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The **GEM** **1**^D

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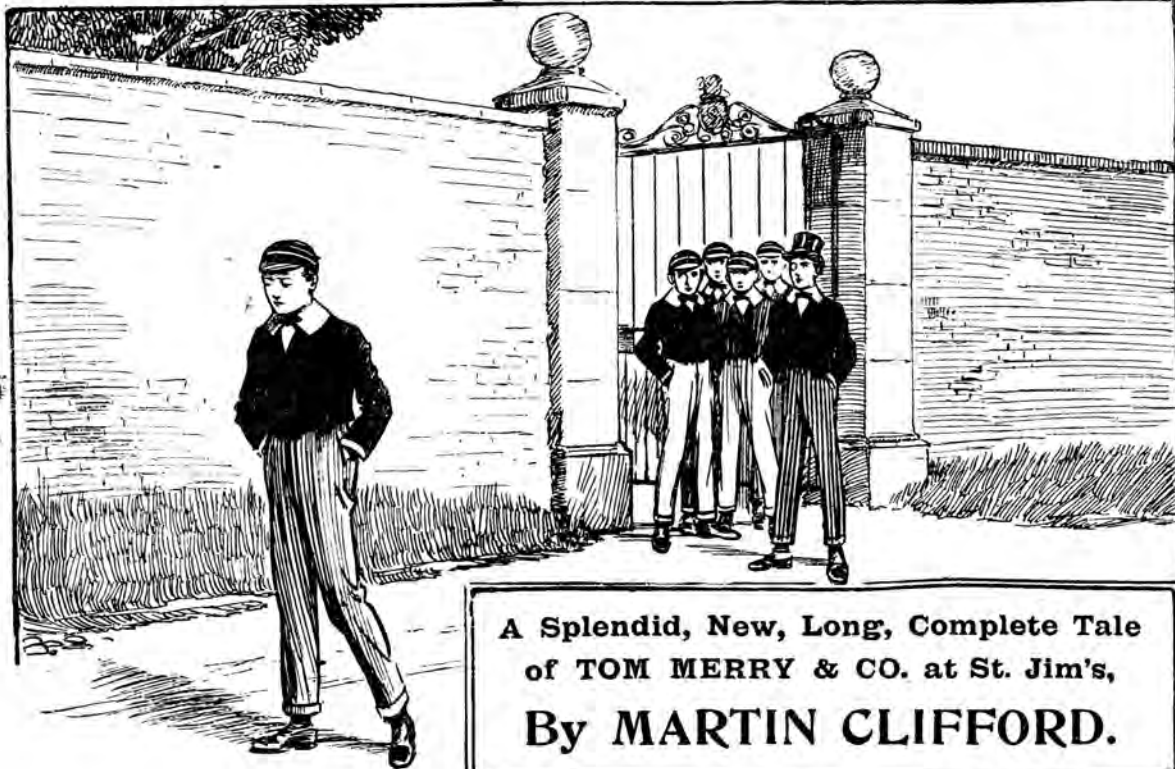
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UNDER FALSE COLOURS.



A Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale
of TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's,
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. One of the Family.

"**B**LOOD—
"Eh?"
"Blood—"

"Where?" exclaimed Jack Blake, in alarm, real or pretended, staring round Study No. 6 with an anxious eye.

"Where, and whose?"
"Weally, Blake—"

"Has somebody been committing giddy murders, or is it merely the crimson stream from the harmless and necessary punch on the nose?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and gave his facetious chum a withering look, which did not, however, have the effect of withering Jack Blake. He never even turned a hair.

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake! I was going to say that blood is thickah than watah—"

"Oh, I see," said Blake, with an air of great relief—"I see!" He dipped his pen in the ink, and turned to his work again. "That's all right, then. I believe I've heard the same thing said before, or else read it in a book—but you always were a giddy plagiarist. Dry up, now, or I shall never get this impot. finished."

"Blood—"

"My hat! He's beginning again!" exclaimed Digby, looking up from the lemon-squash he was slowly absorbing through the medium of a straw. "Can't you get to a more tasty subject, Gussy? Have you been reading 'Dead-Shot Dave and Gory Jim the Road-Raider,' and got it on the brain?"

"Weally, Dig—"

Next Thursday

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA," AND "THE ALLIANCE OF THREE."

No. 180 (New Series.)

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"Yes, do dry up!" said Blake. "I've got to get this impot. done by tea-time—"

"I was goin' to say—"

"Well, don't!"

"You uttah ass! I weally think that when a chap is in a difficult posish—a weally doocid, awkward posish—he ought to be able to wely on his fwiends to back him up!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's indignantly.

Blake laid down his pen.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Nothin'."

"Is anything wrong?"

"Not exactly."

"Then what are you mumbling about?"

"I wufuse to have my wemarks chawactewised as numblin'. I was wemarkin' that blood is thickah than watah, and therefore it is a chap's duty to stand by his weliations."

The chums of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy had been sitting silent a long time, while Blake was writing out his imposition, and Digby was absorbing lemon-squash, and Herries was mending a dog's collar. The swell of the Fourth had suddenly broken out with these incomprehensible statements, and the chums of the Fourth could not help wondering what was the matter.

"Well, I suppose a chap ought to stand by his weliations, if he's got to stand," said Blake, in a very thoughtful way: "but in this hot and tiring weather I should recommend sitting down as much as possible."

"Ass!"

"Well, that's my advice; take it or leave it," said Blake. "If you want to stand by your weliations, you can stand. Is it a case of standing-room only?"

"I wufuse to weply to such fwivolous wemarks. I was sayin' that blood is thickah than watah, and it is a chap's duty to stand by his weliations, whatevah they are like, so I shall have to stand by young Devigne."

"Eh?"

"He is a distant weliation of mine—a sort of second cousin, you see—so I am bound to stand by him, whatevah he is like, don't you see? Blood is thickah than watah."

"My dear chap, I don't see any objection to your standing by him," said Blake soothingly. "You can stand by him till you get an ache in each leg if you like. But who is he, where is he, what is he, and why is he?"

"He is a distant cousin—I mean a distant weliation—and he is comin' to St. Jim's," said Arthur Augustus. "I have had a lettah from my governah. I had wathah expected to find a fivah in it, but instead of a fivah I had this wotten information. My weliative is comin' to St. Jim's, and he is goin' into the Shell."

"Then Tom Merry & Co. will have more of his society than we will," said Blake. "What is he like? Anything like you?"

"Oh, tell me, pretty Gussy, are there any more at home like you?" trilled Digby softly.

"Weally, Dig—"

"But it's impossible," said Blake. "There is only one Gus—the great and only."

"Weally, Blake—"

"What's the chap like?"

"I don't know."

"I suppose you know him, ass?"

"I decline to be called an ass, and I don't know him, eithah. I have nevah seen him. I have heard a lot about him," said D'Arcy dolefully. "He has a wotten wputation. He is only fifteen years old, and he has been allowed to wun quite wild. I have heard that he dwinks and smokes, and chums up with the stablemen, and does all sorts of weekless things that I disapprove of entirely. I have even heard that he is vewy careless of appeawances, and neglects his dwess."

"Awful!"

"Yaas, wathah! It's vewy howwid! I don't know how I shall stand him, especially if he bwings his howwid habits to St. Jim's, as I feah he will. But the governah seems to think that I ought to stand by him."

"Oh, these governors!" said Blake sympathetically.

"As a mattah of fact, the chap is a howwid boundah, though, of course, he may have been painted blackah than he is," said D'Arcy. "Lord Westmoor is a vewy busay politician, you know, and his son has been left to his mattah, who has spoiled him howwidly. The young boundah is weally a disgwace, you know, and I undahstand that he is bein' sent to St. Jim's against his will, because he is quite out of his mattah's cntwolv."

"Nice boy!"

"Awful young cad, I hear," said D'Arcy. "But blood is thickah than watah, and I suppose I shall have to wecognise him."

Blake chuckled.

"If he's going to be in the Shell, a higher Form than yours, he mayn't care to recognise you," he remarked.

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"A SCHOOLBOY'S CROSS-ROADS," in this week's "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1st issue of the

"Oh, wats! Of course, he will want to know me, and as he is a distant weliative, I shall have to know him. But it's howwid!"

"Quite so. Still, we may be able to lick him into shape for you," Blake suggested. "As your best chum, I'd do anything I could, and I'd wallop him, with or without gloves, any time you liked."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Same here!" said Digby heartily. "You can rely upon me to punch him as much as may be necessary, Gussy."

"Weally, Dig—"

"I'd lend a hand with pleasure," said Herries. "Only say the word, Gussy, and we'd bump him the minute he arrives. We'd do more than that to oblige a chum."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

Five o'clock rang out from the clock-tower. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy started hastily to his feet.

"Bai Jove! The twain comes in at half-past five."

"The young bounder's train?"

"Yaas, wathah! My governah suggested that I might meet it, and say somethin' nice to Lord Devigne."

"Oh, he's a giddy lord, is he?" asked Digby.

"Yaas. He is the only son of Lord Westmoor, and he takes the second title of the family," said D'Arcy. "The family is not weally so good as ours, as it dates back only seven hundred yeahs, but it is connected with ours by mawwiage, and so it is weally a vewy good family. I was thinkin' that you chaps might like to come with me—"

"What about my impot?"

"What about my lemon-squash?"

"What about my dog's collar?"

"Weally, you know—"

Blake rose to his feet and tossed the pen into the inkstand, with the result that a fine variety of blots were scattered over his imposition.

"Oh, blow!" said Blake. "Look at that! All your fault!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Still, we'll come. We'll have a look at the new kid, and see if we can stand him, anyway, you chaps," said Blake.

"As Gussy remarked, blood is thicker than 'bacca-juice—"

"You uttah ass! I said that blood is thickah than watah—"

"Same thing! Come on!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 took their caps and left the study. Three youths were coming down the passage—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell.

The Fourth-Formers cheerfully bumped into them, and sent them rolling over, and ran down the passage.

Tom Merry jumped up wrathfully.

"You asses—"

"After them!" gasped Monty Lowther. "I—I—I—"

But the chums of the Fourth were gone. They ran all the way to the school gates, and then proceeded at a more leisurely pace towards the railway-station to meet the train which was to bring Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's relative to Rylcombe and St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 2.

His Lordship.

AN undersized boy, with a hard, discontented face, sat in a corner of a first-class carriage in a train that was rolling through the rich scenery of Sussex. There was a bag on the rack over his head, and a travelling rug sprawled over the seat beside him. The boy was dressed in evidently expensive clothes. He wore a gold watch and chain, and he had diamond studs and gold sleeve-links with rubies set in them. A silk hat was pushed back from his head, and under the rim of it his brow was puckered and angry.

He looked out of the window at each station as he passed, and scowled at the porters, at the passengers, and at everybody else.

Lord Devigne was not in a good temper.

He was fifteen, and at that age he had most of what most people wanted to have. He was rich, he had a splendid home, he had a fond, indulgent mother, and a father who denied him nothing. And the result was that he was a peevish, irritable, discontented, and ungrateful young rascal.

A newspaper lay upon his knees, opened at the sporting news column. That was the only news that Pitt—that was his Christian name—cared to read. And the young viscount, boy as he was, could have told a great deal about the well-known stables, about the form of horses and jockeys. But that was a pursuit which was closed to him in the future. At St. Jim's, where he was being sent for his sins, so to speak, nothing of that sort would be allowed. He was not to be in the hands of an indulgent and foolish mother any longer, but under the sway of a stern schoolmaster who would stand no nonsense.

And the boy's heart was filled with discontent and resentment and venom at the prospect.

"Hang them," he muttered, a dozen times or more—"hang them!"

He was not referring to anybody in particular, but probably to the world in general. He felt at that moment as if he hated everybody.

The carriage-door opened at a station. The train, which was an express, had stopped only for a minute. Lord Devigne, glancing out along the platform with a dull, savage eye, saw a lad of about his own age, in rough sailor clothes, come racing along the station from the entrance.

The stranger had a little bundle tied up in a large, red-striped handkerchief, fastened upon a stick, over his shoulder. He was evidently anxious to catch the train; he came tearing along the platform at full speed as the guard slammed the doors.

"Stand back there!"

The sailor lad rushed on.

It was pretty certain that he travelled third, but the third-class carriages were far along the train, and he had no time to reach them.

He caught at the handle of a carriage and tore the door open, and threw his bundle in, and scrambled in after it.

A red-faced, angry guard slammed the door angrily behind him as the train was on the move.

The train glided out of the station.

Lord Devigne gazed sullenly at the boy who had invaded his carriage, which he had had to himself up to then.

He did not particularly want to be alone, but he was annoyed at the abrupt entrance of the stranger—he was in a mood to be annoyed about anything.

The stranger picked himself up, and then his bundle, and sat the latter on the rack. He grinned at the viscount.

"Narrow shave that, sir," he said.

Devigne made no reply.

"Nearly missed it," said the stranger. "My word! I should 'a' copped it if I 'adn't turned up at Southampton this evening!"

He sat down opposite Lord Devigne. The viscount looked over him curiously. The boy was evidently very poor, and he bore his poverty with a cheerful and jaunty air, as if he did not find any trouble in it. He was short, but of sturdy build—about the same height, but a great deal sturdier than the viscount. His face was round and smiling, his eyes blue and cheerful, and his bullet head was surmounted by a shock of hair.

He grinned at the viscount pleasantly.

"'Ope I ain't intruding 'ere?" he remarked. "I 'ad to tumble into the fust carriage, you see—I was in a 'urry."

Devigne gave him a cold look.

"As a matter of fact, you are intruding," he said. "This is a first-class carriage, and I suppose you haven't a first-class ticket."

The lad chuckled.

"If I 'ad, it would be for the fust in my natural," he said. "I've got a third class, but I can change at the next station, I s'pose. I 'ope you don't mind me for that fur."

"It's all the same if I do, I suppose; I can't pitch you out on the line," said the viscount.

Another chuckle.

"No; if it came to pitching out, I reckon you'd be the one to go," remarked the sailor-lad, looking over the thin, undersized form with a searching eye.

Devigne flushed angrily.

"Don't give me any of your cheek!" he exclaimed. "I shall have to stand you while you are here, you low cad, but I don't want any impertinence!"

The sailor-lad coloured.

"You ain't no call to call me names," he said. "I ain't doin' no 'arm, I s'pose?"

The viscount shrugged his shoulders angrily. Curious enough it was, but the look of the lad made him angry and envious. He was going to a school—an expensive and famous school, true, but to the viscount it seemed as a prison might have seemed. This lad was poor, uneducated, friendless probably—but he was as free as air—free to come and go, and do as he liked—free and apparently happy. Riches, after all, were not everything; riches did not make Devigne happy, and poverty did not make this lad miserable.

The sailor-lad took a crust and a fragment of cheese from his pocket, and began to eat. The cheese was strong, and the scent of it worried the viscount. He sniffed angrily, and threw open the window.

The lad chuckled.

"You don't like it?" he asked.

"Hang you! No!"

"I'll put it away if you like." The cheese disappeared into the pocket again. "There! I don't want to bother you, sir."

"Oh, never mind!"

"I'm goin' to sea," the boy went on, after a pause, evidently feeling inclined for conversation, and not caring much whether his travelling companion was inclined for it or not. "I'm goin' in the Nancy Jane—skipper Ted Higgins. Ever heard of old Ted Higgins?"

"No, you young ass!"

"He's a scorcher, 'e is," said the lad. "I'm Jim Brown—that's me. What might your name 'appen to be?"

"I am Lord Devigne."

The boy stared, and whistled.

"Lord—eh?" he said.

"Yes."

"A real live lord?"

Devigne could not help smiling, in spite of his ill-humour.

"My father is a real live lord, as you call it," he said.

"I have a courtesy title; but I suppose you don't know what that means. I am going to school."

A shadow came over the sailor-lad's face.

"School!" he repeated. "Lummy! I wish I was you."

The viscount stared at him curiously.

"You want to go to school?" he asked.

"Yes, I should say so."

"What for?" asked the viscount abruptly.

Jim Brown stared at him in wonder.

"To larn," he replied. "To larn, and get on in the world. But there ain't no chance for me—I've got to work."

"It's very odd," said the viscount slowly.

"What's odd?"

"That you should want to go to school. I was just thinking that I'd give anything to change with you—to get away and be free."

Jim Brown whistled softly.

"You'd soon change your mind," he said.

"I shouldn't! Look here," said the viscount, in a low, eager voice. "Look here! I'm being sent to school against my will. I don't like it. I'd do anything to spite them, and to keep away from St. Jim's."

"My word!"

"I tried to run away from home once, when they were decided to send me to a boarding-school, but I couldn't get away. They sent my tutor to see me off to-day, and they've wired to the school to have somebody to meet me; I've got a beastly relation there—a fellow named D'Arcy—who'll be on the platform. If I don't turn up, I shall be searched for. But—"

He paused, his eyes scintillating.

Jim Brown gazed at him in wonder.

There was a purpose in the viscount's looks now—a gleam of angry resolution in his eyes. A strange scheme had come into his head—a scheme that could have not entered any head but his own; which suited well with his savage, irritable, discontented temper.

"Look here," he muttered. "You say that you'd like to go to school."

"Yes."

"I want to escape from going—to be free. You understand?"

"Ye-ea."

"Nobody at St. Jim's knows me; even my relation, D'Arcy, has never seen me. If another fellow turned up in my place, nobody would be the wiser."

"My word!"

"Will you change with me?"

CHAPTER 3.

A Complete Change!

JIM BROWN leaned back in his seat, and stared blankly at the viscount. The train hummed and whirled on through hills and trees.

"Lummy!" said Jim at last.

The viscount was leaning forward, keen, eager. The strange idea had evidently taken firm possession of his mind.

"What do you say?" he exclaimed.

"You must be dotty," said Jim Brown. "You—a lord—goin' to a good school—want to change with a poor lad going to sea! You must be dotty!"

"I mean it."

"You wouldn't mean it for long."

"I do—I do! Look here, I could bolt now; but if someone with my name doesn't turn up at Rylcombe Station, I shall be searched for, and the police would soon find me." The viscount gritted his teeth. "Then I should be taken to the school by force. Look here, you say you want to go to school."

"Goodness knows, I do!"

"You can go—one of the best schools in England, and plenty of money in your pocket, and a good name to go by," said the viscount.

"But—"

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

"You change clothes with me, and take my bag, and all my things, and my box that's in the guard's van," said the viscount eagerly. "You turn up at Rylcombe, and simply say that you're Lord Devigne. Who's to know any better?"

"But—but it wouldn't be true."

The viscount laughed scornfully.

"You have a right to use my name, if I give it you," he said. "I shall take yours in return."

"I s'pose that's all right," said Jim Brown doubtfully.

"Of course it is."

"But—but they'd bowl me out," said Jim. "I—I don't speak the same as you do, you know. That'd give me away."

Lord Devigne shook his head.

"They know that my education has been neglected," he said. "They won't be very much surprised, however you turn out."

"But—"

"And they'll take special pains with you, as the son of a lord," said Devigne, with a curl of the lip.

Jim grinned.

To the sailor-lad, expecting to go to sea under a hard-fisted skipper, to slave hard for a few shillings, the sudden prospect of wealth and consideration and education seemed like a dazzling dream.

And if the viscount really wanted to change with him, why shouldn't Jim consent? he asked himself.

He would only be taking what was freely given. Surely there could be nothing wrong in that!

"What do you say?" repeated the viscount eagerly.

"Oh, sir, do you really mean it?"

"Mean it? Of course I do!"

"You—you want to go to sea instead of me—with a bundle—like Jim Brown?"

"Yes."

"It's a 'ard life, sir."

"I don't care! I will not be sent to school against my will," said the spoiled youth, gritting his teeth. "I'll show them—hang them!"

"But—but—"

"Look here, even if you don't take my place, I am going to make a bolt for Southampton, and take my chance," said Devigne. "It will be safer for me if you go on to St. Jim's as Lord Devigne, and it will be a good thing for you."

"Lummy—yes! But—"

"It will be quite safe. My relations will never come to the school. My mother is going abroad for her health, and my father is too busy in politics to remember my existence at all. You will be quite safe until the vacation—and even then you could elect to spend the holiday at the school if you liked, or get invited to go home with some other fellow."

"Lummy!"

"What do you say, then?"

"If you mean it, sir—"

"I mean it."

"Then I'll do it—glad."

The viscount sprang to his feet. His face was blazing with triumph. Not a thought of the harm he might be doing crossed his mind—of what might happen to the poor lad, sent to a school he was in no way fitted for—of the anxiety of his parents if they discovered the truth. The viscount was not accustomed to thinking of anybody but himself.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Let's get changed!"

"Orlight, sir!"

And while the express rushed on steadily, through the golden summer's afternoon, the two boys stripped and changed clothes in the carriage.

It did not take them long.

In ten minutes, Jim Brown was arrayed in the garments of Lord Devigne, and Lord Devigne was in the rough clothes of the sailor-lad.

Fine feathers, it is said, make fine birds. Certainly Jim Brown looked better than Devigne had looked, in Devigne's costly clothes. His figure was a better one, and filled out the clothes better, and he carried himself more gracefully. Curiously enough, the poor deck-hand made a better-looking lord than the real son of the Earl of Westmoor.

Lord Devigne grinned at him approvingly.

"Ripping!" he exclaimed.

"Think I'll do, sir?"

"I'm sure of it."

"You're werry kind, sir."

"Not a bit of it; you're doing me a service," said the viscount. "Here's some money; I'll keep some, and give you five pounds. I've plenty."

Jim's eyes opened wide.

In all his life he had never possessed such a sum as five sovereigns, and the careless way the viscount tossed the coins over to him took his breath away.

"Oh, sir!"

"Mind, when you get to Rylcombe Station you're Lord

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Devigne, son of Lord Westmoor—your name's Pitt Ferndale, you understand."

"But if my name is Devigne—"

The viscount made an impatient gesture.

"Ferndale is our family name; Devigne is the second title of the family. You are Viscount Devigne."

"Oh, I see?"

"This express goes straight on to Southampton," said the viscount. "I shall remain in it instead of you, and you will change at Wayland for Rylcombe."

"I see."

"You understand? As for my relation at St. Jim's—D'Arcy of the Fourth Form—you had better quarrel with him and prevent him from asking too many questions."

"Ye-es."

"My box will be changed into your train—I give it to you, and everything in it, so it's your own property."

"Oh, sir!"

"Here's Wayland. Get ready."

Jim Brown, like a fellow in a dream, jammed the viscount's silk hat on his head. It was a size too small, and it was the first time Jim had ever tried on a topper, but as he glanced in the little glass over the carriage seat, he was very well pleased with himself.

The train stopped at the junction.

Jim Brown jumped out.

"Good-bye, sir!"

"Good-bye, and thanks!"

Jim strolled down the platform. A respectful porter carried the bag and travelling rug, and conducted him to a first-class compartment on the local train for Rylcombe. The viscount's box was placed on the local train. Lord Devigne stood watching from the carriage window. The guard came along the train and stared at him.

"You got a first ticket?" he asked roughly.

Lord Devigne, forgetting for the moment that he was attired as a rough sailor lad, stared haughtily at the man.

"Don't be impertinent," he exclaimed.

The guard sniffed.

"You show your ticket," he said.

"I decline to do anything of the sort."

"Then out you come!"

"Fellow!"

"Out you come!"

And the guard opened the door of the carriage and jerked Lord Devigne out upon the platform. The viscount shrieked with rage.

"You—you low cad! I'll have you discharged! I'll—"

The man grinned.

"You'd better get into your own part of the train unless you want to be left behind," he suggested.

The train was already moving. The viscount, bursting with rage, jumped into a third-class compartment, and sank into a seat. The express rushed on, and the viscount, as he sat crammed between a big seaman and a fat lady in a shawl, smelling of gin, began to think that he had not made a change so very much for the better after all.

CHAPTER 4.

The New Boy.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY paused on the platform of the little station at Rylcombe, and looked up and down the railway-line.

There was no train in sight.

"We're early," said Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better early than never," remarked Digby. "The local from Wayland is timed to get in at five-thirty, and it's only a minute past half-past now, so we've got five minutes to wait."

"I suppose that cousin of yours changes from the express at Wayland?" asked Blake.

"He is not exactly a cousin—"

"Does he change at Wayland?" shrieked Blake.

"Yaas."

"Then he'll be in this train—here it comes."

The train came in sight down the line.

It curved into the station, and clattered and whirled to a halt, and half a dozen carriage doors flew open.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass up and down the train.

He did not know his relative by sight, but he expected to see which of the arrivals was the new boy for St. Jim's.

No other new boy was expected at the school, and a fellow in Etons with a box would be pretty certain to be Lord Devigne.

"Bai Jove! There he is!"

A boy with a bullet head and a shock of hair escaping



"Look 'ere!" roared the skipper, brandishing a big fist in D'Arcy's face. "Where's Jim? What I says is, where's the boy? Tell him he can come back to the Nancy Jane if he likes. He's all right." "Weally —" said Arthur Augustus feebly. Jim's pale face looked out from behind the putress. Then it disappeared, as the new boy trod cautiously away.

under his silk hat jumped out of a first-class carriage and looked up and down the platform.

It was Jim Brown, alias Lord Devigne.

The boy was grinning.

A rough-and-tumble life had taught him to take things as they came, and not to be put out by anything, and he was taking this new adventure in an easy way.

If it turned out all right, he had gained his ambition—to be educated at a good school, and given a chance in life. If it failed, he would be no worse off than he was before. He would have lost his berth with Skipper Ted Higgins, but he could easily find another of the same sort.

He caught sight of the juniors of St. Jim's. He guessed that they were from the school, and had come to meet Lord Devigne.

D'Arcy nodded towards him.

"That's the chap," he said.

"You know him?"

"No, but he must be. He's the only possible chap on the twain."

"Well, ask him, then."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy advanced towards the new boy, and raised his silk hat in his most courtly manner.

"Pway excuse me," he said gracefully, "but I think you are my welation, Lord Devigne. I am Arthur Augustus D'Arcy."

"Oh, you're D'Arcy, are you?"

"Yaas, wathah! And you are the new kid?"

"Right first time, cocky!"

D'Arcy almost staggered.

He had heard all sorts of stories about his youthful relation—it was an open secret in the family that Devigne was a young rascal, that his education had been shockingly neglected, and that his manners savoured of anything but the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

But Arthur Augustus had hardly expected to be answered in this strain.

He crammed his eyeglass a little tighter into his eye, and regarded the new boy with a peculiar glance.

"I suppose you know the ropes here?" remarked Jim.

"Yaas, wathah!"

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

"Then you might tell the porter what to do with my box. Tip him the wink."

"The—the what?"

"I mean, give him the office."

"Eh?"

"Trumble, old man, shove that box in the hack," said Blake, laughing.

"Yes, sir."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! I was nevah so surprised in my life! I am weally thwown quite into a fluttah."

"You blokes belong to St. Jim's, I s'pose?" asked Jim.

"Blokes! Bai Jove!"

"I'm the new cove," said Jim.

"My hat!"

"S'pose you show me the way to the school?" suggested Jim.

"Certainly," said Blake, with a grin. "Look here, Gussy, your relation is all right. I'm certain he'll be a success at St. Jim's."

"Bai Jove!"

"This way, Devigne."

"All serene, cocky!"

And the lad followed Jack Blake from the station. The juniors were grinning gleefully. Lord Devigne was a great surprise to them. Arthur Augustus followed them with blank amazement and dismay in his face. Whatever he had expected his cousin to be like, he had not expected him to be like this.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured, again and again. "Bai Jove!"

The juniors left the station. The box was piled on the hack, with the travelling rug and the bag. The new boy pushed back the tight silk hat and mopped his brow with a handkerchief.

"Ot, ain't it?" he remarked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Look 'ere, ain't you got anything else to say?" demanded the new boy, staring at Arthur Augustus.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, do put on a new record!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Devigne—"

"Where's the school?" asked Jim, looking down the quaint old High Street of Rylcombe. "Where do you chaps hang out?"

Blake gasped.

"It's down the lane," he said. "Would you rather go in the hack or walk?"

"Shanks' pony is good enough for me."

Blake laughed.

"Come on, then, we'll walk."

The juniors tramped down the lane together. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still in a state of great bewilderment, and he murmured "Bai Jove!" at intervals all the way down the lane to St. Jim's.

Taggles, the porter, was sunning himself outside the lodge when the party came in. Taggles looked at them in his sour way, but he grinned amiably as he discerned the new boy with the party.

Taggles knew that a lord's son was expected at St. Jim's, and a new boy generally shelled out a tip, and from a lord's son naturally something extra in the way of a tip was to be expected.

Taggles rose, and came towards the juniors with his best smile turned on.

"Hallo, Taggy!" said Jack Blake cheerfully. "Thirsty, this afternoon?"

Taggles's eyes glistened.

"Which I am, Master Blake. It's dry weather."

"Go and have a good drink under the pump, then," said Blake sweetly. "It's really refreshing on a hot day, Taggy."

Taggles snorted. Water might be a refreshing drink, but it was not the kind of refreshment that Taggles was looking for.

"Thank you for nothing, Master Blake. Look 'ere, the young gent. will want his box carried in, I s'pose?"

"It's coming on in the 'ack," said Jim.

Taggles stared.

He was accustomed himself to referring to the hack as an 'ack, but he was very much surprised to hear the son and heir of Lord Westmoor do so.

"You can take it in when the 'ack comes," said Jim. "Wot are you starin' at, old cock?"

"Oh!" murmured Taggles.

"He requires a gwatuity," murmured D'Arcy.

"A which?"

"A gwatuity."

"Is that Latin?"

"Bai Jove!"

"What does he mean, you coves?" asked the new boy. Blake chuckled.

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"A SCHOOLBOY'S CROSS-ROADS," in this week's "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1^d.

"A tip," he said.

"Oh, I see. What shall I give him?"

"Anything you like."

"Lummy!" said the new boy. "You see, I don't know the ropes 'ere, that's 'ow it is. What shall I give you, old cock?"

"Anything you like, my lord," said Taggles, in his most obsequious manner.

The new boy's eyes sparkled with fun.

"Anything?" he asked.

"Yes, my lord."

"Anything I like, eh?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Turn round, then."

"Eh?"

"Turn round."

Taggles, in great amazement, turned round. The new boy raised his foot, and planted it behind Taggles, and the school porter gave a wild roar, and staggered forward.

"There you are!" said Jim.

And he walked on, grinning, followed by the juniors, roaring with laughter. Taggles stared after them blankly. The new boy had taken him at his word, but Taggles was not pleased at being taken at his word in this way.

"The young rip!" he muttered. "The young 'error! I allays said that all boys ought to be drowned, and I think that young rip oughter be drowned and 'ung, too! Ow!"

CHAPTER 5.

Levison is Not Wanted.

TOM MERRY, of the Shell, was standing upon the steps of the School House when the juniors arrived there. Monty Lowther and Manners were with the hero of the Shell. The Terrible Three looked a little warlike as Blake & Co. came up. They had not forgotten being bumped over in the passage an hour before. But Blake saluted them with a cheerful grin.

"Hallo, my sons!" he said. "We've brought you a present."

"A what?"

"A new kid for the Shell."

"Oh, we're fed up on new kids," said Manners. "I hope they won't shove this one in our study, as they did the last. That chap turned out to be mad, and I dare say this one will turn out to be an idiot, as I hear that he's a relation of Gussy's."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"If you're a-calling of me an idiot, you'll get a dot on the boko," said the new boy.

The Terrible Three stared at him.

They were not surprised at his firing up at Manners' remark, but the variety of language he used was a surprise to them.

"My hat!" exclaimed Lowther. "Go it! Where did you pick up that elegant way of expressing yourself? I suppose your noble dad brought it home from the House of Lords."

"Oh, go on!" said Jim.

"Eh!"

"Cheese it! Belay your jawing tackle," said the new boy. "I've whopped bigger duffers than you are."

"Well, this is a surprise packet," said Manners. "I suppose you're not pulling our leg, you fellows? This is really Lord Devigne."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not a tramp you have picked up on the road, and dressed in his lordship's clothes for a jape on us, hey?"

"Weally, Lowthah!"

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"Oh, he's all right," said Tom Merry. "Look here, you chaps, as you've got a new fellow with you, and we're in funds, we'll stand a feed. Manners has been selling some photographs, so we are rolling in riches for the present."

"That is vewy decent of you!"

"Come along to the tuck-shop, then."

D'Arcy nudged his relative as the juniors fell in with the Terrible Three. An invitation to visit the tuck-shop at St. Jim's was seldom refused.

"Devigne, deah boy!"

"Hallo!" said Jim.

"Haden't you bettah dust yourself down, and get off some of the signs of twavel, before you have tea."

"Oh, I'm all right, cocky."

"Wats! You are wathah untidday and dustay!"

"All serene!"

"Your face is none too clean, deah boy."

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Devigne!"

"Belay the jaw, and come on," said the new boy.

"If you address me in that way, deah boy, I shall probably waive the fact that you are a relation of mine, and give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Rats!"

And Devigne walked away with Tom Merry & Co. Arthur Augustus followed, in a very bewildered frame of mind.

The juniors poured into the tuck-shop in quite a little crowd. There were a good many fellows already there, refreshing themselves after cricket practice in the summer evening. Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—of the New House, were standing in a row at the little counter, eating ices.

"Make room, you New House bounders," said Monty Lowther.

Figgins & Co. snorted.

"None of your cheek," said Figgins. "Look here, you School House bounders had better keep out till we've finished. We're rather particular whom we mix with."

"Weally, Figgay!"

Tom Merry laughed!

"Pax!" he exclaimed. "We've got a new chap here, and we're going to stand a feed. You New House chaps can join us if you like."

"Good egg!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "That's the talk! On an occasion like this, the two Houses ought to stand shoulder to shoulder."

"On an occasion like what?" demanded Figgins, staring at his fat chum.

"On the occasion of a feed, of course," said Fatty Wynn.

"What is it going to be, Tom Merry? I'll begin with pork-pies, if you like."

"You've had enough, you blessed porpoise," growled Kerr.

Fatty Wynn looked reproachfully at Kerr.

"Now, look here, Kerr, you know I've hardly tasted anything. What have I had, excepting sausage-rolls, and some sandwiches, and a few hard-boiled eggs, and a beefsteak-pie, and some cakes and tarts, and a few buns and ices? I'm hungry."

"You must be," said Manners sympathetically.

"I always get extra hungry about this time of the year," Fatty Wynn remarked confidentially. "I suppose there's really something in this July weather that does it, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll start with pork-pies," said Fatty Wynn, disregarding the laughter. "I could go on with the ham-patties, if you like—they're prime."

"What you like," said Tom Merry genially. "Hand it out, Mrs. Taggles. What are you going to have, Devigne?"

"Hallo! Is that the new chap?" exclaimed Levison of the Fourth, entering the tuck-shop with Mellish. "How do you do, my lord?"

The new boy stared at him.

"Lummy, I don't know you!"

"I'm Levison of the Fourth. This is Mellish. We've heard a lot about you," Levison explained. "Welcome to St. Jim's."

"Thanks! Put it there!" said his lordship.

He shook hands with the cad of the Fourth. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Levison.

"I weally fail to see how you can have heard anythin' about my cousin, Levison," he remarked.

Levison grinned.

"Well, as a matter of fact, Mellish told me," he said.

D'Arcy's eyeglass glimmered upon the sneak of the School House.

"And how did you know anything, Mellish?" he demanded.

"Oh, I happened to hear—"

"Bai Jove! You've been listenin' at my studay door, you cad!"

"I happened—"

"I wegard you as an uttah wottah, Mellish, and if you are

admitted to this feed, I shall wefuse to partake of Tom Mowwy's hospitality," said the swell of St. Jim's indignantly.

"Oh, go and eat coke."

"Weally, Mellish—"

"We've heard all about Devigne, and we like him all the better for it," said Levison, with a grin. "We like a chap who can kick over the traces sometimes. I dare say Devigne will get on better with us than with you, Gussy."

D'Arcy waved his hand towards the door.

"I shall advise my cousin not to associate with two such uttah wascals!" he exclaimed. "And now I insist upon your wetirin' ffrom the tuck-shop."

"Rats!"

"I insist—"

"Have you bought up the place?" asked Levison, unpleasantly. "I suppose we're at liberty to stay in the school shop if we want to."

"I should suppose so, too," said Mellish, with a sneer.

"Then your supposer's out of gear," said Blake flatly. "You're going out. We don't want you. You can go out on your feet, or on your necks—just as you prefer."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here—"

"Are you going?" demanded Tom Merry.

"No," yelled Levison.

"Bai Jove, I'll jollay soon put you out!"

"Hands off! I—"

"Wats!"

And the indignant D'Arcy rushed at the cads of the Fourth, and hugged them round the neck together, and whirled towards the doorway with them. D'Arcy was, for once in a way, in a temper. The two cads of the Lower School had learned the reputation of his cousin—undoubtedly by listening at a door—and they meant to take the viscount under their wing. They were the black sheep of the Lower School, and whatever bad qualities the viscount had were certain to be brought to their fullest development under the care of Levison and Mellish. And Arthur Augustus meant to nip it in the bud if he could.

The cads of the Fourth struggled violently, but D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant ways, was athletic. The other fellows were ready to lend him a hand, but he did not need it.

Levison and Mellish were whirled through the doorway, and sent into the quad, to roll on the ground under the big elm outside the tuck-shop. Arthur Augustus turned back into the shop, with his jacket crumpled, his collar burst, his tie disarranged, and his cuffs twisted—but triumphant.

"Bai Jove," he gasped, "they're gone! Bai Jove!"

"Bravo, Gussy!"

And the new boy clapped Arthur Augustus on the shoulder.

"Hip-hip!" he exclaimed. "You're a little terror, and no mistake! Bravo, cocky."

CHAPTER 6.

Jammy!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY turned his eyeglass upon his cousin, with a far from approving expression in his eyes.

"Pway don't be so beastly wuff!" he exclaimed. "I dislike vewy much havin' my shouldah thumped in that bwotal way. Pway don't do it! Besides, I do not like bein' alluded to as a tewwah, or as cocky. I wegard those expressions as vulgah."

"Lummy!"

"And I don't like that expression, eithah. I uttably fail to see how Lord Westmoor can have allowed his son to pick up such an uttably wotten expression."

"My 'at!"

"Pway where have you lost your aspiwates?" demanded Arthur Augustus. "Are you doin' this on purpose, you uttah ass?"

"Doin' what?" demanded Jim.

"Dwoppin' your aspiwates."

Jim looked about him on the floor, as if in search of something. The juniors watched him with grinning faces. Although the new boy looked very much in earnest, they could not but imagine that he was pulling Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's aristocratic leg.

"I ain't dropped nothing," said Jim.

"Eh?"

"I tell you I ain't dropped nothing."

"You young ass! Don't you know what an aspiwate is?" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Well, what is it, then?" demanded Jim defiantly.

"It's an 'H,' you ass!"

"Well, what's the marrer with my blessed 'H's,' then?"

"What are you dwoppin' them for?"

Jim frowned.

"Look 'ere," he said, "if you want me to land you a drive on the giddy smeller, you've only got to say so. See?"

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK: "THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

"Smeller! Is it poss. that you are alludin' to my nose undah that howwid appellation?" gasped D'Arcy.

"I'm jolly well ready to give you a dusting, anyhow," said Jim. "I've licked bigger lubbers than you in the fo'e'sle of the Nancy Jane."

"The—the what?"

"Which I mean, I—I—" stammered Jim, recollecting that he was Lord Devigne now. "Look 'ere, I don't want any of your upper crust, you see?"

"I fail to compwehend."

"Here, let's get on with the feed," said Tom Merry. "Besides, it's bad form for relations to row. Remember, he's a new chap, Gussy."

"New chap or not, welation or not, he has no wight to dwop his aspiwates in that weekless way," said D'Arcy headtily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah. I considah—"

"Have some ginger-pop, Gussy?"

"Yaas; but I considah—"

"Rats! Pass Gussy the jam tarts."

"The jam tarts are all wight; thanks awfully, but I think—"

"Give him some buns."

"Thank you; but I must wemahk—"

"Nothing but a gag will stop him," said Blake resignedly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"What are you going to have, Devigne?" asked Tom Merry, drawing the new boy aside from his indignant relation.

"I was going to 'ave a crust and some cheese," he said. "But I reckon I'll get something better than that now. This is better than the prog. on a tramp steamer."

Tom Merry stared.

"I dare say it is," he said; "but you've never been on a tramp steamer, have you?"

"Ain't I just?" said Jim.

"I understood that you had been educated at home, with a tutor," said Blake, giving the new boy a puzzled look.

"I'll 'ave jam tarts," said Jim, avoiding replying to Blake's remark in that way. "I say, these 'ere tarts are simply prime."

"Dame Taggles makes good tarts," said Digby. "Pile in! Tom Merry's rolling in money, and we're going to make hay while the sun shines."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll have a few tarts," said Fatty Wynn. "I'll try the marmalade-tarts now. I haven't had any of them."

"About the only thing in the shop that you haven't had any of, then," said Figgins.

"I'll try 'em," said Fatty Wynn, taking a marmalade-tart in each hand. "Mrs. Taggles makes good ones, as a rule. I suppose I'd better have twopenny ones, Tom Merry."

"Yes," said Tom, laughing.

"Good. These are all right," said Fatty, clearing the dishful at express speed. "By Jove," he went on, when he had eaten seven or eight, "they are really all right! I think I'll have some."

The juniors roared. Fatty Wynn had eaten as many as would have been too much for most fellows, before he fully decided that he would have some. And he forthwith proceeded to "have some."

"My 'at!" said the new boy, bolting jam tarts at such a rate that he smeared jam over his face, his hands, his cuffs, and his sleeves. "My 'at! Lummy! Ain't these prime! I ain't never 'ad a treat like this before."

"I should have thought you'd have plenty of pocket-money," said Kangaroo, of the Shell.

Jim had forgotten again. He proceeded to bolt jam tarts to avoid answering. He had a strong objection to telling untruths, and the only way of avoiding them, and of avoiding discovery at the same time, was by not replying.

"These 'ere are ripping," he said.

"They're all right," agreed Tom Merry, looking in some surprise at the jammy state of the viscount. "By the way, do you always get yourself into that state when you eat jam tarts?"

"Lummy, I never noticed it!" said Jim, staring down at his sleeves. "Never mind, I don't git a feed like this nevery day."

"I should think you could if you liked, at Westmoor Park," said Clifton Dane.

"I'll 'ave some more, please."

Jim ate tarts as if for a wager. He was looking a little pale when he finally desisted. As a matter of fact, accustomed as he was to a plain and wholesome diet, jam tarts in great quantities were a little too rich for him, and he had eaten too many.

"Had enough?" grinned Figgins. "Blessed if you don't beat Fatty Wynn!"

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"A SCHOOLBOY'S CROSS-ROADS," in this week's "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1^d.

"I reckon I'll belay now."

"Bai Jove, I should say it was time you did!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weckon you had bettah clean yourself before you weport to your Form-mastah. You can't go in to Mr. Linton in that state."

"Ave I got to see 'im?" asked Jim.

"Of course you have, as a new boy—or the Head."

"Lummy!"

"Haven't you been told so?"

"No," said Jim, truthfully enough.

"I wegard that as vewy wemahkable. You had better take him in, Tom Mewwy, as he is in your Form. I decline to be seen with him in that state."

"Oh, rot!" exclaimed Blake. "He's your relation, and you're going to stand by him; you said so yourself. Why, it isn't two hours since you were saying that blood is thicker than lemonade."

"You uttah ass! I said it was thickah than watah."

"Better take him to see Linton," grinned Tom Merry. "Linton will have been told to expect him, you know, and he may be ratty about it—he may be even staying in to see him."

"Bai Jove!"

"Go along with your cousin, Devigne—he's going to introduce you to your Form-master," said Blake.

"Wotto!" said Jim.

D'Arcy gave him a look of great disfavour. The swell of St. Jim's hardly knew what to think. He had heard that his relation was a young rascal, and a thorough young blackguard. But he had expected him to have decent manners and customs, even if he was a cad of the deepest dye. The newcomer was a complete surprise to Arthur Augustus. He did not seem a bad sort of a fellow, as far as that went; but his ways—

D'Arcy did not know what to think of his ways.

"Well, come on, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, far from graciously. "I suppose I ought to stand by you, as you are a welation. Blood is thickah than—"

"Ginger-beer," said Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an uttah ass, Blake. Come on, Devigne!"

And the jammy new boy followed Arthur Augustus from the tuckshop quite serenely. D'Arcy meant to take him into a dormitory for a wash, before he presented him to Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell; but luck was against the swell of St. Jim's. As they entered the School House, the form of the Shell-master, in cap and gown, loomed up before them, and Mr. Linton turned a frowning eye upon them.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Is that the new boy—Devigne—your cousin, as I understand?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Why has he not reported his arrival to me before?"

"There has been a-a-a delay, sir," stammered Arthur Augustus, hoping that Mr. Linton would not force him to explain what the delay was—the delay having been solely caused by the feed in the tuckshop.

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Linton. "Goodness gracious, boy, how came you into this state? How did you get covered with jam?"

"I've been a-eatin' of it, sir," said Jim.

"Bai Jove!"

Mr. Linton stared at him.

"Go at once and clean yourself, and then you, D'Arcy, bring him to my study."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

Arthur Augustus hurried his terrible relation away. Mr. Linton looked after them in great amazement.

"What an extraordinary boy!" he exclaimed.

And Mr. Linton was perhaps the first, but not the last person at St. Jim's who pronounced the new arrival to be an extraordinary boy.

CHAPTER 7.

The Master of the Shell is Surprised.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY guided the new boy to the door of Mr. Linton's study, and knocked. The Shell-master bade him enter, and he opened the door.

"Please I've bwought him, sir," he said. "Here you are, Devigne."

"Orright," said Jim.

"Pway be careful how you address Mr. Linton," whispered D'Arcy. "Don't play any of your wotten japes here. Speak pwopahly."

"Ain't I speakin' properly?"

"Pway don't be an ass! Mr. Linton is an awf'ly touchy old beggar!"

"D'Arcy!" came a deep and awful voice from the study. Arthur Augustus jumped. The master of the Shell, in the study, had overheard that cautious whisper outside, and the swell of St. Jim's turned cold all over.

"Ya-a-a-as, sir!" he gasped.

"D'Arcy! Take five hundred lines for speaking in such a manner."

"With pleasuah, sir—I—I mean, certainly, sir," stammered D'Arcy.

"I shall speak to your Form-master."

"If you please, sir—"

"You may go."

"Pway allow me to explain, sir. I did not mean to make any diswepful allusion. I was merely cautionin' the new chap—"

"You will write out the lines."

"Yaas, wathah, sir; I don't mind that, only I should not like you to be under a misapprehension with wegard to me," said D'Arcy, coming into the doorway and looking at Mr. Linton very seriously. "You see, sir, it's wotten bad form to be diswepful to a mastah, and I twust I should nevah be guilty of such a howwid bweach of good mannaahs."

Mr. Linton's face wore a curious expression.

"You may go, D'Arcy. Upon the whole, you need not do the lines."

"Thank you, sir. I twust you exonewate me—"

"Quite—go! Come in, Devigne!"

"Thank you, vewy much, sir. I considah—"

"Close the door after you, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir; undah the circs—"

"Go!" rapped out Mr. Linton.

And Arthur Augustus went at last. Mr. Linton turned to the new junior. Lord Devigne, alias Jim Brown, of the forecable, stood before him looking very quiet and respectful. Jim had to go through an ordeal now, and he knew it. He guessed that the master of the Shell was going to question him as to his attainments; and those attainments were woe-fully small. Jim could scrub down a deck with anybody, and keep his bunk tidy, could make good coffee, and cook a good meal with next to nothing for materials. He could stand the roughest sea without turning a hair, and was at home in any part of the rigging of any craft. He could use his fists, not scientifically, but very effectively; and he could expend a shilling to the greatest possible advantage. These things he had learned in following the sea. But he had never even heard of Virgil; he did not know there was such a language as Latin, or ever had been; mathematics was as much a mystery to him as the picture-writing of the Mexicans; and simple arithmetic presented itself to his mind as a series of Chinese puzzles. Rough-and-ready reckoning he could do, indeed, well; for he was quick and intelligent. But book-learning of any sort was strange to him; and instead of taking his place in the Shell, he was more fitted to go among the "infants" of the First Form—if, indeed, he was sufficiently advanced even for that.

Mr. Linton looked him over with his keen, microscopic eye, which he always turned on new boys. Mr. Linton had known boys ever since he was a boy himself, which was popularly supposed at St. Jim's to have been thousands of years ago, or something like that. Mr. Linton could generally size up a new boy at a glance. But he had to admit that there was something about this new boy that he did not quite "catch on" to at once. The master of the Shell had been told of Lord Devigne's peculiar reputation; and he was prepared, as Arthur Augustus had been, to see a proud, discontented, sullen lad, insolent perhaps, and hard to deal with. But there was nothing proud or sullen in the round, healthy, good-natured face of Jim Brown. But he was more of a puzzle to Mr. Linton than any new boy ever had been.

Master and pupil stood looking at one another for a full minute, the boy silent and inwardly apprehensive, feeling strangely as if he had been called before the skipper on the deck of the Nancy Jane, and wondering what would happen to him.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Linton at last.

Jim made a movement. He was glad the silence had been broken, at all events.

"I understand, Lord Devigne, that you have been a troublesome boy at home," said Mr. Linton. "I am informed, too, that you are backward in your lessons, but are intelligent enough when you choose to exert yourself. Now, I do not mean to allow anything in the past to weigh against you here; so long as you behave yourself at this school, all will be well. But I shall expect you to work and do well."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"What!"

Jim turned red.

"I—I mean, yes, sir," he stammered.

"I understand, too, that you have had very peculiar

associates, for so young a lad, and considering your station in life," the Form-master went on. "You will fall into better ways here. Any attempt at improvement will be encouraged; and any wrong-doing will be severely punished. Now, I have been instructed that you are to enter the Shell."

"Ay—yes, sir."

"Very well, then."

Jim looked round him.

"Where is it, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Linton stared at him.

"I do not understand your question, boy. Where is what?"

"The—the shell, sir."

"Devigne!"

Jim looked helpless.

"You—you said I was to enter the Shell, sir," he stammered.

"I—I'm willing to do anything I'm told, sir. But I don't see any shell."

Mr. Linton frowned.

"Do you mean to say, Devigne, that you don't know that the Form here between the Fourth and the Fifth is called the Shell?"

"Oh!"

"If you are playing a silly joke, I warn you that it will be wise not to do so," said Mr. Linton, in his awful tones.

"This is not the place for jokes."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, Devigne, we will have a little discussion of what you can do."

Jim quaked.

It had come at last! What was to happen next he did not know; he rather wished that there would be an earthquake.

"Take up that book, Devigne," said the Form-master, pointing to a Virgil lying on the table.

Jim did as he was bidden.

"Begin at the first page."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Don't answer me in that ridiculous way. When you have to reply to me in the affirmative, say 'Yes, sir.'"

"Ay, ay, sir—I mean, yes, sir."

"Now construe."

"Eh?"

"Construe," said Mr. Linton, raising his voice.

Jim stared helplessly at the book he had opened, and at the master of the Shell. He had not the faintest idea what the word construe meant.

Frowns gathered on Mr. Linton's face, puckering up his brow like old parchment.

"Will you do as you are told, Devigne?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then construe."

"What is that, sir?"

"Do you mean to say that you do not know the meaning of the verb to construe?" almost thundered Mr. Linton.

Jim trembled. For the moment he wished he was safely back on the deck of the Nancy Jane, even with Skipper Ted Higgins in a state of rum and exhilaration, and swearing at him.

"N-n-no, sir," he stammered.

"You cannot construe?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Linton drew a deep breath.

"If this is true, it is not your fault, I suppose, but your education has certainly been most scandalously neglected," he said. "But I must be assured that this not some absurd joke. To construe is to turn the lines before you into English. Read the first line in Latin."

Jim stared at the book.

The old familiar "Arma virumque cano" was before him. But to Jim Brown of the Nancy Jane it was neither old nor familiar.

Latin, which was not easy to all the juniors of St. Jim's, was not merely hard to Jim Brown; it was an utterly incomprehensible mystery.

He blinked at the line, and blinked at Mr. Linton, and turned the book over twisting in his fingers, and turned crimson, and turned pale. But he did not construe.

"Devigne, read the first line in Latin."

"I can't sir."

"Do you mean to say you know no Latin?"

"I'm sorry sir. I don't."

"Is it possible that you are quite ignorant of the language, boy?" Mr. Linton demanded, in astonishment.

"I—I don't know anything about it, sir," stammered Jim.

Mr. Linton's expression softened. He could see by Jim's distressed look that the boy was genuine enough.

"Very well," he said. "You may put down the book, Devigne. I suppose it is not your fault; but it is extraordinary that you should be put into the Shell, in such a state of ignorance. It will be impossible for you to take your

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place in my Form. But let us see your state in other branches of knowledge."

In other branches of knowledge Jim proved almost as deficient as in the classics. Mr. Linton's astonishment grew and grew. He could not think that the boy was deceiving him; yet to find an earl's son in such a state of utter ignorance of all book-learning was amazing.

Jim, indeed, could read and write, and deal with simple figures—but that was the beginning and the end of what he could do. He had never had any chances of learning more.

"I really hardly know what to make of you, my boy," said Mr. Linton at last. "I must certainly consult the head-master about you. You may go."

"Thank you sir. I 'ope you won't be 'ard on me."

"What do you mean, Devigne?"

"I ain't 'ad much learnin'," said Jim, in distress. "But I ain't 'ad the chance. I want to learn, sir; I'd do anything to get on in that way."

"If you are speaking sincerely, Devigne, you will have every chance here; though certainly you will have to begin at the bottom of the ladder. It is extraordinary to me that your education should have been so neglected, especially if you have a desire to learn. I will see what can be done for you. You may go now."

And Jim went, leaving the master of the Shell in a most puzzled frame of mind.

CHAPTER 8.

Tom Merry Lends a Hand.

TOM MERRY came along the Shell passage, whistling cheerily. He almost ran into the new boy, who was going slowly along, looking at the studies as he passed. Jim turned round and looked at him, and nodded.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, pausing. "Seen Linton?"

"Ay, ay!"

"How did you get on?"

Jim made a grimace.

"I dunno! He's goin' to talk to the skipper about me."

"The what?"

"The 'ead-master, I mean."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, with a curious look. "Have you ever been to sea, Devigne?"

Jim grinned.

"I reckon I 'ave," he replied.

"Oh, that accounts, then! I think it would give the Head a fit if he heard himself called the skipper," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Blessed if I know what a kid of your age was doing at sea, but that's your own bizney. I'm glad you got on all right with Linton. Did he say you didn't know anything, 'but we will make every effort to fill up this vacancy, boy'? That's his usual style."

"Well, he said I didn't know anything, and I don't," said Jim. "I'm going to learn, though. If I could get somebody to 'elp me—"

"I'll help you with pleasure, if you like," said Tom Merry at once. "I've heard that you haven't had much chance in that line. But you had a tutor, hadn't you?"

"A tutor!"

"Yes, I understand that you had a tutor, who prepared you to enter the Shell Form here," said Tom Merry. "But I know there are tutors and tutors. I suppose yours let you do as you liked, and you liked doing nothing. I've seen pupils and tutors running the bizney on those lines. Are you very slack in Form-work?"

"Look 'ere, can you construe?" asked Jim, in lowered tones.

Tom Merry stared.

"Well, I should say so," he replied.

"Ow do you do it?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know?"

"Ay, ay!"

"Look here, you're not pulling my leg, are you?" asked Tom Merry suspiciously.

"Honour!"

"Well, come into my study. By the way, what study have you been put into?"

"I ain't been put in any that I knows of. Mr. Linton said I was to go into the Shell—"

"That's a Form, ass!"

"But he said arterwards I couldn't. I don't know where I'm to go."

"Well, as you're a Shell chap, you'll be in this passage, and you can stick in my study for a bit if you like," said Tom Merry kindly, as he piloted the new boy into his own quarters.

"Oh, can he?" demanded two voices at once, and Manners and Lowther glared at the new-comers.

Jim hesitated on the threshold.

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"Shut up, kids!" said Tom Merry. "It's a case of taking in the homeless."

"That's all very well," said Monty Lowther. "You did that last time with a new chap, and he turned out to be a lunatic, and gave us a high old time. I don't see why this study should be turned into a home for vagrants."

"My dear ass, there are fellows along the passage who would simply jump at having a lord in their study," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Let 'em jump, then—"

"I say, you know, I won't come in," said Jim. "I ain't the sort to intrude nowhere, I 'ope. I'll get hout."

"No, you won't," said Monty Lowther, changing his tone at once. "You'll come in. I was only joking, you young ass."

"Yes, come in," said Manners.

Jim came in.

"You two chaps shut up now," said Tom Merry. "I'm going to give Devigne some Latin—"

"Some what?"

"Latin."

"Dotty?" asked Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

"No; but Devigne is slow at classics, and I'm going to peg him on. See?"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Lowther. "I never heard of a junior study being turned into a giddy coaching den before. I'm off!"

"You are—right off—off your giddy rocker!" said Tom Merry. "Good-bye!"

Lowther went out whistling. Manners was cutting films, and he went on cutting them.

"Don't mind me," he said. "I'll listen, and put you right when you get out on the giddy quantities."

"Cheeky beggar!" said Tom Merry.

He opened his dog-eared Virgil. He sat down, and drew a chair up to the table with his foot for Jim. Jim sat down, too.

"Begin now?" asked Tom Merry.

"Please."

"How much Latin do you know?"

"I don't know nothin'."

"My hat! That's bad for a start. How did they come to leave Latin out?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder. "I suppose your tutor knew it—he must have!"

Jim was silent.

"Well, never mind. We'll begin at the beginning, though I don't see how you're to go into the Shell without any Latin," said Tom Merry.

"I say, sir—" Jim paused.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Eh? What's what?"

"Latin."

Tom Merry laid down the book and stared blankly at the new boy. He had never been quite so astonished in his life.

"What is Latin?" he asked blankly.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Do you mean to say you don't know?"

"Is it a language?" asked Jim cautiously.

"Yes, it's a language, certainly."

"Oo speaks it?"

"Nobody now—it's a dead language."

"Oh! What's a dead language?"

"A language that has died out of use, of course," said Tom Merry. "Latin was spoken by the Romans and the people of the Roman Empire. It is not a spoken language now."

"Then what does you learn it for?"

"Well, it's a great language, and there are lots of very valuable books written in it," Tom Merry explained.

"More useful to learn a language people speak, I should think," said Jim thoughtfully, "like French, or Spanish, or German."

Tom Merry laughed.

"My dear chap, you've touched on a controversial subject that we won't go into—they've been jawing for dogs' ages on the subject of classics versus hustle," he said. "Look here! If you don't know a word it's no good beginning with Virgil. We'd better take the First-Form book; I'll borrow one."

"Thank you kindly, sir."

Tom Merry left the study, and returned in a few minutes with an elementary Latin book, which contained the valuable information that the Latin alphabet consisted of twenty-five letters, and that the letters were divided into vowels and consonants, and that there were three genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter. Manners yawned, and left off cutting films, and departed, as Tom Merry conducted his pupil through the earliest pitfalls of the great language of Horace and Virgil.

The depths of Jim's ignorance on the subject astounded Tom Merry, but he was so keen, so intelligent, so docile, so grateful, that the hero of the Shell tried his very hardest to help him. The docility of Jim's character surprised Tom as much as anything else. Was this the reckless, swanking young blackguard he had been led to expect? It really seemed as if someone else had stepped into Lord Devigne's clothes on the way to the school—if such a thing had been possible.

"Thank you, sir," said Jim, when the lesson was over. "It's very kind of you, sir. I don't know how to tell you how good you are."

Tom Merry smiled.

"Rats!" he replied cheerfully. "As a matter of fact, it does a chap good to go over early ground again, so I score as well as you. If you want any more coaching I'll give you some time every day with pleasure till you get on."

Jim's eyes were moist.

"I'd like it, rather," he said, "but I don't want to impose on your kindness."

"Stuff!"

"Then I'll have another lesson as soon as I may, sir."

"Don't call me 'sir,' you young ass."

"Ay, ay! I forgot."

"I'll give you a quarter of an hour before we go to bed, and see how much of all that you remember," said Tom Merry.

Jim's eyes sparkled.

"You'll see that I remember it all," he said. "Can I keep the book for a bit?"

"Yes; shove it in your pocket."

And Jim shoved the book in his pocket, and left the study with a bright face. Manners and Lowther came in, and found Tom Merry with a thoughtful wrinkle on his brow.

"Well, how has the giddy lesson gone?" yawned Lowther.

"All serene."

"Like your pupil?"

"Very much. But—"

"But he's a slacker, eh?" asked Monty, with a grin.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I've never seen anybody less like a slacker," he said. "Not at all that. He's so keen to learn that he simply staggers a chap."

"Well, that's not what we heard about him," said Manners. "I had it from D'Arcy that he was a slacker of the first water, and a regular boulder into the bargain."

"Well, he's not a slacker or a boulder either. If he wasn't what I know him to be, I should think he was a poor man's son who'd never had any chance of education, and was keen on getting some," said Tom Merry. "I suppose that's impossible, as he's the son of an earl, but I can't understand Lord Westmoor's son being neglected in this way. It's a giddy puzzle."

And Tom Merry shook his head over it, and gave it up.

CHAPTER 9.

Lots of Latin.

"YOU amaze me, Mr. Linton!"

Dr. Holmes was looking at the master of the Shell in surprise. Mr. Linton was seated in his study, some time after his peculiar interview with Jim Brown.

"I was amazed myself, sir," said Mr. Linton. "I have never been so surprised. If the boy had not come here in a way that placed his identity beyond a shadow of doubt, I should really think that some joke was being played, and that he was not really the son of Lord Westmoor at all."

"That is, of course, impossible."

"Yes; he has his box, and his linen is marked, and D'Arcy presented him to me as his relation. But I am astounded. The boy's ignorance is utterly without end. He knows nothing—nothing that might not be known by any boy in the street with hardly any education at all."

"It is shocking! He must have been dreadfully neglected."

"Shockingly neglected! He must have run utterly wild. Even his way of speaking is dreadfully uncultured—he drops his aspirates even."

The Head of St. Jim's looked distressed.

"Not exactly a suitable boy to send here," he said, "but I should not care to refuse Lord Westmoor's son. But if that is his state he cannot go into the Shell."

"Yet to put so big a boy among the very small juniors would be absurd, sir."

"Yes, I fear so."

"This is really no place for him. He requires a tutor to prepare him in private to take his place in a public school."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"Quite so. But as he is here—"

"As he is here, I really do not know what is to be done, sir. He is certainly not fit to take his place in the Shell."

"Perhaps some private coaching would help him on. Some of the prefects might take him in hand—I am sure Kilbarr or Darrel would find a little time. After all, if the poor lad has been so dreadfully neglected he is an object of pity, and should be helped in every possible way, Mr. Linton."

"I agree with you," said the master of the Shell—after quite a pause, however. "It is a most extraordinary state of affairs, but certainly we must do the best we can for the boy now that he is here."

"I leave him in your hands, Mr. Linton."

"I will do my best, sir."

Mr. Linton quitted the Head's study. The Shell master's brow was puckered in a frown. The strange state of affairs worried him considerably. As he passed down the Form-room passage he caught sight of a diminutive figure on a seat in a window recess.

Mr. Linton paused, and looked.

It was Jim.

He was seated there, a book in his hands, devouring the contents, so busy that he did not observe the Form-master. He was mumbling to himself, and Mr. Linton caught a few of the mumbled words.

"The Latin language has six cases, nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, ablative."

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Linton.

He looked hard at the boy.

Mr. Linton was a very keen gentleman, and not to be easily imposed upon, and he knew the old dodge of deep youths of assuming extremely studious airs when a master was likely to pass.

But there was nothing of that sort with Jim now. He was so deep in his work that he did not see or hear the Form-master.

Mr. Linton passed on without speaking to him, but strangely touched by what he had seen. Surely if ever a lad deserved to be helped over the rocky path of education this was the lad.

Jim, quite unconscious of the fact that the Form-master had passed at all, went on wrestling with the elements of Latin.

He was still busily engaged when several juniors came along, and their voices interrupted his study.

"Weally, Blake, I weally wefuse to come and play chess. I'm lookin' for my relation."

"Oh, blow your relation!" said Blake crossly. "I tell you you're jolly well going to play chess! You beat me by accident last evening—"

"I uttaly wefuse to have it wegarded as an accident! I had you mated quite easily—"

"Rats! If I had moved my rook instead of my bishop—"

"But you moved the bish., old man!"

"Yes; but if I hadn't—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Herries. "I'll tell you what—come down to the kennels with me, and I'll show you Towser begging for biscuits."

Blake and D'Arcy turned withering looks upon Herries.

"You uttaly ass!" said D'Arcy.

"Better than your rotten chess, anyway! You should just see Towser—"

"Oh, blow Towser!" said Blake. "After D'Arcy getting the mate quite by accident, of course, I'm going to play him again, and show him that he can't play chess!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"So come on, you ass!"

"I'm thinkin' of my relation. Of course, he's a hawwid jammy boundah, but blood is thickah than—"

"Jam?"

"Don't be an ass, Blake! Blood is thickah than watah, and I'm bound to stand by my relation!"

"Look here, your giddy relation is getting on all right without you!"

"Weally—"

"My hat! There he is—reading, all the time!"

The three juniors stopped before Jim. The new boy in the Shell looked at them and nodded, with a grin.

"I'm all serene!" he remarked.

"Bai Jove! What on earth are you reading?"

"First steps in Latin, by Jingo!" said Jack Blake, with a whistle. "What on earth are your mugging into that for, kid?"

"I'm learning."

"Learning what?"

"Latin."

"My only Panama hat!"

"It's a dead language!" said Jim, somewhat proudly.

"It was spoken by the Romans, and it has twenty-five letters in the alphabet."

"Go hon!"

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WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

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"There are six cases—the nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and ablative," Jim volunteered.

"Weally, Devigne—"

"There are two numbers—singular and plural—"

"Bai Jove!"

"The substantive is declined by number and by case."

"My hat!"

"Taking the first declension, you will find that the nominative singular ends in 'a' and the genitive in 'æ,'" said Jim.

"Thanks!" said Digby. "I found that a long time ago—before I was in the Fourth!"

And Digby walked away.

"Mensa, a table," went on Jim enthusiastically. "There being no article in Latin, mensa may mean a table or the table."

"Pile it on, old son!"

"Nominative, mensa, a table; genitive, mensæ, of a table; dative, mensæ, to or for a table—"

"Mad, of course!" said Blake. "It seems to be raining lunatics lately! There was that chap the other day, and there's Gussy—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And now there's this chap! I'm fed up!"

And Blake followed in Digby's footsteps. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, filled with the idea that he must stand by his relation, blood being thicker than water, or any of the liquids Blake had humorously enumerated, remained.

"Devigne, deah boy—" he started.

"Accusative, mensam, a table," said Jim; "vocative, mensa, O table; ablative, mensa, by, with, or from a table."

"Weally—"

"That's the singular. Now for the plural—"

"Look here, Devigne—"

"Mense, nominative, tables," said Jim, unheeding; "genitive, mensarum, of tables; dative, mensis, to or for tables—"

"You uttah ass—"

"Accusative, mensas, tables—"

"You are wight off your silly wockah!"

"Vocative, mense, O tables—"

D'Arcy walked away down the passage. He had had enough. Floating after him came the voice of the new boy, in a kind of chant:

"Ablative, mensis, by, with, or from tables."

Jim was getting on with his Latin.

CHAPTER 10.

The Wai's Progress.

LORD DEVIGNE, to give him the name which he bore at St. Jim's, without anyone suspecting that it was not his own, made quite a sensation in the Shell Form.

When he took his place in class in the morning, Mr. Linton, knowing what to expect, passed over him very lightly.

But he could not prevent the boy from showing his astounding ignorance of all subjects dealt with in the curriculum at St. Jim's.

The Shell fellows were amazed.

To hear a chap, whose father was in the House of Lords, dropping his "h's" in the most reckless way was astounding. To discover that, up to the previous day, he had never known that there was such a language as Latin, staggered them.

Lord Westmoor was too busy a politician to have much time to waste on his son. Lady Westmoor was supposed to be an invalid. Yet even so, it was hard to account for the viscount having been neglected in this way.

Had Jim been a poor boy, had he been without relations or influence, it is very probable that his strange ignorance and his curious manners would have caused a set to be made against him.

But ignorance was pardonable in the son of an earl! If the viscount had learned nothing, at all events, it was not because his people couldn't afford to pay for him to be taught, as Crooke, of the Shell, put it.

And that propitiated Crooke and fellows like Crooke. There was plenty of money in the Westmoor family, and two or three titles, and so Jim glowed with rosy light, as it were, in the eyes of the tuft-hunters.

Crooke was very nice to him—as nice as the end of the Shell knew how to be—and Levison and Mellish, of the Fourth, chased him uphill and down dale, so to speak.

But Jim did not take to them.

He liked Tom Merry better than anybody else, and Tom Merry's chums—he rather took to D'Arcy, and he liked Figgins & Co., of the New House.

But the black sheep of the Lower School he did not take to.

at all, and all the blandishments of Crooke & Co. were in vain.

And as soon as Crooke & Co. discovered that—and Jim put it bluntly enough—their regard changed to dislike—and they consoled themselves by sneering at the new boy's ignorance and at his defective pronunciation.

Which Jim did not mind in the least.

Some of the best fellows at St. Jim's had taken to him in the friendliest way, and with their friendship Jim was satisfied.

It was curious how soon he had dropped into his new way of life.

After the first surprise was over, he felt as if he had lived the part for a long time, and certainly as if he would like to go on living it.

And why not?

Lord Devigne had changed with him of his own free will; indeed, had asked him as a favour to make the change.

Surely Jim was justified in taking what had been given him freely, or, rather, had been thrust upon him.

At all events, he thought so now. Other considerations might come in later, but for the present he was too busy picking his difficult path to be able to give much thought to the future.

Even if the worst came to the worst, and he had to leave, at all events he would be able first to realise part of his darling ambition—to leave St. Jim's with his education at least commenced, and with some knowledge of how to continue it.

That would be so much clear gain, whatever happened afterwards.

And Jim stuck to his work with a diligence that could not fail to gain the attention, and win the sympathy, of the masters.

Tom Merry helped him in leisure hours, and other fellows, when they saw how keen he was to learn, lent a hand also.

Manners took him in geography, Tom Merry in classics, and Kerr, of the New House, in mathematics. Kerr was a terror at maths., as Figgins said, and he was quite willing to impart his knowledge to the new boy. And the strides the new fellow made amazed Kerr, who was quick at learning, himself.

"Blessed if I can make that chap out," Kerr confided gravely to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, a day or two later.

"What chap, deah boy?" asked the swell of St. Jim's.

"Your cousin."

"He is not exactly my cousin, deah boy—"

"Well, whatever he is, then. He's awfully clever."

"Weally, is he?"

"Picks things up very quickly, and remembers them, too. He's got brains, you know."

D'Arcy smiled placidly.

"It wuns in the family, you know," he remarked.

Kerr stared.

"What does?"

"Bwains!"

"Rats! That's just what gets me!" said Kerr. "I naturally expected a relation of yours to be a silly ass—"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"And he turns out to be quite a brainy chap. He might be a Scotsman by the way he understands things at a glance!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Are you sure there ain't some mistake?" asked Kerr gravely. "I tell you the chap's got brains! Are you sure he's a relation of yours?"

And Kerr dodged away just in time to escape a drive from the indignant swell of St. Jim's.

Mr. Linton, when he mentioned the new boy to the Head again, mentioned him in terms which showed what a good impression Jim had made upon him.

"The boy is extraordinarily deficient in education, and extraordinarily keen upon supplying the deficiency, sir," he said. "The progress he has made in a few days is amazing."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mr. Linton."

"It is the strangest case I have ever known of!" said Mr. Linton. "I am giving the lad some private instruction in my study every day now, and other boys are helping him on in a really generous way. I think that in the long run Lord Devigne will be a credit to his Form."

"That will be a very gratifying report to send home to his father," said the Head, looking very pleased.

"Yes, indeed."

And Mr. Linton was very kind to Jim. The lad thrived under kindness, and after a week at St. Jim's his progress was so great that it amazed himself.

"How do you like it, kid?" Tom Merry asked him one morning, as the Shell came out of the Form-room after lessons.

Jim's eyes glowed.

"Oh, it's ripping!" he said.

"You like the lessons?"

"Lummy! Yes, rather!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I've never seen a swot quite so keen as you are," he said.

"Why, fellows don't work as you do, even when they're mugging up for an exam, and a big prize!"

"It's easy work to me, after what I've been used to," said Jim.

"Eh? What work have you done, then?"

Jim coloured. He had been thinking of the hard toil of a deck hand on board a tramp steamer on coasting work.

"Well, it's a big change," he said.

"Yes, I suppose it is. I understood that you had led a very idle life before you came to St. Jim's."

"I take to it all serene," said Jim. "I don't see how you chaps can think so much about cricket and tennis and rowing, when you might be getting on like steam with your work."

"My hat! Well, you are keen, and no mistake. When you've been at it a term or two, I expect you'll slacken down a bit," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Besides, cricket and tennis and rowing keep you fit, and in good condition to work."

"Ay, ay!"

"Come out for a run now—it will do you good."

Jim hesitated.

"I was going to do deponent verbs," he said.

"Ha, ha! Leave the deponent verbs over, and come and have a row—you need it, you're looking quite seedy with work."

"Oh, all serene!"

And Jim walked off with his arm linked in Tom Merry's.

CHAPTER 11.

Declined Without Thanks.

LEIVISON, of the Fourth, looked after the two juniors with an ugly frown.

"Looks jolly, don't it?" he sneered, turning to Mellish. "Tom Merry seems to have adopted the giddy viscount. Blessed tuft-hunter, I say."

"Of course, he's after his money, and crawling up to his titled relations," said Mellish.

"Yes, of course."

The two cads of the Fourth agreed with one another in words; though in their hearts they knew perfectly well that they were speaking falsely. Tom Merry would have made no distinction between the son of an earl and the son of a chimney-sweep. There was nothing snobbish about the hero of the Shell.

But it was a kind of pleasure to them to malign the fellow they disliked, and envied, and feared.

"It's rotten," went on Mellish. "When I heard what a reputation Devigne had, I thought he was exactly the fellow for us."

"So did I—I thought he was a chap like Lumley-Lumley—like Lumley-Lumley used to be, I mean, before he became goody-goody."

"Yes, and he must have jolly near as much money as Lumley-Lumley, besides being a lord," said Mellish. "It would have been a catch for us."

"Yes; but it hasn't come off."

"Those rotters have nobbled him," said Mellish. "I don't know what the chap means by all this swotting; it's not natural."

"It's a game of some kind, of course."

"I dare say it's a scheme to get into the good books of the masters and prefects, so that he won't be suspected, when he does break out," Mellish suggested.

Leivison nodded emphatically.

"My hat, I shouldn't wonder!" he exclaimed. "Of course, when you come to think of it, that's his game. He's taking Tom Merry in with the rest."

Mellish grinned.

"Then there's still a chance for us," he remarked.

"Yes, rather!"

Leivison thought it out, and he decided that Mellish had certainly hit upon the true explanation of a remarkable state of affairs. And Leivison determined to let the new boy know that he was discovered, and to suggest to him that it was time to take other fellows of the same kidney into his confidence.

Tom Merry and Jim came back from their row, looking very ruddy and healthy. After dinner, Jim went out with a book under his arm, and Leivison followed him.

Jim crossed the road, and crossed the ditch by the plank bridge, and entered the quiet, shady wood.

There, with the wind whistling in the branches over his head, and birds twittering round him, he sat down to wrestle with deponent verbs.

"Hallo!"

Jim started, and frowned a little as Leivison came up. The cad of the Fourth threw himself upon the deep, rich grass at the foot of the big tree where Jim was sitting.

He nodded to Jim, affecting not to see the knitting of his brows. The new junior was very far from pleased at being interrupted in his work, especially by Leivison of the Fourth.

"Well?" he said, as politely as he could.

"I want a little jaw with you, old man."

"Buck up, then, please," said Jim. "I've got a lot of work to do."

Leivison smiled sneeringly.

"Oh, we're alone here!" he said. "You needn't keep up that rot to me, you know."

Jim looked at him steadily.

"What rot?" he asked. "I don't understand you."

"Oh, ring off! I tell you it doesn't work with me," said Leivison impatiently. "The studios air for the masters is all right, and always carrying a Latin book round under one's arm looks well, I know. But you can't pull the wool over my eyes, and I don't see why you should want to, when I'm prepared to be your friend."

"I don't quite catch on."

"Look here, you used to have a giddy time—smoking and gambling, horses and cards, and so on," said Leivison. "I've heard all about it from more than one quarter."

The new boy smiled in a peculiar way.

"I've never had a very giddy time, as you call it," he said; "but supposing I had, what then?"

"Well, I know you are only lying low now, waiting for your chance," said Leivison. "You are playing a little game to pull the wool over the eyes of the powers that be. I know it, you see."

Jim laughed.

"Oh, you know that, do you?" he said.

"Yes, I know it quite well. So you may as well be candid with me," said Leivison. "I'm ready to be your friend. I, and two or three more, have a little plunge sometimes. I can introduce you into a nice little set at the Green Man in Rylcombe. We can have a gay time, if you like. What do you say?"

"No."

"You refuse?"

"Certainly."

Leivison's eyes gleamed with rage.

"Then what do you mean?" he exclaimed. "You don't want to join us. Does that mean that the Sixth have taken you up—Knox, and Sefton, and that lot?"

The new boy shook his head.

"It don't mean that anybody has taken me up," he said. "I simply don't want to do as you suggest. I've seen too much drunkenness ever to want to take to drink, and as for smoking, I'm not old enough. I have never gambled in my life, and I don't intend to. And it would be mean to deceive the Head, when he is so kind to us. That's all I've got to say."

"You—you puppy!" said Leivison huskily, hardly able to speak for rage. "You dare to lecture me!"

"I don't mean to lecture you; but I mean what I say—I'm not going to join your party. Besides, I haven't the time, I have work to do."

"Oh, don't tell lies!" said Leivison roughly. "I know that's only a blind."

Jim's eyes flashed.

"I'm not used to be called a liar," he said curtly. "You'd better get back. I don't want your company. That's plain enough, I 'ope."

"You 'ope," said Leivison, with a sneer. "Where did you leave your 'h's, you low cad?"

"Will you buzz off?"

Leivison rose to his feet.

"I know you're lying," he said, "it stands to reason you're lying; but you can't take me in, you confounded cad!"

Smack!

Jim's open hand caught Leivison across the face, and the cad of the Fourth reeled back. Jim's eyes blazed at him.

"You've been calling me some pretty names," said Jim.

"Now you can put up your hands, if you've got the pluck, you lubber."

Leivison came at him like a tiger. He was bigger than the new boy, and he meant to give the viscount a thrashing which should make him sorry he had refused the high honour of going on the "razzle" with Leivison & Co.

But small as he was, Jim was wiry and strong, and he had heaps of pluck.

He met Leivison's rush steadily, and in a moment they were going at it hammer and tongs. There was a shout from the wood.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jack Blake, coming on the scene.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 180.

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of

Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

"Chuck that! If you want to have a mill, why can't you have the gloves on?"

Neither of the combatants replied. They had closed now, and were grappling with one another, fighting furiously.

"Look here, I'll go and get you the gloves, and you're going to fight like decent chaps, not like giddy hooligans," shouted Blake.

And Blake ran off.

The two juniors seemed hardly to have heard him. Levison was in a furious and savage temper, and Jim's blood, too, was up. They fought furiously, hitting hard, and both of them getting pretty severe punishment.

"You low cad!"

"You lubber!"

"Take that!"

"And you take that!"

"Ow!"

There was a pattering of footsteps under the trees, and a crowd of juniors rushed up, with Blake at their head, and Tom Merry, carrying the boxing-gloves.

"Here you are!" shouted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Here are the gloves, deah boys."

There was no answer.

Levison and Jim were hitting out furiously; and as the juniors came up, Levison went rolling on the green sward, with a loud gasp.

Jim stood panting, waiting for him to rise.

But he did not!

The cad of the Fourth lay winded, gasping, bruised and beaten. He turned an evil eye upon Jim; but he did not attempt to rise.

"Are you done?" gasped Jim.

"Hang you! Yes. Hang you!"

"Too late for the blessed fun," growled Monty Lowther. "Next time you have a mill, young shaver, go into the gym, where we can watch you."

Jim grinned—a peculiar-looking grin, as his nose was swollen, his mouth cut, and his face spotted and lined with crimson.

"All serene!" he gasped.

"What was it about?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Oh, just a row!" said Jim.

And he said no more than that.

CHAPTER 12.

The Skipper.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stood at the gates of St. Jim's. It was the day after the fight in the wood, when Jim had shown his mettle, thereby considerably enhancing the respect the juniors had for him. He had given Levison a record licking, and it was agreed on all hands that Levison had wanted a licking for a long time. And although Jim said little or nothing, it was pretty clear to the chums of the School House what the row was about. Levison had hardly made a secret of his intention of gaining Lord Devigne as a member of the "fast set" in the Lower School, and it was pretty clear that it was upon this subject that the two had fallen out.

The chums of St. Jim's did not want any further proof that the new boy was a decent fellow. Whatever he had been before he came to St. Jim's, it was clear that he wanted to run straight now; and in that Tom Merry & Co. were prepared cordially to back him up.

D'Arcy was beginning to feel a little proud of his new relation. Jim still dropped his aspirates in a very extraordinary manner. His customs at table were not all that could be desired. But he was evidently a fine fellow, and as decent at heart as Arthur Augustus himself was.

D'Arcy was going out with Jim that afternoon, to buy a

cricket-bat, and he was waiting at the gates for the new boy to join him. Jim was with Mr. Linton, getting a little extra instruction, and D'Arcy had agreed to wait for him if he was late. Arthur Augustus occupied the time by polishing his eyeglass, which certainly did not need polishing.

"Ahoy, there!"

Arthur Augustus looked up in surprise.

A big, burly sailorman, in a peaked cap, looking like the mate or skipper of a coast-tramp, came rolling down the road from Rylcombe towards the school gates. Arthur Augustus looked at him with interest. Although St. Jim's was not very far from the coast, sailormen seldom came so far inland.

"Ahoy, young shaver!"

"Good-mornin'!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

He did not particularly like being addressed as "young shaver," but he was willing to make allowances for the freedom of sailormen's ways.

The burly man halted before the swell of St. Jim's, and looked past him at the school. From the gateway there was a view of the grey old buildings and porches with clinging ivy.

"Ahoy! Is this 'ere the school?" demanded the sailorman.

"This is St. Jim's, my good man."

"Ho! This is St. Jim's, is it? Then 'e's 'ere."

"Weally—"

"You don't know who I am, maybe," said the burly man. D'Arcy shook his head.

"I do not wemembah havin' met you before, my good sir," he said. "I twust I have not committed such a breach of mannahs as to forget a gentleman I have once been intowduced to. If so, I am extremewly sawwy."

"I'm Captain Ted Higgins, of the Nancy Jane."

"Yaas?"

"That's me," said Mr. Higgins, nodding his head—"that's me."

There was a distinct scent of strong rum as the skipper came closer to the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus backed away a little.

"Pway don't come so close, my deah sir," he expostulated.

"I am not at all deaf, and I can hear vewy well, you know."

"I'm Skipper Ted Higgins—"

"Yaas, you have already informed me of that. I am suah I am vewy pleased to make your acquaintance, my dear sir."

"I'm lookin' for 'im."

"Yaas?"

Arthur Augustus could see that the gallant captain had had a little too much rum before he started on his walk; or perhaps he had refreshed himself at wayside places en route—not wisely, but too well.

"E's 'ere," said the skipper, nodding his head confidentially. "He's 'ere."

"Is he weally?" said D'Arcy, without having the faintest idea what the skipper was driving at, but thinking it best to humour him.

"You bet! He's 'ere."

"Vewy well!"

"I've come to speak to him," said Mr. Higgins. "He was rather a young rip. You'll allow that?"

"Certainly."

"But I ain't goin' to see him shown up and done in without speakin' a word of warnin', all the same," said the skipper. "That's me—Ted Higgins."

"I am suah that is vewy considerate of you, Mr. Higgins," said Arthur Augustus, still humouring the stranger. "It would certainly be howwid for him to be shown up and done in without a word of warnin'—vewy howwid indeed."

"The other chap," said Mr. Higgins, "sailed on the Nancy Jane. He came down instead of Jim, and I took him on."

"GEM" FREE HAMPER WINNERS.

The boys marked with a X on the photographs on the back page of the "GEM" Library, No. 174, having sent in their applications, have duly received the "GEM" Free Hampers. The names and addresses of the lucky winners who attend Werneth Council School, Oldham, are as follows:

MASTER J. TOOLE, Homestead Garden, Suburbs, Oldham.

MASTER H. DUNFORD, 35, Millgate, Hollinwood, O.dham.

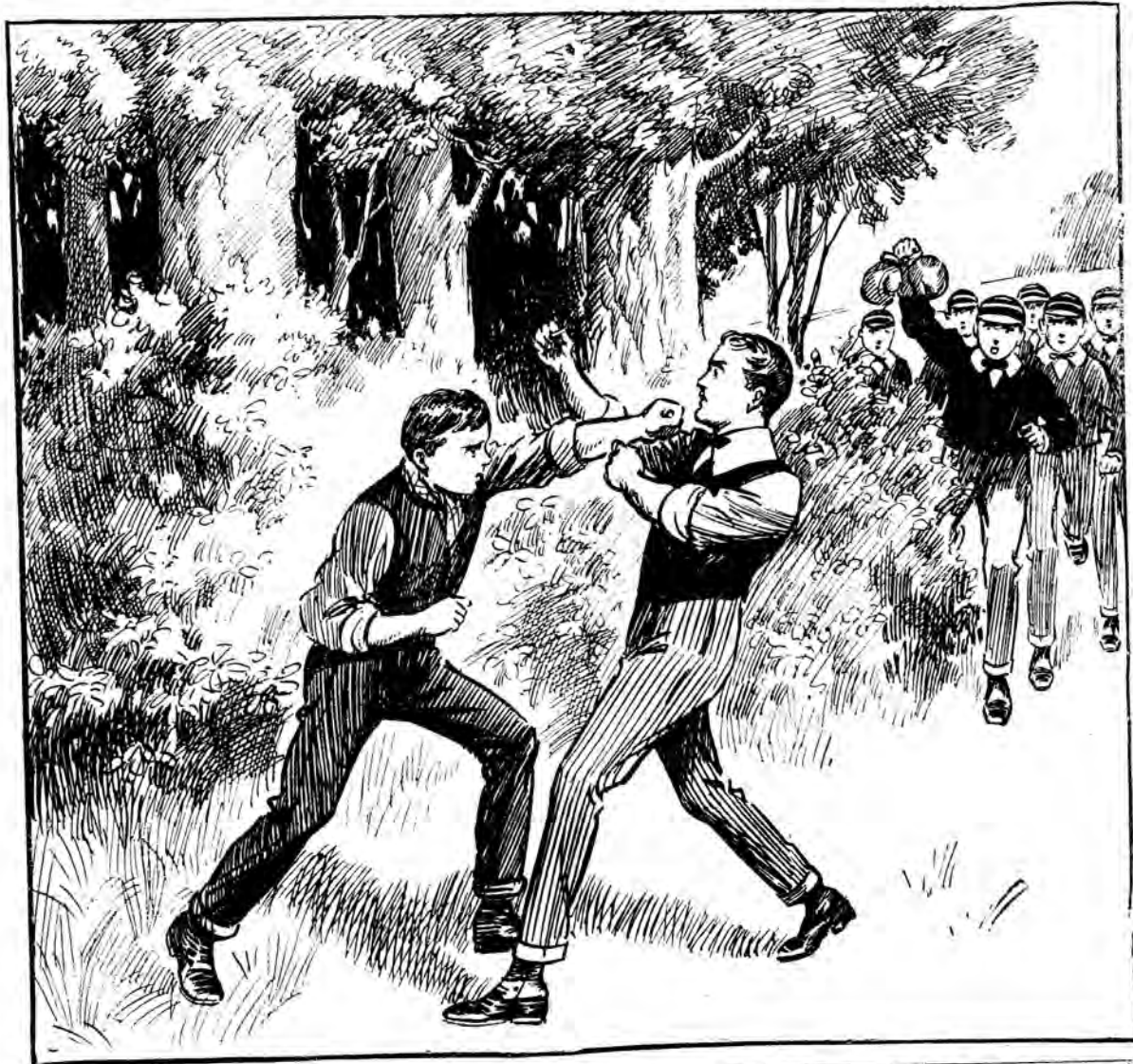
MASTER E. RICHARDS, 133, Lee Street, Oldham.

At the time of going to press the names and addresses of the other three winners of the "Gem" Free Hamper have not been identified by Our Representative.

The names of the two boys who attend Page Green School, Tottenham, and whose photographs were marked with X on the back page of the "Gem" Library No. 173, are as follows:

MASTER STANLEY BURNETT, 8, Cunningham Road, Broad Lane, South Tottenham.

MASTER H. LOVE, 11, Cunningham Road, Broad Lane, South Tottenham.



Jim and Levison were fighting furiously; there was a pattering of footsteps and a crowd of juniors rushed up, with Blake at their head, carrying the boxing-gloves. "Here you are," shouted Blake. "Here are the gloves!" (See page 14.)

"Weally!"

"Ay, ay! I took him on—and a lazy, slacking, spiteful, careless, insolent swab he was," said Mr. Higgins, with emphasis. "Tork about lazy scum—he took the cake, he did! He took my belt erround 'im, too, so I tell yer. At every port he wanted to bolt ashore—e'd 'ad enough of it. But I says to him, says I—'My fine gentleman,' I says, 'you came on the Nancy Jane to please yourself,' I says, 'and you'll stay on it to please me,' I says. 'I'll eddicate you afore I've done with you,' I says."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ay, ay! I put him through it—a slap for a back answer, and a belting for laziness, and it improved him wonderful," said Mr. Higgins. "You should 'ave seen the change in 'im afore we'd been coasting a week."

"Weally!"

It was all Greek to D'Arcy. He hadn't the faintest idea what the skipper was driving at, though the boy he was waiting for could have told him. Had not the gallant captain imbibed liquid refreshment so liberally that warm afternoon, he would not have confided all these particulars to the first chance stranger, especially as he had evidently come to the school with some hazy idea of doing Jim Brown a service. But the rum had been a little too much for the skipper's wits.

"I says to him, says I," went on the skipper, who was

gradually coming closer and closer to D'Arcy, and edging his way in—the swell of St. Jim's retreating from close contact with him, "I says to him, says I, 'you changed with the other chap of your own accord, accordin' to your story,' I says, 'and you'll stick this till we git back to Southampton,' I says."

"My deah sir—"

"And then," I says, 'I'll leave my mate instructions to keep you aboard,' I says, 'till I've 'ad time to go and warn Jim,' I says, 'so that he can get into the offing,' I says. 'E ain't goin' to be shown up by you,' I says, 'you spiteful young scoundrel,' I says."

"Bai Jove!"

"And that's 'ow it is," said Mr. Higgins, beaming upon D'Arcy with an expansive and odorous smile. "That's the course, sir. You savvy?"

"Weally, I don't quite undahstand, but it's weally of no consequence. Good-afthnoon!"

"But I've come 'ere to see Jim."

"Weally—"

"Where is 'e?"

"My deah sir—"

"That young bouncer is comin' back, you see," the skipper explained. "He's as full of spite and malice as an egg is of meat; and I must say that he's been through it while he's been aboard with me. Course why, I've been larnin' him."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 180.

"I'm sure that was vewy pwaiseworthy of you my deah sir—"

"Now I want to see Jim. I'm goin' to see Jim."

D'Arcy looked round helplessly. He could only imagine that the rum had so influenced the skipper of the Nancy Jane, that he imagined that some old shipmate of his was at the school. Indeed, it was possible that he mistook St. Jim's for a public-house, in the hazy state his mind was in.

Arthur Augustus wondered how he was to get rid of the man.

"Where's Jim?" demanded the skipper, his voice rising.

"Weally, my deah sir—"

D'Arcy looked round for help. A junior was coming towards him from the School House, with a book under his arm. D'Arcy waved his hand to him, and the new boy at St. Jim's looked at him quickly, and caught sight of the skipper. Captain Ted Higgins was mopping his heated brow with a red handkerchief, and did not see him.

For a moment Jim stood still, petrified, as he recognised his old skipper.

Then he darted out of sight behind a buttress.

D'Arcy viewed this proceeding with amazement. But he had no time to think about it; the skipper had finished mopping his brow, and was talking again.

"Take me to Jim," he said. "I've got a good cargo aboard, but I can follow a course, you being the pilot, you see. Heave ahead!"

"My deah sir—"

"Look 'ere!" roared the skipper. "Where's Jim? What I says is, where's the boy? Tell him he can come back to the Nancy Jane if he likes—he's all right."

"Weally—" said D'Arcy feebly.

Jim's pale face looked out from behind the buttress. Then it disappeared; as the new boy trod cautiously away.

Captain Higgins was growing excited now. He clenched a big, hairy fist.

"Look 'ere," he roared, "I want to speak to Jim!"

"Pway don't make a wow, my deah sir—oh!"

Arthur Augustus staggered back as a big fist was brandished in his face.

"Bai Jove!"

"Where's Jim?"

"Gweat Scott! Help!"

Kildare of the Sixth ran up, and Taggles, the porter, came along. The skipper glared at them, evidently quite prepared for war.

"What on earth are you doing here?" exclaimed Kildare.

"Get outside the gates at once!"

"I've come to see Jim!"

"Jim who?"

"Jim Brown—my shipmate, Jim Brown."

Kildare laughed good-humouredly.

"Well, your shipmate Jim Brown isn't here," he said.

"You're much more likely to find him at the Green Man, down the road. Come, come, sir, you can't stay in here, really you can't!"

The skipper blinked at him uncertainly.

"Jim Brown ain't 'ere, ain't he?" he asked.

"No, he certainly isn't. There's isn't a fellow of that name in the whole place, I give you my word," said Kildare.

"Then he's gone."

"Well, he's not here."

"Then I can't warn 'im about the other chap?"

"No," said Kildare, laughing; "you can't. This way out."

"If you see him, you'll tell him old Ted Higgins came to see him, and he's welcome to come back to the Nancy Jane, and we sail ter-morrer."

"I'll tell him with pleasure—if I see him."

"Thank you kindly, young gent. P'raps you'll come erlong to the Green Man and 'ave a rum with me."

Kildare grinned.

"Not just now," he said. "Thank you very much, but I can't—just now! Good-bye!"

"So-long! Don't forget my signals to Jim Brown if you see him."

"Right-ho!"

And the gallant skipper went rolling down the road, leaving Kildare grinning in the gateway of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 13.

Arthur Augustus is a Little Particular.

JIM touched Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lightly on the arm, as the swell of St. Jim's went into the School House. D'Arcy was still looking very flustered.

"Bai Jove! I've been waiting for you," said D'Arcy.

"Why didn't you come?"

"Sorry! But—"

"I have had a most excitin' expewience," said D'Arcy.

"A big, howwid man smellin' of wum vewy neahly committid assult and battewy on me—weally."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 180.

Read the Grand, Complete School Tale of Harry W. Barton & Co., entitled:

"A SCHOOLBOY'S CROSS-ROADS," in this week's "MAGNET" LIBRARY. 10.

"What did he want?" asked Jim.

"He was talkin' a lot of wot—about a shipmate named Jim Brown who was here—and sayin' that Jim could go back to the Nancy Jane if he liked," said D'Arcy. "Of course, the wuffian was intoxicated."

Jim grinned a little.

"He always could shift it," he remarked.

"Eh! Have you seen the man before, then?"

Jim coloured.

"I'm ready to go out, if you are, D'Arcy," he said. "We shall have to buck up now."

"Vewy well; come on."

During the walk to the village Jim learned all he could of what the sea-captain had said to D'Arcy. But it was evident that Ted Higgins had not given him away. Jim gathered that he had talked a great deal about some "other chap," and who the other chap was Jim, of course, guessed easily enough. But the captain had not come with hostile intent, and he was sailing again on the following day, and from that Jim took comfort.

For the lad had quite fallen into the ways of St. Jim's now; and if exposure had come, and he had been compelled to leave, it would have been a bitter blow to him.

He had feared rather injudiciousness than malice on the part of the skipper; but he was glad that he was gone. On the part of the real Lord Devigne he feared nothing.

It did not even occur to Jim that the viscount might repent of his bargain, and callously undo it, as he could with a word.

If Jim had made a compact of his own free will, he would have stood by it through thick and thin. He had not learned much in his rough life as a sailor lad, but he had learned that.

That a fellow would break through a solemn compact, made by his own wish, and bring unhappiness upon another who had trusted him—that was not one of the things Jim's way of life had led him to expect.

And with the captain of the Nancy Jane safely gone, Jim's brief alarm subsided, and he felt secure again.

The five pounds Lord Devigne had given him was still mostly in his pockets. Jim was a careful lad with his money. He was expending some of it now on the purchase of a cricket-bat, under the sage counsel of D'Arcy, and he felt considerably elated as he walked back to St. Jim's with the bat under his arm.

Of cricket Jim knew little, but he was eager to learn, though he placed sports second to "swotting," in that differing from most of the other fellows, who put outdoor games first on the list.

Tom Merry had promised to coach him in cricket, and Jim was keen to begin. And that afternoon, after lessons, he started, and acquitted himself very creditably. Tom Merry patted him on the shoulder as they walked back from the nets.

"You'll get on like anything if you stick to it," he said. "I shouldn't wonder if you have a chance for the juniors eleven by the end of the term."

Jim's eyes glistened.

"Lummy," he ejaculated, "that would be spiffin'!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and turned it upon the new junior.

"Pway excuse me, Devigne," he remarked. "I would not think of offewin' instruction, of course, to a fellow of my own age; but would you mind sayin' wippin' instead of spiffin'?"

"Lummy!" said Jim.

"And if you don't weally mind, you might say 'My hat!' or 'Bai Jove!' instead of lummy," suggested Arthur Augustus. "It would weally get much less on my nerves, you know. I'm sure you don't mind my mentionin' it."

"Crikey!"

"Ow!"

"What's the matter?" asked Jim, in astonishment.

"That howwid, vulgah word gwates on my nerves like—like a nutmeg on a gwatah," said Arthur Augustus. "Would you mind sayin' 'Gweat Scott' instead?"

"Anything to oblige," said Jim. "You're mighty particular, that's all. But I don't mind, s'long as you're 'appy."

"Eh!"

"What's the hoddas," said Jim philosophically, "so long as you're 'appy'?"

D'Arcy shuddered.

"Of course, I weally wouldn't think of cowwectin' a chap," he said. "Cowwectin' anybody is pwiggish, and in weally bad taste. But if you wouldn't mind leavin' out the 'h's' where Pwovidence nevah intended them to be, as in the word odd—"

"Lummy!"

"And if you wouldn't mind soundin' the spiwitus aspah in the word 'happy'—"

"The what?"

"The wuff bweathin', I mean, commonly called the aspiwate," said D'Arcy. "It is just as easy to say 'happy'."

as to say 'appy,' and it's weally much more comfy to listen to."

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "Look here, why shouldn't Jim drop the front letter of a word, if you drop the final one?"

"Weally, Tom Mewry—"

"I don't see that it's any worse to drop an initial 'h' than to drop a final 'g,' as far as that goes."

"Weally, you ass—"

"Rats!"

"It's orlright," said Jim, "I'm goin' to do my best; but, lummy, it's hard! That's wot it is, you know—'ard!"

"Sry hard, you chump!"

"Hard, you chump!" said Jim innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hard you chump!" yelled the juniors.

And Arthur Augustus sniffed, and gave up his attempts to improve his relation for that occasion.

CHAPTER 14.

Denounced!

TAGGLES, the porter, sat outside his lodge in the pleasant sunset. Taggles was feeling very comfortable. Most of his work was over, and he had taken advantage of the fact that Mrs. Taggles was busy in the tuckshop, to sample the contents of a green bottle he kept behind the clock in his little parlour. Taggles, feeling very happy, and smelling slightly of gin, sunned himself and was content.

It was not yet time to close and lock the school gates, but Taggles was ready to do it and he intended to take a well-earned rest till that time. He was blinking towards the gates, and wondering hazily whether he should sit there and rest, or whether it was worth the effort to pay another visit to the green bottle behind the clock. He was turning it over in his mind, when a figure entered at the gates of the school.

Taggles sat bolt upright.

The figure was that of a boy of about fifteen, in rough sailor clothes, stained with tar and grease, and the dust of travel. He had a stick and a bundle in his hand, and had evidently tramped far on a dusty road.

His face was not over clean, being clotted with perspiration and covered with dust, and its expression was not prepossessing.

The brow was wrinkled in an ugly frown, the eyes were gleaming with bad temper, and the lips looked as if they were snarling.

A more unpleasant specimen of a youthful tramp Taggles had never looked upon.

The boy came in at the gates of the school as if he belonged there, and Taggles viewed that proceeding with amazement and indignation.

"Hi, you there!" he shouted.

The stranger glanced towards him.

"Well?" he rapped out.

"Houtside!"

"Eh?"

"Get hout!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" said the stranger. "I'm coming in."

"My honly 'at!" muttered Taggles.

He jumped up, and placed his bulky form in the path of the new-comer. The boy stopped, looking at the school porter with a venomous glitter in his eyes.

"You just go hout!" said Taggles, pointing to the gates.

"Hout you go! You 'ear me?"

"Oh, get out of the way!"

"Wot?"

"Let me pass!"

Taggles smiled unpleasantly. He had not the slightest doubt that he had to deal with an unusually cheeky specimen of a tramp, and Taggles was annoyed. He did not like his repose being disturbed, and he did not like the wayfarer's insolence.

"You 'ear me?" he said emphatically. "Tramps ain't allowed in 'ere. There ain't nothing to be give away. You get hout!"

"Tramps, you old fool! I'm not a tramp."

Taggles simply staggered.

"W-a-a-what!" he gasped. "What did you call me?"

"Old fool—old idiot! Get out of the way!" said the other savagely.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Taggles.

"Will you let me pass?" shouted the lad.

"I rather think not, you cheeky young scoundrel!" said Taggles. "Hout you go! You march straight hout, or I'll kick you through the gates. You 'ear me?"

"Don't be a fool," said the boy. "I'm not a tramp. I belong here, and I'm coming in. Get out of the way!"

"I'm blowed! I never 'eard anything like this—never!"

The stranger attempted to push past Taggles. The big, strong hand of the school porter closed on his shoulder. The boy's eyes blazed with rage. It was pretty clear that he had a savage and violent temper, which he never even tried to control.

"Let me go!" he shouted.

"Not that I knows on," said Taggles.

And, exerting his strength, he dragged the boy to the gates. The lad kicked savagely at his shins, and Taggles uttered a cry of anguish.

"Oh! Ow! Oh!"

"Now let me go, you old fool!"

Taggles did not let him go, but with his disengaged hand he boxed the lad's ears till they rang again, and pitched him out into the road. The youthful tramp rolled over in the dust, spitting with rage like a cat. Taggles proceeded in a leisurely way to close the gates, limping a little as he did so.

The boy staggered up in the road.

He came back towards Taggles, his eyes blazing with rage and hate and malice, and every evil feeling.

"I tell you I must come in!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice. "I belong to this school."

Taggles sniggered.

"New boy, I serpose?" he remarked. "New boys generally come to this 'ere college in that state, with a stick and a bundle—I don't think!"

"Yes, I am a new boy."

"Har, har, har!" chortled Taggles, as he closed the gates and proceeded to insert the ponderous key in the lock. "Har, har, har! I don't think! He, he!"

"You old idiot!"

"Oh, pile it on!" said Taggles. "You'll be run in by a policeman afore you're much holder, that's one comfort."

"I belong to this school—"

"Go hon!"

"My name's Lord Devigne."

"What?"

"I'm Lord Devigne."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Taggles in amazement.

"When I knows Lord Devigne as well as I knows Master Merry or Master Figgins. Well, I'm blowed!"

"I'm Lord Devigne!" howled the boy, shaking the bars of the gate from the outside in passionate wrath.

"Har, har, har!"

"I tell you the fellow who came here as Lord Devigne isn't me—isn't Lord Devigne at all, I mean. I'm Lord Devigne."

"Well, you do it well," said Taggles admiringly. "You orter to go hon the stage. I suppose you belong to a show, hey?"

"I tell you I am Lord Devigne. I changed clothes in the train, the day I came here, with a sailor lad called Jim Brown. I'm going to change back now."

"Pile it on!"

"I tell you I'm speaking the truth!" shrieked the boy.

"Take me to your headmaster. I will prove it to him."

"Go it!"

Lord Devigne shook the gate in mad anger. Taggles was laughing loudly, very much amused by the preposterous claim of the stranger.

"Will you let me in?" shrieked the viscount.

Taggles shook his head.

"Which I won't let your sort into 'ere, if I knows it!" he replied. "Your proper place is a reformatory, young feller-me-lad! What you want is a dose of the treadmill, and that's my opinion!"

"Let me in!"

Taggles turned the key in the lock.

"If I let you in, I should give you a licking for your cheek," he said. "Go away! My word, I believe you've been drinking! You'd better be careful, or you'll get run in this 'ere evening!"

"I must come in!"

"Oh, run along!" said Taggles impatiently.

"I tell you—"

"Sure you ain't made a mistake?" asked Taggles, with heavy sarcasm. "You ain't the Duke of Westminster, by any chance, are you?"

"I am Lord Devigne."

"You don't appen to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, I suppose?" pursued Taggles, in a fine vein of irony.

"I tell you I am Lord Devigne!" shrieked the viscount.

"The other fellow is a liar—an impostor—a thief! I am Viscount Devigne!"

"Make it Duke while you're about it," Taggles suggested.

ANSWERS

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

"Why not say you're the Prince of Wales? I should be just as likely to let you in."

The boy spluttered and spat with rage. His look was like that of a wild cat. He raged at the gate, shaking the bars passionately, while Taggles turned and tramped back to his lodge, without deigning to look back at him once.

"Most peccoliar tramp," said Taggles to Dame Taggles as he went in—"most peccoliar indeed! A meer kid, and been drinking! What do you think of that? And howling out that he's a lord, or a duke, or something! Ha, ha, ha!"

The boy outside the gates shook at the bars savagely till Taggles disappeared into his lodge. Then he ceased, choking with rage.

"Hang him—hang him!" he muttered. "I must get in—I must get in! The headmaster will believe me—he must believe me! He cannot believe that that uneducated young ruffian is Lord Devigne, when I confront him! Oh, what a fool I've been—what a fool! But I'll make that low cad suffer for it!"

The amiable viscount, whose heart was seething with hatred of the boy who had personated him—though at his own request—passed along the school wall, looking for a likely place to climb over.

In a place where the ivy grew thickly, and hung down over the road, he climbed easily enough, and in a couple of minutes dropped down inside the school wall.

He drew a deep breath.

He was within the school grounds. It only remained to find the impostor and denounce him, and state his case to the headmaster. Punishment might await him, but that was nothing compared with what he had been through. For his week on board the Nancy Jane, under the hard-listed skipper, Captain Ted Higgins, had been like a nightmare of horror to the spoiled and petted viscount.

He had not known what to expect when he changed places with Jim Brown, and he had not known how to make the best of his new lot. He had been as insolent and idle on board the Nancy Jane as in his father's house at Westmoor Park. And Skipper Ted Higgins had made him simply squirm.

Blows and hard words, hard words and blows—that was the programme—until the viscount learned to curb his insolent tongue, and to turn to work with the other hands. It was an experience that Lord Devigne was not likely to forget if he lived to a patriarchal age.

It had done him little good. Only it had embittered his temper, and filled him with a savage longing to be revenged upon somebody. Utterly unreasonably and unjustly, he had come to look upon Jim Brown as the cause of his woes, and he was looking forward with spiteful eagerness to denouncing him at the school as an impostor, and getting him kicked out in disgrace from St. Jim's.

With these thoughts in his mind, the viscount looked about him, and having got his bearings, started for the School House.

A crowd of boys were just coming out, and they stopped in surprise to look at the strange, roughly-clad figure.

Lord Devigne's eyes blazed as he caught sight of a familiar face among them—the face of Jim Brown.

He sprang forward, his right hand raised to point.

"That's the cad! You fellows, I'm Lord Devigne, and that fellow is a liar and impostor!" he shrieked.

CHAPTER 15.

A Cad's Triumph.

JIM BROWN stood on the steps of the School House petrified.

The blow had fallen with the suddenness of summer lightning, and he had not had a second to prepare for it.

But for his unfortunate weakness for rum, Captain Ted Higgins might have succeeded in conveying a warning to the unfortunate lad; but he had not succeeded.

Jim was taken utterly by surprise.

He stood staring blankly at the viscount, his brows contracted, his eyes gleaming wildly, his heart thumping against his ribs.

He was betrayed!

This wretched fellow had gone back on his bargain, and he was betrayed—exposed—ruined! All was over!

Those thoughts came hammering through the unhappy lad's brain.

All was over!

He could not speak. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. His eyes were fixed upon the viscount, as the eyes of an unhappy bird might be fixed upon the serpent about to devour it.

Lord Devigne's face blazed with triumph. He had expected denial, defiance, a struggle on the part of the fellow

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who was sailing under false colours. He had anticipated having to prove his identity. But it was evident that he had little or no resistance to look for.

There was a buzz round Jim, but he did not hear it. He seemed to be stunned, lost to his surroundings. Tom Merry shook him by the arm.

"Do you hear what this chap says, Devigne?"

Jim did not reply.

"Devigne!" shrieked the viscount. "You call him Devigne! I tell you I am Lord Devigne—I! He is a liar—an impostor!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the infuriated viscount. "Bai Jove, I must say that that is an extraordinary statement! And even if appearances were not against you, I should strongly doubt that you were a welation of mine. It is howwibly bad form to fly into a wage, and you are actin' like a howwid black-guard, whethah you are in the wight or the w'ong."

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther.

The viscount shrieked again:

"I tell you—"

"Hold on!" said Jack Blake. "Let's hear what the fellow has to say. Of course, there can't be anything in it."

"Of course not, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "It's all uttah wot, of course!"

"Kick him out!" said Herries.

"I tell you I am Lord Devigne!" yelled the viscount. "Ask that hound. He won't deny it."

"If you're Lord Devigne, what are you doing in those clothes?" asked Tom Merry.

"And what is this chap doing here in these?" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Devigne panted for breath.

"I'll tell you," he said. "It was my idea. I was sent to school against my will. I didn't want to come, and I couldn't bolt without being followed. I suggested to that cad to change clothes with me in the train and come on here in my name, while I went to Southampton as Jim Brown, to go to sea."

"Bai Jove!"

"And did you?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder.

"Yes. I went to Southampton and shipped on a horrible tramp steamer called the Nancy Jane, with a fearful ruffianly beast called Ted Higgins for captain."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy, remembering his visitor.

"Was Ted Higgins a big, wuff chap, with a big beard and a voice like a megaphone?"

"Yes."

"Gweat Scott! It's the same chap, then!"

"I've been a week on that horrible steamer," went on the viscount. "What I've gone through is unspeakable, among the low brutes. I only got away this afternoon. The skipper had left orders with his mate to keep me on board till he'd had time to come here and warn Jim Brown that I was returning."

"Bai Jove!"

"I'll make them all suffer for it!" said the viscount, grinding his teeth. "When I'm of age I'll use my money and influence to ruin that captain, and to get all his crew punished, somehow."

Tom Merry's lip curled.

"You utter, rotten cad!" he said. "If that's the sort of brute you are, I hope you got a good few lickings while you were on the steamer."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The viscount gritted his teeth.

"And you've repented of your bargain, then, as you've come back?" asked Jack Blake, forced against his will to believe that the strange story was true.

"I've changed my mind."

"Then what have you got your rotten back up against this lad for?" Tom Merry exclaimed. "He only appears to have done what you asked him to do."

"I hate the low cad! I hate all of them! As for him, he shall be kicked out of the school!"

"Cad!"

"Worm!"

"Rotter!"

The viscount's eyes flamed defiance as these uncomplimentary remarks were hurled at him.

"Where is the headmaster?" he exclaimed. "I am going to see him, and expose that low cad. I'll soon show him!"

Tom Merry turned to the unhappy junior beside him.

Jim's face was deadly pale.

There was perspiration in large and heavy clots on his brow, and his mouth was drawn tight, as if in physical pain.

"Is this true, old lad?" said Tom Merry softly.

Jim's lips moved, and he tried to speak; but no words came. The juniors looked at him in silence.

"If it's true, tell us," said Tom Merry. "It would account for a lot of things we couldn't understand; but it

won't make us think badly of you, kid. You didn't do right in coming here under false colours, but you've been a thousand times better than that utter cad, who got you into this and has now rounded on you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is it true, kid?"

Jim's voice was broken and husky as he answered at last.

"It's true."

The words were almost inaudible, and only a few of the fellows caught them.

"What does he say?" exclaimed Clifton Dane.

"He says it's true."

The viscount sneered triumphantly.

"Now kick the cad out!" he exclaimed.

Smack!

The back of Jack Blake's hand came with a mighty swipe across the sneering mouth of the viscount, and he sat down at the foot of the steps with a gasp of rage.

CHAPTER 16.

Not Wanted.

LORD DEVIGNE struggled to his feet, white with rage. "You cad!" he howled. "You insolent hound!"

Jack Blake pushed back his cuffs. His eyes were gleaming.

"Come on, you worm," he said; "this chap is worth a thousand of you! I don't care what he is—he couldn't grow to be such a rotten cad as you are if he lived to be a thousand years old! Come on, if you want some more!"

"Yaas, wathah! I have always said that blood is thickah than watah, and that it's a chap's duty to stand up for his watah; but I uttably wufuse to stand up for such a feahful wottah as Devigne! I bar him!"

"I wogard him as a wank outsidah, and an uttably unspeakable cad!" he continued. "If he has the feahful cheek to claim me as a watah, I shall have no wesource but to give him a feahful thwashin'!"

Jim made a movement.

"I'm going!" he said brokenly. "It's no good waiting to be kicked out! I can see now that I did wrong in coming here—it was sailing under false colours, anyway; though, goodness knows, I meant no 'arm! But I never thought a nobleman would break his word, and round on a chap like this! I'm going!"

"I suppose you can't do anything else," said Tom Merry miserably. "Give us your fist before you go, anyway!"

Jim shook hands with Tom Merry, and then with Arthur Augustus and Blake and several more of the juniors, and went slowly and heavily down the steps.

The viscount watched him go, with scintillating and un pitying eyes.

Tom Merry gave him a scornful look.

"As for you, you cad," he said, "I hope you won't be allowed to remain at St. Jim's, after this rotten trick! But if you do remain, we'll cut some of the cheek and spite out of you, I promise you that!"

"Yaas, wathah! As a chap who is disgwaced by bein' your watah, I shall make it a point to give you a feahful thwashin' whenever you are caddish, deah boy!"

Lord Devigne gritted his teeth.

"Let me pass!" he said. "I'm going in!"

He thrust his way through the juniors, shoving right and left. Tom Merry & Co. were not likely to take that patiently—from Devigne.

In a moment the viscount was collared, and sent spinning into the hall, where he alighted, sprawling.

"Oh!"

"What is this? What does this disturbance mean?"

It was the Head!

Lord Devigne staggered to his feet.

"I have been assaulted!" he shrieked. "I have been treated brutally by those young ruffians! I demand that they shall be flogged!"

The Head stared at the dirty, ragged lad in blank amazement.

"Are you mad?" he said. "How did this wretched boy get in here, Merry?"

Tom Merry came up.

"He's Lord Devigne, sir," he said.

"What?"

Tom Merry explained. The Head listened with utter amazement and consternation in his face.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible that such a trick has been played upon us?"

"It's true!" snarled the viscount. "I am Lord Devigne!"

"And the other lad—that strange boy? Ah, I understand now! Yet his keen desire to improve his education was most praiseworthy! Where is he?"

"He is gone, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Did he admit the truth of this boy's statements?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is most extraordinary! Lord Devigne, you have acted in a rascally and disgraceful manner! I am glad that the truth has been exposed," the Head continued; "but nothing in the matter reflects credit upon you, Lord Devigne! You have acted in an utterly discreditable and dishonourable way all through! I shall certainly not permit such a boy to remain at this school, to contaminate more decent boys with his presence! You will remain here just as long as it takes me to explain matters to your father, and no longer! This school is not for such as you!"

"Hurrah!"

The Head frowned as the juniors cheered.

"Silence!" he said. "Kildare!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Will you see that this wretched boy is kept safe and looked after till I am prepared to send him home under escort? He cannot be trusted alone! Let him have what he may need, but see that he plays no tricks!"

"Yes, sir."

The Head turned to Tom Merry.

"You say that the other boy—the boy we have known as Lord Devigne—is gone?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I wish to see him again. Fetch him back!"

Tom Merry hesitated a second.

"Are—are you going to punish him, sir?" he faltered. "I—I hope, sir, you won't! He was such a decent chap, sir—thoroughly decent all through!"

"I am glad you have a good opinion of him, Merry; I have, myself! No; I am not going to punish him. I think he has done wrong to some extent, but he was led into it, and his chief motive evidently was a desire to improve himself. He cannot remain at St. Jim's, but I shall send him to a more suitable school, and in the future, perhaps, he may come here. You may repeat what I have said to him."

Tom Merry's eyes danced.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Lose no time, Merry!"

"Bai Jove! We'll wun like anythin', sir!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Come on, you fellows!" And the juniors rushed out of the School House in search of the boy who had gone.

Tom Merry ran down the road as if he were on the cinder-path competing for a prize.

"Stop!" he shouted, as he saw Jim walking down the road with a slow and dejected gait.

The boy did not hear, but tramped steadily on, buried in his own gloomy reflections.

"Devigne! Jim! Stop!" shouted Tom Merry.

Then Jim heard, and started. He stopped and swung round.

Tom came up to him, gasping for breath.

"Jolly glad I've caught you!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Jim despondently. "Does the 'Ead want to cane me? I don't care if he does—I don't care much for anything now!"

"My dear old chap," exclaimed Tom Merry, "the 'Ead doesn't want to cane you; but he wants to see you!"

"What for?"

"To be a friend to you, kid—to look after you!" said Tom Merry joyously. "He's the best old sport you ever heard of, the 'Ead is!"

Jim's eyes sparkled for a moment.

"Oh, Master Merry—"

"You're to be sent to school, and afterwards, perhaps, you can come to St. Jim's to stay," said Tom Merry. "What do you say to that?"

Jim tried to speak, but a sob came instead.

"Come on, kid," said Blake, "we're going to take you back! It's all right!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Jim Brown was marched back into the school in triumph in the midst of a crowd of gleeful juniors.

Jim Brown went to school and Lord Devigne went home, the latter unregretted by anybody at St. Jim's, especially Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Blood might be thicker than water, but D'Arcy had had quite enough of his noble relation.

But Jim was remembered, and he remained in correspondence with the St. Jim's fellows, who had become his good friends while he was at St. Jim's, though sailing Under False Colours.

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Cry in the Night.

"Bob Harding! Well, I'm hanged!"

Ralph Chesterton involuntarily came to a halt in the middle of the road, his companion, Tom Manton, being no less surprised. The pair stood for a moment looking at a little shop close by, in which could be seen the tall, well set-up figure of a young man of about their own age. He was unaware of the others' gaze, being totally engaged in the occupation of choosing a box of cigars.

The time was late evening, and the place none other than the famous Muski in Cairo, Egypt, that land of wonder and unsolved mysteries.

The thoroughfare known as the Muski is a long, comparatively narrow street, bordered on both sides by shops and bazaars of various descriptions. The buildings are tall and uneven, and in some places coved wooden cornices jut far out from the tops of the walls. Busy in the daytime, it was now quiet, and far above could be seen the myriad stars of the tropical night.

Ralph Chesterton, his open, bronzed face glowing with delight, strode forward over the uneven ground, and entered the cigar-seller's shop, his companion in close attendance.

"Bob, old man!" he cried, grasping the other's shoulder in a firm grip. "What on earth are you doing in Cairo?"

Bob Harding turned quickly, and looked at the two young men standing in the doorway with an expression of surprise and pleasure. Without a word, he extended his hand, and wrung Ralph Chesterton's warmly.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I hardly expected to see you in this part of the world, Ralph. You, too, Tom; give me your hand! Jove, I hardly know what to say!"

"We're every bit as surprised as yourself, Bob," said Manton, in a slow, evenly modulated voice, pleasant to the ear. "Both Ralph and I were under the impression that you were in the old country, stewing up your precious engineering."

Bob Harding laughed lightly.

"I've finished with that," he replied. "I became a fully-fledged civil engineer three months ago. But we can't talk here. If you'll wait a moment, I'll complete my purchase, and join you outside."

Tom and Ralph turned, and emerged once more into the quiet roadway. The cigar-seller's shop was hardly large enough to contain three of them in addition to the owner, who was squatting on the floor, surrounded by his wares.

Bob Harding lost no time in completing his purchase, and very soon joined his companions outside. They were evidently pleased to see him, for without hesitating they broke off their conversation, and plied him with several questions.

"Wait a moment," he laughed. "I can't answer everything all at once. Besides, I shall have several things to ask you before long, for, to tell the truth, I'd not the faintest notion that you chaps were in this outlandish part of the world."

"The best thing we can do," said Ralph, "is to go to our diggings. It's not so very late, and we can talk there quietly."

"Good idea. Where are you staying?"

"Only a few yards away. Come along. We can keep you engaged in conversation till past midnight."

"Very probably," replied Bob, "for there's plenty to talk about."

Ralph led the way down the Muski, which, although somewhat dimly illuminated, nevertheless formed a decidedly Oriental scene, with the lofty buildings, uneven roadway, and quaint bazaars, occasionally separated by narrow alleys.

It was down one of these latter the three young men turned their steps, the passage commencing with a sharp descent. It was a peculiar thoroughfare, but decidedly characteristic of Cairo. It wound tortuously between tall houses which, in the daytime, effectively shut out every ray of sunshine. At present it was dark and gloomy.

"I don't know where you're taking me," remarked Harding, gazing round him. "But this lane certainly cannot be called straight."

"Down at the bottom," said Ralph, "is the old Hotel du Nil, and you'll be surprised when you see in a moment the difference in the surroundings. I admit the approach is nothing great, even in the daytime. Now it seems anything but imposing."

"I'll place myself in your hands," laughed Bob, "and go just where you take me. I've not been in Cairo many days, and have had no time to explore yet."

They continued their walk a little further down, and suddenly the alley gave place to an open gateway, inside of which could be seen the lights of the hotel. The surprising part, however, was the sudden change from bare, ugly buildings to a delightful garden. For, inside the gateway could be seen, even in the semi-darkness, palms, bamboos, flowering shrubs and creepers.

"We reside on the first floor," said Manton, leading the way up the path, the sweet scent of the many-coloured flowers being very soothing after the dusty heat of the alleys. The contrast between this delightfully green spot, and the surrounding city streets, was singularly striking.

"Well," remarked Bob, looking round him curiously, "I hardly expected to find a place such as this down here. This garden is really splendid."

"The du Nil is one of the oldest hotels in Cairo," said Ralph, as they entered the building. "Come on, the best thing we can do is to sit out on the verandah. It's beastly hot to-night, and unbearable indoors."

Five minutes later, the three of them were comfortably ensconced in deck chairs, the soft light of an Oriental lamp within the room shedding its rays over the little table on the verandah, round which the three chums were sitting.

"Before we start," remarked Harding, "I should like you to try one of these cigars. They're really good, I can assure you."

They lit up, and sat for a moment in silence. Then Bob

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turned, and faced the others. He was, if anything, the tallest of the three.

"You want to know what I'm doing in Cairo?" he asked. "Well, to tell the truth, I hardly know myself. I came out, really, in the hope of securing a job up the Nile, but found, on arrival, that some other fellow had got there before me, and so taken the wind out of my sails. At present I'm simply doing nothing."

"That was hard lines," exclaimed Ralph, "although I, for one, am rather glad you lost the job. We should never have come across you had you secured it! It seems like old times, sitting here together, and reminds me of the days when we used to be at St. Elmer's in the same House. It's a dickens of a time since we saw you last, Bob, old man, and now we have got you we mean to keep in touch."

"Rather!" agreed Manton heartily. "I've often wondered what you were doing, Bob. And, anyhow, what are your plans for the future?"

"Plans," repeated the other. "Well, I've never bothered myself about such things as plans, but if anything decent happens to turn up, I sha'n't hesitate to accept it. But you haven't told me what you are doing yet. Both of you are in mufti, and apparently without occupation. What's the meaning of it?"

"It seems rather a coincidence," said Ralph thoughtfully, "that we should all be in Cairo at the same time, and all unoccupied. Personally, I'd much rather be with my regiment—although, of course, I'm delighted to see you two fellows—but through some ridiculous formalities I'm on leave for a year."

"How is that?" asked the young civil engineer.

"Well, the real cause of my inactivity came about a couple of months ago. I was practising fencing in the gym, with one of our chaps, when he made a slip, and his rapier cut me rather badly across the shoulder. At the time my case looked somewhat serious, and the colonel gave me a year's leave to recuperate. It was rot, of course, but I was carted away home, and, being a healthy sort of brute, pulled round in practically no time. In a month I was up and ready for work again; but my people insisted on my coming out here for eight or nine weeks. Not that I wanted to. As it happens, I'm rather glad I came, for the very first person I met was Tom here."

"That was rather surprising," said Bob. Then he turned to the other young man.

"What's wrong with you, Tom? Have you had an accident as well? I was under the impression that you were with your ship at Gibraltar."

"I was," replied Tom Manton; "but there was a dust-up, and I resigned in a hurry. I can't explain fully now, but I had an idea of joining the Aspia at the end of this month. She's a good ship, and there'll be a vacancy then."

"Well," laughed Bob, giving each of his companions a light slap on the shoulder, "you're fine specimens of his Majesty's Army and Navy! The pair of you lounge about in Cairo as though you had nothing in the world to do. And, anyhow, what brought you here, Tom?"

"Chance," replied the naval officer. "Nothing else but chance. The Aspia is due at Alexandria shortly, but after waiting there for some time I got fed-up with it, and came along here. If I hadn't met Ralph I should have been gone long ago. We've been having a regular holiday though, doing Cairo in proper style."

"And here am I," said the new arrival, "absolutely ignorant of the whole place. I can't tell you the name of one thoroughfare except New Street. The other names require a little more memorising. Not that I don't like the place, for, to speak the truth, it rather fascinates me. Being among these dark-skinned Egyptians and Arabs reminds me of the books I used to read about the Pharaohs and Pyramids. There's a certain charm, a feeling of mystery, which comes over me when I look at the old-fashioned streets, with their constant panorama of Oriental life. The Arabs and the fellahs with their hard-working donkeys seem to be just the same now, in this twentieth century, as they were described thousands of years ago. I feel as though I want to explore every inch of the place, to go out on to the desert, and find traces of the old temples and buildings."

"By jingo," drawled Tom, with a smile, "you're getting quite romantic, Bob. I didn't think it was in you. But what you say is right. I've got the same feeling myself. It's hard to describe, but it's there, all the same. You say you're doing nothing at present? Well, I don't see why we shouldn't go on a tour of exploration."

"Exploration?" repeated Ralph. "What about your ship, then, Tom? You can't explore Egypt in a couple of days, you know."

"What I suggest," put in Harding, "is to—"

"Hark!" interjected Ralph, suddenly starting forward in his chair. "What was that?"

"What was what? I heard nothing!"

"Yes, there it is again!"

The three of them sat perfectly still, with their ears on the stretch. At first not a sound could be heard. Down below in the bright starlight the luxuriant flowers sent up their perfume delightfully, and they could faintly be seen waving to and fro in the gentle breeze. Then, quite distinctly, the sound of a woman's voice made itself heard. And, as the three young men listened to it, they started to their feet, for the cry was one of distress—of urgent appeal.

"That's an English voice," declared Ralph, with conviction. "Besides, the cry was one for help. I wonder what on earth is the matter! Ah, there it is again!"

"I mean to see for myself!" cried Bob, starting to his feet. "Come on; this is the quickest way down!"

Without hesitation he leapt over the low rail of the verandah, and landed with a thud on the garden path below. The others followed immediately on his heels, and ran rapidly after him through the gateway. There they paused for a moment irresolutely, and, quite distinctly, they heard the sounds of several Arabs jabbering among themselves.

"You cowards!" they heard a girlish voice exclaim. "Let me go. Do you hear?"

"This way!" muttered Bob; and once more they dashed along, this time up the narrow alley. All of them, wearing indiarubber-soled tennis shoes, approached practically noiselessly, so that when they turned the corner they took the group of swarthy ruffians completely by surprise.

They were Arabs, five in number, and in their midst could be seen the form of an English girl. She was struggling desperately, but could, of course, do nothing against her powerful assailants.

Like an avalanche the three young Britons threw themselves upon the robbers, for this they evidently were. There was no stopping that rush. Bob, being foremost, grasped the girl by her arm, and fought his way out. Ralph and Tom, in true British fashion, hurled themselves into the fray with a will. The Arabs were desperate fellows, however, and had no intention of seeing their prize slip through their fingers. Being five to three, the fight was rather one-sided, and the rescuers had all their work cut out to hold their own.

The bulk of the fighting fell to the lot of Tom Manton and Ralph, for Bob was protecting the girl. The roadway here was a little broader than at most other places, and allowed some small degree of starlight to penetrate to the mass of struggling forms on the rough stones below.

With her mind in a whirl of fear and excitement, the girl found herself with her back to one of the lofty buildings, while in front of her stood the broad figure and square shoulders of Bob Harding. Every now and again he would lunge out as an Arab attacked him.

It was hard British fists versus treacherous knives, for every one of the bandits held a wicked-looking dagger in his right hand. That each of the young fellows stood in danger of his life there was not the slightest doubt, and it was only by excessive vigilance that they saved themselves from getting knifed.

For a moment the young engineer found himself clear of the vortex, and drew his breath in sharply as he saw his chums engaged in the fight of their lives. The Arabs were like cats, for no sooner were they knocked sprawling than they leaped to their feet again, more desperate than ever.

The air was filled with their low, muttering curses, and Bob was somewhat anxious for the safety of his two chums. Unless he gave a hand there could be only one inevitable termination, for the ruffians, finding he was guarding the girl, had turned all their attention in the direction of his friends, in the evident hope of vanquishing them as a preliminary. He turned suddenly and looked at his fair companion.

"I am afraid I shall have to leave you," he exclaimed quickly. "My friends are rather hard pressed, and these brutes with their knives— By Jove!"

Bob spun round like lightning as an expression of alarm entered the girl's eyes. Even in the semi-darkness he could see that something was wrong. He turned just in time to notice, above him, the upraised arm of the tallest Arab. With a swinging left-hander Harding caught the fellow a stunning blow on the muscle of his shoulder, and something bright flew upwards and fell to the stones with a clatter. Before the Arab could back away Bob followed his advantage up, and drove his fist with terrible force into the other's stomach—there were no rules in this affair, for it was a fight for life, and any expedient was excusable.

Tom and Ralph were, if anything, fighting harder than Bob, for they had two assailants each to contend against. Tom was doing the greater part of the work, for he was a born fighter. His blows were stupendous and his guard unbreakable; already he had knocked one Arab clean out of time. The other sons of the desert realised his strength, and in consequence Tom found himself the centre of attraction, although Ralph was by no means left out in the cold.

But the defeat of the leader—the man Bob had so neatly

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winded—brought the fight to a sudden conclusion. Two of the Arabs being down, it was an equal fight now, and had not the scoundrels decided that discretion was the better part of valour, they would all have followed their leader's fate.

As it was, they had received a hiding such as they had never experienced before. Suddenly the tallest shouted some sharp words in Arabic, and, with a cry of response, his companions stumbled to his side, leaving the three young Britishers standing in front of the trembling girl, hot, exhausted, but unconquered. They were ready, if necessary, for another tussle equally as strenuous.

But their assailants had had enough—they all bore marks of Tom Manton's fists—and they beat an ignominious retreat up the narrow roadway. Suddenly the leader paused, turned round, and shouted some furious words in Arabic to the young men who had foiled his plans.

And the tone alone told Bob that it was a threat—a menace.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. William John Fortescue.

"I really don't know how to thank you," began the girl, in a low, trembling voice. "Those terrible Arabs—"

"By Jove," interrupted Tom Manton, his even tones transformed almost into a gasp on account of his quick breathing, "it's Miss Fortescue!"

The girl stepped forward a pace or two.

"This is a pleasant surprise!" she cried. "I had no idea you were one of my rescuers, Mr. Manton. Tell me who your friends are, will you? I have to thank all of you for saving me from those horrid natives."

Helen Fortescue held out her hand, and Tom, as he took it, felt that it was trembling a little. Without loss of time he introduced his companions, who were looking a decidedly dishevelled pair.

"Those thieving Arabs were not successful at all?" asked Bob Harding, mopping his face.

"Oh, no! You came just in the nick of time. I really don't know what I should have done without you. I suppose it was foolish walking through the streets alone, with no cloak over my shoulders."

"But, without being inquisitive," asked Ralph, "may I inquire your destination? It is rather late, and, well, you are alone—"

"I know. I should by rights have made a servant accompany me. I had no idea this lane was so dark."

"I was going to suggest," said Ralph hesitatingly, "that one of us should escort you home. With all those diamonds you are wearing it is hardly safe for you to go alone."

"You must all come," said Miss Fortescue, her eyes gleaming with admiration for her valiant rescuers. "I am sure you have saved me from a considerable loss, and perhaps injury. Those Arabs wouldn't have hesitated a moment to use violence. My father will be delighted to see you."

The three young men looked at one another.

"Well," began Tom, "we should like to come, but as it is rather late I don't think we had better go inside. You are on the way to Shephard's, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied the girl, "we are staying there. But you must come in, for I intend to tell my father all about this affair. He would never have let me venture out unattended had he known of it. I had no notion that it was dangerous to walk through the streets alone."

"As a rule," replied Chesterton, "it is not. But in Cairo you are apt to meet an occasional band of robbers, and your diamonds look very tempting, Miss Fortescue, if I may say so. As Tom—er—Mr. Manton says, we certainly ought to see you to Shephard's, but as to invading your father at this time of night—"

"You must come in," cried Miss Fortescue. "I will not hear of anything else."

"If you insist," commenced Bob, "I suppose—"

"I do insist! You must all come along with me, and tell father what you have done."

"Which amounts to very little," laughed Tom. "I think my friends will agree with me, Miss Fortescue, in asking you to make very little of this affair. It is really not worth repeating."

Helen Fortescue did not answer, but commenced walking up the narrow alley in the direction of the Muski, her three escorts not again referring to the desperate scurrinago which had lately taken place. Arriving at the Muski, they turned to the left, and very soon found themselves skirting the Esbekiyeh Gardens. Here, in the light of the gas-lamps, the rescuers and rescued found themselves looking at one another rather curiously, for up to now they had been in comparative darkness.

Helen Fortescue was a pretty girl of about nineteen, with dark auburn hair and kindly-looking brown eyes. Her

features were not classical, but nevertheless very winsome and attractive.

As she looked at the three friends she could not help an expression of admiration entering her eyes, for they were, in truth, splendid specimens of British manhood, all being well set-up, muscular, and with faces which clearly showed their characters, in their different ways, to be frank and open. The Army man could be picked out at a glance from his erect carriage, while, although there was no obvious sign to show it, Tom Manton clearly gave one the impression that he was a naval officer. Harding's profession could not be hazarded at a glance, but that he was far from being a fool was very evident. Indeed, a look at his thoughtful eyes and serious face told any observer that he was possessed of a very respectable share of intelligence.

Shephard's Hotel, the most famous in Cairo, was very soon reached, and Miss Fortescue led the way up the steps into the building. There were plenty of signs of activity here, for at that time there were a good few visitors in the Egyptian capital. Men and women of all nationalities were staying at Shephard's, but the bulk consisted of British and Americans.

Helen's father, Mr. Fortescue, occupied a whole suite of rooms on the first floor, for he was one of the richest men in the world. He usually spent a couple of months of each year at least in Cairo, his favourite quarter of the globe, with his daughter. Helen's mother had been dead too long for the girl to remember her.

"Here we are!" cried Helen, pushing open the door of a certain room. "Come in, all of you; I know father will be pleased to see you."

"But it is such an invasion," murmured Manton hesitatingly.

"No, no; it is nothing of the sort, Mr. Manton. You must all come in, I tell you."

And with an impulsive movement she grasped Tom's arm and literally pulled him into the room, the other two following close behind. The apartment in which they found themselves was a large one, well decorated and well furnished. It was brilliantly illuminated, and seated close by a small table, on which stood a decanter of whisky and a box of cigars, was a stoutish, rather florid-faced gentleman of perhaps fifty-five. He was partially bald, that hair which remained being iron-gray in colour. His moustache and beard were both long and flowing, the latter reaching halfway down his capacious waistcoat. Mr. William John Fortescue looked up as the door opened and as his daughter's voice made itself heard.

His eyes showed something like surprise as he saw Helen enter with the three escorts. Tom Manton had met Mr. Fortescue on one occasion, and the two had formed a very good opinion of one another.

"Why, my dear," he exclaimed, looking at the visitors searchingly through his gold-rimmed glasses, "whatever is the meaning of this? Who are these young gentlemen—Ah, I see one of them is young Tom Manton."

"Yes, dad, and the others are friends of his," exclaimed Helen impetuously. "This is Mr. Ralph Chesterton, and this Mr.—"

"Bob Harding," smiled that individual. "We have had the pleasure, sir, of doing your daughter a very slight service, and she insisted on us accompanying her home."

"A service?" repeated Mr. Fortescue, looking keenly at the other. "Pray let me know what it was, so that I can offer you my thanks."

And he involuntarily gave an anxious glance at his daughter, thereby telling Bob how extremely fond of her he was.

"I will tell you all about it," said the girl, seating herself in an easy chair opposite to her father. "You know, dad, I have been to see Mrs. Wilson this evening. When I came away I assured her I should be quite safe without an escort."

"Foolish," muttered Mr. Fortescue, as if to himself—"very foolish! Go on, dear. You came to no harm, I suppose?"

"I might have done, dad, had it not been for these gentlemen. I will tell you. As I was passing close to the Hotel du Nil I was suddenly set upon by five terrible Arabs, who grasped hold of me very roughly. I cried out aloud in the hope of drawing attention, struggling all the while to get free. Just as I was beginning to give up hope of saving my diamonds—"

"Confound the diamonds!" said her father anxiously. "What about yourself?"

"I am not hurt in the least, dad. As I said, I'd almost given up hope, when Mr. Manton and his two friends dashed up. Oh, it was lovely!"

"Lovely?" repeated Mr. Fortescue. "What do you mean, Helen?"

"It was, dad, just lovely! You should have seen how Mr. Harding fought his way through and took me clear of the



With a swinging left-hander Harding caught the fellow a stunning blow on the muscle of the shoulder, and something bright flew upwards and fell to the stones with a clatter. (See page 27.)

Arabs! Then immediately they turned on him these other two brave gentlemen put up such a fight! The way those Arabs fell before their fists was beautiful! It was a long fight, but at last they took to their heels and fled. I am sure these gentlemen saved me from injury, for I should have screamed so much that the robbers would have done something serious to quieten me."

Bob, Tom, and Ralph were feeling decidedly uncomfortable, but they could not help noticing that Helen, flushed of face and with sparkling eyes, seemed prettier than ever at that moment.

"Good gracious!" cried Mr. Fortescue, starting to his feet. "The affair might have had a terrible climax, little girl! These bandit Arabs are tough fellows to deal with. Five of them you say there were? Good gracious! I tremble to think of what might have happened had not these courageous youngsters heard your cries! And you treat the matter as though it were of no importance."

"Oh, no, dad, I don't," said Helen quickly, "for I realise that they have done me a very great service indeed. They took big risks, too, for all the bandits were armed with knives. It was my diamonds they were after, of course, but they did not get them."

"It would not have mattered a rap if they had done so!" exclaimed her father. "Not a rap! What are diamonds compared to yourself? Upon my soul, here have I been sitting reading while you have been in peril of your life! Thank Heaven, you're not hurt!"

He turned quickly and faced the three chums. "You are making light of this affair," he said slowly, "but if you think you can take me in, young men, you're mistaken. I know what these Arabs are, and am perfectly aware that one of you at least might easily have got killed in the fray. Give me your hands, all of you. I can never thank you sufficiently for your splendid services—never!"

He wrung their hands with great heartiness, then turned and seated himself in his chair again, muttering a few words to himself as he did so.

"Brave fellows!" they heard him exclaim. "I must get to know all about them. They look honest, fine specimens of Englishmen. Yes, I must certainly get to know all about them."

He turned abruptly and glared at Bob Harding. "Tell me," he exclaimed. "What are you doing in Cairo?"

Bob could see that Mr. Fortescue's apparently brusque THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 180. Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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manner was only his manner, and that he meant nothing by it. At first glance it would appear as if he were angry and impatient.

"Well," began the engineer, "to tell the truth, sir, I am doing nothing at present—"

"Nothing? That is very bad! Explain yourself!"

"I am a civil engineer by profession, and came out to Egypt in the hope of securing a situation, but arrived here just in time to see another man get the berth. I have no doubt, though, that I shall secure something as soon as I begin to make an effort."

"Ah, I see! You are taking a holiday, I suppose? Doing nothing? You have good prospects, by the look of it, and you should make a name for yourself. I can see that you are the sort of man to go ahead once you start. Good—good!"

The others—Ralph and Tom—were a little puzzled, for they could not quite make out why Mr. Fortescue was taking such an interest in Harding. He sat in his chair nodding to himself, and glancing from one of the young men to the other.

"And you?" he asked suddenly, turning on Ralph, somewhat to the latter's embarrassment. "Who are you? Don't think I am over-inquisitive, for I have a reason for these questions—a good reason."

"I am a lieutenant in his Majesty's army, sir—"

"Army man!" murmured Mr. Fortescue to himself. "Splendid!"

"I am on leave for a year," continued Ralph, "having met with an accident two or three months ago. It was all rot giving me so long a leave, for I'm perfectly well again now, and have nine months on my hands, and nothing to do."

And Ralph told his questioner exactly how the accident had happened, which regiment he was in, who his parents were, etc. At the end of the cross-examination Mr. Fortescue rapped the table for no apparent reason.

"Good," he exclaimed—"very good! You, Manton, I know all about. Why on earth didn't you bring your friends here before? What are your plans for the future?"

"Well," said Bob, "we have no plans definitely fixed, but, being unoccupied, and having been separated since our schooldays, we had an idea, partially formed, of taking a holiday together."

"Just the very— You have money, I suppose?"

"Not to throw away, sir," replied Bob, unable to decide why they were being put through this questioning.

Mr. Fortescue looked up, and stroked his beard slowly.

"I have got an idea," he exclaimed, looking from one to another of the three chums—"a plan which you will have to think over!"

He looked at his daughter suddenly.

"You are in it, too, girlie," he said, his face breaking into a smile.

It was quite plain he had some plan at the back of his head which he was about to disclose. What it was the others could not even hazard a guess.

"You three boys have saved my daughter's life to-night—yes, I choose to take it that you have saved her life—and, from your very appearance alone, I can tell that you are honourable Britons. I mean no flattery by my words, you may be sure, but am speaking my honest thoughts. What I want you to do—"

A clock on the mantelpiece chimed the hour of eleven, and Mr. Fortescue glanced at it quickly.

"Good gracious me!" he exclaimed. "It is eleven o'clock! I had no idea of the lateness of the hour. You ought to be in bed, Helen! There is no time to discuss my plans now, so they must be left till the morning. Eleven o'clock—this is too late altogether!"

He rose to his feet, and paced across the room.

"Yes, my plans must certainly be left until the morning. Come round at half-past ten—not later."

"We can all come round, sir, if you wish it," said Bob Harding, rising to his feet; "although I shall never admit of having helped to save your daughter's life. What we did was a triviality."

"That's all," agreed the others.

"Nonsense, my boys—nonsense!" cried Mr. Fortescue. "I will never believe that, whatever you say! To-morrow, at half-past ten, I shall expect you. Promptness from you I can absolutely rely upon."

He grasped their hands one by one, and wrung them with considerable force, although, at the same time, the heartiness and warmth of the handshake could not be overlooked.

"Good-night, Miss Fortescue!" exclaimed Tom, extending his hand to the girl. "I am afraid your father has got a wrong impression of our action, for there was nothing whatever in it. I suppose we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again to-morrow?"

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"Oh, yes, of course!" said Helen, with a bright smile. "Good-night, Mr. Harding!" she added, turning to Bob. She shook hands with Bob and Ralph in turn, and they, for some reason, felt just a little embarrassed under her warm grip and pleasant smile.

Five minutes later the three young men were walking swiftly round the Esbekiyeh Gardens on their way back to the Muski, the roads being practically deserted once they reached the quieter region of Cairo. Their thoughts were varied and numerous, but the outstanding one was conjecture as to what Mr. Fortescue's plans were.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Halil Ahmed Swears Vengeance.

"No, Mr. Fortescue is certainly a little beyond me!" declared Bob Harding, as he and his companions turned into the narrow alley which led to the Hotel du Nil.

"What he was driving at I can't quite make out," said Tom slowly. "There's some scheme at the back of that old head of his, though, which he alone knows. What it is we shall probably learn to-morrow morning. In spite of his peculiar antics and gruffness of tone, he's a good sort, I'm sure."

"Oh, yes!" agreed Ralph, with conviction. "Mr. Fortescue has impressed me a lot. It is quite plain to see he's a shrewd, hard-headed business man. It would take a jolly smart fellow to get the better of him. He seems to have taken to us because we lent Miss Fortescue our aid. How he got the idea into his head that we saved her life is a puzzler."

"It's all rot, of course!" said Bob. "I dare say the bandits would have robbed her, but as to killing her—well, even an Arab draws the line at that over such a trifling matter."

But although Harding spoke in this manner, he knew perfectly well that the men of the desert would certainly have taken Helen's life at very slight provocation, for there was no denying that they were a murderous lot. Each of the three chums were aware of this, although neither would admit it to the other.

"As I was about to suggest—" began Harding.

"About to suggest?" repeated Bob. "I don't remember."

"Yes, I was about to say something when we heard Miss Fortescue's cry for help."

"By Jove," said Ralph, with a laugh, "that's just like you, Bob, continuing a conversation which we were in the midst of an hour or two ago. Well, go on. What were you about to suggest?"

"Taking into consideration the event which has just come to pass, my idea seems about to be knocked on the head, for I am firmly convinced that Mr. Fortescue has something for us to do."

"You mean," said Ralph eagerly, "some adventure, perhaps?"

"That I cannot pretend to guess. I was merely going to propose that we should all go on an expedition down the Nile, and explore places of interest as we proceeded along the route. We are all at liberty at present, and a little holiday together would be great sport. Before we can decide on a course like this, however, we must wait until Mr. Fortescue has had his interview with us to-morrow. It is firmly fixed in the back of my head that the old fellow wants us to go somewhere for him—do something. He trusts us, I'm sure."

"Well, whatever comes of it," said Ralph, "I want you chaps to promise me that, for a month or two at least, we will stick together and form a kind of alliance."

"You are taking the words out of my mouth," said Bob Harding thoughtfully, "for I was about to propose the same thing myself. This land of mystery has gripped me somehow, and my instinct seems to tell me that we are destined to pass through many adventures together before we part company."

"We need something to buck us up," declared Tom, "for things have been rather slow this last week or so—beastly slow, in fact! We three could—"

Before Tom Manton could proceed further with his sentence a cry of warning escaped Ralph's lips. The Naval officer swung round just in time to see the tall form of an Arab towering over him. In the starlight Tom could see that his assailant had his arm upraised, while in his hand the glitter of a dagger revealed itself. All Tom's attention was engaged with this fellow, although he could see that his companions were also in the thick of the fight.

(This splendid new serial story will be continued in next Thursday's number of THE GEM LIBRARY. Price One Penny. Please order your copy in advance.)

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A Thrilling Tale of Modern Adventure on Land and Sea.



By ROBERT W. COMRADE.

INTRODUCTION.

Frank Kingston, a young Englishman, is engaged on a secret campaign against a criminal society called the Brotherhood of Iron, his aim being to break up the society by ruining the members of the Inner Council. He has the assistance of Miss O'Brien, an accomplished young lady, Professor Graham Polgrave, a clever scientist and inventor, Carson Gray, a detective, Fraser, a manservant, and a lad named Tim.

By a series of clever schemes he manages to get rid of half of the Inner Council, in various ways, and while he is planning further measures he hears of the latest and most infamous of the Brotherhood's plots. This decides him to finish off the Inner Council, and therefore the Brotherhood, at one blow, and as a preliminary step, he and Carson Gray disguise themselves, and kidnap a certain Ludwig Capelli, the chief agent of a Foreign Power. They bundle the agent into a motor-car, and, not heeding his protests, take him to Scotland Yard. There two policemen take charge of him, and are escorting him across the yard, when Capelli makes a mad dash for freedom, and springs into a taxi, which drives off at full speed. In a moment all is confusion, but Kingston, noting the taxi driving furiously off, starts to run after it at a truly amazing speed.

(Now go on with the story).

Caught!

Carson Gray had caught the two constables up, and, whatever faith he had in Kingston's running powers, he could not possibly imagine him racing a swiftly-moving taxi-cab.

And, as a fact, Kingston knew that he had only one chance. That was, that when the vehicle turned into the busy street at the end, it would be delayed by the traffic. His hope was realised to a certain extent, for the cab had to stop for a few moments before it could turn the corner.

And Kingston took advantage of those few moments to their fullest extent. Never in his whole life before had he run so phenomenally fast, and he knew from that moment that the race was his. The taxi turned into the busier street, and he was only a hundred yards behind, and this distance was diminishing every second. Far in the rear could be seen the figures of Carson Gray and the two police-officers, followed up by a now large crowd of people.

Then, with dramatic suddenness, the door of the taxi-cab was flung open, and Ludwig Capelli, pale, impotent, and terrified, jumped out while it was still travelling. Undoubtedly he had thought he could land in safety, but, on the contrary, he collapsed into a heap in the roadway. And while he was picking himself up Frank Kingston laid a hand on his shoulder very fitly.

"Come along, my friend!" he exclaimed coolly. "I dare say you thought you were safe in that motor, eh? You've been quite enough trouble, so I should advise you to calm down a little now."

"You fiend!" snarled the foreigner. "How did you do it? How did you run like that? I never saw anything like it in the whole world!"

Kingston merely smiled sternly, and looked round for the others to come up. The taxi-driver had turned, and was now stepping from his cab, looking somewhat scared. A crowd was already gathering fast, those who had seen Kingston running relating to those less fortunate what a marvellous

sight it was. To look at the Avenger, however, one would imagine he had not exerted himself one atom.

"We're very sorry, sir," exclaimed one of the policemen breathlessly as he ran up, "but the fellow was like an eel, and got away before we knew it. Great Scott, sir, but you did run!"

"Yes, and you ought to be thankful for it, my man," replied Kingston sternly. "If you and your companion had taken proper care, the prisoner would never have escaped. As it is, I've only recaptured him because the traffic happened to be a bit thick. He evidently got into a panic when he saw that recapture was inevitable, and so made a wild jump for it."

The march back to Scotland Yard was accomplished under difficulties, for the crowd increased every moment, and Kingston, Gray, and the police had some trouble getting through. The detective was full of praise for his friend, having only seen Kingston run at such an extraordinary speed once before—on the occasion when he had outpaced Dr. Charles Anderson, who had been mounted on a bicycle.

This time Capelli was lodged in a cell in safety, and after some little delay Kingston and Carson Gray found themselves closeted with the prisoner alone. The foreign Chief Agent was in possession of all the plans of the Brotherhood with regard to the naval case, and Kingston intended to wrench them from him.

"I absolutely refuse to say a word," snarled Capelli savagely, as he sat on the bench, watching, with glowering eyes, the movements of his two companions.

"Come, come, Capelli, the game is up, you know," exclaimed Kingston, "so what's the use of making matters worse? You must realise now that you are hopelessly caught, and that to be obstinate is only foolish."

"I shall answer no questions whatever."

"You definitely refuse?" asked Kingston sharply.

"Yes."

"Then I am afraid, Capelli, that I shall have to use force," replied Kingston, in even, cutting tones. The words seemed to send a shiver through the prisoner, and he turned a ghastly paler.

The Plot Against the British Navy.

Frank Kingston's words had indeed startled the foreign Chief Agent.

"Force?" he repeated hoarsely. "You do not mean—you cannot mean that you are going to—to torture me?"

Kingston laughed contemptuously at the other's craven manner.

"No," he replied shortly, "we shall not do that, Capelli." Capelli breathed freely.

"Then no amount of bribing will have any effect," he exclaimed firmly. "You've got me now, but there are no proofs. Ah," he added suddenly, with some excitement, "under what charge have I been arrested? There is nothing you can prove against me—nothing whatever—and I demand to be set free."

"You are quite right, my friend, I have not the least proof of your guilt," replied Kingston; "and I may add that I had no right to bring you here, or, in fact, detain you in any way. I merely suspect you, and intend to make you confess. If you do not do that you will be a free man."

Capelli's eyes nearly started from his head as he listened to these words, calmly spoken as they were. Then they glared from Kingston to Gray triumphantly.

"I am innocent of crime," he cried, "and you shall suffer heavily for having taken this liberty with me. You can talk from now until next Christmas, but it will make no difference whatever. Having done nothing that is unlawful, you cannot harm me."

Frank Kingston laughed easily for a moment, then grew stern.

"Now, Capelli," he said briskly, "we have had quite enough of this fooling; let us get to serious business. I told you a few moments ago that I would force you to speak, and now, unless you do so of your own accord, I shall certainly have to carry out my word."

Capelli's only reply was a derisive jeer, as he fingered nervously with the ends of his long, straggling moustache.

"Very well, then, Gray, get ready to call Sir Nigel."

The Chief Agent, in spite of the wave of relief and triumph which had swept over him, felt that same cold shiver pass down his spine. In some unaccountable manner Kingston's very presence seemed to awe him; and now, as the Avenger turned upon him, with his usually calm eyes looking like living coals, Capelli almost shrieked with terror—terror which had seized him within the last minute.

"Capelli," said Kingston, in quiet, commanding tones, "look into my eyes."

"I refuse to—"

The words tailed away, and Capelli, all against his will,

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK: "THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

found himself gazing fearfully into the mysterious depths of a pair of eyes the like of which he had never before seen. Their power was amazing, and, try as he would, the foreigner could not tear his own glance away. In some way a magnetic force held him as in a vice.

He could not cry out, and a feeling was creeping over him that he was absolutely powerless. Yet he was not hypnotised—he knew that very well, and the knowledge added to his horror. The will-power of the man before him was so stupendous that he could do as he liked with any ordinary man. Kingston was, as a matter of fact, treating Capelli in the same manner as he had treated Don Sebastian months before on the lonely shores of the Iron Island—he was forcing him to tell the truth.

"Now, Capelli," he said, in a stern, even tone, "you are a member of the Brotherhood of Iron—the man who attends to the affairs of that organisation in your own country. Is that so?"

"Yes," answered Capelli immediately, between set teeth. He had not intended to utter a sound, but the word was forced from him against his will. The sensation was terrible, and he made another effort to shake the feeling of tightness which surrounded him off. But it was wasted energy.

"There is a plot against the British Navy," continued Kingston, "and you are aware of all the plans connected with it. Now, I want you to tell me exactly what those plans are. Start from the beginning, and say, in plain language, how and when the scheme is to be put into execution. Gray, kindly call in Sir Nigel."

Capelli sat on the bench, bending forward slightly, absolutely under Kingston's influence. He could no longer control his own actions, but had to do exactly as Kingston told him. This was because his own will-power was weak in comparison. Try as he would he could not divert his eyes from those of his questioner; he was fascinated by them, and they held him as in a vice.

Carson Gray watched in wonderment and a certain amount of awe at the powers possessed by his great friend. He knew Kingston to be a marvel, but it was never brought home so much as when he was given a practical demonstration. In a moment he had called in the Head of Scotland Yard.

"To begin with," said Capelli, in a dull, monotonous voice, "my Government commissioned me to come over to England and arrange, at my own discretion, for the removal of a dozen British battleships. I was a member of the Brotherhood of Iron, so decided to myself that I could not do better than interview Lord Mount-Fannell."

"Which you did immediately on arrival in London?" asked Kingston, still in that terribly commanding tone.

"Yes. He agreed to do what was wanted for the reward offered by my Government, and immediately set about making plans. The matter is such an extremely vital one, that he decided from the first to have no common-members concerned in the undertaking. As a matter of fact, the work has been progressing for several days, and is now nearing completion."

"What work?" demanded Kingston. Sir Nigel and Gray listened attentively, the former with a certain amount of eager surprise and astonishment. To him, this was certainly a new way of gaining information.

"There is a submarine at present in the Solent," continued the foreign Chief Agent, "which belongs to the Government of my country. There are two men aboard—divers—who are seeing to the main work. Those in command are Inner Councillors of the Brotherhood, being Frederick Carstairs, a noted engineer, and Captain Pennington, an Army officer. These four have for the last few days been cruising about beneath the fleet, setting highly explosive mines to a dozen of the most powerful battleships, five of them being Dreadnoughts. By midday to-morrow the last one will have been set."

Sir Nigel glanced across at Gray with an alarmed expression. He had never guessed that such a vital matter as this was on hand. There was no doubt about Capelli's guilt now, for he had said enough to convict him ten times over.

"Well?" asked Kingston. "There is much more than that, Capelli. You have been telling me what has been done; now let me know what is coming to pass during the next few days."

"The Brotherhood's yacht, the Unicorn, at present in the London Docks, will leave her moorings to-morrow so as to arrive off Spithead by to-morrow night. As she is to all intents and purposes a pleasure yacht, there will be a party of wealthy and influential holiday makers aboard—as a matter of fact, none other than all the remaining Inner Councillors of the Brotherhood."

"For what purpose is the Unicorn travelling to Spithead?" "For a very important reason. All the wires which are to explode the mines will be connected up with the Brotherhood's yacht, and in one of the cabins a switch will be affixed, so that by the touching of one lever the whole twelve vessels will be blown to atoms at the same moment. The Inner

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"A SCHOOLBOY'S CROSS-ROADS," in this week's issue of the "MAGNET" LIBRARY, 1st.

of Councillors, under the disguise of holiday makers, are in reality going aboard the Unicorn for the express purpose of seeing the magnificent spectacle—the spectacle of the twelve simultaneous explosions."

"Good heavens!" broke out Sir Nigel. "What a ghastly—"

Without turning his head, Kingston held up his hand for silence. Sir Nigel remembered where he was, and concealed his indignant and outraged feelings with difficulty.

"So the whole thing is this," asked Kingston—"the Unicorn leaves London to-morrow, and will arrive at Spithead just about the time when the submarine has completed its dastardly work?"

"Yes," answered Capelli, in his monotonous tone.

"Very well. Now tell me, on what day, and at what time, are the battleships to be blown up?"

"On Thursday—that is, the day after to-morrow—at eight o'clock precisely, in the evening, just when the battleships are beginning to switch on their thousands of illuminations. There will be crowds of people watching, both from the sea and from the shore, and there will be a grand sight for them to witness which—"

"That is enough," said Frank Kingston sternly. "I think I have learnt all that I wish to know, Capelli. You can now divert your gaze to any other direction in the cell. Already I have been disgusted long enough by looking into your face."

The piercing look died from Kingston's eyes, and they became sleepy and languid as usual. Simultaneously Ludwig Capelli awoke out of his semi-trance, and looked round him as though he had just wakened up. He remembered all that had passed, however, that in spite of his jeers he had indeed given all the plans away. And with this realisation there came a wild wave of rage and hatred. For a second he glared round him with wild eyes, then sprang forward suddenly, with a snarl, at Kingston. For one second he possessed the strength of three men, and had Kingston been a common-place individual alone, he would assuredly have breathed his last.

As it was, he simply grasped the frenzied man with apparent ease, and flung him, snarling and cursing, on to the bench. It had the effect of making Capelli calmer, and he lay there looking up with glowering eyes. His breath was coming in short gasps, and he realised with stunning force that he had hopelessly convicted himself.

"Come," exclaimed Kingston quietly, "there is no reason why we should remain longer in this apartment! I have gained the information I needed, and you, Sir Nigel, have been a witness to everything that has passed."

"A witness!" replied the other. "By heavens, yes, Kingston! And I never dreamed of hearing such a vile story of crime as I have done. Up till this moment I never fully grasped the villainous nature of this Brotherhood of Iron. Now, however, my eyes have been opened, and it is quite plain to me why you have been so insistent with your great campaign."

"I brought Capelli here, Sir Nigel, because I knew you would keep him safely, and because it was, really, the only course I could pursue. I could not very well kidnap the man myself, and hold him prisoner."

"No, of course not," replied the Chief of Scotland Yard as they entered his private room. "Your proceeding was rather an unusual one, Mr. Kingston, but wonderfully effective. It is not customary to arrest a man when there is not a breath of proof against him, and then force him, by sheer will-power, to state facts which, under ordinary circumstances, he would rather cut off his right hand than reveal."

"It is a splendid method, nevertheless," declared Carson Gray. "But of course, no other man but Kingston could accomplish it. You have not the slightest idea, Sir Nigel, what terrible powers my friend is possessed of. To-night, I must admit, he has given you a little insight, first by racing the taxi, and then by forcing Capelli to reveal the Brotherhood's plans."

"And what plans?" said Sir Nigel agitatedly. "Think of it, gentlemen! Unless something is done, the best ships in our fleet will be blown up, and hundreds of lives will be wantonly destroyed. It is appalling to think of! These men must be fiends, not human beings at all!"

"They are influenced by the Chief," explained Kingston. "Were it not for him they would have hesitated before entering upon such a dastardly scheme. But he has a strange personality, and when speaking to the assembled councillors, he can do practically as he likes with them."

"But something must be done!" cried Sir Nigel Kane. "A message must be sent at once to the Admiral of the Fleet, telling him of the mines beneath his ships. They may be fired at any minute, and I tremble for the safety—"

"My dear Sir Nigel, pray do not excite yourself," said Kingston gently. "I know exactly what I am doing, and

intend to see this matter through myself. There is not the slightest necessity to do as you say, for the battleships will not be wired up until to-morrow evening."

"Nevertheless," protested the other, "it would be safer to warn the Admiral of his danger. The mines could then be removed, and—"

"And I should lose the whole bunch of them," concluded Kingston. "No, Sir Nigel. What you suggest would be to give the Unicorn and its villainous crew a warning of danger, and they would instantly take to flight—before, in fact, the remainder of the Inner Councillors have arrived on board. In this way there would be no proof against them whatever."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Carson Gray. "You speak as though you are going to have them all arrested, Kingston."

"Exactly, my dear Gray. That is my intention. This affair is the limit, so to speak, and I have decided to finish the Brotherhood once and for all."

"You could not do better," declared Sir Nigel; "but tell me, Mr. Kingston, how do you intend to set to work?"

"I am afraid I cannot tell you now, Sir Nigel, but as it is the Brotherhood's intention to remain inactive until Thursday night, we have plenty of time at our disposal. But I shall not drive matters too late, and I want you to

in the final act, I should be very glad of your assistance into the bargain."

"If I care!" cried Gray. "Why, Kingston, nothing would delight me more than that, and I have been fearful lest you should not want me."

The Dart Gets to Work.

On the following morning Gray and Kingston met outside the latter's hotel, and jumping into a taxi, they were soon rapidly bowling in the direction of the docks. They reached their destination well before noon, and made straight for the Coronet. On their way they noticed that the Brotherhood's yacht, the Unicorn, was no longer at its accustomed moorings.

Captain Morrison, the skipper of the Coronet, was well aware that the reports of Kingston's death were not true, and so went about his business quite contented of mind.

Consequently, he was on the look-out for his master now, and immediately recognised both he and Carson Gray as the two middle-aged gentlemen Fraser had described.

The pair crossed the gangway, and some minutes later were in the captain's cabin.

"Well, Morrison, is the Dart all ready?" asked Kingston.

"Ready and waiting, sir," replied the captain immediately.

"Fraser is aboard, waiting for the word to start, and she's



"You fiend!" snarled the foreigner, turning on Frank Kingston. "How did you do it? How did you run like that? I never saw anything like it in the whole world!" (See page 25.)

have a couple of tugs ready with police aboard to approach the Coronet to-morrow night, and formally arrest every Inner Councillor aboard. That will, of course, mean an end to the Brotherhood, for, once the Councillors and the Chief are disposed of, the society cannot continue. Afterwards, of course, you can raid the Chief's house in Grosvenor Square, force your way into the Council-chamber, and secure the Brotherhood's private records."

For a little over half-an-hour the three men remained talking, then Frank Kingston, looking a very different man to his real self—for he was, as the reader knows, disguised—took his departure with Carson Gray. The detective hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry that his friend's campaign was coming to an end, for he had spent some of the most pleasant hours of his life while helping Kingston in his work.

"Where now, Kingston?" asked the detective, as they walked along the street. "The time is not yet late—just after ten, as a matter of fact."

"Late or early, my dear fellow, I mean to make straight for bed, once I have interviewed Fraser. There is important work for him to do, and, Gray, if you care to be in with me

lying to port just above water. I hear there's dangerous work on hand, sir?"

"Yes, Morrison, fairly dangerous, but nothing to be worried about. There's a chance that before long I shall require the Coronet to go on a long cruise—merely a pleasure cruise, you'll understand."

And that was all Kingston said, though both Morrison and Carson Gray were somewhat puzzled as to what he meant.

They found Fraser eagerly waiting to be off in the submarine, and Kingston nodded with approval as he saw, stowed neatly away in one of the corners, a regulation diving suit.

"You have done very well!" he exclaimed approvingly. "Considering the short time you had at your disposal, Fraser, I think it creates something of a record."

"The workmen had only just gone, sir, when you came up," grinned Fraser. "Do we go right away, now, sir?"

"Right away without a stop; but mind, before nearing Spithead—or, in fact, any passing vessel—once in that vicinity, to dive below the surface should we be on top."

"Very good, sir."
(To be concluded. Please ask your friends to read the opening chapters to our new, short serial story.)

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."

OUR NEW WEEKLY FEATURE

**Our New Feature.**

As announced last week, I have decided to take the important step of introducing a new feature in our popular paper—namely, the Chat Page. The numerous letters from my readers and chums all over the world asking for this feature to be embodied in their favourite paper, have at last decided me to accede to their request.

The Chat Page will be the readers' own corner, to which they are cordially invited to contribute. On this page, too, I intend to give any advice and information which my friends may require, provided it is of sufficient general interest to warrant publication. Helpful articles, snappy storyettes, and interesting and amusing "pars" will also brighten the page from week to week; in fact, anything of general interest to my readers will be included, and it will be my endeavour to make our new feature a universally popular one. As far as possible, I want my readers to run the page for themselves. The contents will, therefore, depend entirely upon my readers' expressed wishes. This is to be the corner of the GEM where my readers are invited to air their views, to get into closer touch with fellow Gemites, and to bring their perplexities and troubles before their Editor. In short, it is to be a bright, chatty, helpful, amusing, and interesting page—a real "Readers' Own Corner."

Next Thursday's Story.**"THE SECRET OF THE SEA."**

Next week's story will appear under the above title, and will deal with the adventures of the chums of St. Jim's while on their summer holidays. The story is full of exciting incidents, and is one you are sure to enjoy reading. Will you please order your copy of the GEM in advance, and at the same time get your friend to place a regular order with his newsagent.

A Reader's Suggestion.

A letter which I received from an Australian reader recently strikes me as being worth publishing on this page, particularly as it includes a request which I get pretty frequently—this is, to introduce boys from particular places, or with certain peculiar characteristics, into the circle of the famous "Tom Merry & Co.," so as to give my enterprising correspondents a personal interest in Martin Clifford's famous series of stories. Now, GEM readers will understand that it is quite impossible for me to grant all the requests, from the very large number I get, even if it were advisable to do so, which, of course, it is not. A character which would be of absorbing interest to one particular reader or party of readers, since it was practically the creation of their own brains, would not necessarily be so popular with the enormous number of regular GEM readers. My correspondents, therefore, who are kind enough to send me suggestions must not feel aggrieved if they do not find them being carried out; but, at the same time, I earnestly hope they will not be discouraged from writing to me again. I am always delighted to hear from any of my friends, whose suggestions are often most useful. So please go on writing to me, Gemites.

Well, here is the letter from my Australian chum:

"Dear Editor,—As one of your constant readers of the GEM, I would like to write a few words to you in reference to 'Tom Merry & Co.' You have among his company a chap named Harry Noble, the Melbourneite. Well, being a Sydneyite myself, I would like you to fetch a Sydney boy into Tom Merry's company. As Sydney and Melbourne are always at one another it would make your tales lively at times—I am not saying they are not so now—through these two fellows, each sticking up for their own city. Of course, this chap will be a 'true blue,' as Wally would say. Victor Trumper would not be a bad name to give him. As New

South Wales have the most cricketers in a Test Match, the new chap will have to be a better cricketer than Noble. Hoping this little favour will meet with your approval,—I am, yours truly,

"C. LINDQUIST, JUNR.

"P.S.—Would be very much pleased if you could get some decent fellow—a London chap preferred—to correspond with me—one about 18 or 19 years of age, and oblige.

"C. L., 61, Smith Street, Summer Hill, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia."

A Helpful Article.**A HOLIDAY UNDER CANVAS.**

There are several separate methods of camping-out—namely, boating, cycling, or going by train somewhere and making permanent headquarters. The benefit to health from living in the open air for days at a time must be experienced to be believed. Within forty-eight hours you acquire an appetite like a horse, you find yourself sleeping like a log, your muscles acquire a firmness and elasticity hitherto unknown, your eyesight and hearing improve, while the quiet of the real open country sinks into your very being, and rests you as nothing else can.

There is also the delightful sense of being
your own master.

You are not dependent on time-tables and trains, and your meals you take when you please. You are, for the time being, your own master in a sense you have never before realised. The whole experience tends to make you self-reliant as nothing else can, and also fosters a feeling of good fellowship between yourself and your chums which makes you better friends than you ever were before.

Incidentally, you pick up a lot of knowledge about cooking, which often comes in very useful later on.

Camping-out gives you opportunities for photography and sketching and watching wild life, for fishing and botanising, and for natural history generally, which it is impossible to find in any other way. There is nothing more delightful, for instance, than to turn out early on a soft, dewy morning, catch a dish of fish, and grill them over a wood fire for breakfast. They taste utterly different from shop fish, however fresh.

Then it is quite the cheapest way of putting in a holiday. After you have hired or purchased the necessary equipment—usually

a boat and tent

and a few cooking utensils—the only expense will be buying the food. The cheapness of food will come as a startling surprise to those who live in rooms. Four fellows camping together can live like fighting-cocks on twenty-five to thirty shillings a week, if they cook their own food. Board at a seaside resort would cost four times as much for the same party.

The pleasures of camping-out increase as the days pass. The first twenty-four hours will be the hardest to one who has never tried it before, but each day you pick up a fresh wrinkle for making yourself comfortable, and enjoy yourself more and more until you look with positive dread upon returning to civilisation.

When you do at last get

back to work,

you make up your mind that next year you will spend your holiday in exactly the same way, and during all the coming months you look forward eagerly, and plan in full detail the coming year's excursion.

Many young fellows have never thought seriously of a holiday under canvas, simply because they have not known how to set about it. In this series of articles the writer hopes to give such useful information as to the cost of equipment and other similar hints.

(This article will be continued in next week's number of The GEM Library.)

THE EDITOR.

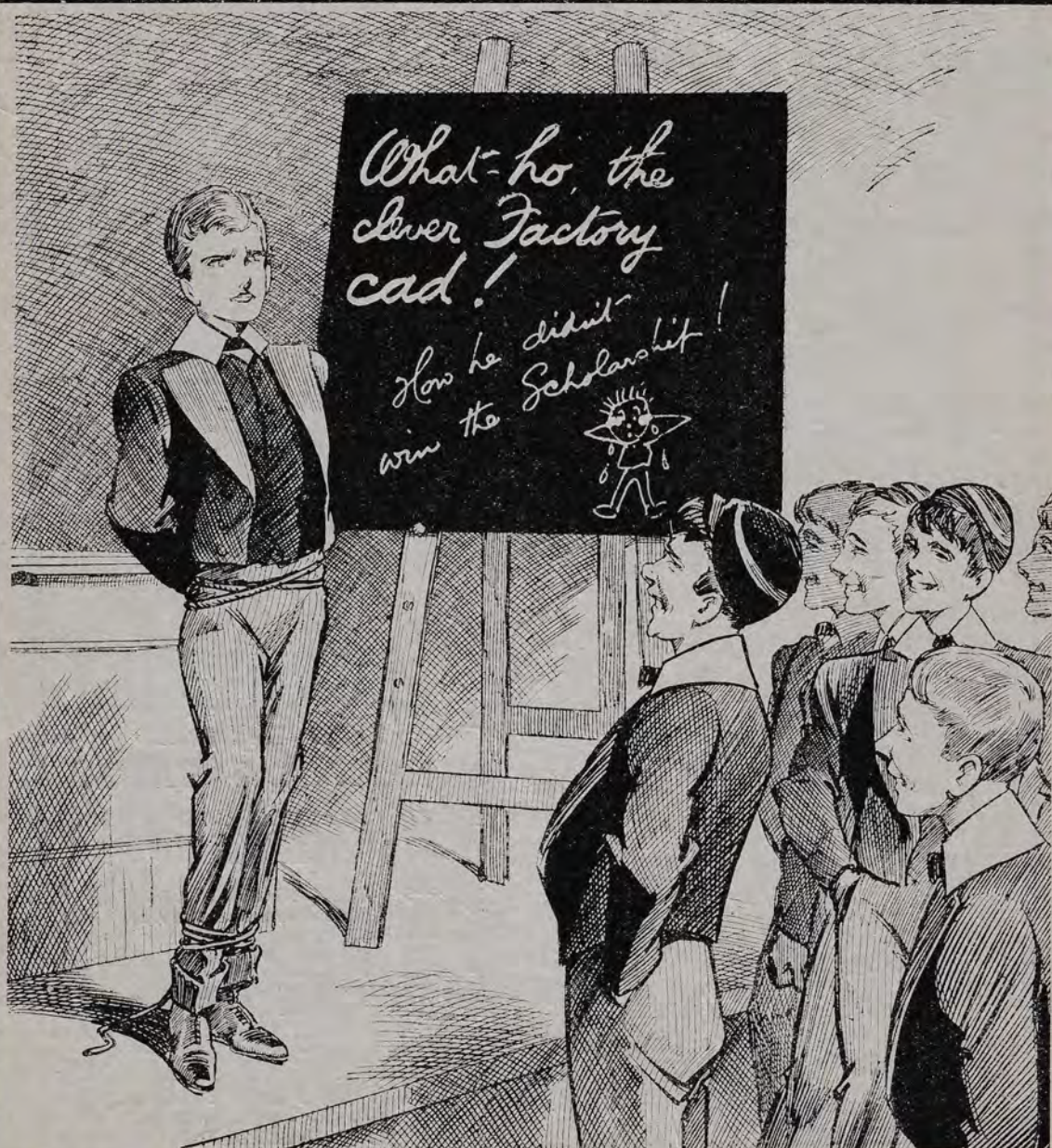
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