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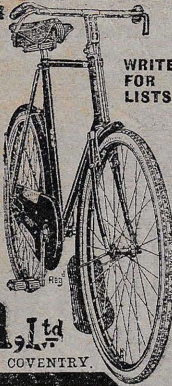
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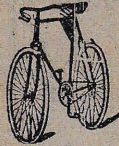
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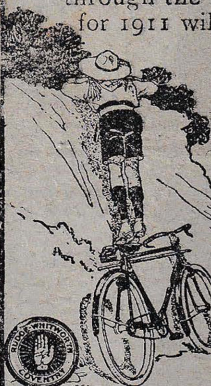
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THE BOY FROM NOWHERE!

A Splendid New, Long
Complete School Tale
of TOM MERRY & Co.
at St. Jim's.

By . . .
Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.

Blake is Surprised—and so is Gussy.

"HALLO!"
"Weally, Blake, I wish you would not uttah such sudden wemarks," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, looking up from his work. "Weally, you thow me into quite a fluttah—"

"Hallo!"

Jack Blake was standing at the window of Study No. 5, looking out into the old quad. It was a bright afternoon; the quad. was baking under the rays of the July sun. Blake was standing, looking out over the tops of the elms towards the cricket-field, while his elegant chum, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, was writing a German imposition.

Herr Schneider had descended upon D'Arcy that afternoon, and the swell of the School House had a hundred lines to write out before he could join the cricketers. Blake was staying in with him out of sheer sympathy.

He watched the cricket from the window, while D'Arcy covered the foolscap with what looked like an army of spiders marching in close order.

"Hallo!" repeated Jack Blake emphatically.

"Weally, you know—"

"I haven't seen that kid before."

"What kid?"

"The one who is coming across the quad," said Blake, looking down from the window. "New chap, I suppose. I hadn't heard there was a new boy expected."

"Neither had I, deah boy. Nevah mind the

new boy howevah; I have fifteen beastly lines to write out yet."

"Blessed if I can quite make it out."

"My deah chap, you can't expect to make out German w'itin," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I don't suppose old Schneidah can make it out, eithah."

"Ass! I wasn't referring to that Chinese puzzle you're making up. I was speaking of the new boy."

"Wats! What can't you make out?"

"Ho looks queer."

"Well, let him look queah if he likes, and let me go on with my work," said Arthur Augustus.

And his pen scratched away over the paper.

Jack Blake continued to watch from the study window with a great deal of interest. Naturally he was interested in a new boy, especially if he was coming into the School House—the larger of the two Houses at St. Jim's, and the one that Jack Blake belonged to. But there was an interest in the boy he was watching, apart from the fact that he was strange to St. Jim's.

"My hat!" Blake ejaculated.

D'Arcy looked up again.

"Is it weally quite impos. for you to keep quiet, Blake, deah boy?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I can't make this chap out," said Blake.

"Oh, wot! Wait till I've finished my impot., and I'll make him out for you," said Arthur Augustus.

"Fathead!"



Next Thursday:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS," AND "THE BROTHERHOOD OF IRON."

No. 179 (New Series)

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"I wefuse to be called a fathead! I——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligible wemark. I——"

Blake looked out of the window, and D'Arcy paused, and went on quickly writing. He was beginning to get a little curious himself, but he would not rise from the table until his imposition was finished. He breathed a deep sigh of relief as he wroto down the last line and threw his pen upon the inksand.

"My pwivate opinion is that Schillah was an ass," he remarked, as he rose from the table, "and Herr Schneidah is anotheh ass for giviah me the wot to w'ite down, and I am an ass to do it!"

"No doubt about the last statement—you are an ass!" Blake agreed, with great readiness.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Look here!" Come and look at this chap—he's coming across the quad."

"Bai Jove, he must be a long time comin' across the quad., Blake, if he's been comin' across evah since you first spoke."

"Yes; look at him."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy joined Blake at the window.

He adjusted his eyeglass with great care, and looked out through the open window into the green quad.

Past the tops of the trees that made a mass of green under the study window the juniors had a view of the gates and of playing-fields in the distance.

From the direction of the school-gates came the boy upon whom Blake's eyes had been fixed for more than five minutes.

He was a boy of about Blake's own age, but thinner, and less strongly built, but it was his face that attracted Blake's attention. His face was pale in colour, its paleness rendered all the more prominent by the thick black hair that clustered over his brow. His eyes were very dark, and had a gleam in them, which was to be observed even at that distance.

There was something dazed and strange about the face—something that could not fail to arrest the attention as soon as the strange lad was near enough to be seen.

The boy was not walking straight to the School House. Every now and then he paused to look about him in a slow, strange, dazed manner.

Either he was under the influence of some great shock or of some drug—that was the only explanation the juniors could think of.

"Curious, ain't it?" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"He must be a new boy——"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's go down and speak to him," said Blake abruptly.

"There may have been an accident or something, and the chap may have had a knock on the napper."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Come on, then!"

Blake hurried from the study.

"Pway wait a moment, deah boy!" D'Arcy called after him. "Wait a second while I get my toppah, you know."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Hang your topper!"

"A toppah should nevah bo hung—it should be put away in the hat-box," said D'Arcy severely. "I always keep mine in a hat-box."

"Fathead!" yelled Blake.

"Wait a minute——"

"Rats!"

Blake ran off down the passage. Arthur Augustus opened his hat-box, extracted the topper, and rushed out of the study to overtake his chum, the top hat still in his hand. He meant to put it on in the passage as he went, but that topper was destined never to be put on.

Three cheerful youths were coming down the passage—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell Form.

Arthur Augustus rushed right into them as he bolted from the study.

Instantly the Terrible Three stood firm as rocks, and D'Arcy reeled back from the impact, and sat down on the floor of the passage.

Squelch!

The hat had fallen first, and unfortunately it fell just where D'Arcy sat the next moment.

The swell of St. Jim's gave a yell as his hat crumpled up beneath his weight.

"Ow!"

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

"Bai Jove! Ow!"

"Is this a new acrobatic performance?" asked Tom Merry innocently. "You should have warned us first."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"It's a hat trick," said Monty Lowther blandly. "Gussy sits on his hat, and then he restores it to its original shape—it's a conjuring trick. Go on to the second part of the performance, Gussy."

"Ow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat in the passage groping for his eyeglass, and blinking dazedly at the Terrible Three.

The chums of the Shell winked at one another, and trod on—and trod on the swell of St. Jim's, and cheerfully walked over him.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Gweat Scott! Ow! Ah! You uttah wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Terrible Three walked on their way, grinning, leaving the swell of St. Jim's on the passage floor in a very dusty stato indeed.

CHAPTER 2.

Nobody—From Nowhere.

JACK BLAKE had reached the doorway of the School House, and he looked out into the quad. for the stranger who had caught his glance from the study window.

The latter had just reached the steps of the School House, and there he had paused, looking about him in the same strange, dazed way that had caused Blake's surprise.

Blake made a sign to him.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

The boy's wandering eyes fixed upon him for a moment. "Hallo!" repeated Blake. "Are you looking for somebody?"

"Looking for somebody?" the boy repeated softly.

"Yes. You're a new boy, I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said the other doubtfully.

Blake looked at him in blank amazement.

"I suppose you know whether you're a new boy or not?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"What's your name?"

"My name?"

"Yes, your name!" exclaimed Blake. "Blessed if I don't begin to think that you're off your silly rocker. What's your name?"

The boy passed a hand across his brow in a dazed way.

"My name?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"I do not know."

Blake jumped.

"You don't know your own name?" he ejaculated.

"No."

"Look here, my son, if you're pulling my leg, the sooner you stop it the better," said Blake darkly. "Come in here."

The stranger ascended the steps of the School House, and Blake looked at him more closely. He wagged a warning finger at him.

"Now, what's your name?" he exclaimed.

"I don't know."

"You young ass——"

"Hallo, what's the trouble here, Blake?" asked Tom Merry's voice. "New kid, eh?"

Blake turned towards the Terrible Three with an exasperated look.

"Yes, a blessed new kid, with a blessed new gag of some sort!" he exclaimed. "I can't make him out. He pretends that he doesn't know his own name."

"My hat!"

The chums of the Shell looked with curious interest at the new boy. He did not meet their glance—his gaze was wandering and unfixed all the time.

Tom Merry clapped a hand upon his shoulder.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "What's the little game? What's your name, kid?"

The boy looked at him for a moment, and shook his head.

"I don't know," he said.

"You don't know your own name?"

"No."

"My hat!"

"I have no name."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "Where do you come from?"

"Nowhere."

"Eh?"

"Nowhere," said the new boy, gazing attentively at Tom Merry for once.

The juniors were staggered.

The boy was certainly a little strange in his manner, but he did not look as if he were mad. But what else could it mean?

Was it some stupendous jape, of which the old hands at St. Jim's were to be the victims, while a new boy was the perpetrator?

Naturally such a thought made the anger of the juniors rise at once.

Tom Merry took the new boy by one shoulder and Jack Blake took him by the other, and they shook him.

He did not resist.

"Now, look here!" said Tom Merry impressively. "You can't rot us like that, you know. You've got a name, and you came from somewhere. Now, then, explicate."

The boy looked at him vacantly.

"I do not know my name," he said.

"And you come from—"

"Nowhere."

Jack Blake gave a growl of wrath.

"Now, look here," he exclaimed, laying his hand upon the new boy's shoulder. "Look here, that may be very funny. But there's a time to be funny, and a time not to be funny. Have you ever meditated upon that important fact?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, that's another thing you don't know!" Blake exclaimed. "I never can get Lowther to understand that there's a time to leave off being funny."

"Eh?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"But we allow Lowther the privileges of a duffer we've known a long time. You're a new duffer, and—"

"Look here!" began Lowther.

"Please don't interrupt the speaker," said Blake severely.

"Look here, youngster, what I asked you is—what is your name?"

"I don't know."

"Where do you come from, then?"

"Nowhere."

Blake doubled his fist.

"You'll get my knuckles somewhere," he said. "What's the little game?"

"Hold on, Blake—"

"Look here, Tom Merry!"

"The chap's not well," said Tom Merry, in a low voice.

"Look at him! There's something very strange about him.

He's ill, or he's been ill."

"He looks healthy enough."

"Yes, but he's not," said Tom Merry. "I say, you new chap—"

The boy gave him a vacant look.

"Did you speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes. Have you been ill?"

The boy nodded.

"Yes, I have been ill."

"What was it?" asked Monty Lowther. "If it was catching, you can kindly go into the New House, and leave this show alone. Was it measles?"

"Don't be an ass, Monty."

"It was brain fever," said the boy simply.

"How long ago?"

"I don't know."

"And you don't remember your name?"

"No."

"Now, where have you lived?"

"Nowhere."

"My hat!" muttered Jack Blake. "It looks to me as if the chap is right off his rocker."

"You feahful asses!"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's had just arrived on the scene, looking extremely dusty and dishevelled.

"You uttah chumps!" he exclaimed. "You fwabjous asses! I am goin' to give you all thwee a feahful thwashin'—"

"Order!" exclaimed Blake.

"I wefuse to ordah. I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean now, Gussy! Look here—"

"I wefuse—"

"And don't make a row when there's a new chap here!" exclaimed Tom Merry severely. "What will he think of our manners at St. Jim's?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"D'Arcy is called to order," said Monty Lowther, holding up his hand. "We cannot allow D'Arcy to make a row before visitors."

D'Arcy was speechless. He prided himself, more than anything else, upon Chesterfieldian manners, and the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. The wind was all taken out of his sails by this attack.

"This new chap is off his rocker," Monty Lowther went on to explain. "Can you tell us if he is a relation of yours, Gussy?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh, all right. I thought he might be. I know that kind of thing runs in the family—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"He's off his rocker, anyway," said Manners. "The curious thing is, if he's lost his memory, where did he lose

it? He must have been all right when he started for school, or his people wouldn't have let him come."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I suppose he's got to the right place," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I say, are you sure you were to come here?"

"Yes."

"This is St. Jim's, you know."

"Not Colney Hatch," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Shut up, Lowther!"

"Yaas, wathah. I wegard Lowthah's remark as—"

"St. Jim's!" the new boy was repeating vaguely. "Yes. I came in the train. I had to come to St. Jim's."

"Sure?"

"Oh, yes, I am sure. I had to come to St. Jim's. I am going into the Shell with Tom Merry."

Tom Merry started.

"With me?" he exclaimed. "I'm Tom Merry! How do you know my name?"

"I don't know."

"Have you ever seen me before?"

"I don't know."

"I don't remember ever seeing him," Tom Merry said thoughtfully.

"More people know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows," said Monty Lowther, politely quoting the old proverb.

"Oh, rats! It's curious that he should know me, when I don't remember ever seeing him before. But perhaps he's heard of me from some relations."

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps you'd bettah leave this chap to me. As a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Rats!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"The fact is, he ought to go in and see the Head!" Tom Merry exclaimed. "Dr. Holmes ought to see him at once!"

"Yaas, wathah. I was just goin' to suggest that—I mean, I was just goin' to think of it, you know, and then I should have suggested it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Exactly," said Tom Merry. "Come on!"

And he linked his arm in that of the new boy, and led him into the School House, with quite a little crowd of juniors round him.

CHAPTER 3.

Arthur Augustus is Sorry to Intrude!

THE new boy at St. Jim's had attracted general attention by now. His peculiar answers to the questions put to him had been listened to by a crowd of fellows, and they were as amazed as the chums of the Shell. They all followed the Boy from Nowhere into the house, and along the wide oak passage to the Head's study.

"He's off his rocker," said Levison of the Fourth. "I suppose, as a matter of fact, he was put in the train to go to Bedlam, and he got out here by mistake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "He can hear what you're saying, Levison, and it isn't very nice."

Levison sneered.

"I suppose I can say what I like," he said.

"No, as a matter of fact, you can't," said Tom Merry calmly. "You can't do anything of the sort. Shut up!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Shall I give him a feahful thwashin', Tom Mewwy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, pushing back his cuffs.

Levison retired to the back of the crowd before that question could be answered.

He nudged Mellish of the Fourth. Mellish was the cad of the House, and he was Levison's special chum.

"What do you think of him?" whispered Levison.

Mellish shook his head.

"Off his rocker, I suppose."

Levison grinned.

"Well, I don't," he said. "He's had brain fever, has he, and can't remember his name? In that case, what did his people send him here for—without anybody to care for him, or even to see that he arrived safely."

"It's odd."

"I should say so. You mark my words, he's shamming."

"Shamming!" repeated Mellish.

"Yes. That's my opinion. He's simply shamming. It's a dodge to get out of classes," said Levison. "It's humbug from start to finish, and if you watch him, you'll see him give himself away."

Mellish whistled.

"He's doing it jolly well, then, that's all," he said.

"All the same, he's shamming."

The procession arrived at the door of the Head's study. Monty Lowther looked along the crowded passage with a grin.

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

"All of you coming in?" he asked.
 "Wathah not," said D'Arcy. "I think it would be bettah for one chap to take the new kid in, and explain to the Head. As a fellow of tact and judgment—"
 "I'll do it," said Tom Merry.
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Order!"
 "I wefuse—"
 Tom Merry tapped at the Head's door.
 There was no reply. Tom Merry tapped again, and opened the door. Dr. Holmes was not there. Tom Merry closed the door again. D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass, and stared at Tom Merry in great surprise.

"What are you closin' the door for, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"So that it won't remain open."

"Weally, you ass!"

"Let's buzz off!"

"But aren't you going to speak to the Head?"

"Not this minute."

"Pewwaps I had bettah do it."

"Go ahead, then."

D'Arcy stepped towards the door of the Head's study, and raised his hand to knock, and then paused and looked at the grinning juniors.

He had not looked into the study when Tom Merry opened the door, and he did not know that the Head was not there. The other fellows knew it well enough, but it had not occurred to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Sometimes he did not think of things very quickly.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy—"

"Well?"

"I wegard it as a good ideah for me to be the one to speak to the Head, as a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Exactly. Pile in."

"But I have a howwah of puttin' myself forward in any way," D'Arcy explained. "I twust you will not wegard this as swankin'."

"Not a bit of it."

"I should be vewy sowwy to be wegardad as swankin', you see—"

"My dear ass—"

"Pway dwy up, Lowthah—"

"Go ahead, Gussy," said Manners. "We're waiting for you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy tapped at the door.

"You are sure you do not mind, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"Not at all."

"Vewy well."

Tap!

"I suppose I had bettah open the door."

"Certainly."

D'Arcy opened the door, and stepped into the study, bowing his best bow as he went in, and not noticing for the moment that there was no one sitting in the Head's usual place at the writing-table.

"If you please, sir, I twust you will excuse this intwusion— Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus broke off as he observed the empty chair.

"Bai Jove! He's not here!"

There was a roar of laughter from the passage. Arthur Augustus cast a glance round the study, and then came out into the passage, pink with wrath.

"You uttah asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The doctah is not there."

"Go hon!"

"Did you know it, you howwid boundah?"

"I looked," said Tom Merry. "That was why I let you go in, you see, because there was no one there."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that, you know! I wegard you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' whatevah to cackle at," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with dignity. "I wegard you—"

"Give us your kindest regards," said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, pway don't be an ass, Lowthah!"

"Don't ask impossibilities," said Kangaroo, of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as a set of asses! I have nevah been able to undahstand why you genevally bweak into a silly cackle when I make a remark."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What are you kicking up this row for, outside the Head's study?" demanded a loud and bullying voice. The voice belonged to Knox, of the Sixth, a prefect of the School House, the particular enemy of Tom Merry & Co. on all occasions.

CHAPTER 4.

Quite a Row!

KNOX stopped in the passage outside the Head's study. A glance in at the open door showed him that the study was empty. Knox, when he indulged his taste for bullying, generally made sure that there were no masters close at hand.

The heavy-browed, unpleasant-voiced senior looked at Tom Merry with a dark frown. Tom Merry met his gaze fearlessly. Knox was a bully, and his position as a prefect gave him many opportunities of annoying the juniors; but he had never been able to make Tom Merry afraid of him.

"What are you all hanging about here for?" Knox demanded. "Playing some prank in the Head's study, I suppose?"

"No."

"Then what are you up to?"

"There's a new kid here," Tom Merry explained. "I was bringing him to see the Head, because he's not well."

"You want the Head to physic him?" asked Knox, with a sneer. "What's the good of these yarns to me, Tom Merry? Tell the truth."

Tom Merry flushed scarlet.

"It is the truth, Knox!" he exclaimed. "And if you doubt my word—"

"Gently does it!" murmured Manners. "You mustn't slang a prefect."

"Weally," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, screwing his glass into his eye, and regarding Knox with an air of great disdain—"weally, you know, I wegard a chap who doubts a chap's word as the kind of a chap a chap is justified in slanging to any extent; and when the chap doubts the word of a friend of mine, I wegard it as impewative to give him a feahful thwashin'. Undah the circs—"

"Dry up, Gussy."

"I wefuse to dwy up. I—"

Blake and Digby and Herrics pushed the swell of the School House back.

"Look here," said Knox, "where's the sick kid, if he exists at all?"

"He is here," said Tom Merry quietly.

He drew the new boy forward.

The stranger to St. Jim's was looking dazed and vacant still; his expression had not changed since the juniors first saw him in the quad.

Knox looked the new boy over with a sneering look. Knox was of the same sceptical turn of mind as Levison, of the Fourth, and he was too untruthful himself to believe anything without proof.

"Oh, that's the kid, is it?" he exclaimed. "And you tell me that he's ill."

"I said he's not well."

"That comes to the same thing, I imagine. What's the matter with him?"

"He's lost his memory, I think."

Knox jumped.

"His what?" he roared.

"His memory."

"Well, of all the rotten yarns I ever heard!" Knox exclaimed angrily. "How dare you tell me such stuff? Boy, what's your name?"

The new boy looked at him slowly, and did not answer. Knox laid a hand upon his shoulder, and shook him.

"What's your name?"

"I don't know."

"Don't try to stuff me!" Knox said sharply. "What is your name?"

"I don't know."

Knox gritted his teeth.

"If you think that sort of rot will work with me," he said, "you're making a great mistake! I'll give you one more chance to speak sensibly, and if you don't do it, I'll lick you till you can't stand. What's your name?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then, take that!"

The prefect began to box the new boy's ears right and left.

Biff! Biff!

The new boy shrank back from him, crying out, and a yell of indignant protest rose from the juniors.

"Stop it!"

"Knox, you cad!"

"Make him stop!"

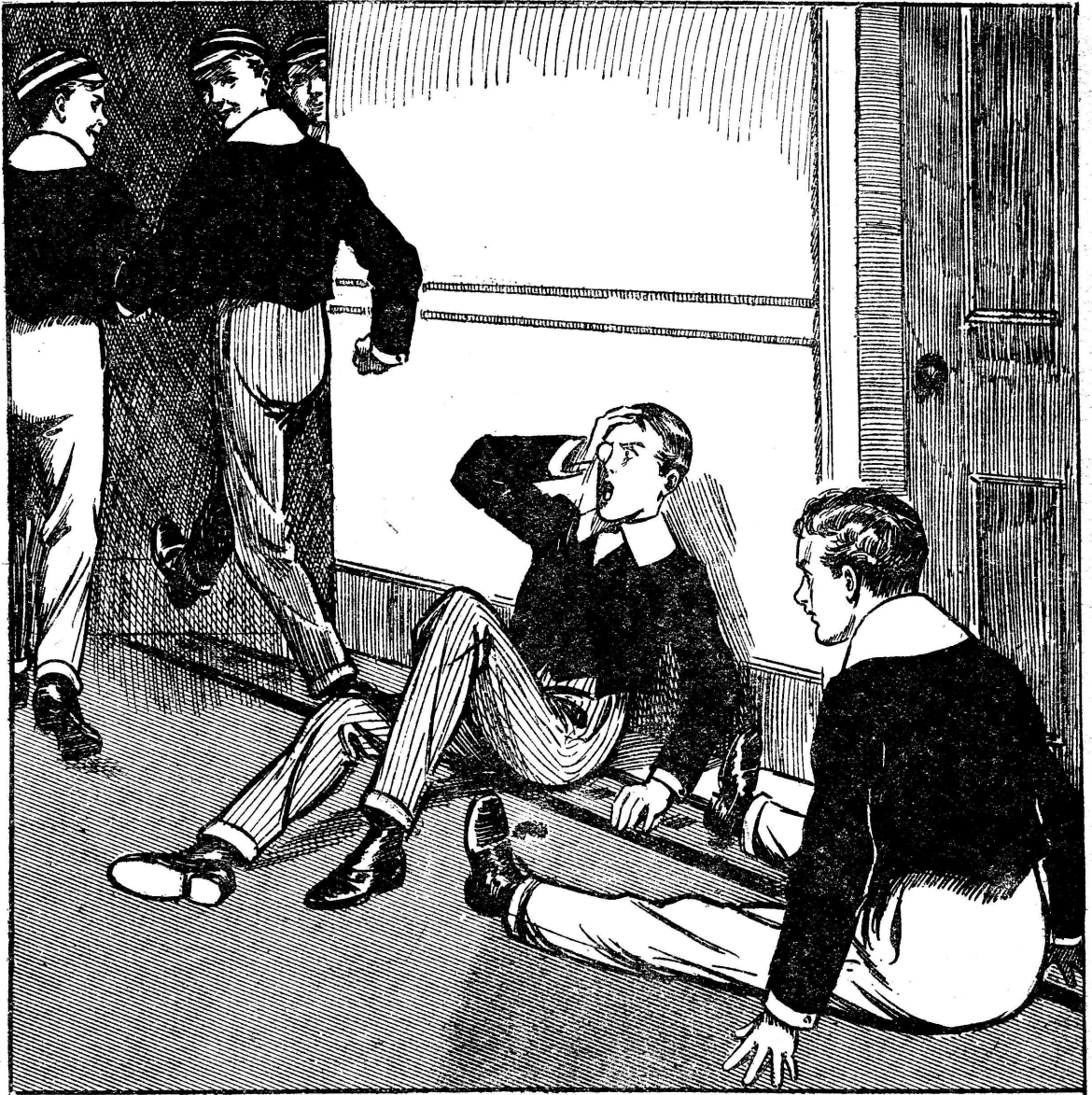
"Knox!" exclaimed Tom Merry, laying a hand on the prefect's arm. "Knox! Stop it! You may hurt the chap! He's not well! Stop it! Stop it! Say it!"

"Stand back!"

Tom Merry's eyes blazed.

"I won't stand back! Stop that!"

And as Knox did not stop, Tom Merry sprang right at him, hitting out, and the prefect had to leave off his punish-



Bump! Bump! Blake and D'Arcy dropped on the passage floor with loud bumps, and the three New House Juniors trod calmly over them. "Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "What was that?" "Ow!" grunted Blake. "That was Figgins & Co." (See page 10.)

ment of the new boy, to defend himself from Tom Merry's attack.

The new boy staggered against the wall, gasping. Knox grasped Tom Merry; but he had no chance of dealing with the hero of the Shell alone. The other fellows were rushing on.

Lowther, and Manners, and Blake, and Herries, and Kangaroo, and Reilly, and three or four more, seized hold of the prefect, and he was swept off his feet in a second.

It might be risky to go for a prefect, but the juniors were ready to follow Tom Merry's lead anywhere.

"Let go!" roared the prefect. "Do you hear? Let go! You young hounds!"

"Down him!"

"Bump him!"

"Shove the cad over!"

Knox went to the floor with a crash, with five or six juniors clinging to him, and sprawling over him.

There was a terrific struggle on the floor of the passage, while a crowd of juniors stood round yelling. The din was fearful. In the midst of it, there was the rustle of a gown, and a hurried footstep, and then a startled voice.

"Good heavens! What does this mean?"

"My hat!"

"The Head!"

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors jumped up, red and flustered. There was a general movement to retreat, but Dr. Holmes raised his hand.

"Stop, all of you!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Knox sat up, gasping.

"Knox! A prefect! What does this mean? How dare you lay hands upon a prefect?" the Head thundered.

"Ow!" groaned Knox.

"Weally, my dear sir—"

"You see, sir—" began Tom Merry.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Tom Mewwy."

"Let Merry speak. Go on, Merry."

"I was thinkin' pewwaps I could explain a little bettah, sir."

"Silence, D'Arcy."

"Vewy well, sir."

"You see, sir," said Tom Merry, "Knox was knocking

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NEXT WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

this chap about, and he's not well, and we had to stop him—that's how it was."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Who is this boy?" exclaimed the Head, turning his eyes upon the new junior. "I have not seen him before."

"He's the new boy, sir."

"The new boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"But I was not expecting a new boy to arrive," the Head exclaimed, in amazement. "Surely there is some mistake. What is your name, my boy?"

"I don't know, sir."

"What?"

"I don't know."

"What does this mean? What—?"

"He's not well, sir," Tom Merry explained. "That's why we were bringing him to your study, sir. He's lost his memory."

"Dear me!"

"He says he's had brain fever, sir."

"Indeed."

"And—and that's why we rolled Knox over, sir. He didn't understand, I suppose, and we thought he might injure the kid if he punched him."

"I—I boxed his ears because he would not answer me, sir," stammered Knox, getting up, in a very dusty state.

The Head looked at him.

"You should never box a boy's ears," he said. "It is dangerous. And in this case you should have been doubly careful. You have been very injudicious, Knox. You may go."

And the prefect went, aching in every limb, and gritting his teeth.

"Boy, whoever you are, come here! You say you do not know your name?" the Head asked, fixing his eyes upon the new junior.

"No, sir."

"You have come here alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you come?"

"By train, sir."

"Where from?"

"I don't know."

The Head pursed his lips.

"You are sure this was your correct destination?" he asked. "This is St. James's Collegiate School."

"St. Jim's, sir—that's right."

"Were you told to come here?"

"I don't know, sir. I came because Tom Merry is here."

"Tom Merry! Do you know this boy, Merry?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I never heard of him before, sir."

"It is very strange. Go into my study, my lad. Merry, kindly tell Mr. Railton I should be glad to see him."

"Yes, sir."

The Head entered his study with the new boy, and the juniors dispersed, discussing the matter excitedly. The new boy amazed them.

"Blessed if I can make him out," said Digby, of the Fourth. "It's possible he had an accident coming here."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He may have come to the wrong place," Tom Merry said thoughtfully. "But what I can't understand is, how his people could let him travel in such a state."

"It's a giddy mystery."

And the juniors had to agree that it was.

CHAPTER 5.

The New Chum.

THE Boy from Nowhere was the talk of the school in a few hours' time.

A fellow who had lost his memory was naturally an object of interest; and when he was a fellow who had come to the school by himself, without being expected by the Head, the interest was doubled.

Every fellow in the School House had a look at the Boy from Nowhere, as they had all come to call him already. As he had no name, apparently, it was really the only way of referring to him.

All that was known of him was that he had arrived at St. Jim's, without knowing who he was or where he had come from.

The mystery was intensely interesting to the juniors, and all kinds of theories were formed to account for the Boy from Nowhere.

Who was he? Where had he come from? He had certainly not dropped from the clouds—he had come by train from somewhere—but where?

Then there was his statement that he had come to St.

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DON'T MISS

BOB CHERRY IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER.

Jim's because Tom Merry was there. Yet Tom Merry did not know him.

The general theory was that the boy's parents had sent him to the school, and that they knew some relation of Tom Merry who had talked of Tom to them. But then came the curious fact that the Head was not expecting a new boy at St. Jim's.

New boys did not walk into the school, naturally, without any notice of their coming. And the Head knew nothing of his coming till he came. His parents should have been in communication with Dr. Holmes, if they did not come personally; but nothing of the kind had happened.

Yet it was evidently a fixed idea in the boy's mind that he was to come to St. Jim's. Perhaps it had been intended by his parents, and he had known of it, and had come of his own accord in the middle of the term. In that case, it had to be assumed that he was not quite right in the head.

Yet, excepting for his want of memory, he seemed sane enough. And he was a pleasant-looking lad, and his eyes were very intelligent, when the dazed look left them for a moment. But if that look left him, it quickly returned. It seemed as if his mind was under a cloud.

The doctor from Rylcombe was sent for, and he examined the lad, but his report did not clear up the matter at all. The boy's state might have been caused by a severe shock, or it might be that he was of unsound mind. In either case, he was harmless enough; there was no question about that.

The question that arose was, what was to be done with him? He could not be sent wandering away from the school alone; that was evidently impossible. He could be handed over to the authorities, certainly; but it seemed a hard proceeding. And as the lad was evidently set upon being at St. Jim's, Dr. Holmes determined to allow him to remain there till his people could be discovered.

Meanwhile, the police were informed, and the inspector from Rylcombe came and saw the lad, and took down a full description of him.

The story of the mysterious new boy reached the other House at St. Jim's quickly, and New House fellows came over in crowds to see him, the first being Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the Fourth Form.

Tom Merry had taken the new boy in charge, after the Head and Mr. Railton, and the doctor and the inspector, had seen him. Dr. Holmes had given Tom Merry a hint to that effect, and the kind-hearted lad was only too glad to be of service.

The Terrible Three took him up to their study in the Shell passage. The new boy looked round him with great interest.

"You are Tom Merry?" he asked the hero of the Shell, as they walked down the Shell passage in the School House.

"Yes," said Tom, with a smile, "I'm Tom Merry. And you came to St. Jim's because I was here?"

The new boy nodded.

"Who told you about me?"

"I can't remember."

"Was it your father?"

"I don't know."

"Did you have any accident on the train coming?" asked Manners.

"I think not."

"It's jolly odd! And you can't remember your name?"

"I'm sorry; no."

"Here's our study," said Tom Merry. "If you're going into the Shell Form, you'll have a study in this passage, kid. You might even be put in here with us."

"I should like that."

"Oh, good!" said Monty Lowther, with great politeness.

As a matter of fact, the Terrible Three were by no means enthusiastic about having anybody put in their study. They wanted it to themselves. But temporarily, they were quite willing to take the stranger in, so to speak.

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Tom Merry lighted the spirit-stove, and placed it on the window-sill, so that the smell of the methylated spirit should not be too pronounced in the study. Then he took the kettle away to fill it. Manners departed on a visit to the school tuckshop, to get in supplies.

Monty Lowther remained alone in the study with the new boy.

It was then that the actions of the Boy from Nowhere became peculiar. He trod silently to the door, looked into the passage, and closed the door with great caution.

Monty Lowther, who was cutting bread-and-butter, glanced at him, and his eyes became fixed upon the new boy in great amazement.

"What the——" he began.

The new boy held up his finger warningly.

"Hist!"

"Eh?"

"Be careful!"

"Careful! Do you mean about cutting my fingers?"

"Oh, no."

"What then? What are you getting at?" Monty Lowther demanded, his surprise increasing as the new boy came towards him on tiptoe.

The new boy sunk his voice to a whisper.

"It's about Tom Merry," he murmured.

"Eh? Tom Merry?"

"Yes, yes!"

"What about him?" asked Monty Lowther, in wonder.

"Do you not know?"

"Kn-n-n-now? Know what?"

"About Tom Merry." The new boy sunk his voice still lower, till Lowther had to strain his ears to hear it. "He's mad!"

Monty Lowther jumped, and the knife went from his hand with a clatter to the floor. He gazed at the new boy with a pale, startled face.

"What!"

"He's mad!"

"M-m-m-mad!"

"Yes."

"You—he—I—T-t-tom Merry m-m-mad!" stuttered Lowther, so astounded that he hardly knew what he was saying.

"Yes."

Lowther looked at him long and hard.

"Look here," he said, "I don't know what you're driving at. If you are trying to pull my leg, you're in danger of getting a prize thick ear. Savvy?"

"Hush!"

"What is there to hush about?" demanded Lowther wrathfully.

"Don't let him hear."

"You ass! I'm going to tell him what you said, the minute he comes into the study," said Monty Lowther.

"Oh, I——"

"Hush!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you it must be kept quiet," whispered the new boy anxiously. "Mind, it's very important. That's why I've come here."

"Eh? What?"

"I've been sent here to look after him," murmured the new boy. "Because he's mad, you know, and may break out at any moment."

"Great Scott!"

"I'll prove it to you if you like."

"Prove it!"

"Yes."

"But you're—you're off your rocker!" stammered Monty Lowther. "What do you mean? How can you prove it?"

"I can show you my card."

"Your card?"

"My professional card."

"W-w-what!"

"My father is a brain specialist, and I look after cases of madness in youths," the new boy explained, still in a mysterious whisper.

"But it's—it's impossible!"

"Look here, then!"

The new boy cautiously opened a little card-case, and took out a card, which he showed to Monty Lowther. The Shell fellow stared at it blankly.

"Dr. Ballantyne, Mental Specialist."

That was the engraved inscription on the card.

Monty Lowther staggered.

If there was nothing in what the new boy said, where did he get that card, and what was he telling this astounding story for?

"But—but you——" stammered Lowther.

"I'm Dr. Ballantyne's son."

"Oh!"

"And I'm here to watch over Tom Merry, and see how he progresses. I dare say you did not know that there was madness in the family."

"Good heavens!"

"It generally comes out in the Merry family at about fifteen," the new boy explained. "I'm to watch over him and report to my father. I'm telling you so that you will understand. Mind what I've told you—not a word."

The study door opened, and Tom Merry came in with the filled kettle. The new boy dropped back into his dazed, listless manner at once, as if it were a cloak he was putting on.

Monty Lowther opened his mouth, and shut it again. Tom Merry put the kettle on the spirit-stove, and Monty Lowther said not a word.

CHAPTER 6.

Odd.

TOM MERRY looked round after lighting the spirit stove. He caught Monty Lowther's eyes fixed upon him with a searching gaze.

Tom looked a little surprised.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

Lowther started, and coloured.

"Wrong? Oh no."

"What are you staring at me for?"

"Ahem! Was I staring at you?"

"Yes, as if you wanted to bore a hole in me," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "Have I spilt the spirit or anything?"

"I think not."

"It niffs a bit, I know," said Tom Merry. "I'll go and get it off my hands, I think; I always get some of the blessed stuff on my hands."

He crossed towards the door.

"I—I say, Tom," began Lowther.

"Yes?"

"I suppose you're feeling well?"

"Fit as a fiddle. Why?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Blessed if I can make you out, Monty," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, I'm all right."

"You don't talk as if you were all right," said Tom with a grin. "You talk as if you were off your silly rocker."

"Oh!"

Tom Merry quitted the study, and the new boy gave Lowther a significant look. It was curious to see how his dazed expression dropped from him like a garment. The changes in the new boy's face were quite startling.

"What do you think now?" whispered the new boy.

"I'm blessed if I know what to think," said Lowther, in dismay. "What you've been saying to me is all rot, of course."

"I've proved my words."

"Look here, I suppose you didn't pick up that card, did you?"

"The card I showed you is my father's card. Mind, not a word to Tom Merry. It is dangerous to let a lunatic know that you suspect him of being one—it is liable to send him right off his head at once. You see, it preys on the mind."

"I suppose it does," said Lowther.

"More than one man has gone mad simply through being suspected of madness, when he was only a trifle queer."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder."

"That's how Tom Merry is. It runs in the family, and generally breaks out at his present age; but if he is treated carefully, and never knows it, he may be all right. I hope so, as I said to Miss Fawcett."

"Miss Fawcett!"

"Yes, Tom Merry's old governess."

Monty Lowther's doubts were shaken. If the new boy were not what he represented himself to be, how did he know anything about Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, or, indeed, about Tom Merry himself?

Was it possible?

It was a terrible thing to think of, but it was possible—such things were the happenings of every day!

"It's rotten!" muttered Lowther.

"It runs in his family," said the new boy. "His father was the same. They keep it a dead secret from Tom, of course, in case it should prey on his mind."

"I suppose so."

"Miss Fawcett and Mr. Dodds both think that the secret should be kept from Tom; it is the only safe course to take."

"You know Mr. Dodds?"

"Yes; the curate of Huckleberry Heath, and a great friend of Tom Merry's. He and I have discussed the matter."

"Oh dear!"

"I know it's a shock to you," said the new boy sympathetically, "but I thought it better for you to know, so that you can help me."

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NEXT WEEK:

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"I don't know what to think."
Manners came into the study with a bag under his arm. He plumped it down upon the table, and grunted.
"Jolly hot weather," he said.
"Got the grub?" asked Lowther. "Turn it out. Can you open a tin of salmon, you new chap? There's a tin-opener in the drawer."
"Certainly."

Tom Merry came in by the time the salmon steak was turned out. He was looking very bright and cheerful, and the scent of the methylated spirit had been quite removed.
"Ready?" he asked.
Lowther started out of a brown study.
"Eh?" he ejaculated.
"Been to sleep?" asked Tom Merry kindly. "Are you getting into the habit of going to sleep standing up, like a horse?"
"You—you see—"
"Kettle's boiling," said Manners.
"Oh, good!"
Tom Merry made the tea and extinguished the spirit-stove. The four juniors sat down round the table to tea.
"Hand me that knife, and I'll cut some bread," said Tom Merry.

Lowther started again.
"I—I'll cut it," he exclaimed, taking hold of the knife quickly and pulling it over towards him.
"Go ahead, then."
They began tea. The new boy did not say a word. He sat still in his stolid, moveless way. The Terrible Three chatted cheerily, about cricket and school affairs. They tried to draw the new boy into the talk, but as he would not speak, they gradually dropped him out. Monty Lowther was unusually silent. When he spoke, it was with a forced cheerfulness.
He could not help thinking of what the new boy had told him.

Surely there could be nothing in it—and yet—
That "yet" worried and puzzled Lowther.
He wondered whether it would be possible, by judicious pumping, to learn something of Tom Merry's antecedents, so as to ascertain whether there might be any grounds for the new fellow's curious statement.
He knew little of Tom Merry's people.
Tom's father had been killed in battle on the Indian frontier long ago, and his mother had died when he was a child. His uncle in America was his mother's brother, and so would not possess the supposed taint of the Merry family. Certainly Mr. Poinsett was sane enough.

Of Tom Merry's father's relations Lowther knew nothing—he had no near relations. It was impossible to learn anything from them.
"Do you remember your father, Tom?" Monty Lowther asked abruptly.
Tom Merry stared at him blankly.
The chums of the Shell had been discussing cricket, and Lowther's question was asked suddenly, without any reference of the matter under discussion.

"My father!" Tom Merry repeated.
"Yes."
"What about him?"
"I asked if you remembered him."
"Yes, indistinctly," said Tom, in wonder. "I was a kid when I was sent home from India. I was born there, and Miss Fawcett brought me home. I didn't see my dad after that—I can just remember him in his uniform."
"Did you like him?"
"I suppose so."
"You don't remember anything about him?"
"Very little, excepting that he was kind to me—and he was a splendid chap, from what I've heard."
"Did he have a violent temper?"
"A what?"
"A—a violent temper—I mean, was he excitable?"
"Excitable?"
"Yes."

Tom Merry rose to his feet and looked steadily at Lowther. Monty Lowther coloured under his searching gaze, and dropped his eyes.
"I think you must be ill," said Tom Merry quietly.
"We're talking about Fatty Wynn's bowling, and you ask me whether I remember my father, and whether he was excitable. What's the connection?"
"I—I—"

"What are you driving at? Blessed if I don't begin to think that you're off your silly chump, Monty."
"You—you see—"
"I don't remember whether my dad was excitable, but I shall get excitable myself if you don't stop talking piffle," said Tom Merry crossly.
"I—I—"

"Yes; why don't you explain yourself, Monty?" said Manners. "What do you want to know about Tom Merry's governor for?"
"Oh, nothing."
"Merely talking out of your hat?" asked Manners.
"Well, you see—"
"Well, what?"
"Oh, nothing."

Then Manners stared. Certainly Monty Lowther had never been quite so strange in his manner before.
There was a knock at the door, and Figgins & Co. came in. Figgins grinned genially at the chums of the School House.
"Having tea?" he remarked. "Good! So will I!"
"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.
"Yes, here, here," grinned Fatty Wynn, "I'm hungry! It's a curious thing, but my appetite is always good at this time of the year—"
"Sit down," said Tom Merry, laughing, "there's heaps."
And Figgins & Co. sat down to tea; and over tea they learned all that was to be learned of the Boy from Nowhere. But they did not learn what Monty Lowther could have told them.

CHAPTER 7.
A House Row.

MONTY LOWTHER sat very silent at the table.
There was a worry on his mind, and he could not help showing it. He dropped out of the talk as the Boy from Nowhere had done, and sat with a glum frown on his brow. After a time he made an excuse to get up and leave the study, and he closed the door behind him as he went.

Figgins of the New House looked surprised.
"Nothing wrong, I hope?" he asked.
"Not that I know of," said Tom Merry.
"I mean, if we've come in at an unlucky moment, and interrupted one of the family rows, we're willing to buzz off while you finish," said Figgins genially.
"Or we'll stay as spectators, and see fair play," suggested Kerr.

"Or you can leave it till after tea," said Fatty Wynn.
"Pass the shrimp paste."
Tom Merry laughed.
"It's all right," he said. "We haven't been having a row; but Lowther has been talking out of his hat for some reason. Perhaps he's feeling seedy."
"Oh, all serene, then!" said Figgins. "Pass the ham! After tea we'll do some of the 'Weekly.' We've rather been letting it slide lately, owing to travels in the South Seas, and that sort of thing."

The Boy from Nowhere looked at Figgins.
"The 'Weekly'?" he said. "What is that?"
"Our school paper," Figgins explained. "We publish it weekly, excepting when it is missed—which is pretty often. It's called 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' but that's really only a matter of form. It's really a New House paper."

"Rats!"
"All the good stuff is written by New House fellows, I mean," Figgins went on. "We let Tom Merry call himself editor."
"I am editor!" shouted Tom Merry.
"Merely a matter of form," said Figgins loftily. "Besides, I've been thinking that it's time there was a change of editorship, and that the chief editor ought to be chosen from the New House for this term."

"More rats!"
"You see, you School House swankers—"
"You New House asses—"
"Look here—"
"Look here—"
"We came over here on a peaceful visit," said Figgins, beginning to glare. "If we have any rot, though, we are quite ready to wipe up the study, and everybody in it."
"Bah!"
"Bosh!"

"Hold on a minute, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn, who was bolting jam-tarts as fast as he could. "Hold on; don't have a row till I've finished the grub. It's ripping."
"You fat bounder—"

Gobble, gobble! went Fatty Wynn. There was a storm coming, and before it burst, Fatty Wynn meant to get through as many of the tarts as possible.
"Let the grub alone," said Kerr. "We were quite willing to come to tea, but if Tom Merry prefers a row—"
"Not much choice about having a row, when there are New House chaps in the study," said Manners. "There won't be so much row if you shut up."
"Fathead!"
"Look here—"
Gobble, gobble!

"Peace, my children, peace," said Tom Merry. "Figgins, don't be an ass!"

"What!"

"Don't play the giddy goat. Of course, we haven't any special desire to keep the editorship of the 'Weekly' in this study, only we know that it wouldn't be properly managed in the New House."

"Well, of all the cheek——"

"So, for perfectly disinterested reasons, I'm going to remain chief editor of the 'Weekly,'" said Tom Merry. "It's really a great sacrifice on my part."

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, as chief editor, I have to keep an eye on the copy, and so I have to read all the contributions sent in—including yours."

"Why, you ass——"

"The other fellows can skip the page when they come to the 'Mystery of a Bandbox,' by G. Figgins, but I can't," said Tom Merry. "Under the circumstances, I expect sympathy."

G. Figgins rose to his feet.

"You utter ass——" he began.

"Order!"

"My serial story is the best thing that has ever appeared in the 'Weekly.'"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

Gobble, gobble! from Fatty Wynn.

"Excepting Kerr's chapters on playing the violin, and his articles on music," said Figgins generously.

"You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours," murmured Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the serial is getting better every instalment," said Figgins. "I've been doing some of it this afternoon. It goes on from Chapter X—What the Bandbox Contained. It runs like this——"

"Order!"

"Like this: 'Aubrey opened the bandbox. What was his horror——'"

"Blessed if I know," said Manners. "What was it?"

"Ass!" "What was his horror to see, lying in the bandbox——"

"Groo!"

"The severed head——"

"Ow! Chuck it!"

"The severed head——"

"Cheese it," said Tom Merry. "That's not the sort of stuff to write for the 'Weekly.' That's only fit for an American horrible."

"The severed head——" persisted Figgins.

"Stow it!"

"The severed head of a young——"

"Stop!"

"The severed head of a young cabbage——"

"Eh?"

"You ass!"

"That's where the mystery comes in," Figgins explained. "The mysterious document was concealed in the cabbage, which proved that Aubrey was the real Duke of Cashbocks, and that Adolphus de Vere was an impostor. You see, the story goes on——"

"The story goes on, but you're jolly well not going to," said Manners. "Chuck it!"

"Look here, Manners——"

"Rats!"

"If you're looking for a thick ear——"

"I'd rather have a thick ear than any more of that blessed serial."

Figgins glared.

"Then you can jolly well have it!" he said.

And he reached over the table. Manners jumped up, and his knees caught the table underneath.

Crash!

The table spun over, and the crockeryware and the tea, and the cakes and the shrimp-paste, and the rest of it, shot in an avalanche to the floor.

CHAPTER 8

Monty Lowther is Alarmed.

RASH!

"Oh!"

"Great Scott!"

"You asses!" roared Tom Merry, mopping at his knees frantically. A pot of hot tea had fallen there, and Tom was scalded. "Oh! Ow! You chumps! Yaroo!"

"Sorry! It was Figgins!"

"It was Manners!"

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

Figgins and Manners rushed at one another, and in a

moment they went whirling round the study with their arms round one another's necks.

Tom Merry rushed to interfere, but Kerr jumped in the way, and the next moment Tom Merry and Kerr were rolling on the floor in a deadly grip.

Fatty Wynn gave them one glance, and then began to pick up the farts that were strewn among the wreckage of the tea-table.

The combatants were two to two, as Lowther was absent, and the Boy from Nowhere did not interfere. Fatty Wynn was therefore disengaged, and he was improving the shining hour in his own way.

"Yaroo!"

"Oh!"

"Take that!"

"Yah!"

Gobble, gobble! from Fatty Wynn. The remainder of the tarts were disappearing at a really record speed.

There was a sudden step outside the passage, and the door was flung open, and Monty Lowther rushed in, his face wildly excited.

He gave a hurried glance round the study, and rushed at Tom Merry, and dragged him away from Kerr.

"Stop!" he shouted.

Tom Merry and Kerr were both hitting out, and as Lowther had rushed between them, Lowther had the benefit of their blows.

Biff! Biff!

The unfortunate Shell fellow gave a fearful yell, and dropped on the floor as if he had been shot.

"Oh!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Tom Merry. "Sorry! But——"

"Ow!"

"Sorry!" grinned Kerr. "But—— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!"

They raised Lowther up. He rubbed his head, and glared at them. Figgins and Manners were still rolling on the floor pommelling.

"What did you rush in for like that?" demanded Kerr.

"Who set you up as a giddy peacemaker?"

"Ow!" gasped Lowther. "Keep an eye on him!"

"Eh? On whom?"

"Tom Merry!"

"Tom Merry! Why? What do you mean?"

"He's mad!" gasped Lowther

"Eh?"

"What!" roared Tom Merry.

"That's why he's broken out like this," said Lowther gaspingly. "I—I was afraid he would! Mind he doesn't get a knife."

"My hat!"

"Look out, I say!"

"But it wasn't Tom Merry broke out—it was Figgy broke out!" yelled Kerr.

"Oh! I—I thought——"

"Look here," shouted Tom Merry wrathfully, "what do you mean by saying I'm dotty? I think you're jolly near that yourself."

"I—I——"

"What do you mean?" demanded Tom Merry, advancing upon Lowther, his hands up. "Are you looking for a thick ear?"

"You—you see——"

"I don't see at all. What do you mean by saying that I'm mad?"

"I—I mean—you can't help it—that is to say——"

"Can't help it?"

"No; it's in the blood—I mean it's in the Merry family—that is to say, it isn't! What I really mean, is—— Ow!"

Monty Lowther did not really mean to say "Ow," but Tom Merry's patience was exhausted, and he gave his chum a tap on the nose.

Lowther staggered back.

The tap was really a light one, but Monty Lowther seemed quite knocked up by it. He dodged round the fallen table and Fatty Wynn.

"Keep off!" he yelled.

"What!"

"Keep off!"

"You utter ass!"

"Don't let him get that knife, Wynn!" roared Lowther.

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Keep that knife by you."

"You chump!" roared Tom Merry. "I wasn't going to take the knife! What should I want the knife for?"

"I—I don't know! I—I thought perhaps——"

"Oh, he's rocky!" said Kerr. "Look here, Figgy, we've got into a giddy lunatic asylum by mistake, and we'd better clear."

Figgins and Manners had separated at last. Both of them looked considerably the worse for wear.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

NEXT WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"All right!" gasped Figgins. "Come on!"

"Yah! Get out, New House cads!"

"Yah! School House rotters!"

And with that exchange of compliments the foes parted. Fatty Wynn had finished up the tarts by this time, and he followed Figgins and Kerr from the study. In the Fourth Form passage as Figgins & Co. made their way out, Blake and D'Arcy were standing talking. They had heard the terrific din from the Shell passage and were wondering what was up.

"Bump them over!" muttered Figgins. "Down with the School House!"

"Hurray!"

The three juniors rushed down the passage right into Jack Blake and the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bump them!"

Blake roared.

"Hallo! Chuck it! Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

Bump! Bump!

Blake and D'Arcy dropped on the passage floor with loud bumps, and Figgins & Co. trod calmly over them and went downstairs.

Arthur Augustus sat up.

"Bai Jove! What was that?"

"Ow!" grunted Blake. "That was Figgins & Co."

"Bai Jove! The cheeky wottahs! I wufese to be tweeked in this way. I considah—"

"Ow! Ow!"

"I have been thwown quite into a fluttah. This is the second time I have been bumped ovah in this vevy passage to-day, and I wufese to stand—"

"You're not standing, you're sitting."

"I wufese to stand it. I shall give Figgins a feahful thwashi!"

Apparently Figgins did not consider the offer enticing enough—at all events, he did not come back.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet and dusted his trousers down.

"Bai Jove, I feel howwid!" he exclaimed. "I shall have to go and change my clothes for the second time this day. I wegard it as wotten!"

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Are you injahed, deah boy?"

"No; I'm doing this for fun!" groaned Blake.

"Bai Jove, I'm awfily sowwy!"

"Oh, buzz off, and don't jaw, and it won't be so bad!" said Blake ungratefully.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Rats!"

And Blake limped into his study, and D'Arcy limped away to the dormitory for a change of clothes—the second that afternoon—both of them breathing vengeance upon the heroes of the New House.

CHAPTER 9.

More Madness.

TOM MERRY glared at Monty Lowther after Figgins & Co. had left the Shell study. He was very excited and very exasperated.

"Look here, will you explain what the dickens you mean?" he exclaimed.

Lowther blinked at him doubtfully.

"What I mean?" he repeated.

"Yes. Explain yourself."

"You—you see—"

"What are you keeping at that distance for? Do you think I'm dangerous?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Dangerous?" Lowther murmured.

"My hat, he's turning himself into a giddy parrot!" said Manners. "Have you really gone off your rocker, Monty?"

"Oh, he's as mad as a hatter!" said Tom Merry crossly.

"Am I?" said Lowther warmly. "I'm not the chap here that's mad—though there may be one here who is."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Tom Merry looked at him very curiously and a little anxiously. He wondered whether the blazing heat of the July weather had affected Monty Lowther's head a little.

"You're not well, Lowther!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I am."

"You seem jolly queer."

"I'm all right."

"Hadh't you better go and lie down for a bit?" said Tom Merry.

"What should I lie down for?"

"Until you get—well, calmer."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

"I'm calm enough, I think!" shouted Lowther. "So long as you keep calm it's all right. That's what I'm afraid of."

"You're afraid of what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Tom Merry and Manners exchanged glances. They were beginning to feel seriously alarmed about Lowther. Certainly his manner was very strange, and his words were stranger still.

"Won't you go up to the dorm. for a bit, Monty?" asked Manners softly. "It will do you good to lie down in the cool for a bit."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther.

And he stamped out of the study and slammed the door after him.

Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another in consternation.

"What on earth's the matter with Lowther?" Manners exclaimed.

"Must be the heat," said Tom Merry.

"Perhaps I can explain."

The chums of the Shell looked round as the Boy from Nowhere spoke in his quiet voice. They had almost forgotten his presence in the study.

"What do you know about it?" Tom Merry demanded a little acidly. The curious events of the afternoon had set his nerves on edge a little.

"I could explain what is the matter with Lowther."

"Well, what is it?"

"He's mad," said the new boy, lowering his voice to a whisper. "Mad?"

"What?"

"Hush! It's a dead secret. His people are keeping it from him in case he should get frightened at knowing there is madness in the family and go mad in consequence. If he is never told he may never go quite mad."

"What on earth are you driving at? How do you know anything about Lowther, when you've never seen him before to-day?" demanded Manners.

"I was sent here to see him."

"What?"

"I was sent here by my father, Dr. Ballantyne, the brain specialist, to look after Lowther," said the new boy, with perfect calmness. "His people engaged my father to take up the case."

"My hat!"

"Here is my father's card."

The chums of the Shell stared at the card of Dr. Ballantyne, mental specialist.

"Mad!" muttered Tom Merry. "Oh, impossible!"

"It is true!"

"But Lowther—Monty Lowther—oh, you ass!"

"Haven't you noticed how he has been acting?" said the new boy. "It breaks out in the Lowther family at just his age, and that is why I have been sent here to keep watch over him. Mind, he must not be told a word! If he realised the awful truth it would have the effect of sending him quite mad at once."

"Good heavens!"

Tom Merry and Manners sat down quite limply. Monty Lowther's extraordinary conduct certainly required some explaining; and here was the explanation, with a vengeance. Strange and startling as it was, it seemed only too true.

Monty Lowther had acted like a fellow whose brain was not quite steady, there was no doubt at all about that—unless, of course, he had something on his mind. And what could he possibly have upon his mind?

The new boy's strange coming to St. Jim's was explained, too, by the fact that he was the son of a mental specialist, and had been sent to St. Jim's to look after Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners were silent for a few minutes. They were not able to realise the fearful truth all at once.

Tom Merry broke silence at last.

"It's impossible—impossible!"

He almost groaned out the words.

The new boy shook his head.

"It is quite true," he said—"perfectly true. It is terribly hard for Lowther; but I hope it will not be necessary for him to be placed under restraint."

"Under restraint! Good heavens!"

"That's what it may come to. I am sent here to watch over him, and see what turn it takes with him."

"Oh, dear!"

"But let us hope for the best."

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "I can't believe this! I won't say a word to Lowther, in case—in case it should be true. But—"

"But keep your eyes on him—that's all," said the new boy.



Major Cherry grasped his son's hand. "Bob! You've saved me—you and the others?" "Yes dad, and thank goodness we found you—thank goodness we came in time," said Bob. (An incident in the grand, long, complete tale of the Chums of Greyfriars entitled, "Bob Cherry in Search of His Father," by Frank Richards, which is contained in this week's issue of the "Magnet Library." Now on sa'e. Price One Penny.)

"I shall do that!" Tom Merry rose to his feet. "Let's get out, Manners—I feel choked here."

"Right you are! Come on!"

The chums of the Shell left the study.

The Boy from Nowhere remained alone in the room.

As soon as he was alone the dull expression passed from his face. He crossed to the door and closed it carefully.

Then he capered round the room, waving his arms and gesticulating in a peculiar way, chuckling all the time.

Anybody looking at the Boy from Nowhere at that moment would have come to only one conclusion—that he was insane. Suddenly the door opened.

It opened quietly; and the new boy was too occupied in his strange diversion to notice either the tap on the door or the fact that it was opening.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in.

The swell of St. Jim's glanced at the Boy from Nowhere, and seemed to become rooted to the spot.

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and looked again, as if he doubted the evidence of his eyes.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated at last.

At the sound of his voice the Boy from Nowhere became

aware of his presence, and he stopped suddenly in his capering and stood quite still.

The dull look came back on his face, but in his eyes now was a haunted look of fear and apprehension.

He looked like a fellow who had been caught in the act of betraying himself and did not know what was to come of it.

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I—I—" stammered the new boy.

"I came here to speak to Tom Mewwy," said the swell of the Fourth. "I see that he is not heah. I twust I am not intewwuptin' you?"

"Not at all. I—I—"

"I twust you are not off your silly wockah?" said D'Arcy. "Eh?"

"What were you capewin' about like a giddy lunatic for, you ass?"

"It was—was—was a new kind of exercise," said the new boy haltingly. "It's supposed to make the joints supple, you know."

D'Arcy gave him a curious look.

"Well, I suppose it would do that," he agreed.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"Do you often take that exercise, dear boy?"

"Oh, no—I mean yes—sometimes."

D'Arcy gave him another curious look—a very curious look—and quitted the study. He returned to Study No. 6.

"Blake, dear boy," he said, "that new chap is quite off his giddy wockah."

Blake grunted.

"Not the only chap at St. Jim's in that state," he said.

"Weally, Blake—"

"What was he doing?"

"Capewin' about the study and wavin' his hands in the air and gwinnin'."

"Great Scott! Nice for Tom Merry!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus looked very thoughtful indeed.

CHAPTER 10.

Dark Secrets.

TOM MERRY was of such an open, sunny nature that anything in the shape of a secret worried him, and he could not help showing when he was worried. When he went out with Manners after the strange communication from the new boy his face was darkly overcast.

The friendship of the Terrible Three was a very strong one—three brothers could not have been more firmly united. True, there had been tiffs, even rows, in Tom Merry's study, but never of a lasting nature.

The friendship of the three juniors was firmly cemented, and would last as long as they lived.

The discovery that there was something wrong with such a close chum as Monty Lowther was weighing like lead upon the minds of Tom Merry and Manners.

It seemed only too true, but if Lowther had developed insanity or anything else it would have made no difference to his friends.

They would only have thought of helping him, comforting him, and looking after him, and making everything as easy for him as possible.

The thought that there was insanity in the Lowther family, and that it might break out at any moment in poor Monty, was like torture to them, and it made them very tender in their feelings towards him.

"It's simply awful!" Tom Merry said, as they walked out into the cool dusk of the old quad.

Manners nodded.

"It's frightful!" he said. "But—but it can't be true."

"And yet—"

"There's a 'yet,' that's the worst of it," said Manners. "It's awful to think of! I wonder if it would do any good asking Lowther's people?"

"He lived with his uncle at home," Tom Merry remarked musingly. "His uncle never married—that may have been the reason. He took Lowther away from St. Jim's once, possibly because of this."

"It won't do to say a word to Monty?"

"Oh, no! If it's true, he must never know it."

"Poor old Monty!"

There was a shout from the dusk of the quad. Three or four figures loomed up from the dimness shadows of the elms.

"School House cads! There they are!"

Tom Merry raised his hand as Figgins & Co. rushed up.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"That's all very well!" said Figgins indignantly. "Blow pax! We're jolly well going to bump you!"

"Hold on, Figgy!"

There was something in Tom Merry's voice that struck Figgins. He dropped his hands at once. The hostility between School House and New House was only half serious, and in times of trouble it was quite forgotten.

"Anything wrong?" asked Figgins.

"Yes."

"Sorry! Can we do anything?"

Tom Merry hesitated. He was sorely in need of advice on the subject, but he felt that it would not do to tell Lowther's terrible secret to anyone.

"No," he said heavily. "It's a bit of a worry on our minds, that's all, but it's another fellow's secret, and we can't very well tell you. I'd be glad to have your opinion, old chap, but it can't be done."

"That's how it is," said Manners.

"Sorry!" said Figgins again.

"Anything about grub?" asked Fatty Wynn anxiously.

"Is it something gone wrong with a feed, or anything of that sort? If it is, I might be of service."

Tom Merry grinned.

"No, it's not that," he said.

"If you chaps want to stand a feed we're in funds just now, and we'd help," said Fatty. "We'd be glad."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

"It's not that, thanks."

"Oh, you said it was serious, so I thought it might be," Fatty Wynn explained.

And Figgins & Co. walked away.

Figgins looked worried.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" he said. "Tom Merry's not the chap to make a mountain out of a molehill, so I suppose there must be something wrong. I wonder what it is? I hope there's no trouble ahead for them, anyway."

Kerr pinched his arm.

"Looks as if there's trouble in the School House, anyway," he said. "Look there!"

In the deepening dusk of the summer evening a figure was pacing up and down in the quad, dimly seen as it passed lighted windows.

It was Monty Lowther.

The Shell fellow had his hands thrust deeply into his trousers' pockets. His head was sunk forward a little, and he was evidently buried in gloomy thought.

The New House chums gazed at him in silence for some moments. They had seldom seen a lad so deeply plunged in gloomy reverie.

"Looks like trouble, and no mistake," said Figgins.

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Fatty Wynn.

"Ass!"

"Well, I feel like that when I'm hungry," said the fat Fourth-Former; "and there's something in the air at this time of the year, too, that makes a chap extra hungry. I feel it myself."

"He's got something on his mind," said Kerr.

"That's jolly certain."

"Let's ask him to a feed in our study, and cheer him up," said Fatty Wynn.

"Well, we might do that."

Monty Lowther paced on, to and fro, to and fro, the grim frown upon his face never relaxing. The New House fellows were quite close upon him before he saw them, and then he started.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Hands off! I don't want a row now—I'm worried. Buzz off!"

"What's wrong?" asked Figgins.

"Oh, nothing."

"Then what are you worried about?"

"Well, you see—"

Monty Lowther broke off. Like Tom Merry, he would have been glad to consult Figgins and Kerr—they were both sensible fellows, and could have given him counsel perhaps; but, like Tom Merry again, he did not feel that he had a right to betray such a secret.

"Well?" said Kerr.

"Oh, nothing!"

"You're bothering over something," said Figgins. "If it's anything we could help in we'd be glad."

"Thanks, awfully, but—but it's not my secret, really," said Lowther. "I dare say it will come out all right."

"My hat! Is it the same thing that's bothering Tom Merry?"

Lowther started.

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes. We've just seen him, and he's got some worry, and doesn't seem like telling anybody what it is."

Monty Lowther turned quite pale.

"Does he know?" he gasped.

"Know what?"

"About—about— But, no, he can't know! Nobody could have told him."

"Told him what?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Blessed if you're not getting jolly mysterious," said Figgins, in wonder. "Then it's not the same thing that's bothering Tom Merry?"

"I—I suppose not."

"He's got something on his mind, anyway."

Monty Lowther groaned.

"Poor old Tom!"

"Oh!" said Figgins. "Is that it? Is there something the matter with him?"

"Yes—no—h'm—"

"Not getting ill, is he?" asked Fatty Wynn. "I've noticed that he's not very careful in his diet. I never thought he had quite enough to eat."

"It's—it's not that," said Monty Lowther. "You see, he—he— It's nothing! Besides, it's a secret, and I can't tell you. Goodness knows, I'd be glad to have some advice, and I'd ask you, only I can't."

"I don't make it out," said Kerr. "You're worried over Tom Merry for something."

"Yes, that's it. Look here," said Lowther, sinking his voice, "you've just been talking to Tom Merry, haven't you?"

"Yes, a few minutes ago."
 "Did you notice anything peculiar—anything a little unusual, or anything of that sort?"
 "Yes, I did."
 Lowther groaned again.
 "It's coming on, then."
 "What's coming on?"
 "Oh, nothing."

And without waiting for any further talk, Monty Lowther nodded abruptly to the New House juniors and walked away. Figgins & Co. stared at one another blankly.

"Well, my only summer hat!" Figgins exclaimed. "If that doesn't capture the giddy cake! The chap must be wandering in his mind."

"Better speak to Tom Merry about it, I should think."
 "I jolly well will!"

Figgins ran over to the School House. He found Tom Merry and Manners talking in low tones on the House steps.

"Seen Lowther?" asked Figgins.
 "Not just lately," said Tom Merry, anxious at once.
 "Have you seen him?"

"Yes, and there's something wrong with him."
 "Good heavens! What is it—quick?"

"He was wandering in his mind, I believe, and jabbering rot of all sorts. I suppose it's the heat," said Figgins. "I thought I'd just warn you to keep an eye on him, that's all. I should think he was going to be ill."

"Thanks, old son!"
 Figgins departed. Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another in utterly miserable dejection.

"It must be true," said Tom, in a low voice. "Figgins has noticed it. Poor old Monty!"

And Manners echoed his words miserably enough:
 "Poor old Monty!"

CHAPTER 11. More Lunatics.

THE Boy from Nowhere occupied a bed that night in the Shell dormitory next to Tom Merry's. In the chat of the Shell dormitory, before the boys turned in, he took no part; he preserved his dull, listless manner, as if unobservant of everything that passed round him. But some of the fellows knew him better by this time, and the Terrible Three, who sometimes had their eyes upon him, noticed how keenly his eyes would flash at times. As a matter of fact, nothing escaped him—and that fact bore out his statement that he was there to watch a fellow suspected of incipient insanity.

Tom Merry and Manners did not sleep easily. As for Monty Lowther, he lay looking into the gloom with a worry on his mind that quite banished sleep.

It was a moonlight night, and the rays of the full, round moon came in at the windows of the dormitory, and a twilight reigned in the long, lofty room.

One by one the fellows dropped off to sleep, but some remained awake—those who were worried too much to close their eyes.

It was towards midnight that there was a sound heard of someone rising from bed. Tom Merry started up at once. His thoughts were with Monty Lowther. He sat up and peered through the gloom.

"Is that you, Monty?"
 "Eh?" came back a voice from Monty Lowther's bed.

"Oh, you're not asleep?"

"No. You're not, either, Tom?"

"No. I don't feel like it, somehow."

"Poor old Tom!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean nothing."

"Was it you getting up just now, Monty?"

"I? No!"

"Who was it, then?"

"I don't know."

"Somebody's up," said Manners. "Look there!"

A figure moved in the dim light of the dormitory. It passed into the broad rays from the moon at the window, and they recognised the Boy from Nowhere.

Tom Merry called out to him:

"Hallo! What are you up to?"

The new boy came back to his bed immediately.

"I couldn't sleep," he said; "that's all."

"Well, don't disturb everybody else," said Manners, rather snappishly. The worry on his mind was beginning to tell upon Manners' temper.

"Very well," said the new boy quietly.

And he stepped into bed again.

The chums of the Shell dropped off to sleep towards morning, and when daylight came, and the rising-bell clanged through the sunny air, they were still sleeping soundly.

Kangaroo shook Tom Merry by the shoulder.
 The hero of the Shell started up with an exclamation. The Cornstalk grinned down at him with a dripping sponge in his hand.

"Can't you hear the rising-bell?" he demanded.
 Tom Merry rubbed his eyes.

"Yaw—aw—aw!"
 "Well, that's a sensible remark to make, I must say!"

said Kangaroo. "I suppose what you really want is a little help in waking up."

"I—oh—Oooch!"
 The dripping sponge descended upon Tom Merry's face.

He leaped up in bed with a wild gasp.
 "Ow! You utter ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll—I'll—"

"That's all right. I'm going to help Manners to wake up. He seems as sleepy as you are. So does Lowther."

"You're jolly well not!" said Manners, sitting up in bed. "If you bring that blessed sponge near me, I'll jolly well buzz this boot at you!"

"Turn out, then!"
 Manners turned out. Monty Lowther was still fast asleep, and muttering in his sleep. Evidently the rising-bell had not penetrated his slumber, and, to judge by the moving of his lips, he was in the grip of a nightmare.

Kangaroo lowered the sponge. He did not want to wake Monty Lowther too suddenly. As he bent over the sleeper to shake him gently, a word dropped faintly from Lowther's lips.

"Mad!"
 Kangaroo gave a jump.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.
 "What's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry anxiously at once.

"Lowther's got a horrid dream, I should say. — He's muttering about madness."

"Oh!"
 "Wake him up!" exclaimed Manners.

"Yes, rather!"
 Kangaroo shook Lowther gently by the shoulder. Monty opened his eyes, and stared wildly at the Cornstalk.

"What is it? He's mad!" he muttered.
 "Eh? Who's mad?"

"He is— I—I mean— Oh, nothing!" said Monty Lowther, beginning to recover himself. "I—I've been dreaming, I suppose."

"I guess you have," said Kangaroo. "You've been having nightmares, I guess, you silly owl! This is what comes of sleeping late in the morning."

"Oh, rats!"
 "Will you get up now, or would you like the cold sponge down the back of your neck?" asked the Cornstalk politely.

Monty Lowther decided to get up. He went down with the rest of the Shell, looking very pale and worried. As a matter of fact, he had been dreaming that Tom Merry's insanity had taken a homicidal turn, and that his chum had been after him with a chopper.

He looked uneasily at Tom Merry as they went downstairs. He noticed that the hero of the Shell was looking pale and harassed.

Tom Merry had enough to be harassed about. From that muttered word of Monty Lowther's it looked as if the lad were aware of his malady, and as if it were weighing upon his mind, even in his dreams.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy met the juniors in the passage downstairs. The swell of St. Jim's raised his hat in his Chesterfieldian manner.

"Bai Jove! You're all lookin' wathah seeday this mornin'!" he remarked.

"We're all right," said Manners shortly.

"Well, you don't look all right," said Jack Blake. "Have you been keeping it up in the dorm.—devouring the giddy jam-sponge and the unwholesome doughnut in the small hours of the morning?"

"Ass!"
 Tom Merry and Lowther walked on. Blake caught Manners by the arm. Manners stopped with a growl. The usually calm and quiet Manners was very upset and sharp-tempered just now.

"What's the row?" he demanded.
 "You all look seedy," said Blake. "I hope there's nothing wrong."

"Oh, rats!"
 "Bai Jove! I must say you are vewy polite, Mannahs," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I wegard your weply as wotten and wude."

"Bosh!"
 "You are perfectly cowwect in descwibin' your ow wemarks as bosh. But—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Br-r-r-r!"
Manners jerked his sleeve away from Jack Blake, and walked away. The chums of the Fourth Form stared at him in amazement.
"Well, my hat!" muttered Blake. "I don't think I ever saw anything quite like that before. What's the matter with Manners?"
"Bai Jove! I wegard him as a wude beast."
"He must be ill!"
"Even illness is no excuse for bad mannaahs," said D'Arcy, in a very stately way. "I shall no longah wegard Mannaahs as a fiwied. I shall ewase his name fwom my list of acquaintances."
"But I wonder—"
The Boy from Nowhere had stopped, and was listening. He gave Jack Blake such a peculiarly significant look that Blake stopped short in his remark, and stared at him.
"Do you know anything about it?" he asked.
The new boy nodded.
"Yes."
"What is the matter, then?"
"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! What's the mattah with Mannaahs?"
The new boy lowered his voice mysteriously, and whispered:
"He's mad!"

CHAPTER 12.

The Tact of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY gave such a jump that his eyeglasses jerked out of his eye, and fluttered at the end of its cord. Jack Blake gasped, and stared at the new boy blankly.
"Mad!" he murmured.
"Hush!"
"Did you say mad?"
"Yes. But hush!"
"Off his wockah, do you mean?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in amazement.
"Yes."
"Rot!" said Blake.
"I have been sent here to watch over him," said the new boy quietly. "I am the son of a mental specialist, and I have come here specially to watch over Manners. He has it in his blood, you know, and in his family. It breaks out just at his present age. That is why I came to St. Jim's."
"Great Scott!"
"Here is my father's card, if you want proof."
Blake and D'Arcy stared at Dr. Ballantyne's professional card.
"Well, bai Jove!"
"Mind, not a word to Manners," said the new boy.
"He does not know it himself, and if he knew it, it might send him right off immediately."
"Good heavens!" muttered Blake. "But—but it's horrible!"
"He may recover if the secret is carefully kept from him," said the new boy. "I am here to watch if he shows any symptoms of becoming really insane. So far he has shown only a few slight signs—such as his conduct just now."
"Oh, dear!"
"Bai Jove, this is feahful! I shall not ewase his name fwom my list of acquaintances aftah all. I did not know the poor chap was off his wockah."
"It's awful!" said Blake.
"I thought I'd better explain to you," said the new boy. "But mind, not a word to anybody else. I rely upon you."

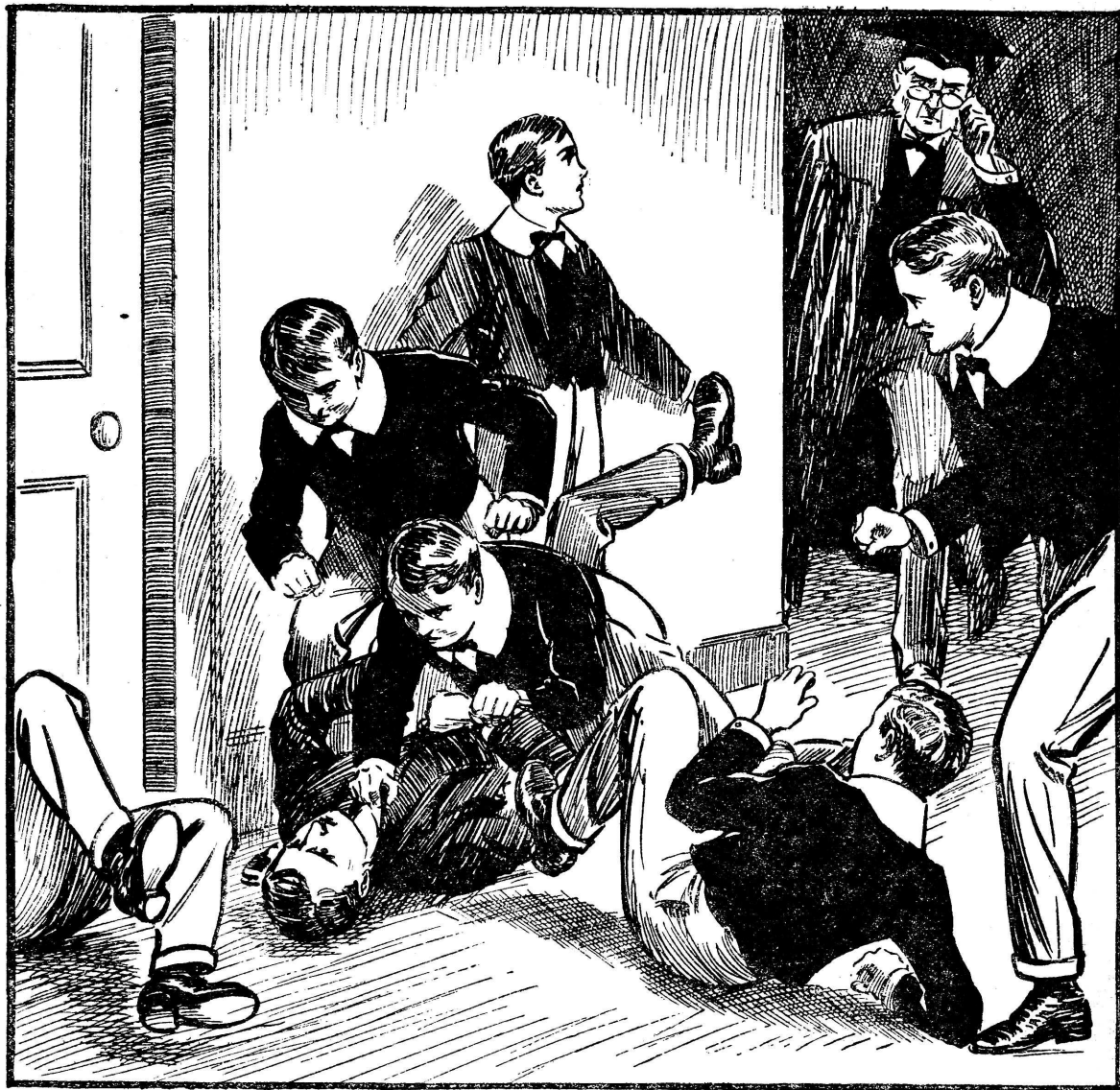
And he walked away, leaving Blake and D'Arcy quite overwhelmed.
"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove!"
"It's horrible!"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"But—but perhaps it's not true," said Blake.
"He showed us his fathah's card," said D'Arcy, to whom the professional-looking inscription of "Dr. Ballantyne, Mental Specialist" was convincing enough.
Blake nodded slowly.
"And I've heard of that name, too," he said. "Dr. Ballantyne keeps a home for mentally deficient people on the south coast. I remember seeing the name in the papers once, in connection with some chap who escaped."
"Bai Jove! That's pwoof, then."
"It looks like it. But—"
"I'm afwaid it's only too twue, deah boy," said D'Arcy, in great distress. "You see, Mannaahs was vewy wude just now, and a chap who is wude without weason must be a bit off his wockah, you know."
"I wonder if Tom Merry knows?"
"That may be why they're lookin' so wowwied," said D'Arcy. "The new chap may have told them."
"Yes, perhaps. But—"
"But we'd bettah not mention it to them. It would be wough to give poor old Mannaahs away if they don't know," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "The new chap is in the same studey, and he can keep an eye on Mannaahs."
"Yes, that's true."
"I weally had an idea that the new chap was a bit wocky in the uppah stowy himself," the swell of St. Jim's remarked, in a thoughtful way. "Pewpaws it comes from livin' among lunatics, you know—it may be catchin'."
"Let's go and look after Manners," said Blake abruptly.
"We can lead him on to talk, and judge by what he says whether he's rocky."
"Bai Jove, that's a jolly good idea!"
"We might ask the other chaps if they've noticed anything, too."
"Good bizney."
Herries was the first fellow they asked. Herries was coming in from the quad, and he was looking red and rather excited. They stopped him.
"Have you seen Manners?" asked Blake.
"Yaas, wathah! Have you seen Mannaahs, deah boy?"
Herries snorted.
"Yes, I have," he said. "I've seen the idiot!"
"Oh! What makes you think him an idiot?"
"He's an idiot or a luratic—I don't care which."
Blake and D'Arcy exchanged significant looks. Here was proof, if they wanted it. Herries had evidently noticed Manners's strange mental state all of his own accord.
"But what has he done, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.
"I just asked him to look at Towser—my bulldog Towser," said Herries. "Towser's learned to sit up and ask for biscuits. What do you think Manners said?"
"Blessed if I know!"
"He said Towser was a silly beast, and I was a silly ass not to have him drowned," said Herries wrathfully.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Eh? Why, you're as big an idiot as Manners!" exclaimed Herries. "I can jolly well tell you that my dog Towser—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Blake and D'Arcy walked on, leaving Herries to expend his indignant eloquence upon the desert air.
Manners was in the quad, strolling about aimlessly with his hands in his pockets. Nobody could have looked at him without guessing that he had something on his mind.
"There he is," said Blake.
"Yaas, wathah! Suppose you leave the talkin' to me, deah

"GEM" FREE HAMPER WINNERS.

Four of the boys marked with a X on the photographs on the back page of No. 173 of the "GEM" Library, having sent in their applications, have duly received the "GEM" Free Hampers. The names and addresses of the lucky winners who attend Park School, West Ham, and Page Green Boys' School, Tottenham, are as follows:

- PARK SCHOOL, WEST HAM.
MASTER H. G. WALKER, 32, Reginald Road, Forest Gate.
MASTER R. S. DAVIS, 21, Atherton Road, Forest Gate.
MASTER R. RICHARDSON, 11, Carnarvon Road, Stratford.
PAGE GREEN BOYS' SCHOOL, TOTTENHAM.
MASTER E. G. WILKINSON, 29, Stamford Road, Broad Lane, Tottenham.

At the time of going to press, the winners of the other two Hampers have not yet been identified by Our Representative.



Knex the prefect went to the floor with a crash with the juniors sprawling all over him, and the din was fearful. In the midst of it there was the rustle of a gown, and a hurried footstep, and then a startled voice. "Good heavens! What does this mean!" "The Head!" gasped Tom Merry. (See page 5.)

boy, and I'll approach the subject in a tactful way," D'Arcy suggested. "What is required in a case like this, you know, is a fellow of tact and judgment."

Blake sniffed. Apparently he placed little reliance upon D'Arcy's tact and judgment. The swell of St. Jim's saluted Manners in his courteous manner.

"Feelin' all wight, old boy?"

Manners stared at him.

"Eh?"

"I asked you if you were feelin' all wight."

"Why shouldn't I be?"

"Oh, no weason at all," said D'Arcy, who had heard that it was wise to humour lunatics, and who was resolved to humour Manners. "No weason at all. Of course, you are feelin' all wight—isn't he, Blake?"

"Oh, yes," said Blake.

"How do you know?" said Manners peevishly. "I don't see how either of you can know how I'm feeling, as I haven't told you."

"Yaas, but—but yaas, of course! How could we know, Blake? Mannahs is quite wight."

"It's my belief you're off your rocker," said Manners crossly.

"Yaas, certainly, deah boy, so I am," said D'Arcy, still

humouring Manners. "I wondahed whether you would notice it—didn't you, Blake?"

"I noticed it long ago," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Blessed if I don't think you're both rocky," said Manners. "I suppose there's insanity in the air, or something."

"So there is, deah boy. By the way, have you evah had any lunatics in the Mannahs family before?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Before!" howled Manners.

"I—I mean, have you evah had any lunatics in the family at all?" stammered D'Arcy. "That was what I weally meant to say, you know."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Look here," said Manners, "I suppose you chaps are pulling my leg—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You—you—you frabjous chump!" said Manners. "I'm not in a temper for your funny little ways. Buzz off!"

"Certainly, deah boy! But look here, I weally should like to know exactly how you feel, you know—wethah you have a dizzy feelin' in the head, or wethah things seem to be

turnin' wound and wound, or anythin' of that sort," said D'Arcy cautiously.

"My hat! Has he been drinking, Blake?"

"Weally, you know—"

"If this is a rag, I'm fed up with it," said Manners angrily.

"If I have any more of your rot I shall dot you on the nose."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Pewwaps you wouldn't mind tellin' me whethah your fathah was mad, too?" suggested D'Arcy gently.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Blake.

"It's all wight, Blake—I'm puttin' it to him vewy tactfully."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Blake—"

Manners was glaring at the swell of St. Jim's. He did not seem to be able to find his voice for a minute, but when he found it, it sounded quite emphatic.

"You burbling ass!" he shouted. "Take that!"

Biff!

"Ow! Yow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat down in the quad. Manners stalked away, bristling with wrath. The swell of St. Jim's blinked up at Blake, who was grinning.

"Ow!" he groaned. "Ow! My nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause whatevah for wibald laughtah. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! I cannot imagine why Mannahs bwoke out like that. I am sure I was appwoachin' the subject with gweat tact and judgement. I can only conclude that he is weally a howlin' lunatic, and I shall leave him severely alone."

CHAPTER 13.

Detained.

"DODDS, by Jove!" Monty Lowther uttered that exclamation suddenly in the Shell class-room during morning lessons.

He had been in deep thought—thinking of anything but his work, however. Twice or thrice Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had called him to account, but without the effect of driving away Lowther's deep reverie.

Lowther started out of a brown study with that sudden exclamation.

The fellows turned their heads to look at him, and Mr. Linton fixed his cold, grey eyes upon the junior.

"Lowther!"

The Shell fellow coloured.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you been paying attention to the lesson, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir!"

"Is not that answer slightly contradictory, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you mean by suddenly saying 'Dodds, by Jove!' Lowther?"

"I—I—I—"

"An incessant repetition of the first personal pronoun is not an answer to my question, Lowther," said the master of the Shell, with crushing sarcasm.

And some of the Shell fellows tittered feebly, as in duty bound when their Form-master condescended to unbend so far as to make a joke.

Lowther turned crimson.

"You—you see, sir—" he stammered.

Mr. Linton shook his head.

"No, Lowther, I'm afraid I do not see; that is why I am questioning you," he said, still in the same vein of irony.

"I—I was thinking, sir—"

"You were thinking of the lesson, of course, and preparing to construe?" Mr. Linton suggested, to another soft titter from the class.

"N-n-no, sir."

"Then what were you thinking of?"

"Mr. Dodds, sir."

"Who may Mr. Dodds be?"

"A—a curate, sir—the curate of Huckleberry Heath, and a friend of Miss Priscilla Fawcett, sir."

"And why should you be thinking of him during your Latin lesson, Lowther?"

"I—I—I—I was thinking of seeing him, sir."

"During your lessons?"

Another dutiful titter.

"Oh, no, sir!" said poor Monty Lowther. "Afterwards, sir."

"Then why think about the matter when your whole attention ought to be devoted to Latin hexameters?" asked Mr. Linton.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

DON'T MISS "BOB CHERRY IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER." The Splendid, Long, Complete School Story appearing in this week's number of the "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"It suddenly came into my head, sir."

"I am afraid there was nothing in your head, then, or it could not have entered," said Mr. Linton. "I remember now meeting Mr. Dodds, whom I respect very much, but even Mr. Dodds cannot be allowed to fill your thoughts to the exclusion of your lessons, Lowther. You will stay in for an hour this afternoon and write lines."

"Oh, sir!"

"And now kindly construe."

Monty Lowther proceeded to construe in a way that brought down the vials of Mr. Linton's wrath upon him again, so that his detention for the afternoon was lengthened to an hour and a half.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and when lessons were over the boys were free until evening preparation.

After dinner, Monty Lowther had to return to the class-room, and, naturally, Tom Merry and Manners returned with him to speak words of comfort.

Mr. Linton looked in at the door.

"If you remain here, Merry and Manners, you can write out lines with Lowther," the master of the Shell said crossly.

"Oh, sir!"

"Better buzz off," said Lowther dismally. "No good you two chaps being detained, too. You can go down to the cricket."

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry.

"Never mind; it can't be helped."

"But what on earth did you mean by speaking about old Dodds suddenly in class like that, Monty?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, nothing!"

"But you must have meant something, old chap. What was it made you think of Mr. Dodds all of a sudden?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter!"

"Do you feel well, Monty?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"I don't like leaving you here alone."

"Can't be helped. Better buzz off, in case old Linton comes in again. Look here, ask Kangy to give me a look in."

"Oh, all right!"

Monty Lowther was left alone in the class-room. The clock ticked away dully over the bookcase; from the distant playing-fields, through the open windows, came the faint shouts of the juniors.

Monty Lowther's pen scratched away lazily. The number of lines he was to write during his hour and a half of detention had not been specified, but it was necessary for him to make some sort of a show of work done.

Kangaroo came in about ten minutes later. He was in cricketing-flannels, and had a bat under his arm, and a ruddy flush in his cheeks.

"Hallo!" he said. "Tom Merry says you want to speak to me. I was batting, and I couldn't come till I was out."

Monty Lowther nodded.

"It's all right!" he said. "There's no hurry. Will you do me a favour, Kangy? I'm detained here and can't get out."

"Certainly! What is it?"

"I want a telegram sent."

The Cornstalk nodded cheerfully.

"I'll take it."

"Then I'll write it out on some impot paper, and you can copy it out at the post-office," said Lowther. "It's rather important."

"I'll take it, with pleasure. But why couldn't you ask Tom or Manners while they were here?" asked Kangaroo.

"I—I don't want them to see it."

"Oh, all serene! Some giddy secret—eh?"

"Well, yes, in a way."

"Go ahead, then, I'm mum."

"I want to see Mr. Dodds," Lowther explained. "It's very important; but, of course, I can't get away from the school and go down to Huckleberry Heath. I'm going to ask him if he can come here and see me."

Kangaroo whistled.

"He'll think it's a jolly check—unless the matter is important," he said.

"Well, it is important. I may as well tell you, as you will have to read the message, anyway," said Lowther. "It's about Tom Merry. There, read it."

He handed a scribbled sheet to the Cornstalk. Kangaroo took it, in some wonder, and read what was written on it.

"Mr. Dodds, the Vicarage, Huckleberry Heath.—Can you come here? Important matter concerning Tom Merry."

"LOWTHER."

"My hat!" said Kangaroo. "He'll think Tom Merry is ill or something. Blessed if I know what to make of this, Lowther."

"No need for you to make anything of it," said Monty. "It's quite a private matter; and you've said you'll keep mum, so it's all right."

"I suppose it is," said the Cornstalk dubiously. "I don't want to be inquisitive, but—well, I suppose you know your own bizney. I should say that this would fetch Mr. Dodds here by the first train if he can get away from his duties."

"I hope it will."

"I'm off, then."

"It will be eightpence. Here you are!"

"Thanks!"

And the Cornstalk departed, whistling cheerily. Monty Lowther settled down to his imposition with a lighter heart. It had suddenly come into his mind that morning to consult Mr. Dodds on the troublesome matter that was weighing upon his mind, and it was certainly an excellent idea. According to the Boy from Nowhere, Mr. Dodds had consulted Dr. Ballantyne about having a watch set upon Tom Merry, and in that case Mr. Dodds was the one to consult. He would be able to tell Lowther exactly what to expect, and to advise him what to do. It was a great relief to Monty Lowther to feel that he had an older and wiser head to help him out.

CHAPTER 14.

The Telegram.

THE Boy from Nowhere was in the Form-room passage as Kangaroo came out. Kangaroo closed the classroom door and almost ran into the new boy as he turned to go down towards the quad.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

The pale face of the Boy from Nowhere was strangely excited.

"You have a telegram?" he asked.

"Yes."

"May I take it for you?"

Kangaroo hesitated. As a matter of fact, he would have been glad to get back to the cricket-ground, but his good-nature had led him to undertake that little commission for the detained Shell fellow.

"I don't know," he said. "Lowther asked me to take it, and I said I would."

The new boy smiled.

"But you can trust me with a telegram," he said. "I have nothing to do—I am not playing cricket—I can walk down to the post-office quite easily, you see, and take the wire to Mr. Dodds."

Kangaroo started.

"How do you know it is to Mr. Dodds?" he exclaimed.

"Is it not, then?"

"Yes, it is; but you must have been listening at the Form-room door, or you wouldn't have known it," said Kangaroo indignantly.

"I did not listen, but I heard—"

"I don't see how you could have heard without listening," said Kangaroo scornfully. "But, in any case, I don't trust this wire in your hands."

"I promise—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, I should like to take it. I—"

"You'd like to read it, I expect," said Kangaroo. "You're jolly well not going to, though. Buzz off!"

And the sturdy Cornstalk strode down the passage and passed out into the brilliant July sunshine in the quad.

The new boy's eyes glistened. He stood uncertain for some moments, and then followed the Cornstalk out into the sunshine. Kangaroo, with his cap on the back of his head, was striding towards the gates.

The Boy from Nowhere broke into a run and joined him as he was going out into the road.

"May I walk with you to Rylcombe, Noble?" he asked.

"Oh, rats! What do you want to do that for?"

"I should like to come."

"Well, I suppose you may if you like," said Kangaroo.

"The road's public property, I believe."

"Thank you!"

"Rats!"

Kangaroo's manner was abrupt enough. He did not in the least like the new boy's curiosity with regard to Lowther's telegram; and he had a strong suspicion that the new boy wanted to accompany him solely for the purpose of getting a sight of the telegram when it was handed in at the telegraph-office. And Kangaroo was grimly determined that if that was his object he should not be able to effect it.

The new boy walked silently beside the sturdy Cornstalk until the post-office in Rylcombe was reached.

"Wait outside for me," suggested Kangaroo.

The new junior shook his head.

"Oh, no; I'll come in!"

And he followed Kangaroo into the post-office.

Kangaroo took a form and wrote out the telegram, purposely placing himself so that the new boy could not get a glimpse of it.

"How many words?" asked the new boy.

"Fourteen—no, sixteen."

"Better let me count them and make sure."

"The postmaster will do that, thanks."

"Better let me—"

"Rats!"

Kangaroo handed in the form. The new boy craned his neck to see it; but Kangaroo kept the writing turned away from him.

The Cornstalk grinned as they left the post-office. The new boy's face was dark and sullen.

"Now we'll have a nice walk back to St. Jim's," grinned Kangaroo.

"Look here—"

"Well, what?"

"What was in that telegram?"

"That's Lowther's bizney—not yours, my son. I knew all the time you wanted to spy into it, and I wasn't going to let you," said Kangaroo coolly. "Go and ask Monty Lowther if you want to know about it."

"Why should he be wiring to Mr. Dodds?"

"Ask him."

"About Tom Merry, too?"

"Better inquire."

The new boy's face clouded angrily. Kangaroo strode on, and left him behind in the road.

It was some ten minutes after the Cornstalk had gone back to the cricket-field that the new boy arrived at St. Jim's.

He crossed the quad, direct to the School House, and made his way to the Shell Form-room.

Monty Lowther was still there, his pen travelling at a snail's pace over the impot paper.

He looked up as the Boy from Nowhere came in. The latter closed the door and came quickly towards the detained junior.

"I've got a message for you," he said.

"From whom?"

"Harry Noble."

"Kangaroo?" exclaimed Lowther anxiously. "Hasn't he sent the telegram?"

"No. The wind blew the paper away, and he's asked me to get it from you again. He's waiting at the gate now."

"Why can't he come and get it again himself?"

"He's talking to Tom Merry."

Monty Lowther rose from his desk and crossed to a window, mounted upon a pair of steps, and looked out.

From the Shell class-room a view could be had of most of the quad, with the gates in the distance, and the cricket-field in another direction. Monty Lowther looked towards the gates and saw Taggles, the porter, there, and no one else. On the cricket-field a batsman was running, and even at that great distance Monty Lowther could recognise Tom Merry of the Shell.

He descended from the steps, and gave the new boy a quiet, scornful look.

"You have lied," he said.

"What?"

"Kangaroo is not at the gates, and Tom Merry is on the cricket-ground. I don't believe a word you've said."

"Look here—"

"Oh, get out! If Kangy has lost my message he can come and ask me for it again himself. I sha'n't tell you a word of it."

The new boy gritted his teeth.

"What have you sent Mr. Dodds a telegram about?" he asked.

"Mind your own bizney."

"Is it about what I told you of Tom Merry?"

"Find out!"

"I—I—hang you! I tell you—"

"Oh, buzz off!" said Monty Lowther. "You've bothered me enough, and I'm about fed up with you. Buzz off, or I'll help you, with my boot."

The new boy gave him an angry look, and quitted the Form-room. Monty Lowther settled down again to his detention work till the clock struck the hour of his release, and he went down to the cricket-field to join Tom Merry.

ANSWERS

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

CHAPTER 15.

A Surprise for Mr. Dodds.

CRICKET ceased as the dusk fell in the old quad. The juniors, with bats and stumps under their arms, streamed in a warm and ruddy crowd towards their houses.

The Terrible Three walked together, as usual, and they were looking a little more cheerful than of late. The grand old summer game had cheered them up, and banished their troubles from their minds for a little while.

Toby, the new page, met the chums of the Shell as they came into the School House. He had a telegram in his hand.

"For Master Lowther," he said.

"Thank you, Toby."

Monty Lowther took the telegram.

Manners and Tom Merry went on, while Lowther passed into the hall, and opened the buff envelope.

It was a reply from Mr. Dodds.

"Coming down this evening.—DODDS."

That was all.

But it removed a great weight from Monty Lowther's mind. He felt that things would go better when the handsome, athletic curate arrived. Mr. Dodds was just the man for a boy to go to in a time of difficulty.

Lowther followed his chums to the study in the Shell passage. He had to let Tom Merry know that Mr. Dodds was coming, though, of course, it was necessary to keep secret the reason for the curate's long journey to St. Jim's.

"Any news?" asked Manners, as Monty Lowther came in. Lowther had put the telegram into his pocket.

He nodded.

"Yes; we're going to have a visitor."

"Good! Who?"

"Mr. Dodds."

"Dodds!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in surprise. "Old Dodds! What is he coming down for?"

"To see us."

"Was the wire from him?"

"Yes."

"Let's see it," said Manners.

Lowther laid the telegram down on the table. The chums of the Shell glanced at it, and Tom Merry looked very puzzled.

"Well, I'm glad Dodds is coming down," he said. "I haven't seen him since we came back from the cruise in the Pacific, and I shall be glad to see him again. But it's very odd that he should wire to you instead of to me."

"Jolly hungry," said Monty Lowther. "What is there for tea?"

"Eggs and ham," said Manners.

"Good; let's get 'em ready."

"Yes; but how is it Dodds wires to you instead of to me," Tom Merry asked. "He knows you, but not so well as he knows me."

"Oh, that's all right," said Lowther. "Let's have some tea, and talk about the cricket. We've got to settle something about the Grammar School match."

"Yes, but—"

"Where's the kettle?"

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "I don't quite catch on—"

"I'll go and fill the kettle while you get the spirit stove going," said Monty Lowther.

And he left the study with the kettle in his hand. Tom Merry and Manners looked at one another.

"It's coming on again, I suppose," said Tom Merry, in a low voice. "Dodds must have heard something about Lowther's being rocky; you know, and he's coming down to see him on that account."

Manners nodded.

"I suppose so," he said. "Poor old Lowther! It's rotten for him! But I shall be glad to see Mr. Dodds. We can tell him all about it, and ask his advice."

"Good idea."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked into the study. "You fellows comin' to do the 'Weekly' in our study this evenin'," he asked.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No; we've got to entertain a visitor," he said. Mr. Dodds is coming down to see us."

"Bai Jove! I shall be glad to see Mr. Dodds again, deah boys. I suppose you don't mind if I give you a look in."

"Pleased, I'm sure."

"Besides, I want to consult Mr. Dodds about something—about Mannahs—"

"Eh?" said Manners.

"I—I mean, I want to speak to him," said D'Arcy hastily. "It's all right—I'll look in duwin' the evenin', deah boys."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

And the swell of St. Jim's departed before Manners could make any further remark.

"Blessed if there doesn't seem to be insanity in the air now," said Manners peevishly. "Anybody might take the School House for a giddy lunatic-asylum. I—"

"Hush, here's Monty"

Monty Lowther came in with the kettle of water, and no more was said upon the subject.

The chums of the Shell had their tea, and then tackled their preparation, to get that over if possible before Mr. Dodds arrived, so that they would have more time to devote to their visitor.

"By the way, I wonder where that new chap is," Tom Merry remarked. "I haven't seen him for some time."

"Oh, he hasn't any prep. to do," said Manners carelessly. "No need for him to come in. I daresay he's somewhere."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, I suppose he is," he agreed. There was a tap at the door. "Come in, fathead."

The door opened.

"Thank you," said a cheery voice.

It was Mr. Dodds.

Tom Merry jumped up with a crimson face.

"I'm sorry, sir," he exclaimed, "I—I thought it was one of the chaps from down the passage. Please come in, sir. We're jolly glad to see you."

The big, athletic curate of Huckleberry Heath came into the study. Tom Merry swung round the arm-chair at once. Mr. Dodds sat down. He seemed to bring in a fresh, sweet breath of the countryside with him.

"It wasn't very easy for me to get down here this evening," he said, "but I felt that I had better come. I have to catch the nine train back from Rylcombe. Now, Lowther, I think you have something to say to me."

"Yes, sir," Lowther coloured. "I—I—"

Tom Merry looked at him in wonder.

"Is it anything private?" he asked. "Manners and I will get out."

"I—I want to ask Mr. Dodds' advice about something," Lowther stammered.

"Oh, I see. All serene. Come on, Manners."

"Right you are."

The chums left the study, closing the door behind them. Monty Lowther stood with a crimson face, hesitating to speak.

Mr. Dodds looked at him curiously.

"Well, Lowther," he said, "I felt I had better come, after getting your telegram, but I haven't the faintest idea why I am here. What is the matter with Tom? He certainly looks all right, so far as I can see."

"It's awful, sir."

"What is awful?"

"What's the matter with Tom," said Lowther, almost with tears in his eyes. "I couldn't believe it at first, but it seems clear enough now."

Mr. Dodds looked very grave.

"I don't understand you, Lowther," he said. "You don't mean to say that Tom Merry has done anything wrong?"

"Oh, no, no, no!"

Monty Lowther blurted out the denial eagerly.

"He is not ill, I should think?"

"Ill! Oh, no—not exactly ill."

"Then what is the matter?"

"He's mad!"

Mr. Dodds jumped.

"What!" he shouted.

"He's mad," said Monty Lowther miserably. "But you know all about it of course. You know that madness is hereditary in the Merry family, and that it breaks out at Tom Merry's age as a rule. Isn't it awful?"

Mr. Dodds looked at the junior long and hard.

"I believe, Lowther," he said slowly, "that you have a reputation in your Form for being of an extremely humorous turn of mind."

"Ye-es, sir, I think so."

"You are famous for your japes, and for the extraordinary schemes you concoct for pulling people's legs," said Mr. Dodds.

"Perhaps; but—"

"But I should not have expected you to send me an alarming telegram, and to make me come on a long journey, for the sake of a jape," said Mr. Dodds.

Lowther stared at him.

"Oh, sir, you don't think it's a jape, sir, do you?" he gasped.

"Is it not one?"

"No, sir! Oh, no, no!"

"Then," said Mr. Dodds warmly, "if you are not joking, and if you are not wandering in your mind, what the dickens do you mean, Monty Lowther?"

CHAPTER 16.

Light at Last.

M R. DODDS rapped out that question very sharply. Monty Lowther could only stare at him. After what he had learned from the Boy from Nowhere, he had expected the curate of Huckleberry Heath to be perfectly cognisant of all the facts of the case. He was puzzled and bewildered.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Dodds, "I am waiting for you to explain, Lowther."

"I—I—I—"

"You wired to me that something was wrong with Tom Merry. I have come down to see what is the matter. Explain yourself."

"I—I have explained. He's mad."

"I think you must be mad," said Mr. Dodds testily. "What has put that utterly absurd and cranky notion into your head?"

"It's hereditary in his family—"

"What is?"

"Insanity, sir, and it always breaks out at his present age."

"Who told you so?"

"Isn't it true?" demanded Lowther. "Don't you know it yourself?"

"Certainly not. I know the reverse to be the case. I knew General Merry, and I know all about his family. There is not the slightest suspicion of anything of the sort being the case."

"My hat!"

"Who has told you that absurd story?"

"The Boy from Nowhere."

"Who?"

Monty Lowther explained. Mr. Dodds listened in blank astonishment to the story of the peculiar arrival of the nameless boy at St. Jim's, and to the strange statement he had made to Lowther concerning Tom Merry.

"Dear me! This is utterly amazing!" Mr. Dodds exclaimed. "What name has this boy given you?"

"Ballantyne, sir."

"I am well acquainted with Dr. Ballantyne, a most worthy gentleman," said Mr. Dodds. "He keeps a home for people with afflicted minds, on the south coast. He has a son, about fifteen years ago, who has shown himself very clever in dealing with the mentally afflicted. But—"

"This is the fellow, sir. He showed me his father's card."

Mr. Dodds rubbed his chin in bewilderment.

"I cannot understand this," he said. "It puzzles me completely. Is the lad still at the school?"

"Yes; he digs in this study with us."

"It is amazing! Where is he now?"

"I don't know. I could find him."

"Please find him, then, and bring him here," said Mr. Dodds. "Don't tell him I am here, or he may try to avoid the interview. But now I may assure you that there is not a word of truth in the story. Tom Merry is as sane as I am, and there is no taint of madness in the Merry family. The boy has been deceiving you, I suppose, as a ghastly sort of a joke."

"He said that you and Miss Fawcett consulted Dr. Ballantyne about Tom Merry's state, and that was why he was sent here, to keep watch over Tom Merry, in case his insanity broke out suddenly."

"There is not a word of truth in it."

"My hat! I'll lick him—"

"Wait a little. Let me see him before he is punished. It looks to me as if he must be insane himself, to tell such a story as this. Go and find him."

"Very well, sir."

Monty Lowther left the study. As soon as he was gone, Manners and Tom Merry came in.

"We'd like to speak to you, while Monty isn't here, sir," said Tom Merry quickly. "It's something we can't very well let him hear."

"Go ahead, Tom!"

"There's a new chap come to the school—we call him the Boy from Nowhere, because nobody knows who or what he is," Tom Merry explained.

Mr. Dodds started.

"Yes; I have just been hearing about that extremely peculiar youth from Lowther," he said grimly. "But go on."

"He's told us the secret," said Tom Merry. "He's been sent here by his father, Dr. Ballantyne, the mental specialist, to keep watch over Monty Lowther. There's madness in the Lowther family."

"What!"

"It's horrible, isn't it, sir? It gave us an awful shock to know it."

"I should think it did," said Manners. "But we're going to stick to poor old Lowther, all the same. I don't care if

they have to shove him in a strait waistcoat, we should stick to him, wouldn't we, Tommy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "But I hope to goodness that it won't come to anything like that. Young Ballantyne says he may not break out if everybody's careful to keep from him the knowledge that there's madness in his family."

"Oh!" said Mr. Dodds.

"We want you to advise us what to do, you see, sir," Tom Merry went on. "We want to do the best for Lowther. We never noticed anything rocky about him before the new chap told us, but since then we can't help noticing it. Lowther's got some fearful trouble on his mind; other fellows have noticed it as well as us."

"You are sure?"

"They've spoken to us about it—Figgins especially."

Mr. Dodds smiled.

"Lowther certainly has had a trouble on his mind," he said, "but you need have no fear that he is insane."

"But, sir—"

"I am fully able to assure you on that point."

"Yes, but—"

"He has had a worry on his mind, on your account."

"On my account!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in great astonishment.

"Yes."

"But why, sir?"

"Because—" Mr. Dodds paused, as a tap came at the door.

"Come in!" said Tom Merry.

The door opened, and an eyeglass glimmered in from the passage, showing that the caller was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form.

"I hear that Mr. Dodds has awwived," remarked Arthur Augustus. "I should be glad to speak a word or two to Mr. Dodds, if Mannahs will excuse me."

"I!" ejaculated Manners.

"Yes. I should not mind Tom Mewwy heavin', but I should like you to wetime from the study for a few minutes, if you would have the extwemec goodness."

"Oh, bosh!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"We can't allow you to bore our visitors."

"Weally, you ass—"

"Buzz off for a minute or two, Manners, old chap, and let's get it over," said Tom Merry. "Gussy will never leave off otherwise."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, very well!" snapped Manners.

He went out of the study, and shut the door after him. Arthur Augustus approached the curate of Huckleberry Heath in a very mysterious manner.

"It's a howwibly important mattah," he said. "It concerns Mannahs, you see. Tom Mewwy ought to hear it, upon the whole, as he is Mannahs' best chum. You see—"

"Come to the point, Gussy, old son."

"Pway don't intewwupt me, Tom Mewwy. You throw me off the thread of my wemarks. There is a new chap come to the school, Mr. Dodds, a chap we call the Boy from Nowhere, because nobody knows who he is; but he has told Blake and me the dweadful twuth."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Mr. Dodds smiled grimly.

"And what is the dreadful truth?" he asked.

"He is the son of a chap who deals in lunatics—a mental specialist, you know," D'Arcy explained, "and his fathah has sent him here to keep special watch ovah Mannahs."

"Why?"

"Because there is madness in the Mannahs family, and it bweaks out at Mannahs' age," said Arthur Augustus. "It's howwid, ain't it?"

"It certainly would be horrid if true," Mr. Dodds agreed. "Fortunately, there is not a syllable of truth in it."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"You don't know all," he said. "I doubted it at first, but I have pumped Mannahs, exercisin' a considerable amount of tact and judgment to get at the facts, and I am convinced now that Mannahs is completely off his wockah, and even inclined to bweak out into violence."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for wibald mewwiment. It is surely not a laughin' mattah, poor old Mannahs bein' off his wockah."

"It wouldn't be, if he were," said Mr. Dodds. "But it is not true. I can only conclude that the new boy is a lunatic himself."

"Bai Jove!"

"He has confided to you that Manners is mad, and at the same time he has told Tom Merry and Manners that Lowther is mad."

"Gweat Scott!"

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NEXT WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

"And Lowther wired to me to-day to come down here because something was wrong with Tom Merry; and I find that this new boy has confided to him that Tom Merry is mad."

Tom Merry jumped.

"I!" he shouted. "Mad!"

Mr. Dodds laughed.

"Yes. It seems to be an amusement of this boy to tell people that other people are mad, and that it must be kept a secret from them," he said. "If you had not all told me, you might never have compared notes, and never learned that he was deceiving you. It is all nonsense, of course."

"Bai Jove!"

"The young scoundrel!" Tom Merry exclaimed wrathfully. "Why, he ought to be licked bald-headed for playing such a rotten jape."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Dodds held up his hand.

"What is that scuffling?" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry threw open the door. There was a sound of gasping and of scuffling footsteps in the passage.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

It was the voice of the Boy from Nowhere.

"Not much!" said the cheery tones of Monty Lowther. "You're coming into the study. Bear a hand, Manners, old chap."

"What-ho!" said Manners.

The Boy from Nowhere was struggling in the grasp of the chums of the Shell. He evidently guessed that Mr. Dodds was in the study, and he did not want to see the curate of Huckleberry Heath.

But he could not escape. Tom Merry stepped out of the study, and lent a hand, and the boy from nowhere was whirled into the room in the grasp of the Terrible Three.

He was brought up just in front of Mr. Dodds, gasping, panting, wriggling.

The curate of Huckleberry Heath started to his feet.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Rayner!"

The Boy from Nowhere ceased to resist. At the sound of his true name he seemed to be completely overcome. He stood lumpy in the hold of the chums of the Shell.

Mr. Dodds looked at him hard.

"How did you come here, Rayner?" he asked.

The new boy was silent.

"He must have escaped," said Mr. Dodds. "It is extraordinary!"

"Bai Jove! Who is he, sir?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"His name is Rayner, and he was a patient in Dr. Ballantyne's Home," said Mr. Dodds. "I have seen him there and talked to him there many a time."

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "And that is how he knew about St. Jim's—how he knew your name and my name, and the rest of it."

"No doubt."

"Bai Jove! And is he wocky, sir?"

The Boy from Nowhere trembled. Mr. Dodds did not reply to D'Arcy's question. He dropped his hand upon the new boy's shoulder.

"Come with me, Rayner," he said. "I will take him to your headmaster, my boys. I will then return here."

And Mr. Dodds led the now quiet and submissive Boy from Nowhere from the study.

The juniors waited in astonished silence for his return. Mr. Dodds rejoined them in ten minutes. His face was very grave.

"I have explained to Dr. Holmes," he said. "The boy is in safe keeping, and he will be sent back at once to Dr. Ballantyne's Home."

"Is he mad, sir?" asked Tom Merry breathlessly.

"Yes; though not dangerously so. His intellect is sometimes very vigorous, and at other times quite clouded. He is possessed with a peculiar fancy that he is quite sane, but that other people are mad, and that it is his duty to look after them," said Mr. Dodds. "His mania is quite harmless, but it is necessary for him to be kept under restraint. He has evidently persuaded himself that he is the son of Dr. Ballantyne—he is about the same age—and the card he showed you he must have taken before he left the asylum. He has escaped, and the doctor will be searching for him everywhere."

"Bai Jove!"

"It is fortunate that I came here and recognised him, before he had come to any harm," said Mr. Dodds. "You must not owe him any grudge; the poor lad does not know what he is doing."

"Quite wight, sir. I feel awf'ly sowwy for him," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sincerely. "It must be howwid to be wocky in the bwain. But, bai Jove, I'm awf'ly glad to discovah that you are not off your wockah, Mannahs!"

"I should be awfully glad if you weren't off yours; but I suppose it's no good hoping for that," Manners remarked.

"Weally, Manners—"

"I'm jolly glad we've found out the truth," said Tom Merry, with a sigh of relief. "It's been a fearful weight on my mind. I suppose that chap is treated all right at the asylum, sir?"

"Oh, yes; certainly! The doctor is kindness itself," said Mr. Dodds. "This is merely a freak on his part—a most extraordinary freak. I shall take him away with me when I leave St. Jim's; and really it is time for me to go now."

Ten minutes later Mr. Dodds was driving away from the school, and with him went the new boy; but for a long time the most interesting topic in the studies at St. Jim's was the strange case of the Boy from Nowhere.

THE END.

NEXT THURSDAY:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS!"

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

Also a Grand New Feature

(See page 27 of this issue.)

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DON'T MISS **BOB CHERRY IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER.** "The Splendid, Long, Complete School Story appearing in this week's number of the "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

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AN AMAZING TALE OF MODERN ADVENTURE.



By **ROBERT W. COMRADE.**

INTRODUCTION.

Frank Kingston, a young Englishman, is engaged on a secret campaign against a criminal society called the Brotherhood of Iron, his aim being to break up the society by ruining the members of the Inner Council. He has the assistance of Miss O'Brien, an accomplished young lady, Professor Graham Polgrave, a clever scientist and inventor, Carson Gray, a detective, Fraser, a manservant, and a lad named Tim.

Becoming aware of the active part the detective Gray is playing against them, the Brotherhood manage, in spite of his vigilance, to kidnap him and convey him on board their yacht, the Unicorn, lying at the London Docks. There Lord Mount-Fannell, the Chief of the Brotherhood of Iron, examines his prisoner, and attempts to force him to reveal the identity of the secret enemy who is doing the Brotherhood so much damage. Gray is only saved from torture by the appearance of Frank Kingston himself, via the port-hole. Kingston reveals himself to Mount-Fannell, and surrenders. The relentless Chief has Gray and Kingston bound firmly together, back to back, and thrown overboard into the deep water of the dock. The helpless forms of the two friends strike the water with a dull splash, and sink like lead to the bottom of the docks!

(Now go on with the story).

The River Police Make a Find.

When Carson Gray touched the water; he really thought that the end had come. He was bound to Kingston so tightly that it was absolutely impossible to move an inch. Down—they went, and then a strange thing happened.

Suddenly the detective felt the bonds which bound him grow tighter and tighter, until they were cutting deep into his flesh. He would have cried out, but for the muffling effect of the scarf, and he could feel the water entering his mouth and nostrils in spite of his efforts to hold his breath.

"It's all up," he thought bitterly. "We're done at last!" All this had happened so swiftly that they had only just ceased descending. Frank Kingston was quite cool, and knew exactly what he was doing. The very instant they disappeared below the surface, in fact, he exerted all his terrific strength into one great effort to burst his bonds. While being bound, he had purposely made himself as small as possible. Now, when he expanded his chest, and forced his arms out, the strong cords found themselves unable to stand the strain.

After that one steady pressure, which had caused Gray some considerable pain, there came a dull series of snaps, and the next moment the detective turned over and over as Kingston commenced struggling. Both of them had swallowed a considerable amount of the Thames water, and Gray felt that his lungs must burst if he did not rise to the surface immediately.

As a matter of fact neither of them had been in the water for more than forty seconds before Kingston was absolutely free. But he did not immediately rise to the surface. He grasped hold of Gray's arm, and commenced swimming with him for a few yards in a certain direction.

Then, very slowly, they commenced rising. At last the surface was reached, and both men drew in great lungfuls of the glorious night air. Gray was too much occupied in drawing in the life-giving air to notice where he was, but Kingston, still holding his companion, noted with satisfaction that they had come to the surface on the opposite side of the Unicorn.

"Don't make a sound, Gray," he whispered. "We're safe if you just keep your mouth and nose under water, and keep still. The heathens are all watching from the other rail."

"Great Scott, I thought we were done for! How in wonder's name did you manage to break those ropes? I can still feel where they cut—"

Gray stopped suddenly as he saw above him the dim shape of someone walking along the deck. The two "drowned" men remained perfectly still, and at last, when everything seemed to be quiet, Kingston placed his mouth close against Gray's ear.

"I'm going to leave go of you," he said. "Try and get those ropes away from you, or you'll get hopelessly entangled when you try to swim."

When Kingston had burst the bonds, he had managed to struggle free himself, leaving them all hanging round Gray. The detective now made a silent dive, and after a short wriggle rose to the surface with the broken ropes in his hand.

"I thought I'd better keep them," he explained in a whisper. "so that they wouldn't be found by any of the ship's company. Somebody exceptionally smart might jump to it that we'd escaped."

"Good man," murmured the Avenger approvingly. "That was jolly thoughtful of you, my dear Gray. Come along; we'll be getting away. This water is none too warm when you're not exercising your muscles."

They silently swam away from the vicinity of the Unicorn, both being almost totally submerged until they had placed a respectable distance between themselves and the spot they

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had lately occupied. Once out of sight behind some other shipping, Kingston gave vent to an easy laugh.

"Jove, Gray!" he exclaimed. "What a fool Mount-Fannell has been! It's not often he makes mistakes, but he's made one this time with a vengeance!"

"He can hardly be blamed, though, Kingston. Even I, knowing you as I do, thought that our last moments had come. It's little short of miraculous how you snapped that rope!"

"Nonsense!"

"I can understand your breaking that creeper stuff on the Iron Island some time ago, but that thick rope—well, it's beyond my comprehension. But I've forgotten to thank you for saving my life."

"All these matters we can discuss far more comfortably when we are out of this water," replied Kingston calmly.

"Quite so. But didn't you really feel at one time that the game was up? I saw your winks and signs, but hang it all, you couldn't possibly have decided to break those ropes before they were bound round us."

Kingston laughed.

"You're making too much of it, Gray," he replied. "I knew, the very instant I saw those bonds, that I could snap them. So, of course, I tamely submitted to being bound. It deceived the Chief magnificently, and he is now under the impression that both of us have gone to Kingdom Come. Ha! I thought the ropes impossible to break, I should have immediately proceeded to effect our escape."

"And I'll warrant you would have succeeded!" cried the detective.

"Probably. You see, my great strength is my most valuable gift. But had we escaped that way, Mount-Fannell would have known that we were still at large. As it is, he thinks us dead, and by to-morrow afternoon the whole of England will think so, too."

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say, my dear fellow. I have a scheme in my head. But who is this, I wonder?"

He looked ahead, and saw, bearing down upon them a small boat, in which were seated three men. Evidently they had spotted the swimmers, for they were steering the craft straight for them. Both Kingston and Gray recognised it as a police-boat, and ceased swimming.

"Couple of men, by the look of it, sir," a gruff voice said. "Wonder what they're doin' in the water at this time o' night?"

"We'll pick them up, and ascertain," another voice answered; and Carson Gray uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"I'll wager a sovereign that is Inspector Williams!" he exclaimed. "By Jove, this is a slice of luck!" Then he turned to Kingston. "I suppose it will suit your plans to reveal ourselves?" he added.

"Perfectly. Had we not been fortunate enough to meet this boat it was my intention to make for the nearest river police-station. You appear to know the worthy individual who is approaching?"

"Yes, I am almost positive. I say, is that you, Williams?" as the boat drew alongside.

One of the men leant over the stern, and flashed a light on to the faces of the two swimmers. Expecting to see a couple of half-dead dock loungers, he was not to be blamed for expressing amazement when he looked upon the two cool and smiling faces of Frank Kingston and Carson Gray.

"Mr. Carson Gray!" he cried. "Good gracious me, this is extremely singular. How in the name of all that's wonderful did you manage to get into this plight, Mr. Gray?"

"Plight, Williams? I assure you I have been enjoying a little swim. Have you room for us aboard?"

"Of course! Jenkins, Lawrence, help the gentlemen in!"

In less than a minute the pair of soaked adventurers were sitting in the police-boat, and Kingston had introduced himself to the inspector. He made no effort to conceal his identity, and requested Williams to make straight for the station.

The boat altered its course, and very shortly afterwards they were standing in the inspector's private room at the police-station. It was plain to see Williams was curious. He did not know Kingston, but he could easily see he was a gentleman. This made the occurrence the more puzzling.

His curiosity was soon satisfied, however.

"To state the matter in straightforward language, inspector," explained Kingston, "Mr. Gray and I were engaged upon a case—he does not object to my assisting him at times—and somehow we got the worst of it. Our enemies captured us, and having secured us with ropes were kind enough to give us a free bath, in the evident hope that we should be drowned. We escaped, however, and the rest you know."

"Who were the people who attempted the murder?" inquired Inspector Williams eagerly. "Perhaps I may succeed in making a capture."

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"Pardon me, inspector," interjected Gray, "having escaped their clutches I wish to complete the case myself. The villains will think me dead now, so I hold the upper hand."

The detective had readily understood what Kingston was driving at.

"What do you think of this idea?" suggested Kingston, keeping up the pretence. "Mr. Gray's enemies will naturally take it for granted that we have been killed. Now, could you, inspector, manage to send the news to all the chief newspapers that Mr. Carson Gray, the famous detective, and a certain Frank Kingston, had been found in the London Docks bound together—dead? When Mr. Gray's enemies saw that they would feel themselves doubly secure."

"A splendid notion," declared Gray. "You can do that, Williams, surely?"

The inspector scratched his head in some surprise.

"Yes, I think it would be possible," he replied, "and it's not such a bad suggestion, Mr. Kingston. Being a man who's seen twenty years' service in the Force, however, I think I've bowled it first off. Dead bodies that're found in the water—"

"Have to be lodged in the mortuary?" concluded Kingston. "Exactly, inspector. Don't think that point had escaped me."

"You had thought of it, then, sir?" said Williams, a little disappointedly. "Well how are you going to do it? If you're supposed to be dead, there's a chance somebody might come and ask to view the body."

Kingston smiled.

"There's not only a chance, but an extreme likelihood," he replied. "Well, they will have their wish granted without delay. Anybody who calls to see our lifeless forms will not be disappointed."

"I don't think I understand," protested the police-officer.

"I will explain then," replied the Avenger, as he saw Carson Gray looking at him curiously. "My friend, Mr. Gray, has in his possession a certain drug which causes those who take it to grow cold and stiff as though in death. We could remain in this room until morning, take enough of this drug to last twelve hours, and be removed to the mortuary. Your men could be trusted to keep the secret, I presume? Then, should anybody come, they will go away satisfied that we can do no further harm in the world. I strongly suspect the villains who tried to murder us to-night will make every effort to verify the newspapers' statements!"

Inspector Williams gazed from one to the other of his two visitors. He was rather a stolid individual, and it took some moments for the meaning of Kingston's words to sink into his brain. To him, of course, it sounded extremely peculiar.

"Good gracious me," he ejaculated. "Your words amaze me, Mr. Kingston. Never, in the whole course of my experience, have I heard such a remarkably singular proposal!"

Milverton is Satisfied—War to the Knife.

"My dear Gray, it was the wisest course to hoodwink the worthy inspector. There was no reason why he should be let into all my secrets, and it has done no harm whatever in letting him think this is your affair."

"Not in the least," replied Carson Gray. "I agree with what you have done entirely, for I think it is a splendid plan. Williams was a little dubious, however, and even now is not convinced."

Kingston laughed. They were both sitting in the same room, alone. Some fifty minutes had elapsed since Kingston related his scheme, and the inspector had been forced to leave them to attend to his business.

"He will be convinced right enough when he sees us to-morrow," replied Kingston. "I know it is asking a lot of you, Gray, to go through the ordeal, but I think I know you well enough—"

"Of course—of course!" exclaimed the detective hurriedly. "I've told you time and again, Kingston, that I am always willing and eager to help you in your work, and this sham dying business is nothing new. I have passed through the ordeal before, and as I suffered no ill effects then, I see no reason to object now. But do you really think one of the Brotherhood will come to the mortuary on purpose to see that we are dead?"

"I am of the opinion that such a visit is practically certain. Mount-Fannell is not the man to do things by half-measures, as you already know, and when he sees the news in all the papers he will immediately instruct somebody—probably an Inner Councillor—to visit the mortuary on some pretext and satisfy himself that there has been no hitch."

"By Jove, it is a splendid notion of yours, Kingston! Although the Chief is aware of your real identity at last, he

will be playing into your hands more than ever, for while he will imagine himself to be more secure than previously—"

"He will, in reality, find that the end is very close," put in Kingston grimly. "Yes, Gray, the utter demolition of the Brotherhood of Iron is at last in sight. I do not know what case is to claim their attention next, but it is bound to be a large one. Now I propose to snatch some sleep, wake up in time for breakfast, and then—"

"And then die!" smiled Carson Gray. And this programme was carried out. Inspector Williams was instructed how to administer the drug, and he shook his head doubtfully as he looked at the tiny instrument which Gray handed to him.

"It can't possibly do as you say, Mr. Gray," he exclaimed. "Why, there's nothing like it in the world! To tell the truth, I am half afraid to have a hand in the affair. Suppose, for instance, something went wrong, and both of you were killed?"

"My dear inspector, what is the use of supposing? I am absolutely positive that there will be no hitch," smiled the great detective. "Why, man, do you suppose I'd risk my life and that of my friend if there was the least uncertainty? When we go off you will be easily deceived, so make up your mind that we are all right."

Gray was speaking as though the whole affair was his own, and this was what Kingston required. He had no desire to reveal his true character to the public as yet. When the Brotherhood was finally wiped out would be time enough for that.

By ten o'clock both of them were cold and stiff, and were lying side by side in the mortuary, with a constable on guard at the door. Williams had looked in once or twice, and an anxious expression had taken possession of his features. He was a man who disliked anything apart from the general routine, and this strange affair was puzzling him more than a little.

Sure enough the first editions of the evening papers were flaring out the startling news in huge headlines, and the newsboys were doing a roaring trade. The placards were everywhere, most of them bearing the words:

**"CARSON GRAY AND WELL-KNOWN GENTLEMAN
MEET WITH AWFUL FATE.
"TERRIBLE MYSTERY."**

The news was creating quite a sensation, for in England Carson Gray's name was almost a household word. This sudden announcement of his tragic death was arousing everybody's curiosity.

At three o'clock in the afternoon a rather shabby gentleman presented himself nervously at the mortuary, and asked permission to view the bodies. The reader need scarcely be told he was a member of the Brotherhood—Mr. James Milverton, as a matter of fact.

"I fear Mr. Kingston is a very dear friend of mine," he explained tentatively. "I know a gentleman of that name, and as he is missing I can only conclude that he became somehow entangled in this awful occurrence. I shall know instantly I see the—the poor gentleman."

He acted well, and the constable nodded his head sympathetically. Milverton was soon looking down upon the cold and waxen-looking faces of Kingston and Carson Gray. One glance was sufficient, and he had difficulty in repressing his feelings.

"There's no doubt about it this time!" he thought triumphantly. "There's the pair of them, dead as doornails! The Chief assured me there would be no hitch, and he is right. After being bound and thrown overboard last night there was practically no doubt that the pair of meddlers would meet this fate. Jove, but I feel a deal easier now!"

The K.C. managed to conceal his feelings, and turned to the constable with a relieved expression on his face.

"It's all right, officer," he said. "Neither of these poor men is a friend of mine. Needless to say, my relief is intense, although, of course, I am greatly concerned at such a terrible tragedy. Thank you very much for allowing me this privilege."

"A right-down good sort that!" declared the constable to himself, as he thoughtfully pocketed a half-crown and watched Milverton's back as he walked away. "Tain't often I get tipped so liberal."

The rest of the day passed uneventfully enough, for no one else came on the same errand as the barrister. Inspector Williams looked in once or twice, and it was quite plain to see that he was very much worried. In spite of Gray's assurance, he could not bring himself to believe that those two cold forms were in reality full of life. The inspector was not to be blamed in the least, for without doubt Professor Polgrave's preparation was without parallel in the whole world.

Close on the stroke of eight o'clock Williams glanced at his watch several times. The twelve hours had almost elapsed.

"They should be coming round in a few minutes," he muttered. "The place is all quiet and locked up now, so I think I had better go there and await developments. But it's very strange—very strange, indeed!"

The worthy inspector received something of a surprise when he arrived at the mortuary, for he found Frank Kingston coolly sitting up waiting for the door to be unlocked. Gray was still unconscious.

"I'm glad you've come, Williams. To tell the truth, I'm getting tired of sitting in this gloomy place. I must have come to myself soon after the constable left, for I've been sitting here at least an hour, and I don't mind telling you that I've got the very deuce of an appetite."

"Good gracious, Mr. Kingston, it is utterly amazing!" exclaimed the river-police officer. "I was more than half afraid I should never see you alive again, yet here I find you none the worse for your surprising adventure."

Kingston smiled coolly. "My dear man," he replied, "Mr. Gray assured you this morning that there was no danger. I suppose he will be coming to his senses in a few minutes."

Kingston took hold of the detective's shoulder and shook him violently. It so happened that the effect of the drug had just spent itself, and Gray gave a grunt, and sat up.

"There you are; I thought it was just about time. Come along, Gray! I should think you've had enough sleep to last you a good while now."

Carson Gray recovered himself rapidly, and after a few minutes had elapsed was quite himself.

"Well," he said, "have there been any visitors to see us, Williams?"

"One, Mr. Gray. Somebody called about three o'clock, saying that he would like to see the bodies, as he suspected that Mr. Kingston was a friend of his."

"A palpably made-up tale," smiled Kingston. "The ruse has succeeded, Gray, so I think we can now reckon ourselves fairly secure. Well, inspector, about that little supper? Do you think you can manage to get us something?"

"Certainly—certainly!" replied Williams immediately. "If you will come along to my private room I will soon see about it. I am very glad things have turned out so satisfactorily."

He turned and led the way out, obviously much relieved, for now he spoke quite genially. He proved as good as his word, for presently Carson Gray and Kingston were busily discussing a really excellent supper. The inspector was present, and Kingston turned to him.

"Could you manage to have a note delivered at the Hotel Cyril?" he asked. "Let me see—the time is now close upon nine. I should like it to be at its destination not later than half-past."

"Yes, I think I could manage that, Mr. Kingston," replied Williams.

"Good."

Kingston wrote a short note to Dolores, asking her to be at Professor Polgrave's residence in St. John's Wood by ten o'clock the following morning. That accomplished, he immediately set to work disguising both himself and Gray, so that they resembled a couple of middle-aged gentlemen. It was all done by means of the professor's preparations, and Williams' estimation of Carson Gray went up wonderfully, for he was given to understand that the secret was one of the detective's own.

By ten o'clock the pair had taken their departure, and they immediately set off for the West End. Here they engaged a couple of rooms in a quiet hotel, and retired for the night, for there was nothing further to do until the next day.

"I tell you, Kingston, I don't half like taking the credit for all these things," declared Gray, as he sat smoking a cigarette before turning in. "For one thing, I don't deserve it."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow; you deserve far more than that. I sha'n't forget in a hurry how you acted aboard the Unicorn. I honestly believe you would have submitted to torture rather than reveal my identity to the Chief."

Gray coloured slightly.

"I don't say that," he replied, "but it would have been a mean trick to give you away to save my own skin, Kingston. Fortunately for me, you turned up in the nick of time, and, as usual, managed to completely turn the tables, although, in this instance, the Brotherhood are not aware of that fact. In reality, they consider themselves doubly secure on account of our being dead!"

"That is where we have the upper hand. Somehow, by hook or by crook, I mean to find out the Brotherhood's plans, and give them another shock before the end comes. They shall carry the thing through until the last moment, then find themselves involved in utter ruin. I could, of course, instruct the police to act immediately, but I prefer to take them just when they are congratulating themselves on a big success."

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Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"It will be a crushing defeat."

"It will indeed," replied the other determinedly. "It's war to the knife now, Gray, and there is to be no quarter. The Brotherhood of Iron is walking blindly on to its fate, and the crash will come when they least expect it!"

"You will do nothing with the common-members, of course?"

"No; that is impossible. It is the Inner Councillors I am after, and once they have fallen, the Brotherhood must of necessity fall to pieces and die. As I said just now, it is to be a fight to a finish—war to the knife!"

And the grim light in Frank Kingston's eyes told Gray that the Brotherhood's doom was sealed. Things had come to a pass now, and very shortly the climax would come. And then—

At St. John's Wood—The Chief's Interview.

Frank Kingston and Carson Gray alighted from a taxi in St. John's Wood Road, and walked off in the direction of Professor Graham Polgrave's house. Both were, of course, wearing the disguises already mentioned. The time was just upon ten o'clock, and Kingston was intent upon keeping his appointment.

"I am rather looking forward to this visit!" exclaimed Gray, as they walked along, "for I have heard much about the professor, and have, so far, had no opportunity of seeing him. You are sure, Kingston, he will not object to my presence?"

"Object to it, Gray? What ever put that idea into your head?" laughed Kingston. "The old gentleman has often expressed a wish to meet you, for knowing what you have done to help me in my work, he hails you immediately as a friend. You will see in a few minutes that he will greet you quite effusively."

Kingston was quite correct, for when he and his companion were admitted by Professor Polgrave, the old hermit was genuinely delighted to see them. His recent voyage to the Pacific had done him a world of good, and his face was creased into its usual mass of wrinkles as he greeted them.

"My dear Kingston," he cried, "this is a quite unexpected pleasure. It seems a very long time since we parted at Monte Questo, and, according to what I can understand, much has happened—very much indeed. But really I should not have known you but for the voice. Your disguise is perfect, and I congratulate you."

"No, professor, I cannot allow that. You must congratulate yourself, if anybody. This is my friend Mr. Carson Gray, whom I have often referred to. He is, of course, disguised similar to myself."

"Dear me, this is better still!" cried Polgrave, shaking Gray heartily by the hand. "I am extremely pleased. I have already learnt from Mr. Kingston of the invaluable assistance you have rendered him during his noble campaign. But come, there is no reason why we should remain here in the passage. Dolores is waiting below, having arrived a quarter of an hour since."

"I was sure she would not be late," said Kingston.

"No, indeed, she was a few minutes before time, if anything, and is eager for you to tell her of your adventures since arriving in London. I declare I was greatly startled when I first saw in the newspapers that both of you were drowned. But Dolores paid me a visit yesterday, and assured me that everything was all right, having learnt this from your excellent young helper, Tim Curtis."

Without further talk, they proceeded to the wonderful underground laboratory. Gray, to whom all this was new, was vastly interested in everything he saw, being particularly so at the marvellous electric light.

"Ah, Dolores, I was sure you would be here in accordance with my request!" exclaimed Kingston, as he stepped across to where Dolores, looking more charming than ever, was seated. She rose, and, recognising the voice, cordially shook hands.

"It seems an awful time since you left us in Balataria, Mr. Kingston," she smiled. "And I'm so anxious to hear what you have been doing since arriving in London. At all events, you could scarcely have wasted much time."

"Wasted time, Miss O'Brien," put in Carson Gray, with a smile. "Within four hours of Mr. Kingston's arrival he was up to his ears in work, and has been involved in one of the most difficult of his cases until the present moment."

"It's too bad," declared Dolores. "Just at the time when I and the professor were away, the pair of you contrive to get associated with something really exciting. You simply must tell us all about it."

"We mean to do so," replied Kingston, and he straightway commenced telling everything that had occurred since his arrival in England. Dolores and the professor listened attentively, the latter every now and again nodding his head and smiling approvingly.

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DON'T MISS "BOB CHERRY IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER." The Splendid, Long, Complete School Story appearing in this week's number of the "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"What an audacious undertaking!" exclaimed Dolores, when she knew all. "It would have been a catastrophe indeed if the Crown Jewels had not been recovered. And now, after all your work in this matter, neither of you will get the credit for it."

"Such a thing would be impossible," declared the professor—"at least, impossible at the present time. Neither Mr. Kingston's or Mr. Gray's names must appear in the newspapers, but I dare say that when the Brotherhood is finally demolished, they will reap their full share of the honours."

"But how do you intend to start?" inquired Dolores interestedly. "Now that you are supposed to be dead, you will have to be extra careful."

"Exactly; and I shall, in all probability, require Fraser's assistance, to mention nothing of a motor-car. Since I am supposed to be dead, however, I cannot use my own. So I want you, Dolores, to see about the purchase of a new one—or a secondhand one. It will be easy enough to stow it in a garage, while you can direct Fraser to go to a certain boarding-house in Bloomsbury, the address of which I shall give you. Then, whenever I want him, I can either call or wire. You see, I am taking every precaution; it will be impossible to associate Frank Kingston with the middle-aged gentleman you now see before you."

"I will do as you ask with pleasure, Mr. Kingston," replied Dolores readily. "But why do you want me to buy the motor-car for you?"

"Because I do not wish to attract any attention at the hotel where I am staying. If I remain a quiet, unobtrusive individual, nobody will become curious, and I shall be practically able to do as I choose."

While this conversation was going on in St. John's Wood, another one was taking place in Grosvenor Square.

Lord Mount-Fannell was in close consultation with Ludwig Capelli, the Chief Agent from abroad, whom the Chief had previously referred to. The man spoke English perfectly, although he could never have been mistaken for a Britisher. He was short and squat, and wore a large, straggling moustache. The most distinctive features about him, however, were his huge ears, which seemed to stand out straight from the side of his head.

"You accept my Government's offer, then?" inquired Capelli at the end of a long confab.

The Chief was looking serious and thoughtful, but a determined, hard look had entered his eyes, too. He saw a chance of making a small fortune, and made up his mind swiftly.

"Yes," he replied, "I accept."

"I was sure you would, Chief!" exclaimed the foreigner. "After all, it is not such a great task when you come to think of the reward. You have men about you whom you can trust, and there will be no war through it."

"I never thought of that aspect," said Mount-Fannell, "for I don't care if there are fifty wars. Now, the fleet is stationed at Spithead, and I have received information that it will remain there for at least another two weeks, without any of the vessels moving from their moorings. It ought to be fairly simple to sink a dozen of the battleships and cruisers if I set to work in the right way."

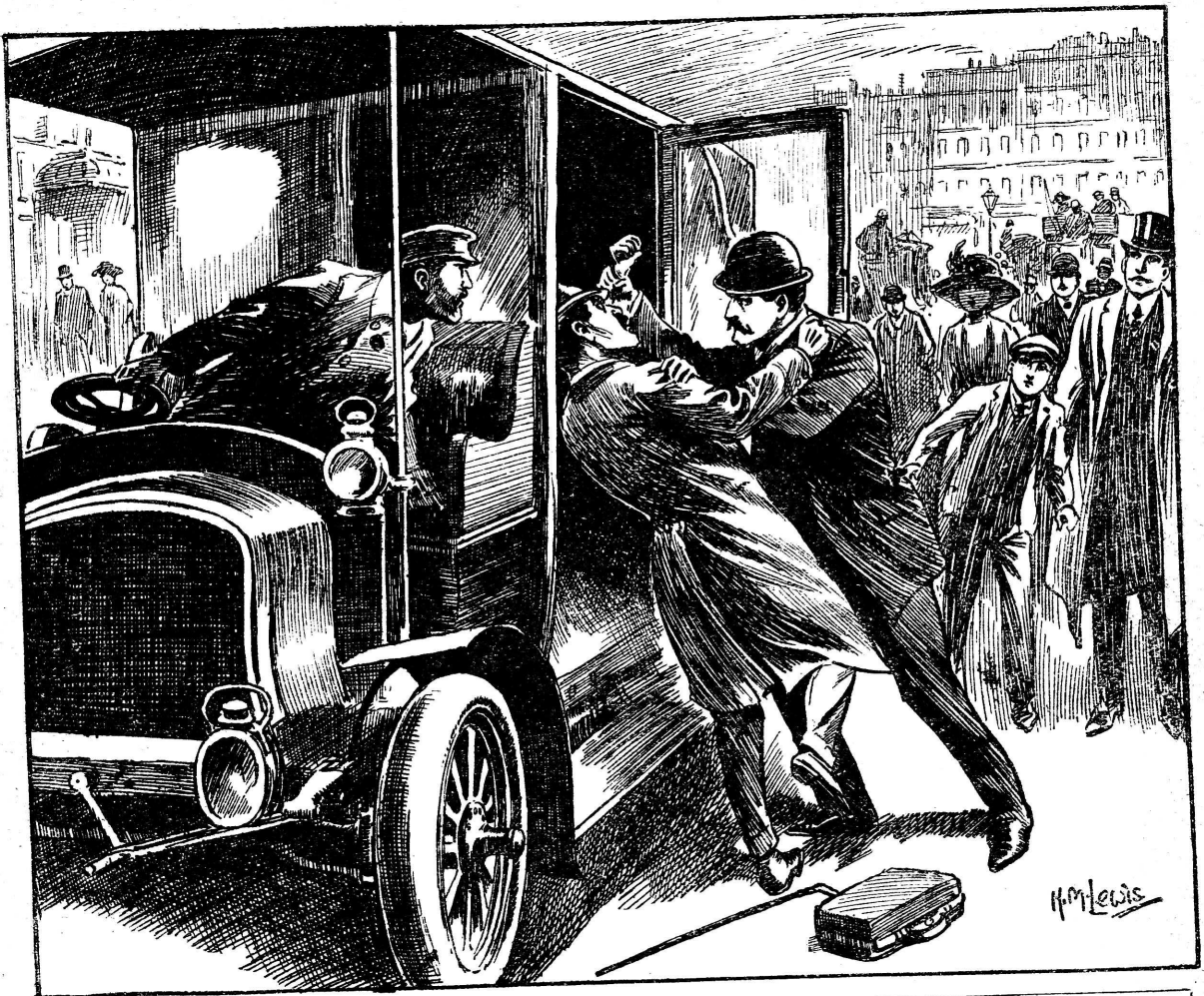
"Twelve will be quite sufficient. With those gone, the remainder will be quite unable to attack our own navy when the climax comes. The Government of my country means to have that vast tract of land in East Africa, and the only way to have saved it would have been to send a score of British battleships over. But with them out of the way, Britain will be able to do nothing, and it will be equally impossible to prove who wrecks the ships, so that a war is out of the question."

The two men were silent for a moment. Lord Mount-Fannell well knew what a villainous piece of work he was deciding to undertake, but he never had the suspicion of a quail. There was a deal of money in the thing, and that was all he cared about. What mattered it to him that hundreds of innocent men would be blown to death—that hundreds of mothers and wives would be weeping over their lost ones?

In plain language, the foreign power which Capelli represented had commissioned him to have a dozen British men-o'-war blown out of the water. By doing this, the British would be prevented from protecting a large portion of the African continent which the great foreign power had had its eyes on for a long time. The latter country would have no difficulty in annexing the prize, when fought for under these cowardly and dastardly methods.

Capelli, being a high Government official himself, had promised to see the thing through, for he reckoned on the Chief taking the work on. And he had not been wrong in his supposition.

Lord Mount-Fannell, however, was to find that his villainy was nearing its climax. This was to be the last case he would take part in, and, instead of bringing him wealth, it would end in ruin, disgrace, and retribution.



For a moment the pair swayed and struggled on the pavement, and then Kingston exerted his great strength, and bundled the half-mad chief agent into the car.

Kingston on the Trail.

"I think that is all we need discuss at present!" exclaimed Lord Mount-Fannell. "We understand one another perfectly, and know exactly what has to be done. You can rest assured, Capelli, that the work will be completed before the end of a week."

"Good! I know you well enough, Chief, to rely on your carrying the thing through in a straightforward manner. Now let me see, you mentioned something a few moments ago concerning Mr. Milverton?"

"Yes. I think he is fairly slack this morning, so can spare time to accompany you to Portsmouth, where you will be able to see the Fleet to full advantage. The journey will, of course, be merely a preliminary one, and while you are away I shall be making other and far more important arrangements. It is necessary, however, that you should make a plan of the positions of the ships."

"Quite so. If you will communicate with Mr. Milverton we will set off as soon as possible. The sooner this business is over the better."

"It will not be an easy job, I can assure you," said the Chief; "for, besides being extremely difficult, there is a great amount of risk attached to the work. I'm afraid I shall be unable to trust such an important task to common members."

"You mean, then, to have nobody in the secret except Inner Councillors?"

"That is all. I think it will be best to take these precautions. Suppose we walk round to Milverton's address? It is not far, and I have other business in the City to attend to."

So a few minutes later the two men left the house and

walked to Milverton's chambers. He was at home, and, knowing a great deal of the case already, agreed to accompany Capelli to Portsmouth.

"It will be the best way," he said thoughtfully; "for when we have the exact positions of the ships in our minds we shall know exactly what we are doing. In addition, we can choose the twelve which have to go."

Five minutes later the three of them were walking along the street, Mount-Fannell accompanying them until he could find an empty taxi. As it happened, Frank Kingston and Carson Gray had, a few minutes previously, parted not a hundred yards away, having left the professor some time beforehand. Kingston was strolling along, wondering how he should get on the track of the next case, when he was somewhat surprised to come face to face with the Chief and his two companions. He recognised Ludwig Capelli immediately, although he had met that individual only once before.

Of course, being disguised, Kingston was a perfect stranger to the three councillors. As he came face to face with them he gave them a casual glance and passed on. But he did not proceed far, turning almost immediately.

"I'll follow them," he decided, without hesitation. "There's something pretty big in the wind, I should say, or that follow Capelli wouldn't be over here, especially when such strained relations exist between his country and ours. Yes, I think I may possibly get on the track of something important if I stick to this trail."

He saw Mount-Fannell hail a taxi and drive off in it, and for a moment was undecided whether to follow him or the other two. Then he came to the conclusion that it would be best to stick to the foreigner. Fortunately, the pair stepped aboard a passing motor-omnibus, thus making Kingston's task an extremely easy one, for while they rode on

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NEXT
WEEK:

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS."

Another Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale of
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the top he took a seat within. They did not alight until the journey's end was reached—Waterloo—and Kingston took care to be near the booking-office when Milverton procured the tickets.

"Two first-class returns to Portsmouth," he heard the barrister say; and did not trouble further to keep them in sight. He purchased a third-class ticket himself, deeming it advisable to travel where he would not be so noticeable. On making inquiries, he found that the next train for Portsmouth left in twenty minutes' time.

"That'll just leave me time to send Gray a wire," he told himself. "I think it will be best to let him know what I am doing, in case there's a slip."

He had no difficulty in finding his quarry again when he walked on to the platform. Both Milverton and Capelli were walking up and down the platform, waiting for the train to start. They were apparently engaged in deep conversation, and Kingston wondered what the Brotherhood's latest game could be.

"Capelli wouldn't be over here unless it was for something of great importance, that's very certain. Just now there's some sort of strained relations between Britain and Capelli's country over that affair in Africa, and I shouldn't be surprised if it concerns this very matter. But whatever happens—even if I have to go to extreme measures—I mean to find out what is in the wind."

Kingston was quite decided on this point, but did not intend to act in any way until he had discovered the reason for this visit to Portsmouth. The train was a fast one, and after an uneventful journey, arrived at the large seaport town. He had no difficulty whatever in shadowing the two men, for they were utterly unsuspecting, and proceeded on their way with never a glance round them.

Still, even had they taken every precaution, it is extremely doubtful whether they would have known they were being shadowed. Kingston did his work thoroughly, and although he knew that the councillor and the Chief Agent were off their guard, he nevertheless acted exactly as he would have done had they been full of suspicions.

To tell the truth, he was rather puzzled at their actions, for, instead of making for any building or ship, as he had expected them to do, they boarded a tramcar which was leaving for the outskirts of the town, and settled themselves on top.

"Where on earth can they be going?" wondered Kingston. "I don't think tram-riding is much in Milverton's line. There are plenty of cabs about, too. Well, I suppose I shall know in good time."

He did, in a way, for, once off the tram, the pair ahead of him proceeded to walk at a brisk pace towards the seashore. There were not many people about out here, so Kingston had to be extra cautious. He was again surprised when the two men took up their stand against a gateway. From that spot they could obtain a perfectly clear view of the Solent, and the splendid array of battleships as they lay on the gently rippling water.

Kingston had laid himself down behind a hedge, where he was unseen himself, although he had a clear view of all that was going on. He saw Capelli produce a powerful pair of binoculars, and examine, very carefully, each of the vessels ahead. And while he was doing this Milverton was busily engaged in jotting down notes in a pocket-book.

"Decidedly peculiar," mused Kingston, after this had gone on for several minutes. "What can they be up to? It's very evident they're noting the positions of the Fleet, and, in all probability, drawing a rough plan. This begins to look interesting."

Nothing further of interest occurred, and twenty minutes later Milverton and Capelli set off back the way they had come, with Kingston now a very great distance behind. He was thinking deeply, trying to fathom the meaning of this journey.

"It can only mean one thing," he told himself at last. "The Brotherhood evidently means harm to the Navy. Otherwise, Milverton would not have wasted his time by coming down here. The presence of Capelli, too, makes it doubly significant."

Kingston had not guessed the true state of affairs, although he had a faint inkling. And this inkling was enough to make him decide, then and there, to obtain possession of the facts before another twelve hours had passed. As he had expected, Milverton and his companion took the next train back to London, and it was while travelling up to town that a plan entered the Avenger's head.

"It's a time for desperate measures, now," he thought calmly. "By the look of it, this naval business is going to be a big thing, and it's absolutely imperative that I should get hold of the information first hand—and at once. There's one way, and only one way, in which that can be done, and I mean to take that course. I can rely on Gray to help me, I am sure. It will be decidedly risky, but certain of success."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 179.

When the London terminus was reached he had no difficulty in following his quarry. They strolled slowly outside the station, and then stood for a time, still engaged in conversation. Finally they shook hands, and while Milverton jumped into a taxi and drove off, Capelli walked away down the street.

"That's my man," murmured Kingston to himself. "I'm very much afraid, my dear Mr. Capelli, that you will not be quite so nonchalant twelve hours hence. Ah, so you're getting in a taxi now, are you? Well, there's one now coming, so I shall easily be able to keep you within sight!"

Kingston thought he might as well make sure of the Chief Agent's destination while he was about it, although it would have been quite possible for him to find out Capelli's address from Crawford. He told his driver to keep the other taxi in sight, and to tell him when it stopped.

The foreigner did not travel very far, for the taxi drew up at the entrance of the Hotel Russell, in Russell Square. Kingston merely ordered his own cab to turn round and make for the quiet hotel he had chosen in the West End. Gray was sitting in the pleasant little room they shared for meals when he arrived.

"You're a fine fellow!" exclaimed the detective. "You tell me you are going away for half an hour, and here I have been waiting for you for over half a day. What on earth have you been doing with yourself?"

"I'm sorry, Gray," laughed Kingston. "When I left you I fully intended to be with you again almost immediately. But circumstances alter cases, and by a sheer stroke of luck I happened to meet the Chief, Milverton, and a foreign person named Ludwig Capelli. They are utterly unsuspecting, for they are under the impression that both you and I are dead."

"You followed them?"

"Exactly—or rather, I followed the last two named. Mount-Fannell drove off almost immediately. And by the look of it, Gray, I've hit on something big."

"That is nothing fresh," smiled the detective. "As a matter of fact, I've never known you to hit on anything small."

Kingston laughed, and told his companion what had occurred. Gray was certainly somewhat surprised when he learnt how Milverton and his companion had taken notes of the battleships stationed off Spithead.

"There's only one conclusion to arrive at," said Kingston finally, "and I hardly like putting my thoughts into words, for it seems altogether too horrible a scheme. I only hope that I may be proved wrong, but as matters now stand it looks very much as though the Brotherhood are scheming to sink some of our battleships—to get them out of the way, Gray, so that the great foreign power, of whose Government Capelli is a member, can do their work with no fear of interruption."

Carson Gray looked at his companion aghast.

"You must be wrong, Kingston!" he exclaimed. "Even the Chief would never go to such lengths as that."

"I know the Chief better than you do, Gray, and I know that he values human life at a minimum. Provided the bait is big enough, he will go to any lengths to secure it—always providing the risks to his own skin are not very great."

One Way of Gaining Information.

Frank Kingston was fairly busy for the rest of that day. There were many inquiries to make, one way and another, and much to Tim Curtis's delight he found himself given the task of watching the Hotel Russell. His orders were to report every one of Capelli's movements to Kingston, and never once to let the foreigner leave the hotel without following him to his destination.

As it happened, nothing of importance occurred that day, so Tim left his post at midnight, with instructions to take up his position again not later than seven the following morning.

Tim was there sharp to time, and he did his work so well that not one person in a hundred would have thought he was watching the hotel entrance. At eleven o'clock exactly Capelli appeared, looking very pleased with himself, and, much to Tim's delight, walked round the corner to the Russell Square Tube Station, and took a ticket to Marble Arch.

"Goin' to 'ave a blessed interview with the Chief," Tim told himself confidently. "Marble Arch ain't far from Grosvenor Square, an' that's the station the foreign beggar would make for, sure."

The youngster was right, for when Capelli reached the end of his journey he turned into Grosvenor Square, and walked straight to Lord Mount-Fannell's house, where he was immediately admitted. He remained therein for at least two

hours and a half, Tim growing really weary with waiting. At last, however, the Chief Agent appeared, but it was only to go straight back to the Russell.

The time was now close upon three, and Tim looked round for Fraser, who had been due at two o'clock to relieve him. Sure enough, he was there; but instead of taking up his position without conversing with Tim, as had been arranged, he walked straight up to the lad.

"There's no need for you to come back again after tea," he said quickly. "The gov'nor's altered his plans."

"Altered 'is plans?" repeated Tim. "Why, what do you mean?"

"I can't explain here, but it seems that the foreign chap is leaving London to-night, and the gov'nor is makin' some plans to nab him, or something like that. Now that Mr. Gray's takin' such a hand in the game," added Fraser ruefully, "I haven't got so much to do, worse luck!"

Tim hurried off, and went straight to Kingston's hotel, where he told his master what had occurred in a few words.

"All right, Tim. You can do what you like till you hear from me," said Kingston. "Don't go away, however, for I may want you at any minute after to-night's work is over."

"You won't want me to-night, then, sir?"

"No, Tim; not to-night," replied Kingston.

And so Tim departed rather disconsolately, for he was happiest when doing some work or other to assist his master.

But Kingston had received news via Crawford that afternoon which had given him a certain amount of satisfaction, for Crawford had brought the news that Capelli was leaving

They were waiting for Ludwig Capelli to appear.

Kingston's arrangements were precise, for the foreigner appeared before Kingston had been waiting fifteen minutes. He was merely carrying a small valise and a walking cane, and without hesitation turned to the left, and walked briskly down the square.

Gray slipped his clutch in, and quietly and slowly moved down the street, almost parallel with the man he was following. Kingston was not three yards behind Capelli, for this was not an ordinary case of shadowing, by any means.

For three hundred yards things proceeded in this manner, then Kingston quickened his pace and caught his quarry up. He laid a light hand on Capelli's shoulder, and swung the man round until they were face to face.

"Pardon me, Mr. Ludwig Capelli," he said quietly, "but I must trouble you to accompany me in this motor-car!"

He indicated as he spoke the automobile which Carson Gray had deftly brought to a standstill against the kerb. Capelli started violently, and then turned deathly pale. He tried to swing himself away from the light grip on his shoulder, but as he did so it perceptibly tightened, and Capelli felt a sensation of terror coming over him.

"What—what is the meaning of this outrage?" he managed to stammer. "I have not the least notion who you are, sir, and demand that you should release me immediately!"

"I give you warning that if you resist there will be a commotion in the public street!" exclaimed Kingston, in a low voice. "I give you a last chance. Will you enter that car quietly, or shall I force you in?"

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London for his native land that very night, and that he had had a final long confab with the Chief before departing.

"Depend upon it, Gray, that was between noon and three, while Tim was on the watch!" declared Kingston. "All we have to do now is to carry out my plan, and force Capelli to tell us what he knows. I know that what we are doing is against all law, but that cannot be helped in a case like this. Even Sir Nigel Kane himself saw that when I interviewed him this morning at Scotland Yard. He has agreed to do everything I want, as you know."

Carson Gray was very much interested in this latest case, although both he and Kingston were somewhat in the dark so far. They knew that it was connected in some manner with the British Navy, but beyond that they were in the dark. How Mount-Fannell meant to carry out his plans was a secret, and Crawford, much as he had tried to gain some information, had been forced to report failure. It seemed that no common-members at all knew anything whatever of the whole business—the secret was confined solely to the Inner Councillors.

But Kingston had decided upon a plan which, if successful, would enable him to know everything immediately, with scarcely any trouble, and it would be gained in such a manner that Mount-Fannell would never have the slightest suspicion.

That evening a rather elderly man was seated at the driving-wheel of a motor-car which had come to a standstill on the opposite side of the road to the Hotel Russell. The driver was in reality none other than Carson Gray, and another man who was walking up and down the pavement some short distance away, would never have been recognised as Frank Kingston. Yet it was he.

"Where are you going to take me?" gasped the foreigner. "Tell me that!"

"I am taking you to Scotland Yard on a charge of conspiracy," replied Kingston. "If you make a fuss the news will be in all the papers, while, on the other hand, the whole thing will be hushed up."

Capelli stood there for a moment, like a tiger at bay, his eyes gleaming half with fury and half with fear. He was shivering violently as the awful realisation dawned upon him that he was caught—that he would have to stand his trial, and probably be thrown into prison for years and years. It was a terrible thought, and for a moment a frenzy of impotent fury swept over him.

"No, hang you, I won't let you take me!" he snarled furiously, commencing to struggle at the same moment.

For a second the pair swayed and struggled on the pavement, the pedestrians talking excitedly as they saw what was occurring. But before a crowd could gather Kingston had exerted his strength and had overcome the half-mad Chief Agent. In a moment he was bundled into the car, the door slammed, and Carson Gray released the clutch, allowing the automobile to move gently forward.

In a few seconds it had gathered speed, and was gliding rapidly down the road, leaving a small bunch of curious and excited spectators on the edge of the pavement, wondering what on earth had just happened. In the car itself Kingston very soon quietened his captive. Ludwig Capelli, as soon as he knew that he was mastered, seemed to crumple completely up, and sat in the cushions staring before him dazedly.

He was stunned by the suddenness of the calamity, and did not even think to ask who his captor was. All he knew

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was that he was being taken to Scotland Yard—that place he had always looked upon with a certain amount of disdainful scorn.

Kingston was perfectly satisfied, and mentally congratulated Gray for having been so smart with his part of the work. The detective was driving rapidly now, and very soon the car came to a standstill outside the main entrance of New Scotland Yard.

"Now, my friend," murmured Kingston, "we are now going to extract from you some information which I judge will be very useful!"

"I shall not utter a word!" snarled Capelli sullenly.

"That we shall see later, Mr. Capelli," smiled the Avenger, "and I do not think there is much doubt on the matter!"

A Race Against Odds—Capelli is Obstinate.

Ludwig Capelli's eyes were blazing in a strange fashion, as Kingston lowered the sash of the side-door, and put his head out. Somehow, although he felt that to escape from this man was impossible, he was determined that he would ultimately do so. A thousand thoughts filled his whirling brain, the chief among them being a horror of what was to come in the future, if he did not gain his liberty.

Outside a couple of constables were waiting, and Kingston, stepping to the ground, ordered them to take charge of the prisoner. The other door of the car was locked, so he had no fear of Capelli escaping by that means.

"Take him straight to the cell!" he said quickly. "I'm now going to interview Sir Nigel, and will see the prisoner in a few minutes."

"Very good, sir!"

The constable had no idea, of course, as to who Kingston really was; but they had received instructions from their superior to obey him implicitly. Kingston waited for a moment while they stepped across to the car, then turned, and made for the office of Sir Nigel Kane, the head of Scotland Yard.

Had he remained by the side of the car a certain startling incident would never have happened. Carson Gray might possibly have obviated it, but he, too, made his way into the building.

Capelli, his eyes still blazing in that strange manner, had watched the man whose terrible strength he had already felt, disappear into the building, and in that second he determined to make a last bid for liberty. The two police officers, when they saw the foreigner's squat form, thought they had a very simple task before them; but a moment later they received a considerable shock.

Capelli, as he was being led quickly across the short intervening space between the car and the doorway, felt that the grip laid on him by his captors was not at all heavy, so, when they were least expecting it, he suddenly became like a squirming eel. The constables were taken completely by surprise, and, try as they would, they could not regain their grip.

The foreigner, with a cry of triumph, twirled round, and rushed into the street at lightning speed. It was simply remarkable how he covered the ground, considering his short build. But the police were very soon after him.

An immediate recapture would have been certain, but for an unfortunate accident. The two officers, alarmed at what had occurred, rushed out, and charged full tilt into a group of passing pedestrians, whom Capelli had just missed.

In a second there was wild commotion, and while the people were sorting themselves out, the foreign Chief Agent was making good his escape. He darted round the nearest corner, breathing hard, and caught his breath in with a gasp as he saw a taxi standing

against the kerb, having evidently just discharged itself of a passenger. Without stopping to consider, Capelli had made up his mind.

"King's Cross!" he gasped, rushing up to the startled taxi-cabby. "And don't waste a minute! I must catch a certain train!"

The driver, knowing nothing of what was happening round the corner, naturally thought that Capelli was in such a flurry because he was late for his train. So he was not to be blamed in the slightest for jumping into his seat with a "I'll get you there in time, sir," and starting the vehicle.

The escaped prisoner, the very instant he found himself inside the cab, turned round and looked through the square of glass at the back, for the taxi was a closed-in one. And just as the machine started the two policemen rushed round the corner, followed by the crowd.

Capelli waited with his heart in his mouth as he heard several cries and shouts. But he need not have feared. The taxi-cabby was a dull fellow, and the commotion he heard fell unheeding on his ears. All he thought of was getting his fare to King's Cross smartly, in the hope of gaining a fat tip. For a few moments it looked very much as though Ludwig Capelli was going to get clear away.

Indeed, he was seated in the cab, already congratulating himself that he was as good as clear—that matters had gone so far now that it would be a simple matter to evade recapture.

But he was reckoning without Frank Kingston.

The latter, together with Carson Gray, had heard an echo of the commotion outside, and, wondering what had occurred, the pair hurried into the open once more. They were just in time to see the two policemen pick themselves up and sort themselves out from the crowd.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Carson Gray, in alarm. "They've let the beggar escape! Did you ever hear of such blundering in all your life?"

Kingston did not reply, for already he had darted out into the roadway. He caught the constables up in a moment, and was just behind them, when they came in view of the taxi-cab.

"He's in there, sure!" gasped one of the policemen. "He only turned the corner a second ago, and there ain't a corner or cranny where he could hide. A thousand to one, mate, he's jumped into that taxi!"

Although they knew the task to be hopeless, they were running breathlessly after the fast-disappearing cab, and were little short of amazed when the figure darted past them, and commenced whizzing up the quiet side-street with extraordinary fleetness.

It was, of course, Kingston, and he was running at a truly amazing speed.

"The idiots!" he said to himself as he ran. "They might have known that the man would be desperate, and taken due precautions. As it is, they've let him slip through their fingers in the easiest possible manner. By Jove! And Capelli was the only man I had to rely upon for the information! He simply must be captured, that's all there is about it!"

Kingston hardly thought what a stupendous task he had set himself; but when he made up his mind to attain a certain object, that object was practically accomplished. As he passed the scared and breathless policemen he could just see the rear of the taxi gaining the end of the street. With apparently no effort, he put on a spurt, and fairly flew along the smooth asphalt road.

The few people who walked the pavement stopped in amazed wonder, for never in their lives had they seen such magnificent running.

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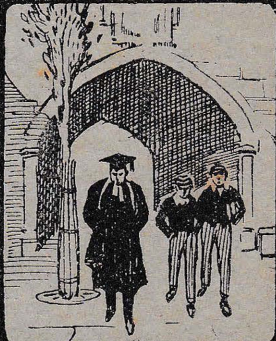
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