

SPECIAL LONG STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S INSIDE!

The GEM 2^d

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LIBRARY

OF

SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



SHOULDERING ANOTHER'S BURDEN!

(Loyal to St. Leger of the Fifth, Oliver Lynn, the schoolboy "pug," is confined in the Punishment Room. Read the Splendid, Long, Complete School Story in this issue.)

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

MY DEAR CHUMS.—Whenever the Levisons come on the scene I always find that my letter-bag is a lot bulkier. There is practically no limit to the popularity of the brothers Levison, Ernest and Frank, and their charming sister, Doris. This fact lends plenty of extra interest to next week's yarn of St. Jim's in the "Gem."

"FRANK LEVISON'S FLIGHT!"

By Martin Clifford.

That is the title of as brilliant and fascinating a story as we have ever had. It is marked by all that sympathy and good feeling which Mr. Martin Clifford is so great an adept at expressing, while it can be reckoned, too, as one of those special, out-of-the-way tales which open up new views, and are crammed full of fresh lines of thought.

LITTLE TROUBLES AND BIG DITTO!

It is a story of the small cloud no larger than a man's hand, which is the precursor of the raging storm. There has been a bit of a bother at St. Jim's, and the merry blades of the Third are in it up to their eyes. If all these youngsters were as particular about fair dealing and the fine code of honour as, say, young Wally D'Arcy, Manners, and Frankie Levison himself, things might have panned out mighty differently. But there it is, you have to take the world as you find it. The story shows just a few of the worries of Mr. Selby, a gentleman who sometimes feels he is a martyr. This is a bad habit with some rather weak individuals who have never taken the pains to understand human nature. Anyhow, Mr. Selby has raised the ire of his pupils. The Third admires sportsmanship; it comes down like a sledgehammer on all forms of pettiness and tyranny. The fat is in the fire—or, rather, Selby is in hot water over a piece of very high-handed oppression—and some of the brighter sparks of the Form consider it about time the master had a lesson, for lessons are good in season.

A WELL-DEVELOPED YARN!

Mr. Martin Clifford will get heaps of compliments next Wednesday for his treatment of the theme. He shows how young Frank Levison makes a certain confidence to his brother, Ernest. Frank generally tells his major about any difficulty—that is, when he feels he requires an elder's opinion. There is a plot to give Mr. Selby a sort of fresh start in life, so to speak—make him jump to it, as it were; I am not going into details—and the post of chief participator is marked out for Frank. Ernest listens to the scheme, but he shakes his head with the superior wisdom of his senior Form. He will not counsel the idea in any way, nor sanction it, and he extracts a promise from his junior that the plan shall come to nothing—i.e., so far as Frank is concerned. But that's just the crucial point; there are others besides Frank who are ready to lay the train. Then we reach the culminating incident. Mr. Selby has been asking for drastic action—and, maybe, it is mere justice that a tyrant should be lifted out of himself now and again. The story may be divided into two parts—(1) a surprise for Mr. Selby; (2) the question of the ringleader. Who was the guilty party? Investigation often does go off on an utterly wrong track. But Frank Levison is implicated, and the matter is serious enough to make the youngster come to the most tragic determination in his life. It is a fair crisis, and he sees only one thing to do—and does it. I will leave you to find out what his action is. We can see what he thinks, and the reason for what he does, and anybody will feel a certain admiration for him. He has pluck—just like his brother. Of course Ernest is deep in trouble again, for what hits Frank hits him as well.

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THE BIG MEN OF THE SIXTH!

There must be a line here concerning the next issue of the "St. Jim's News." We have been discussing the Third. In the Supplement the important and magisterial wights who live in the lordly Sixth come into play. A prefect is a creature of a rarefied atmosphere. He tolerates fags; he permits such small fry to make tea and run errands, but he knows fags do not belong to his world at all. Now, in the coming Supplement we get contributions from some of the really significant men of St. Jim's. As you walk the world it is easy to spot the fellows who count; you can generally tell them by the tilt of their nasal appendages, and sometimes by the colour of their waistcoats. I know everybody will be glad to see that the Sixth can write. The new Supplement is simply IT.

"THE HOLD UP!"

Captain Malcolm Arnold has packed his incidents close in this telling story of an attack on a pay wagon. You will find a good few thrills in the account of what happens to the messenger who has been "got at," also what falls to the lot of the bloodthirsty gang who are out for pillage. There have been hold-ups in plenty, but this favourite author has tackled the matter with such freshness and vividness that the whole thing strikes an entirely new note. A strong, gripping yarn, this, with the whiff of real happenings of a particularly sinister kind, and with breathless and shuddering moments in it which capture every bit of attention you can bring to bear. To my mind, Captain Malcolm Arnold has solved the most intricate part of an author's work; he can show what is passing in the mind of a man who is brought up sharp to face the deadliest peril. It is not so much the idea of the physical danger which rivets the attention as the mental experience of the fellow who finds himself on the brink of disaster.

"THE WOLVES OF ST. BEOWULF'S."

Duncan Storm is contributing another grand instalment of his capital serial to next Wednesday's "Gem." The chums continue to pound away on the trail of that eminently unpleasant rascal, Suini Baba. Suini is a nice cup of tea, as you may say, and on points he would beat for sheer villainy, and the love of it, the most dangerous brigand who ever figured in the "Arabian Nights." But Suini, as described by Duncan Storm, is a grim and saturnine reality. We have seen something of what this amazingly unscrupulous nigger martinet is capable, and in the carry-on of the brilliant yarn there is abundance of out-and-out excitement. Not that the author ever forgets the vital need of the comedy note, and of raising a laugh when possible. Trust him!

THE TUCK HAMPER.

Bright and snappy, happy little storyettes continue to reach me, and each week a cheery and companionable Tuck Hamper starts on its travels to the home of some lucky winner. I would recommend postcards for these stories. Everything that matters in a short and merry little wheeze can be squeezed into the limits of a p.c.

MORE TO COME!

No need for me to urge the claims of the splendid footer competition each week. By the way, that reminds me of another winner I have secured in the shape of a wonderful new serial which will set everybody talking. Keep your eye on this corner of the "Gem" for further and fuller particulars in the immediate future.

CONGRATULATION TO THE "GEM."

Over and over again I have wanted of late to refer to some of the friendly letters which reach me from my chums, but as a rule the printer says "No" in adamant fashion. Nothing doing. But I must crowd in a line of thanks to a reader from Weston-super-Mare, who says: "I think 'The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence' quite the rippingest yarn Mr. Martin Clifford has ever written, but please, Mr. Editor, let us have a story about Kildare." Now, I wonder if Mr. Martin Clifford can be persuaded to make a note of this very right and reasonable request?

Your Editor.

YOU MUST NOT MISS—

Next Week's BUMPER Number of the GEM which contains—

"FRANK LEVISON'S FLIGHT!"

Another Grand Long School Story By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Splendid Contribution by the Great Men of the Sixth in the
"ST JIM'S NEWS."

A Thrilling and Dramatic Story of Highway Robbery, entitled:

"THE HOLD-UP!"

By Capt. MALCOLM ARNOLD.

A further exciting instalment of "The Wolves of St. Beowulf's," and Our Easy Competitions for which more big money prizes will be offered.



GAME TO THE LAST!

A Magnificent Story of A Schoolboy's Pluck and Endurance in attempting to shield another from the bitterness of deep disgrace and expulsion.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

"For It!"

"WHERE'S Lynn?"

A dozen voices asked that question in the Fourth Form dormitory after the rising-bell rang.

There was an empty bed in the dormitory—a bed that had not been disturbed, and evidently had not been slept in. That bed belonged to Oliver Lynn, the new boy in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! Lynn's not heah!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He did not come back last night!"

"I know he hadn't turned up when I went to sleep," remarked Jack Blake. "But—"

"Lynn's for it!" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Where on earth can he be, though?" said Digby. "He's a jolly queer customer, but he can't be ass enough to suppose that fellows are allowed to have nights out."

"He seems to be ass enough for nearly anything," remarked Levison. "This means jolly big trouble for Lynn!"

The St. Jim's Fourth were in rather a hurry to get downstairs that morning. Every fellow was curious to hear news of Oliver Lynn. Even Baggy Trimble refrained from staying in bed till the latest possible moment, and saved a further minute or two by reducing his ablutions, which were normally on a very small scale.

What had happened to Lynn was a perplexing question. In many ways Lynn differed from the other St. Jim's fellows. The fellow who had once earned a hard living in boxing-booths as a boy pugilist, had little in common with the rest of the Fourth. He had made friends there. Study No. 6 backed him up loyally, in spite of his unusual manners and customs. But there really was no telling what Lynn might do next.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell were already down when Blake & Co. came down the staircase. Tom came across to the Fourth-Formers at once.

"Lynn——" he began.

"Know anything about him?" asked Blake.

"Only that he cleared out at bed-time last night," said Tom Merry. "He came back, I suppose?"

"That's exactly what he didn't do," answered Blake.

"He's not been in the dorm all night."

"Great Scott!"

"The young duffah has done it this time!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head. "Of course, he is not so much to blame as anothah fellow, considin' his early twainin'. But the Head will be in a feahful wax!"

"But he must have come back!" exclaimed Tom, in amazement. "A fellow couldn't stay out all night!"

"Where is he, then?" said Blake.

"Oh, where and oh where can he be?" sang Monty Lowther softly.

"Weally, Lowthah, this is a sewious mattah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely. "This may mean the sack for poor old Lynn."

"Pretty certain if he's been out all night," said Manners. "Serve him right, too, in that case."

"Yaas; but——"

"Dash it all, he must have turned up!" said Tom Merry. "Perhaps the masters bagged him when he came in. Let's ask St. Leger. St. Leger of the Fifth ought to know, as he's Lynn's cousin."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"St. Leger doesn't have much to do with Lynn," said Blake. "The whole giddy school knows that he's ashamed

of him, and keeps him at arm's length, or farther. St. Leger's been chipped no end about his merry old relation, the prizefighter."

"I vegard St. Leger as bein' vewy much to blame," said D'Arcy. "If he had looked aftah his welayon bettah this would not have happened."

"Better tell him so!" grinned Blake.

"I shall certainly mention my opinion to St. Leger, Blake. He has acted vewy badly towards poor old Lynn."

"Let's ask him if he knows, anyhow," said Tom Merry.

"If Lynn's in trouble, St. Leger ought to know."

"Good!"

The juniors proceeded to look for St. Leger of the Fifth. The Fifth Form were already down, and in a few minutes Tom Merry & Co. sighted St. Leger in the quadrangle. He was sauntering there with Cutts and Prye of the Fifth, chatting with them, apparently in cheerful spirits. The three Fifth-Formers stopped and looked rather hostile as the crowd of juniors bore down upon them. Apparently they suspected a rag.

"All serene," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "Keep your wool on. We want to know what's happened to your cousin, St. Leger."

The dandy of the Fifth started, and looked sharply at Tom.

"Lynn, do you mean? Nothing that I know of."

"You didn't know he was out of bounds last night?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He's not turned up!" explained Blake.

St. Leger looked very startled.

"Not turned up? What do you mean? He's in the school, I suppose?"

"If he is, he's keeping out of sight," said Blake. "He wasn't in the dormitory last night."

"Not in the dormitory!" exclaimed St. Leger blankly. "Where was he, then?"

"That's what we want to know."

The juniors eyed St. Leger curiously.

His handsome, rather weak face had turned white.

It was known all over St. Jim's that St. Leger, the dandy of the Fifth Form, was ashamed of his odd relation, and that Lynn's presence in the school was gall and wormwood to him. Nobody supposed that St. Leger had any affectionate regard for his cousin. But it was obvious that this news had given him a painful shock.

He seemed unable to speak for some moments.

"You mean to say that he's been out of bounds all night?" he exclaimed at last. "It's impossible!"

"It looks like it," said Tom Merry.

"Impossible!"

"Then you don't know anything about it?" asked Blake.

"Nothing."

"Let's ask Kildare," said Herries. And the juniors trooped off again, to seek the head prefect.

Kildare of the Sixth was soon found. His face became very grave as soon as Lynn was mentioned.

"Lynn's in the punishment-room!" he said briefly. "He was locked in for the night by Mr. Rgilton."

"Oh! He came back then?" said Dig.

"Yes; about eleven o'clock."

"Phew!"

"Do you kids know anything about the affair?" asked the prefect.

"Only that he's missing," answered Blake. "I-I say, is he booked for very bad trouble, Kildare?"

"I imagine so," answered Kildare dryly. "He was caught

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out of bounds last night at the Green Man in Rylecombe, and he assaulted Mr. Ratcliff, who found him there. It's not likely that he will be allowed to stay at the school after that."

"Bai Jove!"

Kildare walked away, leaving the juniors in consternation. Whatever they had expected to hear, certainly they had not expected to hear anything so serious as this.

"Punched Ratty!" said Blake, almost dazedly. "My only hat! Punched a Housemaster!"

"Only the New House master!" remarked Herries. "Tain't as if he had punched Railton."

Blake grinned.

"I don't think the Head will see much difference," he remarked.

"Bai Jove! It's awfully wotten!" said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "You see, poor old Lynn is wathah accustomed to punchin' people, havin' been a boxah in the wing befoah he came heah. Pwobably he punched old Watty without thinkin', you know—fwom force of habit. Lots of fellows, weally, would like to punch old Watty. Evewy fellow in the New House would give a term's pocket-money to punch him. I dare say old Watty annoyed him."

"It's the sack!" said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah! Poor old Lynn!"

"He's for it!" said Blake dismally.

There was a keen sympathy for Lynn of the Fourth among all the juniors when the facts were known. They could sympathise with anybody who punched Mr. Ratcliff, the unpopular master of the New House. But the seriousness of such a proceeding was not to be denied, all the same, and nobody had the slightest doubt that the unfortunate school-boy boxer was "for it."

CHAPTER 2.

Loyal to the Last!

OLIVER LYNN, the one-time "Chicken" of Hawley's Ring, sat on the edge of the bed in Nobody's Study—the punishment-room in the School House. The spring sun streamed in at the window, and glimmered on the rugged, chubby face of the schoolboy boxer.

Considering his position, Lynn of the Fourth was not looking very despondent. His face was serious, but not downcast.

He had turned out at the clang of the rising-bell, and dressed himself, and now he was waiting.

What was going to happen to him he did not know; but he was well aware that the "chopper" was to come down.

To judge by his looks, he did not care very much. Indeed, there were some signs of satisfaction in his looks. His prospects seemed dark enough; but there was some reflection to his mind that solaced him.

He rose from the edge of the bed as there was a sound of footsteps outside the door. The key turned, and the door opened. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, appeared in the doorway, with a grave and stern face. He was followed by Toby, the page, bearing a tray.

"Good-mornin', sir!" said Lynn respectfully.

Mr. Railton coughed.

"Good-morning, Lynn! Toby has brought your breakfast here."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Place the tray on the table, Toby."

The page obeyed, with a compassionate glance at the prisoner. Then he retired without a word.

"I shall come here for you later, Lynn, to take you to the headmaster," said Mr. Railton.

"Very well, sir."

Lynn hesitated a moment, and then, as the Housemaster turned to the door, he added:

"Skuse me, sir—"

"Well?"

"I s'pose I'm going to be kicked out, sir?"

The School House master coughed again.

"I fear, Lynn, that Dr. Holmes will decide to send you away from the school. I see no alternative."

"I s'pose so, sir. I'm sorry I've give you such a lot of trouble," said Lynn. "I—I s'pose St. Leger knows, sir?"

"Probably he has heard by this time, Lynn."

"Could I see 'im, sir, and 'ave a word with 'im? I—I'd like to speak to my cousin, sir, afore I see the 'Ead, if it's allowed, sir."

Mr. Railton eyed the junior.

"For what reason, Lynn?"

"Master St. Leger's been very kind to me, sir!" faltered Lynn. "I'd jest like to speak a word to 'im."

"I will mention your request to Dr. Holmes."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Railton retired from the punishment-room, locking the door after him, and taking away the key.

Lynn sat down to his breakfast.

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He ate with a good appetite. The sentence hanging over him had not impaired the appetite of the Chicken, always a very healthy one.

His breakfast over, Lynn rose from the table, and walked about the room, and looked from the window.

Below, in the spring sunshine, he caught sight of several fellows, and among them he recognised the Terrible Three of the Shell. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther waved their hands to him.

Apparently, the chums of the Shell had been waiting there to give him that sign of encouragement.

Lynn smiled, and waved back to them.

"They ain't down on me, anyhow," he murmured. "They're jolly decent blokes, they are."

Tap!

He turned from the window as there came a faint, cautious tap at the door. He crossed the room.

"Hallo!" he said.

"You there, Lynn, deah boy?"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, whispering through the keyhole.

"Ere I am, cocky!" answered Lynn cheerfully.

"I'm awfully sorry for this, Lynn."

"Thanks, old feller!"

"Of course, what you have done was vewy howwid," went on the swell of St. Jim's. "It was simply outside for you to go to such a howwid place as the Gween Man, and vewy diswepful to punch a Housemastah—"

"I never punched 'im," said Lynn. "Jest 'eld him a bit, so that he couldn't worry a bloke."

"Bai Jove! It is a vewy sewious mattah to lay hands on a Housemastah, Lynn; even Watty."

"I know that. It couldn't be 'elped, you see."

"You ought not to have bwocken bounds affah lights out, Lynn, and especially not to go to that howwid den."

"Course I oughtn't," agreed the Chicken. "But there I was!"

"I am awah, deah boy, that your twainin' has not made you look at these mattahs as we do," said Arthur Augustus gently. "For that weason I wegard you with sympathy. If there is anythin' a fellow can do for you—"

"You're very kind," said Lynn gratefully. "But there ain't nothing to be done. I'm for it, you know. I'd like to speak a word to Master St. Leger, but they won't allow it. 'Old on, though—there's something you could do, if you liked."

"I will do anythin' in my powah, Lynn."

"Will you take a note to Master St. Leger, if I shove it under the door to you?"

"Certainly!"

"You won't read it?"

"Lynn!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in tones of horror. "Gweat Scott! Can you weally think, Lynn, that I am capable of weadin' a lethah entwasted to me?"

"Sorry, sir!" said Lynn. "I—I— You see, Master D'Arcy, I ain't been brought up along of blokes like you. But I know you wouldn't go for to do any such thing."

"It's all wight, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus, mollified. "Pway pass out the note as quickly as poss, in case we are intewupted."

"Jest 'arf a tick."

Lynn turned hurriedly to the table. He tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and extracted a stump of pencil from his trousers-pocket. It did not take him a minute to scribble the note:

"I'm for it. Don't you mind, and don't you say a word. I ain't saying anything. You may lay to that. Trust me.—O. L."

He did not put St. Leger's name on the paper; there was nothing written that could incriminate St. Leger, should the note fall into wrong hands.

There as no envelope to be had. Lynn folded the note, and slipped it under the door, entrusting the secret to the honour of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Got it?" he asked.

"Yaas, deah boy. I'm to give this to St. Leger?"

"Yes, yes; and don't tell anybody."

"I will not bweathe a word, Lynn. Is there anythin' else—"

"Nothing else, sir, only 'urry up and catch Master St. Leger before classes with that there note."

"Vewy well, Lynn."

Arthur Augustus' footsteps receded down the corridor. Oliver Lynn returned to the window, and looked out into the sunny quadrangle far below. His face was calm and composed as he awaited the summons into the presence of the Head—to receive his sentence there!

He would be condemned—he knew that. A word from St. Leger of the Fifth would have saved him; but not for worlds would Lynn have asked St. Leger to utter that word.



"I say," said Cutts, "it's not so bad for Lynn to be kicked out of the school as you. Burn that note, and say nothing about it." "But—" groaned St. Leger, "to let that kid suffer in my place—Cutts, think of it—" Cutts lighted a match, and applied it to the scribbled note. St. Leger watched it consume to the last fragment. (See page 6.)

It was to save the dandy of the Fifth from the consequences of his reckless folly that Lynn had gone out of bounds the night before. He had saved him, and Fate willed that he should suffer in the place of the culprit. He did not repine. He had only one fear—that St. Leger, when he learned of the catastrophe, would blurt out the truth, and take his own punishment. That was the only fear in the loyal heart of the Chicken as he waited in the silence and solitude of the punishment-room.

CHAPTER 3 The Evil Genius!

"SEEN St. Leger, you fellows?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy asked that question, after looking round the quadrangle in vain for the dandy of the Fifth.

"He's gone indoors," said Tom Merry. "No good asking St. Leger anything—he doesn't know anything about Lynn."

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"It isn't that," he said.

"Going to speak a word in season?" asked Monty Lowther. "It's a bit too late to tell St. Leger how to treat his jolly old cousin. You ought to have weighed in earlier, Gussy."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"St. Leger looked rather cut up when he heard," remarked Manners. "The best thing you can do, Gussy, is to keep off the grass."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus cheerily.

The swell of St. Jim's went back into the School House. He looked into the senior Common-room, but St. Leger was not there; and he turned his steps in the direction of the Fifth-Form passage.

St. Leger's study was No. 3 in the Fifth; and Arthur Augustus found him there, with his study-mate, Gerald Cutts. St. Leger was standing with his back to the window,

his hands driven deep into his pocket, and a black look of trouble on his face. Cutts was watching him curiously, evidently at a loss to understand his chum's mood that morning.

"St. Leger—" began Arthur Augustus.

The Fifth-Former turned on him with a burst of savage irritation. St. Leger's nerves seemed to be in rags.

"Get out! Confound you, get out!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you hear, you young fool? Get out!" shouted the Fifth-Former.

"Weally, St. Leger—"

The dandy of the Fifth clenched his hand, and made a stride towards Arthur Augustus, his eyes blazing.

"Draw it mild!" yawned Cutts. "Perhaps the kid's got a message or somethin'!"

"Oh! Is that it, D'Arcy?" snapped St. Leger.

"Yaas."

"Why couldn't you say so; then, you young idiot?"

"If you considah it civil, St. Leger, to apply such a vewy oppowbious epithet to a fellow—"

"What's the message?"

"I must warnk that I disagwee with you," continued Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wegard your mannahs as shockin', St. Leger!"

"Will you give me the message, before I throw you out on your silly neck?" roared St. Leger.

"Pway don't wear at a fellow. It is not exactly a message—"

"What is it, then, hang you?"

"It is a lettah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am sowwy I agwee'd to bring it now, only I could not vewy well wefuse Lynn."

"Lynn!" exclaimed Cutts. "A letter from Lynn?"

"I cannot answah that question, Cutts, as I pwomised not to mention the mattah to anybody."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cutts.

"Weally, Cutts—"

"Will you give me the letter?" said St. Leger, in concentrated tones.

"Certainly. Heah it is."

St. Leger snatched the letter from D'Arcy's hand.

"Now get out!" he rapped.

"I am goin', St. Leger. But I considah— Oh, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, jumping back into the passage, just in time to save his noble nose from the slam of the door.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired from the Fifth-Form quarters, with an indignation too deep for words.

St. Leger of the Fifth stood with the folded note in his hand, his brows darkly knitted.

He seemed in no hurry to read it. Possibly he feared what he might read there when he opened the note.

"What on earth's this game?" asked Cutts, in wonder.

St. Leger sank into a chair.

"The game's up!" he said, with a gasp. "I'm for it! I knew it must come as soon as I heard that that young idiot had been nailed! What will they say at home?"

"Blest if I can catch on!" said Cutts. "You don't mean to say that you're knocked over by young Lynn getting the boot? I should have thought you'd be glad to see the last of him."

St. Leger groaned.

"Dash it all, you've never liked the kid, and you hated to have him here!" said Cutts. "Your father can't be very much surprised at a hooligan like that comin' a mucker at a school like St. Jim's. He can't blame you, anyhow. You haven't looked after the kid as I dare say your pater will think you ought to have done; but, anyhow, you couldn't keep the young rascal from breaking bounds at night. What on earth's the matter with you, St. Leger? This looks to me like a stroke of luck for you. Any fellow would be glad to get a relation like that turned out of the school."

"You don't understand," said St. Leger huskily.

"Blest if I do!" said Cutts.

"You're a fool—a fool!" said St. Leger savagely. "Can't you see? You know I didn't go to the lecture at Wayland last night. I got a pass-out from Railton to go to the lecture, and—went to the Green Man to play cards, like a blackguardly fool, with that ruffian Banks."

"I know. But you weren't spotted," said Cutts. "You got clear before Ratcliff got there and nailed that little idiot Lynn, who was playing the game in the same way."

"I didn't," said St. Leger hoarsely. "Lynn never went to the Green Man to play the goat. He found out somehow that the Housemasters were after me, and came to warn me."

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Cutts.

"Ratcliff had me fairly cornered," said St. Leger. "And—and the kid got the light out, and collared Ratty in the dark, and gave me a chance to clear. I got away unseen, and biked over to Wayland and put in half an hour before the lecture finished, and came home all right. I—I thought that young idiot had got clear, too."

Cutts whistled.

"I—I was fairly knocked over when I heard this mornin' that he had been caught," groaned St. Leger. "I thought, of course, that he would have told them at once—to get off. But he hasn't given me away yet. I suppose he's keeping it till he sees the Head. Of course, he won't be sacked if they know the facts. They'll cane him for what he did; but as for me—"

"It's the sack for you, if the Head knows, of course," said Cutts. "You can't expect the kid to keep quiet, and

take your medicine for you. He seems to be fond of you—blest if I know why—but that would be askin' rather too much."

"I know!" groaned St. Leger.

"Take a tip from me," said Cutts coolly. "Let the kid say anythin' he chooses—an' deny it. There's no proof. Ratty thinks he bagged the right party; and Lynn's for it. Nothin' to prove that you were anywhere near the place last night. Keep mum, and keep a stiff upper lip."

"Shut up, you scoundrel!" shouted St. Leger furiously. "Do you think I could stand before the Head and swear to a set of dashed lies against a kid who ran that risk for me?"

Cutts' lip curled sarcastically.

"Please yourself!" he sneered. "I know I wouldn't face the chopper to save all the Fourth Form from bein' hanged, drawn, and quartered. And don't call me names, St. Leger; I don't like it! I'm tryin' to help you."

"I'm not rotten enough for that!" muttered St. Leger. "There's a limit. I—I— If the kid kept silent, I—I should keep mum; but it's not to be expected—after the way I've treated him, too."

"Hardly!" grinned Cutts.

"I know he'll let me off as lightly as he can," said St. Leger. "He's not said anythin' yet. He's keepin' it back till he's put me on my guard, I suppose, and he's got this note to me to warn me to look out for squalls. It's more than I'd a right to expect from him. But he's bound to tell the Head, and then it's the sack for me. What will my father say when I get home?"

And St. Leger fairly groaned in misery.

"I can't face it! I can't!"

"Let's see what the kid says, anyhow," said Cutts.

"What does it matter? The chopper's comin' down."

"Let's see."

Cutts jerked the note from St. Leger's hand and opened it. He glanced at the Chicken's message, and uttered a startled ejaculation.

"Great pip!"

"Well, what is it?" muttered St. Leger. "Does he say he's told Railton?"

"Look!"

St. Leger glanced idly at the note Cutts of the Fifth spread out under his eyes. His expression changed. Like a fellow in a dream, he read the loyal message of the St. Jim's waif.

"I'm for it. Don't you mind, and don't you say a word. I ain't saying anything, you may lay to that. Trust me.—O. L."

St. Leger seemed hardly able to believe his eyes. It was more than he had dreamed of—more than he had dared to hope. So far from betraying him, the hapless Chicken was urging him not to betray himself. St. Leger started to his feet.

"I've treated him like a dog!" There were tears in the eyes of the Fifth-Former. "Good heavens! I've been a beast to him, and—and he's goin' to face it out for me! I can't let him! I won't! I'll go to the Head! I'll tell him—"

St. Leger swung round towards the door. Cutts' grasp closed on his arm. Always his evil genius, the blackguard of the Fifth was ready once more with evil counsel, to sway his weak will from the right path.

"Don't be an ass!" said Cutts crisply. "This lets you out! Let the kid have his way!"

"I can't!" said St. Leger hoarsely. "How can I let him be kicked out for what I've done?"

"It's not so bad for him as for you, old bean. He's out of place in a school like St. Jim's, anyhow. He will fall on his feet somewhere. Your father won't be surprised at his comin' a mucker after his early trainin'; but if you get the long jump—"

St. Leger shivered.

The thought of facing the old colonel's stern, steady eyes, when he was sent home in disgrace, unnerved him. Cutts had touched the right chord for his purpose.

"Burn that note, and keep mum!" said Cutts.

"But—but—"

Cutts lighted a match and applied it to the scribbled note. St. Leger watched it consume to the last fragment.

"But," groaned St. Leger, "to let that kid suffer in my place! Cutts, think of it!"

"He won't suffer so much as you would."

"That's true, too," said St. Leger, catching at a straw, as it were. "He won't. And—perhaps I can make it up to him somehow, afterwards."

"Let's get down," said Cutts. "It's close on time for class. Keep a stiff upper lip, and don't let Ratty spot that there's anythin' the matter. It's goin' to be all serene."

St. Leger gave way, as he usually did in dealing with Cutts of the Fifth. But he found it difficult to keep a stiff upper lip in the Fifth Form room that morning. He did not possess Cutts' reckless, unscrupulous hardihood. He had made up

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"I've called to see Holiver Lynn!" said the strange visitor, addressing Taggles. "He's 'ere all right. No 'arm I suppose?" "My eye!" ejaculated the school porter. "Name of Hawley!" went on the plump man. "Hawley!" murmured Tom Merry. "Why, it must be Lynn's old guv'nor." (See this page.)

his mind to take advantage of the fag's loyal devotion, but his conscience tormented him. That morning was a terrible one for St. Leger of the Fifth.

CHAPTER 4.

Mr. Hawley, of Hawley's Ring!

"LYNN!"

"That's the name!"

"My eye!" said Taggles, staring at the visitor.

Taggles suppressed a grin. The fat, portly gentleman had called at a very inopportune moment for seeing Oliver Lynn of the Fourth Form. Lynn was in the punishment-room, as Taggles knew, and certainly he could not receive visitors there.

This visitor was rather unusual, in his aspect, for a visitor at St. Jim's. He had a remarkably prominent feature in a broken nose. He was short and plump and red-faced; he was dressed in somewhat conspicuous check clothes; he wore a gigantic watchchain of rolled-gold—more roll than gold, as Monty Lowther, eyeing him from a distance, remarked in a whisper to Tom Merry and Manners. The plump gentleman sported a silk topper, which he wore rather on one side of his head, giving him a rakish look that was not wholly becoming in a gentleman on the shady side of fifty. He wore white spats, and a large necktie that seemed to rival the celebrated coat of Joseph in its many colours. But it contained hardly more colours than the gentleman's waistcoat.

Striking was the only word that would describe the gentleman's appearance. From his white spats to his rakish topper he was decidedly striking in his looks. Certainly he could not be called handsome. Even in the days when his nose had been unbroken, it had not been a handsome nose. But there was a jolly, good-natured expression on the gentleman's face that was rather pleasing.

"Jolly old buck, what?" Manners remarked. "But what the thump can he want at St. Jim's? He's asking for poor old Lynn."

The Terrible Three stopped. They had been discussing the

Chicken as they strolled round the quad before morning lessons. Little as they approved of the kind of conduct that had brought the official "chopper" down on Lynn, they sympathised with the hapless wail of St. Jim's. As for any doubt of his guilt, that did not cross their minds. They knew that he had visited the Green Man on more than one occasion, to see the disreputable Mr. Banks. He had told them so. That it was for another's sake that Lynn had made his last visit; that he was now to suffer for another's sin, naturally did not occur to the chums of the Shell.

The three juniors came down towards the gates. Taggles' manner was uncompromising, and Tom Merry was quite ready to chip in; he did not see any reason why Lynn's unknown friend should not be treated with polite civility, remarkable as he was to look at.

"Holiver Lynn!" went on the gentleman, in further explanation. "He's 'ere all right! I've called to see 'im. No 'arm, I suppose?"

"My eye!" repeated Taggles.

"Name of Hawley!" went on the plump man. "I desay you've never 'eard the name. But there it is. He'll know it."

"Hawley!" murmured Tom.

The Terrible Three knew the man's identity now. They remembered that Lynn, in his boxing days, had belonged to what he called "Hawley's Ring." This was Mr. Hawley, his old "guv'nor."

"I'm 'ere to see young Lynn," continued Mr. Hawley. "Came down yesterday arternoon, I did, rather late, you know. Put up at the Habbotsford Harms. Says I to myself, I'll catch 'im afore he goes into school in the morning. So I comes hover in that there taxi. And 'ere I am."

Taggles did not seem interested in these details. Taggles' look showed that he disapproved of the plump gentleman, of his striking attire, his rakish silk hat, and his broken nose. Taggles grunted.

"Well, you can't see Master Lynn!" he said.

"And for why not?" demanded Mr. Hawley warmly.

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"Any law agin a gentleman callin' to see a young gentleman at his school, I'd like to know."

"If you're a relation—" said Taggles, minus the respect he was accustomed to show the relations of St. Jim's fellows. Taggles had aristocratic prejudices, and he had no respect to waste upon this "person," as he would have described him, who, only too obviously was a retired fighting-man. "A blinking old pug!" was the way Taggles described him, in mentioning the matter later to Mrs. Taggles. Naturally, Taggles was lofty in his dealings with a "blinking old pug."

"Relation?" repeated Mr. Hawley. "No, I ain't a relation. Jest an old friend of young Lynn."

"You can go up to the 'ouse, I suppose, if you like," said Taggles disdainfully; "but you can't see Lynn!"

"Why can't a bloke see a bloke, when a bloke's called specially to see a bloke?" inquired Mr. Hawley, showing signs of excitement.

"Cause he's locked up in the punishment-room, for a-misbehaving of himself," retorted Taggles.

"My word!" said Mr. Hawley. "Is that young cove in trouble?"

"He is that," snapped Taggles; and the school porter went back to his lodge, leaving Mr. Hawley to his own devices. He had already wasted too much of his valuable time on a "blinking old pug."

The old pug stood with dismay in his fat, red face. The news that Lynn was in trouble seemed to have affected him.

Tom Merry approached the portly gentleman, and lifted his cap politely.

"Excuse me, Mr. Hawley," he said. "You were asking after Lynn of the Fourth Form—"

"I was," said Mr. Hawley dejectedly. "This 'ere is bad news, sir. P'raps you wouldn't mind telling a bloke what's appened to young Lynn? You don't seem to be so 'igh and 'aughty as that cove."

Tom Merry smiled. Certainly he was nothing like so naughty as Ephraim Taggles, though Taggles' hauteur could have been softened to a wonderful extent by the presentation of half-a-crown.

"Oh, don't mind Taggles," he said. "Taggles is an old donkey—"

"I'll report you, Master Merry," came Taggles' crusty voice.

"Go ahead, old duffer," said Tom cheerily. "Don't mind him, sir; Taggles is harmless, and we let him run on. I'm awfully sorry about poor old Lynn; so are we all."

Taggles retired into his lodge and slammed the door, as a manifestation of his disgust.

"But what's 'appened to young Lynn, then?" asked Mr. Hawley, with a look of distress. "I 'ad my doubts whether he'd get on 'ere, I 'ad. I've knowed that kid a long time, sir, though I can't tell you the circumstances, being as 'ow p'raps it's better not."

"That's all right," said Tom. "Lynn's told us about Hawley's Ring, and we know the whole story."

"My eye! I rather thought Lynn would 'ave kept that dark, at a big school like this 'ere," said Mr. Hawley, in surprise. "Well, sir, if you know all about it, there ain't no 'arm in my telling you that young Lynn was the best boxer that ever was in my show; and I fancy Hawley's Ring is fairly well known. A good 'un he was with the mittens; and a crying shame it was that he quit. I 'ope it won't do him any 'arm, an old friend looking in to see 'ow he's going on at his noo school."

"Of course not," said Tom. "But, as it happens, Lynn's rather in trouble at the present moment, and he's locked in the punishment-room. I don't think you could see him now; but if you like to ask the Head, I'll take you in to Dr. Holmes at once."

Mr. Hawley shook his head.

"If that's 'ow it is, I won't trouble the 'Ead this morning," he said. "I s'pose the Chicken has been kicking over the traces, what? He was always a lad of sperrit. It was a mistake for him to quit the Ring and take to this 'ere schooling. Waste of time, I call it. P'raps you'd be kind enough to give 'im a message for me, sir."

"Certainly, the moment I can see him," answered Tom at once.

"Tell him I'm going to stay at the village yonder to-day, and if he can get away, to speak a word to an old friend, he'll find me at the Rylcombe Harms," said Mr. Hawley.

"I'll find a chance of telling him that," said Tom.

"Thank you kindly, young gentleman."

Mr. Hawley raised his silk hat, set it on his bullet head again at a still more rakish angle, and walked back to his taxi. The Terrible Three looked after him curiously as he drove away. His fat, red face was very grave and concerned.

"Jolly decent old chap," said Monty Lowther. "Bit of a skyrocket to look at, but his heart's in the right place, if his aspirates aren't."

"So that's Lynn's old guv'nor," said Manners. "I fancy he's right, and that Lynn made a mistake in leaving him to come here."

Tom Merry nodded.

"I'm glad to know that Lynn's still got a friend," he said. "St. Leger's father sent him here, but Colonel St. Leger is pretty certain to be waxy at his getting expelled. He's his uncle; but he may turn him down after this, and in that case—"

"There's still Hawley's Ring for the Chicken, in that case," said Lowther.

"Poor kid, I dare say he'll have a better time there than he's had here. I hope so."

"There goes the bell!"

The Terrible Three turned their steps towards the School House.

"You fellows go into class," said Tom.

"I'll cut up to Nobody's Study, and see if there's a chance of giving Lynn the tip."

"Mind the prefects don't spot you."

"That's all right."

And Tom Merry hurried upstairs, while Manners and Lowther went into class with the rest of the Shell.

CHAPTER 5.

For St. Leger's Sake!

TOM MERRY tapped at the door of Nobody's Study. It was locked, and the key gone, so he knew that Lynn of the Fourth was still there.

"Allo!" came Lynn's voice from within.

"Lynn, old man—"

"That Master Merry?"

"Little me," said Tom, in a hurried whisper through the keyhole. "I've got a message for you, Lynn."

"Fire away."

"Mr. Hawley's been to the gates—"

"My eye! My old guv'nor!"

"Yes. He called to see you, but went away when he heard that you were juggled here. He left a message."

"Go it!" said Lynn.

There were footsteps on the stairs, and Tom Merry caught sight of Mr. Raiton's mortar-board in the distance. It was

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against all rules and regulations to speak to a fellow detained in the punishment-room, and there was still time for Tom to escape; but he was determined to give Lynn the message before he went. He could guess that it would have a cheering effect upon the junior who was down on his luck.

"Mr. Hawley's putting up to-day at the Rylcombe Arms, in the village, Lynn," Tom whispered hurriedly. "He says that, if you can get away, he'd like you to go there and see him."

"Good old guv'nor!" said Lynn.

"Merry!"

Tom backed away from the door as Mr. Railton came striding down the passage.

"Merry! What are you doing here?"

"Hem!"

"You were speaking to Lynn," said the School House master severely.

"Ye-es, sir."

"You will take fifty lines, Merry. Go to your Form-room at once."

Tom Merry turned away in silence, and descended the stairs. When he arrived in the Shell Form room he was given another fifty lines by Mr. Linton for being late. His service to Lynn had earned him a total of a hundred lines; but Tom did not regret it.

Mr. Railton unlocked the door of the punishment-room.

"Lynn, you will follow me. Dr. Holmes will see you now."

"Yes, sir," said the Chicken.

He followed Mr. Railton. On the way to the Head's study they passed the open door of the School House, and Lynn glanced out into the sunny quad. He was tempted, for the moment, to make a bolt for it. But he restrained that impulse, and followed Mr. Railton to the Head's study.

Mr. Railton tapped at the door and opened it.

"Here is Lynn, sir. Go in, Lynn."

Lynn entered the study, and Mr. Railton shut the door and walked away to the Sixth Form room.

Dr. Holmes was seated at his table, and beside the table stood the angular form of Mr. Ratcliff, the New House master. Mr. Ratcliff was due in the Fifth Form room, being Form master there; but the Fifth had to wait for their Form master that morning.

"Ah!" Dr. Holmes adjusted his glasses and stared at Lynn. "I have sent for you, Lynn, to tell you my decision. It appears that last night you left the precincts of the school, and visited a low resort—an extremely disreputable resort—known as the Green Man. You do not deny this?"

"Course I don't, sir," said the Chicken. "It's true."

Dr. Holmes coughed slightly.

"I am glad to see, Lynn, that you have such a regard for the truth," he said dryly. "It seems that, when you were discovered in this low resort by Mr. Ratcliff you assaulted him in order to make your escape."

"I never meant to hurt him, sir."

"You laid hands upon a Housemaster of this school," said the Head, raising his voice a little.

"I told him a few minutes, sir."

Dr. Holmes peered at the schoolboy boxer over his glasses.

"You struggled with Mr. Ratcliff, Lynn?"

"I didn't 'ave to struggle much, sir," said the Chicken, with a faint grin. "He was easy enough for me to 'andle."

"Bless my soul!"

"Why, sir, I could 'andle three or four of 'im!" said Lynn innocently. "Five or six of 'im wouldn't be much for me."

Mr. Ratcliff's face crimsoned.

"Dr. Holmes, this boy's insolence——"

"Lynn's insolence will receive its due punishment. Mr. Ratcliff, you may rest assured of that. I will not detain you from your Form longer, sir. As Lynn makes no denials the case is clear."

Mr. Ratcliff quitted the study, giving Oliver Lynn a last bitter look as he went.

Dr. Holmes coughed again.

"Lynn, I have no desire to be unduly hard upon you," he said. "I desire to be just, but as lenient as possible. I know only too well that you had no opportunities in early life of learning the behaviour that is required of a boy in this school. I considered very carefully before I assented to Colonel St. Leger's request that you should be admitted here. Your uncle was somewhat doubtful himself, I think, and regarded your entrance at St. Jim's as more or less of an experiment. I am sorry that that experiment has failed."

Lynn was silent.

"You do not appear to have a clear comprehension of the fitness of things," went on the Head. "It is, perhaps, not to be expected of you. I understand that, owing to an unfortunate disagreement between your father and your uncle, Colonel St. Leger was able to do nothing for you in your father's lifetime. When he learned that you were an orphan he made search for you, and rescued you from the surroundings in which you had been abandoned. Surely, Lynn, this kindness of your relative should have made you

very careful in your conduct here. You should not have been guilty of ingratitude."

"I'm sorry, sir!" faltered Lynn. "I 'ope the colonel won't mind very much. He's been very kind to me."

"It will be a painful shock to him," said the Head. "I would spare him that shock if I could, but I have my duty to do. Had you been guilty of only reckless folly in visiting that resort I could have made allowances, owing to your unfortunate training. I should have punished you, certainly, and endeavoured to bring you to a better frame of mind; but I could have allowed you to remain in the school. But you went to the length of actually attacking a Housemaster—of using a member of my staff with violence. That is unpardonable."

"I—I s'pose so, sir."

"On your first coming here," resumed the Head, "you did not seem to realise that you were in a place where your old rough habits could not possibly be allowed to continue. You took advantage of your unhappy training as a pugilist to act in a bullying manner towards other boys——"

"I never meant to, sir. And—and them blokes are my friends now, sir," said Lynn eagerly.

"Let me finish, Lynn. I was very, very glad to see that you turned over a new leaf in that respect. I had hopes of you. Now all is at an end; what you have done now cannot be overlooked. If you had any excuse to offer——"

The Head paused.

Lynn did not speak.

"Your conduct was as foolish as it was rebellious and wicked," said the Head. "You attacked Mr. Ratcliff, in order to escape; it was only because he had an electric torch in his hand that he saw you as you fled. But you had already been missed from the school; even if Mr. Ratcliff had not seen you, there would have been no doubt of your identity. What crass folly, Lynn, made you guilty of such an action when it could not serve you, as you must have known?"

Lynn did not speak or look up. He could not explain to the Head that he had been utterly reckless of himself; that he had held Mr. Ratcliff a prisoner in his muscular grip long enough for St. Leger of the Fifth to escape, and no longer.

Dr. Holmes waited for a reply, but it did not come.

"Your conduct was so reckless, Lynn, so foolish, that I cannot help suspecting that there is something hidden behind it," the Head went on at last. "There is something, I think, that you have not told me, and that is unknown to Mr. Ratcliff or Mr. Railton."

The Chicken breathed hard.

"I ask you, Lynn, to give me a full explanation," said the Head. "It is possible that there may be extenuating circumstances unknown to me; and, for your uncle's sake, if not for your own, I desire to be as merciful as possible."

"My—my uncle?" faltered Lynn.

"Colonel St. Leger. You must surely know what a painful shock this will be to a gentleman who has been kindness itself to you."

"Not so bad as——"

"What?"

"Nothing, sir!" gasped the Chicken.

He was thinking that his expulsion from the school would not be such a blow to the proud old colonel as the expulsion of his handsome son—the pride of his father's heart. The Head, all unconsciously, had touched the wrong chord. He was appealing to Lynn's sense of gratitude to Colonel St. Leger; but that sense of gratitude kept the loyal Chicken silent. If the proud old gentleman was fated to be brought to shame by his son's misconduct, Lynn's hand, at least, should not be the one to strike the blow; he owed his uncle too much for that. All unconsciously the Head had strengthened the Chicken's determination to say no word.

Dr. Holmes regarded the junior, who stood with flushed cheeks and downcast eyes before him, in silence. The Head was a keen man; he could not help thinking that there was something behind this—something that Lynn could have told him. He was far from guessing what it was.

"Have you nothing to say, Lynn?" he asked at last.

"Nothing, sir."

"You leave me no resource but to dismiss you from the school," said Dr. Holmes.

"I know, sir."

"I will put my question more plainly," said the Head.

"Was there some other person concerned in this escapade?"

The Chicken's heart beat faster.

"You must have known, if you have common intelligence, that your assault upon Mr. Ratcliff could not save you from discovery, Lynn."

"I—I knowed that, sir."

"Then what was your motive? Was there some other person whom you were shielding and giving an opportunity to escape?"

Lynn trembled inwardly. He had heard the juniors describe the Head as a "downy old bird." The headmaster was getting perilously near the truth. Not for worlds would the

Chicken have uttered a word to bring him nearer to it; though the truth would have saved him, and he knew it.

"Nobody went with me, sir," said Lynn, steadying his voice with an effort. "I went alone, sir."

There was a short silence.

Lynn had told the truth, though with a misleading effect. Certainly he had gone out alone that night.

"Very well, Lynn," said Dr. Holmes at last. "I thought—I hoped that you might have something to tell me that would justify me in giving you another chance. You have nothing to say?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Very well. For your uncle's sake, and in consideration of your unhappy training before you came here, I shall not expel you publicly from the school," said the Head. "I shall send you home by the afternoon train as quietly as possible."

"Ome!" muttered the Chicken.

"I shall ask your cousin, St. Leger of the Fifth Form, to take you to his father's home. You will go with him."

"Oh, sir!"

"That is all, Lynn. You may go. You will not attend classes to-day; and you will remain in the punishment-room till you are sent for. You may go and pack your box, and then return to the punishment-room and remain there."

"Yes, sir."

Lynn of the Fourth left the Head's study. The whole school was at lessons; the corridors were deserted. Lynn stood in the big doorway and stared out into the quadrangle—at the sunshine, and the old trees that were showing the green of spring. His face was clouded, his heart heavy.

Home! He was going home! St. Leger Lodge had been his home since the old colonel had taken him from Hawley's Ring. He was going home to face his uncle, from whom he had received nothing but kindness—to face him, shadowed with disgrace. He thought of the Lodge—of the old garden looking over the Chiltern Hills, where St. Leger of the Fifth, in the vacation, had been kind to him, taking a great deal of trouble—for so lazy a fellow—to help his newly-found cousin in his unaccustomed studies with his tutor, who was preparing the Chicken for school.

St. Leger had been very kind then, and it was then that the waif had learned almost to worship the handsome, good-natured, careless fellow. At St. Jim's it had been different. But St. Leger's later conduct had made no difference to the loyal affection of the Chicken: he had always made allowances for the fellow he admired so much. St. Leger was his idol—an idol, alas! with feet of clay; but never a disloyal thought entered the mind of the rugged waif of St. Jim's. St. Leger was his hero still. To serve St. Leger, above all, to save him, the Chicken would have faced fire and steel.

But to go back in disgrace—to repay the kindness of his uncle with what appeared the blackest ingratitude—

"It's 'ard!" muttered the hapless Chicken. "It's 'ard!"

He turned away from the sunny doorway, and went with slow steps to the dormitory to pack his box. It was hard, very hard; but the Chicken was of the stuff that heroes are made of, and he did not falter.

CHAPTER 6.

The Scapegoat.

ST. LEGER of the Fifth was in trouble more than once that morning with Mr. Ratcliff. Try as he would he could not fix his thoughts upon the Form work—they would wander to the fellow in the punishment-room, to whom he had been so harsh, and who was willing to sacrifice so much for him.

After that wretched adventure at the Green Man, St. Leger had resolved to profit by the lesson of his narrow escape—to keep clear of such shady escapades in the future, and to make up to the Chicken somehow for his neglect. That resolve came too late, as repentance so often does. To keep his reckless blackguardism a secret, he was forced to take a step deeper into the mire, and to allow a sacrifice which, as he knew well, he ought never to allow. And how could he "make it up" to Lynn, who was to be turned out of the school in ignominy?

The thought came incessantly into St. Leger's tormented mind that he would go direct from the Form-room to the Head, and make a clean breast of it. But he knew that he dared not, even if there had not been his evil genius at his elbow to restrain him. He envied the cool, hard indifference of Gerald Cutts. Cutts of the Fifth would have sacrificed friend or foe to save his own skin, with cool indifference, and no load would have remained on his conscience. St. Leger was not made like that. Wrong he could do, but it had to be expiated by the tortures of his conscience—the still small voice that he could not silence.

Several times that morning the bitter tongue of Mr. Ratcliff was given free exercise at St. Leger's expense. Mr. Ratcliff was never a patient master, and on this especial morning he was in a savage mood; his "handling" by the Chicken on

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the previous night rankled in his bitter mind. St. Leger gave plenty of cause for dissatisfaction, and but for the fact that the use of the cane was barred in the senior Form-rooms, St. Leger certainly would have been caned more than once by the master of the Fifth. He earned three hundred lines, and any number of gibes, which he hardly heeded. In his troubled state of mind he was almost deaf to Mr. Ratcliff's bitter tongue.

Class was a prolonged torment to St. Leger. He almost panted with relief when it came to an end and he was free. He hurried away from the Form-room, avoiding Gerald Cutts. He wanted to see Oliver Lynn, to speak with him, perhaps to justify himself somehow in the junior's eyes. He was going to take advantage of the waif's devotion, but he tried to think that his decision was as yet unsettled. The thought haunted him that the junior, while urging him to accept the sacrifice, must despise him for doing so. How could he help it, when St. Leger despised himself from the very bottom of his soul? And yet—

St. Leger made his way to Nobody's Study. The punishment-room was in the Shell passage at the back of a deep alcove, and several juniors were there. Lynn was in the room, but the door was open now. The Head trusted him to remain there till he was sent away. Tom Merry & Co. had come along, immediately after class, to speak to the outcast, and to give him what comfort they could.

The juniors looked oddly at St. Leger as he came up. His face was pale and deeply lined with trouble; he looked almost ill. Fellows who had blamed St. Leger for his neglect of his fag cousin, for his snobbish avoidance of Lynn at St. Jim's, felt disposed to change their opinion now. It was easy to see that St. Leger was hard hit by the misfortune that had fallen upon the Chicken. Apparently he was not, after all, indifferent to the ties of blood.

"Lynn's there?" asked St. Leger, in a low voice, as he turned from the passage into the alcove outside Nobody's Study.

"He's there," answered Tom Merry.

St. Leger nodded and went on, and the Shell fellows withdrew. They realised that they were not wanted there while the Fifth-Former was speaking to his cousin.

Lynn started as St. Leger came in. The look on the senior's face was startling. If Lynn had needed anything to make him firm in his resolve, St. Leger's look would have been enough. He had not expected St. Leger to take it so hard as this.

The senior closed the door.

"I—I say, Master St. Leger," said Lynn, "don't you worry. Don't you mind. You're looking fair knocked out, sir. Don't you worry!"

"I—I had your note," muttered St. Leger.

"I mean it, sir," said the Chicken eagerly. "It's all right. Don't you go for to worry about it. It can't be 'elped now. I—I'm glad you're sorry, in a way; but I don't want you to take on."

"I thought you'd got clear last night," said St. Leger. "I shouldn't have cleared if I'd known Ratcliff had collared you."

"I'm glad you did, sir."

"Why couldn't you get clear?" muttered the Fifth-Former. "The old bloke had an electric torch, sir, and he flashed it on me as I was dodging off," said the Chicken. "But it never made no difference, sir. You see, I was missed already. It was just at bed-time that I came out to warn you; and, of course, they knowed."

"You knew you'd be missed?"

Lynn smiled.

"I didn't stop to think about that, sir, when I 'eard you was being run down by the Housemasters. If I hadn't come they'd have had you sure. You was fair cornered."

"I know. I wish I'd been caught, I think," said St. Leger miserably. "I was a fool to go there—a fool and rotter! You ought to have left me to stand it."

The Chicken shook his head.

"No fear, sir!"

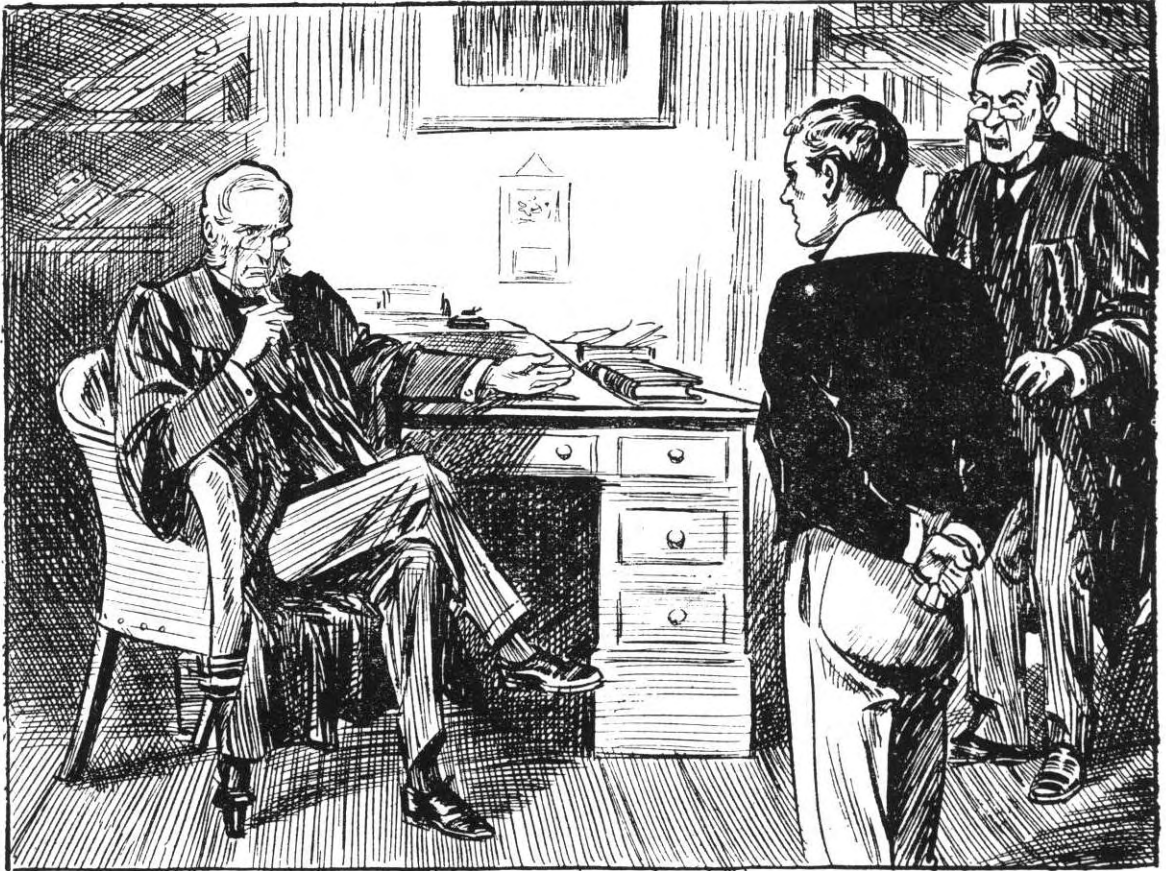
"I've never treated you decently since you've been here, either," muttered St. Leger remorsefully.

"Yes, you 'ave, sir," said the Chicken loyally. "'Course you didn't want to be bothered with a bloke like me, with Cutts and them coves chipping you, too. Why should you?"

"I can't allow it," said St. Leger huskily. "I shall have to own up to the Head, kid. I can't let you go in my place."

"You must, sir," said Lynn steadily. "It's all right. Besides, I've fair asked for it. I've been in that there show two or three times, and I knowed it wasn't allowed. It was only a chance that I was caught there when I came for you—might have been when I was there on my own."

"Yes, yes; that's true," said St. Leger, catching at a straw of justification. "You were there in the afternoon." Then he shook his head. "But that's different from breaking bounds at night and handling a Housemaster. It would have been a flogging, but not the sack."



"Lynn!" said the Head, "you have laid hands upon a Housemaster of this school in order to make your escape!" "I told him a few minutes, sir," answered Lynn. Dr. Holmes peered at the schoolboy boxer over his glasses. "You struggled with Mr. Ratcliff, Lynn!" he said sternly. "Well," said the Chicken, with a grin, "I didn't have to struggle much, I could 'andle three or four of 'im at once!" (See page 9.)

"Well, I did 'andle the 'ousemaster, sir; no getting out of that. That's what the 'ead was specially waxy about," said Lynn. "If you owned up, sir, it wouldn't alter that. It's the chopper for me for laying 'ands on Mr. Ratcliff."

St. Leger smiled faintly.

Lynn was trying to make out his own case to be hopeless; but St. Leger knew very well that it was not hopeless, if the Head were told the whole truth.

"You see, sir, I'm for it, anyhow. Don't you take on. I shall pull through all right. I ain't sorry to go, if you come to that. St. Jim's ain't really the right place for me."

"But when you get home," muttered St. Leger. "My father—what will he think of you?"

"P'raps he won't be surprised, sir. What could he expect of a bloke brought up like I've been? Shouldn't wonder if he expected something of the kind all along."

"I can't allow it!"

The Chicken looked alarmed.

He did not understand that St. Leger was arguing with his conscience, trying to make himself believe that he was unwilling to accept the sacrifice.

"For 'eaven's sake, sir, don't you think of saying nothing," exclaimed Lynn. "Think of your father! It would near break his 'eart if you was sent home. The 'ead couldn't let you off—you a senior chap, in the Fifth Form! You'd 'ave to go; and what would your father feel then? What about your future, and you going into the Army? It would muck it all up. Why, it's ruin, sir, if you're turned out of the school." The Chicken's voice was shrill with alarm. "For goodness' sake, sir, jest keep quiet till I'm gone—it's only a few hours now. I tell you I don't mind it a little bit. I'll see you again in the vacation, sir. And if I see you looking 'appy and bright, sir, like you used to look when we was at 'ome, that's all I want, sir."

The tears came into St. Leger's eyes.

What had he done to earn that loyal affection? A few acts of careless kindness, to which he had given no thought at the time.

"You talk about 'ow you've treated me," went on the Chicken. "You don't know 'ow good you was to me, sir." "Good?" muttered St. Leger.

"When your father fetched me away from Hawley's Ring, and brought me 'ome to the Lodge, sir," said the Chicken, "precious little ragamuffin I was, eating with my knife—little pig I was. I was fair scared when I saw you, sir—so nobby you was. I thought you wouldn't speak to me, and wouldn't touch such a little rotter as I was. I expected you'd look down on me, and think I ought not to be about the 'ouse. 'Steard of that, you took me up, and was always good-tempered, and 'elped me with my work when the tooter started on me. Why, sir, lots of blokes in your position would 'ave been no end ratty, 'cause of the money spent on me, being as it must all come to you some day. You never thought of mean things like that—you couldn't. You don't know how good you was, and what a difference it made to a kid who was frightened out of his wits, finding himself in a big house, and scared of the blooming servants. If it hadn't been for you, sir, I reely think I should have bolted. I couldn't have gone on with it. I should be a precious rotter if I couldn't stand up for you, sir, when I get the chance, and jolly glad of the chance, too."

St. Leger moved about the room restlessly while the Chicken was speaking. Lynn's eyes followed him anxiously. "What is it to me if I'm turned out, sir?" said Lynn. "Ain't I been pitched about all my life like a football—more downs than ups for a bloke like me. Why, it's nothing to me, sir, and it's everything to you. If you think you're obliged to me in any way, sir, jest let me 'ave my way—that's all I want. Besides, think of your father. He won't be pleased when I turn up like a bad penny, but it would break his heart to see you come a mucker. You can't do it!"

"I can't!" said St. Leger, his face white as chalk. "I ought, but I can't. Lynn, I'd rather you told the Head the whole truth."

"Catch me!" said the Chicken.

"If you don't, I can't!" groaned St. Leger. "But it will be on my conscience all my life."

"No, it won't, sir," said Lynn. "You'll forget about it in time. 'Tain't so jolly serious as you think jest now, sir."

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In a few days you'll forget there ever was such a little ragamuffin 'ere at all."

St. Leger came to a halt.

"There might be a chance yet," he said huskily. "I'll speak to the Head. I'll try to get him to give you a chance. I—I'll promise to look after you." He smiled in a ghastly way. "He may give you another chance, kid. I'll try it."

"Tain't likely, sir. You keep clear of the 'Ead," said the Chicken anxiously. "Keep clear, sir, and keep mum."

St. Leger shook his head, and quitted the punishment-room without saying more, leaving the Chicken in a very anxious mood.

CHAPTER 7.

The Only Way !

MR. RAILTON called to St. Leger as he came down the staircase. The Housemaster looked rather curiously at the Fifth-Former's white, strained face.

"St. Leger, I have been looking for you. The Head wishes to see you in his study."

"The—the Head, sir?" stammered St. Leger.

"Yes. He has some instructions to give you with regard to Lynn of the Fourth Form."

"Oh, very well, sir!"

For a moment a deadly terror had gripped St. Leger's heart—the terrible fear that the Head knew! In that moment of fear he knew that, howsoever he chose to debate the matter in his mind, he would never dare to confess. His steps were unsteady as he moved away towards Dr. Holmes' study. It was not easy to recover from the shock the Housemaster's words had given him.

Dr. Holmes gave the Fifth-Former a compassionate look as he entered. The wretched suffering in St. Leger's face touched his heart. He attributed it, naturally, to his concern for his cousin who had come so complete a "cropper" so early in his school career.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed the Head, "you must not take this matter so much to heart. You must not think, St. Leger, that the disgrace of your relative reflects any discredit upon you."

St. Leger almost laughed. That was not what he was thinking of.

"I am sure that you have done all you could for this unfortunate boy," said the Head. "The actual fact is, that it was a mistake to allow him to enter the school at all. Your father hoped, and I hoped, that at St. Jim's he would rid himself of the ill effects of his unhappy training. But the evil, it appears, was too deeply rooted. Lawless and ruffianly habits had taken too firm a hold upon him. It is my wish, St. Leger, that you should conduct the boy to his home; and you will take a letter from me to your father."

"Isn't there a chance for him, sir?" St. Leger forced himself to speak. "If—if you could be lenient, sir, I—I think—I am sure, sir, that he would never act—"

Dr. Holmes raised his hand.

"It is useless to raise that question, St. Leger. I have thought the matter over very carefully, you may be sure, before coming to a decision, and have consulted Mr. Railton. It is impossible to change my decision."

"But, sir, if it's not so bad as you think—" St. Leger stammered and stopped.

"What do you mean, St. Leger? Are you acquainted with any circumstances that are unknown to me in this affair?"

St. Leger trembled.

"I—I mean, sir, if—I'd looked after him a bit more, as I ought to have done—"

"I am sure you are not to blame, St. Leger."

"If he were allowed to stay, sir, I—I'd keep an eye on him, and—and I could answer for it, sir, that nothing of the kind would ever occur again." St. Leger was amazed at his own hypocrisy. "I'm sure, sir, that under my—my guidance—"

"I am afraid it is too late for that, St. Leger. If you have the influence you suppose over this unhappy boy, surely you would have exerted it earlier? If you have failed in your duty to him, as an older boy and a relative, you have much to answer for. But I cannot think that that is the case. Please say no more."

"But, sir—" stammered St. Leger.

Dr. Holmes did not seem to hear.

"You will take the train at half-past three," he said.

"You may, if you choose, remain the night at home."

St. Leger licked his dry lips.

He knew, only too well, that he could not face his father with a lie upon his lips, that he could not hand over his cousin as the culprit, with the knowledge of his own guilt heavy upon his heart. The Head made a gesture of dismissal, but St. Leger did not go.

"If you would send a prefect with him, sir," he gasped.

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"It would be—horrible—for me—to take him home—and see my father!"

Dr. Holmes raised his eyebrows.

"As you are the boy's relative, St. Leger, I deemed you the fit person to conduct him home. If you think, however, that the task would be painful to you—"

"Anything rather than that!" groaned St. Leger, hardly conscious of what he was saying.

"I will ask Kildare or Darrell to take charge of the boy, then, most certainly," said the Head. "You must pull yourself together, St. Leger, and not take this unfortunate affair so deeply to heart. Your regard for your relative does you credit; but you must remember that you are not to blame in any way."

St. Leger left the study.

A few minutes later the bell rang for dinner, and St. Leger joined the Fifth in the dining-room. His white, wretched face drew curious glances upon him from all sides.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy remarked at the Fourth Form table. "Poor old St. Leger seems quite knocked ovah, you know! I weally nevah thought he was fond of young Lynn."

"Blessed if I did, either!" said Blake.

"Pewwaps he knows that he ought to be hoofed out, too," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Lynn was an awful young sweep, of course, but St. Leger was up to the same games, you know; and if the Head knew—"

"Shurrup!" murmured Blake.

At the Fifth Form table, St. Leger hardly tasted his dinner. Cutts, who sat next to him, whispered in his ear.

"Pull yourself together, St. Leger, you ass!"

St. Leger did not answer or look at him.

"Do you want the beaks to guess what's the matter?" whispered Cutts. "You're asking them to put two and two together, goin' around with a face like that! Do you want to be lagged?"

"I don't care!" said St. Leger bitterly.

"You'd care if the chopper came down!"

"Let me alone."

Cutts shrugged his shoulders. He was not without his own uneasiness; for if St. Leger, in a desperate conscience-stricken moment, blurted out the truth, it was possible that Cutts' own part in his downfall might come to light. St. Leger, in his present mood, was keeping Gerald Cutts on tenterhooks of anxiety.

But it was evidently useless to argue with St. Leger, and Cutts shrugged his shoulders and hoped for the best, with his usual cynical coolness.

After dinner St. Leger sought Nobody's Study again. He found Oliver Lynn there, quite composed and apparently cheerful.

"There's nothing doin'," said St. Leger. "I've spoken to the Head, and he's as hard as iron."

"That's all right, sir."

St. Leger looked at him in something like wonder.

"And you're willing to face it?" he said.

"More than willing—glad!" said the Chicken sturdily.

"Only too jolly glad to 'ave a chance of doing something for you, sir!"

"You're a young fool!" groaned St. Leger. "I wish you'd spoken right out at the first."

The Chicken smiled and shook his head.

"The Head's let me off takin' you home. You're goin' home with a Sixth Form prefect by the three-thirty."

"Right-ho!"

"What will you say to my father?"

"Well, I can say I'm sorry," said the Chicken thoughtfully. "Goodness knows I'm sorry to worry 'im, after all his kindness. You trust me, sir, I sha'n't let out a word about you, 'cept to mention 'ow good you've been to me."

St. Leger shuddered.

"I can't stand it!" he muttered. "I can't be such a rascal! Heaven help me, I'm going to do the right thing! I'm not going to let a kid stand between me an' what I've asked for! I'll go to the Head—"

"You won't, sir!" said the Chicken earnestly. "For my sake, and your father's sake, you won't!"

"I can't see you taken away!" said St. Leger. "I can't! Lynn, old man, before Kildare comes to take you away, I'm goin' to speak! If it's at the last minute, I'll do it—somehow! I must—and I will!"

He turned to the door, and the alarmed Chicken caught him by the sleeve.

"Master St. Leger—"

"Don't say another word!"

"Leave it till the last minute, then," said Lynn. "Promise me, sir, that you won't say a word afore the prefect comes for me."

"You think I shall weaken again?" muttered St. Leger, only too conscious that he might weaken.

"No, no! Never, sir! But something may turn up—"

"What do you mean? What can turn up?" asked St. Leger, with a faint gleam of hope.



"Lynn's gone now," groaned St. Leger, "and it's too late for me to help him!" "Too late, that's a cert," said Cutts coolly. "The Head would never let him come back after this, if you whitewashed him to any extent. But, by gad, he's a good kid—a good kid. Game to the last!" St. Leger sank back into his chair, and covered his face with his hands. He realised that he was saved, and that the devoted Lynn had suffered in his stead. (See page 17.)

"While there's life, there's 'ope, sir," said the Chicken. "Jest you leave it till after three, and it may turn out all right for both of us. No good asking for trouble 'arf-way."

"But what—what—"

"Do what I ask, sir. It don't make any difference, and if you're going to be ruined, it can't 'appen too late."

St. Leger smiled, a ghastly smile.

"It's ruin, right enough," he said. "I don't quite understand you, Lynn, but rely on this, before you're taken away from St. Jim's I'm going to speak out and save you. I'm determined on that."

He hurried away from Nobody's Study. Lynn looked after him curiously and sadly.

As soon as he had disappeared Lynn left Nobody's Study, taking the opposite direction. All the fellows were downstairs, and there was no one to observe the Chicken as he scudded into a box-room, slipped from the window upon the leads outside, and thence dropped to the ground. Two or three minutes later Lynn of the Fourth was outside the school walls.

CHAPTER 8.

Back to the Ring!

"GUV'NOR!"

"Blow me!" said Mr. Hawley. "It's the Chicken!"

Mr. Hawley had finished his dinner at the Rylcombe Arms, and was smoking his cigar in the porch, when Lynn of the Fourth came up.

The old boxer stretched out a welcoming hand.

He eyed the Chicken as he shook hands with him. Doubtless, in his Etons and white collar and neat tie, the Chicken looked very different from of old, when he had belonged to Hawley's Ring, and travelled from town to town with the boxing show.

"You've changed, Chick!" said Mr. Hawley.

"'Ave I, guv'nor?" said the Chicken. "You ain't! Still the same 'carty old cove, you are."

"I'm jolly glad to see you agin, Chick, and sorry to 'ear you was in trouble at your school," said Mr. Hawley, shaking hands with him again. "That young gent told you about me calling?"

"That's 'ow I'm 'ere," answered Lynn.

"Where's your 'at?"

"Come away in a 'urry without it," said Lynn. "If I'd stopped for my 'at I shouldn't 'ave got clear."

Mr. Hawley looked very grave.

"I 'opo you ain't bolted, Chick!" he said.

"Just that."

"This 'ere won't do," said the old boxer, shaking his head. "I reckon it was a mistake for your uncle to take you away from the ring and send you to school, but he meant well, Chick. You ought to play up and be respectful. 'Tain't respectful to run away from school."

"You see —"

"Mind, I've thought a lot of times you'd do better to come back," said Mr. Hawley. "Why, you had everything in your 'ands if you'd stayed with me. Was there a boxer in the kingdom of your years that could 'ave stood up to you for four rounds? Not one! Why, in a few years' time, Chick, I'd have put you in for the championship. I was going to make another Carpentier of you—and better than Carpentier, Chick, at his best. You can lay to that."

"You'd like me to come back, guv'nor?"

"Wouldn't I just!" said Mr. Hawley.

"Then count me in."

Mr. Hawley shook his head.

"Right's right," he said. "You've got your dooty to your uncle to think of, Chick."

The Chicken smiled, rather wistfully.

"You won't let a bloke explain," he said. "You 'eard that I was in trouble at the school. Well, I've been kicking over the traces, guv'nor—bad."

"You young rip!" said Mr. Hawley. "Jest what might have been expected. But you ain't done nothing wrong, Chick?"

(Continued on page 16.)

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OUR SPECIAL SHORT COMPLETE DETECTIVE STORY!**THE ROYAL SPECIAL!****BY EDMUND BURTON.****Another of the Amazing Exploits of
ANTHONY SHARPE—Investigator.****CHAPTER 1.****"Wanted—A Vice!"**

ANTHONY SHARPE had fallen a victim to that pest of humanity—influenza—in which microbe he had found himself up against a "criminal" who proved too much for even his wonderful prowess. Consequently, Tim O'Carroll was obliged to cool his heels in idleness—and Tim was the kind of young gentleman who had a rooted aversion to cooling his heels in any form whatsoever.

For three days the investigator's young assistant had wandered about the flat in Allington Mansions, desperately trying to kill time, and on the fourth—a beautiful, sunny spring morning—he felt that he simply could stand no more of it. The country seemed to call him, as it were, and he knew that the little two-seater was lying idly in the garage a few streets away. So Sharpe, now being well on the road to recovery, though still weak, Tim broached the subject of his desire—all of which explains why we find the youngster some twenty-five miles from the metropolis, with the neat, handy-looking car running as sweetly as well-cared for engines always do.

Tim was a good driver; he had learnt quickly under Sharpe's expert tuition, and could hold his own with any chauffeur on the road. He had thoroughly enjoyed that spin, and was now well on his return journey, reaching the neighbourhood of Bexmoor just as dusk closed down.

Bexmoor, as most people know, is principally famous on account of its having been the trickiest piece of work encountered during the building of the London and Northern Railway. Here the line pierces, by means of a tunnel, a tough tract of rock and gravelly earth for something like a quarter of a mile, after which it passes through a deep cutting ere entering the little wayside station beyond—a place which few trains, except the slow locals, consider of sufficient importance to halt at. All this had been a big job to complete successfully, for much of the work had meant sheer hacking through most difficult substance, which, considering the length of system involved, had cost more in proportion than any five miles of the line elsewhere.

Just on the Bexmoor side of the tunnel an iron bridge carries the roadway over the cutting, and Tim, running at an easy speed, had just reached the centre of this bridge when, probably through his slightly misjudging distance in the tricky light, he felt the side of his car grate along the low iron shelf on the left, from which rose the protecting bridge-railings. He swerved at once towards the middle of the road, but a harsh, rasping noise told him that some damage had already been done. Something was grinding along the wheel-rim and acting after the manner of a very noisy brake.

A swift examination by the light of a pocket-lamp revealed that a projecting strip of metal had been bent back until it fouled one of the rear wheels, thereby somewhat interfering with the car's further progress—at least, not without a good deal of unpleasant scraping which, to Tim, was the

very essence of horror, since he had only recently been revelling in the extra smooth running of the little two-seater as it glided down the gentle incline to the bridge.

He rummaged through his outfit, but found nothing suitable for the job in hand. What he wanted was a large vice, preferably one with a long handle, which would give sufficient leverage to bend the stout metal back into position, and he didn't possess such an implement at the moment.

"Crumbs!" O'Carroll glared at his watch, and then at the inanimate bridge-shelf which had caused the trouble. "Twenty-past seven, and over twenty miles to go! The gov'nor will be wondering if I've had a smash—By Jove!"

Away down in the cutting below he suddenly caught sight of a small illuminated square—the lighted window of a large plate-layer's hut, or something of the kind, close to the tunnel-mouth. Evidently a night-watchman was employed there continuously, and in all probability he would be able to supply the necessary article.

Five minutes later saw Tim at the bottom of the cutting within a few yards of the hut; but ere he could enter, the door was suddenly flung open, and a tall figure filled the lighted gap.

"Wot d'ye want?"

The man's voice was harsh, and, O'Carroll thought, a little anxious. He stated his requirements briefly.

"Yes," said the fellow; "I believe I've got

somethin' like wot ye're lookin' for. Come in!"

Unsuspectingly, the lad followed the other inside, where a second man—a dark, foreign-looking chap—was standing back against the wall. On a little, roughly made table, an elaborate chart lay, partly unrolled, beside a smoking lamp that did not seem to have been cleaned for weeks. The chart was covered with notes, markings, and here and there several crosses in red ink, whilst a double line of rails, showing a junction, were plainly visible. Evidently it was a plan of some part of the London and Northern system. This much O'Carroll had time to notice, and was about to press his request, when he suddenly felt his arms seized in a vice-like grip, pinning them to his sides, at the same time becoming conscious that a foreign-looking man had drawn an ugly shooter which he levelled at the boy's forehead.

"You may be genuine," the fellow said in excellent English, "or you may not! Therefore, we can take no chances! Now, friend Smithers!"

Tim felt too amazed for speech. A dozen questions might have formed on his lips, but as it happened, even had he been capable of asking them, he never got the chance. For next moment something soft was pressed tightly over his mouth, and a sickly odour filled his nostrils. He fought hard for a few minutes, desperately striving to inhale as little of the drug as possible, but finally his



As Tim O'Carroll raced towards the cross-gates he saw the "pilot" engine flash past. "Another six minutes!" he muttered to himself. "Shall I be in time!"

head fell forward, and he hung a dead weight in the muscular arms of his assailant.

Young O'Carroll's ruse had been fairly successful. Though he did not know the meaning of this extraordinary turn events had taken, when one is confronted by a useful-looking pistol, and chloroformed from behind, something big must be in the wind. Therefore, by holding his breath until his lungs seemed in danger of bursting, he had succeeded in inhaling only a very small portion of the fumes, and cautiously opened his eyes less than a quarter of an hour later.

He was lying on the floor just out of reach of the lamp-rays, and the two occupants of the hut were bending over the chart, making little or no attempt to lower their voices. They naturally presumed that their captive was safe in "bye-bye," but, as has been shown, that astute individual was extremely wide awake, with every nerve in his body trained up to concert pitch.

"So that," the alien was saying, "settles the matter admirably." He stubbed his finger on the chart. "Provided your information is exact, friend Smithers, and that you can work the points in the way you say— independently of the signal cabin—there should be no hitch."

The big man nodded.

"Of course I can! I ain't been employed on this line for more than ten year without learnin' a trick or two! First the heavy goods, then the 'pilot,' and then the—the other!"

"And after that a nation's newspapers edged with mourning!" The foreigner showed his even white teeth in a nasty smile. "Six minutes, you say, between the pilot and the special?"

"Yes, six—though three would be enough, now that we've everythin' ready for fixin'— Hark! Here's the goods, on the tick of time!"

A low rumbling sounded in the tunnel close by; then the hut vibrated as a long and heavy train clattered past with throbbing pistons. The foreigner looked at his watch.

"Good! We've a clear thirty minutes' grace now, but it is as well to be on the safe side. Let us go!"

O'Carroll was apparently still asleep under the influence of the drug as the pair rose, the big man glancing briefly at his victim ere turning out the lamp. Tim heard them pass from the hut, and gave them a short start ere he, too, scrambled to his feet and fished the electric lamp from his pocket. He was sorely puzzled, yet from what he had overheard, he guessed that something of great moment was on the mat.

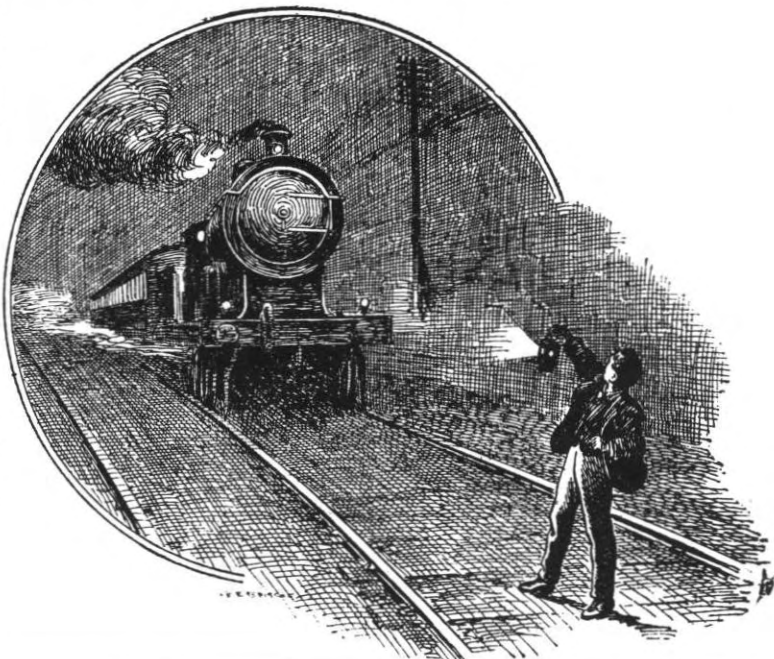
He flashed the beam on the chart, examining it minutely. Bexmoor Tunnel was shown at one side, with the bridge crossing the line before it—the bridge where his two-seater, he fervently hoped, still stood. On the far side of the tunnel the junction already referred to was marked, indicating that a short stretch of track branched at an angle, and then broke off abruptly at the edge of a pit or quarry. A short distance beyond that—on the London side—the road again crossed the railway, this time by means of a level-crossing, the gates of which were operated—as also were presumably the junction-points—from a signal cabin still farther on.

But that unsettling conversation, what did it mean? What— Great Heaven! Tim O'Carroll fairly trembled as a sudden solution struck him. Only that morning he had noticed a paragraph in the newspaper to the effect that the King and Queen of Sylvania, who were on a short visit to this country, were expected to leave London for a few days' tour in the North either to-night or to-morrow morning.

Tim tore from the hut, breasting the steep embankment like one possessed. Reaching his waiting car, he simply tumbled into the driving-seat, and sent her jumping forward. The two-seater slid down the sloping roadway, grating and screaming abominably, but there was no time to think of that now.

Thirty minutes between the goods and the pilot; six minutes between the pilot and the special. That was how matters stood when O'Carroll was listening to that mysterious discussion—but several of those valuable thirty-six minutes had already slipped by. How much time really had he—and what was the best plan to adopt?

It was plain that the quarry junction was the pivot of the whole affair; there were no other "points" on the chart. But that



Unhesitatingly, Tim O'Carroll stepped out into the path of the Royal Special frantically waving his red lamp.

precise spot seemed unreachable by means of the road, which did not approach the line again till the vicinity of the level-crossing.

There was only one thing to be done, apparently, and Tim did it without further hesitation. He opened the little car out for all she was worth, hoping to reach the crossing with time enough to spare in order to gain the signal cabin farther on, and have the special held up. But what if she came ahead of her appointed schedule, as those miscreants had calculated it?

However, "the best-laid plans of mice and men . . ." Scarcely two-thirds of the distance to the level-crossing were covered ere that wretched piece of bent metal broke away suddenly and shot in among the wheel-spokes. The mechanism jammed, and the car skidded, sweeping wildly across the roadway until it struck a low wall at one side with an unnerving crash. Tim was flung against the steering-wheel, just saving himself from injury by thrusting out both his hands in the nick of time.

One of the headlights was smashed beyond repair, and the left mudguard badly buckled, but O'Carroll didn't delay to look for further damage. Instead, he unhitched the red rear-lamp and tore off down the road. There would be no time now, in all probability, to reach the signal cabin, for the precious minutes were slipping swiftly by.

Ah! Just as he rounded a bend the distant signal-lamp set upon the cross-gates swung into position ahead, its red bulb barring the roadway to traffic, and telling that the line was cleared for some oncoming train, whilst the faint clang of the interlocking clutches fell upon his ears. Another few yards of desperate sprinting, and he saw the pilot engine flash past, with her open furnace illuminating the clouds of steam from her funnel.

Six minutes more!

CHAPTER 2.

Red Lights—Danger!

THE pilot tore away into the darkness, the sound of her clanging wheels dying down as Tim clambered over the gate. He did not fear for the safety of those on the footplate of the light engine, since, judging by what he had overheard, the cunning plotters evidently intended that she should pass the points unharmed, thus arousing no suspicion, and continue ahead out of their way. It was when

the pilot had gone by that the points were presumably to be tampered with, and the royal train switched on to the quarry branch, where it would crash to destruction as surely as if blown up with a charge of explosive!

Visions of this horror flashed through young O'Carroll's brain as he sprinted like a madman along the track—visions which were rudely shattered a couple of minutes later by two bright stars, surmounted by a third, suddenly appearing round a bend ahead, and bearing swiftly down upon him.

Unhesitatingly he stepped out into the middle of the line, frantically waving his red rear-lamp, which fortunately was operated by a self-contained reservoir; but for some seconds his signal did not seem to have any effect. Then, just as the fore-buffers of the great loco seemed about to hurl him from its path, he heard a scream of brakes and saw a shower of sparks from the locking wheels as they scraped along the metals.

Tim sprinted along after the rapidly pulling-up train, and made for the engine.

"What the blazes is it? Who's there? Don't you know what train this is—"

"Bedad, 'tis because I do know that I've stopped you!" panted Tim, cutting short the string of questions from the irate driver. "If you go any farther, you'll have a big lot to answer for—that is, if you live!"

The other's face blanched.

"Eh? What's that?"

"Foul play!" snapped Tim. "I can't explain now. Any police on the train?"

By this time the driver had collected himself sufficiently to realise that the lad below was in deadly earnest—not some imbecile who had broken loose.

"Yes; Detective-Inspector Winton, of the Yard, and—"

At this moment a couple of squarely built men sprinted up the line from the rear of the stationary train, and paused level with the engine. Tim instantly recognised Winton—Anthony Sharpe's great friend from Scotland Yard.

"What's the matter? We spotted a red lamp waving— You, O'Carroll!"

"Yes! Look here!" Tim clutched the inspector's sleeve. "There's not a moment to lose if you want to nab as villainous a pair of beasts as ever drew breath! Come along; it's not far!"

Followed by the two amazed officials, he started down the line, past the level crossing and on towards Bexmoor Tunnel. Before he reached this, however, he suddenly paused, pointing to where a branch

(Continued on page 18.)

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"I've handled a master."
"That wasn't respectful," said Mr. Hawley. "Did you give him your left?"

The Chicken chuckled.
"If I'd give that bony old cove my left, guv'nor, it would be a 'anging matter," he answered. "But I 'andled him, and it's me for the long jump."

"They're turning you out?"
"That's it."
"You shouldn't 'ave done it, Chick."

"It was to 'elp a cove out of a scrape, guv'nor—a cove what had been good to me."

"That's you all over," said Mr. Hawley. "If it's like that, I don't see as I can blame you. And it's the boot?"

"The large size in boots," said the Chicken. "The 'eadmaster won't 'ave me at the school for love or money arter. I was to be sent 'ome in disgrace—and I ain't going. I can't face my uncle arter this—leastways, I don't want to. Something might come out—"

"What might come out?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Lynn hastily. "But I can't stay at the school—they won't 'ave me. And I ain't going home. If you won't 'ave me, guv'nor, I'll look for a job along of somebody else."

"Ring off at that, you young ass!" said Mr. Hawley. "Of course I'll 'ave you, and glad. But your uncle, the old colonel—"

"I'll send him a letter, explaining," said Lynn. "I'll tell him 'ow thankful I am for his kindness, and that I can't stick it any longer; I've done my best, but there's nothing doing any more. I'm going to be respectful to him—he's a good man, and meant me well; but the long and short of it is that I'm done with schooling, and I'm going back to the boxing, what I ought never to 'ave left. My uncle will see that it can't be 'elped. I'll put it to 'im in a letter. Anyhow, I fancy he'd be rather beat to know what to do with me, sent 'ome in disgrace."

Mr. Hawley nodded.
"That's so, Chick. If you write to your uncle and tell 'im, he can't complain, if you're set on getting back to the ring."

"That I am!" said the Chicken.
"Then it's a go!"

Mr. Hawley's plump face glowed with satisfaction. It was very probable that, in paying that visit to St. Jim's, he had hoped to hear that there was a chance of the Chicken coming back to him. It was evident that Lynn's determination pleased the old "pug."

"It's a go!" he repeated. "You'll come along of me, Chick. But you've got to let your 'eadmaster know as you're safe and sound. You can write 'im a letter from 'ere."

"I'll do that!" said Lynn.

"If they want to see you any time, they can see you," said the old boxer. "Hawley's Ring is fairly well known, and it's to be found when it's wanted. Blow me, Chick, I'll send your 'eadmaster tickets next time you're up to fight—what?"

"Oh, my eye!" said the Chicken, grinning. "No, I wouldn't do that. When's your train going, guv'nor?"

"Next train, now I've seen you," said Mr. Hawley. "Goin' to get any of your traps from the school?"

"Nix! You buy me a cap while I'm writing a letter."

"Done!" said Mr. Hawley.

"And look out the next train, guv'nor. I want to get off before there's a row."

"Carry on!" said Mr. Hawley.

The Chicken entered the Rylcombe Arms, and was soon inditing his farewell letters. One to Colonel St. Leger and another to the Head of St. Jim's were consigned to the post. But the third—and the most important—was directed to St. Leger of the Fifth, and for that the Chicken looked out for a messenger to take it by hand to the school. He came out of the inn, hoping to catch sight of some St. Jim's fellow in the street; otherwise, the letter had to be entrusted to the inn boy. Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth Form was sauntering along the old High Street of Rylcombe, and he glanced in surprise at Lynn.

"Old on a minute!" called out Lynn.
Cardew stopped.

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"Aren't you supposed to be in the punishment-room, Lynn?" he asked curiously.

"I dessay!" answered Lynn. "I'm goin', Master Cardew. I've wrote this 'ere letter to my cousin. Will you give it to 'im?"

"Certainly," said Cardew, taking the letter. "But—"

"You won't let nobody see it till you 'and it to Master St. Leger?" asked Lynn anxiously.

"No, of course not," said Cardew. "But—"

"Ere you are, Chick!" Mr. Hawley came up with a little parcel in his hand. "'Ere's your noo cap; and the train goes in ten minutes."

"Good!" said the Chicken.
Cardew eyed the old pugilist.

"You're goin', Lynn?" he asked.

"That's it," said Lynn. "I'm sacked, you know. I'm goin'. Take care of that there letter, won't you?"

"Rely on me," said Cardew. His careless face became grave. "Lynn, old man, I never treated you decently at St. Jim's; I'm sorry. Give me your fin before you go!"

Lynn smiled faintly, and shook hands with Cardew.

"It's all right," he said; "I don't bear any grudge, Master Cardew. You ain't a bad sort. It ain't everybody I'd trust with that letter."

"You can trust me," said Cardew. "If there's anything else I could do, you've only to give it a name."

"Nothing but give that there letter to Master St. Leger before class."

"Right-ho! Good-bye, old scout!"

"Good-bye, sir!"

Cardew walked away towards the school, the letter in his pocket. Five minutes later Mr. Hawley and the Chicken were on the platform in Rylcombe Station; and five minutes after that the train was bearing them away, taking the Chicken back to his old life.

CHAPTER 9.

Lynn's Farewell!

ST. LEGER sat, or, rather, lay, in the armchair in Study No. 3 in the Fifth. His handsome face was almost colourless, his brow puckered into lines. He looked limp and worn-out.

Cutts was standing before him, frowning angrily. He had been arguing with his chum.

"You're a fool—a fool!" he said, for the tenth time. "You can't do it! What does it matter what becomes of that scrubby little vagabond?"

"Almost his own words!" said St. Leger, with a bitter smile. "But it matters! I'm not goin' to act like a scoundrel!"

"You're goin' to act like a dashed fool!" said Cutts. "It may be bad for him; but it's utter ruin for you! Sacked from a school like St. Jim's—do you understand what it means?"

"It's pretty clear to me."

"What about your prospects for the Army? What will your pater say?"

St. Leger's lips trembled.

"It's no good rubbin' it in," he said, in a faltering voice.

"I've got to do it! I can't let that kid suffer in my place! I've got some rag of decency left!"

"Oh, you're a fool!" said Cutts savagely. "You'd get over this in a few days, if you kept your mouth shut. It's simply a wonderful stroke of luck that the kid's willin' to take it on his shoulders. You can make it up to him somehow. He couldn't have been happy at the school, anyhow."

"He might have been, if I'd done my duty!" groaned St. Leger. "I might have taken some care of the poor kid, instead of playing the goat and landing myself in this. I've deserved all I've got!"

He glanced at Cutts, and his look grew bitter.

"You've helped me a good bit to get down as low as I've got," he said. "But you needn't be afraid, if that's what's worryin' you. I sha'n't say a word about you or Prye. Do you think I'm goin' to betray my friends, because it's the chopper for me? I haven't come to that."

"You might let somethin' slip!" muttered Cutts.

St. Leger's lip curled. It was only too evident that his "friend" was chiefly concerned for his own valuable skin.

Cutts stared at him gloomily. He was uneasy for himself; and he did not want to lose a wealthy, easy-going pal who had been useful to him in many ways. He was not at all sure that St. Leger would keep to his resolve of confessing before Lynn was taken away; it was only too probable that at the last moment the dandy of the Fifth would weaken, and preserve a shameful silence. But he could not be sure of that; he would have given a great deal to be sure of it, but he could not be sure.

Footsteps came along the Fifth Form passage, and Ralph Reckness Cardew looked into the study. He tossed a letter on the table.

"For St. Leger," he said. "From young Lynn."
 "From Lynn?" growled Cutts. "What is the young idiot sendin' letters for, when he's only a staircase away? He's not locked in now."

Cardew stared.

"Didn't you know he'd gone?" he asked.

St. Leger started up.

"Gone!" he exclaimed.

"Well, he handed me that letter in Rylcombe, and he said he was goin'," answered Cardew.

"Good gad!"

Cardew left the study. Cutts closed the door after him, and signed to St. Leger to take up the letter.

St. Leger slit the envelope and drew out the letter inside. His face was startled. He had wondered why Lynn had asked him so earnestly to put off his confession—he had not been unwilling to stave off the inevitable till the latest possible moment. But a suspicion of the Chicken's real object dawned upon his mind now—a suspicion that was confirmed when he read the waif's farewell letter.

"Dear old chap,—When you get this I shall be gone. I'm going back to the boxing with Mr. Hawley. I never was fit for St. Jim's; and I'm reely glad to go back, so don't you worrit. I've wrote to the 'Ead and to your father, so that's all right. Mum's the word."

"Don't you go for to say nothing. I can't never come back now, 'cause I've run away from school, 'long of all the rest. I've wrote to the 'Ead and told him I won't never come back nohow, and you bet arter that it's all U P for me. Besides, I don't want to come back. You'll 'ear of me later when I'm in the ring, p'raps; but I won't never mention among my pals that you're my relation. You trust me."

"Don't you say nothing. I've fair dished it for me at the school now on purpose, so you can't do any good. No good two goin' instead of one."

"I sha'n't never forget you and 'ow good you've been."

"O. L."

St. Leger read that letter through, and as he read the tears rolled down his cheeks.

Cutts looked at him in wonder, and took the letter from his hand and read it.

"By gad!" muttered Cutts. "By gad! He's a rare

plucked kid, and no mistake—one of the very best! A rough diamond, by gad!"

Even in Gerald Cutts' hard face there was a trace of emotion, as he looked at the waif's farewell letter.

St. Leger choked.

"He's done this for me!" he muttered. "I never suspected—till I saw that letter I never dreamed that he intended anything of the kind—I can say that honestly, thank Heaven! I'd have stopped him—" His voice broke.

"It's the best way," said Cutts, cool again at once. "He will make a name for himself in the ring—and he would never have done that here. He's done the best thing for himself, as well as for you!"

"I wish I could think so!" groaned St. Leger. "I ought to have gone to the Head at once—I know now why he stopped me. It's too late now—too late!"

"Too late, that's a cert," said Cutts coolly. "The Head would never let him come back after this, if you white-washed him to any extent. But, by gad, he's a good kid—a good kid! Came to the last!"

St. Leger sank into his chair again, and covered his face with his hands.

Cutts glanced at him, half wondering, half scornful, and quietly left the study. St. Leger did not heed him.

He was saved—saved from his own resolution. It was useless to speak now—he could not save the devoted junior; it was too late for that. Lynn was gone, never to return to St. Jim's.

Would his resolution have held good—up to the crucial moment? He hardly knew. But Lynn had thought so, and he had taken this final step, which cut him off from the school for ever. The dandy of the Fifth was conscious of a feeling of relief—and he flushed red with shame at the relief he felt.

Lynn had saved him—and Lynn was gone! Deliberately he had placed it out of St. Leger's power to help him by confession. Confession now could not help the outcast—it could only hurt him by defeating the object for which he had sacrificed himself. And yet—well enough the dandy of the Fifth knew that the confession ought to be made. But Oliver Lynn had judged well—better than he realised—

(Continued on page 28.)

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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 Port Vale 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 "Port Vale" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach this address not later than THURSDAY, April 12th, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "PORT VALE" COMPETITION and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name

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G

"THE ROYAL SPECIAL!"

(Continued from page 15.)

track swerved to the right—a double set of rusty iron rails which showed up distinctly in the light of the electric lamp he now turned on them, and which were plainly long-since disused.

"Now," he said, focussing the beam on the points, "have a squint at these, and you'll probably see something queer!"

Detective-Inspector Winton stepped over, adding the light of his own torch to that of the other; then he gave a startled gasp.

Some of the bolts were unscrewed and the points set in such a way that the next train from London would be switched on to the quarry extension!

"Phe-e-ew!" The C.I.D. man whistled softly. "Thank heaven, youngster, that you managed to twig this! You can tell us how it came about later. Meanwhile, where are those two blackguards you referred to—?"

His question was answered in a rather startling manner. A slight sound up the slope, followed by a large lump of rock rolling down, caused the trio to spin round. In the gloom, a few yards up the embankment, two murky figures were just visible—one swiftly climbing to the summit; the other making for the tunnel mouth, evidently believing that it would be easier to escape in the denser blackness within.

Crack! Winton pulled out his revolver and took aim, but missed in the tricky light. One man reached the top and disappeared, but the second kept straight on, presently springing down into the four-foot way between the double row of metals. In a couple of moments the tunnel-opening had swallowed him up.

The trio sprinted swiftly in his wake, entering the boring close upon the fugitive's heels. The torches did little to dispel the gloom here, and, indeed, were of no great advantage, except to the enemy, as the events of the next few seconds demonstrated.

A sharp crack echoed and re-echoed in the confined space, followed by three more in rapid succession. The second C.I.D. man sprawled forward, with a bullet in his knee, whilst another tore through the sleeve of Winton's coat, grazing the forearm. Realising their foolhardiness, both he and Tim snapped out their lights and stumbled on through the blackness.

The fugitive had halted to fire, but now his footsteps could again be heard. Then a faint semi-circle of less density showed

up in front, with the form of a running man silhouetted against it. Evidently his weapon was empty, and he was making for the deep cutting on the Bexmoor side of the tunnel, hoping to climb up to the roadway ere his trackers ran him down.

But now that Winton had a target of a sort in front of him, he made the most of it. Dropping on one knee, he took careful aim at the murky, flying figure, and pressed the trigger.

A spurt of flame momentarily shattered the blackness, a sharp report woke a hundred echoes from the tunnel walls, and when the smoke cleared the fugitive was sprawling on all fours between the metals, desperately striving to regain his footing.

But the other pair saw something else also, even as they dashed up. The "pilot" engine, her driver evidently alarmed by the non-appearance of the royal train—whose headlights he should have seen on the now dead-straight piece of track behind him—was backing slowly down the line from Bexmoor Station, presumably to ascertain the cause of the "special's" dropping so far in the rear, and ready to forge ahead again immediately he felt reassured by the re-appearance of those self-same headlights.

The engine reached the floundering form of the wounded man just before Winton and O'Carroll arrived; but, even in his pain, the fellow seemed to realise this additional unexpected danger, for he managed to twist clear of the crunching wheels barely in the nick of time, rolling aside into the four-foot way just as the "pilot" passed over the spot where he had been lying.

Whilst Winton attended to his prisoner, Tim O'Carroll mounted the footplate of the slow-moving locomotive, quickly assuring her anxious driver that all was well; then he rejoined the C.I.D. man below.

Winton seemed strangely excited.

"You've done a good night's work, lad!" the latter said, clapping his hand on Tim's shoulder. "A darned good night's work! This is Carlos Giovanni—one of the most dangerous anarchists ever bred in the underworld of a European city! The Continental police have been looking for him for donkey's ages!"

Detective-Inspector Winton's praises had sounded sweetly in Tim's ears, but Anthony Sharpe's seemed actually like music, when he got back and recounted his night's adventures.

The investigator was sitting in his deep armchair by the fire, a big pipe—the first he had smoked for days—filling the sitting-room with fragrant smoke.

"Tim," he said, "you always have pleased me, but this is about the limit!"

I only trust that you will never think of setting up as a private detective in opposition to the old firm!"

Some days later, there was further news. Smithers, the other man, was arrested before he got very far and made a clean breast of the whole matter. He had accidentally met Giovanni, and the latter had offered him a heavy bribe for his assistance, after first sounding him well.

And the same morning as Tim O'Carroll took up the newspaper to read the report of the police-court proceedings, two small objects in a wadding-lined box were delivered to him at Allington Flats. They were a handsome jewelled star, set in the form of a scarf-pin, and a gold watch, presented to the youngster personally with the gratitude of his Imperial Majesty, King Michael of Sylvania. But Tim also possesses a third souvenir of that eventful night, in the shape of a strip of battered metal which he recovered from the mechanism of the damaged two-seater, and which, though its cash value is nil, he prizes almost as much.

THE END.

(Look out for another thrilling Anthony Sharpe detective story soon. Meanwhile, make a point of reading what the mighty men of the Sixth-Form have to say in next week's extra-special edition of the "St. Jim's News.")

THE "SUNDERLAND" PICTURE COMPETITION RESULT!

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution contained one error:

W. BLACKHALL,
76, Pleasant Street,
West Bromwich.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following four competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

Chas. Jeffrey, 14, Park Street, Southend-on-Sea; J. W. Tarbotton, 37, Lyndhurst Street, Leeds Road, Bradford; Hector A. Hobbs, 23, Craddock Street, Riverside, Cardiff; George Downes, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge.

Seventeen competitors, with three errors each, divide the Ten Prizes of 5s. each:

H. G. Jeffrey, 14, Park Street, Southend-on-Sea; Willie Budd, Gellygron Road, Pontardawe, Swansea; H. L. King, 42, Beecham Road, Buckland, Portsmouth; Joe Allison, 2, Forth Street, Chopwell, Co. Durham; Alfred Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge; M. F. Brebner, 83, Mid Street, Fraserburgh, N.B.; H. H. Mattick, 177, Church Hill, Writlington, near Bath; F. Bailey, 91, Taylor Street, Bradford, Manchester; Nora O'Halloran, Chapel Street, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland; John James, Bull Hotel, Rochester, Kent; Kate Bland, 2, Walker Street, Heywood, Lancs; Mrs. Gunn, 15, Waverley Park, Edinburgh; J. B. Hughes, 6, Perth Street, Belfast; D. Kennedy, 4, Flanders Vennel, Perth; L. J. Swift, 167, Montgomery Street, Sparkbrook, Birmingham; Thomas Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge.

SOLUTION:

For a long period Sunderland were the finest football club in the land. During the first five seasons of their connection with the League they were only beaten at home on three occasions, but they seem fated never to win the English Cup. Their most noted footballer is the great Charles Buchan.

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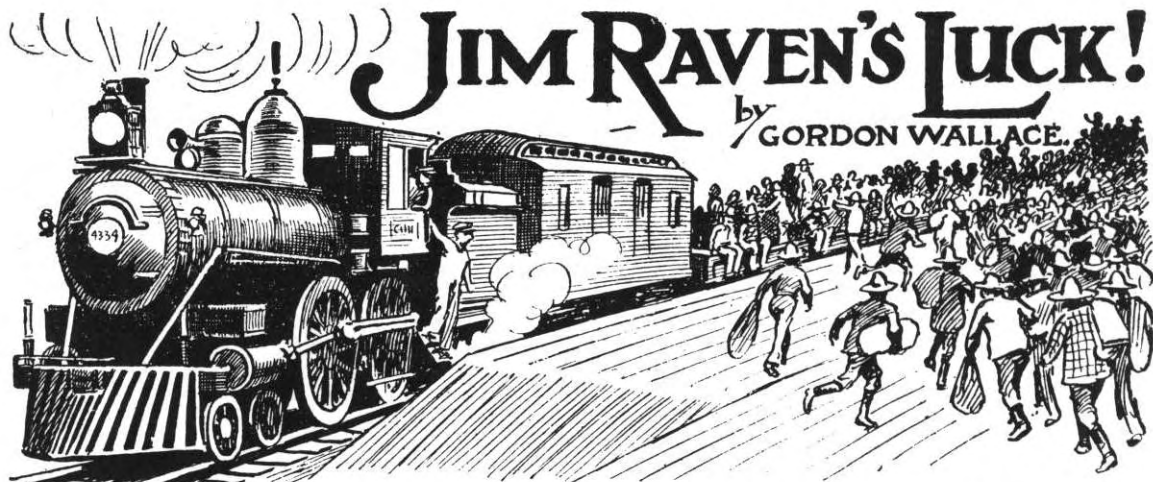
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MYSTERY

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ADVENTURE



A Thrilling Story of the Wild West, dealing with the Six Stalwart Chums of Thunder Creek.

CHAPTER 1. Hands Wanted.

"YOU fellows," said Corporal Nevin, of the Canadian Mounted Police, severely, "ought to be run in, and if I did my duty by the Service, I'd run you in. And why? Well, because you've got no visible means of support. And that's an offence against the law."

The six Sportsmen of Thunder Creek eyed him with expansive grins upon their faces, but they said nothing. When Corporal Nevin got talking to them in that tune, they knew by experience he was working to help them.

"It's all rubbish, of course," said the corporal, "thinking you are not only going to support your six fat, lazy selves by your sports, but are going to keep and educate a boy in England as well."

"We can always work if it comes to a pinch," said Smiler Dickinson, with a shrug. "Worst of it is, it's darned hard for the six of us to get work together—and we won't be separated."

"You're playing the part of god-fathers, all of you, to an unfortunate eight-year-old in England," said Nevin. "And you're paying for him out of what you make from sport. Unfortunately, people up here are too busy as a rule to go in for much professional sport. Cash for purses and what not is tight. Yet you insist on sending that youngster home, keeping him, and having him brought up as if his guardians were the wealthiest people in the world."

"Young Syd Patterson," said Jim Raven, "is a fine little chap, and, because his father happened to get sent to gaol should the kid be brought up as a pauper? Jack Patterson was our friend, too, and yours, Nevin."

"That's so," said Nevin. "Don't get shirty. I'm helping you."

"Good!" exclaimed Jim. "You've heard of a chance for one or two of us to earn an honest dollar at sport?"

"No—at work," drawled Nevin. "Unless this interests you." He took from the breast-pocket of his tunic a cutting from a newspaper. "Here's a chance for the best boxer of you to go back east, to Montreal, and meet Slug McNalty. You've only got to beat him—"

"Slug McNalty?" asked Jim Raven. "He's middle-weight champion of the Province of Quebec, isn't he? What's the joke?"

"Ever heard of Peter Cross, the Montreal lumber millionaire?" asked Nevin.

"Can't say I have, particularly," said Jim. "Millionaires aren't numbered amongst my pals. Wish a few were."

"Peter Cross is dead," said Nevin. "Died three weeks ago—and he left a most extraordinary will. Funny sort of will, showing that Peter Cross in life hadn't the foggiest idea about the rules of the professional boxing game. Yet he mentions boxing quite a lot."

"But look here," Digger Harrison, the Australian member of this band of Sportsmen struck in, "what's all this got to do with Syd and the paying of his board bill, his clothing bill, and his school—"

Nevin waved his hand and studied the newspaper clipping intently. Those who watched him closely enough might have noticed that the corners of his trim little moustache were curling ever so slightly, and that even though he wore a monocle the little wrinkles about the corners of his eyes were not altogether caused by that piece of vanity that he affected.

"Peter Cross," said Nevin, "leaves in trust the sum of five hundred dollars, to be handed over to any amateur boxer who can stand twenty rounds with Slug McNalty in the ring, or knock him out in less time. And, of course, when that gets properly known, Slug McNalty will be bombarded with aspiring boxers who want to make that amount of money. I thought you fellows might like to fix up a fight with Slug."

The Sportsmen laughed at that. The absurdity of the thing was almost unbelievable! A professional boxer, who could get his thousands of dollars for a fight, would not easily be drawn into the ring by some ambitious youngster who cared to try for Peter Cross' five hundred dollars. Undoubtedly Slug would get plenty of challenges, at which he would shrug his shoulders. Champions can choose their own opponents.

"How much is Slug McNalty to get?" asked Jim Raven.

"Slug isn't mentioned as to receive anything," said Nevin. "That's the funniest part about it. Another funny thing is that Slug has disappeared."

"Been bombarded so much with challenges, I suppose?" asked Jim.

"No; killed a sparring partner, and bolted—three months ago, before ever Peter Cross died," said Nevin tantalisingly. "Indeed, we of the police have instructions to look out for him, as they want him back east to stand his trial for manslaughter."

"Well, and what about it all?" asked

Jim Raven impatiently. "I can't see how all this is going to put butter on young Syd's bread."

"No, it simply can't. But, as you're such dead-keen sportsmen, I thought you'd be interested to know about Slug, and Peter Cross' will," said Nevin. "What I really wanted to tell you, though, was that I've found you all a good job. Pay's good, and there's no objection to your taking your horses with you. And they'll have you all together, despite your bad reputation as sports fans."

Jim Raven and the others pulled rather wry faces. It must be admitted that steady hard work did not appeal to them overmuch. It was, in Canada, so tiring. It gave them no chance to get about the country and indulge in the all-too-scarce sport. And yet they were all pretty well "broke" again. They always were, because as soon as one of them made a bit of money it was mailed home to Jim Raven's mother, who was looking after young Syd in Yorkshire, though these six, who had appointed themselves Syd's godfathers, paid all the expenses of the child's upbringing. Up to now that upbringing had been somewhat expensive.

"What's the work?" asked Smiler Dickinson.

"Railroad bridge construction," said Nevin. "Fine, healthy work. Up in the morning early, bed late at night. Real exercise. Makes you as fit as a fiddle—develops the muscles, improves the wind."

"Hur!" chorused the Sportsmen. "Where's the job?"

"Sam Knapp is gathering a gang of stiff together, and is calling in here for what men he can rake up," said Nevin. "Sam's a superintendent, you know, and a hustler. But he'll be only too glad to get some Britishers, or other English-speaking men, in his gang, as he's going to build his bridge in a very lonely spot, and most of his men will be imported Europeans. The more 'white' men he gets, the happier he'll feel. He's taking a trainload of men, horses, and material up with him to-night. He'll be in—Hullo! Good-day, stranger!"

They were sitting in the smoking-room of the Adlington Hotel, at Red Wheat City, as they spoke. Up to this moment they had had the smoking-room to themselves. But Nevin broke off in the middle of a sentence as, somewhat noisily, another man entered. This fellow was roughly dressed in the garments of a Canadian labourer. Upon his

back was a "turkey," which was just a gunny-sack full of clothes and blankets, tied at the corners with a cord that passed over one shoulder of the man.

The stranger was fairly young and pretty well built, but he was not at all tidy to look at. He wanted a shave badly; he was none too clean in face. Nor was he quite as sober as the Prohibitionists cared to see a man. He rocked slightly on his feet.

"Day!" said this worthy. And he unslung his turkey from his back and thudded it on to the smoke-room floor. Then he took out a plug of tobacco, gnawed off an immense mouthful of it, and tucked it away into the corner of his cheek, distending the cheek grotesquely. After which he opened his sack and took therefrom a bottle.

The Sportsmen watched him in some disgust. These were clean-living fellows, who scarcely knew the taste of what was obviously in that bottle, and who usually shunned tobacco in any form as bad for the heart and wind.

Nevin, though, just sat in his chair and eyed the railroad stiff quizzically through his monocle.

"I hear as Knapp's takin' a gang o' stiff up the line to-night?" the stranger said, after he had taken a swig from the bottle, despite the tobacco in his mouth.

"So do I," said Nevin drawlingly. "Might I point out that it's quite against the law to possess that stuff? There are provinces in Canada where the laws are 'wet,' but Alberta is not one of them."

"Hur!" growled the stranger, but did not seem to mind much, although he eyed Corporal Nevin strangely, the Sportsmen thought.

But just then there was another person entered the smoke-room. This was Adlington himself, the proprietor of the hotel. Adlington was a biggish, fairly young man, a bit of a bully—as perhaps it is necessary that hotel-keepers shall be in these frontier places—and thought he knew how to handle people of this type.

"Out you get!" said Adlington, touching the stranger on the shoulder and jerking his thumb doorwards. "I saw you come in, and I reckon we don't want your sort round here. There's a rail-roaders' boarding-house at the north end of the town. Try that."

The stranger eyed him over drunkenly for a moment. Then—and this was done even before the spectators guessed it was going to happen—he seemed to pull himself together with an effort, and became at once a bunch of steel springs. Just once his left arm moved. There was a ghastly, chugging sound. And Adlington, scrapper of merit though he was himself, collapsed a limp heap on to his own floor, eyes rolled up, mouth open, and breathing stertorously.

"My hat!" shouted Jim Raven, the first to come to his feet.

And he laid a hand on the stranger's shoulder. At once the stranger wheeled, fist raised; and perhaps he would have served Jim Raven the same way—or tried to—only Nevin barked out a word that had a tang of steel in it, and the stranger suddenly became aware that the corporal of mounted police was covering him with his revolver.

"You're under arrest!" rasped out the Mounted man. "See if he's hurt Adlington, boys."

"Waal, say—" the stranger began; but he was silenced by the eyes alone of Corporal Nevin.

"Clean knock-out—that's all that's wrong with him," said Jim Raven, stooping and lifting the hotel proprietor into a chair.

"You just come with me," said

Nevin; and forced the railroader to march out of the hotel.

Suddenly the fellow did as he was told; and, outside, Nevin led him straight to the town's little lock-up.

CHAPTER 2.

An Unpleasant Companion!

"SO you've let him out again, have you?" asked Jim Raven.

All six Sportsmen and the corporal were gathered together at the little railroad depot at Red Wheat City, whilst drawn up at the apology for a platform was a long work-train, composed of box-cars, horse-trucks, flat-cars, and a car that had been converted into a kitchen for the use of Sam Knapp's cooks. And, besides these seven friends, there were scores of other men, all bearing the railroad "stiff" mark upon them. Here was the starting-point for Knapp's new bridge construction gang.

Jim's remark had come about because Jim had suddenly seen, turkey on back, the figure of the stranger who had "pasted" Adlington, slouch along the platform. This man did not appear to notice either the Sportsmen or Corporal Nevin.

Nevin laughed softly, and toyed with his monocle.

"Yes, I persuaded Adlington to forgive him that blow," he drawled. "A forgiving person, Adlington. It would be a pity to deprive that man of a good job for some months! So he's going up with you!"

"Well, he'll be another English-speaking man behind Knapp's back, if there's a row," said Pete Craddock, the American member of this little clique known as the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek. "But I hope he doesn't get too handy with that left of his. Gosh! I'll bet he well-nigh killed Adlington that time!"

The stranger did not seem a very nice sort of person they thought as they watched him. For he just bored his way through a knot of jabbering foreigners as though they weren't there. And when one gigantic Swede protested, the fellow just dropped his turkey, spat on his hands, and squared up to the Swede.

Now, the Swede seemed to be a man of character, too, for he also squared up. And right there, on the crowded platform of the ill-lighted little station, a fight began. But it was not a long fight, for, though the Swede led off with a blow that had enough power behind it to fell an ox, the other gave him that terrible left again, in exactly the same place as where he had struck Adlington, and the big Swede dropped like a poleaxed bullock.

"That'll do, my man!" said Nevin sharply.

And when the English-speaking rail-roader saw who was addressing him, he picked up his turkey again, muttered something, and slouched off into the shadows.

"Pleasant beast!" said Nevin. "Name of Gell, he told me when I pinched him this afternoon. I hope Knapp doesn't have any trouble with him, otherwise—"

He paused, and sucked his tongue thoughtfully, the while he glanced at Jim Raven and his fellow-sportsmen.

Just then, Sam Knapp himself came elbowing his way up to the little party of friends. He nodded his head approvingly when he had sized up these six youngsters, who were going to work for him—for all six had been prevailed upon by Nevin to take the job of work offered them. They now had their turkeys with them. Their horses had already been shipped into a box-car. Railroaders, as

a rule, are not allowed to take horses about with them for their own private use. But Knapp, for the sake of getting six such useful fellows, had been able to stretch a point and break the rule.

"Pretty tough bunch, eh?" said Knapp, eyeing the others over. "I'll maybe be wanting some husky helpers behind me, before I get this lot shaken down to the routine. Seen anything of that fellow, Gell, that you asked me to hire?"

"Yes; he's here," said Nevin. "Just been distinguishing himself. Hope you can handle him; if you can't, get Jim here on the job. I guess Jim's no slouch as a boxer, Sam. Remember that, will you?"

But Knapp just grinned and felt his own big biceps. He was proud of his great strength and power of handling rough men roughly.

"I'll not need Jim," he said. "Time's about up now," he added; and raised his bull-like voice in a mighty roar: "All aboard, there! Step lively, you loafers! Get aboard! Pile in—anywhere!"

Babel broke out. Almost every language in Europe was bellowed out by those rough-looking labourers who were going up into the wilds for many months to build a bridge for the biggest railroad in North-Western Canada. Men scrambled for places on the flat-cars. They fought and struggled like so many quarrelsome children for places. They pushed each other off; they helped each other on.

The Sportsmen climbed aboard a flat-car that they had earmarked for themselves. Other foreigners tried to join them; but they were not encouraged particularly by this conservative little clique of six. The train began to move away. As it gathered speed, the six Sportsmen waved their hats and hands towards the figure of Corporal Nevin, as he stood there on the platform. As the waving was going on a man came hurrying from around a corner.

"Gell," said Jim Raven. "Nearly got left behind. Ah! They don't seem to want the gink much."

Gell made a grab at a flat-car as it moved past him—a car crowded with chattering foreigners of all nations. These men deliberately thrust at him with their feet as they hung over the edge. Three cars went past the swearing and inebriated Gell, and then the car the Sportsmen occupied came level. He made a grab for that. At the same moment Corporal Nevin ran up, seized the man underneath, gave a hoist, and sent him rolling in amongst Jim Raven and his pals.

"Well, that's pleasant!" grunted Jim, as Gell picked himself up, still swearing. "Ninety miles of this fellow's company! Huh!"

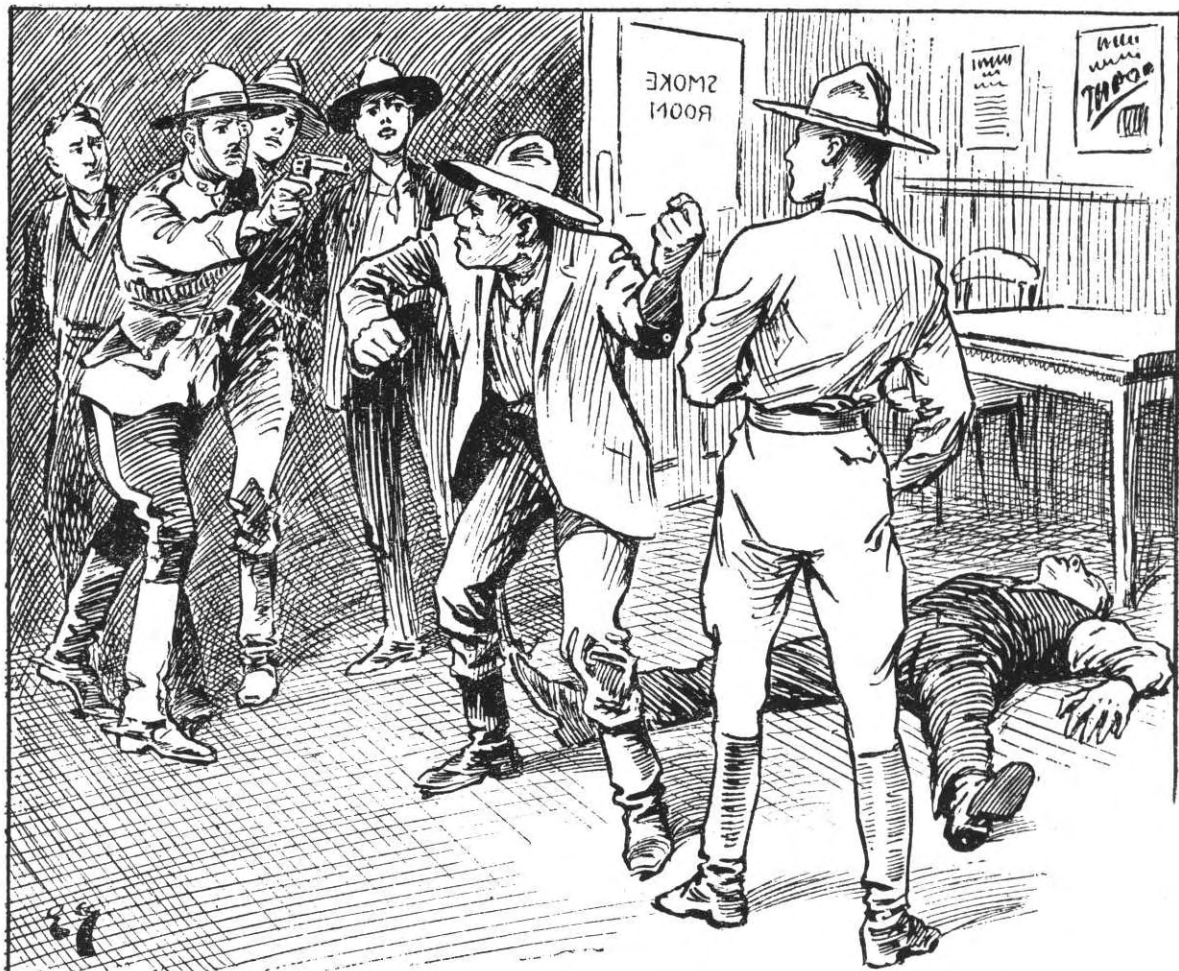
"He'll have to stop his mouth soon, or I'll be getting annoyed with him!" said Smiler Dickinson; for Gell's language was a disgrace to the English tongue; and the Sportsmen were as clean-mouthed as they were clean-lived. "I hate bad language!"

Gell sat there on his turkey, swigging from his whiskey-bottle, and not abating his foul language in the least. But he did not appear to take much notice of the Sportsmen, who sat together and tried to forget his presence.

"I think Nevin might have boosted him up on to some other car!" growled Pat O'Hara, who was the Irishman of the party.

"Forget the blighter," said Jim Raven. "And let's talk about the future. Wonder if there'll be any sport up at Rolling River, where the bridge is going to be built?"

"Should be some," said Harrison.



Crash! The stranger hit out, and Adlington fell with a crash to the floor. "My hat!" shouted Jim Raven, jumping up. The stranger wheeled round, fist raised, and would have served Raven the same, had not he suddenly become aware that Corporal Nevin was covering him with a revolver.

"Some of these foreigners are wrestlers, I know. But I expect Knapp'll keep us too hard at work to let us go in much for sport. However, it's necessary, to keep the supply of cash for Syd going, I suppose."

The train rumbled steadily on through the darkness, and very soon it was toiling through darksome woods, through which the track had been cut. Over occasional high trestle bridges they went, and it thrilled these Sportsmen to look down from giddy heights into unguessable depths. And, before them and behind them, the foreigners and others of Bill Knapp's gang sang their songs in mournful strain. It was an interesting experience for these friends. Nor could they know all that was ahead of them.

"About that rummy will, made by Peter Cross," said Craddock suddenly. "Was Nevin pulling our legs about that?"

"Suppose so," said Jim Raven. "Anyway, that's all Eastern business. Dashed silly will; though I wouldn't mind putting the gloves on with Slug McNulty or anybody else for five hundred bucks. We want that money, fellows."

Just then, Gell, behind them, began to excel himself in the matter of language. He began to sing. What he sang annoyed Smiler Dickinson so much that Smiler impulsively turned round on him.

"Oh, choke that off!" he cried. "I'm sick of it!"

Gell stared at him with mouth agape, then came unsteadily to his feet. Just at this point the train passed over a piece of unlevel track. The man had to grab the first fellow he could to steady himself, as the flat-car swayed dizzily. That fellow happened to be Smiler, who was quick about shaking himself free.

"Talkin' to me?" Gell asked. "Because—"

He raised a massive fist. And just at this moment the flat-car got on to one of those high trestle bridges. His fist swung out. Undoubtedly Smiler would have come off badly; only Jim Raven was quick enough to save his pal. He gave Smiler a thrust that sent him on his face on the flat-car's bottom. Gell's blow missed its mark, and he himself lurched, stumbled, and seemed like pitching off the car.

Jim grabbed him just in time, gave a haul, and pulled him on to his back. He held him there until the train had crossed the bridge. Then he let him get up.

By now the train was stepping along at a lively rate, going down a somewhat slight incline.

Rocking on their feet, Jim and Gell stood and faced each other. Nor did Gell seem grateful for the succour he had received from the leader of this gang of sportsmen.

"Ye tried to shove me off!" Gell shouted thickly.

And he again swung a fist. Undoubtedly the man was a bullying blackguard; though what he had drunk probably had affected his temper.

Jim ducked neatly. But here, with the car swaying like an open boat at sea, it was no place for a fist-fight. And all the Sportsmen knew this. A blow might send one of them hurtling off the train to his death or mutilation.

"Can't have much of this, fellows!" roared Smiler Dickinson. "At the fool!"

As one man, the six Sportsmen leaped at Gell.

They were six hefty young fellows. Gell, if a biggish man and a bully, was only one man. It was no question of fair play. It was a matter of safety. And so they all six hurled themselves at this inebriated blackguard, and bore him down. He fought and roared, but he was helpless against the six. And, until he became quieter, they sat on him heavily, and threatened him; said they would throw him off the train as a nuisance if he did not behave himself better.

At length Gell lay quiet, though, for the rest of the journey the Sportsmen kept a wary eye on their unpleasant travelling companion. But Gell gave them no more trouble, until—

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CHAPTER 3.

A Bully Beaten!

KNAPP'S gang got to their destination just as daylight streaked the eastern sky, and travel-weary men dropped off the train, glad their uncomfortable ride was finished. Breakfast was ready for them almost as soon as they halted. After breakfast Knapp gave orders for sundry tents and marquees to be erected near the spot where he was going to commence his bridge-building operations. It is no intention of the narrator of these adventures of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek to describe the work Knapp was going to do, except to describe the erection of one marquee.

This was a big tent that Knapp had handed over to the Sportsmen and other English-speaking navies, in order that they might be kept separate from the jabbering and rather unclean foreigners, which is a plan always adopted in jobs of this kind. And Jim Raven and his comrades were hard at work, their task almost finished, when Gell, turkey on back, strolled into the almost-erected marquee.

Though he had not done a stroke to put the tent up, he coolly picked out the best place and set his turkey down there. This told the Sportsmen that they were going to have Gell for a bed-mate. Also it told them that Gell quite meant to run the roost.

Now, it was a way the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek had to want to run the roost themselves. As a rule, they only associated with each other. Now when they knew they were going to have others outside their little clique near them, it occurred to Jim Raven that the situation had better be made clear to Gell. Therefore, Jim coolly entered the marquee, picked up Gell's turkey, and slung it out into the open air.

At once there was a whirl of fists, feet, and bad language.

Jim ducked in time to avoid a crushing blow, and, in recovering, he brought up his own left, a beautiful upper-cut to the jaw, that connected with Gell's chin with a whack. Gell staggered against the pole of the marquee. The tent was not sufficiently pegged for such liberties to be taken with it. It came down with a rush, enveloping both Gell and Jim.

Gell roared as he fought for freedom. Jim achieved his quietly, and was first out. When clear of the canvas, he stood,

arms folded, ready for Gell when he should appear. There was a tightness about Jim's face that was wholly suggestive. Jim, anyway, was the best boxer in this party, each of whom specialised in some manly sport. Jim's friends waited with bated breath, sure things had come to a head now, and perhaps not very sorry, for they all had an unbounded faith in their leader as a scrapper, with gloves or without.

Gell appeared, a very angry man. As soon as he saw Jim he stripped off the thick frieze coat he was wearing and threw it to the ground. He did not seem so wildly savage now as before. Perhaps he had got a bit more sober since breakfast.

"I'm just goin' to beat you right up!" he said. "Right to bits!"

"I'm ready when you are," said Jim. "But you're not going to be cock-a-whoop here, partner."

However, the fight did not come off then. Sam Knapp appeared on the scene. Knapp, apparently, did not want a fight here and now. He said so, anyway.

Jim Raven was quite willing to abide by the wishes of his new boss, but Gell did not seem to be of the same mind. Not until Knapp had produced a serviceable-looking automatic from the hip-pocket of his trousers did Gell really understand that there was not going to be a fight at the moment.

"If you two want a scrap," said Knapp, "you shall have a real one. Get me? A properly organised scrap, with or without gloves. I'll guess you'll have to decide who's going to boss that tent. But not now, boys. Not now. Tomorrow night, say. Then we can rig up a ring, arrange for seconds, and you, Gell, will have a chance to sober up."

Jim and the other Sportsmen certainly could not understand why Knapp should make such a decision. But he had made it, and, as he was undisputed boss up here, it had to stand. Gell gave another glance at the automatic, then picked up his turkey and disappeared.

"He won't go far," said Knapp with a grin, and he looked curiously at Jim Raven. "Because he'd have to walk ninety miles to get back to civilisation. The train's going back right now, and it won't take Gell. There'll be another one up to-morrow sometime."

And so things were left unsettled. Perhaps Jim Raven was rather glad of a chance to put in a bit of practice before the fight, for there could be no doubt about it, Gell would be a formidable opponent, although prospects of meeting him in the ring, with or without gloves, did not disturb Jim in the least, nor his comrades. For Jim knew himself that he was a scrapper of great merit, and he had met men who looked even more formidable than Gell.

Knapp seemed to go to great pains, too, to keep Gell and the Sportsmen apart all that day and the following night. He gave them jobs to do at different points. Indeed, the river he was going to span with his bridge flowed between Gell and the Sportsmen all the time they were at work.

The work train came up again during the afternoon of the second day there at Rolling River. Somewhat to the surprise, and certainly to the delight, of the Sportsmen, Corporal Nevin stepped off the train, greeted the chums, and informed them that he had come up in answer to a wire sent down by Knapp. Why Knapp should have wired he did not say. But, less than an hour after Nevin's arrival, Knapp let Jim Raven and Gell meet.

A rough ring had been fixed up. Strangely enough, Gell himself was able

to produce from his turkey a set of boxing gloves.

"I rather guessed you'd come to grips with Gell very soon," Nevin said to Jim Raven, "but not quite so soon as this. However, are you fit to take him on?"

"I am," said Jim. "You're mighty mysterious, but—well, he's not going to play little lord with me, as he seems to want to. If he licks me, well and good. But I'm not going to let him lick me."

"I've seen that left-hand upper-cut of yours before now," said Nevin. "Use it. He's a smasher, but I have faith in you. I'll be referee, if you like. You've got your seconds?"

Smiler Dickinson and Digger Harrison were Jim's seconds. Gell had got hold of two Dutchmen who spoke a little English, and had compelled them to act for him in the same capacity. And so, when all the camp were assembled, these two who wanted to fight it out got inside the ring and took up their corners.

Gell looked distinctly fitter now than he had looked, principally because his stock of grog was exhausted. But he showed the traces of over-indulgence plainly enough, though when he stripped he looked a fine enough figure of a man, if somewhat hairy in the chest and arms. Jim Raven, however, if slighter, was ten times as fit, and murmurs of admiration broke out from even the most oxlike foreigners as they looked at him. He was not a giant. He was not a Sandow, but he had a muscle and a sinuous strength that was wholly admirable.

"Ready?" asked Nevin, the referee.

"Fore we start, Mounty," said Gell. "I want ye to know as I won't be responsible if that kid gets hurt."

"Still bluffing?" asked Nevin, eyeing the man strangely. And Gell started, stared, and bit his lips. "Time, both of you!"

Gell sprang into the ring and began to clap his gloved hands together in a fashion calculated to terrify his opponent. Jim walked in quite coolly, guard well up, eyes fixed on the drink-reddened eyes of Gell. And at once, without troubling to touch mitts, they were at it. Gell led off with a savage swing at Jim's head, leaving everything carelessly open to Jim. For Gell obviously fancied himself as a scrapper, and was underrating Jim. Jim underrated nobody.

The swing for Jim's head missed, thanks to an excellent piece of footwork. And, as Gell lurched a little as an after-effect, Jim brought his left up and caught Gell a resounding whack under the right ear that fetched out a grunt from the bully. But even after that, Gell failed to guard himself overmuch. He was plainly out to make a quick end of the fight. He rushed in, and tried a series of jabs for Jim's ribs, only one of which Jim took, however. The lad was like an eel; refused to be drawn in to any infighting. He kept his left straight and rather low, and used his feet admirably, so that his fellow-sportsmen yelled their delight, and Nevin and Sam Knapp murmured approvingly.

"So ye can box some—eh?" grunted Gell, about half-way through the round.

"Yes!" said Jim quietly; and proved it by fetching up his left from the hip in a swing that caught Gell squarely on the jaw and almost broke his neck. Before the man could recover, Jim hammered him again on the neck, and drove Gell back to the ropes.

Gell managed to wriggle clear, but it was only by slipping to the ground that he did so. He shook his head angrily. His face was bleeding now, and he looked quite murderous. He rushed in again, his awful fists flashing in and out like pistons. But still Jim managed to use his feet to advantage.



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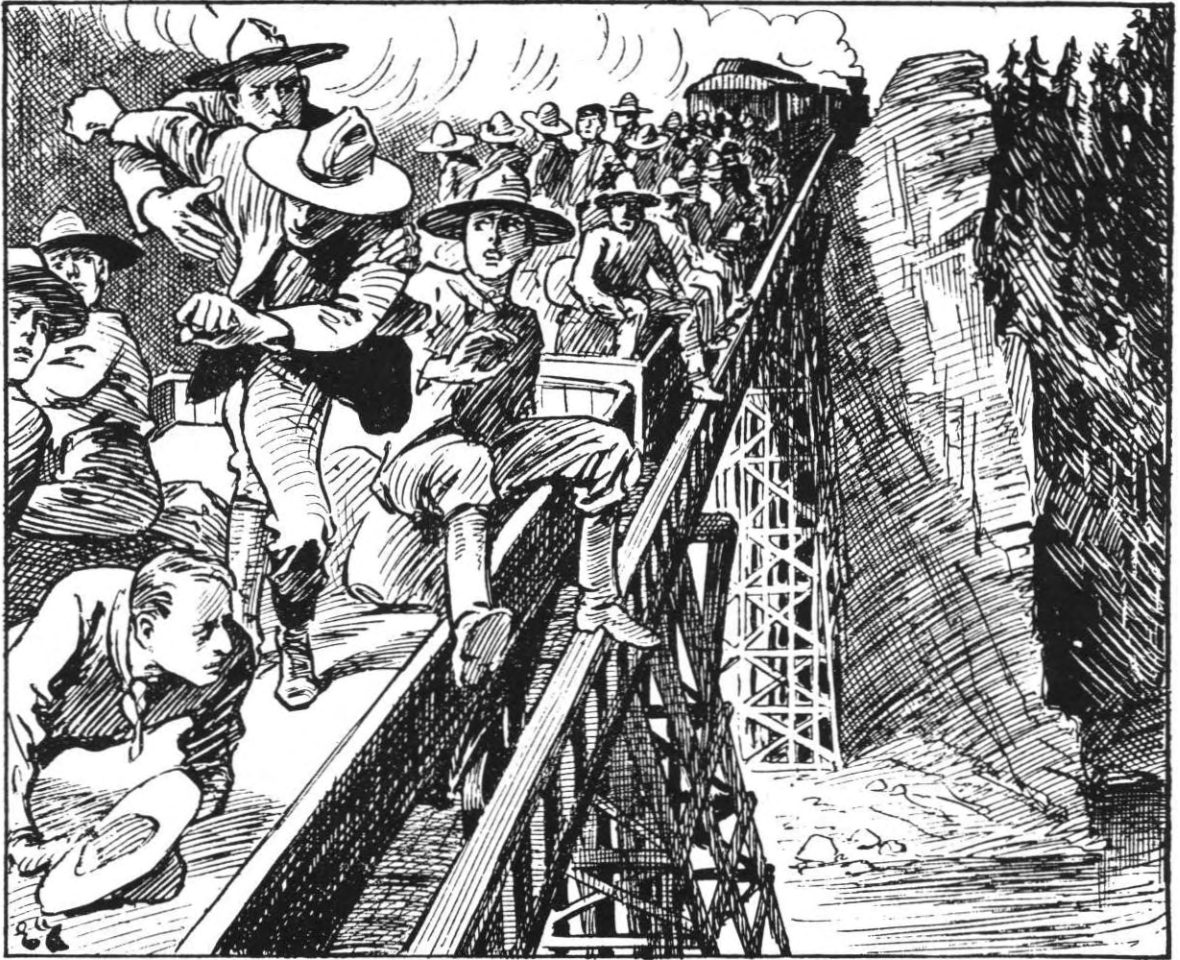
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As Gell's huge fist swung forward, Jim Raven gave Dickinson a push, and the blow missed its mark. Gell, himself, lurched, stumbled, and seemed like falling off the car, but Raven grabbed him just in time.

Gell got angrier every moment; he also got very short of breath.

"I'll finish it now!" he bawled, and, all open wide, hurled himself in. Jim saw a chance that he had never dared to hope for. And he took it. Again that terrible left of his up from the hip—twice; two blows that sounded like a stick smiting wet clay. Gell's head went back at the first; the second, and he went flat on his back, and stared up at Jim. Nevin began to count.

At "seven!" Gell got up again, and tried to cover up till the end of the round should come. But he found then what Jim could do in the attacking line. Jim was merciless. He pressed Gell, battered at him fiercely with force and precision. Gell, desperately, threw himself wide open again and rushed. Jim struck.

It seemed the biggest marvel on earth that Gell's neck did not break then. But he crashed back limply, and lay there like a log, his eyes staring wide open, and his jaw sagging. The crowd roared.

Nevin slowly counted him out.

"Pulling my leg again, aren't you?" Jim asked, as his comrades closed around him and stared at the paper Jim was holding.

"Not a bit of it, old chap," said Nevin, laughing. "I saw the chap in Red Wheat City before you met him, and recognised him at once from the description published."

"But this paper certifies that I met, fought, and beat Slug McNalty," said Jim. "His name's Gell."

"My dear chap," said Nevin patiently, "when a fellow bolts from the law, he often takes another name. That Gell's Slug McNalty all right, the middle-weight champion of Quebec; and you beat him fairly, according to the rules. As a matter of fact, that's why I let him come up here—so you could have a chance to fight him. I knew a scrapper like you wouldn't let him throw his weight about for long. That's why I got you to come up here to work, too, as a matter of fact, knowing McNalty was coming. But I'll bet you wouldn't have beaten him so easily if he hadn't gone to pieces after bolting from the East, where he was wanted for manslaughter. It's funny, but lots of men do seem to go to

pot entirely, once misfortune comes their way. However, this certificate, signed by me and Knapp, is going to old Peter Cross' lawyers, and, you having done as he wanted, will get five hundred dollars, which will be useful for Syd."

"Gosh! What luck!" grunted Jim. "But—"

"Luck, maybe; but most of it manufactured," drawled Nevin. "But I'm sorry that you met him so soon. I was hoping you'd stay up here a bit and do a bit of useful work. Now, having got your five hundred dollars, you'll want to get back again?"

"Personally," said Jim, after a glance at his comrades, "I'm disposed to stay round here a while longer. We thought there wouldn't be much sport up here; but up to now there's been some. There might be more."

"Hear, hear!" said the other Sportsmen. But they said it with bated breath, for it seemed hard to believe, that their leader should have beaten the present, though missing, champion of the Province of Quebec. Still, it was so; and young Syd would not have to go short of things for yet a while longer.

THE END.

(Another splendid complete story next week. Make a note of the title: "THE HOLD-UP!" by Captain Malcolm Arnold. You will enjoy reading this thrilling story of highway robbery.)
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COMING SOON

in the GEM.

"The Spider of the North!"

By David Goodwin.

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The Wolves of St Beowulf's!

A Story of Thrills and
Breathless Situations
on Land and Sea.

BY

DUNCAN STORM.

Wobby & Co. are the pluckiest
and liveliest boys you ever
met, and their adventures are
amazing.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Jack Wabbyong, 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, whose strange antics helps them in effecting their escape. They prepare a further attack upon the dreaded Suini Baba, and the column is toiling along through the hills, when they are confronted by more of the pirate chief's riders, whom they easily overcome. Treated well, their prisoners tell of the fears Suini Baba has of evil spirits. This gives Lal an inspiration, and he hastens to explain his plan to John Lincoln.

(Now read on.)

On the Track of Suini Baba!

"It is a good notion," said Mr. Travers. "And you are a first-class intelligence officer, Lal. You say that Suini Baba's riders are working through the plains far away to the eastward?"

"Yes, sir," replied Lal. "That is why these men were surprised to see so large a body coming up from the coast."

"We'll try it!" said John Lincoln. "And I think the weather is going to be right for us. We shall make the Valley of Stones about three hours after dark to-morrow night, and if the weather is right we will work the stunt!"

"I think the weather will be right," said Sulieman, gazing up at the starlit sky, which now and then was lit up by a faint flash of summer lightning. "By the way the frogs are croaking, and by the shape of the few clouds that hung above the mountains at sunset, there will be thunder in the hills to-morrow."

Sulieman was right. The next morning broke grey and hot, almost like an English summer day when rain is pending. And the column toiled on through the hills, following unfrequented mountain paths which tried the camels sadly.

But the glare of the desert was gone, and they made good progress. There was plenty of water now, and the grey clouds were gathering in wisps of mist, blotting out the rugged peaks of the Atlas.

There was no rain yet, but the rugged hillsides and the half-empty water-courses seemed to be waiting for it.

There was no doubt as to their road. Suini Baba had his signposts. Here and there lay the skeleton of a camel or an ass. On one stumpy tree hung the dry body of a man swinging hideously in the light breeze. On his tattered clothing was pinned a notice in Arabic on parchment, bearing the death warrant signed by Suini Baba himself.

The dead man was a slave who had run away from his eternal toil at the corn-mill, where, gagged so that he could not eat the flour, he tramped round and round like some beast of burden, till he had broken his chains and had run away, making for the coast.

But Suini Baba's riders had not given him much of a run for his money. He had been caught almost as soon as he had started, and here he was, strung up in the tree these three years, his skin tanned and tightened like a drum-skin over his poor bones—a mummy.

None had dared to cut him down and give him burial. He had suffered against the tyrant of the Atlas. That was enough.

The crew of the Kipper King were a rough handful, hardened in the Great War to terrible sights, but even these were moved by the sight of that pathetic figure.

"Ere, 'Arry!" said one swarthy, bearded Moor, pointing to the tree. "What d'ye think abaht that? This 'ere Sweeny Barber ain't 'arf puttin' it abaht!"

"We'll put it abaht 'im when we get

'im!" replied Harry, clenching his fist. "The murderin' ruffian!"

The boys had quite won the hearts of their prisoners. These were not men of the hills, but peasants from the plains, who had been pressed into Suini Baba's service. And when they gradually understood that this expedition of disguised men was going to raze the robber's tower, which had always dominated their simple homes by its grim shadow, they forgot all their allegiance to the dread Kaid.

In any case, they explained in their simple way, they would be dead men if Suini Baba got hold of them. They would never be forgiven for becoming prisoners.

"That's all right, old stiff!" said Wobby when this was translated to him. "It's the Kipper Kings and the Wolves of St. Beowulf's versus Suini Baba's Rovers, and if we don't win ten goals to nil, you can call me dilly!"

The clouds lumped towards sunset, towering over the crags in great masses that foretold thunder. The air grew intensely hot and close. They were within eight miles of their objective when they camped in a deep hollow for the evening meal. And here they waited till darkness fell before they pushed on for the Valley of Stones. When they moved on, the riders presented an appearance that would have scared a stout heart on a sudden meeting, for their robes and their faces shone with a strange flickering, phosphorescent light, and their faces, blacked out in the eyes and touched with luminous paint, looked like the faces of men long dead.

"Crums," muttered Mr. Hobbs, as he peered at Wobby through the darkness. "That you, Master Wobby? My word, you look 'horrid!' Old Tutankhamen would be a beauty compared to you!"

"Well, you don't look beautiful yourself, Hobbo," answered Wobby. "If I met you on a dark night, I'd run for it."

The prisoners were scared and silent. They had seen these strange men from the north turn themselves into ghouls and efreets of the most frightful aspect. And they were wondering what would happen if they met up with the real ghosts of the Hundred Horsemen.

"Tell 'em not to worry, Lal," said Wobby when this fear was mentioned to him. "Tell them we ain't afraid of ghosts in our part of the world. Reckon if the ghosts of the Valley of Stones run into us they'll 'op it, while the going is

good, when they see old Hobbo's chiv. It's a fair scream."

"I don't see anything to scream about!" said Mr. Hobbs. "I smell like a locifer match, and look at me 'ands."

He held up two terrible hands that looked like the hands of a skeleton as they glimmered and smoked phosphorus in the darkness.

Suliman rode at the head of the column now. They were very near the Valley of Stones and the outlying sentinels.

The darkness was made darker by sudden flashes of sheet lightning which played over the mountains.

Jim felt the ground roughen under his feet as he led his horse. He had mounted in his place the nigger who had been shot by Lal on the previous night.

This chap was profoundly grateful to the boys. He had made signs to them that he was going to stop with them for ever. His name was Mafoo.

The boys called him Na Pooh. And he very nearly had been Na Pooh when Lal had plugged at him, only a plunge of his camel saving him.

Now his arm was bound up, dressed and comfortable, and these strange boys had fed him like a prince, and had mounted him on their horses, so that he had travelled easily on this rough ride.

Na Pooh laid his hand on Jim's shoulder and pointed high up on the rocks where showed the red glow of a watch-fire.

This was the outlying sentry of the Valley of Stones.

Suliman had seen the fire and was listening intently for a challenge as the column wound up the Valley of Stones, sparking under the flashes of the lightning.

The sentry was there all right. A flash of lightning revealed him with his long matchlock. But he did not challenge. He gave a cry as he saw this column of spectres sweeping up the valley before him.

"Woe is me!" he cried. "Oh, my misfortune. 'Tis the Hundred Horsemen!" His wailing cry struck terror into the second sentry, who ran to his sentry box, and pulled his hood over his head.

Things were going well.

The sentries were evidently on the jump. The electric clouds which had been hanging on the hills all day had evidently got on their nerves, and they were looking for what they saw.

When a man is persuaded that he is going to see a ghost he generally sees it.

There was no doubt about this ghostly column. As seen from the line of sentry huts they must have looked awful with their greenish shining faces, like the faces of skulls.

They swept on and on, and not a challenge was uttered or a matchlock fired in warning. There was a fear on the sentries greater than the fear of Kaid Suini Baba, the Old Man of the Mountains.

"Bring on the dynamite mule!" whispered John Lincoln, as they reached the head of this valley, which was really a mountain peak rising before them, and caught sight of the grim stark walls of Kaid Suini Baba's stronghold.

The whisper passed down the column, and the mule, laden with dynamite, was brought forward.

Up to now there had been no thunder on the mountains. But as the head of the column neared the gate of the great castle a deep rumbling roar followed the flash. And the sentries, who were gathered outside the gate, hid their faces and wailed. For they saw the column of ghosts plainly, and they saw the huge negro who headed it. He rode forward to the gate crossing the drawbridge boldly, and his horse and face were shining ghostly.

Lifting a great axe, he thundered on the doors of Suini Baba, shouting in a voice that could be heard above the echoes of the thunder:

"Open unto us, Suini Baba. Thou thief! Open unto us, O poisoner!"

Suini Baba's time had come, and the Hundred Horsemen had come for him at last!

The Advance!

"O PEN unto us, Suini Baba! Thou thief! Open unto us, O poisoner!"

Suliman's voice thundered above the thunder. And even in the stronghold of Suini Baba the call was heard.

Suini Baba sat in his hall at the back of his castle. He was nervous and was chewing his white beard.

A man may be a scoundrel and a thousand times a scoundrel, but still the still small voice of conscience is a voice that he cannot escape for ever.

When there was thunder amongst the peaks of the Atlas, Kaid Suini Baba always retired to that hall at the back of his castle which overlooked the tremendous precipice on which the castle was built.

He felt that here the ghostly Hundred Horsemen could not get at him. They were never seen save in the Valley of Stones, and, when that great ghostly negro had thundered away on the portal, they disappeared into thin air.

A slave came rushing into this hall distraught with fear.

"The Horsemen! The Horsemen, my lord!" he cried, and he fell on his face at the edge of Suini Baba's carpet of state.

So frightened was this man at the

thundering knocking on the gate that he forgot to put his shoes off at the entrance or to hide his hands at the sight of his lord in proper respect.

Suini Baba was shaking with fear. But he did not forget what was due to him, even in his hour of terror.

He made a sign to a dull-eyed young man who was leaning against the wall of the chamber, his arms folded and chewing hashish like chewing gum.

The young man moved forward. He was one of Suini Baba's pet assassins. Mahud was his name, and he was as neat a workman with the silken cord as any in the Atlas.

Attired in a reefer suit and a Homburg hat, he would have passed anywhere in the civilised world as a knut of the knuttiest; but, here, he wore a short robe and a red sash, with a small turban worn at a rakish angle, for a knut is not to be suppressed even in the halls of a tyrant.

He made no more bones about the business of executing this slave who was spreading terror than he would of killing a chicken. With the silken cord in his hands, he came behind the unhappy nigger. In another second his victim was dead.

The young man, with tremendous strength and the padding step of a panther, lifted the body, carried it to the window of the hall, and pitched it out.

There was no sound of a fall. The body had to drop two thousand feet before it hit the rocks below. There the hyenas, the jackals, and the kites would attend to it, and on the morrow the bones would be picked clean and bleaching in the hot sun.

There were plenty of bones beneath Suini Baba's windows.

Suini Baba sat amongst the leathern cushions of his divan. He could hear the women screaming in the harem, for



Wobby & Co., in their strange get-up, presented a weird appearance as they moved along the road on the track of Suini Baba.



Suini Baba rushed forward, and his scimitar played like a flash of lightning as it rattled upon Suliman's bayonet. (An incident depicting the great pirate chief "at bay" in next week's thrilling instalment.)

the news had gone through the castle that the Hundred Horsemen were abroad. And the old ruffian was nearly covering as he sat there.

He had no great fear of men, but of spirits he was in great fear.

Suddenly he lifted his head.

The roll of the thunder had died away. But the hammering on the gate of the castle still continued. Kaid Suini Baba was suddenly alert, for he realised that he had to do with live men, and not the spirits of the dead.

He sprang from his cushions with agility wonderful in so old a man.

"Give me my sword!" he cried.

He snatched at the Damascus blade which the dull eyed, hashish chewing young assassin handed to him.

Then he picked up the stick of a large gong that stood close by his divan, and its warning note growled through the castle.

It was some gong. A six-foot disc of pure metal, into which had been melted silver and gold.

At its summons men came running, armed men who had snatched up pistols and the long-stocked Moorish guns, the flint of which they tried as they ran.

"To the battlements!" cried Suini Baba. "These are men we deal with, not spirits."

There was a rush from the hall. Up on the battlements above the great gate were cauldrons of pitch with the fires ready laid to heat them. There were also great stones ready to be rolled down upon the heads of any attacking party,

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for the Moors were always expert in the art of rolling stones down on their enemies.

At the gate Mr. Hobbs was already busy.

The dynamite mule had come forward, and Mr. Hobbs had laid a couple of charges under the massive timbers where they would do most good according to his ideas, and most harm to the property of Kaid Suini Baba.

"Back with the mule, young gents," he cried, "get out of the way. I can hear those lads inside running to the battlements. We shall get something down on our nappers directly!"

The boys ran back, taking shelter behind a wall of piled rocks that commanded the battlements.

They saw a flare of torches there, and turbaned heads moving to and fro past the embrasures.

The defenders were trying to light up their pitch pots, but the rain had damped the kindling.

Suddenly a heavy fire of musketry broke out from the walls of the castle.

There was a sudden flare of balefires lighting up the whole scene.

They saw Mr. Hobbs calmly lighting the fuses of the dynamite charges from his cigar. Then he walked away from the gate and across the bridge, a huge stone falling behind him and shattering into fragments as it burst like a bomb.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

But Mr. Hobbs disdained to hurry.

Bullets whizzed round him as he walked back leisurely to the spot where the boys were sheltering; but the jumping lights of the flares and the nervous fears of the garrison made the shooting fluky, and he came through the shower of missiles without harm.

He dropped behind the wall close alongside the boys.

"Keep that bear's head down, young gents, if 'e don't want it knocked off!" he cried. "I've given that fuse two minutes. Wait 'arf a mo'. Down comes the hammer, and up goes the donkey!"

The bullets were pattering all round on the rocks as the boys crouched behind their shelter, waiting for the bang.

The Moors yelled with triumph. They thought that they had driven back the attack.

They raised mocking cries and cat-calls.

"Poisonous lot of toffs!" remarked Mr. Hobbs. "But they'll be laughing on the other sides of their faces directly."

Two and a half minutes had passed by Mr. Hobbs' wrist-watch.

"I wonder if anything's gone wrong with them charges?" muttered Mr. Hobbs. "I'm pretty well sure that—"

Mr. Hobbs' remarks were cut short by a blinding flash and a shattering explosion that knocked Dempsey head over heels and set the deafened ears of the boys singing and pumping.

The gateway, with its towers, seemed to lean outwards and hang there for a second in the air. Then, with a roar and a crash, the mass of masonry toppled, rolling and pouring down into the deep ditch as though the building had suddenly turned liquid.

The boys dropped on their faces.

They could hear fragments whistling in all directions, crashing and splintering behind them. Then a tinkle of rock-chips told that the explosion was over.

There was a dead silence now. Where had stood the gateway was a yawning rent in the fabric of the castle, shrouded in a cloud of dust.

Mr. Hobbs put his head up cautiously.

"That's put paid to ole Sweeney Todd's front door!" he said. "Wait a minute, young gents. Don't show yourselves till you get the word!"

A fallen cresset of tow and pitch was still flaring, lighting the scene, but the turbaned heads had disappeared from the battlements.

Most of these had been crowded above the gate when it went up.

A bugle rang out, and, with a cheer and a rush, the attacking-party swept forward with fixed bayonets.

They met very little resistance, for only one man came forward to fight them.

This was the sleek, smooth-haired assassin, who, with a dagger in each hand, rushed out and hurled himself upon the bayonets, fighting like a leopard, with all the madness of a fanatic. But he could not break through the wall of steel, and went down.

"My word!" gasped the stoker who got him. "That was a bit of hot stuff! If there's any more tiger-cats like him inside, we are going to have a busy time!"

(There are some startling developments in next week's thrilling instalment. Be sure and read it, boys.)



My Readers' Own Corner:

Let Me Hear Your Latest Joke!

Revised

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(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week You May Next.)

All Attempts 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!

In the middle of a small ploughed field a motor-car lay helplessly on its side. Evidently it had skidded off the road and through the hedge. The motorist stood looking at it disconsolately. "Hallo!" called out a genial passer-by. "Had an accident?" The motorist bit back the angry retort which rose to his lips. "Oh, no," he replied, "not at all! I've just got a new car, so I brought this old one out into the field to bury it. Have you a pick or shovel on you you could lend me? I don't seem able to make much of a hole with a spanner!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to John Barr, 105, Forge Street, Glasgow, Scotland.

HIS DESTINATION!

A man went into a railway booking-office and asked for a return ticket. "Where to?" asked the booking clerk. "Why, back here, of course!" was the reply.—Half-a-crown awarded to F. I. Friedman, 11, Auriol Road, Kensington, W. 14.

TAKING NO CHANCES!

The determined-looking man strode into a gunsmith's shop. "I want a good repeating pistol!" he snapped. "Yes, sir," said the salesman. "Six chambers?" "No; nine. They say a cat has nine lives, and I want to use it on the cat next door!"—Half-a-crown awarded to Robert Drysdale, 8, Charles Street, Greenock.

TOO SMART!

The head of a large shop while passing through the packing-room observed a boy lounging against a case of goods and whistling cheerily. The chief stopped and looked at him. "How much do you get a week?" he demanded. "A pound," came the brief retort. "Then here's a week's money. Now, clear out!" The boy pocketed the money and departed. "How long has he been in our employ?" the chief asked the head of the department. "Never, so far as I know," was the reply. "He had just brought me a note from another firm."—Half-a-crown awarded to A. Walmisley, 29, Sandon Street, Blackburn.

QUITE OBVIOUS!

Orator: "Take the figures, forty-three million seven hundred and fifty thousand eight hundred and seventy-two in 1910, and subtract nine million four hundred thousand six hundred and eighty-seven in 1911, allowing 1.27 per cent for increase of population. Gentlemen, you can draw your own conclusions." Delighted audience: "Ear, ear!"—Half-a-crown awarded to Frank R. Davis, Milton House, West Bromwich, Staffs.

WENT ONE BETTER!

As a costermonger was going on his usual rounds he was accosted by one of those unmistakable individuals from the other side of the "herring pond." "Say, pardner," drawled the American in his nasal tones, picking up one of the largest melons from the cart, "are those the largest apples you've got over here?" The answer came swift and incisive: "You leave that grape alone!" snarled the coster, continuing his journey, leaving the discomfited American to the smiles of the passers-by.—Half-a-crown awarded to Geo. E. Barnard, 9, High Street, Chesterton, Nr. Staffs.

NOT WHAT HE EXPECTED!

Scene Cuptie in the North. Chance had thrown together a Scotsman and a Yorkshireman. Both were enthusiastic, but the Scotsman punctuated his comments with drinks from a flask. The Yorkshireman, watching him enviously for a time, quite casually said: "Ye used to be a footballer yourself, I guess?" "Yes," was the reply. "I played for many years." "Ah," said the Yorkshireman, "I thought so," but glancing significantly at the flask. "You seem to know nowt about passing." "Nowt about passing?" replied the Scotsman. "Dinna be daft, man. Dae ye no see I'm passing to ma inside man?"—Half-a-crown awarded to R. Mansfield, 37, Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

IT ALL DEPENDS!

An Englishman and an Irishman met one day, and the former, wishing to have some fun with Pat, asked him if he was good at arithmetic. "I am that!" replied Pat. "Then could you tell me how many shirts I could get out of a yard?" asked the Englishman. "Well," said Pat, "that depends on whose yard you got into."—Half-a-crown awarded to Ernest C. Higgs, The House, Globe Works, Chatsworth Road, Clapton Park, E. 5.

KEEPING HIS END UP!

An Irishman, being pursued by a policeman, took refuge in a grocer's shop, and requested the grocer to hide him, which he did by helping him into a sack. The policeman, rushing in, asked the whereabouts of his man, and was told that no man had entered there. "Why, what's in that sack?" asked the officer. "Oh, that's broken glass," was the reply. Not satisfied, the officer kicked the sack, and a faint voice was heard to murmur: "Tinkle, tinkle!"—Half-a-crown awarded to Jack Lomas, 14, Gilead Street, Bulwell, Notts.

IDENTIFIED!

Teacher: "Can any boy tell me what comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb?" Billy (aged nine): "The land-lord when father pays the rent."—Half-a-crown awarded to H. Wild, 47, Countess Street, Stockport.

A FISHY CATCH!

Two men were walking along a street, and one said to the other: "Think of the names of two fish that begin with E." After a bit he said: "I can only think of eel; I'll give the other up." "Well, Edinburgh's the other." "But Edinburgh is not a fish," said the surprised man. "No; but it's a pla(i)ce!" said the other, with a grin.—Half-a-crown awarded to E. Gardner, 310, Gt. Clowes Street, Hr. Broughton, Manchester.

REASSURING!

An old lady was going down a coal-mine for the first time in her life. As the cage slowly descended, she noticed that she and the rest of the party were dependent upon a single rope to which the cage was attached. "Do you think it is quite safe?" she asked nervously of a brawny miner who was accompanying the visitors down. "Don't you fear, mum," was the reply. "These ere ropes are guaranteed to last exactly eighteen months, and this one ain't due to be renewed until to-morrow."—Half-a-crown awarded to Wilfred Challinor, 44, Chell Street, Longsight, Manchester.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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"GAME TO THE LAST!"

(Continued from page 17.)

St. Leger did not speak.

"Lynn's gone, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that announcement after lessons.

"Gone!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! There's some sort of a wow goin' on about it," said Arthur Augustus. "Lynn did not go home with a pweefect. Twinkle says he bolted, and wrote a wathah cheeky letter to the Head—"

"How does Trimble know?" growled Tom Merry.

"Listenin' at a door, I suppose—you know Twinkle. He says the Head was watty, and spoke to Mr. Wailton about it—and he says that Lynn has gone back to the boxin', and

not home at all, accordin' to what he told the Head. But Twinkle is such a feafuhl fabricator, there's no tellin' wethah it's the twuth or not."

"Let's ask St. Leger," said Mondy Lowther.

"Nothin' doin', deah boys. I've been along the Fifth Form passage, and St. Leger's sportin' his oak."

"Poor old Lynn!" said Tom Merry. "I shouldn't wonder if he has a better time in the ring than he had here. But—I'd like to see him back again."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Perhaps we'll see him back some day," said Tom hopefully. "He was a good kid, with all his weird ways. We may see him back at St. Jim's one of these days."

But as to that, time alone could tell.

THE END.

(Next week's story of Tom Merry & Co. will be an extra-special one. Make a note of the title: "FRANK LEVISON'S FLIGHT!" By Martin Clifford. Make sure of reading it by ordering your GEM early.

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