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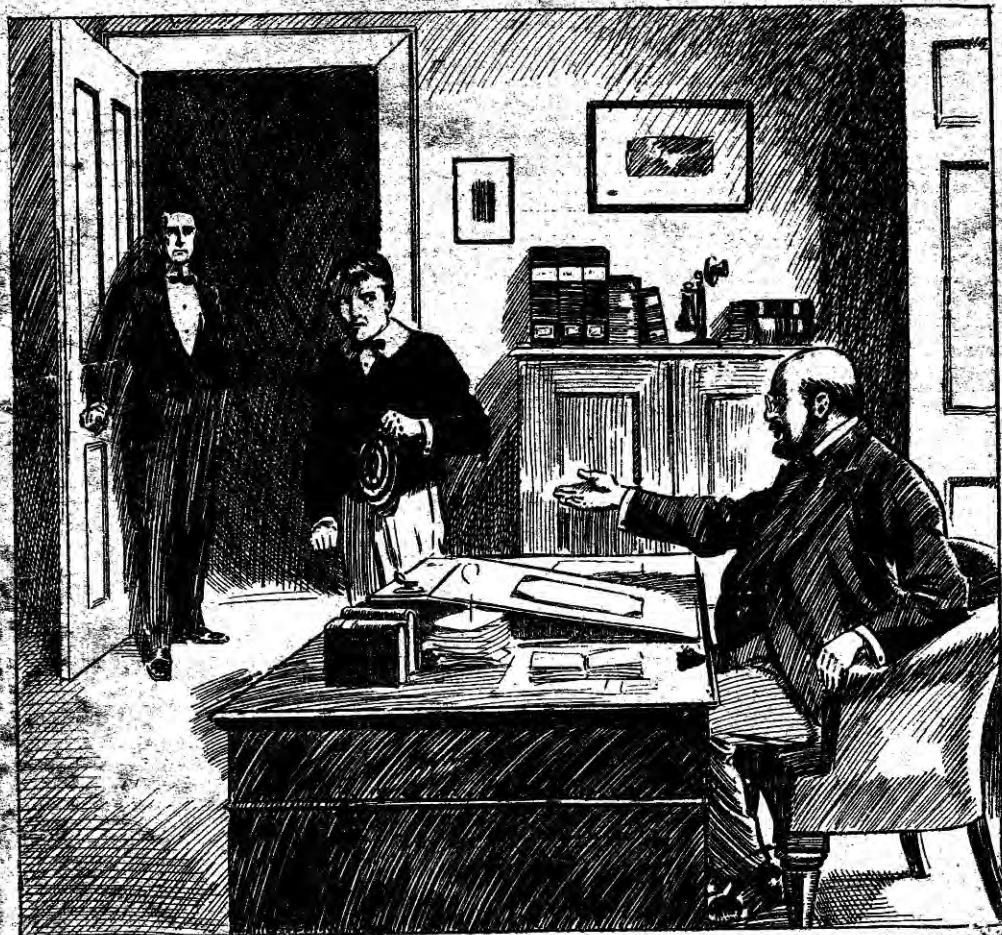


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THE HONOUR OF A JEW!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



Mr. Moses touched a bell, and a manservant appeared. "Jacob, you will show this young gentleman out," said Mr. Moses. "And you will never admit him again under any circumstances. Good-afternoon, Mister Levison." (See Chapter 3.)

CHAPTER I. A Young Man in a Hurry.

"**W**HERE'S Julian?"

It was Tom Merry of the Shell who was asking that question up and down the School House at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry was in flannels, and had his bat under his arm. It was a sunny September afternoon, and a half-holiday at St. Jim's. And that afternoon there was to

take place a most important event—the last junior cricket match of the season.

Tom Merry, as junior captain of the School House, had a world of responsibility on his young shoulders. The final match was a House match, and, of course, Figgins & Co. of the New House had to be beaten. The cricket season could not possibly wind up without a final licking being inflicted upon the rival team, from the point of view of the School House.

Next Wednesday:

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!" AND "UNDER THE DRAGON!"

So it was just cruel luck that Talbot of the Shell, who was a tower of strength to the School House side, should have "crooked" his wrist and that Kangaroo, the Australian junior, and a famous batsman, should be laid up with a bad cold. It was really too thick, as Tom Merry declared with exasperation, that Talbot and Kangaroo should have selected the very same time, one for getting a cricket-ball on his wrist, and the other for tumbling into a ditch and catching cold.

It never rains but it pours. Or, to put it in Shakespearean language, when sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions. Talbot and Noble were out of it. Then, on the very day of the match, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bound to have a spill on his bike, and hurt his noble leg. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy offered to limp on the field and do his best—an offer that his skipper declined without thanks.

With three vacancies to fill in the last House match of the season, Tom Merry felt the full weight of the responsibility of his position. Kangaroo and D'Arcy he could replace from his reserves without much difficulty, but the loss of Talbot was a great loss. There were plenty of fellows keen enough to fill the place, but their keenness was not shared by the junior skipper. Tom Merry, turning the matter over in his mind, and thinking hard, bethought himself of Dick Julian, the new fellow in the Fourth Form.

True, Julian was a new chap, but Tom had noted that he was keen on cricket, and that he shaped remarkably well. He gave promise of being a valuable recruit for the eleven, and Tom resolved to give him his chance in the House match. Julian might turn up trumps, and if he didn't, at least he would play as good a game as any of the other reserves at Tom's disposal. So, having come to a decision about a quarter of an hour before stumps were to be pitched, Tom Merry called for Julian.

As we have already observed, it never rains but it pours. For a new fellow, almost untried, to be offered a place in the eleven was a tremendous honour. Julian ought, really, to have been hanging on the spot, ready to be picked up. But he wasn't. To Tom Merry's wrath and dismay, Julian of the Fourth was not to be found.

It was the last straw.
"Is it possible that the silly ass has gone out?" exclaimed Tom Merry, greatly incensed.

"Fellows do go out on half-holidays, you know," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Not when they're wanted to play in House matches, fathead!"

"But Julian doesn't know," remarked Manners.
"What has that to do with it?" demanded Tom, rather unreasonably. "He's wanted, and he ought to be here. Julian—Julian! Where's that thumping ass Julian?"

Levison of the Fourth came along the passage, and Tom Merry called to him.
"Levison!"

The Fourth-Former did not reply; he did not seem to hear. His brows were wrinkled, and his lips tightly set. If Tom Merry had not been so preoccupied he would have noticed that something was wrong with Ernest Levison. But Tom's mind at that moment was fully occupied with the House match.

"Levison!" he shouted.
Levison started, and looked round irritably.

"Eh? What? Did you call me?" he snapped.

"Yes, twice!" growled Tom Merry.

"What the dickens is it, then? What do you want?"

"Well, I want a civil answer, for one thing," said Tom Merry sharply. "What the deuce is the matter with you?"

"Find out!"

"Have you seen Julian?" asked Tom Merry, controlling his temper with some difficulty. He was greatly inclined to hand Ernest Levison the business end of his bat.

"Hanging him!" said Levison.

"Never mind hanging him. Have you seen him anywhere? I want him."

"No, I haven't!" growled Levison. "I don't pal with Jews."

"You might do worse," said Tom contemptuously.

"Some of your pals aren't fit to be touched with a barge-pole. The Library.—No. 397.

pole, Levison. Some of the fellows saw you with Banks the bookie yesterday, and if a master had seen you—"

"You'd better go and tell Ralston," sneered Levison.

And, shrugging his shoulders, the black sheep of the Fourth turned his back, and went out into the quadrangle.

"Curious that I never see that chap without wanting to punch his head," said Tom Merry, "and I've a jolly good mind—"

"No time for napper-punching now," said Monty Lowther cheerily. "Never mind punching Levison's head. Stumps are going to be pitched in ten minutes, if you've got your team together."

"Levison's been losing money again," said Manners sagely. "I know that look on his chivvy—same as when he went borrowing money of old Moses in Wayland. Nice youth."

"Oh, blow Levison!" granted Tom Merry. "Where's that howling ass Julian? Hallo, Blake, have you seen that other idiot? He's in your Form!"

"The only idiots I've seen are in the Shell," replied Jack Blake cheerily. "Three of them—all present."

"Oh, don't be funny! Where's Julian?"

"Haven't seen him since dinner," said Blake. "What do you want him for?"

"To play."

"Good!" said Blake, with approval. "I mentioned to you once that you hadn't enough of the Fourth in the team."

"You've mentioned it a hundred times, I think," growled the captain of the Shell. "Well, now I wait out of your blessed Fourth, the silly ass has done the vanishing trick. Where is he?"

"Oh, we'll soon find him," said Blake. "He can't have melted into thin air, you know. Hallo, Reilly, Gussy, everybody, has anybody here seen Kelly—I mean Julian?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, jumping up.

"Where?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"At dinnah, deah boy!"

"You ass!" roared Tom Merry. "I suppose all the Fourth saw him at dinner. Has any silly ass seen him since?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Sure, I've seen him," said Reilly of the Fourth. "He was going out on his bike a few minutes ago."

"His bike!" yelled the hapless cricket captain.

"Faith, and so he was, and—"

"Where was he going, do you know?"

"Sure I asked him if I should come wid him, and he said he was going to see his uncle," said Reilly.

"Bless his uncle! Blow his uncle! Where?"

"At Wayland."

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"He can't have gone far if he only started a few minutes ago. The howling ass to go out biking and seeing silly uncles when he's wanted to play. I'll catch him."

Tom Merry dashed out of the School House, and rushed for the bike shed. Levison of the Fourth was there, wheeling out his machine.

"Lend me your bike," gasped Tom Merry. "I'm in a hurry; you can get mine out."

"Look here—"

Tom Merry did not look there. Cricket captains have to be a little high-handed on some occasions, and Tom felt that this was one of the occasions. So he jerked the bike away from Levison, and rushed it away. Levison gave a yell of indignant wrath.

"Tom Merry! You cheeky rotter—"

Tom did not heed. He jumped on the machine, and pedalled away for the gates. Levison rushed after him furiously. He made a grab at the Shell fellow from behind, but the pedals were going like lightning now, and the cyclist shot out of his reach. Levison had put rather too much force in that hasty grab; as his clutch met with only the empty air, he overbalanced himself, and fell forward.

Bump!

Tom Merry, on the bike, went whizzing down to the gates. Levison of the Fourth gasped furiously with his nose in the gravel.

CHAPTER 2.

Another Engagement!

DICK JULIAN was riding at a leisurely rate along the leafy, shady lane, that wound through deep, overhanging woods towards Wayland. There was a thoughtful expression on the Fourth-Former's handsome face. He did not at first notice a clanging bicycle bell behind him, but, as the clanging came closer, he drew in towards the side of the lane.

A breathless cyclist drew level, and jammed on a brake. It was Tom Merry of the Shell, flushed and warm.

"Caught you!" he exclaimed, parting.

Julian looked surprised.

"Yes, you've caught me," he assented. "What did you want to catch me for, Merry?"

"Jump down."

"Certainly."

Julian alighted from his machine, wondering what had brought the captain of the Shell speeding after him from the school at such a rate. Tom Merry leaned on his bike, recovering his breath. He had certainly exceeded the speed limit in his chase of the new boy.

"You're wanted," he exclaimed.

"Anything wrong?" asked Julian.

"Yes, rather. You know Talbot and Kangy are crooked—"

"Yes, I'm sorry."

"Now Gussy's taken a tumble. He was bound to take it at the most inconvenient time possible, or it wouldn't have been Gussy," explained Tom Merry. "We want another man in the team. You're the man. Savvy?"

Tom Merry naturally expected Julian to beam with delight at the idea. It wasn't every new kid in the Fourth who was offered a place in the School House junior eleven.

But Julian did not beam. His face clouded.

"How dencid unlucky!" he exclaimed.

"Unlucky!" said Tom Merry. "You're not crooked by any chance?"

"Oh, no; but—"

"No time for buts. It's time the stumps were pitched now, and Higgins & Co. will be waiting," said Tom.

"Come along."

"I can't," said Julian.

"Can't?"

"I'm sorry—"

"Blow your sorrow!" said the captain of the Shell testily. "I don't want your sorrow—I want you. Look here, Julian, do you understand—you're wanted in the House team. I don't want to pile it on, but any other fellow in the House would jump at the chance."

"So would I," said Julian, "rather. I never thought I'd have a chance in the House eleven this season. If I'd had any idea you might want me, I'd have stayed in. But I can't now. My uncle's expecting me."

"I suppose you can see your uncle another time," said Tom. "You can send him a wire from Rylcombe as we go back."

"I'm afraid it wouldn't do. He's expecting me, and— and he will have made some preparations for me," said Julian flushing. "He's been awfully good to me, and I couldn't disappoint him. He wouldn't understand about a House match being important. He doesn't know much about cricket. I'm awfully sorry, Merry—for my own sake as much as yours. But I can't come back."

"If your uncle has come down to Wayland specially to meet you, I suppose—"

"He's in Wayland," said Julian. "He hasn't come there specially."

"Oh, he lives there!" said Tom. "I never knew you

had a relation so near to the school. Look here, if your uncle lives there, it's all plane sailing. Ask him to come over to the school, instead of going over to see him. I should think he would be jolly glad to see you playing in the House match."

"I—I couldn't."

"Is he some stiff old johnny, with a four-point-seven scowl?" asked Tom.

Julian laughed.

"He is the kindest of men," he said.

"Then he would come over if you asked him, surely. If he lives at Wayland, I wonder he hasn't been to the school to see you already. Now's his chance. Put it to him nicely in a telegram—and ask him to come. Tell him all your pals will be glad to see him. What the deuce are you blushing about?"

Julian's face was crimson.

"I—I'm sorry, Merry, but it can't be done. I'm more sorry than I can say," said Julian. "I'd have given almost anything for a chance of playing in the House match. But I never thought I'd have a chance—a new kid. I wish I could fix it, but I can't now."

Tom Merry looked hard at Julian.

He had several times heard of Julian's uncle, who was supposed to be very wealthy. Julian made no secret of the fact that he was dependent on that uncle; and Julian always had plenty of money. A kind and indulgent uncle would surely have acceded to such a request as Tom had asked Julian to make. What did Julian's refusal mean—and the crimson that flooded his face?

There was evidently something behind it, something that Julian did not care to explain. Tom Merry set his lips a little.

"Well, if you won't come, you won't," he said shortly. He turned his machine in the road again.

"I—I say, I'm really sorry," said Julian eagerly. "You can be sure that I'd come if I could. You—you don't understand."

"No, I don't," said Tom; "I jolly well don't! If he's a crusty old bargee, it's a different matter, but I've heard you say he's one of the best."

"So he is."

"Then he'd come over, if you asked him, and he'd be glad to see you play in the House match."

"Yes, but—but—"

"But what?"

"Nothing," said Julian, his brow clouding.

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"If I were a suspicious chap," he said, "I should suspect that you weren't going to see any blessed uncle at all, and that you're only pulling my leg."

"I am not a liar," said Julian, flushing again.

"No, but you're dashed disobliging, anyway," said Tom, "and I sha'n't ask you to play for the House again in a hurry. No good talking, I'm off."

There was a whir of a bike in the lane, as Tom was about to mount, and Levison of the Fourth came along. He was mounted on Tom Merry's machine, and he was looking decidedly out of humour. He scowled at the sight of the two juniors.

"Hallo!" said Tom. "You can have your machine now, Levison. Sorry I took it in such a hurry. I hadn't a minute."

"Like your rotten check!" growled Levison, as he jumped down.

"Well, perhaps it was," admitted Tom. "But I'll explain. I wanted to catch Julian, to get him to play in the House match. You see how it was."

"So Julian's playing for the House?" said Levison, with a sneer.

"No, he isn't. He doesn't want to, after all. I've had my run for nothing," said Tom. "Ta-ta!"

Tom mounted his own machine and pedalled away rapidly back to the school. He was in a decidedly cross temper. It was not pleasant to have had his offer refused.

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YOUR EDITOR.

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

and to be still a man short for the team. Levison glanced after him, and then fixed his eyes curiously upon Julian.

"You don't want to play in the House team?" he said. "I thought you were very keen on cricket."

"I can't play, as it happens," said Julian shortly.

"It was a jolly good chance for you."

"I know that."

"Got another engagement—what?"

"Yes."

"Most chaps would throw over another engagement to get into the House team," said Levison, watching him with a peculiar expression.

"Well, I can't," said Julian.

He mounted his machine, and, with a curt nod to Levison, rode away. The black sheep of the Fourth mounted more slowly, and pedalled on his track. They were both going to Wayland apparently.

Tom Merry went whizzing back to St. Jim's, and jumped off his machine in the gateway. Lowther and Manners were waiting for him there.

"Well, where is he?" asked Manners.

"Didn't you catch him?" demanded Lowther.

"I caught him, but he won't come," growled Tom Merry. "Says he's got to go to Wayland to see a dashed uncle. Never mind him. I shall have to find somebody else. Kerruish, I suppose—"

"Kerruish has gone out," said Manners.

"Oh, what luck! Lumley-Lumley, then."

Lumley-Lumley, fortunately, was discovered in the quadrangle. He willingly changed into his dannels for the match.

Figgins & Co. of the New House were waiting on the ground when Tom Merry arrived there, looking somewhat flushed and cross. The happenings of that day might have disturbed the serenity of any cricket captain.

"We're ready," remarked Figgins, with somewhat satirical politeness. Tom Merry was a quarter of an hour late.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," grunted Tom.

"Oh, don't mench! Got your flock together?" asked Figgins.

"Yes, we're ready."

Tom Merry won the toss, and the School House opened the innings. Tom Merry's team consisted of Lowther, Manners, Blake, Herries, Digby, Dane, Lumley-Lumley, Gore, Mayne, Reilly, and Tom himself. It was a good team—very good—but not the best that the School House juniors could have put into the field. And for the last House match of the season, Tom naturally wanted the very best. Figgins & Co. were in great form.

But it was useless to grumble over spilt milk. Kangaroo was in the sanatorium, and Talbot and D'Arcy were crooked. Dick Julian might have been there; but he had not chosen to be there, and Tom could not help feeling some resentment. Why couldn't the fellow bring his uncle there to see the match, and play in it himself? It did not occur to Tom—what would probably have occurred to Levison at once—that perhaps Julian's uncle was some "shady" relation whom the junior would not care to show to the St. Jim's fellows.

But as he started batting, with Jack Blake at the other end, Tom dismissed the matter from his mind, and devoted all his attention to the game. The House match had to be won, by hook or by crook, unless the cricket season was to wind up with a New House win—which was not to be thought of.

CHAPTER 3.

Mr. Moses Does Not Oblige.

"GREAT Scott!"

Levison of the Fourth uttered that exclamation under his breath.

All the way to the market-town, Dick Julian had been in sight, and as he pedalled through the old High Street Levison could still see Julian ahead of him. Julian did not look back once, and apparently was not aware that Levison was behind him. Neither was Levison taking any special interest in Julian's movements, till the Fourth-Former dismounted from his machine in a quiet street, at the gate of a large house. Levison knew that house; it was the private residence of Mr. Moses, the

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moneylender, with whom Levison had had dealings in his time.

That mansion was, as a matter of fact, Levison's own destination; but he had not thought of suspecting that it was Julian's destination also, until he saw the new fellow dismount at the gate.

Julian wheeled his machine in, and disappeared beyond the thick shrubberies. Levison dismounted, in a state of great wonder.

Julian of the Fourth had gone to visit the moneylender. That was the "other engagement," evidently, which had prevented him from playing for Tom Merry's team in the House match at St. Jim's.

Levison was almost thunderstruck.

Julian was supposed to be wealthy, and certainly in no need of assistance from a moneylender. Was that, after all, the source of his supposed wealth—borrowed money? Levison wondered.

It was a risky proceeding to have dealings with Mr. Moses. Levison had come perilously near the "sack" for his own little transactions. Now Dick Julian was running the same risk!

"The blessed spoofer!" muttered Levison. "It must be gammon about his money—or what is he going to see old Moses for? He spends money jolly freely—old Moses' money, I suppose—and he signs papers for it, the same as I did. He will get it in the neck in the long run, same as I jolly nearly did. The duffer!"

Levison's lip curled contemptuously.

It was dire necessity that had driven Levison to the moneylender. But so far as he could see, Julian's object was simply to raise money, in order to keep up an appearance of wealth among well-to-do fellows. That, at least, was a kind of folly the black sheep of the Fourth would never have been guilty of.

Levison waited in the street for some time. He had to see Mr. Moses that afternoon, and he knew that the moneylender was not at his office; but he did not wish any St. Jim's fellow to see him visiting the house. It was necessary to keep such transactions strictly secret.

But Julian did not emerge.

Levison waited till an hour had passed, and still Julian did not appear. Why was he staying so long? Levison gritted his teeth as a new thought came into his mind.

"He spotted me, after all, and he's gone out another way!" he muttered. "There's a gate on the towing-path, I remember; he's cleared off that way. Cunning rotter!"

Levison hesitated no longer. He left his bike outside the garden railings, and walked up to the house.

"Tell Mr. Moses that Master D'Arcy wishes to see him for a few moments," said Levison to the manservant who opened the door.

He waited in the hall for a few minutes.

After his previous transactions with Mr. Moses, Levison was in doubt as to whether the moneylender would consent to see him. He had had no compunction in sending in D'Arcy's name instead of his own. He had no doubt that Mr. Moses would be very glad to see the son of Lord Eastwood. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would have been a very profitable customer for Mr. Moses, if he had had any inclination that way.

He had judged correctly. The man came back in a few minutes, and showed him into Mr. Moses' study.

The old man was alone there. But Levison had heard a door close, and he knew that someone had left the study just before he came in. He wondered whether it was, after all, Dick Julian. He glanced at the door which led into the library, wondering whether it hid Julian. But the door was closed.

Mr. Moses half rose as Levison stepped in, and a dark frown came over his hard, fallow face.

"Mishter Levison!" he exclaimed.

"Good-afternoon!" said Levison.

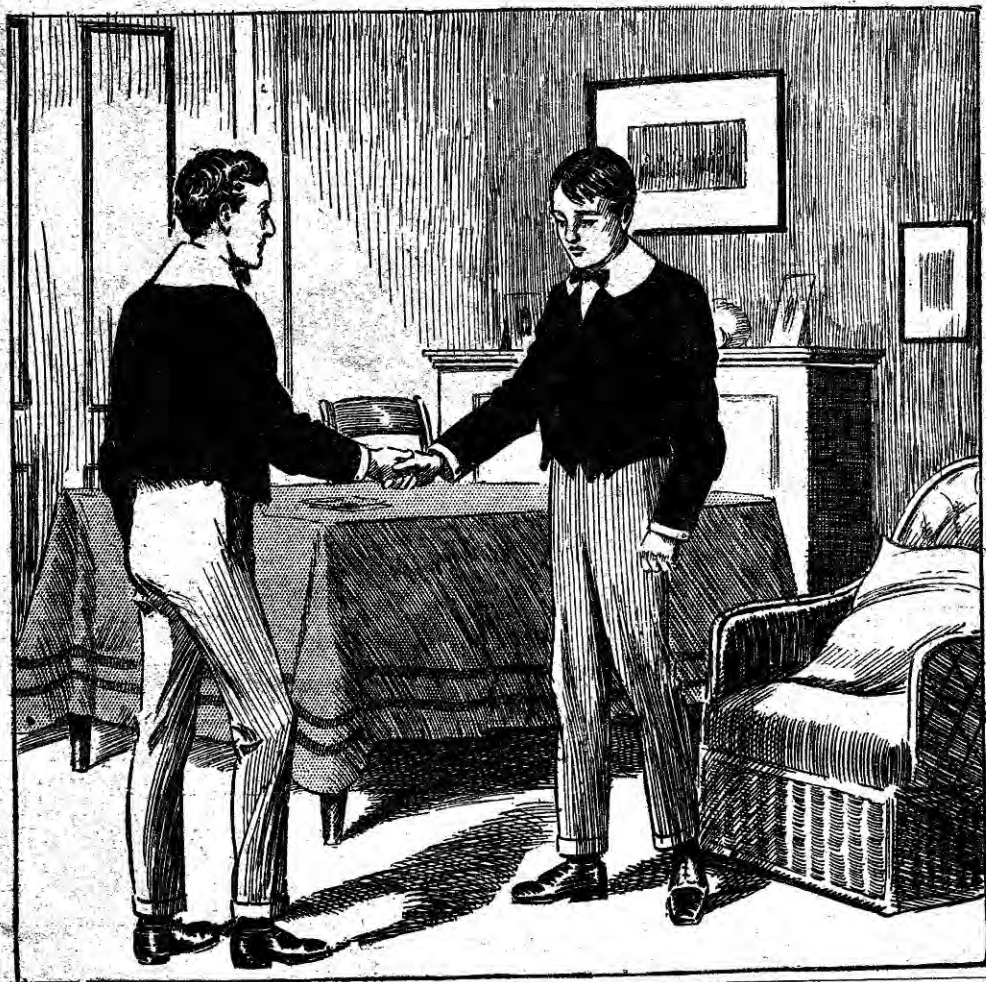
"You have sent in a false name."

"No harm done," said Levison coolly. "I wanted to see you very particularly, Mr. Moses."

Mr. Moses pointed to the door with his pen.

"You may go, Mishter Levison," he said. "I will do no bizness with you, I have had too much experience of you!"

Levison laughed.



Julian held out his hand, and Levison took it in a shamefaced way. "Good-bye, Julian—I'm sorry you're going. And—and I'm sorry I've been a rotten end to you. I wish you'd stay and stick it out." (See Chapter 13.)

"Let bygones be bygones," he suggested. "Business is business, Mr. Moses."

"You tried to swindle me," said Mr. Moses stolidly, "and I will do no piziness with you!"

"Set a thief to catch a thief," said Levison. "You did me brown; you know that. Cent. per cent. isn't exactly honest. You had me in a corner, and I tried to wriggle out. But that's all over. Look here, Mr. Moses, I want to make a little raise—"

"Not with me," said Mr. Moses.

"I simply must have ten pounds," said Levison. "I'm in a hole."

"That is not my piziness."

"I'll give you fifteen for it at the end of a week," said Levison eagerly. "Isn't that good enough, Mr. Moses?"

The old moneylender grinned.

"Do you know what you are offering?" he asked. "Five pounds on ten in a week; that is more than two thousand per cent."

"I can do it."

"When you want money, you come and offer me thousands per cent.; and when you are to pay, you say I am a Jew and a Shylock," grinned Mr. Moses. "At different times you sing different tunes. But I will not lend you money, Mishter Levison."

"I suppose you mean you want security for it," said Levison. "My signature isn't good enough. What about D'Arcy's signature?"

"That would be goot enough."

"I can get it," said Levison.

Mr. Moses shrugged his shoulders.

"You would get it by a trick, perhaps," he said. "But I have made my resolution. I do no more piziness with you!"

Levison's lips tightened.

"Look here, Mr. Moses, what's your objection, if your money is safe?"

"I have made up my mind with regard to you, Mishter Levison. But that is not all. I do no piziness with schoolboys."

"You usen't to be so particular," sneered Levison.

The moneylender nodded.

"That is so. But I am particular now," he said calmly. "I would not lend money to any boy at your school for any amount per shent. So I wish you a very good-afternoon, Mishter Levison."

Levison clenched his hands. There was calm determination in the moneylender's look, and Levison could see that he was not to be moved. And the need of money was pressing.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: **"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"** A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Mr. Moses touched a bell, and the manservant reappeared.

"Jacob, you will show this young gentleman out," said Mr. Moses, "and you will never admit him again under any circumstances. Good-afternoon, Mishter Levison!"

Mr. Moses turned to his writing-table, and appeared to become totally oblivious of Levison's existence. The wretched junior stood for some moments biting his lip, and then, without another word, he followed Jacob from the room.

His face was pale and harassed as he mounted his machine, and pedalled away towards the school.

He had failed.

In his previous transaction with the moneylender he had tried to trick Mr. Moses. True, he had not succeeded. But the moneylender was evidently "fed up" with him. That resource had failed him.

Where was he to turn now? With his usual recklessness the black sheep of the Fourth, scarcely extracted from one scrape, had fallen into another. He was in bitter need of money, and the usurer, the last desperate resource of the authoritary, had failed him.

What was he to do now? Levison's thoughts were black and bitter as he rode back to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4. A Close Finish.

"BRAVO, Figgins!"

That shout greeted Levison's ears as he wheeled in his bike. Round Little Side there was a throng of juniors, and they were all shouting.

Levison smiled a bitter smile.

Those fellows, merry and careless, were thinking only of cricket, and the match that was in progress, while bitter trouble was preying on his heart. Not one of them would have spared a thought for him, even if they had known. He did not reflect that he could have been as happy and careless as the cricket crowd if he had chosen; that if he had cared for cricket instead of more questionable pursuits, his present trouble would never have come upon him. He had brought it upon himself by his own taste for dingy blackguardism. At that moment, as he paused to look on at the cricket, the contrast was borne in upon his mind, and something like regret woke in his breast.

He would have been glad at that moment to dismiss black care from his mind, and to join the careless throng with a mind as free from harassing thoughts as their own.

"Hallo!" said Talbot of the Shell, greeting him with a friendly nod. "It's looking rather bad for the School House, Levison."

"Is it?" said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"School House innings 45," said Talbot, "and the New House have made 50 already. Figgins is hitting in topping style."

Levison nodded absently. Talbot's glance dwelt on his face somewhat curiously.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"No. Why?"

"You look a bit down in the mouth," Talbot lowered his voice a little, so that only Levison should hear him. "I hope it's not trouble again, Levison."

"Would you care if it was?" sneered Levison.

"Yes. And if I could help you out you'd only have to say the word," said Talbot quietly.

Levison laughed.

"Without asking me what I'd done, and whether it was my own fault?" he queried.

"It's not for me to set up in judgment on you," said Talbot. "I know you did me a good turn once, and that's all I care to think about."

"Well, I'm not going to plunder you, Talbot," said Levison moodily. "If I get into a scrape I can wriggle out of it somehow. You're the only chap who's ever treated me decently, and I'm not going to shove it on your shoulders."

"But—"

"Besides, it's nothing," said Levison lightly. "Don't bother about it. It's nothing. Why aren't you playing?"

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"Crocked! My wrist."

"Bad luck for the House," said Levison. "My hat! There's another 4 for Figgins. The School House will get it in the neck this time!"

"And it's the last match of the season," said Talbot. "It's rotten luck! Might have been a bit better if Julian could have played. I've noticed his play, and he is a topping bat."

"But he couldn't," smiled Levison. "Another engagement—what?"

"Yes. He was booked to see his uncle this afternoon."

"His uncle?"

"Yes. So he told Tom Merry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't quite see the joke," said Talbot, puzzled, as Levison burst into a loud laugh.

"So he told Tom Merry he was going to see his uncle, did he?" asked Levison, in great amusement.

"Yes. Why not?"

Levison did not reply to that question. He watched the cricket in silence. Dick Julian had told Tom Merry that he had to see his uncle. But Levison knew, as a matter of indubitable fact, that he had gone over to Wayland to visit the moneylender. Julian's regard for the truth seemed to be about on a par with Levison's own.

Another shout rang out as Figgins drove the ball away again. Talbot and the rest of the School House fellows looked a little anxious. They were very keen on the House winning the last match of the season; but it was beginning to look as if Tom Merry's team would get it fairly "in the neck!"

"Wotten Luck, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lugubriously. "I suppose they can't expect anythin' else, with three of the best left out of the team. But it's wotten luck all the same!"

The luck of the School House certainly seemed to be out. The New House fellows were at the top of their form, and bent on winning. Patty Wynn's bowling had been tremendous in the previous innings. Now Figgins and Redfern were batting away like county champions. The School House bowlers did their best, but the two best bowlers of the team were out of it—Talbot and Kangaroo—and their absence was sorely felt.

The figure for the innings was exactly 100 when the last New House wicket fell. Figgins & Co. had more than doubled the School House score.

The New House crowd were grinning gleefully. Faces were long among the School House fellows when Tom Merry and Mayne opened the second innings.

Patty Wynn went on to bowl the first over, and the New House crowd cheered him on. But the fat Fourth Former was not so lucky this time. Tom Merry and Mayne were playing the game of their lives, and for a long time they held the New House bowlers at bay. Patty Wynn and Redfern and Kerr, in turn, assailed them in vain. The score was 50 before the partnership was dissolved.

"Bai Jove! It's lookin' up, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus jubilantly.

Mayne went out, and Blake joined Tom Merry. Blake was also resolved to do or die, and he did well. The board marked 70 when he retired, and Tom Merry was still batting. Herries and Digby came in, in turn, and added their quota of runs. Then came Reilly, and then Lowther, then Manners. The score jumped over the 100 amid loud cheers.

"My hat! Tommy looks like being not out at the finish," said Monty Lowther, as he joined Talbot. "If we had a first-class bat to pair with him we should pull the game out of the fire yet. Perhaps Dane will do it."

Clifton Dane came on, and his first hit was for 4, and there were loud cheers for the Canadian junior. Dane was the last chance, as it were. The fag-end of the School House eleven would not be worth much. But Dane was doing well, and over after over was played through, and found him still keeping his end up.

"Hundred and fifty!" chirruped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Huwway! We shall beat the boundahs aftah all!"

"There goes Tommy!" said Lowther regretfully.

Tom Merry had been clean bowled at last, after a splendid innings. He had fallen to Fatty Wynn's doughty hand.

"Now for the finish," grunted Manners. "Lumley-Lumley won't do much against Wynn."

Manners was right. Lumley-Lumley was bowled for a duck's egg by the Welsh junior.

"Last man in!"

Gore of the Shell was last man in.

"We stop at 150," Lowther remarked to Tom Merry, as the captain of the Shell joined the group. "Gore can't tackle that bowling."

Tom shook his head.

"I'm afraid not. Clifton Dane is well set, and if we had a good man to put along with him we'd beat the New House hands down. But Gore is hardly up to it."

"That ass Julian—"

Tom Merry frowned.

"Julian could keep the innings open, and give Dane the chance to make the running, if he were here," he said. "But it can't be helped."

"There goes Gore!"

George Gore had done his best, but he was nowhere near the form of the bowling. His wicket went down, and the School House were all out for 150.

Tom Merry could not help feeling exasperated. A steady bat like Dick Julian would have made all the difference at the finish. But, as Tom remarked, it could not be helped. Julian was not there.

The New House second innings started. Figgins & Co. had plenty to do after the way the School House had picked up in their second innings.

Blake of the Fourth captured Figgins' wicket in the first over, and the School House gave him a roar. It was a good beginning.

But Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Koumi Rao, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn all put on a goodly allowance of runs in their turn. The score mounted up. It reached 80 for the eighth wicket. It was at 88 for the ninth. Then the order was "last man in" for the New House.

"A close finish, anyway," said Talbot.

90—92—94! Kerr was still at the wicket, and his partner was Thompson of the Shell. The School House bowling would have been too much for Thompson, but it was Kerr who was getting it. And the Scottish junior was batting in great style, but very cautiously. If the game had gone past that over it would have been a win for the School House, and Kerr knew it. But there were three more balls to the over, and only one was wanted to tie, two to win. Jack Blake sent down his best ball, and the School House crowd hoped for a moment, but Kerr was "there." The leather went whizzing, and the batsmen were running—once!—twice! A second too late the ball came in from Digby.

"Hurrah!" the New House fellows were yelling. "New House wins! Hurrah!"

Tom Merry compressed his lips as he came off the field. He was thinking what a good many other fellows were thinking. If the School House had scored a few more runs, the New House would not have been able to finish in that over, and the next over would surely have been fatal to them.

"All Julian's fault!" growled Jack Blake. "Why couldn't he have been here? Julian in Gore's place would have done the trick."

"Close thing—what?" said Figgins to Tom Merry. "You nearly did us! But a miss is as good as a mile."

Tom Merry's face cleared. He would not allow himself to take a licking badly.

"Well, you've done us in the last match of the season, Figg," he said. "Never mind. Wait till the footer comes along, and we'll make hay of you!"

"I don't think!" grinned Figgins.

A junior came wheeling a bike in as Tom Merry & Co. walked away to the School House. It was Julian of the Fourth.

"How has it gone?" he asked eagerly.

"Licked!" said Tom Merry.

Julian's face fell.

"Sorry! I suppose it would have made no difference if I'd been there?"

"As it happens, all the difference," said Tom curtly. "If we'd had half a dozen more runs we could have pulled it off; the New House couldn't have lived through another over. Of course, you might have scored a duck's egg like the man I put in your place. There's no telling."

"Vewy impwob," said Arthur Augustus. "It was weally too bad, Julian. You know we wanted to beat the New House in the last match of the season."

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry, somewhat mollified by the regret that was very plainly visible in Julian's face. "The kid had to go and see his uncle, I suppose, if the old Johnny was expecting him. No need to look out up about it, Julian; it wasn't your fault."

Julian nodded, and wheeled his bike away. Levison of the Fourth, looking on, grinned in his peculiar way.

"His uncle!" he murmured. "His uncle! What would they say if they knew the spoofing rotter hadn't been to see any uncle at all, but a moneylender—what, I wonder?"

CHAPTER 5.

Anonymous!

"BETTAH take wound a toppah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Why not a portmanteau?" asked Blake sarcastically.

"Or a trunk?" said Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy screwed his eyeglass a little more firmly into his eye, and surveyed the two humorous juniors severely.

"Pway don't be fwivolous, deah boys. This is a wathah sewious mattah, considewin' that the poor chaps are bein' starved by those disgustin' Huns in Germany. I wegard it as bein' up to us to collect at least a toppahful of cash. Will you lend me your toppah, Blake?"

"Try your own," said Blake.

"It would hardly improve my toppah, Blake, to go wound collectin' money in it. You are vewy weckless with your toppah, anyway, and it always looks wathah wotten!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I wegard that as a widiculous ejaculation, Blake! Will you lend me your toppah, Tom Mewwy?"

"When I've done with it," said Tom Merry. "Ask me next term!"

"Wats! Lowthah, deah boy, will you lend me—"

"A thick ear!" asked Lowther.

"Your toppah, you ass?"

"Ask me another!" said Lowther.

"I wegard you as unpatiwotic boundahs!" said Arthur Augustus sternly. "Howevah, wathah than allow Tewwitowials to be starved in Germany, I will use my own toppah!"

And he did. A handsome and beautifully-shining silk topper was extended for contributions, and the chums of the School House went through their pockets.

It was really a deserving case. Some of the local Territorials, from Wayland and Abbotsford and Rylcombe, had been captured in Flanders, and news had come through that like most British prisoners in Germany—they were on very short commons. They did not like the kriegsbrod—that terrible "war-bread" which is now a common article of diet in the Fatherland, owing to the activities of the British Fleet. And their wants having become known at home, there was a local fund being raised to supply them with necessities.

A committee had been formed, of which the Head of St. Jim's, Dr. Holmes, and Mr. Railton, the House-master, were members. Handsome contributions had been made by local patriots, but a good deal of money was wanted to keep the unfortunate Territorials well supplied. Both Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton had contributed handsomely, and even Mr. Ratcliff of the New House had put his name down. Then it occurred to Kildare of the Sixth to take a collection in the senior Forms, and the Fifth and the Sixth had "whacked out" handsomely.

That so excellent a thing should be left to the seniors was not to be thought of. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had therefore proposed a junior collection also.

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The idea was heartily backed up. Fellows who had plenty of money were more than willing to hand it out for the benefit of prisoners in Germany—men who had fought for their country, and were suffering hard imprisonment among savage foes. Fellows who had little were willing to contribute from that little—as Arthur Augustus told them every little helped. Four pennies were enough to purchase a loaf; and a loaf of British bread was a boon and a blessing to a hapless soldier condemned to the "hard tack" of a German military prison.

But it was doubtful whether a "topper" was wanted for the collection. If Arthur Augustus succeeded in getting that topper full of cash, certainly it would constitute a record in the way of collections.

"Shell out, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am beginnin' it with a soveveign. Pway don't wegard that as swank. Ewewy fellah ought to hand out all he can, and I shall be vewy glad to collect soveveigns fwom all of you!"

There was a general chuckle. Many sovereigns were not likely to be gathered in the junior forms.

"There's my last shilling," said Monty Lowther.

"It is vewy good of you to contribute your last shillin', Lowthah!"

"Yes; it would leave me stony if I hadn't some half-crowns left!" assented Monty Lowther.

"You uttah ass!"

Clink! Clink! Clink!

Coins rattled into the topper. Tom Merry & Co. did their duty nobly. Then Arthur Augustus marched through the School House, like a lion seeking whom he might devour, so to speak.

"Levison!"

"Hallo! What's the little game?" asked Levison, as the swell of St. Jim's hailed him.

"Contributions, please!"

"Rats!"

"It is for the prisoners in Germany, Levison."

"Oh!" said Levison. The black sheep of the Fourth was a pretty hard customer, but even he was not proof against that. He fished in his pocket. "Tanner any good?" he asked. "It's all I have."

"If it is all you have, Levison, you cannot do more. Small contributions received with gwtitude; largah ones in pwoportion."

Levison's sixpence clinked into the topper.

"Thank you vewy much, Levison! Goah—"

"Go and eat coke!" said Gore politely.

"For the prisoners in Germany, Goah."

"Oh, all right!"

A half-crown clinked in. Arthur Augustus marched triumphantly along the passage. He was beginning well. The lower passage was soon exhausted, and the swell of the Fourth mounted to the studies. The Shell passage was thoroughly "done," coins of all denominations falling into the hat. Then the Fourth-Form passage was started upon. Julian was in his study, and he looked in surprise as Arthur Augustus and the topper as they came in together.

"Heah you are, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"What's the little game?" asked Julian.

"Collection for the Tewwitowials who are bein' starved in Germany."

"Oh, good!"

Julian's hand went to his pocket at once. Then he hesitated.

"Pway don't be bashful, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus kindly. "If you are short of tin, a coppah will do."

"I'm not short of tin," said Julian. "I've plenty. My uncle gave me a lot of money to-day."

"Bwavo! Whack it out!"

"Certainly! But—"

"But what?"

Julian coloured.

"I'd like to put in a good bit, if you won't mention it to all the fellows. I don't want to look like swanking, you know, because I happen to have plenty of tin."

"My dear chap," said Arthur Augustus, "I won't say a word, on my honah. I will close my eyes if you like while you put it in."

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Julian laughed.

"Never mind that. Here you are."

"Oh, cwumbs!" said Arthur Augustus, as the Jewish junior slipped five currency notes for a pound each into the hat. "Weally, Julian, that is too wippin', you know. You musn't beggar yourself."

"All serene!" said Julian.

"Bai Joye, we shall beat the Sixth at this wate!" said Arthur Augustus gleefully. "I will wagah that Kildare did not collect any fivahs. Hwaway!"

Arthur Augustus looked as if he were walking on air as he quitted the study. The School House being finished, he crossed the quad to the New House. Figgins & Co. were to have their turn. The heroes of the New House were at tea in their study when the swell of the School House arrived.

"Heah you are!" announced Arthur Augustus.

Figgins stared at the topper for a moment in astonishment. Then he grinned.

"Thanks, awfully!" he said.

He took the topper from Arthur Augustus, and put it on the table—a proceeding that caused D'Arcy great surprise.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"This is really good of you," said Figgins heartily. "How did you know funds were low in this study?"

"Weally—"

"Just like Gussy to pass round the hat for us!" grinned Kerr. "You seem to have made a good raise, Gussy."

"Simply ripping!" remarked Patty Wynn. "I suggest that we give Gussy threepence for his trouble—out of the hat!"

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins and Kerr unanimously.

Arthur Augustus clutched at the topper.

"You uttah asses!" he exclaimed. "I am not bwingin' this cash to you!"

"Not?" ejaculated Figgins.

"Certainly not!"

"But you said 'here you are,'" objected Figgins. "Think again, Gussy! Are you quite sure it isn't for us?"

"You uttah asses, of course not!"

"Then we shan't give you the threepence," said Patty Wynn, with a shake of the head.

"Weally, Wynn—" Arthur Augustus began warmly. Then it dawned upon him that Figgins & Co. were pulling his noble leg. "Weally, you fellahs, I suppose you are only wottin'—"

"Has that dawned upon you, dear boy?" grinned Figgins. "What a brain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats! I want your contributions for the pwisonahs in Germany. Those wascally Huns are starvin' them, you know, and we're goin' to beat the Sixth Form subscription."

Whereupon Figgins & Co. shelled out heartily, only, as funds were low in the study, they did not cause the topper to overflow.

"You seem to have done pretty well already," said Figgins, as he dropped in ninepence halfpenny—all he had in the way of cash. "Who's been shelling out pound notes?"

"I have agweed not to reveal his name, Figgay, deah boy, as he is afraid it might be considered swank on his part. But I may mention that he put in five of them."

"My hat! A giddy millionaire," said Kerr; "and strictly anonymous."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, he's a jolly decent chap, whoever he is," said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah! I am going to keep his name secret, as he asked me to," said Arthur Augustus mysteriously. "But if I revealed it, it would make some fellows blush for sayin' that a Jew is bound to be a Shylock, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins & Co.

Arthur Augustus looked at them in surprise.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As there was only one Jew at St. Jim's, it was not difficult for the chums of the New House to guess who was

the generous donor, from Arthur Augustus's remarkable way of keeping the secret.

"I fail to see any cause for laughter," said D'Arcy stiffly. "I regard your merriment as unwelcome."

And he marched majestically out of the study, with his noble nose high in the air, leaving Figgins & Co. chuckling.

Half an hour later, Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was surprised to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy enter his study, with a well-laden topser in his hand.

"Pwax excuse me, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "As you are a member of the Prisoners' Committee, sir, I have brought you this."

He held out the topser. Mr. Railton, who was seated, could not see what was in it. He could not see, in fact, that anything was in it. He regarded the topser with surprise, and then looked somewhat sternly at the swell of the Fourth.

"I do not understand you, D'Arcy. Why have you brought this here?"

"Because you are a member of the committee, sir," explained Arthur Augustus. "It is for the Tewwitowial prisonahs, sir."

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir."

"Is this an absurd joke, D'Arcy?"

"Joke, sir," ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Certainly not, sir. I have brought this heah for the prisonahs, sir."

"And of what use would a schoolboy's silk hat be to the prisoners in Germany?" exclaimed the Housemaster.

"Oh! Ha, ha—"

"D'Arcy!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Excuse me, sir; not the topser!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "What's in it, I mean, sir."

He turned out the topser on the table. There was a regular volley of silver, and gold, and coppers, and currency notes. Mr. Railton uttered an exclamation.

"Bless my soul!"

"It's the juniah collection, sir," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "There are ovah ten pounds, sir. Five came from one contributor, whose name I have pwomised not to mention, though I should weally like to reveal it to the chaps who called him a 'Sheeney.'"

Mr. Railton smiled.

"I will take charge of this money, D'Arcy, and forward it to the proper quarter. Convey my thanks to the juniors who have contributed."

"Yaas, sir. I twust there will be enough now to pwovide for those poor chaps in Germany?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Railton. "A very generous gentleman, whose name is not known to me, has contributed five hundred pounds to the fund."

"Five hundred pounds?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, and his name is not to be revealed, it appears; a very generous contribution indeed—more than all the rest put together," said Mr. Railton.

"That is jollay good news, sir!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Bai Jove, I'll tell all the fellahs that."

And Arthur Augustus hurried away with the news.

"Wathah puts our collection in the shade, deah boys," he said, in Study No. 6. "I wondah who has whacked out five hundred pounds. Must be some awfully wick chap."

"And awfully generous, too," said Tom Merry. "Even rich men don't part with five hundred pounds very easily, as a rule."

"Long may he wave!" said Monty Lowther. "Must be one of the big guns in the county, I suppose—old Major Stringer, perhaps. I don't know why he should keep his name dark, though."

"Some modest chap," said Blake; "like the anonymous contributor who handed Gussy five quids."

"Gussy is keeping his name dark," chuckled Manners.

"You're not going to reveal that at any price, are you, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, Mannahs!"

"Not if I offer you a lump of sugar!" said Monty Lowther persuasively.

"Weally, you ass—"

"It was jolly good of Julian, but he would have known

that Gussy would blurt it out, if he'd known Gussy better," grinned Digby.

"Julian!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "How on earth did you know, Dig?"

"I had it from Figgy," chuckled Digby.

"And how did Figgy know?"

"You told him!"

"Wubbish! I didn't say a word."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you cacklin' asses— Bai Jove, you know, Figgins must be a thought-weadah! I was awfully careful not to say a word, yon know. And I uttaly fail to see anythin' for you duffahs to cackle at."

But the duffers persisted in cackling.

CHAPTER 6.

Blackmail.

LEVISON tapped at Dick Julian's door, and opened it. There was a peculiarly grim expression on Levison's face, which the new junior could not fail to notice.

Levison closed the door very carefully, and then turned to the surprised Julian.

"I've got a bone to pick with you," he remarked.

"You might leave it till after I've done my prep," said Julian, good-humouredly.

"It can't wait. Can you lend me ten quid?"

Julian stared.

The request was so extraordinary that he simply stared—he could do nothing else. For one fellow to ask another whom he hardly knew for the loan of ten pounds was a little out of the common.

Julian had plenty of money, and he was very generous with it. There were several impecunious fellows, like Mellish and Piggott, who raised little loans from Julian and forgot to settle them. But they were generally contented with shillings or half-crowns. Levison was impecunious, too, that was an open secret, and it was pretty certain that if he borrowed ten pounds, he would not be able to repay it. And ten pounds was rather a considerable sum, even to a rich fellow.

"Rather taken your breath away—what?" asked Levison, with a grin.

"Well, yes," said Julian, after a long pause. "Of course I can't lend you ten pounds, Levison. Are you joking?"

"Not at all. I am in deadly earnest."

"I don't understand you," said Julian shortly. "I'm not a bank to be drawn upon, you know. And if you want me to speak plainly, I think this is pretty cool. The last time you spoke to me it was to call me a Sheeney. Now you've got the nerve to ask me for ten pounds. I think it's like your cheek."

"I'm not asking it as a friendly favour," said Levison coolly. "I'm asking it, because I want it, and it may pay you better to lend it to me than to refuse."

"I don't see that."

"Then I'll explain. Yesterday afternoon Tom Merry asked you to play in the House match, in the House eleven."

"What on earth has that to do with it?"

"Lots. You refused; you told him you had to see your uncle."

"That was true."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Tom Merry took it as true, at least," he replied. "But he feels pretty sore about it, and so do all the fellows. As it happens, the match would have been a win for the School House if you hadn't left him in the lurch as you did. Suppose the fellows should get to know that you were spoofing them yesterday, and that you hadn't been to see my uncle at all. You're pretty popular now, for some reason I can't make out, but that would make rather a difference—what?"

"How could they get to know anything of the sort when, as a matter of fact, I did go to see my uncle?" asked Julian. "You're talking in riddles."

"You want to see a moneylender."

Julian started.

"That isn't true," he said.

"I saw you."

"What?"

"I was in the same street, and I saw you go in," grinned Levison. "Not much good denying it. I watched you wheel your bike into the garden, and you stayed in Mr. Moses' house a long time."

Julian stared at him hard.

"I visited Mr. Moses' house," he said. "I should not think of denying what is true. You had no right to spy upon me, Levison; but if you think I should lie about it, you are judging me by yourself, and judging wrongly. But what right have you to say that Mr. Moses is a moneylender?"

It was Levison's turn to stare.

"Do you mean to say you didn't know?" he shouted.

"I did not, and I do not now. I do not believe it."

"You—you—you don't believe it?" stuttered Levison. "You don't believe that old Moses of Wayland is a moneylender?"

"Certainly not."

"You must be potty," said Levison, in wonder. "Any of the fellows will tell you. Why, he's well known as the most miserly and grinding old hunk in the county of Sussex."

"It is false!" exclaimed Julian savagely. "You say that because he is a Jew. It is false!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Levison. "There are Jews and Jews, I know, but old Moses is one of the Shylock kind."

"It is false!"

"You're trying to bluff me," said Levison, with a sneer. "You know it as well as I do. If you didn't know he was a moneylender, what did you visit him for?"

"That's my business!"

"You want to borrow money, of course. You couldn't have gone to a moneylender for any other reason."

"I do not believe he is a moneylender," said Julian. But he no longer spoke angrily; a troubled look was gathering on his handsome face.

"Oh, come off!" said Levison roughly. "You can't bluff me. Have you ever seen the 'Wayland Gazette'?"

"No."

"Well, if you buy a copy you'll find old Moses' advertisement in it. Money lent!" said Levison.

"It is impossible!"

"Blessed if I can understand you!" said Levison, in wonder. "Everybody knows he is a Sheeney Shylock, and I don't see what you're denying it for. You went to him yesterday afternoon, and you lied about it to Tom Merry, because you wanted to keep it dark."

"What!" exclaimed Julian fiercely.

"You told Tom Merry you were going to see a relation—an uncle. You were really going to see the moneylender, for I saw you go into his house," said Levison, "and if the fellows knew, you can bet you'd be sent to Coventry for leaving the eleven in the lurch for such a reason."

Julian was silent.

"And if it came out," resumed Levison icily, "you'd get the sack. The Head would come down on you like a hundred of bricks for having dealings with a moneylender. That's why I've asked you to lend me ten pounds."

"I don't see the connection."

"I'll point it out. I'm in a hole, and I'm desperate," said Levison coolly. "I've been putting money on horses, and I've had bad luck. I've got to pay ten quid. I've got to get them from somewhere, or the chopper will come down. You're going to lend them to me, or give them to me, if you prefer to call it so. In return for that I'm going to keep your secret. Savvy?"

"You scoundrel!"

Levison laughed. "Hard words break no bones," he said. "I know you've raised a lot of money with old Moses, for you gave D'Arcy five pounds for the prisoners' collection."

Julian frowned.

"D'Arcy let it out," sneered Levison. "I dare say you meant him to. Don't get ratty," he added, as Julian half rose, his eyes gleaming. "Anyway, whatever you meant, D'Arcy did let it out. If you could hand out five

pounds for a fund yesterday you must be pretty well heeled. I want ten."

"Do you know what this kind of thing is called?" asked Julian, looking at him with mingled disgust and scorn.

"Blackmail," said Levison, with a nod. "I can't help that; it's an unpleasant word, but necessarily knows no law, as the Germans say. I've got to raise the money or get out of St. Jim's, and you're my last resource. If I can stick you for it I save my bacon; if I can't, I'm done. I've tried to raise the money from your precious friend Moses, but he wasn't taking any. You see, I'm quite frank about it. He lent me money once—"

"Mr. Moses lent you money—you, a schoolboy?"

"Yes. And he stuck me for about a hundred per cent. I tried to get my own back on him, but he was too deep for me. And he won't have anything more to do with me. That door's closed now. I'm desperate. I would have dodged D'Arcy into putting his signature on my paper, or put it there myself, to raise the money from Moses. I'm telling you this so that you can see that I'm not a fellow to stick at a trifle."

"By your own description you ought to be in prison," said Julian contemptuously. "The sooner you leave St. Jim's the better for the school."

"Perhaps," said Levison, shrugging his shoulders. "But I'm holding on as long as I can, all the same. My people are rotten poor, and I have to fend for myself. I've tried it on the geegees, and had bad luck. I don't see why I shouldn't screw money out of you. Moses screwed it out of me, holding my paper over my head—the paper wasn't worth twopence in law, with a schoolboy's signature on it—but shown to the Head, it would have got me the sack. Wasn't that blackmail?"

"I suppose it was, if it is true."

"There are a good many fellows can tell you it is true. Ask Talbot; he paid the money for me out of a prize he'd won, and saved me. Well, if Moses can blackmail me, I can blackmail you—another Jew. That's how I look at it."

Julian's lips trembled.

"If what you have said is true—if I believed it—I would give you ten pounds, if only as compensation for what was done to you," he said. "But I do not believe a single word of it. I think you are a liar!"

"Nuff said!" granted Levison. "I want ten quid. That's the price of your precious secret. If I don't get it I go down, and we'll go down together."

"And suppose I explain in public what you have just asked me—that you have tried to blackmail me?" said Julian.

"I don't care if you do. If I don't pay Banks I get the sack, and after that it doesn't matter what kind of a reputation I leave behind me here. It would not be a very savoury one in any case," said Levison bitterly. "What are you going to do, my Sheeney friend?"

Julian rose to his feet, his lips trembling, and his eyes burning.

"I am going to throw you out of my study!" he said.

"What! Here, hands off!" shouted Levison. "I warn you—Oh, you cad!"

Julian grasped the cad of the Fourth in an iron grasp. Levison struck out savagely, and Julian received, without heeding, the heavy blow full in his handsome face. Then Levison was swung off his feet.

Julian tore the door open, and swung Levison headlong through the doorway. There was a crash and a yell in the passage.

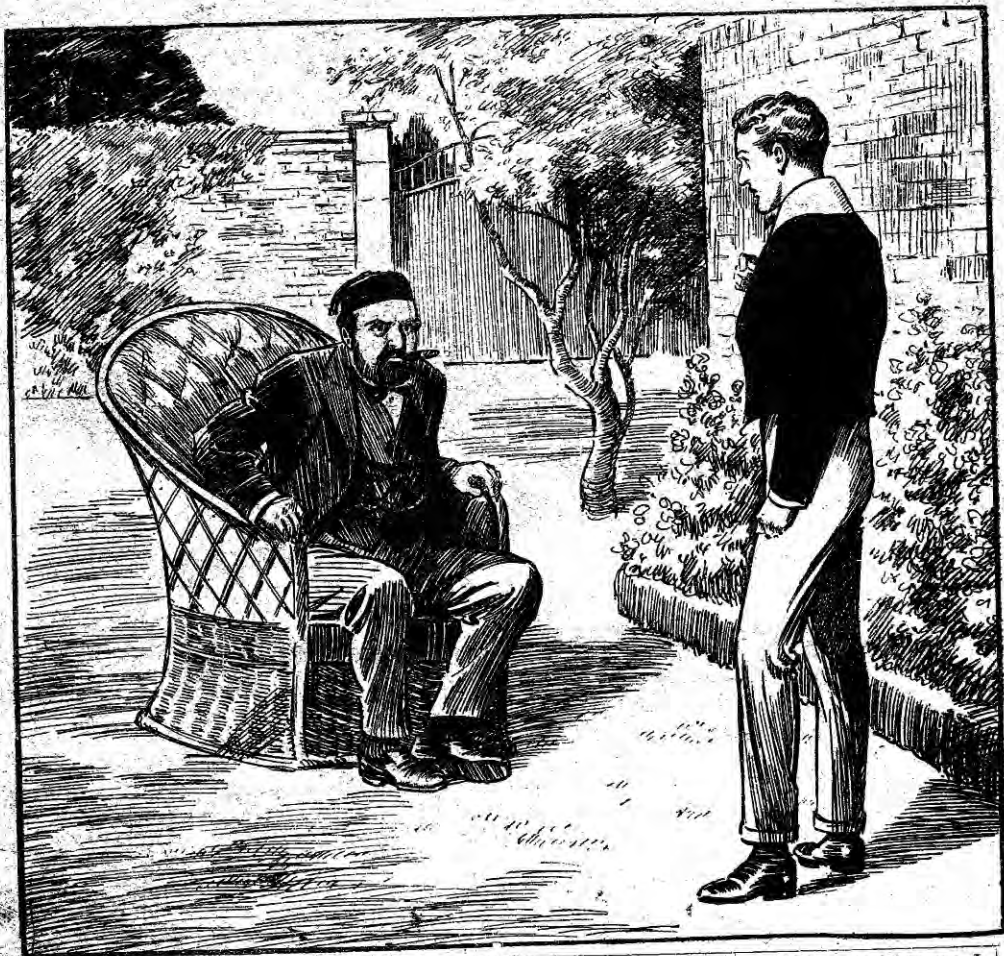
Levison sat up against the opposite wall, gasping. His eyes fairly burned as he looked at Julian, panting in the doorway.

"That's what I think of you," said Julian furiously. "You blackmailing cad, that's my answer!"

Slam!

The door closed. Levison picked himself up, and

ANSWERS



"Uncle—don't be angry—I—I must speak out," stammered Julian. "You have been kindness itself to me. I know. You know I am grateful. But—from this day—I—I cannot take anything more from your hand." Mr. Moses sat petrified, staring at his nephew. Dick Julian's voice was low, but very clear and determined. (See Chapter 9.)

limped away down the passage. He did not seek to come to close quarters with Julian again. There were other and safer means of revenging himself upon the new junior.

CHAPTER 7. Julian's Trouble.

"COME in!" sang out Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three and Talbot were chatting in Tom Merry's study. Preparation was over, and the chums of the Shell were discussing roasted chestnuts and things generally, when a timid tap came at the door.

It was Julian of the Fourth who entered.

"Hallo, kid!" said Tom Merry cordially. "Come and try the chestnuts. Sit on the table—chairs are at a premium."

Tom Merry had not quite forgotten the incident of the previous day; but he had reasoned it out that Julian had had no choice about the matter. And he was not a fellow to bear malice, anyway. The loss of the last House match of the season was not agreeable; but if the chap had had to go to his uncle—why, there it was, and it couldn't be helped. So Tom had dismissed the matter

from his mind, and, as he really liked Julian, he was as cordial as ever.

But Julian did not accept the cheery invitation. At a second glance Tom noted that his face was pale and troubled.

"Anything the matter, kid?" he asked. "Surely you're not bothering about that affair yesterday. If I spoke a bit too plainly, I'm sorry, but, you see—"

"That's all right," said Julian. "I was sorry I couldn't play, but I couldn't miss going to my uncle's, and I couldn't bring him to the school."

"Yes, I understand," said Tom. "Perhaps I was a bit exasperated just then. You see, a House match is a House match, and, as it turned out, we were licked for want of a few runs. But that's over now."

"I wanted to ask you something," said Julian.

"Go ahead."

"About Mr. Moses."

"My hat! You don't mean to say that you've had anything to do with that old skinflint?" exclaimed Tom.

Julian crimsoned.

"Is he an old skinflint?" he asked.

"What-oh!"

"His reputation would sink a Dreadnought," said Monty Lowther. "My dear young friend, if you are

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hard up, come to this study. We will raise a tanner for you any time, or even a bob. But don't visit old Shent per Shent. You will be done brown—as brown as the Kaiser will be next year."

"Julian can't be hard up," said Tom. "A chap who whacks out five quids in a collection can't be stony. But, in any case, keep clear of that awful old bounder Moses, Julian."

Julian's lips trembled.

"I've heard something about him from Levison, and I want to know the truth," he said. "Mr. Moses is a Jew. Is that why you are down on him?"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom warmly. "You are a Jew, too. Are we down on you?"

"No. But—"

"You see, Moses is an awful old hunk," explained Tom. "We know for a fact that he lends money to schoolboys. That's a rotten thing to do. He couldn't recover the money in law; but they daren't make it public, you see. One of the chaps in this House was in his clutches."

"Then it is true?"

"Yes, that's true enough," said Tom. "I don't see what you want to worry about it for, Julian. You're not responsible for what all Jews do, are you? There are plenty of other people who do the same kind of thing, worse luck. Black sheep in every flock, you know."

The distress in Julian's face puzzled, and touched, the captain of the Shell. He could not understand it.

"I only wanted to know the facts," said Julian quietly.

"I could not take Levison's word. But are you sure?"

"Sure!" repeated Tom.

"Yes; do you know all this for a fact, or is it only that Levison has told you? If so, it is not true."

"But we know it for a fact," said Tom. "Mr. Moses came here after Levison, and he was going to show him up to the Head, because he hadn't paid. Talbot paid the money out of his prize."

Julian looked at Talbot, who nodded.

"Then there is no doubt?" said the new junior heavily.

"No. But what does it matter to you, kid? You needn't care what old Moses does, need you?"

Julian smiled, a bitter smile.

"Thank you for telling me," he said. "I only wanted to know. Good-night!"

He left the study abruptly.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry, in great astonishment.

"What the dickens is the matter with the fellow?"

"He seems awfully cut up about something," said Manners. "Blessed if I understand him. I suppose old Moses isn't a relation of his."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

Monty Lowther rose and strolled out of the study quietly. Lowther was not given, as a rule, to taking anything very seriously, but he had not forgotten how Dick Julian had saved his life in the rushing mill-stream. Lowther had been "down" on Julian when the boy first came to St. Jim's, and Julian had repaid him by risking his life to rescue him from peril. Lowther had not forgotten that.

With a serious expression on his face that was very uncommon there, Monty Lowther went quietly down the passage to Julian's study.

He paused outside the door with a sudden start.

A sound had come from within Julian's study—a low, faint sound, but Lowther knew what it was.

It was a sob!

What was the matter with Julian?

Monty Lowther lifted his hand to open the door, but

he dropped it again. Julian was "blubbing." Why?

Lowther could not guess. But he felt that Julian would not like to be discovered at that moment, and he

did not go in. With a very sombre expression, the Shell fellow went back to his own study.

Dick Julian was seated at his table, alone. His head had fallen into his hands, and there were tears on his cheeks. But what was the cause of his grief, it would have puzzled any fellow at St. Jim's to say.

CHAPTER 8.

Sent to Coventry.

THE next morning there was a peculiar atmosphere in the Fourth Form, as Dick Julian noted at once.

Julian was looking unusually pale when he came down. He looked as if he had not had much sleep during the night.

The Fourth-Form fellows looked at him oddly; one or two of them seemed to avoid him.

Julian did not need telling that Levison had been at work. The cad of the Fourth had not been slow to avenge his ejection from Julian's study. There was ruin hanging over Levison's head. His last hope, his last unscrupulous trick had failed him. It was a consolation to him to involve a fellow he disliked in his disaster.

During morning lessons it was made only too plain that there was something wrong between Julian and his Form-fellows. But when the juniors were dismissed, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bore down on him in the passage. Arthur Augustus's noble eye was gleaming behind his eyeglass.

"Julian, dear boy!"

Julian stopped.

"Pwaw gathah wound, you fellahs," said Arthur Augustus. "Julian is goin' to knock on the head Levison's wotten slandahs."

"We'll give him a hearing, anyway," said Kerruish. "Go it, Julian!"

"Does Levison accuse me of something?" asked Julian, with a faint smile.

"Yaas, watlah! And we're goin' to bare it out," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not approve of sayin' things behind a fellah's back. Levison says that on Wednesday afternoon, dear boy, you weren't goin' to see your uncle at all, and that you left us in the lurch, ovah the ewicket, because you were goin' to see a wotten money-lendah. Of course, we don't believe a word of it."

"I did not go to see a moneylender," said Julian. "At least, I did not know that he was a moneylender then."

"Bai Jove!"

"Did you go to see Mr. Moses?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yes."

"He admits it!" grinned Mellish.

"Why should I deny it?" said Julian coldly. "I went to Mr. Moses' house in Wayland. Levison spied on me, it appears—he is fond of spying. I have nothing to be ashamed of, and certainly I shall not deny what is true."

"B-b-but," stammered Arthur Augustus, "I—I was quite sure it wasn't true, you know, and—and I have punched Levison's nose for sayin' so."

"You went to old Moses," said Blake hotly, "when you were wanted in the House team! Well, I think it's rotten!"

And he didn't know he was a moneylender!" jeered Mellish. "He's about the only fellow in Sussex who's never heard of Moses the moneylender."

"What did he go to see him for if it wasn't to borrow money?" sneered Levison. "Not merely a friendly call, I suppose."

"I don't choose to explain to you, Levison," said Julian. "In fact, I don't see that I am called upon to explain to anyone."

"But—but weally, dear boy—"

"You'd better keep it dark," said Blake scornfully. "If the Housemaster heard where you'd been you'd get it in the neck, and serve you right!"

"Yaas, watlah! I must agree to that."

Julian turned and walked out into the quadrangle, his cheeks burning. Some of the juniors in the passage hissed as he went.



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A little later the Terrible Three bore down upon him. Tom Merry and Manners were looking grim and angry, and Monty Lowther worried. Evidently the story had reached the ears of the Shell fellows.

"A word with you, Julian," said Tom Merry gruffly. "There's a yarn going round—it seems to come from Levison, but the fellows say you've admitted it. I asked you to play for the House on Wednesday, and you told me you couldn't because you had to go to see your uncle."

Julian nodded wearily.

"Well, it seems that instead of going to see any uncle, you paid a visit to the moneylender in Wayland."

Another nod.

"You left us in the lurch," said Tom hotly. "We were beaten in the last match of the season because you wouldn't play. I took your word for it that you had to go to your uncle. Now it comes out that you were really going to see a rascally moneylender!"

Julian's lip quivered.

"You've nothing to say?" asked Tom.

"Nothing!"

"That's all, then! You lied to me!" said Tom angrily. "I did not lie; but I can't explain now."

"No, I don't see how you can explain!" said Tom scornfully. "You left us in the lurch to go to a moneylender on some shady business. It's pretty plain that we've been mistaken in you. We shall know what to think of you now. Come on, you fellows!"

Tom Merry strode away, and Manners went with him. Monty Lowther lingered.

Julian gave him a somewhat bitter glance.

"Are you not turning your back on me like the others?" he asked.

Lowther hesitated.

"I'm not turning my back on the chap who fished me out of the mill-stream," he said. "But—but I wish you could explain, Julian. You can't blame Tom for being ratty—it is enough to make any chap ratty! You know jolly well that you oughtn't to have gone to visit a man like old Moses—and, anyway, you could have put it off till after the match. It was caddish of Levison to spy on you and tell about it; but there's the fact, all the same. You ought to have come back with Tom, and left the moneylender till afterwards, if you were bound to see him."

"You don't understand," said Julian drearily.

"Well, that's so; I don't. It looks as if you told Tom a barefaced whopper, and, naturally, he doesn't like it!"

"I can't explain."

"I'm afraid the fellows will be down on you," said Lowther uneasily. "It's a bit of a shock to me, I must say. There's talk about sending you to Coventry for it."

"I can't help it. I wish I had never come to St. James," said Julian bitterly. "If I'd known then what I know now I wouldn't have come."

"I don't see—"

"It's no good talking!" said Julian. "I can't explain because I'm bound by a promise. But I know what to do, and, before I go, I shall make Tom Merry understand that I did not lie to him. He can't help thinking so now, I suppose, but I did not lie, all the same!"

"Before you go," repeated Lowther. "Where are you going?"

"Anywhere—I don't care much! I can't stay here after—after what I've found out!" said Julian moodily.

"Dash it all! It's not so serious as all that!" said Lowther. "It will blow over, you know. Things do blow over in time."

Julian laughed a little harshly.

"I'm not thinking of that. When I explain, Tom Merry will see that I did not deceive him, and so will the rest. But—but it's something else—I may tell you before I go, if you care to know; but I can't now; a promise is a promise."

"Blessed if I understand you! If you can explain, you ought to, before it goes any further. Suppose the Head got to hear of it," said Lowther uneasily. "It would mean the sack!"

"Not in the least! The Head knows," said Julian calmly.

Lowther jumped.

"The Head knows you go to see old Moses!" he ejaculated.

"Yes!"

"My only hat!" Lowther stared at the junior in blank astonishment. "Are you trying to pull my leg, Julian?"

"No; the Head knows, I tell you. I had his permission to visit Mr. Moses."

"Well, that beats the band!" said Lowther, utterly amazed. "I suppose it's so, as you say so; but I'm blessed if I can understand it! You see, it's bound to get to the prefects, with all the fellows chow-chowing over it, and they'll report it to the Head. Levison thinks you're booked for the sack."

Julian laughed scornfully.

"Levison is a little too clever," he replied. "I am in no danger of the sack."

"Yet you say you're going."

"By my own choice," said Julian quietly.

"To another school?" asked Lowther.

"No!"

"Where then?"

"I don't know; to work, I suppose."

"Work!" ejaculated Lowther.

"Yes!"

"But you've got pots of money!" exclaimed the astounded Shell fellow.

"None of my own," said Julian. "And now that I know where it comes from, I will never touch a penny of it again."

Lowther gave a violent start.

Like a flash of light, a new and illuminating thought came into his mind. He understood.

"Poor old chap!" he said softly.

Julian compressed his lips.

"If you have guessed, you'll keep it dark," he said. "It's a secret now—I never knew why it should be a secret, but I know now. I am going to explain before I leave. But you will say nothing!"

"Not a word, kid," said Lowther. "I think I've got on to it now—I wonder the other fellows haven't guessed. But mum's the word as long as you like!"

Lowther walked after his chums, his brow wrinkled. He had made a startling discovery, and he wondered that he had not thought of it before. But Julian's secret was his own, and Lowther did not say a word to Tom or Manners.

That afternoon was a painful one to Julian.

With one accord, the juniors had tacitly agreed to send him to Coventry. Julian could hardly blame them. As they saw the matter, he had acted badly enough. He had been popular and respected, and it turned out that he secretly visited a moneylender. He had declared that he was going to visit a relation, as his reason for not backing up the House team, and it came out that his visit was really to Mr. Moses in Wayland. It was not surprising that the fellows were down on him; for, besides himself, only Monty Lowther possessed the clue to the mystery.

But "Coventry" was a cold and painful abode; and Julian felt it keenly that afternoon.

But when lessons were over Julian wheeled out his bicycle, and went out at the gates. Some of the fellows, who noted that he took the lane to Wayland, sneered and shrugged their shoulders. It was doubtless another visit to the moneylender, and it looked as if Julian was bent upon passing from "Coventry" to the "sack."

CHAPTER 9.

Uncle and Nephew.

MR. MOSES was reclining at his ease in a big garden chair in his well-kept garden, and enjoying the cool of the evening. He was adding to the fragrance of the garden with a big black cigar. There was an open newspaper on his knee—open at the financial page—and the expression upon Mr. Moses' aquiline face hinted that he had found cause for great satisfaction in the perusal. Mr. Moses, indeed, looked as if he were at peace with himself and all the world.

He glanced round lazily as there was a step on the

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garden path; and he looked surprised, and pleased, as Dick Julian came up.

He waved his cigar to another chair near at hand, and Julian sat down.

"Always ferry glad to see you, Dicky!" said Mr. Moses. "But you must be careful. It will not be good if your friends at the school see you coming here. But it is a pleasure to see you."

Then the keen, black eyes, so hawkish in their keenness, noted the pallor and distress in the junior's face, and Mr. Moses' genial expression changed.

Probably Mr. Moses had seen many distressed faces in his time, and he could bear the distress of others with great fortitude. But in the case of the St. Jim's junior it seemed to move him strangely.

"Vat is der matter, Dicky?" he exclaimed. "Something have happened?"

"Yes!"

"Tell me then," said Mr. Moses, sitting bolt upright and throwing away his cigar. "Is it monish?"

"No, no!"

A pained look came over Julian's face.

"Uncle," he said, "don't speak like that! Why do you do it?"

Mr. Moses grinned for a moment.

"Habit, Dicky," he said, without a trace now of the strong accent that usually adorned his speech. "I have one language for the office and my clients, and another for my home. But habit is strong. The Gentile who comes to me expects me to call money monish. Why should I not gratify him? And the habit clings to me. But you do not like it?"

"Uncle!" Julian gasped. "Oh, uncle!"

"What has happened, my boy?" A look of alarm crossed Mr. Moses' face. "That young rascal, Levison, was here the other day. I was careful that he should not see you; but perhaps—"

"He saw me come in."

"You are sure, Dicky?"

"He has told all the fellows. It is the talk of the place now."

"Ah!"

"He has told me other things, uncle."

Mr. Moses knitted his brows.

"You have not talked too much, Dicky? After all, what if you came here? That is nothing. But you have not told them that I am your uncle?"

"No. You asked me not to, and I promised you, though I did not understand your reason for keeping it a secret."

Mr. Moses looked relieved.

"Least," said soonest mended, Dicky. "It will do you no good to have it known, that I am your uncle. Oh do not understand me, and that is all the better. But you can trust to your old uncle's judgment."

"I did, and I gave you the promise without thinking, and without caring for what reason you might have," said Julian.

"The Head knew," said Mr. Moses. "Dr. Holmes had to know. But he agreed that it would be better for it not to be talked of in the school."

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For that reason I have never visited you, Dicky, though I should dearly like to see you there, holding your own among the sons of the Gentiles."

"You speak as if Gentiles and Jews were natural enemies, uncle," said Julian bitterly. "I feel no enmity towards anyone, and no one at St. Jim's has shown any enmity to me. We are not Jews and Gentiles; we are all British now. Jew and Gentile are standing shoulder to shoulder now against the Germans. If I were, old enough I should be fighting for England. But that is not what I came to see you about, uncle. When you asked me to keep in secret that you were my uncle I was surprised, but I did not care. I was content to obey your wishes, after all your kindness to me. But now I know the reason."

"Dicky!"

"I have made some discoveries, uncle."

"From Master Levison?" asked Mr. Moses, snapping his teeth.

"From him, and others. I did not believe what Levison told me, but I asked those whom I knew were incapable of falsehood. Uncle, when I came to see you on Wednesday I was asked to stay and play in a match, and I explained to Tom Merry, our cricket captain, that I was going to see my uncle. He was satisfied with that. Now, through Levison's tattling, it has come out that I came to see you. Tom Merry thinks that I lied to him."

"He does not guess—"

"No."

"Good! You will not tell him," said Mr. Moses. "Even Levison does not guess?"

"No."

"And he is very keen," smiled Mr. Moses. "No one will guess."

"Lowther of the Shell has guessed, but he is my friend, and he will say nothing. It is I who must speak, uncle. I cannot let Tom Merry believe that I have lied to him. When he knows that Mr. Moses of Wayland is my uncle he will know that I told him the truth."

"You must not tell him."

Dicky," said the old man harshly. "It will do you harm. You do not understand."

"I do understand, uncle. Did I not say that I have made discoveries?" said Dick Julian patiently. "You have been so kind and generous to me, an orphan, that it was hard for me to believe. But I think that I am important enough to judge, and that I shall ever feel anything but gratitude and respect for you. But—but—but—"

He broke off.

"You have learned that Mr. Moses is a money-lender?" said the old man quietly. "I see that that is it."

"Yes."

"And you are shocked, Dicky?"

"I was very much hurt, uncle. I have heard about Levison—how you lent him money, a schoolboy! Oh, uncle—Julian's voice quivered, and his face was red with shame and pain—"I could never have believed it! You so kind and good to me, who had no claim on you!"

"You are the son of my dear sister Rachel," said Mr. Moses quietly. "You

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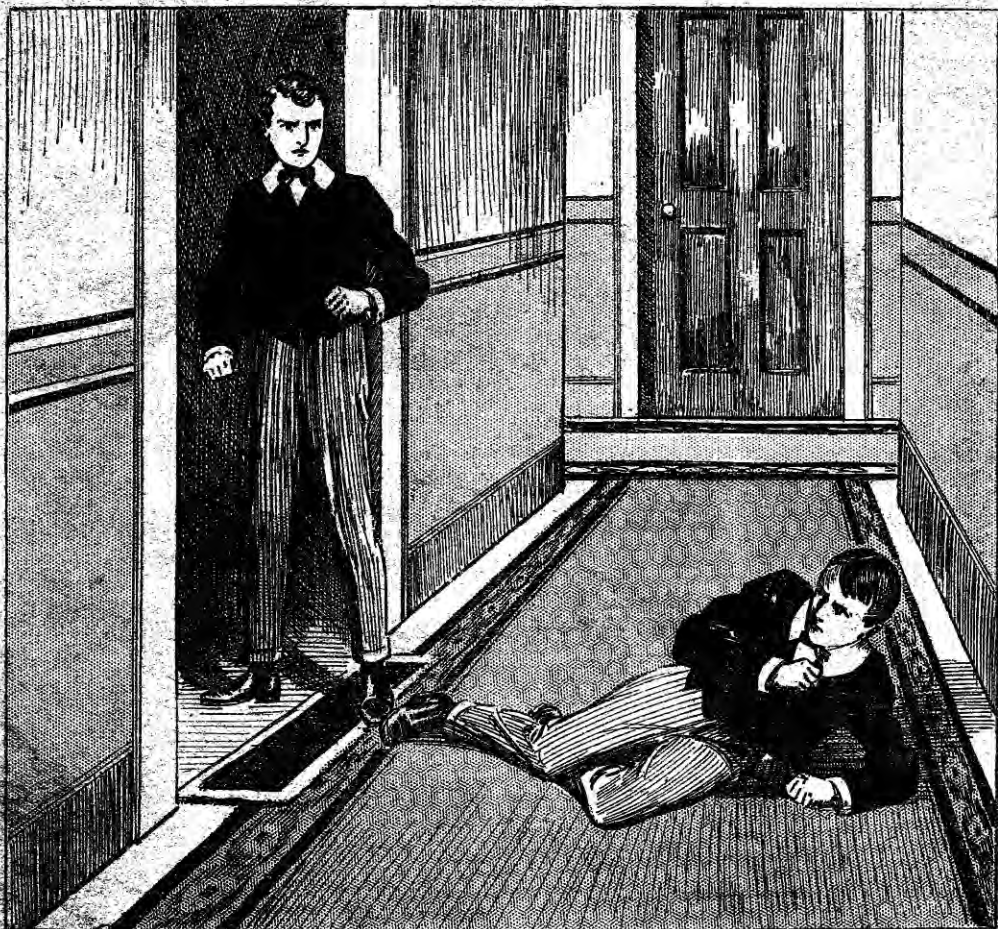
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and that the tone and quality of the contents of this journal will maintain their high standard of all-round excellence.

YOUR EDITOR.



Levi sat up against the wall, gasping. His eyes fairly burned as he looked at Julian, panting in the doorway. "That's what I think of you!" said Julian furiously. "You blackmailing cad, that's my answer."

(See Chapter 6.)

are all that is left in the world for me to care for, Dicky. Since you were a little child I have thought only of making you rich. And rich you will be when you are a man—richer than any of the Gentiles who hold their heads high in this country."

Julian shook his head.

"You are shocked, dear boy," said the moneylender. "Your training has been different from mine. Heaven forbid that you should ever have a hand in such a trade! You shall never soil your hands with it, Dicky. Your old uncle will work for you and grind for you that you may be rich and happy."

"Rich you could make me, but not happy, uncle," said Dicky, with a sigh. "Money that comes in that way will not bring happiness to anyone."

The old man's lip curled cynically.

"There is an Eastern proverb," he remarked. "It tells us that the smell of all money is sweet."

"It is not so, uncle."

"I always knew this time must come," said Mr. Moses, after a pause. "I would have kept it from you longer—till you were a man, and could understand—but I always feared it might come to your knowledge. But now you know, Dicky, you must not judge your old uncle too harshly. I have been a hard man in business, true, but what I have taken with one hand I have often given with the other. Dicky, I have followed the trade that

has been left to the men of my race, because, Dicky, we have more brains than the Gentiles in business, and because the oppressor has closed other paths of advancement to us. But do you think we are alone in this? Do you think so badly of your own race? There are Gentile moneylenders whose little finger is heavier than my hand."

"I dare say that is true, uncle. I know it is if you say so. All the same, a Jew should keep his hands clean from such things for the honour of his people. We should never give just cause for the taunts that are thrown at us."

"Do they wait to be just before they taunt?" said the old man, with a bitter smile. "Why not give them cause? Let a Jew be a model of integrity, and there will always be a Gentile ready with a sneer. But the rich Jew commands respect, at least. If they will respect nothing but money, let the Jew get the money. At that game he can always beat his enemy."

"There was a time when we could beat our enemies more honourably," said Julian, with a sigh. "There was a time when the Hebrew armies were as brave and as terrible as the soldiers in khaki of the present day. There was one nation that defied the Roman Empire at the height of its power—that preferred destruction to submission, and that was the Jewish nation. I dream sometimes that those glorious days may return. Our old

land is in the hands of savages, our people are scattered and divided among themselves, but at least a Jew can make himself worthy of his race and its traditions."

Julian's face flushed as he spoke, and his uncle's eyes dwelt affectionately upon him.

"Perhaps I had such dreams at your age, Dicky," he said, "but the world is a hard teacher. The great days of Israel are over, and dreams are only dreams. Yet I would always have you think as you do."

"I shall always think as I do," said Julian. "And—and you, uncle—"

"I shall always be Mr. Moses, the hard-fisted Shylock," said the old man grimly. "Our lives are cast on different lines, my boy."

Julian's lips opened, and closed again. It was evident that he had something to say, and that he found it difficult to say it. His colour came and went.

The old man eyed him sharply.

"What is it, Dick? Speak your mind," he said.

"First, I want you to release me from my promise, uncle. I must tell the fellows at the school that you are my uncle."

"And you are not ashamed to make it public?" said Mr. Moses ironically.

"I am less ashamed of the truth than of being supposed to be a liar!"

"You may tell them if you wish," said Mr. Moses. "Perhaps you are right. Tell them, then. But it will make matters bad for you at the school if you do."

Julian's face clouded sadly.

"I cannot remain at the school, uncle."

Mr. Moses started.

"Why not? They cannot send you away. What do you mean?"

"Uncle, don't be angry. I—I must speak out!" stammered Julian. "You have been kindness itself to me, I know. You know that I am grateful. But—from this day—I—I cannot take anything more from your hands!"

Mr. Moses sat petrified, staring at his nephew. Dick Julian's voice was low, but very clear and determined. There was a long, long pause.

CHAPTER 10. Dick Julian's Resolve.

JULIAN rose to his feet at last as his uncle did not speak.

Then Mr. Moses found his voice.

"Sit down!" he rapped out.

Julian sat down obediently.

"You cannot take anything more from my hand?" said the old man harshly. "And why not?"

"Don't make me say things that must be bitter to you, uncle, and that will make me feel like an ungrateful rascal," said Julian, in distress. "I can never repay all your kindness to me. But—"

"Because my money comes from usury," grinned Mr. Moses, with a savage grin: "because I spoil the Egyptians; because I screw the money from those who would gladly screw money from me if they could!"

Julian was silent.

"You are a boy," said Mr. Moses, "a schoolboy; and you take it upon yourself to lecture me!"

"I don't lecture you, uncle," said Julian, his face crimson. "I—I don't judge you; I know you have good reasons for what you do. It is not my business to judge you; and I should be ungrateful if ever I forgot what you have done for me. I shall always respect you and remember your kindness. But I cannot accept anything more from you, and that is the truth."

"And what are you going to do, you young fool?"

"I don't know. I shall have to leave St. Jim's."

"And then?"

"I don't know, find work somewhere, I suppose, as I have no other resource."

"Work!" said Mr. Moses bitterly. "Casual labour—eh? Is that what I have brought you up from childhood for?"

"I must live."

"You can live in wealth, if you drive these mad ideas from your mind."

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"Mad or not, I cannot drive them from my mind," said Julian. "Uncle, I am resolved, but we must not part in anger."

"We shall not part at all," said Mr. Moses grimly. "You will forget this, and you will stay at the school."

"Impossible!"

"You will not touch my money?" said Mr. Moses, in amazement and anger. "My money is tainted, that is it?"

"If you will force me to say so, uncle—yes."

Mr. Moses clenched his hands.

"This is your thanks to me?" he asked. "I have cared for you since first you saw the light of this world, and this is your thanks!"

"I suppose you must think me ungrateful," said Julian, in a low voice. "But I did not know what I know now. I knew that you were engaged in finance; I knew no more than that. But—"

"But you have only contempt for a moneylender," sneered Mr. Moses. "Bah! We are all moneylenders now—Gentile and Jew. What is the War Loan, my boy? Before the patriots will lend their money to save their country from the enemy, they must have four and a half per cent. guaranteed to them. Ask them to lend the State their money without interest, even to keep the Germans out! You will find your Gentile answer you like any Jew. The common soldier enlists, and gives life and limbs for his country, but the moneyed man must have his four and a half per cent. before he will risk his money. It was not so in Israel, Dicky, when even the women brought their golden ornaments to help against the common foe. You judge me hastily, like a foolish boy; and you are wrong. I am like the rest—like all the rest—but because I have brains, the brains of my race, I am more successful."

Julian made a restless movement.

"Well?" rapped out his uncle.

"I have nothing to say, uncle. If I were rich, I would give my money to help England, and if I were a man I would give my life. What others do or do not do, cannot concern me. I know what is right, and what I must do. Don't be angry with me, uncle. If I am wrong, I cannot help it; but I think I am right, and honour comes first, all the more because I am a Jew."

"And this is the end," said the old man; "the end of all my hopes in you; the end of my schemes and my plans. Go, then, and do not let me look upon you again!"

He made a gesture of dismissal.

Julian hesitated, and held out his hand. Mr. Moses did not seem to see it. And the schoolboy, with a deep sigh and a clouded face, turned away.

His footsteps died away on the garden path, a gate clicked shut in the distance.

Then Mr. Moses started up. His grizzled face grew pale and worn, his eyes were almost wild in their glare.

"Dick!" he called out hoarsely. "Dick! Come back!"

Only the echo of his voice from the trees answered him.

Dick Julian was gone.

"Dick!"

His voice died away. With an unsteady step, he stumbled down to the gate, and his eyes searched the white, dusty road.

But the form he sought had gone. The long, white road, shimmering in the sun, lay silent and deserted before his eyes. Muttering to himself, the old man turned back into the garden.

CHAPTER 11. Light at Last!

TOM MERRY & Co. were chatting in the common-room in the School House, when Dick Julian came in.

They were discussing the prisoners' fund. That fund had been very successful. St. Jim's had contributed a handsome quota, and there had been various sums from various quarters; but all the rest were outdone by the

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"I don't think anybody would have guessed it," said Talbot. "Why didn't you tell us, Julian?"

"Mr. Moses had asked me not to mention our relationship here," said Julian quietly. "I had promised not to do so. I did not know his reason then. I know it now." He smiled a little bitterly. "You know now that I am not a liar, and that I do not borrow money from moneylenders. But you know that I am Mr. Moses' nephew, and naturally you will not want to speak to me again. I understand that. I do not complain, either. But it makes no difference, as I am leaving the school at once, and you will never see me again."

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry awkwardly, as Julian made a movement towards the door. "I—I am really sorry, Julian. I always knew you were a straight chap, and I ought to have guessed there was some explanation. I'm sorry I doubted your word. More sorry than I can say!"

"That is all right. It couldn't be helped!"

"I am fearfully sorry, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus, "and you are mistaken if you think a fellow will be down on you because of your uncle. You did not bring your uncle up, I suppose, and you can't help what he is. And I am quite sure that you would never touch his howd money."

Julian compressed his lips.

"My fees here are paid with his money," he said. "I have been supported by his money ever since my parents died, when I was a child. He has been kind and generous to me, whatever he has been to others. I have nothing in the world but what comes from my uncle."

"Bai Jove! Sowwy I spoke, dear boy!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Of—of course, you can't do anything else—"

"I can do something else!" said Julian. "I can leave St. Jim's, and I can work for my daily bread. That is what I am going to do. I never knew the truth till now, and now I know it, I know what to do. You have always thought me a decent chap until lately, and I should not like you to think me anything else after I am gone. That is all I had to say."

He left the common-room quickly.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another in rather a blank way.

Calm and quiet as Dick Julian had been, the juniors could dimly perceive the tragedy that lay hidden under his calmness. It was almost the end of all things for the unfortunate lad. From wealth he was to go to poverty; from the happy, careless life of a schoolboy to the hard grind of the labour-market. Tainted money he would not touch, and he had no other resources, save in his own strong limbs, and the work his hands could do. And that was not the worst; for worse than that was the hideous discovery that the kind and generous benefactor, to whom he owed so much, was a man at whom the finger of public scorn was pointed. A man condemned by every voice, and in whose defence he could say no word.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, at last. "Poor old Julian!"

"Gotten hard luck!" growled Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry remembered the scene in his study, when his talk with Levison, had come to ask about Mr. Moses. Tom had been perplexed by the strange emotion then. He understood it now. Julian had made the discovery of what his uncle was. Tom could understand the pain, the shame and misery, the unfortunate lad had

Julian was, as Tom had always believed, one of the best, and as straight as a die, was proved clearly enough by the step he was now taking.

Doubtless it was his duty to choose poverty and hardship rather than soil his hands with tainted gold.

He had chosen the right path. It was his duty to choose it. But how many fellows, after all, would have chosen it? It was no light thing. Any fellow might have been excused for hesitating, for compounding with his conscience. Many fellows, even of the best, would have hesitated, would have drawn back from the sacrifice. There was Crooke of the Shell, for instance, who simply recked with money; Crooke's pater had made untold

wealth by speculations on the Stock Exchange, certainly not much more honourable than Mr. Moses' moneylending business. There were Levison, Mellish, and Clampe. Would they have chosen as Julian had chosen? And better fellows, too. Would they have thrown up everything for the sake of a scruple of honour? Many would, but many, Tom knew, would not.

"So he's going," said Tom Merry at last. "I suppose it's the only thing he can do. It's what any fellow ought to do, I suppose. I hope I should do the same. But—but it's ripping of him to do it." Tom Merry looked round at the juniors. "If any fellow thinks of throwing it at Julian that his uncle is what he is, he had better keep his mouth shut. Whatever old Moses may be, Julian is one of the best chaps breathing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Old Moses' nephew, by gum!" chuckled Crooke. "Blessed if I know why I didn't guess it! Might have guessed it, you know. A pair of blessed giddy Sheeneys!"

"You heard what I said, Crooke!" said Tom, with a steely glitter in his eyes. "You can call old Moses what you like, but if you say another word about Julian you'll have a fight on your hands!"

"Yaas, wathah, you uttah cad!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you wotah!"

Crooke sneered.

"Julian's chucking it up now he knows where the money comes from," said Tom Merry savagely. "That's more than you'd do in his place, Crooke! We all know how your pater gets his money. I know my old governess was ruined in one of his precious companies; but I've never noticed that it worries you at all. You're not fit to black Julian's boots!"

Crooke slunk away without another word.

"It's uttally wotten about Julian!" said Arthur Augustus, in great distress. "And especially as we've tweated him so wottenly lately. I could weally kick myself. I wish he wasn't goin'."

And the group in the common-room broke up, with clouded faces.

Julian had set himself right in his schoolfellows' eyes. And in spite of the fact that the obnoxious Mr. Mo was his uncle, they liked him better, and respected him more, than before. They felt that he would leave a blank behind when he went. But for that there was no help.

That day was to be Julian's last within the ancient walls of St. Jim's. On the morrow the old school would know him no more.

CHAPTER 13.

Levison's Luck.

"LANDED at last!" Levison of the Fourth muttered the words to himself, as he paced to and fro in his study, while the dusk deepened over the school.

Levison's face was pale, and almost haggard, his thin hands were clenched. His hurried movements were like those of a rat in a trap.

He was landed at last.

Looking back over the dangers he had evoked by his recklessness, the scrapes his miserable blackguardism had brought him into, Levison could only wonder that he had not been "landed" before.

His luck had been phenomenal. Luck or cunning trickery had always saved him so far. In the tightest corner he had contrived somehow to wriggle out.

He had come to have a belief in his luck; to take risks because he felt that, somehow or other, his lucky star would not fail him. It had failed him at last. No scruple would have deterred him, if he had seen a chance of saving himself. But he was at the end of his tether.

His study-mates had gone out. Levison's savage and bitter temper made them glad to leave him the study to himself. Under the old roof of St. Jim's there were two fellows who expected to look their last on the old school on the morrow—one because honour called, the other because his rascality had brought him to the final pass.

The one was Dick Julian, the other was Levison of the Fourth.

"Landed at last—at last!"

Levison did not hear a tap at the door; but he swung round fiercely as the door opened. Dick Julian came in.

Levison grinned as he saw him, and noted his pale, worn face. There was one fellow in the school, after all, as miserable as himself; there was some satisfaction in that. His attempt to save himself at Julian's expense had failed; but Julian was a sharer in his disaster.

"Oh, come in," said Levison satirically—"come in! We're in the same boat, my boy—kicked out together tomorrow. Upon the whole, I think I prefer my finish to yours. I've had a run for my money, anyway. But, by gum, it would have paid you better to hand out the ten pounds I asked you for, Julian, wouldn't it?" he chuckled. "You preferred to chuck me out of your study. Well, I won't chuck you out of mine. Birds of a feather should flock together. Will you have a cigarette? I have a few left."

"You are going?" asked Julian.

"I've got to go. Banks is denning me for his ten quid. Moses won't have anything to do with me—your dear uncle, ha, ha! Blackmail doesn't seem a paying business. I was sure of you, and you couldn't see which side your bread was buttered. I thought Jews had a keen eye to business—you don't seem to have. Banks will write to the Head to-night—it's the last day he will give me. He might have given me another week—it would be all the same. I've come to the end of my tether. Well, I'll clear off in company, at any rate."

Julian's lip curled. The reckless blackguardism of the cad of the Fourth jarred on all his nerves. Levison laughed as he saw his expression. "You look pretty down in the mouth," he said. "Well, I'm game, anyway. I shall keep a stiff upper lip at the finish. I'm not afraid to face the music. If I were in your place, I'd have nerve enough to stick it out."

"It's not nerve I want," said Julian.

"The fellows would swallow Mr. Moses, shent per shent and all, in the long run," sneered Levison. "You've got plenty of money, and that's the main thing. I'd stick it out in your place."

"Perhaps you would," said Julian. "I didn't come here to speak about that, however. You asked me for ten pounds the other day—"

"It would have paid you better to hand it out," jeered Levison.

"I told you I would give it to you if what you said was true," said Julian quietly. "I have found out that what you said was indeed true. My uncle lent you money, and you had to pay unjust interest—or your friend paid it for you, which comes to the same thing. I have come here to keep my word."

Levison started.

"I don't understand you! You don't mean—"

Julian opened his pocket-book, and laid two five-pound notes on the table. The black sheep of the Fourth stared at them hardly able to believe his eyes.

"Take that, and my uncle will owe you, at least, nothing," said Julian. "The money came from him—so you may take it. You have told me that he swindled you—well, that will set the matter right."

Levison gasped.

"You—you can't mean it, Julian." He caught up the notes as he spoke, however. "This will see me clear—this will save my bacon! I can get down to the village and pay Banks—you understand? It won't be the sack for me, after all—nothing will come out. Do you understand?"

"I am glad of it," said Julian simply. "If you will let me advise you, I should advise you to take more care in the future—you may not be so lucky next time."

"You can give me all the advice you like—along with this," chuckled Levison.

He breathed more fully and freely; a weight was lifted from his mind and from his heart. The outward show of cynical recklessness had been but a cover for the misery that gnawed him within. He stuffed the banknotes into his pocket with eager, greedy fingers. Once more his luck had held good.

Julian had turned to the door.

"Hold on!" said Levison.

"Well?"

"You've done me a jolly good turn after—after what I did, too. I'd like to do anything I could for you; I'm not exactly a Hun," said Levison. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Nothing; thanks all the same."

"I've been rather a cad to you," said Levison, with a touch of remorse; "I'm sorry you're going, Julian. It's true that you're going?"

"Yes."

"Why not stick it out? The fellows would swallow Moses, I tell you, in the long run."

"It isn't that. I have no money of my own, and I cannot take that money."

Levison whistled.

"I shouldn't be so jolly particular," he said. "We're not built the same way, I suppose. But you've got some cash in hand, surely? You're not going away on your uppers?"

"I shall have nothing."

"But—but this money—these quids—"

"That is a debt that had to be paid. I have more banknotes here—but I shall not keep them. What I have given you is what my uncle ought never to have taken from you. The rest I shall return to him."

"Don't be such an ass," said Levison. "I can assure you you'll be sorry for it afterwards. Blessed if I understand you! I thought Jews were awfully keen on money."

"There may be something they hold dearer," said Julian, with a slight smile. "I'm glad we're parting on good terms, Levison. I should be sorry to leave any enemies here when I go. Good-bye!"

He held out his hand. Levison took it in a shamefaced way.

"Good-bye, Julian! I'm sorry you're going. And—I'm sorry I've been a rotten cad to you. I wish you'd stay and stick it out."

Julian shook his head, and left the study. Levison remained alone, looking very thoughtfully for a few moments. Then he took out the banknotes, and made them rustle in his fingers, and his eyes danced.

"Saved on the last lap!" he muttered. "My hat, what a stroke of luck! Now to settle that rotter Banks!"

A few minutes later Levison dropped from the school wall, and went speeding away towards Rylcombe. Levison was saved from the consequences of his own folly and vice. But the boy who had saved him was in his study, with dim eyes and heavy heart, putting together the few things he was to take with him when he left the old school. The blackguard of the Fourth was saved; but for Dick Julian there was no hope.

CHAPTER 14.

The Five-Hundred-Pounder!

TOM MERRY & CO. were feeling rather glum.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, indeed, looked quite woe-begone.

Julian was going.

Before the bell rang for morning lessons the junior who had been so short a time at St. Jim's was to leave. His box had already been sent away; he was staying only to say good-bye to his friends.

Julian had had an interview with the Head the previous evening. His friends had hoped that somehow or other Dr. Holmes would find a way for him to remain at St. Jim's. But there was no way to be found. Deeply touched as he was by the lad's generous resolve, the Head could say nothing to combat it—he could only approve of it with his whole heart.

It had only been with great hesitation that Dr. Holmes had consented to receive a nephew of Mr. Moses in the school at all. He had been quite in agreement with the old moneylender that the connection should not be mentioned. But the Head was just; he felt that the nephew ought not to suffer for the uncle's reputation. Had Julian shown any proclivities in the same direction as his uncle's, certainly he would not have stayed. But both the Head and the Housemaster had observed him, and they had seen that, whatever the uncle might be, the nephew was as straight as a die.

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Dr. Holmes had been quite satisfied with his decision. He recognised that Julian of the Fourth was a credit to the school. Now that his relationship with the money-lender was revealed, it would have made no difference to him; Dick Julian was popular enough to have lived that down. It was not for that reason that the boy was going. It was his determination not to touch tainted money that made it necessary for him to leave.

And of that determination the Head could only approve. In the hour of trial the boy was showing himself true as steel, and the good old doctor had only admiration for his courage and strength of mind.

And now, in the sunny morning, Dick Julian was going. Tom Merry & Co. had come down to the gates to see him off. They all looked glum. They were sorry to lose him.

Arthur Augustus pronounced that it was "wotten," and all the fellows agreed with him.

Dick was very quiet and subdued. In spite of himself, a dimness came over his eyes as he said good-bye, and his voice faltered.

"Good-bye, old chap!"

"Best of luck!"

"Let's hear from you!"

"Don't forget us, deah boy."

There was a handshaking all round. Levison of the Fourth was the last. He came forward a little uncertainly.

Julian took his hand frankly enough.

"I'm sorry you're going," said Levison. "You're a better chap than I am. I couldn't do as you're doing. I—I hope you'll forget what a rotter I was, Julian."

"That's all right," said Julian. "By-gones are by-gones."

"You've saved me here," added Levison, in a low voice. "I—I'm going to try to keep out of that kind of thing after this. Good-bye, old chap!"

The last handshake was given, and the sombre-faced junior turned from the gates of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. looked after him till the bend in the road hid him from sight.

"Wotten!" muttered Arthur Augustus, with a lump in his throat. "I—I feel quite beastly about it, you know."

"I should think this blessed uncle would feel rather beastly, too," said Monty Lowther savagely. "If he'd been decent——"

"Pewwaps the old bounder may turn ovah a new leaf, you know, and then Julian could come back," said Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, I've a jolly good mind to go and give him a talkin'-to!"

"Fat lot of good that would be!" growled Blake. "The old hunks don't care a rap, I expect. He's a rotter all through."

"Nice kind of an uncle for a St. Jim's chap to have," sneered Crooke. "I think Julian's done well to clear off. He ought to."

"Oh, shut up, Crooke!"

"It would always have been up against him, if he'd stayed," said Levison. "It's only by going that he's showed he's the right sort. But you needn't be so jolly hard on his uncle, either. Old Moses isn't quite a scoundrel."

"Blow old Moses!" grunted Tom Merry. "You're about the last chap I should have expected to hear saying a word for him."

"Quite so; but I know something now I didn't know before," said Levison coolly. "I had a pretty bad time with him, and there's no doubt that he's a grinding old Shylock; but he's got his good points, as I happen to have found out."

"Name 'em!" snorted Manners.

"He's whacked out five hundred pounds for the prisoners in Germany!" said Levison.

"What!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Oh, draw it mild, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "His wotten name isn't on the list at all, and there's only one contribution of five hundred pounds, and that's the anonymous chap."

"That's Moses!" said Levison.

"Wubbish!"

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"Cheese it!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"It's the truth. You've jeered enough about my finding things out. Well, I've found that out. The Head had his cheque, but old Moses wanted to remain anonymous. Well, I've got on to it. I heard the Head tell Railton."

"Listening again?" grunted Blake.

"Yes. I was a bit anxious about Julian," said Levison.

"I thought they might have found some way of keeping him here. The last thing Julian did here was to get me out of a scrape. I heard them talking about Julian and old Moses, and the Head said that the old man couldn't be as black as he was painted, as he had paid five hundred pounds into the prisoners' fund—and jolly well the only man who has, too!"

"Bai Jove!"

Levison's statement was received in utter astonishment by the juniors. Monty Lowther had humorously suggested, true, that the mysterious donor might be old Moses, but that was only one of Lowther's little jokes. The discovery that it was, in fact, Mr. Moses who had "whacked out" that large sum was simply staggering.

"Well, that beats the band!" said Monty Lowther, with a whistle. "So Julian's giddy uncle is the five-hundred-pounder!"

"He must have his good points, then," said Tom, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "Good and bad in everybody, I suppose. Perhaps his reputation's a bit blacker than he deserves. Does Julian know?"

"I told him," said Levison. "I thought it would make him feel a bit better. He was cut up at finding out that his uncle was such a rotter. I didn't understand that at first. He's a queer customer."

"He's one of the best," said Tom Merry; "and his uncle can't be one of the worst. Hallo! There's the bell!"

The juniors went to their Form-rooms. But their thoughts were with the boy who had gone forth into the world alone, turning his back upon wealth and ease for honour's sake.

CHAPTER 15.

Julian's Return.

"DICK!"

Julian—no longer of the Fourth—was tramping slowly along the leafy lane. His brows were wrinkled, his eyes bent on the ground. A motor-car was halted by the roadside, but Dick Julian did not notice it as he passed; he did not see the old man seated in the car, the wrinkled old face and hawkish eyes peering from under the shiny silk hat.

But as his name was whispered, the junior started and looked up. It was Mr. Moses of Wayland who sat in the car.

"Uncle!" stammered Julian.

Mr. Moses looked down on him grimly.

"So you have left the school?"

"Yes, uncle."

"For good?"

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know."

"You were not coming to me?"

Julian shook his head.

Mr. Moses' features contracted. Julian felt a pang of remorse as he noted the haggard look in the old man's face. After all, the usurer had always been kind to him, had loved him as if he were his own son. He had disappointed the old man, had dashed all his hopes. Yet he could not regret what he had done. There was no room for regret.

"You did not expect to see me here, Dick?" said his uncle.

"No. Did you come to——"

"To meet you on the road—yes."

"How did you know?"

"Did you think I had forgotten you already?" said the old man. "Did you think I have not been grieved and anxious for you? I have telephoned to Dr. Holmes; I could not come to the school. He has told me all of

your resolution, and of his approval of it. He told me you were leaving this morning, to take the train from Rykombes. I came here to intercept you."

"I am glad to see you, to say good-bye, uncle," said Julian. "I shall never forget all that you have done for me. I am sorry if I have grieved you. I had no choice."

"And do you think I shall let you go like this, Dicky?" Julian smiled patiently.

"You must, uncle, I am sorry if it hurts you, but it cannot be helped. You received my letter?"

"Yes. You have returned me the money—thrown it back in my face—"

"I did not mean to do that; but I could not keep it."

"And you have nothing left?"

"Nothing."

"You are going to face the world without money, without friends," the old man exclaimed in angry incredulity.

"But—but you are right, Dick. You are foolish and reckless, but you are right. I have been proud of you because you were not like me—because you do honour to the name of our race instead of dragging it in the mire as I have done. But I shall not let you go, my boy. You will jump into the car, and I shall take you back to the school."

Julian shook his head.

"Impossible, uncle!"

"But I say that you shall, Dick, and you will not refuse. Listen to me. Since you left me I have reflected, and I have come to a decision. Dick, I was not always what I am called now—and even now Mr. Moses is not wholly the grinding Shylock he is supposed to be. If they only knew—not that I will tell them—"

"I know, uncle," said Julian, with a smile. "I know you have always been generous to me, and more than that, I know that you have helped Dr. Holmes's fund for the prisoners in Germany more generously than anyone else has done."

"You know? How do you know?"

"Levison found it out, and he told me," said Julian. "I was glad to know it. All the school will know it now, and I am glad they should know that my uncle has a human heart. And I believe that you have done many such things, only you did not allow your name to be known."

"The name of a moneylender—a hard-fisted miser," sneered the old man. "What would they say if they saw my name in the list? That it was an advertisement."

"I suppose so," assented Julian, with a sigh. "But—but—" He broke off.

"I know what is in your mind, Dick. I have given them every reason to look for no good from me. But what if all that should be changed? What if I should come to your way of thinking, Dick, since you will not come to mine?"

Julian smiled. "What if I have done so?" said Mr. Moses. "What if the office in Wayland High Street is closed for ever, Dicky? What if the usury of Mr. Moses is a thing of the past? If business worth many thousands has been stopped, thrown away like a thing of no value?"

"Uncle," said Julian breathlessly.

"What," continued Mr. Moses grimly, "if debts have been cancelled, if a crowd of miserable debtors have been released from their obligations? What if your obstinacy has cost me a third of my fortune?"

"You—you would not—"

"I would, and I have, Dicky. You have said that you will not touch money that is tainted—money that I have piled up for you since you were a little child. Well, be it so. But you know that I have many irons in the fire, Dicky; the moneylender business was only one of them. It is finished with. It has cost me much, but it is finished. There are five hundred debtors to-day who will be happier through your obstinacy, and because your old uncle cannot afford to lose you."

"Uncle!"

Julian's face was very bright, and there were tears in his eyes.

"For your sake I have done that, my boy," The old

man's voice trembled. "You will not abandon me now?"

There was a brief pause. Then Dick Julian stepped into the motor-car.

"Julian, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus could not help uttering that ejaculation, though he was in class, and Mr. Lathom's eye was upon him.

Julian had come back.

Under the surprised eyes of all the Fourth, Julian's face flushed as he came into the Form-room. Mr. Lathom glanced at him, and gave him a nod. Julian took his usual place in the Form.

It was last lesson, but the Fourth-Formers did not give it very much attention. Julian had come back, and they wondered. They were anxious for dismissal to question him.

Never had the close of lessons been so welcome to the Fourth Form at St. Jim's as it was that morning.

As they trooped out of the Form-room Dick Julian was surrounded by the chums of Study No. 6, and a crowd of other fellows.

"Back again, deah boy!"

"Jolly glad to see you," said Blake. "But how—and why—"

"Hallo, Julian! By Jove!" exclaimed Tom Merry, the first out of the Shell Form-room. "Is it you or your ghost, old chap?"

Julian laughed.

He could laugh now, and his laugh rang out cheerily and merrily.

"Yes, I've come back," he said.

"But why, and how—"

"My uncle met me on the road, and brought me back, and he's had a jaw with the Head," said Julian. He flushed a little. "I don't want you to think that I—I have changed my mind. My uncle has changed his. I suppose it's not much good trying to make you fellows think well of my uncle?"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "We've found out that he is a five-hundred-poundah! Thwee cheeahs for Julian's uncle, deah boys!"

"Hip-hip-hurrah!"

It was a hearty cheer, and it rang and echoed along the passage. Mr. Moses' handsome gift for the prisoners in Germany had atoned for all his sins in the eyes of Tom Merry & Co.

Julian's eyes sparkled.

"I'm glad you know that," he said. "If—if you knew my uncle better you'd think of him as I do perhaps. I always knew that he was good and generous, and—and he has proved it. I want you fellows to know. The money-lending business—that's all over. It's finished with. You know my uncle is rich—well, it has cost him a third of his fortune. I think you ought to know it."

"My hat!" said Tom Merry.

"Gentlemen," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "we have always been of opinion that Julian was one of the best—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And I have come wound to the opinion that his uncle is one of the second best—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And further, deah boys, I suggest that you all come with me to the tuckshop!"

"Passed unanimously!"

"And dwink Mr. Moses' health in gingah-pop!"

"Hurrah!"

And a merry crowd carried out Arthur Augustus's excellent suggestion, and among the crowd of cheery faces the cheeriest was that of Julian of the Fourth.

THE END.

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!" is the title of next Wednesday's grand, long, complete story of St. Jim's. It is a Martin Clifford masterpiece. Order to-day!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 397.

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"

How St. Jim's Received the Suggestion for "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

HOSTS OF LETTERS FROM POPULAR CHARACTERS.

YOUR EDITOR'S LETTER TO TOM MERRY.

"The Fleetway House,
"Farringdon Street, London, E.C.,
"August 10th, 1915.

"Dear Tom,—In view of the immense popularity which your 'Weekly' enjoyed when I gave it away as a special supplement in one of my papers, I am seriously contemplating publishing it every week—subject, of course, to the approval of you and your chums.

"Will you, therefore, be good enough to ask your chums to let me have their opinions on the subject?

"If this venture is floated, you will have to keep all your spasmodic contributors up to the mark. They must be spasmodic no longer, but regular. Not only this, but the 'Weekly' will have to be considerably enlarged if my readers are to pay a halfpenny for it—in fact, three times its present size, and the stuff must be first-rate. Of course, I have obtained the Head's sanction for this important new venture. "With best wishes for a successful footer season.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,
H. A. HIXTON."

THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHELL CONSENTS.

"St. James's School, Rycombe, Sussex,
"August 12th, 1915.

"Dear Mr. Hinton,—Thanks awfully for your letter. The idea it contained made us feel jolly bucked. I can tell you, and I've roped my contributors together, and said that it's up to them to turn out some stunning, gilt-edged numbers of the 'Weekly' for 'Gem' readers. We don't care how much midnight oil we burn, so long as we can win the admiration and approval of a wider public than we have at present.

"Figgins & Co. of the New House are with us to a man, and most of the fellows, when I posted the required notice on the board, said they would write you on the subject. You need not trouble to reply to them all personally, as I know you are up to your neck dealing with inquiries from readers as to how old I am, and whether Mauners's Christian name is Tommy or Theophilus, and all that sort of thing.

"With kindest regards to yourself, to Mr. Martin Clifford, and to all the chaps on your staff.—I remain, your ever-loyal chum,
TOM MERRY."

FIGGY THINKS IT'S FINE.

"Dear Editor,—It will be really great if 'Tom Merry's Weekly' comes out every Wednesday with the good old 'Gem,' and I am at work on a thrilling serial in anticipation. "I hope every Gemite will rally round, and make this venture a stupendous success.—Yours affectionately,
"GEORGE FIGGINS."

GRUNDY, TOO!

"Dear Edditer,—As you doubtless no, I am up against 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' but if you decide to publish it every week, I suppose it would be disloyal of me not to tow the line with the rest.

"Tom Merry and his chumms are two jellies for words, and they are sure to try and keep me off the grass; butt I'm not

haveing anny. If they don't let me kontribute to their paper, then they'll jolly well get it in the neck!—Yours trawly,
"GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY."

JACK BLAKE'S CHAT WITH "GUSSY."

"Dear Editor,—Having seen Tom Merry's notice on the board, I sat in solemn conclave with the immortal Gussy, and we jawed things over. He wishes me to tell you that he's at work on some ripping articles—mostly, about striped socks and the latest fashion in kilts—and that, should the 'Weekly' be in danger of coming to grief through lack of support, his pater will be pleased to stand the racket.—Sincerely yours,
JACK BLAKE."

SOUND SOCIALISTIC SENTIMENTS.

"My dear Editor,—I am in complete concord with the project which Merry—at your request, I understand—has conspicuously posted on the school notice-board.

"Could you bring your influence to bear on Merry—he is such an obstinate chap, you know!—and persuade him to use my story, 'The Rabid Red-tied Reprobate,' as a serial? I am at present engaged in deep and intricate research in order to compile the three hundred and twenty-fifth chapter, and surely the labour is not to be in vain, and spent on the desert air?—Yours fraternally,
"HERBERT SKIMPOLE."

FINE FEEDS FOR FATTY!

"Dear Editor,—That's a ripping scheme of yours to publish 'Tom Merry's Weekly' as a separate halfpenny book.

"Is the rumour correct that you are going to pay your contributors a guinea a column? If so, I shall have quite a joy-day, for I intend to make Merry accept a fortnightly column, article of mine on 'The Urgent Necessity of More Tuck.'—Yours loyally,
"DAVID WATTS."

OFFICIAL OPINION.

"Dear Hinton,—From what I have seen of Tom Merry's little book, it should go well with your readers. All they are sensible, they will send in postcards of approval by the shoal.

"Am just off for week-end manoeuvres with our Home Defence Corps. How are your lot getting on?—Fresh and fit, I hope.—Ever yours,
VICTOR REASON."

WHAT THE PAGE-BOY THINKS.

Dear Mr. Editor Which I think Master Tom's paper oughter go well with your readers and wot I say is this 'ere if they are judges of good literature they'll buy two copies every week one for themselves and one for their soldier chum in the trenches—which I think this is all just now

Hoping as you are as well as it leaves me at present from yours respectfully
Toby.

All "Gemites" should also note the Publication of Private Correspondence between Your Editor and Herbert H. Locke, Esq., M.A., Headmaster of Greyfriars School, printed for the first time in the current number of the "Magnet" Library. Price 1d. Now on sale. Get it!

The First Chapters of Our Grand New Adventure Serial.

UNDER THE DRAGON.



The opening chapters of a great new story of thrilling adventure in the Far East.

BY
PETER BAYNE.

The previous instalments told how:—

NORRIS BRENT, a young Englishman, agrees to accompany his unworthy cousin, GUY MELVILLE, on an exploration tour in China for a rare plant only to be found in that part of the world. Misfortune dogs their footsteps, and a crisis is reached when the Chinese pack-carriers, who are with them, mutiny. Stranded in a wild, inhospitable land, there is nothing for it but to return to civilisation, and the cousins, together with YEN HOW, Norris Brent's faithful servant, set out on the weary journey.

The little band is overcome by thirst, and Melville, refusing to share his water with the others, pushes onward through the desert, leaving his companions to their fate. Fortunately, however, Yen How lights upon an oasis, and the danger is averted.

Norris Brent returns to England with Yen How, and Guy Melville pretends to be pleased at seeing his cousin again. He informs him that, owing to the death of an uncle, he is owner of the estate, Eagle's Cliff, and offers Brent a position thereon, which he accepts.

One day Yen How surprises his master by informing him that MING YUNG, a Chinese mandarin, and his ward, SILVER PEARL, whose acquaintance Brent had previously made in China, are staying at Eagle's Nest.

Brent discovers that Ming Yung has come to Eagle's Nest in order to do business with an invention with which he hopes to earn world-wide power.

KARL MARROK, a gipsy, at the instigation of Guy Melville, hurled Brent into a deep cavern on the estate. Brent, however, miraculously escapes destruction, and glancing through a window at the Smugglers' Tavern, he sees his would-be assassin and Guy Melville, who are together, within.

(Now go on with the story.)

On the Wharf—Yen How and the Painthrush—The Great Ruby.

The failure of the dastardly attempt on the life of his young cousin filled Guy Melville with angry disappointment and regret.

There seemed to be no way of circumventing the kind fate that guarded Brent from harm. Every plot aimed at the lad came to nought. He appeared to bear a charmed existence.

But Melville was certain that sooner or later he would achieve his evil purpose. It was necessary, though, for him to exercise more patience and caution. To alarm his intended victim and so put him on his guard would be fatal.

As it was he felt extremely uneasy as to the inference that his cousin would draw from having seen him at the Smugglers' Tavern in Karl Marrok's company. Overnight he decided to say nothing to the other about the matter unless he was spoken to concerning it.

This same resolve Norris Brent himself had come to. In the light of what he had seen at that lonely inn by the sea, much that had puzzled him was now made clear to his mind's eye.

Between his cousin and Karl Marrok there was some secret understanding affecting himself. He had often wondered why Melville had encouraged the gipsy to remain in the neighbourhood after what Marrok had done.

"They're hand in glove with each other," he thought, "and mean mischief to me. It was Marrok who hurled me down the shaft yesterday. His looks gave him away when he caught sight of me at the door-window. And why did Guy go to see the fellow unless it was to hear of what had happened to me? Had I gone in and confronted them, they might have been surprised into giving away the truth. But in that case it's very doubtful whether I should be alive now."

He uttered a mirthless little laugh at the thought. It was hateful to believe what he did, and he was reluctant to do so; but that which he had seen with his own eyes was evidence that it was impossible to blind oneself to.

There was no explainable reason, so far as he was aware, for the cunning treachery of which he had been made the object. That his cousin regarded him with scant favour he had known for some time, but attributing this to the influence of Ming Yung, he had thought little of it.

Now he realised that there must be some far deeper cause than any he had suspected for Guy Melville's change of attitude towards him. In vain he attempted to discover it. The whole thing was a mystery that he could not solve.

In his perplexity he took Yen How into his confidence. There was no one else he could speak to on the subject, and he knew, from past experience, that he could trust his Chinese comrade with any secret.

When Yen How heard of what had taken place the day before, he wrinkled his yellow face into an expression of perfect understanding, and solemnly nodded his head again and again.

"That Marrok velly bad man," he declared; "but Mista Melville he more bad. You can take that straight from me. My catch on to his dodge long time ago."

"When was that?"

"On the day when you nearly die," Yen How answered. "You cry out for water. He have some in a big flask, but he no give you any, and when my try to take it from him so that you can drink, he curse and knock me down. Then he go away."

Brent gave utterance to a long, low whistle of amazement. "The dickens!" he exclaimed. "Is that true? But, of course it is," he continued, "or you wouldn't have told me. Why have you kept it back until now?"

A smile of superior wisdom parted Yen How's lips.

"Suppose my tell you before," he said, "you no believe me. Then you think Mista Melville velly fine man. Now you know him for what he is. He hate you like snake poison. You show some care. Once, twice he fail to hurt you; but he keep on trying. What for you stop this side? More better you go away."

Brent shook his head.

"No fear of me doing that," he said, a look of hard and settled purpose sweeping over his face. "I'm going to stay at Eagle's Nest, whatever happens, and find out what's at the bottom of all this queer business. There's secret work afoot."

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: **"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"** A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Yen How, in more ways than one. That fellow-countryman of yours isn't here simply for the benefit of his health."

"You leave Ming Yung alone," cautioned Yen How gravely. "He good friend but bad enemy. You interfere with him and he make it jolly hot for you!"

"I know it," rejoined Brent laughingly, "and that makes the game all the more exciting. One of us has got to beat the other; and I intend to be that one."

They had walked down the steep cliff path from the woods to the shore, and it occurred to Brent that by going on as far as the Smugglers' Tavern he might pick up some valuable and interesting information.

It was not long before he and Yen How had reached the place. In the bright daylight it looked more dilapidated and uninviting than ever. There seemed to be no one at home, but, crossing a yard and entering a neglected garden at the side of the house, the comrades suddenly came face to face with Dan Morgan, the landlord.

Evidently Morgan had seen them in the distance, and had gone into the garden to avoid meeting them, for he looked more angry than surprised.

"What d'you want?" he asked roughly. "It's private ground you're on. You've no right here. Be off with you!" "Not so fast, Dan," said Brent, with a mischievous smile. "It's evident that you've forgotten me. I used to see you pretty frequently at one time, and thought I'd like to renew our acquaintance. How's business these days?"

"Bad," Morgan answered shortly; "but that doesn't concern anyone but myself. And as I've something to attend to, I'll ask you and your yellow friend to quit. You're wasting my time."

"In that case," said Brent, "I may as well have a chat with your lodger. It must be lonely for him here all by himself. Go and tell him that I'm waiting to see him!"

Morgan scowled malignantly at the speaker.

"I would," he replied meaningly, "if he was at home, and it wouldn't be you who'd have all the joy of the meeting. The luck was on your side last night. Let it be a warning to you not to come spying about here again."

"Last night?" laughed Brent. "Judging from your appearance, Dan, you weren't in a condition then to recognise me, or anyone else. You were sound asleep, snoring like a grampus, when I saw you."

Shaking his fists, and pouring out a stream of abuse, Dan Morgan hurried on into the house, violently slamming the door after him. Looking back the comrades saw him watching them from a side window.

"The hoary old villain!" said Brent. "He'd sell his own father into slavery without turning a hair. Pay him well, and he'll keep his eyes shut to anything. I wonder if he knows the game that Marrok and my cousin are up to? Perhaps not. They'd scarcely dare to take him into their full confidence. He might turn round on them some day—"

As he and his companion were walking through Rocksby village, Brent caught sight of Karl Marrok near the long, straggling wharf the main street sloped down to.

The gipsy was sitting on the keel of an upturned boat, smoking a cigarette and staring out to sea. Not until Brent was close to him did he look round and see the lad.

The quick, nervous start he gave betrayed his discomfiture, but a moment later, shrugging his shoulders, he surveyed Brent with insolently smiling eyes.

"A pleasant greeting to you!" he said, mockery in his voice. "Has Mr. Melville sent you to me? I'm expecting a message from him. He has been a very good friend to me, you know, since that day when you and I fell out."

"I'm aware of it," Brent answered, looking the other full in the face. "And I should like to ask you one question. Was it with Mr. Melville's knowledge that you made an attempt on my life yesterday?"

The question did not take Marrok by surprise; he was ready for it. Rolling his cigarette round between finger and thumb, he stared at Brent with an expression of feigned bewilderment in his face. Then he smiled exasperatingly, and shook his head.

"You puzzle me," he remarked. "Made an attempt on your life! Why should I do so?"

"You can answer that question better than I can," said the lad. "It was you, right enough, who threw me down the pit up in the woods on the cliff. You thought you'd done your dirty work well, and it must have been a nasty surprise for you when you saw me at the Smugglers' Tavern later on. You looked uncommonly sick and silly, at any rate."

Marrok winced at the taunt, and his eyes glinted with fury.

"You're off your head!" he said. "Go home and see a doctor. As for that Chinaman, I like him no more than I do you. The colour of his skin annoys me. Run away with him, quick, or I shall be tempted to make his ugly dial uglier than it is!"

Hearing these aspersions passed upon him, Yen How lost his usually placid temper. With an air of great dignity, he came forward and slowly eyed Marrok from head to foot. Then, with a pitying smile on his lips, he glanced at his comrade.

"This fellow too much trash," he said. "He no good for anything. In my country we chain up his sort like dogs in the kennel."

The insult stirred Marrok to a perfect madness of rage. Sliding down from the boat, he ran round it to reach Yen How and wreak summary vengeance on him. But the other was prepared for the onslaught.

Running to a big paint-pot that had been left at the side of the wharf, Yen How snatched up the brush and thrust it out in front of him on a level with his shoulder.

Swosh! The brush, dripping red paint from every bristle, met Marrok's face with painful force. A coughing howl broke from the gipsy's spluttering lips. Lowering his head, he made another rush at his tormentor, who, deftly skipping to one side, used his paintbrush with excellent effect as his enemy whirled by him.

Again and again Marrok returned to the attack. Very soon the whole of his head and face was coloured a fiery crimson, while countless splotches of the thick, adhesive fluid decorated his clothes from head to foot.

At last, unable to bear the smarting pain in his eyes any longer, he turned on his heel and retreated from the field of battle in ignominious flight. Shaking with laughter, the comrades watched the beaten foe until he was out of sight.

"My guess he no come back here," said Yen How proudly, smearing red paint over his own wonderfully mottled countenance with a hard wipe of his hand. "That fellow no want to see a paintbrush any more."

"Not with you handling it," laughed Brent. "You missed your vocation. You ought to have been a house-decorator. The way you dabbed the stuff on to his head and face was great! But you've made him your bitter enemy by the performance. He'll never rest until he's got even with you in some way."

"My no care," said Yen How. "He no can surprise me after that littee touch-up with the paintbrush. Ha! ha! ha! That velly funny thing to remember. Mista Marrok no feel himself again for a week."

"It's certain he won't," Brent answered. "And in the meantime I'll go down the shaft to the underground passage again. There's something there I'd like to find out more about. It would be useless trying to gain an entrance by the Smugglers' Tavern way. One can be sure that old Dan Morgan has lost no time in closing it."

"You velly hopeful," said Yen How. "What thing you use to go down the pit?"

"Plenty of long rope," Brent rejoined. "And that's easily obtainable. There must be loads of it stored away, and never used, in the sheds and outhouses. It was bought some years ago, when there was talk of a lot of timber being felled on the estate, but it's never been wanted. A hundred and fifty feet of it ought to be ample for my purpose."

The length of rope deemed to be necessary was secured, and a day or two later Brent and Yen How arrived at the head of the shaft early in the afternoon.

The rope, easily pliable and of the strongest fibre, was looped over the straight-running limb of an oak-tree, the free end, weighted with a heavy stone, being cast into the hole.

When the line had run out to its full length, Brent lost no time in starting to descend it. He reached the bottom of the shaft without mishap, and, guided by the bright light of the lantern that he had brought with him, made his way into the underground tunnel that he had traversed in darkness only a few days before.

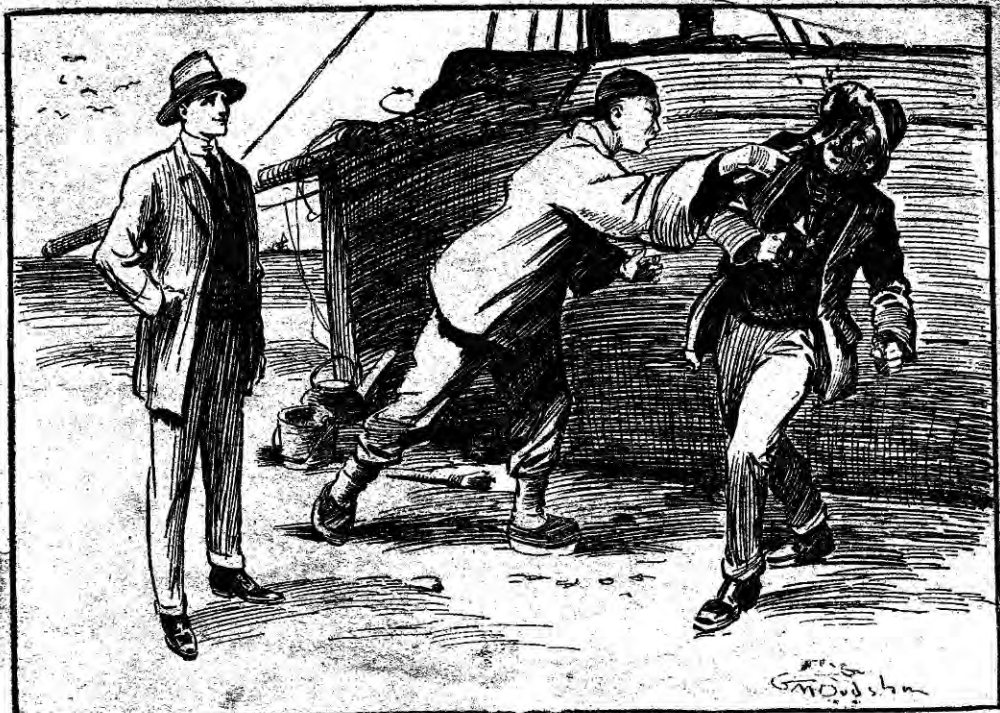
Climbing over the obstacle in the passage formed by the fallen boulder, he came to the spot where lay the two skeletons whose appearance had so startled him upon his first seeing them.

Bending down, Brent cast the beams of his lantern-light over the tunnel-floor from side to side. Thick dust lay everywhere, and when he stirred it up, a stale, musty odour like that of an ancient vault came from it.

Suppressing the natural feeling of repugnance that he experienced, Brent went on with his task of turning over the dust. He was engaged in a search for he knew not what, and as the minutes passed and he found nothing, he reluctantly told himself that he was going to meet with disappointment.

Yet he kept on for some time longer before abandoning his quest. Then, with a sigh of regret, he stood up and turned to go.

At that moment he trod on something hard and round, that rolled away from under his foot. He looked down, but



Yen How snatched up the brush and thrust it out in front of him on a level with his shoulder. Swosh! The brush, dripping red-paint from every bristle, met Marrok's face with painful force. (See page 24.)

and see nothing. Curiosity prompted him to look more closely for the hidden object.

Feeling in the dust, he found it, and drew it out into the light. He stared at it with amazed eyes. It was a great ruby, the size of a small egg, and of glorious crimson colour, that flashed back the light of the lantern in a hundred rays of blinding brilliance.

Now Brent realised that he had found the key to the mystery that the tunnel had concealed for so many years. For the smugglers had quarrelled over the possession of the ruby, and one of them, snatching it up, had fled into the underground passage.

His partner had pursued and overtaken him near the fallen rock, and there they had fought and killed each other, while the living world outside went in ignorance of their fate.

They had perished, and the ruby remained, retaining all its ageless beauty as the dust slowly gathered over it. And now once more it was exposed to the light that revealed it as a stone of such rare and peerless splendour.

As it lay in the open palm of his hand and he looked down at it, Brent understood how it was that men and women in all ages of the world had sold their very souls to gain such a prize as he knew this ruby to be.

The upward streaming rush of light that seemed to come from it dazzled his eyes. He quivered with excitement at the thought of the vast treasure that was lying there in his outstretched hand.

With the red ruby in his possession, he had no need to fear anything that the future might bring to him. He was rich for the rest of his life.

Carefully placing the precious stone in his pocket, he hastened back into the shaft. It was a stiff climb up the rope, which had prudently been knotted at frequently recurring intervals, and Brent heaved a prodigious sigh of relief when he stood once more by Yen How's side.

"You down there a long time," commented his Chinese companion. "What thing you see?"

"I'll tell you when we get home," said Brent. "It's scarcely safe to speak about it here."

They walked back to Yen How's cottage, and there Brent sprang a little surprise on his companion. Making the other shut his eyes, he placed the red ruby on a table.

"Now, Yen How," he said, "you can look. See it?"

When the Chinaman set eyes on the ruby he stared at it like one dumbfounded for several moments. Then, stretching out his hand, he picked it up and inspected it with a gaze of awestruck admiration.

"You find this down there?" he said at last. "Golly! Some gem-gems my have seen in Chinese Temple of Heaven at Peking, but this more better than any of them. You velly lucky fellow. You sell it for more money than you know what to do with."

"I don't intend to sell it," Brent answered—"not yet, at any rate. But, all the same, I'll take a trip up to London and get it valued one day this week. You'd better not say anything to anyone about it."

Yen How severely closed his lips and pointed to them.

"Mum's the word," he said. "No fear me speaking. My no such fool. Suppose either Mista Melville or Mista Yung find out you have that ruby, you have it stolen from you jolly quick."

"Is Ming Yung fond of such things, then?" Brent inquired. "I should have thought he wouldn't have cared anything about them."

"He like them more than anything else," declared Yen How. "All Chinamen who know Ming Yung will tell you so. Suppose you no believe me, you show him your ruby."

"I'll not be taking the risk," laughingly answered Brent. "It's not for me to put temptation in Ming Yung's way."

Wrapping up the ruby, he took it away with him. His search in the subterranean passage under the cliff, he told himself, had been attended with remarkably successful results.

Had he been able to look into the future, however, it is possible that he might have thought of the red ruby with a loathing abhorrence that would have made him relinquish it there and then.

The Red Ruby Changes Hands.

Two days later Norris Brent went to London, taking the red ruby with him. He did not reach his destination until the evening, so it was not until the following morning that he made his way to the address of a leading dealer in precious stones, whose offices in Hatton Garden were visited by some

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of the most famous people in Europe seeking expert advice concerning jewellery.

After sending in his name and spending a long time in the waiting-room, Brent was shown into a private room, where two assistants, working behind a high grille like those to be seen in banks, were examining precious stones of all kinds with the aid of powerful lenses.

Stating the nature of his business, he handed to one of the men the chamois leather bag containing the ruby. The assistant drew the ruby out of the receptacle with a slightly bored look on his face. Apparently he expected to find a stone of quite ordinary value. When his glance alighted on the red ruby he gave a start, and his expression underwent a sudden change.

Crossing over to his companion, he showed him the gem. Both obviously excited, they examined it for some time, both with the lens and with the naked eye; and then one of them went away with it into an inner room.

He returned a minute afterwards to inform Brent that the manager wished to see him.

Following his conductor, the lad was ushered into the managerial sanctum, where a man of middle age, with a pale, clever face, was bending over the red ruby with a rapt look of the deepest admiration in his eyes.

"Mr. Brent," he said, looking at the written slip on his desk to make sure of his visitor's name, "I understand that you wish us to give you an expert valuation as to the worth of this ruby? That being so, you will no doubt inform me—in all secrecy, of course—how it came to be entrusted to your care, for—pardon my saying so—the person who sent you out into the London streets with so carelessly guarded a priceless treasure on you was guilty of conduct deserving the severest censure."

Brent's looks expressed his astonishment.

"You are making a mistake," he said. "No one has sent me to you. I am here because of the great reputation of your firm. The ruby is my own."

The manager gave a gasp. Leaning forward, he stared at Brent with a look in which incredulity mingled with sharp suspicion.

"Yours!" he exclaimed. "Do you, a mere boy, dare to stand there and tell me that you are the possessor of the finest ruby I have ever seen in my life—a treasure that is worth a king's ransom? The thing is too absurd for words! How did you come by it?"

A flush of angry pride crimsoned Brent's cheeks. His eyes flashed. He felt that it would have given him intense pleasure to drive his fist into the other's face.

"That I decline to tell you," he answered, with scornful coldness. "I did not come here to be asked impertinent and insulting questions, but merely to transact a piece of ordinary business with you, for which I pay you the required fee. Now that you have given me to understand that the ruby is indeed what I suspected it to be—a rare and absolutely flawless one—I am satisfied, and will leave you."

The manager looked a trifle apprehensive and alarmed. He realised that he had made a mistake in so freely showing his doubt and suspicion. Moreover, he was compelled to acknowledge that the lad who stood before him spoke in a voice whose every tone rang with sincerity and truth.

"If I am wrong, I apologise," he said; "but you must admit that it is a singular thing for you to be the owner of a jewel worth a fabulous sum of money. It is one of the few really great rubies in the world," he went on to say, with the enthusiasm of the expert, "and by far the best of those. But I must make a more prolonged examination of it. Then I will write you fully concerning it."

Brent shook his head.

"I'll not trouble you to do that," he said coldly, "and will take the ruby away with me."

"But you can't do that, you know," expostulated the other. "It's impossible!"

"Do you think so?" said Brent laughingly. "Then permit me to undeceive you."

Stretching out his hand, he picked up the ruby and dropped it into the chamois-leather bag, which he coolly replaced in his pocket. Then, with a curt nod of farewell, he turned on his heel and walked out of the office.

He was scarcely on the pavement when two private detectives employed by the firm emerged from the building and followed him like a pair of shadows.

For the rest of the day they never let him go out of their sight; and when he went to Paddington in the evening they knew the name of the station he booked to in Devonshire, and saw him off by the night mail.

The manager of the jewellery establishment, losing no time in finding out a few material facts concerning Norris Brent, also wrote to Guy Melville an urgent letter relating to the red ruby, the missive reaching its destination a few hours after Brent's return to Eagle's Nest.

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OUR COMPANION "THE BOYS' FRIEND" "THE MAGNET,"
PAPERS: Every Monday. Every Monday.

To say that this communication amazed its recipient but feebly describes Melville's feelings when he read it. Rage, wonder, and suspicion filled his mind.

At first he thought of sending for his cousin and showing him the letter, but this impulse was soon over. He decided to keep silent in the matter, and to secretly possess himself of the red ruby, the thought of which made his mouth water.

The jeweller declared that it was a jewel of extraordinary worth. Never had he seen another like it. Where could Brent have discovered such a treasure? In vain Melville cudgelled his wits for a satisfactory clue to the problem.

It never once occurred to him that Brent might have found the ruby in the secret way of escape used by the old smugglers when the coastguards were hot on their track.

Setting himself to make a systematic search of his cousin's rooms and belongings when the other was out of the house and he knew that he would not be interrupted, it was not long before he found the ruby.

In its chamois-leather case it had been placed beneath some other things at the bottom of an old trunk. Never suspecting that it would be taken, Brent had not even gone to the trouble of locking the chest.

Shaken with many conflicting emotions, Melville hurried to the library, and there gloated at leisure over his prize. All the greed and avarice of a miser counting his gold sparkled in his eyes and shined in the lines of his face as he gazed at the glittering gem.

How fine it was, he told himself, that he should dispossess his cousin of the treasure in such a way! He laughed aloud in spiteful glee as he pictured a vision of Brent, frantic and despairing over the unaccountable disappearance of the ruby.

"No may come to me then!" he laughed, "and make a clean breast of how he came by it. I hope he does. Where can he have found it? Not in any of the old rooms of the house. If he had he'd have brought it straight to me. He's too honest to keep anything that he hasn't a rightful claim to."

For the rest of the day Melville was not absent many minutes from the library. He was sitting there after dinner in the evening with the jewel before him when a tap came at the window.

Turning pale with suspicious alarm, he seized the jewel and thrust it into his pocket. Then, springing to his feet, he crossed the room to the window and looked out.

The gipsy, Karl Marrok, was outside on the terrace. He generally came by this secret way to Eagle's Nest, so that there was nothing out of the common in his appearance, for now, and also he had come to keep a previously-made appointment with his associate.

But Melville was nervous and suspicious, and was inclined to believe that Marrok had caught a glimpse of the ruby. For a few moments he hesitated about admitting the other, and then, putting on a bold face, he opened the window and let his visitor in.

The gipsy did not stay many minutes, and he gave no sign that might have led Melville to believe that he had seen the ruby. But for some time after the other had gone the master of Eagle's Nest was excited and uneasy in mind.

He knew enough of him to realise that such a man as Karl Marrok would stop at nothing to gain possession of the gem, and he half regretted that he had ever taken the Hungarian into his confidence.

It was after midnight when Melville sat down to take last look at the red ruby before retiring to rest. A glass and decanter stood on a table at his elbow, a prize cigar was between his lips, and he felt that fortune was indeed smiling upon him.

One of the finest old mansions in England was his, he was envied by his friends, and he had more money now than at one time he ever expected to handle.

There was Ming Yung, the mysterious member of that race of yellow men whom he treated so contemptuously, paying him a ridiculously high sum each month for the use of a few ancient rooms that had for years been closed to use.

What a queer fellow Ming Yung was, he reflected, as he puffed at his cigar. He feared and hated the Chinaman, in whose presence he could never be without experiencing a curiously unvarying sensation.

Well, so long as Ming Yung paid him his three hundred pounds a month and did not interfere with him, he was content. Money was everything to him.

And now he had the red ruby, which he could convert into a fortune whenever he chose to.

Looking down at the precious stone, Melville smiled; but the smile seemed to stay unbidden on his lips. Something keen and sharp pricked the nape of his neck, and instantly he began to gasp for breath, while a growing sensation of numbness crept over his limbs.

A thick mist gathered before his eyes. He fought for air.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1D.
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The library seemed to be whirling round and round with the speed of a whirlwind.

There was someone else in the room—Ming Yung, his long, yellow face as impassive as though his mind was absorbed by some peaceful exercise of the intellect.

Taking up the red ruby, he turned and left the library as silently as he had entered it.

A minute or two later Guy Melville suddenly regained full control of his faculties. He breathed freely again, and the dizzy feeling that had overtaken him passed speedily away.

Sitting up in his chair, he stared blankly in front of him. Then the sickening conviction all at once seized him that the red ruby was missing from the little ottoman on which he had placed it.

He stared wildly round in every direction. The ruby was nowhere to be seen.

Like a man bereft of his senses, he sprang up and strode up and down the library with frantic steps. Now he knew what had happened. Some powerful drug had been injected into his neck that had played immediate havoc with his nervous system.

The sharp pain he had felt must have been caused by the serum operated by an unknown hand. Whose was the hand? He answered the self-asked question in a moment.

It was Karl Marrok who had stolen into the library, injected him with the drug, and then made off with the great ruby.

His previous suspicion that the gipsy had seen the ruby through the library window while standing outside on the terrace now became a fierce conviction of belief. It was Marrok, whom he had befriended, who had done this thing.

Muttering incoherently in his rage and agitation, Melville rushed out of the house and along the road to the Smugglers' cove.

He hoped to overtake Marrok, but, hot and breathless, he reached the lonely old house without having seen anything of the gipsy.

There was a light at the window of Dan Morgan's room on the ground floor, but the rest of the place was in darkness. Finding a side door unlocked, Melville entered the house and ran on his way to Morgan's room.

The landlord was asleep in his favourite chair before the dead, white embers of a fire that had gone out hours before. Roughly awakened, he started to rage and fume, but a glance at his visitor's white, savage face silenced him.

"Where's the Marrok?" inquired Melville.

You won't see him to-night," answered the old smuggler after a slight pause. "The ship he was on when he knocked one of the hands down and nearly did for him came into harbour not many hours ago, so Marrok, thinking it wouldn't be safe to run the risk of being seen by his former shipmates, has gone somewhere up the coast for a day or two."

"But he's been at Eagle's Nest twice to-night!" cried Melville angrily. "Once in the early part of the evening, and the second time not an hour ago."

Morgan looked genuinely amazed.

"That can't be!" he said. "He might have been there earlier on, as you say, but not later."

"And I tell you he was there!" declared Melville, almost shouting out the words in his fury. "The story he told you was a made-up one. If he's gone, it's for good. The sneaking scoundrel! To rob me of the ruby after all I've done for him!"

"The ruby!" said Morgan, his eyes sparkling with a new light. "What ruby?"

"The finest ruby in the world," answered Melville, throwing discretion, and all thoughts of it, to the wind. "You never saw such a stone in your life. Large as an egg, and red as blood. An expert who examined it in London the other day told me that it was worth a king's ransom. And now that sneaking hound has got it! But I'll hunt him down if I travel the whole world over to do it!"

"Take it calm," advised Dan Morgan, who, despite this soothing counsel, was himself visibly moved and excited by what he had heard. "A fellow like Karl Marrok could never dispose of such a thing as you tell me this ruby is, even if he has it and tried to, for the police would be down on him in a trice. He'll come back here. You can depend on him doing that, for the Smugglers' Tavern is the safest place in the whole country for the like of him. And when he is back you'll be able to act on your own planning to regain your lost jewel."

Melville was silent for some moments. Now that it was too late he realised that he had been guilty of the wildest folly in speaking so openly. It meant that, having started to take Dan Morgan into his confidence, he must continue to do so.

"Look here, Dan!" he said, with a cunning glance at the other. "You help me to recover the ruby, and I'll pay you fifty pounds down. Is it a bargain?"

The shadow of a scornful smile flickered over Morgan's lips as he bent his head and rammed down the tobacco into the bowl of his dirty clay pipe with a hard blackened thumb.

"You can depend on me doing all I can to get hold of the ruby," he said. "It must be a monstrous fine stone, judging from what you say about it. Directly Marrok puts in an appearance you shall hear from me."

With nothing better to satisfy him than this assurance, Guy Melville took his departure. Returning to his room after having shown his visitor out, Morgan found Karl Marrok there.

"Then you altered your mind about going after all?" Morgan said. "Thought you'd come to the conclusion this was the safest place for you? How long have you been in?"

"For the last three or four hours," Marrok replied. "I heard Melville come in, and took the liberty of standing outside in the passage and listening to every word of the conversation."

Morgan met the fiercely questioning gaze bent upon him with steady eyes.

"Then you haven't got the ruby?" he asked. "I don't believe you had," he continued, as Marrok shook his head impatiently. "But I fancy I could lay my finger on the one who has got it."

"Who's that?"

The question came from the gipsy's lips with the sharpness of a pistol-shot.

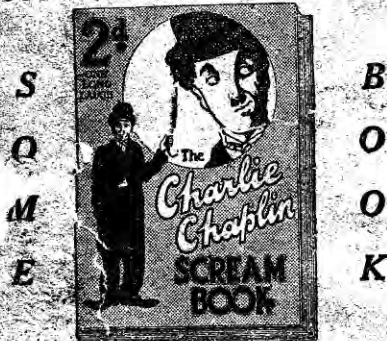
"Why, young Brent," said Dan Morgan, with a queer laugh. "First of all Melville took it from Brent, and now Brent's taken it back from him. That's how I reason it out, my hearty, though I'm not going to tell you why and how at present."

And he refused to say anything more about the matter.

(Another thrilling, long instalment of this splendid serial story next Wednesday. Order your copy early.)

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For Next Wednesday:

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"

By Martin Clifford.

A story with a "setior" interest is always sure of a rousing reception, and next Wednesday's yarn, in which Mr. Clifford introduces to my chums a strapping Sixth-Former named Dick Mason, will be read with intense pleasure throughout the country. Mason is shortly leaving St. Jim's, and it is his intention, before he goes, to do something which will stand for ever as a record on the scroll of great deeds. But Knox, the black sheep of the Sixth, has something to say about this, and by a most cunning device he almost, but not quite, brings about Mason's expulsion! How he retrieves his cadish conduct by rescuing someone from a burning aeroplane, and the many thrilling and exciting scenes leading up to

"MASON'S LAST MATCH!"

are vividly described in a manner which will make the name of Martin Clifford more than ever a household word throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.

EXIT MASTER MALPAS!

a Oxford Chum Sums Up the Situation.

My reader friends will remember that a few weeks ago I published on this page some puerile piffle emanating from a Master W. Malpas, of Oxford. I said at the time that I would publish the best reply I received from a fellow-citizen of that amiable young gentleman. Here it is:

"Oxford.

"Dear Editor,—I have never laughed so much for a long time as I did over the silly, absurd piffle of Master Malpas, who, unfortunately for us, hails from our grand old city.

"It would be idle to say that your correspondent is a cad and a rank outsider. His letter demands sympathy—not abuse. What are our asylum authorities doing that they permit such a poor, demented lunatic to be at large?

"With regard to his spelling, I have seen some styles and variations in my profession of student-teacher, but that of Master Malpas fairly caps the lot. It sent our family almost into hysterics when I read the letter to them at the breakfast-table.

"I hope you won't think, dear Editor, that the remarks of Malpas form a true criterion of what we Oxonians think of the 'Gem'. As a matter of fact, there must be few towns whose residents show such unwavering loyalty to the old book.

"There are black sheep in every fold, but I fear Master Malpas will receive short shrift if he falls foul of some of our true Genies. Your advice to him to mind his p's and q's was excellent. I sincerely hope he will heed for his own sake.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

"RONALD HARPER."

In thanking my Oxford chum for his loyal comments, I should also like to acknowledge letters on the same subject from the following:

"A Loyal Reader" (Dorset), Sidney W. H. (Paddington), Montague A. Potter (Oxford), H. T. C. (Clipping Norton), "Anti-Slanderer", Iris B. (Oxford), Doris M. (Oxford), Rosie Cook (Shrewsbury), V. L. (Highbury), G. Coulbeck (Grimsby), Doreen Michell (Reading), "The Terrible Three" (Worcester), Joe West and Chums (Chester), R. G. R. (Linton), F. S. and J. (Barton-on-Trent), Albert Reid (Grimsby), Private H. J. Laban (1st Herts Regt.), "Loyal Genies" (Carshalton), F. D. Arch (Cardiff), "A Girl Reader" (Battersea), A. Franklin (Reading), "Liskerret"

(Cornwall), R. E. (South Tottenham), "A Faithful Reader" (Scarborough), "An Italian Girl Reader", Private R. Blinn (Rochester), "Some Nuts", "T. 3" (Maidenhead), W. W. (Preston), and A. W. R. (London, S.E.).

By the same post which brought the above letters came another silly, harebrained epistle from a Master F. Stephens of London. However, there are certain questions in his letter which exact an answer, and I am dealing with it on my Chat page next Wednesday.

As for Master W. Malpas, whose spelling created such a scream throughout the country, I fear there is nothing for him but to hide his diminished head.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"A Loyal Girl Reader" (St. Margaret's-on-Thames).—no reason why your brother should not gain admission to school such as you mention. Several names and addresses of soldiers requiring books appear in the "Gem" from this time. Look out for them.

"Curious" (Royal Oak).—What a funny chat you. Was it necessary for me to be alive in the seventeenth century to know that St. Jim's was founded at that time?

"A Very Downhearted Reader" (Leam).—For goodness sake don't get so dispirited because some girl or girl-filthy you! A chap of your age ought to have something better to do and think about.

S. Edgley (Birmingham).—Mind your back up Merry's "Wings" when it appears!

Tom Smith (Barnes).—Your suggestion, Tom, I will use it when occasion arises.

Cecil Curtis (Hewich).—Thanks for sending me a for an indoor game. I am afraid, however, nothing new to the majority of "Genies".

A. C. (Ashford).—The adventures of Jack Sam, do not appear in the "Gem". Get "The Penny P" on sale every Friday.

"A Faithful Gem Reader" (Newcastle, Staffs).—Very thanks for your loyal letter.

B. H. Curtis (East Ham).—You are a better to send out many copies of the "Gem" to the trenches. Depend upon it, such usefulness will meet with its own reward.

H. F. H. (Rochester).—I will persuade Mr. Martin Clifford to write a story such as you suggest. The lessons adopted in the Shell at St. Jim's are the same as those employed in other public schools.

"A Girl Reader" (Northampton).—The most popular in the Shell is Tom Merry, and Jack Blak holds a life position in the Fourth. Redfern and Lunley-Lunley are each fifteen years of age.

F. J. P. (Finchley).—The issues you mention are out of print.

G. C. Russell (Eastwood).—Mr. Clifford has quite enough to do at present, without turning out threepenny books in astonishing number and variety. However, can definitely promise that one of his stories will appear in book form in a month or two.

Miss E. L. Reid (Uckfield).—We have already published a portrait gallery of the boys of St. Jim's.

F. S. Smith (Merthyr Tydfil).—Your acrostic wasn't bad, but lack of space prevents its publication. Very many thanks for all the nice things you say about the companion papers.

James Fox (Dublin).—Send in your jokes on postcards, Jimmy. How many more times?

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)