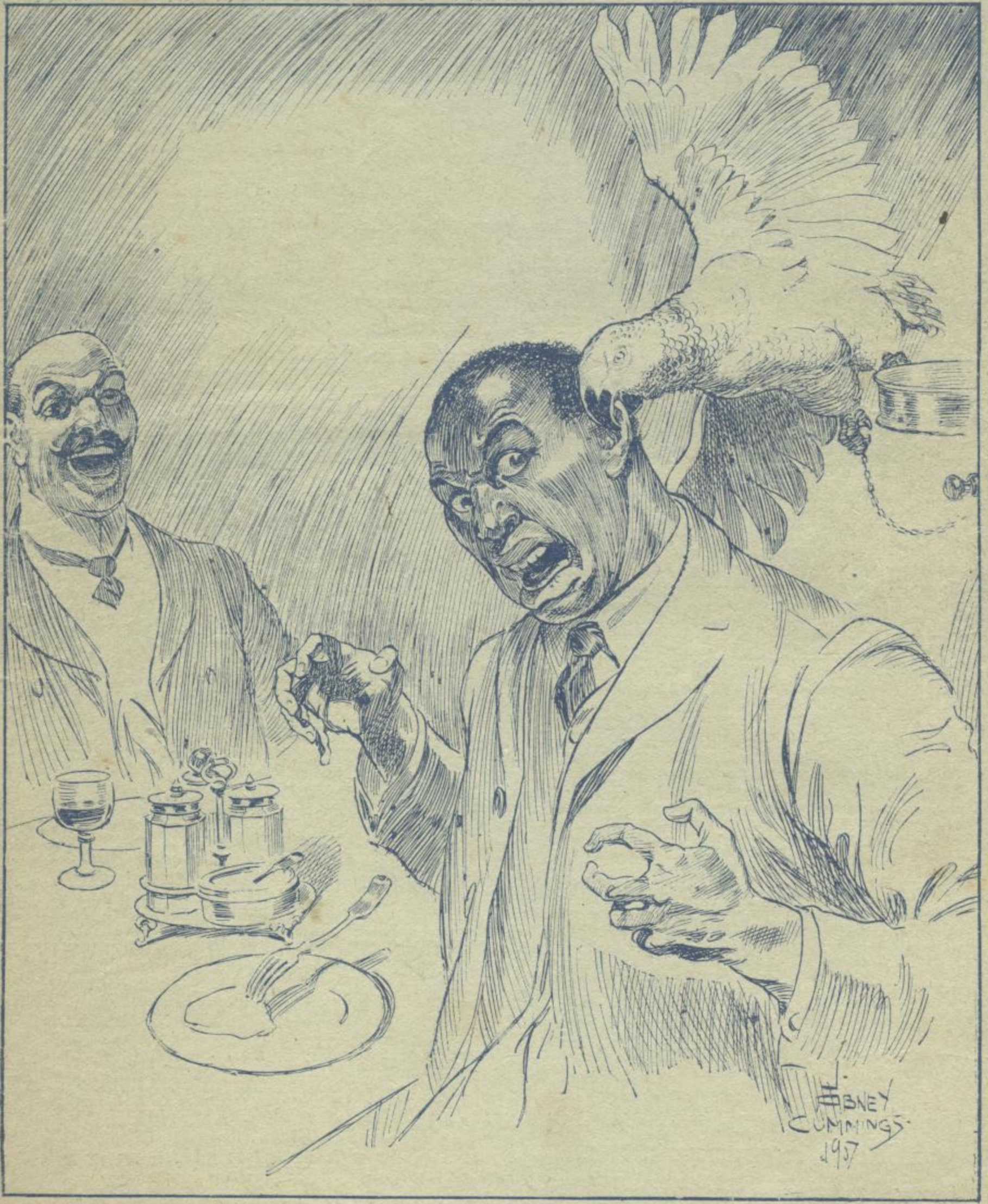


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## "DE MAJOR"

A Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.

### CHAPTER I.

**Pete is Objected to—He Gives His Opinions—The Parrot's First Bite—He Laughs Best who Laughs Last—The Major Nearly Loses His Nose and Quite**

**Loses His Dinner—The Mysterious Stranger.**

**I**n an hotel in Deeyah, a town on the western shore of India, sat Major Spoffin, who was a very big man both in size and importance. In the latter respect he was an enormous man, in his own estimation. What he had done in time of war and in time of peace was simply marvellous. If you had only believed a quarter of what he told you, you must have come to the conclusion that such men as Wellington and Napoleon were not in it. At the present moment Major Spoffin was talking to Ara, the Hindu waiter, a tall, handsome fellow, with large dark eyes.

"You say there are passengers from the vessel?" demanded Spoffin, twirling his moustache, and frowning at Ara as though he had done him a personal injury.

"Yes, sahib, there are three. They give their names as Jack, Sam, and Pete, and they have a dog with them that they call Rory. I am not at all sure of that dog. He is at present fighting with ours, and the one they call Pete is gravely shaking his head, and telling them that it is wrong to fight. They have made arrangements to stay at this hotel, and as they have paid a large sum in advance the proprietor is quite satisfied."

"I shall expect them to behave themselves," said Major Spoffin sternly. "I will have no nonsense at any hotel where I am staying."

"I hope not, sahib," exclaimed Ara.

"You hope not, fellow! I say I will not allow it. Do you think that I am going to be annoyed?"

"Sahib, if you ask my candid opinion on that point, I fear you will be. But here they come. The fight is evidently at an end, which appears to me to be a very good thing for our dog, who was decidedly getting the worst of it. Pete is the negro, sahib."

"What!" roared Major Spoffin, leaping to his feet. "Do you think that I—Major Spoffin—am going to associate with a nigger? Take him away, waiter. I object to niggers!"

"Waitah," cried Pete, exactly mimicking the major's voice and action, "take him away. I object to majahs. I would rader

dine wid a gorilla or one ob de oder species ob monkeys. Frow him into de dusthole along wid de oder rubbish!"

"Hound of a nigger!" yelled Spoffin, bringing his fist down on the table with a force that so frightened a large grey parrot that was on a perch by the window that it commenced to scream. "How dare you address me thus, fellow? How dare you, I say?"

"My dear old hoss," exclaimed Pete, "don't you get excited. I didn't address you. I only told Ara to fling you on de dustheap, 'cos I don't like majahs. Dey ain't any good in de world, and we hab to find de money for deir food and liveries. I shouldn't wonder if dat suit you are wearing now also came out ob de ratepayers' pockets, although it ain't uniform livery. I dunno weder we allow you plain clothes as well as your livery, but I shouldn't be a bit surprised if we do. If not, it is a bad job for de tailors, 'cos majahs don't pay twice as a rule; in fact, I hab heard tell dat some ob dem don't pay once."

"I, who have travelled about the whole world, have never been so insulted in my life. I have cut down a man with my sword for far less insult than that, and I flogged the biggest man in my regiment for saluting me in an improper manner. Do you fondly imagine that an officer who has fought in twenty engagements and never yet been conquered is going to submit to this gross impertinence? Ara!"

"Sahib, I am at your commands."

"Silence, fellow; I know you are! Go into the hall and bring me my riding-whip. Quick, I say! If you dare to disobey me I will lay it about your own shoulders."

Ara spread out his hands, as much as to say that he was helpless in the matter, then he reluctantly went into the hall to obey the order. Pete had already tipped him, and he did not want to obey it at all. All the same, he would rather Pete was flogged by the great man than himself, so he brought the whip in.

"I may just waru you, Major Spoffin," said Jack, "that you will get a most frightful flogging if you dare to lay a hand on my friend Pete. He could pitch you through that window with the greatest ease if he chose, or knock you sillier than you are with one blow of his fist."

"Do you think I am the sort of man to submit to insults, sir?" demanded the major, climbing down a little; for now that he came to look at Pete he saw that he promised to be a very awkward customer.

"It was you who insulted him in the first place."

"Why, you must be demented, young man! How could I insult a nigger?"

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"I should say you would be quite capable of insulting anyone," retorted Jack.

"You had better be careful what you say to me, sir."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Jack. "You surely do not think that you will frighten us with your overbearing manner. If you do, I assure you that you are making a very great mistake, and one that may cost you dearly!"

"I repeat what I have already said. I will not allow a nigger in my presence."

"Then your only remedy is to clear out," laughed Jack, "because we intend to remain here as long as we like."

"I am quite willing to associate with you on equal terms, but—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Dat's a good one, Jack! De old boss doesn't mind associating wid you on equal terms. You ought to be bery tankful to him for his condescension. Gib us your hand, majah! I'm mighty glad to see dat you ain't at all proud; de only ting is weder Jack is willing to associate wid you. If he is, I would advise him to keep a sharp look ober you, 'cos you don't look quite as honest as I should like to see you; and it would be a pity for Jack to get robbed ob his money. I neber would trust majahs. Dey are such mighty shifty persons."

"Be careful, fellow!" cried the major sternly. "Don't you venture to go too far with me."

"Nunno! I ain't going any way, 'cos, if you will excuse me for saying so, I shouldn't care to be seen too much in your company. Your personal appearance ain't exactly dat ob a gentleman, dough wid dose swell clothes I admit dat you might pass in a crowd. I tink, waiter, dat you had better serve up dinner. P'r'aps when de majah has got someting inside him he may get a little better tempered and sensible; and we hab got de consolation ob knowing dat he can't get worse tempered and stupider. De man wants stuffing, like de pigs dey fatten up for Christmas. Poor dear majah! It is to be hoped dat you ain't got a wife, for her sake, unless she happens to be a big lady who can gib you socks when you get extra stupid."

"You insolent vagabond!" roared Spoffin. "You ought to be hanged! In fact, if I have much more of your impertinence, I shall order my men to hang you. It would be a good riddance to the world."

"You tink so, old boss? Bery well, seeing dat you hab decided dat matter to your satisfaction, let's come and hab a talk to dis oder animal. Can de parrot talk, Ara? I'm particularly fond ob parrots."

"No, sahib," answered Ara, "the bird cannot talk; but—"

"Oh, you lying Hindu!" came a voice apparently from the parrot. It was due to Pete's ventriloquism, as a matter of fact, but it sounded exactly as though it was the bird that had spoken.

"Murder! The bird must be bewitched!" gasped Ara. "I have never heard it say so much before."

"M'yes! Seems to be rader a sensible sort ob talker, too, don't it? Knows what it is saying. I'll try and teach dat bird to sing. It's a ting dat requires a lot ob patience, but it won't be de first parrot I hab taught to speak. I used to train wild beasts once. If you like, Ara, I will take de majah in hand, and see if I can train him for you. I should hab to use de whip to him, 'cos he's an obstinate sort ob a beast, and I don't tink you could possibly train him wid kindness. Now for de parrot!" "Tis years since last we met," sang Pete. The parrot favoured him with a contemptuous gaze, and Pete kept singing those words until he drove the major into such a state of fury that he threatened to brain him with the poker.

"You be quiet, old boss!" said Pete. "I ain't teaching you; I'm teaching de parrot, and you must hab patience wid a job-like dat. When I hab sung dose words about free or four hundred times he will start singing dem. I want him to catch de exact tune. I do wish you would stop laughing, Jack. Don't you see I hab got enough trouble wid de parrot and de majah widout habing you laughing at me."

Then Pete started afresh, and he was most exasperatingly persevering. He had certainly a grand voice, but when he had sung the words about a hundred times they became slightly monotonous. Jack and Sam stood it all

right, but the major fumed up and down the room, abusing Pete in every possible way he could think of; in fact, at last he became so exasperated that he clenched his fist, and, shaking it in Pete's face, threatened to knock his head off his shoulders if he did not desist.

"Tis years since last we met," sang Pete again, without taking the slightest notice of the infuriated man.

"Waiter," roared Major Spoffin, "you will either turn that nigger out of the room, or I shall leave this hotel!"

"Sahib," exclaimed the polite Ara, "I fear you will have to leave the hotel." He knew it was impossible for him to do so, because there was no other place in the town where he could have stopped at. "The coloured gentleman is far too strong for me to attempt to turn away; besides, I have neither the authority nor inclination to do so. My employer has taken him in, and here he will have to stay, unless you can induce him to leave of his own accord—a thing that I should say would be unlikely, considering that he has paid money in advance for his rooms. Dinner is served, gentlemen!"

Major Spoffin brightened up a little. It occurred to him that Pete would desist while he ate his food, but that worthy placed the parrot's perch just behind his own chair, and between his mouthfuls he kept on singing those words in exactly the same key. The major, who was seated opposite him, handled his knife as though he would have liked to stick it into him. The monotonous words took his appetite away, because they made him so furious.

"You'm eating a fearful lot, old boss," said Pete, after Spoffin had given him a piece of his mind. "I dunno weder you hab got de money to pay for it; but if I was Ara I should want dat money in advance. Yah, yah, yah! I wouldn't trust majahs unless I had dem chained up. 'Tis years— Hi, golly! De animal has got my ear dis time. Woorooh! Take it off!"

Perhaps that bird had got as tired of the singing as had the major; at any rate, it spread out its wings, and reaching far over, seized Pete's ear with its beak, while, judging by Pete's yells, it bit fearfully hard.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the major. "I'm glad! Ha, ha, ha! I'm thundering glad!"

"Den I ain't, old boss," growled Pete, getting free. "I'm more inclined to be sorry. De bird must hab been trying to get a bit ob one ob de ears since last we met. Golly! It bites worse dan unboiled lobsters. It would be a capital bird to use for piercing ladies' ears. Still, I'm determined to teach it to sing."

Then Pete went on with his task, until at last the major leapt to his feet, and, seizing the large perch, commenced to carry it from the room.

Now that parrot could be gentle enough with those it knew and cared for; but it hated strangers in any shape or form. Besides, no doubt, it resented the indignity of being turned out of the room.

Major Spoffin took the precaution of holding it at arms' length; but it had a fine length of reach, and, fluttering forwards, it fastened its hooked beak in the major's rather prominent nose, while the row he made was really extraordinary.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Mind you don't hurt de poor bird, old boss. Be bery gentle wid it."

"Woohooh!" hooted the man of war, leaping about the room, and sprawling across the table. "Perdition!"

The parrot seemed to know that if it let go it might have a nasty tumble, for it was no good at flying; so it held on, and the perch was dragged over, as it was secured to the bird's foot by a chain.

Pete dexterously caught the perch as it was falling, and shifted it close to the table, so that the parrot should have freedom of action and fairplay. It flapped its wings in the gravy of an entree, and spurted brown gravy all down Major Spoffin's white shirt and waistcoat, also all over his face; then it released its hold of his nose, and hopped back on its perch, which Pete replaced behind his chair, though at a safer distance this time.

"Yah, yah, yah! Ain't dat mighty funny, boys? Golly! I-tought it was going to pull de major's nose off. Yah, yah, yah! Scuse my laughing at you, majah, but if you-knew how mighty funny you looked, you would start laughing at yourself. Don't you waggle dat nose 'bout so much, else you will hab it off, to a certainty."

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Yah, yah, yah! I believe de bird has made it two-free inches longer, and I'm mighty certain it has made it two-free shades redder."

Spoffin's nose was bleeding, and it was frightfully painful. It felt to him as though it had been bitten nearly through, and his fury knew no bounds. Rushing to the fireplace, he seized the poker, and hurled it with all his strength at the unfortunate parrot. Had the missile struck the bird, all Pete's tuition would have been wasted; but the poker missed its mark by about an inch, and one end of the weapon smashed the marble clock, while the other end splintered the pierglass.

"Yah, yah, yah! Hab anoder frow, old hoss," cried Pete. "You may do better next time. And I don't see how you are going to do worse, unless you smash de whole room up. Yah, yah, yah! Talk 'bout free shies a penny after dis little lot. Nunno! You ain't getting to close quarters wid dat bird, dough I must say I tink he fights better at close quarters."

"Stand aside, you ruffian!" howled the major. "I swear I will wring its neck!"

"How do you suppose I'm going to teach a parrot dat has had its neck wrung?" inquired Pete, pushing the angry man back. "'Tis years since last we met."

"You hound!" yelled Spoffin. "If you don't stand out of the way I will blow your brains out!"

"I reckon you will do nothing of the sort," said Sam, whipping out his revolver, and covering the infuriated man.

"Lower your weapon, fellow!" snarled the major, shifting about in a manner that gave the impression he was not much good under fire.

"Well, that's easily done," said Sam; "only you have got to remember that I can draw it again just as easily, and you can bet I shall draw it just a second quicker than you will draw yours. Bear this in mind. If you were to draw a weapon on my friend, there would be some sharp shooting, and it is very seldom that I miss my mark."

"Do you think that I, a gentleman, will be treated in this manner by three ruffians?"

"It seems to me you brought it all on yourself by your ridiculous airs," retorted Sam. "Of course, the fact of the parrot having bitten your nose has nothing to do with us. If Pete says he will not allow you to kill it, you can make up your mind that you will have to obey him. Besides, it would be a brutally stupid thing to do. The bird doesn't know any better. It simply got frightened, and naturally bit."

"Yah, yah, yah! Yes, Sammy, dat bird bit," said Pete. "You see, it ain't a dog dat is only allowed one bite. I don't tink dere are any restrictions on a parrot's bite, but he may hab just as many as he can conveniently get in. He's got in two dis time, and I must say I would rader he had got dem bof at de majah. Still, sometimes you don't get as much as you want in dis world, and sometimes you get a bit more. I got de bit more dan I wanted dat time. You had better come and finish your dinner, old hoss. You hab got in a frightful state ob stew gravy, and I tink you will be wise to change your clothes before you continue de dinner."

"You viper! I'll punish you for this!" snarled Spoffin, striding from the room to take Pete's advice about changing his clothes.

He was a tremendous swell, and thought far too much of his personal appearance to sit down in that state. All the same, it was a very silly move, for the way Pete went into that dinner was surprising. Ara knew that there would be a shortage for the major. There had been considerable difficulty in supplying dinner for four at such short notice; but he had hoped it would go round. As soon as he saw Pete commence to eat, he had come to the conclusion that it would not go round.

As Ara was a man of sound common-sense, he felt it would be better to disappoint the major, who never thought of tipping him, than to disappoint the three comrades, one of whom had already tipped him handsomely. This was Pete's invariable custom, because he always said it was no good tipping a waiter when leaving an hotel; the proper thing to do was to tip him first, so as to insure the very best attention.

He got the attention all right, though Ara foresaw difficulties and unpleasantness when the major returned.

That worthy was a very long time in changing his damaged clothes. Perhaps he thought that he was delaying the dinner, and so annoying the comrades; but this was a great mistake, for by the time he came down Pete had got through all the dishes, and, what is more, he had finished them all off; while now he was finishing a huge fruit-tart, Jack and Sam having refused any more of it.

"I'll take de dish, boys," exclaimed Pete. "It saves all de trouble ob carving. I tell you what it is. If we stay at dis hotel dere's got to be more food. I believe I'm as hungry as when I started!"

"Bring me up my dinner, waiter!" snarled Spoffin.

"Dinner, sir?" exclaimed Ara, looking extremely surprised. "I was under the impression that you had finished your dinner."

"You lying rascal! You know that I only had a little soup."

"Sorry, sahib. I am extremely sorry. It was quite a mistake; only, you see, my impression was that you had finished, and this gentleman of colour has got such an extraordinary appetite, that he has really consumed the dinner, aided, of course, by his friends and the dog, who also had an excellent appetite, and likes the very best. It is unfortunate."

"Fellow, what do you mean?"

"That it is unfortunate, sahib, that their appetites are so large, and that you had not finished dinner. Now, for breakfast——"

"Hang the breakfast, you insolent rascal! I want my dinner, and I will have it!"

"Most unfortunate," murmured Ara, sighing. "These things will occur in life. I am merely a waiter, bound by my employer's orders. What would you have me do, sahib?"

"Why, serve up my dinner, you infamous rascal! If you do not, it will be the worse for you."

"Sahib, you are asking impossibilities. The proprietor, if anyone, is to blame. I have no food; the cook has no food."

"Send up the proprietor."

"See here, Spoffin," exclaimed Pete, finishing off the last of the pie, "you can't eat him. It ain't legal to turn cannibal. You must wait for breakfast. You ain't got anoder pie, Ara?"

"Another! What? By my life, it is wonderful!"

"Well, bring up some brem-cheese. I ain't going to bed hungry. It's a frightful ting for de digestion. Enough is as good as a feast, as Wagglepeare says. Well, so it is; but I ain't had enough yet! Bring up some brem-cheese!"

Pete made a fresh start, and Ara, seeing the way he went for the cheese, ventured to suggest that Spoffin should finish his dinner with those viands; but the major only stormed at the suggestion, and vowed that he would have a proper dinner.

Ara went below, and interviewed the man-cook, who was putting on his coat preparatory to going out.

"It will be necessary for you to remain in to-night," murmured Ara. "The major swears by his father's beard that he will have some dinner."

"What do you think he would like?"

"Nothing in this wide world to-night. His temper is too bad."

"Then go up and tell him that nothing is exactly what he will get. If he chooses to behave himself like a brute beast he must feed like one, and get his food when he can. I am cooking nothing more to-night."

"But you must. There will be murder in the house!"

"That matters nothing. I shall not be in it. My time for returning is eleven o'clock, and that is the exact time I shall be in, if I do not happen to be late. In that case you can sit up for me, and then perhaps we will do a little cooking for our own suppers."

"There is wisdom in your words."

"And there will be suppers in our mouths; but there will be no dinner for that military man until to-morrow night. Tell him I say so, and that what I say I mean. Farewell!"

And the cook went, leaving the unfortunate Ara to bear the brunt of it. Ara thought for some moments, then he seated himself in a chair and thought a little more. His master was out, and not expected to return

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that night, so there was nothing to fear in that direction; nor did he trouble himself much about the bell, which was being rung violently. But presently he heard footsteps descending the stairs; then he bolted out of the back door, and, dodging round the building, slipped in by the front one.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "you will oblige me if you will not mention that I have been here! That major is by no means safe. He once prodded me with his sword, a thing I do not like. I heard him coming, and so I went. Ah, here he comes again; so I will go again, and you will greatly oblige me by not mentioning that I have been here!"

"All right, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "Only when you hab anoder rush up, just bring a little more ob dis cheese. It's mighty good!"

"As I live, there is not another piece in the house!" gasped Ara, bolting from the room, and rushing into the major's arms.

"Pardon, sahib! In my hurry to answer your ringing—"

"Your hurry, your vagabond! I have been ringing for the last ten minutes, and you have not taken the slightest notice of the bell."

"All the fault of the cook, for whom I have been searching. He is out, sahib, and there is absolutely nothing in the house."

"Then bring me some bread and cheese, you scoundrel!"

"Sorry, sahib! The gentleman of colour is just putting the last piece of cheese we have in the house into his mouth. There is bread, and, I think, some butter; but you will find that in a liquid state, owing to the great heat. Bread dipped in it is nice, only I am not at all sure that there is any more bread, and melted butter alone is not nice. Ah, here comes your friend Sahar, sahib!"

"Bring up brandy and cigars, you rascal! I will make you sorry for this when your master returns!" cried Spoffin, as a tall, strikingly handsome young man entered the hotel.

His eyes were very dark, and of extraordinary brilliancy. Jack thought he had never seen such wonderful eyes before, as they were fixed on his. It almost seemed to him that the handsome young stranger was reading his thoughts. He appeared to be a man of about five-and-twenty, and he stood a full six feet in height, while he was proportionately built. He carried no weapons—at least none were visible—and he treated Spoffin with great respect. But all the time he was speaking those wonderful dark eyes were fixed upon the comrades. Possibly Spoffin wanted to show his authority over this striking-looking stranger, for he spoke of matters that appeared to be of a private nature.

"You think this rebel chief Gohore is still on the hills?" demanded Spoffin.

"I feel quite sure of it," answered Sahar.

"His capture should be an easy matter."

"Ah, that remains to be proved!"

"I shall bring my men up, and surround him. Unless he surrenders he will be shot down."

"I think he will be shot down."

"So much the better. Have you seen anything of that beautiful girl, Lea?"

"Now, see here, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "Your duty is to catch rebel chiefs, and I should say you would be as likely to do it as de little boy who tried to catch sparrows by putting salt upon deir tails. You stick to your duty, and neber mind about Lea or any oder beautiful girl, else I shall court-martial you, and order you two dozen lashes."

"You insolent dog of a nigger!" snarled Spoffin. "I will give you a lesson that you are not likely to forget. I will teach you that you cannot insult a gentleman and an officer with impunity!"

"Yah, yah, yah! You gib yourself a better character dan de world is likely to gib. Should say you would be about de only person who could mistake de majah for a gentleman. But neber mind, old hoss! We shall be here for two-free days, so dat you will be able to take a pattern from Jack's manners, and dis may help you in trying to become a gentleman in your manners. Good-night, old hoss! If your room is anywhere near mine I

hope you don't snore. I'll take de parrot up, and start teaching it in de dark. I tink it will be safer in my room dan down here. I dunno what you will hab to pay for de damage you hab done, but I don't 'spect it will be more dan fifteen or twenty pounds. Yah, yah, yah! Makes me laugh when I tink ob dat!"

Then Pete left the room with the parrot and the perch, and the major threatened him with all sorts of things.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Pete Gets a Crack on the Head—Avenged by a Parrot—The Major's Vengeance Ends in a Fiasco—How Pete Laughed Last.

AS the major's ill-luck would have it, his room was next to Pete's, and what was worse was that the walls were thin. It would have been quite easy to have carried on a conversation from one room to the other. Pete did not do this, but he carried on a conversation with that parrot, and it was most exasperating to the major. For quite an hour Pete sat up in bed, smoking his pipe, and singing between his teeth, "'Tis years since last we met," and by that time Spoffin was nearly distracted. He caught himself humming the first bar of the tune after Pete.

The parrot put its head amongst the feathers on its back, and went to sleep; but as Pete was teaching it in the dark, he did not know this. He was wonderfully patient when teaching a parrot, but he couldn't get that one to utter a sound, and when Spoffin commenced to hammer at the wall, and shout out abusive things at him, he supplied the parrot's voice with his ventriloquism. Spoffin really believed he had taught the bird to talk, but Pete knew better. The parrot had not uttered a sound since it had been in the room.

However, Spoffin got the benefit of the double voice now. First of all it seemed to come from Pete, and then from the parrot, and those two voices drove the unfortunate major on the confines of madness.

Pete could not sleep because the night was fearfully hot, and mosquitoes troubled him considerably; but neither the heat nor the mosquitoes troubled him anything like his double voice troubled Spoffin. The man simply raved, and threatened to come in and shoot Pete if he did not stop. Even Jack and Sam could hear the noise in their rooms, and the major's yells made them laugh.

"I wish you would stop dat noise, old hoss!" bawled Pete. "How do you 'spect me to teach dis bird, if you keep bawling? You'm de noisfest man I hab eber slept next door to."

"You villain! I don't want you to teach the bird. How dare you make—"

"'Tis years since last we met!"

"Make this abominable row!"

"It's you dat's making de noise. I'm only teaching de bird."

"It's bad enough when you teach it in the daytime, but I won't stand it at night. I vow I will not. I will have you kicked out of the hotel first thing to-morrow morning."

"'Tis years since last we met!" sang Pete. And he kept up that fearful refrain, making the parrot appear to answer it every time, for at least a couple of hours. Then his voice became drowsy, and Spoffin got into bed, in the vain hope that at last he was going to get to sleep. But such was not to be his good fortune, for Pete's singing had scarcely ceased when his snoring commenced. It was worse than the singing, and, springing out of bed, Spoffin seized the poker; then he hammered at the wall until Pete's snoring ceased. But he had scarcely got into bed again, when it recommenced louder than ever.

This time Spoffin seized his stick, and made his way to Pete's room, the door of which was unlocked.

It was a moonlight night, and as Spoffin opened the door, he could plainly see the noisy sleeper. Stealing up to the bed, he caught Pete a frightful crack over the head; then he commenced to belabour him in a manner that caused him to howl with pain.

"Hi, golly!" yelled Pete, leaping on his assailant, and bowling him over to the floor. "Where's all dis coming

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"Woooh!" hooted the man of war, leaping about the room as the parrot fastened its hooked beak in his rather prominent nose. (See page 174.)

from? Why, it's de majah! Now see here, old hoss, you ain't got de right to come into my room in de dead ob night and knock a poor nigger about. Do you tink I hab got no feelings?"

"Get off my chest, you dastardly villain!" gasped Spoffin, who began to think that his action had been unwise. "How dare you make such a noise in the middle of the night!"

"Well, dat's a good one, I must say!" exclaimed Pete. "I was fast asleep! How could I be making a noise when I was fast asleep?"

"With your snoring, you ruffian. You make more noise asleep than awake, and that's saying a good deal. Will you let me get up? Mind I don't hurt you!"

"Den all I can say is dat you hab succeeded widout wanting to do it!" growled Pete. "You can't bang a nigger ober de head wid a thick stick, and all ober de body wid de stick aforesaid, widout hurting him."

"I don't care—"

"Nunno! It's for me to do de caring part ob de business. You see, I'm de one who has suffered de pain so far, and I'm just waiting for dat pain to leabe me, den I shall commence to make you suffer some pain, so dat you can see how it feels."

"Let me get up!"

"You hab my full permission to get up if you can. Ob course, if you can't get up, den you must lie where you

are till I get up. I ain't nearly ready yet; still, as you are all comfortable, lying on de floor, you ain't got any cause to grumble."

"I am not comfortable, you silly rascal! You are crushing my chest!"

"Dat ain't ob any consequence. All you will hab to do when I let you up is to draw two-free long briefs, and den de chest will be blown out again just like an air-ball. It stands to reason dat if you come into my room in de dead ob night, and whack at me wid a stick, you must expect to get hurt directly de pain ob my blow ceases."

"What is the matter, Pete?" inquired Jack, entering the room accompanied by Sam. They had heard Spoffin's door open, and, fearing foul play, had hurried to their comrade.

"Well, dere ain't anyting exactly de matter, boys," answered Pete. "Dis man couldn't sleep, and so he has come into my room and started whacking me wid dat stick, and it hurt."

"Ha, ha, ha! That is very strange!"

"Yes, Jack; and it was very painful, too, while it lasted. De pain is getting better now, and directly it gets quite well dis man's pain is going to commence. He wants to get up, but dat is one ob de tings dat I don't care about him doing; so I'm just sitting on his chest until I hab recovered my lost spirits and feel in good order to gib him de pain he requires. You see, what I

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want to convince him is dat it ain't safe to come in my room in de dead ob night and start whacking me. Dere's no telling when a man like dis gets roaming about in de dead ob night weder he mayn't steal some ob your money. You can't trust majahs ob his breed. Dey ain't at all safe when valuables are lying about."

"I will be the death of you if you don't get off me!" cried Spoffin.

"Did you eber hear such a ridiculous ting in all your lives, boys? How can de man be de deaf ob me when I'm sitting on his chest, especially as he can't shift me off it? I'm rader inclined to sit on him for de remainder ob de night. I tink he is safer in dis position dan roaming about de hotel, and he's just as comfortable as if he was in his own bed."

"I reckon he looks it!" laughed Sam. "Your weight is making him red in the face."

"Dat may be, Sammy; but he ain't as red in de face as he will be directly I start gibing him de pain he requires."

This threat frightened the major. He shouted for help; but although the cook and Ara heard him distinctly, they were not so stupid as to come to his rescue. In the first place, they would not have had the slightest chance against the three comrades, and in the second they did not care in the slightest whether the major got hurt or not. So they let him go on shouting for the help that was never to come to him, while the comrades laughed at his futile efforts to rise. While Pete calmly sat on his chest, with his long legs on either side, he gazed calmly at his face, distorted with passion, and lectured him on the error of his ways.

"You ain't got de right to disturb a nigger in his sleep, old hoss! It would hab been bad enough to disturb Jack or Sammy, but when you come to disturb a superior black nigger—why, de matter becomes mighty serious, specially for you. Now I dunno weder you would like me to flog you for your bad behaviour. Tink you would like to be flogged?"

"Let me get up, you villain!"

"Dey always say dat silence gibbs consent, so I tink de man would like to be flogged. Do you tink dat would be de best cistern ob punishing him, Jack?"

"Well, perhaps under the circumstances that your snore gave him great provocation, you might let him down a little lighter."

"But I tink de man wants to be flogged, Jack. He ought to be punished in de way he prefers. A good flogging won't do him any harm, and dere's always de chance dat it may do him some good. Do you want to be flogged, Spoffin?"

"Of course I don't, you mad idiot!"

"Look at dat, now! De man says he doesn't want it. I must hurt him somehow, and I don't quite see how I am going to do it unless I flog him. Seeing dat he is only dressed in tartjamas—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I think you mean pyjamas," said Jack.

"Yes, I tink it is pie-jamas. I remembered de word by jam-tart, and got it a bit wrong in its beginning part. Well, seeing de man has only got pyjamas on, I should tink a flogging would be about as efficacious as any oder road ob hurting him. What do you tink de best way ob hurting him would be, Jack?"

"Don't you think you have punished him enough by sitting on him?"

"Golly! Dat's no punishment at all!" declared Pete. "I'm only sitting on him to prevent him from excaping. Nunno! He's got to be much more severely punished dan dat. Just you strike a light, and I will consider de matter. It is one dat must be decided after due deliberation. I ain't going to hurry my decision in any manner; so dat if you hab no objection, I will get you to remain in your present position until I gib de verdict."

Spoffin tried threats and entreaties; they neither had any effect on Pete, however. He had been badly hurt with the stick, and felt like getting a little of his own back; therefore he sat on his prisoner and coolly discussed all sorts of methods of hurting him.

"I know!" he cried at last. "I'm going to turn de man into a bird. He can't do so much harm as a bird."

"How are you going to turn him into a bird?" laughed Jack.

"Dat's easy enough, Jack," said Pete. "When I say

de man has got to be turned into a bird—why, it stands to reason it will be done. Now, den, Spoffin, you can consider dat you are going to be a dear little dicky-bird for de remainder ob your life, and I hab got a lump on my noddle as big as dat bird's egg. Dis way to London!"

Spoffin struggled with all his strength, but it was no good against Pete's. That worthy got his arm round his shoulders and legs, then, lifting him up, doubled him up slightly.

"Yah, yah, yah! Makes me laugh when I tink ob turning de man into a dicky-bird. You will hab to hop about for de rest ob your life and pick up crumbs; den you will hab to sleep on a perch. Dis way! Just hab a bite at dat, polly. Go on, old hoss, bite him! Dat's right!"

"Woorooh!" yelled Spoffin, as the parrot fastened its beak into Spoffin's back and bit as hard as it knew how.

"Yah, yah, yah! De bird has got a piece ob pyjamas in his mouf. Dere you are Spoffin. Yah, yah, yah! See him do de hopping!"

"I reckon I don't see how you have turned him into a bird," said Sam.

"Why, Sammy, de man is bitten, and ebery one knows dat de bittern is a bird. Yah, yah, yah! See de joke, Spoffin?"

The major evidently did not see the joke. First of all, he yelled with pain, and then he yelled with fury; but Pete only laughed at him.

"You'm a seafowl, old hoss. Yah, yah, yah! You'm a bittern! All you hab got to do is to start hopping about de floor and pick up de crumbs. I'll buy you some bird-seed to-morrow morning. Now, you may go to bed, 'cos I want to get to sleep. All de same, I hab to tank you for an amusing evening. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing at you, but you are really such a funny old hoss dat you are enough to make a cat laugh. Good-night, poor old Spoffin! You will need a bit ob a darn in your pyjamas. Yah, yah, yah! Look at de dignified march ob de man! I'll gib dat bird anoder hour's lesson on talking."

And this is exactly what Pete did, much to the major's disgust.

There are some parrots that will learn almost as quickly as a person can teach them, and there are others who will not learn at all. This was one of those that will not learn under any circumstances. It was always willing to bite, but it had a great aversion to talking, although it would scream rather more than was required. Pete came to the conclusion by the following morning that his task was going to prove far too troublesome, and so he determined to give it up as a bad job and supply the bird with all the words it would require.

Notwithstanding the very indifferent night's rest he had had, he was up almost before it was daylight, and he also got Ara up. The two of them went out together, and they were absent when Jack and Sam came down, but Ara soon made his appearance, and he looked Jack full in the eyes as he assured him that he had seen nothing of Pete that morning. Major Spoffin, who entered the room at that moment, answered Jack's inquiry very angrily.

"Of course, I have not seen the scoundrel!" he said. "And, what is more, I hope I shall never see him again. He ought to be hanged, and if I had my way with him he would be hanged. The brute isn't fit to live! Is breakfast ready, waiter?"

"Yes, sahib, if you will all kindly step into the next room."

The parrot was on its perch by the side of the window, and the major had no sooner entered the room when the bird began "talking" to him.

"Spoffy, Spoffy! Poor old Spoffums! Ha, ha, ha! You make me laugh!"

"Perdition!" yelled Spoffin. "I'll teach the brute to bite me!" And, seizing the poker, he went for the bird, dealing a blow that not only knocked the parrot off the perch, but also smashed the perch.

"Steady, Spoffy, I'm hurt! I'll bite your nose again!"

Then Major Spoffin let himself go. He was like a raving maniac, and the blows he dealt that bird would have killed an ordinary-sized tiger.

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Spoffums!"

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He must have known the battered bird could not be talking to him now, yet he went on banging at it in his senseless fury; then he suddenly stopped, and gazed in wonder at the pieces of parrot, for instead of blood being on the floor, he saw pieces of stuffing.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared a voice from behind the curtain. "Ain't dose two birds fighting fiercely? Yah, yah, yah! You do make me laugh, Spoffums!"

Pete had slightly bulged out the curtain with a cushion, so as to make it look as though his head were there. Spoffin fell into the trap, and dealt a blow with the poker that would certainly have brained Pete.

There was a loud crash, as the bolster was driven through the window; then Pete, nearly convulsed with laughter, sprang upon him, and quickly got possession of the weapon.

"Yah, yah, yah! You'm killed dat parrot, old hoss, and you hab bent de glass in de window. I rader tink you will hab a pretty heavy bill to pay at dis hotel, one way and anoder."

"My master values his parrot at ten guineas, sahib," said Ara. "If you will kindly let me have that amount, I shall be obliged."

"You stupid rascal!" snarled Spoffin, becoming considerably cooler now that he realised the damage he had done. "That was not a parrot."

"But, sahib, we all know perfectly well that it was. Not only did it talk to you, but it has been a live parrot for upwards of five years to my own knowledge."

"Don't tell me those lies, you ruffian!" cried Spoffin. "This was only a stuffed bird."

"Oh, sahib, consider the truth!"

"Why, there's the stuffing on the floor!"

"No such thing, sahib! You have slain my poor master's dear bird, and you will have to pay for it. That stuffing you see on the floor consists of various articles the poor creature has swallowed in its lifetime. Alas, it is dead now, and I shall no longer have the pleasure of feeding the dear creature! It was always fond of picking pieces off curtains and such-like. What you see are bits of curtain."

"Do you take me for a fool?"

"I am not permitted to express my opinions concerning the visitors to this hotel, sahib. The damage you have done comes to twenty-nine pounds eighteen shillings, and I must ask you to pay that amount."

"You thieving rascal! I will do nothing of the kind."

"Then my master says I am to take out a summons, which I shall be compelled to do immediately after breakfast. You have broken a ten-pound glass and a ten-pound clock. I am only charging you five pounds for the parrot, and three pounds for the perch. I am practically charging you nothing for the window, and fear that I shall get into a frightful row with my dear master. Well, well, it is a bad business altogether, and we shall make a loss. However, I will knock off the eighteen shillings, and call it twenty-nine pounds."

"You thieving vagabond! I will not pay you a penny!"

"Then, sir, I regret to say that I shall be unable to allow your luggage to leave this place. In my master's absence, I could not permit such a thing."

"Serve up my breakfast! I will soon settle matters with your master."

"Pardon, sahib. It would be quite impossible for me to supply you with more food until you have paid the twenty-nine pounds."

"What?" roared Spoffin.

"Yah, yah, yah! You ain't to hab any food, old hoss, till you hab paid for de damage. Dose are de master's orders, and you can't get ober dem, unless you wait to see him. How long do you tink it will be before your master returns, Ara?"

"He will not be back for six months, sir."

"Den I tell you what it is, Spoffin, old hoss, you are likely to be mighty hungry by dat time. I should almost advise you to pay up and look pleasant."

"I insist on seeing the proprietor of this hotel immediately."

"Sorry, sahib, but that is impossible. At present he is in Bombay, and then, I think, he is going to Jericho."

"Yah, yah, yah! You'm floored, old hoss!" cried

Pete. "And serbe you right, too, after treating dat poor parrot so cruelly!"

"I insist on having breakfast!" shouted Spoffin. "If you don't bring it up immediately, I will wring your neck!"

"Nunno, you won't, old hoss," said Pete. "Ara is kind to dumb animals. You can see how upset he is ober de loss ob his pet parrot."

Ara carefully picked up the pieces of the stuffed bird, and, having shoved them into his pocket, uttered a dismal howl, then he wiped his eyes on his coat-cuff.

"No one will ever be able to tell how deeply I loved that bird!" he declared. "For five years it has eaten out of my hand. It had no other food save what I gave it."

"I dunno 'bout dat, old hoss," said Pete. "It has had a bit off Spoffum's nose, den it had a second piece out ob his back. I rader 'spect de stuffing was some ob his pyjamas."

"Are you going to bring up my breakfast?" roared Spoffin.

"When you pay the twenty-nine pounds, sahib. I dare not bring it up before. My master would kill me."

"Now you keep quiet, majah!" said Pete, stepping in front of Ara. "De man is only doing his duty, and you ain't got de right to touch him; in fact, I ain't going to let you do it."

Spoffin saw that it would be useless to argue the point further, so he strode from the hotel.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I got Ara to come wid me to find a stuffed parrot, and we had a bit ob boder ober de task; but we managed to get a grey one at last. It had been stuffed for an old lady, who found dat she was not so fond ob her dead parrot as to pay de price required. I paid dat price, and you see what has come ob de stuffed parrot. I'm inclined to tink de live bird upstairs owes me a vote ob tanks. But let's hab breakfast, boys! I'm getting mighty hungry."

"My masters!" exclaimed Ara, when the comrades had finished breakfast, and were preparing to go out. "I hope one of you will remain to protect me, because if that beast of a major comes back he will surely cut my throat!"

"Golly! I don't particularly want to stop in all day to protect you. I don't tink habing de froat cut gibs much pain!"

"I am thinking of my dear master. It might spoil his carpet."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat's Ara's latest!" exclaimed Pete. "Buzz off, boys! I 'spect I hab got to protect him, only I don't tink de majah will come back just yet."

"I would rather not chance it, sir—much rather not chance it. He is a most vindictive man. I know it from past experience. He will cut all of your throats if he gets a chance. All he needs is a few of his soldiers here, and then he would have a vengeance that would surprise you, and greatly annoy my master, because he would lose three good customers, and continue to keep one bad one. You see, my master is in terror of the major, and so he makes me deliver all his unpleasant messages, because he would be easily able to get another waiter, and his loss would be far greater if he got hung to one of the trees as a rebel. It is so easy to hang a man as a rebel, and so very difficult for him to prove that he is not one."

So Pete remained in the hotel, and Jack and Sam took Rory with them, saying that they would spend the day on the mountains.

Pete had lunch by himself, and after it he had a nap; but when he awoke and found his comrades had not yet returned, he lent Ara a revolver, and told him to protect himself with that.

"I'm bound to hab a walk to gib me an appetite for dinner," he declared.

"It is quite unnecessary, sir," answered Ara. "I assure you that your appetite will be quite as large as my master will care for."

"Well, all de same, I ain't going to protect you any more!" declared Pete, leaving the hotel.

On the chance of meeting Jack and Sam, he made his way towards the mountains. There was not a breath of wind, and the heat was terrific. Pete found his walk very trying, especially when he came to the more rugged ground.

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A little way to the left was a clump of trees, and their shade was too tempting for Pete to resist. Making his way towards them, he sprawled beneath a large tree, and here he smoked his pipe, and determined to take a short rest before making his way back to the hotel.

He had been there about a quarter of an hour when he saw a dark, beautiful young girl proceeding along the outskirts of the clump of trees.

"Golly!" mused Pete. "I ain't letting Jack see dat girl. She's much too beautiful, and I shall hab him falling in lub wid her as sure as taxes. Look dere, now! Who would hab tought dat? I must say de majah has got better taste dan she has. 'Spect dat meeting was arranged. Shouldn't be surprised if deir conversation is going to be ob a private character, and, in dat case, dey would rader I took my leave. Golly! I dunno 'bout dis. Seems to me I ought to hear dis conversation."

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Pete Goes to Lea's Rescue—The Major Has a Nasty Fall Sahar Conducts Them to the Rajah—What Happened in the Palace.

**S**POFFIN raised his hat politely as he met the beautiful young girl, but he made no sign of moving from her path.

"Lea," he exclaimed, "I have waited long for this happiness! You know the depth of my affection for you, and—"

"Major Spoffin," interposed Lea, while her eyes flashed with indignation, "I have already told you that your suit is hopeless, that I can never be anything to you. Do you wish me to tell you more?"

"Words from you always fill me with happiness."

"Perhaps these words will not. I detest you! Your professions of affection for me are hateful to me. Allow me to pass."

"Not I, my beautiful fury!" he cried, grasping her wrist. "You shall not escape so lightly. You do not comprehend my rank and wealth; but perhaps—"

"See here, old hoss!" cried Pete, springing to his feet and striding towards the major, whom he seized by the coat collar. "Wid your rank it is your duty to protect any young lady, and not to cause her annoyance. All right, my dear. I ain't allowing him to do any shooting, so I'll just take possession ob his revolver, like—m'yes—like so. Put dat in my pocket for de present."

"Unhand me, you black dog! You had better go, Lea, while I deal with this dangerous miscreant."

"What is your name, my friend?" inquired Lea, fixing her brilliant eyes on Pete.

"Pete, my dear."

"Well, Pete, I thank you very much for your brave protection."

"Golly! Dere ain't any bravery in dealing wid dis man, my dear. I find he has got no more weapons, so, wid your kind permission, I will just fling him into dat clump of cactus. Yah, yah, yah! Tought dat would appeal to his feelings. It ain't no good yowling at dem. Oh, don't laugh at him, Lea! Don't you see de man's conscience is pricked. Now, my dear, if you lib any distance from dis part, you must let me see you to a safe distance from your home, 'cos dere are tigers and majahs in de jungle, and you are a lot too beautiful to get yaffled up by wild beasts."

"You are very good, Pete."

"No, I ain't, my dear; at de same time, I ain't bery bad. Not anyting like as bad as dat scamp yelling away dere; so ob de two evils you hab got to choose de lesser, as Wagglespeare said when he ate de lump ob sugar and frew away de black draught his moder had giben him."

"It will be quite safe for me to go alone, Pete."

"Well, I ain't allowing you to do it. I'm going to see you to a place ob safety, weder you gib me permission or not."

"Thank you very much. This is the way," answered Lea, proceeding towards the mountain slope, although Pete could see no house on the mountain-side. All the way she chatted with him, asking several questions as to why he was in the neighbourhood, but she gave him no information concerning herself.

Ascending a winding pathway up the mountain-side,

they almost suddenly came upon a large building which looked like a palace. It was surrounded by almost inaccessible rocks, and a tall sentry guarded the pass that led between towering rocks.

"This is my home, Pete," she said, offering him her hand and smiling at him. "You will see that I am quite safe now. I shall always remember my debt of gratitude to you, and—"

"Golly! Dere's no gratitude needed, my dear," declared Pete, hurrying away. He was afraid the young girl was about to offer him some reward.

He found Jack and Sam on the steps of the hotel, while Spoffin was in the coffee-room, having arranged with Ara to pay five pounds on account of the damage, and settle the balance when he saw the proprietor.

"Well, you are a nice beauty, ain't you, old hoss?" exclaimed Pete.

"I have had more than enough of your impertinence, fellow."

"Yah, yah, yah! I doubt if I hab had de finish ob your blackguardism, dough I'm mighty certain I hab had enough ob it. What do you tink ob de man making lub to Lea, Jack?"

"Well, I suppose he has a right to do so if he pleases," answered Jack; "and I really don't see that it is any concern of yours, Pete."

"Why, de girl is beautiful."

"How do you know that?"

"'Cos I hab seen her. Had a chat wid her, too."

"Well, suppose she is beautiful?"

"Do you tink, Jack, dat I'm going to allow her to frow herself away on a scamp like Spoffums?"

"This is really going too far," cried the major, trying to look very indignant. "Mr. Owen, as a gentleman, I call on you to stop that ruffian's insolence."

"If you refer to Pete," exclaimed Jack, "he is the master of his own actions. He may be rather too fond of practical jokes, but no one could truthfully call him a ruffian."

"He has treated me most shamefully this afternoon. Taking me unawares, he flung me into a clump of cactus, and my flesh is badly torn in consequence."

"Yah, yah, yah! I tought you would find dat bush prickly. Still, you must know you deserved more dan you got. How dare you catch hold ob a girl by de wrist and tell her you won't let her escape? Do you call yourself an officer and a man, and behave like dat to a helpless girl?"

"Nonsense! She knew I only wanted to speak to her. I may explain to you two that the girl is about to become my wife. She was merely annoyed that I was late for the appointment, and as I was about to explain how I had been detained that fool of a nigger came blundering on the scene, and with his customary stupidity upset the whole thing. I am honouring the girl with the offer of my hand and heart. She is poor, while I am rich."

"I dunno dat I eber met a finer specimen ob a liar in all my days," exclaimed Pete. "But here comes our friend Sahar. P'raps he has got some news for you."

"I have news for Major Spoffin," said Sahar—"startling news, and such that will bring him pleasure and renown. Listen, gentlemen! Rajah Gohore is suspected as a rebel. Major Spoffin has certain proofs that he is one, and it is his duty to capture the ruffian. Directly I learnt the major's object in coming here—in fact, he asked me for information—I offered my services in capturing this villain Rajah Gohore. Sahib, this very night I will place him in your hands."

"It is good!" cried Spoffin. "Splendid! It means almost certain promotion for me. There are reasons why this will be so; but listen, Sahar! The ruffian is a desperate character."

"What matter, sahib? Surely we two men are equal to him?"

"Quite so; but has he followers?"

"He will have none to-night; that I know. I have certain knowledge that he is to pay Lea a visit. He, like yourself, is smitten with her beauty. Sahib, he loves her, and I am inclined to the belief that she reciprocates his affection."

"Perdition! That would account for her coldness to

me. But she shall be my wife. I am honouring her with the offer."

"She has wealth."

"What do I care for that?"

"Golly! You tried to make us tink she was poor just now," exclaimed Pete. "I can understand now why you are so mighty anxious to make her your wife."

"You are nothing but a fool, and take a good deal too much upon yourself, considering you are only a nigger," sneered Spoffin.

"Gentlemen, there is no need for us to quarrel," said Sahar. "This night I will take you to Lea, Major Spoffin. You can then inform her what the Rajah Gohore really is; when he comes upon the scene you can arrest him, then you will know how to act."

"I ought to have some of my men with me."

"Perhaps these gentlemen will lend their aid. If Rajah Gohore is such a desperate rebel as you are informed, it stands to reason that he should be handed over to justice. Gentlemen, will you accompany us?"

"Suttinly!" exclaimed Pete. "Dat's just de bery ting I want to do, 'cos it seems to me dat de girl ought to be allowed to gib whatever answer she chooses to de majah."

"I happen to know that her answer will be perfectly satisfactory," said Sahar. "Mind, I have spoken to her on the subject. If the major will avail of your services, I promise to place the rebel in his hands."

"Certainly!" exclaimed Spoffin, who would rather have gone alone, but did not dare to face the dreaded rajah by himself. He knew that he would be pretty safe if Pete exerted his great strength. "It is our duty to capture the ruffian, and I shall overlook the negro's past conduct in consideration of his having volunteered his services."

"Dat's mighty kind ob you, old hoss," said Pete. "I was rader uneasy in my mind tinkin you might take it into your noddle to punish me for making de parrot bite you. Suppose we all hab dinner, and I can be telling Sahar how it all happened; it's most bound to make him laugh. Bring up de dinner, Ara, as sharp as you can. You will dine wid us, Sahar? M'yes! Dat's all right. Sit down dere, and be sure you don't eat too much, 'cos habing such a small appetite myself it always makes me ill to see oder people eat more dan I do."

"I reckon it would be more likely to make them ill if they attempted such an impossibility," laughed Sam. "Come along, Sahar! You are heartily welcome, and must not take any notice of Pete's nonsense."

"But look here, Sahar," exclaimed Pete, as they commenced the meal, "are you quite sure dis rajah is a traitor?"

"Major Spoffin says so. Is it likely that gentleman would state such a thing unless he had certain proof?"

"Why, if you were to ask my opinion, I should say dat it would be much more remarkable if de man told de troof. I'm mighty certain it would be by accident, unless it suited his purpose. What are you looking at me for, majah? Do you want de salt or someting?"

"I want you to behave yourself respectably, if you can; but being only a nigger, perhaps it is expecting too much."

"Well, dat's a nice ting to say, I must confess, after I'm coming to help you capture de bold, bad lover, and gib you de chance ob winning de beautiful heroine. You see, if she's in lub wid de man—she couldn't possibly be

in lub wid you, unless she's raving mad, and she didn't talk like dat—well, all you hab got to do is to say, 'Be my wife. I have sworn it! Hist! I am a determined man. S'death and coffins! Groo! Be mihine, my very own popsy-wopsy, or off comes yonder varlet's noddle!'"

The way Pete said this, then commenced to pick a chicken-bone, made the comrades shout with laughter. Sahar looked quite grave, and Spoffin looked remarkably savage. He hated being made fun of, and this is what Pete did during the whole of the meal—not only this, but he slipped two or three fowl-bones, a couple of potatoes, and subsequently a jam tart into the major's side-pocket. Then Pete said he would just go and change his collar, as he might have to appear in the presence of a lady, and that it was always as well to look as handsome as possible under those circumstances.

"It would take a good many collars to make you look handsome, you ugly brute!" snarled Spoffin.

"But, you see, you ain't a lady, old hoss!" retorted Pete. "And you ain't anyting like a gentleman eider, for de matter ob dat. Sha'n't be long!"

Pete rang the bell immediately he entered the room, and Ara answered it.

"Bring me up a wine-cork, old hoss!" he said. "Quick! Buzz off!"

Ara was not gone many moments, and Pete tipped him five shillings.

"Sahib, you are generous. I could bring you the bottle of wine for the same price!"

"I don't want de wine, old hoss," said Pete, burning the cork in the candle, and rubbing the black all over the palm of his left hand. "Dere, I tink dat will about do!" exclaimed Pete, with considerable satisfaction. "Now we'm about ready. Keep your mouf shut, Ara; dere's going to be some fun to-night. You leabe de working ob it to me!"

Pete came downstairs looking so remarkably innocent that Jack and Sam felt perfectly confident that he had some trick in hand. Rory begged hard to accompany them, and he even tried to dodge Pete out of the front door; but it did not come off. He was left behind, and they heard his

howls of disappointment for a considerable distance.

It was a beautiful moonlight night as Sahar led the comrades towards the spot where Pete had met Lea, and as they reached the trees Sahar stopped to listen. The distant roar of a tiger reached them; but he strode on, taking little heed of the fierce brute.

Pete crept up close to Spoffin, and presently there was a rustling sound in the bushes.

"Hush!" cried Pete, clapping his blackened hand across Spoffin's mouth. "De tiger comes! Stop your talking! Oh, I don't tink it was de tiger, dough," added Pete, passing his hand right across the major's face.

"Fellow," roared the indignant major, "how dare you put your filthy hand in my face?"

"Why, if dat had been de tiger, and I hadn't stopped your talking, de insect might hab bitten you, de same as de bird did. You ought to be mighty tankful to me for habing sated your life, 'cos, although dere was no tiger dere, it is quite possible dat dere might hab been one!"

"You cowardly creature! Do you think I fear tigers?"

"I dunno, old hoss; but dey ain't safe insecks to hab about de place, and if you ain't frightened ob dem you ought to hab a little consideration for dese people who



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etc. I wish you would stop your laughter, Jack. I can't see anything to laugh at just because de majah has had a shock to his cistern!"

Jack and Sam saw something to laugh at, though, so must Sahar have done, although he never so much as smiled. In the bright moonlight they saw that Spoffin's face was smudged all over, and they, of course, guessed that Pete had done it.

"What ever have you done to the idiot now?" murmured Jack, as they dropped back.

"I don't want dat girl to fall in lub wid him," answered Pete, "so I hab giben him a little burnt cork. He will look downright pretty when he appears in Lea's presence. But see here, Jack, dat girl has got to be protected!"

"We shall do that."

"Dat's where de difficulty arises. I don't want you to hab anything to do wid de protecting part. De girl is a lot too beautiful, and I shall hab you falling in lub wid her."

"You silly owl! I'm not such an idiot as to fall in love with every pretty girl I meet!"

"Dat's not de danger, Jack. If you fell in lub wid ebery pretty girl you met, dat would be safe enough; but de danger comes in when you fall in lub wid one ob dem, and dat's what I hab got to guard against. I almost wish I had left you at home wid Rory!"

"Do you really?" laughed Jack. "I must say you are giving Lea enough admirers. You are frightened of Spoffin, and so blacken the poor brute's face; then you are frightened of the rebel rajah; you appear also to be frightened of me. I wonder you don't take fright concerning Sam. Well, the charmer lives in a fine palace, at any rate," added Jack, as they suddenly came in sight of the great building.

No sentry guarded the pass that night, and Sahar walked boldly forward, while Spoffin appeared to become rather anxious.

"You are sure she has no armed men in this building?" he inquired of Sahar.

"Sahib, I am positive of it. Just as positive as I am that Rajah Gohore will come here to-night. I shall place him in your hands. But first you will send in your name to Lea, and we must hope that she will see you of her own accord."

The door of the palace was opened by a woman servant, and Spoffin handed her his card. In a few minutes she returned, asking him to step in; and he entered a magnificently-furnished apartment. Lea was not there, but she presently entered by another door. She was dressed with Oriental magnificence, and a magnificent diamond-and-ruby tiara glittered in her dark hair, while Spoffin had never seen her look so beautiful. She had intended to receive him in a very haughty manner; but when she saw his smudged face she smiled, and he took this as a good omen.

"Lea," he cried, stepping forward, "I have come once more to lay my fortune and myself at your feet—"

"Major Spoffin," interposed the beautiful girl, "I have no need of your fortune. For the last time, I decline your offer!"

"Well, I have learnt your secret!" cried Spoffin. "Perhaps when I tell you that Rajah Gohore is my prisoner, and that if you send me away with a refusal it will sign his death-warrant, you may change your—"

"The rajah your prisoner!" gasped Lea, turning deathly white.

"Such is a fact. His life depends on your decision. Should you refuse my offer, he will die this very night!"

"Don't you believe a word dat man says, my dear!" exclaimed Pete, entering the room at that moment. "De rajah ain't his prisoner at all; but, mind you dis, de man is coming here to-night, and Spoffin is going to capture him. De question is, weder he is a rebel. Ob course, if he is—why, dere will be difficulties in de case!"

"He is not a rebel!"

"Dat's what he tells you, I suppose. But you mustn't believe all a man tells you before he is married to you; and it ain't too wise to believe all he tells you after de marriage. You see, de human race hab a habit ob exaggerating, and Spoffums ain't an exception to de rule. In fact, de man is de worst liar I eber came

across. Sahar has promised to place de Rajah Gohore in Spoffums' hands, and I'm inclined to tink de majah will find he has got a little handful. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing at you, majah, but you really look most remarkably funny, doesn't he, Lea? Sort ob piebald expression 'bout de man's countenance. I tink it must be fear at de thoughts ob meeting de rajah!"

"You will not allow them to take his life, Pete?" pleaded Lea.

"Nunno! Dere's no fear ob dat, my dear. At de same time, I ain't letting you marry a rebel. I sha'n't gib my consent to anything like dat. Spoffums is out ob de hunt. A man wid a face like dat couldn't possibly win de heart ob a beautiful young girl, wid a fortune frown in!"

"I do not intend to argue with this insolent nigger!" said Spoffin. "The fellow ought to be shot; and it is not at all unlikely that such will be his fate, if he interferes further with my private affairs, which can in no way concern him! I have submitted to his impertinence far too long! Are you going to give me a definite answer, Lea? You can order that ruffian out of the room!"

"I have already given you a definite answer."

"Then you consign Gohore to a violent death!"

"I do not believe he is in your power—or, at least, in the power of your soldiers."

"His head shall be sent to you to-morrow!"

"You hear him, Pete!" cried Lea indignantly. "This is the man who professes to care for me! I know perfectly well that it is my supposed fortune that he is so anxious to gain; but that will never be!"

"Suttinly not, my dear. De poor old hoss is as harmless as uncontaminated oysters, and as stupid as dead donkeys! Still, he can't help dat!"

"Have you come here alone?" inquired Lea.

"Nunno! I hab got two friends. Sahar brought us here. Do you know dat man?"

"Yes. Is he here now?"

"'Spect so. He left us in de hall, and I followed Spoffums in, 'cos I tought de man might annoy you. Don't you tink I hab improved his personal appearance, my dear?"

The major stepped to a glass; then he uttered a cry of fury.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing at you, my poor old hoss! You'm de funniest-looking object on de face ob de earth!"

Spoffin dived his hand into his pocket for his handkerchief, then Pete burst into fresh roars of laughter, as he pulled out a jam-tart and a potato.

"You miscreant," he roared, making a second dive, and producing another potato and some fowl-bones, "this is your doing!"

"Yah, yah, yah! De man has brought his supper wid him," cried Pete. "Mind how you handle dat jam-tart, else you will make your hands sticky. Besides, you will spoil de personal appearance ob de jam-tart, if you smash it up wid potatoes."

Spoffin got his handkerchief at last, but it was all over jam and grease, and perfectly unfit to wipe his face with. It would only have made matters worse had he used it for that purpose.

"My hour of vengeance is at hand!" he cried. "You have treated me with scorn, Lea; but before many hours have elapsed you will have good cause to regret it! As for that nigger, he shall die! I swear it!"

"You'm almost bound to be right on dat last point, old hoss," exclaimed Pete. "Dere ain't de slightest doubt dat I hab got to die; de only doubt 'bout it is when de death is coming off, and I prefer to hab dat left a bit uncertain, 'cos it would be painful to de feelings if I knew dat I had got to die, say, to-night or to-morrow morning."

"You shall die this very night!"

"M'yes! Dat's what you tell me; but it don't follow dat I hab got to believe it. I may be wrong, but it seems to me dat when I meet my death it won't be at your hands. Come in, boys! Jack and Sammy, my dear. Dis is Lea!"

Lea offered her hand, and Jack felt very uncomfortable as she smiled at him. Pete heaved a deep sigh, and Jack was fearful that he would make some remark which

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would be embarrassing both to himself and Lea. Lea came to the conclusion that Jack was rather shy, though such was not by any means the case.

"Stand ober dere, Jack!" said Pete, and he obeyed immediately, fearing that something else would happen, especially as Pete glanced from Lea to Jack, as though to make sure no glances of admiration were passing between them.

"I hab to keep my eye on Jack, my dear," explained Pete. "You see—"

"This is a very beautiful spot," exclaimed Jack, hoping to turn the conversation. "I fear you will think we are intruders, but—"

"Now, dat will do, Jack! We don't want any more ob dose observations. You wouldn't believe, my dear, de anxiety dat man causes me. He's a lot more dangerous dan de majah, 'cos de majah is such a mighty idiot dat—"

"You must not take any notice of Pete," hurriedly interposed Jack. "He is always playing practical jokes. You have only to look at Major Spoffin's face to see that."

At that moment a gong sounded, and some curtains which stretched right across one end of the apartment were drawn aside, revealing a second room even more sumptuously furnished than the one they were in.

It was brilliantly lighted, and nothing that vast wealth could supply was wanting. The comrades had never seen such a magnificent apartment, while the ornaments were of priceless value.

Smiling at their surprise, Lea motioned them to enter the apartment.

#### CHAPTER 4.

#### The Rajah Appears to the Major—A Great Surprise for All—How the Major was Forced to Apologise—The Tiger-fight.

**N**OW the door of this apartment was thrown open, and a servant announced:

"The Rajah of Gohore!"

And Sahar, dressed in all the splendour of an Eastern prince, entered the apartment, with his hand on the jewelled hilt of his sword.

Stepping up to Lea, he pressed his lips to her hand; then he turned to Pete, and offered his hand.

"So you'm de rajah, are you, old hoss?" exclaimed Pete, shaking hands. "Well, I must say Lea hasn't got bad taste; but she hasn't got such good taste as you hab."

"I quite agree with you, Pete," said Sahar, looking into the young girl's eyes, and smiling at her blushes. "I think my wife is the best and most beautiful woman on the face of the earth!"

"Your wife! Den you are married?"

"We are married," answered Sahar quietly. "Lea thought I was a poor man when she became my wife—or, at any rate, by no means a wealthy one. She lived in the North, and it was there I won her love. May I ever keep it! Her surprise when I brought her here gave me great pleasure. Now, Major Spoffin, what have you to say to me? It was your wish to meet the Rajah of Gohore. You meet him now. Perhaps you may say that I have deceived you. I appeared to you as Sahar, which is one of my names, but all I promised you was to place the rajah in your hands. Here I am. For purposes of your own, you have accused me of being a rebel."

"You got your followers together, and to my knowledge made a raid."

"I got my followers together, it is true; but it is not true that I made a raid, as will presently be proved to you. When combating with such a dangerous foe as you are, because you are a perjurer, it was necessary for me to act cautiously. I have done so; but no man can say that I am a rebel with truth. Why should I be, seeing that I have a vast fortune, and the British have always treated me with great fairness? Do you think it would be to my advantage to steep this country in rebellion—to aid brigands to rob me of my vast inheritance? Lea never would think this. See, my wife, on my journey I bought you this present; the rubies will match your dark beauty."

As Sahar spoke he clasped a magnificent ruby necklace

round his young bride's throat, and Pete looked on approvingly.

"Well, I must say de two beauties match bery well and you hab taken a good deal ob anxiety off my shoulders by being married, Lea. You see, Jack—"

"Look here, Pete," exclaimed Jack, "we don't want to listen to your nonsense!"

"Nunno! It is about your nonsense I was going to speak. You see, Lea, Jack is a perceptible young man—"

"Quite so," assented Jack; "and I am, therefore, able to perceive that you are a donkey!"

Perhaps it was just as well for Jack's peace of mind that Spoffin made an attempt to sneak out of the room at that moment, for it turned Pete's attention from what he was about to say.

"Here, you come back, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, grabbing him by the collar. "We ain't done wid you by long chalks!"

"That is so!" exclaimed the young rajah. "I am waiting to hear what you have to say."

"I did not know that the lady was married," he stammered.

"Had my wife been single, as you assumed, do you consider that it gave you the right to offer insult by grasping her by the wrist and refusing to allow her to pass? I owe more than I can repay to Pete for having flung you into the clump of cactus, and sincerely hope that you were hurt!"

"You will hear from me later on, sir!" cried Spoffin.

"That will be quite to my satisfaction, if your friend brings the message."

"He shall certainly do so."

"I have all descriptions of weapons here. That would save time."

"I do not consider that I should be justified in challenging you to a duel. You have not offered me insult."

"Perhaps you will consider that slap across the face sufficient insult," said Sahar, stepping forward, and dealing him a blow that caused him to reel.

"You hound, I do! We fight at break of day!"

"Why not fight now?"

"I cannot rely on the honour of a Hindu."

"Indeed! Then I will follow you to the town, and meet you with weapons to-night. Further, I will give you the choice of weapons. But I see you fear me. You do not intend to fight, you miserable cur! However, we shall see whether I am correct; and in the meantime you will go down on your knees, and beg that lady to pardon you."

"You insolent rascal! What do you take me for?"

"Need you ask such a question, and do you fondly imagine that my answer would be pleasing to you? I have told you what you shall do!" added Sahar, striking a gong.

"Bring me my horsewhip!" he ordered, as the servant answered it.

"Stop a bit!" exclaimed Pete, relieving the major of his revolver. "If de man has got to hab a frashing—and I quite tink he deserves one—it will be much more convenient for all parties concerned if he ain't armed. Now den, old hoss, you hab got to answer for your impertinence!"

"You know what I have ordered you to do, fellow!" said Sahar, as the whip was handed to him.

"Let this nonsense cease!" cried Spoffin. "You forget my rank, and what it would cost you were you to dare to strike—Fury! I will have vengeance for this! Perdition! Will you stop?"

Sahar did not stop. He lashed Spoffin all round the apartment.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Ain't de majah getting it hot? Nunno! Dere's no exit dis way. You must take your gruel, old hoss!"

"Stop! I will do what you wish!" cried Spoffin.

"Then do it!" said Sahar, ceasing to lash him.

"Mind, it will have to be to my satisfaction."

"I regret what has occurred," said Spoffin sullenly.

"I ain't got de slightest doubt 'bout dat," observed Pete.

"Kneel at that lady's feet," cried Sahar, "and make a proper apology to her! Do you hear, fellow?"

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"It is impossible! Stop! I cannot contend with four men."

"No; you are more suited to contend with one woman," retorted Sahar. "Are you going to obey my order?"

"I must request you to consider my rank and—"

"I will not listen to you," interposed Sahar. "You have your orders, and unless you obey them now I shall flog you until you do so."

"I have never been so degraded in my life, and— Stop! Fury!"

Then the abject man went down on his knees, and Pete did not improve his feelings by shouting with laughter. What his words were the comrades did not hear, because Pete was making such a noise; but they did not satisfy Sahar, who gave him another stinging cut.

"Make a proper apology, you dog, or I will flog you till you howl for mercy!" he said.

"Do be quiet, Jack!" exclaimed Pete, who was himself making all the row. "You'm making such a noise wid your guffaw dat we shall lose all de beauty ob de majah's speech. Fire ahead, old hoss! We'm all attention."

"I deeply regret what has occurred," growled Spoffin.

"Ask the lady's pardon, you grovelling dog!" cried Sahar.

"I—I ask your pardon. It was all a great mistake."

"Then I forgive you," said Lea.

"Now go," exclaimed Sahar, "and never let me see your face again! That you will challenge me to a duel I know will never be, otherwise you would have fought now, rather than suffer such degradation. Begone!"

"Give me my revolver, you black dog!"

"You ain't habing it, old hoss," answered Pete.

"It is not safe to travel without some weapon. I must have it."

"Don't you be so mighty obstinate. I tell you dat you ain't going to hab it."

"You insolent rascal! The weapon is mine, and I tell you I will have it."

"It ain't no good you yowling at me like dat. When I say you sha'n't hab it, den it stands to reason dat I must be right, and dat you ain't going to hab it. Now buzz off home, and try to behave yourself like a sensible majah. Yah, yah, yah! Makes me laugh when I tink ob you kneeling on de floor. You'm decidedly de funniest majah I hab eber met."

"Give me that revolver."

"Ain't de man's obstinacy someting fearful!" exclaimed Pete. "He is worse dan a mosquito dat has made up his mind to settle on your nose. Buzz off home."

"I shall not leave this place until you return me that weapon."

Pete made no verbal reply, but, seizing the major in his arms, bore him to the open window, and finding it was not more than six feet from the ground, lifted him through it, and dropped him into some bushes.

"Just hark what a noise de man is making!" exclaimed Pete. "Dere's no satisfying some people anyhow."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can quite understand that you have not satisfied him this time," said Sahar. "Those are rose-bushes, and they are prickly."

"Den you can depend on it dat is what de man is yowling at dis time," said Pete, looking out of window. "Buzz off home, old hoss. You are rader unlucky in choosing de class ob bushes you want to tumble into. If you take my advice, de next time you will choose some dat ain't got any thorns."

"Ruffian! Give me my revolver!"

"You won't need it, old hoss. I can hear dat tiger roaring, and it's quite a long way off. All you hab got to do is to hurry up as much as you can; and if you are at all lucky, you will make your excape before de tiger comes up. Good-bye; I ain't got time to listen to all dat. You go home, and if you want to talk to me when I return, you will hab de opportunity ob doing so."

Then Pete turned from the window, and stepped towards Sahar to say good-bye.

"My dear friends, I positively cannot allow you to go yet," said the young rajah. "You must stay to supper; and if you can remain the night, so much the better. Supper will be ready now, so if you will come into the next room, both my wife and I will be most pleased."

The comrades accepted the invitation; and when the meal was finished, Pete gave them some comic and sentimental songs; and, late though it was, they decided to return to the hotel, because they were rather anxious concerning Spoffin.

"You see, boys," exclaimed Pete, as they made their way along the pass, "I hab got de idea dat de majah ain't going to return by himself unarmed. De man is de biggest coward I eber met; and as he knows dat dere's a hungry tiger waiting to yaffle him up, de chances are he will put his pride in his pocket and wait for us. See! What did I tell you? If dat ain't him seated on dat chunk ob rock, it's anoder man remarkably like him."

The moon was shining so brightly that it was almost as light as day. Glancing upwards, they saw the unfortunate major keeping watch for them, and he at once scrambled down from his elevated position.

"It was impossible for me to return unarmed," he said. "There is a tiger prowling about in the jungle. I caught sight of the brute."

"Den it was your duty to hab gone on," declared Pete. "You ought to be indicted by de Society for de Propagation ob Cruelty to Animals for turning back like dat, when you know perfectly well dat de poor tiger was hungry. I'm ashamed ob you, majah."

"I am heartily sick of your buffoonery," snarled the angry man. He did not want to quarrel with them at that moment, because he felt that they would be a great protection to him.

"Well, come along, old hoss, and see if you can behave yourself for once in your life. I say, majah, you hab made a mess ob your lub affairs, ain't you? Yah, yah, yah! Did make me laugh seeing you kneeling down like some tired camel."

"The villain little knows the vengeance I will have," said Spoffin. "I shall bring my men to take him prisoner and burn his palace down. The ruffian has deceived me from beginning to end. While pretending to act as my spy and secure Rajah Gohore, he has actually been gaining private information from me."

"Yah, yah, yah! De man ain't as soft as you are, and he's a lot braver. Suppose you knew a gallant majah had come to gain sufficient evidence to enable him to hang you and marry de girl you lubed, wouldn't you take ebery precaution dat he didn't succeed in his little enterprise? M'yes, I rader tink you would; and I must say dat I don't blame him in any way. In fact, it seems to me dat he has acted in de only sensible manner dat he could."

"He will soon find out his mistake when I bring my soldiers up."

"Ah, but den comes de question, will your superior master allow you to do dat? Ob course, if you hab proof dat Sahar is a rebel, he would let you take him prisoner; but if you hab brought a false accusation against him in order to get him out ob de way, so dat you might marry Lea—and I'm inclined to tink dis is de case—I don't tink your superior master would allow you to do anyting ob de sort. I'm quite sure he would not allow you to hab vengeance for de beating Sahar gabe you. Yah, yah, yah! He did make you howl, too, old hoss; and did you notice de scornful look on Lea's face when you were kneeling down asking her to forgive you? You looked mighty funny wid your blackened face. Now go carefully, 'cos I can hear a slight movement in de long grass, and I wouldn't like dat tiger to hab me for his supper. Just keep a little on dat side ob me, Spoffins, den in case he should make a spring he will get you first, and I should say you would be enough for any tiger's supper."

Spoffin was evidently nervous. He kept glancing over his shoulder in the moonlight, but a tiger might have been quite close in the long grass, which in places was four or five feet high, without it being possible to see the brute.

As for Pete, he told Jack and Sam to keep a sharp

took-out, while he smoked his pipe, without troubling himself about tigers or anything else.

Several times he made the major leap aside by making a growling sound appear to come from the jungle close to him, and Pete did it so naturally that it actually deceived Sam on more than one occasion. The three comrades were armed with rifles as well as revolvers, and Jack and Sam carried theirs in their hands; but Pete had not taken the trouble to unsling his.

They were approaching some bushes, when an ominous roar burst forth. There could be no mistaking it, and Sam knew that Pete could never have uttered a roar like that.

"Stop!" he cried, holding his rifle in readiness.

Spoffin needed no such advice. As the roar burst forth he sprang behind Pete, who immediately seized him and held him in front, while he pretended to be in deadly fear.

"Golly! Ain't dis mighty awful!" he gasped. "Keep in front ob me, old hoss; I want to use you as a sort ob shield. De question is weder I ought not to frow him into de bushes, boys; den we could make a rush for it, and excape while de tiger was consuming him. I hab heard dat tigers are dangerous, and I must say I don't want to run any risk."

"Let me go, you miserable coward!" cried the major, making a desperate attempt to free himself; but he could not possibly escape from Pete's grip. "How dare you hold me like this?"

"To tell you de troof, old hoss," answered Pete, nearly choking the major with the clouds of tobacco smoke he was blowing from his pipe, "I am inclined to tink dat it would be much more daring if I was to let you go. Can't you see dat de tiger is bound to spring just directly. Bery well! He's most bound to come in contact wid you before he gets at me, and while he's eating you I shall be able to run away and save myself."

"Did you ever hear such abject cowardice in all your lives?" snarled Spoffin.

"Well, dat's a good one!" exclaimed Pete. "I ain't de least bit frightened while I hold you in front ob me like dis, 'còs de tiger can't possibly get at me till he has finished you off; and I'm inclined to tink dat after a supper off de majah, he won't want any more to eat till to-morrow morning. Here he comes, I tink. Nunno! It must hab been some oder sort ob inseck moving in de bushes, or p'r'aps it was anoder tiger. Dey often hunt in couples, and dat will make it rader awkward. I wish I had anoder majah for de second tiger; I should feel much more comfortable den."

"Don't you think you had better stop your fooling and unsling your rifle?" suggested Sam.

"I ain't any good at fighting tigers, Sammy. Dey make me dat nervous I dunno what I'm doing. No; de best ting in a tiger-hunt is to let de oder fellow do de fighting, while you do de running away. I wish I had got someting to tie de majah to, so dat I could use him as a sort ob decoy-duck. I believe dey use pigs dat way to attract de tigers, and I don't see why de majah wouldn't do as well as any oder pig!"

From past experience, Sam knew that it would be quite useless to attempt to make Pete act seriously. He wanted to frighten the major, and he was succeeding remarkably well.

Jack and Sam took good care to keep at such a distance from the clump of bushes as to render it impossible for the tiger to spring upon them with one bound; and, fortunately, the grass between them and the bushes was not very long, so that it would have been impossible for the brute to creep up to them without their seeing it approach.

As the growling continued, Pete released the frightened major, and, unslinging his rifle, stood beside his comrades, while Spoffin got behind them. This, however, was not to be wondered at, seeing that he had no weapons; and he did not know that the comrades were well accustomed to facing perils of this sort, and that their nerves were thoroughly to be relied on.

"Shall I draw him wid a shot, Sammy?" inquired Pete, when several moments of suspense had passed by. "I don't tink de brute has got de right to stop dere growling at us, and upsetting our nervous cisterns!"

"I reckon that will be the quickest way," answered Sam.

"You must be mad!" exclaimed Spoffin. "We can easily make a circuit, and so escape!"

"Well, you can try that way if you like," said Sam. "But if you had a grain of sense in your head, or knew anything about tigers, you would be aware that this brute would simply stalk us, and in the jungle we should have a far worse chance than we have here!"

"Don't take any notice ob de majah, Sammy!" exclaimed Pete. "De man knows no more about tigers dan a domesticated mouse does. Just you tell me when you are ready, and I'll fire. I dunno where de inseck is, but I dare say he won't mind dat a bit, if I happen to fire in de wrong place!"

"Fire!" cried Sam.

The report of Pete's repeating rifle was followed by a terrible roar, and the next instant an enormous male tiger leapt from the bushes towards Pete. That was all the major saw of the fight, for he turned and fled at his utmost speed.

As Sam knew would be the case, the tiger, in order to reach Pete, was compelled to make two springs, and both Jack and Sam fired again and again, while Pete dropped his rifle and drew his axe. Notwithstanding the shots, the fierce brute made its second spring. Pete's axe descended on its skull; then over he went, with the quivering body on the top of him. Sam fired the

## Five Minutes with Sandow.

IV.

Wrestling, although one of the most valuable branches of athletic training in self-defence we have, is an art which is not practised so largely as it should be in this country. Wrestling enthusiasts declare that it is far and away the best form of exercise known, and it certainly exercises every muscle of the body in a better way than the majority of sports.

The style of wrestling most favoured in this country is the "catch-as-catch-can" or Lancashire style. The Græco-Roman style, which is not so well understood, will be dealt with next week.

In the former style of wrestling greater freedom as regards the hold is allowed; in fact, a man can almost take hold of his opponent anyhow and anywhere—by the head, arms, legs, or round the body—provided he does not hold his opponent's flesh, clothes, or hair, and does not strike or kick him.

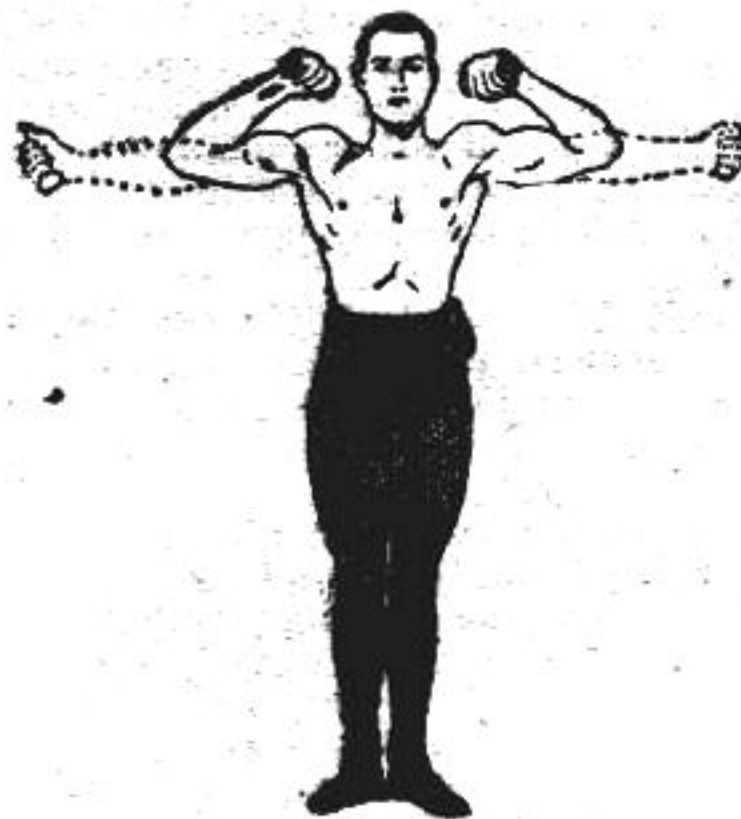
A "fall" in the "catch-hold" style is gained when a man succeeds in pinning both of his opponent's shoulders to the ground at the same time, so that when a man feels himself going to the ground he must do all he can to try and turn on his face, or he will in all probability be defeated. This movement naturally calls for all his strength and knowledge to be brought into play immediately, for "he who hesitates is lost."

The various throws, such as the "buttock," the "flying mare," etc., can only be properly learnt by actual experience, but greater skill can be obtained by the man or youth whose muscular system is under perfect control, and whose strength has been developed to the utmost by systematic exercise.

The "bridge" is an exceedingly useful trick in catch-hold wrestling, and has saved many a man from a fall. "Making the bridge" consists of supporting the body

on the soles of the feet and the back of the head, and to keep his position for any length of time requires great strength in the neck and upper part of the shoulders. The following exercise will be found a valuable one for strengthening those parts of the body which wrestling calls into play.

N.B.—We urge upon our readers to write to No. 2, Sandow Hall, Victoria Embankment, London, W.C., and they will receive by return of post a booklet entitled "Sandow's Way to Health and Strength," which describes how Sandow developed his great strength and how others may improve their physical condition in a similar manner.



EX. 3.—READY POSITION.

Extend both arms in a line with the shoulders, palms of the hands upward.

MOVEMENT.

Flex both arms until the dumb-bells are immediately over the shoulders, and straighten again until the triceps are thoroughly in the strain, pushing well outward, and raising the shoulders, as the arms are extended. The head should be thrown back as the arms are extended, and bent forward as the arms are contracted. Muscles: Biceps, Triceps, Deltoid, and Neck Muscles (anterior and posterior).

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remaining shots in his repeating rifle; but they were not needed, for the tiger was already lifeless.

"It's all right, boys!" exclaimed Pete. "I ain't hurt in any way. But, see here, I must gib dat majah a fright. He deserves it for frightening Lea. See! I'm going to become a tiger. You follow me up, and hear me roar at him. You can blaze away in de air, only mind you don't hit me!"

Then Pete ducked down, so that his head was not visible above the long grass, and, darting along Spoffin's trail, he commenced to roar and growl in a manner that was really very natural. It completely deceived Spoffin, who was returning to the spot, hoping that the shots he had heard had proved effective. He turned again, and bolted at the top of his speed, while Pete followed at an alarming pace.

"Mind the tiger!" bawled Jack, firing some shots into the air.

"Shoot it! Shoot!" howled Spoffin. "It is upon me!"

"I am shooting!" answered Jack. "Keep out of its way!"

This advice was quite unnecessary, because it was exactly what the frightened Spoffin was trying to do; but, notwithstanding Pete's crouching attitude, he got along remarkably quickly. At first Spoffin gained considerably; but Pete's wind was better, and when they had run about a mile, he began to overhaul the fugitive, who was now yelling at the top of his voice for Jack and Sam—who were bringing up the rear—to kill the tiger.

Spoffin was making for a tree, and, springing at one of the lower branches, he commenced to draw himself up, when, uttering a prodigious roar, Pete sprang upon him.

Spoffin gave one wild shriek; then they both fell to the ground, struggling in the long grass, while Pete kept up his growling until the major discovered the joke.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as the terrified man sat up, gazing blankly at him. "Golly! Ain't you had a bad scare, Spoffums?"

"Why, you insolent vagabond, I'll—I'll——"

"Dat's right, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, feeling for his pipe. "Blame me! Ob course, dis innocent nigger always gets de blame when tings don't go exactly as people want dem to. Oh, do be quiet wid dat laughter, Jack! It's nuffin to laugh at when a poor nigger gets blame showered on his shoulders. I'm sure I don't know what de world is coming to, wid all dis blame being frown about! It's enough to dishearten anyone!"

"How dare you behave in this manner, you silly vagabond!" snarled Spoffin.

"You said you weren't frightened ob tigers; but I must say, old hoss, you seemed to be rader frightened ob dis one. Neber knew I could make such a capital tiger!"

"You silly brute, you bit me!"

"Nunno! Only gabe you a few slight nips to make de tiger appear more real. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing at you, but de way you ran and yelled was most remarkably funny. You should hab looked to make sure dat it wasn't a tiger, but only an ordinary nigger. Neber mind, old hoss! I dare say de tiger will turn up sooner or later. And look here, boys; we'm had a mighty good feed, and sha'n't require any more till breakfast-time. Suppose we pass de night here under de shade ob dis tree? It will keep de heat ob de moonbeams off us, and de night is mighty hot to walk all de way to de hotel."

"All right!" exclaimed Jack. "I don't want to go any further."

"We ought to have a camp-fire to keep off the tigers," said Sam.

"Dat ain't at all necessary, Sammy," declared Pete. "Dere has been one tiger after Spoffums to-night, so it ain't at all likely dere will be anoder one, and eben if dere is, we can easily frow Spoffums to it, and make our escape. Yah, yah, yah! How de man did run, to be sure! Tought de tiger would neber obertake him! What wid tigers and parrots, de poor man is habing a rough time ob it!"

"It is not safe to remain here," said the major, thinking it well to turn the conversation.

"Den you go home by yourself, old hoss," retorted

Pete. "We ain't moving anoder step to-night. I'm tired out, and as hot as fresh-cooked pancakes. Dis long grass makes a nice, comfortable bed. If you should get caught by a tiger on your journey to de hotel, we will bury your bones all right. Good-night!"

Spoffin's nerves were greatly upset. He did not want to remain there all night, nor did he want to make the journey by himself. Finding he could not induce the comrades to stir, he determined to remain, considering that the lesser of the two evils; but he was in a considerably worse position than they were, because he had eaten nothing, and as soon as he got over the shock Pete had given him he began to feel the pangs of hunger. This, and the dread he had of being attacked by tigers, kept sleep from his eyes. Jack and Sam felt pretty confident that he would not fall asleep without awaking them, so they let him keep watch.

The night soon passed by, and as soon as it was day they all started for the hotel, while Pete spoke of nothing but tigers.

Ara received them at the hotel, and promised them an excellent breakfast.

"It is this way," he explained. "Last night an elderly gentleman came, and he was very particular concerning what guests were in the hotel. When I told him, he wanted to know all about you, and what you were doing; and he then informed me that his name was Colonel Nargrave, and——"

"Colonel Nargrave!" exclaimed the major. "Why, he is my officer—my commanding officer! What did you tell him concerning me, fellow?"

"Your commanding officer!" exclaimed Ara, looking rather disconcerted. "Now that is very strange! He never told me that; and, of course, I could not possibly guess it. An exceedingly nice gentleman, sahib!"

"What did you tell him about me?"

"Absolutely nothing, sir. Why should I tell him anything?"

"You lying rascal, I believe you told him about that parrot!"

"Why, it was this way. I—er——"

"Never mind what way it was. Did you mention a word about it?"

"I believe there were some words mentioned about a parrot, sahib. I think he commenced to talk about parrots. I—er—don't quite remember how the conversation commenced; but—well, he is an exceedingly nice gentleman, and quite fond of a joke. I never saw a man laugh so heartily as he did when—when a parrot was mentioned. After all, they are funny birds!"

"Yah, yah, yah! I'll bet de old hoss knows all about it!" exclaimed Pete. "It's one ob dose tings you can't keep secret, majah, when Ara is knocking about. But neber mind; you can tell de colonel not to repeat it!"

"You stupid villain! The fellow will tell it all over the country. He never kept a secret in his life—not even when it was against himself. He can't help talking. Perdition! I shall hear that story abominably exaggerated at mess every night. You villain! You have made me the laughing-stock of the regiment! I'd like to have you shot!"

"Yah, yah, yah! I'll gib de old boss de tiger story as well, den he can tell de parrot story one night and de tiger story de next."

"If you dare to mention a word about it, I'll make you sorry for it!"

"Den I'm going to be sorry for it!" declared Pete. "If de colonel is fond ob a funny story, he's going to hab dat one to go on wid. Yah, yah, yah! He's 'most bound to like it!"

"If you were to tell it to me now, sir," said Ara, "I should be able to give you a good opinion as to whether it is the description of story to amuse the colonel."

Then, to Spoffin's great disgust, Pete gave a full account as to the tiger chase, and Ara shouted with laughter until the major made a rush at him, and then he bolted from the room; but a few minutes later they heard shouts of laughter downstairs. Ara was repeating the story, and adding to it as he went on.

A little before eight o'clock Colonel Nargrave came down. He was a jolly-looking old gentleman, with a clean-shaven face and a quantity of grey hair. He greeted them all in a very friendly manner.

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"Look here, you rascal," he said to Pete, "don't you get playing any of your parrot tricks on me. Ha, ha, ha! I've heard all about that, Spoffin. I can see the marks on your nose now. Ha, ha, ha! And it must have surprised you when Pete made it bite you at night."

"I would point out to you that the story has been abominably exaggerated!" snarled the major. "And, further, that it would not be instrumental to my authority if you were to repeat it."

"Pooh, my dear fellow! I sha'n't repeat it. That is not at all likely. Of course—eh?—at mess—well, after all it is only an amusing little incident, and you know our fellows like a funny story."

"You mean to say you are going to repeat those abominable lies before all the officers? But it is needless to ask such a question. You could not help repeating it, if you tried."

"Breakfast is ready, gentlemen!" exclaimed Ara, entering the room at that moment.

Then Pete made the colonel shout with laughter by giving them the tiger story, and Spoffin got so savage that he strode from the room before the story was finished.

"He's a funny fellow!" exclaimed the colonel. "Stands too much on his dignity, and acts as though he did not care twopence for it. I don't know how he would behave in action. I have never seen him fight; but I hope he wouldn't run away like he did from the tiger. It would be rather awkward to see your major bolting from the first shot, and it would not be a good example to the men."

"My impression ob dat man is dat he wouldn't wait for de first shot to be fired before he started running," said Pete. "He would be taken ill before you met de foe, and you would hab to fight de battle majahless. Yah, yah yah! I neber saw a man more frightened ob a tiger in my life; and he says I bit him."

"Ha, ha, ha! Did you?"

"Well, ob course I had to make de tiger appear quite real. I know I pinched him while I did de growling."

"Let's hear you growl now."

Then Pete imitated a tiger, and the colonel, between his shouts of laughter, vowed that it sounded just like the real thing.

"You see, old hoss," exclaimed Pete, "I used to train dose insecks in my boyish days. I was in a circus, and always used to be fond ob de wild beasts. Dat's where I learnt how a tiger goes, and so I was able to copy it pretty well. Yah, yah, yah! You would hab laughed if you had seen him climbing dat tree, and de black tiger spring upon him. He did yowl, too! Made more row dan de tiger was making."

"Well, I want to speak to the fellow. Just go and tell him that I have a communication to make to him, Ara."

Spoffin took his time in coming. He sent a message to say that he would be down shortly, and this vexed the colonel, who, although a very easy-going man, was not to be trifled with in matters of discipline.

He scribbled an order on a sheet of paper that Spoffin was on no account to leave the hotel until he returned; then he went for a walk with the comrades.

"He thinks to keep me waiting for him!" growled the colonel. "Very well; now he shall await my pleasure." And he did not return to the hotel until dinner-time that night. Spoffin by that time was in a fearful state of temper, but in face of that peremptory order he dare not go out.

"I have been waiting for you all day, Colonel Nargrave," he said, directly they entered the hotel.

"Ah! In compliance with my instructions. Quite so! We have been for a long walk. Had a little shooting; you see the result. Fairly good bag for one day."

"I wish you had told me you would not return until this time. I have been kept in this place all the day."

"Well, I don't know that you have lost anything. It is very hot out. Now to business. Bring up dinner as soon as you can, Ara. This rebel affair that you have discovered, Major Spoffin, is all nonsense."

"Sir!"

"I say it is all nonsense; and you have made a regular mess of things. You should be more careful in bringing accusations against people."

"I know for a fact that the rajah assembled his followers."

"Yes; but you did not take the trouble to learn why he assembled them. Mind, he knew nothing about your accusation until he returned to his palace. His only object was to capture a band of brigands who have been giving us great trouble, and he has succeeded in his enterprise. He has handed the ruffians over to us, and I have come here post haste to stop any action on your part. I hope you have not offended him."

"Yah, yah, yah! Den you'm hoping against hope, old hoss!" said Pete. "De majah has offended him right enough; but seeing dat de rajah took it out wid his horsewhip—why, dere's an end ob de matter."

"I say, Spoffin, you ought to be more careful!" growled the colonel. "Don't you see what trouble it might cause. The young fellow is very powerful; besides, he has always proved most loyal. I shall have to pay him a visit and make matters right."

"The scoundrel ought to be hanged!" snarled Spoffin. "I would like to have the handling of him."

"Den here's your chance," exclaimed Pete, "for here he comes. Come in, old hoss! Spoffin wants to hab de handling ob you, and I tink we shall see some more fun when he starts on de job. You'm just in time for dinner."

"I came to see if you got home safely," said Sahar. "I did not think I should have the pleasure of meeting you again, Colonel Nargrave."

"Why, the fact is, a stupid mistake has been made," said the colonel. "It is one that I must apologise for. I came here to try to stop it, but learn that I am too late."

"At any rate, no harm is done!" exclaimed Sahar, smiling. "And, to tell you the honest truth, I am glad that it has happened, because it makes me hope that you will remain my guests for some days. We can have some tiger hunting and a little riding. You will come to the palace, Pete, with your friends?"

"We shall be very pleased, old hoss! We did hab a little tiger hunting last night. Yah, yah, yah! Must tell you all about dat hunt. It will make Lea laugh. Jack and Sammy will come all right, I know. De colonel will hab to decide for himself, but if he takes my advice he will come."

"I shall be delighted, rajah!" said the colonel. "I only regret what has happened, but assure you that the fault was not mine."

"Think no more about it," said the Sahar. "I bear no malice, not even towards Major Spoffin."

"You shall answer to me, sir, for your conduct!" cried Spoffin.

"I am quite prepared to do so at any moment you name," retorted Sahar, turning his back on him.

"Now, you buzz off home, old hoss, before you get hurt!" said Pete, giving the major a playful slap on the back. "You know perfectly well dat you are afraid ob de rajah. If I was you, colonel, I should send de man home. He's only in de way here."

And this is exactly what the colonel did, while the comrades spent a grand time at the palace.

THE END.

(Another tale dealing with the adventures of the three famous comrades, Jack Sam, and Pete next Wednesday. Please order your copy of the MARVEL in advance. Price 1d.)

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# FAIR PLAY

A Splendid School Tale.

By CHAS. HAMILTON.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Nobob Comes to Netherby.

**O**WEN REDFERN, of the Third Form at Netherby School, closed his Virgil with a snap, and a sigh of relief. There was a buzz of talk in the Third Form room, and Redfern, hard at work in the

midst of it, had found it somewhat distracting.

The Third Form room was never very quiet, except when a master was present, but just now it was a little more noisy than usual. Some extremely interesting topic was being loudly discussed by a dozen juniors, and Redfern, now that his work was done, was curious to know what it was. He joined the group by the fire, who were surrounding a slim, light-haired youth, who appeared to be in possession of exclusive information. They were plying him with questions, and Redfern stopped to listen.

"He's really here, then, Knowles?"

"Yes, I tell you I saw him."

"Where is he now?"

"In the Head's study."

"How do you know he's coming into our Form?"

"I happened to hear—"

The speaker was interrupted by a general laugh.

"Ha, ha! You often happen to hear things, don't you, Knowles?"

"Oh, all right!" said Knowles snappishly. "If you don't want to hear—"

"But we do. Go on."

"Well, I heard the Head say to Mr. Lumsden that the chap was coming into the Third. Old Lummy's with them now in the Head's study."

"That settles it. My hat! This is a go!"

"What's all this cackle about, anyway?" exclaimed Owen Redfern. "Who and what's in the Head's study, Knowles?"

"The new kid."

"Oh, the new kid? Nothing remarkable about that, is there?"

"There is about this one."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Nothing, only he's a nigger."

"A nigger!" ejaculated Redfern.

"Well, an Indian," said Knowles. "It's much the same, ain't it?"

"You've got a lot to learn, my son, if you think it's much the same," said Redfern sententiously. "You really ought to know better than that, Knowles."

"Oh, rats!" said Knowles. "I don't care whether he's brown or black. I think it's a howling cheek of them to stick him in our Form."

"Rot!" said Redfern. "What's his name?"

"Oh, I've got that down fine!" grinned Knowles. "Hurree Jamset Ram Singh! How's that?"

"Well, there's enough of it. But look here, you kids," said Redfern seriously, "don't you start chipping the new chap. He's bound to feel a bit queer at first, coming here from such a distance, and it would be only decent to let him down lightly."

Knowles sneered. He was not a good-natured boy, and

he generally acted in opposition to Redfern. Redfern was cook of the walk in the Third Form at Netherby, a position disputed only by Knowles. And the latter often contrived to make himself unpleasant, though he avoided coming to open fistcuffs with his rival.

"Oh, you'd better shove him into a handbox at once, Redfern!" he exclaimed. "I don't see what you want to take a blooming nigger under your wing for."

"Of course, you don't see it," agreed Redfern. "I shouldn't expect you to, Knowles. You don't see why a chap shouldn't be a cad! You never did."

Some of the juniors giggled, and Knowles turned red with anger.

"Look here, Redfern, if you're going to set up as a champion for that confounded nigger, you'll have your hands full. It's like his cheek to shove himself in here, and if we can get any larks out of him—"

"Oh, shut up, you make me tired!" said Redfern. "The new kid's nothing to me, but fair play's a jewel. It's a cad's game to chivy a foreign chap who doesn't know the ropes. And I tell you plainly that there's going to be no bullying or ragging while I can stop it."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Redfern," said a voice in the doorway.

The juniors swung round with startled looks, for the voice was that of Mr. Lumsden, their Form-master. Redfern coloured with confusion. He had not, of course, had the least idea that the master was there, and the fact that the sentiments he had just given expression to were calculated to find favour with a master, made him feel all the more awkward. He had all a healthy boy's horror of appearing in the slightest degree priggish.

Mr. Lumsden was a stout little gentleman, with a sententious way of speaking. He wagged a fat forefinger at the juniors as he went on:

"I hope the—ah—attitude Redfern has taken up will be imitated by the rest of this Form. Redfern, I have frequently had occasion to find fault with you for—ah—carelessness, and a too—ah—pronounced disposition to frolic, but I am glad to see that you are—ah—sound at heart."

This eulogium made poor Redfern absolutely scarlet.

"Come in, Hurree Singh," continued Mr. Lumsden.

The portly form of the Third Form master nearly filled the doorway. He advanced into the room, and the lad who was behind him followed him in. Then the curious Third Formers got a good look at him.

He was a youth of medium size for his age, slenderly built, with a skin of deep olive, and very large and brilliant black eyes. He was dressed in Etons, and wore a very large flower in his jacket. His dusky face was not exactly handsome, but there was an expression of good-nature and simplicity about it that favourably impressed the beholder. He carried himself very elegantly, and his manner was of the most agreeable politeness.

"My boys, this is your new Form-fellow, Hurree Singh," said Mr. Lumsden, with a wave of the hand. "I trust you will give him a kindly welcome to Netherby. In saying this, I address myself more particularly to you, Redfern."

"Yes, sir," said Redfern.

"This boy comes from a very distant part of the—ah—Empire, and you will all do your best to make him feel at home," said the Form-master. "You may find some of his ways, and perhaps—ah—his English, a little peculiar at first, but I am sure you will not take any advantage of his strangeness to his new surroundings. You will accord him—ah—a friendly welcome. Again, I more particularly address you, Redfern."

"Yes, sir," said Redfern, inwardly chafing.

Mr. Lumsden marched out of the room. The Indian boy was left alone with his new Form-fellows. Naturally, he was surrounded at once by eager seekers after knowledge.

"I say, Inky, where did you come from?" asked Knowles. The Hindoo lad looked puzzled.

"My name is not Inky," he said, in excellent English. "My name is Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh."

"Ah, my mistake!" said Knowles blandly. "Lemme see—what is it? Hurry Jampot Rum what?"

"Oh, shut up, Knowles!" said Redfern.

"Rats! I say Jampot, what part of India do you hail from?"

"Bhanipur," said Hurree Singh.

"And you're a prince in your own country, of course."

"Yes, nabob," said the Indian simply.

Knowles laughed.

"My hat! A blooming nabob! Do you want us to swallow that?"

"My ludicrous friend——"

Knowles stated.

"Your what, you brown bounder?"

The Indian made an apologetic gesture.

"Please do not take offence," he said, in his soft voice. "I speak English with the complete facilitation of the highly educated, but it is a difficult language, and I may have with inadvertence used an incorrect expression, but I shall communicate with you more freely when I become accustomed to the idiots here."

"The—the what?"

Redfern gave a howl of laughter.

"The idiots," he giggled. "You're one of the idiots, Knowles. Perhaps he means idiom, though."

Hurree Singh looked distressed.

"Am I guilty of another inadvertence?" he murmured. "I am truly regretful, my respectable schoolmates. I am far indeed from terming this boy an idiot, for I have been warned to be careful to avoid judging by appearances."

The Third Formers giggled joyously. Knowles had started to make fun of the Indian, but it seemed somehow to be working out the other way.

"Look here, you nigger!" exclaimed Knowles.

"Dry up, Knowles!" said Redfern sharply. "Don't be a pig!"

"Dry up yourself!" retorted Knowles. "What's it got to do with you?"

"Nothing, only——"

"Redfern," said Knowles, imitating the sententious manner of Mr. Lumsden, and wagging his forefinger in the Form-master's way, "I have—ah—frequently had occasion to—ah—find fault with you for meddling in matters that don't concern you."

The juniors giggled.

"Little boys should mind their own business," continued Knowles. "In saying this, I—ah—address myself more particularly to you, Redfern."

"Oh, shut up!" said Redfern uncomfortably.

"As for Inky Darkness here," resumed Knowles, "I shall say what I like to him. I think it will do him good to put him through it a bit. And a blooming nigger——"

Hurree Singh flushed indignantly under his dusky skin.

"If you are not more respectable, my friend, I shall be compelled to administer the castigation!" he exclaimed, with dignity.

"Oh, hold him back!" ejaculated Knowles, pretending to be very much alarmed. "He's going to administer the castigation! Take that for a start, Inky!"



The tackle had failed; Hurree Singh went flying on, and again the spectators roared; "Good old Inky!" (See page 139.)

And he gave the Indian a playful tap on the nose which made him stagger.

Hurree Singh went dark crimson, and, quick as a flash, his hands shot out, and Knowles reeled before a stinging smack.

"You nigger!" yelled Knowles. "I'll pulverise you!" He leaped forward, and Hurree Singh, who was nothing like a match for the bulkier boy, would have fared very badly had not Owen Redfern chipped in just in time.

"Hands off!" said Redfern. And he gripped Knowles by the back of his collar, and swung him away from his intended victim.

"Let me go, Redfern!"

"Are you going to let the Indian alone?"

"No," howled Knowles, "I'm not! I'm going to massacre him! What are you interfering for, you beast?"

"Oh, just for the fun of the thing!" said Redfern serenely. "You're not going to touch Hurree Singh while I'm around, that's all!"

"I'll wring his neck!"

"You look more like getting your own wrung at the present moment," remarked Redfern, tightening his grip and grinding his knuckles into the back of Knowles's neck.

"This is where I shake you!" He suited the action to the word, and shook Knowles till the teeth rattled in his head.

"Now, are you going to drop it?"

"No!"

"Right you are! I'll keep on till you say when."

And Redfern resumed the shaking vigorously. Knowles struggled desperately to get away, but he was helpless. He threw all his strength into a final effort, but Redfern held on like grim death. Something was bound to go. And something did. There was a sudden, tearing sound, and Knowles's collar came out, and his jacket split, and he tumbled over on the floor.

"Ha, ha!" roared Redfern. "You do look a sight, Knowles!"

Knowles jumped up, red with rage. He was usually too cautious to come to close quarters with Owen Redfern, but he was too furious now to think of prudence. He went at Redfern like a wild bull. Redfern receded a few paces before his rush, but his guard was perfect, and not one of his assailant's savage drives reached his cool, smiling face.

Suddenly he let out his right, and Knowles tumbled over again. He went down with a thump, and sat up looking rather foolish.

"Do you want any more?" asked Redfern genially. "They're my Sudden Slaps for Beastly Bounders, and I keep 'em on tap. Don't be bashful; say if you want any more."

"I'll get even with you for this!" mumbled Knowles. "And as for that nigger—"

"What?"

Redfern looked dangerous, and Knowles shut up promptly. He picked himself up, and without offering to renew the fight, went out, scowling blackly. His pride had had a severe fall, but he was not inclined to push the fight to a finish.

"Good for you, Reddy!" exclaimed Reggie Lawrence—Redfern's chum. "That's what Knowles has been asking for for a long time. It'll do him heaps of good."

Hurree Singh extended his brown hands to Redfern gratefully.

"I thank you!" he exclaimed. "It is brave to give the helping hand to the stranger within the doors. I would like to be your friend."

"Certainly!" grinned Redfern.

"That is good, and I think we shall be as thick as a thief," Hurree Singh declared.

And Redfern laughed, but he shook hands cordially enough with the Indian. Hurree Singh's phraseology was peculiar, but his heart was evidently in the right place.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Herr Schwan is Worried.

**H**URREE SINGH'S arrival at Netherby caused quite a flutter in the Third Form, which he honoured with his presence. In spite of Knowles's scepticism on the point, he was, in reality, a nabob in his own country, and princes, even dusky ones, were not common in the Third Form at Netherby.

And the new boy was decidedly a character. His extreme politeness was only equalled by the peculiarity of his English, and, indeed, his knowledge of that language was fearful and wonderful.

His education in India had left a good deal to be desired, but he was blissfully unconscious of the fact, and so it did not trouble him. But his nature was so kind and so obliging that the boys could hardly help liking him, though his extreme simplicity led many of them to play practical jokes upon him.

There was probably only one boy in the Form who dis-

liked him, and that was Knowles, who never forgave him for being the unintentional cause of his downfall at the hands of Owen Redfern.

The coming of the Indian added considerably to the gaiety of the Third Form. The masters did not know exactly what to make of him. His English was the despair of Mr. Lumsden; but Mr. Lumsden's worries were as nothing to those of Herr Schwan, whose business it was to drive German into the heads of the Netherby juniors, and who found the task extremely difficult in the case of Hurree Singh.

Herr Schwan, as a matter of fact, never had a very pleasant time with the Third. They did not like German, and they did not like the Herr. He was a sharp-tempered little man, with a way of rapping knuckles with a pointer when he was irritated.

"Dis is te most stupid class as nefer vas!" he exclaimed one morning. Knowles had been exasperating him by some purposely stupid answers, and had been sent to the bottom of the class. "Now you—vat is your name?" He pointed to the youthful nabob.

"Yes, sir. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, sir."

"Mein gootness! Vat do you know of Sherman?"

"I have been earthed in that beautiful language, sir," said Hurree Singh. "My tutor, a distinguished native graduate of Bengal University—"

"Vat does te poy say? You have been vat?"

"He means grounded, sir," ventured Redfern, smothering a laugh.

"Ach! You vill take te sentence vich tat Knowles cannot understand. I say to you, mein poy, tat sentence. Haben sic hunger? Vat is te English of tat?"

Hurree Singh cocked his head thoughtfully. Herr Schwan rapped his desk with his pointer.

"Are you hungry?" he exclaimed impatiently. "Do you understand?"

Hurree Singh looked surprised.

"Yes, sir; I understand. No, thank you, I am not hungry."

"Vat do you say?"

"I am not hungry."

"Te poy is a fool!"

"Pardon me, sir, I have only answered your question," said Hurree Singh. "You asked me if I were hungry, and I replied that I was not. As a matter of fact, I made a very good breakfast this morning."

The class were giggling, and the Herr rapped his desk again.

"Hurree Singh, is tat stupidity or impertinence tat you mean?"

The nabob looked deeply pained.

"I trust that you could never suspect me of being impertinent, sir!" he exclaimed. "I make it a most universal rule to maintain decorousness of polite manners even with personages of most unpleasant tempers."

The Herr breathed hard. He gave a long look at the dusky face of the nabob, but read only the most complete innocence there, and passed on to the next boy.

But Herr Schwan was a conscientious little man, and presently he returned to the charge. He was looking a little dangerous now, and the boys were very careful, and the nabob was a trifle nervous as the German master's eye singled him out again.

"Hurree Singh!"

"Yes, sir."

"You have heard vat I have just said?"

"Yes, sir."

"Den repeat it!"

Hurree Singh wrinkled his brows.

"Das ist der—der—"

"Dat ist der wige Gesang!" rapped out Herr Schwan.

"Yes, sir."

"Vell, tell me vat tat line mean, and nod keep on saying 'Yes, sir,' like van parrot!"

Hurree Singh looked worried. For the life of him he couldn't construe that line, but he did not dare to say so as the Herr was looking so bad-tempered.

"Vell, are you dumb?" asked Herr Schwan sarcastically.

"No, sir."

"Den tell me vat I ask you."

"Yes, sir."

"I vill gif you vun chance before I use te pointer."

"Yes, sir," gasped Hurree Singh.

It was at that moment that Knowles came to the rescue. He dropped a pen, and stooped to pick it up, and whispered to Hurree Singh as he did so:

"Shall I tell you?"

Hurree Singh gave a gasp of relief.

"Oh, yes, please!"

"It means 'get your hair cut,'" said Knowles, with perfect gravity.

"Oh, thank you!"

**NEXT WEDNESDAY:**

"PETE'S REWARD,"  
A Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete,  
By S. Clarke Hook;

AND

"GLECC. OF NEW YORK,"  
A Thrilling Tale of  
A New Detective.

**TWO** GRAND LONG  
COMPLETE STORIES.

And Hurree Singh, never doubting, brightened up wonderfully.

"Now, mein poy," snapped Herr Schwan, "will you tell me?"

"Yes, sir. Get your hair cut."

For a moment the class was astounded, and Herr Schwan stood as if petrified.

The Herr was somewhat vain of his hair, which he wore longer than is customary, and curled and scented. It was a common subject for jokes at Netherby, but no one had ventured to joke the German master himself about it before.

"Vat did you say, Hurree Singh?"

"Get your hair cut, sir," said the nabob cheerfully.

The whole class burst into a roar. Hurree Singh looked round him in amazement. He had not the faintest idea of what the juniors were laughing at.

The German master made two strides to Hurree Singh, his fat face red with rage.

"You—you impertinent poy!" he gasped. "Come out here—come out at vunce!"

Hurree Singh looked dismayed.

"What is the matter, sir? You asked me!"

"You tell me to get mein hair cut! Mein gootness! Poy, if you do not leave off to laugh, I will punish te whole class!"

He shook his pointer at Hurree Singh.

"Get mein hair cut! Mein gootness!"

"Well, it would do the fat old donkey good to have that mop off, anyway!" muttered Knowles.

"Did you speak, Knowles?"

"No, sir."

"I tink tat you speak!"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Knowles, feeling rather alarmed. He had not expected the Herr to be so quick of hearing. "Hurree Singh will bear me out, sir. I didn't say anything, did I, Hurree Singh?"

The nabob looked at him in astonishment. He did not quite grasp the fact at first that Knowles was telling a deliberate lie to get out of a scrape.

"My respectable friend," exclaimed Hurree Singh, "surely that is a remarkable incorrectness of the remembrance. I distinctly heard you say— Oh, oh, oh!"

Hurree Singh broke off with a yell as Knowles, in alarm, pinched his leg as a hint to keep quiet. The German master glared at them.

"You heard Knowles say 'Oh, oh, oh!'" he exclaimed.

"No, sir! I uttered that ejaculation because someone has just pinched me, and caused me a sudden and excruciating anguish," said Hurree Singh.

"Knowles, step out here!"

"But, sir—"

"Step out here!" said Herr Schwan, in a voice of thunder.

Knowles, giving Hurree Singh a dark look, reluctantly obeyed.

"Now, Hurree Singh, vat did Knowles say?"

"Pardon me, sir," said the nabob, "it has just occurred to me that Knowles might object to my informing you that he alluded to you as a fat donkey, and so, if you will excuse me, I will not repeat his remark."

The class yelled, and the German turned as red as a turkey-cock.

"You call me a fat donkey, Knowles? And you tell lies like vun Ananias!"

"I—I didn't, sir. I—"

"Hold out your hand!"

Knowles had to obey, and he received a couple of stingers on each hand, and he went back to his seat with his hands under his arms, looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

The caning of Knowles relieved Herr Schwan's feelings a little, and he let Hurree Singh alone after that. When the class was dismissed, Knowles jostled against Hurree Singh as the boys went out.

"I'll make you sit up for that, you nigger!" he whispered fiercely.

Redfern shoved him aside.

"Come and have a look at the footer, Hurree," he said, passing his arm through that of the Indian boy.

And he marched the nabob off to Littleaside, leaving Knowles to plan vengeance.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### A Lesson in Rugger.

THEY were strong on football at Netherby, and they played it well. The school game was Rugger, and Netherby College sent out a first fifteen that had a splendid record of success. There were Form teams, too, all in a good state of efficiency, and even the Third Form youngsters were quite up to the mark.

Redfern explained this to Hurree Singh as they went down to the ground. Redfern was captain of his Form fifteen.

"How I should like to play the game!" exclaimed Hurree Singh. "I wish you would teach me, Redfern."

Owen looked him over.

"Well, you ain't bad form," he remarked critically. "Can you run?"

"Yes; I think so."

"Race me down to the ground," said Redfern.

And they started off. The Indian boy was slim and light of foot. He ran like a deer, and Redfern, who was the best sprinter in his Form, was hard put to it to keep up with him.

"You'll do!" gasped Redfern, as they halted. "By Jove, you can get over the ground! If you like to go into it, I'll shove you in the three-quarter line. Have you ever played footer before?"

"No."

"Hum! Your education has been neglected, my son. But just you stand about here, and watch us at practice, and afterwards I'll give you some tips."

"Oh, thank you!"

"Not at all. If you can play, there's plenty of room for you in the fifteen, I can tell you. We've got a match coming off that is awfully fearfully important, and I'm looking out for new talent."

Redfern said this with an air of importance that duly impressed Hurree Singh. The nabob had an immense admiration for the cock of the Third Form, and he listened to the words of Owen Redfern as to those of an oracle.

The Third Form players turned up, and Redfern soon had them hard at work. Hurree Singh watched them eagerly. He was anxious to know the ropes, and learn to play the wonderful game which he had heard was thought so much of in England.

Knowles was a three-quarter in the team, and he played up very well. Of the rest, Redfern and Reggie Lawrence were the best, but, considering their age, all the youngsters played a good game. It had cost Redfern a great deal of time and trouble to bring them to their present form.

While Hurree Singh stood looking on, a number of boys came over from the Fourth Form ground to watch the juniors at practice. The Fourth Formers, being a Form above Redfern's, adopted a lofty attitude towards the Third, whom they generally alluded to as the "infants" or "babes," and their manner was distinctly patronising as they looked on now. Hurree Singh heard their remarks, and began to feel indignant.

A tall, loose-jointed Fourth Former, with a tallow-coloured complexion, was loudest in his remarks, and most unpleasant. But as this young gentleman was afflicted with a stammer in his speech his observations did not sound so crushing as he intended.

"These kik-kik-kids think they can p-play footer," he said, with a sniff. "F-f-funny, chaps, ain't it?"

"Funny ain't the word, Robinson," said another; "but they'll look funnier still when they meet us in the Form match."

Robinson laughed.

"Yes; I fancy we shall make them look sick!" he exclaimed. "We shall have to teach them a l-l-lesson for their chook-chook-chook-cheek! Hallo, there's that new addition to the Third menagerie, the nigger. Hallo, Inky!"

The nabob looked at him indignantly, and turned back his head haughtily. Robinson winked to his friends, and, reaching out with his foot, gave the nabob a shove that sent him staggering forward. His foot slipped on the damp grass, and he went down on his hands and knees.

He jumped up in a twinkling, his black eyes blazing. The nabob was not much of a fighting man, but he had heaps of pluck, and he went for Robinson promptly. The big Fourth Former had not expected that, and he staggered back before a hearty thump on the chest.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Of all the cheek!"

The next moment Hurree Singh was gripped in the strong arms of Robinson, and whirled off his feet. Robinson was looking dangerous. It was a severe blow to his dignity to be thumped by a Third Form youngster. But just then the players came streaming off the ground, and Redfern arrived on the spot, and he at once came to the rescue.

"Hallo, what are you up to, Robinson?" he exclaimed. "Let our chap alone!"

"R-r-rats to you!" snapped Robinson. "He's had the cheek to punch me, and I'm going to wipe up the ground with him!"

"Let him go!"

"Sha'n't!"

Now, it was of no use Redfern attacking Robinson, who was a head taller and more powerful in every way. In a fight Redfern had no chance; but Owen had not learned to play the good old game of Rugger for nothing.

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AND

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a New Detective;

**TWO GRAND LONG,  
COMPLETE STORIES.**

He went straight at Robinson, and tackled him in Rugger style, and the next moment the captain of the Fourth Form was lying on his back, with all the wind knocked out of him. Hurree Singh jumped to Redfern's side.

Robinson lay for some seconds with a dazed idea that the world had come to a sudden end, and then he arose slowly, looking absolutely ferocious. There seemed a good prospect of a general row between the Third and Fourth, but fortunately just then a prefect bore down upon the juniors.

"What are you kids rowing about?" he exclaimed.

"These youngsters are cheeky," said Robinson loftily. "I wish you'd try to keep the lower Forms in better order, Lantham."

"Lower Forms, you cheeky young rascal! I suppose you are full-fledged seniors in the Fourth?" grinned the big Sixth Former. "Do you want me to box your ears, Robinson?"

Robinson turned red.

"Look here, Lan-Lan-Lantham——"

"Shut up! If you want to speak my name, for goodness' sake let us have it all at once and not on the instalment plan. Be off with you. You kids are always making a row. I suppose you and Redfern are to blame as usual. You'll do fifty lines each, and bring them to me before you go to bed to-night!"

"Oh, I say, Lantham!" exclaimed Redfern.

But the prefect, without stopping for argument, stalked away. Prefects at Netherby were high-handed in dealing with juniors, and they found that it saved time to inflict penalties without making inquiries. Robinson looked grimly at Redfern.

"All your fault, you little beast!"

"All yours, you beastly bully!" retorted Redfern. "Only just wait till the Form match, and see what a licking we'll give you!"

Robinson looked inclined to commit assault and battery on the spot, but he restrained himself and walked away with his companions.

"We've still got ten minutes, Inky," said Redfern. "Come on, and I'll show you something to begin with, anyhow."

The Indian boy willingly acceded, and so he received his first instruction in the grand old game. He proved an apt pupil, too. Knowles stood looking on with a sneer on his face, but that sneer was blotted out suddenly. Redfern was instructing Hurree Singh in the mysteries of the drop-kick, and the nabob was anxiously following his directions.

Unfortunately, the ball flew in a direction different from that intended, and before Knowles knew what was coming, the leather had plumped full in his face. He gave a yell, and sat down suddenly.

The ball was in about the muddiest state it was possible for a ball to be in, and Knowles's features had disappeared under a muddy veil.

"Thanks, Knowles," said Redfern calmly. "Awfully good of you to stop the ball. Chuck it back, will you?"

"You beast, you did that on purpose!" howled Knowles.

"I assure you I did not!" exclaimed Hurree Singh earnestly. "I have extreme regretfulness for the lamentable accident."

"You black brute!"

Knowles departed wrathfully. Redfern grinned.

"Come on, Inky, it's time we changed," he said.

And so ended the first lesson.

"Are you really going to do the lines, Redfern?" asked Hurree, as they walked away from the ground.

"Lantham's lines? Oh, yes! When you've been here a bit longer, Hurree, my son, you'll know that a high and mighty prefect is monarch of all he surveys, and that his word is law to all us humble juniors."

"But you were not to blame."

"That makes no difference. Still, I dare say I shall find a chance of making both Lantham and Robinson sit up, and that will make matters even, you see," said Redfern, with a grin.

"There the little brutes are!"

It was a sudden shout, and half a dozen Fourth Form boys suddenly rushed out from behind the fives' court, and threw themselves upon the comrades. They were led by Robinson, who had evidently lain in ambush for the purpose of visiting vengeance upon the heads of the Third Formers.

Redfern was not often caught napping, but he was just now. In a moment the two were bowled over by the rush of the Fourth Formers, and rolled helplessly along the ground by their grinning captors. Unable to get up, hardly able to struggle in so many hands, Redfern and Hurree Singh went rolling along the muddy ground, breathless and gasping. A sudden cry of "Cave!" called off their assailants.

Redfern struggled to his feet as he was released. His head was swimming, and he was simply caked with mud. Hurree Singh was in a similar state. The last of the Fourth Formers was disappearing round a corner. An awful figure in cap and gown was bearing down upon the two unfortunate juniors.

It was the doctor!

Redfern, with a gasp, seized Hurree Singh by the arm, and raced him away, and they vanished from the doctor's gaze like a beautiful dream, long before he had had a chance of recognising them.

"That was a narrow squeak!" panted Redfern.

And he marched Hurree Singh off to a bath-room to clean up.

"They've pretty nearly ruined our clothes," he muttered; "and nearly got us into an awful row! We shall have to make things hum for Robinson. By Jove, I'll make the beastly boulder sit up! We shall be late for grub!"

They were, and Redfern received fifty more lines from Mr. Lumsden. He made a wry face, and put them down to the account of Robinson, to be paid in full at an early date.

#### CHAPTER 4.

#### Rough on Robinson.

**T**HERE was a very considerable feeling of rivalry between the Third Form at Netherby and the Form above them, as the new boy had had an opportunity of observing.

The Fourth Form persisted in regarding the Third merely as "kids," and treating them with a lofty disdain, and, needless to say, Redfern and his friends strongly resented this attitude.

Robinson, the head of the Fourth, was a big, overbearing fellow, and he had fallen into a habit of ragging and cuffing the Third which was extremely painful to them.

But it was Redfern's intention to take the Fourth down a peg or two, and when Redfern made up his mind to anything, it generally came off.

He had now made up his mind that when the Form match came off the result should be a crushing defeat for the higher Form, and he was keeping his players up to the mark with the determination of a slave-driver. In the Form matches it was customary for the higher Form to pull off an easy victory, and the Fourth were treating their rivals with a disdain born of complete confidence in themselves. Redfern intended that they should have a rude awakening from their dream of superiority.

And Hurree Singh entered into the project with all his heart.

The Indian boy was the most good-natured fellow at the school, but Robinson had treated him very rudely, and rudeness was a thing the polite nabob found it hardest to forgive.

And the prospect of being included in the team that was to bring low the colours of the Fourth was joyful to Hurree Singh.

"If Robinson wasn't so cocksure about it," remarked Redfern, "he'd make his men buck up, and they might get the better of us. But he's so sure of victory that he won't realise he's going to be beaten till the time comes, and then it will be too late. And, by Jove, the Fourth will have to sing awfully small after they've been licked by the infants!"

"Rather," said Reggie Lawrence. "Ain't you coming out, Reddy?"

"No; I've got a hundred lines to do, half for Lantham and half for Lummy. Beastly rotten, isn't it? But I'm going to make somebody sorry for it."

Lawrence grinned.

He knew by the sparkle in Redfern's eyes that something was in the wind.

"What's the joke, Reddy, old son?"

"Wait a bit, Reggie, and you'll see," replied Redfern. "Squatze-vous here and do half my lines. Lantham won't know your hand from mine."

"Right you are!"

The three comrades had the Third Form-room to themselves just then, the rest of the Form being out in the school grounds. At Netherby the Third Form did not have separate studies, like the higher Forms.

The lines, by the united endeavours of Redfern and Lawrence, were polished off, as Redfern expressed it, and then the cock of the Third marched off with them.

He visited Mr. Lumsden first, and gave in his own work to the Form-master, who was well acquainted with his handwriting, and then went in search of Lantham the prefect.

Lantham was in his study, and Jobling, the school porter, was in the doorway, talking to him.

"It's just arrived, Master Lantham, and it's in the box-room," said Jobling. "It's a pretty big box, Master Lantham, and it was very heavy getting it up."

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"Was it, Jobling?" said the prefect sympathetically. "Lucky you're such an awfully strong chap, then."

"I ain't so strong as I used to be," said Jobling. "What with the rheumatics, and it was a tug getting that box up, Master Lantham."

"Too bad; you're in want of exercise," said Lantham agreeably, affecting not to know what the porter was driving at. "I should advise a sprint round the quadrangle early in the morning, Jobling."

Jobling snorted. "I ain't in want of exercise," he said. "I'm gettin' too old to carry boxes about, though I like to do things for the young gentlemen. Some of them are werry generous, and'll 'and over a shilling and think nothing of it."

"Yes, there's some generous chaps at Netherby," said Lantham. "I dare say you make a pretty good thing out of it altogether, Jobling."

Jobling gave it up then, and went away sniffing. Redfern grinned as he went into the study, and he found Lantham laughing.

"Hallo, kid! What do you want?"  
 "My lines, Lantham."  
 "Your what? Oh, lines! How many?"  
 "Fifty."  
 "All right!"  
 "Well, here they are."  
 "Chuck 'em on the fire, my son, and cut off."

Redfern looked indignant. He had been given the imposition undeservedly, and to have the work treated in this off-hand manner was too bad. "Well, you're a nice specimen of a giddy prefect!" he muttered.

"Am I?" said Lantham, catching the words, and catching also Redfern's ear. "Now, I thought I was pretty good as a prefect, Redfern. I think I shall persuade you to admit it, if I twist your ear long enough."

"Lemme go!"  
 "Has your opinion of me improved yet?" asked the prefect blandly.  
 "Nunno! Lemme alone!"  
 "There's another twist! What do you say now?"  
 "Oh, I think you're a beastly bully!" said Redfern, wriggling.

"You're an obstinate little beast," said Lantham, boxing his ears. "Get out of my study!"  
 Redfern, with his head singing, and his injured ear burning like fire, beat a hasty retreat from the study. Lantham followed him out, and walked away towards the box-room.

Redfern shook his fist after the prefect. "You just wait, you beast!" he muttered. Lantham went into the box-room, to see to the box whose arrival Jobling had just reported. He left the door open, and Redfern, following him on tiptoe, saw him bending over a box, and cutting the cord with his penknife. Redfern changed the key to the outside of the door. "Hallo, Lantham, you b-b-beast!" said Redfern, keeping the door between him and the prefect.

He imitated with great fidelity the voice of the stuttering Robinson. Lantham looked up in amazement. There was only one boy who stuttered at Netherby, and so the prefect had not the slightest doubt that it was Robinson of the Fourth who was addressing him. He glanced wrathfully towards the door. "Robinson! Do you want me to come to you?"  
 "Oh, n-n-no, pip-pip-please don't; your f-f-face worries me!"

Lantham jumped up. His temper was never good, and cheek like that from a junior made him wild. "Why, you cheeky little brute, I'll skin you!" he gasped. And he made a rush for the door. Redfern instantly drew it shut with a slam, and turned the key in the lock. Lantham grabbed the handle and tried to open it, in vain. "Open this door, Robinson!" he bellowed. "Yah! You go and eat co-co-cokernats, you s-s-silly bib-bib-bounder!" came the reply through the door. "Get out of the win-win-window if you w-w-want to get out, L-L-Lantham, you bib-bib-beast!" Lantham gave the door a sounding kick. Then he heard the sound of retreating footsteps. The junior had departed.

"By Jove!" muttered Lantham. "Fancy Robinson having such cheek! I'll tan his hide for him! By thunder, I'll make him sit up for this. Nice pass things are coming to, when a Fourth Former locks a prefect up in the box-room!"  
 And he stamped across to the window.

Redfern hurried back to the Third Form-room, grinning gleefully.

"What's the wheeze?" demanded Lawrence. "Come and see."  
 Redfern hurried Reggie and Hurree Singh out of the building, to a spot where they could view the box-room window. The window was open, and Lantham was looking out. He slowly and gingerly drew himself out on the sill. "What's he doing?" exclaimed Lawrence, in amazement. "Somebody has locked him in the box-room."  
 "Ha, ha!"

"But he will experience the extreme anger in the heart," said Hurree Singh dubiously. "Exactly; but his extreme anger will fall upon Robinson. The chap who locked him in stuttered through the door at him, you see."

Reggie Lawrence yelled with laughter. "Oh, my only Aunt Maria! What a howling wheeze!"  
 "Don't let him hear you. We've got to see and not be seen in this act," grinned Redfern. "My hat! I didn't know old Lantham was such a giddy acrobat."  
 Lantham had lowered himself and was holding on the sill with his hands.

He seemed in doubt about letting himself go, but finally he made up his mind, and dropped to the ground. He fell over with a thump, and gave a grunt. "He's hurt his little self," said Redfern. "Come on, kids! Hallo, Lantham! That a new course of gymnastics you're going through?"

The senior was picking himself up and dusting his clothes. He looked savagely at the youngsters. "Have you seen Robinson?" he asked thickly. "Robinson of the Fourth?" said Redfern reflectively. "Yes, I fancy I saw him in the upper corridor. He went into his study with Hake."

"Oh, did he? All right!"  
 "Do you want to see him?" asked Redfern innocently. "Yes," growled Lantham, "I want to see him."  
 "You did that drop awfully well," said Redfern. "I should like to see you do it again, Lantham. Are you going to do any more tricks, Lantham?"

The prefect made a dash at him, and the three juniors scuttled off. Lantham did not pursue; his mind just then was filled with thoughts of Robinson. He hurried off in the direction of the Fourth Form studies, and the three followed at a safe distance to see the fun.

Lantham reached Robinson's study and kicked open the door. Robinson and his chum Hake were sitting at the table doing their evening preparation, at peace with all the world. They had not the slightest suspicion that the hour of vengeance had struck, and when Lantham burst into the room, they jumped up and stared at him in blank amazement.

"Hallo, Lantham! What do you want?" said Robinson. "What do you come bub-bub-bursting into my quarters for? Oh, crikey!"  
 He yelled as Lantham seized him by the collar and began to thump him.

"Lemme alone!" he roared. "What's that for? I haven't done anything!"  
 "Haven't you?" panted the prefect. "Then I'll give it to you for doing nothing, you cheeky rat! I'll teach you to lock a prefect in the box-room!"  
 "He's mad! He's off his rocker!"  
 Thump, thump, thump!  
 "I'll teach you to lock the door on me and cheek me."  
 Thump, thump, thump!  
 "He's raving mad!" gasped Robinson. "Hold him! Help!"

Thump, thump, thump!  
 The prefect, panting with his exertions, left off at last, and he pitched Robinson, in a considerably ruffled condition, across the study.

"There, you beast, let that be a lesson to you!"  
 Robinson sat where he fell, with an almost idiotic expression of terror and bewilderment upon his face. "He's mad," he said faintly—"raving mad!"  
 The prefect stalked out of the study, shutting the door with a slam.

# ANSWERS

ONE PENNY.

Every Tuesday

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"Mad!" said Robinson again, with conviction. "Fancy Lantham going off his chump like that all of a sudden. We might both have been mum-mum-murdered!"

The door opened. The grinning face of Owen Redfern looked into the study. Over his shoulders looked the equally grinning countenances of Lawrence and Hurree Singh.

"Hallo!" said Redfern genially. "Had a rough time of it? You look like it. Sorry now that you bothered us, Robinson? Who takes the cake this time? Ha, ha, ha!"

Robinson reached for a ruler. The door slammed; the Third Form youngsters were gone.

"Those little brutes are at the bib-bib-bottom of it, somehow!" gasped Robinson, a glimmering of the truth dawning upon him.

But he felt too used up to think of reprisals just then, and the three were left to enjoy their triumph in peace.

## CHAPTER 5.

### The Nabob Catches It.

"COME on, Hake; there's the nigger!" It was Robinson, of the Fourth, who spoke. A couple of days had elapsed since vengeance in the shape of Lantham had visited Robinson, but the chief of the Fourth was still sore, both in body and in mind. He wanted badly to get even with the chums of the Third, but his opportunity had not yet come, though he was looking out for it. Now, as he saw Hurree Singh going alone into the bicycle-shed, he gripped Hake by the arm and hurried him off on the nabob's track.

"We'll settle up with the nigger first!" he exclaimed. "It's bub-bub-bub—"

"What's bub?" asked Hake. "What are you driving at, Robinson?"

"It's bub-bub-bub—"  
"What is? What do you mean by bub?"

"It's bub-better to take the little bounders one at a time!" gasped out Robinson. "We'll give Inky Darkness something for himself now, and let Redfern and Lawrence wait."

"Right you are."  
They hurried into the shed. Hurree Singh looked round as they entered. The Indian boy was on his guard at once; and, indeed, Robinson's look of triumph was quite sufficient to alarm him.

"Now we've got you, Tar Pot!" remarked Robinson, closing the door.

Hurree Singh did not reply, but he watched the two Fourth Formers cautiously.

"Get hold of the brown brute, Hake!" Hake made a dash at Hurree Singh. The lithe, active Indian dodged him, and dashed for the door. Robinson was in the way, and Hurree Singh butted at him and sent him rolling over. He crashed into a bicycle, and mixed himself up with it on the floor, and yelled. He was hurt. Hurree Singh reeled a little from the shock, and before he could recover himself Hake had turned upon him and seized him.

"I've got him!" ejaculated Hake. "Now, keep still, Inky, or you'll get warmed!"

Hurree Singh struggled violently. Hake inserted his knuckles into the back of the nabob's neck, and held him in a vice-like grip, and the Indian, half-throttled, gave it up.

"Come on, Robinson!" said Hake. Robinson picked himself up. He was considerably hurt, for his head had knocked against the crank of the bicycle, and his elbow had gone through the spokes. And as that bicycle belonged to an Upper Form boy, the results, when the owner saw it, were likely to lead to unpleasantness. And so Robinson was pretty wild.

"Hold the little beast tight, Hake!" he said. "I'll tit-tit-tan him!"

Hurree Singh grinned. "Don't you be a bib-bib-brute!" he said deliberately. "I don't want to be tit-tit-tanned."

Robinson turned as red as a turkey-cock, especially as he saw that Hake was grinning.

"What's the matter with you, Hake? What are you tit-tit-twisting your face about like that for? Ain't it ugly enough already?" he demanded.

"I was only smiling," said Hake. "Crumbs! If you smile like that you ought to wear a mask. Now, Inky, you are going to get something."

The Indian began to struggle, but it was useless. The two Fourth Formers twisted him over, and then Robinson began to whack him. Robinson had picked up a short stick, which answered his purpose very well. The blows fell thick and fast.

When the thwacking began, Hurree Singh had determined that he would not cry out. The blood of the Nabob of Bhanipur was boiling. But as the thrashing proceeded his resolution melted away, and he began to yell in good earnest.

Robinson evidently did not believe in sparing the rod. He laid into the poor Indian with a really hearty goodwill, and Hurree Singh squirmed and yelled.

"There!" panted Robinson, at last, flinging the stick down. "I think that will did-did-do. You won't be so ch-ch-cheeky again."

"You beast!" moaned Hurree Singh. "You beast!"

"Still cheeky? Do you want some more?"

"Oh, that's enough!" said Hake. "Let him go." Hurree Singh was released, and the two Fourth Formers laughed as he walked away. His usual elegant carriage was conspicuous by its absence. He twisted and turned as he walked with a really comical effect, though it was not in the least funny to the nabob himself.

Robinson and Hake took themselves off, very well satisfied. Hurree Singh was not one to complain, and he composed his face as well as he could as he entered the school-house. Owen Redfern met him in the hall.

"Hallo, chappie! What's the matter?" he asked, noticing that something was wrong. Hurree Singh explained. "The brutes!" said Redfern wrathfully. "Have they hurt you much?"

Hurree Singh made a grimace. "It is painful," he said; "but it will be all right so long as I do not have to sit down."

A bell rang as he spoke. "There's the dinner-bell!" exclaimed Redfern. "I'm afraid you'll have to sit down, chappie. The only consolation is that we'll make Robinson and Hake sit up, some time."

They entered the dining-hall. Mr. Lumsden was at the head of the Third Form table. Redfern and Hurree Singh took their places, on either side of Reggie Lawrence. Knowles grinned at the nabob across the table. He saw that the Indian had been in the wars, and was greatly pleased thereby. And from the Fourth Form table at a little distance, Robinson, too, grinned at the nabob.

The castigation had been so severe, and so recent, that Hurree Singh was extremely uncomfortable in his seat. He was compelled to shift his position continually, and at last his movements caught the eye of Mr. Lumsden. The Third Form master frowned at him.

"Hurree Singh!"  
"Yes, sir."  
"Keep still!"  
"Yes, sir."

And the nabob made an effort to keep still. But he was soon twisting again. Again Mr. Lumsden's eye singled him out.

"Hurree Singh, how dare you wriggle about in that manner after I have expressly told you to keep still?"  
"I am sorry, sir."  
"Will you obey me?"  
"Certainly, sir."

And for a couple of minutes the nabob was still as a mouse. But it was of no use, he had to move, and as he wriggled painfully upon the form, Mr. Lumsden arose in his wrath.

"Hurree Singh, I am sorry to find you guilty of this deliberate impertinence. Come here!"



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Hurree Singh rose reluctantly, and approached the Form-master.

"You have been—ah—deliberately impertinent," said Mr. Lumsden. "I must—ah—make an example of you, Hurree Singh. As you will not remain quiet in your seat, I can only conclude that you do not require any dinner."

Hurree Singh made a grimace. He was hungry, but it was of no use to argue with the Form-master. Every eye in the hall was fixed upon Hurree Singh as he stood there, conspicuous, and the red was burning under the dusk of his cheeks.

"You will go to the doctor," resumed Mr. Lumsden, "and tell him that you have been guilty of impertinence to your Form-master. Go at once!"

"Yes, sir."

And poor Hurree Singh turned to go.

Owen Redfern glanced wrathfully across to the Fourth Form table. He was greatly inclined to stand up and explain the truth to Mr. Lumsden. But it was not needed. Robinson, who had, of course, heard all that passed, had whispered to Hake, and was on his feet, very red in the face.

"If you please, Mr. Lumsden," he began.

The Third master looked across at him.

"Did you speak to me, Robinson?"

"Yes, sir. If you pip-pip-pip—"

"What?"

"If you pip-pip-pip—" stammered Robinson.

Mr. Lumsden stared at him in angry amazement. That only made Robinson more confused, and when he was confused his stuttering grew more pronounced than ever.

"Robinson!"

"If you pip-pip-pip—" stuttered poor Robinson, with a burning face. But the obstinate word would not come out.

The whole hall was grinning, except Mr. Lumsden, who was frowning.

"Robinson, how dare you!"

"If you pip-pip-please," gasped out Robinson. "If you please, Mr. Lumsden, it isn't Inky's fault—I mean Hurree Singh's—that he doesn't kik-kik-kik—"

"He doesn't kick? What does the boy mean?"

"He doesn't kik-kik-kik—"

"Why should he kick? Whom should he kick? Are you out of your senses, Robinson?"

"He doesn't kik-kik-kik-keep still," stuttered Robinson.

"It's because he's got a pip-pip-pip-pip—"

"He got a what?"

"A pip-pip-pip—"

"He's got the pip," murmured Knowles. "No wonder, if old Robinson has been stuttering at him."

"A pip-pip-pain." Robinson got it out at last. "It isn't his fault, sir."

"Oh," said Mr. Lumsden, "he has a pain! Is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know anything about it?"

"Because I gig-gig-gig—"

"You what?"

"I gig-gig-gig—"

"For goodness' sake say what you mean!"

"I gig-gig-gave it him, sir."

"You gave him the pain?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you mean that there has been an accident?"

"No, sir. I licked him for being chik-chik-chik—"

"For being what?"

"Cheeky, sir."

The Hall was yelling with laughter now. Mr. Lumsden passed his hand across his heated brow. He found Robinson's conversation exhausting.

"Oh, I see!" said the master of the Third. "Is that the cause of your absurd motions in your seat, Hurree Singh?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are suffering from a pain?"

"Yes, sir; a severe pain in the portion of the anatomical structure which contacts with the hardness of the form," said Hurree Singh, in his beautiful English.

The listeners shrieked at this explanation. Even Mr. Lumsden gave the ghost of a smile.

"Then you may go back to your place, Hurree Singh."

"Thank you, sir! You do not desire me to convey that message to the doctor, sahib?"

"No. Sit down."

"As for you, Robinson," said Mr. Lumsden, "you appear to have been guilty of a piece of ruffianism; but as you have owned up in a manly way, and Hurree Singh makes no complaint, I shall take no further notice of the matter."

Whereat Robinson, who had expected a caning at the least, heaved a great sigh of relief and sat down.

"Old Robinson's not a bad sort," remarked Redfern.

"Fancy his owning up like that! All the same, we've got to put him through it, for having the cheek to touch one of our Form."

CHAPTER 6.

The Third Form on the Warpath.

THE Third Form room was very quiet. That alone was a suspicious circumstance, if a master had happened to notice it.

The Third Form usually prepared their lessons without the presence of a master, and had the room to themselves, and so it was generally the reverse of quiet. Upon this particular evening the juniors were very subdued. Something was in the wind.

The juniors whispered and grinned to one another. Visitors from other Forms were strictly barred from the room. Something important was about to take place. Only upon Knowles's face was a sceptical look.

"Bet you they won't be able to bring it off!" he exclaimed, addressing nobody in particular.

"Rats!" said King. "Trust old Redfern!"

"Redfern will do the trick," said another junior confidently. "He'll get at least one of the bounders!"

"Hallo, here he is!"

"With a prisoner!" ejaculated West.

There was a sound of scuffling in the passage, and a muffled, mumbling sound.

Redfern, Lawrence, and Hurree Singh came bundling in, and in the midst of them, in a relentless clutch, was Hake, of the Fourth. Hake was a prisoner, and he had evidently been captured by main force, and not without cost to the captors, for Lawrence's nose was bleeding and Redfern's lip was cut.

A towel was tied round Hake's mouth, which accounted for the gurgling sound, for Hake was doing his best to yell and bring his Form to the rescue.

"Got him!" gasped Redfern. "Got the brute! Collar him, kids!"

The Third Formers swooped down upon the prisoner. In a moment a dozen pair of hands collared Hake, and he was dragged into the room and plumped down upon a form.

The three chums of the Third gasped for breath.

"He struggled," panted Redfern. "We dropped on him in the passage as he was going to his study. He fought like a wildcat, but we got him."

"Hurray!" shouted the juniors.

"Quiet! We don't want any beastly prefect coming down on us!" exclaimed Reggie Lawrence.

Silence was at once restored.

"Keep that bounder safe till we've got the other," said Redfern. "Mind he doesn't get away while we're gone!"

"Right-ho!" said King. "We'll freeze to him. I've got a blind-cord here, and we'll tie him to the form just to make assurance doubly sure."

Hake began to struggle violently. But he was pinned down by a dozen Third Formers, and he was quite helpless. The blind-cord speedily secured him to the form, and the towel was tightened over his mouth, and he could only faintly gasp and gurgle.

He glared furiously at the juniors, but they only grinned in reply. Hake had lost his terror for the youngsters—for the present, at least.

"We'll keep him safe," said King. "Buck up, Reddy!"

"Right! Lock the door when I go out, in case there should be a row, and an attempt at a rescue. I'll be as quick as I can."

"All right! Buzz off!"

Redfern, Lawrence, and Hurree Singh hastened away, and King locked the door, and remained waiting inside for Redfern's knock when he should return.

As yet there was no alarm. The kidnapping of Hake had been carried out skilfully, and none of the Fourth had any idea that he was a prisoner in the Third Form room. The redoubtable trio proceeded cautiously to Robinson's study.

"We shall have a bigger handful with Robinson," said Redfern. "But the job's got to be done. Mind you back me up."

He opened Robinson's door. The captain of the Fourth looked up in surprise as he saw whom his visitors were.

"Get out of this, you kids!" he snapped, reaching for a dictionary to throw.

But the kids, instead of getting out, got in, and Redfern shut the door. Robinson looked amazed. He hurled the dictionary, and Redfern dodged it, and it crashed into the only picture in the study, smashing the glass to fragments.

"You young hound!" howled Robinson, jumping up, "I'll teach you to come here smashing my pictures!"

"Well, that's cool, when you did it yourself!" ejaculated Redfern. "But to come to business, Robby, we want you."

"All right, I'm coming!"

And Robinson came, with a charge that he expected to bowl over the Third Form youngsters and send them flying helter-skelter from the study.

But Robinson was mistaken. Instead of being overborne by his rush, the youngsters closed up to meet it, and Red-

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fern, taking no notice of a swinging thump that made his head sing, tackled Robinson round the waist, and hung on to him. In a flash Lawrence was on his shoulders, and Hurree Singh got a good Rugger grip on his legs and had him down.

Down went Robinson, with the three on top of him. Then he realised that he had made a mistake in tackling them three at a time. Any one of his assailants he could have knocked out in next to no time, but the three together were too much for him.

"Here, hang it, fight fair!" he gasped. "Three to one ain't fair play!"

"No," grinned Redfern; "it's almost as bad as two big chaps collaring a little one in a bike-shed and lathering him."

He had Robinson there, and the Fourth Former had no more to say about fair play. But he struggled desperately.

"I am afraid we shall have to hurt you if you don't keep still," said Redfern. "Take hold of his ears, Hurree Singh, and knock his head against the floor."

Hurree Singh grinned and obeyed, while Redfern and Lawrence pinned the Fourth Former down.

"Hold on!" gasped Robinson. "I give in!"

"Very well, you're a prisoner of war."

"I'll skik-skik-akik—"

"No; don't do anything dreadful like that, please."

"I'll skik-skin you for this!"

"I hope we shall be there when you do it, my son. At present we're going to do the skinning. Mind, if you wriggle again, bang goes your napper on the cold, cold floor."

"You little bib-bib-beasts, I'll skik-skin—"

"It's a mercy to stop him when he gets like that," said Redfern, jamming his handkerchief into Robinson's mouth.

"I don't want you to eat that, Robby, you know. It's a gag, so you needn't gnaw at it in that ghastly way. Bring him along! Here, fasten his arms first with this belt; he'll be safer. Now, Inky, go and do a scout along the passages."

Hurree Singh scouted, and came back to report that the coast was clear. They marched Robinson out of the study.

With the gag in his mouth, and his hands fastened behind him by the belt, Robinson was pretty helpless; but in the passage he stuck fast, and refused to budge.

They could have dragged him along by main force, but that would have made a disturbance, and Redfern was in momentary dread of a rescue-party of the Fourth coming on the scene.

But Redfern was seldom without a resource. He drew a pin from his jacket and pricked Robinson slightly. The chief of the Fourth gave a jump.

"Now, Robby, if you don't buck up you'll get that again, and deeper," said Redfern.

"Gr-g-grr-grr!"

"Don't make that ghastly row, but get a move on you!"

"Ger-rer-r—"

Redfern brought the pin into play again. This time he let Robinson have more of it, and the prisoner gave a convulsive bound.

"Going to march now, Robby?" asked Redfern sweetly.

Robinson marched.

The pin did it, and the chief of the Fourth Form marched as quietly as a lamb to the door of the Third Form room. Just as he reached it a Fourth Former came in sight, and stared in amazement at the strange scene.

Redfern thumped on the door.

"Open, open! Buck up!"

Robinson began to struggle and gurgle to attract the attention of his Form-fellow. The latter rushed to the rescue. But the three bundled their prisoner into the room, and turned with clenched fists, and the rescuer thought better of it. He hesitated, and then dashed away to call his Form to the rescue, and Redfern entered the room and the door was closed and locked.

"The alarm's given," said King anxiously.

"Never mind, they can't get at us in here."

"They'll make a row and bring the prefects down on us, perhaps."

"No; I don't think they'd do that. Anyway, we've got to risk it. We've got the prisoners now. You can take their gags away, Hurree Singh. Nice-looking pair of beauties, aren't they? So amiable and sweet-tempered! Prisoners aren't they?"

"I'll break your neck, Redfern!" howled Hake.

"I'll skik-skik-skik—" stuttered Robinson.

"Oh, stop your skik-skik-skikking, you make me tired! Do you know what we've brought you here for? You're going to be tried by jury!"

"I'll skik-skik-skin—"

"Dry up! Prisoner at the bar shuts up when the judge is talking! Gentlemen of the Third Form—I mean jury—the court is now open, and the trial of these two desperate offenders will proceed," said Redfern, with great dignity.

## CHAPTER 7

## Trial By Jury.

THE grinning juniors proceeded to form the court. Robinson and Hake looked at each other with a sickly smile.

Trial by jury was an institution at Netherby, a delinquent often being arraigned by his own Form, and, if found guilty, generally ragged as a punishment. But for a lower Form to presume to try fellows of a higher Form was as yet unheard-of. But Redfern, since he had become cock of the Third, had shown a disposition to make things hum.

The Third were evidently in earnest now.

The two prisoners were placed in the dock, the dock being a form, and several youngsters stood on guard over them. Then Redfern told off twelve lads as jurymen. He himself was judge, and he occupied a high seat upon a desk. The rest of the Third stood round in a circle, watching the proceedings with huge enjoyment.

"The court is now open," said Redfern, tapping on the desk with a ruler. "Prisoners at the bar, do you demand the assistance of counsel?"

"I'll break your neck!" said Hake.

"The prisoner uses threats of violence towards the judge, which amounts to contempt of court," said Redfern. "Contempt of court is punished by three pinches in the tenderest spot discoverable upon the person of the offender. Tigg minor is appointed pincher to the court."

"What-ho!" said Tigg minor.

He had often been cuffed by Hake, and he now inflicted the sentence of the court with a keen relish. Hake squirmed and yelled.

"Silence in court!" said Redfern. "These unseemly noises amount to contempt, and are punished in the same way as threats to the judge."

"Wait till I get hold of you, Redfern!"

"Three more, Tigg!"

Tigg minor inflicted the three pinches, and Hake gasped, but this time he thought it more prudent to be silent. Having thus restored order, Redfern proceeded:

"Lawrence is counsel for the prosecution. I hereby, here-with and thusly appoint Knowles counsel for the defence."

"All serene, I'll defend 'em!" said Knowles.

"I believe it's the proper caper for the prosecution to begin," said Redfern, a little doubtfully. "Get on to it, Lawrence. Silence in court!"

Lawrence stepped up.

"The prisoners are accused," he said, "of being pigs and cads in general, and of having upon a specific occasion thumped and whacked and otherwise maltreated a young gentleman belonging to the Third Form at Netherby. This gentleman, who is the most high and mighty Nabob of Bhanipur, Rajah of Ratz, and Emperor of Cochin-China, is now in court to give evidence."

"Call your witness!"

The nabob came forward. He told a plain, unvarnished tale of what had happened in the bicycle-shed.

"That's my case," said the counsel for the prosecution.

"I demand that the prisoners be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and likewise whacked."

"Wait a bit. We haven't heard the defence yet."

Knowles got up.

"I don't really know what to say in defence of these mongrels," he said; "but I will do my best for my clients. Of course, anybody looking at the prisoners at the bar will be able to see that they are wasters and rotters of the first water, the hideousness of their personal appearance being only equalled by the beastliness of their manners."

Laughter in court. Robinson and Hake exchanged furious looks, but did not speak.

"The fact that the prisoners are such awful rotters must not be allowed to count against them," continued the counsel for the defence. "They can't help it. The defence is that they were born like it, and mustn't be blamed, because Nature was hard on them. They are more entitled to pity than anything else."

"Oh, just you wait till we can get at you!" muttered his clients, rather ungratefully.

"Silence in court!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Robinson. "When are you going to stop this giddy rot?"

"Order!"

"I could lick any two of you!"

"Contempt of court!" said Redfern severely. "Tigg minor, you know what to do."

Tigg minor knew, and he did it.

"Ow, ow, ow!" yelled Robinson.

There was a thump at the door from outside.

"Open this door, you cads!"

"Help!" shouted Robinson. "Fourth to the rescue!"

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TWO GRAND LONG  
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There was a crash on the door. Two or three angry Fourth Formers had put their shoulders against it with all their strength. But the door was strong, and showed no sign of yielding.

"We can leave those giddy kids to amuse themselves," said Redfern serenely. "The trial will proceed. The prisoners are proved guilty—"

"You haven't asked 'em yet which they plead," said Knowles.

"Well, why didn't you remind me, fathead!" said the judge. "Prisoners on the form—I mean, at the bar—are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Rats!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Very well. Prisoners refuse to plead. Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the able speeches of the counsel for the defence and the prosecution. What is your verdict?"

"Guilty!" howled the jury.

Crash!

The door trembled and shook; but the panels were of stout oak, and the lock was big and strong. There was no danger of invasion.

Redfern took no notice of the onslaught.

"You hear, prisoners?" he exclaimed. "You are guilty!"

"Rats!"

"Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

"Wait till I get hold of you!"

"You have been guilty of a crime of extreme seriousness," said Redfern severely. "Your little squabbles in your own Form are of no consequence to anybody, but when you presume to lay your hands upon a gentleman of the Third, it is time something was done. The only mitigating circumstance is that you, Robinson, owned up before Lumby about it."

Redfern looked round.

"What is to be the punishment of these gross offenders? I leave it to the court!"

There was a variety of suggestions at once.

"Whack 'em!"

"Flog 'em!"

"Jump on their necks!"

"Give 'em a ducking!"

"No; something with boiling oil in it!"

"You'd better not touch us!" exclaimed Robinson. "I'll make you all wriggle for this, as soon as I get a chance!"

"Then you may as well have a good dose while we're about it!" replied Redfern. "Gentlemen of the Third, I suggest the frog's-march. This sentence can be carried out here and now, which will be convenient."

"That's right!"

"Frog's-march the bounders!"

There was a rush to seize the prisoners. They were seized and hauled off the form by a dozen pairs of hands.

"Now, start!" said Redfern. "Keep it up till I say when."

The juniors started. Robinson and Hake yelled and struggled in vain. Round and round the room the juniors went trampling, and the two chiefs of the Fourth experienced the fullest joys of the frog's-march.

The trampling of feet, and the yells of the unfortunate prisoners, reached the ears of the fellows outside, who redoubled their attack on the door. The kicking and thumping and banging in the passage was simply terrific. The Third Formers took not the slightest notice of it. Round and round they went with the victims of stern justice.

Robinson and Hake had never had such a time in their lives. Before they had been twice round the room, they devoutly wished that they had never cornered the nabob in the bicycle-shed. The third circuit found them yelling for mercy, but the avengers were not inclined to let them off so lightly. They had a long list of thumpings to pay off, and now that their chance had come, they meant to pay them off in full.

"Give it them!"

"Put them through it!"

"Ha, ha! Give the bounders socks!"

"Stop, stop! We give you best! Chuck it, Redfern! Chuck it!"

Redfern took pity on the delinquents.

"Stop now, chaps!" he exclaimed. "If they beg Inky's pardon handsomely, we'll let them crawl out!"

The march ceased. Two draggled-looking wretches lay gasping, with their clothes disordered and covered with dust, their collars and ties torn out, and their hair ruffled. Robinson and Hake had been put through it with a vengeance.

"Beg the nabob's pardon," said Redfern. "You haven't had half enough, but if you do the handsome thing, we'll let you off lightly."

The two victims were too far gone to think of further defiance.

"I beg your pardon, Inky!" gasped Hake.

"I bub-bub-bub—" stuttered Robinson.

"You mustn't do that, Robinson," said Redfern, shaking his head.

"I bub-bub-beg your pardon."

"Granted," said the nabob loftily. "You are pardoned, little boys, but mind you don't do it again, or you will again be the recipients of the severe punishment."

There was a sudden hush outside.

The noise had attracted a prefect, and at his approach the Fourth Formers had melted away like snow in the sunshine. There was a sharp authoritative rap on the door. Knowles opened it, and Lantham came in.

"What's all this row about?" the prefect demanded. "Great Scott! What have those fellows been doing? Who and what are they?"

"They're two prize beauties-out of the Fourth," grinned Redfern. "They've been enjoying themselves. Don't they look like it?"

The prefect grinned.

"You've no business in this room, Hake and Robinson. Get out!"

"We didn't come—" began Hake.

"Get along!"

"I tell you we did—did—did—" stuttered Robinson, his infirmity gripping him worse than ever in his excitement.

"We did—did—did—"

"I don't care what you did. You seem to have been pretty well ragged for it, whatever it was. Travel!"

And the two heroes of the Fourth travelled, Lantham, with a warning gesture to the Third, following them out.

"Ha, ha, ha!" giggled Redfern. "I fancy we've scored this time, my infants. Who said trial by jury wasn't a great institution?"

## CHAPTER 8.

### The Rugger Match.

**A**FTER the trial by jury in the Third Form room, Robinson and Hake gave the Third a wide berth for a time. Their experience at the hands of the youngsters had been a severe one, and they did not wish it to be repeated.

"They've had a lesson," Redfern declared. "It has done them worlds of good, and if it lasts we shall get on famously."

That was the question—if it lasted. The chances were that in time the Fourth would try to get their own back. Meanwhile there was peace. As a matter of fact, both parties had something other than Form rows to think about now. The date of the Rugger match was at hand.

The rivalry between the two Forms gave an additional interest to the customary Form match, and the meeting on the Rugger field was likely to be one of unusual keenness.

Redfern had made his men work like slaves to keep them in form, and they had been brought by ceaseless practice to a pitch of perfection remarkable for the Third.

The Fourth, rather late in the day, had bucked up somewhat, realising that the Third meant to give them a good fight, and of late Robinson and his men had turned up more steadily for practice.

"They ain't a bad team," said Redfern, one day as the chums stood watching the Fourth fifteen at a practice match with a scratch team. "They're heavier all round than we are, and we may as well make up our minds that we've got not the ghost of a chance in the scrum. It's in speed that we've got the advantage."

"Yes, they'll push us all over the field in the scrum," said Lawrence thoughtfully. "We can't naturally expect to stand against their weight."

"That's it. But I would bet lots of tin that there isn't a man in the team can run like some of ours."

"There's Hake at three-quarter. He's getting over the ground."

"Yes, not bad," assented Redfern. "But without blowing my own trumpet, chaps, I think I could make rings round Hake."

"Not a bit of doubt about that."

"And Hurree here can make rings round me," went on Redfern. "Hurree, if he gets away with the ball at all, will make the Fourth open their eyes."

Hurree Singh smiled with pleasure. Praise from Redfern was praise indeed to the hero-worshipping Nabob of Bhanipur.

Lawrence nodded assent. "You're right, Reddy. Inky is an acquisition, and no mistake. If weight and strength win, Robinson will have it; but if speed can do the trick, that's where we come in."

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"Exactly. And we shall have to take care to keep the game open. It's no good blinking facts, and the Fourth could walk us off the field if we gave them a chance."

"Hallo! Here comes Robinson."

The Fourth practice was ending. Robinson walked towards the chums with a grin of superiority upon his countenance.

"Hallo, kids! Come to see what the wrath to come is like? Think you'll have any chance, Redfern?"

"I hope so, Robby. We shall try to run a little bit before you extinguish us," said the cock of the Third sarcastically.

"You won't have an earthly," said Robinson. "It's rather rotten for us to have to play you kids at all. It's really beneath our d-d-dig-dig-dig—"

"Take it calmly, old chap; it's bound to come out in time."

"Our dignity," said Robinson. "Still, it will d-d-do you infants good to have a licking, and make you less cocky, so perhaps it's worth the t-t-time."

"Old Robinson is mighty cocksure about it," remarked Lawrence as the chums of the Third walked away. "He'll look a giddy ass when we lick him. We've simply got to lick him, and make him sing small after all his bounce."

To which the others heartily agreed.

The next day was the eve of the match, and Redfern put in as much practice as he could, anxiously noting the form of his men.

The performance of the Third fifteen was really creditable. Some of the seniors condescended to come down and watch them, and Devereux, the captain of Netherby, expressed his approval without stint.

Devereux was a mighty footballer, the captain of the first fifteen of Netherby, and what he didn't know about Rugby wasn't worth knowing. It pleased him to see the youngsters so keen, and he gave them words of encouragement that were very gratifying to the Third.

Hurree Singh came in for most of the captain's notice.

The change a few weeks had wrought in the Indian was marvellous.

He had come to Netherby knowing next to nothing of the great game, but the painstaking instruction of Owen Redfern, and continual practice had worked wonders. The nabob was as keen on football as any boy at Netherby, and ere long he played it as well as any lad in his Form.

His turn of speed was marvellous; the slim, lithe figure seemed to fly over the ground almost without touching it, and when Hurree Singh really got going there were few who could stop him.

He could dodge, twist, turn, feint with a skill and cunning all his own, and Redfern himself was astonished at the aptitude of his pupil.

With all his determination to win, Redfern had been inwardly dubious about the result of the Form match until the coming of the new boy to Netherby.

But the presence of Hurree Singh in the fifteen gave him confidence.

As he had said, so far as weight and strength went, the Fourth would easily outclass the junior team. But there was not a boy in Robinson's lot who could touch the Indian when it came to running. To see him sprinting down the field with the ball, and the enemy labouring after him in vain, was a treat.

"My hat!" said Devereux. "If the Indian gets half a chance to-morrow, I wouldn't give twopence for the chances of the Fourth."

He patted Hurree Singh on the shoulder when he came off the field.

"You'll do, my lad!" he exclaimed. "If you keep on as you've started, you'll be a credit to Netherby. I shouldn't be surprised to see you captain of the first fifteen if you stay long enough at Netherby, my lad. You were born for Rugger."

The captain walked away, leaving the juniors as pleased as Punch, especially Hurree Singh and Redfern.

"What did I tell you?" exclaimed the latter. "I spotted Inky as a likely recruit the very first day, and now you hear what Devereux says. It only shows that great minds often run in the same groove, doesn't it?"

"Well, Inky is a rod in pickle for the Fourth, anyway," said Lawrence. "I've got a feeling that we shall pull it off all right."

Both Forms were looking forward anxiously to the morrow, which was Saturday and a half-holiday.

Redfern was the first out of bed in the Third dormitory on the morrow morning, and he made a beeline for the window to view the weather.

He gave a chirrup of joy as he saw that it was dry and cold.

There had been a threatening of rain the previous night, but there was no sign of it now, and Redfern was satisfied.

"Glorious day!" he exclaimed. "Get up, you lazy

bounders! Come for a sprint round the quad. before breakfast."

"Oh, I say, it's cold!" said Lawrence. "It's nice and warm here, and— Ooch!"

Redfern gently squeezed a wet sponge upon his face.

Lawrence yelled, and squirmed out of bed. It was no longer nice and warm there, and he knew he would fare worse if he didn't get up.

"Ugh!" he shivered. "You're a beast, Reddy. Now then, you lazy bounders, out with you! What do you mean by snoozing there while we are getting up early?"

Redfern took his men out for a trot in the fresh morning air, which did them a great deal more good than lying in bed.

Lessons that morning were a dreadful bore to the Third.

They were looking forward to the afternoon and the Form match, and they found it simply impossible to fix their attention upon their work.

Lines fell as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, but at last the morning work was over, and the school was dismissed.

The match was timed for an early hour, and a good while before the kick-off a goodly crowd had collected round the ropes.

The ground was in excellent condition, the white lines glimmering brightly on the level green.

As the hour of the match drew near, the crowd of spectators increased in size.

Boys belonging to the upper Forms came down to look on, with condescending smiles it is true, but cordially ready and willing to cheer any good play on either side.

There was a cheer as the captain of the school was seen to come down to the field, with some of the Sixth with him.

This was a great honour to the contesting juniors, and they keenly appreciated it. Third and Fourth joined in a ringing cheer for the captain of Netherby.

Lantham, who had consented to referee the match, looked at his watch. Loud cheers from the junior Forms greeted the players as they streamed into the field.

The Fourth Form wore black striped jerseys, and the Third were in red-and-white. But it was easy to distinguish between them. The Fourth, as a higher Form, were all older than the Third players, and mostly bigger. At present the Fourth team were carrying themselves with a swaggering confidence of manner. But there was to be a change in that respect later on.

Third and Fourth faced each other, and the two captains tossed for choice of goal.

Robinson grinned as he correctly named the coin, and chose the end from which the wind was blowing. There was not much wind, but it was enough to give the Fourth an initial advantage.

The ball was kicked off, and the match, so long eagerly anticipated, commenced.

Then it was seen that Redfern had truly anticipated the line that would be taken by the champions of the Fourth Form.

Robinson knew where his advantage lay, and he meant to make fullest use of the superior weight and muscular strength of his team.

Scrummages were to be the order of the day whenever the Fourth could bring them to pass, for in the scrum it was certain that the Third would never be able to hold their own.

Redfern knew Robinson's intention as well as Robinson himself, and he did his best to baffle the enemy, and his men backed him up well.

In spite of that, however, the first scrum was formed within five minutes of the start, and the heavy forwards of the Fourth faced the lighter weights of the Third with grinning faces, full of the anticipation of an easy triumph.

"Put your beef into it!" muttered Redfern.

The Third forwards obeyed.

But it was useless.

Back they went before the weight of the Fourth, back and ever back, and the backers of Robinson's team round the field began to yell in anticipation of an easy try.

It looked, indeed, as though the Fourth would succeed in driving the defenders by sheer weight over their own line.

That was Robinson's intention, and keeping the ball in the scrum, the Fourth pack came on steadily, resistlessly, shoving with all their strength and driving back the Third.

"The Fourth has it!"

"Go it, Fourth!"

"Good old Robinson!"

"Good old Stammers!"

Thus encouraged by their partisans, the Fourth worked and shoved, and fairly rushed the Third towards their own line.

But there was a sudden shout from the Third.

Redfern's men had made a herculean effort to stop their opponents, and for a moment the scrum swayed and stopped.

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Then on it went again; but the ball was heeled out by Lawrence, and Redfern pounced upon it like a flash of lightning.

In the twinkling of an eye Redfern was away with the leather.

Right at him rushed Hake, and tackled him surely, but not before he had swung the ball back to Hurree Singh, who was coming on ready to receive it.

The Indian received the pass, and with the ball in his arms dashed on.

Three of the Fourth streamed into his path, and the Indian ran round them in a flash, and amid a roar of applause sprinted on for goal.

It was wonderful to see him go; his feet barely appeared to touch earth as he flew on towards his opponents' line.

His dusky face was set like bronze, his eyes flashing, his lips tight. Straight on he went, at racing speed, and the roar round the field increased in volume.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Inky!"

But a Fourth half was bearing down upon him, and the full-back was waiting before the goal, determined that the nabob should never pass him.

The half had to be dealt with first.

Hurree Singh appeared to be unaware of his approach, but that was only a pretence; he knew exactly where he was, and when the tackle was coming.

The half made his tackle, and at the same moment the Indian swerved like lightning, and the outstretched fingertips just grazed his red shirt.

The tackle had failed; the Indian was flying on, and again the spectators roared.

"Good old Inky!"

"Well run—well run!"

But the full-back was watching. The nabob should not pass him—not if he knew it! With ready hands and gleaming eyes he waited. Right on came the nabob, knowing that he had only one more foe to beat, and determined to beat him by hook or by crook. Right on, as if he meant to charge the full-back; and at the last moment he swerved off suddenly and made for the far end of the line.

The full-back made a desperate dash to stop him. He still had the advantage, and he would have stopped any other sprinter in the Third fifteen. But the nabob was one too many for him. For an instant it seemed that the full-back would have him, and, as a matter of fact, his outstretched hands touched the flying three-quarter. But Hurree Singh slipped through them and ran on.

"Hurrah!"

A second more and Hurree Singh was over the line, and the ball was grounded, the back panting after him in vain.

Then all Netherby roared:

"Try! Try! Good old Inky!"

Redfern came up and thumped the nabob in the back.

"Good old Inky!" he exclaimed. "I knew you had it in you. Good old Inky!"

Hurree Singh grinned breathlessly.

"First blood to us, Reddy."

"Rather! I'm proud of you, my son!"

The ball was carried out, and the nabob took the kick; but nobody was disappointed when it failed to materialise, for the try had been gained too near the end of the line for the kick to have any chance. The leather went very near, though, showing what the nabob might have done had the circumstances been a little more favourable.

The teams lined up again, the Fourth team looking in a considerably more subdued mood.

They kicked off in an aggressive humour, and immediately invaded the Third's territory, but King cleared by a kick into touch far up the field, and the Third rushed on. The Fourth were in earnest, however, and they were soon back again, and a scrum was formed on the Third's twenty-five.

Then it was the same story over again. The Fourth threw themselves strenuously into the struggle, and the Third pack went reluctantly but irresistibly back before the superior weight. They fought gamely, but Fate was against them, and this time Fortune did not favour them, and the three-quarters had no chance of getting away with the ball. Back and ever back went the Third, the grinning Fourth driving the scrum right up to the fatal line—right up to it and over it, and the ball went over among their feet.

It was the turn of the Fourth Form to cheer. They did it right heartily. Had the Fourth possessed as sure a kick as either Hurree Singh or Redfern, the try would have been converted; but Hake, who took the kick, was nowhere like the form of the two champions of the Third.

The kick itself was not a particularly difficult one, but Hake managed to send the ball a foot clear of the posts, and the Fourth growled. The score was level now—try and try. And level it remained while the first half was played out,

and when the whistle went, neither side could boast of more than a solitary try.

"But we've held them, lads," said Redfern, as he sucked a lemon. "We've held them, and we had the wind against us in the first half, remember. When we've got it behind us, that's where we come in."

The spectators had increased in number when the teams lined up for the second half. The news of what a hard-fought game was in progress had gone round, and nearly all Netherby was on the spot now to see how the juniors played the grand old game.

The wind was now behind the Third, and it was keener and colder than it had been. It was noticeable that the Fourth showed more signs of wear-and-tear than their opponents. They were, upon the whole, older and stronger fellows than the Third, but they were not so fit. The Third were reaping the benefit now of assiduous practice.

Robinson followed the same tactics as before, seeking to take every advantage of the superiority of the Fourth in the scrum, and fortune favoured him very early in the second half. A scrum was formed close to the Third twenty-five, and the Fourth pushed and shoved their way onward, without giving the Third a chance, and once more the pack tramped on over the line. And this time they crossed the line close by the goalposts, and the kick was the easiest imaginable to take, and Robinson took it himself, and sent the leather whizzing unerringly over the bar.

The Fourth Form shouted with glee. Robinson was five points ahead now, and for a long time the Fourth looked as if they meant to maintain their lead. The struggle was long and varying. Once more Hurree Singh got away, and beat all his opponents right up to the line, but was pulled down in time by the full-back, and lost the try by a couple of feet.

This was a bitter disappointment to the Third, but they did not lose heart. They played up manfully, and at last their chance came. Redfern received the ball from the scrum, and dodged the enemy for some distance, and as he went down with a crash with Hake's weight upon him, the ball flew in a sure pass to Hurree Singh.

Hurree Singh came out strong. Right off he went, sprinting like lightning, dodging some of the Fourth, running round others, and grounding the ball over the line just as the full back's grip was on him.

As before, the nabob had been compelled to make for the end of the line, and the kick failed. But the score of the Third was now six, for two tries, against eight for their opponents. There was a good chance yet.

Most of the players on both sides now showed very visible signs of fag, and on the side of the Fourth, especially, there was a good deal of slackness. But they still held the Third, and try as they would, Redfern and his men could make no change in the score, and the minutes were fast-ticking away; Father Time, who waits for no man, or boy, was inexorable.

Several of the spectators looked at their watches. Four minutes—three! Redfern gritted his teeth. His look and gesture called up his followers for a final effort. The tussle was keener than ever, but the Fourth were confident of victory now. Robinson was already thinking of the ovation which would greet the victors. But he counted his chickens too early. There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, and so it proved in this case.

A Fourth Form back sent the ball to mid-field. Redfern dashed at it, and had it in a moment. There wasn't the ghost of a chance of getting through, for five or six opponents were bearing down upon him, and none of his side was favourably placed to receive a pass. He had about five seconds to act in, and in that remarkably short space of time he decided and acted.

The ball went down from his hands, and as it rose he kicked with a steadiness and skill as if he had ten minutes at his disposal. It was a magnificent drop-kick! The ball soared away, and every eye followed it with almost feverish anxiety. It was the last shot in the locker, so to speak.

Was it a goal? No, it was outside—no, it would hit the post, as sure as fate—no, inside, by Jove!—and over the bar! There was a roar.

"Goal!"

Redfern drew a deep, deep breath. It was a goal, and the Third Form had won!

The whistle went, and the Third Form rushed to greet their champions as they came off the field—victors by ten points to eight.

Robinson was looking a little grim as he came off. But he managed to give Redfern a grin.

"I never thought you'd d-d-do it, Reddy," he said. "I didn't think your beastly Fuf-fuf-form had it in them."

And Robinson, like a true sportsman, joined in the cheer as Redfern and Hurree Singh were carried off on the shoulders of their Form-fellows.

THE END.

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# THE FOURTH FORM

## AT GREYMINSTER

BY

HENRY ST. JOHN.



THE HONOURABLE HERBERT HAVILAND . Third son of Lord Carrington.  
TOM ANDREWS . A poor boy and an orphan. He is adopted by Sir George Dalton  
Mr. TERENCE, the New Headmaster, Mr. GRINDLAY, WICKERS, and other boys of the Fourth Form.

### READ THIS FIRST.

Herbert Haviland and Tom Andrews first meet in a train, which is taking the former to school and the latter to sea. They change clothes, etc., and Andrews gets out at Greyminster station, while Haviland goes on to a seaport. Tom Andrews has not been at the school long when he saves two lives. Time slips by, but nothing is heard of Herbert Haviland until one day he comes to the school. The facts of their change come out, but directly Sir George Dalton—one of the local governors of the school—hears the story, he decides to adopt Tom Andrews. Mr. Grindlay, Tom's form master, who had up to now been toadying to Andrews, under the impression he was the son of a peer, suddenly changes. This in the end proves to be Mr. Grindlay's undoing, for after Andrews is insulted for weeks, the boys of the Fourth take his part, and mutiny reigns. Grindlay is attacked in class and thrown out of the room. The boys have no sooner gone back and locked themselves in, when the headmaster knocks and demands admission. This is refused, and he goes away. The mutineers decide that, after Haviland has gone up to the dormitories and fetched some money, they shall march out. On the way Haviland overhears Mr. Terence and Mr. Grindlay quarrelling. He decides there and then to tell the truth of the matter, and peace is declared. Tom has a letter from a man named Spikey Smith, an old friend, saying he is in trouble, and begs for the loan of £20. Tom does not know where to get it, so calls on Sir George Dalton. Sir George asks him in and starts chatting with him. Now go on with the story!

#### Refused!

"There is not the slightest ill-feeling, but she is odd, Tom—decidedly odd. You never had an odd aunt, my boy; you don't understand. Most extraordinary woman, but clever. Got ideas—wonderful ideas. Going to revolutionise the world with 'em, she thinks; I don't. But touched!" Sir George touched his forehead. "Well, I'm glad to hear all the news. It's good of you to think of the old chap, and come round like this and tell him all that's going on; and if you must get off—why, you must, I suppose, and so it is no good grumbling—ch? What the dickens have you got there, Parsons?"

"Cold beef and pickles," said Parsons, coming in with a tray.

"Bless my soul! Who wants cold beef and pickles? Never knew such an extraordinary man!"

"Ain't two minutes alike," mumbled Parsons. "Don't know where 'e are half his time, and t'other 'alf I don't know where I are, and so we goes on!"

"Well, as I was saying, Tom," said Sir George, when Parsons had gone, "I'm delighted to have seen you, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness in calling—I do, on my soul!—and—Here, take the beef back with you. I'll find a newspaper to wrap it up in. Hobson charges me elevenpence a pound, which is disgraceful! I can get it at Farrow's for tenpence-halfpenny, as I've told him often, so I shall have to make a change."

"I came," Tom stammered painfully—"I came to—"  
"Yes, yes; of course. I'll see you out. Here"—Sir George fumbled in his pocket—"what's this, half-a-crown? Here, take it. Bless you, my boy! Go on well, and be a credit to me and to yourself—that's all I ask. Go on the right way—keep straight, never tell lies, nor do dishonour-

able actions. Never pay more for a thing than its fair market value. Never pay less, because if you aren't cheating someone, someone will be cheating you by selling you rubbish. That's my motto. Never do a dirty action, nor turn your back on a friend."

"That—that's why I'm here, sir!" Tom gasped, grasping at the words to help him.

"Eh—what? What's that?"

"A friend of mine—one who did me many and many a good turn when I was alone—is in trouble, sir—terrible trouble!—and—and I didn't know a soul in the world to come to tell about it but you."

"Of course not! Quite right! Poor fellow—poor fellow!" said Sir George. "I am shocked to hear it. One never knows. Troubles come unexpectedly. I hope he will get over his. Well, good-bye, my boy!"

"Sir, won't you listen to me?" Tom cried, almost weeping.

"Of course! My dear, dear boy, what's the matter—eh?"

"It's Spikey Smith, sir!" Tom gasped.

"Spiteful Smith? Bless my soul, what an odd name! Well, there it is. You see what comes of being spiteful. If he had been—"

"Spikey, sir; it is his name, and he is one of the best. He never turned his back on me when I hadn't a friend in the world. Many and many's the coppers he's given me for a night's doss—lodging, sir—when I hadn't a penny nor a friend; and now he's down, sir, on his luck, and there's a charge against him, though he is innocent of any wrongdoing—he is, sir. If you knew Spikey, you'd know it is true."

"To be sure!" said Sir George. "I am quite sure that if I knew him I should, as you—as you say; I should know him, to be sure. Well—"

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"Would you read his letter, sir? I brought it. I know I hadn't the right to come to you about it, but there's no one else in the world; and—here it is, sir." Tom thrust poor Spikey's epistle into Sir George's hand.

"Ha, poetry!" muttered Sir George, holding the letter upside-down some little distance away. "Poetry—eh? Very pretty—very, very pretty!" He stared at the letter for some moments, and then handed it back to Tom. "Very pretty!" he repeated.

"It isn't poetry, sir!" Tom cried. "It's a letter from Spikey to me, and in it he says that he lost some money that was given to him to mind for someone. It was stolen from him, and now they are going to charge him with stealing it, unless he can pay it back by Thursday; and it is twenty pounds, sir. And if he can't get the money, he'll be sent to prison; so—so I came to—to ask you, to beg you, to—to lend it to me—to Spikey, to save him, as there's no one in the world I could ask. It's a terrible lot of money, but—"

"Hey?" gasped Sir George. "Twenty pounds—twenty pounds? Ask me! My dear, dear fellow, I haven't a penny in the world! I am absolutely impoverished! Twenty pounds, to—to lend to Spiteful Smith! Bless my soul! My dear fellow—twenty pounds! I haven't fourpence between me and beggary! It is out of the question! My dear Tom, I admire you—I do, upon my soul!—I admire you for wishing to serve your friend; but, by George, twenty pounds!"

Sir George rushed across the room and rang the bell.

"Parsons, get a newspaper!" he shouted. "I want this beef wrapped up. He's going to take it back to school with him. Don't get enough to eat, you know. Boys never do. There, what's that? 'Sporting World.' The very thing. Here we are!"

The beef was wrapped up, and Sir George thrust it on Tom.

"Take it back with you, and eat it. It'll do you good. It's the best beef," he said. "Good-bye, my boy—good-bye! I'm glad to see you—very glad. Sorry about your spiteful Smith person—very sorry! Twenty pounds! Bless my soul! See the young gentleman out, Parsons. Good-bye!"

It was over—the last chance was gone—and Tom found himself standing outside the ornamental iron gates, hugging to his breast a huge joint of cold beef for which he had not the slightest use. Sir George had pleaded poverty and had refused him, and Spikey—poor old Spikey!—must go to prison.

### Tom Tries to Get Rid of His Burden—Under Suspicion—Pursued—The Arrest.

Of course, he had been mad to think that Sir George would be willing to help Spikey with so large a sum. He had no right to expect it. Spikey himself would never have expected it.

Tom walked on mechanically, hugging the large joint of beef, and wondering what he should do with it. At last the opportunity for getting rid of it seemed to come—a party of three stonebreakers were sitting beside the road munching bread and cheese. Tom had no doubt but that they would be very glad of such an excellent piece of meat; and at the same time, as it was heavy, he knew he would be glad to get rid of it.

"Good-afternoon!" he said cheerfully.

One of them looked up and nodded.

"Would you like a nice piece of beef?" Tom asked.

"What's that?"

"A joint of beef, hardly been cut," said Tom, unwrapping his treasure.

The men looked at one another, and then at Tom.

"What about it?" one asked.

"Well, I'm asking you if you'd like it."

"For nothing?"

"Of course! I don't want you to pay for it."

"You don't?"

"No," said Tom.

"Rum go this," muttered one of the men. "Pisened, as likely as not! Where did you get it?" he asked Tom.

"I had it given to me."

"And you don't want it?"

"No. If I did I shouldn't give it to you."

"Then what did you take it for?"

"Because—well, because I did. Are you going to have it, or aren't you?"

"I don't know." The man scratched his head. "What's the matter with the beef?"

"Nothing!" said Tom indignantly.

"Then what are you giving it to us for?"

"Because"—Tom was getting angry—"because I don't want it."

"It's a rum go," said one of the men, after a pause. "Look here"—he looked up at Tom—"supposing you get out of it. We don't want none of your larks. You clear out sharp!"

"Then you don't want it?"

"Clear out!" the man said indignantly. "Acting the fool along with us!"

Tom walked on. It was evident the men were suspicious that something was wrong with the beef. Well, they were fools for their pains. Anyhow, he did not mean to carry it back to school if he could help it. Just before he got to the bridge he met an old woman hobbling along. She looked very poor and very thin. She looked as if a good piece of beef like this was likely to be of use to her, so Tom stopped her and offered it.

"I don't want none of your imperence!" the old woman said shrilly. "You get along with you, making a mock of an old woman like me! Beef, indeed! Pisin, more like! I'll give you in charge to the first policeman I see if you ain't careful!"

It was very absurd that a good piece of beef like this should be going begging. The thought of how to rid himself of it was now occupying Tom's mind, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Since no one would accept it, he decided that he would place it on one of the seats of the bridge, and leave it there for someone to find; so when he got to the bridge Tom sat down on one of the seats, and placed the beef beside him. He sat there for a few minutes, until he was certain there was no one near; then he rose hurriedly, and left the beef lying there alone.

Tom was conscious of a feeling of relief as he stepped out. The beef had weighed not only on his hands, but on his mind, too. Thank goodness he was free of it now, and—

"Hi, hi, young man—hi!"

Tom started violently and turned colour, but he did not turn round. Someone behind was yelling at him he felt certain, and it had something to do with that wretched piece of beef.

"Hi! Wait—wait a moment!" yelled the voice.

Tom quickened his pace—he almost broke into a run; then he gave it up in despair, for there was the sound of running feet behind him, and a moment later someone laid a violent hold on his arm.

"Are you deaf—or what, mate?" said the man who had followed him. "I've been shouting to you till half me teeth have blown out! You left this 'ere piece of meat on the seat where you was sitting!"

"Oh, I—I— Did I?" gasped Tom.

"Wonder you don't leave your head somewhere!" said the man. "There, take it! A nice row you'd a got into if it hadn't been for me seeing it." He thrust the beef into Tom's arms. "You'll have more sense next time. You're old enough to go for a errant without forgetting what you're sent for!" he said.

Tom thanked the man as best he could, wishing all the time that he had been anywhere but where he was; then, hugging the beef, he went on.

A few minutes later a lean and hungry-looking boy of about his own age, dressed in rags, came along, with his hands in his pockets and whistling mournfully.

"I say—" said Tom.

The boy stopped in the middle of his whistling.

"I say," repeated Tom, "do you like beef, mate?"

"Me"—the boy grinned—"like beef? What-ho!"

"Could you do with a piece?" Tom asked eagerly.

"A piece of beef! Could I do with it? Not 'arf!"

"Well—" Tom held out the parcel. "Thank goodness, here was someone to take it at last!"

"What's that?" said the boy suspiciously.

"It's the beef," Tom said. "Don't you want it?"

"I don't know. What's the matter with it?"

"There's nothing the matter with it. Here you are!"

"Not me!" The boy hesitated. "No, you don't! I know your trick. Pisened, or a blooming infernal-machine inside it, I'll bet!"

"It's good beef. There's nothing the matter with it."

"Garn!" The boy put his tongue out. "I've a good mind to set a copper arter you," he said. "You get on with it!"

It was certainly disheartening. Tom would never have imagined it possible that it would be so difficult to get rid of an excellent piece of beef like this.

However, he did not mean to be beaten. He certainly was not going to take it back to Greyminster, to be laughed at by the rest of them—not he. He was near the end of the bridge now, and there was just one more seat. Here Tom sat himself down, and, pushing his parcel into a corner of the seat, waited for a few moments, then rose hastily. He was not going to take any risks this time, so the moment

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he was on his legs he took to his heels. Off he went as hard as he could pelt, but Fate was against him.

"Hi—hi! Stop, you boy! Stop—stop him!"

A policeman dashed across the road, shouting at the top of his voice, and Tom completely lost his head, and put on his best pace. In a moment the chase was taken up, the policeman leading the way.

Tom was a pretty good runner, and he had a slight start, but the man in blue was not far behind. Half a dozen loafers had taken up the chase, and were bellowing "Stop thief!" at the top of their voices.

Tom was clear of the bridge now, and, taking a turn to the left, was in the High Street. But as he swung round the corner he ran full tilt into the arms of a policeman who was coming the opposite way.

"Here, where are you coming to?" said the policeman. "Steady! Hallo! What's up? No, you don't!" He grabbed Tom firmly as the boy tried to wriggle himself free, and just then the rest of the pursuers came streaming round the corner.

There were a good many people in the High Street, and in a moment a dense crowd had collected, the centre attraction of which Tom found himself.

"Quite a respectable-looking young fellow, too!" one old woman said, in a pitying voice.

"Belongs to the swell mob, likely as not!" said a man.

An elderly gentleman pushed his way through the crowd.

"What's the young vagabond been doing, officer?" he asked.

"Never you mind, sir!" said the policeman who had chased Tom.

"You let me go!" said Tom angrily. "I ain't done anything!"

"I ain't so sure about that. I've been watching you some time, young man," said the policeman. "What's that there parcel you've been so mighty anxious to get rid of?"

"Meat!" said Tom.

The policeman sniffed.

"You come with me!" he said.

He marched Tom back to the bridge, and to the seat where the parcel now lay. The seat was surrounded by a large crowd, who were looking at the parcel with undisguised alarm.

"Whatever you do, constable, be very careful," said the old gentleman, who was making himself very busy. "I know these things; they go off at the least touch. Be very careful indeed!"

"You can leave that there to me, sir," said the constable. "Now, then, that's your belongings, ain't it?"

Tom nodded.

"It was mine, but I didn't want it, so I left it there. There's no crime in that, is there?"

"I ain't so sure. Supposing you go and pick it up?"

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"I don't want it," Tom said. His refusal to pick it up excited fresh alarm, and the crowd backed perceptibly.

"Dangerous bombs are often concealed in the most innocent looking articles—such as a bouquet of flowers, a box of cigars, or even, as in this case, in a joint of meat," said the elderly gentleman. "I have no doubt whatever but that this is an Anarchist plot to blow the town up!"

"You're talking out of your hat!" said Tom angrily. "That's beef, that is—good beef!—and there's nothing the matter with it. I didn't want it, so I tried to give it away, and no one would have it, so I left it here for someone to pick up."

"He left it on a seat further down," said the man who had given the beef back to Tom before. "I saw him leave it, and follered him, and give it back to him. It's my belief as it is pisened; and what he wants is for some pore chap to pick it up and take it 'ome and eat it, and kill hisself!"

The crowd groaned with horror at the suggestion, and it was well for Tom that he was protected by the two policemen; otherwise, he might have found himself in the river before he could help himself.

One of the policemen now stepped forward, and lifted the parcel gingerly.

"Be very careful," screamed the old gentleman, backing into the road—"be most careful! Don't drop it on any account, or an explosion—"

"I ain't going to drop it!" growled the policeman. "Supposing some of you mind your own business!"

Holding the parcel carefully in front of him, he led the way. The second policeman followed, with his hand lying heavily on Tom's shoulder; and the rear was brought up by the crowd, which by this time had swelled to huge proportions.

The ragged boy to whom Tom had offered the meat was telling of his narrow escape from destruction at the top of his voice, and the crowd was groaning with horror and sympathy. It would have been funny if it had not been so annoying. For the first time in his life Tom found himself in the hands of the police, being marched through the public street in broad daylight, as though he was a malefactor.

Straight to the police-station they went. The little old gentleman who had made himself so officious by a flank movement managed to arrive first, and dashed up the steps into the office before Tom and his captors arrived.

Half a dozen others managed to get inside the little place before the constables could get the door shut, and then a scene of wild excitement took place. Everyone tried to speak at once. The little old gentleman seemed to have lost his head completely; and he brought out his cardcase, and insisted on giving his card to everyone within arms-length.

And the beef, the cause of all the trouble, was laid very gently and carefully down on the desk.

"What is the trouble?" asked the sergeant. "What's the charge against the young fellow?"

No one quite knew what the charge was. The constable explained that he had arrested Tom on suspicion of either trying to poison people or of blowing up the town—he wasn't sure which. He inclined to the poison theory. At any rate, the prisoner had acted in a most suspicious manner. He had tried to get rid of the beef.

When he had made his statement, everyone else tried to make a statement too, and it was some time before the sergeant could command order.

"Now, what have you got to say for yourself?" he asked Tom. "What's your name, and where do you come from?"

"My name's Andrews, and I come from Greyminster College, and if you ask me," Tom added, "I think all the lot of you have gone barmey!"

"Where did you get that meat?"

"Had it given to me; and because I didn't want it I tried to give it away, only everybody seemed to have got an idea I was a-trying to pisen 'em or something!"

"Well, who gave you that meat?" said the sergeant.

"Yes," said the old gentleman fustily, "who gave you that meat, sirrah?"

"You be kind enough to mind your own business, sir!" said the sergeant testily. "Hobson, just clear the office of some of these people."

"I refuse—absolutely and irrevocably refuse to go!" shrieked the old gentleman, clinging to the desk. "As a citizen, I consider it my duty to remain, in the interests of the town."

"Who gave you that meat?" demanded the sergeant.

"Sir George Dalton."

There was a moment's silence.

"Don't you tell me no lies," said the sergeant; "and don't try to be funny, neither! Who gave you the meat? Out with it, now!"

"I've told you once—Sir George Dalton; and if you don't believe me, you'd better go and ask him!"

AND "CLEGG, OF NEW YORK."  
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"It's an abominable thing," shrieked the little old gentleman, "that the name of our respected fellow-townsmen, Sir George Dalton, should be dragged into this abominable case!"

"A fat lot you know about it!" said Tom angrily. "It's a pity you ain't got some business of your own to look after!"

"Assassin!" said the little old man. "Don't speak to me, vile wretch!"

"What's the matter with the meat?" said the sergeant.

"I don't know," said Tom. "Everyone seems to think it's a bit off. I only know it came out of Sir George's house, and he gave it me with his own hands."

"It's pisened!" said the constable. "There's no doubt about it!"

"Nothing of the kind!" said the old gentleman. "Inside that innocent-looking piece of meat is concealed a dangerous infernal machine! Listen! I declare I can hear the mechanism of the thing ticking quite distinctly!" A look of triumph came into his face, and he held up his hand. "Ha! There, what did I tell you?"

"If you'd be kind enough to hold your tongue—" said the sergeant. "That there noise you hear is the office clock. Hobson, jest step to the telephone and ring up Sir George Dalton, will you? We'll soon get to the truth of this 'ere business."

The telephone was in the adjoining room, and a deathly silence prevailed while Hobson, the constable, stumped in and rang up the machine.

"That Sir George Dalton's 'ouse?"

There was silence for a moment, then Hobson's voice again.

"Is that Sir George a-speaking? It's about a young feller," Hobson went on, "with a large piece of beef, which he says he got from Sir George."

"Name of Andrews?"

"No. The young feller's name's Andrews; not the beef's, sir. Says he had it give him by you. Yes, sir; we arrested him as a suspicious character. Andrews, sir; says his name is Andrews, and come from Greyminster, sir."

There was a long silence, then Hobson's voice again, very weak and apologetic.

"I'm sure, sir, as 'ow we are very sorry. We wouldn't 'a' done anything of the kind if we could 'a' known, sir; and it sha'n't never 'appen again. I'll mention what you say, sir; and, of course, we'll apologise 'andsome to the young gent, sir."

Hobson's voice grew weaker and weaker. It was only like a miserable squeak now. They could guess what was being poured into the telephone at the other end.

Then, with a gasp of relief, Hobson hung up the receiver, and tottered back into the office.

"Sir George," he gasped, "is in a most 'orrible rage. I never 'eard 'im go on like it afore in my life, and I 'ave 'eard 'im now and again. He says as how the young gent's 'is protiggy or something, and 'ow it is quite right about the beef, which he did give him, and the beef being all right, and—'is language!" Hobson fanned himself with his helmet.

"Serves you jolly well right!" said Tom indignantly. "After dragging me through the streets like that, and making an exhibition of me, you ought to be kicked out of the force, you—you great fat-headed idiot!"

"So he is," said the sergeant. "Quite right, sir. Hobson's a perfect ijut when he likes. And I am sure, sir, anything I can do to make up for the annoyance you have received—"

"The mistake, under the circumstances, was perfectly feasible," said the little old gentleman. "I repeat—feasible."

"I've a good mind to give you in charge for defamation of character!" said Tom.

"Pooh! Nonsense—nonsense! I did but my duty as a townsman. I considered—"

"Hobson, put that person outside!" said the sergeant angrily. "I'm sick of his lip!"

Hobson was only too glad to relieve his feelings on someone, and the next moment the little old gentleman was skating down the steps of the police-station on his back.

"And I am sure, all said and done, it looks a very nice piece of beef," said the sergeant. "I don't know, all said and done, that I've seen a nicer-looking piece of beef for many a year."

"You'd better keep it then," said Tom. "I've had enough of it."

"Which I am sure I will, and thank you kindly," said the sergeant. "And now, if you'll follow me, sir, I'll show you out the back way, seeing them ijuds is hanging about outside still."

So Tom went out the back way, and long before the crowd had dispersed he was safely back at Greyminster.

### Tom is Incautious—The Padlocks—Mr. Grindlay Bullies Tom.

"Where on earth have you been to, Andrews?"

"Me? Oh, out!" said Tom.

"Well, my son, you are in for it. Grindlay is hopping mad about you; been raising Cain. Anything wrong?"

Tom hesitated. Should he tell Haviland? Why not? If Haviland could not help him, at least he would have his sympathy, and that was something.

"Yes, there's something wrong," he said miserably—"something beastly wrong! I'm in trouble. I want twenty pounds as bad as anybody could want it!"

"Phew! You don't want much. Thinking of buying a motor-car, or a house in the country, or any little thing?"

"It's nothing to laugh about," Tom said. "It's for a friend—a chap I know, one who's been good to me. Spikey Smith—him I told you about. Except Sir George Dalton, there's been nobody as good to me as he has. Many a time he's give me enough for a night's lodging and a meal; and if it hadn't been for him, I don't know what I'd 'a' done often in the old days."

"Poor old chap!" said Haviland sympathetically. "And so this chap—this friend of yours—wants twenty pounds?"

"He's in awful trouble about it," Tom said. "If he don't get the money by Thursday, he'll be took up and charged with stealing; and Spikey wasn't ever one for that sort of thing. He's as straight as—as you are!"

Haviland nodded.

"It's that beast Ike Brunheimer! Spikey had some money of his, and it was stole from him, or he lost it—he don't know which. Anyhow, it's gone, and now he can't pay Ike, and Ike swears he's stole it; so, unless it's paid by Thursday—"

"I wish to goodness I had the money to let you have, old chap," Haviland said. "I've got three pounds and a shilling or two—it isn't twenty, I know—but if it would be of any use, you're welcome to it for your chum."

"You are a real good 'un, Haviland!" Tom said, blinking back the tears. "I knew you'd want to help if you knew, but three pounds isn't any good. It's twenty pounds I want, and twenty pounds I've tried to get, and can't. I'd give all I've got on earth to get twenty pounds, and—"

"S-sh!" whispered Haviland.

He was just too late with his warning. Finch, who was sneaking past the two boys, heard, and opened his eyes wide for a moment; but he said nothing, and went on rapidly.

"I believe that bounder heard!" Haviland said.

"I don't care if he did! It isn't a crime to want twenty pounds to help a friend with. I've been trying to get it this afternoon; but—but I didn't. I went to see Sir George—I know I hadn't got any right to ask him, seeing he's done so much for me; but I didn't know anyone else, and I couldn't a-bear to think I wasn't doing something to help Spikey—but Sir George he wouldn't listen to it. I don't know that anyone could blame him. He ain't to know what sort of chap Spikey is. I know Spikey 'ud pay it back honest, every farthing of it; but then, Sir George ain't to know that. And Spikey's calling's against him. He's a bookmaker—takes bets on the racecourse, you know—and he's got a bad name, like all them kind of men have!"

"It's a jolly bad business. I'm awfully sorry. If my pater was different to what he is, I'd write off this minute and ask him, but I know it would be no good. He'd come sailing down here in double-quick time to find out what sort of a bother I was in, and I'd get the length of his tongue, and precious little else. I wish I could help you, Tom—I do, straight!—but I can't, old man!"

"No, I know," Tom said, shaking his head ruefully. "No one can't help me, and Spikey'll have to go to prison for it, I suppose."

The two boys went into the class-room together.

"Best not tell Grindlay anything about it," Haviland whispered.

"Just as if I'd tell him!" Tom muttered. "Not me! He can do what he likes. What are them chaps up to, Haviland?"

Haviland's brow darkened.

"Fiddling about with their desks, it looks like," he said—"sticking something on to 'em."

"Lor, if they ain't putting on padlocks!" said Tom.

"There's a funny idea—putting on padlocks, after leaving their desks open all this time!"

"Silly asses!" Haviland said.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Grindlay. "Is that you, Andrews? Have you really honoured us at last with your presence? I was beginning to hope, to think, that possibly you had decided to take your departure altogether. Now, sir, be kind enough to tell me how you dared go out without permission, and where you have been to?"

Tom looked straight at the master, but made no reply.

**NEXT WEDNESDAY:**

"PETE'S REWARD,"  
A Tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete,  
By S. Clarke Hook;

AND

"CLEGG OF NEW YORK,"  
A Thrilling Tale of  
a New Detective.

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"You hear me?" said Grindlay, getting red in the face. "Where have you been to, Andrews?"

"Out, sir!"

"You impudent scoundrel, I know you have been out! Where?"

"I went out to see someone. I hadn't got permission, and I know I done wrong. I'm willing to take any punishment you like to give me!" Tom said.

"Indeed! That is exceedingly kind of you. Come here! Answer me, will you? Where have you been?"

"I'm not going to say!" Tom replied stubbornly. "I sha'n't tell you where I've been! I ain't done nothing wrong. I went to see someone, and I came straight back, that's all."

"Very well." Mr. Grindlay hesitated. Should he take the boy to Mr. Terence? No. What was the use? He would probably confide in Mr. Terence, and the matter would be at an end. "I will give you one chance more, Andrews. Why did you go out without permission, and who did you go out to see?"

"I'm sorry, sir, but I can't tell you. I ain't done anything wrong, and that's all I can say."

"Very good!" Mr. Grindlay took the cane from his desk.

"Are you going to flog me?" Tom asked.

Mr. Grindlay nodded.

"Decidedly! There is no other way of treating you. Stoop down!"

Tom clenched his fists; but, after all, what was the use of making a fuss about it? He had done wrong to go out without permission, and Mr. Grindlay was within his right to flog him, so he stooped down, and took his flogging with all the self-control of which he was capable.

Mr. Grindlay's arm ached decidedly when he had finished.

"Now, I—I hope that if it is possible for you to learn a lesson that this will teach you one," he gasped. "You can go to your seat, and write me five hundred lines for going out without leave!"

"I say"—Finch looked mysterious; he plucked Brownlow by the arm and drew him aside—"got something to tell you—something that'll make you smile. What do you think?"

"Hey?" said Brownlow.

"Something about that beast Andrews!" said Finch. "I heard him talking to Haviland just now, and what d'ye think he said?"

"How on earth do I know? Get it out, can't you?"

"Well, he said, 'I've tried to get it, and can't. I'd give all I've got on earth to get twenty pounds!'"

"Twenty pounds! He don't want much," said Brownlow. "Is this straight?"

"Straight as a die!" said Finch.

"I heard it with my own ears. He said it, and Haviland saw me coming, and made him shut up; but I heard, anyhow. What do you think a chap like that wants twenty pounds for?"

**(Another grand instalment next week.)**



This is a small reproduction of next Wednesday's cover. Order your copy in advance. Price 1d.

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