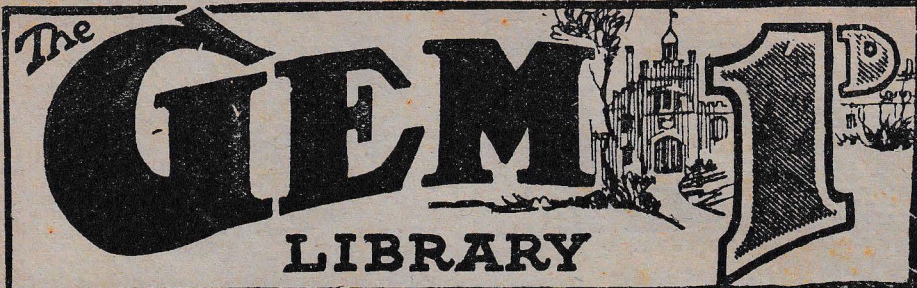


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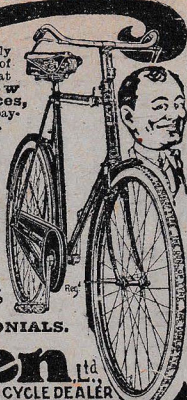
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Figgins grasped his fat chum by the collar, whirled him away from the table, and jammed him against the wall of the study. "Now tell us all about it, before you take another mouthful, you porpoise!" he cried.
(See Chapter 12.)

CHAPTER 1.

The Mystery of Koumi Rao.

"OFF his rocker!"
"Right off his giddy onion, by Jove!"
"Mad as a hatter!"

The Terrible Three looked round in surprise. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell had just sauntered out of the School House, when these remarks, accompanied by subdued chuckles, fell upon their ears.
"Hallo! What's on?" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

There was evidently something "on." At the corner of the School House a group of juniors were collected. They were peering round the corner, craning their heads over one another's shoulders, evidently to watch something that was going on beyond. The Terrible Three, considerably puzzled, approached the group.

"What's the little game?" asked Tom Merry.

"Shush!" said one of the watching group, who happened to be Blake of the Fourth, looking round with a grin.

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"What is there to 'Shush' about, fathead? What's going on?"

"Shush! Take a peep. Keep under cover, or you'll alarm him," said Blake mysteriously.

"There he goes again!" chuckled Digby. "My hat! Fairly off his rocker, and no mistake!"

The three Shell fellows, completely mystified, joined the group at the corner of the building, and peered round the corner.

Then they ejaculated together:

"My hat!"

It was a curious sight that met their gaze. In the gathering dusk a junior was pacing to and fro under the old elms, a lithe, graceful junior, with a handsome, dusky face and dark eyes. It was Koumi Rao, the Indian junior, who belonged to the Fourth Form and the New House at St. Jim's.

Koumi Rao's aspect was extraordinary.

As a rule, the Indian junior was quiet, self-possessed, impassive. Now he was labouring under the greatest excitement. Quite oblivious of the group of amused juniors who were watching him round the corner, he was striding to and fro under the elms with rapid, irregular steps, gesticulating wildly. His dusky hands swept the air with strange, wild gestures, and he muttered to himself incessantly.

Some of his words reached the ears of the St. Jim's fellows, but they did not comprehend them, for Koumi Rao was muttering in his own language—the Nagari dialect of Bundelapore—a language which his school-fellows likened to the cracking of nuts. Nobody in St. Jim's, with the exception of Koumi Rao himself, understood a word of that weird language. Without a glance to right or left, the Indian junior strode to and fro, gesticulating and muttering.

"My only aunt!" murmured Monty Lowther. "What's biting him? Looks as if he's quite off his chump."

"What's he talking about, anybody know?" asked Levison of the Fourth.

"Give it up!"

"That's a giddy mystery," grinned Lowther.

"I—I say, let's get off," said Tom Merry uneasily. "He won't want to be watched by a giddy crowd, whatever's the matter with him."

"Oh, rot! This is too good to be missed!" said Levison. "Like a blessed performing monkey."

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, deah boys?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth joined the group at the corner of the building.

"Look!" chuckled Levison.

Arthur Augustus put his head round the corner, and brought his famous eyeglass to bear upon the Indian junior, and gave quite a jump.

"Bai Jove! He must be wight off his wockah! He's wathah a queeah chap. Any of you boundahs been waggin' him?"

"No fear! I spotted him a quarter of an hour ago," said Levison. "He's been at it ever since. Like a giddy monkey on hot bricks. He don't know we're here, and he can't hear us. Mad as a hatter!"

"Bai Jove! Pewwaps I had bettah speak to him," said D'Arcy. "He seems to be awfully excited about somethin'. If some wottah has been waggin' him—"

"Now, then, you young rascals, what are you up to?"

It was the sharp, unpleasant voice of Knox of the Sixth, the most unpopular prefect in the School House. The grinning and chuckling crowd gathered at the corner of the School House had caught Knox's eye, and he bore down on them at once. The bully of the Sixth never could "keep off the grass."

"Weally Knox," began Arthur Augustus, "I object to bein' called a young wascal—"

"What are you up to?" said the prefect suspiciously.

"Snuff!" said Monty Lowther, in his blandest tone.

Knox scowled and strode forward, and looked round the corner to satisfy himself as to what was going on. He jumped as he caught sight of the pacing, gesticulating Indian junior.

"What the thunder—" ejaculated Knox.

Koumi Rao did not look round. His thoughts, whatever they were, engrossed him, and made him deaf and blind to his surroundings. Knox stared at him blankly

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for a moment or two, and then strode towards him, and seized him by the shoulder, and shook him roughly.

Koumi Rao started and seemed to awaken as from a dream. His black eyes glittered at the prefect.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Knox. "Are you dotty?"

The Indian junior did not reply. He seemed to be trying to collect his thoughts. The Sixth-Former shook him again.

"Answer me, you young fool!"

"Take your hand from my shoulder, you dog!" said Koumi Rao, in a low, passionate voice, his white teeth gleaming between his dusky lips.

Knox glared at him. He had reason to glare. For a prefect of the Sixth to be addressed as a dog by a fag in the Fourth Form was a little too much.

"Why, you cheeky young hound—" gasped Knox.

"Let him alone, Knox!" called out Tom Merry. "He doesn't belong to our House. You've no right to meddle with him."

"Hold your tongue, Merry! Koumi Rao, you cheeky young hound— Why, what—"

Koumi Rao, lithe as a tiger, twisted his shoulder away from Knox's grasp, and sprang away from him. But he did not run. He stood facing the angry prefect, his dusky hands clenched, his eyes gleaming with sombre fires.

Knox strode towards him with his hand raised. The junior did not recede, but set his teeth hard, his lips drawing back in a snarl like that of a wild animal. He was evidently about to spring upon Knox.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ran forward and interposed between them just in time. Knox bumped into the swell of St. Jim's, and had to stop.

"D'Arcy! How dare you—"

"Pway leave the kid alone, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "You have no wight to touch a New House chap, Knox!"

"Get out of the way, you cub!"

"I wefuse to get out of the way, and I decline to be called a cub!" said Arthur Augustus. "Koumi Wao was doin' nothin', and you have no wight to stwike him. Wally wound, deah boys, and back me up!"

The Terrible Three were already on the spot. They lined up beside Arthur Augustus. Blake and Herries and Digby joined them at once. Knox stared savagely at the juniors.

"Will you get out of the way?"

"No fear!" said Tom Merry coolly. "You're not going to bully Koumi Rao. Can't you see there's somethin' the matter with him? Let him alone, then."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Bully us, if you must bully somebody, Knoxy," said Blake meekly. "We belong to your House. We'll take it like lambs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you get aside?" hissed Knox.

"No!"

"No feah!"

The prefect made a stride forward, and the juniors closed up to receive him. Knox paused just in time, Tom Merry & Co.'s looks showed that they were perfectly prepared to collar Knox and bump him on the ground, prefect as he was, regardless of consequences. The consequences of bumping a prefect would certainly have been very painful for the juniors, but that would not have undone the bumping, as Knox realised. So he paused.

"I will report this to the House-master," he said, between his teeth.

"Report away!" said Tom Merry.

Knox gritted his teeth, and strode off. Tom Merry & Co. turned to the Indian. Koumi Rao was standing quite still, his hands clenched, and his eyes burning.

"All serene!" said Tom Merry reassuringly.

"Why did you stop him?" muttered Koumi Rao. "If he had struck me, I would have killed him!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Don't talk rot!" said Tom Merry sharply. "If you let anybody else hear you talk like that, Koumi Rao, you'll find yourself in trouble. Don't be an ass!"

The Indian junior stared at him angrily, and seemed about to make a fierce retort. But he checked the words

on his lips, and turned and strode away towards his House, without a word. The juniors looked after him silently and uneasily.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, when Koumi Rao had disappeared. "That is vevy queeah, deah boys."

Tom Merry's brow was wrinkled.

"Jolly queer," he said. "The young duffer used to talk like that when he first came here, but he seemed to have had his nonsense knocked out of him. If he begins it again, he'll get the order of the boot. I wonder what's gone wrong with the young ass?"

"Not much good asking him," said Blake; "but there's something wrong, that's certain—a bit off his crumplet, I should say. And now we're booked for a row with Knox—and not so much as a 'Thank you' from the bounder. Br-r-r!"

The juniors walked away, considerably puzzled by the strange incident. There was something very wrong with the Indian junior, there could not be much doubt about that. And Tom Merry, who knew more about Koumi Rao than the other fellows, was a little worried in his mind about him. Koumi Rao, the "Jam" of Bundelpore, was a prince in his own country, and when he had first come to St. Jim's he had brought many lofty and princely ideas with him, which had been very soon knocked out of him in the Fourth Form, where "side" of any kind was not popular. In Bundelpore, Koumi Rao might be the lord of a thousand elephants and ten thousand spears, but at St. Jim's he was a fag in the Fourth Form, and not in the slightest degree of more account than any other fag.

It had taken Koumi Rao some time to realise that. But he had learned it at last, and his great friendship for Figgins of the Fourth had helped him. He seemed to have dropped into his place in the school. But Tom Merry knew—he had reason to know—that under the outward aspect of a schoolboy the fierce nature of the Oriental only slept.

CHAPTER 2.

Tea in Figgins' Study.

"All ready?" asked Figgins.

"All ready," said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn turned a crimson face from the fire.

"Just finishing the last round," he said. "Have you opened the jam?"

"Yes."

"And the pickles?"

"Yes."

"Then we're ready?"

Figgins & Co. of the New House were expecting company. The study showed many signs of preparation. There were double the usual number of chairs. The table was laid for a gargantuan feast. Fatty Wynn had made toast till it was piled high on three separate dishes, so high that the piles threatened to tumble over.

There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and Figgins promptly opened the door. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came in, with their sweetest smiles on. At other times, School House and New House were deadly rivals. But every now and then the hatchet was buried on important occasions. This appeared to be one of the important occasions.

Football had ceased to reign, and the St. Jim's fellows were preparing for the cricket season. Figgins had asked his old rivals over to a feed and a talk about cricket. So the hatchet was buried with great unanimity.

"Trot in," said Figgins hospitably. "All ready. Where are the other bounders—ahem! I mean the other chaps?"

"Coming along," said Tom Merry cheerily. "They're only waiting while Gussy gets a new tie on."

"May be minutes, and may be hours," said Monty Lowther. "We won't wait for Gussy."

But in a few minutes there was another tramping in the passage, and four youths insinuated themselves into the study. Blake and Herries and Digby were smiling. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked a little ruffled, and somewhat excited, and was not wearing a necktie.

"Here we are again!" said Blake. "Sorry we're a bit late. We had to wait for Gussy."

"Oh, don't mench," said Figgins.

"Weally, Blake——"

"I suppose two of you chaps could manage with the armchair," said Figgins, "and two on this form?"

"Yes, rather."

"I have to offer you an apology, Figgins, for appeahin' on this festive occasion without a tie," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy heatedly. "I need hardly explain that it is not my fault. That uttah wottah Blake——"

"Oh, don't mench," said Kerr.

"But I must mench, deah boy. It is due to myself to explain that that wuffian Blake dwagged me out of the studay befoah I had finished puttin' on my tie——"

"We had waited five minutes," said Blake. "Now, I appeal to all gentlemen present, isn't five minutes long enough for any silly ass to put on a tie?"

"And when I insisted upon finishin', the howwid bwute actually dwagged off my tie like a wuffian——"

"Awful!" said Figgins sympathetically. "Where will you sit, Gussy?"

"And the three bwutes washed me across the quad befoah I could get anoathah tie——"

"Horrible!"

"So I am heah without a tie, as you see——"

"Atrocious!"

"Weally, Figgins," said Arthur Augustus, beginning to suspect that Figgins's horror of that outrage was a little overdone.

Blake pushed the swell of St. Jim's into a chair. Fatty Wynn made the tea. The merry party sat down round the festive board, only Arthur Augustus looking worried. To have tea without a tie weighed on his mind somewhat.

"Any New House chaps coming in?" asked Tom Merry.

Figgins shook his head.

"I've asked Reddy and Owen and Lawrence, but they're feeding with Pratt, in the next study," he said.

"What about Koumi Rao?"

"We've asked him, but he won't come," said Figgins.

"Rather a queer beggar, you know, but one of the best, really. He has solitary fits sometimes, and sticks in his study by himself. He seems to have one of those fits on lately."

"Noticed anything queer about him?"

Figgins looked surprised.

"Well, he's always a bit different from the other chaps," he said. "The last couple of days, now you speak of it, I've noticed that he keeps to himself more than ever. I'm rather chummy with him, in a way, but I don't profess to understand him quite. When he wants to go off on his own, I just let him go, and he always comes round. You know, he's a blessed prince in some place or other, and he never can get quite used to being only a fag. He takes offence at nothing sometimes, and then begs a chap's pardon with tears in his eyes, and offers him all sorts of things. He offered me a diamond pin the other day, after being huffy for an afternoon. I told him to go and eat coke. Pass the jam, Fatty. You don't want it all, I suppose, you porpoise?"

"How do you chaps like the ham patties?" asked Fatty Wynn anxiously.

"Ripping!" said Blake.

"Top-hole!" said Manners.

"I made 'em!" said Fatty Wynn proudly. "I thought they'd be all right. I made the toffee too. Figgins wanted to make it, but I put the stopper on that."

"I can make toffee," said Figgins warmly. "I can cook—why——"

"Yes; I remember the time you made fig-pudding, Figgy," said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle, and Figgins blushed. That celebrated fig-pudding, which had caused almost a general illness, had never been forgotten.

"But about Koumi Rao——" said Tom Merry.

"About the cricket," said Figgins. "We were going to talk cricket. I had an idea that the New House will be coming out pretty strong in the cricket line, and——"

"Yes, but Koumi Rao——"

"Blessed if you don't seem to have Koumi Rao on
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the brain," said Figgins, in astonishment. "You don't chum with him. I thought he was rather on your track when he first came here."

Tom Merry nodded.

"My uncle had the job of taking over Bundelphore when it was put under British rule," he said. "Koumi Rao had that up against him—and me! But he made friends all right. But you are really the only fellow he has taken to at St. Jim's, Figgy."

"Yes, that's because I'm such a fascinating chap, I suppose," said Figgins cheerfully. "I was thinking that when we play the first match—"

"Pass the pickles!" interrupted Fatty Wynn.

"We've been having a bit of a row with Knox, our pet bully, over Koumi Rao," went on Tom Merry, sticking to his subject. He explained the story of the peculiar scene behind the School House, and Figgins was interested at last, to the extent of forgetting cricket.

"My hat!" said Figgins indignantly. "I wish I'd been there! A rotten School House cad chipping in with a New House chap—my hat! Why, I'd have wiped up the ground with your blessed prefect! Ahem! excuse me," added Figgins, remembering that his guests belonged to the School House. "Still, it was an awful cheek of Knox."

"Passed unanimously," said Monty Lowther. "Now pass the ham patties. Fatty, you're a giddy marvel. If I ever keep an hotel, I shall make you my chef."

"So you see," went on Tom Merry, "Koumi Rao has got something the matter with him. The fact is, I feel a bit anxious about him. He was really playing the giddy ox, and he's such a queer bounder, he really wants an eye kept on him."

"I'll keep an eye on him, now you mention it," said Figgins. "The first match of the season is with the Grammar School—"

"Suppose you fetch him in here now," suggested Tom Merry. "If he's got himself into the blues, we can cheer him up no end. Moping in his study isn't good for him."

"Well, I can see that you won't let me talk about the cricket till I do," said Figgins. "Buzz off and fetch him, Kerr, there's a good chap!"

"Right-ho!" said Kerr, and he left the study.

Figgins was in full swing on the subject of cricket when the Scottish junior came back a few minutes later, with a rather odd expression on his face. He came alone.

"Hasn't he come?" asked Tom Merry.

Kerr shook his head.

"He won't come."

"Why not?"

"Says he doesn't want to."

"Bai Jove, that is weally hardly complementary to us, deah boys!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I regard that chap as vewy queeah!"

"I suppose he's heard that Gussy's here without a necktie," said Monty Lowther. "Of course, he wouldn't like to come, under the circumstances. If a fellow can't put on a necktie when he goes out to tea—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Shut the door, Kerr, old chap," said Figgins. "Now, as I was saying—"

"Pewwaps you could lend me a necktie, Figgy."

"Half a dozen if you like," said Figgins affably.

"I say, Figgy," said Kerr, "I don't quite like the look of the old Jam, you know. He's in his study without a light, and muttering to himself no end. I think he must be ill, or going off his rocker. Suppose you go and speak to him? He never takes any notice of any fellow but you."

Figgins looked concerned.

"Well, if there's anything the matter with him, of course I'll see him," he said. "You fellows would like him to come in here?"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther. "We'll talk to him like a whole family of Dutch uncles, and bring the smiles to his baby brow. I'll tell him my latest wheezes for the comic column in the 'Weekly.'"

"Not if the poor chap's ill," said Blake. "Chap would have to be very fit to stand that."

"Why you silly ass—"

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"I'll be back in a jiffy," said Figgins. And he hurried out of the study, leaving Lowther and Blake in a warm argument, and the other fellows tucking into the festive spread, with the exception of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was searching wildly among Figgy's neckties for one that would harmonise with the colour of his waistcoat.

CHAPTER 3.

The Jam is Mysterious.

FIGGINS hurried along the passage to the Indian junior's study. Figgy was looking a little worried himself now. He had a real regard for the strange and wayward junior from the far off East, founded partly perhaps upon Koumi Rao's devotion to himself. Figgy had been kind to the new boy from the day he came to St. Jim's, and he had chipped in to prevent thoughtless raggings, and his little acts of kindness had been repaid with an overwhelming gratitude and devotion that astonished Figgins. Figgy was not much given to deep thinking, and he did not pretend to understand Koumi Rao; he regarded him as rather a queer foreign sort of beggar, as he would have expressed it, but he liked him, and treated him as a pal in his rough-and-ready manner. There could hardly have been a greater contrast than that between the deep, subtle Oriental and the honest, frank, simple-minded Figgins. But they pulled together well. When Koumi Rao sulked, as he often did, for some fancied offence or neglect, Figgins "gave him his head," so to speak, and the wayward Indian would "come round" sooner or later with tears of repentance for having offended his friend, when Figgins would slap him on the back with a staggering slap, and tell him it was all serene.

Koumi Rao had a study to himself. For various reasons, partly connected with his religion, the Indian junior was not a comfortable study-mate. There were all kinds of weird things in his study, and a couple of bronze statuettes of marvellous workmanship, which stood on his mantelpiece, were popularly supposed among the New House fags to be his gods. Dibbs of the Fourth declared that, looking into Koumi Rao's study one day, he had actually seen the Jam bowing down and worshipping those gods, but it turned out that the Indian was merely looking for a collar-stud on that occasion.

Figgins pushed open the door of the study. All was dark within, save for a glimmer of starlight that fell in at the window. It was a custom of Koumi Rao's to sit by himself in the dark when he was in the sulks. Figgins blinked round the shadowy study, and started a little as he caught the sudden gleam of two dark eyes in the gloom.

"You here, Jammy?" asked Figgins. Jammy was Figgy's variation of Koumi Rao's title, Koumi Rao being the "Jam," or Prince, of Bundelphore.

"I am here."

"All in the darkness—what?" said Figgins cheerily.

"The darkness is in keeping with the thoughts of the Prince of Bundelphore," said Koumi Rao, in his flowery Oriental style, which always made Figgins chuckle.

"Ow!" said Figgins, as he bumped his leg against a chair. "Well, suppose you put a light on, Jammy."

"Let the darkness reign."

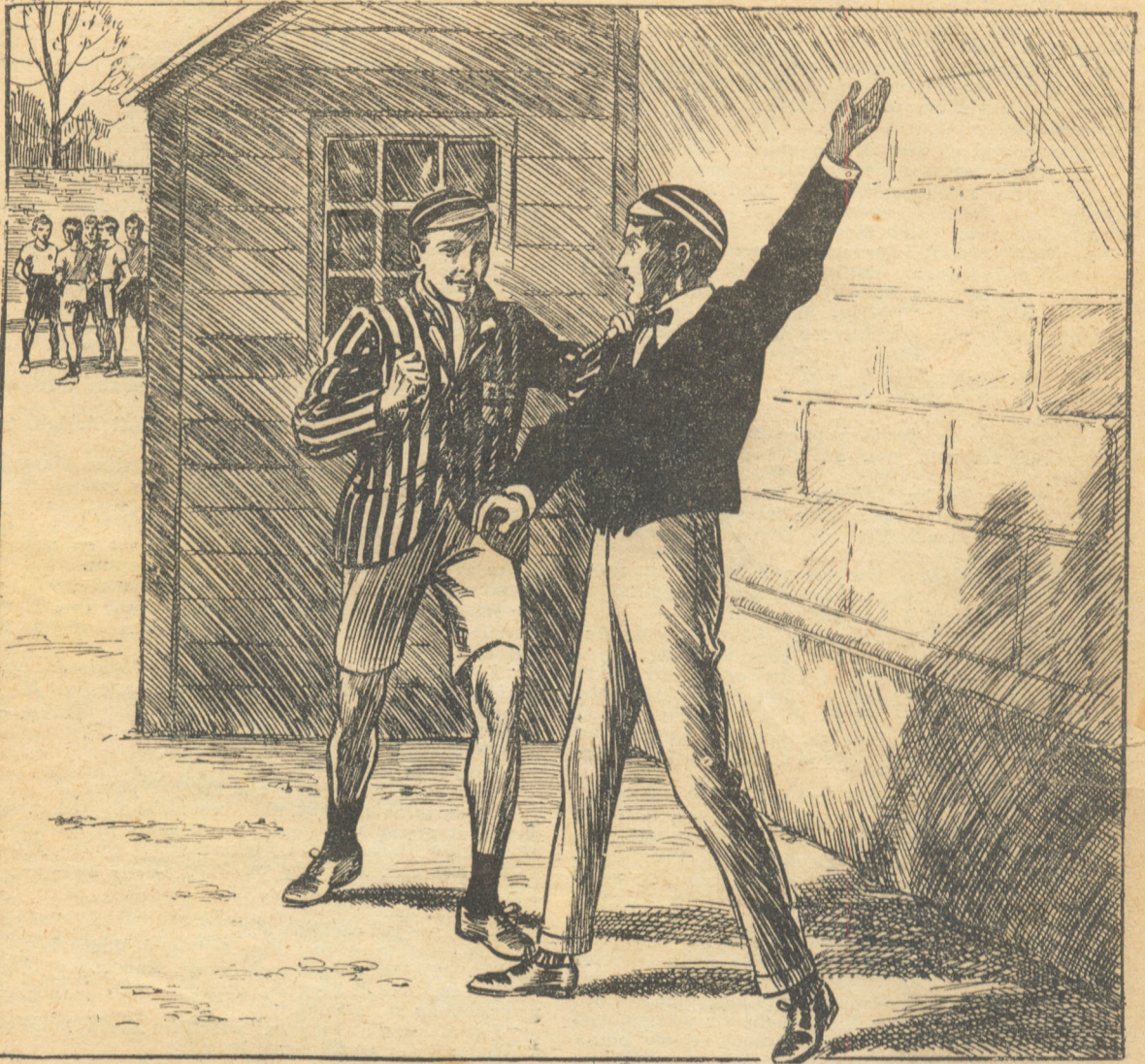
"I say, we've got a jolly little party in my study," said Figgins, blinking towards the Indian. He could see nothing of Koumi Rao save his eyes, and he felt a little uncanny. "Come along with me, kid."

"Leave Koumi Rao to himself," said the Jam. "His thoughts are of war and bloodshed, and he is not fit for the company of the sahibs."

"Thinking about the war?" said Figgins, a little puzzled. "Yes, I remember reading in the paper that your chaps from Bundelphore are going to the front. That's jolly good news, Jammy."

The Jam laughed—a hollow, sardonic laugh that made Figgins start. He began to realise that it was not an ordinary case of sulks that was the matter with the Jam.

"Dash it all, don't cackle like that, Jammy," said



The Jam's eyes flashed. "Am I not a Prince?" he exclaimed, in his most arrogant manner. "Am I not to be obeyed? In Bundelpore, ten thousand swords would leap from their scabbards to do my bidding." "Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "Are you coming, Jammy?" (See Chapter 6.)

Figgins. "You set my blessed nerves on edge. What's the matter with you?"

"Go back to the other sahibs," said Koumi Rao.

"Leave me to my destiny."

"You're always such a giddy, high-flown bounder, Jammy," said Figgins. "Come along, and don't be an ass!"

"Leave me."

"Look here, I'm not going to leave you. Don't play the giddy ox. The fellows are waiting too," exclaimed Figgins. "For goodness' sake, don't be a sulky ass. Has somebody been chipping you?"

"Bah! That would be nothing."

"If you're thinking about the war we'll tell you the latest news," said Figgins. "We've got an evening paper."

The Jam laughed again.

"May be some news about the Bundelpore Cavalry," urged Figgins. "I believe they're leaving India soon."

"Perhaps they will never leave!" said Jam.

"Eh!"

"When they go to the battle it may be among the ghaunts and nullahs of Bundelpore."

"My hat!"

The Jam rose to his feet, and came towards Figgins,

and seized him by the arm. Figgins stared at him blankly. He began to share the opinion that the queer youth was indeed "off his rocker."

"I—I say, Jammy—"

"The sahibs have taken my kingdom," said the Jam, in a low, hissing voice, evidently under the stress of deep emotion. "The flag of Bundelpore is bowed down before the Union Jack. The freedom of Bundelpore is gone."

"Well, that's all the better for you, you know," said Figgins, hardly knowing what to say in reply to this outburst. "Under British rule, you know, you don't have such whacking big famines, and you ain't allowed to cut one another's throats and to burn widows. You ought really to be glad of it, you know."

"General Merry came with the sahibs in khaki," went on the Jam, unheeding. "Figgins, my friend, when I came here, do you know what I sought?"

"Eh!"

"I sought the life of the general sahib's nephew."

"Great Scott!"

"I should have slain him," went on Koumi Rao, in the same moody tone, "but he was too strong for me. Then I was attacked by my enemy, who would have robbed me of my kingdom—my cousin and rival—and Tom Merry saved my life. After that I was his friend.

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CHAPTER 4. A Task for Tom Merry & Co.

"B Al love!" "My hat!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "I've brought him!" gasped Figgins,

Koumi Rao wriggled from under Figgins's arm, and stood flushed and panting. He made a movement towards the door, but Figgins promptly closed it. Kerr pushed

"Let me go! I—" "Sit down, old chap!" "Pass the toast to the Jam, Fatty," said Figgins,

"Pie in, Jummy!" "The Jam breathed hard. But there was no escape for him, and he had to join the cheery party. As a matter

of fact, he discovered that he was hungry as he sat at the tea-table, and he began operations on the toast and

But his dusky, handsome face was still flushed and sulky. "Pie in!" said Figgins. "That's better, Jummy!"

Now, Tom Merry, about the cricket—to come back to the subject—"I rather think that we haven't done so well at

footer as we might have done," said Figgins. "We've got to make up for that this season at cricket—see?"

"We've done pretty well, I think," said Tom Merry warmly. "We've got a jolly good record for the

season." "Yes, but we had some hickings," said Figgins. "Now, my idea is that if there had been some more New House

chaps in the team the record would have been a bit better. What do you think?"

"Oh, I think that's rot!" "Now, look here—" "Hear, hear!" said Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

"I was thinking that when we make up the cricket eleven it would be a good idea to shove in some more

of the New House," said Figgins. "Of course, I need hardly say that I'm only thinking of the good of the

side." "Ha, ha, ha!" "What are you cackling at?"

"I'm cackling at you, Figgins," said Monty Lowther affably. "What are you cackling at, Manners?"

"I'm cackling at Figgins," said Manners. "What are you cackling at, Tommy?"

"I'm cackling at Figgins," said Tom Merry, laughing. "What are you cackling at, Blake?"

"Figgins," said Blake. "What are you, Dig—" "Oh, don't be funny!" said Figgins crossly. "I'm

making a really good suggestion, I think. I suppose we want a good cricket record, don't we?"

"Bai love!" said Tom Merry. "We might find room for one more, New House bouncer. Koumi Rao isn't a

bad bat, and he will come on with practice. What do you say, Johnny? Feel like putting in no end of practice

—what?" "The Jam started. "If No, no, no!" "Wouldn't you like to play in the School junior

eleven?" demanded Tom Merry. "No, my hat!" "Well, my hat!"

"What do you mean, Jummy?" exclaimed Figgins warmly. "You'll jolly well play if you get a chance.

"Think of your House, you bouncer! I'll take jolly good care that you keep up to practice, too, as soon as practice

begins." "Same here," said Kerr. "Why, you used to be keen about cricket, Jummy."

"The Jam did not reply, but he looked very moody. "Don't mind the Jam," said Figgins. "He's a bit

out of sorts. He's been mooching round a lot. He wants exercise. I'm going to take him for a run to-morrow afternoon. We'll have a run across country, and take

the Jam. Nothing like it for keeping in form." "I cannot come," said the Jam. "Eh? Why can't you?" "I must go elsewhere."

I forgave the sabbis for what they had done. I never remain under the British flag, and I, the Prince of Bundelpure, would resign the freedom of my fathers.

But now—"Figgins peered at him in the gloom. He could see that the dusky face was working wildly.

"Well, now, Jummy, old chap?" said Figgins helplessly. "Now it is war," said the Jam. "A great Power

attacks the British Raj by land and sea. What if the troops of the Kaiser march upon Bombay and Calcutta—

"Catch 'em!" said Figgins disdainfully. "They're getting it in the neck a bit too thick in Europe for that."

"Eh! They tell me—" "Eh! Who tells you?" "The Jam was silent.

"Do you mean to say that some silly ass has been putting this rot into your head?" exclaimed Figgins excitedly.

"The war rages by land and sea," said the Jam. "What if the troops of Bundelpure, instead of embarking

in the big ships, should attack the British Raj on Indian soil, as they would do if their prince were there to lead

them? As it the place of a prince of Bundelpure to dally here in a school when the freedom of his kingdom might

be won with the help of the German Raj?" "Well, my word," said Figgins. "Jummy, old man,

you'd better get that rot out of your head as fast as you can. Why, all India's backing us up like—like

bricks. Suppose the Germans got there, how long would they let you keep your giddy little kingdom? Why,

they'd simply squash you down when they once got a footing. Look here, somebody has been putting this into

your head. Who was it?" "The Prince of Bundelpure does not betray secrets."

"Then somebody has?" exclaimed Figgins. "And that's what you've been mooching about and thinking

over, you silly young ass. A kid like you! You—well, there ain't word for you!" said Figgins, in great

disgust. "While the stars shine and the rivers flow Koumi Rao will always be the friend of Figgins. He may say what

he pleases. In Bundelpure it would be death to utter those words." "How-wow! Lucky we're not in Bundelpure, then,"

said Figgins. "Blessed if I can make you out. Some-where, my friend—leave me!"

"I'm jolly well not going to leave you," said Figgins. "You're going to chuck thinking that silly rot. If I

didn't know you were a good chap, Jummy, only a bit potty, I'd mop up the study with you. Some disgusting

Prussian has been getting at you. It can't be old Schneider. Who is it?" "The Jam was silent.

"I don't believe you got that idea into your head all on your own," said Figgins. "Anyway, you're going to

drop it, do you hear? Come along!" "I will not come."

"You're coming to tea, you ass!" "Leave me."

"No!" "Will you come?" demanded Figgins. "Then I'll jolly well carry you!"

And the sturdy Figgins picked up the slim Indian as if he had been a child, and forthwith carried him out of the study under his arm. The Jam struggled for a

moment, but he was helpless in Figgins's powerful grasp; and the Fourth-Former rushed him along the passage. And there was a general exclamation of astonishment

from Tom Merry & Co. as Figgins strode in with the parting Koumi Rao under his arm. "OUR COMPANION" "THE BOYS' FRIEND," "THE MACNET," "THE DREAMBOUGH," "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," "LD. PAPERS: Every Monday. Every Thursday. Every Friday. Every Saturday. 2

"Got an engagement—what?" said Figgins. "Well, you can jolly well chuck the engagement. We'll make up a party for a long run, you chaps. I'll see that Jammy comes, if I have to carry him under my arm again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good idea," said Tom Merry. "If the weather's anything like decent, we'll make it hare and hounds."

"Oh, blow the weather!" said Figgins. "Who minds a little rain? Must expect a little rain in March, I suppose. Start early, and have a good afternoon's run. It will do you no end of good, Jammy."

"I cannot come."

"Bow-wow!" said Figgins.

"Bai Jove! I sha'n't be able to come, eithah, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have a wathah important engagement for to-morrow aftahnoon—I have to go shoppin'."

"Buying a new silk hat?" asked Figgins sarcastically. "Or is it neckties? You can keep that necktie of mine, if you like."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Gussy's coming," said Blake. "I'm not going to have him slacking."

"I am not goin' to slack, Blake, you wottah. I am goin' shoppin'. I have to buy some tobacco and cigawettes."

"Some what?" ejaculated Figgins.

"Tobacco and cigawettes, deah boy."

"My word! Nice habits you're getting into in Study No. 6. I must say!" exclaimed Kerr. "You'd better not let a prefect spot you."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass witheringly upon Kerr.

"You fearful ass! I am not goin' shoppin' for tobacco for myself. You are perfectly well awah that I do not smoke. You know vevy well that it is bad form."

"What are you buying the smokes for, then—mantel ornaments?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"They are for my lonely soldiah, you ass!"

"Your what?"

"My lonely soldiah," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "You may be awah that I am a membah of the Lonely Soldiahs' Guild. I send my lonely soldiah a packet evewy week. I have already sent him twelve pairs of socks and six flannel shirts and four mufflahs, so I have thought of makin' a change this time, and sendin' him somethin' to smoke."

"My hat! If he wears twelve pairs of socks and six flannel shirts and four mufflers, he can't be in danger of catching cold," remarked Figgins.

"You uttah ass! He would not wear them all at once, of course. Howevah, I think it would be a good ideah not to send him any more socks just yet—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I am goin' to send him smokes. Soldiahs like smokin', you know. My patah says that smokin' in moderation doesn't hurt you aftah you are grown up. Of course, it's vevy bad for gwowin' chaps—that's why Mellish is such a yellow, skinny little beast, you know. I have had a wemittance fwom my governah, and I am goin' to send a wippin' packet of tobacco, cigarettes, and cigars. So I shall be wathah busay to-morrow aftahnoon. Howevah, I will have tea weady in the studay when you fellows come in," added Arthur Augustus generously.

Koumi Rao sat silent during the cheery chat in the study. But the juniors did not appear to notice it—they wanted to put the wayward lad at his ease. Every now and then a remark was addressed to him, and he answered shortly. When tea was over, and the guests were preparing to depart, the Jam slipped quietly out of the study and vanished. Figgins frowned a little as the door closed.

"Queer beggar," said Blake.

"Well, we've done our best to cheer him up a bit," said Tom Merry. "I wish he'd be a bit more pally. He seems to have something on his mind, but I don't see how—"

"I think he has," said Figgins. "He was talking a lot of awful rot to me in his study before I yanked him in here. I'll tell you chaps, but don't let it go any

further; it would get him into bad odour. And he's really a decent chap. But I'm sure that some rascal has been working on his mind. Have any of you ever seen any Germans hanging about the place?"

"Germans!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"Herr Schneider," said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"Fathead!" said Figgins.

Herr Schneider was the German master at St. Jim's. He was not a very agreeable gentleman, but he had proved that he was an honest man by denouncing a German spy who had sought to inveigle him into his treacherous schemes. Since that incident Herr Schneider had gone up considerably in the estimation of Tom Merry & Co., and they forgave him for his airy remarks on the subject of the dreadful fate that was threatening the British Empire. Herr Schneider was convinced that the tremendous armies of the Kaiser were destined to occupy London shortly, and he was puzzled and perplexed as day after day passed and they did not arrive.

"You see," went on Figgins, "somebody has been putting silly rot into the Jam's silly head. He was babbling a lot of nonsense about a rising in India, helped by German troops, and that kind of thing."

"Gweat, Scott!"

"Of course, he wouldn't think of that rot by himself," said Figgins sagely. "A kid like that, and a sensible chap, as a rule. He's such a queer, excitable beggar, that some cunning hound might work on his feelings, you know, and make him make a fool of himself. But who the dickens can have done it? That's the giddy mystery. Only a German would want to do it, and I don't know of any Germans about here that Koumi Rao can have met. Most of the rotters are in the concentration camps, and the others are pretty well watched. And certainly there hasn't been one come here to see him. Yet I feel sure that some skunk has got at him."

Tom Merry looked vevy grave.

"He might get himself into trouble," he said. "It's quite possible. We know the Germans have been trying to stir up trouble for us in Egypt and India, and if they could get an Indian prince under their influence, it might be useful to them. He's only a fag in the Fourth here. But in India that kid's a prince and an All-Highest sort of giddy Panjandrum. Only nothing could happen unless he went back to India."

"He might have some scheme for bolting and doing that," said Figgins, with a worried look. "I know he's jolly queer. I'm jolly well going to look after him, anyway, and I'll see that he comes with us to-morrow. And I want you chaps to keep your peepers open, and spot if any foreign scoundrel is seen hanging about."

"You bet!"

"Some rotten spy, perhaps," said Manners. "We know there are lots of them in the country. And this kind of thing is an old game with the Prussians. They got at the Khedive of Egypt in that way. Of course, the only result was that he's been kicked out of Egypt. That would be the result in poor old Jammy's case, if he made a fool of himself. But a lot they would care. If they could cause us some trouble in India, it wouldn't worry them what happened to Koumi Rao and Bundelpore. My hat! If there is such a worm hanging about here, we ought to nail him!"

Figgins clenched his big fists. The mere thought of some cowardly schemer getting the wayward, excitable Indian lad under his malign influence, and tempting him on to ruin, made Figgy feel ferocious.

"The fact is, he was saying something about being in Bundelpore, and that school wasn't the place for him at a time like this," said Figgins.

Tom Merry set his lips.

"Then there's not much doubt that some scoundrel has got hold of him, and has put the idea into his head of bolting, and getting back to India," he said. "The young ass! He doesn't know what he would be up against! We've got to find that scoundrel, whoever he is, and hand him over to the police. Jolly lucky the Jam told you this, Figgy."

Figgins nodded.

"I don't think he'd have mentioned it to anybody

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else," he said, "and he didn't tell me much. I could see he was keeping something back. But he as good as admitted that somebody had been talking to him on the subject. I'd like to be within hitting distance of the villain!"

"Blessed if I know where the Jam can have seen him, though!" said Tom Merry, wrinkling his brows in thought. "I don't know of any Germans near here."

"Might be passing himself off as something else," said Kerr sagely. "Might be calling himself a Swiss, perhaps."

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo! What's biting you, Gussy?"

"Nothin's biting me, deah boy. But the tobacconist in Wayland, where I get the smokes for Tommy Atkins, is a Swiss. But he is weally a vewy wespectable chawactah, I think. He has been established there for yahs and yahs."

"He's a real Swiss," said Kerr. "All foreigners have had to show their passports and prove their nationality. And old Schultz has had a shop in Wayland ever since I've been at St. Jim's."

"I'm afraid we shall have to look a bit further than that," said Tom Merry, laughing. "But we're jolly well going to find the villain, all the same. You fellows can keep an eye on the Jam, as he's in your House."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Figgins & Co.

And Tom Merry & Co. departed, much occupied in their minds about the mysterious conduct of Koumi Rao, and very concerned for him too. For they knew that if some unscrupulous rascal had put wild and reckless ideas into the boy's head, Koumi Rao was hardly responsible for it. But they wanted very much to get hold of the rascal who had done the evil work.

CHAPTER 5.

Knox Makes a Discovery!

KNOX of the Sixth was in the hall when the juniors came into the School House.

The prefect gave them a black look.

As yet, they had heard nothing more of the little row behind the School House. Knox had not carried out his threat of reporting the matter to the Housemaster.

As a matter of fact, Knox had decided that it wouldn't do. Although the juniors would have been punished for defying the authority of a prefect, Knox himself would have been in trouble for "going for" a New House boy. So upon second thoughts the bully of the Sixth had decided to let that matter drop, and to find some other means of making Tom Merry & Co. feel the weight of his hand.

He scowled as they passed him, but made no remark, and the juniors went to their studies for preparation.

Arthur Augustus hurried through his preparation that evening. He had another matter on his mind. While Blake and Herries and Digby were finishing their work the swell of St. Jim's consulted a price list, and made notes upon a slip of paper. Anyone who had been unaware that Arthur Augustus was in the habit of sending little presents to the men in khaki at the front would certainly have been surprised at his present occupation.

He was calculating how far his remittance would go in the purchase of cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco.

"It's wathah a pwoblem, deah boys," he remarked thoughtfully.

The dear boys only grunted; they were busy.

"You see, I have only a quid—I mean a soveveign—to expend on this mattah. I want to send somethin' decent, and at the same time as much as poss. I wondah whethah my lonely soldiah pwefers gold-tipped cigawettes."

"Shurrup!"

"I weally don't know, as I am not a smokah, but I should pwesume that gold-tipped cigawettes feel bettah in the mouth, and I suppose they are bettah, or they wouldn't charge a highah pwice for them, you know."

"Cheese it!"

"This is wathah an important mattah, Blake. What do you think of this? One tin of mild tobacco, three-and-nine—that's half a pound—one tin of stwong tobacco,

three-and-nine—that's in case he likes it stwong—that will come to seven-and-six. All wight so fah—don't you think so?"

Grunt from Blake. Blake was busy.

"Then cigahs. My patah smokes Lawwanagah cigahs at a shillin' each, so I suppose they are all wight. Six cigahs at a shillin' each—total, thirteen-and-six. Do you think that's all wight?"

Grunt!

"Then you can get a hundwed gold-tipped cigawettes for six-and-six, which just makes up the soveveign. But I could get half as many again without the gold tips. That is weally the pwoblem. What do you think, Blake?"

Grunt!

"What do you think, Hewwies?"

"Brrrrr!"

"What do you think, Dig?"

"Rats!"

"Weally, deah boys, on an occasion like this, I weally considah—"

Jack Blake picked up the inkpot.

"Are you going to dry up, or are you not going to dry up?" he demanded, in a tone of concentrated ferocity.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet with a great deal of dignity.

"I wegard you as unpatwiotic wottahs," he replied.

"I will go and consult Tom Mewwy on the mattah."

"Bow-wow!"

Arthur Augustus quitted Study No. 6 with his noble nose high in the air, and the list of smokes in his hand. He turned back in the doorway to make a final remark.

"Undah the cires, Blake— Oh, you wottah!"

A cushion smote Arthur Augustus, and he sat down in the passage. Then the door of No. 6 slammed with violence.

"Bai Jove! You awful wottah! I shall give you a fealful thwashin', Blake! My hat!"

Arthur Augustus jumped up and hurled himself at the study door. But it did not open. Blake had turned the key on the inside. There was a chuckle within, and the three juniors went on cheerfully with their preparation, heedless of the wrathful voice that addressed them through the keyhole.

Arthur Augustus gave it up at last. His thumping on the door elicited no reply from Blake and Herries and Digby; but it had attracted attention elsewhere, and there were heavy footsteps on the stairs. Arthur Augustus spotted Knox in the distance, and executed a swift and strategic retreat to Tom Merry's study. He had just disappeared when the prefect arrived on the scene.

Knox was on the warpath, but he was disappointed. He had caught a glimpse of a junior whisking round the corner, and that was all. He was about to pursue, when he caught sight of a paper glimmering on the floor. He started as he spotted it, for he caught the words on it, and they surprised him. He picked it up hastily.

"My hat!" muttered Knox.

He stared blankly at the paper. It was in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's elegant hand, which Knox knew well enough, from the impositions he had given the swell of St. Jim's from time to time. And this is what he read:

	£	s.	d.
"1 8oz. Tin Mild Tobacco ...	0	3	9
1 8oz. Tin Full	0	3	9
6 Larranaga Cigars	0	6	0
100 Gold-tipped Cigarettes ...	0	6	6

"Total ... £1 0 0."

Knox stared at the paper as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. Knox was a suspicious fellow, and more than once he had thought that the excessively good conduct of Study No. 6 was a little too good to be true. He had never been able to catch them, certainly, but he wasn't satisfied. But if he wanted proof that Study No. 6 was in the habit of breaking secretly a very strict rule of the school, he had it here, in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's own elegant hand. Evidently the swell of St. Jim's had not drawn up that list of smokes for



"Take your hand from my shoulder, you dog!" said Koumi Rao, in a low, passionate voice, his white teeth gleaming between his dusky lips. Knox glared at him. He had reason to glare. For a prefect of the Sixth to be addressed as a dog by a fag in the Fourth Form was a little too much. "Why, you cheeky young hound——" gasped Knox. (See Chapter 1.)

nothing; evidently he was calculating the purchasing value of a pound expended in smokes. Evidently, again, Knox had spotted him, intending to purchase two tins of tobacco, six cigars, and a hundred cigarettes. The depraved young rascal must have been a more confirmed smoker than Knox himself if he wanted that enormous supply of smokes.

Knox's eyes glittered with triumph. At last he had caught Study No. 6, and he had them on the hip!

He crumpled the paper in his hand and strode away. His first thought was to take it into the Housemaster at once, but he reflected. That list was evidently a list of smokes D'Arcy intended to purchase; he could not possibly have drawn it up for any other reason. But, as the purchase had apparently not been made, D'Arcy's sin consisted so far simply in intention. He might even have some yarn ready to account for having made up the list—might pretend it was an arithmetic exercise or something. Anyway, he had not yet broken the law. It was better to wait till he had done so, and nail him with

those contraband goods actually in his possession. Then he would not be able to wriggle out of it. That would be impossible.

Knox grinned. He could imagine Dr. Carrington's look when he marched the juniors into the Housemaster's study with two tins of tobacco, six cigars, and a hundred cigarettes in his pockets. The young rascal could not even pretend that he was alone in his depravity. There was too much for one smoker. The whole study was in it. Even four juniors would take some time to get through such a supply, however hardened they were. Study No. 6 was booked for trouble at last, and the good reputation they enjoyed in their House would be shattered. Once it was clearly proved that they were a set of vicious young hypocrites the Housemaster would have a stern eye on them, and a ready ear for reports from Knox.

"By gum, I've nailed them at last!" muttered Knox, as he turned away towards his own study. "The only question is to nab that young scoundrel with the things."

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"A WASTER'S REWARD!"

in his pockets. When is he going shopping for that little lot? That's the question. To-morrow afternoon, most likely, as it's a half-holiday. He wouldn't dare to get them in Rylcombe; it's too near the school. Besides, you can't get Havana cigars in the village. He must be going over to Wayland; and you can only go on a half-holiday. I rather think I've got him. I'll keep a jolly sharp eye on him to-morrow! I'll make all those young hounds sorry for cheeking me this afternoon!"

And, in his satisfaction, Knox went into his study to smoke a cigarette. He felt that he deserved it, after making up his mind to waste a half-holiday in attending strictly to his duties as a zealous prefect.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had dropped in on the Terrible Three. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had finished their preparation, and Talbot of the Shell had come in for a chat. The four Shell fellows looked considerably surprised as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy whipped into the study without knocking, and closed the door behind him very softly and cautiously.

"Hallo! Is that a new game?" asked Tom.

Arthur Augustus grinned.

"I'm dodgin' Knox," he explained. "That wottah Blake locked me out of the studay, and I thumped the door, and that cad Knox came bumpin' upstairs to catch whoever was makin' the wow. But I spotted him, and he didn't spot me. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"The wotten bwute will be fwightfully disappointed, you know," grinned Arthur Augustus. "He is vewy watty because we wouldn't let him hammah Koumi Wao this aftahnoon. Howevah, I was comin' to see you anyway. I want your advice about my smokes."

"Your smokes?" said Talbot.

"Yaas; for my lonely soldiah, you know. Would you wecommand gold-tipped cigawettes, or the othah sort?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "You'd better ask Knox; we all know that he smokes. Or Cutts of the Fifth might be able to tell you, or Levison."

"No good coming to this study for information of that kind, Gussy," said Monty Lowther, with great solemnity. "In fact, we hardly know what a cigarette is."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"As for tobacco, we have never heard the word."

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! This is wathah an important point, because, you see, you get more of the ordinawy kind for the same money, and I have only a sovewain to spend. What would you wecommand, Talbot? You used to smoke, didn't you?"

"Cheese it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I did not desiah to offend Talbot in any way. I simply wequire expert adwice."

"Fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead!"

"Yes; I used to smoke before I came here," said Talbot quietly, "and my adwice is that the best thing you can do with cigawettes is to leave them in the tobacconist's. But if you're sending them out to the soldiers, that's a different matter. I don't suppose Tommy Atkins is specially gone on gold tips. Get as many as you can for the money, so long as they're good."

"Pewwaps you're wight, deah boy. Instead of a hundwed with gold tips, I will get a hundwed and fiftay without gold tips—what?"

"Topping!" said Talbot, with a smile.

"I will make a note of that on my list. Bai Jove! Where's my list? I must have drowped it when that wottah Blake bowled me ovah with the cushion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thank you vewy much for your adwice, Talbot, deah boy. I will wun away and look for my list."

Arthur Augustus went to look for his list. He searched the Fourth Form passage for it; but he did not find it, and he had to draw up another. The list was reposing safely in the pocket of Knox of the Sixth.

CHAPTER 6.

Hare and Hounds.

AFTER lessons, the next day, Tom Merry & Co. turned out in great spirits.

It was a clear, cold afternoon, just the weather for a run across country, and a crowd of fellows in both Houses had joined in the arrangements for a paper-chase.

Enormous quantities of paper had been torn up—old newspapers, old impots, all sorts and conditions of things. A poem on the war, which Arthur Augustus had composed for the columns of "Tom Merry's Weekly," was recklessly sacrificed by his study-mates. Great scientific calculations made by Skimpole of the Shell, which covered sheets and sheets of paper, were cheerfully reduced to fragments by Gore, who shared Skimpole's study. Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth contributed a certain pink paper, packed with information about winners and dead certs, which belonged to his study-mate Levison, and the loss of which made Levison quite furious. From one source or another a good supply of "scent" was procured, enough to cram two large bags almost to bursting.

Jack Blake and Kerr were selected as the hares to represent both Houses. After dinner a great crowd of juniors turned out, most of them in their running-clothes. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came out to see the start, but his special business in Wayland prevented him from joining in the chase. The swell of St. Jim's was looking his usual elegant self in his beautiful topper and Etons. Knox of the Sixth, who had been keeping an eye on Arthur Augustus ever since dinner, noted that he was not joining in the hunt, and grinned. He thought he knew why the swell of St. Jim's was standing out.

"Awfully sowwy I can't wun with you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, I will give the signal to start. Pewwaps I shall see some of you if you come through Wayland."

Knox grinned again as he listened to that innocent remark. He had been almost certain that D'Arcy's destination that afternoon was Wayland; now he was quite certain.

The prefect strolled out of the gates before the hares and hounds were ready to start. Now that he was sure that D'Arcy was going to Wayland, he decided to be there first. Dogging the steps of the junior was somewhat undignified proceeding, even for Gerald Knox. It would be easy enough to spot the swell of St. Jim's again in the market-town, and would prevent him from suspecting that he was being watched. If he tumbled to that fact, naturally he would not make his guilty purchases, and the zealous prefect would have had his trouble for nothing.

"We're all ready," remarked Tom Merry. "Where's Figgins? Why doesn't he come?"

"Looking for Koumi Rao, I suppose," said Kerr.

Kerr and Blake, looking very fit and well in their running-clothes, had their bags of scent slung over their shoulders, all ready for the start.

They waited for Figgins. Figgins was, in fact, looking for Koumi Rao. The Jam had declared that he was not coming, but Figgins had his own ideas about that. He did not mean to let Koumi Rao get out of his sight.

The Indian junior seemed to have disappeared, and Figgins searched through the New House for him in vain.

"The blessed black bounder!" murmured Figgins exasperated. "He's sticking out of sight on purpose, so that we shall go without him. My hat! He may be going out to see that very scoundrel who's been pulling his leg. The—the ass! I'll show him!"

The New House having been drawn blank, Figgins extended his search. He spotted Koumi Rao at last. The Jam of Bundelpore was pacing to and fro in a secluded corner of the ground, evidently considering himself safe from observation there. Figgins noticed that he was gesticulating and muttering to himself, under the stress of emotional excitement. The sturdy junior gritted his teeth. He was a little angry with Koumi Rao; but his anger against the unknown scoundrel who was influencing the boy was boundless. Figgins would have given a term's pocket-money to

ANSWERS

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know who the man was, and to get within hitting distance of him.

"Jammy, old man," called out Figgins, coming up breathlessly.

The Indian started and looked round, and his gesticulations ceased—he became cold, silent, impassive, on the instant. Only the burning in his black eyes showed the excitement that was suppressed within him. He did not speak, but he shook himself fiercely and impatiently as Figgins caught his arm.

"Come on," said Figgins, "we're waiting for you."

"I cannot come."

"Rats! You've got to!"

"Figgins! You are my friend! You do not dream what your friendship has meant to me," said Koumi Rao, in a low, husky voice; "but for that—but for that—!" He broke off with a passionate gesture.

"Well, but for that—what?" asked Figgins.

"No matter!"

"Jammy, old man, you're a queer merchant," said Figgins. "If you were English, I should think you were right off your chump. But I suppose they make chaps like that in the East—what? But to put it in your own lingo, your friend Figgins desires the splendiferous honour of your company this afternoon, and while the stars shine and the rivers roll, he isn't going to let you off—savvy?"

The dusky face broke into a grin for a moment.

"That's better," said Figgins cheerfully. "Come on, Jammy. We're going to have a ripping run."

"Leave me!"

"Do you want me to carry you?"

"Figgins, I tell you that I cannot come. This day I have an engagement."

"Where?"

The Jam was silent.

"With whom?" asked Figgins, with a gleam in his eyes.

No answer.

"Is it with some foreign cad who has been stuffing ideas into your dotty old cocoanut?" asked Figgins.

Koumi Rao did not speak. But his silence was enough for Figgins.

"Well, we'll strike a bargain," said Figgins; "I'll let you off the run on condition that you take me with you to meet that chap."

"What would you do?" said the Jam gloomily.

"Smash his Prussian nose into his Prussian head!" said Figgins promptly. "I know it's some filthy Prussian—only a beastly Prussian would want to fool you like this, and make you play the giddy ox. Look here, Jammy, I'm beginning to think that it's my duty to tell the Head about this, so that you can be looked after."

"What I have told you I told you as a friend. You cannot betray me."

Figgins rubbed his nose uneasily.

"Well, I suppose that's so," he agreed. "But for your own good, you know. You're such a queer beggar, you see. Will you take me with you on your appointment?"

"No!"

"Will you tell me who the man is?"

"No!"

"Then you're jolly well coming with me," said Figgins determinedly. "Now, you can walk, or I'll carry you. Take your giddy choice."

"Leave me to myself. Do not put too strong a strain upon our friendship, Figgins. It may break."

"Bow-wow!" said Figgins, unmoved.

The Jam's eyes flashed.

"Am I not a prince?" he exclaimed, in his most arrogant manner. "Am I not to be obeyed? In Bundelpore, ten thousand swords would leap from their scabbards to do my bidding!"

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "Are you coming, Jammy?"

"Once more, in the palace of my father my subjects would rise round me at a word, and then—"

"Then there wouldn't be much left of the palace or the subjects soon afterwards, I expect," said Figgins cheerfully.

"Bah! Who are you to talk to me? Leave me!"

"I see, I shall have to carry you," said Figgins. "This way to town!"

"Release me. I will come!" muttered the Jam.

"That's better. Come on, then."

And the Indian junior, since there was no help for it, walked off with Figgins, and was led into the quadrangle, where the hares and the hounds were ready to start, and were getting decidedly impatient.

"Heah they are, deah boys. Weady?" asked Arthur Augustus, taking out his celebrated gold tigger.

"Isn't Jammy going to get into his running-things?" asked Fatty Wynn.

The Jam shook his head.

"Weady?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Five minutes start for the hares, deah boys. Go!"

Blake and Kerr started off. The hounds waited five minutes. The Jam was looking about him restlessly, but Figgins kept hold of his arm. He did not intend to let his dusky chum give him the slip at the last moment.

"Time!" said Arthur Augustus. "Off you go, deah boys, and I wish you a wippin' wun."

The pack streamed away towards the gates. Koumi Rao ran with Figgins—he could not help it. At the gates he strove to stop.

"Let go my arm, Figgins!" he muttered.

"Buck up—they're leaving us behind," exclaimed Figgins, as the pack, picking up the trail of torn paper in the road, went whooping away down the lane towards Rylcombe.

"Will you let me go?"

"No! Come on."

"If I strike you, Figgins—"

"If you punch me, old chap, I shall mop up the road with you, and make you come along all the same," said Figgins cheerfully.

The Jam clenched his hands, but he unclenched them again. With a sullen face he broke into a run, and they rejoined the pack. And Arthur Augustus, after following the pack with his eyeglass until they were out of sight, started off on his walk to Wayland.

CHAPTER 7.

Caught in the Act!

"SPOTTED, by Jove!"

Knox the prefect uttered that exclamation with great glee.

There could be no possible doubt about it, Arthur Augustus was spotted!

Knox had waited in the Wayland road, near the end of the footpath through the wood, which led from St. Jim's. There he had hung about—smoking cigarettes to pass the time—until Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in sight, sauntering cheerfully along, and thinking of anything but spying prefects. Arthur Augustus came out of the footpath over the stile, and strolled on towards the town—and Knox, throwing away the stump of a cigarette followed him. D'Arcy, without the slightest suspicion that he was followed, walked down the old High Street of the market-town, and stopped at a shop at the corner of River Street. It was a tobacconist's shop, as Knox fully expected. It bore the name of "H. Schultz" over the shop-front, and there was a great display of tobacco, pipes, and cigars, in the window.

Arthur Augustus walked into that shop with as much coolness as if it had been a confectioner's. Knox could scarcely believe his eyes. The cool cheek of it puzzled him. The junior must have known that in broad daylight, he might have been seen by someone belonging to St. Jim's. It was only too evident—to Knox—that the swell of the Fourth was a thoroughly reckless, as well as depraved, young rascal. Knox strolled past the shop, and looked silyly in at the doorway. There was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the counter selecting cigars! Knox gave a low whistle and walked on a few paces, and waited. He did not mean to intervene yet. Not until the guilty goods were in the pockets of the swell of St. Jim's would the chopper come down!

Little dreaming of the spiteful eyes that were watching for him, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy proceeded to make his purchases. The little, fat tobacconist, who did not often

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get an order for a sovereign at a time, was all politeness. He trotted out his goods for Arthur Augustus to select from. As a matter of fact, Herr Schultz was not doing a roaring business in these days. The Wayland people naturally had taken him for a German, from his name and appearance.

Mr. Schultz was fat and blonde, and looked a thorough German. He was, in fact, a German Swiss—that is to say, German by race, but Swiss politically. However, he had his Swiss passport quite in order; though he had been many years established in Wayland, and when he had received a visit from the police he had easily been able to satisfy them that he was a genuine Swiss. But although the police were satisfied, and Hermann Schultz continued to carry on his business without interference, the country people were not satisfied. They made little distinction in their minds between a German Swiss and a German of Germany, and so Mr. Schultz found his customers dropping off. That, however, did not seem to worry him. Perhaps he had other sources of income. At all events, the shop remained open, doing "business as usual," so far as the proprietor was concerned, and Mr. Schultz smoked his big meerschaum pipe apparently in great indifference to custom.

"You can weally wecommend these cigars, Mr. Schultz?" asked Arthur Augustus, regarding the big fat Larranagas dubiously. He did not feel inclined to try one. There would have been a bad case of mal-de-mer in Mr. Schultz's shop if he had.

"Ja, ja!" said Mr. Schultz. "They are good—very good—real Havana—and only one shilling and threepence for each piece."

"One and threepence! One shilling, you mean," said Arthur Augustus. "One shilling each, Mr. Schultz."

"I make a leetle mistake; they was one shilling," assented Mr. Schultz.

"Vewy good. Now I want two tins of tobacco—one mild, and one stwong. They are thwee-and-ninepence each."

"Four shilling each," said Mr. Schultz.

"No; look in the pwice-list."

"That is right; I make another mistake," said Mr. Schultz calmly.

Arthur Augustus was not suspicious, but he was very careful now that Mr. Schlutz did not make a mistake about the price of the cigarettes also. Probably, in dealing with a schoolboy, Mr. Schultz had thought that there was a favourable opening for those little mistakes.

But Arthur Augustus had worked out with great care exactly what he could get for his sovereign, and he was not to be "done."

"These cigawettes are vewy good, I suppose?" asked Arthur Augustus, smelling them.

"Ja, ja!"

"You see, I want the vewy best, because I'm sendin' them out to a chap at the fwont," explained Arthur Augustus. "One of the chaps who is givin' the beastly Prussians socks, you know."

Mr. Schultz's eyes glittered for a moment. But he nodded politely.

"Ja, ja; they was very good," he said.

"Vewy well. Pway w'ap them up for me."

The Swiss made a little bundle of Arthur Augustus's purchases. The swell of St. Jim's took it by the string, and bade Mr. Schultz a polite good-afternoon, and walked cheerfully out of the tobacconist's. He almost walked into Knox on the pavement.

Knox held up his hand magisterially.

"Stop!" he rapped out.

Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Weally, Knox," he said, "I twust you are not goin' to make a wow heah."

"What have you been doing in that shop, you young rascal?"

"I wefuse to be called a young wascal!"

"You have been buying smokes?"

"I uttably wefuse to speak a word to a person who chwactewises me as a young wascal!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "If you wish me to wreply to you, Knox, you must address me with pwopah civility!"

"What's in that bundle?"

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"I have already remarked that I shall not answah you unless you address me with pwopah wrespect!"

"Well, I know what's in it," said Knox. "I saw you through the doorway. Two tins of tobacco, six cigars, and a hundred gold-tipped cigarettes—what?"

"Wats!"

"Follow me, D'Arcy!"

"What for, deah boy?"

"I am going to take you straight back to the school, and report you to your Housemaster!" said the prefect grimly.

"I am suah I have no objection, Knox. Howevah, I did not intend to weturn to St. Jim's just yet. I was goin' to look wound for my fwriends—"

Knox raised his hand again.

"You will follow me immediately to the school. If you disobey the orders of a prefect, you know what to expect."

"But I weally wanted—"

"Enough said! Follow me at once!"

"Vewy well, Knox; but I shall complain to Mr. Cawwington of this tywannical conduct!"

Knox grinned.

"I'll chance that," he remarked. "I fancy Mr. Carrington will have enough to say to you when he discovers the kind of young scoundrel you are!"

"You uttah wottah! How dare you call me a young scoundwel!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, trembling with rage. "I shall wreport this disgustin' language to Mr. Cawwington!"

"Follow me!"

Knox turned away. Arthur Augustus hesitated a moment, and then followed. As a junior he was under the orders of the Sixth-Form prefect, and he had no choice in the matter. He did not want to be marched through the streets with Knox's hand on his collar.

"Vewy well, Knox, I will come, but I shall pwotest to Mr. Cawwington!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I entirely fail to see any cause for this wotten conduct on your part Knox. You have no wight to intahfeah with me in this mannah!"

"No right to interfere with a kid in the Fourth, caught coming out of a tobacconist's loaded up with smokes!" sneered Knox.

Arthur Augustus started.

"Why, you uttah ass—"

"Hold your tongue, and come along!"

"But weally, Knox—"

"Will you come or not?"

"I assuah you—"

"Then I'll take you by your collar!"

"You need not take that twouble, Knox; I will come," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. And he walked down the street with Knox, and they took the path home to the school.

There was a triumphant expression on Knox's face, and he kept an eye on Arthur Augustus to make sure that he did not throw away his guilty purchases. Upon the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy there was now a lurking grin. He understood the mistake Knox had fallen into, and as the bully of the Sixth did not choose to allow him to explain, he cheerfully left the prefect in the dark. The explanation would come in Mr. Carrington's study, and Arthur Augustus chuckled as he thought of the scene then. Knox stared at him as he heard the chuckle.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"You, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

And they walked on.

CHAPTER 8. A Hard Run.

T A-RA-AH!

The sound of Tom Merry's bugle rang out on the clear, cold air.

"They've spotted us," said Blake.

"Looks like it," said Kerr. "Get a move on. Some of the New House chaps will run us down if you don't."

"Some of the School House chaps, you mean," said Blake warmly.

"No, I don't," said Kerr. "I said New House chaps, and I meant New House chaps. Figgins would be on us already if he wasn't looking after that black bounder."

"Rats! Dig and Herries will be the nearest; after them Tom Merry."

"Rot!"

"Look here, Kerr——"

"Look here, Blake——"

The bugle rang out again nearer than before, and the argument between the two "hares" ceased. It was growing warm, but it was evident that if it continued the pack would come up before it was finished.

"Come on," said Blake briskly. "We'll give 'em a run through the wood. They won't find it easy to pick up the trail there—at least, the New House chaps won't."

And Blake started off again before the New House hare could make any rejoinder. Kerr snorted and followed him. They threaded their way through Rylecombe Wood, leaving the trail of torn paper behind them. The green of spring was glimmering on trees and thickets in the old wood, which were damp from recent rain. The bugle was heard no more; the pack were evidently picking up the trail more slowly now.

Kerr and Blake slackened down in the footpath, and continued along it, scattering the paper behind them.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake suddenly. "Here we are again!"

The two hares stopped, as they almost ran into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Knox the prefect coming down the path.

"Bai Joye! Not caught yet, deah boys?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus

"Come on at once, D'Arcy," said Knox sharply.

"Hallo, it's you that seems to be caught!" said Blake. "Are you going for a little stroll with dear old Knoxy?"

"I have been capchahed, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus solemnly—"caught in the vewy act! Knox has nailed me buyin' tobacco and cigawettes and cigahs in the tobacconist's, and he's takin' me home to be weported!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus grinned.

"Pway don't laugh, deah boys! This is fwightfully scowious, you know. Knox is shocked, and awf'ly watty, aren't you, Knox?"

"Come along!" roared Knox. "I believe you're in this, too, Blake. D'Arcy would not have been buying that large quantity of smokes for himself only."

"Jolly sure he wasn't!" grinned Blake

"I suspected as much. Did you know that D'Arcy was going to the tobacconist's this afternoon, Blake? The truth, mind!"

"Isn't he nice and polite?" murmured Blake. "That's what makes him so popular."

"Answer me!" snapped Knox. "Did you know?"

"Oh, yes; I knew!"

"And I suppose that supply of tobacco was as much for you as for D'Arcy?"

Blake chuckled.

"Quite as much," he admitted.

"Then you'd better come along with me too. Do you hear, Blake? Blake!" roared Knox angrily.

But Blake was suddenly deaf. He started along the footpath at a run with Kerr, scattering the torn paper behind him. Knox glared after him, and made a step or two in pursuit. But it would not have been easy to run down one of the best sprinters in the Fourth, and Knox gave up the idea. He took another look at D'Arcy to make sure that he had not disposed of the guilty package, and started for St. Jim's again.

Blake and Kerr chuckled as they ran on. The egregious mistake Knox had fallen into tickled them immensely.

But they had no time for chuckling. The delay in the footpath had brought the pack nearer, and a half-dozen juniors came streaming out from the wood, and there was a shout and a blare from the bugle as the hares were sighted.

"Put it on!" panted Blake.

And the hares fairly flew, winding and doubling through the wood again.

After them went the pack in full cry.

The Terrible Three were in the lead, with Digby and Herries and Kangaroo of the Shell. Fast after them came Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn, Lumley-Lumley, Reilly, Kerruish, Redfern and Owen and Lawrence and Fatty Wynn. Behind, in the wood, breathless hounds were following on the trail, still hoping to be in at the death. But the long-legged Figgins, generally well to the fore on an occasion like this, was nowhere near the front. It was seldom that George Figgins was left behind in a run of any kind; his long legs served him well. But on this occasion he was hopelessly in the rear, and at this moment, in fact, he was not following the trail at all. He was standing under the trees, with an exasperated expression upon his rugged face, and shouting:

"Jammy! Koumi Rao! Jammy!"

But only the echo of Figgins's voice and the distant shouts of the pack answered him.

Figgins glared round at the encircling wood with enraged eyes. Koumi Rao had dodged him at last. At the beginning of the run the Jam had made several efforts to get away, but Figgins had kept a grasp upon his arm. Once they had almost come to blows, but the Jam had thought better of it. The Indian junior had seemed to resign himself to his fate; but he was "playing possum," and in the thickness of the wood he had suddenly glided away while Figgins was helping to pick up the trail.

The pack swept on, leaving Figgins looking for the Jam, and looking in vain.

"Jammy! Come back, you bounder! Don't be a cad, Jammy! I'm not going on without you, you know, and they're leaving me behind! Jammy, old chap! Jammy, you rotter!"

Figgins panted with rage. He was pretty sure that the Jam was still within hearing of his shouts, but the sulky junior did not choose to answer. And Figgins suspected what the Jam had given him the slip for. He wanted to get away to keep his mysterious appointment.

"Oh, the rotter!" groaned Figgins, as the shouts of the pack grew fainter in the distance. "The cad! I shall be left behind! I'll have nothing more to do with him, the black image! Jammy, old chap! Jammy! Jam—Jam—Jammy!"

Echo answered "Jammy," and that was all. The Jam was lying low. Searching for him in the thickets was evidently a hopeless task.

Figgins realised that there was "nothing doing," and he hurried on after the pack. His long legs went like lightning, and he gradually overtook his comrades.

When he was gone there was a rustle in a thicket near at hand, and a dusky face looked out.

The Jam emerged from his hiding-place, and started off in the opposite direction. He had gone to keep his secret appointment, after all, in spite of all Piggy's efforts.

Figgins had to put his "beef" into it to overtake the pack. The trail of torn paper and the footprints in the damp soil guided him, and he came up with the stragglers at last and passed them, and joined the advance guard.

"Oh, here you are!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Where's that black bounder?"

"Bolted!" growled Figgins.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Can't be helped. I've done my best—— Hallo! What are they stopping for?"

The Terrible Three, in the lead, stopped on the Wayland road. The wind was rising, and it had made havoc of the paper trail. Figgins joined them breathlessly.

"Try up and down the road," said Tom Merry.

And the pack scattered.

A loud blast on Tom Merry's bugle announced that he had found the trail again. The nimble hares had long vanished from sight. Down the road towards Wayland the pack ran on, now greatly reduced in number. There were only a dozen juniors still sticking to the trail. Of the rest, some were still labouring on behind, and the others had "chucked" it and started for the school. But Tom Merry & Co. were not to be beaten.

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"Rain!" ejaculated Figgins, as a large drop fell on his flushed and heated face.

"Blow the rain!" said Tom Merry. "This way! They've turned off across the moor!"

The pack swept on. Out on the open moor, Tom Merry swept the expanse for a sight of the hares. But there had come mist with the rain, and there was nothing to be seen save the wet grass and gorse close at hand and the trail of torn paper leading away over the moor. The pack ran on steadily at a good speed, Figgins keeping level with the Terrible Three now. He was determined that at least one New House fellow should be in at the death. Kangaroo and Redfern were with them and Fatty Wynn. The rest trailed off, quite blown.

Manners dropped out at last, and then Lowther. Ten minutes later Tom Merry looked round, and found only Figgins and Fatty Wynn with him.

"My hat! Thinned down, and no mistake!" he exclaimed. "Even old Talbot."

"Looks like it!" chuckled Figgins. "You next, Tommy. This is going to be a New House win. Stick it, Fatty!"

"Groooh!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Boosh!" said Tom Merry. "You won't catch me dropping out. Fatty looks jolly nearly done."

"I—I—I can't keep the pace, Figgy!" stammered Fatty Wynn. "Keep it up, old chap. You'll be in at the finish."

And Fatty Wynn dropped behind.

Tom Merry and Figgins dashed on, and vanished upon the misty moor, running neck and neck. Each of them was fully determined that his House shouldn't be left out at the finish. Fatty Wynn had kept up heroically, considering the weight he had to carry. But the fat Fourth-Former was done now. He dropped into a slow walk, breathing like a pair of very old bellows. The rain was coming down thicker now, splashing on his red, plump face.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "This is rotten! This ain't the clobber for a walk in the rain. Lucky I've got the sandwiches!"

As he was out of the running now, there was no need to hurry. Fatty Wynn turned aside to seek for shelter. He knew that the old shepherd's hut on the moor was close at hand; indeed, that was really why he had not slacked down a little sooner. His idea was to shelter from the rain, and dispose of the sandwiches he had so thoughtfully brought with him, and then take it very easy back to St. Jim's.

"Lemme see! It's close here, on the right," murmured Fatty, peering about him in the mist. He started thoughtfully on the sandwiches while he was looking for the shelter from the rain. Fatty Wynn did not believe in wasting time, and he was hungry. He generally was. "My hat! These are good—jolly good! Those duffers never thought of bringing any sandwiches!"

And Fatty Wynn chuckled with satisfaction at his own forethought.

Two figures loomed up in the mist.

"Hallo, Fatty! Chucked it?" called out Talbot cheerily.

"Done in," said Fatty. "It's all right; Figgy'll catch 'em. It's going to be a New House win."

"Rats!" said Kangaroo. "Come on, Talbot!"

The two hounds raced on. Redfern came trotting on, and then Herries. But they were going very heavily. Fatty Wynn watched them out of sight; they were the last. The rest of the pack had given in, and taken a shorter cut home. Fatty Wynn peered about for the old shepherd's hut, eating his sandwiches as he tramped through the wet grass. It was a couple of hundred yards away, but he found it at last. He gave a grunt of relief as he trampled in out of the rain.

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"Good! That's better!" he murmured.

Then he gave a jump.

There were two rooms in the old hut, and the outer one was in a very dilapidated state, the roof partly fallen in. Fatty Wynn intended to get into the other room, but he halted abruptly. From the inner room came the sound of a voice—a voice he knew well.

"I have eaten their bread! I have eaten their salt! I cannot do it!"

It was the voice of Koumi Rao, the Jam of Bundelpure.

CHAPTER 9.

The Tempter.

FATTY WYNN stood rooted to the ground. For a moment, in his surprise, he forgot even his sandwich.

Koumi Rao there—and someone with him! Fatty Wynn remembered Figgins's words, and how the Jam had been looked after that afternoon to keep him from keeping that mysterious appointment. He had evidently kept it, after all. There was no mistaking the voice of Koumi Rao. He was in the adjoining room, and with him was the cunning rascal who had been working upon the Indian boy's excited mind. Fatty Wynn understood that at once.

He stood quite still. Neither the Jam nor his companion in the inner room had heard him. In that lonely spot they never dreamed of interruption. That, of course, was why the old shepherd's hut had been chosen as the meeting-place.

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed.

His first impulse was to rush into the adjoining room and start with his plump fists on the Jam's unknown companion.

But he checked the impulse. He remembered that there was an open broken window in that room, and the rascal's escape would be easy. His business was to learn the man's identity, so that he would be known, and could be dealt with. It was a time for caution. Fatty Wynn realised that, and he became very cautious. He was going to get a good look at the scoundrel, so that he would know him again. Then the Co. would be able to deal with him easily enough.

In the next room the two talkers were invisible to Fatty Wynn, and to reach the doorless opening between he had to cross the first room, and it was not easy to do so without making some slight noise, which would give the alarm to the Jam and the unknown. And the rascal had many reasons for keeping his identity a secret, and there was not much doubt that, at the first sign that someone was coming, he would whip out of the window and disappear.

Fatty Wynn did not mean to risk letting the man get away unrecognised. He thought for a moment or two, and then, staying only to finish the sandwich he had in his hand, he cautiously began to remove his boots.

In his socks he could creep unheard across the rotten, cracked floor of the hut, by exercising great care, and could peer into the next room, and "spot" the unknown rascal before the latter was aware of his presence. It was evidently the best thing to be done.

Silence for a few moments had followed the passionate outburst of the Jam. From the inner room came the strong scent of tobacco. The unknown was smoking a pipe.

"I cannot do it!" It was the Jam's passionate voice again. "It is true what you tell me; but I have eaten their bread, and one of the salibs is my friend!"

"Ja, ja!" said a soft, silky voice, and the words showed that the speaker was a German, as Fatty Wynn expected. "That is so! So! Do not get excited! I shall prove to you that you must do as I say!"

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Blake made a supreme effort, and bounded on to the gate. Arthur Augustus, in his excitement, stepped out of the gateway, waving his eyeglass with one hand, and his hat with the other. Blake bumped into him, of course. The next moment Figgins's heavy hand was on his shoulder. "How's that?" panted Figgins. "Well caught!" shouted Redfern. (See Chapter 12.)

It was a German speaking, but he was speaking good English. It was necessary for the rascal to speak in English, as the Jam did not speak German, and the unknown, whoever he was, naturally knew nothing of the weird language of Bundelpore.

"Listen to me, your Highness!" went on the oily voice.

Fatty Wynn suppressed a snort of disgust with difficulty as he heard it. Koumi Rao was not called "your Highness" in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. The cunning German was touching the right chord.

"What is the use of listening?" said the Jam wearily. "You have told me all this before. But how can I betray them when I have eaten of their bread and their salt? How can I be false to my friend?"

"Yet you have come to speak to me again," said the silky voice.

There was silence. The Jam broke it.

"Yes, I have come again. But—but I cannot do as you advise. It would be treachery!"

"No, no, no! Is not your Kingdom of Bundelpore under the heel of the British? Is it not the duty of the Prince of Bundelpore to lead his brave warriors against the oppressors of India?"

"Let us speak the truth," said the Jam sullenly. "They do not oppress my country. The British Raj is just. In Bundelpore there has been more of prosperity since men in khaki came with General Merry. That is the truth!"

"Be it so. Yet they have taken your kingdom. Only this once comes an opportunity for shaking off their rule. It will never occur again. The legions of the Kaiser are ready to march to the deliverance of India. Listen! Let the flame be lighted in Bundelpore, and it will spread, it will burn through all India, and the ships and the troops of my Kaiser are ready to land—"

"Your Kaiser?"

"Mein Kaiser, ja, ja! I am German in blood and race, though not called a German. Here I serve the Kaiser, as I have served him for years."

"A spy," said the Jam bitterly. "I, the Prince of Bundelpore, am holding secret meetings with a spy!"

Fatty Wynn chuckled softly. He wondered how the emissary of Berlin liked that. He had to take it smiling, that was certain. Fatty Wynn had nearly got off his first boot by this time.

"Your Highness utters hard words," said the silky voice, after a pause; it was not quite so silky now.

"Bah! It is nothing. You are a spy, is it not true?"

"I serve my master. But now I seek to serve your Highness. Listen! In these days it is the end of the British Empire. On all sides it crumbles. In Egypt, has not the Khedive thrown in his lot with the foes of England?"

"And now he is an outcast and a fugitive," said the Jam.

The German coughed slightly.

"But the end is coming," he said. "Already the Zeppelins hover over this doomed island, spreading death and destruction among—"

"Women and children," said the Jam.

"Your Highness is very bitter. I am seeking only to serve you. You shall have the written promise of Germany that troops shall be sent to your aid. Once the flame is lighted— But perhaps you fear the result? You fear the punishment if the revolt should fail?"

Again the rascal had cunningly touched the right chord. The Jam uttered a passionate exclamation.

"A prince of Bundelpore does not know the meaning of fear! Let us win the victory, or let us fall with honour—I would not pause to think of that. But, I tell you, I have eaten their bread and their salt. How, then, can I call my nation to arms against the British Raj? And, moreover—"

"An independent kingdom—freedom from the foreigner!" said the silky voice. "The title of Deliverer of India! With the help of the German Army, success is certain. It needs but the commencement, and your subjects in Bundelpore will follow you to the death, boy as your Highness is! We know—we have agents there. Listen! You are now at an English school, by order of the British—"

"I am glad to be there; I have a friend there—a friend who would look on me with horror and scorn if he could see me now!" said the Jam, with almost a sob.

"Calm yourself, your Highness. A prince's great duties place him far above the claims of friendship."

"It is true!"

"Listen! All is prepared. You leave school by night—a swift motor-car waits for you. By morning you are on the coast. A steam yacht takes you on board; you are landed in Holland in a few hours. From Holland to Germany a few hours more—out of reach of pursuit. In Berlin you will see the Kaiser. You will receive his promise from his own lips—the promise of aid to overcome the English!"

"A promise costs your Kaiser little. Has not Prussia broken her pledged word to Belgium?"

The German coughed again. It was not an easy question for him to answer. The Jam did not appear to be in a tractable mood.

"Every guarantee shall be given," said the plotter, after a short pause. "You shall be satisfied. Then, think—think, the warriors of Bundelpore raising the flag of revolt; money and arms poured in from Germany; the flame spreading through India. It is not then a subject prince, but a great King that the Jam of Bundelpore will become."

The Jam drew a deep, quivering breath. His wayward, excited mind, taken up by the picture drawn for him, was incapable of penetrating the thoughts of the cunning German. The plotters of Berlin were ready enough to play upon his untamed feelings, upon the half-forgotten wrongs, real or fancied, of a dependent prince, upon his ambition; but only for their own purposes. For well they knew that revolt would not spread; that German troops would never be landed on Indian soil; that the promises they made would not, and could not, be kept. All they needed was a fresh difficulty for Britain—a stab in the back to divert her attention from the great struggle in Europe; and if that was attained, the unhappy tool of the plotters would be cynically left to his fate—to his doom!

As the Khedive of Egypt had been led away by the wiles of the schemers, for the benefit of Prussia, and for his own ruin, so was the Jam of Bundelpore to be led—that was the plot. And the rascally spy and his rascally employers cared nothing for the fact that it was a

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wayward schoolboy they were to plunge into ruin to serve their secret ends.

"What is your answer?" went on the soft voice, after a pause. "Let me have an answer to send back to Berlin. It will take time; it is not easy in these days now that the police are so watchful. Will not the Prince of Bundelpore leave the country of his enemies, to appear once more among his subjects, and lead them to revolt and victory?"

"I—I must think."

"But time presses—time presses."

"I—I cannot decide!"

Fatty Wynn's boots were off now, and he was creeping cautiously towards the doorway. He wanted one look at the German's face, that was all. With great caution the fat Forth-former crept across the broken, rickety floor.

Almost holding his breath, he drew nearer and nearer to the doorway, beyond which he would be able to see the German spy.

Creak!

In spite of his caution, a broken board cracked under the weight of the fat junior.

There was a sharp exclamation in the adjoining room.

"What is that? Someone comes!"

The Jam turned to the doorway.

Fatty Wynn, realising that further caution was useless, made a bound to the doorway, and ran right into the Indian junior as he came through.

He strove to push Koumi Rao out of the way, but the Jam grasped him, and they whirled back together.

"Fly!" called out the Jam.

The German did not wait for that bidding. He was already springing through the window upon the misty moor.

Fatty Wynn, with an exclamation of rage, exerted his strength, and hurled the Jam away from him.

He leaped through the doorway, just in time to catch a faint glimpse of a stout figure in an overcoat vanishing into the mist outside the window.

The German was gone!

CHAPTER 10.

Fatty Wynn's Prisoner.

"YOU black bounder!"

Koumi Rao shrugged his shoulders, as Fatty Wynn came back towards him, almost raging. After all his infinite caution, the German had escaped after all, unrecognised. Fatty Wynn was inclined to plant his plump fist in the mocking face of the Indian junior.

Koumi Rao watched him, his big, dark eyes gleaming. Fatty Wynn savagely drew on his boots.

"So! You spied on me?" said Koumi Rao.

Fatty Wynn glared.

"I wanted to see that German scoundrel's face, so that I could have him nailed by the police. I knew he'd bolt if he heard me coming, you cad!"

"As he did," said the Jam mockingly.

"Yes, hang him!" growled Fatty Wynn. "I did my best."

"You have been here—how long?"

"As long as it took me to get my boots off, without letting that cad hear me," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then you heard something?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You know—"

"I know enough to get you properly looked after, after this," said Fatty Wynn. "You won't have a chance of meeting that spy again. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The Jam flushed a dusky red.

"That is not language to address to the Prince of Bundelpore!" he exclaimed haughtily.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Fatty Wynn. "Precious young scamp, ain't you?"

"What!"

"Precious young scamp!" roared Fatty Wynn. "If you were decent, you'd tell us just where to nail that scoundrel!"

"That I will never do!"

"Good! We'll see what the Head says about that," said the fat Fourth-Former.

"You—you will betray me to the Head?"

"I'm not leaving a German spy running about loose—not if I know it," said Fatty Wynn. "Why, you ass, I should be breaking the law if I didn't give information about that rascal."

The Jam clenched his hands.

"You will betray me. I—I shall then be kept under restraint. The die is cast."

"Eh! What do you mean?"

The Jam gave him a gloomy look.

"The die is cast, and it is you who have made the decision. Do you think I will face the headmaster, to be questioned—the police, to be cross-examined—perhaps detained under suspicion? Think you that the Prince of Bundelpore may be so insulted? Bah! It is finished."

The Jam strode to the doorway.

"Where are you going?" demanded Fatty Wynn.

Koumi Rao did not reply, but he strode cut upon the misty moor. Fatty Wynn hurried after him. He thought he understood.

"You know where to find that scoundrel, and you're going to join him?" he exclaimed.

"What then?" demanded the Jam disdainfully.

"Who will prevent me, if I choose?"

"I won't prevent you," said Fatty Wynn. "But I'll jolly well come with you, and we'll see him together. Glad of the chance."

Koumi Rao made a movement to run, and Fatty Wynn promptly caught him by the arm.

"Not so fast," he said cheerfully.

The Jam trembled with rage.

"Let me go!" he exclaimed passionately.

"Not alone. You're not going to get yourself into trouble, my black tulip; and you are going to take me straight to that German scoundrel, if you go to him at all!"

"Will you let me go?"

"No, I won't!"

Fatty Wynn staggered the next moment, as a dusky fist smote him fiercely. But he did not let go. His grasp tightened on the lithe, slim Indian, and the Jam struggled in vain. He was like an infant in the grasp of the sturdy Welsh junior.

"Now come along, you cad," said Fatty Wynn, between his teeth. "We'll go and see your German friend together. You were starting for Wayland. Come on!"

"I will not go—with you!" panted the Indian.

"Changed your mind? Well, you won't go without me—that's a dead cert," said Fatty Wynn. "But we're not going to stay here jawing. You're taking me to the German beast, or you're coming back to St. Jim's."

"I will not move."

"I don't want to hammer you, Koumi Rao. But if you don't march along this minute, I'll thump you till you're black and blue!" said Fatty Wynn.

The Jam ground his teeth. But he realised that he had to give in. They could not stay there in the rain and the thickening mist. He gave a fierce, impatient shrug of the shoulders, and accompanied the fat Fourth-Former without a word.

Fatty Wynn was not thinking any longer about shelter from the rain. He was only anxious to get Koumi Rao safely back to St. Jim's. The Indian was evidently ready to bolt at the first opportunity, and Fatty Wynn held on fast to his arm as they tramped through the rain over the moor. With his free hand Fatty Wynn extracted sandwiches from his pocket, and proceeded to eat them as he walked. As his temper became a little better, he offered Koumi Rao a "whack" in the sandwiches—an offer that was refused with a fierce shake of the head.

"Let me go—that is all I wish!" said the Jam savagely.

"No fear, Jammy," said Fatty Wynn, more good-humoured now under the influence of the sandwiches. "Why, you ass, don't you see that you'd be done in if you threw in your lot with that spying thief? I should

have to give you away at once, and you'd be collared by the police. Nice end for you that would be, wouldn't it?"

"Am I not my own master?"

"Not by long chalks," grinned Fatty Wynn. "You'll jolly soon find that out, my black tulip!"

"But for Figgins," said the Jam gloomily, "I should be gone already. Only the friendship of Figgins has held me back."

"Jolly good thing for you Figgy made a pal of you, then," said Fatty Wynn. "Kim on! You're not getting away, so you needn't wriggle."

"You mean to speak to the Head of what you have heard?"

Fatty Wynn reflected.

"I'll speak to Figgins first," he said. "I'll leave it to Figgins."

The Jam's face cleared a little. But he spoke no further, remaining sulkily silent as he marched on towards the school with the fat Fourth-Former's grip on his arm.

CHAPTER 11.

A Knock for Knox.

"**A**NYTHING wrong?"

Kildare of the Sixth asked that question, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy meekly followed Knox the prefect into the School House. It was beginning to rain, and Arthur Augustus was glad to get in. The captain of St. Jim's looked at them curiously. It was evident that D'Arcy was being brought in as a culprit.

"Nothin' at all, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Knox is wathah off his wockah, that's all. He hasn't explained what's the mattah with him."

Kildare smiled.

"I'm taking this young rascal to the Housemaster," he said.

"I am suah I have no objection, Knox. In fact, I am wathah glad to get in out of the wain. My toppah would have been quite spoiled. But I shall pwotest to Mr. Cawwington against bein' marched home like this on a half-holiday. I put it to you, Kildare—is it playin' the game?"

"What has he done?" asked Kildare, puzzled.

Knox pointed to the packet which Arthur Augustus was carrying by the string.

"Do you see that?" he asked.

"Yes. What is it?"

"Tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes."

Kildare started.

"What rot!" he said.

"I saw him buying them, in Schultz's shop in Wayland," said Knox. "I spotted him going into the shop, and saw him making the purchase. There are two tins of tobacco, six cigars, and a hundred gold-tipped cigarettes."

"Is that what the packet contains, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly not."

"What!" roared Knox.

"I thought there was some mistake," said Kildare.

"He is lying," said Knox. "Anyway, I'm taking him to the Housemaster. We'll see when the packet's opened."

"I am not lyin', Knox, and you are a wottah to say so. But I do not expect decent mannahs frow you. The packet does not contain a single gold-tipped cigawette."

"Does it contain cigarettes at all?" asked Kildare.

"Yaas; but not gold-tipped cigarettes," explained Arthur Augustus. "I decided aftah all not to have gold tips, because you get more for your money by not having them, you see. I asked Talbot's advice about it."

"So Talbot's in it too?" said Knox, with satisfaction.

"A regular gang of young rascals. I'm not surprised, considering Talbot's past—"

"Chuck that!" said Kildare sharply. "I don't understand this, D'Arcy. Do you mean to say that you have been buying cigarettes, and that Talbot knew it?"

"Yaas!"

"Blake knew it, too," said Knox. "He has confessed

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

that the smokes were as much for him as for D'Arcy. They were his very words."

"Quite twue, too," said Arthur Augustus.

"Come on, you young sweep!" said Knox. "I know you have an awfully good opinion of those young rascals, Kildare, but I'm afraid you won't have a chance of finding excuses for them now."

"I don't want to find excuses for them if they've done wrong," said the St. Jim's captain coldly. "But I don't understand quite. Let D'Arcy explain."

"He can explain to the Housemaster."

"I am perfectly willin' to do so, Knox, and I shall uttah a pwotest against your tywanncal conduct."

And Arthur Augustus followed Knox to the Housemaster's study, leaving Kildare looking very puzzled. The captain of St. Jim's knew Study No. 6 pretty thoroughly, and he was pretty certain that there was an explanation forthcoming. He was not, like Knox, willing to believe evil on the slightest evidence. But the matter was in Knox's hands, and Knox meant to make the most of it. He knocked at the Housemaster's door, and Mr. Carrington bade him enter.

"What is it, Knox?" asked the Housemaster, adjusting his glasses, and looking at the two as they came in.

"A very serious matter, sir," said Knox. "Put that packet on the table, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, deah boy."

Knox fumbled in his pocket, and produced a crumpled sheet of paper. He laid it on the table before the Housemaster, who looked at it in surprise.

"Dear me! This is D'Arcy's handwriting," said Mr. Carrington.

"Yes, sir. I picked that up yesterday," said Knox.

"Under the circumstances, I decided to keep an eye on the boy to-day. You see that that paper contains a list of tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes. This afternoon I saw D'Arcy enter Schultz's tobacco-shop in Wayland and purchase the articles contained in this parcel. I will now open it."

Knox opened the parcel.

Mr. Carrington's eyes almost started through his glasses as the tins of tobacco, the cigars, and the packet of cigarettes were revealed.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed.

"I may add, sir, that Talbot of the Shell, according to D'Arcy's own statement, was aware that he intended to make these purchases, and, indeed, gave him advice on the subject of the cigarettes."

"Is that the case, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Blake of the Fourth has also confessed that the purchases were made as much for him as for D'Arcy."

"That is correct, D'Arcy?"

"No, sir."

"Blake will not venture to deny it, I think," said Knox. "D'Arcy is telling a barefaced falsehood."

"Liah!"

"What?"

"Liah!"

"D'Arcy!" said Mr. Carrington sternly.

"Sowwy, sir; but when Knox says that I am tellin' a falsehood, he is a liah, and it is my duty to tell him so. Blake did not say anythin' of the sort. The purchases were not for him."

"What did Blaké say, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Carrington, motioning to the angry prefect to be silent.

"He said that the smokes were as much for him as for me, sir," said Arthur Augustus—"the supply of tobacco, to use his exact words."

"I do not see any difference between that and Knox's statement, which you have just contradicted."

"There is a very great difference, sir. You see, the purchases were for me, because the things become my property. But the smokes were not for me, because I am not a smokah."

"Oh!" said Mr. Carrington. "You admit having made these culpable purchases?"

"I admit havin' made the purchases, sir. I do not admit havin' obtained smokes for my own use. I should wogard such conduct as disgustin' in a fellow of my yahs."

The Housemaster smiled.

"Naturally, sir," said Knox, "he will make some

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attempt to get out of this; but as he has been caught in the act—"

"Let D'Arcy explain, Knox. If his conduct is such as you seem to believe, he will be punished very severely. But D'Arcy has a good character, and I shall not easily believe that he is a vicious boy."

"Thank you, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "I was quite suah, sir, that I should weceive justice fwom you, Mr. Cawwington."

"But he was caught in the act, sir," exclaimed Knox. "He was actually buying those cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco, and there is the list in his own hand. I do not see how evidence could be more conclusive than that."

"However, I will hear what D'Arcy has to say. For what purpose, D'Arcy, did you make these purchases?"

"To send them to my Lonely Soldiah, sir," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

"Wha-at!"

"My Lonely Soldiah, sir. As I have sent him twelve pairs of socks and six flannel shirts and four mufflafs, I thought I would send him tobacco this time. I have sent him some befoah, of course. I have a wathah nice lettah fwom him about it. I twust," said Arthur Augustus loftily, "that there is nothin' w'ong in sendin' things out to the chaps who are keepin' the Germans fwom comin' heah and burnin' down the school."

"Certainly not, my dear boy," said Mr. Carrington. "I approve highly."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But—but—but—" Knox was stammering with rage. "Surely, sir, you will not accept D'Arcy's unsupported statement! I do not believe him for a moment. He has made up this story in order to hide his vices."

"Nonsense, Knox!"

"What, sir?"

"Why did you not explain to Knox, D'Arcy, that your purchases were for this very praiseworthy purpose?"

"I twied to, sir, but he would not listen to me," said Arthur Augustus. "Besides, he called me a wascal and a scoundwel. Aftah that, it was beneath my dignity to have anythin' to say to him."

Mr. Carrington smiled again. Knox clenched his hands with rage.

"I do not believe him, sir," he said. "I believe this is a pure invention."

"Bai Jove, you wottah!"

"You have proof to offer of your statement, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"What is it?"

"My word, sir," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

Mr. Carrington coughed.

"I should be very sorry indeed, D'Arcy, to doubt your word—I do not doubt it for a moment; but as this matter has been formally reported to me, I must go into proofs. You mentioned a letter you have received from the soldier to whom you have sent little presents. May I see that letter?"

"Certainly, sir! Heah it is."

Arthur Augustus passed the letter to Mr. Carrington. The Housemaster glanced through it. It was a brief note from a soldier at the front thanking the swell of St. Jim's for gifts received.

"That is perfectly satisfactory," said Mr. Carrington, passing the note back to Arthur Augustus. "Knox, you have evidently made a mistake. Moreover, you should have given D'Arcy every opportunity to explain. You should not have been so ready to believe evil of a boy whose character is known to be good."

Knox almost choked. The expression on his face was, as D'Arcy told his chums afterwards, worth a guinea a box.

"At the same time, D'Arcy, you have acted thoughtlessly," said Mr. Carrington. "You laid yourself open to suspicion by making these purchases. On future occasions, when you require goods of this sort to send to your friend at the front, you will oblige me by making them through an older person. One of the prefects will probably help you—or you may ask me. You may go. Take away these things, and let them be despatched immediately. Knox, you will kindly see that they are sent away at once."

"Yaas, sir; but I pwotest against Knox marchin' me

home on a half-holiday, sir, because he has a wotten suspicious mind."

"You placed yourself under suspicion, D'Arcy, by acting thoughtlessly."

"Yaas; but a decent chap would have asked me to explain, and then I could have told him, sir."

"That will do, D'Arcy."

"Vewy well, sir, I will excuse Knox," said Arthur Augustus. "Undah the cires, I will look ovah it; but I trust it will be a lesson to Knox."

And Arthur Augustus walked out, leaving Mr. Carrington struggling with a violent desire to laugh, which he succeeded in suppressing until the junior was gone. Knox followed D'Arcy out into the passage. His face was pale with fury.

"You young hound!" he muttered. "You have succeeded in fooling him!"

"You accuse me of fooling Mr. Cawwington, Knox?" asked D'Arcy, fixing his eyeglass sternly on the bully's enraged face.

"Yes, you young liar!"

"Vewvy well. As you are not satisfied, we will let Mr. Cawwington decide," said Arthur Augustus, going back to the Housemaster's door.

"Stop!" gasped Knox.

"I wufuse to stop. I shall acquaint Mr. Cawwington with your opinion that he has been fooled, and have the mattah quite settled." And D'Arcy raised his hand to tap at the door.

Knox simply gasped. He knew how Mr. Carrington was likely to regard the suggestion that he had been "fooled."

"D'Arcy, stop! I—I—"

"Unless you apologise for your wemark, Knox, I shall take the mattah befoah Mr. Cawwington," said Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"You—you—don't knock at that door, you young sweep! I—"

"I'm waitin'."

"I—I take that back," stammered Knox, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Are you sowwy?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Are you satisfied that my explanation to Mr. Cawwington is perfectly stwaight, or are you not?"

"Yes!" hissed Knox, in dread that the Housemaster would hear the altercation and step out of his study.

"Vewy well, Knox. Undah the cires I will let the mattah dwop."

Arthur Augustus walked away with his aristocratic nose high in the air. He left Knox feeling on the verge of manslaughter.

CHAPTER 12.

Bolted!

"HERE they come!"

Jack Blake gasped the words.

The two-hares were coming down the lane at a run, breathing hard. Blake and Kerr were close to home now. Back in the road four figures had loomed up through a hedge, and were running hard in pursuit. The chase was by sight now. And Blake, looking back, recognised Tom Merry and Figgins, Talbot and Harry Noble. Talbot of the Shell and the Cornstalk had won their way to the front again. But the rest of the pack were nowhere.

"Put it on!" gasped Kerr.

The hares ran harder. But they were very nearly spent. It had been a tremendous run across rough country, and it was no wonder that the pack had tailed off. Blake looked back as the grey old tower of St. Jim's came in sight over the trees. Kangaroo had caught his foot on a stone, and stumbled, and he limped on courageously, but far behind. Tom Merry and Talbot and Figgins came dashing on. Figgins was in the lead.

"Blessed if I can keep it up!" panted Kerr.

"Put your beef into it!" said Blake.

But the pace was slackening down, in spite of their efforts. Figgins drew ahead of the hounds. Tom Merry and Talbot came on well, but the long-legged chief of the New House juniors kept his lead.

Round the gates of St. Jim's a crowd had gathered

of the members of the pack who had taken short cuts home. Prominent among them was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He waved his eyeglass excitedly at Blake as the panting hares came in sight.

"Buck up, deah boy! Wun like anythin'!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Tea's weady in the studay. Put it on!"

Blake put it on gallantly. Kerr did his best, but the long-legged Figgins came on as if he had the seven-leagued boots.

Tap!

Figgins's hand came down on Kerr's shoulder in passing. Kerr slacked down. He was caught.

Figgins grinned and passed him like the wind.

He was only six yards behind Jack Blake now, and both of them were doing their best. Another dozen yards and Figgins was only six feet behind. But the gates of St. Jim's were within six yards now.

"Buck up, Blake!"

"Pile in, School House!"

"Wun like anythin', deah boy! That wottah is just behind you!"

Blake made a supreme effort, and bounded on to the gate. Arthur Augustus, in his excitement, stepped out of the gateway, waving his eyelass with one hand and his hat with the other. Blake bumped into him, of course. The next moment Figgins's heavy hand was on his shoulder.

"How's that?" panted Figgins.

"Well caught!" shouted Redfern.

"The pack wins!" said Tom Merry, coming up breathlessly.

"Bai Jove! Weally, Blake, anotheah foot would have done it!"

"You—you—you image!" gasped Blake, glaring at his noble chum. "You frabjous ass, what did you get in the way for?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"If you hadn't bumped in the way I should have done it!"

"But you didn't do it!" chuckled Figgins. "My hat, I'm fagged!" And Figgins tramped on into the quadrangle in great satisfaction.

Blake, with what little breath he had left, told Arthur Augustus what he thought of him: as they crossed the quadrangle. Arthur Augustus listened with great patience. He could make allowances for a chap who had been caught at the last moment.

Then Blake went to the dormitory for a much-needed rub-down and a change. The stragglers of the pack came in one by one, tired and muddy. In Study No. 6 Arthur Augustus had a big fire going, and the table laid with a festive spread. And the hungry juniors gathered there with great satisfaction, Figgins and Kerr joining the School House chums. Fatty Wynn had not come in yet.

They piled into tea with great good humour, and Arthur Augustus told the story of Knox's report to the Housemaster, amid shouts of laughter.

"You should have seen his face, deah boys!" grinned Arthur Augustus. "I told him I twusted it would be a lesson to him, and I weally twust it will. He weally looked quite gween, you know. And I've sent off my parcel to my Lonely Soldiah. Mr. Cawwington came to the studay and gave me a pound of chocolate to put in it. I have also put the latest numbah of Tom Merry's 'Weekly.' They must be glad to get somethin' weally good to wead in the twenches, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wathah think my Lonely Soldiah will like my war poem in that numbah—the one that begins, you know:

"I sing of the hewoes who fight in the twenches,
Those battle-worn wawriors of Genewal Fwrench's!

When once they get goin' they'll make quite a muck
Of the howwible Prussians who follow Von Kluck!

And I twust in the future the Huns will be wiser
Than to follow that cwack-brained and wascally
Kaiser!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to cackle at, deah boys. This is a sewious poem. There are some vewy tellin' lines, like:

"Mid the wed wear of battle they charge without fear,
And the wed blood is flowin' like spilt ginger-beer!"

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"I think that's wathah good, you know, as a metaphor. I have nevah seen anythin' like that even in Kipling—"

"And you're never likely to!" grinned Tom Merry. "Hallo, here's Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn came into the study, and his eyes were glued upon the tea-table at once. Figgins gave him his chair, and the fat Fourth-Former dropped into it with a grunt. He did not speak for about ten minutes. His jaws were too busy for conversation. Then he remarked, with his mouth full—

"I've got something to tell you chaps. Pass the cake, Blake, old man. This is jolly good cake. I found the Jam."

"Why didn't you bring it over?" asked Monty Lovcher, misunderstanding. "There's only one jam here, and that won't last you three minutes."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've had a time, I can tell you. Got into that old hut on the moor. You know it, Talbot; it's the place where you—"

"I remember," said Talbot, with a nod.

"Well, I went in there out of the rain, and found the Jam. Pass the cake again, old fellow. I must say this is really good cake. Do you know I've only had a dozen sandwiches since we started on the run, excepting a snack I've just had in the study after I locked him up."

"Locked who up?"

"The Jam!"

"Koumi Bao!" ejaculated Figgins. "You've locked him up!"

"Yes, in his study."

"My only hat! What for?"

"Keep him from bolting, and getting back to that German hound. I'll have another cup of tea, Gussy. This is good tea."

"German! What German?" howled Figgins.

"The German spy, you know. I'll try the biscuits, Blake, as you seem to be running out of cake. These are jolly good biscuits."

Figgins grasped his fat chum by the shoulders, and whirled him away from the table. Fatty Wynn grasped biscuits in both hands as he went. Figgins jammed him against the wall of the study.

"Now tell us all about it before you take another mouthful, you porpoise!"

"I say, Figgy, I'm hungry!"

"Tell us, you fat duffer!"

"Wait till I've finished these biscuits, then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn finished the biscuits at a great rate, and cast a longing glance towards the table. But Figgins was in the way.

"Not a bite till you've told us what's happened, you fathead!"

"Oh, all right!"

Fatty Wynn plunged into a rapid history of his adventure—very rapid indeed, as he was anxious to get back to the tea-table. The juniors listened with the keenest interest.

"Bai Jove! What a stwoke of luck!" said Arthur Augustus. "Wathah wotten that you didn't recoguise the cad, Wynn. I wish I'd been there."

"He was a short, fat boulder, middle-aged, I should say," said Wynn. "But I only caught a glimpse of him as he cleared off in the mist. I'd know his voice again, though, anywhere. I've heard it before somewhere, but I can't remember where. Lemme get at those cream puffs, Figgy. I've told you all about it, haven't I?"

"This is pretty rotten," said Figgins, as the fat Fourth-Former recommenced his extensive operations on the tea-table. "Still, the Jammy didn't agree to do as the villain asked him. That's something."

"Only what's going to be done?" said Tom Merry. "Now that we know there's a German spy hanging about we can't keep that dark, whatever happens to the Jam."

"No feah!"

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"I told him I'd leave it till I'd told you, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn. "He tried to dodge me on the way home, but I wasn't taking any. He wouldn't give me his word to keep in the house, so I marched him into his study and locked him in, and I've got the key in my pocket. I say, these cream puffs are jolly good."

Figgins's brows were wrinkled with worry. Fatty Wynn's discovery made the duty of the juniors clear. They had to let the authorities know of the existence of the German spy. There could be no doubt about that. And that would cause trouble for the Jam, but it could not be helped.

"Look here," said Figgins, after a long pause, "the Jam has done wrong in having anything to do with that scoundrel, but I don't believe he would have let himself be led into being a traitor in the long run. I can't believe that. Look here, we'll make him tell us where that villain is, and we'll go and collar him, and hand him over to the police. Then the Jam will be all right."

"Will he tell you?" said Talbot doubtfully.

"We'll make him," said Figgins. "This isn't a time for playing the goat. The young ass might be arrested for this. The blithering little idiot! But, you see, he's only a kid, and full of queer ideas, and that awful villain has been working on his feelings. We'll all go and see him, and make him tell us, if we have to rag him baldheaded!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"All right," said Fatty Wynn. "Here's the key. You don't mind if I stay and finish my tea, do you?"

And Tom Merry & Co., in a crowd, crossed over to the New House, leaving Fatty Wynn to finish his tea. He was not likely to be finished while anything remained uneaten on the festive board in Study No. 6.

Figgins led his army up to Koumi Rao's study, and inserted the key in the lock. He threw the door open and strode in.

"Jammy! Why—where—what— He's gone!"

"Gone! My hat!"

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"Bolted!" yelled Blake.

The study was empty. Figgins rushed to the window—it was wide open—and it was only too clear that Koumi Rao had climbed down the ivy. He was gone!

"He—he mayn't have gone out of the school," said Kerr dubiously.

"He has!" muttered Figgins. "He's gone back to see that German! Oh, the young idiot!" Figgins clenched his hands. "He may not intend to come back at all. The scoundrel will persuade him to bolt if he can. What the dickens are we going to do?"

"Let's make sure he's gone," said Tom Merry.

It did not take long to make sure of that. A quarter of an hour's search made it clear enough that the Jam was not within the walls of St. Jim's. Figgins and the rest met again in the quad, with gloomy looks.

"There's only one thing to be done now," said Manners. "We've got to tell the Head, and get the police called in."

Figgins groaned.

"That will mean awful trouble for that young duffer."

"There's nothing else to be done," said Blake.

"Hold on!" said Talbot.

"Well?"

"Let's go and ask Wynn. If he can give us anything like a description of the rascal we may be able to run him down ourselves, and get the Jam back before the police are called in to collar the spy."

"Come on!" said Figgins.

They returned to Study No. 6, where Fatty Wynn, with a happy and contented smile on his face, was just finishing the last biscuit.

CHAPTER 13.

Tracked Out.

"FINISHED?" asked Figgins, with a sniff.

"Yes," said Fatty Wynn, with a last glance over the table. "I tell you what, Figgy. These School House bounders have stood us a good feed. Suppose we stand them one now in our study?"

"Oh, suffocate him, somebody!" said Figgins. "Fatty, you fathead, the Jam has bolted! He got out of the window!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"We've got to find him, quick!" said Figgins. "It's pretty certain that he's gone to see that villain again."

"Dead cert," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, we've got to find him. Now, think it over in your fat head—if you can think of anything besides gorging—and tell us what that German was like."

"Blessed if I can tell you much. He was short and fat, and I thought he was middle-aged. Only saw him from the back as he skipped."

"Didn't the Jam mention his name in talking to him?" asked Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"Nor where he lived?"

"Oh, I know it was in Wayland somewhere!" said Fatty Wynn confidently. "The Jam was starting off to Wayland after we came out of the hut, but I stopped him."

"Did he speak in German?"

"No, ass! I couldn't have understood half if he had."

"Then how can you be sure he was a German?" demanded Blake.

"He said so. Besides he said 'Ja, ja!' Said he was serving the Kaiser, too. Now I come to think of it, Jammy seemed rather surprised when he spoke of old Tin-ribs as his Kaiser," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "Then the German said he was a German in blood and race, though he was not called a German."

"That could only apply to a German Swiss," said Talbot.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We don't know where to find any giddy Germans in Wayland, but we all know where there is a German Swiss. Old Schultz, at the tobacco-shop, you know. And he's short, fat, and middle-aged."

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors looked at one another with growing excitement. Was it possible that they were on the track?

"What was his voice like, Fatty, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Soft and silky, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth," said Wynn.

"Bai Jove, that settles it! You know, I've been talkin' to old Schultz this vewy aftahnoon, deah boys. You know, he's got an awf'ly smooth and oily voice."

"Looks like it," said Figgins breathlessly.

"Was he smokin', deah boy? Old Schultz is always smokin' a pipe."

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn. "The place fairly reeked with tobacco-smoke."

"I must say it looks as if we're on the giddy track," said Tom Merry soberly. "Schultz is a German, excepting that he happened to be born on the Swiss side of the border. Would you know his voice again, Fatty?"

"What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn, with emphasis. "I'd know that slimy toot again anywhere. I know I've heard it before, too. Might have been when I went shopping with Gussy for tobacco for his soldier a week or two ago."

"Then we know what to do," said Tom Merry. "Get the bikes out, and we'll scoot over to Wayland. Fatty can come into Schultz's shop and jaw to him. If he knows his voice again, that will prove it's Schultz. And we can look for the Jam there."

"And we can get there before the Jam, as he's on foot," said Blake.

"Locking-up time soon," remarked Herries.

"Must chance that."

No more was said. Although they were pretty well tired out with the hard run of the afternoon, the juniors did not think of hesitating. The dusky junior was to be saved from his own folly, and the German spy was to be brought to justice. They hurried round to the bicycle-shed and wheeled out their machines. In a few minutes more the whole party were mounted and riding for Wayland.

Blake's suggestion, that they might arrive on the scene before the Jam, was well founded. It was a long walk to Wayland, but on bicycles the juniors covered the ground, of course, in a sixth part of the time. They were all good riders, and they did not spare themselves. In the falling winter dusk they pedalled away as if their lives depended on it. While the Jam was tramping by one of the footpaths they had to go round a little longer way by the road, but the machines fairly flew. The chums of St. Jim's had never done the distance in so short a time before. As for locking-up at school, that, as it could not be helped, had to be chanced.

In a red-faced, hard-breathing bunch the cyclists came swooping into the old High Street of Wayland. They stopped at a short distance from the corner shop in River Street. The dusk was falling thickly on the old market-town.

"No good a crowd of us going into the shop," said Tom Merry. "We don't want to make the Swiss rascal suspicious. Figgins and Fatty and me——"

"Perhaps I had bettah——"

"You look after these chaps, Gussy. They'll get into some trouble if you don't watch over them with a fatherly eye."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

The three juniors walked away towards the tobacconist's, leaving Arthur Augustus to address his remarks to the empty air.

It was quite certain that Koumi Rao could not yet have arrived in Wayland; he could not yet have covered the distance on foot. Mr. Schultz was in the shop, smoking his big pipe behind the counter, and reading a German-Swiss paper, when the three juniors came in.

"Have you a pocket pipe-lighter?" asked Tom Merry, having decided in advance what he wanted.

"Ja, ja! I have a very good one that is one shilling and sixpence," said Mr. Schultz, in his oily voice.

A sort of tremble ran through Fatty Wynn. Very familiar was that smooth, oily voice to the ears of the fat Fourth-Former.

"One-and-six?" asked Tom Merry, examining the

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article. "All right. Good thing to send to a man at the front—what?"

"Very good," said Mr. Schultz—"very useful."

"Any news in your paper?" asked Figgins.

"Only the same old news," said Mr. Schultz.

"The Huns aren't licked yet—what?"

The German's pale-blue eyes glittered.

"Not yet, young sir," he said. "Perhaps never. Who knows?"

"Oh, they're getting it in the neck," said Figgins.

"Jolly good thing when they're mopped up—what?—set of baby-killing polecats!"

"One-and-sixpence, please," said Mr. Schultz, apparently not hearing Figgys's remark.

But Figgins was watching his face, and he saw the glitter in the man's eyes, the sudden tightening of his fat lips.

The three juniors left the shop, with the pipe-lighter Tom Merry had purchased. They did not speak till they had rejoined the group of juniors round the corner, Fatty Wynn was trembling with excitement.

"Well?" said Figgins.

"He's the man, Figgys."

"Sure?" asked Blake.

"I'd know that oily voice anywhere, and that trick he has of saying 'Ja, ja,'" said Fatty Wynn, with conviction. "I'd be willing to swear to it at the police-station, if you like."

"That settles that point, then," said Figgins. "Let's get out of this. Come down to the towing-path, where we can talk it over."

"Suppose the Jam comes?"

"I'll stay heah in covah, deah boys, and keep an eye open for him," said Arthur Augustus. "If he goes in, I'll come and tell you. You watch the back of the place. There's a back-garden, you know, with a gate on the towing-path, like all these houses."

"Good?"

Arthur Augustus ensconced himself in a shop doorway to keep watch on the Swiss tobacconist's, and the rest of the party walked down to the towing-path, which was at a short distance. Darkness had fallen now, and the streets were lighted; but the towing-path and the murmuring Ryll were in deep shadow. The juniors stopped, under the trees, at a short distance from the row of garden gates. Figgins's brows were wrinkled in deep thought.

"We know the man now," he said. "We can denounce him to the police, if we like. They'd be bound to find some evidence in the place to convict him. That's all easy enough. But the Jam? We can't get him into trouble."

"It's a blessed difficult position," said Talbot. "Suppose we watch for Koumi Rao, and collar him before he can get in, and take him back by force."

"And then denounce that scoundrel to the police," said Monty Lowther. "That's about the best thing we can do."

Figgins nodded.

"Right! Some of you go and join Gussy, then, and the rest stop here. There's only two ways of getting into the place. The Jam can't be here yet, or that fellow wouldn't be in his shop."

Blake and Herries and Digby and Manners returned to the street where Arthur Augustus had been left. Figgins & Co. and Tom Merry and Monty Lowther and Talbot remained to watch the towing-path. It was evidently the best thing—indeed, the only thing—that could be done. The German emissary had to be denounced to the authorities, that was certain, but the juniors were anxious to keep their schoolfellow out of trouble. They were not certain which of the gates led into Schultz's garden, and they separated along the towing-path to keep careful watch.

There was a step on the towing-path—a figure for a moment flitted in the darkness, and a gate creaked. Figgins, who was nearest to the spot, ran forward. In the darkness he caught a moving shadow in the garden. He knew that it was the figure of a boy, but it vanished in the shrubberies. Figgins was about to call out "Jammy," but he checked himself. He knew that the Jam would not answer his call; and he did not want to

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attract attention to the dusky junior's presence on the premises of the German agent. He stepped back quietly to the others, and drew them together with a whisper.

"He's come!" he muttered.

"Where is he?"

"Gone into the garden. We're going after him. Come on!"

Figgins led the way. They passed quietly into the long garden, and Figgins led the way up to the house. The windows at the back of the building were all dark. Where was the Jam? Suddenly from the darkness a light gleamed—the gas had been lighted in a back room. The French windows were open, and in the light the juniors saw clearly two figures in the room—Koumi Rao of the Fourth Form of St. Jim's, and the fat, stumpy figure of Hermann Schultz.

There was a smile of satisfaction on the German's fat face.

"It is good! So! You have come—your Highness has decided?"

The words were quite audible to the juniors in the garden. They were about to rush forward, but they held back. They were anxious to hear Koumi Rao's reply, for upon his answer to the German spy depended whether the Jam of Bundelpore was a traitor or whether he was true. Figgins almost trembled as he waited.

"Yes, I have decided."

"Good!" Schultz rubbed his hands. "You will go—you will leave that English school; and in Bundelpore—"

"I have decided," repeated the Jam. "That is what I have come to tell you. I cannot betray those whose bread I have eaten. I have a friend who trusts me, and I cannot break faith with him. That is what I have to tell you."

The German's face was convulsed with rage and disappointment. In the dark garden Figgins drew a deep, deep breath.

CHAPTER 14.

To the Rescue!

KOUMI RAO had spoken quietly, but with determination in his voice.

His glance did not falter before the furious look of the German.

But it was only for a moment or two that Hermann Schultz's fat face betrayed the fury in his heart. Then he calmed himself with an effort. The reward that had been promised him by the master spy in Berlin, if he succeeded in inveigling the Indian lad into the nefarious plot, was trembling in the balance. The Swiss moved his position a little, so that he stood between the Jam and the open French window by which the junior had entered. In the garden the juniors did not move. They were curious to see the end of this strange scene before they chipped in. The Jam's words had relieved their hearts of an oppressive weight.

"Listen to me," said Hermann Schultz, in the silky voice Fatty Wynn remembered so well. "You have not decided—you will think again, your Highness."

"I have thought enough. I cannot be false to my salt, false to my friend. Listen! I was forced back to the school. I was locked in my room."

"An insult to your Highness."

"True. But in my room I thought and thought. He was to tell Figgins—my friend. He has told him before this. Then I thought—I have sat at the table with Figgins, I have eaten with him, I have played games with him; he has made me his friend. Can I be a traitor after that? I knew that I could not. I was mad to listen to you even for one moment—mad, mad!" said the Jam, in a husky voice. "Figgins will despise me for listening to you, but he shall never despise me as a liar and a traitor. I will be true to my salt. That is my answer to you."

"You have come here to tell me this?" muttered the German, grinding his teeth as he read the inflexible determination in the dusky face before him.

"Yes; but that is not all."

"Ah, there is more!" said the German, in a mocking voice.

"There is more," said the Jam quietly. "Because I have listened to you I will not denounce you to the police—if you will flee at once. But now that my eyes are opened I know what I must do. If I permitted that a spy, a scoundrel, remained here to do his wicked work I should be a traitor. So I tell you this—you must go! If you do not leave at once you will be arrested."

"I—arrested!"

"Yes. This night you must leave this town. I will give you two days to leave the country. After that I shall speak. Then, if you are still in England, you will be arrested."

The Swiss laughed softly.

"For ten years," he said, "I have lived here, in the pay of the Berlin Secret Service, to send information to my chiefs. You dream that I shall give up my post now—at the word of a boy?"

The Jam made a movement to go. But the stout form of the German barred the way.

"One moment," said Hermann Schultz softly. "I have tried, as I was ordered, to persuade you. But do you think that there was no second plan, if the first should fail? Fool! If persuasion failed to move you, my orders were to send you to Germany by any means that offered. To kidnap you, fool that you are. And by coming here now you have placed yourself in my hands. You will not leave so easily. Once in Berlin, my prince, you will listen to the voice of reason, or you will never again see the light of day."

The Jam laughed contemptuously.

"Send me to Germany! Oh, you are mad! And how?"

"I shall keep you here, your Highness—bound in my cellar," said Schultz coolly. "You will be sent away, drugged, and packed in a box. That box will be shipped to Holland, and then to Prussia. You will not even recover your senses till the box is opened in Potsdam. There you will hear reason, and obey. And if you should not, then you will disappear, and our agents in the East will let it be known to the people of Bundelpore that the British have made away with you." And the German laughed again softly.

The dusky junior looked at him.

"And this," he said—"this is the scoundrel I have listened to—whom I have allowed to flatter and to influence me. That is the friendship of the Prussian Kaiser that has been promised me. Yes, I have been mad—blind! But I do not fear you. Stand aside!"

The Jam sprang forward. In a moment the German's grasp was upon him, and he was borne to the floor.

There was a grinding of feet outside, and Figgins came in with a bound. But for the presence of the St. Jim's juniors, matters would have gone hard with the Jam of Bundelpore. He was no match for the German. But as it was, the struggle was interrupted almost as soon as it had started. Figgins seized the rascal by the collar, and dragged him away from the Jam. He went spinning into the arms of Tom Merry & Co., who promptly collared him. Down went Hermann Schultz upon the floor with a terrific bump, and Fatty Wynn sat on his chest and pinned him there.

Koumi Rao sprang to his feet, panting.

"Figgins!"

"Just in time, old chap," said Figgins. "Keep that rascal tight, you fellows."

"You bet!" said Tom Merry.

The German was struggling wildly. But there was no escape for him. The crowd of juniors had him fast.

"Figgins!" panted the Jam. "You—you know. I—I had listened to him. I—I had it in my mind to—"

"I know you gave him the straight tip, Jammy; I just heard you," chuckled Figgins. "I knew you were as straight as a die. 'Nuff said!"

"Figgins, you are still my friend?"

"Your pal for life, old son."

"I am sorry—I am ashamed."

"All's well that ends well, Jammy."

There were tears in the sensitive Indian's eyes. He had dallied with temptation, but his heart was true at the core. But now that repentance had come, remorse came with it, and he was overwhelmed.

"Figgins, my friend, some day, when I am in my kingdom, you shall be my Minister, and ten thousand spears shall do your bidding. While the stars shine and the rivers roll, Koumi Rao will be faithful to his friend and to the British Raj!"

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins. And he gave Koumi Rao's dusky hand a grip that made him wince.

Tom Merry & Co. rode back to St. Jim's in great spirits.

The police had been called in, and the Swiss was now safe under lock and key, to take his trial as a spy, and evidence enough had been discovered in his house of his rascally occupation. The Jam's evidence against him would have to be given later. But without that, there was ample to condemn the rascal. The spy's audacity in laying sacrilegious hands upon the noble person of a Jam of Bundelpore seemed, in Koumi Rao's eyes, to merit the most condign punishment. And it was certain that Hermann Schult would get it, if not for that, at least for his other sins.

Koumi Rao mounted behind Figgins for the ride home. The juniors were in a state of triumphant glee. Only Arthur Augustus was a little inclined to grumble for not having been "in at the death." But even Arthur Augustus admitted that matters could scarcely have ended more satisfactorily, even if he had been on the scene.

The juniors were late for calling-over. Knox of the Sixth met them as they came in, and with much satisfaction told them that the whole party were to go to the Head's study at once.

They went quite cheerfully. They had to go there, anyway, to report what had happened. And Knox, who listened in the passage for sounds of anguish, had a woeeful disappointment.

All he heard was the murmur of voices. And when the study door opened at last, he heard the Head say:

"My dear boys, you have done well—very well indeed. You have performed a great service—a very great service."

And Knox, feeling that his luck was quite out, stamped away to his study in disgust.

And, needless to say, from that day Tom Merry & Co. were very pally with the wayward Indian lad who had been Tempted but True!

THE END.

NEXT WEDNESDAY.

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BEVERLEY KENT.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

Bob Hall, a fine, strapping young fellow, succeeds in joining a famous Hussar regiment, known as the Die Hards. After Bob has been in the regiment for some time his ne'er-do-well cousin, Captain Lascelles, joins also. Bob finds that, so far from being friendly, Lascelles is constantly endeavouring to get him into trouble, with the object of having him dismissed from the Service in disgrace. Bob, however, with the help of his many friends, is successful in defeating the villain's schemes. Bob comes into contact with the Earl of Dalkey, who finds that Bob is some connection of his family, and promises to have investigations made. It transpires that Bob is heir to a large fortune, of which Lascelles is in enjoyment. After plotting the downfall of two other officers in the regiment, and being exposed by Bob, Lascelles is compelled to send in his papers and resign his commission. Bob, now promoted to the rank of sergeant, goes to London to search for a non-com. named Bryant, who has stolen some canteen funds and decamped. Bob is shadowed by men in the pay of Lascelles, and lured to a house in the East End. The police raid the house, Lascelles and his confederates escape, and leave Bob unconscious. When he comes to, he finds himself in hospital, and is further surprised to see, coming down the ward, the burly figure of a man he has never seen before.

(Now go on with the Story.)

Two Old Friends Appear.

The stranger nodded respectfully to the nurse, and took a seat by Bob's bedside, rubbing his mouth with the back of his hand as he gazed down solemnly at the lad, who returned his stare with interest.

"What are you doing here, anyhow?" Bob demanded. "You're a bobby, ain't you? Thought so. The light is so bad that I couldn't make certain. Are you supposed to be ill, or convalescent, or what? You're looking fit enough, at all events."

The policeman gazed as humbly as a dog at the nurse, who shook her head.

"You will know all soon enough," she explained to Bob. "You want to get strong, don't you? Well, you must obey instructions if you do, and now you must go to sleep."

"That's not possible until I know why this chap is here," Bob replied firmly. "How can I sleep? My mind's in a whirl. Whilst I'm lying here a villain is escaping. I may be ruined, I may be—"

"You'd better tell him," the nurse interjected hurriedly. "He'll work himself into a fever if he goes on this way."

"I've been put here by the sergeant," the policeman explained. "I'm on dooty, that's what I am."

"Why?"

"Cos we don't know much about you, I s'pose. We found you more dead than alive, an' we've got a warrant for your arrest. But it'll all come right in the end, mate, and there's no use working yourself into a state," the policeman continued quickly, as Bob's face flashed scarlet. "Just you—"

"Who do you think I am?" the lad scoffed indignantly.

"There's time enough to go into that," the nurse urged. "You really must lie down and compose yourself, or I'll have to send for the house-doctor."

"One moment!" Bob pleaded. "I only want this chap to answer a question. Who does he think I am?"

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"Sergeant Bryant of the Die Hards!" the policeman replied, with a very knowing look.

Bob drew his breath sharply. He gazed long and intently at the stolid face before him; then he burst into a peal of nervous laughter. He was weak and badly shaken, and could not altogether control his feelings.

"Oh, you blessed, blissful idiot!" he gurgled. "I'm not Bryant, thank goodness; I'm Bob Hall. All right, nurse, I'll go to sleep. Yes, I'll take that medicine if you like, but I don't need anything. This is the greatest lark I ever knew."

The lad swallowed the bitter draught the nurse had handed to him, and he sank back on his pillow, a grim smile on his face.

The policeman's figure seemed to swell out with injured dignity, and the nurse turned her head away for a moment to hide a smile. Then she looked quizzically at the bobby.

"I told you from the first that there was some mistake," she whispered. "The lad is too honest and manly-looking to be a rogue."

"Appearances ain't everything!" the policeman grunted, as he crept out of the ward again. The nurse watched Bob for some minutes to make certain that the opiate had been effective, and then, gliding away, she continued on her ceaseless mission of mercy from sufferer to sufferer through the long vigil till daybreak.

When Bob awoke dinner was over, the patients, sitting up in their beds, were chatting gaily, and the ward was crowded with their friends, for it was visiting day.

The sun was streaming into the room, smiles and laughter were on the lips of most, and the solemn stillness had been succeeded by the bustle and animation of life. Hardly had the lad opened his eyes before a nurse was at his bedside with a cheery smile.

"How long have I slept?" the lad asked, in amazement. "Sixteen hours," the nurse replied. "Now you must have some soup. Then you can sit up if you like."

Bob took his light meal with relish, and felt wonderfully strong again. He watched the others around him, and fell to speculating about them.

He was thinking thus, more of others than of himself, as was often his way, when an exclamation close at hand caused him to look up suddenly.

A lady, richly dressed, and accompanied by the matron of the hospital, had stopped close to his bed and was gazing at him earnestly. She was young and pretty, and, above and beyond all, her face was tender and sympathetic.

"I know that man!" she gasped. "I'm sure I can't be mistaken. Why—why, he once saved my life!"

Bob had no wish to pose as a hero in a room full of people. He heard the rustle of silk, and a small, jewelled hand was laid timidly on his shoulder.

"You are Robert Hall?" the lady began hurriedly.

"Yes," Bob replied.

"And you know who I am?"

"Yes, I do. You are Lady Miriam."

"Yes; and you saved my life at Dublin Castle, when I would have been burnt to death if it had not been for your gallant conduct. Why are you here? What has happened?"

"I met with an accident, and I only awoke last night to find myself here," Bob explained. "I came down from Edinburgh, where the regiment is now stationed, to do some business in London."

"You are too ill to go back to Edinburgh yet," Lady Miriam insisted. "My father will be here at any moment now. He has promised to call for me in the carriage on the way home and you must come, too."

Bob's face flushed scarlet. He would have much preferred to have been left in the ward, for he had no desire for grandeur; but, of course, he could not explain this, and he saw well the kindness that prompted Lady Miriam to speak as she did.

He was hesitating, not knowing what to say in reply, when an unusual bustle arose in the doorway, and old Lord Dalkey, accompanied by the house-doctor, entered the ward. Lady Miriam beckoned to her father to approach.

"Such a glad surprise, father!" she cried. "Here is an old friend, and it is our turn now to be of service."

"Eh—what?" Lord Dalkey cried. "An old friend of ours here in hospital, and we didn't know of it! How long has he been here? Why didn't he send word to us? Why, bless my life, you're right, child! It's young Robert Hall, the soldier!"

Exit Lascelles!

The old earl advanced, round-eyed, and gazed down out of his kindly eyes at Bob.

"What's happened to you, my lad?" he cried. "I thought—er—your regiment was in Edinburgh. I—"

"He's to come home with us, father," Lady Miriam interjected. "We must take care of him, and make him strong again."

"A good idea, Miriam! Of course, he must come along at once. We've come over to London, and we're staying in my house here because—er—because—" The old earl broke off and chuckled. "Because my daughter is to be married in a few days, and the ceremony is to be performed here. You'll be strong enough to attend it, I'm sure—that is, if you leave it to us to hasten your cure." Yes, Lady Miriam is soon to become Lady Miriam Lascelles.

Bob's face twitched so violently that all thought he had been seized with a sudden spasm.

"I'm sure he's better away from here," Lady Miriam cried, in womanly distress. "Prevail on him to come, father."

"Thanks! I'll go to your house," Bob said, though his features were very grim. Then, falling back on his pillow, he hid his face with his hands.

"The cur!" he muttered. "Yes, I'll go to Lord Dalkey's house, and I'll save that girl from the clutches of Lascelles. The low blackguard! There'll be no marriage—not likely!"

Bob lay resting on a sofa in the sumptuous drawing-room in Park Lane, where Lord Dalkey's London residence was situated. The lad was still weak, and his head was apt to grow dizzy with any exertion; so by the advice of Sir Henry Playwell, the old earl's family physician, he kept as quiet as possible, and was glad to be left alone.

Around him were a hundred evidences of wealth and culture. The apartment was gorgeous, yet everything was in good taste. The thick, soft carpet, the decorations on the walls; the beautiful old-world furniture; the magnificent oil-paintings, the bric-a-brac, the statues, the photographs, silver and nicknacks, all gave an air of comfort and luxury that told of refinement and taste. Bob lay looking out of the open window on to the street below, where motor-cars flashed by, and on beyond to where the greensward of Hyde Park was dotted with human figures and sprinkled with flower-beds, shrubs, and trees. Wherever he gazed the scene was like fairyland, and the lad thought that here, at all events, all ought to be happiness and goodwill.

He shuffled uneasily, for the thought brought back unpleasant recollections, and he had proof already that there were villains amongst the rich as amongst the poor. And now he had to deal with one of the former at any moment. Yes, he had to bring trouble and sorrow into this luxurious and happy home in order that crime and despair might be shut out. Lady Miriam liked Lascelles—she had as much as said so to Bob—yet, if her life was not to be blighted at the start, it was necessary that she should realise that she had placed her trust in an unscrupulous and cowardly scoundrel. So Bob lay waiting—waiting for Lascelles.

The door was softly opened, and Bob, half hidden in the bow window, heard the butler's oily voice as he spoke on the threshold:

"Will you step inside, captain? I will tell Lady Miriam that you have called."

The lad turned his head, and gazed eagerly. The butler was holding the door open, and he bowed gravely as he passed Lascelles and entered the room. The scoundrel was immaculately garbed. He wore an air of genteel superiority; he would easily have passed for an elegant and polished man of fashion. No one who did not know him could possibly

have surmised that he was nothing better than a cold, calculating, heartless villain. To the uninitiated it would, indeed, have been hard to realise that the courtly-looking gentleman was in point of fact the friend and confederate of the most depraved and the toughest ruffians of London's slums.

Lascelles laid down his topper on a table as the door was closed, and, drawing off his gloves, he dropped them into the hat. Then he walked to a large glass to study his appearance, and at that moment Bob, with some pain, and with face drawn and pallid, slipped off the sofa and slowly crossed the room. Lascelles did not hear him approaching over the heavy carpet, but even as he gazed into the glass he saw Bob's reflection, and uttered a cry. Turning and grasping a chair for support, he gazed in fear and alarm at the young sergeant.

"You here!" he gasped. "I thought—er—I thought—" "Yes, you thought you'd seen the last of me when your low hireling felled me to the floor in Gwalior Street; but I am still alive, though badly shaken, and I am here."

As Bob spoke he hardly recognised his own strong voice, so weak had it become with illness, and, leaning against a table for support, he drew his breath fitfully and tremulously, as if the exertion exhausted him. They were a strange contrast—the strong, healthy, well-groomed dandy, and the gaunt invalid; but in the latter's face, despite his illness, were strength and character, whilst fear and cowardice blanched the other's features.

"How dare you come here! Who gave you admittance?" Lascelles hissed. "I'll ring the bell and have you ordered out before Lady Miriam appears. It's like your impudence to venture into a mansion where you're not wanted. Just go down the stairs again, or else—"

"Ring the bell if you like," Bob laughed shortly. "I'm Lord Dalkey's guest, and I am here to see you."

"To see me?"

"Yes, to warn you. Take your hat and go while there is time, for if Lady Miriam comes into this room I'll say what I know about you before her."

Lascelles trembled from head to foot. His lips twitched, his eyes blazed with anger, his fingers clenched tightly on the chair; he moved as if to advance and fell Bob where he stood; then he stopped, glaring around like an animal at bay.

"Go!" Bob reiterated, pointing to the door.

The villain instinctively put his hand to his collar to pull it forward so as to get more air.

"Will you keep silence if I do?"

"No!"

The answer came firm and emphatic. Lascelles bent forward over the chair and stared with a look of terror.

"Then why should I go?" he snarled.

"Because by doing so you will save Lady Miriam from pain and humiliation. Is not that reason enough, you cur? Do you want a woman to show the agony of her heart before us men? If you have a spark of decent feeling left you will clear out and disappear. You cannot marry Lady Miriam; you shall not marry her! All your hopes that way—"

"Who says I shall not marry her?"

"I, Bob Hall, say so. She likes you for what she thinks you are. When she knows your real character she will scorn and despise you!"

"You dare—"

"I'll dare anything!" Bob replied proudly. And his voice rose strong and clear under the stress of his feelings. "Dare!" he scoffed. "What have I to fear from a coward and a cad like you? Think twice before you threaten me, for your liberty is in my hands; and as regards honour—why, you lost it long ago! One word or so from me, and you will appear in the felon's dock. The associate of those who attempt murder is a fool, indeed, if he tries bluster with the man who can hound him into gaol."

"You have no proofs!" Lascelles sneered icily. "Do you think your word will be taken in this house before mine? Do your worst! You will only lose useful friends, and you can't hurt me."

"Then you will not go?"

"No!"

"All right!"

Bob had become suddenly calm. He turned, and, walking back, rested for support against the side of the sofa. His head was throbbing painfully, he found it hard to keep his thoughts collected, he felt on the verge of fainting; yet he hid his physical distress so well that Lascelles did not notice it. Resting against the sofa, the lad looked steadily at the door, and by degrees the faintness passed away, and his sight grew clearer. But he knew that he was but ill-equipped in health for the tragic scene he had resolved to go through. Lascelles watched him anxiously, and saw the resolution in the young sergeant's attitude.

The door handle was turned, and both men started. Had the moment come? Was the trial of strength to begin?

No. To Bob's amazement a strong, manly stride shook the threshold, and Sergeant Gibson, about the last man Bob expected to see in those luxurious surroundings, walked into the room, nodding cheerily to a flunkey who had opened the door.

"Hallo, Bob! I'm jolly glad to see you!"

Gibson crossed the room in half a dozen long strides as he spoke, and wrung Bob's hand cordially. Then he looked with pain at the haggard young face.

"By gum, you are knocked out of time!" he cried. "What happened to you, lad, since we parted the other night? I've been hunting high and low for you, wiring to the barracks at Edinburgh, driving all over the town, stirring up the chaps at Scotland Yard, and it's only half an hour ago I found out that you had been taken, more dead than alive, to hospital, and that the Earl of Dalkey had carried you off here."

"I was assaulted and nearly killed! I was decoyed into a den, and set about by the orders of a villain! It's a mere chance I escaped. I—"

Gibson's face had grown black as thunder.

"Show me the scoundrel!" he cried hotly. "If ever I get up with him I'll—"

"There he is," Bob replied dispassionately. "It was my cousin Captain Lascelles, lately an officer in the Die Hards!"

Gibson wheeled round on his heels, and glared in amazement at the polished reprobate.

"Do you mean to tell me—"

"It's a lie!" Lascelles hissed. The coward was trembling violently.

"It's the truth!" Bob affirmed, quietly. "But that's a business that can wait, Gibson. I'm glad you came, though, for I'm not fit for much, and there's work to be done at once. This cur is engaged to Lord Dalkey's daughter, and the lady may enter this room at any moment. She doesn't know what the cad is like, and I've warned him that I'll expose his villainy if he insists on marrying her. He's stopping on in the hope of brazening out the truth, for, like the cur he is, he doesn't care a scrap what the girl feels so long as he can get her money. I've told him to clear out, and—"

"And he won't, I s'pose?"

Gibson nodded his head as he spoke, and, laying his regulation cane on the table, he drew off his gloves.

"Well, he's got to leave, and sharp, too!" Gibson continued meaningly. "We can't stand here wrangling with him, for you must come along at once, Bob, or else Bryant will escape. I've been in mortal dread that he'd slip through our fingers before I could find you. Now, Mr. Lascelles, out you go, else I'll take the law into my own hands!"

"I tell you this young cur is speaking falsely!" Lascelles almost shouted. "All that he's said—"

Gibson grinned. One glance at Bob, and another at Lascelles, was quite sufficient to satisfy him as to where the truth lay. There is no man better able to read human nature than a non-commissioned officer of experience.

"I believe what Bob Hall says, and that means that I think that you're a liar!" Gibson replied bluntly. "Out you go, or I'll set about you!"

"If you dare," Lascelles cried, "I'll send for the police! I'll jolly soon let you see that a private house is not the place—"

"All right, send for the police, and I hand you over on the charge of attempted murder!" Bob rapped out. "I'll spare you no punishment unless you promise to leave this house for ever!"

"That's straight!" Gibson agreed. "Now, then, which is it to be? I've been a witness to this business, and I've heard what Hall says. Will you go now, and will you make that promise?"

Lascelles shuddered. He looked appealingly at Bob, and

never did his face seem more contemptible than in its abject cowering.

"Quick! I hear footsteps!" Gibson cried, crossing the room. "Give us the promise, or else—"

"I promise!" Lascelles groaned.

"Then clear out!"

As Lascelles crossed to the table to pick up his hat Lady Miriam entered the room.

"I'm sorry I've been delayed!" she cried, as she walked swiftly forward and laid her hand in Lascelles'. "Surely you're not going? You'll stay for lunch? I thought—"

"I must go," Lascelles explained huskily.

"But you'll be back soon? I have a great deal I want to talk about, and—"

"Oh, yes; I'll be back before long!" Lascelles interjected. "Adieu for the present! Don't worry! I'll call again!"

Lady Miriam looked at Gibson.

"This is Sergeant Gibson—a friend of mine," Bob explained. "We also have to leave at once. Gibson has brought some news which is most urgent."

Lascelles walked out of the room, and the two chums followed.

"I'm glad there wasn't a scene!" Gibson muttered. "That's a nice girl, and I'm sorry she ever set eyes on such a scoundrel! Now, Bob, we must look sharp. From what I've heard, I believe that Bryant means to make a bolt to America if he can."

Leaving Lord Dalkey's house, the chums hurried to Scotland Yard. On the way Gibson told Bob that a warrant issued at the instance of the Die-Hards for the arrest of Bryant had reached London, but that the sergeant so far had evaded capture. As it was necessary that Bob's name should be cleared, and as this could only be done by a confession from Bryant, the lad entered the police-office nervously, fearing he might hear that Bryant had escaped beyond the seas.

"Ah, so you've been found, anyway!" the inspector grinned when he saw Bob. "This is a small business from our point of view, and yet it's one of the rummiest I ever had to tackle. A couple of days ago we came near to catching our man, and he's now vanished altogether. What's more, he hasn't left London, and he can't well do so, either. The way he's managed to baulk us has put our backs up, and the chaps are watching for him at every station and down at the docks. What's more, he's spent his money."

"Have you any suggestion as to what's happened?"

"Not much. We've ascertained that Bryant met a well-dressed man, and they had a conversation, and went away together. That's all we know."

"And, of course, you're trying to find that man?"

The inspector grinned.

"London's a biggish place, and there are plenty of toffs," he remarked. "We couldn't get much information as to the chap's appearance from the lad as saw him and Bryant together."

"Where were they?"

"In the Mile End Road."

"That reminds me!" Bob cried. "I got a telegram, with your name as signature, sent to me from the Mile End Road, and telling me to go to Gwalior Street, where I was attacked," he explained hurriedly to Gibson. "You know, you arranged that you'd send me one the night I called on you. Well, I turned up at Charing Cross Post-office, and there it was."

"I sent no telegram!" Gibson affirmed. "I said I'd send you one if we got on Bryant's tracks. But we didn't, so there was nothing to wire about."

"Then the telegram wasn't from you?"

"No, it wasn't."

Bob extracted the crumpled form from his pocket, and the inspector and Gibson gazed at it earnestly.

"Well, I'm blowed!" Gibson gasped. "Some fellow's been forging my name. Now, what was his dodge, and how did he know that you and I were after Bryant? My headpiece is too thick to puzzle out such an amazing mystery. This is some villain's work!"

"It was sent to me as a decoy. But how the ruffian knew about Bryant is the puzzle," Bob agreed. "However, there's no use stopping here. I'm sure the inspector will help us all he can, and meantime I'll try to fathom this mystery. Soldiers ain't much good as detectives, I suppose; but, still, I mean to have a try that way. Come on, Gibson; I've got an idea!"

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Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE.

BEWILDERING.

Two correspondents once wrote to a country editor, desiring to know respectively, "What is the best way of assisting my twins through teething?" and "How shall I rid my orchard of grasshoppers?"

Both questions were answered in the paper in due course, but unfortunately the initials somehow got mixed, so that the fond father of twins was thunderstruck to read:

"Devoted Pater,—If you are unfortunate enough to be plagued with these unwelcome little pests, the quickest way of settling them is to cover their sleeping-place with straw, and set it on fire."

The other correspondent, who had been troubled with grasshoppers, was equally amazed to read:

"The best method of treatment is to give each a warm bath twice a day, and rub their gums with indiarubber."—Sent in by Albert Carter, Leekfrith, Staffs.

ALL KINDS OF CATS.

A schoolboy, when asked to write an essay on cats, produced the following:

"There are a lot of different kinds of cats. Those that are good for little children to maul about and tease are called Maultese cats. Some cats purr in a funny way; these are called Purrnian cats. Cats with bad tempers are called Angorie cats."—Sent in by J. E. Elder, Edinburgh

GOT WHAT HE WANTED.

"You haven't explained how you came to have Mr. Smith's chickens in your possession," said the judge.

"I'm trying to think, yer honour," replied the accused. "Give me time."

"Certainly!" returned the judge. "You can have six months!"—Sent in by P. Eastop, Walthamstow, N.E.

GEE-WHIZ!

An American tourist entered a Paris restaurant with his two little sons. He ordered a bottle of mineral water and three plates. When these were set before him, he shared out on the plates a packet of sandwiches which he had brought with him; and the party commenced to dispose of them.

The manager, overcome by this outrage, approached him and said:

"I should like to inform you that this is not a—"

"Who air yew?" asked the American.

"I am the manager," was the reply. "And if you don't—"

"Oh, good! I was just goin' to send for yew. Why isn't the band playin'?"—Sent in by R. Sumnerfield, Stretford, near Manchester.

REVENGE.

After the dentist had extracted a small boy's tooth, the young victim asked for the molar that had caused all the trouble.

"Certainly," replied the dentist, "you can have it! But why do you want it?"

"Well," responded the small sufferer, "I'm going to take it home, stuff it full of sugar, and watch it ache."—Sent in by John Coakley, Carshalton, Surrey.

READY TO DO THE SAME.

A collier, wandering on some land belonging to a Yorkshire nobleman, happened to meet the owner face to face. His lordship asked the collier if he knew he was walking on his land.

"Thy land! Well, I've got no land myself," was the reply, "so I'm forced to walk on somebody else's. Whur did you get it fro'?"

"Oh, I got it from my ancestors," replied the earl.

"And whur did they git it fro'?"

"They fought for it."

"Ah, well," said the collier, squaring up to his lordship, "come, an' I'll fight thee for it!"—Sent in by J. Pollock, Boscombe, Bournemouth.

NO CHANGE.

With the boundless enthusiasm of his kind, the food faddist harangued the mob on the marvellous results to be obtained from chewing nut-food.

"Friends," he cried, swelling visibly and slapping his chest, "two years ago I was a walking skeleton—a haggard and miserable wreck. What do you suppose brought about this great, this marvellous change in me?"

He paused to see the effect of his words.

Then a voice from the crowd asked:

"Wot change?"—Sent in by W. B. Norton, Wallsend.

COME IN THE OFFICE.

Tramp (to baughty old gent): "Spare a copper, sir."

Haughty Old Gent: "I never give money to people in the street, my man."

Tramp: "Then call at me 'ead orfis, and settle wiv me sekkterry."—Sent in by Miss F. Browning, Margate.

WELL PREPARED.

The counsel for the defence in a case of assault was questioning a witness.

"Now, you say you saw the quarrel between the two men?"

"I did," replied the witness.

"How far away from them were you?"

"Four yards two and a half inches."

"Eh?" shouted the lawyer. "What do you mean?"

"I knew some fool would ask me, so I measured it," said the painstaking witness.—Sent in by Wm. McLaren, jun., Glasgow.

HIS ACCOUNT SETTLED.

Patrick arrived home a little the worse for wear. One eye was closed, his nose was damaged, and the rest of his face looked as if it had been stung by a swarm of bees.

"Glory be!" exclaimed his wife. "What ever's the matter?"

"That 'bastely' German Swartzheimer 'twas him!" explained Pat.

"Shame on ye!" cried his wife. "A big spalpeen the likes o' you to get beat by a wretched little German! Why—"

"Whist, Nora!" said Pat. "Don't spake, disrespectfully of the dead!"—Sent in by P. Eastop, Walthamstow, N.E.

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As the "GEM" Storyette Competition has proved so popular, it has been decided to run this novel feature in conjunction with our new Companion Paper,

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For Next Wednesday—

"A WASTER'S REWARD!"

By Martin Clifford.

The central figure in next week's grand long, complete story of St. Jim's is Crooke the Shell, who has never shown up in the light of a decent fellow. On this occasion he falls foul of a village youth, who, by means of a clever ruse, leads the unhappy Shell fellow to suppose that he is responsible for a serious crime. This so preys upon Crooke's mind that he becomes quite distracted, and great indeed is his relief when the true facts of the case come to light. He has passed through a terrible period of suspense, but it is admitted on all sides at St. Jim's that his dark doings in the past fully merited

"A WASTER'S REWARD!"

A QUESTION OF LOYALTY.

Most of my chums will remember the stirring letter from "Scottie" which I published on this page a few weeks ago. In this letter "Scottie" inveighed against the alleged slackness of English, Irish, and Welsh readers in rallying round the "Gem."

No sooner was my Highland chum's letter published on this page than I was bombarded with a host of indignant communications repudiating "Scottie's" suggestion that there was a lack of loyalty outside Scotland. The following letter sums up to a "T" the sentiments of my chums in the countries concerned:

"High Street,
 "Chatham,
 "Kent.

"Dear Mr. Editor,—In last week's 'Chat' page there was a letter from a rather presumptuous Scottish reader. The letter, no doubt, was meant to be loyal to your paper; but as for saying that Scottish readers are more enthusiastic than the English, Irish, and Welsh readers, I think nothing could be more absurd. I utterly oppose 'Scottie's' statement, and I think all true and unbiassed readers of the 'Gem' will agree with me on this point. I am sure, Mr. Editor, you will have other letters from your loyal chums on this same subject.

"Looking at the matter from a common-sense point of view, I should say that the enthusiasm for the 'Gem' is on about the same level throughout the United Kingdom.

"Believe me, yours,
 "A LOYAL CHUM."

Good for you, "Loyal Chum"! "Scottie" gets a sharp rap over the knuckles in your sensibly-written letter, and I think he deserves it; for, as one who has an insight into this matter, I think I may say that the readers living in the four countries named are consistently loyal towards the old paper; and I should hesitate to accuse any particular nation of slackness. "Scottie" must learn to give credit where credit is due, and should not blind himself to the fact that the "Gem" is just as popular in England or Ireland as in his native land.

When this controversy first arose I made mention of a scheme which I had in mind for putting my Highland chum's assertion to the test. Mr. Clifford and I will put our heads together in the near future, and see what can be done in this direction.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

W. S. (Barking).—I am sorry I cannot help you in respect of your back numbers.

"A Faithful Reader" (Twickenham).—I have already had a picture-gallery in the "Gem," and therefore do not think it wise to repeat the feature.

Ethel Jefferies (Transvaal).—Very many thanks for your long and interesting letter. Hope you will always retain your high opinion of the "Gem."

D. E. (St. Albans).—The narratives you mention are the actual experiences of an old "Gem" reader.

M. R. (West Bromwich).—Thank you for your letter. It was very thoughtful of you to relieve the sailors' monotony in such a practical way. I think I can promise you some further mention of the two characters you specify.

C. W. (Attercliffe).—Many readers noticed the error you mention. Thanks for pointing it out. I must congratulate you on your smartness.

C. Bath (Sydney).—Lowther and Merry are both fifteen. The St. Jim's characters are fictitious.

Phillip O'K.—I am sorry I cannot let you have an article on making model yachts. You could obtain a book on the subject from a large bookselling firm.

C. A. Stock (Henley-on-Thames).—Many thanks for your good wishes, which I cordially reciprocate.

H. Baker (Deal).—Sorry, but your request cannot be gratified just now.

"Daffodil."—I regret I am not in a position to reply to your first question. Talbot is fifteen years of age, and Wally D'Arcy and Curly Gibson are twelve.

A GIRL CHUM'S GENEROSITY.

A striking testimony to the popularity of our bright little journal is shown in the following letter, which speaks for itself:

"Hampton-in-Arden.

"Dear Editor,—I am sure you will be pleased to hear what I have to tell you. We have here a hospital for wounded soldiers, and the other evening my mother, who is one of the nurses, heard the men complain that the books there were not 'sporty' enough for them. She mentioned the 'Gem,' and was greeted with a shout of joy. So I sent up all my old copies, which are now being eagerly perused. Every Tommy is reading a 'Gem,' and sudden laughs break the stillness of the ward. A voice suddenly sings out, 'Oh, you chaps, just listen to this!' And then some funny bit is read aloud. After lights-out, when no more reading is permitted, one hears muffled talking—'Don't be a mugwump!' etc. They have all copied the famous D'Arcy, and everyone is either a 'deah boy,' or 'a fellow of tact and judgment.'

"If you have any spare copies of the 'Gem' that you could let me have for these warriors I can assure you they will be thankfully received, and I will get one of the soldiers to write on behalf of them all to express their thanks.

"If you print this letter, I hope anyone who reads it will remember our men. Thanking you in anticipation,

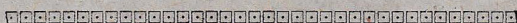
"Faithfully yours,
 "DORIS E. FRODIN."

I have despatched a few available back numbers to Miss Frodin, and hope that those of my chums who wish to do our wounded Tommies a good turn will send along some of their spare copies also, and thus bring a ray of sunshine into the lives of those who have rendered such splendid service to Britain in her hour of need.

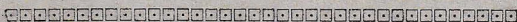
THE EDITOR.

THE BOYS' FRIEND

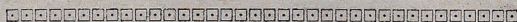
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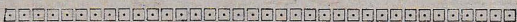
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