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— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER I.
Not Welcome!

Tom Merry, seated in the doorway of the School House, at St. Jim's. As he had his coat on, and had his cap on his curly head, it was pretty clear he was going out, and the question seemed to Ernest Levison looked as if he expected an

Mr. Levison checked his sturdy stride, and gave Levi-

son a nod.

"Hello, Levison,"

said the fellow who was waiting for me."

Tom Merry knew what Levison's question meant.

The School House was standing by the door-

way to his friends at St. Jim's, unless Mellich-

am, fourth, could be called a friend. Levison

was a good fellow, and fellows had passed

him many times. Some of them had given him a

good kicking, and some more notice of him than of

his friends, and some more notice of him than of

his friends, and some more notice of him than of

best to keep that a secret. But that would have been forgotten if Levison had been a likable fellow. He was not bad looking, and he was at least as good as the average junior on the playing-field, and at lessons he was ahead of most of his class. He could assume a very pleasant manner when it suited him, but he was not liked. Perhaps it was because he had a gift of keenness that was almost menacing to one of his age, and fellows did not like to feel that the penetrating eyes could see so far into their hearts, and read their motives better than they themselves could read them.

Herries, of the Fourth, never would speak to Levison, because his dog Towser had taken a dislike to the new boy at their first meeting. Most of the fellows laughed at the idea, yet in the main they agreed with Herries in his attitude. Levison did not seem to care. There was a coldness about him that seemed to render him almost indifferent to companionship.

Tom Merry hesitated.

He was good natured to a fault, and although he did not take to the new junior, he was inclined to ask Levison to come with him. But he remembered that Mellicham and Lowther had a right to be consulted, as well as Herries, and his friends, with whom he was going down to Rykeham. So he did not speak.

Levison looked directly at him.

"I'll come with you, if you like," he said.

"Oh, very well," said Tom Merry.

"Wait a minute while I get my cap."

A LONG, COMPLETE TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.

(New Series)

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"All right."

Levison went into the house. Tom Merry waited on the steps. Over by the gate he could see Manners and Lavish waiting for him, and Blake and Digby and D'Arcy were talking together near the steps of the School House. Herries had gone round to the kennels for his bulldog.

"Bai Jove, Tom Merry is a long time!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, looking at his gold watch. "Some chap's got to take a long time getting into their things." Jack Blake and Digby stared at him. The wail of St. Jim's was famous for the amount of time he spent in changing his clothes.

"Upon the whole, I will go and put on a new necktie, as we have plenty of time," D'Arcy remarked. "We are going to a wathin' awagah place to tea, you know."

Blake and Digby clutched the elegant junior as he made a step towards the School House.

"No you jolly well don't!" exclaimed Blake grimly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"We haven't got half an hour to spare."

"It would not take me more than a quarish of an hour to change my necktie," exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Blake—"

"Hullo, here, Herries!" said Digby. "Nur, don't be an ass, Gussy. You look assed in that necktie, and the young lady in the tea-shop will be charmed."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Gr-r-r!"

That remark was contributed by Towser. The chain rattled as Towser jerked at it.

"Good dog!" said Herries. "Down, dog! Good doggie!" D'Arcy turned his eyeglasses upon Towser.

"Weally, Herries, I wish you would keep that faithful brute away," he exclaimed. "I have told you several times that the rotten animal has no respect whatever for a fellow's trousers."

"Well, don't look at him. How can you expect a decent dog to see your chivy and be good tempered?" demanded Herries, with warmth. "You have worried him, and no wonder."

"Herries, you ass—"

"Gr-r-r!"

"I protest against that faithful beast being brought along," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He will be quite out of place in a tea-shop."

Blake and Digby looked at Towser doubtfully. They could not help agreeing with the paw of St. Jim's in his last remark.

"Not!" said Herries emphatically. "Of course Towser's coming. He likes a run. Besides, we can feed him on sandwiches in the tea-shop. It's awful fun to feed Towser on sandwiches. You should just see him gobble 'em up! Why, you could spend five bob in five minutes, feeding Towser with sandwiches."

"Bai Jove!"

It was evidently no use arguing with Herries. A fellow who expected another fellow to regard it as great fun to spend five shillings in five minutes feeding a bulldog—well, such a fellow was past all argument.

"Where's that bouncer Tom Merry?" exclaimed Blake. "This is what comes of going out with Shell fellows, something always goes wrong. The other two duffers are at the gate. Where's Tom Merry got to?"

"Bai Jove," exclaimed D'Arcy, turning his eyeglasses towards the School House, "there he is!"

"The ass!" said Blake.

He shouted to Tom Merry.

"Merry! Tom Merry! Tom Merry-ry!"

Tom Merry nodded to him.

"It's all serene," he called back.

"All serene, is it?" exclaimed Blake malignantly. "Rats! What do you mean by waiting there, while we're waiting here? You ass! We've been waiting for dog's ages. Come!"

"I'm waiting for Levison."

"What?"

All four of the Fourth-Formers uttered that exclamation at once. Tom Merry turned red. He felt that he had overstepped his rights a little, perhaps, in occupying Levison's company without asking the others; yet Levison had really let him be his choice in the matter. The kind-hearted, good-natured junior felt that he could not tell a fellow plainly that he didn't want his company. And besides, Levison was not so bad as all that. He might not be agreeable, but he wasn't quite disagreeable.

But the heroes of the Fourth were plainly displeased. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his monocle, and gave Tom Merry a fixed stare. Blake and Digby frowned. As for Herries, he set his lips together.

"Is Levison coming with us?" asked Herries.

"The Gax Library, No. 145."

"Well, he wants to," said Tom Merry apologetically. "I suppose there's no harm in his coming, is there?"

"Yes, there jolly well is," said Herries uncompromisingly. "Herries was a slow-going, good-natured fellow enough, and his dislike of the new boy was a surprise to his class. Herries was generally too easy-going to take the trouble to dislike anybody. Even Mellich, the cad of the Fourth, was treated with a good-humoured, scornful tolerance by the bulky junior. But with Levison he would make no terms, and the chums knew that his antagonism was founded upon the dislike Towser showed towards Levison."

"Oh, draw it mild, Herries!" said Arthur Augustus.

"If Tom Merry really wishes Levison to come, you know—"

"Well, I do," said Tom Merry awkwardly. "I am, I'd take it kindly if you fellows will let him come, and be civil to him."

Blake sniffed.

"Oh, if you put it like that, he can come!" he said. "But what do you want him to come for?"

"Well, he was alone, and—and he seemed to want to. Another sniff from Blake.

"Just your old game," he said. "If he's alone, it's because he's so jolly deep that fellows don't take to him. You remember the trouble there was because you wouldn't take up that chap, Lumley-Lumley, and play him in football? He was playing you for a duffer all the time, and you couldn't see it; and, of course, Levison is about the same. You're a jolly sight too good-natured, Tom Merry."

"If you don't want him to come—" began Tom Merry rather abruptly.

"Oh, I don't mind! It's not so bad as that. I'm not speaking to you for your own good," said Blake, rather fairly tone.

Tom Merry smiled—his sunny smile, which always drove the clouds away from his face as soon as they gathered.

"That's all right, then," he said.

"I isn't all right," said Herries. "If Levison is I'm not."

"Oh, weally, Herries—"

"Herries, old man—"

"I say, Herries—"

"It's all right," said Herries. "Look here, I'm a chap. I know his blessed conjuring tricks, but I know some mean dodges on you and make trouble, you know. Words. That's his idea of fun. I'm not having any. I know I can't stand a chap, I keep away from him. Besides, there'll be trouble if he's with Towser. You can't stand him any more than I can."

"You could leave Towser at home, dearie," said D'Arcy, in a tone of one making a really bright suggestion.

Herries snarled.

"Yes, I'm likely to leave Towser at home, to be a worm like that," he exclaimed. "It's all right."

Old Towser for a run, and you fellows can go on to the new tea-shop. I don't care much for tea-shops, anyway."

And Herries, without more words, marched towards Towser.

CHAPTER 2.

Herries in Hot Water.

TOM MERRY was very red and uncomfortable. He was so determined in the matter that it was no use arguing with him. His leaving the party at the chums of the Fourth felt somewhat awkward, and Levison appeared in the School House doorway. Herries went swinging out of the gates with Towser.

"I'm ready," said Levison.

"So are we," said Tom Merry rather shortly.

"Isn't Herries coming?"

"No."

"I thought—"

"He's gone out with Towser."

Levison understood, and his eye glinted in a way. As the juniors descended the School House steps.

"Burtos!" came out of the doorway. Blinks was a lively youth, with a chubby face. He was not over with brains; but he was a kind and obliging fellow, devoted to Tom Merry. Mainly through Tom's influence, Blinks had made an effort to give up his blood-curdling literature which the enterprising use in New York send over to us in shiploads for the amusement of British youth—thrilling stories of the Red Revolver Raport and Blood-Stained Bill. It had been Blinks's ambition to go forth into the Rockies on a coal-black steed, with a revolver in each hand, stage-coaches, and demand gold-dust and nuggets. Blinks would do much erection with the revolver.

Red Cross, was a question, as he had been known to turn pale at the sight of a rat finger.

Tom Merry had bought him a volume of healthy school exercises, and persuaded him to put Blood-Stained Bill into the bag, and Blinks, somewhat reluctantly, had admitted that the change was for the better.

Blinks had a letter in his hand now, and he looked as if he wanted to speak to Tom Merry, so the hero of the Shell looked at once.

"What is it, Blinks?" he asked.

"I've had a letter, Master Merry," said Blinks. "Bein' a holiday, I thought you might be so kind as to read it for me, and give me your opinion. I didn't know you was away for a week, though. 'No other time,' said Blinks hastily.

"Well, it will do when I come in—," said Tom Merry good naturedly.

"Oh, as well, Master Merry. It's all right."

"I'll go to my study after tea, Blinks, then."

"Yes, sir."

Blinks shooting Sam getting on, Blinks?" asked Blake. "Has he taken any more scalps? Or was it Tiger who took the scalp?"

"No, sir."

"I don't got any of them books now, Master Blake," he said. "I've been reading 'somethin' better, that Master Blake says so."

"You've turned round and looked at Blinks."

"Yes, but not reading 'Deadwood Dave,' the Scarlet Letter," he asked.

"No, sir," said Blinks.

"What did you give it up?"

"No, sir."

"You haven't got a copy of it about you?" asked Tom Merry with a cynical smile that very plainly hinted at

"No, I ain't," said Blinks, turning red.

"You've grounded."

"What's this, then?" he asked.

"I slipped up hand under Blinks's tight jacket, and drew out a small pistol with a flaming cover in colour, and a man with a revolver firing at several other men of whom was falling dead."

"You've told the paper up to view."

"You've shored it. A general glance of contempt was cast upon him."

"But, Mr. Jove!" said D'Arcy. "You needn't have told about it, Blinks, dear boy!"

"No, sir," said Blinks.

"No, sir."

"No, sir."

"You wouldn't have done that, Blinks," said Tom Merry. "It's rotten. I asked you to try my sort of books."

"I told you, to do you a good turn, but I didn't want to tell about it."

"Master Merry—"

"It would be far better to read 'Deadwood Dave,' or any of the other sort, than to lie about it, Blinks!"

"No, sir."

"You ain't, Master Merry!" he exclaimed, blubbering.

"I don't know 'ow the paper come there! I told you there and forgot, because I used to carry 'em about me like that."

"You've dissolved in tears, went into the House, with a letter in his hand, leaving the captured 'horrible' in a

"No, sir."

"No, sir."

"You've done very well, Blinks," said Tom Merry. "You've done very well, Blinks."

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"You've done very well, Blinks," said Tom Merry. "You've done very well, Blinks."

down tarts and cakes with milk or tea. But a tea-shop in the proper sense of the word there was not—till the Arcadia was opened in the High Street, near the railway-station.

Mr. Bunn, who was the proprietor, expected a great deal of custom from the fellows at St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had suggested that it would really be the "thing" to give the new venture a leg-up. And as they had nothing particular to do that afternoon, Tom Merry & Co. had agreed.

Arthur Augustus had lately received a handsome tip from his governor, and he had insisted that he was to do the honours on this visit to the new tea-shop.

There was a crisp fiver in D'Arcy's pocket, and the chances were that by the time he had finished doing the honours at the Arcadia, there would be very little left of the fiver. That was Gussy's way. He was nothing if not magnificent.

The presence of Levison and the absence of Herries cast a little shadow over the party of juniors at first. But D'Arcy was somewhat consoled by the absence of Towser. He never felt that his elegant attire was quite safe in the presence of the bulldog.

But, as a matter of fact, the chums of the School House had not seen the last of either Herries or Towser that afternoon.

They had passed the cross-roads when there was a sudden howl of a dog and the rattle of a chain, and they sighed. Herries. Towser was heading for the Green Man, a disreputable public-house that had been frequented by Jerrold Lumsley-Lumsley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, when he had been at the school.

Towser seemed determined to get into the Green Man, for some fancy of his own, but perhaps because a catmunt merchant had gone in for liquid refreshment, and the odour of his wares had reached Towser's nostrils. As a well-conducted and self-respecting bulldog, Towser ought to have despised the wares of the catmunt merchant, but he didn't.

Herries was dragging on the chain.

"But Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Hold on, dear boy!"

"I'm holding on," snapped Herries.

"Towser wants a drink!" grinned Monty Lowther. "You should have brought him up to be a teetotaler, Herries."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" growled Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At that moment Towser, with a powerful jerk, released the chain from Herries's hand and bolted. He was in at one of the doorways in the twinkling of an eye. Herries gave a shout, and darted in after him.

"But Jove!"

D'Arcy's exclamation was not caused by the action of Towser—nothing that Towser did would surprise him. He had caught sight of the somewhat ungainly figure of Knox, the School House prefect, coming down the road from the direction of the village. Knox had just caught a glimpse of Herries dashing into the inn.

He stopped, and stared at the juniors.

"Who was that?" he exclaimed.

"I don't understand you," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, you do!" snapped Knox.

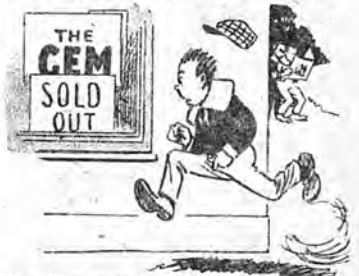
The Shell fellow flushed red.

"I'm not a liar!" he exclaimed angrily.

Knox snapped his teeth.

"One of you went into the public-house just now, and

Boys who do not read "THE GEM."



The Boy who is always TOO LATE!

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he's in there still," he said. "I saw him, but didn't see who it was. Who was it?"

"Towser ran in there—"

"Then it was Herries!"

"He's gone in for Towser."

Knox laughed sneeringly.

"That's a likely story!" he exclaimed. "I always had a suspicion about you—all of you; it's a certainty now!"

"Well, Knox—"

"Hold your tongue, D'Arcy!"

The swell of St. Jim's jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked the bullying senior coolly in the face.

"I refuse to hold my tongue, Knox!" he replied. "If you accuse my friend of going into that wretched place from a disreputable motive, you are off-side, dear boy!"

The prefect clenched his hand. D'Arcy did not flinch, and his intention to hit back if he was touched was so apparent, that Knox dropped his back. He knew that if he began to ill-use Arthur Augustus, he would have the rest of Tom Merry & Co. to deal with, perfect as he was.

He strode to the door of the inn.

Herries was just coming out. The offensive Towser had dogged him, and Mr. Jelliffe, the proprietor of the inn, had been decidedly rude. Herries was coming out without the bulldog, and with a very flushed face.

He started as he saw Knox.

"So I've caught you!" said the prefect.

"Caught me!" said Herries.

"Yet! sub-handling you young rascal!"

Herries's eyes blazed.

"I went in there for Towser!" he shouted.

Knox laughed.

"Where is Towser now?"

"He got away!"

"Do you expect me to believe that?" exclaimed the prefect impatiently. To do him justice, he did not believe it. He was of a narrow and distrustful nature, and capable of despising himself, and a liar is always suspicious. "You'll go straight back to St. Jim's, and stay in for the rest of the afternoon—do you hear?—and write out two hundred lines, or I'll take you before the Head, whichever you like! Take your choice!"

Herries gritted his teeth.

Without a word, he strode away towards the school. Knox was a triumphant glancer at Tom Merry & Co. He disliked them bitterly, all the more because they were not to be intimidated. He felt that he had scored over them this time, and indeed he had.

CHAPTER 3. Gussy's Flier.

TOM MERRY & CO. were looking a little glum as they entered the village. The punishment of Herries was annoying them. The Fourth-Formers, who were Herries's own chamber, were rather inclined to blame Levison, which was hardly just, as the matter might have happened in the same way if Herries had been with them. There was no accounting for the vagaries of Towser.

"It's wathah wuff on Hewies!" said D'Arcy. "There is no end to the wowsy that fearful beast brings upon him. I suggested to him only yesterday to have it shot, you know, and he cut up quite wuff at the idea!"

"Go hum!" said Blake.

"Well, here's the Arcadia!" exclaimed Manners.

The juniors halted in front of the new tearoom that adjoined the High Street of Ryelcombe. It was really very modern and up-to-date. Mr. Bunn had "done it down" in really good style. A fuselage of white and blue was very striking, and impressed the inhabitants of Ryelcombe with Mr. Bunn's artistic tastes. There was a youth in a uniform and gold buttons in the doorway, who greeted the juniors of St. Jim's as they came in.

Within, there was a long, and lofty apartment, decorated in white and gold, with rows of round tables, at which the unoccupied youth of Ryelcombe had tea or coffee and cakes. There were pictures in piles of the deadliest colours, such as would have done credit to any London tea-shop.

The juniors seated themselves at a round table, and a pretty waitress came to take their orders. She was Mr. Bunn's daughter, and the juniors had met Miss Bunn before. She had once looked Lummy Lummy's ears for impertinence, which had led Monty Lowther to remark that she was a hot-cross bun. But she was very charming and obliging, and very pleased to see D'Arcy.

The swell of St. Jim's, quite unconsciously—for he was the least conceited fellow in the world—had made an impression upon the susceptible heart of Miss Bunn.

"Hallo! School House cad!" by George!"

The juniors looked round quickly. Three youths had just come in in St. Jim's caps, and they grinned a welcome to THE GYM LIBRARY—No. 145.

NEXT
THURSDAY

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

Order
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Figgins & Co. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the New House, came up to their table.

"Come to see the new show—eh?" said Figgins smiling.

"Yess, wathah!"

"Same here. We haven't come in to eat, but to see the show."

Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn gave Figgins an indignant glare.

"I'm jolly well going to have something to eat," he exclaimed. "I haven't had anything since dinner."

Then I only had the school dinner, and some pork pie and study afterwards, and the second cake at Mrs. Taggart's, and the milk chocolate and the apples and the tiffin."

"You must be famished!" said Tom Merry sympathizingly.

"Yess, wathah!"

"Well, I've got a healthy appetite," said Fatty Wynn.

"None of your fairy appetite about me, you know, Fatty!"

"He, ha! You can!" roared Figgins.

"Pway sit down bench, dear boys!" said Arthur Augustus hospitably. "I've had a fixah from my governor's merrin! you know, and I'm standin' twost."

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Well, I must say that's jolly decent of you!" said the fat Fourth-Formers. "As a matter of fact, I'm coming to Figgins that if we met any School House row—"

"That you weren't!" chuckled Figgins.

"Well, I—I mean, I was just going to say it!" said Fatty Wynn. "It's the same thing. What's the good of that?"

"It only prevents us from—from pulling ourselves to—"

"Feed," said Blake.

"He, ha, he!"

"House rows are off," said Figgins. "After all, chaps can't help being School House bouncers, and we see that we ought to throw it in their faces."

"Well, Figgins—"

"Well, you cheeky New House waster—"

"My dear chaps," said Figgins, with a gesture of the hand, "we tolerate you! We can afford to represent the cock House at St. Jim's!"

The School House fellows were on their feet, and went.

"What's that? Who's cock House at St. Jim's?"

"New House!" said Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn.

"Rats!"

"Look here, you School House bouncers—"

"New House retters—"

"Rat Jove—"

"If you want a thick ear—"

"Rats!"

"Rat Jove! I wathah think that we'd better change a fearful thrashing, you know?" said Arthur Augustus, turning up to Figgins in the most warlike way.

That their remarks are invalid dig, you know, bouncers!"

"Gentlemen!" said Miss Bunn. "Gentlemen!"

"Bar Jove! Figgins, you ask! What do you quarrelling in the presence of a lady?" declared she rather unreasonably. "I regard you as a witness."

"Why, you ask—"

"I refuse to be called an ass."

"Clump, then!"

"Well, Figgins—"

Tom Merry waved his hand, laughing.

"Fax!" he exclaimed. "We came here for a fixah of a House row. Shut up, you chaps! Chuck it!"

"Well, Tom Mowley—"

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"Now, dearie, Gussy,"
"Weally!"
"Order!"

"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

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"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

"I'm used to ordals—I mean—"

"Gussy!"

CHAPTER 4.

Awful for Figgins.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY turned his mopoe upon Miss Bunn—in black amazement. Then he dropped his glance to the banknote in the girl's hand.

"Not a good note!" he repeated.

"No, sir."

"But, my dear gal—"

"It is not a banknote at all, sir."

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy took the note from her, and gazed at it in astonishment.

It was printed on crisp, rustling paper, and looked at the first glance like a banknote. But a second glance showed that "Bank of Elegance" was printed along the top, instead of "Bank of England."

It was a specimen-note—not of a kind designed by a larger for passing, of course. D'Arcy stared at it in bewilderment.

"Bai Jove!" he said feebly.

The clums were all on their feet now, looking at the note.

"Bai Jove!" repeated D'Arcy.

"Well, I must say this is a rotten joke of your governor's," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowther—"

"Lord Eatwood couldn't have sent Gussy that note," exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"Did you look at the note when you received it, Gussy?" asked Blake.

The swell of St. Jim's nodded.

"Yass, wathah!" he said. "I certainly did!"

"Was it a Bank of England note?"

"Yass, wathah."

"You are sure?"

"I—I suppose so. Of course, I didn't look at it very particularly. But—but it's impos. that my governor would send me this."

"Unless by mistake," said Dighy.

D'Arcy went through his pockets again. He had a faint hope of finding the banknote there. But it was not there.

"Bai Jove, you know," he said. "It's awfully awkward! I suppose, on the whole, my governor must have had this wotten thing passed on him, and sent it to me by mistake. I looked at it, you know, but I never made a special observation of it, of course. I never suspected anything of this sort."

"Well, I must say you are an ass, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Any way, Mr. Bunn won't take that note," said Blake.

"Got any more tin?"

D'Arcy checked his head.

"No, dear boy, I expect for that note I am stoney broke. I shall have to ask you chaps to lend me some tin. Of course, I will wappay it immediately I have communicated with my governor."

Tom Merry whistled softly.

"I hardly think we can raise it," he said. "We'll try."

They couldn't. The sum pooled among them was fifteen shillings. Miss Bunn had been looking on with a sympathetic countenance.

"I'm sure it doesn't matter, sir," she said. "I will explain to my father, and you can send the money."

D'Arcy looked very much relieved.

"Bai Jove! That is very kind of you," he said. "That will be all right. Thank you very much."

The juniors moved towards the door, D'Arcy still carrying the offending Bank of Elegance note in his hand. He was still in a great state of astonishment. Levison lingered behind for a moment to speak to Miss Bunn.

"Do you miss any of the spoon, miss?" he asked.

Miss Bunn stared at him, and then stared at the table.

Certainly half the teaspoons were missing.

"Dear me!" said Miss Bunn.

"Shall I tell you who's got them?"

"Mersey!" gasped Miss Bunn. "They can't have been taken—"

"Ask Figgins—that long chap—for them," said Levison.

"But it's impossible—"

"Well, where are they, then?"

Miss Bunn compressed her lips. Mr. Bunn had provided his new establishment with really elegant nickel-plated spoons, and it was easy to imagine that they would be an acquisition in a journey study—if a junior were dishonest enough to carry them off.

But surely it was impossible—

Yet where were the spoons?

Miss Bunn hesitated. But there were six of the spoons missing, and they were not under the table or on the table.

They could only have been taken by one of the guests, Miss Bunn, with a very red face, ran to the door just as the lad in uniform was opening it, with a flourish, for the juniors.

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A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of

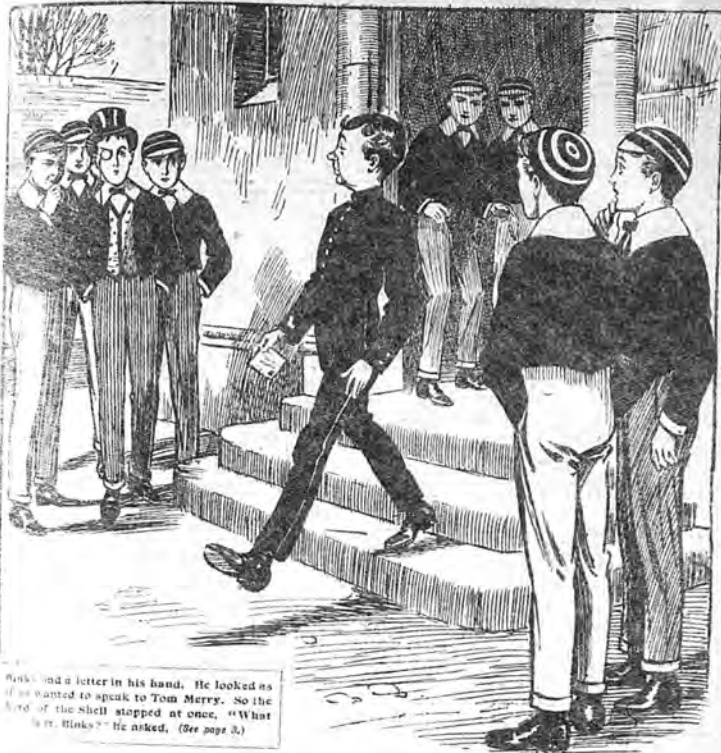
St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT THURSDAY:

"THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of

St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



Binks had a letter in his hand. He looked as if he wanted to speak to Tom Merry. So the Lord of the Shell stopped at once. "What is it, Binks?" He asked. (See page 3.)

"It wasn't a joke—it was a rotten, caddish trick!" said Tom Merry deliberately. "That's plain English, Levison." Levison flushed crimson.

"I don't see why you can't take a joke!" he exclaimed. "I want to own up, of course."

"What were you doing?"

"I can't doubt my word!" Barked out Levison.

"You can hardly expect me to take it," he said.

"You can't doubt my word!" Barked out Levison.

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Figgins glared at Levison.

"I think you're a rotten worm—an unspeakable worm," he said. "If Kerr hadn't been keen enough to bowl you out, you'd have made people think I was a thief. I'd like you to come into the gym with me at St. Jim's, with or without gloves, that's all."

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Levison. And he strode from the trashop.

"Bei Jove! As my fiver has turned up, I will pay the bill for all, Mr. Bunn," said the swell of St. Jim's.

And having received the change of his fiver, Arthur Augustus led the way from the trashop.

The juniors turned their footsteps towards St. Jim's in the growing dusk of the evening.

The happening in the trashop had left them all with a very uncomfortable feeling. They walked on in silence for a time.

"Bei Jove!" said D'Arcy, at last, breaking the silence.

"Bei Jove, dear boys, Towash was right!"

"Towash!" said Tom Merry.

"Yass, watah!—about Levison, you know?"

"And so was Herring," said Blake. "My fat, I rather think that even Tom Merry, the champion ass of the School House, will have done with that cad now!"

Tom Merry laughed unseeingly.

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A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of

St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB."

"I don't think he means any real harm," he said. "It's a peculiar sense of humor he's got, that's all. I don't say I like it."

"Wotah not?"

Figgins set his lip.

"If it's a peculiar sense of humor, the sooner it's knocked out of him the better," he said grudgingly. "and I'll do my best this evening to the contrary."

"Yass, wotah! I quite approve of your intentions, dear boy."

"Hear, hear!"

And as soon as the juniors arrived at St. John's, Figgins set out to look for Levison.

CHAPTER 6.

Great News for Binks!

HERRIE was standing at the door of the School House when Tom Merry & Co. came in. He was looking decidedly glum.

"Been Towah?" was his first question.

"No. Haven't been in."

"Not yet."

"He'll turn up all right," said Blake comfortingly. "He won't be lost—no such luck—I mean, he's bound to come in."

"Yass, wotah!"

"I can't help feeling uneasy about him," said Herries. "He's such an awfully valuable dog, you know, anybody might snip him up. I wonder if that chap Jolliffe's keeping him in the Green Man? Jolliffe's mean enough for anything."

"I rather think Towah wouldn't be an easy dog to keep against his will," Tom Merry said, with a laugh.

"Well, yes, but I feel very uneasy. I'd go out and look for him, only that beast Knos is keeping his eyes open. I'll get level with that rotter one of these days," said Herries. "I'm awfully anxious about Towah."

"Yes, it's hard cheese," said Blake sympathetically.

"I saw Levison come in a few minutes ago," said Herries. "He wasn't looking pleased with himself. I suppose you didn't get on with him?"

"Wotah not?"

"What did I tell you?" demanded Herries triumphantly. "You can always trust Towah!"

"Towah was right this time," said Tom Merry.

"Of course he was. He always is. You remember the time he tracked down the chapel burglar, Blake?"

"I remember the time he tracked down a kipper," said Blake.

"Look here, you ass—"

"I have done with Levison as far as I'm concerned," said Arthur Augustus. "I wearied him as a wank wotah. I would wotah go out with Towah, you know."

"Well, I should think so," said Herries. "I told you he'd play you some rotten trick. But what did he do?"

Tom Merry explained.

"Just like him," said Herries. "And, look here, I believe he played a rotten trick like that on Binks."

"Binks!"

"Yes," said Herries emphatically. "I've thought it over; and I've spoken to Binks about it, and he swears that he never had a New York horrible on him, to his knowledge. It was just one of Levison's rotten conjuring tricks."

Tom Merry's brow darkened.

Now that it was pointed out to him, it seemed only too probable. It was as easy for Levison to plant "Deadwood Dave" upon Binks, as the Bank of Elegance note upon D'Arcy, or the spoons upon Figgins.

"Bar Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "But surely the wotah would have owned up in the long run, and not allowed us to believe that Binks was a bah."

"I don't know," said Tom Merry. "I don't believe he meant to own up at the tea-shop. It's a crooked sort of humor he's got, and he likes to make people jolly uncomfortable. He's a dangerous fellow."

"I really think you owe Binks an apology, Tom Merry."

"I'll see Levison about that," said the Shell fellow abruptly.

And he went to look for Levison. He found him in the study which he shared with Mellish, in the Fourth Form passage. Mellish was there, too, and the two juniors were talking at Tom Merry knocked at the door. Mellish and Levison had one topic at least in common—they had both been friends of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the fellow who had been known as the "Outsider" at St. Juno—and they both resembled that youth in only too many ways.

Levison looked round at Tom Merry.

He did not speak, but the curious green glitter came into his eyes which was sometimes there, and which was a sign

of some inward emotion. But his manner was almost calm and composed.

"I want to speak to you, Levison," Tom Merry said already.

"Go ahead. If you want to apologize for the things you said in the tea-shop—"

"I don't."

"No?" said Levison, with a pleasant smile. "Well, then?"

"You played several caddish tricks on us in the tea-shop."

Levison yawned.

"I want to know whether it was a trick of the sort that you played on Binks, with that American trash," said Tom Merry angrily.

"I don't remember—"

"You remember perfectly well," said Tom Merry.

"We were outside the School House, just before we went down to Rylcombe. You pretended to find a copy of a newspaper poked under Binks's jacket. Was it really Binks's? Was it one of your rotten conjuring tricks?"

Levison laughed.

"I was going to tell you—"

"Then it was a trick!"

"Of course it was," said Levison impatiently; "and I'm glad you on Binks. I was going to tell you—only it was a joke to see his face. He was simply flabbergasted."

"You made me think he was telling lies."

"Well, I dare say he does tell lies—"

Tom Merry's look stopped Levison.

"I think you are a cad," said Tom Merry quietly.

played a mean trick—all the meaner because Binks was employed here, and can't resent your rotten mean another fellow would do."

"Thank you!" said Levison.

"And if Figgins weren't going to lick you, I'd do myself, that's all."

And Tom Merry strode from the study and slammed the door. Mellish looked at Levison with a peculiar expression.

"So Figgins is going for you, is he?" he asked.

"So he says," replied Levison easily.

"You'll get an awful licking."

The new junior did not reply.

Tom Merry went to his study, where he found Blake and Lowther. Binks had also arrived there, with a letter in his hand. Binks was looking very subdued. Tom Merry slapped him on the shoulder at once.

"I'm sorry I doubted your word, Binks. All right."

"Why, Master Merry?"

"I know now that that rotten book was shoved at me by Levison, before he took it away; it was a rotten trick."

"Oh, I see!" said Binks, in great relief. "I'm glad, Master Merry. I was a wonderin' how it come there, I was you know. I hadn't put it there myself."

"It's all right, Binks, and I'm sorry."

Binks's fat face beamed.

"Don't you worry about that, Master Merry. It's all right. Perhaps now you wouldn't mind reading it? I've brought it 'ere as you told me."

Tom Merry took the letter.

"Who is it from, Binks?"

"Mother," said Binks.

Tom Merry hesitated.

"You're sure you want me to read it?"

"Yes," said Binks, "please! I don't rightly like Master Merry—I can't. I think mother was something. It can't be true."

"What can't be true, Binks?"

"The noo."

"The—the what?"

"Noo," said Binks. "The noo."

"Oh, the news!" said Tom Merry, smiling.

Well, if you want my opinion on it, kid, I'll read it certainly."

"P'raps Master Lowther and Manners won't care it, and tellin' me what they think," said Binks.

"Right-ho!" said Lowther. "Go ahead, Tom."

Blessed if it doesn't smell like a mystery, said Binks.

"It's wonderful," said Binks. "If it's the noo, I believe the noo. I think mother must be ill."

"Well, we'll soon see," said Tom Merry.

He glanced over the ill-written, ill-spelt letter. An exclamation of amazement left his lips.

"Great Scott!"

"What's the row?" asked Monty Lowther.

"My only hat!"

"Wonderful, ain't it?" said Binks.

"By Jove!"

"What on earth is it?" cried Manners.

THURSDAY:

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

Order by
Advance.

"said Tom Merry.
and in read out the letter. We give it as written:

"Tom Merry.—There's the most surprising news for you of all. Your uncle Henry on lived in Australia has sent you a lot of money. Which I never knew for one so young. But the lawyer gentleman says as it is worth a thousand pounds and more, all made out of sheep. I never say a word again agen that frozen mutton. He is as rich as creekers, 'Erny, and you want are to come wages to your pore old mother any more, for she'll all be a rollin in gold. Get leave from Dr. Holmes as quick as you can, so no more from me. Yr. mother.
JANE BINKS."

was a short lesson in the study.
of this Shell stared at one another.
thinks the buttons—Binks the page—Binks the boot.
—Binks was a millionaire!
incredible.

unless Mrs. Binks was being deceived, or unless
—she had been made.
—from one face to another.
—you think, young gentles?" he asked.
—the gentles could not reply for a moment. They
—stared in silence and stare at Binks.
—millionaire!

CHAPTER 7. The Millionaire.

—Binks looked doubtfully at the chimps. He evidently
—did not believe the news—it was too great—too
—absolutely.
—and who had sent home his few weekly chillings
—to help to support a brood of younger Binkes.
—that he was wealthy beyond the dreams of

—possible, but—
—he had had too hard a life to think it probable.
—he understood five pounds—or even fifty. A
—sum far beyond his mental grasp.
—"Is a mistake?" he remarked.
—"No," said Tom Merry at last. "Your mother
—is right."
—he said.

—mother, to fancies, or anything of that sort?"
—said Binks. "Not as a rule. Mother's as has
—she need be, with eight youngsters to keep, to
—of father as was always too superior to go to

—he did not express an opinion of the gentleman
—superior to go to work. He kept to the business

—"Is your Uncle Henry in Australia?" he asked.

—"Yes."
—I was named after him. Querer old ever he
—I just remember him leavin' England, after the
—business 'ome. He was very pleased at my bein'
—born, and said it might be worth a trifle to me
—some day, if he never married. And he never did.
—I thought that I'd have a spin note per'aps in his
—time."

—"But say what he meant to do with the five pound

—"I don't know he was rich!"
—"Of course, we know in a general way as he was
—rich," said Binks. "He used to send mother a little
—at Christmas, and he said in his letters that he'd
—be word of father bein' in a permanent job. But
—that superior. He ain't 'ad a job for years and

—I shouldn't wonder if it's true, then," said Tom
—The amount of money may have been exaggerated,
—but it looks to me as if you're a rich man.

—"Yes," said Binks.

—"To wealth," said Manners. "Squirring in fifty
—as 'tween," said Lowther. "Exuding gold at
—Binks, old man. I always liked you. I always
—you were a handsome, bonny chap, very much
—my twin brother—if I'd had a twin. I hope you
—and my old friendship—the times and times when
—you with the boots and the knives—or, at all
—and have, if I'd known about your Uncle Henry."

—"You must 'ave your little joke, Master Lowther."
—If this turns out to be true, young gentles, and

I'm a rich man. I only 'ope as you'll be as kind to me as
you 'ave been, and not think that I shall put on any hairs on
account of the money."

Poor Binks meant "airs," not "hairs." But his meaning
was clear, and Tom Merry impulsively caught him by the
hand.

"You're a jolly good sort, old Binks," he said; "and
though I don't value you twopence more rich than poor, you
can always rely on me to stand by you if you want me to.
If this is true, it will make a change in your circumstances,
and if I can help you in any way, I'll do it like a shot."

"You was always werry kind to me, Master Merry," said
Binks, with a moisture in his eyes. "Then you think I ought
to go 'ome and see about this?"

"Why, of course. If I had known the letter was im-
portant, like this, I'd have read it before," said Tom Merry
remorsefully. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"It's all right, Master Merry; I didn't want to worry you
as you was 'ome," said Binks. "P'raps—p'raps you
wouldn't mind coming to the 'Eed with me, to—to explain
that I ought to go 'ome to-day."

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "But if you show Dr.
Holmes this letter, he will see at once that you must go."

Binks hesitated.
"I'd rather you came, Master Merry, if you don't mind,"
he said.

"Right you are," he said.

And he left the study with Binks. Manners and Lowther
stared blankly at one another, and then they laughed.

"Well, my hat!" said Monty Lowther. "If this doesn't
beat everything!"

"My word, yes!"
Binks was walking like a fellow in a dream as Tom Merry
took him to the Head's study. Tom Merry tapped at the
door. Binks did not nerve enough, and the deep voice of the
Head bade them enter.

Dr. Holmes looked surprised as Tom Merry entered with
the boot-boy.

"What is it, Merry?" he asked, with a curious glance at
Binks.

"If you please, sir, Binks wishes you to read this letter,"
said Tom Merry. "He wants leave to go home to-day, sir."

"This—er—letter?"

"If you'd be so kind, sir," stammered Binks.

"Certainly, my lad!"

Dr. Holmes read the letter.

He gasped, and read it again.

Then he looked at Binks.

"This is extraordinary news, Binks!"

"Yes, sir!" faltered Binks.

"I sincerely hope it is true, and that this sudden wealth
will be a benefit to you, Binks," said Dr. Holmes. "Of
course, if it turns out to be correct, you will leave your
present position here at once—"

Binks's jaw dropped.

"Oh, sir!—you won't send me away, sir?"

Dr. Holmes smiled.

"My dear boy, you could not continue to black boots in
the School House, when you are rich enough to buy the whole
place!" he exclaimed.

"I—I s'pose not, sir, but—but—"

"Yes, Binks."

"I—I don't want to leave St. Jim's, sir. I—I thought that
p'raps you might gimme some advice, sir—some 'elp, if—I
I'm a millionaire, sir. I I shouldn't know what to do with the
money!"

Dr. Holmes thought that very probable; and indeed he
thought it very doubtful if this sudden accession to wealth
would be a benefit to Binks, or to Binks's relations. But he
did not say so.

"Of course, I should be glad to help you in any way,
Binks," he said. "While in my employment here, you have
been under my charge; and I have always considered it my
duty to advise you if you needed it. This makes no differ-
ence. I shall be only too glad to stand your friend. I should
advise you to proceed home as quickly as possible, and accom-
pany exactly how matters stand. Then you can come back
and see me, and consult about the future."

"Thank you kindly, sir! I knew you wouldn't turn me
out," said Binks.

The Head smiled again.

"Very well, Binks; and now hurry home. Are you in
need of money?"

"I can pay my fare, sir, thank you!"

And Binks retired with Tom Merry, leaving the Head in
a state of great amazement. It was not often that a boot-
boy became a millionaire. Such things had happened, but
not in Dr. Holmes's personal experience, and he was amazed.

"It's like a dream, Master Merry," said Binks, as they
left the study.

"I dare say it is, Binks," said Tom, with a smile. "But you'll not need to tell. Look here, are you sure you've got tin enough?"

"—I think so, Master Merry."

"If you haven't, I'll go and borrow a pound of D'Arcy for you. No need to scrape now, if you're a giddy millionaire," said Tom Merry. "Why, here's Gussy! Gussy!"

"Yass, deah boy!"

"Lead me a pound."

"With pleasure, deah boy," said D'Arcy, feeling in his pockets.

"It's not for me, but for a millionaire friend of mine," Tom Merry explained.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared at him.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, Lumley-Lumley was the only giddy millionaire here, and he has left St. Jim's. But do you mean Glyn of the Shell?"

"No."

"Whom, then?"

"Binks of the boots."

"What?"

"Binks—Henry Binks, Esquire!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"His uncle in Australia has left him a million pounds or so," Tom Merry explained. "Binks doesn't know the precise amount to a hundred thousand."

"But Jove!"

"Coming to the station with us?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm going to see Binks off. It isn't every day you have a chance of walking with a millionaire."

"Oh, Master Merry!" remonstrated Binks.

"But Jove! I congratulate Binks!" said Arthur Augustus.

"I will come to the station with pleasure!"

And Tom Merry and D'Arcy both saw Binks off, with the sovereign in his pocket, and happy anticipation on his fat face. Had they taken his good fortune in an envious or sneering spirit, all poor Binks's pleasure would have been dashed. But Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus could always be relied upon to play the game. Their cheerful kindness sent Binks on his way with a happy and grateful heart.

CHAPTER 8.

The Thief.

LEIVISON, old man!

Mellish's tone was quite affectionate.

Ernest Leivison looked at him quietly from under his eyebrows. Leivison had a look that seemed to go right through a fellow, and it always gave Mellish an uncomfortable feeling to have Leivison's eyes turned upon him.

"Well?" said Leivison.

"Can you lend me a pound?"

Leivison laughed.

"What do you want a pound for?"

"Well, I owe a chap a pound," said Mellish cautiously. "I want to settle up. If you could let me have a pound, I'd settle with you next week."

"Better decline to pay Jolliffe at all."

Mellish started violently.

"Jolliffe! What do you mean, Leivison?"

"I mean what I say," said Leivison, with a grin. "If you'll take disinterested advice, you won't go down to the Green Man any more, and you won't pay Jolliffe. He's cheated you, of course."

"You—you rotter!" said Mellish. "How do you know?"

Leivison laughed again.

"I generally know things," he remarked. "Harry Wharton at Greyfriars said I ought to be a detective, and really I think there is something in it. I haven't been in the same study with you for a fortnight without learning your little ways. Besides, you were chummy with Lumley-Lumley, and I knew his little ways."

Mellish was silent for a minute.

"Well," he said, at last, "it is Jolliffe. I really owe him the money—and he's cutting up rusty over it. I really wish you'd let me have the pound!"

Leivison shook his head.

"Can't be did, my son!"

"But, look here—"

"In the first place, I never lend money; in the second, I haven't a pound," said Leivison fairly. "Better go and ask D'Arcy."

"He wouldn't be likely to lend me money."

"Well, he might—he has plenty, and he's a look," said Leivison.

"You'd better not let him hear you say so."

Leivison shrugged his shoulders.

"So you won't lend me a pound," said Mellish, with an unpleasant glitter in his eyes.

"No."

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NEXT

THURSDAY:

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

Order the
Advan

"Very well. Will you come down to the gym?"

"Not just at present."

"Will you come for a stroll in the quad?"

"No."

"You're staying in the study?"

"Yes."

"And you think I don't know why?" said the earl of Fourth, with a sneer. "Look here, you're quite sure you can't lend me any tin?"

"Quite sure."

"Very well. I suppose you've no objection to my signing to supper in the study?" said Mellish, in the smothering tone.

Leivison's eyes gleamed.

He fully understood. He was staying in the study to avoid Figgins, until the affair of the Arcade bookshop should have blown over. Mellish understood his motives perfectly well.

But Leivison was too cool and collected to be taken in. "Bring him in by all means," he said.

He knew very well that Figgins was not likely to be an invitation from the earl of the Fourth.

Mellish looked at him uneasily.

"You know jolly well you're dodging Figgins!" he claimed abruptly. "You know you're afraid of him!"

Leivison rose to his feet.

"I'm not afraid of you, at all events," he said, "of this study!"

Mellish blustered.

"I'm not going out of my own study, unless I choose," he exclaimed.

"You'd better choose."

Mellish evidently thought so, too, for he left the room hurriedly. Leivison sat down again, put his feet on the fender, and took a book. He did not object to passing his hours quietly in the study; it was better than meeting the hair-brained New House junior in the gym.

Mellish paused in the passage.

Then he moved slowly along, a troubled expression on his face. He paused outside Study No. 6 for a moment, and of Leivison's advice to borrow the money from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He was no friend of D'Arcy's, but in the matter of fact, Arthur Augustus was more likely to have the money than Leivison was.

He knocked at the door and looked in.

The room was unoccupied.

The chums of the Fourth were out in the gym, and on the door was the coat Arthur Augustus had taken off after tea at the tea-shop.

Mellish knew it was D'Arcy's coat, not only from the name cut, but from the fact that it was carefully hanging upon a wooden hanger, to preserve the shapely shoulders.

Mellish took a quick look up and down the passage. Then he stepped into the study and closed the door behind him.

His heart was beating violently.

He had heard all about the affair at the tea-shop, and guessed that Arthur Augustus would have the same five-pound note in his pockets.

Was D'Arcy likely to have left it in his coat?

Few other fellows would be so careless; but Mellish was how careless D'Arcy was with money. It never crossed the mind of the swell of St. Jim's that there was such a person as a thief in existence.

"I—I can't ask D'Arcy," ran Mellish's thoughts, not here. And—and he might refuse. I—I might not without asking."

Even to himself he would not admit that he was he was thinking of.

His hands were on the coat now, and as he moved he heard the clink of money. That sound was irresistible.

The fingers slid into the ticket pocket, into which Arthur Augustus had carelessly slid the change of the five-pound note, along with other money.

Two pieces of gold came out in Mellish's hand, and a great quantity of silver left in the pocket.

Mellish slipped a sovereign into his own waistcoat, his hands trembling so violently that a couple of pieces slipped from his fingers and rolled upon the floor.

"It's—it's only borrowing," he murmured. "Yes, D'Arcy won't miss it, and I'll let him have it in a hour."

We are informed that Messrs. Rudgley & Whitworth, Ltd., the well-known makers of Coventry, have received the Royal Warrant of appointment as bicycle manufacturers to H. M. King George.

the rest of the money back into the coat, and then stepped in to pick up the pieces that had fallen. As he did so there was a tap at the study door. "Blah" started up, trembling and shaking, his face ashy. He had no time to think; he sprang behind the angle of the bookcase, and crouched there to escape observation. The gas was turned very low, and in the dim light there seemed to him why he should be seen, unless the new-comer opened the study. This was not one of the fellows who belonged to No. 6. It was, of course, from the knock on the door. The door opened.

at their being away. I told Blake distinctly that I should come in after tea to read him some extracts from my new volume on the subject of Determinism. How very forgetful of him!" Skimpole came into the study. His reflections ran on aroud. Skimpole had a way of talking to himself, and sometimes he could be overheard addressing imaginary audiences in his study. Skimpole was a sage youth, and took a great interest in Socialism and Determinism, and, in fact, all sorts and conditions of "isms." He would expound his "isms" at any length, at any time, to anybody; and fellows who had nothing better to do sometimes



For he seemed determined to get into the "Green Man," and he wanted Berries along to the doorway by the chain. "But don't," gasped Arthur Augustus Parry. "Hold on, dear!"

These head, ornamented with a pair of very large spectacles, were projected into the study.

"Blah," said a voice. "They are not in."

He held his breath. It was Skimpole, of the Shell. He would pass on when he saw that the chains of the door were not at home.

He waited, his heart beating like a hammer.

CHAPTER 9.

A Narrow Escape.

SKIMPOLE blinked into the study. He was short-breathed, and the study was very dim, and the angle of the bookcase concealed Mellish, so it was not surprising that the Shell fellow did not see him. "Is he not?" said Skimpole aloud. "I am very surprised

draw him out on the subject of Determinism, and made him explain that wonderful science, and demonstrate that whatever is, is, and whatever is not, is not, and other great discoveries of a like nature.

"I suppose I had better leave them a note," murmured Skimpole. "I suppose I shall find paper and pen here. It was really very forgetful of Blake."

He turned up the gas.

Mellish trembled.

He was now fully revealed, if Skimpole should look towards him; but the genius of the Shell, as he stood at the table, had his back to Mellish and the bookcase.

He was dipping Blake's pen in the ink, and drawing towards him a sheet of import paper, to leave his message for the chains of Study No. 6.

Mellish set his teeth.

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NEXT THURSDAY: "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB." A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Any fellow coming along the passage and looking in would see him. If he were discovered there, by Skimpole or anybody else, it would be all over with him, as soon as D'Arcy discovered the loss of the sovereign.

The end of the Fourth was desperate. It was very well for him to say to himself that he had only borrowed the sovereign, and that he would return it to D'Arcy later, but he knew what the whole House would think of his action.

They could say that he was a thief—as indeed he was. But what was he to do? Skimpole had not seen him, but if he moved the Shell fellow would be bound to hear him, and look round.

Yet if he waited Skimpole must turn round after writing the note, and then he could not fail to see the Fourth, *Forman*.

Mellish's heart almost died within him. In his mind's eye he already saw himself discovered, and branded as a thief—taken before Dr. Holmes, and expelled from the school.

"Dear Blake," mumbled Skimpole, as he wrote, "I called in as agreed, and brought my extracts with me, but found that you had forgotten the appointment. I am very sorry, and shall be very pleased to explain the matter to you any time."

Skimpole blotted the letter, and laid down the pen. Mellish was desperate, and he could wait no more. He tried softly towards the door.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Skimpole. Mellish stopped, suffocating. But Skimpole had not seen him.

It was the glimmer of a half-crown on the floor that had caught his eye.

He stooped to pick it up. He still had his back to Mellish, but he was too close for the man of the Fourth to pass without touching him.

A desperate plan occurred to Mellish. He sprang upon Skimpole, and grasped him by the shoulders, and hurled him to the floor.

Skimpole gave a wild yell. "Oh! Oh! What— Mellish, my dear fellow, what do you mean?"

"What are you doing in here?" demanded Mellish. "I was just passing, and I saw you. What are you up to in Blake's study?"

Skimpole sat on the floor and blinked at him. "Really, Mellish—"

"What are you doing here?" "I was about to pick up the half-crown," said Skimpole, blinking. "Someone has dropped a half-crown in the study."

"Hello, who's dropping half-crowns?" asked a cheery voice, and Tom Merry nudged in.

Tom Merry was passing No. 6 on his way to his own study. Mellish gasped with relief. Had he remained in his previous position, Tom Merry would have seen him hiding behind the corner of the bookcase, in a certainty.

Now he believed that he could bluff the matter through. "Skimpole is," he said. "I found him here, and caught him bending, and bumped him over."

"It was really very rough and rude of Mellish," said Skimpole, blinking indignantly at the end of the Fourth. "I have received a shock."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Serve you right!" said Mellish. "You shouldn't bend when a chap's passing. Besides, you can let Blake pick up his own half-crown, for that matter."

"Really, Mellish—"

Mellish bent out of the study whistling. Tom Merry looked after him, and then looked at Skimpole, who was slowly getting up.

"It was quite brutal of Mellish," said Skimpole. "Dear me, there's another half-crown on the carpet! How very careless of Blake! What shall I do with these half-crowns, Merry?"

"Better give 'em to Blake," said Tom Merry. "Yes, perhaps so; but I do not know where he is. Perhaps, upon the whole, I will leave them lying upon the note I have written for Blake."

And Skimpole placed the two half-crowns on the note. Tom Merry went on his way, and was soon busy with his preparation with Manners and Lowther. Skimpole drifted back to his study to pursue his investigations into Detection and Evolution, and other extremely important matters which were wont to exercise his mighty brain.

Mellish went on his way, too, and sat down in the common-room. He thought he had covered up his tracks pretty well. In fact, if there were any suspicion about the loss of the sovereign, it was more likely to fall upon Skimpole than upon himself, under the circumstances.

THE 3^d LIBRARY.—No. 145.

D'Arcy's man, of the Third, came into the junior room. Wally D'Arcy, like most of the lads, generally went to the Third Form-room, and left the junior common-room to the Fourth and the Shell. But Wally was on his own now. He looked round the room, but it was nearly empty. Most of the juniors being in the gym, or in their own rooms. He crossed over to Mellish.

"Hallo, Mellish!" he exclaimed. "Got a sovereign?" Mellish sprang to his feet.

Such a question, from D'Arcy's minor, at such a moment to the amazed junior that he was discovered, Wally knew.

"You young bound!" he shouted furiously. "What do you mean?"

Wally started back. "My only Aunt Jane!" he ejaculated. "What's the matter with you, Mellish! Keep your wool on, you fool!"

"If you haven't got a quidlet, say so," said Wally. "You need to jump out on a fellow like that. What's the matter?"

Mellish glared at him, but his look gradually cleared. He could see, at the second glance, that Wally meant no harm, and was not making an allusion to D'Arcy's sovereign, which was reposing in Mellish's waistcoat pocket.

"It's—it's all right!" muttered Mellish. "I—I was— Look here, young D'Arcy, what do you want?"

Have you got the check to ask me to lend you a sovereign?"

"Not much!" said Wally aggressively. "Do you want to borrow money of me? I've had a postal-order from Aunt Adelaide, and it's come in by the last post. I'll cash it to-night. I wanted some fellow to take the hands."

He held out a postal-order for a sovereign. "Oh, I see!" said Mellish.

"I came here to ask Gussy," said Wally, "but he's out."

"It's all right," said Mellish. "I'll cash the postal-order for you. I've got a sovereign, as it happens."

"Good!" The sovereign and the postal-order changed hands. Wally went out of the room whistling, too satisfied with having obtained the cash to worry himself about the strange outburst. Mellish was a fellow of unerring accuracy anyway.

Mellish drew a long breath of relief. He had obtained the sovereign, and as it was late to obtain a postal-order at that hour, he had had to go to break bounds that night to take the money to the bank.

Breaking bounds to join a merry party was one thing, but to run all the risk for the sake of paying a bill was another. The postal-order came in the nick of time. Mellish had no time in writing a letter and sending it.

He dared not post a letter addressed to Jolliffe in the box, so he waited about in the quad, till the postman came to collect from the box, and gave him the letter, slipped it into his bag without looking at it.

Mellish returned to the School House, much to his mind. He started a little as he met Lovison.

Lovison looked at him curiously. "Been for a stroll?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mellish shortly. "Without your coat, too?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" "Cold night for a stroll without a coat," Lovison said.

"Oh, mind your own business," snapped Mellish. And he walked on, leaving Lovison staring after him with a very curious expression upon his keen face.

CHAPTER 10.

The Missing Sovereign.

"D'WAY don't bump into me, dear boys!" Arthur Augustus made that remark.

It was tea-time for the Fourth Form, and St. Jim's was carrying his coat on his arm.

He had taken the coat carefully out of the box, and had stopped behind to read Skimpole's note. He had picked up the two half-crowns off the table, and was puzzled to find them there, for Skimpole had asked him to take them.

Arthur Augustus had disposed of the coat gracefully, and Herries and Digby showed a disposition to let him for the heinous purpose of rumpaging the coat.

St. Jim's turned a wrathful eye upon them. "Pray don't be an ass, Herries," he said. "You boy, keep off the grass, you ass! Lovison, if you again I shall push you violently."

Lovison grinned. "Is that your coat?" he asked. "Yess, wathah?"

"Curious things you've got in the pockets," said St. Jim's.

"Here!"
 "I hid his hand into a pocket of D'Arcy's coat, and
 of St. Jim's gasped as he drew out a frog.

"But Dave!"
 "What?" ejaculated Digby. "How on earth did that

about Scott?"

"Look here!" said Levison.
 "In another pocket he extracted a mouse.

"A mouse? menagerie," he remarked.

"I dropped the coat."

"It's howled! How—"

"He, he, ha!" roared Blake. "You see! It's only that

menagerie conjuring again! They're only spoof things—

nothing to be trusted and mice."

"I stared his eyes upon Levison.

"What, wotah!"

"He roared the juniors.

"He looked up the coat, and stalked into the dormitory

with dignity. He took it towards the roomy old ward-

robe end of the dormitory, where he kept most of his

things of attire.

"He took the coat up he put his hand in the pocket to

the money. It was not because it occurred to him

that he could not be safe in a coat-pocket in a ward-

robe to the whole form. But he wanted it in his

coat-pocket for use on the morrow. He drew the money out

of the pocket and dipped the silver into his trousers pocket

to count it, and then opened his little leather

bag to take the gold away. Thus he became aware

that anybody else would have noticed at first.

"He only one sovereign instead of two.

"He said D'Arcy.

"He took the coat-pocket again for the other sovereign.

"He took it there. He felt in the other pockets.

"He said matter!" asked Blake.

"He said: 'It's another of that wotah's wotten conjurin'.

"He said Arthur, Augustus. 'He has been meddlin'.

"He said again."

"He said towards Levison.

"He said: 'My sovereign, you see!' he exclaimed.

"He said: 'He was sitting on the side of his bed taking his

"He said: 'He was sitting on the side of his bed taking his

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"He said: 'He was sitting on the side of his bed taking his

"Quite sure!" asked Hancock.

"Yaas, certainly! Blake knows that I had two sovereigns,

and the west of my change in silrah."

"That's quite correct," said Blake.

"I have found only one sovereign in my pocket," said

D'Arcy. "The silrah is there, and one sovereign; the other

is gone."

"Perhaps you've overlooked it," said Macdonald.

"You are at liberty to look in the coat, dear boy, so long

as you are careful not to wumple or wulla it."

Macdonald cringed, and fetched the coat out of the ward-

robe. He and several other fellows felt in the pockets, and

as a matter of fact, the fellow was both rumpled and ruffled

considerably in the process. But no sovereign was found.

"Perhaps you put it in another pocket!" Digby suggested.

"Wotah! not! It was all together in that pocket, and I

just took it all out before puttin' the coat away."

"And you think Levison took it!" asked Jogan.

"Yaas, wotah!"

"It's a lie!" said Levison fiercely.

D'Arcy eyed him steadily.

"I have not accused you of stealin' it, Levison. I thought

you played a wotten trick. You took the hanknote from my

pocket in the washin to-day and kept it. You just pretended

to take it from my coat-pockets in the passage. I consid-

ered, naturally, that you had taken the sovereign for a

trick."

"I didn't!"

"You must excuse me if I do not rely upon your word.

I have heard you tell many untruths already."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"I haven't touched your sovereign, and I don't believe

you've lost one!" he broke out savagely.

Arthur Augustus clenched his hands. Blake pulled him

back, and fixed an angry look upon Levison.

"Hold your tongue, you cad!" he exclaimed. "No one

here is likely to doubt D'Arcy's word; though nobody would

take yours!"

"Dear, dear!" said a dozen voices.

Arthur Augustus looked round through his eyeglass.

"I trust, dear boys, that you wely upon my statement,"

he exclaimed.

"Faith, and we do!"

"Of course we do!" said Hancock. "The only question is,

whether you lost the cash or whether Levison took it."

"Of course, it's one of his other tricks, and he means

to own up later," said Blake impatiently. "He'll get us

down for a third one of these days."

"I don't know anything about the sovereign," said Levison

sullenly.

"What?"

"Oh, not! Own up!" said Blake.

"If he doesn't own up," said Herrie, in his deliberate

way, "it shows that he's stolen it. He's none too good for

that, in my opinion. You know how Towser wanted to go

for him the first time he saw him. What about Towser,

now?"

"Now, then, you ought to be in bed," exclaimed Darrel,

the prefect, looking into the Fourth Form dormitory.

"What's the matter here?"

Levison turned a fierce look upon the Bath-Farmer.

"D'Arcy is accusing me of picking his pocket, that's all.

Darrel," he exclaimed.

The prefect started, and came into the dormitory.

CHAPTER 11.

Under Suspicion.

THERE was a grim silence among the juniors. The

angry outburst on Levison's part was very like a

proof of innocence, since if he had been guilty he

would hardly have been the one to bring the matter to the

notice of a prefect, who would be bound by his position to

inquire into it. Yet it might only be Levison's cool impu-

denance—he had coolness and nerve enough for anything. It

might be that, knowing an inquiry to be inevitable, he had

thrown down the gauntlet like this for the very purpose of

making an impression of innocence. No one trusted him.

Darrel was looking very grave.

"What is this?" he said, in his quiet voice. "Explain it,

Blake."

"Wotah!"

"Let Blake explain."

And Blake explained. There was nothing to be concealed

now, and he told the whole story, of the tricks Levison had

played in the tea-shop that afternoon, and in the passage as

the Fourth-Formers came up to bed, and then the discovery

that the sovereign was missing.

Darrel looked hard at Levison.

The new junior kept his eyes on the floor, and the expres-

sion of his face was hard and sullen.

"Very well, Blake. Levison, you admit having played these conjuring tricks?"
 "Certainly," said Levison.
 "You pretended to take a frog and a mouse from D'Arcy's pockets in the passage here?"
 "It was a joke."
 "But you did it?"
 "Yes."

"You could just as easily have taken a sovereign from his pocket if you had chosen."
 "Yes, I suppose so, if I had known it was there and had wanted to."

"You did not know it was there?"
 "No."
 "He jolly well did," said Blake. "He saw D'Arcy put it there in the tea-shop. He sees everything, whether it's his business or not, as a matter of fact."

"I may have," said Levison, "but I had forgotten all about it. If I had thought about it at all, I should have expected D'Arcy to change the money to another pocket when he took the coat off. But I didn't think about it."

"Only your word for that," commented Herries.
 "Don't interrupt, Herries," said the prefect quietly. "You deny having taken the sovereign from D'Arcy's coat, for a trick or for any other purpose, Levison?"

"Yes."
 Darrel turned to the wall of the School House.
 "You are certain you had a sovereign there, D'Arcy?"
 "Yes, washah. Blake knows it, too."

"Could you not have lost it?"
 "Well, Dawvel, I don't see how I could, without havin' lost some more of the money that was in the pocket."
 "Was there a great deal there?"

"Another sovereign and a lot of silvah."
 "And that was intact?"
 "Yess, washah."

"You are sure?"
 D'Arcy reflected.
 "Well, I didn't count the silvah," he said. "I didn't know exactly how much there was silvah. But I believe it was all right."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Blake suddenly. "What about that silver in the study? I found two half-crowns on the table."
 "They couldn't have belonged to me, dear boy. Mine was in my pocket."

Mellish came forward. He would gladly have stayed out of the matter altogether, but he realised that Skimpole and Tom Merry would be brought into it now, and that they would mention his presence in the study.
 "I think Skimpole could explain that," he said.

The prefect turned his eyes upon Mellish.
 "Skimpole?" he repeated.
 "Yes, Skimpole, of the Shell. I happened to be passing the study this evening, and I saw Skimpole picking up some silver on Blake's carpet."

"I was going to suggest calling Skimpole," said Blake.
 "I found two half-crowns on the table, and saw a note Skimpole had written and left there for me."
 "Go and fetch Skimpole here, Hancock."

"Right-o!" said Hancock.
 He hurried away to the Shell dormitory. In a couple of minutes he returned with Herbert Skimpole, dragging him along by the arm. Skimpole vainly protesting. The genius of the Shell was in trousers and shirt, with only one boot on, and his spectacles in his hand. The Fourth-Formers grinned as he came in, serious as the situation was.

"Dear me," said Skimpole. "Did you send for me, Darrel?"
 "Yes," said the prefect.

"I was just getting to bed," said Skimpole. "I trust you will explain to Kildare that it is not my fault I shall be late for bed, Darrel."

"Certainly. You were in Blake's study this evening, Skimpole?"
 Skimpole adjusted his spectacles, and blinked at the prefect.

"Certainly."
 "Why did you go there?"
 "To explain to Blake some of the great truths of Determinism. By studying the great volumes of Professor Balmucius, and the wonderful books of Dr. Loocetop, I have obtained a complete mastery of the subject. It is now clear that, as there is nothing in existence except heredity and environment, heredity and environment are the cause of everything, and, in fact, are everything. Suppose you commit a murder—"

"What?"
 "Shell I blame you!" said Skimpole, unblinking. "Certainly not. It is simply the murderous desire of some remote ancestor which is breaking out—"

"Skimpole!"
 "Suppose, for instance, you are a thief— Now!"
 THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 145.

"NEXT THURSDAY:"

Skimpole left off supposing as the prefect's finger and thumb closed tightly upon his ear.

"Ow! yow! yowh!"
 "Don't talk nonsense, Skimpole. This is a serious matter."
 "My dear Darrel, there cannot be a more serious matter than Determinism. The great truth that everything is what it is, and not otherwise."

"You found some money on Blake's floor?"
 "Yes," said Skimpole, coming back to the earth from the airy regions of Determinism. "Two half-crowns. I placed them on the table on the note I left for him. I then found the note and the money, Blake!"

"Yes," said Blake.
 "Very good. Speaking of Determinism—"
 "We will speak of something else now," said Blake.

"Blake, as the money was on the floor in your coat must have belonged to one of you."
 "I suppose so."

"Was it yours?"
 "No. I had only two bob, and I have it now."
 "Or yours, Digby?"

"Story since yesterday," said Digby cheerfully.
 "Might it be yours, Herries?"
 "My money's all right," said Herries. "I've counted it."

"Then it must be yours, D'Arcy?"
 "Impossible, dear boy."
 "Why impossible?"

"Because I'm a very careful chap, and not at all likely to spill cash about the floor," said Arthur Augustus. "I'll shake of the head. "Blake knows what an awful chap I am."

"Rats!"
 "Well, Blake—"
 "You must have dropped the money in the dormitory."

Darrel. "If you dropped silver, you may have lost it." "Oh Jove!"

"Before the matter proceeds further, the study must be searched for the sovereign," said Darrel. "You must belong to the study, come with me. The rest of you go to bed. You may go back to your dormitory, Skimpole."

And Darrel left the Fourth-Form dormitory with the sovereign. Skimpole blinked after him, and then went away. The Fourth-Formers slowly undressed and went to bed. There was a buzz in the dormitory as they discussed the occurrence. But no one addressed a word to Levison.

Blake & Co. and Darrel were not long in getting to the No. 6. D'Arcy followed close on Darrel. The prefect's mind was thinking it was just possible that he had lost the sovereign. He did not want to be the victim of more tricks.

Jack Blake was always ready for a joke. If the sovereign had dropped from his pocket, and the chums found it had been Arthur Augustus' felt instinctively that not even his presence would save him from some jest or other.

"Here we are," said Darrel. "Search carefully."
 "Yass, washah. But I'm certain, dear boy, it hasn't dropped out of my coat—"

"Rats!"
 "Well, Blake—"
 Darrel lighted his glass, and the search began. Five minutes there was silence as the nooks and corners were thoroughly explored.

"Nothing here," said Herries and Digby together.
 They were turning the linoleum up behind the door, and Arthur Augustus was watching anxiously.

"Pwag be careful, dear boys."
 "Rats! Go on with your own end," said Herries. "I won't do any harm to the lino."

"I wasn't thinkin' of that, Hewies."
 "By Jove, Dig! It might be under those hat boxes." "Yank 'em out, Herries!"

Herries and Digby took a keen delight in blowing the hat boxes out of the corner. They were well aware of the anxiety of D'Arcy. In a second, Herries had pulled out the lower one, and Digby lifted the other. D'Arcy motioned to save his property. But it was too late. The sovereign had been put away unobserved, and as Digby lifted the hat came off and a silk-hat rolled on the floor.

"You clumsy ass, Digby! Why can't you be more careful with your property alone!"
 "That's jolly grateful, I must say, when we couldn't find your missing wealth."

"Hewies, you brute!" almost shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Can't you see you're twaddin' on my topknot?"
 But Herries had only pretended to do so. The prefect, on, and Arthur Augustus recovered his hat, which was demured. Blake and Darrel had found nothing, and the very much-disarranged furniture testified to the fact that they had made.

"I don't think it's here," said Darrel. "Five minutes more."

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"I'm going to search this room. We can't very well have any of it." And the candle-ends are nearly done in, in any case," said Blake.

"It might have rolled, you know," went on Darrel. "And if it rolled to the sides of the room, it might be wedged in the corner by the skirting-board."

"Let's look," said Blake. "It's quite likely, Darrel."

The clums resumed the search. But nothing was found. The clums near the wall was quite innocent of sovereigns. The clums were setting your beastly candle-fat drop on my boots, clums revealed Blake.

"Dear, dear boy, I beg to offish air unqualified—" "Keep it off 'em, Gussy. That'll do just as well."

"Now, Blake—" "I'll get back to the dormitory, you fellows," said Blake. "The sovereign can't be here or we should have found it."

"Wah! Good-night, Dawson!" "Good-night."

Augustus wanted to tidy up the study before they went back to bed, but the clums would not hear of it. In the clums, said Levison, "have you found it?" "No," he said.

Wah! Another word the clums turned in.

CHAPTER 12.

The St. Jim's Detective.

ERNEST LEVISON was the first up in the Fourth dormitory, in the School House, on the following morning. It was probable that he had not slept peacefully. Several of the fellows looked at him as he came out, but no one spoke to him.

The serious loss of D'Arcy's sovereign was hanging over the Fourth. Most of them agreed that Arthur was very wrong to be so careless with his money. He did not excuse the thief. No one had a right to be found gold lying in piles near his hand. If he was a thief, he would be expelled from St. Jim's, where school would be glad to see him go.

There was very little doubt of his guilt among the juniors. He was who was fool enough to play tricks with other people. He had kept the banknote in the trashbox until he was expelled. He was who was bowled him out, and make him a fool. There was no proof that he had intended to return the sovereign. In the same way he had taken the sovereign, and he was all it a conjuring trick if he was detected, and he was not detected. It seemed so probable, and so well with the known character of Levison, that he wonder that this was the generally accepted view of the Fourth-Formers.

He did not mind taking the sovereign, either as a trick or as a joke, but he was known to be untruthful; besides, he was not to be expected that he would be a thief. His denial counted for nothing.

But the dormitory. As the rising bell clanged out, the dormitory turned out of bed.

They discussed the mysterious occurrence, and they found themselves in agreement, that they had not found the sovereign. Mellish found himself in for an opinion.

"It's the new chap's study," Hancock remarked. "You think?"

"No, I don't think so."

"I don't want to say anything against my study mate," said Levison.

"You ever missed anything?"

"No, I have."

"I know the chap was expelled from his last school," said Levison. "He hasn't explained exactly what he did."

"Very likely," Jones remarked.

"It looks like it."

"I don't know, think, Blake?"

"No," said Blake. "It looks black enough to me. And if he's innocent, it serves him right for his money tricks with money."

"Wah!"

The Fourth-Formers went down. They found Levison in the Fourth-Form passage, scanning Study No. 6. Blake looked at him.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Blake.

"I was on his knees examining the carpet, and up his habitual sneering expression upon his face."

"Sneering," he replied.

"Looking for the sovereign, do you mean? We proved pretty clearly last night that it wasn't here," said Blake. "We've been all over the study."

"I don't expect to find the sovereign here."

"What are you looking for, then?"

"The thief."

"Blat!"

Blake looked scrutinizingly at Levison. The new junior spoke perfectly coolly, and went on with his investigations. To Blake's mind he seemed like Sherlock Holmes at work in a play. Certainly nothing escaped the cold, penetrating eye of Ernest Levison.

"Then you still deny having taken the sovereign?" Digby asked.

"Of course."

"You think it has been lost?"

"I think it has been stolen," said Levison. "Gussy is a fool."

"Weally, Levison—"

"A fool," repeated Levison coldly; "but if he lost a sovereign out of a pocket full of money, he would have lost some more, I should think."

"But the two half-crowns must have been dropped here," said Blake. "It's barely possible that the sovereign was dropped, too—somewhere else."

"I did not drop the half-crowns here, dear boy."

Levison shook his head.

"The half-crowns were not dropped here," he said. "Even D'Arcy wouldn't be as enough to drop two big coins like those without noticing it."

"Weally, Levison—"

"Then what do you think?" exclaimed Blake.

"I think the thief dropped the half-crowns, in going through the money and looking for the sovereign," said Levison coolly. "Either he was nervous, and let them fall, or he was interrupted and startled, and so did it."

"But he would have picked them up again, surely."

Levison rose to his feet.

"He might not have had time. Suppose somebody else came along?"

"In that case, the thief must have been in the study when somebody else came along," said Digby.

"Just so. That's a clue."

"Oh! You've got a clue?"

"Such as it is," said Levison. "I've been told I ought to be a detective, and I really think I'm cut out for the work. I'm going to find the thief."

"That ought to be easy," said Herries disdainfully.

Levison looked at him with a sneer.

"I am not the thief," he said; "but I'll remember your kind opinion of me, Herries—and you may have cause to remember it some day."

"If you mean that as a threat, I'm willing to come into the gym. with you before breakfast," said Herries.

Levison did not appear to hear the remark. He was looking round the study. He took an envelope and a stump of pencil from his pocket and scribbled something.

"Making notes?" asked Herries sarcastically.

"Yes. What time did you hang the coat up in the study, D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus reflected.

"It was about six o'clock, dear boy."

"Try to remember exactly."

"Weally, Levison—"

"Look here," said Levison coldly, "you all suspect me of being a thief. In an hour or two the whole school will be ringing with it, and I shall be pointed at on all sides. I'm looking into this matter to prove my innocence. You ought to help me."

"Well, there's something in that," said Blake. "We'll tell you everything we can."

"Then exactly at what time was it the coat was hung up here?"

"Just about ten-past-six," said Blake. "We got in, I remember, as six was striking from the clock tower, and we came straight in."

"And then when did you leave the study?"

"Digby was the last in."

"I left at seven," said Digby. "I turned the gas down."

"Seven," said Levison. "And when did you come back?"

"About eight."

"Then the study was empty between seven and eight?"

"Yes, wah!"

"Good. The theft was committed between seven and eight o'clock," said Levison, making a note on the back of the envelope.

"Where were you at that time?" asked D'Arcy. "If you can prove that you were out of doors, or with somebody, it's all right for you."

"I was in my study."

"Mellish there?"

"He left soon after seven."

"And then you remained alone?"

"Yes."

"Till about eight?"

"Till nearly nine."

The chums of the Fourth looked at one another. Levison's investigations, so far, had had one result—of destroying any chance he might have had of proving an alibi. If he had been in his study, a few doors up the passage, all the time that No. 6 was unoccupied, he had had ample opportunity to pursue the sovereign.

Blake could not help grinning.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "If that's being a detective, Levison, I must say you're a regular scotcher. Can't you see that you're proving the case against yourself?"

"I want to get at the facts."

"You've got at them," said Herries.

"The study was empty between seven and eight," said Levison. "In that space of time, someone came in and took the sovereign, and dropped two half-crowns on the floor in his haste."

"And I jolly well know who did," said Herries. "But look here, there's one way of proving it clearly, and I don't mind doing it."

"You!" said Levison.

"My dog, Fowler."

"Oh, rats!"

"I'll put Fowler on the scent, if you like, you chaps," said Herries. "I'll go and fetch him at once. We'll bring him into the study, and put him on the scent, and he'll jolly soon track out that sovereign."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Levison.

Herries made a movement towards him, but Blake pulled him back.

"But Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I was thinking that Towash was best for good, you know."

"He came in last night," said Herries. "Well, I jolly well won't bring him on the matter now. I know jolly well why that fellow doesn't want him. He knows jolly well that Towash would follow the scent straight to one of his pockets."

And Herries marched on indignantly. Levison was looking round the study with a keen eye. The chums watched him curiously.

"Someone came in and stole the sovereign between seven and eight last evening," said Levison, "and if I don't find out who it was, you're welcome to put it down to me, and the Head's welcome to expel me."

"But Jove! How are you going to do it?"

"I'm going to find out how many people came to this study last evening," said Levison grimly. "Every chap who came here, or could have come here, between seven and eight last night, will have to account for what he did."

"But Jove!"

"Well, it's only fair," said Blake. "If you're not a thief, I hope you'll be able to prove it. But you must prove it—until then, you can't blame the fellows if they think you're set the sovereign."

"Yves, catchah!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Then can't think what they like. But I shall have shown up the thief before the morning's up, I think."

CHAPTER 13.

The Inquiry.

MR. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth-Form at St. Jim's, was a little puzzled with his class that morning. There was a continual exchanging of glances and whispers, much to the detriment of the work performed by the Fourth-Form—or, supposed to be performed.

If it had been Saturday, and a big footer match-booked for the afternoon, Mr. Latham could have understood it better.

But it was not Saturday, and there was no footer match near. It was evidently some other matter that preoccupied the Fourth-Form.

Fellows of both Houses were equally interested in it. Piggins & Co. had been the first to learn it, from Blake, in the quad, before breakfast. The whole school knew by this time what Levison was suspected of; and the fact that most of the fellows concluded that he was guilty only proved how bad an impression he had made upon them by his cunning and secretive ways.

His profession that he intended to investigate the matter, and discover the real thief, was regarded as so much bluff.

Jack Blake and a few others were rather inclined to believe that there was something in it. But most of the

juniors scorned the idea. Darrel had delivered no opinion, but it was clear that he did not trust Levison's explanation.

If the new junior did not succeed in clearing himself, the results were certain to be serious for him. The matter was bound to come to the Head's notice before the day was over.

Mr. Latham, patient little gentleman as he was, lost his patience, and handed out impositions freely, and his Form were richer in lines by the time the morning lessons were dismissed.

Levison was left generally alone when the Form was dismissed. Eero Mellich, his study mate, did not approach him. Levison did not seem to mind.

Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, had been taking the Sixth that morning, and he came down the Sixth Form-rooms about the same time that the juniors were dismissed. Levison walked up to him in the passage. Mr. Railton, to whom Darrel had reported the whole matter as in duty bound, gave the new junior a very curious look as he came up. The other fellows watched him, and gathered round as near as they could venture, to hear what Levison had to say to Mr. Railton.

"Can I speak to you, sir?" said Levison.

"Certainly."

"D'Arcy has had a sovereign stolen, sir," said the junior.

"The fellows in my Form suspect that I took it."

"But Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, aside to Levison.

"He's waving a cool beggar, you know."

Blake nodded.

"Well, Levison!" said Mr. Railton, showing no surprise.

"I think it only fair that the matter should be cleared into, sir, so that I may have a chance of proving my innocence to the satisfaction of the House."

"That is quite right, Levison. The matter will certainly be inquired into very strictly."

"Thank you, sir. It is proved that the theft in question has been committed between seven and eight yesterday evening, and it is known that a number of juniors belonging to the School House visited Blake's study at that time. May I ask you, sir, to call upon those juniors to come forward and tell what they know. I believe it will be possible to get it clear by questioning them, which one of them has D'Arcy's sovereign."

Mr. Railton looked hard at Levison.

But the request was evidently reasonable, and Levison no desire on the House-master's part to refuse, he turned to Kildare.

"Kildare, will you ascertain how many juniors visited Blake's study last evening, at that particular time, and bring them into my study?"

"Certainly, sir," said the St. Jim's captain.

Mr. Railton went into his study. Kildare knew that all the School House fellows were called up to see what they had been to Blake's study the previous evening between seven and eight, and four fellows owned that they had been there. They were Skimpole and Tom Merry of the Fifth-Form, Eero Mellich of the Fourth, and Wally of the Third-Form.

"Jolly lucky we saw each other there," Tom Merry remarked, as the four juniors proceeded to the master's study with Kildare. "We shall be able to give evidence for one another."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "You and I and Eero were there at the same time. What about you, Wally?"

Wally looked rather blue.

"I only looked into the study," he said. "I went to Gussy, to ask him if he could cash a postcard, but nobody was there, and the gas was turned out, so I came away again."

"Nobody saw you?"

"Not that I know of."

"Well, nobody would suspect you, Wally, because that's all right."

"I trust nobody would suspect me," said Skimpole, looking at Tom Merry. "Of course, if I did take the sovereign, it would not be wrong."

"What?" exclaimed Kildare.

"Skimpole blundered at him. 'I mean, according to Determinism,' he explained, 'it should only be following the impulses of either my nature or my environment, and hence—'

"Don't talk nonsense!" said Kildare.

"My dear Kildare," exclaimed Skimpole, in a quiet, "Determinism is not nonsense! I know your view commonly held, but I could prove, in the next hour, that—"

"Dry up, you young duffer!"

As they had now reached Mr. Railton's study at the Shell dried up. The juniors were taken in and they found the chums of Study No. 6, Piggins & Co. were looking very uncomfortable and uneasy.

whether a decidedly unpleasant matter to be mixed up with, but they were greatly inclined to rag Arthur Augustus for being so careless with his money. D'Arcy, on the other hand, said that carelessness with money was really quite a precious thing. If there was a thief in the School House, the sooner he was found out and expelled, the better.

Mr. Railton glanced over the new-comers.

"Did you," ejaculated D'Arcy involuntarily. "What are you doing here, Wally?"

Wally made a grimace.

"Where, please?" said Mr. Railton. "Now, it appears that the theft was committed, if at all, between seven and eight last evening, from what Blake says. Some of the juniors were in the study till seven, and again in it till eight."

"Where, the, sir," said Levinson. "I understand that Blake was left alone in the study after the others went out."

Blake's face flamed.

"Did you," he shouted, forgetful of the House-master's presence for the moment. "Do you dare to insinuate—"

"Did you, if he hints anything against Digby, I'll give him a 'cushful twashin'' on the spot!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly.

"I should not allow a person to be entertained against Digby for a moment. If you excuse me, Levinson—"

"I am, sir, but I think the point ought to be borne in mind."

"Where?" I suppose any of D'Arcy's immediate friends would say. "There is no number of opportunities of robbing him, if he were so minded. There is nothing to be gained by going to him in that direction, Levinson."

"Very well, sir," said Levinson quietly, while Digby shrugged his shoulders and longed to have a quiet ten minutes with the new lads in the gym. "Very well, sir, leaving that, there are these four fellows. If I did not take the loss from D'Arcy's pocket while performing those contorted tricks in the passage, it must have been taken by someone who went to the study between seven and eight last evening."

"That is clear."

"That last chaps explain, in the first place, why you went there."

"That is quite reasonable."

"My question then, sir?"

"Excuse me, Levinson," said Mr. Railton, upon whom the eagerness and collectedness of the new junior were making a considerable impression.

"Very well, sir. What time were you there, D'Arcy?"

"It was a quarter to eight."

"Tom Merry?"

"I think it was a quarter-past seven, or about that."

"And Skimpole and Mellish at the same time, I understand."

"Yes, together," said Mellish.

"What of you was first?"

"I was," said Skimpole.

"Why did you go to Blake's study?"

"To see Blake," said Skimpole innocently.

"For what object?"

"I am, I had promised to explain to him some of the connection with Determinism, and also evolution."

"The origin of species by natural selection," said Skimpole.

"You see, by the principles of the science of Determinism, it is quite clear that—"

"To the point, Skimpole," said Mr. Railton.

"I am doing so. Determinism clearly proves"

"Where did you find Blake there?"

"I found him sitting at a table."

"What note on the table for Blake, explaining how it was that he had forgotten that I was coming to him by the principles of—"

"Did you touch D'Arcy's coat?"

"No, only his hat."

"Did you touch any money in the study?"

"Only the two half-crowns. I saw them on the floor, and was tempted to pick them up, when Mellish pushed me away, saying that I can only characterise as quite rude."

"Did you pass along the corridor, and saw him bending over?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton. I pushed him over for a lark."

"I know he was picking up money."

"That was when I came in," said Tom Merry. "I heard him say something about half-crowns being dropped."

"Did it appear that all three were there together?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton."

"After Skimpole," said Levinson. "You were there some time alone first, Skimpole?"

"Oh, yes; two or three minutes."

"Quite long enough to have taken the sovereign from the coat?"

"Oh, yes, if I had wanted to."

"The simplicity of Skimpole's reply brought smiles to several faces. It was scarcely possible to suspect the genius of the Shell; and even Levinson realised that."

"So the only boy who was there alone, besides Skimpole, was D'Arcy minor?" said Mr. Railton.

"Wait a minute, sir," said Levinson. "When you were in the study, Skimpole, did you go into the angle of the wall beside the bookcase?"

Mellish turned deadly pale.

"Certainly not," said Skimpole, in astonishment.

"Did you, Tom Merry?"

"No."

"Did you, Mellish?"

"Of course not."

"Someone did," said Levinson. "As it is an out-of-the-way corner of the study, it is not to be supposed that anybody living in the room would go and stand there. But someone with dirty boots did stand there, for I found the traces on the carpet this morning, and the marks were ground into the carpet, as if the person had crouched there, trying to make himself as small as possible, to keep out of sight."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Railton. "This is a little vague—"

"Please allow me, sir. My reputation for life depends on how this matter is settled," said Levinson.

"You may go on."

"Skimpole, are you certain that the study was empty when you entered it? Are you certain that neither Tom Merry nor Mellish was already there?"

The juniors held their breath.

CHAPTER 14.

The Benefit of the Doubt.

MELLISH'S face was of so sickly a colour that several of the fellows could not help observing it, and it gave rise to strange thoughts in their minds. Mr. Railton looked sharply at Levinson.

"What are you trying to establish, Levinson?" he asked.

"I think, sir, that the marks beside the bookcase show that someone may have been in the study when Skimpole entered, and may have crouched out of sight there. Skimpole is too blind to have seen him. It is a suspicious circumstance to me that Tom Merry and Mellish should happen along at the time. One of them may have been in the study at the time. I may mention, too, that shortly before that hour last evening Mellish had tried to borrow a sovereign of me, which he wanted for a very particular purpose."

"It's a lie!" said Mellish.

Levinson shrugged his shoulders.

"We'll prove whether it's a lie or not," he said. "Now, Skimpole, answer me carefully. You say that Mellish pushed you over when you stooped to pick up a half-crown?"

"Yes."

"Where were you at that moment?"

"Near the table," said Skimpole reflectively. "Between the bookcase and the door."

"From which side did Mellish push you?"

Skimpole started.

"Dear me!"

Levinson's eyes gleamed.

"Was it from the side of the door?" he asked.

"No, it was not."

"Then you were between Mellish and the door at the moment that he pushed you over?"

"Certainly! I must have been. It did not occur to me at the time, as I was thinking about Blake's great loss in not hearing my explanation of the principles of—"

"How did you come to be on the wrong side of Skimpole, Mellish, if you came in from the passage and pushed him over, as you said?"

"I—I stopped past him."

"Why?" said Levinson relentlessly. "If you only wanted to push him over, you could have done so without passing him."

"I—I was thinking of rolling him out into the passage."

"Could Mellish have passed you, into the interior of the study, without your being aware that he was entering the room, Skimpole?"

"I think not. You see, there was no room for him to pass without touching me."

"Did you see him before he bumped you over?"

"Not at all."

"You came along the next moment, Tom Merry, I think?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton."

"Did you see him before he bumped you over?"

"Not at all."

"You came along the next moment, Tom Merry, I think?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton."

"Did you see him before he bumped you over?"

"Not at all."

"You came along the next moment, Tom Merry, I think?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton."

"Did you see him before he bumped you over?"

"Not at all."

"You came along the next moment, Tom Merry, I think?"

"Yes, Mr. Railton."

"Did you see him before he bumped you over?"

"Not at all."

"Well, Skimpole was still sitting on the floor," said Tom Merry, who had been listening to Lovison's questioning with the greatest interest.

"If Mellich had passed along the passage and entered the study, as he has stated, he must have been just in front of you before he went into Study No. 67."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Did you see him in the passage?"

"No."

"But you would have seen him if he had been there?"

"Well, most likely."

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon Mellich.

"That seems to me to be quite clear, Mellich."

The cad of the Fourth gazed without speaking.

"Come, come, Mellich! What have you to say?"

"I—I was in the study, sir," said Mellich, in scarcely audible tones. "I—I did myself behind the bookcase, in—to play a game on Skimpole."

Mr. Railton's brow grew very stern.

"That is very different from the statements you have made within the last few minutes, Mellich."

"Yes, sir. I—I was afraid to—to tell you exactly how it was, when I—I heard there had been a theft. I knew Lovison would try to fix it on me, because you're on bad terms lately, and—and he's cunning enough for anything. Any of the fellows will tell you how deep he is, and that it's no good trying to keep up against him."

"But Jove, there's something in that!"

Lovison's lip curled.

"I haven't finished yet," he said. "My statement is that Mellich wanted a sovereign for a particular purpose, and that he stole that sovereign from D'Arcy's coat. My belief is that he sent that sovereign away by post last night. What were you doing out in the quad, last night, Mellich, at the time of the collection of letters from the box in the quad?"

"I—I was taking a stroll, because I had a bit of a headache."

"You didn't go out to post a letter?"

Mellich looked sickly.

"Now I—I come to think of it, I did post a letter," he said. "I had forgotten."

"You had better be careful, Mellich," said Mr. Railton.

Mellich licked his dry lips. He realized the necessity of care. But what was the use of being careful, with Lovison winding the net round him in this manner? Mellich felt that he was lost.

Lovison smiled satirically.

"Good!" he said. "You posted that letter because you had found the money you wanted?"

"I—I didn't—"

"We shall see. As you handed the envelope directly to the postman, I don't suppose you put the money in it in gold. You must have got a postal order from somewhere. Now, you didn't go to the village. Where did you get the postman?"

Wally was staring blankly at Mellich.

"My—my hat!" he gasped.

Lovison swung round on him.

"What do you know about it, D'Arcy minor?"

Wally was silent, but still looking at Mellich.

"Will you ask him, sir?" said Lovison to Mr. Railton.

"Tell all you know, D'Arcy minor."

"Well, Mellich changed a postal-order for me last night, sir," said Wally reluctantly. "I had run from my gun, and I went to Gusey's study to ask him to cash it, as it was too late to go to the post-office, but he was out. That's how I came to be in the study at all. I went down to the common-room, and found Mellich there. He gave me a sovereign for the postal-order."

Mellich's face was haggard.

"Where did you get that sovereign, Mellich?" said Lovison.

"It was my own."

"Where did you get it?"

"I—I had saved it up."

"Then you had a sovereign of your own at the same time that you asked me to lend you one?"

"I—I never asked you."

Lovison shrugged his shoulders, and turned to the School House-master.

"Have I made the case pretty clear, sir?"

"But Jove," murmured D'Arcy, "it's clear enough! But the fellow is a wretch, all the same."

"A rank rotter!" said Horrie, in an undertone.

"I think it is quite clear," said Mr. Railton sternly, "Lovison has been wrongfully suspected, my boys."

"It looks like it now, sir," agreed Blake.

Mellich admits that he was in Blake's study when Skimpole came there, and that he concealed himself. He spoke fairly about it. He denied posting a letter, and then THE NEW LIBRARY—No. 105.

admitted it. His falsehoods had one object—to what he had done. There is no longer any doubt, at least that you took the sovereign from D'Arcy's coat pocket."

"I—I—"

"As for you, Lovison, you deserve no sympathy from House-master, said. "You should never play with money. That was what led to your being suspected. I cannot blame D'Arcy and the others for suspecting you at the same time, I must say that you have shown ingenuously in bringing the truth to light."

"Thank you, sir."

"And now, Mellich, what have you to say?"

"I—I did take the sovereign, sir—"

"Ah!"

"But—I didn't steal it, sir."

"What?"

"I—I took it, sir, intending to put it back, but I lost it. The sovereign I gave D'Arcy minor for my order was one of my own. I—I was going to put the sovereign in Lovison's pocket, for a joke, sir, to get him out for some of his rotten conjuring tricks he's put me up to. I—I thought I'd get up a row between him and me about it, you see, sir. He—he put a cigarette in his grammar the other day, and it fell out in class, and Lathorn gave me lines."

Mr. Railton looked hard at Mellich.

"I should be very sorry to judge any boy more than he deserved," he said slowly. "I would not believe that you did not intend to be a thief. You should blame you for what you have done, and I think no boy could be so foolish as to meddle with another boy's money; but Lovison has done so himself, and clearly proved that he is not a thief. Therefore, I think that perhaps you are entitled to the benefit of his mistake."

Mellich gave a gasp.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy.

"And if Lovison had been found guilty of theft, what could you intend to do?" asked Mr. Railton.

"I—I was going to explain to Kildare, sir, and advise him to tell you—and to explain how it was."

"I hope that is the truth, Mellich."

The cad of the Fourth was silent. He hardly knew whether it was true or false, so deep and tangled was the network of lies he had involved himself in, in his attempt to escape the consequences of his act.

"Mellich will be punished, severely punished, for the suspicion of his act to fall upon another," said Mr. Railton. "I can only hope that his statement is true, and he meant it only for a joke, and intended to own up to a little sympathy for Lovison in any case, who has done this upon himself by his own crooked ways. You may go, excepting Mellich, who will be punished."

The juniors left the study.

Tom Merry and his friends heard the swishing of the door as they went down the passage, and a gasping sound.

Mellich.

"My only Aunt Janet!" said Wally. "Mellich intended to really keep that shiner, Gusey."

"Weally, Wally, that is a very vulgar expression."

"Rats, old son!"

"Weally—"

"We must think the best of any chap, even of Skimpole," said Tom Merry. "It may have been all a joke, and it would be no worse a joke than some of the tricks Lovison has played on all of us. Anyway, I'm such a scare that I don't think he'll do anything else again."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lovison looked at them, with a sneer. "I rather think you owe me an apology," he said. Tom Merry shook his head.

"Nothing of the sort," he exclaimed. "You lie all on yourself, and I hope it will be a lesson to you. Yaas, wathah! I somewhat owe you from the money I have abstracted my sovereign, Lovison, but I owe you as a wank wathah, all the same."

"Same here," said Blake. "You've brought it all off, and you can go and get coke! You're a wank wathah, all the same, and I'm sorry he's got all of it. You ought to have half of it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the clowns walked away, leaving Lovison alone. Lovison dragged his shoulders.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of the Gun Jim's again next Thursday, entitled "The Terrible Rub," by Martin Clifford. Order your "Gun" in advance. Usual size and price. One Penny.)

The Second Long, Complete Story contained in this number.



King of the Moors.

A Thrilling, Long, Complete Story, dealing with adventure in the West of England.

By ERNEST BRINDLE.

(War Correspondent in the Russo-Japanese War.)

CHAPTER I.

People and Poets—Revolt—The Fight in the Dark—
"To me, Royal!"

"A good thing to do, Phil, I know, but you must go with it. He stands to you in the place of a

"What?" interrupted Phil Denham impatiently, his

sparkling, and his cheeks flushing a fiery red.

"I have been anything like that to me since the day he

came to his miserable home. And he did that not out

of love for me, but because he saw that one day I

was a cheap servant for him—a slave to treat as he

pleased—that's what I am, Mr. Penruddocke—a slave!"

"A poor, weather-beaten face as he listened to the

passionate outburst, for well he knew that there was

no more for it. As a poor, friendless orphan, six years

old, he had been adopted by old Joe Heald, a sheep-

ster, who had not a living soul had a good word to say,

because the boy had received little else than harsh

reproaches from his master. Bitter words, black

blows were his portion, and in course of time

he had grown to regard and receive them with stubborn

indifference. Yet occasionally a fit of savage

rage would seize him as he thought of his wrongs, and

he would have gone hard with Joe Heald had the lad

been able to do so.

It was what Phil never did, for his frank, generous

heart would not allow him to forget that it was Heald who

at last become unbearable, and that to endure it any longer

would lead him to commit some act of desperate madness.

"It isn't as if I was an idle wastrel," he continued, as Pen-

ruddocke remained silent. "I do my work for him willingly,

and even he can't find fault with me on that score. It's his

black heart that turns him against me, and nothing'll change

him. It's certain that he's a bad lot altogether, or the chil-

dren hereabouts wouldn't run from him as they do. He cares

for nothing, nor nobody, but himself."

"You're forgetting Black Harry," said Penruddocke, with

a grim smile. "It's my belief that Heald couldn't live with-

out his dog."

"That's true enough," agreed Phil bitterly. "He and

Black Harry understand one another better than any pair of

mortals do, and the dog hates me just as much as his master

does. It's only natural, I suppose, and I'm not grumbling at

that, but it's time to do something when he tries his best

to make away with Royal."

Penruddocke looked at the boy with a new light in his

eyes.

"D'you mean to say," he inquired quickly, "that Heald

has tried to kill your dog?"

"That's it," replied Phil, his face darkening with emotion.

"He put a piece of poisoned meat outside that little shed

in the back garden, where I put Royal at nights when he's

at home. The dog had some enough not to touch it, but

he might have, and then—then—"

His voice choked in his throat, and he clenched his fists,

while his eyes blazed with such a startled look of hatred for

the dastardly wrong attempted as to startle the farmer.

"Do you know for certain that he placed the meat where

you found it?"

"It couldn't have been anyone else," replied Phil, "and

what makes me more sure still that it was him is that he's

been threatening mischief ever since Royal gave Black Harry

such a drubbing down last week. And when I accused him

of it he didn't attempt to deny it, the mean, cowardly roun-

deed! I don't think he'll try on any more tricks of that kind,

though, because I let him understand that if he did I'd let

everybody hear of it, and leave him for good, and he doesn't

mean to lose me if he can help it."

"It's a black sin for a shepherd to be guilty of," said Pen-

ruddocke, "to seek to injure another's sheep-dog, and if the

folks round here got to know of it Joe Heald would be

hounded out of the country."

He paused, looking inquiringly at Phil, who, comprehending

the meaning of the look, shook his head.

"No," he said; "I've not told anyone but you of it, and

I'm not going to unless it happens again."

"That's the wisest course to follow, my boy," rejoined

Penruddocke approvingly, "and perhaps what's happened'll

be a lesson to Heald to act differently in the future. He's

sour and bad-tempered, but he's a man, and a man's got

some good in him however much evil it may be hidden away

from the world."

A scornful laugh rose to Phil's lips, but he checked it

at once, for however John Penruddocke said he would

with him.

"I suppose that's true," he said, "although it's hard to

believe in Joe Heald's case. I'll be getting on home, now,

Mr. Penruddocke. Come on, Royal!"

"Won't you come on down to the farm and join us at

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THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB.

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of

St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

approach," asked the farmer. "You know that you'll be right welcome."

The boy hesitated a moment, and looked longingly down at the twinkling window-lights of the red-roofed farmhouse in the hollow below, and then he curved an again.

"Not to-night," he said, "a little catch in his voice. 'I'm best alone to-night, I'm thinking.'"

Cast- ing a peering glance at the farmhouse he walked on towards the open moors, the night wind from off the distant sea wa- ding the shore of the North Devonshire coast blowing in his face, and whistling through the grass and heather. By this time the lotted Royal, the great, grey sheep-dog, whose dash and intelligence were the talk and honest envy of every sheep- lard in the district. It was said of him that, alone and un- aided, he could drive a flock of frightened sheep into the pen- fold, or coax them across the narrowest plank that ever did duty for a bridge across a river. He was in his fourth year, and Phil had owned him since he found him, a starving pup- py, in the hut of a shepherd who had met his death one wild night in winter while out searching for strayed sheep.

As no one came forward to claim it, Phil had taken charge of the little animal, and in course of time Royal, as he named it, became his inseparable companion. It possessed all the ingrained, natural instincts of the best class of sheep-dog to an extraordinary degree, and knew far more of the art of shepherding than ever Phil was able to teach it. And when he became old enough to tend sheep himself, the lad found in Royal a valuable assistant, as well as a faithful, devoted friend.

There were fewer losses amongst Heald's sheep in the winter months than on any of the other farms for a hundred miles around, all as a result of the fine work done by Phil and Royal, and the old farmer gratefully acknowledged to himself that he was well served by the boy he had taken into his house.

Then there came a time when he began to regard the dog with suspicion, then with dislike, and finally with a hostile hatred that was also extended to Phil. For Royal showed unmistakable signs of becoming a better dog than his own Black Harry, which had won the reputation of being without a rival on the Devonshire sheep-farms. And the thought that his dog, upon which he lavished all the affection his crabbed nature was capable of feeling, should take second place to Royal was unbearable to him. In the darkness of the night, with Black Harry's muzzle resting across his knee, he would sit brooding over it hour after hour, plotting and planning how to get rid of Royal without anyone knowing of it.

One day he had set the two great dogs on to fight, and Black Harry had got the worst of it, and this aroused the old man's vindictive hatred of the other dog to fever pitch. Watching for his opportunity while Phil was asleep one night he had crept out of the house and put some poisoned meat near the door of Royal's kennel-shed. But Royal knew his enemy, and bit the meat untouched to be discovered by Phil in the morning.

It was while looking for his work that same day that the lad had come upon this evidence of the farmer's murderous treachery, and he had been thinking about it all day. Now, after his talk with John Penruddocke, his thoughts reverted to it again, and wave after wave of passionate indignation heated his blood as he realised to what lengths Heald was ready to go in order to injure his dumb friend.

"He won't do it again!" he muttered aloud, repeating the same words that he had used to John Penruddocke. "He won't do—"

A low, husky laugh, coming apparently from the midst of a clump of fern-bushes near the rough footpath he was following, interrupted him, and he halted, while Royal, the big ruff round his neck rising convulsively, growled and threw up his head. Again the laugh rang out, but this time farther off, and the dog sprang towards the bushes with the silent, faithful bound of the sheepdog when it attacks a known enemy.

"Black Royal!" said Phil, and the dog immediately came to heel. "It's only the old man!"

He stood up on up-tips and peered over the bushes across the dip in the moore beyond, but no moving object met his gaze. Then he walked on again, wondering how much of his conversation with Penruddocke had been overheard by Heald, for that mocking laugh from behind the fern-bushes had told him that the old farmer had been playing the spy.

"It don't much matter whether he heard us or not," he said to himself, with a reckless little laugh. "He can't do more than give us a hiding, and I'm used to that by now, I reckon."

A little farther on he came to a neglected copse of pine- trees, skirted the copse on the right, and ascended a steepish hill. On the crest of the hill stood an old farmhouse, with aged, bareheaded, and outbuildings in front of it, and scattered fruit trees on either side. It was here that Phil lived all

alone with Heald, for no house-servants were kept at the farm, and after taking Royal round to the shed in the afternoon at the back of the premises, the lad returned to the shed and entered the building by the front door.

There was no light within, and supposing that the door was not yet home, Phil went along the stone passage, pushed open the door of the kitchen. A slight sound in his ear, and glancing round, he saw two shining eyes at him out of the black void. Hesitating a moment, he struck a match and lit an oil-lamp on a sideboard near the door, and then stepped farther on into the room.

Sitting in an armchair against the far wall was the thin, shrivelled little man, with a head of grey, wrinkled hair, and a cruel, arched face, and at his feet was stretched the huge bulk of Black Harry. As his master looked at the weak, so did the dog look the embodiment of animal strength, his neck round and massive as a pillar of stone, and under lip, slightly drawn down, revealing a perfect white tooth.

Yet between man and brute there was a curious gleam of outward expression, especially in the surly, scornful of their eyes. The bitter dislike that Heald bore to the dog communicated itself to Black Harry. Each was aware of it, and if Phil had not known it before, he must have been aware of it at that moment.

"You've got home before me, I see," he said, sitting down on the table. "Was it you I passed on the road about quarter of nine hour ago?"

"Happen it was, and happen it wasn't," answered the dog with a dry snarl. "I leave it to you."

"Yes," said Phil, "I leave it to you." He then turned to the Farmer Penruddocke. "It's a pity you can't show us a honest man at such times, instead of peeping about about!"

"Ah, well, my lad," said the little man benignly, "say that confession's good for the soul, and I'm glad to hear you confessing that you've been and disloyal to me again. When I tell you not to go near Bratton he means it."

"And I mean to keep on going there, always!" said the boy.

"And not content with disobeying my orders?" Heald, still with that very snarl on his lips, "you are a ruddocke with a lying story about me trying to poison you. You don't show your shame of yourself, my lad!"

"It wasn't a lying story," rejoined Phil boldly, "truth—and you know it!"

The little man smiled on, tapping Black Harry's head with the fingers of his left hand, and stretching out his arm to clutch a stout ash stick that lay on the table.

"I'll not argue, lad," he said, "no contending could only be waste of time. So I'll thrash you a good thrashing. It lead you to see the error of your way. Take off that coat, and bare those big shoulders of yours to make you feel this time, my lad!"

The boy sullenly obeyed, and stood up, a good shoulders taller than the other, his face white and red set up on his haunches, flicking his lips, his eyes greedy expectancy.

"Say you feed to Penruddocke," said Heald, smiling, "and I'll let you off easy."

"I told him nothing but the truth," replied Phil, "and I tried to poison Royal, you know!"

The stick whistled through the air, and came to his bare back with smashing force, a thin line of white flesh marking where it had fallen. Again it arose and descended, and still Phil did not move a fibre tonight and almost motionless. It was only after the hundreds of thrashings that he had once the little tyrant in the days gone by, and endured his cruel blows.

But there is a point beyond which endurance and as the cruel blows of the ash-plant fell upon him he suddenly reached it. Something seemed to stir within him, and he swung round and away, away from the ash full across the face.

"Stop it!" he panted, his eyes lucid with rage, standing more erect, "I warn you!"

The little man, smiling still, bit on bravely, and in and veered him round the waist, lifting him up as he fell right across the room.

Screaming madly, he scrambled to his feet again. "Tear him down, Black Harry!" he shrieked, down, good dog!"

Uttering a gurgling roar, Black Harry sprang, snatching quickly, grasped a bottle on the edge of the table, and hurled it at the lamp. There was a loud noise, a spouting heap of flame, and then darkness. And once the raging cries and stumbling movements of the little man to grip the lad who had at last defied him.

Black Harry as he crept stealthily over the fence to his prey. Then a chair crashed over, and the dog and struck Phil in the chest, sending him reeling down the wall.

He sprang back and back, and his hands gripped about him in mad desperation. He could see the rolling, gleaming eyes of the enormous brute searching for his throat, and he felt the hot, fetid breath in his face. With a gasp he lifted the dog and dashed it from him, and he ran blindly out of the room, down the passage, and through the hall, banging the door after him.

His passage sounded the running of feet, the cries of the household, and the baying of the now infuriated dog.

"To me, Royal!"

His hoarse, hoarse bark answered him, and round the yard he rushed. The farmhouse door opened, and Heald appeared, with his eyes behind him. The cheeks of the little man were as white as the hair upon his head, but when he saw the dog coming there he fell back, with a look of cunning fear, dragging Black Harry with him. He feared that he feared him still more for his own dog's sake, and that Black Harry was no match for Phil's strength in a fight to the death.

As he saw at the door, he withdrew into the house, and Black Harry with a strength that was amazing, dashed and slammed to the door. Heald, with a look of despair, and with the fires of passionate anger glowing in his eyes, Phil stumbled down the hall, and the dog's head.

"Here, to night, old chap," he whispered loudly, to the dog's noble head. "They don't want me yonder, and my master—no more than they want you." He looked up at him, an expression of understanding in his beautiful brown eyes that was almost as if he knew, and would remember in the days to

CHAPTER 2.

II. Muckleton Pass—Treachery—The Rivals Meet—A Friend in Need.

"MUCKLETON take the lead, whoever he is!" said Phil to himself. "Why hasn't he made sure that the road's clear?"

A natural question to ask, for the rules of the road were all shepherds using Muckleton Pass, a steep, rocky, leading up from fertile valley to high, rocky, and a descending flock of sheep should always be on the line on the ascent. It thus became necessary to be approaching the top of the pass to make sure the road was clear, as moving space in the defile was not to admit of two flocks passing each other.

Phil commenced the ascent, Phil, who was a flock of sheep to Torley, a small market town about four miles distant from Joe Heald's farmstead, was used to see the leaders of another flock entering the top of the pass. When they came, with many more close behind them, Phil found voice, and shouted exhortation to the sheep. The sheep, frightened at the noise, threw up their heads and came to a halt, but a dog's angry bark drove them forward again, and immediately afterwards the shepherd, followed by his shepherd, a long-furred, shaggy, smoking a clay pipe.

"Here!" called Phil, gestulating with his arm. "Just step back until I've passed! You know what the old man says, as well as I do!"

"Come on how it's that that'll have to turn back," answered, with a sly grin, "and not me."

"I'll never do," said Phil stoutly. "And whatever be done for it'll be on you!"

The two flocks neared one another, slowed down, and advanced again as the dogs barked and worried them with quick, unwearied persistence. At last, with a shiver in nervous tension, puzzled, obstinate, and with scarcely a dozen inches separating them.

"How a goat to do now?" inquired Andrews, uttering a hoarse laugh. "Rock on as neither side can move, and can do right here!"

Andrews' words that rose to his lips, Phil waved his hand, and the dog slowly made his way to the top of the pass, and the dog's head.

Andrews' sheep he forced a way, slowly but surely, and his wife followed the whole of his flock, and he was by Phil whenever they hesitated, or to bring about dire confusion by seeking a wild, rough

and completely done—an almost incredible feat of strength for a man and boy—and Bob Andrews watched it

with an expression of grudging admiration on his coarse, heavy features that speedily changed to one of bitter jealousy. There was something that he could never hope to imitate, much less to rival, and a cowardly desire to spoil the performance of it seized him.

"It's a rare bit o' work, no doubt," he said gruffly, "but I can't bide idle here to watch it any longer. Happen there's room for me to work past thy lot on the side."

"Best spot where you are," warned Phil, "or you'll have a tuppence or two over the rocks. I'll be through in a couple of minutes."

"Them's a couple o' minutes too long," answered Andrews, pushing hard against a sheep with his knees. "Git on!"

The sheep backed, to receive a savage kick, and then, uttering a bleeding cry of fear, sprang into the narrow lane between Phil's flock and the side of the defile. It dashed forward a yard or two, and, becoming wedged between the rocks and the sheep moving past it, scrambled on to the extreme edge of the defile, lost its precarious foothold, and toppled over into the gulch that ran parallel with the pass. The thumping sound of its body striking the sharp, hilly rocks seventy feet below came upwards in a strange little echo.

"You've done it now!" said Phil indignantly. "You sheep's been murdered if ever one was, and I'll bear witness against you, too, Bob Andrews, should I be called on to do it!"

One moment Andrews peered down into the gulch, at the motionless, broken-limbed body of the sheep, dead now beyond a doubt, and then he turned and looked into Phil's flushed face with a sour grin on his lips.

"Happen thy evidence won't be taken by the owner o' these sheep," he said, "for he's none so fond o' them!"

"Who might he be?" asked Phil sharply.

"Joe Heald," chucklingly replied Andrews, driving his flock forward again down the now unimpeded pass. "He bought 'em yesterday at Torley market, and I'm taking 'em to his farm."

Chuckling still, he slouched on, turning a derisively mocking face to Phil as he did so, and apparently well pleased with himself at the turn things had taken. The loss of the sheep was due to him, but he knew perfectly well that Heald would not hold him responsible for it after he had told his tale to the old farmer—and Phil knew it, too. Between him and Andrews, who was a lazy no-er-do-well few farmers in the district cared to employ, there was no friendship lost, and he had good reason to believe that the other would not hesitate to do him an injury should the chance to do so offer itself.

"He did it on purpose," he thought, as he peered over the brow of the pass on to the open moorland. "Must have spotted me before I did him, and drove his sheep on to meet mine. Well, I did my best, and he can't make black white."

So he strove to forget the matter for the time being, and succeeded in doing so, but upon reaching Torley it was brought back to his mind by the remarks of a shepherd he was chatting with in the market square.

"So that big loon, Bob Andrews," said the man, "is 'goin' to work along w' these! Happen thy gaff might 'ave a better servant than he'll ever be."

"Who told you that story?" asked Phil, unable to conceal his astonishment at this unexpected piece of information. "This is the first I've heard of it!"

"Be it now!" said the other. "That's rummy, mean, as how you be a sort o' son to Joe Heald. I had it from Bob himself, and he seemed mighty pleased about it. Told me as Heald engaged him at this very spot yesterday, after the sheep sales."

His suspicion, then, thought Phil, that what happened in Muckleton Pass was deliberately brought about by Andrews was correct, and this conviction, as he thought, had gathered to him the shepherd troubled him a good deal. For some unknown reason Heald had left him in ignorance of his intention to employ Andrews on the farm, and it looked very much as though that reason must be a sinister one. Since the night when he had turned on him the old farmer had treated him differently than before. Sour and silent, he rarely spoke a word to the boy, and after nightfall whenever they chanced to be sitting together in the farmhouse kitchen, Phil might have been out of the room for all the notice taken of him.

"He's up to some underhanded game, I'll be bound," thought the lad, as he left Torley on his homeward journey, "and Bob Andrews is taking a part in it. Sure as anything I shall be held to blame for the loss of that sheep, and be docked of my shining, wick pocket-money for good and all!"

It started to rain hard as he trudged home, and long before he came to the end of his journey he was drenched to the skin, a fact, however, that troubled him very little, accustomed as he was to being out in every sort of weather. Lights gleamed in the windows of the farmhouse, but to his surprise, he found the door locked, and his knocking for admittance brought no response from the inside. Ten minutes he stood there, with the rain beating down upon

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him, and then the kitchen window was slowly opened, and Joe Heald thrust his gray head out into the night.

"Who's that?" he inquired blandly, while Black Harry, lying down resting on the window sill, growled and gurgled spitefully by his side.

"Why, me, of course," replied Phil impatiently. "I've been here knocking loud enough to wake the dead. Didn't you hear me?"

"Oh, it's you, is it, Phil Denham?" said Heald. "Hardly expected you back here after what happened in Muckleton Pass to-day. Happen you've come to pay me the price of that sheep of mine you drove over the rocks?"

He spoke in a slow, aggravating tone of voice, charged with malice, and his eyes twinkled with mocking glee as he noted the effect of his words on his listener.

"You must talk to Bob Andrews about that," said Phil hotly, "for it was his fault that the sheep was lost, and not mine!"

The little man turned his head, and waved a beckoning smile.

"I'ven' hear that, my man!" he exclaimed, with a dry, throaty chuckle. "This bold, young servant of mine brings a most serious charge of sheep murder against you. What's your answer to it?"

A dark shadow flitted across the light, and then Bob Andrews appeared at the window, a look of impudent assurance on his face.

"It's a lie," he said, "and I know it's a lie. It was but an old dog as worried the sheep that much that it jumped into the gulch near the pass, as I've already told you, Mr. Heald, and when the poor thing went down, he laughed, and said as 'ow it 'ould pay you out. That's the truth, and he can't deny it."

"It's a sorry tale," said Heald, shaking his head sadly—"a very sorry tale. Little did I think that Phil here would turn out to be so ungrateful when I adopted him for charity's sake."

He stopped speaking, and slaved back with extreme slowness as Phil strode forward with clenched fists and burning eyes.

"That'll do," said the boy. "What you've done for me, I've repaid a hundred times over, and if you behave what that big, bulking coward there tells you, then you're as bad as he is."

The farmer laughed wildly, and looked down into the red eyes of Black Harry, whose back set ears and bared teeth showed that he desired nothing better than to spring at the boy he hated as thoroughly as did his master.

"D'you hear what he says?" inquired Heald, fondling the great dog's head. "He makes me out to be a liar, me, as took him from the gutter. Oh, a nice lot he is, Harry, an ungrateful lot, as beats you most cruel, and kills my sheep. Can't we teach him a lesson?"

The dog uttered a terrible growl, and, shaking its head free of Heald's hand, hurried through the rain-swept darkness and crowded full into Phil's chest. The boy fell back, and Black Harry sat at his throat, while Heald stood and watched from the open window, his grinning face white as a mask. Rolling over, Phil struck out blindly at the savage brute, and the next minute his coat-sleeve was ripped up from wrist to shoulder.

"Call the dog off, master!" cried Bob Andrews, his teeth chattering with terror. "He'll kill the lad, sure!"

"Happen he's had enough," said Heald, licking his lips. "Come back, Harry. Come back!"

His voice rose to a scream of entreaty, for at that moment a third figure added itself to the combatants struggling madly on the ground—the figure of a dog fierce as Black Harry himself, Royal, the sheep-dog. He had heard the noise of the struggle in the farmyard, where he had wandered to, and had come to the rescue of his master with the swiftness of lightning. Eyes level, and hair bristling with the awful, silent fury of his kind, he sprang at his foe.

"Keep him off, Phil!" screamed Heald, all his hate of the lad forgotten in consternation over the danger threatening his dog. "Keep him off, I say!"

Phil got slowly up on his feet, bruised of body and bleeding of face, and he laughed wildly.

"Not to save my life!" he said. "You started it. Let 'em fight it out, and we'll see which is best of the two."

Snarling and biting, rearing up on their hind legs, the two rivals fought and wrestled like battling giants of the brute creation. Then down they went, Black Harry foremost, and Royal hanging on to his shoulder. Howling furiously, the black dog freed himself, red blood bespattering his body, and made a fresh leap. Jumping here, striking there, and fighting with teeth, paws, and bodies, the two dogs warred in grim, desperate tenacity.

"Harry! Harry!" wailed Heald hysterically. "Come to me, Harry!"

It promised to be a duel to the death, for the rivals were now within the last of killing, on fire to avenge old wrongs, THE CHIEF LIBRARY—No. 145.

and satisfy the hate that had always parted them. In a twenty yards and more into a field of battle, and streaming drops of blood to mark the progress of the well-matched in size and strength as they were, Black Harry lacked the marvellous quickness of movement which Royal's distinguishing characteristic, and his heavy limbs were repelled time after time.

Slowly he was pushed back towards the wall of the barn, and at last, seizing his opportunity, Royal darted, hurled him over. His head struck the stone wall with a thundering impact, and he rolled over and lay still, pouring from a dozen wounds. And Royal, striving like a hawk of triumph, trotted back to Phil's side, to the of the fight.

A sobbing moan came from the window, and then a man, frenzied with grief and passion, sprang out of the door.

"Out of my sight!" he yelled frantically. "Not a word, not a word, or I'll shoot you and the dog!"

He sank down on his knees, and leaned over the side of Black Harry, calling to it, and fondling it with his hands, and even Phil was touched by the spectacle. He said nothing, and walked away through the driving rain, the only thing that no man in the world would have done from him, at his side. A little way farther on, the path leading up the hill to the farm, he was seen. The little man had risen from his knees, and now he was on his feet, while Bob Andrews' fear-stricken face was plainly visible as the window. Then Heald patted the dog inside the room, clumping in himself a moment closing the window after him.

"So, Black Harry's not dead," muttered Phil as he walked up to the hill. "Well, I'm glad of it."

Late that night, as John Penruddocke was taking a look round his farmyard, a pale-faced, wet, and shivering dog, along with a dog that limped slightly, appeared before him.

"Hallo, Phil, my boy!" said the farmer, staring at once that something was amiss. "What's gone wrong?"

And Phil told him, keeping nothing back, and when he had finished, Penruddocke took his hand in a hearty grip.

"You're not to blame, Phil," he said, "and I suffer because of an old man's wicked spite. Thank you here for an extra hand, and I'll gladly have you for me if you'll come."

Phil's eyes sparkled, and the burden of loneliness had carried upon his young shoulders for so many years, young though he was, left him for ever.

"There's nothing I'd like better, Mr. Penruddocke," said, a sobbing note of heartfelt joy and gratitude in his voice, "than to work for you."

"That's settled, then," said Penruddocke, with a smile. "Now, we'll go into the house. Happen your clothes won't hurt you, and Lucy can give the dog attention. He wants it."

CHAPTER 3.

The Fight for the Shepherds' Cup.

"YOU'VE just got to win, you dear, old time!" "Bow-wow!" barked Royal knowingly at Lucy Penruddocke's words. "Bow-wow!"

The great sheep-dog, standing higher than the farmer, formed the centre of an admirably critical look in the kitchen of Penruddocke's farmhouse. He went to pat and stroke his noble head was Lucy, and stood her father and Phil Denham, whose faces were as pale as a grave-lid upon it than usual. For the thinking of what lay before him, and of what the hours might hold in store for him and Royal, in the struggle for the Shepherds' Cup, which trophy awarded each year to the winner of the Devonshire sheep-dog trials.

"Never fear that he won't win!" said Penruddocke with a confident chuckle. "There's no other dog so good as him when it comes to master's sheep, and nobody can't deny it."

Phil smiled, and shook his head.

"You're forgetting Joe Heald," he replied. "That Black Harry'll win the cup."

"That he's the only one as does," said the farmer, not saying as Black Harry can't a time dog, in the West of England, but he's no match for me when it comes to rearing up sheep in rough country. He's been over before. It's there he'll lose points."

"I hope so," answered Phil, "but it remains to be seen."

Much as he believed in the capability of Royal, every dog that might compete against him in the coming trials, he was by no means inclined to

He knew that Black Harry had no chance of success, but better, the fine qualities of Heald's dog, and as well as he did, he foresaw that to win the cup would have to put forth all his wonderful powers of endurance.

"You seem to be seen, my lad, as you say," said Penruddocke, "and you'll see that my words are true. Royal's in the cup. Nothin' can stop him."

"Is not?" cried Lucy laughingly. "The Shepherds' meeting back here to-night with us. And now we are making a start to get it," she added, as they came of moving wheels in the yard. "There's the

house, they took their seats in the trap which was taken to Tatton Mount, the scene of the dog show, with Penruddocke holding the reins, and some of the crowd at a smart pace over the moorland roads. The scene was bright and warm, with a soft wind blowing in from the sea, and the fragrant perfumes of millions of flowers greeted the air.

Lucy for the trials no shepherd could wish for, and she rose high under the genial influences of the sun and the merry chatter of his companions. She saw Lucy's deep blue eyes, and at the rough, but kind, of her father, he knew that his success would be due to himself, and the knowledge acted on him in an invigorating tone. He and Royal must carry the day, if only to bring delight to the disappointed people who had received him into their arms as the open arms of unselfish kindness.

He had when Joe Heald had shut the door open and had found a welcome at the farmhouse in the morning, more than three months had passed, and he had been the happiest months of his life. He was as a son of the family than as one to whom he had been shown, and manfully had he striven to pay the debt of gratitude that he considered himself to his benefactor. And now he had a chance of winning the cup by the winning of the cup by a dog Penruddocke's farm would bring fame and as the old farmer just as much as though Royal

was a bigger crowd round the Mount," said Penruddocke, looking his whip, "than I've ever seen before." Some of the moment scattered by the remark, Phil and his heart gave a great bound. The trap had been left in the road, and Mount Tatton was now in sight. It was a big hill, rising steeply up from the moorland, and over it and round about it swarmed thousands of people. Assembled as he was to see the dog show, Phil experienced a thrilling excitement at the spectacle of such a

meeting of folk, he said slowly. "I expected a bigger lot at the most. Where do they all come from?"

"Every part o' the west and south, my lad," said Penruddocke, chuckling amusedly over the lad's eagerness to see Royal here win the cup as they

went up his house as he spoke, and in a few minutes they were on the top of Mount Tatton, and being welcomed by a crowd of strangers like farmers, shepherds, and dog-lovers, as they were chatty of speech. The crowd of well-dressed, talkative, boisterous men had come to see the Dorsetshire sheep-dogs and to see the trophy. And everywhere were dogs, of all breeds, but alike in the distinguishing features of sheep-dogs.

"There's Heald!" said Penruddocke, as he and Lucy came to the paddock. "Seems as lonesome as

he is in front of them stood Heald, attired in his usual dress, and crouching by his side was Black Harry, growling defiance on everyone around. In

that laughing, light-hearted throng the man looked strangely out of place, and not one of them was turned upon them. The surly reserve of the men had always maintained towards his neighbor, but now on this day he was wished him and

Penruddocke approached him, a sour smile on the corners of his mouth, and Black Harry's snarl was caught sight of his deadly enemy.

"He's dead," said Phil, as Royal stopped dead in his tracks and stared at the black dog with the light of something in his eyes. "No fighting of that sort

looked up at his master, reared his bushy tail, and snarled on again, as serenely indifferent as though he had been a hundred miles away.

"That's how you ought to train your dog, Heald," said Penruddocke, as the little man had to hold back Black Harry by main force. "But he's a mighty quarrelsome brute, and there's no more curin' a dog than a woman o' being quarrelsome. You've my sympathy."

A few shepherds round laughed aloud at the jesting words, which were spoken in all good part, but Heald's thin, wasted face went white with rage, and the sour smile deepened on his lips.

"Happen you speak w' the experience of a humped husband," he remarked, in the bland tone of voice that he used to deliver his most venomous shafts of speech. "Bein' a single man myself I must take your word for it, Farmer Penruddocke, and all your sympathy. You had it once before, when you took in Phil. Found out what a sad young waster he is yet!"

"No," said Penruddocke, as he passed on, angry with himself that he had spoken to the other; "and I'm not likely to, either."

Heald laughed spitefully. "You'll find out afore long," he called out. "These brats as come from nobody kens where never brings good luck to them as are soft enough to take pity on 'em."

"That's where you're wrong," Penruddocke flung back at the little man—"I'm sorry. It's Phil here, who's one o' the best lads at ever breathed, what's your 'n' to take back the Shepherds' Cup to my farm to-night?"

At that Heald put up his hand to his brow, and turned away, for Penruddocke had put into words the fear that had been oppressing him for weeks past.

"That's settled the little reptile!" said Penruddocke, as he and Phil walked on down the paddock. "Dashed if I'll ever set out to crack a joke w' 'im again!"

"Jokes don't agree w' Joe Heald," answered Phil laughingly. "There's a flag going yonder," he added, as one fluttered out at the top of a pole just beyond the paddock. "We'd better be moving along there and see the trials start."

The first part of the programme consisted of trials for young and untried sheep-dogs, and it was not until the afternoon that the great event of the day—the race for the cup—took place. The course was a stiff one, leading up the slope of the hill, round a flag-pole, and down the hill again to a gap in a thick pile of furze-bush. Beyond the gap it ran across the moor, close to the hill-side, then took an abrupt turn to the right through a second gap, and then returned once more to the penning fold, which was placed close to the brink of a deep pool of water.

The difficulties of the course soon told a tale, for out of sixteen dogs that attempted to take their flocks over it, only four—Royal, Black Harry, the General, and Mayflower, two dogs that had competed for the cup in earlier years—were selected for this deciding trial by the judges. The course was altered, made as difficult for successful negotiation as expert knowledge could make it, and the spectators settled themselves down to witness what all foresaw would be one of the finest exhibitions of shepherding ever witnessed on the Dorsetshire moors.

Halfway round the course the General, who was the first to make the trial, could not get his sheep through the furze-gap, and, time being up, returned to the starting-point, disheartened and beaten. No better fortune attended Mayflower, whose sheep broke and ran in front of the second gap, being still unmanageable when time was called.

"Now, Phil," said Penruddocke, his voice trembling with emotion, as Royal's number went up on the board, "go in and win, my lad. Keep a cool head and a steady nerve, and the cup's yours."

"I'll do my best," replied Phil, stepping forward, the youngest shepherd there by ten years—"I'll do my best."

One swift glance round he took at the vast sea of faces lining each side of the hill, in the midst of which, clear and distinct to his eye, was the sweet face of Lucy Penruddocke beaming affection and encouragement upon him, and then he and Royal were off on their run for the cup.

The dog found his sheep at ease, and sent them up the hill as though he had known them since they were unborn lambs. They were a wild lot, and made several dashy dashes for the open, but Royal headed off the runways each time, and brought them back into the pack. Behind him ran Phil, cool and collected, despite the sledge-hammer beating of his heart and the singing in his ears, keeping a keenly watchful eye on dog and sheep alike. Past the pole on the top of the hill they went, and then turned and swept down towards the narrow gap in the furze-bush that had been the General's undoing not an hour before.

"He's bringin' 'em down too fast," said an old shepherd in the forefront of the crowd. "They'll never stand the pace."

But they did, and went through the gap without a blunder. A rolling cheer went up from the vast crowds of onlookers.

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and then a deep silence fell upon them as the sheep reeled towards the sharp turning leading to the next gap. Would they take that turning, or break and scatter? A big, black-horned tup shied and darted sideways up the hill. A quick seizure from Phil, and Royal had headed the tup off, and the next moment the turn was rounded, and the sheep were heading for the gap. Now they were through, and again a deep-throated cheer rolled over the far-spreading moors.

"Didn't I tell you as Royal 'ould win!' shouted Penruddocke, wild with excitement. "There ain't another dog to match 'im!"

A cackling laugh rumbled at his elbow as Joe Heald, his face white and strained, craned his head forward.

"Wait!" he said. "Yen plank's goin' to werry him." It was the plank crossing the pool of water to the pen, a narrow bit of timber scarce wide enough for a sheep to tread upon, and towards it Phil's sheep were racing at headlong speed.

A murmuring hum of excitement passed along the packed rows of spectators as the sheep neared the plank. The leading sheep stopped, throwing those behind him into momentary confusion, and then stepped out and stopped again, on the very edge of the plank.

"He's only got another minute," rumbled Heald, at Penruddocke's elbow. "Only one more minute."

Men were looking at their watches, their fingers shaking with uncontrolled excitement, and a tiny figure almost lost in the crowd, Lucy Penruddocke was holding her hand to her eyes, afraid to look. Steadily, calmly, Phil and Royal sorted the sheep forward. Now the leader was moving on again, but slowly, slowly, and the precious seconds were flying by.

"He'll never do it!" muttered Penruddocke. "He'll never do it!" echoed Heald. "Didn't I tell you so?"

Then Penruddocke looked again, and a flashing smile lit up his face.

"It's a ho!" he yelled. "He will do it! He's done it!"

A spasm of fear had sent the leading sheep to the far side of the plank in a flying leap, and the rest followed it over the frail bridge and into the pen. Then a thunderous roar of cheering broke loose, and old shepherds turned to each other and said that never before had they seen anything like that.

Three cheers for Royal, King of the Moors! shouted a voice, and the cheers were given by twenty thousand throats, again and yet again.

The crowd subsided almost as quickly as it had commenced, and all eyes were turned on a thin, little man, hairless and combless, who had started briskly up to the starting-point, followed by a gigantic black dog. The man was Joe Heald, and the big dog was Black Harry.

The two were off in a moment, and Black Harry had his sheep off the run with marvellous quickness. Up the hill he sent them at a tremendous pace, bullying them as only he knows how to bully, and they were over the hill and through the first gap ten seconds ahead of the time taken by Royal to cover the same part of the course. The spectators held their breath, and stared at the flying pack in sheer amazement. Black Harry was hurrying his sheep along like a shot, and his horses round the ring in a chariot race, keeping them by a straight, undeviating line, with Heald flying along behind, with his features set in hard, grim lines of purpose.

Along the hillside, round the turning, and through the second gap they raced, and now they were heading for home. A shout, the first sound to break the astonished silence, went up as the sheep came to a huddling halt in front of the plank bridge, and five of them broke and dashed for the open. Like a flying thunderbolt Black Harry was after them, and turned four back, but the fifth ran on up the hillside, and by the time the dog had brought him back, other sheep were plunging and darting in all directions.

"He's two minutes yet!" shouted a score of voices. "He'll do it!"

The two minutes dwindled to one, and still the sheep plunged and backed, refusing to set foot on the bridge. Behind them Heald, the perspiration streaming down his face, worked like one inspired, and Black Harry charged and leaped with demon-like energy.

"They're on!" roared the crowd, as the sheep rushed for the plank. "Not Not Not!"

The leading sheep had slipped clean off the plank into the water, and those following backed wildly on to firm ground, and headed a mad flight that was still in progress as the last nibs of grass ticked out, and Royal was declared the winner of the cup.

Caught up shoulder high, Phil was carried in triumph through a surging, cheering crowd to the judges' stand, and there presented with the silver cup that he and Royal had won.

"Bravo!" shouted Penruddocke. "Cheers for R. King of the Moors!"

And as the sounds of applause rang out, a light, sweeping unrestrainedly in the bitterness of his disappointment, turned and stumbled blindly away from the crowd, his head bowed, and his side moved Black Harry, wagging his tail and lowered head, for in his own way he was as pained as keen and bitter as his master.

Once he stopped and looked back, his great jaw bowed at his eyes flashing deadly hate and defiance, for on the plain stand he could see the lordly figure of Royal, his rival.

"He's beaten me!" cried Heald aloud, as he retorted to the open moors. "That young lout I took from the beaten me, hang him! But I'll be even with him yet with his dog!"

And Black Harry, as if understanding the meaning of his master's words, growled hideous approval. His long, revenge was almost human, and had Heald but known the word he would have raced back to fight with him to the death. But weeks and months were to pass before the opportunity he desired came to him, and then his revenge was taken in a totally unexpected way.

CHAPTER 4.

A Mission of Rescue—Fighting the Storm—What Phil Found.

"HERE'S the farm at last, thank goodness!" As he uttered the words aloud, Phil stopped to give a sighing gasp of relief, and then he fought his way onward again through the blinding storm towards Penruddocke's farmhouse, that, for an hour, he had almost despaired of ever seeing again. On the moors, while returning late in the afternoon to the farm, some seven miles distant, where he and Royal been with a flock of sheep, he had been caught in a storm that had seemingly swept down upon the earth in a cloudless autumn sky.

Believing that it would soon be over, he had taken in the hollow trunk of an old and withered tree, and the storm increased in fury, and he was compelled to move, or run the risk of meeting his death from exposure.

Rain and snow fell in quantities unprecedented for the time of year, and was quickly blown into drifts by the fury of the gale. Such a night set in as the lad never remembered, and in bleak, open places he was driven helplessly from his path and thrown off his feet time after time.

But for Royal he must have perished, for the dog, as his short, joyous barks announced the fact of his arrival at the old house in the hollow that had once been a place of refuge for Phil, and was now his home.

Stamping his feet, and shaking the thick coating of snow from his overcoat, the lad opened the back door of the house, and entered the kitchen, with Royal at his heels, followed by a trembling woman, with a piteously imploring expression in her eyes, which were red and swollen with weeping, ran forward to meet him.

"Is she found yet?" she cried eagerly. "Tell me, have you found her yet?"

Then, as the lad's face expressed bewildered surprise, she sank back into a chair and put her apron to her eyes.

"I'd forgotten," she sobbed, "that you hadn't seen her with John to look for her, my lady."

In an instant Phil was by her side, and, perceiving her face.

"Lucy!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "What's happened to you?"

"She's lost!" came the broken reply. "Early in the morning she set off for Torley, to order some things, and she's not come back since. When I missed her father and a couple of the farm hands, I went her, expecting that she'd be almost home by five hours ago, or more, and they haven't returned."

Phil put his hand on the table to steady himself, as the news had given him a terrible shock. Staggered through the storm and darkness the thought of his welcome he would receive from Lucy Penruddocke warmed his heart, and now he heard that she was out in the black night at the mercy of the raging storm. He himself had been nearly cast away. How could he survive when he had been all but overcome by the storm? He staggered back at the awful thought, and then his young face hardened in that expression of determination which had been so often on it in those past months.

Crossing over to an old oak sideboard against which he took from it a spirit flask and filled it with brandy, he took it, along with a few other things.

might come in useful for restorative purposes should required, he stowed away inside his pockets.

"Where are you going to?" asked the woman wonderingly as he was making these few preparations.

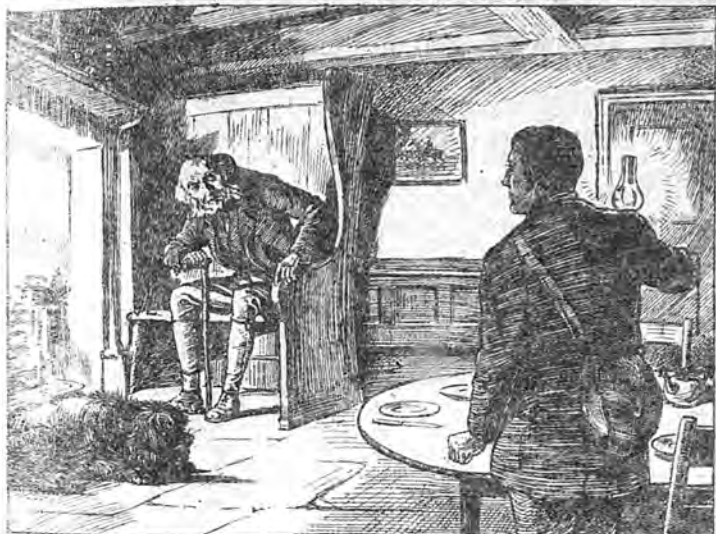
"To find Lucy," he replied, looking at her with a heartening smile. "And try and keep from freezing. Mrs. Penruddocke. I sha'n't be surprised to see you late and sound with her father and the men in one of the houses on the Torley Road. Happen they're all there for shelter till the storm's over. So keep up a good heart, and when you see Lucy again, remember, you'll find me there."

The other could utter the words of feeble remembrance as it rose to her lips, he had left the cozy, firelit room and faced once more the wild and stormy night. He had, however, taken the precaution of arming himself with a stout ash stick and a lantern, and by the aid of the

hand was eclipsed in his sight by the vivid picture that he carried in his mind's eye of Lucy's sweet face, clear blue eyes, and white brow crowned by a glory of fair hair. To save her from death he was risking his life, and his only fear was that his bodily powers would not endure the strain that he was putting upon them.

At times he floundered and fell while plunging through some drift, and it was Royal who lifted him on his feet again, and licked warmth back into his chilled face and hands. It was a battle between him and Royal on one side and the elements on the other, and as though imbued with a sentient fury at the dogged fight that was being maintained against it, the storm increased in violence. It shrieked and howled in a thousand mad voices, buffeting the lad right and left, and forcing him to cower on his knees, spent and breathless, time after time.

A numb, drowsy feeling was creeping over him, and



Phil placed the lamp on the table he placed at Heald, who was seated against the far wall in an old room. "You've got home before me," said Phil. "Was it you I saw on the moor about a quarter of an hour ago?" (See page 20.)

Thus available room reached the snow-covered moor.

One of the slopes of Bratton Hollow, and for some yards was protected from the wind, but upon the top of the slope the lad encountered the full force of the storm. The wind was blowing more strongly than ever, and the snow fell upon him in blinding sheets.

He tried to see an inch in front of him, for the snow was falling into his eyes; and but for Royal he must have been lost from the path.

It was a time to test the courage of boy and dog alike, if ever there was one, and they answered to the test with a nobility. Never flinching, the great sheep dog stood every moment or two to make sure that nothing was lost with the other. Where the path dipped the snow was correspondingly deep, reaching in places above the lad's knees and clinging around his limbs like the softy tenacious arms of some stormy octopus. But he pushed doggedly on, determined purpose.

The howling, while wilderness encompassing him on every

side as he fought against its paralyzing influence he could not shake it off. How far he had come he did not know in the least, for his brain had lost all count of time and distance. His one fixed idea was that he had to rescue Lucy, who was battling somewhere ahead of him in the storm, and that he must reach her at all cost.

The sound of Royal's whining bark reached his ear, and at the same moment the dog pressed softly back against his knees. Almost mechanically he pushed forward, but the dog would not move, and whined again. Wondering vaguely what the cause of this was, he held up his lantern and peered ahead through the whirling snowflakes. Then he knew why Royal had come to a halt. He was close to the entrance to Muckleston Pass, but a huge wall of snow blocked up the narrow defile, and to blow a way through it was a sheer impossibility.

A groan burst from his lips, for it seemed to him that his journey was to be a fruitless one, and then hope came more to him. The pass was some considerable distance from Torley, and if Lucy had approached it after the storm commenced, she would in all probability have taken the footpath that led round one side of it as being the safer

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way. No sooner had he thought of this than he struck out to the left and gained the path, now knee-deep in drifting snow. Under the jagged wall of rock that now sheltered him, he was able to gain a respite from the fierce buffeting of the gale, and made quicker progress. His lantern now became of more use to him, and he looked keenly to right and left for signs of recent footprints.

He discovered none, however, and after a while he abandoned the search as useless, and hurried on towards the junction of the path he was following with the one at the far end of the defile. He was nearly there when Royal, who had been sniffing steadily for some minutes past, uttered a loud bark and dashed off into the darkness. He was gone some three or four minutes, and upon reappearing looked up into Phil's face with an air of wonderful sagacity, and then moved off again.

He left the path and clambered up over the rocks that were piled together high above him, and Phil followed; a wild howl arose in his breast. Up and on he and the dog climbed, slipping in the snow continually at the risk of being hurled down to a suffocating death, but pausing never a moment. They were almost level with the summit of the rise when Royal barked and darted in between two rocks that leaned towards each other, forming a natural archway, and, following him, Phil saw, at the far end of a recess backed by a huge block of granite, three huddled figures lying in the thin mantle of powdery snow that the wind had drifted into the shelter.

In an instant he was down on his knees by the first figure, and tearing away the shawl that had been wrapped round the head, he peered down into the white, still face of Lucy Penruddock.

"Lucy!" he cried, in a queer, strangled voice. "Lucy, it's me, Phil Denham! Wake up, Lucy!"

There was no response to his pleading, and with a great dread that he had come too late to save her tugging at his heart, he set about to try and restore animation in the unconscious girl with feverish haste. Opening the spirit flask, he rubbed her hands and lips with brandy, as if then forced her mouth open and poured a dose of the fiery liquid between her teeth. A slight flush of colour in the pale cheeks, and a fluttering of the closed eyelids rewarded him, and he was almost overwhelmed by a suffocating sense of boundless gratitude. He was not too late. She was saved.

"Lucy, dear!" he exclaimed, as she opened her eyes.

"It's me, Phil. Don't you recognise me?"

A faint smile lit up her face, and then she sat up feebly, and caught his two hands in hers with a gesture of unpeakable relief.

"I know you would rescue me," she said. "I told Mr. Phil when he brought me in here, and—"

She stopped speaking suddenly, and gazed round with a startled, frightened look on her face.

"Joe Heald!" cried Phil in amazement. "Was it him who saved you?"

The girl was still looking behind her, and now she stretched out a trembling forefinger—

"Look!" she said.

Phil's glance followed hers, and then he stepped across to those huddled figures that he had first noticed then forgotten in his joy at the sight of Lucy. One of them was that of Joe Heald, and the other of Black Harry, one swift glance told Phil that both man and dog were dead.

The little man was lying on his back, a set marble white features, rigid in the sleep that had awakened. He was without a coat, and his shoes were torn where the sharp rocks had pierced them, stretched upon his breast, his master's hands still about his neck, was Black Harry. The great dog huddled there to keep his master warm, and the almost human anguish in the glazed eyes of the animal showed that he had suffered all the bitter, hopeless grief before the death that had claimed the man he had loved laid its cold finger on his brow.

"He's dead!" said Phil, tears that he was afterwards ashamed of remembering coursing down his cheeks.

"Both he and Black Harry will wake no more."

And Lucy Penruddock sobbed bitterly over the stark forms of the man and the dog who had given her life to save her.

"He was lost in the storm like I was," she said, "and found me in the pass. I was stupid and overcame the cold, and all I remember is that he lifted me up to his arms and brought me in here."

"He wrapped you up in his coat to keep you warm," added Phil, "and but for that you must have perished."

And into silence by the thought of the noble man that had glorified the last hour of Heald's life, waited there in that place of shelter between the rocks, the storm had abated in violence. Then, hand in hand, Royal guiding them, they sought the footpath in the snow of the pass and walked on in the direction of Tor, which they met John Penruddock at the head of the coach-party. And so there was rejoicing that once rejoicing mingled with grief for the death of a man and a dog who had loved his master as his master loved him.

In less than a week later the bodies of Joe Heald and Black Harry were buried in one common grave in the little churchyard at Torley in the presence of the man who had known them in life. Both had been faithful while living, but now there was not a man not think of them with kindly thoughts, for they upon earth had been one of unselfish heroism that for ever appeal to the rugged hearts of men who have lived out on the wild moors of Devonshire in such a gloom, in calm and in storm.

And so long as Phil and Lucy, now looking forward near day of their marriage, are alive, so long as the flowers bedeck the green mound above that grateful thoughts keep alive the memory of the man and his sheep-dog, then when there was peace in the snow-Royal, King of the Moors.

THE END.

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EASY
TO DO.



"If you will keep him at bay, Mr. Graydon, I will set about cutting your hair and beard to resemble his," said Dolores. "There is no time to waste, remember." (See page 39.)

Others were still remaining afloat. For some reason
ambulances were loitering about.

The weather, she stepped across the pavement, hasty petticoats to avoid getting them wet.

"No, no, no," she said to the chauffeur, and the hrougham. In the darkness she failed to see the two gentlemen had glided up, one each side of her, and locked the doors; the hum of the motor was now very loud.

...gilded off, and Dolores looked at the man interestedly. She thought, in a vague way, she had been wroth in refusing the Government's offer. Monterre's last words had caused her a little more than once. But she had decided now, and now, like darkness, it was ridiculous to say she was. (The rain—the didn't incite the people to

...back into the street again, then started. The
bustling in a different direction altogether to
comparably took. Besides that, it was moving
high speed, and drove ahead as if the driver was
...to his destination. Dolores hastily called
...to him, but no reply was forthcoming.

— I have going the wrong way, and why did he
— (groans) She looked out of the window more
— I never. Evidently they were making for the open
— She pulled the window-strap, and received another

surprise—it refused to budge! The doors, too, were locked! Dolores became somewhat excited. What had happened? She was a prisoner in her own carriage, being whirled in a strange direction at the rate of thirty miles an hour! It was impossible for her to escape—unless she smashed a window and threw herself out. And that would probably mean death.

She had been kidnapped. Her mind was in a dizzy whirl. Who could have done it? What could be the motive for the outrage? With wide-open eyes she looked through the thick glass. She was changing from hot to cold, and it was with an effort she kept herself from shrieking. The brougham was in the country now, driving through the mud and rain with unslackened speed. Again Dolores signalled the chauffeur, but again she got no reply.

And so, until the end of a long and weary ride, she sat there, half angry, half frightened, waiting for some explanation of this extraordinary journey. At last, after an interminable time, the power was cut off, and the vehicle came to a halt. For the last few minutes it had been passing through lighted streets, and now stopped in almost utter darkness.

Isolores sat listening for a moment, then one of the doors was quickly thrown open. Several men stood outside, and the splashing of water could be heard. The sky was now clear and starlit, but the high wind still prevailed.

"Stay step outside, mademoiselle," a polite voice said. "And be good enough to make no attempt to escape. There are three men with me, so you will see the wisdom of my words."

"Mamma! Longetto!" cried Dolores in amazement.
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"If you will keep him at bay, Mr. Graydon, I will set about cutting your hair and beard to resemble his," said Dolores. "There is no time to waste, remember." (See page 28.)

the door remaining alight. For some reason the gentlemen were loitering about.

As Dolores and Dolores came into view. She was the first to appear. With a very grimace at the scuttler, she stepped across the pavement, and turned to the left to avoid getting them wet. "Good-bye, Louis!" she said to the chauffeur, and then she disappeared. In the darkness she failed to see the two gentlemen had glided up, one each side of her, and looked the doors; the hum of the motor was heard as they rolled.

The car glided off, and Dolores looked at the scuttler in astonishment. She thought, in a vague way, that she had been wisely in refusing the Government's offer. The last words had caused her a little trouble. But she had decided now, and she was determined; it was ridiculous to say she was afraid of the men—she didn't invite the people to

come into the street again, then started. The car was in a different direction altogether to the one she was usually took. Besides that, it was moving very fast, and drove ahead as if the driver was in a hurry. Dolores hastily called out to the chauffeur, but no reply was forthcoming.

Louis going the wrong way, and why did he not come back? She looked out of the window more and more. Recently they were making for the open air. She pulled the window-strap, and received another

surprise—it refused to budge! The doors, too, were locked!

Dolores became somewhat excited. What had happened? She was a prisoner in her own carriage, being whirled in a strange direction at the rate of thirty miles an hour! It was impossible for her to escape—unless she smashed a window and threw herself out. And that would probably mean death.

She had been kidnapped! Her mind was in a dizzy whirl. Who could have done it? What could be the motive for the outrage? With wide-open eyes she looked through the thick glass. She was changing from hot to cold, and it was with an effort she kept herself from shrieking. The brougham was in the country now, driving through the mud and rain with unslackened speed. Again Dolores signalled the chauffeur, but again she got no reply.

And so, until the end of a long and weary ride, she sat there, half angry, half frightened, waiting for some explanation of this extraordinary journey. At last, after an interminable time, the power was cut off, and the vehicle came to a halt. For the last few minutes it had been moving through lighted streets, and now stopped in almost utter darkness.

Dolores sat listening for a moment, then one of the doors was quickly thrown open. Several men stood outside, and the splashing of water could be heard. The sky was bow down, and starlit, but the high wind still prevailed.

"Pray step outside, mademoiselle," a polite voice said. "and be good enough to make no attempt to escape. There are three men with me, so you will see the wisdom of my words."

"Monsieur Lennet," cried Dolores in amazement.

"Exactly! I think I mentioned when I saw you the other day that something unusual would occur, that through your own fault—"

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" cried the prisoner angrily. "I demand to be set at liberty. I am arrested, Monsieur Lemorre, at you, a member of the Ministry—"

"I am under orders from the Government," interrupted the other quietly. "Everything that has happened has been done by the police; the man who drove you here is a member of the Force. No harm will come to you; not a hair of your head will be touched."

"But I don't understand—"

"Of course not!" said M. Lemorre, noting the bewilderment she was in. "Now, Lieutenant Bouillier, is everything in readiness?"

"Everything, monsieur."

"Good! If you will agree to follow me, mademoiselle, I will show you the way to your cabin."

Dolores started back.

"Cabin?" she asked. "What do you mean? Are you going to take me on a ship? I won't go! I am not a criminal!"

"I think you will agree with me that it will be better to walk than be carried," said M. Lemorre calmly. "I warned you, and you have only yourself to blame for what is now happening. You will come with me quietly!"

Dolores stood for a moment looking at the men before her. The lights from the brougham showed her their faces and clothing, and she noted that they were sailors. Her brain was working like lightning, but she could not fathom the meaning of this strange proceeding. She knew from M. Lemorre's presence that it was in connection with her refusal to sign the necessary paper, stating that she would drop her pretence to the throne, but what they were going to do with her was a puzzle. It half frightened her when she thought of a ship. Was she banished from the Republic? At all events, it would be better to fall in with M. Lemorre's suggestion, and follow him quietly.

"Yes," she said, in answer to his question, "I will go without assistance. But somebody shall be made to answer for this, Monsieur. I am a free citizen, and have done no wrong."

The sailors closed about her, and she noted that all wore a half-concealed smile. It was clear that no harm was to befall her, anyway. The affair had more the appearance of a joke than anything else. The walk was not a long one. Having passed through a narrow alley, she found herself on a quay, where moored alongside was a large man-of-war.

Without a word she crossed the gangway, and found herself on the gently heaving deck. The whole adventure seemed like a dream to her; it was too fantastic to be true.

"This way," said the high Government official, and Dolores followed him into a brilliantly lighted cabin. She gave a cry of surprise, and stepped forward. The old servant who looked after her Paris villa was seated within, and she appeared to be remarkably comfortable. These surprises were continuous.

"Ah, mon'sieu, you have got here!" she cried. "Are you not wondering what is the matter? We are to go on a long sea voyage. Monsieur Lemorre has told me—"

"A long sea voyage!" echoed Dolores. "I am bewildered. I must ask you to explain, Monsieur."

"In a moment. The captain's presence is essential, as I will go and find him. Meanwhile your excellent house-keeper will show you your cabins. There are three at your disposal, so I think you will be quite comfortable."

And M. Lemorre, serious and polite, left the cabin. Very soon he returned with the captain, and explained to the dismayed Dolores that, owing to her refusal to comply with the Government's wishes, she was to be incarcerated on an island in the Pacific for ten years. All her fortune, and \$5,000 over in banknotes was to go with her, and a guarantee that her house and furniture would be preserved during her absence.

At first she was nearly hysterical, terrified with the thought of what was to be her lot. M. Lemorre had expected her to beg to be allowed to return, ready to do anything he wished. But in this he was mistaken. After the first shock Dolores became calm and quiet. She declared that if she escaped she would not lift a finger to do as he required. She had a will of her own, and plenty of brains.

M. Lemorre admired her for it, and wondered if, after all, she would have her spirit broken when the cruiser called on the return journey to fetch her off. At all events, she would be out of France for a month or two, and during that time she would be forgotten, and the affair have blown over.

And so, in this abrupt, dramatic, and tremendous fashion Dolores de la Merced left the French Republic for the Pacific. The cruiser was a fast one, but it was well on into November before it reached the vicinity of the Iron Island. A few days before sighting it a fierce storm had raged—the

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storm which had sent the Hurricane to eternity. Dolores had grown resigned to her fate almost by now, although she couldn't believe that she was to be left alone for ten years. Yet she didn't guess M. Lemorre's strategy.

The Iron Island, as it happened, was the first sighted, and the captain decided it would do as well as any other. There were numerous uncharted rocks thereabouts. It was chance Philip Graydon was asleep in the banyan tree on the cruiser's mainmast. The captain had made a complete map of the island beforehand, had seen the jagged reef, and decided upon another method of landing his crew. The reef looked dangerous, and an under-surface rock was a mean disaster.

A boatload of bluejackets was sent off to a spot where the reef was the shallowest, and there it sloped a trail up to the west of the island—as West Point, as it was called. It was difficult work, but after a while the men had succeeded in climbing to the top. They carried a large ladder with them, and it was a simple matter to get it to a rock at the summit.

A tent was carried up next, and numerous bags of Dolores' personal belongings. The sailors grumbled at this, for this was rather a novel occupation. They did not know any of the particulars, but knew what it was, and what a commotion she had been causing. Not a sign of life of any description was to be seen on the island.

They pitched the tent several hundred yards from the cliff edge, down in the valley under the shade of cococonut palms, placed the supply of water, and then, inside, then signalled to the captain that all was ready. In a few minutes Dolores, pale and calm, was being taken towards the jagged ironstone cliff, unable to believe that leaving civilization behind for ten years. Her mind was too numb to take in all before then.

Being active and agile, the climb up the rope-ladder was nothing. With mingled feelings she watched the bluejackets returning to the cruiser. The boat reached the shore, and a few minutes later the war-vessel steamed on northward. It had only been in view from the bay for a few minutes, so Graydon had little chance of seeing if he had been awake.

Dolores turned with heavy heart and gazed at the sea. She was alone! Alone on an island, with no hope of help—she felt the same feelings exactly as her countrymen, and these two were only separated by a mile of ironstone. Both thought they were alone, both thought they had the island to themselves, until—

Endeavouring to brighten herself a little, Dolores turned down to the landing with true French politeness. It had been performed for her. She found a coverlet in that hut. The captain of the cruiser had been of putting his charge to any discomfort during the trip to the island.

Curious to see what was beyond the trees she went down. Dolores presently strode into the valley, and just placed her foot on the soft patch of earth, paused, her heart beating wildly, her whole frame quivering with excitement and amazement. Her face was a picture of incredulous wonder. Somewhere from the trees had come a voice—a voice humming an English song.

She waited a moment longer, and the sound grew louder and nearer. There could be no doubt as to its nature. Looking swiftly around her, she darted behind a large rock, watching with wondering eyes. What she saw! She couldn't even imagine.

Then she drew her breath in sharply, because Philip Graydon had walked in view, and his grotesque appearance caused her to cry out. With dilated eyes she watched him walking onwards, towards her tent, and so far, hidden by the trees. Who was he? What he was doing here? Again she drew her breath in sharply. Graydon had seen the footprint, and had staggered at the sight.

"Great Heaven!" she heard him exclaim.

With sudden decision she made up her mind to have no object to be gained in concealing herself. He was strange, but he might be able to help her. He was a fishman evidently; but why did he wear his hat? Dolores stepped out into the open composedly. She had got over her great surprise. She was now curious now.

"My friend," she called calmly, in perfect French, "I am puzzled over something."

Philip Graydon swung round like lightning, and with open mouth and dilated eyes, gazing at her before him. Had he recognised Dolores? He had not, but he had never before taken such a look. He stood still, his hands outstretched to move an inch or utter a sound.

And there they stood, separated by no more than a dozen yards—these two whose destinies were

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the Government's wishes, but was I not a free citizen? Could I not sail myself what I wished?"

"It is unjust—tyrannical! I shall have to escape—I must escape! I could not live for ten years on this barren spot! It is impossible!"

"And yet I have endured it for eight years," said Graydon, a sudden fire appearing in his eyes. "Escape is impossible—at least, it seems so at present. I have a presentiment, however, that some day not far distant I shall get away, and be free to revenge myself upon my enemies. And when that day comes—"

The expression of his face told Dolores the rest. When that day did come Graydon would be a very dangerous man. It made her all the more curious to know his story. But she had not finished her own yet.

"I cannot realise the extent of my sentence yet," she said. "It seems impossible that I am to remain here for ten years. What can I do? How can I live? Oh, if I were free—"

"But you are not, mademoiselle. And, if you will excuse my being quite candid, I think you did very foolishly to set yourself against the Government. Governments are tricky things to tamper with. They are all-powerful, and can do as they please. And, after all, upon whom are you usually victorious. I advise you for it greatly, and am sorry it has terminated in such an abrupt fashion. But to defy the Government! Really, it was immense!"

She could not be angry with him for his plain speaking. He spoke so pleasantly, so concisely. Already she was beginning to see that he was right: she had been unwise. M. Lemeroy had carried out his plan, and Dolores was bitter against him. Poor Lemeroy! His intentions were really good; he had done this merely to save Dolores from being banished from France. How was she to know that she was to be fetched off in a fortnight—that the threat of leaving her there for ten years was merely to break her spirit!

"I will admit this Lemeroy you talk about is something of a tyrant," went on Graydon. "His action in imprisoning you here is scandalous, and when you return to France, ten years hence—"

"But I must escape before then!" cried Dolores. "I cannot exist for all that terrible time!"

"I thought the same when I was first landed here, and I had nothing to look forward to—I am sentenced to spend my life here!"

"You will live to the island when I do!"

"Of course, but that may not be for ten years!"

They looked into one another's eyes, and there was something in that glance that told them both that he was wrong; that they would leave the island about immediately. But how they knew it, and in what manner they would escape, was a question neither could answer. The feeling was there—intangible, but nevertheless positive.

The Man of Mystery.

"You have greatly interested me by your very singular story," exclaimed Graydon, stroking his beard. "But there is one thing puzzling me. You said a short time ago that you were neither English nor French. Since you have a French name, French manners, and have been earning a living on the French stage, I fail to see how—"

"Oh, that is easily explained," laughed Dolores. "I've some strange reason, she felt light-hearted. Perhaps it was that feeling—the feeling that they would both escape in the near future—that had taken possession of her. "Dolores de las Mercedes" is merely an assumed name. My real name is not nearly so imposing, and would not look at all well in Paris."—Kathleen O'Brien.

"By Jove!" said Graydon languidly. "That's Irish!"

"My father was a native of Belfast, while my mother was of Spanish blood, so, you see, I'm not French at all. But my father lived most of his life in Paris, so I grew up a French girl almost. He insisted, however, on my learning the English language, and being fond of learning I eagerly agreed. But you have not told me anything about yourself—who these enemies are, and why you were placed here all alone."

Graydon rose to his feet. Although not a big man, he seemed to Dolores to be powerful, both in body and in mind. His very eagerness was disconcerting; his utter indifference to the peculiarity of the position. He fascinated her. She did not know why, but she seemed drawn towards him; his personality was magnetic, and she was burning with curiosity to know who he was.

"It is rather a long story," he explained, picking up his hat. "Perhaps you would like to come down to the other part of the island? I can show you my home, and can explain things much better there."

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NEXT THURSDAY:

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"Oh, that is a good idea!" she said, rising. "I'm wondering where you lived."

"I am afraid you will find it not nearly so attractive as you may think here. You have at least got some civilisation all around to remind you that you are not in the world!"

"And haven't you?"

"That," he said, "I will let you see for yourself." He walked out into the sunlight, and stood for a moment looking directly up into the golden ball. The sky was cloudless, and the heat intense. The humming of the bees and the gentle rustling of the palm-leaves were the only sounds to be heard. A peaceful scene, but one of such loneliness that was absolutely inconceivable to a person who had never been there. The Iron Island seemed to be cut off from the world; isolated, with not an animal in its length and breadth, and only a limited number of men. Dolores and Graydon, standing there, felt the utter loneliness of the island intensely; the overpowering sense of being alone.

He was used to it—used to loneliness far greater than this. During the weary eight years of his exile it had become nearly as much his home; at others it had given him time to think, to strengthen his brain, to strengthen his body, until he was no other man on earth. By this time he had grown to like his solitary life; the overpowering loneliness to have another human being by his side had passed. Nevertheless, he was glad Dolores had come; he would like somebody to tell his plans to. And he was glad she was a woman, for he felt that she would sympathise with him more than a man; would understand and help him in his utter loneliness of the island. She stood there thinking of the terrible years to come, the weary months with nothing to do, no other woman to speak to. Then came another thought; or, rather, a feeling of exultation. She escaped! She escaped! In exactly the same manner as the comfort taken hold of Graydon some rain," declared Graydon, looking upwards. "Before night, too."

"But there's not the slightest sign of it!"

"So I should have said eight years ago. But now I have had ample time to study Nature. And now I can definitely state by a glance at the sky what the weather will be like six hours hence."

"Really, that must be very handy!"

"It is—in a way. Now, if you will follow me I will show you to the path. The rest of the island is not so good as this you know."

Graydon walked down the hill, and she could not help admiring his magnificent physique. He walked with a feel appearing to glide over the ground, yet he never slipped; every step was firm and sure. She walked beside him, and almost felt envious of his curly locks. His own thoughts were busy. He was thinking of the fact that he had just told her, although she would never hear of it. To all appearances he was totally occupied with his work, he wondered what the world would say when he heard the facts about himself, for he meant to tell the world nothing.

They passed the shed containing the bread and the Brotherhood of Iron, and Dolores looked at it with interest. As he vouchsafed no explanation, however, she said nothing. Presently the luxuriant vegetation and trees gave place to a bare, scorching plain.

"Oh, how horrible!" she said, as she stumbled over the rough ground. "I had no notion it was so wretched stuff here! Isn't it difficult to walk on?"

"Do you find it so?" he queried. "I have been accustomed to it, although I remember it was rather awkward at first. However, there is little further to be said."

"Look at that bird!" she interrupted, pointing to a gaudily-coloured creature that had suddenly alighted on the ground twenty yards distant. "What a size it is!"

"Yes, they are a decent size," agreed Graydon. "They're very good eating, too. Would you like to see one?"

"But you have no weapons," said Dolores, in surprise. "No civilised weapons certainly, but there are others. There, he is going!"

The bird had taken to the air, and was slowly flying over their heads. Quick as lightning Graydon stooped, picked up a round stone of about an inch diameter, and threw back his arm. Dolores watched in amazement as he raised his arm, and she saw the bird fall to the ground as if it were a stone.

Graydon's arm shot forward, and, although Dolores saw the stone leave his hand, she failed to see the bird fall. He had sped into the air like a shot from a gun. There was a loud squawk, and the huge bird, now that it was alone, was alone.

as high from the ground, seemed to crumple up like a stone. With a thud it struck the ironstone perfectly still.

"You," drawled Graydon, with a quiet smile, "are absolutely necessary."

"I cannot believe it!" exclaimed Dolores amazedly, "it is impossible that you killed it with a little stone, and you send it with sufficient force!"

"I have practised stone-throwing a lot. When I throw anything else to do, it is really an interesting

exercise. The force with which you throw it was stupendous! You are strong, too! The bird was in flight at the time, and you are a most remarkable man. I can't help saying

years of solitude has no doubt worked many changes in body and in mind," smiled Graydon calmly, "nothing to be surprised at; it is only natural."

"I looked over to the bird and picked it up. It was dead. The stone had struck it in the side, smashing its ribs and causing instant death. Dolores had

tried; the force with which the stone had been thrown was enormous. And the accuracy of Graydon's aim was perfect in itself. Yet he made no boast about his

skill. He did not know half his accomplishments yet. He looked at him somewhat in awe. His was such a

personality—such an air of mystery permeated his being. She almost decided to hear his story; she

was intrigued in her own mind that he was a criminal. For what other reason had he been imprisoned?

Then she thought of her own case. She was a criminal, so why should he be? He certainly

seemed sufficiently enough. His eyes and face, too, were

most looking. No; before she judged him she

was developments.

In my opinion, is the best place on the whole

for Graydon, as they left the ironstone and

under the impenetrable shade of the mighty man-

grove. "Straight ahead, you see, is the

background is the only stretch of beach

anywhere." "And isn't it cool here, after that

heat?" "The sea, too, looks just delightful. But I

don't think straight at it," drawled Graydon,

looking about her wonderingly. She seemed a

stranger to what she had been in Paris. Her

thoughts to have gone, and she was a girl again,

innocently. Her simple glances were merely

and she seemed in no way embarrassed. Had

an ordinary man she would have been so;

He was a decidedly extraordinary man, and

He, seated himself on a patch of grass which grew just under one of the minor trunks of the banyan-tree, while Dolores sat facing him. She was looking expectant, and watched his unemotional face closely. She did not picture him as a young man still under thirty; it was impossible to do so. He was a personality all to himself.

In a quiet voice, Graydon proceeded to tell his fair companion of his first dealings with the Brotherhood of Iron, when he had been a weak youth of barely twenty. He told her how he had joined the Brotherhood, believing the whole thing to be an elaborate joke, and had discovered too late the villainous object of the society. She listened, enthralled, for the narrative, and the way in which he told it—was thrilling. When he definitely learned the truth—that the Brotherhood of Iron was nothing but a colossal criminal organisation—he had declared himself highly indignant, and threatened to expose them to the police.

"I was hot-headed at that time," said Graydon quietly, "or I should have used a little stratagem; instead of that, I swore excitedly that immediately I got out of the council chamber I should inform the police. Of course, that settled matters. They weren't going to be frustrated by a youngster, so merely bundled me aboard a ship, and brought me out here, where I'm as harmless as a hitten."

"But why should they keep you here? If they are as bad as you say, I should have thought they would kill you."

"So they would but for one fact. Every year a ship comes to this island, and every year I am asked whether I have changed my mind."

"Why don't you say you have, and get to England again?" asked Dolores interestedly.

"Because it would be worse than useless. I should be watched by a dozen spies, and any sign of treachery would mean instant death. No, I would have to escape—disappear, and be able to average myself by methods of my own; to remain in the background, to strike them down one by one; and to let them remain in ignorance as to who their enemy is."

Dolores shivered a little as she looked at his face then, for it was lit with a terrible fire. His eyes had grown as hard as steel, while the set of his jaw could be seen even through his thick beard. Then he laughed lightly, his expression changing like magic.

"But I have not escaped yet," he drawled. "You were asking why they do not kill me? Well, in England there is a certain young lady who has a vast amount of money; I have a little, too, and the Brotherhood want me to marry this lady, gain her fortune, and hand it over to the common fund. Of course, the idea is absurd, for even if I did return to England, I should never marry her. I have almost forgotten her, and she I have often wondered why the Brotherhood doesn't kill me, for they know I am adamant."

"But weren't you in love with this girl?"

"Not the least bit. I think she cared for me a little, but it's all over now," said Graydon carelessly. "My whole time on this barren isle has been directed to perfecting myself—strengthening myself, and when the day comes, when I finally escape—"

"They will regret not having killed you!"

"By Heaven, yes! The fools! They think I am still a weak ninnypop! They think I am like potty, to be worked any way in their fingers. But the awakening will come—I know that; but the question is when?"

"It is hard to say," replied Dolores, realising the enormous tower of the man by her side. "But how long is it since the ship paid its last visit? When do you expect it again?"

"I have been looking out for it for the past few days," answered her companion. "It may be here this afternoon."

Dolores jumped to her feet.

"Then," she cried excitedly, "they can take me away with them? I can escape!"

"You seem to forget that you are in a position exactly similar to my own," rejoined Graydon quietly. "If they take you off the island, you will be a danger to them, for you know as much as myself. Even if you didn't, they would still leave you here. They can afford to take no risks. I am afraid you must await your opportunity the same as I have been doing for so long."

Dolores smiled disappointedly.

"Of course," she agreed, "it is impossible. Besides, if they took me away, I could easily have a ship sent for you. I had overlooked the most obvious difficulties. How silly of me."

"Not at all. It was natural that should be the first thought to cross your mind. By the way, you have the explanation of the most can now. My food mostly consists of tinned stuff, and they bring a fresh supply every year, together with some clothes. Don Sebastian is the name of the man who comes—a confounded Spaniard! Oh, I really beg your pardon! I had forgotten for the moment that your mother—"

"There are bad people in Spain as well as good," exclaimed Dolores.

"The Gem Library, No. 143.

Graydon Tells His Story.

of surprise, and stepped closer. Her

fell upon the various uncivilised articles the

found. The rough table and chair, the wooden

strid leaf bed, all seemed too peculiar and

everything was so clean, so neat and tidy,

where you have lived all these years!" she

thought. "It seems so remarkable; so like

again! But I must ask you to ex-

pose of those. They seem so out of place!"

to a couple of canned meat tins with their

coloured labels. They certainly did seem out of

the remainder of the articles, and Graydon

explained Graydon, taking a sample of steps

opening the door which he had led into the

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opening the door which he had led into the

and displaying the hollow interior.

Graydon Tells His Story.

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fell upon the various uncivilised articles the

found. The rough table and chair, the wooden

strid leaf bed, all seemed too peculiar and

everything was so clean, so neat and tidy,

where you have lived all these years!" she

thought. "It seems so remarkable; so like

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Dolores. "But tell me about this ship. How long does it stay?"

"Just long enough to land any bullion, if they have any—and remember I told you this was their treasure-house—and any cases of tinned goods, &c. When that is over, Don Sebastian seeks me out for a few minutes' chat: to ask me if I have had my spirit broken or not. Pah, the very thought of him turns me sick! He only comes to that he may taunt me!"

"Has he no recognition with him, then?"

"None, except a glittering revolver. He is foolish enough to imagine it would save him if I wished to harm him. Before he could draw trigger, I could knock him senseless."

And as Dolores looked at him she could well believe it.

"And you let him think he has the upper hand?" she asked.

"Why not? What good would it do harming him? I could not escape by doing so. And I wish the Brotherhood to think I am as weak to-day as I was eight years ago."

"I understand. But who is this Don Schastiano?"

"He is a member of the council—one of the men who govern the Brotherhood—one of the greatest scoundrels among us."

"I suppose he is one of those blustering men—big and all important!"

"On the contrary, he is no bigger than I," replied Graydon, quite ignorant of the fact that Dolores had worked up to the question—she was a fine actress. "He is of much the same build as myself, in fact."

"And does he always come?"

²⁴ *Always*.

Dellars was silent for a moment. An idea had entered her head; a wild, fantastic idea at first glance, but one that, if carried out properly, would mean the liberty of their race. She was too clever to allow her feelings to betray her; she had time to think it over, to perfect it, before leaving it to her Graydon. Her keen, womanly sympathy was all with the unprivileged race. She wanted to help him, for she knew that his case was lonely, more grievous than any other. He was a man, he should be a man, but he had been placed in his present terrible position because of his grandfather's hunger.

—Six times she thought, as he said scraps he would wreak a terrible vengeance on the Brotherhood for the great wrong they had done him; but she was in sympathy with him, heart and soul; her own liberation could only come about by helping him. But she wanted time to think—she was alone. She must know nothing yet. The women's wit was to get them out of the seemingly insurmountable difficulty they were in.

"And to think the ship may have up at and leave," she said, gazing dreamily at the distant horizon. "How terrible it must seem to see the way to civilization before you, and not be able to avail yourself of it!"

"It is certainly exasperating," agreed Gryphon. "Now that you know all concerning myself, and we thoroughly understand one another, suppose we go and examine a very peculiar cave in the cliff face just here. It is low water at present, and that is the only time the entrance is accessible."

"Oh, I shall be delighted!" exclaimed Dolores instantly. She was still thinking hard, but wished to be alone to perfect her plans. Yet she did not want her singular companion to think she was eager to be away.

She walked out of the shade of the banyan-tree, and stood on the grassed-down the shingly beach, a strange, pale figure indeed. Yet her position was rhetorical. But she was bound to it; the absolute solitude gripped her and frightened her, whereas, Graydon seemed unaffected by anything. The rapidly with which he had got over his first surprise at meeting her was remarkable in itself—it served to show Dulce what absolute control he had over himself. She looked at him now, but whatever his thoughts were, whatever his intentions were, his courteous manner, and face, and

The tide was right out, the sea having receded for a distance of two or three dozen yards. And in one of the differences—the left-hand side one—a dark, low opening could be seen. The difference in the colour of the transome several feet up the cliff clearly showed that at high-tide the cave entrance was completely under water. At present, however, it was possible to walk right in.

At first, it seemed pitch-dark in there, but after a minute their eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, and it was possible to distinguish the surroundings. The ground was covered with a thick layer of soft, spongy seaweed, while a salt, fishy smell assailed their nostrils. The ground sloped sharply upwards, and ahead there was nothing but absolute darkness.

They walked onwards into the darkness, Dolores following her companion, cautious to see where he was leading her to.

They walked onwards into the darkness, Dolores following her companion, cautious to see where he was leading her to.

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**NEXT
THURSDAY:**

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"It's got to go, and it'll be quite safe." That is over you will simply sneer for home, calling me at Rio, where you will carry out the business with the traitor, No. 220—John Fraser."

"I may be gone. I will be several weeks." "I'll be gone. Listen here, and I will refresh your memory. No. 220 was commissioned to secure the Walkley. He had been in Sir Roger Walkley's family for years—and succeeded remarkably well. He got me."

"Understand," murmured the Spaniard, rolling a cigarette as he handled in the proceeds to the Brotherhood, "the usual high commission, No. 220 took to run off with them. It was a foolish thing to do, agents are in every port, and it will only mean the penalty. At all events, No. 220 managed to get in South America. I imagine he thought himself—and still does—but a couple of our agents immediately, and at once set about their duty—to kill him. An hour or two before their plans were in operation, however, No. 220 was unhappily involved in a street car accident, and sustained a broken

leg. Fenell paused and lit a fresh cigar. The man with which he spoke of this matter was not yet his very appearance seemed to give one a mischievous smile, his charming manners, his added to an assumed personality which was hard. That it concealed a nature as hard as steel, was as hard as a flint.

"This was very unfortunate, for Fraser was a capitalist, and his there now. The diamonds are somewhere among his belongings, and our men are to find them. But as soon as he comes out, the probable date among your men—he will be the severity the case deserves."

"Arrive at Rio, all being well, about the day mentioned has been indicated, and will simply take the Walkley diamonds, and bring them home with

"I am straightforward enough," exclaimed Don Sebastian, raising his sharply-pointed beard. "I'm glad to hear that. All have been completed by the time I arrive; and the possibility of my being implicated. But do not let the job will be done."

"I understand, round a small cottage somewhere near the part of the town, evidently under the name of the description the agents sent it is exactly what, and an ideal one for the work in hand. I'll be there, and—well, the rest will be left to you."

"What is the address of this cottage?" "I will send you notes. Really, senior, you have a bad cold; that is all; having taken charge of the case, I will retrace and set sail for England. So your journey will end."

"I will be gone for some weeks to come, Chief, but I know you well enough to see that matters run their course. There are several large coupes—"

"I'll be there," said Don Sebastian, when you come back you will find a letter from me. It's ever been before. The Spaniard went to the Inner Council has made a big mistake—a beginner—and an important one—he is a fool. Yes, we're flourishing just now—pulling in our belts."

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couple of hours to accomplish. All the rest of his time would be spent in looking about the decks and state-rooms—and Don Sebastian was very fond of the sea, especially when there was no work to do.

The whole crew were common members, and looked upon the Spaniard as if he were a prince. Even the captain was most deferential. The first part of the journey was rather rough and cold, for the winter was coming on fast. But soon, as the vessel approached its summer clime, the weather began to improve.

A few days before Cape Horn was sighted, a change of wind and the rapid dropping of the glass told the captain—a man named Shaw—that something rough was in store. A few hours later, much to Don Sebastian's disgust, the storm burst in all its fury. By midday it was at its height, the yacht was pitched and tossed about mercilessly, every plate and bolt in her grating under the pressure.

The skipper, dishevelled up to the eyes, was in charge on the bridge, and every now and again a great green mountain would thunder over with an appalling crash on the fore and rushing madly through the scuppers into the angry sea again. The lower decks were awash almost unceasingly, and even the crew kept as much as possible to the main forecastle. Down in the engine-room the engineers had their work cut out to keep their feet, for the pitching of the vessel was tremendous.

The wind shrieked through the rigging, and the captain was forced to cling tightly to the wheel to steady himself. The flying spindrift cut like a knife, while the rain beat down upon the decks with a roar that could be heard above the howl of the gale. Every now and again the Night Hawk would glide giddily down a watery slope, down, down, until it seemed impossible to rise again; then the oncoming wave would run over her bows, swirl madly into the scuppers, and the ship would shake the tons of water from her, shuddering through her whole length and breadth.

Don Sebastian, in one of the state-rooms, was trying to read, having propped himself on one of the lounges. But it was a hopeless task; he felt restless and wanted to be outside. He knew the storm would soon be past—the glass was already rising—and wished to see the angry waste from the promenade deck. For the Spaniard was no coward; he enjoyed an experience like this now and again.

He rose, lit a cigarette, and walked unsteadily across the heaving floor. Outside it was cold and chill, while the wind seemed to be a solid body. The spray tore past him, drenching him on the way. Clinging to the rail, he fought his way forward. He was well accustomed to rough seas, but for once he under-estimated the force of the wind.

Suddenly a cry rang out—a cry of warning. Don Sebastian heard it faintly and turned. But it was too late; a huge, solid wall of water came bounding across the deck towards him. In a second it struck him, picked him up like a feather, and carried him at a mad pace onwonder. A cry of horror arose from those who saw. Don Sebastian was being carried overboard! Escape seemed impossible, and if he once did leave the ship, nothing on earth could save him. A boat couldn't live for a moment in that foaming waste of waters.

The Spaniard cried aloud, and threw his hands out to save himself. As luck would have it, the wave was not of sufficient strength to carry him right overboard, but its strength was, nevertheless, tremendous. Unable to save himself, he was flung with stunning force against the bulwark, rolled back a few feet, and lay still.

Several members of the crew dashed towards the spot, and their faces grew serious as they saw blood streaming from their superior's face. Hurriedly they lifted him, and bore him back to the cabin. He recovered himself after a minute, and looked dazedly about him. A couple of stewards assisted him to a couch, and hastened to procure water, bandages, and ointments.

Beside being bruised it was found that Don Sebastian was suffering from a nasty cut right across his nose and cheek—at one place the gash extended to the bone. It was a difficult place to bandage, but it had to be done, and the Spaniard was put to bed. His bruises were considerable, and it was several days before he could walk about again. When he did, he found the Horn had been rounded, and the Night Hawk was well on her journey to the Iron Isles.

The weather conditions were superb now; hot, sunny and delightful. Don Sebastian cursed his luck, for there was now much enjoyment for him, aching as he was, and with a bandage across his face which practically obscured his features. It would be a month before he could dispense with it—the best part of the whole journey, and he was naturally annoyed. Not that that helped matters. The mischief had been done quickly enough, but it took a long while to heal.

And so, some days later still, when the lookout reported "Land ho!" Don Sebastian was still half-obscured with his bandage.

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huge bandage. The Night Hawk had arrived at its destination; but the Spaniard felt quite up to his coming interview with Philip Graydon. The pain had not come by now, and the wound was quickly healing itself. Eagerly he clambered on to the bridge and seized a pair of binoculars. "It is the Island, right enough. I wonder what the next twenty-four hours will bring—I wonder!"

Had he known, Don Sebastian would have given hurried orders for the ship to reverse immediately, and scurry away from the Iron Island, as it was the plague itself!

Dolores' Scheme.

Dolores emerged from her tent and stood for a moment gazing at the trees around her. Although they were rustling wildly in the breeze, and a soft, numerous birds flitted about, she did not notice them. All she noticed was the absolute stillness; the absolute absence of ordinary, everyday sounds.

"What a terrible place!" she murmured. "If I should go mad if I were to remain here long! But I must. I'm going to escape. It is possible, and if everything comes off all right, easy."

Dolores had decided to throw in her lot with Graydon—to exert all her wit and powers in helping him. Somehow her heart had gone out to the exile; she felt sorry for him, and if she didn't help, who would? Besides, it was the only means of effecting her own escape; and even then she would have to keep her identity a secret.

She walked down the path hurriedly, and wondered what Graydon would be doing. The morning was a beautiful one, with the tropical sun shining with a brilliance which dazzled her eyes. When she emerged from the bushes on to the coastline, she paused for a moment and gazed about her. The sea looked magnificent, sky-blue, and perfectly transparent. Then her eyes turned to the direction of the lagoon. No Graydon was to be seen. Away to her left stretched the seething iridescence—

But what was that? She opened her eyes wider. Speeding over the jagged ground at an astonishing pace was Graydon himself. One he came, as swift-footed as a deer, leaping high into the air every now and again to clear a particularly large bump. His speed was amazing, and Dolores could not help admiring the grace with which he ran. His long hair was flowing behind him, and a stranger figure could scarcely be imagined. Seeing her, he altered his direction, and a moment later was standing before her.

"Ain' good mornin', Miss Dolores!" he cried. "You came just as I was taking my mornin' spin. It is the only way to keep yourself fit, you know."

His voice, his manner, his careless dress; all were as they had been the day before. Although he had just been taking violent exercise, he seemed as cool as ever. His breath, instead of coming sharply as Dolores had expected, was regular and moderate; there was no sign of perspiration in his hair, nothing to show that he had been exerting himself as no other man could have done. His endurance must have been marvellous; his fitness almost superhuman.

"But the way you ran!" exclaimed Dolores, gazing at him in amazement. "It was astounding! And yet you seem as no less for breath. I couldn't understand it."

"You would if you had lived on this island as long as I have done," Graydon replied. "Remember, I have nothing else to do, and so can spend more time than other men in perfecting my muscles and lungs and sinews."

"But it does not seem natural—"

"It is not natural. The iron had entered into me, and made me different to other men. Yet I do not show it. To look at me you would take me for a man of ordinary strength. But I'm not. I have spent the years in making myself equal to the task before me—the task of wiping out the Brotherhood of Iron."

"When you get the opportunity," put in Dolores softly. "Yes, when I get the opportunity, Miss Dolores; when I escape. And I feel the time is not far distant now. Would to Heaven I could be certain. It will be too late in a few years' time—"

"Suppose I tell you the opportunity is here, and it only remains for you to take advantage of it."

Graydon staggered back. For an instant the sleepy expression died out of his eyes, the liquid manner vanished as he drew his figure up rigidly, and he gazed at his companion with an intense eagerness that was disconcerting. Then, equally as suddenly, despite the shock her words had given him, despite the multitude of thoughts they had brought to his mind—he relaxed into his usual condition and laughed lightly.

"You're joking," he smiled.

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"On a matter such as that? No, Mr. Graydon, scarcely so thoughtless. What I said just now is the truth; the way is open before you—myself as well as something to tell you—something to suggest."

His lazy glance met hers.

"Really," he drawled, "you seem to be the gent that would help me out of my difficulty. My dull brain is blank; it is your woman's wit that will do it. The only means of escape I can think of is by balloon."

She laughed, but she knew his return of question was merely a disguise to hide his real tumult of thought.

"Balloon," she cried. "They're right out of the question. You would want an aeroplane."

"Aeroplane," repeated Graydon. "I'm afraid that is more useless than—"

"Oh, I had forgotten! You have been out of the island eight years, haven't you? You didn't know any has been practically conquered, and that aeroplane flying about everywhere like birds!"

"Then I am certainly out of date," he smiled. "I have to get you to tell me all the news. But you have of a minute ago have interested me. Suppose you tell me the matter? No other topic of conversation could be so interesting."

"But not here. The heat, and—"

"I think the arboreal will be as good a place as is shady there, and the sight of the ironstone is as good as the trees. I have spent many an hour there by moonlight."

To a few minutes they were seated in the little arbutus Graydon had erected for his own comfort, silent waiting for her to commence, and although there was no sign of it, Dolores knew he was eager to hear him.

"You told me yesterday that this man, Don Sebastian, always interviewed you alone, believing you to be his friend?"

"Alone, except for his revolver. I think he is a very good company," smiled Graydon.

"And he is a man of about the same size as you are, is he any peculiarity, anything out of the usual?"

"Nothing. Don Sebastian is a common-looking fellow."

"Does he wear a beard?"

"He has done so since I have known him. He is a companion, his insatiable face utterly devoid of expression. Dolores searched in vain for a sign of interest. He was right enough, but hidden behind his mask of indifference, control. It is brown, sharply pointed. His hair is iron, as waxed, with long extremities."

"And his hair—"

"Oh, his hair is the same as most other people's, but short, and parted in the middle. I used to wear a wig. But why this long cross-examination on the subject of my Spanish friend?"

"It is important," replied Dolores, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "Now, listen carefully. Don Sebastian is to arrive at any hour, isn't he?"

"The ship may be in sight even now."

"And that is the only vessel that ever visits this island. This being so, you must escape from this island before he comes."

"But that is impossible," protested Graydon.

"Hear me out before you say that. When I see you, you must get him out of view of the island. I will knock him senseless!"

"What would be the use?" said Dolores, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

"When you have done that," said Dolores, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "I will ensure that he never comes back."

"Your part," repeated Graydon. "Really, I cannot follow you. Al, but wait a minute!"

He was up and an expression of understanding entered his eyes. "You mean—by Jove!"

"You have guessed it."

"I am to knock him senseless, then you are to disguise me?" You will cut my hair and I will have a replica of Don Sebastian—you will alter me so that nobody will tell."

"That is my plan!" exclaimed Dolores. "You will act your part the rest will be easy. I can do it. I have a whole box of theatrical make-up. The idea is so simple that it is bound to succeed."

"I can do my part of it, it will be an easy matter to assume the character of Don Sebastian. I will be the actor—every intonation of his voice."

"You can retire to your cabin immediately. The captain will not dare to question me. I will tell me the senior is one of the councilors. I will tell them that the prisoner has escaped, or, better still, that he is dead, that his remains are among the trees, and that he can be moved abroad."

"But you," said Graydon. "How about you?"

"I will explain that soon. The very subtle"

order the gold to be landed, and instruct the men to go straight home to London. Immediately he is told that it will be an easy matter to shave yourself, and

Kingston," interjected Graydon quietly.

"Kingston?" she repeated. "What do you mean?" "Rather a long story, so I will tell you later. With reference to the other matter, however, it seems a first-class idea that I will be easy for me to impersonate Don Sebastian; and I will tell him, therefore he will be left on the island. It is equally impossible for you to accompany me. You are here as well."

"I shall be left on the island," replied Dolores, smiling. "I shall be left on the island by the only possible way. I am sentenced to spend the remainder of my life in the French Government on this island, and any escape is better than serving the sentence. Don't worry as soon as you are yourself again—or, rather, Kingston—you can charter a yacht for your own use, and take me off."

"But we shall both get free. By Jove, it's a good idea, Miss Dolores! But that would not be well. I must not think of leaving you alone on the island."

"Unavoidable—it must be so. And, anyhow, it will be no trouble. He will not molest me. What would he do? He will be unarmed, while I shall have a revolver on my hip."

"When you sleep? He may kill you!" "I shall be in the treasure-house. That is strongly built. I shall be in there every night, and rebuke him in the morning. You needn't worry, for I shall be able to take care of myself. And you will be back in a few weeks—on a fortnight."

"I shall be on my return at the earliest possible moment. It seems too easy; there will be something to be done off. After all these years—"

"I shall be good acting and plenty of nerve," said Dolores. "I leave the latter," smiled Graydon, "while the former is simple. There is only one real obstacle."

"What is it?" "The excellent dog does not turn up! Suppose he never came in his place!"

"I shall see all our planning will have been in vain. I shall be no reason for this. He won't come! It is a great misfortune, and is in all probability groundless."

"For a few minutes, cast your mind in thought. It is a great scheme, but would it succeed? Graydon was doubtful: he felt that the time had come; that was the day—the day he had been waiting for."

"Something within him told him that his hopes were vain. Dolores had come to the island under circumstances, and had she found it deserted would not do. As it was, she had found him—and a great freedom."

"I shall be with Graydon. Alas, he was utterly unable to do anything to lift a finger to help himself. But he could not do that. She could effect his escape; without his aid he would have had to disguise himself as Don Sebastian. He could effect his escape; without him she would not have been able to do so."

"I shall be a powerful—drilled, useful. I shall remain untouched," asked Dolores. "I shall be a powerful—drilled, useful. I shall remain untouched."

"I shall be a powerful—drilled, useful. I shall remain untouched."

"I shall be a powerful—drilled, useful. I shall remain untouched."

"I shall be a powerful—drilled, useful. I shall remain untouched."

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never look upon him as an ordinary man. He was different. Everything he did was different, and there hung about him an air of mystery which fascinated her, which made her enthusiastic for his cause, and which made her decide, there and then, to help him after their arrival in England.

The Brotherhood of Iron was a blot on the earth; and, anyhow, she would be doing good work. She knew that Graydon would not inform the police. That would be too tame altogether. No, he would do things in his own way. She could not go back to France, either, for if she did she would be recognised by the police and shipped back to the Iron Island. Here she sadly misjudged M. Lemercier; but she was not to know that it was a meaningless threat; that the French Government never had any serious intention of leaving her on the island for ten years. She thought their sentence was final, so decided to live in England under her own name—Kathleen O'Brien, and do all in her power to help Graydon. She had a fortune of her own, and was quite independent.

"And they deserve it," she said, in answer to his passionate speech. "They are worse than murderers! The excellent Don Sebastian will be tasting a dose of his own medicine. How long will he be here for, though? You won't take him off when you come for me?"

"Most decidedly not. He shall, as you say, be dosed with his own medicine, and dosed strongly. He shall remain here until it is convenient to take him off. The launing board has thought all along that I am still a weak—What was that? Did you hear? By Jove!"

Graydon broke off suddenly, and stood in a listening attitude. Dolores, seeing the eager expression in his eyes, felt her heart thump wildly against her ribs as she guessed what he was listening for. She herself could hear nothing—nothing, that is, except the gentle murmur of the sea and the rustling of the leaves overhead.

"It is!" muttered Graydon. "As I live, it is!" "What?" asked Dolores quickly. "Is what? I cannot hear anything. Do you mean to say—"

"Follow me," he said calmly. "I think you can guess where I am leading you."

He stopped a few yards up the path to where a clear view of the sea was obtainable. Excitedly Dolores parted the leaves of a bush, then she cried out and pointed, her face flushed and eager:

"It is!" she called out—"It is!" "Yes," Graydon murmured, "It is the Night Hawk right enough. But does it bring Don Sebastian?"

Steering straight for the island, sending a wide line of foam in its wake, could be seen the graceful lines of a large steam-sloop. When still far away Graydon's remarkable hearing had distinguished the steady thud-thud of her engines.

"That question is very easily settled," cried Dolores. "He is pretty sure to be on deck, if there at all. I have a pair of binoculars here. Just glance through them and tell me what you see."

Graydon took them with no sign of hurry, and a slight smile played round the corners of his mouth. Leisurely focusing the glasses he placed them to his eye and took a long look, his companion meanwhile fuming with impatience. Finally he lowered them and handed them to Dolores.

"Well?" she asked tensely.

"Our fears may all be set at rest," he replied coolly, a touch of triumph sounding in his voice. "The worthy, or, rather, unworthy, Señor Diego Sebastian is standing on the bridge beside the captain, looking at the island by means of one eye. The other is effectively blocked by a huge bandage. From his general outward appearance I should say he has been decidedly in the war. I wonder what has happened!"

Freedom—After Eight Years.

"Here at last! And there couldn't be a better day to effect a landing. But where is Graydon? I see no sign of him. He is usually the first noticeable thing on the island."

"Possibly he is asleep, sir," said Captain Shaw, gazing intently at the strip of beach before him.

He and Don Sebastian were on the bridge of the Night Hawk as it drew nearer to the island rock. The rain was blazing down upon it, and it looked strangely peaceful and quiet.

"Not a sign of life was visible, and both the captain and his superior were struck by the same thought—Graydon was dead!"

"Tell the first officer to lower the boat as soon as possible," said Don Sebastian. "The weather is ideal now, and I wish to get this business over at once, and be away again before daylight. As usual, I shall interview Graydon alone. As there are no provisions to land this time the small boat will suffice."

In a few minutes the yacht's engines were shut off, and the anchor lowered. The sailors bustled about the deck, and presently, with a rattling of ropes and pulleys, one of the

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NEXT
THURSDAY. "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB."

boats dropped in the water. Without loss of time the crew scrambled aboard, and Don Sebastian took his place in the stern. It was rather ticklish work getting past the reef, but as the sea was as still as a pond there was not much danger.

The Spaniard looked a comical spectacle with the bandage obscuring the greater part of his face. Only one eye, and pointed mustache, and a sharply-cut beard could be seen. His nose was completely hidden. The long gash was nearly well by now, but unightly, and Don Sebastian cursed his luck—the scar would remain for all time.

It was a pleasant journey from the ship across the bay, with the pretty view in front, and the rugged cliffs on either side. The water was transparent, the sandy bottom being plainly discernible. At last the boat grounded, and Don Sebastian stepped out on to the shingle.

"You will remain here until I return," he said. "You need have no fear for me. I shall be all right. I may be half an hour, or I may be five minutes. Anyhow, you needn't move from where you are."

"Very good, sir," said the first officer respectfully. "We will wait for you here."

Without another word the Spaniard made his way up the sloping beach, producing a formidable-looking revolver and looping it in his hand. He looked about him searchingly, but there was no sign of life. Everything seemed still; the wind had dropped, and the sea was practically motionless. The door of the banyan-tree stood wide open, and Don Sebastian paused for a moment and looked inside.

"Not here," he muttered. "I wonder where he is! No sign, either, of his having lately occupied the place!"

He stood looking undecidedly about him for a moment, then proceeded through the grove-like density of the banyan-trees. Just past its limits, the tree-trunk in the full glare of the sun, radiated the heat terribly; and Don Sebastian, after a hasty glance over its barrenness, turned his steps in the direction of the path that led to the storehouse, where the vegetation grew thickly and luxuriantly.

Hardly knowing what to expect, he continued his way. On every other occasion he had found Graydon waiting on the beach, and his absence this time was significant. The path curved a little ahead, so that the arboreal was out of sight. Suddenly the Spaniard walked onwards, then he uttered an exclamation of surprise and cocked his revolver.

Seated in the arbour was Graydon himself. He appeared in one of lazy contentment; a look of quiet amusement in his eyes. He smiled as the visitor cocked the revolver, but made no effort to rise. For a moment neither spoke.

"Oh," said Don Sebastian at last, "you're here, then?"

"I should scarcely be anywhere else," replied Graydon calmly. "You seem surprised to see me."

The other drew closer, rather disappointed at finding Graydon alive, for he had really dismissed at finding Graydon alive, for he had really dismissed at finding Graydon alive. He had no fear of an attack, for Graydon had always seemed as unbroken-witted, yet obstinate.

"I notice your beard is getting longer, my dear Graydon," he sneered. "Have you enjoyed yourself this last year? Any better than the previous ones?"

"You are wasting your time, Sebastian, by speaking to me. The answer I have given you on previous occasions would apply equally well to this. You can leave as soon as you like."

"Ah, my good fellow, your existence on the Iron Island ceases from this day onward!"

"What do you mean?" Graydon asked, in a serious voice.

"I thought that would startle you!" chuckled Don Sebastian, enjoying himself immensely. It was one of his chief delights to gloat over the misfortunes of others. "You may well ask what I mean. Well, I will tell you. As you are no longer any use to us, and as you still remain obstinate, we have no other alternative than to relieve ourselves of your existence. To speak quite plainly—"

"You mean to kill me!" cried Graydon, starting back in horror.

"It is the only course. You are a fool, Graydon—a pig-headed fool—to let your life be thrown away like this. If you had only agreed to throw in your lot with the Featherhood last year all would have been well. As it is," the Spaniard chuckled—"as it is, my friend, even if you consented now, it would be too late."

"Have no fear! I should never consent to join your murdering band of scoundrels! They number too many already!"

"Then you have nobody to blame but yourself for what happens. I have come here as the emissary of the Featherhood and must carry out my instructions. As I said, your life on the Iron Island is at an end!"

Graydon rose slowly from his seat.

"You are right," he exclaimed. "It is!"

Don Sebastian looked up sharply. The tone in which Graydon had spoken the words was startling. He was standing up.

rigidly now; and somehow, as the Spaniard looked at him, a cold shiver passed down his spine. Graydon's eyes, a moment ago so full of languor, were shining, black and piercing, and they seemed to look right through Don Sebastian.

"What—what did you say?"

Graydon did not answer, but continued to look at his companion. He seemed taller, broader, while his hair and eyes gave him an appearance almost majestic. But his expression was terribly stern. The set purpose in his eyes told of determination, and resolution. In a second his whole face had changed, and Don Sebastian felt somehow that he had moved. Those eyes held him where he was. He was fixed, and he felt himself involuntarily giving way.

"My life on the Iron Island is at an end," went on Graydon slowly, "for I am leaving it to-day by your yacht—No, don't speak!"

The other had endeavoured to shake that bewitching spell of fascination from him, and cry out, but he found it impossible. His tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, and he was fixed there.

"Up to now, Sebastian, you have had the upper hand. Now, at last, my time has come. You thought me a weakling, and I allowed you to go unopposed. Drop that notion."

The Spaniard's face contorted itself into an expression mingled rage, surprise, and fear. To be told that his power was so completely nullified, that he was so completely out of his power, was a blow he could not move an inch. That momentary power held him tightly, and he found it impossible to turn his eyes away from Graydon's. He was impotent, and unable to lift a finger, yet he was armed!

"Drop that revolver!"

The voice came like a knife, and Don Sebastian's hand dropped. Graydon bent forward suddenly, and grasped his wrist with his left hand. The revolver was held in his right. And that grasp was like the clutch of a steel band. The Spaniard felt it growing tighter and tighter.

The two combined powers—the strength of will and strength of muscle—proved too much for him. It came home to him, the fact that a revolver even would be against such a man. He felt that if he loathed it, it would be strapped in two like a carrot.

His nervous fingers opened, and the pistol dropped to the ground. He knew that his master was before him, and he was as weak as a child in comparison to Graydon, who had always been considered a fool. And it frightened him, for fear was born within him that he had been deceived and experienced. It was uncanny.

"Thank you!"

Graydon released his hold of the other's wrist and picked the firearm from the ground, keeping it fixed upon Don Sebastian all the time. He twined it in his fingers for a second, then levelled it at the Spaniard.

"Strip!" he commanded.

The Spaniard, as if dazed, as if hypnotized, did nothing but obey the order. Hurriedly he divested himself of his outer clothing, finding himself even more cursing. And as he undressed, so did Graydon.

"Put this suit on, and be sharp!"

Again there was silence for several minutes, while the breathing of Don Sebastian breaking the stillness, and breath hissed between his teeth in slow gasps, and a clammy perspiration stood out on his forehead. He changed now—Graydon stood attired in the Spaniard's clothing, and vice versa. The Spaniard raised his head, and a loud, melodious whistle sounded.

"Well," he remarked, "that's one thing done. Now, the next. Don't move, please. Remember, this is fully expected. One movement, or one cry, will have very unpleasant results to yourself."

He sat down, and smiled. The piercing expression vanished from his eyes, and they were dreamy again. Don Sebastian shook himself, and muttered:

"The spell was broken; and he was nearly famished with mouth with rage and impotence. This man was disliked with him; was playing with him as a cat does a mouse. Yet he could do nothing; that was the terror of it. In some unaccountable, mysterious fashion, he forced him to relinquish the revolver. The position reversed now—Graydon had the upper hand."

"You—you fiend! You have got the better of the minute, but, by Heaven, your success ends here! You can do nothing. You cannot get away. My men are within call—"

"Nevertheless, they are ignorant of your position. I think you will agree with me that it would be a crime to raise your voice just now. It is according to you, I die in any case, so I shall accompany in shooting you down first!"

Don Sebastian swore violently. He saw that life

He was absolutely helpless. He could do nothing. He was in Graydon's hands. Suddenly, the latter looked at the prisoner. "You could be heard approaching. The prisoner was behind him in amazement. Who was this? It could not be one of his own men, for they were in the opposite direction."

"Now we shall soon get the business over!" drawled Graydon. "I imagine you are considerably astonished, aren't you? You were not aware of a second person's presence on the island, were you?"

After opening his eyes wide as he saw who the newcomer was, Dolores, from her tent, had heard Graydon's words and had hurried down with the make-up box. It was an anxious time for her waiting for that signal, which she was relieved as she saw the Spaniard stirred and his clothes slipping awingingly," remarked Graydon. "You have a very little time, however, I will ask you to be as quick as possible."

"I have been so anxious," she cried. "So that is the man who comes here to tempt you! He is meeting with success at last. But see! What a fortunate chance, that his face is injured somehow, and is forced to disguise. It will conceal your features better than anything else."

"Do you mean?" gasped Don Sebastian. "What—my friend! Your voice is really unmusical!" "I will keep him at bay, I will act about nothing," said Dolores quietly. "There is no mistake, remember!"

Her fingers were set to work with the scissors, and Don Sebastian looked on, she rapidly cut Graydon's hair until it was a replica of the Spaniard's. His face was shortened, and his moustache waved and curled. The resemblance was already startling. But Dolores got to work with her make-up box, and features became precisely similar to the prisoner's. "A clever piece of work, and nobody could have detected the deception."

"There," said Graydon, "the bandage will complete the work. He is wearing two—an inner and an outer. The inner one will be sufficient for me."

"The outer one was off; in another, Graydon had it around his own head. Then he stepped back, smiled and mimicked the Spaniard's voice to a degree which was startling."

"And," cried Dolores triumphantly. "You have got him. And now, I will bind him. You must be getting on, as they will be wondering what has become of you, of your counterpart here."

"All excellent. Her plan was working with amazing speed. Escape was assured now, for nobody on the island could possibly detect the exchange. It had been done so quickly and so effectively that even she found it hard to believe Graydon as himself."

"Where we bind him, I have a few questions to ask," said the counterfeit Don Sebastian coolly. "It is very important that I should have them answered, so please answer me."

"You will get nothing out of me!" snarled the beaten man in a furious voice. "By Heaven, you don't think you can escape, do you? You fool, you will be detected and hanged! See here, if you will give this mad scheme up now, I will let you escape."

"For me, my friend! Don't be abused. You know well that I shall escape without your help. Now, look at me!"

"I answer no questions!" "Imagine you will," exclaimed Graydon sharply. "Now, tell me what your instructions are—what you intended to do when you departed from here?"

"To make for Australia, and—"
"That is all? The truth, I said, and the truth I want. What were your instructions? Tell me exactly, everything, and be quick!"

Graydon's hand fell upon Don Sebastian's shoulder, and he pressed it tightly. Once more the Spaniard felt that shiver run down his spine. Graydon's eyes were like live coals, and he looked into his very soul, and in vain he tried to resist it. Somehow, against his will, he began telling everything, including the stoppage at Rio, and the connection with John Brown, the traitor. The words came out of his mouth as if drawn. They were drawn, in fact, though he used all his will-power to stop their flow.

"Now we are on our way," Graydon's mysterious power was too much for him. He could not resist the feeling to tell everything that he was told.

She watched in awe-struck astonishment. She knew that Graydon was a marvellous individual, but she had never felt that his will was so strong that he could absolutely compel another man to do something he wished not to do. For

it was not hypnotism, it was sheer will-power. He could do as he liked almost. It was amazing to see the two facing one another, Don Sebastian speaking words he was trying to keep back the whole while, and Graydon standing motionless, every now and again putting a sharp interrogation.

"And that is all?" he said at last. "Quite an interesting account, Sebastian. Now, if you please, Miss Dolores, will you bind him up? I promise you he won't move."

Still helpless, the prisoner was deftly secured by the stout rope Dolores had brought. That done, she gazed at him anxiously, then rose to her feet. He lay like a log now, completely defeated. His violent rage suddenly deserted him, and left only a craven fear. What were they going to do to him?

"Now," said Graydon briefly. "It is time I was off. I have been away from the ship too long as it is. They will be wondering what has become of me."

"Yes, you must be off," she replied, flushed and excited. "Oh, I believe everything is going to turn out all right! Only do be careful."

"Please make your mind easy on that score," he said, looking straight into her anxious eyes. "Nobody shall know that I am an impostor. It will be simple to masquerade as Don Sebastian, and this bandage makes it doubly easy. But he cannot be left here. The sailors will be coming presently to remove the gold from the storehouse! For the time being he can be played by your tent. Then, when I am gone—"

"I shall look after him," she said grimly. "But be quick! I am fearful all the time lest one of the men should come."

Graydon stooped down, and lifted the bound prisoner as if he had been a baby. With seemingly no effort, he carried him swiftly up the pathway to Dolores' tent. Unceremoniously he deposited him on the ground, drew himself up straight, and looked at Dolores, who had followed close behind. There was no time for more than a very few words. The task he was to undertake was a heavy one, and he fully realised the importance of getting back to the ship.

"Miss Dolores," he said quietly, and grasping her hand, "your scheme is going to liberate us both. Of that I feel confident. But I don't care for the idea of your being left alone with this scoundrel."

"I shall be all right," she said eagerly. "He is completely defeated, and it will do him no good to harm me. Besides, I have the revolver. All I ask is for you to be back as quickly as possible."

"I shall be here again at the very earliest opportunity," he said earnestly. "Look out for me, and take care of yourself. If anything has happened to you during my absence, I shall never forgive myself."

"You'll find me safe and sound. Good-bye, Mr. Graydon, and remember, I shall help you all in my power when we reach England!"

They gripped hands tightly, and for a moment stood looking into one another's eyes earnestly. They were good friends, these two, and were destined to pass through many adventures together.

"Good-bye," he said quietly, "and don't forget when I return that I shall be Graydon no longer, but Frank Kingston!"

(Next Thursday's chapter will tell of Frank Kingston's thrilling adventures, as aided by Don Sebastian, and his return to the Iron Island. Frank Kingston also makes his first dash against the invincible Bistherkent.)

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CHAPTER 1.

Queer Chums—The Secret Worker—The Strange Light
on the Wall—Tracked Out—"Jack English, Traitor!"

"YOU will be true to me, Joe? If you fail me—"
"H—the moon turns into green cheese, and St. Paul's goes for a walk! It isn't my style to crow; but Extra Special Joe—that's me—never turned on a friend yet, and he isn't going to start now. You an' me have promised to stand by each other; bestways, I rather thought we had, Mr. Jack."

The first speech came in tones so subdued that they scarcely sounded above a whisper, while they yet quivered with a tense, even a fierce earnestness. The second speech was in a boyish voice, rough and ready, and full of an indignant, remonstrating note.

The two speakers were standing in a cellar, which was so far underground that not a sound was to be heard in it except the echo of their own voices, although Oxford Street, one of the busiest of London's thoroughfares, with all its rush and roar of traffic and hurrying pedestrians, was almost exactly above them.

The sole illumination in the cellar came from the red glow of a furnace, but this was built so low down that most of the light fell on the floor, and left nearly all the rest of the cellar in obscurity.

Yet it was enough to show that the cellar was furnished half like a living-room and half like a workshop. The walls were nearly hidden by strange-looking pieces of metalwork, hanging from hooks and nails. There was a lathe and a carpenter's bench on one side, and in the centre of the brick floor was a second bench, but this was of wrought iron instead of wood, and was covered with a number of moulds, dies, and tools. In a corner was a narrow, iron bedstead, covered by a coarse rug.

Was the cellar a coppersmith's den?

At first glance any stranger might easily have taken it for one. Amongst the objects on the iron bench were things which glittered; but a closer examination would have shown that these were of steel, and were evidently intended to form parts of some invention.

The first of the two speakers appeared to be a very old man, shabbily dressed, and with a stooping figure, long gray hair, and a beard reaching nearly to his waist.

The second speaker who had answered so promptly was a London street boy, whose only home had been the slums and gutters of the Great City. His clothes were rags, and he was half-starved; but there was an expression of pride, and self-confidence in his sharp features, while loyalty and shrewdness twinkled in his small eyes. The way he carried himself suggested that it would be unsafe for anyone to attempt to "put on" him.

He had a bundle of newspapers tucked under his arm.

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Before the street boy had finished what he had intended to say the old man hastily placed a hand over his mouth.

"Do not speak so loudly, Joe," he whispered; "and do not repeat my name. It is one that will do me no good in the way you are seeking me hear it. You know what you have done to call me!"

"Guv'nor!"

"That's it. I am sorry I said anything to make you suppose I could distrust you. I do not, indeed, Joe. I have proved that by allowing you to see this place, where I am working in secret."

He indicated the cellar with a swift movement of his hand as he added:

"My life would not be safe if you betrayed what I am about me."

"If you ain't going to be in danger till I let you know something, you'll live for a jolly long time, guv'nor," said Joe confidently. "Wild horses sha'n't drag nothing out of me, and I'll stick to you till the good times come, when everyone will know you're innocent and you're in justice. I'd walk round London barefoot for a day, if I could only make the time hurry up for your sake."

"I believe it, Joe," the other answered humbly. "You will be rewarded some day for being so true to me. I should be a coward if I despaired while I have a friend as you. But sometimes I cannot help wondering if it is all going to end."

He glanced round the cellar as if he were in pain, and his companion was anxious to divert his thoughts into another channel.

"How's the big work going on, guv'nor? Can I be of any use?"

The old man hesitated, and looked about the cellar with increased uneasiness. The door was locked and bolted from the inside; and it was a strange thing that, while the old man himself was so like the home of someone sunk in poverty, the door was strengthened by sheets of iron over the woodwork, and was little less powerful than that of a strong-room of a bank.

No thieves or enemies could have forced it open without resorting to the use of explosives.

Finally, after that hesitating pause, the old man went to a part of the cellar wall which was ostensibly no different in appearance than all the rest. It was of brickwork, and was with the smoke from the forge. But when he took a step from his coat and thrust its point into a high-invisible crevice in the centre of the bricks, there was a sharp, clicking sound, and simultaneously a portion of the wall, about two feet square, swung out. It consisted of a door, cleverly constructed to pass as a part of the wall, and mounted on a pivot. It had covered a hole in the wall in which was a metal box, ribbed round with steel bars and fastened with a couple of strong padlocks.

The old man unlocked the box, and from it lifted a small object which looked very strange in the dim-lit cellar.

the model of a cannon, fashioned in glittering steel. It was unusually long barrel, and, though it was small and comparatively light, it presented a curiously-deadly aspect when set on the work bench.

"Bravo!" murmured the street boy. "It's a beauty! How much would those foreign War Offices give for it, say, show many millions?"

The old man smiled slightly as he handled the gun.

It was not a model, yet even as a model it was not finished. It was beautifully designed, and a naval expert would have told at a glance that it embodied some wonderful improvements, which, if they could be perfected in the finished form, would be certain to produce a gun which would give more naval warfare and give a tremendous advantage to the fleet possessing it.

How came the model to be hidden in the cellar, and who were the man and the boy who alone appeared to know its existence?

Questions will soon be answered. "I don't think it matters what the foreigners would offer, but I'm not going to leave the chance of buying," the old man said. "I hope to get on fast with my work now, and I'll finish the model soon. Then—"

He stopped abruptly. He had been speaking to his companion as he sat on a stool, but he knew it was impossible for the man outside the cellar to hear him. It was not, therefore, a word of being overheard which troubled him. It was the silence as startling as it was unexpected.

He had taken the model from its hiding-place the moment the door had given the side illumination, but as he was speaking to Joe, a faint, quivering light shone on the wall near the door. It vanished as he stopped speaking.

"You are that, Joe?" he whispered. "Answer softly, so no one should hear you."

"Somebody watching, guv'nor?" whispered the boy. "But he's not near the door, or the light would show him on the other side of the cellar. If there's a spy, I'll see if I can't mark him!"

Joe spoke. Joe took from under his ragged jacket, a small packet of pepper. Pouring some of this into the palm of his hand, he threw it against the wall opposite to where the light had shone. It spread all over the grimed

surface. "And if there's a spy," he said, "he ought to be able to give me some about its quality!"

A sound in tell if the pepper had been thrown. The noiseboy did not waste any time. Lighting a stump of candle, he went close to the wall.

"The model away, guv'nor, and then open the door," he said.

Joe did so, taking it for granted that the quickness of the man was what he was talking about. Outside the door was a dark, low passage. The street boy stood along this, holding the candle above his head. A bright flash on to the brick wall. There was an instant of hesitancy and suspicion on the boy's sharp face, which made him resemble a terrier. There was no sound in the passage; but Joe's eyes scanned every corner of the stair.

"Who there?"

Joe stepped suddenly, and with his hand which was holding the candle he pointed to the wall. The old man

looked him, and followed the direction of his out-

stretched eye. There would have been nothing to see, but the eyes of the street boy and his companion of the moment, and the light of the candle

showed that the mortar in one part of the wall had

been so much the intention between the bricks in several

places, such a manner, that they indicated four lines

which, joined together, formed a square.

"Guv'nor, guv'nor?" whispered Joe, his eyes glittering

in the dark.

Joe nodded, and, taking from his pocket a clasp

of a saloon carry, he forced it between two of the

bricks. The mortar was lacking, as far as it would go,

and it came side to side. Nothing happened at the

moment, but he repeated it in different parts of the

cellar. There was a sharp sound, to tell of the release

of the square in the wall swung out so quickly and

so that he had to jump aside to avoid being struck.

It was as clever a secret door as that which covered

the place of the model. It was several feet above the

floor, and, only large enough for a man to

pass through it. Joe would have gone first with the

light, but the old man took the light from him and went

first to confront any danger that might be waiting beyond. The boy wriggled after him.

They were in a second cellar, smaller than the one they had just quitted. It was quite empty, except that on the floor was stretched the figure of a man.

He was lying on his back, with his arms thrown out on either side of him. His eyes were wide open, but they were glassy, and seemed to stare up without seeing anything. His face, as the candlelight shone on it, was ghastly and pallid.

He was a tall, bony man, with a face so sharp and cunning as to suggest some kind of prey. He wore a rusty-black suit, such as might have been worn by an out-of-work clerk, and a pair of black gloves were on his hands, and a shabby silk hat rolled away from him into a corner. His hands were tightly clenched, and he looked as if he had fallen in a fit.

Was he dead?

It might almost have been thought so. But Joe, pointing to the wall on the right-hand side, nodded significantly. Through the wall had been drilled a hole, no larger than a thick needle could have penetrated. It would have been invisible, in fact, had not the glow of the forge on the other side shone through it.

Then the boy pointed down at the motionless man.

"Look at his eyes!" he said. "He is dying! He's a villain, guv'nor!"

There were flecks of pepper about the man's eyes.

But the man on the floor never moved when the street boy denounced him. Not the shadow of an expression flickered across his face. He continued to lie there, motionless, with his hands clenched and his glassy eyes staring vacantly.

He looked so forbidding and sinister that most people would have hesitated to touch him. But the old man knelt down, and thrust his hand under his coat and shirt to feel his heart. He could distinguish no beating, and the skin felt cold and clammy. Yet, if the evidence of the flecks of pepper was to be relied on, the man had been standing close against the wall less than a minute or so before.

"He is not dead, but is playing us some horrible trick. I'm positive!" the old man said between his teeth. "Give me the pepper, Joe!"

The boy handed him the packet, which was still more than half full. The old man dropped several grains into the wide-open, staring eyes. For an instant the cadaverous face did not change, and not a muscle quivered. But it was for an instant only.

Then a spasm, full of baffled anger, passed over the cadaverous face, and the glassy eyes glared with savage passion. With a swiftness that had something tigerish in it, the man on the floor rose to a crouching position, and, seizing the old man, dragged him down.

The old man? No! There was no old man in the cellar, as he went down and grappled with the man in black, the false hair and wig he had been wearing fell from Joe's companion.

He was a young man, with a face which, despite that it was worn and haggard, and that its expression was the fierce, tense one of a man who knew that he was being hunted for his life, was daring and resolute. It was the typical face of an officer in the British Navy.

"Let me go!" snarled the man in black in English, but with a foreign accent. "Let me go, or it will be the worse for you! You think you've got me, don't you? It is I who have got you, Jack English—traitor!"

CHAPTER 2.

At the Bidding of an Enemy—Aboard the Mysterious Yacht off Gravesend—What the Man with the Twisted Foot had to say—A Solitary Life Against the Empire's Safety.

As he heard his own name—the name he had told Joe—it would be as much as his life was worth for him to hear—uttered by the man in black in tones of savage mockery and menace, Jack English crept back, well free, and, springing to his feet, glanced hastily towards the door of the secret cellar in dread lest anyone should have heard what had been said.

He need not have troubled, however. The name had been uttered only in a strangled, half-choked tone, and as his companion had been dragged down Joe had closed the door with such celerity that not a sound had escaped from the secret cellar.

Then the street boy would have gone to Jack's assistance, but the struggle was over before he could do anything.

Jack English gazed down at the man on the floor, who made no immediate attempt to get up.

"You spy!" the young fellow said. "I guess in whose pay you are. How did you discover that I was in this place? Only the owner of the house above knew that I was

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"THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB." A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of

ST. JIM'S. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

here, apart from the boy; and he has cause to be grateful and true to me."

The man in black gave a harsh, jeering laugh. "It does not matter to you how I found you, Jack English," he replied, "I have done so; and I do not suppose there is any necessity for me to explain who ordered me to find you. The man who is your master—"

Jack English flushed hotly. "No man is my master!" he broke in. "I—"

But then he stopped, checked by another jarring laugh from the man in black, who said: "I have no more time to waste in talk. I was given my orders before I came here, and I must obey them, and so must you. I was ordered, if I found you, to tell you that you must go with me to the man who sent me to find you; or, if you refuse—"

He paused, a cruel smile on his cadaverous face. "If I refuse?" demanded Jack.

He was very pale, but there was no sign of craven fear about him.

The man in black answered deliberately: "Then another hour or less will see you in the hands of the police, with nothing but a traitor's shameful death to look forward to. You cannot escape. You are like a rat in a trap!"

Up to now less than five minutes had elapsed since Jack English and his companion had found the man in black lying on the floor.

In going down and grappling with his enemy, Jack had dropped the stump of candle, which, however, had remained alight when it fell to the floor, and had been picked up by Joe, who was now biding it in his left hand free for action.

The street wail was standing close behind Jack English, and as the man in black uttered his threat he made a sudden movement.

"It's a lie!" he said. "My gov'nor's not tripped, and never will be by such a sneak as you!"

He would have thrust himself bodily on the man, but his companion got hold of his shoulder just in time to hold him back.

"Be quiet, Joe!" Jack English ordered sternly. The wail wriggled round, and looked at him respectfully and wonderingly.

"I was only trying to look you up, gov'nor, same as I told you I would," he retorted sulkily.

"I know it," Jack English said. "and I am grateful to you for your intention, Joe; but you also promised to do just as I told you, and you must do it now. Perhaps later on you may be able to help me, but at present you cannot. This man is speaking the truth. I am in a trap, and I must get out with him."

His tone was low and suppressed, and his eyes gleamed strangely. His hands were clenched, and he held them behind him, as if afraid of being tempted to use them.

Was he a coward? Was he so cowed by a mere threat that he dared not defy the man who had acted as a spy on him?

The man in black thought so, at all events, and an ugly smile of malicious triumph flickered across his pallid features.

But Joe, after barely an instant of blank dismay and doubtfulness knew better.

Jack English was no coward, but at the present price of his life he was confronted by a dilemma which would have been too much for many, even when no one could have called cowards.

It was a dilemma of peril and difficulty, and on its solution depended not merely the safety of Jack English, himself, but the safety, perhaps, even the existence, of the British Empire. And, for the sake of the Empire, Jack was willing to sacrifice his life.

It was because of this, and not through any craven fear of what might happen to himself, that he felt he must go with the man in black.

"I must go with him, Joe," he said to the street boy. "I do not know when I shall come back, but here are all the keys of this place. I leave you in charge, to guard everything for me—everything, you understand?"

He was alluding to the hidden model of the gun, though he did not mention it to the man in black.

Joe understood his meaning perfectly. "Right you are, gov'nor!" he replied. "I'll hand on here like—like content! You can trust me. But I'd a jolly deal rather go with you, and be in it along with you if you're going to be in trouble."

Jack shook his head.

"You can't go, Joe; and you will be of far more use to me by remaining here and guarding everything for me. I trust you, as I could trust no one else in the world!"

The boy flushed with pride as he closely clasped the bunch of keys which the man whom he had chosen for his leader gave to him.

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NEXT THURSDAY:

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

The strange scene in the cellar did not last for many seconds longer.

Jack quickly resumed his disguise, and then, going back into the other cellar, put on a long, heavy overcoat, a broad-brimmed felt hat, which almost wholly concealed his face.

Then he curtly signified to the man in black that he was ready.

Leaving Joe in the cellar, Jack and his sinister companion went up the cellar steps, until they came to a strong iron door, which was sheathed with strips of iron. It was set from the other side.

The man in black rapped on it sharply three separate times, with a distinct pause between each rap. After a short interval it was opened, and a man carrying a candle appeared on the last steps of a second flight of stairs.

He was a thin man, with an extraordinarily long face, big, prominent eyes, and he had a mass of fiery red hair which seemed to give him an aspect of perpetual rage, since it stood up on the top of his head in spikes.

He was trembling so much that the grease dropped from the shaking candle in his grasp, and hastily turned away his face, so that he might avoid the reproachful gaze of Jack English fixed upon him.

"I thought I could trust you, Bolter!" Jack said. "Now you have betrayed me, and let this spy in the cellar watch me, and do all he can to drag me into danger and shape to my death! Is the world full of traitors?"

The man flushed a dull red.

"I'm—I'm sorry!" he stammered. "I didn't want to do it, sir; I swear I wanted to be true to you, but I couldn't help myself! He forced me to be a liar and a traitor, just like to kill him!"

He turned fiercely on the man in black, who started but only smiled in a sneering way.

"Well, the mischief is done now, and there's no use to be served by talking about it," Jack said quietly. "I'm going away from here, Bolter, and I do not know when I shall come back. But I am leaving Joe Ferret to stand in my place downstairs, and I should advise you to be true to him."

Without waiting for the man's answer, he went up the second flight of stairs, following the man in black, who came to a door at the top, which led into a small room, and from this door at the top a passage led to a short street, into a side street. This door was at the corner of some dingy tobacco-shop, and Oxford Street was across the street's end, a short distance.

It was night-time, and that the hour was late was proved by the fact that all the ordinary traffic in the street had ceased, and that only omnibuses, taxicabs, hansom cabs, and horse-drawn carriages were whizzing along. Not very many people were on the sidewalks.

They went into Oxford Street together, and the man in black hailed a passing taxicab, the driver of which stopped rather doubtfully when he heard where he was to take the driver to.

"Babington Street, Lincolnshire!" repeated the man in black with a snarl. "Do you not know the way? I'm afraid that you will not be paid! Here, take the driver fast, and remember that there is more than one way if you waste no time!"

He thrust a couple of sovereigns into the chauffeur's hand, then, dragging Jack English after him, he got into the taxicab, which at once started.

The chauffeur intended to earn the promised reward as much haste as he dared. He exceeded the limit in the more deserted streets, and once he came to a corner at a rate which almost sent the taxicab over the side.

All through the long drive Jack and his companion met with a solitary word. The man in black, and motionless, with the sneering smile still visible on his features.

The young fellow opposite to him knew perfectly well it would be waste of breath on his part to seek for any information from the living sphinx who was his companion.

The man who would answer questions, and who decided what the fate of Jack English was to be, had for him down the Thames, over which the black night was now drifting like a smothery pall, and sorrow and the crime which lay at night on the earth its murky waters.

The cab stopped at last, and the chauffeur opened the door.

"Very sorry, sir," he said, "but I'm afraid I can't take you quite to where you want to go. It seems that Oxford Street is low down by the river, and the only way it is through narrow alleys which I can't get the taxicab through, they're full of such sharp turnings."

In black snarled again, but he was compelled to let the taxi-cab, He did not refuse to pay the money, he had promised, and then, taking the arm, drew him into the network of twisting streets, which were so confusing that even if they would have been a labyrinth to anyone entirely familiar with them.

though it was so pitchy dark that even the gas-lamp which appeared here and there did no more than cast a visible flicker of light, the man in black did not for a moment. He moved forward with a step of stealth, that he might have been an evil spirit or a wicked and cruel errand.

Jack came to Jack, who shuddered involuntarily. He sought to put as much space as possible between himself and his companion, but the man in black held him by the bony, clammy hand.

"Close to me," he ordered harshly. "If you are not I shall find it hard work to find you again." "I would find me at all!" retorted Jack. "You do not know I could go with you at all if I did not wish to."

"Who sent you to me? If I wished to escape you, I could."

"And see if the best hiding-place in the world would you from me!" retorted the other. "I found you as easily as I could find you anywhere!"

Jack made no reply. They went on together, the man in black never hesitating in all the devious windings, until they stopped. Then Jack's conductor struck a match, the flame of which showed they were standing before the high, wooden gates of a wharf. These gates the man in black unlocked with a key he took from his pocket.

The gates, as revealed by another match, were old and entirely deserted except for the new-comers. The guide went close to the edge of the wharf, and the river was flowing, sluggish and murky.

Jack went softly. Instantly he was answered by another boat, rowed by a solitary man, glided up to him, uttering a sign from his companion, Jack English, who was in the boat, swinging from the wharf with his hands.

The man in black followed. The boat was pulled out of the stream.

Jack went dark in the narrow streets, it was like a vault beneath blackness now. A thick mist was floating over the river, and nothing was visible. But the men in the boat apparently without an effort, and without any sound.

Jack answered this time, not by any sound, but by the motion of his hand. It was evident someone was swinging a torch. The light was so faint as to be hardly visible.

Jack, by the steersman saw it, and made directly for it. A couple of minutes the boat glided alongside a much larger boat, in which were three men.

Jack, by his companion, Jack English, clambered from the boat into the larger one, and the man in black followed. At once the larger boat was pulled out of the stream, and the smaller craft was swallowed up in the darkness.

Jack went in the stern sheets beside his guide, who was the stiler ropes. The light given by the lantern was so faint that at first he could see nothing with any certainty, but as his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, he felt a sudden tightening of his heart.

He felt a sudden tightening of his heart, and he cast him an effort to stifle a startled cry. He was lying in the bottom of the boat, a form, draped in a dark canvas, and tightly bound with ropes. He felt that it was the body of a man, though whether it was it was impossible for him to guess.

Jack was motionless, and no sound came from it. He was so motionless, and no sound came from it.

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from the man in black as he himself had done in the streets, as from something evil and sinister, although they did not dare to question the orders he gave them.

It was a long run down to Gravesend, but the three men were powerful rowers, and they tugged at their oars without intermission. The black pall still hung over the river when the end of the extraordinary midnight expedition came.

No light glimmered through the blackness, nor was any hail given from ahead, but, as though he were independent of the senses of eyesight and hearing on which ordinary people relied, the man in black abruptly pulled the boat half round, and headed as if directly for shore. Simultaneously the rowers relaxed their efforts, and allowed the craft to drift onward.

In less time than it takes to tell the boat was alongside a vessel, which was moored in mid-stream off Gravesend, and was completely hidden by the blackness.

No light was shown aboard her, and Jack English would have been unconscious of her proximity had he not heard the boat grate softly against her side.

He felt the bony hand of the man in black touch his own once more.

"Up with you!" came the whispered order.

Gripping with his hands, Jack touched a rope ladder, which was dangling from the sides of the invisible craft. With the experience of a sailor he mounted this, passed over the side, and stood on a firm deck.

Still he could see nothing, and no voice greeted him. He could detect no sound, not even the slightest, to prove that any living men were aboard the mysterious ship.

The effect was almost uncanny.

As Jack English stood motionless on the deck of the unknown vessel, he felt the clammy fingers of the man in black close over his own again, and the shilbut whiney sounded in his ears.

"Come!"

The blood was coursing with feverish heat through the young fellow's veins, but it was with excitement born with the knowledge that a crisis in his life was approaching, and not with fear. His nerves were as steady as steel, and his every sense was on the alert.

He was led across the deck and down a companion hatchway. Then they traversed a narrow passage, also buried in the same darkness which hung over the river and the ship.

A door was opened, and Jack was drawn forward. He heard the door close behind him with a clasp, and for another second he stood environed by blackness.

Then a voice spoke—a soft, smooth, almost purring voice, which, for all its softness and smoothness, had a curiously metallic, pitiless note in it.

"So you are here at last, Jack English—traitor!"

As the words sounded in his ears, Jack was dazzled and nigh blinded by a blaze of light which flooded out. It was the white, cold light of electricity, and, breaking in on the darkness, and dispating it without warning, was for a full minute unsupportable to him.

He put his hand over his eyes to shield them from the sudden glare, and felt back, so that his back was against the door through which he had just passed.

The movement was one simply of self-defence, so that he might guard against a treacherous attack from the rear. Then he dropped his hand, and, raising his head, stared steadily at his surroundings.

He was in a cabin of a ship, though it was hard to believe it. All the woodwork was concealed by hangings of priceless tapestry, and furniture inlaid with gold, silver, and ivory was scattered about, while ornaments of massive gold seemed to meet his gaze in whichever direction he turned.

But he looked at these things only for an instant.

Then his gaze was riveted on the man who had spoken to him. He was a tall man, thin almost to emaciation, and with a face which more resembled a mask of greyish-hued parchment than the features of a living being. It was a lifeless face, with no expression on it, and the man's eyes were so cold, and with such a strange, filmy terecent over them, that they resembled glass.

For the rest, the man was dressed in shabby, grey clothes, which contrasted strangely with his garish surroundings, and when he made a step forward it was at once evident that he walked with a limp.

"So you are here at last!" he repeated. "I need not tell you what I want from you. You will consent to give me your gun, finished and perfected, or I will surrender you to the British Admiralty, who will shoot you as the rascald traitor that you are!"

Jack English set his teeth. He knew that the time had come when he must make the choice of his life. He had to choose between imperilling his own life and risking the safety of the British Empire—perchance its existence as the foremost Naval Power of the world.

THE GEN LIBRARY, No. 126

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

ANSWERS

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CHAPTER 3.

The Dark Page from the Past—Bound for an Unknown Goal—The Threatened Liner—A Brave Attempt—Baffled—Like a Ghost from the Sea.

THE words were startling in themselves, and though the man with the limp never altered his soft, smooth tones when he uttered them, they vibrated with the same deadly, pitiless note which had been discernible before.

There was not a shadow of doubt that his meant exactly what he said. He believed he had Jack English at his mercy, and that he could consign him to a shameful and violent death whenever he chose, and he intended to use that power unless the young fellow consented to agree to his terms.

Jack had known pretty accurately what would be said to him on the vessel at Gravesend as he had made his strange journey with the man in black. He was not, therefore, taken by surprise, nor were his nerves any more shaken than they had been by what had happened before.

But he had reasons of his own for thought or what he intended to do until he was driven to do so.

Jack English was playing a daring game for the sake of the British Empire, and playing it none the less bravely because he knew full well he had not more than one chance in a thousand of carrying out his plan and escaping with his life. If he did escape, it would be by the skin of his teeth.

A year before, Jack English had been a lieutenant in the British Navy, an smart and able young officer as ever tried a warship's deck, as daring as he was true, and ready to go anywhere, and risk anything for the Empire's sake.

In addition to being a good officer as far as his ordinary duties were concerned, Jack had been fond of dabbling in inventions. He was possessed of a very real talent in this direction, and his great ambition had been to use all his skill for the benefit of the Fleet and of the Empire.

At last Jack had hit on an idea for a new naval gun, of an absolutely unique pattern. If it could be perfected, it was certain to utterly revolutionize naval warfare. The weapon would be as essential and destructive, and would hurt out most fearful, as a machine much farther than any previously known weapon that relied solely on the old gun would be, in comparison, out of date and ineffective.

Jack English had spent all the time when he was free from duty in his efforts to perfect the scheme of his gun. Many a night, instead of sleeping, he had passed the wave-wreathed dock watching, and he had not succeeded for a long time. The idea of the gun was magnificent, and he had been able to plan it out, detail by detail—but only up to a certain point.

Then he had been baffled.

There had been something lacking in the scheme of the gun. It was only a solitary detail, which might be hit on in a minute, but for a long time it had baffled Jack, eluding him despite all his efforts to hit on it.

With this finishing detail the gun would be perfect, and worth any price to the nation who possessed it. Without this finishing detail it would be useless, and worth no more than scrap iron.

Though Jack had been baffled, he had never for an instant thought of giving up his task in despair. There had been too much of the naval bulldog, never say die, about him for that. He had simply gone on working and trying, until the time he had been doing this Jack had been lavishly lauded by the men with the limp. It had been a strange, almost an uncanny sensation.

As far as he knew, Jack English had no relations in the world, he had never seen his father nor anyone else who claimed kinship with him. He had been brought up by a strange guardian, who had refused to tell him about himself. After his education was finished, he had passed into the Navy as a midshipman. After that he had worked his own way up step by step, knowing that it depended entirely on himself whether his career was a good one or a bad one.

One thing had perplexed and disturbed him. It had been of such a nature that it might well have shaken the nerves had they not been of the strongest.

It had begun when Jack was at school. One winter's afternoon when he had been coming home alone from a paper chase, he had seen a man's figure skulking near the great entrance gates. The light had been too dim for him to catch on the figure distinctly, but as the man had moved away suddenly, Jack had been sure that he was walking with a limp, though this had not prevented him from moving fast.

A year afterwards, while still at school, Jack had seen the man with the limp under precisely similar circumstances. Again the man had made off fleetly—so fleetly that the pursuit had been impossible, even had Jack been disposed to follow him. He had not spoken a word.

Then Jack had not seen him again for several years—not

for certain, at all events; though once when in London on a holiday he had thought that a strange figure was limping after him in the Strand. But when he had turned round sharply, he had failed to detect anyone with a limp in the hurrying crowd.

His very first cruise had taken Jack to Alexandria, and on the very day before landing he came face to face with the mysterious stranger, who was standing on the busy quay. Jack had been struck by the man's extraordinary appearance and deathlike pallor, and had been also inspired by a sense of revulsion and distrust, such as no human being could awaken in him before.

But his nerve had not failed him, and he had gone back resolutely.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "Why do you follow me? What do you want with me?"

The man with the limp had made no reply. His inexpressive expression implied that he had not heard the question, though Jack was certain that he must have done so. He had simply turned and limped off, and the addressee had been left helpless.

The next time Jack had seen him had been at Cape Town. Then they had met again at Bombay, and, after another long interval, at Sydney.

Jack had become convinced that the man with the limp was following him about the world, dogging him, and keeping watch. He knew simply nothing about him, except his even his name. And what object could he have for pursuing him in such an extraordinary course? That was more than the young naval officer had succeeded in finding out.

All Jack's efforts to force the man with the limp to tell him and explain the origins had been failures. He had vanished as soon as he had appeared; now residing in some remote part of the world, and then in another, and of rules away, but never uttering a word.

This had gone on for years, and then something had happened which had, for the time at least, caused the young officer to forget even the sinister man with the limp.

Jack's ship, the *Hercules*, had been sent to Delagoa Bay under sealed orders. It had been believed by many that the object of the voyage was to checkmate some move on the part of a foreign nation to acquire a base near the Portuguese fort which would have been disastrous to the interests of Britain in South Africa.

The captain's instructions had been not to open negotiations until the cruiser's arrival at Delagoa Bay, and so on. There had followed a startling surprise. The sealed orders had been stolen from the captain's cabin, together with a book of secret signal-codes for use in war! The thief had retained a mystery for days. Then, one day, drinking solemnly in Delagoa, a man had been found in the breach, and apparently dying.

When the police had been brought, the man had said his name was Ambrose Brink, and he had avowed that he had brought the stolen sealed orders and signal-book from the man who had stolen them from the *Hercules*, with the promise of selling them at a profit to an enemy of Great Britain. That the thief had tried to murder him because they had relied on the price of the stolen articles. He had said that the thief was Jack English, and no other.

In vain Jack had passionately protested his innocent support of his story. Ambrose Brink had given up the sealed orders and the signal-book, and had provided a letter by Jack stating that he had stolen them, and offering to swear that he had also brought forward three witnesses who swore that they had seen Jack hand over the code book and the sealed orders to Brink.

At the court-martial Jack declared the letter to be a forgery, but experts had pronounced it to be in his handwriting. The evidence had been held to be overwhelming against him, and he had been found guilty, and sentenced to death as a traitor to the Empire.

A traitor to his Empire! The brand of shame which the words had hurt Jack English far more than the death itself. They had been far harder to bear than the danger itself. He was innocent, and was ready and eager to risk his life for his King and country, and yet he was regarded as worse and meaner than an ordinary felon—a scoundrel—had been waiting to sell both King and Empire for a few pounds.

Though Jack had been condemned, many of his officers, and practically all the crew—two men excepted, who refused to believe in his guilt. To them he was a hero, Jack—"loyal to the Empire and his comrades alike"—capable of doing anything vile.

At dawn of night, within a few hours of the time of his execution, friends on board the cruiser had given him a chance to slip off his irons and escape from his cell. He could be seized he had jumped overboard into the sea. Delagoa Bay.

He had sunk at once, and purposely, and in the

impossible for either of the search-boats to see him when he came to the surface. However, he reached land, and then found himself ashore in a peculiar and an outcast.

He took far too long to detail all his adventures after that, refusing to be daunted by difficulties or hardships, and eventually found his way to the Rand. There he found such good luck that fortune had been within his grasp, and the prospect of becoming rich did not tempt him. His object was to return to England and perfect the plan of all his troubles he had never forgotten the gun which he had so much for the Empire. If he could only find the missing detail.

He returned to London, bringing with him the money which he had made himself known to no one but a man who kept the shop off Oxford Street. In the shop Jack had befriended Bolter, and he had thought it best to trust him, and lived the secret cellar from him, and stayed on his model day and night, with the hurrying of people as near him overhead, and yet without suspecting his hiding-place.

Jack had worked alone, but after a time he found an ally in Joe, the street wail, who was called "the Social Joe." Jack had sometimes got out in his disguised disguise, and one miserable, pitiless night found the boy huddled up in a doorway, nearly senseless from dying of starvation. He had hurried him home, and been kind to him, and the boy, as hard as a London sparrow, had soon recovered. He had himself so grateful and loyal that Jack had at last found a safe to trust him.

Jack had slipped by, and Jack had worked with feverish haste to perfect his model before he lost his liberty. He had thought had been for himself as he worked in the only wish had been to perfect his work so that he could be powerful and great—invisible against the world, and at last he succeeded.

And at last the model, all but the one last, essential detail, he had known what this detail was to be. He was at the point of fitting it in, when Joe and he had seen the man in black, playing the part of spy in the

man in black was Ambrose Brink, who had been the false accusation against Jack English at the trial.

Jack had recovered from his wound, and, after the court-martial, had a secret and hurried departure from the ship. Jack had not known whether he had gone, but he had told him that they would meet again. The same day he had told him to guess that Brink was taking him to the court, and he might meet the man with the limp. Jack had told him how or why he had anticipated this. It was one of those guesses which are like intuition, and of us now and then.

Jack had become convinced that the man who had dogged him all the world had not done so without a purpose, and he had said that this purpose was not a good one. He had said if his nameless pursuer could have any share in the world against him of the false accusation of being a traitor to the Empire.

Jack had not consented to tamely accompany Brink to the court, because he was afraid of anything that might happen to himself if he refused to do so. It was the instinct of a man who was to be taken to the man with the limp that he had to go so quietly. If he could only come face to face with the man of mystery, he had told himself, he would have a chance of solving more than one mystery.

Joe had expected that Jack would betray any confidence upon hearing his threatening demand, but he had not. The young lieutenant looked him squarely in the face.

"What do you want?" Jack said quietly. "Why should I be to you?"

"I am your own concern," the other replied, with the same calm before. "I do not intend to explain, because I am sure no good to know, and I do not believe in secrets. It is enough for you that I want the cannon which you have perfected. The price I offer you for it is your freedom."

"And Jack coolly, 'before we go any further, tell me who you are, and why you have dogged me all these years?'"

"Call me Clement Graves if you like," the other said, "but as to why I dogged you, as you put it, is a matter I intend to keep to myself, for the present, at all events. The main point is the cannon. I know that the cannon is worthless as it is now. I have seen it."

"You have seen it?" echoed Jack. "Where?"

"On board this yacht, the Siren," answered Clement Graves coolly. "Do you suppose I was going to leave it in the cellar while you came here? Look, Jack English, I will tell you this much. I have kept watch on you for years, and not I alone, but many others. I have more spies than you could count—spies everywhere. Many of them at different times and at different places have kept watch on you. They found out that you were working on the cannon, and brought news to me. When you were in South Africa I never lost trace of you for a day. When you returned to London you were followed. My best spy discovered your hiding-place beneath Oxford Street, and bribed the man to allow him to watch you through the hole in the cellar wall. He watched you for days though you never suspected it. He feared enough to be sure that you could put the finishing touch to the model of the cannon whenever you liked, though he failed to discover what that missing detail is."

Jack drew a deep breath. Brave as he was, he almost shrank as he looked into the cold, cruel, calculating eyes of the man who was speaking to him—eyes which seemed to see everything and betrayed nothing.

He was certain that behind Clement Graves was a secret power potent for evil. The man spoke like one who had but to will a thing to have it come to pass. But there was one thing Jack intended he should never find out.

"The secret of the cannon is my own," the young sailor said firmly, "and I intend to keep it."

"Even if I give you up to those who are hunting for you if you refuse to obey me?"

"Yes."

"Why will you not give up the secret?"

"Because I believe you want to sell the cannon to an enemy of Great Britain," Jack replied. "And I would rather die a hundred times than help you to deal a fatal blow against the Navy of the Empire."

"You fool!" Clement Graves said. He did not speak with any anger, but with a panopline scorn which was more than any outburst of rage. "What is the British Empire to you that you should throw away your life and die a traitor's death to secure it? It has disgraced and sentenced you to death; it has made you an outcast, robbed you of all life. Even if you give your cannon to the British Admiralty, you are not certain that you would be rewarded. But you never will give it to the Admiralty; you are in my power, and if you will not agree to my terms you will never regain your freedom. (On the other hand, if you do as I ask, I will make you rich for life. I have the power to do that, as I will prove to you presently. I ask you again, what is the British Empire to you?)"

Jack English drew himself up stiffly, as he had often done on the quarter-deck while saluting the flag.

"It's the Empire," he answered. "It's the Empire for which I'll live and die, and to which I'll be true as long as there's blood in my body. That's all I've to say to you, Clement Graves. But as to whether I'm as completely in your power as you boast, that's got to be proved."

With the last words Jack sprang on the man with the limp. He intended to seize him by the throat and make a fight for liberty. Clement Graves did not recede an inch, he made the slightest motion to defend himself, but before he could reach his enemy the lieutenant found himself helpless.

Graves had raised no cry for help, nor given any signal that he needed any; but no sooner had Jack English sprang forward than two men entered the cabin, swiftly and noiselessly. Both were men of gigantic stature, dressed as sailors, one was a yellow-skinned Mongolian, the other a negro.

Before Jack could turn on them they had seized him. He had no time to make a real struggle before a rope, formed in a signpost, was thrown over his shoulders and drawn tight. He was powerless and stood a helpless prisoner before his enemy, who regarded him with a mocking smile.

"I have given you a chance of life—a fortune, Jack English," he said, "and you have defied me. I tell you I had any other man dared to do as much as that on the Siren, the world of the living would never have seen him again. But you are a fool and obstinate. When I ask you to agree to my terms for the second time, you may have found sense, and be willing to give me a different answer. Take him away."

The answer was given, not to the pair who had seized Jack, but to Joseph Brink, who had suddenly appeared at the door of the cabin. He glided behind Jack, and threw a heavy shawl over his head, drawing it tightly over his eyes and mouth, so that he was deprived of sight and gagged simultaneously. Then Jack was dragged away.

Whither?

All that he could be sure of was that it was down a steep unknown way. He saw nothing of the yacht. He only heard a door open, felt himself thrust forward, roughly that he lost his balance and fell on his knees, and heard the door close to the accompaniment of grating bolts.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 145.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB." A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

He was a prisoner on board the Siren. The yacht was in a British port within sight of London, yet Jack English was absolutely at the mercy of a man who, for aught he knew to the contrary, was an outlaw of the ocean, or even something worse.

"At the same," Jack informed himself, "while there's life there's hope; and I don't think that Clement Graves will kill me just yet, though he no doubt intends to give me as rough a time as he can."

Jack already judged that the man with the limp would not kill him, simply because, if he were dead, the secret of the caution could never be wrong from him. While he was alive, Graves could believe that he might bribe, trick, or extort the secret out of him.

The wheel was to prove that Jack was correct in this guess; but even in his wildest imaginings the young sailor felt far short of what he was to experience while in the power of his strange enemy.

Without wasting any valuable time in formulating his position, Jack promptly began to make the best of it.

When he was thrust into his prison, the shawl was still twisted round his head, and he was still plighted; but he had his strength left, and had no time in using it. Getting into a kneeling position, he worked his arms about in an effort to loosen the encircling cord. At first he could not move them for more than a fraction of an inch, and the effort caused him excruciating agony, for the cord cut into his flesh, until it seemed as if it would sever the muscles. He persisted, however, and even then the task, far from being simplified, was only just begun. How many hours it occupied before it was actually finished, Jack English never cared to calculate afterwards.

But the time seemed endless as he knelt there in the pitchy darkness, fighting for liberty. The sweat was flowing down his face, and every nerve in his body was strained and quivering.

At last, however, it was all over. He felt the same slacken suddenly as the ship-knot loosened. He could have shaken the cord off, and was indeed about to do so, when he was stopped by a evening sound. It was the grating of bolts. The door of his prison was being opened.

Instantly, Jack threw himself flat on the floor, rolled himself over on his back so that the slackened ship-rope was hidden beneath him, while at the same time he drew the rope tightly across his chest with his freed hands.

It was done so quickly and cleverly that to one would have appeared that he was really free. The shawl which still enveloped his head added to the effect of helplessness.

The plan succeeded. Jack heard the door of his prison grate open, and felt stealthy footsteps cross the floor of his prison. It was, of course, impossible for him to see anything, but his ears were so keen and his perception so rapid, thanks to many a long watch that even the covering over could not shut all sound out of his ears. He heard a soft, drawing foot fall.

"Him s'fice enough. Him faster tied up. Him he a silly fool run to his as him teller. But wait till him get to the island."

The voice sounded so close that Jack guessed that the speaker was either kneeling beside or bending over him, and he had more than a suspicion that the speaker was the same Chinaman who had taken him by surprise in the cabin of Clement Graves.

Then Jack decided that it was high time that he took as prominent a part as he could in the proceedings. He had begun to be well helpless in order to take his victim by surprise, and he succeeded gloriously.

Before the Chinaman even suspected that anything was going to happen, Jack had jerked the rope aside, and, twisting himself up, thrown his arms round his knees, dragging him down. Then they grappled and rolled over on the floor. It was a grim struggle while it lasted, but it did not last long. The Chinaman was a powerful brute, as lithe and sinewy as a tiger; but Jack was his master. The young fellow's blood was up, and his resolute spirit made him the master of the yellow man.

It was Jack's object not only to master the Chinaman, but to prevent him from raising an outcry; and he succeeded. His strong fingers, having once closed on the yellow man's throat, held tenaciously, and he threw every ounce of strength and science he possessed into the contest.

The struggle ended in the Chinaman making a savage writhe to get loose. Jack threw him back again, and his head was dashed against the floor with such force that he was rendered insensible. He quivered, and lay still.

"He's paralyzed for a few minutes, anyhow," the Bretonner muttered. "and it's my business to see that he hasn't the chance to do any mischief for a lot longer."

The Chinaman had been holding a lantern when Jack had pulled him down. This had fallen to the floor; but, being mostly of iron, had not been broken, and it was still burning. Jack picked it up, and was able to see his prisoner.

THE BOYS' LIBRARY—No. 145.

NEXT
THURSDAY

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

Order
Advances

It was a cabin with walls and roof and floor of polished steel, and a floor of the same material. There was no hole, and air was admitted only through some small drilled in one of the walls.

It was easily derived of furniture, and not so much as old rug was on the floor to serve as a bed. Altogether it was only such a prison as could have been devised by a man who was not in the habit of showing any mercy to his prisoners, and in itself it gave Jack a clear notion of the treatment he had to expect if he continued to defy the will of the limp, and remained in his power.

But Jack did not waste any time in examining his prison, nor in troubling himself with what might happen in the future.

He used the rope which had plighted himself to land the Chinaman, hand and foot, cutting the rope into convenient lengths with a knife which he found in one of the pockets of the yellow man. He finished his task by stuffing a corner of the shawl into the fellow's mouth, and fastening it so that he was effectually gagged.

"And now to find out all I can about the yacht," the Bretonner thought.

With the knife in one hand, at his side weapon, and the lantern in the other, Jack stole from his prison cautiously.

The Chinaman had left the steel door open when he left, so that there was no difficulty at the outset. The light of the lantern showed him that he was in the hold of the yacht, and the silence which prevailed told him that it must be night-time, and that most of the strange craft were asleep.

As it turned out, this was an accurate guess. He found one as he went up the companion-ladder, and came to the fore-deck of the Siren.

Before venturing on to the deck, Jack thought it best to extinguish the lantern and put it down. The reason was a wise one. The deck of the yacht was not dark, although at first he was inclined to wonder if it was.

The night was not intensely dark, but the moon and stars were obscured by drifting wreaths of clouds, so that for a minute it was possible to distinguish objects at a distance with clearness, while the next minute saw everything obscured.

Forward on the yacht's deck, so far distant from the stern that they looked like shadows, were a number of men who were working busily and silently about a long, dark object the character of which he could not make out. The object was covered by tarpaulins.

Jack stole a little nearer, and as he did so looked over his shoulder, for he had been so many hours in his prison that the Siren had been given time to drop down the tide, and was now surrounded by trackless waves on every side.

The fact that it was again night told Jack that he had been steaming at full speed for twenty-four hours. His sailor's experience showed him that a glass-bottomed yacht had been built for speed first, speed second, and safety always.

The swiftness with which she tore through the waves was amazing.

As Jack's gaze swept the sea he perceived what was so something ordinary enough at first glance. It was really a couple of miles away, so that in the dim and moonlight it was impossible to catch more than a blurred glimpse of her. But Jack knew her name, and her liner, outward bound.

The Siren was overhauling her steadily and was so cleverly was the yacht being sailed that it was not for those on the liner, especially under the present conditions, to see that they were being pursued, and singled across the ocean.

And Jack, looking up, saw that the yacht was a yellow flag at her main-mast. It was the flag, he knew, denote that she had serious illness, porphyria danger on board, and was in urgent need of assistance.

The flag of distress was a lie. It was being done to lure the liner into a treacherous trap. Jack saw instinctively, and he was more certain of it when he saw the shadowy figures on the yacht. They had removed the tarpaulin from the object he needed, and that object was revealed to the human eye.

It was a cannon!

Long, swivel-mounted, with a wicked and an about it. Not nearly so deadly or so formidable as which Jack had invented, yet as up-to-date as any so far known, and with a range of several miles. It was painted black, so that no flash of steel should be presumed on the yacht to show on the liner, and the two craft being much nearer to each other than they were.

As it was, they were gradually drawing closer, the yacht was more than within range, if her crew were to make a treacherous night-attack on the other vessel.



was a sudden flash of illumination in the prison cabin, and the door opened noiselessly and swiftly. On the threshold stood the man with the twisted feet, followed closely by the huge Chinaman.

(See page 46.)

Jack was convinced that they intended to do so, and his nerves tingled with excitement at the thought that he would soon be in the midst of perilous adventures.

What object could the projected attack have? Was it nothing but a vulgar pirate—a robber of the sea—seeking for plunder and nothing else?

Watching the liner and the shadowy figures on the deck, Jack had been crouching behind one of the bulkheads. He made not the least movement, but he was not alone on the yacht suspected as yet.

He waited, watching and listening. Jack could not judge. Each minute seemed to intolerably long. The men became more obscured by clouds, so that the scene on the sea grew even more uncertain and more foreboding. The yacht continued to gain upon the liner, as it were, like a wolf of the sea.

Jack did not believe that the man with the twisted feet, calculating, had led him to expect something so tremendous as that. He felt certain that the man was a criminal of a type the world had never seen before.

From this, there was not a shadow of doubt that the state of false security by allowing the flag of the liner to take advantage of this to make a treacherous attack.

Jack was in the middle of this when the door opened.

Not if he was not strangely changed from the Jack English of old, who had been ready to lead his men into the teeth of death and expose himself more than all with a laugh on his lips.

Nearer and nearer the yacht stole upon the unsuspecting liner. But those on the Siren did not intend to lose any advantage they might possess by being in too great a hurry. Having trained and sighted the cannon, the men who had been engaged on the work threw the tarpaulin over the gun again, and stole below, with the exception of one man, whom they left on watch.

"They mean to get even closer before they start any mischief," Jack muttered. "The question is, am I going to let them do just as they like? If the liner isn't warned I shall feel myself responsible for any evil work that's done to-night."

He made up his mind quickly. As far as he could see, the man by the cannon was the only man on deck. Softly and cautiously he stole on him, and, with a spring, was on him, bearing him down and crushing him down to the deck with one hand, while he held the other hand over his mouth to prevent him from raising an alarm.

It was a repetition of the scene of the prison cabin. The fellow struggled savagely, but Jack held him tenaciously, and was on the point of mastering him, when there was a rush of feet along the yacht's deck, and the next moment Jack himself was pounced on by half a dozen enemies, who all held him at once.

He fought desperately, but he had no chance against such odds. He tried, at least, to shout a warning to the threatened ship, but the liner was too far away for his voice to carry.

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NEXT THURSDAY: "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB." A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"...it off. After putting it in a box one of 'em had
...it off."

"...did you know all this, Joe, if you were sense-

"...somewhere for long, guv'nor. You see, before
...came into the cellar, they hung outside a bit,
...escape. That gave me a chance to come round.

"...funny and queer, but I saw 'em and knew what
...young. I wanted to go for 'em, but it wouldn't
...no sort of use. I wasn't in fighting form, and,
...no eyes half open. They thought I was blind and

"...and they was more sure of it than ever after one of
...and me, and I didn't even wink. All the same, I
...ought to let 'em do what they liked without trying to

"...on my own."

"...Joe!"

"...it wasn't no use shouting for help down in the
...cause nobody would have done anything even if
...told me," the street-boy went on; "and it was just

"...to get a policeman to stop those two thieves
...went off with your model and were walking down
...street. If I'd done that I should have had to

"...you, so all I could do was to pick myself up
...you just to see where they went, and if I could
...It was rather stiffish jolting down to Graves-

"...don't mean to say that you walked all the way!"

"...a lot of it," rejoined the boy cheerfully. "I
...pretty quick to keep on their track, and I was un-

"...when they took a cab. They nearly did for me
...dressed after 'em to London Bridge, and then
...hung on behind. When we got to Graves-

"...waiting for 'em, and they were taken off to
...I heard one of 'em say where they was going
...we wasn't polite enough to ask me to pay him a

"...I'd go on the yacht without being asked,
...I heard one of the men on the boat say you
...Siren, and that you'd been trapped."

"...did you manage it?"

"...guv'nor. I ain't been a moud-lark down by
...for nothing. It wasn't daylight, just a dirty sort
...the sky, and I got on board the yacht and bunked

"...and did the stowaway business, dodging about and
...all the information I could. I didn't have no
...of you before you got free on your own account;

"...those villains getting the gun ready to fire on
...and watched 'em. When I saw you come stealing
...the shadows, my heart nearly jumped out of me.

"...I guessed what you wanted to do, and when all
...jumped on you at once, I thought I'd do it

"...that are a prisoner in consequence, at the mercy
...of Graves."

"...you, guv'nor, with a jolly good chance of
...it out alongside of you."

"...got slap hands, but Joe testified his devotion
...himself up as nearly as he could to Jack English.

"...two more questions which Jack was compelled
...he shrank from the first, out of fear of the

"...might receive."

"...those Brink, and the others hurt you when you
...Joe?"

"...told me about a bit," he admitted; "but, bless
...my now, guv'nor, it might have been a lot

"...if you tell Ambrose Brink, was going to knock
...head and throw me overboard; but he was

"...as well, by somebody I ain't anxious to see
...with the twisted foot?"

"...He came limping on deck, and when they
...I'd done, he gave me a look worse than all

"...and curse. Then he smiled—ugh! It gives me
...think of it! And he told him to tie you and

"...foot, and look us up fast."

before. "I heard the man with the twisted foot say that I'd
been the cause of him losing many workers, whom he could
have got off the liner."

Jack's thoughts flashed back to the huddled-up figure in
the boat at Gravesend, and the answer of the rover to
Brink's question: "Another of them?" What could it
mean?

"What sort of workers can Clement Graves want?" Jack
said, rather allowing the question to escape him involuntarily
than directly asking it of his companion. "What work can
he have for them to do?"

An answer which he had never expected came to him in a
startling fashion.

There was a sudden flash of illumination in the prison
cabin, the door of which had opened noiselessly and swiftly.
On the threshold was standing the man with the twisted
foot himself. Close behind him was the Chinaman, with
whom Jack had so recently had his exciting encounter. The
Celestial held a lantern of peculiar shape aloft in his left
hand, so that it cast a dazzling light into every crevice of the
previously black cabin. In his right hand he held a revolver,
ready cocked for instant use should either of the prisoners
have been in a position to attempt mischief.

The Chinaman's expression was savagely malevolent, and
it was evident that he was only withheld by fear of his
master from taking a cowardly revenge for his recent
defeat. But the face of the man with the twisted foot was
as coldly serene, as passionless, and withal as steady as ever.

The face of a man who knew no pity, who would stick at
nothing to attain his ends.

Jack English had thought so before. He was sure sure of
it than ever now, as, lying on the floor of his prison, he
looked up at him.

He was utterly helpless to do the slightest thing in his
own defence or on behalf of Joe. But if Clement Graves
had expected to see any signs of fear or yielding about the
young fellow he held in his power, he was disappointed.

Jack returned the gaze of the cold, pitiless eyes with a
steady and undaunted stare.

For a second a shadow of doubtfulness flickered across the
pallid face of the owner of the Siren. It seemed to him that
his belief in his power to break Jack English to his will was
shaken. Then, however, his sneering smile came back.

"Wait outside, Wah Fung," he said to the Chinaman.
"Leave the lantern on the floor, and wait for my orders
outside the door."

"Me not to kill 'em?" demanded the Celestial,
snarling.

"Not until I give you the order," retorted Graves. In the
same he might have used in addressing a dog. "Go!"

He pointed imperiously to the cabin door, and the yellow
ruffian, who would have committed murder without com-
punction, slunk away, shaking with fear.

He left the lantern on the floor, and closed the door of the
prison cabin after him.

For a full minute Clement Graves did not utter a word.
He stood with folded arms, looking down at his two
prisoners.

There was something so evil in the man's cold eyes that the
mere hint of it would have shaken strong nerves. But Jack
English did not lose any of his composure, and Joe, though
very much inclined to shiver, bravely imitated the example
of his leader in declining to betray the white feather.

"Well, Jack English," Clement Graves said at last, "I
have come to ask you if you have learned any sense since I
saw you before? You will do well to give me a different
answer this time, if you wish to live to be a free man
again."

"I've given you one answer," Jack returned, "and I will
never give you another. If you want the secret of the
cannon—"

"I want it, and I mean to have it," Clement Graves inter-
rupted harshly. "You fool! Be careful how you answer me!

You have already done so much to injure me—you and the
boy there—that you would look like a man thrown overboard
before this had I not wished to retend you in spite of your
self. I offered you safety and wealth before, and I offer
them to you again for the second time. Are you going to
be so mad as to refuse them for the sake of the Empire
which has made you a fugitive and an outcast?"

Jack English made no response.

He knew that, to a certain extent, though a fast prisoner,
he was the master of the situation. Clement Graves had not
spared him so far out of any sentiment of mercy. The man
with the twisted foot was more anxious to get hold of the
secret of the new, untried cannon than anything else in
the world. He would rather have the secret of the cannon
than any sum which could have been poured out in gold be-
fore him from the richest treasury in existence.

And Jack English was the only man living who could give
him the secret of the cannon and confer on him the terrible

THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 145.

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of
St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB.

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THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB.

power which the possession of the new gun would carry with it.

Jack realised that as long as there was the faintest hope of forcing the secret from him, Clement Graves would not take his life. He might threaten and even torture him, but he would stop short of the last extremity, because he knew that if Jack English was dead the secret would die with him.

Jack's great desire was to find out everything he possibly could touching Clement Graves. He believed that his best chance of doing this was to force the man with the twisted foot to take him whither the Siren was bound, and to allow him to see with his own eyes the island he had alluded to. If he refused to open his mouth and kept his secret to himself, Clement Graves would have no choice save to do this.

Once on the island, with his limbs free again, there might be an opportunity for a daring bid for liberty. There was simply no opportunity at all in the prison cabin. He had escaped from it once, but he would assuredly not be given the chance to do so again.

So Jack lay obstinately silent, refusing to speak a word in response to Graves's tempting offers and fierce threats. Even when the Chinaman, Wah Fung, was resented and ordered to place the muzzle of the revolver against his temple, he did not move a muscle.

"Tell me the secret of the cannon, or the Chinaman has my orders to blow your brains out!" the man with the twisted foot said. "You are tempting my patience too far, Jack English."

Jack laughed defiantly.

"Do what you like," he said; "but when I am dead seek the secret of the cannon from whomever you give it to you!"

The recklessly daring shot told Clement Graves set his (sin) true, and his cold eyes glittered with anger. He waved Wah Fung back and bent over the imprisoned.

"Very well, Jack English!" he exclaimed. "It is to be war between us. We shall see who will conquer in the end!"

He quitted the cabin followed by the yellow man, who carried off the lantern with him.

The prisoners were once more left in the darkness. And this was the beginning of a terrible time for Jack and his boy ally. They were left in their prison for so many long, black, dreadful hours, that they lost all count of their number. Indeed, there was nothing to tell them where one day ended and another began. At irregular and long separated intervals, Wah Fung appeared, and gave them some drops of foul water, but never enough to assuage their thirst, and some scraps of mouldy food, which barely sufficed to keep them alive.

Satan for the visits of the Chinaman, they saw no human being, and not a ray of light penetrated the blackness of their prison.

It was the intention of Clement Graves to leave them into weakness, and to break Jack's spirit, so that when he was once more called on to give up the secret of the cannon, he would have neither the strength nor the courage to refuse.

All the time they lay in their black prison, which became more and more dreadful to them, day and night the Siren sped over the ocean on her voyage.

Whether was she bound? They could neither of them tell. There was nothing for them to do but to wait until the unknown goal was reached.

At last, after an interval which seemed to the prisoners as if it were intended to be endless, the door of the prison cabin was again thrown open, and the dazzling light of the lanterns again flooded into it. This time, however, it was not Clement Graves nor Wah Fung who appeared, but Ambrose Brink accompanied by four of the Siren's crew. One of the latter carried a couple of searves, which he bound over the eyes of Jack and Joe, so that they were blindfolded. Then the men round the ankles were cut, and they were roughly dragged to their feet. Their hands were still bound behind them, and both were so weak and so cramped by starvation and long inaction that they reeled, and would have fallen had not the men nearest at hand caught hold of them. They were half fed and half dragged from the prison cabin, and up the companion-way.

It was icy cold. The air cut like the sharp edge of a razor, causing them to shiver excessively. Joe gasped for breath, and even Jack, habituated though he had been to every climate of the globe during his previous voyages, had never experienced anything like this before. They were forced across the yacht's deck and down a rope-ladder and so into a boat. When they were dragged from this they slipped, and Joe fell to his knees, while Jack maintained his balance with difficulty. They were standing, not on firm earth, but on ice.

Once more they were half led and half dragged forward. When they halted again it was to be forced into a vehicle. They could not see what it was, but Jack at last knew as soon as it began to move. The jangling of bells and the smooth, gliding motion told him that he and Joe were

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NEXT THURSDAY:

USUAL SIZE—USUAL PRICE.

seated in a sledge, such as Arctic or Antarctic explorers use when in quest of the North or South Pole.

Jack English set his teeth. The blood was through his veins, hot and fast, in spite of the cold. He was beating faster. He would have given his eyes to have got his hands free and torn the maddening bands from his eyes. He was beginning to guess where he was, but the guess seemed so wild and improbable that he failed to place any credence in it. The drive in the sledge was a long one, and it appeared to the two prisoners to be even longer than it actually was. It ended eventually, however, and with it ended all uncertainty. The sledge stopped with a jerk, and they were dragged out.

Simultaneously there sounded the voice of Clement Graves, a note mingling with triumph and exultation and harsh tones.

"You are welcome to my kingdom, Jack English! I reign as a sovereign—here even the boasted might of the British Empire cannot reach me! Here I hold more power than any crowned monarch in the world possesses. You see if you will defy me now!"

The handgrip was plucked from Jack's eyes. He saw snow, snow and ice, everywhere. Look where he would, Jack could see nothing but a white, frozen wilderness, seemed to be in a different world from that in which he had away London and modern civilisation belonged.

The glaring whiteness was unbearable to his eyes. He had been impured in darkness for so long. He had been them, afraid of blindness if he stared about him too long. It was some time before he could open his eyes about him with anything like steadiness.

When he could do this, however, it was to see that he was standing in the midst of a frozen wilderness, far from being a wilderness abandoned by man.

In the distance, across the ice, was a vast island, from within which came the ringing of many hammers, and from the lofty chimneys of which poured dense clouds of smoke. And near the building rose a skeleton structure of wood and steel, on which a countless number of men were working.

It was a great battleship, nearing completion. The workers were the shipwrights who had built her, and were working their hardest, but all bore such a stress of that Jack doubted if his eyes were telling him what he saw. And Joe, whose sight had now been unimpaired, uttered a astonished cry.

"Why, they're convicts in chains!"

If the boy did not speak the exact truth, who could fully justified the thought to which he had given rise. The men working on the warship had come from all countries. There were dark Italians, fair Swedes, Sinners, wiry Frenchmen, stolid Germans, and Britons, too, unmistakably marked out from the rest of the motley crowd. They had not all been of the same rank of life; this was told by their dress, and was left in it. But all the toilers, amidst the snow, were clad in garments which had been so much soiled by now little more than dirty rags, and this despite the cold. All were emaciated and desperate, and the aspect of slaves who were forced to toil until they were utterly blighted.

Overlooking the toilers were scores of other men, whose aspect was in every way as evil and repulsive as the crew of the Siren. They were all armed to the teeth, in addition, each carried a heavy whip with a long, low lash of dried rhinoceros hide into which were hammered strips of steel wire. The whips were in the skillful hands, of killing a man at a blow, or of inflicting shocking injuries on him.

The guards of the workers were using the whips with pity, and cries of agony mingled with the groans of the hammers. Jack felt Clement Graves standing close when he turned his eyes away from the strange scene. He was so perplexing and yet so freight with startling ideas.

"Well, Jack English, do you understand now?" he asked, with the twisted foot demanded. "Have you guessed the truth for yourself, or must I take the trouble to explain?"

The young fellow looked the man straight in the eyes.

"Perhaps I can guess something," he replied, "but I do not mean to trust to such a guide. If you wish to tell me to do anything, you will have to explain a great deal to me. I will do nothing in the dark." The eyes of the man were very cunning.

"Will you do what I want after I have told you?" he asked. "That will depend on whether or not you think it is worth my while to do so."

In his heart, Jack was sure that Clement Graves was saying and doing nothing powerful enough to induce

creator to the Empire. His object was simply to get on to explain matters to him, and he felt he was justified in tricking his enemy if he could. The slaves fell into the trap. He believed that Jack was shaken by what he had seen that he was wavering; it would only be necessary to press home this by causing him to rise in altogether. By this belief, the man with the twisted foot and Joe should be taken away by those who were sworn, and that Jack's hands would be free, mentioned to the lieutenant to follow him. "Jack English," he said. "I'm going to show you."

The other, answered with an enigmatical grin mentioned to Jack to follow him. He led through the vast iron building. It was a foundry, called as any that ever has been found in Europe. Machinery and appliances were of all the most up-to-date. Here, as on the warship, hundreds of men, all starved, desperate sailors were at work, and the noise and lashed into new activity by the men whenever they faltered from their weariness.

At the furnaces, the clangor of mighty hammers, the whistles, and the harsh orders of the guards were ringing with the shrieks and groans of the slaves—all contributed to create a scene of unrelenting horror, and Jack English noticed that all that was being done had some connection with a goal. The glare of the furnaces fell on armour-plate, and rifled cannon in a more or less state. Jack could understand more clearly before why the man with the twisted foot was to get hold of the secret of the new cannon. The man with the twisted foot led the young man to the workshop after workshop, and then out into the open again. They walked away from the scene of horror and were close on the frozen waste.

Jack spoke abruptly, and his speech was a revelation of the beginning of a man's revenge, Jack

had seen the beginning of a man's revenge, Jack spoke, and offered Jack a cigarette as he spoke. "I'll smoke it, and lit it coolly. He betrayed no emotion, but had been said to him, but pulled out a tiny pipe and waited for Graves to go on. He did not speak. His harsh voice was stunted and intense, and he spoke as a deadly and so fierce that the ordinary man would have been as nothing in

his presence." "A revenge which has cost me my life, and will cost me millions more! A revenge which has taken years of my life, for the sake of a few moments of glory, and then set store by it. But I will have it, when it comes, shall shake the world to its base. It shall not be my fault if it is not crushing down in hopeless and shameful

as if they could come from no one but Clement Graves was mad—mad with hate and most violent kind. The story he told was extraordinary new.

Clement Graves had been a slave. He had been captain of a ship that was used for the purpose of carrying blacks, women, and children—men and women where they were sold into bondage, and sold into bondage. Graves had known no other life. It had been nothing to him but a life of slavery, and he had been sold into slavery in the death-dealing hold, as long as he was left to yield him a profit on each voyage. On the West Coast of Africa, and, indeed, throughout the rest of the world, Clement Graves had been one of the most cruel and heartless traffickers in the world. He had never trod a deck

of a ship, and during, too, and for years had been employed to capture him, though practically all his life had been at a price on his head, and warships were sent to the world had tried to hunt him down.

He had fought like a tiger, and got away by the skin, and on other occasions, helped by evil luck, slipped through the fingers of those who had tried to capture him, and cunningly chosen hiding-places.

He had seemed to lead a charmed life. It seemed nothing could bring his career as a slave

ever he had been helped by his son, Reuben Graves. He was wicked and cruel as himself. Black-people, though he was, without an atom of pity

for the unhappy blacks in whom he traded, Clement Graves had idolized his son, and had loved him, much as a tiger might have loved his whelp.

"He is dead; but he would be alive now, and he and I would be sailing the seas together if it had not been for the accursed British Empire and your equally accursed father, Jack English!" the man with the twisted foot said, with a burst of passion which transformed his appearance. "Your father, Captain Mark English, was sent with a cruiser to the West Coast of Africa, with orders to take me alive or dead; to capture or sink my ship. He forced me to a fight, after a chase which lasted for months, and he took my ship, and shot my son dead with his own hand as he boarded her."

"It was done in fair fight," Jack exclaimed. "My father was only doing his duty."

"He killed my son!" Clement Graves repeated. "That is all I remember. I jumped overboard and escaped to shore. Before I reached land I swore to have a fearful revenge on the Empire whose cruisers had run me to bay, and on your father, who had shot my son. Part of my oath I have kept. The rest I intend to keep."

"If you can!" said Jack quietly.

Clement Graves said a menacing look at him. Then he finished his story.

He had escaped capture, and had devoted himself to compassing the death of Jack's father. He had dogged him for years from one end of the world to the other, and had, at last, under cover of the darkness of night, treacherously shot him. He had not been satisfied with this, but had left a scrawled message beside his victim, boasting of his crime, confessing his reason for committing it, and declaring that his revenge was only half complete. As Mark English had shot his son, he had sworn to have the life of the officer's son, if he had to wait for many years for the chance of taking it.

At this time, Jack had been a little fellow, too young to understand what had taken place. His guardian had not told him the story, being anxious that he should not be troubled by it. Jack had been sent to school, and there had seemed less reason than ever to tell him the story, when news had come that Clement Graves had met with a violent death in Zanzibar.

But the rumour had been a false one, circulated by Clement Graves himself with the object of throwing Jack and his friends off their guard. In reality, the man with the twisted foot kept watch on Jack, following him like a bloodhound. Once he could have made a treacherous attack on him, but had held his hand. This had been but of no feeling of commiseration. He had intended to be not merely satisfied with taking Jack's life, but had made up his mind to add the bitterness of ruin and disgrace to his fate. For this reason he had merely kept a pitiless watch on him, and had waited till he grew to manhood.

While waiting to strike his blow against Jack, Clement Graves had never for an instant forgotten his vow of revenge against the British Empire.

As a slaver he had amassed an enormous fortune, and he had added to this by daring speculations and the fruits of many crimes. He had been the chief of a gang of negroes who plundered innocent people in all parts of the world, and had brought him the lion's share of all their plunder. Added to all this, the discovery of a tract of land in Alaska, rich in gold, had made him a millionaire thrice over.

Then, the master of enough money for his scheme, he had set to work in earnest. His plan had been a daring one, fully worthy of a Napoleon of crime.

As a wanderer of the seas, he had made many discoveries unknown to the geographical world. One of them had been an island in the far Southern Sea, near to the South Pole. It was far out of the beaten track of explorers, and for the greater part of each year was blocked in by a frozen sea. But once every year the ice broke in one particular place, so that a wide channel, deep enough for the largest warship to navigate, was thrown open. On this island, amidst the ice, Clement Graves had by degrees accumulated a vast store of material for the work he had in contemplation. And he gathered weapons. Some he had caused to go to the island of their own accord, in the hope of being richly rewarded for their work; others, by far the larger number, had been kidnapped from all over the world, and carried to the island on the Sun. All alike had found themselves the slaves of Clement Graves, devoted to lives of cruel, never-ending toil.

And this had taken years, but the man with the twisted foot had persevered with a patience matching his hatred. His purpose had been nothing less than to build a fleet of warships in his ice-hidden lair, and with this fleet to inflict all the damage he could on the British Navy.

"Do you think it a madman's plan, Jack English?" he asked. "It is nothing of the sort. My idea was to start

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NEXT WEEK: "THE TERRIBLE THREE'S SUB." A Splendid, Long, Complete Story of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

with one ship, the swiftest, most powerful cruiser afloat, and to use her to prey upon British merchant-shipping."

"If you like to put it like that, I call it making war on the tyrant of the seas. I reckoned on my first ironclad bringing me in so much plunder and so many more workers that I should be able to add to my fleet by degrees. I had no hope at first of doing more than inflict enormous damage on British commerce, and destroy a part of her fleet; but when my master spy, Ambrose Brink, whom I set to keep watch on you, found out that you had invented the new cannon, then I knew that if I could only induce you to work with me, I should hold the boasted British Navy at my mercy!"

"How?"

Jack was puffing at his cigar as coolly as ever. He murmured half-sung what the answer would be.

"Are you such a fool that you need to ask that?" Graves demanded harshly. His tones vibrated with excitement. The same excitement glittered in his cold eyes. "Look, Jack English, with the help of your cannon, I can destroy the British Navy and drag the British Empire into the dust!" He went on speaking in an intense, sonorous tone, which only Jack could hear, as if he intended to run no risk of being overheard over the waste of ice and snow.

Through his spies, whom he kept constantly at work all over the world, Graves had learnt that a European Power, a rival of Great Britain, was planning to make war on her, and was only waiting till it could put on the seas a fleet equal to that of the British Navy. Many years would have to pass before any rival could hope to do this in the ordinary course of things.

But Clement Graves knew that if he could induce Jack to give up the secret of the cannon, he could then, not only arm his one cruiser with the new weapon, but could turn out the new cannons in his arsenal on the island. These cannons he could sell to the enemy of the British Empire, and that enemy's fleet, even if numerically inferior, would become immeasurably more powerful through being armed with Jack English's cannon, that the British Fleet would sink to second place at once, and would be outclassed in the fight for existence.

"I would make such a bargain with this rival Power that I should be the richest man in the world, and I should, besides, have gained such a revenge as no other man ever knew," Clement Graves said. "Why should you hesitate to join me, Jack English? The Empire has made you an outlaw. I will make you a millionaire, and give you freedom and safety if you will give me the secret of the cannon!"

Jack English threw away the stump of his cigarette.

"I have answered you once," he said. "I will not betray the Empire, and I will have nothing to do with you, who killed my father!"

"It was in fair revenge," Clement Graves returned, biting his lip. "I advise you to think carefully before you throw your chance away."

"I will not agree."

"Not if refusal costs you your life!"

"No!"

Jack spoke with steady deliberation. He thought he knew all that his defiance would cost him, but he was ready to pay the price rather than become a traitor. No harm should befall the Empire through him. Jack was disturbed, in spite of himself, by the fashion in which Clement Graves received his defiance. Had the man with the twisted foot burst into savage anger and open threats, it would have been easy enough to have answered him. But he simply nodded in an indifferent way, while a smile quivered on his thin lips. It was a sinister smile and boded evil.

"Just as you like," the man with the twisted foot said carelessly. "But come with me. I have something more to show you."

Jack hesitated. He was wondering if it could be of any use to make an attack on Graves and try to master and extort terms from him.

He knew that the man was armed, while he himself had no weapon. This, however, was not restraining him, but the fact that Joe was in the power of Clement Graves's men. If anything was done by him—Jack—against the master of the island, Joe would probably be made to pay dearly for it. So Jack kept his hands thrust into his pockets, and walked off at the man's side. He would have to wait for a better opportunity.

It was a long walk over the ice, and, as they went on, Jack saw that, behind the great workshop, there was a town with a fortress on one extremity, though whether this was to repel the attacks of any invaders, or to overawe the captive tribes if they were tempted to revolt, he could not be sure. From the embrasures of the fortress showed the black muzzles of cannon.

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They went a long way past the fortress and the town, then Clement Graves stopped suddenly.

"See there!" he said.

There had come to the brink of a great crevice in the ice a body of men, and a great crowd in the distance. It had been seen a rope, fastened at either end to a tree, driven into the ice, and from the centre of this rope a cord, the end of which was tied round the waist of a boy, who was being dashed, shapeless and shattered, to the depths below.

It was Joe, the street boy!

Crouching on the other side of the crevice, close to the end of the rope, was Ambrose Brink. He had a sharp grip in his grasp, and the razor-like edge of the blade was on the top strands of the rope. A movement of his arm, and the rope would be severed, and all would be over for the boy, who would be dashed, shapeless and shattered, to the depths below.

"Now, Jack English," Clement Graves said, with a triumphant, cruel smile, "will you give me the secret of the cannon? If you do not, I will signal to Brink to cut the rope, and the boy will go to his death—and you will be a murderer!"

CHAPTER 5.

Baffling a Scoundrel—In Peril of their Lives—Placing a

Daring Game—The Dash Through the Glacier—Joe—Jack English, Hero of the Empire.

FOR the first time since he had confronted Clement Graves in the cabin of the Siren, Jack English stood himself at a standstill. His heart seemed to be beating as he stared at the boyish figure dangling in life and death over the crevice.

The secret, or Joe's life!

It was no longer a matter of what might happen to himself. This new peril, which had been devised with ingenuity, menaced the boy who had stood by him in his troubles, and had shown himself such a brave and self-reliant friend.

Joe's eyes were closed. All the colour had faded from his face, to leave it an ashen hue, and he hung heavily in the air. At first Jack thought he was dead already, but he saw the boy's lips moving slightly.

Could he doom Joe to a dreadful fate by retreating in to the man with the twisted foot?

It was a fearful dilemma, and Jack's brain reeled as he confronted and tried to solve it. On the one hand, the life of his boy-chum, on the other hand was the safety of the Empire, the honour, perchance the existence, of the British Navy, and the lives of countless men who would be sacrificed in the sanguinary war which would be inevitable if Graves was once the master of the cannon.

What could he do? What should he do?

For a minute that seemed an endless hour, Jack was in suspense, Jack debated the point. Then he made up his mind in a flash. He thought he saw his way clear, and he acted with suddenness and daring which left his enemy no time to prepare for the attack, he sprang on Graves, gripped him by the throat, and tore him to the ground. With such desperate swiftness, he got his hand into the old man's pocket, and jerked out a revolver, the outline of which had been through the cloth. The muzzle of the weapon was pressed against the temple of Clement Graves as he lay on his back.

"Now, it's my turn!" Jack English said through his teeth. "Give that scoundrel on the other side of the crevice a pull the boy back into safety or I swear I'll shoot him myself! I'll not see the boy killed, and I'll not see myself without making you pay for it!"

Looking up into the young lieutenant's set face, he read there that he was a lost man if he did not do as he was told.

Jack's blood was up, and he intended to stick to it to save Joe or, if he could not save him, to at least show the master of the island gave the order to kill Brink.

"Pull the boy back!"

Brink snarled like a baffled wild beast, while the blood and had been kindled of it; but he dared not disobey the command of his terrible master. Dropping his hands, he reached down over the crevice for another coil of rope, fastened to Joe's shoulders, and pulled the boy up.

For less than a minute Joe lay there motionless, capable of making an effort on his own behalf. But Clement Graves, who was prompted by Jack Brink's eyes, which were fastened round the boy's wrist. No—this time when Joe leaped to his feet, and a shot. He tore over the ice at lightning speed, passed to look back and shout:

and he was Ambrose Brink, who threw himself at Jack's feet, and, clinging to his knees, shrieked for mercy.

It was an easy task after that for Jack to seize the warship. There were enough good sailors amongst the men whom he had led to victory and liberty to form a capable crew. The new cannons were dragged aboard, and all the shells which Graves had prepared for his own use in the war he had anticipated against Great Britain.

The warship had already been launched in the thawed channel. She was surrounded by drifting masses of ice, but her powerful engines made short work of them. Under the command of Jack English, the great ship forged ahead, scattering the ice before her bows. And, as she went, Jack made the first use of his cannon. Broadside after broadside was directed against the fortresses, the town, and all the works of the hidden island amidst the frozen wilderness, until nothing but ruins were left.

That was the end of Jack English's trials.

The warship cleared the channel in safety. The voyage homeward through the southern seas was a perilous one; but the young naval lieutenant's superb seamanship stood him in good stead, and the great ship obeyed him like a thing of life, while his crew were only too eager to execute his orders.

On the voyage home Joe told how he managed to live in the wilderness of ice on the island, sealing near the town at night to pick up scraps of food, and avoiding capture. Nothing but his pluck had kept him alive; but he had come

through, and as soon as he had heard the sounds of Jack's feet, he had hurried to take part in it.

"And it was well for me you did, Joe," Jack said. "I shall be your debtor as long as I live."

"Say my friend, gov' nor, and I'll ask nothing better," Joe said eagerly. And they gripped hands on it.

No need to describe Jack's welcome home, nor the glory of his story caused. His cannon was adopted, as a matter of course, by the Admiralty, and its possession made the British Navy even more supreme than it had been before.

And Jack's good name was cleared also. In the long-4 escaping a part of the punishment his crimes had merited, Ambrose Brink confessed that he had lied when he had accused Jack of selling him the code-book. The first son had attempted to kill him was another member of the crew, one of Clement Graves's innumerable spies, who had been set on by the man with the twisted foot to commit the theft that Jack might be falsely accused and ruined. Joe who had subsequently attacked Brink because that man had been robbed of the reward he had promised.

All who had helped Jack on the island amid the ice were richly rewarded, and Joe did not know himself how he received his share.

But as for Jack English himself, he thought himself any reward in comparison with the restoration of his name and his reinstatement in the glorious British Navy. He had risked all to serve.

THE END.

("Tom Merry's Sub" is next week's "Gem" Library—usual price.)

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Read This First.

Oswald Yorke, a young ex-highwayman, joins the Navy as a midshipman under the name of John Smith. His ship, the *Cynthia*, is dispatched to the Island of San Andrado, to investigate the conduct of a certain family of planters named Wilson, who are suspected of complicity with the notorious pirate, Kester. The warship lands a party of bluejackets, who find the island laid waste and the Wilsons dead. Amidst the general ruin, however, a negro is found, who informs them that the Wilsons have left the island in company with the pirate Kester. The bluejackets then return to their ship. Oswald and his friend Maxwell are making their way to their quarters, when a sailor named Dicky Davis comes hurrying after them.

(Now go on with the story.)

Before the Captain.

"Smith, the skipper, has sent me to bring you," said Davis.

"They could tell by the expression on his face that there was something wrong."

"The captain wants me on the quarter-deck," asked Oswald quietly.

"Yes. And that little brute has been reporting you for something or other. What have you been up to?"

"Nothing," said Oswald quietly.

Davis turned to Maxwell.

"Has he been up to something, or hasn't he? Whether

he has or not, the skipper is in a fine way. It's really serious, I mean," asked the little chap excitedly.

"That depends how the captain takes it," said Maxwell.

Meanwhile, Oswald had walked to the quarter-deck, finding himself in the presence of his superior.

Captain Gavrin was there, with Mr. Briggs, of the *Lancaster*.

The captain looked at Oswald fixedly.

"Mr. Briggs has been obliged to report to me your gross insubordination on your part, Mr. Smith. Captain, in a cold, level voice.

"To my knowledge, I have not been guilty of any act," said Oswald quietly.

"He lies," cried Mr. Briggs excitedly.

A shade of annoyance passed over the captain's manner of the accused was decidedly unbecomingly that of the accuser.

"Will you repeat your accusation, if you please, Mr. Briggs, in order that Mr. Smith may hear it?" said Captain Gavrin.

"As I told you, sir, a negro lad was found by my men skulking in a dark corner of the house. The lad brought before me, and I questioned him about it."

My questions, kindly put, were met with obstinate sullen reticence and looks of defiance. I happened to catch a small twig in my hand—it was no more than a twig, but it threatened the youth that, unless he answered me, I would strike him. Scarcely had I uttered the word

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flung at me, and wrenched the twig out of my hand and hurled it out of the window."

"And then?" asked Captain Garvin gravely.

"I stood round, dumbfounded by this sudden attack."

"Mr. Smith had been standing behind me at the time. I told

him I would report his conduct the moment we set foot

on shore, and he laughed in my face. The act was

humiliating. Had we been alone, it would have been

bad; but, as it was, the men were standing

round, they took their cue from Mr. Smith's behaviour,

and began to laugh and jeer."

"Mr. Smith's face darkened.

"The negro youth?"

"The opportunity to escape, assisted, I believe, by

the fact that my back was turned. The whole occurrence

was a disgrace; and, though it pains me to have

charge against one of the younger officers of the

ship, I am now, sir, feeling it my bounden duty."

"Your duty, sir," said the captain. Then he turned

to Mr. Briggs and said: "What have you

to say in reply, sir?" said Oswald quietly.

"The truth of the charge, then?" said the

captain.

"I have nothing to say, but you insinuate that

my statement is false. This makes your serious

charge only the greater. Have you nothing to

reply?"

"Mr. Briggs has a question, sir!"

"What?"

"Just now, sir, of the negro as a lad and a

man, you have nothing to say, but you insinuate that

my statement is false. This makes your serious

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"Just now, sir, of the negro as a lad and a

man, you have nothing to say, but you insinuate that

my statement is false. This makes your serious

charge only the greater. Have you nothing to

deal with and put down. For, Smith himself I am sorry,

and I hope it will not go too hard with him."

"Your kind heart does you credit," said Lansing, with a

most palpable sneer.

"Your own conduct, sir," said the captain sternly, "is not

credible. You apparently terrified this black child;

you had already struck him, because he was incapable of

answering your questions. I regret that I sent you in charge

of this expedition. I feel sure that, had Mr. Lansing gone

in your place, this would never have occurred."

"I trust, sir, that you do not think that I am capable of

inflicting injury on an inoffensive child, and thus earning for

myself the contempt of the crew?" said Mr. Lansing.

"The contempt of the crew! How dare you say—"

spluttered Briggs.

"Date is a strong word to use here, sir," said the captain.

"You will kindly retire."

Mr. Briggs turned away; but before he had reached the

steps young Garvin, with flushed face, sprang up them, and

approached the captain.

"Sir, may I speak?" he asked breathlessly.

The captain and Mr. Lansing glanced at the boy's excited

face curiously.

"On what subject?" asked the captain.

"I understand that, Smith has been placed under arrest."

Mr. Briggs had already descended the steps, when the

captain asked him to return.

"Mr. Garvin has something to say on the subject of your

complaint against Mr. Smith. You had better stay to hear

it."

"May I tell my story in my own way, sir?" asked Garvin.

"You may. I presume it bears on this matter?"

"If Mr. Briggs has charged Smith with snatching a stick

from his hand, it does, sir," said Garvin.

He told the true story of the occurrence in the house of

the Wilsons rapidly but intelligibly. He described how the

covering and trembling child had been dragged out of its

place of concealment; how Mr. Briggs had shouted at it

and intimidated it until it was beside itself with terror. He

told how Briggs had ordered the boatman to cut a stick, in

order that he might whip the child, and so force him to

answer it; how the old man had feigned deafness; how Oswald

had flatly refused; and how one of the men had finally gone

and brought back a stick about as substantial as a blade of

grass.

"And was this the twig with which Mr. Briggs struck the

child?" asked the captain.

"No, sir. Mr. Briggs flung it away from him, and went

out and cut one for himself—a stout stick. He returned

with it; and because the child could not answer him he

struck it a blow with the stick."

Garvin's face was flushed; he was panting with excite-

ment.

"It was a cruel and cowardly thing to do. I looked at the

men, and I could see that they could hardly restrain them-

selves. That man—I mean Mr. Briggs—raised the stick the

second time. I was just behind him; the stick almost grazed

my face. Without a thought, I grasped it and jerked it out

of his hand, and flung it out of the window behind me."

"You?" cried Captain Garvin and Mr. Lansing in a

breath.

"Yes, sir, I did, and that is why I have come to tell you

the truth."

"I do not believe it! I believe this has been invented to

shield Smith!" cried Briggs.

The captain swung round on his heel and faced Briggs.

"Silence!" he said sternly. "Mr. Garvin is my nephew,

and I know that he comes of a race that finds lying a difficult

art to acquire. You have evidently behaved in a

manner in which no officer should. Your brutal violence

aroused the feeling against you which you endeavoured to

perpetrate as was caused by Mr. Smith's defence and oppo-

sition. You have brought a charge against Mr. Smith, and

he was content to submit to the penalty rather than shield

himself at the expense of his messmate. You acted in a

manner unworthy of an officer and a gentleman, and your

disgrace was well merited."

Captain Garvin turned to his young nephew.

"You say that the stick passed close to your face, and

you seized it and jerked it out of his hand? You did not

touch Mr. Briggs?"

"No, sir. I only caught the end of the stick. Mr. Briggs

was standing some way from me."

Then the captain turned again to the discomfited lieu-

tenant.

"You complain of an assault. You said that Mr. Smith

sprung at you. This, I think, is rather a different story.

You were not touched by anyone. How, then, could you

have been assaulted?"

"There is nothing for me to say," said Briggs sullenly.

"You have good reason for siding against me."

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NEXT THURSDAY.

"THE TERRIBLE THREE'S

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