

SUPERB SCHOOL STORIES, ADVENTURE YARNS AND THRILLING SERIAL!

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

# The GEM 2<sup>D</sup>

LIBRARY

OF

SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES

No. 837.  
Vol. XXV.  
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## THE FALL OF THE COCK-OF-THE-WALK!

Mulroney minor, licked to the wide by the new arrival at St. Jim's, is forced to relinquish his claim as cock-of-the-walk in Study No. 4! (A dramatic incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co. contained in this issue.)



# Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

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.

## OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

**"THE BOYS' FRIEND"** Every Monday  
**"THE MAGNET"** Every Monday  
**"THE POPULAR"** Every Tuesday  
**"JUNGLE JINKS"** Every Thursday  
**"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"** Published Yearly

My Dear Chums,—Another great and varied number of the GEM for next week! The only complaint I get these days is just this—"the end of the book" comes so soon. That is how a Blackpool friend of mine expresses himself. Thanks for the remark. But, luckily, the end of each issue of the good old GEM brings us nearer to the beginning of another new number. For next Wednesday Mr. Martin Clifford has written a thrilling story in the fascinating Len Lee series.

### "THE SHADOW OF A SECRET!" By Martin Clifford.

This yarn can have but one result—namely, to increase the tremendous interest felt in the Waif of St. Jim's. Everybody is talking about the mysterious stranger, whose personality seems to be dual. Your curiosity will be piqued by the action taken by Cardew in the coming fine tale. In the new story he tries to perform a signal service for Len Lee. Cardew, like most silent, reserved people, hears a lot, and we find him on the track of a very curious and baffling mystery. He thinks it is up to him to warn Lee about a certain danger. As to whether he is right or not, you will form your own conclusions.

### A BOXING SUPPLEMENT.

The "St. Jim's News" blossoms forth next week with a topping boxing number. There is something in this to interest everybody. I am eager to hear what you really think of the "St. Jim's News." There have been a good few growls in my postbag concerning the supplement. Some readers want it longer, some vote the other way. Let me know what you think about it.

### "MARMADUKE'S MOTOR-WHEEL!" By Elmer K. Arter.

Mike McAndrew's return is an event which will be received with a "three times three." There never was any doubt about the popularity of the most amusing motor-car maker who ever fiddled with a carburettor. There is bound to be an extra run on the GEM next Wednesday for several reasons, one being that the ex-cruciatingly comic Mike McAndrew and his young brother Marmaduke will reappear. Young Marmy supplies laughter without end. A learned scientist has just made the striking discovery that the easiest way

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to wealth is to grow fat. To get fat you must laugh. That being so, make sure of next week's GEM, and you will not only have a first-class time, but also find yourself on the high-road to fortune.

### THE TEMPTING TUCK HAMPER!

Excellent efforts continue to pour in on me by the shoal. I welcome all entries. Our Tuck-Hamper Department is unique. Send your storyettes to Gough House—addressing them "The GEM, 'My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4."

### "TOM OF THE AJAX!"

Plenty of compliments reach me about our great serial. The plot thickens as the narrative proceeds, and the big secret behind the implacable enmity of Kalcho for the plucky Tom Gale is well kept. Still, secrets—like murder—will out; so keep your eye on the coming instalment.

### THE BEST WAY!

A football enthusiast asks me the best way to reach the footer-grounds of Aston, Cardiff, and Bolton. That is easy, though, as this reader is a Londoner, the business has its expensive side. On great occasions, such as Cup ties, the railway companies nearly always run cheap excursion trains. For Aston, close to Birmingham, one has to travel from Euston or Paddington. It is a two-hours' run. All the northern routes link up London with Bolton, and Manchester. Cardiff is reached by the Great Western from Paddington.

### YOUR EDITOR.

Do you go in for Wireless?

If you do, you naturally want to get the best results at the lowest cost. POPULAR WIRELESS will tell you how to construct or repair any type of receiving set and how to enjoy this popular hobby to the full. There are special features for both experts and beginners. Under the headings of "The Junior Amateur" and "Practical Ideas for the Amateur" you can pick up endless valuable hints. Ask your newsagent TO-DAY for

**POPULAR WIRELESS**  
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## "MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"

### OUR TUCK HAMPERS ARE PRIME!

Remember, boys and girls, we award a delicious Tuck Hamper for the best storyettes sent us each week—also half-a-crown is paid for each other contribution accepted. Cut out the coupon on this page, and send it, together with your joke to me.

### ANOTHER TUCK HAMPER WON!

#### SOME APOLOGIES!

An Irishman, who had been tossed over a fence by a bull, was recovering from his fall when he saw the bull pawing up the ground. "If it was not for your bowing and scraping and your humble apologies, you brute," said Pat, smiling, "faix, I should think you had thrown me over the fence on purpose!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to G. Matthews, 1, Sydney Terrace, Ryde, I. O. W.

### AN AWKWARD SUGGESTION!

A man complained of the conduct of his son to a friend, and related to him some of his escapades. "You should speak to him with firmness, and recall him to his duty," said the friend. "I have, of course; but he pays not the least attention to what I say. He only listens to the advice of fools. I wish you would talk to him!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Thomson, Rock Cottage, St. Mawes, Cornwall.

### THEN AND NOW!

The orderly officer walked into the mess-room. "Any complaints?" he asked. "Yes, sir," spoke up Private Jones, "the meat's bad." "Why, my man," said the officer, "during the Boer War the soldiers would have been glad to get that meat!" "Yes, sir," replied Jones, "but that was about twenty years ago, and it might have been fresh then!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Roger A. Rhoden, Waterworks Farm, Red Rock, nr. Wigan, Lancashire.

### A TRUE FRIEND!

Jack: "Riley said that you were two-faced."  
John: "I'll make Riley eat his words when I see him!"  
Jack: "But I said, 'No, he isn't two-faced.'"  
John: "I'm glad you stuck up for me."

Jack: "Because if you had two faces, you wouldn't be going about with the one you have now!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to James Hennessey, 53, Norton Bridge, Pontypridd, S. Wales.

All attempts in this Competition should be addressed to: The GEM, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

### TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

Micky Mulvaney, in his endeavours to rule the roost in Study No. 4, receives rather a rude awakening when he comes up against Leonard Lee, the one-time outcast and wanderer of Wayland Wood.

# LEN AT ST JIM'S!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of  
Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



## CHAPTER 1.

### Gussy Makes Arrangements!

"TOMPKINS, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth stood elegantly in the doorway of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage. He addressed Clarence York Tompkins, the owner of the study.

Tompkins looked round with a worried look. He was kneeling before the grate, searching among cinders and other debris in the fender, apparently looking for something that was not there. Tompkins, the most inoffensive youth at St. Jim's, had for a study-mate Mulvaney minor, who was anything but inoffensive; and so Tompkins' lines were not cast in pleasant places. Mulvaney minor ran the study in his own way, and when Tompkins objected to his methods Mulvaney was always ready to punch his inoffensive head. Tompkins, on the other hand, was not always ready to have his head punched; in such matters it was more blessed to give than to receive. So Mick Mulvaney generally had his way, and was a thorn in the side of Clarence York.

Tompkins was grubby and worried and troubled. He ought to have been pleased to receive a call from so distinguished a fellow as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's. But he was too worried to be pleased by anything just then.

"It's done in," he said.

"Bai Jove! What's done in, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"My Latin grammar!" Tompkins rose from the fender. "It's rather beastly of Mulvaney to use my books to boil the kettle, isn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah!" assented Arthur Augustus. "I wegard that as vevy beastlay indeed! I should wecommend punchin' his head!"

"So I would," said Tompkins. "Only—" He left it at that.

"I will lend you a Latin gwammah if you like, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus graciously.

"Oh, good!"

"I looked in to speak to you about the new chap," continued Arthur Augustus.

"New chap?" repeated Tompkins vaguely.

"Yaas—chap named Pomfwet, who is comin' to the school to-day. I heah that he is bein' put in this studay."

"Oh, yes," Tompkins assented, "I remember! Mr. Railton told Mulvaney, and he told me."

"This chap Pomfwet is only a new kid, of course," said Arthur Augustus. "New kids don't amount to much, as a wule. But in the cires I think it is up to us to take some notice of this chap Pomfwet. His fathah was an old St. Jim's man, and was killed in the War. Probaboly you have seen Captain Pomfwet's name in the Woll of Honah."

"Pomfwet?" said Tompkins. "Oh, yes! What about it?"

"Lots about it," said Arthur Augustus rather severely. "It isn't evvay chap heah whose patah's name is in the

School Woll of Honah. The kid has been at school in Switzerland, and has only wecently come home to be sent to St. Jim's. In the cires, I think we ought to take some notice of him."

"I'm sure I don't mind," said Tompkins.

"Vevy good! As he is bein' put in this studay, don't you think it would be a good ideah to stand him a wathah decent spweed on his first day heah and ask some fellows to meet him?"

Tompkins nodded assent. He had not thought of it on his own account, but he was always willing to oblige.

"I have spoken to Blake and Hewwies and Digby about it," went on Arthur Augustus. "They think it a vevy good ideah to have a spweed. They agreed at once!"

Tompkins grinned.

"I dare say they did," he remarked.

"As this is goin' to be Pomfwet's studay the spweed ought to be given heah. About half a dozen of the best fellows in the House might be asked to meet Pomfwet—what?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I will come. What are you gwinnin' at, Tompkins?"

"Nothing," said Tompkins hastily. "Go on!"

"And Blake and Hewwies and Dig," said Arthur Augustus. "And I think we might have a few Shell fellows."

"If you like!"

"Shall I ask Tom Mewwy and Mannahs and Lowthah?"

"Certainly!"

"Good! That will be seven guests, as well as Pomfwet himself. I suppose Mulvaney will want to come?"

"Catch him missing a spread," said Tompkins.

"And you will be pwesent, of course?" added Arthur Augustus graciously.

"Thanks!" said Tompkins, with a slight inflection of sarcasm in his voice. Even Tompkins could be sarcastic.

"Not at all, deah boy! As it is your studay, you know, you are weally entitled to do the honahs," said Arthur Augustus, quite unconscious of the sarcasm.

"Anything else?" asked Tompkins.

Arthur Augustus glanced round the study. It was not a tidy study. Mulvaney minor was not a tidy youth. Clarence York was. And he spent a great deal of time in tidying up after Mulvaney. But Study No. 4 was generally more or less in a state of chaos.

"You might make the study look a bit decent," suggested Arthur Augustus gently. "Football-boots on the mantelpiece, for instance, look wathah out of the picture on a festive occasion!"

"They're Mulvaney's boots."

"And a stack of cinders and burnt papah in the fendah!"

"Mulvaney's been making coffee!"

"Bai Jove! I wathah think that if Mulvaney were my studay-mate I should give him a feahful thwashin'!" said D'Arcy. "Howevah, do the best you can, deah boy. I should like young Pomfwet to get a good impresson of St. Jim's on his first day."

"Right-ho!"

"Bettah make it five o'clock for the spweed," went on D'Arcy. "Will that suit you, Tompkins?"

"Oh, yes!"

"You won't forget to ordah the stuff at the tuckshop?"

"N-n-no!"

"Bettah lay in plentyay of supplies, as there will be so many fellows to tea," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "I suggest ham and eggs to begin with—"

"Yes."

"And a cake—pewwaps two cakes—"

"Ali!"

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"And a few dozen jam-tarts——"

"Oh!"

"And some mewingues and buns and doughnuts!"

"Um!"

"And anythin' you think of, in fact," said Arthur Augustus. "We want to be hospitable to the new chap, you know!"

"Oh, yes," gasped Tompkins.

"Now I will run along and speak to Tom Mewwy."

"Oh, do!" stammered Tompkins.

And with a gracious nod Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ambled away. Clarence York Tompkins stared after him blankly. Then, slowly, carefully, and methodically, Clarence York turned out his pockets. From one pocket he turned out a shilling. From another a sixpence. Two pennies followed, and then a halfpenny.

That was all!

Clarence York had been bidden to lay in ample supplies for a feast of honour, at which ten fellows were to be present. His cash resources amounted to one shilling and eightpence-halfpenny.

Sordid details of this kind did not enter the magnificent mind of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. But they had to enter Tompkins' less magnificent mind, as he was expected to stand the feast, and had, in fact, agreed to do so!

How a royal spread was to be stood at twopence a head was a problem which an expert mathematician might have given up in despair.

Tompkins did not give it up. He wrestled with it. He forgot about the Latin grammar that Mulvaney minor had used for boiling the study kettle; he forgot about the deponent verbs which Mr. Lathom, his Form master, had sternly bidden him to "mug up." He had more pressing matters on his mind now.

## CHAPTER 2.

### What Tom Merry Knew!

**T**OM MERRY came off Little Side with Manners and Lowther, his face cheery and ruddy. Games practice was over for the afternoon—a clear, fine, frosty afternoon. The junior captain of St. Jim's was looking, and feeling, in great spirits. Levison, Clive, and Cardew of the Fourth came back towards the School House with the Terrible Three—the last-named with a tired and bored expression on his handsome face. Ralph Reckness Cardew had turned up for games practice that afternoon, as it was a compulsory day. And he had shown up well; but it pleased him to affect to look upon football as a bore.

"You're coming on well, Cardew!" Tom Merry said, as the juniors left the ground together. "I hope we shall see you down here to-morrow."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"Football isn't compulsory every day, thank goodness!" he remarked.

"Compulsory or not, it's better than frowsting in the study!" said Manners rather tartly.

Cardew bowed.

"So glad to know what you think!" he said.

"Oh, rats!" said Manners.

"No reason why you shouldn't play in the next House match, Cardew," said Tom Merry cheerily. "If you like to keep up games practice, I'll put your name down."

"Lots of thanks!" yawned Cardew. "But don't bother! House matches aren't compulsory."

"Look here, Cardew——" began Levison.

"Ease off, old fellow!" urged Cardew. "Keep your giddy sermons for the study! Then I can take a nap in the arm-chair while you unload!"

"Fathead!" grunted Levison.

"What's the good of slacking?" said Sidney Clive. "I'm trying as hard as I can to get into the House matches, and you've got the cheek to turn down an offer!"

"I pass it on to you," said Cardew. "Can I accept your offer, Tom Merry, and pass it on to Clive?"

"Ass!" was Tom's reply to that.

The Terrible Three walked on, leaving Levison and Clive arguing with their perverse chum.

"By the way, it's Wednesday!" remarked Monty Lowther, as the three Shell fellows went into the changing-room together.

"What about that?" asked Manners.

"Isn't that new kid, Pomfret, coming to-day? Somebody told us he was coming on Wednesday."

Tom Merry started.

"Pomfret!"

"Or Lee?" grinned Lowther. "We'd better see him when he comes, and make up our minds who and what he is!"

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows. He had forgotten for the moment; but he remembered now.

Leonard Pomfret, nephew of Mr. Claude Pomfret, of

Pomfret Lodge, was to arrive at St. Jim's that day to take his place in the Fourth Form. He had visited the school a few days before with his uncle and guardian, and Tom had seen him. And—if Tom could trust his eyes—Leonard Pomfret was Len Lee, the penniless wanderer whom the Terrible Three had encountered in the old hut in Wayland Wood.

Tom Merry had puzzled considerably over that strange affair without being able to make head or tail of it. Len Lee, once a public schoolboy, now a wandering outcast, seemed remote enough from Len Pomfret, the rich stockbroker's nephew. And yet Tom Merry knew, and felt, that they were one and the same person.

"We'll have a look at the chap when he comes," said Manners. "If he's Lee, we'll know him right enough."

"Only he can't be Lee," said Monty Lowther. "It must be just a case of a resemblance."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It isn't," he said.

"But a chap can't have two names!" urged Lowther. "And Mr. Pomfret must know whether the fellow is his nephew or not?"

"I—I suppose that's so."

"Len Lee was down on his luck—down on his uppers—and this fellow Pomfret is a rich chap, so far as we can see," said Lowther. "His father was at St. Jim's, too."

"I can't understand it," said Tom. "But——"

"But you still believe he's the same chap?"

"Well, yes."

"If that's so, there's something jolly wrong somewhere," said Manners thoughtfully. "He must be imposing on Mr. Pomfret. But how the thump could he? If he's not Pomfret's nephew, that jolly old nephew must be somewhere."

"I admit I can't make it out," said Tom. "But I'm certain he's the chap we met in Wayland Wood that day. He told us his name was Len Lee, and that he had been at a big public school in the north. From something Cardew said, I fancy it was Cardew's old school—Wodehouse. But—but—well, it beats me. I'd have asked Cardew some questions, only I don't want to start any talk about the new chap, in case I may be mistaken."

"No harm in asking him whether there was a fellow named Lee at his old school, without mentioning Pomfret at all?" said Manners, after some thought.

"Well, no. Might ask him that."

Levison & Co. came into the changing-room. Monty Lowther called across to Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"Cardew, do you remember a fellow named Lee at your old school?"

"Lee?" repeated Cardew.

"Len Lee," said Manners.

Cardew seemed to make an effort to remember.

"Yes, there was a chap of that name in the Fourth when I left," he answered.

"You knew him?"

"By sight," answered Cardew. "I never had anythin' to do with him. He was one of the footballin' fraternity, and I was one of the giddy slackers."

"He was still at Wodehouse School when you left?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, yes. There now, for all I know," answered Cardew.

"I remember now that he ragged my study once with some of his pals. I'm goin' to punch his head for it, if I ever see him again."

Cardew plunged his face into steaming water, and the subject was dropped. Evidently he was not interested in hearing anything about his former schoolfellow.

"That settles it," said Tom Merry in a low voice. "There was a Len Lee at Wodehouse, and the yarn that chap told us was true. But how he comes to be called Len Pomfret, now, beats me hollow. People do change their names sometimes, of course, but—but—but——"

"But it's fishy," said Lowther.

"Yes, rather?"

"Bai Jove! Lookin' for you fellows!" It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the Terrible Three were leaving the changing-room. "I twust you have not had your tea?"

"Only just chucked footer," said Tom. "You chucked it a good deal earlier, Gussy. Are you taking to slacking in your old age?"

"Wats! I had a wathah important mattah to attend to," explained Arthur Augustus. "A new chap named Pomfret is comin' to St. Jim's this afternoon."

"Oh, my hat! Do you know him?" exclaimed Tom Merry in astonishment.

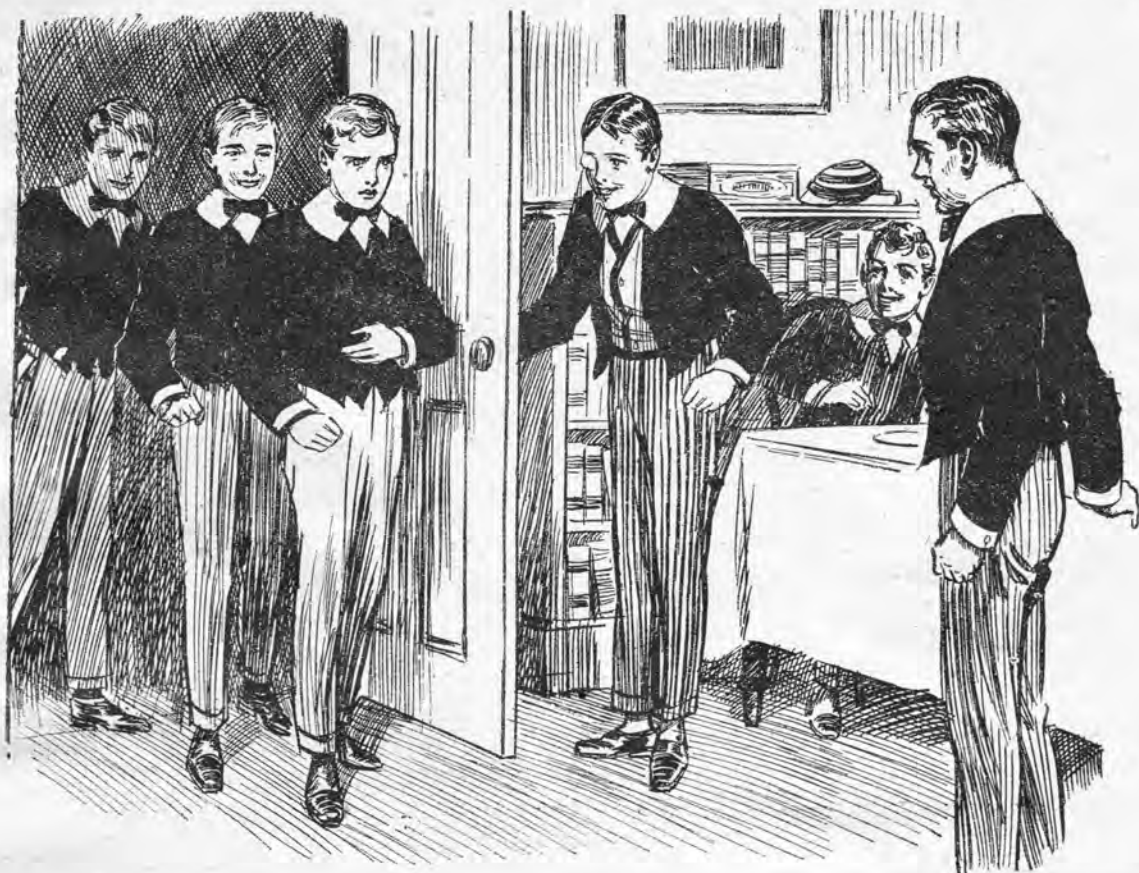
"Not at all, deah boy!"

"Then what does he matter?" asked Manners.

"He is the son of an old St. Jim's man who was killed fightin' the Huns," said Arthur Augustus.

"That's so! Captain Pomfret's name is in the roll," said Monty Lowther.

"For that reason I am goin' to take some notice of him," explained Arthur Augustus.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy opened the study door, and three juniors entered. Len glanced at them, then his face grew white and his heart beat almost to suffocation as he recognised Tom Merry & Co. Tom Merry fixed his eyes on Len, and recognised him as the one-time outcast and wanderer he had seen in the old hut in the wood. (See page 9.)

"Which is bound to make him feel no end bucked," suggested Monty Lowther gravely.

"Yaas, wathah!" assented Gussy innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows, I see nothin' to cackle at. He's goin' into Study No. 4 in the Fourth, with Tompkins and that young wuffian Mulvaney minah. I have put it to Tompkins, and he has agweed to stand a woyal spweed on the occasion. My study are all goin', and you fellows are wanted to wewesent the Shell. See?"

The Terrible Three looked at one another quickly.

If they wanted an opportunity of seeing Pomfret of the Fourth at close quarters, and judging whether he was or was not Len Lee the outcast, here was the opportunity ready for them.

"I twist you will come," said Arthur Augustus. "You see, my ideah is to introduce the chap to a numbah of the best fellows in the House, and give him a footin' to start with."

"Dear old Gussy!" said Manners with a grin. "If you put it like that, we'd cancel an engagement with the Head to come."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Count us in, old top," he said. "We'll be glad to come, all the gladder because tommy is short in Study No. 10, and we've dug up a first-class appetite at footer. When's the spread?"

"Five o'clock, deah boy, in Tompkins' study."

"I hope Tompkins has written to his rich uncle," observed Lowther.

"Bai Jove! Why?"

"Well, with eight guests he will have to strain his credit at the tuckshop to breaking point if he hasn't had a remittance."

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Gweat Scott! I nevah thought of that!" he exclaimed.

"Now I come to think of it, the chap did look wathah queeah when I was tellin' him what he had bettah get for the spweed."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Bai Jove, you know, it might be quite awkward for

Tompkins if he happens to be short of cash," said Arthur Augustus. "It was weally quite bwight of you to think of it, Lowthah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will go and see him at once. You chaps will be comin' to the spweed to meet Pomfwet?"

"Rely on us, old beau."

"Good!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ambled off, and the Terrible Three chuckled. They could imagine the state of dismay in which the noble Gussy had probably left Clarence York Tompkins.

"Good old Gussy!" chuckled Lowther. "Trust him to think of everything but the thing that matters, and to see everything but the obvious. But, I say, if we're teeing with Pomfret, we shall be able to size him up, as Wildrake calls it, and I fancy you'll find that he's himself, Tom, and not somebody else."

"Very likely," grinned Manners.

"Well, I suppose that's most likely," said Tom Merry, laughing. "All the same, if he isn't Len Lee, I'm a Dutchman. Anyhow, we'll know for certain when we see him."

And the Terrible Three strolled round the passages, chatting to the fellows, while they waited for the interval to elapse before the spread in Study No. 4. They were looking forward to that festive occasion with great keenness, rather on account of Len Pomfret than on account of the spread, though they were quite prepared to do justice to the latter.

### CHAPTER 3. Rough on Tompkins!

"L END me a quid?"

Mulvaney minor of the Fourth stared at his study-mate.

Mulvaney minor had come in to tea—or, rather, to see whether there was any tea going in the study. If not, there was just time to cut down to Hall. Generally, Tompkins stood the study feeds; and Mulvaney, who patronised his inoffensive study-mate when he was not ragging him, generally condescended to take the lion's share. Fellows who shared a study were supposed to stand equal

"whacks" in a study tea; but in Mick Mulvaney's case it seldom got farther than supposition.

"Lend you a quid!" said Mulvaney, astonished. "Is it joking you are?"

"No," said Tompkins; "I'm nearly stony."

"And I'm quite," said Mulvaney.

"You borrowed ten bob of me yesterday," hinted Tompkins. "It was all I had left of a remittance from my uncle."

"And sure I'm going to pay you when I get a remittance from me own uncle," said Mulvaney. "Mean to say there's no tea going?"

"I've got one-and-eight—"

"We can manage on that," said Mulvaney cheerily.

"Look here, let's go down to tea in Hall, and then drop in at the tuckshop with the one-and-eight and finish up with jam-tarts, see?"

"I'm standing a spread—"

"With one-and-eight?"

"To eight fellows—"

"Oh, it's potty you are!" said Mulvaney. "I don't believe you know eight fellows in the House, either."

Tompkins coloured. Nobody chummed with Tompkins, though everybody liked him more or less. Whenever he was seen with other fellows he had always the air of "hanging on," as it were. He was far too diffident to assert himself in any way. But it was not kind of his study-mate to remind him of it.

"Well, whether I know them or not, they're coming," he said.

"Rot!" said Mulvaney decidedly. "Fellows don't tea with you—not fellows who matter, anyway. Who have you got—Trimble, Mellish—that sort?"

"D'Arcy and his friends—"

"Rats!"

"And Tom Merry," said Tompkins proudly. He was rather elated to be able to tell Mulvaney that the junior captain of St. Jim's was "teasing" with him.

Mulvaney stared.

"And Manners and Lowther," said Tompkins victoriously. "And there'll be the new chap, Pomfret, who's coming this afternoon."

"Tare and 'oun's!" said Mulvaney minor. "Quite a party! Are they pulling your leg?"

"No, they're not!" bawled Tompkins.

"Then what are they coming for? Is it a rag?"

"No, it isn't," hooted Tompkins.

"Must be," said Mulvaney minor. "The fellows don't know you, and don't want to. You're nobody, and you know it!"

"Look here, can you lend me a quid?"

"Not a brass farthing," said Mulvaney minor. "If you've got a party coming, how are you going to feed them?"

"Well, I thought you might lend me something, or at least square some of what you've borrowed this term," said Tompkins.

"Oh, give us a rest," said Mulvaney. "I dare say you lend me a half-crown every now and then. But I don't kick you as often as I might—you know that. It's rotten for me, having a booby like you for a study-mate. It's against a fellow, isn't it?"

"Is it?" said poor Tompkins.

"Don't you know it is?" sneered Mulvaney. "Why, I had to punch Jones minor the other day for making out that I chummed with you."

"Well, if you don't chum with me, you borrow my money just as if you did!" said Tompkins, stung into a retort.

"Dear man, if you didn't get remittances from your uncle, and lend a chap a bob or two occasionally, I'd boot you out of the study entirely!" said Mulvaney minor coolly. "And, sure, I'll boot you out now for your cheek!"

Clarence York dodged round the table.

"Chuck it!" he exclaimed. "I've got to see about that spread! You're coming, Mulvaney, if I can bring it off."

"Well, you can't, on one-and-eight!" said Mulvaney contemptuously. "Besides, the fellows won't come! They're only making game of you, if they've said they'd come."

"They're not!" howled Tompkins. "I've fixed it up with D'Arcy. I suppose you know he's a fellow of his word, and wouldn't let a chap down?"

"I know he's soft, if that's what you mean. But the others—"

"D'Arcy's answered for them."

"Then it bates me intirely," said Mulvaney. "Mean to say that a crowd of fellows who cut a figure in the school are going to let themselves down teasing with you?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, why?"

Tompkins' colour deepened. He was well aware, of course, that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had fixed up that little

party solely on account of the new junior, Leonard Pomfret, in whom the swell of St. Jim's took a kindly interest. But he shrank from telling Mulvaney minor so. He could not resist the temptation to let Mulvaney suppose, for the present, at least, that all that distinguished company were visiting Study No. 4 purely and simply on his—Tompkins'—account.

"You can ask them why, if you like," he said, rather lamely. "Perhaps they want to see me."

"Why should they?"

"They may like me."

"What rot!" said Mulvaney. "Nobody likes you. I'm dashed if I know why I stand you myself, booby as you are! But I'd punch any fellow who said that I liked you!"

Tompkins winced.

"Well, I don't like you, if you come to that!" he retorted.

"You'd better not!" said Mulvaney warningly. "You start liking me, my pippin, and I'll rag you bald-headed till you stop it! Now, look here, if there's going to be a feed, I'm coming. If Tom Merry and the rest are going to pull your leg for the sake of a spread, faith, I'll pull it, too, for the same reason! But where are you going to raise the wind?"

"I—I don't know—"

"Might sell your watch along the passage," suggested Mulvaney thoughtfully. "It's a good watch, and I've thought of pawning it once or twice, only it's risky going into a pawnbroker's."

That, seemingly, was Mulvaney's only reason for not having pawned his study-mate's watch! Clarence York's own wishes in the matter did not count.

"I'm not going to sell my watch," said Tompkins. "It was a birthday present from my uncle."

"Oh, rot! Racke might buy it—he's got tons of oof!" said Mulvaney. "Look here, if you've really got fellows coming to a spread, you can't give them bread-and-scrape, can you? Are they really coming?"

"Yes, they are."

"Then you'll have to feed them, if you're making friends at last in the House. Now—"

"Tompkins, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy loomed up in the doorway. He gave the worried Tompkins a benevolent nod. Mulvaney turned to stare at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh, here's one of the jolly party!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know you were chummy with Tompkins, D'Arcy."

"I am not exactly chummy with Tompkins, Mulvaney. I regard him with friendly feelin's, however," said Arthur Augustus. "I considah it vewy wippin' of him to fall in with my ideah of standin' a little partay to gweet the new fellow."

"What?" ejaculated Mulvaney.

Tompkins' face was crimson. The truth was out now: the bottom had been knocked out of his brief attempt at swank.

"Tompkins is standin' this partay to gweet Pomfret, the new kid, on my suggestion," Arthur Augustus explained innocently. "A numbah of pwominent fellows are comin' heah to make Pomfret's acquaintance. I regarded it as the pwopah thing for the spread to be stood in this study, as it will be Pomfret's study."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mulvaney.

"Weally, you know—"

"So that's it?" ejaculated Mulvaney. "You're making use of Tompkins and his study. I catch on now."

"Weally, Mulvaney, that is a wotten way to put it," said Arthur Augustus sternly. "I am doin' nothin' of the sort."

"Tompkins was making out that the party were coming because they wanted his jolly company!" chuckled Mulvaney.

"Look here—" gasped Tompkins.

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"I regard your remarks with disappwoval, Mulvaney," he said. "If I were Tompkins I should punch you!"

"He's welcome to try!" grinned Mulvaney.

"Wats! Tompkins, deah boy, in makin' the awwange-ments for the spread, I ovahlooked a twiflin' detail."

"D-d-d-did you?" stammered Tompkins.

"Yaas, wathah! Of course, you are standin' the spread, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "But, as it was my ideah, I am givin' an ordah at the tuckshop for the stuff wequiahed. I twust you have no objections, Tompkins."

"Of course he hasn't," said Mulvaney. "He's only got one-and-eight, and he's lending me a bob out of that."

"It—it—it's all right, D'Arcy!" gasped Tompkins. "I—I— Just as you like, you know!"

"Wight as wain, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus nodded kindly and departed—having now locked to the trifling detail which he had overlooked. Clarence York Tompkins gave Mulvaney minor a glare.

"So that's it, is it?" grinned Mulvaney. "Blessed if I know what the fellows want to make a fuss of Pomfret for; but, anyhow, I knew they wouldn't be making a fuss of you. Lend me a bob, kid."



Len Lee closed the door, and Tom Merry & Co. waited for him to speak. But Len found it difficult. Once or twice his lips parted, but no words came. "Well?" said Tom Merry, breaking the silence at last. "You've got something to say to us, Lee?" The name made Len start and his face turned a deathly white. (See page 10.)

"I'm going to stand something towards the feed," said Tompkins. "One-and-eight isn't much."

"You won't lend me a bob?" asked Mulvaney minor, pushing back his cuffs in a careless sort of way.

"I—I will if you like."

"That's a good chap!" said Mulvaney, pocketing the shilling. "And sure I'll remember this. And next time I'm going to kick you, Tompkins, remind me of it, and sure I'll let you off!" And the cheerful Mulvaney strolled out of the study, whistling shrilly.

Clarence York Tompkins breathed hard.

"I'll jolly well lick him some day!" he murmured. "I—I jolly well wish I could lick him now! I—I wonder if the new chap will be able to lick him?"

And at that thought Tompkins' face became quite bright.

#### CHAPTER 4. Len at St. Jim's!

A BIG car swung along a muddy road, heading for St. Jim's. Over the leafless tree-tops the grey old buildings were coming into sight, and the schoolboy who sat in the car watched them, clear against the winter sky. The man by his side leaned back on the cushions, staring before him as the car ran on, but occasionally glancing at the handsome, thoughtful face of Len Lee.

Claude Pomfret, stockbroker, was bringing his nephew to the school from Pomfret Lodge, a few miles away. To all the world Len was his nephew, Leonard Pomfret; only to the two themselves was it known that he was Len Lee, orphan and outcast, once a junior schoolboy at Wodehouse School, cast on the world by the death of his grandfather, which had left him utterly unprovided for.

His present situation seemed a good deal like a dream to Len Lee.

Only a few weeks had elapsed since he had been a schoolboy at Wodehouse; but in those few weeks he had known all the bitterness of poverty and want.

From an expensive school, from the company of wealthy fellows, he had fallen into dire want; and from that terrible state Mr. Pomfret had saved him.

Why? Len scarcely knew—or, rather, he was conscious that he did not know and could not guess.

Mr. Pomfret did not look like a man to go out of his way to succour the helpless and afflicted. Yet he had taken Len Lee from dire poverty to a life of wealth and ease. The boy who had not known from whence his next meal would come was now in the lap of luxury, with more money in his pockets than he had ever possessed in his old days at Wodehouse, when he had supposed himself the heir of a rich man.

And he was going back to school—not to his old school, certainly, where he could not have gone under a name that was not his own. But he was going to St. Jim's, to take up the thread of his old life again in new but similar surroundings. Why was the hard-faced man at his side doing this for him? Len had tried hard to be grateful to his benefactor—he felt that it was his duty to be grateful. But there was something in the hard-faced stockbroker that repelled all the kinder feelings. There seemed no other explanation, yet in his heart Len felt that it was not from kind motives that Claude Pomfret had taken him up.

"A few minutes now and you will be at your new school," Claude Pomfret's hard voice broke the silence.

Len looked up at him without speaking.

"You're glad to go there?"

"Yes," said Len.

"What were you thinking of?"

"I—I wish I could have gone in my own name," said Len, suppressing a sigh.

"What does it matter? I have adopted you in the place of my nephew, now dead, and you have taken his name. Where is the harm?"

"There is no harm, of course," said Len. "But—but if I should meet any fellow who'd seen me before—"

"St. Jim's is hundreds of miles from Wodehouse."

"I know."

"It's not likely to happen. If it did—" Mr. Pomfret paused a moment. "It's unlikely enough. But, anyhow, you could carry it through."

"You—you mean—" faltered Len.

"I mean that you are now Len Pomfret, and that your old name and your old life are dead and gone," said Mr. Pomfret harshly. "If by some evil chance a fellow should meet you who knew you before, let it go as a case of accidental resemblance."

"Why should I not explain?"

"Explain what?" snapped the hard-faced man.

"That I have been adopted by you, sir," said Len timidly, "and that I have taken your name in consequence."

"I have already told you it is impossible."

"I know! But why?"

The stockbroker knitted his brows.

"I have told you, too, that you are not to ask questions. You are now my nephew and ward, and under my authority. Do you wish to dispute it?"

Len drew a deep breath.

"I should be very ungrateful to dispute it, sir, after all you have done for me," he said in a low voice. "I shall carry out your wishes, whatever they are. You have told me that there is no harm in this, and I cannot see how there can be any harm. I—I hope I may be able to fill your nephew's place, as you have adopted me and given me his name. Only I cannot see why it should be kept a secret."

"There are reasons."

"I—I know there must be."

"Many reasons," said Mr. Pomfret. "One is that you will be my heir—heir to a large fortune—and if you are supposed to be actually my nephew your inheritance will not be disputed by my relations when the time comes. I am caring for your future as well as the present."

"You are very kind," faltered Len.

"Keep in mind all I have told you, and do me credit at your new school," said Mr. Pomfret. "You will want for nothing. I am a wealthy man, and you will have a good allowance. Ask for anything you want, in reason. If you think sometimes of what I took you from, you will realise that you have no reason to complain."

"I often think of it, sir," said Len; "and I do not complain. I try to be grateful."

"That's good!"

The stockbroker fell into silence. Len was silent, too, thinking. He was thinking of his dark days—of rags and tatters and want, the days that contrasted so sharply with his present prosperity. It was a change like magic that had come over his life. In his handsomely-appointed room at Pomfret Lodge he had sometimes awakened in the darkness, wondering not to find himself hungry and cold. His new life was still unreal to him at times.

The car turned in at the gates of St. Jim's.

Taggles, the porter, saluted Mr. Pomfret with marked respect. The wealthy appearance of that gentleman, and the evident expensiveness of the big car, impressed Taggles greatly. There was, perhaps, just a little too much evident expensiveness about Mr. Claude Pomfret and his car—it might have been guessed that he was a man who lived, and moved, and had his being, in money. That impression had forced itself on Len's mind, though he had driven to drive it away as disloyal to his benefactor.

The car stopped at the School House.

Three Shell fellows were lounging in the doorway—killing time till the spread in Study No. 4 was due. They looked at Len as he alighted from the car, and looked quickly at one another. Then they walked away.

"Well, what do you think now?" asked Tom Merry.

"The chap we met in Wayland Wood, or his ghost?" said Monty Lowther, with conviction.

And Manners nodded.

Little dreaming of the Terrible Three, or of what they were thinking, Len entered the School House with his guardian. He had almost forgotten his meeting with three schoolboys one winter's evening in Wayland Wood—it had never crossed his mind that they were fellows belonging to St. Jim's. The strange events that had happened since had driven the remembrance of that brief encounter from his mind. Little dreaming that he was known, and recognised, in his true name, by at least three of his future schoolfellows, Leonard Pomfret—so-called—accompanied his "uncle" to the Head's study.

Half an hour later the big car hummed away with Mr. Claude Pomfret, leaving Len Lee at St. Jim's—Len Lee no longer, but Pomfret of the Fourth.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Face to Face!

"PWAY excuse me, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's manner was one of polished politeness—quite unusual in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and probably at any other school. Len Lee stopped in some surprise and glanced curiously at the well-dressed, elegant youth who addressed him. He had just left Mr. Lathom's study, after an interview with his Form master, and Arthur Augustus stopped him in the corridor.

Wich Gussy—lurking a little behind him—was Clarence York Tompkins, shy and pink and uncomfortable.

"Pway excuse me!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "I am a swangah to you, of course; but I believe you are Pomfret, the new chap in the Fourth."

"I'm the new chap in the Fourth," assented Len.

"Vewy good. I'm in the Fourth myself!" explained Arthur Augustus, his manner indicating that this was rather a good thing for the Fourth.

Len nodded and smiled. He understood that this was one of his future Form-fellows, desirous of making his acquaintance, and he felt very pleasant and grateful towards Gussy in consequence. True, he was not exactly in the position of a new boy at school, as he had been at a public school before; still, he was a stranger here, and knew no one as yet. It was very pleasant to make an agreeable acquaintance to begin with.

"My name is D'Arcy," continued the swell of St. Jim's. "This chap with me is Tompkins!"

Tompkins grinned and reddened, and gave Len an awkward duck of the head, intended for a friendly nod. The contrast between the polished manners of Gussy, and the awkward self-consciousness of Tompkins, was rather striking.

"Tompkins is in your studay," D'Arcy further explained.

"You are goin' into Studay No. 4 in the Fourth, I think!"

"Yes; Mr. Lathom has just told me so."

"You will have Tompkins and Mulvaney minor there with you," said Arthur Augustus. "Tompkins is wathah an ass, and Mulvaney is wathah a wuffian, but they are both all wight in their way."

"Oh!" said Len.

"I beg your pardon, Tompkins," added Arthur Augustus gracefully. "Pewwaps I should not have mentioned, in your pwesence, that you are wathah an ass."

"Oh, don't mind me!" gasped Tompkins.

"You bein' new here, Pomfret, I thought you would like to be introduced to Tompkins," said Gussy.

"Oh, yes, rather!" said Len.

"Leonard Pomfret—Clawence York Tompkins!" said Arthur Augustus, performing the introduction with grace and dignity. "Now you know one another. Have you any engagement at the pwesent moment, Pomfret?"

"Not at all!"

"You have finished with Mr. Lathom?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you are weady for tea?"

"Mr. Lathom said the house-dame would see to that, on my first day," said Len. "I have to see her."

"Quite so! Now, that is all vewy well; but there is a spread in your studay, in your honah, deah boy, and that will be evah so much bettah."

"Much!" said Len, with a smile. "But, may I ask why there is a spread in my honour?"

"Certainly. It's owin' to your fathah's name bein' on the Woll of Honah at St. Jim's."

Len started.

"My—my father?"

"Yaas, wathah! Evewy St. Jim's man who fell in the War has his name on the School Woll of Honah, you know."

"Oh!" gasped Len.

He realised that it was Captain Pomfret of whom D'Arcy was speaking. His own father had died long before his remembrance of him.

It was the first shock to Len—the first clear realisation of the part he was playing. The colour came deeply into his cheeks. Anything like lying or trickery was foreign to Len's nature—it was his way to be frank and open. But it was impossible to say a word to correct D'Arcy's error—one word in explanation would have betrayed his guardian's trust.

Arthur Augustus meant well—very well indeed—in thus paying honour to the son of a St. Jim's man who had fallen in the War. Arthur Augustus always meant well. And really the most perspicacious fellow could not be expected to guess that Mr. Claude Pomfret's nephew was not, in actual fact, the son of Mr. Claude Pomfret's brother.

Len stood silent and crimson in deep discomfort. In his first hour at St. Jim's he was feeling like a cheat.

Arthur Augustus rattled on cheerily:

"Captain Pomfret is not forgotten at St. Jim's, you know. We are vewy glad to welcome his son here, deah boy!"

"Oh!" stammered Len.

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"Nothin' to blush about, old scout," said D'Arcy. "Tompkins, deah boy, you can run away to your study and see that ewewythin' is weady, while I take Pomfwet to the house-dame."

Tompkins obediently cut off.

Arthur Augustus walked the new fellow away to Mrs. Mimms' room, and remained with him during his interview with the house-dame. Then he piloted him to the Fourth Form passage.

Len was feeling far from easy.

To come to St. Jim's as Mr. Pomfret's nephew, since Mr. Pomfret had adopted him as a nephew, was surely harmless. Mr. Pomfret had assured him on that point, and Len had seen no harm in it. But to appear there as Captain Pomfret's son, when he was nothing of the sort, savoured of deception. From the bottom of his heart, Len wished that Arthur Augustus had never noticed the name of Pomfret in the School Roll of Honour, and had never dreamed of welcoming the dead soldier's son to the old school. But it was useless to wish that; and Len could only go through with it.

Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth Form were loitering in the passage. Arthur Augustus presented Len to them, and they greeted him genially, though not in the polished manner of the great Gussy himself. The five juniors arrived in a crowd at Study No. 4, where Clarence York Tompkins was busy giving the final touches to the preparations for the spread.

There was a bright fire in the grate, the table was set for tea, with plenty of good things arrayed on a spotless cloth. Mulvaney's football-boots no longer adorned the mantelpiece, and the burnt remnants of the Latin grammar were gone from the fender. Borrowed chairs crowded the study, and borrowed crockery crowded the table. Tompkins grinned an awkward welcome to his visitors. He was rather unaccustomed to receiving guests in his study, especially in such numbers. Sometimes fellows who were hard-up dropped in to tea with Tompkins, without asking permission, in a patronising way—Tompkins' entertainments were generally on those lines. He was elated, but rather disconcerted, by his present distinguished company.

Certainly, poor Tompkins was scarcely equal to doing the honours. Fortunately, Arthur Augustus was more than equal to taking his place as host.

"It's time those Shell bounders were here," remarked Herries, with an appreciative glance at the well-spread table. "Are we going to wait for them?"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"More guests coming?" asked Len, with a smile.

"Yans, wathah—thwee Shell fellows," said Arthur Augustus. "I—I mean Tompkins, of course—thought you would like to meet some Shell fellows."

"Pleasure!" said Len.

"One of them, Tom Mewwy, is juniah captain of the school," said Arthur Augustus. "He is worth knowin', especially if you go in for football."

"Do you, Pomfret?" asked Blake, with some interest.

"Yes, rather!"

"That's good! Which game have you played?"

"Soccer."

"Do they play much Soccer in Switzerland?" asked Dig.

"Switzerland!" stammered Len.

"Yes; you've been at school in Switzerland until lately, haven't you?"

Len did not answer immediately. He remembered what Mr. Pomfret had told him; his nephew Leonard had been at school in Switzerland and had been drowned in the Lake of Geneva. He would be expected to know something about Switzerland—a country he had never even visited. Whether they played Soccer in Swiss schools Len had not the faintest idea.

Fortunately, as he was about to stammer out some reply, Mulvaney minor came into the study, and interrupted.

"Not late, am I?" asked Mulvaney. "Good! Hallo! Is that the new kid? How do you do, Pomfret? My bat! This looks like a spread? If you fellows were waiting for me, you needn't wait any longer." And Mulvaney drew the nearest chair to the table.

"We were waitin' for Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus.

"What rot!" said Mulvaney, helping himself to ham and eggs. "Follow my example and pile in."

"Here they are," said Blake.

The Terrible Three of the Shell arrived in the study doorway. Len glanced at them—rather interested to see what the junior captain of the school looked like.

Then his gaze became fixed.

He knew the three at a glance. It was only by candle-light, in the old hut in the wood, that he had seen them. But he had seen them clearly, and he had a good memory for faces.

His own face grew white, and his heart beat almost to suffocation, as he met the eyes of Tom Merry & Co., and

knew them for the three fellows who knew that he was Len Lee.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Not Quite a Success!

TOM MERRY fixed his eyes on Len.

They stood face to face, and there could be no mistake now—the fellow who had come to St. Jim's as Leonard Pomfret was Len Lee, the one-time outcast and wanderer.

Monty Lowther and Manners knew him, too. Their doubts on the subject were resolved at once. It was Len Lee who stood before them—a fellow who had no claim to the name under which he was entered at the school.

If any doubt had lingered, it would have been banished by the look on Len's face. There was no mistaking the white, startled look—the almost hunted gleam in the eyes. He knew them as well as they knew him. The recognition was mutual.

Len's heart thumped and thumped, and then it seemed almost to cease to beat. He was known—he was known—and what could these fellows think of him? That he was an impostor—a cheat—a liar, whom it was their duty to expose? What else could they think? He waited dully, with a colourless face, for the words to come.

"This is Pomfwet, deah boys," Arthur Augustus noticed nothing, though some of the other fellows were looking curiously at Len. "Pomfwet, old scout, this is Tom Mewwy—this is Mannahs—this is Lowthah! Bai Jove!" Even Arthur Augustus became aware of something in the atmosphere at last. "You fellows do not happen to know Pomfwet, do you?"

"No," said Tom Merry quietly. "I've never met anybody named Pomfwet that I'm aware of."

"But I seem to remember meeting this chap, all the same," said Monty Lowther, with a faint tone of sarcasm.

"Quite a familiar face, I think," said Manners.

"Bai Jove! That is wathah odd," said Arthur Augustus, perplexed. "You mean that Pomfwet weesembles somebody you know?"

"A striking resemblance," said Lowther.

"Very striking," added Manners.

Tom Merry opened his lips and closed them again. Len stood, white and silent; the look on his face was the look of a fellow expecting a blow he could not guard. That the fellow was an impostor Tom Merry could not doubt; but he felt something like compassion for him at that moment. He was an impostor; but certainly he did not look like a rogue, and Tom hoped that somehow there might be some explanation. At all events, he did not want to be hard on the fellow—not, at least, till there was proof that he was a cheat and a rascal.

"Weally—" said Arthur Augustus, rather at a loss.

"The fact is—" said Tom.

"Ham this way!" said Mulvaney minor. "Shore us the toast from the fender, Tompkins! Make yourself useful, old man."

"Oh, yes! All right!" said Tompkins.

"Aren't you fellows beginning?" asked Mulvaney. "Ain't I setting you a good example?"

"Bai Jove! I—"

"The—the fact is, we—we can't stop," said Tom Merry, colouring. "We—we're awfully obliged by your invitation, Tompkins, but—"

"Oh, don't mention it!" gasped Tompkins.

"Thanks very much, you know!" said Manners. "But it turns out that we—we can't stop—"

"Thanks all the same," said Lowther.

The Terrible Three backed out of the study.

"All the more for us," remarked Mick Mulvaney cheerfully. "It was a bit of a crowd. Blessed if I know what you wanted Shell fellows here for, Tompkins. Why don't you fellows begin?"

Blake and Herries and Digby started. The feast was plentiful, and they were hungry after football. Arthur Augustus was slower in following their example. He felt that somehow something had gone wrong with this celebration. The new fellow, certainly, looked anything but merry and bright.

He sat at the table and ate; but there was a white, strained look on his face, and deep trouble in his heart. At the very outset his luck had failed him. What were those fellows thinking of him—those fellows who knew that he was Len Lee? What were they going to do?

It was in vain that Arthur Augustus chatted cheerily, and tried to draw out the fellow in whose honour the feast was given. Len answered him almost at random, in monosyllables.

The black depression that had fallen on him spread to the party. Mulvaney minor did not feel it—he was too busy disposing of the good things; and Tompkins was too busy looking after his guests. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was keenly

conscious of it, and Blake and Herries and Digby had a sense of discomfort. Their impression of the new fellow was that he was a very dull dog indeed.

Study No. 6 were not sorry when the spread came to an end. Len was glad and thankful when they went. Arthur Augustus lingered behind his chums to speak a cheery word or two to the new fellow.

"My studay's No. 6 along the passage, deah boy," he said. "I should be vewy pleased if you'd give me a look in at any time."

"Thanks!" stammered Len.

"Anythin' I can do for you, you know——"

"Yes, yes!"

"You will be wathah new to our ways heah, as you have been at a school abwoad," remarked Arthur Augustus. "I feel that it is up to me to show you the wopes, you know."

"You're very kind," muttered Len.

"Not at all, deah boy. I can put you up to no end of tips, and I shall be vewy pleased to do so," said Arthur Augustus, and he walked away after his chums, much to Len's relief.

Mulvaney minor, having finished, glanced over the table, and pocketed two or three good things that were left, and lounged out of the study. Len was left alone with Tompkins.

"Now we've got to get these things back," said Tompkins. "Eh?"

"Most of these crocks and chairs were borrowed, of course. Catch Mulvaney lending a hand," said Tompkins, with a sniff. "He bolted twice as much as any other fellow, and he's gone away with his pockets full. That's his sort."

Len did not answer; he was not thinking of Mulvaney minor.

"Well, are you going to help?" asked Tompkins, a little aggressively. He was wondering whether he was to be imposed upon as much by his new study-mate as by his old one.

"Oh! Yes, certainly!"

"This chair came from Tom Merry's study—you can carry it back," said Tompkins. "No. 10 in the Shell."

Len started.

"Tom Merry—the fellow who came here——"

"Yes—he's captain of the Shell. Quite a decent sort," said Tompkins. "In fact, a jolly good sort."

"I—I know."

"Eh! I don't see how you can know, as you've never met the chap before," said Tompkins.

"I—I mean——"

"Well, there's the chair," said Tompkins, aggressive again. "I think you might lend a hand, after that feed. I get enough swank from Mulvaney, without you going on the same tack."

"I—I'll take it at once! Where is Merry's study?"

"No. 10, I tell you, in the Shell passage—up this passage, cross the landing, and bear to the left."

"All right."

Len Lee picked up the chair and left the study.

## CHAPTER 7. Mysterious!

TOM MERRY and his chums had tea in their own study. They were very thoughtful over that meal.

Commons were rather short, as it happened, in Study No. 10 in the Shell; and they had left a gorgeous feed behind them in Study No. 4 in the Fourth. But they had had scarcely any choice in that matter. They could not sit down and break bread with a fellow whom they knew to be an impostor, and whom it might be their duty to denounce.

That latter thought was troubling them deeply.

To give a fellow away—to act the mean and odious part of an informer—was repellant to them. Even if he were a rascal, the task would be an odious and disagreeable one. And he did not look like a rascal.

The chums of the Shell had decided, sagely enough, not to act in a hurry. There was always time to speak; but words once spoken could never be recalled.

"We're bound to hear what the fellow's got to say, before we speak!" was Tom Merry's decision, and his comrades agreed.

And it was left at that.

They knew that Len Lee had recognised them, and they could guess that he would seek an interview with them—if he had any explanation to give. What explanation he could possible advance was a mystery to them; but it was only fair play to give him a chance. All three of the juniors were conscious that they liked Len, and hoped that he would be able to explain somehow. On the face of it, it looked as if Len Lee had stolen another fellow's name and place—and such an action was impossible without the real owner of the name having been dealt with in some manner—which hinted

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at crime. Yet the thought of crime was hard to reconcile with Len's frank face. The mystery of it, the possibility that there was a deeper and darker mystery behind, worried the Shell fellows deeply; and they were still more worried by the knowledge that, unless Lee could give some adequate explanation, it was their duty to go to their Housemaster, and tell Mr. Raiton what they knew.

Tea in Study No. 10 was not a very cheerful meal. After it was over, the Terrible Three lingered in the study, wondering whether Len would come there. If he came, they would give him a hearing—if he did not come, what were they to do?

A knock came at the door, and Tom Merry called out:

"Trot in!"

Len Lee came into the study with a chair under his arm. The Terrible Three looked at him in silence, and his face flushed crimson.

"Tompkins asked me to bring this chair here," he said awkwardly.

"Yes," said Tom.

Silence again.

Len closed the door. Evidently he had not come to the study solely to return the borrowed chair.

Tom Merry & Co. waited. It was for the fellow who bore another fellow's name, to speak.

But Len found it difficult to speak. Once or twice his lips parted, but no words came. The crimson had died out of his handsome face, leaving him very pale.

"Well?" said Tom Merry, breaking the silence at last. "You've got something to say to us, Lee."

The name made Len start. Perhaps he had nourished a faint hope, up to the very last moment, that the juniors were not sure of his identity. If so, it vanished now. Tom Merry, in his usual way, had come straight to the point.

"You—you think——" stammered Len.

"We don't think—we know!" said Tom Merry curtly. "You are Len Lee, the fellow we met in Wayland Wood one evening."

"I am the fellow you met."

"You don't deny it?" asked Manners.

"It's the truth."

"Then why have you come to this school under another name?" asked Tom Merry quickly. "How is it that when we met you, only a short time ago, you were an outcast in rags—and now you're as well off as any fellow in the school?"

Len did not answer.

"I dare say there's some explanation," said Tom, not unkindly. "If there is, we'll be glad to hear it. If there's not——"

"If there's not——" repeated Len.

"Well, in that case, what are we to think?" demanded Tom. "There is a Len Pomfret somewhere, and if you've got his name, and his place, what has happened to him?"

Len gave him a startled look. That aspect of the matter had never occurred to his mind.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You—you think—you suspect——"

"We don't think, or suspect—we want to know. We've got to know," said Tom. "If there's underhand business going on, I suppose you can't expect us to be parties to it?"

"There is nothing underhand."

"I hope there isn't," said Tom. "I'd like to believe you. When we met you that evening in the wood, you told us your story, and we believed you. We want to believe you now. But you can see for yourself that, knowing what we do, we can't let the matter rest where it is."

"I know!"

"Well, then——"

Len cleared his throat.

"I told you the truth that night at the hut," he said. "I never knew then that you belonged to this school. I'd hardly heard of this school at that time—never dreamed that I should ever come here. I'd rather have gone back to my old school, but Mr. Pomfret's nephew's name was down to come here, and he was resolved on it. I—I think Captain Pomfret left it in his will that his son was to come to his own old school."

"Very likely. But you're not Captain Pomfret's son."

"No."

"Then what——"

"I can't tell you everything," muttered Len. "I'm under a promise—a sacred promise. I've pledged my word not to tell. Of course, I never thought that I should be recognised here. If I'd foreseen that it would be different. But I give you my word of honour, if you can take it, that there's nothing underhand in the matter. It was only a few hours after I left you that night that a chance came my way. I found a friend who has stood by me."

"Do you mean Mr. Pomfret?"

Len nodded.

"You hadn't known him before?"

"No."

"He knows your real name?"



The hapless Clarence York Tompkins bent over the chair and Mulvaney minor raised the ruler, but before it could descend a grip was laid on his arm and he was jerked back. "Stop that!" said Len. "Phwat?" Mulvaney fairly spluttered in his anger and surprise. "Will ye let go my arm?" (See page 13.)

"Yes."  
 "He doesn't think that you are his nephew?"  
 "How could he? His nephew's dead."  
 "Dead!" exclaimed the Terrible Three together.  
 "He was drowned in the Lake of Geneva a few weeks ago," said Len. "Mr. Pomfret told me so."  
 The Terrible Three stared at him.  
 "That alters the case, of course," said Tom, after a long pause. "It seems, then, that you've come here in the name of a dead schoolboy, with the knowledge of that boy's uncle?"  
 "Yes."  
 "That's a bit clearer," said Tom, wrinkling his brows. "It's not a case of your having imposed yourself on Mr. Pomfret after getting rid of the real party somehow."  
 Len smiled faintly.  
 "I'm not a criminal," he said; "and if I were I could hardly carry out a scheme like that at fifteen, I think."  
 "It would mean that there was somebody else, somebody older, behind it all, of course."  
 "There's nobody."  
 "But why—" began Lowther.  
 "I can't tell you anything," said Len. "I'm under a promise. I've only told you so much because you knew it already. But—but, of course, I can't expect you to trust me on my bare word."  
 Tom Merry shifted uncomfortably.  
 "I'd like to take your word," he said, "but the thing's too jolly serious for that. We can't let it rest as it is. Does the Head know anything about it?"  
 "No."  
 "He believes that your real name is Pomfret?"  
 "Yes."  
 "If it's all above-board why couldn't the Head be told? You know he has a right to know, that he'd never let a fellow into the school under a false name if he knew?"  
 Len breathed hard.  
 "It's not a false name; it's my own name now. But I can't tell you any more."

"That's not good enough," said Manners very decidedly. And Monty Lowther shook his head.  
 "I know," said Len. "I'm not asking you to take me on trust. But before I can tell you anything more I must see Mr. Pomfret and ask his permission. Give me a few days."  
 There was silence.  
 "When I tell my guardian that there are three fellows here who know my old name, he will see that I must explain," said Len. "But I cannot break my word to him. Give me a few days, and then if I do not satisfy you there will still be time to give me away if you think that that's your duty."  
 Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.  
 "I understand how you feel," said Len. "If you speak to the Head he will see Mr. Pomfret at once and ask for an explanation. The explanation will satisfy him. I'm certain of that. I repeat that there is nothing underhand in the matter."  
 "You're sure of that?"  
 "Quite sure."  
 Tom Merry rubbed his nose in perplexity.  
 "I suppose we ought to give you a chance," he said. "Goodness knows we don't want to harm you, and if you've come fairly into this good luck we're jolly glad. It's no business of ours what name you go by if you've come by it fairly. I'd like to trust you, but—well, how long do you want?"  
 "Saturday's a half-holiday here, and Mr. Pomfret is always at the Lodge for week-ends. He's a stockbroker, and I dare say you know that the Stock Exchange is closed on Saturdays. I can see him on Saturday afternoon."  
 "And then—"  
 "I shall get his permission to explain to you; or, better still, I'll take you with me to the Lodge to see him."  
 "That sounds fair enough," said Manners.  
 Tom Merry nodded.  
 "Fair enough," he said. "It's understood that on Saturday you prove to us beyond doubt that there's no trickery"

or swindling in this affair, and till then we hold our tongues."

"That's understood."

"Good enough," said Tom, and Manners and Lowther nodded assent.

Without another word Len Lee left Study No. 10. The door closed after him, and the Terrible Three exchanged glances.

"I'm inclined to trust the chap," said Tom, after a pause.

"But we're bound to know."

"Yes, rather," said Manners. "Goodness knows what might be behind it all. It might only be that a kind-hearted man had adopted a poor chap in the place of a nephew he had lost."

"Mr. Pomfret didn't look that sort," remarked Lowther.

"By Jove, he didn't!"

"Well, you can't go on a man's looks, really," said Tom.

"But on his looks I shouldn't say that Mr. Pomfret was a man to mourn very much for a lost relation or to adopt a chap who was down on his luck. If he's that kind of tender-hearted man, his face doesn't give it away. Still, that might be the explanation, all the same. And, anyhow, it's only fair play to give Lee time to explain."

"That's so."

And the Terrible Three sorted out their books and sat down to prep. It was an hour later, while wrestling with Q. Horatius Flaccus, that Monty Lowther looked up suddenly.

"I say!"

"Well?"

"Cardew!"

"What about Cardew?"

"Lee's never told us that his old school was Wodehouse. But if it was, Cardew was a Wodehouse chap."

Manners whistled.

"And he's told us he knew a Len Lee at Wodehouse," he said.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry.

Prep was forgotten for the moment. The Terrible Three started at one another across the study table.

"Cardew will know him," said Tom, at last.

"Looks like it."

"Of course, it mayn't have been Wodehouse where Lee was, but it's jolly likely. If Cardew knows him—"

There was a long pause.

"Well, Lee will have to take his chance," said Tom. "If it turns out like that, Cardew will follow his own line. Anyhow, we've got no influence over him."

"None at all," agreed Manners.

"I—I suppose we—we can't interfere—anyhow!" said Tom Merry doubtfully.

"I don't see how we can. We can't prevent Cardew seeing the chap; they're in the same Form, and very likely may have met already. Do you want to interfere?"

"Blessed if I quite know," said Tom frankly. "I—I think I believe in Lee—I know I'd like to believe in him. We're bound to ask him for proof that it's all above-board, but there's something about him that makes me trust him. After all, Cardew never knew him at Wodehouse intimately—he may not even know him again under another name, too. It's a good time since Cardew was there."

"That's so," said Lowther.

And the chums of the Shell resumed prep, though more than once that evening their thoughts wandered to the new fellow who had come so strangely to St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 8. Cock of the Walk!

"LIKE the place?"

Clarence York Tompkins asked that question of his study-mate later in the evening. Tompkins had finished his prep—Len had none on his hands, it being the first day at the school. Mulvaney minor was scamping his prep in another study, and had not shown up in Study No. 4 since the spread.

Tompkins was feeling kindly towards Len. Mild and in-offensive as Tompkins was, the new fellow had shown no desire to take any advantage of him. That was a pleasant and refreshing change after Mulvaney.

Len, too, was very cheerful. His interview with Tom Merry had relieved his mind of a weight. They knew more than he wished them to know; but it was no fault of theirs, and when he had explained matters to his guardian, he was sure that Mr. Pomfret would take steps at once to satisfy the three juniors that all was "square." But for his promise to his guardian, he would have told them at once all he knew himself, and cleared their minds of doubt. But on Saturday that would be done, and they had agreed to wait till then, and after that the subject need never be mentioned again.

Indeed, when the Shell fellows once knew that they could trust him, there was no reason why they should not be friends. And, looked at from that point of view, Len could

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feel glad, after all, that he had found them at St. Jim's. He had not forgotten the kindness of Tom Merry at the time when he had been a hopeless outcast. Once all ground of distrust had been swept away he felt that there was no fellow he would have liked better to be friends with.

These reflections had a cheering effect on Len; he had recovered from the shock the meeting had given him, and his face was bright and cheery. So far, he knew nothing of Cardew's presence at St. Jim's—the name, naturally, had not been mentioned in his hearing. He did not dream that another shock, and a greater one, was in store for him. Of Cardew at Wodehouse School he had known little, and probably had never heard of him since he had left Wodehouse. That he was at St. Jim's was utterly unknown to him.

So Tompkins found his new study-mate cheery enough, and after Clarence York had finished his prep he helped Len to put his things about the study. Study No. 4 was not a large room, and three fellows and their belongings pretty well filled it, and Mulvaney's scattered property had to be collected a little to make room for Len's books and other things.

"Like the place?" repeated Len, as Tompkins asked him the question. "Oh, yes, rather! It's a good deal like—" He was going to say "my old school," but he checked himself in time, remembering that he was supposed to have been at school at Lausanne. "The fellows seem to be very decent here."

"You've seen some of the best," said Tompkins. "D'Arcy's a real good sort."

"I'm sure he is," said Len heartily. "He's been jolly decent to me, a stranger to him."

"He's decent to everybody; a bit of an ass, but jolly decent!" said Tompkins. "He's always civil to me, too."

Len glanced at him.

"Why shouldn't he be civil to you?" he asked.

Tompkins coloured.

"Well, a lot of the fellows put on me," he said. "I ain't of much account, you know."

"What rot!" said Len, laughing.

"A fellow can hardly call his soul his own in his own study," went on Tompkins. "There'll be a row with Mulvaney when he finds we've moved his things."

"Oh!" said Len.

"He thinks the whole study's his, and he can do as he jolly well likes," said Tompkins moodily. "He burns a fellow's books to boil a kettle, if there's nothing else handy. He makes out that it's only carelessness, but I notice that he never burns any of his own books. He's not so jolly careless with his own things. You've got a nice set of books there—all new."

"Yes," said Len.

"You'll see some of them go pretty soon," said Tompkins darkly. "Mulvaney sells his books when he's hard up. He sold my Latin dictionary to a chap in the New House the other day."

"My hat, did he?"

"Yes; and when I told the chap I wanted it back he kicked me," said Tompkins, deeply aggrieved. "He said I should have to settle it with Mulvaney. And when I told Mulvaney that, he kicked me, too."

Len laughed—he could not help it.

"You seem to get more kicks than halfpence in this study," he said. "I don't think Mulvaney will sell my books, though. And I don't think he will burn them."

"Don't you, bedad!" said a voice at the door.

Mulvaney minor came into the study. He gave the new junior a rather aggressive look. Mulvaney was by no means a bully—at all events, he was not conscious of being one. But it was so easy to have his own way with Tompkins that Mulvaney had drifted into something very like bullying in dealing with his mild study-mate. And it was characteristic of Mulvaney that he was always ready for a row.

Len glanced at him carelessly.

"No, I don't!" he answered.

"You don't think I'll jolly well burn your jolly old books if I jolly well want to?" remanded Mulvaney categorically.

"Not at all."

"And who's going to stop me?" demanded Mulvaney.

"Is there any need to go into that?" asked Len quietly.

"Surely you don't want to burn my books, Mulvaney."

"Sure, if I want to boil a kettle and there's nothing else handy I'll shove on your Latin dick, or your best Sunday hat for that matter," retorted Mulvaney, "and if you make a fuss about it, I'll ram your head into the coal-locker, same as I've done with Tompkins. Haven't I, Tompkins?"

"You wouldn't if I could lick you," said Tompkins.

Mulvaney chuckled.

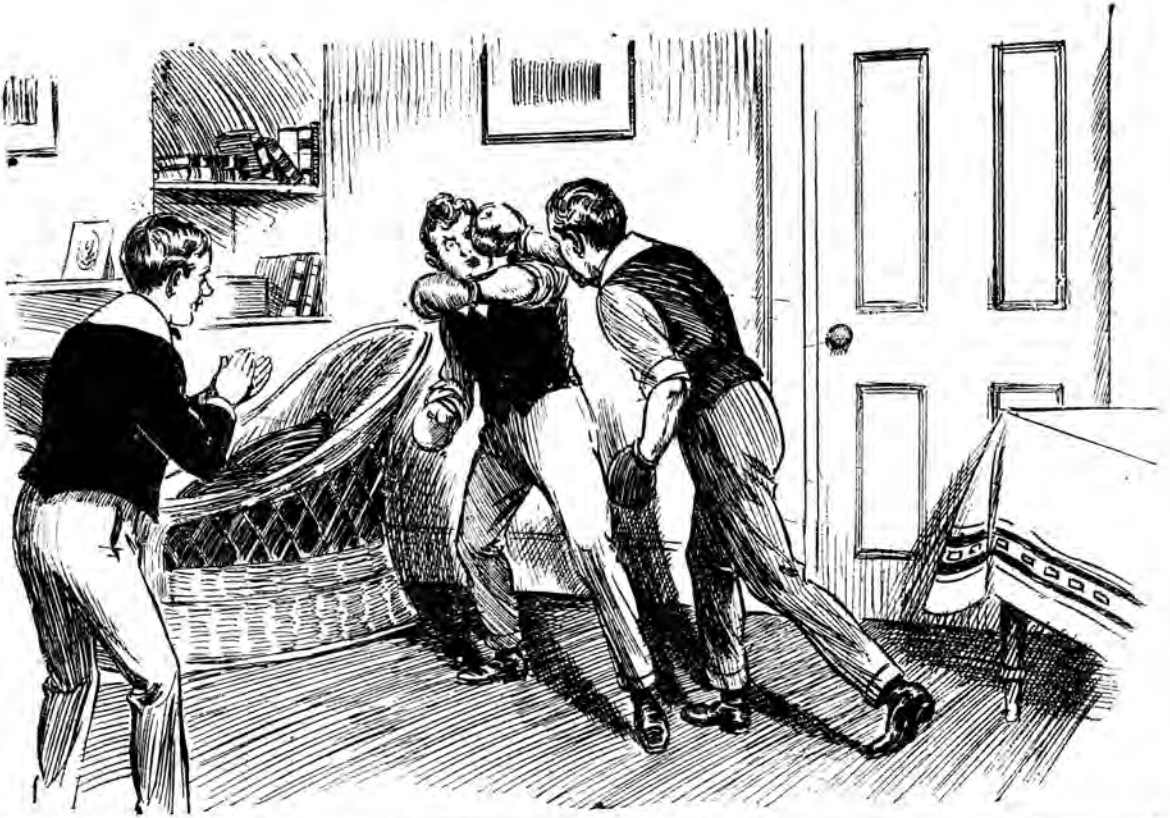
"But you can't lick me, any more than this new chap can," he answered. "Who's cock of the walk in this study?"

Tompkins did not answer.

"Getting deaf?" demanded Mulvaney.

"Oh, go and eat coke."

Mulvaney minor pushed back his cuffs. He was not averse from displaying his authority before the eyes of the new



A terrific thump on the side of the head sent Mulvaney minor staggering across the study. "Bravo!" chuckled Tompkins, greatly elated. "Follow him up! Give him jip, Pomfret!" But Len did not follow up. He left Micky Mulvaney to stagger for several seconds, losing the opportunity of knocking him out. (See page 16.)

junior. It would show Len his place, and that was desirable from Mulvaney's point of view.

"Did you say go and eat coke?" he inquired politely, but with a look that made Clarence York sorry he had spoken.

"Yes, I did," murmured Tompkins, edging round the study table away from his aggressive study-mate.

"You're getting your ears up, are you?" grinned Mulvaney. "How long is it since I've licked you, Tompkins? Now, where will you have it?"

He followed Tompkins round the table, grinning. The hapless Clarence York edged further away, with Mulvaney on his track.

"You may as well stop," remarked Mick. "You've got to have it, you know! You've asked for it."

"Look here—"

"Who's cock of the walk in this study?" roared Mulvaney.

"You are!" said Tompkins weakly.

"That's better!" Mulvaney glanced round, and picked up a ruler. "Now bend over that chair."

Tompkins' submission had not saved him: Mulvaney was bent on showing that he was indeed cock of the walk in Study No. 4, for the benefit of the new boy. He flourished the ruler; Len looking on silently. Tompkins gave the new junior a sheepish look, and moved towards the chair to "bend over."

"Sure, I won't hurt you much," said Mulvaney generously. "I'll give you a couple, just as a warning not to be cheeky. Bend over."

The hapless Tompkins bent over the chair. Mulvaney raised the ruler; but before it could descend a grip was laid on his arm, and he was jerked back.

"Stop that!" said Len.

## CHAPTER 9. A Fight to a Finish!

"PHWAT!" Mulvaney minor fairly spluttered, in his anger and surprise. He glared at the new junior.

"Stop it!" said Len.

"Phwat! Stop it? Let go my arm!" roared Mulvaney.

"Let Tompkins alone!"

"Will ye let go me arm?" hissed Mulvaney.

Len released his arm, having pulled him back out of reach of Tompkins. Clarence York rose from the chair, and blinked

at the two hopefully. He had wondered whether the new fellow would be able to handle Mick Mulvaney. It was clear, at all events, now, that Mulvaney's position as cock of the walk in Study No. 4 was not to remain undisputed.

"So you're chipping in, Mister Cheeky Pomfret?" said Mulvaney minor. "You think you're going to stop me licking that booby?"

"I think so," assented Len.

"I was going to give him two, and now sure I'll give him six, and you six as well!"

Len smiled.

"Better give me mine first," he suggested; "and you may as well put down that ruler. You see, you'll have a fight on your hands before you give me six, or Tompkins either."

"Bravo!" chirruped Tompkins.

Mulvaney minor turned on him.

"You shut up!" he bawled. And Clarence York Tompkins quaked and shut up.

"Now," said Mulvaney, crashing the ruler down on the table, "if you mean business, you new kid, get your jacket off and put up your hands!"

"Any old thing," said Len. "I suppose I should have trouble with you sooner or later, from your manners; and it may as well come sooner as later."

He stripped off his Eton jacket, and threw it on a chair. Then he turned back his cuffs.

Mulvaney minor followed his example. Then he dragged back the table to the wall, to give room for the combat. He sorted two pairs of gloves out of a box, and threw one pair across to Len.

"Put 'em on," he said.

"Right-ho!"

"You can keep time, Tompkins," said Mulvaney. "Two minute rounds, and one minute rests. That suit you, Cheeky Pomfret?"

"Quite!"

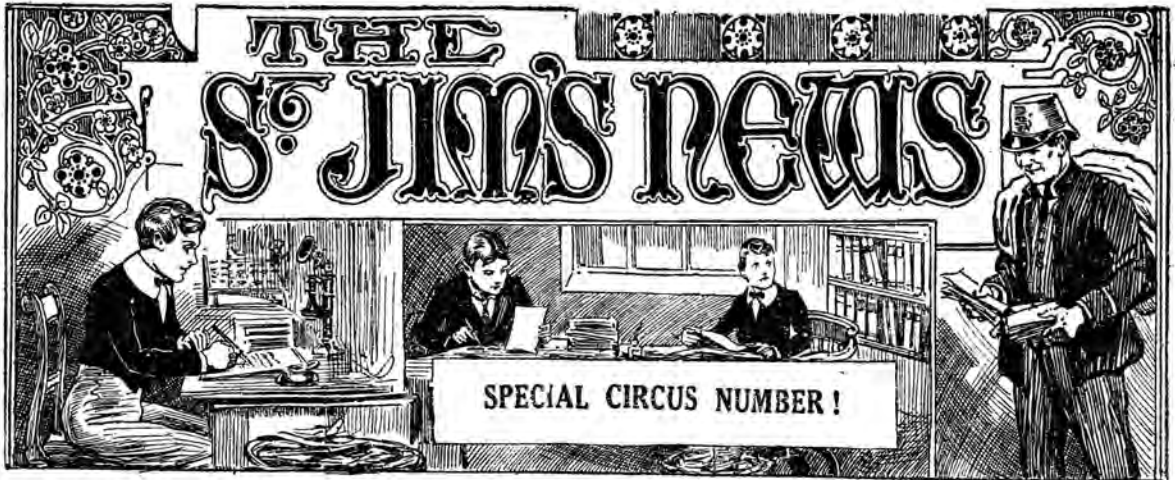
"You can get out your gold watch, Tompkins—by the same token, the watch I'm going to pop," said Mulvaney.

"You jolly well won't pop it if Pomfret licks you," said Tompkins.

"He won't pop it, anyway, without your permission, Tompkins," said Len. "If he licks me this time, I undertake

(Continued on page 16.)

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## CHEERY CHAT.

By Whimsical William, Chief Clown  
at Martinello's International  
Circus, now being presented on  
Wayland Heath.

**H**EIGHO! Here we are again, boys, as the Form master said on surprising his pupils at a dormitory feed. Glad to have this tunioportunity of writing in your jolly little mag!

So you enjoy the circus! Delighted to hear it, as Binks minor said when the bell rang for lessons to finish. My jokes in the ring tickle you—eh? Well, I love to raise a laugh. Once, however, I raised a laugh without wanting to. That was when I asked the manager to raise my salary!

Circus life isn't at all bad. It takes a lot of beating, as the perspiring boy said after half an hour's caning at the drawing-room carpet. Things run pretty smoothly—unless a wheel happens to fall off the caravan en route, or the bottom drops out, as it did once in my caravan when I was giving Jumbo, the circus elephant, a ride because he had a bad foot!

Of course, there are drawbacks, as the dog said when the boy tied a brick and a kettle on its tail. Circus folk, being always on the move, cannot settle down. Some circus managers find difficulty in settling up on pay-days—and then we live on our reputations only! Like the lift boy, I've had my ups and downs!

A circus clown is usually expected to be able to do a lot of things besides fall over his own feet and generally act the giddy baa-lamb. Have you ever heard me rattle our old box of dominoes—play the circus piano, I mean? What do you think of my execution? Some people say the sooner the better!

Well, boys, time is flying, as the old gentleman said when he threw the alarm clock at the cat. The lady snake-charmer is in hysterics because a mouse has appeared in her dressing-room, and I must away to chase the monster to its lair. And then I go to take my part in the semi-final of the Circus Grand Shove-Ha' penny Championship!

Real scientific game this, boys. Old Jumbo, the elephant, is a real masterpiece at it. He comes out with most honours every time. Possibly due to his light touch—clever feat of his!

See you again when the circus next comes to Wayland!

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## EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

**T**HE circus is on Wayland Heath, and thither all roads lead, for there is nothing that attracts attention more than a circus! Nearly everybody at St. Jim's has been, and I think the occasion quite deserves a special number.

The circus makes us forget our cares, and we revel instead in mirth and merry-making. The marvels of the circus are innumerable. The horses, for instance. The handsomest—and certainly the cleverest—horses of the world are to be found at the various circuses. We cannot but marvel as we watch these magnificent creatures speed round the ring, performing all kinds of "stunts" that one would think almost impossible for animals to do. Such is the skill of the ring-masters who train them. Have you ever seen horses waltz to the dreamy strains of the circus band, or answer questions in code by tapping their hoofs on the ground? I have—and I have gasped!

Wonderful, too, are the feats performed by the clever equestrians who perform at circuses, and the trapeze artists, who thrill us with their tricks in mid-air! The clowns provide most of the fun, and these comical fellows work hard, their antics causing shrieks of laughter. I was fortunate in securing an article for this number by Whimsical William, who is one of the funniest clowns who ever performed a somersault and wielded a slapstick.

At the circus, in addition to these, we have the Strong Man—the Village Blacksmith isn't in it with him!—and the Indiarubber Man and the Fat Lady and the Snake Charmer and the Lion Tamers and the Smallest Dwarf in the World, and many other novelties, both human and otherwise.

I could go on for ever, like Tennyson's brook, or like Skimpy on Socialism, dilating upon the joys of the circus, but the other contributors to this number want some space, of course.

We chaps at St. Jim's always give a hearty welcome to a circus, and we wouldn't miss one for worlds!

Tom Merry

## COMMENTS AT THE CIRCUS!

By Monty Lowther.

**I** NOTICED particularly at the circus that the man with the big drum, who stood at the entrance exhorting people to come in, was doing a roaring trade!

The acrobats on the trapeze did their "turns" "over and over" again. They certainly seemed to know the ropes!

Gussy was very struck on Lolita, Queen of the Ring! But to follow her as she performed her tricks, standing on the bare back of a horse galloping round and round the ring, was enough to turn any fellow's head!

The Armless Wonder was a great attraction. He played the piano and did all manner of things with his toes. Wonderful feet!

The Fat Lady's motto: "Weight and see!"

And the Human Skeleton's: "Hold fast!"

I found the Human Skeleton in a very melancholy state of mind. He informed me that his diet consists of one carraway seed and a glass of water per day. And yesterday, he moaned, the carraway seed got stuck in a hollow tooth, so that he had to go without food for that day!

Mr. Ratcliff once said that there was nothing uplifting about a circus. He should have seen the Strong Man and the 500 lb. weights!

The clown who balanced himself on the big ball performed a most difficult roll!

The Wild Man from Borneo gave a song that was reminiscent of one of Gussy's tenor solos. And Gussy got wild when we told him!

I managed to get a few words with the Oldest Man in the World, who was also on show. He looked so mournful that I attempted to cheer him up with a few of my best jokes. The old blighter said he remembered them all!



# Gussy's TURN!

By Jack Blake.

earnest conversation with the uniformed attendant for a few minutes.

A little while later the aristocratic form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered the tent. He carried the bouquet, and his face was a trifle red.

"I say, dear boy, do you mind takin' this to Lolita, the Queen of the Wing, with my compliments?" he said to the attendant.

"Yesir!" grinned the attendant. "Will you wait for a message?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The attendant disappeared through the curtains opposite. A few minutes later he returned.

"Step this way, please, sir!" he said. "The lady wishes to thank you personally."

Gussy followed the attendant with beating heart. He was led past a number of little partitions, from behind which circus performers grinned at him; then he was ushered through some curtains into a small dressing-room.

Gussy looked eagerly about him, expecting to see the charming idol of his heart. He almost fell down when he saw the Fat Lady smiling at him, with the bouquet folded in her podgy arms.

"Darling boy, to send me these!" she gushed. "Come and be kissed!"

"Oh ewwums!" gasped Gussy, wishing the earth would open and swallow him up. "I—I—theah must be some mistake, ma'am! I—Oh, bai Jove!"

The Fat Lady gave him a resounding kiss. Then there was a roar from the doorway. Looking round, Gussy beheld the circus Strong Man, whose face was suffused with anger.

"Ho!" roared the Strong Man. "Makin' love to my wife—eh? Sending her da bouquets Sapristi! Ze young villain! I breaka da backbone of his body!"

"Oh ewwums! Help! Wesee!" howled Gussy; and he dashed away as the Strong Man made towards him.

Gussy did not know his way, but he just ran, with the infuriated Strong Man on his track. He tumbled over pieces of circus "props," and collided with one or two performers. Then, bursting through some curtains, Gussy found himself in full view of the audience running into the ring itself, where an acrobatic turn—the last on the programme—was being given.

"You little villain! Come back!" shouted the ring-master, as Arthur Augustus dashed into the middle of the ring, with the Strong Man after him.

Tom Merry & Co. could hardly believe their eyes.

"Gussy!" gurgled Digby. "It's our prize chump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience.

The acrobats had been throwing Indian clubs at each other, and Gussy, getting in the way, had caught one on his chest. He fell over with a yell. The Strong Man pounced on him, but Gussy was up in a twinkling. He climbed the trapeze rope, and hung there, like a monkey, blinking down in terror at the Strong Man, who stood below shaking his fist at him.

"Weally, deah man," pleaded Arthur Augustus, "you are actin' under a delusion." "Actin' under a delusion—eh?" fumed the Strong Man. "Ho, I like that, blow me if I don't! Just let me get 'old o' yer! I'll delusion yer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the audience.

Tom Merry & Co. jumped up and clambered into the ring. Gussy, dangling on the rope, explained matters. Everybody roared, and the Strong Man was persuaded to give up his designs on Gussy's life.

Gussy was hurried out of the circus by his chums, amid the laughter of the audience. Monty Lowther was outside. He confided to us afterwards how he had divined Gussy's intentions, and had tipped the attendant to take the bouquet to the Fat Lady instead of Lolita.

## MI CIRKUS DAZE!

By Baggy Trimble.

I WOZ broke, as usual, wen Tomp-onio's Circus kame to Wayland, and nun of the fellos—mean rotters, I call 'em—wood lead me the price of a seat! I wanted to sea the cirkus, but hadn't a beeb in the world! Wot woz I to do? To kut a long story short, I waited, and wen noboddy waz looking I krawled in under the kanvas!

To mi horror I found myself, not in the publick part of the tent, but in the performers' kwarters! Standing rite in frunt of me woz a feroshus-looking liun. I gave a yell, and woz about to run, wen a big man in a flashy dress-suet kollared me.

"Wot are you doing hear?" he kried.

"I dropt a shilling, wich roled under the kanvas, and I kame to find it!" I yelled.

Everybody larked, and then I herd the liun larking, too!

I sor then that it wasn't a reel liun at awl, but a skin with a man in it. The back part of the liun woz empty!

"Say, guv," sed a man in a gawdy uniform and a long moostach, "this kid is just the chap we're lookin' for! He's just fat enuff to fill up the liun."

And then the propriettor of the cirkus maid me an offer of a job. It appeared that the chap hoo usenally akted the frunt 2 legs of the liun woz in the lokal police-stashon, and the cirkus people had noboddy fat enuff to fill up the frunt part of the liun skin! That woz wear I shined! I took on



Everybody was laughing, except me!

the job at five bob a day to akt the frunt legs of the liun.

Next evening I left St. Jim's, and went to the cirkus to enactt my role. At length the grate liun tern kame on. Everybody beleved it woz a reel liun, and they cheered the "tamer" to the eko. Then the cirkus propriettor challenged anywun to remane in the liun's den for five minnites or over!

Three men and a boy kame in, but soon went out agane! Then a big sailor chap kame into the ring and walked boldly into the liun's den!

I rored and pranced abowt, but the sailor didn't seem a bit fritened. Then I gave the two reer legs chap the tip, and we jumped on the sailor. Mi werd, wosn't there a struggel! The sailor must hav been a champion restler! The people in the cirkus shreeked; they thort the sailor woz being harf killed. But it woz me who woz being harf killed! The 2 back legs mannigged to get out of the skin, and he hopped it out of the kage, leaving me to bare the brunt of the fray.

Everybody woz larking now, on seeing that the liun woz a hoax, and they egged on the sailor. He needed no egging on! At larst I mannigged to get free, and taring my way out of the liun's skin, I dashed out of the cage, leaving the sailor still resting with the empty skin.

I will pass over the paneful interview I had with the cirkus mannager afterwards. Needless to say, I resined!

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"Bai Jove! How wippin'!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he stood on the circus-ground on Wayland Heath, contemplating the gaudy placards that advertised the attractions in the huge canvas marquee.

Tom Merry & Co. and a good number of Sheil and Fourth Form chaps were with him. All were about to enter the circus for the afternoon show.

"Yes, if the cirkus is anything like the pictures, Gussy, it will be toppin'!" said Tom Merry. "Come on; people are flocking in!"

But still Gussy stood in front of the placards. He adjusted his monocle, and seemed quite wrapt in contemplation. His chums glared at him.

"How weally wippin'!" murmured Gussy. "Come on, Gussy, and let's see the show!" said Herries impatiently. "We shall see then whether it's ripping, you ass!"

"Weally, Hewwies, I am not wewefin' to the show!" said Gussy loftily. "I mean this picture of Lolita, the Queen of the Wing. What a weally wippin' gal she looks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy's smitten agane!"

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther linked their arms in Gussy's, and led him away. That's the worst of Gussy—he's so susceptible to the charms of the fair sex!

Seated in the "ring seats" three rows from the front, we had a fine view of the cirkus.

Cheers arose when the trumpets sounded, and the grand parade of the cirkus performers commenced.

The clowns came first, tumbling over each other, and sending the audience into shrieks of laughter. Then followed the horses and all the other attractions of the cirkus.

But Gussy had eyes for one person only—Lolita, Queen of the Ring! A beautiful little lady, indeed, she looked, as, seated on the back of her stately white horse, she smiled and waved to the audience.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Gussy, under his breath. "What a charmin' gal! I—Oh, bai Jove! She wayed to me, deah boys!"

Gussy jumped up excitedly, and raised his topper to Lolita. The people who saw him roared with laughter, and Tom Merry grabbed his jacket and pulled him down.

Bump!

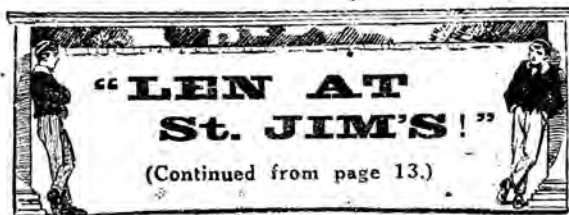
"Ow-ow!" yelled Gussy. "Weally, Mewwy, you wuff wottah—"

"Sit still, and don't make such an ass of yourself, Gussy!" said Tom severely.

Gussy sat still. He noticed a far-away look in his eyes, which only vanished when Lolita came into the ring. Then Gussy watched her every movement in deep admiration.

He jumped up long before the performance was over, and hurried out of the tent. The others winked at each other and laughed. Monty Lowther also left the cirkus a few minutes afterwards.

He followed the swell of the Fourth off the heath into Wayland, and there saw him purchase a huge bouquet of flowers. Monty chuckled deeply, and five minutes later was back again at the cirkus. He went to the performers' entrance, and was engaged in



to fight him again every time he tries on bullying in this study."

"Bullying?" ejaculated Mulvaney. "Are ye calling me a bully?"

"What else do you call it?" asked Len.

"Faith, I'll give you a prize nose for that, too," said Mulvaney. "Are ye ready, ye thafe of the world?"

"Quite ready."

"Then come on, and bad cess to you!"

Tompkins produced his gold watch—that birthday present from his uncle which was in danger of going "up the spout"—and was pretty certain to go on that mysterious journey sooner or later, if Mick Mulvaney remained cock of the walk in Study No. 4.

"Time!" said Tompkins.

And Mick Mulvaney came on with a terrific rush.

He was a bigger and heavier fellow than Len, and he had plenty of pluck—at least, at the beginning of a combat. If reckless and rushing tactics could carry him through, Mulvaney was sure of victory; and such tactics had often served him well, especially with timid fellows. But it was not a timid fellow that he had to deal with this time. Len Lee had a quiet and civil manner that had rather deceived Mulvaney, who was anything but quiet and civil himself. And Mick did not dream that this quiet youth who faced him had been the best junior footballer and boxer only a short time before in the Fourth Form at Wodehouse.

Mulvaney's rush swept Len back at the start, and the new junior had a narrow escape of being pinned against the study table, with Mick's slogging fists hammering at him. But a quick side-step saved him, and Mulvaney hardly knew where he was, till a terrific thump on the side of the head warned him.

Mulvaney staggered across the study.

"Bravo!" chuckled Tompkins, greatly elated. "Follow him up! Give him jip, Pomfret!"

But Len did not follow him up. He left Mick Mulvaney to stagger for several seconds, losing the opportunity of knocking him out.

"Oh, bedad!" gasped Mick.

He righted himself, and spun round towards Len. Then he came on with thrashing fists.

It was hammer and tongs for a time, till Tompkins, with his eye on his watch, called out:

"Time!"

Then the adversaries dropped their hands and backed off. Len was breathing quietly and steadily; Mulvaney minor was panting.

"Faith, it's a good man of yere hands ye are!" gasped Mulvaney. "There's more beef in ye than I thought."

"Very likely," said Len, laughing.

"But I'm going to lick you, all the same," said Mulvaney; "and sure you'll have to be carried up to dorm after I've finished with you!"

"Gas!" said Tompkins.

"What?" roared Mulvaney.

"You're all jaw," said Tompkins coolly. "You've got more chin than punch, Mulvaney."

Mulvaney blinked at him blankly. This was quite new language from Clarence York Tompkins. The worm was turning at last; which indicated pretty clearly Tompkins' opinion of the probable result of the fight.

"Bejabers!" said Mick. "I'll mop up the study with Cheeky Pomfret, and then I'll give you such a licking, Tompkins, as you never had before in your life."

"Time!" said Tompkins.

Mulvaney started the second round with great vim. It was hard fighting now from the start, and Len received some hard punishment. But the round was almost all in his favour, and Mick Mulvaney was thumped right and left. He finished the round sprawling over several chairs, which he knocked spinning as he went down sprawling.

The study door opened.

"You fellows scwappin'?" asked a cheery voice, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass gleamed into the study.

"Yes, a little bit," said Len, smiling.

"Bai Jove! What are you sittin' on the floor for, Mulvaney, deah boy?"

Mulvaney sat up dazedly.

"Grooogh!" he gasped.

Clarence York Tompkins grinned at his watch. He was eager to call time again, and the minute's rest seemed long to him.

"Ow! Oh! My hat!" mumbled Mulvaney. "Sure, he's got a punch on him! But I'll lick him yet!"

"Time!"

Mick Mulvaney was groggy, but he came on gamely at the call of time. Arthur Augustus stepped into the study, and sat gracefully on the edge of the table to watch. Blake and Herries and Dig looked in at the doorway, and behind them appeared Julian and Kerruish and several more of the Fourth. The din had been heard all along the passage. Tom Merry and Mauners and Lowther, on their way down after prep, stopped to look on. The passage was soon crowded.

"Good man!" said Tom, as Mulvaney went down again, laid on his back by a terrific drive on the chest.

"Time!" grinned Tompkins.

"Bai Jove! Pomfret is a fightin' man," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have no doubt that Mulvaney asked for this; he's always asking for trouble."

"He did!" chuckled Tompkins. "And now he's getting what he asked for."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mick Mulvaney staggered up. He dabbed his nose, and rubbed his eyes, and gasped for breath. It was dawning upon him now that he was "out" for a terrific licking; and that his reign as cock of the walk in Study No. 4 had reached its end.

But he came on gamely. He was good for a fourth round, at least, and he was still game.

Three fellows of the Fourth came along from Study No. 9 as the fight was resumed. Levison, Clive, and Cardew joined the crowd outside the wide-open doorway of Study No. 4.

"What's the row?" asked Levison.

"The new fellow, Pomfret, walking all over Mulvaney minor!" grinned Blake. "This will be a good thing for poor old Tompkins."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Crash!

Mulvaney went down with a thud that almost shook the study. Len panted a little.

"By gad!" murmured Ralph Reckness Cardew, looking into the study over many shoulders. "Great gad!"

His eyes were fixed on Len's handsome, flushed face. Cardew seemed scarcely able to believe his eyes. He tapped Tom Merry on the arm.

"Is that chap Pomfret?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Tom hastened. "That's Len Pomfret, the new chap."

"Great gad!"

Cardew was startled—strangely startled. Tom Merry read the look on his face, and he knew that Ralph Reckness Cardew had recognised Len Lee, once in his own Form at Wodehouse. For a few moments Cardew stared hard at the new boy, between intervening heads; then he whistled, drove his hands deep into his pockets, and walked down the passage without another word.

Len had not seen him—his eyes were on Mulvaney. Tompkins called time, and Mulvaney did not stir. He began to count, and Mulvaney rose as far as his knees when he reached eight. Then he gasped:

"Sure, I'm done! You've done me, Pomfret, and faith it's a good man ye are intirely!"

And Mulvaney staggered to a chair and sat down, gasping and spent.

"Congratulations, old man!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Len put on his jacket.

And the crowd of interested onlookers dispersed.

Mulvaney minor, licked to the wide, was no longer cock of the walk in Study No. 4. Clarence York Tompkins had reason to be glad that Len Lee had come to St. Jim's. Mulvaney spent the rest of the evening attending to his damages, with many grunts and groans; Len, little the worse for his strenuous combat, looked forward cheerfully to bed-time, and meeting the Fourth Form fellows in dorm. He did not know yet that among them he was to meet one whose face was familiar—one whom he had known in the old days at Wodehouse. That shock was yet to come.

THE END.

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a furious jewel  
chase through the  
trackless West.

## CHAPTER 1.

### A Luncheon for Three—Luiz Ferraro, Eavesdropper—Plans!

THE luxurious dining-room of the "swellest" hotel in San Francisco was practically empty, the hour being one of the few slack periods the establishment's hard-pressed staff could boast of.

At a small table set for three, near a big window, sat Henry Grant, probably the wealthiest jeweller in California, his son Jimmy, and Montague Morgan, the famous railroad king, who was known all over the continent wherever a sleeper helped to support a track.

The conversation so far had been upon ordinary everyday topics, but as the last diner left the big room Grant turned and leaned forward towards his friend.

"I'm sending young Jimmy here over to Buffalo, by the Overland Limited, at the end of the week, with those rubies and emeralds your wife ordered last month, Morgan," he said. "I got them from a certain rajah who was travelling here, and who had exceeded the speed limit at the gambling-tables at Delmontis Beach—a rare thing for a rajah to lose his head like that and want to raise the wind. Anyway, it is done, and your good lady will have the finest lot of gems for her necklace that it would be possible to secure anywhere. Rubies, chum—pigeon-blood rubies as large as hedge-sparrow's eggs—and emeralds just a shade larger. Eh, how does that strike you?"

Montague Morgan nodded his big, brainy head.

"Splendid, Grant—splendid!" he said, though without a great deal of enthusiasm. "I'm glad the wife is spending some money with you, and sorry I'm not a very regular customer personally. I'm a plain man, you see, and have little interest in such baubles, however valuable. Somehow, railroads seem to occupy my time to the exclusion of everything."

"Quite so!" the jeweller chuckled. "I know all that. You couldn't distinguish a ruby from a doughnut, Monty; but you married a diamond merchant's daughter, and she was once in Hatton Garden with her dad—wasn't she?—so she'll understand the value of the scoop I've got for her."

Again Morgan nodded in agreement; then his shrewd, grey eyes rested upon the face of Jimmy Grant.

"And you're sending the lad over to our place with the parcel?" he

commented. "D'you think that wise? He's only about seventeen, isn't he?"

Henry Grant's well-nourished frame fairly shook, as though his friend's words were intended as a huge joke.

"My dear man," he grinned, "when a youngster has an American father and a British mother—for Jim's mum comes from England—I guess you may look for a combination of business smartness and grit second to none. Yes; the boy's not eighteen yet, but I'll guarantee he delivers the goods safely. In any case, there's no danger, for nobody knows anything about it but the three of us. As you see, this room's deserted, so there wasn't much risk in speaking."

Ay! The room was deserted, but unfortunately the balcony wasn't. The table the trio had engaged was, as before mentioned, near a big window, and that window was open.

Unfortunately, also, at another table on the balcony, which chanced to be screened from view by a group of palm-trees, a swarthy-looking fellow was sitting—a man who, could Grant have known it, had been drinking in every word that fell from the jeweller's lips, his own rather thin lips wreathing themselves into a smile as he pieced the information together for his own purpose.

He was a man whom, of all others in the world, Grant would never have expected to find refreshing himself at that expensive hotel, nor was there an individual in the broad universe he would have less desired to speak within earshot of.

For the unseen diner was none other than Luiz Ferraro, a Mexican who, until three or four days previously, had been Henry Grant's valet—until one or two shady little actions, which we need not describe here, convinced Grant that he would be better off minus Luiz's services. Therefore, he had given the Mexican notice, and the man had left his employ with enough saved—for Ferraro was a careful liver—to carry him on pending the securing of a new post.

Now, although Grant, secretly and alone, had conducted the deal with the rajah who had gambled not wisely but too well, Senor Ferraro, from a habit he possessed of periodically going through his master's private papers on the q.t., gleaned some inkling of the transaction; also, he learned of the appointment for lunch with Morgan, the railroad king, whose wife the jewels were intended for, and he had therefore laid his plans accordingly.

Happening to be acquainted with one of the waiters at the hotel—a man who knew the meaning of "graft" and

appreciated it—the Mexican had bribed him to set a table on the balcony within earshot, but not within sight, of the table whereat the trio had discussed their plans. And as Henry Grant's voice became silent again, Ferraro quietly left his seat and gained the grand staircase by another route than passing through the large dining-room.

"Ah!" he murmured. "So the young fledgling is to be sent upon this mission! What a fool you are, my erstwhile master—what a fool! Well, the English have an old saying concerning a fool and his money, which I think must be true!"

Still enjoying his apparently bright reflections, Senor Luiz made his way rapidly from the splendid thoroughfare in which the hotel stood to a much poorer quarter of the city—a place of narrow, twisting streets and strange, dark corners, even in the brilliant sunshine—and here he entered a low-class establishment, half-gambling-saloon, half lodging-house.

That his entry was not unexpected was apparent from the fact that four men, who were sitting at a small table near the door, rose as if in greeting. Luiz motioned them to be seated again, drawing over a fifth stool himself and joining their questionable company.

"Listen carefully, now, my friends," he said, in a low voice. "The time is ripe, and I have learnt all that was necessary for us to act upon."

The others leaned forward expectantly.

"Grant's son," continued Ferraro, "is taking the jewels to Buffalo by the Overland Limited, which leaves here in three days. I, also, am travelling by the Overland, but the boy knows me too well for me to risk mixing up in the business; so you fellows must arrange to hold up the train wherever you think best between here and there. Get others to help you—make it a big affair, so as to keep everyone well occupied—and relieve the youth of his property."

"I shall give you a description of him, and you can do the rest; but one thing you must be very careful about—we shall be strangers when we meet on the train. You must hold me up and search me with the other passengers, for it must not be known what tit-bit we are specially after; nor shall you hold any communication with me whatsoever until we meet at the rendezvous previously decided upon in Buffalo, and there you shall hand the loot to me. Anything else you pick up you may keep, but beware how you play me false over the jewels!"

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"It is useless your trying to twist me out of my share of these, for you know well enough that I am the only one among us who can dispose of the baubles. I know the ropes to pull in safety, and you do not; so I trust we thoroughly understand each other?"

The four nodded together.

"Yes, boss," one of them replied. "We'll not even wink at you on the train—don't fear. You describe the younger, an' that'll be enough for us. As to tryin' any hanky-panky with you afterwards—waal, we know on which side our bread's buttered, an' we ain't fools!"

Ferraro thereupon went into a minute description of Jim Grant's appearance, his words carefully listened to by his four confederates, after which the Mexican left them to their own devices.

## CHAPTER 2.

### On the Overland Limited—The Hold-up—Jimmy's Cute Ruse!

THE Overland Limited—that wonderful train which completely crosses the American Continent in five or six days, thereby linking up the Pacific and Atlantic coasts—had accomplished more than half its journey when Ferraro's plans began to develop.

When going through a deep, moonlit ravine where the slopes on each side were

almost precipitous, the driver of the locomotive suddenly espied a great rock wedged between the metals ahead of him. The boulder showed up plainly in the glare of the engine's powerful headlight, and had apparently fallen from somewhere above; but, whatever the cause, the train could not proceed until the obstruction was removed. Consequently, the passengers were rather surprised to hear an unexpected scream of brakes, and to notice a steady diminution of speed.

Almost immediately came further cause for surprise. As the Overland drew to a standstill, from their places of concealment among the rocks a body of men hurried down the slope, two of them taking possession of the engine-cab, where the astonished driver and fireman found themselves staring stupidly into the black barrels of a couple of big "shooters," whilst the remainder of the band spread themselves throughout the train, occasioning equal stupefaction wherever they appeared.

Every one of the intruders was masked, and all armed to the teeth, so that any attempt at either recognition or resistance would have been futile.

"Sorry to worry ye, ladies an' gents," said one of the band, "but business is business, an' if ye'll hand over yer vally-ables ye'll be showin' uncommon good wisdom. If ye don't—"

He broke off with an expressive shrug which was not lost upon the occupants of the car he had invaded, and no one raised any objection to having himself, or herself, relieved of additional weight, after which the bandits passed on, but left one of their number behind to wave an ugly "Colt" at the startled passengers, and so prevent any alarm being raised, however useless such might have been in that wild and deserted region.

Jimmy Grant was in the dining-saloon when the masked raiders entered and held up the few occupants the big car at that moment contained. At a table in the parallel row to that in which Grant sat, a young couple, evidently on their honeymoon trip, were having a snack of supper, the girl giving one scared, sidelong glance at the intruders and then adroitly slipping a cheap pearl necklace she was wearing into the wide-mouthed pickle-jar before her. It was a

neat ruse, and nobody noticed it but Jimmy, who smiled slightly despite the gravity of the situation.

He, Jimmy, was dressed rather shabbily, and carried a leather bag—his only luggage—which contained a sleeping-suit, some tools wrapped in oiled paper, and a set of faked references. He was, ostensibly, a mechanic travelling from West to East after a new job, and he looked the part he was playing to the life.

In the bag, it may be mentioned, was a false bottom, beneath which were the precious baubles consigned to Mrs. Montague Morgan. There they lay, neatly sorted in wash-leather bags, ready to be handed over to that lady's jeweller for making into a necklace which, it was hoped, would outshine all others at the forthcoming Presidential ball at White House.

As Jimmy looked at the intruders he strove desperately to conceal the panic that arose within him; for, somehow, the leader of the band seemed to have singled him out for special attention. The fellow's black eyes, glistening through the slits in his mask, seemed to pierce the lad through and through, causing young Grant to feel peculiarly uncomfortable.

Suddenly the man strode forward, bending over Jim's table, and holding his pistol within a few inches of the diner's head.

"Think ye might as well let's see what's in that bag beside ye!" he said, grinning. "An' hurry up, too; we've no time to waste!"

Jim looked up, a grieved expression in his face.

"Surely ye don't want my sleepin'-suit an' a set of tools, boss?" he muttered. "That's all I have, except a few references. I guess ye might leave a poor hobo, who's goin' after another job, alone! D'ye think I'm Rockefeller?"

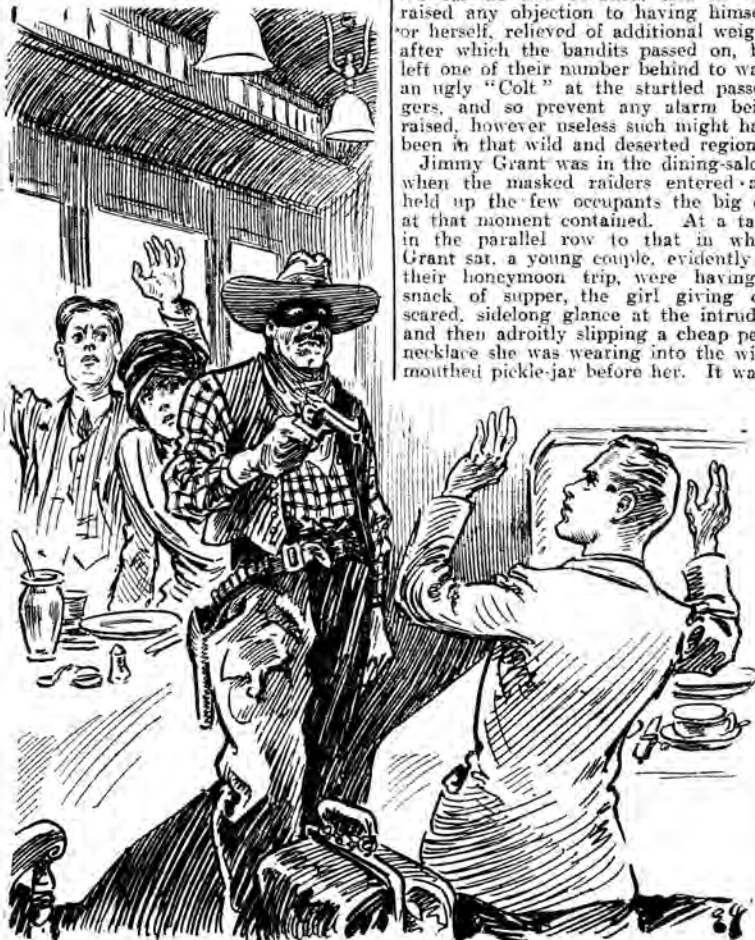
The bandit stared curiously at his latest victim—the boy whose face seemed so like that which he had been told to look out for, yet who appeared to be merely an "out-of-work," and certainly not the son of the richest jeweller in California.

Jimmy was acting his part magnificently, and the robber's confidence was undoubtedly shaken, seeing which young Grant strove to press home his advantage.

"Look here," he whispered, a sudden idea striking him. "If ye leave me my few belongin's, I'll tell ye somethin' worth while." He glanced cautiously towards the young couple seated close by, awaiting their turn to be attended to. "There's a pearl necklace in the pickle-jar on the table to my right. I saw 'Sis' yonder take it off her neck an' slip it in just now—an' it's worth somethin', from the looks of it!"

For perhaps another thirty seconds the masked man stared doubtfully at his informant, inwardly bemoaning the fact that he dared not risk summoning Luiz Ferraro, who was also somewhere on the train, to confirm or deny the lad's identity. But Ferraro's most strict instructions had been to hold no communication with him whatsoever, but to treat him as an ordinary victim of the hold-up, so that no suspicions of his working hand-in-glove with the band could possibly be aroused—and those instructions had to be respected to the letter, since everything regarding the disposal of the jewels, when found, depended upon the Mexican.

Finally, after this fresh survey of Jim's innocent countenance, the masked rascal decided to believe him. He made a hasty examination of Grant's leather bag, saw



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the sleeping-suit, tools, and sheaf of references—but missed the false bottom—and then made a sudden dive for the pickle-jar.

The girl at the opposite table screamed, while her consort gasped out a string of protests, stared fiercely at Grant, and nearly got a bullet for his trouble. Then the robber triumphantly drew the necklace from its "pickly" hiding-place, and grinned to himself.

Suddenly, even as the band was about to move on to the next car, a wild commotion sounded from outside. A few scattered shots, a scurry of feet, and a chorus of shouts, awoke the echoes of the gorge. Like shadows the bandits on the train faded away, dashing for their tethered horses higher up the slope, and encountering in their flight a score or so of cowboys who had been searching the higher ground in the moonlight for some cattle which had strayed from a neighbouring ranch. Seeing the long train at a standstill in the ravine below, the great boulder still resting between the metals, and the group of waiting mounts roped together on a grassy plateau just above the track, the astute fellows quickly put two and two together. This was not the first time in their memory that an attempt had been made to hold up a train passing through that selfsame gorge, and the result of that knowledge has already been outlined.

The cowboys immediately opened fire above the heads of four of the bandits who had been left in charge of the horses, which caused the rest of the gang to make a hurried exit from the train. The majority, as by a miracle, succeeded in regaining their mounts, and a running fight was continued across the hills, the sounds of the firing soon growing fainter and fainter in the distance. It had been a complete turning of the tables, and it was lucky that those cowpunchers should have happened along before the whole train was cleaned out from end to end.

As Jim Grant, gazing from the car window, heard those shots in the distance he felt a sense of great triumph sweep through him—a triumph which was rudely shattered as the young man from the next table suddenly confronted him.

It was easy to see that this young man was in a towering passion—and small wonder, under the circumstances!

"Confound your impudence!" he cried. "You're a nice credit to your country! I guess you must be proud of yourself—turning those toughs on to us just to save your own miserable belongings! You were the only one who could have seen where my wife hid the necklace, and it was a wedding present—"

"One moment, please," Jim cut in quietly. "If you will permit me to explain, I think you will agree that my action, strange though it was, had a certain amount of justification—"

"Justification, in causing my wife's jewellery to be stolen!" gasped the other; but again Jim interrupted him.

"Yes. Please listen to me," he pressed, glancing round to make sure that the dining saloon was now empty of all save themselves. "The necklace you placed in the pickle-jar was, if I may say so, a cheap one. It was a good imitation, but not the real thing, even though it may have been a wedding present."

"How d'you know that? You're not an expert in jewellery, are you?"

"No; but I'm the next best thing to one—the son of the biggest jeweller in California—Henry Grant. I suppose you've heard of him? Very well, then. You're a straight chap, I believe, so I'll risk taking you into my confidence. I am travelling with a consignment of gems of enormous value, and they belong



As he felt the ground crumble beneath his feet Ferraro made a wild attempt to clutch at the railings, but missed, slipping beneath them to be swallowed up in the seething waters beneath.

to the wife of the actual owner of half the railway property in the States—Mrs. Montague Morgan, of Buffalo. Under these circumstances I had to employ any ruse to turn that fellow's attention away from me, as I could see he had his suspicions that I was kidding him, although I don't suppose that he could have had any idea of what I carried. The necklace turned the scale in my favour; and, having deprived you of it, I can guarantee you a cheque for double its value as soon as we reach Buffalo. We halt here for a while, so that passengers can view Niagara. Thus, even if you are going farther, there will be time enough to recompense you. Is that satisfactory? See! Here are my credentials."

He took some papers from an inner pocket, and, after examining them, the young man's righteous rage quickly evaporated. He stared steadily at Grant.

"I believe you," he said, with a slight grin, "and will accept your offer. As a matter of fact, Buffalo is also our destination, so we needn't depend upon the train waiting for us."

The Overland Limited had long since resumed its journey, and was making up for lost time, swaying at a rattling pace through gorge and over trestle; eating up the miles through moonlight and sunshine.

Eventually Buffalo was reached, where Jim Grant and his new-found friends detrained. And here, also, detrained a swarthy, lithely-built man, who had been skulking in the rear-most coach, in

case Grant might have seen him during the journey. He was taking every precaution, was Luiz Ferraro, and now, fondly hoping that his confederates had succeeded in reaching Jimmy's car, and relieving him of the loot before the surprise visit from the cowpunchers took place, the Mexican was hastening to the pre-arranged rendezvous where the spoils were to be examined.

Ferraro's feelings were not enviable ones at that moment, as he slipped out of the station, and made off at a rapid pace through the streets. He was not in a position to know how the fight had fared, and how many of the train-robbers had succeeded in getting clear, or if the four whom he had employed had succeeded in making a get-away with the principal object of the hold-up in their possession.

In any case, he would have to cool his heels at this meeting-place for some time, since the others could not possibly join him, however good their luck, just yet awhile.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### In the Roar of the Falls!

**J**IMMY GRANT stayed a few days at the Morgans' beautiful home on the outskirts of Buffalo, and thoroughly enjoyed his visit; or, to be strictly correct, he enjoyed the major part of it.

The part he did not appreciate was the day after he had sent off the promised cheque to the young couple, in recompense for the stolen necklace, and he had gone, at Mrs. Morgan's suggestion, to view the Niagara Falls, which were comparatively close by.

Not expecting to be so far East again for some time, Jimmy fairly jumped at the opportunity, for he had heard as much about this gigantic show-spot as anyone living, and had often longed to behold its magnificence with his own eyes.

It was about sunset when he arrived at a good vantage-point overlooking the great basin, and, this not being exactly the season for trippers, he found that he had the place to himself.

At least, so he thought; but could he have possessed the power to see behind him without turning round, Jim Grant might have noticed a swarthy-looking fellow, bent almost double, who crept inch by inch towards his unsuspecting victim from some thick scrub at the rear.

For Luiz Ferraro had tracked Jimmy from the Morgans' place—had watched his every movement, in fact, with the cunning of the semi-savage he was, since he had met his baffled confederates at the rendezvous, and learned how they had been deceived; for Ferraro had little doubt, after listening to what had taken place in the dining-car of the Overland that night, that his colleagues had been cleverly fooled by a mere boy—that the "out-of-work mechanic" was in reality the very fellow they should have paid special attention to.

And when he learned that, Senor Ferraro bitterly regretted his decision that no communication should be held with him while on the train. He wished, instead, that he had ridden with the band himself, masked and armed as they were, in which case there would have been no mistake, for then he could personally have attended to this cunning young pup.

However, what is the use of wishing when the opportunity is past? The gems had by this time been safely delivered to Mrs. Morgan—probably, indeed, were already with the jeweller who was to make them into the wonderful necklace which was to eclipse all others of its kind at the forthcoming White House ball.

But Luiz Ferraro's composition was a strange one. He knew that his ambition had been balked completely, yet the hot Mexican blood in his veins made it well-nigh impossible for him to take his beating with resignation. Rather, it filled him with an insane craving to be revenged upon the individual who had been the cause of his defeat.

So that was why he had shadowed Jimmy Grant so tenaciously—that was why he was now creeping, inch by inch, upon his unsuspecting victim, his strong, yellow-brown hands opening and shutting like the claws of a vulture about to pounce upon its prey.

But Jimmy guessed nothing of all this. He stood there, contemplating the watery wonders beneath and around him, where the spuming, foam-flecked torrent tore through the vast gorge

between the twin lakes—Erie and Ontario—to crash down, as with the sound of a thousand thunderclaps blended in one long, continuous roar, into the great basin far below—into the raging whirlpool, which was only alternately visible owing to the dense clouds of feathery spray that rose like steam from Nature's greatest cauldron.

The light of the setting sun shone redly upon this, turning the white spume to a pinkish smoke, through which shot all the gorgeous rays of the spectrum as it floated away into the upper air.

The scene, at that time of day, outstripped in magnificence all that was ever written about Niagara by the most enthusiastic admirer of Nature's greatness, and it was small wonder that young Grant felt himself held in thrall—hypnotised, as it were, by the very grandeur of the panoramic feast spread out before him.

Then something encircled his waist, and he was lifted bodily from the ground, whilst the panting breath of whoever, or whatever, had seized him was plainly audible.

But, desperate though he knew his position to be, Jimmy's quick-wittedness never deserted him. He had had a good training at ju-jitsu in his schooldays, and had kept up the practice at a gymnasium ever since, so that he indeed made a formidable adversary to tackle, even unawares.

Twisting like an eel as he felt his feet leave the ground, he was fortunate in making his adversary's hold slip sufficiently to enable him to wriggle his agile body free. Then he spun round and gasped.

"Ferraro! Luiz Ferraro! What does this mean?"

But the Mexican made no attempt at replying. He merely lurched forward again, with teeth bared like the fangs of some wild beast, with his eyes blazing madly, and his clutching hands groping for a fresh hold, and Jimmy knew that he must either completely put his foe out of action, or be cast into the raging maelstrom which shook the very ground upon which the pair fought for mastery.

Grant measured his distance well. Letting his adversary advance until he could bend forward and grip his wrists, he grasped these tightly and dropped flat on his back, pulling Ferraro with him, and pressing his foot into the Mexican's stomach.

The madman—for mad with lust for revenge he undoubtedly was—rose in the air, described a wide arc, and crashed to earth near the edge of the precipice: but, though half-stunned, he managed to scramble shakily to his feet again, and stood there, glowering at the youth who had so neatly balked his move.

But he remained there for a short while only, and the end came in a way that was expected by neither of the pair.

Ferraro was about to launch himself forward for a fresh attack, when the ground upon which he stood suddenly crumbled beneath his feet. He felt himself falling, made a wild attempt to clutch at the railings, but, missing them by a handbreadth, slipped beneath them where the earth fell away for a considerable distance along the brink.

Jimmy Grant stood for a few moments petrified with horror, and with Ferraro's last despairing shriek still ringing in his ears. Then he gingerly stepped forward and gazed down into the wreathing mists, but no sign of the ill-fated Mexican was visible. He had been swallowed up like a straw in the vortex beneath.

As long as he lived Jimmy Grant never forgot his first experience of Niagara, for it was an adventure destined to live in one's memory for all time.

But, rack his brains how he would, he always failed to understand the reason for the ex-valet's wild attack upon him, for he was not in a position to know anything of the Mexican's connection with the band of train-robbers who held up the Overland Limited. That was a secret which Ferraro had carried with him to the end.

THE END.

(Look out for a screamingly funny story of Mike McAndrew next week: "MARMADUKE'S MOTOR WHEEL!" by Elmer K. Arter.)

## The Imaginary Epitaph of BAGLEY TRIMBLE!

By the St. Jim's Joker.

HERE LIES  
(as was his wont in the flesh)

BAGLEY TRIMBLE,

the Prize Porker of St. Jim's,  
who perished of consumption,  
having devoured, at one sitting, two  
rabbit-pies, two veal-and-ham ditto, a  
dozen doughnuts, and an unlimited quantity of sausage-rolls.

THIS PODGY YOUTH,

who was despised by all as a sneak, spy,  
toady, gormandiser, and prevaricator,  
leaves nobody to mourn his loss.

No longer will his bootlaces come untied outside the door of the Head's study; no longer shall we see his barrel-like form go rolling towards the school tuck-shop. He leaves in his Will

THE PRINCELY SUM OF  
TUPPENCE,

with a request that it be sent to the Home for Stray Porpoises.

He has also left behind him

A LARGE NUMBER OF DEBTS,

and any philanthropic person who would like to settle same is requested to communicate with Messrs. Grabbit & Bunk, solicitors, London.

"We gaze upon his upturned soles

With optics far from dim;

He finished scores of sausage-rolls,

And now they've finished him!"

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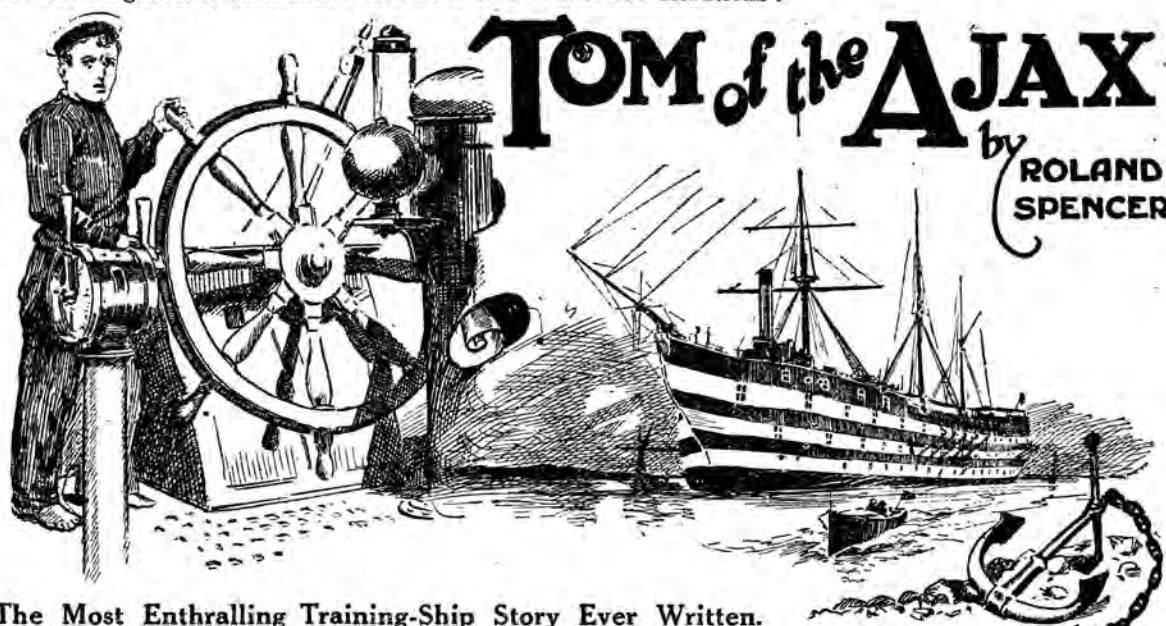
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# TOM of the AJAX

by ROLAND SPENCER

The Most Enthralling Training-Ship Story Ever Written.

## Run Down!

A LOUD shout sounded behind Tom Gale, and the boy swung round like a hunted animal, thinking that fresh enemies were attacking in the rear. Instead, with a low exclamation of excitement, he saw a small motor-boat, nose-on to the sailings, with a man standing in the stern.

It looked like assistance. It might be a fresh trap laid for him. He'd chance it.

Like an arrow from a bow, Tom leapt away from his pursuers, just as hands were outstretched to grab at him. He was speedier than they, and he ran for all he was worth. The long-legged, gaunt, sallow man, however, kept close to his heels, and Tom's heart beat like a sledgehammer as he sprinted and tried to keep the lead.

He sensed that the man's hand was stretched to his collar. He could hear the heavy breathing just behind, could hear the grunts as the man's feet pounded heavily on the grass.

They were now on a wide stretch of sea lavender again. Mud-channels again appeared, and Tom hoped against hope that they would not meet one which he could not clear at a leap, but which would be easy work for his long-legged pursuer.

The motor-boat was near now. Another thirty yards and he would be safe—or in the hands of a fresh enemy. Tom judged the former, for the overcoated figure in the boat was standing with a paddle overside, apparently ready to push off at a second's notice.

The man behind was not gaining, Tom realised with joy. Another few yards, a leap, the boat rocking under the impact, a hasty push-off by the man in the stern, and he would be safe.

Tom's pursuer put on an extra spurt, and again the lad sensed that outstretched hand, fingers curved to clutch. Then he leaped.

He landed heavily on to the bottom-boards of the small motor-boat, and immediately the muffled figure in the stern threw his weight on to the oar resting on the mud overside.

But the tall, gaunt man had leapt, too, his feet striking the gunwale of the boat. Tom sprang up to try to push him overboard, but the man in the stern had acted more quickly. With a low, chuckling laugh, which Tom had learned to admire so much, he sprang forward, a revolver in his fist.

Avalanche Hume!

Overcome with exhaustion, dizzy with relief, without time to exclaim with surprise, Tom sank down in the boat.

Hume had struck at the gaunt man, who had fallen back and was standing on the mud, knee-deep in water, with the butt of his revolver; but, with a tremendous blow like an upper-cut, the man's big fist caught Hume on the wrist, and the weapon went curving over across the water, to fall with a splash into the muddy depths.

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE!

TOM GALE, a sturdy-built youth and chief petty officer of the starboard watch aboard the famous old training-ship *Ajax*.

STONIKY BURR, C.P.O. of the port watch, a bully of the first water.

DICKY WEST is a cheerful ginger-headed youth and a staunch chum of Gale's.

Trouble arises when a mysterious, sinister man in green spectacles approaches Burr. He gives his name as KALCHE, and he entitles the aid of Burr in a plot against Tom Gale, without, however, giving any reasons.

Following this Tom falls an easy prey to a trick of Burr's, is disgraced, and struck off the list of boys detailed to sail on the annual cruise round the British Isles aboard the *Ulysses*.

A mad impulse seizes him, however, and, stealing out of his bunk at night, Tom plunges over the side of the *Ajax*, swims to the *Ulysses*, clambers aboard, and stows himself away in the chain-locker. His wild adventure comes to a sad ending, for, on reaching Harwich, he is taken ashore and delivered to the guard of an express for his journey back to the *Ajax* and punishment.

Aboard the train, Tom is carrying out another daring escapade when a severe storm breaks out. A tree is blown across the lines, and the train is wrecked. Tom is crawling out of the wreckage when he is rushed upon, overpowered, and carried to an awaiting car, in which he is conveyed to a lonely house on the moor. He effects an escape, however, but Kalche and his men are soon hot on his track. Fearlessly Tom swings round to face his pursuers!

(Now read on).

Another low chuckle broke from the lips of the Scotland Yard detective as his fist flashed out and caught the man right on the mark—a crash on the point of the chin that sent him staggering backwards, to fall with a splash into the shallow water.

"All right, Tom!" said Hume coolly, his clear voice sounding like heavenly music to the exhausted lad on the floor-boards of the boat. "Others at hand. Lost my gun. But we'll push off and beat 'em yet!"

Hume clipped out his sentences in his own peculiar way, as he prodded the mud with the blade of the oar, and pushed the motor-boat out, stern foremost, into deep water.

"I'll crank up now. This is Kalche's boat I've borrowed, so he won't be able to follow. My plans have miscarried a bit, but we'll get safely away at all events."

Kalche's boat! Not able to follow? As the engine roared out and the detective put the tiller hard over, making the boat describe a wide curve, well out of revolver range of the baffled men on shore, Tom spoke.

"Then Kalche has another motor-boat, sir. A natty boat she is, too. Big turtle deck at the bows. She's a dandy for speed, I can tell you!"

Hume's strong face turned suddenly towards Tom.

"What's that?" he demanded. "Another boat belonging to Kalche? Where?"

"The other side of the island, where his house is," replied Tom swiftly. "She was left tied up to some broken-down staging at the water's edge—"

Hume chuckled.

"Then the chase is not ended, my lad—"

Even as the detective spoke, a sudden, quick throb was heard astern of them. Both looked over sharply, and saw the long, lean shape of the motor-boat Tom had referred to swerving round the point of the island. The sound of the throbbing, unimpeded now by intervening land, had burst suddenly on their ears.

The boat swung towards the shore, and the three men who had chased Tom splashed out into the water to the depth of their thighs, and boarded the craft.

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The tall, lean figure standing at the tiller was undoubtedly Kalche.

Avalanche Hume immediately pointed out to sea.

"We're off the coast of Norfolk, Tom," he said quickly. "I have been shadowing Kalche for some time. I was on the train that was wrecked—in one of the rear compartments—so was lucky. I saw you captured, though what you were doing on the train I have yet to learn. I had a stiff job keeping Kalche's car in view, but I managed it, and he led me here—"

"But what—what—er—why didn't you barge in before, sir?" began Tom.

But Avalanche Hume smiled as he looked astern at the following motor-boat, and tried to judge the two boats' respective speeds.

"Not my policy, lad!" clipped out Hume. "I have two or three things to do. One is to solve the mystery of you. Another is to get Kalche's whole gang. Kalche alone, as it happens now, will not wreck this ugly crime syndicate that is in being. It is only through Kalche I can get the lot. I didn't expect you to escape, and I'm sorry you have. I had hoped to solve the mystery of you by finding out what Kalche intended to do with you—"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" cut in Tom. "What a pity I gave them the slip!"

"It's all right," continued the detective. "You weren't to know anything about that. You might think it funny that I have helped you to escape, but, as a matter of fact, though I'm not afraid that you will suffer any real harm at Kalche's hands, you might at the hands of his underlings. I think that was proved when that ferret little ruffian drew a gun on you when you were fighting them at the stone pile—"

"So you saw that?" cried Tom.

"Yes," replied Hume; "and a plucky chap you are, Tom! Twice you turned round to fight them. I could see you meant to make yourself as troublesome as possible, and I was therefore afraid for your life. So I thought it best to get you away—"

"Which isn't done yet, sir!" grinned Tom. "Look!"

Tom nodded astern, and Hume turned to look at the chasing motor-boat. The speedy craft was much nearer, though still a good distance away. The water was curling white from her sharp bows as her propeller thrust her forward, tearing into the waves like a destroyer flashing into action.

"Our only hope of dodging them is by getting to sea, Tom," said Hume. "Clouds are banking up round the moon. Pitch dark very soon. We'll give them the slip yet. Well, here's for the open sea, anyway!"

The detective, thoroughly enjoying the adventure, urged the little motor-boat eastwards. The following craft was gaining on them rapidly—making ten yards to their nine. Tom was peering astern anxiously.

"They'll get us in a few minutes, sir," said the lad. "They're almost within pistol-shot now. See, there's the glint of Kalche's automatic—"

"And a shoal of sorts alongside us, Tom. See, a few of the weeds sticking up above the water. We must try to get over that submerged bank. It will be impossible for Kalche's big boat—water too shallow—but we may do it. You go forward and pilot."

Tom sprang to the foredeck, and began peering at the submerged bank, or "horse," as it is termed. It stood between them and the open sea.

"Here's the deepest part, sir!" shouted Tom suddenly. "Hard a-star-

board, and we'll either stick or go over, and—"

Kalche was now pointing his weapon, and Hume swung the little boat round. She rushed, roaring, for the bank. Would they scrape over? Could they, after all, escape?

As Kalche's pistol spoke and the bullet lashed into the water alongside, the little motor-boat lurched heavily and stopped dead. Tom and Hume were thrown heavily on to the thwarts by the impact.

A shout of triumph sounded from the chasing craft.

"In there—there! They're aground on the eastern horse! We've got them!"

### The Fight on the Sandbank!

THE big motor-boat containing Kalche and his ruffians began to slow down and edge in cautiously. Weapons had been lowered, so certain was Kalche of victory. But Avalanche Hume had not received his nickname for nothing.

Tom and the detective had leapt overboard as soon as they had picked themselves up from the thwarts across which they had been thrown. They splashed about in eighteen inches of water, their feet sliding about on the slimy mud covering the hard sand below.

"Push the boat, sir! Force her over on to one of her bilges!" cried Tom, feeling that here his own intimate knowledge of boats and the sea, sandbanks and mudflats would qualify him to take a leading part. "She'll draw less water like that, and we may be able to slide her right over."

The pair pushed desperately, and the little motor-boat moved forward under the pressure.

"She's going!" gasped Hume. "We'll do them yet, Tom!"

A vicious tongue of flame shot out from the big motor-boat, and the crash of a pistol shot followed instantly. The bullet sang past Tom's ear, nearly deafening him. It had passed between his head and Hume's, and their heads were not a foot apart!

Hume chuckled.

"All right, Kalche!" he muttered. "Carry on, Tom. Get her over by yourself if you can. I'll join you again in a minute."

The detective suddenly leapt away from the little boat. Two bounds, his feet splashing in the shallow water, brought him close up to the big motor-boat. Another pistol-shot rang out, but Tom heard Hume's chuckle, so he knew that the bullet had not found its billet.

The boy heaved and heaved at the motor-boat, but he could not move it any farther forward. Avalanche Hume, by this time, had leapt right into the middle of the men in the big boat. Tom heard the gasps and grunts, the dull thud of the detective's fists, occasionally that wonderful chuckle, then a storm of oaths from Kalche.

"Tackle him, tackle him!" shouted Kalche. "Don't fire this way, you fool, you'll hit me! Birch, fire at the brat! We'll tackle Hume!"

Tom gave one more despairing heave at the motor-boat. He meant that to be his last. If the boat did not yield he would join Avalanche, and go down fighting, at all events. If he stayed he would be shot down for sure.

The boat moved! She had slewed round! So, though hard aground, she must be pivoted on the hard ridge of the sandbank.

Tom splashed round to the other side of the little craft, so that he could get

the boat between him and the fire from the bigger boat. Then he pressed his shoulder against the little vessel's quarter, and heaved till he thought his heart would burst.

Round slewed the motor-boat, and Tom felt the fabric list heavily as the heel caught on the bank. The lad heaved again, taking no notice of the bullet that splintered the woodwork of the sheer strake close to his ear.

With a triumphant shout Tom felt the heel go over. Now he could push her clear, stern foremost.

One heave did it. The boat was "fleeing" again—that is, she became waterborne. Tom yelled frantically to Hume, who was still pounding away at Kalche and his men, diverting fire from the training-ship boy, and, at the same time, preventing his enemies from getting a locking grip on him.

Although Hume did not look round, Tom knew, somehow, that his shouts had been heard. The lad stood anxiously by the little motor-boat, his hand on the gunwale to keep the little craft from drifting out to sea. From that position, now safe from pistol-shots, since the man who had been firing at him now was forced to join in the struggle with Hume, he watched the big heaving motor-boat.

Hume was standing in the waist of the craft, hirting out to left and right. And he seldom struck without getting his blow home. He was holding his own so well that Tom knew it would not help matters for him to join in. He must just wait by the little launch, ready to start up and away if Hume should be able to make a get-away.

"What's Kalche up to now, I wonder?" said Tom suddenly to himself. Hume was defending himself against the stubborn attacks of the ruffians, but Kalche had moved away from the fighting men, and had perched himself on the big transom of the boat. Then Tom saw the glint of the villain's pistol in the pale slant of moonlight that had just broken through the dark clouds above.

There was only one explanation to the man's actions. He intended to risk hurting one of his own men by trying to shoot the detective as he struggled there in the waist of the boat.

Tom looked round desperately. What could he do? If he let go his hold on the gunwale of the little launch the boat would drift away. If he pulled the boat back aground they might not get her free again, for the wind was blowing towards the bank on the side on which he now was waiting.

Kalche was pointing the weapon. No doubt he would wait for an opening, and then—

Quick as thought Tom acted. He dived his hand over the side of the small boat, turned up a floorboard, and got hold of a heavy spanner from the tool recess beneath. The lad balanced this in his hand, let the boat go free for an instant, then swung his arm back and sent the spanner flying through the air.

There was a yell of pain from Kalche, and his automatic pistol went off, discharging the bullet harmlessly into the air. Tom's aim had been straight and true. He had caught Kalche on the wrist with a well-directed shot.

The men with whom Hume was fighting evidently thought that, somehow, Kalche had been shot, for they turned towards him with gasping exclamations of alarm. At that instant Hume took his opportunity, and the nickname Avalanche had never before fitted him so nicely as it did then.

He leapt at his assailants, rained blows on them, and crashed them, dazed and

shouting, into the bottom of the boat. Then, with his low chuckle, he leapt overboard and splashed over towards Tom.

In thirty seconds the lad and the detective were aboard their small craft, and Tom was jerking desperately at the starting handle.

With a roar the little boat felt the thrust of her propeller. She was curving round gracefully, and away to sea, followed by the frantic blazing of Kalche's automatic, before the ruffians in the bigger boat had heaved the stem of their craft free from the bank on to which they had gently nosed her.

"So far so good, Tom!" chuckled Hume, lighting a cigarette as coolly as if nothing had happened. "But we mustn't be too elated, my boy. They have a fast craft there, and they'll be round that horse and pursuing us, well up astern of us, in an hour or so."

"Our hope lies in the night getting a bit thick, Mr. Hume," replied Tom. "We might get patches of mist farther out to sea. I noticed that it is thick in parts about three miles out."

"Yes, my boy, we must carry out our original intention of getting as far to sea as possible. But we'll have to run along by the land for another five miles or so before we can point straight out. There's another shoal—Norringen Bank—between us and the shipway. We must run east till we clear it, for it is only to the east where we can get through. Two hours of ebb will see that bank bare and stretching like a long finger out to the eastward."

"Once round that, then, I should think we'll be safe enough."

"We'll be safer, at all events, Tom."

The pair sped on in silence for some time. They looked astern, searching the waters for signs of the pursuing craft at every fitful burst of moonlight. Kalche could easily keep in their wake, since they had only one direction in which they could travel—along the narrow channel between the Norringen Bank and a long spit of sand known as the Saddleback.

They had no chart to guide them, but Hume had prepared himself for any eventuality, so he had made himself acquainted with the run of the channels off shore by reference to his maps. These, luckily, showed the outlines of the banks, but they did not give any shoal-water soundings.

Between the Saddleback and the land there was another deep channel, too wide to swim, so they had no escape by pointing shorewards, and abandoning the motor-launch as soon as she might run aground. They must just trust to speed and to luck.

They were nearing the end of the channel when Tom held up his hand.

"Listen!" he said.

Hume cocked his head on one side. Then he chuckled.

"Yes, they're there all right, boy. Not far off, either, and going like smoke. We'll see them when those clouds let the moon shine down for a spell."

Tom fussed about over the engine, increasing the supply of lubricating oil, etc. They were trusting their lives to that little engine, and the maintenance of every ounce of power might mean their salvation.

"There they are!"

Hume's voice roused Tom from his work. He peered astern across the now silvery, glinting water.

The big launch was coming along like a hydroplane; so fast, in fact, that Tom gasped, and felt his heart miss a beat. They wouldn't be able to hold the lead even to the tail of the Norringen Bank,

which was now visible by the shoal water breaking on top of it.

"Wouldn't it be best to drive the launch aground, sir?" said Tom. "Or perhaps we could lash the helm, slip overboard, swim to the bank, and wade back to land along the top of it, and let Kalche and his men chase an empty boat?"

"A pretty little scheme, if it would work, Tom. But the launch, left to herself, would soon get out of her course, and then the game would be up. No, lad, two in a launch are better than two in the sea. We'll hang on."

"Right-ho, Mr. Hume! As you say, the launch would soon show signs of being unattended. It'll come to another fight in a few minutes, won't it?"

"Fraid so, my lad. Still, we'll see. Nurse up that little engine again. Plenty of oil, but don't risk smoking the plugs."

The speedy little craft forged ahead gallantly, but the bigger boat astern drew rapidly closer and closer. Then Hume pointed in for the lashing waves over the Norringen Bank, and Tom half thought that the detective was, after all, going to run her aground, and make a bolt for it by wading along shorewards in the shoal-water. The detective, however, when near the breakers, turned the boat parallel to the bank again.

He leaned forward towards Tom.

"I'm going to shut off power," he said. "You crank up for all you're worth, just as if we'd broken down. I'll open the throttle just at the right moment, but you keep turning hard."

Tom did as he was told, realising that Hume had some sort of a scheme in mind.

Suddenly the detective switched off power, and Tom began turning the starting-handle frantically. Hume kept the throttle shut, so, of course, the engine wouldn't fire.

Kalche's boat swept up close in a few minutes now that Hume's boat was losing way.

"Engine's conked out," Tom and

Hume heard Kalche remark, as the big launch swept up abreast of the little boat. "Stop the engine, Birch. We'll get 'em now. We won't close with Avalanche. Just stand by and fire at them from a safe distance."

"Right-ho, guv'nor!" said one of the men. "Sure and safe this time."

Tom, in the meantime, was heaving and jerking at the starting-handle. Kalche's launch was right abeam and about thirty yards away. The men began to raise their pistols.

Suddenly Hume opened the throttle full, and the engine of the little boat roared out, and the boat shot ahead at the sudden powerful thrusting of the propeller. Hume jammed the helm hard over, and like an arrow from a cross-bow the little craft changed full tilt at the bigger motor-boat.

A swift exclamation of alarm and fear sounded from Kalche and his men. Then there was a splintering crash, and Tom and Hume were thrown heavily as the stem of the little boat ripped clean through the planking at the side of the bigger launch.

Kalche and his ruffians were tumbled all of a heap, and had not picked themselves up till Hume had leaped down to his feet and had thrown in the reverse. The little boat immediately drew away from the big one, letting the water now rush through the hole she had cut in the planking.

"Jump overboard! Struggle for Norringen Bank!" cried Kalche. "The launch is sinking!"

As Hume and Tom drew rapidly away in the little boat, going stern-foremost as she was, her bows crumpled and leaking, they saw the big launch stagger and lurch to port. Then the port gunwale dipped under, just as the men aboard her leapt clear.

The launch disappeared beneath the surface, and her master and crew, the former still with his green spectacles on, struck out for the shoal-water.

Hume waited only to see the men with



As Tom's pursuer was about to leap upon the gunwale of the boat there came a low chuckling laugh, and Avalanche Hume, with a revolver clenched tightly in his fist, sprang forward!

their feet on hard sand, wading up the bank, the water chest deep, then he altered the blades of the propeller once more, and the boat lost its sternway, began to forge ahead, and was soon speeding away into the darkness, followed by the curses of Kalche and his men.

The last view Hume and Tom had of Kalche was the gleam of the green spectacles in the moonlight, the sinewy, knotted fist clenched and shaking in the air, as the man stood waist-deep in the water, and saw the two persons he hated so much disappearing into the night.

### In the Shipway.

"WATER coming in badly."

Tom? "Rather! Trickling down over the fore-sheets like billo-ho! Gosh, Mr. Hume, it's spouting in on either side of the stern like half a dozen taps turned full on!"

Hume whistled.

"We'll have to put a stop to that, lad," he said. "I'd better leave it to you. Better caulk it roughly with something."

"The stern's stove in," remarked Tom, withdrawing his head from under the foredeck. "If I try to ram unravelled rope between the broken plank-ends and the stem, I'll bust 'em out completely, I expect. I'll cram in all the swabs and cotton-waste we can muster, and then jam your overcoat over the lot. That'll enable me to keep the boat fairly dry by bailing."

"Good lad! Then get to it," clipped out Hume. "We're round the Norrington Bank now, and I'm putting her head for Cromer. The tables are turned on Kalche with a vengeance—what?"

"Rather!" grinned Tom, tearing the strands of a piece of hempen rope into oakum, and adding that to the little heap of cotton-waste and the two swabbing cloths they found on the motor-boat. "His ardour will cool down a bit during their walk waist-deep in the water to the mainland. He'll have plenty of time to think of the advisability of leaving us alone in future, sir."

"He won't sing off, Tom; don't promise yourself that. I've been up against Kalche before, and I know what sort of an animal he is. He'll still try to kidnap you, and, I have reason to believe, to murder me. We'll hear more of him yet."

Tom thoughtfully jammed the heap of material he had collected round the leaky stem of the motor-boat.

"Hurrah, sir!" he cried. "It has practically stopped the inrush of water. I'll just get your coat crammed in, too, and held there by the boathook jammed tightly against this thwart, then I'll bail out."

Before long the boat was once more fairly dry. Tom had to keep bailing pretty speedily; but they could easily master the leaks occasioned by the ramming of Kalche's boat now. On they sped across the now rather lumpy water, until a low exclamation of alarm escaped Hume's lips.

"Petrol tank's practically empty, Tom," said the detective, rapping the tank with his knuckles. "Whew! It was full when we started. What's this—"

Hume bent his head and sniffed at the tank. Tom peering over his shoulder while he did so.

"Well, of all the luck—" began Tom. He was interrupted by Hume's out-

burst of anger at his own negligence to examine the tank after the firing of Kalche and his men.

"Fool that I am!" he cried. "One of those bullets has hit the tank and nearly all our petrol has leaked out. There is a bullet dent here where one of the shots flattened out on the tank. It came through the gunwale first, so it has not broken right through the tank. But there's a crack, and the petrol has leaked out. Here's a to-do! But thank goodness we have thrown Kalche out of the chase—"

Tom broke in.

"We're out in the shipway, anyway, sir," he said. "At the worst, we can hail a passing craft and get taken aboard."

"That's all there is left to do, lad," replied Hume. "I'll stop the engine now, and reserve the drop of juice there is left for getting alongside some vessel to hail her. Look out for lights, then."

Now rolling sickeningly in the chop, Tom and Hume searched the dark waters for approaching lights. Some came, and passed, the look-outs not hearing the hail for help from the disabled motor-boat. After three unsuccessful rushes towards lights, with the consequent further waste of petrol, things began to look rather desperate.

There was no lantern on the motor-launch. Hume's torch was wet and useless, and, to cap matters, the broken plank-ends at the forefoot began to work, and the leaking became more serious.

Tom bailed hard, but could only just keep the water under control. The launch rolled helpless about, first taking the lumpy waves head on, then slewing round and taking them on the quarter, then dead abeam.

When taking them abeam, the little craft rolled almost on her beam ends, and green water came sluicing in over the gunwale at times. Hume and Tom felt that they were in a pretty plight.

Hume began to chuckle.

"Well, we're having a meal of it, Tom," he said. "You're the seaman. Think we'll last out till daylight?"

"Not if it gets rougher, or remains as rough," replied Tom. "This is only a ripple for a big boat, but to us it's a pretty bad pople. I—"

The lad broke off and looked straight ahead.

"Lights of a sail boat bearing down dead for us, sir," he cried. "See—over there!"

Hume looked over and exclaimed with satisfaction.

"Mustn't let this one pass, anyway, Tom," he remarked. "Crank up for our last spurt. I'll steer dead for the lights and swerve away from the boat's bows just at the last minute. Then we can yell fit to wake the dead, and if the look-out isn't asleep we'll be heard."

Action followed words. Hume steered the motor-boat, now going weakly owing to the lack of pressure in the tank, dead for the centre of the lights. Gradually the huge square sails of a square-rigged vessel could be discerned.

"Now, Tom," said Hume. "I'll swerve and just miss her bows. Yell your loudest as we flash by—"

The detective broke off suddenly. The engine of the motor-boat had stopped. All the petrol was gone!

Over went the helm, and, though the boat turned with her impetus, she had not sufficient way to carry her clear.

A strangled cry broke from Tom. The bows of the vessel were towering above them. The outline of a well-known neat little figurehead seemed to menace them from above.

"It's the Ulysses, Mr. Hume!" cried

Tom. "Our ship—and she's running us down!"

### The Guiding Light!

TOM'S face was as white as death. It was all over in an instant, but to the youngster it seemed like the terrible strain of hours. He heard a shout from Hume:

"Jump—for your life, jump!"

Above them, like a wedge of blackness, the great bows of the barquentine came smashing on resistlessly through the surge.

Tom tried to jump for it, but his limbs refused to stir. And then he felt himself seized and lifted bodily, flung like a thing of paper. He struck the water with a splash that was drowned in the sound of the seas washing round the cutwater of the Ulysses. For a moment the water closed above his head, then he struck upwards, fighting for breath.

It had seemed an instant before as if the little motor-launch must inevitably be smashed to matchwood beneath the bows of the on-racing barquentine. But the little craft was flung aside like a toy, and Tom saw a dark figure flung with it. Avalanche Hume, in striving to save Tom's life, had himself been caught in the wreck of the launch!

Tom felt a sickening wave of horror sweep over him. His senses reeled. And then, as the towering hull of the sailing ship smashed past him through the waves, and he heard a scream from the look-out on her deck: "Port your helm! We've run down a launch!" something black in the trough of the waves ten yards away leapt out to his straining eyes. A wild, hoarse cry broke from his lips. It was Hume, and even as the youngster's startled eyes rested on that black wave-tossed shape, it vanished beneath the surface.

The ice-cold hand of fear gripped the youngster's heart, and it seemed to miss a beat. What had happened? Hume was a powerful swimmer, but Tom had seen him sink like a stone.

And then it a flash he realised what it must mean. The launch had been flung into the air, to turn turtle upon its occupant: the gunwale must have struck Hume on the head as the launch overturned, and he had sunk unconscious.

Tom struck out fiercely, driving through the water to the spot where he had last seen the head of the unconscious man. Already he realised that the Ulysses was luffing up into the wind. Vaguely the orders came to his ears above the lashing of the sails:

"Man the starboard braces! Haul, there—haul! We're heaving to on the starboard tack, sir! Just run down a launch!"

Then Tom dived.

He struck downwards through the foaming swirl of black waters, and his heart leapt as the clutching fingers of his left hand gripped something below, something that rolled heavily in the darkness. His fingers clawed for a hold, then he struck up desperately, his lungs seeming as though they were about to burst. The youngster's head lifted through the foam, and he gasped in a great mouthful of air. But his grip was still on that lifeless form, and the moonlight, breaking for a moment through the racing cloud-banks, gleamed white on the wet face that sagged back helplessly in the foam, a crimson gash on the forehead showing where the gunwale of the launch had struck the man senseless.

Then the clouds swallowed the moon again, and Tom was fighting in the

darkness against the swirl of waters that threatened to drag his burden from him. While, yards away now, the black outline of the barquentine loomed up through the murk.

"They'll lower a boat—they must lower a boat soon!" thought the youngster desperately.

Even as the thought passed through his brain, he saw the calcium light of a night lifebuoy flare out in the darkness. It struck the water forty yards from Tom and Hume. Tom groaned inwardly.

"I'll never do it! I'll never do it!"

He kicked out doggedly with both legs, twisting round on to his back. But though he struck out gamely for the light-buoy, dragging Hume through the water with him, the Hood youngster felt that he could never get near to that smoking flare of calcium. Already his arms and legs were aching with all the exertions he had been through that night. But his lips were set doggedly.

"I must do it—I must!" he muttered.

He had succeeded in kicking off his boots, and now he managed to wriggle out of his coat without relinquishing his hold of Hume.

"That's better," he thought.

Twisting round, he could see the light ahead, like a beacon of hope, rising and falling on the waves. Beyond, half-seen in the darkness the *Ulysses* still made little way, though her sails were lashing dead in the wind's eye. Tom fancied that he heard shouted orders aboard the barquentine, though he could not be sure but that it was simply his imagination.

The training-ship youngster struggled on wearily; but he felt that he was making no movement worth speaking of through the strong-running seas.

"They'll row to the buoy there—they'll have the boat out in a brace of shakes now," he thought. "If I can't get nearer to that buoy they'll never find us. It's too dark—"

A sob choked in his throat. It was fear, not for himself, but for Hume. After the terrible strain of the last twenty-four hours, this culminating catastrophe had all but broken the youngster's usually iron nerve. Tom, ever cool, had learnt to rely upon his nerve in time of stress; but now it looked as though he had tried that cool nerve to the breaking-point.

And then something black came leaping out of the darkness between himself and the calcium light of the night-buoy—one of the ship's lifeboats from the *Ulysses*, manned by training-ship youngsters. Tom saw the flash of oars, saw a dark figure in the stern peering round into the enveloping darkness. A faint hail came to his ears—and then the boat was swallowed up in the darkness beyond the light as it circled slowly round in search.

Tom shouted, but his hoarse quaver was pitifully weak. With temples that drummed with the exertion, he put every ounce of his remaining strength into an effort to drive towards that swaying light. Again a distant hail came to his ears, over the black waste of waters. Again he tried to shout back. But a shrill croak was all he could manage, and a sudden dread seized him that the game was up.

"They'll never find us—never! And I can't swim any more—"

His senses were reeling. It seemed as though the waves themselves were dancing in his brain. He felt his clutch on Hume relaxing, fought to make his fingers grip again—

And then a wild shout came to his ears from close by. He forced open the lids of his dazed eyes, to see the ship's boat come shooting towards him over the tumbling seas. Beyond, against the wall



A startled cry broke from Tom Gale's lips as he recognised the figurehead on the approaching vessel. "It's the *Ulysses*, Mr. Hume. Our ship—and she's running us down!"

of darkness where the barquentine rose like her own shadow, the calcium light of the buoy winked and nodded like a glaring, blinking eye.

"What ho, Tom, old bean!"

It was the cheery voice of Dicky West. The red-headed young leader of the Hoods—leader since Tom's own disrating—was looking down at his chum with twinkling eyes. Dicky believed in cheering up invalids. And he considered Tom an invalid now.

"Oh, not so dusty, Dicky," answered Tom, grinning weakly. "Good heavens, though, to think I'm back here aboard the *Ulysses*!"

Dicky West chuckled.

"Yes, rather! Back already! Hanged if this isn't the giddy limit! I can tell you this, Tom—you could have knocked me down with a feather when, after scouting round for whoever it was we had upset, we hauled you and Mr. Hume out of the briny! Blowed if I didn't think it must be a couple of ghosts when I spotted your old dial in the water, Tom—and Mr. Hume's, too! But you felt solid enough when we hauled you out! You'd fainted, but you were still hanging on to Hume's collar as though he were a hunk of cake!"

Tom was lying in a bunk in the compartment in the waist of the *Ulysses* where the training-ship boys slept. It was morning, and the sunlight was streaming in at the starboard porthole near Tom as the barquentine drove on before a fair breeze up the east coast. He felt utterly played out physically, but, except for his tired muscles, he was little the worse now for his exciting two days.

Up on deck, the other youngsters from the *Ajax* were busy swabbing down, but Dicky had been allowed down to see his chum. They could hear the patter of bare feet overhead, and could hear the shouting and laughter, the occasional voice of one of the officers; and also, like music to Tom's ears, the creak of straining sheets as the great sails of the *Ulysses* filled out to the morning breeze.

"What a fine ship she is!" he cried suddenly, listening to it all, and to the sound of water swilling along the run of the boat as she plunged on through the waves. "By gum, but she's the nattiest tot in the North Sea! Hanged if she's not, Dicky!"

Dicky nodded.

"She's that all right," he agreed. "And now you're back aboard her the

only fly in the jam's gone! If only they let you stay on board, Tom!"

Tom nodded.

"If only they would! There's a chance this time, I suppose, seeing that I'm not a stowaway this trip! But you never know. Dave says they'll land me at Dundee and send me off to the Ajax again. And I can't hope to be wrecked a second time, and kidnapped on top of it!"

Dicky West chuckled.

"No. That was a stroke of luck, wasn't it?"

Tom grinned.

"Stroke of luck, d'you call it?"

"Rather!" laughed Dicky. "Why, hang it all, if it hadn't been for Kalche carting you off as he did, you would have been aboard the Ajax by now, in form with old Cosine, probably! And if it hadn't been for the wreck, Kalche would probably never have got you, although he was hot on your tracks. No. As far as we're concerned that business was lucky from beginning to end!"

Tom had already learnt that the newspaper report of the train wreck stated that, by a miracle, not one of the injured had been fatally hurt.

"But I can tell you, we were mighty relieved to find that your name wasn't in the list of the injured!" Dicky added; and there was a look in the red-headed youngster's eyes that told Tom more than the lightly spoken words. "Say, Tom, let's hear it again. Spin the whole yarn of what happened to you and Mr. Hume between the wreck and when we picked you up last night."

Tom laughed, and did as he was bid.

"And it's something to do with my parentage, Dicky," he finished up. "I know that pretty well for certain now! Jove! I wonder if even you can realise all that thought can mean to a chap, Dicky old man? To think that I've parents who are most likely still alive—though I haven't the vaguest hint as to who they are—"

Dicky nodded sympathetically. He, too, was an orphan, and he could realise something, at any rate, of what he would feel in Tom's place.

"I can guess, anyway," Dick said simply. "By gum, though, Tom, what if your father's a giddy millionaire or something, and Kalche knows it and is after a ransom! Can't think why else he should be so keen on getting hold of you—"

Footsteps from the companion-way leading down from the deck caused Dicky to break off and turn his head. An exclamation broke from him, and he sprang to his feet beside the bunk where Tom lay. Dicky grinned a cheerful welcome, though he would heartily have resented the intrusion of anyone else upon his little quiet pow-wow with Tom.

The newcomer was Avalanche Hume.

"Hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed as he came up. "How d'you feel, Tom?"

"Top-hole, thanks!" grinned Tom. "Bit fagged, that's all. You got it worse than I did, Mr. Hume, with that whack on the head! How are you feeling?"

"Fit as a fiddle! I'm used to whacks on the head, and I'm only ashamed that one knocked me out as it did and left you with all the burden on your hands. You saved my life, you know, Tom, last night."

Tom coloured.

"Oh, rot, Mr. Hume!" he stammered awkwardly. "I—"

"Cut that out!" laughed Hume. "You The GEM LIBRARY.—No. 837.

know you did. Well, there's no need for us to thank each other for things like that. Instead, I'll give you the good news I've brought—at least, I think you'll call it good news!"

Tom's eyes lit up expectantly, looking up with eagerness at the strong, determined face of the man by the bunk.

"I've been speaking to the skipper of the Ulysses," Hume went on quietly. "We've still got to get official permission from the Ajax, but I think I can guarantee to get it. So that, unless a miracle happens and they say 'No,' you'll be staying aboard the barquentine for the rest of her voyage, Tom!"

### Knocked Out!

TOM gasped, and Hume chuckled.

"Good news—eh?"

"I should say so!" cried Tom. "Oh, that's fine! By gum, sir, but that's the stuff to give 'em! But—but—" For a moment he broke off. "You think the commander of the Ajax will give permission all right?"

"I wouldn't have told you of it if I wasn't practically dead-sure—as sure as one can be of anything," returned Hume, with a ring of conviction in his voice.

And that conviction was justified. At Dundee, reached next day, an exchange of wires was effected, and Tom was taken before Captain MacNayre, to learn that permission had been granted by

### "JUNGLE JINKS."

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Commander Boyce for him to remain aboard the barquentine. The news fled round the Ulysses, and Stoniky Burr, and his crony Hemming were the only youngsters aboard who did not join in the cheer that greeted Tom after his interview.

Tom and Dicky were on shore leave when Hume left the Ulysses, and they accompanied him to the railway-station. He gripped Tom's hands warmly in parting.

"Cheerio!" he said in his quiet, clipped tones. "Good-bye and good luck! Only wish I were going with the Ulysses for her cruise myself. But it's time I was back at my job; our friend with the green spectacles needs watching. Though it will be an out-size job to get on his tracks again most probably. Not likely he'll stay at the old house in the fens where we had that interesting little slice of fun, Tom."

Hume's grey eyes twinkled for a moment at the memory of that desperate fight for life. Adventure good and strong was the breath of existence to Avalanche Hume.

The train glided from the station, and Tom and Dicky turned away. Hume had "lobbed" the youngsters ten shillings—in training-ship slang—and both felt that it would be a pity for all that money to lie idle for very long.

"But not tuck, Dicky," warned Tom, with a grin. "I've got to box this afternoon in the Port versus Starboard, and I've jolly well got to be in the pink, just to show those port wets what the old starboards can do!"

The boxing was to take place on the main deck, in the waist of the Ulysses. The three best boxers from each watch were to take part, the watch gaining the largest total of points being the winners. Tom and a fellow named Snow, of the Raleigh division; and Stoniky Burr, of the Blakes, were to represent the starboard watch; while the ports were entering Starling, the Chief P.O. of the Nelsons, and a hefty giant named Peel, of the Grenvilles, and another Grenville named Holloway. Altogether, it promised to be a hotly-contested affair, and excitement ran high aboard the Ulysses. The perpetual rivalry between the two watches was as keen aboard the barquentine as aboard the mother-ship, the Ajax.

The opening bout, between Snow and Holloway, was soon over. The starboard watch fellow knocked out Holloway in the second round, and starboard hopes ran high. Stoniky Burr had drawn against Peel, and Tom against Starling. It was generally considered that Tom could hold his own against Starling, though the leader of the Nelsons was one of the finest boxing-men on the training-ship; and as for Stoniky Burr, no one had a doubt but that he could lick Peel, the giant Grenville, who, although as big as the bully, had not the science of a black-beetle.

"Good old starboards! We've put it across the ports at footer, and now we're going to show 'em what's what with the gloves!" chuckled Dicky West, as he watched Stoniky Burr and Peel enter the improvised ring.

But a nasty shock was waiting for the starboard watch.

Stoniky Burr, in boxing-kit, showed up to their full advantage his immense chest and shoulder-muscles, and the muscles of his huge arms. Peel, equally heavily-built, was as strong, but slower—comparatively slow though Burr himself was, compared with such boxers as Starling and Tom.

It was Burr who took the offensive, battering away at Peel's slow, cheerful smile—a smile that was reputed aboard the Ajax never to wear off, even in his sleep. And a good number of Burr's smashing blows landed. At the end of the first round the starboards were very cheery. Things seemed to be going well.

The second round opened with a further smashing attack from Burr. Tom, squatting beside Dicky and Starling, changed ready for the next bout, grinned happily. The interest of his watch was always first with Tom, and he did not care that it was Burr, his enemy, the fellow who had—or so Tom believed—painted the nose of the Ajax's figurehead red and allowed him to be disgraced for it; all Tom cared was that the starboard man was on top of the port.

"Go it, Stoniky!" called Tom.

Stoniky was grinning as well as Peel; but Stoniky's smile was as different from his opponent's as chalk from cheese. Burr was a sneer—a sneer of triumph—for he felt that he had Peel beaten. He was following the other round the ropes, sending in blow after blow, which Peel seemed incapable of guarding. They were mostly body blows; and then a straight left from Burr went driving in, to crash with blinding force between the port fellow's eyes.

Peel staggered back, and Burr leapt after him. There was something unnecessarily cruel always about Burr when he boxed; and Tom's lips tightened. He was sorry that a starboard fellow should be fighting as Burr fought.

Peel, his smile still showing upon his

battered features, fought on pluckily. He seemed to have no idea of attacking Burr; every movement of his arms and feet was defensive.

Burr's right came breaking through Peel's guard again, and Peel staggered. But he kept his feet. Burr's left followed, straight to the port fellow's throat. Right, left, right, left—the blows went raining in. And at last Peel fell.

A shout went up from the starboards. Burr's victory would mean certain victory for them, since Snow had already beaten his man. Even if Starling were to succeed in beating Tom, evenly matched though the two were, the ports would be unable to pull the fat out of the fire.

But Burr had not won yet. Even as Mr. Bowser's deep, rolling voice counted, "Seven, eight," Peel lurched to his feet. A moment later the bell sounded for the end of the round.

And it was in the opening of the next round that the starboard watch received their shock.

Most of the onlookers regarded Peel as an already beaten man, as he left his corner, still smiling the same slow smile, for the next round. No one noticed that there was another look in the port fellow's eyes now—a queer, dogged look.

Burr opened the round, as usual, with a right hook that should have ended matters in two seconds. But somehow it didn't reach its mark. Instead, Peel moved—for him, at any rate, like lightning. The blow fell on air, and Peel's own right flashed out.

There was the heavy thud of leather on Burr's chin, and then a wild shout went up from the port fellows at the ropes.

Burr had tottered back, arms dropped limply to his sides. The next moment his knees had sagged from beneath him, and the bully of the Ajax went crashing to the deck. His head striking the boards with an echoing crack.

"One, two—"  
Mr. Bowser, the barrel-shaped little mate, began the count. But Burr did not stir a muscle. Breathless, the on-looking youngsters waited. Had the impossible happened? Had Peel turned the tables on the starboard fellow, after all?

### The White Feather!

"ONE—two—"  
Mr. Bowser's gruff voice boomed out the count.  
Burr lay on the deck where that flashing blow had sent him crashing, to the amazement of the onlookers. Peel, of the port watch, though hefty and strong, had seemed a beaten man already. No one had dreamed that he would floor the starboard team fellow after the terrible punishment he had received at Burr's hands in the first two rounds.

The onlooking youngsters scarcely breathed. Not a sound broke the tense silence except Mr. Bowser's voice, and the grinding jerk of a distant ship weighing anchor farther up the river.

"Six—seven—"  
And then a sudden wild shout rang out from the starboard watch. Burr had moved with open eyes, had lifted himself on one arm; he was struggling to his feet!

There was a look of surprise in Burr's eyes as he faced Peel again. But it was a look that soon turned to one of savage fury. Burr regarded Peel's temporary success as an out and out fluke. He would show Peel now!

He attacked fiercely. But there was a

change in Peel now. The port watch fellow still bore the sleepy smile on his face—a face battered badly by Burr's fists, but the slow dullness of the first two rounds had left the Grenville fellow. There was a look in his eyes that was new.

He did not give way before Stoniky Burr this time. He stood his ground, and his great fists moved quickly. Burr, to his surprise, found that he could not penetrate the other's defence with the old ease. It was a shock to Stoniky.

But at last a straight left found Peel's chin, and he staggered back. Burr followed up like a battering-ram, but a shout went up as he was driven back in his turn by a flashing right from Peel that all but found his solar plexus. Then the end of the round took Burr glowering to his corner, and a murmur of excited comment buzzed out.

"By gum, old Stoniky isn't having things all his own way, after all—not by long chalks!" said Tom to Dicky.

"That's a fact!" said the red-headed youngster. "Looks to me as though you may be wanted, Tom, to pull the fat out of the fire for the starboard watch!"

"Oh, hang it, surely Peel won't be able to lick Burr!" said Tom. "But if he does, as you say, that'll make us and the port watch equal as far as points go."

Starling was sitting next to Tom, and he grinned.

"Don't you be too sure our man won't lick Stoniky!" he said. "And if he does—well, I'll do my best to make you see stars, Gale, when our turn comes!"

Tom chuckled. He was looking forward keenly to his bout with Starling of the ports. Starling was one of the finest boxers aboard the training-ship, and Tom and he would be a great pair.

But so far, at any rate, the starboard watch were ahead, thanks to Snow's victory over Holloway. And to judge by the opening of the next round it looked as though they were likely to keep their lead.

Burr's onslaught was terrific, and Peel retreated before it in his old dull way.

But then the port fellow seemed to pull himself together once more. That queer look flashed out in his eyes as it had done in the third round. He defended doggedly, and then he found his opportunity.

Burr was slogging away with more strength than science now, angry that he could not end the fight there and then. For a moment he left his chin unguarded. Peel's left flashed out, and Burr countered too late. He only succeeded in driving the blow upwards. It crashed into his face, and a snarl of rage broke from him. Blood was flowing from his nose, and his eyes seemed blinded by the smashing force of Peel's fist. Peel

followed up with amazing speed, and his left thudded home again.

Burr had lost his temper badly now. He rushed at the port fellow, only to be sent reeling back by a stubborn jab with Peel's right. There was something dogged and invincible about Peel's defence now; for the first time since the opening round a sudden doubt flashed into Burr's mind. Could he win?

Thud, thud—Burr beat desperately, vainly against that iron defence. And then Peel moved slowly forward to the attack, forcing Stoniky before him helplessly. Burr's right caught him a vicious blow in the ribs, but Peel only smiled his battered smile. And panic seized Stoniky Burr.

If he had had the pluck, had stood up to Peel and fought on with all his strength and skill, Burr could have beaten his opponent of the port watch. But the yellow streak that was never far below the surface with Burr was coming out. He relied always on his great strength; when that seemed to be failing him it was Burr's habit to find some other way out of a difficulty instead of bearing his gruel; and he was not too particular as to his methods.

His brain was working quickly now. He did not mean to suffer the disgrace of defeat at Peel's hands, but he also did not mean to risk fighting on. He would willingly have fouled, only Mr. Bowser's keen eyes would certainly detect that, and Burr knew how hot things would be made for him if he tried it on.

And then a scheme flashed into Burr's brain. He would cheat Peel of his well-earned victory, after all!

*(What underhand scheme is in Burr's mind? Make sure you read next week's thrilling long instalment of this powerful serial, chums.)*



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