

HARMSWORTH'S UNIVERSAL ENCYCLOPEDIA—PART 1—JUST OUT.



The GEM $1\frac{1}{2}$

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FIGGINS RESTORES THE STOLEN PROPERTY.

(A Dramatic Incident in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this Number.)



The Editor's Chat.



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers.
Address: Editor, "The Gem," The Fleetsway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

FOR NEXT TUESDAY!

"FIGHTING FOR THE FAGS!"

is the title of next Tuesday's splendid story of St. Jim's, by Mr. Martin Clifford, in which Percy Pander makes his bow as a new boy in the Fourth Form. Percy Pander comes to St. Jim's to stay, and he makes himself felt in no uncertain manner.

The way in which he becomes the staunch friend of Wally D'Arcy & Co. provides a story which every reader will thoroughly enjoy.

"FIGHTING FOR THE FAGS!"

will be voted one of Mr. Martin Clifford's best stories, so make sure that you do not miss it, by ordering your copy of the GEM in advance.

"RODNEY STONE."

This is the title of the splendid new serial in the "Boys' Friend." I hope all my friends will make a point of reading the story. It is written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the celebrated author of the detective yarns about Sherlock Holmes. Every fellow interested in the ring and its history will enjoy "Rodney Stone." The story is a grand one, and shows Conan Doyle at his best, while its glimpse into the old days of the last century are perfectly thrilling.

ONLY A DREAM.

And it was lucky it was only a dream! This was what it was.

I met a lovely-looking fat person tramping miserably through the twilight down a muddy lane. Behind him rose the towers of St. Jim's. I stopped and spoke to the traveller, and, will you believe it?

It turned out to be Baggy Trimble. He said he had been expelled from the school, and then he sat down, opened the big portmanteau he was carrying, and started to make a light meal off sandwiches, eclairs, cheese-cakes, and what-not, sighing bitterly as he munched. "I dunno what they will do without me," he said plaintively. "I expect they will be begging me to go back, but I shan't go! It isn't fair to sack a chap who means well!"

I was just going to say something consolatory to the poor fellow, when I woke up. It was only a dream. Baggy Trimble had not been sent out into the cold world. Perhaps the dream was occasioned by an angry letter I had been reading, suggesting that such fellows as Baggy Trimble should be dismissed. Well, it might be poetic justice, but it would never do. We want Baggy!

THE LADY OF NOTTINGHAM.

Why should the world laugh when it sees somebody being trounced?

This is not a conundrum. Please do not think it. But, as the song says, it is so. Maybe the onlookers feel that folks are all the better for being called over the coals.

Anyway, I do not consider it cheek on the part of a girl correspondent at Nottingham to say she thinks the artist who draws Cousin Ethel and Doris Levison is quite ignorant of the fashions.

"The artist knows how to draw boys, but girls!!! The hats are old-fashioned, the blouses are old-fashioned, huge, spotted, ugly, with high necks (I don't want them too low), while the style of doing the hair is straight and staggy."

The writer encloses a sketch of a girl—Marjorie Hazeldene to wit—as she ought to appear, and the picture is very good indeed. I hope my Nottingham critic will realise that the business of following the fashions is a very difficult one. It is quite possible that Clara Trevlyn did have a tiny school hat, and, after all, the poor girl cannot help the size of her head. All the more room for brains as the said head is large.

A NOTE FROM ABERDEEN.

This letter that comes from Aberdeen is in the neatest hand that ever was seen. The very look of it makes you think of poetry. The writer seems to have taken Monty Lowther and his puns—some of which are considerably bad—rather too seriously.

Nobody should take Monty like that. Still, the incorrigible joker might well say, "Love me love my puns." It just depends how you are made. Some folks

like puns, others fairly hate them. That's where it is.

I am so sorry to learn that my girl chum up north has been ill, and I hope very much she will write to me again before long. By the way, she considers the villainy of Crooke and his friends is overdone. That must be a matter of opinion, but I am quite in agreement with the writer of the letter in what she says concerning the genuine school story with the right sort of atmosphere; I feel that she will not be disappointed in the future, though it is impossible to make definite promises.

NEWS WANTED.

Mrs. Moran, of Green Street, Royston, Herts, sends me the following notes for insertion:

ROYSTON.

Tom, do come home, or write to me, for your clothes. We are quite willing for you to stay if you are employed and happy. Dad does not know why you went away. He thinks you did not like your work. Write or wire as soon as you see this. I am so unhappy.—Your mother, E. M.

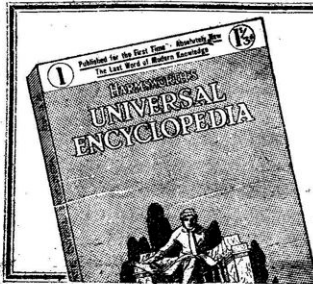
A CARTOON OF BUNTER?

Perhaps you think there could not be such a thing. You are wrong there. Frank Nugent, the special artist of the "Greyfriars Herald," has done the trick. This clever draughtsman is cartooning all the celebrities of Greyfriars. Look out for Dutton among the number. You will have a hearty laugh.

IN CASE YOU FORGET.

Please note that the picture of Jack Cornwell, V.C., is to be had almost for the asking. It is a fine coloured plate, which should hang on the walls of every home in the land as a reminder of what British valour can achieve. You will find all particulars in another column.

Your Editor



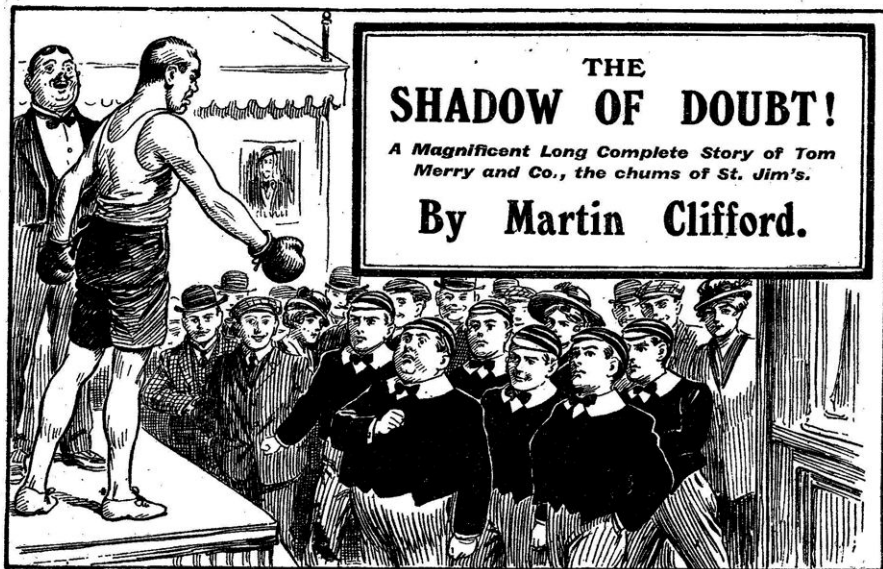
PART 1.

Just Out!

The most complete work of reference ever published—ABSOLUTELY NEW—RIGHT UP-TO-DATE—Written by experts—Splendidly illustrated—Issued in fortnightly parts at 1/3 each.

THE MOST WONDERFUL BOOK IN THE WORLD.

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THE SHADOW OF DOUBT!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story of Tom Merry and Co., the chums of St. Jim's.

By Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.

For the Honour of St. Jim's.

"**M**Y hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Here comes Figgins & Co.! Everybody seems to have turned out for the fair this afternoon!"

The chums of the Shell at St. Jim's were mingling with a noisy throng that had assembled on Wayland Heath.

A number of large tents and marquees and booths indicated that a fair had established itself on the heath. The number of raucous voices, the blatant tones of mechanical organs, and the incessant din of drums, and the hundred and one other sounds also gave evidence of a fair.

And as it was Wednesday afternoon, and a half-holiday at St. Jim's, many of the fellows had crossed to Wayland Heath, to see what the fair was like.

Tom Merry and several members of the Shell were there, and Jack Blake & Co., the chums of Study No. 6, were also in the vicinity.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of St. Jim's, were standing together, when Tom espied Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the heroes of the New House at St. Jim's.

"Abo, Figg!" cried Tom Merry breezily. "Whither bound?"

George Figgins, the lanky-legged leader of the New House fellows, grinned good-humouredly as he came up with Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

"Nowhere in partic," he said. "My word! Hark at that fat Johnny over there; he's yelling like a cannibal! Might as well go over and see what he's advertising!"

Willing to bury the hatchet of rivalry for the time being, both Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. pushed their way through the crowd and made their way towards a booth, on the platform of which a corpulent gentleman in soiled dress-suit and grubby shirt-front was

roaring forth at the top of his stenographic voice.

"Who accepts the challenge? 'Ere you see Brummer Bert, the light-weight champion of England, though 'e 'asn't applied for admission to the National Sportin' Club yet!" yelled the fat, red-faced showman, gesticulating wildly towards a grinning, burly-looking individual in boxing attire.

"Come on, chaps!" said Figgins, his eyes agleam with excitement. "It's a boxing-booth, and we might see something exciting!"

The St. Jim's juniors elbowed their way until they were in the front row of spectators.

They found themselves before a crudely-erected booth, on the platform of which the showman and Brummer Bert were standing.

Several gaudily-coloured pictures, distributed across the front of the booth, depicted an extremely muscular-looking boxer, in various weird and wonderful poses. The legends beneath these grotesque pictures stated that the above was Brummer Bert, the coming light-weight champion of the world, who challenged anybody to knock him out in ten rounds, for a prize of ten pounds.

"Nah, kim on, gents!" drawled Brummer Bert, his small, beady eyes scrutinising the crowd in front of the booth. "I ain't no Joe Beckett, I ain't—haw, haw! Nah, then, 'oo's goin' to try me for ten short rounds? If any gent amongst this 'ere audience can stand up to me for ten rounds, I'll 'and 'im over ten quid wivout a murmur, an' the audience kin see as 'ow this offer is on the level!"

The St. Jim's juniors regarded the boxer curiously.

He was a small, sinewy fellow, with closely-cropped hair, and a nose which had been broken, most probably, in the execution of his profession.

He regarded the crowd with a swag-

gering, cynical air, a sneer lurking at the ends of his cruel-looking mouth.

"Well," murmured Monty Lowther to Tom Merry, "he looks every inch a boxer, doesn't he?"

Tom Merry nodded, and looked with extreme disfavour at Brummer Bert.

"Ten quid for ten rounds, gents!" drawled the boxer. "Anybody care to take me on? I'm right 'ere, I guess!"

George Figgins growled.

"The conceited bounder!" he muttered. "He seems to think there's nobody in England who can box but him."

I'd like to take him down a peg or two!"

Kerr gave Figgins a quick glance.

"Look here, Figg! You're not thinking of taking him on, are you?"

Figgins did not reply. He was regarding Brummer Bert.

As it happened, Brummer Bert happened to look down at the schoolboys, and his and Figgins' eyes met.

Brummer Bert gave a guffaw.

"Nah, then, little boys," he said, in a bantering tone, indicating the St. Jim's juniors. "Wouldn't yer like me ter teach yer boxing, jest ter provide some amuse-ment for the gents? Stand up to me for ten rounds, an' I make yer a present of ten quid—ow's that?"

A chuckle went up from the crowd, and the St. Jim's juniors flushed angrily.

Brummer Bert's eyes lighted on Fatty Wynn, and he pointed a derisive forefinger at the Falstaff of St. Jim's.

"Look at that fat chap!" he guffawed.

"About ten times my weight, but I'd take 'im on. I'd knock some of the fat off 'im by the time I'd finished!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"You—you cheeky rotter!" hooted Fatty Wynn, his face flushing crimson.

"For two pins I—"

"Shurrup, Fatty!" said Figgins between clenched teeth. "I'll see if I can't take some of the bounce out of him!"

Fatty Wynn blinked at his leader in some astonishment.

"I a'pose little boys shoudn't fight!" sneered Brummer Bert from his vantage-point on the boxing-booth platform. "Does their teachers know they're hout, I wonder?"

A roar of laughter from the crowd arose, and Figgins, his eyes glinting, strode angrily forward.

"I'll take you on, you bragging rotter!" he cried, in firm, ringing accents. "Lead the way, and I'll fight you for ten rounds!"

The boxer on the platform blinked down at the St. Jim's junior, an expression of incredulous surprise on his face.

"Say it again, sonny!" he said. "I didn't quite catch what you said!"

Figgins tried hard to contain his wrath.

"I said I'd take you on!" he cried. "I'll box you for ten rounds if I can, and—and I'm ready now!"

"Figgys!" ejaculated Kerr. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther turned startled faces towards Figgins.

Figgins' face was flushed, his eyes were gleaming with angry determination, his jaw was set, and his whole demeanour was one of grim resolve.

"You—you take me on!" gasped Brummer Bert. Then he burst into a roar of laughter. "Haw, haw, haw! I'd have the Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Children on me!"

"Look here!" shouted Figgins tensely. "You've challenged anybody in this crowd to a ten-round fight, and I accept the challenge! Will you fight me?"

"Figgys!" cried Tom Merry. "Don't be an ass!"

"Rats!" retorted Figgins hotly. "He's a light-weight, and just about my weight, I reckon. He thinks he's the only one who can fight, and I'll have a jolly good try to show him what a St. Jim's chap can do!"

"Bravo, Figgys!" breathed Kerr.

The corpulent showman, who had ceased his shouting in order to let Brummer Bert talk, came forward, and looked critically at Figgins.

"He looks a tough sort of kid," he said to the sneering Brummer. "Look ere, youngster," he resumed, addressing the St. Jim's fellow. "Are you serious, or is this a joke?"

"I'm serious!" shouted Figgins.

"Lead the way, and I'll have the gloves on at once!"

The eyes of the fat showman gleamed. He spoke a few words to Brummer Bert, who was seen to nod and scoff. Then the showman addressed Figgins again.

"My man will accept your challenge!" he said briskly.

"Good!" said the hero of the New House grimly. "I'll knock some of the wind out of his sails!"

"Hurrah, young 'un!" cried, a voice in the crowd.

The showman turned to the grinning crowd, who were craning eagerly forward to take a look at Figgins.

"Roll up, gents," he cried, and see this contest between Brummer Bert, the light-weight champion, and this young feller before you. Come in and see the fight, admission expence!" The showman was quick to see the business side of Figgins' acceptance of the Brummer's challenge.

The sporting instincts of the crowd were aroused, and they were all eager to see how this precocious schoolboy fared with the Brummer.

Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins' two chums looked meaningfully at each other.

"Figgys, a hasty ass," said Kerr quietly, "but I agree with him."

"Ye-es," said Tom Merry, "he must

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go through with it now, I suppose. We'll all go inside and see fair play."

And the five juniors mingled with the crowd that was mounting the steps leading to the boxing-booth entrance.

Figgins had been first up, and the manager had led him inside.

Brummer Bert followed, walking with a swaggering gait, a cynical sneer on his far from pretty countenance.

The boxing-booth was quickly filled. Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, Manners, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn paid their sixpences and managed to get good seats upon the front bench facing the ring.

Several seedy-looking ring attendants were there, making preparations for the coming contest.

Figgins had gone behind a screen to the dressing-room of the boxing-booth, there to strip, be weighed, and then don boxing shorts and shoes.

The manager, who supervised these operations, looked with an air of critical admiration at the wiry, supple form of Figgins as he stripped.

Figgins was one of the leading junior athletes of St. Jim's, and ever a sportsman.

By reason of his prowess with his fists, Figgins had attained the leadership of the New House. Next to Tom Merry he was undoubtedly the champion boxer of the junior school at St. Jim's.

Figgins was in the very pink of condition. As he strode firmly into the boxing-booth and mounted the steps leading into the ring, the audience looked upon the schoolboy champion, and a hearty cheer arose.

"Bravo, youngster!"

"He's a plucked 'un, haw!"

"Cheer-o, Figgys!" cried Fatty Wynn.

Figgins looked towards the small group of St. Jim's juniors, and gave a wry smile.

"Keep a stiff upper-lip, Figgys!" said Tom Merry encouragingly. "Best of luck, old son!"

Attention was now directed towards Brummer Bert, who strode into the ring followed by the seconds and the portly showman.

Standing side by side the contrast between the professional boxer and Figgins was remarkable.

Brummer Bert had a hard, angular frame, with muscles that were developed for show.

His skin was sleek, his face sallow, and he was now evidently in a bad mood.

The New House junior, on the other hand, looked the picture of health and condition.

He was tall and lanky, and had a long reach, too. He had no great display of muscle, but the gentle ripples under the firm skin showed that strength lay in his sturdy frame.

His chest was well-developed and muscular. His skin glowed with a healthy pink, his face was fresh, his poise even.

"My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I shouldn't be surprised if Figgys doesn't stand up to him for the ten rounds, Tommy."

Fatty Wynn turned indignantly to Monty.

"Of course Figgys will!" he said. "He'll lick that swanky merchant, too—eh, Kerr?"

George Kerr, the cool, calculating Scotch junior, did not reply. His eyes were on Figgins.

His face showed the confidence he placed in his leader.

"Gents," cried the showman, holding the ropes which bounded the ring and addressing the audience, "this ten-rounds bout is now to commence. All's fair and square, take my word! These ere's the gloves, and are open for anybody's inspection."

Tom Merry came forward, took the boxing-gloves and gave them a brief but thorough examination.

"All right," he said, and resumed his seat when the gloves had been handed back.

"Choose your gloves, sir!" said the showman, extending the gloves to Figgins.

Figgins chose a pair, and a second assisted him to don them.

Brummer Bert had the other pair affixed to his hands, and the principals went to their respective corners.

The showman acted as referee, and had a large stop-watch in his hand.

Tensely the audience waited. Brummer Bert looked at Figgins with his small, beady eyes, and his demeanour was anything but an even one.

Figgins, on the other hand, was cool and collected, and seemed as much at ease as if he were about to have a bout with one of his own schoolfellows in the gymnasium at St. Jim's.

"Seconds out of the ring!"

The attendants climbed over the ropes. "Time!"

Brummer Bert and Figgins advanced at the same instant, and the fight commenced.

CHAPTER 2.

"Bravo Figgys!"

"GO it, Figgys!" sang out Monty Lowther. "St. Jim's for ever!"

"Show them what the New House can do!" chimed in Fatty Wynn.

All eyes were fixed intently upon the rivals in the ring.

Brummer Bert ignored Figgins' outstretched hand, and gave a swift, cunning blow with his right.

He had told himself that he would give this boy a grueling before he knocked him out—at his leisure.

Figgins determined that this should be the fight of his life. The honour of the New House—nay, the honour of St. Jim's—relied upon his standing up to the Brummer without faltering.

Figgins' guard was up, and he warred off the blow.

Brummer Bert darted in, bent on delivering some heavy body punches.

But Figgins knew something of the art of defence, and his guard was almost impenetrable. He started warily, walking backwards deftly round the ring, causing Brummer Bert to follow him up, expending energy and wind in making fruitless blows for the body.

Then, when he saw that the Brummer was getting vexed, Figgins side-stepped, strode forward, and got in a beautiful left hook on the jaw.

The Brummer staggered back, to the tune of a tumultuous roar of applause from the audience.

"Bravo, Figgys!" chortled Fatty Wynn. "That's the stuff to give 'em, old chap!"

"Figgys all there!" said Tom Merry, turning enthusiastically to Kerr.

Now the Brummer, recovering from his blow, sparred savagely with Figgins. Figgins met him gamely, and thus they fought until the fat proprietor called time.

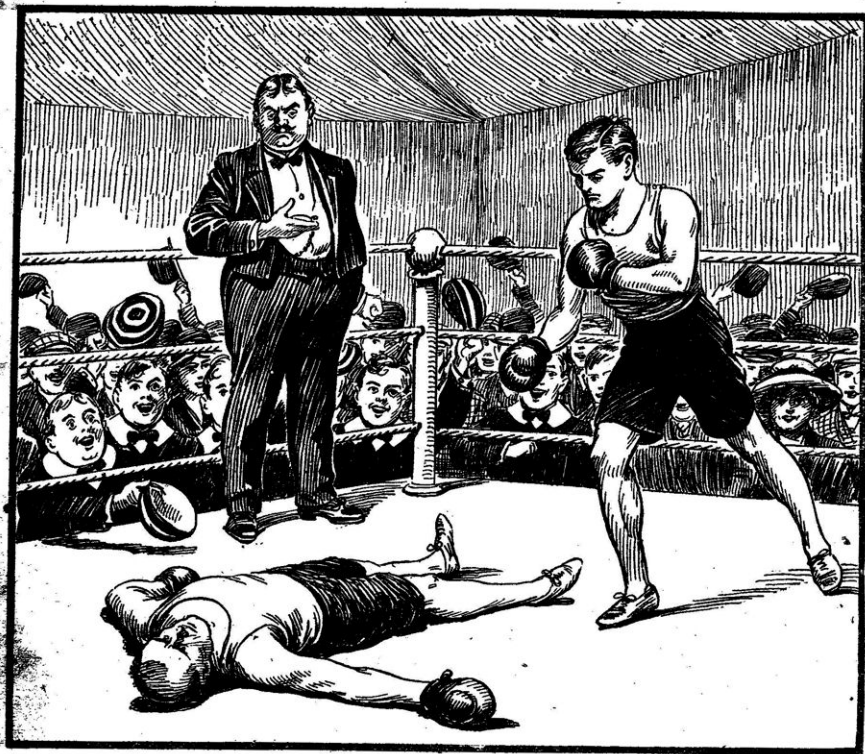
A cheer arose for Figgins as he walked to his corner.

Brummer Bert darted a savage look upon the audience, and sat down badly-temperedly in his chair.

He caught a meaning glance from his employer, and scowled.

The result of the first round had been anything but satisfactory to the Brummer.

He began to realise that Figgins,



Brummer Bert was lifted clean off his feet. He crashed heavily to the floor, and lay there like a log while the referee counted him out. "Knocked out, by Jove!" muttered Tom Merry. "Oh, Figgy!" (See Chapter 2.)

though a boy, knew something of the noble art of self-defence.

Figgins sat in his corner, fanned by the second, and grinned cheerfully at his chums.

"All serene!" he cried. "He isn't much of a boxer, take my tip!"

This was intended by Figgins to infuriate the Brummer, and in this intention he was successful.

He saw the Brummer's brow lower, and heard him mutter something unintelligible under his breath.

Kerr's eyes were dancing.

"See Figgy's game?" he whispered to Fatty Wynn. "He's getting the chap's rag out, and will play old Harry with him soon!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Fatty Wynn, whose faith in his leader was as firm as a rock. "Figgy knows what he's up to."

At the lapse of the two minutes the referee again called time, and Figgins and Brummer Bert sprang out for the second round.

Brummer Bert's jaw was set now, and he resolved to get rid of the schoolboy with as much expedition as possible.

Figgins noted that his opponent was angry, and decided that for the time being discretion was the better part of valour.

He ducked and feinted and side-stepped, and got in an occasional jab on his opponent's body, but never once did he relax his vigilance or give his opponent a chance to get in an effective blow.

Consequently, when the end of the round was called, Figgins went back to his corner full of confidence in himself, and breathing evenly, whilst the Brummer was savage.

This was a new experience for him.

In his tour of the country towns with the boxing-booth, Brummer Bert had relied more upon brute force than science for the victory.

His opponents were generally beefy yokels, clumsy on their feet and embarrassed by the audience. In these bouts nimble footwork and brute force counted, so that Brummer Bert had got into the habit of neglecting his science, which is really the art of boxing.

Figgins was a boxer of science. He had taken stock of his man, and knew how to deal with him.

The St. Jim's junior felt fully confident that he could wear Brummer Bert, and exasperate him into making some clumsy move which would be his undoing.

The third round commenced, and Brummer Bert was scowling.

The cheers of the audience were for the schoolboy, and the encouraging shouts of Fatty Wynn urged Figgins on to victory.

Brummer Bert crouched and fought low. His footwork was good, but so was Figgins'.

He tried trick after trick, but Figgins met him. The lanky-legged junior side-stepped and dodged skilfully, as he had done many a time in the St. Jim's gymnasium.

Only once was Figgy caught napping. Brummer Bert feinted, as if to make a lunge for the abdomen. Figgins guarded it with his left. Bringing himself up with a jerk, the Brummer darted swiftly in, raised his right, and brought it down with crashing force along the bone of Figgins' nose.

Instantly a flood of involuntary tears welled into Figgins' eyes.

The audience gave a groan and subsided into tense silence as Brummer Bert crashed his left on the schoolboy's jaw, and sent him to the floor with a thud.

Tom Merry had his watch out, and he looked up with a perplexed frown as the referee began to count Figgins out.

"Time!" shouted Tom. "You can't count him out—the round is at an end!"

"That's right!" cried Kerr furiously.

The showman darted a venomous look at the schoolboys, but went on with the count.

But, Figgins, hearing the commotion, rallied. At eight, he crouched on one knee. Then Fatty Wynn's voice rang out loud and clear:

"Up, Figgy! Up, Figgy!"

And Figgins responded. The word nine had barely tolled from the referee's lips, when Figgins sprang up, and staggered towards his chair.

The showman's face went black, and he muttered "Time!" in a reluctant voice. Tom Merry & Co. looked grimly at him.

"The—shady cad!" muttered Monty Lowther. "The round had ended before the count began!"

Kerr looked round, and fixed a steady gaze upon the School House fellows.

"Never mind," he said quietly. "Rely on Figgy. He can pull it off!"

"Good old Figgy!" chortled Fatty Wynn.

Figgins now had the water cleared away from his eyes, and he smiled ruefully from his corner at his chums.

"All right, Figgy?" cried Kerr.

"O. K.," responded the New House hero. "Don't worry!"

"That's it, Figgy!" cried Fatty Wynn.

"Keep your pecker up!"

"Time!"

For the fourth time the combatants faced each other.

The Brummer's face now was suffused with spiteful triumph, and he reckoned on finishing the fight in this round.

But he did not know George Figgins of the New House at St. Jim's.

Figgy was on his mettle now.

He took the initiative, and attacked his opponent with a battering-ram-like punch on the nose, followed by three body blows in quick succession.

Brummer Bert tried to clinch, but Figgins darted back and gave him such a beautiful smack behind the ear that the audience set up a howl of joy.

"Go it, Figgy," came Fatty Wynn's strident voice. "Pile in, old chap!"

Figgins set his teeth, and "coiled in."

Brummer was amazed at this sudden display of grit on the part of the boy. He guarded clumsily, and finished the round by darting to and fro, on the defensive.

The fifth round was full of thrills. Both combatants warned to their work

and sailed into the fray with stern resolve.

Figgins, however, was not the schoolboy amateur now.

Confidence and a knowledge of his man won him through, and he gave tit for tat, skilfully dodging, and keeping at arm's length whenever he deemed Brummer Bert too dangerous to be tackled at close quarters.

Figgy did not hope to knock out the Brummer. What he was bent on, however, was to last out the ten rounds.

This was the fifth, and he was by no means spent.

Wild shouts of praise of the schoolboy boxer resounded in the booth as the fifth round terminated.

The faces of the St. Jim's boys in front were radiant.

"He's splendid!" breathed Tom Merry to Kerr. "Figgy is magnificent! I've never seen him fight like that before!"

"He'll stick it out, too!" said Fatty Wynn, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Yes, he'll stick it to the tenth!" said Monty Lowther.

But Monty was wrong in his estimation. As the two combatants met for the sixth round it was evident that the Brummer meant business.

His eyes were narrowed into slits, and he sprang like a tiger upon Figgins.

Tom Merry, & Co. watched with bated breath. Silence reigned in the tent, except for the sounds made by the fighters, as they moved to and fro upon the floor of the ring.

Now Figgins showed signs of weakening. His attack slackened, and more than once he was driven to the ropes.

Flushed with victory, Brummer Bert came on. Figgy got into a corner, and as he dodged out, a heavy drive from Brummer's left caught him in the eye.

The blow bewildered Figgins, and he went down.

A groan arose from the onlookers.

Brummer Bert towered over the schoolboy for him to rise.

"Ha—he won't give Figgy a chance!" muttered Lowther thickly. "It's all up, poor chap!"

They looked at the prostrate Figgins with strained eyes.

Brummer Bert would not allow him to rise without sending him back again with a knockout blow.

Figgins, however, was watching the Brummer.

He raised himself, as if confused.

Down swept the gloved right arm of Brummer Bert, a punch that contained all the force which the boxer could muster.

But it did not land home.

Figgins, before the blow had neared his face, rolled sideways, and sprang to his feet in a twinkling.

With a bellow of fury, Brummer Bert swung round—but too late.

Figgins took time over his blow, and measured it to a nicety.

Round it came, a driving, smashing blow from the left shoulder.

It caught Brummer Bert full on the jaw, and the report was heard all over the booth.

Brummer Bert was lifted clean off his feet. He crashed heavily to the floor, and lay there like a log while the referee counted him out.

"Knocked out by Jove!" muttered Tom Merry. "Oh, Figgy!"

It was a thorough knock-out, and when ten had been counted, the champion of the boxing-booth still lay there, gazing up intently at the roof of the tent.

Then there arose such a roar of cheering that it made Figgins' head swim.

"Bravo! Bravo, young'un!"

"Hurrah for Figgins! He's knocked Brummer Bert out!"

"St. Jim's wins!—Hurrah!"

The corpulent proprietor of the boxing-booth was regarding Figgins queerly.

He was amazed that his hitherto invincible champion should have been actually knocked out by a schoolboy, and in the sixth round.

"Well, I'm bothered!" were his first words, when the cheering had subsided.

"Gents, Brummer Bert wasn't up to the mark—"

"Yah!" hooted an excited countryman in front. "E was licked fair 'un square by the youngster! Fork out the ten quid!"

"Yes; pay up to the kid!"

"Certainly, gents!" cried the showman. "Young sir, I congratulate you on your wonderful exhibition of boxing, and I offer you ten pounds, as stipulated. I may add that this is the first time the money's 'ad to be paid, for the simple reason that Brummer Bert's never been knocked out before!"

"Shows you what St. Jim's can do!" hooted Fatty Wynn, almost babbling over with delight. "Oh, Figgy, you are a marvel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins grinned, but he ignored the ten-pound note offered.

"Keep it!" he said, with a shrug of the shoulders.

The showman looked at him in great astonishment.

"What!" he gasped, hardly able to believe his ears. "It's a genuine note, and—"

"I don't want your money," said Figgins curtly. "All I wanted was to take some of the bounce out of that bouncer there, and I'm glad now I've done it. He's a pretty sort of champion, isn't he?"

"He, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry & Co., radiant for their schoolfellow's victory.

"Well, if you won't 'ave it, you won't!" said the showman, scratching his head in perplexity. "You all saw me make the offer, didn't you, gents?"

The onlookers roared delightedly, and Figgins was the hero of the hour.

By this time Brummer Bert had been lifted to his feet by the ring attendants, and as he was helped from the ring, he darted a look of venom at Figgins.

The schoolboy champion met this with a curl of the lip, and he turned away abruptly, addressing the showman.

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"How dare you enter my house in this disgraceful condition, Figgins?" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "With whom have you been fighting?" Figgins set his lips hard, and would not reply. (See Chapter 3.)

"I'll be off to the dressing-room and change," he said.

He strode out of the ring, followed by the corpulent showman.

"Shoulder him!" cried Fatty Wynn.

"He's a giddy hero!"

Figgins backed hastily away as his enthusiastic chums advanced.

"Chuck it, you chaps!" he said, with a twisted grin. "I'm feeling sore all over, for that boulder gave me a gruelling. Let me get dressed, and we'll get back to St. Jim's."

Figgins went behind the screen alone.

He had not finished dressing, when the proprietor of the show came in. His fat, podgy face was affable, and he was smiling.

"You did very well, my lad," he said admiringly. "My man was thoroughly licked, and I've just been havin' a row with 'im. By Jove, but where did you learn your boxing?"

"At school!" replied Figgins grimly. "There is such a thing as science in boxing, you know, sir."

"Yes, yes!" replied the showman.

"Look 'ere, young sir, aren't you going to take that ten quid? It's yours, and you've earned it."

Figgins shook his head, and struggled into his Eton jacket.

"Well, you are a queer specimen!" said the fat showman candidly. "But you're a sportsman, my lad! You'd make your fortune in a boxing-booth like mine!"

"Would I?" said Figgins.

"Yes, you would!" said the man earnestly. "And if you care to take on a job now—"

"No thanks!" said Figgins, smiling in spite of himself. "I'd like to be a boxer, but I'm a schoolboy now, you know!"

"Well, you never know what may 'appen," said the fat showman. "See 'ere, my lad, my name is Paul Jenner, and if ever you are in need of a job, just apply to me and—"

"You are very kind, sir," said Figgins, "but I don't think I shall take up boxing as a profession—not just yet, at any rate."

"But you never know!" said Paul Jenner eagerly. "You won't forget my offer, will you?"

"No," said Figgins. "I won't forget!"

"I'd like to 'ave a boy like you in my booth," said Jenner, looking covertly at Figgins. "That fool Brummer has been getting too saucy lately, and I'm glad now, in one way, 'e's been beaten, though I—I ought not to be. Sure you wouldn't care to leave school and earn, say, ten pounds a week with me?"

"No, thanks!" said Figgins good-humouredly. "But I'll think of your offer when I'm hard up for a job, Mr. Jenner. Good-afternoon, and my best respects to Brummer Bert!"

The fat showman gave a chuckle as Figgins departed from the booth. He accompanied Figgins to the side door.

"A boy like that would make my fortune!" he muttered, as the schoolboy walked away. "E knocked Brummer Bert out—oh, my 'at! And, unless I'm much mistaken, 'e'll come back 'ere again!"

CHAPTER 3.

An Amazing Discovery.

"**B**AI Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglasses and gazing down the lane leading from the gates of St. Jim's to the village. "Somethin's w'ong!"

A party of St. Jim's fellows had come in sight, and Gussy recognised them as Tom Merry & Co., Kerr, and Fatty Wynn.

They were helping another fellow, who seemed in rather a bad way.

"It's Figgins!" exclaimed Jack Blake, who was there with D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby. "My hat! What's Figgins been up to, Tom Merry?"

The party from Wayland Heath had just arrived back at St. Jim's. Figgins, after leaving the dressing-room of the boxing booth, had rejoined them.

Figgins had felt quite cheerful at first, but as he continued the walk home over Wayland Heath, the after-effects of his strenuous encounter with Brummer Bert began to tell.

He felt sore all over, and had to rely upon the assistance of his chums.

"What's up, Figgys, deah boy?" inquired Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, stopping the party as they entered the gates.

Figgins gave a twisted smile.

"I've been fighting, Gussy," he said, "and feel a wreck!"

"Great Scott, and you look a wreck, too!" ejaculated Blake. "You look as though you'd been fighting with a steam roller!"

As Blake had remarked, the hero of the New House looked a wreck.

He had two bruises on his chin, his lip was cut and swollen, and his nose was red and looked too big for his face.

Figgins' right eye had developed a blue tint, and was half closed. He had received a severe gruel from Brummer Bert, a grueling which he had not noticed in the excitement of the fight.

Briefly, Tom Merry gave Jack Blake & Co. an account of Figgins' magnificent fight with Brummer Bert, and the heroes of the Fourth Form drew deep breaths.

"My word!" breathed Blake, looking admiringly at Figgins. "We've only just come back from the Heath. I wish we'd seen the fight. Figgys, you're a giddy Trojan!"

"Thanks!" said Figgins heavily. "I feel jolly groggy, though. I think we'd better get in as quick as we can, Kerr!" "Yes," said Kerr quietly. "It wouldn't do for the masters to hear that you were engaged in a fight at a common boxing-booth. Figgys, there'd be no end of a row!"

Figgins turned to Tom Merry & Co. "Thanks for helping me along," he said; "I'll be better in the morning. It was a jolly stiff tussle, you know!"

"Good man, Figgys!" said Tom Merry breezily. "I hope Ratty doesn't spot you!"

Kerr and Wynn hurried away with their champion across the quadrangle towards the New House.

Tom Merry & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. returned to the School House animatedly discussing Figgins' great fight.

Most of the boys were at preparation, so Figgins had hopes of not meeting anybody on his way up to his study. But his hopes soon fell.

They were walking along the main corridor, when a familiar step made them stop and look at each other in dismay.

"Ratty!" said Fatty Wynn.

With a swish of his gown Mr. Horace

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Ratcliff, the sour Housemaster in the New House, strode into view, bearing down upon the three juniors in the passage.

As his eyes alighted on Figgins' battered countenance, Mr. Ratcliff stopped short, and gave an exclamation of horror.

"Figgins!" groaned Kerr. "Now you're in for it, Figgys!"

"Figgins!" rumbled the ominous voice of the master. "You have been fighting?"

No. 39.—MR. PERCY CARRINGTON, B.A.



Master of the Second, and mathematical master. A real good fellow, liked by Tom Merry & Co. and all the best juniors at St. Jim's. Once "bowled out" Levison and Crooke in one of their wily schemes, for which they have hated him ever since; but Levison and Crooke hate all decent fellows, whether boys or masters.

"Ye-es, sir!" replied Figgins.

Mr. Ratcliff looked narrowly at the bruised face of his pupil. Figgins' eye was now worse, and was a dark blue colour.

"You have been engaged in no ordinary fight, Figgins," rasped Mr. Ratcliff; "your face bears tokens of a brutal pugilistic encounter!"

Figgins did not reply.

"How dare you enter my house in this disgraceful condition, Figgins?" thundered Mr. Ratcliff, his eyes snapping as he regarded the champion of the New House. "With whom have you been fighting?"

Figgins set his lips hard, and would not reply.

"Answer me, Figgins!"

"I—I have been fighting—that's all, sir!" said Figgins quaveringly.

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip.

"Follow me to my study, Figgins!" he rasped. "I will see if I cannot thrash this matter out!"

He strode away, and Figgins, with a rueful look at his chums, followed the master.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn looked glumly after their leader.

Mr. Ratcliff was in one of his worst moods, and things boded ill for the champion of the New House.

"Now, Figgins," said the Housemaster, when he and Figgins were alone in his study. "What explanation have

you to give me of this—this disgraceful affair?"

Figgins looked hard at the master, and saw that he would only make matters worse by keeping back the truth.

So he decided to make a clean breast of the story.

"We—myself and a few other fellows, went over to Wayland Heath to see the fair," said Figgins in a slow, but measured voice. "Among the other shows, there was a boxing-booth, and the boxer employed there challenged anybody to stand up to him for ten rounds

"Ah!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "I have heard of such disreputable shows. There was a monstrous stipulation also made, I presume?"

"Ye-es, sir," said Figgins. "Ten pounds!"

"Go on!" said Mr. Ratcliff acidly. "I suppose you accepted the challenge for the purpose of gaining the ten pounds?"

"No, sir, I did not!" said Figgins hotly. "I should never have dreamed of fighting in public, had not the boxer insulted us. He was a boaster, and—he thought too much of himself, so I took him on, just to show how St. Jim's fellows can stick up for themselves!"

Mr. Ratcliff sneered.

"That's all very plausible and noble, Figgins," he said. "Did you succeed in this—this disgraceful encounter?"

"Yes, I knocked him out in the sixth round, sir," replied Figgins spitefully.

"And took the ten pounds prize-money—ch?" sneered Mr. Ratcliff.

"I did not, sir!" exclaimed Figgins, his eyes flashing. "They offered me the money, sir, but I refused it!"

Mr. Ratcliff looked sharply at Figgins.

The narrow-minded Housemaster was by no means a sportsman, neither did he trust his pupils. Were this not so, he would have taken Figgins' word at once.

But Mr. Ratcliff had ever disliked the healthy young leader of the juniors, and was always ready to visit his spleen upon him whenever he could.

He was a distrustful and suspicious master, and the most unpopular at St. Jim's.

"You refused the ten pounds, Figgins?" asked Mr. Ratcliff. "Do you expect me to believe that you, a junior boy, refused the offer of ten pounds?"

"Yes, sir," said Figgins indignantly.

"I told you just now I did not fight for the money. The rascal insulted us St. Jim's fellows, and for the honour of the school I accepted his challenge and licked him!"

"Do you know, Figgins," rasped Mr. Ratcliff, "that you have committed a serious breach of discipline? What would Doctor Holmes say, were he to know that a boy from St. Jim's engaged in a public boxing encounter, in a common boxing-booth, for money?"

Figgins clenched his fists hard.

"I didn't!" he cried. "I did not fight for money!"

"Turn your pockets out, Figgins," said the distrustful Housemaster. "If prize-money is brought to light, I shall take the matter before the Head!"

Figgins flushed angrily, but turned his pockets out.

First the contents of his inside pocket were divulged, and his pocket-book examined by Mr. Ratcliff. Figgins had a ten-shilling note there, but no more.

Then Figgins plunged his hand into his right-hand pocket, and his fingers encountered something there that rustled.

Wonderingly he drew it out, and as his glance alighted upon a crisp, rustling banknote, he gave a cry of amazement.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, his

thin face lighting up with triumph. "A banknote!"

The note fluttered from Figgins' nerveless fingers, and was instantly seized upon by the Housemaster.

It was a Bank of England note for ten pounds, grimy and soiled, but quite genuine.

"Well, Figgins?" rapped Mr. Ratcliff, his eyes glinting as they scrutinised the amazed junior.

Figgins found his voice at last.

"I—I didn't!" he cried. "It's not mine! I didn't take the money! I—"

Mr. Ratcliff gave a mocking laugh.

"How do you account for the presence of the note in your pocket, then, Figgins?" he sneered.

"I—I don't know!" cried Figgins, racking his brain for an explanation. "The man must have put it there himself—"

"That is unlikely, Figgins," interposed the master. "Here is evidence that you, a boy in a junior form, fought in a disreputable boxing-booth with a professional boxer for money. Such a thing for a schoolboy is unprecedented. It is a disgrace to St. Jim's. Such a crime as you have been guilty of, Figgins, can mean only one thing—instant expulsion from the school."

Figgins looked staggered at Mr. Ratcliff, but the master silenced him with a wave of the hand.

"Not another word, Figgins!" he snapped. "As it happens, Dr. Holmes is away, paying a visit to the vicar of Wayland to-day, and will not return until to-morrow morning. As soon as he returns, I shall place this disgraceful matter before him. Pugnists are not fit companions for boys of this school, and I shall recommend your removal at once."

"But I—I didn't!" cried Figgins desperately. "I know nothing about it! I refused the money!"

"Silence!" rapped Mr. Ratcliff spitefully. "You will kindly leave this study, Figgins, and remove, as far as possible, those revolting traces of your disgraceful combat. You will hear from me again this evening, and from Doctor Holmes in the morning!"

Figgins, without a word, turned to the door. He knew that it was no use arguing with the malicious master.

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes, gleaming with spiteful triumph, followed him to the door, and a smile lurked about the thin mouth of the master as the door closed behind Figgins.

It was a situation such as Mr. Horace Ratcliff enjoyed.

He had always been "down" on Figgins and his chums, and now he realised that he had scored heavily.

Figgins was met by Kerr and Fatty Wynn in the passage outside.

They noted Figgins' woebegone face, and anxiously inquired the result of the interview.

In quiet, tense accents, Figgins acquainted them with what had transpired. His two chums stared blankly at their leader.

"Figsy!" burst out Fatty Wynn in horror. "It isn't true!"

"It is true!" said Figgins dully. "The note was in my pocket, but I didn't take it. I swear I didn't!"

Kerr frowned perplexedly.

"How on earth could it have got there?" he said.

"I don't know!" muttered Figgins, his brain in a whirl at the amazing turn events had taken. "Ratcliff says the Head will expel me to-morrow!"

"Oh, Figsy!"

Fatty Wynn looked at his leader almost with tears in his eyes.

"They can't touch you!" he stammered. "You didn't take the money, Figsy. I won't believe—"

"But the note was in my pocket, and I—I fought for the ten pounds!" said Figgins miserably. "Everything's against me! I shall be expelled!"

They moved down the passage towards their own quarters, all three wrestling with gloomy thoughts.

"Figsy!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Let's go and tell Tom Merry. He—he might help—"

"He can't help me," said Figgins. "I've got nobody to prove that I didn't take the money when Jenner offered it to me in the dressing-room. Nobody else was there, and—oh, it's horrible!"

Gloomily they descended the New House steps, and made their way over to the School House.

They found Tom Merry, Manners, and

No. 10 for a few minutes longer, but, as there was nothing more to be said, they took their departure, leaving Tom Merry & Co. as concerned over the affair as they themselves were.

They realised how black things looked for the hero of the New House.

And Figgins, on his way back to the New House, felt uneasy for the morrow, for he knew how serious was the accusation levelled against him.

CHAPTER 4.

In the Tolls.

BY bed-time all St. Jim's was buzzing with the news.

George Figgins, the second best junior boxer at the school, had fought at a common boxing-booth, and taken ten pounds' prize money.

Fellows like Racke and Crooke sneered, and gloried in the news.

With unaccustomed righteousness they said that a taint had been placed on the old school by Figgins' action; that the loss of prestige could only be atoned for by the expulsion of Figgins.

In bed that night, when all others were asleep, Figgins lay and brooded over his misfortune.

In his overwrought condition he had listened to the relentless gibes of Crooke, and fellows of his kind.

He tossed about in bed, from one side to another, the one thought uppermost in his brain being what the Head would say on the morrow.

"I must find out how the note came in my pocket! I must—I must!" muttered Figgins. "Jenner put it there as I went out!"

He sat up in bed, turning over this idea in his mind.

Figgins was ever a hasty, impetuous youth, and he acted on the spur of the moment now.

"I'll go over and find out if he did!" he muttered, springing out of bed.

"I'll find out if he did put the note there, and then it will be all right if he says he did. I can't be expelled for the fight alone."

With this idea in mind, Figgins dressed himself in the darkness of the dormitory. Nobody else was awake, and he got into his clothes, and walked out without making any noise.

The passages were dark and deserted. Figgins knew his way, and, proceeding with infinite caution, he went downstairs. From the box-room it was an easy matter for him to gain the quadrangle, and a minute or two later he was speeding towards the gloomy old elms of the cloisters.

It was a moonlight night, and the old school was bathed in mystic radiance. As Figgins gained the cloisters, the clock in the old clock-tower tolled eleven.

Figgins did not hesitate.

He climbed a tree that was always used in cases of such emergency. From the lower branches he was able to swing upon the school wall.

It was a ten-foot drop to the road the other side; but Figgins managed it. His body was still sore from the results of his fight that afternoon; but he cared nothing for his hurts.

He sprang to his feet, and, keeping well within the shadow, he sped down Rylcombe Lane.

Ten minutes later he struck out into Rylcombe Wood, and began his journey in the eerie stillness of the thick trees.

Nobody was astir, and the only sounds he heard were those of the wind through the trees.

The other end of the wood bounded Wayland Heath, and Figgins, emerging from the wood, sped across the moor in the direction of the fair.

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No. 40.—MARIE RIVERS.



The St. Jim's nurse. Liked and respected by all. She is the particular friend of Talbot, who was a member of the famous Angel Alley gang, of which Marie's father was the leader. John Rivers is now a reformed character, and Talbot one of the best. Attempts have recently been made to kidnap Marie by Jim Dawlish, one of the old gang, but Talbot has gallantly saved her on each occasion.

Lowther in their quarters in Study No. 10, and Fatty Wynn blurted out the miserable story.

The captain of the Shell whistled in consternation.

"My hat, Figsy!" he exclaimed. "Ratcliff ought to be—"

"He ought to be boiled in oil!" burst out Fatty Wynn tearfully. "Only a rotten cad like him would have disbelieved Figsy's word, and made him turn out his pockets."

Tom Merry nodded gloomily.

"But the Head isn't such a rotter," he said. "Wait till to-morrow, Figsy, and tell the Head everything. We can bear witness that you refused the ten pounds in view of the audience."

Figgins shook his head miserably.

"It's a trick!" he muttered. "That rascal Jenner put the tenner in my pocket!"

"But what was his object?" asked Monty Lowther. "He didn't look the sort of fellow to chuck a tenner away."

There was no reply to this.

Figgins and his chums stayed in Study

His head was aching, and he hardly knew what he was doing.

His set purpose, however, was to reach the boxing-booth manager, and get from him the truth of the banknote.

If only he could prove that he did not accept the note of his own free will, then his good name was cleared.

Soon the bulk of tents and marquees came in sight, and Figgins could see furtive figures of belated men moving about, and horses pawing, tied to caravans.

Several curious glances were cast at the schoolboy as he hurried between the caravans in search of Paul Jenner's boxing-booth.

At last the familiar erection came in sight, and he could see one or two of the ring attendants moving about.

He approached one of them, and asked for Mr. Jenner.

"Over in that caravan," said the man, indicating a caravan near by. "You'll find the gun'vor there."

He cast a squinting glance at St. Jim's junior as he turned away.

Figgins mounted the steps of the caravan, and knocked at the door.

The heavy voice of Paul Jenner bade him enter, and Figgins, throwing the door open, strode in.

By the light of an oil-lamp, he discerned the corpulent figure of the showman seated before an oil-stove, a cigar in his hand.

The stuffy interior of the caravan reeked with the fumes of tobacco and spirits.

Jenner gave a start as he recognised Figgins, and rose from his chair.

"Evening, my lad!" he said, with a chuckle. "So you've come for a job! That's a good boy!"

"I haven't come for a job!" panted Figgins. "I've come to find out how that ten-pound note came into my pocket!"

The showman gave a burly laugh. "So anxious as all that, young 'un?" he asked. "You 'avem't come to give it me back, surely?"

Figgins clenched his fists, and looked with glistening eyes at Jenner.

"No, I haven't come to bring it back," he said. "A master at my school found it, and I—I've got into trouble over it."

Jenner elevated his eyebrows in surprise.

"Got into trouble for 'aving a tanner!" he exclaimed. "Why, you earned it!"

Figgins smiled bitterly.

"Yes, that's just the trouble," he said. "Fellows at our school are not allowed to fight for money in public, and, unless I can prove to my headmaster that I didn't take the money, I—I shall be expelled."

"Kicked out—eh?" mused the showman, looking cunningly at Figgins.

"Well, my lad, wot of it? I've made you an offer! You are just the sort of young feller I've been looking for! You'd make your fortune as a boxer, let me tell you. I can give you ten quid a week—ten pounds a week, mind you! Why not chuck schoolin' for, what good it does you, and enter this 'ere boxing business with me?"

"I—I can't!" said Figgins. "Look here, Jenner, did you put that note in my pocket?"

Jenner chuckled.

"Yes, I did," he said. "You see, I'm anxious for you to work for me, my lad, and I thought that maybe you was frightened of the money. So I jest put the tanner in your pocket without your knowing it, so's you'd find it later, and want more—see? And you know where more is to be got. I can

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give you one of them tenners each week, just for doin' what the Brummer does. You'd make your name and fortune, my lad, and—"

"You—you put it in my pocket!" broke in Figgins eagerly. "Oh, good! You can prove I didn't willingly take it!"

Jenner looked narrowly at Figgins.

"I might prove it!" he said. "Wot 'appens if I don't prove it?"

"I'll be expelled—turned out of the school in disgrace!" cried Figgins. "They think I boxed in public especially to earn money!"

"Well, well, old son," said the showman, blowing out a cloud of cigar-smoke, "that would jest fit in with my designs, nice. You get turned away from the school, and have nowhere to go, and no means of gettin' a living, so you'll come to me—eh?"

"But I sha'n't be turned away now!" said Figgins. "You can prove—"



"I prove nothin'!" said the showman flatly. "Suppose I tells the 'eadmaster that you took the ten quid from me in the dressin'-room? I guess the old chap would believe I showed it in your pocket just to get rid of it—eh?"

Figgins stared at the showman in horror and dismay.

"You—you cad!" he blurted out. "You don't mean—"

Jenner nodded.

"I want you in this show, my lad," he said suavely. "You could be very useful to me—more useful than Brummer, who's gettin' sulky since you licked him this afternoon. That's why I put the tanner in your coat-pocket; but that's between you an' me. I wouldn't tell no one else that, not even your 'eadmaster. Better make the best of it, my lad, and stay 'ere with me."

"You rotter!" panted Figgins. "You—you—"

"No fancy names, please!" said the showman, with a wave of his fat hand. "I mean to treat you well, take my word for it. I want you badly, and that's why I'm acting to you like I am. But just enter into this thing with me, my lad, and see if we don't get on all right together. Just think of it—ten quid a week, and you'll be starred as the coming champion light-weight of the world! Why, there's thousands of youngsters as would be only too glad of the chance to make fame and fortune!"

Figgins sank down into a chair, staring mechanically at the complacent Mr. Jenner. His bewildered brain could hardly grasp the drift of the man's remarks. He did understand, though, that the proof he sought would be denied him; that Jenner would allow him to be expelled from St. Jim's next day.

"Think it over, sonny!" said Mr.

Jenner, laying a fat hand on Figgins' knee. "Don't go back to be kicked out of school! Stay here with me, and have a comfortable time. We're shifting to-morrow night, and our next stop is Abbotsford, ten miles away. If you like, you can change your name, and nobody would find you. I reckon you could write and let your parents know you was all right, and making a mint of money."

Figgins looked dazedly round him. The exertions of the afternoon and evening were now beginning to tell upon him. He was overworked, and had a deadly fear of being expelled before the school. He shrank from the ordeal of the morning, when Mr. Ratcliff would give evidence against him, when the Head would hear that he fought in a common boxing-booth, among disreputable men, for prize-money.

He strove to fight against the lassitude that came over him, but failed.

His head sank forward, clasped between his hands, and the leader of the New House juniors at St. Jim's groaned in anguish of mind and spirit.

"Cheer up!" said Mr. Jenner reassuringly. "Take a drop of this!"

He held a glass of spirit to the boy's lips and forced it down.

Mechanically, Figgins swallowed the burning spirit, and it seemed to send fire into his head.

His brain reeled, and, not knowing what he did, he gulped down more of the potent brandy.

"There!" chuckled the showman. "That will put you right, my lad! Now, lie down 'ere, and 'ave a good sleep!"

But Figgins was already nodding. He sat there in the chair, his head bowed, his brain on fire.

Somebody else entered the caravan, and squinted at the huddled figure of the St. Jim's schoolboy.

"S's run away to join us, Snake!" chuckled Jenner. "I've frightened 'im into it. A bit of luck for us, this! 'E'll raise the fallen fortunes of Paul Jenner's boxing-booth—eh?"

The man addressed as Snake squinted again, and grinned.

"'E played a Jimmy Wilde game this afternoon, an' no mistake, boss!" he said. "But what will the Brummer say?"

"Brummer can go an' 'ang!" snorted the showman. "He let me down this afternoon, and I told 'im that if I could get this youngster to take 'is place 'e'd have to take a back seat!"

"Crumbs!" grinned the other. "I guess the Brummer won't stand that, boss! Backfired by a schoolboy! Oh, crumbs!"

Paul Jenner chuckled and took a long pull at his cigar as he looked at the huddled figure of Figgins in the lamp-light.

"The kid's got some spirit down 'im, and we'll work 'im into our ways all right," he said. "It either means that, or bein' kicked out o' school in disgrace for public boxing. The kid's nerve is all gone, an' I guess he'll choose the easiest way. Give 'im a dose of dope, an' 'e'll be safe as 'ouses full morning!"

CHAPTER 5. The Shadow of Doubt.

CLANG, clang, clang!
The rising-bell at St. Jim's, plied by Taggles, the porter, tolled out upon the crisp morning air, arousing boys and masters from their slumber.

In the Fourth Form dormitory in the New House Kerr was the first one awake. "Tumble up, Fatty!" he called to Fatty Wynn, who was snoring energetically, curled up like a ball.



Snake entered the caravan, and squinted at the huddled figure of Figgins. "E's run away to join us, Snake!" chuckled Jenner. "I've frightened 'im into it. 'E'll raise the fallen fortunes of Paul Jenner's boxing booth—eh? (See Chapter 4.)

Fatty awoke with a grunt.

Kerr himself jumped out of bed and looked towards Figgins' bed, meaning to give a cheery greeting to his unfortunate chum.

He fell back in amazement when he saw the bed empty.

"Mum-my word!" ejaculated the Scotch junior, rubbing his eyes.

"Figg's gone!"

Every boy in the dormitory stared at the vacant bed and crowded round it, gazing at the tumbled sheets and blankets in stupefied amazement.

"Chowle, the black sheep of the New House, set up a cackle of laughter.

"He's bolted!" he sneered. "Goody-goody Figgins has done a bunk! Shows he was guilty, and— Yow-ow-ow!"

He broke off as a heavy boot, propelled by a strong, unerring arm, smote him on the chin.

Fatty Wynn had thrown the boot, and Fatty was wide awake now.

"You cad!" hooted the indignant Fatty. "Say that again and I—I'll wipe up the floor with you!"

Chowle nursed his injured chin, and growlingly subsided.

Conservation and dismay was written across the faces of those who were Figgins' chums, and Figgins was popular with nearly everybody in the New House.

"It—it's unbelievable!" exclaimed Dick Redfern. "Figg can't have run away from Ratty!"

Kerr's face was haggard as he turned away.

"Well, he's not here!" was his comment. "Goodness knows where he is! Figg does things on impulse, you know, same as he did when he tackled that rotten boxer yesterday. Oh, I don't know what to think!"

Fatty Wynn's face was a picture of dismay.

"Figg wasn't frightened!" he said. "I won't believe Figg was guilty of taking the tenner, and has bolted in the night just to avoid being expelled by the Head this morning!"

The New House juniors looked dubiously at each other.

In the face of circumstances, they had to agree that things looked black against their leader.

"Let's get dressed—quick!" said Kerr quietly. "I think I know what's happened. Figg went back to the boxing-booth last night, to—to—"

"To what?" asked Redfern miserably. "He said the manager offered him a job there."

"He wouldn't do that," said Kerr, shaking his head. "I can't think why Figg should want to see the rotten show again, but as the trouble started there, I reckon that's where he's gone!"

The boys dressed in silence. A cloud of doubt and suspicion seemed to have settled on the room.

They were not all dressed and washed when the door opened, and the thin

features of Mr. Horace Ratcliff looked in.

His green, glinting eyes scrutinised the room, but he did not see the boy he sought.

"Where is Figgins?" he demanded curtly.

There was an oppressive silence.

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes seemed to emit fire.

"Kerr!" he rapped out. "Where is Figgins? Answer me, boy!"

"I don't know, sir," replied Kerr quietly.

"What!" almost shouted the House-

master.

"I don't know, sir," repeated Kerr. "His bed was not occupied when we awoke this morning."

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes searched one and then another, but he could see that Kerr had spoken the truth.

"The depraved young rascal has absconded!" grated Mr. Ratcliff at length.

"He has run away from the punishment he feared would be meted out to him this morning!"

"He hasn't!"

The words came from Fatty Wynn like a pistol-shot, and the Housemaster wheeled round and faced Fatty, his face working spasmodically.

"Wynn! How dare you!" said Fatty committed no crime, sir!" said the Welsh junior stoutly.

"He didn't accept the ten pounds, although the note

was found in his pocket, and I don't care what you say!"

Mr. Ratcliff seemed to choke. His sour temper was sorer than ever at the disappointment of finding his victim gone.

He had intended keeping Figgins under strict personal surveillance until Dr. Holmes returned from Wayland.

"He—he is not hiding in here?" gasped the master. "You are not aiding him?"

"W know nothing, sir!" interjected Kerr firmly, "except that Figgins fought for the honour of St. Jim's yesterday, and that he did not fight for money!"

"Very well!" said the master, bestowing a baleful look upon the boys. "Dr. Holmes shall be summoned immediately, and the young rascal shall be found and brought back to receive the justice he deserves!"

With that the master rustled away, leaving more like an angry hawk than ever.

He left the dormitory in a commotion. Returning to his study, Mr. Ratcliff went over to the telephone and lifted the receiver. He asked for a Wayland number, and in five minutes was connected.

"Hallo! Is that the vicar's house? St. James' School speaking. May I speak to Dr. Holmes?"

The voice of a servant came over the wires, saying that Dr. Holmes had just arisen, that he was having breakfast, and that he would call him immediately.

Soon the Housemaster was talking to the Head of St. Jim's, and he gave the doctor the blackest account he could of the events which had led up to the disappearance of George Figgins.

Dr. Holmes replied that he would return to St. Jim's immediately. He hoped to be there by half-past eight.

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes were glinting maliciously as he replaced the telephone-receiver.

He meant to suggest a flogging as well as expulsion for the unfortunate Figgins when he was found.

Meanwhile, the news had spread all over the school, and fellows stood in groups in the corridors and in the quadrangle, discussing the strange disappearance of George Figgins.

The only explanation they could offer was that Figgins, being guilty, had run away to avoid the ordeal of expulsion.

There were a few, like Chowle, Clambs, Racke, Crooke, and Mellish, who gloried in this supposition, and preached it far and wide.

Tom Merry & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. and other decent fellows of the School House, refused to believe the worst of Figgins.

Tom Merry met Kerr and Wynn, looking utterly miserable in the cloisters after breakfast, and they discussed the matter together.

"I'm sure Figgys must be at that show, somehow," said Kerr, who was famous for his shrewdness. "And I'm going to make up a party to go over there after lessons this afternoon. If Figgys is there we'll soon rout him out!"

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry readily. "We're with you, old chaps! Figgys isn't the rotter Ratty accuses him of being, I do know that!"

"Hear, hear!" said Fatty Wynn, casting a grateful glance at the captain of the Shell.

"I say, you fellows——"
The voice of Baggy Trimble, the fat new member of the Fourth, broke in, followed immediately by the appearance of Baggy himself.

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"I say, you fellows!" he began breathlessly. "What do you think?"

Baggy's little round eyes were rolling, his face was red and excited, and he was panting in his eagerness to tell some great news.

Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins' two chums looked at Baggy, hope lighting up their faces.

"Has Figgys been found?"

"Nunno!" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Worse than that! The Head's just arrived. He was walking home from Wayland, through the wood, when he was attacked and robbed. And who do you think attacked and robbed him?"

The other juniors stared at Baggy Trimble blankly.

"Who?" blurted Fatty Wynn.

"Figgins!" said Trimble.

Kerr and Wynn nearly fell down, whilst the eyes of Tom Merry & Co. nearly started from their heads.

"Who?" gasped Tom Merry, grasping Baggy Trimble by the arm. "Did you say Figgins?"

"Yes!" screeched Baggy Trimble excitedly. "Leggo my arm, Tom Merry! I've heard the news—everybody knows it now! The Head was attacked by a St. Jim's fellow at half-past eight this morning. And the only St. Jim's fellow out was Figgins!"

The thunderstruck juniors stared at Baggy aghast.

"I'm not spoofing!" said Trimble. "Honour bright—I heard it from Kildare. It was one of our chaps, dressed in Etons, and a St. Jim's cap on. He took the Head's gold watch and pocket-book! Ratcliff's opinion is that Figgys ran away and had no money, so he waylaid the Head and robbed him, just to get some cash!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Kerr. "Is that what Ratcliff says? If Ratcliff said it in front of me, I'd knock him down!"

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther.

"But everybody thinks the same!" said Baggy Trimble eagerly. "Who else could it be but Figgins? And Ratty collared the ten-pound note Figgins had yesterday! Oh, my word! What's St. Jim's coming to?"

Baggy Trimble, having imparted the startling news to Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins' chums, scampered away.

The boys in the cloisters looked at each other in dumb amazement for a few minutes.

"Well!" breathed Tom Merry at length. "If—if Figgins was abroad this morning, he—he can't be at the boxing show!"

Kerr's face seemed to have aged since Baggy Trimble told them the unbelievable news.

"I—I won't believe Figgys did it!" he muttered. "Unless—unless Figgys was mad!"

They left the cloisters, and met scores of excited fellows in the quadrangle. The news that Baggy Trimble had told them was true. A St. Jim's fellow had attacked and robbed the Head. And again the shadow of suspicion was on Figgins!

CHAPTER 6.

The Dopers Doped.

GEORGE FIGGINS awoke with an aching head, and a horrible taste in his mouth.

He stared about him with heavy eyes at first, then he sat up.

He was in the caravan, and he remembered dully what had happened the previous night.

Then to his astonishment he discovered

that his school clothes had been taken from him, and in their place some other clothes—rather shabby, but quite tidy—had been substituted.

"Oh, my head!" groaned the St. Jim's junior. "What are they saying about me at St. Jim's, I wonder?"

He shuddered, and rose to his feet. He was unsteady, and grasped a chair for support.

Then he became aware of voices speaking outside, and he listened intently, for he recognised one of the voices as that of the boxer he had defeated yesterday—Brummer Bert.

"Yus, it was a bit of all right, my boy!" the man was saying. "A gold watch and a pocket-book with seven quid notes inside! And in broad daylight, too—haw, haw, haw!"

Figgins started as he realised that the rascally boxer must have robbed somebody and relieved his victim of a watch and pocket-book.

"Good disguise, too, Brummer!" came the voice of Figgins now recognised as that of Snake, the squint-eyed ring-attendant. "Yer didn't show yer face, did yer?"

"Betcher life I didn't!" said Brummer. "The old man was too scared to move! Haw, haw, haw! I've got the tucker safe in me pocket, and I reckon it'll fetch ten quid at least. Solid gold it is, and inscribed!"

"Let's have a look at it, Brummer!" said the other.

After a pause, the voice of Snake could be heard muttering admiringly as he evidently examined the watch.

"Yus, it's a presentation watch, too!" he said. "Let's see wot it says."

Presented to Dr. Richard Holmes, M.A., D.D., by the Fellows of the Royal Society of Ancient Research, as a mark of their esteem and gratitude. December 25th, 1901."

"Crumbs!" chuckled Brummer Bert. "The old chap looked like a clergyman, or one of them clever guys!"

Figgins heard every word that was said, and his breath came in great jerks in his amazement.

"My only hat!" muttered the St. Jim's junior. "The Head's been robbed! How on earth did Brummer Bert manage it?"

Then he remembered that Dr. Holmes had been staying the night at Wayland, and would most probably have hurried back to St. Jim's that morning when he became acquainted with the news that a boy was missing.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" breathed Figgins under his breath. "He must have waylaid the Head this morning, and robbed him! Oh, if only I could get the stolen goods back!"

Figgins' eyes gleamed with a new light as this idea occurred to him. His amazement on discovering that the Head of St. Jim's had been robbed had driven the dizziness and pain from his head, and Figgins was now quite calm and collected.

"If I could escape, get the watch and pocket-book back again, and return to St. Jim's with them!" mused Figgins, his heart beating wildly, "the truth would come out, then, and everything would be all right! My word, I wonder if I can work it?"

Heavy footsteps sounded outside, and Figgins recognised them as belonging to Paul Jenner.

Figgins promptly laid down again, and he had hardly composed himself and shut his eyes before the fat showman himself entered the caravan.

"Still asleep!" he chuckled. "Ho! Snake!"

At the call the squint-eyed Snake entered.

"The kid's still dosing," said the showman, indicating the prostrate Figgins. "I reckon we'll give 'im another dose of dope, for safety's sake, and keep 'im in dreamland until we get out of this neighbourhood. We are sure to 'ave a gang of those schoolkids poking round 'ere to-day, and this youngster mustn't be found—see?"

"Right you are, boss!" grinned Snake, squinting down at Figgins. "E don't look much of a schoolboy now, does 'e?"

He pointed to the clothes that had been placed on Figgins while he slept.

Jenner looked swiftly at Snake. "I didn't order you to change 'is clobber," he said. "What the blazes did you do it for?"

"Oh, Brummer thought it would be the safest way, guv'nor!" replied Snake evenly. "Brummer's got the kid's clothes 'ere. We 'ad a fine lark with 'em this mornin'—they fit Brummer a treat, an' 'e looked a puffish schoolkid in 'em—haw, haw haw!"

Figgins' eyes flickered open for a moment, and he regarded the fat showman intently.

He saw, in some surprise, that evidently Jenner knew nothing of the robbery that Brummer had committed that morning.

"Well," said Paul Jenner, "it don't matter much, only don't let Brummer go gadding around in public with the schoolkid's togs on, else they might run 'im back to the school, in mistake for the real 'un. Then I guess our trouble will 'ave been taken for nothin'. Where is Brummer?"

"Gone down to the town to get some booze up, boss!" replied Snake. "'E won't be a few quid at nap with some of the boys early this mornin'!"

Figgins' heart beat wildly. If Brummer were walking alone to Wayland, then Figgins, once he could break clear from the clutches of the showman, could overtake him on the road and tackle him alone without having a hornet's nest of rascals around him.

"Well, 'e won't be wanted till dinner-time, so it's all right," said Jenner. "Now, let's dope this youngster, and shove 'im in the compartment under the floor. A little prick with the syringe will do the trick, and 'e won't wake till some time to-morrow."

He crossed to a shabby wooden cabinet, and drew forth a small glass syringe. This he charged with a colourless liquid from a bottle, and handed the syringe to Snake.

"In the arm," he said suavely. "No clean, honest boxing promoter should be without a drop of dope. Haw, haw, haw!"

"Snake grinned, took the syringe, and approached the prostrate schoolboy.

Neither the showman nor his assistant had the faintest suspicion that their victim was playing possum.

Figgins watched Snake approach from beneath his half-closed eyelids. As Snake knelt down and leant forward with the syringe in his right hand Figgins suddenly sprang into life.

He landed an upper-cut on the man's jaw that sent 'im reeling backwards. Figgins grasped the syringe before the man dropped it.

"You young whelp!" shouted Jenner, his face livid. "You—"

But!

Figgins charged head-first into the man's ample waistcoat.

Jenner went floundering back, and Figgins, with a deft movement, inserted the pin-prick end of the tiny syringe in

his flabby wrist, and pushed the little plunger half-way.

"Doped by Jove!" chuckled Figgins. "Now for you, Snake!"

SNAKE had struck his head on the side of the caravan as he fell back from Figgins' magnificent upper-cut, and was just dazedly sitting up as the junior went over to him and treated him to a dose of the dope.

SNAKE blinked round him bewilderedly for a couple of minutes. Then, with an incoherent gasp, he sank back, as if asleep.

Figgins chuckled in high glee as he stood up, surveying the two precious villains on the floor of the caravan.

"I reckon they're both in dreamland!" he chuckled. "Blowed if I know how much dope I've given 'em; but they'll wake up some time, I expect. Anyhow, I'll refill the syringe, and set out after Brummer Bert. If I can dope that merchant I shall save myself a fight."

Figgins cheerfully recharged the syringe, and placed it carefully in his pocket. There was some rope in the caravan, so, in order to make doubly sure of his captives, he spent five minutes binding them.

The key was in the door of the caravan, and Figgins locked it after he had got outside, and placed the key in his pocket.

Then, chuckling softly to himself, and feeling as gay as a skylark, the hero of the New House of St. Jim's set out at a brisk pace for the high-road that led from Wayland Heath into Wayland itself.

His clothes caused no comment among the other fair folk, most of whom were busy on their morning jobs.

Figgins broke into a run as soon as he was well away from the vicinity of the caravans and tents.

"Now for the last giddy act!" he murmured, as his long, lanky legs sped forward. "I'll recover the Head's watch and pocket-book, and return to St. Jim's a hero, instead of an outsider!"

CHAPTER 7. The Prodigal's Return.

"O H, it's rotten!"

Thus spoke Fatty Wynn of the New House at St. Jim's.

Morning lessons were over, and the school had just finished dinner. Lessons, as a matter of fact, had been a farce, and nobody had enjoyed dinner. Everybody was full of the startling events of the last twenty-four hours.

The masters themselves were worried, and paid little heed to the inattention of the boys.

Everybody felt relieved when they were free to go into the fresh air.

Fatty Wynn, Kerr, Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen were in a group before the tuckshop.

Even Fatty Wynn had no eyes for the tuckshop that afternoon.

He was worrying over the fate of his chum, and wondering how the fiasco would end.

"It's beastly!" growled the Falstaff of St. Jim's. "The Head's in an awful tantrum, and the police are looking for Figgys. The police—after Figgys!"

"It's like a horrid nightmare!" said Redfern dully.

Kerr dug his hands deep into his trousers-pockets.

"What gets my back up," he said, "is the way that cad Kaceliff takes it! He's always been down on Figgys, and now he's rejoicing. When I see him strutting about, smiling to himself, I feel as though I'd like to punch his nose for him!"

The others nodded sympathetically.

Just then Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the elegant swell of St. Jim's, came up with Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby.

All four were looking gloomy and downcast.

"Isn't it wotten, deah boys?" said Gussy gently. "Fway accept my sincerest sympathy. I assure you I feel as troubled o'ah the affair as youah-selves! It's jolly hard luck, and I wufuse to believe that Figgys is guilty of any of the charges made against him!"

Kerr grinned faintly.

"Thanks, Gussy!" he said. "We all feel the same, I think. But it will come all right, I hope."

"'Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy cheerfully. "E'werythin' comes all wight in the end, deah boys! But a fellaah can't help feelin' troubled, can he? I dare say I should go off my wockah if such a thing happened to Blake, f'winstance."

Jack Blake glared at Gussy, and Herries and Digby grinned.

"I'll knock your blessed rocker off for you in a minute!" growled Blake.

"W'eatly," said Gussy, as he made a complimint to deah boy, said Gussy pacifically. "But what I weally came to suggest, Kerr, is that I should interview the Head and point out to him what an egwiegious ewwor he is makin' in suspectin' old Figgys of anythin' wotten. As a fellaah of tact and judgment, I considah—"

"I'm afraid you'd do no good, Gussy, thanks all the same!" said Kerr. "We shall have to wait and see, as that political fellow remarked, and hope for the best. I think I'll make a party up, after all, and go over to Wayland Heath and interview the boxing showman. I've still got an idea in my head that Figgys went there."

"Not a bad idea, Kerr!" said D'Arcy. "Shall we ask Mr. Walton to give us the afternoon off so that we can go in search of Figgys? None of us feel like work, but Jove!"

"H'm!" said Blake. "There's something in what Gussy suggests. Come on, you chaps, we can but try!"

The party of juniors moved off from the tuckshop and across to the gates, where they saw Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, Talbot, and Clifton Dane standing.

Blake told the Shell fellows what they proposed doing, and Tom Merry voted it a good idea.

"We'll fetch Figgys back if we do find him," said the captain of the Shell. "He can tell us his story. Oh! Mum-my hat!"

Tom Merry broke off and stared at the school gates like one in a dream.

The others turned also, and they blinked in amazement at what they saw.

A figure had come dashing in at the gates—a figure attired in rough tweed garments. He wore no hat, and his hair was ruffled. His face was flushed and smiling. And Fatty Wynn cried for joy when he recognised the new-come.

"Figgys!"

Fatty Wynn dashed forward towards the fellow who had entered the gates. He was none other than George Figgins, the missing schoolboy!

"Figgins!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Figgys, you bawdy!"

"Cheer-ho!" cried Figgins.

"The prodigal son's returned! And, by Jove, here's the prodigal!"

Fatty Wynn almost fell upon Figgins' neck and hugged him as the hero of the New House hugged his watch.

"But Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, screwing his nose into his eye and surveying Figgins. "Figgys, deah boy, it's weally you!"

"Rather!" grinned Figgins, disengaging himself from his chums' embrace.

"Been wondering where I'd get to."

The St. Jim's juniors looked at Figgins curiously.

"Figgys!" exclaimed practical Kerr. "Where on earth have you been? Do you know who's happened?"

"Yes, rather," chuckled Figgins. "The Head was attacked and robbed by Brummer Bert this morning, and relieved of his ticker and pocket-book."

"Brummer Bert!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Who else did you think did it?"

"Why, they—they thought you did it!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Yes!" gasped Figgins. "A chap in Eltons and school cap attacked the Head and—"

"Whew!" whistled Figgins. "No wonder he pinched my toes!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Kerr suddenly. "You don't mean to say that you went over to the show last night, got captured by Brummer Bert, and he pinched your clothes, and robbed the Head in 'em, to make it appear that you did it?"

Figgins nodded. "That's about the size of it," he said. "Although I did not realise till just now that the Brummer had masqueraded in my clobber when he attacked the Head. My word, the chap's got his knife in me, and no mistake! Gather round, chaps, and I'll explain what happened last night!"

They gathered eagerly round, and Figgins told them how he had run away from the school in order to ask Jenner whether he had placed the note in his pocket, how Jenner had insinuated that he would not give the evidence in Figgins' favour, and how he had played upon his overwrought nerves to remain in the caravan that night.

"He must have made me half intoxicated," said Figgins. "Anyhow, I got rid of the headache when I woke up. They were going to dope me, but I woke up before they thought I should, and played possum for a bit. I turned the tables on 'em properly, and gave them a dose of their own dope. I left the fat showman and his boss-eyed servant asleep, and trussed up like chickens in their caravan, and then I set out after Brummer, who was on his way to Wayland to get some drink. I caught him up just on the outskirts of Wayland town. I just jumped on his back, like the Old Man of the Sea, and gave him a dose of the dope in the neck. He buckled up like a punctured balloon, and then I went through his pockets. I've got the Head's ticker, and his pocket-book with me now!"

"My aunt!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Figgys, you're a corker!"

"And what happened then?" gasped Fatty Wynn, devouring his chum's words with eager ears.

"Well, a policeman came up then, and asked me what the dickens I was up to, dopping a chap in the street. So I just explained, and he took Brummer away on a stretcher. Then the inspector sent two men over to the caravan, and they got Jenner and Snake. Snake came away from the police, and the inspector says that they mustn't revive the trio and make old Snake a mess. They're going to fry 'em later, too, although I don't believe he knew about the robbery, and he's sure to get me out of the scrape by making a clean breast of the whole business. I reckon I ought to be jolly good of myself, you know, to have a chap like him taking so much trouble to secure my services. Ten quid a week, mind you—sounds all right, doesn't it?"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

By this time a vast crowd had collected round Figgins, whose quaint attire was the subject of much speculation.

"Well, I reckon I'd better go and see the Head," said Figgins. "He'll jump for joy when he gets his ticker and the pocket-book back. And the police-inspector at Wayland is going to make clear the other part of the business for me!"

Tom Merry & Co., and Figgins' chums looked at him in breathless wonderment.

"What did I tell you?" chirruped Fatty Wynn joyfully. "Oh, Figgys, you are a giddy wonder!"

"Go on!" grinned the lanky-legged junior. "I guess Ratty is going to receive a bit of a shock, anyhow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorried Dick Redfern & Co. in high glee.

Figgins pushed his way through the admiring crowd, and made his way over to the School House.

Many fellows stared blankly when they met him on the way, but Figgins smiled sweetly at them, and proceeded to the Head's study.

He tapped at the door, and the deep voice of Dr. Holmes bade him enter.

CHAPTER 8.

Ratty is "Done!"

"FIGGINS!"

Doctor Holmes gazed in amazement at the curious figure that walked into his study. Two other masters were there, and they, too, rose to their feet and looked blankly at Figgins.

They were Mr. Horace Ratcliff and Mr. Raiton, the Housemaster in the School House.

"It's me, sir!" said Figgins cheerfully, though ungrammatically.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, darting a venomous look at the junior. "He has the effrontery to—"

"Pray allow Figgins to give us his explanation, Mr. Ratcliff!" said the Head tartly. "Figgins was it you who attacked me this morning and took my property?"

"No, sir!" replied Figgins. "It was a fellow who changed clothes with me. You see, I haven't regained my clobber yet."

Mr. Raiton smiled as he saw the peculiar look on Mr. Ratcliff's face.

Figgins groped into his capacious pockets, and withdrew two articles, which he placed on the table before the Head.

"Your watch, sir, I think!" said Figgins. "And your pocket-book!"

Dr. Holmes started back in amazement as he looked first at the recovered property and then at Figgins.

Mr. Ratcliff was frantically chewing at his moustache.

"These—these are certainly mine, Figgins," said Dr. Holmes. "How did you obtain them?"

"I think I had better start at the beginning of the yarn, sir," said Figgins. "You have heard Mr. Ratcliff's story, I dare say, but I think, perhaps, you would understand it better were I to give you details!"

Mr. Ratcliff choked, and Mr. Raiton coughed in a frantic endeavour to conceal a laugh.

"Go on, Figgins!" said the Head.

Whereupon Figgins related everything that had happened on that memorable afternoon when he accepted the Brummer's challenge, and knocked him out.

"As I told Mr. Ratcliff, sir," said Figgins. "I did not fight for money, and refused the ten pounds prize money offered me. Mr. Ratcliff seemed to know that the ten pound note was in my

pocket, and made me turn my pockets out, and the note was there. He must have been gifted with second sight!"

"You—you—you—" choked Mr. Ratcliff.

"Proceed, Figgins!" said Dr. Holmes quietly.

Figgins told why he had left St. Jim's that night, intending to return after having the proof that he required. He told of the treachery he had met with, and how, that morning, he had turned the tables on the trio, and recovered the missing property.

"All three are now in the Wayland Police Station, sir!" he concluded.

And as soon as the inspector has revived them from the dope he's going to make Snake confess, and will ring you up and let you know what transpires."

Dr. Holmes drew a deep breath as he looked at Figgins over the rims of his spectacles.

"You acted very foolishly last night, Figgins," he said sternly. "You should have relied upon my discretion and sense of justice in the morning. As you have always appeared to me to be a boy of exceptionally good character, and of an honest, open nature, I should have believed you. In any case I should certainly not have expelled you."

"No-no," said Figgins, and he looked at Mr. Ratcliff, who was scowling. "Mr. Ratcliff promised to recommend expulsion for me, though." He said I was a disgrace to St. Jim's!"

"Am afraid Mr. Ratcliff acted hastily, Figgins," said the Head, looking severely at the Housemaster. "Mr. Ratcliff, you will no doubt be pleased to apologise to Figgins for the—er—harsh words you used."

Mr. Ratcliff gulped, and found some difficulty in speaking for a few minutes. When he did speak, his voice was harsh and bitter.

"I believed Figgins guilty of a base swindling breach of rules," said Mr. Ratcliff, striving hard to contain his wrath, "and I cannot retract any words I may have used. In the first place it was wrong of him to engage in a pugilistic encounter—"

"It was a fair boxing contest, sir!" broke in Figgins. "And, besides, the boxer whom I fought insulted St. Jim's fellows, and for the honour of St. Jim's I fought him."

"And, Dr. Holmes, I quite approve of the course Figgins took under the circumstances," said Mr. Raiton, looking kindly at Figgins.

"Ahem!" coughed the Head. "I should certainly have stopped the fight had I been there. However, as Figgins has shown himself a brave lad, and quite unworthy of the suspicions Mr. Ratcliff entertained of him, without actual proof I shall—er—you, Mr. Ratcliff, to apologise to Figgins," he added, turning to the New Housemaster.

Mr. Ratcliff looked malevolently at the hero of the New House, and stammered out a clumsy apology.

"Thank you, sir!" said Figgins sweetly. "I trust you will never have cause to mistrust my word in future."

What Mr. Ratcliff might have replied is unknown, for at that moment the telephone-bell rang, and the Head answered it.

He was engaged in conversation for a few minutes, and then, when he laid the receiver upon its hook, he turned with a beaming smile to Figgins.

"The police-inspector at Wayland has corroborated your story, Figgins," he said. "He mentioned that the three men you—er—rendered unconscious, have not been reformed, and that the Brummer's confederate has confessed. The proprietor of the boxing-booth admits he

detained you last night, and also admits that he placed the ten-pound note in your pocket as an incentive to you to—go back to him for more. All three are being detained to come before the magistrate, when justice will be meted out to them. Figgins, you must be hungry, so you had better go to the matron and ask her to prepare a good meal for you."

"Thank you, sir," said Figgins cheerfully. "I suppose I'd better change first, though?"

"Ye-es, Figgins," said the Head, with a smile. "You may go!"

And Figgins went, noting with great satisfaction that Mr. Ratcliff was squirming.

Figgins was met by a resounding cheer from scores of youthful throats as he stepped into the passage.

Instantly he was seized in the strong grasp of Kerr, Fatty Wynn, Tom Merry, and Jack Blake, and whirled precipitately along the passage.

"Groooh! Leggo, you chumps!" gasped Figgins. "What's the merry game?"

"Gussy's planked down a fiver to stand you a feed!" cried Fatty Wynn, his eyes dancing with enthusiasm. "Come on, Figgy, you've got to have the feed of your life!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The food's all weedy in Study No. 6, deah boy. It's neatly fough o'clock, so we'll have tea early, bai Jove!"

"Hear, hear!" chorled Monty Lowther. "Bring the giddy hero along, chaps. We

didn't celebrate his victory yesterday, so we must make up for lost time."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Figgins suffered himself to be carried along in triumph to Study No. 6. Lessons were forgotten that afternoon.

They gave Figgins no time to change his clothes. He was planked down in the place of honour at the head of the table, and tea was prepared.

It was a feast for the gods. Even in such expensive times a fiver goes a long way, and the table, to use the novelist's favourite expression, groaned under the weight of the goodly viands thereon.

Nearly everybody joined in the revelry, and the masters, hearing the noise, smiled knowingly and turned a deaf ear.

Fatty Wynn excelled himself that afternoon at the festive board, but for once he had a rival in George Figgins, who had so successfully won through the Shadow of Doubt.

THE END.

"Fighting for the Fags!"

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THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Jim Quinton of the Sixth Form at Harwood's, Bigglesdale, by the will of John Quinton, his father, is to succeed to a great position at Karradon in Africa. A great deal of mystery is attached to the position which John Quinton really held; but he is supposed to have been almost as powerful as the king himself. Mr. Matlock, the late John Quinton's solicitor, makes known details of the will to Jim Quinton, who at once decides to carry out his father's wishes. He is then introduced to Tim Daly, Erik, and Nijellah, a negro, who are to be his servants.

In their presence the solicitor hands to Jim a sealed packet of papers, which John Quinton had left solely for his son's perusal.

Jim has enemies in Dillon Braester, another Sixth-Former at Harwood's, Braester senior, Cyrus Kerzon, and a fellow named Flaxman, who call themselves the Karradon Syndicate. An attempt by Dillon Braester to obtain Jim's private papers fails. Next day Braester junior leaves the school on his father's orders.

At a meeting of the Syndicate it is decided to kidnap Jim, and a forged message calls him to interview Mr. Matlock in the village near the school.

Jim's chum, Dick Willoughby, wishes to join the party, and decides to follow Jim to the village to obtain permission from Mr. Matlock.

(NOW READ ON.)

Foul Play!

WILLOUGHBY was still in his flannels; but time was too precious to bother about dress, and he slipped on a scarf and overcoat, jammed a cap on his head, and rushed off. Dick Willoughby had the reputation of being a very cool, collected sort of fellow, but just at present he was as excited as a young terrier on its first chase. Instead of a dull year of relation-hunting and courses of stupid lectures, a wonderful journey of adventure was looming before him. There was no time to waste!

He ran the whole way down the drive, and still kept up a jog-trot when he turned into the main road to Bigglesdale. The light was beginning to fade; but presently he fancied he could see Quinton's form right ahead of him, and he put on an extra spur.

A big car had apparently stopped by Quinton. Willoughby could not quite see what happened, but as he came nearer he thought for a moment that there was a fight taking place. It was only for an instant, however, and the Sixth-Former imagined that he was mistaken, for the car was already moving on again.

Probably that was why he failed to see Quinton. He had doubtless passed on while the people who had stopped and

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jumped out of the car to ask his advice had very quickly got back again.

In another twenty seconds the car came past Willoughby at a fair pace. It was a big grey roadster with closed-in body, and instinctively Willoughby stopped his running for a moment or two while it passed. Perhaps because he had connected it in some way with Quinton, he noted various details about it, and as it passed beyond him he caught sight of the number—LAD—1719—and it stuck in his memory.

Later he was to be thankful for that. At the time the whole incident was too uncertain to rouse any particular doubts in his mind, beyond that vague wonder as to what they asked Quinton, if, indeed, it had been Quinton.

This doubt increased a little as he began to run again. There was no sign now of anyone ahead. Every so often Willoughby put on a spur, but he did not overtake Quinton.

He told himself that he was getting jumpy when he reached the hotel. As he went along the entrance-hall to the little inquiry-office he could not help noticing the big man who stood by it, staring at a telegram which he held in his hand. He was staring at it when Willoughby entered the hall, and he was still gazing fixedly at the message when the Sixth-Former made his request to the clerk at the window.

"I want to send a message up to a Mr. Quinton, who's visiting Mr. Matlock here," Willoughby explained. "I think Mr. Quinton is here; he came a few minutes ago."

"Mr. Matlock's gone away, sir—" the clerk began, and just then the big man stepped forward and touched Willoughby on the shoulder.

"Who says Mr. Quinton has come here?" he asked.

"I was to meet him here," Willoughby explained. "He left the school about ten minutes before I did. I wanted to see Mr. Matlock or Mr. Daly."

"My name's Daly," the big man told him. "I'd like to have a talk with you, if you're a friend of Quinton's."

Very briefly Willoughby explained who he was, and gave a hint of the object of his visit. Tim Daly only nodded at this, but his face had taken on a more serious look as he listened to the Sixth-Former.

"You'd better come upstairs with me," Daly said at last. "Wonder where that chap Erik has wandered to? There's some game on here unless I'm mistaken. Mr. Matlock never sent any message to your Head for Quinton. He left here

this morning, in answer to a telegram from his partner. That's the wire I've just had from him."

He passed over to Willoughby the message which he had been so intent upon when the schoolboy came into the hotel.

"Telegram from my partner was a forgery. Suspect some trickery, and advise increased watchfulness. Returning to you earliest possible train."

"MATLOCK."

"What do you make of it?" Daly asked. "Matlock gets called away; young Quinton gets a message to come down here for seven, and you know he let's the school. Erik would be on to anything. But he ought to have left a message! He'd evidently left his room in a hurry. Let's go and look again!"

He jumped to his feet, and Willoughby followed him from the sitting-room to a small bed-room two or three doors further down the corridor. Apparently the occupant of the bed had been disturbed and risen hastily.

Daly looked about the room in a puzzled manner, but it was Willoughby who raised the first suspicion. "Queer sort of smell hanging round, isn't there?" he asked.

"Yes!" Daly jerked the word out. "I'm wondering—I'm getting a bit anxious, youngster! There's been too much—"

He broke off sharply as the door opened. A chamber-maid stood in the entrance, and there was a look of fear in her eyes as she stepped towards Tim Daly.

"Your man, sir," she began—"the little man you call Erik—"

"Yes?" Daly asked sharply, as she hesitated. "What about him?"

"He's in the other room, sir," she answered. "I don't know—but he looks very queer. He's asleep. But come and look at him, sir."

Both Daly and Willoughby followed her quickly. On the bed in the room to which she took them lay Erik, very quiet and still, and his face was an unnatural, ghastly white.

Daly bent down quickly, but a moment later turned to the maid.

"Send for a doctor quickly!" he ordered; and she went from the room at once.

"I think he'll be all right," Daly spoke more to himself than to Willoughby. "We'll wait till the doctor comes and reports on poor old Erik. Not often he's caught napping. I'm sorry!"

He turned to Willoughby.

"Can you send word to your Head?" he asked. "You said something about joining our party? I guess you can join us to-night, if you're game for a rough time. There's going to be no rest for us until we find Jim Quinton and get him safely aboard the Artemus. What do you say?"

"I'll come!" Willoughby answered quickly.

Nijellah to the Rescue!

UP to a certain point the plans of Kerzon and his helpers worked even more perfectly than they had expected.

Mr. Matlock went away in answer to the forged wire. Tim Daly and his African friend, Nijellah, went out for the afternoon as usual, and Erik was left a simple victim.

Then the message to the headmaster of Hamood's produced its exact result. They had been rather afraid that Quinton might have someone with him on his way to the village, but he appeared alone.

The two men inside the car called to him, and asked whether he could direct them to Frating—a place of which Quinton had never even heard. Naturally, he stepped up to the car, and the fact that one of the two men who got out slipped behind him while he spoke to the other man, was a detail which would not have been noticed by any normal Briton.

"I'm afraid I can't tell—" Quinton began courteously, but never finished the sentence.

A blow on the side of the head stunned him instantly.

In the hands of an expert a sandbag is a most efficient weapon. The man who had stepped behind Quinton had had previous experience in the art, and, within five seconds of speaking to the tall man, Quinton's limp form was being hastily pushed into the bottom of the car.

After that Quinton knew nothing. The whole episode, from the moment when he answered the call from the car to the time when the machine was moving on again, had occupied no more than eight seconds. Flaxman's faith in his experts was fully justified.

When at last Quinton awakened up, he found himself lying in bed in a dimly-lighted room which he did not recognise. He tried to sit up, but discovered that his right leg was apparently in splints, and securely bandaged. His head was aching dully, and his mouth was horribly dry and parched.

His attempts to move brought someone to his side. It was a man who seemed to be dressed in a white overall, and, as soon as he saw that Quinton's eyes were open, he stepped back for a moment, then brought a small glass, containing some liquid, which he put to Quinton's lips.

The drink was wonderfully refreshing, and Quinton felt grateful for it. But he still felt dull and stupid, with vague ideas about walking to Bigglesdale and meeting Mr. Matlock.

"What's happened exactly?" He spoke for the first time as the man took the glass from his lips. "What's this place? How did I get here?"

"You mustn't worry yourself at all, Mr. Quinton," the man told him quietly. "How are you feeling now? Better, I hope?"

"Oh, I'm feeling pretty fit, thanks!" Quinton answered cheerfully. "But I'd like to know more about it all. Is there anything wrong with my leg? It's all bound up, and I can't move it."

"It was injured in the accident," the

man told him quietly. "You shall hear all about it presently, but just now your first job is to get well again. Mr. Matlock knows all about it, and he is making every arrangement for you."

"I'd like to see him," Jim said quickly. "Will he be coming along?" "Presently." The man's voice was almost irritatingly quiet, and subdued. "But you must rest now."

He went away then, and Jim, lying on his back, and unable to move because of the splints on his leg, began to recall just what had happened before the accident which had brought him here.

All that he could remember, however, was that he had set out to go into Bigglesdale to see Mr. Matlock. Someone had called to him from a motor-car, and, as he was speaking to them, there had come a terrific crash. That was all!

voice that everything was well, and that Mr. Matlock would be coming soon.

Just how long this programme went on Quinton had no idea, but his impression was that days and days went by, and that nothing at all happened. Such little wants that were necessary were all supplied by the man who acted as his nurse. Once or twice he fancied that someone else came into the room, but at the time he was too sleepy to take any real interest in his visitor.

The first time Jim really noticed anything was when someone came excitedly into the room, and began to speak in quite a loud voice, giving orders to the attendant. At first he did not understand what was being said; but the newcomer's tone was so commanding and definite that it had the effect of rousing Quinton.



Quinton saw two figures rushing upon him. One of them was Dick Willoughby, and the other Nijellah. "Quinton!" "Quinton!" they cried. "Stick it, old son! We're here!" (See page 18.)

Jim kept quiet as long as he could, but he was very anxious to know more, and he called out at last. The man who had attended to him before came forward at once, and asked him what he required.

"I want to know more about myself," Jim answered. "What was this accident which knocked me out? How did it happen?"

"A motor-car came behind you," the man told him. "But Mr. Matlock doesn't want you to worry about it until you are quite well."

"I'm feeling fit enough," Jim retorted, and asked further questions.

His attendant was not to be drawn, however, and Jim had to abandon the attempt. Another small quantity of liquid was brought to him, but this time it was obviously medicine, to judge by its taste.

After that he dozed, and even when at times he awakened he felt curiously dull and sleepy, and was quite content to drift on without worrying over anything. Sometimes the man gave him something to drink when he awakened, and on these occasions he invariably assured Jim in a very quiet, yet insistent

"Carry him down on a stretcher!" the voice said harshly. "Give him another dose of that stuff before you do. Don't wait him to start coming round before we get him on board the yacht. He'll be safe there. You've got to hurry. Understand?"

"Yes, Mr. Flaxman," Jim's attendant answered. "We shall have no trouble with him."

For the first time since he found himself in this bed, Quinton's mind began to work beyond the mere desire to know where he was. It was as though a veil were being slowly lifted, and he began to remember details which had been forgotten.

The man who had been addressed as Mr. Flaxman gave further instructions before leaving the room. As soon as he had gone the attendant came over to Jim, whose eyes had closed again, and shook him gently. Without protest Jim took the medicine which was brought to him, but this time he did not swallow it.

Instead, he got rid of it quietly, but when someone else came into the room he pretended to be asleep again. As yet he had no clear idea of what he intended

to do, but he meant to keep awake and learn all that he could for himself.

A few minutes later he was lifted from the bed, and put on a stretcher. Jim half-opened his eyes as he was carried from the room, and down a flight of stairs. They passed through a wide and well-furnished entrance-hall, and here Quinton had a glimpse of a short, unpleasant-looking man, who seemed to be in charge of all arrangements.

"Don't waste too much time!" he commanded, as the stretcher was lowered for a brief space. "Those idiots have discovered this place, and will be round here with the police before long. They'll find they've made a mistake, then. Get along now!"

Again the stretcher was lifted and carried outside. To Quinton it was good to breathe the fresh air again, and it acted on him as tonic. New ideas began to jump into his mind, and the old contentment to lie still and do nothing was falling from him. He wanted to be up and doing, and if it had not been for his leg he would never have hesitated.

As it was he opened his eyes again and looked round him. A covered car was standing just at the foot of the steps, and they put the stretcher down again for a time while the interior was prepared for the patient's reception. The sound of the engine gently running free made a queer impression on Jim Quinton. He was going on a journey again; but he knew nothing about it, and he resented that fact. Somehow he was going to find out more about this performance.

Having come to this decision, he made an effort to sit upright. At that same moment another sound reached his ears. It was the noise of a powerful car which emitted a sharp honk! honk! on its horn. It came so suddenly and powerfully that instinctively Jim turned, despite his splinted leg.

He was now resting on his elbow, half-raised on the stretcher, and, as he twisted round, he saw the big car beyond straight for him. There were cries from the men who were getting ready to put Jim in the stationary car; there was the grinding of the brakes, hastily applied, of the moving car, and then it seemed that everyone was shouting out.

To Jim Quinton, still bemused a little by his recent experience, the next few seconds were utterly confused and chaotic. The two men who had carried him from the house suddenly tried to lift the stretcher, and one of them half-pushed and half-struck him when he realised that Jim was trying to sit up.

"Get down!" he commanded; and then to the man at the other end: "In with him—quick!"

That roused every ounce of fighting spirit within Quinton. Just what the situation was he did not know beyond the fact that the man who had forced him down was his enemy. He made a mighty effort, and struggled up again, then used his hands to pull himself round.

The first result of this action came swiftly and unexpectedly. The man in front of Jim lost his grip, and the next second the stretcher had fallen, Quinton himself lurching forward and putting out his hands to save himself.

As he raised himself from the ground he heard his name being yelled out: "Quinton! Quinton! Stick it, old son! We're here!"

He saw two figures rushing upon him. One of them was Dick Willoughby, who

was grasping a stout stick in one hand, with which he was slashing about him furiously.

The other figure Jim caught sight of in that first moment was a big African native, and Quinton recognised him as he reached him. It was Nijellah, still dressed in frock-coat and wonderfully white collar, and even in this wild moment Jim saw some three inches of spotted cuff, for Nijellah's arms were outstretched in the manner of a wrestler's preparing for a grip.

"Bazar! Bazar Quinton!" Nijellah's voice was more of a shriek than a call of recognition; and before Jim could utter the greeting that was on his lips he was seized under the arms and swung upwards.

Quinton had never been regarded as a light-weight, but the ease with which Nijellah apparently carried him over his shoulders was something to marvel over. From his position Jim could not see a great deal of what was happening; but he imagined that everyone was calling out at once, and heard one voice, quite near at hand, giving quick commands.

"Put him in the car, Nijellah! Watch him, ank! Looks as though his leg is injured. Go gently! Now, sergeant, what's the move? Right-ho, Willoughby! Got to the car!"

A few moments later Quinton was being gently lowered from Nijellah's shoulders, and it seemed to him that half a dozen hands were on him, laying him with great gentleness on one of the seats, his legs stretched out before him. He caught sight of Erik, looking more serious and earnest than ever, and then Dick Willoughby bent over him.

"Are you feeling all right, old son?" Willoughby asked, and Jim felt inclined to laugh at the note of anxiety in his chum's voice. "Your leg—What's wrong? It's not hurting you, all this moving?"

"Not a bit!" Quinton made an effort to speak; but he felt horribly weak and tired, and his eyes would insist on closing despite all his efforts to keep them open. "I'm quite all right, Dick!"

But his eyes closed again, and as they did so he heard the voice which had given earlier commands speaking again.

"We'll get away at once. The others can follow later on. How is Quinton?"

"He's pretty nearly knocked out at present, Mr. Daly," Dick Willoughby answered. "Hope we've not damaged his leg."

"I hope not!" Daly answered fervently; and in a louder voice called out to the driver as he himself climbed on board the car: "Right ahead now! But drive carefully!"

The Chase Begins.

BY the end of that journey Jim Quinton had completely recovered from his temporary attack of faintness; but Willoughby, who sat opposite him, was inclined to adopt the attitude of his late attendant, and told him to keep quiet for the time.

"I'll tell you the whole yarn when we get to the Croxford Hotel," Willoughby assured him. "Mr. Matlock is there, and he'll be jolly glad to see you! There's a lot to talk about."

At the hotel, they carried Quinton to a private room, and a doctor was sent for immediately. He asked Jim a few questions about the injured leg; but the patient could tell him nothing, and in the

end the medical man proceeded very cautiously to find out for himself.

The others stood round waiting for his verdict, and the doctor turned to them at last, with a little smile of perplexity playing about his lips.

"It's very extraordinary!" he told them, and there was a touch of irritability in his tones. "There's no sign of any injury. The leg is as sound as can be. Probably a little stiff from being bound up so tightly. How did you get the impression that it was broken?"

It was Tim Daly who talked to the medical man and satisfied him that they were just as much in the dark as he was. The doctor went on with his examination after that, feeling Quinton's pulse, testing his heart, and asking odd questions, which Jim answered to the best of his ability.

"There is absolutely no injury whatever!" the doctor announced at last. "The patient is very weak at present; but that's due to lack of food, and, I imagine, some sort of sleeping-draught which is still making him feel heavy and tired. Two or three days of careful feeding will put him all right. I'll send you a tonic now."

"Is he fit to travel?" Tim Daly asked the question quickly.

"If you look after him—yes," the medical man answered. "Don't let him overdo things. But he's as sound as a bell, and will soon shake off the effects of whatever drugs he's had."

A short time later Jim was sitting up in a comfortable armchair, with Dick Willoughby near him. On the little table by Jim's side was a pleasant meal, carefully ordered under the doctor's advice, and the patient was showing excellent form in tackling it.

Mr. Matlock and Tim Daly had learned from Jim all that he was able to tell them, and now they had gone off to make further inquiries, which Dick Willoughby satisfied Quinton's curiosity regarding the adventure in which he played such a passive part.

"But we've had an exciting five days!" Willoughby told him. "It's now Tuesday, and you performed your disappearing trick last Thursday evening."

"Is it five days since I left Harwood's to see Mr. Matlock?" Jim asked in astonishment. "What happened? But go on! I'll listen to the whole yarn without interrupting."

Willoughby told him everything, from the time when the Head gave him permission to go on the voyage if Mr. Matlock agreed, to the moment when, standing up in the car as they came up the drive, Willoughby had caught a glimpse of Jim Quinton struggling to rise from a stretcher.

Old Daly was frightfully sick about it when he found that he'd simply disappeared. The only thing we had to go on was my idea that I'd seen you in front of me, and thought you stopped near the car. And I happened to remember the number of that car—L A D—1719.

"Mr. Matlock came along, and he started a hunt for the car. They traced it to a big garage in London, and we all came up. Then it seemed as though we were up against a brick wall, because the owner of the motor simply said he'd hired it out for two days to a certain man at a particular address. But there wasn't any such address, and they couldn't find anyone with that identical name."

"They had the police on the job, of course, and I think they rather fright-

ended the garage man. Anyway, he admitted in the end that the car had really been hired by a fellow called Flaxman—or he'd paid for it, which was the same thing.

"Flaxman?" Quinton repeated the name, and recalled when he had heard the name before. "That was the name of the man who came into the room I was in. Who is he?"

Willoughby shook his head. "I can't tell you exactly," he answered. "But he's rather an important sort of person, though Tim Daly says he's an out-and-out scoundrel. Still, the police were a bit afraid of tackling him, and when they did he soon satisfied them that he'd hired the car for some important business of his own, and knew nothing at all about you. It began to look as though my little clue was going to be a wash-out."

"But it wasn't?" Quinton asked. "Not a bit! Mr. Matlock got a friend of his, who is a very high-class sort of private detective, and only touches big cases, to take the thing up. I can't tell you all that he did, but he had this chap Flaxman watched night and day, and he himself eventually followed him down to this place, Whewell House. Mr. Matlock, Tim Daly, and I have been rushing all over the place, until late last night we got a message from the detective to come down to London."

"We came bright and early this morning, and met the detective chap at this hotel. He's a fine fellow, Jim! Just as he was telling us all that had happened, and how he knew for a certainty you were at Whewell House, a queer, dark little chap came in and made for the detective at once. I had my school cap on, and when Flaxman saw that he just turned and bolted."

"Why?" Quinton asked, as Willoughby passed to give proper effect to that particular point.

"He didn't recognise the others at first, so the detective said. But when he saw my cap he must have jumped to the idea that we were after you, so Bruff, the detective, says. We got busy at once, and Bruff managed to get two of the police to come along with us. He'd already arranged about a search warrant and all that sort of thing. It's amazing the things you have to know and do in the detective business!"

"Sounds like it!" Quinton laughed, feeling very much happier now that he had finished his first decent meal. "And you came up after me at once?"

"We did! We got another car as well as the big one, and the whole lot of us except Mr. Matlock, came up to Whewell House as quickly as we could. We've left old Bruff and the police still there; but Mr. Matlock reckons that Flaxman will get out of it in some way, though he's going to bring an action against him somehow or other."

"I hope he does!" Quinton agreed. "What's going to happen now? Do you know?"

"I'm coming with you!" That's the most important item, old son! Tim Daly says they'll manage to fix up all the details somehow; but he's quite a pal of mine now. We've missed the boat we ought to have sailed by—the Artemus—and I think Mr. Matlock and Dale have gone out to telephone to London about the best course to take now."

The door opened at that moment, and the solicitor and Tim Daly came into the room. Both of them were looking much more serious than they had been when they went out, and Willoughby began to wonder if something else had gone wrong.

"How are you feeling now, Jim?" Mr. Matlock asked.

"Quite fit again, thanks!" Jim answered. "I'm ready to go anywhere or do anything—as soon as I can get myself into some decent clothes again."

He was still wearing the curious woollen sleeping-suit with which his late captors had provided him. Over it he now had an old dressing-gown supplied by the hotel.

"Yes, we shall have to get you some other clothes," Mr. Matlock said slowly. "You have no idea, of course, what happened to the suit you were wearing when you left the school?"

"I haven't," Jim admitted. "I was wearing this horrible affair when I first wakened up."

"And you had all those personal papers on you when you left the school, I understand?" Mr. Matlock went on. "I mean the papers I handed over to you on your birthday?"

Jim sat suddenly upright, as he remembered them. In the excitement of this morning he had never troubled about such trivialities as his own clothes, but Mr. Matlock's question brought back several important details to his mind.

"I had, sir," he answered quickly. "The message was supposed to come from you, and I had to be sure and bring the papers, the Head told me. I put them very carefully into my inside-pocket. Have you any idea of what has happened to them?"

Mr. Matlock did not answer, but looked at Tim Daly, as though expecting him to make the reply, or to throw some light on the matter.

"We've got a fairly good idea of where they are," Daly said, with a hint of bitterness in his voice. "I expect that bright friend of yours—Dillon Braester, I think they call him—is studying them very carefully—and on board the Artemus, too!"

Both Quinton and Willoughby stared at him in wonder. Willoughby knew, of course, of Braester's attempt to get the papers once before, but they had both

been inclined to regard it as an example of Braester's mean spite rather than a deliberate incident in a well-laid plot.

"But what on earth can Braester do with them?" Quinton asked at last. "They are my papers, and the information is intended for me alone. He cannot possibly make any use of them."

He broke off abruptly as he looked at Tim Daly. It was as though the big man had telegraphed his own thoughts to Quinton; for through the latter's mind there now ran swiftly a glimpse of the possibilities which might lie before Dillon Braester with those papers in his possession—and with Jim Quinton quite safely detained in England!

"I'm not thinking of the youngster so much as those who are behind him," Tim Daly answered slowly. "Flaxman is in it, and his crowd are evidently going to act quickly. They can make a lot of trouble out there, unless we can stop them!"

He turned to Mr. Matlock. "I think we'll overtake the Artemus at Marseilles," he said more quickly. "You'll attend to things at this end, and we'll get the papers back somehow! After that, I reckon we'll manage to deal with this fellow Kerzon and his friends, the Braesters."

"I think that will be the best plan," Mr. Matlock agreed. "We'll get some clothes for Jim first and then get up to London. The sooner you begin your journey the better."

An hour later the whole party was motoring back to London. On the following morning Mr. Matlock saw them off on the Channel boat-train. As he held Jim Quinton's hand just before the train moved out, the grip of the middle-aged solicitor suddenly tightened.

"Good-bye, Jim!" he said firmly, though it was obvious that he was making an effort to control his own feelings. "I wish I could come with you; but you'll have some splendid friends with you. You'll come back one day and tell me of your heritage. The best of good fortune!"

He looked beyond Jim quickly to Dick Willoughby, standing just behind Jim.

"I shall be seeing you before Jim, I expect!" he said, and laughed, as though to hide his real feelings. "You'll stick by him, I know. It's a big adventure—but you'll pull through!"

"We shall pull through all right, sir!" Willoughby cried cheerfully. "I'll come and see you when I come back!"

The train started slowly out, and Mr. Matlock stood waving his hand till the last carriage had passed round the bend, then turned and walked from the platform.

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