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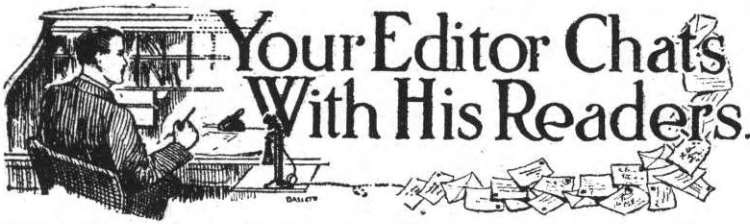
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COUSIN ETHEL FINDS A CALLANT CHAMPION!

(*Oliver Lynn, the New Boy, Proves Himself A Hero. A Thrilling Incident from the Grand, Long, Complete School Story Inside.*)

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OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
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My dear Chums,—It is the way of life that the best always shows up in a fellow under the blows of misfortune. It might be thought at first start off that this fact could not conceivably have anything to do with next week's thumping fine number of the GEM, but that would be an error, for next Wednesday's issue brings Lynn into the vivid limelight again.

"LYNN'S LOYALTY!"

Lynn is up against it. As the protege of Colonel St. Leger he has not comported himself as he should—anyway, that is the impressions which gain ground because of the young fellow's inveterate boxing proclivities. St. Jim's has never seen a boxer quite as handy, nor so thoroughly well versed in the art of self-defence.

PLAYING THE GAME!

Now, in the coming splendid yarn of St. Jim's we see just how Lynn acts while under the shadow of what must seem to him to be the very shabbiest treatment; for boxing is in his blood, and if he overdoes it, the fault is, after all, something which may well be set down on the right side of the account. We have seen enough of Lynn's temperament to realise that he is

true blue, despite sundry little idiosyncrasies to which stiff-necked folks might possibly take exception. You will be interested in seeing the part played by Lynn when it comes to his ears that his guardian's son, young St. Leger, has broken out in the silliest way, and is setting the rules and regulations of the school at defiance. If Lynn had left the matter alone, well, anything might have happened. Certainly the result would have been short, sharp, and sudden, for the son of the colonel.

THE POST OF DANGER.

The yarn simply rocks with excitement. Ratcliff is on the war-path—dear old Ratcliff, Horace of the mean mind. When Mr. Ratcliff gets going there is sure to be big trouble. The unpopular Housemaster did not learn his lesson during the barring-out, though he picked up a few useful hints in the way of punishment, but that is another story. We find the ineffable Ratty and Monteith awaiting the fellow who is on a forbidden jaunt.

WHO IS THE CULPRIT?

The idea was that Ratcliff and Monteith would net St. Leger himself. They do nothing of the kind. The late comer turns out to be Lynn. He is in the cart again. Mr. Ratcliff may have to swallow disappointment. He is always having to perform this feat, but no matter about him. The prevailing idea is shown to be wrong. They can believe what they like. The cart is there, and Lynn steps into it, cool as a cucumber. It is nothing to him to be in the cart again. He has stood a fair racket at St. Jim's as it is, and there have been plenty of jealous individuals eager to prove that he is a fish out of water, though how an upright, honourable sportsman could be out of his element at a great public school is a problem worth studying.

"THE HONOUR OF HIS CLUB!"

This is a grand footer yarn, showing the underhand work of a man who at one time was secretary to a football club, and puts the knowledge thus gained in a position of trust to a bad purpose. It is a yarn of character, and bubbling over with brisk incidents. The writer makes his points well, and you get interested at once in the shady business of the ex-official. The forged telegram and the ignoble attempt to make pots of trouble out of the gnat of a technical difficulty, while swallowing the camel of a despicable piece of rank dishonesty.

BRILLIANT PHOTOS!

There will be tremendous satisfaction with the beautiful photograph given away this week. The series has won hands down, and sent the fame of the GEM shooting onward. Make a note of it that I have a crowd of further surprises in store.

ST. BEOWULF'S!

Duncan Storm's record serial is swinging along in fine style. I spoke of this last week, but I may as well emphasise the fact again, namely, that the Bombay Castle author is out to make each instalment of his yarn better than the preceding. That is his aim and he is doing it with a vengeance.

THE TUCK HAMPER!

Here's something more worth jotting down. The results of the great Tuck Hamper Room Number Competition will be announced in next week's GEM. There will be guesses at the newagents' over this issue of the favourite paper. Mind you are early on the scene. You never know your luck, and there will be some very cheery news next Wednesday for some fellows.

A TAGGLES SUPPLEMENT!

I have purposely kept this bucking-up item of intelligence to the last—I mean about the coming supplement of that live sheet, the St. Jim's News. The portly Taggles has been at St. Jim's a very long time. His interests and sympathies are bound up with the school. And he is popular, despite the nature of some of his official functions when pains and penalties are knocking round. It is a right and seemly thing good old Taggles should have full honour done to him in the St. Jim's News. Such honour is paid next Wednesday.

Your Editor.

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Cardew's Fighting Chum!

Although facing great odds, Oliver Lynn, the despised new boy, plays a gallant part, and earns the esteem of everybody at St. Jim's. A First-rate School Story

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Trouble in Study No. 6!

"IT'S wathah wotten!"
 "It's beastly!"
 "It's a shame!"
 "Utterly rotten!"

Four voices were speaking together in Study No. 6 as Oliver Lynn came along the Fourth Form passage. Lynn, the new fellow in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, came to a sudden halt.

A dark look came over his rugged face.

He did not need telling what Blake & Co. in Study No. 6 were discussing. They were discussing him!

Lynn stood quite still, within a few feet of the open door, as the voices ran on.

"It was too bad of Railton to put the fellow in our study!" said Blake. "Plenty of other studies to choose from."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The fellow is really the outside edge!" said Robert Arthur Digby. "I suppose he doesn't know any better; but—"

"Then he ought to know better!" growled Herries.

"Probably he will learn better when he has been at St. Jim's a little longah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy mildly. "But in the meanwhile, it is vewy howwid for this study."

Lynn made no movement.

There was a pang at his heart as he heard that discussion—not intended for his ears; but anger was growing in his face. The aristocratic voice of Arthur Augustus went on:

"I trust I am not a snob! I wegaud snobbewy as wotten bad form. But, weally, that chap Lynn—"

"He ought to have a study to himself!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He oughtn't to be at St. Jim's at all!" grunted George Herries.

"There I must difah from you, Hewwies. St. Jim's is the wight place for him. He will learn heah not to be such a feahful savage, in the long run—"

"Likely to be a jolly long long run, then!"

"The twouble is that cousin Ethel is comin' down in a few days. Cousin Ethel always has tea in the studay. How can Ethel have tea in the studay with that young wuffian present?"

"Impossible!"

"Yaas, quite imposs! But we cannot tarn the fellow out of his own studay, you know."

"We'll ask Tom Merry to have the spread in No. 10 in the Shell," said Blake. "That will keep us clear of the bounder."

"Yaas, that's a good ideah. It's wotten, but there's nothin' else to be done, I suppose."

Oliver Lynn stirred at last. Every word he heard was bitterness itself to him; and, deeply as they disliked their new study-mate, Blake & Co. certainly would not have spoken like that in his hearing if they could have helped it. Lynn strode on to the voice, and entered, his rugged face flaming with anger.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, turning his eyes upon the new junior. "Heah he is!"

"Yes, 'ere I am!" said Lynn savagely. "I've 'eard all you was saying. So that's 'ow you talk about a bloke!"

D'Arcy coloured.

"You had no wight to heah what we were sayin', Lynn," he said quietly. "It was not intended for your yabs."

"Listehing!" grunted Herries.

Lynn's rugged face crimsoned. Once more he had failed to come up to St. Jim's standard. He realised that he ought not to have listened outside the door; it added to the contempt with which his study-mates regarded him.

"Talking about a bloke behind his back!" he said.

"Weally, Lynn—"
 "We'll say it all over again to your face, if you like!" said Blake contemptuously. "You know what we think of you!"

"We were discussin' a wathah difficult mattah, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus, "I am sowwy if your feelin's are hurt; but—"

"You think I ain't good enough for this 'ere study?"

Arthur Augustus shivered.

The accent of the new junior "got on" the noble nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, as well as his aggressive and certainly not polished manner.

Lynn's eyes burned.

"You want to get rid of me because you've got a lady visitor comin'," he said. "I ain't good enough for her to see?"

"Perfectly cowwect!" said Arthur Augustus coolly.

"Right as rain!" said Herries.

"Jest because I've been a boxer, and never 'ad your chances!" said Lynn. "Think it was my fault that I was left to kick for myself when I was a kid not so high as that there table?"

"Certainly not," said Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy sowwy. Nobody heah looks down upon you because you earned your bwead boxin' in a booth, Lynn. That is not the case at all."

"I never asked to come 'ere," said Lynn. "I was 'appy enough in Hawley's Ring, and I never asked my uncle to come looking for me, and taking me and sending me 'ere."

"Your uncle!" exclaimed Blake.

The juniors stared at Lynn in astonishment.

They were aware that this very peculiar new junior had been sent to St. Jim's by Colonel St. Leger, the father of St. Leger of the Fifth Form. The general impression was that the colonel had taken pity on the forlorn youth from sheer kindness of heart, and resolved to give him a chance in life.

Lynn bit his lip.

"Now I've let it out!" he muttered. "Master St. Leger told me to keep it dark."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Blake. "Do you mean to say that St. Leger of the Fifth is your cousin, then?"

"I don't mean to say nothing," said Lynn doggedly. "I promised Master St. Leger I wouldn't. You blokes think I ain't good enough for your school and your blinking study. Why, if I 'ad you in Hawley's Ring I could knock out the lot of you with one 'and!"

Lynn glared aggressively at the four juniors as he made that statement.

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"That is weally not to the point, Lynn!" he remarked.

"Ain't it?" sneered Lynn. "You've got a neck to check a bloke what could take you all by the scruff of the neck and knock your blooming 'eads together!"

"Oh, choose it!" exclaimed Blake.

Study No. 6 was a fighting study. They rather prided themselves upon that fact. But it was absolutely certain that Lynn—once the Chicken of a boxing-booth—could have made his words good. That was a bitter reflection to Study No. 6, and it added to their dislike of the schoolboy boxer. With a little more tact, Lynn would have kept his amazing pugilistic powers in the background; but he seemed bent on making the most of the one quality he had.

"I'm fed-up with this 'ere!" went on Lynn, eyeing the juniors a good deal like a savage bulldog. "If I ain't good enough for you, then you ain't good enough for me—see? You'd turn me out of the study if you could. Try it on!"

Silence.

"That's what you call low, I s'pose!" said Lynn, reading the faces of the chums of the Fourth.

"Yaas, Lynn, I feah that your wemarks must be chawtwaised as wathah low," said Arthur Augustus. "It is feahfully bad form, you know, to bwag of what you can do."

"I'm too low for you," said Lynn. "Well, I ain't sharing this study with you blokes any longer!"

Study No. 6 brightened up. If this outsider was going of his own accord, it was really the best thing that possibly could happen.

"Oh good!" exclaimed Dig.

"You're going?" asked Blake.

Lynn grinned savagely.

"No, I ain't going," he said. "You're going!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

Lynn drew off his Eton jacket and pushed back his shirt-sleeves.

"Out you go!" he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"You'd turn me out if you could. Well, I'm going to turn you out," said Lynn. "I ain't having you in this study."

"You cheeky totter!" roared Herries.

"Great Scott!"

"You can go on your feet or on your neck," said Oliver Lynn deliberately. "But you're going, and you ain't coming back till you're civil—see?"

Blake & Co. rose to their feet.

They could hardly believe that this astonishing new fellow was in earnest. But Lynn's face was set and grim. He was no longer at that moment Lynn of the Fourth; he was the Chicken once again—the boy "pug" who had knocked out the Tooting Pet in the ring. His square jaw protruded; his eyes glistened; his whole aspect was threatening, his knuckly fists clenched.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "What a howdy wuffian!"

"Are you going?"

"No, you cheeky cad!" shouted Blake.

"Then I'll sling you out!"

And with that Lynn advanced on the chums of the Fourth, and the next moment a terrific combat was raging in Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 2.

The Order of the Boot.

A FIGHT!

"What's the row?"

"The new chap!" yelled Baggy Trimble. "He's walloping the whole study! He, he, he!"

"Great Scott!"

There was a rush from up and down the passage to the doorway of Study No. 6.

At that hour in the evening the juniors were supposed to be hard at work with their prep. But prep was forgotten now.

Nearly all the Fourth Form crowded and crammed round the doorway of Study No. 6, and Shell fellows came along from their studies. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell were the first to arrive, and Talbot and Kangaroo and a dozen others followed.

"It's the giddy boxer going it!" said Monty Lowther. "My hat! It sounds like a jolly old earthquake!"

"Go it, Lynn!" yelled Baggy Trimble. "Give 'em beans!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better chip in, I think," said Levison of the Fourth.

"My hat! What a game!" said Cardew, looking into the doorway, calmly rolling Trimble out of his way to get a better view.

"One against four, and the one baggin' the giddy victory!"

"Stop them," said Clive.

Tom Merry looked in with a frowning brow. The tussle in Study No. 6 was terrific.

There had been many a tussle in that celebrated study, but nothing like this. This was a record.

Blake & Co., heedless of the serious damages they were receiving, were putting up the fight of their lives.

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To be turned out of their study—and by a new fellow single-handed—was a humiliation Blake & Co. could not possibly tolerate. Study No. 6 would have fallen from its high estate with a vengeance after such a defeat.

But Oliver Lynn was master of the situation. The one-time pugilist handled his four adversaries with ease. The schoolboys had simply no chance against a fellow who, though little older than themselves, had earned a hard living as a boy boxer for years. Punishment—such punishment as Blake & Co. could give him—did not ruffle the Chicken in the least.

He received, without heeding, a good many hefty blows, and the drives he delivered in return were something quite new to the experience of the St. Jim's juniors.

One or two of the quartette lay on the floor all the time—there were never four on their feet at once.

"Lynn!" called out Tom Merry.

"Let him rip!" said Cardew, with a chuckle. "This is worth watchin'. People used to pay to watch the giddy Chicken, before he honoured us by becomin' a St. Jim's chap. We're gettin' this for nothin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's Blake!" yelled Trimble.

The Chicken's terrible "left" lifted Jack Blake through the doorway, and he crashed on the crowd there and rolled to the floor.

"By gad! What a drive!" said Cardew admiringly.

"I guess that was some whack," remarked Wildrake of the Fourth, and he helped Blake to his feet.

Crash!

Digby came spinning through the doorway.

Herries and D'Arcy lay in a dazed state on the study carpet. Lynn stooped and grasped George Herries and whirled him out into the passage, Herries being too far gone to put up a hand in self-defence.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet.

His nose was streaming red, and one of his noble eyes was darkened, and he had a feeling all over him as if he had been under a specially heavy garden-roller.

But the blood of all the D'Arcys was boiling in his veins, and the thought of surrender did not even enter his mind.

Lynn turned on him with a savage grin.

"Ad enough?" he demanded.

"Come on, you wottah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Get out!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort."

"Then 'ere goes ag'in."

Lynn drove the swell of St. Jim's doorway under a rain of blows. Arthur Augustus prided himself on his boxing; he was a good boxer. But he seemed to be opposed to a battering-ram that moved with the speed of lightning. The Chicken drove him out of the study without effort, and sent him spinning across the passage, the crowd outside making room for him to spin.

Lynn stood in the doorway, his hands up.

"Coming back ag'in?" he asked.

Blake & Co. had been helped up. They stood dazed and dizzy, turned out of their study, and obviously unable to re-enter it while Oliver Lynn stood on guard at the door.

Their faces were crimson with wrath and humiliation. But the truth had to be admitted. Study No. 6, all together, were not a match for the one-time Chicken of Hawley's Ring.

The Chicken stared at them with a grin of contempt, which was harder to bear than the hammering he had received.

"Waiting for you!" he sneered. "Come back ag'in, and see wet you'll get."

"Oh deah!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Come on, you fellows," said Blake, with an effort. "We can't handle that prize-fighting hooligan, and it's no good pretending that we can. Let's get out of this."

Lynn gave a scoffing laugh. He was victorious, for what that was worth. On one point, at least, he had to be respected.

The chums of Study No. 6 moved away, slowly and painfully, through a silent crowd. Even Trimble was not sniggering now. Tom Merry glanced after Blake & Co. and then fixed his eyes on Lynn.

"Does this mean that you've turned these chaps out of their study, Lynn?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, it does."

"You can't keep them out."

"I'm going to."

"Do you think you'll be allowed—"

Lynn came a step nearer to the captain of the Shell.

"Like to take a 'and?" he asked aggressively. "I've licked that lot, and I'm ready to lick you. Why, I could clear this passage of the lot of you if I took it into my 'ead to do it!"

Tom Merry smiled slightly.

"I don't think you could do that, Lynn," he said.

"Like me to try?" snapped Lynn.

"You can please yourself!" said Tom disdainfully.

Lynn lifted his right hand, and displayed a formidable set of knuckles under the nose of the captain of the Shell.

Tom Merry did not recede an inch; and his expression did



One by one Blake & Co. were lifted out of Study No. 6 by Lynn's terrible "left," and sent staggering into the crowd of juniors looking on. Lynn stared at them with a grin of contempt, which was harder to bear than the hammering they had received. "I'm waiting for you!" he sneered. "Come back again, and see wot you'll get!" (See page 4.)

not change. He was quite well aware that he could not have stood up for a minute against the professional pugilist; but it did not even occur to him to feel anything like fear. His look expressed only contempt.

Lynn dropped his hand again. The cool contempt in the junior's look seemed to affect him more than a blow could have done.

"I never asked for trouble," he said. "They says I ain't good enough for them in this study. Well, then, let 'em keep away till they think I'm good enough."

"By gad! There's reason in that!" said Cardew, eyeing the now junior very curiously.

"There'll be a row when the Housemaster gets on to this," said Levison. "You'll find that you can't do your boxing-booth stunts at St. Jim's, Lynn."

"Go and chop chips!" retorted Lynn.

"Look here—" began Clive.

"That's enough."

Lynn slammed the study door, the juniors backing away just in time as it slammed.

In the passage, the School House fellows looked at one another.

"This is a go!" murmured Kangaroo.

Cardew chuckled.

"It's a giddy experience," he said. "I wonder if the jolly old Head foresaw anythin' like this when he let a prize-fighter into the school? It's no end entertainin'—somethin' new under the sun at last."

But Cardew was evidently the only person present who found anything entertaining in the peculiar state of affairs. Tom Merry & Co. returned to their study in a very thoughtful mood, and the crowd broke up, discussing the matter, and not a voice was raised in favour of the redoubtable Chicken.

That youth remained in Study No. 6—monarch of all he surveyed, for the present, at least. But, if the School House fellows could have seen Lynn just then, they would not have seen him looking triumphant, or appearing to enjoy his victory. The excitement and anger had passed, and the Chicken, left alone in the study, threw himself into a chair, and sat in frowning thought, with a downcast face. In the old days a successful fight was all the Chicken had needed to

make him satisfied and happy; but he could realise that at St. Jim's, things were very different. His rugged face was downcast and miserable.

"I've been a fool!" he murmured. "I've done wrong again. What's the good of 'ammering blokes what can't touch me? 'Tain't even fair play. I don't seem never able to do what's right. I wish I hadn't never come 'ere."

CHAPTER 3.

Called Over the Coals!

BLAKE & CO. did their prep in other studies that evening.

There was a welcome for them in every study in the Fourth Form, for that matter; hospitality was unbounded towards the outcasts of Study No. 6. But their prep was not very well done; they had too many damages, to be able to give much attention to their work. It was not a happy evening for the chums of the Fourth.

Some of the fellows advised them to refer the matter to the Housemaster; but Study No. 6 shook their heads at the suggestion. They had no intention whatever of appealing to Mr. Railton to deal with the formidable Chicken. The peculiar circumstances would have justified them; but calling in the Housemaster would have had an appearance, at least, of "sneaking." Somehow or other, they were going to deal with the Chicken themselves—though how, was not yet clear.

On the morrow morning, however, the four juniors were called upon to stand up in class, under the shocked eye of their Form master, Mr. Lathom. Signs of warfare were not uncommon in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's; but there was a limit; and Study No. 6 had passed the limit. Black eyes were decidedly uncommon, and there were four black eyes distributed among Blake & Co.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom, peering at the unhappy four over his glasses. "Whatever have you boys been doing?"

Some of the juniors grinned. It was fairly clear what the four had been doing.

"You have been fighting, Blake!"

"Ye-es, sir!"
 "You have a black eye."
 "H-have I, sir?"
 "Are you not aware, Blake, that you have a blackened eye?"
 "Ye-es, sir."
 "D'Arcy, Digby, Herries—you are all in the same state—a disgusting state!" said Mr. Lathom, with great severity. "I am ashamed of you."
 Silence.
 "Have you been fighting with one another?"
 "N-no, sir."
 "Bless my soul! Has each of you been fighting with some other boy, then?" exclaimed the Form master.
 "Yes, sir."
 "This matter is too serious for me to pass over. Boys cannot be allowed to come into class in this disfigured state," said Mr. Lathom. "You will be punished for this. With whom have you been fighting?"
 No answer.
 "I command you to give me the name, at once, of the boy you have been fighting with!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.
 "Some quarrel with the New House boys, I suppose?"
 "N-no, sir."
 "Then who was it, Blake?"
 Blake looked expressively at Oliver Lynn. It was up to Lynn to admit that he was the fellow in question, as it was impossible for Blake to avoid answering his Form master's question. But Lynn sat with a stolid face, and did not speak.
 "Give me the name at once, Blake, or I shall refer the matter to your headmaster!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.
 "I—I had a fight with Lynn, sir."
 "Indeed! And you, Herries?"
 "Lynn, sir."
 "And you, D'Arcy?"
 "Lynn, sir."
 "And you, Digby?"
 "Lynn, sir."
 "Bless my soul! You have all been fighting with your

new study-mate!" said Mr. Lathom. He fixed his eyes on Oliver Lynn. There were few signs of the combat on Lynn's tough countenance. "Lynn!"
 "Yes, sir!" muttered Lynn.
 "You will take a note from me to your headmaster," said Mr. Lathom.
 The Fourth Form master wrote a note at his desk, sealed it in an envelope, and handed it to the new junior.
 "Take this to Dr. Holmes at once," he said.
 "Yes, sir," said Lynn heavily.
 He quitted the Fourth Form room with the note. Blake & Co. exchanged uneasy glances.
 "If you please, sir—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.
 "Well, D'Arcy?"
 "We are not blamin' Lynn for the wov in the studay, sir! If Lynn is goin' to the Head, sir, we ought to go to the Head."

Mr. Lathom gave the swell of St. Jim's a freezing look.
 "Are you undertaking to give me instruction in my duty, D'Arcy?" he inquired.
 "Bai Jove! No, sir! But—"
 "You will take a hundred lines for impertinence."
 "Oh deah!"
 "Sit down!"
 "Yaas, sir! But—"
 "Another word and I shall cane you, D'Arcy."
 Arthur Augustus sat down without uttering the other word. Lessons proceeded in the Fourth Form room, but a good many glances turned on the door, in expectation of Lynn's return.
 It was a quarter of an hour before Lynn came back to the Form-room. All eyes were turned on him at once.
 His face was pale and troubled; but he did not look as if there had been a licking. He sat down in his place silently.
 When the class was dismissed, Lynn went out with the Fourth—with them, but quite alone. Nobody wanted the company of the Chicken. Lynn glanced at several faces—which turned away from him at once. A gleam came into his eyes, and his hands clenched. But some reflection occurred to his mind that unclenched his fists again at once. He loafed about the passage after the other fellows had gone out, with a clouded brow. D'Arcy minor, Wally of the Third, came along, and called to him.

"Seen St. Leger, you new chap?"
 Lynn started and looked round.
 "St. Leger?" he repeated.
 "The Head wants him," said Wally. "Know where he is?"
 "No, I don't."
 "Oh, bother!" said the fag, and he proceeded further in quest of St. Leger of the Fifth.
 Lynn walked out into the quadrangle with a gloomy brow. He thought that he could guess why the Head wanted St. Leger of the Fifth; it was upon his account. He passed near a group of juniors—Trimble and Mellish, Racke and Crooke, and some other fellows.
 "St. Leger's cousin!" Trimble was saying. "It's a fact; he said so himself last evening—"
 "A brute like that St. Leger's cousin!" said Racke.
 "Honest Injun!"
 "Poor old St. Leger!" Racke chuckled. "He's always held his head high. This ought to bring it down a little lower, I think. A ramping hooligan like that fellow his cousin—"
 "Shush!" muttered Crooke. "He can hear you."
 Racke looked round in alarm. He gave quite a jump as he saw Lynn near at hand.
 "I—I—" he stammered.
 Oliver Lynn walked on without speaking, much to Racke's relief. Had the Chicken cut up rusty, Racke would have had no resource but to take to his heels—a very undignified proceeding for Aubrey Racke of the Shell.
 "A narrow escape for you, old bean," grinned Crooke.
 "I'm not afraid of him," snapped Racke.
 "No; you looked as if you weren't," said Crooke, with a chuckle, and there was a laugh.
 Oliver Lynn walked on. He caught sight of Study No. 6 together under the elms, and crossed towards them, with some vague idea in his troubled mind of making his peace. Blake & Co. turned their backs on him and walked away, and the Chicken halted and stood looking after them with glittering eyes.

CHAPTER 4.

St. Leger is Not Pleased!

"IT'S out now, old bean."
 Gerald Cutts made that remark in his study in the Fifth Form passage. There was an amused grin on Cutts' face as he glanced at his study-mate, St. Leger. St. Leger was looking gloomy.
 "What's out?" muttered St. Leger.
 "About young Lynn of the Fourth Form."
 "What about him?" asked the dandy of the Fifth hastily.

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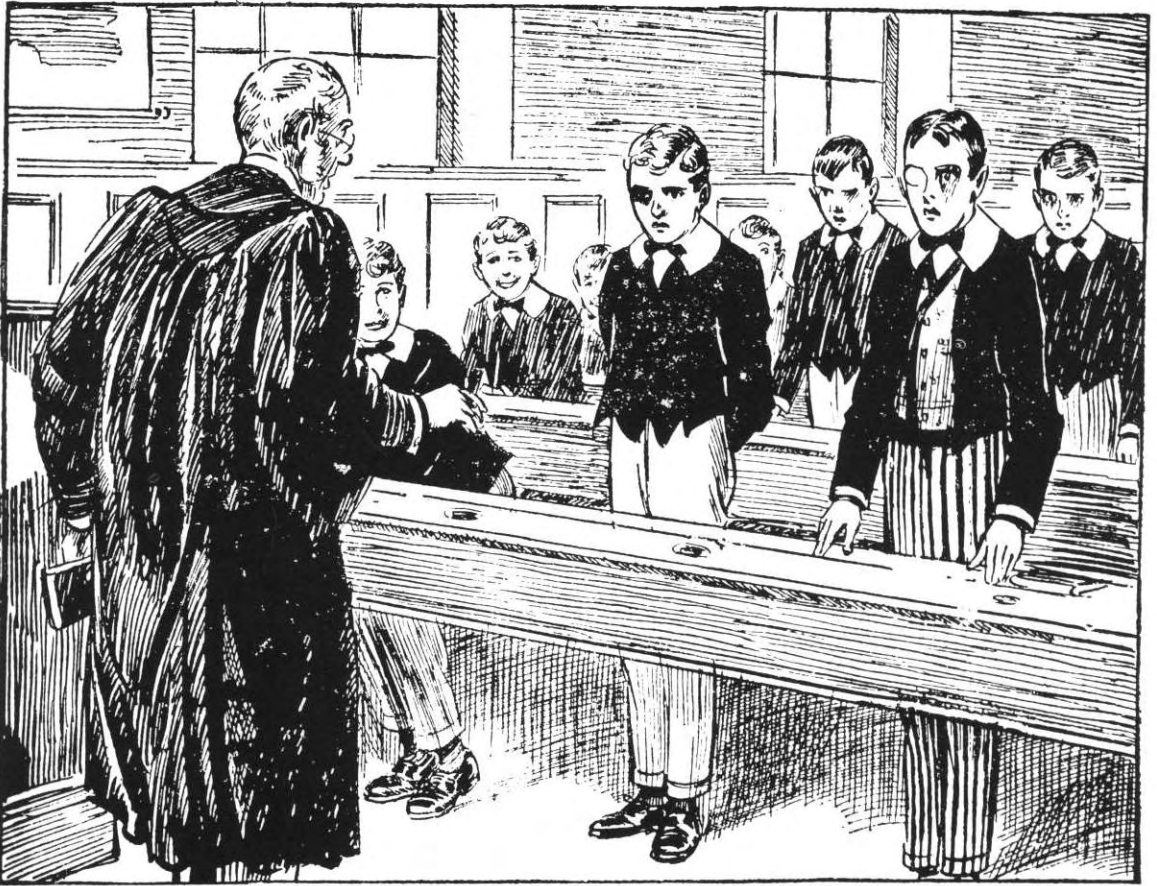
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"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom, peering at Blake & Co. over his glasses. "Whatever have you boys been doing?" Blake & Co. were silent. "Are you not aware, Blake, that you have a blackened eye?" asked the Fourth Form master. "Ye-e-es, sir." "And you, D'Arcy—Digby—Herrie—you are all in the same state—a disgusting state! What is the meaning of it all?" (See page 6.)

"The fags are sayin' that he's your cousin."
St. Leger caught his breath.
"Who's sayin' that?"
"Everybody, apparently," answered Cutts, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Is it the fact?"
"Find out!"

Cutts laughed. He was St. Leger's chum. He made it a point to be very chummy with the wealthy and well-connected dandy of the Fifth. Cutts was not nearly so well-connected, though he usually had plenty of money. St. Leger's high connections made him a chum to be cultivated, and at the same time had a somewhat annoying effect on Cutts of the Fifth. It was a pleasure to the amiable Cutts to "rub" this in.

"It seems to be found out," he remarked. "I can quite understand your keepin' it dark, old chap—a relation like that. But why the thump did you let your pater send him here?"

St. Leger did not answer that question.
"It's no end of a giddy topic among the fellows," went on Cutts, with relish. "They can't make out how you came to have a cousin who can't even speak English. How was it, St. Leger?"

The dandy of the Fifth gave his chum an evil look, but did not speak. It was evident that the subject was gall and wormwood to him.

"Best thing you can do is to ask your pater to take him away from St. Jim's," said Cutts, smiling. "Dash it all, if the colonel was goin' to take him up he might have started a little earlier in the kid's career. You'll never hear the end of this, St. Leger—a cousin of yours who's knocked about earning his daily bread in a boxing booth at fairs, by gad!"
St. Leger winced.

There was a footstep in the passage, and the tugged face of Oliver Lynn looked into the study. Cutts gave him a grin.

"Here's the merry prize fighter," he said. "I hear you've been going it in your form, Lynn. How many teeth have you knocked out so far?"

"I ain't knocked out any," said Lynn. "I could 'ave, if I'd liked. I let the blokes off easy."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cutts.
"I want to speak to you, Lynn," said St. Leger. "You might clear, Cutts."

"Dash it all, I'm in the secret now," said Cutts, laughing.
"Can't I improve my acquaintance with your cousin?"
"Look here——" broke out St. Leger furiously.

"Say the word, Master St. Leger, and I'll shift 'im out fast enough," said Lynn, pushing back his cuffs.
"Shut up, you young fool!"

Cutts rose from his chair, with a very curious look at the chicken. It occurred to him that the Fourth-Former could have made his words good easily enough.

He left the study, and St. Leger signed to the junior to close the door after him. Lynn closed it, and turned towards the Fifth Former again, with an appealing look.

"It wasn't my fault," he muttered.
"You young hooligan!" said St. Leger savagely. "Didn't I warn you not to show any of your hooliganism here? I've been up before the Head on your account."
"—I—I know, I—"

"You've been punching the juniors, you young ruffian. It seems that you've been handing out black eyes in the Fourth Form."

"I couldn't 'elp that," said Lynn. "I—"
"I told you to keep it dark that you were my cousin," said St. Leger moodily.

"It slipped out. I never meant——"
"It's the talk of the school now."
"I'm sorry," muttered Lynn; "but—but——"

"But what, you young idiot?"
"If you was ashamed of me, why did you let uncle send me 'ere?" said Lynn. "He wouldn't 'ave if you'd asked him not to. I s'pose. You was kind enough to me at 'ome, and 'ere you treat me like a dog. I didn't want to come to this school."

"I wasn't going to stand in your light, of course," said St. Leger, his handsome, rather weak face softening a little. "I wanted to stand by you and help you through. But you won't help yourself. You know it's not fair play for you

to tackle an ordinary schoolboy; a Sixth-Former wouldn't have much chance against you. You've acted like a bullying young ruffian."

"I never meant—"
"You've done it. Your Form master sent a note to the Head. Dr. Holmes has had me up on the carpet about it," said St. Leger.

"He asked me about what 'appened," said Lynn. "I let it all out. He jawed me a lot. He hadn't any call to jaw you, too."

"As you are my cousin, he expects me to train you a bit, and keep an eye on you," said St. Leger. "He's told me to speak to you about it."

"If you'd took a bit of trouble with me when I came, it mightn't 'ave 'appened," muttered Lynn. "I never wanted any trouble with the blokes."

"Can't you drop that word?" snapped St. Leger. "Can't you say fellows?"

"I—I mean fellers."
"Look here, Lynn! If you get into any more punching bizney, you'll have to get out of the school," said St. Leger.

"Do you think you're goin' to be allowed to knock fellows about as you like, because you've been trained in the ring and they haven't? Keep clear of fighting, mind that. Nobody will put a scrap on you; you've only got to keep clear of it, and you can do that. Stop rowing with your study-mates, and ask them to come back to their study. You seem to have told the Head that you pitched them out."

"They said I wasn't good enough for them," muttered Lynn.

"Well, you're not, if you come to that."
Lynn's lip quivered.

"I see now it was a mistake to let you come here," said St. Leger. "I hoped it could be kept dark about your having been in the ring and about your being my cousin. Now it's the talk of St. Jim's, and I shall be chipped to death about it among my friends."

"What sort of friends are they to chip you about a thing you can't 'elp?" said Lynn.

"Hold your silly tongue!"

"Yes, Master St. Leger," muttered the Chicken.

"Don't call me 'Master.' Haven't you any sense? Call me St. Leger, you young idiot!"

"Yes, sir—I mean St. Leger!" said the Chicken, his lips trembling. "Look 'ere, sir—I mean St. Leger—can't you ask the old gentleman to take me away from the school? He meant it all kindly; but I'd rather be back among the boxers—I would, you can lay to that. Ask him—"

"How can I?" said St. Leger irritably. "He fancies that I'm as keen as he is on seein' you through and backin' you up."

"And you ain't—"

"Yes—yes, I am, of course. But—but, anyhow, it can't be mended now. But, for goodness' sake, try to learn to behave yourself a little less like a hooligan from the slums, and don't disgrace me more than you can help. Good Lord, are you goin' to blub?" exclaimed St. Leger, in great exasperation. "That's the limit! Get out, do!"

"I'm goin', sir!" faltered the unhappy Chicken, keeping back his tears with a great effort.

He turned blindly to the door and left the study. St. Leger threw himself into a chair and lighted a cigarette—one of the customs he had picked up from his amiable pal Cutts.

"How utterly rotten!" he muttered. "It—it's unspeakable! What a life for me!"

It did not seem to occur to the dandy of the Fifth that life at present was not exactly a bed of roses for his hapless cousin. St. Leger felt himself a very ill-used person, and all his sympathy was required for his own grievances.

CHAPTER 5.

A Pal at Last!

"GOIN' strong, old top?"

Lynn gave a start.
Since the outrageous affair in Study No. 6 not a junior in the school had spoken to him.

By common consent, the one-time Chicken of Hawley's Ring was sent to Coventry by the whole of his House.

It was a surprise to Lynn, therefore, as he came away from St. Leger's study to be addressed in that friendly fashion, with an amiable smile, by Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth Form.

Cardew's manner was all amiability.
He gave the surprised outcast a cheery nod, affecting not to observe his surprise.

"Visitin' the Fifth—what?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes," muttered Lynn.

"Ah, yes, you've a cousin in the Fifth, I hear," remarked Cardew.

No answer to that.

"Come into the quad, old bean," said Cardew agreeably.

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"I've been lookin' for a chance to speak to you. I've never really had a chance of makin' your acquaintance yet, though we're in the same Form."

Like a fellow in a dream, Oliver Lynn walked along with the dandy of the Fourth. His clouded face had brightened up wonderfully. He had noticed Cardew among the other fellows—he knew that Cardew was the grandson of a lord, and connected with numberless titled people; he had seen and observed and admired the elegant ways of the fastidious Fourth-Former—admiring from afar, as it were. It had never even occurred to him as possible that this superb youth would ever condescend to take the slightest notice of his insignificant existence.

And here was Cardew—the wealthy, the well-connected, the elegant—walking by his side, with a friendly smile on his face, chatting pleasantly as if he had known him for two or three terms, at least.

No wonder the hapless Chicken brightened up. His lonely and troubled heart was ready to go out to the first who offered him kindness; but of all the fellows in the Fourth, Cardew was the one he would have chosen for a friend if given his choice. He had never ventured to think of such a thing, however; and here was Cardew offering friendship of his own accord!

The two juniors walked out into the quadrangle together—Cardew, handsome, slim, elegant; the Chicken, stocky, rugged, thick-set—a strange contrast to his elegant companion.

Many eyes were turned upon them.
Levison and Clive, Cardew's study-mates, noted that odd companionship, and both of them frowned. Ernest Levison, after a moment or two of reflection, left Clive and hurried after Cardew and the boxer.

"Come up to the study, Cardew," he said abruptly.

Cardew glanced at him with an amused smile.

"Anythin' on?" he asked.

"Yes!" snapped Levison.

"I'll give you a look-in presently, then. I'm havin' a little talk now with my friend Lynn."

Levison compressed his lips.

"Lynn's no friend of yours!" he said. "Don't play the goat, Cardew! Come up to the study; it's nearly tea-time."

"Oh, bother tea!" yawned Cardew. "Tea's a bore, like everythin' else! May I bring a pal to tea?"

"No!" growled Levison.

"Ernest old man, your manners are deterioratin'," said Cardew, shaking his head.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Levison angrily. "You know jolly well what I'm thinking of, Cardew, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself—and you know it!"

"I do!" agreed Cardew. "I am ashamed of myself—always was. Anythin' more, jolly old bean?"

Levison strode away without any rejoinder. Oliver Lynn cast a dark look after him. He knew that Ernest Levison was Cardew's chum, and his impression was that Levison was angry at seeing Cardew friendly with the outcast—that he grudged the hapless fellow a few kind words.

That was not at all Levison's view. He knew only too well Cardew's volatile and unthinking nature, and he knew that the dandy of the Fourth had taken up the schoolboy boxer from sheer idleness of mind, without any intention whatever of pursuing the acquaintance after he had tired of the novelty. Fellows who knew Cardew knew what to expect of him. But the Chicken did not; he was taking Cardew's cordiality at face value, and later on there was a painful shock in store for him—which Levison would gladly have spared him.

Cardew looked after his chum with a smile, and then devoted his attention to his new acquaintance.

The Chicken interested him.

Cardew had seen fellows like the Chicken before, but, naturally, had never come into intimate contact with them, and he was amused to draw Lynn out, and to listen with well-concealed enjoyment to his amazing Cockney accent. It was Cardew's way to follow any fancy that came into his careless head, utterly regardless of the consequences to himself and others. He would never willingly have wounded anyone, but there were a good many fellows whom he had wounded deeply from sheer want of thought. It was probable that the hapless Chicken was to be added to the list.

Delighted with his elegant and friendly companion, Oliver Lynn talked freely, from his very heart, Cardew putting in a few words here and there to keep him going.

He told of his early life in Hawley's Ring, of his rough-and-ready companions, and of his uncle, Colonel St. Leger, finding him and taking him away for a new life. It was amazing to Cardew to learn that this rough fellow actually was a near relative of the fastidious dandy of the Fifth Form. He chuckled silently at the thought of St. Leger's feelings on the subject.

"What about tea?" said Cardew at last. "Nothin' goin'?"

in my study. I wonder whether you'd ask me to tea in your quarters, Lynn?"

"Wouldn't I be just pleased!" said Lynn, beaming.

"Let's, then!" said Cardew, turning his sauntering steps towards the School House. "By the way, I hear that you're on fightin' terms with your study-mates."

Lynn's brow clouded.

"I'd make it up with the blokes if they'd let me," he said.

"Master St. Leger 'ave told me to ask them to come back to the study."

"Best thing you can do," agreed Cardew. "I'll come with you and ask them, and we'll put it nicely—what?"

"Thank you, sir."

"Don't call a chap sir, old fellow!" murmured Cardew, wincing. "You don't mind my mentionin' it—"

"No, sir—I mean, no, Cardew," said Lynn.

"They're havin' tea with some Shell fellows, I think," said Cardew. "Let's go and see them in Tom Merry's study."

He led the way to Study No. 10 in the Shell. Blake & Co. were being entertained to tea by the Terrible Three of the Shell. Cardew was aware of the surprise that Tom Merry & Co. would feel to see him on pally terms with the boxer; and he was going to enjoy their surprise. He tapped at the study door and looked in.

"Here they are, Lynn," he remarked. "You fellows mind if I butt in for a minute?"

you're a dashed prizefighter, and we can't handle a prizefighter. Keep the study, and keep your distance!"

The Chicken winced.

"I'm sorry—" he stammered.

"Oh, give us a rest!"

Lynn turned out of Tom Merry's study. Cardew gave the School House juniors a droll look and followed him.

"So you're chumming with Lynn, Cardew?" said Dig.

Cardew glanced back and nodded.

"Well, I think you're a rotter!" said Blake.

"Just a rotter!" said Herries.

"How well you know me!" said Cardew agreeably. "This perspicacity really does you credit, dear men. But Study No. 6 was always famous for its uncommon intelligence!"

And he strolled away with Lynn.

"That silly ass is pulling the fellow's leg," remarked Manners, when the unexpected visitors were gone. "He's taken that young ruffian up to amuse himself, and he'll drop him suddenly when he's tired of him."

"I wogard that as a caddish pwoceedin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"Go hon!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But aren't you fellows going to use your study again?" asked Tom Merry. "You can't get on without a study."

Blake knitted his brows.

"We can't take a favour from that hooligan," he said.

All About FRED PAGNAM the Sharp-Shooting Centre-Forward of Watford F.C.

There are very few players in football of to-day who have had a more interesting or varied career than Fred Pagnam, the centre-forward of the Watford club, who for a long time this season has held the leading place among the goal scorers of the country.

Born at Blackpool, and educated at Poulton Grammar School, Pagnam played as an outside-right with several junior clubs before he went from Lytham to sign up for Huddersfield Town. There he did not get any chance of showing what he could do with the first team, so he hied himself back to Southport, to play for the Central, still as an outside-right; and then he went on to Blackpool; and there, at last, he began to make real headway, appearing in sixteen League games during the 1913-14 season.

Being transferred to Liverpool for the following season, the manager of the Anfield club had an inspiration—he decided to play Pagnam at centre-forward, and immediately the outside-right, as he had been up to then, made good. There was a memorable match very early in his career as a leader of the attack when Pagnam scored four goals against Tottenham Hotspur, and in his first season as a centre the popular Fred scored twenty-four goals in the course of twenty-nine matches. Then, of course, there came the war to interrupt the normal run of football, and while Pagnam was attached to the Artillery he played a few games in the London Combination for the Arsenal, whose manager apparently made a note about his abilities. When things became normal again, Pagnam resumed with Liverpool, but he had apparently lost

his goal-scoring power, and so they transferred him to the Arsenal for £1,500.

Evidently a change of air was what the player required, for on joining the Reds he burst out again as a successful sharp-shooter, and for a couple of seasons was a most useful centre-forward. But in due course his powers seemed to fade again, and the Arsenal, thinking that the best had been had out of him, transferred him to Cardiff City near the end of the 1920-21 season. With his new club Pagnam scored eight goals, and these materially assisted his new club to gain promotion. Once again, however, that wanderlust spirit which seems to be a part of Pagnam's make-up manifested itself. He ceased to score frequently for Cardiff, and for last season they transferred him to Watford. For the Herts side he scored sixteen goals, but, as our readers know, he surpassed this total before half the present campaign had gone.

On his day there are few more deadly shots in the country, and he makes rather a habit of getting several goals in a match, once he has tasted blood. Already this season he has several hat-tricks to his credit, and now seems to have settled down at Rickmansworth. A harder or more whole-hearted player than Pagnam it would be difficult to find, and he seems as strong as a horse. One would not, of course, describe him as an ideal centre-forward, for there are plenty of fellows his superior, both in the art of ball control and in passing to the wings. But there is no more enthusiastic hustler in football of to-day, and so long as the other forwards of Watford give their centre sufficient chances—and plenty of space in which to work—he will see to the goal-scoring business.

MORE SPLENDID ATTRACTIONS TO FOLLOW—WATCH OUT!

"Come in, of course," said Tom Merry.

Cardew linked his arm in Lynn's, and marched the school-boy pugilist into Study No. 10.

Blake & Co. fixed their eyes on their teacups, not caring to look at Lynn or to speak to him.

Lynn coloured uncomfortably.

"Lynn's the bearer of a giddy olive-branch," Cardew explained. "There's been some trouble in your study, Blake—"

"No business of yours," said Blake gruffly.

Cardew nodded.

"Quite so. As you so politely put it, it's no bizney of mine at all. But there's a giddy olive-branch goin' beggin'. Go it, Lynn."

"You blokes can come back to Study No. 6 when you like," said Lynn.

No answer from Blake & Co. Those youths were not likely to accept an offer like that. Permission from Lynn to return to their study was rather more humiliating than being turned out of it.

"I mean it," said Lynn. "The 'Ead's jawed me. St. Leger's jawed me. I'm sorry I turned you out. There!"

"That's the amende honorable!" murmured Cardew.

Blake looked at the Chicken.

"We're not coming back to the study, so long as you're there!" he said coolly. "You can have it to yourself."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You were able to turn us out," went on Blake, "because

"Wathah not."

"I—I suppose not," said Tom thoughtfully. "But—"

"I shall wefuse to return to Studay No. 6 until I have thwashed Lynn," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am goin' into tewwific twainin', you know and I twust I shall soon be able to give Lynn a feahful thwashin'. Aftah that I will forgive him and return to the studay."

At which there was an outburst of chuckling in Tom Merry's study. The idea of Gussy thrashing the redoubtable Chicken seemed to have quite an exhilarating effect upon the whole tea-party.

CHAPTER 6.

Cardew's Chum!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW did not turn up in Study No. 9 to tea. He seemed to have forgotten the existence of Levison and Clive. When Levison looked for him after tea he found him in Study No. 6, having tea with the Chicken. Levison looked in grimly at the door.

Cardew waved a hand to him.

"Come in, old top!" he said. "Lynn, old fellow, you don't mind if Levison joins us?"

"Pleased!" said Lynn.

Levison did not enter.

He did not like the new fellow, and did not feel friendly

towards him; and he had no intention whatever of joining in Cardew's game of pulling the Chicken's leg.

"How long are you keeping this up, Cardew?" he asked.

"Keepin' what up?" asked Cardew innocently.

"This silly rot!" snapped Levison.

"I don't quite follow, old bean. Can't you be a little more explicit?" asked Cardew amiably.

Levison made an angry gesture and walked away. The Chicken knitted his brows.

"Your pals don't like you being friendly with me," he said.

"Oh, they'll get over it," said Cardew easily. "You're goin' to show me that wonderful punch of yours with the left after tea, Lynn."

"I'll be glad to show you anything I can!" said Lynn heartily. "I'm jolly glad we've become friends."

Cardew winced slightly. But he nodded and smiled agreeably. After tea the study table was pulled aside, and a set of boxing-gloves sorted out. Cardew was a good boxer when he chose to exert himself which was seldom. He was interested in the Chicken's wonderful pugilistic abilities, and particularly in that "punch with the left" which had served the boy boxer so well in his career in the ring.

He threw off his jacket and put on the gloves, and faced the Chicken with his hands up.

"I won't 'urt you," said Lynn.

"My dear man," murmured Cardew. "I'm not really soft—I don't mind if you hurt me a little."

The Chicken grinned.

"If I 'it you 'ard you'd never know what 'urt you," he said. "I put the Tooting Pet to sleep with that there left punch. And he was a bloke twice as heavy as you, Master Cardew. I'm going to be careful."

"Get going," said Cardew.

"Ere goes, then."

Cardew was not wholly pleased by the boxing display that followed. With all his skill—which really was considerable—he did not succeed in touching the Chicken at all. The Chicken tapped him here and there, taking care to put no force into his blows. But the "taps" were fairly hard taps—only taps, in fact, from the point of view of the Chicken, who was accustomed to extremely hard hitting.

A feeling of angry annoyance grew up in Cardew's breast at his helplessness. He did not like the knowledge that this fellow could have knocked him right and left if he had chosen.

He made a sudden and tremendous effort, and got through the Chicken's guard at last, and succeeded in getting his blows home. Then the Chicken, forgetful for a moment, let out his left with the old driving force in it, and Cardew spun across the study and crashed on the carpet.

"Oh gad!" he gasped.

Cardew sprawled breathlessly on the floor, feeling as if a mule had kicked him.

Lynn ran forward and bent over him anxiously.

"Sorry!" he gasped. "I never meant to 'it you 'ard. You're 'urt?"

Cardew set his teeth. He certainly was hurt; and, but for the well-padded glove, his hurt would have been considerable. He sat up.

"Let me 'elp you up," said Lynn anxiously.

"Rot! Let me alone!" snapped Cardew. "Do you think I'm knocked out with one tap?"

He staggered to his feet without assistance, but he was obliged to lean on the table for a minute or two.

"Going on?" asked Lynn, at last.

Cardew burst into a laugh. His good-humour returned.

"No," he answered, peeling off the gloves. "I've had enough for the present. I'm dashed if I see where you get the strength from to punch like that, Lynn."

"Well, I'm pretty hefty," said the Chicken. "But it's the knack as much as anything else."

Cardew put on his jacket.

His head was singing, and for the present, at least, he was tired of the company of the Chicken. But the Chicken was not tired of his.

"I'll tell you what, Cardew," said Lynn, who had been thinking over tea, "I've got this study to myself now. Them blokes won't come back to it. It's the best study in the passage, too. 'Ow would you like to keep in this study?"

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated Cardew.

"I'd like you for a study-mate," said Lynn. "It's pretty rotten for a feller to 'ave a study to himself all on his own. Couldn't you change out of Study No. 9?"

Cardew stared at him.

He almost laughed outright at the idea of changing out of Study No. 9 and becoming the study-mate and permanent pal of this extremely odd new fellow. But Lynn was in serious earnest, and Cardew contrived not to laugh.

He put on a thoughtful air.

"Well, no," he said. "You see, Levison and Clive are my friends, and they'd rather miss me."

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"They wouldn't like me in Study No. 9?" said the Chicken wistfully.

Cardew coughed.

"You see, there's scarcely room for four," he explained. "It's not quite so large a study as this." He glanced at his watch. "By Jove, it's time I got on to prep! I'll see you later, Lynn."

"'Ow long will you be at prep?"

"Eh! Oh, about an hour."

"I'll look in for you arter," said the Chicken.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Do!" gasped Cardew.

He escaped from Study No. 6 with that, and Lynn sat down to his own preparation rather dismally. He was a sociable fellow, and he hated being left alone; and Cardew was the only fellow at St. Jim's who displayed any friendliness towards him. Lynn would have been glad of the company even of Blake & Co., in spite of the bad terms they were on with him. While he worked he was thinking of joining Cardew after prep, and he found comfort in that prospect.

Cardew was feeling a little dismayed as he strolled into Study No. 9, where he found Levison and Clive at work.

He dropped into a seat at the table.

"What are we grindin' at this evenin'?" he asked.

"Lathom told you," answered Levison shortly.

Cardew yawned.

"Dear man, how can I possibly remember what Lathom says? Point out the place. I'm goin' to put in a good grind this evenin'. I'm thinkin' of keepin' it up till bed-time."

Levison and Clive stared at him.

"Swotting?" asked Clive in amazement.

"Why not? I'd like to please old Lathom in class for once," said Cardew. "Besides, Virgil is a great poet—no end of a big gun—and I've never given him his due. This evenin' I'm goin' to dig deep."

"Glad to hear it," said Levison dryly. "It will do you good. Your construe this morning was about on a par with Baggly Trimble's."

"To-morrow it's goin' to be a regular corker," said Cardew solemnly. "I'm goin' to astonish the natives with my knowledge of the beauties of this great classic."

Cardew sorted out his Virgil, his dictionary, and his grammar. But he did not seem in a hurry to get to work, in spite of his declaration. Levison and Clive went on steadily, while Cardew yawned and occasionally took a turn up and down the study.

But at the sound of a footstep in the passage Ralph Reckness Cardew developed sudden activity.

He was deep in work when there came a tap at the study door, and it opened to reveal the rugged face of Oliver Lynn.

Levison and Clive glanced at the visitor, but Cardew seemed too deep in his work to notice that Lynn was there.

"Finished?" asked Lynn cheerily.

Cardew had to look up at that. He coloured slightly.

"Finished? Oh, no!" he answered.

"It's over the hour," said Lynn.

"Is it, really?" asked Cardew.

"Hour and a quarter," said Lynn. "I've finished."

"Lucky you!" said Cardew, with a sigh. "I'm afraid I shall be another hour yet at least."

"My eye! That'll keep you till bed-time!" said Lynn.

"'Fraid so," assented Cardew.

"That's 'ard lines," said Lynn. "Can I 'elp?"

"Hem!"

"I'll look out words for you in the dictionary—what?" said Lynn, coming into the study. "I'll be glad to 'elp."

Levison looked at Lynn, and then at Cardew. The latter's face was a study for a moment. And Levison grinned.

"I—I don't want to give you the trouble, Lynn," said Cardew.

"No trouble at all."

Cardew shook his head.

"The fact is, old bean, I mustn't let you help me," he said. "Fellows are supposed to do their prep without assistance."

"Oh, I see," said Lynn. "Well, if I can't 'elp—"

"No. Thanks all the same."

"I'll jest sit down and wait till you've finished," said the Chicken.

"Oh!"

"Shall I?" asked Lynn.

"Oh! Do!" gasped Cardew.

Lynn sat down. Levison and Clive rose from the table, their work being finished. Both of them were grinning now.

"Don't go, you elaps," said Cardew.

"We're finished," smiled Levison. "We're going down to the Common-room. Ta, ta!"

"Look here—"

"Well?"

Cardew gave his chums a furious look. He did not want to be abandoned to the Chicken, but he could scarcely say so. Levison and Clive left the study, and Cardew proceeded with his neglected prep; the Chicken sitting with his feet on the fender, waiting for him to finish.



A terrified cry broke from Ethel's lips as a rough hand grasped her shoulder. "Help!" There was a crashing in the thickets, and her assailant spun round to see Ralph Reckness Cardew leaping out into the path. Cardew had a light cane in his hand, and using it as a weapon, he rushed into the attack. "Hands off, you scoundrel!" he shouted. (See page 13.)

Having tired of pulling the new fellow's leg, Cardew had intended to drop his estimable acquaintance. But it was evident that the Chicken did not "catch on." Cardew had even intended to work till bed-time, in order to avoid the Chicken's company; but it was not to be avoided so easily as all that. He finished his prep rather hastily, after all, and rose from the table.

The Chicken rose, too.

"Done already?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Let's go down."

They left the study together.

"Now I come to think of it, I promised to call on Tom Merry this evenin'," said Cardew. "See you later, Lynn."

And without waiting for a reply he walked away to the Shell passage, leaving the Chicken standing rather dismayed.

CHAPTER 7.

Rough on the Chicken!

"OLD on a minute, Cardew!" It was in the Fourth Form dormitory the following morning. Ralph Reckness Cardew—having made his toilet more rapidly than usual that morning—was going down when the Chicken called to him.

Cardew seemed suddenly afflicted with deafness.

He left the dormitory and disappeared; and the Chicken hurried to finish putting on his boots to follow.

Cardew's friendship—such as it was—had come as a ray of light into the Chicken's lonely life at St. Jim's, and it was too precious to him to be neglected. He liked Cardew immensely, and admired him still more; and there were few things that he would not have done for the dandy of the Fourth. The Chicken's way of life had never brought him into contact with a fellow of Cardew's character, and he had not the remotest comprehension of that character.

Some of the Fourth grinned, and Arthur Augustus frowned. Cardew's ways were well-known in the Fourth, incomprehensible as they were to the new junior.

Sometimes it amused Cardew to "take up" Baggy Trimble, letting him drop again as soon as the amusement of pulling Baggy's fat leg palled upon him. Sometimes he was on the

chummiest terms with Racke of the Shell, and then again he would go on his way unconscious of Racke's existence. Cardew meant no harm—in fact he meant nothing at all, only following his wayward, idle fancy whithersoever it might lead him. He could always take care of himself, and he took it for granted that other fellows could hold their own.

But the Chicken, who could have held his own with the "mittens" on against a man of twice his age in the boxing-ring, was simple and unsuspecting, and quite unable to deal with his present surroundings. That a fellow could be chummy and intimate with him one day, and forget his existence the next, never occurred to the simple, confiding mind of the schoolboy boxer. He would have called that kind of thing by a much harsher name than waywardness. He would have called it a "dirty trick," in his own phraseology, and he would have been right; though Ralph Reckness Cardew was far from realising it.

Lynn noted a good many grinning faces turned towards him, and heard the fat chuckle of Baggy Trimble.

All the Fourth knew that Cardew had been pulling the new fellow's leg, and had tired of the entertainment; only Lynn himself remained in blissful ignorance of the fact.

In spite of his repugnance towards the new fellow, Arthur Augustus debated in his noble mind whether it was not up to him to give the schoolboy boxer a warning word. Fortunately, the swell of St. Jim's decided not.

But Baggy Trimble proceeded to exemplify the truth of the proverb that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

"You're a bit dense, Lynn," he remarked, with a fat chortle. "Don't you know that Cardew's pulling your silly leg?"

Lynn looked at him.

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble.

Lynn finished lacing his boots, and then started towards Baggy. He took the fat junior by the collar.

"You saying anything against Cardew?" he asked.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Twimble, you have no wight to make such a wemark!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Ow! Leggo my collar!" roared Trimble.
 "Not till you tell me what you was driving at!" said Lynn angrily. "Now, then—"
 "You silly ass!" howled Trimble. "Cardew's been pulling your leg—that's all! He wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole really. You're not fit for anybody to talk to. And Cardew wouldn't be seen walking with you in the quad for a term's pocket-money."

"Shake, shake, shake!"
 "Yow-ow-ow!"
 "You lying sweep!" said Lynn, his rugged face dark with anger. "You're saying rotten things about a cove whose boots you ain't fit to clean! If I 'it you, you'd burst—"

"Ow! Leggo! Help!" yelled Trimble.
 "Sit down, you fat rotter!" growled the Chicken.
 He sat Trimble down on the floor with a bump that almost shook the dormitory. Trimble gave a roar of anguish. Lynn walked to the door, and left the dormitory, without a glance at the grinning juniors. He went down into the quadrangle, into the fresh air of the sunny spring morning, and looked round for Cardew. That elegant junior was not to be seen.

Cardew did not show up till breakfast, when he came in and sat down between Levison and Clive. Lynn looked at him across the table, with a nod and a smile. Cardew nodded back, absently, and devoted his attention to his breakfast. He left the dining-room after brekker with Levison and Clive, to walk in the quadrangle till lessons. A frown crossed his face as Lynn appeared in the offing.

"There's your new pal," said Sidney Clive.
 Oliver Lynn came up to the three. Tom Merry & Co. were punting a football about, and Levison and Clive made a move to join them.

"Don't desert a pal, you fellows!" murmured Cardew.
 "You've got a new one!" grinned Levison.
 "Oh, don't be an ass!"
 "Your own fault," said Clive, with a frown. "It's up to you to treat the chap decently, Cardew."

"Look here—"
 Levison and Clive ran into the crowd of juniors punting the footer, and Cardew was left to his new friend. Lynn joined him with a beaming smile.
 "Looking for you before brekker," he said. "I couldn't find you."

"Couldn't you?" murmured Cardew.
 The football came Cardew's way, and he kicked it, and ran off with it, with a crowd of juniors, and Lynn was left alone. The Chicken did not care to join in the punt-about, and he stood where he was, staring moodily after the merry crowd.

"He, he, he!"
 He looked round, to see Baggy Trimble. His brow darkened savagely, and Baggy backed away.

But the Chicken did not touch him. He drove his hands deep into his pockets, and walked away by himself, with a clouded brow and a heavy heart. He was beginning to understand Cardew.

Oliver Lynn was not looking cheerful at lessons that morning. Not once in class did Cardew meet his eyes. After class, Lynn came on him in the corridor, discussing with his chums what was to be done with the afternoon, which was a half-holiday.

"Come on the river with us," suggested Clive. "We're taking a boat up to the island."

"Too much fag."
 "You can steer!" said Levison.
 "No good asking you fellows to come on the jolly old razzle?" said Cardew.

"Fathead!"
 "I hear that D'Arcy's cousin is coming this afternoon," said Levison. "Blake says she's staying at the vicarage, and is walking over. There's going to be a tea-party in No. 10. You can lend the fellows a hand at getting the study in order."

"Oh, my hat!"
 Lynn stood a few paces away. Cardew did not glance in his direction. Lynn had been looking forward to the half-holiday, to be spent in the fascinating company of his new friend; but it was clear that Cardew was not thinking of that. The Chicken turned away without speaking to Cardew, and Levison glanced after him rather curiously.

"Walking over from the vicarage!" said Cardew thoughtfully. "Know which way Miss Ethel will come?"
 "How should I know, ass? There's three or four ways. Come out on the river."
 "Spare me!"

Cardew strolled away. After dinner, he walked down to the gates by himself, and while his comrades were on the gleaming river, and Tom Merry & Co were making great preparations for the distinguished visitor who was expected, Ralph Rockness Cardew sauntered into the woods—possibly in the hope that cousin Ethel would decide to walk to St. Jim's by the woodland path.

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CHAPTER 8. Cardew to the Rescue!

"D'ARCY!"
 Oliver Lynn spoke abruptly.
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his glance slowly and loftily upon the new junior.

"Yaas?" he said curtly.
 "Your visitor's coming this arfternoon?"
 "Yaas."
 "I'm going out," said the Chicken.

"What?"
 "I'm going out all the arfternoon," said Lynn quietly.
 "You can 'ave your study. I won't come back till call-over."

With that, Lynn turned and walked quickly away in the direction of the gates. Arthur Augustus gazed after him in surprise.

"Bar Jove!" he murmured. "That's weally vewy decent of that howwid outsiders. I wondah whethah I have been wathah too wuff on him."

Which was rather an uncomfortable reflection for the Honourable Arthur Augustus.
 Lynn left the school gates, and walked down Rylcombe Lane, with a moody brow. It was pretty clear to him now that his supposed friendship with Cardew of the Fourth was at an end; that Cardew had been only pulling his leg, for his own amusement and that of the Fourth Form. The unhappy Chicken was feeling more miserable than angry; and he was not seeking Cardew now. He had no friend in the school; he was never likely to have a friend there. Their ways were not his ways, and they had nothing in common.

He wished from the bottom of his heart that Colonel St. Leger had never taken him from his old surroundings, and given him this "chance" in life. He had been happy enough, in his own way, in Hawley's Ring, and he had looked forward to a boxing career which would have had its own triumphs. His uncle had meant well and kindly, but the chance had come too late for the Chicken.

He turned into the woods, and followed the path towards Wayland, giving no thought to the direction he was taking. He only wanted to fill up the time with a long ramble, till D'Arcy's visitor had left St. Jim's. There was a delicacy in the Chicken's nature that the St. Jim's juniors were far from suspecting; and it had led him to keep off the scene while Ethel Cleveland was at the school. He was sorry enough for the marks of conflict he had left on the faces of Blake & Co., and which Miss Cleveland could not fail to notice. It was the first time that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had displayed a darkened eye upon such an important occasion.

The Chicken started a little as he caught sight of a slim and elegant figure strolling on the woodland path ahead of him. It was Ralph Rockness Cardew.

Cardew was sauntering up and down the path, with his hands in his pockets, idly. If Miss Ethel came that way to the school, he intended to offer himself as an escort; but he was not particularly keen even upon that privilege. He was idle and bored, and dissatisfied with himself and things generally, as he often was. His treatment of the Chicken was a little upon his conscience, too, and that irritated him. He had taken the fellow up for a day, and dropped him again—as he had done with Trimble and Racke and Chowle and other fellows; but somehow he could not dismiss the matter from his mind so easily on this occasion. As he turned in the path, he came face to face with Lynn, and frowned. His first thought was that his importunate acquaintance had run him down.

He was annoyed; and he was still further annoyed when Lynn passed him, without a look or a word. In his surprise, he called out to the Chicken:

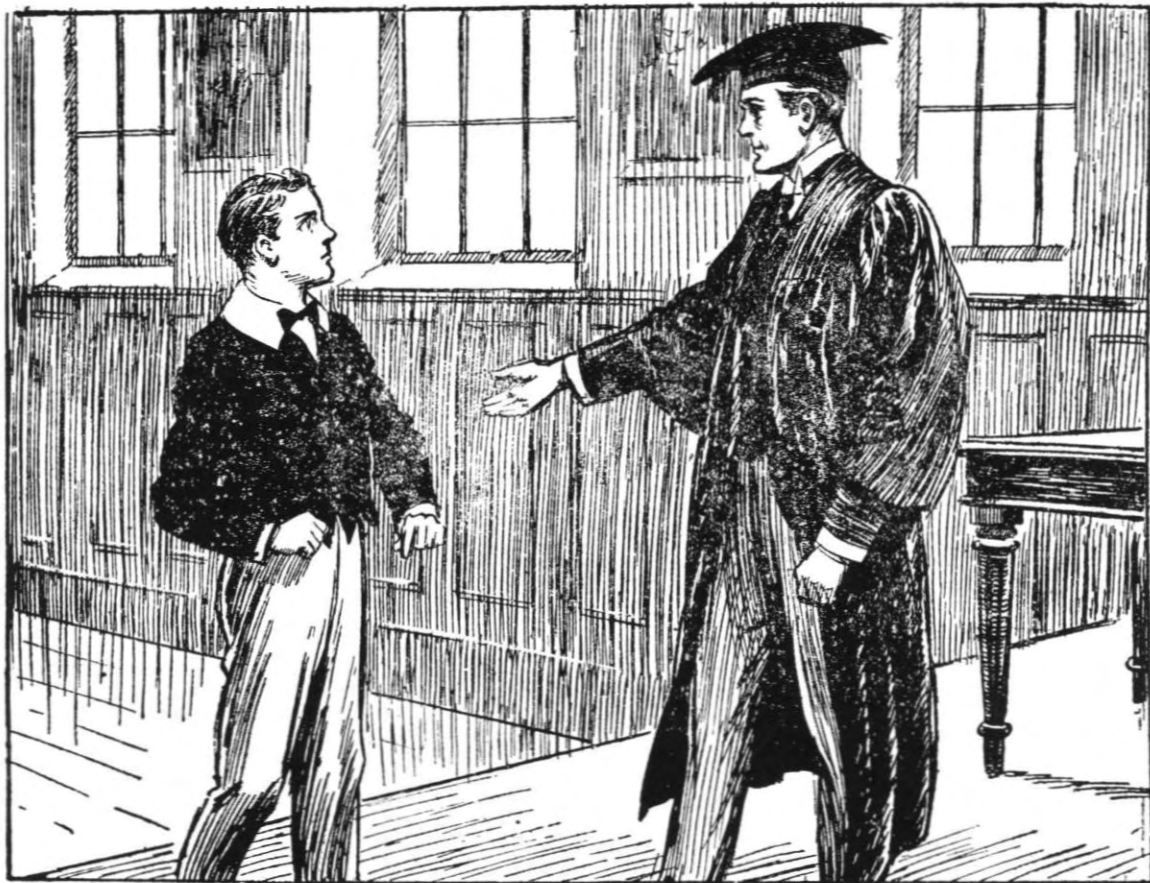
"Hallo, Lynn! Whither bound?"
 Oliver Lynn glanced round. There was a look on his rugged face that could only be described as "ugly." He came back towards Cardew.

"At it again, eh?" he said.
 "Eh? I don't quite follow," yawned Cardew.
 "You're jest like the rest," said Lynn. "You don't think I'm good enough to speak to. I shook that there Trimble for saying as you was only pulling my leg. And you was all the time."

"Ye gods, what language!" murmured Cardew.
 Lynn's lip curled.

"I don't speak like the other blokes," he said. "I don't tell lies like you fellers, either. I don't take a cove in and make a fool of him. I wouldn't! If I made friends with a bloke one day, I wouldn't turn my back on 'im the next. Them's public-school manners, I s'pose. They wouldn't be good enough for the blokes I used to know."

"My dear man—"
 "Cut it out!" said the Chicken. "I thought of giving you a 'iding, Master Cardew; and I could lick you, jest as easy as you could take me in and make a fool of me before all the fellers. I ain't going to do it; you ain't worth it!"



"Lynn," said Mr. Railton, "you have acted very courageously in going to the rescue of Miss Cleveland. You are a credit to your House, and I'm sure everyone else is with me in thinking so." "Well, sir," said Lynn, "I wasn't goin' to see a poor girl attacked like that." Mr. Railton gripped the new boy by the hand before dismissing him. (See page 17.)

With that, Lynn tramped on, and the winding of the footpath hid him from sight. Cardew stood staring after him, a strange expression on his handsome face.

"Quite a lecture!" he murmured, at last. "And the odd thing is that the fellow's quite right."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders, and resumed his sauntering up and down the woodland path. He was inexpressibly bored that afternoon, and he even began to wish that he had gone on the river with his chums, or had prolonged the entertainment of pulling the Chicken's leg for one more day.

But boredom was suddenly banished, as a sharp cry rang through the wood, so close at hand that it made him jump.

"Help!"

Cardew knew Ethel Cleveland's voice.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated.

"Help!"

In a second, Ralph Reckness Cardew was tearing through the wood in the direction of the cry.

CHAPTER 9.

The Chicken on His Mettle!

COUSIN ETHEL stopped suddenly. The girl was following a narrow footpath through the wood, thinking of anything but danger, that sunny spring afternoon. She stopped at the sight of four burly forms sprawling in the grass—four of the roughest, dirtiest-looking tramps her eyes had ever fallen upon.

There was a portmanteau lying in the grass, and the quartette were sorting articles they had taken from it. It was evident at a glance that the four worthies had stolen the portmanteau, and retired to that secluded spot to share out the plunder. As the girl stopped, all four of the footpads leaped to their feet.

"Wot luck!" ejaculated one of them, a red-faced ruffian with a black patch over one eye. "Old on, miss!"

Ethel caught her breath.

The four tramps surrounded her, grinning.

"Ain't going to 'urt you, miss," said the gentleman with one eye. "You jest 'and over your loose cash to 'elp a pore man on his way—"

"And that there watch, Bud," said another.

"And that there umbrella—"

"Jest anything that's valuable!" grinned Bud. "Don't be afeared, miss; we know 'ow to treat a lady. Jest 'and over the dibs."

Ethel backed away, her face white. She made a sudden spring to escape as Bud stretched out a rough hand to stop her, and ran back along the path.

The four ruffians ran in pursuit at once. A terrified cry broke from the girl as a rough hand grasped her shoulder.

"Help!"

"Old your row!" growled Bud. "I—"

"Help!"

"Look here—" roared the red-faced man.

There was a crashing in the thickets, and Bud spun round, still grasping Ethel by the shoulder. Ralph Reckness Cardew leaped out into the path. Cardew had a light cane in his hand; he grasped it to use as a weapon.

"Hands off, you scoundrel!" he shouted.

He struck Bud across the face with the cane, so fiercely that the ruffian staggered back, releasing Ethel.

"Cardew—" panted Ethel.

"Run for it!" breathed Cardew. "I'll keep them back a minute—"

He had no time to finish.

Bud, swearing savagely, closed in on him, and Cardew struggled desperately in the grasp of the ruffian.

"Help! Help!" screamed Ethel.

Crash! Cardew went to the ground, almost stunned by a savage blow at close quarters.

Ethel tottered against a tree, shrieking for help. One of the tramps seized her and clapped a knuckly hand over her mouth.

Cardew sat up dazedly.

"Lynn!" he yelled.

(Continued on page 16.)

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ANTHONY SHARPE SOLVES ANOTHER BAFFLING MYSTERY THIS WEEK!



THE STARING EYES!

By Edmund Burton.

Another of the Amazing Exploits of ANTHONY SHARPE
—Investigator.

CHAPTER 1.

A Strange Narrative!

ANTHONY SHARPE lay back in his chair and pressed the tips of his long fingers together—a favourite attitude of his when “summing up” any story which he had just listened to.

“A queer tale, Mr. Forbes, and quite a gripping one,” the famous crime investigator remarked. “Let me review the principal points, and please correct me if I go wrong. About two months ago you unexpectedly received a legacy of twenty-five thousand pounds through the death of a relative in America, and with part of this money you purchased Thornville, the big house at Salmminster, which you and your wife now occupy. The main building, you say, is supposed to be very old, but a couple of new wings were added within recent memory by the previous tenant. There are several panelled rooms, two or three of which still contain all the original fixtures and fittings—cupboards, tiers of shelves, and so forth—and one, the library, possesses a very massive oak press, at present empty, with an oval glass panel set in the upper portion of the door. This press is the pivot of the whole trouble, apparently, since it has been the cause of both you and Mrs. Forbes receiving a nasty scare on four distinct occasions. Also, the two maids you had engaged left in a panic through the same cause. That is right so far, is it not?”

Wilfred Forbes—a broad-shouldered, strongly-built young man, whose appearance suggested that it would take a good deal to frighten him—nodded his head.

“Quite right, sir,” he said.

“Now,” pursued Sharpe, “this ‘scare,’ as we shall call it, has on each occasion taken the same form. Just before you switched on the lights at dusk, a couple of large, luminous eyes have suddenly appeared behind the glass panel, and stared for a brief space into the library; but the big press was absolutely empty when you opened the door, however quickly. What investigation did you make, beyond that?”

“There was little to make,” Forbes answered. “The cupboard, as I have said, is built into the wall, and could not be drawn out; and though I sounded the woodwork all over the interior, it seemed solid enough. Of course,” he added, with a slight smile, “I never was an expert in these things, so you’d better not take my verdict as final, Mr. Sharpe.”

The detective inclined his head slowly.

“Quite so,” he admitted. “Secret panels, and such like, would be of little use if everyone could locate their position by rapping on them; but since neither of us seems to favour the supernatural theory in this case, the existence of some such panel, employed by human agency for a purpose at present unknown, naturally suggests itself. Now, you said you bid for Thornville at an auction. I think? Had you any very persistent opposition before the house was knocked down to you?”

“I had,” Wilfred Forbes answered at once. “And, by a curious coincidence, my

opponent was a resident in the neighbourhood of Salmminster—a Mr. Horatio Markham, I afterwards learnt his name to be.”

“And he lives quite close to you?”

“At Abbot’s Hall, another big house about a quarter of a mile away, which, I hear, was originally an old monastery, though part of it was pulled down some years ago.”

“Have you seen much of this Mr. Markham since you moved to Salmminster?” was Sharpe’s next query. “If so, how does he treat you—I mean, does he appear to be friendly?”

Forbes laughed.

“I have passed him in the Main Street on two or three occasions, but he never even glanced in my direction. He seemed rather sore when I outbid him at the auction, and, quite plainly, he is not inclined to renew our acquaintance.”

“I see. Now, please describe him as accurately as you can. There is nothing at present to suggest that Mr. Markham is mixed up in this affair, but—well, you certainly snatched the house from under his nose, and he appears to have been particularly keen on having it.”

“He is tall, dark, and powerfully-built, with a most pronounced beak of a nose—reminded me of a vulture,” Forbes replied. “That’s his picture, in a few words.”

“Thanks,” Sharpe said, then added, as he drew a “Bradshaw” towards him: “Well, we’ll go back with you—my assistant and I—and prowl round the scene of action. There’s a suitable train in forty minutes.”

CHAPTER 2.

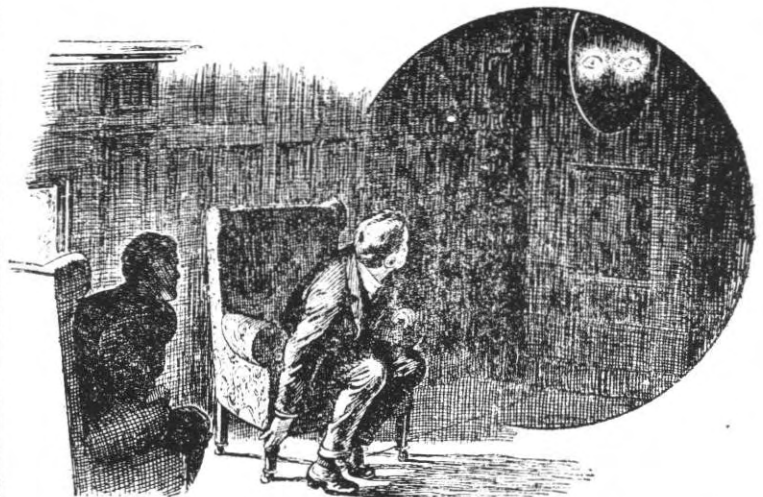
The Mysterious Eyes!

ABBOT’S HALL and Thorville, as Sharpe soon discovered through several inquiries he made in the neighbourhood, were the two oldest buildings for some miles around. Salmminster itself was almost entirely modern—a small but go-ahead town about twenty miles from London, the majority of whose houses were of the up-to-date semi-detached type.

Tim O’Carroll, the investigator’s young assistant, accompanied his master, and both made an exhaustive examination of the library in question; but, as Wilfred Forbes had said, everything seemed to be so solid that they received absolutely no reward for their trouble. The big oak press was a massive affair, capable of holding a couple of tall men standing upright, but even an expert scrutiny of its interior brought no result. The panelling at the back and sides was old and worm-eaten, and nowhere did the slightest variation of echo answer Sharpe’s careful sounding.

The pair had been staying with Forbes for three days without the mysterious phenomenon of the glowing eyes putting in an appearance, and on the evening of the fourth the library was left to the occupation of Tim and Sharpe alone. Previous to this the investigator had been preparing his ground well, and had done one or two little things to the big press, both inside and out, which might help to solve the problem more quickly.

Mr. and Mrs. Forbes had gone to dine with some friends in the neighbourhood.



As the illumination of the staring eyes began gradually to fade away, Anthony Sharpe’s hand dropped towards the leg of his chair, and his fingers encountered a strong, black cord which he pulled taut.

and Sharpe was sitting in a deep chair by the side of the fire, O'Carroll being curled up drowsily in another close by. Dusk was closing down, and the light had not been switched on—purposely, since this was about the time the manifestations usually occurred.

The minutes passed slowly, the heat of the fire causing Tim's head to nod; but his master's eyes never left the vicinity of the mysterious press which almost directly faced him in his present position.

There was no reason to expect that their vigilance would be rewarded this evening more than any other, but constant watching was the only remedy, on account of their investigations having drawn blank hitherto. It might come within the next few minutes, in an hour, or perhaps not for a week, and—

Ah, what was that? Sharpe's gaze suddenly intensified as he stared at the gap behind the glass panel—a gap which had been almost jet black, but which now became gradually suffused with a faint light, growing more pronounced each moment.

The investigator thrust out his foot, pressing Tim's very gently, and, well trained to take such warnings coolly, O'Carroll sat up quietly. He followed his master's gaze, his own eyes also fastening on the door of the big press, and immediately became conscious of a queer, creepy feeling in the region of his spine.

For, framed in the oval panel above the level of their heads, were two luminous orbs that seemed to flicker and glow with an uncanny light—eyes that stared unblinkingly into the room for a few seconds before their illumination began gradually to fade away.

Then Sharpe's hand dropped towards the leg of his chair, his fingers encountering a strong, black cord which he pulled taut. The press door swung open swiftly, but the glowing orbs had vanished.

"Too smart for me that time!" the investigator muttered. "I'm afraid I left it just a fraction of a second too long, but we've a second card to play, eh, Timothy Dennis?"

As he spoke Anthony Sharpe strode towards the press, switching on his electric torch and shining it all over the panelled interior. As the beam of light travelled down the left-hand side, Tim O'Carroll gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"Yes, an' it's a trump card, sir!" he whispered. "Look!"

Sharpe nodded as he examined sundry little strips of gummed brown paper which he had pasted here and there on the woodwork, wherever an angle or panel-boundary suggested that an opening might exist. And several of these small paper slips were now burst asunder, proving that that part of the press wall had since been moved.

"Switch on the light—all the bulbs!" the detective commanded, nodding towards the big electroliter depending from the high ceiling. "Then find something that will serve as a strong lever. We've got to follow the scent while it's hot!"

Tim did as requested, presently returning with a stout, flat-bladed pike which had been hanging among other ancient weapons in the hall outside. Sharpe pressed the point of this against the spot which held most of the burst paper strips, and worked at it until he had forced a narrow rift in the woodwork where two large panels joined.

O'Carroll then inserted another lever a little higher up, and the pair tugged strongly until something gave with a snap.

"That's done it!" Anthony Sharpe murmured, as part of the back wall swung a few inches inwards. "Now, steady! Let's be prepared for eventualities, for we don't yet know the reason for all this display of magic!"

He drew an automatic from his pocket, and pushed the secret door open wider, being surprised at its evident heaviness; but next moment he learned the cause. For, on stepping through the narrow aperture into a dark passage beyond, he found that the back of the paneling was reinforced by a double thickness of brick. Small wonder, indeed, that no hollow echo had rewarded their sounding when he and Forbes had made their previous investigations. The door was as solid as the wall itself, and an excellent example of the care taken to keep such things secret in those far-off days when cunning means of entry and exit were deemed necessary.



Anthony Sharpe and Tim O'Carroll were investigating the mystery of the staring eyes, when the cellar door swung open without warning, and the electric light was suddenly switched on. "Ah!" said the newcomer. "May I ask to whom I am indebted for the honour of this visit?"

The passage was a short one, presently ending in a flight of stone steps that led downwards; then came a long tunnel beneath the ground level, perfectly straight and smelling of damp earth. Tim gave a disgusted sniff.

"Like a bloomin' catacomb, so 'tis!" he muttered, but Sharpe instantly nudged him into silence.

"Sh! Not a word!" he hissed. "See! There's a gleam of light yonder, so we're evidently near the finish."

They pressed forward on tiptoe, finally reaching the other end of the tunnel, and here both paused in amazement. For, to their surprise, they found themselves looking into a large cellar, lit by a single electric bulb in the ceiling and containing a number of boxes and packages arranged in neat order round the walls. The place held only one occupant—a tall, dark man, with a hooked nose, who was stooping over something in the far corner, and who presently passed through a doorway to the right, switching off the light without apparently noticing that he was being spied upon.

Sharpe gave him a few minutes' start; then the pair stepped into the cellar, and commenced an examination of its contents by the aid of the electric-torch.

CHAPTER 3.

The Secret of the Cellar—Trapped!

AND wonderfully interesting that examination proved to be, for the larger boxes were packed to the m with cigars and tobacco, whilst the smaller packages contained a white powder which, to Sharpe's experienced eye, could answer to one name only—cocaine!

"That's enough!" he muttered. "Now for the thing in the corner. Ah, I guessed as much!"

They had crossed the cellar, and were now stooping over a fantastic-looking contrivance—a couple of bracketed glow-lamps fixed behind a pair of large artificial eyes, such as an optician often uses for advertising purposes; and the bulbs were connected by wires to a dry battery fastened at the base of the framework which supported the whole ingenious affair.

That was sufficient—and, in fact, all they had time to investigate—for at that moment the cellar door swung open without warning, and the light in the ceiling was switched on again. There was no chance of retreating to the passage, for the newcomer had already seen them.

"Ah, I thought I heard a slight sound!" he said quietly. "May I ask to whom am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"Mr. Horatio Markham, I think?" returned the investigator coolly, fixing his eyes on the other. "My name's Sharpe, since you ask—better known when prefixed by 'Anthony,' perhaps."

"Anthony Sharpe—the detective!" the tall man muttered, his lips compressing slightly. "Yes, yes! Of course I've heard of you—everyone has—but why are you here?"

"Merely to solve the mystery of the staring eyes over at Thornville, with which your place of yours communicates," replied Sharpe. "And I have solved that mystery to my satisfaction—also, some other things!"

He swept his hand round expressively, indicating the stock of stuff the cellar contained.

"Oh, you have, have you?" Markham's calmness vanished in a flash, and his eyes glittered like steel points. "Well, the knowledge won't do you any good, my prying friend! Take that for your interference!"

A sudden spurt of flame came from the region of the man's pocket, followed by a report that echoed like the boom of a heavy gun in that confined space. Both Tim and Sharpe ducked wildly as the light went out again, and something smacked against the wall behind where the investigator's head had been a fraction of a second before.

Then he loosed off his own weapon, firing twice at random into the darkness, a groan and a heavy fall telling him that at least one shot had got home.

They found Markham lying with a bullet-wound in his thigh at the base of a flight of steps leading to the dwelling house above, and carried him with difficulty back along the passage to Forbes' place, where Sharpe bandaged the injury as well as he could before sending Tim for the local doctor.

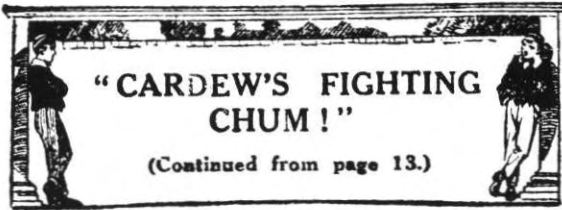
"That's a bad 'un!" the detective said, looking gravely at his prisoner. "You've lost a great quantity of blood—in fact, you're still bleeding, so I hope I haven't severed an artery. It was your own fault, anyhow; you fired first, and it was my duty to get you!"

Markham looked dully at his captor for a minute or so, and Sharpe saw with satisfaction that he had more or less "got the wind up"—this being exactly what the detective was playing for. He wanted to know if there was anyone else in the game, as there surely must be, considering the big store of stuff that cellar contained—for such would require more than one man to cope with and distribute.

"You think I'm booked?" Markham asked, his face twitching.

"Well, I'm not sure, of course," Sharpe replied, shaking his head. "but I certainly plugged you badly, and— However, in case you are, hadn't you better square matters up a bit? Even if you recover, you won't be able to carry on your business for a good while to come, because they don't allow that kind of trade in his

(Continued on page 18.)



Like a flash it came into his mind that Lynn of the Fourth was in the wood. If only the Chicken was within hearing—

"Shut up, you!" roared Bud savagely.

"Lynn! Help! Rescue!" yelled Cardew desperately.

He sprang to his feet, and a fierce blow sent him sprawling again. One of the ruffians planted a heavy boot on his chest, pinning him down.

"Help! Help!" Ethel was shrieking.

But the hand was clapped over her mouth again, and her cries died away in a faint gasping.

Cardew struggled fiercely under the foot of the ruffian who pinned him down. But he could not get loose.

"Lynn!" he shouted, with all the strength of his lungs.

There was a rustle in the thickets.

"Keep that young 'ound quiet!" growled Bud; and a savage blow on the mouth stopped Cardew's shouting.

But his shout had been heard.

Oliver Lynn had heard it, and he had heard Ethel's screams. He was coming!

The burly, thickset junior leaped out into the path. Bud & Co. were watching rather anxiously for the newcomer to appear; they grinned at the sight of a junior schoolboy. They did not suppose that the newcomer was likely to give them more trouble than Cardew.

"Collar 'im, Spotty!" called out Bud.

Spotty ran at the new arrival, and met with the surprise of his life. The Chicken was a tougher customer to deal with than the dandy of the St. Jim's Fourth.

What happened to him Spotty hardly knew. Something that seemed like a cannon-ball caught him on his stubby chin, and he went over backwards as if he had been shot.

He crashed on the ground, and lay there, groaning. It was the famous "left" of the Chicken that had knocked him out, though he was not conscious of it—or of anything save a terrific ache in his jaw and a myriad stars that danced before his dazzled eyes.

Lynn came on with hardly a pause.

"I'm 'ere!" he exclaimed.

"Help!" panted Ethel.

"I'll look arter you, miss!"

Oliver Lynn had not the faintest idea that this was D'Arcy's cousin, the distinguished visitor whose coming to St. Jim's had been one cause of the trouble in Study No. 6. He did not know or care who she was; he saw only a girl surrounded and frightened by ruffianly tramps, and that was more than enough for the Chicken.

"Go it, Lynn!" panted Cardew.

Lynn did not look at him.

Bud & Co. turned on the newcomer savagely, leaving Ethel free for the moment. Ethel reeled against a tree, and Cardew staggered up. The three tramps rushed right on Lynn.

What followed was amazing to Ethel, and both amazing and painful to Bud & Co.

Instead of being overborne by the rush of the three ruffians, Lynn jumped back a pace or two to get his back to a tree, so that he could not be taken from behind, and put up his hands.

They were on him in a second; three burly ruffians together, and the Chicken did not falter for a moment.

Bud went staggering back from a drive that fairly winded him and laid him on his back in the grass.

The next instant a swift upper-cut jarred on the jaw of the next rascal, almost lifting him from his feet. He rolled over, howling.

The third rascal got in a blow, and Lynn staggered under it, the blood spurting from his mouth. It was a blow that would have knocked out almost any other St. Jim's fellow; but the Chicken had stood up to harder knocks than that in the ring. Before the ruffian could hit again, Lynn closed in on him, and left and right came home on the tramp's face with blows like a hammer.

The ruffian collapsed under that attack, and sprawled in the grass.

Lynn panted.

"Come on, you rotters!"

The four tramps scrambled up. They were hurt, and they

were astounded; but more enraged than either. They flung themselves on the St. Jim's boxer with savage oaths.

Cardew, dazed and dizzy as he was, rushed into the fray; but he was knocked aside like a skittle.

Ethel, hardly breathing, watched the fierce fight with terrified and wondering eyes.

The Chicken was on his mettle now.

It was like his old life in the ring, this. For the first time since he had bidden farewell to the ring, the Chicken had to go "all out" to save his skin. And he was enjoying himself.

His movements were like lightning; again and again his quickness saved him from a knock-out blow. He was here there, and everywhere, seemingly all at once, his teeth set, his eyes glinting like diamonds, breathing hard through his nose, and his knuckly fists hitting out like flails.

Spotty went down again, and stayed there—groaning in the grass and nursing a fractured jaw. Another of the gang joined him on the ground, half-stunned by a crash between the eyes.

The other two backed off a little; and then the Chicken took up the offensive.

He came on to the attack, and gave them no rest. One of the rascals fairly took to his heels and fled along the path; but Bud had no chance to flee he was too hotly engaged. He backed and backed, till the Chicken's "left" came suddenly into play, and Bud went down like an ox.

Lynn stood panting, and dashed away a stream of crimson from his nose with the back of his hand.

He had won in that unequal fight, but he had received severe damages. Both his eyes were darkening, his nose was streaming red, and there were cuts on his face.

Cardew eyed him shamefacedly.

"You've done it, Lynn!" he said. "You've won!"

"Oh, you are hurt!" exclaimed Ethel.

Lynn grinned faintly.

"That's all right, miss. I've been 'urt before, and no 'arm done. They won't trouble you no more."

That was true enough. One of the rascals had disappeared from sight, two of them were crawling away groaning into the wood, and Bud lay almost senseless, incapable of movement. The schoolboy boxer, like Cæsar of old, had come, and seen, and conquered!

"Lynn, old chap—" faltered Cardew.

"Cut out the old chap!" snapped Lynn, dabbing at his nose. "I come 'ere to 'elp the young lady! Don't you worry."

"You wouldn't have helped me?" said Cardew.

"Course I would! Think I'd 'ave left you to be scragged and robbed!" grunted the Chicken. "But I don't want nothing to say to you, all the same. Don't you be afeared any more, miss; there ain't any danger now."

"This chap is Lynn of the Fourth, Miss Cleveland," said Cardew. "He's a new fellow at St. Jim's."

"Oh!" said Ethel. She held out her hand to Lynn.

"Thank you so much. I should have been robbed, and I—I was frightened—"

"Miss Cleveland!" ejaculated Lynn. "My eye! You D'Arcy's cousin, miss?"

"Yes," said Ethel. "You know my cousin?"

"Oh, yes, I know 'im!" said Lynn grimly. "I'm sorry, miss. You won't find him looking very chippy, and it's my fault. You'd better not shake 'ands with me, D'Arcy won't like it."

"What?" exclaimed Ethel. "Nonsense."

Lynn shook his head.

"Tain't nonsense," he said. "If you're going to the school, miss, p'raps you'll let me walk with you as far as the road. I won't come no farther than that."

"Won't you walk to the school with me?" asked Ethel, puzzled.

"I couldn't, miss, seeing as I've promised to stay out," said Lynn. "But you'll be safe out of the wood."

Ethel gave him a perplexed look, and they started. Lynn walked with Ethel and Cardew as far as Rylcombe Lane, and there he left them and turned back into the wood. Cardew ran after him.

"Lynn—"

"Well?" grunted Lynn.

"Those brutes would have smashed me if you hadn't come up—"

"Very likely!"

"I'm no end obliged," said Cardew. "I—I— Look here, Lynn, I've treated you rather like a cad—"

"You 'ave!"

"I'm sorry!"

"Then there ain't no more to say," rejoined Lynn; and he walked away, leaving Ralph Reckness Cardew to escort Miss Cleveland to the school.

CHAPTER 10.
Friends at Last!

DUSK was falling on St. Jim's when Oliver Lynn came up to the school gates. Lynn was feeling tired after a long ramble and after that terrific "scrap" with Bud & Co. in the wood. He had bathed his face in the stream, but the damages of the combat showed up very clearly. Taggles, the porter, stared at him, noticing his blackened eyes and swollen nose, and grunted.

"Pretty goings hon!" murmured Taggles.
"What's biting you, old covey?" asked Lynn.
Taggles grunted again, and did not reply. Oliver Lynn walked on to the School House.

He was just in time for call-over, and he went into Hall with a crowd of fellows, all of whom eyed him curiously.

Mr. Railton was taking the roll, and his glance dwelt upon Lynn's disfigured face. After the roll had been taken and the fellows were streaming out of Hall, the Housemaster called to Lynn.

"'Twasn't my fault, sir!" began the Chicken.
"What?"

"I know I look a blessed picture, sir. But this time I wasn't asking for trouble, sir," said the Chicken eagerly.
"I ain't punched a feller since the 'Ead jawed me, sir—I mean, spoke to me in his study. This time—"

Mr. Railton smiled.
"I am quite aware that you are not to blame, Lynn," he said. "You appear to have been severely hurt."

"Oh, it ain't nothing, sir! I'm tough."
"I think you must be from the account I have received from Miss Cleveland. You have acted very courageously, Lynn, and you are a credit to your House," said Mr. Railton.

"Oh, my eye!" said the Chicken. "Me a credit to the 'Ouse!"

"Yes, Lynn, and I am sure everyone thinks so."
"I don't think!" murmured the Chicken.

Mr. Railton shook hands with the new junior and dismissed him. Outside the doorway of Big Hall a group of fellows were waiting for the Chicken to emerge.

"Heah he is, deah boys!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who spoke.

The Chicken would have walked on, but the swell of St. Jim's caught him by the arm.

"Hold on a minute, deah boy," he said gently.
"What's the row?" said the Chicken gruffly. "Wot ave I done now? The young lady's gone, hasn't sho?"

"Yaas."
"Well, then, what do you want? I kep' away, as I said I would. I couldn't 'elp seeing her this afternoon," said the Chicken defensively. "Cardew'll tell you that; and I wouldn't 'ave told 'er I belonged 'ere—it was Cardew let that out. What more do you want?"

Blake & Co. looked at him.
"You fellows," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gravely, "I trust now that you realise that you have put your foot in it. We have treated this gentleman vewy wottenly."

"This what?" ejaculated the Chicken.
"I am sowwy, Lynn, for havin' failed to treat you with the respect that was your due," said Arthur Augustus. "From one gentleman to another, however, an apology is sufficient. I trust you will pardon us."

"Eh!"
"Without meanin' it, we have acted wathah like snobs," said Arthur Augustus. "I should like to be your friend, Lynn."

"Chuck it!" said the Chicken. "I've 'ad that from Cardew, and I know what it's worth."

"Bai Jove!"
"Ethel has told us about it," said Blake. "You stood up to four footpads on your own—"

"I s'pose I wasn't going to let them rob a young lady," said the Chicken sarcastically. "What are you making a fuss about?"

"I'd have liked to see that scrap," said Herries.
"Same here," said Digby. "Come up to the study, Lynn, and let's see whether we can do anything for your nose."

"Yaas, wathah."

The Chicken blinked at them with his blackened eyes. It dawned upon him that there had been a change of sentiment. Cousin Ethel's champion was a fellow whom Study No. 6 delighted to honour.

"If you're pulling my leg—" began the Chicken dubiously.

What You Have to Do!

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Luton Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Luton" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach this address not later than THURSDAY, March 29th, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

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I enter "LUTON" COMPETITION and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name

Address

G

"Come on, old scout!" said Blake. He slipped his arm through the Chicken's and drew him to the staircase.

The Chicken went with the chums of the Fourth in a rather dazed frame of mind. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were in Study No. 6, which presented rather a festive appearance.

"Hail!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Look 'ere—"

"See the conquering hero comes!" said Lowther, who found it difficult to be serious, even upon a serious occasion like the present.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Can it!" said Blake. "You've got supper ready—that's good. I suppose you're ready to feed, Lynn?"

"Ain't I just!" said Lynn.

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Lynn, old man, we're all sorry that there's been trouble—"

"Hear, hear!" said Manners.

"Yaas, watah! You are now regarded, Lynn, as an honourable member of this study," explained Arthur Augustus.

"You fellers coming back, what?" asked Lynn eagerly.

"Yaas, watah!"

"I knowed it was rotten to pitch you out as I did," said Lynn. "But—but—there, it was rotten, and I own up. It wasn't fair play, and I knowed it."

Blake grinned.

"We needn't feel sore about being handled by a fellow

who can handle four hefty footpads," he remarked. "Let's forget all about it, and start fresh."

"Yaas, watah!"

"That's the tune!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Here you are, Lynn—how many lumps?"

That little supper in Study No. 6 was a very happy one for Oliver Lynn. It was a feast of reconciliation, and Tom Merry & Co. vied with one another in looking after the rescuer of cousin Ethel; and Lynn forgot all about his blackened eyes and swollen nose.

The next day, when the Chicken was seen walking in the quad, he had four friends with him—and many other friends exchanged nods with him. Cardew came along—to receive only a steely look from the Chicken, and to pass on without speaking, but with a flush on his cheeks. Study No. 6, and Tom Merry & Co. had made up their minds to stand by the new fellow and see him through and to make the very best of him—a resolve of which they never had any reason to repent. The once friendless junior had plenty of friends now—but the dandy of the Fourth was not among them—he had done with chumming with Cardew.

THE END.

(This new boy, Lynn, is not only one of the bravest, but he has a heart of gold. You will agree with this when you read next week's grand story, entitled: "LYNN'S LOYALTY!" By Martin Clifford.)

"THE STARING EYES."

(Continued from page 15.)

Majesty's prisons. To begin with, how did you collect all that stuff yonder?"

"By plane," the other muttered, after a brief hesitation. "There are half a dozen of us in the swim, and one delivers the goods according as we run short. Anything else?"

"Yes. The names of the other five, and their present addresses. It's a cute idea—getting over the Customs like that—but it's got to be stopped. As to the cocaine, that's a most infernal crime in itself. Do you know that it's little short of wilful murder to distribute that stuff? It's responsible for more suicides and cases of lunacy than anyone dreams of."

Markham was silent, but Sharpe gave him no rest.

"Come, now, those names and addresses! I must have them at once!"

"Will this do me any good if I pull through and have to stand trial?" the man asked.

He was plainly one of those criminals who, having been nabbed himself, was anxious to benefit his own cause even at the expense of his colleagues; and Sharpe, though he was forced to get this information by hook or by crook for the good of Society, could not help feeling disgusted.

"Yes; I'll not forget you if it comes to that," he promised. "Now, hurry up, for I think you're getting weaker!"

Markham gave the required particulars, which Sharpe scribbled down. Then he put final question.

"Why did you want to gain possession of this house as well as your own?"

"In case we were raided yonder," was the response. "When we bought Abbot's Hall, we found the tunnel, and thought it would make an ideal way of escape should our game by any chance be twigged. When Thornville came up for auction, I bid for it, but Forbes went higher than we could at the time, so we lost it. Then we hit upon the idea of frightening him into selling again, and—well, you know how we worked that trick, so I needn't say any more."

At that moment Tim O'Carroll returned, followed by the doctor, who made a swift examination.

"Nothing serious," he said, as he proceeded to dress the wound in a more professional fashion. "The bullet merely passed through the fleshy part of the thigh—quite a clean affair."

"So I fancied!" said Anthony Sharpe coolly, and Markham's face was a study as he watched the investigator slowly fill his pipe.

A short while afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Forbes returned home, to find the mystery of the staring eyes solved to their satisfaction. Sharpe gave them a brief outline of what had taken place.

"So, you see," he concluded, "the phantom eyes merely served to camouflage as pretty a piece of modern smuggling as I ever came across. And now I've got an important phone message to send, if you'll kindly excuse me for half an hour or so?"

The investigator made his way to the rest Salminster call-office, and was soon deep in conversation with his friend, Detective-inspector Winton, at the Yard. Winton, as Sharpe happened to know, was just then engaged on this very work—the putting down of cocaine traffic.

The result of that conversation was particularly satisfactory, for—well, you've probably seen the full report of the case in the newspapers by now.

THE END.

(Another splendid detective story soon. Look out for it!)

RESULT OF "BURY" FOOTBALL COMPETITION!

In this competition two competitors sent in correct solutions of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between:—

SARAH COOPER, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Nr. Stourbridge.

VIDA LOVE, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following five competitors whose solutions contained one error each:—

Susannah Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Nr. Stourbridge; William Downes, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, Nr. Stourbridge; Stanley Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; A. Jones, Vine Cottage, Dudley Road, Ventnor; Frances Morton, 7, Eyre Street, Pallion, Sunderland.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been added together and divided among forty-five competitors whose solutions contained two errors each. The names and addresses of these prize winners can be seen on application at this office.

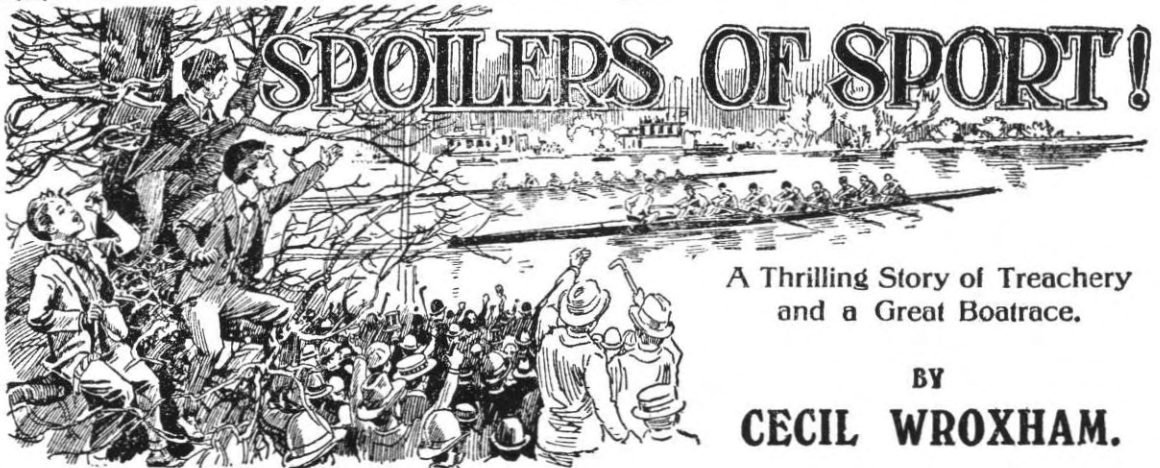
Solution.

Bury has suffered much from lack of cash, and, considering the lengthy struggle it has had, has performed numerous remarkable feats. In 1902-3, Bury carried all before it. The forward line was fine, the combination was magnificent, and the club won every match including the final.

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READ THIS GREAT SPORTING STORY, BOYS.



A Thrilling Story of Treachery and a Great Boatrace.

BY

CECIL WROXHAM.

CHAPTER 1.

Bob Hears a Rumour!

"HALLO! Here they come!" Jimmy Wells was on the point of entering the boathouse of the Thornley Motor-works Rowing Club when this sudden announcement was made. He stopped and strained his eyes in the direction from which the shouts were coming. Round a bend in the River Sperle, about a quarter of a mile distant, a boat appeared, propelled by eight oars, which dipped and cut through the water in perfect unison.

"Don't they look pretty?" Jimmy turned, to find his bosom friend, Bob Towers, who rowed number five, by his side.

"Hallo, Bob!" he cried. "You've changed quickly. I don't know about looking pretty, but they look useful, considering they've got another three weeks in which to practise."

Bob agreed with his chum as the rival crew—that of Shrimton's Tyre-works—flashed past them, keeping well to the north bank of the river.

At this time of the year the small, industrial town of Chadstock regularly seethed with excitement, for, but three weeks distant, the annual boatrace between the two firms which gave work to most of the inhabitants would be rowed.

The cup was held by Shrimton's, but this year the race had an open appearance. With Jimmy Wells, their hero, holding the important position of stroke, no one at Thornley's would hear of defeat.

The excitement, which had temporarily subsided, broke out afresh as Jimmy and his crew appeared, carrying their boat down to the water.

"Good old Jimmy! Now we'll see something!"

"Show 'em up, Thornley's!" Taken altogether, Thornley's were a lighter crew than their rivals, although they could claim the heaviest man of the two crews in Bob Towers. The breadth of his shoulders gave one immediately the impression of strength above the ordinary. His build was sturdy and well-proportioned, and with his dark curly hair blown well back off his forehead by the breeze he looked a handsome specimen of British manhood.

In contrast to his chum, Jimmy was slight; but he was wiry and splendidly proportioned—every inch of him. Well above average height—he was two inches taller than Bob—Jimmy was of the rugged type, genial, good-humoured, and merry.

Being a Saturday afternoon, there was a great crowd present to watch their favourites at practice. Thornley's kept to the south bank of the river in accordance with a pre-arranged plan. With both crews visible at the same moment, their supporters got intermingled. Cheers, counter-cheers, and cat-calls rent the air.

One of Shrimton's supporters, in his enthusiasm, snatched the cap off a Thornley man's head and waved it in the air. His own headgear was promptly knocked off, and, aided by the breeze, it gently rolled down the side of the bank into the river.

It was the spark which set the flames going. In a minute a free fight was raging.

"At 'em, Thornley's!" "Go for 'em! Let the bounders have it, Shrimton's!"

For the moment all thought of the rival crews vanished. Bertie Wallis, Shrimton's stroke, brought his boat past the scene almost unnoticed.

Soon the inevitable happened. Two rival supporters struggled for mastery, totally oblivious of the fact that they had reached the water's edge.

There was a shout of warning—but it was too late!

Splash! Still interlocked, they lost their footing and fell headlong into the river. Their misfortune hardly served to fan the excitement.

"Go it, Thornley's!" "Chuck 'em in the river!"

There was a cheer as another of Shrimton's men fell with a resounding splash into the water. He was quickly followed by his opponent, who found himself tackled and similarly treated before he could protect himself.

The fight spread. First a Thornley's supporter, then one of Shrimton's found himself flung head-first into the river. For several minutes the struggle continued, at the end of which time the water was dotted with black objects, which gradually took the form of human beings.

The river luckily was shallow at this point, otherwise there is no knowing what may have happened.

When Jimmy brought his crew back, rowing strongly, a little while later, hardly a cheer was raised. Thornley's supporters had gone home—to change into some dry clothes! Shrimton's contingent, too, was depleted, as the casualties had been about even. The honour of the rival factions had been gloriously upheld, and quiet reigned—until Monday!

That same evening Bob brought round some startling news to Jimmy.

"Hallo, Bob!" was the latter's greeting. "You're looking deadly serious. Lost something?"

"No; but we look like doing so very shortly," he replied gloomily. "And that something is all chance of getting the cup out of Shrimton's hands."

"What!"

Jimmy was astounded. It was unusual for his chum to give way to pessimism like this.

"Expound, dear old thing, and don't talk in riddles!"

"Mr. Shrimton," said Bob, carefully weighing his words, "is presenting Bertie Wallis & Co. with a brand-new boat for the race."

"Well, what—?"

"Let me finish. It's of a new pattern, and from what I can understand, one man in it could beat the Oxford and Cambridge crews combined!"

This was a piece of news for which Jimmy was quite unprepared. Even allowing for Bob's great exaggeration, he could not help feeling a little uneasy at the announcement.

"But—but how did you get to hear this, Bob? Is it true? Sure some joker has not been pulling your leg?"

Bob scoffed at the idea.

"Patterson is not given to practical joking," was the rejoinder, "nor does he go about spreading false rumours."

"Patterson told you! Phew!"

Jimmy whistled in astonishment. Patterson was secretary of Thornley Motor-works, and although he was thoroughly disliked by everyone with whom he came in contact, he was not, as Bob had said, given to playing jokes. Besides, he had more reason perhaps than anyone else to wish for a victory for Thornley's, as the chums well knew.

"But what about the rules?" Jimmy persisted.

Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"You can trust Shrimton to be careful that the boat answers to the description in the agreement," he replied. "There will be nothing in it as far as weight and dimensions are concerned, but compared with our old tub it is—well, like the Aquitania!"

Jimmy grinned. He did not lose his spirits for long.

"Speaking personally," he exclaimed, "I'd prefer not to have to row the Aquitania!"

"But it's no joking matter, Jimmy," Bob continued. "If what Patterson says is true, we are up against a stiff proposition. He evidently believes it to be more than a rumour, because he's frightened out of his life. And that snake of an assistant-manager of Shrimton's—Gale—is chuckling like any thing!"

"They are up to their tricks again, are they! I thought the ticking-off they got from their respective bosses last year would make them more careful this year. Patterson nearly found himself in the Bankruptcy Court last year over the race."

"That specimen and Gale haven't an ounce of sport in them," said Bob emphatically. "Still, leaving them out of all consideration, Jimmy, this is a nasty development, and if—"

"If," Jimmy interrupted, "this turns out to be true, then we must interview the old man and see that we get a boat of the same pattern. That's all there is in it, Bob. Mr. Thornley is desperately keen on our winning this year. He'll see that we are not placed at a disadvantage. Only, let's wait until it's something more than a rumour before we begin to worry ourselves. They'll have to practice in it for a few days anyway—they can't spring a surprise on the day of the race—that's one comfort."

Bob saw the point in his friend's argument and became more reassured. He, like Jimmy, had implicit confidence in Mr. Thornley. The latter would see that both sides played the game, he was sure. And no one in Chadstock, apart from one or two of the type of Patterson and Gale, asked for more than that.

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CHAPTER 2.

Shrimton's Meet with Misfortune!

"I CAN'T believe it, Patterson! It's— it's simply astounding!"

Mr. Thornley, head of the prosperous firm which bore his name, removed the pince-nez from his nose, and stared incredulously at his secretary, seated at the opposite side of the desk. Patterson's face was a study of glum consternation, and his expression gave ample confirmation to the tale he had just related to his chief.

"Do you mean to tell me," the latter demanded, "that Shrimton's intend to row the race in this new pattern boat and our fellows have got to fight against odds if their plan is not by some means thwarted? How did you get to hear of this?"

"I heard of it a fortnight ago, sir," answered Patterson, "and to-day they were out in it practising. There is no doubt about it, sir."

Mr. Thornley leaned back in his chair for a moment and relapsed into deep thought. Patterson watched him anxiously.

"I suppose this is Shrimton's doings," the chief muttered. "I know he is fearfully keen on retaining the cup, and I also know that he is a little anxious as to the result. And well he might be," he added, with satisfaction, "for he hasn't a dog's chance if the race is rowed fairly. Wells has got our men into splendid trim. They have improved out of all recognition during the last fortnight."

Mr. Thornley ceased ruminating and came abruptly to a resolve.

"I'll see Shrimton right away and get at the bottom of this," he said.

He picked up his hat and walked quickly out of the office.

Within a quarter of an hour he was interviewing Mr. Shrimton in the latter's private sanctum. Forcefully and without waste of words, Thornley repeated what had been told him but a short time before, and demanded to know whether it was true.

Shrimton, obviously, was unprepared for this onslaught. For once in a way he was at a loss for words. He flushed, first angrily, then uneasily. He opened his mouth as if to speak—then hesitated, bit his lip and kept silent.

Thornley waited, his contempt for what he considered an unsportsmanlike action growing with his impatience.

At last, Shrimton replied.

"It is true!" he exclaimed. "I have bought a new boat of an improved pattern for our club. There is nothing, as far as I know, to prevent my doing that. There is nothing in the rules—"

"No! There is nothing in the rules," Thornley interjected bitterly, "but it offends an unwritten law of sport—and that is that both sides should start on an equal basis. What honour is there in winning a race through a superiority in craft?"

Without waiting for an answer to his question, Thornley rose from his chair and made

for the door. On the threshold he wheeled round.

"I shall see that our fellows are not handicapped through this—this treachery," was his parting shot. "I'll get immediately into touch with Lumley's and purchase a boat of the same pattern."

"It's no good—" Shrimton commenced. But his visitor had gone.

Left to himself, Shrimton thought over things. He and Thornley held each other in mutual esteem and were the best of friends—except at this time of the year. Then their partisan feeling—their desire to win the boatrace—surmounted all other considerations.

Thornley's outburst, nevertheless, left its impression. Shrimton was uneasy at the thought that he might be guilty of an unfair act. "What honour is there in winning a race through a superiority in craft?" The question troubled him and he pondered, his conscience sorely tried.

On the other side of the account was his overpowering desire that his crew should be first past the post on the day of the race—but a week hence! This year, too, the race for the first time was to be rowed on the Thames—over part of the famous 'Varsity course. It was an added incitement to win.

The more he considered things—the more completely were his better feelings snuffed. Finally, he laughed. He was worrying himself unnecessarily. Shrimton's must win—that was the beginning and the end of it!

Immediately Mr. Thornley reached his office, he sent for Jimmy Wells. He had regained his composure by this time.

"I expect you know, Wells," he began, "that Shrimton's are practising in a new type of boat which, I understand, is far superior to the one you have?"

"Yes, sir!"

"It will make a tremendous difference?"

"Undoubtedly, sir!" Jimmy was emphatic. "I'm afraid it will turn the scale if the boat is all it is reputed to be."

"Exactly!" He turned to the telephone on the desk by his side, and picked up the receiver. "Just wait a moment," he added.

"Hallo, hallo! Lumley's? I want the manager, please?" A short pause followed.

"Hallo! Is that the manager! Well, look here; this is Thornley speaking. You have recently provided Shrimton's with a rowing boat of a new pattern. Eh? Yes, that's right. Now, how soon can you let me have one of the same kind?"

Jimmy could not restrain a smile of satisfaction. His anticipations were being nicely borne out.

Suddenly, however, the expression on his chief's face changed.

"What? What's that you say? Oh!" Then, after a short pause. "All right, I fully understand. Thank you!"

He replaced the receiver and looked up at Jimmy again. There was a frown on his face and his forehead was lined. Jimmy anxiously waited for him to speak.

"Shrimton's have stolen a march on us, Wells," Thornley remarked at last. "It

appears that Mr. Shrimton knows the inventor of this new boat and has extracted a promise from him that only one of that pattern—the one he has purchased—shall be sold prior to the race."

Jimmy was plainly staggered. "It's a rotten trick," he burst out. "Why, we might as well give them the race and be done with it!"

"Is it as hopeless as that?" Thornley asked sympathetically.

Jimmy clenched his hands.

"Almost," he replied. "But they sha'n't win without a struggle. It won't be a walk-over for them even now!"

"Shall we cancel the race?"

"No! Not under any circumstances," said Jimmy heatedly. "Let 'em win if they can. There won't be any honour in it, anyway."

"I am glad to hear you talk in that spirit, Wells," said Mr. Thornley. "It does you credit! Whatever the result, all the honour will be with Thornley's. Well, stick to it, don't over-train yourselves—and good luck!"

He shook Jimmy's hand warmly, and then settled down to work.

When the news had become generally known, there was consternation amongst the employees of the motor works. And they were indignant; there was no doubt about that. Even amongst Shrimton's supporters there was regret that their crew were to start on the following Saturday with an unfair advantage. Rivalry between the two camps was intensified, and there were many "collisions" between the respective supporters.

Accepting the decree of Fate, Jimmy Wells and his men settled down to serious training for the last few days, although the result now seemed a foregone conclusion.

They were not due to travel to Putney until Thursday, and during the intervening time they had ample opportunity of witnessing the capabilities of Shrimton's new boat. It did not belie its reputation. Without a doubt, it was beautifully constructed and a vast improvement on the pattern the two crews had hitherto used. Bertie Wallis and his men seemed a different crew. They were half as fast again—or so it seemed to Thornley's.

Amongst the many onlookers on the Monday of the week in which the race was due to be rowed, was Patterson. Gale was with him, and the two formed a striking contrast as they watched the two crews at practise. The one—dependent to the point of despair, an evil look of disappointment on his face; the other—jubilant, confident and happy.

Tuesday came—and with it the almost daily sensation.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon and drizzling with rain. Jimmy & Co. were already on the water, some way up the river, at starting practice. By Shrimton's boat-house there was a handful of interested spectators.

Wallis and his crew appeared, carrying their new boat down to the landing stage. They embarked and were gently eased off from the projecting platform. A little preliminary splashing and—they were off!

Rowing perfectly together, they covered the first few hundred yards in quick time.

As they approached the bend, where the river turned almost at right angles, they slowed down, taking the corner carefully.

Suddenly, without warning, there was a crash!

Startled cries filled the air as the boat rocked dangerously to and fro. The crew struggled to retain their balance. As they did so, the water began to lap around their feet. They were sinking!

"Quick!" shouted Wallis. "Into the bank!"

Hurriedly his men complied. The boat, however, filled rapidly and was soon over-weighted. Hardly had they reached shallow water, when, bow first, the craft sank.

A scene of indescribable confusion met the startled gaze of the spectators who had rushed up at the first sign of the disaster. The crew struggled and splashed in their efforts to regain a foothold after their unexpected immersion.

Willing hands from the bank hauled them, one by one, to safety. At last, drenched to the skin, they were all landed and stood gazing at one another in mute amazement.

Wallis was the first to find his voice.

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Suddenly and without warning there was a crash. Startled cries filled the air as Shrimton's boat rooked dangerously. "Quick!" shouted Wallis. "Into the bank with her!" Hardly had the crew reached shallow water when, bow first, the craft sank!

"Well, I'm blowed!" he exclaimed. "How on earth did it all happen?"

But there was no reply to his question. No one knew exactly what had occurred. All they knew was that there was a sudden crash somewhere about where Number Two was seated—and it was all over in a few seconds!

"We must have struck something," Cox suggested.

"Go hon!" cried someone else. "What on earth makes you think that?"

There was a titter, although no one felt like laughing at the moment.

"Come on, then," said Wallis. "Let's get the boat out and have a look at it!"

The water was not very deep and the boat could still be seen dimly on the bed of the river. It was but a few minutes' work to recover it.

When Jimmy Wells, attracted by the excitement, brought his boat on to the scene, Shrimton's representatives were disconsolately examining the damage. Their new boat was upturned on the bank and a huge gaping hole was to be seen. It was visible even to Thornley's crew.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Jimmy, as they eased up. "They must have had a nasty crash!"

"It looks very much like it," Bob admitted. "They must have run in too close to the bank!" He chuckled at the funny side of the affair struck him. "It's Nemesis, Jimmy! That's what it is. I'd sooner have our little craft now than theirs. This puts a different complexion on Saturday's affair!"

"You're right, Bob!" exclaimed Jim. "This'll upset Shrimton's little apple-cart. They won't get that repaired by Saturday—or by any other time by the look of it!"

"Supposing we clear away from this spot?" someone suggested after a while.

Jimmy smiled. "Not a bad idea," he said. "Carefully does it, you fellows!"

With fresh heart and revived spirits, Thornley's resumed their training. No longer faced with the prospect of starting under a heavy disadvantage, they viewed the outcome of the race with renewed confidence.

The news of Shrimton's disaster spread rapidly round the town. For a time it was discussed everywhere, and crowds came down to the spot to offer theories as to how such a mishap could have occurred. Wallis was blamed for not being more on the alert, whilst his "cox" came in for an equal share for bringing the boat in too near the bank.

Meanwhile, in the midst of these heated discussions, Wallis and Jimmy Wells set about putting the finishing touches to their respective crews. Time was getting short.

Mr. Shrimton was away for a few days and no one knew of his exact address. So, without further ado, Wallis & Co. resumed practise in their old boat.

Mr. Thornley was jubilant at the unexpected spoke that had been put in his rival's wheel, and was quietly confident of his men's success. But most pleased of all was Patterson, the rascally secretary.

CHAPTER 3.

The Great Race on the Thames!

It was Saturday! The great day had arrived!

So tremendous was the interest, and so intense was the excitement, that Chadstock, for the first time in its history, was honoured by the local railway company with two special trains to London. And

they were full—both of them! The weather was as perfect as a March day can be, and there was nothing to mar the general feeling of festivity.

The crews, with their respective coaches, had arrived at Putney Bridge the previous Thursday for two days light practise on the Thames. A great send-off they had had—the inhabitants of Chadstock having seen to that!

Now, on the morning of the great race, they were resting, in preparation for strenuous work in the afternoon.

The start was to be from Putney Bridge, and the finish at Chiswick Mall, by the ferry—a distance of about two and three-quarter miles.

Long before the crews were due to put in an appearance, a vast crowd had assembled. The whole of the route seemed to be lined with people.

At ten minutes to three, the rival eights appeared to the accompaniment of loud cheers. Leisurely the crews paddled up to the starting post. Magnificent they looked as they waited impatiently for the pistol-shot which was to send them off like hounds from the leash. Accommodated on the judges' launch were Mr. Thornley and Mr. Shrimton, who, apart from a formal nod of recognition, appeared to be oblivious of one another's presence.

Amongst that vast multitude of onlookers, however, none awaited the result of the race with such nervousness and apprehension as Patterson—and, in a slightly lesser degree, Gale. These two had secured good positions near the winning post, and counted the seconds as they passed.

The first stroke of three boomed! Bang! "They're off!" "Hurrah!"

"Go it, Thornley's!"
 "Stick it, Shrimton's!"

Cheers that could be heard miles off broke out as the race started. Shrimton's had won the toss and had gained what little advantage there was in this. For the first quarter of a mile, the boats ran abreast. Careful observers noted that Wallis was pulling one more stroke to the minute than Jimmy. Yet they were level.

Gradually, Thornley's crept ahead. A quarter of a length they gained—then half! As they approached the mile post, Jimmy increased this to a length. Both crews were by now rowing perfectly.

The cheers which had followed them since they had pulled off, increased in volume as they came to Hammersmith Bridge. Here Wallis spurted and gradually drew level.

"Keep 'em off, Thornley's!"

"Look! Shrimton's are leading!"

Bertie Wallis was now calling on his men for a greater effort. To Mr. Thornley, watching anxiously from the judges' launch, it seemed that Shrimton's boat shot ahead at this point. Soon they were leading by a length—now it was two lengths! And they were still gaining.

It was a din of long struggle. Jimmy, with his perfect blade-work, and Bob, with his powerful leg-drive, were in great form. Thornley groaned.

"What is Wells up to?" he muttered.

"Will he never spurt?"

Thornley's cox looked anxiously at Jimmy.

"Not much more than half-a-mile to go," he said.

Jimmy found time to nod. He was holding Shrimton's now, although he was not reducing their lead. Bob Towers and the others waited, with grim set expressions for the final burst.

Suddenly, the signal was given. Jimmy increased the number of strokes. Valiantly his crew responded. To a man they rowed as they had never rowed in their lives before.

The excitement grew. Frenziedly the crowd near the winning post craned their necks and roared encouragement to the rival eights, as they approached.

Wallis answered the challenge and increased the pace of their boat. He struggled gamely to hold on to his ever-diminishing lead, but the pace was telling.

Could Thornley's do it?

The spectators alternately held their breath and cheered. There was but half a length between the crews now. One or two were showing signs of fatigue, but Jimmy and Bob on the one hand and Bertie Wallis on the other were still rowing strongly! It was a titanic struggle.

Inches separated them! Only a few yards to go. Both crews gritted their teeth for the final strokes. Every ounce of strength was put into them.

"Thornley's! Thornley's are leading!"

"No! Look at Shrimton's! They lead! They lead!"

On board the launch, the rival employers stood shoulder to shoulder, enthralled at the exciting spectacle!

"Gad!" shouted Mr. Shrimton delightedly. "We've won!"

"No! It's ours!" answered Mr. Thornley.

"It's ours!"

The boats flashed past the winning-post as they started, abreast! Who had won? Everybody asked the question—nobody knew. Both crews were cheered to the echo as they sank exhausted in their boats. It had been a magnificent race, with every inch of the course contested.

Breathlessly the decision of the judges—Oxford and Cambridge ex-presidents—was awaited.

A dead-heat!

The cheering broke out afresh. The most sternly-contested race in the history of the firms had ended in a dead-heat!

"Well rowed, Shrimton's!"

"Well rowed, both of them!" Mr. Shrimton said.

The two business men shook hands warmly. Their feud was over—for the time being.

It was a long time before the excitement subsided. The cheering continued while the crews were in sight, and redoubled as Jimmy was observed to row over and shake hands with his rival. Both were sportsmen of the first degree; neither begrudged the other the honour of a finely-fought race.

Of a different calibre were Patterson and Gale. The result was everything to these two—the race was as nothing. Their only

satisfaction lay in the fact that their favourites had not lost.

So the great day ended as it began—in joyous festivity. Chadstock went to bed very late that night.

The following day Mr. Thornley paid his rival a visit. There was a question to be settled. Were Shrimton's to retain the cup?

Mr. Shrimton revealed the sporting spirit he was known to possess.

"The race must be rowed again," he decided. "We won't hold the cup simply by virtue of having dead-beated. How about next Saturday?"

"On the Sperle?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then. Next Saturday at three. And, mind," Mr. Thornley added, wagging his finger, "no stealing any more marches on us!"

Mr. Shrimton shook his head and flushed slightly.

"I promise," he said.

CHAPTER 4.

Foul Play—and a Triumph!

JIMMY WAS bursting with news when he paid his customary visit on Bob the following Monday evening.

"Old man Shrimton is a sportsman—" he began.

"Is he?" retorted his pal contemptuously.

"Now, wait until I've finished," Jimmy admonished. "I've just been notified that the Thornley Motor-works Rowing Club, of which I have the honour—ahem!—of being vice-president, and which lays claim to your thirteen—or is it fifteen—stone—"

"Look here—" Bob broke in wrathfully.

"Has been presented with a brand-new boat, the palatial splendour of which—"

Bob rose from his chair and seized his chum forcibly by the neck.

"Now, you ass," he cried, "cut the cackle and explain yourself!"

Jimmy wrenched himself free and grinned affably.

"You do get excited, Bob," he said, with a smile. "What I was about to tell you was that Shrimton—bless him!—has presented us with one of those new boats, similar to the one in which Bertie Wallis & Co. met their fate."

"Has he?" cried Bob excitedly. "Hurrah! When shall we have it?"

"It will be available for practice to-morrow. Shrimton's, of course, have got one as well. I can see that record going west on Saturday."

"So can I. By the way, have you seen friend Patterson lately? He looks as if he hasn't had a wink of sleep for weeks."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Jimmy. "He'll collapse from heart failure if we don't win on Saturday. Do you know, Bob, I can't help connecting him with that smash Shrimton's had."

"Patterson do that?" said Bob, somewhat amazed. "How could he, Jimmy?"

"I don't know," Jimmy confessed. "But the boat must have struck something pretty sharp to have been damaged like it was. You know they couldn't find anything afterwards. Add to that the fact that Patterson was for some unknown reason away from the office the same afternoon, and there you are!"

"Pure coincidence, old chap," broke in Bob. "He wouldn't be above such a dirty trick, but I don't see how he could have caused the accident."

Jimmy was far from satisfied, but he had to admit the difficulty of laying the blame at the secretary's feet.

Blustering weather interfered with practice for the remainder of the week, but the crews managed a short spell every day. They did not indulge in anything very strenuous after their terrific efforts the previous Saturday, but their form in the new-pattern boats soon went to show that there was some reason for the chums' optimistic belief that the winner would return a record time.

Patterson was one of those who watched the final trials on the day before the race. He came away gloomy. There were no indications that Thornley's were going to enjoy a walk-over—or, indeed, that they would win. The crews were splendidly matched—the first race had proved that.

In the evening Bob paid his chum an unexpected call. He found Jimmy reclining comfortably in an armchair, following the advice he had given to all the crew to rest

in preparation for the morrow's great struggle.

"Hallo!" was his greeting to Bob as the latter entered the room. "What are you doing out of bed?"

"I can't find my wallet anywhere," answered Bob. "I think I must have left it in the boathouse. Let me have the key, old man, will you?"

"Silly chump!" exclaimed Jim. "Always leaving things about. Look here, if you turn up without anything to-morrow, see that it's your head and not your avoirdupois! The latter is far more important. I'd better come along with you, in case you get up to any mischief."

Bob smiled at his friend's facetiousness. He was used to it by now, and he knew he would soon have an opportunity of retaliating.

It was a fine, crisp evening, and the two chums set out for the river at a good pace. On the towpath someone brushed past them. Simultaneously they looked round. The stranger hurried away into the darkness without turning his head. He did not appear to have noticed them.

"You saw who that was?" Bob asked.

"It was our worthy secretary," said Jim, "unless I'm mistaken."

"You're right, Jimmy. What on earth is he doing down here at this time of night?"

There was no answer. The chums walked along in silence for a while. Suddenly, as they came in sight of Shrimton's boathouse, Bob gave a cry of alarm.

"Good heavens!" he cried. "Look! The boathouse is on fire!"

"(tee-whizz!)" exclaimed Jim, in alarm.

"So it is! Run, Bob, run!"

They flew like the wind to the building, which was beginning to blaze furiously. Frantically they hurled themselves against the bolted door. For a few precious seconds it withstood their furious onslaught.

Again and again they charged. At last there was a creak, and, redoubling their efforts, they succeeded in breaking down the partition.

As the huge door flew off its hinges, a great cloud of smoke belched out and choked them. They staggered back, blinded and gasping for breath.

"It's no good, Jimmy," panted Bob. "We can't do anything."

But Jimmy, heedless of the danger, whipped a handkerchief out of his pocket, tied it hurriedly over his mouth and nostrils, and plunged into the boathouse—by this time resembling a furnace.

"Come back!" cried Bob. "Come back, Jimmy! You're mad!"

Receiving no answer to his cries, Bob rushed into the burning building. He saw that Jimmy was determined to save as much of the things as was possible, and he meant to be no idle watcher.

Time and again the two chums bounded into the furnace, each time returning with their arms full. Shoes, caps—everything they could lay their hands on was rescued and thrown in a confused heap outside the building. The boat, to their great surprise, was discovered unharmed on the bank of the river, some few yards away.

Their rescue complete, the two chums sank to the ground. As they did so, the roof of the building fell in with a resounding crash, sending sparks flying in all directions.

For a time neither spoke. With parched throats and smarting eyes they watched the smoking ruins of what was once Shrimton's boathouse.

Soon one or two men, attracted by the flames, began to arrive, amongst them Wallis. His face was as white as a sheet as he listened in bewilderment to Jimmy's hurried account of what had occurred. For a moment he was too staggered to thank the two brave chums for their heroic work. When he realised what they had done, and turned to express his gratitude, they had gone.

Jimmy had no intention of wasting valuable time. As soon as he and Bob had recovered from their terrible experience, he signalled to the latter to follow him. Bob wondered what was the next step.

"Where are you off to, Jimmy?" he asked.

"To interview Patterson," the other replied grimly. "This is his foul work. We'll capture him before he gets up to any more tricks. Your wallet can wait."

"But what on earth is his game?"

"Can't you see?" retorted Jimmy impatiently. "It is so important to him that we should win to-morrow that he wants to make certain of it. To ensure that the race



"Look out!" cried Jimmy. "Hold him!" Bob gave a warning shout as Patterson, with a sudden movement, snatched the heavy helmet from the table by his side and hurled it with unerring aim at Jimmy's head. Jimmy ducked in the nick of time, and the heavy headpiece struck the door with a resounding crash.

is run, he first of all drags their boat to safety, then sets light to the boathouse, hoping to destroy their oars and shoes. This would compel them to find fresh ones, with precious little time in which to do it, and handicap them in the bargain."

This sounded a plausible tale, and Bob expressed his disgust in no uncertain terms. It was too much of a coincidence that Patterson should have been in the vicinity at that tragic moment.

They came to his house, and Jimmy knocked at the door.

"Is Mr. Patterson in?" he inquired of the maid who answered their summons.

"Yes. But he is busy in his room upstairs and is not to be disturbed."

The chums wasted no further words, but rushed in. They found Patterson's room without difficulty, and, without knocking, entered. The scene that met their gaze caused them to gasp in sheer amazement.

Standing in the centre of the room was the secretary, attired in a diving suit, complete without the headpiece, the latter lying on the table near by.

For a few seconds there was a dead silence, all three of them being too astounded to do more than gape.

Bob was the first to break the silence. He laughed; the situation seemed ludicrous to him.

But not so Jimmy. His brow contracted into a frown. He was beginning to see light. Stepping forward into the room, he faced the startled secretary.

"You cur!" he cried. "So this is your game!"

Patterson was still too bewildered to speak. Instead, he looked from one to the other of the chums, and bit his lip in uneasy vexation.

"It's all right, Jimmy!" Bob chuckled. "He's going to a fancy dress ball."

For a second there was hope in Patterson's eyes. This, however, soon turned to fear as Jimmy wheeled round on his chum.

"Shut up, Bob! Can't you see what his game is? Don't you see the connection between this diving suit—and Shrimton's so-called accident?"

The smile disappeared from Bob's face.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "You're right, Jimmy! The utter— Look out! Hold him!"

Bob gave a warning shout as Patterson, with a sudden movement, snatched the heavy headpiece from the table by his side, and hurled it with unerring aim straight for Jimmy's head. In the nick of time the latter ducked, and the implement struck the door with a resounding crash, and fell to the floor. "Curse you!" the secretary cried. "You interfering puppies—"

He got no farther. As he struggled to free himself of the heavy metallic suit, the chums recovered from their shock, and jumped forward to secure him. Muttering and cursing, Patterson did not show any further resistance. He saw it would be useless. The game was up. He had been caught red-handed, rehearsing the foul work he intended to put into operation on the morrow.

"Look after him, Jimmy!" said Bob, as he made a hurried departure. "I sha'n't be long!"

When Bob returned to the house ten minutes later with two police-constables, Jimmy had made another discovery. On the table were two air-cylinders.

"I found these in a cupboard," he informed the men in blue. "With these air-cylinders on him, and attired in a diving suit, he could stay for hours under the water. Now we know how Shrimton's boat was wrecked. Evidently he intended to do the same thing

again to-morrow if his dastardly plan of to-night failed!"

"You've got it for a certainty, Jimmy!" exclaimed Bob Towers. "I say, what a worm he is!"

With a haggard face, Patterson was marched off to the police-station.

The following day the two chums had many callers. Hundreds wanted to congratulate them on having thwarted the secretary's game. But they were not in to any visitors except Mr. Shrimton, Mr. Thornley, and Gale—Shrimton's assistant manager. They were resting in preparation for the race.

Gale came to tell them that he had turned over a new leaf. The downfall of Patterson had been a lesson to him. When he told Jimmy that, whatever the result of the race, he intended giving the local hospital a donation, Thornley's hero believed him. Gale's remorse was too genuine for him to do anything else.

The conditions were perfect for the race in the afternoon. Both Jimmy and Bob pronounced themselves fit and none the worse for their stirring adventures. Certainly they did not look like sick men.

Long before the advertised time of the start of the race, the banks were crowded with anxious faces.

At three o'clock prompt all heads were turned to the starting-post. Anxiously the two crews awaited the signal to start.

Bang! The crews were off!

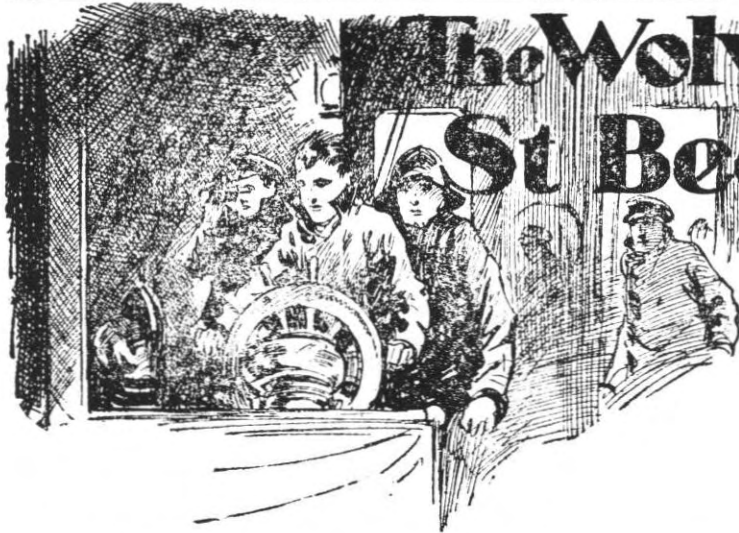
"Get away, Thornley's!"

The huge crowd yelled its encouragement to the rival crews. Neck and neck they raced; then slowly Shrimton's took the lead. Rowing a steady twenty-eight to the minute, however, Jimmy did not allow them to get

(Continued on page 26.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 729.

DON'T MISS A LINE OF THIS POWERFUL SERIAL, BOYS!



The Wolves of St Beowulf's!

A Story of Thrills and
Breathless Situations
on Land and Sea.

BY

DUNCAN STORM.

Wobby & Co. are the pluckiest
and liveliest boys you ever
met, and their adventures are
amazing.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Jack Wabbygong, James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinese named Lung, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, together with Viscount Waffington, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in bringing about the capture of a gang of international burglars.

John Lincoln, one of the governors, takes an interest in the lads, and arranges to take them on a world tour.

The great day comes, and aboard the Pole Star the happy party set off on their great adventure.

After an exciting sea trip, the Pole Star drops anchor at San Carlo where the boys make things so lively they have to dash back to the ship to avoid arrest. Immediately they get back they are told they are to rout out a number of pirates—a prospect they hail with joy. The journey is continued until the coast of Morocco is reached. Here the party land, and, armed to the teeth, they advance upon the stronghold of Suni Baba, the pirate chief.

They are captured, however, by a party of mounted Moors, and marched to the residence of El Took, the nigger governor of Suni Baba. Things would have gone badly for the boys, but for the sudden appearance of Nobby, whose strange antics helps them in effecting their escape. Before leaving the palace, however, the party fire it, then, rushing to the slavehold, Mr. Hobbs is about to free the prisoners, when he is confronted by a huge nigger, who cries:

"I am master of the slaves!"
(Now read on.)

Bearding the Lion in His Den!

"Oh, you are, are you?" demanded Mr. Hobbs amiably. Glad to meet you. You are the chap I'm looking for. There's one for your nob—to get on with!"

Down came the iron bar on the slave-master's turban with a thud that promised a fractured skull.

"Here's the keys!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs, leaning over the prostrate body. "I don't think 'e'll put it across any more o' these poor creatures. 'E's taken the count!"

He opened the door of the hold with the largest key on the slavemaster's bunch, which fitted the huge-lock.

"Some padlock!" he exclaimed, with admiration. "More like a portmanteau. Phew!"

The slaves were in their night chains, and the boys were soon amongst them, unlocking the shackles with the queer tenpenny nail keys that were strung on the slavemaster's bunch.

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The poor fellows stared at these strange visitors, who, though dressed like their dreaded masters, spoke gently and encouragingly to them.

They seemed afraid to fly. But Wobby shepherded them to the door of the slavehold.

"Whither must we go, master?" asked one old slave wonderingly.

"Go where you like, dad!" answered Wobby amiably. "There's the world outside—the whole wide world! And we've set that fat nigger's house on fire. 'Op it!"

There is some magic in the words "Op it!" which seems to be understood in all languages. The old man understood it and disappeared like lightning.

Wobby looked after him with admiring and almost tearful eyes as he fled round the corner.

"He's beating it while the going is good, bless his heart!" he muttered. "And I don't blame him! Come on, Waff; the quarters of the women slaves are next door."

There was a weeping and wailing and the crying of babies as Mr. Hobbs unlocked the farther door. His face grew black as thunder at the sight the dim light of a smoky oil-lamp showed.

The women were panic-stricken.

Mr. Hobbs took one old negress by the arm, slipping it through his own, and speaking soft and comfortable words.

"Come on, ma!" he said. "No one's going to 'urt you. Them shots are not slay raidats; they are our pals, putting paid to some of your account. This way for the early door! There we are! Come on, missus, give us the baby. No need to be afraid! You are with the ole firm—Obbs & Co., furniture removers, and you can do your moonlight flit right now! Imshie, missus! Begone—and the blessings of Allah go with you!"

"Now, Queenie," he added, addressing a particularly ugly, flat-faced negress, who was sobbing with fright, "come out of it, and let me take that bracelet off your arm. Your young man's waiting for you round the corner. If you want to see the best fire you've ever seen in your life, get up there on the hills behind. We charge nothing for front seats!"

Deftly picking the lock of the slave-iron, Mr. Hobbs set the negress free; then he struck the shackles off the other slaves.

They were poor, broken-down creatures. Two of the younger women, who

carried babies, flung themselves into the arms of two huge negroes who were waiting anxiously for them.

The eyes of the boys grew misty as they saw these poor creatures weeping for joy and fondling one another.

Here Mr. Hobbs saw an accession to their little force.

"I say, Mutt and Jeff," he said, addressing the negroes, "I can see you've still got some ginger left in you. Take an iron bar, and join the Army and see the world!"

The two niggers understood. They could hear the sound of rifle-shots at the gates of the city, and they knew that some enemy had come up against their hated masters.

"Yussuf!" said one nigger, shaking the iron bar which Mr. Hobbs had given him.

"No good, Mutt!" replied Mr. Hobbs, grinning. "Yussuf, the slavemaster is nah poo. I combed 'is air for 'im with that bar just now, and he's never smiled again. Tell your wives where to go and hide, then come along with us. We'll see you righted, and you can draw your club money off that fat nigger who shut us up with the pussycat!"

Mr. Hobbs then marshalled his little troop in the darkness and led them, as far as he could judge in the direction of the front of the palace.

They were not long in clearing the gardens, and found themselves amongst a number of those rambling courtyards with which the Moors love to surround their dwellings.

The firing drew nearer, and bullets began to whistle over the walls, the sharp snapping of rifles being answered by the fuff and bark of the slaves' mixed weapons, punctuated now and then by the roar of some blunderbuss or elephant-gun.

Yells and shouts were answered by cheers.

"It's our chaps coming!" said Mr. Hobbs exultantly. "We'll stay in this court for a minute or two. We are on the flank o' the enemy, and we can back our barrier into their crush when we feel like it. I don't want to get plugged by one of those stokers off the Kipper King!"

There was a rush and a pattering of feet outside the courtyard; the supporters of El Took were scattering and running.

They hammered on the great wooden gates of the empty courtyard, and one

nigger leaped over the gate to draw the bolts.

He was at once felled by Mr. Hobbs. "Stand by the bolt, boys!" said Mr. Hobbs in a low whisper. "Let 'em in sudden, and I'll pat their heads with this handspike!"

Wobby stood at his side, and Waff drew the great bolt.

The shouting, flying mob tried to surge in at the gate, but the first man who thrust his head inside went down under the dull stroke of iron.

Another tumbled over him, only to be caught in the arms of Dempsey, who hugged him to his chest, howling and screaming that there were devils loose against them.

Wobby's boomerang licked out and tapped a nigger's head with so shrewd a blow that he dropped like a log. Then panic seized the crowd, who were trying to escape this way.

"We are betrayed! We are surrounded!" they cried, and they surged off along the wall of the courtyard, dropping their weapons as they ran, for no warrior can run comfortably dragging a six-foot length of gas-pipe behind him.

"Hurrah, boys! They are on the run," cried Mr. Hobbs. "Show yourself, Nobby. Pull the shirt off that bear and let the chaps see who we are, or we may get shot by mistake."

Nobby was pushed forward through the gate.

Nobby was quite in his element now, chasing niggers as Wobby had taught him to chase the thieving blacks of the back blocks.

One nigger came running for his life, and Nobby leapt out upon him, biffing him two with his hind feet that sent him rolling head over heels like a shot rabbit.

The boys hauled the robe off Dempsey, exposing him, shaven and painted, with his tufted head looking horrible on the top of his gaily-coloured body.

The crowd who were running towards the palace cheered as they saw this apparition in the firelight, and Dempsey, travelling at high speed, chased a huge nigger just as a terrier chases a rat.

"Come back, Dempsey!" yelled Wobby, and Dempsey obediently returned as the Kipper Kings swept forward, driving the last of the pirates before them.

When these saw Dempsey they took to their heels and ran for the mountains behind the town, yelling that they were fighting jinns and efreets and not human beings.

"Well done, boys!" cried John Lincoln. "Now we must force our way into the building. This fellow El Took must be arrested. Forward, engineers!"

The great wooden gates of the palace were closed and barred, but the two engineers ran forward with a charge of dynamite, placing it under the great wooden valves and running out the wires. The rearguard was waved aside as the party dodged round the corner out of the way of flying debris.

There was a turn to the handle of the firing-box, and then followed a rending, shattering roar, which echoed amongst the crags behind the town like a thunder-clap.

The gates were shattered into matchwood, and the arch of the gate came down in a run of bricks and plaster, sending a cloud of dust thick as a fog sweeping out from the scene of the explosion.

"This way!" cried John Lincoln, making for the open door.

"Half a minute, sir!" called Wobby. "Watch your step! This chap has a

nasty lot of young men in the house, a proper lot of tugs and stranglers. They are the Bad Boys of Badville. Let me come along with my little stick."

John Lincoln had drawn his revolver, and watchfully entered the outer court.

It was in darkness, for the explosion which had smashed the gates had put all the lamps out.

There was a sudden fizz and a flare, and the livid white light of two powerful portfires lit the court bright as day.

It happened just in time, for, racing towards John Lincoln, a couple of daggers joined by a leathern thong in his hands, was one of El Took's young assassins.

He sprang like a tiger, but he was caught in mid-air by something that whizzed and flickered in the white flare. Clap!

The boomerang caught the well-oiled young assassin in mid-air, and down he crashed, his daggers clattering on the marble pavement.

John Lincoln stooped calmly and picked up the tools, examining their blades.

"Poisoned!" he muttered. "Thank you, Master Wobby."

Then he turned to his party, which was closing up behind him.

"If any more of these young gentlemen show themselves, shoot at sight," he said. "They are the assassins of Kaid

Suini Baba, and are as dangerous as snakes."

As they approached the upper end of the court, three more of these young men dashed out, blind with fanaticism and hate, and intent only on killing.

But the crowd were ready for them, and before they could stab they were shot.

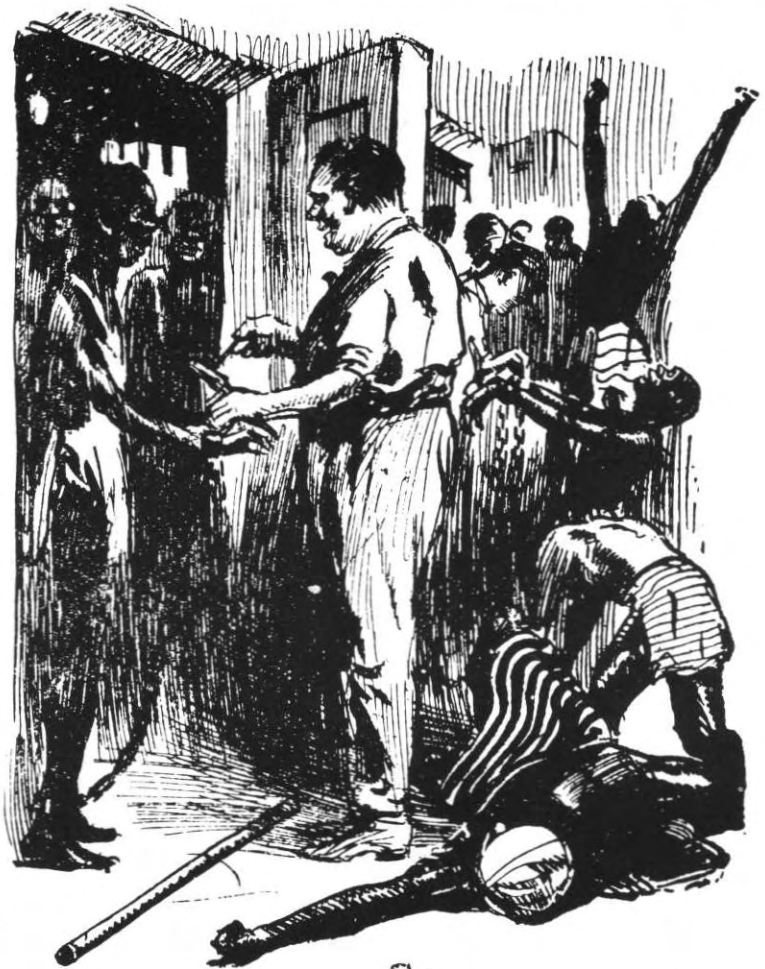
John Lincoln turned over one of them, and shuddered as he saw the blue tattooed mark on their throats that was the sign of their dreadful office.

Smoke was already filling the upper chambers of the palace as the crowd dashed in, and there, grovelling amongst his pillows, half-mad with fear, they found the fat nigger, El Took, deserted even by his assassins.

He had a jewelled sword by his side, but when he saw Mr. Hobbs dancing in front of him with the bar of the slave cage in his hand, he made no sign of showing fight. He dug his head beneath a pile of pillows, as the ostrich is reported to dig its head in the sand under the mistaken illusion that what the eye does not see the heart does not grieve after.

"Get up, Ally Baba!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs wrathfully. "Get up! I'm going to teach you to throw white men to the lions."

The trembling nigger was jerked to his feet and promptly handcuffed. Then



Mr. Hobbs extracted a key from the slavemaster's bunch and opened the door of the slavehold. The boys then unlocked the shackles of the slaves and set them free.

through the wooden roof of the chamber the flames began to flick and coil, roaring and hissing amongst the dry, resinous woodwork.

"Time we got out of this," said Mr. Hobbs. Then a happy thought struck him, and he turned to El Took. "'Arf a mo', cocky!'" he said. "There ain't no bank in this place. Where do you keep your savings?"

"No got!" stammered the nigger, quaking like a jelly.

"That's what they all say," replied Mr. Hobbs, "but we want some reparations, we do. Come on, Bertie, show us the savings-bank. Turn out the ole money-box, or—"

He whistled to Dempsey, and El Took gave a howl as the terrible figure of the painted bear thrust its way through the group.

"Now, Archibald," said Mr. Hobbs, "time is short, and we can't keep the bus waiting for you. You gave us to your lion, and if you don't reveal the El Nif branch of the Morocco Savings Bank, we give you to the bear!"

With a howl, El Took shoved the pillows aside, revealing a loose slab of mother of pearl in the floor, which, evidently, had recently been moved.

"That's all right," said Mr. Hobbs, who was practised in these matters. "It's plain that you've been at the money-box, and what isn't in there is in your pockets. Stand 'im on 'is 'ead, Darkey!"

Darkey, one of the stokers of the Kipper King, seized the unhappy nigger, and with consummate ease caught him by his heels, stood him on his head, and bumped it on the floor.

Out from the pockets of El Took's baggy trousers dropped clattering packets of hard objects wrapped up in rags.

The sight of these satisfied Mr. Hobbs.

"Shiners!" he said, pulling out a heavy golden bracelet covered with diamonds of great value. "I thought as much! These niggers always put their money into jooks. Now we'll 'ave a peep into the ole money-box."

He lifted the slab, revealing a dark, square opening.

Showers of sparks were already falling from the burning timbers above.

"Hurry up, Mr. Hobbs!" called John Lincoln. "The roof will be down before long!"

Mr. Hobbs heard a low hiss from the interior of the hole. He thrust in a flaring portfire, and there, squirming over the tightly-packed bags of money, that lay in the bottom of the treasure-chamber, were two ugly black adders, the guardians of the treasure of El Took.

El Took had apparently been feeding these pots so that they might live if he had to leave his treasure for any prolonged period; for, on top of the bags, lay a dead rat.

Mr. Hobbs' way with adders was short and sweet. He pointed a revolver into the treasure-chamber, and, with a couple of well-directed shots, decapitated both the deadly snakes.

"You naughty boy!" he exclaimed paternally to the terrified nigger as he caught him by one of his great ears. "'Ow dare you 'ave money! And to think that you've been sitting on all this brass while honest men 'ave been working hard and paying sumpence for a packet of smokes! Pull out the stuff!"

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El Took hesitated.

"Pull out the stuff, or I'll feed you to the bear!" said Mr. Hobbs.

Dempsey growled. The fire that was licking through the roof above, and the flakes of burning wood that were falling on his shaven carcass and tickling him up, were making him restive.

The growl made up the nigger's mind for him.

One by one he threw the bags out of the hole—fat leather bags that chinked with a delightful sound which had not been heard in England for many a long day. It was the chink of a real Moorish hoard of golden English sovereigns.

Wobby, swift and resourceful, had ripped open half a dozen of the large yellow pillows of Moorish leather, which, strongly sewn, and of stout material, were just the stuff to hold this load of gold.

The six pillows were filled before the treasure-hole was empty of all but the dead snakes and the dead rat.

Then El Took was kicked to his feet, and dragged back out of the burning building.

They were barely out of the entrance when the roof fell in with a crash of falling tiles, sending up a shower of sparks fifty feet in the air.

"Just in nice time, as the ole lady said when she caught the bus!" remarked Mr. Hobbs genially, as he pulled the trembling El Took along. "Don't be afraid, ole sport!" he added. "We aren't going to cut your throat. We are taking you to the beach, and

SPILERS OF SPORT!

(Continued from page 23.)

far ahead. A length separated them. Then it increased to a length and a half!

At the half-way post Shrimton's led by nearly two lengths.

"Come along, Jimmy!" shouted the Thornley's supporters. "Don't leave it too late!"

Jimmy had no intention of leaving it too late. Gradually he increased his strokes, and his crew responded nobly. Then, inch by inch, Thornley's began to gain on their rivals. The cheering was deafening.

"Now!" muttered Thornley's stroke through his clenched teeth.

It was an order for the last spurt, and Thornley's responded right royally. Their boat seemed to fly through the air as his call was answered. Rowing faster and stronger than their opponents, Thornley's drew level, and then crept ahead. Then came a final challenge from Wallis! It was staved off, and with a last magnificent dash, Jimmy brought his crew with a flash past the winning-post—three-quarters of a length ahead!

Thornley's had won! The cup was theirs!

"Bravo, Jimmy!"

"Well rowed, Thornley's!"

Unstintedly the crowd cheered the hero of the race. They cheered again when it was announced that Thornley's had beaten the record time by a clear minute.

But the loudest cheer of all came when Jimmy went up to receive the cup from the hands of Mr. Shrimton. The crowd let themselves go for several minutes.

And amongst that crowd no one missed Patterson. Thanks to the two chums, he was in a place where he could no longer carry on his activities as one of the spoilers and enemies of sport!

THE END.

(Another grand long complete story next week, and one you must not miss — "THE HONOUR OF HIS CLUB!" — one of the finest football stories ever rewritten.)

there you will be put aboard ship, and you'll be 'anged later on when we've found out 'ow much you've done!"

The town was empty as the master of El Nif was dragged to the shore and tumbled into a boat with his treasure, to be rowed off to the Kipper King, which answered their signals in the darkness.

Down on the beach were gathered the horses and camels, neatly marshalled under the command of Lal Singh, who had proved himself the right boy in the right place when it came to dealing with camelry and cavalry. The last party which came down from the town brought a string of donkeys laden with the saddles and bridles for both horses and camels.

The saddling-up was speedy. There was no time to be lost if they were to make the stronghold of Kaid El Suini Baba before the news reached him of the sacking of El Nif.

Within the hour the strongly-armed party, under the guidance of the giant Sulieman, passed rapidly over the dark dunes, making for the tail of the hills and heading for the passes which led to the stronghold of the dead Kaid.

Away to their right the palace of El Took smouldered and flared, casting a ruddy glow amongst the ruins of El Nif.

"What-ho, the Wolves of St. Beowulf's!" chuckled Mr. Hobbs, who was perched high on the hump of a camel. "We've smoked out that wasps'-nest all right. Now for the other!"

There was a sudden flare over the city, a great flash, and a column of fire shot hundreds of feet into the air.

"Powder-magazine gone up!" said Mr. Hobbs, as a dull roar boomed along the coast. "That'll teach 'em! And I wonder what the ole lion thinks about it all. Mus' be 'avin' the night of 'is life!"

Having finished with El Took, it was now the turn of his master, Kaid Suini Baba, who sat in his tower far inland.

Little did Suini Baba dream, as he sat in his stronghold, that things were already on the move against him.

Suini Baba was a tiny little old gentleman, white and frail, with a long white beard that almost reached the ground, a beard fit for any devout Moslem to swear by. And white was his dress, save for his turban, which was green, a proper head-dress for one who claimed descent from the Prophet.

Suini Baba's business was large and varied, and he worked it all from that lovely old courtyard in his stronghold where the light Moorish horseshoe arches of fretted pink marble surrounded a small garden full of fountains and rare birds.

He did a trade in salt with the niggers of the south, and kept his own little body of troops who raided north, south, east, and west without let or hindrance.

But these were only foragers who wrung chickens, eggs, corn, and cheese from the unhappy peasants who paid him their unwilling tribute from a hundred miles round.

These had no money. Their last penny had long since been extracted from them.

But Suini Baba was in the pay of many intriguers, and had long played a part in the troubled affairs of the Land of Maghreb, or the Land of the Setting Sun, as it is called.

(To be continued next week.)



Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next!)

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM LIBRARY, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER. EASILY EXPLAINED!

There had been complaints of overcrowding at Mudcombe, so an official of the local council was sent to make inquiries. Approaching one house, he knocked sharply, and the door was opened by the daughter of the house.

"How many live here?" he asked.

"Nobody lives here," answered the girl. "We're staying for a short time."

"But how many are here?" persisted the man.

"I'm here, father's gone for a walk, and mother is—"

"Stop! Stop!" exclaimed the official impatiently.

"I want to know how many inmates are in this house. How many slept here last night?"

"Well, you see," was the reply, "I had toothache dreadful, my little brother had the stomach-ache, and we both cried so much that nobody slept a wink!"

Then the inspector said that he would call again.

A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to G. Davies, New Building Site, Birchgrove, Llansamlet, Swansea.

HADN'T THE HEART!

In a football match the goalkeeper failed to stop a ball which was travelling slowly. When the ball was centred one of the full-backs said to the goalkeeper:

"How did you manage to let that one through?"

"Well," the goalie replied, "after the ball had passed about ten of you players I hadn't the heart to stop it!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. A. Knight, 10, Tillingham Street, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

ALMOST!

From a Norwegian immigrant's essay on frogs:

"What a wonderful bird the frog are! When he stands he sit, almost. When he hop he fly, almost. He ain't got no sense, hardly. He ain't got no tail, hardly, either. When he sit, he sit on what he ain't got, almost!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Tame, Victoria Cottage, The Drive, Wellington Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham.

READY MADE!

He clasped her hand in a passionate embrace. The very sofa thrilled with emotion.

"And one day, light of my life," he cried, "you will be mine all mine! Those silken tresses, those sky blue eyes, that rosebud mouth, those dear, darling, pearly teeth that show like sea-shore shells, are more precious to me than the world's wealth! Let me gaze on them, my beloved!"

The sofa thrilled again, and from beneath came the shrill voice of the bride-to-be's young brother:

"Why don't you take 'em out and show 'em, sis?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. H. Swallow, 188, Dereham Road, Norwich.

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