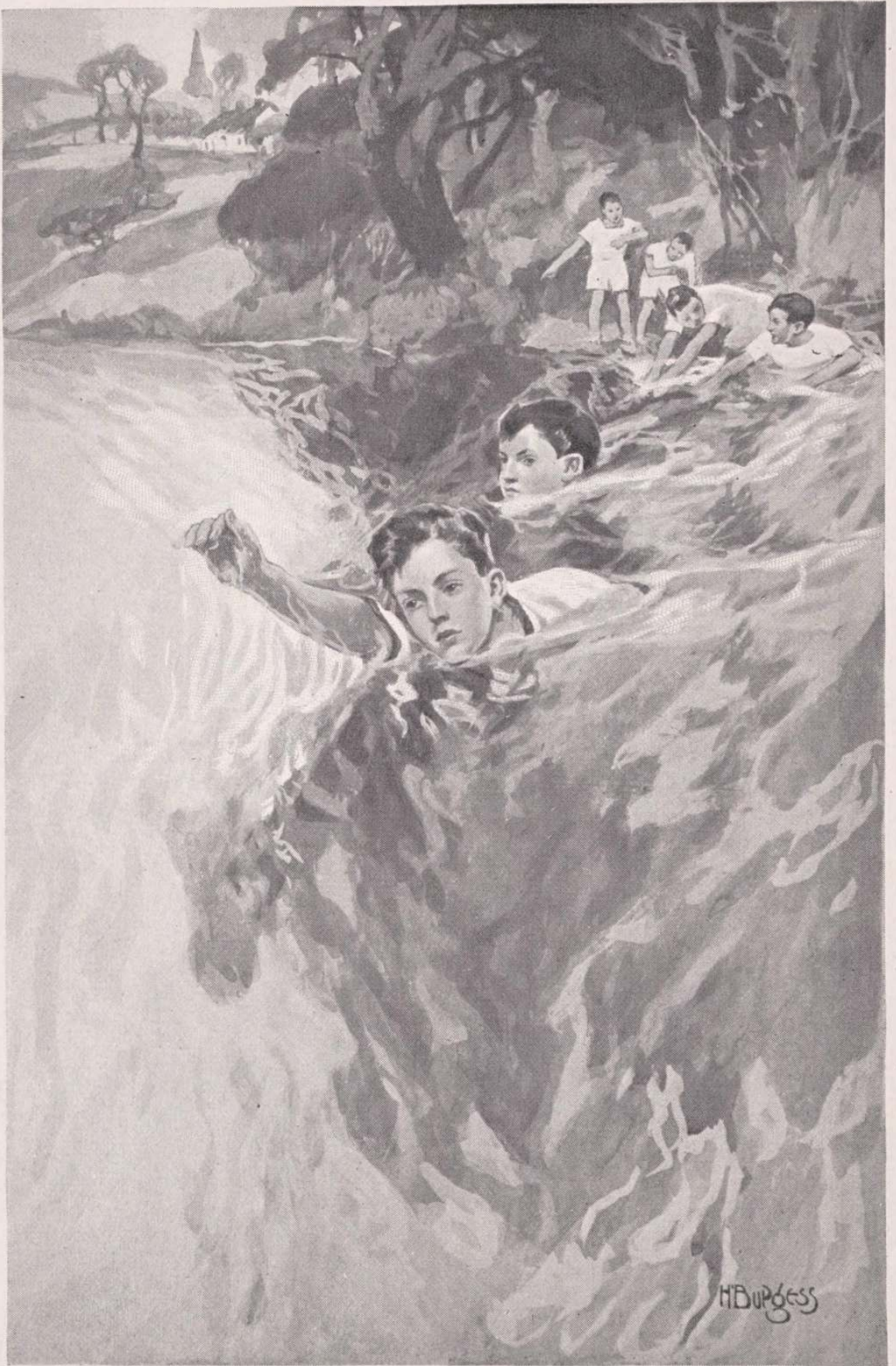




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JACKSON AND HIS HENLEY FRIENDS



Then they struck out with all their strength for the
opposite bank.

FRONTISPIECE. *See Page 252.*

The Henley Schoolboys Series

JACKSON AND HIS HENLEY FRIENDS

BY

FRANK E. CHANNON

Author of "An American Boy at Henley"

Illustrated by

H. BURGESS

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JACKSON AND HIS HENLEY FRIENDS

JACKSON AND HIS HENLEY FRIENDS

CHAPTER I

THE OPEN MILE

HENLEY COLLEGE was having one of its big days. You would have said so had you been there. The four-acre "Tempus ludendi" was swarming with all sorts of men and women, boys and girls. Some eight or nine hundred college boys, resplendent in snowy, spotless collars, black Eton jackets and broad-brimmed straw hats banded by the school colors of red and black, were strolling about, showing their people the sights of the place, proudly superior in their knowledge of things. Excited juniors were darting here, there, everywhere, shouting at the top of their shrill trebles, and hordes of townspeople were sauntering about the splendid grounds. Here and there a black-gowned master could be seen, walking with dignified carriage amid the gay confusion.

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The classic gables of the college loomed out along the entire west side of the grounds, backed by the towering Cotswold range of hills, while dotted around the magnificent green, white posts were visible, defining the oval track on which presently was to be fought the battle of speed and muscle.

A confusion of shouts arose from the scene. Undoubtedly Henley College was having one of its big days.

“Hello, Tuck, you beggar!” yelled an excited “sprat” (third form boy). “Get over here; I’ve got my mater, and can’t leave her.”

The “beggar” addressed as “Tuck” dived deftly under some ropes and carromed heavily into a corpulent old gentleman, who was innocently surveying the scene, unconscious of danger.

“Ugh!” grunted the stout one, as he felt the full force of the collision. “What are you trying to do, my little man?”

“Trying to get to Strawberry’s mother, sir,” explained the hastening youngster, as he scrambled on his way.

“I am not she,” repudiated the injured one, but “Tuck,” otherwise Percy Morris Tucker, had passed gayly on and brought up at his desired haven.

“Look here, mater, here’s this chap Tuck —

that is, I mean, you know, it's Tucker, my chum," introduced Strawberry, known on the school roll as George Newman Berry.

"How do you do?" inquired the "mater," with kindly interest.

"Fine, thanks," shouted Tucker, straightening out his crumpled hat and rubbing his head.

"Did you hurt the old gentleman?" inquired the lady, who had observed the collision.

"No, I don't think so, but he bashed my hat in," complained the junior; then, turning excitedly to his chum, "Say, Straw, hurry up; they're going to start in half an hour, and some cad's stole my pumps and corks;" he rattled on, "the junior hurdles is second, you know."

"Say," delicately hinted Berry to his mother, "think it will be all right if I steer you and Lil back of the pop stand? I've got to peel, you know, and you'll get a stunning view from there. Come on, Tuck, hack your way through. Catch on to my coat, mater, and you tow on behind, Lil."

Thus instructed, Mrs. Berry endeavored to follow the rapid, aggressive movements of her son, as he and his chum twisted in and out through the crowd, shouting orders to her from the van:

"Back water, there, mater! Now, come on! Steady, Lil, what're you shoving for? Don't

hit it up so hard, — easy, I say. Now, then, all together!”

They reached the vantage point at last, the two ladies rather out of breath, and somewhat disheveled, but safe.

“Get out of that chair, you shrimp!” brusquely ordered Berry, addressing a small, first form lad; “chairs for visitors only, you know.”

“Oh, let the little boy sit there, George,” remonstrated Mrs. Berry, but the youngster had already backed away, with a muttered apology, and the “mater” was thrust into the vacant seat, with a growl of instruction from her son. “Sit there, can’t you, or some one will swipe it; take Lil on your lap. Now, we’ve got to cut, you know,” he rattled on, in explanatory manner; “the junior hurdles is second, and you’ll see Tuck and me making a show of the other chaps. We’ll try to get back to you in time for the four-forty and the mile, though; my man, that Yankee, Jackson, is in for that, and he’s going to win for the school. We’re going to come back and rip for him — hang tight; don’t lose your places.”

The youngsters were gone before the bewildered mother could find time to form a reply.

“What is the four-forty, mother?” inquired the lady’s daughter.

“ I’m sure I don’t know, dear, but it’s a race of some sort, I suppose; it seems to be all races to-day.”

“ The four hundred and forty,” explained a gentleman who was standing back of the two ladies, “ is the quarter of a mile race. That and the open mile are considered the two most important races of the day, I believe.”

“ Oh, yes, mother, that’s it. I remember George said that the boy he — he fags for, I think he said, was going to run in the mile race. He’s the American, you know, of whom Bert was so fond.”

“ Of course,” assented Mrs. Berry, “ it’s Roger Jackson, Bert’s old chum. Why, there he is now! ”

A tall, wiry-looking youth of seventeen was advancing towards the ladies, accompanied by a shorter, thick-set fellow.

“ Good morning, Mrs. Berry,” he greeted, raising his hat. “ Good morning, Miss Lily; we’ve been looking everywhere for you, haven’t we, Dob? ”

“ Yes,” agreed Dobson, as he shook hands, “ but there’s such a mob here to-day that it’s hard to find any one. Max lost his folks and has only just found them; at least, he didn’t, but Yank, here, spotted the two twins.”

“ Dear me,” mused Miss Lily, in apparent

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deep concern, "could it be possible that there were more than two twins?"

"I mean, you know, there was a couple of them," Dobson confessed.

"Think you will be comfortable here?" questioned Roger Jackson; "you'll get a good view, but it's not so comfortable as on the stand."

"There's not a ghost of a chance there," Dobson said; "everything's full up; you had better stay where you are."

"Oh, we're very comfortable here, thank you," assured Mrs. Berry. "George displaced some poor little boy to make room for us; he was quite rude to him, in fact."

"I guess he'll survive," Roger consoled; "the chairs are for visitors, you know."

"Well, we'd better be jogging," warned Dobson. "You know, Mrs. Berry, the hopes of the school rest on Yank for capturing the open mile, and we want to put him on the track fit. This Charterhouse chap, Jones, is a top-notch, and Yank will have to extend himself to rip the tape first; come on, old man!"

The two chums departed, arm in arm, Henley fashion, as a bugle blared from somewhere, and there was a general scattering of the crowd from the course.

White-smocked officials, with red flags, waved

back the mob, and old Doctor Proctor, the head of Henley College, who had consented to act as judge, stalked with dignified steps towards the finishing line at the chapel end of the grounds.

The first event was the junior hundred and twenty yards, and then the junior hurdles, in which Berry and Tucker were entered. These two youngsters were fully conscious of their own importance, and thoroughly convinced in their own little minds that the great crowd had assembled solely to witness this event. Berry waved his hand in lordly manner to his mother and sister, as he and Tucker strolled up to the white line.

There was a perfect mob of contestants for this event, and it was run off in seven heats. Both Berry and Tucker succeeded in capturing their respective heats, but in the final Tucker was left in the ruck, while Berry tripped and fell over the last hurdle, and came down while leading his field.

They appeared fifteen minutes later at the spot where they had left the ladies, both rather crestfallen, but still convinced that they would have won if — if — if only something hadn't happened.

Mrs. Berry consoled them as only a motherly woman knows how to, and then all attention

was turned towards the open mile, which great event was next on the card.

“There’s Maxwell!” shouted Tucker, who had recovered his spirits. “Oh, and there’s Jackson! Look, Straw—I mean, Berry,” he corrected himself, glancing uneasily at Mrs. Berry.

“And there’s the Charterhouse chap, Jones! By Jinks, isn’t he a little fellow? Doesn’t look as if he’d stand any chance along with Jackson,” yelled Berry, whose memory of defeat was now swallowed up in the excitement of the coming struggle.

The contestants were trotting out on the track. Only five responded to the starter’s call. The rest had been scared out by the class of the champions.

A mighty shout greeted the runners, as they toed the line for this great annual event—The British Public School Open Mile.

On the inside was the gaunt, long-legged Henleyite, Maxwell; next came the dreaded Charterhouse boy, a short little runt of a fellow, but with a suggestion of great speed and staying powers in his compact, well-knit limbs; then the wiry American, Roger Jackson, the fifth form Henley boy; and on his right, the Malvern College champion, Batten; Wyles, the celebrated Etonian, a typical-looking speeder, was on the extreme outside.

A hush fell over the waiting thousands as the boys ranged themselves up, and the Rev. Milton Murray, senior house master at Henley, gave them a few parting instructions.

“It’s four laps to the mile, mater,” hoarsely whispered Berry, “and Max is to cut out the running for Jackson, you know.”

“Ready?” came the query from the starter far up the track.

The five runners bent forward in position, Maxwell on the inside, stretching out until his finger-tips touched the turf, as if he were starting for the hundred-yard dash, instead of the long mile.

Roger Jackson, who always carried corks, fidgeted about with them, while the chunky little Charterhouse boy kept his eye on the starter. The Malvern fellow and Wyles were on tiptoes.

“Three!” cried Mr. Murray.

The runners made their final poise.

“Two!”

Maxwell, on the balance, like a hound in leash, made a false start, and was called back.

Then the nerve-racking words were gone over again.

“Three!”

“Two!”

“Gun!” — They’re off!

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A deep roar of excitement greeted the start, and the runners were away on their journey.

Maxwell, on the inside, had jumped off with the crack of the gun, and was leading his field by a couple of yards, as they flashed past the stand, with its mob of yelling spectators. Down the field, past the long lines of shouting school-boys, they raced towards the near turn, the Eton boy running second, with Batten and Roger neck and neck, close behind, and the Charterhouse champion last, taking things easily in the ruck.

The school breathed contentedly. Things had started as they hoped they would. The two scarlet Henley champions were well up, Maxwell leading, as he was expected to, cutting out the running for his mate.

As they swung around into the far side, Roger moved up to second place, two yards behind his running mate, and the Charterhouse boy, evidently determining not to be left too far behind, ran into third place, with Batten and Wyles bringing up the rear.

So they ran past the stand the second time around, and then, as they headed for the far side again, the Eton and Malvern fellows challenged Jones for third place. The little Charterhouse chap responded with a burst of speed that left the two challengers far behind, and brought

him up to within a few inches of the Henley couple. Maxwell gave a quick half-glance behind, and then let himself out in a terrific spurt, and Jones, going like the wind, intent on collaring the leader, flashed past Roger, and ran into second place.

The school yelled itself hoarse, as the rapid changing of positions took place, and then yelled again until it was black in the face, as the two rear runners began again to close in on the flying leaders.

Past the stand the runner flashed again, and started on the third lap, with the American running well within himself, and still in third position, while Maxwell tore along to the fore, with the Charterhouse fellow hot at his heels not a foot behind. Then something happened.

Maxwell had shot his bolt! He withered up and dropped away, and the four chasers shot past him in a flash.

His sudden collapse left Jones in the command by a good ten feet, with Roger his next attendant. Around they sped, past the stand again, and into the last lap.

A bell rang loudly from somewhere.

“Last lap! Last lap!” the cry went up.

“Now, Jackson, now! Come on, sir, come on!”

“Stick to him, Batten! Stick to him,

Wyles!" yelled the Eton and Malvern contingents in unison, and loud above the din arose the Charterhouse cheers and shouts:

"Go on, Jones! Go on, sir; you've got him! Go on, sir!" and then the familiar Henley cry, and shouts of: "Jackson! Jackson! Now, Jackson, make your run!"

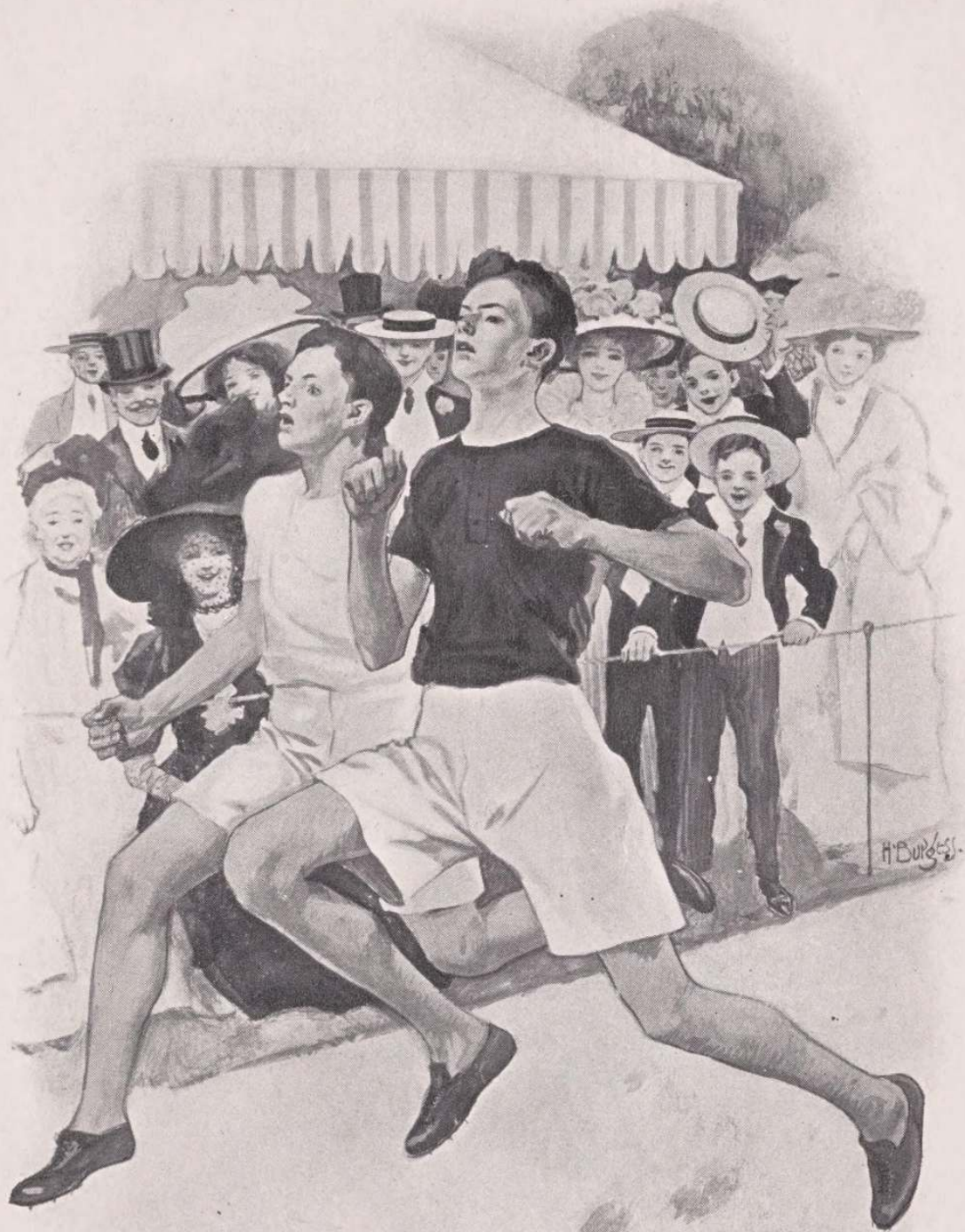
Jackson was making it. He had gained five feet on the leader, and Batten and Wyles were both closing up. A blanket would have covered the four as they whizzed around the far turn and shot up into the straight in front of the stand.

The occupants of the grandstand were on their feet in an uproar.

"Come on, sir, come on! Jones! Jones! Hold him off, Jones! Foot it, Jackson, foot it, sir! Now, Wyles! Now, Batten, come on, sir!"

A perfect babel of shouts arose from the wildly excited spectators, as the flying boys straightened out for the last hundred yards. Doctor Proctor was fingering his end of the tape nervously, as it swayed gently in the breeze, his keen old eyes watching sharply the four blurs of white, red, blue and black, as they flashed towards him.

On, on, they came in a terrific final spurt. Now there were only three colors in the van!



It was a hair-raising finish. *Page 13.*

Now only two! Only the white and the red! The white of the Charterhouse champion, the red of the Henleyite. They were neck and neck now! It was a whirlwind finish.

“Jackson! Jackson! Jones! Jones!” The shouts went up on every side.

Fifty yards, and dead level!

“Come on! Come on, Henley! Come on, Charterhouse! Come on, sir!”

The two runners were locked in a fierce struggle. It was a hair-raising finish. First the scarlet would show a few inches to the fore, then the white would crowd it out, and then again the scarlet.

Ten feet more!

“Jackson! Jackson!” a boy’s shrill treble screamed above the din, and as if in answer to that appeal, the Henley champion gathered himself together in a final mighty effort, and in a terrific burst of speed caught the tape a foot to the fore, then, rolling over, lay panting on the turf.

The great British Public School Open Mile was over, and Henley held it, won by Roger Jackson, its American student.

The crowd broke loose and surged over the lines on to the track. The exhausted runners were picked up and carried shoulder high back to the dressing-rooms, while two small boys,

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almost delirious with excitement and triumph, were yelling shrilly, Berry assuring every one around and near him that Jackson was his "man," and that he "fagged for him."

CHAPTER II

JUNIORS AND SENIORS

THERE was no preparation for lessons that evening at Henley, and the boys were free to do as they pleased. Some obtained leave and showed their people around the town, while others simply lounged about the old college and took things easy. Among the latter were Roger Jackson and his chum, Tommy Dobson. The two fifth form boys met in the American's den after tea, and there talked over the events of the day.

“Say, old man, that *was* a clinking fine finish,” congratulated Dobson, as they went over the great race again. “I’ll swear I thought sure that fellow had you; I didn’t think you had another ounce in you.”

Roger was swathed about in a bathrobe, lolling back in his chair, his feet elevated to the table. Some sheets of paper and an open book were on the table in front of him. He had been “grinding” when his chum entered.

“I knew I had him as we passed the flagstaff

at the far end of the stand," said Roger. "I got my finishing wind there, and I saw him falter for a twink, but he ran a rattling fine race; I wouldn't be surprised if he could turn the tables if it was run over again. And anyway, I could never have hit the tape first if it hadn't been for Max; the way he cut out the pace and winded that chap was bully. I tell you, Dob, the victory's as much his as it is mine, and I hope the fellows recognize that."

"Of course, I know; that's where you had the pull on the other chaps. Say, hasn't Max come along?"

"Bet your life. Do you remember, Dob, what a snob he was when he first showed up here? It's lucky that fellow Welsh moved on; he'd have ruined Max."

"You're right, old man. By Jinks, how things have changed in the last couple of years. It doesn't seem that it's only three since you first turned up at Henley, does it? Great Scott, I can remember that day I first saw you in the playing field. Old Murray trotted you out and shoved you off on me, and then old Berry came along and nabbed you to fag for him, and you didn't even know what fagging was. By Jove, how you flared up when I explained to you that you had to get his grub and keep his den clean.

I remember how you blurted out: 'What for? I'm not his servant, am I?' Oh, Yank, you were a greenhorn!"

"No more than you'd have been, old boy, if you'd been suddenly dumped into a school on my side of the pond; everything all new and strange, you know. But, I say, isn't it odd that I have Berry's young brother to fag for me now? See, here's a letter I got from old Berry only the other day."

Roger "gunned" through his desk, and presently unearthed a letter which he handed to his chum. It read.

"IN QUARTERS, WOOLWICH,

April 19th, 1910.

"MY DEAR YANK:—I am writing that young brother of mine before I take train north for embarkation for Bermuda, where, you know, I am to be stationed for the next two years, so I am enclosing this for him to hand over to you.

"I am jolly glad you can arrange for him to fag for you this half; I'll feel much easier if I know he has a good man, for, you know, he's such a frisky young beggar.

"I have not time to write much, but I want to congratulate you on making the fifth, old man; you'll come pretty close to running

through Henley in record time if you keep up this gait.

“ Now, Yank, for the sake of old times, look after this kid brother of mine, won't you? He's all right, you'll find, but easily influenced by others, and, you know, Henley is a place where a fellow has a chance to do a lot as he pleases. George has chummed up with Tucker, minor, the brother of that fellow who was in the third with you, and whose reputation for stuffing was so great. Does he still keep up that full feeding of his? Did he move up into the fifth with you and Dobson and the rest of you, or remain in the fourth?

“ The mater goes to stay at Weston while I am gone; I wished her to come out with me and live in quarters, but she funkyed at the trip; she does so detest water, you know.

“ I hope to get my promotion this year, and when I come back I may have my troop — who can tell?

“ Well, so long, old chap. Once more, look after George, won't you? Regards to all the fellows.

“ Yours as ever,

“ HERBERT BERRY.”

Dobson returned the letter to his chum with the remark: “ Berry was a jolly fine chap;

he'll make good, as you say, wherever he goes."

"Bet your life he will," acquiesced Roger, with conviction, as he pocketed the epistle.

There was a loud knock at the door of the den, and without waiting for an invitation to enter, young Berry crashed in.

"Oh, sorry, Jackson," he stammered, all breathless; "didn't know you had any one here — say, no end of a lark! You know how down on us sprats that new monitor, Halford's been — just cocky because he climbed into the sixth this half, you know. We chaps have just been getting even with him. You know he sent four of us up for lines in three days, so to-night, just after prep, Tuck and I and a lot of other beggars commenced to make no end of a row in our study room. We thought that'd bring him, and we fixed things all up nicely ready. Had the door shut — that is, you know, just closed, and lodged a lot of hot water tins and other truck on top; filled 'em up with water, too, and then we began to bawl that 'Rip-rip-row' song — you know it. By Jinks, hadn't got to the third line when we heard him coming full gallop down the corridor. 'You fellows shut up that row!' he was shouting, and then in he burst like a load of bricks, and, whoop, down came the cans and water and things all

over him. It knocked him silly for a minute, and then you ought to have seen how crazy he got. He was drenched all through, and wild as a hornet, and he flew at Tuck like a wild cat. He got him by the collar and pounded him across a desk, and, of course, you know, we wouldn't stand for that, so we all pitched in, and there *was* a row, and that brought the prefects and the night watchman down on us, and now we're all on the report list — the whole batch of us — Whoop!”

The eager junior had rattled on with scarcely a pause to draw his breath, Roger and Dobson sitting back in their chairs helplessly listening to him. When at last he stopped, Roger said sternly:

“ See here, Berry, you've been getting in trouble again; this is the third time inside of two weeks. Don't you know you'll get on the black list if you keep up this pace? ”

“ Oh, you know, we didn't do anything,” cried the youngster, turning an innocent face towards his man, as he saw trouble ahead. “ We just put 'em on top of the door to get 'em out of the way, and then we thought we'd have a song to celebrate the school winning the mile to-day. How were we to know that silly beggar, Halford, would come sticking his nose in? ”

“ You know you did it all on purpose to get

him in there; you said so yourself just now, so what's the use of fibbing about it? It's all right to have some fun, but you kids carry it too far — Say," broke off Roger, "isn't that the nine o'clock call? You should be in your dormitory; cut for it, sharp!"

"By Jinks, so it is," cried the small boy, as he turned and dived through the doorway.

Roger sat with a half-grin on his features, gazing at his chum.

"Isn't he a rummy little beggar?" he demanded.

"He's not like his brother," admitted Dobson. "He's so excitable, and old Berry was always so cool. By Jove, old man, I shall always remember that time when the school sent him to Coventry over that exam business."

Then the chums commenced to chat of past days at Henley.

To the readers of "An American Boy at Henley," it is unnecessary to explain who Roger Jackson was, but to those who have not read that story, it may be well to explain briefly that Roger was a Virginian lad who had been placed at the English college while his father was absent in India engaged in the construction of a great bridge for the British Government. Roger entered the school three years ago, and was then placed in the third form, the boys in

which are nicknamed "sprats." The forms run from first to sixth, and are dubbed by the lads as follows: shrimps, minnows, sprats, mackerels, salmons, and whales. Roger entered as a sprat, but had passed through the third and fourth forms into the fifth, and become a salmon. He had grown into a tall, thin, wiry youth, one of the best boys at the college for either sprint or distance, and had made good on both river and gridiron, although he could not enter into the spirit of the British national summer game, cricket.

There is in vogue at most of the British public schools a system called fagging. All boys in the first, second or third forms are required to fag for boys in the fifth and sixth; the fourth is fagless, the lads there neither giving nor receiving service. The juniors keep the dens of the seniors in order; get their breakfast for them when they eat in rooms, and make themselves generally useful to their "men," in return for which service the seniors assist their fags with their preparation work, and look out for their interests generally.

When the young American first came to Henley he fagged for a sixth form boy named Berry, who had now left the school and was in the army, but his young brother, George, had come on to Henley, and became a sprat and a

fag for Roger Jackson. Dobson, the American's chum, whose father, Sir Henry Dobson, is a famous old soldier, moved up with him, and is now a salmon. So are Cossock, Tucker, primus, Bradbury, Dauncy, and many other lads who took part in "An American Boy at Henley." Dobson's fag is Tucker's young brother, who is in the same form as Berry, and is called Tucker, minor, to distinguish him from his brother of the fifth form.

Henley College has a roll call of over a thousand boys and is divided into four houses: Murray's, Fairbank's, Grafton's and Dole's, a master of those names being at the head of each house.

With this short explanation it is hoped that those who have not read "An American Boy at Henley" will be able to follow the fortunes of "Jackson and his Henley Friends."

CHAPTER III

HENLEY ELECTS HER CAPTAIN

THE combined houses of Henley were in session next day in the "Big," a great hall used for the purpose of general assembly.

The day following the annual Easter sports was always an important one in the college annuals, for on that day the school captain was elected for the coming year.

The position of school captain at Henley was an unofficial one, although recognized by Doctor Proctor. The captain was elected by the boys themselves, and his position was that of a minor king. On all matters between the boys his word was law, and he was sometimes called in for consultation by the doctor, when the feeling of the lads on any particular subject was desired. The appointment of "prefects," or "spotters," as they were called by the lads, was generally governed by his recommendation. Hence the office of school captain was the most important one open to the students at the college.

Belcher, of the sixth form, was occupying the chair at the conclave.

“ Mr. Dobson, of Murray’s, has the floor,” he had just announced, whereat there was terrific cheering from the Murray two hundred and forty-seven boys, and in the midst of the clouds of dust raised by the demonstration, the chunky figure of Dobson was observed aggressively waving some papers.

“ Look here, you fellows,” he shouted, but the fellows had not concluded their greeting, and for a while his efforts to obtain a hearing were vain. Presently his voice was again heard with another: “ Look here, you fellows.”

“ Order! Order!” sternly cried the presiding boy. “ Address the Chair, please.”

“ Oh, beg pardon, old man — that is, I mean, Mr. Chairman, but the beggars make such a confounded dust — that is, you know, I should say, the honorable members kick up such a row that a fellow can’t make himself heard. I want to make a speech.” [Cries of “ You don’t say!”] “ Yes, I do,” affirmed Dobson, with conviction, “ I want to propose this fellow, Yank; that is, I want to propose Mr. Roger Jackson, of Murray’s for school captain.” [Fearful hubbub from the Murray boys.] “ He’s a ripper all right, you know, and you can’t get a better chap, for all he’s not in the

sixth." [Loud and prolonged cheers.] "Let's see, what was I going to say?" [A voice: "Search me."] "If you'll shut up, Kilby, I'll tell you a few things, and —"

"Order! Order!" again came from the Chair. "The honorable member must address the presiding officer."

"How can I, old man — I mean Mr. Chairman, when these beggars, I should say, the honorable members keep interrupting a chap so?" demanded the aggrieved Dobson. "Well, here it is, then; I've got it all written out," and hastily referring to some sheets of paper he resumed:

"Mr. Chairman, and fellow members of the combined Henley houses, I have great pleasure in proposing Mr. Roger Jackson of Murray's fifth form for school captain."

Some one shouted: "You've said that before," which appeared to incense the speaker, for he responded with some warmth:

"I know, but it won't hurt you to hear it again."

Then, after again glancing at his notes, he demanded savagely:

"Now, then, didn't he stroke the school eight against Malvern? Didn't our shell win out by two lengths?" [Prolonged cheering from the entire school.] "Of course he did. Of

course we won, but we wouldn't have won if Yank — I mean Jackson — hadn't stroked us. Didn't we almost win against the county? Wasn't it just by a fluke of a drop kick that they beat us? Every fellow knows that. Wasn't it Yank — I mean Jackson — who brought down their crack half-back within ten of our line?" [Terrific cheering.] "By Jinks, old man — I should say, Mr. Chairman, didn't he overhaul him, though, from half-way down the field?" ["You bet."] "Didn't he run the Charterhouse chap off his feet in the open mile yesterday? There isn't a fellow here who doesn't remember that finish." [Prolonged applause.] "Well, then, what's the use of talking?" [A voice: "Sit down, then."] "No, I won't — not till I've had my say. You all know you can't find a more stunning chap than Jackson." [Cries of "He's a Yankee."] "Well, what if he is? Can't a Yankee be captain of Henley? We had a New South Wales man in '89. We had a South African only last year. You fellows on the other side are a lot of rotters and —"

"Order! Order! The honorable member must withdraw that remark," commanded the chairman.

"Loud shouts of "Withdraw, withdraw, apologize."

“ Oh, well, I’ll withdraw if that remark offends,” admitted the speaker, “ but you fellows make such a lot of rotten interruptions. What does it matter if he is a Yankee? As a matter of fact, he’s not, he’s a Virginian; but you chaps don’t know the difference. Anyway, he’s a Henleyite. Hasn’t he worked all the way up from a sprat to a salmon? There’s nothing more to be said. I propose him for captain. Now, then, Dauncy, you second. Get up, you duffer! ”

Loud and prolonged cheering followed, in the midst of which the slight figure of Augustus Dauncy, the crack fifth form debater, was observed to be standing waiting for silence.

“ Mr. Dauncy,” recognized the presiding officer.

“ Mr. Speaker,” the lad commenced, “ I have been considerably astonished by the feeling displayed here to-day. Gentlemen on the opposite side may cry ‘ Oh, oh,’ but that does not alter the fact. It would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that on an occasion like this, when the welfare of the entire school is concerned, we should not permit partisanship to run away with our judgment. It does not matter to what house the proposed captain belongs, or to what form, provided he is a senior. What we

want to do is to elect the best man." [Loud cheers.]

"My friend, Mr. Dobson, has proposed the name of Roger Jackson of Murray's fifth. I heartily second that motion, [loud cheers], and for this reason: he's the man best fitted for the job." [Another outburst of cheering from the Murrayites.] "Now, without any undue excitement, let us examine his record since he came among us three years ago as a sprat." [Mighty cheers from the third form.] "To-day he is a salmon. To-day he stands fifth on the roll of his form. During the period he has been with us he has done things. As a third form boy he passed the College of Preceptors on the honor list. As a third form boy he made his mark in an inter-house Rugby match, and stroked his house form to the top of the river — the first time, gentlemen, that the sprats of Murray's had been top for ten years." ["Hear, hear," and loud cheers.]

"As a fourth form boy, in company with five other fellows whose names will live on Henley's roll-call, he won the medal of the Royal Humane Society for a jolly good plucky act." [Great enthusiasm.] "He made his step to the fifth in almost record time, and as manager of the 'Pageant' presented by the boys of that form last term, he left an enviable mark for

executive ability. He has always been in his form shell and fifteen." [Cries of "What about cricket?"] "Gentlemen on the other side cry: 'What about cricket?' Mr. Roger Jackson does not play cricket." [Great hooting.] "Is that a disgrace, gentlemen? Must a man play cricket in order to be captain of this college?" ["Yes, yes," and great disorder.] "I think differently, and the gentlemen on the other side would, also, if they were not nearly out of their minds with excitement." [Cries of "Withdraw, withdraw."] "Oh, well, if that hurts them, I will put it differently, and say that they are permitting their judgment to be biased by their feelings. I tell you, gentlemen, there are more important things than playing cricket. A man to be captain of this college should be a fellow of judgment and tact; a sound fellow. You have such a man in Jackson." [Prolonged cheering.]

"Prominence has been given to the fact that he hails from the other side of the pond. Mr. President, I trust that Henley is too great a school to be influenced by any such foolishly weak argument as that. Mr. Jackson is an American, and is very properly proud of that fact." [Cheers and hooting.] "Gentlemen, I would not give a fig for a man who was not proud of the country of his birth; there is

something wrong with such a man. Mr. Jackson comes from a great country; a country that has made such strides as to astonish the world, and I take my hat off to his land." [Cheers and catcalls.] "Henley is nothing if she is not cosmopolitan. We have had men here from every country in Europe, some from South America, South Africa and Oceania. In two cases we have had captains from them. Why seek to bar Jackson because he comes from this great land of ninety million people who speak our tongue, and govern their country according to the best traditions of the Anglo-Saxon?"

Augustus Dauncy was getting into his stride now, and fully sustaining his reputation as Murray's crack speaker. His remarks were punctuated by cheers and loud shouts of approval from his supporters, but it was soon easy to see that the majority of the school was not with him. Not so much from the fact that Roger was an American did their opposition arise, as that he was only a fifth form boy. Henley's captains had heretofore always come from the sixth form, and conservative Henley disliked to establish a new precedent.

Three names were before the meeting as candidates for the important office: Wade and Blake of the sixth, and Jackson of the fifth, and as the conclave proceeded it became

apparent that Wade was a certain winner. Proposed by the gold medalist of the school, and seconded by another distinguished member, he carried with him the entire support of Dole's and Grafton's, with a considerable following from Fairbank's, when that house discovered they could not possibly elect their man, Blake. Roger, although receiving the support of his own house to the last man, was able to attract only a slight following from the determining factor, Fairbank's, and in the end the vote stood:

George Jennings Wade, Sixth Form, Grafton's	. 560
Roger Jackson, Fifth Form, Murray's 390
John Dunn-Blake, Sixth Form, Fairbank's	. withdrawn
Not voting 19

The result was no disappointment to Roger. It had not been his desire to have his name placed on the nomination board, but the fellows of Murray's house, from which no school captain had come for some years, had been desirous of making a bid for premier honors, and the strongest man they could name was the American. The house voted solid, but the support from the other divisions was not sufficient, so George Jennings Wade was captain of Henley.

CHAPTER IV

A MIDNIGHT EXCURSION

YOUNG Berry, after leaving his man's den on the night of the school captain election, spent half an hour in earnest conversation with his chum, Tucker. At nine o'clock the junior dormitory bell sounded, and the two youngsters hastened to answer the call.

Fifteen minutes later forty-three sprats were reclining quietly on their cots. Not a sound broke the stillness of the night. The full moon, a big, round ball of yellow, shone in through the open windows, making the room as light as day.

Another fifteen minutes passed, and still only a snore here, or the mutter of some lad in his sleep disturbed the stillness. Then, Tucker, who was right-hand mate to young Berry, after a careful survey of the room, commenced to wriggle out of bed.

Berry was awake, for he at once joined his chum, as the latter reached his cot, and without a word, the two youngsters removed their pajamas and stuffed several towels inside them.

They worked from the aisle between the cots, completely hidden from view, even if any of the tired lads had been looking for them.

Presently their task was completed, and silently they each lay the stuffed night clothes upon the cots, covering them with a blanket. Then as swiftly and noiselessly they commenced to dress. Not a single word had either uttered. A nod or a push was their only means of communication.

With a final hasty glance around the dormitory, the two lads crawled towards the far west window. There Tucker leaned down, and with familiar fingers brought out a coil of rope from his locker, a small wooden box, with which every Henley lad was provided in which to keep his private things. He leaned far out of the window, and slipping one end over an iron hook just under the sill, permitted the other to drop slowly groundward. Then he nodded to Berry, and the boy climbed nimbly out of the window, grasped the dangling rope, and went down hand over hand.

It was a drop of only about twenty-five feet, and in another minute Tucker stood by his chum's side on the gravel walk of the quadrangle. The dangling rope was tucked out of sight behind an adjacent gutter spout, and would scarcely attract the attention of the

night watchman as he passed on his rounds.

A moment yet the lads lingered, and then they stole noiselessly up the driveway, keeping in the shadow of the buildings, well out of the moonlight, until they reached the shrubbery that decorated Doctor Proctor's residence. Into this they dived and were lost to sight.

They emerged five minutes later at the tall iron gates that separated the master's garden from the high road. The lodgekeeper's cottage looked silent and deserted in the brilliant moonlight. Old John had long since gone to bed. Back in the doctor's house they could see a light burning on the second floor.

"Old Proctor's in his study still," whispered Tucker, hoarsely, as he climbed up the gates.

He reached the top, and leaned back to help his chum up. Then the two jumped down into the road, and, sitting down on the grassy side bank, produced their shoes from their pockets, and put them on.

"Now, we're all ready; come on, Straw," urged Tucker, and at a sharp trot they ran off along the road.

Behind them the old pile of Henley college lay dark in the brilliant moonlight. Here or there a light was visible from some late worker's study. In front, towering high above them, lay

Lechampton Hill, the northern spur of the Cotswold range. The road led them up steeply towards the hill, past the old "King George" tavern, and into the quarries.

Neither lad spoke until they arrived there. Then they stopped again, and sat down to rest.

"Bully night," observed Tucker, as he leaned forward to tie up his shoe string.

"You didn't forget the candle and lantern, did you?" demanded Berry.

"No, here it is," and Tucker produced from his coat pocket a folding mica lantern. "But I won't fit it in until we get to the cave," he added.

Again they resumed their trot, but soon it slowed down to a walk, and then to a crawl, as the ascent became steeper and steeper.

"By Jinks," panted Berry, as they paused on a narrow ledge half-way up the precipice, "it certainly is a climb, eh, Tuck?"

"It is that," agreed his companion, "but no one could ever find it; no one in all the world knows about it but you and me, Straw. We could stock it up with grub and tuck and pop and things and stay here for weeks if we wanted to."

"Yes," eagerly went on Berry, "we're like brigands — outlaws, you know, with a secret hiding-place in the mountains, and if we wanted

to we could go to the cave any time and defy old Proct and everybody. It's just such a place as 'The Spanish Brigand' had at the top of the mountains in that story we read; come on, Tuck!"

"We're jolly close to it now," muttered Tucker. "It's back of that clump of trees somewhere. Here, catch hold of my hand, and I'll swing you up — steady, here we are."

They stood high up on a rocky ledge, clutching to some mountain birch. Above them still towered the crest of the hill; below in the Arrow valley twinkled the lights of the town. The whole scene was bathed in the soft light of the glorious moon. Far off a little puffing locomotive was working its way along towards the city of Gloucester, eight miles to the west, and, looking almost right beneath them, the broad Arrow flowed in silver silence. It was a peaceful, soothing scene, and for a brief space the two youngsters stood drinking in its beauty.

The sound of the school clock striking the hour of eleven aroused them.

"Come on," urged Berry, "get the lantern ready and let's get in."

His companion was in the act of striking a match, when Berry stopped him with a word of warning.

“Don't do it yet,” he advised, “wait until we're inside.”

“Where *is* the place?” growled Tucker, still searching. “Oh, here it is! Come on, Straw; I swear, a big chap couldn't squeeze in here.”

The lads wriggled in through the opening, and after a drop of about eight feet stood upright in the cave. The feeble light from the lantern, which they had lit, disclosed an aperture roofed with a great slab of rock about the size of a kitchen table, and through this the lads crawled with confidence born of familiarity.

The sight inside would have been rather disconcerting to a stranger. Huge boulders hung “confused hurled” overhead on all sides. Massive monoliths of rock, tons heavy, apparently awaited a breath to topple over. The lads looked like pigmies in the midst of that gigantic scenery. The air seemingly was fresh, for the candle burned brightly. High on their left was a large fissure that receded into darkness. Without hesitation the youngsters clambered up this and into a tunnel, with just standing room for one. Then came a slight descent for a few feet. Along this they crawled, then turned sharply to the left, where the passage terminated in a large V shape with a small opening at the point. Through this they again squeezed, and

after a drop of a yard stood in an almost circular room.

With the assurance of one who knows well the ropes, Tucker advanced, and hung his lantern upon one of the numerous stalactites that descended from the roof. Then he glanced around with the air of a conqueror, and demanded of his companion:

“ Say, isn't it bully? ”

“ Bet your life,” acquiesced Berry, as he stalked around, monarch of all he surveyed. “ Now then for the spread,” he added.

His companion was already busy with a hamper that reposed in one corner, taking out from it an inviting collection of jam pots, pop bottles, and all that confectionery and pastry that delights the heart of the small British schoolboy.

It was to enjoy this feast that the two youngsters had broken bounds and made the midnight excursion. The cave they had discovered by accident a few weeks before, and it had at once appealed to their love of adventure. It was mysterious; it was a secret, therefore it was “ fun.” There was the delicious risk of breaking bounds, and of getting away unseen from the dormitory; the knowledge that punishment would surely follow if their absence was discovered, and finally the inviting spread

when the cave was reached. More than a dozen times this term had the boys successfully made the climb and returned unseen and undetected by monitor or watchman.

For an hour and a half they remained enjoying their stolen visit, and then Berry suggested:

“ Say, Tuck, we had better be getting.”

“ Rather expect we had,” reluctantly admitted his chum.

They carefully put away the remnants of the feast, climbed back to the entrance, extinguished the light, and commenced the descent.

In half an hour they were at the entrance to the college grounds again. They climbed the gate as they had before, and sneaked between the shrubbery along to the driveway beneath their dormitory window.

Both lads removed their shoes again, and then Tucker whispered:

“ You go first, Straw, and I’ll steady the rope; then give me a leg up from the window when you get there.”

“ Right you are,” softly responded his chum. Suddenly he stopped, mouth agape in horrified surprise.

He took a step yet further in, felt frantically about the wall with inquiring fingers, then turned back, and whispered hoarsely:

“ Say, Tuck, the rope’s gone! ”

CHAPTER V

BLACKMAIL

TUCKER sprang forward and searched frantically for the lost rope. He tugged at the ivy that covered the wall; he got to his knees and pawed about on the soft turf; he searched to right and left. Then he stepped back a few steps and gave vent to a low whistle of dismay.

"By Jinks, Straw, we're nabbed," he groaned.

As if by common impulse, both lads crouched in the shelter of the wall, and waited, uncertain what next to do.

The rope was gone! It followed, then, that some one must have removed it. "The thing couldn't have got off by itself," as Berry whispered. Then some one had discovered their absence, and most likely they were even now being "stalked."

The great school clock chimed solemnly twice.

"Two o'clock," rasped Tucker. "Say, Straw, we *must* get back; we may as well get nabbed getting back as staying here."

“How can we get back?” demanded the scared Berry, glancing apprehensively upwards.

For a moment or so Tucker hesitated, then, after a careful survey of the land, Tucker stepped out a pace or so from his place of concealment against the wall, and studied attentively the ivy-covered building.

“We’ll have to climb up that,” he whispered, pointing to the ivy. “I’ll try it first, and if I can make it I’ll tie my sheets together and help you up; you’re such an ass at climbing. Here goes!”

He vaulted lightly on to the lower window-sill, and grasped the ivy. It sagged and gave under his weight. Undismayed, he stuck his toes into the strongest looking mass, and reaching up his full height, drew himself up a foot.

Carefully, slowly, he swarmed upwards, his chum watching his efforts with bated breath from the ground.

It was slow work. Again and again it appeared he could go no further. Again and again the frail, sagging ivy threatened to give way beneath his weight, but still the desperate lad crawled upwards, until at last, with a final effort, he grasped the window-sill of the dormitory, and drew himself noiselessly up.

He peered in through the open window. All

the occupants of the room lay apparently fast asleep. He crawled silently inside, and for a few minutes Berry was left in lonely solitude, a prey to his fears.

Then his chum's head appeared at the window, and with a soft "flop" a twisted sheet dropped almost to the ground.

The valiant Tucker had tied together the sheets of his own and Berry's cot, and twisting his end about the iron hook outside, had made it fast.

The waiting lad below wasted not a moment. He climbed to the lower sill, as Tucker had done, and with the aid of the rope and ivy, had but little difficulty in gaining the room above.

Without a word the sheets were untied and replaced upon the cots. The youngsters undressed in hot haste and scrambled back into bed, perplexity and apprehension holding them frightened victims.

They both dropped off to sleep sometime before the morning sun peeped into the long room, but their rest was troubled with dreams of caves and mountains and ropes, and once Berry imagined he was falling, falling, falling, and he awoke with a start and a cry of fear.

"Shut up, you idiot," growled the boy on his left, sleepily, and the dream-tormented lad sank back again to uneasy slumber.

They both awoke at the usual bugle call next morning, and hurried to their respective men's dens, to help with the breakfast.

"Why didn't you get here in time for the pull up river?" demanded Roger, as his fag's face appeared in the doorway.

"My alarm didn't go off, or else I didn't hear it," truthfully admitted the lad.

"You look as if you're asleep now," suggested the American. "Did you take your tub this morning?"

"No, I hadn't time."

"I thought so; you'd better cut and take a plunge now; you will feel off color all day unless you do; I'll get my own breakfast."

Nothing loath, the fag departed on a run for the pool, emerging fifteen minutes later, looking as red as a young lobster.

School hours that day appeared particularly long and arduous to both youngsters. They lived in a state of constant terror. Some one had taken that rope, and that some one might "peach."

Excitement was running high that day both in the old town and the school, for two days hence an election for member of Parliament was to take place, and the boys, as usual, were intensely interested in the result. More than one hundred boys had obtained leave to attend

the final meeting held on the morrow, and intended to "rip" for Sir James Leigh, the Conservative candidate. Even the anxiety that harassed them could not make the two sprats lose their interest in the result of the poll, and they had been two of the very first for whom passes had been signed.

Roger Jackson took little or no interest in the exciting event. Politics was the only subject on which he and his chum, Dobson, disagreed, so they wisely avoided any reference to them.

"Say," young Berry explained to his man, late that afternoon, "Tucker and I and a lot of the chaps are going to town to-morrow afternoon to rip for old Leigh at his meeting. I've got excused from prep, and you won't want me, will you?"

"No, you can go as far as I am concerned, but look out, kid, there's an awful rough lot in town these days; you must steer clear of them, and be back again as soon as the meeting's over; don't hang around the town; come straight back to school, won't you?"

"Oh, Tuck and I'll take care, you bet. There's a whole crowd of us going, and some seniors, too," responded the boy, as he darted away.

He sought out his chum, who had also ob-

tained leave, and the two wandered out on the playing field, talking in low tones of the last night's incident.

"We had better not go there any more, at least for a time," suggested Berry.

"Well, we'd have to get another rope, anyway, before we could," Tucker said. "I hate to give up that cave; it was such a bully place, and it was rattling, sneaking off like that at night, with not a kid or any one knowing anything about it. We can wait for a few nights and see if anything turns up, and then if it doesn't, we'll get another rope. I'm not going to be scared out."

They were sauntering along arm in arm, Henley fashion, and had just reached the confines of the grounds, when they were approached by a burly, rather seedy-looking man. The lads were passing him, when he stopped them with a loud:

"Good day to you, Misters Tucker and Berry."

Both youngsters stopped in surprise and looked at the fellow.

"Don't be scared," growled the man, with a leer. "I just wants to 'ave a word or so with you; can you step houtside aw'ile?"

"What do you want?" inquired Tucker coolly.

"I said I wants a word or so with you," repeated the fellow.

"Well, go ahead; you can say it here, can't you?"

"Maybe, you'd rather every one didn't 'ear wot Hi 'ave to say," suggested the stranger.

"How did you know our names?" demanded Berry.

"That's my business," chuckled the fellow, with a knowing wink.

There was something about the man's manner and speech that made both lads uneasy.

"Best step outside and walk up and down a bit," he insisted, and the boys followed him.

"Well, now, what is it?" demanded Tucker, as they stopped well away from any listeners.

"Come on," insisted the fellow, "we can talk as we goes along."

"We haven't passes," explained the youngsters, "we can't go in town."

"'Pears as you don't always 'ave to 'ave passes when you goes out. Oh, I'm on to you young gents up at this school," and the man laughed unpleasantly.

"But we have to," insisted Tucker.

"In daytime, perhaps, but 'ow 'bout moon-night rambles? Wot is it the song says? 'A starry night for a ramble.' — Oh, oh, that's a

good 'un, ain't it?" and the fellow laughed boisterously at the two blanched faces of the lads. "Oh, don't you be uneasy," he resumed, nudging Berry playfully in the ribs. "I ain't a-going to 'urt you; I just wants a square deal, that's hall."

"What do you want?" whispered poor Berry, now thoroughly frightened.

"You're really nice, 'andy boys now, ain't you?" went on the fellow, ignoring Berry's question. "Can climb like sailormen, can't you? Never seen nothing to beat it afore."

The stranger produced, as he spoke, a yard of rope, and dangled it before the astonished lads' eyes.

"Give it to me!" shouted Tucker, making a grab for it.

"Not so fast, mister, not so fast," growled the man, scowling, and tucking the rope back in his pocket. "It's a little keepsake. Hi'm collecting such like. Maybe the gaffer up to the school'll like to look at it; guess I'll take hit up and show it to 'im."

"Don't! Don't!" shouted both boys with one voice, now badly frightened. Their worst fears were being realized; their consciences were making cowards of them.

The man laughed loudly. "Well, I never, I never did," he roared.

“ You stole that rope,” accused Tucker boldly; “ you stole it last night.”

“ Well, wot if Hi did?” growled the fellow.

“ Give it back to us — all of it.”

“ Wot was you both doing?” persisted the man. “ Sheep stealing, I’ll warrant. By Gosh, that’s pretty close to a ’anging job, ain’t it, and you be so young, too. ’Twould be a pity, it would. Wonder wot the gaffer up to the school’ll say?”

“ Oh, don’t! Don’t!” implored the lads again.

“ Well, wot was you doing, then?”

“ It was only the cave,” whimpered Berry.

“ Cave, cave? Maybe you be smugglers, then. That’s worse yet. Come, out with it. You best make a clean breast of it hall.”

The two green lads were like clay in the rogue’s hands, and in ten minutes he knew all. He pretended to be vastly concerned. He shook his head and muttered to himself:

“ It’s a bad job; sneaking hoff when all honest men is abed, like thieves; tut, tut, I reckons as ’tis me duty to go tell the gaffer. Hi’ll ’ave to do it, misters; Hi’ll ’ave to do it, Hi certainly will. Hi — ”

“ Oh, don’t, don’t!” implored both the lads, as they grasped the fellow’s coat in an effort to

detain him, for he was moving away, school-wards.

He stopped as they importuned him, apparently relenting somewhat.

"Well, if Hi don't, Hi'll certainly 'ave to come in on the deal somehow; that's only fair."

"What is it? What do you want?" cried Berry, seeing hope.

"'Alves, I s'pose."

"Halves, halves on what?"

"See here," the fellow growled, turning about like a man who has made up his mind to do some generous act. "My duty is clear to go tell your gaffer up at the school, but you be both such kids that Hi 'ate to do it." Here he grinned, and endeavored to look benevolent. "Tell you wot Hi'll do," he suddenly exclaimed, as if he had at last made up his mind. "'Ow much money 'ave you got?"

Berry dived down in his pocket instantly and produced three shillings and some coppers.

"I'm stumped," explained Tucker.

"Won't do," growled the man, shaking his head. "Hi'd 'ave to 'ave more than that or Hi'd feel like Hi'd 'ave to tell the governor."

"I'll give you my allowance next week when I get it," promised Tucker fearfully, seeking to detain the tormentor.

The man considered for some time, then:

“ Tell you wot Hi’ll do,” he suddenly repeated. “ You ’and over wot you’ve got now, and come hup with a quid apiece before the end of term, and we’ll call the thing square; there now, ain’t that ’andsome? ”

“ Why, it would take all our tin, and we wouldn’t have a penny left! ” cried Berry.

“ Well, just as you likes,” muttered the rogue, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he made a move as if to depart; “ only don’t say afterwards as Hi didn’t give you both a fair chance, that’s all.”

“ Wait a minute! Wait a minute! ” cried Berry; “ we’ll do it, won’t we, Tuck? ”

“ Hit’s a hawful thing,” commented the man, as if talking to himself, “ hit sure his. Two young gents a-sneaking hoff hat dead o’ night, like thieves, and a-going to a cave, and a-’iding themselves there, and then a-sneaking back again. Many a good man’s gone to prison fur less than that. I suppose the gaffer, if Hi told ’im, ’e’d just call a p’liceman, that’s hall, but Hi ’ate to see ’im do it. Well, well, I s’ppose Hi’ll ’ave to let you hoff. ’And hover wot you’ve got, and Hi’ll be hup ’ere of a Saturday to get your allowance, as you calls it. You each gets ’alf a crown a week, you says. Hit’s awful little, but Hi reckons as Hi’ll ’ave to be easy with you, and let you down light.”

He pocketed the three shillings and sixpence, with a final warning. "Don't you forget now, hevery Saturday hat two o'clock. I'll be hout-side 'ere, and you come hup with the ready, or Hi'll trot hup to the governor and peach; I sure will," and off he swaggered.

CHAPTER VI

THE RIOT

THE two lads stood gazing after him for a few moments in blank dismay and dejection. Their worst fears had been realized. All day they had been dreading an exposure, though from what quarter it would come they could not guess. Now the pit had opened beneath them.

“ Who is he? ” groaned Berry, appealing to his chum.

“ Hanged if I know. Some town chap, I suppose. But I don't see how he got on to it.”

“ That *was* our piece of rope, wasn't it? ” queried Berry.

“ You bet it was; I know that old piece well; it came off my box.”

“ Well, he's a cad, whoever he is; suppose he was sure off to peach on us to the doctor? ”

“ Looked like it, but I think we're all right now as long as we come up with the tin.”

“ But how'd he find out? ” persisted Berry. “ What right had he in the grounds, I wonder, and he must have been in the place to have

taken the rope away. I told you we'd get nabbed sooner or later, scooting off like that of a night to the cave."

"Well, it's no use growling over it now," manfully maintained Tucker. "We've had the fun and took the chance, so I suppose we've got to face the music."

"But what're we going to do for tin if he takes it all?" demanded Berry, in dismay, the prospect striking him with its full significance.

As the two sprats talked together seriously, Jack Maxwell, the crack sprinter of the Murray fifth form, came along.

"You two kids had better get inside the gates," he warned; "it's against rules, loafing out here, you know. What were you talking to that chap for?" he added.

"That chap? Who? We weren't," chattered Berry.

"Don't you know who he is?" continued the fifth form boy, who in his early days at Henley had been one of the fast set. "His name's Dutton, — 'Bunny' Dutton, — and he keeps one of the shady pool-rooms. You had best have nothing to do with him; take my tip."

The tall senior passed on, after giving the two youngsters this advice.

That was a wretched evening for the two sprats, and not even the boisterous company

of their fellows could raise their spirits. Only the prospect of to-morrow's leave and outing in town, and the excitement of the election meeting made life liveable. Both went about their duties with dejected mien and listless interest, and studies suffered; but they were sufficiently recovered by next morning to make the effort to have passes signed for leave, and later in the day, in company with a dozen other sprats, made their way into town.

Two hours later Roger opened the door of his den, and placing his hands to his mouth, yelled "Berry! Berry!" Then waited for a response. "Confound the kid, wonder where he can have gone to," he grumbled.

"You'll have to shout louder than that to reach him, Yank," advised Dobson, who appeared at that moment.

"Why, where is the beggar? I've hunted for him everywhere."

"Oh, he and a whole crowd of chaps have gone off to town on leave; it's election day to-morrow, you know, and Leigh is holding his final meeting. The fellows have gone to rip for him."

"Oh, that's so," said Roger. "I forgot; he told me he was going. I wonder you haven't gone, too, old man."

"I was going, but —"

A sudden interruption stopped the boy's words.

His fag, Tucker, burst in through the doorway.

"Oh, Dobson!" he yelled, "come on quick. I've been looking for you everywhere. Come on! Come on!"

"What's the row?" demanded Dobson, wheeling about towards the excited junior. "Why, what on earth's the trouble; been in a fight or what?"

"Come on, come on," urged the half-crazed youngster; "they're killing our chaps. Come on quick!"

Dobson caught his fag by the shoulder.

"Tell me what's up," he demanded. "Stop jumping about like a jackass and tell me."

"It's the meeting, you know," panted the boy. "We ripped for Leigh, and the roughs set on our fellows, and they've got 'em cornered in the market-place and they're killing 'em — oh, come on, I say."

Without another word the two seniors grabbed up their mortar-boards, and headed by the fag, dashed from the room. Along the corridors they raced, down the broad stairs and through the hall and into the playing field, picking up a dozen other or more fellows as they ran with shouts of: "Henley to the rescue!"

“ Our chaps nabbed in town! Come on, you beggars,” yelled Roger, and at the head of a fast-increasing crowd, the two fifth form boys swung past the great iron gates and dashed off towards town.

Little Tucker had been left far behind in the race, but his cries of: “ In the market-place,” still sounded to guide the rescuing party.

It was the day before the parliamentary election, and Hamenchelt was in an uproar. Sir James Leigh, the Conservative candidate, and a Mr. Henry Tupper, a local man, were the rivals. Party feeling was running high, and somewhat ill-advisedly a large party of the boys had attended the last meeting of the Conservative candidate, amongst them Berry and Tucker. It was young Tucker, who having made his escape from the *mêlée*, had rushed back to the school and brought word of the riot.

The rescuing party had now small need of Tucker's directions, for in the distance the shouts and cries of the combatants could be heard, mingled with the high screech of some fifes and the furious pounding of a drum.

And now, as they tore townwards, the words of the Liberal election song were plainly borne to them on the wind:

“ Out of the road for old Dan Tupper,
 You’re too late to have any supper;
 Clear the road for the jolly old man! ”

While high above the blare of brass instruments arose the screech of the Conservative fifes with:

“ Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue,
 Old Tupper is stuck in the glue;
 He’s kicking about and he can’t get out:
 Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue! ”

And then came shouts: “ Hack it through, Henley! Hack it through, sir! ”

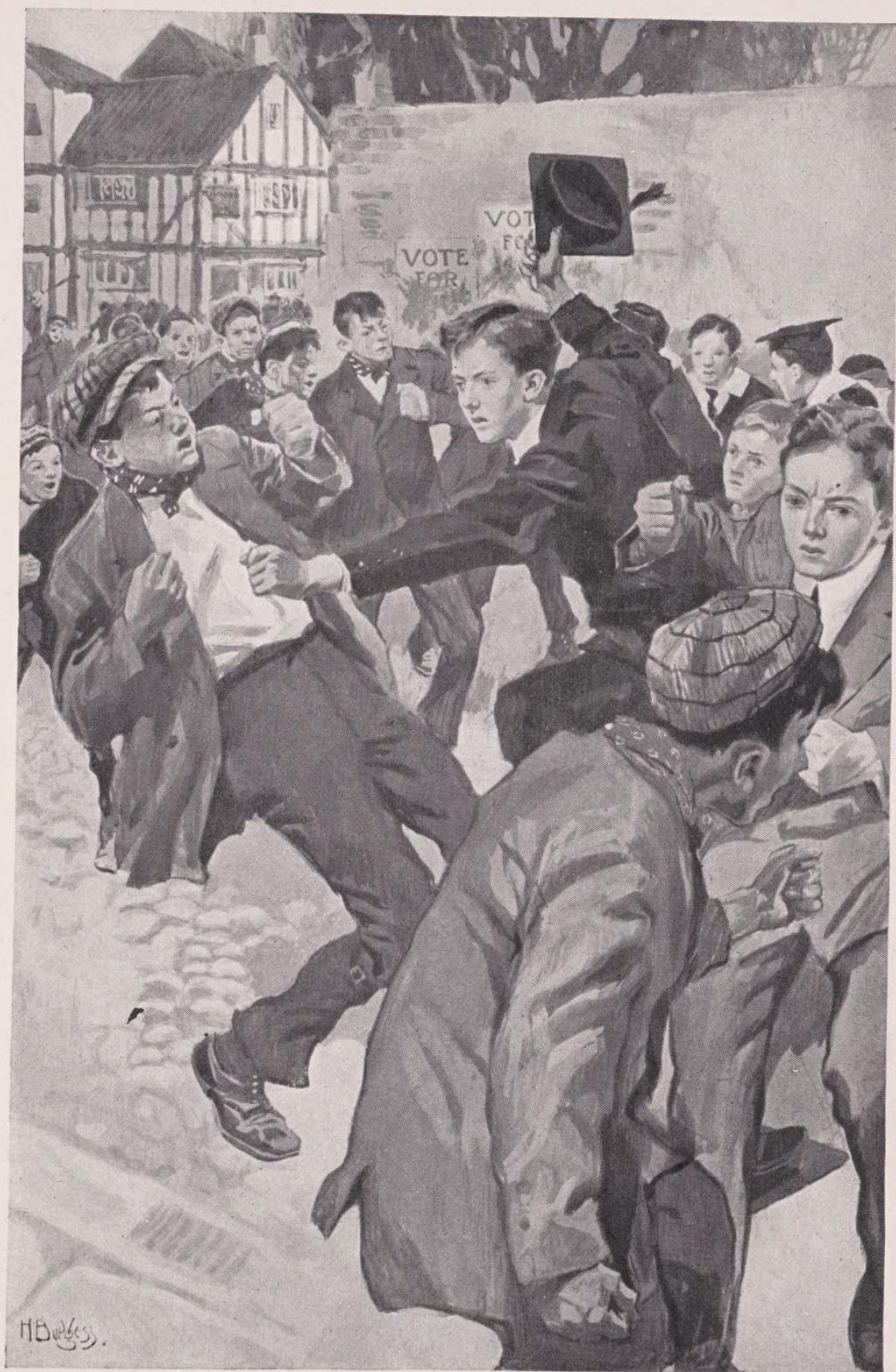
It was the football cry of the college, and it set every nerve of the racing boys tingling, as they tore madly to the rescue.

“ Come on, you fellows! Come on! ” shouted Roger, as he led the wild rush.

The wiry American was in the van, with Dobson and a good three dozen hot at his heels.

Again came that shout: “ Hack it through, Henley! ” and then the cry was drowned by shouts and jeers mingled with hoots and yells of: “ Down with the kids! ” “ Smash the toffs! ” Then again came a confusion of curses and groans.

A turn of the road, and the scene of battle lay before the rescuing party. The Henley town party was evidently fighting its way back



Next moment they were in the thick of the fray.
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to school, beset on all sides by the roughs of the town. Stones were being freely used, and matters were looking very serious.

“School to the rescue!” shouted Roger, as he tore along, and the boys behind him took up the cry: “School to the rescue.”

Next moment they were in the thick of the fray. A mob of angry toughs charged down upon the advancing schoolboys, endeavoring to prevent a union of the Henley forces.

“Mortarboards, give them the mortarboards, chaps!” yelled Roger, as he whipped his college square from his head, and struck out right and left, his followers instantly taking the cue.

A mortarboard, when used correctly, forms a very effective weapon. The corners, though protected by rubber, are yet sufficiently sharp to inflict considerable damage, and with cuts and swings from these mortarboards, the two parties of schoolboys sought to effect a union; the crowd fighting savagely to prevent it.

With a final charge, Roger's boys and the returning ones effected a junction, and, turning about against the toughs, formed a solid front, the seniors making a fringe about the smaller lads, in an endeavor to protect them. The college rallying cry sounded everywhere from the

hundred or more boys, as in a compact body they doggedly fought their way schoolward.

Two prefects, Neuman and Price, who had been in town on duty, had hurried to the help of the hard-pressed Henleyites, and were now directing the retreat. They hailed the rescuing contingent with shouts of joy.

“Here, Jackson, here! Look out for the tail; they’re trying to cut it off!” shouted Neuman, as he espied the tall American fighting his way toward him at the head of his band. “The sprats and minnows are bunched there!”

At that instant a high treble sounded above the din of battle: “Down, here, down; Henley to the rescue!”

Instantly Roger was hewing his way towards that spot. Well he knew the voice. It was the cry of his fag, young Berry, and it sent every drop of fighting blood tingling through his veins. Like an avenging Nemesis he flew to the rescue. A foot behind him Dobson fought his way valiantly. The American lad, quick-witted and keen, was using his mortarboard in effective style, and the chunky Dobson, with clenched fists, was handing out jabs and swings impartially. He was bare-headed; his cap had been knocked off earlier in the fray, and a little stream of crimson was trickling down over his face.

“With you, Yank!” he bellowed, as he warmed to his work. “Get into ’em; I’m with you, old boy!”

It was but the work of a short minute to reach the hard-pressed youngsters, and once there the two seniors soon cleared a space around themselves long enough to give the half dozen sprats and minnows time to scramble to their feet, all but *one*, one who lay very still, with closed eyes, amid the confusion of stumbling feet.

It was young Berry!

“You set of cads!” yelled Roger, his face white with anger. “Hold ’em off a minute, Dob!” and he swung the injured lad across his shoulders.

Tommy Dobson needed no exhortation. Your true Anglo-Saxon dearly loves a fight, and although slower in getting into one than the other fellow, he is pretty apt to see the affair through, once he has started.

The mob by which the schoolboys were surrounded was, however, in an ugly mood. The cheers of the lads for their candidate, their vigorous support of him, and the gibes and taunts they had hurled at the opposing one had wrought up the anger of the attackers to a high pitch. They were now almost beside themselves with fury, and seeing the lads cut

off, and apparently at their mercy, they attacked them furiously.

“Down with the toffs! Give it to the kids!” their shouts rang out, as they pressed hard upon the cornered schoolboys, who, rallying under the leadership of Roger and Dobson, fought back gamely. The severed detachment consisted only of about eight or nine lower schoolboys and the two seniors, while their assailants numbered many dozen.

Hemmed in, the Henleyites were driven against a high brick wall that bordered one side of the market-place, where they gathered savagely at bay. Matters were looking rather serious for them, for the main body of their comrades had fought their way on up the High Street, and were now separated from them by a block or more, ignorant of the fact that their comrades were in such a tight place. Dobson, intent on nothing but giving back the best he was capable of, gave no thought to the general plan of battle, but the longer-headed American, realizing that it was impossible for his little band to get through without assistance, suddenly let out an ear-splitting yell:

“Henley, Henley to the rescue!”

Almost instantly came the answer from far up the street. A voice commanded loudly: “Steady, there, you fellows!”

And then came a great shout: "Hack it back, Henley, hack it back!"

The school was fighting its way back once more!

The assailants, perceiving this movement, prepared to receive it, but at that moment a cry ran through the crowd: "Police! Police! Look out for the bobbies!"

As if by magic the mob commenced to melt away, and in another minute a detachment of stalwart constables arrived on the scene at the double. The schoolboys picked themselves up from the fray, while in a few curt words the lieutenant in charge of the police ordered them back to the college.

It was a pretty badly battered crowd that finally arrived at the gates, where the disabled ones made for the dispensary in search of plaster and lotion to heal the scars of battle.

Young Berry soon recovered, but he had a nasty scalp wound, that necessitated his remaining in the sick ward for two days. Meanwhile the election had been decided, and *Leigh had won*, so he felt that his wounds had not been in vain, for Henley was firmly convinced in its own mind that it contributed in no small manner to the result.

CHAPTER VII

PLANS FOR THE FIELD DAY

THE weeks from Easter to mid-summer were busy ones for Roger. He and his chum Dobson, in company with thirty odd Henley lads of the fifth form, were grinding for the "Oxford, Junior," a national examination held in September.

He had just returned from an interview with Mr. Murray, in which the master had endeavored to get at the bottom of the unfortunate election disturbance. Dobson and the two prefects had all been subject to the same examination, but Mr. Murray had soon come to the conclusion that the error lay rather in permitting the boys to go to town, than in the fight itself, and the matter was dropped, without sending it to Doctor Proctor.

As Roger sat working in his den, he heard Berry's footsteps outside, and a second later the fag entered. His head was still decorated by plaster, as a memento of the fight, but otherwise the lad was "as good as new," as Tucker said.

“ Say, Jackson,” he blurted out, as he shifted about uneasily first on one foot, then on the other.

“ Well, what is it, kid? You look as if you’d swallowed a hot potato.”

Berry hesitated a moment, then in a would-be offhand manner: “ Say, could you lend me five bob? ” he demanded.

Roger looked up keenly. “ Sit down,” he invited.

The youngster had evidently had hard work screwing up his courage to the asking point. His face was red as a frosty sun, as he sidled into a chair.

“ You know,” he rattled on, “ I hate to ask you, but — but I — I rather need it, you know — I’m clean stumped.”

“ That’s all right,” assured Roger, “ I’ll lend it you with pleasure, but look here, kid, take my advice and keep within your allowance. I don’t know what you want the crown for, or why you’re broke so early in the month, and I’m not going to preach at you. I’m just saying what I know your brother Bert would say if he were here, and that is: ‘ Don’t borrow.’ Shakespeare says the same thing, you know. His advice was: ‘ Neither a borrower nor a lender be.’ ”

“ Oh, it’s all right. If you don’t want to

lend it me, you needn't," flared up the fag, beginning to go.

"Sit down again," ordered Roger curtly. "I said I'd lend it to you, and here it is; you're welcome to it. It isn't that I mind letting you have it one bit, you know, — or you should know, — but I think a lot of your brother; he was a bully fine fellow to me when I fagged for him, and I hate to see his brother drop into a bad habit, that's all; but if ever you want to borrow again, you'll come to me, won't you? Promise me that, Berry. Bert wouldn't like his brother getting loans from any one."

"Thanks," muttered Berry, as he took the proffered silver.

He gave his man an uneasy glance; stopped, as if about to say something, and then again made for the door.

"Hold hard!" cried Roger. "Come here a minute, George."

The junior hesitated, then returned.

"What is it?" he demanded sulkily.

Roger slipped his arm familiarly into his fag's.

"Say, old chap, is everything all right?" he inquired kindly.

"Everything all right? Yes! Why? Of course it is."

"Because," resumed the American, ignoring the assurance, "if it isn't, I want you to tell

me. I should stand by you, you know, no matter what the trouble was; I promised old Berry that."

"Nothing's the matter," vehemently asserted the junior.

He fingered the coins together nervously as he spoke.

"You don't smoke, do you?" suddenly demanded Roger.

"N—no — that is, never, scarcely; I did have a cig with Tuck, though, the other day — no harm in that, you know."

Roger glanced at the stained finger-tips.

"It's a rotten bad habit," he condemned, "and you want to cut it out; take my tip. It ruins your wind and takes away your nerve."

"I'm not going to smoke any more," hastily disclaimed the fag. "Nothing else you want me for to-night, is there?"

"No. How about your prep; getting along all right? I'm ready to give you a leg up any time you're stuck, you know."

"Oh, I'm traveling all right. Tuck and I are swallowing irregular verbs like sharks, and we can take the 'Asses' Bridge' in the dark," cried the junior gleefully. "Good night."

"Good night," responded Roger soberly.

After Berry's departure he sat for some time pondering. Then he aroused himself with an

effort and resumed his work. He turned over the leaves of his Greek fables idly for a few minutes. His thoughts were evidently some distance away. "Well, this won't do," he muttered, commencing to apply himself again, "but I wouldn't — I wouldn't have anything go wrong with that kid for worlds. It would cut up old Berry awfully."

He had been working less than half an hour, when the door was kicked open, and the bulky form of his chum Dobson appeared.

"Hello, old grinder!" was his greeting. "What a beggar you are for pegging. Look here, can you get this passage? I'll swear I can't make top or tail of it: 'The figure has had no stability; it —'"

"Oh, it isn't, you old duffer; it's 'The figure has no stability!'"

"Well, I wish to goodness it had, then; I'm sick and tired of 'the figure;' and it's tommy-rot."

Dobson sat down.

"Think I'll work in here awhile," he announced, and for an hour there was no sound but the scratch of pencil or a muttered exclamation. Then Dobson flung down his book, and tilted back in his chair, as he exclaimed:

"I'm going to stop; hang the Oxford, Junior!

Wonder if we're going to get through?" he soliloquized.

"Oh, I guess so. This Oxford isn't such an awful stickler, so Wade says, and he's been through. Remember that Preceptors' exam, Dob? What a big thing that seemed to us kids two years ago."

"Rather. And then you were fagging for Berry, and now his brother's fagging for you, and Tucker's brother doing duty to me; say, by the way, Tucker's awfully thick with your kid; they stick together like glue, — regular David and Jonathan."

"That's what they used to call you and me, Dob. But, say, is Tucker a decent chap?"

"Oh, I suppose he's all right; he stuffs, though, just like his brother used to; suppose it runs in the family, eh?"

"Doesn't run wild at all, does he?"

"Well, I've had to call him down once or twice, and he was reported for rough behavior in town by spotters; I got him off, though. But, say, Yank, what I really dropped in to see you about this evening particularly was this Field Day; you know, it's right on us. I brought the map along. Wade gave it to me only a few minutes before I came in, and I thought you and I had better look it over together. See, here it is."

Dobson spread the map out on the table, and the two chums commenced a careful examination, Roger hurling his fables, with a relieved air, into a far corner of the room.

“Who sketched that map?” demanded Roger, looking up.

“I did,” admitted Dobson proudly.

“I thought so; well, it looks like a pretty tough place to take. Let’s hear the ‘general idea,’ Dob.”

Out came Dobson’s notebook, and he began to read, in a business-like tone:

“The enemy (Red; Henley) are supposed to be the invaders. Having landed somewhere from the lower ‘Arrow,’ they have captured Bristol, Gloucester and other towns. The main force has struck out for London, but a strong body of the defenders (Burford; Blue) threatening their left flank, they detached a mixed column of all arms, five hundred strong, to drive off defenders (Burford; Blue).

“The Defenders (Burford; Blue) have taken up a strong position on Cleeve Hill. The attackers (Henley; Red) are supposed to arrive in Hamenchelt early in the morning, and they are to capture the enemy’s position by four (4) o’clock, when ‘cease fire’ is sounded, or suffer defeat, it being supposed that by that time the

defenders (Burford; Blue) will be reinforced by a strong reserve marching to their aid from the north."

"Here's the idea, old man," pointed out Dobson, again taking up the sketch. "Burford's chaps will leave their grounds sometime early in the morning, and get to their position before seven; they are three hundred and fifty strong; a hundred and fifty less than our force, because we have to attack.

"We are given a squadron of cavalry, — fifty, you know. A battalion of infantry (three hundred and fifty), and two batteries of artillery, with eight guns. Companies B, C, D, E, and F will form the infantry battalion; Company A, the cavalry; and G and H, the artillery."

"What are you going to use for your cannons?" demanded Roger. He had not entered into the spirit of the game with the same vim as had Dobson, who, being prepared for the army, was naturally keenly interested.

"Well, of course," admitted Dobson, "they are only dummies, but they're supposed to be machine guns, or screw guns — something that can be packed on mules' backs, you know — and the sergeant has really secured some quite respectable-looking affairs; no end of fag for

us fellows to lug 'em along, I'll promise you. The cavalry chaps are armed with singlesticks, and, of course, the infantry will carry the cadet corps guns — oh, I tell you, old chap, it's going to be a ripping good Field Day. All communication between the colleges will cease at noon Tuesday. Old General Kerr, of Presbury Court, is to act as referee, and the umpires are the two sergeants of the schools. Wade has given me the artillery, you know, and he wants to know if you will handle the cavalry. That's really what I dropped in to see you about. How about it, old man?"

"Say, Dob, you know I have small knowledge of anything like this. He had better select another fellow; I shall only make a muff of it."

"Not you, old chap. All Yanks are born soldiers, so my governor says. Besides, you can go the distance so jolly fine, and, you see, as the 'cavalry' have no horses, it's necessary that they can foot it fast. Wade's picked out the best long distance men in the school for that division; that's why he's asked you to command."

"Well, I'd like it awfully, but really, I'm afraid I'll make a hash of it."

"Oh, rot! Of course you won't. It's on, then. Now, this is Wade's idea of attack.

It's confidential, of course," and then the enthusiastic Dobson proceeded to make his chum acquainted with the details of attack.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MARCH TO "THE SUN"

WHEN Roger awoke next morning to the usual Henley bugle call, he was as enthusiastic as any boy at the college. The day was a general holiday, and after breakfast the "troops" mustered on the playing field. Only the five hundred seniors were taking part in the manœuver, but all scholars had a holiday, and most of the boys who were not taking part were prepared to follow afoot as spectators, strict instructions being given them to "keep off the firing line."

The morning was cloudy, but gave promise of becoming clearer as the day advanced. General Wade, with his aide-de-camp, and attended by his second in command, made a careful inspection of his troops.

While he was looking over the "guns," the squadron of cavalry, composed of the fastest boys in the college, and in command of Roger Jackson, wheeled and trotted off the ground, and a few minutes later the whole infantry force, with the exception of one company, set

off at a swinging pace, marching in easy formation. Securely strapped to the back of each fellow was a knapsack with a full day's rations. With this exception, the force marched in light order.

Doctor Proctor and most of the resident masters came out to witness the march off, while two umpires prepared to accompany the different divisions.

Scarcely had the tramp of the departing infantry died away, when the order to "limber up" was given the waiting artillery, and with the company of infantry as guard, the main body of the men on the drag ropes, the right arm of the service, Colonel Dobson in command, moved smartly away.

The worthy French master, M. St. Leslie, was enthusiastic, and prepared at once to follow the fortunes of his school.

"It iss de gr-r-rand!" he exclaimed. "I, too, have serve de army four year."

There were as yet few people abroad. The little town was quickly left behind, and at an easy jog-trot the two batteries, with their infantry escort, proceeded along the Presbury road.

"This is something like!" exclaimed the enthusiastic Dobson to his second officer, Andrew Cossock, as he watched with pride his

eight guns and gallant troopers on the march. "Say, Cossock, old man, don't they look bully?"

"Fine," admitted Cossock.

Dobson's command soon caught up with the battalion of infantry, when the pace was slowed down to three miles an hour. At "Kerr's Court" a halt was made and the men rested.

Before them, two miles away, loomed the big hill — an ideal position for any troops to defend. The halt was of short duration.

Down the "Spring Lane," with a whirl and a clatter, came a troop of "horse." They wheeled into the Presbury Road and pulled up at General Wade's headquarters.

"Felt the enemy, sir, and drew their fire; left one man behind prisoner," smartly reported Captain Jackson to his superior.

There was a conference between the Henley leaders.

"Following orders, sir," continued Roger, "I pushed up the Spring Lane and got in touch with the enemy on his left flank. I reached the high ground unobserved, where I counted two parties, each with a gun. The enemy shortly saw me, and shelled at a thousand yards, when I was waved back by the umpire, the enemy

pursuing with cavalry. Trooper Billings was overtaken and captured."

There was ten minutes of delay while this report was talked over. Then the officers of Henley again assumed position at the head of their troops, and the whole force broke up into two divisions.

One strong brigade, with Enfield in command, fell into column, and commenced to slowly ascend the lane. Dobson was ordered to detach two guns and twenty-five men under Cossock to accompany this force. Then General Wade, with Roger and his "cavalry," and a battery and a half under Dobson, started off along the Winchcombe road.

"Eight-forty-three," observed Wade, glancing at his watch.

The sun was just beginning to climb through the banks of clouds. The day promised to be fine.

"Now, see here," continued Wade, as he and Roger and Dobson tramped briskly along, "Enfield and Cossock are going to climb that lane slowly, extending themselves, as they get up, into the meadows on either side. Then they'll commence to pepper the enemy; he's pretty well all there, I think, and I want him to get the idea that the main blow is being put in there, twig? Meanwhile, we're pushing on

as hard as we can go for 'The Sun' — that tavern; you know it, Dobson, high up at the other end of the hill. If we can get there without being seen, we'll have a bully position on the enemy's right flank. We must be there at one-thirty. That will give us half an hour in which to rest after the climb, and at two o'clock Enfield and Cossock have orders to ram home their attack. We'll make ours at the same time, and between us we should crumple up the Burford chaps."

"It's a jolly long tramp," warned Dobson. "'The Sun' must be seven miles at least, you know."

"Well, we've five hours and fifteen minutes in which to do it," Roger said, with the assurance of an old cross-country man.

"It looks long enough," Wade observed, "but it's no fun lugging these guns along. It would be all easy and fine if we could take the road, but of course, they'd spot us there at once. We'll have to stick on this road until we strike the lane lower down, and then wheel right and get along over that footpath that runs through the meadows up to 'The Sun.' Jackson, you fling out a fringe of men to guard against any surprise, and the rest of us will get on the drag-ropes and tow the guns along. See,

here's how the lane goes, and the position things should be in at two o'clock."

Drawing a little, roughly made sketch from his pocket, "the general" handed it over to his two officers, who studied it closely.

"Now, then, get back to your commands," ordered Wade, and Roger and his chum assumed positions at the head of their men.

It was against collar all the way, with the men on the ropes, and Roger's cavalry sweeping the fields before them on either side in systematic search. Two miles an hour was about the best the lads could make, encumbered, as they were, with the "guns," and as the little path wound its way nearer and nearer the hill, and the ascent became stiffer and stiffer, it became difficult work to maintain even that rate.

Shortly after nine o'clock a scout came running back, and reported.

"Captain Jackson orders me to state that enemy are observed on the left crest of hill; right flank appears to be unoccupied."

Wade nodded. "I thought so," he observed to Dobson.

"I rather fancy your plan is working out all right," chuckled his companion. "They haven't thought of us making this forced

march, eh? And I suppose they think their right's safe from attack."

"The great thing is to get to our position on their right flank by two — or, at least, we should be there at one-thirty, in time to get a rest. Once we are there, we have them caught between two fires, and all we have to do is to crush 'em."

"No danger of them assuming the offensive and coming down to attack us, is there?" queried Dobson.

"Not they. They'd be fools if they did. They have a rattling good position where they are, and I saw at once we couldn't dislodge them by a frontal attack, and our game was to out-flank them."

"Well, if they do make any movement, Yank'll tell us; he's a spanker to have out in front."

At eleven the column had covered half the distance, and a short halt was made to give the boys a chance to get their second wind.

The stiffest part of the work lay yet before them. The rise commenced to be most difficult. Officers and men alike sweated and panted as they dragged along the guns in short shifts. Roger and his men were keeping a splendid screen and carefully watching for the first sign of discovery. The movement so far appar-

ently was undetected. If the enemy knew it, he was lying low.

At noon a mile of hill work lay between them and their destination, and exactly at one-thirty-seven, panting and rather exhausted, the column at last crowned the ridge back of "The Sun."

"Now, you fellows," advised General Wade, as he went about amongst his men, "drink water if you must, but keep away from the tavern and its pop and lemonade; they kill your wind. Lie around easy; you'll want all there is in you soon. You've twenty minutes in which to pull yourselves together. Stand easy, all!"

"Stand at ease!" repeated Dobson, and the exhausted lads lay down to rest.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIGHT FOR THE HILL

MEANWHILE Enfield and Cossock, with their infantry and two guns, had quickly established themselves along Spring Lane, and opened fire upon the enemy.

The lane was well concealed by heavy banks and hedges, and as the Burford fellows remained under cover at the summit, a long-drawn-out and heavy fire continued from both sides. Gradually, however, as the Henley boys pushed home their attack up the steep lane, the enemy brought more and more men upon the scene of action, until at last their whole battery of four guns and the main body of the force was opposed to the advancing Henleyites.

Hotter and hotter became the fire from both sides. Closer and closer in, with persistent little rushes, pushed Enfield and Cossock with their men. It was pretty work to watch them. From behind a hedge would come a volley, and then a rush of a score of red-coated boys, making for the next cover, where they would lie down under shelter, until those on their

right or left had dashed past them in like tactics.

It was impossible, however, for the weaker column of Henley to hold out, or even maintain their position forever against the now greatly superior force of the Burford fellows, who, snugly hid behind hillock or hedge, wall or ditch, held a great advantage over the attackers. At eleven-forty-three the umpire-in-charge waved back the Henleyites.

“Fall back!” obediently came the order from Enfield and Cossock, and doggedly, slowly, their men began to retreat, a cloud of skirmishers following them up. This line was supported by a large detachment from the main force on the hill. Pursued thus, Enfield gave the order to stand behind every cover, and fight every inch of the retreat; but determining, if possible, that the retreat should become a rout, the Burford commander brought his cavalry into action and from far up the lane sounded the “Charge!”

This opened a serious position for Enfield. His troops were rather out of hand, as he had extended them along the lane and over several fields. His two guns were in the lane, with only a small squad of boys to serve them.

“Look out there, Cossock!” yelled the Henley general, as he noticed the manœuver,

“they’re coming down on our front and left flank with the horse. Get the boys together!”

Cossock gave the Henley rally, but before he could get his men in hand, the charging Burford men were almost upon him.

“Back! Back!” signaled the umpire, and there was nothing for it but to run.

“Get the guns out!” shouted Cossock, throwing off his coat and working like a good one.

Splendidly the boys rallied to his call. Madly, desperately, they strove to get away the two pieces of artillery. The lane was muddy and full of ruts. One of the pieces became lodged in a gully, and despite the heroic efforts of its gunners, had to be abandoned.

With yells of triumph, the enemy swooped down upon it, and the Henley fellows fled in confusion. Pushing their advantage to the limit, the Burford horsemen drove the Henleyites down the lane and across the fields, but here they met with stout opposition from a company of determined fellows, with the remaining gun, which they had succeeded in masking behind a stone wall.

Made confident by their sweeping victory, the Burford boys dashed down upon the gallant band, determined to wipe them out and take that gun. But the fighting blood of the Henley

boys was up, and an exhibition of a masterly retreat followed.

Working like dogs, they would stick to their gun until the very last moment of safety, then, dragging it off at a galloping speed, take up another position. Again and again they pursued these tactics, gathering around them the scattered force of Enfield as they retreated.

“Rally! Rally!” the Henley bugle rang out, and from all parts of the battle-field came dashing their comrades.

“Form squares! Prepare for cavalry!” shouted General Enfield, as a bit of open ground was reached, and with the readiness that long drill and preparation always ensures, the lads dropped into formation, and formed their squares around that last gun.

Across the open ground came the cavalry at a dash. There was a clash, and then a fierce hand-to-hand struggle. For two or three minutes it looked as if the Burford men would complete their victory, but gradually the tide of battle changed, and then, with fourteen of their number prisoners in Henley's hands, the rest were sent scampering back to the cover of the hill.

The Henley lines were re-formed, the advance again commenced, and the lost gun was

recovered. A new position was taken up three hundred yards up the lane.

“ Hang tight! ” shouted General Enfield, as he dashed about among his men. “ Pepper ’em, boys; pepper ’em! ” And then the long fight up the lane recommenced.

So engrossed in repelling the attack of Enfield and Cossock had the Burford general become, that he had given small attention to his right flank, and it was not until his second in command drew his attention to the fact that no cavalry were being employed against him and that only two field pieces were in action, that he realized he was dealing with only a partial attack.

“ You take care of this end, ” he commanded, and then, taking an escort of a dozen fast men, he dashed along the front of the hill.

“ Don’t see any signs of the beggars, ” he muttered. “ Think they must all be in the lane lower down; may as well go through to the right and make sure, I suppose. ”

In another fifteen minutes he reached the crest on his extreme right. A rapid survey of the valley below him caused him to give vent to a long-drawn-out whistle of surprise.

There, right below him, toiling slowly up the steep ascent, was Wade’s column, with Jackson’s men fringed out in front and flanks,

and Dobson in the center with the six guns.

“ Six guns, by Jinks, and all their cavalry! ” he ejaculated. “ Come on, boys! ”

The little party wheeled and dashed away at top speed for their main position on the right.

“ Order those four guns up here and let me have all the cavalry! ” shouted the Burford commander to his second. “ I’ll take charge. You stay here and hold those fellows off with your infantry. ”

As quickly as they could be extricated, the guns were brought up, and then cavalry and artillery went racing away at a clipping pace over the flat tableland towards the threatened point. They made a splendid spectacle as they tore along, straining every nerve to get to the right in time to prevent their opponents from gaining the high land first.

Enfield and Cossock were not slow to observe the hasty departure of half their foe, and at once they knew the cause. Their chief was ramming home the right flank attack, and Burford’s chaps were racing to repel it.

Now was their opportunity! Now or never! They had three hundred infantry with two guns. Above them, well concealed on the heights, was half that number of the foe. They

outnumbered them two to one. Now was the moment to push home the attack!

Leading their men forward at the double in short rushes, they succeeded, in spite of the heavy fire poured upon them, in establishing themselves on the nearest spur. There, under cover, they halted for a brief space.

Enfield glanced at his watch. It was six minutes to two!

Far away in the distance on the Burford right, he almost fancied he could hear the din of battle. Yes, surely there was the Henley battle cry! "Hack it through, Henley! Hack it through, sir!"

A moment he stood attentively listening.

Now it came to him again: "Hack it through, sir, hack it through," and then, quite clear, a bugle call.

His commander had gained the ridge! The right crest was theirs!

Enfield sprang from shelter, whipping his singlestick from his belt.

"Fix bayonets! Charge!" he yelled.

"Fix bayonets! Charge!" echoed Cossock.

Like one man, the fellows behind him leaped to their feet. The guns were left behind. With a yell and a whoop, the whole three hundred Henleyites surged up to their foe. One company cleared the right flank, another the

left, and the remaining two shattered the center.

Splendidly the outnumbered Burford lads met the attack, fighting desperately to maintain their position, but outflanked, cut in two, their ranks were broken and they were swept away before the rush of the Henleyites. Here and there little bands fought on gamely, with their singlesticks or guns, but in ten minutes' hard fighting the last of them were driven over the hill pell-mell into the vale below, while the victorious infantry of Henley swept on to join hands with their commander on the other end of the hill.

They caught the Burford cavalry and guns between them in a hopeless position, and realizing that he was trapped, the Burford commander determined to die hard. Forming his men under cover of the old Roman camp on the tableland, he gallantly met the attack from both sides, and for fifteen minutes held his position, then, noticing the umpire approaching, and guessing only too well his mission, he ordered the white flag to be hoisted.

A handkerchief was tied to a singlestick and waved aloft.

A terrific cheer went up from the Henley forces, and then General Wade, attended by his two officers, Dobson and Roger, came forward

to meet his defeated rival, who, bowing, offered his sword.

"No, I won't take it," declined Wade. "You made jolly good use of it; keep it, old man."

The rival generals clasped hands.

"And, say," added Wade, as he introduced his officers in turn, "on behalf of the Henley fellows, I invite you and your chaps to a spread in our rooms. Half your fellows are down the valley now," he remarked, with a smile, referring to the division Enfield had driven off, "so let's make one party together as far as our grounds; then you can return to Burford by train this evening."

"Jolly kind, I'm sure," accepted the Burford general.

And so the two "enemies" returned together to the sleepy old town of Hamenchelt, while the referee and umpires pointed out to the officers their errors, and showed them plainly what bad judgment they had all used, and how if they had only done this or that how different would have been the results.

"But there's only one fellow I wish to compliment," grimly observed old General Kerr, glancing at Roger, "and that's this young chap. The way he handled his cavalry showed he understood his business; I rarely saw kept

a better screen. The manner in which he swept the country during his chiefs' flank march does him credit."

"Thank you, sir," responded Roger. "We all did our best, I'm sure."

"Without doubt," grumbled the old soldier, "but it was a thundering poor one at times."

CHAPTER X

CAPTAIN DOBBS HAILS MR. DUTTON

THE memories of that famous Field Day were soon forgotten and swallowed up in the interest aroused by the fast-approaching summer holidays and "break-up." July 15 was the term end for Henley.

It had now been accepted as a settled event that Roger should accompany his chum, Tommy Dobson, to the latter's home at Hatherly Court in North Wales, but this summer Sir Henry and his wife had gone to the Riviera, for the benefit of Lady Dobson's health. Dobson's two elder brothers, the major and Captain Archie, were both in India with their regiments, so Hatherly Court was in charge of the servants.

Sir Henry had written from the south of France, suggesting that his son and Roger spend a week or so touring the Somersetshire and Devon coast, even going as far as Land's End in Cornwall, if they wished to, and then making a short trip to Hatherly Court at the conclusion of the holidays.

"By Jinks, a good idea, eh, Yank?" de-

manded Dobson, as he read the letter to his chum.

“Bully,” acquiesced Roger; “I’d like to do it awfully. Have you ever been down that way, Dob?”

“Not since I was a six-year-old kid in charge of a nurse,” admitted Dobson, “and of course,” he added, “I can’t remember much about it. It’s a go, then, eh, Yank?”

“You’re on, old man.”

Mr. Murray, their house master, who was a Devon man, and to whom the chums confided their intentions, gave them letters of introduction to his people at Bideford, and also loaned them a minute map, showing all roads and lanes.

“You will have a splendid holiday,” he assured them, “for really, I consider that for historic interest as well as natural beauty the ‘shires of the Sea Kings’ have no equal; but, then, you know,” he added laughingly, “I’m a Devon man, so perhaps I’m prejudiced. No place like home, you know, boys.”

The lads proposed to do the country awheel.

“You can cover the ground so much quicker,” argued Dobson, “and that gives you more time to stop at places where you wish to.”

“The roads are good, I suppose?” queried his chum.

“ Oh, yes, they’re all right, but hilly, of course.”

“ We’ll leave the morning of the sixteenth, I vote; let’s stay here until after break-up.”

“ Certs. It would be too late to start that day, anyway. Only five more days, Yank.”

“ I know, but I’m going to take my algebra and Euclid along with me, Dob; they’re my weak spots, and I mean to get through this Oxford next term. Are you going to grind at all this holiday? ”

“ Bet your life; I’m all behind with my Greek as usual.”

“ Say,” observed Roger, suddenly changing the subject, “ I can’t think what’s the trouble with young Berry; the kid doesn’t seem himself at all of late.”

“ No? ” questioned Dobson, looking up quickly. “ Now that’s odd, for my kid, Tucker, is looking beastly seedy, too. I’ve noticed it for some time. I believe the beggar smokes. Does Berry? ”

“ I know he did, but I don’t think he does now; I jumped on him for it, and he promised to quit.”

“ Oh, well, I suppose it’s a change they want — both of them. The holidays will put them all right, I’ll bet.”

“ I hope so, I’m sure. Now let’s get that map

and mark out our stops for the holidays, Dob."

"All serene, here you are," and the chums became engrossed in pleasurable anticipations.

The remaining days passed quickly, and the day of the great break-up arrived. As usual there was a crowd of the boys' people down to hear the awards made. Neither Roger nor Dobson had any one there, however, the American's father being far away in Upper India, and the genial Sir Henry and his wife in the south of France. Berry's mother, however, came to help swell the gathering, and so did Maxwell's, bringing her two daughters with her.

"Hello, here we are again," cried Maxwell, as he escorted his relatives towards Roger and Dobson on that great morning. "Can't lose 'em, you see."

There was a hearty greeting as the visitors and schoolboys renewed acquaintance, and then young Berry came mooning along in company with his mother and sister, and there was more handshaking.

"Why, what's the trouble, George?" inquired Roger. "You're not looking as if this were Speech Day."

"I think George is rather unwell," explained Mrs. Berry. "He has been working too hard, I

think, and yet he tells me he is not going to pass into the fourth form, as we hoped he would; he has to remain in the same class until Christmas; he has failed in three of his studies."

"Percy's in the same boat," complained Tucker, primus, who came strolling along at that moment, with his young brother in tow. "He has to stick with the sprats for the coming half, too."

Both juniors looked uncomfortable, Tucker endeavoring to carry off the setback with a swagger, as he explained:

"Oh, well, you know, there's lots of beggars left with us, and we'll make up for it next term, won't we, Straw, — I mean, Berry?"

"I suppose so," muttered his chum.

The party drifted their different ways, and it was not until after the exercises were over that Tucker obtained an opportunity to speak to his chum in private.

"Say, Straw," he whispered fearfully, "that beggar's been up here again. He nabbed me as I was going across the field, and he says that if we don't come up with half a sov each he'll peach on us to the doctor before we get away to-day. Got any tin?"

"Only two and a kick," groaned poor Berry, looking very wretched. "He cleans me out every Saturday; he knows I haven't half a sov."

“ I know. He said so, but he said if we don't borrow it, he'll sure tell to-day. Can't you get it from Jackson or your mater? I'm going to try to get my brother or Dobson to stump up for me; we *have* to, hang it! ”

“ I'll — I'll try,” groaned Berry, “ but I do hate like thunder to do it. I dare not ask the mater again; I got an advance of half a sov only last month. I'll have to try Jackson, I suppose, but I owe him seven and six already. He'll lend it to me, I know, but he'll want to know what for and all that sort of thing; he always does. I believe he thinks something's up. I — I, oh, I wish we'd never found that beast of a cave.”

“ Well, it's no use howling now. The thing to do is to get the tin. Go ahead and try, and meet me here at five. He's going to be outside just after.”

Moodily Berry turned on his heels and went in quest of the money. He evidently obtained it, for a few minutes after the school clock had chimed five, two dejected-looking youngsters were talking in low tones to a burly-looking man without the college confines. There was a short conference, and then some silver passed from the lads to the stranger, who nodded in surly fashion, and turning on his heels, made his way back towards town.

There was another figure standing by; a burly man, like the stranger, but with a very different look in his fearless gray eyes. Neither of the lads noticed him, for he was sitting on a bench, smoking a short clay pipe, hid from their view by a giant elm.

He jumped to his feet with alacrity, as the boys turned in by the gates, and followed the blackmailer along the road townwards, his hands stuck deep into the pockets of his pea jacket. His gait was a rolling one, like one accustomed to the heaving deck of a ship, but he covered the distance rapidly, and in a few minutes caught up with the object of his chase.

His hand came down with a crash on Mr. Dutton's shoulders, as he demanded in tones loud enough to be heard blocks away:

"Hullo, Mister Dutton, what be ye a-doin' on this tack? Didn't know you was interested in the education o' the young."

"Mister Dutton" wheeled about, with a start and an oath, then, observing who was his saluter, he changed his tone.

"Well, I swear, Captain Dobbs," he greeted, "you gave me a start; what'd you come creeping hup hon a chap like that fur?"

"It weren't I as was creeping; I come 'long all canvas drawing and me lights a-showing, but you was so busy countin' yer passage

CHAPTER XI

A CLOSE CALL FOR DOBSON

YOUNG Berry and Tucker both left for home two hours after their interview with Dutton, but Roger and his chum remained at the college overnight.

They planned to start, weather permitting, soon after six next morning. Their wheels were all ready, and the route marked out. Their first day's stop was to be at Bristol. Then to Weston, and on through Burnham and Minehead to Ilfracombe, from which place they would visit Bideford, Westward Ho and Barnstaple, and then, following the coast, run down into Cornwall to Penzance and Land's End, returning on the English Channel side by Plymouth, Exeter and Weymouth, where they would turn inland, and reach Hamenchelt via Bath, after which they would take train and spend the remaining time at Hatherly Court in North Wales.

"We won't hurry ourselves," Dobson advised, "just jog along taking things easy, and seeing all there is to be seen, eh, Yank?"

“That’s exactly my idea, old man. If the weather is decent, we’ll have a bully time, I’m sure.”

The weather was “decent;” at least, the morning was all that could be desired, when the two boys, after a plunge in the pool and a hearty breakfast, strapped their kit to their wheels, and rode off along the Shurdington Road towards the steep ascent of Cooper’s Hill, over which their route lay to Thornbury and Bristol.

“By Jinks, Yank, it’s fine to shake old Henley, eh? But I’ll bet we’re glad to show up again when time’s gone. Somehow, it always seems jolly fine to get back and meet all the chaps again,” Dobson called back over his shoulder, as he wriggled up the hill.

“I’m going to dismount and push it, Dob,” Roger shouted. “This is rather a stiff rise, and it’s no use fagging ourselves out at the start. Say, Hamenchelt shows up well from here, doesn’t it?” he broke off, as he stopped and gazed back at the old town nestling below them in the vale. “Three, four, five, six, eight, twelve — say, Dob, I can count just a dozen steeples. What a place it is for churches!”

“Most of the towns over here have them — the steeples, I mean — I remember that was

one of the things that struck me as odd when I was over in the States with you and your Dad — so few of the churches had really tall steeples, and so many of them were made of wood.”

“ Look out, this hill’s marked ‘ dangerous; ’ see, Dob,” cried Roger, as he stopped and looked at a painted sign. “ Do they mark all the hills like that over here? ”

“ Only when they *are* dangerous, you know. Fellows coming over from the other side might take it scooting, not knowing of that awkward turn just below us, and then have a spill.”

“ I think it’s a good idea,” commended Roger. “ We’re pretty close to the top, aren’t we, now? ” he added.

“ Yes, here we are! Say, isn’t that a stunning view from this side? See, there’s old Gloucester; see the cathedral? And there’s Tewksbury; I can always spot that by its abbey.”

“ Tewksbury,” mused Roger, “ oh, yes, I knew there was something happened there; a battle, wasn’t it, in the War of the Roses? ”

“ Right you are, old chap; that’s where Queen Margaret got licked by the Yorkists. There’s a field there called ‘ The Bloody Meadow,’ where a lot of the Lancaster soldiers were butchered after the scrap.”

“ How clearly a fellow can see the river.

See, it runs through Tewksbury to Gloucester, and I can almost see where it joins the Bristol Channel. What are those three big sheets of water, Dob? ”

“ Oh, those are the Whitcombe Reservoirs; they supply the water to Gloucester, you know. Now, then, Yank, for a spanking fine run down the other side into the Stroud valley. Don't let the machine get away too much, though; there are one or two nasty twists, but the road's good.”

Down the three-mile hill the boys plunged, and in another ten minutes they were in the midst of the farming country. Nearly every rustic they passed saluted them with a “ Good marning, gents,” or “ A fine day to ye, bays.”

They stopped for lunch at a country tavern, — “ The Three Foxes,” — where both did ample justice to the huge hunks of bread and cheese, and the cold slices of home-cured ham.

The inn was full of countrymen eating their dinners, and a lively interest was displayed in the two visitors.

“ An' w'ere be'st ye a-goin' ter? ” inquired a jolly, red-faced old farmer, as he brought his mug of ale across and seated himself at the lads' table. “ Yer don't say, now; so fur has hall that! But I s'pose has hit hain't much these day, wot with these 'ere motor cars and bikes

as goes without no pushin'. 'Tis wonderful, wonderful, the distance as folks travels nowadays; most wonderful, I'm thinkin'. But folks hain't as fat as they uster be," he rambled on, "an' they be a-gettin' humpty-shouldered, too, I'm mortal certain. 'Tis all along with goin' so swift an' so fur. Now ye two be a-goin' ter the end o' land, yer says; well, good luck to yer, misters, good luck, an' I 'opes yer gets back safe."

The worthy old rustic shook the lads' hands warmly, and watched them as they mounted and rode away, shaking his head to himself, as if he foresaw that they would never return.

"By Jove, old man, no wonder you call this 'The Green Shire.' Some of the folks *are* green, all right," cried Roger, with a laugh.

"Oh, it isn't that, you know," hastily disclaimed Dobson. "It's called green because the fields and hills and valleys are so green."

"Well, some of the inhabitants match the scenery," rejoined the American, "but," he added, "I like them; they are quaint and old-fashioned and honest and — hello, here's another rise! Great Scott, what a hill!" he broke off, as they suddenly turned sharply to the right, and the white road appeared to wriggle zigzag-fashion up to the sky.

They dismounted and toiled up. It was long

and stiff, but at last the summit was reached, and with a shout of joy, the lads remounted and commenced the descent into the succeeding valley.

Some distance ahead a lone figure was sauntering along, first on this side of the road, then on that.

“Taking up the whole road,” complained Dobson. “What’s that over his shoulder?”

Roger was in the midst of the Henley boating song, and did not stop to reply:

“Kick your stretchers, fellows, pull, pull, pull!
Feather lightly now for return.
Number one will watch the stroke;
You must follow till you’re broke,
And its pull, pull, pull all together.”

Dobson came roaring in with the chorus:

“And its pull, pull, pull all together.”

The man in front stopped and glared around at them. Then he stepped into the middle of the road and commenced to cut down imaginary corn with the heavy scythe he was carrying.

There was no time to stop. The lads rang their bells loudly, and Dobson shouted at the top of his voice: “Look out! We can’t pull up!”

“Look out yourselves,” retorted the man, still

circling about with his implement. "I am the king of all this part!"

It was an awkward position. The road at this point was quite narrow, and the wide circles of the scythe covered it almost from hedge to hedge.

"Look out, Dob, the fellow's drunk!" shouted Roger.

But Dobson was already upon the obstructor, who raised his mower threateningly, and then, as the boy endeavored to flash past him, made a vicious cut.

It missed Dobson's head by only a few inches. The next instant Roger was upon the fellow. The American drove his wheel full tilt at him, regardless of consequences, and wheel, boy, man and scythe went crashing in confusion into the ditch.

To extricate himself from the *melée* was the work of an instant for Roger. He was uninjured, with the exception of a few scratches, for the hedge had broken his fall, and before the assailant could recover himself, Roger was upon him. He wrenched the scythe from his hands, and then, catching the fellow by the throat, forced him down upon the road.

Dobson jammed down his brake, and back pedaling, brought his wheel to a stop. In another moment he was at his chum's side.

“Hold the beggar, Yank,” he cried; “I’m with you!”

“I’ve got him,” announced the American coolly, as he clung to the assailant. “Get up, you confounded cad,” he ordered, addressing his prisoner. “Oh, he’s drunk, Dob,” he explained, as his chum came running up.

“Drunk or sober, he’s going to the nearest police station,” insisted the angry Dobson.

“Unhand me! Let me go!” growled the fellow, wriggling in the grasp of the two boys.

“Not on your life,” emphatically insisted Roger. “You’re too nice a chap to be strolling about a country road alone. Get up!”

“I don’t think he’s drunk, Yank,” said Dobson, looking keenly at the man.

“No, I’m not drunk; I’m the king’s son, and lord of the manor,” explained the fellow, “and I’m going to cut down every man or woman in the road. I won’t have any trespassing on my lands.”

The chums exchanged glances.

“Bug-house,” ejaculated Roger, tapping his forehead.

“What?” demanded Dobson. “Oh, I twig; believe you’re right, old man.”

“I’ll knight you both — knight you both with my trusty sword; kneel down!” commanded the crazy one.

“Sorry, but we must decline the honor for the present. Suppose we accompany you to your — your castle,” suggested Roger, winking at Dobson.

“Follow, then, in my train!” commanded “the King’s son and lord of the manor.” “Hand me my trusty weapon; but I warn you,” he added, “you may pay dearly for your attempted passage through my dominions.”

“We trust, your majesty,” began Roger, with assumed humility, but at that moment a welcome interruption came to the scene.

Two men in a tall, two-wheeled dog-cart came driving furiously down the road. They drew up, as they saw the “king” and his two “attendants.”

“Well, your majesty,” one of them called loudly, “taking a little constitutional?”

“The King” waved them away. “Go back,” he shouted angrily. “You are dismissed for a set of worthless knaves; I have me here more faithful fellows.”

“Most certainly, your majesty, but just climb up here, and we’ll take you back to your estate.”

“My estate is here, there, everywhere,” commenced the madman, waving his arms about wildly.

“ Well, then, your throne, your majesty; help him up, John.”

They bundled the poor “ king ” into the dog-cart, despite his desperate resistance, and with a nod and a wink to the lads, turned the horse’s head and drove rapidly away.

“ Well,” cried Roger, as he stood watching the retreating vehicle. “ Do they allow many such to roam the roads of the ‘ green shire? ’ ”

“ I hope not,” laughed Dobson. “ He’s got away from Barnwood, I suppose; that’s a big asylum, you know, Yank, between here and Gloucester.”

“ Poor chap,” Roger commiserated. “ I hope we didn’t hurt him.”

“ No, but he came jolly close to hurting us,” growled Dobson. “ Gad, I can feel the whiz of that long blade of his around the back of my neck now. Wonder where he got it from. Come on, Yank, let’s get along.”

CHAPTER XII

A VISIT TO CAPTAIN DOBBS

THE young tourists ran over Clifton Downs, with Dobson humming:

“And ere the day three hundred horse had met on Clifton Down,”

across the high suspension bridge and into Bristol town soon after six that evening.

“We’ll soon commence, old man, to be right in the history-making country,” said Dobson.

“You don’t call Somersetshire one of the shires of the Sea Kings, do you, Dob?” inquired Roger.

“Oh, no; Devon is really the shire of the Sea Kings, although some of the beggars did come from Cornwall as well, you know. Let’s see, where was it Doctor Proctor told us was the best place to put up? You have the paper, Yank.”

“Yes, here it is. ‘Maylay’s Temperance Hotel, 34 Royal Crescent.’ Now for getting there. Say, it’s quite a big city, isn’t it, Dob?”

“Yes, I suppose it has three hundred thousand easily. It’s a comer all right. They have

just completed some big docks at Avonmouth, a little lower down the river. The Bristol people think they have the port for the Atlantic trade, you know."

"Anything old here?" inquired Roger.

"Oh, my, yes! It was a city, and a big one in the thirteenth century. It was from here that John Cabot sailed when he discovered your little bit of a continent on the other side. Prince Rupert and Lord Fairfax had it hot here, too, in the civil war. First the King got it and then the Parliament — no end of scrapping. You'll be able to see signs of it yet."

They found their hotel without any difficulty, and having registered and been assigned a room, washed up and took supper, or dinner, as Dobson persisted in calling it, in the "commercial room." Then they strolled out to see the sights of the city by electric light.

They found Bristol to be quite a modern and progressive city. It has shaken off its lethargy of the last century, and is now a bustling, thriving center of population.

"You must be sure and see St. Mary Redcliff," their host told them. "Hall Hamericans want to see that. 'Tis six hundred years old — at least a part of it is."

So next day to St. Mary Redcliff the lads went. The church is declared to be "the

fairest and most famous parish church in all England," by no less an authority than Queen Bess. A tapering spire points skyward two hundred and eighty feet. This, however, was only completed in 1872.

The boys spent a hustling day seeing the most important sights of Bristol town, and then made preparations to continue the trip on the morrow. They intended to make only a short run of about twenty-four miles by the route they had mapped out, via Clevedon and down the coast.

The weather held beautifully fine, and a magnificent run they enjoyed. They stopped at Clevedon for lunch, and spent two or three hours strolling about the dainty little resort, and then, soon after three o'clock, covered the remaining short distance to Weston.

Roger was no stranger to this resort, having spent a day there two years before in company with Dobson and some other chums, when they came down from Henley by boat, but it was a real pleasure for the boys to again roam around its beautiful environments.

"Look here, Dob, here's where old Berry was standing when I saw him that day; and say, oh, by Jinks, why didn't we think of it before; of course, this is where young Berry and his folks are. We must look them up."

“ Let’s see, what was the place called where they stopped; ‘ The Holmes,’ wasn’t it? ”

“ Yes, I remember it quite well; it’s off somewhere along that road.”

The Berrys were finally located, and the boys took dinner with them that evening. Mrs. Berry and her daughter were thoroughly enjoying the lovely summer days, and even young George looked happier than when he left Henley.

That evening was spent with the little family, and then, as the next day’s run was to be a long one, the boys retired.

From Weston to Ilfracombe by the coast road is within three miles of the century, and though the going is good, the way is hilly, and the nearer one approaches the Devon resort, the stiffer becomes the country.

“ Looks rather like rain,” suggested Dobson, as he and Roger swung across their wheels.

“ I know, but I’ve given up worrying about your English weather,” was the American’s retort. “ The mercury in the barometer at the hotel has dropped half an inch since last night, but I used to notice that at Henley the barometer was a pretty good fibber. The weather would stay fine while it steadily dropped, and then as soon as it started to rise, down would

come the rain, so I pay no attention to it now. Come along, old man."

They soon left Weston behind, and skirted along the edge of Bridgewater Bay, looking out across it to the South Wales coast. The bay was full of craft of all kinds, from the little yawl and fishing smack to the larger excursion steamers, dotting it here and there with their white sails and smudges of black smoke. Far out, some ten miles ahead of them, arose two most peculiar-looking rocks. Huge and towering was the one, flat and squatty the other.

"The Steep and Flat Holmes," cried Dobson. "I remember seeing them years ago. Aren't they an odd-looking couple?"

"They certainly are," acknowledged Roger, stopping and gazing seaward.

"We should be at Minehead by noon," observed Dobson, as they started again, "and if we can find Captain Dobbs at home, I vote we get him to take us out to them; what say, Yank?"

"By Jinks, I vote we do; hope he's home. I'd like to see them close in."

The boys had written before they started from Henley to their old friend, Captain Dobbs, the Minehead sea captain, telling him they would be passing his fishing village some time

during the coming week, and inquiring if he would be ashore or afloat, but they had received no reply.

“It’s most likely he’s away on his brig,” Dobson had observed, but to their delight, they found the old captain down at the harbor, superintending the warping in of his ship, the *Kate II*.

He let out a tremendous shout when he saw his two favorites.

“What oh, me young gents!” he bellowed, rolling at a rapid gait towards them. “What brings you to this part of the country? Thought you was at school. Oh, holidays, is it? Yes, sure, I should have known that, too; just come in from the Penzance trip,” he bellowed on. The worthy old man always seemed to think he was on the poop of his own ship and that it was necessary to shout at the top of his voice. “Letter — letter —” he repeated, as the boys told him they had written to him. “No, I ain’t seen no letter, but then, I’m three weeks away, and just come in. Reckon I’ll find it waitin’ fur me up ter the cottage. Come ’long, come ’long,” and reeling along before them, he led the way from the sea wall.

“Aye, aye, the ’Combe’s all right, but I ain’t a-goin’ ter let ye go on ter day. Yer must luff up and drop anchor at me cottage; the

missus'll fix yer up all right, and in the mornin', maybe we'll let yer hoist sail 'gain."

They reached the old salt's cottage, a pretty little vine-clad place, perched high on the cliffs back in the village, and again the sailor's voice was raised in a mighty hail:

"Ahoy! Ahoy, there, missus!" he hailed. "Drop the gangway and stand ready! Visitors comin' 'board."

Next moment a stout, comely old woman appeared in the doorway. Her sleeves were rolled to her shoulders and her hands were steaming with hot water and soapsuds.

"I see you bring the *Kate* in," she called out, "but I'm that bustled getting the wash on the line, I couldn't come down to meet ye, Josiah. All right and well, I says — why, who be these young gents?" she broke off, suddenly espying the two lads.

"Visitors. Make ready in the galley!" commanded Captain Dobbs, whose sole idea in entertaining appeared to be that something to eat must at once be placed before his visitors. "Two young gents from the college up there," he went on, with a bang of his fist on the porch. "You've heard me speak on 'em; two o' the young chaps as come out in the blow couple o' years ago and took me and the boys off the Homer sandbar."

Mrs. Dobbs was busily engaged in wiping the soapsuds off her steaming hands, and as soon as she had accomplished this to her satisfaction, she embraced each rather astonished lad in turn.

“ My dears,” she welcomed, “ come in and sit ye down. Josiah, put out a chair; put out a chair. What be ye standing there like a guinea-pig fur? ”

“ I ain’t a-standin’ like a guinea-pig,” indignantly denied the old salt. “ You go ’head and get busy in the galley; I wants ter show ’em ’round a bit. Look here, me lads, here’s the model o’ the old *Kate* as was wrecked on the bar; made it meself the winter afore last, and Jennie, me daughter, fixed up the shells. ’Tis exact as she was, bless her old timbers! ”

Captain Dobbs was pointing with pride to a big glass case, enclosing a three-foot model of his brig, *The Kate*. The lads examined it with interest, marveling at the skill with which the horny fingers of the sailor had pieced together the minutest details. The model was indeed, as he asserted, “ fixed right from mizzen to keel.”

Then they were taken out in his garden at the back, and shown with pride his broad beans and vegetable marrows; his immense cucumbers and giant strawberries, now just in their prime;

and then "the missus'" voice was heard in loud calls for dinner.

What a dinner that was! The old lady was on her mettle and set out the best. There was a huge leg of tender Cotswold mutton and mint sauce. There were broad beans and potatoes and marrow, and home-made bread, and tea so strong that Roger vowed he could make his spoon stand up in it. And then there arrived a mighty roly-poly red currant and raspberry pudding, all wallowing in red sirup.

The lads were ravenous and made the good things fly.

"That's right, that's right," commented the captain, in approving tones, "I likes ter see a chap take well hold o' his victuals. Here, have another slice o' this roly-poly; 'tis good fur yer inards and makes yer grow."

"I can't eat another berry," Roger expostulated.

"Well, lay off a spell, lay off, while I runs down ter the jetty and sees as things is ship-shape there."

"You think we had better stay over night?" questioned Roger of his chum.

"Well, we certainly can't move after this dinner," acknowledged Dobson. "I swear, I couldn't pedal a mile."

"And to-morrow," rattled on the old salt,

“ I’ll take yer out and down the coast a bit — ’tis a mighty pretty coast, too.”

So that night the two lads rested beneath the hospitable roof of Captain Dobbs, sleeping between snowy sheets on soft feather beds that let them down easily into the arms of old Morpheus.

CHAPTER XIII

“THE STEEP HOLME”

“ALL hands on deck, young masters, all hands on deck!” roared old Captain Dobbs soon after seven next morning, as he rapped loudly upon the door of the boys’ sleeping-room.

“All right,” Roger called back, “what time is it?”

“Six bells in the mornin’ watch, an’ I was figurin’ on gettin’ afloat by eight bells; but I reckon as ’twill be noon afore we gets out ter the Holmes, fur the wind’s blowin’ ten knots clean off ’em, an’ we’ll have ter beat it all the way.”

The mention of the Holmes sent the boys splashing into their shallow tin baths in a hurry, and ten minutes later they were running down the narrow box stairs into the living-room.

“Here they be, missus, here they be; hurry on the skerry and eggs,” roared the captain.

A minute later a steaming platter of long fat slices of ham and half a dozen eggs was

placed before the boys, and another plate on which lay a couple of broad soles, browned to a turn. Upon this the lads fell with a vim, and thus fortified, they emerged thirty minutes later, and started in company with the captain for the jetty.

"A dull forenoon, increasing wind, and blowing smart afore night," announced the old salt oracularly, studying the four quarters of the heavens, and sniffing knowingly.

"So?" inquired Dobson. "Not too rough for the trip to the Holmes, I hope?"

"No, sir, not a bit. I've a little cobble down there as'll stand most any kind of a blow and sea; a nice, handy little craft as is snug and dry, and a fast sailor. I calls her *The Cat*, 'cause she's so almighty good at clawin' into the wind; not but what she knows how to scoot when she's drivin', too, though. There she be now, the green 'un with the white top lines, an' the long overhang."

They had arrived at the harbor by this time. It was alive with three or four score of smackmen and their boys, all intent on the business of getting the smacks ready for sea.

"Fleet's goin' out to-night if it don't blow too hard," observed the captain, as he piloted his guests in and out amongst the crowd, with a nod here and a hail there to his friends.

“Get her ready, Dick,” he shouted to a small boy, who was busily engaged in swabbing out the inside of the *Cat*.

“Aye, aye, Captain Dobbs, all ready, sir,” came the reply.

“Step aboard, young masters,” invited the sailor; “hoist the main, Dick, and cast off.”

The *Cat* caught the merry breeze and shot out from the wooden jetty, as Captain Dobbs busied himself in running on a jib, and then, loading up his pipe generously, settled down in the stern with the tiller under his arm.

“Come over here and you won’t get no wet-tin’,” he advised, motioning to the boys, who scrambled up and took their seat alongside the skipper.

“There they are!” cried Roger, as the cobbler darted out from behind the bluff, and poked her nose into the chops.

“Yes, sir, there they be. ’Tis clear this morn, though, or you’d never see ’em so plain. ’Tis all o’ twelve mile to ’em.”

“They are odd-looking beggars,” said Dobson. “One so thundering tall and the other so awfully flat.”

“Oddest things on this coast, there’s no beatin’ that,” admitted the captain. “Many o’ the boys won’t go near ’em when they’re a-hollerin’ like they be now — hear ’em!”

The captain sent out one or two short, jerky little puffs from his pipe, and held up one horny finger to command attention.

As he spoke there came from the far distant rocks a low, hollow whining, that gathered power as it proceeded, until it became a hoarse, uncanny whistle that seemed to fill the whole air with its screech. It was an unpleasant sound.

“By Jove, what a racket!” exclaimed Dobson.

“It must be a terrific noise to carry so far,” suggested Roger.

“You’ll say so, sir, when you gets there,” assented the sailor.

The boy in the bow of the boat was crouching down, shading his eyes with his hands from the glare of the sun on the dancing waves.

“’E’s a-’ollering mos’ terrific this marn, Captain Dobbs,” he called back. “I reckon as ’tis goin’ ter blow ’ard afore night.”

“Why, what’s his howling got to do with that?” inquired Roger.

“P’hew — ew — p’hew — p’hew,” roared the Steep Holme away off in the distance, and the lad glanced uneasily before he replied:

“’E never ’ollers like that ’less ’tis goin’ ter blow, do ’e, Captain Dobbs?”

“No,” growled the captain, taking his pipe

from his mouth. "'Tis a sure sign o' foul weather."

"Why? How does it work? What makes it kick up the racket when it's going to blow?" persisted Roger.

"P'hew — p'hew — whoop — p'hew — p'hew," bellowed the Steep Holme from afar.

"Just listen ter him!" exclaimed Captain Dobbs. "Oh, 'tis along with the tide, I s'pose — the tide a-runnin' in strong, driven by the west wind, I reckon, and a-gushin' in and out o' the caves there, I s'pose; makes a kind o' a suckin'; that's the way I figure it. But the boys ashore is almighty scared of it, and 'as all kinds o' yarns 'bout it as scares the women folks. Just nonsense, young gents, pure nonsense."

The lad, Dick, was listening as the captain explained the phenomenon, and shook his head.

"They says as 'tis the 'black flags' a-'owlin' in torment, 'cause they be chained there inside the cave, and knows as they's goin' ter be tortured 'gain," he dissented.

The captain laughed loudly. "You'll have the young gents scared, Dick," he shouted — "that is," he added, "if they was the scarey sort, which I reckon they ain't, so you can go 'head and tell that rhyme, as I knows you're itchin' ter spout. Out with it!"

Thus enjoined, the lad solemnly recited:

“When ye ’ear me shout and roar,
 Keep your boats upon the shore.
 When in silence deep I sleep,
 Then’s the time to man the fleet.
 But when I screech and whistle shrill,
 Then for all men I brood ill.
 An’ when the torch flares on me crest,
 Then sink I to lastin’ rest.”

“Good! Bully!” cried the boys. “But what does it all mean, Dick?”

“Means as ’e’s a-warning now, an’ if ever the torch shines on ’is top ’e’ll topple hover and bust,” explained the lad, whereat the captain laughed more boisterously than ever, Roger and Dobson joining in; but Dick’s features never lost their solemnity.

“’Tis the ’oly truth,” he affirmed.

“Maybe, maybe,” Captain Dobbs admitted; “but look ter yer sheet, Dick. I’m goin’ ter come ’bout an’ stand in further, ter give the young gents a good look at the Holmes.”

The *Cat* clawed up into the wind in a manner truly befitting her name, and then, running down, skirted along the base of the great rocks.

The Steep Holme was a mighty pinnacle, rearing almost straight up out of the swirling waters to a height of nearly three hundred feet. The Flat, its neighbor, did not project more than thirty at low tide, but was of greater area.

“ My word! ” cried Dobson, making his voice heard with difficulty above the thunder of the breakers, “ what a magnificent sight! ”

It was, indeed, and Roger, as he lay back in the stern of the little boat, now tearing past the Holmes on the port tack, echoed: “ Magnificent! ”

An inspiring scene it was upon which they gazed. There the two rocks stuck, the one straight up out of the boiling waters, the other flat on them. The Steep almost resembled some giant arrow-head, as if a Colossus, in striding across from the English to the Welsh coast in days gone by, had rammed one of his mammoth arrows, feather-head down, into the Channel, and left the point sticking up, against which the incoming rollers of the great Atlantic might forever fling themselves in impotent fury. The Flat looked as if one of his sandals had become loosened, and rising to the surface, had anchored itself to the arrow-head.

“ Fair or foul, ” shouted Captain Dobbs, as he skilfully brought his little craft almost within the line of roaring breakers, “ there’s no peace here, and God help the boat as gets caught in the swirl ’twix the two Holmes, fur she’ll never come out. Good Lordy, how they do howl! ” he exclaimed, as the Steep gave out a yet more piercing shriek.

“It’s almost uncanny!” cried Dobson. “Don’t get in too close, captain,” he added.

“No fear, lad; I knows all there is ter know ’bout this here water, but you’d say ’twas uncanny if you’d seen it when the gale’s a-roarin’, as I have once or twice. I come out here with the lifeboat and took off a schooner’s crew most as close in as we be now. We played with old Davy Jones that night, I tell ye, boys.”

“Tell us about it, captain,” cried the boys, in one voice.

“No, no, lads, I can’t do that; I ain’t much at spinnin’ a yarn,” replied the old salt, as he brought his cobble about and sent her racing before the wind for home.

“P’hew! P’hew — p’hew — whoop!” shrieked the Holme behind them, as if speeding them on their way in a last adieu.

The wind was rising fast, and they fairly flew back to Minehead before it. They met the fishing fleet beating out in the teeth of the rising gale.

“I wonder they go out when the weather is so threatening,” cried Roger.

“It’s bread and butter to ’em, lad. The sole is thick out in mid-channel, so the report come in, and the boys is after ’em. Them little smacks can stand ’most any kind o’ a blow, but spite o’ all they do get catched once and again.

Now, then, stand ready, Dick!" and Captain Dobbs manœuvered his little boat skilfully for the narrow entrance to the harbor.

Five minutes later he tied up securely, and stepped ashore, while far off in the distance still came to them in fainter tones the whistle of the Steep Holme.

CHAPTER XIV

A COACH AND FOUR

NEXT morning the lads bade the captain and his buxom wife good-by, and resumed the run for Ilfracombe. The hard macadam road first led them away from the sea, and then crossed the winding river Parret, as it rushed to the ocean. A sharp turn and they were once again following the coast line, past Blue Anchor, until shortly before nine o'clock they arrived at Quay Town.

"It was a fishing village; it is now, I suppose, but it is turning into a seaside resort, like so many of these towns along the coast," Dobson explained. "Now, Yank," he continued, "you'll see some hills. It's hills, hills, hills all the way from here to Ilfracombe, but we must strike inland a bit and get a look at Exmoor Forest; that's the one place in all England, you know, Yank, where the wild deer is still hunted."

"So!" exclaimed Roger, "I didn't know it."

The boys were laboriously pushing their machines up what is known as the North Hill, a

long spur of lofty land. At Portlock they left their wheels at "The Ship and Anchor," and proceeded afoot. It was well they did, for no bike could ever have been pushed up that ragged edge of cliff. It rose almost sheer up from the ocean, and took its name from the little village. In fact, everything around this part did take its name from that settlement, as Roger pointed out.

"It's 'Portlock Town,' 'Portlock Weir,' 'Portlock Bay' and 'Portlock Hill!'" he exclaimed, "but, by Jinks, Dob, this is getting to be a stunning view. Look, look, I can see clear across the Channel — and there are the Welsh Mountains — that's them, I'll swear. Why, it must be a good thirty miles off."

"All of that," acquiesced Dobson, as he gazed off across the blue waters. "That blow last night must have cleared the atmosphere, I suppose."

As they struggled up to the high tableland at the summit, some thousand feet above the sea level, they crossed a fine hard road, and along this there came bowling a big, top-heavy-looking coach and four.

"A tally-ho!" shouted Dobson. "Say, Yank, let's see if we can't get a lift; I'll bet they're going to do the rounds!"

The lads shouted and gesticulated, and a

dignified-looking man, resplendent in red and blue livery, stood up in the overhang of the coach at the back, and blew his yard-long horn furiously.

There were only four people on the seats at the top of the big coach, and as the vehicle drew abreast of the boys, a tall man, with a big, shiny white hat on his head, leaned over the side and shouted:

“What do you want, boys?”

“A lift,” replied Dobson.

The tall man leaned over and touched the driver on his shoulder. There was a laugh, and then the moving horses were pulled up.

“Get up, then!” shouted the man, and as Roger and his chum stood wondering how they were to get up the tall coach, a footman sprang smartly down, and placed a little ladder, up which they scrambled.

The ladder was drawn up, the footman at the back let out a resounding blare from his long horn, the driver touched up the impatient horses, and off again bowled the big coach, while the man who had invited the lads to get up beckoned for them to come over with him in the front seat.

They obeyed with alacrity, and seated themselves beside him.

"Thanks," said Roger, "thanks for stopping."

The man looked at the lad keenly. Then he slowly pointed a finger at him.

"You're an American," he accused.

"Why, how did you guess that?" demanded Roger.

"Easy, awfully easy, you know; knew it directly you drawled out that 'thanks!'"

"To whom do we pay?" inquired Dobson, turning around and looking for some official.

The tall man nudged his companion on his right, and then explained, seriously: "You pay me."

"How much?" demanded Dobson, going down into his pockets.

"Five pounds each," said the man, looking hard at the youngsters.

"Five pounds!" they both gasped with one breath. "Why — why —"

"Isn't it enough? Well, then, a tenner each; how'll that suit you?"

"Oh, I say," commenced Dobson, "stop your fooling. How much is it, no joking?"

"Isn't your friend here an American?" persisted the man. "Of course he is; and aren't all Americans millionaires? Of course they are. Why, a tenner's nothing to him. Stump up, my young friends."

The joke might have gone a little further, had not the gentleman on the other side exploded with laughter.

“ Oh, don't mind Chawley,” he drawled; “ he's bound to have his fun, you know.”

By this time it had dawned on the lads that they had held up and boarded a private coach, mistaking it for one of the many plying for passengers over to Exmoor roads.

“ Say, I believe,” Dobson explained, “ that we've made a mistake. We thought this was a regular tally-ho; it isn't, is it, though? ” he inquired.

“ Why, most certainly it's a regular tally-ho. There isn't a finer double span of nags in the county; don't you like 'em? ” demanded “ Chawley.”

“ Oh, they're fine, but we're afraid they're a private team, and we thought we were hailing a public coach. You must think we have a lot of cheek, but we didn't know, you know,” blundered on Dobson, getting very red in the face.

“ What's your name? ” demanded the owner of the coach. “ We must be regular about this affair, you see. It won't do for a fellow to go riding about Exmoor roads with two gentlemen to whom he has not been introduced. That's a fact, isn't it, Dunn? ”

“ Oh, most certainly,” agreed Mr. Dunn.

“ Why, this fellow’s Roger Jackson; he’s an American, and I’m Tom Dobson; we’re both Henley fellows; touring the coast, you know, on our bikes.”

Mr. Dunn slowly and deliberately inserted a single glass in his left eye, and critically examined the lads.

“ You don’t say!” he exclaimed, after a minute examination. “ Really, now, really, ’pon me word, I’m jolly glad to meet some Henley chaps; was there meself in the eighties.”

“ Chawley,” too, evinced pleasure at the mention of the word Henley, and at once proffered his hand to the chums, each in turn. “ I’m delighted,” he said, “ to have any Henley fellows as my guests; delighted, I’m sure; don’t smoke, do you?”

He extracted his cigar case, as he inquired, but the lads shook their heads and declined.

“ You haven’t told us who you are,” suggested Roger pointedly, for he was rather under the impression they were being made fun of.

“ By Jove, that’s a fact, now, isn’t it? Dunn, you do it; I’ve forgotten how.”

Mr. Dunn arose, with a stately motion, and steadying himself with one hand, waved the other, as he introduced:

“ Lord Bonhaven, Mr. Roger Jackson. Mr. Roger Jackson, Lord Bonhaven.”

Then the ceremony was gone through in like manner for Dobson's benefit, and it was then Lord Bonhaven's turn to introduce his friend, which he did, with a curt:

“ Sir Michael Hicks-Dunn, High Sheriff of Somersetshire.”

Honors done, and the lads still rather embarrassed, the drive continued. But Lord Bonhaven and his friend, the High Sheriff, proved to be most delightful comrades, who soon put the lads at their ease, and at a spanking pace, the four big grays sent the coach along over the breezy uplands, until towards noon, they drew up, with a clatter of hoofs and a flourish of horn, at “ The Royal Oak ” at Winford.

Roger and Dobson, rather uncertain as to their position, whether guests or strangers, dismounted with “ me lord ” and the High Sheriff, and were just commencing to wander off, when his lordship stopped them, with a loud:

“ Oh, say, you fellows, don't go off; we're going to take luncheon, you know, and I've told Scraggs to lay plates for four. Look, my young American friend,” he continued, addressing Roger, “ I wish to draw your attention to this far-famed sign picture. It was painted

by — by — who the dickens was it painted by, Dunn? ”

“ Oh, hanged if I know the chap’s name,” replied the baronet, with languid interest.

“ Well, by Jove, it doesn’t matter, you know, but it represents Prince Charlie bunking after the battle of Worcester. No joking, it is considered a really remarkable painting, although it is only a sign. You may not know, my young friend from Yankeeland, but Prince Charlie was afterwards Charles II,” explained his lordship.

The boys gazed with considerable interest at the gaudy-colored sign. It represented a man in brilliant uniform, mounted upon a dashing and impossible white steed, galloping hard over also impossible hedges, followed by a few noblemen, while in the distance could be discerned the Parliamentary forces under Cromwell, apparently in hot pursuit.

The host, Scraggs, at this moment appeared from beneath the low-roofed, thatched cottage.

“ It was blown down, me lud,” he explained, “ blown down last winter and smashed to bits, but Hi got a hartist gentleman, as was stopping ’ere, to paint me one like it, and ’pon me word, me lud, ’tis better than the old one, ’pon me word it is, me lud. Luncheon is ready, me lud.”

Luncheon was served in the tap-room. The floor consisted of great flagstones, roughly pieced together, and sanded. In the center of the room was placed the plain deal table, over which was spread a spotless white cloth, on which was displayed an imposing collection of pewter and earthenware. Huge rafters carried the whole length of the room, and suspended to them were many hams. All around the room were long pictures, all representing hunting scenes, in which the unfortunate deer appeared to be always getting the worst of the chase. A glistening bar, with half a dozen handles at various angles, enthroned behind which sat the landlord's wife, completed the "tap," which, although beer and spirits were served in it, possessed none of the appearance of a saloon. It was a hostlery, and as such "The Royal Oak" enjoyed an enviable reputation throughout all Devonshire.

At luncheon the talk was all of Henley and Henley boys.

"When I was there the last half of '83," boasted Lord Bonhaven, "Littleton, the school captain, cleared the bar at five, eleven and a half, and carried his bat against the county the same year for a hundred and twelve."

"Oh," cried Roger, beginning to get interested, "we have a fellow there now — Blake,

of the sixth — who tipped the bar at six feet and three quarter inches.”

“ Yes,” chimed in Dobson, “ and Yank, here, ran the Charterhouse chap, Jones, off his feet in the open mile last half — did it in four-thirty-six flat. We’re smashing all the old records up there now, aren’t we, Yank? ”

“ I’ll bet you’ll never have a chap there who’ll do what Chawley, here, did,” interposed Sir Hicks-Dunn, as he attacked his fried sole savagely. “ Hat trick, you know, against the county, be Jove; that’s one picture that’ll stay with me always — those three fellows walking back one after another, just as fast as Chawley could bowl the balls, be Jove — rattling! By Jinks, how the school did yell, and old Doctor Jennings — he was there then, you know — came running out like a sprat, and shook hands with you, didn’t he, Chawley? ”

His lordship acknowledged that to be a fact, and so the reminiscences continued, until at last it was suggested that it was time to be moving.

“ Yes, you know,” Roger explained, “ we should be on our way to Ilfracombe by this time,” and then the lads went on to explain about their trip, and how they had scrambled up the Exmoor tableland for only a short

ramble, and how they had mistaken his lordship's coach for a passenger conveyance.

“ Ah, ah, quite a joke; awfully good, you know; most stunning,” his lordship laughed boisterously. “ Now you must come on, and we'll take you back to Portlock. John, sit back with Giles in the overhang; I'll take the ribbons going back,” Lord Bonhaven commanded, addressing his coachman, and gathering up the leathers, he shook up his magnificent grays, and sent the big coach bowling off at a spanking pace towards Portlock.

CHAPTER XV

“ BEVERLY CASTLE ”

HIS lordship appeared to be on his mettle, and made the coach travel at a great pace. Only once did he slow up over the hill and dale journey between “ The Royal Oak ” and Portlock, and that was to have the heavy shoe put on the rear wheel, as they started the descent of a long, steep hill.

They did the seven and a half miles in just three-quarters of an hour, and then, as he pulled up, Lord Bonhaven jumped down from the box, and made a critical examination of the steaming horses, as the footman stood, holding the near leader's head.

There appeared to be something on his lordship's mind, as he stood there, while Roger and Dobson extended their hands to bid him good-by.

“ Thanks, awfully, for the spin; we've enjoyed it great, haven't we, Yank? ” said Dobson.

“ Awfully, ” echoed Roger.

“ Say, you know, ” suddenly blurted out his

lordship, “ why not come over to Beverly with us and spend the night? You can’t get on to Ilfracombe to-night, you know; it’s too late. Come on to Beverly, and we’ll put you up. Then in the morning you can start out fresh.”

“ Oh, it’s jolly kind of you, but we’re a day behind now,” Roger said.

“ What’s the bally diff? ” demanded Lord Bonhaven. “ Time was made for slaves, you know, and you have all the holidays before you. Let’s carry them off, shall we, Dunn? ”

“ Most certainly,” decided the High Sheriff. “ I’m staying over at Beverly, you know, and Chawley is a most beastly dull fellow; come along and ’liven the old pile up; it needs some young blood; it has the dry rot.”

There was some discussion over the proposition, but the boys finally were won over to make the stop.

“ But, you know,” Dobson explained, “ we must go down to the “ Ship and Anchor ” and get our bikes; we left them there.”

“ Giles,” commanded his lordship decisively, “ go down to the pub and get the gentlemen’s wheels. Take John with you and carry the things up here on your backs, and then pack them in the back of the coach.”

The man touched his hat; John joined him, and they departed on a run, while the two

gentlemen took out their cigar cases and strolled around with the boys, waiting for the return.

Twenty minutes later the two men returned, puffing and perspiring under the load of a wheel apiece. Into the coach the bicycles were loaded, and then the party climbed back, Lord Bonhaven shook up his grays, and off again bowled the coach.

“How far is Beverly?” inquired Roger.

“Five miles as the crow flies, but it’s ten the road we travel,” explained the host.

“It’s set in the very midst of ‘Black Barrow,’ with the Exe in front,” added Sir Hicks-Dunn. “Best trout fishing in Devon,” he added, whereat Dobson pricked up his ears.

By this time the little party had become better acquainted and felt more at ease with one another, and when the long, old, rambling pile of Beverly was reached they had discovered many mutual friends.

When an Englishman invites one to his home, one may rest assured that one has his confidence, and there is nothing he would not do for one. So the chums discovered. “Beverly is yours,” Lord Bonhaven invited, with an expressive wave of his hand.

His lordship was a bachelor some thirty years of age, and his friend, the High Sheriff, was a little his senior. At Beverly Lord Bon-

haven kept home in all the ancient grandeur of the old English country gentleman. Beside his vast estate, consisting of over five thousand acres, the Dobson home in North Wales appeared small, indeed. Situated on the very crest of the hills of Exmoor Forest, almost in the very center of that singular piece of wild land of Devonshire, not reaching up quite so high, not so extensive as Dartmoor, it nevertheless possessed a charm all its own. Almost within sight of Lord Bonhaven's castle was Dunkerry Beacon, the highest of the many hills of this wild country.

“ You have the oddest names around these parts,” complained Roger, as the party was driving up to what appeared to be the back entrance to the castle. “ There's ‘ The Devil's Punch Bowl,’ ‘ Hangman's Hill,’ ‘ Torr Steep,’ and so many others.”

“ Aye,” agreed Lord Bonhaven, “ and you must not forget that we are also in the ‘ Lorna Doone ’ country — here we are! ”

As they pulled up, the boys leaped down and gazed about them. Far off, the base of Dunkerry Beacon seemed to be girt about with a circle of impenetrable mist. The sun was slowly setting far out Atlanticward, red and angry-looking; the wind was coming in from the west, bringing with it the moan of the ocean and the

clamor of the incoming channel tide hammering the rock-bound coast five miles away.

Quite a crowd of hostlers appeared from somewhere, as the coach drew up. While one placed the ladder for the occupants to descend, another brought out the packages, and a third flung wide the door of the entrance. Servants appeared to be everywhere; in fact, the place rather reminded Roger of an old Virginian plantation where he had once visited, with the exception that the help was white instead of black.

"Hodges," called Lord Bonhaven, "the gentlemen will remain over night. They have no luggage; see they are fitted out."

"Yes, me lud," responded a man who appeared from some recess, and almost before Roger or his chum could draw breath, they were being escorted through dark-paneled halls, up broad stairs, until they arrived at the further western wing of the rambling old castle.

"Bauth, sir?" inquired the man.

Dobson nodded.

"If you please," replied Roger.

It all moved with the slow precision of the well-managed England country house. There was no noise, no bustle. The trained valet anticipated every want. A scarcely audible: "Shower or German, sir?" or a whispered:

“ Massage, sir? ” would come from the impassive lips of the valet, but that was all.

An hour later, just as the long Devonshire twilight was merging into darkness, and the lights of the mansion commenced to spring up, the two lads strolled into the smoking-room, where their host and his friend were reclining.

“ By Jove, thought you fellows were never coming down,” observed his lordship, looking up from his copy of the *Referee*.

“ Dinner is served, me lud,” whispered a servant from the doorway at the same moment.

“ Four confounded chaps,” grumbled Sir Hicks-Dunn, as the four drew up to the table, and a footman placed a chair behind each.

“ You should get spliced, Chawley.”

“ Know it,” admitted “ Chawley ” languidly. “ Beastly shame, you know, but I can’t find a girl.”

The dinner was long-drawn-out, and to Roger tedious, but at last it was over.

“ I’m tired,” Dobson confessed a little later, as eleven o’clock sounded from a dozen different parts of the castle, “ and I think I’ll go to roost,” he added.

“ By Jove, I’m with you,” drawled his lordship, who appeared to be in a per-

manent state of being tired. "Hodges will help you."

It was small help the lads required, and thirty minutes later they were both sound asleep.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BONHAVEN PLATE

ROGER dreamed that night — a thing he rarely did. He dreamed he was being held down in that old-fashioned four-poster. Some one had removed the absurd bolster, and placed it across his mouth. It half smothered him, and he seemed to be powerless to tear it off. He tried to call Dobson, but his chum was far away. Once he thought he heard him reply, and then that wretched bolster shut out all sound.

“Dob! Dob!” he endeavored to shout. And then he was awake — very much awake — and Dobson was really by his side.

“Shut up, you chump,” he was whispering hoarsely.

“What is it?” demanded Roger, propping himself up.

A faint moon was shining in with coy fitfulness through the open windows, obscured every second or so by scudding clouds.

“Look!” hissed Dobson.

And in one of the momentary appearances of the lunar light, Roger beheld the rungs of a ladder barred against the window; and on the last visible rung was a pair of shoes.

“I heard something and it woke me up,” hoarsely whispered Dobson. “They came in my room first, I think, and that roused me. Get up, Yank!”

“Yank” was getting up. Roger Jackson was nothing if he was not quick in action. He crept noiselessly towards the open window, followed by his chum. As the lads reached the sill the pair of shoes on the ladder disappeared from sight above them. Cautiously Roger leaned out and peered upwards.

The ladder reached to the window above him, the third, and the top floor of that part of the castle.

“Something crooked here, Dob,” he whispered, withdrawing his head for a moment.

Dobson nodded in silent acquiescence, and pointed dumbly upwards.

For just a second Roger hesitated — only a second — but during that instant a dozen propositions flashed through his brain. His decision was reached almost instantaneously. With a meaning glance at his chum, he reached far out of the open window, grasped the ladder four feet away, and swung himself on to it.

Then he climbed rapidly upwards. A jolt from beneath told him Dobson was following.

Despite the demands of the momentous moment, Roger was forced to notice, as he swarmed rapidly upwards, the beauty of the scene. The moon, passing silently out from behind one dark cloud, revealed the grand old castle in all its glory. Its irregular battlements stood out in severe, sharp angles and sweeping curves in the mellow light. Below, lay the silent, deserted country: broad, level lawns in front, edged in by dark masses of forest trees, and beyond these the black mountains.

Dobson, Saxon to the core, saw nothing but the rungs of the ladder in front of him.

"Go on," he whispered hoarsely, as his fingers touched his chum's heels.

In another second Roger grasped the sill of the window above him. With his eyes on that level, he peered in. The room was in blackness. He edged to one side of the ladder and Dobson crawled up to his position.

A low mumble of voices sounded from the gloom inside, but as they clung there, endeavoring to pierce the darkness, a single, brilliant ray of light streamed out. But not towards them. It fastened itself on the further side of the room, then groped about uncertainly until it settled

on the doors of a massive safe. There it stayed, and its increasing focus of circle told that the handlers of it were reducing the distance between them and the safe. No sound came now from the room, not even a footfall. The voices had ceased.

The lads crouched low, with eyes just level with the sill of the window. They were clad only in their pajamas, barefooted, and with nothing but their naked hands as weapons. Each boy knew how to use those, however. Henley breeds no quitters, or if she does, she drops them from her roll before they reach her senior forms. Like the United States Navy or Army, a fellow is made or broke before he attains seniority.

The unknown intruders before them were on mischief bent. That was enough for the lads. With more years behind them, and consequent greater discretion, they might have stayed and called for help, but the fire and rashness of youth burned in them, and their sole thought was to catch the intruders — catch them with their bare hands.

A slow, screeching sound came from within, and then a boring — a grooving. The light remained steady now, fixed upon a six-inch circle of the steel safe. The night prowlers were at work!

Noiselessly, with the practised hoist of the fellow who knows well the stunts of the horizontal and parallel bars, Roger pulled himself on to the sill. Then he dropped down inside the room, Dobson at his elbow.

The boys crouched low on the inside. Still that boring sound continued, punctuated now and again by a hoarse whisper or a slight noise of movement from the darkness.

Cautiously Roger and his chum pawed around, endeavoring to obtain some idea of how the land lay. The room appeared to be unfurnished, for they struck no furniture of any kind, and the floor was uncarpeted.

It was a critical moment. Should they throw off all concealment and dash upon the intruders, or observe yet longer?

The decision was made for them, for at that moment Dobson's foot came in contact with some piece of furniture, and, with a crash, it fell to the bare floor. At the same second the lantern was turned upon them, and they were exposed in its blinding rays.

To leap to their feet and dash forward was the work of a second.

"Come on, Dob!" yelled Roger at the top of his voice.

Dobson came like a thoroughbred. For one fleeting instant they were the focus of that

dazzling glare, then, with a crash and thud, Roger wrenched the lantern from the grasp of some unseen hand. Dobson had something, too. His bare hands felt the rough, unshaven face of some one, and he flung his weight upon him. Roger let out drives to right and left blindly, then a huge pair of arms were flung about him; he was lifted from his feet and sent crashing to the floor by a superior weight. He wriggled out from under that grasp; it caught him again — by the throat this time, and pinned him down, struggling desperately. He heard his chum's loud shout of anger, and then there was another crash.

When the lantern went to the floor the light was extinguished, and now the fight went on in total darkness. But suddenly the fickle moon peeped in through the open window. It showed Roger his assailant. It showed Dobson his. It showed another — a third figure, moving swiftly to the attack. It showed a room, bare almost, with the exception of a large, old-fashioned, key-locking safe, a chair and a big table. Just long enough to disclose all this did the moon stay, and then slipped slowly behind another cloud and left the struggle to proceed in darkness.

The boys were outnumbered and decidedly outweighed. Their assailants, too, had seen

who and how many their attackers were, and, with an oath, the third man rushed to the assistance of his confederates.

But now came a diversion. There was a racing of bare feet upon the stairs and along the landing outside. A terrific blow came on the door. The handle was wrenched furiously, and a stentorian voice shouted:

“Wot’s hup? Wot’s hup?”

“Break it in,” gasped Roger, choking under the tightening grasp of his assailant.

Crash! Crash! Bang! Bang! came the blows upon the stout door. It held firm. They built doors of two-inch oak in the old days for British castles; the locks were clumsy and heavy. It takes more than a bare fist to break it in.

“Hopen th’ bloomin’ door! Hopen hit, I says,” loudly demanded the voice from outside, and then more feet came racing along the passage. Some one had taken a chair. Roger heard it go to pieces beneath the blows, and still he and Dobson were fighting for their lives on the floor inside.

Now came a loud, authoritative, aristocratic command of:

“Get out of the way, Giles; get out of the way, man. Butt into it, Dunn — now, then, all together!”

“Slope!” howled the man over Roger, and the American felt the grip relax. There was a jostling of forms, a scrambling of feet, oaths and cries, and then the door came in, with a tear and crash, and the room was flooded with light.

With the tenacity of his breed, Roger hung, half choked as he was, to the legs that sought to disentangle themselves from his grip. One heavily-shod foot wrenched itself loose, and, with a sickening thud, came against the boy's forehead.

That was all Roger knew.

CHAPTER XVII

HENLEY AGAIN

“It’s a nasty cut,” the country doctor pronounced. “A nasty cut,” he repeated. “An inch higher up and it would have fractured his skull.”

Dobson, feeling very much out of place, and not knowing what to do, yet unwilling to leave the chamber, was hovering about. Lord Bonhaven, all his affected manner dropped, was standing beside the physician, and a nurse in white cap and apron was busy at a little side table.

The morning sun was streaming in through the long French windows. On the bed lay Roger, very still and white.

“It’s all right, though, doctor, isn’t it? He’ll pull through all serene, eh?” insisted his lordship.

The physician nodded mutely. “Unless anything unforeseen should crop up,” he added aloud.

“What in the world made you two youngsters climb up that ladder and tackle them alone?”

demanded Lord Bonhaven, as the watchers left the room.

"Seemed like the easiest thing to do," muttered the embarrassed Dobson, shifting about uneasily.

"Easiest," repeated his lordship; "yes, I suppose so, of course. It's what one would expect Henley fellows to do; they always were a bull-headed lot," at which speech the doctor smiled broadly.

"That was what old Sir Colin said," he mused, "when he held the Russians off all day long at Inkerman, wasn't it? Some one asked him why he didn't withdraw. 'Oh,' replied the old man, 'it was easier to hang tight.' Same case here, I suppose, me lord."

"The one fellow got away, didn't he?" inquired Dobson.

"Yes, that fool, Giles, let him get through, but we have the other two. I rather think we'll catch the third one soon. Who'd have thought the beggars would want that old plate? Why, I haven't seen the stuff since I had my coming of age fête."

They heard Roger stirring uneasily in the room, and Dobson tiptoed back.

"Hack it through, hack it through, Henley," mumbled the rambling lad on the bed.

The nurse soothed him, and Dobson patted his

hand, as he whispered: "It's all right, old man, you hacked it through."

"Hang to him, Dob, hang to him," muttered the delirious boy, clinging to his chum's hand.

He dozed off as the sun mounted, and by evening he was resting comfortably, with every chance of his mending in a few days, and Dobson went down into the cool library and wrote letters.

That evening's mail took out one to Sir Henry, his father, sojourning in the south of France, and one to Roger's father, away on the banks of the fever-infested Ganges. They both ended with the same sentence: "But Yank's all right now, and he'll be on his feet again in a few days."

That accidental trip to Beverly altered the holidays considerably. Instead of pedaling down the Cornwall coast and back through the Somerset country, the lads spent it at Lord Bonhaven's estate, for Roger's scalp wound proved more obstinate than was at first supposed it would, and the hot August days had nearly passed before the doctor pronounced him fit.

Lord Bonhaven turned out to be the most hospitable and sympathetic of hosts — a real nobleman in act, as well as in name and lineage.

As Roger gradually gained back his strength,

he enjoyed long trips over the Exmoor Forest. His lordship's horses and conveyances were always at the boys' command, but no motor car ever chugged into the castle courtyard, for Lord Bonhaven was opposed to the modern vehicle. A delightful companion did his lordship prove. Beneath his indolent and affected manner, lay a noble and unselfish disposition, that showed itself in a hundred thoughtful actions, and it was with real regret that at last the two chums left behind them the hospitable turrets and gables of Beverly, shipped their wheels to Hamenchelt, and answered the roll-call on September the first at Henley.

"The old show looks familiar," observed Dobson, as they passed through the great iron gates, and made their way with unthinking steps towards Murray's house, with nods and handshakes to friends.

"I told you we'd be glad to get back, Dob," commented Roger.

"Oh, you beggar, it was *I* told you."

"Well, what's the diff; we both agree, then, for it is jolly fine to get back, isn't it?"

"Bet your life," confirmed Dobson. "But now," he added, "comes the grind for the sixth, for I suppose we'll both be expected to be whales by Christmas."

"Fifteen weeks, old boy; we can do wonders

in that time. Hello, Berry, old chap, how're you feeling? How do, Tucker?" This to the two sprats, who were wandering arm in arm across the grounds.

"Pretty fine, thanks," mumbled Berry. "Just been up hanging out your notice on the den. No end of fellows after dens this half. Lucky I got it for you; that beggar, Cossock's fag, was going to nab it, but I drove him off and tacked up your name — like his confounded cheek."

"Say, have you collared mine, Tucker?" demanded Dobson, becoming alarmed at the news.

"Bet your life," responded Tucker. "I had the name up first thing this morning; always a grand rush this half, you know."

Thus reassured, the boys made their ways to their respective dens with confident steps, and proceeded to install themselves. The evening was busily employed. Callers were plentiful, and the fags were kept busily at work preparing tea and serving biscuits, jam and other delicacies.

At nine next morning roll-call was sounded, and Henley entered upon the eighty-first year of her existence with the largest number of students ever enrolled upon her books. One thousand and seventy-nine lads shouted "Present,"

as old Sergeant "Glum" growled out their names. Over fifty fifth form boys were without dens, owing to the unprecedented number of scholars, and fortunate was it for the chums that their fags, knowing well the Henley ropes, had early secured their rooms for them, for at the college it was an unbroken rule of "First come, first served."

The real grind for Roger and Dobson now commenced, for six weeks before the Christmas breakup, or just eight weeks away, the terrifying ordeal of the Oxford, Junior examination awaited them. Andrew Cossock, Bradbury, Dauncy and a host of other fifth form boys were entered with them.

"Well, by Jove, I've got to pass," growled Bradbury, as he and the two chums talked over the approaching test in Roger's study the next evening. "My governor says if I don't he'll take me out of Henley and apprentice me to a tailor or something of that sort. No joking, though, he will take me out and set me to work somewhere at something — a bank, or something — if I don't pull through."

"You had better grind a little harder than you are, old man, or you'll slip up," advised Dobson, for Bradbury was notoriously a loafer. Although two years the senior of either Roger or Dobson, he was in their form. Only the

unflagging energy of the fourth form master, Mr. Kilgordon, had pushed him into the fifth this half, and now his father had determined to make him work or drop him from college.

“If you’d cut that fellow, Lemming, you’d get on better,” Dobson blurted out, in his usual blunt style. “The fellow’s a cad and a rotter — just such another as was Walsh and Kemp — pulls every one down who gets chummy with him.”

“Oh, he’s not such a bad chap,” Bradbury denied. “You fellows don’t understand him, that’s all.”

“Why, he’s no good at all,” Dobson blundered on; “he never shows up on the green and at studies he’s — ”

“Well, at studies, at any rate, he’s all right,” Bradbury interrupted. “Why, he passed this Oxford, Junior last half with a rush — seventh in all England, you know.”

“I was going to say,” Dobson resumed, with an injured look, “that at studies he’s too jolly smart. He never grinds like us chaps; you never see him sweating; he’s always loafing about, smoking in his den. He plays cards, I know he does, and he always wins from the other chap. There’s something I don’t like about him, I tell you.”

“Oh, you’re set against him because he runs

under wraps all the time; you've never seen Lemming extend himself yet in his studies; you shouldn't be down on a chap because he's smart enough to do what you can't."

"Well, I don't like the beggar; there's something rotten about him, I tell you," growled the unconvinced Dobson, who always possessed strong likes and dislikes.

"It's none of our business, though," suggested Roger, as Bradbury was going, "and if you like to chum with him, why, that's for you to decide, Bradbury."

"Of course," agreed Bradbury, and departed, whistling merrily, as if no such ghost as an Oxford, Junior existed. He made his way to Lemming's den, and spent the hot evening playing "odd man out" in company with another congenial spirit.

Just after eleven the odd man departed, leaving Lemming and Bradbury alone. They shared their den in common, on account of the crowded condition of the school, and as they prepared for bed, the talk turned towards the approaching examination.

"Say, old man, I'll have to buckle down to hard work and cut out all this fun business," announced Bradbury, imbued with a weak resolve to turn over a new leaf.

"Oh, rot, don't bother so confoundedly.

I'll coach you along all serene and put you right where you're weak," his companion comforted, tossing the end of his cigarette into a spittoon.

"I know, you're so jolly well on edge all the time, but I can't get things into my head like you can; I'm slow."

"Lots of time, lots of time, my boy; it's weeks away yet. Good night; I'm off to sleep."

CHAPTER XVIII

A CRISIS FOR BERRY AND TUCKER

ROGER JACKSON set to work with characteristic energy to prepare for the forthcoming test, and Dobson plodded along in his bull-dog fashion. The American was really brilliant in certain studies, but poor Dobson had nothing on which he could depend but his steady plug, plug, plug. Slow to grasp a thing, once he had it, it never escaped him again; he was master of it for all time, whereas, Roger, like so many other brilliant scholars, often discovered that the point had got away from him. The two formed a splendid team, however. The quicker wits of the American would often seize upon the kernel long ere the plodding Dobson had even seen it, but following steadily with sure steps after his chum, the English lad, in turn, would as frequently point out some error in figures or logic that had been passed over by the more rapidly traveling Roger. So, together, they helped each other along, covering the eleven subjects in thorough fashion that spoke well for the ultimate results.

Meanwhile, matters were going badly with the two juniors, Berry and Tucker. What little Captain Josiah Dobbs had heard from his position behind the old elm tree last term had not been sufficient to enable him to form a true deduction as to the blackmailing that was being carried on by the old blackleg, "Bunny" Dutton. In fact, that scamp had succeeded in a rather complete degree in throwing dust in the old sea-dog's eyes, and the sailor had not even mentioned the subject to Roger or Dobson when they had visited him at Minehead.

To Roger, engrossed though he was in the examination preparation, it was obvious that something was decidedly "off" with his fag, and even the duller wits of Dobson perceived that his youngster was not all he should be.

"What ails you, young 'un?" demanded Roger one afternoon, as his fag absent-mindedly ran his shell into the bank.

"I — I — I think — I rather think I pulled the wrong line, you know," stammered Berry, as they drifted clear again.

"I should rather think you did. What makes you such an ass? You'll be walking backwards instead of forwards; now, then, pull yourself together."

Roger would hardly have jumped on the small boy so severely had he known the trying

scene through which he had passed that very morning during recreation.

Dutton had appeared! How the two lads had grown to hate the sight of the fellow! He beckoned them outside the gates, as usual, and then put the proposition straight to them.

He must have a sovereign apiece that very afternoon. He was in a hole. Kind-hearted man that he was, he had been foolish enough to "stake" a comrade, and this comrade had "welshed" him. No, nothing less than a quid each would do. He must have it. They hadn't got it? Well, they must get it. He wasn't going to go on for ever shielding a couple of fool lads and keeping them out of prison. Not much. "Borrow it, then," he told them curtly. A pound from each he was bound to have that very afternoon. It was up to them to get it. If it wasn't in his hands by six that evening, up to the gaffer he was going, and going to "peach," too. He's had enough of fooling around with them for their measly bobs and half crowns.

The two youngsters, frightened half to distraction, had slunk away from him with many promises of "ponying up" that evening, yet completely at a loss as to where they could obtain the necessary funds. Both were head over heels in debt to their respective men.

Tucker had almost broke his brother by his incessant demands for money, and their people at home had been importuned several times by letter. The inexperienced boys were like clay in the rogue's hands. He had so worked upon their fears that they now looked upon their escapade of visiting the cave as really a criminal offense. In reality, their only offense had been in breaking bounds and being out after night-fall. Had they told their men, or even gone boldly to their house master, the error would have been settled by the imposition of "lines" and probably detention during half-holidays — certainly nothing more severe than that. Yet, instead of coming up like little men and taking their medicine, they had continued paying the blackmailer and living in a constant state of terror.

Now the climax had arrived. They had come to the end of their resources. Their borrowing powers were exhausted, unless they went to Tucker's brother or their men and made a clean breast of the whole affair.

"Let's do it," proposed the bolder Tucker, in desperation.

But the more timid Berry held back. "I dare not," he whined.

"Well, what shall we do? We can't get the money by to-night."

“Can’t you get it from your brother?” fearfully questioned Berry, catching at a last hope.

“I told you he hasn’t got any tin. He’s broke; I’ve stumped him.”

“I’m going to bunk!” whispered Berry, looking up with frightened eyes at his chum.

“Bunk!” echoed Tucker. “Bunk where to?”

“To the cave,” announced Berry, with tragic emphasis.

“To the cave!” repeated Tucker dully. Then, a light breaking in on him. “We might,” he allowed. “No one could ever find us there.”

“He knows it’s on the hill somewhere.”

“Yes, but he could never find it; let’s scoot to-night, Tuck.”

There came a momentous pause. Both lads were turning over in their small minds the proposition. It sounded alluring to them. They had had weeks and weeks of worry and harassment. There on the lonely hill, in the seclusion of that cave, was peace. Freedom from anxiety; freedom from Dutton. The after consequences, how long they would stay there, what they would eventually do, did not trouble them. The present — the ever present — was uppermost in their thoughts.

Suddenly Tucker faced his chum. His face

wore a desperate look. His small fists were clenched in intensity.

“ I’ll go you,” he whispered harshly.

“ To-night,” urged Berry.

“ Yes, to-night.”

“ After roll-call? ”

“ After roll-call.”

CHAPTER XIX

PLANS

THE runaway plan proceeded with the impetuosity of youth. The idea ran like wildfire through the minds of the youngsters.

“ We’ll answer roll-call at five, and then get our truck together and slope. The beggar will be up here just before prep this evening, but we’ll miss him, and be on the hill by that time,” Berry planned.

“ The only thing is that it’ll be light; some one may see us going,” Tucker demurred.

“ No. We’ll get leave and head towards town, and then turn about and make for the hill.”

“ All right, then, but what about grub and stuff? We’re so confoundedly short. How much can you muster? ”

“ Not a penny. I’m clean broke. But I’m going to sell my white rats and that spliced ‘ Lillywood ’ bat to Billings; he’s been wanting them badly, and I’ll get six bob for them. What can you make? ”

Tucker dived into his trousers pockets and

pulled out a little collection of small silver and coppers.

"All I've got," he mourned, "but perhaps," he added hopefully, "there's something I can sell, too."

"There's our two watches; we might pawn them."

"Certs, when we go to town. Why, we'll get a lot for them."

"I've never been in a pawn shop. Do you know how to do it?"

"Why, why, I suppose you just go in and get them to take them."

"No, it won't go," Berry said, shaking his head, after thinking it over. "The fellow would be surely suspicious. You know, it's out of bounds, and the shopkeepers have orders to sell nothing to us or buy nothing of us. Better just go with what we have or can get here, or we'll get nabbed and brought back perhaps."

"All right, then; we'll buy all the grub we can and hide there. Say, it's going to be a lark, all right. I'll be glad to shake the old school."

"So'll I. Now, whatever you do, don't blab to any one. Don't let a kid know; just go about as usual."

That advice sounded easy, but it was difficult to "go about as usual" with so exciting an

adventure as running away from school and hiding oneself in a cave staring one in the face.

“What’s the matter with you, kid?” demanded Maxwell, as Tucker ran into him full tilt around a sharp turn in the fives shed, and a cage full of white rats fell to the ground.

“Nothing — nothing — I’m just carrying Straw’s rats for him.”

“Well, why don’t you look where you’re going, not butt into a chap like that?” growled Maxwell.

The youngster hurried past, and soon returned with the money realized from the animal sale. Berry had already sold his bat, and now everything was ready except packing their clothes and getting away.

“If that beggar wasn’t coming up to-night, I’d say wait until dark; it would be much easier then,” Tucker argued.

“I know, but it won’t do; he’ll be up sure, and then he’ll go to the doctor and tell for certs. — No, we must get away at once after roll-call.”

The lads between them had realized a capital of nearly nine shillings, which they intended to expend in “grub.”

The day had been a hot one, and now, as the evening neared, there came every promise of a thunder-storm. There were threatening rum-

bles of distant thunder, and now and again a faint illumination. Dark clouds were gathering from the west, and piling up high on top of one another.

Roll-call was at five, and each lad felt a peculiar difficulty in making the reply. It was the last roll-call they would answer.

“Here,” squeaked Berry.

“Berry!” loudly repeated the sergeant.

“Here, sir,” piped the lad again.

“Why didn’t you answer first time?”

“I did, sir.”

“Speak out! Speak out! I can’t hear what you say.”

“I said I did, sir.”

“Ugh,” and the drill-master rattled on with the names.

Tucker swallowed a lump in his throat, and yelled: “Here, sir!” so loud, that the sergeant stopped and glared at him.

It was over at last, and the two lads looked anxiously about. It appeared to their guilty consciences that every boy must know they intended to run away. They were left to themselves, however. Murray’s sprats were too much interested in themselves to bother about two moody kids.

“Now,” whispered Tucker, as they reached the shelter of the gymnasium, “now for it!”

Let's sneak up to the dormitory and take out what we want."

But another delay came. They met Dobson searching for his fag. He wanted his flannels taken to the cleaner before preparation commenced.

"Here," he cried, "here's a pass; I've got it all ready signed for you; now hurry up."

"Can Berry go with me?" inquired Tucker.

"All right; I'll put his name on, too. You cut back to the room and get it signed. Now, hurry."

The boys hurried. Fortune was playing into their hands at last. They would be able to get to town without any questions being asked.

Five minutes later, passes in hands, they walked swiftly through Henley's gates, and headed for town.

Twilight was just falling. In the distance the low rumbling continued. Behind them the lights of the old school were just commencing to spring up at scattered points. In their pockets were passes for two, and nine shillings and fourpence. Wedged up inside their clothes were various articles such as the lads conceived they might require.

"Good-by, old prison," growled Tucker.

Berry said nothing, but he looked back,

and something almost like a sob arose to his lips.

They had left Henley.

They had run away!

CHAPTER XX

EMPTY COTS

AT nine o'clock that night a terrific thunder-shower raged. The lightning flashes came in rapid succession, followed by almost instantaneous crashes of thunder.

Roger poked his head inside his chum's room. There was a troubled look on his face.

"By Jinks, what a storm!" ejaculated Dobson. "What's the matter, old man; stuck?"

"No," replied Roger, "I'm hunting for Berry. I want the beggar, and I can't find him anywhere."

"Gone to roost, I suppose."

"No. Sprat call hasn't sounded yet — there it goes now, by Jove!"

"Well, it's no use, then; he can't do anything for you; sit down, old man. Say is 'the uncle's garden' masculine or feminine?"

"Oh, it's masculine, of course, you old duffer; won't you ever get into your skull that nouns take their genders from that which governs them?"

"Pretty thing," grinned Dobson. "A mas-

culine garden! Why, in the name of common sense, don't they have a neuter gender in French?"

For a while the two "grinders" worked over the difficult passages, and finally Dobson was straightened out. Then Roger said:

"Say, I believe I'll run up and see if Berry's asleep. I had a letter from his brother on to-night's mail, and he sent me a postal order for a pound for him; I'll give it to the kid to-night; it'll make him feel good and he'll sleep fine — back in a moment, old man," and the big-hearted Roger left the study and leaped up the broad stone stairs three steps at a time.

A single light was burning in the long dormitory, but all the youngsters were in bed.

Roger hurried along on tip-toes to number seventeen — Berry's cot — next to which Tucker claimed number eighteen.

"Say, kid," he commenced in a whisper, so as not to arouse any sleepers, then he stopped, and stood staring at the cot.

It was empty! So was Tucker's, next to it!

Roger wheeled about and glanced around the room. The lad two cots away propped himself up and called softly: "The beggars didn't show up for bed to-night."

"Know where they are?" questioned Roger.

“ No, but they had passes, and I suppose they’ve got caught in the storm, and are late.”

“ Why, it’s half-past nine now; they’ll get lines for it. Didn’t the monitor notice their absence? ”

Another lad, half dozing, muttered something about “ the jolters putting them down for an impot,” and Roger slipped noiselessly away.

He routed Dobson up again just as he was settling down for a long wrestle with his French verbs.

“ Say, Dob,” he cried, “ I can’t find the young beggar anywhere, nor your kid, Tucker. They’ve neither of them returned from town yet; where’d you suppose they can be? ”

“ Search me,” muttered Dobson, “ I suppose he’s hung up by this thunder-storm — say, what’s: ‘ *Il dut la vie à la clemence et à la magnanimité du vainqueur?* ’ He owed his life to — ”

“ Oh, I don’t know. Shut up a minute. What about these two kids? The storm’s almost over; what holds ’em? ”

“ Wait a minute,” implored the nearly distracted Dobson, still wrestling with the sentence. There, now, what is it? What a chap you are, Yank, where that precious kid of yours is concerned. They’ll both show up soon.

Wait till ten, and then see if they've come back."

"Dob, old man, I'll tell you straight, I'm worried about the boy; he's not been himself of late; neither has your kid; there's something wrong with them."

Ten minutes was spent discussing the subject, and then Roger again ascended to the sprat dormitory. All the lads were asleep, but neither Berry's nor Tucker's cots were occupied.

Down raced Roger again. "They haven't come in yet, Dob," he said gravely.

"Well, what's to do? Suppose they've got into any trouble? It is funny they haven't come in yet."

"I'm going to see the house captain; perhaps he's given them time extension; coming with me?"

"All right," growled Dobson, shutting his book with a bang, and springing to his feet.

It was ten o'clock when they found Blake, just coming in from his "nightcap" in the pool.

"I passed nine o'clock checks for the kids, and I suppose Murray signed them," he acknowledged. "They should be in long ago."

"I'm going to Mr. Murray," Roger announced, without a second's hesitation, and

followed by the faithful Dobson, he proceeded to the house master's study.

Mr. Murray wasn't in. He had gone to town to attend some lecture, but his messenger showed the boys the pass book, and entered upon it for nine o'clock leave were Berry's and Tucker's names.

"What next?" demanded Dobson. "Suppose they can have come in yet?"

Again Roger went to the sprat dormitory. Again the two empty cots met his eyes. For an hour they fidgeted about, going first here, then there. The storm had passed, and the new moon was showing herself, a slender rim in the southern sky. At eleven o'clock they found Mr. Murray in, just returned.

"Why, is that true?" he demanded. "That is very surprising. They should have been back at nine o'clock. Yes, I signed passes for them for that time. They said they were going down on your business, I believe, Dobson."

"Yes, sir, but that wouldn't have taken them more than an hour."

Mr. Murray reached for his 'phone. He called up the porter at the gate.

No, old John had seen nothing of them; had not even seen them go out. Neither had the hall porter, nor, in fact, any one, apparently. All the room monitor could tell was that neither

of them were there at bedtime. He had noted that, and placed their names on the report list.

“Where had they to go on your account, Dobson?” inquired Mr. Murray.

“To Lyons, the cleaners, sir; I sent Tucker there with a pair of flannel trousers to be cleaned.”

“Where else were they going? Did they tell you of any other place, or what were their intentions in town?”

“No, sir, unless they told Jackson.”

Roger shook his head. He looked worried. His clean-cut features were almost haggard under the rays of the electric light.

“Would you allow me to go to town and look for them, sir?” he suddenly requested, looking up at the house master.

Mr. Murray hesitated not a second. “You can go,” he assented. “You may accompany him, Dobson, if you wish.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“It is late,” Mr. Murray observed, glancing at his watch. “Eleven thirty-seven. It is unusually late to give passes; it would be unprecedented, in fact; you had better go without them. What do you intend to do? Have you any plans? Do you know of any place where the boys might be liable to be?” he continued, in rapid questions.

Both the boys shook their heads.

“ Well,” summarized the house master, “ call me up and report as soon as you return, regardless of time. I am considerably worried over the absence of the lads.”

Without another word, Roger and his chum left the room.

CHAPTER XXI

DOMESTIC TRIBULATIONS

MEANWHILE, out through the blackness of the storm, the two runaways had fought their way upwards until they reached the great hill.

They had left Dobson's trousers at the cleaners, expended two-thirds of their ready money in "grub," and just reached the quarries, when the storm burst upon them.

It had been threatening for an hour or more, and then down it came upon them, with a grand flash and a mighty thunder of Heaven's artillery. The skies opened, and the deluge came down.

Drenched to the skin, the two lads struggled up, clinging to bush and briar. They had little difficulty in finding the way, for many trips had made them familiar, and at last, with a final shout of: "Here we are, Straw!" Tucker swung himself down inside the narrow opening. Berry scrambled in behind him, and without delay, they pushed on through the various narrow passages until they reached the circular, room-like cave at the very back.

There they both flung themselves down, and lay panting and resting.

Outside the storm still roared as loud as ever, but in the recess of the great cave in the bowels of the hill, scarcely a sound penetrated. They were secure. Henley was far away, and the cave hid them. Dutton could harass them no longer!

They lay there, exhausted with the hard climb, but triumphant. For a few moments neither lad spoke, then Tucker grunted: "I'm hungry and wet, Straw; let's get some grub and then go to bed."

"I'm hungry, too, and thirsty," admitted Berry. "Oh, say," he cried, "we haven't got any water!"

"By Jinks," ejaculated Tucker, "we forgot about that!"

It was an oversight, and a bad one, but Tucker arose to the occasion. "Never mind," he consoled, "there's a spring down in the quarries, and we'll have to sneak out at night, and bring in enough to last for the day."

"Yes," assented Berry, "it wouldn't do for us to go out in the daytime; some of the quarrymen might spot us. Have we got anything we can bring it up in, though?"

"Let's see," mused his companion. "Why,

certs," he continued, "we'll have to scoop out those preserves and use the jar for getting the water in; we'll put the jam in this hollow place here; it's nice and clean."

"Let's do it now," hastened Berry. "I'm awfully thirsty, and we must get enough water so we won't have to trot out to-morrow."

"Right you are, Straw, but we must wait until the storm's over. By Jinks, I'm wet through; wish we had a change."

They took out the jam with a piece of slate, and deposited it as neatly as possible in the hollow rock, but strawberry jam is a perverse and sticky substance. It stuck to everything, and there was a serious loss.

"Believe there's glue in the darned thing," complained Tucker. "Never saw such sticky stuff — look out, Straw, you've got your foot on some of it."

Tucker laughed, as his chum endeavored to scrape off the delicacy, and laughed so hard that he had to sit down.

"Look out!" yelled Berry in alarm.

It was too late. Tucker had sunk limply down on the whole mass of jam, as it lay in a comfortable little heap on the rock.

"Gosh!" ejaculated the lad, looking around in an endeavor to observe the damage.

"Stay still!" shouted Berry, "stay still, you

ass, and I'll try to scrape it off; most of it's stuck on your trousers. You are a fool, Tuck!"

The wreck of the strawberry jam was finally saved, but only a fraction of the first amount; the rest was deposited about in various places, and Tucker, with a sticky mass clinging to the seat of his trousers, was afraid to sit down.

"It's too bad," he mourned, "but we'll have to be more careful; where'd you put the bread, Straw?"

"Here it is, but, by Jinks, it's got wet; it's like dough!"

"We'll have to put it in the sun to dry tomorrow — don't touch it now — there, now you've got dough all over your fingers — leave it alone, you duffer!"

The rain had played havoc with a lot of their provisions, but there was hope in the morning sun, and meanwhile, the lads discovered that the storm had abated, and took their crock in which the jam had been, and proceeded to climb down to the quarries, where they washed it at the spring that gushed out there, and then refilled it with the cool, sparkling fluid. Then they climbed back.

"Now we'll open that tin of tongue, and — oh, pshaw, the bread's dough, isn't it? Well, we'll have to eat biscuits with it, and wash it

down with water. Come on, Berry, open the thing."

Berry had hold of the tin of potted tongue, and was turning it helplessly around and around in his hands.

"Say," he ejaculated, "how're we going to open the thing?"

"Open it?" repeated Tucker. "Why — why — of course — why, we should have a can opener, I suppose; we forgot that. Get a rock and bust it in."

A large, sharp stone was found, and the tin pounded. It bent and twisted into every conceivable shape, but not a seam came undone.

"You're mashing the thing all up," growled Tucker crustily. "Here, let me have it."

"Wish you would; never saw such an obstinate thing," said Berry, yielding up the poor, misshapen can.

Tucker hit and pounded. He endeavored to cut it with the sharpest part of the stone. The can gave way, and assumed some other shape, but no opening rewarded his efforts.

"Hang the thing!" he exploded, in wrath; "what's the matter with it? Let's jump on it, Straw; that'll squeeze it open."

They laid the miserable-looking object upon the ground, and leaped upon it with vehemence.

It flattened itself to a wafer, but remained unconquered and unopened.

“ You fool, you’ll squash all the tongue into nothing,” cried Berry, getting alarmed. “ Here, let me have it again; I know how!”

Again the much-mauled tin of potted meat changed hands, and now Berry took it up, and hurled it with all his might against an overhanging rock.

The poor, beaten can had reached the limit of its endurance. It opened in a dozen places at the same time, and the contents went flying in as many directions.

Both lads groaned aloud, as they witnessed the ruin. Then they set to work to gather up the fragments, which they deposited beside the remains of the jam on the rock. Domestic life was presenting unforeseen difficulties.

They finally ate a part of the tongue and some biscuits, and then, undressing, rubbed themselves dry with some towels they had the foresight to bring along, changed into their pajamas, and making the bed of some leaves scraped in from the outside, where they had remained dry beneath a rock, sank to sleep.

They were tired out — almost exhausted, and despite the unusual bed and exciting situation, did not wake up until some hours later.

CHAPTER XXII

CAPTAIN DOBBS TAKES A HAND

ROGER and Dobson, upon leaving the college, had first proceeded to the cleaner's, Lyons. The shop was, of course, shut up, but the proprietor lived over his place of business, and the lads aroused him.

He came down, candle in hand. At first he was angry, but as the lads explained their trouble to him, he relented, and told them all he knew. It wasn't much. Both the runaways had come into his shop just as he was putting up the shutters. He remembered them perfectly. Yes, they had left the trousers — there they were, and he produced the articles. They had stayed only a moment or so, giving directions that the trousers should be sent back to the school in time for the Saturday half-holiday, and then left. He thought they went down the street, but wasn't sure.

It was midnight when the lads came away from the dyer's shop. They had not the least idea what next to do. As they stood debating beneath the light of a corner lamp, a constable

came along on his beat. With him was a stout, muscular-looking man. Both boys recognized him at once. It was Captain Josiah Dobbs!

The light of the lamp showed their features to the sailor at the same time, and he let out one of his customary hails:

“ Ahoy, ahoy, there, me hearties, what, in th’ name o’ the salt sea, be ye a-doin’ here this time? ”

The constable halted, and shot the rays from his lantern into the lads’ faces.

It did not take them long to explain to the captain the situation, for they felt safe in confiding to the honest old tar.

“ But we don’t want this affair to get into publicity,” Roger warned, glancing at the policeman.

“ I ain’t listenin’,” vouched the officer of the law.

“ He’s me wife’s brother,” introduced the sailor, “ and he’s gold all right, and maybe as he can help us without a-airing o’ things, eh, Bob? ”

“ Belikes,” admitted the officer, “ I ain’t got me note-book out,” and he winked at the boys.

“ Well, now, how long can yer stay in town? ” demanded the captain.

“ We should go back right away,” Roger said.

“ But you has a clean slate, with no ports o’ callin’ on it? ” demanded the captain.

“ Yes,” Roger assented.

“ That is,” Dobson corrected, “ we were given leave to come out and see if we could find anything about them, but, of course, we must get back as soon as possible, you know.”

“ Jus’ so, jus’ so,” nodded the sailor. “ Bob’s cottage is on North Street; he’s off his beat jus’ goin’ home, and me, too, with him, so you two come ’long, will ye? I’ve something on me mind, young gents. There’s bin something wrong with these here young gents o’ yours fur some time, fur I knowed ’em by your description, and I seen ’em two months ’go, or more, afore you come down our part o’ the country.”

“ Saw them where? ” demanded the boys.

“ That’s wot I’m a-comin’ to,” and then the old captain told of his view of the scene outside the school gates last term. “ I seen ’em give up the ready, and I seen the old scamp, Dutton, pocket it. ’Twas my opinion right then, lads, as there was something wrong, and I gave chase ter the scamp, and put it to him square as he was doin’ funny tricks, but he wouldn’t own up, the skunk. Since then I seen ’em once more in almost the same place when I was up ter town ’long with me missus, and when I took her

'round ter show her the school. They was both on 'em talking ter him at a fast clip, both at the same time, and Dutton were a-shaking his head and a-growling back at 'em, an' once he shook his fist at 'em, and the poor little chaps talked faster'n ever. I beat in smartish close, but didn't show no light nor hail him, but I made note in the log-book to signal you next time I saw yer, 'cause I knowed as one on 'em was what you call ' fag ' fur you."

" And the other one fags for Dobson," instructed Roger.

" Right an' good, right an' good," the sailor said. " Have you got yer key, Bob? "

Bob had, and the four entered.

" Now, then, Bob," resumed the captain, as the four seated themselves, " if you was any kind o' a detective, 'stead o' just a plain bobby, you might be some use ter us, but anyway, you can tell us what time this chap Dutton closes up."

" Supposed to be at eleven," the policeman said, as he loosened his belt and removed his helmet, " but he runs things much later behind drawn curtains, so I'm told — he ain't on my beat, you know."

" Think we'd catch him in now? "

" Maybe."

" Why, you don't think they are at Dutton's, do you? " inquired the boys.

“ I ain’t sayin’, but I thinks they might be.”

“ Oh, they’d never stay out so late as this; they’d know it would mean expelling.”

“ Maybe he’s spoke ’em some time to-day, and noted which way they stood when they parted,” the sailor suggested; “ anyway, come on if ye be willin’.”

Five minutes later the trio stood before Dutton’s billiard room and “ public house ” higher up on North Street. The place was in darkness, but repeated knocks at last raised some one, who came quietly towards the door. A head was poked cautiously out.

“ Wot do you want? ” a voice demanded, in low tones.

“ It’s Captain Dobbs,” growled the sailor; “ let me in.” And one of the skipper’s stout boots found a place inside the door.

“ I’m gone to bed,” snarled the voice.

“ Don’t look much like it,” the captain insinuated. “ Folks don’t smoke cigars in bed as a rule, an’ they most always shifts their duds ’less ’tis a squally night, an’ they be liable ter be called ter deck; I be comin’ in,” suddenly announced the sailor.

“ You be, eh? What the blazes d’you want? Well, come on, then,” and the door was opened just far enough to permit the three to enter.

“ Who’re these blokes? ” demanded Dutton, as he observed the two lads.

“ Mates o’ mine, ” vouched the captain.

“ Darned odd time ter bring ’em. What d’you want, I say. What d’you want, anyway? Get it hout. ”

“ Lots o’ time, ” the captain assured. “ It ain’t two bells in the first watch yet, and you ain’t no chicken, that I knows. ”

There came a sound of moving, a shuffling of feet, and then a light went out.

“ Ain’t all gone ter bed yet, ” grinned the captain.

Dutton swore. “ It’s none o’ your business, ” he growled, “ who’s hup and who ain’t. Now, what d’you want? ”

“ Sit down, ” ordered the skipper curtly, and Dutton sat down. “ ’Tis polite, ” the sailor continued, “ ter offer visitors seats, too, an’ ter spring a light; you ain’t sociable-like, Mister Dutton. ”

“ There’s chairs, ” growled Dutton, and he lit a single gas jet.

They were now in the back room of the place. A deck of cards lay on the table before them. An overturned spittoon and several cigar ends gave evidence of a hasty exit of some recent visitors.

The captain whispered something in Roger’s

ear, then, turning towards the saloon proprietor, demanded curtly:

"We wants ter know where them two lads is; their names is Berry and Tucker. Just get it out quick, Mister Dutton."

"I ain't seen 'em to-day," Dutton cried, rather taken aback.

"That's a lie!" snapped Captain Dobbs, between his teeth.

"No man's a-goin' ter call me a liar hin me hown place," Dutton commenced to bluster, but the captain stopped him with a growl.

"Yes they be, when yer tells lies. You seen 'em this mornin' — er, rather, 'tis yesterday morning now. I says, where be they?"

"I tells you I don't know 'em; I never seen 'em scarcely."

"Don't lie to me!" roared the skipper, bringing his fist down on the dirty table with a bang that nearly made the scamp jump out of his chair.

Roger and Dobson stood up ready for any trouble.

It was a very different matter to talk to an irate Channel sea captain, with two clean-cut, determined youths to back him up, to what it was to squeeze blackmail money out of two green youngsters, and Mr. Dutton realized this at that moment.

He looked first at Captain Dobbs, then at the two Henley lads.

"Well," he muttered, "you needn't flare up so darned fast; I'll own up as I seen the kids in 'ere once er twice, and that's hall Hi knows about 'em."

"That's another lie I'll nail!" the sailor roared. "Didn't yer come up ter school last term, an' didn't I see yer, an' didn't I spread canvas an' come up to yer, yer blackleg. An' didn't I see the lads hand ye out some coin, an' didn't I see ye with 'em only a short time 'go? What're yer lying ter me fur? First thing I'll have ye in the brig, double irons and ten days bread and water. You ain't dealin' with no kids now."

"You're drunk." Dutton commenced to bluster again.

"Not a drop in me," denied the captain.

Dutton was touching him on his particularly sore point now, and it angered the old man. He grabbed the fellow by the collar, and almost shook him. Roger and Dobson spoke no word, but both pushed up close behind their friend, ready for action.

"'Ere, let go, don't be so darned touchy," muttered Dutton, now rather cowed by the turn events had taken. "I was only jokin'."

"'Tain't no time fur jokes," snapped the

captain. "There's squalls ahead; you'd better shorten canvas."

"I tell yer I don't know nothin' about these young gents. They said as they'd see me to-night, but —"

The fellow stopped, evidently realizing that he was talking too much.

"Eh, they did, did they? And wot was they ter see you 'bout?" demanded the captain, quickly catching on. "Wot was yer business with 'em, Mister Dutton?"

"They owes me money," growled the saloon keeper.

"Wot fur?"

"None er yer business; they're welchers, anyway."

"Bin bettin' with 'em, I s'pose."

It was a long, wordy warfare that ensued, but in the end, the friends of the two runaways were convinced that Mr. Dutton knew nothing of the present whereabouts of either Berry or Tucker, and were also aware that the blackleg had been "squeezing" them.

"Aw, they'll show hup," Mr. Dutton assured his visitors, as they were leaving him. "They're just takin' a night hoff ter enjoy themselves."

CHAPTER XXIII

CONFERENCES

IT was early morning, although still dark, when the lads arrived at the college.

It had been an anxious night for Mr. Murray, who was really alarmed lest the lost lads had fallen into the river or some other terrible mishap had befallen them. He had informed Doctor Proctor of their absence, and Roger and Dobson were at once sent to the principal of Henley. The old gentleman arose from his bed and came down-stairs to meet them.

“No, sir,” Roger informed him, when asked for an opinion, “I think no accident has come to them; in fact, sir, I—I rather, rather think they’ve run away.”

“Run away!” echoed the doctor blankly. “Why, why, do you really entertain that idea, Jackson? But to where? For what purpose? What would induce them?”

“I think, sir, that in some way they have got into this man Dutton’s fingers, and he’s been bleeding them of cash,” and then the young American went on to tell the doctor of the

straitened state of his fag's and Tucker's finances; of how they had been borrowing right and left of late, and yet never appeared to have any money. "And I believe, sir," he concluded, "that this fellow Dutton has been taking it away from them as fast as they got hold of it."

"Why, really, really, now," the doctor mused, leaning back in his chair and looking thoughtful.

"Yes, sir, Captain Dobbs saw them giving the fellow money on one occasion, and talking to them only lately again. Dutton, himself, acknowledged that they owed him money, and had 'welched,' as he called it."

"I shall send for this man Dutton at once," the doctor said in his decisive manner. "I have received one or two complaints regarding him of late. I will not permit any of my boys to frequent his resort; it is most demoralizing — most demoralizing for the entire school. Go to your beds, young gentlemen, and get some rest. It is most unfortunate that this affair has occurred at this period when you are both engaged in preparing for your examination, but I must request that you again attend here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning. Go to your rooms now and get what rest you are able to between now and that time."

The lads went to their rooms, but it was little

sleep that Roger found there. He was worried — worried far beyond the permitting of sleep. His devotion to “old” Berry had led him to take far more than an ordinary interest in his brother, “young” Berry. He had considered that, in a way, he was responsible for the youngster, for had not “old” Berry committed his brother to his care? He lay awake puzzling and puzzling over the disappearance. Where could the youngsters be? He got up and made himself a cup of strong tea, and then sat down to rest and think again.

Dobson had roused Tucker, primus, his fag’s brother, and, in the latter’s room, the two boys went over the extraordinary happening, but there was nothing the elder brother knew, except that his brother had been borrowing heavily of him of late, and that he had remonstrated strongly with him. Dobson had the same story to recount.

“This fellow, Dutton’s, at the bottom of it all,” Dobson asserted, “I know that. We must make that chap tell all he knows, that’s all there is to it. He knows where your brother and young Berry are.”

“The blackleg shall be made to tell,” Tucker, primus, threatened.

Other heads, older than the lads’, were working over the complications. Doctor Proctor

and the Rev. Milton Murray held a conference soon after eight o'clock the next morning, and as a result, a messenger was sent to Captain Dobbs at his brother-in-law's house, where he was staying.

The note was short, and to the point. It read:

“MY DEAR CAPTAIN:— Kindly call at the college on important business as soon after you receive this as possible, and oblige,

“Yours very truly,

“HENRY J. PENN-PROCTOR.”

The note and the gallant captain passed one another, and just five minutes after Roger and Dobson were ushered into the presence of the principal of Henley, a servant announced Captain Dobbs.

“Conduct him in,” the doctor commanded, and the worthy old seadog rolled into the room.

He was not in his usual high spirits, but simply boiling over with energy and resolve. He looked as he looked on the poop of his own brig when the mercury in the barometer had been falling steadily for forty-eight hours, and a lowering sky and gathering wind gave promise of dirty weather ahead. He saluted the as-

sembled masters and boys in seaman-like manner, and then inquired:

“ ’Tis out boats and away, ain’t it, sir? ”

“ Just as soon as we find our bearings, Captain,” responded Doctor Proctor.

“ A mighty important matter,” acknowledged the sailor.

“ I have sent for this man Dutton,” the doctor continued, “ and he should be here very soon; that is,” he added, “ if he comes, and I have reason to think he will.”

“ Nothin’ heard, sir, o’ course, o’ the young gents? ”

The doctor shook his head.

“ Be so good, Captain,” he requested, “ as to tell us all the facts in your possession.”

Then the sailor recounted what he had seen from behind the elm tree that day when the boys paid Dutton, and again his second view of the meeting only a few days ago.

“ ’Tis plain as the name on me brig, sir, wot’s happened,” he summed up. “ These young gents’ been running free a bit with a wet sheet, and bin playin’ down there,” he jerked his horny thumb townwards. “ They’ve got into shoal water, debt, as yer might say, owin’ him fur the table rent and such like, and he’s just worried them so they cut their cables and stood

'way under all canvas — deserted, I reckon's the proper name fur it."

"Do you think it is possible that Dutton knows where they are?" inquired the principal.

"I doubts it, sir; me opinion is as no one but themselves knows that, but I'll wager new bunting with any one as they ain't fur away."

"Why, captain?"

"'Cause, sir, in me opinion, they ain't git no cash to go with."

"They have some money, though," said Doctor Proctor, "for I have been informed that the lads sold a bat and some other things to a schoolfellow last evening, and in that manner obtained nearly half a sovereign."

"Ah," growled the sailor, looking up from under his shaggy brows, "that may alter things."

At that moment old John entered the room, and announced to Doctor Proctor:

"Mr. Dutton, here by appointment, he says, sir."

"Admit him," commanded the principal.

And the billiard-room proprietor entered with a swagger.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN UNCOMFORTABLE HALF-HOUR FOR "MISTER" DUTTON

THE man had experienced considerable difficulty in making up his mind as to whether or not he would obey the summons from the Henley head master. Several times he had declared that "He wasn't a-goin' near the darned 'ole," and as many times he had thought better of his resolve.

Conscience makes cowards of us all, and Dutton was fully alive to the fact that he had been guilty of blackmail. He was not quite sure what the next move of Doctor Proctor might be, if he did not attend at the school; and finally: "Hi'll go hup and see wot the old fool school gaffer wants," he muttered, and wended his way schoolwards.

"Be seated, sir," commanded the doctor, as his eyes fell on the man, and Mr. Dutton plumped into a chair and sprawled out his legs with an impudent air, then, recognizing Captain Dobbs, he gave a slight start, and nodded to him in surly fashion.

The captain was "takin' turns," walking briskly exactly eight paces to the right, then wheeling and returning, as if he were on the navigating bridge of his brig. Roger and Dobson were seated.

The doctor at once turned his attention to the latest arrival.

"Your name is Dutton, I believe — Mr. — er — 'Bunny' Dutton," he suggested, glancing at his visitor.

"They calls me 'Bunny,'" admitted Mr. Dutton, with a leery grin, "but Hi'm Mister 'Energery Dutton to you."

"Well, Mr. Henry Dutton, I wish you to inform me why you have been receiving payments from two of the lads under my charge. You know their names — Berry and Tucker."

"W'o said Hi 'ad?" began Dutton, with an impudent stare, then, recollecting that Captain Dobbs was present, and also recalling what he knew, he added: "Wot for? Wot you wanter know for?"

"That you will presently discover," severely replied the doctor; "meanwhile, answer my question."

"My business is me own," announced Dutton, endeavoring to carry matters with a high hand.

"You will shortly make the discovery that

your business when it touches any of my boys, is also mine," replied Doctor Proctor crisply.

"Well, wot you want?"

"Reply to my question, please."

"'Cause they owed it ter me," growled the man.

"Indeed. For what?"

"Find out," blurted Dutton. "I ain't come up 'ere ter be badgered about by a school gaffer."

"Dutton," replied the doctor, in that quiet tone of his that had so often proved deceptive to the lads of Henley, "you will answer that question, or—" He made a movement to strike his gong.

The motion was not lost on Dutton. A sickly smile overspread his sallow, blotchy features.

"Wot you goin' ter do?" he inquired, attempting to carry the situation off with a joke; "call the p'lice?"

"Most certainly. I shall instruct John to send for an officer at once. If I cannot find out what I wish from you, my only resort is to place the matter of the disappearance of the lads in the hands of the police; then they may have some questions to ask you. I thought perhaps you might prefer to reply to my questions rather than theirs."

The doctor was cool as ice-water; his words were clear-cut, and his expression might have been carved from granite. Dutton commenced to mop his head with a dirty-looking handkerchief.

“Hit’s ’ot,” he complained, “’ot;” then, in the manner of one graciously unbending, and determining after all to do the right thing, “See ’ere, gaffer,” he purred, “Hi’ll make yer wise — give yer the straight tip. These young gents o’ yourn is welchers — that’s straight.”

“You mean they do not pay their debts?”

“That’s wot.”

“Do they owe you money?”

“Bet they do.”

“How came they indebted to you?”

“That’s my business,” growled Dutton, showing a disposition to kick over the traces.

“It is also mine; answer, please,” came the cold tones of the doctor.

“They’ve howed me for a long time,” grumbled Mr. Dutton, feeling the schoolmaster’s whip, and trotting kindly again, “an’ come yesterday mornin’ Hi told ’em as I wasn’t goin’ ter wait no longer, and — ”

“I require my question answered, please, Mr. Dutton,” interrupted Doctor Proctor.

“How came the lads to owe you money?”

“ Things supplied to ’em — things to eat and drink and such like,” evasively mumbled Dutton, discovering he was still being driven.

Captain Dobbs made a short stop in one of his “ turns,” and started forward, but Doctor Proctor stayed him with a gesture.

“ What is the amount of their indebtedness to you?” he resumed, still refusing the worried man his head.

“ Two pounds,” blurted out Dutton, recklessly.

“ Exactly two pounds?”

“ That’s wot.”

“ And all for liquid and solid refreshments; do I so understand you, sir? Be careful, please; I require you to itemize the account.”

“ Hi ain’t got the bill, you old — ”

But Mr. Dutton stopped, evidently reconsidering his words, and then, reconstructing his sentence: “ I ain’t got any bill ’ere.”

“ There ain’t no bill!” blurted out old Captain Dobbs, unable any longer to contain himself. “ You ain’t got any bill, Dutton, and you knows it; if they owes yer anything ’tis for table rent and the like.”

“ ’Taint!” snapped Dutton, now quite sure of his ground. “ They never played a game in my place in their lives, you old lobster!”

“ Oh, it ain’t, ain’t it? Then I’ll tell you this,

it was never run up for drinks and such, fur I knows the young gents don't take nothin'."

Both the men were shouting at the top of their voices, and Doctor Proctor did not try to make his voice heard.

"Look 'ere!" yelled Dutton, working himself into a fury. "Wot you say if Hi tells yer as yer nice, quiet, lamb-like gents was a-roamin' 'bout the country all night, a-doin' God knows wot, eh? That makes yer jump, does it? Hi thought so. Look 'ere, 'ere's a nice bit o' rope, ain't it? Wot'd yer say hif Hi told yer as yer little boys was a-gettin' out o' their winders every night, an' a-goin' hover the 'ills and heveryw'ere a-scarin' honest folks 'alf ter death, — an' a-robbin' of 'em most likely — spring 'eeled Jack and all them sort o' tricks; wot then, eh?"

Doctor Proctor's face had assumed a startled look at first, then, as the blackguard raved on, a relieved one. Although he had been so closely connected with Henley college for the last thirty years of his life, he knew a little of men and their ways. He had mixed with the great outer world, too.

Before any of the occupants of the room could speak, he arose and stepped forward. One well-manicured finger pointed straight at the fellow who was storming about the room. His moral

force made itself felt, and a hush fell over all.

"*Now* I understand you, Dutton," he said quietly. "I quite understand. You have said enough. Give me that piece of rope you have in your hand."

Dutton started to stuff into his pocket the yard or so of rope he had taken out.

For a brief moment there was a battle of eyes, but the better man won. Dutton handed the rope over, with a snarl.

"Take yer darn bit o' twine; wot 'd Hi want hit for?"

"Thank you," said the doctor, quietly placing it on the table. Then turning to the sailor, he said:

"Captain Dobbs, be so good as to stand between this man and the entrance."

The old salt, with the joy of battle in his eyes, sprang to obey orders as one of his own sailors might have done.

"Gosh!" he chuckled half aloud, as his broad back went up against the door with a bang, and he turned about to face the occupants of the room. "Gosh, I didn't think it was in the old boy; good fur him."

Dutton wheeled about like a hunted animal at bay.

"Wot monkey tricks is this?" he shouted.

“Get ’way from that door; Hi’m a-goin’ hout.”

“Come on, then,” grinned the old sailor. “I’m a-waitin’ ter see yer try — come on, me hearty!”

“Now,” resumed the doctor, ignoring the interruption, and addressing Dutton, “speak up, my man. From where did this rope come? How came it in your possession, and how much money have you taken for blackmail from my two boys? Speak quickly and truthfully; I have small time to waste over you just now.”

When a determined, educated man is matched against a swaggering, gin-soaked bully, the result never hangs very long in the balance. It did not in this instance. Never had the two boys, or old John, the porter, or Captain Dobbs ever seen the Principal of Henley in the mood he was in now. His aristocratic old features were grim and unmerciful-looking; his keen, gray eyes looked in unflinching determination into those of the rogue.

It took Mister Dutton about fifteen seconds to make up his mind, and then he made a clean breast of the whole wretched business, and when he had finished, and Doctor Proctor was convinced that he was ignorant of the whereabouts of the cave on the hill, he curtly ordered him from the room.

“Go,” he said quietly, “go instantly, and never show your face at Henley again. If I have information that you are loafing about these grounds, I shall give you in charge as a rogue and a vagabond, and — one moment, Dutton, if I hear in the future from any source that your resort is harboring any Henley boys, a complaint will be made to the proper authorities; so take care, my man. Recollect, your license already has one black mark on it. Three endorsements, you know, and the license is revoked. Such is the law.”

CHAPTER XXV

“WATCH THE SPRINGS”

THE news of the escapade of Berry and Tucker soon became school property. By the noon recess it was gossiped about in all the forms. It reached the ears of Bradbury and Lemming, as these two worthies lolled about in their room at noon.

“It’s a jolly rum business, isn’t it?” suggested Bradbury. “I didn’t know the kids were cutting it wide. They say they’ve been down at Dutton’s all last term after hours.”

“I never saw them there,” declared Lemming, “and,” he added, “I’m pretty sure I would have, had they been there much.”

This was a self-evident truth to Bradbury, too, for Dutton’s resort was much frequented by Lemming and other “sports” of Henley.

“Well, anyway, it’s something between them and Dutton, because Dutton was up here this morning, and the doctor ‘laced’ him. Say, Lem, shy that crib over here; I couldn’t get the answers to this thing last night and I want

to copy them out. Wish I had a crib; can't you get me one?"

"Rather think so; what's it worth to you?"

"Half a quid, perhaps. I've got to get a move on me if I'm to take this Oxford, Junior; it's right on us, you know."

"Oh, you bother too much."

"You would if you knew as little as I do, and the confounded thing was staring you in the face a few weeks off."

"Don't you really think you can struggle through?" inquired Lemming, glancing up.

"I'm worried half to death about it," confessed Bradbury.

"Never worry, my boy; does no good," was the sage advice Bradbury received from his crony.

"That's easy said, but hard to put in practice."

"Why, great Scott, old man; I've lots of strings to my bow. I told you I'd see you through, and I will; never fear. If not by one way, then by another."

Bradbury glanced at his chum. "I don't see how," he complained. "You may know the wretched things, but you can't load me with them."

Lemming yawned. "Oh, great Jinks, you're a dull fellow sometimes, Brad, and no error.

Why, my good fellow, I could put you through this exam and never let you see the inside of the room.”

“What!” cried Bradbury, in surprise; then, “Oh, stop your fooling,” he remonstrated.

Lemming whistled a few bars from a popular opera. Then he nodded knowingly at his crony.

“Never more serious in my life,” he asserted.

“How could a fellow pass and yet not go near the room?” demanded Bradbury. “All fellows have to show up and take the thing personally at Oxford, you know.”

“I know that, and yet what I said holds good. I say I can get you through and yet never have you see the musty old town.”

“I know you’re a clever sort of a beggar, Lem, but you’re not a wizard, so stop your fooling and chuck me that crib.”

Lemming threw the desired book across and then resumed his whistling. He stopped short in the middle of a line.

“Well,” he yawned, “when you get to that point that you feel dead sure you can’t get through, let me know, old chap.”

“Wish I knew what you were driving at,” complained Bradbury. “Your talk is all Dutch to me.”

Lemming finished the air, then, with another stretch, struggled to his feet.

“ We’ll have to be getting back — ten to two,” he said, “ but don’t forget, old boy, if you figure you can’t do it, call on me, and keep your bank roll tight; everything needs that, you know.”

Bradbury gave his room-mate a bewildered stare, and the two passed out and made their way to their class-room.

Neither Roger nor Dobson were at studies that day. They had been excused, and at the time Bradbury and Lemming were lolling about their study, the two chums were far away on the steps of the big hill. With them were Captain Dobbs and a quarryman, a fellow who knew the hill well.

“ Cave, cave,” the man repeated, as he trudged along beside the two Henley boys and the sailor; “ yes, yes, there’s a smartish few of them, I’m thinking. The best way, I figures, would be to start at ‘ The Seven Springs ’ end of the hill and work ’long the brow to the ‘ Devil’s Chimney.’ I knows four on ’em twixt them two points.”

They followed the man’s advice, and under his guidance explored each as they were reached, but not a sign of the two runaways did they come across. The caves he showed them were “ very ordinary affairs,” as Dobson complained — simply holes in the hillside running back a greater or less distance. Then, at the quarry-

man's suggestion, they scoured the flat tableland at the summit, exploring every shanty they came across. They inquired at the two farmhouses that dotted the highest point. No, no one had seen anything of the two lost lads.

The search party rested, and took lunch at one of these farms, and old Captain Dobbs reaffirmed his opinion that "they wasn't fur away. Ten bob, which it seems like is all they had, don't take no one no distance, an' I'll wager they be somewhere close 'round," he insisted.

"Say," suddenly exclaimed Dobson, "do you suppose they could have gone home? They had enough money to go to Weston, where Berry's mater hangs out, you know."

Roger shook his head. "The doctor wired there this morning," he said, "and they hadn't gone there. He has sent Mr. Saintsbury down there on the early morning train, to find if Mrs. Berry knows anything about the affair, and to inform her. No, I agree with Captain Dobbs that they are somewhere close around. You see, Dob, they have a cave on this hill somewhere that they used to come to — that old scamp Dutton got that much out of them, and what is more likely than that they ran away when he pushed them too hard, and hid in it? They are both such kids, you know, and it's about what they would do."

"If you feels sure as they is hiding somewhere on this 'ill," the quarryman broke in, "the best thing as I knows on is to lie low and wait for 'em."

"Wait for them? How? What'd you mean?"

"Well, 'tis like this, young gents, there may be places as I knows nothing of, and most likely they'll be hiding in one on 'em, but they'll have to eat and drink."

"Oh, I suppose they brought grub with them; in fact, we know they brought quite a lot of things, for one of the prefects who went to town this morning discovered they had spent quite a few shillings in provisions and such like. That's one reason that makes me think they must be close about; they wouldn't buy a stock of eatables unless they intended to remain close, for if they went off to another town, for instance, they could easily buy what they wanted when they got there, and so avoid burdening themselves with things to carry."

"Yes, that sounds reasonable," agreed the captain, and Dobson nodded his head.

"But there's one thing as you ain't all figured on," interposed the hillman.

"What's that?" demanded the lads.

"Water," laconically replied the man.

"Water. Well, yes, of course, they would

have to get water to drink, but they could get that almost anywhere about this hill.”

“Aye, that’s true, young masters, but they’d have to come out of their cave to get it, I figures, ’less there was a spring or something of that sort in there by ’em. That’s so, ain’t it?”

“That’s so,” acknowledged the captain, beginning to look interested.

“And I say we might cotch ’em when they come out,” continued the man.

“Yes, if we knew where they were.”

“Watch the springs, to be sure.”

“Might do that, eh, Dob?” cried Roger.

“Where be there any springs on this ’ere hill?” demanded the captain.

“There’s the ‘Seven Springs’ as we started from, and there’s ‘Bloode’s Spring,’ an’ there’s the quarry ’un, and — and — that’s ’bout hall as Hi knows on, but I’ll tell ye straight, young masters, if I was you I’d let the young gents bide where they be till they gets ready to come out themselves; they’ll tire mighty quick, never fear, o’ hidin’.”

“Oh, we can’t do that,” Dobson negatived, with a smile; “we want to find them and get them back as soon as possible.”

“Then watch the springs at night,” counseled the quarryman.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE NIGHT WATCH

THAT advice sounded wise to the search party, and after an all day's fruitless scouring of the hill, they returned to the college with the resolve to again take up the search after dark.

Mrs. Berry had arrived from Weston, and Tucker's people had joined their eldest son, and shared with him the anxiety for the safety of the boy.

The supposition that the two truants had taken refuge on the hill had now almost resolved itself into a certainty, for several persons had been discovered who had actually seen and noticed the youngsters headed that way. One, an old shepherd, had seen them and nodded to them, after the manner of countryside people, just before the storm broke, while he was engaged in homing his Cotswold sheep.

As much as possible the authorities at the college had prevented the unfortunate affair from becoming public, but that was a difficult matter. At a general assembly, the boys of Henley had been instructed not to mention the

escapade in town, "for the sake and reputation of the old school, boys," the doctor had appealed, and not a lad had breathed of the affair beyond the confines of Henley.

That night, following the old hillman's advice, a strong party of prefects — all senior boys, of course — had been divided into half a dozen little bands, with instructions to especially watch the springs, to go about their work as noiselessly as possible, and if possible, bring back the erring youngsters.

With two quarrymen as guides, the party ascended the hill soon after dusk, and were quietly stationed along the various water supplies.

"There ain't no cave round these 'ere parts as I knows on," the man vouched, as he and Roger and Dobson took their stand within a stone's throw of the spring in the quarries, "but I reckon as we'd better watch 'em all — they'll have to come to get water somewhere, I figures."

"If they are on the hill," Roger said, "they must have obtained water before now, or suffered."

"I should say," Dobson interposed, "that if they are hiding in some cave that Tom, here, knows nothing of, it is likely there may be a spring in the cave — often there are springs in caves, you know."

“ Yes,” acknowledged the man, “ that may be, may be; ’tis quite likely, young sir; an’ then again, it ain’t.”

“ Well, all we can do now is to wait and try the plan we’ve adopted,” summed up Roger.

Tom, the quarryman, and the chums were alone. Old Captain Dobbs had been compelled to return home, as his brig was clearing from lower Channel ports early next morning, and of course he had to be aboard. The little party lay talking in low tones under the shelter of the tall fir trees that girt about the quarries. Below them, twenty yards away, bubbled and gushed the tiny spring from the rocks.

All was quiet on the lonely hill. The men had long since ceased work in the quarries, and now only the bleating of some far-off sheep or the lowing of cattle broke the stillness of the night.

The quarryman pulled an old clay pipe from his pocket, and loading, cautiously shielded the light while he struck a match, then puffed contentedly. The success or non-success of the night’s expedition meant nothing to him except perhaps an extra half crown, but to the boys — and especially to Roger — the night was fraught with momentousness.

The lads lay silent, and only by gesture was communication made. They heard the clocks

from the churches in the vale below sound nine, ten, eleven, and then midnight. It was a weary vigil. It appeared to Dobson that they were taking one chance in one hundred that the truants might come to that particular spot.

One o'clock had just sounded from a dozen steeples in the town, when the quick, strained ears of the American caught the sound of a slight rustling. He lay down and placed his ear to the soft turf that girt about the edge of the quarries. The sound died away again.

In another moment, however, Tom, the hillman, sat upright, and held aloft his finger to command attention.

Both lads were on the *qui vive*. For a certainty Roger could now detect a rustling from the bushes far up the hill behind them. So could Dobson, for he looked expectantly towards his chum. The quarryman crawled over and lay on hands and knees. Then suddenly, almost right on them, came a growled whisper:

"Look out, Straw, you beggar, you cracked my knee with that old jam pot; what'd you swing it about like that for?"

"Oh, shut up, don't talk so loud," came back the hushed rejoinder.

Tucker, apparently, had stopped to rub his injured limb, for the sound of footsteps ceased, and mild upbraidings followed. The voices died

down, and then sounded again. This time on the further side to where the watchers lay.

The boys saw dark outlines climbing down over the rocks.

“Follow them,” urged Dobson, in a hoarse whisper.

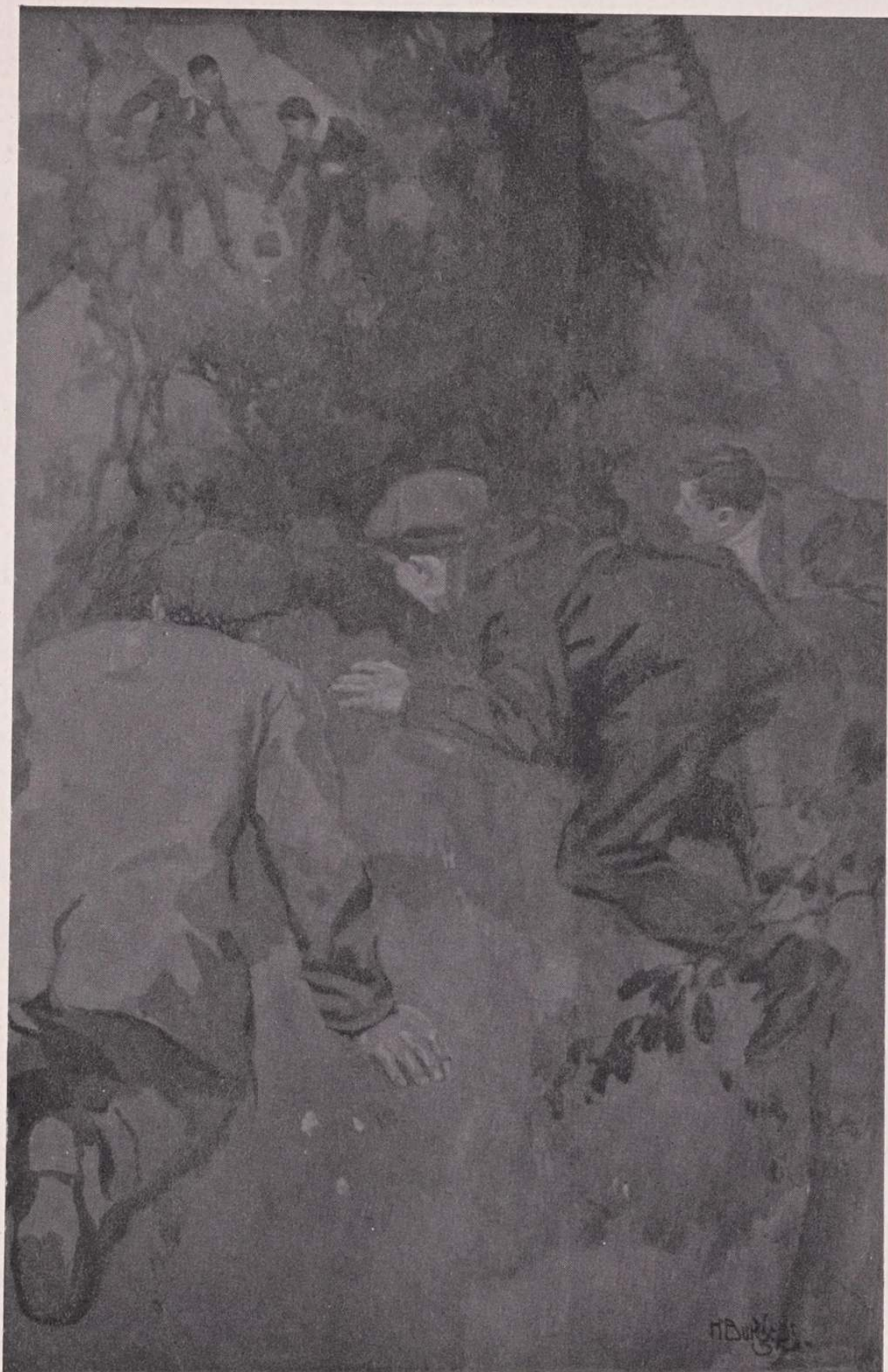
The quarryman commenced to get to his feet.

“Wait,” cautioned Roger huskily. “They’ll have to come back with their water — see, they have a pot of some sort! Let’s move around and wait for them at the place where they went down; we don’t want them to bolt and lose themselves in this place; they could easily do it.”

This advice was followed, and cautiously the trio crept around to the summit of the rough path by which the truants had descended. Then they concealed themselves behind the heavy pines, and waited for the return. They had not long to wait.

Apparently the two sprats did not wish to linger at the spring, for almost immediately they espied them returning with the refilled vessel.

“Now,” whispered Roger, “don’t shout at them; they’ll only run and we’ll have to chase them. Leave it to me; see if I can’t manage it. Look out, there; keep back, Dob!”



The boys saw dark outlines climbing down over
the rocks. *Page 224.*

There came sixty seconds of absolute silence, then the murmur of voices from the approaching lads could be heard. Now, the very words, something about "a stiff climb against collar," and then they were upon the watchers.

Roger stretched out his hand. "Berry. Oh, Berry, old chap," he called quietly.

There was a sudden stop, a start, a cry of surprise, and then there would have been a flight and a chase, had not the American caught the frightened youngster and clung to him, while Dobson grabbed Tucker.

"Let me go, you cad! Let me go!" yelled the frightened youngster, as he struggled frantically in the grip of the fifth form boy. He wriggled and struck. He even bit and scratched, in his mad efforts to get free.

Berry's struggles were less violent. Roger always possessed a restraining influence over the boy, and as soon as he realized that "his man" was holding him, he gave up.

Almost the first words he panted were: "Has Dutton been up to old Proct yet?"

"Everything's all right; I'll tell you about it presently," Roger assured. "Say, Dob, suppose you and Tom get word to the other fellows and tell 'em they need not watch any longer, while Tucker and Berry and I go back to the college," he suggested, turning to his chum.

Dobson stopped short and looked at him in surprise.

“ Oh, that’s all right I’ll promise you,” Roger said, reading his thoughts. “ Tucker and Berry will ‘come peaceable-like,’ as the policeman says, won’t you, kids? ”

“ I’m coming all right,” replied Berry.

Tucker nodded glumly.

Roger laughed. It was an uneasy exhibition of mirth, but it accomplished what he intended it should; it took some of the tragedy out of the capture.

Dobson and Tom departed, rather unwillingly, and Roger and the two youngsters were left together.

“ Look here, kids,” Roger went on, as they reached the level piece below, “ there’s no use in saying that you haven’t got yourselves in rather a mess, because you have. But it isn’t so awfully bad but that it can be fixed up. I’m not going to jump on you, because I know you’ve had trouble enough, but I want to impress on you that as soon as you get back you must make a clean breast of this whole wretched business. You’ve been guilty, of course, of several things. I’ve talked the affair over with Mr. Murray, and he says there’ll be three charges against you — breaking bounds, overstaying leave, and frequenting with unde-

sirable people. You'll most likely be crimped for the rest of the term, and, of course, have lines given you, but what's that? I'm so jolly glad to see you both back that I feel like kicking up no end of a shindy. It's bully, old boys!" and Roger wrung the hands of the lads, frankly and warmly.

There was no feeling grouchy over such a lecture as this, as Tucker afterwards explained to his friends, and the trio proceeded in silence schoolward for a few minutes. Then Berry timidly inquired:

"How about Dutton? You said everything was all right, but has he been up? What did he say?"

"The scamp was sent for and then he came up," Roger replied, "and the doctor told him a few things, too. He won't worry you any longer, so be easy, kids."

That return to school was a trying experience for the two lads, but Doctor Proctor, like the good old boy he was, tempered his punishment with mercy. In reality the hardest part of the whole affair was meeting their own schoolmates again. The two youngsters were unmercifully "froathed," but in a week the whole wretched business was forgotten in the interest aroused by the important events now crowding thickly upon one another.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CONSPIRACY

AFTER that memorable "jackass business," as Dobson always referred to it, young Berry and Tucker took a fresh grip of their school life, and put all their energies into wrestling their way upwards from the third to the fourth form.

"By Jove," Roger lectured his fag, "you'll just *have* to climb up this time; you can't stay a sprat all your life."

"I know it," Berry admitted. "Tuck and I are both grinding like good 'uns; we're going to pull through; just wait."

But while the two juniors had overcome their troubles, there was a senior who had some of his own. Bradbury had been unable to tear himself away from the delights of dissipation, and as the day of the test for the Oxford examination drew near, he admitted to himself that his chances of getting through were slim indeed.

"Look here, sport," he confided to his crony, Lemming, "it's no use my going up; I can never make it. I'm not going to show up.

I shall tell the doctor I can't take the confounded thing; it's no use going up there to make an ass of myself."

"Rot!" ejaculated Lemming, "you can get passed all right."

"I tell you I can't. What's the use of fooling me like that? I know what I can do and what I can't. Why, at that test last Tuesday I went all to pieces. You should have heard the dressing down Murray gave me after reading my papers."

Lemming sat gazing at his companion with a half amused expression on his sallow face.

"You ass!" he suddenly exploded. "Don't you know there're more ways than one of killing a pig?"

"That's all right; call me an ass; I deserve it, but I don't see what you mean by the last question — about the pig."

Lemming laughed — unpleasant mirth.

"Look here," he half whispered, as he drew his chair over and lowered his voice, "you're flush, aren't you?"

"Flush!" echoed Bradbury, glancing up in a startled manner. "Flush? Oh, yes, I suppose so; why, are you broke as usual?"

"Bet I'm broke," admitted his companion. "I haven't a millionaire dad like you, you know. Why, I remember when you first came

down that you had a bank roll of nearly a hundred."

"Oh, I know, the good governor always puts me right for that, but I haven't that much now — you've had some of it, you know," and Bradbury gave Lemming a meaning look. "Anyway," he resumed, "what has that got to do with this beast of an exam? I can't pass if I had a thousand."

"Don't you be so jolly cock-sure, old chap."

Bradbury started. "What d' you mean?" he queried.

"What's the size of your roll now?" demanded Lemming.

"Oh, I don't know. I've about eight quid on me and some thirty-eight or forty in the bank."

"Guess you could raise a pony altogether?" suggested Lemming.

"I suppose so. Why?"

"See here," suddenly demanded Lemming, "how much would you give to pass?"

Bradbury flushed.

"Almost anything," he groaned. "It's no use, though; I haven't a ghost of a chance."

"Don't be so jolly cock-sure of that. I can engineer the thing for you — that is, for a consideration. Let's get down to business, sport. Will you give me that fifty quid you

have, and promise me another as soon as you can get your governor to pony up, if I pass you up? ”

“ What! ” almost shouted Bradbury.

“ Shut up; don't yell so confoundedly loud. ”

“ Well, how can you? What's the use of talking? You know it can't be done. ”

“ I know it can be done, and I'll see it done for fifty down and the rest as soon as you can manage it. I need the money, or I'd do it for nothing, sport, ” added the boy, rather shamefacedly.

“ You'll have to explain; I'm afraid I don't quite understand, ” stammered Bradbury. “ It isn't anything crooked, is it? ”

“ Who said anything about anything crooked? Nothing's crooked in this world, my young buck; that is, if you don't get found out. ”

“ Well, how can I pass, then? ”

“ *You* can't, but *I* can, ” retorted Lemming, leaning close to Bradbury, and giving him a knowing wink. “ See here, this is the scheme. I've passed once, you know, and I can pass again. I may be a bit rusty, but I'll rub up, and I'll go up to Oxford and take the 'Junior' instead of you, savee? ”

“ But that won't make me pass? ”

“ Oh, you're an idiot. Don't you see, *I'll* be *you*. ”

“ You’ll be me.”

“ Sure. That is, I will, for the consideration I said. I’ll guarantee your name shall appear on the pass list above the ninety mark, then you give me the fifty, and the rest as soon as you can get it. Does that suit you? ”

“ But they’ll know you. They’ll know it isn’t me; all the fellows go up together; and besides, it would be crooked, too; oh, I won’t do that,” blundered on Bradbury.

“ Well, then, let it alone. You don’t have to. I just thought we might work it together. It’s a square deal. I need the money. You want to pass. It’s a fair exchange, but I don’t give a hang; it’s off, then.”

“ Wait — wait a minute,” stammered Bradbury, his face, which had gone white, as he understood the nature of the proposition, now flushing up red with excitement. “ Let’s — let’s see — how is it? ”

“ Just as I said. It’s dead easy, and no one will ever know. The fellows all go down as they like, you know, but most of them take the morning train from here to Oxford. Well, of course, you can go with them, but when you get there, break away. It’ll be easy to invent some excuse — go to see some friends of yours — anything you like. The first day’s exam

commences at noon, so there'll be lots of time. Well, once you leave the chaps at the hotel, just make a beeline for this place; I'll write the name down for you. It's a snug little pub six miles out, and you can lie low all day. You must get back in time to be seen coming out from the college doors, you know, and I'll contrive to get the questions to you as soon as I finish, so you can talk decently to the chaps about them after the exam. You'll do the same thing next day and the next — it's generally a three-days affair, you know."

"I know, but, but —"

"Hold hard, I'm coming to it. You know the authorities at Oxford always take care that fellows from the same school never get near one another; keep 'em in separate rooms if they can, for fear they'll look over and crib and help one another. Well, I'm going to have 'my cousin' write a few days before the exam and get a week's leave for me from Henley, and when your name is called out at Oxford next Monday, I'll answer for you, — catch on? There's only one possible trip-up, and that is that some of the fellows from here may be in the same room, and if they are, of course, I'll have to do a sneak, but I'm going to make it my business to see that doesn't occur, and I rather think I'll succeed."

"Some one will see you going in or something," faltered Bradbury.

"Oh, rot, how can they? I wasn't born yesterday, my boy. There'll be a perfect mob there from all over the British Isles to take the exam, and I'll just be George Hume Bradbury for two days and a half — that's all; why, it's dead easy."

"It — it looks — looks easy," admitted Bradbury, "but, but, you know, it isn't — it isn't fair, you know, Lem."

"Oh, come off; you're no kind of a sport. Why, I'll bet it's done dozens of times every exam, and no one ever knows. Are you on, or not?"

"I — I — think I'd like time to think about it," hesitated Bradbury.

"Oh, there's no need for anything like that; besides, if I'm going to take the exam, I must sweat up a bit; I'm rusty, but I can shine up a bit between now and Monday. Come, make up your mind, sport; yes or no. Why, you're like a baby; I don't believe you have any sporting blood in your veins; but, there, I don't mind, just as you say, only decide, yes, or no; which shall it be?"

Bradbury was fast losing the battle now. Already his real self was in retreat. His false was taking its position. There was a mo-

mentous pause. Then: "I — I think — think I'll go you," he muttered.

"All right; that's the best deal you ever made," congratulated Lemming. "Now, you understand how it's to be. I'm to pass in your name above the ninety mark, and when the list's out you're to pony up fifty quid — here, we'll put it down on paper; it's more business-like."

In a few minutes the agreement was drawn up, and with a hesitating hand, Bradbury signed. Then Lemming put his name below. He made a copy and handed that over to Bradbury, but that wasn't signed.

"Now," he proposed, "let's have a drink," and opening his little cupboard, he produced a bottle and two glasses.

"Here's to your success in 'The Oxford, Junior,'" he toasted.

Bradbury said nothing. He drained his glass, and then pushed it towards Lemming, who refilled it.

"By Jinks, your hand is all of a tremble," Lemming commented.

CHAPTER XXVIII

COMING SPORT

HENLEY was a busy school those fall weeks. There was the coming "Oxford, Junior," the form examinations, and last, but not least in the estimation of the boys, the annual fall "paper chase."

The cross-country run was not bothering the two conspirators, but Roger, who had qualified as "hound leader," Maxwell, his "hunter," Cossock, the "whipper-in," and Neale and Forrester, the two crack cross-country men, who had made good as "hares," were all busily engaged, despite the near approach of the examinations, in putting the last touches on their condition.

Now that the anxiety of his fag's disappearance had been removed and everything going "swimmingly," as he put it, the American was rapidly getting to the keen edge both mentally and physically. Dobson, while he possessed staying powers, was too chunky for the long distance, and was merely running as a "hound."

"But you had better keep up, old man,"

threatened Cossock, as he and the two chums chatted over the approaching event, "or look out for my whip round your legs."

"That's no joke," retorted Dobson, with a grin; "you're the most unmerciful whipper-in Henley ever knew."

"Never mind him, Sock," admonished Roger; "you keep the pack together, and hang their legs."

"Bet your sweet life I will," vowed Cossock, with vehemence.

"Lick you for that!" cried Dobson, playfully reaching for the gloves.

Next minute Roger was crying time, and the two well-matched boys were at it.

Six fast and furious slogging rounds they went, with honors easy.

"Pwhew!" panted Dobson, "I've had enough."

He slipped his wrist string and hurled the glove at Cossock like a cannon ball. The object of the missile side-stepped neatly, and the flying glove sailed past him and caught Bradbury, who entered the room at that moment, fairly in the face. He reeled back, with a cry of surprise.

"By Jinks," he ejaculated, "that's a bally nice reception to give a chap."

"Oh, beg pardon, old fellow; unintentional,

I promise you; meant that for Cossock, only the beggar funk'd it," explained Dobson, whereat Cossock laughed gleefully, as he called out:

"You should have funk'd it, too, Brad, then you wouldn't have that red beak. Never mind, Dob, my boy; wait till I see your bare calves in the pack in front of me next Saturday, then I'll have my revenge, my sweet youth."

"I'm not going in for that run," announced Bradbury.

"What!" exclaimed all the lads, in surprise.

"No, you see this confounded Oxford coming right on top of it Monday I thought I'd better not take the time off. In fact, I rather think I shall go on to Oxford Saturday; I have some friends there, and I can take things easy there all day Sunday and grind up to the last minute; I'll see you all there Monday, though."

"How're you feeling; pretty solid?" inquired Roger.

"Lots better than I did; rather think I'll pull through all right. Say, Jackson, have you that 'Bradstreet'? I want to see how the trains run; that's what I dropped in for, only that Dobson sending the glove at me made me forget."

"Here's one," invited Roger. "Bring it back when you've done with it; I want it myself."

"All serene," and whistling to himself, Bradbury departed.

"I don't believe he'll stand a ghost of a chance," prophesied Cossock. "He came an awful cropper in the last test, and he hasn't been doing any grinding since to speak of."

"He seems to think he'll make it," suggested Dobson.

"Maybe he will, but I can't figure it," was Cossock's final judgment. "Now, then, how about this business on Saturday? I thought I'd better drop in and talk it over with you, Jackson. Maxwell said he'd be up later on — ah, here he is — hello, you beggar!"

Maxwell, tall, thin, and wiry as ever, entered, and after selecting the couch as the most comfortable place, nodded to his three companions.

"Old Socks wouldn't be satisfied until I had a confab with you, Yank, about this run. Now, Socks, get it out, what is it you want to gas about?"

"Well, there're a good many things," complained Cossock, with an injured air. "It's all right for you two chaps; all you have to do, Jackson, is to lead the pack, and you, Max, to fool on your horn, but I tell you a whipper-in has no cinch. He has a crowd of beggars on his hands, and it's no end of a job to keep them on their feet."

“What’s that about hands and feet?” inquired Dobson.

“Oh, don’t get funny,” rebuked Cossock. “I want to know first, Jackson, how many are in the pack for certs.”

“Sixty-four all told.”

“By Jinks, what a pack!”

“Don’t complain; half of them will drop out before ten miles.”

“That’s what I *am* complaining of. That means work, work for me. Look at that great chunky Dobson sprawling about all over himself; you know he’ll want to quit before half distance, and I’ll have to work over such as he, keeping them on their trotters as long as they’re able to toddle, and small thanks I get for it, too.”

“Don’t be peevish, Sock; what else do you want to know?”

“Well, have the hares told you what direction?”

“Yes, Tewkesbury way — that’s all.”

“That’s enough. That means crossing the river, and a lot of funky beggars to push in,” growled the aggrieved whipper-in.

“Pass on, Sock; what next?” demanded Roger.

“Well, of course, I want to know the bugle signals; how can a fellow handle a great un-

wieldy pack of thirty-two couples unless he knows all the calls? ”

“ Certs, you’ll want ’em. I thought you had ’em; I sent ’em over to you a week ago by your fag. Here, I’ve got a copy somewhere in my desk. Can you make them out? They’re the same as Henley always had, I think. See, this is ‘The scatter,’ here’s the ‘Bring-down,’ and here’s the ‘Come away.’ You talk it over with Max; he’s the old trumpet man.”

“ It’s going to be wet, I’m afraid,” complained Dobson.

“ I don’t care for that if only the wind doesn’t blow.”

“ Yes,” chimed in Cossock, as he moved towards the doorway, “ the wind’s the greatest factor. A puffy wind scatters the scent and is more of a time-eater than any dodge they can invent. Good night, you fellows.”

The chums dismissed the stirring thoughts of the coming chase, and buckled down to the task of rounding out the jagged edges of their work for the coming examination.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE WHITE TRAIL

IT was a regular British autumn day when the two hares and big pack assembled in the playing-field. There was little or no wind blowing, but already a certain crispness in the air told that the vanguard of the bleak season had arrived.

"Are you all ready, boys?" demanded Mr. Murray.

"All ready, sir," reported Cossock, as he looked his pack over, and Roger dipped his little bit of red bunting, as he echoed: "All ready, sir."

The master looked expectantly towards Neale and Forrester.

"Ready, sir," came from the two hares in a single voice.

"Strip!" ordered Mr. Murray.

In a second the two hares had shed their outer "duds" and swung their bags of "scent" across their shoulders. They leaned forward in position.

“Get away!” cried the house master, glancing up from his repeater.

Next instant the two fit-looking hares were trotting off at a sharp clip from the college grounds. They disappeared from sight behind the gymnasium, and Mr. Murray stood chatting with his chief. The rest of the masters stood talking with the boys of the waiting pack, advising and cautioning.

Five minutes had almost slipped away, when Mr. Murray suddenly glanced up and warned: “Ready, hounds!”

Sixty-four jerseys went to the ground like a single garment. Roger, with his red flag of leadership, sprang to the front, and Cossock with his ever-ready whip, scurried around the flanks and rear of the pack.

“Get away!” came the sharp command.

There was a blare of horn, and sixty-four well-conditioned fellows were swinging off at a ground-covering trot, all well together, and moving with the precision of a machine. Not without reason was the Henley college pack famous throughout all the broad acres of the green shire of Gloucester.

Clear and distinct before them lay the trail of white paper scraps, — the scent of the hares, — dropped but a bare five minutes previously.

The crowd cheered as the pack doubled

out from behind the massive iron gates, and dashed away in hot pursuit. Many of them started with the boys, and even kept pace with them for the first half mile or so, but gradually they were tailed off.

As the pack cleared into the Tewkesbury road, Roger signaled for his huntsman to come up clear on his right and wait for orders. Dobson was running third man out.

“Max,” confided Roger, “we can’t carry all this pack very far. Tell Cossock to cut loose with all stragglers and distress men as they wither, and not to bother with the beggars who balk at their jumps.”

Maxwell swung wide, slowed down for the whipper-in, and repeated his instructions to him.

“Of course,” muttered Cossock, “he told me that before. If there’re ten men in at the death it’s a wonder; Neale and Forrester have sworn to get away from us.”

Maxwell spurred and again took position on the right of his leader.

The pack was moving in splendid style, covering the ground at a fine eight-mile clip, with the scent as plain as white paint. They had shaken off all well-wishing friends, and beyond a passing rustic or so, the way was clear and unimpeded. The white trail stretched

away in an unbroken zigzag, lying undisturbed upon the moist road.

Of the two hares not a sight was to be gained; they had probably spurted well ahead, and by this time taken to the country. Indeed, in a few minutes there was ample proof of this, for the trail suddenly left the highway, and turned at a sharp angle over a low stile, where it limped away as far as could be seen over plowed fields and meadows.

The pack took the jump in good form, and Roger slowed down as they ran over the heavy ground. Across some meadow land, up the railway embankment, and into a dark patch of woods, they followed their prey.

Then the first check was struck. The scent branched out in three directions. Evidently the hares had flung some loops.

"Scatter," was Roger's sharp command, and instantly the horn rang out the merry blast.

The pack flung itself into the wood in all directions, while the whipper-in, panting up to his leader, called: "All in hand so far."

The wily hares had made a cast of three clever loops, and it took the hounds a good five minutes to untangle it, then, with a "Come away" blast of the horn, they were off again at a hot clip to make up for lost time.

It was a stiff country through which they now ran. Roger did not let up on the pace, and things were taken as they came. It was hedge after hedge, fence after fence, and running water flung in for good measure. The pack became straggled, despite Cossock's efforts to handle them. His long whip went cracking here, there, everywhere, but dead beat, a baker's dozen fell off and were left to their fate.

Then suddenly, in a wide-running brook, the scent ceased. It was an old dodge, but always a successful time-eater. Of course, the hares had gone either up or down stream, dropping their paper in the fast running water as they waded along.

"Scatter," again the bugle rang out, and up and down the rivulet scampered the hounds in little packs of threes and fours. Of course, the hares had to come out somewhere; they could not wade on forever in that clear stream, and waded they evidently had, for not a footprint on either bank was to be detected.

It was a hard check. The up-country hounds came back from a half-mile search rewarded by nothing but failure, but a moment later "Yap! yap!" came from far down stream. Some of the pack had got on the trail again.

“ Full cry! ” yelled Roger to his huntsman, and the horn sounded the inspiring “ Come away! come away! come away! ”

They swept down stream at a clinking pace, picking up the stray hounds as they whirled along the banks to a deep gulley, across which the scent suddenly came into view, sprinkled here and there upon the frail-looking trestle that conducted the stream over the railway below. The hounds who had discovered the trail were scampering around, uncertain what to do. It was a nasty climb to go over there. The viaduct was but eighteen inches wide, with not a rest on either side. The racing stream surged along over it, deep and swirling. They would never have known the hares had gone across except that a few tell-tale pieces of paper lay lodged on the narrow brink here and there.

“ There it is! there it is! ” cried an excited hound, as he pointed out to the flagman the lost scent.

“ Right, ” snapped Roger. “ I see where they came out on the other side. They’ve turned sharp and cut off across country. Come on! ”

Without another word he took to the water and commenced to wade along over the bridge. It was up to his middle. The boys sprang in behind him — all but four quitters, who

hung back and scampered away out of reach of Cossock's whip.

They came out all right, but a wet, bedraggled set they looked, as they tore off at top pace, hot on the scent up a steep hill, through a little copse, and down the further side on to the hard high-road, where clear and distinct in front loomed the old pile of Tewkesbury Abbey.

"They've doubled the abbey and cut off across country again," yelled an excited spectator. The road was full of the Tewkesbury people who had turned out to see the hounds come in.

"They're making for Wainslode's Hill," bawled another.

There were just twenty-one couples left, as the pack raced into the sleepy little market town, where the trail led them straight up to the abbey, through the "Bloody Meadow," where Queen Margaret had made her last desperate stand against the Yorkist troops in the War of the Roses, and sharp around again out into the country.

"Tell Cossock to get 'em well in hand," panted Roger to his huntsman, who slowed down and delivered the order to the whipper-in.

"Do me best," gasped Cossock; "the beggars are quitting right along now."

The country became as flat as a billiard table for miles, but it was stiff going for all that. The land was cut up into small farms, each fenced and hedged in neatly.

Roger set a hot pace. It was a good ten-mile clip, and the leading men drew away from the tail of the pack at every bound. Not a glimpse of the hares had they caught so far, but the trail was as plain as daylight.

“Ten couples in hand!” yelled Cossock at the end of a clinking three-mile run.

“Checked!” shouted Roger, at the same instant.

Checked, indeed! And a bad one, apparently. The scent stopped short in the middle of an open field, an apple orchard.

“Scatter,” again the bugle sounded, and scatter well the faithful remaining hounds did. But where, where had the trail gone to? They knew the scent had not given out, for old experienced hares like Neale and Forrester were not the sort to time themselves wrong.

“What’s the trick now?” demanded Roger of his huntsman.

At the same instant the keen eyes of Maxwell caught sight of something. “Quick!” he shouted, “the trees!”

A quick glance aloft told the tale. The hares had *taken to the trees!*

“Up!” yelled Roger, and the next instant the unique spectacle was presented of hounds taking to the trees.

As the young American scrambled up, the whole scheme lay clear before him. With a craftiness that would have done credit to King Reynard himself, the two hares had swung from tree to tree, dropping their paper on the branches as they climbed, and were now — goodness knew where.

At that critical moment a shout went up from an old hound. “There! there!” he yelled excitedly.

Two patches of white caught the eye at the far end of the field. The two hares were just coming to ground again.

A yell went up from the pack. Roger steadied them with a “Follow your leader.” Like mad, heedless of cuts and bruises, scratches or tears, they climbed frantically along from tree to tree. Away went the hares and disappeared at a swinging clip behind the next hedge.

The pack was a good four minutes getting over the trees, then, with a “Full Cry,” they were down and after them.

Now, indeed, they were going, — and gaining, too. They caught sight of their prey just three fields ahead, and Roger ordered the

“Bring Down” sounded. Maxwell gave it with what seemed to him his last remaining breath. He was badly winded, but old cross-country man that he was, he was game from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet.

“We’ll collar them,” muttered Roger encouragingly. “Come on!”

Now only a field separated the pursued and pursuers. The two hares were toiling almost painfully along. A dozen good men and true were still in hand with the pack; the rest straggled out in a disordered procession.

“They’re making for the Arrow,” gasped Maxwell, over Roger’s shoulder, as the broad river came suddenly into view.

Next instant the hard-pressed hares, without wait, leaped boldly into the silver water. Roger saw the white spray, he heard the dull splash, and next moment two bobbing heads and straining shoulders showed where they were swimming silently, desperately across. They had cast away two empty bags as they took their dive, but the American knew that another canvas, crammed to the brim, lay across the broad shoulders of Neale. He hesitated not a second, but took his header like the true blue he was. Maxwell was in the water after him a moment later, and as the two rose to the surface, they heard splash after splash

that told the rest of the pack was following. Once they heard Cossock's indignant command of: "Get in, you lout," and knew he was urging some backward hound into the river. Then they struck out with all their strength for the opposite bank. Roger was using his usual overhand stroke, but Maxwell stuck to the slower breast. They saw the two hares scramble out on the opposite bank, shake themselves for an instant, and then dash off like the wind, as if their bath had given them renewed strength. Roger had forged ahead of Maxwell, and another fellow, Blake, had passed the huntsman, too; but the wiry Maxwell was third man out, and once on dry land he soon tore up to the leader again.

"How many?" panted Roger, as he heard his huntsman thudding along in his rear.

"Seven," gasped Maxwell.

"Couples?"

"Singles."

"Cossock?"

"Out."

"Come on," urged Roger, and the three labored steadily, resolutely on. A fourth man came panting up; then a fifth, but that was all. On those five depended whether they should bring down or fail.

They toiled up the stiff ascent of Wainslode's

Hill and on to the high road again, but the hares were a hundred yards away. Far off in the distance the spires of Hamenchelt tapered skyward. It was a flat mile to the college gates. The last heartbreaking lap had commenced. Once Roger saw the two hares slow down to a walk, but they spurted again immediately afterwards. Then one of his companions dropped away, with a little gasp.

“And then there were four.” Somehow that foolish little rhyme about the nigger boys kept running through his mind.

Half mile more! The game Maxwell reeled and swayed weakly.

“Stick it out,” urged Roger. He saw Blake with white, set face, toiling along painfully three yards behind him. The tired hound tried to run level with his leader. Gained a yard! Another; he was level. The hares were fifty yards ahead. The American glanced at Blake, and as he did so, the exhausted runner curled up and dropped in his tracks.

“And then there were three.”

Just Roger, Maxwell, and Wade. On those three alone depended the result. Wade appeared to be the freshest of the three, and as Maxwell swayed, he steadied him with his arm for a moment, half supporting him. Roger glanced at him savagely.

“Can't you go?” he hissed.

With a mighty effort the huntsman pulled himself together and still stayed.

Twenty yards ahead the two hares were struggling along. Forrester was evidently nearly all in, and Neale was urging him on. Four hundred yards to the gates. The road was full of people; of boys from the school; of carriages, motors, and wheels. They scarce saw them. Then a stone — a something — got in Maxwell's way, and crash, down he went.

“And then there were two.”

Again that silly rhyme ran through Roger's brain. Would the thing come true? Would it end with: “And then there were none?”

“Come! come!” urged Wade, and his voice sounded to the toiling Roger like a trumpet-call to battle.

He ran up to his last ounce. He gained! He gained! They both gained! They would collar them.

Roger stumbled and nearly went down over the last discarded bag.

“On, on, come on!” urged Wade, at his side.

He saw the white of Forrester's shirt right in front of him. He reached for it feebly. He saw Wade shoot past him. He clutched at that white thing again. Missed it! Again! He

— he had it, or — or Forrester must have stopped — or something, for the next instant he was on top of him and they were both down, *but he had him!* Some one was shouting: “Well collared, sir, well collared!” He heard another shout three yards ahead of him: “Well collared! Collared, indeed, sir!” and knew that Wade had brought down Neale. Then he felt the great bulk of Forrester slowly endeavoring to arise, but he sat tight on him — as much from weariness as anything else. Some one came and lifted him up.

“It’s all right; let him go,” urged a voice, but it sounded far away.

Wearily he relinquished his hold, and Forrester crawled from under him. He was torn and bleeding a little, and tried to wink at Roger from out of one muddy eye. The American grinned an answer, and then he realized that the great autumn paper-chase was over, and that they had *collared their men.*

CHAPTER XXX

“THE OXFORD, JUNIOR”

THERE was a big time at Henley that Saturday evening. Despite the hard work that was ahead of them, the school was in a hilarious mood, and here and there little celebrations were indulged in, and the sound of song or jest came from the different class-rooms.

There were two boys, however, who took no part in the jollifications. Both Bradbury and Lemming had left the school some hours earlier. They parted at the railway station only to meet again an hour later at the little Ashchurch junction. Ostentatiously Lemming had gone to visit his cousin, three or four days' leave being granted him for that purpose, while Bradbury, at his own solicitation, had been permitted to go on to Oxford on Saturday, instead of Monday. This part of the deception had been easy. Henley was a college where a great deal was left to the honor of the boys, and although this confidence was sometimes abused, still, as a rule, it worked well. This is the plan generally adopted in all the British

public schools, in contradistinction to the French system, where the boy is always under the eye of his tutors.

The two conspirators entered a compartment of the Oxford train when it steamed into the station, but it was not until they had the carriage all to themselves that they noticed each other openly. Then Lemming winked an eye expressively.

"Well, sport," he congratulated, "all well so far, eh?"

"So far," admitted Bradbury. "No one saw us together, I'm sure."

"Oh, you leave all this business to your uncle; he'll engineer it through all right. Now, then, listen, my boy. I shall leave you at Islip, and lie low at the "Ship" there; the less I'm seen the better, but you get into Oxford and show yourself all you like, — the more the better. Put up at the "Clubman," and spend the Sunday lolling about on the verandas. Get plenty of books around you, and make out you're grinding hard, twig? The Henley fellows are coming on the eight o'clock Monday, and you can leave word — just casually, you know — that you've gone out up the river for a spin with a 'varsity chum of yours, and that you'll go straight from the boathouse to the rooms, twig?"

“ Y — yes,” drawled Bradbury hesitatingly.

“ Well,” resumed Lemming, “ of course, you won’t go near the rooms, but instead, head straight for the “ Ship,” and take my place there while I’m taking yours. Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time, you know. The only part you’ll have to play is to meet me at three-thirty sharp at that little tavern at the back of the High Street. I’ll make it a point to get out thirty minutes before the other duffers finish; I can do it easily; this exam is a cinch. Then I’ll hand you over the question sheets and post you as to answers, so you can make a decent bluff when you talk the thing over with the fellows afterwards at the hotel.”

“ Y — yes,” again whispered Bradbury.

“ Well, that’s all there is to it. I’ll cut after seeing you, and stay at the “ Ship ” till next morning, when we’ll repeat the programme. Then if the thing hangs on into three days, as it often does, do the same thing again. Sure, that’s easy enough.”

“ I don’t see how you’re going to stop the fellows from spotting you,” complained Bradbury.

“ Don’t worry about me; I’ll attend to my part all right; I’ll hold my end of the game up. All you have to do is to attend to yours.”

The train sped on, and it was not until the

spires of Oxford loomed in sight that Lemming prepared to leave his companion.

“Here’s where I say ta, ta,” he announced, as the train slowed up. “It’s three miles into Oxford; now, don’t forget instructions.”

He swung off as the train slowed up at Islip, and disappeared from sight.

Bradbury heaved a sigh. He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and mopped his brow. The day was quite chilly, but the boy was in a fever of heat.

He spent that evening as Lemming had instructed him, wandering about the rooms and balconies of the hotel, books in hand, making a pretense of studying. A few other students had arrived from different parts of the country, but none from Henley. Bradbury held himself aloof and had nothing to say to any one.

Sunday the hotel commenced to fill up, and the old town was ablaze with the colors of a hundred schools from all parts of the British Isles. Early Monday morning Bradbury started for the station. There were crowds coming in, but not a single Henley fellow did the frightened eyes of the boy meet.

It was a drear morning, with threatening rain as he reached Islip, and made hurriedly for the “Ship.” Lemming had evidently left, for he saw no sign of him.

He seated himself at a table and called for a glass of beer, as he glanced over the morning paper. Try as he would, however, he could not keep his mind from that examination room at Oxford. He was worried and nervous. Every one whom he met he eyed with suspicion.

Presently a tall, flashily dressed man seated himself at the table, and instantly Bradbury became possessed with a dread that he was being watched. He pretended to be interested in his paper, but his eyes kept wandering to the man opposite, and every time he looked up the fellow's glance was on him. The perspiration broke out on his forehead, and he mopped his brow. Surely that man was taking more than a passing interest in him. He was certainly watching him. What if he were some detective? He was on the point of getting up and leaving the table, when suddenly his worst fears were confirmed.

He almost leaped from his chair, as the man opposite extended his hand and inquired in friendly fashion: "How do, Mister Bradbury? Take a drink on me."

"N — n — no, thanks," stammered the boy, struggling to his feet and gazing at his companion.

The man laughed. "All right. Suit yourself," he said; "no offense meant."

“I — I must be going,” hurriedly stammered Bradbury, glancing at his watch.

“No hurry, is there? You ain’t scared of me, are you, sonny?”

“No,” muttered the boy; “why should I be scared of you?”

“Just wondering how I knew your name, eh? Kind of startled you, eh? Don’t worry, sonny; that’s easy. Saw your name on your rag when you mopped yourself just now. It’s a good name — Bradbury — eh? Ah, ah, that’s a good ’un, ain’t it? I’m a regular Sherlock Holmes, ain’t I? My name’s Smith — that’s another good name. Every one round here knows me, don’t they, miss?” [This to the barmaid.]

Bradbury hastily paid for his drink and hurried away, his mind all upset by the remarks of Mr. Smith. He made his way around to the front entrance, and registering under an assumed name, procured a private room, where he spent the rest of the day miserably skulking until time to catch the three o’clock train, when he hurried to the station, scarcely daring to look to right or left.

He arrived at Oxford in time to keep his engagement with Lemming at the small tavern back on the High Street.

“Everything’s all right,” assured Lemming,

as they met. "I got there rather late, and managed to get shoved in with a lot of heathen-talking Scots. The exam was easy as smoking a cig, and I'll bet I ran into the ninety-five division. By Jinks, old sport, the Henley people will be surprised to see how smart you are. You'll have the laugh on them all right. Here are the questions and some of the answers; look 'em over. Now get out and meet the chaps. You were in room number nineteen, twig?"

Bradbury managed to mingle with the throng that was streaming from the ivy-clad towers of Christ Church College, and it was not long before some Henley students espied him.

"Hello, there, Brad!" cried Roger, thumping him in the ribs. "I haven't seen you since last Saturday."

The boys at once dived into the absorbing subject of the examination and how they had come out.

"I made out much better than I expected to," Bradbury told them, in reply to their eager questions. "In fact," he continued, "I was stumped only once."

"Which was it?" demanded the lads.

"In geog, paper three, question nine: 'Where is Quito?'"

"Didn't you know?" demanded Roger.

“I was on to that all right. It’s the capital of Ecuador, you old duffer. Did you get it, Dob?”

“Yes, I collared that all right, but three others bowled me. One in history — something about William Penn —”

“Oh, oh,” roared Roger, stopping and punching his chum. “Might have known a Britisher wouldn’t be able to answer anything correctly about U. S. Why, any third grade boy in America could have taken that one all right.”

“I never heard much about him,” grumbled Dobson. “Did you take it all right, Brad?”

“Bet your life,” boasted Bradbury, ransacking his brains to think if Lemming had told him anything about William Penn.

“What did you put?” demanded the disgruntled Dobson.

“I remember,” explained Bradbury, getting confused as the two Henleyites waited for him. “He issued the proclamation against slavery and —”

“Pwhew!” whistled Roger, “you went up in the air that time, Brad. Why, William Penn was one of the early birds; you’ve got him mixed with Lincoln.”

“Well,” soberly related Dobson, “I figured that Penn ought to have something to do with Pennsylvania, so I said that William

Penn was an American millionaire who owned most of the coal mines in that state."

"Hurrah!" shouted Roger. "Better and better. It takes an Englishman to tell us anything about America."

"Well, confound it all," complained Dobson, "they teach a fellow so little about it; we had just one week for history and geography of the States. A fellow can't learn all about it in that time, you know."

"Scarcely," agreed Roger.

So the conversation continued on the absorbing subject until the hotel was reached, where, pleading fatigue, Bradbury went to his room.

The second day, like the first, he succeeded in keeping out of the way of his comrades, when, after a hasty conference with Lemming, he again mingled with them as they came out of college. The third day was only a three-hour session, and the rest of the day was spent in seeing the sights of the historic old place, after which an early return was made to Hamenchelt and Henley.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RESULTS

HARD work again followed the Oxford examination, hard work in which the whole school participated, for at Christmas, now looming into view, came the general shake-up, and what shrimp did not hope to grow into a minnow, or what salmon did not believe he would discover himself a whale?

The candidates who had taken the Oxford, Junior lived in a perpetual state of expectancy, for any morning's mail might bring them fame or disappointment.

It came at last. The boys felt it when they saw old Doctor Proctor stalk into chapel that Friday morning with an important-looking official envelope in his hand. They could barely contain themselves while prayers were being recited, and then at last came the shock.

"Ahem — ahem," coughed the doctor, as was his manner before speech, "ahem — I have in my hand the pass list of the Oxford, Junior examination held last October fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth."

A suppressed flutter of excitement ran around the chapel.

“Henley,” continued the doctor, “has been singularly successful this year; not a single failure of any of her candidates having to be recorded, — ahem.”

Had it been “form” there would have been a wild outburst of cheering at this point, but the place forbade it.

“The list,” resumed the doctor, “and the averages obtained by our boys you will find posted in the corridor as you leave this chapel, and I can only say that I heartily congratulate you, as well as your form tutors, on your success. You are dismissed.”

There was a rush as soon as the chapel doors were passed for the notice boards, and the names and figures were shouted back by the foremost lads.

“Murray’s win in a canter,” shouted an enthusiastic Murray boy.

“Murray’s have first three men in!” yelled another.

“Jackson first, Bradbury second, Dobson third, hip — hip — hip — Murray’s win!”

“Oh, Cossock just sneaks in, last but two! Bravo, Sock!”

“Steady old plugger!”

“’Rah for Sock!”

The news and congratulations, cries and yells were sounding all through the halls, while the statisticians went to work to discover just how the four rival houses stood.

It was Murray's easily first, with Fairbanks' and Dole's almost tied for second place, and Grafton's nowhere, with only four men in, and those low down.

Every one was congratulating the successful boys, and one of the first to shake Bradbury's hand was Roger.

"Well done, old boy!" he cried. "You did bully. I'll swear I never thought it was in you, and that's straight. You surprised us all. Shake again."

There was a hearty handshake, and then Dobson and Cossock came pushing their way up, and it was all done over again.

"Say, Sock, old chap," blurted out Dobson, "I never got such a shock in my life as when they shouted out your name. I didn't think you had a ghost of a chance."

"Thanks, you candid old beggar," replied Cossock, "I'll admit I was rather staggered myself."

"You did it by solid, steady plugging, Sock, and you deserve it more than any other fellow who passed," declared Roger.

Cossock, rather embarrassed by this over-

flow of praise, turned the subject by inquiring:

“Ah, but how about Brad, here; all the chaps said he wouldn't get through, and look, the beggar has run into second place on the school list! Shake, Brad, you old 'possum; I believe you were lying low all the time just to give us a grand surprise. Own up now.”

Bradbury, too, looked embarrassed. He muttered something about: “Not at all,” and then edged away, while other fellows took his place, and congratulations were recommenced.

It was difficult for the boys to buckle down to hard work, and yet it had to be done; so with a sigh and an effort, Henley turned again to its books and papers. But that night in the privacy of their dens the seniors again went over the battle of the Oxford, Junior.

“The real surprise to me,” bluntly admitted Dobson once more, “was that chap Brad; I can't see how he managed to pull in the way he did, can you, Yank?”

“He rather astonished me,” acknowledged Roger, “but I suppose he must have crammed a lot the last few days. You know he had Lemming to coach him, and that fellow's a smart one all right; he went through under wraps last term. I heard Mr. Murray tell Mr. Kilgordon one day last week that there wasn't a

smarter chap at Henley than Lemming, only he was no worker."

"Well, by Jinks, I call him a rattling fine coach to keep Brad on his feet and push him in second in the whole school; and, by thunder, old chap, fancy your crowding into first place; things have certainly come Murray's way this time."

"Rather. With a chap named Dobson running third, too," added Roger.

"Swear, you could have knocked me down with a feather when they yelled that out," honestly admitted Dobson.

There was an interruption as young Berry and Tucker burst into the room and insisted on preparing some kind of a spread in honor of the occasion.

A great spread they partook of, too. There was tea, of course, for what British function would be complete without that beverage? There were hot buttered pikelets and deviled herrings, strawberry jam, celery and cake, potted tongue and hard-boiled eggs all served together at table in delightful confusion.

Tucker and Berry took the courses valiantly without a murmur, missing nothing, for the banquet that the small British schoolboy's stomach will not take care of does not exist.

It came to a conclusion at last, though, as

even the best of things must, and nothing remained but the remnants.

Then, with a sigh, the two fags arose and proceeded to wash up dishes.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

“WELL,” demanded Lemming, as he and Bradbury talked of the results. “I put you next to it, eh?”

Bradbury nodded.

“Too close,” he complained. “Every fellow is wondering how in the dickens I made such a showing, and Murray only this morning said he didn’t see how I managed to forget so much since the examination. He asked some fool question or other about James the First, and I tripped up on it.”

“Don’t worry about Murray or any one else. The Oxford was all you wanted to pass. Now you’ve done it, and all Henley can’t undo it. Say, can you let me have that other fifty quid soon?”

“Just as soon as the governor ponies up. I wrote him I was stumped, and I’m sure he’ll come down with the goods within a week.”

“All right; I suppose I can hang off for that time.”

The money arrived on time, and Lemming was paid off, but the superabundance of cash made him reckless, and he plunged, on the advice of Mr. Dutton, on a "sure thing" in the Liverpool Handicap. The "sure thing" like so many other certainties, failed to materialize, and Lemming found himself ten days afterwards as poor as he was before the arrival of Bradbury's cash. Such is usually the fate of ill-gotten wealth.

Mr. Dutton, however, gallantly came to the rescue. He was considerate enough to show Lemming how, not only could he make good his loss, but also come out a long way ahead, if he would only place fifty on "True Blue II" for the Kempton Park sweeps. This absolutely, without doubt, was a sure thing, he affirmed. He had, himself, been badly bitten over that Liverpool, but this time his information was without doubt correct.

Bradbury found Lemming waiting for him that evening in his study.

"Hello, sport," he greeted, "where have you been? I've been waiting for you for an hour or more."

Somehow since that examination Lemming had assumed a sort of domineering air, and whereas Bradbury had been endeavoring as much as possible to withdraw from the ill-

formed friendship, Lemming seemed determined to keep it up.

"I've been over with Jackson in the gym," replied Bradbury.

"Pshaw, what do you want to run with that straitlaced chap for?" demanded Lemming.

"Jackson's not straitlaced particularly, that I know of."

"Yes, he is; but never mind; what I dropped in to see you about was to ask how you stood for cash; got any?"

"Precious little; that last fifty I paid you about cleaned me out."

"Well, say, I want to get some more from somewhere."

"Why, what've you done with all that?"

"All that! Great Scott, you speak as if it was a fortune. I dropped the whole bunch over that plug 'True Blue' at Kempton."

"Well, you're a fool to bet, that's all I have to say, and I can't lend you any; I'm almost broke myself; haven't got a fiver to my name."

"Oh, come off, old man; you can afford to let me have some; you can tap your governor again. What's the use of having a rich dad if you can't help your friends now and again? Let me have a fiver; there's a good chap."

"I can't, Lemming; that would leave me stone broke."

“ Well, then, let me have four quid. I’ll let you have it back soon, and you know, Brad, I did that Oxford business awfully cheap for you; it won’t hurt you to help me out now.”

Bradbury’s face flushed. He hesitated a moment, then his hand went down into his trousers pocket, and he produced a handful of coins. He counted the money out on the table, Lemming following the operation with greedy eyes.

“ Three pounds, nineteen and six,” announced Bradbury, glancing up. “ Here’s three quid, Lemming, and that will leave me with less than a sov. to my name.”

Lemming pocketed the gold coins fliply, muttering: “ All serene, sport; I wouldn’t bone you, but I need the money so thundering badly, and if a chap can’t get it from his chum, who *can* he get it from, eh? ”

Bradbury winced. That claim of friendship jarred him now. Since the excitement of the examination had passed, he had had leisure to realize what his action had really been, and was by this time thoroughly disgusted with himself. It was his firm intention to break with Lemming, but that parasite apparently was determined he should not. The son of a not too wealthy father, his natural extravagance and unhealthy appetite for dissipation had made it necessary for him through all his

Henley days to prey upon some companion better supplied with cash than himself; and in his roommate, Bradbury, he had found just such a one as he wished. It was therefore not his intention to lose him now.

Poor Bradbury was in reality a very decent fellow, but lacking in that stiffening quality that makes the difference between strong and weak men and boys. He had wished so much to pass the Oxford examination, realized that he could not, and then Lemming's offer had seemed an easy way out of the difficulty, — and he had succumbed. Now a small voice, but a most persistent one, was continually nagging him. "You're a pretty fellow," the silent voice would taunt, as the lad flung himself on his cot at night. "Why, you're nothing but a fraud; you're sailing under false colors; you're a cheat." And in his slumbers the accuser still followed him tantalizing him with maddening dreams, in which he thought he had really taken the test, had really passed, and then in fancy he would walk to his class-room, with squared shoulders and fearless eyes and honest heart, and meet there his tutor's gaze without shame. Then he would awake to find the bright sunshine streaming in upon him, and hear the shouts and noise from his happy schoolmates below in the playing field,

and all the hideous deception would come back to him with an overpowering rush, and burying his face in his pillow, he would sob with the shame and bitterness of it all. Too late he began to know the truth of the lines:

“ Remorse — she ne'er forsakes us —
A bloodhound staunch — she tracks our rapid step.”

But was it too late?

Under the continual strain and the attacks of his own accusing conscience, his health began to give way, and he commenced to look haggard and woebegone. He forsook nearly all outdoor exercise, and spent most of his spare time mooning about brooding over his deceit. In one thing, however, he showed some strength. He broke with Lemming. He could stand the boy's evil, cunning face no longer, and after considerable difficulty, succeeded in finding another study, much to Lemming's chagrin.

Roger and Dobson could not help but notice poor Bradbury's haggard appearance.

“ You're grinding too hard, old man, you need a rest; it's lucky the holidays are coming; they'll put you all right,” Roger cheered him.

“ I'd forgive you, Brad, old man, if you hadn't nosed me out of second place,” teased Dobson, as he departed. “ You know, I'm

still sweating; I haven't got into the sixth yet," he called back, as the door banged after him.

"He's a happy beggar," sighed Bradbury, glancing after him.

"No reason why you shouldn't be, too," commented Roger. "I'm sure you've done well enough this half, and I guess you're safe for the sixth, old man. Oh, we'll all be whales next term."

"I'll bet I won't be," groaned Bradbury. "I'll fall down in the test; see if I don't."

"Not likely — not with the showing you made at Oxford."

"Oh, thunder!" exploded Bradbury, in a burst of confidence. "You fellows are all right; you're straight; you won on your merits, but I — I — I —"

He stopped, frightened at what he had said — afraid to go on.

Roger got up from his chair. He leaned over and gave the boy a friendly thump.

"Old man," he comforted, "you're not quite yourself; you're all upset. You've been working too hard, I tell you; take a rest for a few days."

"Oh, it's not that! It's not that!" cried Bradbury hoarsely. "You don't know. I can't — I can't tell you —"

“ Yes, you can if you wish to,” Roger said. “ I don’t want you to tell me anything you don’t want to, but if there’s anything I can help you in, you know I’d do it, Brad. You’re not my chum like Dob, but we’ve always been in the same crowd together since we were sprats and we’ve been in lots of scrapes together. If there’s anything in which I can help you, I will, and so will Dob.”

These comrade-like words broke down Bradbury’s last reserve, and there and then he confessed in the sympathetic ear of the American the whole wretched business.

When he had finished, Roger said gravely: “ It’s a bad affair, Brad.”

“ It’s awful,” groaned Bradbury. “ It’s spoiled my prospects here and broke me all up. I have no faith in myself. If you had told me six months ago, Jackson, that I should have done such a thing, I wouldn’t have believed it possible. I must have been out of my head. I wish — oh, I wish I could undo it.”

“ You can’t do that, old man,” said Roger seriously, “ but it’s no use crying over spilt milk. You’ve made the mistake; now you must make all the amends you can.”

“ I can’t do a thing,” moaned Bradbury. “ I must get away from Henley; I can’t stand it here.”

“Oh, no,” corrected Roger, “you mustn’t do that. It’s no use running away; you must stand up to it. I—I—” and then, for the first time Roger hesitated. He was wishing his father had been there to advise him then. “I think, old man,” he resumed, “that the best thing you can do is to take this affair to Mr. Murray. He’s a stunner all right; I’ve found that out since I’ve been at Henley.”

“Oh, no, no!” cried Bradbury fearfully. “I dare not do that. I shall go away. I have no more right at Henley. I’m a cad.”

Then very seriously and earnestly Roger talked to the nearly distracted boy, and at the end of half an hour’s argument he had persuaded Bradbury that the best course would be to present the matter to their house master, Mr. Murray.

CHAPTER XXXIII

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

MR. MURRAY was in his study. They saw that from the light that streamed from his window, as they walked the quadrangle, Bradbury screwing up his courage to face the music.

“Now, come along, old man,” urged the American. “When you’re going to take a header into cold water, the best way is to get right in.”

“You go ahead; I’ll follow you in a minute,” still hesitated Bradbury.

“Not a bit of it; you come with me,” insisted Roger, and together the two lads ascended the stairs and rapped at the study door.

“Come in,” invited the genial master’s voice, and the lads entered.

“Good evening — why, what’s the matter, Bradbury; you look unwell.”

“Bradbury’s in some trouble, sir, and he wants to tell you about it,” explained Roger. “Go ahead, Brad.”

The nearly distracted lad sank unbidden into a chair and blurted out: "I've been an awful cad, sir!"

"Oh, I trust not," said the master. "You have done so brilliantly this term, Bradbury; it would be a thousand pities to mar your work by an error."

"It's worse than an error, sir — I've been a cad — a thief — a —"

"Now, stop, stop," commanded Mr. Murray. "You are excited; you are not quite yourself to-night, Bradbury; I see that. Compose yourself, and tell me quietly."

Then the boy, in broken sentences, told the story of his temptation and fall.

The Rev. Milton Murray sat with clasped hands, as the lad told of his wrong-doing, and sat in that same position several minutes after he had concluded. Then he asked quietly:

"Bradbury, are you sure you have repented of your sin? That is really the first thing to do. I never preach to my boys, as you are aware, but I believe that God requires us all to repent when we have committed a fault before he will help us. I want to start at the right place, my boy. I want to tackle this bad business in a right spirit."

Mr. Murray was speaking more like a boy to

his friend than a master to his pupil. His whole manner breathed comradeship.

The tears sprang to Bradbury's eyes.

"God knows I have repented," he muttered. "I would do anything — anything in the world, sir, to undo this business. It isn't — it isn't so much that I feel afraid of the results, but that I am — am such a cad," he stumbled on lamely.

"That's right," cried the tutor, as he extended his hand and grasped Bradbury's. "Now we can get at it in the right spirit. Sit down, Jackson, and we will talk this affair over as between three friends."

"But how — what can I do, sir?" mumbled Bradbury.

"Do! Why, start all over again. That's the only thing."

"I'm afraid I don't understand, sir."

"You must take this examination over again."

"What!" cried Bradbury, almost leaping from his chair.

"That is the only thing for you to do. You can pass if you study hard for a month, and there is another test before Christmas. You must cut loose from this fellow, Lemming, Bradbury."

"I have already, sir," cried the boy, leaping

to his feet, a new light and ambition shining in his eyes. "I will take that exam again, sir, and I *will* pass. Here's my hand on it," and ignoring all precedent, he shook hands with the Henley House master unbidden, then, turning about, did the same to Roger.

That night conference lasted over an hour, while Mr. Murray carefully went over point after point that was likely to present any difficulty.

"I must, of course," he said, "inform the doctor."

Bradbury moistened his lips.

"But I think," added the master, "that I can promise he will fall in with my views on this subject. Now go, boys. You must come here every evening at eight, Bradbury, and I will give you an hour's time, coaching you along especially."

Long after the lads had gone the Rev. Milton Murray sat pondering, and long after he had retired he still lay awake thinking.

"I am doing right. I am doing right. I am sure of it," he kept repeating to himself as he dozed off.

Next morning before school prayers he visited Doctor Proctor, and the two remained in conference for over half an hour. When he came away his face was wreathed in smiles, and the

old doctor was left sitting in his study, tugging in deep thought at his clean-shaven chin, as he muttered to himself the same words used by his divisional master the previous night: "I am doing right. I am doing right. I feel sure of it."

Roger mentioned not one word of the confession to his chum Dobson. No one in that college of over a thousand scholars knew anything about the unfortunate affair except the doctor, Mr. Murray, Roger, and the two guilty boys.

Bradbury at once put his shoulder to the wheel, going every evening to Mr. Murray's study, and there the old Cambridge B. A. exerted himself to tutor as he never had before. He was determined that Bradbury should pass that next examination. He had studied the singular case from every standpoint, moral as well as legal.

"You see, Bradbury," he instructed one night, when going over the case again, "I cannot defend your behavior from the moral side at all, but in point of law it is this boy, Lemming, who has committed the crime, — for a crime it is. You simply entered for the examination, and then failed to present yourself, as did some dozen other candidates, but Lemming was guilty of impersonating you at Oxford. He

presented himself there and answered to your name. To impersonate another is a crime, punishable in law by a fine or imprisonment, or both. Recollect, I am not condoning your offense in the slightest way, but simply stating Lemming's position in the matter. Now, what you must do is to pass. *You must pass!* You understand. I know you have it in you, and I am going to give up sufficient of my time to insure the result. Your honor — the honor of the old school demands that."

CHAPTER XXXIV

LEMMING SNARLS BACK

BRADBURY had now mated it up with Cossock, in whose room he applied himself with an energy that brooked no opposition to the task of preparing for the coming examination. Cossock, slow and plodding as ever, could not but marvel at the industry with which his new roommate applied himself.

“If ever a fellow deserved to be a whale, you do, Brad,” he growled, as he watched the ever-working Bradbury. Little did he know the stakes for which the lad was working.

The days sped by with lightning-like rapidity, and on November 19th Bradbury again found himself in the historic old city of Oxford. This time there was no need to skulk along and fear that every corner might hide a familiar face or form. He walked like a man, with erect carriage and determined face into the gloomy class-room of Christ Church college, and when ten days later Mr. Murray called him into his study and showed him his name on the November Oxford pass list, with the figures “97.11”

opposite it, the lad, with happy heart and brimming eyes, could only shake his tutor's hand and mumble:

"Thank you, sir — it's all — all through you."

"No," replied Mr. Murray, "there is some one else to whom you owe something, and that is Jackson. He saw the right thing, and did it in a straightforward manner. I consider his conduct in this affair has been most praiseworthy and correct."

"I know. He's a trump, sir," agreed Bradbury.

It seemed now that all would go well with Bradbury, but he soon discovered he had not yet finished with Lemming. That wastrel was leaving Henley at the end of the term, and had fast been going from bad to worse.

He appeared at Bradbury's den one afternoon just as the latter was leaving in company with Roger. He was in a nasty humor, and soon disclosed the fact that he had come for the express purpose of annoying his former roommate.

"Hold hard there, Bradbury," he called out, "I want a word or so with you. You needn't wait, Jackson."

"Thanks," dryly responded the American. "I rather fancy this is Bradbury's den, not yours. Shall I stay, or go, Brad?"

“Stay,” said Bradbury. “Sit down, Yank.”

“Oh, well,” snarled Lemming, “it doesn’t matter a hang. Very likely you know all about it, anyway. He’s so jolly thick with you, I shouldn’t be surprised. But come to think about it, I guess he would scarcely tell you, so suppose I do. Shall I, Bradbury?”

“Just as you please,” replied Bradbury.

“Oh, you’re a beaut, aren’t you. Say, Jackson, do you know what this nice friend of yours did awhile back?”

“Lemming,” commanded Roger, coolly, “If you have anything to say, say it, and get out. Bradbury and I want to go for a spin.”

“Oh, you’re a fine couple — both of you!” shouted Lemming, working himself into a fury.

“You were thundering glad to use me, Bradbury, when I was of use to you, and now you think you can cut me. Not by a long shot, my beauty. I’ll show you a thing or so yet. I’ll fix you, see if I don’t.”

Bradbury shot an inquiring glance at Roger, who pointed towards the door.

“Get out, Lemming,” he ordered, “or I’ll throw you.”

“Oh, will you?” shouted Lemming, losing all control of himself. “If you try any of that high-handed business with me, you’ll discover

you've got your dear friend, here, into a pot of trouble, so look out, you confounded Yankee!"

"You'll have to explain yourself," replied Roger, taking no notice of the epithet. "Bradbury has nothing to fear from you. He —"

"Oh, hasn't he? That's all you know about it. He's a fraud, that's what he is; and directly you try any tricks with me, I'll put him where he belongs."

"You had better go before you make a greater ass of yourself than you have already. Your threats convey nothing to me."

"That's because you're not wise to it, but I'll soon make you. I thought Bradbury might have told you now you're so thick, but as he hasn't, I will. Bradbury never passed the Oxford, so there!"

"I say he did."

"And I tell you he didn't, you fool."

"Well, it's here a matter of my word against yours, then; but the records will tell."

"Oh, look here, he never went near the rooms. I passed for him, so there you have it. Now, what have you to say?"

"Simply this: that if, as you say, you impersonated Bradbury at Oxford, you laid yourself open to a charge of a rather serious crime. To impersonate another at a national examination is a crime against the law."

For a moment Lemming was plainly staggered, but he quickly recovered himself.

“What do I care for that?” he retorted. “You dare not do anything. I can peach on you, but you can’t do it to me, or Bradbury comes down with me, so there, my smart Yankee friend.”

“Now look here, Lemming,” cautioned Roger, suddenly becoming very much in earnest, “you’ve been very free with your advice to ‘make me wise’ and all that sort of tommyrot; suppose I do a little enlightening myself. Listen, you cad! It is true you impersonated Brad, here, in the examination held at Oxford in September last, and it is true he permitted you to — a serious error, for which he has since been sorry, and — ”

“Rot!” interrupted Lemming savagely.

“But,” resumed Roger, not heeding the outburst, “it is also true that Bradbury took another examination this November, and, moreover, passed with a slightly higher average than you did for him. His examination in November has nothing to do — nothing whatever — with that one in which a fellow named Lemming impersonated him, and the sooner that fellow named Lemming grasps that fact, the better it will be for him. That’s all I have to say to you, you cad. Now, get out! I’ll give you twenty seconds!”

“ Oh, you think you’re smart, don’t you? ” snarled Lemming, “ but — ”

“ Five seconds gone, ” warned Roger, holding his watch in his hand.

“ But I’ll get even with you both, see if I don’t, ” yelled Lemming.

“ Only ten seconds longer, ” mildly observed Roger.

Lemming glanced hastily at the two boys. Roger had placed his watch on the table, and was deliberately removing his coat.

“ Five seconds more, ” he drawled. “ One, two, three, four — coming! ”

But Lemming had gone.

“ I rather think we’ve seen the last of him, Brad, old man, ” prophesied Roger.

And they had.

CHAPTER XXXV

HENLEY'S GIFT

THE Christmas break-up was, as usual, a red-letter day for Henley.

A larger crowd than ever of the boys' people was down, and the old town was gay with bunting and other signs of welcome. The borough motto, "Salubritas et Eruditio," was everywhere in evidence, while the gay costumes of the ladies, the black Eton jackets and broad, spotless collars of the boys and the somber gowns of the tutors were mingled in picturesque confusion all about the buildings and grounds of the great college.

Roger's father was still in Upper India, and would not return until some time in the next year, but Dobson's father, the genial old Sir Henry, accompanied by his son, Captain Archibald, had "shown up," as Dobson put it; and, of course, it was a foregone conclusion that Roger would spend the Christmas at Hatherly Court, where Sir Henry kept the festive season in true old English manner.

Mrs. Maxwell and her daughters were there,

and so were Mrs. Berry, and Tucker's people, and the stately old judge, Cossock's father, and Bradbury's millionaire "governor," fresh from his commercial conquests in the East.

"My boy," cried Sir Henry, as he greeted Roger, "how you are shooting up. Why, why, you must be nearly as tall as your father. Tommy, he's four inches taller than you."

"Ah, but not so broad," laughed Dobson. "We're going to put a couple of ten-pound dumbbells on his head if he doesn't stop growing."

"Well, Henley appears to agree with you both, for I never saw either of you looking fitter," mused the general.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Sir Henry," said Doctor Proctor, who was mingling with every one everywhere that day. "We are to be congratulated, I'm sure; we are very fortunate; the health of the boys was never better than during the last term. We shall see you in 'The Big' at three, I suppose; you must not miss our gold medalist's speech. Dauncy will soon be 'an old boy' of whom Henley will be proud, you mark my prophecy, Sir Henry. Ah, good morning, judge." This to Cossock's dignified father. "So glad your son has been able to pass his test into the sixth form. He is slow — very slow, but his form master informs

me that he possesses that most desirable of traits which is perhaps best expressed by the word 'Sticktoitiveness.' He was speaking to me of him only the other day, and this is what he said: 'I have seen him beaten a dozen times over the same problem, but I have yet to see him finally routed.' I like that report, Judge, I like it very much; it rings true to me."

The judge beamed over with pleasure.

"I like it, too, sir," he said. "Andrew would not be a Cossock if he were not slow; we are all built on those lines, I believe."

Doctor Proctor passed on through the groups of parents and friends with a bow and courteous word everywhere.

Then came a grand rush of small boys, shrimps, minnows and sprats, eager with the tidings that the spread was open, and determined to lose no time in getting to the banquet.

Young Berry and Tucker were among them, and shouted boisterous greetings to Dobson and Roger and their people, urging them to "come on and get busy."

And then came a stalwart, rolling figure that breathed of the strong Channel winds and choppy seas, the boys' old friend, Captain Josiah Dobbs. He hailed his favorites from afar:

"What ho, me mates! In port again. Pay

off day and all buntin' flyin'. How be ye, young gents? How be ye? And ye, too, Mister General; 'tis a mighty fine son as yer have. Good luck to yer, sir, good luck."

"I was just wondering if you would show up," said Roger.

"Show up," echoed the old salt. "Bet your life I'd show up if me brig was within a hundred miles o' ye. When's the say goin' ter be?"

"'The say,'" puzzled Dobson.

"Yes, ain't there goin' ter be a grand say by one o' the young gents? I heard as there was."

"Oh, he means Dauncy's speech," explained Roger.

"That's it — *essay*, I thinks they named it; the signals weren't easy read."

"Why, that's at three. Are you interested, captain?"

"I be always interested in what folks has ter say if they talks sensible-like."

"You should, captain, find this subject an especially interesting one," observed the general.

"Eh?" questioned the old salt, glancing up.

The party moved away towards the junior classroom, where the big "spread" was being served. Sir Henry and the captain were old acquaintances with many of the boys, and so

was Cossock's father, and here, over the hospitable board of the college, they were met as comrades by the youngsters, who did the honors of the day.

"Now, governor," hinted Dobson, "you must get into form. No one is supposed to leave the Junior until he has eaten half a crown's worth of pastry."

"I know," sighed Sir Henry, "but really to-day — to-day — you know, Tommy, I scarcely feel up to that form. I shall appeal to the captain, here, to come to my assistance."

But Captain Dobbs shook his head.

"I'm all right on hardtack," he asserted, "but when it comes to this 'ere soft, flaky contraption as all sort'er goes to mush 'twix yer teeth, why I 'lows as I leaves that ter the boys. Ain't it wonderful," he appealed to Sir Henry, "how much er this 'ere stuff boys can swaller?"

"Most wonderful," admitted the general; "but listen, there goes the bugle, Tommy!"

"That's right. It's all for the Big!" shouted Dobson.

There was a general exodus of visitors and lads, and soon they were seated in long rows waiting for the doctor's gavel to fall.

Then followed the long list of awards, and then the past successes in the world of "The

Old Boys," and Henley cheered and cheered, until it appeared there could not be another cheer left in the lungs of her lads. But there was for when the old doctor arose and announced:

"Augustus Dauncy, our gold medalist, will now claim his prerogative, and address this assembly," the shouts that went up attested to the fact.

It was fully three minutes before Dauncy could be heard, and when his voice was finally distinguishable it was evident that he had got some distance along in his speech. He was saying:

"You know, sir, it is in the opinion of the boys, most appropriate, and a most fitting climax to this year's work, in which so many of them have been prepared for the naval training ship, that the old college should make this gift. As they are embarking on life's ocean, so will this lifeboat be ready, — aye ready at any moment to fight its way out into the storm on its work of mercy and rescue. And it will fill all Henleyites with pride to know that the historic name of the old school is borne by a life saver. 'The Henley Lifeboat!' Think of it, sir! That name itself is an inspiration enough to make any crew fight their way out in the teeth of the fiercest gale that ever blew;

and we know, sir, that our lifeboat crews need little urging when help is asked of them."

The speech was interrupted by vehement applause and approving cries.

"The boys have, therefore, sir, subscribed this sum of money, and wish you to present it to the Royal Humane Society, in the hope that it may be sufficient to build and equip a lifeboat that may be stationed at some port of the upper Channel where such a boat is needed."

"By Gum, sir, there ain't a spot where 'tis more needed than at Minehead!" roared a stentorian voice, and there stood old Captain Dobbs, with both hands forming a funnel, and shouting at the top of his voice.

Loud as were his tones, they were drowned next moment by the united shouts of a thousand boys.

"Minehead! Minehead! The Henley Lifeboat for Minehead! Hip, hip, for Captain Dobbs! Hip for the old boy!"

"The old boy," his face crimson, and the happy tears starting from his eyes, sat down in confusion, surprised, himself, by his interruption.

When the confusion had somewhat subsided, Dauncy concluded his speech by a formal presentation of the purse containing the money raised by the boys.

Doctor Proctor accepted it in trust, and promised to make known the wishes of the college when he turned over the purse to the proper authorities.

So now the name of Henley is often in the thick of the battle when the gallant coast-guardsmen and fishermen of Minehead struggle out to succor some souls from the jaws of death, just as the Henley boys are in the thick of the battle of life in all parts of the world. But the accounts of these battles form another story, so here we must leave our Henley boys at this Christmas time, all happy and jolly, all hastening for the trains that speed them homewards to spend the Yuletide with their people at home.

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