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FATTY WYNN'S NEW WHEEZE

CHAPTER 1. Like Anything.

"WUN!"
"Eh!"
"Wun!"
"What?"

"Wun like anythin'!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, waving his hands in great excitement.

Fatty Wynn did not run. He was sitting on the stile in Rylcombe Lane, within sight of the old grey tower of St. Jim's. He had a handkerchief spread on his knees, and on the handkerchief rested a large pork pie. Fatty Wynn was eating the pie.

Naturally enough, he didn't want to be interrupted. And as he had already eaten four similar pies, and was well on with the fifth, he didn't feel inclined to run. Fatty Wynn had a weakness for pork pies.

He had a weakness, as a matter of fact, for anything eatable. Figgins and Kerr, his chums in the New House of St. Jim's, had often expressed the sincere hope that they would never

be wrecked on a desert island with Fatty Wynn, or abandoned in an open boat at sea with the fat Fourth-Former. Under such circumstances they declared their conviction that there would be no restraining Fatty Wynn from cannibalism.

Whereat Fatty Wynn would snort, and go his way—his way generally leading him to the tuck-shop, when he had any money. He seldom had any; Mrs. Taggles at the tuck-shop usually received it almost as soon as Wynn did.

Fatty Wynn was sitting on the stile in the sunny afternoon, thoroughly enjoying those pork pies.

When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came dashing up the lane, with his eyeglass flying at the end of its cord, and holding his silk hat on with one hand, and shouting to Fatty Wynn to run, the Fourth-Former simply looked at him.

D'Arcy waved his hands excitedly. D'Arcy generally cultivated that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. But he could get excited; he was excited now.

"Wun!" he roared,

"Eh!"

"Wun!"

Next Thursday:
"Lumley-Lumley's Return" and "The Iron Island."

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Fatty Wynn took another mouthful.

Arthur Augustus rushed up to him, and grasped him by one leg to drag him off the stile.

Fatty Wynn gave a yell, and clutched at the stile to save himself, and what was left of his pork pie dropped into the grass underneath.

"Eh? You ass! Look at that!" roared Fatty.

"Wun, you duffah!"

"What's the matter?"

"The bull!"

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

"He's got out of Farmer Giles's field!" panted D'Arcy breathlessly. "Wun, you ass! He's comin' up the lane like steam! Wun like anythin'!"

Fatty Wynn ran then.

Arthur Augustus was already on the run again, sprinting towards the open gates of St. Jim's. Fatty Wynn dashed after him. He realised his peril, and did not stop even to pick up the fallen pork pie.

There was a deep bellow down the lane. It was the voice of the bull. Some careless farmhand had left a gate open, or else the bull had got through the hedge. At all events, he was in the lane now, with flaming eyes and tossing head and lashing tail. Several farmhands were chasing him, and it was likely to go badly with anyone who got into the bull's path just then. Once or twice he turned on his pursuers, and they retreated hurriedly from the lowered head and dangerous-looking horns. Then the bull careered on again, with the shouting pursuers closing up behind him again.

"Wun!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking back. "Come on, Wynn, deah boy!"

"I—I—I'm coming!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Buck up!"

"I—I—I can run as well as any School House bouncer!" jerked out Wynn.

"Oh, wun!"

D'Arcy's slim legs carried him on at a splendid speed. D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant ways, was one of the best forwards in the junior team at St. Jim's.

Fatty Wynn was a wonderful goalkeeper, and he had a good turn of speed when he was in form. But four pork pies eaten at express speed were not likely to put any fellow in form for a fast race.

The fat Fourth-Former laboured and panted. His face was crimson, his breath came in painful jerks, his face streamed and ran with perspiration.

Fatty Wynn felt as if he had an iron band round his chest, and as if his lungs were bursting. His pace slackened.

Arthur Augustus turned his head again.

Fatty Wynn was several yards behind, and losing ground all the time. The bull had caught sight of the two juniors now, and was charging towards them with lowered head.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

The juniors were close to the gate of St. Jim's now. But would they reach the gate before the bull reached them? D'Arcy could have done it with ease. But Fatty Wynn?

"Buck up, Wynn!"

"Ow!"

"Wun, deah boy!"

"Groo!"

"Wun like anythin'!"

"Gr-r-r-r!"

Fatty Wynn slackened still more.

"I—I can't run!" he gasped. "I—I'm done! Keep on!"

And, with the bellow of the savage bull close behind him, Fatty Wynn dropped into a walking pace, utterly spent.

Arthur Augustus halted. He would not desert a chum in danger, though how he was to be of any use to Fatty Wynn was not clear.

There was a shout from the gateway of St. Jim's.

"Buck up, you fellows! Buck up!"

Tom Merry, of the Shell, ran out. He had caught sight of the chase, and, catching up the nearest weapon, he had rushed out to the aid of the juniors. He had a spade in his hand. Taggles, the school porter, was spending that afternoon in tending the little garden belonging to his lodge, and his spade and garden-hose were there, and Tom Merry had caught up the spade. Heedless of the yell the angry porter sent after him, Tom dashed into the road with it.

"Tom Mewwy—"

"Get in, Gussy!"

"But—"

"Get in! Go on, Fatty!"

Tom Merry ran towards the bull. The savage animal was almost upon Fatty Wynn. The heavy iron spade swung up into the air, and Tom Merry struck with all his strength at the lowered, charging head.

There was a terrific roar from the bull. The blow had fallen heavily on the side of the head, and it caused the bull to swerve in his rush, and he went raging past the juniors, staggering

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blindly from the blow. He charged blindly into the hedge beside the road.

"Come on!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry dropped the spade, and, seizing Fatty Wynn by the arm, he rushed him in at the gateway. D'Arcy dashed after them. Taggles, the porter, stood up in his garden, and shouted to the juniors.

"Master Merry! You young rip! Where's that spade?"

"Look out, Taggles!"

Taggles was grasping the nozzle of his hose.

"You bring that spade back, Master Merry, or I'll turn the loose on yer!" he roared.

"Taggles—"

"I tell yer—"

"Get into your lodge, man!" roared Tom Merry. "The bull—"

"Wot!"

There was a bellow from the gateway. The bull, mad with rage, was charging in after the juniors. There was no time to get the gates closed. Taggles, the porter, gave one wild stare at the bull, and then, dropping the hose, he bolted into his lodge and slammed the door.

The juniors dashed after him. In the open quad, they were at the mercy of the bull, and they would have been overtaken and gored long before they could reach either the School House or the New House for shelter.

"Taggles," shouted Tom Merry, "let us in!"

But there was no reply from Taggles. He had bolted the door in frantic terror, and sunk exhausted into a chair, too terrified to move again.

"Taggles—"

"Bai Jove! Look out!"

The three juniors looked wildly towards the bull. The furious animal was charging towards them, and there seemed no escape.

The pursuers were at the gates of St. Jim's by this time, and looking in, they uttered a yell of warning. But warning was little use. The juniors saw their danger clearly enough, but they could not escape it.

Fatty Wynn reeled back against the lodge, utterly spent. Tom Merry's eyes fell upon the garden-hose that Taggles had dropped in his terror, and a gleam of hope lighted his eyes. He sprang towards the hose, and seized it. He raised it, and as the bull charged down upon him he faced the furious animal steadily, and pressed the nozzle.

Whiz! Swish!

A stream of water shot fairly into the eyes of the charging bull, and splashed blindly over his head. The animal roared and snorted. Whiz! Whiz! Swish! came the water in a spattering stream, Tom Merry holding the nozzle with a hand that never trembled.

CHAPTER 2.

The Hero of the Hour.

WHIZ! Splash! Spatter! The stream of water crashed into the eyes of the bull, and, with a choked bellow, it halted, and whirled away from the whiz of the water.

Tom Merry did not move. He might have been a figure carved in bronze as he stood there holding the hose. Only his wrist turned slightly to direct the nozzle upon the bull as the animal swerved and swung away from the stream of water.

D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn stood gasping breathlessly. Fatty had not another run left in him if the bull had been charging directly at him, and D'Arcy, too, was out of breath.

Bellow, bellow! Whiz-z-z-z!

It was touch and go. If the bull could have seen in the blinding water, and had come on, Tom Merry would have been trampled over and gored in a second more. But the animal, startled, confused, bewildered by the sudden dash of water in its eyes, swerved away, staggering, and careered off into the quadrangle.

"Tramp! tramp! tramp! There was a rush of all the fellows in the quad, for refuge.

The savage brute careered up and down the quadrangle, bellowing furiously, with water dripping from its head and neck.

Tom Merry gasped.

"That was a close thing, kids!"

"Bai Jove!"

"We're not out of the w-w-woods yet!" stuttered Fatty Wynn. "Let's get inside!"

"Taggles! Open the door, Taggles!"

"Taggles, you cowardly wascal—"

"Taggles! Taggy—Taggy!"

But there was no reply from Taggles, he was still gasping in his chair inside the lodge, and he would not have opened the door for love or money.

Tom Merry dropped the hose, and ran to the lodge window. At any moment the bull might come careering back, and the

hose-pipe might not stop him a second time. The window was partly open, and Tom Merry threw the lower sash up.

"This way, kids!" he exclaimed.

"Gerrout!" gasped Taggles from within. "You awful beast, gerrout! Shoo!"

Taggles, in his terror, seemed to have an idea that it was the bull who was getting into the window. Tom Merry involuntarily burst into a laugh.

"You ass!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Master Merry—"

"You first, Gussy—"

"Pway excuse me, Tom Mewwy, a D'Arcy's place is the last in the wetveat," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "Pway get in first, deah boy."

"Ass! I want you to help me in with Wynn!"

"Oh, vewy well. But—"

"But what? Quick!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Fathead!" roared Tom Merry. "Get in!"

Bellow, bellow!

"Buck up, for goodness sake!"

Tramp! tramp! D'Arcy plunged in head first at the window. "Buck up, Fatty!" shouted Tom Merry. "The brute's coming back. Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn gasped.

"Ow! Gimme a bunk up! Oh!"

Tom Merry "bunked" the fat Fourth-Former up. Fatty Wynn went rolling wildly in at the window. D'Arcy helped him from within, and Tom Merry from without. But the junior was too-plump for the aperture. He stuck half-way through the window.

"Bai Jove! Make an effort, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ow!"

"Squeeze in, Wynn!"

"I c-c-can't!"

"Great Scott! You must! Quick! Drag him in, Gussy!"

"I'm doin' my best, deah boy," panted the swell of St. Jim's.

"Yow! Ow!"

"You must come in, Wynn, old man, bai Jove!"

"Go it, Fatty!"

"Yaroo!"

A loud snap was heard—Fatty Wynn's buttons were bursting off. Tom Merry looked round anxiously. The bull was charging furiously up and down the quad, bellowing loudly, with foam on his mouth. His eyes were blazing with fury. He did not seem to notice the juniors at the lodge window for the moment. But when he did—

"For goodness sake, get in, Wynn!"

"I c-c-can't!"

"You must!"

Tom Merry shoved frantically. He could see, out of the tail of his eye, as it were, the bull's head turning towards him.

Bellow! bellow! The brute was coming!

"Wynn!" yelled Tom Merry. "Quick! He's coming!"

Fatty Wynn gave a howl of terror, and with a terrific effort, squeezed himself through, and fell upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; they rolled on the floor together, the swell of St. Jim's underneath.

Tom Merry flung himself in at the window. He was hardly in, when there was a terrific shock outside, and the lowered head of the bull struck the wall beneath the sill.

Tom Merry fell upon Wynn and D'Arcy. He was up in a moment, and he looked out of the window with a face grown suddenly white, as he saw a wild, furious head and tossing horns. He had had the escape of his life.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "Good heavens!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ow!"

Bellow! bellow! bellow!

The juniors were safe. The bull was glaring in at the window, and his steaming breath reached Tom Merry's cheek; but he could not get in.

"Ow!" gasped D'Arcy. "I'm cwushed. I am bein' flattened like a wotten pancake, you know. Dwag that fat boundah off, deah boy!"

Bellow! bellow! Then the bull rushed away. Two stout men in blue smocks were rushing at it, one with a noosed rope in his hands. The animal went charging out of the gateway, scattering the crowd before him, and the butchers rushed in pursuit.

"Taggles!" shouted Tom Merry. "Quick, get the gate closed before the beast comes back!"

"Hey?"

"Quick, the gate!"

"I don't stir houter this 'ere 'ouse!" said Taggles.

"You duffer! I tell you—"

"I don't stir—"

"Give me your keys!"

Tom Merry snatched the keys, and dashed from the lodge.

In a minute, or less, he had slammed the gates shut, and locked them.

Tramp! tramp! tramp! Bellow! bellow! bellow! Back along the road, in clouds of dust, rushed the frantic bull, with a dozen men in pursuit. Past the closed gates of St. Jim's he careered. He could not get in again. The juniors were safe at last.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came out of the lodge. Fatty Wynn followed him more slowly. The fat Fourth-Former was panting.

A crowd of fellows came rushing up now that the gates were closed. There were juniors and seniors, and masters in the crowd. Figgins and Kerr of the New House slapped Tom Merry vigorously on the back.

"Splendid!" roared Figgins.

"Here, let's get at him!" shouted Monty Lowther. "Good old Tommy!"

And he slapped, and Manners slapped, and Jack Blake and Herries and Kangaroo slapped, till Tom Merry yelled.

"Stop it, you asses! Do you take me for a giddy pancake? Stop it!"

"Hurra!"

"Bravo!"

"Hip, hip hurra!"

"Good old Tom Merry!"

"Crumbs!" yelled little Joe Frayne. "Ain't he splendid! Ain't he a corker?"

"Here's the Head!"

Dr. Holmes came up in rustling gown. His face was full of emotion. He held out his hand to Tom Merry, and shook hands with the Shell fellow.

"Tom Merry!" he exclaimed, "I don't know how to thank you for your courage! You have saved two of your schoolfellows from serious injury, perhaps from death, by your courage and presence of mind. I saw it all! Tom Merry, the whole school is proud of you. Boys of St. Jim's, I call for three cheers for Tom Merry!"

And the boys of St. Jim's gave them with a will.

"Hurra!"

"Hip-hip-hurra!"

And then Tom Merry was captured by his enthusiastic chums, and carried off, shoulder high, to the School House. But it was not merely a School House demonstration. The New House fellows joined in it with equal heartiness. House rivalry was forgotten for the time: Tom Merry was the hero of all St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking After Fatty.

FIGGINS, of the New House, marched Fatty Wynn off when the demonstration was over. Figgins took the fat Fourth-Former by one arm and Kerr by the other. The three chums of the New House were inseparable, and Figgins and Kerr had really been thinking more about Fatty Wynn than about Tom Merry, the hero of the hour.

Fatty Wynn might be over-attached to the pleasures of the table. He might have an inordinate craving for pork pies. He might have an uncontrolled desire to consume jam tarts to the exact extent of his pocket-money. He might be unable to resist the temptation of buns and cake and ice-cream. But he was the best-hearted fellow, the kindest and truest chum, and the mightiest goalkeeper the lower school had ever turned out. And he was Wynn—their chum Wynn! That was every-thing.

As a rule, Figgins and Kerr, in spite of their sincere friendship, did not sympathise very much with Fatty Wynn's healthy appetite. They had sometimes laid violent hands upon him to prevent him from gorging himself upon jam tarts just before a footer match. They had hinted in plain English that he would do well to moderate his transports a little when he invaded the tuck-shop.

But that was forgotten now. Fatty Wynn had been through a perilous adventure. Fatty Wynn was blown and spent. Fatty Wynn was gasping and exhausted. It was the place of his faithful chums to stand by him, to comfort him, and to feed him back into his usual state of placidity. And that was what his faithful chums proceeded to do.

They helped the gasping and exhausted Fatty into the New House. They assisted him gently upstairs to Figgins's study. There they dropped him gently into the arm-chair. Fatty Wynn subsided into it with an expressive grunt.

"Feel done in?" asked Figgins sympathetically.

"Oh!"

"Fagged?"

"Ow!"

"Poor old Fatty!" said Kerr. "What he wants is a pick-me-up. I'll see what there is in the cupboard."

Fatty Wynn brightened up a little.

"I'll have tea," he said faintly.

"Tea?" said Figgins. "Good!"

And Figgins jammed the tea-kettle into the fire, and stirred

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

the fire round it so industriously that the room was filled with floating blacks.

"And something to eat," said Fatty Wynn.

"Ham?" asked Kerr, "and eggs?"

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Ripping!" he moaned.

"Buck up, old son; we'll have 'em ready in a jiffy."

"How good!"

"It's all right, we'll soon have 'em ready, old man. Just you sit there and rest, and get your wind back."

"Groo!"

Fatty Wynn sat and got his wind back. His thumping heart was soon going at its old pace. The natural ruddy colour returned to his cheeks.

Meanwhile, a delicious smell of cooking rose in the study, and permeated every corner of it. Fatty Wynn sniffed contentedly.

"That's something like!" he murmured.

"Better?" asked Figgins.

"I'm getting better."

"Good! Shan't be long now!"

Figgins was poaching the eggs in a frying-pan. Kerr, after exchanging a look with his chum, rushed out of the study.

Figgins dished up the eggs with the ham. He made the tea, and poured out a steaming cup for Fatty Wynn.

By that time Kerr was back. He deposited a large paper parcel upon the table, and Fatty Wynn looked at it curiously.

Kerr opened it, and the fat Fourth-Former's eyes glistened with delight as a cascade of pastry rolled out. Jam tarts and marmalade tarts, cream puffs and doughnuts, and a whole plum cake. Fatty Wynn began to wish that he was chased by a wild bull every half-holiday in the term.

"Come up to the table, Fatty," said Figgins, beaming. "No, don't move; I'll wheel your chair up."

"Really, Figgys, old man!"

"It's all right; you mustn't exert yourself, my son."

And Figgins wheeled Fatty Wynn up to the table.

Appetising dishes were set before him. The two chums watched him begin to eat, with a great deal of interest.

"It's all right," said Figgins, "the poor old chap hasn't lost his appetite."

"He hasn't!" agreed Kerr.

It was pretty clear that Fatty Wynn hadn't. The two chums knew nothing of the pork pies in the lane. Had they known, they would have still more admired the way Fatty Wynn wired into the poached eggs and bacon.

It was hardly teatime yet, and Figgins and Kerr were quite willing to wait. Fatty Wynn's wants were to be looked after first. Fatty Wynn was looking after them himself pretty well, but Figgins and Kerr never relaxed their chummy attentions.

"Feeling better, old man?" asked Figgins, as the last of the eggs disappeared.

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"Heaps!" he exclaimed.

"Good! What do you fancy next?"

"Jam tarts!"

"Here you are! Go ahead."

Fatty Wynn went ahead. The study door opened, and Pratt of the Fourth looked in. Pratt was grinning.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Feeding the brute, eh?"

Figgins and Kerr glared at him. Fatty Wynn did not even look up. He was too busy with the jam tarts.

"You ass!" said Figgins.

"You chump!" said Kerr.

"Oh, draw it mild," exclaimed Pratt. "I only looked in to see Fatty!"

"He's getting better."

"We're bringing him round."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass?" demanded Figgins, wrathfully.

"Why, the School House chaps are saying——"

"Blow the School House chaps!"

"Yes, but they're saying——"

"Blow what they're saying!"

"They're saying that there wouldn't have been any danger, only Fatty Wynn was too fat to run away from the bull. Ha, ha, ha."

"Get out!" roared Figgins.

"Yes, but they're saying in the School House——"

Pratt got no further. Figgins and Kerr rushed at him together, and he was collared before he could escape.

"Bump him!" shouted Figgins.

"Yow!" yelled Pratt. "Leggo! Yow! I was only telling you that the School House fellows were saying—ow! ow!"

Down went Pratt with a mighty bump, and then he was rolled into the passage.

"Ow! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door slammed on Pratt. Figgins and Kerr turned

back apologetically to Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth-Former was as busy as ever.

"Don't mind him, Fatty," said Figgins.

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Don't mind that ass Pratt."

"Pratt!"

"Yes. He said——"

"Did he?"

Figgins and Kerr burst into a laugh. Fatty Wynn had been too busy with the tarts to notice even the intrusion of the humorous Pratt.

"The School House bounders can go and eat coke," said Figgins. "What do you think, Fatty?"

"They're splendid," said Fatty Wynn.

Figgins stared at him.

"What! The School House bounders are splendid, are they?"

"Eh! I was talking about the jam tarts."

"Oh, I see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll try the cream puffs now."

"Good! Here you are."

Fatty Wynn went on feeding. Figgins and Kerr were feeling very satisfied. Fatty Wynn, after his hairbreadth escape, was becoming his old self again, and settling down into his old ways. They were more than glad to see it.

The door opened again. Figgins and Kerr looked round angrily, expecting to see the obnoxious Pratt again. But it was French of the Shell this time. French of the Shell looked curiously at Fatty Wynn. Wynn did not look up. He was bolting cream puffs as if for life!

"I see Fatty's not much the worse," grinned French.

"He's getting better," said Figgins.

"I say, the chaps are saying over in the School House," began French.

"Oh, dry up!"

"But they're saying——"

"Never mind what they're saying; don't worry!"

"They're saying that if Fatty doesn't bring his fat down, and learn to run, they'll——"

"Outside!" roared Figgins, greatly incensed.

A cream puff, deftly aimed by Kerr, shot through the air. French did not see it coming for a moment.

"They're saying—yaroo! Yoop! Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins pushed French out of the study. French staggered into the passage, scooping white cream out of his eye, and saying things.

Fatty Wynn pushed his plate away with a grunt of contentment.

"Oh, ripping!" he said.

"Cake, Fatty, old man?"

"Well, just one slice."

"And some pineapple?"

"Well, yes; only one."

"And doughnuts—you were always fond of doughnuts," said Kerr, with tender solicitude.

But Fatty Wynn declined the doughnuts.

"I—I can't!" he said, regretfully. "You're awfully good, you fellows. But I—I can't eat any more! I'm done!"

"Lend a hand, Kerr," said Figgins.

The armchair was wheeled back to the fire. Figgins lifted up Fatty Wynn's feet and put them on the fender. Fatty Wynn gave a sigh, and closed his eyes in a state of beatific contentment.

CHAPTER 4.

A Public Danger.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY lifted his teacup, as he sat at the table in Study No. 6, in the Fourth Form passage in the School House. He did not drink the tea, but gazed into the cup with a very thoughtful expression on his face. Blake, Herries, and Digby watched him. They had a way of watching Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sometimes, as if they found something very entertaining in his movements. As a matter of fact, the swell of St. Jim's frequently was entertaining, though quite unintentionally.

"Good!" exclaimed Jack Blake, suddenly.

Arthur Augustus started, and a little of the tea jerked over his cup. He stared at Blake reprovingly.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Good!" repeated Blake.

"What do you mean, Blake?"

"Am I going to marry an heiress?" asked Blake.

"Eh?"

"Will she have brown eyes or blue?"

"What?"

"And am I to beware of a dark gentleman?"

"I fail to understand——"

"You're telling fortunes in the tea-leaves, aren't you?" asked Blake.

Herries and Digby roared. D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye with his disengaged hand, and regarded Blake with immeasurable scorn.

"No, Blake, I am not telling fortunes in tea-leaves," he said.

"Oh, my mistake!" said Blake, blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what are you doing, then?" asked Blake. "Of course, that was what it looked like. Is there anything wrong with the tea?"

"I have not tasted it."

"You are afraid there's something wrong with it, I suppose?"

"I have not thought about the matter at all."

"Then, if you were not telling fortunes, and you didn't think there was anything wrong with the tea, what were you staring into it for?"

"Was I?"

"Yes, ass, you were."

"I was thinking—"

"Oh, draw it mild," said Blake, incredulously.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy set down his teacup in his saucer, and regarded Blake fixedly.

"I regard you as an ass, Blake. I considah—"

"Another cup of tea?"

"No; I think—"

"More toast?"

"Thank you, no. I regard—"

"Have some jam?"

"Certainly not. I was goin' to say—"

"Well, I think I'm about finished, too," said Blake, yawning and rising. "It was a jolly good tea, and I was hungry. I wonder how Fatty Wynn's getting on. He had a narrow escape of bursting in Taggles' window."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was about Fatty Wynn that I was goin' to speak, deah boy."

"Oh, go ahead. Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"Pway listen to me, deah boys. I was goin' to speak about Fatty Wynn, and I wegard it as a wathah important mattah. Fatty Wynn was nearly wun down in the lane by a mad bull, because he couldn't wun fast enough."

"A School House chap got him out of it," said Blake, with a certain amount of satisfaction. "These bounders over the way won't be able to say that the School House isn't cock-house at St. Jim's now."

"Yaas, wathah! But I was goin' to wemark that Fatty Wynn had a second nawwow escape owin' to his bein' too fat to get thwrough the lodge window."

"Poor old Fatty."

"Lucky Tom Merry thought of the hose," said Digby. "Of course, I should have done the same if I'd been there."

"P'raps!" said Blake.

"Look here, Blake, you ass—"

"If I'd known what was going on," said Herries, "I'd have turned my bulldog loose. Towser would have made short work of the bull."

"Bolted him at a mouthful, I suppose?" suggested Blake. To which remark Herries replied only with a snort.

"I have been thinkin' about Fatty Wynn," said D'Arcy. "I don't know whethah a vewy important aspect of the mattah has stwuck you fellows."

"What is that?"

"That owin' to Fatty bein' so fat, and my stoppin' to look aftah him, I might have been goahed by the bull as well as Fatty."

"Would that have been important?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"I insist upon speakin'. I might have been sewiously injahed, to say nothin' of the damage done to my clothes. As it was, my hat was twodden on by some careless wuffian, and pwactically wuined."

"Of course, if Wynn had foreseen that, he would have stayed out in the road and been gored peacefully," Digby suggested.

"I wegard your wemarks as fwivolous, Dig. I was about to say that I have weflected upon the mattah, and I have come to the conclusion that Fatty Wynn's fatness is a public dangah."

"Go hon!"

"To himself," said D'Arcy, "and to everybody else. Tom Mewwy will not always be on the spot with a garden hose when Fatty Wynn is chased by a mad bull. I think it is unlikely that Tom Mewwy will always be on top in that way."

"But Fatty may never be chased by another mad bull."

"Well, it might be a mad dog, then, and I don't suppose a stwam of watah would stop a mad dog, anyway. The fact is, deah boys, I wegard Fatty Wynn as a public dangah while he wemains in his pwesent state of extwawordinary plumpness."

"Agreed," said Blake. "Proposed, seconded, and passed unanimously, that Fatty Wynn is a public danger. Now, has anybody seen my Virgil?"

"Pway give me your stwict attention, deah boys. My ideah is that somethin' ought to be done in the mattah."

"Blessed if I see what. Could we have him labelled—
"Dangerous to Mad Bulls?"

"Pway don't be an ass."

"I suppose you're not suggesting boiling him down into tallow or anything of that sort?" Blake demanded. "His people would be practically certain to raise objections."

"You uttah ass—"

"Of course, he could be thinned down," suggested Digby. "I was reading in a recipe about making toffee the other day, that if you wanted to thin it down, you should add butter while it was hot in the pan. Now, my belief is that you could thin Fatty Wynn down by adding butter."

"You feahful ass—"

"Besides, you'd never induce him to remain hot in the pan," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "It's asking too much of any fellow."

D'Arcy gazed almost speechlessly at the humorous juniors who persisted in misunderstanding him.

"You—you uttah asses—"

"Well, if you've got any other method to suggest, I'm willing to help in carrying it out," said Blake. "Perhaps you're thinking of rolling him under the doctor's lawn-mower? That would only make him flatter; there would be just as much stuff in him, only it would be double width."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Or you can make people thinner by makin' 'em drink vinegar," said Digby. "Of course, you couldn't make Fatty Wynn drink vinegar. But you might persuade him to. You could tell him it was buttermilk."

"Good egg!"

"You uttah asses! I wefuse to discuss the mattah with you any more," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, wrathfully. "I shall pwocceed to Tom Mewwy's study, and acquaint the Shell fellows with my bwiliant ideah."

"Pwocceed away!" said Blake, cheerfully. "Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"You ass!"

"Well, I want my Virgil; it's time to do my prep."

"You feahful chump—"

"Anybody seen my Virgil?"

D'Arcy opened the door of the study. He paused with his grasp on the handle, to send back a withering look at the chums of the Fourth. Blake was looking round for his book.

"I wegard you as a set of silly asses!" said D'Arcy.

"Good!"

"And blithewin' chumps!"

"Hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus went out of the study and closed the door with unnecessary force.

"Slam!"

Then he paused. He thought he heard his name called from the study.

"D'Arcy! I say, Gus!"

Arthur Augustus turned back to the door again, the frown clearing from his aristocratic brow. He opened the door and looked in.

"Did you call me, Blake, deah boy?"

"Yes, rather."

"What is it? Have you—"

"Have you seen my Virgil?" asked Blake blandly.

"Slam!"

The door closed behind D'Arcy even more forcefully than before, and the swell of St. Jim's walked down the passage with his noble nose held very high in the air. He left three clucking juniors in No. 6.

CHAPTER 5.

Quite as Bad.

TOM MERRY stretched out his feet to the fire. It was a bitterly cold evening, and the fire was piled up high in the Terrible Three's study in the Shell passage. There was a pleasant smell of hot buttered toast in the study, mingled with the fragrance of tea—Dame Taggles's best, and two shillings a pound. The chums of the Shell had finished tea, but there was still toast on the table, and still tea in the pot. Funds were high in Tom Merry's study, and the three chums were living on the fat of the land. Outside the night was setting in, and a wild wind wailed among the elms in the quadrangle. But in the study the fire leaped and roared.

"This is comfy, and no mistake," said Tom Merry. "I like this better than London."

"I should jolly well think so," said Monty Lowther. "And young Joe Frayne seems to like it better, now he's getting used to it."

"Yes, and that's good. Hallo, who's there?"

There was a tap at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" called out Manners.

The door opened, and an eyeglass gleamed in from the dusky passage. The face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form glimmered behind it.

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NEXT THURSDAY: "LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

"Come in," said Tom Merry, cheerfully. "Got over your fright?"

D'Arcy was just entering the study when Tom Merry asked that question. He paused, jammed his monocle more tightly into his eye, and regarded Tom Merry fixedly.

"What were you pleased to remark, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"Got over your fright?" said Tom Merry pleasantly.

"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you do not think a D'Arcy capable of fallin' into a fright?" said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh, I don't know. You fell into a river once, and I've seen you fall into a rain barrel," said Tom Merry. "Why not into a fright?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Manners and Lowther.

"If this is the way you weceive a visitah, Tom Mewwy——"

"I don't see how I can receive a chap more politely than by asking him how he feels?" said Tom Merry. "But if you say you weren't in a fright, of course I take the word of a D'Arcy."

"I certainly was not in a fright."

"Then it is all right. Appearances were deceptive. We'll agree that you only looked a fright," Tom Merry conceded.

"You uttah ass!"

"If that is the way you address your host, Gussy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Come in, old son, and sit down," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Now, what is it? Do you want our opinion on a new waistcoat?"

"Nothing of the sort, deah boy."

"A new hat?"

"Certainly not."

"If you've come to tea, you've come to the right place at the right time. There's heaps of toast, and heaps of tea, heaps of ham and jam. You can take them both together, or einander nach, as old Schneider says. Or to put it in the words of the poet," said Tom Merry, with a wave of his hand to the tea-table, "Still a ruby kindles in the vine, and many a garden by the water blows."

"I have had my tea, deah boys."

"Have another."

"Imposs. I am not Fatty Wynn. Look here, you know, I have come to speak to you about Fatty Wynn," said D'Arcy. "I have bwoached a most brilliant ideah to the fellows in my study, and they have tweeked it in a spiwit of uttah wibaldwy."

"The Terrible Three exchanged a wink.

"Rotten of them," said Lowther.

"Beastly," agreed Manners.

"Unmanly," said Tom Merry.

"Awful cads, those Fourth-formers," said Monty Lowther, with a shake of his head. "They're worse than the Third Form fags."

"Heaps worse," said Manners. "Horrid little rotters, and Gussy's study are the worst of the lot, too."

"Yes, that's so," said Tom Merry, sympathetically. "I've often wondered what Gussy's great-grandmother would say if she knew the company he kept."

"Horrid!"

"Simply beastly!"

"Unspeakable!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed at the chums of the Shell one after another. Their sympathy pleased him at the beginning, but as they went on with their frank opinions about Blake, Herries, and Digby, the swell of St. Jim's rose to his feet.

"If you boundahs intend to speak in this stwain about my fwiends, I shall wetro from the study," he said frigidly.

The Terrible Three burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right, Gussy. We were only pulling your leg. They are the best chaps in the School House, bar ourselves; and you're quite in the wrong when you have any trouble with them."

"Nothin' of the sort——"

"Oh, dear! You can't L-f-sfy some chaps at all," said Manners. "Suppose you tell us what you came to see us about, Gussy."

"Vewy well. I wegard Fatty Wynn bein' so awfl'y plump as a public dangah. It is a dangah to himself and to othahs. For the genewal good, I think Fatty Wynn ought to be persuaded somehow to weduce his fat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows wegard it as a laughin' mattah——"

The Terrible Three evidently did. They laughed, and laughed, till the study and half the passage rang with it.

Arthur Augustus sat frigidly the while, his monocle jammed into his eye, regarding them with a fixed stare of great scorn.

"When you fellows have done——" he began at last.

Tom Merry wiped away his tears.

"Oh, Gussy! How are you going to reduce his fat?"

"I presume that a selected diet would be the best plan.

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Suppose he were put on a vegetawian wegime?" said D'Arcy. "Say a little powwidge in the morning, no lunch, and a vewy light tea, for a few weeks——"

The Terrible Three shrieked again.

"I fancy I can see Fatty taking it on," sobbed Lowther.

"I was thinkin' that we ought to put it to Figgins & Co. as sensible chaps, and then Fatty Wynn would have to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you chaps care to come and back me up, I will go ovah to the New House at once and intahview Figgins & Co. on the subject."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cannot be sewious——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Terrible Three.

Arthur Augustus rose from his seat and crossed to the door. He opened the door. Kangaroo looked in from the passage at the same moment; he had been about to open the door himself and look in, to ascertain the cause of the sounds of loud merriment. He stared into the study with a grin. D'Arcy, who had looked back towards the chums of the Shell, did not observe him.

"You uttah cwass asses!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You are as diswepctful and cwass as the uttah duffahs in my own studay. I wefuse to wemain and be tweeked with this uttah want of pwopah wespsect."

And Arthur Augustus strode from the study, right into Kangaroo, knocking the Australian junior fairly across the passage with the sudden impact.

"Ow!" roared Harry Noble.

"Bai Jove!"

"Yaroooh! You ass!"

"I—I beg your pardon, Noble, deah boy. I did not see you. Bai Jove!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Kangawoo——"

"Ass!"

Kangaroo lurched forward, and caught hold of Arthur Augustus.

"Hold me up!" he gasped.

"Bai Jove! Are you injahed, deah boy? This is tewwible! Help!"

"Oh!" moaned Kangaroo.

"I'm awfl'y sowwy. Are you much hurt?"

"Oh! Carry me into the study!" moaned the Cornstalk faintly.

Arthur Augustus grasped the bulky form of the Colonel. Kangaroo was no light-weight for the slim swell of St. Jim's to carry in. The Terrible Three did not offer to lend a hand. Perhaps they had caught a wink from the Cornstalk.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

He staggered into the study under the weight of the sturdy Cornstalk. He slid Noble into a chair, and gasped.

"Ow! Oh!"

Kangaroo sat up, apparently quite recovered. The breathless swell of St. Jim's regarded him in wonder.

"Are you all wight?" he panted.

"Quite, thanks," drawled Kangaroo.

"W-w-w-weren't you hurt?"

"Not at all."

"You—you uttah ass! Then you were wottin'!"

"Exactly," said Kangaroo blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"You feahful asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus strode into the passage and slammed the door, with a slam that was heard as far as Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form quarters. Blake chuckled.

"That's Gussy again!" he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fourth-Formers chuckled and went on with their prep. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, still panting for breath, passed the study and descended the stairs. D'Arcy's face was pink with indignation. He felt that he was not being properly backed up. But he was as far as ever from abandoning his splendid idea.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Suggests Dieting.

FIGGINS stirred the fire. Fatty Wynn opened his eyes, blinked at the fire, and closed them again. Kerr looked at Figgins.

"Time for prep, you know," he remarked.

"But, Fatty——"

"I wonder if we could excuse him to Mr. Lathom to-morrow."

"I wonder!"



Fatty Wynn gazed at D'Arcy, and clasped his hands. He envied the Swell of the School House his slim figure. How did he do it? "Gussy, old man," began Fatty, in a wheedling tone. (See page 13.)

"The poor old chap isn't in a fit state for prep," said Figgins. "He seems to be quite fagged out."

Tap!

Figgins's eyes gleamed.

"If that's French or Pratt come back, I'll jolly well jam his head!" he muttered; and he threw open the door.

An elegant figure presented itself to view. It was that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a monocle jammed in his right eye, and a silk hat in his hand. He gave Figgins a graceful bow.

"Good evenin', dear boy," he said.

"Hallo!" said Figgins, in a subdued voice. He held up a warning finger. "Quiet!"

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed.

"What's the mattah, Figgay?"

"Fatty Wynn!"

"What's the mattah with him?"

"We're looking after him. He's had a rough time, you know. He mustn't be disturbed. Don't make a sound. Tread on tiptoe."

Arthur Augustus came into the study on tiptoe. Figgins closed the door noiselessly. Kerr held up his hand to D'Arcy as an additional warning to be quiet.

The swell of St. Jim's turned his monocle upon Fatty Wynn. The Falstaff of the New House did not open his eyes. He may

not have been asleep, but he was too far gone after that tremendous meal to support the burden of a conversation.

"Baj Jove!"

"Hush!"

"Weally, you know——"

"Quieter, Gussy!"

"Weally, is there anythin' w'ong with him? He looks all wight."

"He needs looking after."

"But, weally——"

"Hush!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Kerr and Figgins, and then at Fatty Wynn again; then he finally fixed his gaze upon Figgins.

"I have come ovah to speak to you about somethin' wathah important, dear boys," he said, subduing his tones in deference to the almost frantic signals of Figgins and Kerr. "You are aware that Wynn was in gweat dangah this aftahnoon, owin' to his bein' too fat to wun?"

"What?"

"He was a second time in dangah, because he was too fat to get throught the window of Taggles's lodge."

"Eh?"

"If this goes on, he will gwow too fat to play goal for the juniah team, and that would be a weal catastwophic. I have a w'oposal to make to you fellows."

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
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"Look here, D'Arcy——"

"I think that, for the geneval good, Fatty Wynn ought to be somehow induced to weduce his fat!" said D'Arcy firmly.

Figgins and Kerr gazed speechlessly at the swell of St. Jim's. That a School House fellow should have the nerve to come and say this to them in their own study, in their own House, almost took their breath away.

One of Fatty Wynn's eyes half-opened, and closed again. Fatty Wynn was sleeping with at least one ear open.

"Well, my word!" murmured Kerr at last.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, apparently considering, from the silence of the New House juniors, that he had made an impression. "Yaas, wathah, deah boys! For Fatty Wynn's own sake, and for all our sakes, I considah that he ought to make the attempt to weduce his fat. The Gwammah School chaps sometimes ask us if we're fattenin' him up for Chwistmas or if he is to be exhibited at the Shepherd's Bush Exhibish, you know, and I wegard that as verry personal and unpleasant. The best thing to do is for Fatty Wynn to weduce his fat, and I know a wippin' way to do it."

Fatty Wynn's eyes were both open now.

"Oh, you do, do you?" gasped Figgins, finding his voice at last.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I—I——"

"You see, the best way to deal with this problem is by a system of dietin'," Arthur Augustus explained. "I have thought the mattah out. Fatty Wynn should adopt a system of diet, and stick to it."

"Oh!"

"I should wecommend a half-slice of bwead-and-buttah for bwekkah, with a small cup of weakish tea——"

Fatty Wynn sat bolt upright in his chair, his eyes wide open now, and fixed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a look that might have made the hero of a six-shilling novel quake. But D'Arcy did not observe him for the moment.

"I should stop the cup of cocoa and the woll at eleven o'clock entirely," went on D'Arcy; "and for dinnah I should suggest some powridge, and pewwaps a small slice of bwown bwead, without buttah."

"What!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Ah, I see you're awake, deah boy! I am speakin' for your good, you know. For tea, I suggest a single woll, without anythin' but plain watah to dwink with it."

"Ow!"

"And no suppah at all!" said D'Arcy firmly.

Fatty Wynn stared as D'Arcy made his brilliant suggestions. If D'Arcy had been suggesting scalping him, and then boiling him in oil, Fatty Wynn could not have glared at him with a deadlier glare.

"There!" said Arthur Augustus, with a wave of the hand. "There you are, deah boys! What do you think of that for a pwogwammie?"

"I—I don't think!" gasped Figgins.

"You chump!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn——"

"You ass!"

"My deah Wynn——"

"You dangerous lunatic!" shrieked Fatty. "You—you've thrown me into a perspiration! You—you're dangerous!"

"Weally, you know——"

"Collar him!" shrieked Wynn.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made a backward step towards the door. It dawned upon him at that moment that it had been a little imprudent of him to venture with his splendid scheme into the rival House.

He had not counted upon Figgins & Co. cutting up rusty; but they certainly were cutting up rusty, especially Fatty Wynn.

Figgins and Kerr rushed at the elegant junior as he retreated.

"Weally, you know—— Hands off, you wuffians! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus was pinioned in a moment. Figgins and Kerr grasped an arm each. The swell of St. Jim's gasped with indignation.

"Welease me, you wuff asses! I shall lose my tempah and atwike you with violence if you do not welease me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold him!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wrenched his right hand loose and hit out. Figgins caught it on the end of the nose, and he sat down on the study floor with a sudden bump. Kerr closed with the swell of the School House, and bore him back against the wall. D'Arcy's silk hat rolled on the floor as he struggled with Kerr.

"Keep him!" panted Figgins, springing up.

The Scottish junior chuckled.

"I've got him!"

"You—you wottahs——"

Figgins laid his powerful grasp upon the swell of the Fourth, and Arthur Augustus was pinioned again, more secure this time.

"Pway don't be such wuff beasts!" he exclaimed. "You are

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wumplin' my jacket, and you have wuffed my waistcoat howwibly!"

"We've got him!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Bring him here!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Here he is!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was marched before the fat Fourth-Former in the armchair, like a prisoner being marched up to his executioner.

CHAPTER 7.

Awake!

FATTY WYNN sat upright in the armchair, with an extremely wrathful frown upon his fat face. It was not often that Fatty Wynn allowed his plump serenity to be disturbed. But if anything could disturb it to its very foundations, it was the suggestion that he should live upon a famine diet. Fatty Wynn felt that that was the unpardonable wrong—the almost inexpressible sin!

He glared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Chump!" he said. "Fathead!"

"Weally, Wynn——"

"Ass! Frabjous duffer! Cuckoo!"

"Weally, you know——"

"Burbler!"

"Will you kindly welease me, Figgins, so that I can give Wynn a feahful thwashin'?" demanded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly.

Figgins grinned.

"No fear!" he replied.

"The chump!" said Fatty Wynn. "The chortling fathead! The golumphing dummy! Feed on porridge and oats, hey? Cold water and dry bread for tea! Ugh! And a little brown bread, eh? Groo!"

Fatty Wynn shuddered.

"Undah the cires, deah boy——"

"Name the punishment," said Figgins. "Shall we bump him?"

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Not bad enough," said Fatty Wynn, with a shake of the head. "What he really wants is something lingering, with boiling oil in it."

"Shall we mop his napper in the ashes?"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"That's not enough—not nearly enough!"

"We could anoint him with red ink!" suggested Figgins. "If you like, we'll mop red ink and gum over his head, and chalk his face, and put cinders in his clothes."

"You uttah wuffian!"

Fatty Wynn shook his head again. The punishments proposed did not seem adequate to him. Hanging, drawing, and quartering would have been nearer the mark.

Fatty Wynn glanced round as if in search of ideas. His glance ran over the well-stocked tea-table, and his fat face lighted up into a joyful grin. He had evidently hit upon an acceptable idea.

"Sit him down!" he exclaimed.

Figgins and Kerr sat D'Arcy down—so suddenly that he gasped for breath, and his monocle jerked out of his eye.

"Yow! You uttah wuff beasts!"

"Now feed him!" said the fat Fourth-former.

"Feed him!" ejaculated Figgins.

"That's it! Make him eat all the grub there is on the table!" said Fatty Wynn, with a grin. "Every atom of it! Every morsel!"

Figgins and Kerr burst into a roar. There were sufficient provisions on the table to keep D'Arcy for a long time. The swell of St. Jim's gazed at the piles of tarts, cream puffs, doughnuts, cakes and other things, that Fatty Wynn had not been able to consume, and turned quite pale.

"I twust that you are jokin'!" he remarked feebly.

"Not at all."

"I will not——"

"Yes, you will!"

"I refuse to touch a morsel!" said Arthur Augustus, with all the dignity of the D'Arcy's. Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"You'll get something else if you don't," he said. "If you don't clear that table, you'll have your head bunged in the ashes in the grate. Then we'll do up your top-knot with red ink and gum, and liquid glue, and fill your clothes with cinders, and pour treacle down your back."

"Ugh!"

ANSWERS

"So we will," said Figgins. "We swear——"
 "We swear!" said Kerr, in the best manner of the Amateur Junior Dramatic Society. "We swear! I swear, thou swearest, he swears! Je jure, nous jurons——"

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy."
 "Mind, we mean bizney," said Figgins. "We're looking after Wynn. He's our chum, and he's been through a rough time. What he says, goes."

"I pwotest!"
 "No good. Now, will you eat the lot, or take the alternative. Take your choice!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Figgins & Co. He could see that they were in deadly earnest. And there was no doubt that they could carry out their threats if they liked. He was alone in the study with them, and Figgins had only to call out to have a crowd of fellows in, who would be joyful at the prospect of ragging the swell of St. Jim's.

"You—you don't mean it, deah boys!" moaned D'Arcy.

"We do—we does!"

"But—but I cannot eat so much!"

"Oh, you never know what you can do till you try," said Kerr, encouragingly. "Fatty has just eaten more than that lot."

"Yaas; but I am not a gweedy beast like Wynn!"

"What!" roared Figgins and Kerr together.

"I—I mean that I have not so healthy an appetite as Wynn!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"It's bound to improve with practice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Jam his head into the ashes!" said Figgins.

"Here goes!" said Kerr cheerfully.

Arthur Augustus was whirled towards the fire-grate.

He uttered a yell of alarm.

"Pway stop, you wottahs! I—I—I'll do as you say!"

"Honour bright!"

"Ya-a-a-as!"

Figgins and Kerr released him. Arthur Augustus turned towards the table. He had given his word now, and he had to keep it. But if he had failed, the chums of the New House were ready to seize him again, and inflict the alternative punishment.

"Go ahead!" said Fatty Wynn. "A little porridge, hey—and some dry brown bread with plain water! I'll teach you to give me the cold shivers! Pile in!"

"Bai Jove!"

It was beneath the dignity of a true D'Arcy to ask for quarter. Arthur Augustus sat at the table and started.

The sandwiches went. Then a pork-pie. Arthur Augustus had already had his tea in Study No. 6 in the School House. But fortunately it had been a very light one. He was fervently glad of that now. He devoured a large cake and then his efforts slackened. If he had had nothing to eat for two days, he would have been satisfied by this time. But there were heaps to follow. He commenced operations on the jam tarts. Figgins & Co. watched him with grinning faces.

Fatty Wynn, usually the most good-natured of fellows, was merciless. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had wounded him in his tenderest spot.

D'Arcy had pronounced him an over-indulgent eater—had hinted that he ate more than was good for him! That was unpardonable. Fatty Wynn was quite touchy on that point. He often explained to scoffing juniors that he was not greedy, but that he liked a lot. And D'Arcy had, as Wynn afterwards pathetically explained, made him feel quite ill by his description of the diet he suggested for reducing his weight.

D'Arcy's want of tact, in fact, had quite spoiled the beatific feeling that Wynn had been left with after his splendid feed. And the tactless swell of St. Jim's had to pay the penalty.

The jam tarts disappeared slowly, but they were all gone at last. Figgins, with a cheerful grin, pushed a large plate of cream puffs over towards D'Arcy.

"They're nice!" he remarked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Pile in!"

Arthur Augustus piled in reluctantly. Slowly and more slowly the cream puffs vanished from sight.

They really were nice, but Arthur Augustus was not in a fit state to appreciate their nice qualities just then. He was beginning to feel dreadfully full and bloated, and his face was assuming a bright and shiny look. His cheeks were pale, and there was a fishy expression in his eye.

"Oh!" he murmured, as the cream puffs were finished.

"Oh!"

"Nice?" asked Figgins.

"Ow!"

"I hope you're enjoying this feed, D'Arcy?"

"Ugh!"

"Try the doughnuts!"

"Weally, Figgins!"

"Doughnuts forward!" grinned Kerr.

The doughnuts were eaten at a snail's pace. Arthur Augustus was feeling extremely uncomfortable. A slight feeling as if he were on a Channel steamer was coming over him.

"Now the marmalade tarts!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Gweat Scott!"

The marmalade tarts followed the jam tarts. D'Arcy's complexion by this time was assuming an art shade in green.

He lay back in his chair and panted.

There were biscuits and cakes on the table still, and several apples, and some preserved fruits. But Fatty Wynn was magnanimous.

"We'll let him off the rest," he said generously. "Besides, I can manage some more presently. Have you had enough, D'Arcy?"

"Ow! Yaas, wathah!"

"Will you come here again suggesting starving a fellow to death, because he's got his bones covered with flesh, instead of being a skinny tailor's dummy?"

"No, no!"

"Then buzz off! We shan't charge you anything for that feed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! Gweat Scott! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet. He made an attempt to walk to the door with his usual dignity. But it was a dismal failure.

His head drooped forward, and he fairly staggered. Figgins handed him his silk hat with all the politeness of a waiter expectant of a tip.

"Got any more suggestions to make, Gussy? You can still have the red ink and the gum, you know."

Arthur Augustus did not reply. He tottered out of the study, and out of the New House, and crossed the quadrangle like a fellow in a dream—a fearful dream; a nightmare, in fact.

CHAPTER 8.

Poor Old Gussy!

JACK BLAKE pitched his books into the corners of Study No. 6, rose to his feet, and yawned.

"That's done!" he remarked. "If I ever run a public school, I shall abolish prep, and most lessons. If the fellows play footer in the daytime, and read the 'Marvel' in the evening, I should think they would do pretty well. Haben Sie den Vorhang? Rats!"

"I wonder where Gussy is?" Digby remarked.

Blake grinned.

"I don't know! Starting his splendid wheezes on somebody, I suppose! I heard him chucked out of Tom Merry's study once, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Herries, holding up his hand.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage. Footsteps, naturally, were not uncommon in the Fourth Form passage in the School House. But there was something very unusual about these particular footsteps.

They were slow and heavy, slow like the regular tapping of a wooden leg, heavy as if the person walking were dragging himself along step by step.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "That's somebody ill!"

He threw the study-door open. The chums of the Fourth Form looked out into the passage.

"D'Arcy!"

The Fourth-Formers uttered the name together. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who was dragging himself along the passage.

His face was pale, and there were clotted beads of perspiration on his brow. His movements were slow and lethargic. He seemed to be struggling with some inward disturbance. At all events, he was evidently not quite himself, and if the chums of the Fourth had not known him so well, they might have suspected that he had partaken of some liquid refreshment of a stronger nature than coffee.

Blake ran down the passage.

"Gussy! What's the matter?"

"Ow!"

"What's happened?"

"Groo!"

"Poor old chap! He looks sick! Bear a hand, you chaps."

The three juniors bore a hand together. Much as they might chip Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and make fun of his wonderful wheezes, they were very fond of the elegant junior, and at a sign of something wrong, they were affectionate chums again in a moment.

They piloted Arthur Augustus into the study, and placed him in a chair. They stood round, looking at him in surprise mixed with alarm.

Arthur Augustus gazed at them with a lack-lustre eye.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

He had allowed his silk hat to fall upon the floor. He had not even tried to put his monocle into his eye. He sat with his mouth partly open, a thing that the chums had never seen before in D'Arcy. There was evidently something very wrong with the swell of St. Jim's.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "What is it, Gussy? What's the matter, old man?"

"Ugh!"

"He's been eating," said Digby. "There's jam on him, and cream and crumbs!"

"My hat! He's been gorging like Fatty Wynn!"

"What has happened, Gussy? Have you been over to the New House?"

"Yow! Yaas!"

"Seen Figgins & Co.?"

"Gwoo! Yaas!"

"Did they go for you?"

"Yaas, wathah! Ow!"

"What did they do?" asked Blake anxiously. "The cheek—to rag a School House chap! We shall have to take this up. What did they do, Gussy?"

"Ow! They—they—yow! Ow!"

"Great Scott! What was it?"

"They made me—made me—ow!"

"Yes?"

"They made me—ow!—they—"

"What did they make you do?"

"Eat!"

"Eat!" exclaimed Blake, Herries, and Digby together. Arthur Augustus groaned.

"Yaas! Yaas, wathah! They made me eat a fearful lot—just because I wposposed placin' Fatty Wynn on a diet to weduce his fat. Ow!"

"They—they made you eat!" gasped Blake.

"Ow! Ugh! Yaas! Cake and doughnuts and jam-tarts and marmalade-tarts and cream puffs!" groaned D'Arcy. "Ow!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys!"

The chums of the Fourth roared. They could not help it. Of all the raggings that the swell of the School House might have been subjected to in the New House, this one was the one that would have been least expected by his chums.

D'Arcy gazed at them feebly as they roared. He did not feel even energy enough left to remonstrate.

"Ow! Ugh! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and the Terrible Three looked in. Tom Merry & Co. had finished prep., and were going out. They gazed in with interest.

"What's the joke?" demanded Tom Merry. "We could hear your cackle at the end of the passage? What's the shriek?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is it, you fatheads? Explain?"

Blake gasped it out. Then the chums of the Shell joined in the roar. Six juniors roared and roared as if they were going by steam, while the swell of St. Jim's sat in the armchair and gasped.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "I always said that Gussy would be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Weally—ugh! Ow!"

"But we can't take this lying down!" exclaimed Blake, struck by an after thought. "The New House will be shrieking over this to-morrow—the whole school will yell over it! We shall be the grin of the whole place."

"Yes, rather! But—ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make the New House sit up for it," said Monty Lowther. "But—how?"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall insist upon makin' the boundahs sit up like—like anythin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Manners. "We'll take up the question of Fatty Wynn's fatness—just as Gussy suggested—and make a ripping rag of it! We'll worry the New House chaps into grey hairs about it. What?"

"Good egg!"

"Ripping!"

"Splendid wheeze!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the School House juniors put their heads together over it, and with many chuckles they elaborated a scheme for the discomfiture of the New House juniors. Figgins & Co. had scored so far. But—

It was, as Monty Lowther remarked, a big "but—"

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CHAPTER 9.

Going for Fatty.

CLANG!

The rising-bell rang through the frosty morning air. Figgins & Co. turned out in the Fourth-Form dormitory in the New House. Figgins was always the first out of bed in that dormitory, and his chums were always second. They had to be, as a matter of fact, for Figgins would have yanked them out headlong if they had not turned out at his call.

Fatty Wynn blinked doubtfully at Figgins over the top of the bedclothes on this particular morning when Figgys called him. Fatty Wynn was wondering whether the great and affectionate care his chums had shown towards him the previous evening outlasted the night. Fatty was greatly inclined to take a little extra nap.

"I—I don't know that I feel quite fit to turn out this morning, Figgys," he ventured.

"Yes, you do," said Figgys decidedly.

"Ahem!"

"Up you get!"

Fatty Wynn sighed, and turned out. It was clear that the period of lavish affection and care was over. Fatty could not flourish for ever on the strength of his narrow escape from the bull.

The three juniors were first down. They went out into the quadrangle in the frosty morning air to get an appetite for brekker, as Figgins remarked. Fatty Wynn did not really need it. He had an appetite already.

There were juniors to be seen outside the School House, punting a footer about, early as it was. Figgins recognised Blake and D'Arcy and Tom Merry, and he chuckled.

"Let's go and ask Gussy how he is!" he suggested.

The three New House juniors ran across the quad. There was a shout at once from the juniors of the School House.

"New House cads!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Figgins genially. "How do you feel this morning, Gussy? Did you have enough for supper last night?"

D'Arcy jaunted his monocle into his eye, and stared loftily at the New House trio.

"I regard that as an impertinent question, Figgins," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Blake and Lowther and Herries and some more of the juniors came over towards Figgins & Co. They looked solemn as owls.

"Taken any measures, yet?" asked Tom Merry.

Figgins & Co. looked puzzled.

"Measures?" repeated Figgins. "What do you mean?"

"Have you done anything yet?"

"Anything—what?—how! What are you driving at?"

"About it, I mean."

"About what?"

"That."

And the School House juniors, raising their hands simultaneously, pointed to Fatty Wynn's waistcoat. Figgins and Kerr looked at Wynn, and Wynn squinted down at his waistcoat. They did not understand for the moment.

"What on earth are you getting at?" demanded Fatty Wynn indignantly. "What's the matter with my waistcoat?"

"Nothing."

"Then what do you mean?"

"Have you done anything to reduce it?"

"Reduce what—the waistcoat?"

"No—the circumference."

"What?" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"The circumference," said the juniors, all together. "It has been decided that the circumference of Fatty Wynn is a public danger."

Figgins & Co. glared. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emitted a soft chuckle. But the other fellows remained as serious as if they were occupied upon a question of life or death.

"You silly clumps—" began Figgins.

"Public danger," said Tom Merry solemnly. "The circumference of Fatty Wynn, tending as it does at its present rate of increase to exceed the circumference of the earth, may lead to some displacement in the orbit of the globe, and thus—"

"You silly ass!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Have you taken any measures?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I don't mean any measures round Wynn's waist—I know there's no measure long enough to go round. But—"

"Measures for reducing the bulk of the largest circumference—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins, half grinning. "Don't be an ass!"

"It has been decided in the School House—"

"Oh, blow the School House!"

"The School House, as cock-house of St. Jim's, naturally decided such matters," said Tom Merry loftily. "It has been decided in the School House that Fatty Wynn's circumference—"

Is a public danger. Measures must be taken to reduce it. I understand that a suggestion with regard to diet has been rudely received."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So other measures must be tried," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "Fatty Wynn caused deadly peril to D'Arcy's silk hat yesterday, all through being unable to run. Something must be done."

"Quite wight, deah boy."

"Oh, don't be a chump!" growled Fatty Wynn, who had grown very red in the face.

Tom Merry waved his hand.

"Something must be done," he repeated. "The question is, are you New House chaps going to take the matter in hand, or do you leave it to the School House?"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins.

And the three New House juniors stalked away with their noses in the air. There was a yell of the School House fellows after them.

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn turned crimson. He half wheeled, as if with the intent of charging the crowd of School House fellows single-handed. But Figgins and Kerr dragged him away.

"Silly asses!" growled Fatty Wynn wrathfully.

He expected sympathy from his chums. But he did not get it. Perhaps they had expended all their sympathy the previous day, or perhaps they felt that there was some justice in the School House position.

"Well, you see, you are jolly plump!" said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"Well, why shouldn't a fellow be plump?" he demanded.

"Fellows may be too plump."

"At any rate, nobody ever asks me whether I've got pipe-stems on in mistake for legs?" said Fatty Wynn hotly.

Figgins coloured. Figgins's figure certainly erred slightly on the side of slimness, and when he was in cycling clothes his calves did not show to advantage. Rude boys in Rylocombe had drawn attention to that fact. But Figgins had not expected it from Fatty Wynn. He felt inclined to say, "Thou too, Brutus!"

"Oh, cheese that, Fatty!" said Kerr.

"Well, then, let me alone!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'm sure I'm not a greedy chap. I know I like enough to eat. But nobody could say I'm over-fond of eating. I like a lot, that's all. Some chaps are so healthy, and have such a splendid physique, that they simply can't help putting on flesh."

Figgins grinned.

"Look here, Fatty, if you keep on, you'll get too fat for footer," he said.

"I'm not fat!"

"Too plump, then!"

"I'm not so very plump, either!"

"Suppose you made a beginning, this morning, and had only one rasher?" Kerr suggested.

Fatty Wynn gave him an indignant glare.

"Just like you to suggest that, on a cold morning when I'm specially hungry!" he exclaimed. "I was thinking of having some pork pies extra."

"Oh, my hat!"

And Figgins and Kerr gave it up.

Fatty Wynn ate his breakfast that morning with an indignant expression upon his face. Chipping from the School House fellows about his girth was all very well, he thought, but it was too much for his own chums to take up the same song. Fatty Wynn felt that he was being hardly used.

Perhaps his indignation made him cease counting, or made him careless, but he certainly put away a larger breakfast than usual that morning. A big meal always made Fatty Wynn happy and cheerful, and the clouds had quite cleared off his face when he took his place in the Fourth Form room for lessons.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was not yet there, and Fatty Wynn was greeted with a howl from the School House fellows in the Fourth.

"What price blubber?"

"Yaas, wathah, Wynn, deah boy! What pwice blubbah?"

Fatty Wynn snorted, and took his place. There was a large sheet of paper gummed down to his desk, and on that sheet of paper was inscribed, in large Roman letters:

"WHAT PRICE BLUBBER?"

"You silly asses!" roared Fatty Wynn, glaring round on the grinning class. "I should like to know what chump put that there! I should like to see the silly ass!"

The door opened, and Mr. Lathom walked in. Fatty Wynn ceased suddenly. The Form-master stopped, and blinked at Fatty Wynn over his spectacles.

"Is it possible, Wynn, that you were alluding to your Form-master with those disrespectful expressions?" he exclaimed.

"Oh! Oh, no, no, sir!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Ah! Oh, very well! But you will take twenty lines for using such expressions in the Form-room, Wynn!"

"Ye-es, sir!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Sorry, Wynn," said Reilly, leaning towards the fat Fourth-Former. "But, faith, I'd like to ask ye a question, if I may?"

"Yes; what is it?" said Fatty Wynn, unobtrusively.

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn breathed hard through his nose. He did not reply to that question.

CHAPTER 10.

No Tuck!

FIGGINS & CO. did not enjoy lessons that morning. They never did enjoy lessons very much, as a matter of fact, but on this special morning they were especially worried. All the School House juniors seemed to have made a special set against Fatty Wynn's state of plumpness. It was in vain that Figgins & Co. said to themselves that if Fatty Wynn was plump, it was a matter that solely concerned Fatty Wynn. The School House fellows evidently meant to make a public business of it. And, worse than that, some of the New House juniors joined in. French and Pratt were heard to whisper, while Mr. Lathom's back was turned, an inquiry concerning the market price of blubber.

Figgins thought a good deal about it. It was like Blake's cheek, of course. And he would hammer French and Pratt after lessons.

All the same, the fact remained that Fatty Wynn's plumpness had suddenly assumed the proportions of a most important matter—a matter big enough to have House rows about. It was annoying and ridiculous. Figgins wished that Wynn wouldn't grow so jolly fat. Kerr wished that Wynn would be a little more careful in his diet. Even Fatty Wynn himself began to wish in a vague sort of way that he was a little less strikingly like Daniel Lambert in figure, or Henry the Eighth.

But when the thought of a spare diet crossed his mind, Fatty Wynn shuddered.

After lessons, when the Fourth Form poured out of their room, they found the Shell fellows already in the passage. The Terrible Three came marching up arm in arm, with solemn faces.

"I want to ask you chaps a question," Tom Merry remarked.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Anything about the footer?"

"Footer? Oh, no."

"What is it, then?"

"It's rather a personal matter; I suppose you don't mind my asking—"

"Oh, go ahead!"

"What price blubber?" asked Tom Merry sweetly.

"Eh?"

"What price blubber?" demanded the Terrible Three, with one voice.

Figgins & Co. glared.

"You champion chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say!" exclaimed Kangaroo, coming up, "I've heard that rolling a chap downstairs, and bumping him, is a cure for plumpness. I don't mind lending a hand—"

Fatty Wynn walked away rather hurriedly, and Figgins and Kerr followed him. There was a cloud on Figgins's brow.

A yell followed them over the quadrangle.

"What price blubber?"

Figgins snorted.

"Hang it all!" he exclaimed. "This jolly well won't do, you know. I'm getting jolly well fed up with this!"

"Let's go for 'em!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Hallo!" exclaimed French, of the New House. "I say, Wynn, you haven't answered my question yet. What price blubber?"

"You ass!"

"I—oh! Ow!"

Figgins & Co. pushed French over, and walked over him, leaving him looking considerably rumped and dusty as they passed on. French sat up, and yelled:

"Yah, Fatty! What price blubber? What price tallow! Yah!"

Figgins & Co. went into their House with very red faces. Pratt was in the doorway, with several fellows of the Third and Fourth. They all grinned at Figgins & Co.

"Blubber going cheap?" asked Pratt.

"Tallow a drug in the market?" queried Jameson, of the Third.

Figgins & Co. made a rush, and scattered the kind inquirers to right and left. But as they scattered, they sent back a yell:

"What price tallow? Yah!"

Figgins & Co. went up to their study. As they entered, Figgins gave a snort of rage. Chalked across the looking-glass was the following notice:

"Two gallons of vinegar consumed daily will reduce flesh in the most obstinate case. Try it."

"The silly chumps!" growled Fatty Wynn. "A fellow can't have a decent amount of flesh on his bones without starting a cackle like a blessed farmyard!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

Figgins and Kerr stared at him. Their stare was searching. "Look here, Fatty!" exclaimed Figgins. "It won't do!"

"Eh?"

"It won't do!"

"What won't do?"

"You'll have to reduce your weight, somehow!"

"Rats!"

"If you get too jolly fat to play in the footer team, it will be rotten come-down for us, to have a New House chap dropped."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"And you are getting fatter; you can't deny it!"

"Bosh!"

"Better make a new rule," said Kerr. "Only eat enough for two people in the future, and it will make a wonderful difference."

"Stuff!"

"That's just what you're not going to do,"

"What?"

"Stuff!"

"Just so," agreed Figgins. "You're too fond of stuffing, Fatty. I'm sure we—Kerr and I—have mentioned it to you often enough, in a friendly way."

"I'm sure we have!" said Kerr.

"Too jolly often, if you want to know my opinion!" snorted Fatty Wynn.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Figgins.

"Do! I'm going to the tuck-shop."

"What for?"

"A pick-me-up, of course!"

"We have dinner in half an hour!"

"I can't wait half an hour in this blessed cold weather. I'm hungry. I always get very hungry in this February weather."

"And every other kind of weather, I think," growled Figgins.

"Look here, you've got to muzzle your appetite, Fatty."

"Rats!"

"You can wait till dinner—"

"Look here, Figgins!"

"And then have a light meal—"

"Oh!"

"It will do you good, Fatty. We're really thinking of you, you know. It's entirely for your own sake, and—and ours," said Figgins.

Kerr took a duster and wiped the chalked letters off the looking-glass. Fatty Wynn opened the door of the cupboard. Figgins gently closed it again, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. The fat Fourth-Former looked at him with feelings too deep for words.

"Figgins!" he jerked out at last. "Is that what you call chummy?"

"Real chummy!" said Figgins. "You can't eat so much, Fatty! It won't do! Last night was the final bust-up! You must be more careful!"

"B—b—but I can't be kept short of food!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn, in alarm, almost wildly. "I—I shall be ill, you know!"

"I rather think you'll be ill, otherwise."

"Oh, let's go out into the quad," said Fatty Wynn, abruptly, and he rolled out of the study. Figgins and Kerr followed him into the quad, watching him. They expected his footsteps to lead him in the direction of Dame Taggles' little tuck-shop in the corner of the quad, behind the elms.

But Fatty Wynn walked towards the gates. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

"What's that?"

"What's what?" asked Kerr.

"That—in the road!"

Figgins and Kerr, in surprise, stepped towards the grass, looking. Figgins swung round the next moment, suspiciously. His suspicion was well-founded. Fatty Wynn was scudding off towards the tuck-shop. Figgins gave a shout,

"After him, Kerr!"

"What-ho!" grinned Kerr.

They dashed in pursuit. Fatty Wynn ran at top-speed. He had gained a start by his stratagem, but he was not equal to the two slim juniors in point of speed. They gained upon him rapidly.

Fatty Wynn contrived to reach the tuck-shop, and dash into it. Figgins and Kerr pelted in after him.

The fat Fourth-Former grabbed a tart from the counter, and took a single bite. Figgins's large hand grabbed at it, and the tart was squashed over Fatty Wynn's mouth. He gave a choking gurgle.

"Drop it!" roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn dropped the remainder of the tart, and dabbed his jammy mouth furiously with his handkerchief.

"You rotters!" he roared. "What do you mean? Do you think I'm going to be starved to death, and waste away to a shadow to please you? Get out! Lemme alone! Look here, I'm jolly well not going to chum up with you chaps any more! I'll change into another study. Yah!"

Figgins and Kerr took no notice. They took Fatty Wynn!

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Taking him by the arms, they marched him out of the tuck-shop.

"Let me go, you chumps!" roared Wynn.

"For your own good, Fatty."

"Mind your own bizney."

"It is our bizney, to look after a chum!"

"I—I—I—" Fatty Wynn turned an imploring glance upon his merciless chums, who were so grimly determined to be chummy. "I—I say, Figg, old man, I'm so hungry! I—I am simply dying for a morsel—just one tart!"

"Can't be done!"

"Half a tart?"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Come on!"

And Fatty Wynn was marched off. Nor did Figgins and Kerr lose sight of him till they went in to dinner in the New House.

CHAPTER 11.

Fatty Wynn Has a New Idea.

TOM MERRY ceased punting about the old footer, and picked it up, as the bell rang for dinner. He came towards the School House with a glowing face. Manners and Lowther were glowing too. They crossed the quad, at a run, and very nearly ran into three Fourth-Formers who were walking towards the New House arm in arm. The Terrible Three were very hungry. But they paused for a moment to look at Figgins & Co., so unusual was the aspect of the three inseparables of the New House.

For Fatty Wynn, usually so placid and cheerful, was looking dark and despondent, and Figgins and Kerr wore expressions of merciless resolve. There was evidently something unusual the matter.

"Anything wrong?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" said Figgins shortly.

"Price of blubber gone down, or anything of that sort?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh, shut up."

"Fall in tallow, perhaps?" Manners suggested.

Figgins snorted.

"We're looking after Wynn," he said. "Fatty's got his ears up because we're keeping him off the tarts. That's all. Don't be funny. Go back to your monkey-house—they're beginning to feed the animals."

And Figgins & Co. stalked on. The Terrible Three ran on towards the School House, laughing. Blake met them at the door, with an inquiring look.

"Figgins and Kerr have undertaken to keep Fatty Wynn off his feed!" Tom Merry explained, and Jack Blake joined in the roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! They'll have all their work cut out, then."

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!"

"I fancy it will be uphill work," grinned Tom Merry. "Fatty Wynn will manage to diddle them somehow—what do you think?"

"Yes, rather—or he'll perish! Ha, ha, ha."

And the School House chums chuckled and went in to dinner. They were very interested in the experiment Figgins and Kerr were making. That Figgins and Kerr should have been bantered into taking up the matter was a triumph for the School House fellows, and could be considered as wiping out the stain of the jape on D'Arcy the previous evening. The forcible feeding of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a joke all over the school now, and fellows were asking each a very popular conundrum—why was Gussy like a Suffragette—because he was fed by force—a bad enough conundrum, but a good enough joke against the swell of St. Jim's. But the joke about Fatty Wynn's plumpness was putting the D'Arcy joke into the shade, and the popular question now was—"What price blubber?"—much to D'Arcy's satisfaction. He did not care to be reminded of his awful experiences in Figgins's study.

Tom Merry & Co were laughing as they went in to dinner, but Fatty Wynn was far from feeling any inclination to merriment when he entered the New House with Figgins and Kerr. Fatty Wynn was feeling famished. That would not have been so bad, if he had been sure of being "given his head," so to speak, at the dinner-table. But Figgins and Kerr had wary eyes on him.

Fatty Wynn was to be kept short of provisions, and Figgins had plainly warned him that he wasn't to have more than one helping.

And the prospect made the fat Fourth-Former groan inwardly.

The dining-room of the New House had a very pleasant scent when the juniors came in. They were having stew in the New House that day, and Fatty Wynn liked stew. He sat down to the table snuffing.

Baker, a Sixth-Form prefect, was the head of the Fourth-Form table in the New House dining-room, the Form-master dining with the rest of the Form in the School House. Baker gave the juniors liberal helpings, but Figgins, passing up Fatty Wynn's plate, specially asked Baker to go easy.

"Fatty Wynn's on diet, Baker," he explained. "Will you go easy with the grub for him?"

Baker nodded.

"Certainly," he replied.

"Oh, I say—" began Fatty Wynn.

"It's about time you dieted, I think, Wynn," the prefect observed. "You'll soon be too fat for footer, if you keep on."

"No dumplings for Wynn," said Figgins

"Oh, Figgys!"

"Just a light helping."

"All right."

"And he won't want any more."

"Good!"

Fatty Wynn looked at the plate when it came down to him, with an expression in his eyes that might have moved the Sphinx.

"What do you call that—a dinner?" he asked.

"Nuff for you, Fatty!"

"No good at all—rotten!"

"You're on diet, remember."

"I ain't!" roared Fatty Wynn excitedly.

"Quiet down the table there," said Baker.

"B-b-but—"

"Don't make a row, please."

Fatty Wynn began to eat, with gleaming eyes. He ate as slowly as he could, to make the dinner last as long as possible.

The dinner would certainly have been enough for any other fellow at St. Jim's. But it seemed like a mockery to Fatty Wynn.

The plate was cleared long before the other fellows had finished. Fatty Wynn whispered fiercely in Figgins's ear.

"Look here, Figgys, I'm going to have another helping."

"You're not."

"I suppose I can do as I like!"

"Your mistake—you can't!"

"I tell you—"

"Cheese it!"

"Look here, I'm jolly well going to have a double dose of pudding, then."

Figgins shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind."

"I tell you I will—I must—I—"

"Rats! You're not going to have any pudding at all."

"What!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"You're jolly well not going to have any pudding at all," said Figgins serenely. "Now we've taken the matter in hand, we're going to see it through."

"You—you as—"

"You can talk as much as you like, Fatty; but you've finished eating till teatime," said Figgins firmly.

Fatty Wynn suppressed a groan. Till teatime! Why, that was hours off yet! Figgins might as well have said till Christmas.

The dinner was over, and the New House juniors trooped out. Fatty Wynn felt an unaccustomed sense of lightness.

"Feeling fit?" asked Kerr.

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"I believe I'm going to be ill!" he said.

"Oh, you're all right—you'll lose about a hundredweight a day till you're quite normal," said Kerr, encouragingly.

"Oh, don't be funny!"

Fatty Wynn rolled disconsolately out into the quad. Figgins and Kerr let him go, but they were keeping an eye on him. Figgins lounged round the tuck-shop, and as he had the key of the study cupboard in his pocket, both Wynn's usual sources of supply were cut off.

The fat Fourth-Former drove his hands deep into his pockets and walked away moodily, thinking it out. From the distance floated a shouted inquiry:

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn snorted.

After all, he was rather plump—rather unusually plump. It would be a good thing perhaps, if he could bring his weight down a little. But going short of food—that was not to be thought of! Anything but that!

Fatty Wynn started and looked up from his reverie near the doorway of the School House. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was passing him. Very slim and elegant the swell of the School House looked.

Fatty Wynn gazed at D'Arcy and clasped his hands. Never before had he envied D'Arcy—or, indeed, anybody else. But he envied the swell of the School House now—he envied him of his slim figure. How did D'Arcy do it? D'Arcy was a little fastidious in his eating perhaps, but he had a good appetite. Fatty Wynn knew that! How did he keep his figure so beautifully slim?

"Gussy, old man—"

Arthur Augustus paused, and turned his head. He jammed his monocle more tightly into his eye, and gave Fatty Wynn a stare of great frigidity.

"Weally, Wynn, I must remark that I wegard you as a

wotten boundah! I was tweated with the grossest diwespect in your study last evenin'—"

Fatty Wynn, in spite of himself, grinned at the recollection. "I fail to see anythin' whatevah to gwin at," said the swell of the School House.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Look here, Gussy, how do you do it?"

"How do I do what, deah boy?"

"Keep so slim!"

Arthur Augustus gazed down at his aristocratic figure with considerable satisfaction. Then he turned his eyeglass upon Wynn again.

"In the first place, Wynn, deah boy, I don't ovah-eat myself. In the second place, I take plenty of exercise."

Fatty Wynn started.

"Exercise!" he exclaimed. "By George! I'll take up gymnastics, and that will work the oracle! Figgins must have sense enough to see it. No need to cut down the meals. I'm going in for gym every day."

"Jolly good ideah, deah boy. If you would like me to give you some instnuction—"

But Fatty Wynn was hurrying off to find Figgins. He was full of his new wheeze.

CHAPTER 12.

Indian Clubs.

FIGGINS chuckled as Fatty Wynn came puffing towards him, and placed his lanky form in the doorway of the school tuck-shop. He put out his arms, with a hand on each door-post, and grinned at Fatty Wynn.

"No, you don't!" he remarked.

"I say, Figgys—"

"Not this time!"

"I'm not going into the tuck-shop!" panted Fatty Wynn.

"J—"

"I jolly well know you're not," agreed Figgins. "Nothing till teatime, old man."

"Look here, I've got a new wheeze," said Fatty Wynn eagerly. "I—I know you are quite right, you know—you and Kerr—I know I had better bring down my weight a little."

"A lot, you mean."

"Well, a lot, then," said Fatty Wynn. "But look here, there's no need for a chap to starve himself to get his weight down. There are other ways."

"What other ways?" asked Kerr suspiciously, coming up.

"Exercise," said Fatty Wynn.

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"Gymnastics."

"Well, that's right."

"But you don't care for the gym, Fatty," Figgins remarked.

"I'd rather take gymnastics than starve," said Fatty Wynn. "I'm really afraid of injuring my constitution, you know, if I don't have enough to eat. Look here, I'll take up gymnastics, and go into training thoroughly, if you fellows will back me up."

"Right you are," exclaimed Figgins heartily.

"Good wheeze," said Kerr.

"Of course," said Fatty Wynn confidentially, "when I'm taking up physical exercises to reduce my weight, there won't be any need to cut down my diet."

Figgins's reply was non-committal.

"We'll see," he remarked.

"Now, don't be an unreasonable ass, Figgys. I—"

"We'll see how the exercises go, at any rate," said Figgins.

"What are you going in for—trapeze, bars, and Indian clubs?"

"I—I suppose so," said Fatty Wynn dubiously. "I—I'll take your advice about it, Figgys. What shall I go in for?"

"Well, I've got a set of Indian clubs in the study," said Figgins.

"If you care to try them, I'll show you the drill."

"Good! I suppose I can have a bit of a feed first?"

"I suppose you can't."

"Now don't be a rotter, Figgys, I'm fearfully hungry," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I haven't had any dinner to speak of."

"Well, after the drill, then," said Figgins. "Perhaps we might give in to the extent of one tart, Kerr. What do you think?"

"Well, just one," agreed Kerr.

"I jolly well wish you'd be reasonable," said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "What's the good of one tart to a fellow like me?"

"One or nixes, Fatty."

"I suppose one is better than nothing, but—"

"Come and do the Indian clubs, then."

Figgins led the way to the New House. Figgins was looking distinctly pleased.

The chief of the New House was great on gymnastics. There were few things to be done in the gym that Figgins could not do. Even Tom Merry and Blake could not get ahead of Figgins when it came to gymnastics.

Often enough Figgins had urged upon Fatty Wynn the

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necessity of taking up gymnastics. Fatty Wynn preferred the tuck-shop.

To have Fatty taking up gymnastics of his own accord, like this, was very gratifying to Figgins. Figgins was prepared to take a great deal of trouble to help Fatty Wynn on. Fatty was not, as a matter of fact, taking the thing up exactly of his own accord; but that was a point there was no need to consider.

Fatty Wynn was not looking very happy as he walked off with Figgins and Kerr towards the New House.

He had a foreboding that Indian club drill would make him hungry—hungrier than he was—and what would one tart be? He was almost hungry enough to eat the Indian clubs, as it was.

"Here you are!" said Figgins, taking a pair of clubs, and swinging them lightly through the air. "Now, watch me."

Fatty Wynn watched him.

Figgins really handled the clubs very well. It looked easy enough, the way Figgins did it. Fatty Wynn felt that he would be able to handle them all right. He had tried it before, in a desultory sort of way.

"Oh, that's simple enough," he remarked.

"Is it?" said Figgins, with a snort.

"Yes, I think it's quite easy."

"Well, it's jolly well not so easy as it looks. Watch me!"

"Oh, all right."

Figgins went through exercise after exercise. Perhaps Figgins shared to some extent the little weakness common to athletic persons; when they are showing you how to do a thing, they seem to forget that you are supposed to be learning something, and turn it into a solo performance.

Fatty Wynn watched, and getting tired of watching in a perpendicular position, he sat down. Then Figgins yelled:

"Now then, that's not the way to exercise—you can't reduce your weight by sitting down. Up you get."

Fatty Wynn rose with a grunt.

"Suppose you hand him the clubs," suggested Kerr.

"Well, I was showing him."

"Afternoon classes soon."

"Oh, all right," said Figgins, "I suppose you ought to be able to handle the things now, Fatty. You can try, at any rate."

"Oh, all right," grunted Fatty Wynn.

"Here you are, take the clubs."

Fatty Wynn took the clubs. He allowed the ends of them to drop to the floor, and there was a fearful yell from Figgins.

"Ow! Ow! Yarooop!"

Figgins suddenly began to dance on one leg, clapping the boot of the other foot in both hands. There was quite a wild expression on his face.

"Ow!" he roared. "Yow! Oh!"

"Did that drop on your toe?" asked Fatty Wynn innocently.

"Yow! Yes! Ow!"

"I'm sorry—ha, ha, ha—I—"

"You—you ass! Yow! Oh!"

"I don't want to hurry you," said Fatty Wynn, "but it will be afternoon school soon. Shall I begin?"

Figgins ceased his impromptu dance.

"Yes, you clumsy ass!" he growled, "and take care of those clubs. Mind you don't brain yourself or anybody else."

"Oh, I think it's easy enough."

"Well, wire in them, if it's so jolly simple," snorted Figgins.

Fatty Wynn swung up the clubs. There was a fiendish yell from Kerr, and he staggered back on one leg, clapping his knee.

"Ow! Yow! Whoop!"

"Oh, my hat! Did that hit your knee, Kerr? I thought I heard a crack. Did it hit you?"

"Yow! Do you think I'm doing this for fun?" bellowed Kerr.

"Well, you see—"

"For goodness' sake be careful," exclaimed Figgins. "Now then, we'll get behind you and watch. Go ahead, Fatty. It's simple, you know."

"Oh, it's simple enough," said Fatty Wynn.

He swung the clubs up.

They soared in the air.

"That right?" asked Fatty Wynn, without looking behind him.

"Yes, that's all right," said Figgins. "You're a bit clumsy at first, but you'll improve, you know. Keep 'em in a regular rhythm. Put your beef into it."

Fatty Wynn obeyed. He put his beef into it; and he had plenty of beef. The clubs sang through the air. With the impetus of a powerful swing, Fatty Wynn stepped backwards to keep his balance.

He was swinging the clubs backwards at arms' length as he did so. It was unfortunate. There was a wild roar from Figgins and Kerr.

The clubs smote them fairly.

They were knocked flying, and Fatty Wynn swung round with a gasp as he heard two heavy bumps on the floor.

"M-m-my hat!" he gasped.

"Oh!"

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"Ow!"

"You clump!"

"You fathead!"

"Yow!"

"I'm sorry—" began Fatty Wynn.

"Put those clubs down!" roared Figgins, staggering to his feet. "Put 'em down. If you ever touch Indian clubs in my presence again I'll—I'll brain you with one of 'em. Put 'em down, you clump!"

"Oh, all right," said Fatty Wynn resignedly.

"Yaroo! Oh! Ow! I didn't say on my foot, you fathead!" yelled Figgins.

"Look here, Figgins, if you're going to grumble all the time—"

Figgins snorted, and caught up one of the clubs, and rushed at Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth-Former dodged out of the room and ran. He did not even stop to inquire after the jam tart he was to have had.

CHAPTER 13.

Fatty Wynn, Gymnast.

TOM MERRY was grinning as he came in for afternoon classes. Monty Lowther and Manners met him near the Form-room door.

"Wherefore that grin?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Have you seen Gussy's new spotted necktie, or have you been reading about Jack, Sam, and Pete, or what's the matter?"

"I've seen Fatty Wynn."

"Ha, ha! Is he still dieting?"

"No, not if he can help it, I expect," said Tom Merry laughing.

"He's taken up gymnastics, and I hear that he's nearly murdered Figgins and Kerr with Indian clubs. He's going to try the trapeze in the gym. after school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't hold him," said Manners with a chuckle. "It'll break under the strain—like Gussy's voice when he's trying to get a top note."

Manners added that simile because he saw the swell of St. Jim's coming along the passage.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped, and turned his eyeglass upon Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—" he began.

"Hallo, Gussy, is that you?" said Manners. "When are you going to give us another of your ripping tenor solos?"

"You were speakin' of my voice in a most gwoosly disweptful mannah, Mannahs."

"Oh, that's only my fun, you know. You know I really regard your voice as ripping," said Manners. "Isn't it ripping, Lowther?"

"Yes, rather," said Monty Lowther. "It would rip anything except the armour-plate on a battleship."

"That's it," said Manners.

"You uttah asses!"

"I jolly well wish you'd give us another solo, some time, Gussy," said Manners. "I've often wanted to get a snapshot of you, with your mouth open getting a top note. It would fetch a fabulous sum on a comic postcard—not going, are you?"

But Arthur Augustus was gone.

The Terrible Three chuckled and went into their Form-room. They thought the lessons very long that afternoon. They were looking forward to seeing Fatty Wynn distinguish himself in the gym. after school.

Fatty Wynn on the trapeze was a thing likely to prove interesting and entertaining. As Monty Lowther remarked, an elephant walking the tight rope would be simply not in it with Fatty Wynn.

Lessons were over at last, and the chums of the Shell turned their footsteps towards the gym. as soon as they were free of the Form-room. They found that many other fellows were doing the same.

The fame of Fatty Wynn's new wheeze had gone abroad, as it were, and others beside Tom Merry & Co. were keen to see his performance on the trapeze.

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn joined Tom Merry, and the Shell fellows joined the crowd who were pouring into the gym. Half the Lower School—of both Houses—seemed to have resolved to turn up on the occasion of Fatty Wynn's performance.

"You see, this won't be a twice-nightly bizney," Monty Lowther remarked. "I'll take a bet of a football boot to a tin of blacking that it will be positively for one occasion only—first and last appearance of Fatty Wynn, the great star artist!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Here they come!"

Figgins & Co. entered the gym. The chums of Study No. 6 followed them in, each with an anticipatory grin on his face.

Fatty Wynn was not looking enthusiastic. He seemed surprised at seeing so many fellows present, and murmured something to Figgins. Figgins promptly shook his head.



"Wun! Wun like anythin'!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, rushing up to Fatty Wynn and grasping him by one leg to drag him off the stile. (See page 2.)

"Can't be did!" he replied. "You can't put these things off, Fatty. Why, the School House bounders would say you were funk'g the trapeze!"

"I should feel better after tea, and—"

"After tea we're taking you for a sprint."

"Look here, Figgins, I'm jolly well not going to overdo it, you know. There's no sense in running a thing into the ground."

"You must stick to it," said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

"No sense in doing things by halves. Stick to it, Wynn, and you'll be as slim as Gussy soon."

"Yaas, stick to it, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I wemembah you twiced once before to weduce your fat, but it was some wotton concoction you took for the purpose, instead of wholesome exercise. Stick to it, my deah boy, and in the course of time you may become a weally gwaceful athlete like—ahem!—me."

Fatty Wynn glared at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Do you think I'm likely to grow to resemble you at all if I take up athletics?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I'm jolly well going to give up the idea, Figgy. I—"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see nothin' whatevah in Wynn's rude wemarks to

cack'le at," said the swell of St. Jim's, with a great deal of dignity. "I wegard this cacklin' as bein' in extwemely bad taste. I am surprisid to see my own fwiends cacklin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Now, get to bizney!" said Figgins, with a brisk air. "Here you are, Fatty—you're all ready. And here's the giddy trapeze."

"Oh, all right! I—"

"Up you go!"

"I'm feeling horribly peckish. You see, it's this February weather," exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I always get very lungry about this time of the year, and—"

"Up with you!"

"Has anybody got any milk chocolate?" asked Fatty Wynn, casting a pathetic glance round. "I think just a chunk of chocolate would buck me up."

"Rate!" said Figgins. "Up with you, you slacker!"

Fatty Wynn sighed and mounted. The juniors stood back. As Monty Lowther cautiously observed, it would be no joke to have a weight like Fatty Wynn's falling on them.

"Hold on!" shouted Figgins. "Hold fast! Keep a good grip, and let yourself go!"

"Ye-e-es, but—"
 "Now swing!"
 "Oh! All right! Oh!"
 Fatty Wynn grasped the rings and swung. The juniors gave a cheer of encouragement.
 "Hurray! Go it, Fatty!"
 "Groo!"
 "Turn over!"
 "Turn over and drop!"
 "Ha, ha, ha! Take care of the earth—you might bust it!"
 "Mind how you drop!" roared Kangaroo. "I don't want a hole bored through into my back garden."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Fatty Wynn puffed and blew. He swung over, and inserted his feet in the rings; but he did not venture to let go with his hands. The juniors cheered. Fatty Wynn's face was assuming the hue of a well-boiled beetroot.
 "Go it, Fatty!"
 "Why don't you drop?"
 "Stand under him, Figgy, in case he falls!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "My word! This would make Blondie look sick," remarked Clifton Dane. "What are you swinging about like that for, Fatty?"
 "I c-can't help it!" stuttered Fatty Wynn.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "There's nothing to l-l-laugh at! Ow!"
 "Look out, Fatty!"
 "He's falling!"
 "Drop, old man—drop on your feet!"
 Bump!
 Fatty Wynn sat on the mat and gasped.

CHAPTER 14. Bread and Butter.

"A, ha, ha!" the crowd roared.
 The expression on Fatty Wynn's face was too comic for words. The juniors simply shrieked.
 "Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Ow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bai Jove!"
 Figgins and Kerr rushed to raise their chum up. Fatty Wynn staggered to his feet in the grasp of his two faithful chums.
 "Feel hurt, Fatty?" asked Kerr.
 "Yow!"
 "Bit shaken up, I suppose?" said Figgins sympathetically.
 "Grooh!"
 "Never mind; try again."
 "Eh?"
 "Try again," said Figgins encouragingly.
 "You ass!" said Fatty Wynn, in measured tones. "You chump! You frabjous chump! If you ever catch me on that thing again, you can use my napper for a football!"
 "Now, don't give in, old chap. Try—"
 "Rats!"
 Fatty Wynn stalked to the door. He was followed by a roar of laughter. Figgins and Kerr went with their chum, vainly expostulating. Fatty Wynn was done with that particular branch of gymnastics.
 Tom Merry wiped the tears from his eyes.
 "Oh, this is too good!" he murmured. "Fatty Wynn the gymnast beats Gussy the tenor."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 The juniors dispersed, still laughing. They would have been glad to see Fatty Wynn going on with his performances; but Fatty Wynn was as disgusted with the trapeze as Figgins was with the Indian clubs.
 The fat Fourth-Former grunted as he made his way to the New House. He cast a glance in the direction of the tuck-shop, but the expression upon the faces of Figgins and Kerr warned him off.
 The chums of the New House entered their study. Figgins jammed the kettle on the fire. Fatty Wynn looked at him uncertainly.
 "I suppose we're going to have something decent for tea," he remarked.
 "Must be moderate, Fatty!"
 "Look here, shall I go and do some shopping?"
 "No, that you jolly well won't!"
 "We've got enough stuff in the study for tea," Figgins remarked. "There's enough bacon and eggs for Kerr and me, and you can have some bread and butter, Fatty."
 "Good wheeze!" said Kerr. "That's a good arrangement!"
 Fatty Wynn gave his chums a freezing look. Figgins's proposition almost took the fat Fourth-Former's breath away.
 "You—you crass ass!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "You

galumphing burler! Do you think I shall sit here and chew fodder while you chaps are eating bacon and eggs?"
 "You're on diet, you know."
 "No, I'm not; I—I'm on gymnastics."
 Figgins shook his head.
 "Gymnastics are all very well," he remarked, "but we must be careful of the diet too, old man. You'll notice a splendid improvement in your health soon. You are only feeling what they call the 'habit hunger' in the crank books. You'll get over that in time, and you'll get accustomed to only eating enough for two instead of enough for twenty. It's only a matter of time."
 "I'm jolly well going to have the same as you chaps," said Fatty Wynn savagely.
 Figgins hesitated.
 "It can't be did, Fatty! You've got to keep on spare diet. But there's no need for Kerr and me to starve ourselves, is there, Kerr?"
 "No need at all," said Kerr, at once. "Don't be an unreasonable chap, Fatty."
 "I tell you I'm going to have the same things that you chaps have," said the Falstaff of the New House doggedly.
 "If starvation diet is so jolly good, you can have a whack at it yourselves."
 "I'll tell you what I'll do," exclaimed Figgins heroically.
 "I'll set you a jolly good example, Fatty. You can have the same stuff that I do—"
 "I jolly well will. I—"
 "But I'll have the same stuff that you do," said Figgins.
 "There you are! I'll only have bread and butter for tea to keep you company."
 Figgins's self-sacrifice was not nearly so much appreciated by Fatty Wynn as it should really have been. The fat Fourth-Former only grunted.
 "I'll do the same," said Kerr generously. "Now, what do you say to that, Fatty?"
 "You are a pair of blithering asses!"
 "Eh?"
 "Pair of silly chumps!" said Fatty Wynn. "Yah! Rats! Much better let us all three have a jolly good feed."
 "We're doing this for your good, Fatty!"
 "Br-r-r-r!"
 "Bread and butter and weak tea," said Figgins firmly.
 "Spread the festive board, my sons."
 The festive board was spread. It did not look very festive to Fatty Wynn. But in his present famished state even bread and butter was welcome. He started operations on the bread and butter with great gusto, but at the third slice Figgins stopped him.
 "Nuff!" he said, with a laconism worthy of Lysurgus himself.
 "Eh? What do you mean?"
 "Nuff!"
 "Nuff! It's not enough! It's not half enough!" yelled Fatty Wynn. "You ass! I'm jolly well going to have something to eat."
 "You're finished!" said Figgins, with great firmness.
 "I'm not! I—"
 "You are!"
 Fatty Wynn made a dive at the loaf. Figgins jerked it away, and pushed the excited junior back into his seat.
 "Chuck it, Fatty!" he said. "We're looking after you."
 "Blow you!"
 "Now, don't be ungrateful."
 Fatty Wynn jumped up.
 "Look here, I'm not going to stand this!" he bawled.
 "I'm not going to be put upon in my own study! I'm jolly well going to change into some other study."
 "Not a bit of it!"
 "I'll change into Pratt's room."
 "Rats! You couldn't stand Pratt, and I jolly well know that Pratt couldn't stand you, if you could!" said Figgins.
 "I—I—I'll change into the School House," yelled Fatty Wynn.
 "Ha, ha! Rats!"
 "Look here—"
 "Let's get out!" said Figgins. "We've finished tea."
 "I haven't finished. I—"
 "Your mistake! You're quite finished. Come on!"
 Fatty Wynn gasped with rage. Figgins and Kerr took him by the arms and walked him out of the study. Wynn went helplessly. In the hall downstairs they met French of the Shell. He grinned at them cheerfully.
 "Coming over to the tuck-shop, you chaps?" he asked.
 "I've just had a tip from my uncle, and I'm standing treat."
 "Good!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I'll come!"
 "No, you won't," said Figgins. "Thanks awfully, French, but Wynn is dieting."
 "I'm not! I'm not! I—"

(Continued on page 18.)

Grand New Competition.

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A Pair of Sandow's Spring-grip Dumb-bells to be sent

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Suitable for age	
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*Please cross out sizes not required.

THE "GEM," 11/2/11.



[Photo by Warwick Brookes]

This is a photograph showing the beautiful physical development of Mr. Eugen Sandow who has done more than any other man to encourage others to emulate his example in securing perfect health and strength.

(Continued from page 18.)

"Yes, you are! We can't come, either, as it would be torturing Fatty to eat without letting him eat," said Figgins. "Thanks, all the same."

"Poor old Fatty!" said French. "He isn't old enough to know what's good for him. He has to be watched to see that he doesn't eat too much! Ha, ha, ha! When are you going to buy him a pinafore and a monkey-on-a-stick?"

And French walked away laughing.

Fatty Wynn's face was crimson. He looked at his chums with deep reproach in his face.

"That's the way you're making the fellows speak of me!" he said pathetically. "Nice way to get a chum talked about, I must say."

"Well, it's true!" said Figgins doggedly. "You don't know when you've had enough, Fatty. You never know when to leave off."

"I haven't had a chance of beginning lately," said Fatty Wynn. "I thought last night that a chap never had too better chums than I have. And now it seems to me as if you want to reduce me to a skeleton. I've been feeling all the morning as if I were wasting away to a shadow."

Figgins and Kerr looked at him. His tone was very pathetic. But the idea of the fat, substantial, rosy-cheeked junior wasting away to a shadow made them smile.

"That's all very well," said Fatty Wynn. "But a fellow can look plump and healthy while he's being starved to death—like a flower with a canker at the root, you know. Do you chaps notice my hair turning grey?"

Figgins and Kerr burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, you can cackle!" said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "What I say is that a fellow can't expect to keep his health without laying a solid foundation."

"Well, you look solid enough," said Kerr, with a grin. "Come on, Fatty. We haven't had our walk yet. Twice round the quad, at top speed."

"I'm too hungry——"

"Rats! Come on!"

"I tell you I jolly well won't! I——"

"This way, Fatty!"

"I—I want to speak to French for a minute! I——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on!"

And with his arms linked in those of his inexorable chums, Fatty Wynn was marched away. He was soon tramping round the quad, at a great speed, between Figgins and Kerr, and whether the exercise reduced his fat or not, it certainly reduced Fatty Wynn to a state of fury. He was streaming with perspiration when he came in afterwards, and for some time he would not speak a word to either Kerr or Figgins. But they bore it nobly. They felt that they were doing their duty like true chums!

CHAPTER 15.

Joe to the Rescue.

"**B**AI JOVE! I believe you are lookin' a little thinnah, Wynn!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when he met Fatty Wynn in the quadrangle the next day.

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"Only a little!" he said. "I feel like a lath!"

"Bai JOVE! You don't look like one, then," said D'Arcy. "But I weally believe I see a slight difference. You are petywraps not so gwoos!"

"Not so what?" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Gwoos, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, innocently. "I—— Ow!"

Biff!

Fatty Wynn's fat fist bumped on D'Arcy's chest, and the swell of St. Jim's sat down violently in the quadrangle. The fat Fourth-Former walked away, and left him sitting there, feeling and looking dazed.

"Ow!" muttered Arthur Augustus. "Oh! The wuff beast! I wondah what Fatty Wynn did that for, when I was careful to say nothin' to upset him! I wegard him as a wuff beast!"

Fatty Wynn walked away disconsolately. That biff upon D'Arcy's elegant waistcoat had been some consolation. But not much. Fatty Wynn had been greatly restricted at breakfast-time by Figgins and Kerr. He was feeling famished. And there was nothing to eat till dinner; and then his two over-careful chums would be on the watch to prevent him from eating too much.

Fatty Wynn was getting desperate. He was fed up—in one sense, if not in another.

"I'm jolly well not going to stand it!" he muttered. "It's all rot to say I'm fat! Just plump; that's all! It's all rot, and I'm not going to stand it!"

Fatty Wynn looked round the quad, with a cautious eye,

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and then bolted in the direction of the tuck-shop. As he neared it, he stopped, with a snort. Figgins was sitting in the doorway, reading the "Marvel."

He looked up at Fatty Wynn with a grin.

"Hallo, Fatty!"

"Hallo!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

He strolled away, leaving Figgins still grinning. He went into the New House, and up to the study. He knew that Figgins had the key of the study cupboard in his pocket, but Fatty was getting desperate. He intended to burst open the cupboard door with the poker. But as he put his head into the room he stopped.

Kerr was sitting at the table. He gave the fat Fourth-Former a sweet smile, and Fatty Wynn retired without speaking.

He turned into the quadrangle again. On other occasions he would have sought succour at the hands of his house-fellows. French was in funds, and Pratt generally had something to spend. But Figgins had solemnly impressed upon the New House juniors that anybody who fed Fatty Wynn between meal-times would be hammered without mercy. And the New House fellows, too, had entered into the spirit of the thing. They wanted to see Fatty Wynn going through the course of treatment prescribed for him.

Fatty Wynn walked into the quad, with his hands deep in his pockets, and a deep frown corrugating his usually placid brow.

A loud yelp interrupted his painful reverie. He looked round quickly. Under an old elm close to the School House wall—a somewhat out-of-the-way spot—he caught sight of three School House boys. One of them was little Joe Frayne, the street arab whom Tom Merry had brought to St. Jim's, and who was now in the Third Form there. The other two were Mellish and Levison, two of the least popular fellows in the Fourth. That they were bullying little Joe Fatty Wynn saw at a glance.

Levison was holding the lad, and Mellish was pulling his ears. Mellish wore a pleasant grin while he performed that operation. The cad of the Fourth enjoyed nothing better than bullying a boy smaller than himself.

"Ow!" yelped Joe. "Yow! You—you wouldn't dare to do it if Master Tom was 'ere! Ow! Crumbs!"

Fatty Wynn ran towards the little slum lad and his tormentors. Fatty Wynn had not seen much of Joe Frayne, owing to his being in the other House at St. Jim's, and, like most of the fellows, he had thought it curious that such a little ragamuffin should come to St. Jim's. But if little Joe had been ten times the ragamuffin he was, Fatty Wynn would not have stood by and seen him badly treated by the cads of the Fourth.

"Stop that, you cads!" he exclaimed.

Mellish and Levison looked round quickly.

"Mind your own business, you New House rotter!" said Levison, his uneasiness relieved as he saw that it was not Tom Merry. "You buzz off!"

"Let that kid alone!"

"I ain't done nuffin'," said Joe, rubbing his sleeve across his eyes. "I don't know wot the young gents goes for me fur. I ain't done nuffin'!"

"Nice way to speak, ain't it!" sneered Mellish. "We don't want your sort at St. Jim's! I'm not going to put up with a rotten slum rat in the School House, for one!"

"What are you pitching into him for?" demanded Fatty Wynn.

"Mind your own bizney!"

Fatty Wynn did not reply to that. He let out with his left, and Mellish rolled on the ground.

"Oh!" roared Mellish.

Levison started back, and put up his fists. Fatty Wynn walked straight up to him.

"Do you want any?" he asked quietly.

Levison forced a laugh.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" he said. "I'm done!"

He put his hands in his pockets and strolled away. Mellish picked himself up, and followed. He did not want to continue the argument with Fatty Wynn. When Wynn hit out, and put his weight behind the blow, somebody was bound to be hurt. Mellish was holding his jaw as he walked away scowling.

"You're all right now, kid," said Fatty Wynn.

Joe rubbed his ears.

"Thankee, sir," he said. "You're werry good to me, you are! Crumbs! But it did 'urt!"

Fatty Wynn nodded, and was turning away, when he paused. An idea had come into his mind. He came back towards the outcast of the Third.

"Look here, kid," he said in a low voice. "Would you like to do me a favour?"

Joe nodded.

"Crumbs! I'll do anything for you, Master Wynn!" he said.

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed.

"It's a delicate matter," he said. "A chap in my own House can't help me. It will have to be a School House chap—like you. Look here!"

He took a half-crown from his pocket.

"Go to the tuck-shop, and get some pork-pies and jam tarts to that extent. Savvy?"

"Wot to!" said Joe. "I often fetches things for Master Merry."

"Well, take them into the School House," said Fatty Wynn. "You don't have a study, of course—you're in the Third! Take them into a box-room, and then come for me."

"Ye-es!" said Joe, not understanding.

"You see, I want you to take me into the School House as—a visitor," Fatty Wynn explained hurriedly. "If I go in alone, the fellows will jump on me."

Joe grinned. He had heard the story of the dieting of Fatty Wynn, of course. He fully comprehended the little game planned by the fat Fourth-Former.

"I catch on, Master Wynn," he said.

"Then buck up!"

"I'm on!"

And little Joe darted away. Fatty Wynn waited impatiently. He had his doubts about Joe, but it was his only resource. Considered from the point of view of his early training, Joe was not likely to bring back either the half-crown or the provisions.

But, as a matter of fact, Joe had a heart flowing with gratitude and good feeling to whomever showed him a kindness. Joe fulfilled the commission entrusted to him, to the very letter.

In ten minutes he rejoined Fatty Wynn under the elm.

The fat Fourth-Former met him with an eager look. Frayne came up breathless and grinning.

"It's alright," he exclaimed.

"You've got the stuff?"

"Yes, Master Wynn?"

"Where is it?"

"No. 4 box-room."

"Good! You shall have some of it!" said Fatty Wynn.

Joe chuckled joyously. The half-starved street Arab looked upon jam tarts as the topmost height of human enjoyment.

Fatty Wynn walked into the School House with little Joe. Several School House fellows saw him come in, and stared at him.

"What do you want, New House bouncer?" asked Hancock of the Fourth.

"Can't I bring a friend in if I like?" demanded Joe.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, you can, Joe," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Let 'em alone, Hancock! How do you do, Fatty? Feeling the benefit of the diet yet?"

"No, I ain't!" growled Fatty Wynn.

Joe led him upstairs. In two minutes Fatty Wynn was in the box-room, opening the precious packet from the tuck-shop. In one second more he was devouring the contents.

Fatty Wynn had always liked pork pies. But these pork pies, after his long abstinence, seemed like a dream—a vision! They were delicious, amazing, heavenly!

Fatty Wynn had eaten all the pork pies and half the tarts before he noticed that little Joe was not eating, but only watching him.

"Go ahead, kid!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Master Wynn!"

And Joe piled in, too!

Between them they soon cleared up the tarts. Fatty Wynn rose from the box he had been sitting on with a great sigh of relief.

"My word!" he murmured. "I feel better now! Look here, kid, here's a couple of bob. Get some more things in here for me, and I'll come in after school to-day! You shall have your whack! See?"

Joe grinned.

"Orl right, Master Wynn."

And Fatty Wynn walked out of the School House, undoubtedly heavier, but feeling as if he were walking on air!

CHAPTER 16.

How it Ended.

FIGGINS was amazed.

At dinner, Fatty Wynn did not even ask for a second helping! There was roast mutton—a dish of which the Fourth-Former was very fond. But Fatty Wynn took the amount Figgins had allowed him to, ate it, and said nothing!

Figgins stared at him. Kerr stared at him. Fatty Wynn sat tight, apparently unconscious of their amazed looks.

"Are you feeling well, Fatty?" asked Figgins, at last.

"Ripping!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Not got a pain anywhere?"

"Not at all."

"But you haven't asked for any more?"

"I don't want any more, thanks!"

Figgins nearly fell off his chair.

"You don't want any more!" he gasped dazedly.

"No."



Down the stairs tumbled the Bouncer, with Billy Bunter rolling wildly after him, while the juniors on the landing burst into a roar, "Ha, ha, ha!" (An amusing incident in "The Greyfriars Hypnotist," a splendid long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., in this week's issue of the "Magnet" Library. Buy it! Price One Penny.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

"B-b-but you must be ill, then?"

Fatty Wynn grinned.

"I'm all right."

"My word!" said Figgins, in amazement. "There must be something in what the crank books say about habit-hunger, after all! Wynn is getting over the habit of feeling hungry now he's on a shorter diet. It's doing him good, and he's losing the unwholesome craving for food!"

"That's it," said Kerr.

"You'll admit that we were right now, Fatty?" said Figgins persuasively.

Fatty Wynn only quitted.

Fatty Wynn looked quite contented in the Form-room that afternoon. He seemed to be looking forward expectantly to the close of lessons, that was all. He couldn't have been looking forward very keenly to the tea in Figgins's study, because that was to consist only of bread and butter, in allowed quantities.

School over, Fatty Wynn strolled out into the quadrangle. The Third had just come out, and were yelling and whooping to express their delight at their freedom after classes.

"Hallo, Fatty! Where are you going?" asked Kerr.

"Oh, just to speak to young Frayne!"

"You seem to have struck up a friendship with that kid," said Figgins, staring. "Pratt was telling me you visited him in the School House this morning."

"Well, he's a decent little chap!" said Fatty Wynn.

And he walked away.

Joe met him with a grin and a wink.

"It's all right, sir!" he remarked, in a whisper. "I've got the things in the same room, sir. Are you a-comin' in now?"

"Good!" said Fatty Wynn.

Half an hour later, Figgins and Kerr were preparing tea in their study in the New House, and wondering why Fatty Wynn did not come.

"The system's answering splendidly!" Figgins remarked.

"Fatty seems to be losing that craving for food, especially pastry. We shall have his weight down in next to no time!"

"Looks like it!" agreed Kerr thoughtfully.

"Ah, here he is!"

Fatty Wynn came in. He glanced at the tea-table, with nothing but bread-and-butter on it, with a disparaging curl of the lip.

"Hungry?" asked Figgins.

"Not so very!"

"Well, pile in! There are three slices for you!"

"Oh, all right!"

Fatty Wynn ate all of his three slices. But he did not ask for more. Kerr was looking a little dissatisfied as he finished his bread-and-butter. It was only friendly for the two chums to restrict themselves to the same diet that Wynn had. It would have been too bad to tantalise him with the scent of frying bacon. But Kerr was beginning to think that dieting could be carried too far. Something of the same sort was in Figgins's mind, though he would not have said so for worlds.

Fatty Wynn rose as soon as he had finished his frugal meal. Figgins ran his hands through his pockets.

"Lend me half a crown, Fatty," he exclaimed. "I'm stony! And we must get in some things before the tuck-shop closes!"

Fatty Wynn turned red.

"I—I'm stony, too!" he exclaimed.

"Why, you had a postal-order yesterday, and I'll swear you haven't spent it!" Figgins exclaimed. "You jolly well haven't had a chance!"

Fatty Wynn's colour deepened.

"I—I'm sorry! I've got none left!" he stammered. "I'm expecting some in the morning. I—I've written to my people to ask for some extra."

He quitted the study before his chums could reply. Figgins stepped to the window and looked out. Fatty Wynn was crossing over towards the New House, and under the elms Figgins saw him join Joe Frayne.

Figgins turned back into the study with a clouded brow.

"I don't quite catch on to this!" he said. "What has Fatty been doing with his money, Kerr old chap? He's just joined that young ragamuffin! Can he have been giving his money to that kid?"

Kerr looked puzzled.

"I dare say the kid's hard up," he remarked. "But I understand that Tom Merry's uncle keeps him in pocket-money. He may be getting some off Fatty, though. You never know."

"We'll jolly well see!" exclaimed Figgins abruptly.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going after Fatty Wynn!"

"Good egg! I'm with you!"

The chums of the New House hurried downstairs, and crossed the quad. They found the Terrible Three on the steps of the School House.

"Fatty Wynn here?" asked Figgins.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "He's just gone in with young

Joe. They seem to have struck up quite a friendship. Are you looking for trouble, you New House bounders?"

"Heaps here!" Monty Lowther remarked.

Figgins held up his hand hastily.

"Fax!" he exclaimed. "We want to speak to Wynn, that's all!"

"Oh, all right!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Pass in, and all's well!"

Figgins and Kerr went in. Mellish met them in the passage. Mellish gave them an evil grin. There were few things that passed in the School House—or anywhere else in St. Jim's—without Mellish getting to know. Fatty Wynn had not counted upon the cad of the Fourth and his spying proclivities.

"Looking for Wynn?" asked Mellish, with a snigger.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Do you know where he is?"

"Yes," grinned Mellish. "He's dieting!"

"Dieting?" exclaimed Figgins and Kerr together.

"He, he! Yes! No. 4 box-room, third landing," said Mellish.

The New House chums ran upstairs. They reached the third landing very quickly, and looked round for the box-room. The number four painted on a door guided them, and they ran towards it.

There was a sound from within the room. It was the clink of a bottle on the edge of a glass and the gurgle of ginger-beer. Then a voice they knew.

"That's good!"

"Prime, ain't it?" said another voice. "It's all right, that's what it is, Master Wynn!"

Figgins breathed hard through his nose. He turned the handle, and flung open the door of the box-room.

There was a sudden exclamation.

Fatty Wynn started to his feet, the glass of ginger pop falling from his hand with a crash in his surprise!

Figgins simply glared. On a box were spread arrays of pies and cakes and tarts, and dried fruits! It was a regular feed, and both Fatty Wynn and Joe Frayne were evidently enjoying it to the full.

"Oh!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn blankly, at the unexpected sight of his chums.

"You—you bounder!" roared Figgins. "This is how you diet, is it?"

"You—you see—"

"And you're stony broke, hey?"

"So I was!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'd given all my tin to Joe to get these things with."

Figgins and Kerr stared at him speechlessly.

"You—you fraud!" gasped Figgins, at last. "Collar him, Kerr!"

"Here, I say—ow—yow!"

Fatty Wynn was collared. They bumped him, and bumped him again. Then they bumped him a third time, and gasped for breath.

"Groroooh!" panted Fatty Wynn. "You silly asses! Look here, I've had enough of your rotten wheeze! I'm not going to diet! I won't! You can keep me out of the tuck-shop, if you like, and starve me in the study, but you can't prevent me from coming into the School House to feed!"

"My hat!" said Figgins.

Kerr burst into a laugh.

"He's got us there, Figg!"

"The fat bounder, he has!"

Fatty Wynn staggered to his feet.

"Now, be sensible chaps," he urged. "You've had a rotten, skinny tea, and I was thinking of you all the time I was eating here, honour bright! Sit down and wire in! I'm not going to be starved, so there's no need for you to be starved either! Sit down and feed, and let bygones be bygones."

Figgins and Kerr looked at one another. There was great wisdom in what Fatty Wynn said. And their meagre tea in the New House had left them feeling very empty. And the array of pork pies and cold beef and ham, and jam tarts and cake spread on the trunk was very attractive! Figgins and Kerr realised that they were very hungry.

"But—but what about the diet?" said Figgins feebly.

"Oh, that's all off, anyway."

"Shall we, Kerr?"

"May as well," said Kerr, with a grin. "We've bumped him, anyway."

"Good!"

And Figgins and Kerr sat down to the meal. And by the time the four juniors had finished, there was hardly a crumb left to tell the tale. And with that record feed ended the dieting of Fatty Wynn!

THE END.

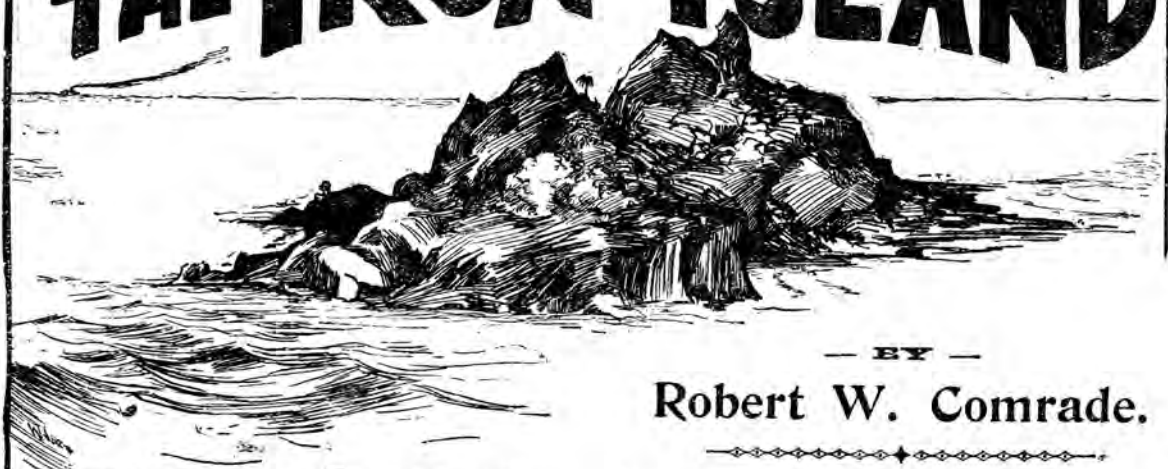
(Another splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry and Co. next week, entitled "Lunley-Lunley's Return," by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of the "GEM" Library in advance. Price 1d.)

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A Thrilling Adventure Tale.

THE IRON ISLAND



— BY —

Robert W. Comrade.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS BRIEFLY RE-WITTEN.

Philip Graydon is a young Englishman, who for eight years was marooned on an uncharted island in the Pacific—the Iron Island—by a criminal society called the Brotherhood of Iron, of which he was once a member. A lucky chance brings to his aid Dolores de las Mercedes, a beautiful Parisian actress, who has incurred the displeasure of the French Government. Graydon escapes from the Iron Island, and lands in England with Dolores. As Frank Kingston and Miss O'Brien, the two begin a secret campaign against the pernicious Brotherhood, and six prominent members are

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

Lord Mount-Fannell, the chief of the Brotherhood, gives a dinner-party one evening, to which Dolores and her friend, the Princess Kamala of Srinpurdu, are invited. During the evening the Princess's scarab talisman is stolen, and Kamala leaves the house frantic with grief.

While Kingston is endeavouring to persuade Kamala to allow him to recover the talisman for her, she receives a letter, informing her that if she sends £10,000 to a certain address the talisman will be returned to her immediately. She sends the money, though Kingston requests her not to, and after waiting anxiously, a reply is brought her. She picks up the envelope and tears it open eagerly.

(Now go on with the story)

Kamala Accepts Kingston's Assistance.

Kingston knew perfectly what the letter would contain, and was not surprised when her Highness cried out furiously in Hindustani. She flung the letter passionately to the ground and stamped on it, pacing up and down the room in a sudden access of fury.

Dolores rose from her chair, and endeavoured to calm her, but for a few moments Kamala's rage got the better of her. Meanwhile, Kingston had leisurely picked up the letter and read its contents.

"Thanks! I have cashed the notes quite safely. Of course, you didn't really expect the scarab back? It is still in my possession, and will remain so until another ten thousand pounds comes along. The boy has the key. Do the same as last time, and the scarab will certainly be delivered to you before night. By following these instructions you have your only chance of recovering the talisman. Don't throw that chance away!"

Kingston laid the typewritten sheet on the table.

"As I predicted," he said quietly, "The thief has appropriated the ten thousand pounds, and you are in a position identical to that which you were in before you parted with the money. You see, princess, this man means to extract every penny he can from you before he gives up his treasure."

Kamala suddenly grew calm. Dolores' soothing words had had a big effect on her, and she faced Kingston with a hard glitter in her black eyes.

"Yes, Mr. Kingston, you are right!" she exclaimed. "It was foolish and wilful of me to send the banknotes. But I did not listen to reason; I thought my own judgment better

than yours. Well, I have paid for my pig-headedness! This scoundrel who has the scarab will extract every penny from me unless something is done—for he knows its great value to me!"

"Whatever messages he sends, princess, take no notice of them," advised Kingston. "He will tell you he is going to destroy it, in all probability; but that will be bluff, for he certainly won't destroy the talisman as long as you have money. But, as I said previously, I will place it in your hands before the expiration of three days. This is a promise, and I will faithfully fulfil it."

Her Highness sat for some moments agitatedly tapping her foot on the magnificent carpet. Finally, she looked from Dolores to Kingston and forced a smile to her lips.

"What can I say?" she exclaimed with a helpless shrug of her shoulders. "I neglected your advice, and see what the result is! I can only place myself entirely in your hands, Mr. Kingston. Although I am a princess, I am utterly helpless, alone. My own servants are valueless in work of this description, and it is impossible to go to the police. All I can do is to trust in you to assist me out of this difficulty. I need not say how thankful I am to you, Miss O'Brien, for having introduced me to this gentleman."

"And I," said Dolores, "am gratified to see you take this course, princess. I can absolutely assure you that there is no better or abler man in London for the work. If Mr. Kingston does not secure your scarab, then it is impossible for any man to do so!"

Kingston rose laughing.

"Really, Dolores," he drawled, "you are singing my praises highly. But seriously, your Highness, there is no necessity for you to worry—the talisman will be returned to you the very instant I get it in my hands; and I shall get it in my hands. All I ask is—take no notice of whatever threats the thief makes."

"I will do as you say, Mr. Kingston," cried Kamala. "Somehow, your words give me hope. I feel I can trust you, and your own confidence is giving me confidence, too. If you are successful in regaining the talisman, you will have earned my life-long gratitude."

"The fact of having been of assistance to you, princess," said Kingston graciously, "will be full reward for any slight services in this matter. When I meet you again I hope to be in a position to place the talisman in your hands. Personally, I am confident of success."

What the Attic Revealed.

Dolores paused for a moment as she was walking down Ludgate Hill. It was the following morning, and she was out bent on a little shopping. Overhead, the sky was clear and cloudless, and the sun was making London look less dingy than usual.

Dolores had stopped to take a shilling from her purse. Standing against the kerb, in between two hawkers, was a bent, old man. His face was pale and haggard, his beard uncut, but, nevertheless, tidy. Attired in the raggedest of

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"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN"

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of The
Chums of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

clothing, he looked a pitiful spectacle as he stood there with a dozen or so pairs of laces hung over his shoulder.

His whole appearance suggested honesty and abject poverty, so Dolores paused for a moment and placed a shilling in one of his hands.

"Laces, lady?" he said in a hoarse whisper. "Which sort, miss, black or brown?"

"Don't trouble about the laces," replied Dolores with a smile. "Perhaps you can sell them to somebody else."

The old fellow looked at the coin in astonishment for a second, then grasped what she meant.

"Oh, thank ye, miss," he said huskily. "an' heaven bless yer! There ain't many kind-hearted folks like you about!"

Dolores gave him another smile and passed on, thinking no more of the matter. But the incident lingered in the old man's mind for some time. He carefully stowed the coin away in one of his waistcoat pockets, a ghost of a smile appearing on his wrinkled features.

"Jove!" he thought. "What a coincidence! And Dolores had no suspicion! Well, if my disguise is good enough to deceive her, it is good enough for anything!"

Frank Kingston chuckled inwardly.

"I'll keep that shilling as long as I live," he told himself.

"It's the first coin I've ever accepted from a friend, but the circumstances justify the action. By Jingo, Dolores will be surprised when I show it to her!"

His make-up was certainly a masterpiece, and it was small wonder that Dolores did not recognise in the old lace-seller her own friend. Kingston had not, of course, donned the disguise at the Cyril. It would have been impossible for him to have been seen in the hotel in his present personality.

No, he simply called on Carson Gray, in Great Portland Street. There he found practically all disguises accessible to him. Kingston was to find this convenience alone worth a great deal to him. Gray himself was only too delighted to be of assistance.

But what was Kingston doing on Ludgate Hill? Why was he attired in rags, standing together with other hawkers, selling boot-laces? The solution was simple. Mr. Jacob Lowenwirth's office was situated in that busy thoroughfare, and Kingston was merely waiting for the Jew to leave his office. The previous day Tim had been watching, and had seen Lowenwirth leave the building, enter a taxi, and direct the driver to make for Whitechapel.

Tim could not, of course, follow, but Kingston was convinced that visit to Whitechapel had been in connection with the scarab affair. There was a possibility that Lowenwirth would make the journey again to-day to interview, perhaps, the common-member who had fetched the notes away from the safe-deposit in Holborn.

And Kingston was not mistaken. At about noon, the solicitor's tall figure emerged from his offices, and walked smartly down the hill to Ludgate Circus. The old man with the laces apparently stowed his goods away leisurely, and slouched down the hill with his eyes to the ground, searching, apparently, for a possible coin.

As a matter of fact, Kingston had been very quick, and was hardly twenty yards behind Lowenwirth as the latter turned to the left up New Bridge Street. To an ordinary observer—and to Lowenwirth himself—Kingston was taking no interest in anything save himself. Yet every movement of the Jew's was seen by a pair of remarkably keen, if sleepy-looking, eyes.

"Good!" thought Kingston. "The very thing I wanted!"

Lowenwirth had entered the Blackfriars Underground Station, and Kingston was next him at the booking-office.

"St. Mary's, Whitechapel," said Lowenwirth sharply.

The seeming old man took a ticket to the same station, and walked down to the platform. There was a train almost immediately, and when it arrived at Whitechapel, the Jew turned to the right down Mile End Road. He did not go far, however, but entered a narrow roadway, which ended in a squalid, dingy thoroughfare.

Numerous pedestrians were about, so neither Lowenwirth, or Kingston were taken much notice of. The former turned into a fairly respectable-looking tenement-house, and disappeared from view. Kingston kept straight on, and walked to the end of the street. Here he unpacked his laces, and stood in the gutter, offering them for sale. He was certain that Lowenwirth was unaware that he had been followed.

The Jew remained in the building for quite half an hour, then emerged accompanied by a young fellow of about twenty-three, also a Hebrew. The latter touched his cap and hurried off, Lowenwirth returning to Mile End Road the same way as he had come.

Kingston did not move until another five minutes had elapsed, then he again stowed his goods away, and slouched along to the tenement. At the first door on the ground floor he tapped timidly.

It was answered almost immediately by an elderly woman.

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She was tall and thin, with a sour-looking visage, and glared at the caller searchingly.

"Well?" she asked abruptly.

"Can you tell me where to find the landlord of this 'ere 'ouse?" asked Kingston huskily.

"I'm the landlady," answered the other in the same sharp tone. "What do you want? I don't want nothin' if you're sellin'—"

"No, mum, I ain't sellin' anything, only I was told as you 'ad a room 'ere to let—a furnished room."

"Who told yer?"

"Why, that gent who's jist bin 'ere, mum. Mr.—Mr.—"

"You ain't referring to Mr. Cohen, are yer?" asked the woman, becoming slightly interested. Kingston nodded his head quickly; he guessed that "Cohen" was, in reality, Lowenwirth.

"That's it, mum, Mr. Cohen. 'E's got a room 'ere, ain't 'e—a room where 'e sees people sometimes?"

"That's right. You seem to know a lot about 'im, though."

"'E's a gent, 'e is, mum," replied Kingston, leaning against the doorpost for support. "'E's goin' to give me ten bob to stop 'ere an' keep 'is own room tidy. 'E said you'd got a little room you'd let me have cheap—"

"So I 'ave," answered the sour-faced woman. "I'll show it to yer if you'll come upstairs."

Fifteen minutes later, Kingston had paid the first week's rent in advance, and was installed in a dirty little attic, hardly bigger than a cupboard, which was furnished merely with a bedstead and plain deal table and chair.

"Splendid," he told himself with satisfaction. "It was a random guess, but I was right. Lowenwirth merely keeps his room here so that no common-members of the Brotherhood shall go to his office in Ludgate Hill. The landlady was deceived nicely, but before she can suspect anything, I shall have done my work and gone. What a stroke of luck she should have a room empty—if this hole can be honoured by the name of a room—on the same floor as Lowenwirth's!"

Everything was in Kingston's favour. Somehow, although he knew not why, he was convinced that a search of the Jew's rooms would reveal something of importance—something relating to the scarab—if not the scarab itself.

How to get in, though? The task was nothing to Kingston. There were three rooms on the top floor of the house: Lowenwirth's, the one Kingston was in, and another empty one. So the coast was quite clear. Caution was necessary, however, for several families resided in the rooms below, and any suspicious movements would soon bring somebody up.

Kingston quite understood why Lowenwirth represented himself as Cohen. He naturally did not want his name associated with an East End lodging-house.

The landing just outside Kingston's door was small, dingy, and ill-lighted; what little illumination did find its way there came from a small skylight, which certainly appeared as if it had never been cleaned since the house had been put up. The darkness, however, was to Kingston's liking.

Quietly as a mouse he crossed the uncovered boards and knelt before the door of Lowenwirth's apartment. In fifteen seconds the panel swung open. The lock was only a cheap, old-fashioned one, and this fact caused a momentary doubt to enter Kingston's mind. Surely there would be nothing in a room so insecurely fastened?

Without wasting a second, he slipped into the attic and closed the door after him. It was a compartment of his own, only it was decidedly cleaner, and contained more furniture. The skylight, too, was practically free from dirt.

"Well," thought the intruder, as he viewed the surroundings, "this certainly doesn't look very promising. Have I made a mistake—has my judgment forsaken me? It is firmly fixed in my mind that yesterday Lowenwirth came here and secreted the talisman. After all, it's about the safest place he could hit on. For who would think of looking for it here?"

Without further conjecture—for conjecture would accomplish nothing—he set to work to search the place. He did his work carefully, noting the precise position of every article before he moved it.

The attic contained a bed—which was evidently never used—a mahogany table, two chairs, a stained-wood cabinet, and the floor was covered by a fairly good carpet.

Kingston started on the cabinet, and the first thing he saw—the only article the cabinet contained, in fact—was a massive iron cashbox. He picked it up, with a slight smile, and shook it gently. Something rolled to and fro inside. A heavy brass lock secured the box, and it was solid and firm.

"The least likely place of all," thought the old man, as he laid the cashbox down. "Lowenwirth would surely never be fool enough to place the scarab in here—where anybody would immediately look? No; the thing's merely a blind."

He laid it aside, and proceeded with his work. With remarkable rapidity he overhauled every article of furniture in the little room. It was no half-search; nothing escaped his



"You seem to hold the upper hand, my friend," remarked Kingston calmly, eyeing his captor with perfect self-possession. "Silence, dog!" rapped out the Indian. See page 26.)

attention. The bedstead, the table, the mattress, the chairs, the carpet—everything, in fact, was subjected to a most minute scrutiny.

All to no purpose, however. At the end of half an hour Kingston was forced to admit the talisman was not in the little attic.

"There seems to be no secret hiding-places," he mused, as he stood looking at the bedstead, with a frown wrinkling his forehead. "The confounded thing certainly is well hidden if it is here. I'm not satisfied, though; this is such a good place to keep the scarab that it is practically certain to be here somewhere. Yet I've searched every inch of the room."

Kingston's eye caught the cashbox.

"I suppose, after all, I had better look inside," he thought, as though the article had been a thin tin affair. "No doubt Lowenwirth concludes it is impervious to attack. I think, however, that it will not prove a very formidable undertaking."

He picked the iron box up and turned it over in his hands. It was a massive thing, about twelve inches long, by eight wide, the heavy lock holding the lid down securely.

Kingston produced a bunch of little keys; after a few minutes, however, he slipped them back in his pocket. The box remained as before.

"It will have to be force, then," he thought.

He clasped the thing to his side, and placed his right fist against the lock. It seemed absurd to suppose he could bend the side in—it was made of thick wrought-iron. But Kingston drew his breath in sharply, bent himself double, and for a moment the veins stood out like whipcord on his forehead. The force he was exerting was stupendous.

Suddenly there was a crumpling sound, and this singular man of Samson-like strength drew himself up erect. The iron box in his hands was considerably altered in appearance now, for the front was bent in like a piece of cardboard. How Kingston had done it was a miracle; his strength was incalculable.

"Well," he thought, "it wasn't such a terrible task. Now to see what the box contains. A few odds and ends, I suppose. Lowenwirth is an astute man, and he wouldn't leave anything valuable in here."

He lifted the lid up. Inside could be seen a box almost the counterpart of the outer one, only smaller. This, too, was bent out of shape. To lift it out the larger box had to be straightened.

In a moment it was done. Kingston opened the lid of the second one, then chuckled softly.

"This appears very much like a joke," he mused, as he perceived a third box. "Jove, but I'd no idea I had

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disfigured a whole collection of cashboxes when I bent the outer one! I wonder when I shall come to the kernel?"

The third box, however, proved to be the last. Having extricated it he lifted the lid, looked inside, then chuckled again.

"As I thought, the thing is merely a blind! Well, my curiosity is satisfied, at all events. The scarab remains undiscovered, nevertheless. Confound it, I hate the idea of going away with nothing accomplished!"

He looked at the contents of the iron box, with a frown on his features, then took them out and laid them on the table. A stump of blue pencil, a couple of coat-buttons, a cigar-end, and a piece of rusty iron were the sole contents of the thrice-secured cashbox.

As he laid them on the table, however, something happened which gave him food for thought. The piece of rusty iron seemed somehow to stick to the bottom of the box, but with a tug he released it.

When he placed it down a peculiar thing happened. On the table was a bottle of ink, and penholder, and several loose pen-nibs. And the very instant the piece of iron touched the table the pen-holder and nibs shot over the intervening space and clung like leeches to the flat bottom of the iron.

Kingston was certainly taken by surprise.

"Well," he thought, "that's rather remarkable. The rusty piece of iron is undoubtedly a powerful magnet. But what on earth for? There is something more in this than first meets the eye."

He picked the magnet up curiously and examined it with minute care. It was a piece of ordinary gas-barrel, about one inch in diameter, the length being about three inches. It could be seen, however, that the hollow centre had been filled up with a solid piece of steel, the outside gas-barrel and the steel interior being separated by a thin tube of different metal. In this manner it was the inside only which was magnetised; the outside remained an ordinary piece of piping, the intervening metal being of a non-conductive nature.

The opposite end had a cap screwed on to it, with a piece of dirty string attached. Kingston took the string in his hand and dangled the very peculiar magnet about as if it were a pendulum.

"What in the world can it be for?" he murmured to himself. "It's ridiculous to suppose Lowenwirth has taken the trouble to make this magnet for nothing. And why is the inside alone magnetised? Evidently for some peculiar purpose. And the string? Jove, but this is puzzling! There is a reason for everything, and I'm going to find out the use of this magnet before I leave this room. I've been here too long as it is, but it can't be helped; I must take my chance."

He examined the gas-barrel again. Then his gaze moved round the little room slowly. That the magnet was employed for some novel purpose he was certain of. The question was—what? It was a difficult matter to discover. Lowenwirth evidently had a touch of humour in his composition, for the difficulty was enough to baffle anyone—anyone except Kingston, that is.

For a full ten minutes he stood in the centre of the room without moving a finger, the magnet dangling pendulum-like from his hand, and while his eyes were busy his brain was hard at work. Everything in the room was examined, in the hope that it would suggest a solution.

"By Jingo!" thought Kingston suddenly. "By Jingo!"

The sight of something in the room had in a flash suggested to him the use to which the magnet was put. And it was simple—so obvious now he saw it—that Kingston burst into a silent laugh. Of course, that was the only possible solution—the magnet had been made for it!

"What a dense, unseeing idiot I've been! Lowenwirth is smart, though, for, even if it is fairly obvious, the hiding-place is undoubtedly novel. And without the magnet it would be impossible to get the scarab, for it is pretty certain the princess's charm is here."

He stepped across to the bed. It was a small affair, though well made. Four brass ornaments were fitted to the top of each corner post, and Kingston proceeded to take one of these out. Instead of unscrewing, as most bed-ornaments do, they merely fitted in, leaving, when removed, a hollow cylinder of the post.

The hiding-place was certainly a most excellent one, for the way Lowenwirth had arranged things defied detection. Not one man in a thousand would have connected the peculiarly-shaped magnet with a secret receptacle. Yet it was the key; for without that magnet the box in which the scarab was hidden could never have been brought to light.

Quickly now Kingston dropped the magnet into the hollow bedpost. Had the outside been magnetised he could never have got it down. The bottom, however, was the only part

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affected, so it slipped to the depth of the post quite easily, then fixed itself firmly to the iron base.

With a slight jerk Kingston detached it and gently drew it to the top. But there was no result—the magnet had risen alone.

"Try the next one," thought Kingston.

He did so, with the same result.

"There's nothing in the first two posts, anyway," he told himself. "It will be in the head—the last one of the four probably."

But he was wrong. At the third attempt the gas-barrel did not descend so far as previously, but clamped itself on to something with a click. He tightened the string gently, then gave it a slight tug.

"It's heavier! Something's coming to the surface in addition to the magnet, at all events."

He was right. A little metal cylinder a couple of inches high was attached to the steel at the bottom of the gas-barrel. It was of the same non-conductive metal, all except the top and bottom, and the bottom was slightly magnetised—this being to prevent the box rattling in case the bed was moved.

Everything had been carefully thought out, and Kingston could not help admiring the Jew for his ingenuity. The little cylinder was fixed quite firmly to the magnet, and had to be wrenched away. The opening was a cap, which was held in place by a thread.

Kingston unscrewed it quickly, but with no excitement. He was practically certain now that his search was ended. The cylinder was filled with wadding, and in the middle of this lay the roughly-carved talisman. He took it out and laid it on the table, giving it only a second's glance.

"My expedition has not been fruitless, after all," he thought, with satisfaction. "Mr. Lowenwirth will receive something of a surprise when he next pays a visit to this attic. No doubt he considered this scarab in quite safe hiding. He will learn, however, that what one man can conceal another can find."

Prince Malabari.

Frank Kingston screwed the cap back on to the brass cylinder, then paused, a slight smile appearing on his disguised features. A thought had just occurred to him, and he felt in one of his waistcoat-pockets, producing after a moment a metal trouser-button.

"Just a little joke!" he chuckled. "Although the cash-box is broken beyond repair, friend Jacob may think the intruder did not find out the secret of the magnet. When he finds this little button, however, I think his disappointment and chagrin will be rather violent."

Kingston dropped the cylinder to the bottom of the bedpost, replaced the gas-barrel in the cash-boxes, and prepared to depart. Before doing so he placed the talisman in a safe place. As he himself always said, nothing but good came of taking precautions. After a final glance round, he placed the iron box in the cabinet, closed the doors, then slipped out into the passage.

Somebody was moving about down below, so Kingston turned the key rapidly, and slipped into his own attic. Here he prepared himself for going out again. Three minutes later he walked slowly down the stairs, bent and feeble-looking, and entered the street.

And as he did so two men, who had been leaning against the wall some hundred yards away, commenced strolling leisurely up the street. Kingston's keen eyes saw them at once, and he wondered why he was being followed by—Indians! For the men certainly were Hindus, and even at that distance Kingston knew they did not belong to the Princess Kamala's retinue at the Hotel Cyril. They were strangers—men whom he had never seen before.

But why were they here? Why had he been followed, and who was the man who had set them the task? Kingston did not like it at all. Surely Kamala couldn't have set two men—two men outside the circle of her own servants—to watch the movements of the man who had pledged himself to regain her scarab? It seemed impossible, for she trusted him implicitly. He knew that—knew it in spite of the strange and secret methods an Indian might think justifiable.

Yet why were they following him? No one else knew of his pledge; no one else suspected him of being anything else but a young man about town. Besides, he was in disguise—the disguise he had told himself would deceive anybody. No, Kingston decidedly did not like it.

He had told no one—not even Dolores or Fraser—of his work that morning, therefore he must have been followed from the Cyril to Carson Gray's, and had been recognised as he came out, in the personality of an old man. Yet he had seen no one following him until this moment. The knowledge was just a little disconcerting.

Not that Kingston was disconcerted. All he experienced was a feeling of annoyance—annoyance because he had not seen the Indians before. The truth of the matter was he had been so confident of his disguise that he had never looked for a possible shadower.

The thing, then, was to elude them. To Kingston the task would be an easy one, and even in a fight he knew he could gain the upper hand. But it was exasperating to be followed at all.

He walked down the street, and entered the narrow lane which led to Mile End Road. At the time it happened to be practically deserted. Kingston slouched on slowly, with his eyes bent to the ground. He knew, without looking round, that the Hindus had closed up until they were within five or six yards.

Suddenly a peculiarly-piercing whistle sounded—a whistle soft in tone, but nevertheless penetrating. The road in front of Kingston was deserted for over a hundred yards, and there was nothing but squalid houses on either hand. On hearing that whistle he twirled round like lightning, instinctively knowing that he was in danger.

Just in time, for the Hindus were actually in the act of springing upon him. With one blow he knocked them both sprawling. And even then he exerted only half his strength. Had he placed the whole power of his arm into the lunge, he would probably have killed one of the men at least.

They were hardy fellows, however, and sprang to their feet muttering rapidly in Hindustani. Kingston stood waiting for them to advance.

Suddenly there was a shuffle behind him. He half-turned, saw three more of the Indians leave one of the houses, and in another second was fighting as no other man could have fought. For a few moments he kept the whole five at bay, then something happened which made him lose the game—something which even his terrible strength could not stand up against.

A sharp prick made itself felt on the side of his forehead, and before he could even wonder what had caused it he fell forward unconscious. No man could fight against such an enemy as this, and in another second Kingston's inert form was shuffled into the house from which the three men had appeared.

The whole exciting incident had not occupied more than twenty seconds altogether, and although one or two people had seen the scuffle, they knew better than to interfere. In that district such a thing was by no means uncommon.

The Indian drug which had entered Kingston's veins in such a dramatic and abrupt manner did not act on his constitution as it would have done on any ordinary man's. Before five minutes had elapsed he opened his eyes and became fully awake immediately. An ordinary person would have remained inert for half an hour, and would have been half-dazed on recovering consciousness.

Kingston's constitution, however, was of iron, and his strength did not allow the drug to take proper effect. The first sensation he felt on awaking was one of anger, anger for allowing himself to be so easily captured. Then he looked about him curiously.

A pungent smell of incense was in the air, rather pleasant to the nostrils. Kingston's eyes, however, were met by a remarkable sight; a sight he had never expected to see in the East End of London. He was apparently not in England at all, but in India.

Soft rugs and tiger-skins lay on the floor, the walls were decorated with beautiful Indian tapestries, and the light was proceeding from some peculiar-shaped lamp. A brazier stood in the centre of the room, and the fumes of numerous spices rose in a straight line of bluey smoke. The whole apartment, in fact, was Indian, and Kingston sat up, quite interested.

At the far side of the room, seated on a massive pile of many-coloured cushions, was a Hindu. He was a young man comparatively, clean-shaven, and was attired in rich native clothing, with a silk turban on his head. Who he was Kingston could not even guess, but evidently he belonged to some high caste.

He was looking in Kingston's direction, and rose from his chair as the former sat upright. He clapped his hands, and called out a few strange words, the summons being answered immediately by two Indians in native costume. They salaamed elaborately, and then grasped Kingston roughly by the shoulders. He, who was a little curious as to what all this meant, did not resist, but rose to his feet. The effects of the drug were entirely gone—even now he was not quite certain as to how it had been administered.

His disguise had become half rubbed away, so he stood upright and looked at his captor with an expression of amusement in his eyes. Had he liked he could have sent the two Hindus flying and calmly walked out of the room. But he was curious to know what it all meant.

"You seem to hold the upper hand, my friend," he re-

marked calmly, gazing at the richly-clothed individual with perfect self-possession.

"Silence, dog!" rapped out the Indian.

Kingston raised his eyebrows.

"Really!" he murmured. "Have I the pleasure of speaking to a king, that you should snap at me as though I were in truth a dog? Allow me to tell you, sir, that—"

"And allow me to tell you," cried the other angrily, "that I speak to you as I choose! My name is Prince Malabari, of the Royal House of Srinpurdu!"

"By Jove!" ejaculated Kingston, in no way disconcerted. "You are, I take it, the brother of the beautiful Princess Kamala, who is honouring the Hotel Cyril by staying there for a few weeks?"

"Yes, I am her brother," said the prince angrily; "and you, scoundrel that you are, no doubt know for what reason you are now in my presence?"

Kingston gently flipped a piece of mud from his ragged coat.

"I have really not the remotest idea," he replied calmly; "and as to my being designated a scoundrel—well, I can only say that you are evidently labouring under a false impression, my dear prince!"

"It is no false impression, you dog; you can't deceive me, if you can my sister! You are the man who has stolen her priceless talisman, and you shall be made to give it up! You and your fair confederate, Miss O'Brien, thought everything was in your favour. I have to be reckoned with, however!"

"May I inquire," asked Kingston suavely, "where you learnt all this most valuable information?"

"I know everything, for what my sister has not told me I have guessed. On the morning after the robbery she cabled to me in Paris, and I at once hurried over. Although you have taken her in by your smooth tongue, I am not so easily gulled. It was the woman O'Brien who stole the talisman, and it was you who made the demand for ten thousand pounds, probably urging my sister to pay the money!"

"You have evidently not seen the princess since you arrived in England."

"No. She does not know I am here, but I very soon got on your track!" replied Malabari, scowling at Kingston darkly. "My men followed you to-day to a house in Great Portland Street, from which you emerged in your present disguise—"

"May I interrupt to compliment your men on their success? I fondly imagined I was secure from observation and detection."

"An Indian can see far more than a Britisher. Your walk, your height, many things gave the clue as to who you were. But enough of this idle conversation. I have had you brought here to force you to give up the scarab. What you have been doing all the morning I do not know, but if you value your life you will answer my questions without delay."

Kingston laughed softly. He really could not help himself. The prince was not to be blamed for the course he was taking, for, without knowing all the facts, it was quite possible to think Kingston and Dolores were working the game themselves. Five minutes' talk with the princess, however, would have given Malabari an altogether different opinion. But he hadn't had that talk, and consequently was sure in his own mind Kingston was the culprit. The course was, then, to dissimulation him.

"If you will allow me to briefly explain the facts, prince," said Kingston calmly, "I am sure you will see exactly how the matter stands. It is quite evident the princess did not cable you fully. The true facts are that I am now regaining the scarab for your sister. I am on her side, and when the demand came for ten thousand pounds, I strongly advised her not to send the money—begged of her almost. I quite realise how you have got this wrong impression—"

"Silence! Every word you utter is a lie!" cried the prince. "You cannot bluff me, you villain! Another word in that strain and I will flog you! Where is the scarab? I have you safely here now, and I intend to wrest the scarab from you."

"You utterly decline to listen to an explanation, or see your sister before you deal with me?" asked Kingston, a little annoyed at the prince's overbearing attitude.

"I decline to let you utter another lie!"

Kingston shrugged his shoulders. The only thing for him to do was to escape as soon as possible. He certainly would not give the talisman up, for if the prince took it by force the princess might possibly believe Kingston had been deceiving her all the time. No, Kingston would have to place it in her hands himself, willingly and of his own accord.

"I am afraid, my dear prince, you are a little too pig-headed," he said quietly; "and if you utterly refuse to give me a hearing, I am therefore reluctantly compelled to utterly refuse to speak further on the matter."

"You are insolent!"

"Insolent! I am merely stating a fact."

"You are lying! You are the man who is demanding this

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money, and who has possession of the scarab. Will you give it up willingly, or shall I have to resort to force?"

Kingston leaned comfortably against his two captors. "I believe I mentioned a moment ago that I would not speak further on the matter," he remarked. "Of course, if you would like me to repeat my words—"

Malabari rose from his cushions again, and stamped his foot to the floor. He was losing his temper, and Kingston meant to let him lose it. As he believed his prisoner to be the culprit, and not a benefactor, and would listen to no explanation, there was nothing to say. Kingston had a strong dislike to wasting words over any matter. He took a pleasure in exasperating this proud Hindu, however.

"I am a dangerous man to trifle with," cried Malabari angrily. "One word from me, and you would be stabbed to the heart."

"I really must compliment you on your splendid English," murmured Kingston. "You certainly have acquired a great command of the language."

The prince raised his hand as if to strike Kingston in the face, then dropped it to his side again, glaring angrily.

"I have put up with enough of your impertinence, you hound," he said, in a threatening voice, "and I now intend to force from you the hiding-place of the scarab. You were searched the instant you came into this room, and it is not on your person."

"Dear me! How very unfortunate!"

"Nevertheless, you know where the talisman is. I am going to have you flogged until you deliver up your secret."

Kingston smiled at the threat. He considered matters had gone far enough, and decided to leave immediately. Doubtless the prince thought to hold the upper hand, but then he did not know the man he had to deal with.

"You are going to flog me?"

"To within an inch of your life, unless you tell me where the talisman is. It is in your own power to refuse or acquiesce. To think of escape is useless; there are three of us against you, and a whistle would bring several others to our assistance—"

Before he could utter another word Kingston had acted. In a flash he had grasped the two Hindu servants by their necks, and cracked their heads together with considerable violence. Both fell to the floor senseless for at least a minute or two.

Then, before Malabari could open his mouth, Kingston caught him up and flung him headlong into the pile of cushions. He did not wish to harm the prince, but it was necessary to use a certain amount of violence.

The whole incident had not occupied two seconds, and while Malabari was floundering among the cushions, Kingston darted across the room, tried the door, and found it to be locked. He stepped back a pace, there was a splintering crash, and the door burst open, Kingston's shoulder serving as a first-rate battering-ram.

And as he hesitated a moment to find his bearings, that same piercing whistle rang out. Kingston knew there was not a moment to waste. His whole escape had been a matter of strength and brisk action. The very rapidity with which he had gained an exit was startling.

Outside the door he found himself on a little landing, with a short flight of stairs in front of him, leading downwards, presumably, to the ground floor. Having been unconscious when brought into the building, Kingston was at a disadvantage.

The whistle had had its effect, for from below had come the sound of running feet, and two more Indians commenced leaping up the narrow stairs, one behind the other. The escaped prisoner did not hesitate for a second, but resolved on a desperate expedient. There were foes in front and foes behind—foes, that is, of the moment. Afterwards, when everything was explained, the prince would probably be sorry for his drastic treatment of his sister's benefactor.

Just now, however, his sole object was escape, whether he hurt anyone or not. It was either they or he who had to suffer; and as they were in the wrong, he could not answer for what occurred.

Gathering himself together, he literally jumped clean on top of the oncoming Hindus, who were then half-way up the stairs. His feet landed with a crash on the chest of the foremost, and the next second the three of them rolled with many thuds to the narrow passage below.

Kingston, being topmost, was unhurt. He knew how to fall, and his weight dropping on his assailants knocked half the life out of them. Quite casually he picked himself up, ran to the end of the passage, which was furnished in the same Indian style as the room above, and found himself at the street door.

The commotion in his rear was considerable, but he quietly slipped the catch back, opened the door, and stepped out into the street, chuckling more than a little over the whole somewhat surprising occurrence. He was safe now, however, for Prince Malabari would hardly send his servants out into the

street to recapture the prisoner. The assault, at the beginning of it all, had been risky enough in itself.

In five minutes Kingston was walking along Mile End Road, his coat-collar up, and hat-brim down over his face. This was necessary, for the old man's disguise he had worn was half demolished.

At Leadenhall Street he jumped into a motor-bus, and was soon travelling westwards. At Oxford Circus he alighted, and in a very few minutes was admitted to Carson Gray's rooms in Great Portland Street. The detective happened to be in, and he looked at Kingston in surprise as the latter walked into his consulting-room.

"What's wrong, Kingston?" he inquired. "The disguise you donned this morning seems to have been somewhat in the wars. But tell me, have you been successful?"

"Quite!" answered Kingston, dropping into a chair. He had told Carson Gray on his previous visit what his present object was, and the detective was greatly interested in the case. Kingston now told him of his visit to Lowenwirth's attic, and the subsequent adventure in Prince Malabari's very strange house.

"By Jove, Kingston, you seem to have had an exciting time! It was a bit risky dashing from the house as you did," cried the detective, standing with his back to the fire filling his pipe. "These Indian fellows are not very particular, you know; and although he may be a prince, he's a Hindu just the same as the others."

"My dear Gray, you surely don't imagine I was going to allow them to flog me?" laughed Kingston. "I realised that no further object was to be gained in stopping, so simply left the house in the quickest possible manner."

Carson Gray laughed.

"You are a wonder, Kingston!" he exclaimed. "I do believe your awful strength—for to an enemy it certainly is awful—would get you out of almost any hole. What can be done against you? If you were roped up, I verily believe you would burst your bonds like so much cotton. For investigation work you have every quality that is necessary. I myself can claim to be only a very poor detective in comparison to you, for you can take risks which would be suicidal to me."

Kingston removed his wig and placed it on the table.

"I admit," he drawled, "that for sheer brute strength I can equal any man; but there, I imagine, my superiority ends."

But there it did not end. Frank Kingston's eight years on the Iron Island had made him different to all other men—different in every way. His strength, his nerve, his brain, his endurance, and his eyesight and hearing were all more acute, stronger, and superior to any other man's. Thus he had many advantages over ordinary people.

"You say that you were searched as soon as you entered Prince Malabari's room?" asked Carson Gray. "If that is the case, and you had the scarab on you when you were caught, how is it the Hindus did not find it?"

"I can only come to the conclusion that they did not do their work as thoroughly as they might have done," replied Kingston calmly. "The scarab was certainly on my person the whole time I was with his genial Highness, although I don't mind saying it was concealed in a somewhat unusual manner."

"You make me curious," exclaimed the detective. "The scarab must indeed be well hidden to escape the attention of a Hindu."

For answer Kingston leisurely rose and removed his coat. Carson Gray looking on with interest. Kingston unfastened his right shirt-sleeve and rolled it up to his shoulder, a slight smile hovering over his lips. Just above the elbow, on the inside of his arm, were two pieces of white court-plaster in the form of a cross. Obviously Kingston had received a cut or scratch.

"You see that?" he queried, glancing at Gray.

"Yes."

"Well, under that innocent court-plaster, my dear Gray, is the Princess Kamala's precious talisman. If you will give me your attention for a moment, I will show you exactly how it is done."

Frank Kingston Returns the Scarab.

Carson Gray looked at Frank Kingston curiously. The latter's words were certainly surprising. How it was possible for the scarab to be under the court-plaster on Kingston's arm was a puzzle.

"By Jove," cried the detective, "it is scarcely surprising that the prince's servants failed to discover the talisman. No man on earth would suspect its presence beneath that plaster."

"I will not go so far as to say that, Gray," smiled Kingston, "but it was a fortunate thing I took the precaution to hide it. It would have been both humiliating and annoying to have had the scarab taken from my pocket while unconscious."

He gave the court-plaster a tug, and one of the cross pieces came away from his skin. It was just an ordinary strip of prepared silk. The other piece, however, proved to be out of the ordinary. Beneath it was a thin steel plate, the exact shape of the plaster, except that it was slightly smaller. This plate, although invisible, kept the scarab absolutely imbedded in the fleshy part of Kingston's arm. For although the little piece of carved stone was half an inch long, it was practically flat.

Kingston laid it on the table with a smile.

"It only remains now," he said, "to run over to the Cyril and place it in the princess's hands."

Carson Gray struck a match vigorously.

"You were certainly cut out to be a detective," he cried, applying the light to the bowl of his pipe. "Personally, I should never have thought of a dodge like that."

"You may find it come in handy yourself. Although I had no suspicion of being captured, I thought it best to be prepared. Precaution is a great thing."

"It is, Kingston, a very great thing, and nobody, I think, could be more careful than you are. You leave nothing to chance; you plan out everything beforehand, attending to even the slightest detail."

"It is the only proper way to work," replied Kingston. "But time is slipping away. If I may, I will retire to your dressing-room and become a respectable citizen once again. I want to deliver this valuable charm into the princess's hands without delay. It is a good thing British people are not so superstitious as these Hindus."

He passed out of the room, leaving Gray examining the talisman and wondering at the off-hand and cool manner in which Kingston performed his work. In a short time the latter was himself again.

"I'm sorry, Gray, at having to rush off so quickly, but I really must!" he exclaimed, dropping the talisman into his trousers-pocket. "I want to get rid of this wretched thing with all expedition. Once Kamala has possession, my responsibility is over. The real work, however, has got to be performed. What I have done this morning has merely opened up the way to Lowenwirth's ruin. Before another twenty-four hours have passed I hope to see Jacob safely under lock and key, on the road to ten years' penal servitude."

"But how will you bring his arrest about? How will you obtain proofs?"

"My plans are all cut and dried," replied Kingston calmly, "and Mr. Lowenwirth has no hope whatever. You will see by to-morrow night how nicely he has been trapped. Until then I will say au revoir."

They shook hands heartily. In Oxford Street Kingston stepped aboard a taxi, and very soon was hastening to the Strand. He lounged into the hotel and went straight to the Princess Kamala's apartments. He was admitted immediately, and ushered into the same room as he had previously entered.

"Ah, Mr. Kingston, I am so glad you have come!" cried the Indian girl, eagerly taking the visitor's hand. "I have just convinced my brother how wrong he has been in suspecting you of being the thief!"

Kingston glanced across the room to where Prince Malabari sat, looking rather suspicious even now. It was a surprise to see him here, but Kingston nodded to him calmly.

"I hope I did not hurt you, prince," he drawled as he sat down; "but, really, I had to get out somehow. Your men, too, felt the force of my feet, I imagine."

"Your exit was so dramatically sudden that nothing could be done to stop you," said Malabari in a decidedly unwelcome voice. "You say you are not the man who stole the scarab, but are looking for it? The story wants some believing, especially as you are as far from recovering it as ever."

Kingston felt in his pocket.

"On the contrary," he exclaimed. "I have paid this visit for the express purpose of returning the talisman to its rightful owner."

Kamala darted to his side.

"You have got it!" she cried excitedly. "You have found it, Mr. Kingston? Ah, yes, that is it!"

In her agitation she grabbed the talisman from Kingston's hand, and rushed over to the window. Her eyes were shining with uncontrollable excitement. The joy and relief she felt could scarcely find its expression in words.

"Oh, what can I say?" she cried, tears actually standing in her eyes, showing how much she prized her scarab. "What can I do to thank you, Mr. Kingston? I am at a loss for words. My mind is in such a whirl that I—oh, I can never repay you for your great kindness!"

She fell to her knees by his side impulsively, and grasping his hand, kissed it repeatedly. Kingston felt slightly embarrassed. She was so excited that she hardly knew what she was doing.

"My dear princess," said Kingston gently, assisting her to

rise, "I have really done nothing extraordinary. The very fact of having been of service to you is ample reward for my trouble. Please say no more about it."

"But I must," cried Kamala. "I can think of nothing else. Now, Malabari," she added, turning reproachfully on her brother, "you will admit Mr. Kingston's sincerity? You acted altogether too hastily."

"Perhaps I did," said the prince, examining the scarab; "but he could have had it all the time, and now, realising I was after him, give it up rather than run the risk—"

Kamala's eyes flashed angrily.

"You are mean," she exclaimed stingingly. "You do not admit your mistake even when the proof is before you. I am more than surprised at you, and ashamed that you should be my brother."

She stamped her foot to the floor. Kingston rose and crossed to where his companions stood.

"Please—please," he said gently, "do not upset yourselves over such a trivial matter. A few words will explain everything. His Highness, having had no conversation with you, knew only the bare facts. I dare say, princess, that you forgot to tell him that Miss O'Brien never once had the talisman in her hands at the dinner-table. Therefore, it could not have been her who made the exchange."

Kamala clapped her hands.

"Of course," she cried, "that is right! Now, my brother, what do you say? Doesn't everything prove that this gentleman is honourable? Did he not beg of me not to pay the ten thousand pounds? Surely he would not have done that had he sent the demand himself?"

At last Malabari was convinced. He saw now that he had been altogether too hasty; that he should not have suspected and kidnapped Kingston until he had had a discussion with his sister. Stepping forward he salaamed humbly.

"I understand what a lamentable mistake I have made, Mr. Kingston," he murmured, "and can only apologise for my precipitous and certainly unwarrantable action in causing you such inconvenience in my house at Whitechapel."

Kingston nearly smiled at the prince's flow of perfect English.

"Pray don't apologise," he said. "I am rather inclined to think that an apology is due from me. The manner in which I threw you among your cushions was hardly gentle, and your door will, I think, require considerable repairs—not to mention the heads of your servants."

Malabari laughed loudly. He was quite friendly now, and truly sorry for his action. The recovery of the talisman was almost as great a relief to him as it had been to the princess.

"My servants must look after themselves," he cried. "But you must allow me to compliment you on your strength and rapidity of movement. I swear that you were in the street three seconds after you had thrown me headlong into the cushions."

"It was the only way to escape," replied Kingston, "and, you see, I had promised the princess to place the scarab into her own hand. That was the reason I would not give it up."

"But where was it? My men could not find it."

Kingston smiled as he again seated himself.

"I will tell you," he said, and explained the court-plaster idea. Both his listeners were astonished at the ease with which he had baffled the Hindu servants.

"But, if you will pardon the question," said Kingston, "I would rather like to know why you, prince, have your peculiarly-furnished house in such a very questionable district as Whitechapel?"

Malabari glanced at his sister meaningfully, and she nodded, uttering a few quick words in Hindustani.

"I will tell you," said the former in answer to Kingston's question. "As you will have guessed, I have been in England before—have paid London many visits, in fact. I always keep that little house furnished in the way you saw it, mostly because I like to leave my hotel for a few hours each day and live, as much as possible, in my native atmosphere."

"Quite so," nodded Kingston. "I understand."

The prince was looking very serious, and he bent forward now as if the words he was about to utter were important.

"I am going to let you into a secret, Mr. Kingston, which no other Englishman is privileged to share," he said, in a low voice, Kamala, meanwhile, looking on with evident satisfaction. "It is the only way you can be partially repaid for the services you have rendered us. I am going to make you a member of the greatest secret society on earth."

Kingston opened his eyes at this. Up to the present he had thought the Brotherhood of Iron to be the greatest. He waited interestedly for Malabari to continue.

"In saying the society is the largest in the world," said the prince, "I mean that it has thousands upon thousands of members, one of whom is equal to another. There is no head member, or, in fact, any special object to which the society is devoted. Its members are for the most part Oriental."

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RETURN."

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"But I fail to see why such a society should exist," interrupted Kingston, "since it has no object."

"It has, I suppose, a purpose, namely, should you find yourself in a very tight corner in the East End—say you were surrounded by thieves—you have merely to sound the whistle of the society and rescue is almost certain. It is the same anywhere; in Paris, in Berlin, in New York. The members are everywhere, and will immediately answer the whistle for assistance. Or, if you were troubled with an enemy, or blackmailer, there are plenty of men to take charge of the case."

Kingston quite well knew what Malabari meant by those words. And then and there, the former was created a member of that very peculiar secret society. He consented to the ceremony more than anything in order to please the prince, because, after all, he would hardly require Oriental assistance in his work. Notwithstanding this, however, the experience was a novel one, and certainly entertaining.

"You will find," exclaimed Malabari, "that the society will be an immense help, and aid with any little matter which you would not like doing yourself. Do not forget the whistle and the sign, however. No man is recognised as a member unless he can show the sign."

"I shall not forget it," said Kingston solemnly, although he felt rather inclined to laugh. The organisation seemed trivial and unimportant when compared to the all-powerful Brotherhood. Still, there was a possibility the knowledge might come in useful at some future date.

At last he took his departure, the princess repeatedly expressing her gratitude. No doubt the recovery of the talisman meant that her life had been saved.

Kingston went straight to Dolores. She shook his hand warmly and tried to read from his face what news he had to tell. But he looked the same inane fop as ever, with that perpetual smile of laziness on his features.

"How have you got on, Mr. Kingston?" she asked eagerly. "I have not seen the princess for an hour or two, but when I left her she was utterly miserable."

Kingston dropped into a chair.

"Before I speak about that matter," he said languidly, "I want to thank you for the shilling you so kindly presented me with this morning. I assure you I shall prize it highly."

"Shilling?" Dolores repeated. "I'm afraid I do not understand. This is the first time to-day I have seen you."

"No, Dolores, you are mistaken. As you were walking down Ludgate Hill you stopped for a moment and placed a shilling in my hand, refusing to take bootlaces in return for your money."

Dolores looked at her companion for a moment in surprise, then realised what he meant.

"It was you?" she cried. "Oh, and I was so completely taken in! I had not the remotest suspicion. I thought you looked so forlorn and starving, however, that I felt compelled to give you something. But what a splendid disguise it was! Your voice, too, was quite different."

She broke into a hearty laugh over the incident.

"You haven't told me why you were there?" she exclaimed after a moment. "And what point have you reached in your search for the talisman?"

"The talisman, at the present moment, is in the princess's hands," drawled Kingston, "or, maybe, it is hanging from the chain round her neck."

Dolores started forward. "You have recovered it, then?" she cried. "Tell me how you found it, Mr. Kingston, for I'm really interested in the affair."

"I came here for the express purpose of telling you my adventures. The case was very simple, after all, and had it not been for the prince, would have been uneventful."

"The prince?" repeated Dolores.

"Yes," said Kingston, and related the whole adventure to Dolores. The tale of the conversation with Malabari in the Whitechapel house interested her particularly.

"I am glad you have completed the case so quickly," she

said at last. "The princess has been almost off her head with worry."

"But it is not finished, Dolores; what I have done is merely preliminary work. Mr. Jacob Lowenwirth has to be attended to yet. By to-morrow evening he will have left the outside world for many years to come."

Kingston's words were quite correct, in a sense, but he did not know that the Jew would leave the world for ever that very night; that his doom was even then being planned.

Planning Vengeance.

While Kingston and Dolores had been talking in the latter's apartments another conversation was taking place further along the corridor—a conversation on which the life of a human being depended.

Almost as soon as Kingston had left the rooms of Princess Kamala, Malabari seated himself in an easy-chair, and lit a black-looking cheroot. His face wore a stern expression, and his eyes glittered dangerously.

"Mr. Kingston has acted like a gentleman," he said. "In future I shall have to be more careful. My error was a foolish one, and I fully admit it. You have your talisman back, though, and that is the main thing."

"I shall remember Mr. Kingston as the kindest and the cleverest Englishman—or, as he would prefer, Britisher—I ever knew," said Kamala. She fully meant what she had said to Kingston; they had been no idle words. "But you are looking cross, Malabari. What is the reason?"

"What is the reason?" he reiterated. "This—although Kingston has proved a gentleman, the fact remains that he has taken the talisman without even punishing the man who has violated all the laws of our family. He did not even mention who the thief was."

"Whoever he is, he deserves to die like a dog!" exclaimed Kamala, her expression changing in a flash. "Were he here I would kill him myself! The agony of mind he has caused me is tremendous, and I hate him for having dared lay hands on it!"

"The man has got to be punished according to our own laws; he shall die," declared the prince. "Other men before him have been put to death for laying sacrilegious fingers on the talisman, and he shall not escape his just deserts."

Kamala looked at her brother quickly. He spoke with relentless determination, and she herself, being a Hindu, quite agreed with what he said.

"But who is the thief?" she asked. "Mr. Kingston did not tell us."

"No, but I have found out for myself. My servants told me which building Kingston had watched in Ludgate Hill, and described the man he followed. I looked the address up in the directory, and drove past it myself in a taxi-cab. There is no doubt at all that our man is a Jew, known as Jacob Lowenwirth."

"When do you mean to punish him?" asked the princess eagerly. "I shall feel uncomfortable as long as he is alive."

"I mean to go this very hour and make arrangements. The scoundrel will pay the penalty this very night, and pay it in a manner which will make him scream for mercy."

And Malabari told his sister exactly how he meant to compass Lowenwirth's death. They discussed the question as if they had been deciding the fate of an animal; as if they were far from planning to commit the greatest of all crimes—murder.

For, in spite of their perfect English, their highly civilised manner, both of them were, at heart, superstitious heathens. They saw no wrong in killing Lowenwirth; he had violated their laws, so must, as a consequence, die.

Malabari left shortly afterwards, and set about making preparations in a perfectly businesslike way. First of all, he found out Lowenwirth's suburban address, then travelled to the house off Mile End Road. Here he had a long talk with two of his servants, giving them certain instructions.

(To be continued.)

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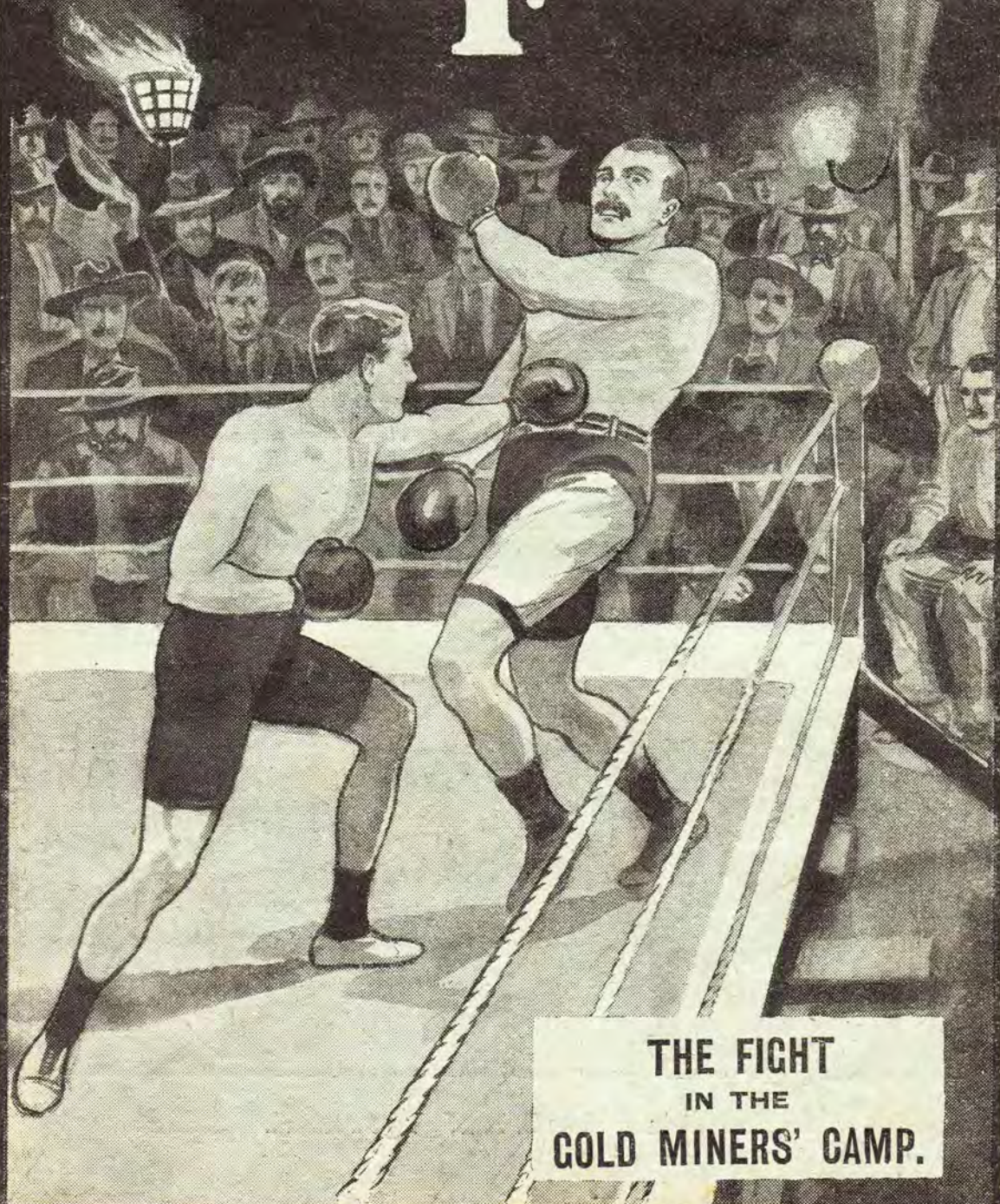
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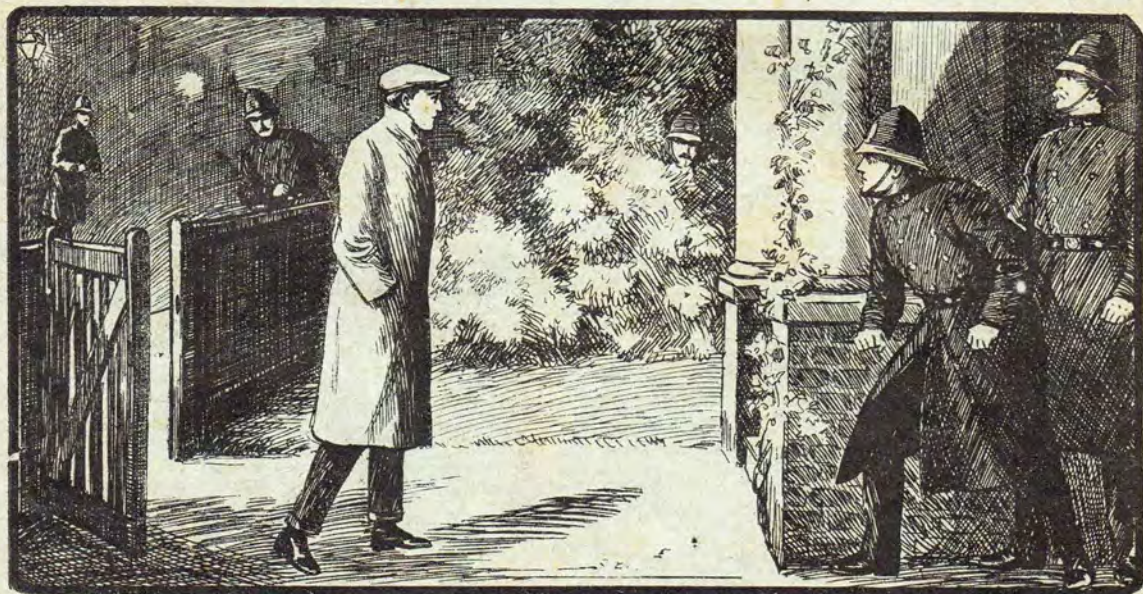
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