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THE SCHOOLBOY "PUG" GETS TO WORK!

(A Striking Incident from Our Grand Long Complete School Story, showing how Oliver Lynn dealt with Blake & Co.)

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Address all letters: The Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetsway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday
 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

My dear Chums,—Next Wednesday's copy of the "Gem" offers a treat to all readers. I always feel that I have not said half enough about the truly magnificent series of FREE GLOSSY REAL PHOTOGRAPHS, AUTOGRAPHED BY THE PLAYER.

FRED PAGNAM.

Now, next week you will find a superb portrait of Fred Pagnam, the famous sharp-shooting forward of Watford F.C. I am drawing very special attention to this prize photo because it is exceptionally good; worthy to figure in any gallery. You see the clear-cut features and manly turn-out of Fred Pagnam just as in life. I know this portrait will please you, every one of you, and I am proud to be able to offer you such a splendid "extra" with next week's issue of the good old "Gem."

"CARDEW'S FIGHTING CHUM!"

Martin Clifford scores again in this great story of St. Jim's. Don't forget the title,

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Now we come to a magnificent and intensely thrilling detective story. Anthony Sharpe, crime investigator, shows himself at the top of his form in next week's baffling mystery. There is abundant reason to congratulate the "Gem" on this fine series. Each story is a winner, but "THE AFFAIR OF THE STARING EYES" is certainly the most masterly bit of detective work ever

set down on paper. Sharpe has his setbacks, but he can be relied upon to solve the knottiest problem in the end, and this time he has to tackle a terrible mystification.

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This is the most vivid boatrace yarn I have ever read. The writer gets to grips at once. He knows all that a tense aquatic contest may mean, and the race, handled with such brilliant dexterity in this story, will be followed with breathless interest by everybody. It is a daring business altogether, and the plot is a fair starter. What's more, you find the vim and excitement of a great boatrace, the go and snip of it all, just as we all know and enjoy when an important event is on the way. "SPOILERS OF SPORT!" will make a fresh record for the "Gem." It is out and out good, and leaves you with an added zest, if possible, for good sport, and a sense of relief that plots formed to wreck a sound cause always find the right sort of opposition.

THE TUCK HAMPER!

Readers would do well to send in their Tuck Hamper entries on postcards. It is easy to stick the coupon to the card, and in every way the end is better served, for postage rates are still high. This is merely a hint pro bono publico, as it were. The great TUCK HAMPER feature remains, as ever, a tremendous draw, and the page of crisp and lively storyettes is not a thing to be overlooked.

OUR SERIAL!

Duncan Storm continues to carry forward the amazing adventures of the chums of St. Beowulf's. This fine story shows the celebrated author at his best. There are no dull moments when in the genial company of Wobby & Co., and the doughty Hobbs is a jewel. As a standing example of good temper under many trying conditions the much-worried conductor of the tour could not possibly be beaten.

Your Editor.

AN INTERESTING PHOTOGRAPH!



My best thanks go to Professor Julius Herman, of Volkshool, Graaff Reinet, South Africa, for the capital picture he has sent of an amateur theatrical company. The piece in which the talented troupe appeared was called "Eight Little Maids, the Bad Brother, and the Cross Father," and is a splendid tribute to the Companion Papers.

The characters represented in the photo, from left to right, are as follows:—Dr. Locke, Babs Redfern, Wally Bunter, Marcia Loftus, Mabs Lynn, Ernest Levison, Clara Trevlyn, Tom Merry, D'Arcy, Peter Hazeldene, Figgins, Wharton, Agnes White, Bessie Bunter, Marjorie Hazeldene.

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Joy, Doris Levison, Ethel Cleveland, Mr. Larry Lascelles, Marie Rivers, and Talbot.

The real names of the characters are:—Professor Eybers, T. Raubenheimer, Professor Julius Herman, N. Jansen, A. Steynberg, O. Copeling, E. Smith, R. Slabbert, E. Smith, J. Olivier, Professor Westhuizen, J. van de Berg, J. du Toit, S. de Vries, L. Scholtz, J. van de Berg, A. Pohl, Mr. Barnard, M. de Klerk, and A. Brunner.

The performance was given under the direction of Professor Herman, and Mr. Barnard.



A Most Remarkable School Story telling of Oliver Lynn's Hard Fight to Settle Down in His New Quarters at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

(Author of the grand stories now appearing in the "Popular.")

CHAPTER 1.

Nice for Study No. 6 !

"**B**LAKE! D'Arcy! Herries! Digby!"

Kildare of the Sixth called out the names one after another.

Four juniors of the Fourth Form paused on the staircase, and looked back as the prefect called.

Blake & Co. had just changed after a football-match, and were going up to tea—with a very keen appetite for tea. So they were not very pleased to hear their names called.

"Hallo!" called back Blake. "Anything wanted, Kildare?"

"Yes; you four kids."

"Oh, rotten!" grunted Blake.

"We are just goin' up to tea, Kildare!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Mr. Railton's study!" said Kildare crisply; and he walked away down the passage.

Blake & Co. turned back from the stairs. They looked glum. A summons into the Housemaster's study was never very welcome. Generally, it boded trouble.

"What the thump's up now?" grunted Herries. "Railton might have left it till after tea."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Blow Railton!" murmured Digby. "What the dickens does he want us for, at tea-time, too?"

Jack Blake gave an angry snort.

"Oh, I know! It's about ragging the Fifth yesterday. Railton's heard about it. Cutts or St. Leger must have told him."

"Bai Jove! But they started the waggin', deah boy."

"They won't have told him that!" grinned Digby.

"I vegwed them as wottahs, then!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly. "I considah—"

"Oh, come on!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"It won't make it any better if we keep Railton waiting, fathead!"

Blake & Co. proceeded to the Housemaster's study, not in a cheery mood now. That little "rag" on the Fifth had been justified—more than justified, from a junior point of view at least. But there was every probability that the Housemaster's point of view was quite different. There never was any telling how a Housemaster might look at a matter. Housemasters were, at best, unreliable merchants.

"Come in!"

Study No. 6 entered. Blake and Herries and Digby had made up their minds to go through it as cheerfully as possible. But Arthur Augustus had a gleam in his noble eye behind his eyeglass. Arthur Augustus intended to argue the point.

"I have sent for you—!" began the School Housemaster, as the four juniors came up to his table.

"Yaas, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "We know why you have sent for us, sir."

Mr. Railton raised his eyebrows.

"I fail to see how you can know already why I have sent for you, D'Arcy," he said.

Blake made a sign to Arthur Augustus to be silent. But Arthur Augustus did not even see it.

"Pewwaps you will allow me to explain, sir," he said firmly. "Those wottahs—"

"What?"

"I vegwed vewy much, sir, to have to describe any St. Jim's fellows as wottahs. But they actually are wottahs, you know."

"D'Arcy!"

"It is quite true we wagged the studay," pursued Arthur Augustus. "We should not think of denyin' it for a moment. But I beg to point out, sir, that Cutts and St. Leger asked for it."

Mr. Railton looked hard at the swell of St. Jim's.

"You have ragged, as you call it, a Fifth Form study?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, sir!"

"D'Arcy, I—"

"They asked for it, sir."

"Cutts and St. Leger asked you to rag their study?" ejaculated Mr. Railton.

"In a mannah of speakin', of course, sir. They started the waggin'. We were bound to give them the lesson, sir, to show them that Study No. 6 will not take any cheek from the Fifth. Undah the circs— Yawoooooh!"

"Bless my soul! D'Arcy, what do you mean by uttering that absurd noise in my study?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Wow! Some wottahs twamped on my foot!" wailed Arthur Augustus, in anguish. "I am hurt! Ow!"

"Shut up, you ass!" said Herries, in a ferocious whisper.

"Weally, Hewwies— Ow!"

"My boys—" said Mr. Railton.

"Ow! If you tread on my foot again, Hewwies—"

"Shut up!" hissed Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "My boys, I have sent for you—"

"Yaas, sir. Pway excuse my intewwuptin'. If you will call Cutts and St. Leger of the Fifth, sir, I will—"

"Will you be silent, D'Arcy?" exclaimed the Housemaster.

"Yaas, sir. But—"

"I have heard no complaint of your apparently lawless proceedings in the Fifth Form passage—"

"Oh!"

"I have sent for you for quite another reason—"

"Bai Jove!"

That fact had already dawned upon Blake and Herries and Digby. But the dawning of a new thought was a slow process where the powerful intellect of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was concerned.

"I shall take no notice of your allusion to the matter, D'Arcy," said the Housemaster, with a severe glance at the dismayed swell of the Fourth. "You spoke apparently under a misapprehension—"

"Oh deah! Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Kindly do not interrupt me again. Now—"

"Vewy good, sir. I am sowwy I intewwupted."

"Be silent, please, Blake—"

"I was only expressin' my vegwed at havin' intewwupted you, sir," said Arthur Augustus mildly.

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"Silence!"
 "Vewy well, sir. I will not speak anothah word, sir, unless you address me personally. I considah—"
 "Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"
 "Bai Jove!"
 "Swish!"
 "Wow!"

"Now, perhaps, you will allow me to speak without further interruption," said Mr. Railton, with a frown.

"There was no 'perhaps' about it. Arthur Augustus remained silent, squeezing his palm in anguish.

"Now, Blake, I will tell you why I have sent for you. There is a new member of the Fourth Form to-day—Oliver Lynn. I have decided to place this new boy in your study—No. 6 of the Fourth."

"Oh!" gasped Blake.

Dismay fell upon the chums of the Fourth. This was worse than a licking for having ragged the study of Cutts and St. Leger of the Fifth.

"A—a new kid—" said Herries.

"In our study!" ejaculated Digby. "I—I say, sir, we—we're four already in Study No. 6."

"I am aware of that, Digby."

"There's only three in Study No. 2, sir," murmured Blake. "I—I dare say Trimble and Mellish and Wildrake would like—"

"I have decided upon Study No. 6," said the Housemaster. "Oh, very well, sir!"

"I trust, my boys, that you will give Lynn a welcome to your study," said Mr. Railton. "I have my reasons for placing him among you. Lynn is a ward of Colonel St. Leger, the father of St. Leger of the Fifth Form. He is a boy of very good character; but, owing to certain circumstances, he suffered under great disadvantages in his early upbringing."

"Oh!" said Blake blankly.

"You will find him somewhat different from the usual run of St. Jim's boys. I trust this will make no difference to your welcome of him."

"Oh!"

"Lynn has many disadvantages to struggle against," said Mr. Railton. "You boys, I am sure, will not add to his burdens."

"Bai Jove! Certainly not, sir!"

"It is because I have a very high opinion of your characters that I have decided to place Lynn in your study."

"Oh!"

"Hem!"

"I am sure that my confidence in you will not be misplaced," said Mr. Railton. "I am sure that you will do everything you can to smooth this boy's path at St. Jim's. You will remember that you have had advantages that he has never had, and so you will make allowances for any little peculiarities you may discern in him."

"Oh!"

"That is all, my boys," said the Housemaster, with a rather doubtful look at the juniors. "You may go!"

And Study No. 6 went—with feelings too deep for words.

CHAPTER 2. Hard Cheese!

TOM MERRY cracked his second egg in Study No. 10 in the Shell, with a thoughtful frown upon his boyish brow.

Manners and Lowther were looking thoughtful, too. They had heard a motor-car glide away on the gravel path to the gates, the sound apprising them that Colonel St. Leger was gone.

The old gentleman had departed, leaving behind him Oliver Lynn, the new junior in the School House.

The arrival of that new junior was a matter, as it happened, of the keenest interest to the Terrible Three of the Shell.

That was quite unusual. As a rule, new boys might come and go, unseen and unnoticed, never for a moment disturbing the lofty serenity of such important youths as Tom Merry & Co.

But this particular new boy was a singular exception.

St. Leger of the Fifth had asked Tom Merry to give the new kid a helping hand in his first days at St. Jim's, and that had first drawn Tom's attention to his unimportant existence. But that was not all—far from all. Tom Merry's brows were wrinkled in deep and puzzled thought on the subject of the new boy.

"It seems impossible!" he said, for about the twentieth time. "You're quite sure, Lowther?"

"Fathead!" was Monty Lowther's reply.

"It beats me, if it's true!" said Manners. "Sure it wasn't only a giddy resemblance, Monty?"

"Ass!" said Lowther politely. "I tell you I saw the Chicken in the boxing match on the film at Wayland, and it

was the same chap—that same kid that we saw arrive in the car with Colonel St. Leger. Oliver Lynn is the giddy pugilist!"

Tom Merry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"It's hard to believe!" he said. "It seems too thick. But, in any case, we'd better say nothing about it outside this study. If the kid's keeping it quiet, we don't want to give him away."

"Oh, that's so, of course!" said Manners.

"Quite!" agreed Lowther. "But there isn't any doubt about the fact. The newspaper said that the Chicken was retiring from the Ring. And he's retired from the Ring to come here as a giddy schoolboy. It's as surprising as you like, but it's true."

"Queer that St. Leger's father should be sending him here," said Manners. "Why the thump should the old colonel pick up a kid pugilist out of the Ring, and send him into the Lower School at St. Jim's?"

"Ask me another?" said Lowther. "Some relation, I suppose."

"But the St. Legers are no end rich. If the kid's a relation, why should the old gent leave him kicking around in boxing-booths for a living, and then suddenly pick him up?"

"Goodness knows!"

"If it wasn't a mere resemblance—" began Tom Merry.

"It wasn't!" exclaimed Lowther rather excitedly. "Do you think I haven't any eyes in my head?"

"Well, if he's the same chap—"

"No 'if' about it—he is the same chap!"

"Well, then, he's the same chap," said Tom soothingly.

"Right-ho! Let's keep it to ourselves, unless the kid himself talks about it. Not a word to anybody!"

There was a knock at the door of Study No. 10, and it opened, to reveal Blake & Co.

"Trot in!" said Tom Merry hospitably. "You're late!"

"Sowwy, deah boy—"

"Better late than never. We've started," said Manners.

"Didn't you feel ready for tea after the footer?"

"You bet!" said Blake. "Railton wanted us."

"Oh! More trouble?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes. Rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus dismally, as he sat in the chair Tom Merry offered him, and accepted an egg from Lowther and tea from Manners. "Thank you, deah boys! I have always had a vewy high opinion of old Wailton—but weally—"

"He seems to have a giddy high opinion of us!" groaned Blake. "That's the trouble."

"Blessed if I see—" began Manners.

"Pass the grub, Gussy! I suppose you fellows have heard of a new kid that blew in to-day," said Blake.

"Lynn?" asked Tom quickly.

"That's the rotter!"

The Terrible Three exchanged glances. Oliver Lynn, the rather mysterious new boy at St. Jim's, had been the topic in the study a few minutes before, owing to the startling discovery Monty Lowther had made—or believed that he had made. That discovery, the Terrible Three had agreed, was to remain a dead secret—for the present at least.

"Rotter?" repeated Tom. "You've met the chap, then?"

"Not yet."

"Then how the thump do you know he's a rotter?"

"Yaas, that is wathah a stwong expression, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with mild reproof. "The chap is a feahful bothah, but I should not go to the length of callin' him a wotah."

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Blake crossly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"But what has the fellow done, if you haven't met him yet?" exclaimed Manners, in astonishment.

"Nothing!" growled Blake. "Only Railton's sticking him in our study in the Fourth! We're four in Study No. 6 now—or, counting Gussy's hats and neckties, it amounts to five—"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Now this rotter, this outsider, this—this blessed Lynn, is shoved in!" said Blake. "Old Railton spun us a yarn about being such nice boys that he could trust us with a new kid. Made of porcelain, I suppose. Mustn't be touched, or he'll break! Br-r-r-r!"

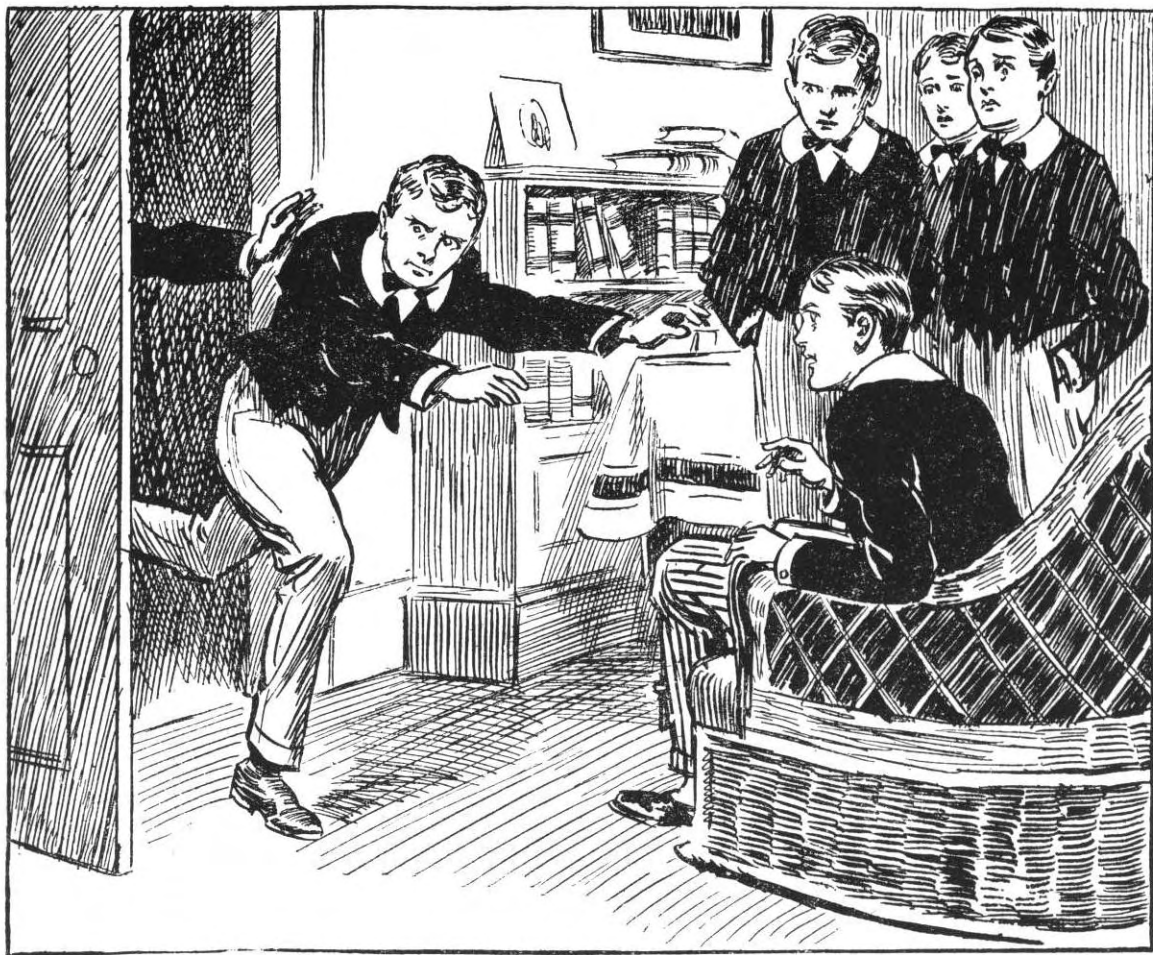
Blake helped himself to a second egg. Football had improved his appetite.

"It's rotten!" said Herries. "According to Railton, the new kid is some sort of a frightful outsider."

"Some horrid sort of bounder," said Digby. "I don't see that it's fair to stick him in our study. Of course, we should be decent to a new kid. But we don't want him in Study No. 6."

"Hard cheese!" said Monty Lowther sympathetically.

Tom Merry looked thoughtful. He had told St. Leger of the Fifth that he would do his best for the new fellow; and it seemed that Oliver Lynn was a somewhat queer customer,



Blake & Co. looked up as the door of their study was thrown open and Mellish looked in. "Your new study-mate, you fellows," chuckled Mellish. "Trot in, Lynn, old dear!" As Lynn entered the doorway, Mellish gave him a playful push behind, which sent him sprawling forward. "Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Mr. Wailton has no wight whatevah to plant this dweadful person on us!" (See page 8.)

who would be in need of kindness. If Lowther was correct, Lynn had spent a hectic boyhood in boxing-booths—a strange enough preparation for coming to St. Jim's. Evidently Study No. 6 had received an impression from the Housemaster that there was something decidedly unusual about Lynn. Tom Merry felt that a word in season, in the new boy's favour, would not be out of place.

"Well, he may be quite a decent chap," he remarked. "You may chum up with him all right."

"We don't want a strange dog in the kennel!" grunted Herries.

"Bai Jove! That is a wathah coarse way of puttin' it, Hewwies. But Hewwies is quite wight, you know."

"Railton oughtn't to have landed him on us," said Blake. "Four in a study is the full allowance. We don't want him especially if he's some queer customer."

"No fear!" said Dig.

"Well, it's not his fault, you know," said Tom mildly. "Railton can't have consulted him about his study."

"I know that, ass!"

"May be quite nice—"

"Oh, rot! How would you like to have him planted in your study, if you come to that?" said Blake warmly.

Tom Merry coughed. As a matter of fact, he would not have liked it at all. An Englishman's house was his castle, and the same applied to a schoolboy's study.

"Well, I suppose he's in the Fourth, as he's coming to you," said Tom, "so he couldn't dig with the Shell."

"Railton might make an exception, if you asked him specially," said Herries eagerly.

"Hem!"

"Um!"

"Fraid not!"

"Bai Jove, that's a vewy good ideah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You fellows go to Wailton and beg him to let you have the new chap heah, you know."

"I don't think!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"It's no good grouching," remarked Blake, somewhat soothed by toast and tea and new-laid eggs. "It's not the kid's fault. We'll try to be civil."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"But it's rotten," said Blake. "Breaks up the jolly old family circle, and all that. Besides, Railton says he's a queer customer."

"My hat! Did Railton say that?"

"Not in those words, ass! That's what he meant. We don't want any dashed queer animals in our study."

"Enough already," murmured Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Don't be a funny ass, Lowther!" said Blake. "Pass the jam. I say, we beat the Third this afternoon. It makes the junior team fairly irresistible when you Shell fellows keep out of it."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Where's the new kid now?" asked Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I know, or care. Lost, stolen, or strayed, I hope," answered Blake. "Haven't even seen him, and don't want to—Hallo, fatty!"

Baggy Trimble looked into Study No. 10. Baggy's fat and podgy face was wreathed in grins.

"Seen the new kid?" he asked breathlessly.

"Not yet. What's he like?"

"He, he, he!" chortled Baggy. "Oh crumbs! He's a corker!"

"What sort of a corker?" asked Tom Merry, with a frown at the fat Baggy. Baggy was evidently very much entertained by what he had seen of Oliver Lynn.

"Come and see!" chuckled Baggy. "He's on the stairs now. Oh crumbs! I wonder what St. Jim's is coming to? He, he, he!"

Baggy rolled away, grinning, and the seven juniors in Study No. 10 followed him—the Terrible Three very curious to see the new boy, of whom they had had only a glimpse so far—

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and Blake & Co. curious and uneasy. What sort of a merchant was it that Mr. Railton, in the kindness of his heart, and in his high opinion of Blake & Co., had planted upon Study No. 6?

CHAPTER 3.

The New Boy!

"H!"

Talbot of the Shell jumped.

That surprising hail fell suddenly upon his ears, and naturally it startled him. Talbot looked round quickly.

"Oh! New kid?" said Talbot politely.

Oliver Lynn nodded.

"Jest that," he assented.

Talbot looked at him. He saw a very sturdy, thickset fellow, with a round, bullet head, and little keen, sharp eyes and rugged features. The boy was in Etons, and his clothes were quite good, but somehow they had an ill-fitting effect. His mode of speaking was odd enough for a St. Jim's fellow, and his manner was a strange mingling of timidity and assertion. Talbot's expression, however, did not indicate that he found anything unusual or noticeable in the new fellow Talbot being a fellow whose manners were rather unusually polished for a Lower boy.

"Anything I can do for you?" he asked.

"Wot?"

"Give it a name," said Talbot, smiling.

"Know a bloke named St. Leger?"

"A—a what?" ejaculated Talbot.

"Bloke."

"A—a bloke! Oh! Ah! I see! Certainly! Do you mean St. Leger of the Fifth?" asked Talbot.

"I s'pose so. Anyhow, I mean St. Leger," said the new junior. "Bloke who spoke to me when I came in the car with the old gent."

"I didn't happen to see you arrive in the car with the old gent," said Talbot politely. "But St. Leger of the Fifth is the only St. Leger here, so that's the merchant you want, I suppose. I'll take you to his study if you like."

"Good for you!" said the new junior. "That's kind!"

"Hold on, though," said Talbot. "What Form are you in?"

"Fourth, so the old gent with the whiskers told me."

"The Head? Oh!" Talbot wondered what Dr. Holmes would have thought had he heard himself described as the old gent with the whiskers. "I—I see."

"Reg'ler old beaver," said the new junior. "Kind old cove, though."

"Oh, Dr. Holmes is generally considered a kind old cove," said Talbot solemnly. "But if you're in the Fourth Form you want to find a Fourth Form study, not a Fifth Form one. By the way, what's your name, kid?"

"Lynn—Oliver Lynn. What's yours?"

"Talbot," said the Shell fellow, more and more surprised. "What study are you in, in the Fourth?"

"Number 6, the old gent said."

"You'll find some decent fellows there," said Talbot cordially. "You're in luck, Lynn."

"That's good noos," said Lynn. "But I got to see St. Leger. I want to 'ave a talk with 'im, you see."

Talbot hesitated. The new junior was a queer customer, that was obvious, and what business he could possibly have with the dandy of the Fifth was a mystery. Talbot was not curious about his affairs, but it occurred to him that Lynn might be the victim of some joke of the juniors. Sending a new fag butting into a senior study was one way of getting him a licking.

"Sure you want to find St. Leger's study, Lynn?" he asked.

"Course I do! Got to see him. He's my relation."

"Oh!" exclaimed Talbot, quite taken aback. That this youth who spoke like a ragamuffin could possibly be a relation of the elegant, fastidious St. Leger seemed impossible. But Lynn looked in earnest.

"Well, come on, and I'll show you the way," said Talbot.

"Thanks, old sport!"

Talbot led the way, and all the fellows whom he passed cast curious looks at Lynn. Lynn stared at them coolly, almost impudently. Only once or twice his gaze faltered, and his timidity seemed to return. Evidently the new fellow felt himself out of his element in the big school, and was rather at a loss.

He followed Talbot up the staircase, and in the next corridor he was subjected to a still more extensive survey. News of him seemed to have spread, and fellows came out of studies to have a look at him. The fat chortle of Baggy Trimble was heard in the passage.

"Here he is, you fellows!"

Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three looked at the new junior as he passed. Arthur Augustus, in his interest in the youth who was to share Study No. 6 with its old owners, fixed his eyeglass upon Lynn, with an unconsciously penetrating scrutiny. Lynn seemed to resent that fixed scrutiny, for he stopped following Talbot and turned a hard stare on the swell of the Fourth.

"You'll know me agin!" he snapped.

"Eh?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Staring at a bloke!" said Lynn resentfully.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus' eyeglass dropped to the end of its cord, in his astonishment. He blinked at Oliver Lynn wide-eyed.

"Well?" snapped Lynn. "Ain't you stared enough at a cove yet, you with the glass eye?"

"Gweat Scott!" said Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" roared Gore of the Shell. "Where did that spring from? What is it? Where was it dug up?"

"Look 'ere—"

Talbot caught the new junior hastily by the arm.

"This way!" he said.

He led Lynn onward to the Fifth Form quarters. Oliver Lynn gave a backward resentful glance at the grinning juniors behind. The new boy had made quite a sensation in the School House.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Is—is—is that weally the chap who is comin' into Studay No. 6? Gweat Scott!"

"My word!" said Blake. It was all he could say.

In the Fifth Form passage, Lefevre and Prye and Gilmore were lounging, and they all glanced at the juniors. Gilmore waved a hand to them.

"What do you fags want here? Get out!"

"The new kid wants to see St. Leger," said Talbot. "This is the study, Lynn." He stopped at Study No. 3 in the Fifth.

Lynn eyed the three Fifth-Formers. The three big, well-dressed seniors of St. Jim's, with their lofty manners, seemed to impress him with respect, if not with dread.

"No 'arm in coming 'ere, is there?" he said.

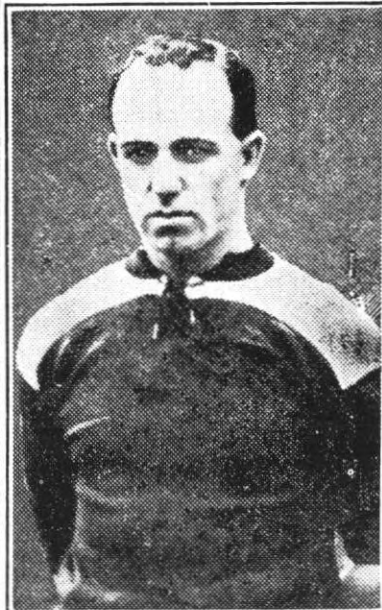
The three seniors gave a sort of jump.

"Eh? What's that?" ejaculated Prye.

"Say that over again, will you?" said Gilmore, with a blank stare at Oliver Lynn.

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Lynn strode towards Raake and Crooke and grasped them by the collar. The two Shell fellows hardly knew what was happening, so swift and so powerful were Lynn's movements. Crack! There was a loud concussion, and a terrific roar, as Raake and Crooke's heads came together. Blake & Co. stared. Raake and Crooke were much bigger than Lynn, but the new boy handled them together with perfect ease. (See page 9.)

"No 'arm in coming 'ere," said Lynn. "A cove can come 'ere to speak to a bloke and no 'arm done, I s'pose?"

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"Here you are, Lynn!" said Talbot. He tapped at the door of Study No. 3, and opened it. "St. Leger, here's a visitor for you."

"Ere I am!" announced Oliver Lynn. And he stepped into the study, and Talbot of the Shell went his way, wondering.

CHAPTER 4.

St. Leger's Cousin!

OLIVER LYNN stood and looked at the two seniors in the study. Gerald Cutts stared at him. St. Leger rose from the armchair, with an embarrassed flush in his handsome, rather weak and good-natured face. Lynn's face had lighted up at the sight of St. Leger; the only face familiar to him in the swarm of fellows at St. Jim's.

"What on earth's that, St. Leger?" asked Cutts.

"It's a new kid."

"What has he come here for?"

"To—to see me, I suppose."

Cutts stared at his study-mate.

"Have you taken to dry-mursin' new fags?" he asked sarcastically. "What the thump do you mean? Here, young hopeful, get out!"

Oliver Lynn stood his ground.

"I come to see St. Leger," he answered. "What are you wedding in for, I'd like to know? No 'arm done, I s'pose?"

"The fact is, Cutts," muttered St. Leger, the colour deepening in his face, "this—this kid—his name's Lynn—"

"I don't want to know his name," said the amazed Cutts. "No connection of yours, I suppose? What's he doing here at all? He speaks as if he belonged to the gutter."

"Oh, do I?" exclaimed Lynn hotly. "Well, I don't, and nothing like it, so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it! I'm as good as you are, any day in the week, and so I tell you straight."

Cutts fairly gasped.

"What the dickens— Is it a new boot boy?" he

exclaimed in wonder. "What the deuce does this mean, St. Leger?"

"I mentioned to you that my pater had taken a kid into his charge, and was sendin' him to school," said St. Leger.

"Did you? Is this the kid?"

"Yes."

"Pretty specimen, I must say!" said Cutts, in disgust.

"What was the Head about, to let him come here?"

"I dare say the Head knows his own business," said St. Leger tartly. "Come here, Lynn, and sit down."

"Orlright."

"I want to have a talk to Lynn," said St. Leger. "You were going to tea with Gilmore, Cutts."

Cutts rose to his feet.

"I certainly don't care to remain with your father's gutter preteges," he said. "Is your pater off his rocker, St. Leger?"

"Oh, cheeze it!"

Cutts left the study and slammed the door after him. Oliver Lynn stared at the slammed door, and then looked at St. Leger.

"That feller a pal of yours?" he asked.

"Eh? Yes!"

"Nice manners, I don't think," said Lynn.

St. Leger drove his hands deep into his pockets, and stood surveying the new junior, with a deep wrinkle in his brow. Lynn, watching his face, lost all the brightness in his own. It was not difficult to read that Lynn's arrival at St. Jim's had been a blow to the dandy of the Fifth—that St. Leger wished him anywhere else.

"Well, you're here, kid," said St. Leger, at last.

"You don't want me here!" said Lynn, in a low voice.

"Hem!"

"I never wanted to come, sir," said Lynn eagerly. "Not if I knowed you didn't want me. I never would 'ave come if I'd knowed that. I 'ad to do what your father told me."

"I know," said St. Leger uneasily. "That's all right. The pater's a good old sort; but there's some things he doesn't quite understand. Still, you're here now, and you must make the best of it."

Lynn was silent, with a clouded face.

"You haven't talked among the fags yet?" asked the Fifth-Former.

"You told me I wasn't to say nothing till I'd seen you, sir."

"Good! You've kept to that?"

"I'd do anything you tell me."

St. Leger's troubled face softened.

"You're a good little kid, Oliver," he said. "But it wouldn't do you any good for the fellows here to know you're my cousin. It might do me harm, in some ways. No need to mention it."

"I won't say a word, sir."

"Don't call me 'sir,'" uttered the Fifth-Former. "Call me 'St. Leger' when you have to call me anything. We shan't see much of each other here, of course."

Lynn's face clouded more deeply.

"I—I thought—" he faltered.

"You see, we're in quite different Forms," explained St. Leger. "I'm in the Fifth—a senior; you're a Fourth Form fag. Juniors and seniors never get together. It's not done."

"Oh, if that's the reason—" said Lynn, brightening again.

"That's the reason, of—of course. But I've spoken to Tom Merry—he's the junior captain here—and he will do a lot for you. You'll meet him later. I—I hope you'll be successful here, Oliver." St. Leger eyed the waif dubiously. "Anyhow, you'll be able to take care of yourself, and if I can do anything for you, rely on me."

"I ain't going to worry you, sir—I mean St. Leger," said Lynn. "I did think we was going to be friends 'ere, same as at 'ome in the 'olidays."

"It's quite different at school," said St. Leger hastily. "Quite. And—and do be a little more careful how you speak, Oliver. You've had a good tutor for a long time, and you ought to have picked up the King's English by this time."

"Ow I speak?" repeated Lynn.

"Yes. The pater says you've learned wonderfully with the tutor. You're sharp; and clever," said St. Leger. "Try to speak as you hear the other fags speak—don't drop your H's if you can help it. Don't think I'm findin' fault, kid—it's for your own good. I—I hope a term or two will turn you into a St. Jim's chap like—like all the rest."

"I 'ope so," said Lynn. "I'll try, if you want me."

"That's right. And—and don't mention anything about the boxing—about your old life."

"I ain't ashamed of it," said Lynn, with a slight appearance of resentment.

"No, no! But it won't do you any good here," said St. Leger hastily. "Take my word for it, Lynn."

"Just as you say, sir—I mean, St. Leger."

"And don't tell the fellows your family history," said the Fifth-Former. "It's all right, but don't spin the yarn. You see, your father—"

He hesitated.

"I know he was a bit of a corker, sir," muttered Lynn. "But—but he was my father."

"I'm not goin' to say anything against him. But it was not till after his death that my father was able to do anything for you," said St. Leger. "He had to let his sister's son be brought up as—as you were; brought up. It was rotten, and it won't do you any good to have it known. That's all over now, of course. No more dashed boxing engagements—what?"

Lynn grinned faintly.

"No, sir. That one at Abbotsford was the last."

"I wish it could have been cancelled," said St. Leger. "It's too jolly near St. Jim's for safety. I had a lot of trouble keepin' a gang of juniors from goin' over to Abbotsford Stadium that very day."

"Where's the 'arm?" asked Lynn. "I give a fair and square boxing show. It couldn't be stopped, as old Hawley 'ad it in my father's writing. I couldn't let Mr. Hawley down, neither. Your father never wanted me to let him down."

"No, no! Thank goodness, it's all over, anyhow," said St. Leger. He eyed the boy uneasily. "Keep it all dark, that's all."

"I will, if you say so."

"Well, I do say so," said St. Leger. "And now—" He hesitated. "Now you'd better run along to your own quarters, Oliver. I'm expected to tea in a fellow's study, and I'm late already."

"Don't let me stop you, sir!" exclaimed Lynn eagerly. "I'll hike off this 'ere blessed minute!"

And with that he hurried from the study.

"Oh gad!" murmured St. Leger.

The dandy of the Fifth stood staring at the doorway after Lynn had disappeared, with a strange mingling of feelings in his face. There was kindness in St. Leger's heart. He wanted to be kind to the little waif whose childhood had been so hard, whose early boyhood had been spent in a grim struggle for existence. At home, at St. Leger Lodge, he had been kindness itself to the boy, and his kindness had earned

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him a deep and devoted loyal affection from the little waif, which St. Leger dimly recognised. But at St. Jim's—his cousin! This little ragamuffin, who could not even speak decently, his cousin! He thought of the mocking grin of Gerald Cutts, and his face crimsoned. He would be kind to the boy—as kind as he could—but as for owning him in public, that was impossible. After all, their ways lay far apart at St. Jim's. The Fourth Form had nothing in common with the Fifth.

Prye looked in at the doorway.

"Forgotten tea?" he asked.

"Eh? No. I'm comin'."

"Bringin' your fag friend?" grinned Prye.

"What rot!"

"Who is the little ragamuffin, and where the merry deuce did he spring from?" asked Prye.

St. Leger shrugged his shoulders.

"The pater's taken pity on him, and given him a chance," he said calmly. "Awful benevolent old gent, the pater!"

"Must be," said Prye, with a stare. "Must be a little bit loose in the crumple, I should think, sendin' a young ruffian like that to St. Jim's. I suppose you're not goin' to take him up?"

"Oh, of course not!"

And St. Leger followed Prye to Gilmore's study, where tea was ready, and Cutts was waiting; and after tea there were cigarettes and banker among the black sheep of the Fifth, and St. Leger completely forgot the existence of the new boy in the Fourth Form.

CHAPTER 5.

Catching It!

"THERE he is! He, he, he!"

Thus Baggy Trimble.

Quite a number of the School House juniors, as well as Baggy Trimble, were interested in Oliver Lynn. There was a sound of chuckling as he came along the Fourth Form passage.

The new junior stared at them.

"This 'ere the Fourth?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, this 'ere is the Fourth," said Percy Mellish, with a playful imitation of Lynn's way of speaking. "In fact, it's the blooming Fourth!"

"I'm looking for my study," said Lynn. "I can't make out these 'ere numbers. Time they 'ad a fresh coat of paint. I think. Which is Study No. 6?"

"Are you in Study No. 6?" howled Mellish.

"Just that!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll get on with Gussy!" roared Mellish. "Here—I mean 'ere—I'll show you your study."

Mellish opened the door of Study No. 6, where Blake & Co. were assembled after tea. The four juniors looked round at Mellish.

"Your new study-mate, you fellows!" chuckled Mellish.

"Trot in, Lynn, old dear! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Mellish—"

Lynn entered the doorway. Mellish gave him a playful push behind, sending him sprawling forward, and withdrew quickly and shut the door. Oliver Lynn, taken quite by surprise, sprawled into the study, and fell on his hands and knees.

"Oh gum!" he ejaculated.

He jumped up.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Oh deah! It is weally too bad of Wailton! He had no wight whatevah to plant this dweadful person on us!"

Oliver Lynn looked at the four juniors. Their looks were not welcoming. Blake & Co. did not want to be uncivil to a new fellow. But this new fellow got on their nerves; there was no mistake about that. The most engaging new fellow would not have reconciled them to an addition to the study, and this hapless youth was not engaging in the least.

"Well, 'ere I am," said Lynn, looking from one to another of the rather grim faces. "This 'ere is my study, I s'pose?"

"Mr. Railton said so," answered Blake.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet. He did not like the new boy; he couldn't. But the Chesterfieldian manners of Arthur Augustus did not forsake him, even in this dreadful emergency.

"The chap is heah, you fellows," he said. "It is up to us to be civil. Lynn—I understand your name is Lynn—"

"You've got it."

"Pway allow me to intwduce you to your study-mates," said Arthur Augustus. "This chap is Blake—this is Hewwies—this is Digby. My name is D'Arcy. I—I—I am pleased to meet you, Lynn."

"What a whopper!" remarked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You're the chap with the glass eye what was staring at me in the passage," said Lynn.

"Bai Jove! I am sowwy if I seemed wude," said Arthur Augustus. "I—I was a little surprised. I beg your pardon."

"Oh, no 'arm done!" said Lynn. "I've been stared at before. I've 'ad 'undreds of eyes on me, I can tell you, when I was——"

He broke off abruptly, remembering St. Leger's warning. Mr. Hawley and the Ring were not to be mentioned at St. Jim's. Lynn did not understand why, but St. Leger's word was law to him.

"Pway sit down, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus politely. "You will not have any pwep to do, as it is your first night heah. Have you had your tea?"

"'Ad it with the 'Ouse dame," said Lynn, sitting down, and putting his boots on the fender. "Nice old bird!"

"Oh, ah—yaas!"

The door opened, and Racke and Crooke of the Shell looked in, with grinning faces. Blake & Co. gave them savage glances. They understood why the two cads of the Shell had come.

"Is it here?" asked Racke.

"Let's hear it talk!" said Crooke.

"Oh, get out!" growled Blake.

"You don't want to keep this unique specimen all to yourselves," said Aubrey Racke. "I've heard about it, and I want to hear it talk!"

"I don't know you, and don't want to. You get out. Tha 'ere ain't your study."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Racke and Crooke.

"What a voice!" chirruped Mellish.

"What an accent!" gurgled Trimble. "I say, where was that fellow dug up?"

"Are you getting out, you two blokes?" demanded Lynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke and Crooke were both bigger fellows than Lynn, and they had no intention of retreating unless Blake & Co. cut up rusty. They found amusement in tormenting the new boy.

But Lynn was a more dangerous customer than they supposed.

He strode towards Racke and Crooke, and grasped them, much to their surprise. He did not tackle them one at a time, but both at once, and the two Shell fellows hardly knew what was happening, so swift and so powerful were his movements.

He had them by the collars, and jerked them into the study, helpless in his grasp.

Crack!

There was a loud concussion, and a terrific roar as Racke and Crooke's heads came together.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

Blake & Co. stared.

READ ALL ABOUT WILLIAM HENRY WALKER. A Lucky Lad of Aston Villa F.C.

MERE ordinary justice demands that we should place William Henry Walker high up among the lucky lads of modern football. Within twelve months of making his first appearance in the Aston Villa team—his only first-class side—he had won an English Cup medal and worn an English International cap. Those two possessions are, of course, considered the best prizes which the footballer can win, and there are plenty of first-class players who have been in the game for many years who have not gained either. Hence the suggestion that in getting both inside twelve months William Walker is a lucky lad.

Yet when you come to think of it, perhaps there was something more than luck in the case of Walker. It is said that opportunity knocks at every man's door at least once, and when opportunity knocked at the door of this very excellent footballer, he took the precaution of being at home.

This opportunity for the fair-haired young player came in January of 1920. He had been on the books of the Villa for some time—even before the war he was their player—but very wisely the management of the Villa Park club had allowed him to mature. However, in the first round of the Cup in 1920, Walker was given the centre-forward berth in the Aston Villa team against Queen's Park Rangers. And from that day to this the player has never been out of the Villa side unless compelled to stand down owing to injury, or when his services have been required for representative games.

Walker first played for England—in the difficult centre-forward berth—in 1921, against Ireland, and last season played against Scotland and against Wales, and in addition to his other distinctions, he has played in representative matches in two different positions in one season—at centre-

forward and at inside-left. At the present time he is regarded as being a better inside-left than a leader, but unless the Villa experiments in the centre-forward berth meet with success very soon, it is more than likely that Walker will be called back to the task of leading the attack.

Tall, but nothing like so frail as he looks when on the field, Walker is what might be called a player of the real Villa school—a scientific exponent of the fine art of the game; now making the perfect pass, and anon doing the swerving run past the backs and finishing with a flashing, well-placed shot. Among other things which he has done for the Villa is the unique feat of converting three penalty kicks in one match—this he did last season against Bradford City.

Walker's career since he climbed into the first-class has been so interesting that we have left ourselves with little space to tell of his early days. It should be mentioned, however, that he is the son of George Walker, a man who in his day played some magnificent games as a full-back for Wolverhampton Wanderers. So young Bill had football in his blood. Consequently, it was not of much use for his father to try to dissuade him from taking to football as a profession. "Try anything else you like except football," said Walker senior; but the passion for the game was too strong in the lad.

Born at Wednesford twenty-four years ago, Walker had some experience with Hednesford, Darlaston, and Wednesbury Old Park before joining the Villa. As he is now only twenty-four, and benefiting each season as the result of experience, there should be many further honours in store for the lucky boy who entered the game against the advice of his footballing father.

A SPLENDID AUTOCGRAPHED PHOTO OF A GREAT FAVOURITE NEXT WEEK, BOYS!

"Weally, Wacke——"

"You blokes gettin' at me?" asked Oliver Lynn, staring at the two grinning faces in the doorway.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crooke. "Listen to him! I say, Blake, is this study a home for hooligans?"

"Oh, stow it!" said Lynn.

Blake & Co. looked at Lynn, and looked at one another. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy repressed a shudder. What sort of a "merchant" was it that Mr. Railton, in his kindness of heart, had landed on them?

A dozen more fellows gathered round the doorway. Grinning faces looked in at Oliver Lynn, and at the dismayed natives of Study No. 6.

"Go it!" chorried Crooke. "Sing it over again, Lynn! We like to hear you talk."

"To 'ear 'im, you mean!" said Mellish.

Lynn flushed red.

He rose from his chair, a dark look on his face. In the new and strange surroundings of the big school, the new boy had a sort of timidity, but there was no fear in him. The lad who had been called the Chicken, who had earned his bread in boxing booths for years, young as he was, was not likely to be afraid of fellows like Racke or Crooke—or indeed any fellows at St. Jim's at all.

He stepped towards the doorway, his eyes gleaming.

"You come 'ere to make fun of me, what?" he said.

"Oh deah!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Check!" continued Lynn, glaring at Racke and Crooke

Racke and Crooke were big fellows enough, both of them bigger than Lynn, yet that surprising new boy handled them together with perfect ease. There was another loud crack as their heads collided a second time.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Whoop! Ow!"

"Leggo!"

"Oh, you rotter, leggo!"

"'Ad enough, you two coves?" demanded Lynn, grinning.

"You asked for it, you did, and you can't deny it! 'Ave you 'ad enough?"

"Yes! Ow!"

"Leggo! Yes!"

Racke and Crooke yelled together. They had had more than enough. Oliver Lynn whirled them to the doorway again, and sent them spinning out into the passage.

Mellish and his comrades crowded back in a hurry. Mellish and Trimble vanished into their study. A fellow who could handle Racke and Crooke like this, was not a fellow to be ragged by Trimble or Mellish. Lynn closed the door of the study on Racke and Crooke. They sprawled gasping in the Fourth Form passage.

Jack Blake looked at him, with involuntary respect, as he turned back into Study No. 6.

Study No. 6 had been surprised. In fact, that celebrated study had been astonished. It looked as if they had been entertaining a Samson unawares.

"That was pretty hefty, Lynn!" said Blake.
 "Easy enough to 'andle them blokes," said Lynn.
 "They're as soft as putty."

"That's so, but—"
 Blake paused, and sat down to his prep. It occurred to him that there was more in Oliver Lynn than met the eye. The new member of Study No. 6 was able, at least, to do his share in keeping up the fighting reputation of that famous study. That was something; but it did not reconcile Blake & Co. to this extraordinary addition to their select circle. Study No. 6 were not snobbish—far from it; but there was a limit, and for the present, at least, Blake & Co. felt that Oliver Lynn was the limit.

CHAPTER 6.

Not Wanted!

OLIVER LYNN took his place in the Fourth Form on the following morning.

Mr. Latham was observed to peer at him rather curiously over his spectacles.

The Fourth Form master had had an interview with Lynn already, so the new junior did not come as a sudden shock to him in class; but undoubtedly Master Lynn required getting used to.

The Fourth-Formers were in a state of wonder regarding him.

All sorts and conditions of new fellows had come to St. Jim's at one time or another, but a new fellow like Oliver Lynn certainly had never been seen at the old school before.

He was quite unique.

When he talked the juniors listened in amazement. They wondered how a fellow who dropped his H's, and seemed unacquainted with the commonest rules of grammar, would handle the Form work. A fellow who did not know English was hardly expected to handle Latin, and it was utterly surprising that he should be there at all, for, of course, a certain standard of efficiency was required of any fellows admitted into any Form at St. Jim's. To the surprise of the juniors Lynn showed up quite well in the Form work.

He had been "crammed" for his entrance at the school, and so far as paper work went, he was more than equal to most of the fellows in the Fourth. His intelligence was keen enough, and his information was at least adequate.

It was only in his speech that his early want of training betrayed itself.

He had absorbed instruction under his tutor at St. Leger Lodge, and he had a good memory. Fellows like Levison and Kerr and Redfern were ahead of him in class work. But he was well ahead of slackers like Trimble and Mellish and Chowle, and equal to Herries and Dig and Clive, and other easy-going fellows. Only when he spoke there were general smiles. His tutor evidently had not been able to eradicate his little failings of speech and expression.

Study No. 6 were not proud of their new acquisition.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made it a point to show the new junior a polished politeness; but he did not feel chummy, and did not pretend to feel what he was far from feeling.

Blake and Herries and Dig did not want to be disagreeable; but they did want to have as little to do with Lynn as possible.

Lynn looked so rugged that they did not suspect him of having a sensitive nature under his rather hard exterior.

After morning lessons, Lynn left the Form-room with the rest of the Fourth, and would gladly have joined his study-mates, knowing nobody else to speak to.

But Blake & Co. walked away without looking at him, only Arthur Augustus lingering in the passage for a minute or so to speak a few civil words before he followed his chums.

Then the new junior was left alone.

Tom Merry had kind intentions towards the new "kid." He had not forgotten St. Leger's request, and he fully intended to give Lynn a lift if he could. But the Shell were not yet out of their Form-room; and when the Fourth had cleared off, Lynn was left entirely to himself in the corridor.

Possibly some of the fellows would have lingered to "chip" him, but what had happened to Racke and Crooke the previous evening had served as a warning. Mellish and Trimble, at least, had decided to give that hefty new junior a wide berth.

Oliver Lynn loafed about the passage for a few minutes, with his hands in his pockets and a rather gloomy look upon his face.

He sauntered out into the quadrangle, where there were crowds of fellows, most of them seemingly occupied in one way or another—none of them with any thought of him.

The lonely boy thought of St. Leger, his cousin and his natural protector in the big school where he knew nobody. St. Leger's greeting the previous evening could not be described as enthusiastic. But the dandy of the Fifth had been kind enough at home at the Lodge, and Lynn was

longing for a kind word or a kind look. He drifted into the House again, and into the Fifth Form passage.

He hesitated to approach St. Leger's study; but he made up his mind at last, tapped at the door, and looked in. The study was empty.

Lynn stood looking in, wondering where St. Leger was. A rough push on the shoulder made him stagger a little, and he spun round angrily, to find himself looking at Cutts of the Fifth.

"Who you shoving?" he snapped.

Cutts looked at him. He was very curious about this queer protegee of his elegant and aristocratic chum, St. Leger.

"Fags aren't allowed in this passage," said Cutts. "What are you doing here?"

"Looking for a bloke."

"You'd better look for a bloke somewhere else," said Cutts. "Is the bloke—hem—that you're lookin' for St. Leger?"

"Yes."

"Is St. Leger a relation of yours?" asked Cutts.

Lynn did not answer.

He had no desire for concealment for his own part, but he remembered the instructions of the dandy of the Fifth.

"Well," said Cutts, "can't you answer?"

"You'd better ask Master St. Leger," said Lynn.

"I'm askin' you."

No reply.

"Where did you come from?" further inquired Cutts.

"Master St. Leger's home."

"I've heard that you're a ward of Colonel St. Leger?"

said Cutts, eyeing him.

"That's right."

"How did he come to pick you up?"

"You'd better ask him."

Cutts compressed his lips.

"Where were you before the old colonel took you in hand?" he asked.

"You're asking me a lot of things," said Lynn coolly.

"I don't see why I should tell you nothing."

"Do you know what I do to a fag when he's cheeky?"

asked Cutts. "I generally twist his ear."

"You won't twist my ear!" said Lynn.

"You cheeky little rotter—there!" exclaimed Cutts angrily, and he seized the junior's ear between finger and thumb.

The next moment his wrist was grasped in a grasp that made Cutts utter a howl of surprise and rage. It seemed for a moment to him that the bones were cracking under that sudden vice-like grip.

"Oh! Ow! Let go!" he yelled.

Lynn grinned and let go. Cutts jerked away his hand and rubbed his wrist savagely.

The junior walked away, and Cutts of the Fifth stood staring after him savagely and rubbing his wrist. He did not offer to interfere with the new boy further.

Lynn left the School House again and looked for St. Leger in the quadrangle. He caught sight of him at last, chatting with Prye and Gilmore of the Fifth, and Knox of the Sixth Form. Lynn came up to the group of seniors, and all of them looked at him.

"Oh, that's the new fag, isn't it?" grinned Knox. "I hear he's a queer bird. Some connection of yours, St. Leger?"

St. Leger's lips tightened.

"My pater's taken him in hand," he answered carelessly.

"What do you want, Lynn?"

"Nothing, sir," said Lynn with a sinking heart.

"Then cut off."

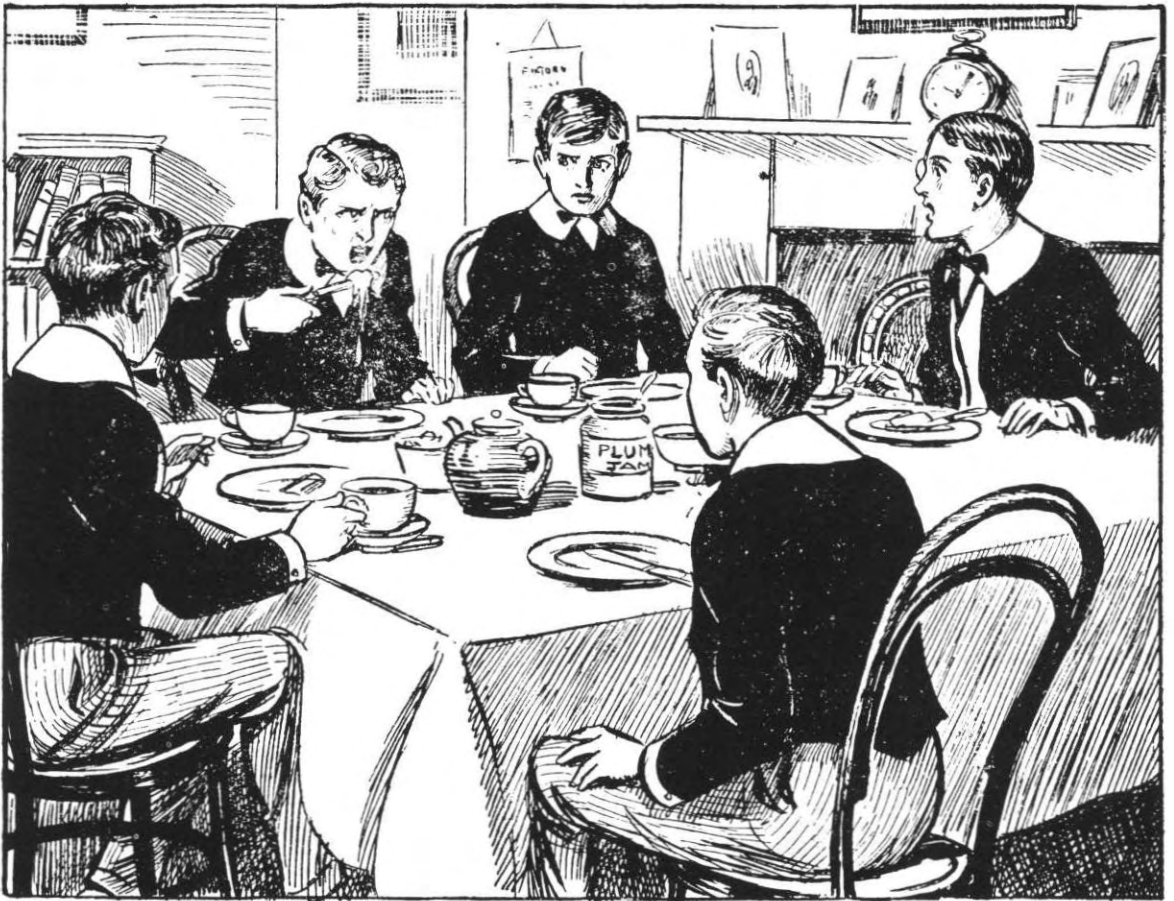
Lynn cut off. St. Leger continued chatting with his friends, with a faint flush in his cheeks, quite conscious of their curiosity, though they did not express it in words. He was annoyed with Lynn for coming up to speak to him in the quad, and the new junior was well aware of it as he walked quickly away.

Lynn walked by himself under the old elms, with a moody brow. Cheery voices could be heard on all sides; every fellow in the crowd of St. Jim's fellows seemed light-hearted excepting Lynn.

He was in the midst of a crowd, but he had never felt so lonely before.

"This ain't much catch!" he muttered miserably. "The old gent was very kind—and Master St. Leger is kind, too—but—but I wish they'd left me where I was! I'd rather be with old Hawley and the blokes—they'd speak a friendly word to a feller, anyhow. What's the good of coming 'ere, where I ain't wanted?"

And Oliver Lynn drove his hands deeper into his pockets and tramped about with a heavy heart until the bell rang for dinner.



"Oh deah!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that sudden ejaculation as his eyes fell upon the new boy. Lynn, unconscious of affecting the nerves of the noble Gussy, was eating jam with a knife. Blake and Herries did not ejaculate, they looked gloomy. Lynn caught his study-mates' glances, and he flushed to the roots of his hair, and put down the knife. (See page 13.)

CHAPTER 7.

With the Gloves On!

TOM MERRY glanced across from the Shell table and spotted Lynn's shadowed face among the Fourth-Formers at dinner. Tom's kind heart smote him a little. He had glanced round for Lynn once after morning lessons, and then, unfortunately, forgotten his existence. Now he remembered him, and remembered that it was his intention to be kind to the new junior. St. Leger of the Fifth had asked him to do so, and Tom had readily agreed, and he was prepared to do all he could. But, as it turned out, Lynn was in a different Form. If the new fellow had entered the Shell, Tom's task would have been easier. Still, when the juniors came out of the dining-room the captain of the Shell tapped Lynn of the Fourth on the shoulder and gave him a cheery smile.

"Come on, Tom!" called out Monty Lowther, who was heading for the quadrangle.

"Hold on," answered Tom.

"What's up?"

Lowther turned back, and Manners followed his example. They understood, as they saw the new boy with their chum. Tom Merry was at his old game of helping a lame dog over a stile.

"Oh, all right!" grunted Monty.

"You're young Lynn, what?" said Tom by way of greeting to the new junior.

"That's me," answered Lynn.

"I'm Tom Merry. How are you getting on here?"

"Rotten."

"Oh!" said Tom.

"You're in Study No 6 in the Fourth, I think," remarked Manners.

"Yes."

"Very decent fellows in that study."

"I dessay!" answered Lynn. "They don't want to speak to a bloke, though."

"Oh!" said Manners.

"Come out and have a look at the place," said Tom Merry. "You'd like me to show you round, what?"

"Thank you," said Lynn in surprise. "You in the Fourth Form?"

"Oh, no. I'm in the Shell," said Tom with a smile. "Next Form up. Come along, Lynn."

He led the new boy out into the quad. Manners and Lowther followed, not wholly pleased. They were very busy young gentlemen, with their time fully occupied, and they did not "quite see" showing a new fag round the school. That duty might well have been left to somebody in the Fourth, in the opinion of Manners and Lowther. However, they concurred with a good grace.

Having made up their minds to sacrifice their valuable time on account of this unimportant new boy, the Terrible Three put their best manners on for the purpose. They showed Lynn round the school and pointed out various things of interest, Big Side and Little Side, the gymnasium, the old tower, and the New House, and old Taggles and his lodge. Lynn's face brightened a good deal. A little cheerful companionship was what he wanted.

"You fellers know St. Leger?" he asked presently.

"St. Leger of the Fifth! Oh, yes!" said Tom.

"He's a good sort, ain't he?"

"Not bad for the Fifth!" said Monty Lowther.

"We don't have much to do with the Fifth," said Tom.

"But I believe St. Leger isn't a bad chap."

"He's a real gent, he is," said Lynn.

"Hem!"

"He was very good to me at 'ome," said Lynn. "Might 'ave expected a young gentleman like 'im to look down on a bloke. But he never did."

"Oh," murmured Tom.

"You lived at St. Leger Lodge?" asked Manners.

"Yes, more'n six months now," said Lynn.

The Terrible Three wondered whether he was going to make any allusion to his previous career, as a boy pugilist. But Lynn did not refer to that.

Certainly he did not imagine for a moment that the chums of the Shell were acquainted with his early history.

"How do you get on in the Fourth—with the lessons, I mean?" asked Manners.

"That's easy."

"Oh, I shouldn't have thought—" Manners paused.

"I've 'ad it all jammed into my 'ead at the Lodge, ready to come 'ere," said Lynn. "It was 'ard at first, but I soon picked it up. Course, you blokes can see that I ain't always been what I am now."

"Hem!"

"You wouldn't take me for a St. Jim's feller, to look at me and 'ear me speak, would you now?" said Lynn, eyeing Tom Merry rather anxiously.

"There are all sorts of St. Jim's fellows," said Tom Merry diplomatically. "You'll find yourself feeling quite at home after a few days."

"P'raps," said Lynn slowly. "It ain't quite like what I expected. I thought I was going to see a lot of my—of Master St. Leger. But—"

"The Forms never mix," said Tom, quite understanding what was troubling the junior's mind. "Fourth and Fifth hardly ever speak even. You see, seniors and juniors have nothing in common. It doesn't do a fellow any good to mix with fellows older than himself. Chaps always find friends in their own Form."

"That's a rule, is it?"

"Well, a sort of rule," said Tom. "It's understood."

Lynn nodded slowly.

Tom Merry was stating the fact; but he was giving it a little additional emphasis, from his understanding of the situation. He could guess that the dandy of the Fifth was more likely than not to neglect this queer kid in the Fourth; and he could see that Lynn was troubled and disappointed. It was like Tom to pour oil upon the troubled waters.

"It's a blooming change for a bloke here," said Lynn, after a long silence. "Like coming into a new world. Things that a feller was proud of somewhere else, he mustn't mention 'ere. Don't seem right to me, somehow. I s'pose Master St. Leger knows best, though. Fellers 'ere ever do any boxing?"

"Yes; quite a lot," said Tom.

"Like to 'ave the gloves on with a bloke?" asked Lynn. Evidently the poor fellow's thoughts were running on his old life, and his little triumphs in the ring—which now he was forbidden to mention.

"Certainly," said Tom. "Let's go into the gym."

"Good egg!" said Lowther, showing some interest in the proceedings at last. He was curious to see how the Chicken would handle Tom Merry, the best junior boxer at St. Jim's.

The Terrible Three went into the gym, and the gloves were sorted out. It was odd to see how Lynn's face brightened when he put the gloves on, and stood up to his adversary. It was a glimpse of his old life again—the life he had always known and liked, and which he had given up obediently, but not cheerfully.

"Mind your eye, Tom!" grinned Monty Lowther. "You've got a real coughdrop to handle there."

"I won't 'urt you," said Lynn.

"Thank you!" said Tom rather sarcastically. "I think perhaps I can take care of that."

"Time!" said Lowther.

With an ordinary junior in the Fourth, Tom Merry would not have considered it necessary to exert himself very much. But knowing that his opponent was the Chicken, a boy boxer who had been deemed worthy of filming, Tom was very much on his guard.

Several fellows strolled in as the round began, and they circled round the combatants to look on. Levison & Co. of Study No. 9 gathered round, and Cardew eyed Lynn with interest. Ralph Reckness Cardew had a good knowledge of boxing, and of a fellow's form, and he could see that the captain of the Shell was handling a difficult proposition.

It turned out much more difficult than Tom had anticipated.

In the first round, Tom held his own pretty well; in the second, Lynn began to tap and rap him here and there, keeping a perfect guard the while, which Tom found it difficult to get through.

"By gad! That kid knows all about the mittens!" Cardew remarked to his companions. "He may be weird; but he knows how to box. The esteemed Thomas is for it." Crash!

Lynn's left came in like lightning, and Tom Merry went to the floor before he knew what was happening.

"Oh!" he gasped.

He sat up and blinked.

"Well hit!" exclaimed Cardew.

Manners ran to help up his chum. Tom Merry blinked at Oliver Lynn in a rather dizzy way.

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The drive had been almost a terrific one, the boy pugilist putting unconscious force into it.

"Sorry!" exclaimed Lynn, at once. "I never meant to 'it so 'ard. I forgot."

"It's all right!" gasped Tom.

"Better chuck it, old chap," murmured Manners. "The fellow's a giddy pug, you know; you're up against a professional."

"I'm good for another round or two," said Tom. With all the pleasure at his downfall at the hands of a fellow in a lower Form.

"I'll be more careful next time," said Lynn.

"You needn't," said Tom rather curtly. "I'm not made of putty, you know; I don't mind a hard knock."

He stood up to the new junior again, a good many fellows gathering round now to look on. It did not take long for the news to spread that the queer new fellow in the Fourth was holding his own against Tom Merry with the gloves.

Tom Merry put his best into that round; and he succeeded. Oliver Lynn was forced to give ground, and a heavy drive on the chest staggered him. His keen eyes began to glitter now, and the old "pug" within him woke to life. He forgot that it was a friendly spar with the gloves; and Oliver Lynn disappeared to give place to the Chicken. Right up to the end of the round Tom had the best of it; but then there came a sudden recovery of Lynn, and he closed in, hitting like a hammer.

His blows fairly thudded on Tom, and the captain of the Shell was knocked right and left. He went down at last, crashing.

Cardew gave a low whistle.

"That's a new style for St. Jim's!" he murmured. "By gad! That kid could knock out a Fifth Form chap."

Tom Merry gained his feet. There was a curious expression on his flushed face as he peeled off the gloves.

"That's enough, Lynn," he said. "You're a better man than I am with the mittens."

"Course," said Lynn innocently. "I would be, you know. I 'ope I ain't 'urt you."

"Rot!" said Tom.

The well-padded gloves had prevented much damage from being done, but Tom was conscious of a swelling in his lip, and a trickle of red from his nose. He gave Lynn a friendly nod, however, and walked away with his chums to bathe his face. Lynn put on his jacket slowly, an object of considerable interest to the juniors now.

"You've had the gloves on a good deal, I should say, kid," remarked Levison of the Fourth.

"Lots," answered Lynn.

"You've got a neat flick with the left," said Cardew. Lynn grinned.

"That's my favourite," he said. "That's 'ow I put the Pet to sleep—I got in that one with the left."

"The Pet?" said Cardew blankly.

"I—I—I mean—" Lynn crimsoned and stammered. "Nothing, sir!" He walked away quickly.

"The Pet!" said Herries, who had joined the crowd. "It was a chap called the Tooting Pet, who was boxing at Abbotsford last week, when those Fifth Form cads prevented us from seeing the match at the Stadium. That kid can't have boxed with a real pug."

"Looks as if he's able to, if he liked," remarked Cardew. "I've heard some of the fellows talking about raggin' him. I should advise them to think it over again, after this."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Levison. "About as safe to rag as a tiger, I should think."

Probably Racke & Co. did think it over, for nothing was heard of a ragging. It was not long before all the Lower School heard that Oliver Lynn had beaten Tom Merry with the gloves on; and the news made the strange new boy an object of greater interest than ever. It did not look as if the one-time Chicken would make friends at St. Jim's; but, at all events, it was clear that he was quite able to deal with his enemies.

CHAPTER 8.

A Scrap in the Study.

"OH dear!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that ejaculation quite involuntarily.

It was tea-time in Study No. 6.

There were five to tea—Blake & Co., and their new study-mate.

So far, there had not been any trouble in the study. Blake & Co. were civil enough to the newcomer, having reflected on the matter, and justly acknowledged that it was not Lynn's fault that Mr. Railton had seen fit to "shove" him there.

But relations were strained in the study.

That the four juniors did not want Lynn in the study was indubitable. All the fellows knew that. It was in the nature of things. It was partly from good feeling, and partly from



Gore, in his bullying way, caught Lynn by the shoulder, and spun him back. Crash! The new boy hit out, and Gore went flying across the landing, to drop with a gasping howl. Lynn passed on, whilst the other juniors gathered round the dazed Gore. (See page 17.)

Gussy's noble influence, that they did their best to be civil, and even friendly. But since the defeat of Tom Merry with the gloves, Trimble, and Mellish, and one or two fellows of their kind, had hinted that Blake & Co.'s civility to a fellow they did not like was founded chiefly upon Lynn's prowess as a boxer. It was fairly evident, after that encounter with Tom Merry, that Lynn could have knocked any member of Study No. 6 into a cocked hat; and that was a rather painful sort of knowledge for a fighting study like No. 6. If Lynn had put on airs as "cock of the walk" in the study, there would have been trouble immediately. But he did not; he was too good-natured for that. Yet certainly he took Tom Merry's defeat as a matter of course; too much a matter of course to be worth a moment's thought; and that was rather irritating. How could it be a matter of course for a new kid to defeat the best boxer in the Lower School?

Blake had a secret persuasion that, at a favourable time, and at his best, he could "knock out" the captain of the Shell, with luck. What Blake hoped, rather than believed, that he could do, this queer new fellow had done without effort. It annoyed Blake somehow.

Still, he was a reasonable fellow, and would not let that influence him, and still less the gibes of fellows like Trimble or Crooke. He was not going to quarrel with Lynn unless the latter started the trouble. But in such an atmosphere it was only too probable that trouble would begin sooner or later.

There was a worry on the minds of Study No. 6 now. On Saturday cousin Ethel was paying a visit to St. Jim's; and when cousin Ethel came to the school, tea in Study No. 6 was a time-honoured institution. And on such a very important social occasion there was no doubt that Oliver Lynn, with his weird ways, would be "de trop."

Still, a fellow could hardly be asked to keep out of his own study at tea-time because he wasn't considered good enough to meet a distinguished visitor. Evidently the chums of Study No. 6 had to chance it, and hope for the best.

Arthur Augustus was thinking over that little problem at

tea on Friday, when he suddenly ejaculated, "Oh deah!" quite without intending to do so.

It was Oliver Lynn who caused the ejaculation. Lynn, unconscious of affecting the nerves of the noble Gussy, was eating jam with a knife.

The sight of a tiger devouring its prey could hardly have shocked and pained Gussy more than the sight of a fellow eating jam with a knife.

Blake and Herries and Dig did not ejaculate. They looked gloomy. If such were Lynn's manners and customs, they couldn't help it. Cousin Ethel, when she came, would see a fellow guzzling like this in their study—it couldn't be helped. They had never realised until this moment how utterly rotten it was of Railton to shove the fellow into Study No. 6.

Lynn looked up as he heard Gussy's horrified ejaculation.

"Hallo! What's biting you?" he asked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Anything up?" asked Lynn.

"Nunno!"

Blake glanced at the knife, loaded with jam, on its way to the new junior's mouth. Lynn understood then. He flushed to the roots of his hair, and put down the knife.

"Oh!" he said.

D'Arcy coloured, too. He felt that he had departed from the rigid line of good manners; for once he had neglected the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"I beg your pardon, Lynn!" he said.

Snort from Herries.

"Where the thump was the fellow brought up?" Herries asked, addressing space.

"That me?" asked Lynn.

"Yes, you," growled Herries. "What do you want to be a pig for?"

"Weally, Hewwies—" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"He is a pig, isn't he?" said Herries.

"Yaas; but—"

(Continued on page 17.)



EDITORIAL!

By George Figgins.

At last the New House appears to be coming into its own. For over a year the "St. Jim's News" has continued its way without any appeal to this side for assistance, with the result that it has come to such a state that the New House has had to be asked to take it over, lock, stock, and barrel, for an issue in order to buck it up a little. Considering the record of previous issues, which shows an almost unbroken sequence of School House piffle, I think it's pretty good cheek on Tom Merry's part to call it the "St. Jim's News" at all! How he can justify the title, considering that the most important section of the school—the New House, to wit—never seems to get a look in, I really don't know. Mind, I'm not blowing my own trumpet, but if there is a galaxy of talent in any study in that antiquated casual ward they call the School House to come within miles of this study, I'll eat my hat!

That's not conceit, it's just plain, ordinary horse-sense, and any New House chap would say the same—with the possible exception of Redfern & Co., who have got some queer notion that their study is in the running for cock of the New House. However, that's neither here nor there. It's a family matter, and we don't wash our dirty linen in public whatever the School House may do.

Any old how, we're here now, and things are going to hum. This New House issue of the "News" is going to make history. It won't surprise me in the least if readers write in demanding that for the future the control of the paper shall be handed over to the New House, with occasional contributions from the one or two fellows in the School House who happen to be possessed of something remotely resembling brains, rather, of course, for the sake of variety than for any actual value in the articles. But we shall see what we shall see. In the meantime, what do you think of this issue? Can you honestly recollect any single issue produced by the School House that could claim to come within streets of it? I can almost hear a universal chorus of "No!" Of course not! I quite agree with you. Now carry on and enjoy the fruits of New House brains. As I said before, this is SOME number.

I have no doubt many readers will write in and congratulate us New House fellows on this splendid issue, and that we shall be asked by Tom Merry to supply another. This we will gladly do; in fact, to make the thing a real success, Tom Merry should let us have the whole management to ourselves. I don't like to make the suggestion myself—you know what these Shell bounders are—but perhaps someone else will approach him on the subject.

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GRUB!

By DAVID WYNN.

Figgys says I can write about what I like; and there's only one thing I really like to write about, so I'm going to write about it. The subject of my few remarks is GRUB. To my mind, it's the only thing worth talking about, and to my tummy it's the only thing worth bothering about.

Mind you, there are other attractions in life. Football is all right in its way, so is skating and cricket and swimming. They all help to give you an appetite. But Latin and maths and all that sort of tosh spoil your digestion. They take the blood away from the stomach, where it's really needed, and send it up to the brain. So I don't bother about them more than I can help.

Now, if they only taught cooking at St. Jim's. Ah, there's a subject a fellow could really take an interest in. Instead of messing about with HCL and H2SO4 and CO2 in the lab, if one could only experiment with grub, and work out original ideas in rabbit-pies and toffee, that would be of some real benefit to humanity. Why, some fellow might hit on a great discovery! Who knows? He might even lay the foundations of a fortune by inventing a new kind of toffee, and getting it put on the market.

Just think of "Wynn's Toffee-de-Luxe." Why, the name would be good enough to make it famous and bring about a record sale. And the taste—well, it fairly makes my own mouth water to think about it! Even "Ratty," our esteemed Housemaster, would favour me for ever if he tasted it. You might think that Ratcliff wouldn't eat toffee. You just try him, and see!

But, as things are, there is no real encouragement given to a fellow. In fact, it's rather the other way about. Ratty, for instance, is down on study cooking, and tries to limit it as much as he can. He comes prowling along the corridor with his long nose twitching and sniffing to see what's going on, and if there is the faintest trace of a nice sort of smell—like kippers, or bacon, or stew—he comes down like a hundred of bricks. As if a chap can cook properly without making a bit of a smell. Besides, I think the whiff of the grub is a most important part of the business.

What puzzles me is what the old beast does with the grub he confiscates. He doesn't eat it, I feel sure, because when he collared me for cooking sosses on the Common-room fire, and I managed to stuff them with cayenne pepper before he took them away, he didn't seem to be any worse for it soon after. And I can't believe that anybody could possibly be heartless enough to throw good grub away. It's a blessed mystery.

NEW HOUSE—COCK HOUSE!

By Richard Red'ern.

To any sensible fellow there can be no question that the New House is cock house. Incredible as it appears, however, to anybody who knows the real facts of the matter, there are actually people who refuse to admit it.

Of course, I suppose it's only natural that School House chaps would like to think that they rule the roost, and try to persuade themselves that it actually is so, in spite of the evidence to the contrary. They are frightfully stubborn about it, too. Time and again we've tried to convert Tom Merry & Co. to our way of thinking, but without much success.

Of course, I'll admit they've got one advantage over us—a Housemaster worthy of the name. But one Housemaster doesn't make a House, no matter how fine a fellow he may be.

Now, as to the real leader of the New House, Figgins or myself, that's an open question. There's no disputing that Figgys has done some good work in the past, but there are some of us who consider he's getting a bit played out, more or less of a back number. At the same time there can be no doubt that he's far in front of any of the School House leaders.

Take Tom Merry, for instance. Nobody can deny that he's a decent enough fellow in his way, but he's not up to New House standard. If he was over here he'd have to toe the line among the "also-rans." The same with Blake.

What gets over me is the manner in which they let the Third Form run riot over there. That sort of thing wouldn't do for us, I can tell you. Our Third-Formers have to sing jolly small. We make a point of keeping something like order over here. It pays in the end, because it enables us to present a solid front against the School House.

The only drawback to the New House is Ratty. We have to stick him as best we can, though we often feel that we should like to "stick" him with a cricket-stump.

At the same time he's the only master we have to worry about (with the exception of Hector Gordon, the stinks merchant, who is a rattling good sort), while the School House is stiff with them to (say-nothing of prefects), owing to their having their quarters over there. So that if we can only manage to dodge Ratty we've got nobody else to worry about.

And it's well worth enduring even him in order to belong to the cock house of St. Jim's.

Take any sports you like to think of, and we could run the School House off their feet. Admitted you hear of a result being in their favour at times, but this is only our little way of encouragement.



FIGGY'S WAISTCOAT.

By George Francis Kerr.

remarkable about a fancy waistcoat that is capable of making Gussy think, I can assure you. But there is not the slightest doubt that this one really startled him. Figgy rather thoughtlessly asked him to give his opinion of it, but I cut in quickly with the truth about it. I was afraid that poor old Gussy might say something that would distress him to recall if he discovered that the garment had been specially knitted by fair hands for an unappreciative relative. Of course, in the circumstances, he professed himself charmed with it.

"Extremely tasteful, dear boy!" he said with, I have no doubt, an inward shudder. Figgy pressed him to accept it, but Gussy protested that he could not possibly deprive him of it, in the circumstances.

Then Figgy attempted to induce Taggles to accept it. The old chap chased him out of the lodge with a broom. He apparently considered that it was some obscure form of joke that Figgy was working off on him. But that waistcoat was no joke; far from it. Cardew suggested that, hung up between the trees in the Close, it would provide a permanent sunset effect, but Herries definitely rejected it as a blanket for Towser, while Blake was scragged for saying that it might be adopted as a House banner by the New House.

Kildare found us hawking it about the School House, and gave us two minutes to clear out with it. He said that it was calculated to provoke a riot.

THE ONLY REMEDY!

Poor old Figgy wanted to stop short of actually throwing it away, as it was a present, and that sort of thing, but there seemed no hope for it until I suggested returning it to the sender.



Figgy needed a great deal of persuasion before he would try the waistcoat on.

And that's what we eventually did, accompanying it with a note in which Figgy explained that although he was delighted with the gift, he dare not accept it.

"I am only a junior," he wrote, "and I should not be permitted to wear anything so magnificent. It would be the cause of endless jealousy, and might provoke much bitterness among less fortunate fellows. Not even a master is possessed of so gorgeous a garment"—we thought this an excellent touch—"and although we have a fellow in the school who is the son of a lord, and the very 'glass of fashion and the mould of form,' thinking of little but sartorial adornment, even his wardrobe cannot boast of such splendour. It is his one distinction to be the little ray of sunshine in our midst, and I would not for anything deprive him of it. It would break his heart. Therefore, I am reluctantly compelled—" and so forth.

And the evening that parcel was dispatched was the most cheerful that Figgy had enjoyed since its arrival.

I don't suppose Figgy's cousin was very pleased with the return of her handiwork. Anyway, she has not replied to his letter yet.



AN ACCIDENT!

By Leslie Owen

LAST week I was going along the Fourth Form corridor with Redfern when we met three of the School House fellows over here on a raiding expedition. Cheek, you know, coming over openly like that, without the slightest pretence at caution. Tom Merry, Blake, and Manners were the intruders.

Now, the New House is sacred ground as far as School House bounders are concerned, and we don't encourage aliens. So we promptly proceeded to discourage them.

Reddy yelled out: "School House eads!" which had the effect of turning out the studies in full force, and we went into action.

Bump! Then some anguished howls. Bump, bump! More howls—and things began to get lively. There isn't too much room for a free-and-easy in the corridor, and it's pretty certain that somebody's head is going to get rapped up against the wall. But so long as it's a School House head there isn't much harm done, and we put up with it. Unfortunately, my head got one rather hefty bump, and, of course, that's quite another matter.

But we collared the Tom Merry gang.

Somebody thoughtfully provided a pot of treacle, and we made liberal use of it, together with some ink and a tin of condensed milk that had gone past being of much use for any other purpose.

We tied their hands together, and bade them a more or less affectionate farewell.

They were just rolling down the steps when Ratty came out in his usual inconvenient style, and commenced to understudy Mr. Nosey Parker.

That caused it! Tom Merry & Co. tried to explain that it was due to an accident, but you can take it from me that a pot of treacle, a pint of ink, and a tin of condensed milk takes some explaining away as an accident.

No doubt the School House chaps would wash all right—and they needed it—but their excuse wouldn't.

Not that Ratty cared a Continental hang about what happened to the School House fellows, though, of course, he tried to make out that he was protecting them against our disgusting, cowardly, ruffianly behaviour—I quote him literally—but it was a magnificent opportunity for handing out imposts all round. And that's what it came to.

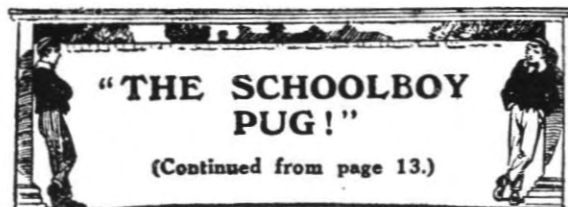
We subsequently discovered that the School House chaps had been on their way to consult Figgy with regard to the Inter-House match, and had come over to the New House without the remotest idea of causing any trouble.

But, of course, accidents will happen, and we assured them later that we did not hold them in the least responsible for the misunderstanding—a concession of which they did not appear to be properly appreciative.

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(Continued from page 13.)

Lynn's eyes flashed. That this rugged, queer new fellow was sensitive had not occurred to Study No. 6. As a matter of fact, Lynn had been sorely wounded by his exclusion from the intimacy of the study. Of St. Leger of the Fifth he saw almost nothing; and, in spite of his loyalty to his cousin, he could not help knowing that St. Leger wanted to keep clear of him. The dandy of the Fifth was his idol, his beau ideal, and he would not allow himself to feel the slightest resentment in that direction. But it was different with his study-mates. He was thrown upon their company; and they did not want him, and did not consider him "good enough." Bitterness had been growing in Lynn's breast for some time; and this incident fanned it into a flame. He rose to his feet, and stared angrily at the chums of the Fourth across the table.

"Who are you calling a pig?" he demanded, loudly and shrilly.

"Don't yell!" said Blake.

"Who's yelling?"

"You are," snapped Blake. "Shut it."

"I'll do as I like."

Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"Who are you blokes, to look down on a chap?" continued Lynn, fiercely and resentfully.

There was no answer to that. Study No. 6 went on with their tea as sedately as possible.

Lynn realised that he was at a disadvantage; he realised that he was talking in a way that those fellows would regard as "low." He was very much inclined to burst into tears. As an alternative to that, he raised his voice in loud anger.

"Looking down on a bloke, as if he isn't good enough for you! I could lick any one of you with one 'and.'"

"Bai Jove!"

"So I could," said Lynn, "and if I 'ave any more cheek I'll jolly well do it, too."

"Weally, Lynn—"

Blake looked at the excited fellow with quiet scorn.

"I don't know how it was that you came to St. Jim's, Lynn," he said. "But now you're here, it's up to you to play up. St. Jim's fellows don't talk like that. Cut it out."

"I'll talk 'ow I like!"

Blake shrugged his shoulders again.

"Pway listen to me, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus mildly.

"I feel bound to mention that we considah it wotten bad form for a fellow to waise his voice."

"Wot do I care?" said Lynn. "I never wanted to come 'ere. The old gent would send me, and I knowed it was no good. I'd rather be back in Hawley's Ring any day."

"Bai Jove! I weally do not know what Hawley's Wing is," said Arthur Augustus in astonishment.

Lynn bit his lip. Again his secret had nearly escaped him—the secret St. Leger had bidden him bury deep.

"If you didn't want to come here," said Blake, "it was a mistake to send you here—no doubt about that. You'd better ask the old gent, whoever he may be, to take you away again."

"Well, I ain't going," said Lynn. "Don't you think it! I'm 'ere, and 'ere I stay."

"Vewy well, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity; "there is no occasion to argue furthah. I am sowwy if I hurt your feelin's unintentionally; a fellow cannot say more than 'bat.'"

"Mighty civil, ain't you?" sneered Lynn. "You can be civil to a chap, because you're afraid he'll dot you on the nose, as I've 'eard young Trimble say."

Arthur Augustus crimsoned, and jumped to his feet.

"Twimble is a lyn' wottah, Lynn, and you are anothah!" he exclaimed hotly. "Aftah that uttaly wotten wemark, I shall insist upon your meetin' me in the gym with the gloves on."

"You! You'd faint if I punched you!" Lynn said contemptuously.

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Can it, Gussy!" said Blake. "This hooligan is looking for trouble, and he can apply to me. I'm your man, Lynn."

"I wefuse to allow anythin' of the kind, Blake. I insist upon givin' Lynn a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lynn.

The idea of receiving a thrashing from the swell of St. Jim's was irresistably entertaining to the Chicken. He roared.

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"When you are done cacklin', Lynn, pewwaps you will be good enough to accompany me to the gym!" D'Arcy said.

"Leave him to me, Gussy, you ass!" growled Blake.

"I wefuse to leave him to you, Blake. I am goin' to thwash the cheeky cad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lynn. "Oh, you're too funny to live, you are! Know what would 'appen to you if I was to 'it you? You'd fall over and never get up again, you would!"

"Bai Jove! You insultin' wuffian—"

"You seem to be fairly hefty with the gloves," said Blake. "But you're making a mistake in thinking that you can bully this study. I'm ready when you are, Lynn."

"I am weady, Blake—"

"You can leave it to me!" growled Herries.

"All of you, if you like," said Lynn, with an air of rather savage banter. "I wouldn't mind 'andling the four of you together, if you're keen on it. You wouldn't last me five minutes."

"Cheeky cad!" growled Digby.

"Shut it!" said Lynn. "I ain't going down to the gym. You fellers ain't worth the trouble. Shove that table aside, and I'll mop up the study with you. That'll 'elp you to learn manners, p'r'aps."

"I'll take you at your word," said Blake quietly. "If you beat me, you can tackle these chaps afterwards."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Dry up, Gussy, and lend a hand with the table."

Arthur Augustus unwillingly "dried up." The study table was shifted aside; Blake peeled off his jacket and put on a pair of boxing-gloves that Dig handed out of the cupboard. Lynn did not trouble to remove his jacket; and that implied contempt for his adversary made Blake's eyes gleam.

"Here's your mittens, Lynn!" said Dig gruffly.

Lynn put them on.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Waiting."

"Come on, then!"

Jack Blake came on fast enough. What happened next Blake never knew. He suddenly realised that he was lying in a corner of the study, with an ache in his jaw that was terrible. From that corner, dazed and dizzy, he blinked helplessly at the schoolboy boxer.

CHAPTER 9. Tom Merry Speaks!

TAP!

Tom Merry opened the door of Study No. 6 and looked in. Manners and Lowther looked in behind him.

"You fellows coming down?" asked Tom cheerily. "Why, what—My hat!"

"Phew!" murmured Lowther.

The Terrible Three stared at the scene. Blake was down in the corner, one gloved hand feeling at his jaw. Herries and Dig and Arthur Augustus looked on blankly. They had seen the lightning-like drive that had knocked Blake off his feet, in startled wonder. Never would they have dreamed that a junior in the Fourth Form of St. Jim's could have handed out a blow like that. They hardly thought that Kildare of the Sixth could have handed it out.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus faintly.

Tom Merry's face was very grave.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"Only a scrap!" said Herries. "It's all right! Shut the door."

Tom shut the door, with the Shell fellows inside the study. Oliver Lynn gave them a grim look. He had not forgotten Tom Merry's kindness, but he was not in a mood to think of that now. He knew instinctively that there was disapproval for him all round, and that knowledge roused his resentment more keenly.

"You'd better chuck this!" said Tom.

Dig helped Blake to his feet. The hapless Blake rubbed his hurt jaw tenderly, with strange grimaces. A black bruise was forming there, and the jaw seemed paralysed.

Blake had stood up to a good many hard knocks in his time. His fight with Figgins of the New House, once upon a time, had been stiff. But he had never stood up to a drive like this. His head was singing, and he felt as if his teeth were loosened. He knew that he could not go on—he was knocked out in one round.

Slowly, with a scarlet face, Blake peeled off the gloves.

His chums were silent. The new fellow was so obviously above the weight of Study No. 6 that it was useless to dispute the point.

"I'm chucking it!" said Blake, his utterance a little indistinct, so intense was the pain in his jaw. "You've done me, Lynn!"

Lynn laughed.

"D'Arcy next," he said.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy drew a deep breath.

"I am weady!" he said very quietly.

"I dessey you'll last me about two seconds!" said Lynn jeeringly.

Lynn of the Fourth was the Chicken again now—the rough fellow of the boxing-booths of old. All that was better in him seemed to have fallen away in his bitterness and resentment. The haunting consciousness of inferiority, which had almost driven him to tears, had finished by driving him to brutality. In one respect, at least, he was superior to these fellows who despised him, and in that respect, at least, he would show that he was master. That was the angry thought in his mind, and he was enjoying the situation now.

"Don't put those gloves on, Gussy!" said Tom Merry steadily. "Lynn, you're doing wrong in this, and you know it. Gussy, keep clear! Lynn has knocked Blake out—he knocked me out the other day. You can't touch him."

"I am goin' to twy, Tom Mewwy."

"You're not, you ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Chuck it, Gussy!" muttered Dig. "The fellow's above our weight. Blessed if I don't think he's some dashed prize-fighter!"

The Terrible Three exchanged a quick glance. The secret, known only to the three, was dawning on Study No. 6.

"Lynn—" began Tom.

"You mind your own business," said Lynn sourly. "They think I ain't good enough for this 'ere study. Well, if they think that, they can put up their 'ands and make it good."

"Yaas, wathah! I am weady!"

Arthur Augustus firmly put on the gloves. He knew that he was going like a lamb to the slaughter, but there was no trace of fear in his heart. Tom Merry almost shuddered at the slim, elegant swell of St. Jim's stood up to the thick-set Chicken. The contest was utterly unfair. Arthur Augustus had not the remotest chance against the fellow who had earned his bread in the boxing-ring.

It did not last long.

Lynn's movements were almost too quick to be followed by the eye. Arthur Augustus was down in three seconds.

He went down with a crash.

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Going on?" sneered the Chicken.

"Yaas!" gasped Gussy.

But as he scrambled up, he reeled, and had to clutch at the corner of the table for support.

"I'm going on!" he stuttered faintly. "I wegard you as an uttah wottah, Lynn, and I am goin' to thwash you somehow!"

"You silly fool!" said Lynn. "I'm letting you off! If I'd let you 'ave that on the nose, I'd 'ave knocked it through your 'ead!"

"Pway come on!"

"Oh, got out!" said the Chicken derisively. "You're done! You ain't got a punch left in you, you tailor's dummy! Let the other blokes 'ave their turn! I'm going to knock out the lot!"

Arthur Augustus moved forward unsteadily. Tom Merry stepped between him and the Chicken.

"Keep back, Gussy!"

"Weally, you know—"

"You're not going to fight Lynn," said Tom Merry quietly. "If you knew about him what I know, you wouldn't think of it!"

"Let him come on," jeered Lynn. "I'll spoil his beauty for him this time. I've 'ad enough of his turning up his nose at me. I'll turn it up for him for good."

"I nevah meant to turn my nose up at you, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus. "I should wegard such a thing as snobish, and in bad form. But—but I think you are wight, Tom Mewwy. I cannot go on."

The swell of the Fourth almost collapsed into a chair. Herries took the gloves from his hands.

"Your turn, Mister Herries!" grinned Lynn.

"I'm ready!" growled George Herries.

"And then Digby," sneered Lynn. "I ain't letting you off, though you don't seem so mighty keen on it as you was!"

"This isn't going on!" said Tom Merry. "Stand back, Herries! You can't tackle a prizefighter. Lynn, you'd better shut up!"

Lynn gave a start.

"What are you calling me?" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry turned his eyes, with a flash in them, upon the boxer.

"I'm going to tell these fellows the truth," he said. "We knew—and never mentioned it. But they're entitled to know, when you're trying to bully them in their own study. Blake, this fellow Lynn is the boxer you nearly saw at Abbotsford the other day—the Chicken!"

"What?" gasped Blake.

"A—a prizefighter!" said Dig.

"Not exactly a prizefighter, but a professional boxer, young

as he is," said Tom. "I doubt whether Kildare of the Sixth could stand up to him."

"You knowed that?" exclaimed Lynn blankly. "You knowed it, and never let on!"

The truculence dropped from the new junior at once. He was thinking of St. Leger—St. Leger, who had warned him never to let his past be known in the school. What would St. Leger say?

"I knew it," said Tom.

"You 'ound!" panted Lynn. "You've been spyin' on a bloke!"

Tom's lip curled.

"That may be your way of getting information," he said.

"It's not mine!"

"Then 'ow did you know?" shouted the Chicken.

"Lowther happened to see you on the film," said Tom coldly. "These fellows would have seen you at Abbotsford Stadium last week, but your friend, or relation, or whatever he is, St. Leger of the Fifth, prevented them. I know why now. As it happened, Lowther saw a film at Wayland the same day, and you were on it."

"Oh!" gasped the Chicken. "I never thought of that. I was filmed once in a boxing match. St. Leger never knowed that."

"Then it's true!" muttered Blake.

"A professional boxah!" said Arthur Augustus.

Lynn's eyes blazed.

"And what 'ave you got to say agin it?" he exclaimed fiercely. "Ain't it honest? Ain't it good enough?"

"Yaas, certainly," said Arthur Augustus. "But you had no right to start a fight with schoolboys, if you are a professional boxah. There is such a thing as fair play, and playin' the game, though you do not seem to be awah of it."

Herries threw down the gloves.

"So you're backing out?" said the Chicken.

Herries did not answer that, save with a curl of the lip. Blake rubbed his jaw slowly and painfully.

"You can take off those gloves, Lynn," said Digby quietly. "Nobody here is going to fight a professional pug. It's not good enough. Now we know—"

"Now you know," muttered the Chicken, "I s'pose all the school will know! What will he say?" He was thinking of St. Leger. "He told me to keep it dark. I wish I hadn't never come 'ere."

He hurried the gloves to the floor, and cast a black defiant look round at the silent juniors. He was moved to rush upon them, hitting out right and left—the redoubtable Chicken would not have feared the seven of them all together; it was not prudence that restrained him. He was more miserable than angry. He gave them one look, and then strode to the door and tore it open. The door slammed behind him. As he stepped out into the passage, the fat figure of Baggy Trimble scuttled away. Lynn looked after him without interest, and stood for some minutes with a puckered brow, in troubled thought.

He went downstairs at last. On the landing he passed a group of juniors. Baggy Trimble was relating something to them breathlessly, amid ejaculations of astonishment and incredulity. Lynn caught the words, "The Chicken! A prizefighter—"

"Rot!" said Gore of the Shell, who was in the group. "Here, young shaver, Trimble says—" Gore, in his bullying way, caught Lynn by the shoulder, and spun him back as he passed.

Crash!

Gore flew across the landing, and dropped with a gasping howl. Oliver Lynn went down the lower stairs, and the juniors gathered round the dazed Gore. They needed no more proof of Trimble's startling assertion.

Lynn went down the stairs, hesitating at the end of the Fifth Form passage; but he did not go to St. Leger's study. He went down to the big doorway, and strode out into the dusk of the quadrangle.

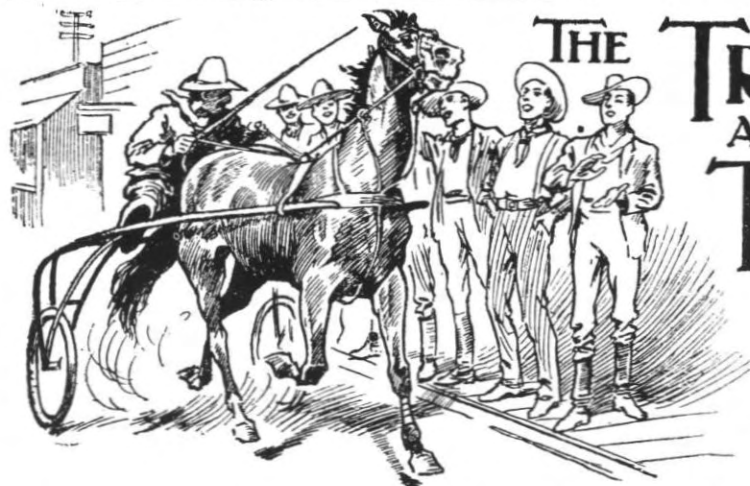
"I've done it now!" he muttered miserably. "I've been and gone and done it, and no error! I could knock out any six of 'em; but—but—but that ain't no good. What's the good of it? And—and St. Leger don't want to speak to me; he's ashamed of me, and don't want me 'ere—" The muttering voice trailed off.

In the dusk, under the elms, the tears welled into the eyes of the Chicken—never so moistened in the old days, when he had stood up to hard punishment in the ring. If Study No. 6 could have seen him at that moment, they would have felt, perhaps, a little kinder towards the schoolboy boxer.

THE END.

(What prospects has this professional boxer, Oliver Lynn, in his new surroundings? You will hear more about this amazing junior in "CARDEW'S FIGHTING CHUM!" next week's grand school story, by Martin Clifford. Make sure of ordering your GEM early, and thus make sure of securing our splendid FREE Auto-graphed Footer Photo.

A STIRRING STORY OF THE WILD WEST!



THE TROTTER AND THE TRICKSTER!

by
GORDON WALLACE

A Thrilling Adventure of the
Six Stalwart Chums of
Thunder Creek.

CHAPTER 1.

The Sulky—And a Spill!

THE six young Sportsmen of Thunder Creek were hard-up. That was nothing new for them. Ever since they had been a little clique of sports fans amongst themselves they had cared so little about money that they even hated to work for it. Up till quite recently, having nobody else much to worry as to whether they grew fat or starved, they had been content to remain in their state of impecuniosity. Up till recently, it should be repeated. But these days, being hard-up was a somewhat serious matter. For now they had somebody dependent upon them.

"Our godson," said Jim Raven, the accepted leader of the Sportsmen, "has been sick, and there's a heavy doctor's bill been run up—an operation, in fact."

"Doctors ought to be compelled to operate free," said Digger Harrison, the Australian member of this gang of sportsmen.

"They do, as a matter of fact, in some hospitals," said Jim Raven. "But my mater, who's looking after young Syd, wouldn't let the kid go to a hospital. She sent for the doctor, and nursed him herself. Which I think's dashed decent of her!"

The others agreed that it was very decent. But they also agreed that it was a shame Mrs. Raven should have the worry of doctors' bills and things while those responsibilities were theirs. For had they not, the six of them, made themselves responsible for young Syd Patterson, the eight-year-old son of Jack Patterson, their friend, who was now doing "time" for alleged stackburning? Had they not decided that Syd, back home in England now, should, during the years of his father's imprisonment to come, get the best education that money could buy?

Jim Raven, an old Hebbleswick fellow, had decided Syd should go to Hebbleswick later, even though it did cost hundreds a year to go to that fine Yorkshire public school. And in the meanwhile, Syd wanted feeding, clothing, and his doctor's bills had to be paid.

"The bill for the doctor alone is fifty-odd pounds, English money," said Jim Raven, consulting the letter from his mother that he had just taken from the post-office at Red Wheat City, which is a thriving little town pretty far north in Alberta. "That's a lot of money in dollars for her to pay out of the bit of

an allowance I can make her." For, irresponsible though Jim Raven was, he always managed to scrape up enough cash somehow to send his mother something home each month, though it meant, often enough, he had to go short of necessities to do so.

"There seems to be a slump in sports just now," said Digger Harrison. "Ever since you boxed Spike Needler, Jim, and made a bit that way, there haven't been many chances. Yet we were going to keep Syd going out of what we could make at sports." He sighed. "I expect it'll mean we'll have to go to work," he said.

They could do that, certainly. But they put a very high valuation on their work—far higher than the local ranchers or farmers did. Other work there was little enough of. Up here at Thunder Creek agriculture was the only industry. Farmers and ranchers will not pay bank managers' salaries to careless youngsters who think more about sports than anything else. And when they do pay wages, they usually do so at the end of the term of hiring. The need for two hundred and fifty dollars was urgent. Even when hired out, it would take those six two months to make that amount of cash.

"They're having some races here tomorrow, aren't they?" said Digger Harrison. "Maybe we could win a prize or two by entering our horses."

But that only raised a laugh. Every one of the Sportsmen had a horse of his own. But none of them possessed a racehorse. Theirs were just hardy, half-bred bronchos; good enough for a stiff day's work on the prairie, and fairly speedy, but not up to race-track standard.

"Or I wouldn't mind offering myself as a jockey to some gink who wants his horse riding well," said Pete. "Or—That's more in my line." He nodded his head upstreet, and, following the direction of his gaze, his eye comrades in sportsmanship saw, coming through at a rattling pace, a trotting outfit.

They all had an eye for a good horse, these sportsmen. When this magnificent trotter came level with them, snorting, lathering with the exertion it was going through, taking the light, pneumatic-tired trotting-cart noiselessly along, they cheered approvingly, and the dark-looking driver, bent low over his own knees, holding the short reins as steadily as a rock, grinned at them, and passed on.

"Who's horse is that?" asked Jim Raven, when the dust the trotter had kicked up had subsided.

"Some big-noise sport from Edmonton, I expect," said Smiler Dickinson. "And here's another one coming."

A similar outfit, only the horse was a coal black stallion, hove into view. Evidently, these trotters were returning from practice on the local racecourse. They have a racecourse in almost every one of those thriving little towns in Western Canada, and very good they are, too.

But this second trotter did not come level with the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek before something considerably exciting took place.

An ill-bred dog started the disturbance. Just as the trotter came level with the drug-store, this dog—it was a yellow one—rushed out from the doorway of that establishment, barking and scurrying insanely. And the high-spirited trotter at once took fright.

It shied violently. The driver did his best, but he was not able to avoid the accident. The offside wheel of his trotting sulky came into contact with a telephone-pole that stood at the edge of the plank sidewalk. The sulky bounced off, as though made of rubber, as, indeed, its tyres were. The driver, never very stably seated, shot from his "saddle" sideways. The horse, feeling the unexpected tug at its reins, reared, then came to all fours again, and continued to dash—to gallop, not to trot or pace—down the wide street.

It looked as though some horse-owner were going to suffer disaster. And perhaps he would, too, only for the fact that there were six young sportsmen—"no goods," as many called them—conveniently near. And these six youngsters acted with commendable promptitude.

In a body they rushed out into the middle of the road. The horse raised its head when it saw six fellows approaching. There was a scrabbling of hoofs on the unpaved road. The horse stumbled, and all but went to its knees. And again, perhaps, that calamity would have happened, and the beast's trotting days would have been over, only Jim Raven got hold of the creature's bridle just in the nick of time, gave an upwards jerk, and so helped the trotter to keep to its feet. Yet Jim was dragged along for some yards as he grimly hung on to the animal's head. But when three or four other Sportsmen took a hand, the horse decided it was useless to fight any further, and, snorting, champing his bit, and lathering with sweat, he came to a halt, while Jim Raven, rather breathless, certainly, patted him down to calmness once again.

Of course, there were plenty of people, who had been a bit too slow to do any good when they were needed, who came rushing up. They surrounded the frightened horse, and began to tell each other why they hadn't thought about stopping the runaway. But the late driver of the trotter did not come along. He, as a matter of fact, was just then being carried into the drug-store for treatment. But a wide-hatted gentleman came running out from the main hotel of Red Wheat City. He was a middle-aged, florid-faced man, not unhandsome, looking like one of the many self-made millionaires that the West can produce occasionally.

"Guess I'm obliged to you, boys!" said this man. "That horse is worth a mint of dollars. And he's down for to-morrow's race, too, with a pretty hefty stake behind him! Suppose you've read about Sam Spratt? Waal, that's the horse's name."

"Won the two-five trot in Chicago last fall, didn't he?" said Pete Craddock, who was from Chicago himself.

"The very same horse," said Sam Spratt's owner. "I reckon Al Winthrop's very much obliged to you!" And he held a brown, capable hand out to each of them in turn. "In the matter of reward—" He put a hand to his hip, and drew therefrom a bulky wallet.

Yet, strangely enough, desperately though these sportsmen wanted cash, they all drew back when they saw the substantial wad of greenbacked currency that Mr. Al Winthrop produced. They did not mind working—sometimes—for money, nor did they mind boxing for it, or doing any other sporting stunt; but none wanted to receive cold cash merely for doing a good turn to a brother sportsman.

"That's all right, sir, thanks," said Jim. The others murmured their agreement with him. "Fine horse. Hallo! I'm afraid your jockey's hurt!"

"He oughtn't to have driven so close in to the sidewalk," said Mr. Winthrop sternly. "But I hope he isn't badly hurt." For the drug-store assistant was addressing him now. "What's that? Broken his arm? Waal, I call that real bad luck!"

He left the Sportsmen, who led the captured Sam Spratt to the livery stable at the back of the hotel. There they handed the black over to a liveryman. That done, they went out into the street again. But they looked at each other a trifle ruefully. Jim Raven laughed in a jerky fashion.

"We're too much like darned fools to have the guardianship of a small boy," he said. "He had two twenty-dollar bills in his hand when we refused his tip."

"Forty dollars—about a sixth of what we owe a doctor in England," said Smiler Dickinson. "At the rate we're going, we'll soon get all we want—I do not think, James!"

But Pete Craddock got an idea just at this moment. He gave his head a scratch before acting on it. Then, as he looked across the street and saw Winthrop coming out of the drug-store again, he jammed his hat firmly down on his head and buttoned up his coat.

"Anyhow, there's the chance of making a bit out of sport," he announced, and strode across the street to meet Winthrop, who stopped when addressed, and eyed Craddock, who was only a medium-sized fellow, over critically.

The other sportsmen looked on with

interest, wondering what the conversation was about.

When Craddock showed the horse-owner his hands and spoke earnestly, the millionaire laughed a trifle. Then he clapped Craddock on the shoulder.

"Sure, then, I'll risk it," he said. "Best take him out and try him. And there's a hundred dollars if you win, nothing if you lose."

"I'll win, boss," drawled Pete, and returned to his comrades, his eyes gleaming.

"I convinced him that I knew something about driving a trotter," said Pete. "And so I'm to be his jockey in to-morrow's race."

"Rather a one-sided way of getting paid, though, isn't it?" asked Sandy Graham, who was Scotch.

"All the more incentive to win," said Pete Craddock. "There's only that other trotter up against me. We'll be a hundred bucks nearer getting Syd's doctor's bill—paid by to-morrow night."

CHAPTER 2.

The Suspicious Half-Breed!

"OURS is a nice house, ours is!" chanted Jim Raven, as he prepared to undress for the night.

"Pity we didn't get some of that hundred on account, Pete. Then we'd be able to afford beds in the hotel."

"Luxurious gink!" yawned Pete Craddock. "What's wrong with a shake-down here, in Rafferty's barn? The hay's clean, the night's quite mild, and we're all together."

"Sure, in death only are we divided," grumbled Jim. "Personally, I'd—Pat O'Hara. Haven't I told you



Armed with a pump, Pujol swiped viciously at the head of Pete Craddock, who ducked. As he did so, Raven stepped up to the half-breed, and dealt him a sound thump under the left ear that sent him staggering against the wheel of the sulky.

cigarettes are bad for the wind? Put that cigarette out!"

"I'm not in trainin', bedad," grinned the Irish sportsman.

"Well, you're running the risk of burning our bed-room down, anyway!" said Jim. "By Jove! Just in time!" And he grabbed up a wisp of hay that was smouldering, twisted it together into a rope, and so extinguished the fire. "Silly gink! We want our money to educate Syd, not to pay for new barns."

They certainly were used to all sorts of life, these Sportsmen of Thunder Creek. And sleeping together in a barn was no novelty to them. They had a shack of their own a far way north of this town, which they used when convenient. But often enough they slept just where they happened to be at bed-time. Hotel charges are high enough in the new West, and they seriously thought it wasteful to pay bills for beds when there was so much free accommodation to be had.

Pat O'Hara obediently put his cigarette out when he realised how near he had come to being an incendiary.

"I'll just slip down and see if the sulky's all right," said Pete Craddock, taking up the hurricane lantern Rafferty's stableman had lent them. "I sometimes hear tales about horses getting doped before an important race, of sulkies getting monkeyed with. Thank goodness, this sulky I'm using to-morrow is under my eye, as it were."

It was, as a matter of fact, down in the lower part of the barn, which was really a sort of buggy-shed for the lively stable. And so down the ladder Craddock crept, lantern in hand. There he found two sulkies Winthrop's, and the vehicle Sam Spratt's rival would pull on the morrow.

He cast an eye over the sulky, and saw it was quite all right. As he examined it, the sliding door of the barn came open, and a man bearing an electric torch entered. This man stared at Pete when he saw him. Pete recognised him at once as the dark-skinned man who was going to drive Sam Spratt's rival to-morrow. The man grinned.

"Just do w'at I do, eh?" he asked, with a strong French accent, that, along with his complexion, proclaimed him a half-breed. "You look at ze sulky, hein?"

"Sure," said Pete. "Like to make

sure of things. I'm driving against you to-morrow."

The half-breed grinned again, and bent over his own sulky. Pete continued his examination, purposely prolonging it. For—although he had to admit there was no reason to suspect—he did not seem anxious to trust this breed overmuch. Some of his race are deceitful, treacherous, and utterly without sense of sport. So he did a lot of elaborate things to the sulky. He even took off the wheels, which were like a bicycle's wheels; took off the outer covers of the tyres, too, and examined the inner tubes. He didn't want to have any thorns or pins about that might cause a puncture the next day. He was satisfied with his examination, noticing that both covers and tubes were brand-new, without a patch upon them. He replaced the tyres and the wheels. And by the time he had done that, Pujol—which was the name of the half-breed, Pete knew—also seemed to have done all the overhauling he wanted to do.

"Good-night, m'sieu!" said Pujol, at length, and passed out of the barn, closing the door after him.

"Got the wind up about nothing, of course," the Yankee growled to himself. "The fellow's straight enough. Heigho, my suspicions have cost me half an hour's sleep."

He climbed back into the loft, where he was greeted by the snores of his five irresponsible comrades. Very soon he had joined them in the land of dreams. For the consciences of all were clear enough, and their digestions were good, though means to give their digestive organs work to do were not always to hand.

And yet a dream disturbed Pete Craddock towards morning. In it got mixed up that half-breed's dusky countenance, a surgeon's bill for an operation performed, a sulky's tyre, and, indeed, the whole dream was one of those unaccountable mix-ups that worry a man so much that he has to awake.

He came awake about the same moment as Jim Raven. Jim Raven seemed to have a grievance.

"You had your blinking foot in my mouth," said Jim.

"Sorry, and all that," said Pete. "I must have been wriggling about in my sleep. Accidents will happen. What's the time? Hallo!"

Above the snorings of their pals, these two wideawake ones heard a sound. It was easily recognisable, though it seemed to come from a little distance, and lower down than where they lay. It was, in short, the sound of a stifled sneeze.

"Down near the sulkies," said Pete Craddock, his suspicions very much aroused again. "Darn it! Is that breed trying to dope—"

He pulled his breeches on in the dark. Jim Raven did the same. Pete next led the way down the ladder in his stocking feet. And when they got to the lower level, they saw a light burning at the other end of the buggy-shed. Further, they saw a man who seemed to be hard at work. They heard the hiss of an air-pump, and, when they looked harder, they saw Pujol in the act of inflating the tyre of one of the sulkies. But it was his own sulky.

"Hallo!" Pete called, and strode forward into the light of the lamp Pujol had burning. "Working early, aren't you?"

"It is early, ma foi, yes," said Pujol, who had started rather violently at Pete's hail. "Four o'clock, and ze dawn, 'e just com'."

"Bit anxious about your sulky, aren't you?" asked Pete, and scrutinised the vehicle he himself was going to use this day. He felt at his tyres; they were firm

enough, as he had left them. He tried the springiness of the shafts. They were faultless.

Pujol finished his pumping operation, and stood upright. He grinned at the two young Sportsmen.

"Me, I want to win. I try not to disturb you," he said. "I am afraid some mauvais sujet, 'e will doctaire my chariot—so."

For the lives of them neither Jim nor Pete could see why they should not believe the man. They answered him civilly enough, but felt more relieved when Pujol went out once more.

"I'll be glad when this race is over," said Pete. "I'm getting nervous. Wonder why he was worrying about his tyres as early as this, seeing he overhauled the sulky last night?"

He stooped down and examined Pujol's sulky as he spoke, and he fingered the tyres of it. At once there came a yell from the doorway, and Pujol, waving his tyre-pump, bounced in again. The grin had left his face now. He looked very threatening.

Pete Craddock stepped back from him.

"You go 'way!" shouted the half-breed. "You leave my cart alone! You are one crook. You are one—" He swiped viciously at the head of Pete, who ducked.

Jim Raven was one of those fellows who always take on a pal's quarrels. Jim hated the sight of Pujol trying to brain his Yankee chum. Almost before he thought about it, Jim stepped up to the man, and dealt him a sound thump under the left ear that sent Pujol staggering against the wheel of the sulky. The man dropped his pump, which Jim picked up.

"You strike me!" yelled the half-breed. "You—"

"And I'll do it again, if you don't shut up," said Jim grimly. "You've gone off your base, I think."

Pujol rubbed his ear aggrievedly. "You monkey with the sulky," he said.

"Nothing of the sort; don't be an ass," said Jim. "You want locking up, I think!"

Pujol started and stared. He forgot to rub his ear. His jaw dropped for a moment, then, suddenly, he wheeled and almost ran out of the buggy-shed. They did not see him before the sun had risen, though one or the other of these two kept watch over both sulkies for an hour or so.

It was while the Sportsmen were having breakfast at the Chinese restaurant, where they could get a cheap but well-cooked meal, that they heard some news. It was Corporal Nevin, of the Mounted Police, who jingled in and imparted it to his Sportsman friends.

"You're always out to make cash," said Nevin, "for Syd. Well, there's a chance for you—if you can bring the thing off."

"What's in the wind now?" asked Jim Raven, his mouth full of baked beans.

"Three hundred dollars reward offered by Winthrop, whose wife's had all her diamonds and things pinched in the night," said Nevin. "Funny things some women do—bring fortunes in jewels up to these jumping-off places, then get quite excited if they're lost. Winthrop claims, though, they've been burgled. Taken right out of Mrs. Winthrop's trunk, in her bed-room, since eleven o'clock last night. They're worth a good many thousands. Why don't you go and find 'em?"

"Well," grinned Jim Raven, "if you'll tell me where they are, I will. I suppose you've got a clue of sorts?"

"Not a clue," said Nevin. "Pretty neat-handed thief, if they were pinched.

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Pete Craddock fingered the flabby inner tube of the sulky's tyre and felt something hard. Rocklessly he tore the tube to shreds, and out fell an assortment of jewels. "What a topping place for a crook to hide his loot!" said Jim Raven, looking on. "My word, our luck's in. We shall be able to claim that reward now, boys!"

Winthrop's making a song about it, of course. Seems a lot of the jewels are so rare they couldn't be replaced. There's a necklace containing the green eye of the yellow god, or something thrilling, amongst the loot."

Just the same, lightly as the corporal and the Sportsmen spoke, there was not a Sportsman present who did not wish it could be his luck to find those stolen jewels. Three hundred dollars would not merely pay their young godson's doctor's bill; but there would be a few dollars left over, with which they might buy much-needed shirts and socks. And they sighed, and said they never had any luck like that.

CHAPTER 3.

Victory—and a Startling Discovery.

THERE was quite a nice lot of events in the race-card of this day at Red Wheat City. There were both flat races and steeplechases. There were other trotting matches. Indeed, it was an excellent programme of sport; and the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek enjoyed their afternoon immensely. Their only regret was that they were not all taking part in the events. Certainly, Jim Raven had a shot at the jumping competition, using Snuffler, his broncho, for the purpose. But Snuffler was out-classed, though Jim had the fun of trying his best to make the horse win. And, though Snuffler muffed two of the jumps, he took the last and worst—the water-jump—in magnificent style, fetching out a roar of applause from the assembled spectators.

But perhaps the star event was the trotting match between Al Winthrop's Sam Spratt and Joyce's Walkaway, as the horse Pujol was driving, was named. Everybody knew that this race was the

outcome of a bet between two rival sportsmen, who had tons of money each. The bet was a heavy one, and Pete Craddock knew that he had a big responsibility on his shoulders as he stood in Sam Spratt's stall, just before the race, and listened to the owner's instructions.

"You won't have much time to think what you're going to do," said Winthrop. "It's a mile only, and the horse will do it in less than two-ten. So you'll have to start well, because Walkaway won't give you much chance to make up for hesitations. And," the millionaire added, with a wry little smile, "if you lose, I lose ten thousand dollars. Quite a bit of money, on top of the fifteen that my wife's baubles cost, and which some obliging person walked away with last night."

"I'll see Walkaway don't walk away from me," said Pete Craddock. Being a Yankee, self-assurance was a characteristic with him. "I want the hundred dollars, anyway."

"Good! Glad you've got a stake in the race," said Winthrop.

A few minutes later word was received for Pete and Pujol to get out on to the course. And the two trotters, both looking in the very pink of health and fitness, pranced their way between the shafts of their respective sulkies, while their drivers, sitting straddle-legged in the seats, with such short hold on the reins that their hands almost touched the animals they were driving, drove them out and into the gaze of the multitude.

A roar of applause rang out when the horses were seen. And in that roar Pete Craddock's comrades joined. Pete was not feeling in the slightest degree nervous. He was a capital horseman, with a large amount of horse-sense. He took things coolly, though Sam Spratt did not seem to want to do that.

"Let him have his head," ordered Winthrop, as the two, having been allotted their places, lined up and awaited the starter's pistol. "Sam'll do all you ask him to."

Pete had drawn the inside place, which might have been an advantage, and yet which might not. It would mean he would be close to the rails all the way. Pujol, having the outside track, might want to crowd him, and he would have to keep a wary eye on the half-breed, whom even yet he did not quite trust. He knew there was bad feeling between himself and Pujol; and these professional trotting jockeys can do unsporting things sometimes without being detected.

Sam Spratt was like a hound in leash as he pawed the ground and fretted at the hold Pete had upon him. But when the pistol cracked, he slid forward beautifully, getting into his famous trotting stride almost from the take-off. Walkaway, for a moment, tried to belie his name—he broke into a canter almost at the beginning, which lost him a yard or two before the softly-cursing Pujol could get him into his trotting stride. And Pete sailed ahead, to the roaring cheers of the lookers-on.

The first lap was completed in safety, when the second began the two trotters were all but level. There was not a head between them, anyway. The wheels of the two sulkies almost touched each other; the two drivers crouched forward almost elbow to elbow, Pujol using his whip uninterruptedly, swearing all the time. Pete, a silent man, just drove that wonderful black as, perhaps, Sam Spratt had never been driven before.

The second lap was half-way over, and Pete decided to urge Sam Spratt on for the first time. He spoke sharply to the gallant trotter. Sam Spratt seemed to lengthen his stride. The head lead he

had become a neck; then half a length. And Pujol gave a wail of disappointment, and—it might have been unintentional, though Pete did not think so, he slashed outwards with his whip. Right across the face Pete got the blow. The spectators roared in anger at it, for they saw it all. And Pete's sight was dimmed as he clenched his teeth with pain.

Still, he could see the ears of Sam Spratt still, and pluckily drove the horse forward. An inch at a time, he drew ahead of Walkaway.

There were a hundred yards to go, when there was a pistol-like report just behind Pete, who, startled, turned his head slightly to see what was wrong. His sight was clearer now. He distinctly saw the near-side wheel of Pujol's buggy wobbling, and knew Pujol had had a puncture. Sam Spratt flashed past the winning-post a length and a half ahead of his rival, and gradually the triumphant Pete drew him down to a walk.

"Bully!" roared Winthrop, running out and taking Sam Spratt's head.

"No, you won't, sir!" said Pete, again showing himself to be as quixotic as any of his brother-sportsmen. "A hundred was the deal!"

Back to his stall under the grand-stand Sam Spratt was taken. So was Walkaway. And when Pete rolled out of the sulky seat, he saw Pujol, wringing his hands, staring down at his tyre.

"Malfortune!" sobbed the half-breed.

"Reminds me!" said Craddock. "Did you mean to hit me?"

"Go 'way!" said Pujol. "I am upset! I know not what to do! Ah!" And he

picked up the shafts of his sulky and actually began to wheel the frail vehicle off the course, towards the town.

Just then Pete's comrades in sportmanship came along and proceeded to knock the wind out of Pete with their back-thumpings. The triumph of one member of this brotherhood was the triumph of all.

"And there's a hundred dollars towards the doctor's bill," said Pete. "That'll help. Might have been two, only—Gee whiz!"

He stooped suddenly and picked something from the ground. He looked at it, then looked after Pujol, who was just then wheeling his sulky off the ground.

"Scan that," he said, handing his find over to Jim Raven.

Jim took it, and whistled. It was a very elaborate earring, and the great jewel in it struck Jim as being a diamond of the finest water.

"Gosh!" cried Pete, and took a few steps forward. He stooped again, and off the ground picked up that earring's companion. And again he looked at the receding form of Pujol.

"I get it!" yelled Pete, and dashed after the half-breed. "Come on, you fellows! Here's for another three hundred dollars!"

Pujol, when he heard the Sportsmen running after him, halted, seemed for a moment likely to stand his ground; then, with a yell, threw down the shafts of the sulky, and bolted.

"Fetch him back, Digger and Sandy!" cried Pete. "Jim, let's look at this punctured tyre. I'm finding things out now!"

He was, with a vengeance. There was a big split in this tyre, showing where it had burst. Pete ripped the outer cover off. On the inner tube was a big patch—rather too big to be convincing. No trotter-driver would have wanted to drive with a tyre like that. The patch seemed new, too. But it was not the patch Pete examined. He fingered the flabby inner-tube. He felt something hard, and recklessly tore the tube to shreds.

Out fell an assortment of jewels! There was a necklace of diamonds there. There were rings. There was a diamond-studded wrist-watch. In fact, everything that Corporal Nevin had named was there.

"So that's what Pujol was doing to his tyre when we caught him blowing it up this morning!" said Jim Raven. "Topping place for a crook to hide his loot—eh? Bad luck for him he punctured, though."

"But good luck for us," grunted Pete. "We'll get Syd's bill paid now, and I'm wanting a pair of new bootlaces."

And, later, Winthrop showed he did not offer rewards without paying up. Money was cabled home that very day to Jim Raven's mother in Yorkshire.

And Pujol? Well, Pujol languishes in gaol now.

And the Sportsmen? Oh, they're still stone-broke!

(Look out for the next story of the exciting adventures of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek in the GEM. Meanwhile, make sure of reading "SPOILERS OF SPORT!" a thrilling story of treachery and a boat race, by Cecil Wrotham. You are bound to enjoy it.)

What You Have to Do!

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Clapton Orient Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Clapton Orient" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach this address not later than THURSDAY, March 22nd, 1923.

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THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Jack Wabbygong, James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinese named Lung, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, together with Viscount Waffington, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in bringing about the capture of a gang of international burglars.

John Lincoln, one of the governors, takes an interest in the lads, and arranges to take them on a world tour.

The great day comes, and aboard the Pole Star the happy party set off on their great adventure.

After an exciting sea trip, the Pole Star drops anchor at San Carlo where the boys make things so lively they have to dash back to the ship to avoid arrest. Immediately they get back they are told they are to rout out a number of pirates—a prospect they hail with joy. The journey is continued until the coast of Morocco is reached. Here the party land, and, armed to the teeth, they advance upon the stronghold of Suini Baba, the pirate chief.

They are captured, however, by a party of mounted Moors, and marched to the residence of El Took, the nigger governor of Suini Baba. Things would have gone badly for the boys, but for the sudden appearance of Nobby, who scared El Took and his attendants and then leapt through the dome of the hall.

(Now read on.)

Beware of the Lion!

CRASH!
A shower of coloured fragments fell as Nobby shot through the roof of the hall.

Crack!
The nigger with the spear went down like a stone, as the flying boomerang caught him a shrewd buff on the skull that would have killed a white man.

Swiftly Wobby stepped forward and recovered his weapon, slipping it under his robe as the door of the hall was jammed with armed guards, wildly excited, looking round for the Flying Jinn who was causing all the excitement.

El Took got up on his hands and knees behind his pile of cushions. His eyes were rolling and his black face was ashen green with fear.

Even El Took was shaken this time. "Allah il Allah!" he grunted. "Certain it is that the demons of Eblees are loose to-night, and the Halls of Kaf are emptied of jinns and efreets who prey upon us!"

Then he staggered on to his pile of cushions and pointed to the captives.

"I must have time to think," he said. "Take these prisoners and shut them up in a safe place. Lock them carefully in the slave cage, and let loose Said. I warrant he will guard them securely!"

The guards, scared and nervous, swarmed into the hall.

Mr. Hobbs took one look at them. He knew that there are two sorts of men who are very dangerous. There is the man who is very angry, and the man who is very frightened. The man who is very frightened is the most dangerous of the two, especially when he is armed with a matchlock which is ready primed with a trigger to it that snaps on a feather-weight pull.

"Go quietly, boys!" he muttered. "Anywhere's better than this chamber o' horrors. And if one of these ere guns goes you won't want two shots from it."

The boys allowed themselves to be surrounded by the shouting, frightened guards.

A small door was opened at the back of the hall. They were hurried through this and into narrow passages which turned and twisted in all directions. Presently a small heavy door was kicked open, and they found themselves in an open courtyard which smelled like the cat-house at the Zoo.

The courtyard was dark and wide, surrounded by low roofs.

Mr. Hobbs sniffed the air as they were dragged along.

There was a curiously musky smell that he recognised.

When he had served in the Navy, Mr. Hobbs had put in a long term up in the Persian Gulf, chasing slave-dhows.

The musky smell in the air was the smell of a slaver's hold newly opened.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum!" he said. "I smell slaves!"

Their conductors hurried them across the courtyard.

On the far side was an arched and roofed corner barred in with great iron bars. In this was a door, which one of the party unlocked. The grated door was thrown open, and one by one they were kicked into this cage.

Mr. Hobbs slipped and nearly fell over

a white, rounded object which lay on the ground. This was a skull.

The man who had unlocked the cage did not trouble to lock it behind him.

The boys wondered at this as the party turned away, and they saw the light of the lamp they carried recrossing the courtyard towards the walls of the palace. They saw a door open and the misty white figures with the lamp disappear into the wall.

"Why, they've forgotten to lock us in!" said Wobby.

"Arf a mo'!" muttered Mr. Hobbs. "Arf a mo', Master Wobby! There's something more in this than meets the eye. They didn't look to me like a gang that would forget anything but their debts. Yes, I thought so! Wot's that?"

"That" was a grating sound in the darkness.

Somewhere or other a trap had been lifted in the courtyard.

Their eyes were growing accustomed to the darkness now, and, holding on to the bars of their cage, they peered through.

There was a dark hole in the white wall at the side of the courtyard.

"That's where the trap went up!" whispered Mr. Hobbs. "Oh crumbs! They've let loose the dawg! And what a dawg it is, too!"

Out from the hole in the wall crept a great shape, shadowy, indistinct, and terrible.

The watchers caught the green glint of a pair of fiery eyes turned in their direction. Then the great shape approached, shambling, and soft-footed, padding over the hard earth of the courtyard like a huge cat.

It stopped a little way from the cage. Then its head was lifted, and the courtyard echoed to the long-drawn grating roar of a lion.

"My word!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "It's just as well we are in the cage, after all. 'Ere, Fido, Fido!"

The huge lion stalked slowly towards the cage. He sniffed at the occupants, and, lifting his head, gave another dismal roar.

"Give 'im Bovril!" said Mr. Hobbs. "That's what's the matter with 'im. 'E's 'ungry!"

The old lion, prowling in the yard at the back of El Took's palace, was either very hungry or very disagreeable.

As he approached the slave cage in
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which Mr. Hobbs and his party were shut up, he lifted his muzzle to the sky and emitted a grievous roar.

It was a doleful sound, something like the bray of a donkey magnified a hundred times.

"Well, that's a rum 'un!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "Lions loose, and us shut up in cages! It's like the Zoo turned inside out. Now I know what a monkey feels like on a Bank 'Oliday!"

The lion stopped half a dozen yards from the bars.

He did not look at Mr. Hobbs and the boys. They could see his eyes gleaming green in the gloom, and they could smell his fetid breath.

He was a very old lion indeed, a private man-eater, too old to pull down cattle, and too slow to chase horse, camel, or antelope, and he had fallen into a lion pit and had become a pensioner of El Took's.

His master fed him on slaves and carrion. And apparently there had been a shortage of both, for he was very thin.

Mr. Hobbs could see this in the darkness.

"Crums," he exclaimed, "the poor old chap is fair starved! 'E's been living on the dole. That's what's the matter with him!"

"I'd sooner have his room than his company!" said Wobby, hanging on to the bars of the cage and staring at the shadowy figure. "He may be old, but there's life in the old dog yet!"

"I don't know, Master Wobby," said Mr. Hobbs. "I expect that if you looked into his mouth, 'e ain't got no teeth. Sort o' lion that you've got to feed on Glaxo. If 'e wasn't pretty weak, 'e'd soon 'op it over these walls. They're not high enough to keep in a lion that means to get out. 'E's full o' rheumatism, I expect, and can't jump!"

The words were hardly out of Mr. Hobbs' mouth than, with a sudden angry roar, the old lion showed that he could jump.

He leaped sideways at the cage where those five shadowy, white-robed figures were looking at him through the bars.

Smash!

He came against the bars, and the five tumbled head over heels as he rolled over snarling.

"There's a nasty spiteful brute!" said Mr. Hobbs indignantly. "Shows you what sort o' disposition 'e's got. And it was a good job for us that the old bars held. Perhaps he won't try it on again," added Mr. Hobbs as the lion limped off, snarling angrily. "Urt 'imself, I should say."

"So should I," said Wobby, with a smile.

"I wonder what sort of a watchdog he is?" continued Mr. Hobbs. "We are not locked in, young gents, and we might slip over one of them walls as easy as easy."

"Wait a minute, Hobbo!" said Wobby. "We can soon try."

He clicked the latch of the cage door and half opened it, but the dark, slinking figure of the lion gave forth a menacing roar and came shuffling towards the cage door at once.

"It's nix on the bunk, boys!" announced Wobby briefly. "We are best where we are. Perhaps something will happen soon."

And something was going to happen soon!

"I am not going to worry about it," said Mr. Hobbs, drawing out his pipe and tobacco, which he had managed to regain in the scramble, and lighting up. "I've reached that state o' mind when a chap don't care if it snows. What will

be, will be—and what's the good o' worrying about trifles like lions? Maybe Mr. Lincoln and the rest will find their way into this buzzard's nest, and 'e'll give this nigger tug a taste of the lion's claw."

"Hey!" exclaimed Wobby suddenly. "What's that?"

"What's what?" asked Hobbs.

"Why, there's someone climbing over the wall yonder, close above the lion's den," whispered Wobby, full of excitement.

"I can't see anything!" answered Mr. Hobbs.

"Of course you can't—not with that pipe glowing in front of your nose," replied Wobby. "But I saw something like a head and shoulders bob up just now against the stars. Now it has gone again!"

"Top of a tree wobbling in the wind, maybe, over the garden wall!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"It isn't any tree," replied Wobby. "There it is again! Look, Jim!"

"I can see it," answered Jim. "Maybe it's one of our party has found out where we are, and is climbing over the wall."

They certainly could see the veiled head and shoulders of a human being showing over the wall.

"Look out, there!" called Wobby aloud. "There's an old lion loose in the yard, mate. So if you're a clobber of ours, you'd best keep out of it!"

But the figure on the wall took no notice of his words.

Up it came to the top of the wall. They could see it plainly now, blotting out the stars.

Wobby got quite excited. Perhaps it was Darkey, one of the stokers of the Kipper King who was a bit deaf, having been hit over the head with a bottle in a street fight.

"Mind your eye, Darkey!" yelled Wobby. "Lions aho!"

But the figure took no manner of notice at all. It stood up full length on the wall.

Wobby made quite sure it was Darkey.

"Here," said he, "it's old Darkey, and he's as deaf as a post! He can't hear me, and he can't see the lion. I'm out of this. We must do something. He's walking into the lion's jaws!"

Wobby would have opened the gate of the cage, but Mr. Hobbs laid strong hands upon him and restrained him.

"Don't you make so sure it's old Darkey, Master Wobby," he said. "It may be the keeper of the lion, or it may be one of these tugs who have run us in. If the lion gets hold of him—well, I ain't sending no wreaths to 'is funeral, give you my word!"

But their doubts were soon settled.

The ancient lion scented the figure on the wall. He came to the centre of the courtyard, snarling, but showed no desire to spring.

The figure on the wall dropped easily to the ground, and stalked slowly towards the cage.

Crouching low, the lion stalked across the yard to intercept the white-garbed shape of this intruder.

"My word!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "It's a woman! It's an old Moorish woman! Hi! Look out, ma!"

But the supposed lady, whom Mr. Hobbs addressed as "Ma," took not the slightest notice of Mr. Hobbs' shout or of the lion.

She approached straight towards the cage.

The lion, coming close to her, stopped and snarled.

Then the supposed lady answered him with a most unladylike snarl as ugly as his own.

"Crums!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs in ecstasy. "If it ain't old Dempsey!"

It was indeed Dempsey, the bear, who, after he had scared away the camel herds from their supper on the marshes, had finished up their bowl of honey and their pot of kous-kous, and, licking his paws, had marched up to the town to see what was doing and to look for his friends.

He had made his way in at the back of the old city, climbing over the ruined walls, and making his way through the mud huts and tiny gardens of the niggers, nearly scaring those who tried to stop him out of their wits.

Just as Blondel, the minstrel, discovered his master, Richard the Lion-hearted in his Austrian castle, so did Dempsey discover his pals shut up behind El Took's slave-hold.

He had hooked his claws into the wall of the yard, and had pulled himself up. He had smelled the lion, but Dempsey cared no more for lions than he cared for rabbits. He had dropped down into the yard and made straight for his friends in the cage.

But now the lion stood in his path, and Dempsey growled defiance.

The old lion was disconcerted. He scented a human being, and at the same time he scented bear. And bear was a new and formidable scent to him.

He was really an arrant old coward now. For all the talk of the bravery of lions, the lion is really a cowardly creature, and when he gets old and loses his teeth, and can no longer hunt, he is only up to baby-snatching and killing any old woman who may be straying about.

He is on a par with the man-eating tiger of India, which only becomes dangerous to man because it gets too old to tackle its natural prey.

So, when the lion snarled, Dempsey snarled back in defiance.

The lion was plainly disconcerted. He had knocked over a fair number of old women in his time, and he had heard them scream, but he had never heard any old woman growl in this fashion.

He blinked, and backed like a cat with its head in a paper bag. Then, with a sudden change of mind and a rush of passion, he sprang at the white-clad figure.

Never did a lion meet with a greater surprise.

Biff, biff!

The elderly Moorish lady struck out with two lightning blows that would have done credit to a heavy-weight champion as she side-stepped the rush, and the lion went rolling over and over in a cloud of dust.

He staggered to his feet, and saw the robed figure waiting for him with bargaining paws that were full of his fur.

As he gathered himself up for another rush, a figure came flying off the roof of the palace like the famous Spring Heel Jack.

This figure made no noise.

It covered the courtyard in three huge bounds. One, two, three! And at the third bound it landed a kick in the lion's ribs that sent the king of beasts sprawling.

"Good old Dempsey!" yelled Wobby.

"And Nobby!" yelled Stickjaw.

It was indeed Nobby, the boxing kangaroo, who, after his flight through the skylight of the palace, had found himself on the tiled roofs.

These he had thoroughly explored until he had found his party shut up in the cage in the courtyard at the rear of the premises. He had stayed perched on the roof till Dempsey had arrived on the scene.

The boys were wild with excitement now.

They could only partly see the dim light that was going on in the gloom. They saw the lion gather himself up and

go shambling after his new assailant. But Nobby was too quick for any lion, more especially an old and rheumatic specimen like this guardian of the courtyard.

He drew the lion up towards the wall, and, with an angry roar the beast flew at him.

Then, swift as a flea, Nobby jumped for it, and the lion hit the wall with a thump that nearly stunned him.

He gathered himself up, and made up his mind that the robed figure of Dempsey was safer game than this flying shape, but as he closed on Dempsey, growling furiously, Nobby charged up out of the darkness, and sent him flying with a kick in the stomach like the punch of a pile-driver.

As he rolled, Dempsey flung himself on the king of beasts, giving him two tremendous wipes from his long claws.

It was at this point that a happy idea occurred to Mr. Hobbs.

"Say, boys," said he, "we want a bit of light on this fight. It'll scare the lion, and it will liven up things a bit. What's the matter with setting this old shanty afire?"

"Afire!" gasped Stickjaw.

"There's plenty of kindling," said Mr. Hobbs. "It's a wonder that I never thought of it before. Look at this pile of faggots."

He struck a match. The end of the great cage in which they were confined was piled high with marsh hay and coarse barley straw, and outside the end of their refuge, in close proximity, was a huge pile of brushwood bays, which were used for heating the bread ovens.

The fight in the yard had ceased for a moment.

Snarling and slaving, the lion had drawn off against the faggot heap, where he was crouching and glaring at Dempsey and Nobby, who had drawn together in the centre of the courtyard.

"Ole Timbribs has 'ad enough of the first round!" said Mr. Hobbs cheerfully. "Knows that he's got amongst the champens and is likely to loose the belt. We'll stir 'im up with a few fireworks, and it will make a nice signal for our pals. Where there's fire there's smoke, and where there's fire there's 'Obbs!"

He walked to the end of the cage, and lighting a match, put it carefully to the pile of camel fodder.

"This stuff will burn a treat," he said. "It's marsh stuff and barley straw. Sort o' stuff that they used to cut up and spice and sell to the poor old cab 'orses in London as best London chaff. And chaff it was. Poor old 'orses used ter wear out their teeth on it and wonder where the joke came in. But it will burn!" The stuff did burn indeed!

At the touch of the match the flames leaped up the pile. In a few seconds it was alight.

At the sudden flare the lion rose from his lair beside the faggot heap, blinking and growling and stopping backwards, his tail drooping.

They had a clear view of him now for the first time. He was a huge beast, but old and mangy and almost toothless.

"My word," exclaimed Mr. Hobbs, peering at him through the bars of their cage, "he must have been some lion in 'is day. But 'e ain't a lion now. Ought to be put into a 'ome!"

The flames spread to the pile of brushwood outside the cage. It lit up as promptly as the pile of fodder, and the flames licked and roared round it.

The lion could not stand it. He turned and glared once at the robed figure of the old Moorish woman who had sent him flying and at her strange companion. Then he dropped his tail and slunk back to his den in the wall.

"He's beat!" cried Wobby triumphantly. "He's tossed in the alley, and now's our chance to close him up!"

He slipped out of the cage before his companions could stop him, and tore a huge handful of the brushwood from the pile of fuel, lighting this like a torch. Then with this flaming brand he ran for the wall, making almost for the lion's den.

The lion shoved his head out at the small door, and drew it back with a roar as the brushwood was dashed in his face, singeing his whiskers.

Wobby flew up the high wall like a cat. He knew where to get hold of the leathern thong that lowered the trap of the lion's cage.

One twist and wrench in the darkness, and the deed was done. Down crashed the iron grating, and the lion was caged.

Wobby dropped from the wall and ran towards his friends, who were coming out of the cage, now too hot to hold them.

The flames were roaring up from their bonfire now, lighting all the courtyard and the surroundings with a rosy glow.

Soon the roof of the great cage began to catch, for its timbers were dry and worm-eaten.

The nugarass, or war drums, started to beat the alarm, and from the other side of the wall came yells and wailing and the clinking of chains. For the crackling of the flames was stirring up the slaves in the slave sheds.

These had been aroused by the growling of the lion and the sound of struggle, but they had made no sign. Such sounds were frequent enough in that blood-stained den.

Now the palace was getting alight, and they were frightened.

"We'd best arm up," said Mr. Hobbs. "I've been feeling at them bars of our monkey cage. They are as loose as loose.

Could have pulled them out, but I didn't want to let the lion in!"

He ran to the cage and caught hold of a bar in his powerful hands. Above, the wood socket had shrunk. Below, the stone had fretted away with the sand and the weather. With a wrench and a tug, Mr. Hobbs loosened a long steel bar and dragged it out.

Another two bars were loosened in a like manner.

Then a door at the back of the palace opened and a guard rushed into the court.

The eyes of the leading man fell on Dempsey, who stood shrouded and mysterious in the midst of the court.

"The Nazarenes are upon us, mother!" he cried. "And where are the prisoners?"

He seized Dempsey by the robe, and before he had time to start back was felled by a wipe from Dempsey's paw. He lay very still where he fell, whilst Dempsey faced the next man, who carried a large lantern, as if there was not light enough already from the flaming stables and brush heap.

"Allah!" yelled the man with the lamp. "All Ebless is abroad to-night! It is not a woman here. It is Shaitan, the foul fiend himself!"

And he dropped his lamp and ran.

"Come along, boys!" cried Mr. Hobbs over the wall. "We will let the slaves loose. The poor beggars are locked up for the night, and we don't want to cook 'em alive-o like a lot o' shrimps."

Wobby called to the kangaroo, who bounded to the wall.

"Over!" he cried.

Nobby bounded over the wall in one leap, descending on the head of an armed nigger who was running along on the outer side.



Peering through the bars of their cage, the watchers caught the green glint of a pair of fiery eyes turned in their direction. "My word!" exclaimed Mr. Hobbs. "It's just as well we are in a cage after all. It's a lion!"

The nigger yelled, as he was flattened to the ground. He dropped his sword and, picking himself up, ran for his life, yelling that it was raining fire and devils.

Wobby snatched up the fallen sword, and one after the other the party dropped over the wall.

Waff and Jim had some trouble in getting Dempsey to come along. The noise and lion fighting and excitement had stirred Dempsey up, and he wanted to stay in the yard and have another go at the lion.

But a sound cuffing told him that he was under discipline.

Waff and Jim hauled him up over the wall, balanced him a-top, then shoved him down with a thump on the other side, where Mr. Hobbs was waiting with his iron bar in his hand.

Mr. Hobbs took a squint at the roof of the palace.

He grunted with satisfaction, for the palace of El Took was beginning to light up in a most satisfactory fashion.

"That'll teach 'im!" he muttered. "That'll teach the dirty nigger not to shove white men in his slave-olds. He knows now that 'e's pinched a packet of 'ot stuff! 'Ot enough to set 'is ole slum alight-o from end to end. Crumbs, I

ain't see'd a flare like this since the old oilshop down our street went up. Come on, young gents!"

Their disguises stood them in good stead now, for niggers and yellow men were rushing in all directions, dragging leather water-bags and earthen jars to fill at the wells, such as they were in the sandy soil of El Nil.

But none of these took special notice of the little party that slipped along the outer walls of the courtyard.

Nor did they take notice of Dempsey either, for Waff and Jim had hastily pulled the shrouding cloak that covered their pet well over his head and paws. To them Dempsey was just some old woman.

"Lah! Allah il Allah!" shouted a man who dragged the great bags of skin. "Balak! Balak! Look out, brothers! Look out!"

"Darktown Fire Brigade on a general call!" chuckled Mr. Hobbs. "They'll want more water than they are going to get to put out this flare!"

Nobby, the kangaroo, seemed to know what was required of him. He kept out of the way, hopping through the cover of the bushes in the garden where they had dropped.

Mr. Hobbs, turning a corner of the wall, came upon the door of the slave-hold, from which issued wild shouts and despairing entreaties.

But nobody was taking any notice of the poor slaves. Slaves were cheap enough, and the stuff that was kept here were poor worn-out specimens of humanity, so old and so worn with toil that they were hardly worth their salt.

But Mr. Hobbs was smitten with a great pity.

"Hold hard, mates!" he cried. "We'll soon have you out of that!"

And he forced the end of his iron bar in the huge staples which held an enormous padlock on the door.

A huge nigger came rushing up. He was the master of the slavehold.

"Who art thou?" he cried aloud at the sight of this stranger who was forcing his door. "I, Yussuf, am the master of the slaves and none other!"

"Master of the slaves be hanged!" cried Hobbs. "I'm master now. Away with you before I set my faithful henchmen on you!"

(Next week's instalment is even more thrilling than this. Make sure of reading it by ordering your GEM early.)

RESULT OF "PLYMOUTH ARGYLE" COMPETITION.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

L. WOODFORD,
Dinton,
Near Aylesbury,
Bucks.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following six competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

A. Adams, 1, Herbert Rd., South Willesbro,
Ashford, Kent.

Frances Morton, 7, Ayre St. Pallion,
Sunderland.

H. Knighton, 46, Wellingboro' Rd.,
Northampton.

F. Howarth, 17, Churnet St., Collyhurst,
Manchester.

E. Marshall, Sunnyside, Elm Grove, Thorpe
Bay, Essex.

L. Bachelor, 19, Kettering Rd., Levens-
hulme, Manchester.

Twenty-one competitors, with two errors each, shared the ten prizes of 5s. each:

Charles H. Morton, 7, Ayre St., Pallion,
Sunderland; Cyril Darbyshire, 8, Bennett St.,
Higher Broughton, Manchester; R. A. Camp,
Baddow Park, nr. Chelmsford; R. Cole, 103,
Sheen Lane, Mortlake, S.W. 14; R. B. Curtis,
Hillside, Taplow, Bucks; Richard Wimber-
ley, 15, Wheatfield St., Edinburgh; Annie
Ringham, 45, Petersburg Rd., Stockport;
John Campbell, 148, Kensington St., Keigh-

ley Yorks; E. Shooter, 15, Manor Rd., New
Village, Askern, nr. Doncaster; Alex.
Welland, 257, Winchester Rd., Highams Park,
E. 4; William Ramsdale, 3, Foundry St.,
Stourport, Wores; Donald Rains, 15, North
Evesham Rd., Reigate; Ted S. Newton,
Littleover Lane, Normanton, Derby; Mrs.
Phillips, 27, Streely St., Bulwell, Notts; W.
Edgington, 15, Playford Rd., Finsbury Park,
N. 4; Albert E. Jeffrey, 14, Park St.,
Southend-on-Sea; E. McHugh, 6, Perth St.,
Belfast; J. B. Hughes, 6, Perth St., Belfast;
Alfred Carr, 70, Bargate, Boston, Lincs;
William Mitchell, 5, North Shore St.,
Campbeltown, N.B.; Dorothy Moore, 146,
Vine Place, Rochdale.

SOLUTION.

Plymouth Argyle's ground is almost ideal. Few teams in this country can boast more delightful headquarters. The Argyle's success was mainly due to Mr. Brettell, its first manager. Although Plymouth has not yet been in the final for the Cup, it may come their way in the near future.

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Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next!)

All Entries in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square London, E.C.4.

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER. EASILY EXPLAINED!

Little Florrie, who had just reached her sixth year, had a mania for clipping things. Nothing seemed to escape her eyes. Frocks, tablecloths, cushions, all suffered in the same way. One day, in a frenzy of joy, she cut off all her baby brother's beautiful curly hair, leaving him quite bald. "Miss Florrie!" shrieked the nurse. "How dare you! He cut it himself," pleaded Florrie, on the verge of tears. "You wicked little story-teller!" cried the nurse. "How did he reach the back of his head?" "Why—why," answered Florrie, between her sobs, "he—he stood on the stool!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to Miss S. Duffy, Park Hotel, Church Street, Walker, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Half-a-crown has been awarded for each of the following stories.

DRIVEN TO ACTION.

When an East End man recently applied for settlement of a claim for fire insurance, the agent asked: "Much damage?" "Not much," replied the man. "How much would a new door cost?" "About five dollars. When did the fire happen?" The man hesitated a moment, and then replied: "About thirty years ago." "Thirty years ago?" "Yes, sir." "And you have waited all these years to report it?" "Yes, sir." "How in the world does that come about?" "Well, sir," said the man, "the women folks at my house have been at me to do something about the door ever since it was burned, and I just couldn't stand it any longer!" A. E. Walker, 58, Constance Street, Valley, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

MADE UP YARNS!

Visitor to Shrimpssea: "Here's sixpence, Mr. Barnacle, and will you tell me one of your true tales of the time when you served before the mast as a pirate?" Longshore Profligate: "One-and-thruppence is the fidget this season, my lad. Ain't you heard that there's bin a rise of one hundred and fifty per cent on all manufactured articles?"—A. Lomas, 14, Gilead Street, Bulwell, Nottingham.

HOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL!

Barbara Hammond, a servant-girl in Cincinnati, saw advertised for sale at two dollars a recipe, which, if faithfully followed, would make the homeliest person the handsomest. Barbara was homely. She sent the money. The recipe was as follows: "Take half a gill of hyena's blood, the yolk of two ostriches' eggs, an ounce of gold-dust, and a pearl as big as your thumbnail. Dissolve in vinegar, mix into a paste, and spread upon the face before going to sleep. The effect is astonishing."—F. Gowing, 4, Tottenham Street, North Kensington, W. 10.

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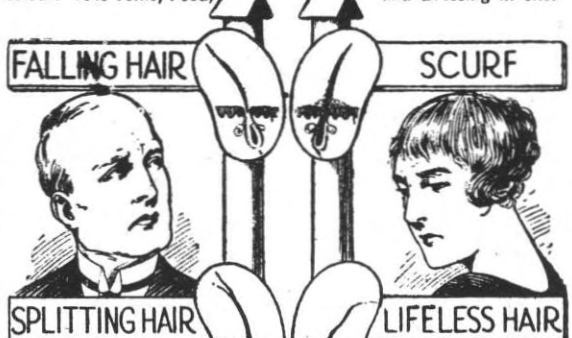
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