

PETE'S SCHOOLDAYS



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PETE'S SCHOOLDAYS.

A Splendid Tale of School Life.

By S. CLARKE HOOK and MAURICE MERRIMAN.

CHAPTER 1.

Pete, the Negro Lad—A Terrible Moment—Pete's Valour—His Flight—How He Met Rex—Pete As a Scarecrow—Unexpected Thanks—Pete's Great Fight.

A LONG a country lane, which led to England's western shore, walked Pete. He was but a negro lad, and although his face was jovial and smiling, he had little on earth to make him happy. In the first place, he had come all the way from Zanzibar, and seeing that he had travelled without money or friends, whom he had left all behind in his African home, as may be imagined, he had had a rough time of it. Still, it took a great deal to dishearten Pete, and now that he was tired and hungry, he drew up his magnificently formed frame and strode onwards, not knowing where he would sleep that night, nor how to get food.

"It ain't de pleasantest situation I hab eber been in," he mused; "still, it ain't de worst, so we'm got all dat to be thankful for. I'd rader like to be a bird, 'cos dey get ober de ground so well; de only ting is I shouldn't like eating worms. Nunno, I'd rader be dat rabbit—den you'm got de shooting parties, and dat's a drawback in de life ob a rabbit. I spect dere are drawbacks in all kinds ob lives. Wish I didn't remember de old plantation way down Zanzibar so well to night—and moder—and fader—and little Jake. Golly! I ain't going to tink 'bout dose tings. No good taking all de troubles togeder. Dere's two tings I would like to know. De first is, where dis lane leads to; and de second, what am I going to do when I get dere? Still, as you can't know tings like dat, and eben if you could as it would not make any difference, why, it ain't any good bodering 'bout dem."

From which it will be seen that Pete was a bit of a philosopher.

But now two things happened which, perhaps, changed the whole course of Pete's life. He was nearing a sharp bend in the country lane, and was walking on the grass beside the ditch, while a high hedge hid the surrounding country from his view. The ringing of a bicycle bell caused him to look back, and, coming up the hill, which was steep, he saw a young girl on a bicycle, her golden hair streaming in the wind, and her fair cheeks flushed with the exercise, which was rather trying at that part, for the hill was steep. Behind her came a carriage and pair. Now, the sharp bend was to Pete's right, but he was on the left side of the lane, so was the young girl on the bicycle.

Pete did not take much heed, for the simple reason that, although there was no pathway, he was walking on the grass, while the bicyclist was, of course, in the narrow lane. He had almost reached the corner, and the young girl was level with him, when to his horror a motor car came whizzing round the corner at a speed that caused it to swerve right across the narrow lane and rush straight for the young girl.

Pete had no time for thought. What happened was over in a second. With

one bound, he seized the girl by her dress, and with a strength that would have done credit to a grown man he flung her on the grass, whence he pitched headlong into the ditch, at the bottom of which was about a foot of water and two feet of mire.

Then there was a crash as the car churned the bicycle into pieces, and, rushing onwards, narrowly missed the carriage; then it was lost to sight.

Pete sat up in the ditch and scooped mud out of his eyes and mouth.

"Grooh! Hope dere weren't any worms in dat mud," he growled. "Wonder if I saved de girl? Hope I did, somehow. Wouldn't I like to hab de handling ob dat motor car driver, if I happened to be 'bout his size."

An elderly gentleman, with a stern though handsome face, leapt from the carriage. A handsome lady followed him, and clasped the girl to her breast as she rose. The elderly gentleman seized Pete by his miry hand and drew him from the ditch. He did not speak; he merely gazed into Pete's eyes.

"It's all right, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "De child ain't hurt. I'm mighty glad ob dat, 'cos I'm fond ob children."

The young girl was about the same age as Pete, but he did not take that into consideration.

"You'll get your hand frightfully muddy, sah! Best leabe go ob dat black one. I ain't in a condition to shake hands wid gentlemen."

The elderly gentleman released Pete's hand and turned to the young girl. Pete dodged round them and strode onwards, and when he turned the corner he ran. It was a remarkably stupid thing to do, because seeing that the girl was the daughter of the gentleman and lady, they would assuredly have rewarded him, and perhaps given him the start in life he so badly needed. But the thought that his brave and prompt action should be rewarded with money was repugnant to Pete; neither did he want thanks. To his way of thinking, he had merely done what anyone else would have done, and there the matter ended.

He knew that the carriage must come along the lane, so he slipped through the first gap in the hedge he came to, and waited for the carriage to pass.

He had not been in that position many moments when he heard someone coming along the lane; then he heard the beat of the horses, and a lad with a calm, handsome face came scrambling through the hedge, not far from the spot where Pete was.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed the new-comer aloud. "That was a narrow squeak. Nearly caught that—— Why, what's this little lot? Oh, you precious scarecrow! Who are you?"

"I'm an ordinary nigger," answered Pete, to whom the inquiry was addressed.

"Tut, tut, tut! I should have taken you for an extraordinary one, or a nigger who imagined that he was a mud worm, and had been groping for its food. What's your name?"

"Pete. What's yours?"

"Rex. Rex is the Latin for a king, but I am not a king."

"Nunno! You don't look like one. You'm most too young to be a king."

"How did you get into that ghastly mess?"

"Fell into de ditch. I suppose you don't know anyone who wants to employ a nigger boy?"

"You might get a job as a scarecrow. You see, this is the fruit season, and you would scare any crow, especially if you howled. Can you howl?"

"Like so?" inquired Pete, uttering a yell that made Rex start.

"Tut, tut, tut! Why, yes! You are a born scarecrow, and just the fellow the doctor wants to scare the birds out of his garden. It's a lucky thing I met you. Would you like the job?"

"What are de wages?"

"Got any money?"

"Nunno!"

"Well, I'll tell you what I will do with you, Pete. I'll stand you a feed at the tuck shop—as much as you can eat—and if you act as a scarecrow this evening I will give you half a sovereign."

"I'm agreeing to dat job."

"Mind, you must howl at the top of your voice. You must make as much row as you possibly can, and when the old chap comes out, just you tell him that you are a scarecrow, and are keeping the bird off his fruit. I say, you won't collar his fruit?"

"Nunno! I'll earn dat money honestly."

"You need not mention my name, because I don't want any thanks or anything like that. You see, the old gentleman referred to is very fond of studying—I am not; but I have a fellow feeling for a chap who is—and it stands to reason that he can't keep going out to drive off the dicky birds while he is studying how to make a triangle by making two circles and three straight lines. With an up-to-date scarecrow like you, he won't have any trouble about the matter. When he hears your gentle little howls outside his study window, he will naturally say, 'This is peaceful and pleasant. The birds are not eating my apples and figs.' Now, come along with me, and I will give you the feed. I belong to Grey Towers College, and the tuck shop I am taking you to is close by it. Are you very hungry?"

"I ain't had anything to eat all day."

"Tut, tut, tut! I don't know—well, it won't do any harm. Come on. If you take my tip, you will have hot sausages and fried or baked potatoes, whichever they have got on. They are sure to have one of them, because it is Wednesday. Unfortunately, I was gated, but when I particularly want to get cut, it takes very high gates to stop me. This way, Pete. I can soon cure your hunger."

The old lady who kept the tuck shop uttered a suppressed scream when she caught sight of Pete, but when Rex winked at her she made no remark. The sausages and baked potatoes were excellent; so were the hot meat pies that followed them. Then Rex insisted on Pete having plum cake; and when he could eat no more, which was not until he had eaten a very large quantity, Rex bought him a pound of brandy balls and a box of chocolate cream.

"Now, there's the half sovereign, old chap!" exclaimed Rex. "Stop a bit I'll give it to you in silver, because you might lose the half sov. There you are, and there's half a crown extra. Now come along, and mind you howl loudly."

"But it's getting dark now," observed Pete. "Don't you tink de birds will hab gone to roost?"

"Well, we don't want to give them a chance of having their suppers off the doctor's fruit. If he should come out and ask you who sent you, tell him it was a boy you met who did not want his name mentioned. You can say he has employed you as a scarecrow."

"Yah, yah, yah! It ain't got anything to do wid me, and I'm bound to earn dis money. Neber earned so much in my life before. Tink he will start whacking me?"

"No; he won't do that. Come on!"

Pete had not the slightest idea as to where he was going, but Rex led him through a small gate into what appeared to be well kept grounds. Pete could see a light from a window; then Rex shoved him behind some laurels, and told him to start howling at the top of his voice.

Now, Pete was by no means a simple lad, and he had the firm conviction that he was being played a practical joke. He did not credit that it would please a man who wanted to study if he commenced to howl beneath his window. He pictured that student coming out with a thick stick, and not being desirous of meeting him, Pete meant to make use of a wonderful power he had—namely, ventriloquism.

He could make his voice come from any part he chose, either near or far away. He chose far away for this job; and forthwith commenced to howl in all sorts of voices. The next moment the French windows were flung open, and a tall form stepped across the verandah and made a rush towards the part where he imagined that voice came from. It was not anywhere near where Pete was. Then another yell came, and the tall form made another rush in another direction, while Pete took particular care that those rushes were towards a spot other than where he was.

This might have gone on for some time, but unfortunately for the enterprising Rex, one of the rushes was towards the spot where he lay watching the fun.

"Who are you, boy?" demanded the angry party.

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"I might have guessed it was you, Rex Carew. How dare you make this noise outside my study window?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Sorry, sir."

"Nonsense! How can you be sorry when you come into my garden and deliberately howl under my study window like a—like a dervish?"

"I mean I am sorry I was caught, sir. I was not the actual howler—only his instigator. It's your new scarecrow. He is trying to frighten away the birds from your fruit."

"I suppose you wanted to annoy me?"

"Not by any means, sir. I wanted to make a muggins of the howler, but I rather think he is smarter than he pretends to be, and I have the feeling that he has made a muggins of me."

"Both of you come into my study."

"Yes, sir. I'll bring him in. Only, I'm to blame. He didn't know what he was doing."

"Very well, bring him in."

"I dunno bout dis scarecrow work," growled Pete. "Still, I tink you ought to get your money's worf, and it won't be de first time I hab had a whacking. Dis way to London!"

And the delinquents entered the study of the headmaster of Grey Towers College. Dr. Kenward, a gentleman whose duty it was to control upwards of five hundred boys of all ages.

The doctor gazed at the pair, then his words fairly took away Rex's breath.

"My dear lad," he exclaimed, "this is really kind of you! I am greatly indebted to you, Rex."

"Tut, tut, tut! I can always oblige you by supplying scarecrows, sir; but I really don't know where the kindness comes in. I have the feeling that you must be speaking what Billy the porter would call 'sarcustic.'"

"Not at all. Of course, your method of bringing this heroic lad into my presence is peculiar."

"The same remarks apply to his personal appearance."

"You know what has happened. Rex?"

"Yes, sir. The nig wanted work, so I suggested he should turn a scarecrow, and frighten the birds away. If his appearance would not frighten them—and I think it would—I felt absolutely certain his howls would frighten an angry parrot; for downright shocking howls hyenas are not in it with Pete."

"Has he not told you how he got into that state?"

"Yes, sir. He said he fell into a ditch."

"He fell into a ditch in rescuing my daughter Bella from a terrible and certain death," said Dr. Kenward.

Then, in a few words, the doctor told what had happened.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex, grasping Pete's hand. "I'm jolly glad I engaged you as a scarecrow, old chap! Bella wasn't hurt, sir?"

"No; scarcely frightened. It was done so quickly. You say you want a situation, Pete?"

"Should like dat, sir, better dan anything."

"Are you hungry?"

"Nunno! Couldn't be hungry after de feed Rex has giben me."

"Would you like a situation in this college as a page boy. You would have all your food found, of course, and I should pay you five shillings a week to begin with."

"Golly! Dat's a fortune!"

"Rex, I wish you to take Pete to William, and say that it is my wish that he may make Pete as comfortable as possible. As regards clothes——"

"No difficulty there, sir. I've got plenty. He's broader than I am, but I can about fit him in trousers. Tom Mordaunt will be nearer his mark for coat and waistcoat. But I'll manage all that, and I'll manage Billy. Can he sleep in the spare room by our dormitory?"

"Certainly!"

"I ain't got a character, sah!" exclaimed Pete.

"I do not require a character from a brave lad who risked his life for my daughter's sake—a lad who saved her from certain death. I shall speak to you further on the subject, Pete. I think you will be happy here."

"I'm bound to be dat, sah. Can't help being happy, somehow, dough it ain't so easy when you'm hungry wid nowhere to sleep. Still, someting generally turns up."

"This way, Pete!" exclaimed Rex, leading him from the study. "Can you fight?"

"A bit. Generally keep on at it till de oder fellow gibs in."

"That's the way. I am all right at the scientific part of it. You see, my mother's butler was boxing instructor in the Army, and he has taught me all he knows. I'll teach you, if you don't know more than I do already. You may need it. Billy, he's the porter, is an utter idiot; but if you play the giddy goat with him you will be all right there. Don't take any notice of his orders. He will try to land you with all his work, but don't you do it. Tell him you are going to pick some flowers for Miss Bella—that's the young lady whose life you saved. Mrs. Kenward, the doctor's wife, is splendid, and she will see that you don't work too hard; but I dare say you will be able to see to that yourself."

"Neber hab been accused ob working too hard. Yah, yah, yah! Dey generally seem to tink I don't work hard enough."

"Well, that's all right. Now, this is William's lodge. He is a fat old idiot, and is always eating. We shall find him at supper now. I believe he has two suppers every night. Leave me to deal with him. He loves me like cayenne pepper in his eye."

"Now, clear out of this!" roared Billy, as Rex entered the lodge. "I can't never sit down so a snack but what you must come poking your stupid 'ead in the door."

"I think you mean the doorway, Billy mine." You see, if you poke your head in the door it might hurt either the head or door. What do you think of this little lot?"

"Take it away!" hooted Billy. "You ain't a bringing monkeys or niggers here. I hate 'em. I hate the sight of a nigger!"

"I rather fancy you will like this one," said Rex. "I'll admit he's a trifle muddy, but you will be able to brush his clothes for him and clean his boots. Then he would like a nice hot bath, and after that you can bring him up supper. He prefers a hot supper."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I tink dose arrangements will just suit dis child's constitution."

"You can superintend Billy's work, you know, Pete; and if he doesn't do it to your satisfaction, just you report him to me. He's a lazy old rascal, but no doubt you will be able to reform him."

"Now, if you don't clear out of my room, and take that dirty-looking nigger with you, I'll kick the pair of you out!"

"Tut, tut, tut! What do you think will be the best thing to do with him, Pete?"

"Might stuff him up de chimbly."

"I doubt if he would go. He would stick at the waist part, and, even if we succeeded in getting him up, we should never get him down again. We should have to feed him for the rest of his life by pouring hogwash down the chimney-pot."

"Yah, yah, yah! But about dis barf. I should rader like dat before de arrangements for supper were made."

"I'll show you the way. Look here, Billy. Pete has come to stay. The doctor's orders are that you are to make him thoroughly comfortable. He is going to sleep in the master's empty room. You had better leave your supper, and go and light a fire in it, and you can heat the bed with a frying-pan—I mean a warming-pan. You need not call him till eight o'clock in the morning, because he does not care for hard work."

"I don't believe a word of what you are saying," declared Billy. "I won't have him here!"

"But you ain't got de choice, old hoss," said Pete. "I hab got de situation."

"No you ain't, you black beast! There ain't anything for you to do."

"I don't mind dat a bit. Can always watch you do de work. Neber did like too much work. I ain't built dat way at all."

"You varmint! I ain't having you here. I—I—"

Billy ceased speaking, because he heard a step in the passage which he recognised as the doctor's, and the next moment that gentleman entered the room.

"William, I have engaged this lad to act as page-boy," he said. "Of course, as he is new to the place, you will make him as comfortable as you can, and I wish you to treat him with every kindness. You can let him help you with the knives—"

"I don't need any assistance in that direction, sir. I don't care for a nigger, especially one like him, fooling around when I am at my work. He would be more trouble than enough."

"Well, you are always complaining at the amount of work that you have to do, so now you will have Pete to help you. Do you understand anything about gardening, my lad?"

"Yes, sah. Fader had a plantation down Zanzibar, and I used to help him on dat, when he could catch me for de purpose. Understand a bit 'bout flowers and vegetables, and tings like that."

"Capital! Well, you can fill up your share time in the garden. I don't wish you to overwork yourself."

"Dere ain't de slightest fear ob dat, sah. My fader used to try to make me do dat, but he neber succeeded to speak ob."

"You will see that he has some supper, Rex," said the doctor, turning to conceal a smile. "Perhaps you would like some at the same time." Then he added, in a voice that was only audible to Rex: "I know, my lad, that there is no false pride about you."

"Tut, tut, tut! Pete is a friend of mine, sir. The fact that he saved Bella's life would be quite sufficient to make him my friend for life. I rather expect that he will cause ructions with Billy; but if you give Pete the order of the boot, I shall ask my mother to take him in hand."

"I shall never do that. I owe him a debt of gratitude which I can never repay. Good-night, Rex. I am thankful you brought your scarecrow!"

"All right!" cried Billy, when the doctor was out of hearing. "All right, you little black beast! If I don't make it hot for you it's a caution. You think as you are coming here to do nothing, do you? You think as you are a-going to make a fool of me the same as you have of the doctor. Well, I'll soon show——"

"William!" came the doctor's voice from the passage—or rather what sounded so exactly like it that even Rex was deceived.

"Yes, sir!" answered Billy, leaping to his feet, and looking frightened.

"Come here!"

Billy went after the voice, which was Pete's, and that worthy availed himself of his absence by emptying about a gill of vinegar into his jug of ale, while Billy followed a more distant voice that appeared to be calling him.

"I tink a little ob dis cayenne pepper ober his cheese will please de man," observed Pete, dredging it in the most liberal manner. "If dat man is going to make it hot for me, I may as well do de same for him; and I'm inclined to tink he will find dat little lot hot enough for de start. What ought I to call you?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Call me Rex. I'm Rex to all who like me, and you have got to be one of them, because you saved Bella's life. But, look here. You will have to wait a few minutes for your bath, because we must see Billy enjoy his supper."

Pete was only willing to do this. Billy soon came back, and he was in a very bad temper.

"Shouting for a man in my position like that," he muttered. "Like his impurance!"

"Please, old hoss, am I to go?" inquired Pete, looking remarkably innocent.

"No, you ain't, you varmint!" snarled Billy, pouring himself out a glass of ale. "What's more, you've got to take your orders from me. In the first place you are to address me as 'sir'—or, at the very least, 'Mr. William'; and, in the second place, you are to—— Hough—bust it! Murder! Hough, hough! I'm choked!"

Billy had taken a mouthful of cheese, and the way he started spluttering and coughing would have made most lads howl with laughter. Rex looked perfectly serious, while the expression on Pete's face was quite sorrowful.

"I wonder if de poor dear old hoss is subject to fits?" observed Pete. "Seems to hab got a bit ob crust or something gone down de wrong way. Reminds me ob a crocodile wid de Asiatic cholera. Dat's right, Billy mister sir. You hab a good drink, and it will do you all de good in de world."

Billy seized the jug of ale, and swallowed a good half pint, then he commenced to splutter worse than ever; and, putting down the jug, he made a rush for Rex, who dodged round the table.

"Yah, yah, yah! De man is being seasick now, I tink. Ain't he mighty impulsive, too!"

It looked as though Rex would have been caught, but he went down in a heap, right in front of Billy, who also went down in a heap, because he sprawled over Rex. That worthy was the first up by a long way, and, as Billy sat up, Pete poured the remainder of the beer over his head, and replaced the now empty jug before Billy could see who had played him the trick.

"Bust me if I don't go straight to the doctor!" howled Billy.

"I tink I would, if I was you, old hoss!" said Pete. "It's mighty certain dat you ain't well, and a dose ob some sort ob medicine would do you all de good in de world. What you need is a tonic-sol-fa, or a sleeping draught."

"Tut, tut, tut! The man does not need a sleeping draught. He sleeps all night, and the best part of the day," said Rex. "But we have not got time to attend to Billy's illnesses. Come this way, Pete, and I'll show you where there is a bath!"

Pete looked rather dubious when Rex took him to the bath-rooms. The water

had to be turned on from the outside, and Rex explained that he would do the turning.

"M'yes! Dat sounds all right, but I was just tinkin' suppose you made a mistake and turned on de boiling water while I was in dat barf!"

"Tut, tut, tut! I never thought of that, but it's not a bad idea!" declared Rex. "However, I won't humbug, and you are not likely to find the water boiling. If I could fix the cold water down your back I might be tempted. But no doubt you will not sit with your back beneath the taps. Now, hurry up, and I will introduce you to my chums! I'll bring you some togs in a few minutes."

Rex rushed off to his dormitory and got a light pair of trousers which he had never yet worn. Then he had a rummage in the clothes cupboard, and found a coat and vest which he thought would fit. He did not know to whom they belonged, but Rex was not the style of lad to bother himself about a trifle like that. He was quite ready to lend or even give his best clothes to the lad who had saved Bella's life, and he expected other fellows to be of the same turn of mind.

Tom Mordaunt, Rex's particular chum, lent a white shirt and the most gaudy necktie he was possessed of.

"Ha, ha, ha! He will look no end of a swell!" observed Tom.

"Tut tut tut! Yes! He deserves it, too. He's a jolly fellow, and if he does not bring us some fun I shall be extremely surprised. He's having a bath now, and he needed it, for he was smothered from head to foot in mud. It was all in his wool. I tell you what, he must have a tall hat. I'll give him my best one. I hate the beastly thing, and he is bound to smash it, so that will be a blessing. He will look no end fine in a boxer. Come on! I'll show him to you when he is dressed."

The effect was rather startling. The coat which had tails was a lot too long for him, but it was not too broad across the shoulders.

"Here's a white handkerchief, old chap!" said Rex. "You need a white flower in your buttonhole, but I will go and collar one of the doctor's. Wear the hat a little on one side. It gives you a rakish sort of appearance."

"Yah, yah, yah! Tink I look rader magnificent in dat little lot! Pity I ain't got boots to match!"

"I'll soon fix that up!" exclaimed Tom. "You rush off and get the flower, Rex. I'll find the boots. Patent leather are what we want, and I know Silas Drewitt has a pair."

Silas was the bully in their Form, and, being big, lorded it over the smaller boys, especially as his great friend was Peter Clegg, who, although in the Sixth Form, was the worst bully in the college.

Tom found the boots after a short search, and he returned with them just as Rex came back with the largest white camellia he could find in the doctor's conservatory. He got Bella to cut it for him so as to save any trouble should further questions be asked.

"You tink I look all right?" inquired Pete, who knew perfectly well that he looked all wrong.

"Superb!" exclaimed Rex. "Tut, tut, tut! People will take you for the Prince of Wales, or some of the Royal family. I should not wonder if the masters imagine that you are a new master come to teach us Latin."

"Yah, yah, yah! I wonder what Billy will say to dis little lot!"

"Let's come and interview him, and find out!" suggested Rex.

Now, it so happened that Silas Drewitt had broken bounds that evening, and he was squaring matters with Billy, who had caught him. Silas's father was wealthy, and he gave his son as much money as he wanted. Billy was always ready to square matters for a consideration.

At any rate, Silas was in the lodge when the worthies entered, and he stared in blank surprise at Pete, who really presented a most extraordinary appearance.

"Whoever is that creature?" he gasped.

"I'm de new page-boy, old hoss!" answered Pete. "I hab come to dis college at de doctor's invitation, 'cos I tink he wants me to keep Billy in order. What do you tink ob dis little get-up?"

"Why! The young villain has got my coat and waistcoat on!" howled Silas, "and hanged if those are not my best boots! Oh, you little demon, won't I pay you for this! Here, guard that door, Billy. I'll soon see if a nigger boy is going to steal my clothes. I never heard such beastly impertinence in all my life!"

Then he made a rush at Pete and smashed his hat flat, while he caught him one between the eyes.

"I dunno weder dey allow fighting in dis college!" observed Pete, squaring up to his adversary, who was several years older and considerably taller than Pete. "But dey are going to allow a little on dis occasion. Take dat one for de start!"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "That's all right. I sha'n't be able to teach Pete much, I can see. Go it, Pete! I'll back you! Give him socks! He's lent you boots, so it is only fair that you should give him socks!"

Silas lost his temper at the start; but he felt convinced that he had an easy task before him. He did not know anything about Pete's abnormal strength, and he went in with more fury than discrimination.

Pete caught him one on the nose which considerably checked his ardour, and, before the bully quite knew what had happened, Pete landed him one on either eye; then Silas closed with him, and they went down side by side.

"We'm getting on nicely!" exclaimed Pete, springing to his feet and waiting for his adversary to rise. "I ain't got in de way ob it yet, but directly I do dere's bound to be a bit ob fun. Here we come again!"

When Pete did not find it convenient to guard a blow he ducked his head and received Silas's fist on the top of it. This mode of fighting would not have suited a white lad; but Pete's head was as hard as a block of wood, and it felt like hitting a piece of iron. It hurt Silas's knuckles dreadfully, but his fury was so great that he did not care for the pain. He knew that he must win, otherwise he would be disgraced.

But it is one thing to be fully determined to win, and quite another to do it, as he found to his cost. Pete's blows were something to be remembered, and he hit with such lightning speed that Silas very seldom succeeded in guarding them. At last he found matters so hot that he closed again, and the struggle for the fall this time was even more severe than on the first occasion. Pete's coat, or rather Silas's coat, was ripped right up the back, then Silas succeeded in throwing him and falling on the top of him, but he was not doing his clothes any manner of good. Seizing Pete by the throat Silas banged his head on the floor, but this did not appear to be doing any particular harm.

"Foul! foul!" cried Tom. "You have no right to hit him when he is down, you contemptible coward!"

Silas did not care for this. He meant to win at any cost, and he would have gone on banging Pete's head on the floor had not that worthy caught him a blow on the nose that caused him to utter a howl.

"Tut, tut, tut! That's the way to work it, Pete. He is bleeding like a stuck pig, and all over his own waistcoat."

Pete broke away, and, springing to his feet, stood waiting for his foe.

"Yah, yah, yah! Ain't I making dese clothes in a plaguey mess, too? I tink it would hab been well to hab taken off your coat before we commenced operations, Silas; however, dat can't be helped now, and I don't see how we

can do dem much more damage now. Here he comes again. Nôw for de superior style. I dunno weder you like dat sort, Silas, old hoss; or if you don't care for dem try a few like dis in de chest. I know dose are rader pleasant, specially when dey happen to land on de spot, like I tink dat one did. Oh, it ain't any good panting at it! All you hab got to do wid dat sort is to wait till dey get better and guard against getting a second one on de top ob de first, like so. Yah, yah, yah! I tink I'm getting on nicely now. Suppose we hab a try at anoder frow. I made a mess ob de last one, but wid de extra practice I may do better dis time. Silas was only too eager to try another throw, but, as he rushed in to get a grip, Pete's left landed between his eyes. It was a very heavy blow, being delivered straight from the shoulder and with all the weight of Pete's body behind it. Not only did it blacken the bully's eyes, but it caused him to stagger back, and that was fatal, for Pete rushed in, and, gripping Silas round the body, gave him a cross buttock that sent him headlong to the floor.

"Tut, tut, tut! You had better give in, Silas!" exclaimed Rex. "You haven't got a chance against him. He's as tough as nails, and I firmly believe he is stronger than you."

"I'll half murder the little demon before I have done with him!" panted Silas, struggling to his feet; but he was clearly in a very indifferent state.

"Yah, yah, yah! I ain't improving his personal appearance!" exclaimed Pete. "Looks a bit lumpy about de jaw, and his eyes don't look as well as dey might. Don't hurry, Silas, at de same time I would be glad if you would get on wid de argument as quickly as possible, 'cos I'm tinkin' 'bout a supper that was mentioned, and it would be a pity to let it get cold or anyting like dat."

Silas, however, was not so simple as to hurry. He needed time, and did a little talking by way of getting it. Of course, the comrades saw through his motive, but they felt so confident concerning their man that they did not trouble to interfere, and, as for Pete, he did not care. He just meant to go on fighting till Silas gave in. He knew that if he did not finish him off then there would certainly be another fight, and Pete did not care for two such serious fights as that.

"You miserable little nigger!" panted Silas. "I suppose you do not know who I am, but I will soon show you what it means to stick up to me. Mind, I will give you the most frightful thrashing you have ever had in your life. You commenced this fight, and I intend to finish it. I don't care how I injure you, and I shall so inform the doctor when he questions me about the matter. I am going to put an end to your impertinence once for all, and you must not blame me for your injuries."

"Look at dat, now! Seems to me I hab got to be injured, still if dat is de case I may as well take it all at once. Neber had a toof out, but if I had to hab one I would rader hab it extracted wid one pull dan half a dozen. For which reason we will finish dis fight dis evening. We shall be glad ob habing done so to-morrow morning, 'cos den we shall feel perfectly free from pain."

"Tut, tut, tut! I don't feel at all sure concerning that," said Rex. "If Silas's eyes feel all right by to-morrow morning, why it will be a very great surprise to me. But are you going to wait there all night gassing, Silas? If you have had enough, and, mind you, I feel quite sure that you have had considerably more than enough, the sensible thing to do is to shake hands with him, and make friends."

"Make friends with a nigger!" exclaimed Silas, who was getting his wind back, and waiting for an opportunity when Pete was off his guard to have another go at him. "Such friendship might suit a cad like you, but it wouldn't suit me."

"What utter nonsense you do talk, Silas!" exclaimed Tom. "Here Rex is a baronet in his own right. His mother is Lady Carew, yet you want to make out that he is a cad, and that you are a gentleman. No one could possibly mistake

you for one. Why, Pete is ten times the gentleman that you are. Look out, Pete!"

The warning was too late, for Silas had rushed in when Pete was off his guard, and, catching him one beneath the jaw, Silas sent him to the floor.

"First knock-down blow to my man!" cried Billy.

"Yes, he ought to be very proud of it!" exclaimed Tom. "I consider it quite worthy of him."

"You had better be careful what you are saying, Tom Mordant."

"I wasn't quite ready for dat one, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, springing to his feet. "However, dere's no harm done. Come on, we are still progressing as satisfactorily as can be expected. Now, wid your kind permission we will try a little logging, 'cos dis sparring begins to get rader tiring. Mind, I'm going to plant a few of dis sort in your face."

Then they went at it ding-dong. It was almost impossible to see who was getting the worst of it—in fact, they both seemed to be doing that; but presently Pete sprang forwards and landed two blows between his adversary's eyes and a third one beneath the jaw, and down he went.

"Dat's de second knock-down blow to me," observed Pete, who looked little the worse for the combat. Blows did not show on his face; besides, he had received most of them on the top of his head, where they neither showed nor felt.

"Tut, tut, tut! You have had enough, Silas!" exclaimed Rex. "You look as sick as a Channel passenger on a rough day. I strongly advise you to fight no more."

"I don't tink he is hurt yet," observed Pete. "Seems a pity to spoil a good fight just at de commencement. Jump up, old hoss, and let's show dem what we can really do. I would like to plant one or two more between your eyes. Dat right one is blacker dan de left, and it seems a pity not to make dem match."

"I really believe the cheeky little hound thinks he can beat me," snarled Silas, struggling to his feet. "Hark, here comes the doctor! I'm off!"

"No, it ain't the doctor," said Billy, who wanted to see Pete get a thrashing. "He has gone out about some motor-car accident or other. You are all safe to finish him off, and if you take my tip you will do it, 'cos think what the boys would say if they knew that nigger had whacked you."

"Absurd! Who would believe such a lie as that?"

"Well, you see, they would go by the evidence of your face, and I must say he has knocked that about above a bit. Bust me if I should know you if I was to meet you in the street—in fact, I don't believe your own father would. You'll need a couple of pounds of steak to cure eyes like them 'ere. The worst of it is blows don't show on that nigger. He's jest like punching a bit of injerrubber. All the same, you've got plenty of time to finish him off, and you couldn't possibly let the fight end where it is. You would get laughed at all over the college."

"It is a great pity you don't mind your own business, Billy," snarled Silas, hoping against hope that a master would come upon the scene. He had had far more than enough, but felt that the degradation of giving in to a nigger lad, so much smaller than himself, would be quite impossible to submit to. "Whoever said that I was going to give in. Only I thought I heard the doctor's footsteps, and, of course, a fellow in my position would not like to be caught fighting."

"Of course not," exclaimed Tom. "Especially with a fellow so much younger than yourself. Keep on your guard, Pete; the fellow is capable of taking any mean advantage. He's not to be trusted as far as you can see him."

"I'll watch de old hoss. Yah, yah, yah! Makes me laugh when I do watch him, too. He's got such a mighty funny-shaped face. I dunno what he had been doing wid it, but it looks all twisted. Here he comes again."

"Give him body blows," whispered Rex. "I think you will knock him out of time this round if you go for the spot."

Pete took his advice. He did not trouble himself much about guarding there was not much strength in Silas's blows now. Pete kept striking his adversary in the chest.

"Ha, ha, ha! Sounds like beating carpets," cried Tom. It felt more like sledgehammers to Silas, and the blows were so swift that he sank to the ground to avoid them, and there he sat, panting for breath.

"I tink dat counts de victory to me," observed Pete, gazing at his adversary. "You don't look like fighting any more, Silas. All de same, if you feel to yearning for anoder quarter ob an hour or so at it, I ain't got de slightest objection."

"I—shall—finish thrashing you—to-morrow," gasped Silas.

"Yah, yah, yah! You will neber fight me again, old hoss. I know dat well as you do."

"You surely don't think you have beaten me, you conceited little fool!"

"Well, dere ain't much tinkin about dat matter. It don't matter to me weder I hab beaten you or not, 'cos I don't care; only I hab de feeling dat I will neber fight wid me again. I tink you will find dis fight too painful."

"As a matter of fact I was not hurt at all."

"Yah, yah, yah!" Just go and look at your face in dat glass, den tell weder you expect us to believe dat little lot. I really don't see how anyone could get his face knocked about like yours widout getting hurt. All de same, if you say you ain't hurt, I tink we had better continue de fight, 'cos I can easy knock you between dis and supper-time."

CHAPTER 2.

How the Combat Ended—Pete's Reception in the Bully's Study—Lamentable Smash-Up—Pete Scores—Mr. Grant Makes Some Observations—So Does Pete.

"ARE you going to fight any more, Silas?" demanded Rex.

A

"You mind your own business, you little cad!"

"It ain't de slightest use talking to a fellow like dat," observed Pete. "He wants to make out he's won dis fight, and he will tell his friends dat he did; but seein dat we know he didn't, what's de good of bodering 'bout de matter?"

"Tut, tut, tut! None at all. He is frightened to fight you any more, Pete. You have fairly won the fight, and I'm exceedingly glad of it. He has got a lesson of what he deserves, and I don't think he will ever try bullying you again."

"Nunno, I shouldn't let him do dat. Why, I wouldn't let Billy start bullying me. I don't tink he would take much knocking out ob time. Would you like to try a round or two, old hoss?"

"You will be sorry for these 'ere insults, and so I tell you, you little black bear. I ain't so undignified as to fight with a nigger boy, though I might flog him if he had much of his impudence, so you had best be careful what you say."

"He's a funny old chap, too!" exclaimed Pete. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if I hab a lot ob fun wid dat man before I hab done."

"Take off those clothes and boots!" snarled Silas, glancing at himself in the glass and receiving a slight shock at the spectacle he presented. He knew that it would be quite impossible for him to conceal his damages from the boys and masters. There was only one consolation, and that was he felt quite certain that neither Rex nor Tom would tell what had happened, while no one was likely to question Pete.

"But I ain't got any oder boots to wear!" exclaimed Pete. "Mine got worn frough, and dey were just on worn out."

"You shall not wear my boots, you dirty little nigger."

"Look at dat, now! I tink I will let you hab your coat and waistcoat, 'cos dey'm about spoilt, but I'm going to borrow de boots for de present."

"Take them off, I say!" cried Silas.
 "Oh course, I can take off de coat and waistcoat widout any boder. Dere you are, old hoss! I'm most afraid dat coat will want a lot ob mending, and de waistcoat will want a good wash, 'cos your nasal organ bled ober it. Yah, yah, yah! You did make me laugh when you turned on de nose. Still, I suppose you couldn't help it."

"Take off my boots."
 "But see here, Silas, dese boots fit me just nicely, and I don't like wearing tight boots. I'm most afraid you will hab to lend dem to me for two-free days."

"I shall do no such thing. Are you going to take them off? Mind, I am not the sort of fellow to be trifled with."

"But I don't want to trifle wid you, my dear old hoss. I quite forgib you ober dat fight, and to show you dat such is de case I don't mind habing anoder fight wid you whenever you like. You'm only got to gib me two-free minutes notice, and if I ain't engaged in any work—and dat's not at all likely to be de case—why I will take you on den and dere."

"Are you going to take those boots off or are you not?"
 "Nunno! I ain't going to take dem off till I go to bed. Dey are nice and comfortable. Do you tink you could lend me anoder coat and waistcoat, Rex?"

"Certainly. Silas has got plenty, and his size seems to fit you. I will lend you one of his best ones. You have taken such care of that one that I feel sure he will be pleased to lend you another."

"If you dare to touch my clothes you will have cause to regret it!" cried Silas fiercely, although he looked rather uneasy, because he did not feel at all sure that Rex would not lend them.

However, Rex lent Tom's this time, and Tom did not mind at all. Pete looked all right now, and both he and Rex were quite ready for supper.

"I told the cook we were coming down," said Rex, "and she promised to get us a nice supper. She will do anything I ask her; besides, the doctor told her he wanted us to have a feed. You come too, Tom. She won't mind."

"But the doctor may, if he catches me," said Tom.

"He won't catch you. He's out, you know, and it is a million to one if he comes into the kitchen even if Billy has not told the truth. Of course, Billy may come there, and then he would be likely to sneak; but it is not a matter the doctor would be likely to take up. The worst would be a hundred lines, and you won't mind them."

Tom did not want much tempting. Mary, the cook, was very well disposed towards Rex—in fact, so were all the other servants, because of his liberal tips. He was in that lucky position that he was able to spend just as much money as he thought fit. His only fear was how the servants would receive Pete, and he knew that his future happiness there depended a great deal on this, for they would have the power to make his life far from comfortable.

When Rex led Pete into the large kitchen, all fears on this point vanished. The fact is Bella had told them how Pete had saved her life. Everyone liked Bella, and the fact of Pete having saved her life was quite sufficient to ingratiate him with the servants. They made a hero of him immediately.

"Do tell us how it happened, Pete!" exclaimed Mary.

"Pulled her off her bicycle, my dear. Golly, don't dat supper smell good!"

"Hark at the boy calling me his dear!" exclaimed Mary, laughing.

"I always call pretty girls dat. It comes sort ob natural. But I'm tinkin about dat supper."

"I have a good mind not to give you any for your impudence. Still, as you saved Miss Bella's life, you shall have a proper supper. Will you have it sent up to the study, Sir Reginald."

"Oh, bother! I wish you would call me Rex, Mary. I detest being called

by my title, and you know it. Have supper in the study? Not a bit of it. We are going to have it here, and you are going to join us. Now come and sit down.

"It is a large steak pie," said Mary. "It was made for to-morrow, but Bella said I was to warm it up to-night for Pete. I have got some mashed potatoes and I think you will like it."

"Dere ain't a doubt 'bout dat, my dear," exclaimed Pete. "You must not go to look at dat pie to see dat you will like it. I like de size ob it, too. Dere's many a good pie spoilt by its too small size, but dat one ain't going to be. Ain't dis just splendid."

"I would like to know what is the meaning of this 'ere," exclaimed Billy, entering the kitchen. It is just possible that he may have smelt that pie. "How am I am to be satisfied with bread and cheese for my supper, and an infamous nigger boy—who ain't nothing better than a thief, gets hot steak pie. Steak pie is one of the things as I can eat without it disagreeing with me, and I'm particularly hungry to-night."

"Poor dear old hoss," exclaimed Pete, with his mouth full. "It's a mighty sad ting to have to go to bed hungry, still, you hab got de consolation ob knowing dat your fellow-toiler won't be in de same sad condition."

"Jest hark at de lazy, imperant young vagabone! I declare if he ain't enough to make a man feel ill. Of course, Mary, you can please yourself about feeding the little brute in this fashion. It's my dooty to inform you that the master wouldn't approve of it."

"Still, I can do de approving part ob de business," said Pete, "and dat's de principal ting, seeing dat I'm one ob de eaters ob de pie. You buzz off, old hoss, and finish off your brem-cheese. Pie ain't good for you. It's much too fattening, and it would be a mighty pity to gib you anyting dat would make you fatter dan you are already."

"I suppose I am to be expected to submit to a nigger's insults, now," exclaimed Billy. "But all I can say is that the worm will turn."

"Yah, yah, yah! De man is calling himself a worm now. He looks to me more like a good-sized maggot. But you ain't wanted here, Billy. When I require your services I will send for you."

"You take care, you ugly black beast of a nigger. Jest you take care. I ain't the sort of man that you can make fun of, and so I'll have you know. See here, Mary, I particularly fancy a piece of that pie to my supper. I know your pies are always good, and I know that you are far too good-hearted to let a man go without his supper."

"Well, you must wait till Pete has had his supper, then you can have some. Take some more, Pete?"

"Thank you, my dear. Just a small piece."

"Call that a small piece?" groaned Billy. "I should say it was jest about twice as much as a boy did ought to have for his dinner, let alone his supper. I never had as much to eat as that."

"Yah, yah, yah! You must hab eaten a mighty lot as a man to make up for it, old hoss," said Pete. "Should say de man has got two-free hundredweight ob blubber on him. I tink, Mary, my dear, you feed dat man too much. He will run to grease one ob dese days."

"I would like to know why I can't have some of that pie now," growled Billy, ignoring Pete's remark.

"You know the mistress does not allow you to take your meals in the kitchen, William," answered the cook. "You must wait till we have finished, then you can take the remainder of the pie upstairs, and finish it off for your supper."

This promise brought a more cheerful expression on Billy's face, but the worst of it was that Mary kept asking Pete if he would take any more, and Pete kept saying that he would take a small piece.

"He's asked for a small piece," growled Billy, "and you've given him an enormous piece."

"Pete is to have as much as he can eat."

"There's no telling what a little glutton like that can eat," growled Billy.

"There ain't enough for me there, as it is. Shall I take the dish?"

"Not yet. Can't you be a little patient, William? I'm ashamed of you."

"It's a shocking ting when a man is so greedy dat he can't wait a few minutes for his supper," exclaimed Pete, winking at Rex. "Now I ain't in de slightest hurry for my supper, and I must say de beginning ob dis one I hab had gibbs me de impression dat when I once get into de job I'm going to enjoy it."

"The beginning? Why, you've nearly wolfed the whole pie."

"Well, ain't dat a proof dat it's nice? If dat pie was nasty, I shouldn't hab eaten any ob it. Nunno! I wouldn't be as greedy as dat. I should hab sent it up to you, and let you hab de whole ob it. As it is, why it stands to reason dat you hab got to wait till Mary has done cutting de pie. I'm not going to be so rude as to hurry her ober dat job. Tank you, my dear, just a small piece more. De crust is de best I hab eber tasted—den de gravy is something to be remembered, while de steak is dat tender dat it melts in your mouf."

"Why, you've given it all to him," hooted Billy. "I won't stand this sort of treatment. A nigger boy ain't going to be fed better than me. It's downright shameful, that's what I call it."

"My orders were to give Pete as much as he wanted to eat, and I have given it to him. You can have some cold meat."

"I won't eat cold meat. I particular wanted pie. It was jest what I fancied, and I ain't at all well."

"Den don't you eat any supper, old hoss. You hab a glass ob hot water and go to bed. Suppers ain't at all good for a man ob your time ob life. Dey are only fit for boys. De plainest food possible is de best ting you can eat."

"It's downright shameful," declared Billy. "I'd like to know why an insolent nigger boy is to be treated better than me. That's my point. I ain't one as cares for good feeding, only I won't be put upon, especially by a nigger boy."

"Buzz off home," exclaimed Pete. "We ain't got time to listen to all dis. I feel most certain——"

"William!" came a distant voice. "William. Lazy rascal. Where can he be?"

"Bust! He's come home. Calling me a lazy rascal, too! I'm coming, sir. I jest came down to see as the back was locked up safe."

Then Billy hurried up the stairs, and was very much astonished to find that the doctor was not there, and what is more, when he made inquiries, he learnt that he had not yet come in.

"It's Pete," whispered Rex, as they made their way from the kitchen. "He's a wonderful ventriloquist. Keep it dark, old chap, and we shall get some fun out of it. Billy is hunting all over the place for that voice. Are you sleepy, Pete?"

"Must say I am rader," answered Pete. "I walked a good distance to-day. Still, if you want a little fun, I'm always ready for dat."

"Tut, tut, tut! We won't have any fun to-night. You see, the masters don't care for it, and it's getting late. Come this way, and I will show you your room. You had better lock your door, because some of the fellows may come and play you tricks. Tut, tut, tut! They are a fearful lot for playing practical jokes."

Pete's room, though small, was very comfortable, and he was scarcely in bed before he fell into a deep sleep, nor did he awake till break of day.

"Now, let me see," he exclaimed. "I ain't going to lib on charity, so de first

ting to be done is some work. Should say work in de garden would please de old hoss; besides, I understand dat. Can easy find my way dere."

There was no difficulty about that, and as Pete found a grass-cutter in the tool shed, he carefully cut the lawn, which was rather long. Then he weeded some of the paths, and tidied up the flower-beds, and he was still hard at work when Dr. Kenward came out.

"Morning, sah! Thought I would start a bit ob work in de garden."

"Why, you have made it look splendid, Pete," exclaimed Dr. Kenward; "but there is no necessity for you to work as hard as all that."

"You will neber find me work too hard, sah! Only I ain't going to lib on charity, 'cos dat wouldn't be right at all. Nunno, I am going to earn my money and keep, and I eat a lot ob food."

"No one here is stinted with food," answered the doctor. "Why, you have cut all the grass!"

"Yes, sah! It wanted cutting; and unless you want me to do something else in de house, I should like to get all dose beds in better order. Dey ain't quite what I should like to see dem. Den again, dere's some more weeding to be done. A garden neber looks nice if it ain't properly weeded."

"Well, Pete, suppose you spend the day in the garden. Do you like apples?"

"I do, sah!"

"Then you may take what you like out of the orchard. You will find plenty there. I suppose you did not notice anything about that motor-car?"

"Dere was a young man driving. I saw his face quite plain. Didn't notice anything 'bout de car. Dunno what colour it was, but rader tink it was black or some dark colour. 'Fraid you won't catch him, sah! De bicycle was all broken, too."

"It is not that. The bicycle is quite a minor consideration, but the reckless way in which the car was driven was scandalous, and the driver should be punished. Do you know how many were in the car?"

"Nunno! I saw two, but dere might hab been more."

"Do you think you could recognise the car again?"

"Not by de appearance ob it; but I might tell if it was de same one by looking at it."

"Ah! Then you shall go into the village this morning. I will arrange about it. Do not say anything concerning the matter at present. I do not wish it to be known that you are making any inquiries. You will go to a garage where they let out cars, and examine them all. I shall ask Sir Reginald to go with you. He is accustomed to driving, and frequently takes them out. Although so young, he has a licence as a driver. The matter is very serious, and it is my intention to do all in my power to discover the man who was driving. Can I rely on you not to mention a word concerning the matter to any one except, of course, Master Carew—as he prefers to be called."

"He told me to call him Rex, sah. Well, I don't tink I shall say a word 'bout dat matter. Should like to catch de man myself. Suppose you try me?"

"Certainly. That is the better way, my lad. Now go and get your breakfast, and I will make all arrangements. You can have breakfast with William."

This arrangement sounded all right, but when Pete entered the lodge, he found Billy all wrong.

He had got two rashers of bacon on a dish, and a pot of coffee before him, a loaf of bread and some butter. He appeared to have received orders that Pete was to have breakfast with him, for he raised no objections when that worthy entered the room.

"Nice sort ob morning, ain't it, old hoss," observed Pete.

"Jest you keep yourself to yourself, and remember that you are in the presence of a white gentleman," said Billy. "You stand there for the present. Disgraceful

milk, I must say. 'Arf water! I don't know what's coming to the tradespeople. The coffee, too, is three parts chicory. Ah, what a difference this to the times when I kep' servants of my own. Well, we all has our ups and downs, and it's the brave, good man as takes the downs with the ups."

"He ain't got much choice in de matter, has he, Billy?"

"Negro varmint! I ain't speaking to you. By birth and edication I am a gentleman, and I expect doo respect to be paid to me. Take one of them slices of bread-and-butter."

They were very thick slices, for Billy had cut them, and he had a remarkable appetite. He preferred bread-and-butter with his bacon, so he helped himself to another slice and a rasher of bacon.

Pete did not quite appreciate this division of the breakfast. He had an idea that some of the bacon was intended for him, and what is more, he meant to have it. Billy meant that he should have bread-and-butter, and expected him to take it standing.

"Disgusting bacon!" growled Billy, who thought it the correct thing to grumble at his food. "Different to the times when I had horves-de-combat and sich-like for my breakfast—Bust that cat! I no sooner leaves my bed-room winder open for fresh air than that cat gets in."

Billy rushed to his bed-room, which adjoined, to deal retribution to t' e cat, whose voice Pete had placed there; then Pete whipped up the other rasher of bacon and another slice of bread-and-butter. Then, having made a sandwich of the result, stepped back to his former position, and looked remarkably innocent.

"Come here, you black beast, and help me drive this 'ere cat out! Bust the creature!"

"Don't hurt de poor ting, Billy!" exclaimed Pete, stepping into the bed-room and pretending to search; while he took a big bite at his bacon sandwich, and found it remarkably good. "Cats hab got deir feelings."

"So will niggers have if you don't catch that cat."

"Best way is to shut dis door," observed Pete, closing it. Then the mewing appeared to come from Billy's sitting-room, and Pete hurried through his sandwich, while Billy rushed into the other room to clump the cat.

It was not there, neither was Billy's second rasher of bacon. And as he commenced to utter howls of rage, Pete finished his sandwich.

"What's de matter, my dear old hoss?" inquired Pete, following him into the room.

"The busted cat has been and eaten my bacon!" howled Billy.

"Dey won't neber eat bacon, not cats won't, I don't tink," quoted Pete. "At least, dat's what de old lady said 'bout dem."

"I have a good mind to give you a clump over the 'ead!" roared Billy. "I have, straight!"

"What's dat for, Billy? I ain't responsible for de actions ob a cat. I spect dat cat was an exception to de rule, 'cos it seems to hab collared your bacon first time ob trying. All de same, it mayn't hab been a cat. It might hab been a frush or a blackbird. I know dey will eat bacon, and your window is open. Depend on it, it wasn't de cat at all, 'cos de old lady is most bound to be right. But suppose I pour you out a cup ob coffee. You can finish de first rasher in reality, and tink you'm eaten de second one in imagination. It will amount to de same ting. Do you like de coffee sweet?"

"Of course I do, you wooden-headed nigger! Do you think as I likes it sour?"

"Plenty ob milk is de proper ting for coffee. Now—M'yes! Dat coffee is all right!" exclaimed Pete, draining the cup.

Then some mewing appeared to come from the bed-room again, and while Billy rushed in once more to deal summary vengeance, Pete drained the milk-

jug and helped himself to another slice of bread-and-butter; while he followed Billy into the bed-room so quickly that that worthy never imagined there was any trickery about the matter. From Pete's manner he thought the lad was just as anxious to catch the cat as he was.

"Seems as dough it must hab got out ob de window, Billy," observed Pete, after they had made a thorough search. "At any rate, it ain't here."

"Foller me!" commanded Billy. "I'll teach you manners afore I have done with you! Sitting down with niggers! A pretty thing indeed for a man of my birth!"

"But I ain't sitting down wid you, old hoss," observed Pete.

"No; and I'll take good care you don't!" retorted Billy, fiercely seizing the coffee-pot, and pouring himself out some in the other cup. Then he took up the milk-jug, and Pete found it no easy matter to remain serious when Billy found that jug empty.

The expression on Billy's face was really comic.

"Hempty!" he gasped.

"Golly! Ain't dat cat got fine powers ob suction!" exclaimed Pete. "Couldn't hab been many moments swallowing de milk. Seems to like de milk as well as de bacon, which shows you dat it can't be a vegetarian cat. Well, we'm got de consolation ob knowing dat it ain't eaten de brem-butter," added Pete, helping himself to another slice.

"Leave that alone!" howled Billy.

"Leabe what alone, Billy?" inquired Pete, taking a second bite that finished the slice.

"Bust you, you greedy varmint! Here, jest you go down to the cook, and tell her the cat has drunk the milk! Mind, you ain't to say I sent you. You are to say you want it for yourself. You ain't to mention my name. Do you think you can understand that 'ere?"

"Should say so, old hoss."

"I ain't got anythink to do with it, mind. Don't so much as mention my name. Say there ain't a drop of milk to your breakfast, and ask her if she would mind sparing you a little. If she asks whether it's for me, tell her no. You can let her think as I've drunk the other if you like, and left you without none; only don't let her think the new lot is for me. Say you are fond of milk, and would like about half a pint."

Now Pete was a remarkably smart lad, and it at once occurred to him that Billy had had a row with the cook over the last night's supper, and that she would allow him no more milk if his name should be used.

This idea proved to be correct, for Mary declared he should not have another drop of milk.

"Mind, Pete, if you want it you can have it; but he sha'n't. He was most insulting to me over that supper. I will let you have as much milk as you want, if you promise me that he sha'n't have any of it."

"Dat's all right, my dear!" exclaimed Pete. "He sha'n't hab a drain. You leabe it to me. You can come and listen if you like."

Pete got a good half-pint of milk, and ascended the stairs, while Mary followed him, in the expectation of some fun.

"It's all right, Billy!" exclaimed Pete. "I hab got de half-pint ob de milk, but it was specially giben to me."

"Well, ain't that what I told you to ask for, you stupid young beast! Put it down, can't you!"

"Suttinly, Bill, my dear old hoss. Here's luck!"

Then Pete drained the jug.

Now, had not Billy seen Pete fight, there is little doubt that he would have gone

for him. As it was, he confined himself to abuse niggers in every shape and form.

"But you told me to put it down, Billy," observed Pete. "And I naturally thought you meant me to put it down my froat."

"You black beast! You know perfectly well that I meant you to put it down on the table."

"Funny place to put milk, too. Seems to me you might as well let de cat hab it as dat."

"I don't believe the cat ever had the other milk. How could a cat get its head into a milk-jug?"

"I hab heard ob dem putting deir paws in, and lapping de milk off."

"Bust you! It would have taken it a hour to empty the jug like that. I believe you drank it. Now, jest you go and tell Mary we want some more milk."

"Then you won't get it, William! You have had the best part of a pint for your breakfast, and that is more than the master has had with his family!" cried Mary, entering the lodge. "You sha'n't have another drop, you fat, greedy brute. So there! I'll teach you to insult me over a meat-pie, and say it was only fit for niggers to eat, when you hadn't even tasted it! I'll give you a lesson, you see if I don't!"

"That's a threat, ma'am; a distinct threat."

"Very well. You will find that I shall execute it. And if you don't like it you can complain to the master, and perhaps I shall have something to complain about."

"I want some milk to my coffee."

"You've had a pint, and you sha'n't have another drain, if I know it. How you are going to get it without me knowing it is more than I know, and you will find it a lot more than you know. If Pete wants any more he can have it and welcome."

"If any man is fool enough to ask you to be his wife I pity him from my heart!" snarled Billy, who was doing himself a fearful lot of harm, but could not control his temper.

"Well, you have been fool enough to ask me to be your wife on two occasions," retorted Mary; "but I haven't been fool enough to accept you."

"I'd have you know, ma'am, that three ladies—not cooks—on three serksessive Leap Years has asked me to be their husbands!" declared Billy. "I ain't one to boast of my love-affairs, but I've screwed up the heart-strings of many a lady to concert-pitch."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "De man is a bigger idiot dan I took him for, and dat's saying a mighty lot. But, seeing dat we can't get any more milk for breakfast, Billy, I will leabe you to drink de coffee. You will find it all right widout de milk."

"You varmint, this is all your own doing!" cried Billy. "But I'll be level with you, mark my words if I ain't! Bust! There goes Peter Clegg's bell! Jest you go and answer it, you rat! It's No. 2 Study."

"Ain't dat de chap Rex said was de worst bully in de college?" inquired Pete.

"Never you mind what he is. Jest you go and answer the bell. And if he asks for me tell him I'm particular engaged, and sha'n't be able to attend him for a hour."

"Well, ob course, I can do all dat," observed Pete; "but somehow I don't care to tackle dat fellow. Do you tink he will start bullying me, Billy?"

"He will love you nearly as much as I do. I don't see how anyone could help loving a nigger, specially one like you. I like you so much that I would like to see all your troubles cease, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to help to screw you down in your coffin."

"Look at dat now. Yah, yah, yah!"

"What are you guffawing at, you worm?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Was only smiling to tink what a mighty big coffin you will take, Billy. Dat coffin will hab to be nearly square. A ready-made one wouldn't fit you, old hoss. Dey would hab to stuff you in wid deir feet. Funny how dat man loses his temper, too. Still, I suppose we can find Study No. 2. Dat ain't de difficulty. I don't seem to hab any yearnings to go to dat study. If Peter Clegg is worse dan Silas Drewitt, he can't be so mighty nice. Besides, he has de disadvantage ob being bigger, and dat's what concerns me de most. Silas was quite big enough for fighting purposes. Howeber, here goes."

Pete kicked at the door.

"Come in!" howled a voice.

"Dat don't sound a nice-tempered voice," observed Pete, kicking again. He wanted to see what Peter Clegg was like before he ventured into the lion's den.

"Come in, you fatheaded villain," howled the voice again.

Pete heard a footstep, and glancing up saw Silas coming along the passage. Pete gave another mighty kick, then shifted to one side of the door. Silas seized the handle, glared at Pete, then strode into the room, and as he entered he received a blow on the top of the head that caused him to sit on the floor, and gaze in a dazed manner at Peter Clegg, a dark, heavily-built young man, who now stood over him with a thick stick in his hand.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Ain't I glad I wasn't de first to go in!"

"You've brained me," groaned Silas.

"Sorry, old chap," exclaimed Clegg.

"Oohoo! So am I."

"It was quite an accident. Come in! Thump, what have you been doing to your face, Silas?"

"I had a fall—off the trapeze. It's nothing much."

"Oh, well, if you don't mind, I don't, but really, it looks a good lot. So that's the new page, is it. Ha, ha, ha! Come in, you imp of darkness. If you grin at me like that I'll knock your head off your shoulders. What brought you here?"

"De bell. Billy is busy wid his breakfast, and so he tought I had better go."

"How dare you kick at my door in that manner, you wooden-headed little black beast?"

"Wanted to make you hear."

"Don't you see you have caused me to strike Mr. Drewitt over the head with this stick?"

"I would rader you hit him dan me, any day."

"Well, take that for a start," snarled Clegg, dealing Pete a sounding crack over the head.

"Hi! golly! Steady wid dat stick. It hurts," cried Pete, grabbing the stick, and trying to wrench it from the bully's hand. He had an idea that there was going to be trouble, and he preferred going through it without the stick.

"What! You dare! Why, lock that door, Silas. I'll teach the little brute a lesson."

Clegg gave a violent wrench, but Pete was remarkably strong, and he stuck to his end of the stick; then when Clegg gave another tug, Pete suddenly let go, and Clegg went backwards into the fireplace with a clatter.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, seizing the stick which Clegg had dropped.

"If dere's going to be a fight, I'm going to hab a weapon as well as you, old hoss."

"Oh, won't I pay you for th's, you black demon!" hissed Clegg, springing to his feet, and seizing another stick.

Now Pete was at a frightful disadvantage, because Clegg was a good fencer, while Pete knew nothing about the art.

Clegg caught Pete another sounding crack over the head, and guarded the blow

Pete struck at his legs, then Pete got half a dozen in quick succession, and bolted round the table to avoid a few more, while Silas got into the corner of the study to avoid getting hurt.

Pete saw that his only chance would be to disarm his foe, and watching his opportunity, he caught Clegg a frightful crack over the knuckles, causing him to drop the stick and howl with pain. Pete got in one more crack, then Clegg closed with him, and the way he punched Pete's head ought to have knocked that worthy senseless. He retaliated with the stick, and it is doubtful who got hurt the most. It was most exciting, especially for the combatants.

Pete had the advantage of being abnormally strong, and tough. Clegg's fists made no impression on his head, but he received one or two in the face that were decidedly painful, and at last Clegg leapt on him and bore him to the ground, then he got the stick away, and Pete felt its effect.

Clegg was very strong, and he struck with all his strength, while his victim strove in vain to break loose.

"Give it to him, Clegg," cried Silas. "He is a perfect little fiend. Give him a lesson that he will never forget."

"I am," panted the bully. "If he forgets this lesson I shall be surprised. Oh, yell away, you little demon. None of the masters will hear you here. There! How did you like that?"

"Golly! I didn't like it at all," groaned Pete, as the bully desisted, though not before he was breathless with the exertion. "That is only a little of what I intend to give you," declared Clegg. "You dirty little nigger, I'll teach you to dare to strike me."

"I dunno dat I want any more teaching, old hoss."

"Address me as sir."

"Can easy do dat. But see here, old hoss, I ain't standing dis sort ob treatment. It's got to hab an ending one way or anoder, so I am going to gib it de ending now. I dunno who is in de right, about this matter, still, we'm got to hab an arrangement, and one ob de clauses in dat agreement is dat you neber strike me again. Tink you can agree to dat?"

"Ha, ha! I'll strike you every day of your dirty life. I'll make your life a misery to you. You can sneak to the masters if——"

"Nunno! I ain't going to do anything like dat. I'm going to defend myself, and I'm going to show you dat it ain't wise to hit me. You see, my object is to stop you in de future. If you eber hit me again, I'll 'bout smash your place up. I can stand as much pain as you——"

"Then stand that pain," cried Clegg, striking at Pete's head across the table, which was laid for breakfast. Needless to say that Pete had got to the other side of that table. That blow was exactly what he was expecting. He bobbed down, and the stick fell on the table with a crash. It broke the teapot, and smashed a dish of eggs and bacon, while it cut a pound of butter in half, and broke the plate on which it was.

Clegg rushed round the table, and got in one blow as Pete dodged beneath it. It was a blow that made Pete yell, nevertheless, he was far from quelled. He sprang up the other side of the table, and seizing the side of it, shot it, and all that was upon it on the top of the bully, who fell to the floor to the tune of breaking china.

Clegg's head was sticking out at the side of the overturned table, which was on his body, and to add to its weight, Pete sprang on the underneath part of the table.

It was a frightfully awkward position for the bully, because he could not shift that weight from his chest.

"Now see here, old hoss," cried Pete, tapping Clegg's nose with his fist. "I could bout gib you socks now, if I chose, but I ain't hitting a man who is down. At de same time, I ain't letting you get up till I hab made my meaning plain. I

ain't a match for you in a fight. Just you dare to come near, Silas, and I'll hurt you. Dis fight is between Clegg and me, and we ain't habing any interference in de matter."

"Get up," gasped Clegg. "I shall not punish you any more. Get up."

"Nunno! We'm got to come to an understanding ober dis. Oh, you will neber get up while I'm on de top ob you, assisted by de table. You'm hurt me above a bit, and alough I ain't going to hurt you while you are down, I'm going to teach you dat it ain't at all safe to hit me without a cause, and it ain't so mighty safe to hit me wid de cause aforesaid. I see dere's one half of your butter fallen outside de table." added Pete, grabbing it with his hand. "Bery well, you'm going to eat dat butter for a start. You can consider dat you are habing your breakfast by degrees, and are commencing wid de butter."

Then Pete slapped the butter over Clegg's mouth, and rammed it in with his fist. The bully tried to bite him, but Pete was watching for that, and he only got his knuckles grazed slightly, while Clegg got the best part of the butter stuffed into his mouth.

"Eat dat little lot," cried Pete. "Nunno, you'm got to swallow it."

"Pull the demon off," gurgled Clegg.

"There's a master banging at the door. It's Mr. Grant."

The new-comer, under the impression that something serious was happening, put his shoulder against the door, and smashed the lock, then a tall, very stern looking gentleman entered the study, and Pete jumped off the overturned table.

Mr. Grant was the senior master at Grey Towers, and there were few boys who did not stand in awe of him. Strict discipline was his rule, and he would have it, whether the boy was big or small. He was absolutely impartial, and if he liked any boy better than another he never showed it. Rex was supposed to be a favourite of his, but he was quite as strict with him as with any other boy in the college, in fact, Rex said he was stricter.

Mr. Grant grasped one side of his gown, a habit he had when excited, though he never raised his voice.

"What is the meaning of this, Clegg?" he inquired, in a calm, deep voice, which was perfectly modulated.

"That fiend—that black demon——"

"Does it not occur to you that your language is foolish, my lad?" inquired Mr. Grant.

"I suppose if the little blackguard had flung a table on the top of you, and stuffed a pound of butter down your throat, you would be calm."

"Ira furor brevis est!"

"Rot! Do you think I'm in a condition to have Latin flung at me?"

"Then don't you think you had better wait a few moments before addressing your master? Consider this matter calmly, Clegg, and remember that whatever has occurred is through no fault of mine. I merely came here to stop the noise, which is one of my duties. Why should you be rude to me?"

"I don't wish to be rude to you, sir. You must make some allowance, under the scandalous circumstances."

"Exactly, Clegg. I am making every allowance. Now, suppose we consider the matter dispassionately. It may be difficult for you to do so at the present moment, but temper will not avail you."

"I tell you one thing, Mr. Grant. I'll make that little demon of a nigger smart for this. I swear I will."

"Hush! I cannot allow that. No man should say such a thing as that. It is childish and ridiculous. Man can but strive for an object in this life. Because he says 'I will' it does not follow that he can, whether that object be good or bad. To say 'I swear I will' is impious and childish. Suppose you tell me exactly what has happened?"

"That common little blackguard of a nigger has dared to strike me."

"Ah! We will commence from that. Are you a common little blackguard of a nigger, Pete?"

"'Spect I'm a nigger, sah! Two-free people hab told me so. 'Spect I'm common, too. Dunno bout being a blackguard. Ain't so mighty good."

"Neither am I," said Mr. Grant quietly. "I only wish I were. Well, I shall not assume that you are a little blackguard until I have proof. I shall merely decide on the assumption that you are a common little nigger, taking the word common to mean ordinary. You are a common little nigger, in the same sense that I am a common big man. Of course, I know what you are, Clegg. Be pleased to tell me exactly what has occurred."

"I don't see that it can do any good, sir. My mind is made up, and nothing will alter it."

"You are in error in that respect. Besides, it is not a matter of whether an explanation will do any good, according to your lights. The crucial point is that I insist on having the fullest explanation, and that being so, you will be pleased to give it."

"According to your own showing it is wrong for a man to say 'I will have this or that,' sir; yet you are saying that you insist on having an explanation. What is the difference to saying 'I swear I will have one'?"

"You are in error again, my lad. What I said was 'that I insist on having an explanation.' I do insist; I shall use every endeavour to force you to give one. I do not say 'I swear I will make you give that explanation.'"

"You must pardon me for saying that it is a distinction without a difference, sir."

"I will pardon any foolish remark you make, my lad, and I pardon that one. How did you injure your face like that, Drewitt?"

"I fell off the trapeze, sir."

"Dear me, I am sorry for that! If you come to my study I will give you something that will take away the bruises. Now, Clegg, are you going to tell me exactly what has happened?"

"Certainly, sir! That little black scoundrel came kicking at my door."

"Why did you kick at the door, my lad?"

"Wanted to make him hear, sah."

"You should have knocked and gone in."

"Didn't care to go in in dat reckless fashion, sah."

"Why not?"

"Had heard a bit 'bout him. Tought it safer to fetch him out and hab a look at him before de interview commenced."

"Did he strike you?"

"Nunno. Yah, yah, yah! Silas came up at dat moment, and he got de strike. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing! Right on de top ob his noddle. Den I got a few strikes; so did Clegg. I gabe dose. Den he fell into de fireplace. Yah, yah, yah! His noddle got knocked dat time. After dat, we bof got knocked. I got de worst ob de knocks—least, dey were mighty painful, 'cos de stick was thick. Den de table got knocked wid de stick, and it broke a few tings, dough not so many as got broken when de table got knocked ober on de top ob Clegg. After dat he got de most ob de suffering. Yah, yah, yah! And he got de best part ob a pound ob butter stuffed down his froat. Dat was my part ob de business; so was de table-turning. Yah, yah, yah! You would hab laughed if you had seen me stuffing half de butter down his froat!"

"Why did you act thus?"

"I couldn't find any more butter, sah."

"You know perfectly well that I did not mean that."

"Look at dat, now!"

"Did you understand my meaning?"

"M'yes."

"Then why did you answer me in that manner?"

"Fun, sah."

"Come this way!"

"Golly, ain't I in for it now!" murmured Pete. "I felt sure something was going to happen, and he looks mighty strong."

Mr. Grant led the way to his study, and when he placed his back to the mantel-piece and fixed his eyes on Pete, that worthy felt that he would rather be in another place.

"I am going to teach you, my lad!" exclaimed Mr. Grant.

"All right, sah. 'Spect I deserve it, only get it ober as soon as you can. I'd rader you weren't so big; still, p'raps you will take dat into consideration, sah, and whack as lightly as de circumstances ob de case may permit."

"Surely, my lad, you do not think that I am going to strike you?"

"Dat's what I tought you meant, sah, by de teaching part ob de business."

"Certainly not! I have no right to strike you; besides, I am inclined to think that you do not deserve it—in this case, at any rate. No; I meant that I would teach you one or two things. Dr. Kenward spoke about the matter, and I offered to do so. You are a brave lad, and, I hope, a good one. Stick to the truth, Pete, no matter what you think the consequences will be, and you will not go far wrong."

"Dat's what I hab been taught so far, sah. I don't like dat chap Clegg at all."

"Well, if he struck you, that is natural—especially if he struck you without a cause."

"Golly, it ain't a question 'bout striking! I don't mind dat, 'cos I'm pretty used to it. I don't care for Drewitt so mighty much, but I tink dat oder one is a lot worse."

"Did Drewitt strike you?"

"Yah, yah, yah! We bof struck at one anoder."

"You fought him?"

"Dat's so, sah. We had a good long fight, too."

"Ah, now I understand! Well, you can go for the present. I will instruct you in a few things each evening."

CHAPTER 3.

The Amateur Detective—How Billy Lost His Boots—Jobson Gets the Worst of it—Pete's Great Surprise—How Lady Carew Received Him—Billy Makes a Fearful Blunder—Before the Doctor.

"DUNNO dat I care for dat teaching arrangement, eider," mused Pete, as he made his way to Billy's lodge. "Still, I suppose it is all for de best. Hallo, Billy! I hab been to see Clegg, and de fellow don't like me."

"No one could, bust you! Have you been playing the fool with him?"

"Well, dere was a bit of an upset one way and de oder."

"There goes his bell, bust him! Well, I suppose I had best go and answer it to see what you have been up to."

And Billy had scarcely left the lodge when Rex entered it.

"I have been looking all over the show for you, Pete," exclaimed Rex. "We are going out together; don't say anything to Billy. We will have a bit of fun with him. Where is the old image?"

"Gone to look after a little upspill dat occurred in Clegg's study."

"Good! Did you play the giddy goat with him?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Should say dat is 'bout what occurred. He nearly brained

Silas trying to hit me, den he caught me more dan I cared for. Next his table fell on de top ob him, and I got him helpless. After dat I stuffed 'bout a pound ob butter down his froat. Mr. Grant came in den, so we stopped."

"Tut, tut, tut! What a pity—just as you were getting on so nicely! Never mind, you may get another chance at him, and I will help you all I can. Here comes Billy! Doesn't he look indignant, too?"

"You black, beastly microbe!" hooted Billy. "Why, he's been and wrecked the study; and now Clegg says I'm to clear up the mess, but I'll see him hung fast! The varmint has been and smashed all his crocks and turned his breakfast on the floor. I never see such a disgusting mess in all my life! Now, see here, you rat of a nigger, jest you go straight and clear up that mess—every bit of it, mind! If I find so much as a crumb on the floor it will be the worse for you! A pretty thing, indeed, for a nigger to come here and make this howling mess. One would think the whole college belonged to you, the rate you are going on. Oh, you varmint, wouldn't I like to have the handling of you for half an hour! I'd make you sit up!"

"But, you see, o'd hoss," exclaimed Pete, "I don't seem to care 'bout clearing up dat mess. I tink you'm dē properest person to do dat."

"Do you, really? You think as I'm a-going to clear up after you?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex.

"Don't you get tutting at me, you lamb-faced demon!" hooted Billy, glaring at Rex. "I always know that you are up to some of your monkey tricks when you start tutting—and, for that matter, you never speak without doing of it."

"Billy, dear boy, I can't spare Pete. You see, he and I have got a scheme on, and it stands to reason that one of us can't execute it without the other."

"I'll scheme you! Go and clear up that mess!"

"I want him to scoot out with me. We shan't be so remarkably long. Doctor's permission to go out, you know."

"I ain't believing that lie, and so I tell you! I know perfectly well that the doctor ain't letting you out this time of the morning, because he would know perfectly well that you would not come in till about this time of night."

"Now, Billy boy, don't be obstinate!" exclaimed Rex. "All you have got to do is to hold your tongue. Do you see? Think you are some fat old maggot in a rotten apple, and keep on saying nothing. We shall not be so remarkably long, at the same time we shall not be so remarkably short. We shall be what you might call a medium length of time. Tut, tut, tut! We're sure to enjoy ourselves on a beautiful day like this. Open the gates, dear Billy."

"I shan't, you worms! You don't leave these 'ere grounds, not if I know it. Jest you start cleaning the knives, you little brute of a nigger! That will keep you going till dinner, and so I can tell you."

"On this occasion, Billy, I shall be glad if you will let him off and clean the knives yourself."

"Will I, thump!"

"Then let the knives go uncleaned—what matter? What's in a dirty knife? We don't shove them in our mouths like you do, Billy. We use our forks for prodding potatoes and such like. Billy always cuts up all his little plateful and talks at it all the time he is on the job; then he seizes the edge of his plate and the knife and works around till he has cleaned the plate. I rather fancy he gives it a finishing lick, but I am not quite certain of that. I know he generally polishes it round with a piece of bread, and, having swallowed the bread, complains of the nature of the dinner."

"Yah, yah, yah! De man complained ob de nature ob his breakfast dis morning. But 'bout dose knives?"

"Tut, tut, tut! They don't want cleaning. Billy always cleans them once a month, whether they want it or not."

"That 'ere's false!"

"Sorry, Billy; I should have said once in six months!"

"I cleans them every day of my life."

"Well, go and clean them this morning then."

"I shan't! That nigger has got to do them."

"I ain't well enough to clean knives dis morning, Billy," said Pete. "I'm well enough to go for a walk, or anything like dat; but when it comes to cleaning knives, it makes me feel so sick dat I wouldn't dare to undertake de job. Nunno! You get on wid dat, and if I am back in time, I will hab a look at dem and tell you if you hab done it de right way."

"Bust me, I never did hear such cheek in all my born days!"

"Come on, Pete. It is no good arguing with the man. If he won't open the gates for us I know where we can scale the wall."

"You varmint, you ain't going, I tell you! Come back there; I'll report you both! Bust if I don't stop that nigger, and chance it!"

Then Billy made a rush for Pete. But he had not very much chance of catching him, and the boys roared with laughter as Billy went across the close at top speed.

"Go it, Billy!"

"Well run, Billy!"

"Reminds you of a push-ball rolling down a steep hill."

"Look at his waddle. Ducks are not in it with Billy!"

These were a few of the remarks he heard, and they made him very angry. All the same, he went on, because he was quite determined to catch Pete.

"Yah, yah, yah! Come on, old hoss," roared Pete. "You'm de finest runner for a fat man I eber came across."

"You might call him a scarlet runner," cried Rex, who was leading the way, as he knew which direction to take. He went across the orchard where the grass was long, and the ground in some parts uneven. Pete kept about a couple of yards in front of Billy, who was puffing and blowing like some old grampus. They were close to the pond, and Rex leapt a little ditch, which was almost hidden by the long grass. Pete saw it all right, but Billy did not. He was too excited to notice a little thing like that, and stepping into the gully, he sprawled face forwards to the ground.

"Yah, yah, yah! He's caught me dis time," exclaimed Pete, turning and springing on the fallen man's back.

"Tut, tut, tut! Can you hold him?"

"Dere ain't de slightest difficulty 'bout dat. It would be as much as de man could do to get up by himself, and he can't possibly get up while I am on his back."

"All right! I will pull his boots off. That will stop his running. Tut, tut, tut! He has kicked me severely; still, that can't be helped. I shall have to cut the laces, Billy. I can't wait to untie them."

"Yah, yah, yah! How is de man going to walk back widout his boots?" inquired Pete. "Dere's some stones to cross in de grounds."

"He can roll over those," said Rex, who had got a rather difficult task. He got kicked several times before he succeeded in getting the first boot off; then matters became easier; so easy, in fact, that Billy became alarmed.

"Sir Reginald Carew!" he cried. "I call on you in the name of law and horder to leave horf. Mind! I ain't the sort of man to be held up to ridicool. If you was to do anything like that I should bring a action for damages against Lady Carew."

"But my mother isn't taking your boots off, Billy."

"She's responsible for her son's actions. I should claim a hundred pounds damages, and she would have to pay, else you would be sent to prison."

"Sounds rather dear for taking a man's boots off, too," exclaimed Rex, who had now got the second one off.

"Oh, you varmint!" howled Billy, as Rex deliberately flung Billy's boots into

the pond. "If I don't have the law on you for this it's a caution. I won't be ridiculed in this manner. I shall put it in the hands of the police."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I dunno how dat man is going to walk ober dose stones."

"Tut, tut, tut! We must come and watch him."

"I'll teach you to throw my boots in the water, you worms!"

"Seems to me, Rex knows how to do dat widout any teaching," cried Pete.

"Yah, yah, yah! I'm tinkin' ob dose stones, and eb'ry time I tink ob dem it makes me laugh, but I don't tink you will laugh so mighty much when you get walking ober dem."

Further pursuit was, of course, out of the question. Billy rose to his feet, and uttered the most terrible threats as he waddled across the orchard, but when he stepped on the stones, he uttered a howl that brought at least fifty boys to watch him.

"Yah, yah, yah! De man has lost his boots," bawled Pete. "Go fast, old hoss, and den you won't notice de pebbles."

"Oh, you black beast!" hooted Billy. "Wait till I get at you!"

"Don't laugh at de poor old hoss. Yah, yah, yah! You can see he's hurting his tribbles. Pick out de soft pebbles, old hoss. Ain't de man got a mighty elegant walk; reminds you ob a bear dancing on hot bricks. Pity we ain't got an organ to play for him."

"Oh, you hutter varmint, won't I jest have a settlement for this!" hooted Billy.

"Ask one ob de boys to carry you on his back, old hoss. I don't suppose you weigh more dan eighteen stone. Yah, yah, yah! De man tinks he's a cow, now."

Billy's feet were not proof against those stones. He went down on his hands and knees, and the howls of laughter the boys uttered brought Bella to the end of the garden; then she, also, shrieked with laughter.

"Whatever are you trying to do, Billy?" she inquired.

"You'll excuse me, miss," snarled Billy. "But I think a young lady would be better attending to her eddication than encouraging infamous boys to play these ere tricks on me. My position in——"

"But, Billy, why don't you keep in your proper position, and not go crawling along like some old caterpillar?"

"Because boys who passes theirselves off as gents goes and heaves my boots into the duck-pond. I shall report them to your father, that's what I shall do, and it will be my dooty to report how you have encouraged them with your laughter."

"But, Billy, no one could possibly help laughing at you when you go along in that ridiculous position. I believe my father would laugh, and I am quite certain my mother would."

"Tut, tut, tut! Certainly she would, Bella," exclaimed Rex, approaching her.

"Did you ever see such a ridiculous man?"

"Of course, you did it, Rex," laughed Bella. "No other boy would have thought of such a trick. But how did you get his boots off?"

"I think I had better not tell you, Bella. You might get taking your governess's boots off in the same way."

"As though I should play such tricks," cried Bella, tossing her pretty head.

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Well, I wouldn't."

"I'd rather not put temptation in your way. It would look most undignified to see a governess going along like Billy is."

"I should get up and walk if I were you, Billy," cried Bella, "I don't think the stones will hurt you."

"You will hexcuse me for contradicting you, Miss Bella," growled Billy; "but I happen to know they will hurt me, 'cos I've tried them. They hurts my hands

and knees bad enough, though not so much as my feet. Oh, won't I have a settlement over this job!"

"Here comes my father," exclaimed Bella, darting away.

"Come on, Pete," cried Rex. "It's time we were going. This way; he hasn't seen us yet. If he shouts don't look round."

They gained the hedge at the back of the orchard, and pushed their way through it. Then the two worthies bolted along the lane at their utmost speed; but the astonished master was too intent on looking at Billy to notice them, and they got clear away.

"It was lucky Bella saw him coming," observed Rex. "You see, I have got a day off, and he might have stopped it."

"M'yes! Specially if Billy told where his boots had got to. How shall you manage 'bout dose boots?"

"Buy him a new pair. He doesn't mind about the loss of his boots. What is bothering him is the loss of his dignity. Tut, tut, tut! He did look an utter ass, too. You see, he makes himself so objectionable to us chaps that we always play him practical jokes when we get the chance. Now, I have promised the doctor to try to identify the car."

"S'pect I shall be able to do dat, if it is dere," said Pete. "Only it might hab been some stranger in de place, and de car may not hab come from here at all. I rader tink it did, dough."

"So does the doctor, I believe. The scoundrel might at least have stopped to see if any one was injured. It was a cowardly thing to do to go on."

"De man must hab been mad to drive round a corner like dat," exclaimed Pete. "Still, we shall soon see who was in dat car."

"Tut, tut, tut! I don't know how."

"Why, dat car ain't going to smash up a bicycle like dat widout showing some marks on de wheels."

"Right! I never thought of that. Have you any notion who was in the car?"

"If I ain't much mistaken it was Peter Clegg," answered Pete. "I couldn't be certain 'bout dat matter, 'cos he was on to us like a flash of lightning, but it was someone mighty like him. He looked just like de chap into whose mouf I stuffed de butter. Yah, yah, yah! Makes me laugh ebery time I tink ob dat."

"Tut, tut, tut! If you are right, I know the car Clegg would have been certain to hire, and that is the best one. Look here, we will take it out, and examine it in the country. The doctor does not want Jobson to know what we are up to. Jobson is the owner of the cars. I expect the doctor has been questioning him, only you can't believe a single word the fellow says. He is the worst humbug I ever met, and if one of the chaps hired a car, and told him not to tell, he would vow he had not let one out that day, and he's got a way with him that is convincing. I used to think he was the most truthful man before I once caught him. He thinks I believe in him still, but I don't, not by long chalks. He and Clegg are as thick as thieves; in fact, I believe he is so remarkably kind that he gives Clegg tips on races, and even puts money on for him. Needless to say, Clegg loses as a rule."

"Yah, yah, yah! He would do. How far is it to de place?"

"About another mile. Still, there is no hurry, because we have got the whole day before us, and as long as we are in by nine o'clock it will be all right."

Jobson was a tall, cadaverous-looking individual, with a remarkably solemn expression. He did well with his motors, and he was also an undertaker. Then he did any carpentering required at the college, so that one way and another he was a prosperous man. He was most remarkably civil to all the boys, and always talked against the masters behind their backs. He fondly imagined that this was the way to keep friends with the boys.

"Good morning, Sir Reginald," he exclaimed. Rex had striven to keep his title a secret, but the fact that he was a baronet had leaked out by reason of Lady

Carew coming to the college occasionally, and now every one in the place knew who Rex was. He disliked being called Sir Reginald.

"Tut, tut, tut! Good morning, Jobson."

"It always does me good to see you, sir."

"Rats!"

"I know you are fond of a joke, sir. All the same I always say what I mean."

"You can always tell when he is lying," whispered Rex, "because he always rolls his eyes upwards. He often rolls his eyes upwards."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete.

"And so this is your little nigger servant," exclaimed Jobson, who did not appreciate Pete's guffaw, which he guessed was at his expense, and there was nothing he objected to more than being made fun of, unless it were not being paid for a funeral, in which case he always went to the house and kicked up such a row that all the neighbours came out to listen.

"Tut, tut, tut! What an idiot the fellow is"—in a voice just audible to Jobson.

"Been making any more coffins lately, Jobson?"

"I am thankful to say I have not, Sir Reginald Carew. It is a blessing that people are healthy here."

"Sort ob blessing in disguise dat, for you, ain't it, old hoss?" inquired Pete.

"I do not allow impertinence from nigger boys," observed Jobson.

"Quite right too, my dear old hoss. I was just tinkering what a mighty long coffin you would take; still, you would save in de width. Dere ain't much breadth in you. Reminds you ob a yard ob pump-water, don't he, Rex?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Don't get savage, Jobson," exclaimed Rex. "We couldn't possibly do without undertakers, and now you have combined motoring, business ought to be looking up. Suppose you let us have that car?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Shall I pay you in advance?"

"By no means. I know that you are a very skilful driver, and although I always send out my own chauffeur——"

"Tut, tut, tut! You didn't send out one with Peter Clegg yesterday."

"I beg your pardon!"

"I say you did not send a chauffeur with Peter Clegg yesterday."

"None of my cars went out yesterday."

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"I did not let out a single car."

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Do you wish to hire the car, Sir Reginald?"

"That is my intention."

"With my consent, sir!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Come along, Pete. Let's go by train."

"Sir Reginald," gasped Jobson, who had no intention of losing his very best customer.

But Rex walked on, and Jobson followed him.

"Allow me to explain, sir."

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"I beg of you——"

"It doesn't matter a bit, Jobson," declared Rex, hurrying on. "My mother has a couple of cars, and I know she will send one to the college if I ask for it. She will be only too pleased, and I shall be able to give the fellows rides whenever I want. It will come cheaper, and——"

"Live and let live is my motter, sir."

"Golly! I should hab tought 'Lib and let die' was a better one for a man in your line ob business!" exclaimed Pete.

"I am a poor man, Sir Reginald, and I hope you are too much of a gentleman

to be offended with a man who never intended any affront. I apologise, sir, for any words that I uttered which may have annoyed you."

"My dear Jobson, I am not the slightest bit offended. I merely wanted the car; but, of course, if you don't care to lend it to me, there is an end of the matter. I will bring one over. It's a good idea."

"Sir, I shall charge you nothing for the hire of the car."

"Tut, tut, tut! I wouldn't have it on those lines. No, I tell you what we will do, Pete. We will run over to see my mother. We will go by train, and come back by motor. Then I can put it up at the livery stables, and use it when I like."

"I beg of you to reconsider the matter, sir," exclaimed Jobson. "Think of the pounds and pounds I should lose."

"Well, I tell you what I will do with you, Jobson," said Rex. "You sha'n't lose money over me. Have you got a rule in your pocket?"

"Yes, sir," answered Jobson, producing a two-foot rule.

"Well, run me over, and take my measurement for my coffin, and you can have the order."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Best gib him de order for mine at de same time."

"Don't joke on such a subject, young gentlemen!" exclaimed Jobson, shifting his position concerning Pete, whom he began to think might be a friend of Rex. He knew that worthy was not at all particular concerning social position. "Now, do come back. The car is quite ready!"

"Just as you choose," answered Rex carelessly. "But if you take my tip you will send a chauffeur with Clegg next time. The way he whizzed along yesterday was surprising. I will say your car is a fast one."

"You are right, sir, but I always feel safe when you have got it."

"I doubt if you would have felt safe if you had seen Clegg going yesterday. What is your opinion, Pete?"

"I don't tink he was going much more dan fifty miles an hour when he passed me," answered Pete. "Ob course, he may hab slowed down a bit before I saw him."

"I assure you that Clegg did not go out yesterday, sir," declared Jobson.

"Tut, tut, tut! A good epitaph for your tombstone would be 'Hic jacet Jobson,' which signifies 'Here lies Jobson.' We might try a short verse, too. Tut, tut, tut! Wait a bit. Let me see. How would this little lot suit?"

"Here lies our friend Jobson, who's ended life's strife,
He's lying in death as he lied in his life;
With lies our friend Jobson you never can sever,
And now he is lying for ever and ever."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, for Rex's impromptu struck him as funny. "Tought I could make up poems myself, but I can't fetch dat little lot. Yah, yah, yah! It ain't half bad, 'cos it's funny!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Jobson won't find it so jolly funny. But hurry up, Jobson. Bring the car to us here. I'm not going to walk back."

"Certainly, sir. With the greatest of pleasure. I'm sure, to obey a command from you is always a pleasure."

"Let's see. Dat last line was, 'And now he is lying for eber and eber.' I rader like the swing ob your poem, Rex. You must teach dat little lot to me."

"I can't stand the fellow. He is such an awful humbug. I would much rather have the fellow who teaches us rowing, and who once called me a lazy lubber. There's something genuine about that, especially as my mother had paid him twenty pounds for a boat just previously. I don't know whether we have worked this little lot wisely, but in my own mind I'm certain that Clegg took that car out,

But there's this to be said, Pete. I am not going to spy on one of our fellows, let him be the biggest bully who ever lived."

"Nunno. We can work dat matter. If we prove who it was you might tell de doctor dat you knew but wouldn't tell, and we could express our opinion ob him fo his face. Clegg could not tackle de pair ob us. I don't think he would try, if we went to him in his study."

"Tut, tut, tut! You know it was he?"

"Should say so. Couldn't be certain, and I wouldn't like to accuse anyone ob dat awful action widout knowing."

"Of course it was an accident, Pete."

"Dat's so. But fancy de man driving on, and neber stopping to see if de poor girl was hurt. It's too mighty awful. For all he knew he might hab killed her."

"Dr. Kenward tells me he would have killed her if it hadn't been for——"

"You see, de doctor was far behind, and couldn't exactly see, and——"

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Yah, yah, yah! You remind me ob an old parrot wid dat little clucking. I knew an old parrot who used to encourage me to talk by making a noise exactly like dat."

"Habit, dear boy; but here comes the car!"

Now, Rex, although so young, was a splendid driver. He had any amount of nerve, and he was extremely cautious. They overtook a cart and a carriage. He slowed down for each. And if he saw a pedestrian, he likewise slackened speed; for the lane was rather dusty, and although Rex liked to enjoy himself, he did not care to do so to the discomfort of other people.

Pete did not know where he was going, except that it was through beautiful country; and when the lane was clear, as was generally the case, Rex let her go; but at turns he was always careful.

It was past midday when he drove through some lodge gates, and up a long carriage drive; then he pulled up at the finest mansion that Pete had ever seen, and the noise Rex made with his horn brought an old man to the door.

"Golly!" gasped Pete. "Dat old swell is going to sit on you, Rex!"

But the old swell bowed, and then gave a military salute, while Rex grasped his hand, and whispered something to him, at which he smiled and nodded.

"Come this way, old chap!" exclaimed Rex, leading Pete into certainly the most beautifully-furnished room he had ever entered in his life.

"Golly! Am I to walk on dis carpet?" gasped Pete.

"Tut, tut, tut! Do you suppose it is meant to roll on? Perhaps you would like to go like Billy did over the pebbles. But suppose we come up and have a wash first. We shall want to get some of the dust off us."

Pete asked no questions, but he had his doubts. The fact is he was surprised, and did not understand the matter at all.

"Seems 'most a pity to use dis soap," he exclaimed, smelling it. "Smells 'most good enough to eat."

"Take a bite at it, and see how it tastes!" laughed Rex.

"You ain't got any yellow soap?"

"Rats! Go on."

"But I ain't used to dis sort ob ting, Rex. 'Spect I'll hab to call you 'sah,' or something like dat."

"Are you going to wash or are you not?"

Pete submitted to circumstances, and then they went into a room, more sumptuous even than the one they had first entered. In fact, it was the drawing-room, and a fair, beautiful lady was seated there. She clasped Rex in her arms and kissed him.

"This is my friend Pete, mother," exclaimed Rex. "My mother, Pete!"

"I dunno what I ought to do, ma'am," exclaimed Pete. "You see, I'm only a

nigger lad, and 'way down Zanzibar we don't see ladies like you, 'scept Miss Lily. Den her homé was a bit ob a hut. See here, Rex, I tink you ought to hab giben me some sort ob warning——"

"Rats!"

"Shoo! You will frighten de lady."

"So long as the lady does not frighten you, Pete," exclaimed Lady Carew, smiling, "we shall not mind. When Rex says that you are his friend, it must follow that you will be a friend of mine. How do you do, Pete?"

Lady Carew offered her hand, and Pete shook his woolly pate.

"Still, de black won't come off, ma'am; but I dunno dat you'm got de right to shake hands wid a common nigger."

"He called the doctor 'old hoss,' mother," laughed Rex. "Tut, tut, tut! Well, he saved Bella's life at the risk of his own. I'll tell you all about it, my dear mother. No I won't, though. We want Pete to enjoy himself, so we won't bother him."

"Lunch is just ready," said Lady Carew, smiling at Pete.

"I'll go into de kitchen, ma'am. I'm de page-boy at de college. Got de situa-tion—yah, yah, yah!—frough Rex. He made me a scarecrow in de first place."

"Stay, Pete!" exclaimed Lady Carew. "You are here as my son's friend, and as my guest. I am very pleased to make your friendship. Now, I want you to enjoy yourself as much as you possibly can. You will have lunch with us, of course, and then we will decide on the best way to make your visit a pleasant one. Wait here one moment."

Rex followed his mother out of the room, and he gave her an account of what Pete had done, exactly as the doctor had described the incident.

"Don't offer Pete money, mother. He's a funny chap. I can't quite make him out. You have frightened him, but he isn't the least bit afraid of the doctor. Now, I'm afraid of the doctor, but I'm not frightened of you."

"Don't be silly, Rex. Are you quite well?"

"You make me smile, mother. I almost wish I had a lot of brothers and sisters, then you wouldn't try to coddle me. Tut, tut, tut! At any rate, I want you to sum Pete up, and let me know what you think of the coon. He's an oddity, I can tell you."

It would be ridiculous to say that Pete was shy. Nevertheless, the grandeur of the place affected him at first, and he would rather have had a crust of bread and cheese by himself; but Lady Carew soon had him laughing and joking; and after that he was as jolly as Rex himself.

Rex gave a description of the fight with Silas; and William grinned as he stood behind Lady Carew's chair. He even returned Rex's wink. Lady Carew laughed although she said it was disgraceful, and told Pete that boys ought not to fight; while Pete quite agreed with her.

"It's de oder boy, you see, who is in de wrong, my dear—— Hi, golly, what hab I done now? Ain't dat mighty awful! I hab called her—— Say, sah," gasped Pete, turning to William, "tell de lady I'm mighty sorry! I dunno how to do it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Go on, you silly owl!" roared Rex. "Do you think my mother is going to take offence at that? Tut, tut, tut!"

"I dunno 'bout dis at all. Seems to me dat tut tut means a lot more dan it says. Wish I had not said dat, too."

"Not at all, Pete," exclaimed Lady Carew, smiling at him. "It makes me think you like me, and that is what I desire, because Rex likes you. Now, tell me all about Zanzibar."

And Pete rattled away. After that everything went on capitally, and when the lunch was finished they adjourned to the drawing-room.

"Are you fond of music, Pete?" inquired Lady Carew, who wanted to induce Rex to sing, for he had a grand voice.

"Yes, ma'am."

"You don't play the piano, I suppose?"

"Miss Lily taught me all dat. She's de wife ob de missionary now, and a most surprising lady. She was de schoolmistress, only she couldn't knock so much into dis child's noddle."

"Well, that is capital, Pete!" exclaimed Lady Carew. "You must play something. Do you sing?"

"Dat's what she said. I dunno, but it seems to me to make a noise when I start on dat job. Don't care for de playing."

"Well, suppose my son plays, and you sing?"

"Might do dat. Tink you can do de tum-tumming for 'Poor Old Joe'? It's about time de poor old hess was buried; still, he does all right for a song."

Rex was a musician by instinct, and he had been taught by the very best masters in the land. He struck a few chords.

"That key suit you, Pete?"

"Yes, dat's 'bout de correct tum-tum for a voice like dis child's. Golly, some-one else——"

Then a beautiful voice appeared to be coming from the hall, and it sang the words of the old song. Pete's lips never moved, and the voice was so distant that Lady Carew stepped to the door, and opened it. Then the next verse appeared to come from the garden. Next the voice came from Pete, and it was really beautiful.

"Tut, tut, tut! Go on, Pete!" exclaimed Rex. "You can make the voice come from any place you like. What do you think of that, mother?"

Lady Carew did not answer. She listened spellbound to that glorious voice, and when the song ended she gazed in wonder at Pete.

"My dear lad," she exclaimed, "there is a fortune in a voice like yours!"

"Rats, mother! Tut, tut, tut! He can't sing!"

"Surely, Rex, you do not think what you say!" exclaimed Lady Carew.

"I don't think what that voice said, mother," laughed Rex. "All the same, I never uttered the words. They were a little of Pete's ventriloquism. Now, then, you 'little black nigger scoundrel,' as Billy calls you, let's have a few more songs! I'm not going to let you off at that. I'll bring you over again, with mother's consent, and let you enjoy yourself; but you have got to amuse us a little this time; and I will jolly well hand you over to Signor Rosati when we get back to Grey Towers."

"Who is dat man?"

"Our music-master. Go on now!"

They went on; and Lady Carew, who was a finished musician, made up her mind that Pete's talents would be quite wasted at the college.

"I have heard a voice that I love far better," she said to her son; "but I have never heard a more beautiful voice. The lad must be brought out. Tell Signor Rosati that I will pay for his education, Rex. I suppose he will not mind teaching a negro lad?"

"My dear mother, he does not care what the lad is like so long as he has got a voice."

"I will write to him, Rex. Pete must have a thorough tuition. His voice is beautiful. He shall make a name."

"I doubt if he ever will, mother. I don't think he would do it; besides, he is only a nigger, you know; and although you and I would not look at that from a musical point of view, others would. He will have a rough life at the college; but I tell you, he can take his own part. Tut, tut, tut! The way that nigger

can fight! You would have been delighted if you had seen him punching Silas's head."

"I am perfectly sure I should not have had any such feeling, Rex. Be kind to the poor lad—well, I know you will be. I am glad he is brave, and from what you tell me, he must be good. No lad would risk his life for another who was not good."

"Pete is all right, mother," declared Rex—"there isn't a doubt about that! I knew you would take to him. Well, I must be off, or we shall be late; and Billy is inclined to sit on us."

Pete had been seated in the motor-car while Rex was having this conversation with his mother, but he got out to say "Good-bye!" to Lady Carew; and that lady told him that she hoped to see him again soon. Then they started off at about four miles an hour, for, although it was a moonlight night, and not yet dark, Rex did not intend to make his mother anxious.

"You see, I am all she has got to love in the world, Pete," explained Rex. "It's rough to have so little to care for, I know; but if I were to break my neck, why, I should break her heart at the same time, and that is a thing that must never be. We will dash on presently. There's no more danger in going fast than slow if you know how to do it; only, don't you see, if we were to start fast, it would give my mother a wrong impression, and keep her awake all night."

"Golly, we ain't doing anyting like dat, Rex! I tink she's de most beautiful lady I hab eber seen. I say, ain't it a mighty pity you don't take after her in looks?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex, glancing at Pete sideways and smiling. "I thought I was her exact image."

"Nunno! You more closely resemble a Chinese image. Dere's no boy could hab dat lubly sort ob face. Might as well say dat I am like you. Dere's as much difference between you and your moder as dere is between Clegg and you. All de same, you ain't de ugliest white person I hab seen on de face ob de earth."

"Ha, ha, ha! I declare I will tell my mother that! Now we can safely open her out! We are going to move."

They did; and Pete enjoyed it; so did Rex. They rushed along that country lane at a fine speed, but they reached Jobson's garage without mishap, and having paid him for the hire, Rex led the way to the college, which they reached well before nine o'clock, their limit.

CHAPTER 4.

How Pete Solved the Mystery of the Motor-Car—In the Lion's Den—Pete Lectures the Bully—Sentenced to a Thrashing—How the Sentence Was Executed—The Lost Clothes, and How They Were Not Found.

"I'm afraid we have not done much good," observed Rex.

"I dunno 'bout dat," answered Pete. "I had a good look at de car, but couldn't see any marks on it. All de same, I found dis little case fallen down behind de seat."

"Wait a bit!" exclaimed Rex, taking it and standing beneath the lamp at the college gates. "Look here! I suppose we are at liberty to read this telegram."

Rex produced the form, which had been put in one side of the case, while cigarettes were in the other, and read:

"Swift a cert!" The message was addressed to "Peter Clegg, care of Jobson."

"Well, that is proof positive to my mind that Clegg did hire the motor-car," said Rex. "Tut, tut, tut! Won't we give him a dressing down! I will get you to do it, Pete. He will like it less from you even than from me. We will both get at him, and talk to him like fathers. But, first of all, we shall have to straighten

up matters with the doctor. He won't like us not telling him who it is; but you leave that to me. Now for Billy! I wonder if he has reported us yet?"

The bell was a noisy one, especially the way in which Rex rang it. He kept on for at least five minutes, and would have continued still longer, had not Billy opened the gate.

"Well, if this ain't beyond all bounds!" gasped Billy. "You've been out ever since teatime! Now, it ain't no good you telling me you ain't, 'cos I saw you go!"

"Then it was your duty to have stopped us, Billy."

"As you know, I did try; but when boys run on and don't take any notice of my shouts——"

"We did not hear you shout at teatime, Billy."

"That's a hemphatic lie! I ain't got any lesser word to use to it. I say it's a hemphatic lie!" cried Billy, who was rather proud of that expression.

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"It ain't no good you tutting in that manner. I won't be tutted at by a school-boy! Directly I accuse you of a hemphatic lie you start tutting at me. I shall report you for being out since teatime, and it ain't no good you telling another hemphatic lie, 'cos I shall tell the doctor. You know how particular he is about the truth."

"Then it is a pity his porter does not take after him."

"All right, you worthless vagabone, I'll tell him that too! You jest come along of me!"

"But, Billy, we did not really hear you call us back at teatime."

"I repeat again that's a hemphatic lie! Come this way!"

Rex winked at Pete, and followed Billy, who was in an excited state when he entered the doctor's study.

"It's my dooty to report these two boys, sir," exclaimed Billy,

The doctor sighed, and glanced up from his book. He was getting tired of Billy's continual reports. He had an idea that Billy reported little matters, and kept big ones secret, provided it was made worth his while to do so.

"What have they done, William?"

"Told me a hemphatic lie, sir!"

"Told you what?" gasped the doctor, who did not quite grasp it.

"A hemphatic lie, sir. They went out at teatime; and I shouted to 'em to come back. Then they had the audacity to tell me a hemphatic lie when they just come in, and say they never heard me shout at teatime! Then, sir, Master Carew starts insulting me in the most shameful manner. I shouldn't like to repeat what he said about me and you; and no doubt a boy who would tell a hemphatic lie would deny saying the frightful things——"

"You must tell me what he said."

"It was principally the way he said 'em in. He had the audacity, after he had told me the hemphatic lie, to tut me."

"To what?" gasped the doctor.

"Started tutting me in the most shameful manner."

"I do not understand you. Is tutting a slang word for abusing you?"

"It's like this, sir: 'Cluck, cluck, cluck!' only I can't do it in the insulting and exasperating way as he does."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete; and even the doctor smiled.

"It is a habit Master Carew has," exclaimed the doctor. "I feel sure he does not intend it to be insulting. He often does it to me."

"Yah, yah, yah! He tuts his own moder, sir!" cried Pete.

The doctor glanced up. He guessed what had happened, although as he had given Rex and Pete a day's holiday, there was no reason why Rex should not have taken Pete home.

"I don't understand anything about the supposed falsehood," exclaimed Dr. Kenward; "but I feel quite sure one was not told. Neither do I believe insulting language was used to me. Something might have been said in fun, of course, but——"

"It wasn't in fun, sir. It was dead earnest." He said as he only wished you was like me, and if that ain't an insult——"

"Yah, yah, yah! You'm talking against yourself, Billy."

"You see some of the things I have to put up with, sir?"

"Billy has got hold of the wrong end of the stick, sir;" exclaimed Rex. "He said he saw us going out at tea-time, and shouted to stop us, and when I told him that we did not hear him shout at tea-time, he said it was a hemphatic lie. In fact, he said that two or three times. I think he is rather proud of the expression; at any rate, it is novel. Well, when he said it was a hemphatic lie, he added that you were so particular concerning the truth, and I remarked that it was a pity your porter did not take after you. Of course, I meant with regard to veracity——"

"You never mentioned the word," declared Billy.

"What word?" inquired Rex.

"Ferocity. I'm jest as ferocious as you are, and I won't have my ferocity doubted by a boy who tells a hemphatic lie."

"Golly! Ain't de man getting at someting, dis time?" murmured Pete. "I don't tink dere's much fight about him eider. Should say his veracity and ferocity were 'bout equal."

The doctor looked rather surprised at this. He did not expect that Pete would have known as much.

"You see, William, what Master Carew desired was that you should be truthful, and it is also what I desire. You could not have seen them go out at tea-time, because they were many miles away. They went out early this morning, after they had played you that trick, for which I am going to reprimand them. You have not been back since, have you, Carew?"

"No, sir, we have only just returned. We spent the day at my mother's place."

"They had my permission, William. You did not see them go out at all."

"Then it must have been two other boys like them."

"I dunno where he is going to find anoder boy in de college at all like me," observed Pete.

"The falsehood is yours, William," said the doctor very sternly; "nor is it the first time you have spoken falsely. I have given you many warnings concerning that grave fault. You appear to have no regard for the truth, and you invariably report what you imagine has occurred, and not what really comes to your knowledge. I detest falsehood in any shape or form. Apart from the wickedness of the thing, it makes me doubt your word even when you do speak the truth. I hope there will be no recurrence. You can go."

"I am sorry, sir, that I was mistook——"

"It is not a matter of being mistaken. You have told me a deliberate falsehood."

"I must say, sir, that the conduct of these boys is shameful. That nigger fair smashed up Master Clegg's study!"

"Mr. Grant is dealing with the matter. You can go. Leave the door open."

The doctor gave this last order, because he knew perfectly well that if Billy shut the door he would remain outside listening. He waited a few moments, then told Rex to close the door, and that worthy looked into the passage to make sure that Billy had really gone.

"Have you discovered anything, my lads?" inquired Dr. Kenward.

"Pete has, sir," answered Rex. "He has found out who was the driver of that car, but we want you to let the matter drop."

"Then it is as I feared," exclaimed the doctor. "The driver was one of the boys belonging to this college. I do not want to make you spy on your schoolfellows, but the action was cowardly and contemptible. No doubt it was an accident, but that boy should have stopped. He ought to be punished for such conduct."

"Well, sir, what Pete and I are going to say to him will punish him pretty severely. Then, again, the dread of your discovering him will be a further punishment."

"You have absolute proof?"

"Yes, sir, there is not a doubt about it. If you will leave it to us we will make him thoroughly ashamed of himself. I don't want to sneak, and hope you won't insist on knowing his name."

"Den you see, sah, I wouldn't hab got dis situation if it hadn't been for de accident," exclaimed Pete. "Miss Bella wasn't hurt. Dere's de bicycle, ob course——"

"That is nothing. I care nothing about that. If you think you can make the guilty boy feel a sense of shame, I will leave the matter in your hands. That is all I should do, as I should not expel him, under all the circumstances. It was cowardice that caused him to act as he did. Good-night, my lads! I shall take no further steps in the matter, except to caution Jobson not to allow his cars out without a chauffeur."

"Tut, tut, tut! It has ended better than I thought!" exclaimed Rex. "I believe the doctor knows who it was as well as we do. We will give him a horrid dressing-down to-morrow morning, Pete. You will be able to make him look an ass, and he won't dare to retaliate for fear of our sneaking. Of course, I don't want to hold the threat over his head, still, it was a beastly cowardly thing to do, and he ought to be made to sit up over it."

"Yah, yah, yah! Rader tink we shall do dat all right."

"Yes! We will go in when he is at breakfast to-morrow morning. Good-night, Pete!"

The following morning Clegg and Silas were having breakfast together when Rex and Pete entered the study.

"You insolent young hounds!" cried Clegg, springing to his feet. "How dare you enter my study without knocking?"

"Tut, tut, tut! We have a private matter we wish to speak to you about," exclaimed Rex. "You had better send Silas out of the room."

"I shall do no such thing. What do you want to say?"

"It is about that motor-car accident."

From the way in which the two bullies glanced at each other Rex got the idea that Silas was the second one in the car.

"Well, what about it?" demanded Clegg, after a pause.

"Tut, tut, tut! Do you wish me to speak before Silas?"

"Certainly! Why not?"

"It is pretty evident that he was with you."

"I don't understand a word of what you are saying!"

"Pete saw you in the car."

"Upon my word, Carew," exclaimed Clegg, "I took you to be more sensible than that. Although I have good cause to detest you for your monkey tricks, I always believed you were a lad gifted with some intelligence. Now, because that lying little nigger receives a well-merited thrashing from me, and to have revenge declares that I caused an accident, you are so simple as to believe him!"

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"We can prove that you were in the car."

"You cannot, for the simple reason that I have not been in a motor-car for over a month."

"You were in one of Jobson's cars on Wednesday, and I believe Silas was with you. That I can't prove, but I can prove you were in it!"

"On the word of that lying little nigger!"

"His word alone would scarcely be proof."

"You surely would not go on the word of Jobson?"

"No, I don't believe him. He declares that you did not have the car out."

"So you have been amusing your dear little selves by trying to find out who caused the accident?"

"Exactly!"

"You charming calm-faced little sneak," sneered Clegg. "I pity your poor mother——"

"Golly! She ain't so mighty poor, eider," exclaimed Pete. "Yah, yah, yah! I should like to be so poor as all dat. Spent best part ob yesterday dere, so know a bit about it!"

"Well, I should say you are a fit friend for that contemptible little sneak, Rex Carew. It is abominable to think that such a contemptible little cad should be in this college!"

"Why should you mind us finding out who was the driver of the car, if it should not have been you?" demanded Rex.

"Because I detest a sneak and a spy."

"Don't you think it was a mean-spirited thing for the fellow to have done to drive off?"

"Oh, I expect he saw that the girl was not hurt!"

"You don't think that he should have stopped?"

"Well, I expect he was in a hurry or something like that. At any rate, it seems to me that the doctor is making a thundering fuss about the matter."

"Do you think he would have stopped if he had killed Bella? And he would have done so had it not been for Pete."

"How should I know what he would have done?"

"You ought to know, seeing that you were the fellow. To my mind he is a despicable cad, and he ought to be kicked out of this college."

"Well, what has it to do with me? I cannot help the actions of others!"

"No! I should say you have quite enough to do to look after your own actions. All the same, Pete and I can prove that you were the driver of that car."

"You may be smart, my lad, but you cannot prove a negative!"

"Was 'Swift' a cert?" inquired Rex calmly.

"Yah, yah, yah! Look at his face. Say, old hoss, ain't you feeling well?"

"Look here, Carew," exclaimed Clegg. "You are acting very stupidly towards me. I never could understand why you always wanted to quarrel. You remember soon after you came here that I offered to be friendly, and——"

"Quite so. You knew that I had an unlimited supply of money. If I were to be friendly, as you call it, you would drop Silas's friendship to-morrow, because although he is of use to you for borrowing purposes, his supply is limited. My mother does not limit my allowance."

"There you go! You can't expect me to be friendly if you say insulting things!"

"I am glad that I know how to prevent such friendship."

"Why?"

"Because you are the most contemptible cringing bully in this college. Because you have no sense of honour. Because you are a liar!"

"This is too much! I don't want any false reports spread about me, but I cannot allow such language."

"You know you cannot help yourself," said Rex. "You know that I can

prove beyond all doubt that you were guilty of that accident. You dare not come with me to the doctor and face it out!"

"Suppose for the sake of argument——"

"There is no supposition about the matter. I say I can prove that you were the driver, and I am not in the habit of speaking falsely. You say you have not been in the car for over a month; then how is it that we found your cigarette-case in the car? Do you suppose it would have remained on the seat for a month? Do you imagine that the doctor would believe such a thing?"

"You may have collared it and placed it there just to spite me!"

"Do you think Dr. Kenward would credit that?"

"I don't suppose he will ever be asked the question. I don't suppose you are so dishonourable as to——"

"Golly! You ain't de right person to talk 'bout dishonour!" exclaimed Pete.

"I don't wish to listen to you, boy."

"Nunno! I know all 'bout dat, but you'm got to do it. You'm got to hear what a common nigger tinks 'bout you, else de doctor has got to hear it. See, it was an accident, and, in a sense, I'm mighty glad it occurred, 'cos I got dis job frough it; but dat don't alter de fact dat you are a contemptible coward to run away like you did. It was lucky dat I recognised your face again, and luckier still dat we hab got proof positive, sufficient to convince de doctor dat it was you. It's mighty certain dat you would not let Rex and me talk like we are doing, and are going to do, if you were not guilty. Now, if you had stopped and faced it out, I don't tink de doctor would hab said much 'bout de matter. But you didn't do anything ob de sort, and dat proves what a mean-spirited cur you are. If you ain't ashamed ob yourself you ought to be. You talk about a nigger being a blackguard, but don't you tink dat you are de blackguard in dis case? 'Cos if you don't, I do, and I'm mighty certain Rex tinks de same. You may be a gentleman by birth, but if you are one by nature, den I'm glad I ain't anoder. You look ashamed ob yourself now, and you hab got good cause to be. It ain't only your coward's action in running away, but you lie like a doormat ober de job. You'm de sort ob creature to take de most solemn oath dat you were not de driver ob de car, but you know you can't do anything ob de sort while we hab proof dat you were. I dunno weder de proof would be sufficient in a court ob law, but wid dat proof, if de doctor was to start questioning, dere wouldn't be any doubt in his mind. No one looking at your face now could doubt. Pr'aps if you grow older, and keep on like you are now, you may learn to conceal your feelings; but you can't do it yet, and it will be all de better for you if you neber learn to do it, 'cos you might become dangerous to your fellow-beings. As it is, you'm quite harmless. You ain't got much intellect, and you ain't got de power ob concealing your thoughts from oder people. De one ting in your mind at de present moment is to get dat cigarette-case, and den if we took you to de doctor you would swear dat we were speaking falsely, and dat we brought de accusation against you out ob revenge; but you ain't got de case yet. Nunno! You can listen quietly to what I am saying because you tink dere's de chance ob getting our evidence. Now, if I was a bit bigger I would lay you across dat table and gib you a good flogging. Seems to me dat a boy like you wants a beating to make anything like a man ob him. I tink, Rex, it is our duty to flog him; and I don't tink we hab got de right to part wid our evidence till we hab flogged him. What do you tink 'bout de matter?"

"Tut, tut, tut! He must be flogged."

"Den dat's settled, Clegg. We am going to cane you. We find you guilty ob a bery cowardly action, and we decide dat you must be flogged. We ain't decided when de punishment will take place, but it will be before so long."

"Now let this fooling cease!" exclaimed Clegg, who looked very uneasy.

"You know perfectly well, Carew, that it is not an honourable action to read a fellow's private papers."

"I had to open the case to see to whom it belonged."

"Very well. Now it is your duty to return it to me intact. I don't wish my private papers——"

"A betting telegram! Tut, tut, tut! Y's, that would get you into trouble; and the same remarks apply to Jobson. You heard what Pete said. We shall return that case after we have punished you."

"Talk sensibly. Who has the case?"

"Dis child," answered Pete.

"Well, I intend to reward you for finding it with this sovereign."

"Golly! I ain't taking your money. If I was in need ob any I would rader ask Rex to lend it to me."

"I suppose you think by working with him that you will get money out of him."

"Why, de old hoss is judging me by himself. He tinks I want to do exactly what he is trying to do. Yah, yah, yah! I don't tink you will succeed, Clegg. I wouldn't give you twopence for all de money you will eber get out ob Rex. Nunno! Dat friendship will neber come off. If dere was any chance ob dat, I'm most inclined to tink dat Lady Carew would take her son away from dis college. You ain't at all de sort ob friend dat lady would choose for Rex. She don't mind him taking me to her house, dough I am a nigger, but she would not hab you dere at any price, if she happened to know your nature. You see, dere are valuables knocking about in dat house, and a fellow who is as dishonest as you might nick a few ob dem. Shouldn't like to trust you wid twopence, unless I had you securely chained. You can hold yourself in readiness for dat flogging, 'cos I'm quite determined dat it is coming off. I dunno when or how or where, but you will find out all about dat when de time comes. You'm got de notice, and you can take what precautions you like; all de same you will get de beating, and we shall make it so severe dat it will be most bound to do you good. I rader tink Silas deserves one as well, 'cos it's mighty certain he was wid you. However, seeing dat I hab already punched his head, I tink we will let him off wid a caution. Come on, Rex! It ain't de slightest use talking to Clegg. De only way to appeal to his feelings is to gib him a severe flogging. He needs a sound caning, and dat is what he is going to get."

"Perdition!" gasped Clegg, as the two worthies left his study. "This is beastly awkward, Silas."

"Do you think it would be any good to bribe that nigger to give up the cigarette-case?"

"I don't know. The little blackguard might take a fiver, then he could swear he had lost it. Personally, I would give ten pounds to get it back, if I had them."

"I don't know whether I could get any money just now. There was that loss over Swift. My governor is kicking up rough at my requests, and he only sent me some money last week. Still, I have got five pounds left."

"It would be frightfully awkward if they gave the case to Kenward."

"I know it would. The whole thing would be bound to come out, and the smash on the top of the betting transactions would get us expelled. That would mean a lot to me."

"So it would to me," growled Clegg.

"Well, you see, in your case it would not matter so much, because your father has no money to speak of, while mine is a millionaire."

"Yes, my father was never in trade—in fact, we have no tradesmen in our family, thank goodness!"

"There's a lot of difference between a wholesale business and a trade," snarled Silas.

"Difference without distinction. They are all tradesmen. Of course, they make more money from the gentry."

"Hanged if they would make much out of gentry like you, because you never pay them!"

"Look here, Silas, this is rot! It won't do for you and me to quarrel just now. Besides, there's no reason why we should quarrel. We have got to get out of this scrape, and, mind you, it is a serious one for both of us."

"I believe if I got expelled my father would not leave me sixpence."

"Well, I'm much in the same position. At any rate, I should get my allowance stopped straight away. Now, just go and have a chat with that little brute of a nigger. Offer him a couple of sovereigns. Then offer a fiver. If he won't take that offer him ten pounds. We can borrow it from Jobson. He would be sure to lend it rather than have the betting transaction shown up. That would about ruin him, because the doctor would stop all custom. We have Jobson on toast. I will guarantee half of what you give to the nigger."

"Bother it! I know all about that. The question is, who the thunder is going to guarantee you?"

"Look here, Silas, that is coarse."

"That may be, but it is the truth all the same. You owe me a lot over fifty pounds already."

"Well, I have never disputed it."

"No, and you have never attempted to pay it."

"Oh, bother the money! What does it matter? We are bound to spot a winner soon. Swift came in second."

"And might as well have come in last as far as we were concerned."

"I wish we had backed the brute for a place."

"It would have come in fourth then; besides, it was odds on the horse, and it wouldn't have paid to back it for place money. I call a tip like that absolutely rotten. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Jobson sent the telegram himself—at any rate, he has collared my money. It was a downright stupid thing of you to leave that case!"

"Well, it's no good talking about it now. I must have taken it out and placed it on the seat while I lighted a cigarette. Funny thing I never missed it till they spoke about it."

"What about that other matter? It will look jolly suspicious now."

"Not a bit of it. We sha'n't know anything about it. I vow I will have vengeance on that nigger one way or another. The little brute ought to be flayed alive. Go and see if you can get the case."

Drewitt did try, but he utterly failed. Pete refused the ten pounds, although he knew that they would never use the evidence. He merely said he wouldn't take a hundred pounds, nor yet a thousand, and that convinced Silas that his case was hopeless.

Pete had just commenced his work in the garden the following morning when he was surprised to see Rex approaching, as it was only just daylight.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "I had an idea that I should find you here. I've got an idea."

"Well, dat's strange, too. I wonder where you got it from?"

"Rats! Can you swim?"

"Oh, yes, I can do all dat!"

"But can you swim far, and are you buoyant in the water?"

"I dunno 'bout de aunt part ob de business, but I'm always a boy when I get into de water. Should say I could swim two-free miles if dere ain't many sharks and crocodiles in de water."

"No, we don't keep them in this country. At least, we don't keep crocodiles, and the sharks keep well out to sea."

"Den all you will hab to do is to make de water warm, and I will swim to furder orders."

"Right you are! Well, my idea is this. Clegg and Drewitt go down to bathe each morning. They are going down this morning, and other chaps are going as well. Now, my idea is to go too, and you to come with me. Clegg thinks he's the best swimmer in the college, but I believe I can beat him in distance. He likes to show off a bit, and always goes out a long way. The question is, could you and I tackle him in the water, and give him his promised flogging?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat's a good idea! Should say dey must hab been full-sized rats dat you got it from. M'yes! Dere ain't a doubt dat we could do all dat, 'cos I can keep underneaf de water 'bout free minutes, and white people can't do dat as a rule. 'Bout a minute is enough for dem. Den again, if we kept ducking him he would get frightened. If I stuck to him round de neck, you would be able to gib him a mighty big flogging, and it would be more efficacious if he had only his bathing-costume on instead ob all his clothes. Yah, yah, yah! I feel quite sure dat we could correct him in a proper manner wid de aid ob a cane."

"I have a nice little walking-cane that will answer the purpose admirably," said Rex. "You see, we can't very well tackle him on land. He would be sure to damage us fearfully before we got him down, even if we succeeded in doing it. Then, again, he would make a row, and the masters would come and stop us, whereas in the sea they can't. We should have him all to ourselves for about five minutes at the very least, and that would be long enough."

"M'yes! He would find dat quite long enough if your cane is a nice bendy one."

"He's got to be flogged hard, and we shall have to take care he does not get possession of the cane and flog us instead."

"Nunno, he won't be able to do dat. If you let him get hold ob me in de water he will wish you hadn't, cos I'm mighty certain I can keep under for quite twice as long as he can. But dere's a mighty big objection to dis arrangement."

"What's that?"

"Won't de water be cold?"

"Well, it won't be hot. They never turn on hot water in the sea, especially at this time of the year. However, it's not nearly so cold now as it is in the middle of the winter."

"Golly, no, and I don't want it to be! I don't like too much cold water. Just about enough to wash my face, and I like dat cold water hot best. Still, I don't mind putting up wid dat discomfort if you tink we can gib him de flogging he deserves. Yah, yah, yah! Won't de boys laugh when dey see us on de job?"

"Rather, and there will be some masters there, too. Grant is the only one who swims out any distance, and he never goes very far, cos he sometimes gets cramp. We shall have the beauty all to ourselves, and we will pay him. I mean to pay him for the way he ran Bella down. Come on! I'll lend you some bathing togs."

"The only ting dat boders me 'bout de matter is de temperature ob de water."

"Oh, bother the temperature of the water!"

"Well, ob course I can try to do all dat, but it seems to me dat temperature ob de water is much more likely to boder me. You see, I was grown in a hot country, where de water is never anything like cold. I ain't used to ice and snow, and dose ingredients."

"Well, we haven't got any ice and snow."

"Feels as if we were going to have some dough. Still, I suppose it ain't any good waiting till next summer, so if you tink de doctor won't mind me leabing dis work—"

"No, he won't mind. He doesn't expect you to work day and night."

"Well, dat's a blessing, cos he won't be disappointed, and I'm mighty certain

he would be disappointed if he expected anything like day and night work from dis child ; I'm ready ! ”

Rex got his bathing things, and his cane, and the two worthies made their way down to the bathing place, where they already found a number of boys in various stages of undress, and they learnt that Clegg was on one of the bathing machines with Drewitt and two others. Mr. Grant was in the other machine, and he was the only master down that morning. The smaller boys all bathed from the beach.

“ Nothing could be better,” exclaimed Rex. “ I can stick the cane through my bathing gear, so that I shall have my hands free for swimming, and Clegg will never guess what we are up to.”

“ I say, Rex,” exclaimed a lad approaching. “ You watch me and you will see some fun.”

“ All right, Tim,” answered Rex, who knew that he was an abominable sneak. “ Mind you don't tell the masters. You are about the only chap in the college of whom you never sneak.”

“ Oh, well, if you don't want to see the fun, you needn't watch Clegg's bathing machine.”

“ And if you don't want to see any fun you need not watch us. Hurry up, Pete ! —there he goes ! ”

Clegg plunged in and swam straight out to sea. The tide was not quite at its height, so it was getting slack before the turn.

“ We need not bother about the tide,” exclaimed Rex, as they dashed into the water.

“ I'm not,” growled Pete ; “ but ain't dis water mighty cold ! I'd rader hab de warn water and chance de sharks and crocodiles.”

“ You will soon get accustomed to it. Cold water is good for the health.”

“ So is medicine ; but I don't like habing my health done any good by dose cisterns. I don't call him much ob a swimmer. Tink we could easily obertake him if we tried.”

“ We want to reserve our strength. We shall need it all when we tackle him,” answered Rex.

“ I tink p'r'aps I will collar him by de legs,” said Pete. “ You see if I get my arms round bof ob his legs, you will be able to get at his back nicely.”

Pete was a grand swimmer. He had been accustomed to the water all his life, and had been taught to swim by his father almost as soon as he could walk. He was remarkably buoyant, and Rex had the idea that had Pete chosen he could have shot ahead and caught up Clegg in a very few moments.

As it was, however, they kept side by side, and when the cowardly bully turned and saw them, he appeared to be rather uneasy in his mind.

“ You silly kids had better turn back ! ” he cried. “ You are coming out too far ! ”

“ You see, my poor old hoss,” cried Pete, “ we'm coming up wid you ; but you will notice dat just directly. Yah, yah, yah ! Makes me laugh when I tink ob it ! ”

“ What do you mean, you little black villain ! ” snarled Clegg.

“ We tought dat dis would be a favourable opportunity to gib you dat flogging. Yah, yah, yah ! We'm got a special cane here for de purpose.”

“ Look here, Carew,” exclaimed Clegg. “ You and that nigger had better go back, or it will be the worse for you.”

“ Tut, tut, tut ! ”

“ Are you going back ? ”

“ Nunno, not yet ! We shall all go back togeder,” answered Pete ; “ but first ob all we hab got our duty to perform. You'm got to hab dat flogging for being a bad boy.”

"I suppose you know that Mr. Grant is down here, Carew?"

"He daren't come out as far as this," answered Rex. "See, I have the cane here. It is very thin, so it won't do you any damage, though the way I shall use it is likely to cause you considerable pain. Don't let him pass you, Pete!"

"Dere ain't de slightest chance ob de poor old hoss getting past dis child. I feel sort ob sorry for you, Clegg; but you quite see dat you deserve a beating for your bad conduct, and dat's exactly what you are going to hab."

"If you were to dare to touch me, I would about drown the pair of you!"

"Yah, yah, yah! You will find dat ain't so easy as it looks. Don't you tink you had better turn and face de foe? Nunno! Well, I shall catch you den."

Pete shot onwards at a surprising speed, and as Clegg struck out, Pete dexterously got an arm over either leg of the bully, and what is more, he stuck to them, notwithstanding Clegg's desperate efforts to kick himself free.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "I hab caught him first time ob trying. Dere's no hurry, Rex, I can hold on here all night. Keep your head end up, old hoss; I'll look after the oder end. Yah, yah, yah! I know I shall laugh directly."

"You young villain! Will you release me?" howled Clegg, who began to realise that he was in a very awkward position.

"Nunno, I ain't going to do anything like dat for de next two-free minutes. You keep 'longside ob me, Rex, den he won't be able to get at you wid his hands. Now den, Clegg, try to bear de pain as bravely as you possibly can. If it is any relief to your feelings you can yell. We shan't hit you as hard as you hit me, but you will find it quite hard enough. Ready now! Start doing your duty, Rex!"

"Tut, tut, tut! You bet I will!" cried Rex, getting in his first cut, which made Clegg howl.

A distant voice sounded from the shore. It was Mr. Grant's, but the chums pretended not to hear it, in fact they could only hear between Clegg's yells.

"Yah, yah, yah! Ain't you getting it hot!" cried Pete. "Dose are de sort; sort of stingers. Put your back up a bit more, Clegg. Dis is doing you all de good in de world. Yah, yah, yah! Seuse me laughing at you, but you really do look mighty funny."

"Woohoo! I'll have your lives for this!" howled Clegg. "Murder! Help! Hel—woohoo! Stop, stop! You are drowning me."

"Dat ain't at all possible. You couldn't talk if your mouf was under de water. Do you tink he has had enough, Rex?"

"Tut, tut, tut! I will give him a few stingers for the finish. He deserves far more than we have given him."

"Talk about banshees' shrieks, dey are nuffin' to Clegg's yowls. One would tink he was getting hurt, de fuss he is making. Yah, yah, yah! Is dat de finish? Den I will disrelease him."

Now Pete could have swum away had he chosen, and Clegg would never have been able to catch him, but he knew that he would have to face the bully sooner or later, so thought he might as well do it in the water, where he would have a much better chance.

Clegg's fury was like madness. He struck Pete over the head with all his strength then that worthy got him round the neck and plunged his head beneath the surface while Rex got in two more cuts ere Pete released him.

"I tink he wants to come up to breathe now," exclaimed Pete. "Take a good breaf, old hoss, and den we will do a little diving."

Directly Clegg recovered his breath he returned to the attack, and they both disappeared beneath the surface, though Rex got in another cut before Clegg went down.

The time they remained under made Rex begin to feel anxious, but at last they rose, and Clegg, who had evidently had rather more than he cared for, swam out for the shore, while Rex followed him up and gave him a few more cuts.

"Yah, yah, yah! I tink you hab learnt your lesson dis time, Clegg; but if you ain't we can easy gib you some more. Why, I believe he is blubbering. Well, dat shows you dat we hab done him good. Cry away as much as you like, old hoss. It will be a sort ob relief to your feelings. You did get it hot dat time, didn't you?"

"I'll have vengeance for this, you see if I don't! Wah! Stop it, you little demon! Will—woohoo! You stop!"

"Tut, tut, tut! It is evident to me that you have not had enough," said Rex, "otherwise you would not dare to threaten us. But you will have had enough by the time you get ashore."

They could now hear the boys' shouts of laughter. Clegg was hated by all, and they were delighted to see him getting that thrashing. There was scarcely a boy in the college whom he had not bullied, and now they regarded Rex and Pete as a couple of heroes for taking the law into their own hands.

Clegg found it too painful to threaten any more. He swam on in silence, while his face was livid with fury.

"I tink we hab got him into a better frame of mind now, Rex," exclaimed Pete. "We can gib him one ob dese floggings ebery now and den, and if dat don't improve him, we shall hab de consolation ob knowing dat it can't make him any worse dan he is at present. Yah, yah, yah! Look what's happening on de shore!"

"Fury!" howled Clegg. "It is my bathing-machine! You young demons, all my clothes are inside, and my watch!"

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat machine is going funder before it stops, I 'spect!" exclaimed Pete.

Tim had cut the rope by which it was drawn up the beach, which was very steep at that part. The bathing-machine shot down it, and, dashing into the water, floated out to sea. When it reached the comrades there was little except its top above the surface, and there could not be a doubt that it was going to float out further.

"Tut, tut, tut! You can say a long farewell to your togs, Clegg," exclaimed Rex. "I think the tide is running southwards now, and if that machine still keeps afloat, which it is almost certain to do, it will clear the point, and go floating merrily out to sea."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dere she goes, and de wind is in de right direction," cried Pete. "You hab looked your last on your clothes, old hoss. De watch has gone from your gaze like a beautiful dream."

"A boat!" howled Clegg. "All my money and jewellery are in those clothes."

"What's the good of shouting for a boat," exclaimed Rex. "That old machine is drifting at about four miles an hour, and before they could get a boat, it would be well on its voyage to Ireland; at least I rather fancy it will go to the south of that and fetch America."

"I nobber did hear a fellow make such a noise ober his missing clothes. What's de good ob yowling at dem, old hoss? Dat won't bring dem back. You might as well whistle for dem. Well, here we are ashore. At least, I can feel de bottom."

When Mr. Grant saw the extraordinary scene that was occurring out at sea, he hurriedly dressed, and now stood on the beach to await the arrival of the swimmers.

"You keep to de water for a bit, Rex, and lend me de stick," murmured Pete. "He's most bound to go for me, and if he does I'll gib him socks."

"But he will catch you."

"Nunno! I'm used to running ober stones wid bare feet, and he ain't. You watch him go for me, and I will show you some fun."

Rex handed the stick to Pete, who swam along the shore for a considerable distance. Clegg followed along, keeping nearer in shore, but he also had to swim because walking on the shingle was far too painful for him.

"You little demon," cried Clegg. "My turn shall come now. You can go as far as you like, but I'll get you sooner or later."

"You buzz off home," cried Pete, shooting ahead, then dodging round the bully he gained the beach.

Clegg forgot about the shingle in his blind fury. He made a rush at Pete, then stopped, and uttered a cry of rage, for he found those stones remarkably painful. They did not affect Pete's feet in the least. He ran about just as freely as though he had had boots on, and every time he got within reach of Clegg, he gave him a cut with the cane that caused him to howl.

"Nunno! You keep to de beach for de return journey, else I shall lash you so."

"Perdition! I can't walk on these stones."

"Yah, yah, yah! You must, else you will neber be able to get back to de college. You ain't got any boots, you know."

"What do you mean by this conduct, boy?" demanded Mr. Grant, hurrying to the spot.

"Please sah! We'm been gibing Clegg a flogging, cos he deserves it."

"You little viper!" yelled Clegg, who felt some sort of protection in Mr. Grant.

"You have sent all my clothes and money into the sea."

"Look at dat now."

"They could not have done that, Clegg," exclaimed Mr. Grant. "It must have been one of the boys on the beach."

"They told the little villain to do it."

"You'm wrong dere, old hoss."

"What am I to do. I can't go to the college like this."

"I see no help for it, unless you wait here till one of the boys brings you more clothes," said Mr. Grant. "I really think your better plan will be to get back at once. You are not likely to meet anyone."

"How do you suppose I am going to walk over these stones?"

"I don't see what else you are to do, unless as I say, you wait for your clothes."

"Do you mean to say you are not going to punish that little demon Carew for his shameful conduct?"

"The matter will be inquired into. If you will bully lads, you must expect retaliation. Carew would not have struck you without a cause. I should require to know that cause before punishing him."

"I never touched him."

"You must have done something. I do not believe these two lads would have attacked you for no reason."

"Of course, you take Carew's part because he has a title, and is the heir to a large estate."

"What a ridiculous observation to make. What has his wealth or his title to do with me? I should be much more likely to take Pete's part because he has no friends. As a matter of fact, I am taking no one's part, and have no intention of doing so. If you tell me the whole facts of the case, I will take the matter up in a suitable manner, or if you prefer it you can bring the matter before Dr. Kenward; at least you will not think that he would show favouritism."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dar's a chance for you, Clegg," exclaimed Pete. "You would look well bringing de matter before de doctor; but I'm 'most inclined to tink you would come off second best."

"What are you going to do, Clegg?" inquired Mr. Grant. "You will catch cold if you remain here."

"I can easy drive him along de beach, sah," said the obliging Pete. "Could shift him directly."

"Silence! You have caused too much trouble already, and I fear you have led him on, Carew."

"Well, sir, I certainly planned the flogging," admitted Rex. "You see, he richly deserved it. We gave him warning that we would flog him."

"Had he been bullying you?"

"Oh no, sir! I wouldn't have thrashed him for that."

"For what reason did you strike him?"

"Do you wish me to tell, Clegg?" inquired Rex, turning to the infuriated bully.

"I don't know anything about the matter; but I do know this," cried Clegg.

"I will give you something that will make you regret this to your dying day."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "Of course, if you refuse to tell me the reason why Carew struck you—and I know there must have been a reason—I can do nothing in the matter. Now, shall I send a boy to the college for your clothes?"

"I'll go with pleasure, Clegg," cried Tim. "I call practical jokes like that rotten."

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"Oh, it's nothing to guffaw about. One of the chaps must have cut the rope, unless, of course, it broke, though I shouldn't think that remarkably likely. I'm awfully sorry for you, Clegg; besides, there's the loss of the bathing machine, and I'll bet those things are expensive. I don't believe for a moment that the doctor will like it. You have only got to say the word, and I will rush off like a lamp-lighter. Only, I wouldn't advise you to get into the other machine, 'cos the chap may let you into the sea, and it's ten to one if we should ever recover your body."

"Yes! Go to the college at once," snarled Clegg. "I can't walk over these stones. How long will it take you to get there and back?"

"A minute and a half."

"Rot! It is a good quarter of a mile there."

"It doesn't take me long to run half a mile."

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "If you run half a mile in a minute and a half I shall be surprised."

"Well, I have run five miles in an hour."

"Tut, tut, tut! You must have flown. Well, at that rate it will take you six minutes to do the half mile, then you have got to find his clothes."

"I'll bet you I get back in ten minutes."

"Yah, yah, yah! You won't be if you stand dere arguing de point," cried Pete.

"But I mean I'll be back in ten minutes from the time——"

"Fury! Will you start?" howled Clegg, who was getting frightfully cold, for there was a cutting wind.

"Of course I will, Clegg," answered Tim. "It's a beastly shame, and if I find out the fellow who did it, I declare I'll tell you. You see, it might have been——"

"Perdition! Will you start!"

"I'm off!" cried Tim, rushing towards the gully which led to the summit of the cliff. The distance was about a quarter of a mile, and the remainder was certainly as far again. Clegg had come a good way along the shore. Tim reached the gully, then he stopped, and appeared to be considering; the next moment he came rushing back, and although Clegg howled at him to go on, he took no heed.

"I say, Clegg," he exclaimed. "Which clothes shall I bring?"

"Bring any, you empty-headed idiot. What do I care, so long as they are clothes?"

"Well, I thought perhaps you would like——"

"Fury! Will you go on?"

"Of course I will. You know, Clegg, I'd do anything——"

"Oh, go on!" howled Clegg.

"Right you are, old chap," exclaimed Tim, bolting again, though this time his

pace was not so fast, and when he had nearly reached the gully he sat down, and pretended to take a stone out of his boot.

"Yah, yah, yah! At de rate he is starting I should say he will neber do dat little lot in six minutes," exclaimed Pete, who was now hurrying on his clothes.

Clegg was howling to the obliging Tim to go on, but that worthy pretended not to hear, and he spent quite three minutes taking off his boot, and putting it on again.

Rex and Pe'e were dressed long before Tim returned. Clegg was raging now, and Mr. Grant kept looking at his watch.

"He ought to be back by now," exclaimed that gentleman, at last. "He has been gone over a quarter of an hour. Ah, here comes the doctor."

Dr. Kenward looked decidedly annoyed as he approached.

"I met the boy," he explained; "and the silly lad kept me waiting quite five minutes before he gave me to understand what had happened."

"Is he coming back?" snarled Clegg.

"He could not be coming back yet," answered the doctor. "I met him at the bottom of the gully, and he was taking a stone out of his shoe."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat must hab been a second stone," cried Pete. "He got a stone in dis side ob de gully."

"Well, he won't be long now," observed the doctor. "It was a stupid thing wasting all that time. He is a most simple lad."

"He ain't so simple as he looks," murmured Pete.

Dr. Kenward questioned Clegg as to whether he had any idea which boy had played him that trick, then he questioned the bully's chums who had been in the machine, but had come out before the "accident" had occurred. Of course he got no satisfaction from anyone.

It was quite half an hour before Tim came rushing along the shore.

"Haven't I been jolly quick," he panted. "I should have been quicker still if the doctor hadn't kept me talking. There you are Clegg. There's a shirt. It's one of Rex's, but I couldn't find one of yours. Here's your waistcoat and coat, and these braces belong to Rex, so does this collar and tie, and——"

"Where are my trousers?" howled Clegg, who saw at a glance that they were not there.

"I must have dropped 'em somewhere," observed Tim. "I know I brought 'em, 'cos I rammed a pair of Rex's socks in the pockets."

"De trousers ain't important," declared Pete, "Dey will only take you for a Highlander. But I dunno what you are going to do 'bout de boots."

"Listen to me, Pete," cried the doctor, "you are to go to the college,——"

"It is not a bit of use sending him, sir!" growled Clegg. "The young villain would keep me waiting another hour."

"I don't think he would disobey my orders, but I will go myself, and send off your boots at once—also your trousers. Carew, come this way! You also, Pete."

"Tink he saw us?" murmured Pete, as he followed the doctor.

"Shouldn't be surprised. He sometimes watches the bathing from the top of the cliff."

"Now, what were you doing in the water with Clegg?"

"We were flogging him, sah."

"Had he struck you first?"

"Well, it wasn't for dat, sah. We gabe him warning dat we would frash him. I told him so, but didn't know how it was to be done quite."

"The water idea was mine, sir," said Rex.

"It appeared to me that you were striking him very severely."

"I was, sir. The cane is thin, as you see, but I made him feel it. Tut, tut, tut! We made him howl."

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"It is no laughing matter, my lad."

"Dat's what he found, sah."

"Why did you strike him?"

"He deserved it, sah. When I behave in a similar manner, I hope you will flog me widin an inch ob my life, and kick de oder inch out ob me, 'cos I should deserve it."

"It is as I feared!" exclaimed the doctor. "Well, I saw the incident by chance, and as Clegg did not refer to it, I shall let the matter drop, unless he speaks to me about it."

"He won't do dat, sah!" exclaimed Pete. "I tink he is quite satisfied, and so are we!"

"But you appear to forget that Clegg may seek revenge."

"I don't tink he would come off first best dere, sah. He couldn't get much satisfaction out ob Rex and me togeder, and we should take particular care he did not attack us singly."

When they reached the lodge Dr. Kenward told Billy to take the trousers and the boots down to the bathing place, then he ordered Pete to remain in the lodge. He thought this would be safer than sending Pete, who might be inclined to dawdle.

"Well, if this ain't downright scandalous!" growled Billy, when the doctor had left. "Here I ain't had a mouthful of breakfast, and I'm expected to go all that way. Why, it's more than flesh and blood can bear. I might be a gallous slave or a dirty nigger the way I'm treated!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Cheer up, Bill!" exclaimed Rex. "It won't take you long. You can run, you know."

"Or he might roll down de gully," suggested Pete. "He would get down mighty fast dat road, 'cos he's so fat and round."

"You varmint!" hooted Billy. "Go and find them trousers and boots while I have my breakfast."

"Don't you make a mistake and eat mine at de same time, Billy!" observed Pete. "Where am I going to find de boots?"

"In the cupboard, of course, you silly black beast! Do you suppose you are going to find 'em in my pockets? Be off with you, else I'll kick you out of the place. The cupboard is in his room."

Now, it so happened that there had been three pairs of boots in that room, and two pairs of trousers belonging to Clegg. Tim had stuffed the trousers up the chimney, and flung the boots out of the window. He wanted to get a little of his own back, for he had received many a thrashing at the bully's hands.

Pete searched all over the room, then he went to report progress, and found Billy—who had apologised to the cook—eating eggs and bacon.

"You are the stupidest varmint as ever lived!" roared Billy. "Here the whole work of this college falls on my shoulders, and, what with one thing and another, my life is fair worn out!"

"Tut, tut, tut! You look very thin on it!" exclaimed Rex. He had remained in the lodge, and Billy, who liked to have someone to grumble at, had not ordered him out. It did Billy good to bully a real live baronet.

"I tell you dey ain't dere, old hoss!"

"Bust you! I tell you they are! Go and look again."

"See here, Billy," exclaimed Pete, "my orders are to remain in dis lodge, and dat's what I'm going to do! You can go and look for dose tings yourself, or send Rex. I ain't going."

"What! You dare to disobey my horders?"

"I'm obeying de doctor's orders in remaining in dis lodge, and dat puts me on de right side ob de hedge. You can take a running leap and kick yourself."

"Then he's got to wait till I have finished my breakfast, and I hopes as he catches his death of cold. Bust him, with his certainties!"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "I know which way the cat has been jumping. What price Swift, Billy?"

"So you back racehorses, do you!" growled Billy, finishing off the bacon, some of which belonged by rights to Pete. "All right, my young shaver, I'll report you!"

Then Billy finished his breakfast and went to look for Clegg's clothes, and all the time the bully was seated on the beach, while his rage was the only hot part about him.

CHAPTER 5.

The Bully's Shamming—Billy Thinks He Has Caught the "Complaint"—How Pete and Rex Disinfected Them—The Doctor Objects to the Process.

HAVING leisurely finished his breakfast, and eaten up all the butter, leaving Pete dry bread, Billy went to look for the missing garments. "Look here, Pete," exclaimed Rex, as Pete poured some more water into the coffee-pot, and cut a huge slice of dry bread, "I wouldn't stand that sort of thing! It's rot! The doctor would not allow it."

"Yah, yah, yah! I yaffled up his milk yesterday, he ain't left me any to-day. Well, dat's about equal, specially as de cat took de second rasher ob bacon yesterday. Wonderful animal is dat cat. I don't mind so long as I get bread."

"Bother it, you are supposed—ahem! Tut, tut, tut!"

Dr. Kenward entered the lodge at that moment, and he looked so stern that Pete sprang up and glanced at his slice of bread, wondering whether he had cut too much.

"What are you eating, boy? What is the meaning of this?"

"Sorry, sah, rader hungry. Bathing gibbs de appetite."

"This is positively shameful. Carew, I am surprised at your allowing such a thing."

"Sorry, sah! It wasn't Rex's fault. You see, I cut off dat little lot before he could speak."

The doctor took Pete's cup of coffee and actually tasted it, then he flung the stuff into the slop-basin.

"Do you mean to tell me that William has given you dry bread and that—that stuff for your breakfast, my lad? And he has been having eggs and bacon! It is perfectly scandalous."

The doctor rang the bell and told the maid to order the cook up.

"Mary," exclaimed Dr. Kenward, "I regret to say that William has given this lad dry bread and—and this abominable stuff for his breakfast. I am exceedingly annoyed, and shall speak seriously to William. Send up a proper breakfast for the lad. I feel quite sure you are not a party to this."

"Not me, sir. Pete knows that. I sent up breakfast for both, eggs and bacon."

"Golly! You should hab seen de supper Mary gabe us, sir! Steak pie, hot wid mashed potatoes."

"Miss Bella wished it, sir!" explained Mary.

"So did I," exclaimed Dr. Kenward. "You don't bear Pete any ill-feeling, Mary?"

"Ill-feeling, sir, when he saved Miss Bella's life—my little girl, as I call her, bless her, and her mother, too. There's going to be no ill-feeling with Pete."

"I thought not, Mary," said the doctor quietly. "I felt sure I knew you better than that, after the years you have been here. But what I wish is that you see Pete has proper food. I rather fancy the lad would not complain to me or to your mistress, but when you know our wishes no doubt all will go right."

"Don't you boder 'bout me, sah!" exclaimed Pete. "Dere were two rashers

yesterday, somehow one ob dem disappeared, 'cos a cat kept meowing. Billy made sure it was de cat, and dat same cat drank all his milk. Yah, yah, yah! Billy won't come off first best when dat cat keeps taking its share ob de food."

The doctor glanced at Rex, and they both smiled. The expression on Mary's face gave Rex the impression that Billy would have to make his peace again.

"I will send the lad up his breakfast in ten minutes, sir," said Mary, leaving the lodge; and the doctor, who felt quite satisfied, also went away.

"You will be all right in future, Pete!" exclaimed Rex. "Billy is in for it this time. You know, we get splendid food here, and there is no stint. Of course, it isn't served up like it is at home, but it is excellent in quality and cooking. Mary looks after that. Her roast beef and Yorkshire-pudding is a thing to be remembered, and you are supposed to get exactly the same as we do. I say, it is lucky he did not ask if Billy had started!"

Pete had just got an excellent breakfast served up when Clegg, attired in a coat and waistcoat and a shirt, but without trousers or boots, entered the lodge, and both Pete and Rex roared with laughter.

Clegg was too dispirited to retaliate at the moment. He went to his room, and sent down word by Tim that he was seriously ill.

"Tut, tut, tut! Did you ever hear such humbug in all your life!" exclaimed Rex. "Now, that stupid rascal will remain in bed for two or three days. We shall have the doctor here. He did it once before, and there was no more the matter with him than there is with me or you at the present moment. I would have given something to see him walking over that beach, too, with his bare feet. I only wish he had met the girls' school coming in."

"Yah, yah, yah! Neber tought ob dat. But, see here, Rex, if dat chap is so ill, don't you tink we ought to get Jobson here?"

"Eh?"

"We might manage to get him here somehow, sort ob in case ob accidents."

"Tut, tut, tut! I'll think it over. A letter—eh?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Can't help laughing when I tink 'bout dat. It would be a sort ob surprise for Clegg, and if dat didn't stop him shamming in de future—myes! Yah, yah, yah! Tink it could be managed, Rex boy?"

"Tut, tut, tut! I will think it over, and let you know."

But there was a check to their extraordinary scheme, and Billy was the cause. Prayers had just been said that night when Billy marched Pete into the hall, and the expression on Billy's face was quite astonishing.

"It's my dooty to inform you, Dr. Kenward, and the rest of the gents in this 'ere room, that this boy is a thief."

"Look at dat, now!" exclaimed Pete, who had accompanied Billy because that worthy had told him the doctor required his presence "immejiate."

"I must warn you to be careful what you say, William!" exclaimed Dr. Kenward very sternly. "I believe you are talking utter nonsense."

"So you may, sir. I never make a hallegation nor an insertion——"

"He's a lacy man," cried Rex.

"I hain't a lazy man," declared Billy. It was not true, and the doctor knew it.

"I was referring to lace," observed Rex. "You referred to an insertion and I naturally thought you meant something to do with lace. At least, the supposition is that I might have imagined such to be the case. I won't 'insert' that I really did think so."

"I insert that this nigger boy is a thief. I don't know who this gold chain belongs to, but I do know that the chambermaid found it under this rascally nigger's mattress. I know it, 'cos she brought it to me, and told me so. I say that chain ain't his."

"Depend on it, Billy, the chain has changed hands," said Rex.

"Silence, Carew!" cried Dr. Kenward. "Is this the chain you told me you had lost last Wednesday, Mr. Grant?"

"Yes, that is the one. I took it off because I broke the ring, and I intended to have it mended."

"When did you lose it, sir?" inquired Billy.

"On Thursday morning."

"Well, I happened to see this nigger go into your study, after he had smashed up Mr. Clegg's study, on Thursday morning, and you lost it after that?"

"Yes! I lost it after that. That is to say, after Pete had been into my study."

"And the chambermaid found it beneath the nigger's bed and the mattress. If I was in a court of law, I should tell his lordship the prisoner was guilty. I should say, 'Guilty, my lord, and jest you convict that black thief, and sentence him to penal servitood, else I'll have you shifted from that ere bench for falsifaction of hevidence. It ain't pleasant for me to be in a place where there's thieves and hemphatic liars."

"He must be mad," murmured Mr. Grant. "Unless he is drunk."

"Sir, that's libel," cried Billy, who had caught the words. "Not one drop of spiritual liquor had passed my lips this day, except two pints of very weak ale. I say the nigger is a thief."

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "I say I would trust him with thousands. I would place a thousand pounds of gold in his hands to-morrow morning. I'd trust him with more than that. I would trust him with my life. He saved Bella's life at risk of his own, and that is quite sufficient for me. Pete refused to take ten pounds against his conscience. That is nothing. If Pete wanted money, he would only have to mention the matter to me. Why, I'll bet he wouldn't take it. Surcly, doctor, you don't think that a lad who has saved Bella's life, and run away from the reward, would steal?"

"I never said so, Carew," answered the doctor quietly. "You are not generally impulsive."

"Tut, tut, tut! I beg your pardon, sir. Will you allow me to leave the hall? I shall punch Billy's head if you won't—at least, I shall try to do so. I hope you will let me go, sir."

"You can leave the hall if you so desire, Carew."

Then Rex grasped Pete's hand, bowed to the masters and left the place.

"Well, Pete," exclaimed Dr. Kenward, smiling at him. "You have a staunch friend there."

"Can't make it out sah, why he likes me. His moder was wonderfully kind too. Must run in de family."

"People are mistook with thieves," observed Billy. "I knowed that boy was a thief the minute I set eyes on him. I told the cook so, but she wouldn't believe me. This ain't my hevidence. I know he's a thief, for the simple reason that he went into Mr. Grant's study, stole his gold chain, and hid it under his mattress. There ain't any two questions about the matter. I happen to know he came here with a false character. It was a forged one. It was all a put-up job, and the man as rode Miss Bella down was his accomplice. He got here to steal, and if it hadn't been for me, he would have stole thousands. He would have had all the plated silver, and—and other watch-chains."

"Leave the hall, William," ordered the doctor.

"I have other hevidence to——"

"Leave the hall, William," repeated the doctor.

And Billy went.

"I firmly believe that this is a disgraceful trick," said the doctor. "I believe that the chain was placed there by someone to try and bring ruin on an innocent lad. What is your opinion, Mr. Grant?"

"Exactly the same as yours, Dr. Kenward, and for this reason: Assuming that

Pete had been dishonest—I have absolute reliance on his honesty, and am only speaking thus to prove his innocence beyond the slightest doubt. He came into my study while the chain was on my mantel-piece, and we spoke together for some time. It would have been quite easy for him to have taken the chain, had he been dishonest. Well, he left the study, and went to the lodge. I followed him out a few minutes later, but before I left I examined the chain to see if I could mend the ring myself, but I decided to have it properly done, and I replaced the chain on the mantel-piece, then left my study. Now, I went as far as the lodge to give William a message, but Pete was there by himself, so I returned to my study to ring the bell. The door had been opened in my absence, and the chain was gone. I think it right to give this information seeing that the chain was found concealed in Pete's bed. Some boy or someone in this college, has been guilty of a shameful action. It is a terrible thing to know that there is someone in this college who would be guilty of such a wicked action, and I am only thankful that the plot has failed, because what I have said is actual proof that Pete had nothing to do with the matter."

"I shall make further inquiries into the matter," said Dr. Kenward. "It is a cowardly act of vengeance; however, it has fortunately done you no harm, Pete, so you need not trouble yourself about the matter."

"Nunno, sah! I shouldn't trouble ober a little ting like dat, seeing dat I didn't know anything about it. Ob course, if Billy likes to tink I'm a thief, I don't mind at all. Shouldn't like you or the oder masters to tink it—nor de boys eider for dat matter, still, if dey did it wouldn't be my fault, so it wouldn't boder me. Takes a good lot to do dat one way and anoder. Yah, yah; yah! Can't help laughing when I tink how de person was sold."

Then Pete went to explain matters to Rex, whose indignation turned to laughter.

"We will come and interview Billy," exclaimed Rex. "I shall be able to find out whether he did it."

"Rader tink it was Silas or Clegg. You see, if Billy had done it he would hab let de chambermaid take the chain to de doctor. Nunno! Dat's just like one ob Clegg's tricks, but I should say I shall be able to get eben wid him. I rader tink he wants anoder frashing."

"He is still shamming illness," said Rex. "They are going to send for the medical man, and the fellow is as well as I am. We will give him a scare, Pete. I can manage that all right, but first of all we will see Billy. We shall need him to help us with our little scheme."

When Pete entered the lodge Billy made a rush to his cupboard, and placed a battered silver teaspoon in his pocket, then he went into his bed-room and came out with a few brass studs.

"These 'ere are forty-two carat gold," he observed.

"Wonderfully rich gold, that Billy. They must be over eighteen carat over pure gold," said Rex. "There are your old boots there, don't you think you had better put those in your pockets?"

"When thieves are hanging around I has to be cautious."

"Certainly! It was a good idea of Clegg to place that chain under Pete's mattress wasn't it, and you helped him capitally, but it didn't come off, because Mr. Grant happened to be in a position to prove that Pete knew nothing about the matter. You see, he saw the chain there after Pete had left the study, and he followed Pete into your lodge, then went straight back, and when he got back, found the chain gone. Clegg must have slipped in during his few minutes' absence, unless, of course, you did. It's one of the two. I tell you what, Billy, when the doctor sacks you it wouldn't be a bad plan for you to join Clegg as amateur burglars."

"That's libel, and I shall bring an action for damages against your mother. I shall instruct my solicitor this very day."

"Yah, yah, yah! Should start off now, Billy, and he could draw up de agreement at the same time."

"I ain't a thief—a stealer of gold watch-chains."

"Nunno! I don't tink you would hab de ability for dat sort ob ting. It wants a smart sort ob man for work like dat."

"You are a thief!"

"Look at dat now. Ain't it mighty sad."

"You can't say as you ain't a thief. You dursn't look me in the heyes and say you ain't a thief."

"Golly! He must tink his eyes hab a lot more power dan is de case. Must tink he's a sort ob cobra, or one ob dose insecks."

"Here comes the doctor," exclaimed Rex, as a carriage drew up.

"Oh, is dat de medicated man?" exclaimed Pete. "Ain't he mighty fat. Go and let him in, Billy."

"Don't you get stealing any more things, you varmint. I shall put you in prison if you dare to take anythink of mine, and so I give you fair warning."

The doctor only stayed long enough to convince himself that there was absolutely nothing the matter with Clegg, and Rex met him as he descended the stairs. He knew Rex, and liked him; besides he had once been a patient over a sprained wrist, and Lady Carew had paid the worthy doctor a fee that took his breath away. They remained in conversation for at least five minutes, and then the doctor shook hands, much to Billy's disgust.

"Why don't he give me the hinformation instead of that boy," mumbled Billy.

Rex came in looking remarkably sad, and seating himself in Billy's chair he sighed deeply.

"Dr. Jenkins is coming again this afternoon," said Rex. "I told him that we were interested parties in the matter, Pete, and requested him to send the bill to my mother, which he cheerfully agreed to do. He has promised me to spare no pains—but—well, we must hope for the best."

"Golly! Is he as bad as all dat?"

"It's a very sad affair," sighed Rex. "There is only one ending to Clegg's life."

"Golly! what's dat?"

"He must die! His death is absolutely certain."

"Bust me!" howled Billy! "and he owes me five pounds. Here, he ain't going to die till I've got my money."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, as Billy rushed upstairs. "If dat man don't frighten Clegg I shall be surprised."

"That's exactly what I mean him to do," answered Rex. "It will serve him right for being such an awful humbug. He is as well as I am. Only wait till Billy comes down, and I'll give him a scare at the same time. We will partially close the door. Billy is sure to listen to our conversation, and he's soft enough to believe anything."

Rex was quite right. Billy always made it his duty to listen, so that he could make out full-sized reports, and when he heard Rex's calm voice, he went on tiptoe to the door.

"Beastly reckless thing for Billy to do to go in to an infectious room. You see, he's so frightfully fat and unhealthy through his abominable laziness, that he would be one of the first to catch it, and a dropsical creature like him would be certain to go under."

"Still, dat would bring business to Jobson."

"So it would, Pete. But Billy may have someone who likes him."

"Shouldn't tink dat is at all likely."

"Oh, you varmint!" muttered Billy. "Won't I——"

"It is to be hoped that Billy does not catch it. We don't want two fatal cases in the college."

"You don't seem to hab muck consideration for poor Jobson, Rex. How do

you suppose de man is going to get his libing if some ob de people don't get deir deaths? All de same, I tink we had better get out ob dis before Billy comes back. I ain't going near dat man, cos I might catch it at de same time, and I wouldn't like to oberwork Jobson."

"Tut, tut, tut! It's a frightful risk to run. It's a question whether I ought not to have told him, only you see, someone must attend to the patient, and if Billy knows of the awful risk, why, he might refuse to go into the room."

"Should say de doctor would make him. After all, he's de properest party, 'cos I could do his work if anything happened to him. And tink what a nice easy time of it I would hab! Just sit down in dis chair all day, and read de paper or sleep, as de case might be."

"Be sure you don't tell him of the risk he has run," said Rex. "It's no good frightening him, and he's frightfully nervous about himself."

"Golly! I ain't going to get near the man for de next six weeks."

"Wise too! I shall get some disinfectants. I know of a splendid thing. It smells like rotten eggs, and would choke the strongest microbe. Don't say any more about it. Billy will be returning with his five pounds, and—Ahem! I quite agree with you, Pete, cricket is a very fine game. I'll teach you a bit about it when the season comes on."

"Golly!" exclaimed Pete, dodging round the table as Billy entered the lodge. "How's de patient, old hoss?"

"Jest you come here," growled Billy. He looked very uncomfortable, and the worthies never doubted that their little conversation had taken effect.

"You keep away from me, Billy," cried Pete, shifting round the table as Billy followed him up. "I don't want you to hit me, or anything like dat."

"I ain't going to hit you."

"Well, keep where you are. Don't you come within free yards ob me."

"Why not?"

"Dere ain't any particular reason, Billy, only I don't seem to want it. How's de patient?"

"He's shocking bad," declared Billy. "When I told him as there worn't no hope for him, I thought he was going to have fits. The doctor had told him he could have what he fancied to eat, and he ordered roast chicken; but when I told him the worst had got to happen, he said he was too ill to eat anything."

"You shouldn't have told him, Billy!" exclaimed Rex. "You had better not let the doctor know you did so, or you may get yourself into trouble. If I were you I would keep my window open."

"Why?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Oh, there is no particular reason! I say, Billy, don't you feel well?"

"I ain't been well for a long time."

"All right! I'm off."

"But it ain't all right, you rat! You've been and let me go into that 'ere room."

"Well, what of that? Someone must go in. We can't leave the miserable worm to die of hunger."

"You deliberately let me go in when you knew as it was catching."

"Tut, tut, tut! You won't catch it. I know of a splendid disinfectant. It's rather a powerful smeller, but it is perfectly harmless. I'll swamp some about. Come along with me while I mix it up, Pete!"

"Oh, dear! I do feel bad, too," groaned Billy. "My stummick is aching suthin' crool."

"Don't you come near me, Billy!" cried Pete. "You keep to your side of the room. Let's get out ob dis, Rex."

"Quite so! I wouldn't like anything to go wrong with my stummick. It's no good all of us catching it."

"Bust you, you have been and let me catch it, and if anything was to happen to me, you'd be hung."

"Look here, Billy," exclaimed Rex. "You need not mention my name in the matter."

"Won't I, just! I'll tell the doctor straight away."

"If the worst has to happen to you, you wouldn't like to die thinking you had got me gated, or anything like that. I'd offer to shake hands with you and be friends, but there are reasons why I don't care to come too close to you. Still, I freely forgive you, Billy, and when—if—well, suppose you were to die, or anything like that, I will get my mother to pay for your funeral expenses. She is awfully kind-hearted, and I know she would be delighted to perform that service for you. I'll see that Jobson turns you out something decent. Polished oak or something tasty. Come on, Pete!"

And away they bolted, leaving Billy groaning in his chair, while they were nearly convulsed with laughter.

"Now, this is the laboratory, Pete!" exclaimed Rex, leading him into it. "This is the stuff I want. Nice harmless sort of stuff, but it smells when you pour water on it. You will probably be able to detect it. Get me a little water in that jug. M'yes! There's plenty of the stuff here, but we will use it all, so as to get the full flavour. Now, just smell that, and tell me if you think people will notice it."

"Golly!" gasped Pete, as he got a whiff. "Ain't dat mighty awful!"

"Would you like to have another smell?"

"Nunno! One sniff at dat little lot is quite enough for dis child. Yah, yah, yah! I could follow you blindfolded all over de place. You wouldn't need ploughounds to track you while you are carrying dat stuff about. I say, Rex, I'm mighty certain if you gib Billy a dose ob dat you will eider kill or cure him. Rotten eggs would hab to take a back seat when dat stuff is knocking around."

"Well, come along! We will come and disinfect Clegg first. We need not go into the room. If I pour some of the stuff beneath his door, he is nearly sure to smell it."

"Yah, yah, yah! I'll guarantee he will do all dat. Might smell dat stuff two-free miles away. It's de most remarkable-smelling stuff I hab eber come in contact wid. Golly! I tink it's waking up a bit. Seems to be smelling stronger dan eber."

"M'yes! It will do all that when the gas generates a bit more. Now, I will give him about a quarter of a pint. I can't spare more, because I need the rest to disinfect Billy."

Clegg got a fearful dose, then they went down to doctor Billy. He was still groaning in his chair, and he seemed to be waiting for a pain which he was in expectation of seizing him each moment.

"How do you feel now, Billy?" inquired Rex, sprinkling some of the stuff over the carpet.

"I feel mortal bad. Here—phew—what's all this?"

"You must be disinfected, Billy," said Rex.

"Golly! Ain't it mighty awful?" gasped Pete.

"Clear hout!" howled Billy, springing to his feet. "Take it away. Do you think I want to be choked? Bust you, will you take it away?"

"It's doing you no end of good, Billy."

"If you don't take that stuff away, I'll about brain you."

"Yah, yah, yah! Don't you like the smell, Billy?" cried Pete. "You dunno what good dat stuff is doing you. It will cure your stummock in no time. Oh, golly! Yah, yah, yah! I could cut it if I had a big-sized axe."

The smell was more than Billy could stand. He made a rush at Rex, and seized the jug. There was a short struggle, then Rex suddenly let go, and Billy stopped

the whole of the abominably smelling stuff into his own face and down his shirt-front.

"Yah, yah, yah!" howled Pete. "You smell worse than dead polecats, Billy. I believe some sort ob scents are good for de hair, but I dunno what effect dat little perfume will hab on it."

"Oh, you varmints!" hooted Billy, puffing and blowing, and gasping for breath. "I will tell the doctor of this, you see if I don't!"

"Yah, yah, yah! Should say dat man would be 'most bound to notice it ob his own accord, if he comes anything like near. Shouldn't advise you to go to make lub to the cook just now, Billy. You would be most bound to spoil your chances."

"You will feel all the better for it presently, Billy," exclaimed Rex. "It is a bit whiffy, I'll admit, but it is wonderfully efficacious. It would disinfect almost anything, and it takes away all bad smells."

"Yah, yah, yah! I'm inclined to tink I would rader hab de ordinary bad smells," observed Pete. "Dat's de most extraordinary pungent smell I hab eber made the acquaintance of."

"I think I shall take out a patent for it," observed Rex.

"I should take out a patent straight away, if I was you, Rex. If people get copying dat perfume it would be rader a serious matter."

"Come on," exclaimed Rex. "Billy isn't safe. He's contagious, and violent. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, giving way to temper like that when you can plainly see that we are trying to do you good."

"Bust you, I'll make it warm for you before so long! I ain't standing this sort of treatment. I believe I'm choking, and I got some of the thundering stuff in my mouth. It's all over my 'air. I'll never get rid of the stink."

"You don't want to get rid of it, Billy. When it smells it shows you it is doing good."

"Must be doing a powerful lot ob good just at dis moment, den," observed Pete, following Rex from the lodge.

"We will go and interview Clegg, and see how he likes it," said Rex.

Clegg was making a terrible disturbance when they entered his room, which certainly smelt very strong.

"This is a bad job, Clegg," exclaimed Rex; "and as Pete and I felt that we annoyed you, we think it only right to come and ask you to make friends before—well, to make friends at once, you know. You do look bad, too!"

"Get out of my room, you little fiends!" cried Clegg. "I don't want to have anything to say to you."

"But, you see, my poor dear old hoss, we don't want you to be buried without making friends."

"What did the doctor say to you about me, Carew?" demanded Clegg.

"Don't talk about that, Clegg!" exclaimed Rex. "Where there's life there's hope."

"He didn't say that I was dangerously ill?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Who's talking about danger? We all have to face certain perils, and, after all, a fellow can but die once."

"Dere's a great consolation in dat," said Pete. "It's a ting he wouldn't care to do a second time."

"I don't believe the doctor said I was dangerously ill."

"Why, I never said he did," answered Rex.

"Billy says he heard him tell you that I was dying."

"It is a great pity that Billy is always listening."

"What were the doctor's exact words?"

"Look here, Clegg, don't excite yourself. Billy had no right to repeat private conversation, especially to you, because you are an interested party."

"Den at a time like dis you ought to hab consideration for oder people, and Jobson must hab work if he is to lib," observed Pete. "We hab got to hope dat he will lose your job; at de same time ebery precaution ought to be taken, and if you hab any little special orders you would like to hab carried out, Rex and I could look after dem."

"What is this abominable stench in my room!" snarled Clegg, taking no heed of Pete's kind offer.

"Dat's a patent perfume, and it is for de purpose ob taking away all bad smells. Now I will tell de cook to send up any little ting you fancy. Should say a painful ob gruel would be bout your mark, and, if you like, Rex can flavour it wid some of dat patent perfume."

"Get out of my room, you demons," howled Clegg. "I would like to see the pair of you hanged."

"I say, Clegg I don't want to upset you in your present critical state, but what a horrid botch you made about that chain."

"I don't know what you mean."

"You should not have gone in, as Mr. Grant was coming back, because he naturally would suspect you. It's a ghastly failure, so far as you are concerned; but I dare say the doctor has told you all about it. It's unfortunate for you. Still, don't worry yourself about it. We will send you up the gruel."

"Tell the cook to send me up a roast fowl, and clear out of my room, else I will get out of bed and break your silly heads."

"De poor fellow seems to be getting violent now!" exclaimed Pete. "Do you tink it would be as well to tie him down? I can easy get some box cord for de purpose."

"We will consider the matter," answered Rex. "It's all right, Clegg. You shall have the gruel up in about ten minutes. Mind you don't excite yourself. The doctor will be here again this evening, then perhaps I shall be able to give Jobson definite instructions. I am going to ask my mother to bear all the expense."

"Go away, you miserable, snivelling little brute! I hope I never set eyes on you again!"

"Poor dear creature. He will get into a better frame of mind towards the end. I will send you up a medical book on various complaints, and I will tell Jobson to send you some funeral literature. You may get some hints from it that you would like carried out. He's got some sweetly pretty things in coffins. Sorry there's no hops for you. Still, we can't live for ever."

"Yah, yah, yah! I believe he's frightened!" said Pete. "He started wid shamming, and he's really convinced himself dat he's bad. I should tink dat perfume ought to make him feel rader ill, too. Golly! Here comes Billy. I can smell him."

"You are both to come straight to the doctor with me," declared Billy. "I've reported you, and he says you are a couple of young blackguards, and he's going to give you the worst flogging you've ever had in your lives."

Needless to say, the doctor had said nothing of the sort. In fact, Billy had not been near him; but he wanted to get the chums into a row. They followed under the belief that Doctor Kenward had really sent for them, and all entered the doctor's study together.

That sorely-tried gentleman was hard at work, and he did not look best pleased.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, rising to his feet. "What is this—this abominable smell?"

"Tought he would wind it," murmured Pete.

"Tut tut, tut! Keen of scent."

"It's all Master Rex Carew's doing, sir," declared Billy. "I've been treated suthing scandalous!"

"It is positively shocking!" gasped the doctor.

"You'd say so, sir, if you knowed the crool way——"

"I am referring to this abominable smell. Open the window, William, and stand near it."

"I dursn't get near a draught in my dangerous state of health, sir"

"Well, tell me as quickly as possible. Dear me! I never smelt anything so atrocious!"

"He let me run into the peril of catching Master Clegg's complaint, after the medical man had told him he was dying."

"Nonsense! There is nothing the matter with him."

"Master Carew assured me as he was dying, and he said the doctor told him so."

"Tut, tut, tut! You were mistook, Billy. I told you that the end of Clegg's life would be certain death."

"Well, ain't that what I said?"

"Not exactly."

"You said his death was certain, and that he must die."

"I believe that is inevitable."

"And you've ordered Doctor Jenkins to come again this evening?"

"Well, seeing the serious state poor Clegg is in he ought to have every attention, and my mother won't mind paying at all. I'm sending Jobson up to him to-morrow to take his measurement."

"You are doing no such thing. Have you been telling Clegg that he is dying?"

"Tut, tut, tut! He certainly might have gathered from our conversation that such was the case, sir," admitted Rex; "but it was Billy who gave him the information in the first place, and when we went to sorter confirm it, why, I think Clegg was convinced. Billy surmised——"

"I never did," interposed Billy, who thought surmised meant some sort of swearing, and he knew he had been doing that. "I wouldn't think of such a thing."

"Tut, tut, tut. I was going to say that Billy imagined from our conversation that Clegg was contagious, so we have been disinfecting him, sir."

"He's been and slopped a pailful of the stinking stuff all over my 'air, and I've swallowed about a pint of it."

"Is it poisonous, Carew?"

"Judging from its effluvium, I should say it was the deadliest poison man ever yet invented," answered Rex calmly.

"Woohoo! Then I'm poisoned. I'm a dead man," howled Billy.

"What ever is the matter?" cried Mrs. Kenward, rushing into the study, followed by Bella.

"Oh dear!" gasped that lady, starting back. "What a shocking smell!"

"Do come out of the room, father!" cried Bella. "You will be poisoned!"

"I'm dying!" groaned Billy, sinking into one of the chairs.

"Yah, yah, yah! Should had tought you had been dead 'bout two months."

"Silence, Pete!" cried the doctor. "How dare you speak like that? Bella, I am surpris'd at your laughing at him."

"I don't think he meant anything, father."

"I am quite sure he did. Do be quiet, William. There is nothing the matter with you."

"He admitted he had given me effluvium, and I know for a fact that is a deadly poison."

"I must admit, Billy, that I gave you effluvium in disinfecting you; but that is merely part of the process, and I really believe you are more likely to poison other people than they to poison you."

"What has the boy done?" inquired Mrs. Kenward, looking at her husband with

anything but a serious expression on her face, while Bella was shaking with laughter.

"Convinced William that he has caught some complaint from Clegg, who has absolutely nothing the matter with him. Then the silly man has allowed himself to be disinfected, and you can smell the result."

"But how could Rex have made William believe such a thing as that?"

"I don't really know, my dear; neither do I know how he has convinced Clegg that he is dying; but he appears to have done so."

"I know I'm poisoned," declared Billy. "I can feel it coming on."

"You won't have to suffer from the contagious disease now, Billy!" exclaimed Rex, glancing at Bella. "If my patent disinfectant poisons you it will save you a lot of suffering in the long run, and I promise to pay all your funeral expenses."

"Silence, Carew! Don't be so silly as to listen to him, William. You had better go away, and when—when you have got rid of the disinfectant I will speak to you."

"How am I to get rid of it, sir?"

"I really don't know."

"If you will allow me to make a painful of another species of disinfectant I shall be pleased to slop it over him, and I will guarantee it will take away the present perfume."

"How dare you joke about your disgraceful behaviour?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Sorry, sir, but if Billy goes around smelling like that for a fortnight it will get monotonous. Now, I could make him smell differently each day, and—"

Here Mrs. Kenward joined her daughter's laughter, and the doctor went to the window and flung it open, while Billy hobbled from the room, groaning as he went, for he really thought he was bad.

"I positively cannot remain in the room!" exclaimed the doctor. "It is awful!"

"Do give me the recipe, Rex," pleaded Bella. "One of our governesses is hateful, and it would be such fun to put a little on her handkerchief."

"Bella!" exclaimed her father sternly.

"Well, only just a little, father. I feel quite sure a few drops would be sufficient."

"Nonsense! Run away, Bella. It is a great pity, Carew, you do not pay more attention to your studies, and less to these silly practical jokes. Go away, both of you. I shall have something more to say about the matter. Understand me, Carew, I forbid you to send for Jobson."

"Yes, sir."

"Then mind you obey. Now go away."

"Funny ting dey don't seem to like de smell ob your patent, Rex."

"Tut, tut, tut! There is no accounting for tastes; but you will be all right. He won't say anything more about the matter. There goes the beastly bell. I must get in. See you later on. If you have to go into the village for anything you might call in at Jobson's and get all the literature you can. Tell him it is for me, and that if there is any charge I will pay it."

CHAPTER 6.

A Day on the Water—How Pete Lost a Salmon and Smashed a Rod— A Gallant Rescue—Watts Seeks Vengeance—How He Got It.

PERHAPS it was rather lucky for Pete that Rex had to settle down for an examination now, and for some time they did not see much of each other. Pete shirked the work that Billy tried to make him do in every way he possibly could, but the way he worked in the grounds was really very creditable.

He was at his work one morning when Rex approached him.

"We've got a holiday to-day, Pete!" exclaimed Rex, "and I've made arrangements accordingly. Come on."

"But I ain't got a day off."

"Yes, you have. I got Bella to ask her father to let you come with me, and I've made all arrangements. Can you paddle a canoe?"

"Should say so. Been all ober de lagoon, and out to sea in de bargain."

"Right you are. We are going up the river in two canoes. Come on."

"Sure dat will be all right?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Did you ever know me to get up to a lark? It's perfectly right. I have made all arrangements. Hurry up. You are wasting all the morning."

"I was just tinkering wedder a little breakfast would not be well before de start."

"Bother the breakfast. You are not hungry."

"You may be right, but somehow I hab got de feeling dat you are mighty wrong on de point."

"We shall have a snack at the inn. I have ordered it. In fact, I've made every arrangement, and you will find that all will be comfortable."

Rex had arranged to hire two canoes, and they found them all ready when they arrived at the boathouse; then the pair sped up the river, and Pete began to wonder whether Rex had forgotten about the breakfast; however, he did not care to say anything about it.

They got through the first lock all right, and past the weir; then they stopped at a riverside inn, where Rex was well known, and where a sumptuous breakfast awaited them.

"Wire in, old chap!" exclaimed Rex. "There are chops and kidneys. Can you eat them?"

"Golly! One ob my favourite dishes. Hot rolls, too. Cold ham, roast beef. Well, if I can't eat dat little lot should say I ought to starve. But I say, Rex, ain't dis going to cost a mighty lot ob money? I hab only got free shillings."

"Rats! You are my guest. You haven't got to bother yourself about what it will cost, because I pay all that. Fire ahead. We sha'n't get anything to eat till lunch-time, and there's a lot of hard work before us."

"I don't mind dis sort ob hard work at all," observed Pete, going into his chop; "in fact, de harder I'm worked at eating, de better it suits my constitution. Tink we shall meet Clegg or any ob dat lot on de water?"

"Tut, tut, tut! I should not be a bit surprised; but we shall only meet them coming back. You see, we have started early, and they are not at all likely to do that."

It was a beautiful day, though rather chilly; but the sun shone brightly, and the crisp air just suited the chums for their paddling, and there could have been no doubt that all would have gone well had not Rex suggested a race.

"I expect you will win, because you are a lot stronger than I, and I rather fancy you are better with the paddle," observed Rex. "All the same, it will be a bit of excitement. You see that old fellow in the punt, well, just past him there is a big oak tree, near the water; we will row up to that."

"What, pull de canoes ober de dry ground!"

"Rats! No. We will get level with that tree, and that will be the winning-post. Now, get level. Are you ready? Go!"

Away they sped in rare style, and they kept very level. Both did their utmost in friendly rivalry. Pete was nearest to the punt, and as their ill-luck would have it, the party in the punt had just hooked a magnificent salmon.

"Keep away!" he howled.

"You get out ob our way!" roared Pete. "Yah, yah, yah! Now we'm going. Take your rod out ob de way, you fathead. Golly! I'm getting tangled wid rods and lines and fishes. Must stop dis race!"

"You little villain!" howled the angry fisherman.

Pete had smashed his line, and that fine salmon went down the river with it, while the wrath of the fisherman knew no bounds.

He smashed his rod over Pete's head, and the upper broken portion of it went down the river; then he caught Pete a second one over the head with the butt end of the rod, and smashed that. Rex's first impression was that Pete's skull must be broken, but it did not appear to cause him much damage.

"Here, old hoss!" cried Pete. "You ain't going to hab all de slap-dashing on your side. Take dat one on your back!" And Pete caught him one with the flat of his paddle that made him howl again.

"I tink we may as well get off," observed Pete, paddling out of striking distance. "Yah, yah, yah! Where's your fish, old hoss? And what price dat rod. Oh, it ain't no good yowling like dat!"

"It's Farmer Watts!" exclaimed Rex. "He's a beast!"

Watts was a thick-set man of about forty, and he was a bully. He had had many a row with Rex on previous occasions, and knew him by sight. In fact, Rex had once been gated for a fortnight through Watts coming to the college with a complaint; nor was he the only Grey Towers fellow who had got into trouble over Watts. The language the infuriated man now used was abominable, so the chums rowed away to the little inn where Rex had made arrangements for lunch, and which was within sight from that spot.

"Tut, tut, tut! Here comes Watts after us!"

"Yah, yah, yah! Does de silly old hoss tink he is going to obertake us in dat punt, 'cos if he does, I don't. Steady dere, my dear old hoss. Don't you get excited wid dose poles!"

"I'll brain you when I get at you!" howled Watts.

"Well, you see, I ain't going to let you get at me, my poor, fermented old hoss. You'm a lot too impulsive. You had better take dat old punt home, and let your missus use it as a washing-tub. You will be much safer using it dat road. Yah, yah, yah! I know you will fall into de water just directly."

"I know where you come from, you little vagabonds. I shall call on your master this very day, and I'll make him thrash you within an inch of your lives!"

"More work for poor old Jobson. But look here, Watts, you ain't got de right to excite yourself in dat manner. You will be getting blood to de brain, and it wouldn't take much blood to drown a brain like yours. You'm de worst-tempered man I eber came across."

"You little black demon, I will make you smart for this. You have not only lost my fish, but you've smashed my rod!"

"Should say you smashed dat ober my noddle. Still, de fact remains dat it is smashed, so it don't make much difference to you who broke it."

"You will find it will make a sight of difference to you. I'll flog you till you howl for mercy!"

"Look at dat now! Well, if you are determined to do anything like dat, old hoss, I am determined dat you sha'n't; so if it's all de same to you, I won't let you catch me. Go on wid your punting. Yah, yah, yah! You do make me laugh de way you punt. De elegance ob de bent body is charming. Put your waistcoat against de end ob de pole and push, only mind you don't puncture your tyre. Ugh! Dat's de way. You hab moved nearly two feet against de tide, and you ain't drifted back much more dan free feet. How long do you tink it will take him to reach de inn at dat rate, Rex?"

"Tut, tut, tut! You are getting on famously, Watts. You are a born punter, old fellow. You are getting rather wet, are you not?"

It did not require this chaff to complete Watts's fury. It was complete already; but he was so unskilful with the punt that the chums thought he would never be

able to reach the inn, and when they got tired of chaffing him they paddled on, leaving him to his own devices.

Now that little inn was a very comfortable one, and Jim the landlord was a decent fellow. Rex was an excellent customer, having had many a sumptuous dinner there, while sometimes he stood dinners for large numbers; so that Jim was always anxious to please him.

"My wife has got you a grand feed, sir, and it's all ready—in fact, you are a little late."

"Tut, tut, tut! We have been having an argument with Watts."

"He's a beast!" declared Jim. "I'll put him into court if he's not so careful. He's been and put up a fence, and cribbed a bit of my ground."

"Should pull that fence down," observed Pete.

"Well, I thought of doing that, only he's a terror, and he's got more money to waste in law than I have; but come and have your dinner. I wouldn't like anything to spoil, neither would the missus."

The dinner was really excellent, and the chums, who were very hungry, enjoyed it immensely; then Jim placed a large plum-pudding on the table, and left them to discuss it.

"Funny ting, but dis am one ob my favourite dishes," observed Pete. "It's a mighty nice pudding, too."

"Tut, tut, tut! Jim's wife is a grand cook, and she always does her best, Have another slice?"

"Dat's a question dat can be answered in de affirmative widout de slightest chance ob a mistake being— Hi, golly! Are earthquakes happening?"

Pete never had his second slice of pudding, for at that moment Watts rushed into the room. He asked no questions, nor expressed any thoughts. He just went for Pete like the proverbial bull goes at a gate, and his one aim in life appeared to be to knock chips off Pete, thereby resembling the aforesaid bull that goes for the gate.

Pete received three blows on the back of his head that knocked his face into his plate, which was broken; then Pete bobbed under the table, came up the other side, and seizing the huge pudding, hurled it full into his adversary's face. This gave Pete a great advantage, for that pudding was uncomfortably hot, and it scattered over Watts's face in a manner that prevented him seeing properly.

Before he had recovered from the pudding and his surprise, both Rex and Pete were upon him. They charged at his back, and sent him sprawling half across the table, while he broke a lot more crockery; then Pete seized one of his legs, and despite his furious kicks, stuck to it. He was flung about a good deal, but while he clung to Watts's leg, the angry man could not get off the table, unless he wanted to fall to the floor, in which case he must have known that he would have had a rough time of it.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "Wait till I get hold of his other leg. Got it, first time. Drag him on the floor, old chap. Never mind his howls!"

Watts clung to the cloth, with the result that when they wrenched him on the floor, everything that was upon the table came with him; then Pete jumped on his back, and as Rex stuck to his left leg, Watts's chances of rising were remote.

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Jim, rushing into the room on hearing the uproar. "Why, it's Watts! Haw, haw, haw! You've got him safe this journey. He ain't made much mess, neither."

"Nunno, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete, who had got a most advantageous position. "I ain't letting you up. You'm much safer in your present position. I rader tink we had better tie de man up till we get to a safe distance. He wants muzzling as well."

"It's all right, young gents," exclaimed Jim. "You can let him up, and if he don't pay me a sovereign for this damage, why, I'll punch his head. I reckon I

can take a sovereign's worth of damage out of him, and send him home so as his missus won't know him!"

"In dat case you may get up, old hoss," exclaimed Pete, rising.

"Now, then, you!" cried Jim, standing in front of him in a fighting attitude. "You've got to finish this argument with me."

"What has it got to do with you?" snarled Watts, who had no intention of taking on anything like that.

"Nothing at all. How could it? Haven't you got a perfect right to steal my ground, and come into my house and smash up my crocks—to say nothing of assaulting my guests? Why, of course you have, you pudding-headed chunk of stupidity! Why not finish off the work proper, and assault me? Come on, I'll give you as much beer as you can drink if you try it on!"

"I have punished that little nigger scoundrel, now I'll go to the college and get them another thrashing!"

"Haw, haw, haw! You've punished him, have you! Should have thought it was him who had punished you; but if you are satisfied, I ain't got anything to say about the matter, except that you will pay me a sovereign for the damage you have done before you leave this house."

"Tut, tut, tut! I will pay for the damage and mess, Jim," said Rex. "Let's come and smash his fence down, and if he goes for you for damages, I'll prosecute him for assault. Come on!"

"Why, so we will. Come on, young gents. I'll teach him to put his fences on my ground!"

"You daren't touch my fence!" roared Watts, following them up.

"Yah, yah, yah! We'll soon see about dat!" cried Pete. "Dis way to London!"

Jim led the way to the bottom of the ground, and showed exactly where Watts had taken off a corner of it; then the chums set to work. It was an open fence, and when they had succeeded in getting out one bar, the rest was quite an easy matter, for they used that bar as a lever.

Watts simply raved, but Jim did not care for that. He had got plenty of strength, and the way he wrenched that fence up, and flung the bars on Watts's ground so exasperated that individual that he threatened to go for Jim.

"Well, come on!" exclaimed Jim, squaring up to him. "I'd just like you to try to punch my head. Give me a smack in the eye for a start!"

"I've a thundering good mind to. How dare you pull my fence down?"

"Why, you thieving vagabond, how dare you steal my ground?"

"It ain't your ground."

"Ain't it? I can soon prove it is, and you know it as well as I do. You are not going to square up your field by cribbing my land. If you do, you will take the consequences."

"You have got your remedy at law."

"I know all about that, and I'm going to take my remedy out of law, and let you take t'other. Up she comes! I've broken that one—still, up she comes! Haw, haw, haw! You are going hot, young gents."

Despite Watts's ravings, every bit of that fence that was on Jim's land came up; and then he strode away, merely threatening what he would do. They followed him to his punt.

"Keep steady, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "Don't ober-exert yourself. Gently does it."

Watts pushed off; then, raising his punt pole, struck at Pete's head in a manner that was distinctly dangerous. But Pete was on his guard. He leapt aside in

time, and as the pole struck the ground, Watts lost his balance and plunged into the water.

"The boat!" cried Jim. "He can't swim, nor can't I."

"Golly! dat's mighty awkward for de man!" exclaimed Pete, diving in without stopping even to take his coat off, an example that Rex followed.

Watts rose to the surface and uttered an appalling howl, but they caught him ere he sank again.

Their task was no easy one, for Watts struggled desperately, and all the time he worked for help, but after a desperate struggle they got him to the bank, and then all clambered up, while his punt went floating down the river.

"You got rader wet dat time, didn't you, old hoss?" inquired Pete.

Watts glared at them; then, without one word of thanks, he strode away.

"Shows you what sort of man he is!" exclaimed Jim. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he hasn't got the face to go to the doctor and try to get you into a row. Well, the only thing to do is to come in, and we will get your clothes as dry as possible."

"Golly! dere ain't no need for dat as far as I'm concerned," exclaimed Pete. "I don't mind de wet clothes. Often get mine wet. Do you mind, Rex?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Not a bit."

"Well, I don't quite see how we are going to get them dry in time, either. See here, you paddle back as sharp as you can. You won't come to any harm if you get a change before they have had time to dry on you."

Rex paid the bill, compensated Jim for the damage, and gave him a sovereign for himself; then they started off, but they took matters very leisurely, as Rex said it was a pity to spoil the afternoon.

Pete quite agreed with him, with the result that they had tea in the village, and did not return to the college till eight o'clock, which was their time. It had only just finished striking the hour when they reached the gates, which they found locked, and Billy kept them waiting for over five minutes before he found it convenient to answer the bell.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "Ten minutes late. I'll report you for that, and you are wanted for something else, so I can tell you. P'raps you will know what it is when I tell you that Watts is here. Haw, haw, haw! He's here, and I have been talking to him. There's such a thing as highway robbery——"

"Tut tut, tut! Have you been stealing any more gold watch-chains, Billy?"

"You are a liar!"

"If you say so, it looks serious, for a better personal judge of a liar than you are never could have lived, and if you judge me by yourself, then I'm done."

"You think you are clever!"

"No, Billy; but I think you are the biggest idiot that ever walked in shoe-leather!"

"I have another complaint to——"

"Golly! de man has been near Clegg again!" exclaimed Pete. "Got anoder complaint, hab you, Billy? Den we must disinfect him, Rex. You must make anoder lot ob dat little perfume. We can't allow de man to run about de college wid all dese complaints."

"Oh, you viper! You black, grinning, ugly, black beast! You worm, as I would tread on and squash beneath my 'eel! Come along with me, you black brute of a murderer! Come into the doctor's presence! I'll show you who's master in this college—me or you!"

"Look at dat, now! Yah, yah, yah! Suppose we had better go to face de music, Rex. Hab you eber noticed how mighty fat Billy is getting? He must be a frightfully expensive man to feed. If I was de doctor I should keep him wid de oder pigs. It would save a lot ob money. He's got a waddle like a goose dat

has been fattened for market. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me laughing at you, Billy, but you really look too mighty funny. Dis way to London!"

Billy conducted them to the doctor's study, and that gentleman looked remarkably stern. Watts was seated there, and he appeared to be quite calm. He had given his version of the affair, and the doctor, knowing Rex's playful ways, never doubted that Watts's version was correct.

"This is a very serious matter, Carew!" exclaimed the doctor. "Mr. Watts tells me that you have grossly assaulted him. What have you to say?"

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Did you hurl a pudding into his face and knock him on the floor?"

"De pudding was my idea, sah!" said Pete. "De knocking him on de floor was a combined idea. We worked dat little lot between us."

"I understand that you have wrenched up his fence?"

"M'yes! We did that, sir. Placed on wrong ground."

"That was a matter that did not concern you. What right had you to touch Mr. Watts's fence?"

"None whatever, sir."

"Then I am given to understand that you caused him to lose a salmon that he had hooked, and smashed a valuable rod?"

"Correct, sir, in a sense."

"You broke his line?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think that was a gentlemanly or sportsmanlike thing to do?"

"No, sir. I should call it an accident."

"Are you aware that Mr. Watts claims compensation for what you have done?"

"I was not, sir; but he won't get it. I don't care for money, but in this case I won't pay him a farthing; and I am perfectly sure that my mother will not, if I request her not to do so."

"Then I will make her!" cried Watts. "I will put her in a court of law!"

"That is absurd," interposed the doctor. "Lady Carew has nothing whatever to do with the matter."

"I don't care about that!" cried Watts. "I claim twenty pounds damages. That won't nearly pay me, seeing that I have spoilt a suit of clothes, to say nothing of a watch. If you think you are going to allow your boys to treat me in this shameful manner, why, you are mistook."

"I must trouble you to address me in a proper manner," said Dr. Kenward.

"I always speak as I feel, sir," growled Watts.

"Shall we frow him out ob de window for you, sah?" inquired Pete.

"Silence, boy!"

"Beg pardon, sah. I tought perhaps you would like de man frown out ob de window, and it would be no sort ob trouble to Rex and me; in fact, it would be a pleasure. And he deserves it, after de way he has behaved to-day."

"Do you maintain that Mr. Watts was in the wrong?"

"Well, sah, I started de matter. Rex hadn't anything to do wid de wrong part ob de business. I got entangled in de old hoss's line, and dere ain't a doubt—yah, yah, yah!—dat he lost his fish frough me. Dat was de accidental part ob de matter."

"Then I understand you broke his rod?"

"Dat was his fault, sah. If a man starts whacking me ober de head wid his rod, he must expect it to break. It has got to be de rod or my noddle, and a noddle like mine would take a good-sized rod to break it. After dat we chaffed him a bit, and den we went to hab dinner. After dat he came for me as dough he

meant business, and when he had smashed a plate wid my face, I tought it was time for me to make a start, so I made it by bashing de pudding into his face, and after dat we bof went for him. Pulling up his fence was an extra. We did dat because he had cribbed some ob Jim's land, and Jim wanted it done. Den de man had anoder smash at my noddle wid his punt pole. He missed de head dat time, else he would hab broken his pole. Yah, yah, yah! Den he toppled into de water."

"This puts a different complexion on the matter, Watts. If that lad is speaking the truth, you have spoken very falsely."

"You ain't going in!" cried a voice, which the chums recognised as Billy's.

"I tell you I will."

"The master is engaged."

"I don't care. I'm going to see him."

The door was flung open, and Jim entered the study; then, in a few words, he told all that he knew about the matter. He also told how Pete and Rex had rescued Watts from a watery grave.

"I came over purposely to let you know the truth sir!" exclaimed Jim. "You never could learn it from Watts, because he never tells it, unless it suits his purpose. I guessed he would come here, sooner or later, and I wanted to get before him. However, I hope I am in time."

"Yes; and I am much obliged to you for coming. I always try to deal justly with these matters. You have thoroughly deceived me, Mr. Watts, and I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself for distorting the truth in the way you have. You said the lads knocked you into the water, while an independent witness assures me that you fell in while trying to strike one of the lads with a pole. You would certainly have seriously injured him."

"I wish I had brained the black brute!"

"That shows me what description of man you are. I refuse to have anything more to say to you concerning the matter."

"I demand compensation!"

"You will certainly not get one penny. The fault was entirely yours. What right had you to strike the lads?"

"What right had they to lose me my fish?"

"That was an accident. You broke the rod yourself, if what I now hear is correct, and I have not the slightest doubt that it is. You can go."

"Then I will put you into a court of law."

"You can please yourself concerning that. You have been guilty of a violent assault, and yet the lads risk their lives to save yours. You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself."

"Then I ain't!"

"That must be because you are lost to all sense of shame. William!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Show this man out of the college, and should he call again, say that I refuse to see him. Go and change your wet clothes at once, my lads."

Billy wanted to report them for being late, but he had an idea that he had better wait for another occasion, and so he showed Watts out of the college, while Rex and Pete heard no more about the matter.

"I rather think that we got out of that nicely, Pete," observed Rex, when they had changed their clothes. "You see what angered the doctor was the abominable shamboo, Watts told. Nothing annoys the doctor more than that. He hates shamboo in any shape or form."

"Den I hab an idea dat he can't like Billy so mighty much."

"Tut, tut, tut! No. Billy wants taking down a peg, and I will do it too, one

of these days. What we want to do is to give him a scare. You leave it to me, and I'll think it over."

"I rader tink Billy is going to get dat startler," mused Pete, as he made his way to the lodge in the hope of getting some supper.

"Well, you little thief, what have you come here for?" demanded Billy. "I don't want any more of my property stolen."

"Nunno, Billy. I would be a mighty sad ting if you lost dose brass studs dat you call gold, wouldn't it?"

"You had best be careful, or you will go too fur with me one of these days. I shall knock your nigger's head off your shoulders, and you won't like that."

"Would look rader funny to see a nigger going frough life without a head, wouldn't it, Billy. Where's de supper?"

"Go and fetch it, you worm. Do you think as I'm going to wait on you?"

"Yah, yah, yah! You hab had anoder row wid cock, and are frightened to go into de kitchen to get it. I wish dat woman would pitch into you and gib you what you deserve. I wonder she doesn't do it. Spect she will one ob dese days, den we shall hear some squalls. All right, old hess, don't get excited. I'm going to get dat supper."

Pete disappeared, and he had been absent for fully ten minutes, when Rex entered the lodge.

"Where's Pete, old bumble-toes?"

"Oh, you varmint. Wouldn't I flog you if I was your mother! He's gorn to get my supper, bust him, and he's been gorn nigh on half an hour; but I will make it warm for him when he comes."

"Well, here he comes now, so you had better start making it warm. I think he's got your supper."

"What do you mean by being all this time, you worm?" snarled Billy.

"De beer cask was nearly empty, Billy. De cock told me to draw your beer out ob dat cask, and I had a job to tilt it far enough. You see, it was already tilted, and eben den I couldn't make it run in a satisfactory manner, so I tilted it a bit more, and got your jug full."

"Bust it! I've told her time after time not to give me my beer out of the old cask. There's nothing I like mcre than a drop of clear ale."

"You take a mighty big drop at a time, old hess," said Pete. "Still, you will find dat just in good condition."

Billy poured himself out a glass, and the indignant manner in which he gazed first at it, and then at Pete, made Rex laugh.

"What do you call that 'ere?" roared Billy at last.

"Well, you see, old hess, I happen to know dat it is beer, else I might hab called it pea soup. Still, you'm got all de richness of de cask in dat ale. De extra tilting must hab shaken it a little, still, if you shut your eyes you will neber notice de difference."

"If this ain't positively shameful of cook I dunno what is," growled Billy. "It's all her doing, and this imp's. Mind you, if you don't fetch me up a proper drop of beer, not one mouthful of supper shall you have to-night, and if you go and tell the doctor I'll let him taste that ale, and ask him if he thinks as it's fit stuff for a man to have given him to his supper."

"I hab changed my mind bout dat supper, Billy," said Pete, winking at Rex. "I don't want any."

"What, not want any supper, when you was asking for it not so long ago."

"I suppose a poor nigger can change his mind de same as oder people."

"You little black beast! You've been having your supper in the kitchen while you've kept me waiting for mine, and then you bring up this disgusting slop for me to drink."

"I might hab had a snack," admitted Pete. "If Mary chooses to gib me a little supper, I suppose she's got the right to do it."

"I know your ways, you varmint. Here you've been having the very best there is in the house, and you think as bread and cheese is good enough for me."

"Was de cook who tought dat. She sent up dat, and she told me where to draw de beer from. De fact is, old hoss, I don't tink you hab been pleasing dat woman, and it ain't at all a sensible ting to do to quarrel wid de cook, cos, don't you see, she can make matters mighty uncomfortable for a man, specially one like you, who is always tinkin ob eating and drinking."

"Hark at the greedy little brute talking to me about eating. Just you take that jug down, and tell the cook if she doesn't send me up some proper ale, I shall go to the master."

"Ob course, I can gib dat message, Billy, only I don't believe she will send you up anyting different."

Pete took the jug away, and in a few minutes returned with it.

"De cook says she won't gib you anyting different to dis, old hoss, so you must drink it or else go widout."

"Then I won't," howled Billy, who would rather have gone without his bread and cheese than without his beer. "It's a scandalous, disgraceful shame, and I'll take it straight to the doctor."

"Why not drink it first, Billy, and den go to de doctor afterwards. Or I tell you what I can do for you. I can hold your nose, while Rex pours it down your froat."

"I won't be insulted in this shameful manner. Flesh and blood——"

"I cannot have this disgraceful noise," cried Mr. Grant, striding into the lodge, "Here I am trying to do some work when you start raving like a maniac. What is the matter with you, William?"

"I've been sent up the most shamefullest ale you ever saw in your life."

"It is absurd to make such a fuss over your supper beer. What does it matter?"

"I ain't had a glass of ale since dinner, sir."

"Well, I have not had one for two days. I generally drink water, and you would find yourself very much better in health if you were to do the same."

"I have to work for my living, sir. I'm not a gentleman who goes through life with nothing to do."

"Do you suppose that I do not have to work?"

"I don't call it work, sir, sitting on a cheer and making boys learn their lessons."

"Tut, tut, tut! Billy has not got an easy life like yours, sir," exclaimed Rex. "He can't set on his cheer all day and do nothink like you do. When Billy sets on his cheer he always snores, or reads the doctor's paper."

"I hope you won't stand that boy making fun of you, sir," growled Billy.

"I rather fancy I am not the party he is making fun of," retorted Mr. Grant.

"But let this noise cease. You leave the lodge, Carew."

"I wish you would just taste that ale before you go, sir," said Billy. "It's fair fearful."

"You are always complaining about something," said Mr. Grant. "I don't suppose that there is anything the matter with it."

Then, taking up the jug he poured out a glassful of sparkling ale, and drank half of it.

"Why, it is excellent ale," exclaimed Mr. Grant. "I am astounded that you should complain of it. I do not remember having tasted better beer."

And he finished the glass, and left the lodge in disgust, not at the ale, but at Billy objecting to it.

The fact is, Mary had given Billy a fresh jug of ale, but Pete had omitted to tell him so.

"Bust me!" gasped Billy, looking into the half empty jug. "He's been and wolfed 'arf my supper ale."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Scuse me laughing at you, Billy, but you are making a mistake ober your supper beer dis time. Yah, yah, yah! I must say Mr. Grant knows a good glass ob beer when he gets it, dough he may prefer water as a general rule."

"Bust him. 'Arf my beer gorn. I'd like to——"

Billy did not say what he would like to do, but what he really did was to thump that jug down on the table with a viciousness that smashed it, and the other half of his beer went on the tablecloth and the carpet.

"Yah, yah, yah! Golly! I know I shall laugh directly. You'm lost de oder half ob your beer now, Billy. Might most call dat beer 'half and half.'"

"I suppose you think as you're funny?" sneered Billy.

"I don't tink I'm nearly so funny as you are, Billy."

"Jest you go down and explain to cook as Mr. Grant has drunk my supper beer."

"I ain't taking dat job on, Billy. She didn't like gibing de fresh lot, and I'm mighty certain dat she won't gib you any more."

"It was all your fault. You ought to have told me it was fresh beer."

"Look at dat now!"

"So you ought, you varmint. You did it on purpose. Go and fetch me some more."

"See here, Billy, I ain't going to impose on cook's good nature. If dat woman has got to be offended you will hab to do it. I believe you hab quarrelled wid her already, and dere's no sense it two ob us quarrelling wid her; so just you buzz off and get your own beer, or else go widout it. Yah, yah, yah! Dere goes your bell. I tink de doctor wants you."

"The amount of work they expect me to do is positively shameful," growled Billy, who always did just as little as he possibly could. "I'm at it from morning to night, and it's enough to wear a man out, what with one thing and another. I'm fair sick of it. Bust the bell. There it goes again. I wish there was no such things as bells—or boys. They ought both to be roasted."

Then Billy went to see what was required of him.

CHAPTER 7.

Billy Scores—A Little Retaliation—A Most Disastrous Smash—A Goose and a Boy—Jane Nearly Has Fits—The Doctor's Surprise.

REX had had a run of bad luck. The fact is he had broken bounds to purchase a supper for the fellows in his dormitory. Billy had seen him go out, so he waited for him to come in, then Billy caught him, and confiscated the hamper.

This was bad enough, but worse was to follow, for Billy had a grand supper from that hamper. There were some meat pies, and other dainties there. He had some for supper, and some more for breakfast, while he saved the rest for tea. Then he reported Rex for breaking bounds, but omitted to mention anything about the hamper. Rex got his Saturday afternoon stopped, and a chapter of Cæsar to translate, and when he went to regain possession of his provisions, Billy threatened to report him again for bringing the hamper in.

"I saved you all I could," declared Billy. "I didn't mention nothink about the hamper, cos I knew you would get a caning if I was to. You can consider them provisions are conferscated. Haw, haw, haw! They worn't wasted."

"Did he give you any, Pete?"

"Nunno. I neber saw any ob dose. 'Scept I saw him wolfing some meat pies, but he told me he had bought dose wid his own money."

"Tut, tut, tut! Well, it doesn't matter. I don't care about the provisions, Billy, but I do care about being gated; however, these little things will happen. By the way, Pete, I want a word with you."

Then Rex explained how he was going to give Billy a startler, and brilliant though his idea was, it would have been far better had he never executed it.

The horrible failure was not exactly Rex's fault, because he knew nothing of Billy's plans; but it so happened that he had asked permission to have his married sister to supper, and as she had once been the cook at the college, the doctor at once gave his consent. Her name was Jane, and she was coming with her husband Sam. And as the doctor had given Mary instructions to supply them with a nice hot supper, Billy had the whip-hand of her on that occasion, because she was not at all likely to send up indifferently-cooked food to a rival cook.

"You see, Pete," exclaimed Rex, "a bird like that flapping round his room is sure to startle him. You can pretend to be frightened, you know. I shall creep down the sloping roof of his lodge, and shove it through the top of his window. He always keeps that open in the evening; besides, even if he should shut it you can open it."

"Yah, yah, yah! Suttinly! You don't tink it would save trouble to put it in by de door?"

"I should get caught. No, that is the safest idea. I shall be able to see the fun through the skylight. We shall be quite safe this evening, because the doctor is out with his wife and daughter. We will go at about eight o'clock. It will be pretty dark then."

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"What are you guffawing at?"

"Was just wondering weder you wouldn't rader go alone."

"Certainly not, you black beauty. I need your help."

"If I know anything 'bout geese it will make a mighty row."

"Not if we treat it kindly."

"You can be as kind as a moder to a goose, but it's going to make a row when you collar it. Still, if you tink dere won't be anyone dere to hear it, why dat's all right."

"Meet me by the orchard at eight sharp."

"Nuff said."

It was not a pleasant night, nor had it been a pleasant day. A gusty wind had turned to a gale, and that gale brought rain. It came up from the sea, and it came down like a waterspout. Pete noticed that when he had been waiting for Rex for about three minutes, however, he succeeded in getting shelter under an apple-tree, nor did Rex keep him waiting much longer than the three minutes aforesaid.

If only Lady Carew had been there to stop her son, what a difference it would have made; but then she was miles and miles away, and Rex was not the sort of lad to turn from danger. He strode to the shed where the geese were kept. The door was not locked. Better far had it been; better far had all those geese been roasted, with some apple-sauce and stuffing, for those who liked it. As it was, they were quite alive and lively, when the chums entered the shed. They only wanted one goose, and were not going to hurt it; but a dozen geese were there,

and they all appeared to imagine that they were going to be hurt very badly, judging by the noise they made.

"Scissors!" gasped Rex, who was receiving some fearful flaps in the face. "Have you caught one, Pete?"

"Hi, golly! Murder! I tink I hab caught 'bout forty, and 'bout fifty ob dem seem to hab caught me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it ain't anything to laugh at, Rex! It's de worst business I hab eber had. Grooh! Dere's one trying to fly into my mouf now."

"Keep it shut, Pete. The doctor would be annoyed if you swallowed one of his geese alive."

"Golly! I rader tink de goose is trying to swallow me. Hellup! De goose is smacking me all ober de face!"

"He—ha, 'ha—won't hurt you!"

"You may be right bout dat, Rex, but de feeling I hab got is dat he is hurting me. Golly! Ain't dey making a mighty row, too. Steady dere, old hoss, I ain't going to hurt a hair ob your head! Dis is a mighty awful job, too."

"Have you caught him, Pete?"

"I ain't quite certain weder I hab caught him, or weder he has caught me; we'm so frightfully mixed."

"Well, that's capital. Hold him tight. Don't hurt him."

"I wish you would gib dose instructions to de goose 'bout me. I neber come across such an excited goose in all my life!"

"Well, bring him out."

Pete did, but that goose made the most frightful row. It simply refused to quiet down till they had reached the college, and then it appeared to turn sulky.

"Give him to me, Pete!" exclaimed Rex. "Leave the rest to me. You may expect to see that goose again at about nine o'clock."

"I don't quite know 'bout dat goose," mused Pete, as Rex hurried away; "but seems to me de bird is going to get us into trouble one way and anoder. However, it ain't any use bodering yourself about de future; so I'll go and see how Billy is getting on."

Billy was sitting in his chair smoking a cigar, and he was a most tremendous swell. He had got all his Sunday clothes on, with one of the doctor's camellias in his buttonhole, and he really looked most imposing. Pete did not understand it at all until Billy spoke, and he appeared to have taken on a different voice; while he brought in some words that Pete had never heard before.

"Boy!" he cried. "On this horspicious occasion, I have invited my sister Miss Jane to sup along of me to-night, and she will bring her husband, Mister Sam. Seeing as they are corrolotive relations of mine, you have got to treat them and me with doo respect. This 'ere ain't one of them occasions when I should promit you to call me Billy. I'm Mr. William, and jest you remember it!"

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"What are you laughing at, you black monkey!"

"I was only tinkin, Billy, 'bout dis 'horspicious occasion,'" answered Pete, "and I was just wondering. All de same, I suppose you want me to hab supper wid you?"

"A nigger! To sit down at table with a corlateral relative of mine! To sup with a perfect lady! The boy must be mad."

"All right, old hoss, den I 'spect you want me to wait on you?"

"That's exactly what the exhergencies of the case command. You are to wait at table, and you are to take particular care as I gets all I require. Of course, you are to look arter my sister and Sam; though you needn't bother much about

him. He ain't a polished gentleman. All the same, seeing as he's a corlateral relative of mine, why I pectert him to an extent. What you have got to do in special is to see as my plate ain't never hempty, and that my mouth is always full. Haw, haw, haw! I must bring that joke in agin some way. Now—Bust, there's the bell! Still, it may be them, a little afore their time. Go and open the gate."

"I dunno 'bout dis," mused Pete, as he obeyed. "Seems to me dat dere's going to be some trouble in de world. All de same, Rex ain't de sort ob boy to dis-appoint himself. I know he's made up his mind to let dat goose flutter around to-night and I don't believe dat Billy's sister, or his own moder's sister, would change his mind. Here goes! Dey hab got to be let in, dough dey dunno to what sort ob entertainment dey are coming."

Jane much resembled her brother in the figure, though she was better looking in face. She was rather short, and very fat, and she was most frightfully haughty. If her appearance had not given the impression that she was a perfect lady, as Billy declared—except when he was quarrelling with her—her speech would have settled the matter. Sam stood about six feet in height, and he was broad chested. They kept a grocer's shop, bought with Sam's savings and Jane's savings. Jane called it her business. Sam said nothing, because he was a man of few words. Jane loved him—no one could help liking Sam—and she snubbed him whenever he spoke, just to convince him that she had more intellect than he. She always contradicted him also. But then, he did not often speak, though what he said was to the point. As for Billy, he treated Sam as an inferior being; and Jane followed suit—in Billy's presence. He was a good-looking fellow, and he had made a bit of money, which he knew how to keep; although his wife was dressed in the most wonderful style.

"How doo, my dear!" exclaimed Billy, waving his cigar. It was a good one. He had got it, and two or three more, out of the doctor's box. "Shocking night! I hope as you didn't get wet coming?"

"No; we had a kerrage."

"That 'ere's all right. I shall send you back in the carriage. I don't know what sort of gru—what sort of a supper they are sending me up, 'cos I ain't given them any horders. And, as you know, Mary ain't much of a cook; still, I dessay we shall be able to give you a snack of summat. Oh! is that you, Sam?"

"Yus."

"Ain't it horful!" murmured Billy.

"I never can make him talk," observed Jane. "He's that shy in the presence of company, that I don't know what to do with him. Come, Sam, say some-thing civil to our host—my brother."

"How-do!" exclaimed Sam, offering his hand, into which Billy placed three fingers, and blew a whiff from his cigar into Sam's jovial face. Billy was proud of his cigar. He did not understand much about them; but he knew it would be a good one, because it belonged to the doctor.

"What a change this 'ere is to our boyhood days, Jane," observed Billy. "I don't know whether you recollect the carriages and 'orses our father used to keep. You was a little child then. Of course, you are a sight of years younger than me; but you will remember the serciety we used to keep?"

"I do so, Billy. And have often told Sam of it, haven't I, Sam?"

That worthy appeared to be lost in thought. He was gazing out of window, but they had not invited him to sit down. As a matter of fact, he could see nothing out of window; for it was pitch-black, and the storm was beating the rain upon the panes. The window was shut. Pete thought that was all the better under the circumstances, and he made a mental vow not to open it that

night. He decided that it would be preferable not to open it. He would rather that Rex and his goose got wet than that the aforesaid goose should come flopping around Jane.

"Samuel, I'm speaking to you," observed his better-half.

"What you say is perfectly right, my dear," declared Sam; though it is doubtful whether he had heard what she said.

Then came an unexpected trouble. It was Mary's vengeance. She came into the room, and she placed her cheek against Jane's; then she smiled sweetly at Billy.

"You will be pleased to serve up some supper, Mary," said Billy. "We should like summat 'ot and tasty."

"Why, certainly, Mr. William!" exclaimed Mary, who had kept her back turned towards Sam all the time, and utterly ignored him, although she had known him for years. "Now, let me see, would a nice Irish stew, with apple-tart, suit you? I know you are rather partial to Irish stew, Mr. William, and the doctor mentioned that he would like you to have what——"

"That will do all right. We can make shift with that," interposed Billy, who did not want Mary to give the show away. "Send it up, cook."

"With pleasure," smiled Mary, then she turned. "Ah!" she exclaimed. "Why, Sam, are you here? Now, why did you not tell me that you were coming? I am so pleased to see you!"

"You are not the only one, Mary!" exclaimed Sam, taking her hand.

"Oh, you flatterer, and you a married man, Sam. It's a lucky thing for you that Jane is not jealous. Now, don't blush, Sam. Jane and I understand a joke, and, of course, I am only the cook here, you know; besides, I am quite a plain cook; don't you think so, Sam?"

"I'm not a liar," growled Sam.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, and Billy shook his fist at him.

"You bad boy, Pete," exclaimed Mary, shaking a finger at him. "Of course, I appear ugly to you, because I am a good age. Let me see, Jane, I know there are ten years between us—yes, I am thirty-eight."

"I wonder you ain't married, my dear," observed Pete.

Mary fixed her eyes on the unfortunate Sam, then lowered them, and sighed. It was frightfully rough on the unfortunate man. Mary only wanted to get her own back with Jane and Billy, but Sam would have to bear the brunt of it later on.

"Are you keeping quite well, Sam?" inquired Mary.

"Never had a day's illness in my life."

"I am so glad, Sam. I do hope you will have a happy life; indeed, you deserve it. As I said—well, never mind about that. I often think, Jane, if you had had a son—or a daughter—that it would have been so nice in your old age, Jane. Still, one can't have everything in this life, and you have got a good husband."

"You have not, I believe," snarled Jane.

"No, I do not think I shall marry—if I ever receive another offer. Of course, that is not impossible, because you must have been at least five years older when Sam married you. Why, I knew him when he was quite young; I was a little girl then. Do you remember the Christmas decorations, Sam?"

"I have some sort of a remembrance about some holly," groaned Sam.

"You have forgotten the mistletoe, Sammy. Oh, you bad one, and you always pretended to be so shy. Well, children will be children. I was only seventeen, and you must have been scarcely twenty-three. Now, Sam, for auld lang syne, I am going to send you up a supper such as you have not tasted for years. If you don't enjoy it, I shall come up and scold you."

Then as Mary passed Sam, she bent down and whispered something in his ear. It was a shocking vengeance to take, and fearfully rough on the unfortunate Sam, who still gazed out of window, though he got no comfort from the blackness. Jane shifted her chair, so that her back was directly towards him, and then she chatted with her brother.

"Something is going to happen ober dis little lot," mused Pete. "Seems to me dat we sha'n't need de extra services ob a goose to finish de scene."

"Samuel!" cried Billy, who had a knack of making bad worse. "It is pre-meditated noos to me that you, a married man, has kissed a cook under the mistletoe."

"I've kissed Jane many a time under it, ain't I, my dear?"

"I ain't talking of Jane," cried Billy. "I'm talking of Mary."

"Mary?" exclaimed Sam, in a voice intended to give the impression that he could not recollect who she was.

"Samuel!" cried Billy. "I'm here to perfect my sister, who's a perfect lady. You can't play fast and loose with me. Is that woman a liar, or ain't she? Did you kiss——"

"Why, she never said anything about it."

"Did you kiss her or did you not?"

"How do you expect a man of my time of life to remember what he did when he was a child?" growled Sam.

He was a truthful man, and a kind-hearted one. He felt inclined to kick Billy for his stupidity, but that would have caused trouble, especially to Billy.

"Don't you think as you can put your interlect agin mine, Samuel," cried Billy, "cos I won't allow it. Did you, or did you not, kiss that common——"

"She never said I did."

"I'm asking you."

"Well, go and ask her."

"I insist on a hanswer to that 'ere question."

"What question?"

"Did you kiss her under the mistletoe?"

"Haven't you ever kissed a girl under the mistletoe? It's the custom of the country, and it's the duty of every honest Briton to keep the old customs up."

"I ain't a married man."

"Neither was I when I kissed any girl under the mistletoe, except Jane each Christmas."

"Why, he admits it!" cried Jane.

"Leave me to deal with this 'ere, Jane," said Billy. "Is this the only case, Samuel? Mind, I'm a going to have the truth, the whole truth, and nuthink but the forcious truth. Is this the only case?"

Poor Sam was a simple man, and now he was searching for the truth. He knew, as Rex would have put it—jolly well—that it was not the only case. He scratched both sides of his head, and thought. Not being an absolute liar he could not say that it was the only case.

"As far as I can recollect, there might have been other cases," he admitted.

"I wish that woman had been further, too."

"Samuel!" cried Billy. "Leave my 'ouse and 'ome!"

"Is that what you want, Jane?" demanded the unfortunate Sam.

"I am in my brother's hands," observed Jane, who knew perfectly well that this was merely a little by-play to make Sam realise his position.

"You are in his hands, are you?" growled Sam. "Well, stick in 'em, and if you prefer his hands to me, why you are welcome, but see you here, I was invited to this place to supper, and I'm not going till I get it!"

"Why don't you go to your cook and kiss her under the mistletoe?" snarled Billy.

"Never you mind about that, my man," retorted Sam. "You asked me to supper, and I to supper I'm staying. If you don't like it, I'll go to your master, and ask his opinion. I'm a man, and——"

"See here, Sam, there ain't no cause for you to give way to temper," said Billy, who thought it judicious to climb down a little. "Not having been brought up in my spere of life, it ain't to be—— But here comes the supper, and you are welcome to stay."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "If you ain't de funniest old hoss on de face ob de earth, Billy, I dunno where we'm going to find a funnier one."

"Boy! Do you know as you are speaking to a white gentleman?"

"Dat's all right. Go on, sah! Try de next one."

"The trouble that boy gives me is suthing crool," declared Billy, licking his lips as a huge dish of Irish stew was brought in. "Time after time I've told him as I won't allow him to laugh when he's waiting on me at table, but, bless you, it ain't no good. I shall have to give him the sack; that's what it will end in. Stand behind my cheer, you grinning black ape, else I'll clout you over the 'ead."

"All right, Billy, old hoss," exclaimed Pete. "Don't you get excited, else you will frighten Jane. Dere you are, my dear, dere's some for you to start wid. You will find dat little lot no end comforting. Sure you wouldn't like me to join dis supper, Billy? You'm only got to say de word, and I shall be quite willing to oblige you."

"Your mitigated imperance exceeds all boundaries," cried Billy. "Jest you stand behind my cheer and behave yourself. I'm sure the trouble the servants give me in this 'ere establishment is suthing crool. Now, stupid, can't you hand the plate?"

"Oh, yes, Billy," answered Pete. "I can do all dat, but I was just tinkin——"

Pete had heard something that sounded remarkably like the quack of a goose, while it was accompanied by a strange rumbling sound. He handed the plate to Sam, who at once started operations.

"What's that?" exclaimed Jane, as the rumbling sound was repeated.

"That's the wind," said Billy. "It's blowing a heavy gale."

"Golly!" gasped Pete, as the doctor entered the lodge to say good-evening to Sam and his wife.

Sam was a great favourite with the doctor, because he was so honest; in fact, Sam's prosperity was in a large measure due to the doctor's patronage. He was by far the best customer Sam had.

"I hope you will have a comfortable evening," said the doctor. "It's a dreadful night, but you can have a closed carriage to get home. You must come and say good-bye to me, and Mrs. Kenward will be pleased to see you, Jane. I won't interrupt you——"

At that moment there was a most terrific crash. There was a sound of rending woodwork mingled with breaking glass, and the next moment Rex, with a large goose beneath his arm, came crashing through the skylight, and dropping into the huge dish of Irish stew, sent splashes all over the assembled company, while the goose went flapping round the room, making the most extraordinary noise.

Jane shrieked at the top of her voice, while Billy bellowed like some old cow in pain. Rex sat in the dish of stew, and gazed blankly at the doctor.

But above the extraordinary turmoil rose Pete's roars of laughter.

"Yah, yah, yah! Golly! I know I shall laugh just directly. Yah, yah, yah!"

"Silence, boy!" commanded the doctor. "Be calm, Jane. Do stop that noise, William. Leave that goose alone, Pete!"

"Yah, yah, yah! I'm chasing it out ob de room, sah. Dere he goes!"

The doctor closed the door.

"Carew!" he exclaimed. "Carew! What is the meaning of this?"

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Are you injured?"

"Er—I believe not, sir."

"Get out of that dish, boy."

"Broken!" murmured Rex, jumping off the table, and gazing at the frightful mess. Then he glanced up at the skylight, and murmured "Broken!" again.

"Funny ting dat, too," murmured Pete. "Yah, yah, yah!"

"What were you doing, boy?"

"I wanted to startle Billy, sir."

"Yah, yah, yah! I tink you'm succeeded," exclaimed Pete.

"Tell me, Carew, how it happened," commanded the doctor.

"If you please, sir, I was on the roof. I was going to put that goose in his window to startle him. Roof slippery. Slanting. I tobogganned into the skylight, and—er—came through it. Quite an accident. They will happen. Sorry!"

Here some wild screams came from the kitchen.

"I rader tink dat goose has gone downstairs," observed Pete. "Yah, yah, yah! He must want to be cooked!"

Here there was a sound of breaking crockery and some more screams.

"Seems to hab got on de dresser now," observed Pete.

"You boys must go and turn it out—and come to me to-morrow morning."

The doctor had to shout the last order, because the two worthies bolted after that goose, only too glad to escape.

They got it out after rather an exciting chase, during which it broke a few more plates.

Mary was so delighted when she heard what had happened that she invited them both to supper.

"It serves Billy right," she declared, "having his sister here and making me cook for the creature. I'm sure I pity poor Sam."

"You ought to hab married him, my dear, when he kissed you under the mistletoe."

"I'll box your ears if you talk to me like that," cried Mary. "I never said he kissed me. I was only trying to annoy that cat. Don't you dare to say anything about that again, Pete, or you will get no more suppers here."

"I'm as mute as a maggot, my dear, and, mind you, I don't blame Sam."

Meantime that worthy sat in his chair without speaking a word. He pulled out his pipe, and commenced to fill it, while Billy, who had quieted himself, tried to quiet his sister, who was giving the doctor some hints as to what she would do if she were in his place.

"Boys will be boys," growled Sam, when she appealed to him to endorse her remarks.

"It don't follow that they have got to be little demons at the same time," snarled Jane. "If you haven't got a sensible remark to make on the subject, you had better not speak at all."

"Quite right, my dear. I don't see that it is any business of mine, and Dr. Kenward knows what to do a lot better than I could tell him."

"I suppose you do not care that I might have been killed, and all the supper spoilt."

"I'm sorry about the supper, of course, but——"

"And don't euc-care that I might have been killed," sobbed Jane, pulling out her handkerchief.

"I should have been sorry if you had been killed, still, it wasn't at all likely."

"You want to see me in my family tomb so that you may marry that insolent creature Mary."

"Well, I'm not going to contradict you because it always makes you cross, and if you think what you say, you are welcome to think it. I'm only sorry to hear you speak like that in the doctor's presence, because I wouldn't like that gentleman to think I was a scoundrel. I asked you to be my wife, and you consented. If the way I've treated you gives you the right to think I'm a scoundrel, well, I'm only sorry I haven't treated you better, lass. I only know that I'd rather die than you did."

"Oh, Sam, I forgive you everything," sobbed Jane.

"I think, Jane, you are exciting yourself without the slightest cause," said the doctor, who had not paid much attention to what she had been saying. He had been wondering how that fearful smash was going to be repaired, and estimating the damage. "I feel sure Sam is a model husband, and that he is very fond of you. It seems to me that the only thing to be done is for you both to come some other evening. And, William, you must put some tarpaulin over that broken skylight."

"Have I got to do it this time of night, sir?"

"Of course you have," growled Sam. "The rain would ruin everything. Here, come along with me. I'll do it, if you show me where the tarpaulin is."

"I'm much obliged to you Sam," exclaimed the doctor. "Come this way Jane, and have a glass of wine, and some cake. You must come up some other night."

CHAPTER 8.

How Pete and Rex Astounded Billy and the Doctor—Billy Feels Bad—An Aberration of Intellect—The Doctor Does Not See the Joke.

AS soon as the chums had finished supper, Pete went to bed. He wanted to keep out of the doctor's way for as long as he possibly could. Rex remained in the kitchen and got Mary to let him know what articles the goose had broken. There were a good many, one way and another, but Rex did not appear to mind that. He merely said that it was lucky no serious damage had been done. Billy refused to sleep in his bed-room, because he declared there would be a draught from the smashed skylight, so he chose one of the empty rooms at the top of the building.

It appeared to Pete that he had been asleep for about five minutes, although in reality it was over an hour, when he was awake by being roughly shaken, and he found Rex by his bedside.

"Wake up! We are going into the village."

"Don't you tink it would be nicer to go to-morrow morning?"

"Rats! It wouldn't be a bit of good, besides, they wouldn't let us."

"Do you tink de doctor is in a state ob mind to grant favours to-night, and dat he is likely to let us go?"

"He will let us go right enough if we don't ask him."

"But all de shops will be closed, Rex."

"I never saw such a fellow as you are for raising objections. I suppose the shops have knockers and bells. Hurry up, I've collared the key of the side gate."

"Suppose you walk on while I follow."

"See here, my beauty. If you are not out of that bed in ten seconds I'll romp the contents of the water-jug over you."

"Hi, steady! I'm out. Ain't it jolly cold, too, and just hark at de rain."
 "Bother the rain. Get dressed. I am going to surprise the doctor this time."

"Golly! Wid anoder goose!"

"Certainly not. Tut, tut, tut! Won't your ideas soar above geese?"

"I don't tink he could bear anoder goose to-night."

"He's not going to have one!" exclaimed Rex, as Pete hurried into his clothes.

"Are you going to try him wid a duck or some ob dose birds?"

"Rats!"

"Yah, yah, yah! I don't believe he will like dose, dough he might be surprised if you turned forty or fifty ob dem into his room."

"I'll show you what I am going to do. Come on now. We will take a short cut through the churchyard. We shall save half a mile or more that way."

"I hope dere won't be any ghosts, Rex. I'm mighty frightened ob ghosts."

"They are perfectly harmless. You never met a man who was injured by a ghost, did you?"

"I dunno dat I hab, at de same time, I dunno dat I eber met a man who was not frightened ob a full-sized ghost. It comes natural to people to be 'fraid ob ghosts, ob dem. Some ob dem pretend dat dey don't believe in dem, and ain't a bit frightened ob dem."

"Billy isn't! At least, he boasts of how he once laid a ghost."

"Dat man ain't seen a real live one. We might plant a real ghost in de churchyard, and see if dat appeals to his feelings. Now I'm ready, but I don't feel anything like-willing."

It was a most abominable night, but the chums reached Jobson's shop all right. The place was all in darkness, and it was pretty evident that Jobson was in bed; but this did not deter Rex.

Seizing the bell-handle he rang violently, while he directed Pete to bang at the knocker, and the row their combined efforts made quickly brought Jobson to his bed-room window.

"What do you mean by making that row this time of night?" roared the astonished and angry man.

"Oh, is that you, Jobson?" exclaimed Rex calmly. "I thought you would hear us."

"Hear you! How could I help doing it, when you make a row like that?"

"Well, we wanted you to hear us, so that is perfectly satisfactory. I have got a splendid paying job for you."

"Oh, is that you, Master Carew? Very well, I will come round to the college first thing to-morrow morning and take instructions."

"Rats! You will do no such thing. You will come down now, else we will smash your bell, and if that doesn't bring you down we will go to the other carpenter. It's an all-night job, and you are going to get paid accordingly. Are you game, or shall I go to the other chap?"

"I shall be down in five minutes, sir."

"Well, mind you are, because it is raining, and we don't want to get wetter than we are already."

"Don't tink I could get much wetter," growled Pete.

"You will be wetter before we have finished with this job," declared Rex. "I wish that fellow would make haste. He's slower than a tortoise."

After what seemed a long time to the comrades, Jobson made his appearance and asked the drenched lads into his sitting-room where he sat shivering, while he listened to Rex's brilliant scheme.

"You know the skylight you put in Billy's roof to give him more light?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Well, I've fallen through it."

"What, smashed it?"

"Tut, tut, tut! What a remarkably foolish question. How could I fall through that skylight without smashing it?"

"I don't know."

"Neither do I. Well, the worst of it is the doctor was in the place, and he was vexed a few."

"He would be. You want me to mend it. Very well, sir, it shall be attended to."

"When do you think you will be able to get it done?"

"Well, let me see now. If I remember right it was four by three. Well, I can promise you to finish it not later than this day week."

"Well, you have got to get it done by six o'clock to-morrow morning, all fitted in its place, and painted dark grey, and the paint has got to be dry. See? Hurry up now, and you may charge me what you like, but if it isn't done by six o'clock to-morrow morning, I shall not pay you a penny, and I won't take the thing. Time is the essence of this bargain."

"Now, you are talking ridiculous!" exclaimed Jobson.

"All right! If you can't do it, I know the carpenter who can. Good-night! You will excuse me for saying that you are the most disobliging brute I ever came across. Still, I suppose you can't help your nature."

"Stop a bit! Let me think this out. Four by three. It isn't possible to do it in one night, and get it glazed and fixed, let alone painted. Four by three, dark grey. I did the two together. It's risky—very risky; but if you would help me I might manage it. Both was dark grey, I know, and his house is shut up. If the bobby caught us we might get sent to prison. Would you mind that?"

"I could tip him."

"So you could, and I could vow the colonel had told me to take his skylight to paint yellow, or some of them colours. You see, it's this way. I made him a similar skylight for his washhouse, and I used the same paint to paint it with. The sizes was exact, I remember. Now, it would take us half an hour to walk to the colonel's, and say we could get to the college a little after midnight. Well, it wouldn't take me above half an hour to fix it. Then I could take the old frame away from the college, mend it, and let the colonel have that one."

"Yah, yah, yah! Tink de colonel will like de broken frame?" inquired Pete.

"Well, you see, I shall mend it, and make it just as good as new, and he won't never know the difference. The family ain't coming back for a week from now. I know that because I've got a little job for them that must be done by that time."

"You've got more sense than I imagined, Jobson," declared Rex. "Come on, we will help you, and if the bobby happens to come round that way we can all pitch into him, that is to say if he won't take the tip; but he will, he's taken many from me. If I tell him it's all right he won't see us."

"He can't see us unless he happens to come prowling round the house to see if it is all right, and he's not likely to do that on a night like this. No! I rather think it will come off all right. I needn't turn up the measurements, 'cos I know the two frames were exactly the same size."

"Suppose a burglar comes round and gets frough de open skylight into de colonel's house?" suggested Pete.

"He can't," answered Jobson, "because the washhouse is built away from the house, and there wouldn't be anything in it to steal. No, that's all right. There's risk, because if I was caught at the job, and if the colonel got to hear of it he would never give me another job. Then he would probably prosecute me for trespass."

Now, sir, the question is, what are you going to stand for this risk and the night-work ? ”

“ How much do you want ? ” inquired Rex.

“ Is the doctor's skylight much damaged ? ”

“ I should smile ! I went clean through it with a goose.”

“ Well, it will have to be re-glazed ; then there's the wood——”

“ Look here, Jobson ! ” interposed Rex, who was getting impatient. “ If you get it done to-night so that it doesn't show, I'll stand you ten pounds.”

“ Come along, sir ! I'm on to that, risk or no risk. A man must live.”

“ Of course he must—unless dat man happens to die,” said Pete, “ and eben den it makes a profit for you.”

Jobson locked up his shop, then they made their way to the colonel's house, and, with some little difficulty, Jobson got his skylight off. Probably the constable did not like the rain ; at any rate, they saw nothing of him.

Their work was equally successful at the college. Jobson had to work somewhat in the dark, but he managed it all right, then he took the old frame away, and with it a ten-pound note.

“ Dat's a mighty fine job,” declared Pete. “ You'mright, Rex, de doctor will be surprised to see all de damage mended.”

“ He's going to see more than that, old chap,” exclaimed Rex. “ I'm going to make a thorough job of it while I'm about it. You see, the doctor will argue this way. Here's a boy who tries to put a goose into the room of the porter, and he climbed through a window on to the roof. He must be punished for that ; the rest was an accident. Now, if he finds the rest put all right, it will make him feel more lenient.”

“ What about de broken china ? ”

“ I've got the list of the things. It's plain white china ; they keep a stock in the village to replace breakages. I shall have it sent up on Monday morning, and we shall have surprised Billy without any very serious consequences.”

“ Don't you tink it would come cheaper if you were to gib him five pounds de next time you want to surprise him ? ” inquired Pete. “ Tink what a mighty big surprise it would be for him if you were to go up to him and say, ‘ Tut, tut, tut ! My dear Billy, here are five pounds for you. ’ ” And Pete mimicked Rex's voice so exactly that it might have been that worthy speaking.

“ Well, I'll admit that would surprise him, especially coming from me ; but, you see, it would be a joyful surprise, and Billy does not deserve anything like that. Now, I am going to give Mary a surprise. This is her room. I hope she does not sleep heavily.”

After a little tapping, Mary answered, demanding to know who was there.

“ It is I, Mary—Rex Carew. I want you to get dressed as quickly as you can. I am going to give the doctor a big surprise.”

“ You go back to bed at once, or else I shall report you. How dare you go roaming about the college at this time of night ! ”

“ Tut, tut, tut ! It's early morning.”

“ Well, go back to bed till it's late morning.”

“ Look here, Mary, don't be so disgracefully lazy. You have had quite enough sleep for one night. Make haste and dress, else I will come into your room and douse a jugful of water over you.”

“ Look here, Sir Reginald, if you don't go back to bed immediately I shall write a letter to her ladyship and tell her how badly you are behaving.”

“ My mother knows that, Mary.”

“ Yah, yah, yah ! She's bound to know dat he couldn't do anything else, my

dear. Still, Mary, it is most important dat you get up. You wouldn't like to get two poor innocent lads into trouble and make deir poor young lives unhappy."

"Oh, go along with you! I expected you would be there. You are the worst behaved nigger I ever knew. What do you want me to do?"

"Clear up all that awful mess in Billy's room and make it look as though it had never happened," said Rex. "I know you are the best-natured girl in the college."

"I'm old enough to be your mother. Well, I will do it for you."

"I want it done before Billy gets up," said Rex. "In fact, I want it done at once."

"All right! I will be down in ten minutes."

"You are a brick, Mary, and I'll stand you three pounds for that work. Pete and I will help you."

"No, you won't, you beauties," laughed Mary. "I would much rather be without your help. Still, you can go down and wait for me."

Mary did her work splendidly. There was not the slightest trace of the accident by the time she had finished, and Rex had some little difficulty in getting her to take the handsome tip.

"You take it, my dear," said Pete; "dat boy will only squander it if you don't, and if you don't want to keep it all, gib some ob it to Billy as an inducement to kiss you under de mistletoe. Hi, golly! Where's all dis coming from? When you want to do any slapping like dat, my dear, just you use Rex's noddle."

"I detest the sight of Billy," declared Mary. "He is a greedy, fat, lazy creature! Now, if you two boys like to come downstairs I will get you some breakfast. I'm sure you must need it, for you have been up all night."

"We mustn't miss Billy's surprise," exclaimed Pete, when they had finished their breakfast. "I rader tink dat man will be worf looking at when he sees de room. Looked last night as dough it would take 'bout a week to get it straight again. Should say you will succeed in surprising de doctor, too, dis journey, Rex. Come 'long! We must not miss Billy."

They decided on hiding in the opposite room, from which they could see into the lodge, and here they were kept waiting a considerable time, for Billy was down rather late.

At last, however, he came. He entered the room muttering, then suddenly he stopped and rubbed his eyes. Next, he gazed up at the skylight; then he gave an audible gasp, flung himself into his easy-chair, and groaned.

"Ain't this 'ere awful!" he groaned, speaking aloud in his perturbation. "It's downright awful! I believe those boys has driven me off my reason. It ain't natural; I'm dreaming, that's what it is. I'm asleep, and yet I ain't. No, I'm sure I'm awake. Yet I can't possibly be. There's the skylight unbroke, jest as it was, paint and all. There's the glass unbroke, and there ain't a sign of the damage. It ain't natural; yet there's no doubt as I'm awake. I wonder if I dreamt about the accident?"

"Suppose we come and convince him dat he dreamt about the accident," whispered Pete.

"You go. I'll come in later, and that will make it more natural."

Pete stepped across the passage and entered Billy's lodge.

"Good-morning, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete. "Nice sort ob morning after de rain."

"See here, you little black beast. What about the accident?"

"Golly! Has dere been an accident, Billy? I hope dat Rex and de doctor ain't hurt. What sort ob accident was it?"

"What about that smashed skylight? Mind, you can't fool me, and if you don't tell me all about it I'll brain you!"

"Golly! De man must be going off his noddle!" murmured Pete in a low voice, though he took good care that Billy could hear the words. "Must-humour him till I get out ob de room. Dat's all right, Billy. Don't you worry 'bout any accidents. Tink ob something else, Billy."

"What do you mean by that 'ere insinuation, boy? Do you dare to assert as I'm drunk?"

"Nunno, Billy. It ain't at all likely dat you would be drunk dis time ob de morning. You might, ob course, get drunk later on if you got de chance, but you couldn't be drunk so early in de morning."

"Explain this 'ere mystery, or I'll be the death of you!"

"Golly! Ain't dis mighty shocking? Poor, barmy Billy!"

"How has that 'ere skylight got unbroke?"

"'Spect 'cos it ain't de cricket season. But don't you worry yourself 'bout dat skylight. If I was you I should go to bed and let someone send for a strait-jacket and a muzzle."

"You know as well as me that skylight was broke to hatoms last night. You know that a goose came into——"

"Must humour him! Ob course, Billy. Fine goose, wasn't it? You often see geese knocking 'bout dis time ob de year."

"You know as well as me that Rex Carew fell through that 'ere skylight with a goose."

"Ob course, Billy. 'Spect dey went for a fly together, and gradually descended frough de skylight. Sort ob fairy goose, you know."

"How is it that 'ere skylight ain't smashed this morning, when it was smashed last night?"

"'Spect fairy geese would pass frough skylights widout breaking dem. Or, if you say de skylight was smashed, perhaps it has got well again; and dat's what I wish you would do, 'cos you ain't safe like you are. I know a broken arm mends itself, so I don't see why a broken skylight shouldn't."

"Ring for Mary!" ordered Billy, keeping his eyes fixed on the skylight.

Pete did so, and he saw Rex sneak from his place of concealment, evidently with the intention of instructing her.

In a few minutes Mary entered the lodge.

"I'll trouble you to come down when you want anything this time of the morning, William," exclaimed Mary, pretending to look very angry. "I have my work——"

"Mary, ma'am, I wanted to speak to you about the damage and the supper what my sister——"

"What is the man talking about?"

"I tink he's gone dotty, my dear," said Pete. "He keeps talking about broken skylights and geese. Says de goose broke de skylight and flew about wid Rex, and tings like dat. De man must be barmy on de crumpet."

"Ain't you well, William?" inquired Mary.

"You must know as the skylight was broke."

"Where?" inquired Mary, looking intently at it.

"Where! Why, it was broke to hatoms. Carew and the goose fell through it, and the goose fluttered all round the room and upset my sister shocking."

"You have had the nightmare, William, that's what is the matter with you. I believe you are half asleep now. You had better set about your work and *not* go talking that nonsense. I have neither time nor patience to listen to you."

Then Mary went, leaving Billy in a state of utter bewilderment. "Oh, here you are, Pete!" exclaimed Rex, entering the lodge. "Why, what's the matter, Billy?"

"Nothink, you varmint!"

"You look jolly queer, too, with that glare in your eyes."

"Shoo!" exclaimed Pete, tapping his own head and shaking it gravely.

"Tut, tut, tut! You don't mean to say he's gone dotty?"

"De man has lost his senses."

"Tut, tut, tut! That's impossible. He never had any to lose."

"He's got fermented. I tink he's got corywoblum ob de ceredicular."

"Tut, tut, tut! What form of madness does it take?"

"Geese. He's got geese on the brain."

"You should get geese on the 'stumick,' Billy. That's the proper place for geese."

"But he's talking ob live geese."

"It's better to kill and roast them before you eat them, Billy. I would not advise you to eat live geese. You might find them rather indigestible:

"Little Mary had a goose,
Quack, quack, quack it sings;
Little Mary had some qualms,
When it clapped its wings.

"I'll never eat live goose again,
Bellowed poor old Billy;
For it giv me horful pain,
And it's drove me silly."

"Yah, yah, yah! I rader like your poetry, Rex, cos it is to do point, and dat's a great ting in poetry. It's sort ob trooful, and you don't generally find dat wid poets. I tink, Billy, if you keep quite quiet you will get ober de wild goose imagination. Yah, yah, yah! Fancy de poor old hoss tinkin you and a goose flew frough his skylight, Rex!"

"Sad case. Let's get out of it."

They did, and watched Billy from their hiding place. He sat in his chair with his eyes fixed on that skylight, and appeared to be trying to fathom the mystery. He kept shaking his head and groaning, and when the doctor's bell rang, he took no notice of it.

It rang several times, and then continued ringing, but still Billy sat there, and it was not until he heard the doctor's step in the passage that he rushed from his room to meet him. As ill luck would have it, they stopped immediately outside the door behind which the chums were concealed, and those worthies held their breaths.

"Why did you not answer my bell, William?" demanded the doctor.

"If you please, sir," groaned Billy. "I ain't well!"

"I am very sorry to hear that, William; what is the matter with you?"

"I've got suthing wrong with my 'ead, sir. The pain is suthin' shocking."

"Neuralgia, I expect."

"Would that sort of turn my brain, and make me imagine things, sir?"

"Well, I suppose it might."

"Then I've got it, sir. I imagined that there was a accident last night. That a skylight was broke."

"So it was."

"Bust! You must have got it, too. We need a medical man, sir!"

"What ever are you talking about?"

"I believe as we are both off our nuts, sir! There wasn't a haccident at all The skylight was never broke!"

"Do you really feel ill, William?"

"Suthing crool, sir. I ain't accountable for my haactions. I ain't safe to be left alone!"

"Well, come this way, William. No doubt you will feel better shortly if you lie down for a little. Don't excite yourself. Don't talk at all. Come this way. If you lie down for——"

The chums heard no more, but they did not feel exactly easy in their minds.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "I hope Billy gets rid of his crool pain quicky. Still, I will take the blame, and the doctor will only punish me for the first part of the business. As a rule he doesn't consider the consequences so much as the action that caused them. For instance, if you flung a cricket ball at his head by accident, he wouldn't mind."

"Dat man must be mighty good tempered, den."

"Well, he would mind in a sense; but he would mind much more if you aimed it at him, and pretended you did not. However, suppose we make ourselves scarce. We can keep out of the way in the hayloft."

Pete was quite agreeable to this, and they spent nearly an hour there; then they went to find out from Mary how matters were progressing.

"I don't know what the master is doing," she said. "He has not left Billy's room, but he sent Clegg out."

"Tut, tut, tut! I hope he has not sent for Jenkins. Still he couldn't have done that, unless he had ordered Billy not to speak. Tut, tut, tut! There goes the bell. I have a presentiment it is Jenkins. Come on, Pete. We will interview him."

They did not get the chance, for Clegg came back with the medical man, and took him to Billy's room. About ten anxious minutes elapsed, then the doctor descended the stairs, and met the culprits face to face.

"You two boys come this way with me," said Dr. Kenward, very sternly, as he led the way to the lodge.

"Best let me deal wid dis matter, Rex," whispered Pete. "He ain't likely to lick me!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Right, but I take the blame. It was my little scheme, you know."

The doctor entered the lodge, then he started back in surprise.

"What is the meaning of this, boys?" he demanded.

"Tought dat skylight had better be mended, sah," answered Pete.

"But—it could not have been mended in one night, and—I don't understand it at all!"

"Dat was where Billy was floored, sah, and it made him tink he was fermented!"

"I suppose you mean demented. Do you mean to say that you have allowed William and me to think that he had lost his reason—that you have allowed me to send for a medical man, while——"

"Please, sah, we did not tink you were going to send for a doctor. I tought as you were a doctor you would be able to put de man to rights, specially as dere wasn't anyting de matter wid him."

"What have you to say, Carew?"

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Yah, yah—ahum—dere ain't much explanation in dat little lot," observed

"It is impossible that a new skylight could have been made in one night!" exclaimed the doctor. "Besides, the paint is the same, and it is not freshly painted. Explain the matter to me, Carew."

"Tut, tut, tut! It would be implicating a perfectly innocent person, sir. I hope you will not compel me to do this. I had the repairs done against time!"

"I don't understand. The skylight is the same, and yet the frame was smashed to atoms!"

"You will find it is all right, sir. My fault. I broke the beastly thing, so had the damage made good. Friend helped me. Quick work. Don't want to get him into trouble about the matter. I don't so much care about myself. My fault!"

"What do you mean, boy? I suppose Pete was as much to blame as——"

"Don't think it, sir. I beg of you not to imagine such a thing for one moment. If you sacked Pete, I would implore my dear mother to take him on, and she would do it, because she always does what I ask; but this idea was mine, and I am answerable. You can whack away, or, what is worse, you can gate me. I would not dare to contemplate that you would expel me!"

"I should expel you if you ever disgraced this college, Rex Carew; but I have a feeling that I shall never do so!"

"Thanks, sir. I think I know what you mean, and I will try to steer clear of anything like that. All the same, this fault is mine. I was the originator of it."

"Are you proud of that?"

"Well, no, sir. I don't see how I could be."

"Are you proud of leading this lad Pete into disgrace, and annoying me?"

"Indeed, sir, I only contemplated a lark."

"Do you imagine that because of your title and vast wealth, that you can act as you please in this college?"

"Tut, tut, tut! I would rather you had flogged me, sir, than asked me such a question!"

"Well, consider the question was never asked, Rex. I withdraw it. I only wanted to show you the harm that you have the power of doing, and, my lad, if you are not a little more cautious, you will surely do it. I do not understand how you have remedied the damage you caused. But I insist on knowing this: How much did it cost you?"

"Thirteen pounds, sir!"

"It is lamentable. My lad, you must learn the value of money. Do you think I want to see you start in life looking at thirteen pounds no more than a lad in worse circumstances looks at twopence. Don't you understand, Carew, that I want to see you start in life as an honourable and good man. I know, my lad, that thirteen pounds are as nothing to you or to your mother, but I also know, Rex, that you have no right to squander such a sum in one night. Besides, the amount you have paid is utterly ridiculous. The damage should have cost nothing like that, and the fact that you have, by some mysterious means, repaired that damage in one night, will make no difference to the punishment that you will receive!"

"Tut, tut, tut! I did not want that, sir. I will face the music, and perhaps make some. All the same, sir, Pete is not to blame. Give it as hot as you like to me, but let him off!"

"Boy, don't you comprehend the ridiculous position you have placed me in?" grumbled the doctor.

"Consequential circumstances, sir; you don't punish for those!"

"Do you imagine that if a boy had a pistol, knowing it was against the rules, and fired it off for fun, and shot a boy, that he would not be answerable for manslaughter, according to the law?"

"I suppose he would, sir."

"Now, suppose you had fallen on William's head and bro—"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Beg pardon, sah, but I was only tinkin how funny Billy would hab looked under dose circumstances!"

"Suppose his neck had been broken!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Should say he would hab needed a medicated man in dat case, sah, Billy would hab wanted his neck put in splinters. But den you hab got to consider dat Rex ran a lot bigger risk, and after all, dere ain't much harm in putting a little goose—least, a big sized goose, into a man's room. No one can help slipping. You see, sah, you ought to be bery thankful to Rex!"

"I really fail to see what I have to be thankful for in these circumstances."

"Why, sah, dat boy might hab killed himself, den tink how sorry his moder would hab been, so would you, de mistress and Miss Bella, and what about dis child? I dunno what I should do widout Rex to gib a bit ob fun, now and den. It's mighty hard lines on a poor boy who happens to slip, when he is going for a harmless bit ob fun, and I tink, sah, de justice ob de case will be met if you gib me de flogging, and gib Rex a day's holiday!"

This cool request did not appear to appeal to the doctor.

"You overlook the fact that the accident was caused through bad behaviour in getting on the roof at all," said Dr. Kenward. "You are in my service, Pete, and I have no right of power to punish you. With Master Carew it is different. I am responsible for him, and the responsibility is very considerable, for I never know what trick he will get up to next. In this case, Carew, I shall decide later on how to deal with the matter, but if you bring me up a hundred lines of well composed Latin, which must be original, and either in blank verse or poetry, I may feel inclined to deal no further punishment. It must be written to my satisfaction. I believe that punishment will be less to you than if I were compelled to gate you for a week or so, and as it will do you far more good, so I decide."

"Thank you, sir," exclaimed Rex. "I will do it in poetry, if you don't mind. Would comic verse do, sir?"

"Yes."

"Something like this, sir: 'Balbus, who was very fat, was building a wall'?"

"Nonsense! That is not rhyme, boy."

"It is, sir, if I shove it into Latin. Thus:

'Balbus, who was very fat,
Murum aedificabat;
For it was his wish to own a
Wall in propria persona.'

Which, with your permission and with due deference to your superior knowledge I would translate:

'Balbus, who was very stout,
Built a wall right out and out,
For he wished a wall to own
Vested in his own person.'

"Golly!" gasped Pete. "De boy can make up poetry in Latin almost as well as he can in English."

"Leave the room," ordered the doctor. "You know perfectly well what I require, Carew, and just you take care that I get what I want, or you are likely to get more than you want."

When the doctor was alone a smile came over his face, and he later on reported that masterpiece to Mr. Grant.

"What can I do with a boy like that, Grant?"

"I really don't know. You ought to flog him, I suppose, but his cool impudence is only equalled by his honesty."

"Can you do anything with Pete?"

"He can learn if he likes. He has the aptitude, but he has not the inclination. Still, he has been well grounded in honesty, and after all that is the principal thing. I believe he is a thoroughly good-hearted lad."

Rex had not much difficulty in doing his task, and, what was more to the point, he did it to the doctor's satisfaction. Pete upset him a little because he would keep coming in to ask him if he had finished.

"Oh, go away," roared Rex, at last. "This Latin is enough to drive a fellow mad. I could do it all day long if he would only allow me to work every alternate line in English; but when I make the beastly Latin rhyme it does not reason, and when it reasons it does not rhyme."

"Yah, yah, yah! Well, you stick to de task, else you will get gated, and you rader lazy. Did I eber tell you 'bout——"

"Oh, go away, else I'll chuck the ink-bottle at your head."

"It's mighty nice outside in de open air. Should take a little air, and finish off dat Latin to-morrow."

"Rats! I can't. To-morrow is the last day, and I've got twenty more lines to do—er—m'yes. Anno ubis conditæ——"

"Golly! I'm off if you are going to use that language at me," cried Pete, and off he was, much to Rex's relief. However, the poem was finished to time, and the doctor declared it was excellent. As a matter of fact, Rex did not care for its excellence. All he cared for was whether it would give the necessary satisfaction.

It did, so he and Pete went for a stroll the following Wednesday, and as luck would have it, they were overtaken by the doctor as they were passing through the churchyard concocting a little scheme which would make Clogg look stupid.

Now, this would not have mattered at all, for the doctor was excellent company. He always spoke about sports when off duty, or about matters that interested his lads, and this was no exception to his rule. But they were just crossing the next field when who should come upon the scene but that very colonel whose skylight they had borrowed.

"I am glad to see you back, Colonel Warton," exclaimed the doctor, shaking hands. "Stop a moment, boys, I'm going your way. Perhaps that is unkind, too, colonel, because your holiday is ended. Did you have a pleasant time?"

"Excellent, thanks, and returned in the best of health. All well at home, I hope?"

"Thank you, yes. Come up and spend the evening with us. We will have a chat and a cigar, then a game of chess. You found all safe when you got back, I suppose?"

"Why, yes," answered the colonel. "But the most extraordinary thing has happened. I had a skylight put in my washhouse; it is an out-building. Well, during my absence, someone came in and repainted all the framework. Inside and out, mind you. I have made inquiries about the matter, but have learnt absolutely nothing. There is not the slightest doubt about it. The whole thing has been repainted. Jobson made it for me, and it occurred to me that he might have imagined it wanted repainting, though such was not really the case. Well, I thought perhaps he had done the work on his own account, improbable though that would be, and so I went to him; but he knows absolutely nothing about the matter. Still, I am on the right side. Look here, suppose I come up to be beaten at chess to-morrow."

"Delighted to see you, only I won't promise about the beating, though I will do my very utmost."

"Well, you ought to be well accustomed to beating. If you were to start beating that innocent beauty, Rex Carew, it would do him all the good in the world. Good-bye, doctor. Good-bye, you beauties. I'll bet the young monkeys are hatching some plot now."

Then the colonel marched on, and Dr. Kenward was very silent for some time. He realised now how that skylight had been replaced. He also realised what a frightful liar Jobson must be. Still, it was one of those cases where Dr. Kenward decided that it would be better to say no more, though when he left the lads even the calm Rex looked a little perturbed.

"Tut, tut, tut! Funny thing that should have come out," exclaimed Rex.

"Yah, yah, yah! I don't tink colonels ought to be allowed to talk. Dose men ought to be muzzled, Rex. Dey ain't safe, blabbing all ober de place in dat stupid manner. Still, dere's no harm done, and it's just possible de doctor did not put two and two together."

"Rats!" answered Rex, which was to the point, although it might be considered vulgar.

"Do you tink we shall hear more about de matter?"

"Tut, tut, tut! Well, hardly. You see, I whacked off that task, and it seemed to satisfy him; well, that was for the little slip, and he could hardly rake it up again. The only thing I fear is that he will tell the colonel what has happened. Still, he's a jolly old chap, and would only laugh. He knows my mother, and wouldn't do anything to get me into trouble. No, I think we are all right, and I believe Jobson is also. You see, the doctor doesn't know for certain that we shifted his skylight."

"Nunno, but if de old hoss starts putting two and two togeder, he ain't unlikely to come to de conclusion dat we should be able to gib him a little information on de point. Howeber, dat's a ting ob de future, and what we hab got to do is to manufacture a good-sized ghost for Clegg's benefit. He ain't got de right to stay out late at night, and tip Billy to say nuffin' about it. We must break him ob dose bad habits. What we want to do is to make a good-sized ghost, only it's got to be an out ob de common one. We don't want a ghost dat you can see any night ob de week. We want a downright horrid one dat will do me credit when I supply de screams. Should say a boy who can make up Latin poetry ought to be able to tink ob a respectable-looking ghost."

"Tut, tut, tut! We will think it over. Come on."

CHAPTER 9.

The Ghost—Its First appearance—Only a Ghost at the Window—Clegg Gets a Second Fright—Mr. Grant Becomes Sarcastic—The Ghost Plays a Prominent Part—So Does Pete.

YAH, yah, yah! Golly! I hab a sort ob a bit ob an idea. Yah, yah! I dunno weder it could be worked, eider," exclaimed Pete, when the ghost manufacturers had walked about a quarter of a mile in comparative silence. "I'm 'most afraid it would be rader a costly ghost."

"I don't mind that a bit," said Rex. "My mother would not object to paying handsomely for a downright horrid ghost."

"We could use dis ghost on Billy as well, or we could eben use him on de doctor.

"You see, I can make his yowls come from his mouf. Frinistance! Listen to dis little yowl coming from de branches ob dat tree above our heads, den it's going to die away in de distance."

The most unearthly shrieks appeared to come from that tree. Pete's ventriloquism was startling and realistic, and he never moved his lips.

Rex gazed at him in wonder, as the sound seemed to pass through the air until it died away in the distance in a mournful and exceedingly ghostlike wail; that is to say, what we imagine the wail of a ghost ought to be like.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Rex. "Clegg is a superstitious idiot, and if we can only get a ghost to fit that wail, I don't care what I pay for it."

"I want a tall ghost. What we ought to get is a horrid head, stick it on de end ob a long pole, wrap a sheet round it, and dere you are. De ting is to get de horrid head. I suppose Billy would not like us to cut his head off; but suppose we got a bull's head, wid mighty great horns."

"Why, you are a genius, Pete. The very thing, and I will rub phosphorus all over it that will make it glow in the dark, and look downright horrid."

"You see, if it takes de proper effect on Clegg, we can follow him up—yah, yah, yah!—and make de ghost look in at his bed-room window. Den it can utter de most awful yowls at him, and if dat doesn't startle him we shall hab to frow cold water ober him. Do you tink you could buy a bullock's head from de butcher?"

"Without a doubt—if he's got one. I wouldn't like to have a poor brute slaughtered for the purpose, but if the bullock is already dead, why it couldn't do it any harm to use its noddle. We will come and interview Jones the man of meat. He's a decent chap, and knows me."

Jones was a jovial-looking man, and he grinned when he knew exactly what Rex wanted.

"Why, come this way," exclaimed Jones, leading them into the little room at the back of his shop. "What's the matter with that one on the wall? I had it dressed years ago, because it had such wonderful horns, and because it was quite white."

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Rex. "He's got glass eyes too. If we were to shove a light in the head, those eyes would glare beautifully. Will you sell him?"

"Well, it's no particular good to me, and the missus don't like it in the shop parlour. She says it's unpleasant when she has any friends, though I don't see the sense of a man being ashamed of his trade. Look here, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have it for half-a-sovereign, and give her the money."

"Tut, tut, tut! That's not enough. We want a long pole to fasten the noddle on, and all wrapped round with a sheet, or a couple of sheets. Tell your wife to fix it up, and I'll stand five pounds."

Mrs. Jones was consulted, and she at once entered into the scheme. She said she had a clothes prop, which would be just the thing. Then she said she had a sheet which, though old, would do excellently for the ghost's robes. Jones said he would fasten the head firmly to the pole, and would have it all ready by the time they came back with their light and phosphorus. Thus everything was arranged.

Jones let them out the back way, and crossing the garden, and the field at the back, they made their way to the churchyard.

"Now, de only question is, will he come dis way?" exclaimed Pete.

"It is almost certain," exclaimed Rex. "He always does; but it is equally certain that he will not come till pretty late, and the chances are I shall get caught by Billy. We can get in through the doctor's ground, but there is the risk of my being missed."

"You can easy do some more Latin poetry."

"Tut, tut, tut! I don't care for it. The strain on my noddle is frightful. No, I would rather not get caught."

"In dat case all we'm got to do is to hope for de best. Now light de bicycle lamp and shove it in de old cow's noddle, den I will rear it up, and we will see what sort ob effect it has."

The night was very dark, and the effect of that extraordinary-looking ghost was truly immense, even without the wails which Pete was going to supply later on.

"It looks downright horrid," declared Rex, coming back. "I believe it has frightened me."

"Yah, yah, yah! You tink it will startle Clegg?"

"It would startle the doctor."

"You don't tink Clegg will make a rush at us when we move de ghost about beneath de sheet?"

"I should smile!" exclaimed Rex. "I'll guarantee when he sees our ghost he will do all his rushing in another direction. Go and have a look at the ghost for yourself, then tell me whether you consider a lad who is of a timid nature is likely to rush at it."

Pete thought not. He said it was the most perfect ghost that he had ever seen. "De glowing eyes, and de greenish gleam ob de hair as it waves in de wind make dat ghost as near perfect as you can get it. I'm quite satisfied wid dat ghost, and if he gets looking in at de bed-room windows, I'm inclined to tink he will cause a sensation. Yah, yah, yah! After we hab tried him on Billy we might see what effect he has on Mary. She would be bound to be surprised if she was woke up by blood-curdling yells and saw dat face at her window. Shoo! I tink someone is coming now."

Pete was correct. Clegg had taken Swipes, a fellow who had only lately joined the school, and was credited with being very wealthy, into the village, and then they had called on Jobson, who happened to have a friend there. He was a downright good-hearted fellow, and he gave some very valuable tips on a certain race. Clegg and Swipes asked Jobson if he would put some money on for them, and Jobson said that betting was not a good practice as a rule, but as the horse was certain to win he saw no harm, and that he would not only put their money on but would put a little on for himself. The horse being a rank outsider they would get twenty to one. Swipes ventured a five-pound note, and Clegg, who did not happen to have five pounds, staked a sovereign. Sloth was the name of the horse. It was a strange name for a racehorse, but both Jobson and his friend said they knew it would win, so that was all right. They then had a friendly hand at whist, and Swipes lost four pounds seven, while Clegg lost fifteen shillings in money, and he gave an I O U for the balance. Then the pair started for the college, and reached the churchyard in the best of spirits, because Swipes thought he was going to win a hundred pounds, while Clegg felt confident he would win twenty.

"I like long odds," observed Clegg. "It gives a chap a chance. I win a lot wid it." This was an abominable falsehood, but he wanted to impress his new friend with his cleverness. "It's a disgusting nuisance, but my father sent me a cheque for fifty pounds yesterday, and the silly duffer forgot to sign it. I have had to send it back to him, and the delay is annoying, because I am run aground. However, it was my fault for not having written sooner. I had a lot of gold in my study, but I believe that little nigger has collared it. It went in de most mysterious manner. It's not often that I let myself run aground like dat."

"I never bother myself about money," declared Swipes. "I've got more than I want. If I wanted three or four thousand pounds to-morrow morning my father would send it to me. I've got nearly fifty pounds in my pocket now."

"Well, that's lucky, old chap!" exclaimed Clegg. "Just lend me a fiver all de day after to-morrow."

"Eh?"

"Lend me a fiver!"

"Why, don't you know, of course I could, but what——"

"Bother it! Do you mean to say you are afraid of my honour?"

"It's not a question of your honour, you know, but it is a question whether you would be able to pay me back. I know what fathers are."

"I thought you said yours died when you were an infant?"

"That's true enough; but I have a general knowledge of other fellows' fathers. You see, Clegg, seeing that we are chums, I don't mind how much money I spend on myself, but I don't care to lend another fellow five pounds. I'd do it if I had ample security, and good interest, but I wouldn't do it without either."

"I will pay you back seven pounds within a fortnight."

"That would do so far as interest went, but you would have to give me security. For instance, if you got the doctor to guarantee it, that would be all right. Or if you gave me a gold watch and chain as security. You see, my father was in the business, between ourselves, and I'm going into the same line myself. It's a jolly easy way to pile up a fortune. I've been studying the question. Now my mother is worth four or five thousand a year, and a lot of that comes to me. Well, I shall turn the capital into forty or fifty thousand a year, but I'll take thundering good care that I never lend a penny without guarantees or ample security. If you like to deposit your gold watch with me, I'll lend you a sovereign, or even a couple, and you can pay me back in a fortnight."

Clegg gasped. He had not expected anything like this, but he had an idea that Swipes might become useful later on, so he did not say anything to cause a quarrel.

"Oh, if you are afraid to trust my honour no more need be said!" exclaimed Clegg, entering the churchyard and gazing around in a manner that showed he was not quite at his ease. Swipes followed him closely, casting many a glance at the old tombstones.

They had got halfway across when a wild wail arose, then amongst the bushes they saw that awful-looking ghost, with its hideous head.

It moved towards them with terrible cries, and without asking each other's advice, both took to their heels and fled from the place, yelling at the tops of their voices. Nor did they slacken speed until they reached the college.

"Whatever is the matter?" exclaimed Billy, as the pair rushed into his lodge. Their faces were deathly white, and they were so breathless that they could hardly speak.

"We have seen the most awful form!" panted Clegg.

"A fuf-form? Where?" asked Billy, gazing out of the window.

"In the churchyard. It was horrible. It was not of this earth."

"It must have been a shadow. I know they say the old place is haunted, but it ain't true, 'cos I've never seen nothing."

"Neither have I before," groaned Clegg. "But this was too awful; and it does not follow that because you have not seen it we have not. I saw it quite distinctly."

"So did I," groaned Swipes.

"Wha—what was it like?"

"Awful! It must have been twenty feet high, and oh, it was awful! Its eyes flamed, so did it. It was all aglow, and it uttered the most hideous cries, they were not human. It had huge horns; I sus—saw them, all on fire! Ah, I can see its awful eyes now."

"Where?" groaned Billy, gazing around and giving a violent start as a gust of wind moaned round the lodge.

"I mean they are in my brain. I never saw anything so terrible in all my days!"

"It was awful!" declared Swipes, who was quite as frightened as the cowardly bully.

"It must have been your imagination," declared Billy. "The question is, ought we to tell the doctor?"

"You must be mad. He would know that we had come in late!" exclaimed Clegg.

"Well, I'd a sight rather he knew that than that anythink like you described was to come this way. Not that I'm afraid of ghosts. I know there is such things, 'cos one of them come to my father the night before he died, and there's several other people as have been visited by them jest before their deaths. It's a certain sign of death. Several of my relatives has been visited, but they never lived. I tell you straight you ain't got many hours afore you."

"Bosh! I don't believe in that nonsense! All the same, this was the most awful thing I have ever seen."

"Well," exclaimed Billy, "seeing as you are really frightened of it, p'raps you had better come round with me as I lock up, and if we see anythink like it, I shall be able to tell you whether it's a real ghost or not."

"I'm not going out again," declared Clegg.

"Neither am I," said Swipes.

"Well, jest come and hold the light while I lock the gates."

"Not I! If you had seen that awful form you wouldn't jolly well go out."

"Bust it! The gates must be locked!"

"Well, go and lock them!" exclaimed Clegg. "Hanged if I will!"

Clegg went to his room and firmly locked the door; then he placed a chest of drawers against it to make doubly sure. He slept in a small room by himself, and felt far from comfortable at being alone that night.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, when the pair of frightened bullies disappeared in the darkness. "I rader tink we hab given him a mighty big scare dat time. Now p'raps we had better try de effect ob de ghost on Billy. It's a pity not to use a ghost like dat. Just you carry his head part while I carry his body, Rex."

"Tut, tut, tut! I fancy I shall be able to carry the body better than you. Don't you see it is rather awkward? Long, you know."

"Dat may be," growled Pete. "But I'm tinkin' de head is mighty heavy. I would much rader hab de awkward part ob de ghost to carry dan his heavy part. However, if some people are so mighty lazy, why, I suppose oder people dat are sort ob industrious must do de heaviest part ob de work."

"Ha, ha, ha! You are getting on famously, Pete, and I don't believe for a moment that you will ever injure yourself with hard work."

"Nunno, Rex, I shall neber try to do a stupid ting like dat. Now dis way to London, old hoss. I'm ashamed ob a ghost habing such a heavy noddle, 'cos you ain't got any brains."

They got on all right until they reached the college, and then as Rex was passing the doctor's scullery, he shoved the ghost's body through the window.

"Yah, yah, yah! What are you trying to do, Rex?" inquired Pete. "I don't believe de doctor will care to hab his windows broken in dat reckless manner."

"I didn't know the beastly window was there. However, there's not much harm done. Glass is quite cheap, and it can't be expected to last for ever."

"Should say it would not last much longer dan five minutes when you are knocking about. I neber saw such a careless chap in all my life. Why ain't you—— Golly, I hab put his horn frough anoder window now! Funny ting dey will frow windows all about de place. I tink de builders must do it to save brickwork."

"Look out, someone has heard us!"

"Den rig up de ghost sharp! Get amongst de bushes!"

They were only just in time, for Mary opened the scullery door, and they heard her talking to Billy, while they guessed from his reply that Clegg had told him all about the ghost.

"I tell you there ain't nothink there, Mary!" he growled. "What's the good of being so obstinate?"

"You great stupid creature!" cried Mary. "How can no one break two windows? Come here at once and see who it is. I believe it's burglars."

"Burglars don't go about smashing windows to let you know they are coming!" growled Billy, with some reason.

"Are you coming to see who it is or are you not?"

"It's no good my wasting my time. I tell you there ain't no one there, and if you are so certain there is, the best thing as you can do is to go out and find them!"

"I do believe the man is frightened!"

"What, me! Haw, haw, haw! That's a good one. Our family has all been soldiers from the time of the memorial. One of my ancestors was a general in the Henglish Army, and fought in the Battle of the Nile. I ain't frightened of any living or dead thing. I've gone through life up to this 'ere moment without never knowing what fear is. If I was the King of Hengland, and the Parliament was to say to me: 'Billy, lay your 'ead on that 'ere block, you've got to be beheaded,' I'd do it without the slightest signs of fear. Now, shut that door, Mary, and don't you talk so stupid 'bout being afraid!"

"Well, who would have thought that Billy was a coward?" exclaimed Mary. "He doesn't mind me standing at this door when burglars may be roaming about, and yet he's afraid to come and stand by my side!"

Now, to do Billy justice, it must be stated that if burglars had been there, he would certainly have faced them. He would not have liked the job, of course, but would have done his duty so far. To face a horrid ghost was quite another matter, and he would rather have walked a couple of miles than do it. But now his prestige was at stake, for the other servants were laughing at him. He stepped to Mary's side, and she gave him a violent shove that sent him sprawling out; then she slammed the door, and locked and bolted it.

"Mary!" panted William. "Mary! There's no one here. Indeed, there ain't!"

"You haven't searched properly yet."

"Now, see here, Mary! These 'ere practical jokes don't become you, and if I was to tell the master he would be most indignat at having my time wasted like this. Let me in, there's a good girl. Pretty girls shouldn't play practical jokes, specially to those who admire 'em so much. I can't get vexed with a beautiful woman as is a perfect lady——"

"It won't do, Billy!" laughed Mary. "You have got to hunt for those burglars. I don't forget that you called me a bad-tempered cat the other day."

"I was only speaking metaforik. I never came across a prettier and sweeter tempered young lady in all my life, and—— Open the door, Mary!"

"When you have gone as far as those bushes to search. I believe you are frightened; and you sha'n't come in till you have gone as far as the bushes."

"Me afraid!" cried Billy, striding up to the bushes in the boldest manner he could command. "I ain't afraid of man nor ghost! I'd strike it life—— Wooohoo! Howow! Murder! Fire! Warahah! Save me! save me! Wowhow!"

The fact is that Billy had caught sight of that ghost with the big horns and flaming eyes, and it was too much for his bravery. His howls of terror were so

genuine and so loud, that Mary, fearing that the doctor would hear them, let him in, taking care to lock the door.

"Take it away!" hooted Billy, rushing into the kitchen and slamming the inner door on Mary, who immediately commenced to scream; for she was frightened of burglars as well as ghosts, and it seemed to her that Billy must have seen half a dozen of both, judging by the row he was making.

"Do stop your hooting!" cried Mary, entering the kitchen with rather a white face. "You are enough to startle anyone, you great coward!"

"Oh, I've seen the horfulest sight as any man set eyes on. There's a frightful ghost outside, and I have heard tell as they can come through walls. Woooohoo, what was that?"

"Do stop your noise, you great silly creature!" exclaimed Mary. "The master will hear you directly. Tell us what it was like."

"Golly! Ain't dis ghost doing his duty to perfection!" exclaimed Pete. "I tink we had better get him away in case de doctor comes. Suppose we take him to Clegg and let him hab anoder look at it. I tink we hab occasion to be proud ob dis ghost, but it won't do to take him to bed wid us. Where do you tink he can sleep?"

"We can fix him up in the clock tower. He will be a little surprise to Billy when he goes to wind the clock. But first of all, let's give Clegg another sight of him. I hope we don't meet the doctor."

They did not, and as there was not the slightest possibility of their meeting Billy outside the walls of the building, all went well from their point of view, though it went extremely badly from Clegg's point of view.

He was in bed, and making a desperate effort to get to sleep, when a shriek that appeared to come from his window caused him to start violently; then he saw that monster's face looking in at him with its gleaming eyes.

That was rather too much for Clegg. He commenced to yell at the top of his voice, and wrenched at the chest of drawers with a violence that brought it toppling over. It fell with a crash that shook the room; then Clegg got the door open, and went rushing downstairs howling at the top of his voice.

The masters were all at supper, so they did not hear him. He wanted company of some sort, and he rushed into the kitchen; then the servants commenced to scream as they saw that white form appear.

That appeared to bring Clegg somewhat to his senses, for he rushed upstairs again and into the masters' supper-room.

"Gentlemen!" he yelled, "there is a terrible form—a spectral form!"

"And there is a noise," observed Mr. Grant. "There appears to have been a noise in the kitchen also. May I ask, Clegg—I seek information—if you rushed into the kitchen in your night attire?"

"It was terrible—awful!"

"Well, we will call it startling," said Mr. Grant. "I suppose the servants took you for a ghost, and I must confess that you are an extremely noisy ghost."

"I suppose, sir, you think to make fun of me!"

"My good lad, I never hit a cripple with his own crutches. You have made yourself funny enough already. Let us look at the facts of the case, and combine the fiction with them. Let it be given that you saw a horrible spectre. Let us grant the spectre was there. Now, every boy in this college will know soon after prayer time to-morrow morning that you saw the assumed spectre, and that it was quite as awful as you assert. Very well. Every boy will know that you rushed howling at the top of your voice into the kitchen and called on the cook to protect you—"

"No such thing!"

"Well, that is what they will assert. I teach that negro lad, Pete, and know something of his nature. I can hear him telling the story. Stay, you shall hear him."

Mr. Grant rang the bell, and told the servant that he wished to see Pete at once.

Now, as may be imagined, the chums were not many moments in placing their ghost in the tower, and they got into the college through Billy's lodge. Rex went up to bed immediately. Pete seated himself in Billy's chair, and he had scarcely done so when Mr. Grant's message was delivered to him. There was no help for it. He entered the room.

"Yah, yah, yah!" he roared, gazing at the trembling bully.

"At what are you laughing, Pete?" demanded Mr. Grant.

"Was laughing at Massa Clegg, sah! Seems to be in evening-dress."

"I suppose you know that he rushed into the kitchen?"

Pete did know it, because Mr. Grant mentioned the fact.

"You see, sah, when a boy in evening-dress rushes frouh de college yowling at de top ob his voice, a poor nigger-lad can scarcely help knowing it. Ob course, dere may be advantages in acting like dat; but dere are disadvantages."

"And what are the disadvantages?"

"Might be tin-tacks on de stairs, or de boys might laugh at him. It don't take much to make boys laugh. Yah, yah, yah! Was just tinkin what Rex would say 'bout de matter. Tut, tut, tut! M'yes—er—jest so—er—ahem! Tut, tut, tut! M'yes!"

"Clegg got fears;
Rushed downstairs.
Frightful yells;
Terror tells.
And de cook
Wid fear shook.
Boy in white,
Dead ob night.
Nerves all jars—
Pyjamas!"

Mr. Grant smiled in a manner that exasperated Clegg.

"I suppose you think the little black beast is funny!" sneered Clegg, losing all respect with his temper.

"If you refer to Pete, I never said I thought he was funny."

"You grinned at the little fool."

"A master has the right to smile, should he be fortunate enough to feel so disposed. Are you afraid of ghosts, Pete?"

"Yes, sah! Don't like ghosts at all, and I ain't de only one. Clegg don't seem to appreciate dem. 'Spect it's because we ain't used to dem."

"Did you shriek with terror when he rushed into the kitchen in his evening-dress?"

"No, sah; but dat may be because I wasn't dere. Might hab shrieked wid laughter if I had been. You see, sah, de boy strikes me more in de comic light."

"Perhaps you will tell me what you really saw, Clegg?" said Mr. Grant.

"What's the good! I am not going to do anything of the sort when you sneer and grin at me, and try to be funny."

"I feel that it is you who have not only tried to be funny, but have succeeded in a most remarkable manner. You will tell me exactly what you saw before you leave this room."

Clegg had no alternative.

"Mighty awful, dat!" gasped Pete several times, when he found Mr. Grant's eyes fixed upon him. "Golly! ain't dat shocking! Glowing eyes! Churchyard just de place for ghosts, too."

These were a few of his observations, but Mr. Grant did not say a word. He was watching Pete closely.

"You can go now, Clegg. Go to bed, boy, and try to remember that you are nearly a young man. In future, be careful how you address masters in this college, or you will get yourself into trouble. Good-night."

Clegg glared at his master and left the room, without saying good-night. Pete was not so badly behaved.

"Good-night, sah!" he cried, making a bolt for the door.

"Pete!" cried Mr. Grant. "Come here!"

"Yes, sah! Want anyting fetched? Picked some apples. P'r'aps, after supper, you——"

"Did you go out this afternoon?"

"Yes, sah! A poor nigger requires a little exercise now and den, and de doctor told me to go for a walk. Pretty country round about."

"Extremely pretty. Rugged scenery and fine sea views. Did you go alone?"

"I did happen to obertake one ob de boys, and den de doctor obertook us, and——"

"I see; you went for a pleasant stroll with this boy. What was his name?"

"Rex, sah; and de doctor walked wid us, and den——"

"Yes; the doctor strolled with you for some distance. So you like the country! What do you think of the old churchyard?"

"Don't want to go dere, sah, just yet. Rader too lonely."

"Quite so; and, as you say, it is a likely place to meet ghosts. Is Master Carew in bed?"

"Should say so, sah. Can go and see."

"Do you know whether he is in bed or not?"

"Not for certain, sah."

"You think he may have had time to get to bed?"

"Should say so, sah, at dis time ob night."

"Good-night!"

Pete was out of the room like a shot.

"There goes one of the parties to the ghost," said Mr. Grant. "The other party to it may be in bed, probably he is by this time. Does anyone know who took Carew's dormitory to-night?"

"Hugh, the doctor's son," answered Mr. Leigh, one of the other masters.

"Exactly! You know Hugh's style. 'Now you young rascals, tumble in, else I'll collar your light, and perhaps report you to my father! Your light must be out by the time I come back.' They would take particular care that it was, and it is ten to one if he counted them. I feel confident that Rex was missing, and that Hugh never noticed it."

"But how could they construct a ghost such as Clegg describes?" inquired Mr. Leigh.

"I really don't know. Rex has unlimited pocket money. If he wanted to construct a ghost he would not mind it costing him ten pounds. I told Lady Carew that she was far too lenient, and that it was unwise; but she pointed out that the lad has money in his own right, and that it would be impossible for her

to let him be short. They are enormously wealthy, and she is the kindest-hearted and most generous lady I have ever met. Anyone on the Carew estate is provided for for life."

"Shall you take any further notice about the ghost, Grant?"

"Not I! Clegg, as you know, is an abominable bully, and I don't believe we have a more troublesome boy in the college than Rex. But I tell you this, Leigh, I don't believe we have a more honourable one."

"No. He is so truthful. Of course, he tries at times to hoodwink us; still, he will not speak falsely."

"Correct. Pete has his qualities, too. He has excellent ability, and although Rex will lead him into many a scrape, they don't do each other any harm. Pete won't speak falsely. Candidly, I admire the lad immensely. This stupid trick, of course, is to punish Clegg for his bullying propensities. Very well, let him bear the brunt of it. He has brought it on himself."

Now, this appeared to be a very pleasant ending to the matter; but, unfortunately, it was not to end there. Mr. Grant questioned Hugh the following morning, and that worthy admitted that he had not noticed whether Rex was in the dormitory; then Mr. Grant told the whole thing to the doctor, and asked him to let it rest, to which Dr. Kenward at once agreed.

"I shall leave you to deal with it in your own way," he said. "Rex is a most extraordinary lad. You know that skylight, and how he got it mended in one night. Well, I was with them when we met Colonel Warton, and in course of conversation he mentioned a very strange thing that occurred in his absence. His skylight had been repainted! Rex must have got Jobson to take the colonel's skylight, and put it on the lodge; then he evidently repaired my skylight, and placed it on the colonel's washhouse, and the whole thing would have remained a mystery to me for all time, had not the truth come out. It was all due to the repainting. I told Warton all about it, and he shouted with laughter. What the work cost Carew, I really don't know; but Jobson would not work all night for a trifle. The worst of it is, Grant, the boy must have got out at night. We must stop that sort of thing somehow."

"It's disgraceful! I used to do it; all the same, it is utterly wrong."

"I know it is. I received a well-merited thrashing for the same thing on more than one occasion. Ah, a master's life is a difficult one! The masters have to strive to be without reproach, and we know that is impossible in a sense. Then, however nearly we satisfy ourselves in that respect, we cannot forget our youthful delinquencies. It is hard for a master to have to punish a boy for a fault, when that master knows perfectly well that he committed that same fault in his boyhood days."

"I suppose the same happens with others in this life—a judge, for instance?"

"Well, he deals with crimes of which he would never have been guilty. We deal with faults of which we know perfectly well we have been guilty."

"Correct! But sometimes he has to put on the black cap. Thank Heaven, we never have to do that! No! Ours is a simpler task than his; and, after all, we are agents. We strive to put the lads into the right path, and lick the young rascals if they won't go the right way, as we were licked. It is a question whether the very best man who ever lived must not be something of a signpost. I will deal with this matter, then, doctor. Breaking bounds is the worst part of it. The other was only fun, with an object. And as you have left it to me, I am inclined to let it die a natural death, because it would be absolutely impossible to convict them, unless we forced them to convict themselves, a thing I know you abhor as much as I do."

The strange part about it was that the boys imagined that Mr. Grant was a very stern man!

CHAPTER 10.

How Billy Saw the Ghost Once More—How He Showed His Bravery—
A Nasty Collision—Mr. Grant Makes His Meaning Plain—In the
Doctor's Presence—Rex's Invitation.

IT was Saturday afternoon, and Rex was in the study that was his, in conjunction with other boys. Pete entered the room.

"Nice afternoon, Sah Reginald Carew."

"Oh, go away!"

"Ob course, I can do all dat, Sah Reginald; but—"

"Look here, you silly black chunk of ebony, if you dare to call me that again I'll shy this inkpot at your head, and make you blacker than Nature has done!"

Pete shifted to the other side of the door, and remained in readiness to dodge because of the threat of the inkpot.

"I was remarking dat de weather was fine, sah. I dunno when I saw fine weder dan dis at dis time ob de year, except in June or Zanzibar. All de same the fact remains dat it is a fine day, and you ain't got de right to contradict dat nasturtium. Den de cowobly remains obvious dat—"

"Look here, you black snowdrop, take my tip, and don't use words like that. You are getting as bad as Billy."

"De weder ain't bad. I ain't got anything to do wid it; still, it ain't bad."

"It jolly well would be if you had anything to do with it."

"Nice afternoon for a walk, and I hab got de afternoon off for dat special purpose."

"Well, take your walk. You have my full permission, if you want it."

"Suppose you take dat walk wid me, and you can hab de pleasure ob paying for any expenses dat we disincur?"

"No. Tut, tut, tut! I am not coming with you."

"How's dat?"

"Because you would want to raise ghosts or do something foolish, and I am a respectable lad with an aversion to ghosts, or any fooling like that."

"Golly, de boy must be fermented! De walk will do you good."

"I won't come."

"Why not?"

"I'm busy!"

"Yah, yah, yah! Send for de medicated man. He's gone dotty! I'll fetch him to you, old hoss. If you get busy someting serious has happened, and you will want a lot of curing. Suppose we come for a quiet walk, it would do you good, and take your mind off your business."

"I know it would."

"Den come for de walk."

"Rats!"

"We might frow dem in."

"Go away, boy. You annoy me."

"Yah, yah, yah! He tinks he's a master now. He must be fermented. But come for dat walk."

"I won't!"

"Why not?"

"Because I emptied an inkpot over Perkins's head!" growled Rex.

"Yah, yah, yah! Gated?"

"Of course I am gated, you silly black owl! Do you think I would spend a lovely afternoon in this beastly study if I wasn't gated?"

"Oh!"

"Here! Come here, you image! There's no necessity for your not having

a little fun. Shove that half-sovereign into your pocket, and go out and enjoy yourself."

"I ain't going out dis afternoon. I tink it's going to rain."

"Rats!"

"Nunno! It's more likely to rain cats and dogs, and dose insecs don't like rats. I don't want to go out."

"Well, take the brass."

"Dere's dat doctor ringing his bell again," declared Pete, bolting. He did not care to go out by himself, and he did not care to take the half-sovereign, for the simple reason that Rex could not come with him. And so he spent the afternoon in Billy's lodge, and thought hard things of masters who gated innocent schoolboys.

Billy did not come in to tea, so Pete had his in the kitchen, where past experience taught him that he always got a better one. Mary invariably gave him plum-cake, a thing of which Pete was particularly fond.

It was nearly eight o'clock before Billy came in. He ought to have been back by seven, but was not nearly so particular concerning his own time as he was that of the boys.

"You'm nearly an hour late, Billy, old hoss!" exclaimed Pete.

"Now, I ain't in the humour to take any of your nigger's lip!" growled Billy, who had spent the evening with Jobson. It had put him in a very bad temper, for he had lost nearly a week's wages.

"Still, Billy, I hab to do my duty, and you ain't got de right to come in late. You know perfectly well, Billy, dat your master pays you bery handsomely for your time, and it stands to reason dat if you spend it out ob doors you are robbing him. Now, I can't allow de servants ob dis establishment to rob a friend ob mine. You ain't in de same social scale as me and my friend de doctor, and we hab to see dat you do your duty as a servant."

"You varmint! I'll tell him as you said you were his equal!"

"Nunno, Billy! You tell him dat I consider him nearly my equal. When I hab taken dat man in hand, and trained him up in de way he should go, de improvement in him will be so great dat you will hardly know him."

"I'll tell him every word you have been saying, then he will sack you, and that will be a blessing to me; for you ain't the slightest use here."

"I mayn't be any use, Billy, but tink what a beautiful ornament I make."

"Haw, haw, haw! A pretty hornament indeed! The only hornament as you would do for would be the black 'ead of a fire shovel!"

"I can see, Billy, dat you ain't got much lub ob de beautiful."

"I ain't got no love for you, you worm! A pretty thing, indeed, for a nigger to come here and say he's going to teach the doctor of this 'ere college! Go and get me my supper, you ill-conditioned, ugly, black beast! And mind you bring up a nice one, else I'll kick you!"

"You ought to kick de cook if de supper ain't to your liking, Billy. It ain't got anything to do wid me, you know, and my impression is dat, if you ain't made friends wid Mary, you will hab only brem-cheese."

"Jest mention that I'm feeling faint for want of food, and that I ain't had anything since dinner, and then only a scrap of meat."

Pete was a fearfully long time gone; but Billy, who had not made his peace with Mary, did not care to venture into the kitchen. He waited and fumed but when at last Pete made his appearance with a large covered dish and a jug of ale, Billy seated himself at the table and rubbed his hands.

"I told cook dat you felt faint. And she says dat she's very sorry, and tinks it must be de effects ob de ghost, and dat she has sent you up dis bottle ob smelling-salts, which she hopes will do you good."

"Bust her imperance!" snarled Billy, lifting the cover. "Fury! Why, it's

only bread-and-cheese, and the ugly wench has shoved a cover over it to make me think as I'd got suthing nice! It's downright shameful, that's what it is! What have you had for your supper?"

"Tank you, Billy; I won't rob you ob any ob yours. You ain't got more dan you require dere. Tank you all de same."

"I ain't asking you to eat any of my supper, you ill-conditioned little black brute. The fack is you heat a lot too much, and if I was your master I'd allowance you. It's perfectly disgraceful as a white gentleman like myself should fare no better than a nigger boy. What I want to know is what cook gave you for your supper."

"Why, I neber said dat she gabe me anyting, Billy."

"You awful little liar. To stand there and swear you've had no supper!"

"I neber told you dat, Billy. Might hab had a snack."

"A snack be blowed! You've been over half an hour getting it."

"Can't yaffle up my food like you can, Billy."

"You've had steak-and-kidney pie."

"Golly! De man must hab a wonderful sense ob smell. Should say he was meant for a blughound."

It so happened that Billy knew a steak-and-kidney pie, on a large scale, had been in the larder, and he was guessing the rest; but he hit the mark. Mary liked Pete. She called him a mischievous young monkey to his face, but she liked him. The very fact that he had saved Bella's life was quite sufficient to make her like him, because no servant could help loving Bella. If anything went wrong they always went to her, and she went to her mother, and smoothed the way. If a servant wanted a holiday, or more wages, she always went to Bella, knowing that it would be a certainty—a much better certainty than Sloth, whom Swipes had backed to win. At any rate, Pete had eaten as much steak-and-kidney pie as he wanted, and did not require any bread-and-cheese.

Billy raved, and would no doubt have continued to do so, but at that moment the clock chimed.

"Bust it!" roared Billy. "I wish that clock was further."

"Does it jar on your nerves, Billy?"

"Jar on my nerves be hung! I forgot to wind it, and it will be stopping."

"Golly!" exclaimed Pete, who remembered the horrid ghost.

"I'll have to do it now. Here, you come along of me, and hold the lantern."

"Eh?"

"Come along of me, I say."

"Ob course, I can do dat, Billy; but Mary was telling me 'bout de ghost you saw, and we should hab to pass de place. Don't you tink dat clock would like to be wound to-morrow morning?"

"No. I'm a lot after time already. It would stop."

"Somehow, I don't seem to care to go after time to-night—not when ghosts are knocking about. In daylight it's all right, but in dis darkness—well, it's just de time for ghosts to make deir personal appearance, and somehow I don't care for dem. Don't you tink it would be better if you got de doctor, or one ob de oder masters to hold de lantern for you?"

"I never came across sich a coward in all my life!" declared Billy. "Do you mean to stand there and tell me as you are afraid of ghosts?"

"Nunno, Billy. I ain't standing. I'm sitting in your easy-chair for de start; and I ain't telling you any sort ob information dat I don't consider you ought to know. But de sort ob description you put on dat ghost, according to Mary, ain't such as would be at all good for my nervous cistern."

"I can't wind a clock and hold a lantern at the same time!" growled Billy. He had done it for years, but when a man is timid of ghosts, any company is better than none. You see, you can talk to the other party, and point out to them how

silly it is to be afraid of ghosts; only when that ghost turns up, you must be particularly careful not to yell and rush away, because that causes suspicion.

"Go and fetch the lantern!" cried Billy. "That clock has got to be wound to-night, 'cos it will stop to-morrow if it ain't wound. I ain't scared of ghosts, if you are. I ain't a man to be browbeat by a ghost. Go and get it, and if you ain't sharp about the matter, I'll kick you!"

If Pete had been kicked every time Billy threatened it, he would have needed an air-cushion. However, he went for the lantern, and on his way he went to Rex's study. That worthy scrambled a book away and seized a pen. His back was towards Pete.

"This is an awful job, sir," murmured Rex, who never doubted that Mr. Grant had come to see how he was getting on with his task. He was quite convinced when he heard a voice which was the exact counterpart of Mr. Grant's. Pete chose such words as he could pronounce without detection, and that voice would have surprised Mr. Grant himself, it was so wonderfully mimicked.

"Go on, my lad. You well deserve your task. If it is not done to my satisfaction you will be severely punished."

"Tut, tut, tut! M'yes, sir. It's a frightful job. I'm a bit doubtful whether it will be to your satisfaction. I don't want to say anything against my own composition, but——"

"Yah, yah, yah!"

"Tut, tut, tut! You silly black owl!" growled Rex. "How dare you come here startling me like that? I made sure you were Grant!"

"Nunno! I ain't got de happiness ob being your master. But see here, Rex. Billy has forgotten to wind up de clock, and he has sent me for de lantern. I'm supposed to be getting dat lantern. Now, de man is frightened to go dere by himself, so he has ordered me to go wid him; and while I'm getting de lantern, I thought you might like to go dere first and light up de ghost; den we can bof listen to see how he enjoys himself wid dat ghost."

"Good idea!" cried Rex. "I will chance it. I'm not supposed to leave this study, but Grant isn't likely to come just at the moment when I am gone. Keep Billy waiting for about five minutes for the lantern, and the ghost will be all lighted up. I shall be hiding in the bushes close by."

Pete kept Billy waiting a good ten minutes before he brought the lantern, and this put him in a worse rage than ever.

"You lazy little black snail!" growled Billy. "Ain't it a mighty strange thing that I can't send you for anything but what you must take half an hour to fetch it? What you want is a good thick stick to wake you up!"

"You can't expect all people to rush about like you, Billy, when you start on a job; but it ain't so mighty often you do start on a job, and den it's only because you can't get someone else to do it for you."

"Light the lantern, you little idiot. You ain't even lit it. I declare you are the worst idiot as I've ever met. You ain't worth your salt!"

"So long as I get plenty ob sugar, Billy, I don't mind so much 'bout de salt. Neber did care for salt. Now, old hoss, are you going to stand dere grumbling all de night? You'm worse dan an old washerwoman wid de toofache and a big wash in front ob her. I tink Billy, if you eber get kicked out ob dis place you had better take a place as a washerwoman!"

"You are beneath my notice, you worm!" declared Billy. "I ain't having anythink to say to a low-down nigger. You ought to be roasted alive. Toller me with that lantern, else it will be the worse for you!"

Pete obeyed, and the unsuspecting Billy made his way to the clock tower; then he took the lantern from Pete's hand and opened the door.

He had no sooner done so than he caught sight of the bestial-looking ghost,

whose eyes were glowing in fine style, and some very appalling shrieks appeared to come from it.

They were as nothing compared to Billy's shrieks. He howled at the top of his voice, and turning, dashed away with the lantern in his hand; but he had not gone twenty yards when he ran full tilt into Mr. Grant's chest, and the two rolled on the ground. Billy continued his yells, for he had fallen on the lantern, and he found it extremely hot.

"Woohoo! I'm burnt—I'm burnt suthing crool!"

"You stupid man!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "How dare you run against me like that!"

"I never seed you coming, sir. There's the awfullest ghost you ever saw in the clock tower, and it has nearly murdered me. Oh dear, oh dear. I'm burnt terrible!"

"I came in search of Master Carew," said Mr. Grant, picking himself up, while Billy still lay on the ground groaning; though needless to say he was not now lying on the hot lantern. "Have you seen him?"

"I ain't seen anythink except that awful ghost!" groaned Billy. "I'm hurt suthing crool, what with the ghost and the way you knocked me down."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat's pretty good, too!" cried Pete.

"So you are here, are you!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "I suppose Carew is not far?"

"No, sir," answered Rex, stepping from the bushes. "Few moments' fresh air—after strenuous labour, you know. Couldn't sleep without a little fresh air. Shall we come back, sir?"

"No, we will not. Show me the ghost, William."

"Not if my life depended on it. I ain't going nigh that ghost again. Don't I tell you it has nearly murdered me as it is!"

"Nonsense! I don't suppose it touched you."

"Then you are utterly and entirely wrong, sir; and though you may be a very clever man at your lessons, you don't know nothing about ghosts. It struck me repeated blows, and nearly broke my back as I fought with it."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dere wasn't much fighting on your part, Billy," said Pete.

"All de blows must hab been struck on de ghost's side, 'cos all you did was to yowl at it, and den rush into Mr. Grant's bread-basket. Don't you get too near dat ghost, sah, else it will start yowling at you."

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Grant, as he gazed at that extraordinary-looking creature, which immediately commenced to howl at him.

"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Grant.

"Go away, or I'll bite you!" came that voice; but Mr. Grant was made of sterner stuff than that. He strode up to the ghost and examined its body, then he got the head down. He certainly started back when a wild shriek appeared to come from the jaws, but he finished his investigation.

"You have been nearly frightened out of your life, William, by a bullock's head stuck on a clothes-prop, with a sheet wrapped round it, and it was an abominable falsehood to say that this thing struck you."

"Perhaps it struck him as awful, sir?" suggested Rex.

"I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, William, acting in such a cowardly and ridiculous manner. It was bad enough for a lad like Clegg nearly to shriek himself into fits, but for a man of your time of life to be so terrified at a foolish trick is absolutely ridiculous."

"I—I wasn't exactly frightened, sir. I—I only wanted to make sure what it was."

"And so you howled like a terrified woman, and rushed away. I must say that was a funny manner to find out what it was. What did you come here for?"

"To wind up the clock, sir; and I must say it is shameful that these two lads

should be allowed to impede a porter in the execution of his duty. They deserve to have the soundest flogging that any master could give them; and if you have the feeling that you can't hit them hard enough, why nothing would please me more than to help you."

"How do you know that they did it?"

"Because there ain't a bit of devilment as occurs in this college but what they are at the bottom of it. I believe they are the worst boys as ever lived."

"Do you know anything about the ghost that has so startled William?" demanded Mr. Grant of Pete.

"If you please, sah, I tink I hab seen dat ghost before. I fancy it must be de same one, 'cos dere's a family likeness to de one I saw."

"Then depend on it it is the same, because no two ghosts could possibly be like that one. I suppose you made it look in at Clegg's window!"

"Tut, tut, tut! It certainly did look in at his window, sir."

"You see how your stupid trick has frightened William. The man is all of a tremble. I believe he is afraid of the thing now that he knows what it is. Then you have caused him to tell me a lot of abominable falsehoods about the ghost striking him. You have nearly frightened the timid man to death."

"I worn't never frightened at all!" growled Billy.

"It is a lamentable thing for a man to tell such atrocious falsehoods."

"You must excuse me for saying, sir, that I don't think the doctor would care for you using them swear words in the presence of these boys. They can use quite bad enough without your help."

"It will not matter if they never use worse language than I have used. You don't appear to know the meaning of words, and when you do not understand them you think they are swearing. I feel quite sure that your statement about the language these lads use is as untrue as the rest of what you have been saying."

"I don't see why you should bully me jest because you happened to run agin me!" growled Billy.

"Preposterous! It was you who ran against me."

"Of course, jest because I'm a poor man and you a rich one!"

"I am very far from a rich man," interposed Mr. Grant. "Besides, even if I were the wealthiest man in the world it would have nothing to do with the question of your terror at the silly practical joke of these boys. I would not care if you had admitted what is obvious to us all, that is, that you were in a state of abject terror; but to cover your cowardice with gross falsehoods is too contemptible."

"You had best own dat you were a little frightened, Billy," said Pete. "Yah, yah, yah! I tink Mr. Grant will believe you if you tell us dat you were frightened. You had de personal appearance ob being a bit frightened. Yah, yah, yah! You did yowl too. I tink for full-sized yowls you beat de ghost hollow."

"I shall report the whole matter to the doctor," declared Billy. "I ain't going to be treated in this shameful manner and knocked down by masters in this college."

"Tut, tut, tut! The man will vow you knocked him down, sir," exclaimed Rex.

"It does not matter what he says. No one will believe him. As for reporting the matter to the doctor, I will deal with it, William."

"You must excuse me for saying that I ain't going to allow any such thing, sir. This 'ere matter oppertains to me, and I'm going to have justice done. I ain't going to be flung to the ground with impoony, not if I know it."

"But it was you dat flung Mr. Grant down, Billy!" said Pete.

"You hold your jaw, you insolent black beast!" growled Billy. "You know nothink of the circumstances of the case. I suppose I ought to know best whose fault it was."

"Very well, William!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "As you wish the circumstances

to be reported to the doctor, I will explain everything that happened. Come this way, and you come also, boys."

"I don't want to get people into trouble!" growled Billy, who began to see that he had gone too far. "I'm willing to overlook the matter on this occasion, but it ain't got to occur again, else there will be trouble. Good-night, sir, and I hope as you will do your dooty by them boys."

"Come here, William. We are all going to the doctor," said Mr. Grant. "You said that you would report it to that gentleman. Now you shall."

"I don't want any unpleasantness, sir."

"What you want and what you do not want has nothing to do with me. You will come to the doctor, and you will tell him exactly what happened. After that I shall tell him exactly what happened."

"He's bound to believe you before me, sir."

"All you have to do is to speak the truth, and then Dr. Kenward will believe you. Come this way."

"You'm in for a nice ting now, Billy," murmured Pete. "I wouldn't be surprised if de doctor gibs you a caning. Ob course, de man will know dat poor innocent boys like us couldn't do ainyting wrong, and you will get all de blame ob dat ghost."

Billy looked very uncomfortable when they entered the doctor's study, and Mr. Grant's words did not tend to set him at his ease.

"William wishes to make a complaint against me," said Mr. Grant.

"No, sir, you are mistook," cried Billy. "I wish to make a complaint against these ere boys and the ghost, sir. I've been treated something shameful by them. Still, I have discovered what the ghost was, and there won't be any need for the servants to be frightened in future."

"But you have not said anything about being knocked down by me," observed Mr. Grant.

"I intend to overlook that, sir. It ain't necessary to say ainythink further about it."

"I wish Dr. Kenward to know all the facts of the case, and as I am an interested party, you will just explain to the doctor what happened, Pete."

"If you please, sah, dere was a ghost in de clock tower, and when Billy went to wind up de clock dat ghost started yowling at him, and Billy started yowling at de ghost. I ain't quite sure which yowled de loudest. But I rader tink Billy did. Yah, yah, yah! You would hab laughed if you had seen Billy and dat ghost hooting at each other; but Billy did not stop long, you see. Dat ghost was rader frightful-looking, wid flaming eyes, and all dat sort ob ting. Billy bolted, yelling at de top ob his voice, and he was so frightened dat he did not look where he was going. He bashed into Mr. Grant's diagram, and dey bof bowled ober. Den Billy started yowling again, cos de lantern was burning him. Yah, yah, yah! 'Scuse me smiling, but Billy looked so mighty funny. Mr. Grant went into de place and discovered dat de ghost was a bull's head assisted wid a light, and supplied wid a voice. It was only some silly trick ob some boys, but it frightened Billy."

"I really do not see what you have to complain about, William," said the doctor. "It appears to me that Mr. Grant is the one to complain. I am surprised that you should have been terrified by a silly trick. I suppose these two boys constructed the figure?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Mr. Grant, glancing at Rex. "I do not believe any other boys in the college would have thought of it. How much did that ghost cost you, Carew?"

"Tut, tut, tut! A mere trifle, sir!"

"Indeed! It would be interesting to know what you consider a mere trifle."

"Five pounds, sir. That covered everything."

"It is positively lamentable the manner in which you squander money,

Carew!" exclaimed the doctor. "How much did it cost you to have the repairs done to the lodge?"

"Tut, tut, tut! That cost a trifle more, sir."

"How much did it cost you altogether?"

"Merely thirteen pounds, sir. I do not consider that it was dear, considering the speed with which the job was completed."

"That is eighteen pounds that you have absolutely wasted in a few days, to say nothing of the other money I expect you have spent."

"It does sound a good lot if you put it that way, sir," admitted Rex; "but, you see, these little—er—mishaps do not occur every week."

"I am very thankful that they do not," sighed the doctor. "Well, Mr. Grant will deal with this matter. It is a great pity that you do not pay more attention to your lessons, Carew, and less to playing practical jokes."

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"Does that mean that you agree with my advice?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then try to follow it. You can go."

And when Billy subsequently learnt that they were not punished for that ghostly trick he declared that it was positively shameful.

But now the examinations before the holidays were coming on, and Rex had to settle down to work. Pete succeeded in getting him out occasionally, but they were not much together for the rest of the term, and Pete had to enjoy himself alone as best he could.

"To-morrow is de last day den," observed Pete, as Rex came into the lodge one evening.

"Yes. I'm off to-morrow, Pete."

"And a thundering good job too!" growled Billy. "I'm mighty glad to see your back, and if I never see your face again, I sha'n't care. Here you've been and held me up to ridicool before all the boys. You've been spreading your lies about me, saying I was frightened of the ghost when I worn't anything of the sort!"

"Rather a nice place ours, isn't it, Pete?" inquired Rex.

"Should say it was. You neber saw anything like it, Billy. You could walk miles in de grounds, and de flowers are mighty lubly. Den again, de food. Golly! I neber tasted anything like dat. Makes my mouf water to tink ob it. I wonder you don't get fatter, Rex, wid all dose good tings knocking about. Should say you hab a fine time ob it in de holidays."

"Rather! You see, there's boating, fishing, shooting, motoring, riding—in fact, you can have whatever sport you like at my mother's place."

"Den dere's de unlimited money."

"Yes! That is a decided advantage. Well, you will have an easy time of it these holidays, Billy."

"I never have an easy time."

"Not with Pete to help you in your toil?"

"Bust him! He's not the slightest use to me! I'd rather be without him."

"Well, that's lucky, because I am going to take him home with me to spend the holidays—that is, if he likes to come."

"Golly! De answer to dat is 'yes' straight away."

"Wouldn't you like to have a few hours to think it over?"

"Nunno! I don't need a few seconds to tink dat ober. P'r'aps dat's because I hab got a mighty active brain."

"He ain't going!" cried Billy. "I won't have him go! Do you suppose I'm going to do his work and my own while he's enjoying himself like a lord? I say I won't have it, and when I put my foot down—"

"Steady dere, Billy! Best not get prancing a hoof like yours down. De doctor would be savage if you smashed his floor frough. Consider de invitation is

accepted. Dere ain't no previous engagement, Rex. Am I to stay for more dan a day ? ”

“ Tut, tut, tut ! You are to stay for the whole of the holidays. We are going to motor over. My mother is sending one of our cars. You see, being an only son I want a chum, and you are just the chap I want—a nice, quiet fellow, who does not get up to too many larks. Besides, I want to try another ghost on a certain neighbour who lives a mile or so from us. There are several other things I have in mind. Picnics, and an excursion up the river in our steam-launch, and a few dozen things like that. You don't mind late dinners, do you ? ”

“ Yah, yah, yah ! I remember de early dinner I had dere, and I didn't mind dat at all.”

“ Tut, tut, tut ! That was only lunch—just a light lunch ! You are coming as a friend, and we will have a downright jolly time of it. Can you ride ? ”

“ Should say so ! ”

“ Well, there are plenty of horses, so we will have some hunting. Just make your arrangements, Billy, to do without him. Be up early, Pete, and I will explain all about it. Good-night ! ”

“ Bust me ! ” gasped Billy. “ I don't believe a word of it. The doctor would never allow anything so shameful. Here am I to slave away, and live on shameful food, while a common black nigger lives like a lord ! There's no justice in it ! ”

“ Funny he didn't ask you, Billy.”

“ I won't stand it. I don't believe the doctor has given his consent.”

“ Yah, yah, yah ! Rader tink Rex has arranged it all ! You neber saw such a place, Billy, and you neber tasted such food in all your life. Yah, yah, yah ! Sha'n't I enjoy dat little holiday ! ”

As a matter of fact, Billy had seen the place, and he had tasted some of the food, because on one occasion the doctor had sent him over with a message. He had been looking forward to an easy time, because he was determined to give Pete as much work as he would take, and do as little as he conveniently could himself. Now this was all nipped in the bud ; and what made Billy so fearfully mad was that Pete would be having a glorious time of it in the old mansion, while Billy would be doing his ordinary work, and the work that Pete would have taken off his hands. He kept saying that he did not believe a word of it, until Dr. Kenward entered the lodge, and in a few words confirmed what Rex had said. He also pointed out to Pete that he ought not to play any tricks that would cause Lady Carew vexation.

“ Now, my lad, I have not the slightest doubt that you will have a very happy time, and you will both come back at the end of the holidays together. I may see you before then, as Lady Carew has invited us to come over for a few days. Had you saved my life, Pete, I——”

“ Shoo, sah ! Dere was nuffin' 'bout de matter. Would rader you didn't speak 'bout it ! ”

“ Good-bye, my lad ! I may not see you to-morrow.”

Then Billy gave a gasp, for the doctor actually shook hands with him ; but what astounded Billy still more was that Mrs. Kenward and Bella came into the lodge, and also shook hands with Pete.

“ Shameful ! ” muttered Billy. “ Here I've been a servant here for more years than I can remember, and I'm treated worse than a dog, jest 'cos I didn't chuck their daughter off her bicycle, and swear as I'd saved her life. It's downright shameful ! But I will get level with you, you little black beast of a nigger ! Here's Rex Carew squandering his money on you and the servants, and he never so much as gives me half-a-crown. He's given the cook five pounds, 'cos I heard her telling the housemaid, and the housemaid said as she had got three. Bust ! He came here under false pretences, making us all believe as he was no one, and hiding his title like he did. It's downright shameful.”

Billy really thought he had been badly treated, because he overlooked the manner in which he had always treated Rex and Pete. Rex did not overlook it, and as he strongly objected to Billy's ways, he never tipped him.

The following morning there was a tremendous amount of noise in the college. Clegg was going home in style, and Swipes was paying for it. At least, that is what he would be compelled to do by the time they got to their destination, for Sloth had not proved a winner, and Clegg had no money, having used his journey money to square up a few things that were very pressing, and which otherwise would have got to the doctor's ears. To look at Clegg, and hear him talk, one would have imagined that he could buy Rex up.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex, entering Billy's lodge, accompanied by Pete. "You are the slowest man on record, Billy. You were evidently meant for a War Office official. Don't I keep telling you that the motor is waiting for my boxes?"

"You do so, you worm, and I keep telling you that those boxes are going last."

"Take no notice of the little cads!" snarled Clegg. "Look after my luggage Billy. My motor-car is waiting."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dat's Jobson's motor-car, too," exclaimed Pete. "But look here, Rex, I'm going to fetch dose boxes down."

"Rats! You are going to do nothing of the sort. Bother the boxes! I'll have them sent on. It will mean a journey to the station for Billy, but walking is good for his fat. I'll wire to-morrow morning to ask the doctor to have them sent on. It will only mean a run to the station for you, Billy."

"Golly, de man will look no end graceful running. Should almost like to see him run. Neber mind de boxes, Billy. We'm off!"

"Bust it! Here, jest you stop! Don't you think as you can play your monkey tricks on me! You wait till those boxes come. I'm fetching 'em down after Mr. Clegg's."

"Tut, tut, tut! We don't mind waiting that little time, Billy," said Rex. "It will save you a journey to the station to-morrow, and there's no sense in giving extra work seeing that you will have to do Pete's work while he is enjoying himself at our place. Ever tasted turtle soup, Pete?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Nunno! I hab tasted pea-soup at a penny a basin."

"Well, you shall taste turtle soup. Personally I prefer pea-soup, but there is no accounting for taste. Go on, Billy, you will lick all the skin off your lips. Game pie isn't bad!"

Billy groaned. He had tasted game pie when he took that message over, and he remembered it. He also remembered the flavour of the sherry; and he fondly imagined that if he had played his cards differently he might have been the guest instead of Pete. But then Billy was not much gifted with common-sense, and he could not see where the difference came in.

At any rate he brought Clegg's luggage down, and Rex waited patiently, so did his chauffeur, who was smiling. The boys were admiring the beautiful car, with the Carew arms upon it.

Billy landed Clegg's boxes, and then, to save himself a long walk on the morrow, he brought one of Rex's boxes down on his back, and he muttered things to himself. Rex was in the chauffeur's place now, and just as Billy came up panting, for he had no light load, that car moved slowly on.

"Stop, you varmint!" howled Billy, waddling after it.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Hurry up, old hoss, else you will hab a mighty long walk to-morrow. Come on! Dat box ain't heaby! Least, 'nuffin' to make all dat fuss 'bout! A man wid a stummiick like yours ought to be able to trot along wid a little sized box like dat. We'm down hill you know; and motor-cars can't always stop on hills. Now den! Dat's better! Gib us de cord. M'yes! Missed it dat time! Hab anoder wobbly run, old hoss, else you'm going to miss dis train, and tink ob de mighty walk you will hab to-morrow."

The way Rex worked that car was truly exasperating. Sometimes Billy nearly got the box upon it, and then the car moved on, while Rex kept exclaiming, "Tut tut, tut!" Billy exclaimed other things, and he came on panting and puffing like some old grampus, then he tried to pitch the box into the car, but it fell into the road.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Take it home, Billy! We can't wait for it, but you can easy walk to de station to-morrow morning, and make arrangements for de box to be sent on."

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "I can't wait for you, Billy. I want to overtake that idiot, Clegg. Good-bye, dear boy! Carry the box back!"

And this is exactly what Billy had to do, while the chums soon rushed up to Clegg's car.

Clegg could not get his car to go at anything like the rate of Rex's, but the lane was narrow, and by keeping in the centre of it, and with a little bit of manipulation, he was able to prevent Rex passing him.

"Now, den, old hoss," bawled Pete, "take dat traction-engine out ob de way. Don't you see dat we are coming!"

By way of answer Silas sent a shower of peas into Pete's face, and that worthy felt sorry that he had not come armed in a similar manner.

"Tut, tut, tut! It's a pity," exclaimed Rex, "but I rather fancy here comes a way out of it. See that carter coming along the lane? Well, he will help us."

The driver pulled his cart almost into the hedge to allow Clegg to get past, and that worthy was compelled to go very cautiously.

"Look here," exclaimed Rex, pulling up. "I'll give you a sovereign for your whip."

"It's your'n at the price," exclaimed the delighted carter, handing Rex a long whip. It was not worth anything like a sovereign, but was admirably suited to Rex's purpose.

"There you are, Pete," exclaimed Rex, handing it to him. "I'll do the driving while you do the slapping."

"Yah, yah, yah! Dere will be some amusement just directly."

"Tut, tut, tut! Yes. We have been so remarkably quiet coming so far that we really need a little excitement, don't we, Jim?"

Jim was the chauffeur.

"Well, you see, Sir Reginald——"

"Bother!"

"I mean, Master Rex, you have only come a few hundred yards, and there hasn't been much time for excitement. It would be a pity to smash up this car, you know. She's a little beauty, and I can get a hundred miles out of her easy."

"We shan't smash her up," answered Rex cheerfully. "Of course we may take a few chunks out of her, but my mother won't mind that so long as I do not break any of our necks. Now then, Pete, be ready for the peas. You shall have the soup later on."

Pete and Rex got fresh showers as they rushed up to the leading car, then leaning well forward, Pete caught Silas one over the shoulders that made him howl.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jim. "That will shift them before so long. They won't care to get down to us; at least, if they do, they won't be wise, 'cos I shall chip in."

Jim was mistaken. Had Pete confined his lashing powers to Silas, Clegg

would not have minded at all. He would merely have gone ahead at the greatest pace he could command, which was about half as fast as Rex could go. But Pete distributed his favours, and he gave the bully some cuts that so enraged him that he drew up his car across the lane, thereby rendering it impossible for Rex to pass him, and then, springing out, he came for Pete.

"Don't interfere for the present, Jim," exclaimed Rex. "Pete can use a whip; and I rather fancy Clegg will notice it directly. Tut, tut, tut! Here he comes!"

It was a very stupid move on Clegg's part, but then he was so infuriated at Pete daring to strike him that he was determined to have vengeance at any cost. Pete had the advantage of being in a higher position, but Clegg scored by being armed with a stick, and he used it. Pete noticed that.

"Tut, tut, tut! Go it, Pete!"

"I am!" observed Pete, lashing away in grand style. "I'm 'most sure I'm hurting him."

"Mind he doesn't hurt you."

"He's doing all dat; and I do mind it. Same time, dere's one wid a little drawback. Yah, yah, yah! It's no good yowling, Clegg. You'm got to hab it."

Pete got some awful cracks on the head, but they did not appear to do much damage, and the way the bully yelled amused Rex. Jim, who was a very decent fellow, saw that honours were equally divided, and he did not want to interfere except in case of need. He had an idea that it would not redound to his credit if he blacked a schoolboy's eye, or knocked him out of time. For this reason he remained neutral; and Rex was determined not to bring him into the row, if he could help it.

For about a minute the two worthies went at it. Pete received some frightful whacks on the head, but the lashes he got in were extremely painful, as Cleggs' yells testified; and the fact that Clegg retreated proved that Pete held his own. Now, what Pete should have done was to have waited for a fresh attack; but he had got a few lumps on his head, and his shoulders were aching badly, while he felt that he had not got his own back; so springing from the car, he went to get it.

From the spectators point of view, the effect was extremely funny. Pete was as active as a wild cat, and he took particular care that Clegg did not get to close quarters. Sometimes Pete lashed while facing the foe, and at others he lashed backwards, while retreating. But again and again his whip cracked, and every time it did so, Clegg uttered a wild yell. Pete had got the knack of bringing his whip back, much as a boy flicks another with a wet towel, and as our readers will know, it hurts. Clegg only got in one blow, and after that Pete was more cautious; but the way he lashed that bully was funny. Clegg did not appear to think it so, and he made a rush for his car, but all the time he received some cuts that caused him to leap into the air, and howl at the top of his voice, and while he was climbing into the car he got it hot; then he drove on, and Pete jumped into Rex's car, which whizzed after the front one.

"Yah, yah, yah! Tink I paid him, Rex?"

"I should smile. But look here, we are not going to let the brute play the fool with us. Just you wait, and watch me. You can lash them every time you get the chance; but I'll floor him, even if I have to take chunks off this car."

"Golly! Your moder won't like dat."

"Well, I don't suppose she will like it particularly, but she won't mind so long as I don't hurt myself. Now, we need a little skill presently. I want to catch the boss of his front wheel, and if I can only do that, why something is going to happen. Perhaps you had better stop your slapdash-ing for the time being."

Pete followed this advice, and they both covered about a mile, then they came to a bend in the lane, on the near side of which was a duck pond. It was here that Rex's scheme had to take effect.

Clegg tried to whiz round the curve, but at that critical moment Rex dashed up, and dexterously caught Cleggs' front wheel, with the result that he went spinning into the duck pond.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "Dere's some snowballing wanted here."

And springing out again, he seized a handful of mud from the side of the pond, and hurled it at the bully's head.

From Pete's point of view the shot was grand. It caught the bully in the ear, and scattered all over his face, then Pete kept up his fire. Some of the shots missed their objective, but a good many of them hit, with the result that within two minutes Clegg and Silas presented a very muddled appearance.

It must have taken Clegg a good five minutes to get out of the pond, and during the whole of that time Pete pelted them with mud, then rinsing his hands in the water of the pond, he rushed after Rex's car, which had gone ahead, and was now in front of the other one.

"Get at the back, Pete," directed Rex, "and lash them as hard as you know how every time they come within lashing distance."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, obeying these instructions. "Ain't you made yourselves in a beastly disgusting state, old hosses. If dey were to shove you into an oven dey would hab a ready-cooked mud-pie. You might grow carrots on your collar, Clegg; and if you were to shove a turnip in your ear it would come out in full bloom in about a fortnight. I neber saw boys get into such a shameful, horrid state in all my life, and we'm in front dis journey. Just you come a little closer, and you will notice dat I hab got a whip."

"You demon!" hissed Clegg. "I will break every bone in your body when I get at you!"

"Yah, yah, yah! But I ain't letting you get at me while I know it."

"Do you hear what I say, Carew?" shouted Clegg.

"Every word of it, dear boy."

"Clear out of my way, you calm-faced little demon!"

"It's all right, Clegg," exclaimed Rex. "You would not let us pass you; now, I am not going to allow you to pass us. It does not matter to me what time we get home, and I am going slowly. Of course, you have the right to try to pass us, but whether you succeed or not is another matter. If you run the gauntlet of Pete's floggings, I shall run you into the ditch."

"You little fool!" yelled Clegg. "You would spoil your car!"

"I don't mind that a bit, and I shall not spoil it as much as you will get yours spoiled if I smash you into the ditch, a thing I am determined to do if you try to pass us. Now, come on, if you dare! You know what is going to happen."

"You stupid little brute!" snarled Clegg. "Drive on, then! You know that you can go faster than I can, if you choose. Well, drive away, and I hope that I may never see your face again."

"You are almost bound to see it, Clegg, unless I smash it up during the holidays, and I shall try not to do that. As for driving away—well, when you were ahead you went at the pace that suited you, and you refused to let us pass.

"Now, I'm going at the pace that suits me, and I am fully determined not to let you pass. The pace that suits me will be about two miles an hour, and if that pace doesn't suit you, why, you can go at a slower one, but I shall take particular care that you do not go at a faster one. You see, Pete, I ordered lunch at an inn that we shall have to pass on our way home. Now, if we had gone at top speed we should have reached that inn an hour or more before the time; as it is we may reach it a little after the time, but then we shall be able to enjoy the country, and we are sure to enjoy our lunch the more because we shall be extra hungry."

"Yah, yah, yah! Don't mind a bit 'bout lunch if I can only gib Clegg a few more cuts. Suppose you run backwards into dem, and let me do a little more lashing."

"I think we will wait for them to come up," said Rex, going at a most tantalising pace.

Clegg made several attempts to get past, but he had not the slightest chance of doing so, and he knew that he would have to pay for any damage done to the hired car, so did not care to risk a collision. Rex, on the other hand, was not at all particular concerning damage. He was only determined to keep in front.

"Say, Clegg, old hoss," exclaimed Pete, who had just succeeded in getting a cut in. "You'm got a wonderful flow ob language for a gentleman. Should say you would do better for a costermonger, or something like dat."

"Will you get out of my way?" howled the infuriated bully.

"Nunno! Clegg, we ain't going to do anything like dat. You ain't got de right to drive too fast, and we are going to see dat you don't do it. You'm going along at a nice comfortable pace, and are not at all likely to hurt yourself, unless you get a lash like dat one. Yah, yah, yah! Caught him dat time nicely. Why don't you get out ob your car, and let's hab anoder fight on foot. It would do you all de good in de world."

The manner in which the chums chaffed the bullies did not tend to improve their tempers, and it was a very lucky thing that they were not in a position to execute all the threats that they uttered.

Rex kept just ahead for mile after mile, and the pace at which he went was truly exasperating.

At last they reached the inn where Rex had ordered a good spread. He had said that he would be there at a little after twelve, and required the feed for one o'clock. It was nearly two o'clock when he arrived.

Clegg knew that there would be no chance of food for at least another hour unless he stopped there, so he also gave orders for lunch.

"Perhaps you will have it with these young gentlemen, sir," exclaimed Bob the landlord.

"I will do nothing of the sort!" cried Clegg. "I wouldn't sit down at the same table with the young blackguards!"

"Feed de boy in de pigsty, landlord!" said Pete. "Gib him some hog-wash, and feed him just de same as de oder pigs. He will yaffle it up wid his mouf, and it is just de sort ob food he requires!"

"Now, you keep back, young gent," exclaimed Jim, standing in front of Clegg, as he strode towards Pete.

"What's it got to do with you, fellow?" snarled Clegg.

"You will find that it has got something to do with you, if you don't behave yourself. If there's got to be any fighting done here, I will take it on with pleasure. I used to be rather good at it, though it's some years since I had any practice; however, I shall soon get into the way of it again."

"Can we have a separate room, landlord?" demanded Swipes.

"Well, sir, I'm afraid you can't. There's only the kitchen and the bar-parlour, and the kitchen is in use. The bar-parlour wouldn't suit you at all, 'cos there's two or three stickers in it now playing dominoes, and they wouldn't like me to shift them from the table. Besides, I don't expect you would care for their company."

"Serve our lunch at that table there," ordered Clegg, pointing to a second table.

"Yes, sir," answered Bob.

"What do you take to drink, Drewitt?"

"Claret, please! I like it good."

"A small bottle of your best claret," ordered Clegg. "We will have other wine afterwards."

Rex ordered ginger-beer for himself and Pete, and a glass of ale for Jim, for he made the chauffeur have lunch with them. Bob knew Rex, and the sort of lunch he would require, but he did not know the extent of Pete's appetite.

They had soup first of all. And Clegg said nasty things because his lunch was not served up first. But Bob quieted him by explaining that he was getting something he would like. So he was. He was getting him exactly the same lunch as he had already had prepared for Rex's party; but he could not serve the two together, so he was going to let Clegg have what the chums left, and he was going to bring it up separately to make it look different. This, no doubt, was an excellent arrangement; but, unfortunately, there was a shortage in soup after Pete had tackled four plates of it.

Bob trusted that Pete would play lightly with the trout; but in this he was disappointed again, and he saw with dismay that Clegg would get neither soup nor fish. Under ordinary circumstances, this would not have mattered, and Clegg would have been perfectly well satisfied with roast beef and Yorkshire pudding; but he had seen the youngsters start their lunch, and Bob felt convinced that he would want something quite as good. He placed a fine joint of roast beef on the table, and Rex commenced to carve it.

"A little roast beef, gentlemen, to start with," ventured Bob, approaching Clegg's table, and leaving the others remarkably busy.

"I begin with soup!" snarled Clegg.

"Sorry, sir, but soup is off."

"Off be hanged! Those young blackguards have had soup and fish."

"Well, you see, Sir Reginald ordered the lunch, and of course we got him the best we possibly could, seeing his high position."

"High position be hanged! I'd like to kick the little cad! Bring up some soup and fish, and then we will have the joint and entrees."

"Sorry, sir, all the soup and fish have been eaten. You can have a nice cut of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding."

"Do you mean to say that is all you have got in the house?"

"There is no soup or fish left, sir."

"Then serve up the beef immediately."

"Yes, sir, certainly!" exclaimed Bob, who did not know how on earth he was going to do that, considering that Rex's party were still busy with the joint. They were making it look frightfully small, too, because Jim had got a remarkably good appetite, and he was particularly fond of ribs of beef; so he was of Yorkshire pudding. Rex was also very hungry. But it is doubtful if the two together could have kept pace with Pete. Rex kept piling his plate, and that worthy kept emptying it.

"I tink you had better tell me when I hab eaten enough, Rex," he said at last.

"Tut, tut, tut! Eat as much as ever you can," murmured Rex. "I wish you could polish off the joint, for I have an idea Clegg is waiting for it; and he has collared many a supper from me before now."

"Most afraid I can't quite do dat," observed Pete. "Still, we'm done pretty well, Jim, between us. You ain't going to stop already?"

"I am, though," laughed Jim. "It's prime meat, and beautifully cooked, but—well, I can't manage any more."

"There's a pair of fowls to follow, gentlemen," groaned Bob, who did not know how on earth he was going to put that wrecked joint before the other party; nevertheless, he was fully determined that Rex should have the very best, knowing that he paid the very best prices, and that he was an excellent customer.

Rex often had dinners and teas there when out on his excursions during the holidays, and he always stopped there for some sort of a meal when passing to or from his home. Besides, he was the hereditary lord of the manor, and a favourite with all.

The beef went down, and the fowls came up. Then the beef came up again for Clegg.

"What is the meaning of this, landlord?" demanded the bully. "Do you expect me to eat the leavings of a nigger and a cad of a chauffeur?"

"Why, my father keeps several chauffeurs!" declared Silas. "And where's the Yorkshire pudding and asparagus? Those little blackguards had asparagus."

"Well, you see, sir, they have eaten it; and they have eaten the Yorkshire pudding. If you had ordered lunch it would have been another thing."

"It's disgraceful!" declared Clegg.

"Some fowls to follow, sir."

"Which means, I suppose, that we are to have the leavings of those little villains!" snarled Clegg, slashing at the joint.

He could not do it much harm now, for Rex was anything but an expert carver. He went on the lines of cutting off what he considered to be the nicest portions, and he had done so on this occasion. He was doing the same thing with the fowls. Even Jim grinned at the way he carved them.

"Funny ting," observed Pete, when Rex placed a third portion on his plate, "but I'm most remarkably fond ob fowls. Would you mind passing me de brem-milk, Jim—I mean de bread-sauce?"

By the time the three had finished, the pair of fowls looked utterly ridiculous. Bob did not know how to quiet Clegg, who was howling for his fowls.

"Look here, young gent," he cried, crossing the room with the wrecked

poultry, "this is the best I can do for you. There's some picking on 'em; but—"

Then Clegg let himself go. He called Rex a greedy glutton, and he called Bob an empty-headed blackguard for thinking that he would eat a nigger's leavings. He threatened to wring Pete's neck, and get him dismissed from the college; and the things he said about niggers were really surprising.

All Pete said was "Yah, yah, yah!"—and he said it several times.

Clegg was still howling over his wrongs while Pete was consuming apple-tart, assisted by Rex and Jim.

"Funny ting," observed Pete, "but I'm rader fond ob apple-tart. And dis cream helps de indigestion. What I like for lunch—yah, yah, yah!—is a little and good. We hab had de good, and we seem to be getting a good lot ob de little. Yah, yah, yah! 'Seuse me for laughing at you, Clegg, but I don't tink if Rex allows me to hab as much as I can eat ob dis apple-tart prime roast beef, and I'm mighty certain dat dat is as much as you can afford to pay for."

"I won't pay a penny!" howled Clegg. "I have been treated most shamefully!"

"Well, sir," exclaimed Bob, who was an honest fellow, and did not want to be too hard on Clegg, probably because he did not know what sort of a character he was, "you have had some roast beef and vegetables; now I can bring you some excellent cheese, and I shall only charge you half-a-crown. I feel sure you will say that is fair, seeing that you have had half-a-bottle of claret and a good lunch."

"A good lunch be hanged!" cried Clegg. "I am not accustomed to eat a good lunch which is the leavings of niggers!"

"Still, old hoss," exclaimed Pete, "you did eat de beef, and I noticed you had two lots ob it. You didn't get de Yorkshire pudding, 'cos dat went anoder way! All de same, you got de vegetables and de bread; and, seeing dat you'm had de wine, I don't see dat you can complain 'bout de charge ob half-a-crown for de two ob you."

"You little black scoundrel of a nigger!" howled Clegg. "If you dare to speak to me I will strangle you!"

The row he made caused the worthy farmers—who should have been attending to their flocks instead of playing dominoes—to come to the door in the hope of a little fun, or a fight, or anything to give vim to life.

"Well," exclaimed Bob, "you've had a small bottle of claret, and you have had a feed of roast beef. I only want what is right. I'm charging you for the wine only, and—"

"You have treated me shamefully!" declared Clegg. "How dare you treat a gentleman like this—to give me a nigger's leavings? Pay the silly scoundrel the half-crown, Drewitt! We will go to a respectable place and get lunch."

"I don't quite see that," growled Silas, who, with all his faults, was a thorough man of business. "You ordered the lunch, and you ordered the wine; don't you know, and it seems to me that you are the one who ought to pay. Of course, I don't care for money. I have thousands, and a hundred pounds or five hundred pounds are as nothing to me."

"Haw, haw, haw! I'm a bit of a liar myself!" roared one of the domino-players.

"Yes, and you are also a cad!" sneered Silas. "I'm a gentleman."

"It's thundering lucky you told us, 'cos we might not have noticed it!" guffawed one of the domino-players, who was considered a bit of a wit in his way. It was rather a slow way.

"My point is this," snarled Silas: "Money is no object to me."

"But you don't object to money. Haw, haw, haw!"

The wit liked to start a laugh at his own jokes, in case the others might not see them.

"You stupid yokel!" howled Silas. "Do you think to put your paltry wit against mine?"

"I'd rayther put my wit agin yourn than my purse agin yourn, 'cos I ain't up to the confidence-trick. Haw, haw, haw!"

"You're a blackguard!"

"You are a gentleman. Now we have both told a lie. Haw, haw, haw!"

"Do you think that is original?" sneered Silas.

"No; but I think as you are original. Haw, haw, haw! I should say that you are so original as you ought to have been Adam. Haw, haw, haw! I'd say Bob would be original, too, if he got any brass out of you or your mate. I'd say he was the cleverest man on the face of this earth."

"I wish to have nothing to say to you!" exclaimed Silas. "But, you see, Clegg, you asked me to lunch, and I naturally expect you to pay for it. The most I will do is to pay for my own, and I shall consider that you owe me the money."

"I won't pay anything for the shameful lunch I have had," declared Clegg. "The wine was disgraceful, and I have had simply nothing to eat."

"Look here, old hoss," exclaimed Pete. "P'r'aps I ate rader more dan I ought to hab done, and didn't leabe you enough, so I will pay de oder half-crown for you. Dere you are, Bob."

"Hand the little black brute the money back," ordered Clegg.

"No fear," exclaimed Bob. "If he chooses to pay your debts it makes no odds to me. I'm satisfied, and there is an end of the matter."

"I will not allow a nigger to pay for my lunch."

"Then hand him the half-crown back," retorted Bob. "I'm not going to."

"Just lend me half-a-crown, Drewitt," said Clegg. "I have come away without any money. You had better lend me a fiver."

"Why, don't you see, I never lend money without good security. If Carew likes to guarantee the sovereign, I don't mind letting you have fifteen shillings, and the sovereign must be paid back in a week."

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex, making a rough calculation. "You don't want much interest, either, Silas. Your interest works out at one thousand three hundred per cent. per annum."

"I am perfectly satisfied with that."

"So you ought to be. I'm having nothing to do with you in money transactions, Silas!" exclaimed Rex. "I don't mind fighting you, or anything like that, but I won't mix up my name with yours. I consider you are about as honest as Clegg, and that is saying very little for you."

"I suppose you are afraid of losing a sovereign?"

"If you are so bold in money matters, why don't you lend it to him without my name as a guarantee?"

"Because I don't choose."

"Well, I don't choose to have my name associated with yours in any shape or form. I would rather make Clegg a present of five pounds than that. If I thought the fellow deserved it, I would give him a lift now, but I know what he is. He is better without money than with it."

"I took you for a gentleman, Drewitt!" cried Clegg, who was livid with rage at being spoken to in this manner, although he did not dare to retaliate because of Jim. "You are the meanest hound I ever came across, and I will have nothing more to do with you. I hired the motor-car, so I shall take you no further. Shove that in your pipe and smoke it, you rat!"

Then Clegg strode from the room, and a few minutes later they saw him running down the lane.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Rex. "That is rather awkward for you, Silas. What are you going to do next?"

"What do I care, you little cad! I've got plenty of money. I shall just go to the station, and——"

"Tut, tut, tut! How far do you reckon this from the station, Bob?"

"As the crow flies, sir?"

"Well, I rather think that the crow would have the most comfortable time in reaching it; still, Silas will have to walk, so we will reckon by the lane."

"Well, I'd say it is about fifteen miles; p'r'aps a bit more. But it wouldn't be any good going to night, 'cos he would miss the last train."

"Have you a trap?"

"Not me. I can't afford to keep traps."

"Can I get a bed here for to-night?"

"No. We haven't got room."

"Fury! Then what am I to do?"

"I'd say the best thing would be to walk to the station, and you will p'r'aps be able to get a bed there."

"Do you think I am going to walk fifteen miles, fellow?"

"I don't know; but I don't see what else you can do."

"You will have to send for a carriage somewhere."

"That would mean that I should have to walk fifteen miles; and I would a lot you rather did it than me."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "You had better start walking, Silas. You'm only wasting time."

"You will have to take me in your car, Carew."

"Tut, tut, tut!"

"You must! There is nothing else to be done. I can stay for the night at your place."

"Well, of course, you might do that, but I see a drawback to such an arrangement. My mother would not like it at all."

"Oh, I will make it all right with her. Besides, why should she object?"

If it comes to that I can pay for the accommodation, and I am quite ready to do so."

"We don't take paying guests. I fear you will have to walk."

"Nonsense! I can't walk that distance. I shall explain the matter to your mother, and shall offer to pay for my accommodation."

"I should not care to introduce you to my mother, Silas," said Rex. "Your business instincts are too pronounced. If you were a decent fellow, and anything like a gentleman, it would be another matter; but as you are neither—why, I wouldn't take you home under any circumstances."

"I am quite as much of a gentleman as you are. I have more money than you, for a start, and——"

"Yah, yah, yah! Ain't Silas mighty amusing!" exclaimed Pete. "I wonder if he believes what he says, 'cos if he does he's 'bout de only one."

"Well, we won't argue the matter, Silas!" exclaimed Rex. "I must distinctly decline to take you home. My mother would not appreciate your kind offer to pay for your lodgings at all; and then again, you might not think our place suitable to your aristocratic notions."

"Yah, yah, yah! What do you tink ob dat little lot, Jim?"

"Why, that Sir Reginald is quite right not to take him home. I feel quite certain that her ladyship would not like the young gent."

"Then how do you suppose she would like that nigger?" snarled Silas.

"That's a different thing altogether. Shall I get the car out, sir?"

"Yes, please, Jim. We must be off. It would not do to let my mother wait dinner for us, and I am quite certain she would not commence without us."

"Well, give me a lift as far as the station," said Silas.

"Impossible! It is in the opposite direction to that we are going. It would make us late for dinner, and I do not intend to keep my mother waiting."

"It is better that she should wait than that I should have to walk fifteen miles."

"Tut, tut, tut! I would rather you walked thirty miles!"

"You mean to say that you won't take me."

"Certainly not. I might be inclined to do so if I had time, but I have not."

"I will give you a sovereign."

"Tut, tut, tut! The funny fellow thinks his money will do anything. Keep your sovereigns, Silas. I would not touch them."

"You are nothing better than a little cad!" yelled Silas. "I should be ashamed to be seen in your company!"

"There is not the slightest fear of that; at least, you won't be seen in my company if I can help it."

"You miserable, dirty little cad, who wants to go in your rotten old car? And as for your ugly old beast of a mother, why I——"

Silas said no more, for Rex sprang forward and caught him a slap in the mouth that drove him backwards.

"What!" yelled Silas. "You dare to strike me!"

"I never allow anyone to say insulting things concerning my mother."

"I'll say what I like of the old washerwoman!"

Rex used his fist this time, and he dealt a blow that caused Silas to stagger backwards, and, stumbling over a chair, he fell to the floor.

"Yah, yah, yah! Smelt dat one, Silas!" cried Pete. "Rex has got a cistern ob fighting dat hurts; least, it looks as dough it did!"

"If the little villain were anything like my size, I would give him the worst thrashing he has ever had in his life!" declared Silas, who, although considerably bigger than Rex, did not care to take him on. He had only come to the college at the half term, and Clegg had made a friend of him because he had money.

"Well, we can't bother any more with you," said Rex. "Here is the car, Pete. Come on!"

"I shall leave the caddish college," declared Silas. "I'll go to Storm-point. I can go where I like, and——"

"Do de rest ob your talking to Bob, if he will listen to you!" exclaimed Pete. "We ain't got time to listen to you!"

Then away the youngsters sped, and Rex, who drove, opened her out. They had a long journey before them, and he had no intention of keeping his mother waiting.

There was no danger, because the country lane was free from passengers and police, and in good time they came in sight of the entrance-gates to the Carew mansion. Rex shook hands with the lodgekeeper, and made a few inquiries concerning his family, then he whizzed up the drive, and was met at the door by his mother, whom Pete always considered to be the most beautiful and kindest living lady.

"I am so pleased to see you, Pete!" she exclaimed, offering her hand, after she had greeted her son.

"I dunno 'bout dis, ma'am!" exclaimed Pete, shaking his head gravely. "Still, de black won't come off. I hope Rex won't start punching my head. You ain't seen dat boy fight, hab you, ma'am?"

"Indeed I have not. I hope he never does fight—at least, not often!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Very seldom, my dear mother. It's necessary sometimes, you know. Quite in a—well, you might almost call it friendly way!"

"Yah, yah, yah! It's 'most too friendly. You made de oder boy understand your meaning quite plainly by hitting him in de nose! But school-boys don't mind dat, ma'am; dey rader like it, and wouldn't be happy unless dey had a few fights now and den!"

"They might injure themselves."

"Nunno! Dere ain't any chance ob dat. Ob course, it don't improve de personal appearance for a few days, and de masters hab to pretend not to notice it. Spect dey say to demselves dat black eye must hab been got at cricket, and I won't remind de poor, dear boy ob de accident. Yah, yah, yah! Dat's where I always score. You see, howeber much anyone bangs my eye, he will neber make it blacker dan it is at present!"

"But why need boys fight, Pete?"

"I dunno dat dere's any particular cause 'bout de matter, ma'am. Same way as I dunno dat dere is any cause for a bee to buzz, but dey all do it. I tink it gibbs dem pleasure, same as it gibbs birds pleasure to sing. Dogs are de same way fixed."

"Tut, tut, tut! I never heard a dog sing!" exclaimed Rex.

"Nunno! You ain't met many dogs, perhaps. I was talking ob dogs liking to fight. Why, you hab got a dog here!" exclaimed Pete, as Lady Carew's pet dog came to welcome him. "You ought to hab——"

Then a grand voice appeared to come from the little dog. It sang—or, at least, Pete's ventriloquism made it appear to do so—"The Last Rose of Summer," and Lady Carew insisted on the song being completed. The little dog did not appear to appreciate Pete's beautiful voice, and before he had got through the song, it walked away, while the voice appeared to follow it, until it died away in the distance.

"It is really wonderful!" exclaimed Lady Carew. "I must get you to sing to some of my friends, Pete. Now Rex, I am sure you must both be hungry. Dinner will be ready in five minutes."

Then away they went to their rooms, and Pete started on a holiday that, so far, was to prove the happiest time of his life.

And here we must leave them.

THE END.

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