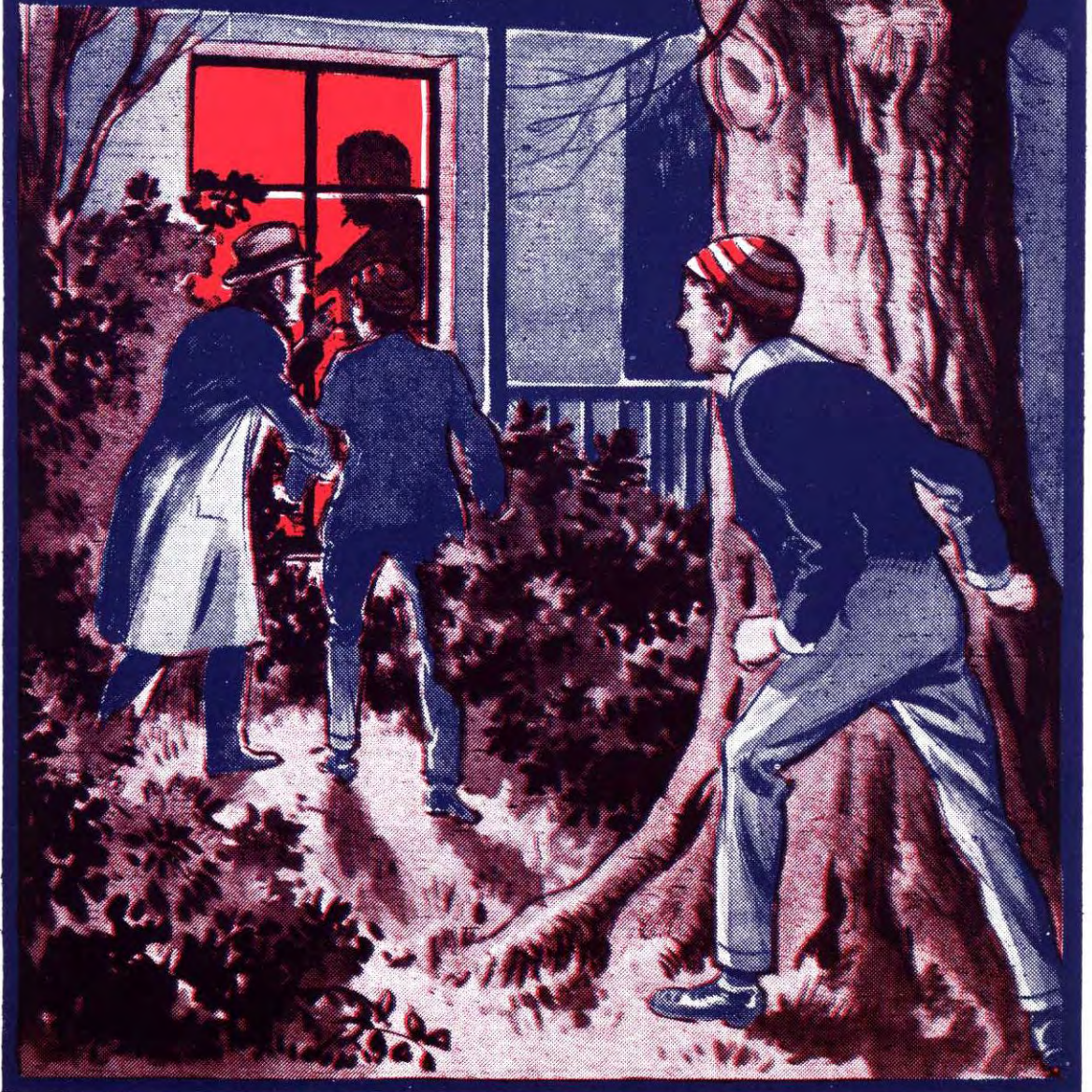


THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE SCHOOL STORY PAPER!

# The GEM 2<sup>D</sup>

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## THE SHADOW ON THE BLIND !

*(Unable to warn St. Leger, Oliver Lynn waits unscen, whilst Mr. Ratcliff and Monteith keep a wary eye upon the shady haunt of the Fifth-Former. An Incident in the Grand Long Complete School Story in this issue.)*

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# My Readers' Own Corner

Send Your Latest Ribtickler to Me!

## TUCK HAMPERS AND MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR WIT! (If You Are Not a Prizewinner This Week, You May Be Next.)

All Attempts in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

This Week, Boys, I am able to announce the Result of the **"BIG AWARD" TUCK HAMPER COMPETITION.**

Senders of the following amusing stories have all been awarded one of our delicious Tuck Hampers.

There is another offered for next week, also money prizes.

**SEND IN YOUR ATTEMPT NOW!**

### HARD ON JOHNNY!

A young gentleman friend of Nellie's had come to spend the afternoon and evening at her home. The party were laughing and chatting at the supper-table, when Nellie's brother shouted across to the visitor: "Oh, Howard, you should have seen the fine big soldier who came to see Nellie yesterday! Gee! He was some swell! He was talking to Nellie, and he had his arm—" "Johnny," said his sister, blushing deeply. Johnny looked surprised. "Well, I was only going to say that he had his arm—" "Johnny," said his mother sternly, "that's enough from you!" Johnny began to pout. "Well, I was only going to say he had his

arm—" "Johnny, leave the room!" said his father angrily. Johnny began to cry, and slowly moved towards the door. As he opened it he said between his sobs: "I was only going to say he had his Army clothes on!"—Sent in by Robert Samuel, 8, Caledonian Place, Edinburgh.

### UP AND DOWN!

A Yankee, on a visit to England, occupied the same compartment as a collier. "I guess," said the Yankee, "our coalmines in the States are deeper than yours here in England." "Oh," returned the collier. "I dunno about that! What depth are your coalmines?" "Well," said the American, "I guess we have some two or three thousand feet deep." "That's nowt," said the collier. "We have a coalmine here, and it tak's men half a day to go down and half a day to come up." "Oh!" said the Yankee. "And who does the work?" "Well," said the collier, "there's a night shift!"—Sent in by Arthur Link, 5, Florence Street, Castleford, Yorkshire.

### CAUGHT!

In a large public school there was a master named Bird. Such an opportunity was not to be lost by the boys, and they were for ever using his name as a target for their jokes. One day, one daring light in his Form wrote on the blackboard: "Hail to the blight spirit,

Bird thou never wert." Dead silence reigned when the master entered the Form-room. Some of the boys stared down on their desks, whilst the others turned their eyes towards the ceiling. Catching sight of the writing, the master demanded angrily: "Who wrote that?" Nobody spoke for a minute; then a tall, studious-looking boy, in spectacles, rose and said: "Please, sir, I think it was Shelley!"—Sent in by D. Seddon, 108, New Road, Whitefield, near Manchester.

### AN UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL!

Doris had received an invitation to a fancy-dress dance. She did not know what costume to wear. At last a brilliant idea struck her; she would go as the GEM. Accordingly, on the night of the dance she appeared in her original costume, made up entirely of covers of the GEM. Another dancer approached her, saying: "Doris, you must be very fond of the GEM." "Fond of the GEM" was the reply. "Why, I'm simply wrapped up in it!"—Sent in by William Icke, 25, Catherine Street, Cathays, Cardiff.

### RIGHTLY JUDGED!

A certain Army officer was very particular that his men should be properly fed, and often made unexpected visits to the barracks and inspected the food. During one of these visits he perceived two soldiers carrying a steaming boiler from the kitchen. He approached them. "I say, you men, drop that," he commanded, "and fetch me a spoon." The astonished soldiers looked at each other. Then one of them rushed off, returning in a few moments with a spoon. "I want to see what sort of soup you get," said the officer, dipping the spoon in the boiler and tasting its contents. Suddenly he made a wry face, exclaiming: "What sort of broth is this? It tastes like dish-water." "That's just what it is, sir," replied one of the soldiers; "it's the water the dishes were washed in!"—Sent in by J. Perry, 94, Killowen Street, Woodstock Road, Ireland.

### TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

**AT THE EARTH'S CORE** BY EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

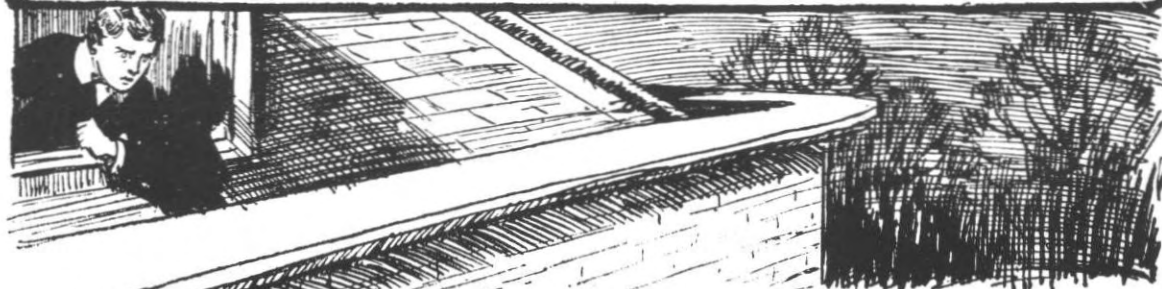
THRILLING NEW STORY in this week's

# PLUCK

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# LYNN'S LOYALTY!



A New Extra-Long Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how Oliver Lynn endeavours to shield St. Leger of the Fifth from scandal and expulsion. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### Lynn's Little Way!

**Y**OU blokes—"  
Tom Merry & Co. grinned.  
They could not help it.  
That was a very unusual form of address at St. Jim's. It was, in fact, peculiar to Lynn of the Fourth, who was quite an original youth in many ways.

Lynn of the Fourth—once the "Chicken" of Hawley's Ring—had been some weeks at St. Jim's now. He was picking up, more or less, the ways of the St. Jim's fellows, especially since Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had devoted his noble attention to him. But the habits of early years were not easily broken. His speech still bristled with "coves" and "blokes," and his aspirates were few and far between.

"It's a 'arf-oliday this artemnoon!" went on Lynn.

"It are!" said Monty Lowther gravely.

"You blokes like to come along with a cove?" inquired Lynn.

Lynn was looking very cheery that afternoon.

Since he had made friends with Blake & Co. in Study No. 6, and Tom Merry & Co. of the Shell, life had been much brighter for him at St. Jim's.

"That depends," said Manners. "Where is the cove going?"

"I'm going down to the Green Man!" said Lynn cheerily.

The Terrible Three fairly jumped.

"The—the Green Man?" said Tom Merry faintly.

Lynn nodded.

"That's it! I'm going for a game of billiards."

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

Lynn made his surprising statement without subduing his voice in the least. Apparently, he saw nothing uncommon in a St. Jim's Fourth-Former dropping into a public-house on a half-holiday. The Terrible Three fairly blinked at him.

"Coming?" asked Lynn.

"Oh crumbs! Not quite!" gasped Tom Merry. "My dear chap, we're not coming to the Green Man—and you're not going, either!"

"Why not?"

"It's out of bounds, for one thing!"

Lynn grinned.

"You fellers go out of bounds sometimes," he said.

"Not to pubs, though," said Manners tartly. "You young sweep, if a prefect spotted you you'd get reported for a flogging!"

"But I ain't going to get spotted!" explained Lynn cheerily.

"That's not all," said Tom Merry. "It's not the kind of place for a St. Jim's fellow to enter, Lynn. You're new here, Lynn, and don't know the ropes yet. Take a tip from an old hand, and stick to the rules."

"Oh, blow the rules!" said Lynn. "There's too many rules for me, in this

'ere show! Where's the 'arm, I should like to know?"

"Lots of harm," said Tom. "It's up to a fellow not to do shady things, Lynn. Keep away from that place, Lynn. Look here, we're going on the river. Come along with us!"

"I'd rather play a game of billiards," said Lynn. "You blokes come with me, and I'll give you fifty in a 'undred, with a quid on the game!"

"You young rascal—"

"Wot?"

"Don't you know that it's wrong to gamble?" asked Tom Merry, hardly knowing what to say to this extraordinary youth.

"Racke of the Shell does," said Lynn.

"Racke's a blackguard! He will be kicked out of St. Jim's some day!" said Manners.

"Come on the river with us, kid," said Tom Merry kindly. "Ever so much better for you, apart from the right and wrong of the matter."

Lynn shook his head.

"Your study-mates are at footer practice," said Manners. "Why not join them?"

"Football ain't much in my line," said Lynn. "I never 'ad a chance of playing football when I was a boxer."

"You'll soon pick it up."

Lynn shook his head again. He was evidently set on his own peculiar mode of enjoying a half-holiday.

"Now, look here, kid," said Tom Merry quietly. "you simply must not play the goat. You'll get into trouble. You've got a cousin in the Fifth Form here—St. Leger. Ask his advice, if you don't care to take a tip from us."

Lynn's brow clouded.

"I ain't going near Master St. Leger," he said. "He's awfully ratty about it coming out that I'm his cousin. He's ashamed of me."

"Oh, rot!" said Tom uneasily.

"He's told me to keep my distance," said Lynn. "I'm going to. I ain't bothering a bloke what don't want me."

"Well, that's all right," said Tom Merry slowly. "But—I'm off!"

Oliver Lynn gave the Terrible Three a nod, and walked away to the gates. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked after him, and then looked at one another.

"It's rotten," said Tom Merry, knitting his brows. "St. Leger of the Fifth ought to keep an eye on that kid. It's up to him."

Manners shrugged his shoulders.

"Most likely St. Leger will be playing the goat himself," he said. "He's got no time for bringing up Lynn in the way he should go."

"The young ass ought to be stopped," said Tom Merry uneasily. "It might be a good idea to collar him—"

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"There's a difficulty about that," he remarked. "The jolly old Chicken could knock out all three of us if it came to a scrap."

"I suppose he could," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Well, he will have to go his own way, I suppose. Let's get off."

"There's St. Leger," said Monty Lowther, with a grin. "You can put it to him, if you like, Tom."

St. Leger and Cutts of the Fifth Form came out of the School House. They passed the Terrible Three on their way to the gates. Tom Merry hesitated a moment, and then came up to the Fifth-Formers.

"I say, St. Leger—"

"Hallo!" said the Fifth-Former, pausing. "What is it?"

"Oh, come on!" growled Cutts. "What are you wasting time for, St. Leger?"

"Let the kid speak," said St. Leger good-naturedly. "Cut it short, Merry."

"It's about your cousin, Lynn of the Fourth," said Tom.

St. Leger stared at him for a second, his brow clouding darkly. Without giving Tom time to finish, he turned on his heel and walked away quickly after Gerald Cutts. Tom was left standing, with a flushed face.

"Dear man!" muttered Monty Lowther.

"The cheeky rotter—" began Tom wrathfully. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"No, you haven't," said Lowther. "No time for ragging the Fifth this afternoon. Let's get down to the boat-house, before some bounder bags our boat."

He linked his arm in Tom Merry's, and led him away. The Terrible Three followed the path down to the boat-house, and took out their skiff, and dismissed Oliver Lynn of the Fourth Form from their minds.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Up to Arthur Augustus!

"SLACKER!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Why haven't you changed?" demanded Blake.

"Didn't I tell you to be ready for footer at three?"

"Yaas."

"Well, then, ass—"

"I've been thinkin', deah boys—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" urged Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Are we playing footer this afternoon or listening to Gussy doing a chin recital?" asked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Go and change, ass!" roared Blake. "Don't you want to beat the Shell next Saturday?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Do you think you're such a topping player that you don't need any practice?"

"Not exactly, deah boy. But—"

"But what?"

"But don't wear at a fellow—"

"What?"

"I have mentioned a good many times, Blake, that it

throws me into quite a fluttah when a fellow wears at me," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy mildly.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Blake.

"I have been thinkin', deah boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "That chap Lynn, you know—"

"Oh, bother Lynn!"

"I wefuse to bothah Lynn, Blake. Since he vevy bwavely chipped in and saved cousin Ethel fwom bein' wobbled by a howwid twamp I wegard it as bein' up to us to stand by him."

"Well, I asked him to join in the footer practice," said Blake. "He didn't want to, and there's an end."

"Not at all, deah boy. It is a vevy unusually fine aftahnoon for this time of yah, and some of the fellows are takin' boats out. Suppose we chuck footah—"

"Eh?"

"And take out a boat instead. Lynn might like to come."

"You silly owl!" said Blake, in measured tones. "I don't mind making friends with Lynn and backing him up and picking up his H's when he drops them all over the study. But I wouldn't cut footer this afternoon to save him from being hanged as high as Haman."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Not to save him from being boiled in oil," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Not to save him from listening to one of your tenor solos," said Digby.

"You uttah ass!"

"Now go and get into your things, fathead," said Blake; "you've got to learn to pass a little less like a frightened duck if you want to play for the Fourth in the Form match on Saturday."

"I wefuse to admit for a moment that I pass like a frightened duck!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly, "and I considah it is up to me to look aftah Lynn a little. I think I will ask him again to join us at footah, if anybody knows where he is—"

"He, he, he!"

Arthur Augustus turned his head as Baggy Trimble weighed in with that unmusical cachinnation.

He fixed his eyeglass loftily and freezingly upon Trimble.

"Will you oblige me, Twimble, by cacklin' somewhah else, where the howwid noise will not offend my yahs?" he inquired.

"He, he, he! If you want Lynn, you'll have to go down to the Green Man for him!" chuckled Trimble.

"Bai Jove! I wegard you as a slandewin' young wascal, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus sternly.

"I heard him," grinned Trimble. "He asked Tom Merry to go with him to play billiards there. He, he, he!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Blake.

"Tommy preached to him about it," continued Trimble; "you know his style. When he got to seventhly Lynn hooked it for the Green Man."

Arthur Augustus looked deeply distressed.

"If Lynn is weally playin' the shady goat in this way, Twimble, it is not a laughin' matlah."

"He, he, he!"

"Are you coming to the footer, Gussy?" asked Blake, in concentrated tones.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"Certainly not, Blake. If Lynn is playin' the goat fwom ignovance it is up to somebody to set him wight. I am goin' to look aftah him and pluck him like a bwand fwom the burnin', you know!"

"And what about footer?" demanded Blake.

"Nevah mind footah for once. Aftah all, I do not need so much practice as you fellows, you know."

"You cheeky ass!" howled Blake. "Haven't I told you fifty times that I could play your head off at footer with one leg tied up?"

"Yaas, deah boy; but it isn't the fact, you know," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I just let you wun on out of politeness, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries and Digby.

Jack Blake's face was a study for a moment.

"You fellows will have to wub on without me this aftahnoon, somehow," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I must go aftah Lynn and stop him befoah he gets into some feahful twouble. I wegard it as bein' up to me."

"Oh, bump him!" growled Blake.

"Weally, you fellows— Yawooooop!" roared Arthur Augustus as he was suddenly up-ended by his devoted chums.

"He, he, he!" cackled Trimble.

"Now Trimble," said Blake, "give him something to he, he, he about."

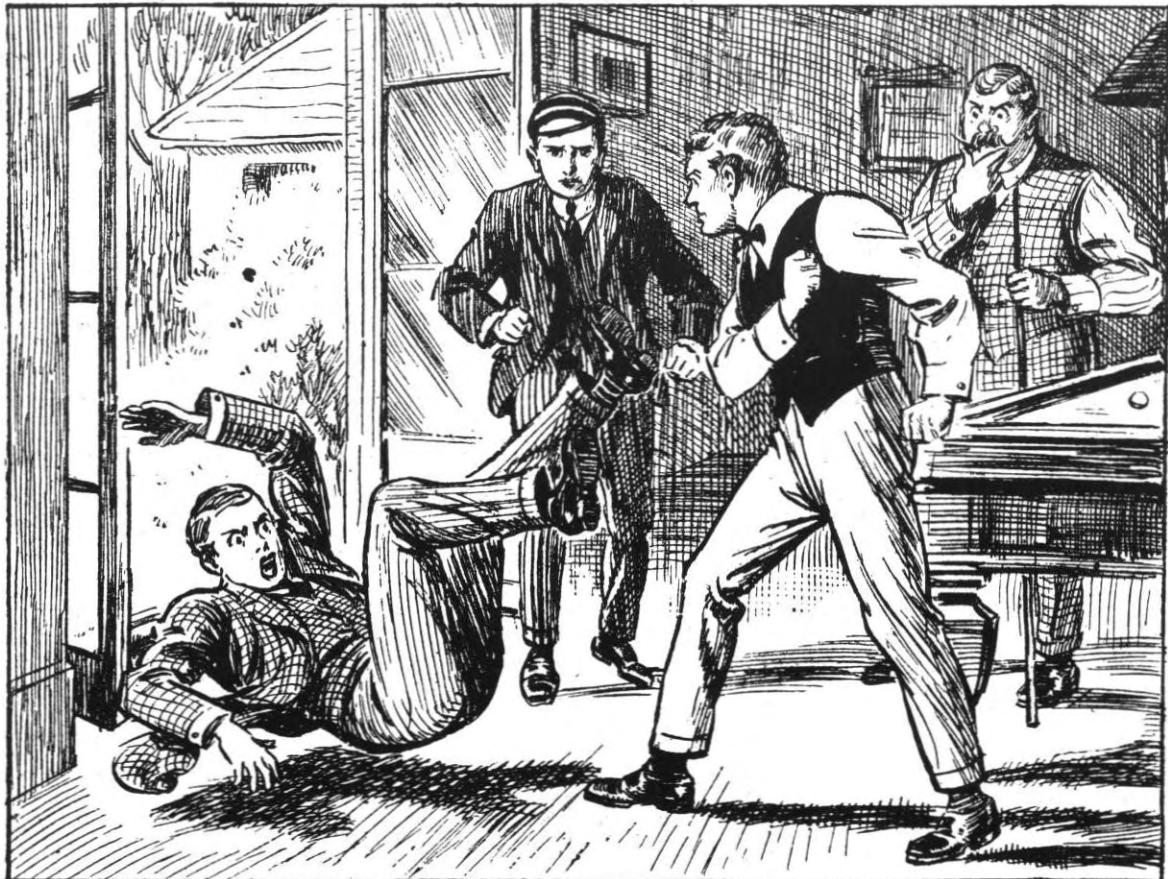
"Here, I say— Ooooooop!" howled Trimble.

Bump!

Blake and Co. walked away towards the footer ground. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered up.

"Bai Jove! I have a great mind to give those fellows a feahful thwashin' all wound!" he exclaimed.

"Yow-ow-ow!" groaned Trimble. "Give a chap a hand up, you beast."



Cutts of the Fifth seized Lynn by the collar to sling him out into the inn garden. In his rage he had forgotten that the Fourth-Former was more than a match at flatcuffs for the biggest and fiercest senior at St. Jim's. He remembered it the next moment, however, when with a hard blow Lynn sent him sprawling along the floor of the billiards-room! (See page 6.)

"Wats!  
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away—not towards the footer ground. He headed for the gates.

Having made friends with Oliver Lynn—and swallowed that remarkable youth whole, as it were—Arthur Augustus felt that it was up to him to lend a helping hand and speak a word in season. He found Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth chatting in the gateway, and stopped.

"Have you seen Lynn of the Fourth go out, Kildare?" he inquired.

The captain of St. Jim's looked down at him.  
"Do you suppose that I notice whether a Fourth-Form fag goes out or not?" he asked, in turn.

"Weally, Kildare—"  
"Cut off!" said Darrell.  
"Weally, Dawwell—"

Kildare made a playful motion with his boot; and the swell of the Fourth departed rather hastily.

In the road he paused to consider himself. There was no sign of Lynn, the youth of whom he was in anxious search. He caught sight of Talbot of the Shell coming up from the direction of the village on his bicycle, and hailed him.

"Seen Lynn, Talbot?"  
"Passed him up the road," said Talbot; "he was going to Rylcombe, I think—I passed him near the Green Man."

"Oh! Thanks, dear boy."  
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy started for Rylcombe. He had no further doubts; and he intended to seek Lynn of the Fourth where he was to be found—forgetful, for the moment, of the possible consequences to himself if he were "spotted" by the powers in that extremely disreputable resort, the Green Man at Rylcombe.

### CHAPTER 3

#### A Shock for St. Leger!

"AFTERNOON, sir!"  
"Afternoon!" responded Lynn affably.  
Mr. Banks, racing tout and billiards sharper, eyed the St. Jim's junior very curiously. Mr. Banks had seen all sorts and conditions of fellows in his varied career,

but never had he happened on a fellow quite like Oliver Lynn of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

All St. Jim's knew that Lynn was the nephew of Colonel St. Leger, the father of St. Leger of the Fifth; that he had been left an orphan by a spendthrift father, and had knocked about "on his own" for years before his uncle found him and took him in charge. But Mr. Banks was not acquainted with those circumstances, and he was astonished to see a fellow in a St. Jim's cap who acted and talked as the one-time Chicken acted and talked.

But all was grist that came to Mr. Banks' mill. Lynn of the Fourth had money in his pocket, and seemed quite oblivious of all the laws and rules of the school to which he belonged. So Joseph Banks concealed his astonishment, and treated Lynn with great respect and consideration—that treatment to last until Lynn's pocket-money had been transferred to Mr. Banks' pockets.

To do Lynn justice, he was not aware of the serious offence he was committing in visiting the disreputable "pub" to play billiards with the racy, purple-faced sharper. He had thought nothing of such things, during his career as a "boy pug" in the boxing booths, and he had not been long enough in better surroundings for his ideas on the subject to change.

Lynn was scarcely conscious of wrongdoing; but he understood there would be a "row" if the school authorities learned that he had been out of school bounds—and the Green Man was very severely out of bounds. So he had slipped across a field-path to the back garden of the inn, and he was entering by the veranda at the back when Mr. Banks greeted him. It was not his first visit to the place by two or three.

"Glad to see you, sir!" went on Mr. Banks. "I believe the table's free now, if you care for a game."

"That's it," said Lynn. "I'm your man!"

"This way!"  
Mr. Banks led the way into the billiards-room—a dingy apartment that looked on the unkept garden from French windows. A coarse-looking marker was knocking the balls about in a bored, dismal sort of way. He nodded to Mr.

Banks, and stared curiously at the lad in Etons, and grinned. Mr. Banks gave his young friend twenty-five in the hundred, and they started. The fat sharper allowed Lynn to keep ahead till near the finish, and then ran out with a single break. One of the Chicken's pound-notes found a resting-place in Mr. Banks' pocket-book.

"You're too good for me, you are!" the Chicken remarked. Mr. Banks shook his head. "You nearly had me that time," he said. "You'd have run me out, but for that little bit of luck at the end. Try again."

"I'm goin' to!"  
A shadow crossed the French window from the garden. An elegant figure appeared there, that of St. Leger of the St. Jim's Fifth. Cutts was with him.

Mr. Banks started a little as he saw the newcomers through the glass. He had many dealings with Cutts, the sportsman of the Fifth, and his friends. Mr. Banks was not particular, and he was as ready to waltz a junior schoolboy as a senior; but he wondered how the Fifth-Formers would like the junior boy to see them there. It was too late to prevent it now, however; the French window swung open, and Cutts and St. Leger came in.

"Arternoon, gentlemen!" said Mr. Banks. Lynn, who was chalking his cue, let the butt drop to the floor with a clump in his surprise. It astonished him to see the fastidious St. Leger in such a resort.

"Hallo, what have you got here, Banks?" exclaimed Gerald Cutts, staring at the Fourth-Former.

"Lynn!" exclaimed St. Leger. The dandy of the Fifth stared at Lynn, and strode towards him, his brow dark with anger.

"Lynn! What are you doing here? You young rascal, is this how you behave?"

Mr. Banks exchanged a wink with the greasy marker. Cutts burst into a laugh.

"The young shaver is followin' in your footsteps, St. Leger," he remarked. "Don't turn your cousin out."

"Cousin!" ejaculated Mr. Banks involuntarily. "My eye! Is that young gent your cousin, Master St. Leger!"

St. Leger did not reply, but his face crimsoned with anger and mortification. All St. Jim's knew that the Chicken was his cousin, and St. Leger had had to stand a good deal of chipping on the subject from his nutty friends in the Fifth. It was gall and wormwood to him to have such a relation at the school, and his attempt, in the first place, to keep the relationship a secret had drawn all the more attention to it.

"How dare you come here, Lynn?" he said between his teeth.

Lynn backed away. It looked for a moment as though the angry Fifth-Former would strike him.

"Where's the 'arm?" faltered Lynn.

"You young rascal!"

"You come 'ere, it seems," said Lynn. "Why shouldn't I come 'ere if you do?"

St. Leger would have found that question rather difficult to answer.

"Don't give me any cheeky back-chat, you young hooligan!" he growled. "Try to remember that you're a St. Jim's fellow now, and not a ruffian boxing at circuses!"

Lynn flushed deeply.

"I wouldn't 'ave come, if I'd knowed you came to such places," he said. "It's good enough for the likes of me, but it ain't good enough for you. You oughtn't to come 'ere!"

"My hat! The young shaver's givin' you a sermon, St. Leger!" exclaimed Cutts, highly entertained. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dry up!" snapped St. Leger. He pointed to the garden.

"Get out, Lynn!"

"Let him alone," chuckled Cutts. "You're not a prefect, old bean. You can't give orders to fags!"

"If you don't go, Lynn——" began St. Leger in a low, passionate voice.

"I'm going, sir!" exclaimed the Chicken hastily. "I'll do anything that you tell me!"

"Then get out before I kick you out, you young sweep!" snapped St. Leger.

"Yes, sir!" said Lynn submissively.

He crossed to the French window at once. Cutts chuckled almost explosively. This extraordinary relation of the aristocrat, highly connected like St. Leger, afforded Cutts endless entertainment.

"What are you turnin' him out for, old chap?" he remonstrated. "I dare say the kid plays a great game of billiards. Judgin' by his manners, I should say he was brought up in places like this."

St. Leger gave his chum a dark look, but made no rejoinder. Oliver Lynn went slowly out into the garden.

He turned in the French window.

"Master St. Leger——" he began.

"Get out!"  
"Are you staying here, sir?"  
"Mind your own business! Get out!"  
"I—I wish you'd come away, too, sir," said Lynn. "It ain't right for a gentleman like you to come to these 'ere places, sir. It's all very well for Master Cutts and his sort."  
"Eh! What's that?" exclaimed Cutts, ceasing to chuckle all of a sudden. "Why, you cheeky, scrubby little scoundrel, I——" The sportsman of the Fifth made an angry stride towards Lynn.

Lynn gave him a contemptuous look.

"Ands off!" he said. "Ah, would you?"

Cutts of the Fifth seized him by the collar to sling him out into the inn garden. In his rage he had forgotten for the moment that Lynn of the Fourth was the Chicken of Hawley's Ring—more than a match at fisticuffs for the biggest and heftiest senior at St. Jim's.

He remembered it the next moment, however. Something that seemed like a lump of iron clumped on Cutts' chin, and the Fifth-Former went sprawling along the floor of the billiards-room.

Mr. Banks stared.

"My eye!" he ejaculated.

"Get out, Lynn!" shouted St. Leger furiously.

"I'm going, sir!"

And the Chicken went. He tramped down the path through the inn garden, with a clouded brow, and reached the towing-path. Not for a moment did it occur to him to resist the authority of his cousin in the Fifth. St. Leger of the Fifth was his ideal—the hapless Chicken's admiration of that elegant and fastidious youth had no bounds. Even St. Leger's open shame at such a connection had made no difference to the loyal affection of his cousin. The Chicken was only too painfully conscious of the fact that there was nothing about him for a fellow like St. Leger to feel proud of.

He tramped down the towing-path in a troubled mood. He had gone into the Green Man without hesitation himself, but it shocked him and pained him to see St. Leger there. What was good enough for him, was not good enough for that magnificent youth, in the humble opinion of the schoolboy boxer.

"Hallo, Lynn!"

It was a hail from the river. Lynn looked round quickly. Manners and Lowther were pulling, and Tom Merry was standing up in the boat, waving his hand to the junior on the bank.

"Allo!" called back Lynn.

"Coming aboard?" asked Tom Merry cheerily.

Lynn's downcast face brightened.

"If you'll 'ave me," he answered.

"Cheerio!"

Tom Merry steered into the bank, and Oliver Lynn jumped aboard. The Shell fellows pulled out into the river again.

It was five minutes later that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along the towing-path, and the boat was then out of sight—a circumstance that was to have its results.

## CHAPTER 2 Gussy Butts In!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stopped at the gate of the inn-garden, on the towing-path. The swell of St. Jim's was quite resolute, and he did not hesitate for a moment in carrying out his resolution, which was to seek Lynn of the Fourth in that shady resort, and get him away from it without delay. But he was cautious. To be seen entering the precincts of the Green Man was a serious matter, so Gussy had arrived by way of the towing-path instead of by the road. At the inn gate he stopped, and took a cautious survey of the path and the river. Nobody was in sight, and Gussy vaulted over the gate and disappeared into the unkempt garden.

"All sewene so fah!" murmured Arthur Augustus, "but I shall have to be vewy careful. It means a floggin' to be seen heah, and I could not vewy well explain that I came heah to pluck that ass Lynn like a bwand fwom the burnin'. I wondah where he is?"

The swell of the Fourth advanced cautiously up the garden, and surveyed the back of the building.

From the direction of the stables a man in his shirt-sleeves came along, carrying a basket. He paused to look at D'Arcy.

"It's all wight, my deah man," Arthur Augustus hastened to explain; "I'm lookin' for a fwend."

The stableman grinned.

"It's all right, sir," he said. "I didn't take you for a burglar."

"Bai Jove! I twust not! Can you tell me where they play billiards in this howwid hole, my good man?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I—I mean, in this establishment," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway do not think I meant to be wude."



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his damaged hat clutched tightly in his hand, dashed up the garden path, with the billiards-marker hot in pursuit. St. Leger, Cutts, and Mr. Banks stood at the open doorway grinning. "Oh deah!" groaned Augustus as the billiards-cue came down with a thwack upon his slim shoulders! (See this page.)

The stableman jerked a dirty thumb towards the French windows.

"That way," he said, and walked on.

"Thank you, my deah fellow."

Arthur Augustus approached the French windows. He heard the sound of clicking balls from within.

"If Twimble was wight, that weckless young boundah is there," Arthur Augustus murmured. "I'm goin' to get him out. If he wefuses to come, I feah that I shall have to use force, for his own sake. I cannot see a St. Jim's fellow go to the dogs, even such a vevy peculiar chap as Lynn."

How he was to use force in dealing with a youthful boxer who could have doubled him up with one punch was a problem Arthur Augustus did not think of solving. He approached the open French window, and turned his eyeglass upon the dingy interior of the billiards-room.

"Bai Jove!"

He did not see Lynn there; but he saw Cutts of the Fifth engaged in a game with Mr. Banks, and St. Leger looking on, smoking a cigarette. His exclamation drew all eyes on him at once.

"Hallo! It's rainin' fags this afternoon," said Cutts. "Is this another of your young friends, Banks?"

"Bai Jove! I wepudiate the suggestion with scorn!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "I have come heah to look for young Lynn, of my Form. St. Leger, I am shocked and surprised to see you heah."

"Get out, you cheeky young ass!" snapped St. Leger.

"I will get out fast enough, and take Lynn with me," said Arthur Augustus disdainfully. "Lynn is heah somewhah. It is your dutay, St. Leger, to look aftah your cousin, and see that he does not come to howwid dens like this, even if you are wottah enough to do so yourself."

"Turn that fellor out, marker," said Mr. Banks.

"Wotto!" said the marker.

"I wefuse to go without Lynn," said Arthur Augustus. "My man, pway keep your distance. I shall punch you if you lay your howwid hands on me."

"Lynn's gone, you young fool!" snapped St. Leger.

"Houtside!" said the marker.

"Keep your howwid hands off--oh, my hat!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as the grinning marker seized him by the collar.

"Sling him out!" chuckled Cutts.

"'Ere goes!"

Crash!

Arthur Augustus was not a match for the fat marker. But he was not to be handled with impunity.

He drove a hefty fist into the marker's podgy ribs, and the man sat down with a crash.

"There, you howwid wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"My word!" gasped the marker.

He was on his feet in a moment, and fairly jumping at the swell of St. Jim's. He grasped him forcibly, and Arthur Augustus returned grasp for grasp, and they struggled and rolled into the garden together.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cutts. "Go it!"

"Gwoogh!"

The angry marker was smacking the hapless Gussy right and left, as they rolled on the gravel outside. St. Leger came to the window.

"Cut off, D'Arcy, you young ass!" he called out. "Lynn isn't here. He was here, but he cleared. Get out of it!"

"Oh cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus dragged himself loose. His collar was jerked out, his tie was gone, he was ruffled and rumped all over, and his handsome silk hat was a wreck. The marker, still unsatisfied, charged at him; and Arthur Augustus, clutching up his wrecked hat, fairly ran for it up the garden path. St. Leger and Cutts and Mr. Banks stood at the open door, roaring with laughter, as Gussy raced away up the path, with the angry marker panting and gasping in pursuit.

"Oh deah!"

Arthur Augustus cleared the gate at a bound, and rolled over on the towing path. The marker shook a fat fist at him over the gate, and then tramped back to the inn.

"Oh cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus looked, and felt, like a disreputable wreck

of his elegant self, as he picked himself up, and moved away. His collar could not be fastened; it had been torn from the stud; and his necktie was left in the inn garden; his clothes were rumpled and covered with dust. He looked at his hat with anguish, and tried to punch it out into something like shape. But a silk hat that has been rolled upon is a difficult proposition to deal with.

"The awful wotahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I have a great mind to go back and thrash them all round. But—but I suppose I should only be chucked out again. Oh deah!"

"Hallo, you young sweep!" Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth were sauntering along the towing-path. They came face to face with Arthur Augustus, and stopped to stare at him. Seldom, or never, had the swell of the Fourth been seen in such a dusty and dishevelled state.

"What on earth have you been up to?" demanded Kildare. "Is that a state for a St. Jim's fellow to be seen in?"

"Certainly not," gasped Arthur Augustus. "Have you been scrapping with a bargee?" asked Darrell, laughing.

"Nothin' of the kind." "Well, what have you been up to?" asked Kildare sharply. "I have been tweeked with gwoss disrespect by a wotten wuffian," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh!" said Kildare. "One of those tramps that young Lynn fell in with the other day, perhaps. If they're still in this neighbourhood the police had better be told. I'll—"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hurriedly. "It was not a twamp, Kildare. Nothin' of the sort!"

"Then who was it?" "A—a—billiards-markah."

"What?" roared Kildare. "You—you see—"

"So, you've been playing billiards, and kicking up a shindy with the marker?" ejaculated the prefect.

"Oh cwumps! Certainly not!" Kildare's hand dropped on the junior's shoulder. His face was very grim.

"Tell me where you've been this minute," he said. "Now then, sharp's the word."

"I've been to the Gween Man, Kildare," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "Pway allow me to explain. I twust you do not suppose that I should visit such a vewy disreputable place without a vewy stwong reason."

"Trot out your reason."

"I had weason to believe that a St. Jim's chap was there, and I went to fetch him away—pluckin' him like a bwand from the burnin', you know," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

Darrell subdued a chuckle. "And was he there?" asked Kildare.

"No," said Arthur Augustus, very thankful that he was able to answer that query in the negative.

"Was any St. Jim's fellows there?" demanded Kildare, eyeing the Fourth-Former rather suspiciously.

No answer. "Do you hear me, D'Arcy?"

"I am not deaf, Kildare?"

"Then answer me at once."

"Weally, you know—"

"I suppose you have not forgotten that I am head prefect of St. Jim's, D'Arcy?" said Kildare.

"Not at all, deah boy."

"Then answer my question directly."

"I cannot vewy well, Kildare. It is not the business of a fellow to gwe information to a pwefect, especially about a chap in anothah Form."

"In another Form?" repeated Kildare.

"Yaas, wathah! You see, deah boy, I was awf'ly shocked to see Fifth Form chaps in such a vewy wotten wesort, but I should wegard it as sneakin' to mention the fact to a pwefect."

Kildare gave a jump. "Fifth Form chaps there?" he exclaimed.

"I feah I must decline to ansawah that question, Kildare."

"You young ass!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Names!" snapped the prefect.

"Wats!"

"What!" roared Kildare.

"I wepeat, wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am not an informah—and you can lick me if you like."

Kildare of the Sixth looked, for a minute, as if he would take Arthur Augustus at his word. But he controlled his wrath.

"Never mind!" he said. "You will take five hundred lines, D'Arcy, for going into a place out of school bounds, whatever your silly motive was—"

"Bai Jove! I do not wegard my motive as sillav, Kildare."

"Opinions may differ on that point," said Kildare dryly. "It's lucky for you I know what a young ass you are, or I should report you to your Housemaster. Cut off."

"Weally, Kildare—"

Kildare made a movement—and Arthur Augustus walked quickly along the towing-path instead of finishing his remarks. Kildare stood for some minutes with a knitted brow, thinking, Darrell watching him rather curiously.

"This has got to be looked into," said the captain of St. Jim's at last. "There's been talk of St. Jim's fellows hanging round that den, and Railton has spoken to me about it. If it's Cutts again— But dash it all, it's not fair to suspect Cutts without a particle of evidence. But this has got to be looked into."

Darrell nodded. The two great men of the Sixth resumed their walk, both of them thoughtful and preoccupied. There was a great deal of responsibility on the shoulders of the Sixth Form prefects, and both Kildare and Darrell realised that this affair could not be left where it was.

## CHAPTER 5. Danger Ahead!

"THIS 'ere is all right."

Thus Oliver Lynn, Tom Merry, and Manners, and Lowther smiled, and agreed that it was all right. The afternoon was unusually warm and sunny for a day so early in the spring. The river gleamed and rippled past the boat, and there was hardly a cloud in the blue sky. The Terrible Three had moored the boat under a high bank rimmed with willows, beyond which the towing-path ran. The painter was tied to a projecting root, and the boat rocked on the current. Monty Lowther unpacked a little bag of cakes and tarts. Manners uncorked the lemonade, Tom Merry turned out a packet of sandwiches. The keen breeze over the downs had made the juniors hungry, and they were enjoying an early tea "al fresco."

Oliver Lynn, sprawled in the stern, with a tart in one hand and a smear of jam on his chubby, rugged face, felt quite comfortable. It even dawned upon his untutored mind that this was preferable to the dingy, smokey atmosphere of the Green Man at Rycombe. Certainly Tom and Manners and Lowther were rather nicer company than Mr. Banks and the greasy marker.

The Terrible Three were glad to see that Lynn was enjoying his half-holiday in that harmless way, after all. As a rule, the heroes of the Shell did not trouble their lofty heads very much about Fourth-Formers. Sometimes they consorted with Study No. 6; but generally they were sufficient unto themselves. But they made an exception in Lynn's favour. Since the occasion when the Chicken had stood up gallantly to a gang of rowdy tramps in defence of cousin Ethel the chums of St. Jim's had determined that Lynn should not want for friends in his new school—and they were patient with his many faults and failings and his rather remarkable manners and customs—resolved to make the best of him and to see him through. And they had already found that the Chicken's sterling qualities far outweighed his faults.

"All right, ain't it, you blokes?" went on the Chicken.

"Topping!" said Tom with a smile.

"Almost as good as the Green Man?" asked Manners.

"Better," said Lynn. "I dessay you fellers is quite right. But, you see, a bloke 'as to learn. I wasn't brought up like you chaps. I never had chances like my cousin, f'rinstance. Might be as good a chap as he is if I had."

It was the opinion of the Terrible Three that Lynn was quite as good a chap as St. Leger of the Fifth, anyhow. But they did not make the remark.

"You see, I was left stranded," said Lynn. "My father died when I was a nipper, and I was fair left on my uppers—goodness knows what would 'ave become of me if old Hawley hadn't taken me in hand and 'elped me to pick up the boxing. From what I 'ear, my father was a bit of a corker, and on fighting terms with old Colonel St. Leger; but the old gentleman made his lawyers hunt me up when he 'knosed that father was gone. That was very kind of 'im!"

"It was," agreed Tom.

"You blokes may 'ave noticed that Master St. Leger ain't very keen on me being at the school," continued Lynn, looking a little uneasily at his companions. "You see, it ain't nice for 'im, me being 'is cousin and not even being able to talk like the other coves—I mean fellers. But when I was took 'ome by his father, Master St. Leger was vewy kind to me—at 'ome, you know. He 'elped me a lot. I—I think p'r'aps it never came into his 'ead that I should be sent to St. Jim's. It's 'ard on 'im."

"He's not a bad chap," murmured Tom. "He would be all the better if Cutts left him alone."

Lynn nodded eagerly.

"That's it," he said. "You never said a truer word. He's got a 'eart of gold, Master St. Leger has; but that there Cutts gets him into mischief with his rotten ways. That Cutts is a bad egg."



"No doubt about that," said Lowther. "Try the lemonade, old bird."

Lynn leaned back on the cushions and gazed dreamily at the wide, gleaming river, and the green banks beyond, and the woodlands that patched the slopes of the downs. Suddenly from the silence there came a sound of footsteps on the towing-path, and a voice. The chums of the Shell exchanged glances as they recognised Kildare's tones.

Tom made a sign to Lynn to be silent.

"No 'arm in our bein' 'ere, surely!" whispered Lynn, staring at him in surprise.

"Only we're rather outside school bounds," answered Tom in a whisper. "No harm—but we don't want to bag lines."

Lynn nodded.

The boat, moored under the willows, was quite hidden from the high bank, and could not be seen from the towing-path unless the pedestrians there came to the edge and looked over.

Rather to the dismay of the juniors, the footsteps above stopped. Kildare and Darrell halted to rest on the fence that ran on the other side of the towing-path. They had walked a good many miles from St. Jim's along the river—"bounds" did not apply to such lofty personages as prefects of the Sixth Form.

"What a ripping day!" Kildare was saying. "We might as well have had a boat out, Darrell!"

"So we might!" agreed Darrell. "I rather wish we had!"

"Well, I'm glad we dropped on that young ass D'Arcy, though. I can't help being a little worried about it."

"The young ass!"

"It was straight enough what he told us—the young duffer butted into that den because he thought some St. Jim's junior was there. He's a really decent kid. But it's plain from what he let out that some Fifth-Form chaps were there. I had half a mind to march into the place—"

"Wouldn't have been any good, old chap. We should have been seen coming, and whoever was there would have got out of sight fast enough."

"That's so," assented Kildare. "But—"

He paused.

The Terrible Three exchanged grins. Apparently the two prefects had a serious problem on hand, which they were thinking out during their ramble. But Oliver Lynn did not grin; his rugged face took on a serious and startled expression.

"We've got to do something about it," Kildare said at last. "I couldn't very well make D'Arcy give the name—I can't turn a kid into an informer. But if a Fifth-Form chap is disgracing his school in that way—"

"It's got to be stopped, at any rate," said Darrell.

"I'm dashed if I know how to stop it. I shall have to report to Mr. Ralton, I suppose. He can look into it if he thinks fit."

"That's all you can do."

"If the fellow, whoever he is, has been there once, he'll go again, I suppose. Ralton will know what to do. I'd rather speak to the chap quietly, and keep it out of the House-master's hands, if I could. But it's got to be stopped."

"No doubt about that."

The talk ceased. Tom Merry & Co. waited silently for the Sixth-Formers to pass on their way. But it was some time before Kildare and Darrell moved.

"May as well be getting back," said the captain of St. Jim's, at last. And there were footsteps receding along the bank in the direction of the distant school.

"Trouble for somebody!" murmured Monty Lowther, when the sound of footsteps had died away. "Some merry blade of the Fifth Form is booked for a terrific row, I fancy."

"Serve him right!" grunted Manners.

"Cutts, most likely," said Tom Merry. "We know something of his ways. Hallo! What's the matter with you, Lynn?"

Lynn's face was quite pale.

"I—I say, Master Merry," Lynn faltered, "you told me a bloke would get into a row if he was spotted at that there show, the Green Man. Would it be worse for a Fifth Form chap than for a kid?"

"Yes, rather. A junior would get a licking," said Tom. "But a senior is supposed to know better how to behave; besides, they don't lick seniors."

"What would happen to him?"

"Might be the sack."

Lynn started.

"Sent away from the school, do you mean?"

"Just that!" said Tom.

"Oh!" muttered Lynn, in dismay. "Oh, my 'at!"

"You needn't worry," said Tom, in surprise. "It needn't bother you what happens to Cutts of the Fifth."

"Cutts! I don't care what 'appens to Cutts!" muttered Lynn. "Blow Cutts—if it was 'im! Cutts is too jolly clever to be caught, too, if you come to that. But—" He broke off. "What would his father say if he was sent 'ome?"

"Cutts' father?" asked Tom, puzzled.

"No, no!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom Merry, a light dawning on his mind. "You were there this afternoon, you young sweep, and you saw—St. Leger, of course!"

"Don't you go for to say that I said so!" exclaimed Lynn, in alarm.

"Fathead! Do you think we should give anybody away? We're not telltales," said Tom, rather gruffly. "But if you saw St. Leger there, the best thing you can do is to give him a tip to keep clear of the place. Kildare's bound to speak to the Housemaster, now he knows what's going on; and Mr. Ralton is quite certain to keep his eyes open on the Fifth for some time to come."

"It's all Cutts' doing," mumbled Lynn. "Master St. Leger wouldn't 'ave a 'and in such things if he was left alone. He's too good for that."

"He will come a pretty mucker if he gets nailed," said Tom. "You're his cousin, and you can speak to him. Give him a tip to keep clear of the place, and it will be all right."

"I'll do that!" said Lynn. He sat up, with a troubled brow. "You fellows thinking of going 'ome yet?"

Tom Merry smiled.

"We'll get back," he said. "We've come a good bit out of bounds, and it's time we pulled back."

Tom cast loose the painter, and the Terrible Three pulled away up the river, Lynn steering. But the brightness had gone out of the new junior's face now. He was thinking of the danger his reckless cousin had brought upon himself—or that Cutts' evil influence had brought upon him, as Lynn preferred to think. He was anxious to speak to St. Leger—and full of misgivings as to how the dandy of the Fifth might receive his intervention. The way back to St. Jim's seemed very long to Lynn.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Words in Season!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. arrived at the school just in time for call-over. Lynn went into Hall with the Terrible Three, and joined the ranks of the Fourth there, Baggy Trimble greeting him with a fat giggle, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a frown. Lynn did not heed either of them. He was looking at the Fifth-Formers, his eyes seeking out St. Leger.

St. Leger was there, and Lynn noted that he looked tired and pale. His afternoon out had not done him much good, to judge by his looks. After the roll was called, Lynn left Hall with the rest of the Lower School; but he noted that Kildare of the Sixth stayed behind to speak with Mr. Ralton, who had called the roll.

Lynn could guess what the head prefect had to say to the Housemaster. He was making his report, as in duty bound—

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a rather unpleasant duty for Kildare, but one which he could not elude. Lynn, looking back from the big doorway, saw a stern frown gather on Mr. Railton's brow as he listened.

That frown boded ill for the culprit, if he should fall into the hands of authority.

Lynn hurried away, looking for St. Leger of the Fifth. That elegant youth was standing in the corridor chatting with Cutts and Prye, of his Form—or, rather, Cutts and Prye were chatting, and St. Leger was listening to them with a moody look.

Lynn came up timidly.

St. Leger, tormented by the snobbish shame he felt on account of his remarkable relative, never concealed his angry annoyance when the Chicken spoke to him in public. He seemed to want to forget, if he could, the existence of the hapless Chicken.

Oliver Lynn had fallen into the way of avoiding his cousin, for that reason; though sometimes St. Leger, who was at heart a good-natured fellow, had the fag in his study when Cutts was absent, and talked to him kindly enough. Those occasions were rare, but very precious to the loyal Chicken, who treasured up the memory of every act and word of kindness, and tried to forget the scorn and annoyance that were very much more frequently displayed.

He would not have spoken to St. Leger in the presence of his nutty friends, if he could have helped it; but his alarm on St. Leger's account was deep, and he was bound to speak now. But he was timid and troubled as he came up to the group of Fifth-Formers.

"Rotten, and no mistake!" Prye was saying. "Better luck next time, St. Leger, old man!"

St. Leger grunted.

"One swallow doesn't make a summer, old bean," said Cutts. "After all, a fiver isn't much to you."

"It isn't that!" grunted St. Leger. "But if I'd had another with me, it would have turned out differently. I tell you the luck was just changin'."

"Cave!" murmured Prye. "There's a fag listenin'!"

St. Leger glanced round hastily. His brow grew black at the sight of the Chicken.

"I—I say—" stammered Lynn.

St. Leger made a fierce gesture.

"I wasn't listening," said Lynn. "I never meant to. I—I just wanted to speak to you—"

"Get out, will you!"

"Jest a word, sir, if you'll 'ear me—"

"Clear off, you cheeky young cad!" said Prye. "My hat! I really think you might keep your fag relations at a distance, St. Leger!"

"Get away, will you!" snapped St. Leger; and he made a movement towards Lynn, with his hand clenched.

Lynn backed away, and followed the rest of the juniors down the corridor. Obviously, it was not a propitious moment for giving the warning to the dandy of the Fifth.

Lynn went up to his Study No. 6 in the Fourth, with a troubled brow. He found Blake & Co. there; Arthur Augustus still looking stern.

"You young wapsellion!" was Gussy's grim greeting.

"Hallo! What's bitin' you?" said Lynn.

"Nothin' is bitin' me, Lynn! I wegard the question as widdlewical!"

"Gussy's going to give you a sermon, young 'un," explained Blake. "We're going to sit round and listen."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Go it, Gussy!" said Digby encouragingly. "We'll let you run on to sixtily."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Yes, go it!" said Herries. "Get done by the time I come back. I'm going to see after Towser."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

Herries grinned, and left the study. Blake and Digby sat down, with an air of exaggerated respectful attention, as if they had been going to listen to a Head's sermon.

"Ready!" said Blake.

"Weally, you ass—"

"That's not the way to begin. You ought to start with My young friends."

"Or 'My misguided young friends'!" suggested Dig.

"If you are goin' to turn my remarks into widdlewical—" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly.

"Can't be done! No turning required—they're ridiculous to begin with, old scout!"

"I wegard you as a sillay ass, Blake!"

"The Head never says that," said Blake, shaking his head. "Put it more like this, 'My young friend, I learn with extreme regret that—'"

"Pway dwy up, you uttah ass, while I speak to Lynn. Lynn, I wegard you as a weckless young wascal!"

"Oh, can it!" said Lynn gruffly.

"Bai Jove! I came to the Gween Man this aftahnoon, Lynn, to pluck you like a bwand from the burnin'."

"More duffer you!" said Lynn.

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"Hear, hear!" said Blake and Dig together.

"You were gone, and I was treated with gwoss disrespect by a howwid gweasy person!" said Arthur Augustus. "Lynn, I wegard you as bein' to some extent undah my pwotection. I'm goin' to explain to you the uttah wottenness of your ways, and I twust it will do you good."

"On second thoughts—" said Blake.

"Pway don't intewwupt me, Blake, when I am talkin' to Lynn for his own good."

"On second thoughts, I'll leave you to it," said Blake. "You don't do it half so well as the Head."

Jack Blake strolled out of the study, and Digby grinned and followed him. Oliver Lynn was left alone to stem the full tide, as it were, of the eloquence of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He sat down in the armchair, with a moody and troubled brow; and Arthur Augustus stood in front of him and expounded. Arthur Augustus felt that a word in season was needed; and he spoke quite a large number of words in season. Lynn did not interrupt him once; and the troubled expression on his face seemed to indicate that Gussy's homily was going home, as it were, and making clear to the new junior the shady iniquity of his conduct. As a matter of actual fact, Lynn, deep in his own troubled reflections, heard hardly a word that D'Arcy was uttering—and did not heed any of them.

"I am glad to see, Lynn, that you wealise the sewiousness of your shockin' conduct," said Arthur Augustus, at last, mollified by the deep trouble in the Chicken's rugged face. "Pway don't look so awf'ly down in the mouth, deah boy. I am suah you undalstand, and that you will avoid this weckless and shady conduct in the future. Cheeah up, old fellow!"

"Eh?"

"I am suah you wealise—"

Lynn came out of a brown study.

"Eh, what?" he said. "You been talking?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Sorry, I wasn't listening!" said Lynn. "I was thinking of something else. What was it about?"

"Gweat Scott!"

Oliver Lynn left the study without waiting for an answer to his question. He left the swell of St. Jim's with quite an extraordinary expression on his noble face.

## CHAPTER 7.

### In the Toils!

OLIVER LYNN gave little care to his prep that evening. He worked at the table in Study No. 6 with Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy; and all four of the juniors were ready to lend him a helping hand when he needed it. Lynn remained in troubled thought most of the time, and his prep was "scamped", in a manner worthy of Baggy Trimble at his laziest. He was thinking of St. Leger and the danger he had incurred; and of the warning that was to be given. He shrank from going to the Fifth-Former's study; especially while St. Leger was in his present savage mood; but he shrank also from leaving the warning unspoken till the morrow. It was easy for him to guess that St. Leger had lost money to the sharpers at the Green Man; and he remembered Prye's allusion to "better luck next time!"; St. Leger, it was certain, would go again—and unless he was warned, he might go to his ruin.

The Chicken, reckless on his own account, was full of concern for the fellow he admired and liked. It was supposed at St. Leger Lodge that the Fifth-Former was keeping an eye on Lynn at St. Jim's, and helping him through. So far from that being the case, the reverse was the actual state of affairs—it was Lynn of the Fourth who was concerned about St. Leger, and anxious for him. The thought of the tall, handsome, elegant Fifth-Former, the pride of his father's heart, being expelled from the school, sent home in disgrace, was torture to Lynn. He would have sacrificed himself a hundred times over to save St. Leger from such a fate, and the kind old colonel from so terrible a blow.

Somehow or other he had to get to St. Leger, and make the reckless, obstinate fellow listen to him; make him understand that suspicion was aroused, and that he must be on his guard. But he winced as he thought of the black look that would greet him if he put his face in at St. Leger's doorway.

"Well, that's done," said Jack Blake at last, rising from the table with a yawn. "You don't seem to be getting on, Lynn."

"Eh! Yes! No!" muttered Lynn.

"Can we help you along?" asked Blake kindly.

Study No. 6 were resolutely and almost invariably kind to their queer new stable-companion, since the affair of cousin Ethel and the tramps.

"No! It's all right, thanks!"

"What have you got on your mind, kid?"

"Eh! Nothing!"

"Pwobably Lynn is thinkin' about his wathah shady



St. Leger sprang to his feet as the door of Mr. Banks' room was pushed open and Oliver Lynn entered. "You here again, you young rotter!" exclaimed the Fifth-former passionately. "How dare you?" He sprang towards the Junior with clenched fists. "Master St. Leger," panted Lynn, "listen to me! Mr. Ratcliff—he—he's outside watching for you!" St. Leger stopped as if struck, and his face went white. (See page 16.)

conduct this aftahnoon, and wepentin', Blake. I twust so, at all events."

"Hallo! What does that fat animal want?" asked Herries, looking round, as Baggy Trimble blinked in at the doorway.

"Oh! Lynn's here!" exclaimed Trimble, in surprise. "Why shouldn't he be here when this is his study?" demanded Blake. "What have you got in your fat coconut now?"

"I fancied he was out of bounds," said Trimble, with a grin. "After what he did to-day, I took it for granted that Railton was after him."

"Railton! What on earth—?" "Well, there's something up," said Trimble. "I thought it was Lynn; but Lynn's here all right. Railton has been talking to Ratty—"

"Railton hasn't much to say to Mr. Ratcliff, as a rule," said Digby. "He doesn't like his jolly old company."

"They were confabbing together," said Trimble. "I distinctly heard Railton say something about the Green Man—"

Lynn started convulsively. "That hits you where you live, what?" chuckled Trimble. "Lucky they didn't get on your track this afternoon. He, he, he! Mr. Ratcliff said it was a strict duty to investigate, even if they had to visit the place personally. I don't see why Railton jawed to him about it—he's master of the New House, and he's got nothing to do with School House fellows."

"Might be some New House chap playing the goat," said Herries.

"Then Railton wouldn't chip in; he never interferes with the New House," answered Trimble.

"Yaas, that's so," said Arthur Augustus. "But Mr. Ratcliff is mastah of the Fifth Form as well as Housemastah ovah the way. Mr. Wailton may have been speakin' to him as a Form mastah."

"That's it!" ejaculated Trimble. "They're not after

Lynn at all. It's some chap in the Fifth they're scenting out!"

Lynn suppressed an exclamation. He had already arrived at that conclusion.

"More trouble for Cutts!" yawned Blake.

"Cutts is too jolly deep to get into trouble," chuckled Trimble. "You rely on Cutts to keep clear. If anybody's nailed in that Fifth Form gang, it will be some ass like Gilmore or St. Leger."

"St. Leger, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, remembering what he had seen at the Green Man that afternoon. "I wondah if Wailton knows—" The swell of St. Jim's broke off suddenly.

"Knows what?" asked Trimble eagerly.

"Wats!"

"There's something awfully serious on, anyhow," said Trimble. "Ratty is going to watch—he said so. You know what a prying rat old Ratty is he likes watching chaps. I heard him say—"

"Dwy up, Twimble!"

"But I heard him say—"

"I wufuse to listen to the wesusols of your wotten oaves-dwoppin', you fat boundah!"

"That's right," said Blake, with a nod. "It's no affair of ours. Go and tattle somewhere else, Trimble."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yah!" was Trimble's rejoinder; and he rolled away, to convey his thrilling news to some study where it was more welcome.

Lynn sat motionless. This was a new development, evidently the outcome of Kildare's report to his Housemaster. The two Housemasters of St. Jim's had put their heads together on the matter. Mr. Ratcliff, as master of the Fifth, was entitled to be consulted in any matter relating to a fellow in his Form; and Lynn had been long enough at

St. Jim's to have learned the kind of man Mr. Ratcliff was, and how extremely keen he would be on the track of any suspected offender.

St. Leger belonged to Mr. Railton's House and to Mr. Ratcliff's Form—and so both the Housemasters were concerned in the affair; and all the time the foolish fellow was quite unconscious of his peril. Lynn almost trembled as he thought of it.

To St. Leger's wrongdoing, it is to be feared, the Chicken gave little thought. His early training had not made him sensitive on such points. It was of the Fifth-Former's danger that he thought—and he knew that the danger was very real.

He rose from the table, leaving his prep unfinished. Blake and Herries and Digby went along to Tom Merry's study in the Shell, for a "jaw" before bed; but Arthur Augustus was tied down by a big imposition—the lines Kildare had given him.

"I weally think you ought to help me with these lines, Lynn," he said. "I bagged them on your account, you know."

Lynn did not even hear.

He left Study No. 6 without a word or a look for Arthur Augustus, and the noble Gussy turned his eyeglass upon the retreating form disapprovingly.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "I am wesolved to stand by that chap, and back him up no end; but weally I do not know how I shall be able to stand' his dweadful mannahs. He is weally extwemely twyin'."

And Arthur Augustus shook his noble head, and settled down to get rid of a batch of his five hundred lines—a task that soon drove the schoolboy boxer and his dreadful manners from Gussy's thoughts.

Lynn made his way to the Fifth-Form passage.

Whatever the reception he met with there, he was determined that he would speak to St. Leger; even if he had to speak out before two or three of the Fifth-Form fellows. St. Leger's next act of folly might take place the very next day; and the warning, if not uttered at once, might come too late to save him from discovery.

He tapped timidly at St. Leger's door, and opened it. Cutts of the Fifth was alone in the study, smoking a cigarette after his evening's work was done. He put the cigarette hastily out of sight as the study door opened; but it came into view again as he saw that the newcomer was only a rag of the Fourth.

"Hallo, young hopeful!" grinned Cutts. "Trot in! You can take a smoke if you like—I suppose that's in your line?"

Lynn shook his head.

"I don't smoke, sir," he answered.

"No!" said Cutts sarcastically. "You're a giddy pub-haunter; but you don't smoke."

"Old Hawley never would 'ave it," explained the Chicken. "You can't box on smoking. Bad for the wind."

"Right as rain!" grinned Cutts. "Quite a sage youth! Did old Hawley, whoever old Hawley may happen to be, allow you to play nap?"

"You bet."

"You're a regular young sportsman, aren't you?" said Cutts. "Shut the door, and we'll take a hand at nap, kid."

The worthy Cutts had observed that Lynn of the Fourth had money about him; he had a good allowance from his uncle. But Lynn, whatever he might have done at any other time, was in no mood now to be fleeced by the black-guard of the Fifth Form.

"Where's Master St. Leger?" he asked.

"Out of gates."

Lynn started violently.

"Out of gates!" he exclaimed. His voice was shrill with alarm. "But it's arter lock-up! He'll be found out—"

Cutts laughed.

"He's got an exeat," he said.

"A—a—a what?"

"A pass-out, you young ignoramus!"

"Oh!" Lynn breathed more freely. "He ain't gone to—to—to—"

The Fifth-Former laughed again.

"He asked the Housemaster for a pass for the evening," he said.

"He—he asked Mr. Railton?"

"Yes. Why shouldn't he?"

"But where's he gone, then?" asked Lynn. "It can't be any harm, if Mr. Railton knows."

"Our beloved Housemaster doesn't always know so much as he thinks he knows," smiled Cutts. "He's a good-natured man—very. He didn't think twice about giving St. Leger a pass till half-past ten, to go to the lecture at Wayland. No end of a stunnin' lecture, I believe, about jolly

old Egyptian mummies—Egyptology, and all that. St. Leger's no end interested in that stuff."

"Is he?" said the Chicken doubtfully.

"Oh, no end!" chuckled Cutts. "That will do for Railton, at all events. Why, what's the matter with you?" asked the Fifth-Former, staring at Lynn, whose face had become as white as chalk.

Lynn started forward, and caught Gerald Cutts by the sleeve in his alarm and agitation.

"For 'Eaven's sake, Master Cutts," he said hoarsely, "where is Master St. Leger? Has he gone to that there pub again? If he has, it's all up with him!"

"Let go my arm, you young fool!"

"Tell me where he is!" said Lynn shrilly. "I tell you they knows—they suspect him—they're waiting—Mr. Railton and old Ratty. If he's tricked the 'Ousemaster about the pass, he's as good as caught."

Cutts' face became very grave.

"What do you know about it?" he asked.

Lynn explained breathlessly. Cutts' face hardened, and he gave a low whistle.

"My hat! The game's up, then. Railton must have given him the pass, to put him to the test. Poor old St. Leger!"

"Where is he?" shrieked Lynn.

"Don't yell, you young ass! He may get clear!"

"Where is he?"

"At the Green Man, of course!" snapped Cutts angrily. "He lost his money there this afternoon, and they arranged for him to come back this evening to have his revenge. If you'd told him this—"

"I tried to," groaned Lynn. "You know I tried to, and he wouldn't give a bloke a 'earing."

"That's so, too. You're not to blame," said Cutts. He stared in wonder at the boy's tortured face. "What's the matter, anyhow? How does it matter to you? St. Leger doesn't treat you so jolly well, so far as I've seen."

Lynn laughed harshly.

"Think I care about that?" he said huskily. "Wot do I care 'ow he treats me 'ere—a young gentleman like 'im, and me what I am! He was good to me when his father brought me 'ome, and I wasn't fit for 'im to touch. A young ragamuffin I was. He never was ashamed of me then, and nor he wouldn't be 'ere, neither, if it wasn't for rotten 'ounds like you chipping him, and fellers looking down on me."

"You cheeky young scoundrel! Get out of my study!" shouted Cutts.

"I ain't going yet."

Cutts jumped up, his face crimson with rage.

"Get out, or—"

"Or what?" sneered the Chicken. "Don't you raise a 'and, Master Cutts, or I'll knock you spinnin' across the room! I could do it, as you know, or any other bloke in the school—Kildare hisself, for that matter. You stand where you are."

Cutts dropped his hands. He knew only too well that the schoolboy boxer could have handled him like an infant.

"Master St. Leger's got to be got out of that some'ow," said Lynn, unheeding the fury in the Fifth-Former's face. "If you was to cut down to the place and tip him the wink—"

"You young idiot!"

"He's your pal," said Lynn. "It's up to you to 'elp 'im out—specially as you got him into this sort of thing. Wot does the risk matter if you've a chance of pulling him through?"

"I can see myself being sacked along with him!" sneered Cutts. "It's no good talking to a young hooligan like you! Get out of my study!"

"You won't raise a 'and to 'elp him?"

"I can't! What can I do?" muttered Cutts. Perhaps Gerald Cutts' conscience was not wholly easy.

"You can go down there this 'ere minute—"

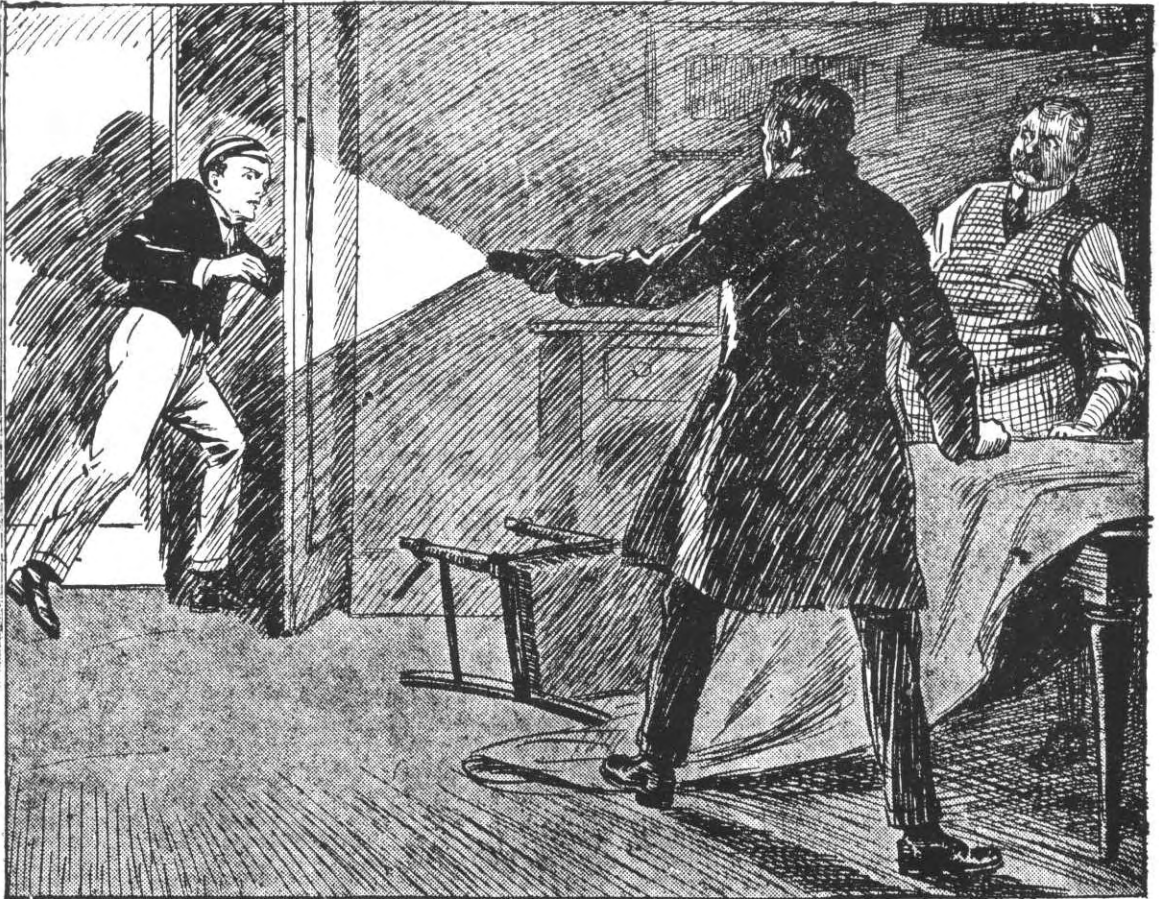
"Don't be a fool!"

"You won't?" said Lynn bitterly. "You're afraid! Well, I ain't afraid!" He turned to the door.

"What are you going to do, you mad young idiot?" breathed Cutts.

Lynn did not answer. He hurried away from the study.

Cutts of the Fifth threw his cigarette into the fire; it seemed to have lost its flavour somehow. He remained some minutes in deep thought, and then went along to Gilmoro's study, to consult with his friends there. Gilmoro and Prye heard his news with dismay, and with a deep thankfulness that they had not accompanied St. Leger that evening. The three sportsmen of the Fifth talked the matter over, coming to the conclusion that they could do nothing, and that St. Leger had to take his chance. And all three decided that, unless a miracle happened, St. Leger was 'for it.' If a chance remained for the dandy of the Fifth, he did not owe it to his sporting friends of the Fifth Form.



Oliver Lynn made a rush for the door of Banks' room and pulled it open. As he did so Mr. Ratoliff switched on his electric torch. The bright beam of light blazed full upon the face of the junior as he dodged. It was only for a second, but it was enough. "Lynn!" panted Mr. Ratoliff. He made a rush for the junior. (See page 17.)

CHAPTER 8.

Running the Risk!

"LYNN!" called out Tom Merry. The Chicken did not answer.

It was half-past nine, and the juniors were on their way to the dormitories. Nothing was further from Lynn's thoughts than going to bed, however.

The House doors were closed. It was impossible, at that hour, for a junior even to step out into the quadrangle. Lynn's determination was fixed, but he did not approach the door. He was going into the lower box-room when Tom Merry sighted him and called.

Lynn disappeared the next moment from the eyes of the captain of the Shell.

"That young ass will be late for dorm!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"What on earth can he want in the box-room at this time of night?" said Manners. "He can't be thinking of—" Manners paused.

"He looked jolly queer," said Tom. "You fellows know what he was up to this afternoon. He can't be ass enough to be thinking of breaking bounds now! He would be missed at once!"

Tom Merry hurried to the box-room and entered it after Lynn. He was just in time to see the window closed from outside.

That left no further doubt on the subject, utterly reckless as such a proceeding was at such an hour. It was evident that the Chicken was going out of school bounds.

Tom tore the window open.

"Lynn!" he called out, in a subdued voice. A dark figure appeared for a moment on the leads without. Then Tom heard a faint sound as someone dropped to the ground.

"My only hat! He's gone!"

It was impossible to follow Lynn and reason with him, though Tom felt inclined to do so. What madness possessed him to break bounds at that hour, of all hours, was a mystery to Tom. The junior was certain to be missed

when the lights were put out in the Fourth Form dormitory. It would have been safer to wait till after lights out, and leave the dormitory quietly. Tom did not guess the circumstances that made it impossible for Lynn to waste a single moment, whatever the consequences might be.

The captain of the Shell rejoined his chums. "Gone?" asked Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"He must be out of his senses!" said Manners, in wonder.

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it."

The Shell fellows went to their dormitory. Kildare turned the lights out there. Darrell was on duty with the Fourth. In the Fourth Form sleeping quarters Darrell noticed at once, of course, that a bed was empty. All the Fourth had noticed it earlier.

"What kid hasn't come up?" asked Darrell. "Oh! Lynn! Where is Lynn, Blake?"

"Haven't seen him since prep," answered Blake.

"The young ass!" growled Darrell. "I'll give him a licking if he wastes my time!"

He looked out into the corridor, but there was no sign of Lynn. Kildare came along from the Shell quarters.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"Lynn hasn't come up to bed."

"The young rascal!" Kildare looked in at the Fourth.

"Any of you kids know where Lynn is?"

"I am sowwy, Kildare, that I am unacquainted with his pwsent whereabouts," said Arthur Augustus politely. No one else answered.

"I'll warn him!" growled Darrell.

Leaving the light on in the Fourth, the two prefects went down to look for Lynn.

To their amazement, they failed to find him. Lynn, apparently, was not in the House.

After a startled consultation between the two prefects, Kildare went to the Housemaster's study, to report Lynn's amazing absence, while Darrell repaired to the Fourth Form

(Continued on page 16.)



## EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

Dear Chums,—A brainwave has just struck me (no rude remarks, please). In order to satisfy your demands for Taggles to appear in the News, I've decided to devote an entire number to our school porter, and I hope this will please you all.

Taggles is not such a bad sort. In fact he's one of the best school porters who ever portered—"potted," Monty Lowther suggests would be a better term—and upon deciding to run our Taggles Number, the end study waited upon him to ask his assistance.

"Well, you young rips," he asked, amiably for him, "what can I do for you?"

We explained to him what we wanted, but to our surprise he refused point blank.

"What I says is this 'ere," he said. "I'm a school porter I am, and not one of them writer chaps."

We expostulated in vain.

"I'm in a regular job," he said comfortably, puffing away at his pipe. "Them writer chaps is always out of a berth. I won't have anything to do with them."

This new light upon the life of a journalist almost stunned us.

"B-but," I began, "some of the most famous men have been writers; in fact, nearly all of them have been."

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Manners. "Why, they are always getting titles and things."

"Do you mean to say they make them writer chaps into barrynights?" Taggles gasped incredulously.

"Yes, rather!" we agreed. "And lords as well!"

"Golly!" cried Taggles in an awed tone. "If I was to keep on I might be a yearl or something!"

We had to leave the lodge in order to save ourselves from exploding in Taggles' presence, which would have been fatal to our mission.

Whether or not Taggles expects to be made a member of the peerage for his effort which we are printing, we are not quite sure. He deserves it, no doubt.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 790.



## WHEN I WAS A BOY!

By Ephraim Taggles.

Fancy me doing a thing like that when I was a boy. Why, my father would have larruped my hide. He'd a given me tar!

Now I aren't agoing to deny but that I did used to play a few pranks, 'arnless ones, of course. I well remember the year the Battle of Waterloo—or was it Balaclava—was fort.

I was caught steeling apples. 'If it hadn't been that I was so young I might have been hanged, as the punishment was in those days. The judge let me off with a cotion.

I have often thought it would be a good idea if they was still to hang young rips for breaking the law.

### NOT A ROSY TIME!

First of all, when I was a boy I never hacted like a lot of young rips who orter have been drowned at birth, and worrited people out of their lives to wright a harticle.

What I says is this 'ere, I had some respect for my elders in my young days. - My old father often toled me little boys—and he meant young rips, too—orter be seen and not heard. I've often thought since he never had to deal with a passell of boys like wot I have.

Little boys orter be absqwatulated, and then there wouldn't be any further trouble. I used to have to get out of my kosy bed about half-past five every morning and start work at half-past six.

Noverdays the young rips at St. Jim's won't get outer bed at rising-bell, which is much later, and as for coming home at night—why, duzzens of times I've had to leave my warm little back parlour in order to let some of those pesky boys in.

### SCHOOLBOY PRANKS!

They say as how "boys will be boys." It's my experience that boys will be young warmints. I've promised myself I'll give that young Racke wot for if I catch him tarring the school gates again.

It all happened like this. Here was I a sitting smoking my pipe and drinking a glass of milk wot the doctor ordered for my weak chest, when a ring comes at my lodge door.

Out I goes into the cold and dark to investigate, and can't see anyone, so I goes up to the gate and has a look through, and someone had smothered the bars of the gate with tar! Soon afterwards I sees young Racke hurrying away with a can of tar.

## TAGGLES' REVENGE!

BY

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As down the lane there panted past,  
A youth, who gasped out at the gate,  
"Oh crumbs, I'm half an hour late!"

Ho, Taggles!"

The porter slowly left his chair,  
He called out lazily, "Who's there?"  
And loud that cheerful voice rang out,  
"It's me, old bean; you needn't shout,

"Chump, Taggles."

The porter's face grew stern and grim,  
To hear a boy thus speak to him,  
"For that, my lad, yer can just wait,  
I ain't agoing to touch the gate!"

Not Taggles.

The schoolboy laughed—he thought he might.

"Old scout, I can't stay here all night,  
I'll simply make an awful din,  
Till you come out and let me in—

See, Taggles?"

Old Taggles turned back to his lodge.  
He said "he didn't mind that dodge,  
He'd often heard 'em yell and shout,  
But never twice had he come out."

Not Taggles.

The pouring rain in torrents fell,  
The junior pulled and pulled the bell,  
The tearing gale came blust'ring by,  
And drowned that oft-repeated cry,

"Ho, Taggles!"

And when the day broke calm and bright,  
They found him where he'd stood all night,

Still staring wildly through the gate,  
And feebly murmuring, "I'm late,  
Ho, Taggles!"



# TAGGLES' LEGACY!

By Monty Lowther

## MY IDEAL SCHOOL PORTER!

(A few suggestions on how to improve Taggles.)

"BAI Jove!" "Oh crumbs, he's gone potty!"

Several juniors, who had been waiting at the gate for the postman, stared at the portly figure of Taggles came dancing out of his lodge, waving a letter above his head.

Baggy Trimble gave one startled glance at him, and then fled towards the School House, yelling for the police.

It certainly looked as if Taggles had gone stark, staring mad. He was hopping around upon one leg like a savage dancing his war-dance, the letter flourishing like a banner.

"Ephraim!" A stern call from the porch at last recalled him to some sense of his dignity. He calmed down.

"You just orter see what's in this letter, Martha!" he called jubilantly.

His wife walked towards him with a determined air, and snatched the letter from her husband's hand. It was a type-written missive.

"I can't see without my specs!" snapped Dame Taggles after several attempts to decipher the letter, "and I've left them in the shop. Perhaps you'll read it aloud, Ephraim?"

"I—I 'ardly know 'ow ter believe me own eyes!" gasped Taggles at last. "Get one of these dratted boys to read it, and see if they make it the same."

Mrs. Taggles frowned, and then passed the letter to Tom Merry.

"You read it, Master Merry," she said. "I don't think Taggles is hisself this morning."

Tom Merry grinned, and then coloured.

"Certainly, ma'am, if you don't—"

Mrs. Taggles smiled reassuringly, and Tom Merry began to read:

"Dishem & Soldagen,  
Solicitors,  
London, E.C.

"Dear Mr. Taggles,—We have much pleasure in informing you that under the will of your uncle, the late Mr. Jeremiah Taggles, you have been left his entire fortune, amounting to four hundred pounds (£400).

"We are sending you enclosed twenty-five pounds (£25) as an advance. Believe us,

"Yours faithfully,  
"Dishem & Soldagen,  
Solicitors."

"Mum-my hat!" gasped Tommy as he finished reading. "Four hundred quids! Jolly good luck, Taggles."

Dame Taggles was staring as if her eyes were about to start from her head.

"You've been left money, Ephraim?" she gasped finally.

Taggles nodded his head dazedly. "Four hundred quid! Well, I'm

blowed!" he ejaculated at last in an awed tone. "Four hundred—"

"The envelope with the money in it!" shrieked Mrs. Taggles suddenly. "What have you done with it?"

"Eh?" "The envelope—"

Taggles scratched his head slowly. "I dunno. P'r'aps it's indoors."

Mrs. Taggles rushed into the lodge, and a scuffling in the interior showed she was busily occupied in searching for the missing envelope.

Another moment and Taggles, who had awakened from his stupor, rushed in to help in the search.

Quite an argument arose very soon, and poor old Taggles was being called all sorts of names for having lost the solid proof of their good fortune. Mrs. Taggles tearfully expressed it as her opinion that he had "done it for the purpose."

"See if you've dropped it outside," said the angry dame.

Taggles emerged from the lodge looking very crestfallen.

"Tisn't out here!" he bawled, after looking around.

"Where have you put it?" "Now if I knowed where it were, Martha, I shouldn't be asking you where it were, should I?" demanded the porter, thrusting his hands in his pockets.

"Why, here it is!" he went on as he pulled out a crumpled envelope. "Now I wonder how it got there?"

"See what's in it, you great idiot!" shouted Mrs. Taggles excitedly.

We juniors were almost as excited as the two lucky ones. Slowly, so slowly that we hardly dared to breathe, Taggles opened the envelope and drew out a pink slip.

"A cheque!" cried the good dame. "Let me have it!"

She took the cheque from Taggles' hand, and at that moment the athletic figure of Mr. Railton came striding across the quad.

He had come to see what all the noise and excitement was about, and he demanded to know why we were all standing there.

Immediately about six juniors began to speak at once.

"Hush!" said Mr. Railton at last. "Now, Merry, tell me what all the fuss is about?"

Tom Merry explained the situation, and Mr. Railton held out his hand to (Continued at foot of next column.)



Taggles opened the envelope and drew out a pink slip. "Why, it's a cheque!" cried Mrs. Taggles.

THE HON. A. A. D'ARCY.

One of the first alterations I should make to improve Taggles would be in the matter of clobber.

Personally, I should suggest a uniform something upon the following lines, instead of the one he now wears:

Coat.—Light pink or crushed strawberry, faced with green silk. It would have silver buttons, and an outside breast-pocket, in which would be worn a nice, spotted silk handkerchief.

Waistcoat.—Red or scarlet, double-breasted, with a tasteful V-opening.

Trousers.—Light blue, with a green braid stripe down each trouser-leg.

A good curly brim top, and a tie of the school colours would complete this natty and, I flatter myself, "dresy" get up. Don't you think this would be a jolly good idea. (No fear, I don't!—Ed.)

BAGGY TRIMBLE.

I think that Taggles ort to be made to start a pornbroker's, or munneylender's, or somethink like that, so that when a fellow got hard up, he could borrow a little munny to help him over the stonie plaices. Of course, he wood not be erlowed to charge emny interest, or anything comun like that.

AUBREY RACKE.

My suggestion for improving school-porters is perfectly simple. It's to do away with them altogether. Then a chap could get away from school occasionally without having a low-down bouncer like Taggles on his collar. Of course, if they'd only get a school-porter who'd take a few sporting commissions for a chap it wouldn't be so bad. Jolliffe, down at the Green Man, would be just the fellow.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY.

What about employing chaps who are ex-heavy-weight championz to be school-porters? Then the fellows who wanted too, could take lessons, and he could punch the heads of the wuns who didn't.

HARRY MANNERS.

Honestly, I don't think old Taggles could be improved very much. He's really a jolly decent old bird, who puts up with an awful lot from those he calls "a lot of young tips."

congratulate Taggles, when the shrill voice of the good dame chipped in.

"Show 'Mr. Railton the cheque, Ephraim!" she cried.

Taggles took the slip of paper from her and handed it over to the House-master, who could hardly repress a smile upon looking at it.

"Why, Taggles," he said, "it appears to me that somebody has been what is called 'pulling your leg.' This cheque is signed by Mr. A. S. Windler, and is drawn upon the Bank of Some Hopes. It is nothing but a hoax, and a nasty one at that."

He handed back the piece of paper to poor old Taggles, who seemed utterly crushed by the rotten joke.

It was never quite proved who sent that letter, but we acted upon good suspicions, with the result that Aubrey Racke is now unable to sit down with any degree of comfort.

THE END.

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## LYNN'S LOYALTY!

(Continued from page 13.)

dormitory to put out the light. Sleep did not descend soon upon the Fourth. There was a busy discussion from bed to bed on the subject of Oliver Lynn.

Meanwhile, Lynn of the Fourth was at a good distance from the school.

That he would be missed immediately, and that his absence at that hour would be reported, was a circumstance to which the Chicken gave no thought whatever.

He was not thinking of himself.

All his thoughts were of St. Leger—the weak, foolish fellow who was "playing the goat," unsuspecting of the toils that were closing round him.

St. Leger was supposed to be at the lecture-hall in Wayland, and in actual fact he was in a back room at the Green Man, in Rylcombe, breaking every law of the school to which he belonged. Mr. Raiton was not likely to watch him, but was pretty certain to question him with regard to the Egyptian lecture when he returned now that his suspicions were aroused. But Mr. Ratcliff was certain to watch. Lynn knew Mr. Ratcliff's methods. At any moment the master of the Fifth might appear on the scene, and the dandy of the Fifth would be taken in the very act.

That was what was in Lynn's mind as he raced along Rylcombe Lane in the dark.

He was going to save St. Leger somehow. He had no time to think of himself.

The Green Man looked dark and deserted as Lynn came in sight of the building. Not a light glimmered from the front of the disreputable inn.

But Lynn knew where St. Leger would be if he was there at all. Pausing only a moment to recover his breath, the junior turned into the dark little lane beside the inn, which led into the ill-kept garden.

He knew the way well enough. He ought not to have known it, but he did. He was glad of that now.

There was a glimmer of light from a window under the veranda at the back; the window of Mr. Banks' dingy room. Lynn was about to approach it when he stopped suddenly and darted behind a tree.

The glimmer from the window showed a thin, angular figure standing in the shrubbery, regarding the lighted blind.

Dim as the light was, Lynn knew Mr. Ratcliff!

The master of the Fifth was already there!

Lynn suppressed a groan.

What did the Fifth Form master know? What had he seen? The junior tried to think; his brain was throbbing. Mr. Ratcliff could not have followed St. Leger to the place; he would have stopped the reckless fellow outside the building. Lynn was sure of that as soon as he reflected. So far, the Housemaster could only be acting on suspicion. What was he thinking, as he stood there silent, watching the lighted window on the blind of which a shadow moved now and then—possibly the shadow of St. Leger himself?

He had no authority to enter the place, but was he likely to care for that? If he knocked at the French window of Mr. Banks' room the door would be opened, at least—and then he would see St. Leger. Doubtless it was the uncertainty that was making Mr. Ratcliff hesitate. If the culprit was not there, the visit would expose him to the coarse ridicule of the habits of the disreputable inn.

Every moment that passed was a torture to Lynn. He could not approach the veranda without passing under Mr. Ratcliff's very eyes and betraying himself. For himself he did not care, but he was there to save St. Leger.

As he stood in the darkness under the tree, tormented by doubt and anxiety, there was a footstep close at hand. A shadowy figure joined Mr. Ratcliff. The New House master was not alone, then! A whispering voice came to the junior's straining ears.

"Return to the road, Montieith, and keep your eyes open. I shall watch here for the present. If he is there, as I believe, he cannot emerge without my seeing him."

The faint footfall died away again.

Lynn understood.

Montieith, a New House prefect, was watching the front of the building; Lynn had run the risk of falling foul of him as he came. Fortunately, he had escaped that. Montieith had been watching the building, not the road, and the darkness had favoured the junior.

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The Chicken hardly breathed.

St. Leger had to return to the school by half-past ten. He was supposed to come back from the Wayland lecture at that time. Mr. Ratcliff would not have to wait long for him. And the warning that Lynn had come to give could not be given while the Fifth Form master was standing there on the watch, like a bony, angular statue. The Chicken moved at last. He was growing desperate.

Keeping clear of the spot where Mr. Ratcliff stood, he crept down the garden, and stooped for a clod. He rose again, taking aim at the Housemaster. There was a whiz as the missile flew.

A startled exclamation came from Mr. Ratcliff as the clod crashed on the back of his neck. He staggered forward in his surprise, and almost fell on his knees.

He recovered himself and spun round, glaring into the shadowy garden furiously.

"Who—what—" he ejaculated.

He caught sight of a moving shadow, and ran into the trees, his eyes glinting with rage. It was all that Lynn had dared to hope for. He darted away in the gloom, and a second or two later he was under the veranda and at the lighted French window. It opened to his touch, and the Chicken, breathless, almost wild-eyed, plunged into the room and closed the door behind him.

## CHAPTER 9.

### For Another's Sake!

ST. LEGER sprang to his feet, with a startled, furious exclamation.

The room was thick with cigarette smoke. There were cards and money on the table; the room was hot and close. Mr. Banks was in his shirtsleeves, with a big, strong-smelling cigar gripped between his discoloured teeth. He stared at Lynn without speaking. St. Leger started towards the junior with clenched hands.

"You here again, you young rotter! How dare you?" exclaimed the Fifth-Former passionately.

"Master St. Leger—'ear me! He's outside—"

"What—who—"

"Your Form master, Mr. Ratcliff!" breathed Lynn.

St. Leger stopped, as if struck. His face went white.

"Mr. Ratcliff—here!" His voice was scarcely audible.

Mr. Banks gave a soft whistle.

"Outside, watching!" The Chicken panted out the words. "I landed 'im with a clod, and he's looking for me. He never seed me. I had to get in somehow and warn you."

"Good heavens!"

St. Leger sank heavily into his chair. He felt himself utterly lost at that moment.

Mr. Banks rose quickly.

"Keep your pecker up, sir," he whispered. "I'll let you out at the front door. You'll dodge him yet—"

"Stop! That's no good!" breathed Lynn. "There's a prefect watching the front of the house."

"My eye!" murmured Mr. Banks. He sat down again. So far as the estimable Mr. Banks could see, the game was up for his young sporting friend.

St. Leger groaned.

"Fool, fool, fool!" he muttered. "Caught like this—like this! And—and my father—"

Lynn caught at his sleeve.

"I came to tell you, sir, there's a chance for you yet. Ratcliff ain't seed you. He don't know for certain. They think you're at the lecture hall in Wayland—"

"It's all up! I can hear him!"

There were footsteps outside. Mr. Ratcliff, breathing fury, was not playing a waiting game any longer. Doubtless he guessed that the missile in the garden was hurled to draw away his attention while the intended victim escaped. He was taking no more chances.

"There's a chance, sir!" The Chicken's eyes were gleaming. "I can 'andle the man—"

"What?"

"Leave him to me. Put out the light—sharp! Put it out!" hissed the Chicken. "You fat fool, you, put out the light!"

Thus adjured, Mr. Banks mechanically turned out the gas. The room was plunged into shadow, broken only by a red glimmer from the dying fire.

St. Leger, with his nerves in a twitter, was utterly at a loss. The hot room, the smoky atmosphere, the feverish, unhealthy excitement of the cards, had told on the wretched fellow. He was already in a state of "nerves" when Lynn arrived; and the shock had done the rest. He seemed unable to make a movement to help himself, to save himself.

In his excitement Lynn shook him by the arm.

"Don't you catch on?" he breathed. "I can 'andle Ratcliff—I could 'andle a dozen of 'im. While I'm holding him you get clear."



"Oh!" gasped St. Leger.

"Cut across to Wayland, get into the lecture-hall, and take a train 'ome arter the lecture—jest as if you'd been there all the time. Catch on, sir?"

"I—"

"Think of your father, what he'll feel like if they send you 'ome in disgrace!" breathed the Chicken. "Don't say a word, he's 'ere—"

"But—but you—"

"I'm all right, but it's the sack for you. Quiet! Not a word, he's 'ere!"

The French window was flung open.

Dimly Mr. Ratcliff's angular figure was visible in the opening. His white, furious face caught a gleam of firelight. "I know why the light was turned out." His voice was thick with rage. "I have no further doubts. I—"

A bright flash of light cut the darkness of the room like a knife. There was an electric torch in the Housemaster's hand.

At the same instant the Chicken leaped at him.

He grasped the Housemaster's arm, and forced it up, and the bright ray danced on the ceiling. The Chicken's other arm, muscular, irresistible, was thrown round the Housemaster, gripping him like a ring of iron, and driving him back to the wall.

That was St. Leger's chance, and he seized it. Mr. Ratcliff was too busy at that moment to observe a flitting shadow; the next moment St. Leger was gone.

Crash!

Mr. Ratcliff came sprawling to the floor, still in the iron grasp of the schoolboy boxer.

St. Leger, white-faced, palpitating, was fleeing down the garden, to escape by way of the towing-path. Probably he took it for granted that Lynn was following; possibly he did not think of Lynn. He had left the school on his bicycle that evening, ostensibly to ride over to Wayland. The bike was hidden in the garden some distance from the house. St. Leger dragged it from the shrubberies, and lifted it over the gate to the towing-path; a minute more, and he was riding at a reckless speed along the dim-glimmering river.

In Mr. Banks' room, Mr. Ratcliff was struggling with the fellow who grasped him, and whom he had not recognised. He had not seen the Chicken yet, save as a black shadow.

Lynn did not release him.

He intended to hold Mr. Ratcliff until St. Leger had had ample time to get clear.

Mr. Ratcliff panted and struggled, amazed by the strength shown by the arms that held him. He could not see Lynn, but he could not fail to be aware that the fellow who was holding him was not so tall as a Fifth-Former—he realised that he was in the hands of a junior. Probably at that moment a suspicion of that junior's identity came into his mind. There was only one Lower boy at St. Jim's who possessed such muscular powers, and that was the schoolboy boxer.

Mr. Banks, wondering how the strange affair was going to end, sat down and finished his cigar. For fully five minutes Lynn held Mr. Ratcliff a prisoner, in spite of his desperate wiggings.

Then he jerked himself away from the Fifth Form master.

Mr. Ratcliff struggled up.

"You young rascal! Oh dear! Ow! Ooooh! I believe I know you! You do not belong to my Form! Ow!"

Lynn darted out under the veranda. A bright beam of light followed him. The electric torch was still in the St. Jim's master's hand.

For a second, as Lynn dodged away, the light blazed full on his face.

It was only for a second, but it was enough.

"Lynn!" panted Mr. Ratcliff.

He hurried after the junior. Flying footsteps died away down the garden. Mr. Ratcliff, more slowly, walked back to the road, gasping for breath. Mr. Banks relighted the gas, and whistled.

"My eye!" said Mr. Banks. "My blinkin' eye!" That was all the comment Mr. Banks had to make upon the affair.

Mr. Ratcliff joined Monteith of the Sixth in the road. The prefect peered at him.

"He has escaped!" said Mr. Ratcliff, in a gasping voice. "He seized me, struck me, dragged me down. It was a junior after all. Mr. Railton was utterly mistaken in suspecting a member of my Form—utterly! I have no reliance whatever upon his judgment—none whatever. It was a junior—a School House boy," Mr. Ratcliff spluttered.

"A junior—and he handled you, sir!" said Monteith blankly.

"It was that wretched boy, Lynn—the prize fighter, whom Dr. Holmes would never have admitted to the school had he asked my advice. I saw him distinctly. He has escaped, but there is no doubt of his identity. Let us return."

Master and prefect started for St. Jim's together.

## CHAPTER 10.

### The Price to Pay!

ST. LEGER of the Fifth found Mr. Railton at the gates of St. Jim's when he arrived there on his bicycle soon after half-past ten. The School House master eyed him as he dismounted.

Half an hour earlier Mr. Ratcliff and Monteith had arrived; and Mr. Railton had learned, with amazement, of the discovery that had been made at the Green Man.

That discovery fully cleared St. Leger of suspicion in his Housemaster's eyes. He was, indeed, sorry that he had allowed the thought to enter his mind, that St. Leger had had a double purpose to serve in asking for the pass out, to visit the lecture-hall at Wayland.

Mr. Railton's manner was very kind as he nodded to the Fifth-Former.

"So you are back, St. Leger," he said. "I hope you have enjoyed your evening."

"Very much, sir, thanks," answered St. Leger. "A toppin' lecture, sir. I've made a few notes, if you'd care to see them to-morrow. I thought they might interest you."

"Very good," said Mr. Railton. "Good-night, my boy."

"Good-night, sir!"

St. Leger wheeled in his machine. He was quite himself now. He had ridden at a mad speed for Wayland, and arrived there in time to hear the finish of the Egyptian lecture—his alibi was well proved, if he needed one. He had the half of his ticket of admission, and scribbled notes of the lecturer's concluding remarks. The dandy of the Fifth was feeling cheery as he went in. He had escaped—owing to Lynn's intervention—and he thought with remorse of the poor lad to whom he had been so hard, and who had run so much risk to save him. St. Leger, with all his weakness and folly, had a generous heart; and he had inwardly resolved that he would make it up to Lynn somehow. He would make it up to Lynn—and he would keep clear of the miserable black-guardism which had so nearly ended in ruin for him—he had made up his mind about that. That resolve cheered him; and it did not enter his mind that the unhappy boy, to whom he was going to be kind, was not as safe as himself. He went to bed in the Fifth Form dormitory, and never dreamed that Oliver Lynn was still outside the walls of St. Jim's.

Lynn had not returned yet.

He had saved St. Leger—he was sure of that; and that was enough to banish any regret the junior might have felt; enough to make him happy. But when the excitement passed, Lynn realised his own position. Mr. Ratcliff had recognised him, and, in any case, he was missed from his dormitory, and there would have been little or no doubt about the identity of the fellow who had collared Ratty.

Lynn lingered in the shadowed roads, wondering what was to happen to him—caring little, if St. Leger was safe. From a distance he watched the dandy of the Fifth arrive at the gates, and pass in, after a word with Mr. Railton. St. Leger was safe—he was not suspected. That was all the loyal Chicken wanted to be sure of.

Mr. Railton was still standing in the gateway; and Lynn knew for whom he was waiting. The junior made up his mind at last, and came up to the gates. Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon him grimly.

"I have been waiting for you, Lynn."

"Yes, sir!" said the Chicken meekly.

"You have been out of bounds."

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Ratcliff found you at a disreputable resort in Rylcombe, which you well know is prohibited to all belonging to this school."

Lynn was silent.

"You had the audacity to attack a Housemaster, in order to make your escape, Lynn."

"I hope I didn't hurt Mr. Ratcliff, sir."

Mr. Railton coughed.

"I shall not trouble the headmaster with the matter to-night, Lynn. In the morning you will be called before Dr. Holmes, to be dealt with. It seems to have been a mistake to admit you to this school. I must warn you—if you are not aware of it already—that after your disgraceful conduct, you will not be allowed to remain. You may go in, Lynn."

"Yes, sir!" said the Chicken, with a steady voice, but a heavy heart.

He went in, in silence. He had acted for another, without counting the cost; and now the price had to be paid. And the Chicken, as in his old days in the Ring, braced himself to take his punishment without flinching.

THE END

(*Oliver Lynn has taken a heavy burden upon himself this time, in saving St. Leger from disgrace. There will be some startling surprises in next week's extra-special story entitled: "GAME TO THE LAST!" By Martin Clifford. Make sure of reading it by ordering your GEM early.*)

## A ROLLICKING FINE FOOTER STORY!



Read of the Fruitless Attempts at Trickery to Bring about the Downfall of a Big Professional Football Club.

## By ERNEST JAMES.

### CHAPTER 1. Resentment.

"SAY, boys, the Wanderers—Penntown match is off!"

"Off, Joe! What the dickens do you mean?"

"Is it in the paper?"

"Who's scratched it, and why, Joe?"

Joe Walters, seated in a corner of the billiards-room at the working-men's club, lowered the "Wallbrough Echo" he had been reading, and turned an angry face upon his fellow-members.

"The game's been cancelled by the League authorities, chaps," he said harshly, "and all because young Jack Thorpe, of the Vale, protested against its being played!"

"But what has he got to do with it, anyway?" demanded Charlie Brown, straightening up as he missed potting the red. "Is the reason given? Surely the Vale can't have any objections against a friendly being played between an amateur and a professional club? Why, Vale Athletic are meeting Dodbrook Rovers in a friendly themselves on Saturday. A Qualifying Round of the Cup this week has somewhat upset the League programme, you know, and both the Vale's and Penntown's original opponents are engaged in it. I can't understand the affair; and, as a matter of fact, I don't believe the League officials would interfere with the games. However, Joe, give us the details, if they're in the local 'rag.'"

Joe Walters cleared the ashes out of his pipe by knocking the briar on the heel of his boot. Then he rose to his feet, crossed the room to the fireplace, and leaned his broad back against the mantelpiece.

"The Vale protested on the grounds that the game between the amateurs and Penntown would prove a great attraction," he said, at length; "and that, as the Wanderers play within three miles of their pitch, their gate would be likely to suffer in consequence."

A howl of wrath greeted the explanation.

"What an unsportsmanlike bounder!" growled Peter Jennings, tapping his billiard cue impatiently upon the floor. "Shouldn't have thought Jack Thorpe

would do a thing like that. I always imagined that he was a decent young fellow. And I suppose Dodbrook Rovers haven't a League match this week, Charlie?"

Charlie Brown shook his head. "No," he said. "Their opponents are also in the Cup ties on Saturday; and, as the Rovers are professionals, it seems to me that the authorities give precedence to their match with the Vale. It's a rotten shame, for why shouldn't the amateurs be given a chance?"

"That's my opinion," remarked Joe Walters. "But I'll tell you this, boys, I'm following Wallbrough Wanderers in future. I'm blowed if I'll patronise Jack Thorpe's crowd after this!"

"Same here!"

And as one man the members who were at that moment present in the billiards-room agreed unanimously with Joe Walters' resolution.

There the discussion ended. Joe resumed his seat in the corner, and Charlie Brown went on with his game with Jennings.

The two hundred up finished with Brown an easy winner; then, having relinquished his cue to the marker, he put on his hat and coat and strode over to Walters. As his chum approached, Joe folded up his copy of the "Wallbrough Echo" and placed it in his pocket.

"Coming along, Joe?" asked Charlie Brown, with a smile.

Walters nodded his sleek head, reached for his clothes, and, hurriedly putting them on, he followed the other out of the club. In silence they proceeded along the street; then, as they turned into the main road, a sound of angry voices came to their ears from the direction of the market-place.

Charlie Brown grinned. "Sounds like a row, Joe," he said quietly. "Let's see what it's all about. Come on!"

He broke into a run, and, with a grunt, Joe Walters followed him. Side by side they dashed up the road, and all the while the voices grow louder.

"Down with the Vale!"

"The wasters!"

Reaching the market-square the two chums pulled up abruptly, for before the shire-hall was an angry, gesticulating

crowd, whilst upon a platform, address them, stood Tom Bates, the local butcher. Outsides Bates' shop, which was but a dozen yards to the right of the shire-hall, were gathered a knot of men, each of whom carried a sandwich-board upon which, displayed in big letters, were epithets derisive of Jack Thorpe and Vale Athletic.

"My hat!" gasped Charlie Brown, blinking in the light from an electric lamp. "The local 'rag' has only been out about an hour, yet it seems as if all the town has heard of Jack Thorpe's protest to the League officials. It's a wonder the police haven't been along to clear this mob."

"They're probably in sympathy with the Wanderers, Charlie," said Joe Walters, shrugging his shoulders. "That may be the reason why they're making themselves scarce. Anyhow, holding a meeting like this is a bit thick, especially so early in the evening, when so many people are about the— Listen!"

Tom Bates' powerful voice burst forth anew.

"Now, people," the butcher roared, "we're all agreed that Jack Thorpe and the rest of the Vale Athletic are going to suffer for what amounts to dirty business?"

"We are!"

"Hear, hear!"

It was no half-hearted shout that went up from the dense crowd, and it took the red-faced butcher several minutes before he was able to establish quietness again. He waved his arms frantically about him; he bellowed and glared, then smiled as a silence which could almost be felt at last descended upon his audience.

"Very well," he growled, shaking a big fist. "We'll hold another meeting here in a couple of hours' time. Mean while, my sandwich-men will parade the streets, and that'll show some of 'em, I'll be bound."

With that he jumped down from the platform, hurried over to the group of men before his shop, and spoke to them. Then, as his hirelings lined up and marched away, he grinned, and disappeared through his doorway.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" muttered

Charlie Brown, wild eyed and staring. "If that's not the limit!"

Joe Walters looked grave as he turned to his chum.

"I don't like this a bit, old man," he said quietly. "Bates is a terror, and if he once masters a crowd he's liable to stop at nothing. Why, it's any odds that he would lead them to the Athletic's ground, and there wreck the whole show. Can't understand why the police haven't been on the scene."

"Yes," said Charlie Brown, "that's certainly strange. But, as you said a little while back, they're probably in sympathy with the Wanderers."

And so many of them were; for, having heard that Bates was holding a meeting in the market-place, the constables who should have been on duty in the immediate vicinity had discreetly given that part a very wide berth.

"Anyhow," said Joe Walters thoughtfully, "I'm coming back for that other meeting. That'll be at about ten o'clock, and if there's going to be trouble I'll do my best to stop it. There's no need to go the whole hog, and give vent to one's spite in destruction and injury. The Vale have disgusted the town, but to punish them I think the best way is to keep away from their matches; and if I can get upon old Bates' platform I'll tell the people so."

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Charlie Brown enthusiastically. "I'm with you. But let's get along home now, and have supper first."

And accordingly the two chums proceeded to the other end of Wallbrough, where they both shared the same lodgings.

CHAPTER 2.

Unpleasant for Jack!

JACK THORPE, the young player-manager of Vale Athletic, jammed the telephone-receiver on its hooks, and swung round in his revolving-chair, his face flushed crimson.

"Well," asked Mr. Wyatt, the chairman of the club, "what has the League to say about it, Jack?"

"Say!" growled Jack Thorpe angrily. "That the protest comes from here. It's typewritten on the club paper, and bears my signature."

"But—"

Jack clenched his fists as he interrupted the chairman.

"Mr. Wyatt," he said, and it was only by a supreme effort that he controlled his enraged feelings, "there's been some dirty business going on behind our backs; that's a cert. The League seem convinced I wrote that letter, and they say that they cannot take further steps at present. An inquiry into the affair will be held in a fortnight's time."

"Meanwhile," he added bitterly, "I suppose we're to be treated with scorn by the whole of the country. The evening papers are full of it, and the 'Wallbrough Echo' have given the front page over to venomous propaganda against us."

"And all over a couple of beastly friendly matches!" grunted Mr. Wyatt. "Why, Jack, we wouldn't have protested against the Wanderers playing Penntown if we had had a League match or a Cup tie the same day. It's downright shameful, for the motto of this club had always been 'play the game,' and I don't think we can be accused of over having been unsportsmanlike."

The young player-manager rose to his feet.

"You're right, sir!" he said hotly. He brought his clenched fist down viciously upon the desk. "And if ever I get to the bottom of this disgusting affair and find the culprit, I'll—"

"I say, Jack, the town's up in arms against us!"

Jack Thorpe turned sharply as the door of the office swung back on its hinges, and Bill Johnson, the trainer, rushed in, panting and gasping.

"What!" he roared.

"Tom Bates, the butcher, has been hurling threats against us to a crowd of fools in the market-place!" gasped Johnson breathlessly. "And I believe there's going to be more trouble, for he's holding another meeting at ten."

"Is he?" growled the player-manager, his eyes glinting dangerously. "Then I'll be there to have a say in the matter. But, Bill, didn't the police chip in?"

The trainer shook his head.

"No; there wasn't a bobby to be seen. Keeping out of the way, I should say."

That was enough for Jack Thorpe. Let the police keep out of it, then. He could fight his own battles.

He set his teeth resolutely. He knew well enough that he was going to have a hard fight before he convinced the townsfolk that he had not sent the letter to the League.

"Right!" he snapped. And, grabbing up his hat, he jammed it on his head. "I'm for the town right away."

"But, Jack," protested Mr. Wyatt, as the player-manager strode towards the door, "don't you think it best to treat these fools with contempt?"

Jack Thorpe pulled up and faced the chairman.

"No, sir, I don't!" he said deliberately. "If they attempt to damage the fair name of the Athletic they harm me, and I'm not standing that at any price."

Mr. Wyatt shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, my boy. Then I'm with you, and we'll run down in my car and face these so-called sportsmen. We'll tell them that the Vale has always played square."

A grin crossed Jack Thorpe's clean-cut features. The chairman had struck a warlike attitude which would have done credit to many a man burlier built than he.

"You coming, Bill?" asked the player-manager, turning to Johnson.

The trainer nodded vigorously.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Wyatt. "Then come on!"

And he strode from the room, closely followed by Jack and the trainer. They reached the road, and were just about to get into the chairman's car, when in the light shed by a lamp a few yards ahead the player-manager caught sight of a procession of men carrying sandwich-boards.

"What the dickens are those chaps doing out so late with advertisements?" he asked, in astonishment, turning to his companions.

Mr. Wyatt and Bill Johnson cast hurried glances down the road to where Jack was pointing. A whistle escaped the trainer's lips.

"It's Bates' idea, Jack," he angrily. "He's got those fellows to parade the streets with those boards and—"

"Well, what of them?" interrupted the youngster impatiently.

"On those boards are insulting remarks about the Athletic."

"What!"

Jack Thorpe's teeth came together with a click, and he clenched his fists hard. Before either Mr. Wyatt or the trainer could reach out a hand to stop him he dashed down the road.

"Hi! Jack, stop!" shouted the chairman anxiously. "Don't be a young idiot! Come back!"

But the young player-manager either didn't hear, or heard and heeded not this sound advice. Anyhow, he ran on, and, with a roar of an enraged bull, he hurled himself at the man who brought up the rear of the procession.

Crash!

Both Jack and the sandwich-man collapsed to the ground, struggling and hitting out at each other for all they were worth. Then several pairs of hands grasped the youngster, and he was dragged to his feet. He blinked about him to discover that he was surrounded by a threatening crowd.



The mass of people gazed up as if fascinated as the aeroplane twisted and turned, seeming as though it were trying to escape from a maze. From its stern was appearing a trail of grey smoke which formed into letters. There was a gasp of astonishment as the watchers read the startling announcement.

"It's Thorpe!" cried a voice. "Lynch the spoil-sport! Show him what the town thinks of his underhand ways!"

"That's the idea!"  
The sandwich-men closed in on their victim, and it was at that moment that Mr. Wyatt and Bill Johnson came dashing up. Without hesitation, the chairman and the trainer forced their way through the crowd and reached Jack Thorpe's side.

"Stand back!" cried Mr. Wyatt. And his fingers tightened about his stick. "Play the game! Give us a hearing!"

"Hearing be blowed!" snarled a pug-faced individual. "Boys, here's two more of the skunks! At 'em!"

Hampered though they were with their boards, the sandwich-men dashed in upon the objects of their wrath. Mr. Wyatt raised his stick and brought it down with a crack on the arm of the foremost, who lunged out viciously at the young player-manager.

The man gave vent to a long howl of pain and staggered backwards; then the chairman felt himself collared from behind and dragged to the ground.

Jack Thorpe and Bill Johnson, with teeth clenched tightly, hit out right and left, and three of the sandwich-men bit the dust before their furious onslaught.

But the odds were against them, and at last manager and trainer found themselves upon their backs in the road, with several of their assailants sprawling on top of them.

"What shall we do with them, mates?" growled a voice.

"Chuck 'em in the pond at the back of their rotten ground!" snarled the ruffian who had felt the weight of the chairman's stick. "And then wreck old Wyatt's car. It's outside the club gates. You can see it from here if you look."

There were loud growls of assent to this rascally suggestion, and rough hands were laid upon Mr. Wyatt, Jack Thorpe, and the trainer. They were dragged to their feet and forced towards the club.

Things looked desperate, when suddenly there sounded running footsteps ahead, and out of the gates of the Athletic Club dashed the figures of a dozen men.

And fortunate it was for Jack Thorpe and his colleagues that the chairman's chauffeur, seeing how matters had fared with his employer, the player-manager, and the trainer, had hurried to the games-room and routed out the players of Vale Athletic.

The sandwich-men were taken by surprise. The players waded into them with great gusto, tore their boards from their backs, and scattered the ruffians far and wide. Then the youngsters, grinning, stood back and surveyed their handiwork.

"Let's burn this rubbish!" said Peter Mills, the left-back, indicating the sandwich-boards with his boot.

"That's the idea!"

"Pile 'em up!"

The youngsters set to with a will. They piled the boards up at the side of the road, and the chairman's chauffeur hurried over to the car and came back swinging a tin of petrol. He emptied the contents over the stack of wood and a match was applied.

Neither Mr. Wyatt nor Jack Thorpe remonstrated. They just stood rigid, with jaws set grimly, watching the blaze. It was not until the sandwich-boards were reduced to a mass of smouldering ashes that Mr. Wyatt laid a hand on the player-manager's shoulder.

"Still keen on going down to the town, Jack?" he asked.

Jack Thorpe smoothed his tousled hair.

"Yes," he said. And, pulling out his

watch, he glanced at it. "It wants a quarter to ten. Just time to get there for the meeting; and the boys will come with us, no doubt."

He turned to the players, and hurriedly explained his mission; and when they had heard that Tom Bates was endeavouring to turn the town against them they agreed as one man to back Jack up, and if needs be, treat the butcher and anyone else who had a word to say against them as they had done the sandwich-men.

"We've heard all about the complaint which you are supposed to have written to the League officials, Jack," said Peter Mills. "But we know you too well to think for one moment that you would raise any objections against Penntown playing the Wanderers. As for the town folk being up in arms with intent to do us an injury—well, we'll soon see about that. Lead on, boy!"

The player-manager smiled as a chorus of agreement went up from the others.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Then come on!"

They made for Mr. Wyatt's car, and somehow crowded aboard. Then off they went, and it was just striking ten as the car drew up in the market-square of Wallbrough.

Jack Thorpe thrust his head through the window, and to his dismay he saw before the shire-hall an immense crowd of people, and on a platform, addressing them, the burly figure of Tom Bates, the butcher.

Suddenly a figure darted out of the shadows of a shop close at hand, and approached.

"Mr. Thorpe"—it was Joe Walters of the Working Men's Club—"you'd best clear off from here whilst it's safe. The town is dead against you and the Athletic. And so am I, for that matter, but I don't believe in joining in disturbances, and that is what—"

"But I'm going to get these hot-heads to listen to me," growled the player-manager angrily. "I want to tell them that we are being treated unfairly. We didn't make a complaint to the League about—"

"There they are, in that car! Rush 'em!"

Jack Thorpe glanced towards the crowd and saw Tom Bates pointing in the direction of the car. He clenched his fists, the nails digging into the palms of his hands.

"Quick! Clear off!" exclaimed Joe Walters. "I'll get along to the police-station and get help. It'll be wanted, for there's sure going to be trouble with that crowd."

"But," grunted Jack, flushing, "I'm going to—"

Mr. Thorpe pulled him back in his seat.

"It's no good, Jack," he said sternly. "I'm not going to chance any of you getting hurt. Quick, James"—to the chauffeur as the crowd came rushing towards them—"back to the club at once!"

Joe Walters ran alongside the car as it swung round in a graceful semi-circle.

"Mr. Thorpe," he said loudly, "I had hopes of getting on Bates' platform myself and attempting to quell the people, but it seemed an impossibility. But I'll get to the police-station for assistance."

He darted off, and the car shot forward, heading for the Athletic Club at increased speed. A terrific howl of threats, jeers, and catcalls followed it from Tom Bates' meeting.

Then the crowd streamed back and surrounded the butcher, who still stood upon his platform. Tom Bates spoke to them for a further half-hour, and then, having worked their feelings against the Athletic up to concert-pitch, he headed a threatening procession towards the professionals' ground. But unfortunately for them Joe Walters had impressed upon the police the necessity for quick action, and when they were within a hundred yards of the Athletic's ground, they discovered the road barred by a score of mounted police, who, in the light of the moon, looked a formidable proposition, with batons clenched firmly in their hands.

A coward at heart, the butcher gave the order to retreat, and every man in the procession was glad that he did. Keen to do all they could to injure Vale Athletic for what they considered to be "unsportsmanlike behaviour," the Wallbrough football "fans" didn't fancy running risks themselves in bringing this about. They arrived back in the market-place, held another meeting which didn't last for more than five minutes, and agreed one and all to boycott the Vale.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Truth Will Out!

"YOU going to pay up or not, Cripps?"

Harry Heap stuck out his jaw grimly as he addressed himself to the manager of Penntown F.C.

"Not, you gaolbird!" growled Phillip Cripps, thrusting his hands into his pockets. "For one thing, my friend, I haven't the money, and if I had you wouldn't get it."

"So that's final, is it? You won't pay me for that little job?"

His eyes glinting dangerously, Harry Heap, forger and blackmailer, took a step nearer to his companion.

For several days the crook had been waiting his chance to interview the manager of Penntown. He had called at Cripps' lodging, only to find him not at home on each occasion. But now Heap had cornered his man, and he was determined to be satisfied ere he took his departure from No. 10, Wellington Street, the manager's abode.

In point of fact the crook wanted money badly, his immediate intention being to take a trip to the Continent to further his business interests.

Therefore he was firmly resolved that Cripps should pay him the hundred pounds promised for forging Jack Thorpe's signature to the letter of complaint supposed to have come from Vale Athletic to the League officials.

"Yes," snarled Cripps, "that's final! Now clear out of—"

He whipped his hand out of his pocket, and there was the glint of an automatic as Heap suddenly sprang at his throat. The crook backed, trembling and cowed, towards the door.

"Get out, sharp!" hissed the manager, indicating with the revolver, "or—"

Heap reached the door, his right hand went behind him and grasped the handle, his left he placed in his jacket-pocket.

"Cripps," he said, and his voice was surprisingly steady, "if I leave here without that money, I go straight to Vale Athletic and inform them that it was at your dictation I took down that letter, forged it in Thorpe's handwriting, and sent it to the League. And, by the way, I know more about you than you think. You once held the reins of the Athletic club, till you were found out and dismissed for dishonesty. Now you're out to revenge yourself on them, and that is why you—"

**ANSWERS**  
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2!

"Cut it out!" cried Cripps, bringing his weapon on a level with the other's forehead. "Do your worst! Besides, what proof have you of what you allege? None! And I think you'd better go careful, for I have an idea that you are still 'wanted' by the police."

Heap shrugged his thick shoulders indifferently.

"I may be," he said, "but that doesn't frighten me a bit. I go straight to Jack Thorpe if I leave here without—"

"Get out!"

Phillip Cripps advanced a pace, and momentarily he was off his guard. Heap took advantage of the fact. Like lightning he swung open the door, and as he did so his left hand came out of his jacket-pocket, revealing a wicked-looking life-preserver. The weapon changed hands in a flash, and then, as Cripps hastily levelled his revolver again, the crook sent it whizzing through the air with unerring aim. It caught the rascally manager upon the hand in which he held his automatic, and with a yelp of pain Cripps relaxed his hold, and the weapon clattered to the floor. And, with a hoarse chuckle, Heap darted out of the room, slamming the door to behind him.

The crook went down the stairs which led to the front door as quickly and as quietly as he could. He heard footsteps mounting the stairs which he guessed came up from a basement kitchen. Next moment he had the front door open. He pulled it to with a jerk; then, breaking into a run, he turned towards the railway-station. Luck was with him, for a train was due in for Wallbrough. He took his ticket and hastened up on to the platform. He glanced at his watch, paced up and down for a couple of minutes, and then the train ran into the station.

He jumped into an empty carriage, and with a sigh of relief he sank down into a corner seat. A minute later the guard's whistle shrilled, and the train began to glide out of the station.

Heap smiled as he placed his feet on the seat opposite.

"Cripps was a fool!" he muttered savagely to himself.

But had the crook known that, as the train was gliding out of Penntown Station, a man had dashed on to the platform and had just managed to dive into one of the end carriages, he would not have felt so much at ease.

Heap came out of a doze as the train jerked to a standstill. He heard a porter call out "Wallbrough!" in a stentorian voice, and he quickly came to his feet and jumped out on to the platform. Without glancing about him he made straight for the exit and reached the road. Once there, he quickened his pace and turned a corner into the street leading to Vale Athletic's ground. The crook knew his way about Wallbrough, for he had been there before.

He passed through the market-square, then for some unknown reason he glanced behind him. But he didn't see the figure of a man who, as he looked back, dived into a shop doorway, and who, when he continued his journey, emerged from his place of concealment and followed him.

Arriving at the players' entrance to the Athletic's ground, Heap paused. He took out a case from his waistcoat-pocket, extracted a cork-tipped cigarette, and then, as he struck a match and applied it to the weed, he heard a footfall behind him. With a cry of alarm he swung round, and the match dropped from his fingers. The figure of a man loomed up in the darkness, and though the crook was unable to recognise the features, instinct told him that it must be Phillip Cripps.



There was a roar of excitement as Jack Thorpe dodged round Smithers, caught the ball neatly with his toe and sent it crashing goalwards. The Wanderers' custodian made a brilliant attempt to stop the flying sphere, but it was beyond the reach of his clutching fingers.

"Who's that?" he demanded. "Me!" snarled the voice of the manager of Penntown F.C. "And I'm going to stop you from seeing Jack Thorpe, my friend."

Heap backed towards the door behind him as Cripps took a step in his direction.

"Keep off," he muttered hoarsely, "or I'll rouse the whole darned neighbourhood!"

Cripps chuckled.

"Go ahead!" he sneered.

But there the rascally manager was wrong, for at that very moment Jack Thorpe, on his way home, arrived at the other side of the door to the players' entrance. Jack heard Phillip Cripps' words, recognised his voice, halted, and listened. Those words he had caught made the young player-manager instantly suspicious.

Heap ignored Cripps' last remark.

"Are you going to pay up for that signature, Cripps?" asked the crook, recovering his nerve as the manager failed to threaten him with his revolver. "I think you'd better, or, by heavens, I'll tell Thorpe that you were the man who sent that letter to the League, and—Ow!"

Jack Thorpe had heard enough. He decided on action. Quietly inserting his key in the lock, he unfastened the door, and, with a hard push, he sent it swinging out on its hinges. Heap was in the line of fire, and the door caught him clean between his shoulder-blades. He staggered forward, lost his balance, and crashed to the ground.

With a muttered exclamation, Phillip Cripps turned to run, but Jack Thorpe was on him before he had taken a couple of strides, and, grasping the rascal by the shoulder, the youngster swung him back. In a grip of iron, Jack Thorpe dragged him to where Heap was now struggling to his feet. The young player-manager grasped the crook with his disengaged hand, then, with amazing suddenness, he brought both their heads together with a crack.

"Now, you rotters," said Jack sternly.

"I'll have a little confession from you both! This way!"

He pulled them through the door, slammed it behind him, and proceeded towards the club-house. Reaching his office, he pushed open the door, and Bill Johnson, the trainer, came to his feet with a cry of astonishment at sight of the two rogues in the grip of the youngster.

"What the dickens!" gasped the trainer. "Who are they, Jack?"

Jack smiled serenely.

"Only a couple of chaps who have a confession to make, Bill," he replied easily. "Just hold the beauties whilst I get out a pen and some paper."

Jack soon had the necessary articles, and, having explained to Johnson what he had heard pass between Heap and Cripps, and how he had captured them, he drew out a letter to the League. This formed a confession that Heap and Cripps, with intent to injure Jack Thorpe and his club, had forged the youngster's signature, and made the protest against Wallbrough Wanderers playing Penntown the same day that Vale Athletic were at home. And then the rascally manager and his confederate were forced to put their names to the paper, for Bill Johnson was most persistent with his threat to hand them over to the police if they refused.

Satisfied now that he had a document which would clear Vale Athletic in the eyes of the public, Jack Thorpe decided to let Heap and Cripps go free.

"If I see or hear of you in this town again," he said sharply, "I'm putting the police on your tracks! Now, get out before I change my mind!"

Heap and Cripps got out, glad to escape so lightly.

#### CHAPTER 4.

#### Back into Favour!

**B**UZZ-Z-Z! Buzz-z-z!  
It was Saturday and market-day in Wallbrough, and consequently vast crowds thronged the streets of the town. People were pushing themselves hither and thither, but  
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 796.

when the droning sound of an aeroplane's engine fell upon their ears, they halted and looked up into the sky.

"Look!" cried a stall-holder excitedly. "Sky-writing! It's some advertisement or other!"

"Yes," said the man's assistant breathlessly. "And I bet that plane belongs to the 'Echo.'"

The assembly gazed as if fascinated as the aeroplane twisted and turned, seeming as though it were trying to escape from a maze. And the while a trail of grey smoke which formed into letters appeared astern.

Then came a gasp of astonishment from the watchers as they read:

"Vale Athletic play the Wanderers to-day! See the 'Wallbrough Echo.'"

What did it mean?

"Piper! Special! Piper!"

The shrill voice came from the direction of the offices of the "Wallbrough Echo," and, catching sight of a boy staggering along under the weight of a bundle of newspapers, a burly farm-labourer gave vent to a loud exclamation, and tore off to meet him. Then followed a great rush. The newspaper boy was surrounded, overwhelmed. His papers were snatched from him by the eager, curious crowd.

"Don't forget yer pennies!" wailed the youngster; and he fervently wished he had a dozen pairs of hands.

Then, at that moment, more shrill cries of newspapers sounded on the air, and the youth gave a sigh of relief. He looked about him. He was no longer surrounded. His papers were gone, and he grinned as he saw a whole heap of coppers scattered at his feet. Hastily he gathered them up, and dashed back to the news offices for a further supply of papers.

And he left behind him crowds of football "fans," who eagerly devoured and discussed the intelligence contained in the local newspaper. And that news was the cause of many a deep-throated growl. The people saw how they had been duped. They resented that, but they resented still more that part of the information which announced that the rogues had "got away" after signing the confession.

The Athletic, despised by all ever since the Wanderers—Penntown match was cancelled by order of the League, was rapidly back into favour. Ready as the townsfolk had been to condemn without making any inquiries, they were eager to amend. They could only do that by taking the first opportunity to cheer the Athletic. This the paper hinted at in its concluding paragraphs:

"Local sportsmen have a great opportunity of seeing this afternoon what can only be termed as 'the match of the season,' for the Athletic have arranged to meet Wallbrough Wanderers at the Crescent; kick-off three o'clock.

"Originally, it will be remembered, the Athletic were to play Dodbrook Rovers to-day in a friendly, but this match Thorpe was able to postpone. How, we do not know, neither will we attempt to guess, but the fact remains that it has been put off, and our local professional club will meet the Wanderers."

It was a "scoop" for the "Wallbrough Echo," and came to the sporting element of the town as a great surprise. Confidence in Vale Athletic was instantly restored, and at half-past two their well-appointed ground was packed to capacity.

All was life and animation, and the

great concourse of people, impatient though they were to catch sight of a jersey, helped the town band along with their selections with whole-hearted enthusiasm.

And Jack Thorpe, making his way towards the dressing-rooms to change, peered through a window beneath the grand-stand, and smiled happily as he glimpsed the mighty throng. Never in all the history of the club had the Crescent been so full, and to the youngster it seemed that his trials as player-manager were now at an end.

## CHAPTER 5.

### A Well-Contested Game!

"HERE they come!"  
 "Good old Jack!"  
 "Who said the Vale were spoil-sports?"

A deafening shout split the air as, with Jack Thorpe in the lead, Vale Athletic came trotting through the aperture beneath the grand-stand and on to the playing-pitch.

Looking spick and span in their trim green-and-white-striped jerseys and blue knickers, the players made for a vacant goal, and no sooner did Burns place himself between the sticks than he was bombarded with shots from all angles.

The referee and linesmen made their appearance, the nets were inspected, then the shrill blast of the whistle summoned the rival skippers to the centre of the ground. Here the trio shook hands, and up went the coin. The luck was with Thorpe, and he elected to play with the wind. This necessitated a change of ends, and as the players crossed the spectators made their presence once again felt with storms of applause. But silence fell with remarkable suddenness on all sides, when, in his usual business-like manner, Mr. Stern glanced at his watch, took a hurried survey of the field, and set the game in motion.

Pheep!

Wilson, the amateurs' centre-forward, sent the ball out to the right; and Paul, snapping up the pass, set off down the touchline with the speed of a racehorse. And such was his pace that he was by the Athletic's left-half in a flash, and had reached the corner-flag before being tackled by the opposition.

Then Peter Mills took a hand in the game. The giant back came thundering across the turf with a grim look upon his rugged features. Paul pulled up in his stride; then, as Mills charged him, he flicked the ball to his right and jumped aside. Unable to stop himself, the Athletic's defender shot forward, and, losing his balance, he crashed to the ground with a force which jarred every bone in his body.

"Now then, Peter, don't hurt the ground. It ain't done you any harm!" yelled a wag from the stand.

A roar of good-natured laughter greeted the remark, and Mills scrambled to his feet and glanced round. And he was just in time to see Paul send in his centre.

Describing a graceful arc, the ball soared into the goalmouth, where a crowd of jostling players made a concerted leap to get their heads to it.

"Now then, the Wanderers! In with it, lads!"

"What about— Goal!"

Towering above the rest, Wilson's fair head had connected with the leather as it had descended; and Burns, beaten all ends up, now stood regarding it with amazement as it swirled at the back of the net.

The din that followed must have been heard for miles around.

Heartened by their early success,

Wallbrough Wanderers played like a team inspired. Their football was clean and polished, and right up to the interval they did most of the attacking. And as the players went off for the welcome "breather," Jack Thorpe realised that but for the magnificent defence put up by Burns and Mills his side must have surely been at that moment three clear goals to the bad.

Both sides came in for another warm reception on their reappearance, and the Wanderers very nearly added to their lead immediately after the resumption.

Jack Thorpe touched the ball to his inside-left; but Hawkins, in endeavouring to send out to Fry on the wing, slipped. Wilson dashed forward, and, with the leather literally glued to his toe, he worked himself into the penalty area. Then, as Mills challenged him, the amateurs' centre-forward passed the ball on to Milton, his inside-right, who immediately sent in a lightning drive at goal. The ball whizzed through the air with tremendous speed for the top right-hand corner of the net. Burns gave a prodigious leap, his fists shot upwards, and the sphere, directed from its course, went sailing over the crossbar.

"Well saved, goalie!"

"That's the idea, lad!"

Burns came in for a well-merited round of applause for his wonderful save; but when, from the corner-kick, he punched the ball away from Wilson's head, it seemed as though the crowd were on the verge of insanity. They positively shrieked, and the rattles and bells, hooters and squeakers, contributed hideously to the noise.

Meanwhile, the ball had bounced at Jack Thorpe's toe, and, with most of the opposition behind him, he was racing towards the Wanderers' goal. He reached the penalty area, and as Smithers, the visitors' right-back, came dashing towards him, he let fly with a first-time shot.

The ball struck the crossbar and rebounded into play. There came a groan of disappointment from the crowd; then a roar of excitement as Jack dodged round Smithers, and, hurling himself at the ball as it bounced on the ground, sent it again crashing goalwards.

The Wanderers' custodian leaped sideways, but the leather was beyond reach of his clutching fingers, and the next minute it had crashed to the back of the net.

Vale Athletic had drawn level!

Again the boisterous crowd let themselves go with a vengeance, and they kept it up until some time after Wilson had kicked off.

From the pass which he received from his centre-forward Paul was again prominent in a dash to the corner-flag. But this time Mills successfully emerged from his duel with the winger, and sent the ball down the field with a hefty kick. It bounced at Jack Thorpe's feet; but as the youngster swung round to make tracks for the enemies' territory, Slade, the amateur's centre-half, charged him off the ball, and he went crashing to the turf.

"Never mind, Jackie boy!"

"Better luck next time!"

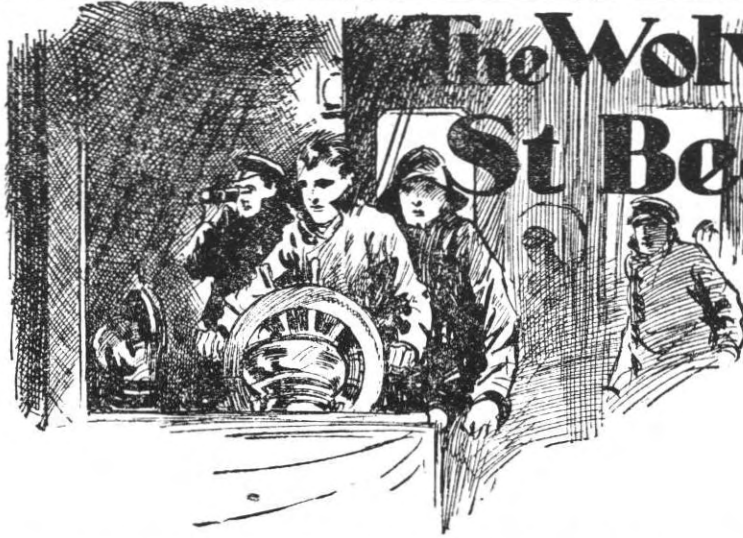
Slade bent over Jack to help him to his feet. The centre-forward's face was twitching painfully, and the amateur signalled the referee. Mr. Stern blew his whistle instantly, the game stopped, and the official came running up.

And as two or three of the players assisted Thorpe to rise, Bill Johnson, the trainer, appeared with towel and sponge.

"Hurt much, Jack?" he asked anxiously.

(Continued on page 27.)

MORE THRILLS AND BREATHLESS SITUATIONS THIS WEEK!



# 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, clumps 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 Suini Baba, the pirate chief.

They are captured, however, by a party of mounted Moors, and marched to the residence of El Took, the bigger governor of Suini 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. Mr. Hobbs then releases the slaves, and with their aid prepares a further attack upon Suini Baba. Scaring the assassins, they capture El Took and the stolen treasures, and row back to the Kipper King. Then, strongly armed, they return for Suini Baba.

(Now read on.)

## The Last Ride!

SUINI BABA had been hand in glove with the Germans over the Agadir incident, and he had set French and Spaniards alike at defiance. But he had set a power at defiance of which he knew not. This was Scotland Yard.

Perhaps Suini Baba would have been rather unhappy had he known that Mr. Travers, of Scotland Yard, was already on his track in the matter of many daring hotel robberies and various unaccountable murders which had taken place in England or on the Continent.

Certainly no one would have suspected this most respectable old gentleman of keeping a large and private band of assassins and thieves who were operating in all parts of Europe.

Yet such was the case.

Suini Baba knew his history and had his model. This model was one Hassan Ben Sabbah, who about the year 1080

became the head of the Persian sect of fanatics known as the Ismailians. Angered by the failure of his many intrigues at the Persian Court, Hassan, a man of strong and evil will, increased his fanatic following, and in 1090 seized the strong castle of Aramut, in the Province of Rudbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea. It was from this mountain stronghold that he obtained that evil celebrity amongst the Crusaders by which he is still remembered as the Old Man of the Mountains and the head of the sect of the assassins.

It had not been difficult to Suini Baba to persuade his following of ignorant Moors that he was possessed of magic powers, and that he was, indeed, none other than the Old Man of the Mountains, who, having discovered the secret of the elixir of life, had never died, but had left his mountain home in the east and had come to settle in the Atlas.

Throughout those wild mountains he had his following. He was glib and pat with his story. He talked familiarly of the old Crusaders of El Melek, Richard the Lion Hearted, King of England; of Saladin, Sultan of Damascus; of the Archduke Luitpold of Austria, who took a dislike to King Richard of England and clapped him into gaol when he was making his way home from the crusades, so that England was half broke before his ransom was paid.

Suini Baba had got the tale to the last word. He knew the story of Blondel, the minstrel who discovered Richard of the Lion Heart in his prison, of the Marquis of Monferrat, of Berengaria of Navarre, King Philip of France, Guy de Lusignan, and Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and he talked of these old dead-and-gone crusading boys who had flourished in the world when St. Beowulf's was founded for six poor boys, as though they lived yesterday.

The simple hillmen of the Atlas swallowed the lot. They held that Suini Baba was a Santon and a holy man. He was careful not to rob these mountaineers; he robbed only the peasants of the plains.

Bit by bit he had gathered around him, sleek and smooth young men, who did his bidding without question. These were eaters of hasheesh, or the opiate of hemp leaves which is called in India bhang.

These men Suini Baba sent forth into the world to win him treasure.

Some of them never came back. Others returned, bringing jewels of great price, the proceeds of hotel robberies in America, sometimes accompanied by murder.

None of these assassins had ever given their master away. If they were caught, they went to prison meekly, and mostly managed to commit suicide. Some were murdered strangely in their turn. No one in Scotland Yard was ever quite able to understand why Cogia Ben Mulhacen, a young foreign waiter who was put away for five years for burglary, was murdered by strangling, in his locked prison cell in an English prison.

None the less, there it was. Kaid Suini Baba knew all about it. He had mistrusted Cogia Ben Mulhacen, who had failed to commit suicide when he should have done, and was therefore suspect of the possibility that he might blab to a friendly warder.

Suini Baba, sitting in the fine hall of his mountain stronghold, stroking his white beard, had beckoned to one of these sleek young men lounging against his walls.

"Kandor ibn Soosan ibn El Mouk, come hither!" he had called, in his faint, shrill voice. And the slim young man thus called had run forward, and had thrown himself on his face at the edge of the carpet.

Again the shrill voice had called.

"Ali, son of Malouk, son of Tutan el Kooos of Marrakeesh, come hither!"

And another young man had run forward to take his place by his companion.

"My sons," said Suini Baba, addressing the two kneeling figures paternally, "the word is upon you. You shall travel to England, and there, in the great prison which is called Dartmoor, lies Cogia Ben Mulhacen, who has failed to die. Strike my sons, but not with the knife. Knives tell tales, and these infidels can read strange things by bloodstains and the prints of fingers. Wherefore, use the cord which tells no tales."

The young men kissed the hem of the carpet and withdrew.

Three weeks and four days later Cogia Ben Mulhacen, the supposed waiter, died in his cell.

Kandor ibn Soosan ibn El Mouk and Ali, son of Malouk, son of Tutan El Kooos of Marrakeesh, the Red City of THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 790.

Morocco, never returned to that grim old tower in the Atlas. They were found dead of gas-poisoning in a Cardiff garret. It was said at the inquest that they had apparently made some mistake with the gas. But Suini Baba generally looked to it that his assassins were wiped up in their turn. He had an idea that after having fulfilled their mission, his two sleek boys might head off for America where his agencies were not very exact. Dead men tell no tales, and it was in this fashion that this old white-bearded gentleman struck at his enemies and his friends.

This was the personage whom the wolves of St. Beowulf's were going to hunt out of his lair.

Suini Baba had rather forgotten himself when he had allowed his little band of freebooters to raid and sack John Lincoln's trading station near El Nif and had collared Mr. Brown, the manager, with his wife and baby.

He had heard of John Lincoln vaguely as a person of some power in Africa, and he had sent out a couple of assassins to seek the Englishman, and to put him through the usual ceremony.

They had found John Lincoln's home easily enough. But John Lincoln was away, and they had mistaken Stubbs for his master. Their mistake had cost them their lives, and had given Mr. Travers of Scotland Yard just the last clue that he was looking for.

It was of no use to ask the authorities of Morocco to arrest Suini on suspicion. The Kaid was well enough known, and there was matter enough in his own country to hang him. But no one dared to go in and bring him out of his lair.

Few would have dreamed that the Wolves of St. Beowulf's and the Kipper Kings were on this errand as they drove on through the warm night, on camels and horses, over the dark hills, Sulieman steering them by the stars.

Sulieman rode at the head of the cavalcade with John Lincoln. The boys followed on in the rear of the procession chaffing Mr. Hobbs, who, balanced on the back of a camel, was feeling quite seasick from the strange movement.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "I'd sooner go to sea in a destroyer than ride this beast!"

Before dawn the party stopped, and camped in a stretch of lonely desert country which ran along the foot of the wild, sterile hills. They had got well away before any messenger could warn Kaid Suini Baba of the sacking of El Nif.

At their camping-ground was a well and a few palms, with some cover of bushes, and here they took a short sleep and breakfast.

Whoever came to warn their enemy must come by this road. So a guard of four men, armed with rifles, were left to hold the water and to arrest all wayfarers.

Then on the riders went, making their way through a sparsely populated country, where the peasants fled at the sight of the flutter of their robes.

"My word!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "See those niggers run! Anyone would think that we was going to do them some harm."

"They think we are the harka of Suini Baba," said Sulieman; "and I think we had better steal a few of their chickens, otherwise they may suspect us."

So a few of the scraggy light-weight fowls that were pecking about the deserted hovels were stolen to give colour to the column of white-robed

riders. And even to this day the peasants of those parts recall with wonderment the very light toll that was exacted from them by Suini Baba's robbers on their last ride.

On they went over a desert of piled sand-dunes, backed by jagged blue mountains, the rising ridge of the Atlas.

Now the sun beat down hard on them, and the boys began to suffer their first taste of the discomforts of Oriental travel.

"My word!" exclaimed Stickjaw, as he touched the blister which had cut right across his nose. "My nose has come in halves!"

Waff groaned.

"I could do a large twopenny ice in a bottle of iced ginger-beer," he sighed. "I feel as if I was being baked in a gas-oven!"

"Baked in a gas-oven!" panted Mr. Hobbs. "This is more'n a gas-oven; it's like the hot floor of an ironworks! Used to work in an ironworks at Middlesbrough once, I did. Wish I was back there now to get cool!"

Dismal gruntings came from the back of a camel on which was perched one of those strange camel litters which are called by the Arabs "musattah." This was a square tent built up over two boxes or chests which were slung over the camel's back, and it was the bus that was used by the ladies of Kaid El Suini's court when they came to the seaside.

In one of these box panniers sat Dempsey, the bear. In the other was Nobby, the kangaroo.

Dempsey did not like the motion of his camel any more than Mr. Hobbs, for both the beasts were accustomed to carry heavy burdens of salt, and consequently had an uneasy, swinging walk, unlike that of the properly trained riding camel.

This camel was called Old Ike. Most of the camels would have resented such a burden as Dempsey and Nobby. But Old Ike, accustomed to carrying fat old negroes and all sorts of riff-raff, was the sort of camel who did not care if it snowed.

He padded along over the sand, grunting and bubbling and slinging out his great legs as if he were doing a cake-walk. And he took no notice of Dempsey's yawns and grumblings and growls.

Now and then Nobby would put his head out from the curtains of the litter and look round on the sterile landscape with his mild eyes.

"Nobby thinks he's back in good old Queensland," said Wobby, grinning. "He thinks that those blue mountains are the Never Never Mountains which run behind our place. But, my, this is hotter than home."

All that day they marched along the desert plain, each peak and jagged hump of the mountains keeping its shape as if they were not getting on at all.

Their tough little Arab steeds stood this hard march well.

Even Mr. Hobbs was bound to admit this, though he would admit very little that was to the credit of this hard bitten country.

"There's something in feeding 'orses on tin tacks and straw mattresses!" said he. "What you've never 'ad you don't miss, as the sweep said when they asked 'im to 'ave a glass o' champagne wine. As for these 'ere camels, they are a bloomin' miracle propped up on four legs. They say they've got three stumicks. Mine's been runnin' on one boiler all day long."

## The Strange Horseman!

AS the sun blazed to the west behind them, and they came padding over the desert with their shadows lengthening before them,

Sulieman turned inwards towards those great mountains along which they had been coasting all day.

"'Ere, Master Wobby," said Mr. Hobbs. "I'm tired o' playing pitch-and-toss on this camel. That 'orse of yours seems an easy goer. Will you change perches with me?"

Wobby was quite agreeable. He had ridden camels in Western Australia, and the change of mounts was effected.

Then Sulieman suddenly became alert in his saddle.

Far away he saw a speck of white racing towards them.

"Who is this coming along, Sulieman?" asked John Lincoln, levelling his glasses on the yet distant figure.

"Whoever he is, sir, he must not go back again!" said Sulieman. "Without a doubt he is one of Kaid Suini Baba's patrols which he keeps on this route. He trusts no one. And this man will doubtless be surprised to see so large a force coming from the coast. See, he comes quickly. He is mounted on a fast camel."

John Lincoln called to Wobby and to Lal Singh, who were the two best mounted in the caravan, for Mr. Hobbs had been riding the best camel, and Lal Singh was mounted on Laila, Kaid Suini Baba's best Arab steed.

Laila was a splendid little mare, broad-chested and narrow-flanked, with a step as light as a feather, and a mouth soft as silk.

"Go forward and reconnoitre this chap who is coming along so fast," said John Lincoln. "Lead him back towards us. If he shows signs of running, do your best to make him prisoner."

Lal Singh nodded. At his saddlebow was coiled a lariat of raw hide, which Lal had learned to use as well as any cowboy. Indian though he was, Lal had always been a great reader of the adventures of Buffalo Bill and of other cowboy literature. And he had applied himself to their arts.

The difference between a Rajput and a cowboy is only a difference of colour. Both are horse thieves born, and of similar tastes. In fact, the Rajput is the cowboy of India.

Lal Singh clapped his heels to Laila, and off she shot over the way, Wobby swinging after him on his camel.

"Easy up, Lal!" called Wobby. "This ain't the Derby."

Lal circled round and came alongside his friend.

"This man who comes has the sun in his eyes. Therefore we have the advantage of him," he said. "But see, he is not coming direct for us. Perhaps he has his suspicions already."

"They all have their suspicions in this blessed country," answered Wobby. "He's about two miles away now, Lal. Ease off gently towards him. Not too quick, or he may get more suspicious, and beat it while the going is good. These galoots are so jumpy and treacherous themselves that they would jump at the shadows of their own grandmothers. I've got a hunch that we are in for a topping adventure. This is a saucy knave who approaches."

They had now advanced a good mile ahead of the caravan, and they could see their man easily as he bestraddled his loose-limbed camel.

Lal had spoken truly. He was dazzled by the beams of the westerling sun, and he was shading his eyes as they neared him, doubtless trying to judge the



numbers of the caravan and its nature in the cloud of golden dust which hid it as though in a haze.

The spy had not altered his course, and Wobby and Lal bore down straight upon him.

"I believe he's buying the goose, Lal," said Wobby. "Thinks that we are a brace of his cobbers coming up from the coast. He'll hail us in a minute or show some sign of greeting."

The greeting came swiftly enough.

The camel rider had not recognised Wobby or Lal as cobbers or cronies of his, but he had recognised the neat-stepping little mare of his master.

There was none like this pearl of horses in this country. There was no mistaking her. And the rider knew that Laila on a long journey like this was never ridden. Kaid Suini Baba had sent her down to the coast for the benefit of bathing her slender legs in the strengthening seawater. For any of his servants who dared to ride her over the hundred miles from the coast the penalty would have been death, and a very unpleasant death, too!

The camel rider snatched a pistol from under his flowing white robes.

There was a flash and a bang, and a bullet sang over Lal's head.

Well it was for Lal that he was against the sunset, or that bullet would have passed through his brain.

Their man gave a yell, and out from a khor or watercourse, that was hidden in the rough plain, rose a party of ten Moors similarly mounted.

These, with a yell, advanced on Wobby and Lal.

"Split, Lal!" gasped Wobby. "Divide 'em. We might have known that this tug was hiding his party down the drain."

Wobby swung his camel to the right, and Lal shot off to the left, dividing their pursuers into two parties, six after Wobby and five after Lal.

Wobby looked to his bunch quickly. Yelling, and urging their camels forward, three of them brandishing spears, the other three drew pistols from under their flowing robes.

But they were troubled with their firearms. They had not expected so swift an encounter, and to keep out the sand from the bolts of their weapons, they had wrapped these in bandages of oily rag.

### The Valley of Stones!

**E**VEN to expert camel riders it is not easy to unbandage a rifle when travelling at full pelt.

Wobby saw his chance. He had his trusty boomerangs, not one this time, but three. He had also his pistol.

It was the boomerang first. Wobby hated to kill.

He measured the distance of the leader of the bunch which was coming along like a camel Derby.

"If I stoush Perce yonder, he'll bring two down," he muttered. "Then there's only three little niggers left!"

He aimed at the bobbing head of the leading camel and the strange weapon flitted birdlike through the air.

It was a wonderful shot.

Crack came the heavy weapon on the camel's skull ricocheting on to the face of the neighbouring rider.

The camel came down in a cloud of dust. The man fell and grabbed at the next rider. Then Wobby gave a shout of joy. Never was there such a mix-up, even in the Grand National. The riders were all on top of one another, and down they all came in a bunch, the



"My sons," said Suini Baba, addressing the two kneeling figures before him, "the word is upon you. You must go to England and kill my sons who have failed to die before being taken prisoners. Use your cords to kill, they tell no tales!"

camels rolling over on them, their great padded feet waving feebly in the air.

"My hat!" muttered Wobby. "I knocked out the King Pin that time! This is the new game of camel skittles!"

One rider rose from the bunch, a spearman. He rushed for Wobby with a yell. But the boomerang is quicker than any spear. The weapon flew, dipped like an aeroplane, cracked on the nigger's skull and, wheeling in a wide circle, smacked back into Wobby's hand.

It was quick work. Lal's pistol had cracked twice, and two camels had come down. Now he was wheeling and leading his pursuers down on Wobby.

One of the three pursuers dashed towards Wobby, not realising the magic that dwelt in the two strange curved sticks that were in the hands of this strange rider.

Crack went his rifle. But Wobby had wheeled against the sun, and the bullet flicked past his ear.

Then the boomerang arrived, and the shooter dropped out of his saddle as if he had been stricken by a bolt from the blue.

"These are magicians!" yelled one of the two remaining niggers when he saw their companion drop in this swift fight. "Let us fly, O brother!"

They wheeled their camels to fly, but Wobby's hand was nicely in, and down went one, leaving the last man in the field with Lal racing after him.

The ground was loose and sandy, and the camel in a few seconds would have got away from the horse. But Lal, above his head, whirled a weapon that was new in the endless warfare of Morocco. The coil of his lariat shot out and straightened as it fell over the head and shoulders of the yelling rider.

Up went his slippered feet in the air. The camel shot on, and down he came to the earth with a thump that knocked the wind out of him, so that his spirit, for a while, departed from him.

Then the leaders of the caravan came dashing up.

There was no fight left in the niggers who had come down with the camels. A

toss from a camel in full flight is worse than a fall in a steeplechase.

These were sitting on the ground nursing their heads and thanking Allah that niggers' skulls are thick.

These were made prisoners whilst the fight was out of them, and Wobby collected his boomerangs.

"A very nice little fight, young gents," said Mr. Hobbs, "and reflects the greatest credit on all concerned. I gather that we are now going to move into the mountains to camp in some secluded valley, and I sha'n't be at all sorry, for I'm all made in one piece. No more land excursions for me. I don't like this Jack ashore business!"

As darkness closed down they were amongst the foothills, and, before very long, Sulieman had led them into a deep valley of the hills where there was both water and feed for camels and horses.

Their prisoners were roped together, expecting to be killed by the strange wild men. Lal had clipped one of them in the shoulder with a bullet, and to this man's great surprise, his wound was carefully dressed and sterilised. Then he was made comfortable and fed by the very boy who had shot him.

It was good food, too—white bread, sardines, and coffee of the best. There was also roast fowl and tobacco.

Little wonder that these prisoners began to talk. They were a patrol on the coast road, and there were no more patrols out, they told Lal. They had been greatly surprised at seeing so large a caravan on the coast road, as it was not yet time for the removal of the salt from the salt pans.

They were very curious to know who were the ladies shut up in the camel litter.

This was translated to Wobby.

"Tell the tugs that we've got two new chums for them. It's about time we let old Demp out. He's gone to sleep now, tired out, I expect, with growling."

He walked over to the litter that was still on the back of the patient camel. This beast had shut its long legs up like

clasp-knives, and was lying on the ground chewing a cud of straw.

"Come out of it, Demp!" said Wobby. "Come out and show yourself to the gentlemen."

A yell of fear went up from the niggers when Dempsey, who had been rolled up in a ball asleep in the litter, worn out with the fatigues of the journey, yawned, growled, unrolled himself, and stepped out into the firelight.

The bear looked horrid with his shaven painted body and his shaggy, frowsy head and gloved paws.

"It is a jinn! It is an efreet! It is such a ghost as rides in the Valley of Stones!" the prisoners cried.

"Don't be silly, you niggers!" said Wobby. "Tis only a bear without his overcoat. Come here, Dempsey, and sit by the fire with these gents. And here's a three-pound tin of marmalade for you."

The niggers' eyes rolled as Dempsey squatted down by their fire, matey as a Christian, and started to scoop out the marmalade from the tin and lick his paws.

They rolled still more when Nobby, gentle and mild-eyed, came hopping out of the litter with the gentle, surprised look which all kangaroos have.

Never having seen a kangaroo before, they decided that Nobby was also a jinn, or an efreet, or some other form of evil spirit.

Then Lal, who spoke Arabic pretty well, gave them marmalade and biscuits,

making cunning inquiries of the ghosts who ride in the Valley of Stones.

The prisoners thawed under all these wonders and kind treatment. And when Lal informed them that they were not going to be murdered, but that they would be discharged with large presents, they told him freely about the ghosts which ride in the Valley of Stones.

There were the ghosts of the Hundred Horsemen, and their story was a simple one. They were men who many years ago had revolted against Suini Baba. The Kaid had withheld their pay and had robbed them of their rations. So they had mutinied against him, and had even gone so far as to besiege him in his castle, occupying the Valley of Stones, which was the only approach.

But Suini Baba, finding himself besieged, had spoken fair words to them. He had sent them out meat and flour and sweetmeats, and had promised that he would receive them the next day and settle their arrears of pay.

So the Hundred Horsemen had made a feast in the Valley of Stones, till they had been taken with great pains and had laid down and died. For the sweetmeats and the flour were poisoned.

Not a single man had escaped this treacherous act, and it was said that on thundery nights their ghosts haunted the Valley of Stones; they rode up to the gateway on their ghostly horses and camels, then their leader in a shrill voice would cry:

"Open unto us, Suini Baba—thou thief! Open unto us, O poisoner!"

Then would come a crash of thunder, and the whole spectral troop would fade away.

The niggers were very earnest about this story. Each one told it in his own way. They had all heard the ghosts when they had been on sentry in the Valley of Stones. They had heard the bubbling of the ghost camels and the clink of the horses' hoofs on the stony bed of the gorge.

Even Suini Baba himself went in fear on thundery nights, for he always hid himself in the back rooms of his palace, where it overlooked a sheer precipice of two thousand feet. His stronghold was built right at the edge of this crag, castle and rock shaped into one solid mass, and he knew that on this side nothing could approach him.

That was the story of the Hundred Horsemen of the Valley of Stones, and, with this story, Lal went with a plan to John Lincoln and Sulieman and Black-board Teach and Mr. Travers as they sat at a council of war about their camp-fire.

They listened attentively to Lal, his story, and his plan.

(What will be the fate of Suini Baba when Lal's plan is carried into action? You will find next week's grand instalment of this powerful serial most thrilling, so make certain of your GEM right now.)

## 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 Queen's Park Rangers 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 "Queen's Park Rangers" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach this address not later than THURSDAY, April 5th, 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.

I enter "QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS" COMPETITION, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

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**"THE HONOUR OF HIS CLUB!"**

(Continued from page 22.)

The young player-manager blinked dazedly about him, and gave a wry smile.

"It's my arm," he said ruefully. "I've twisted it, I think."

"Better come off," the trainer said. "It'll want attention."

Jack nodded assent; and, pausing only to assure Slade that the charge he had received had been a perfectly fair one, he walked towards the grand-stand with Bill Johnson supporting him by his injured arm.

The game proceeded; but, although handicapped by the loss of their centre-forward, five minutes from time found Vale Athletic still holding their own in spite of their opponents' persistent attacks. Then, as Burns punched away from a corner-kick, the spectators, who since Jack Thorpe had left the field had been very much subdued, let out a terrific roar.

"Good old Jack!"  
 "Here's the bonnie boy!"  
 "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

In spite of the fact that his arm had been heavily bandaged, and still pained him, the young player-manager had insisted on being allowed to return to the field. And now, as he trotted on to the pitch with the cheers ringing in his ears, he was satisfied that Vale Athletic was indeed back into favour with the local sportsmen.

The ball had landed at Fry's feet, and the winger was making headway down the pitch when Jack looked round to see

how play went. Then he raced down the field, and was well in with the other players before the Wanderers' goal when the outside-left sent in his centre. Half a dozen heads went up. Jack leaped above the rest of them as the ball descended. His bullet head met the leather, sending it into the back of the net.

And that goal won Vale Athletic the match, for hardly had the game been restarted than Mr. Stern blew full time.

"Good old Vale!"  
 "Never mind, the Wanderers!"  
 "Chair them!"  
 The spectators swarmed on to the field.

And when at last they were put down before the aperture leading to the dressing-rooms they were well-nigh exhausted, but, for all that, extremely happy. And Jack Thorpe was the happiest of them all, for he didn't want any further proof as to the popularity of his club than had been given them during their match with Wallborough Wanderers.

THE END.

(Look out for another thrilling adventure of the Six Stalwart Chums of Thunder Creek: "JIM RAVEN'S LUCK!" A gripping story of the Wild West.)

**THE "WEDNESDAY" PICTURE COMPETITION RESULT!**

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

- G. PURDEY,  
9, Rosedale Road,  
Richmond,  
Surrey,
- DORA WILLIAMSON,  
39, Willoughby Street,  
Gainsborough.

So many competitors qualified for the third grade of prizes that division among them of the prizes offered was impracticable. The second prize of £2 10s. and the ten prizes of 5s. each have therefore been added together and divided among the following sixteen competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

- Peter Wood, 21, Pleasance, Edinburgh;
- W. A. Ellsey, 97, Carlton Terrace, Radcliffe, Manchester;
- Cyrit H. Horton, Rodford, West-terleigh, Chipping Sodbury, Glos;
- Mrs. McMahon, 35 Macclesfield Street, Chester Road, Hulme, Manchester;
- Henry Urquhart, 115, Cawseywayend, Aberdeen;
- E. Nunns, 1, Alexandra Road, Windermere;
- James Russell, 44, Norman Street, Glasgow, E.;
- Cecil Winslow, 6, Fairfield Terrace, Douglas, I.O.M.;
- Wm. Mustoe, 5, School Lane, Cirencester;
- R. B. Curtis, Hillside, Taplow, Bucks;
- Norman Reed, 48, Northcote Road, Clapham Junction, S.W. 11;
- David Johnstone, 30, Martin Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow;
- Miss D. Stephenson, 68, Keppel Road, East Ham, E.;
- Fred Archer, 96, Humberstone Road, Plaistow, E. 13;
- Leslie Tapscott, 141, Coronation Avenue, Stoke Newington, N. 16;
- S. Walker, 26, Padwell Road, Southampton.

SOLUTION.

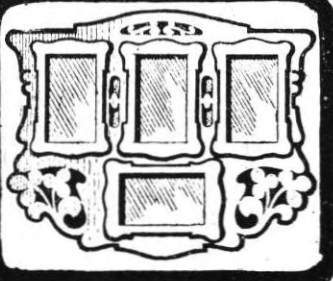
The Wednesday is an ancient club, for it began in the '60's, 15 years before football properly took root in the provinces. Like many other well-known clubs, the Wednesday has had several homes, and its association with the Cup competition has been long and honourable.

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Address all letters: *The Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.*

My dear Chums,—Next week's tip-top yarn of St. Jim's carries on with the stirring adventures of Lynn. The title of this winner is indicative of what is happening.

**"GAME TO THE LAST!"**

Look out for this gripping story in next Wednesday's GEM. It shows the stuff the fellow has in him. From the very first there has been no nonsense about Lynn. He knows his own mind, and when he has decided on a certain course of action he sticks to it with bulldog tenacity. We know how he slipped into the post of danger, and came into collision with Mr. Ratcliff. Of course, St. Leger does not quite like the business, but this is an instance once again of the stronger will prevailing. Lynn will have his own way; he thinks he sees duty in it, and so he goes right ahead with the programme, so to speak; he has arranged. He is a perfect whale for taking the blame. On this special occasion he also takes to burning his boats in the good old style, and, in order to put

it out of the power of St. Leger to chip in, Lynn comes to a determination of a very sensational kind. I confidently recommend next week's story. It is outstanding in merit, and a thoroughly worthy carry-on of the fine traditions of St. Jim's.

**"THE ROYAL SPECIAL!"**

In this dramatic tale of the Anthony Sharpe series, which is proving such a tremendous draw for all GEM readers, the stage is held principally by Tim O'Carroll. The story deals with an audacious hold-up—not the usual sort of attack on a train, by any means, but a plot abounding with daring, originality, and spirit. Your opinion of the resourceful Tim will be high. The plucky youngster stands in well, and his bravery and grit come in mighty useful.

**"JIM RAVEN'S LUCK!"**

The chums of Thunder Creek are to the fore once more in this grand piece of Western fiction. We have been thrilled by

the part they have played thus far; everything they set their hands to may not turn out trumps—that is not to be expected—but they are always on the right track, as witness their action in the case of Paterson and his jolly youngster. But that is by the way. In the coming tale we have an affair with Corporal Nevin, and a new railway enterprise, where the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek get work.

**ST. BEOWULF'S!**

Our serial by Duncan Storm is going ahead at high pressure, and the instalment which will be in your hands next Wednesday beats the best. For there is a pulsating intensity about it, and the perils the chums meet in El Took's country, surpass anything Duncan Storm has yet put down on paper for all who run to read.

**THE TUCK HAMPER.**

This week's GEM contains the awards in the great Tuck Hamper Competition. In a race many run, but all cannot win, and yet those who have not brought off victory this time may have better luck on the next occasion. I have some splendid surprises in preparation. Don't let disappointment get hold of you if your name is not down. Remember that the future is crammed full of good things just like a tuck hamper itself. By the way, send in attempts on postcards. The p.c. is a useful affair, and is roomy enough to contain the best storyette that the wit of anybody ever devised.

**A TIP!**

Don't miss this week's issue of our splendid Companion Paper, the "Boys' Friend." It's really top-hole!

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