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The Greyfriars Herald

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TONY SCORES IN THE GREAT DONKEY POLO MATCH!

(An incident in our magnificent sporting tale on page 13.)

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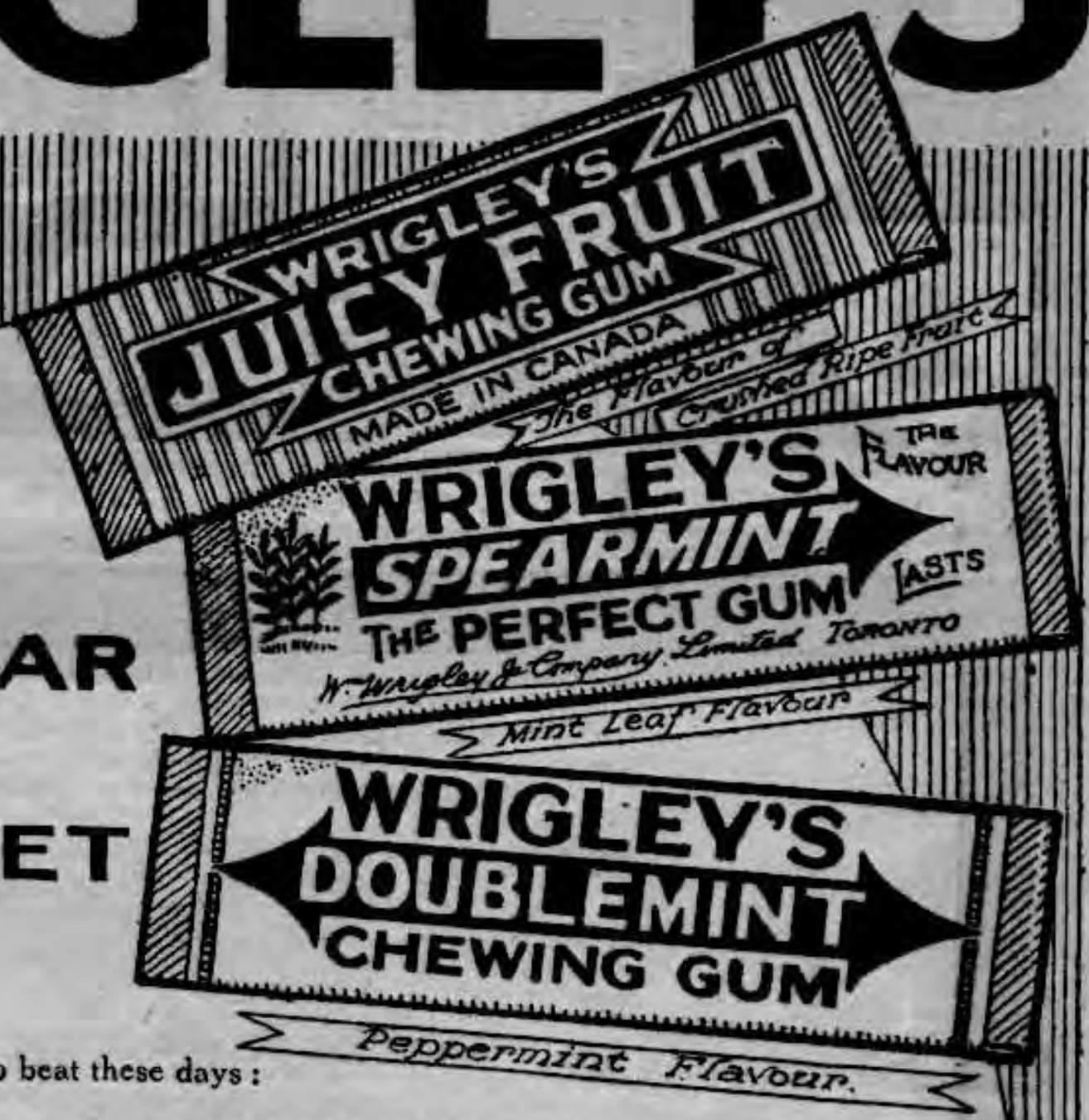

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Editorial

By Harry Wharton.

DICK PENFOLD

HURREE SINGH

BILLY BUNTER

TOM MERRY

JIMMY SILVER

ARTHUR A D'ARCY

BLUE SEAS OR PRINTER'S INK?

My Dear Chums,—In spite of it being the holiday season quite a number of fellows seem to have developed a craze for editing amateur journals. There's a great fascination in running a little paper I must admit, although sometimes I long to exchange my blue pencil and shears for my trusty old willow, or sally forth to splash in the sparkling blue sea at some south-coast resort instead of dabbling in oceans of printer's ink.

Now, when the call of the sea or country becomes too insistent, I pick out a few letters from a large budget stowed away in my desk and quietly re-read them. These guarded and treasured missives did not emanate from the girls of Cliff House as some of you may suspect; they were sent by loyal "Heraldites" of both sexes—yours may be amongst them—and, one and all, they breathe refreshingly of good will and fellowship.

RALLYING ROUND!

The writers realised the difficulties of catering for such a world-wide public as that of our little journal, and their communications overflow with encouragement and helpful suggestions for the "man in the chair." It bucks a fellow up wonderfully to receive such expressions of comradeship, and I hope I shall receive hundreds more in the future from boys and girls interested in the welfare of the "best three-ha'porth."

Of course, some of the Greyfriars fellows have stood loyally by to keep the "Herald" going strong during the holiday season. Even Mauly blew into the office the other day and offered to help with the work! While he was talking, however, he dropped off to sleep in the visitor's armchair. By the way, Mauly's tendency to somnolence has been responsible for his getting into hot water lately, as you will see by reading the ripping little yarn by Wibley on page 19.

Your cheery pal,

HARRY.

THE EELY FISH GETS BADLY CAUGHT! - - - Drawn by FRANK NUGENT.

1. Fisher Tartleton Fish, that cheery young shark from the U.S.A., thought it great fun to "rustle" the eels from the basket of the Porpoise of the Remove, thereby causing the latter to gnash his useful set of molars with fiery age and aggranoyance.

2. But Billy is always up and doing —something or somebody— and so he borrowed a pot of white paint from a near-by cottage when the man wasn't looking, and did a fancy little bit of artwork on his own account as depicted in the above fine-art engraving.

3. And when Fishy came back for the next catch he got the shock of his life. "Jumping snakes!" he howled. "Guess I'd better hit the trail!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Billy Bunter. "And if you come back for another eel you'll get my toe!"

THE STOWAWAY OF THE BENBOW!

A splendid, long, complete tale of our magnificent new series dealing with the adventures of the boys of the Benbow

By OWEN CONQUEST

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

Drake's sudden grasp swung the ruffian aside and a kick knocked his feet from under him. Slaney came down with a crash.

CHAPTER I.

Old Foes!

"THE sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark!"

Dick Rodney quoted the lines as he stood, with a group of the Benbow juniors, watching Barbados rising from the sea in the sunset. Red in the west, the sun sank into the waters in a blaze of purple and gold. From the waste of waters astern, darkness was already creeping.

"Not much twilight here," remarked Jack Drake.

"Jolly good scenery, you know," said Tuckey Toodles critically. "If the grub is as good as the scenery, Barbados will do! Are those lines from Shakespeare, Rodney?"

"No, ass—Coleridge."

"Coleridge? Never heard of him," said Tuckey. "We haven't had him in class, have we?"

The juniors chuckled. Tuckey Toodles' knowledge of literature was strictly confined to the amount hammered into his head by Mr. Packe. Beyond that limit Tuckey had no desire to stray.

"I know something poetic just descriptive of all this, you know," said Toodles. "I forget the name of the poet, and I forget the poem, but it's about something or other, you know, or something. You ain't the only fellow on the ship who can quote, you see, Rodney!"

"Dark already!" said Drake.

The sun was gone, the rainbow colours of the west had died out, and darkness lay upon the face of the waters.

"We shall make Barbados in the morning," said Rodney, "and then poor old Tin Tacks has to go ashore."

"Jolly good thing, too!" grunted Tuckey Toodles. "I don't like that nigger. He's cheeky."

"Fathead!" said Drake.

Jack Drake went below with rather a thoughtful expression on his face.

He had taken a liking to Tin Tacks, the coloured gentleman of Barbados whom he had rescued from the sea, and the black man's desire to remain with him touched the junior.

He had ventured to hint to Mr. Packe that he would like Tin Tacks to stay on board the Benbow, but the Fourth-form master had pooh-poohed the suggestion at once.

Tin Tacks was in No. 8 Study when Drake came in.

In spite of the fact that his services had been declined with thanks, the coloured gentleman seemed to have constituted himself personal attendant in the cabin.

He had washed up after tea, at which he had been a guest, in spite of Drake's remonstrances, and now he was tidying up the cabin, which perhaps needed it a little.

He turned a broad grin upon the junior, showing a magnificent set of glistening teeth.

"Hallo, you still here, Tin Tacks!" said Drake.

"Me still here, Mass' Jack. You 'peak to ole bald-head 'bout me?"

Drake grinned.

He thought that Mr. Packe might have been still more uncompromising on the subject of the Barbadian gentleman if he could have heard that flattering description of himself!

"I've spoken to him, Tin Tacks, but it's no go," he said. "I'm afraid you'll have to go ashore in Barbados."

The black man's face fell.

"No like go 'shore," he said. "Like 'tay on ship and look after Mass' Jack. What me do now?"

"There isn't anything to do, old bean," said the junior. "We look after ourselves here. The steward's mates sweep the cabins, and we sling our hammocks with our own fair hands. We get our rations from the canteen. So, you see——"

"Me sling hammocks," said Tin Tacks.

"You can, if you like," said Drake, laughing. "I'll show you where the things are, if you want a job. Hallo, Slaney, what do you want?"

He glanced round as Peg Slaney, the steward's mate, squinted into the cabin with his single eye.

"Message from Master Daubeny, sir," said Slaney civilly. "He'd like you to go to supper in his cabin—— Hallo!"

The one-eyed seaman broke off abruptly as he saw Tin Tacks.

Slaney had been below when the Barbadian coloured gentleman was picked up, and this was his first meeting with Tin Tacks.

Drake, to his astonishment, saw that he was acquainted with the black man of Barbados.

"You here, on board the Benbow!" ejaculated Slaney.

Tin Tacks had been unrolling the hammocks, but he let them drop at the sound of the one-eyed seaman's rasping voice.

He spun round, and fixed his eyes on Slaney.

"You know Tin Tacks, Slaney?" asked Drake, in surprise.

Slaney did not reply.

He was watching the negro like a cat, evidently in expectation of an attack.

Tin Tacks' black, good-humoured face had grown grim and menacing, and he came towards the one-eyed seaman with a glitter in his eyes.

Drake ran between them just in time.

He pushed the negro back.

"Hold on, you duffer!" he exclaimed. "What the thump's the matter with you? You can't fight here!"

"Let him come on, sir!" said Slaney, with an evil grin. "I'll tan his black hide for him, like I've done afore!"

"You won't do anything of the sort!" exclaimed Drake sharply. "Stand back!"

Peg Slaney shrugged his shoulders, and left the cabin. Jack Drake stood in the negro's way as he would have followed, and kept him back. The powerful negro could have tossed him out of the way easily enough, but he did not touch him.

"Now, what the thump does this mean?" asked Drake. "Keep back, you ass! You're not going to scrap with Slaney."

"Name not Slaney," said Tin Tacks. "Name Paquito."

"I dare say he's had a good many names in his time," said Drake. "So you knew him when he was called Paquito?"

Tin Tacks nodded.

"Me know dat white trash on de Orinoco," he said. "Dat when me servant to bery grand white gentleman. Him beat me with raw-hide. Me gib dat debble hiding, Mass' Jack, now me see him!"

"What did he beat you for?" asked the junior.

Tin Tacks explained.

Paquito had robbed his master, the white gentleman, of a valuable paper, and Tin Tacks had followed him to recover it. Paquito and his associates had seized him in the chaparral, and beaten him with a raw-hide whip, and left him insensible—perhaps left him for dead. Jack Drake started as he listened. He remembered the mysterious Spanish document in Slaney's possession, about which Daubeny of the Shell had been so curious.

"Was the paper in Spanish, Tin Tacks?" he asked.

"Yes, Mass' Jack; me no read him, but me see him. My gentleman jolly waxy when he lose him paper."

"By Jove, I shouldn't wonder if that's the paper the rogue's got about him now," said Drake. "But you must let him alone on the Benbow, Tin Tacks. You can't take the law into your own hands, you know."

Tin Tacks looked rebellious, but he nodded at last.

"Mass' Jack master," he said.

"I'm not your master, ass!" said Drake. "But Captain Topcastle would be down on you if you kicked up a row."

"Me savvy."

And Drake left the Barbadian gentleman slinging the hammocks, and looked for Dick Rodney, to take him to supper in Daub's cabin.

Black Against White!

VERNON DAUBENY, of the Shell, greeted Drake and Rodney with great cordiality when they arrived in his quarters.

Since Daub had made friends with Drake, Rodney had contrived to keep on good terms with him, though perhaps he had not yet given up expecting to see Daub show the cloven hoof again.

Daub's study-mates, Torrence and Egan, were barely civil—Torrence the more civil of the two. Egan was keeping up the old feud, but he contrived to keep his feelings below the surface for the present.

Vernon Daubeny's ample supply of cash allowed him the run of the canteen, and there was a very handsome supper in the Shell cabin.

The juniors chatter over it cheerily, their talk running chiefly on the sights they were to see at Barbados and Trinidad, and later on the South American mainland. And the latter topic brought up the mention of Peg Slaney's Spanish document, which had been talked about by all the Benbow fellows since its existence had become known.

"I saw that boozy waster conning over his precious paper this morning," Egan remarked. "He's babbled all over the fo'c'sle about some treasure he's going to lift on the Orinoco, when we get there."

"Gas, most likely," said Drake carelessly. "If there's really a treasure, he would be a silly ass to chatter about it."

"Well, he is a silly ass," said Torrence. "When he's taken his grog, he will blab about anythin'."

"If there's a treasure, it's rot to leave it in the hands of that squintin' rascal," continued Egan. "He can't have come by the document honestly."

"Most likely not," said Rodney. "But it's his at present, and even a thief can't be robbed."

"Rot!"

"Ahem!" murmured Torrence.

"I believe I've got some news about that merry document," remarked Drake; and he related what he had heard from the Barbadian.

"By gad! Then it's pretty clear he stole it," exclaimed Daubeny. "It really belongs to Tin Tacks' old master, whoever he was."

"Looks like it, only there's no proof, of course."

"Look here," exclaimed Egan, "we're getting close to South America now, and the matter ought to be settled. Now we're all friends here"—he smiled rather sourly—"now we're all friends, why shouldn't we go into the thing together?"

"Can't be done," said Daubeny, with an uneasy glance at Jack Drake. "We can't rob the chap."

"You tried once," said Egan sourly.

Daubeny flushed.

"Let that drop," he exclaimed irritably. "What a fellow you are for rakin' up old sores, Egan!"

"I don't see why not——"

A bang at the door interrupted the argument at this point, perhaps fortunately. Sawyer major of the Fourth put his head into the cabin, in a state of high excitement.

"You fellows coming?" he bawled.

"Hallo, what's on?"

"Fight in the fo'c'sle."

"Oh, rot!" yawned Daubeny. "We don't want to amble along to see two hands punchin' one another in the fo'c'sle. Besides, the fo'c'sle's out of bounds for us."

"I'm going," said Sawyer. "I thought you'd like to come, Drake, as it's your pet nigger——"

"Tin Tacks?" exclaimed Drake, rising quickly.

"Tin Tacks and Daub's one-eyed pal!" grinned Sawyer major. "They're just going to begin. I'm off!"

And Sawyer major rushed away.

Jack Drake frowned.

Tin Tacks was berthed in the forecastle with the crew, and apparently he had come upon his old enemy again in the seamen's quarters.

"Dash it all! I wish he'd keep the peace!" he exclaimed. "The captain will be waxy if he hears a row going on."

"He won't!" said Daubeny, laughing. "Captain Topcastle's got too much tact to hear a little scrap going on in the fo'c'sle. I'll bet you they won't be interfered with. Let's go."

"Well, I'd like to see old Tin Tacks through," said Drake.

"Come on, then. It's half an hour to bed-time, and I dare say they'll be through by then."

Egan and Torrence decided to finish their suppper, and Daubeny left the cabin with Drake and Rodney.

They made their way forward cautiously.

The crew's quarters were supposed to be out of bounds for the schoolboys on board the Benbow, and caution was necessary.

Peg Slaney's rasping voice came to their ears as they approached the forescuttle.

"You black hound, I'm ready for you! Put up your hands!"

"Just in time for the first house!" murmured Daubeny.

The juniors looked in.

The forecastle was a little dim in the light of the swinging lamp.

The watch below had not turned in, evidently being too interested in the fight to think of sleep.

The seamen were sitting on the bunks, or standing about, keeping back out of the way of the two foes.

Peg Slaney and Tin Tacks stood facing one another, in their shirts. Both of them were looking savage and determined.

Smacke, the boatswain's mate, seemed to be master of the ceremonies.

"Now then, you cripples," he said, removing his pipe, "if you're ready ——"

"Me ready to t'rash dat white trash!" said Tin Tacks, spitting on his big, black hands, and rubbing them.

"Let the durned nigger come on!" growled Slaney.

"Me no nigger, you white trash!" exclaimed Tin Tacks wrathfully. "Me free Barbadian coloured gentleman!"

"Good old coloured gentleman!" grinned Daubeny. "Go it!"

The boatswain's mate looked round.

"Here, you younkers sheer off!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, you've got room for little us," said Drake. "We won't interrupt. You can go ahead."

Smacke had no time to reply, for the two combatants, equally impatient, rushed upon one another, and the fight began.

The Fight in the Forecastle!

TRAMP, tramp, tramp!

The seamen of the Benbow looked on with cheerful interest as the fight began, only taking care to keep out of the way of the tramping, gasping combatants.

The juniors watched from the step outside the forecastle in silence.

There were no rounds in the fight; there seemed to be no rules observed, excepting the rule of hitting as hard as possible and as often as possible. Both the adversaries were in deadly earnest, and the sound of heavy blows thudded through the forecastle.

Tin Tacks and his enemy clinched and struggled and hammered, giving and receiving heavy punishment, which did not seem to have much effect upon them.

They parted again, and sprang back, panting.

But it was only for a second or two. Then they rushed to meet, and again the thudding blows rang out.

"My hat!" murmured Dick Rodney. "This is going to be a regular prize-fight! They ought to have the gloves on."

"They don't put on the gloves for scraps in the fo'c'sle!" grinned Vernon Daubeny. "Two to one on the nigger, you fellows!"

"No takers!" answered Drake, with a smile.

The fight had lasted ten minutes, and by that time it was growing pretty clear that the coloured gentleman of Barbados was getting the best of it. Neither of the combatants had much knowledge of boxing, and the great strength of the negro was telling in close combat. And Peg Slaney soon had "bellows to mend" with a vengeance. His drinking habits put him at a disadvantage. He lacked the stamina to stand up to such a slogging contest.

There was a terrific crash, as the one-eyed seaman suddenly went down under a right-hand drive that might have felled an ox.

"Phew!" murmured Rodney.

Tin Tacks stood panting, waiting for his adversary to rise.

Slaney was not in a hurry to get on his feet.

He made two or three efforts to rise, and sank back again helplessly, his breath coming thick and fast.

There were dark bruises on his swarthy face, and his single eye was purple.

"Me waiting for white trash," said Tin Tacks at last.

"Now then, look alive!" sang out Smacke. "If you're done, say so, and if you ain't, show a leg there!"

"I guess I'll smash that darned nigger!" muttered Slaney thickly.

"You don't look like doing it so far!" grinned the boatswain's mate.

Slaney staggered to his feet at last.

His swarthy face was convulsed with rage.

He advanced upon the coloured gentleman of Barbados, who met him promptly enough. Tin Tacks was grinning. The raw-hide Slaney had wielded on the banks of the Orinoco was being avenged now.

With savage courage, the one-eyed seaman stood up to his adversary; but he had no chance.

He was driven back before the powerful blows of the negro, back and back towards the juniors, who watched breathlessly.

Suddenly he sprang back, dropping his hands, so close to the juniors that Drake could have touched him.

His hand slid behind him as Tin Tacks came on, and the next moment it whipped out with a knife in it.

There was a shout in the forecastle at the glitter of cold steel in the lamplight.

Knife in hand, Slaney made a spring at the negro, his swarthy face distorted with reckless fury. In his rage the ruffian was oblivious of the consequences of his act. But as he sprang, Jack Drake, behind him, made a jump at him, and caught him by the shoulder.

The junior was just in time.

Another moment, and the negro would have fallen under a murderous blow. But Drake's sudden grasp swung the ruffian aside, and a kick knocked his feet from under him.

Slaney came down with a crash, the knife clattering from his hand on the planks.

"By gad!" gasped Daubeny.

Daub and Rodney had seen the ruffian whip the knife from his belt, as well as Drake, but they had been too paralysed to move. It was Jack Drake's prompt action that prevented a terrible tragedy from being enacted in the forecastle of the Benbow.

Slaney had no time to recover his knife, at which he was clutching as he sprawled on the floor.

Smacke kicked his hand aside, and picked up the weapon.

"You cowardly lubber, I reckon I'll take care of this!" he said.

"Give me my knife!" yelled Slaney.

He sprang up and clutched at the boatswain's mate. Without a word the seaman struck out, his clenched fist crashing upon Slaney's jaw, and sending him spinning.

Peg Slaney collapsed on the planks, half stunned by the blow.

"That's for you, you lubber!" said the boatswain's mate. "And you can have another if you ask for it!"

Slaney groaned.

"Now kick him out of the fo'c'sle," said Smacke. "He don't berth here, and if he puts his nose in again I'll alter his figurehead for him."

"White trash no good," said Tin Tacks scornfully, as three or four of the seamen dragged up Peg Slaney, and pitched him out of the forecastle, the juniors making way for them.

"The show's over," said Vernon Daubeny, as the three juniors moved away. "That ruffian ought to be reported to the skipper, and put in irons. He's not safe."

"I think he's had a lesson," said Drake. "Hallo, it's bed-time—there goes the bell!"

Drake and Rodney returned to their cabin, where they found Tuckey Toodles. Before the chums turned in, however, a battered black face looked in at the door.

"Mass' Jack——"

"Hallo, Tin Tacks! You'd better go and bathe your chivvy, or you'll lose your complexion!"

Tin Tacks grinned.

"Dat debble Paquito want knife poor ole Tin Tacks," he said. "You save ole Tin Tacks second time, Mass' Jack. Me nebber leabe you. No go 'shore at Barbados—nebber leave Mass' Jack."

And the coloured gentleman disappeared before Drake could reply.

At Barbados!

DAWN flushed up on the sea, and the dark shadows rolled away like a curtain that is drawn.

Long before rising-bell Drake and Rodney were on deck, with some of the other juniors, to watch the outermost island of the Antilles as the old Benbow drew nearer.

There was little wind, and the Benbow seemed to feel her way along, passed easily by two or three steamers as she sailed on, white and stately.

Larger and bluer rose the island, till the juniors could see the reefs on which the surf curled, and the uplands in the interior of the islands, and the graceful, nodding palm-trees in the far distance.

"Beautiful!" said Dick Rodney, in almost a hushed voice.

"Jolly nice!" said the unromantic Tuckey Toodles. "I say, Tin Tacks says there's no end of coconuts, and grapes, and things he calls guavas—I don't know what they are, but I dare say they're good to eat. And we're stopping two days!"

"We shall be at anchor in a couple of hours now," remarked Drake. "Then, I suppose, we're going to say good-bye to old Tin Tacks."

"Nebber leabe Mass' Jack!" said a voice at his elbow—the voice of the coloured gentleman.

Drake glanced round, and he could not help smiling.

Tin Tacks had been the victor in the fight in the forecastle, but his black face showed severe traces of the punishment he had received from the one-eyed seaman. One of his eyes was nearly closed, and his flat nose was flatter than ever.

"Feel all right this morning, old top?" asked Drake.

"Ole Tin Tacks all right," answered the coloured man. "Dat trash Paquito all wrong. Him sick!"

"Reported sick?" asked Rodney.

Tin Tacks nodded and grinned.

"Mass' Doctor he go to him, and he off duty," he said. "Ole Tin Tacks gib him jolly hiding. S'pose you come ashore in Barbados, Mass' Jack, ole Tin Tacks guide you, and show you tings. What you tink?"

"Good egg!" answered Drake. "We'll be jolly glad. I wish you were going to stay on the ship with us, Tin Tacks."

"Me 'tay!" answered the black man.

Drake shook his head.

"It's impossible, old chap."

"Me 'tay, all same."

And Tin Tacks walked away, with a very determined expression on his ebony face.

After breakfast, the Benbow was

feeling her way into the bay, and the juniors had a view of Bridgetown.

It was late in the afternoon before any of the schoolboys were allowed ashore, however.

Then they went in two parties, under the charge of Mr. Packe and Mr. Vavasour.

Jack Drake and his comrades would greatly have preferred to wander about at their own sweet will, with Tin Tacks for guide; but the masters, perhaps judiciously, did not want to run the risk of any of their charges being missing when the Benbow raised her anchor again.

Tin Tacks accompanied the Fourth-form party, and when they returned to the boat he came back with them. Mr. Packe looked at him rather expressively as he was stepping into the boat after the juniors.

"Me come, too, sar!" said Tin Tacks submissively.

"I think I understood that you were remaining ashore," said Mr. Packe.

"'Tay on ship till to-morrow, sar," said Tin Tacks earnestly. "Beautiful white gentleman let poor ole Tin Tacks 'tay till to-morrow."

Mr. Packe smiled.

Possibly he was pleased at being described as a beautiful white gentleman; at all events, he made no further objection to Tin Tacks entering the boat, and the Barbadian pulled back to the ship with the juniors.

The following morning Tin Tacks made himself busy in sweeping out No. 8 cabin. That duty usually fell to Peg Slaney, but the one-eyed man was still on the sick-list, and Tin Tacks had his own way.

After breakfast he disappeared.

There was another run ashore in the morning, but the black Barbadian did not accompany the party.

Drake missed him, and inquired after him; but Tin Tacks was not to be seen, and the juniors went without him.

They spent a happy morning in a long ramble, during which Tuckey Toodles sampled tropical fruits to such an extent that Mr. Packe came down on him, in time to save him from making himself ill.

Tuckey was looking a little green when the juniors came back to the Benbow.

"Anybody seen old Tin Tacks?" Drake inquired that evening, wondering at not having seen the black gentleman during the day.

Nobody had.

On inquiry, Drake learned that Mr. Piper, the boatswain, had seen Tin Tacks in a shore boat, which had come alongside the Benbow with a supply of fruit for the ship.

He had not been seen since.

Whether Tin Tacks had gone ashore in the fruit-boat, Mr. Piper did not know, not having regarded the Barbadian as a person of sufficient importance for his movements to be observed.

Drake concluded that Tin Tacks had landed, and he was rather sorry not to have said good-bye to his black friend.

"Poor old chap!" he remarked to Rodney. "He seemed very keen about staying on the ship, and I suppose he thought it would be rather too painful to say good-bye. I'm really sorry he couldn't hang on."

"He was a good chap, in his way," said Rodney, smiling. "We may see him again if we ever touch at Barbados."

"I hope so."

"Rot!" remarked Tuckey Toodles. "Im fed with that blessed nigger. I offered to make him my servant, and he was ungrateful."

"Fathead!" replied Drake and Rodney together.

Whereat Rupert de Vere Toodles sniffed scornfully. The fat junior had been disposed to be very kind to Tin Tacks, in his own way, being prepared to take on the black gentleman in the role of "faithful nigger." But Tin Tacks had apparently had no ambition to be Tuckey's faithful nigger. At all events, he had declined emphatically.

The next day the Benbow left Barbados behind, steering a southerly course.

Jack Drake stood on deck and watched the island sink out of sight in the sunset, thinking of Tin Tacks, and wondering whether he would ever see the coloured gentleman again. A rasping voice at his elbow interrupted his meditations.

"That nig's gone, I s'pose, sir?"

He turned his head, and glanced at Peg Slaney.

"Yes," he answered curtly.

"Good thing for him, too," muttered Slaney, gritting his yellow teeth. "I'd—I'd have——" He paused.

"You're lucky not to be in irons," said Drake disdainfully. "You would be if the captain knew that you'd drawn a knife in a row in the fo'c'sle."

"P'r'aps so," answered Slaney sourly. "I s'pose, sir, that there nigger talked to you a lot?"

"What do you mean?"

"Did he ever tell you what he was doing on the Orinoco, sir?"

"I don't see why I should answer your questions," said Drake coldly. "But he didn't tell me, excepting that he was there with his master."

"Did he give you the gentleman's name, sir?"

"No."

Peg Slaney drew a quick breath, and Drake thought he looked relieved.

"No, I s'pose he wouldn't think of it," he muttered.

"He told me you'd robbed his master of a Spanish document," said Drake scornfully. "I shouldn't wonder if it's the same paper you have about you now."

"That ain't any business of yourn, sir," said Peg Slaney. "I reckon there ain't much law on the Orinoco, and a man takes what he can find. Do you think that there dockyment belonged to the nigger's master—which I needn't mention his name? Not it! He was mixed up with Ponce Garcia's rebels, and so was I, and he had no more right to old Ponce's paper than I had. And I reckon he made more out of it than I did. He went back to England a rich man, and I—look at me, sir! Steward's mate on a durned floating school, by hokey! But the time'll come!"

And the one-eyed seaman moved off, muttering to himself.

Tin Tacks accompanied the Fourth-form party when they returned to the boat. "Me come, too, sar?" he said to Mr. Packe. "Beautiful white gentlemen let poor ole Tin Tacks 'tay till to-morrow."

The Stowaway!

"YAROOOOOP!"

That sudden startled yell came from Mr. Capps, the steward, and it interrupted lessons on the deck of the Benbow the next day.

The Fourth-formers stared round,

and Mr. Packe uttered an exclamation.

"Bless my soul! What——"

"Yoop! 'Elp!"

"Something wrong with old Capps," murmured Rodney. "He's in the hold. What the dickens——"

"'Elp!"

There was a scrambling and trampling of feet, and Mr. Capps came bursting up the main hatchway.

His eyes were almost starting from his head as he came whooping out on deck.

"'Elp!" he panted.

"What's the matter there, steward?" shouted Captain Topcastle.

"G-g-g-g-g——"

"What?"

"G-g-g-ghosts!" spluttered Mr. Capps.

"Ghosts!" roared the skipper.

"Ay, ay, sir—g-g-ghosts!" groaned Mr. Cappe. "Come on it quite sudden-like, sir, in the 'old, when I was down for stores, sir—'orrid and black and 'orrible, sir—breathing fire and flames, sir——"

"Nonsense! Are you drunk, Capps?"

"Which I ain't touched a drop, sir!" gasped Mr. Capps. "Not a drop this 'ere day, sir! I come on it sudden—a ghost with a black face, sir, and 'orrid, starin' eyes, sir, breathing red flames——"

"Belay your jawing-tackle!" snapped the captain. "Bosun!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Go down and see if anything's am'ss in the hold."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Mr. Piper glanced at the terrified steward, and glanced at the hatchway, and glanced at the captain. In the bright sunlight on the decks of the Benbow ghosts seemed rather absurd, but in the dim recesses of the hold it was a different matter. Captain Topcastle glared down at the hesitating sailorman.

"Why don't you go, bosun?"

"I—I'm jest going, sir!"

"Look alive, then!"

Mr. Piper reluctantly descended the ladder. Mr. Packe's class had all risen to their feet, in eager curiosity. Most of them would have been quite willing to search the hold of the Benbow for Mr. Capps' ghost; it would have been a welcome change from lessons. But their services were not required.

There was the sound of a shout below, and a strong sea expression in the deep tones of Mr. Piper.

Then a trampling of feet on the ladder.

The boatswain emerged on the main deck—not alone. He was dragging up a wriggling form by the collar.

Jack Drake gave a shout as his eyes fell upon the latter.

"Tin Tacks!"

"The nigger!" ejaculated Tuckey Toodles.

"A stowaway!" shouted Captain Topcastle.

"Kim - on, you black lubber!" growled the boatswain; and he jerked the wriggling Barbadian towards the captain. Mr. Capps blinked at the "ghost," and scuttled away to his canteen with very red cheeks. It was a very solid ghost indeed that the boatswain had unearthed in the hold of the Benbow!

The stowaway was landed at the captain's feet, and Captain Topcastle gave him a grim look.

Drake looked on, feeling distressed. He understood now why Tin Tacks had vanished on the last day at Barbados. The black man had not gone ashore, after all; he had stowed himself away in the hold of the ship, in order to sail with the Benbow. It was assuredly too late to put him ashore now.

"So you're a stowaway!" growled the captain. "Stand up, you rascal!"

"You leabe go collar," said Tin Tacks to the boatswain. "No handle free coloured gentleman like dat."

Captain Topcastle was a little perplexed to know how to deal with the coloured gentleman.

"Me good sailorman, sar," said Tin Tacks. "Ship's carpenter, sar—bery useful man. You find ole Tin Tacks bery useful on ship, sar. Me wait sail with Mass' Jack, sar."

"I can't throw you into the sea," grunted the captain. "I've a good mind to have you tied up and given three dozen."

"No flog coloured gentleman, sar——"

"Belay that! Get away forrard! Bosun, take that man in hand, and see that he earns his rations."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Tank you bery much, sar," said Tin Tacks gracefully. He grinned at Jack Drake as he passed the juniors on his way forrard.

And Drake smiled and nodded in return. He was very glad to see the stowaway of the Benbow.

THE END.

Next Tuesday's ripping, long, complete yarn of the boys of the Benbow will be entitled: "Trouble at Trinidad!" Order your "Greyfriars Herald" to-day!

RESULT OF TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION.—No. 36.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures, and the prize of £2 10s. has therefore been awarded as follows:

H. G. SIMMS,
37, Laburnum Road,
Brook Road,
Gorton, Manchester.

A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to each of the following eleven competitors:

Clara Love, 20, New Buildings, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Eileen Stanning, 119, Skelton's Lane, Leyton, E.; Edith M. Don, 259, Crookston Street, Glasgow; Edna Hinett, 26, Hall Street, Kidderminster, Worcs.; Donald Howgate, 8, Cagthorpe, Horncastle, Lincs.; Cecil Silcox, 82, Cotewold Road, Bristol; A. G. L. Snowden, 27, Powis Street, Woolwich, S.E.18; Miss B. Rainford, 35, Wraybun Street, Earle Road, Liverpool; Alex. Ritchie, 115, East Clyde Street, Helensburgh, N.B.; Meg. B. F. Gamten, 110, Wilton Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; W. E. Grundy, 1, Parkfield Place, Beeston, Leeds, Yorks.

CORRECT SOLUTION:

Dear Pals,—The splendid new complete tales of the boys of the Benbow, by Owen Conquest, have been welcomed by one and all with loud cheers. Jack Drake and the various other characters will have many more adventures in sunny South America, the reading of which will afford you great amusement.

MY KRICKET KOLLUM

By

BILLY BUNTER

"THE kricket seeson is droring to a clothes," I remarked to Wharton, "and befour it finnishes alltogether, I meen to distingwish myself. Can I tern out this afternoon against St. Jim's?"

"No!"

"Oh, reelly, Wharton——"

"If you were a kricketer, instedd of a komedian, I should be happy to give you a plaice," kontinewed Wharton. "As it is, you'll have to kontent yourself with being a specked tater!"

"Look hear," I protested. "It isn't fare——"

At this junkcher, who should stepp into Wharton's studdy but my sister Bessie, who had overherd us.

"What nonsence!" she eksclaimed. "Billy's a verry promissing player."

"Too promissing!" said Wharton. He's allways promissing to skore a sentury—but it nevver comes off!"

Bessie through owt her slimm white hands appeelingly.

"Do let him play this afternoon!" she pleeded.

How could Wharton rezzist that appeel? How could he ignaw the klaims of bewty in distress?

"All rite, Miss Bunter," he said. "Billy shall play."

Akkordingly, I terned owt with the Remove teem that afternoon.

St. Jim's took 1st nock, and Tom Merry and Talbot were in eggsellent form. They treeted the boling with lofty kontent, and the skore mownted apace.

Then Tom Merry smote the bawl in my direckshun.

"Katch, Bunter—katch!" cride the croud.

The bawl kannoned into my chest, and I sat down with grate violense in the grass

"Butterfingers!"

I skrambled to my feat with a krestfallen air, and returned the bawl to the boler.

After that, Tom Merry maid qwite a target of me. The bawl kontinewally came wizzing in my direckshun, and I was in an agerny lest I should be nocked owt.

When Tom Merry had skored ninety-nine, and was on the verj of getting his sentury, he agane smote the bawl towards me.

I promptly put up my hand to sheeld my face, (for my specktacles are valewable, and I didn't want to get them broken), and then a serprizing thing happened. The bawl crashed against my palm, and staid there!

"Kawt, sir!"

It was a pure axxident, of corse; but I was cheered to the ekko. And allthough St. Jim's gained an easy vicktory at the finnish, that grate and brillyunt katch of mine, will always be remembered. Fewcher jennyrations of Greyfriars feloes will diskuss it with rellish. But Tom Merry will nevver diskuss it. He'll always kuss it.

THE END.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LORD ADOLPHUS!

Our Great New Series dealing with the amazing adventures of

HERLOCK SHOLMES
DETECTIVE

Written by

PETER TODD

I.

HERLOCK SHOLMES was reading the morning paper when an agitated official of the Red Tape and Sealing-Wax Department was shown into our rooms at Shaker Street.

"Mr. Sholmes!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

Sholmes politely laid down the journal, and removed his feet from the mantelpiece.

It was evident that something of a startling nature must have occurred to cause an official of the Red Tape department to be abroad, and wide awake, so early as half-past eleven in the morning!

"What has happened?" drawled Sholmes. "You may speak quite freely before my friend Dr. Jotson."

"Lord Adolphus Fitzfoozle, the head of our department, has disappeared!"

"Disappeared!" repeated Sholmes. "Kindly give me a few details."

"Little is known, Mr. Sholmes. Yesterday morning, as usual, Lord Adolphus arrived at the department, at a quarter past eleven. He seemed in his usual health and spirits, and slept peacefully in his bureau until twelve o'clock, when he left for lunch. It is his custom to walk across St. James's Park for lunch at his club; Lord Adolphus has always been a man of great energy. But—he did not arrive at his club!"

"Ah!" said Sholmes inscrutably.

"Inquiry was not made till evening, for sometimes his lordship sleeps at his club in the afternoon, instead of at the department. But when inquiry was made, it was discovered that he had never arrived at the club. Search was made in the park. He was not there. He had not been heard of at his home. He had vanished completely! Find Lord Adolphus, Mr. Sholmes, and save the country!"

And the agitated official retired.

II.

HERLOCK SHOLMES took up his morning paper again, glancing at me with a smile.

"Sholmes!" I exclaimed. "You are not going to read your paper now?"

"Why not, Jotson?"

"My dear fellow," I said warmly, "the fate of the country may be at stake! The most important measure of modern times—that of dressing the Army in the style of Punchinello—may be hung up if the Red Tape department is paralysed by the loss of its chief! And what might happen to the country, if a fresh war should break out, and find our soldiers still dressed in khaki?"

"True. But I hope to find a clue in this journal, Jotson. Listen to this, my dear fellow:

"'Some excitement was caused at Colney Hatch yesterday by the escape of a lunatic. This man, after eluding the keepers, succeeded in getting as far as London, but he was recaptured in St. James's Park, and taken away immediately in a taxi.'"

I stared at Herlock Sholmes.

This item of news was, perhaps, interesting in itself, but I could see no connection between it and the affair of the missing Minister.

Sholmes smiled at my perplexed expression, and rose from his chair.

"Come!" he said; and, taking me playfully by the nose, he led me away.

In Shaker Street we stepped into a taxi. Sholmes gave the direction to

The name of Herlock Sholmes opened all doors.

the driver, and as I heard it, I blinked in amazement.

"Colney Hatch!"

"Sholmes," I exclaimed, "you are going to call upon your relatives at this crucial moment!"

"Not at all, my dear Jotson."

"Then why are we going to Colney Hatch?"

His answer astounded me.

"To find the missing Minister, Jotson!"

We arrived at Colney Hatch, where the name of Herlock Sholmes opened all doors. His request to see the lunatic who had been recaptured in St. James's Park the previous day was immediately granted, and we were conducted to his room.

A slim gentleman, with a vacant, aristocratic face, was dozing upon a couch when we entered. Sholmes touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"Wake up, Lord Adolphus!" he said.

The sleeper started up.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "Is it lunch-time already?"

"Come!" said Sholmes.

III.

THE taxi bore us to Whitehall, where Lord Adolphus was returned, safe and sound, to his anxious friends in the Red Tape and Sealing-Wax department. His return brought joy to the seventy-five thousand officials of that department. As we walked back to Shaker Street, I could contain my impatience no longer.

"Sholmes——" I exclaimed.

"A very interesting case, Jotson," said Herlock Sholmes. "One that might have baffled Scotland Yard for years, but which was, fortunately, simple enough to me. The clue was in the newspaper report."

"But how——"

"Consider, my dear fellow. A prominent Government official disappeared in the park. At the same time, an escaped lunatic was captured there, and taken away in a taxi. The conclusion was obvious. The Colney Hatch attendants had made a mistake—natural, under the circumstances. To the trained eye of a detective, Jotson, there are distinctions between a Cabinet Minister and a lunatic. But asylum officials, of course, are not trained detectives. They made a natural mistake; they supposed that Lord Adolphus was their man, and took him away in a taxi."

"I see it all now, Sholmes! But what a dreadful shock to Lord Adolphus, to find himself in a lunatic asylum!"

Sholmes smiled.

"A painful shock, no doubt, if Lord Adolphus had given the matter any thought," he replied. "Fortunately, he is a member of the Corps Diplomatique, and not accustomed to think. Moreover, the difference between a lunatic asylum and a Government department is not very great, and Lord Adolphus had not yet observed it when we fortunately found him."

"True. And the escaped lunatic, then, is still at large?"

"Evidently! But doubtless he will be recaptured in time, unless——" Herlock Sholmes paused.

"Unless what, Sholmes?"

"Unless he should take refuge in a Government department, Jotson. In that case it will be a matter of exceeding difficulty to pick him out from the others."

THE END.

Next week's laughable adventure will be "The Mystery of the Garden Suburb."

The GREYFRIARS POLICE COURT

—A Vivid Account of all the latest Charges & Convictions by Our Special Representative.—

Owing to the indisposition of Mr. Justice Wharton, who was confined to his study with an attack of swelled head, the court proceedings this week were presided over by Mr. Robert Cherry, K.C., the eminent barrister.

Curious Charge Against Coker!

Horace James Coker, described as an absentee from Colney Hatch, was charged with attempting to take his life.

Magistrate: What silly ass stopped him? (Laughter.)

Mr. Peter Todd, K.C., for the prosecution: This is a very sad case, your worship. I desire to shed a few silent tears, before calling the first witness.

Magistrate: Anybody got an empty ginger-beer bottle? (Laughter.)

Mr. Todd, having sobbed pitifully for several moments (the members of the public being obliged to put up their umbrellas), called upon Detective-Inspector Penfold to give evidence.

Det.-Insp. Penfold: On the 2nd instant, your worship, I had occasion to visit prisoner's study for the purpose of raiding his tuck. (Laughter.) On the table I discovered a pathetic ode, addressed to Potter and Greene. I have the ode in court. Would you like me to read it, your worship?

Magistrate: Go ahead!

Det.-Insp. Penfold then recited the following tender, touching lines:

"Fare thee well, George Potter!
Good-bye, William Greene!
Don't think I'm a rotter—
Don't suggest I'm mean!
You will find my body
Floating after dark,
In the reeds and rushes
Of the River Sark!"

Mr. Todd: Boo-hoo!

Magistrate: Wherefore does my learned friend weep?

Mr. Todd: It's such a terrible tragedy!

Magistrate: But Coker is still alive!

Mr. Todd: Yes, that's the terrible tragedy! (Laughter.)

Magistrate: What action did you take, inspector, on finding that farewell ode?

Det.-Insp. Penfold: With the aid of the Greyfriars Special Constabulary, your worship, I dragged the river.

Magistrate: And you found?

Det.-Insp. Penfold: Nothing but an old tin kettle, your worship. (Laughter.)

Magistrate: That was a far more valuable find than Coker's body would have been, anyway!

Mr. George Blundell, who appeared for the defence, said that there was no question of suicide.

"Coker composed that ode simply and solely as a practical joke," said Mr. Blundell. "And Potter and Greene knew it was only a lark. But these idiotic Jotland Yard officials took it seriously."

Magistrate: Practical jokes of that description are in very bad taste, and prisoner must be taught a sharp lesson! He will be placed in a convenient position across the dock, and will be chastised with a cricket-stump, until either the stump, or the prisoner, breaks in half! (Laughter)

Foreman of the Jury: Steady on, your worship! You appear to have forgotten our existence!

Magistrate: I have! You're dead in this act!

Prisoner (wrathfully): If you dare to lay a finger on me, you cheeky young cub——

Magistrate: Carry out the sentence!

To the accompaniment of cheers from the spectators in the gallery, the sentence was duly carried out.

Ten minutes later, prisoner hobbled out of the court on crutches.

Magistrate: I'll teach you to pretend to take your life!

Prisoner: Yow-ow-ow! You've jolly nearly taken it for me! (Loud laughter.)

My Weekly Interview

By the Special Representative of "The Greyfriars Herald."

This week:

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE

"TEMPLE'S the next on the list," said the editor, when I presented myself at his sanctum.

"I don't like the idea of interviewing Temple," I said. "He's a Fourth-form beast, and the Upper Fourth are at daggers drawn with the Remove, just now The moment I barge into his study, he's bound to start lamming me with a cricket-stump. And I don't want to be bedridden for the rest of my life!"

"What rot!" said the editor. "Temple's quite harmless, and I'll pay you an extra threepence. Pat him gently on the back, and make inquiries about his pedigree, and he'll simply fawn on you!"

Taking fresh heart from this assurance, I went along to Temple's study.

Cecil Reginald Temple was not at home. But his stable companions, Dabney and Fry, were preparing a "high" tea, in the shape of grilled kippers.

"Where's Temple?" I inquired.

"On the river," said Dabney shortly.

It was a bit of a fag, having to go down to the river, but I was determined to earn my extra threepence.

Ten minutes later, I was plodding along the towing-path of the Sark, in the sweltering heat. I looked everywhere for Temple, but he was not to be seen. And I was about to turn back in disgust, when I caught sight of a boat reposing in the rushes, not a great distance from the weir.

At first the boat appeared to be empty, but when I drew nearer I observed a huddled, motionless figure in the stern.

"Temple!" I ejaculated.

There was no movement from the huddled figure, and I became greatly alarmed.

I could not see Temple's face, but I could guess what had happened. He had hired a rowing-boat from the boathouse, and whilst rowing downstream he had been overpowered by the fierce sun.

And now he lay huddled and helpless in the boat, which might soon be caught in the current, and swept over the edge of the weir!

That was how I figured things out.

Fired by an heroic impulse, I sped away to the boathouse, and secured a long boat-hook, which would reach right across the river. When I returned, I half expected to find that Temple's boat had been carried away by the current, which I knew to be very powerful at that part. But the boat was still there, and Temple was still huddled up in the stern.

Swinging the boat-hook across, I deftly hooked Temple's boat, and started to pull it in. Then, to my amazement, the huddled figure became suddenly active, and Temple spun round towards me, with fury in his face.

"You chump—you imbecile!" he roared. "What do you want to drag me in for? Just as I'd got a bite, too!"

"A—a bite?" I faltered.

"Yes, I should have landed quite a decent-sized trout if it hadn't been for you, you prize maniac!"

And then it dawned on me that Temple had not been a victim of sunstroke at all. With his back turned to me, he had been fishing! And I had robbed him of what might have proved the catch of the season!

I paused, scarcely knowing what to do or say.

"You can finish hauling me in, now you've started!" said Temple. "And then I shall have something to say to you!"

And when the irate captain of the Fourth landed on the bank, he said what he had to say—not by word of mouth, but with his fists!

And it was a very battered and forlorn special representative who limped back to Greyfriars to collect his well-earned threepence!

THE END.

For the best storyette printed on this page a hamper crammed full of delicious tuck will be awarded. Money prizes will be given for all other contributions used. When more than one reader sends in the same acceptable storyette, the prize is awarded to the first read. Remember your joke should be written plainly on a postcard.—Editor.

Woodn't Flatter!

The Actor: How did you like me as the "wood-nymph," old man, eh?

His Friend: Why, man, you're a genius! You acted as though you were actually made of wood!—Sent in by A. Reader. 16, Brace Street, Bedford.

Sea?

Little Tommy was sitting on his father's knee watching his mother arranging her hair.

"Papa hasn't a Marcel wave like that," said his father laughingly.

Tommy looked up at his pa's baldpate, and replied:

"No; no waves, it's all beach!"—Sent in by Miss Marion Gomersall, 2, Earle Terrace, Lee Mount, Halifax, Yorks.

NEARLY OUTED HIM!

HARRY: "What are you going out for? The umpire signalled 'no ball.'"
NOVICE: "'No ball!' My aunt! I know it was a ball! Look at the bump it made before it took my wicket!"

A Lacing Followed!

Mr. Quelch: How is it you're late for class this morning, Bunter?

Billy Bunter: P-please, sir, my shoelace became untied.

Mr. Quelch: That's a poor excuse for coming late!

Billy Bunter: I—I know, sir; but I couldn't think of a better one!—Sent in by S. Waxman, Downside, 94, Downs Park Road, Clapton, E.5.

Tools of Fate

"Ah, life's a hard grind," murmured the emery-wheel.

"It's a perfect bore!" exclaimed the auger.

"It means nothing but hard knocks for me," said the nail.

"But you haven't so much to go through as I have," put in the saw.

"And I'm always being sat upon," cried the bench.

"Let's strike!" suggested the hammer.

"Cut it out!" muttered the chisel. "Here comes the boss!"

And awl was silence.—Sent in by Wm. Lewis, 55, Meredith Street, Crewe.

OUR TUCK-HAMPER PRIZE STORYETTE

A CLEAN FACER!

"You say your baby doesn't walk yet," said Bragge. "Mine does, and he's not half the age of yours. Has your baby cut his teeth yet?"

"No, he hasn't," admitted Meek sadly.

"Oh, mine has them all," boasted Bragge. "Can your baby talk yet?"

"Not yet," replied Meek. "And yours?"

"Great Scott, yes!" exclaimed Bragge.

Then Meek became desperate.

"Say," he demanded, "does your baby use a safety razor or one of the ordinary variety?"—Sent in by C. Hannuell, 12, Bridport Street, Harewood Avenue, Lisson Grove, London, N.W.1., to whom a hamper crammed full of delicious tuck has been despatched.

Was It Black?

P.-c. Fairyfoot: Do you happen to know a man with one eye of the name of White, who's often hanging about here?

Ice-cream Vendor: Couldn't say. What's the name of his other eye?—Sent in by Miss A. Browne, 2, Ridgehill Lane, Stalybridge.

Followed Instructions!

The coloned was to hold an inspection of the recruits, and the sergeant was telling Private Muggins what to say if he was spoken to by the commander.

"When he says 'How long have you been in the Army?' say 'Three months, sir.' When he says 'How old are you?' say 'Twenty-nine years, sir.' When he says 'Do you like your food and lodgings?' say 'Yes, both, sir.'"

As it happened, the first man the colonel spoke to was Private Muggins.

"How old are you, my man?" he asked.

"Three months, sir," was the reply.

The officer stared hard and said:

"How long have you been in the Army?"

"Twenty-nine years, sir."

"Rattling sabres!" spluttered the colonel. "Are you a blithering idiot, or am I?"

And the reply came.

"Yes, both, sir!"—Sent in by Rowland Marrish, 77, Camp Road, Leeds.

A Striking Discovery!

Dentist: I think that tooth's been filled before. I can see traces of gold.

Patient: Great Scott, man, then you've struck my back collar-stud!—Sent in by Alex. B. Gibson 5, Douglas Terrace, Abbotsinch, Paisley.

MADE A SAD SPECTACLE!

TEDDIE: "Hallo, Freddie, I suppose you'll see better at cricket to-day when you use 'em."
FREDDIE: "See better! What the dickens d'you mean?"
TEDDIE: "Why, I heard you got a 'pair of spectacles' at the match yesterday!"

Heading For Trouble!

Mr. Bootles: Muffin, do you remember what I told you about the North Pole, yesterday?

Tubby Muffin: Er—I—er—I——

Mr. Bootles: Really, you can never remember anything, boy! What is the use of your head?

Tubby Muffin (brightly): Well, it keeps my collar from slipping off, sir!—Sent in by W. J. White, 90, Downs Road, Walmer.

Unanswerable!

Constable O'Flanagan to street loafer): Now then, bedad, move on there! If iverybody stopped in the same place, how'd ye iver think the rest would get by?—Sent in by Miss H. Macarthy, 21, Hampton Street, **Barton Hill, Bristol.**

The Luck of the Estors

Our magnificent racing serial specially written by

MAJOR CHERRY

Tony's Desperate Leap!

TONY, who had been leaning on the balcony rail outside the room, swung round with a start as the two rogues entered. He guessed that the precious pair had come to some decision concerning him, and he greatly wondered what his fate was to be, little suspecting, however, the murderous nature of the plot which had been hatched against him.

"Put your hands over your head, you young rip!" ordered Groat, making a threatening movement with his automatic. "We've come to have a li'l chat with you."

Leaning casually against the rail of the balcony, Tony obliged without demur. A contemptuous smile, however, lighted his face as he noted the thick tones of the bookmaker, which proved that the man had been resorting to rather more liquid refreshment than even his extraordinary capacity would permit without tell-tale effects. And Tony's smile was reflected in a grin tinged with malice and expectant triumph on the face of Andy Finch, as that worthy noticed the attitude of the boy on the balcony. Nothing could have suited the villain's plan better.

While Jerry Groat showered abuse on the head of the stable-lad, Finch manoeuvred himself into a position ahead of the bookie, and near to the right hand of the intended victim.

The foul deed he contemplated seemed easier now of accomplishment even than it had done when he and Groat had been discussing the matter downstairs.

Finch took a hasty glance outside. There was a lane beyond the grounds of The Poplars, but it was hidden by trees, and therefore it was impossible for any passers-by to be witness of his murderous act.

Still rolling forth a string of abuse and threats on Tony, Groat saw Finch preparing to put the murderous scheme into action, and his hand trembled convulsively. Tony noted the unsteady movement of the automatic, and a sudden disquieting thought occurred to him that the notorious bookie intended shooting him in cold blood.

But hardly had the thought flashed through his mind than a swift movement on the part of Finch attracted his attention. The ruffian threw himself down to clutch the lad's knees, and in a flash the boy realised the full nature of the villain's diabolical intention.

There was no time to jump clear of that deadly tackle, but instinctively Tony thrust his right knee forward. It came against Finch's chin with a resounding crack, and an involuntary gasp of surprise and pain escaped the villain. This had the effect of preventing Finch from securing a firm grasp, but even so Tony almost overbalanced over the low balcony railing as the ruffian dashed against him.

But with a dexterous twist the boy freed himself from the grasp of the villain, who sprawled face downwards on the floor. At that moment Groat pressed the trigger of his automatic. There was a sharp report, and a bullet whizzed past Tony's ear.

Forgetting Finch in the face of this new danger, Tony dashed at the bookmaker. At point-blank range the scoundrel again pressed the trigger, but this time the hammer fell with a dull thud.

The pistol was a modern Webley-Scott automatic, capable of firing thirteen rounds in swift succession; but the bookmaker had omitted to press home the magazine in the hollow handle, with the result that after the cartridge in the breech had been fired no other leapt up to replace it.

With an oath Groat hurled the pistol at the boy's head; but Tony ducked just in time, and the weapon hurtled over the balcony outside the room, into the depths below. Next moment Tony sent the rogue reeling with a straight left to the bookie's bulbous nose. Then, hearing a footstep behind him, he swung round swiftly.

Andy Finch had risen from the floor, and was gliding towards him, his face convulsed with baffled rage. As the ruffian made a dash at him, Tony dodged, and thrust out his foot, and for the second time Groat's henchman measured his length on the floor.

Tony glanced swiftly at the door, in the lock of which the key reposed; but, unfortunately, Jerry Groat was between him and that possible means of escape. He hesitated and was lost, for Finch sprang to his feet, and, panting with rage, took up his position by the side of the bookmaker.

Tony backed away slightly, and then stopped and faced the two rogues defiantly.

From his pocket Finch drew a short leaded cane, and spoke a word into Groat's ear. There was no doubt the two contemplated a combined attack with the intention of settling the issue once and for all.

The stable-boy's brain worked like lightning. He realised he held no chance against the two men, either of whom was more than his match physically, and with sudden inspiration the memory of the elm-tree outside came to him. It was a long drop on to the highest branch, which was more than likely would break beneath his weight if he attempted to leap on to it; but he had performed the dangerous "Five Boughs" stunt at school, and now it was a case of neck or nothing.

With swift determination he spun round, vaulted on to the balcony rail, and judged the distance to the topmost branch of the tree. Groat and Finch started forward with cries of surprise.

"By hokey!" cried the bookmaker hoarsely. "The kid's a-goin' to commit suicide!"

Hardly had the words left the man's lips than Tony leapt downwards. He caught the projecting branch with his hands, and it bent

READ THIS FIRST.

Lord Estor, a grand old British sportsman, is attending Epsom with his daughter, the Hon. Dorothy Cavanagh, a charming girl of sixteen. The bad luck which has dogged the Estors reaches a climax, for Sunfire, the Derby favourite, with Danny Wade up, loses the great race. Afterwards a vet. gives the startling verdict, "The mare has been doped!" Arriving back at Newmarket, Tony Draycott and Dick Selby, two stable-boys, set out to solve the mystery. They track a suspect to the house of Jerry Groat, a notorious bookmaker, where they learn that Ginger Hales, a racecourse tout, is being held prisoner. Dick meets with an accident and breaks his collar-bone. The boys inform the police, but, by a ruse, Groat outwits them when they search the house. Later Tony returns alone to seek a key-book to a cipher captured from the tout, and is trapped by Groat and Finch. The rogues decide his fate and then enter the upstairs room in which he is confined.

like a bow with his weight, and then cracked with a loud report.

As he hurtled down, the boy clutched wildly at the bough beneath, and this, being stronger, supported him, although his arms were nearly jerked from their sockets by the sudden strain imposed upon them.

To descend the rest of the way down the tree was a comparatively easy matter for the athletic lad, and in a very few seconds his feet were upon solid ground.

Both Groat and Finch were leaning over the balcony on the third floor, and their faces plainly revealed their chagrin at seeing their intended victim escape beneath their very noses. Suddenly they turned away, and disappeared inside the house.

Tony was about to escape from the grounds of the house with all possible speed, when another and far more audacious idea occurred to him. Instead of running away, he darted round the house by way of the lawn, and made straight for the window of Groat's "Turf Commission" office. It would take the two rogues some few seconds to get down from the top of the house, and, he argued, they would never dream of seeking him inside the mansion itself. His intention was to secure the yellow-covered key-book, which had been left lying on the floor beneath the secretaire. In the very audacity of his plan lay its safety.

He quickly scrambled into the room, and as he did so a strong odour of burning cloth rose to his nostrils. On the carpet lay the cigar which Groat had let fall during his discussion with Andy Finch. Without hesitation Tony extinguished the burning end with his foot, thus probably preventing a serious fire, and then he rescued the "A—Z Cipher and Decipher" from the floor, and carefully stowed it away in his pocket.

Leaving the room by the window, he made off at top speed, neither seeing nor hearing anything of the two rogues of the Turf.

Returning to the nursing-home at Frameham, he requested to see Dick Selby, but as visiting was not allowed at that hour he had to content himself by leaving a note, containing the words "I've got it!" scrawled thereon, for his chum's edification.

Taking The Rocking Horse from the stable, he trotted off in the direction of Newmarket, well pleased with his evening's work. Despite Groat's original threat, the boy felt convinced that now the bookmaker would not call in the aid of the police, so he had nothing to fear from that quarter.

But his thoughts were interrupted by the soft whirr of a motor-car tearing up the road behind him. Although the car was a considerable distance away, a glance over his shoulder convinced the lad that the two occupants were none other than the very men from whom he had so recently escaped. He touched his heels to the flanks of The Rocking Horse, and the colt broke into a swift gallop.

But the car gained rapidly, and soon the boy heard a deep voice hail him.

"Stop, you young rip, or I'll put an ounce o' lead through you!"

Jerry Groat had either retrieved the firearm he had hurled from the third-floor room, or he had procured another, for Tony saw him take one hand from the steering-wheel and bring out a pistol from his jacket pocket.

But the stable-boy had no intention of obeying the command, and his eyes darted rapidly to either side of the road for an avenue of escape. To the right the hedge was a trifle lower than on the other hand, and without hesitation he swung the head of The Rocking Horse round and put the colt to the jump.

Had Barney Bulfin been witness of the occurrence he might have changed entirely his opinion about the dappled grey, for the colt rose to the occasion like a bird. And it afforded Groat and Finch no little astonishment when they saw the horse leap over the high obstacle, and bound off across the fie. on the other side, where no motor-car could follow.

In baffled rage the bookmaker fired a couple of rounds from his pistol after the stable-boy, but each passed harmlessly by. With a smile, Tony turned in his saddle, and waved his hand cheerily. He could afford to smile, for was not the key to the mysterious cipher reposing safely in his pocket? He longed to reach home, and set to work deciphering the missive taken from the tout, Ginger.

The Key to the Cipher!

TAKING a roundabout route, in case Jerry Groat and Finch had driven ahead in the two-seater car, and were lying in wait for him, Tony arrived safely back at the Estor stables.

It was dusk by this time, and, after watering the colt and giving him a feed of oats, Tony bade good-night to the stable-hand on duty, and ran home as fast as his legs would carry him.

Barney Bulfin, Tony's foster-parent, and the trainer of the Estor string of racehorses, was ensconced in an enveloping armchair in the smoking-room, puffing at his favourite pipe, and reading a well-known sporting journal.

Tony took a seat for a few minutes, while he gave a report of his visit to the Frameham nursing-home, but inwardly he was burning with impatience to commence the task of deciphering the mysterious letter he had had so long in his possession, by means of the yellow-covered key-book which reposed in his pocket.

Not a word did the boy say concerning his foolhardy visit to the house of the notorious bookmaker, for he was not at all sure that Barney would approve of his action, even though it had resulted in an initial success. He looked forward, though, to being able to pour into the ear of the astonished trainer the whole facts concerning the Derby doping mystery after he had ferreted out the meaning of the unaddressed letter which the tout had claimed was intended for Danny Wade, the leading jockey.

Retiring to the library, Tony carefully drew the blinds of that apartment, and afterwards switched on an electric reading-lamp. Then he brought from his pocket the mysterious letter and the "A—Z Cipher and Decipher," and set to work.

There were no instructions as to the method to be employed for either the coding or decoding of messages, so after a couple of unsuccessful attempts to apply the deciphering process to the letters and figures of which the missive was made up, Tony composed a trial message of his own, using the words and phrases given in the first half of the key-book.

By this means he gained a very fair idea of the way in which an "A—Z Cipher" message was constructed, and by applying this principle in reverse ratio to the letters and figures of the mysterious letter, he soon reduced the missive to a more readable form.

Sitting back in his chair, Tony read and re-read the result of his efforts, but the more he perused it the more puzzled did the expression on his face become. The deciphered message ran thus:

"Headquarters agreeable to price of strawberry providing not among first three in cup. Beware selah. A careful watch being kept, as trouble expected shortly from that quarter."

There was no signature to the note, and nothing to show for whom it was intended.

On the evening when Tony and Dick had taken the cipher from the red-headed tout, in Lord Estor's wood, Ginger Hales, the spy in question had stoutly averred that this unaddressed letter was for none other than Danny Wade, the crack jockey, but, having learnt since how little respect for the truth the spy had at any time, the stable-boy began to doubt even that piece of information.

With his aching head supported in his hands, Tony was still poring over the note when he was interrupted by Barney's voice from the adjoining room, inquiring when he intended going to bed. Heaving a sigh of disappointment, the boy thrust his note-paper, key-book and the cipher letter into his breast-pocket, and gave the problem up for that night.

He was no nearer a solution to the meaning of the letter on the following afternoon, when he trotted off to Frameham nursing-home on his favourite dappled grey, to visit his unfortunate chum, Dick.

Passing down the road which swept through the Grange Hall estate, he beheld three mounted figures approaching—two men and a girl. They were Lord Estor, Sir Digby Garston, the rival Newmarket owner, and Lady Dorothy. As Tony drew near, he raised his hat politely, eliciting in return smiles from the Owner and his charming daughter, and a black scowl from that young sprig of the aristocracy who was accompanying them.

To Tony's pleasurable confusion, instead of passing him, Dorothy drew rein, calling out to her father and Sir Digby that she would quickly catch them up.

The grand old sportsman waved his hand in acknowledgment.

"She wants to speak to young Draycott about the coming Newmarket Fete, I think," he said to his companion, by way of explanation. "Dorothy's on a ladies' committee that's getting up a riding contest or something in aid of some charity."

Sir Digby merely grunted, and, half

turning in his saddle, looked back at the two young people, his lean face disfigured by intermingled anger and jealousy. But neither Dorothy nor Tony noticed him.

"It's a bit of luck, meeting you, Tony!" said the girl, leaning over in her saddle to stroke the smooth, arched neck of The Rocking Horse. "It saves me the trouble of dropping you a note, as I intended. I want your assistance."

Tony raised his eyebrows. Immediately the thought occurred to him that some further trouble had descended upon the house of the Estors, but the girl speedily set his mind at rest.

"You know, Tony," she said, "the annual mid-August fete takes place on the Heath next week, for the benefit of the Aged and Disabled Jockeys and Stable-hands Fund?"

"Rather! I'm looking forward to it. It's always jolly good fun."

"Well," continued Dorothy, "this year I'm on the ladies' committee responsible for getting up a portion of the programme, and I've suggested we have a donkey-polo match between riding jockeys and stable apprentices. It will be great sport, and I want you to play."

"I'll play like a shot!" cried Tony. "But—er—what do you have to do?"

"The thing's simplicity itself. You get together a number of donkeys——"

"Human, or the four-legged variety?"

"Both!" retorted the girl. "Now, don't interrupt again. Six of the mokes are mounted bareback by the jockeys, and six by apprentices, all of whom are armed with hockey-sticks. Instead of a proper polo-ball, a football is used, and the side which scores the most goals wins."

"It sounds jolly interesting."

"It is," answered Dorothy. "And we shall charge people a bob a time for witnessing the match. Danny Wade is to be captain of the jockeys, and the head boy of Colonel Nuttick's stable—you know, Tubby Brownlee, I think they call him—will lead the apprentices. I'll send Tubby your name."

"Thanks awfully, Lady Dorothy," said Tony. Then the pleasurable excitement died from his eyes, and a look of disappointment replaced it.

"I was thinking of Dicky Selby," he said. "He'll be jolly disappointed he can't play. I don't think I'll tell him about the donkey-polo match until it's over."

"Yes, it's hard lines for Dick," said Dorothy. "He's really the senior lad, and had he been fit he'd have captained the apprentices' side. Now, what are you going to be—Napoleon or Sunny Jim?"

"N-Napoleon or S-Sunny Jim? I—I——"

Dorothy broke into a silvery ripple of laughter.

"How silly of me!" she cried. "Of course, I didn't tell you. You see, the jockeys are to play in their owner's colours; the apprentices are to wear fancy-dress."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Tony, his face clearing. "I think I'll disguise myself as a pot of glue, and then I sha'n't have any difficulty about sticking to the back of my merry old ass!"

Dorothy laughed, and swung the head of her hunter in the direction taken by her father and Sir Digby.

"Well, I must be trotting along," she said; "you shall hear further particulars of the great donkey-polo match in the course of a day or two. By the way, how go the detective investigations?"

Tony mumbled something to the effect that they were progressing slowly, and then the two young people separated.

Arriving at the nursing-home at Framehum, Tony found his chum looking very much better and more cheery, and into Dick's ear he poured the tale of his evening's adventure in Jerry Groat's house. The look of surprise on the invalid's face was comical to see.

"So you've got the key-book!" he said breathlessly. "Have you deciphered that letter we took from Ginger Hales, the tout, yet?"

Tony fumbled in his pocket, and brought forth the result of his previous night's work.

"'Headquarters agreeable to price of strawberry,'" read Dick aloud, "'providing not among first three in cup. Beware selah. A careful watch being kept, as trouble expected shortly from that quarter.' My hat, that's a rummy kind of message! What d'you make of it, Tony?"

"Not much, I'm afraid," replied Tony, with a wry grimace, "though I guess the references to 'Headquarters' and 'Strawberry' concern those two mysterious individuals mentioned by the gang that night when we watched their pow-wow from the elm-tree."

Dick's face lighted with sudden comprehension.

"By jingo, I'm beginning to believe that this chap they call Strawberry is none other than Danny Wade himself, Tony!" he cried. "Who had a better opportunity at Epsom of using a hypodermic needle on the mare than he?"

Tony smiled at the question, remembering how his chum had pooh-poohed the idea when he had suggested it weeks ago.

"But supposing, as you say, that Wade and Strawberry are one and the same person," he said, "why on earth should the latter be referred to in the third person in the note? If the letter was actually intended for Wade, it looks as though Headquarters and Strawberry were quite apart from the jockey or any member of Groat's gang whom we've come across up to the present."

But Dick was now riding his new theory for all it was worth, and in doing so was exhibiting a charming disregard for all obstacles along his line of reasoning—a very dangerous practice, as many an amateur detective has discovered to his cost.

"If you admit Wade is Strawberry," he said, "the message is as clear as daylight. 'Headquarters agreeable to price of Strawberry providing' not among first three in cup' means that the big Unknown at the back of Groat's gang was willing to pay Wade the price he demanded, on condition that Sunfire did not place in the first three in the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot."

Tony looked at Dick with admiration in his gaze.

"Jolly ingenious, old man!" he said approvingly, "and worthy of Herlock Sholmes at his very brightest. On the other hand, though, if, as you suggest, Wade asked a big price for keeping Sunfire out of the first three at Ascot, why the dickens did he ride such a rattling good race? After being left at the post as he was, he could easily have managed to come in fourth without exhibiting a suspicion of bad jockeyship."

"Oh, I thought you'd raise some silly objection to my brainy theory," said Dick impatiently. "Anyway, if you like to stick your head in the sand, like an ostrich, and refuse to see, I'm going to keep my eyes on Mr. Danny Wade in future. That cipher message is as clear as noonday to me!"

"I'm glad of that, Dicky," said Tony soothingly, "'cause I'd like to have explained what 'Beware selah' means."

Dick peered at Tony's deciphered note for about half a minute, nothing but inarticulate gulps emanating from him. At last he suddenly gave the younger stable-boy a mighty smite on the chest with the back of his hand, nearly bowling Tony from his chair by the bedside.

"I know how we can get it!" he cried.

Tony drew his chair away to a safer distance.

"Get what, you burbling chump?" he demanded.

"Why, 'selah'—any clergyman could explain that."

The younger boy looked at his invalid chum pityingly.

"Er—would you like me to call the nurse, old chap?" he asked sympathetically. "I—I suppose that bump you got on your head the other night——"

"Bump my grandmother!" howled Dick, to the alarm of two other patients in the adjoining room. "If you'd ever been to Sunday-school and read your Old Testament, you'd know that 'selah' is mentioned scores of times in the Psalms. But here's Mrs. Mump, the matron; I'll ask her."

The matron approached Dick's bed with an apprehensive expression on her face.

"Did you call, Master Selby?" she asked.

"No, it's all right, Mrs. Mump," said Dick. "But now you're here perhaps you wouldn't mind giving Draycott and I a bit of information. I know you're a keen Biblical student, and know a whole heap of Latin and Hebrew and all that kind of rot—er, I mean—other classical languages."

Mrs. Mump preened herself under this subtle flattery.

"I shall be delighted to assist you, my dear boys," she said. "It is so refreshing to find the young taking an interest in other things than—er—Joey Beckett and Charles Chaplin, and the rest of those cinema knockabouts. What do you wish to know?"

"Please could you tell us the meaning of the word 'Selah'?"

Mrs. Mump coughed slightly.

"It—it's an exclamation of praise," she explained doubtfully. "Synonymous with 'Hosannah,' you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Tony.

Mrs. Mump frowned severely.

"The time limit to your visit is nearly up," she said; "I'm afraid you're inclined to excite my patient."

With that the good dame swept from the room.

Dick looked rather crushed. He had hoped to have some startling explanation of the word which would have made clear the whole of the latter portion of the mysterious message, and proved his detective abilities to be of no mean order.

Tony took the message from his chum and looked at the work again. As he did so, an exclamation of triumph left his lips.

"What chumps we've been, Dick," he cried, thrusting the note back in the other's hand. "Twist 'Selah' round the reverse way and then see how it reads."

Dick obeyed and read aloud the result.

"'Beware Hales.'"

"It means Ginger Hales, the racecourse tout," said Tony. "Groat evidently wrote this note, suspecting that the spy was liable to double-cross the gang at any time, so he sent this warning to somebody. That somebody may have been Wade or it may not. That we must try to discover, and also the identity of 'Headquarters,' and 'Strawberry!'"

"That's the idea," said Dick. "I shall be about again in a few days, and then I'll give you a hand in the investigation. Let's try to collar the tout and make him split."

At that moment the door of the room opened, and the voice of Mrs. Mump was heard announcing that it was time for Tony to take his departure.

The Great Donkey Polo Match!

A FEW days after this meeting of the two chums, the Newmarket Fete was held. Tony had received full details of the charity donkey polo match, in which he was to take part, from Lady Dorothy, and he had hired his fancy dress from the theatrical costumiers in the town in preparation for that amusing event.

Garbed in the cocked hat, golden epaulettes, and blue, be-laced tunic of a British Admiral of the Fleet, with his legs encased in a pair of riding-breeches of a startling white and black check pattern, he set off for the Heath in the dog-cart with Barney.

Following some athletic sports and wrestling on horseback, Tubby Brownlee, the appointed captain of the apprentices' polo team, rounded up his men ready for the fray against the riding jockeys.

Tubby himself, would have put Solomon and all his glory in the shade, for his chubby proportions were encased in a tight-fitting harlequin's costume, the predominating colours of which were scarlet, blue, yellow and vivid green. You needed tinted glasses to look at him without danger of severe eye-strain.

Shorty Dunn, the Garston apprentice, with whom Tony had experienced trouble during the Newmarket races, was rigged out, appropriately enough, as a blue-faced monkey with tail complete. The other boys figured as a brigand, pierrot and red-nosed comedian.

A row of meek-looking mokes were ranged near one of the goals on the field, ready for the match, and Shorty created great amusement among the spectators, by leaping on the back of one of these, and, doubling up his legs, scratching his side in the appproved fashion of the Simian inhabitants of the Zoological Gardens.

Greater glee still was caused when, after alighting from his precarious perch, one of the mildest-looking of the quadrupeds suddenly lashed out with his hoofs, sending the humorist flying through the goal.

"Goal! Well kicked, sir!" yelled the delighted onlookers, as Shorty Dunn picked himself up, and, holding the region of his tail, gazed in pained surprise at the long-eared cause of his discomforture.

Wearing the violet-and-white hooped jacket and cap of the Estors, Danny Wade led his team of jockeys, all armed with hockey sticks, to the row of donkeys, and told the men to select their mounts. Then Tubby Brownlee, Tony, Shorty Dunn and the three other stable-boys that composed the apprentices' team, mounted the remaining mokes, and took up their positions in the field.

Tony was elected to play at No. 2, which is the equivalent of centre forward in footer, facing Danny Wade, Tubby preferring to allow his moke to graze quietly near the home goal-posts. Shorty Dunn was No. 3 on Tony's right.

The referee, on a spirited hunter, blew his whistle.

With a sharp swing of his stick, Tony set the ball in motion in the direction of Shorty Dunn. Shorty saw the ball coming, and drew back his stick ready to propel it forward, towards his opponents' goal; but his mount also saw the ball, and, with a startled "Hee-haw!" it side-stepped out of the way, and Shorty shot off the moke's back like a sack of coals.

After some spirited play, Tony robbed one of the jockeys of the ball and amid a great uproar dribbled it with his hockey-stick towards his opponents' goal. Evading two of the rival players, he rapidly neared his objective, and as he did so, Danny Wade manoeurved his moke into the goal-mouth.

"Shoot! Shoot, sir!"

With a mighty effort, Tony sent the football whirling from his stick, The ball struck Danny Wade hard on the side of the head, knocking him clean from his donkey, and bounded into the net.

"Goal!"

Spectators and players alike cheered

One of the mildest looking of the mokes lashed out with its hoofs sending the humourist flying. "Goal! Well kicked, sir!" yelled the delighted onlookers.

the boy's fine effort, but Danny Wade lay very still on the ground.

Tony leapt from the back of his mount, and, dropping on his knee beside the fallen player, started to undo the buttons of the jockey's jacket to permit of his breathing more freely.

Then a startling thing happened. Wade came to life as though stung into action, clasping his throat with both hands as though fearful that something concealed beneath his jacket being revealed to the eyes of his helper. He sprang to his feet, and, with a snarl of rage, lashed out with all his force. The foul blow caught Tony full on the point of the chin, and the stable-boy reeled senseless to the ground.

Another long stirring instalment of our magnificent racing tale will appear in next week's issue of "The Greyfriars Herald."

THE CRIMSON ARROW

A Thrilling Serial Story of Buffalo Bill and the Redskins

By Mr. PAUL PONTIFEX PROUT

(Master of The Fifth Form.)

A Midnight Discovery!

THE boys followed Uncle Baldy away from the horse lines, and watched the spy they suspected.

He was still seated with the cowboys, gambling stolidly. The luck had been running against him, and, Mexican fashion, he had gambled away the dollars with which his clothes were decorated like great silver buttons.

He had lost the heavy gold bullion-band of his wide-brimmed, steeple-crowned sombrero, and the cowboys were now playing him for his heavy rowelled Mexican silver spurs.

The last glow of the sunset had faded away, and the stars were now twinkling out in the deep, blue vault of the prairie sky.

The boys, seated outside their tent, watched the wild group of gambling cowboys, as they ate their suppers. They saw the luck change; and they watched the stolid, yellow face of the spy by the firelight, as the luck turned, and he won back, not only his bullion hat-band, but his silver spurs and dollars, as well as the gold of the reckless cowboys.

The game kept on till nearly midnight. Then the cowboys were cleaned-out, and the stranger rolling himself up in his blankets by the door-lodge in which he was quartered, gave himself up to sleep.

Uncle Baldy had cut a hole in the wall of their own tent, through which he watched the sleeping form of the spy. By the glow of the dying fire, he could see the stranger lying there, the red flicker of the embers playing upon the great Mexican sombrero, which rested on the stranger's saddle.

To Uncle Baldy, there was nothing strange in the notion of a man going to bed in his hat. All Mexicans have a deadly fear of what they call a "refriado," or cold in the head, and are given to sleeping in their great, high-crowned, felt sombreros in this fashion.

The boys had turned in, and were asleep. But Uncle Baldy kept his watch, applying his eye at intervals to that hole in the wall of the tent, and watching the sleeping figure of the spy.

Presently, a fitful puff of night wind brightened the embers of the fire, and caught a patch of dry grass close by the spot where the spy was sleeping.

The grass lit up with a flare and a puff, and the flame ran along the ground in at the doorway of the tent.

But the sleeping figure did not move.

Uncle Baldy called the boys.

"Git up, boys, quick!" said he.

"What's up?" demanded Kit, as he and his brother rolled out of their blankets, and strapped on their revolvers.

"It's that thar greaser, Vasquez!" whispered Uncle Baldy. "Ther skunk is either fireproof or he's shed his skin like a rattlesnake. Come, boys!"

He tiptoed from the lodge, followed by the two boys, and they stole over to the wide-open door of the tent by which the Mexican was sleeping.

The little flare of the dried grass had died down, but the air was filled with the scent of singed wool.

Yet that silent figure had not moved, and the dandy greaser's hat was still resting on the saddle.

Uncle Baldy advanced boldly, stumbling over the ground like some belated soldier, seeking his tent, and making as little noise as possible about it.

He tripped carelessly over the bundled figure in the blankets, with a ready-made apology on his lips. Then he started back with a stiffled exclamation.

There was nothing in the blankets but a rolled-up buffalo-robe, with the hat perched at the end of it, resting naturally on the saddle.

"Gee-whizz!" exclaimed Uncle Baldy, as he kicked the roll of blankets open; "ther rattler's shed his skin sure enough, an' he's slitherin' about somewheres makin' mischief. Quick, boys!"

Uncle Baldy could move very silently when he pleased. He slipped through the sleeping camp like a shadow, heading for the building at the back of the headquarter's log-house, where Major Lincoln had his quarters.

Here was the safe in which were kept the secret documents, and despatches, a strong brass-bound contraption of sheet-iron, built into the masonry of the great chimney.

Uncle Baldy peered in at the window.

There, on the bed, lay Major Lincoln, bound hand and foot, and, standing over him, his evil face lit by the light of a single candle was the prisoner, Big Tree.

He was holding the point of his knife over the major's heart, whilst the spurious Diego Vasquez was working on the safe, drilling the lock.

And, driven into the pillow, close above the helpless officer's head, was a long-shafted crimson arrow.

The Pursuit!

FOR a moment, Uncle Baldy and the boys stood aghast at the sight which presented itself by the dim light of the candle.

The major was lashed out spread-eagle fashion on his bed, which was a stout structure of wood and buffalo-thongs. Over him the Apache chief, Big Tree, was stooping, his knife at the captive's heart.

Diego Vasquez was evidently finding the old-fashioned safe, that was built into the masonry of the great chimney breast, a tougher proposition than he had bargained for. Laid out on the table were a set of fine, gleaming tools, braces, bits and wedges. But the safe, containing the secret military docu-

READ THIS FIRST.

Into Fort Madison, the headquarters of the 5th United States Cavalry—the famous "Dandy Fifth"—rides a little group of horsemen, bringing news of an uprising of the Redskins. The leader of the party is Buffalo Bill, and other members are Buck Dixie, Deadwood Dick, Uncle Baldy, Jake Bellew, old Prairie Wolf, a former Navajo chief, and Kit and Joe Desmond, two British boys whose father is a prisoner in the hands of the Indians. A mock convoy sets out from the fort, and the Redskins make an attack, which is beaten off with heavy loss. Afterwards some mysterious crimson-coloured arrows are found sewn into the quivers of the fallen braves. One night on the prairies Buffalo Bill captures a famous wild horse known as the White Horse of Death, and this he presents to Kit. A stranger, in the garb of a Mexican, joins the convoy. Uncle Baldy, afraid that Kit's white horse, Moonlight, might be stolen, turns it into a piebald by the aid of a pot of paint.

ments of the fort, had resisted these successfully, so far.

A sudden draught of air from the window caused the light of the single candle to flicker, and the scoundrel, toiling at the safe, turned his yellow face to the window.

That breath of the fitful night breeze saved his life, for Uncle Baldy fired as the candle was suddenly dashed out.

And, at the same moment, Kit's revolver spoke, shooting the knife that was suspended over Major Lincoln's heart, clean out of the Apache's hand.

Then Uncle Baldy, revolver in hand, leaped into the room through the window, whilst the boys rushed round to the door, to stop the escape of the miscreants.

Uncle Baldy heard a rustling and bumping in the darkness of the room.

He dodged behind the table, and listened with straining ears, with his finger on the trigger.

He was not going to give himself away to his enemy by the flash of his revolver in that pitchy darkness, and he was sure that Diego Vasquez was still in the room.

From the bed, Major Lincoln, bound hand and foot, was struggling with his bonds and making inarticulate noises.

Then a knife whistled through the air close by Uncle Baldy's ear, and he heard it bury itself with a thud in the log wall of the room.

This time, Uncle Baldy fired, his revolver echoing dead and heavy, and filling the room with the acrid smoke of powder.

The flash of his shot showed him a leg, disappearing under the logs in a dark corner of the room. He ran forward, and grabbed at the disappearing foot in the darkness, but the soft moccasin was wrenched from his grasp. Then he saw how an entrance had been made by sawing through the logs on the ground tier, and by burrowing underneath a hole large enough to admit the body of a man.

"They are off, boys!" shouted Uncle Baldy. "They are off by the back!"

Kit and Joe, who were watching the door, rushed round to the back of the log cabin. They were just in time to see two shadowy figures running towards the horse-lines.

They started off at full-tilt, but they both came to earth together, tripped by fine, invisible wires that were stretched across their path, and which threw them heavily on their faces.

But they jumped up again quickly, unwinding the wires, which had sprung and wound round their ankles in a snare.

Off they went again, stepping carefully until they had cleared the entanglement by which Vasquez and Big Tree had secured their line of retreat.

The trooper in charge of the horse-lines, a big Dutchman, was snoring heavily at his post, as the boys chased their quarry down the lines, the horses shying and rearing at this sudden rush.

Two horses were already loose, and the two figures were springing to their backs. One was the Apache horse, which Uncle Baldy had doctored to whiteness in imitation of Moonlight's coat. The other was the Mexican horse of the spy.

The alarm was now ringing out through the fort.

Kit fired at Vasquez, as he wheeled his horse and made off for the earthern glacis, a huge bank of earth which, as yet, was uncrowned by the ring of palisades that was being drawn round the fort enclosure.

But the light of the stars, was not enough to give him an aim, and the black mound of the swelling ramp of earth almost obliterated the figures of the Mexican and the Apache. All that Kit had to guide him, was the faint shadow of the white horse, which showed illuminous in the gloom, as it breasted the rampart, both horses climbing up its steep slope like cats.

Then the two figures blotted out the stars, as they reached the crest of the rampart. An arrow whistled through the air, better directed than Kit's shot, for it ripped through the sleeve of his coat.

Then, with a shout of defiance, the two figures disappeared.

The boys could hear their horses scrambling up the slope of the dry ditch beyond the ramp. Then away they went across the hard, dry prairie.

An outpost challenged them, and a shot was fired. But it evidently missed its billet, for the hoof-beats of the two horses still kept on till they died away across the dark prairie land.

The boys listened intently till the sounds were gone.

Then Kit sighed.

"They are gone all right!" said he. "And we might have bagged the two of them!"

"There's one comfort!" answered his brother Joe, who always looked at the bright side of things. "He thinks he has got Moonlight. But, thanks to Uncle Baldy, he'll find out his mistake before he has gone twenty miles."

The boys turned and went back to the log-house, behind the headquarters.

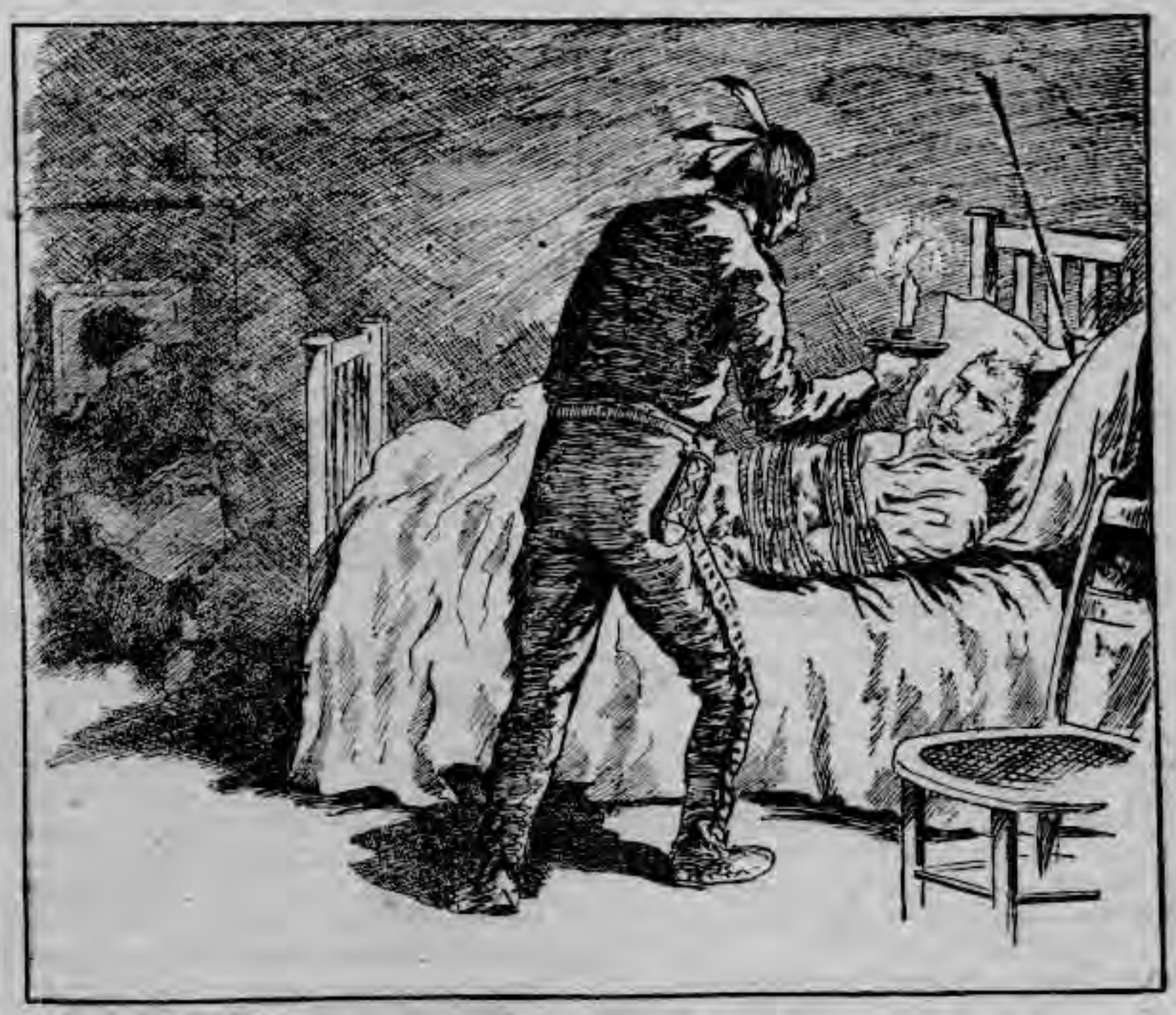
They found Major Lincoln sitting ruefully on the side of his bed In his hand he held a neat little screw-gag, or bridle, which had been thrust into his mouth when he had been taken by surprise in his sleep. It was a neat little device, and was evidently the work of a skilled dental mechanic, for it was made of metal, and vulcanite and rubber pads, with a plate that held down the tongue of the victim, whilst the gag forced the teeth open so that it was quite impossible for anyone, thus gagged, to make an articulate sound.

"I must have been sleeping with my mouth open!" said the major, with an uneasy laugh. "The first thing I knew about it was that this thing was shoved in my mouth, and those two rascals were on my chest, lashing me to my bed! Where's the sentry in charge of the lock-up?" he added.

Stammering and scared, the sentry, who had been posted at the door of the lock-up was brought in and questioned.

The Mexican hunter had given him a drink, he confessed, and, after that, he had become very drowsy, and had been awakened to find the door of the lock-up forced and his prisoner gone. The leg-irons and handcuffs in which Big Tree had been secured, were sawn through, and lay in the prison with a small section of a finely-tempered steel saw.

There was a trail on the dewy grass, which showed that Vasquez and the escaped prisoner had made their way to the major's sleeping quarters, and had cut through the two lower logs of the tier with a fine saw which had bitten through the wood, as though it were cake.



There, on the bed, lay Major Lincoln, bound hand and foot, and driven into the pillow was a long-shafted crimson arrow.

The major confessed that, before he had fallen asleep, he had heard a sound that was like the gnawing of rats; but he had taken little notice of it, as this was by no means an infrequent sound in the old fort buildings.

The spy and the prisoner were gone, leaving nothing behind them, but that tell-tale crimson arrow, and a fine set of burglar's tools, the like of which the armourer of the Dandy Fifth admitted that he had never seen for quality and temper.

Fine as these were, the safe had resisted them, though the Mexican had nearly succeeded in cutting out the lock, only having failed for lack of time.

The major was quickly slipping into his uniform

Outside the headquarters, they could hear cowboys assembling with their horses, all vowing that they would catch the greaser and his Apache confederate. They were particularly keen on catching the Mexican, and getting back from him the money he had taken off them.

"We'll catch the scoundrels!" said the major. "My horse—quick!"

"Here is your watch, sir!" said Kit, picking up a watch which lay on the table.

"That's not my watch!" replied Major Lincoln. "I saw that rascal draw it from his pocket, and put it on the table before he started to drill the safe. Went about it in a regular workmanlike fashion—he did, timing himself. Oh, what a fool I was to take that chap on the strength of his papers! I believe we've missed the rascal who is behind the whole of this rising!"

But Kit had turned the watch in his hands by the light of the lamps, which the troopers had brought into the room;

He grew quite dizzy and faint.

It was an old-fashioned silver watch, a lever, of English make, and the very touch of it awakened memories in the boy's brain.

Many a time, and oft had he played with this self-same watch, sitting on his father's knee—it seemed now—years and years ago.

He remembered that his father had always carried a postage stamp in the back leaf of the case.

With trembling fingers, he opened the case, and there, sure enough, lay an old unused penny English postage stamp.

"Joe," cried Kit, "it is father's watch—in the hands of that scoundrel!"

Joe took the watch. He recognised it at once. The minute hand was missing, and Joe could remember that even from his earliest babyhood.

"Its dad's watch right enough," said he, "and if we can only capture that rascal, Vasquez, we'll find out where father is held prisoner! Come along, Kit!"

Three minutes later, a party of fifty horsemen filed out at the gate of Fort Madison in chase of the fugitives.

Twenty-five of these were the best mounted troopers of the Dandy Fifth. The rest were cowboys and Redskins.

The boys were the last to issue from the gate between the sentries, but they were not the last, when the long cavalcade, trailing out on the prairie, extended into a sort of a horse race, which was led by Buffalo Bill and Buck Dixie.

Their horses, Buckskin and Starlight, refreshed by their rest and good food, led the field at a fast gallop, which increased in speed as they tore over the dark prairie.

Buffalo Bill did not bother his head about trails. He knew very well the line of country that the Apache horse which Vasquez had stolen would take, and their way lay along the plainly beaten buffalo-path, which was the main road of the buffalo towards the south-west.

Soon the horses warmed to the gallop, and were stretching over the dark prairie in fine style.

They cleared the first ten miles from Fort Madison in forty minutes. Then the trail led them down into a great, dark depression in the vast plain.

Prairie Wolf came sailing along to the head of the column, as Buffalo Bill checked Buckskin, and slipped to the ground to pick up the trail. The old Redskin had left his favourite mount,

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Maud the mule, at Fort Madison, in favour of a tall, raw-boned Apache roan, able to hold its own in this test of speed.

And Prairie Wolf, who was an expert tracker, also dismounted, casting backwards and forwards like a dog on a scent.

Soon the trail was picked up. There was no mistaking it, for it was the trail of two horsemen. And the mount which Vasquez had taken for Moonlight, had a queer inturn of the off-side fore-hoof.

Away they went again, riding fast out of the hollow, for the trail was red-hot, and Prairie Wolf said that their quarry had passed there less than twenty minutes ahead.

Soon they were racing over the prairie, widening their front, and deploying from the Indian-file, in which they had hitherto ridden, in order to cover a wider space of the prairie.

But each man kept in touch with his neighbour, as they raced on their long front, curving forward at each end in a half-moon, like a great sweep-net.

Presently, Kit's horse seem to sense the fugitives ahead.

Moonlight had not forgotten his wild tricks, when it had been his delight to race with the troops of wild horses over the prairie. And his quick ear had caught the sound of the horses ahead of them, distinct and apart from the dull, thudding of the shadowy steeds on either side of him.

He shot ahead like a racehorse, despite all Kit's endeavours to stop him.

"After him, Buck!" called Buffalo Bill to Buck Dixie. "The Spirit Horse is away with him, and he'll overhaul those ruffians single-handed. Yours is the only mount which can hold his!"

Buck Dixie clapped his hand on Starlight, and away the gallant black horse flew, like an arrow from a bow, heading after Kit, and leaving all the others quickly far behind.

The going was altering now, the flatter prairie breaking into long undulations, with deep valleys between them, like the English South Downs.

Here great limestone ridges rose out of the flat lands, and the tussocky buffalo-grass gave place to a fine cropped turf, as fine and as short as a tennis lawn.

The grass was wet with dew, and as springy as a cricket pitch.

And both Moonlight and Starlight, feeling this natural racecourse under their feet, scampered away at their top speed, racing down the long slopes of the undulating, treeless downs, and breasting the up slopes from the dark hollows with hardly a check of speed.

Kit's horse was leading by a dozen lengths, and he was simply playing with Starlight, for he would allow Buck Dixie and his mount to creep up a few lengths and then fly ahead with increased speed till he had won back his lead.

Kit had almost forgotten the chase in the exhilaration of this rattling night-ride. The wind whistled past his ears as Moonlight, untiring, raced on, travelling almost silently now over the soft, springy turf. He was only conscious that he was riding the finest horse on the prairies of the Far West.

Slope after slope, rising black against the sky of frosted starlight, was breasted by the gallant horse, and even Starlight was beginning to fall behind, beaten by the pace.

Then, of a sudden, as Kit and his racing steed reached the top of one of these long crests the boy stiffened in his saddle, and grasped the rifle which he carried at his saddlebow.

Close ahead of him, two shadowy horsemen were pounding along as hard as they could go. It was Vasquez and Big Tree, the Apache chief.

And Buck Dixie was now nearly a quarter of a mile behind, still toiling up the other face of the ridge.

And Kit knew that he was in for a single combat with these two ruthless antagonists.

Another splendid instalment of this enthralling yarn of the Redmen will be given next Tuesday.

MAULY'S DESPERATE DODGE!

A capital complete story of Greyfriars written by

WILLIAM WIBLEY

I.

MAULY'S a fellow who always believes in being up and doing —nothing! He has reduced slacking to a fine art, and he's always getting into trouble with the powers that be. He can't get up in the morning, even in summertime. And when he does get up, he can seldom keep awake for any length of time. He has been known to fall asleep in the middle of morning lessons, and on one memorable occasion we found him lying in a state of somnolence at the foot of the School House steps.

"I've tried to reform you, Mauly," said Bob Cherry, as he turned out one morning at the clang of the rising-bell, "but it's no use. You're a hopeless, incurable slacker. It's not a bit of use my pitching you out of bed. You'll only curl up and go to sleep on the floor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm tired, begad!" murmured Mauly drowsily.

"Look here, Mauly," said Johnny Bull, "I should advise you to shake off dull sloth, and get a move on! If you turn up in hall late for brekker, Quelchy will come down like a thousand of bricks!"

"All right, dear boy," mumbled Mauly, stretching himself lazily between the sheets. "I'll be up soon. I'm just goin' to take another forty winks."

Mauly was still enjoying his forty winks when the rest of us, having washed and dressed, went downstairs.

The brekker-gong sounded shortly afterwards, and we trooped into the dining-hall with healthy appetites.

Quelchy presided at the head of the Remove table, and he noticed, with a frown, that Mauly was missing.

"Where is Mauleverer?" he rapped out.

"Sleeping the sleep of the just, sir!" said Skinner.

"Do not be impertinent, Skinner! I shall have to reprimand that slothful boy severely when he arrives."

Mauly didn't arrive until the tail-end of the meal. Then he lounged into the dining-hall, immaculately dressed, as usual, and with his hair plastered back over his head with brilliantine.

The schoolboy earl hoped that he would be able to slip into his seat unobserved. But he was unlucky.

"Mauleverer!" rumbled Quelchy. "You are late for breakfast!"

Mauly glanced at his watch, and an elaborate expression of surprise came over his face.

"Jove, how time flies!" he murmured. "I didn't think——"

"You never do!" interposed Quelchy. "You are not sufficiently awake to think! Your slackness, Mauleverer, is a source of constant annoyance to me! On this occasion I will do nothing more than administer a severe reprimand. But if you transgress in this way again, I will see that you are adequately punished. Sit down, and eat your breakfast!"

Mauly subsided, and attacked his cold and leathery bacon.

"The only way to enjoy your brekker, Mauly," muttered Bob Cherry, "is to get up early. Take my tip, and rise with the lark to-morrow morning."

Mauly fully intended to act upon this advice. But his intentions sadly missed fire. Next morning he was later than ever. We were, in fact, about to be dismissed from the dining-hall when the slacker of the Remove drifted in. Quelchy was simply furious. His wrath resembled that of Jove of old.

"You have disregarded the warning I gave you twenty-four hours since, Mauleverer!" he rumbled. "The necessity for punctuality does not yet appear to have been brought home to you. You will take a thousand lines!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Mauly. "Surely you mean a hundred, sir?"

"I mean what I say!" thundered Quelchy. "If you are late for breakfast to-morrow morning, I shall take you before Dr. Locke, and request that you be awarded a public flogging!"

This terrible threat rang in Mauly's ears all day. He was no funk, but the possibility of being flogged in public was far from pleasant.

"You'll simply have to come up to the scratch to-morrow morning, Mauly!" said Nugent. "If you oversleep, you're doomed!"

"I realise that only too well, dear boy."

When we went up to the Remove dormitory that evening we were surprised to find that Mauly was absent. Nobody had seen him since prep.-time, and nobody had the foggiest notion what had become of him.

"He'll turn up in a few minutes, I dare say," said Vernon-Smith.

"The silly duffer!" said Wharton. "I expect he's gone to sleep on the sofa in his study. I'll pop down and see."

The captain of the Remove hurried out of the dormitory, and he returned shortly afterwards—alone.

"I've drawn blank," he explained. "Mauly's not in his study."

"Wingate may have given him a late pass," suggested Peter Todd.

When Wingate of the Sixth came in to extinguish the lights, he noticed at once that Mauly's bed was unoccupied.

"Where's Mauleverer?" he asked.

"Didn't you give him a late pass, Wingate?" inquired Squiff.

"Certainly not! I suppose the silly young ass is asleep in his study!"

"He isn't," said Wharton. "I've just been down to see."

Wingate looked grave.

"It's my belief," said Bolsover major, "that's he's bunked from the school. Quelchy threatened him with a public flogging if he was late for brekker again, and he's been worrying about it all day. He knew he'd never be able to get up in time in the morning, and so, rather than stay and face the music, he's sloped off."

"What rot!"

"Funny thing," said Wharton thoughtfully, "but I noticed that Mauly's overcoat was missing from his study."

"That looks ominous," said Wingate. "I must report the matter to Mr. Quelch."

And the captain of Greyfriars put out the lights, and withdrew.

Quelchy was very agitated when he learned that Mauly was missing.

"It would appear that the foolish boy went out of gates and has not yet returned," he said. "A search must be undertaken forthwith. You will detail a number of seniors to accompany you, Wingate, and will make inquiries in Friardale, and, if necessary, at Courtfield. Mauleverer must be brought back to the school at once!"

Wingate nodded, and quitted the Form-master's study. His next action was to arouse Gwynne, Faulkner and Hammersley, of the Sixth.

The seniors were not at all keen on their job, especially as it happened to be a wretched night.

"We haven't a dog's chance of finding him," growled Gwynne. "He may be fifty miles away by this time."

"I fancy we shall hear news of him in the village," said Wingate. "Buck up, you men!"

A few moments later the party of seniors set out in search of Mauly. A strong wind from the sea buffeted them as they crossed the Close.

"Beastly night to go on a wild-goose chase of this sort!" muttered Gwynne.

The seniors went direct to the village. Late though the hour was, there were several people about, and inquiries were made for the missing junior. But nobody could give any information concerning Mauly. He had not been seen in Friardale that evening, nor at the railway-station. Exhaustive inquiries were made at various places on the road, and in the town of Courtfield, but without result.

It was long after midnight when the Sixth-formers, tired and exasperated, returned to Greyfriars. Wingate reported to Mr. Quelch that the search had proved fruitless. And the Remove master looked very serious.

"I am grateful to you for your efforts, Wingate," he said. "I am afraid nothing more can be done to-night. I will acquaint Dr. Locke with the facts of the situation in the morning, and it is to be hoped that the foolish boy will be found and brought back. That is all, Wingate. Good-night!"

II.

WHEN, on the following morning, the rising-bell clanged out its shrill summons, it was noticed that Mauly's bed was still unoccupied.

"The mad idiot!" growled Johnny Bull. "He'll get it in the neck if he's bolted from the school!"

"They've got to find him first," said Squiff.

But the finding of Mauly came about sooner than anyone expected. When we went into the dining-hall for brekker we had the surprise of our lives. On the floor, close to the Remove table, was a pile of blankets. And beneath these blankets, sleeping peacefully, was Mauly!

"Mauly, you ass——"

"Mauly, you imbecile——"

The schoolboy earl did not stir. He continued to lie snugly beneath the blankets, over the top of which his overcoat had been spread.

Bob Cherry strode forward, with the intention of rousing Mauly, when Quelchy swept on the scene.

For a moment the Form-master stood petrified, unable to move or speak. When he did speak, his voice resembled the rumble of thunder.

"Mauleverer!"

A musical snore sounded from beneath the blankets.

"Wharton!" rapped out Quelchy. "Pray rouse that absurd and wildly eccentric boy!"

The captain of the Remove stooped down, seized Mauly by the shoulders, and shook him.

"Mauly, you duffer! Wake up!" he exclaimed.

The schoolboy earl came out of his slumber with a start. He sat up, and blinked confusedly at Quelchy, who looked positively Hunnish.

"Mauleverer!" rumbled the Remove master. "I can scarcely credit the evidence of my eyes! You have had the effrontery—the unparalleled audacity—to spend the night in the dining-hall!"

"I—I was hopin' that I should wake up before you came in, sir!" stammered the unfortunate Mauly. "You said you'd take me before the Head if I was late again, sir, so I hit upon this as a cute dodge for avoidin' trouble."

Quelchy frowned grimly.

"I will endeavour to teach you, Mauleverer, that 'dodges' of this sort cannot be practised with impunity! Your absence from the dormitory has thrown the school—or a section of it—into disorder. You have been responsible for depriving a number of seniors—likewise myself—of sleep. I had occasion to despatch a search-party——"

"Oh, begad!"

"And it was generally believed that you had absented yourself from the school. You will remove those blankets immediately, and after breakfast you will wait upon me in my study!"

Mauly scrambled to his feet, and staggered out of the dining-hall with the blankets and overcoat.

After brekker a steady swishing sound emanated from Quelchy's study. It continued for quite a long time. Then the door opened, and Mauly came limping out into the passage.

"Had it hot?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Yaas, dear boy!"

And Mauly limped dejectedly away to his study, to recover from the effects of his licking.

These events had an astonishing sequel.

Mauly was out of bed before everybody else next morning, and he appeared in the dining-hall a good five minutes before the brekker-gong sounded.

The slacker of the Remove had reformed! But those who knew him well predicted that his reformation would endure but for the twinkling of an eye.

One thing, however, is certain. Mauly will never again attempt to convert the dining-hall into a dormitory!

THE END.

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