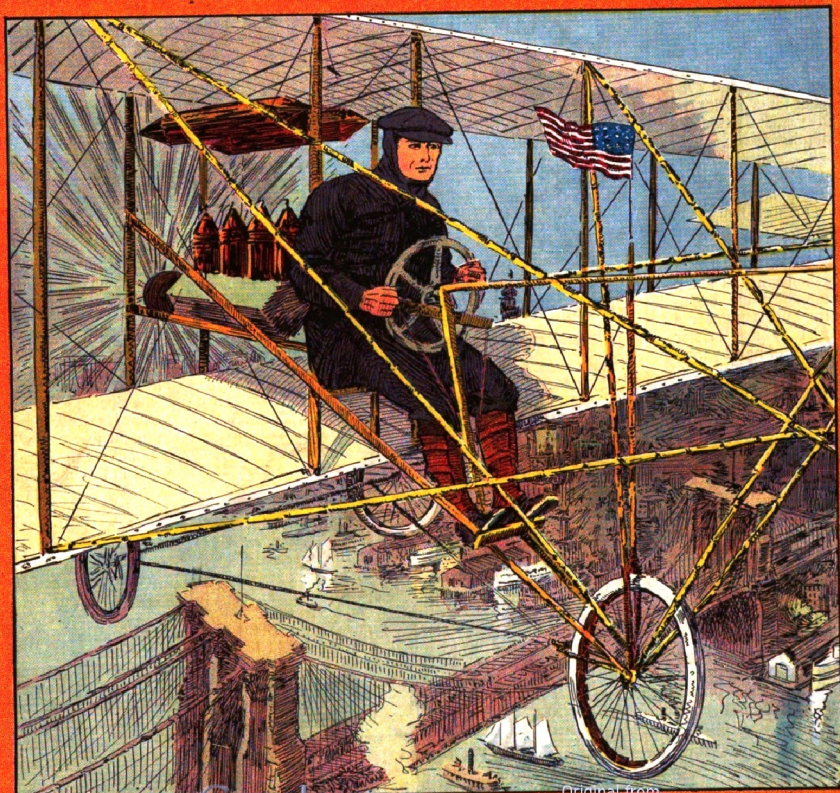


AUG. 1910
Vol.1-No.6

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TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE

Edited by BURT L. STANDISH



LEADING THE RACE

TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE FOR AUGUST

This number gives you a stirring example of the improvement going on every month, which, in the immediate future, will give you a Greater TOP-NOTCH—a publication in regular magazine form—about four times the present size, and issued twice a month. This big change is forced upon us by the wonderful rally young men everywhere have made to the standard of TOP-NOTCH. It is unparalleled in the world of magazine publishing. But we are not going into the details of this splendid news just now. It takes time and infinite care to give you the greater TOP-NOTCH that is being planned. Another issue in the present form must be made before your wish for a bigger and even better lot of stories can be gratified twice a month.

Meantime, there are some things to say about the stories and the authors that make particularly attractive this issue—the next to the last of TOP-NOTCH in the form you get it now. We are beginning in this number a serial by that master weaver of naval yarns, Ensign Lee Tempest, U. S. N. Its title is "Dave Manning, Midshipman," which tells you the name of the hero and just what his position is among the

daring chaps who serve our country on the big men-of-war. You are going to be keenly interested in Dave, and like him, for never has there been a finer example of the true-blue American and junior naval officer. The marvelous adventures duty calls him into are only just begun in this installment of the tale; they grow more and more thrilling as the story marches on, and they take you among some astonishing people at sea and amid wonder after wonder on land.

"The Fighting Edge" is a thrilling tale. It was written by John D. Emerson, who knows just what's what when picturing scenes on the mat. The story has a moral as well as an athletic interest, for it illustrates, in the char-

acter of the hero, what Col. Roosevelt meant when he spoke of men and nations being "on the fighting edge." Seldom, indeed, are we fortunate enough to get hold of a wrestling story that excels in quite the way this one does. The author, you will remember, is the man who wrote "The Climbers" and "When Hall Rowed Stroke," two stories that made a decided hit with you, as your letters tell us. Mr. Emerson has been regularly engaged, and you'll get the product of his brilliant pen right along in TOP-NOTCH.

We know that you are glad to see, from the table of contents, that Clif Stirling is with you again in the two-part story "The New Boy." And you are glad, too, that he will continue in your company in the September number. Our certainty of this is built on the many letters we have received from you saying how well you like Clif, and the lively doings of Academy life, with its football, running and baseball adventures, which the author so cleverly pictures. Mr. St. Dare will contribute regularly to TOP-NOTCH, and he tells us he has some ripping good stories up his sleeve. Bear in mind that you will get Mr. St. Dare's work in this magazine only.

Another of the favorites reappearing in this number is Tow-Head Murchison, the debonair young bank clerk from New York who, in his travels, "puts the bee" on crooked "sports" and other shady folk, but always in a way to make you smile and love him for his boundless good nature. Tell us just what you think of Tow-Head and his smart, though often slangy, mode of expression. We've had a lot of letters from you about him, but we should like some more—not only about Tow-Head, but about all the stories in TOP-NOTCH and the authors behind them. Your letters are always a reliable tip on what you like. They keep the editorial cat from jumping the wrong way.

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OUR AIM: THE LIVELIEST, CLEANEST AND BEST STORIES

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AUGUST, 1910.

Price 5 Cents

Dave Manning, Midshipman

By ENSIGN LEE TEMPEST, U. S. N.

A rapid-fire story that takes you around the Horn with the big American fleet in a series of wonderful adventures at sea and ashore. It is Ensign Tempest's latest and, by long odds, best serial tale.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE CARIBBEAN.

"Light ho!"

"Where away, Dave?"

"To starboard——"

"On that island?"

"Sure. A flash—all red—just now shot up from it."

"But, Dave, isn't that peculiar?"

"Peculiar? Holy mackerel, Roddy, it's mysterious, sinister!"

Both were clean-cut, athletic-looking young fellows. They were midshipmen in the United States navy, as their natty white uniforms evidenced. They stood on the main deck of the U. S. S. *Virginia*, which, with fifteen other United States men-of-war, was cruising southward through the Caribbean Sea on a voyage around South America. It had just gone one bell in the midwatch—half after midnight in land phrase—of a tropical moonlit night.

Dave Manning and Roddy Seabright, the two middies, had been standing their watch on the main deck. Of a sudden their attention had been drawn to a red light that flared up from an island on their right. A flash of red light from a tiny coral key far out in the Caribbean at midnight and just as the Atlantic fleet was passing. Small wonder the boys were stirred and excited by it. The two middies stood gazing at the key. It was the nearest of all those that dotted the Caribbean round about the moving battleships. The *Virginia* came abreast of it. Then another red light shot up from the palms in its centre.

"The second flash, Roddy! I'm sure now we didn't hocus-pocus up the first."

"No; I saw it with these here dead-lights. Confounded strange, don't you think?"

Roddy started. "Great twelve inches!" he exclaimed. He had seen something out of the tail of his eye. It was another flash of light! This time it was not red or from the key. It came from the quarter-deck of the *Virginia*—a white light!

The shipmates wheeled about. A second white streak of light stabbed the night above the quarter-deck!

"Roddy," said Dave. "There's something in the wind. We've seen four lights in five minutes—two red flashes from that island, two white ones from our own quarter-deck!"

"What does it mean, Dave?"

"It's signaling, and between some one on this ship and some one on that island."

"But we haven't any orders——"

"Of course not! It's signaling without orders, against orders!"

"Signaling in secret?"

"Sure as shooting! It's signaling by some one on board who's up to some devilry!"

Roddy whistled. "Let's go aft and see about it."

"All right."

Dave led the way. He was tall, gray-eyed, square-jawed—spick and span in his white and natty uniform. Every inch of him looked a sailor and a fighter. Chubby-faced Roddy tiptoed at his heels. The two reached the end of the

superstructure. All the quarter-deck lay before them. They halted.

Slowly and steadily, the orderly of marines paced his beat back and forth across the deck before their eyes.

"He can't have made that light," whispered Roddy.

"No; but look sharp! Do you see anything in the shadow of the turret over there?"

Roddy gazed toward the great superposed after turret of the *Virginia*—a monster steel box. In a moment, he shook his head.

"Bilge me, if I can see anything," he said.

But even as he spoke, from out the shadow into which he had been peering, there sprang up a glaring shaft of light! It emanated, the boys could see, from a powerful electric torch. The torch was flashed by a man, short and squat. His face was a brownish yellow, his eyes black and of the shape of almond nuts. He wore the white uniform of a mess attendant.

"Pablo!" gasped both middies.

Then Roddy turned to Dave. "Why, Davy," he whispered, "it's only the Filipino mess boy in the wardroom mess."

But Dave never so much as once removed his eye from the squat form of the signaler. And he noted in that brief instant of light that Pablo was staring straight at the coral key abeam. Then, when all was dark—the light gone and Pablo swallowed up by the shadow of the turret—slowly pacing across the deck came the marine on sentry duty. He had seen nothing of the light, if his

actions counted for anything. While he was pacing away, from behind him, from the turret's shadow, again flared up the light.

Roddy breathed: "Dave, what can he mean by signaling in secret like this?"

"He's a spy!"

Dave quickly answered him: "What else can it mean?"

Seabright gasped. "A spy?" he hoarsely whispered. "A spy on the *Virginia*!"

Dave was looking toward the island.

"Roddy! To starboard—the key—look!"

Roddy did so, and in time to see a red light burst up from the palms. Expecting a move from Pablo, the middies whipped about. Sure enough, before their eyes, a dark figure glided out of the shadow. Silently and swiftly as a snake, he made across the moonlit deck toward the stern.

"It's Pablo!"

"Sssh!" warned Dave. "Watch closely. All this signaling leads up to something."

The middies sprang forward to the shadow of the turret. Pablo was at the stern. A red light shot up from the key. The signal for him to proceed, Pablo lost no time heeding it. Up went his hand above his head. It clasped a black something that glistened in the moonlight. This, with all his strength, Pablo hurled out into the sea. Then he turned and raced up the deck. Without the sentry seeing him, and all in a moment, he gained the shadow of the turret. Still he continued running. Unknowingly, he was heading straight for the two middies in the darkness.

"Quick, Roddy, dodge!" cried Dave, and he leaped to one side.

Before Seabright could do likewise, Pablo struck him full tilt. Both went down. The Filipino was the first upon his feet, and with all haste he got away.

CHAPTER II.

A SWIM INTO TROUBLE.

Midshipman Dave Manning must now take the deck. It was his trick at the wheel. Now was the time for him to interfere, to take a hand, in the mysterious goings-on of the night. He would regain the object Pablo, the Filipino, had hurled into the Caribbean. He believed that object contained secrets of the United States Pablo had stolen. In any case, he knew that it was in some way important to the Filipino, and that it was intended for his confederate on the key.

"But it will never reach him," he determined.

And he dashed across the deck. As he went, he hastily discarded some of his clothing. He was clad in his shirt and trousers only when he reached the stern. A good half cable's length to

stern—gleaming in the moonlight, bobbing on the waves—was the black object. Toward it in a beautiful dive sprang Dave Manning.

"Great flying fishes, what can he mean?" exclaimed Roddy, who reached the stern in time to see Dave bob to the surface and take a few rapid strokes to clear himself of the sucking propeller.

Then Dave shook the water out of his face and flashed back a smile at his messmate. Dave was now in his element. He had been one of the best swimmers in the natatorium or "water gym" at Annapolis. There he had swum for the pleasure of the thing and, occasionally, for prizes. Now, however, he was launched on a swim for a greater prize than any he had ever competed for. The object, when Dave descried it, was a good distance off. It was just topping a wave, which the *Virginia* had stirred up in its wake. As Dave watched it floated farther and farther away from him.

"It's being drawn along by some current," he reasoned. "I'll have to exert myself to overhaul it."

He fell to swimming. With the clean, easy, machine-like strokes of the expert swimmer, he cut the water. His long slim body glided along like a racing shell, disturbing only ripples. At every stroke, he gained slightly upon the object. It was only a question of time, indeed, when he would overhaul it. He swam and swam. At last, after he knew not how long, he saw it bobbing just ahead. Then he redoubled his efforts. He fairly shot through the water. The little distance separating him from his quarry dwindled rapidly. Ten feet; then seven, five, three—and his extended hand grasped the object.

It was a bottle!

Up to this time, every action, every thought of Dave had been intent on the pursuit. He had noticed neither the distance nor the direction he had swum. Thus it chanced that, at the very moment of his success, he was startled by the grounding of his bare toes upon a sandy beach!

His heart stopped beating for a moment. Scrambling to his feet, he found he stood but waist-deep in the water.

"Great guns, where am I?"

He looked about. Before him lay a stretch of white sandy beach. Beyond that, a tiny clump of palms.

"An island!" he cried. "The island!"

He waded ashore, and saw that he was, surely enough, on the island whence had flashed the red signal lights. Presently there reached his ears these words, called out by some unseen person:

"*Oyo san! Oyo san!*"

The hail was uttered, Dave was almost certain, by the man who had made those signals, Pablo's confederate. It came not from the island, but from somewhere out in the Caribbean.

As he heard it, Dave stood tense and motionless. Then he looked about. Out on the water lay a long yawl. In it were four men, two working at the oars. It was headed straight for the island and moving at a good clip.

"The dickens!" muttered Dave. "I'm in for it. Here comes Pablo's confederates—not one, as I thought, but four. Well, they'll want this bottle, of course—that's what they're out there looking for—and they'll want to know, too, what I'm doing here."

The man in the bow of the approaching yawl rose to his feet. Making a megaphone of his hands, he shouted something in a peculiar tongue.

"Japanese!" Dave exclaimed, and whistled softly. "So Pablo, our Filipino mess boy, and his four confederates, are Japanese. Yes, Japanese and spies!"

Several years before, while a "plebe" in the naval academy, the middy had studied the Japanese language. Now he was able to interpret the hail. It meant, "We are coming. Be patient."

Dave muttered: "We're coming, are we? Well, I can't say you're welcome. For, great guns, what'll I do when 'we' come up? I'm caught here like a rat in a trap. If I swim off, they'll overhaul me. If I remain here, they'll capture me. And goodness knows, I can't hide on this little key. Well, it looks like it's all up with Davy."

Again one of the men in the boat began to call out. "In a minute we will reach you, O chief," he shouted. "Be patient, *Oyo san*."

With startled eyes Dave looked at the Japs. "I'm a goat if they take me for some one else," he said to himself. "*Oyo* is a man's name in Japan. I'll be blowed if that's not Pablo's real name. They take me for him. But why? I can see them plain as day."

The moonlight played full upon them. They were short, squat fellows. All were well-nigh naked. Their brown skins glistened with sweat, like scales of fish, in the moonlight.

"Lucky for you, Manning," murmured the middy, "that the moon is at your back and your face is in shadow. It's because of that they think you are Pablo. To all appearances, they expected him to come with his bottle."

An idea struck the quick-witted lad. And above his head he raised the bottle. It glistened in the moonlight. The yawl was quite near now. The man in the bow—the one who had been hailing—could plainly make out the bottle.

"Ah! you have it," he cried. "Then you must have all. We have outwitted the *to-gins*. *Banzai!*"

And he fairly crowed with delight.

"It's full speed ahead!" said Dave.

And out he stepped boldly into the water. Without a sign of hesitation or fear, he waded toward the onrushing yawl. Now the boat seemed fairly to

fly toward Dave, the oars dipping quick and sharp over the sides, and the rowers grunting out their wind after each stroke. As the water reached to Dave's armpits, the boat shot within four yards of him. Then the rowers rested on their oars. The Jap in the bow reached down over the gunwale to grasp Dave.

Then Dave Manning of the *Virginia* acted! He made a move for safety and the open sea. He dived in the water. He skimmed headfirst beneath the on-rushing yawl! The Jap in the bow clutched at nothing. The men on the thwarts, upon the point of backing water, dropped the oars with a splash and, in confusion, sprang to their feet. As for the fourth, the one at the tiller, he must have lost his head completely. For the yawl, following its own sweet will, sped onward till it brought up upon the beach.

Meantime, Dave was swimming under water. At last he rose to the surface. He found he had put the key a good space behind him. In one glance he took in the lay of the land. He chuckled, then turned to swim away. At that moment a roar of voices came from behind him. He looked back. One of the Japs—he who had been in the bow, and who appeared to be the leader—was standing on the beach and pointing at the midddy. The rest were huddled together in the boat.

For a moment all were speaking. Then all, save the man on the beach, were silent. Dave gave ear.

"*Nippon denji*," he heard. "Men of Japan, we have been duped. This is not our chief, Oyo. It is a *to-gin*, an American, a spy!"

"The trick's up!" thought the midddy. "But I face now only what I faced at the outset, capture by these Japs. And maybe, if I swim like sixty, I can escape from them. They're stranded on that key."

Dave began swimming. Just then came, like the baying of hounds at the kill, a cry from the rear.

"The spy is escaping, and with the bottle!"

The next instant a report sounded, and a something spit by the midddy's head. Dave's heart jumped into his throat. He heard a second crack. A second bullet sang close by. Then he thought it time to disappear, so he dived. When he bobbed to the surface, a short time later, and the din left his ears, he became aware that all firing had ceased. He glanced back for the cause. It was apparent. The yawl was no longer grounded on Signal Island. It was making toward him as fast as the two rowers on the thwarts could propel it!

Dave fell to swimming as he had never swum before! But quickly the yawl overhauled him. Shouts and commands, the creaking and splashing of oars, and the loud panting of men rang in his ears.

And then, as the yawl shot down to within six feet of him, the Jap in the bow grasped an oar and leaped upon the prow. There he stood, the oar poised in his hands, as the yawl rushed down upon the gamely swimming midddy.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE COMMISSION.

At this juncture happened the most unexpected of things. A long beamy rowboat, manned by a dozen or more men in white, of a sudden flashed out from under the lee of a coral key to port. It shot, swift as a torpedo, across the intervening stretch of water. It crashed, bows on, plump into the side of the Japs' boat!

The yawl staggered out of that collision a total wreck. Its port gunwale was completely stove in. Its port oars were smashed to little bits. And the Jap in the bow—he that had cut so menacing a figure—was knocked heels over head into the water.

"Weil, I am in the lucky class," murmured Dave, as he was helped aboard the new-come boat. It was a lifeboat from the *Virginia*, with Roddy Seabright in command.

"Davy! Who are those fellows?" he cried. "What were they doing? Putting over the Pablo trick, running you down?"

But Dave, without a word, slumped down into the fore sheets.

"Say, old fellow," Roddy piped merrily on, "see what lambs they've become since we stove in their old scow."

Dave had not strength to move a muscle, but had he looked back he would have seen a sight well worth seeing. The Japs' yawl was returning to Signal Island. But it looked doubtful if it could weather that far. It was well-nigh foundering. And its panic-stricken crew was having the time of its life trying to keep it afloat.

What with the fresh night air blowing and the cold spray dashing in his face, Dave gradually livened as they rowed back to the waiting fleet. By the time they slid up to the side of the *Virginia*, he was himself once more.

He clambered to the deck unaided. Lining the rail were most of his shipmates. Beyond Dave caught sight of Captain Salter. The captain was making toward him!

"Man your rails, Davy, old boy," Roddy whispered at his elbow. "Here comes the Old Man."

The "Old Man," as the captain is called by his crew, was smiling as he approached Dave. "So it was you that fell overboard, Mr. Manning," he said. "Well, you're none the worse for the bath, I hope?"

"All the better, sir."

The captain gasped. "Why, Manning, you're half naked!" he exclaimed.

Dave could not deny it; besides, there was no need of doing so.

"You didn't fall in, sir." The Old Man was jumping at conclusions. "You went in of your own accord. Now, didn't you?"

Dave did not reply. He saw that the captain regarded him with suspicion. He stepped nearer the commander.

"Captain," he said in a low voice, "things have happened to me this night. Could I report to you in private—in your cabin, say? It is important, sir!"

And so it was arranged. They were making across the deck when a dapper little man broke from the group of officers aft and blocked their way.

"Captain, you surely aren't going to tow Mr. Manning away without first allowing him to make a change—well, of uniform," said he.

And thus it chanced that Dave was instructed "to do what the doctor says. Then report in the cabin." Dave saluted. He went below with Roddy Seabright, who was, as he himself said, "just aching for the news!"

Practical and yet luxurious; that describes most American naval commanders' cabins. Captain Salter's was like the run of them. The captain was seated, when Dave entered, in a roomy swivel chair. A large mahogany table was before him. An electric lamp on the table furnished the sole illumination. Dave saluted and waited for his commander to speak.

"Now, Mr. Manning, what of these unusual happenings of to-night?"

The Old Man tilted the light full upon the midddy. With one hand grasping the edge of the table, the other holding the bottle behind his back, his eyes gazing toward the captain, Dave stood in silence for a moment. Then from somewhere forward drifted, like a signal, the melodious sound of "two bells"—and Dave began.

"Mr. Seabright and I, sir, were on the starboard side of the main deck. It had just gone one bell. Suddenly we saw a red light from a coral key abeam. Then another. Then, sir, we saw a white light from our own quarter-deck!"

In a clear, concise manner, Dave brought his story down to the present. The captain was violently moved. He asked for the bottle. In a moment, such was his hurry, he had extracted a tightly rolled cylinder of paper. He had no more than glanced at this than he threw it upon the table.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" he exclaimed. "A pretty mess! A paper with a lot of scrawls on it we can't make head nor tail of!"

Dave was looking at the paper. "I can read it, sir," he announced.

The Old Man was surprised. Also, he was highly pleased. "What might you call the hieroglyphics?" he asked.

"Japanese characters, sir."

"Japanese!" He looked at the paper once more. "Right you are, Mr. Manning. But this is strange! I mean you understanding Japanese. Did you learn it at the Academy?"

Dave nodded. He had learned it, he said, from Hara Tsukamoto, a young Japanese, who had been sent to Annapolis by his country to become a naval officer. Now, spreading the paper on the table, Dave studied it. Moments passed like minutes. Dully the engines throbbed far down in the hold and the ship vibrated all over like a living thing. Save for the beat of the waves on the sides, and the occasional tread of a sentry on the deck above, not a sound disturbed the stillness of the cabin.

Captain Salter was intently watching. He was jerking at the ends of his mustache. It was a habit he had when excited.

Dave snapped erect. "I have it, sir," he reported.

"Read, Manning, read! And let us know the worst."

And Dave read:

"On board the U. S. S. *Virginia*.

"MATSU YAMA: Am sending with this message copy of secret code of U. S. navy. A very important document. Get it to Tokio as soon as you can. Do not fail. Copy is only one . . ."

"The secret naval code! Man, where is it?"

Dave was at a loss. He began shaking the bottle. "If it's there this will fetch it!"

The Old Man broke the bottle on the edge of the table. A large wad of paper was disclosed. One glance at its contents, which were also in Japanese, sufficed to show Dave that it was the copy of the secret naval code Pablo referred to.

The captain breathed a sigh of relief when he heard. "Well, thank heavens, they didn't get it," he said. "Now continue with the message, Mr. Manning."

Dave read:

"Have all ready for me at Rio. I shall have no time to spare when reach there. Intend to skip out with all documents men are now collecting. One more order. Mark it carefully. Fulfill to letter. Telegraph Kuri-no-Kuroka, Callao, Peru, to await my coming, and be prepared to do all necessary for me.

"Oyo."

"Japanese spies are at work on our ships. They are stealing our most important documents, our most vital secrets. The safety, the security of a nation, depends upon our stopping them!" It was Captain Salter who spoke. He was addressing himself not so much to Dave as to the cabin. He was thinking aloud, in other words, as he paced up and down.

"What can we do, sir? We must do

something!" Before he was aware of it, Dave had broken in.

"That's it!" cried the Old Man. "We must do something. We must stop, outwit, balk these Japs and the spy system behind them!"

"But how, sir?"

"Through this very man, Oyo, I believe. We know who he is—"

"A fellow disguised as a Filipino and serving in the humble capacity of a mess attendant."

"Yes, but the chief, the brains, of these men!" The captain picked up the message as if to read it. "He says here that he will gather together all the documents stolen by his men and skip out with them at Rio de Janeiro. Isn't that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Which means that when we reach Rio, he will have all the documents in his possession. Now, if we capture him just as he goes to skip away, we will get all the documents and save the day."

"You plan, then—"

"To leave him go about free and unhampered, collecting all the papers his men can steal."

"But to have him watched?"

"Yes, constantly under surveillance."

"And then—"

"Then, when all is ready for him to slip his cable—why then, Manning, we'll bag him and all the documents, and turn defeat into victory in one stroke!"

And the Old Man thumped the table in his enthusiasm.

"But who are to carry out these plans?" asked Dave, curious enough.

The same moment he felt the captain's hand on his shoulder.

"Why, you, my boy," the Old Man said. "You who have done most to unearth this plot. You will spy upon this chief of spies!"

Dave saluted. A few more instructions and he left the cabin.

CHAPTER IV.

BATTLE WITH A SHARK.

"Pablo."

"Yas, sar."

"You wish to see me?"

"Si, Pablo, heem want to know, sar, what u'form—"

"Oh, the uniform for the reception."

Dave looked down at the speakers. He was seated on the superstructure deck overlooking the main deck. And here Lieutenant Davis was talking with Pablo, the mess boy.

The fleet lay at anchor in the harbor of Port of Spain, Trinidad, the first port of call in the cruise. It had arrived several days before. That afternoon it would put to sea again not to stop till Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, was reached. Although the date was December 29th, the sun was shining as warm and brightly as on a day in June. It was so warm,

in fact, that Manning had come up from the steeage for a breath of fresh air. There was to be a reception on one of the battleships early that afternoon. And Pablo, in his capacity of mess attendant, wanted to know the proper uniform to lay out for Lieutenant Davis.

"Hanged if I know," said Davis. He turned to the ship's doctor, popularly known as "Microbes," with whom he had been conversing before Pablo had appeared. "Do you know, doc?"

"Not I. You'll have to ask some other line officer, or consult the Uniform Circular."

Davis looked at Pablo. "Can you read?" he asked.

The spy started. "Read? Heem, Pablo?" He pointed questioningly at himself.

Davis nodded.

"Ah, no, sar!" Pablo smiled broadly.

"Well," muttered the middy on the deck above, "who would believe that this humble servant, this ignorant Filipino that can neither read nor write, is the head of the Japanese spies aboard this fleet? He's a consummate rascal, that's what!"

In the broad daylight Pablo now looked to Dave much like an orang-outang—that huge monkey which is said to most resemble man. His shoulders were disproportionately broad for such a squat frame. And his arms flapped down from these almost to his knees.

In the meanwhile the officers had resumed their conversation. They had turned their backs on the spy, completely ignoring him.

Said one: "There are some mighty mysterious goings-on aboard this old tub."

Said the other: "Yes, and it has leaked out that some important documents have been lost, perhaps stolen."

Dave started. "Great guns! this is what they shouldn't speak of in the presence of that spy." For Pablo had pressed nearer the two officers. "Now I see it all," thought Dave. "He has these officers entirely duped. They believe him only a faithful and ignorant Filipino who knows nothing outside of his duties as a mess attendant. So, in his hearing, they unguardedly speak of important naval secrets. If he hears anything further about these papers, it'll be all up with the captain's plans. He'll become alarmed and leave instanter, while his men will go on stealing the papers. We can never round them up, if he escapes. I'd better warn them!"

Dave drew near the rail. The two officers and Pablo were just below. Lieutenant Davis was saying:

"It looks stormy. The Old Man had him on the mat in his cabin three nights ago."

"You're all wrong, Davis," Microbes interposed. "Manning isn't in trouble. He's a fine, upright lad—"

"Yes, like him myself," admitted the lieutenant. "But, doctor, can you explain?"

"Well, I'm no detective, but this I do know."

"What's that?"

"Dave Manning is in with the Old Man—in good and confidential, mark me, for a middy."

Dave hesitated. At present the officers' conversation was dangerous, but hardly enlightening. Perhaps, he thought, it would be wise to let matters take their course and watch what effect they would have on the spy. He listened.

"But why was he closeted with the Old Man after he fell overboard—"

"But he didn't fall. He jumped."

"Jumped! But why, man?"

All unconscious of the dark, eager face a few inches behind his head, of the interested listener at his back, the dapper little doctor said:

"I'm sure you'll laugh at me, Davis, because of what I believe Manning went into the Caribbean for."

"And what was that?"

Dave gripped the rail. "The old women!" he gritted through his clenched teeth. "They'll spoil all if I don't stop them."

But before he could interrupt, Microbes burst out:

"Well, what he had in his hand when he came on board, what he brought to the captain's cabin was—"

"A bottle!"

Strange, it was Pablo, the spy, who spoke! Through fear and impatience the words had escaped him. If a 12-inch shell had dropped in their midst, the two officers could not have been more startled.

They swung upon the spy. He recoiled. The guard rails were down! And he stepped backward off the deck, shot head over heels downward, and, with a splash, plunged into the water!

The harbor of Port of Spain, Trinidad, is notorious for its huge, man-eating sharks. In olden times one or two of these wolves of the sea were licensed by the British government to stop sailors from deserting its ships by swimming ashore. For the past few days scores of them had been darting about the American fleet on the lookout for refuse, or perhaps men.

So it fell that, no sooner had Pablo struck the water, than Dave, on the superstructure deck above, saw signs of a shark. All that was visible of it was its dorsal fin. It was cutting through the water with the speed of a locomotive not a hundred feet away. It was making straight for the spot where the spy had gone down!

"In a minute he's a goner!" thought Dave. "I must save him."

He pulled his jackknife from his pocket. Quickly he unclasped its longest

and sharpest blade. Then with this grasped in his right hand, amid resounding cries of "Man overboard!" into the sea he leaped. The shark was rushing toward him on its way to the Jap. He shot below its path. As it flashed above his head, up he sprang in the water and planted his knife full to the haft in its white belly, its one vulnerable point.

A deep, long, ugly gash was ripped by its own impetus. From this gushed forth black-red blood, which dyed the water about. For some yards past the midy the man-eater shot. Then it turned, a vicious, maddened, wounded monster of the deep. It turned from its purpose of attacking the Jap, only to come back like a thousand furies against Manning.

To turn it upon himself and so give the spy a chance to escape, that was Dave's purpose in wounding the monster. And so now he was ready for the rush of the shark toward him. He dropped down in the water, as, with jaws snapping, the wounded wolf of the sea shot toward him. Then up again he leaped as it streaked above him, and once more planted his knife in its belly.

That won the fight for Dave. For the shark, with two ugly seams in its belly, now dashed away from its strange and powerful antagonist. Suddenly, it ceased its mad scurry. It rose to the surface and there it floated, exhausted and dying.

Meanwhile, Dave had risen to the surface and struck out for an awning-covered launch, the craft nearest to him. He was eager to get out of the shark-infested water.

Pablo was holding to the side of the launch, when the midy swam up. But the next moment he was gone. And the next, Dave suddenly felt his leg grasped in a vise-like clutch!

"Great heavens, a shark!" he gasped.

He believed his leg was in the jaws of another man-eater. He felt himself being pulled down. He held tightly to the side of the launch. At that moment he looked down. The water was clear. And what was his astonishment, not to say relief, to see that he was in the grasp of a man. That man was Pablo, the spy!

"Good lord," thought Dave, "what can he mean? Does he want to drag me down and kill me beneath the surface, where nobody can see?"

The question was never answered. For just then a number of jackies on the launch grasped Dave by the shoulders and lifted him and Pablo, too, out of the water.

But the man for whom Dave had battled with a shark to save must have feared to enter the same launch with the midy after his dastardly trick. For once poor Dave was out of his clutches, he turned from the launch and swam away.

Manning was totally exhausted. Otherwise, he would have seen to it that the spy was put aboard the *Virginia*. For Dave certainly did not want him to get ashore and escape, now that he knew all. But it so chanced, or rather Pablo so fixed it, that a shore launch, one of several that were about, picked him up. And he went chugging toward Port of Spain, as Dave, a wet and crumpled figure, was carried aboard the *Virginia* by the jackies of the launch.

CHAPTER V.

A RIOT IN THE STEERAGE.

"Great Scott, Manning! What's up?"

Dave had just staggered into the "steerage country," as the junior officers call their quarters. Two middies, an ensign, and an assistant surgeon—the room's occupants—had leaped to their feet at sight of him. Roddy Seabright was one of them.

"Good lordy, Dave, what's happened to you?" he asked.

Dave stuttered: "I fell in—I mean, I jumped into the water."

"Why, Davy, you certainly look it."

"Weather too warm for you, Manning?" asked the young surgeon, Garnet Holmes by name.

Dave feebly shook his head. "Shark," was all he said.

The others looked at each other.

"He's sick," said one.

"You bet," said another.

"He looks bad, Roddy," from a third.

At this Seabright motioned Holmes, the assistant surgeon. "Sherlock," said he, "let's put him to bed."

Every one present knew that Roddy spoke in all seriousness. And so it was done. No sooner had Dave's head touched the pillow than he dozed off into a peaceful sleep. His exertions of the morning had been too much for him.

An hour or so later he awoke. For a few moments he lay perfectly quiet, collecting his thoughts. He heard shouts and laughter from the mess room. He wondered whether Pablo was on board the *Virginia*. He got out of bed and opened the door. Garnet Holmes met him. The young surgeon had become filled with importance over his new patient, he had so few. He shoved Dave back into the room and closed the door.

"Why, Manning, you must rest yourself," he said. "Go back to bed. You were hardly able to stand."

"When I came in, Sherlock. Now I'm all over that."

Holmes saw that the midy was determined to remain out of bed. "All right," he said, wisely enough. "Dress up quickly and come into the mess room. The boys are waiting for you."

Dave arrayed himself in a fresh suit of white. Then, spick and span as though nothing had occurred, he stepped into the mess room.

"Ah, here the conquering hero comes!" assailed his ears. "Dave Manning, the premier high diver and champion swimmer of old Ann, ladies, and meal tickets, will now tell why he took a bath as we were about to leave Trinidad."

It was Roddy Seabright, perched upon a centre table, and acting as master of ceremonies.

"Hear! Hear!" shouted some of his minions about.

And others: "Oyez! Oyez!"

Then every one of the four—two mid-dies, one ensign and the assistant surgeon—burst out laughing. The funny part of it was that each laughed at his own joke or near-joke.

Dave laughed with them. "You want to tell it to the marines, eh?" he said.

Master of Ceremonies Roddy Seabright was displeased at this. "Don't you mind, younker, who we tell it to. Just you tell it, that's all."

"If it's worth it," put in one mid-dy, Cub Lawrence by name, "we may, yes, we may tell it to the Old Man himself."

Dave lifted his hand. "Fellows, that's just the person I want to tell my story to first. I promise you, though, I'll repeat it to you after—"

"What?"

"Won't tell us?"

"Why it's insubordination."

"We'll court-martial you—"

"For disrespect to your superiors."

The place was in an uproar. Everybody was talking and all at the same time.

"And who's the Old Man?" shouted Cub Lawrence. "I repeat it, messmates, who's the Old Man that he should hear this story before us—"

"The pride of the navy—"

"The gallant four—"

"The battle-scarred quartette that has won more battles by its lonely than the Old Man ever had a hand in."

"Sure," said Dave, "sham battles, fist fights."

And he turned to leave, amid a gale of laughter at the expense of Roddy Seabright, upon whom he had so cleverly turned tables by his little interposition.

Roddy was "sore." "Fellows!" he cried, "don't let him escape!"

His idea was taken up instantly by the "bunch."

"Guard the door," cried one.

"We'll make him come through."

"Sherlock, you will cross-examine him."

"At him, all hands, at him!"

A rush was made to command the way to freedom and every other way, in fact. What else might have happened is not known, for just at this interesting juncture, the captain's orderly thrust his head in the doorway.

"Midshipman Manning," he called.

"Here," answered Dave, and every one else.

"The captain wishes to speak to you, sir."

Then followed a hurly-burly.

"Wishes to speak to a middy!"

"Great flying fishes!"

"Oh, my!"

"Bilge me for a barnacle!"

But Roddy was still huffed because he had not heard Dave's story.

"You're an old sea cow, Dave Manning, that's what you are!" he blurted.

"Sorry, boys, but I must be going," smiled Dave.

And the "bunch" chorused: "No one's a-stopping of you, lad!"

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED OCCURRENCE.

Dave found Captain Salter in the emergency cabin, which is just off the bridge.

"You wished to see me, sir?"

"Yes. I learned you were extremely weak, though, and waited."

"I'm all right now, sir."

"You look fresh and wide awake. Do you know why I sent for you?"

"I think I do, sir."

"I heard you leaped overboard and saved this Jap from a shark."

"I did, sir."

"Well, it was a brave, a very brave thing to do. Why, lad, you're a hero. And he so deadly an enemy."

Dave smiled dryly at that. "What would you say, sir, if I told you that he tried to kill me after I had rescued him from the shark?"

"Outrageous! But did he?"

"He did, sir." And Dave told in detail about it.

"Lord, but that was cold-blooded!" grated the Old Man. "Why, that fellow has no more gratitude in him than a snake. He deserves to be shot." He winked an eye. "But we have a better plan, eh, lad? You will continue watching him, and when we reach Rio we'll bag him, as per schedule."

At this moment an alarming thought struck the middy. "But is he on board?" he said. "I don't remember him on the launch."

"I don't know, Manning." Captain Salter was worried. "Do you think he may have skipped?"

Dave shrugged his shoulders. "Well, anyway, he is wise to the fact, sir, that I brought back the bottle he threw overboard," he said.

The Old Man was astonished. "He is!" he shouted. "How is that?"

Much against his wishes, Dave was now forced to repeat the conversation between Microbes and Lieutenant Davis that he and Pablo had overheard.

"The pair of old gossips!" muttered the captain. He was angry through and through at the officers' conduct. He

ended up by telling Dave to search the ship "alow and aloft" for the Jap.

With the help of Roddy Seabright and Cub Lawrence, both of whom happened to be off duty at the time, Dave did so. But Pablo, the spy, was nowhere to be found. From some of the officers they learned that he had been carried by an excursion boat to the shore. Dave reported this to the captain. Then, when the occasion offered itself, he begged to be allowed ashore to search for the spy.

"For if we let him escape now, we can never capture his men or recover the papers," he said.

The Old Man closed his binocular case with a snap. "No," he said with finality. "We get under way within a half hour."

"But may I stay behind to search, sir?" pleaded Dave.

"I'm sorry, my boy, but I cannot allow that."

"Then what—"

"Just bid farewell to the idea of ever seeing this fellow Pablo, or rather Oyo, again. He gave us a lively time for a while, but we're well rid of him now."

"But what about his men, sir?"

"Well, we'll do our best to track them down. Forewarned is forearmed—you know. And another thing, and the most important, I think these spies will not be able to work much harm with their head, this fellow Oyo, out of the way."

"And the code?"

"Will be changed. Admiral Evans and I purpose sending reports on to Washington when we reach Rio de Janeiro. Now go about your duties in peace, lad."

Six bells in the afternoon watch were sounding when Dave came down to the quarter-deck. The fleet would weigh anchor within a few minutes.

At this moment a cutter of the naval patrol drew alongside the *Virginia*.

"Any men not reported aboard?" hailed the officer in charge.

"Two," returned Jimmy Legs, the master-at-arms. "A Chinese cook named Ah Sow, and a Filipino mess boy called Pablo."

"Plain deserters?"

"Think so. Can you go ashore and rout 'em out?"

"Nothing doing. We have less 'er a quarter of an hour before we steam out of this hole of a port."

And the cutter pulled down the line to the next battleship.

"Confound it, but this is bad," muttered Dave. "The spy deserts. And that means that it is all up with the captain's plans." He stamped the deck. "There will be many a paper lost and many a spy will work undetected while this cruise is on!"

Most traffic with the shore had ceased. But now one boat could be seen making out for the fleet from Port of Spain. It drew near the *Virginia*.

"Great spouting whales!" Dave cried. "Pablo hasn't deserted!"

The boat—a launch—was making straight for the *Virginia*. In it was one passenger. From certain peculiarities about his figure, Dave believed he was Pablo, the spy. Near and nearer drew the chugging launch. The figure of the man within grew. His face at last became distinct.

"The dickens!" the midddy muttered as it did so. "It's not Pablo. It's the Chinese cook, Ah Sow."

Three minutes later the sixteen white battleships of the great American fleet got under way, and soon put Trinidad in their wake. They were started on the second leg of the great cruise—down the Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

They left behind them, Midshipman Dave Manning believed, Pablo, or Oyo, the Japanese spy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VENGEANCE OF NIPPON.

The night was wild and stormy. Along the coast of Brazil a tempest raged—a tropical tempest of heavy seas that contested every foot of the way with the American battleship fleet, as it plunged southward through the Atlantic.

In the lee of the *Virginia's* superstructure, Dave Manning, clad in oilskins, a sou'wester and rubber boots, awaited the end of his watch. Eight bells struck presently, and Roddy Seabright weathered across the deck to relieve him.

"Lo, old man," shouted Roddy. "How's things looking for my watch?"

"Bad, Rod. It's an ugly night, I tell you, and you'll have the worst part of it."

"What did that old fossil, Willie Shakespeare, say, Davy? 'On such a night——'"

"H'm. This is far from a joke, Roddy. The seas are running so high they almost wash you off your feet."

"You bet. It's as black as pitch, too, Davy. Why, I can't see my hand before me, save when the lightning . . . Going, Dave?"

Manning had turned away. "Yes, Roddy, old boy," he said. "Good night, or rather, bad night, for if there ever was a bad night, this is it!"

Roddy grasped his arm. "Davy, who's this?"

A dark figure was making toward them in the teeth of the gale.

"It's the captain's orderly."

The orderly saw them. He made a trumpet of his hands.

"Mr. Manning! The captain's cabin! At once!"

Dave nodded assent. He knew he would hardly be heard, if he shouted, in the din of the storm. He shook hands with Roddy. Then scudded across the deck after the orderly.

The captain's cabin looked doubly warm and cheerful after that storm outside. The captain himself was busily

engaged over a table littered with charts and documents. He looked up, as the dripping midddy entered.

"A wild night out, eh, Mr. Manning?" he remarked. Then he turned to business. "I want you to translate this message on the typewriter. It's the one we found in the bottle."

Dave looked his surprise.

"It's like this," explained the Old Man. "At Trinidad, I put the entire matter before Admiral Evans. We decided then to forward a report to Washington, when we reached Rio. I believe I have told you this last part before."

Dave nodded.

"Now, with this report, will go your typewritten translation of the message." He handed Dave the paper cylinder. "You will find a machine in the ward-room."

"Shall I typewrite it there, sir?"

"That reminds me. I would advise you to take it to your own quarters. You see, this is a matter of great secrecy. That is one reason why I ask you to typewrite the translation. The other and most important is the fact that you are the only man aboard that understands Japanese."

Dave turned to leave.

"Have you heard any more of the Jap?" the Old Man inquired.

Dave shook his head. "Nothing, sir."

"Well, it looks like we're well rid of him, as I said. Now, we have only to look out for his men. And I'm thinking, as I said before, that they can't do much without this fellow, Oyo."

The captain returned to the litter on the table. The conference over, Dave saluted and withdrew. Grasping the paper in one hand, he stepped out of the brightly lit cabin into the dimly illuminated corridor beyond. Here, save for the faintly heard booming of the thunder and the crashing of the waves on the decks above and the sides about, not a sound disturbed the stillness. Not a soul was visible, not even the orderly.

All this told on Dave, as his feet sank deeply into the rich carpet and gave forth no sound. He felt a strange sensation of impending peril. He laughed at his fears. The laughter rang. Then, all of a sudden, his heart was in his mouth. He had heard, amid the echoes, the swish right behind of another's footfall!

Quick as thought, he swung around. But quicker than that, a large, muffling cloth was thrown over his head. It blinded him completely. Then, before he could struggle, his arms were pinned to his side. He was defenseless, now. More, he was helpless. Swiftly his senses were slipping from him. In the silken meshes of the muffling cloth, he smelled a strange, sweet, sickening odor. As he breathed it, he lost strength, life, understanding!

When he came to, he was still in the

arms of his unknown assailant. But they were no longer in the corridor. The rain was beating on his face. The cold wind was snatching at the cloth. He could hear the thunder, and the waves cascading about them. And it quickly dawned upon him that they were on the open deck! He could go no farther; for at that moment he became aware that the man, who held him like a babe in his arms, was speaking.

"Dave Manning!" The voice was cold, sharp, cruel as the very night. "This is the vengeance of Nippon!"

At that, the midddy felt himself hurled from his assailant's arms, as from a catapult!

Down, down, through space, he shot! The cloth fell from his face. A flash of lightning, and far above, he saw a yellow Oriental face!

"Oyo!"

Manning sank into the stormy Atlantic!

"Lordy, Bill! What's that?"

"Maybe a spirit's scream."

"Let's see for sure."

Two pale and quaking bluejackets left the lee of the *Virginia's* superstructure and started for the storm-swept quarter-deck. They had heard a blood-chilling cry from out the pitch-black night. A shaft of lightning zigzagged down the sky, and for an instant lit up the whole scene—the miles of plunging battleships, the black and tossing sea, the wave-washed deck, the heaving rail before them. Leaning against this, they saw a man. He was Ah Sow, the Chinese cook.

"What yuh doin' here, John?"

Like a top, the Chinaman spun around. "John sick. Me belly sick. Come topside, klick, klick. Me belly, belly sick." And the Celestial rubbed his stomach as if to indicate the seat of his trouble.

The sailors were somewhat touched. "He's seasick," said one. "I guess that's why he let out such a cry, Bill."

"Well, he scared me out of a year's growth," said the jacky called Bill. "And we'd better make him go below so's he can't do it again." He addressed the Chinese in pigeon English. "Downside go, John, klick, klick. Sabe?"

The fellow clasped his stomach and nodded. "All light, Melican man. Ah Sow, he catch um downside, klick."

And he clattered across the storm-swept deck toward the companion. In his hand, as he did so, he crumpled a paper cylinder—the one Dave Manning had brought from the captain's cabin.

You guess that it is not the last of Dave. No; a chap like him was never born to be drowned. But why he was not, the fight he made for life, and the strange company he found himself in when safe from the sea—all that is part of the exciting tale you'll get in the next splendid installment, to appear in the September number.

TOW-HEAD, ON THE SLAB

How He Landed the Diamond Prize

BY W. S. STORY

You'll like the snappy, "git-up-and-git" New York banker's clerk better than ever when you have read this tale. It is a decidedly lively one of how he served a strong baseball team from going over to crooked sports. You'll appreciate, too, as never before, that back of Tow-Head's jolly slang and debonair style is the stuff of which real men are made. In this particular episode—which no one enjoyed more than Tow-Head himself—he knew just what he wanted to do, and did it cleverly with coolness. Shouting or sneering bleachers and a team manager who had a very different plan, didn't rattle him for an instant.

Young Tow-head Murchison employed when at home, in the office of Sturtevant & Pearson, Brokers, of New York, stood on the curbstone in Grape Street, in the fine city of Savannah, in the land of broad A's, and whistled—extemporizing. Tow-head had been shanghaied in New York, and by a strange adventure, previously narrated, he found himself in Savannah—just as has been stated. He had money from home in his pockets, and he could return north when he chose. He was in no particular haste. The lack of work didn't bother him very much—he was a queer chap, of course—and the affairs of the firm were not putting any wrinkles in his cheerful physiognomy nor greatly impairing his digestion.

His whistling was right from the heart, figuratively speaking; and his freckled face was mellow in the shine of his own inexhaustible good nature.

It was about half-past seven in the evening—possibly more, possibly not quite so much—it makes no difference—and there was no moon. If there had been a moon, it would make no change in the deep plot of this account. But if there had been a moon, this is the place to mention it.

Did you ever hear any one whistling who really felt like whistling? Well! It's decidedly cheerful music. Tow-head ceased abruptly in the middle of a bar or measure, or something like that, and thus addressed himself:

"I'm goin' back to Noo York t'morrow. I love this town o' coons an' mint juleps an' aristocracy, but hurrah for Noo York! 'There's no place like home.'"

Tow-head meant to return north. He thought he was going. If he had gone, however, according to his plan, this story—but, then, he didn't go.

Turning on his heel, he swung back to the Oglemore Hotel. Young Murchison had two reasons for choosing this particular house of entertainment for his base of supplies. First, it was fairly

cheap; and, second, it was the resort of baseball and race-track men and their like. It was clean and respectable, but was full of life and so appealing to the young fellow from New York.

Around each pillar in the spacious lobby of the Oglemore, of which there were several, was a comfortable leather-cushioned seat, and Tow-head took up a position on one near the street window. He had not been there long when he heard men talking on the other side of the pillar. What they said interested him at once.

"Yer see, Davis," said some one in a gruff voice, "Hartigan has stuck us up on this game for practice, an' dey ain't nuthin' in it fer us. He's rubbin' it in. Hartigan's out fer de coin, an' he t'inks he's got a cinch. I seen all de rest of de fellers, an' we're goin' t' trim him good."

"So you want t' throw this game, huh? Is everybody in?" The questioner's voice was smoother.

"Sure t'ing; everybody's out t' hand. Dan er good stiff jolt. Dis'll hit him where he's tender ez a boil—right in de money place."

"Murphy," said the smoother voice, "I never threw a game in my life."

"Neder'd I—before," returned Murphy, with a note of shame in his foggy voice.

"I haven't any great love for Dan," went on Davis. "He's the tightest wad I ever saw."

"Huh!" grunted Murphy, "Hartigan cries every pay day."

"But he's honest," put in Davis. "If he says he'll pay, he will. Perhaps he intends to make a split after the game."

Murphy burst into a roar of laughter. "You're a good joker, Davis," he explained.

"Well, now, see here, Murph," said Davis, "wouldn't it be white to say we want to get in and ride on the receipts and say we won't play if he don't make a divide?"

Murphy laughed again, and then for several minutes talked very earnestly to

his friend Davis. Tow-head, who knew all about these two men, and all about the Palmetto team, of which they were members, learned a great deal as he sat on the other side of the pillar. He was a fine ballplayer himself, and he had all a real sportsman's contempt of men who would "throw" a game for money or revenge. He had a strong impulse to jump up and lash the traitors with a scornful tongue. Dan Hartigan, the manager, he knew by sight—and by reputation. Hartigan was famed as an honest man, as a driver, and as a "tight wad."

Tow-head had a keen faculty for acquiring information on a subject that deeply interested him. He was in a place where he could learn a great deal concerning the Palmetto team, and he knew each member of the nine, knew his record in the field and with the stick, and knew his particular weakness. He had seen them practice, too, and hadn't too high an opinion of them.

"Are yer on?" queried Murphy, the shortstop, after his earnest talk.

"Yes," returned Davis, but Tow-head thought he detected a note of reluctance in his assent.

"Let's have a drink," invited Murphy.

The two players arose at once and strode off to the bar.

Tow-head sat very straight and very quiet, his muscles and nerves tense. He could not have been stirred much more deeply if he had heard a conspiracy against the government of his count y. His sporting spirit was touched to the quick, and, as he looked at the matter, it seemed as if the Palmetto nine should be strung up by the necks in a row—to the last man. He was aroused and very angry; but, like a real philosopher, he thought before he acted.

"Those guys are the rottenes' bunch of crooks this side o' Noo York," he soliloquized. "Dey're so crooked dey couldn't get up a spiral staircase. Gee! It ain't my business, maybe, but I'm goin' to wise Dan up."

Arising resolutely, Tow-head sauntered slowly across to the desk. He greeted the clerk in a friendly fashion—for he had a way of getting on speaking terms with everybody.

"I want to have a little talk with Mr. Hartigan, Mr. Stanley," he announced casually.

The hotel clerk grinned, and puffed on his cigar—a gift from the hotel management presented in its sleep.

"Don't believe he's looking for any more men, Mr. Murchison," he said gravely.

"I don't want t' play with the bunch o' goats he's got on his pay roll. They play like a lot of ol' women with a beanbag."

Mr. Stanley laughed. "You can find Hartigan in five hundred and two—front, right from the elevator. Want to send up your card?"

"I'll tell who I am an' where I come from an' where I hope t' go before the hookworm gets inter my system," returned Tow-head. "Much obliged!"

He swaggered off, rode up to the fifth floor, and rapped at once on the door of room 502.

He had to wait a few moments. He feared the manager was out, but just as he raised his hand to knock on the panel again the door opened to him.

The room was cheerful with light, and Mr. Hartigan, a big, broad-shouldered man, with a smooth face, stood before him, in his shirt sleeves.

"Hello, young man!" he said bluffly.

"Hello, Mr. Hartigan," returned Tow-head. "Can I come in? I want to talk t' yer."

"What d'ye want?" asked the big man brusquely.

Tow-head was offended at the other's manner, but he was out in an affair of honor, and so swallowed his irritation.

"I want t' talk business," he answered. "Aw, don't t'ink I'm the boy wonder from Vermont wid de tireless arm. I ain't lookin' fer er job wid your bunch of glass ginks. I want t' put yer next to a raw deal."

"Come in!" said Hartigan, with a grin. "You make me think of a good ol' smoke of Connecticut leaf. You didn't sprout in the sugar belt, did yer?"

"No," returned Tow-head. "I come from the city."

Hartigan understood. If you want to hear a man express pride in his native town, just hear a New Yorker say he's from the city. It makes you think of an angel sitting on a bench in City Hall Park, preening his white wings, and saying offhand, "I just blew down from heaven an' want t' go right back."

Mr. Hartigan nodded with satisfaction.

"Now, what you got to hand out, young feller?" he queried sharply. "What's yer name?"

Hartigan coolly locked the door of his

room, and, turning, inspected the tall, keen-eyed, freckled-faced specimen from the metropolis.

Tow-head told the manager his name, and then, in his turn, frankly studied him at short range. Mr. Hartigan was a stalwart, keen-eyed man, and his hair was touched with gray. Most baseball managers go gray, or bald, or—to a sanitarium. Hartigan was a full-blooded person, and a shrewd manager.

Tow-head liked his looks, and he was strongly attracted by a big, pure-water diamond sparkling in the centre of Hartigan's ten acres of shirt front. What a brooch that glinting, fiery bit of carbon would make for his mother! He wished he could send her one just like it.

"Smoke?" queried Hartigan genially, and he took a cigar from a box on the table near which he had been sitting when disturbed, and handed it to the visitor.

"Sometimes," said Tow-head. Then he added candidly, in curious contrast to his usual astute way, "I ain't sure I can go it without gettin' sick, but I'm game to tackle it, all right!" He lighted it, and began to smoke. It did not make him sick.

"Now, kid," said Hartigan, in a few moments, "you go ahead an' unload what you got! If you're a reporter er a kid lookin' fer a job, you kin say yer prayers now—'cause I'll bust yer conk!"

Tow-head grinned. "You hold tight, Mr. Hartigan," he began, "an' hear me spiel." In quick, terse phrases, the boy told the baseball man what he had heard.

Dan Hartigan sat very still as the New York boy told his story. His keen eyes glinted, and he chewed on the end of his black cigar, which he had allowed to go out. His big hands were spread out on his brawny knees.

"That all?" he queried shortly, as Tow-head concluded all he knew.

"Yes," returned the other, a bit angered at the manager's seeming indifference. He made as if to rise.

"You sit still!—right there!" roared Mr. Hartigan suddenly. His big face glowed red, and he waved Murchison back to his seat.

He leaned back in his own seat, and in a moment, to Tow-head's utter amazement, he burst into a fit of laughter. He rolled about in his chair, slapped his knees, and at length got up and walked about the room bent double in his amusement.

After this remarkable exhibition, Mr. Hartigan sat down, lighted a fresh cigar, smoked upon it, and without a word to explain his behavior, scrutinized the boy before him.

"Think I'm crazy, don't you?" he blurted suddenly, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I thought you were excited," said Tow-head, politely enough.

"Cool as a bottle on the ice," asserted

Hartigan. Arising, he strode to the door and tried it. He had locked it before, and it hadn't unlocked itself. "Say, young man," he went on, "can you throw a ball sixty feet?"

"Sure, an' then some," returned Tow-head. He was a fine amateur pitcher, but didn't say so.

Again Hartigan lapsed into silence, and again he studied the boy.

"See here, my boy," he said. "I'll tell you the game. I got the name o' being a tight wad, an' out fer the coin. Now, I got a bunch of bush players that got the worst epidemic of swelled nuts I ever seen. We're just goin' to start our schedule, an' I got a scheme to give 'em a stiff jolt. I'm runnin' 'em in on a exhibition game, an' they think I'm out to make money on it. I am. But I ain't out for receipts. I'm goin' to run 'em up against a bunch that'll whip the tripe out of 'em. That'll do 'em good! See? An' they're goin' to throw me 'cause they think I'm goin' to make a dollar by workin' 'em an extra game. Say! the bunch they're goin' up against is a bunch o' coons from New York—an' the blackies can play, too. Gee! that'll be a game to see."

"I want to see it!" interjected Tow-head excitedly. It looked better to him than a three-ring circus. He knew how wild with anger the Palmetto nine would be, but he believed the Palmetto nine would play to win when they met a Negro team.

"I don't care about the gate receipts," went on Hartigan calmly, his keen eyes gleaming, "but I want 'em trimmed. Throw me, will they—the skunks! Say, if I sign you on as pitcher would you have nerve enough to pitch that game? I'll give the Palmetto soreheads something to think of! I'll sign you in ten minutes and give you twenty-five dollars to stay in the box nine innings an' let those coons rap the pill over the lot. Will you do it?"

Tow-head jumped to his feet and gasped. "I haven't had a ball in my hand for more'n a week," he said.

"So much the better," returned Hartigan coolly. "I'll give you a dollar extra every time they rap out a home run against you. Will you do it, son? Then some day you can say you played with the Palmettos. What d'ye say?"

"Yes, yes, I'll do it!" cried Tow-head. "But, say, Mr. Hartigan, what do I get if I win?"

"Win!" Dan Hartigan burst into a roar of laughter. "Win!" he howled. "Why, you chump, them coons can play ball!"

"What do I get if I win?" persisted Tow-head.

"I'll give you anything I got if you win," laughed Hartigan.

"Straight?" queried Tow-head.

"If I don't bang your bonehead off—yes," returned Hartigan, in high spirits.

"Will you give me that diamond in your shirt there?" asked Murchison.

For a moment the manager was inclined to be angry, and then he laughed.

"Yes," he promised. "If you win that game against the Black Giants with a bunch of soreheads in the field you can take the diamond—and my shirt with it. Now, dry up, an' let me fill out a blank."

Hartigan at once filled out a contract blank, and had Tow-head sign it. In a few moments, after promising the utmost secrecy, Murchison left the room, pledged to pitch against the Black Giants to work out the shame of the Palmetto nine.

Hartigan made it known that he had a new pitcher from New York, but he kept Tow-head under cover. The manager went around beaming for the next few days, and his diamond beamed, too, and seemed secure on his shirt front.

The following Friday the Palmetto team, a sullen lot of huskies, left Savannah for Fernville for the game. The day was ideal, hot, but not too hot. Hartigan had seen to it that there should be a good attendance.

When the Palmetto team, after getting into their clothes, went into the field and saw a nine of husky black men practicing, there was an angry murmuring among them. But they had to play. A bundle of greenbacks under a man's nose is a strong magnet. Their contracts for the season were signed, but they could not throw them up. The white men acted like a lot of sullen schoolboys as they tossed the ball about, and they glowered angrily at Hartigan, at their black opponents, and at the crowd of spectators.

When Hartigan introduced Tow-head, they received him with silence.

He began to toss the ball awkwardly to Davis, who purposely fumbled his easy throws. Murchison had the speed of a big leaguer, but he didn't show it just then. When the Palmetto team were called in after several minutes on the field, Tow-head made an opportunity to have a few words alone with Davis, the catcher.

"Say," he began. "I want you to catch me, Mr. Davis; will you?"

Davis shot a quick look at the blue-eyed young chap. Davis was a heavy, square-shouldered fellow, in the main honest. He didn't like Tow-head. He had little use for youthful wonders. Veteran baseball players are not noted for kindness to recruits.

"What d'ye mean?" he growled.

"You kin lick me, all right," said Tow-head coolly, "but I want you to act on the level an' catch me. Are you ginks goin' to let these fellows put it on yer?"

Davis stared at the youngster, fire in his eye.

"I guess I can hold you, all right," he said, smothering his anger with contempt. It seemed to him as if the boy

knew what the Palmetto team intended to do; and Tow-head intended he should think so.

"Will you give me a square deal?" persisted the boy, as they walked along to the bench.

"I'll break yer cussed head," flamed the catcher, in sudden wrath, "if you say another word!" He looked at Tow-head, and his glance, although quick and fiery, was to a certain degree reassuring.

The Palmetto men were a sullen-looking set of players as they sat on the bench. They were in. Davis at once picked his bat, and was at the plate when the umpire called "Play ball!"

Dan Hartigan, nonchalant among his angry, silent men, gave Tow-head a slight wink and a nod, but did not speak to him.

The Black Giants were good players, but not wonders. They were full of ginger, and vociferous. They were out to win. The gate receipts were enticing to them, and were to be so divided that the winner would have the lion's share.

Davis stood up before the black pitcher, and, although a good man with the stick, he struck out. He left the plate and retired to the bench with impassive, sullen face.

Dan Hartigan said not a word to any one; but he grinned to himself. It is not well for a team of ballplayers to be too conceited. The next man up grounded to the gingery shortstop, who shot the ball over to first base like a bullet. The next Palmetto man had plenty of confidence. When he went to the plate he intended to hit the ball. He didn't. He struck out. The black men came in on the broad grin, white teeth showing in every face.

The Palmetto men went swearing into the field. The crowd, although in real sympathy with them, gave them a great laugh. It needed but a small thing to put the Palmetto players on their mettle. They had come out to lose, but they had not expected to play black men. Hartigan had so arranged the advertising that no one knew the darkies were to be their opponents. The Giants were a better team than the white team the public expected to see, and there was neither disappointment nor anger.

Tow-head dropped three balls over the pan to Davis, who carelessly captured them with his mitt, not deigning to use both hands. The boy grinned.

"Play!" called the umpire.

The black pitcher of the Giants, a strapping, grinning darky, stepped to the plate with a bat that looked as big as a wagon tongue.

Tow-head threw a straight ball with moderate speed toward his sullen catcher. Davis didn't catch it. Whack! Jackson, the Giant, pushed his hickory against the pill. Away it shot, up, up, up; it had a chat with a distant planet, and then dropped somewhere southward

over the fence, and probably went so deep it needed a steam shovel to unearth it. The batsman went around the bags to third like a black cloud, making the last lap to the plate at a walk.

The Palmetto men were angry, very angry. Each player spat on his glove, and began to get interested in the game. Hartigan grinned, and remarked to himself that he was a dollar out. The second man came up grinning to the bat.

"T'row the ball, you bonehead!" cried Murphy, the shortstop.

Tow-head made no response. He twisted up coolly and delivered the ball, an inshoot. The darky swept mightily at the cloudlet of steam the ball left as it crossed the plate, and Davis, as he returned the ball, looked at his pitcher. The pill had come to him like a cannon ball—as speedy as he had ever handled. Tow-head struck the surprised coon out in short order.

The next man hit an easy grounder to Murphy, who hoisted the ball over to Harrison on first base with the speed of light.

Again Hartigan winked at Tow-head as he approached the bench, but there was a queer look on his face. He perceived that while his men were still angry they were getting ready to play ball. He liked that, but hoped they would be beaten.

In the second inning, the Palmettos hit the ball, but got no farther than second base. They went to their places in the field with alacrity, their spirits entirely changed.

Tow-head, like Dan Hartigan, was keen enough to see that the white men were determined to play ball. He threw a swift straight ball square across the pan to the first man up. The darky cracked the leather smartly. It struck the ground in front of the shortstop, bounding wickedly. Murphy failed to touch it with his hands. The ball caromed from his shinbone over toward third. Foley, the third baseman, who had run to back up Murphy, dashed back to his own territory, scooped up the ball dexterously, and in one motion threw to first. The ball went high over Harrison, and the runner, encouraged by his coacher's yell, sped like the wind for second, which he reached before Harrison had fielded Foley's wild throw. The bleachers of darkies gave up a wild exultant yell for the players of their own color.

To the second man up, Tow-head deliberately threw another speedy straight ball. It was like stealing a watermelon from a back lot for the black man. Crack! He smashed the ball in a low drive to right field. The man on second scored, and the batter got to second on a slide.

Murphy, advancing a little, gave Tow-head a bit of advice, genuine. For the third time the pitcher threw a straight

ball. If anybody should ask Tow-head about that hit, he'd say the ball was going yet.

When the third run of the inning was scored, with no one out, Davis, holding his mask under his arm, came out to the pitcher's box. Tow-head let him come all the way.

"You're throwin' this game!" said Davis, with a bad eye.

"Maybe I am," returned Tow-head. "I was paid to throw it."

"I'm next to you, young feller," said Davis huskily, an', by heavens, you pitch now, or we'll pound you to a custard! See!"

"I want to win this game," began Tow-head.

The crowd, at this juncture, roared with impatience, screaming out sarcastically to pitcher and catcher.

"Are you guys out to win?" queried Tow-head.

Davis glanced at him with flashing eyes.

"What d'ye think?" he cried.

"I know you didn't *come* to win," returned Tow-head.

"You play ball," said Davis shortly, and slipping on his mask, he went at once to his position.

The next Giant came to the plate with a broad grin. Tow-head gave him a drop that fooled him completely. The black men on the bench yelled gleefully as their mate dented the air, and then looked at the catcher in surprise. Murchison succeeded in striking this man out, as well as the one who followed; and the next man sent up a foul, which Davis smothered. The spectators gave him generous applause for this work, but his teammates said nothing, and Hartigan did not even look at him.

Inning after inning went along with quick, clean play. The Palmettos made two runs, and in the eighth inning the score stood four to two in favor of the Giants. Tow-head, in the first of the eighth, made a clean hit to right, and on successive hits of his teammates advanced to third. One man was out. The next man hit to the shortstop, who snapped the ball to Bag No. 3. Tow-head had a long lead, and he got back to the base only by a dive. Harrison came up next. He was a good man with the willow. He held off for the runner on first to go to second. The next ball he caught well, and he sent a steaming drive to right centre. It was a rather short fly, but the centre fielder had run in well, and Tow-head, ready to leap away, watched the darky. The fielder misjudged by half an inch. He fumbled the ball once, twice; then he dropped it—but with a marvelous quickness scooped up the pill with his right hand. He straightened up and threw to home—delivering the ball too quickly for accuracy. The throw was several feet to the left of the home plate, and the catcher

jumped into the base line to receive his mate's wild throw.

Meanwhile, Tow-head was on his ninety-foot race. The moment the centre fielder had touched the ball, he was off like a streak of oiled lightning; and the fumbling gave him an advantage. The hurried throw came low; the catcher leaned forward for the pick-up; and as he stooped to field the ball, the New York boy, coming on the wind, leaped him cleanly and scored. The catcher threw to third, and succeeded in retiring the man running from second.

The next Palmetto man fouled, and the darky catcher got under the ball and ended the inning.

The ninth inning started badly for Tow-head, the first man up getting a hit, the second getting to first and advancing his predecessor by a bunt along the third-base line; and Tow-head, getting nervous, passed the next man on four balls. The young pitcher could have cried; but he gritted his teeth.

"Steady, man!" cried Murphy. "Take yer time. We're wid yer."

These encouraging words, where he expected curses, steadied Murchison wonderfully. He swung his arms to and fro for a moment or two. He was deeply thinking. He was an accurate pitcher, and he remembered then, queerly enough, that a certain famous pitcher won his games with an absolutely straight ball, speed, control—and brains. Under the law of average, a man gets very few safe hits when he strikes the ball more than eight inches from the end of the bat.

Tow-head nodded to Davis, and the catcher, as resigned to defeat as any real player ever is, told him to play as he had suggested.

Murchison, once his decision made, settled down. He threw a straight ball close to the batter.

"Strike one!" declared the umpire.

"Too near, boss," expostulated the batsman.

Again Tow-head threw. The ball went as before.

"Strike two!"

"Hit the ball!" roared the crowd.

Again the ball sizzled over the edge of the plate, close to the batter.

"You're out!" cried the umpire. "Batter up!"

The next batter, warned of what was coming, struck at the first ball. It rolled toward third base. Tow-head, already on the run, threw to the plate, and retired the forced runner. He had been fortunate, but he was still in what is known as a "hole."

He carefully studied the next batter, the catcher, a strapping darky, with shoulders as broad as a pair of apartment steps. Tow-head threw his speedy straight ball. Crack! The batter swung and caught the ball on the middle of his bat. The pill went straight at

the pitcher. He would have been almost justified in sidestepping, but he wasn't built that way. He stopped it, fumbled it; then pouncing upon it, drove it to Harrison on first base, and so ended the inning.

The first Palmetto man fouled to the third baseman; the second made a clean hit and went on first, immediately going out on a false steal and getting caught off first.

The next man up made a pretty single over the pitcher and over second base.

"Now! Boy!" Hartigan, for the first time, stood up and called to his young pitcher.

Tow-head took the first bat upon which his hand fell—without looking to see whether it was marked for a hit. He felt then he could give ten years of his life to get a good hit. The score was four to three, and he was to win or lose the game. He heard nothing as he went to the plate, saw nothing but the burly black sixty-three feet away. He wanted to win! He gripped the oaken club, and keen-eyed, but in a daze of intense desire, stood at the plate, feet somewhat apart, teeth gritted, bat at his shoulder.

The black man twisted up and threw the ball. It was swift and straight.

Tow-head swung mightily. He caught the ball squarely on the end of the bat. It's a joyful sensation! *Well!* Up, up, up, and away the ball went. The man on first scored. Tow-head ran like the wind, ran like mad, and he never stopped until Dan Hartigan stopped him in his arms six feet across the home plate.

The crowd roared, and went away.

"You can play ball some," said Hartigan. He turned to his players, who were grouped around, now smiling in good humor and not scant of praise.

"Now, you bunch o' stiffs," he roared. "I got something for you." He had his say in short order. "That ain't all, either," he went on. "Ol' tightwad's goin' to divvy the receipts took in. *See!* Now come on!"

The Palmetto team was a happy bunch as it went back in a bus to the city.

That night after supper, Tow-head refused a permanent contract, saying he had to go home. He accepted his pay, and receipted for it.

"Excuse me, Mr. Hartigan," he said, as he pocketed the money, "but you said I could have that di'mon'. I don't want to be a hog, but—"

"Any o' you glass-arm sponges got a jackknife?" broke in Hartigan, looking around the group.

He accepted one proffered, and in a twinkling cut out a foot of his shirt front and handed all—shirt and diamond—to the boy. Then he retired for another shirt.

On the following day, Tow-head sent the diamond—and an account of the game—to his mother. She is wearing the diamond as a brooch to-day.

NOSEY ADAM'S FALL

By MACK WOODFORD

Nat Dawson, a daring young circus rider, longed for the free, open-air life of a cowboy. He had every quality for such a career, but somebody, from prejudice, stood in his way. How Nat, aided by his faithful pal of the sawdust ring, a clever Arabian horse, performed a brilliant circus stunt in the wilds, broke down this prejudice, and became a line rider of Double Z Ranch, is part of this oddly interesting Western tale.

"Come, hit the trail! I don't want any circus brats on this ranch. Get out, or I'll set the dogs on you!"

The young fellow thus spoken to stood with clenched fists and blazing eyes before Samuel Owens, the speaker, and to the cattlemen who were lounging about the yard it seemed that he half-lifted his hand to strike the rough-tongued proprietor of Double Z Ranch. But Nat Dawson kept his temper in check. Had he not done so it might have gone badly with Owens, for Nat was as sturdy and athletic a chap of nineteen as ever the West had produced. He let his hands drop to his side.

"There's no need to tell me to go, Mr. Owens," he said quietly. "I came to you expecting, at least, a welcome for my dead mother's sake, and you have chosen to insult her memory. I had no reason to think that her only brother would treat me so. But since you ate that sort of a—man, I'll be glad to go."

He turned, and walked across the yard toward his horse, a magnificent bay that was tethered to the rail of the corral. While Owens and the cowmen looked on silently, he swung himself into the saddle, and rode off into the dull, dusty glow of the setting sun.

One of the cattlemen had watched the lad intently, a grim smile on his sun-burned face. He was Billy Raynor, Owens' head line rider. When the boy had gone he turned to his employer.

"Say, boss," he remarked, with a drawl, "you've done a mighty bad stroke of business."

"What do you mean?" demanded Owens, scowling.

"You've turned away your own sister's son, and as fine a lad as ever I clapped eyes on, and you've lost one of your best cow-punchers, if I do say it myself."

"Who've I lost?"

"Me, boss."

"What are you talking about?"

"Just this: I'm through. Gimme my money. I don't work for a man who'd treat his own flesh and blood like that, not on your life! You turn him away without so much as offering him a bite to eat. I've always heard that blood is thicker than water. Say, it must be vinegar that runs in your veins."

"Hold on, Billy," growled Owens. "If you knew more about it you wouldn't talk like that."

"I know enough," replied Billy fiercely. "What if the boy's mother was a circus rider?"

"It may be nothing to you, but it's a lot to me," returned Owens angrily. "She was my only sister, and I forbade her to marry that good-for-nothing circus fellow. But she paid no attention to me. She went and married him. What happened? Just what I said would happen. He died and left her without a dollar."

"She's dead, too, I believe?" said Billy.

"Yes; and the circus has gone to pieces."

"So you turn her son away—you, the richest man in Pooamattuck County," pursued Billy, disgust in his tone. "Come, gimme my money. I quit you right now."

For a moment Sam Owens hesitated. No one knew better than he that Billy Raynor, who had served him faithfully for ten years, was the smartest cattleman in the State. It had been his proud boast that Billy could cut out cows from the herd in half the time that three average men would take over the job. But Samuel Owens was an obstinate man, and never more so than when he realized that he had made a mistake. He knew he had only to call back his nephew, say a kind word to him, and it would be all right with Billy Raynor. But Owens had taken his stand, and he would not relent. He turned and entered the house. Going to the safe, he unlocked it, and, drawing forth a handful of notes, he selected two of them.

"Here, take your money and go," he said gruffly to Billy. "I'm boss here, and what I do or say goes."

Billy pocketed the bank notes and made no reply. It doesn't take a cattleman long to pack up. A blanket, a revolver, and a very few necessary articles made up the bulk of Billy's worldly goods; so that, within ten minutes after Nat Dawson's departure, he was mounted on old Solomon and riding hot on the boy's trail.

Meantime, Nat, wrapped in thought none too cheerful, was riding with loose

reins. He had gone to Double Z Ranch that afternoon with high hopes that his uncle would give him a chance to earn his living as a cowboy. It was true what Owens had said about the circus. Since his father's death, followed so soon by his mother's, Dawson's Mammoth Aggregation of Allied Shows—all in one ring—had been scattered by ill-fortune to the four winds of heaven. Nat had not tried to get work with some other show. Although a circus rider of great skill and nerve, he had no love for the sawdust ring. He longed for the free, open-air life of a cowboy. Suddenly pulling himself together, in the saddle, he strove to banish the fit of gloom that had overtaken him.

"Cheer up, Major, old chap!" he said aloud to his horse. "The worst is to come if we don't make Sanford's. Twenty miles, that's all. If we don't make it, there's no grub for you or me to-night."

Major pricked up his ears. He was a noble steed, with a strain of Arab blood in him—the one possession left to Nat out of the wreck of Dawson's Mammoth Aggregation. At the moment that he spoke to Major the soft thud of hoofs sounded behind them. Looking over his shoulder, Nat beheld—Billy Raynor.

"No need to worry about the grub, pardner," was the cattleman's cheery greeting. "I've got some with me, and, if you don't mind, we'll camp here together. I know they didn't ask you to five-o'clock tea at the ranch," he added, with a grin.

You may be sure that Nat was not slow in accepting the invitation. Thus it came about that in the wilderness, a mile from his uncle's inhospitable house, the boy found food, fire, and, best of all, a friend. A pot of coffee was soon steaming, and together they made a hearty supper. Then, while Billy loaded his pipe, Nat unfolded his plan of seeking work on Sanford's ranch.

"That's a good idea," said Billy. "And you'll land a job there all right."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I know he wants a couple of line riders, and I'm going to be one of them. You'll be the other."

"I haven't had any experience," said Nat doubtfully.

"But you can ride a horse. I can give you a send-off there. Sanford will take you on, and I'll teach you the business in no time."

"It's bully of you," returned Nat, "and I won't forget it. I'll do my best to be up to the job. Don't think me too curious," he added, "but I supposed you were one of my uncle's men?"

"I was until a few minutes ago," said Billy with a smile that puzzled his companion. "The old man and I could not just agree on a point of etiquette, so we—Hello!"

Billy's hand shot to his belt in response to a sudden crackling of the undergrowth.

"Hands up!" came in a gruff voice from the darkness without the circle of the firelight. "Hands up, I say!"

"If it isn't Nosey Adam I'm a maverick!" exclaimed Billy under his breath, and something like a cold chill ran down the back of Nat. Everybody in the State had heard of this renegade cattleman who had turned outlaw, and, with his band, was being hunted by many a Sheriff's posse.

"He's got the drop, pardner," growled Billy. "Put up your hands, if you don't want to commit suicide."

Nat followed his friend's example, and put up his hands.

A tall, rough-looking man strode into the firelight, followed by three others as desperate in appearance as himself. The leader's hand clutched a big revolver, with which he covered Billy in a very businesslike manner. The other men looked worn, haggard, and weary, and it struck Nat that, judging from their aspect, the outlaw's life was not a happy one.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Nosey Adam, when he had drawn near enough to recognize the cattleman. "It's old Bill Raynor!" He lowered his huge gun. "How about you, Bill?"

"Well, I'm none the better for seeing you, Nosey," answered Raynor.

The outlaw leader laughed. "Just as sassy as ever, Bill, I see," he replied. "But don't you go buildin' too much on my friendship. I've pumped lead into people more than once for an answer like that. Me and my friends are out on business to-night, and—"

"And if you break your leg I won't set it this time," broke in Raynor. "And if the sheriffs get after you I won't hide you. Remember that, Nosey."

"Oh, I ain't forgot it, don't you worry," muttered the other.

"Then what are you holding up a couple of fellows like us for?"

"Because you've got something we must have."

"It's grub you want, eh, Adam," guessed Raynor, a note of pity in his voice.

"That's what."

"Well, we haven't got much, but we

can stake you and your assistants to a light lunch," and without another word Billy produced what he had in the way of eatables. The desperadoes fell upon the hard-tack and jerked beef like hungry wolves.

"The outlaw business hasn't been rushing lately, I guess," observed Raynor, eyeing the ravenous eaters.

"Oh, we're doin' pretty well," sullenly replied one of the band.

"Yes; just now," said Billy, grinning.

"Don't you worry about us, Bill Raynor," put in Nosey. "We've had a little hard luck lately because the sheriffs has been on our trail. They've had us on the run for three days. But we've got 'em buffaloesd now, and there'll be some-thin' doin' to-night. Who's your pardner, Bill? He don't look like a cow-puncher."

Nat had moved off to where his horse was hobbled a few yards away. Billy told the boy's story for him, and plainly Nosey was tickled when he heard how old Sam Owens had turned his nephew away.

"Say, Bill," he burst out, "it couldn't be better. This younker's just the one we want for our job to-night. Hey," he called to Nat. "Come over here. I've got a business proposition to make to you."

Nat moved over to the fire, around which they were all sitting.

"Look here, whatever your name is," Nosey said, "you've got the chance of your life to get even with that coyote of an uncle of yours. We're goin' to make a call at Sam Owens' place to-night. It's goin' to be a little informal, still we'd like somebody to introduce us like. There ain't much chance the gentleman of the house will receive us very well, but we won't mind that so long as we get the ten thousand dollars he put in the safe the other day after sellin' that last lot of cattle. You wouldn't mind transferrin' a few of them dollars to your own jeans, I guess, younker, would you? All you'll have to do is to ride ahead a little, and rouse up old Sam. He'll open the door to you maybe when he hears your voice. We'll do the rest. Are you with us?"

Nat made no answer, but looked the outlaw steadily in the eye.

"Come, what do you say, younker?" persisted Nosey.

"I won't do it," replied Nat, in a firm voice.

"Got a yeller streak in you, eh?" sneered Nosey.

"No; I'm not afraid," said Nat, "but I won't help you to rob my uncle or any one else."

Nosey emitted a roar of coarse laughter, in which his rough comrades joined.

"Got a Sunday-school boy with you, I see, Billy," the outlaw leader said, turning to Raynor. "Better put a crimp

in him, if you know what's good for both of you."

"Adam," replied Billy calmly, "you've had your answer from the boy, and it's good enough for me."

"Oh, that's how the game lays, is it? All right, Bill Raynor. But if he's too good to go with us, what's the matter with you comin' along? You don't exactly love Sam Owens, I take it, after what you've just told me. We've got to have some one to get us into Double Z Ranch house to-night. It would be easy money for you. All you've got to do is to go right up to the door and say you've changed your mind, and come back to stay on the job. You'd better help us out, Bill."

Nosey accompanied the last words with a wicked gleaming of his eye.

"You don't get any help from me on this job, Adam," said Billy, undaunted. "Neither of us will do any of your dirty work."

Nosey let out a furious imprecation, and, drawing his big gun, jumped to his feet.

"That's your talk, eh?" he thundered, covering Billy with his weapon. "Have it your own way, then. Tie 'em up, boys!"

The outlaws—two of whom had come suddenly out of the darkness with ropes in hand—threw themselves upon Billy and Nat, and both, in spite of their struggles, were quickly pinioned by hands whose deftness showed that they were not unaccustomed to such jobs. The prisoners were carried to a spot some distance from their fire, where Nosey and his men had left their horses. So tired were the animals that their masters had not taken the trouble to hobble them; and with this lot of weary nags Nat and his friend found their own steeds, for horses, like men, are fond of company.

"Here's a stroke of luck," whispered Billy, as his mount came to him, smelled him as he lay, and whinnied softly. "They've taken our horses' hobbles to bind us. This is old Solomon that's trying to kiss me now. If I give him the word he'll trot to Double Z Ranch house as straight as a homing pigeon. Owens and the others will know then that something's up."

"And they'll come out here and be received with bullets by Nosey and his gang," objected Nat. "Look here, Billy, I've got a better plan than that. But I don't know how it will go with you," he added dubiously.

"What's the game?" whispered Billy.

"If I call to my horse, Major, he'll come over, pick me up by the belt, and be off with me, like a dog carrying a bone."

"Sure thing?"

"We've done it together hundreds of times in the circus ring—matinée and evening every day for a whole season."

"Well, and then?"

"How far is it back to the ranch?"

"About a mile."

"Then it's easy. Major can carry me that far; yes, three times as far."

"But how will you guide him?"

"Just as I used to in the circus. He'll go to the right or left, just as I tell him. It was all in the trick."

"Good, if you're sure you can do it."

"But what about you, Billy? I can get away and warn my uncle, but when Major starts off with me the other horses will follow. Nosey will hear the stampede, and when he finds you here, still in his power, what will he do to you?"

"He won't do anything to me," replied Billy quickly.

"Why not?"

"Look here, son," said the other, "can you keep your mouth shut on a secret?"

"You can trust me."

"Well, there isn't any chance of harm coming to me at the hands of Nosey Adam. I saved his life once when he was badly hurt. I nursed him and hid him from the sheriffs, because—because he's my brother."

There was a sob in Billy's voice as he spoke the words.

"Now I understand," said Nat. "That's why you were so ready to give him all our grub, and—"

"Quick, son," broke in Billy. "Call your nag, and do that circus trick."

Major had not forgotten the great act that was featured in sixteen sheets on the billboards of Dawson's Mammoth Aggregation of Allied Shows. When the familiar call was given, he picked up his young master in the old way and

bore him through the moonlight to Double Z Ranch house. At his heels scampered the outlaws' steeds. The galloping of riderless horses into his yard roused Sam Owens, a lot of his cowboys, and a sheriff's posse of six men who had decided to rest at the ranch that night and take up their pursuit of Nosey Adam in the morning. Their amazement was complete when they saw the foremost horse drop a human form from its mouth as a cat might have dropped a mouse, only Major laid his precious burden down with more care.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Sam Owens, when he had looked into the boy's face. "If it isn't Nat Dawson!"

Willing hands freed Nat from his bonds, but it was a minute or two before he could collect his scattered senses. Then he told his story.

"They'll be here as soon as their legs can carry them," he said. "The horses made a terrible racket as they stampeded out of the camp, and Nosey and his gang are sure to come after them. All you've got to do is to gather them in when they arrive."

"By Jingo, the boy's right!" cried Owens. "Here, Jack Foster, take my nephew inside, and give him the best there is in the house. Take good care of him, now. And you, sheriff, get your men in position. They're bound to come if only for the horses."

"All right, Sam," said the sheriff, with a chuckle. "this is where we see the fall of Adam."

And that is just what happened. The posse and the cowboys posted themselves down the trail a little way from the ranch-yard gate, every man lying low in the mesquite bushes. Nosey and his

gang came stealing along. Then the thing came with such suddenness that Nosey and his hard-luck companions never knew exactly how it was done. They only knew that as they turned a sharp bend in the trail a thunderous voice, whose owner was invisible, cried "Hands up!" and that every mother's son of them did put up his hands, while from every side the barrel of a rifle was poked at their heads.

One by one the prisoners were disarmed, and then their captors started to march them to the ranch yard, where a guard would be placed over them for the night. Just as they were about to enter the gate Nat Dawson came galloping toward them.

"Hold on there, lad, where are you going?" cried Sam Owens.

"I'm going to get Billy Raynor. He's lying in the woods yet, bound hand and foot, and nobody with him but his horse."

"That's so; I forgot Billy," said Owens. "But I'll never forget him again. You can bet on that. Wait till I get my horse, Nat. We'll go after him together."

Billy made a good guess when he said that his outlaw brother would not do him any harm. They found the cattleman still in bonds, and lying on the ground fast asleep, with old Solomon on watch, like a huge dog. It was a pleasant awakening for Billy, as the events of the night had been for Sam Owens. The three went back to the ranch house together, and Sanford's outfit did not get the best cattleman in the State and the smartest boy range rider that ever threw leg over a broncho. They remained at Double Z Ranch.



THE BUTTINSKY TWINS

By WILLIAM HEYLIGER

Patrick Brannigan threw a condescending arm across William Bogart's shoulders.

"Billy," he said, "I've always liked you. As soon as I became president of the club I said I'd get you in, and now I've had you elected a member."

William had had many experiences with the older fellows. They seldom bothered with "little Bogart." When they professed great friendship for him he always looked below the surface.

"What do you want?" he asked intelligently.

"Why," said Patrick, somewhat uneasy at William's bluntness, "we'd like

to use your goats and your wagon in the show next Saturday."

"Where do I get off? I mean, where do I get on?"

"Why, we made you a member. That allows you to see all the shows without paying for a ticket."

"I think I could worry along without seeing the shows," returned William reflectively. "Besides, I might be expelled from the club after my goats are used in this show. What do I get?"

That was the start of a long argument. Finally Patrick insisted on seeing the goats before closing the bargain. William took him to the barn and struck a

gong. The goats ran to the wagon and calmly allowed the drop harness to fall around them. William whistled and they ran toward him. Patrick's eyes glistened.

"How much?" he demanded.

"One dollar," said William; "you can have the goats and the wagon Saturday for two hours."

Patrick sighed and handed him the money.

"I insist on driving the wagon in the show," said William; but Patrick hastened away without making reply.

The Superb Dramatic Club was rehearsing in the Brannigan barn as Pat-

rick entered. A gong was clanging, boys in red shirts were running about, and red fire was burning in a corner. As Patrick appeared all activity ceased.

"What did he say?" asked George Young.

"We get the goats," Patrick answered triumphantly. "It cost me a dollar. You fellows take up a collection. That dollar was all the money I had. I want it back."

The proceeds of a collection were handed to Patrick.

"I ought to have some practice driving those goats," he said; "I guess that's impossible, though. You fellows want to watch out when you see us coming."

George Young, who had gone to a corner of the barn, now came back. At arm's length he held a large sheet of paper.

"How's that?" he said proudly. "We can put it up outside the barn. I did it with pen and ink."

The sign read:

NEXT SATURDAY
AT BRANNIGAN'S BARN
THE SUPURB DRAMATIC CLUB
IN
THE STILL ALARM
A Thrilling Daring Melodrama.
The Great Fire Scene.
Engine Drawn by the Butinsky Twins
and Driven by Brannigan
PRICE FIVE CENTS

"Very good," said Patrick judiciously; "but cross out that line about me driving. I don't care for any publicity."

The rehearsal was resumed. George Young, after a visit to the local theatre, was staging the present show from what he could remember of "The Still Alarm."

"Are you sure," he asked, "that the goats use a drop harness and start when a bell rings?"

"Certainly," said Patrick; "didn't he show them to me?"

"Well," said George, with satisfaction, "this will be the best show we have ever given. The Butinsky Twins should make a hit. Wish I was driving them."

Two boys had finished stretching a piece of muslin over an oblong framework of wood. George gathered up a can of red paint and a can of white paint.

"Going to make more scenery," he said. "This will be a brick wall. If we had more muslin and some green paint I'd paint another tree."

"I wouldn't make many trees," sug-

gested Patrick. "You know we had to cut up the last tree and make it into clouds."

"Green clouds," sniffed George; "they're funny looking clouds."

"Well," said Patrick, "it was a funny looking tree."

Early Saturday afternoon William Bogart and the Twins, accompanied by Patrick, entered the barn. The Twins took to their strange surroundings beautifully. They did not try to butt anybody. A sweeping semicircle, chalked on the floor, showed where the stage ended and where the orchestra floor began. Planks resting on small kegs formed the seats.

George Young's artistic poster had done its work well. An audience of forty-six sat on the planks, and forty-six nickels had been taken in at the door. Everybody was keen for the star attraction—the Butinsky Twins.

The orchestra, a boy with a mouth organ, was showing signs of collapse as Patrick mysteriously led William to the rear door of the barn.

"Billy," he whispered, "go around to the front and tell me how the show looks."

"When shall I come back to drive the goats?" asked William.

"We'll take good care of the goats, Billy," said Patrick. "Watch from the front—"

The door closed and William heard the bar slide down into place. Out in the bright sunshine he kicked at the heavy planking.

"Let me in, Patrick," he called. "What are you locking me out for?"

The door stayed closed.

It dawned on William after a while that he had been basely deceived. For three days he had dreamed of driving his goats in the show while the audience cheered and applauded. Now he knew that that glorious part of the performance was not for him. Patrick Brannigan had hurried away when he first spoke of driving the Twins.

"He never intended I should drive them," said William. "I bet he wants to drive the goats himself."

Suddenly, as William gloomily pondered, with just the suspicion of mistiness in his eyes, he saw a glorious way out of the whole difficulty. A smile broke over his face. Without more ado he went around to the front and passed into the barn. The curtain had been pulled to one side. The show was on, but the goats were not in sight. William knew that they were probably behind the scenes. With a serene smile he watched the climax of the first act, and saw the second act start. A brick wall formed the background. He knew from the dialogue that the stage was supposed to represent a street in front of a fire house.

"Guess we'll liven up this act a little," said William to himself.

Soon there was a great deal of loud talking on the stage. William was not following the play closely and didn't know what it was all about. However, when a voice shouted "Fire!" he slid off the rear plank in the audience.

A red glare came from behind the scenes. A bell clanged and he heard a stamping; he knew the goats were running for their harness. Then came the rattle of a light wagon, and as the red glare increased, a wagon drawn by the Twins dashed from the wings and started across the stage amid the cheers of the audience.

This was William's cue to "liven up the act a little." He whistled three times. Instantly a change came over the spirit of the scene. The goats, trained to answer that whistle, turned toward the sound. Straight for the audience they clattered, and the audience stampeded for the door, lifting forty-six voices in a common shriek. Patrick Brannigan tried in vain to halt the now strenuous Twins.

"Whoa!" he kept yelling.

Over the chalk-line footlights went the goats. They passed under the first plank, but it caught Patrick across the chest and tumbled him out of the wagon. After that he had a confused sense of spilled kegs, tumbling planks, audience, and goats. He knew that the audience was going out the door as fast as it could, and that the Superb Dramatic Club's greatest show had come to grief through its star attraction.

When he sat up at last the audience was out in front of the barn guying the members of the club. William and the goats had disappeared. Patrick was straightening out the confusion of kegs and planks when George Young led the club into the barn.

"I had to give them back their money," said George mournfully; "had to give them back forty-six nickels. They'd never have come to another show if I hadn't done it after the fright they got. We could have bought muslin and green paint for another tree with that money." He looked hard at Patrick. "I guess somebody made a mess of hiring the Butinsky—those confounded goats," he observed.

Patrick meekly stood a plank against the wall, and remarked: "That's an easy guess."

IT DID NOT TAKE

A scapegrace of a lad, always in mischief, and evidently on the highroad to all sorts of bottomless pits, had a father with a touch of humor in him.

"Yes, the lad's a mighty nuisance," he said one day, to his pious mother. "But you remember he was vaccinated and christened in the same month. Neither took!"

THE FIGHTING EDGE

By JOHN D. EMERSON

Author of "The Climbers," and "When Hall Rowed Stroke."

There is both a mental and physical struggle in this story of a young mill-worker who endangers his position if he wins a wrestling bout. When you have read it you will have a better idea of what Col. Roosevelt meant when he spoke of "the fighting edge"—a phrase that has caught the attention of two continents.

Oliver P. Hunterton didn't own the town, but he gave you that impression. His walk was a strut, his slightest word a condescension. And yet it must be admitted that he was an expert in the manufacture of cotton; otherwise he would not long have held the position of manager of the big cotton mills of Hargreave & Company, of Corby, Massachusetts.

But just now Oliver P. Hunterton was not thinking about cotton, and he was very unhappy. Between his heavy gray eyebrows were two lines of worry; he ran his thin fingers over his shining pate and shot angry glances at the young fellow who sat opposite him in his office.

"Lawrence, isn't it time you settled down to train?" he asked sternly.

"Pooh! What's the good of training?" demanded the boy. "I guess a Harvard soph who's made a reputation on the wrestling mat as well as on the baseball diamond can tackle anything in the way of a New England farmer."

"But you don't realize what husky fellows some of these piecers are," persisted the elder Hunterton.

"What's the matter with these muscles?" Lawrence stuck out an arm that looked brawny enough.

Oliver P. shook his head doubtfully.

"There's too much fat on you, son. Some of these husky chaps who are going to take part in the games are as fit specimens of young manhood as I ever saw in my life. Now, there's Moreland, for instance."

"Huh! I'll break him in two when I get to grips with him."

"I hope so, son. I hope so," the father said viciously. "There is something about that fellow I don't like. He's too goody-goody, too conscientious, for one thing; and somehow he makes me crawl when I go near him."

"Don't wonder at that," chuckled Lawrence. "The aristocratic Oliver P. Hunterton hasn't always toed the mark when it came down to the square deal—which is something of a mixed metaphor, dad, but I guess you can get the idea."

The elder Hunterton made no retort, but his frown deepened.

"Enough of this fooling, Lawrence," he said. "I want you to win Saturday a week—and you are going to win, whether you are in form or not. The

name of Hunterton has never been associated with defeat, and I don't want you to bring disgrace on it even in the annual sports with the mill hands. Get it into your head that there is some hard wrestling to be done, and, Lawrence—I think you'd be in better shape if you cut out cigarettes."

"Oh, piffle!" snapped the boy, and flung out of the office.

Bedlam had broken loose in the big washroom. The throb and grind of machinery had ceased, but the thirty or forty men who were splashing water over hands and faces and punctuating their ablutions with vociferous comments on the coming wrestling bout, made quite as much noise as the great machines which had silenced conversation during the day.

But now they felt that they could talk. For this was Friday—Friday, the thirteenth, which fact brought hope to their hearts, for to-morrow would be Saturday, the fourteenth. There could be no hoodoo on a day like that, and to-morrow would witness the annual sports, chief in interest being the wrestling bout between the manager's son, Lawrence Hunterton, and the pick of the piecers, Al Moreland.

Al had been selected by the united workers by general acclaim; he was a big, well set-up fellow, broad-chested, clear-eyed, with splendidly developed arms and legs.

Al, bending over a washbasin, was thumped and prodded and inspected; differences of opinion about the width of his chest, the strength of his muscles, the length of his reach almost precipitating a small war in the room.

Foremost among the noise-makers was Jack Brown—small of stature but making up for it in largeness of voice; given to practical jokes; pert almost to "freshness"; cocksure of himself despite his height; and courageous enough to wear silk socks—for which latter failing he was unmercifully badgered.

"Ray for Al!" he shouted. "He's the boy for us!"

"Yea, yea!" they chorused.

"Ain't nothing the matter with Al!"

"Watch him eat up Fatty Lawrence!"

Al Moreland seemed oblivious to it all. He shook himself free of the water and the hands that thumped him, and sought

refuge in a towel. Emerging presently with a glowing face, he rolled his shirt sleeves down over his big strong-muscled arms, flung open a locker, coolly adjusted his collar and tie, jerked himself into his coat and elbowed his way slowly but persistently through the crowd—all this without a word.

"Got a grouch on," decided Jack, and he shot out a question, which brought no response.

"Guess he's scared stiff—Lawrence has got his goat," somebody growled, and was instantly grabbed around the neck by little Brown, forced to his knees and made to "take it all back."

Jack Brown had no objection to poking fun at Al, but to charge the big fellow with anything like fear was rank sacrilege, and Jack was quick to resent it. Having wrked off some of his superfluous energy, Jack ran out after the champion who was to do battle for the piecers on the morrow.

"Nice day for a constitutional," he suggested, stretching his short legs in comical imitation of Al's long stride.

Al looked down. The ghost of a smile flickered on his face, but was gone in a moment.

"I'm going home," he said pointedly.

"Say, old boy, don't be so fierce about it. What's got you, anyhow? Go ahead and kick me if you want to, but I'd like to know what in creation's the matter with you."

"Nothing," surlily.

"That being the case, of course that's the end of it. And this is where I say by-by. All the same, I'd advise you to get a little more cheer into your face, or Helen will——"

"That's just it."

"What?"

"Helen."

Jack whistled. "So that's it, eh? You've gone and quarreled with that hot-tempered little witch."

Al Moreland swung around abruptly. "See here, Jack, you don't say a word against Helen Bates—see? She's not hot-tempered. She's all right."

"You bet she is all right," said Jack enthusiastically. "Helen's a dandy, a peach. And what I want to know is why in thunder you should quarrel with that nice girl?"

"It's the bout, Jack."

"What of it?"

"She wants me to throw it."

Jack choked in his astonishment.

"Say that again, All Wants you to throw the bout? Say"—his voice sank to a wondering whisper—"she hasn't got stuck on that fat college boy who's going to wrestle with you?"

"No, it's his father."

"Lawrence's pop? You're crazy, old boy, just plumb crazy."

"Lawrence has got to win," Al went on mournfully. "His father says so. He threatened he'd fire me if I bested his son. Helen says I mustn't lose my job, and so—well, Jack, what would you do?"

Jack Brown opened and shut his fists, his eyes blazed. His small frame bristled with anger.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "They used to call me the Prince of Gall, but if this don't beat anything! Why, Jack, I——" He stopped and looked up at the big fellow beside him. "What you going to do, old boy?"

"Win," said Al positively.

"And lose your job?"

"Yes."

"And lose Helen?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Shake, Al, you're the goods. You've got the fighting edge, all right."

Saturday the fourteenth! Day ever glorious in the annals of Hargreave & Company! All Corby seemed to have squeezed in at the entrance gates of the big recreation park provided by the cotton manufacturers for the benefit of employees.

"Paris hasn't got anything on Corby for style," was Jack Brown's mental comment as he piloted Helen Bates to a front seat on the grand stand and surreptitiously scanned the throng.

He caught a vision of languishing eyes under enormous flower-bedecked hats; of white muslin gowns and gay ribbons and bows. There was a man or two in the crowd—in fact, there were a thousand or so—but Jack didn't see them. That bewildering array of feminine beauty left him no room for mere men. To be even more exact, the little beauty whom he had promised to take care of for the day filled his eye for the time being.

There were races, and pole jumps, and a basket-ball game for the girls by way of preliminary; then came the great event of the day. A stage had been erected in front of the grand stand for the wrestling bout, and Oliver P. Hunterton mounted to make an announcement.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began. Nobody heard him save those in the immediate foreground. Nobody wanted to hear him. Everybody was eager for the bout. But Mr. Hunterton liked the limelight, and, of course, what Mr. Hunterton wanted he always got.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you are now to witness a contest for the wrestling cup, which goes for one year to the winner of the best two falls out of three. Last year the cup was won by Fred Norcross, one of our bright young mule spinners, who has since gone West. This year there would have been several contestants, but my son Lawrence—ahem—who is visiting me during the summer recess, has expressed a desire to try to win the cup, and the other contestants have gracefully retired in favor of Alfred Moreland, who has been selected by the mill workers to meet my son Lawrence on the mat.

"My son Lawrence—ahem—is not yet an employee, but he will be, as soon as he graduates. He has—er—made quite a reputation, ladies and gentlemen, in university athletics, and naturally he would be proud to carry back with him to Harvard the wrestling cup. Alfred Moreland, according to the opinion of the workers, is the best man in sight to face my son Lawrence—ahem. Alfred Moreland is—er—a piecer, and a good deal of an athlete; and I think you will see a good bout. I may add that I have just received a telegram from Boston with the welcome information that Mr. Hargreave has this year added fifty dollars to the prize."

When this announcement was passed along the stand, straw hats were waved wildly, handkerchiefs fluttered from dainty fingers, masculine whoops and feminine screams attested the esteem in which the head of the firm was held.

Mr. Hunterton smiled benevolently, as if the compliment were intended for him, and continued:

"I need hardly say that if my son Lawrence—ahem—wins, he will return the amount to the recreation fund." He waited for the cheer that ought to have been forthcoming, but wasn't; then he concluded: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for listening to me so patiently. I am sure you are with me when I express the sentiment: May the best man win!"

Al Moreland, stripped to the waist, his muscles showing through satin flesh like bands of steel, stepped out on the stage.

A cheer, hearty and spontaneous, greeted him. But there was no smile on Al's set face. In his quick glance around he had caught sight of Helen—seated close by Jack Brown. In the tension of the moment her small hand had clutched Jack's arm.

He saw that small hand, and a wave of jealousy surged through his breast.

"She loves Jack," he muttered. "Well—Helen's out of my life, and I'll fight for the honor of the piecers."

He turned to meet Lawrence who had stepped jauntily forward. The college man had taken his father's advice—trained off some of the fat, and looked every inch a fighting man.

Judge O'Shane gave the signal, and the first bout was on.

They moved stealthily around one another, clutching at each other's wrists, then Lawrence made a dart for a thigh hold. Al stepped back and hauled his antagonist by the head, almost dragging him into his arms.

Lawrence had the utmost difficulty to prevent himself being brought to the mat right at the opening of the bout, but with a snort of defiance he broke loose and faced the young piecer again.

The jaunty air had vanished. The college man knew that he would have to exert himself to the utmost, and that there was no chance of Al selling the bout. Despite the fact that he had sneered at the mill workers and dubbed them "farmers," he knew that they were a husky lot of men; but he had never bargained for such strength as this.

He moved cautiously round; then their heads were together and they were locked in a tight embrace as they hurtled around, straining, striving to gain the advantage. Then with a sudden clip of the left foot Al disturbed the other's balance, and down went the manager's son on all fours.

The girls looked on breathless, affrighted. The men yelled themselves hoarse. The "college man with the reputation" was being bested by a piecer. Secretly they had feared for Al's chances. They half-expected to see him overwhelmed; and now, seeing that he had the better of it they whooped their delight.

Al had now got behind his man. He got a waist hold, and pressing with his shoulders down upon the back of the other's neck, he tried to weaken him before essaying the first fall. To his surprise the referee came to him.

"You must break that hold, Moreland," he cried in a warning tone.

Some wrestlers would have asked why, but Al wasn't asking questions. He was there to wrestle. He guessed what had happened. Oliver P. Hunterton had tried to get Al to sell the match; had Oliver P. approached the referee with the same end in view? It looked like it, but Al only set his teeth and determined the more to win, despite all odds.

He broke the hold, and with his left hand on his opponent's arm he pressed the right on the top of his head and forced the head down, as if trying the strength of the neck. The college man was spread-eagled, his hands and feet wide apart, resting upon the palms and the knees. Al slipped the arm beneath the armpit and up over the neck for the half nelson, and Lawrence went flat upon the floor.

Keeping his eyes open for a possible counter, Al worked away at the half nelson and secured his opponent's wrist. Lawrence was red in the face, and as he lay there he tried to think how he

could turn the position into one of advantage for himself. But think how he would, no idea occurred to him. He swore beneath his breath. This piecer whom he had sneered at was too strong for him. His head was being pressed into the mat, and some of the onlookers noticing his lack of resource called out ironically to him:

"Wake up, Fatty! Your pop says you've got a rep. Let's see a bit of it. Don't sleep, you rah-rah boy!"

The words maddened him, and he made his effort. Al bluffed him by moving just a little as if he were giving way; but the moment his opponent had weakened his position he forced the right arm over the neck again and rolled the college man over. One of Lawrence's shoulders was down, and Al was pressing relentlessly upon him with all his strength.

Sell the match to Oliver P. Hunterton's son? Oh, yes, Al would do that! The remembrance of that black proposition—and Helen's demand that he accede—these stirred a tumult in his heart, and he put every inch of strength into his effort; and though Lawrence wriggled and struggled, frantically rolling from one side to the other, he received no respite.

At length down went both his shoulders to the mat with a bang, and Judge O'Shane was obliged to pat Al upon the back, indicating that he had won the first fall. The time was four minutes, twenty-three seconds and one-fifth.

Al rose from the prostrate body of the beaten wrestler, and as he got upon his feet Lawrence sprang at his victor with a yell of rage and aimed a blow at Al's head. Instantly the young piecer was in a fighting attitude; but they did not get any farther. The stewards and officials leaped upon the platform and dragged the protesting Lawrence away.

They had five minutes' rest; then they faced one another again, Al cool and confident; Lawrence with an angry scowl upon his face.

The college man altered his tactics this time. Al Moreland had shown himself both the stronger and the better wrestler, and Lawrence had been wisely advised by the men who were supporting him to give him no rest, to throw him off his feet, if possible. And this he set himself to do. Rushing at Al like a madman, and taking him completely by surprise, he seized him in a dangerous-looking waist hold. Up into the air he lifted the muscular young mill worker.

"Ah—h—h!" A long gasp from the stand. Every eye was on the wrestlers. For a moment it looked as if the valiant Al would be downed; then suddenly his sturdy legs wound about his opponent's, his shoulder rose above Lawrence's.

The manager's son strained every muscle, but for the life of him he could not lever Al over. Then the piecer,

having got command of himself again, loosened his leg hold, and as Lawrence hurled him down, he threw his feet out, and they touched the floor.

He lost his balance and fell; and the college man instantly seized him from behind and tried to get him down. The effort was useless. With a sudden and complete turnover, Al regained his feet. Lawrence was up after him like a flash, and there the two stood, wound up for anything now.

The crucial moment had come, and young Hunterton believed that he could really win by throwing Al from his feet, as he had been advised. He rushed in again; but this time the piecer's champion was ready for him. Nothing loath to come to grips, he replied to the body hold with another, and they heaved and tugged like wild men.

Then suddenly Al swung around. Lawrence lost his balance, and down to the mat they crashed, with the big, muscular body of the piecer on top. For the second and last time Lawrence Hunterton's shoulders were pressed down on the floor.

It had been a wonderful throw—wonderful by reason of the splendid resource of the winner, and the manner in which he had beaten, at his own game, the man with the big college reputation.

When Al had received the pat which proclaimed him winner he drew himself erect, deep satisfaction in his heart, but outwardly unmoved. He had no answering smile for the mighty yell of acclaim that rose from the stand. He did not see the tears in Helen's eyes—tears of delight, if he had only known it. He was only conscious of the two terrible facts—he had lost his position, and lost Helen.

But the mill workers knew nothing of the boy's black despair. They only knew that he had won—won—won. And they hoisted him to their shoulders and bore him triumphantly around the field.

"Cut it out, boys," he pleaded. "I want to go home."

An open suit case on the bed; a big broad-shouldered young fellow bending over it. That was the picture Jack Brown saw as he entered Al's room.

"Hello, Al," he cried cheerily. "Goin' to cut the boarding house and blow yourself to a trip to Yurup on the strength of that fifty, eh?"

The big fellow shut the suit case with a bang. "I'm going to get out of this town quick as the train will take me." After a pause: "I suppose you've come for my congratulations?"

"Your congratulations, Al. Great Scott, what have I done? Haven't you won the cup and the prize money and—"

"And"—bitterly—"lost everything else—even Helen. I—I knew you were fond of her, Jack, and I hope you'll be happy."

Jack flopped on the bed in the midst of shirts, neckwear, collars, socks and underwear; his shoulders shaking. Presently, with a grin, he sat up, crossed his feet Turkish fashion, and swayed gently from side to side.

"Why, Al, you great booby! Of course I'm fond of Helen, but I'm far fonder of you, old boy. And say"—seriously—"you don't need to worry any more. Your job's cinched."

"Cinched—how?"

"I'm going to tell you a *trè-mèss-jous* secret!"

"Go on."

"Well, sir, you want to address me much more respectfully in future. I happen to be the son of the head of the firm. There! I hope I have made it dramatic enough."

"What! Hargreave's son? You! You—little—"

"It's true, just the same, Al, no matter about my height. But if you open your mouth on the subject I'll fire you on the spot, see? And I'll get the dad's O. K. I'm just one of the piecers; don't forget it."

Al dropped heavily into a chair and stared.

"Oh, it's a very short story, old boy. I needn't go into the whys and wherefores of my being one of the workers. Pop decided that I had got to learn the business; so I became Jack Brown, see? But I tell you it stirred me up some when I heard old Hunterton's threat to fire you. I had a little talk with him—"

"You peached?"

"Well, I mentioned casually that he might be tempted to make you throw the match and let his kid win. I told him that wouldn't go with me. Then I sprang the glad, good news that I was popper's boy. I most took his breath away. He wanted to call the whole thing off, but I persuaded him that you didn't amount to much as a wrestler—you'll forgive that prevarication, old boy—and that his kid would have a walk-over if he was the crackerjack he was reputed to be. Also I took the liberty of wiring pop to add a fifty to the prize—and the dear old dad came up with the money."

Al's eyes were big with wonder. He gripped Jack's hand. "If only Helen—"

"I've just left that tantalizing youngster," said Jack promptly. "And I never saw a girl so dead in love with a fellow as Helen is with you." Al was on his feet. "Oh, you poor blind man! She was only teasing. If you'd thrown that bout she'd never have spoken to you again." Al reached for his hat. "She asked me if I wouldn't gently hint to you that she would be home all the evening, and—say, old boy, what's your hur—"

Al was out of the door.

"CUB LOGAN'S SCOOP"

By JACK GORDON

To add power to that huge factor of power—the American press—and to do it when the big paper in the big town scowls and growls at your offer to take hold—there's a task for grit and determination. Read how Cub Logan solved the problem of landing a job under the Big Noise, and took a long leap toward the prize of star reporter.

The big man at the desk in the private office looked up as the door opened, and frowned at the intrusion.

His word was law in the huge brick-faced skyscraper which housed the *Standard*, greatest of the big town's daily papers; his smile was the favor of heaven; and his frown was dreaded by every one, from office boys to heads of departments—for he was the greatest man in the works, the managing editor of the well-known newspaper. Beyond his hearing reporters spoke of him as the Big Noise.

"Well—what do you want?" he shot out, in his deepest tone, gazing sternly at the bright-eyed chap who stood just inside the closed door—where he had no business to be.

"A job," was the reply of the young man, who returned the gaze of the editor with all the confidence of his twenty years.

The bushy eyebrows narrowed in a frown. "What's your name?"

"Thomas Logan."

"Where do you live?" was the next sharp interrogation.

The answer was the name of a small suburb, proverbial in the city for being a "back number." It provoked a grin on the grim face of the managing editor.

"Ever done any newspaper work?"

"No—but every fellow's got to make a start, and—"

"We're not running a kindergarten," snapped the editor. "Go and get some experience before asking for a job on the *Standard*."

The young man flushed and turned away, but reconsidered and made a final effort. "All right, Mr. Trainor—I'll not come back without a story worth printing."

He stood for a moment with his hand on the knob of the door through which he had come. There was another door on the far side of the managing editor's sanctum, and through it Logan could see what he knew was called the city room—a spacious square, filled with orderly rows of typewriter desks, bookshelves, and at one side, flat-topped telegraphers' tables, on which sounders clattered their messages to the silent shirt-sleeved men who sat before them. Here was produced the "largest circulation of any paper in the city"; here ex-

perts sorted the world's news and treated each item according to its value in the eyes of the *Standard*; here hard-faced men worked at fever heat to fill positions like that to which Logan aspired.

The Big Noise looked up again, frowned a second time when he saw Logan still standing there, and was about to speak harshly when his attention was caught by a boy of seventeen, who rushed in from the city room and laid before him a pile of damp-looking sheets of paper.

"Wait a minute," snapped the editor, as the office boy was on the point of rushing out again by the way he had come. "Did you let this fellow in here?" He jerked his head in the direction of Logan.

The boy started to stammer a denial, and then, checked by something he saw in the other's face, looked squarely at the managing editor, and said: "Yes, sir."

"You're fired!" was the swift retort, as the editor swept an eye over the wet proofs. "Your job was to keep intruders out of here."

Logan looked at the lad who had just been discharged on his account; he recalled how he had slipped into the sanctum when the other's back was half turned, and he was minded to speak a word in behalf of the boy, who was bound to suffer more than he from the managing editor's temper. But the editor gave him no chance to speak.

"I told you to get out five minutes ago," he began sternly. "Don't you know my time's valuable?" He was about to add more when the telephone beside him rang sharply, and he took down the receiver.

His talk with the person at the other end of the wire was short and vigorous, ending abruptly when he slammed the receiver upon the hook and, shoving back his chair, stamped out into the city room, shouting "Clarke!" at the top of his voice.

No sooner was he through the door than young Logan was beside the jobless boy, whose gray eyes regarded him wonderingly. "Say—I'm sorry I made you lose your job. If I can do any—"

"Aw, you can't do a thing—thanks just the same," was the reply. "Take my tip and hike out of here before Trainor

gets back—he's a holy terror when he's got a grouch. And he's got a fine one now over this Wallaston business."

"You mean what he was talking about on the telephone?" asked Logan, as he and the ex-office boy made their way into the outer office. Here Alec Forbes—as the fired boy was named—got his coat and hat, and, bidding the *Standard* a sarcastic farewell, accompanied Logan to the elevator, which bore them to the street floor.

"Yes, this Wallaston stunt sure has Trainor's goat," Alec went on, as the two reached the sidewalk. "That was the star reporter of the paper he was hollering at for falling down on the story. They can't get a thing on old man Wallaston, though everybody in town knows he's crooked as well, as the old car tracks between here and his big house on Calderwood Avenue."

Logan looked a bit bewildered. "I'm afraid I'm not on to the story," he said. "What's old man Wallaston doing that they want to find out about?"

"Oh, it's the pension-lottery game that he sprang some time ago. The best guess is that Wallaston isn't in it for his health. He's out for the coin—the little quarter a week that the poor people will put in, just as they put it in the policy game some years ago." Alec's eyes flashed his contempt for the financial methods of Wallaston.

"Oh, yes," said Logan uncertainly. "I must say I don't see it all yet. I live out of town, and don't always get the latest news. What is this quarter-a-week game he wants to play?"

"It's a new one," answered Alec, a trace of admiration in his tone. "The advertisements say every man that puts up a quarter a week will draw five dollars a week as long as he's out of work; and five a week for life after forty years of age, if he's been a subscriber for ten years. Nobody knows whether Wallaston's on the level or not. They think he isn't, but they can't find the joker."

"I suppose Trainor would like to find the joker," observed Logan thoughtfully.

"Would he!" exclaimed Alec. "Say, he'd pay big money to get something on Wallaston. He's sore on him; and the fellow that lands a scoop on this story would be in all right with the Big Noise."

But let's cut out the shop talk. What are you going to do this afternoon?"

Logan stopped and looked his companion in the eye. "I'm going to try and land that job Trainor wouldn't give me just now," he said resolutely. "I've made up my mind to be a reporter, and this is where I begin. Where does Wallaston live?"

Forbes stared back at Tom. "Out on Calderwood Avenue," he answered wonderingly. "But what are you going to do? You don't mean you're——"

"That's just what I do mean," was the positive answer. "I'm going to have a shot at landing that job by getting a 'scoop' on old man Wallaston's 'game'!"

Forbes regarded his companion with wide eyes, and then stuck out his hand. "Shake," he said. "That's the talk! I bet you land the job. And if you don't mind, I'd like to come along and see you do it."

That afternoon, the two walked out toward the palatial home of Theodore Wallaston, on Calderwood Avenue, "to look over the ground," as young Logan put it, using an expression he had picked up from his new-found friend, Alec.

"You never can tell what's going to happen," he said, when Alec, more familiar with newspaper methods, tried to dissuade him from attempting to interview Wallaston, saying that he would not talk to a "free lance"; or, if he did, he would certainly tell him no more than had already been "given out" to the press by the wily promoter of the pension-lottery scheme.

"I'm not grouching—'course, I'm glad to go with you—but I'd rather be home developing that last roll of films I took," Alec objected. "It's great fun—photography. Beats everything else." He swung proudly the camera which he carried.

"Yes, it's great fun," agreed Logan, smiling at the other's enthusiasm. "I used to be fond of it, but lately my time's been taken up by something else."

"What?"

"Stenography."

Alec grunted scoffingly. "Huh! That stuff's no good—anyway, it's only good for girls to earn their living with. Catch me making dinky little curlycues with pencil on paper!"

"That's where you're wrong, Alec," replied the young man earnestly. "Stenography's one of the best things a fellow can learn. I'm studying it because it will come in handy when I get a reporter's job, but it's a good thing for any man to know."

They had argued the point further, without reaching any conclusion, except that each of the rival accomplishments was likely to come in handy some time.

"Look out!" cried Logan suddenly, as they came abreast of the gateway which gave access to the grounds of Theodore Wallaston's fine home.

Alec stepped to the safety of the roadside just in time to avoid being run down by a red motor car which had flashed from the middle of the road through the gateway. Peering over the side, the would-be reporter had descried the craftiest face he had ever seen—but his sight of it was only momentary.

"That must be old man Wallaston," he hazarded aloud. "Hello! What do you know about that?" He clutched Alec by the elbow, and pulled him behind the shelter of the garden wall.

The automobile had stopped suddenly, and Wallaston was alighting from it. A stranger might easily have mistaken the scene for a holdup; for the stopping of the car had been caused, apparently, by the apparition of a rough-looking man from among the trees on one side of the driveway that led up to the house. But the fellow's manner was furtive rather than threatening, and Wallaston waved his hand in signal that the chauffeur should drive on to the garage and leave him to deal with the intruder.

"Well, what do you know about that?" repeated Logan wonderingly, as he watched the car disappear up the drive. The instinct of the mysterious was rising in him. "There's something queer when a millionaire gets thick with such a tough-looking customer as that."

"What'll you do?" asked Alec, who had not yet recovered from the abruptness with which he had been forced to jump out of the way of the car. He had been in the act of snapping a beautiful bit of scenery, and he felt sure that the plate had been ruined by underexposure, to say nothing of the joggling of the camera.

"No use hanging round here all the afternoon," he growled, as he turned the roller that drew a fresh film into place. "You won't be able to see old Wallaston now."

"I don't want to," was the reply, as Logan, with glistening eyes, watched the gestures of the two men up the driveway. "There's a bigger story I'm going after."

"What's that?" asked Alec, his eyes widening. He perceived for the first time that his companion was really a good deal older than himself.

"Blackmail," replied Logan briefly. "That's what's going on up there"—he waved his hand cautiously toward the two men—"if I don't miss my hunch. Here's this seedy fellow—Wallaston evidently knows him, and is ashamed to take him up to the house, so he talks with him here. It looks as if the tramp chap is threatening him with something. I shouldn't wonder but what he's been in jail, or somewhere that he couldn't get away from till lately, and now he wants to make Wallaston shell out. Alec, here's a chance for you to take some fine films!" His eyes shone as he turned to his companion in concealment.

"What?"

"Snapshot those two a few times, so's to make sure that one of the films will be good. Can you do it? I'll make it right with you."

"Can I do it? Watch me!" Alec began to glide up the driveway under cover of the shrubbery, his trusty camera poised for action.

"Wait!" called Logan cautiously, and hurried after him. "I'm going to interview Wallaston if I can, but I'll give you time to get up there first. Will the light be strong enough under the trees?"

"Plenty. They're standing in the light, but it's good and dark in the shadow of that big oak, and they'll never spot me." Alec hastened cautiously away on his first assignment as a newspaper photographer.

Logan waited until he felt that his young friend had gained the shelter of the big oak, and then started up the driveway with as much indifference of manner as he could muster, without caring whether he were seen or not. He would have given anything he possessed to be able to overhear the conversation between Wallaston and the other man, but reason told him that his present move was the best he could make.

He was ten yards from the pair when the shabby one caught sight of him and uttered an oath. Wallaston whirled quickly and advanced toward Logan, with the seedy fellow bringing up the rear.

"What do you want?" was the snarl of the promoter.

"Are you Mr. Wallaston?" countered Logan, proceeding carefully with the plan he had formed. Then, as the crafty-eyed man nodded, he continued: "Mr. Wallaston, I'm from the *Standard*. We'd like to get some more facts about the pension-lottery affair."

"I've said all there is to be said just now," snapped the promoter. "You go back and tell your editor so. When there's any more to be said, the papers will be told. That's all." He made as though to turn away.

"Just a moment, Mr. Wallaston," interposed Logan, his pulse beating faster as he heard for the third time the click of Alec's camera shutter behind him.

The promoter faced about angrily. "I told you——" he began.

"Just one question, sir," said Logan. "The *Standard* has confidence in the scheme and in your company, but the first duty of a newspaper is to tell the public what's good for them." He was applying the art of making people talk—an art in which he had heard a reporter must be proficient. "Will you give out for publication some details of the investments that will be made with the funds subscribed?"

"Will I what!" Old man Wallaston was glaring at him.

"Will you tell the *Standard* how the

public's money is to be guaranteed?" repeated Logan coolly.

"Get out of these grounds!" shouted the purple-faced promoter, shaking with rage. "I'll give you two minutes to make yourself scarce, and then I'll have you thrown out, you impudent cub!"

The rough-looking fellow stepped forward, with a snarl, but Wallaston waved him back. There was an instant of tense silence, during which Alec was unwise enough to yield to the impulse of taking another picture. The click of the shutter, formerly inaudible to any one save Logan, now sounded as distinctly as a pistol shot.

Instantly both the men wheeled in the direction of the sound, and the stranger, keener of sight than the promoter, ripped out an exclamation of rage. "A spy!" he shouted, advancing toward the tree which sheltered the daring photographer.

But at the next second he stopped short, for from the shadow came a clicking sound which struck his ear with the sinister inflection of a trigger in the act of being cocked. Logan took advantage of his hesitation; he himself had no fear, but he must save Alec.

"Run, Alec—run for your life!" he shouted, setting the example by starting at a hundred-yard clip down the wooded avenue toward the highway beyond the gates. He knew when discretion was the better part of valor.

With a snarl of rage, the shabby man was after the fugitives, shouting threats of what he would do to them. Panting, they reached the road and sped toward the heart of the city, stopping only when they perceived a man coming toward them along Calderwood Avenue.

"Slack up now," said Logan. "He won't dare come after us any farther, with people passing in autos and on foot. If——" He stopped speaking; for Alec had apparently not heard him, since he was running toward the approaching man, waving his hand and shouting.

Wondering what was the matter, Logan turned to look back in the direction whence he had come. Evidently, the pursuer had given up the chase and gone back to finish his talk with Wallaston; for he was nowhere to be seen. When Logan turned again, he saw Alec approaching beside the man he had hailed, and talking excitedly.

"Here, Mr. Logan!" cried the ex-office boy of the *Standard*. "This is Mr. Evans, the star reporter of the *Standard*. He's on this Wallaston case, too—just coming to see if he can't get that interview out of the old man. I've been telling him about what happened to us."

Tom Logan bowed to the alert-looking young man whom Alec introduced. Secretly he envied him the good fortune which had been denied himself; also, he was not a little proud to meet a "star reporter" at close range. But he was somewhat irritated, as well, by Alec's

announcement that he had been babbling about what had happened to them in the driveway of Wallaston's home.

"So you've been trying to interview the old codger, eh?" said Mr. Evans good-naturedly. "Don't be cast down because you haven't landed him; I've been trying hard for a week. Hello! What's this?"

He was looking up the avenue toward the gate of Wallaston's home, and his exclamation was caused by the sudden appearance of the rough-looking man, who made an abrupt exit into the roadway and came toward them.

"So that's the customer you were running from, eh?" continued Evans, as he eyed the fellow. Logan noted that the star reporter put a hand into his side pocket and kept it there while the tramp one slouched by, with a venomous glare at the three.

Not until Wallaston's visitor had passed out of earshot did any one speak, and then it was Evans who ejaculated:

"Wow! I shouldn't be surprised if you have unearthed a real scoop! Do you know who that fellow is? I do, unless I miss my guess."

Alec stared at him open-mouthed, and Tom Logan waited eagerly for the answer.

"'Chuck' Kelly, by all that's news!" continued the reporter. "Just out of Sing Sing a couple of weeks ago, and I'll wager he's trying hard to get back already! That trampy make-up is a disguise. You can bet there's something crooked here—and, as I said, you have certainly stirred up a scoop. I wish I had a picture of him."

Alec tapped the little black box in his hand. "Got half a dozen of 'em in here," he announced proudly. "Front, back, and side elevations." He pointed an accusing finger at Logan, as the reporter's eyes widened. "Don't blame me; it was Mr. Logan had the idea at the right time. I'd never have thought of it."

"You've got the 'nose for news,' all right, Mr. Logan!" said Evans approvingly. "You'll make a good reporter some day. They'll call you 'Cub' Logan, just as they called me 'Cub' Evans, but not for long."

"Hadn't we better be moving on?" suggested the would-be newspaper man hastily, to put an end to this praising of himself. Nevertheless, he felt proud that Evans thought well of him.

"You bet your life we'll be moving on!" said Evans heartily. "At least, I'll move on to have a go at Wallaston. Logan, I want to see you to-morrow, if you'll come around to the office—will you? And say, Alec—will you take a note to Mr. Trainor for me? I'm going to write and tell him that the *Standard* needs those pictures of yours—at the regular price."

"Are they any good, really?" asked Alec, flushed with pride.

"You bet they are! 'Chuck' Kelly isn't visiting Wallaston to take afternoon tea—there's blackmail in this. And if Wallaston lets himself be blackmailed, it's because he doesn't want something to come out. And I guess that *something* has some sort of connection with the pension-lottery scheme. Anyway, I'm going to find out. So-long!"

With a wave of his hand, Mr. Evans started up the driveway of old man Wallaston's house.

"Says he must see you, Mr. Trainor," repeated the copy boy who had just entered the private office of the managing editor. "It's about Mr. Evans, sir," he added hastily, as he noted the frown of displeasure on his boss' face.

The managing editor of the *Standard* frowned the more at the boldly written "Thomas Logan" on the card before him. "Bring him in," he growled.

"Well, what is it now?" he snapped, looking up as Tom entered the sanctum. "Make it short, young man! If this is a bluff to force your way in here——"

"No bluff, Mr. Trainor," interrupted Logan, whose face betrayed the fact that he was laboring under excitement. "The boy outside told me Mr. Evans hadn't come in this morning, and I wanted to know if you had heard from him."

The managing editor sneered. "Is he any relative of yours?" he asked. "You seem to forget that this is a newspaper office. Mr. Evans is a reporter, and is supposed to do his work occasionally; so it's not to be wondered at that he doesn't hit the office on time every day."

"It's about the pension-lottery story," said Tom, ignoring the man's sarcasm. "The morning papers say it goes into effect to-morrow, and I wondered why the *Standard* didn't have Mr. Evans' story."

"Very kind of you to try and help us run the paper," was the sarcastic comment of the Big Noise; "but, really, you're too late. I don't mind telling you that Mr. Evans' story is in type, ready for the first edition this afternoon. In fact, before long you'll be able to read it for yourself."

"Oh! Did he get the scoop?" Still Logan was too eager to care for the other's sneers.

The answer of the sarcastic Mr. Trainor was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a shirt-sleeved man who, without ceremony, rushed up to the desk and laid down a paper.

"Look at that!" he shouted. "Wouldn't that frost you! Just when we were ready to spring that corking story about Wallaston, here's what Evans sends in! Throws the story flat! Sometimes I think a reporter can be too clever!"

From the description given by Alec, Tom recognized the newcomer as Mr. Clarke, the city editor of the *Standard*. "Where did this come from?" growled

Mr. Trainor, when he had read the contents of the paper.

"Special delivery," said Clarke. "Must have been mailed early this morning. Evans must be off his nut, to send that letter when he could have telephoned!"

"This is Evans' writing, all right?" questioned the managing editor.

"I don't know. He typewrites all his stuff. It may be his writing. But what did he want to write for when he could telephone?"

"Clarke, this is some kind of plant. Somebody's trying to queer our story about Wallaston's crooked deal." The Big Noise bolted out of his seat, brushing the paper to the floor with his arm.

"Yes, of course. But how about Evans? Something must have happened to him." Clarke was plainly worried over the whereabouts of his best reporter.

"Leave that to me. I'll set some of the boys to work finding him."

"Look here!" came a shout which caused both men to stop on their way to the door. "Look at this under the signature! I know where Mr. Evans is!"

Tom Logan, forgotten by the managing editor, had picked up the paper from the floor, and was waving it while he shouted. The two newspaper men rushed toward him.

"What is it?" asked Clarke, who did

not remember having noticed anything under the signature of Evans to the letter which had come by special deliver.

"Here!" was the answer. "You understand shorthand?"

The city editor shook his head. Stenography is no longer a part of the journalistic equipment.

"Well, you see that flourish under the signature, 'Charles Evans'?" went on the young man, indicating the place with an eager forefinger. "That contains some shorthand characters. The message reads: 'Written under pressure. Imprisoned by Wallaston and 'Chuck' Kelly in W.'s home. Ask Logan or Forbes.'"

"Slap that story through, Clarke!" belated Mr. Trainor, as he sprang to the door. "Jump a couple of men down to go with me in my car, and phone headquarters for detectives! We'll put a crimp in Wallaston, after all!" And he was gone.

Clarke was at the other door, in command of the situation before he was fairly in the city room. Scare heads were rushed through, as befitted the story; the letter was photographed for reproduction, including the translation of the shorthand characters which Logan had made; and when the *Standard* reached the street, half an hour after-

ward, the city became aware that the pension-lottery scheme was a bad thing for any one to invest in.

Obedying the imperative order of Clarke, that he should not leave the building, Tom sat in a daze at the managing editor's vacant desk, wondering just what was happening. He gave a sigh of relief when Alec Forbes came in, just ahead of the returning Mr. Trainor, who was accompanied by Evans. He hardly remembers what was said then, except something about the detectives "copping both birds," although he recalls being slapped on the back by Clarke.

But he does not need to remember; for other people do the remembering for him. There have been some changes in the editorial heads of the *Standard*. Whenever a new "cub" reporter is permitted to join the staff, the city editor, who now answers to the name of Evans, and the Big Noise, who is now Mr. Clarke, take pains to impress upon him the fact that the word "cub" is not a term of reproach. In proof of the statement, they point to the star reporter, Mr. Thomas Logan.

Somehow, although he draws a big salary as the best reporter in the big town, they still call him by the name which Mr. Evans gave him before he was regularly attached to the *Standard*—"Cub" Logan.

THE RACE OF HIS LIFE

By ALBERT W. TOLMAN

The August after the spring meet when he clinched the all-round championship of Beauchamp Academy by taking second in the pole vault, and winning the hundred, the two-twenty, and the broad jump, Clyde Malone ran his fastest, longest, hardest race.

An odd race it was, too, without rivals or spectators, without starter, timekeeper, or referee. The track couldn't well have been worse. Yet the excitement of a dozen contests was concentrated in that one; it called for all Clyde's nerve, and grit, and staying power; and, to cap everything, the prize was the most tempting for which a young student, or, indeed, a man of any age, could run.

Clyde was utility clerk that summer for his father at Morey's Junction. He posted the ledger; at a pinch, he jumped in behind the counter; he scoured the countryside for butter, and eggs, and vegetables; and last, but, from the viewpoint of this story, supremely most important, he delivered express packages.

Monday afternoon he was stowing away a wagon load of Uncle Thad Som-

erby's salted polluck. As he slid the last half-quintal under the back counter, the old fisherman brought in a bundle eight inches square, wrapped in newspaper and tied with bleached cod line.

"Here's my compass, Eb," said he. Clyde's father was express agent as well as storekeeper. "It's bound for the city to be adjusted. I've suspected these two months she was a bit off; but Saturday, when I headed notheast by noth for Hockamock P'int, an' brought up all standin' on Green Ledge with a split centreboard, I knowed somethin' 'd got to be done. So I boxed her up, an' here she is." He patted the bundle. "That compass went round the world with my father in the *Amazon*; an' I wouldn't take a hundred dollars for her. They made 'em good in the old days. She's wuth a dor load, now, of your newfangled gimcracks."

He glanced with an air of challenge about the store.

"I shan't rest easy till she's here ag'in," he went on. "Besides, days mean dollars to me just now. I can't find the fishin' grounds without her in this dog days

fog; so I'll have to farm till she gets back."

The box went by night train. Uncle Thad called Wednesday, but, of course, that was too soon. He came Thursday, also, only to be disappointed again. Friday afternoon found him there, yet still no compass.

"I can't be up ag'in till Monday," said he, as he drove off. "If she'd happen to show up to-morrow, bring her down, Clyde, won't ye?"

Clyde promised. Early next morning he started up country on his bicycle to collect a long-standing account. Before he returned to the store at five o'clock, he had covered forty miles; his legs ached, but he had the money. A package splashed with red sealing wax stood on the counter.

"Uncle Thad's compass," said his father. "Don't feel like ten miles more to-night, do you?"

"I promised," answered Clyde. Strapping the box on his handle bars, he started for Uncle Thad's barren shore farm five miles off by road.

Some distance east of the Junction the

Pocomoc River meanders sluggishly through a swampy intervale, to broaden out not far from the sea into a salt bog, a mile long and half as broad. As Clyde coasted down the long hill toward the stream, his progress was suddenly barred by a fence rail bearing the sign:

"BRIDGE UP!"

He stopped. Fifty feet ahead was the bridge, unfinished and impassable. It lacked a half hour of six, and a thick sea fog was rolling in. To cross by the next bridge above would mean ten additional miles of rough riding. Then he remembered the old gunning trail over the bog; Uncle Thad's house was only a quarter mile from its farther end.

Swinging his wheel over the wall, Clyde started south at a dogtrot. Ten minutes through the thick spruces brought him to the trail. By this time the fog was thick as butter.

Clyde felt sure of the trail. He knew that for the first hundred yards it ran straight out; then it curved in a broad S, ending in a short bee line to a sedge point. So he plunged unhesitatingly forward into the dense mist.

Soon he reached the stunted elder bush at the beginning of the S. Never had he seen the fog so thick and black. But he kept confidently on, and before long was well out toward the centre of the bog.

Suddenly his left foot slumped in above the ankle; his right did the same. Pulling them quickly out, he stepped ahead. Down they went again, the black mud spouting up around them. Once more he wrenched them free, and leaped forward; yet still a third time he found no firm footing.

Dread quickened his breath. He couldn't have lost the path! He shot a hasty glance round the contracted fog-walled circle; the low line of bushes that marked the trail was nowhere to be seen.

Things were beginning to look serious. He must find that trail. It lay either north or south of him. A little way back he must have turned too sharply, or else not sharply enough; which was it?

A little reflection convinced Clyde that the trail lay to the south; he turned in what he felt certain was that direction. He felt a trifle uneasy; but, pooh! of course he could find it; why not?

Besides, even if he couldn't, he knew east and west; and it ought to be a very simple thing to work ashore by leaping from hummock to hummock.

Due south—as he fancied—he hurried, springing from grasshead to grasshead through the deepening fog; soon he had traversed at least a dozen yards, yet the path did not appear. That was bad, decidedly. Clyde's spirits sank with every leap. He began to doubt his ability to distinguish direction. Another dozen yards, and he knew he had made a mistake.

Looking up, he strained his eyes, vainly hoping to catch the blur of the sinking sun through the mist. But he couldn't see a dozen feet. East, west, north, and south, all were the same; nowhere was there any distinguishable brightening in the gray, clammy vapors. No use! His head went round, and he knew at last that he was lost—lost in that great irregular opening in the spruce forest, roofed with sky, choked with rolling mists, and floored by that terrible, treacherous, quaking bog!

The next half hour was a fearful one for Clyde Malone, as he floundered at random from one sodden hillock to another. Some sank quickly, some slowly; but all sank, sooner or later.

And, worst of all, darkness—dense, impenetrable darkness—was at hand.

Clyde was deathly tired. Uncle Thad's compass was growing heavier every minute. Trained sprinter though he was, his legs, aching from that forty-mile ride, now almost refused to hold him up; his feet dragged like lead.

Where the tufts were large, he moved more slowly; where they were small, he broke into a run. For one fearful twenty yards it seemed to him he almost flew, constantly uncertain what the next second might reveal.

Something more important than medals and championships hung upon this race. Clyde knew now the prize for which he was running.

Heavier and heavier weighed Uncle Thad's box. Why not pitch the old junk away! But a sense of duty restrained him.

A mound larger than the others gave him a brief respite. Then, as it settled, his eye involuntarily sought the next. On it was the print of a heel!

Some one else on the bog beside himself?

"Help!" he cried. "Help!"

And faint and far from the space walls on every side it was tossed back in endless echoes and repetitions:

"Help! He—lp! He—lp! He—lp!"

And fainter and fainter still:

"—lp! —lp!"

Till it died away.

As Clyde sprang upon the hillock, he recognized a peculiarly shaped plant that he had noticed several minutes before; and the sickening certainty forced itself upon him that the footprint was his own. He was traveling in a circle. What hope for him now!

A cramp knotted the muscles of his left thigh; another gripped his right.

Was this to be his last race? The academy would have to look for another man to run the hundred and the two-hundred on the cinder track next spring; and next Thanksgiving Day another full-back would be digging his heels into the sod and looking for holes in the enemy's line.

A paralyzing fatigue was stealing

over Clyde. The box, held mechanically in both hands, sagged like lead. The chief thing now that kept him from giving up the fight was his horror of the bog.

Every stride he made brought night nearer. His scant horizon was shrinking; already he could not see much more than half as far as he could at first. The last lap of the race was at hand; the goal was not far away.

Clyde's brain was clear; at any rate he would go down fighting. No use to burden himself any longer with that compass. His fingers loosened their hold.

The compass? Wait a bit. Like an electric flash came the thought that here was a chance, his last and only one. The compass would tell him which was east, and west, and north, and south. Why hadn't he thought of that before!

Frantically, still running and leaping, he tore off the paper. What if the cover were nailed on!

A wooden box appeared, its top luckily closed by a tightly fitting slide. Clyde's fingers bled before he got it open.

Inside the battered copper rim, greenish blue with verdigris, appeared the round white dial, edged with jagged black notches, with the silver of polished steel shaking across it. Clyde felt bewildered. To and fro danced the needle, as he ran. But at last he got it fairly steady.

Which way did the trail lie—north, or south? He was good for just so many yards. If he took the wrong direction, he had no chance. Even if he took the right, he might not be able to go far enough to save himself.

Thick, breathless silence brooded over the bog while he considered. The vapors blew damp against his cheek. In the gloom he could barely make out the fateful letters. He started south.

Hillock after hillock sank under his feet—and still no trail. Was the bog to get him, after all?

In front appeared what he felt to be his last tussock. Mustering all his powers, he leaped upon it. What was that low line of bushes beyond the six feet of ooze ahead?

The trail! At last!

Blind, gasping, his temples throbbing painfully, a pounding in his ears, Clyde realized that this was the finish. Here he must win or lose. With a mighty effort, he tossed the box ahead; it lit safely.

Already the slime was clutching at his ankles. He launched himself forward, staking all on that final leap.

His body splashed full length in the black mire. But his hands grappled the elder bush, and with a final spurt of strength he dragged himself in to safety.

The race was over. He had won the prize—his life.

DOWN THE FLUME

By CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT

The conductor on the ramshackle accommodation train looked curiously at the two young hunters as he took their tickets, and after he had passed through the half empty car, came back and dropped into the seat in front of them.

"Coming back to-night, boys?" he asked.

"Not for a week," answered Tom Pope, the elder of the two; "maybe not for two weeks."

"Um! That's bad!" The conductor rubbed his chin reflectively. "Wish I knew for certain just when to expect you!"

Both of the Nimrods looked a little uneasy. The conductor's manner was not grave, yet it was certainly disquieting.

"What you want to know for?" demanded Tom presently.

"So's I can have an extra car put on to carry your game!" responded the conductor, with a quizzical glance at the guns and game bags the chums carried. "Land! I guess you'll get all the animals there is in the Blue Ridge. What you going for anyway, boys? Squirrels, rabbits, and pa'tridges, or deer and bear?"

Tom saw that the conductor was "joshing," but all the same his eyes lighted up. "Are there any bears 'round here?" he asked eagerly. "I—I'd do 'most anything to get a shot at one."

"You would, would you? Well, you take my advice and don't—unless you got something better to shoot him with than them popguns of yours. They wouldn't hurt him to speak of, but they're mighty liable to irritate him, and when a bear's irritated he's kind of careless in what he does. Don't excite him none, and he ain't likely to trouble you."

"But are there really bears up at Carter's?"

"Sure there are. A fellow brought one down on the train the other day. Killed him up by the big lumber flume on Bald Mountain, about a mile from Carter's, where your tickets call for. He saw an old she-bear with cubs, too, but she got away."

Tom Pope drew a long breath, and his eyes sparkled, seeing which the conductor had some misgivings.

"Now don't you go huntin' for that she-bear," he exclaimed. "A he-bear is bad enough, but a she-bear with cubs is the very dickens. Don't you fool with her none. Say, look here! Where you fellows going, anyway? You're sort of apt to get lost up here if you get off the road."

He looked at the younger of the two, Jack Walton, a youth of eighteen, but

he spoke to Tom, who was nearing twenty.

"My father's president of the lumber company that owns the flume," Tom announced. "We're going to stay with Mr. Mullins, the lumber boss."

One long whistle, followed by two short ones, came from the laboring engine; and the conductor rose.

"The next station's yours," he said. "You'll be all right, I reckon, if you're going to stay with Pat Mullins. He's a mighty good man." With a nod he moved away.

In a few minutes the hunters found themselves standing on a platform in front of a tiny station house, watching the train puff away up the grade, and looking around for Mullins. They did not see him, however; in fact, they saw nobody at all except the station agent, who was telegraph operator, postmaster, and storekeeper as well.

As the newcomers hesitated, this man came toward them. "Anything I can do for you, boys?" he asked.

Tom explained the situation, and the man scratched his head. "Mullins ain't been down here for two days," he said. "Does he know you're comin'?"

Tom nodded. "My governor wrote him day before yesterday," he declared.

"Humph! There ain't been any letter for Mullins for three days. Guess your father's epistle's done gone astray. Not that it makes any difference. It's only about three miles to Mullins' camp, and you can't miss the path. Put your stuff inside the station and I'll take care of it till Mullins sends down for it."

In a few minutes all of the boys' impedimenta except their shotguns were safely stored away, and they were ready to start. The agent led them to the end of the platform and pointed to a long, curious-looking trough set on a high trestle that ended a hundred yards away. From its open mouth a stream of water was pouring.

"There's the end of the flume," he explained. "An' Mullins is camped beside it about three miles up the mountain. There's a path tramped all the way along it, an' all you've got to do is to follow your nose. Don't you go monkeyin' in the flume, though, 'cause a bunch of logs is likely to come a-shooting along it and knock the stuffin' out of you." He broke off and shaded his eyes with his hand. "Here comes a lot now!" he exclaimed. "Look! Around the face of the Cape away up yonder."

The young fellows looked. Gaudy and yellow, the flume showed conspicuously against the green background of the mountain. In places it was hidden by

trees, but for the most part it stood boldly out, straddling the gullies on enormous legs, rising higher and higher, until far in the distance it flared out against a rocky face that shouldered it outward until it almost overhung the valley. Something was moving along the top of the flume, something black that now and then shot up into the air and then sank back again.

"See 'em?" queried the station man. "That's a to'able big drive. They're crowdin' so that they push clean up out of the flume once in so often. You'll see 'em clearer when they come down the Devil's Slide, just this side of the Cape. Watch now!"

The logs had reached the end of the cliff, and were shooting through a mask of trees just in front of which the flume suddenly dived downward. The silver ribbon of the water cataracting down it lay in a direct line with the station.

As Tom and Jack watched, the logs appeared at the top of the streak, bowed, seemed to hesitate, and then shot downward.

"Ain't that the greatest shoot the chutes you ever saw?" asked the agent enthusiastically. "You get Mullins to bring you down it in a flume boat, an' you'll have something to tell about when you get home." He drew out his watch. "Them logs'll be here in one minute and forty seconds," he concluded.

The logs had disappeared. The flume did not again dip steeply, and the logs remained hidden within it. But at the end of the specified seconds they shot into view, poised for an instant in the open mouth of the flume, and then hurled themselves like huge javelins a hundred feet beyond it. For half a minute the air resounded with the crash of their fall; then came silence, and once more the water spouted smoothly from the open end of the flume.

Awe-stricken, young Pope and his friend stood still until the riot had ceased. Then Jack looked up. "What did you say about a flume boat?" he asked curiously.

"Eh! Oh! Yes! The men build boats sometimes just wide enough to fit in the flume, and to go round the curves easy—boats about four feet wide and ten long—and come a-swoopin' down the flume in 'em. I came down in one once, an' I'm glad I did, but I don't want no more of it. Terra cotta is good enough for me. But say! It's a great experience!"

Jack stared at the man breathlessly. "Did—did you shoot out of the end yonder like those logs did?" he asked.

"Lands! no! I wouldn't have been

here if I had. No, indeed! There's four or five mouths—by-passes, we call them—up yonder a few yards, and there's a man there—old Bill Jackson—that shunts the logs into whichever one he thinks best. When a flume boat comes along, he shunts it into a special by-pass that lets it stop. He's supposed to be on the job all the time, but when a fellow's rushin' down the spout lickety-split, he can't help wonderin' what would happen if old Jackson happened to be asleep or something. Well! So-long! You follow the path, and you'll get to camp all right!"

The hunters started gayly up the trail. It was a mere footpath, in places scarcely discernible, and everywhere more or less overgrown by the crowding vegetation of the early summer. Except when the inequalities of the ground made another route advisable, it followed the line of the flume pretty closely, but at changing levels. Where the flume strode boldly across the ravine on timber legs, the path dipped down and then ran up again; at the Devil's Slide it made a wide detour up the mountainside; and at the rocky spur that the agent had called the "Cape," it left the flume altogether and went directly up and across the ridge for a quarter of a mile.

At the point where it rejoined the flume, Pope and his comrade had a chance for the first time to examine the latter close at hand, as here it lay on the ground along the mountainside, and the path ran side by side with it for a few hundred yards.

In construction it was simple enough, being nothing more than a wooden trough with a flat bottom and two sides that sloped outward, the whole being firmly braced and spiked to ties laid on the ground. A little beyond, a small creek splashed down the mountainside and cataracted into the flume, nearly filling it. Above this point the water was low, having evidently wasted out in the long trip from the still distant heights.

A few rods farther along the two came to a sort of switch, opening upstream from the main flume. "What's that?" exclaimed Jack excitedly. "A flume boat?"

Tom nodded. The boat spoke for itself. For a while the hunters studied it, noting how a mere push would send it out into the main flume, where the water would catch and hurry it away. Then they turned back to watching the flume.

Logs were coming down it pretty steadily, sometimes singly, but more often in lots of six or eight that ground and crushed upon each other as they swept by at terrific speed.

"By Jingo!" exclaimed Jack, "I'd hate to be in that boat and have a bunch of those logs chasing me."

"Me, too!" Tom agreed. "But come along. It's getting late."

Jack hesitated, glanced to where the path plunged into the heavy shadows cast by the great trees that crowned the upper part of the mountain. "Say, Tom!" he remarked. "S'pose we meet that old she-bear in those woods."

Tom fingered his gun. "Oh, come on," he urged. "That conductor was just stringing us. I don't believe there's a bear anywhere round. And anyway—"

"What's that?" Jack clutched his friend's arm. "Right there by that tree. Say! it's a cub—two of 'em."

He ran forward and dropped on his knees beside two woolly bear cubs that were tumbling over each other in a patch of sunlight that had filtered through the trees. Small they were, scarcely bigger than good-sized hares, but they growled and slapped with their paws at the two-legged strangers as the latter tried to fondle them. Soon, however, they grew quiet and allowed themselves to be caressed.

Suddenly Jack jumped up. He thought he heard something crushing through the underbrush. "What's that?" he exclaimed. "The old bear, sure!"

Tom stood up and listened. "Don't care if it is," he returned. "I'm going to keep this cub." He caught up one of the little animals, and started to run with it; and Jack, not to be outdone, followed with the other.

If either had thought for a moment, he would have realized how hopeless it was for him to try to escape with such a load. But neither did stop to think; in fact, neither knew just why he was running nor where he was running to. They just yielded to the temptation of having a lark with the mother bear.

The weight of the cubs soon made them slacken speed, and when they reached the little hut beside the flume boat they dropped their burdens. "Don't believe it was the bear, after all," said Tom.

But Jack stood pointing. "It is! It is!" he cried, his voice shaking a little. "Look! Look!"

Out of the underbrush, two or three hundred yards away, a bear came rushing, with open mouth and red, slavering jaws. She had missed her cubs and was coming to their rescue.

For an instant young Pope and Jack stood staring, frozen with terror. Then Tom snatched up his cub, and dropped it into the flume boat. "Get in! Get in!" he shouted. As Jack, clutching his cub, scrambled in, Tom pushed the boat out into the main flume and scrambled aboard.

Just in time! The boat slipped away from the switch with the old bear not twenty yards behind! Slowly it moved at first, and the adventurers' hearts came into their mouths as they saw the white

teeth and straining claws of the robbed mother coming nearer and nearer. The boat gathered way, but still the bear gained, slowly but surely. Almost she touched its stern, when suddenly the ground sank away as the flume swung out upon the trestle work, and the boat, caught by the current at last, went winging across a broad ravine, leaving bruin hopelessly behind.

The young men drew a long breath. But almost instantly their hearts sank again. The speed of the boat was steadily increasing. When Tom tried to stop it by catching at the side of the flume, it tore away from his fingers, leaving them full of splinters. Then abruptly it dived, shooting down a small incline with terrifying speed, and causing a horrible sinking in the pits of the passengers' stomachs.

Jack was in despair, but Tom gripped his courage with both hands. He was the older, and it was his place to cheer his friend. "Oh, we're all right," he declared manfully—though his teeth chattered—"we're all right. It's no worse than a roller coaster."

Even as he spoke the boat flashed out along the broad side of a hill. Jack gave one glance. "It's the Cape," he groaned. "Tom! It's the Cape!"

Pope did not answer. He could not! The flume was pinned to the cliff, supported on brackets that overhung the valley a thousand feet below. Round it shot the boat, grinding against the outer edge as it took the curve. On! On! for hours, it seemed, it balanced on the edge of destruction. Then at last it ran straight forward once more and Tom cheered up slightly. But not for long. Jack was muttering something, and at last Tom caught the words: "The Devil's Slide!"

And before he had more than time to realize the coming danger, it was upon them. The boat balanced on the edge, then shot downward, swifter than on any shoot the chutes ever built! Fascinated, unable to close his eyes, Tom saw far ahead and far below the tiny railway station, saw the end of the flume; remembered how the logs had shot out of it; and knew what would happen—must happen—soon, unless the switch tender should see them coming in time to shunt the boat into the by-pass.

The whole wild ride could not have lasted more than five minutes. But never if he lives to be a grandfather will Tom Pope forget those five minutes. Jack also will remember, you may be sure. When the switch tender went to the boat as it floated in the quiet water of the by-pass, he found both of the hunters who didn't hunt about "all in." But they braced up in time to exult over the conductor as they took the cubs they had kidnapped back to the city on the night train.

THE NEW BOY

A Story in Which Clif Stirling Reappears

By J. G. St. DARE

Author of "Clif Stirling, Captain of the Nine," etc.

You meet a chap who knows how to take care of himself when nearly the whole academy is bent upon putting a crimp in him. He seems to enjoy the experience greatly. Time and again he gives his foes a jolt by saying and doing just the right thing at the right time. You'll enjoy the surprises he springs on them not only by play of wit, but with skill in every branch of manly sport they put up to him. Clif Stirling, apparently, is the only fellow at Fairfield who sizes Arthur Gregory right.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY.

"He's got a swelled head," growled Reddy Sprowl. "He needs to have it reduced."

"He's a hot-air merchant, that's what's the matter with him," said Skippy Fisk, as he whittled a cedar peg with his new jackknife.

"Thinks he's somebody because he comes from the city," grunted Booby Tucker, lying flat on his back with his cap pulled over his eyes.

"How'd he ever happen to come here to school, anyhow?" wondered Bub Clayton, poking with a twig at a black cricket that was frantically dodging amid the grass roots in an endeavor to escape un mutilated.

Jud Murdock was the only one of the group of five who offered no remark.

They were talking of Arthur Gregory, a new boy, who had entered the senior class at Fairfield Academy at the beginning of the fall term. It was the third day of school, and they had assembled by chance beneath a big elm in a corner of the academy yard. The first cool touch of early September had given way to a recurrent warm wave, and the shade of the tree was grateful.

"Who knows anything about him, anyhow?" said Sprowl.

"Nobody knows anything except what he's told," grinned Clayton; "and he's spun some beautiful fairy tales."

Fisk pushed the point of the peg into the ground and began "flipping" his open knife in various difficult ways, apparently seeking to strike the peg with the blade.

"Oh," he chuckled, "the feller's a wonder, believe me! He was a great all-round athlete at Lincoln Academy—played second on the nine, left half on the eleven, made a record as a sprinter, swims, rows, shoots, and boxes. He was a champion at anything to which he turned his hand; I know it's true, because he told me."

"I hate a fellow who blows about him-

self," said Sprowl. "Perhaps he attended Lincoln, but I doubt if he ever made a team. Lincoln's the biggest school in the State, and a man has got to deliver the goods if he gets onto a team there."

"He's got a Lincoln football sweater," said Fisk; "I saw it."

"Perhaps some one gave it to him," suggested Clayton. "Maybe he bought it and had a football letter stitched on. The sweater is no proof he ever made the eleven."

"He does seem to know something about the game," said Murdock. "I heard him explaining the new rules to Stirling."

"Oh, wow!" barked Fisk, pausing in his occupation. "To Stirling! Clif must have liked that!"

"I suppose he got a book of rules and posted up," said Reddy. "Any chump might do it; even Tooker could."

"Hey?" grunted the fellow who was lying on his back. "Who you callin' a chump?"

"He's a swagger duck," said Clayton. "Slings on plenty of lugs, and he's got all the girls going a' redy. Winnie Wickford and Gertie Morton have been thick as two peas in a pod, but now they've had a quarrel over Gregory and don't speak."

"He doesn't seem to be particularly popular with Park Wickford," observed Fisk, wiping the blade of his knife on his trousers.

"Oh, Park's jealous," declared Clayton. "The new fellow's clothes are more swagger, and that's enough to make Park sore."

"You bet!" nodded Murdock. "If Gregory really knows football and can play the game, he might prove a big addition to our team. We're going to have a team this fall, aren't we?"

"Sure," said Sprowl quickly; "Stirling says so. We're going to do something, too. Fairfield won the baseball championship last spring for the first time in years, and there isn't any reason why we can't make the other schools go some

at football. Last year we quit after Elmville trimmed us fifty-two to nothing, but it's going to be different this year."

"Oh, we were all split up last season," said Clayton. "There was nothing but pulling and hauling, and we couldn't seem to stick together at all."

"Stirling's the man to remedy that," asserted Murdock confidently. "Look what he did with the nine. He's the boy."

"Of course this new fellow will want to pick his position on the team," said Clayton. "He thinks us a lot of rubes, and he'll be prepared to run things to suit himself."

"That's where he's going to get up against it," was Murdock's opinion. "I don't believe we're going to let any stranger come in here and boss us around."

"Ouch!" grunted Booby Tooker, as the handle of Fisk's knife thumped against his heel. "What are you trying to do, amputate my foot? If you can't flip a knife better'n that, take my advice and sink the thing in your pocket."

"Perhaps you're rather clever at it," scoffed Skippy. "Set up here, Boob, and I'll play you a game of numbly peg."

"Oh, go on; I'm too tired."

"You're always tired. Git up." Fisk poked his toe into the ribs of the recumbent fellow with such force that Tooker's cap fell off his eyes and Booby hoisted himself to a sitting posture, spluttering a remonstrance.

"Come," said the little chap, "I'll play you numbly peg. You're challenged. Are you afraid to accept a challenge? I dare you."

Tooker felt that it would be a shameful show of cowardice to refuse a dare. Therefore, as Fisk squared round facing him, he reluctantly prepared for the contest.

"Go at him, Booby," urged Clayton. "Because he happens to have a new knife doesn't make him any better at it. I'll bet on you."

The other three gathered around to

watch Fisk and Tooker. Their interest was centred on the contest. Skippy began by flipping the knife a certain number of times from his knees and his elbows, causing it to strike blade foremost and stand up in the ground. He finished with a more or less difficult performance, grasping the lobe of his right ear with the thumb and finger of his left hand and throwing the knife with his right hand held inside his bowed left arm, then reversing the position and making the cast with his left hand. Not once did he fail to make the knife stand.

"Fancy work, Skippy," laughed a pleasant voice; and the boys looked up to see big Clif Stirling, the most popular fellow in school, standing near.

Through merit, loyalty to the school, and natural ability as a leader, combined with that indefinable quality known as personal magnetism, Clif had risen to this recognized position in spite of the opposition of his formidable rival, Parker Wickford, who had fought him to the last ditch. In his desperate efforts to get the best of Stirling, Wickford had resorted to methods not only questionable, but absolutely unscrupulous and treacherous toward his own team; yet, as frequently happens in such cases, his scheming and plotting had recoiled to his own undoing and downfall. Finally, however, Wickford's better nature triumphed, and he reestablished himself with his schoolmates by stepping into the critical game of the baseball season after, through spiking, Stirling had been put out of the play, pitching in his finest form and holding the rival nine down, which performance gave Fairfield the baseball championship. Thenceforth the past was forgotten; the hatchet was buried, and Stirling and Wickford became more friendly than before.

Nevertheless, without effort, Clif maintained his standing as a leader, and it is probable that Wickford might not have been so readily forgiven had the boys known the full extent of his attempted treachery. One of them, Jud Murdock, did know; but, although he despised Park, Jud had excellent reasons for remaining silent about it.

Clif had now entered upon his senior year at Fairfield, and it was generally believed that he would be chosen captain of the eleven; for, after making a pitiful fizzle the previous season, the team had disbanded early in the autumn without choosing a captain for the ensuing year.

"Ho!" grunted Booby Tooker, grabbing the knife. "Just you watch me, Clif. That's nothing; I can do it, too."

But, in spite of this boast, he failed on the second spin of the knife.

"Hold on," cried Tooker. "That wasn't fair. It slipped."

"Go ahead, Boob," chuckled Skippy; "I'll give you another chance."

Upon his second trial Tooker got along finely until he attempted to accomplish the difficult trick of casting the knife through his bowed arm while clasping the lobe of his ear. Then he failed again.

"That settles it," cried Fisk. "You've got to root the peg, Took."

He found the peg he had whittled and planted the point of it in the ground just deep enough to make it stand. This done, he seized the end of the knife blade between a thumb and finger and prepared to drive the peg.

"I'm a-watchin' you," reminded Tooker, leaning forward with his gaze on Fisk. "You've got to shut your eyes—shut 'em tight."

"Sure," said Skippy. "You watch." Seeming to close his eyes as tightly as possible, he lifted the knife and struck at the peg with the back of it. His first blow landed fairly, and the peg was sunk more than half its length in the ground.

"Oh-ho!" cried Sprowl. "That was a corker, Skip. You'll have to root, Booby. Give it another, Fisk, old man."

Skippy's second blow missed entirely, and Tooker whooped his satisfaction, while the others, who were eager for the sport, grunted in doleful dismay.

Fisk turned his head to one side and lifted his hand for the third and final blow. As the knife descended, for a single flitting moment, Skippy opened the eye farthest from Tooker. The peg was hit full and fair and driven so deep into the ground that scarcely a nub of it projected.

"Hey!" cried Tooker. "No fair!, You looked!"

"Get out!" retorted Fisk, with pretended indignation. "I even turned my head away. Did you see me look, Bub?"

"No," answered Clayton truthfully, "I didn't see you look." In his position at Skippy's right he had been able to see only one side of Fisk's face, and the little fellow had opened his eye on the other side.

"That settles it," said Fisk. "Are you going to squeal, Boob? Going to show the white feather?"

"You looked," persisted Tooker; "I'll leave it to Jud."

"Aw, squealer, squealer!" taunted Fisk. "Bub was watching me. If he didn't see me look, how could Jud? Back down. Show your pluck. You never did have any sand."

This was too much for Tooker, and he proceeded to plant himself on his hands and knees, preparing to try to pull the peg with his teeth. Gathered close around, the grinning boys looked on.

"Go after it, Took!"

"Oh, you, Boob!"

"Root, you lobster—root!"

"Don't give up; you've got to do it."

Tooker plowed round the peg with his nose, striving to grasp the end with his teeth. The boys shouted with laughter.

"Somebody ought to help him do the grunting," said a voice; and they looked up to see the new boy standing near.

"Then," said Murdock, "judging by the length of your bristles, you're the one for that job."

"In a case like this," was the instant retort, "length of bristles does not count nearly as much as length of snout, and I will resign in your favor."

CHAPTER II.

BEHIND SPROWL'S BARN.

He was a saucy-looking fellow, tall and slender, with twinkling blue eyes and a mischievous mouth. His hands were sunk deep into his pockets and his cap cocked a bit rakishly. The cut of his clothes seemed to denote that they had not been built in Fairfield. His trousers were turned up at the bottoms in a double roll. He displayed a glimpse of his teeth in a chaffing smile as he tipped his head sidewise to return Murdock's look.

Now it happened that the one feature about which Jud was the most touchy was his sizable nose. The blood mounted slowly to his face, which took on an ugly look. Nevertheless, the new boy was not in the least disconcerted by this.

Tooker, on all fours, had ceased trying to pull the peg. An expectant silence fell upon the others as they watched and waited.

Presently Murdock rose to his feet.

"I may have a long snout," he said hoarsely; "but no swaggering, city-bred upstart can touch it."

"Excuse me," laughed Arthur Gregory. "I wouldn't care to try it—unless you used your handkerchief first."

It was the essence of insolence, and every boy scrambled hastily to his feet. It was Stirling who got between them and held Murdock off.

"No, Jud—no!" he cried, while Murdock, his fists clenched, sought to push him aside. "Here comes Professor Parker."

"I don't care!" grated the enraged lad. "I'll fix him! I'll attend to his nose for him!"

The new boy stood unmoved, his hands still in his pockets, that saucy, irritating smile on his lips.

"Your friend seems agitated," he said, addressing Clif. "Let him alone; I'll calm him down."

"Stirling's right," said Sprowl; "you can't fight here—not now. Prof would nab you, and you might get fired."

"Oh, it wouldn't be much of a fight, anyhow," observed the new boy.

"That's right; that's right!" palpitated

Murdock. "You wouldn't last long, you blowhard!"

"You fellows will have to settle this somewhere else," said Clif.

"He'll have to settle it, all right," snarled Murdock. "He's got to fight."

"I'm dreadfully frightened," laughed Gregory. "Is this person I've irritated the champion pugilist of Fairfield?"

"Champion enough for you," retorted Murdock. "Come around here putting on airs and shooting off your mouth, will you? You need a lesson."

"I don't think you can qualify as my instructor," said the new boy.

"I'll show you! I'll give you a chance to think again!"

"Thank you. You're so kind!"

"There goes the last bell," cried Fisk. "We've got to hustle in, fellows."

Laughing, the new boy turned toward the academy. The others followed him, Stirling walking with Murdock, whose arm he grasped. Clif could feel Jud trembling with rage. The blood had receded, leaving the boy's face pale and set.

"I'm going to pound the head off him," declared Jud, his voice catching. "He's been looking for it ever since he struck Fairfield, and I'll give him a plenty."

"Keep your head," advised Stirling. "You're so mad now that you wouldn't be in any shape to fight."

"Don't you believe it! I'd polish him off in less than three minutes!"

"Perhaps so, but——"

"Perhaps so!" snarled the enraged fellow. "I know it! What's the matter with you, Clif? I hope you don't think a boasting dub like that can do me up?"

"The fellow who goes into a fight in your present condition gives the other man a handicap. Keep cool if you meet him and——"

"If I do! Don't you think for a minute that I won't—unless he runs away."

"All right," said Clif soothingly; "but it's a bad plan to underestimate an antagonist, old fellow."

The afternoon session dragged slowly away. Looking forward to what was to happen, not a few of the boys fancied letting-out time would never come. At last school was dismissed for the day.

Arthur Gregory left the academy in company with two girls, who had plainly made a pretense of lingering for this opportunity.

Murdock had his eye on the new boy, and he followed a short distance behind, accompanied by Sprowl and Fisk. Stirling and several others trailed along after them.

Shortly after leaving the academy grounds Murdock called to the new boy.

"Gregory," he said, "I want to see you. I've got a little business with you."

Arthur looked around in evident surprise.

"Oh, hello," he smiled. "I had forgotten all about you."

"Thought so," sneered Jud; "that's why I refreshed your memory. Everybody noticed you trying to sneak."

Gregory excused himself to the girls, who looked back, doubtful and apprehensive, as they walked slowly away. Turning, he met Murdock's vengeful eyes with a coolly indifferent glance.

"So you're still raw, are you?" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Didn't know but you'd get over it. You began this thing with that delicate bit of repartee about bristles. I'm rather ashamed of myself for coming down to the same level, but——"

"Don't apologize—for goodness' sake, don't apologize!" cried Murdock. "I wouldn't have you do a thing like that for the world."

"I haven't the slightest idea of it," beamed the new boy. "Where shall we go?"

"There's a good chance behind my barn," said Reddy Sprowl quickly. "We can get out of sight there. Won't nobody be liable to interfere with you."

"Lead on to the barn," invited Gregory.

Away they went, their numbers augmented by various other boys who had scented something and were eager to witness the "fun."

Shut in by the orchard behind Sprowl's barn, the boys formed a circle, while Murdock hastily stripped off his coat and began rolling up his sleeves. Again he was quivering with eagerness and suppressed wrath.

"How shall we do it?" questioned Gregory carelessly. "Shall it be Marquis of Queensbury rules? Who will act as referee? And who will kindly volunteer to be my second? Don't all speak at once for that last-mentioned honor."

Apparently he felt the hostility of every one present and cared not a fig for it.

"Stirling can act as referee if he wants to," growled Murdock. "I don't need any second. As far as rules are concerned, I'm ready to fight fair, without gouging, kneeling, or butting, and that's all I ask of you."

"How many rounds?" asked Gregory, "and how long shall they be?"

"Rounds!" exclaimed Jud. "There'll be just one, and it will last until one of us is licked and cries quits."

"How crude and primitive!" sighed the new boy. "You fellows down here are sadly behind the times. It's not fair to the spectators, either. They're looking for a lot of sport, and in justice to them we should extend their amusement as far as possible."

"Come, you windbag," urged Murdock. "you can't talk yourself out of it. You've got to fight, and you may as well get ready. I'm waiting."

"What an impulsive chap!" murmured Gregory, as he slowly removed his coat,

collar, and tie. "First time I ever saw one so deucedly eager to take a wallop."

As he rolled up the sleeves of his soft negligee shirt he gave them a glimpse of some silk underwear. He was very deliberate, regarding with indifference his antagonist, who was literally athrob for the clash.

Reddy Sprowl sprang forward and put an arm over Murdock's shoulders, whispering into Jud's ear:

"For goodness' sake, take it out of him! If you don't whip him, he'll think he's cock of the walk."

"Oh, I will; don't worry," promised Jud. "He won't last long."

The new boy took his belt up a notch and politely announced that he was ready, at the same time stepping forward and extending his open hand.

"Put up your fists!" cried Murdock. "There won't be any handshaking before this fight."

"Oh, very well," retorted Gregory; "only it seems a shame that common prize fighters should be more courteous toward each other than we are. Let's get it over. I have an engagement to play tennis with a young lady to-night, and it gets dark early."

"When I'm through with you," promised Jud, "you won't be very eager to show your face to Winnie Wickford. I'm coming!"

"Come on."

Murdock rushed savagely.

CHAPTER III.

A HARD NUT TO CRACK.

Gregory sidestepped deftly and avoided the terrific blow aimed at his face. At the same time he slammed a body jolt into Murdock's ribs. Lightly he danced away, with his antagonist following up.

"Give them room! give them room!" was the cry; and the excited boys fell back.

Stirling, acting as referee, watched every move, and in a very few moments he perceived that the new boy was the possessor of considerable skill at sparring. Doubtless Murdock was the stronger, but he went into the battle with a total disregard of personal danger, exposing himself recklessly, and it was quickly evident that he was suffering severe punishment. Gregory improved his opportunities, while taking care to keep out of harm's way. He was quick as a cat on his feet, and he could come in, break through Murdock's ineffective guard, deliver a blow, and get away untouched.

Jud himself soon realized that he was getting much the worst of it. Indeed, he had succeeded in landing only one or two spent and ineffective blows, while in turn he had received some decidedly

vicious jabs, one of which had split his lip and set him to spitting blood.

His rage increased with every failure to land upon the fitting, darting, smiling fellow, who positively declined to remain in one place long enough for Jud to reach him.

"Go after him, Murdy!"

"Look out! Watch his left!"

"Swing under and meet him when he ducks!"

"Keep your eyes open!"

"Wake up! You're too slow!"

From every side came these bits of advice. Jud knew the sympathy of the witnesses was wholly with him, but he likewise knew they could plainly perceive he was getting the worst of it. The elusiveness of his antagonist was unspeakably exasperating. Several times he sought to clutch Gregory with one hand, thinking to hold the fellow and hammer him with the other hand. Each time he was amazed by complete failure.

Something landed on his lower jaw, jarring him from the top of his head to the base of his spine. Through a haze he saw that still smiling, taunting, hated face. The ground seemed to reel beneath his feet, and he went down.

"He's out!" cried some one. "He's knocked out! Gregory whipped him!"

Looking up through that haze, Murdock saw the new boy standing near, his hands on his hips. Stirling bent over Jud, who started up, furiously pushing Clif aside.

"Get out!" he panted huskily. "I'm all right. I'll fix him yet!"

"He doesn't know when he's whipped," said Gregory. "Some of his solicitous friends had better take care of him."

Murdock swayed for a moment after rising. Then, with a tremendous effort, he got control of himself and was steady again.

"You'll never live long enough to whip me!" he palpitated.

Again he charged. Again they were at it, Jud striving to land one of those terrible swinging blows, but spending his strength on empty air, while Gregory systematically resumed the task of chopping him up.

"It's no use," said Clayton, in great disappointment; "the fellow's too much for Jud."

His friends were losing faith in him! This made him still more furious and blind with wrath. He lunged again and again. He did not seem to realize that he was being hit. But at last the haze which had blinded him became a dark cloud, and the very ground seemed to rise up and smite him.

The fight was over. Murdock lay on his face, with one arm curled under him.

"He's got plenty of sand," said the victor; "but he can't fight any more than a truck horse."

Stirling and Sprowl knelt quickly and sought to revive the defeated lad.

"I suppose that's the whole of it?" said Gregory, glancing around at the silent, frowning boys. "If so, I'll put on my coat and keep that tennis engagement."

They understood it as a challenge. They were dared, any of them, to take up Murdock's quarrel. Not a fellow moved.

The victor picked up his collar and tie and adjusted them, after which he slipped on his coat.

By this time Murdock was showing signs of recovery.

"I offered to shake hands with him before we began," said Gregory. "Tell him I'm ready to do so any time."

Sullenly they watched him take his departure.

A few moments later Murdock, half supported by Stirling, was sitting up and declaring himself all right. When he learned that Gregory was gone he raged at the boys for letting the fellow get away, ending by shedding tears of mortification and wrath.

"No use, Jud, old man," said Reddy regretfully; "he was too much for you. He had the most science and——"

"I tell you I'm not whipped," choked the defeated boy, wiping the blood from his face with Stirling's handkerchief. "A whipper-snapper, an upstart, a braggart like that can't whip me."

"He couldn't if you knew as much about boxing as he does," said Clif.

"So you've gone back on me, too, Stirling! I didn't think it of you!"

"I haven't gone back on you, Jud; but it's a plain fact that Gregory was too fast for you."

"Oh, we'll have a hot time with that fellow now!" sighed Skippy Fisk. "He was bad enough before; now there'll be no standing for him."

"Somebody has got to do him up," said Clayton. "It's up to you, Clif, old man."

"I haven't any quarrel with him," said Stirling.

"Then make one," snapped Bub. "That's easy enough. He's so cocky he'll pick a quarrel in a minute."

"He practically challenged any of us to tackle him if we dared," said Skippy. "I was tempted to take it up myself, as long as nobody else did."

Down through the orchard they went to an old spring, where Murdock washed the blood from his bruised face. A few of them hurried away to tell the story of the fight they had witnessed.

Those at the spring held a council. They were practically united in the conviction that it would be an everlasting obloquy to the boys of Fairfield if they permitted a stranger from the city to come among them and deport himself after the overbearing manner of Gregory without being checked and shown his place. Certainly the new boy held them in disdain, and would continue to do so until properly and thoroughly whipped. That he was not the sort of chap who

could be conquered by any one without difficulty they now understood. In short, as Reddy put it, he was "a hard nut to crack." They had made the mistake of underestimating him, and to repeat that blunder would be folly indeed.

"Bub's right," said Sprowl; "it's up to you, Clif. You're the fellow for the job, and we depend on you."

To their surprise, Stirling again expressed a disinclination to take the initiative in the matter.

"If Gregory forces my hand," he said, "of course I'll have to meet him halfway. After all, he may not be the worst fellow in the world, you know. We haven't been very favorably inclined toward him, and doubtless he has felt it."

"Favorably inclined—toward a hot-air geyser!" cried Fisk. "Who would be? He thinks we're a lot of muckers, and he don't hesitate to say as much. If you can stand for that, Clif, you're different from the rest of us."

"We'll see what will happen," said Stirling noncommittally.

Walking home together, Clayton and Fisk continued to discuss the sensation of the day.

"Do you think Stirling is afraid of the new boy?" Bub finally asked.

"Nun-no, I don't," faltered Skippy; but there seemed to be doubt implied in his tone.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE AGAINST FIVE.

Above the clacking of looms rolling out through the open windows of the old Felt Mill, Keith Stirling heard the sound of boyish voices and laughter, which seemed to come from behind the mill itself. Pausing to listen, he heard another sound—the hoarse cawing of a crow.

In a moment Keith was unning as fast as he could around the corner of the mill. He was one of Clif Stirling's younger brothers, a slender, pale-faced little chap, who had not fully regained his strength and health after an attack of typhoid fever.

Behind the mill five boys were taking turns popping peas at a young crow with a pea shooter. Besides being disabled by the clipping of its wings, the crow was prevented from escaping by means of a stout cord tied securely to one leg and knotted to a post driven into the ground. The cord was about four feet in length, enabling the crow to hop and flutter about, and the bird's tormenters shouted and whooped with merriment at the ludicrous jumps and flops of the captive when pelted with the peas.

"Stop! stop!" cried Keith, running forward. "That's my crow. I've been hunting for him everywhere."

Letting fly another shot, which hit the crow glancingly, Spike Drew surrendered the pea shooter to Peepy Tweed and grabbed Keith by the collar.

"What are you giving us?" he demanded scornfully. "Your crow!"

"Yes, my crow," panted Keith, striving to break away for the purpose of protecting the tormented bird. "He ran away, and I've been trying to find him. Stop, Peepy—don't you shoot another pea at him!"

"Aw, pooh!" grinned Tweed, letting fly and missing the crow by a few inches. "Who's going to stop me? Not you, I'll be bound."

Keith grew frantic. "You're a lot of cowards!" he shouted shrilly. "You'll pay for this!"

Lemon Cooper looked alarmed.

"He'll tell Clif," he whispered. "We'll get into trouble."

But Spike Drew persisted in restraining the excited claimant of the crow, in spite of the latter's desperate efforts to release himself.

"You've got nerve, comin' round here claimin' an old crow as personal property, ain't ye?" he sneered. "Why, a crow can't belong to anybody, and you orter know it, if you've got any sense. They're pests, and there's a bounty on 'em."

"That's right," supported Chick Wallace, his big head wobbling on his slender neck. "Nobody has any right to own a crow."

"He's mine!" persisted Keith wildly. "My brother Jack caught him for me—took him out of the nest. He's a tame crow."

"And a public nuisance," said Spike Drew grimly; "I've heard folks say so. He's a natural-born thief, just like all crows. He gobbled the stuffing out of four pies Mrs. Lee had cooling on her kitchen window sill the other day, and he knocked one of 'em off and busted the plate."

"I know that," retorted Keith; "but Clif paid for the pies and the plate."

"That don't make your old crow any less a public nuisance, goin' 'round destroyin' private property. Uncle Ben Gimble said somebody orter wring the critter's neck. I expect we'll be offered a vote of thanks for riddin' the town of the varmint."

"Don't you dare hurt my crow—don't you dare!" panted Keith. "Let me go, Spike Drey! If you don't, you'll be sorry!"

"There's a bounty on crows," added Spike. "The farmers hate 'em, for they pull up crops."

"You're cowards—every one of you!" screamed Keith, trembling violently. "If you weren't, you wouldn't torture a dumb thing."

"Torture!" grinned Tweed. "We're having a little fun, that's all. Pop goes the weasel!"

Shooting again, he hit the crow, and the bird flopped and cawed wildly, increasing the distress and rage of Keith, who screamed and fought in a fruitless

effort to break away from Drew's detaining hands.

"What's all this racket about?"

The boys looked around, startled by the question. They beheld Arthur Gregory, who, attracted by the uproar, had approached to investigate. He was standing there with his hands in his pockets looking them over inquiringly. His blue eyes finally came to a rest on Spike, who sniffed disdainfully.

"It's the stranger in our midst," said Drew. "Don't his mother dress him nice!"

"What pretty teeth he has!" grinned Peepy, eager to follow Spike's lead. "Wonder if he uses kalsomine on 'em?"

"Sapolio," suggested Chick Wallace, delighted with his own bit of wit.

The new boy beamed on them graciously.

"Wrong," he said. "They're the finest imported crockery, pure Dresden. Why don't you get some in place of those snags of yours?" This question was shot at Tweed, but the speaker's flitting glance returned immediately to rest upon Drew.

"Oh, ain't he fresh!" grunted Lemon.

"That," said Arthur Gregory blandly, "may be accounted for by the fact that I've never found anything who was able to salt me."

He had promptly met and repulsed them upon their own ground. Realizing that his ready wit and quick tongue were too much for them, their resentment boiled, and they united in a feeble effort at rural billingsgate, which seemed simply to increase his amusement.

"When you've got through befouling yourselves by slinging mud," he said, "you might answer my question—what's all this racket about?"

"They're torturing my crow," cried Keith. "They've caught him and tied him, and they're shooting peas at him."

"Your crow?" asked Gregory.

"His crow!" sneered Spike. "Nobody can own a crow."

"It is my crow," persisted Keith. "My brother caught him for me, and you know it."

"That don't make him yourn," said Tweed, taking up Drew's line of contention, as he reloaded the pea shooter and prepared to use it again. "Crows can't be private property."

"In this case," said Gregory smoothly, "I beg to disagree with you. I wouldn't use that thing if I were you."

"Huh! I will if I want to."

"If you do," threatened the new boy, "I shall shake you until it loosens a few of those crooked yellow snags of yours, which will be robbing the dentist of business, and I always dislike to interfere with trade. As for you," he added, turning to Drew, "you're mussing up that little fellow's clothes with your dirty hands. Let him alone."

"You go to grass!" defied Spike. "Perhaps you think we're afraid of you because you come from the city and dress like a dude. You're liable to get them fine feathers ruffled if you don't chase yourself."

Barely were these words spoken when, with a pantherish leap, Gregory broke Drew's hold upon Keith Stirling and sent the fellow staggering. Spike regained his equilibrium, and, shouting to the others, went at the new boy. Responding to that call, his companions plunged into the attack.

They met the surprise of their lives. Gregory was like a whirlwind among them. Spike went down before a well-planted blow; Lemon received a smash on the mouth; Peepy got a punch in the breadbasket; Wallace had his pins knocked out from beneath him; and Freckles Riggs, trying to lunge in from behind, caught an upflung foot on the chin and sat down, wondering over a marvelous display of shooting stars. Nor was Gregory satisfied with that; he kept at them like a smiling fury until, one after another, they took to their heels and fled, losing heart entirely when Drew made haste to get out of danger.

The encounter over, Arthur found that Keith Stirling had removed the cord from the crow's leg and was holding the bird in his arms. The victor glanced ruefully and whimsically at his knuckles, which had been skinned, and then addressed Keith.

"I think you can take your crow home now," he said. "It's sometimes necessary to establish property rights beyond dispute."

"Oh—oh, I—I thank you," faltered Keith. "It was awful good of you, and awful nerry for you to stand up to all those fellows."

"Oh," said Arthur, wrapping his handkerchief around his hand, "that wasn't anything. I knew by their looks that there wasn't a grain of sand in the whole bunch."

Before going to bed that night there was not a boy in the village who had not heard a version of the affair behind the Felt Mill, twisted, and garbled, and colored by the malice of Drew and his mates, who did their best to make the attack upon them appear unprovoked and without warning or any semblance of justice.

"Somebody's certainly got to take that upstart, Gregory, down several pegs," Reddy Sprowl again declared; and there was no dissenting voice.

CHAPTER V.

WAS HE AFRAID?

After this to the boys of Fairfield, Arthur Gregory seemed fresher and more unbearable than ever. He was inclined to make sport of country people

and their ways, and he chaffed his schoolmates in that laughing, irritating manner which filled them with boundless wrath and resentment. Learning that they were no match for him in repartee, they sourly gave up the attempt to retort, with the exception of Tooker, who made himself doubly ludicrous by his slow-witted efforts.

Increasing the dislike which the Fairfield boys entertained for Gregory, the girls seemed more than ever interested in him. They flocked about him between sessions, laughing gayly over his jesting; they told one another that he was "just splendid." And so it happened that the new boy did not even seem to notice that he was practically ostracized by the lads of Fairfield Academy. Their coldness toward him made no perceptible difference in his bearing toward them. With seeming brazen disregard, he butted into groups that had plainly attempted to shut him out.

Finding a number of boys jumping from the lower step of the academy, he watched them until Harp Woodcock had apparently defeated all would-be contestants by several inches. Then, as some of the others were praising Woodcock, Gregory mockingly derided Harp's feat.

"Do you call that jumping?" he laughed. "Why, I could beat it on one foot."

"Did you ever jump farther than that, baron?" inquired Skippy Fisk.

"Did I ever?" roared Arthur. "Listen to the jester!"

"I'd like to see you do it," flared Woodcock.

"Oh, it's hardly worth while trying. If some one would set a real stint for me, I'd jump."

"I think you'll find that stint enough, Mr. Hotair," said Woodcock. "You talk a great deal with your mouth."

"That's one of the purposes I use it for. Some fellows should learn the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, for then they might not make jacks of themselves so often."

The laughing, bantering manner of the new boy irritated them quite as much as his words. Woodcock, proud of his accomplishment as a jumper, again challenged Gregory to beat the record he had just made, but the latter declared it was hardly worth his while to try.

"He don't dast," proclaimed Tooker. "He's got lead in his shoes."

"That's better than having solid bone in my head," retorted Arthur pleasantly. "You could get a fancy price for that top-piece of yours if you sold it for pure ivory."

Booby mumbled and choked in a fruitless effort to make a sufficient retort. No one laughed except Gregory, and he did not laugh aloud.

Jud Murdock, still wearing some bat-

tle scars, came up and passed within a foot of the new boy without looking at him. Stirling was standing fifteen feet away, talking football with Win Mitchell. Apparently Clif was utterly oblivious to what was taking place so near at hand. Another new student at the academy, a country boy by the name of Hayes, who had not taken part in the jumping, opened his mouth as if on the point of saying something, but seemed to change his mind and kept still.

"If you can beat me, Mr. Gregory," said Woodcock warmly, "you may consider yourself the champion jumper of this school."

"An honor, indeed," scoffed Arthur. "I fear so much glory would turn my head."

"It's turned already," growled Reddy Sprowl. "Bimeby somebody is going to turn it back. Nobody will weep if he twists it off while doing the job."

"Another precinct heard from. You've got a bright head, son, referring in particular to its crowning glory."

At this, if possible, Sprowl's face became even redder than his hair. His fingers twitched, and, half turning, he muttered in the ear of Bub Clayton:

"If somebody don't climb aboard that fellow pretty soon I'll have to try it myself."

"Wait," cautioned Bub, in a low tone. "Clif is the fellow for that, and he'll do it when the proper time comes round."

"Baron," said Fisk, again addressing Gregory, "we most humbly beseech you to demonstrate your marvelous skill at the standing jump. We're ready to fall at your feet in worshipful admiration. It can't be you'll deny us the exquisite pleasure of witnessing how easy it is for you to beat Woodcock."

"The eloquence of your appeal touches me," said Arthur, fastening the lower button of his coat. "Oply a heart of stone could resist."

He placed himself on the edge of the lower step, swung his arms twice by his sides, then launched his body through the air with a long, graceful leap. Indeed, he scarcely seemed to make any great exertion or effort, yet the moment his forward-flung feet struck the ground the boys knew he had outjumped Woodcock by several inches.

Dead silence fell upon them all. Tooker, lumbering forward with the tape, measured, and announced that Gregory had outdistanced Harp by seven inches and a half.

The new boy regarded the frowning faces of his schoolmates with abundant good nature, giving a careless pull at the knot of his four-in-hand tie.

Gertrude Morton, coming up with several other girls, lingered a bit as she approached the steps, and her eyes met those of Gregory, who bowed and lifted his cap.

"Excuse me, fellows," he said; "some other time, when I'm feeling like it, I'll pull off my coat and show you a real jump." With which remark he joined the purposely waiting girl, and they passed on into the building, talking and laughing.

Jim Hayes half extended a hand, as if he meant to grasp Gregory's sleeve; but the latter ignored him completely and was so wholly absorbed in the chatter of the girl that again Hayes faltered and changed his mind.

Woodcock was greatly chagrined. "I don't see how he did it," he muttered. "I thought—I thought that I— Oh, somebody's got to beat him at something!"

"Beat him at something's the word," said Fisk, "and there's only one proper way to do it." He put up his clenched fists in a boxing attitude. In another moment he had Stirling by the elbow. "Didn't you see it, Clif?" he asked. "That fellow—Gregory—he outjumped Woodcock. He's a regular peacock. You should have seen him strut. He's started in to do up the whole town of Fairfield. It's up to you, and you can't duck. If you don't thrash him, he will think he owns the earth inside another week."

"But I haven't any quarrel with Gregory, Skippy," said Clif.

Then the last bell sounded, and the boys straggled into the academy, a few lingering to exchange comments and opinions regarding the situation.

At intermission Jim Hayes singled Arthur Gregory out and addressed him.

"Say," drawled the country boy, "I'd like to jump yeou jest once. I'd like to see if yeou can beat me as easy as yeou did that other feller."

Gregory measured the speaker with offensively disparaging eye.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Hayes—James Hayes."

"Really, I don't believe you can qualify. This is my busy day. Run away, sonny, and play with your marbles."

The color mounted into Hayes' homely face.

"You're mighty stuck on yourself, ain't ye?" he snapped. "Don't s'pose you think nobody can beat you at nothing?"

"James," said the other patronizingly, "let me tell you confidentially that your grammar is something scandalous. I advise you to apply yourself industriously to that branch of learning and abandon your ambition to excel in the art of jumping. You're wearing your hair too long, also; it is liable to cause overheating of that vacant upper story."

Hayes blazed. In his resentful wrath he called Gregory a number of unpleasant names, which, to his amazement, simply seemed to increase the fellow's amusement. Had he not been restrained, Jim might have attacked Arthur then and there.

School dismissed, Gertrude Morton again lingered behind her companions, and was rewarded by being once more joined by the new boy. White with pique over this, Winnie Wickford told the girls that she thought Gertie "absolutely brazen."

Again Gregory was followed by a number of the boys. This time Jim Hayes had invited them to come along, stating that they would find it worth while.

"Where you going, Clif?" asked Fisk, as Stirling was turning off.

"Home."

"Home? Say, there's something doing. Old Hazey's got his back up. He's going to have a go at the champion scrapper from the metropolis."

"Hayes is no match for Gregory."

"How do you know?"

"Any one should know. He's too heavy and slow. If he asked my advice, I would tell him to let the fellow alone."

"Somebody has just got to down that chap, Clif. You ought to realize it. Are we going to let a thing like that come here and run over us all? You never can tell; perhaps Hayes is the fellow to do it."

Hayes waited until Gregory bade Gertie Morton good night, and then he made haste to confront him and demand "satisfaction."

For a single moment Arthur seemed to hesitate, flashing a look of resentment at the fellows who accompanied his challenger. Almost immediately, however, he smiled in his usual irritating way.

"Thanks," he said. "Really, I was wondering what I'd do to pass away the time and break the dull monotony of country life in America. You're awfully kind to give me all this attention and consideration. Let's hie to the arena."

This time the fight took place behind the Felt Mill. Those who witnessed it confessed Hayes never had a ghost of a show against Gregory. It was all over amazingly soon, and the victor, looking around, observed:

"Is this all for the present? If I'm to be given the pleasure of fighting the whole of Fairfield, I may as well take on a few others right away and get them off the list."

"Where's Stirling?" asked Reddy Sprowl.

They looked for Clif in vain; he was gone.

"Great marvels!" muttered Skippy Fisk. "I believe he is afraid of Gregory!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPPORTUNITY.

Skippy was not the only fellow who, in amazement and dismay, had begun to fancy that Clif Stirling was betraying a decided disinclination to meet the triumphant new boy in a personal en-

counter. To some of them this seemed absolutely impossible, for they had regarded Clif as one who scarcely knew the meaning of the word fear. Unlike his brother Jack, Clif was not quick-tempered or resentful; but, when it was necessary, he had heretofore shown a willingness to face any man, and he had never failed to acquit himself with honors.

In this uncertain and doubtful state of mind the boys came out on Saturday afternoon in answer to the first call for football practice.

Arthur Gregory had not been given a special invitation to come out, but some time after the practice had begun he appeared in football togs, wearing his green Lincoln sweater. He stood looking on until one of the balls came bounding in his direction. Securing the ball, he punted it into the midst of a group of men who were catching under Wickford's directions.

"I'll get into this," he cried. "My old right leg is paining me for exercise. Let me do the kicking for a while."

Although they pretended to give him little attention, he was secretly watched by the boys, who soon became aware of the fact that he was the possessor of no mean skill at punting.

After the boys were thoroughly warmed up, Stirling called them around him, and said:

"My brother, Jack, wants to pick a scrub team and give us some practice. As we're all rather green and out of condition, a ten-minute period will be long enough. The old members of the team who are here will start in against the scrub. As that leaves two vacancies, caused by the loss of Pemberton and Shotwell, Hayes and Archer will have a chance to play."

Gregory, who stood expectant at one side, was ignored. Jack Stirling was told to make up his scrub team, and he quickly chose the fellows he desired, calling them apart from the others and giving them instructions.

Apparently unmindful of the fact that he had not been selected for either team, Arthur lingered with the group surrounding Clif, who began to give them instructions regarding the code of signals that would be used. A faint smile hovered about Gregory's lips as he listened. Finally he broke in upon Clif.

"You don't mean to say you used a code of signals like that last season, do you?" he asked. "It can't be that you designated your players by various letters instead of by numbers."

"Why not?" asked Stirling, a bit sharply. "What's wrong about that?"

"Why, it's almost childish," said Gregory. "Any one with a particle of perception could get onto such a code."

"Evidently you have played football a great deal, Mr. Gregory," said Park Wickford.

"I played enough to win my letter at Lincoln," answered Gregory. "I haven't a doubt but I know as much about the game as any one here."

"Modest chap," mumbled Tooker; but for once, failing to answer Booby, the new boy seemed not to hear him.

"Why didn't you stay at Lincoln instead of coming here?" asked Wickford.

"I was too good for them," laughed Arthur. "I was such a bright, particular star upon the team that every one became envious of me."

"Where did you play on the Lincoln team?" asked Stirling.

"Behind the line—left half."

"An important position. Ever do anything worth mentioning?"

"Oh, occasionally," was the easy answer. "Lincoln won from Hollowell last year, you know. I was in that game. The score was tied at the end of the first half. Everybody expected Hollowell to eat us up. It was a fierce old fight. In the second half Hollowell kept us going some. We were on the defensive the most of the time. I was the backbone of the back field. Give me a chance on the team and I'll show you a thing or two."

"The team is made up for to-day," said Clif. "If you get onto it you'll have to prove that you're needed."

"Of course you'll give me a chance to do that, Stirling? How am I going to prove it unless I play?"

"Yes, you shall have a chance," decided Clif. "You can play on the scrub. Here, Jack—here's a man for you. He says his position is half back."

"All right," said Jack Stirling cheerfully, "he may take the place of Piker Andrews."

"Oh, very well," agreed Gregory; "better the scrub than nothing at all. But let's have a complete understanding. If I make a touchdown for the scrub I'm to be given a show with the regular team? That's fair, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's fair," nodded Clif promptly. "It's agreed."

"Put me wise to your signals," invited Arthur, as he walked away with Jack Stirling.

"If he makes a touchdown to-day," growled Jud Murdock, "we're a bunch of lobsters."

"A touchdown!" chuckled Skippy Fisk. "Him? If he does, I'll eat my hat."

"This is our chance to take some of the conceit out of him," said Reddy Sprowl, "and we'll be chumps if we neglect the opportunity."

The weather at Fairfield, you see, is getting hotter and hotter for cool Arthur Gregory; but wait until you see what happens in Part II of this ripping tale, when Clif Stirling really gets busy. It will appear in the next number of TOP-NOTCH, out September 25.

TALKS WITH TOP-NOTCH FELLOWS

BY BURT L. STANDISH

THE KEY OF SUCCESS

DO you realize that it is the greatest idea in the world—the idea of work without waste.

It is the keynote of progress. It is the thought that has inspired every inventor, from the skin-clothed man who first rounded a stone into a wheel to Wilbur and Orville Wright making the aeroplane.

It struck this prehistoric brother that he could do better than drag logs in the good old way of his cave-dwelling fathers. He didn't know it, of course, but he was inspired by the idea of work without waste.

Had any one told him that from his wheels of rounded stone would be evolved the sixty-mile locomotive hauling thousands of tons, probably he would have brought a spiked bludgeon down on the head of the rash peeper into the future.

AS man has risen in the scale of civilization, labor-saving, waste-averting devices have marked his path of ascent.

In some of the Old World countries you can see women grinding corn or other grain by hand in funny little mills turned with a rude crank. It is exceedingly hard work, and so slow that hours are consumed in getting enough meal or flour to make two or three dozen slapjacks.

The husbands of those women never break down from overwork. In fact, they are seldom employed except when stowing away the slapjacks made by their wives with such laborious effort. When it comes to eating, these Weary Willy husbands put the busy bee very much on the blink. This is not quite up to the American idea of manhood or the notion prevailing in most parts of Europe.

WHERE work and waste are boon companions the strong have least thought for the weak.

That may seem strange to you, but it is only another way of saying that the less enlightened a community the less respect the strong have for the rights of the weak. It is a case of "do" the woman or the man who can't defend himself.

That's so, you may say, of any community. But remember this: Where the wheat is planted, harvested, and ground by the best machinery of our time—where the most work is done with the least waste—there you are likely to find life unpleasant for the idler and bully.

Napoleon was a great believer in work without waste—to himself and his army. The more the enemy was compelled to waste in blood and treasure the more the Little Corporal nodded his head with satisfaction.

BUT the day came when Napoleon wasted as no modern military commander ever wasted before. What happened? "Rau mit ihm!" cried the

nine Gods of War. All his work ended in failure.

Inventors are racking their wits to find some way of stopping the absurd waste of heat incurred in producing steam. Something like thirty-five per cent., on an average, of the power given off by coal goes up chimney and is lost.

It makes the scientific man sick to think of it. And no wonder, when you consider the work without waste that has been accomplished by the wireless telegraph. There the very air itself is made to serve man's needs.

Some day he'll bob up quietly. Who? The fellow who will stop the engine's ridiculous waste of fuel. Probably that will mark the passing of machinery's long-lived Prodigal Son—the furnace that wastes so much of its substance in riotous smoking.

WIRE busy!" How often you get that when you try to telephone, and how it jar you!

It is said of a prominent Wall Street man that those two words once meant the loss of a million to him. He wanted to telephone a broker's office, and by the time the wire was free for his message it was too late for it to be of avail. The words, "Wire busy," are two of the most exasperating in the English language when spoken at certain moments; but they are associated in Thomas A. Edison's mind with one of the greatest inventions of his wonderful career.

When Edison was a telegraph operator he found himself in a small Western town that leaped into importance one autumn day because of a mysterious murder committed there. It brought the newspaper men in large numbers. There was only one telegraph wire connecting the little town with the rest of the world, and the telephone had not been invented. "Wire busy" was what the reporters got whenever they tried to send off their "stuff" about the murder. They played all sorts of tricks to beat each other to that solitary wire. You may be sure it was kept working overtime. Yet Edison had a hunch that the wire was not really busy. He couldn't get rid of the conviction that a wire carrying only one message at a time was not working without waste.

Well, the hunch grew to definite thought and experiment until the Edison Duplex became a fact. By the duplex two messages could be sent at the same time on a single wire, one message in either direction. From the duplex he evolved the quadruplex, by which four messages can be sent simultaneously on the same wire. Think how readily the reporters' stories on that murder could have been handled if four operators instead of one could have sent them off in company on that lone wire!

But Edison is not convinced yet that a telegraph wire, even when carrying four messages, is busy in the truly scientific sense of the word. It makes him almost as sick to think of the waste here as it does

to think of all the heat from coal that gets away unused. But he hasn't hit upon any way yet of stopping the waste in either of these vehicles of work.

HOW about the author who works without waste?

The author? Yes; the man behind the story—he who wings life with his inky arrow and lays the trophies of his chase before the editor neatly typed by a pretty sister. Thence it springs before you in the form of a printed story. You know how some yarn-spinners beat around the bush. They take you from Boston to New York by way of the Klondike and the South Pole. They make much ado about little; talk, talk until you wonder if a runaway phonograph hasn't dictated the so-called tale. They are working with waste—waste of time for the reader, waste of effort for themselves.

BUT there is another kind, the bright fellows who work without waste of anybody's time or patience, and who give you a delightful hour now and then.

This is the kind who find an open door at the TOP-NOTCH office. On the second page I've mentioned some of their names; but there are a lot more who have written or are writing stories for this magazine—writing the kind that young men with life and snap in them like to read.

YOUNG workingmen, here's a tip for you, whether you toil with hand or brain: Put into practice every day, every hour, this great idea of work without waste. Get the habit. It will prove the best one you ever formed.

It can be cultivated even at play. Look at the game of baseball put up by a team of crackerjacks. Every move they make is likely to count either in their own behalf or in keeping the other side from scoring. Young men who apply the same principle to serious tasks are surprised at the progress they make.

You hear it said of a chap now and then: "He is a hog for work; he does as much as three men." Watch him; study his gait a little. Take notice of his ways. If you are keen you may "get onto his curves." You may see why he does so much in a short time. He seems to be going slow, but really he is hitting a stiff pace. He doesn't go blundering about things. Every lick he puts in tells. He makes no fuss; he seems to have a bully good time working. Tasks accomplished spring up about him as if by magic. And why? You can guess the answer: He is working without waste.

Look on the next page for a partial list of the good things that have been written for the next number.

Burt L. Standish

Beginning with the October Number, TOP-NOTCH will be a Big Ten-cent Magazine, Published Twice a Month

SEPTEMBER TO THE BAT

TOP-NOTCH MAGAZINE

SURE FOR A THREE-BASE HIT

*Here are some of the good things we are holding
over for you until next month:*

ON THE WINGS OF THE NIGHT

By CHARLES WISNER BARRELL

Is there a thrill in your system? If so, this tale will rouse it. It's a big, rapid-fire story that takes you among the great bridge builders and other men who are doing the world's work. One of them is a young assistant engineer, who, to save an important contract for his company, performs an unheard-of feat of daring. None of your cut-and-trimmed heroics this, but the real thing in up-to-date pluck and service that is worth while. The story is a good long one, complete in the September issue.

UP AGAINST IT

By EDWIN LARKMORE

A baseball story that breathes the very spirit of a home run. The opening, though not on the diamond, is like the ring of a bat on the horse-hide sphere, and away it goes sprinting from event to event until the surprising finish. The man who wrote this yarn knows baseball and the hearts of the men who play it.

STINGING THE SOPHS

By J. RAYMOND ELDERDICE

This is a ripping good story of college life, with several hearty laughs in it. You'll enjoy reading it from beginning to end.

THE NEW BOY

By J. G. ST. DARE

This, the second and last part of the story of academy life begun in the present issue, is by long odds the best part. You'll be keenly interested in the outcome of the rivalry between Cliff Stirling and Arthur Gregory.

THE BEST POLICY

A Tow-Head Marchion Tale

By W. S. STORY

One of the cleverest yet in this series of stories in which the debonair Bob Murchison is the moving spirit. Tow-Head has a very interesting adventure with a skipper who tries to draw him into a conspiracy against Uncle Sam. You know Bob, and you can guess who won.

Three Snappy Short Stories

By BRIGHT YOUNG TOP-NOTCH AUTHORS

One of these is a corking football yarn, another is a lively tale of the running track, and the third takes you into the oddest of adventures in the loggig country.

DAVE MANNING, MIDSHIPMAN

By ENSIGN LEE TEMPEST, U. S. N.

Second section of the rattling naval serial begun in the present number (August). The scene of Dave's adventures shift, and he finds himself mixed up with men and events that call into play all the young Midshipman's ingenuity and pluck.

September TOP-NOTCH on Sale August 25.

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