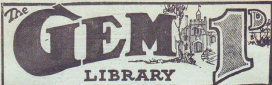


STRAIGHT AS A DIE!

A Splendid Long, Complete Tale of School Life.

Complete
Stories
for ALL
and
Every
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No.
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The Drudge of the School House at St. Jim's.

PUBLISHED IN TOWN
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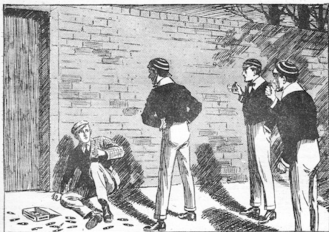


COMPLETE STORIES
FOR ALL, AND EVERY
STORY A GEM!

STRAIGHT AS A DIE!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale Dealing with the Adventures
of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"Collar the cad!" Lynn bumped down heavily in the hands of Levison & Co., and the box of cigars crashed to the ground. Crooke gave a sudden yell, "It's not grocery—it's cigars!" (See Chapter 14.)

CHAPTER 1.

The Kindness of Arthur Augustus.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was the first fellow who spotted him.

He was standing just inside the big doorway of the School House at St. Jim's, looking about him in a timid and hesitating manner, with his cap in his hand.

There was no one else in the hall. To Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, the stranger looked the very newest of new boys, and D'Arcy's kind heart went out to him at once. D'Arcy had not forgotten the time when he was himself a new boy at St. Jim's, with all sorts of little difficulties to contend with.

And this chap, too, was not very well off in this world's goods. In the first place, he was not in Etons, neither was he apparently provided with a silk topper. Almost invariably

new boys arrived in Etons and silk toppers. The clothes he wore were clean and neat, but they were cheap in material, and of a cut that really got on the nerves of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, though he would not have allowed the boy to suspect that for worlds. The boots he wore were heavy and clumsy, and thick with the dust of the lane. It was evident that he had walked to the school. Honest and respectable poverty seemed to speak in all the garments of the dusty lad, as he stood there timidly—and it seemed to speak, too, in the thoughtful lines upon his young, good-looking, intelligent face.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was bound for the tack-shop, for the purchase of certain supplies needed for tea in Study No. 5. Blake and Herries and Digby were expecting his return to the study. Tom Merry and Mansors and Lowther were coming to tea in Study No. 6. So really Arthur Augustus had no time to spare.

Next Wednesday:

"BY WHOSE HAND?" AND "THE CORINTHIANS!"

But courtesy to the stranger came first. Arthur Augustus had no doubts about that.

And he bore down upon the shabby lad in the hall in his most graceful and gracious manner. He remembered having heard that a new boy was coming into the Fourth, but he did not know his name—indeed, he had forgotten the circumstance, until the sight of the dusty lad in the hall recalled it to him.

"Good-afternoon!" said Arthur Augustus.

The boy looked at him.

"Good-afternoon, sir."

Arthur Augustus smiled indulgently. The fact that the boy addressed him as "sir" proved that the new-comer was, indeed, the greatest kind of new boy possible.

"You're the new boy, eh?"

"Yes."

"Glad to see you, dear boy. Pway allow me to welcome you to the school," said Arthur Augustus, in a stately manner worthy of the highest traditions of the noble caste of Vau de Verc.

The lad looked surprised.

"You are very kind, sir."

"Not at all, dear boy. May I inquirah your name?"

"Lynn."

"My name's D'Arcy. You're goin' to belong to this House?"

"I—I think so—"

"There are two Houses heah," Arthur Augustus explained. "School House and New House. This is the School House."

"Yes, that's right. But—"

"Wight-ho! Luckah thing for you, you know—the School House is lockhouse of St. Jim's, you know. No School House chap would be found dead in the New House if he could help it."

Lynn smiled. Perhaps it occurred to him it would not be a specially agreeable thing to be found dead anywhere if it could be avoided.

"I heard you were coming," said D'Arcy. "Very glad I happened on you, you know. I suppose you are feeling wathah lot—what?"

"Yes; I wondered if this was the right way in for me—"

"Of course it is, dear boy."

"If there is another entrance—"

"Yas; there are several, dear boy, but we generally use this one," said D'Arcy, a little surprised. "Have you seen anybody yet—the House-keeper?"

"No."

"Mr. Walton is our House-keeper. He is out at present," said D'Arcy. "I'll take you to him when he comes in. Of course, you will have to report yourself to Mr. Walton."

"Yes; or the house-keeper—"

"Ha, ho, ha!" Arthur Augustus could not help laughing at the idea of the new boy reporting himself to the house-keeper. "That's all wright, dear boy; I see you are quite a strangerah here. Rest wely on me. I'll look afteh you. I'll take you to Mr. Walton as soon as he comes in."

"Thank you, sir."

"Pway don't thank me, Lynn; and you need not call me sir, either. That is quite unnecessary."

"But—"

"I dare say you are wathah hungry afteh your journey—what?"

"Yes; a little, Bro—"

"Then come with me. We're just going to have tea, and it will be a wreal pleasnah to me if you will have tea with us."

"I—"

"Not a word, dear boy. Are you hungry?"

"Yes; but—"

"Then come with me to the tack-shop, and help me do my shoppin', and then we'll have tea. It's all wright," added Arthur Augustus, as the lad seemed to hesitate. "You can wely go to me to see you through. I'm an old hand, you know."

"But—but I thought—" stammered Lynn.

"Pway rest along, dear boy. The fellows are wathin' for me."

"Very well."

Arthur Augustus linked his arm in the new boy's. D'Arcy was not at all given to being demonstrative, especially towards strangers, but he wanted to inspire Lynn with confidence, and he wanted, too, to let it be seen by the world generally that the new boy's shabby clothes made no difference to him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy confessed to having a good opinion of himself, and an extremely good opinion of his high descent, but there was not a trace of snobbishness about him.

Toby, the School House page, came down the passage as they went out. Toby stared at them blankly, his eyes wide open.

"I say," he called out, "are you Lynn?"

"The new boy turned his head.

"Yes."

"I thought so. You'd better come with me. Master D'Arcy—"

"Pway don't bother, Toby. I'm in wathah a hurry," said D'Arcy, turning his eyes back upon the astonished page for a moment.

"But, Master D'Arcy, that fellow—"

"What?"

"That fellow Lynn?" stammered Toby.

"Pway don't speak in that impertinent way, Toby. I am surprised at you."

"But—but—"

"Was off, and don't bother."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy snatched his new acquaintance out into the wash-race, leaving the page staring in blank amazement, and speechless.

D'Arcy and his companion entered the school shop in the corner of the old quad, and Danae Taggles came out in her little parlour. Arthur Augustus was a good customer, and the dame was very respectful to him, but she gave a very curious glance indeed at his companion. D'Arcy gave her orders rapidly. He had lately received a fever from his public pater, and in his usual way he was making the money fast.

"Will you help me wathah these things into the house, Lynn, dear boy?" he asked, as the pile rose to formidable size on the counter.

"Yes, sir."

"Pway don't 'sir' me. Call me D'Arcy."

"But—but—"

"Pway do as I tell you. I'm an old hand, you know. You can wely on me. Any of the fellows will tell you that I'm a fellow of tact and judgement. Now, if you can manage the jam and the marmalade and the apricot and the buttah and the luan, I think I can manage the wot."

And the two boys left the tack-shop under a full cargo.

CHAPTER 2.

An Amazing Discovery.

"MY boy! What a giddy trespasser!" Figgins of the Fourth uttered that remark breathlessly.

Figgins, Kew, and Wyan, of the Fourth Form—the famous Co. of the New House—were coming towards the tack-shop as D'Arcy and Lynn emerged.

The sight of the good things with which the pair were laden made Party Wyan's mouth water. Funds, as it happened were low with Figgins & Co., and they had but the sum of sixpence to expend for a tin for three. And here was a cargo of the best, under their very noses, and as it was School House stuff, it was open to them to raid it, according to the laws and customs that had prevailed from time immemorial in the warfare between the rival Houses of St. Jim's.

It did not take Figgins & Co. a moment to decide. They bore down upon the two laden youths with warlike looks. Figgins raised a large hand threateningly.

"Stand and deliver!"

"Wah?"

"Your jam-tarts or your life!" said Kew.

"Pway was off, you wathah. We are not lookin' for a wreal new. I will thank you New House boundless sense wathah time."

Figgins chuckled.

"Glad, old man, you've dropped on us like even in Egypt. This is where we said you bald-headed. Hand over the plunder."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort."

"Bweep him!"

"Back up, Lynn!" shouted Arthur Augustus, as the New House fellows ran at him. "Pway back me up, dear boy." Lynn hesitated a moment.

G 298

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(See column 2, page 26 of this issue.)



Lynn saw his opportunity at last, and sent in a lightning shot. Fatty Wynne's glump hand raised the leather by an inch, and the ball was in the net; there was a roar from the touchline! "Goal! Bravo, Brudge!" (See Chapter 17.)

Perhaps he had his own reasons for not considering it judicious to lay hands upon St. Jim's fellows, whether they belonged to the New House or the School House. But his reasons were quite unconnected with fear, as he soon showed. For as the New House juniors grasped D'Arcy, Lynn's hesitation vanished, and he rushed to the rescue.

"Hi! hi! hi!"

The new boy did not look, at the first glance, a great fighting-man. But the way he lay out showed that he knew how to use his fists. Figgins & Co. had not expected such resistance—they were in for—three to two—and one of the two was evidently a green new kid. But they found out their mistake suddenly and painfully. Figgins—the mighty Figgins himself—caught a drive on the chest that made him sit down suddenly with a heavy bump and a loud gasp. Fatty Wynne found himself caught round the shoulder, and spun away, so that he staggered half a dozen yards before he also went down on the ground. Kew, next to his surprise, discovered that he had two to tackle, and he was grasped by Lynn and D'Arcy together, and barged heavily on the ground.

In spite of the odds, D'Arcy and his comrades had scored, for the moment.

But Arthur Augustus knew it was only for the moment, and he shouted to Lynn to run.

"Buz off, deah boy! Wuz like anythin'!"

They grasped their goods, most of which they dropped, and ran, leaving several ties and packets and jans on the ground; but that could not be helped, there was no time to stop for all of them.

By the time the astounded New House juniors were upon their feet, D'Arcy and Lynn were half-way to the School House.

"After them!" roared Figgins.

The trio rushed in pursuit. But they rushed into Kangaroo and the Shell, and Reilly of the Fourth, and Gary, and Bernard Glyn, and several other School House fellows who had been attracted by the row, and they were promptly collared and hustled. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Lynn walked cheerfully into the School House, grinning.

"Buster them, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "We've lost a few of the things, but that wozly doesn't matter—it's all wight. Fatty Wynne is welcome to them. They're really good ones, you know, those chaps; but, of course, we're up against them, as they belong to the New House. I must say you handled them remarkably well, deah boy. I must say you handled them remarkably well, deah boy."

Lynn's brow clouded.

"I hope there 'wasn't be trouble about my hitting the young gentlemen," he said.

D'Arcy laughed.

"No feak! Bless you, they're sports; they won't owe you any grudge. And it wouldn't matter if they did."

"But my position here—"

"That's all wight, deah boy. You'll find the chaps are all wozly to thump you on the back for handin' the New House chaps like that. I shall tell them, by Jove! Come on!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy led the way up to the Fourth Form passage, and stopped at No. 5. There were six juniors in that famous apartment—Blake and Herries and Dugby of the Fourth, and Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell.

And they all made the same remark to D'Arcy as he came in, with one voice:

"Am! You've kept us waiting!"

"Fwy excuse me, deah boys. I am bringin' a fobled to you—"

The janitors looked at Lynn. He placed his bundles on the study table, and stood with coloring books.

"It's Lynn, the new kid?" D'Arcy explained. "Figgins & Co. washed as we came out of the truck-shop, and Lynn handled them slipping. He knocked Figgins down—"

"My hat!"
"Good for you, Lynn!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily, extending his hand. "You must be a packet of mustard if you can handle Figgins."

"Yess, wathah! I should find it wathah difficult to handle Figgins anym, you know!"

"Go home!" murmured Jack Blake.
Lynn's colour deepened, and he looked at Tom Merry's outstretched hand in a strange, hesitating manner.

"Give us your hat," said Tom.
"Yes—you want to shake hands with me?"
"Yes, of course," said Tom Merry, in surprise. "Why not?"

"But—but—I—you know—" Lynn shook hands with Tom Merry, coloring quite crimson now as the curious looks of all the janitors in the study turned upon him.

"Lynn is a new kid, you know, and wathah nervous," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm gone to look aftah him. Fwag help me get wath wath, you change instead of standin' wathah like a lot of hens, and wathah at my beloved Lynn."

The table was already laid. The janitors began fastening the pockets, and opening tin and jars. Lynn did not assist. He stood with a very red face, apparently self-conscious to the last degree—more so than the shyest and timidest new boy the janitors had ever seen before. They made it a point not to look at him, so that he might have a chance of recovering his self-possession, but he did not seem to recover it. Dicky made the tea, and seven chairs were centered round the study table.

"Fwag sit down, Lynn, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus kindly.

"I—I'd rather not!" stammered Lynn.
"But Jove! You don't want to take your todah stools' up like a horse, deah boy?" exclaimed the veal of the School House, in surprise.

"I—I—"
"Here's your chair, kid," said Tom Merry. "Now pile in."

"You—you are very kind, but—but I think I'd better not. I—I couldn't. The—The Housemaster wouldn't be pleased!"

The janitors stared at him blankly.
"Rathion? What? Rathion got to do with it?" asked Monty Lovelock. "Why should he care whether you have tea with us or not?"

"Yes—you see, I—"
"My deah chap, prony sit down—"

"We're not going to eat you," said Marvose reassuringly.

"I—I—you don't understand. You don't know who I am!" stammered Lynn.

"You're the new boy, ain't you?"
"Yes, but—"
"Well, pile in."

"But—but I think you're making a mistake," said Lynn, with burning cheeks. "I—I'm not the kind of new boy you think. I—I—Master D'Arcy didn't give me a chance to explain. I didn't understand what kind of a mistake he was making, but—but I see you don't know—I—I'm—"

"What on earth are you, then?"
Lynn gasped.

"I'm the new boot-boy!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Guest of Study No. 6.

"GREAT Christmas Cousins!"

"My hat!"
"Oh, crumbs!"

The janitors all exclaimed at once. It wasn't the politest thing in the world to do—but they could not help it; they were so utterly astonished.

The new boot-boy!

They had heard, carelessly, that a new "kid" was coming into the Fourth Form that week. They had not heard that a new boot-boy was expected below stairs. That was not in their department, so to speak.

They stared blankly at the boot-boy. Lynn's face was crimson with mortification. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's little mistake had handed the schoolmaster lod into a most uncomfortable position.

"I—I'm sorry," stammered Lynn. "I shouldn't have come here, I know. I didn't quite make it all out. I'm sorry."

The next moment he was gone, and the study door had closed behind him.

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"Well!" Jack Blake drew a deep breath. "Well, this beats it! Gussy, you are—you fellows, terrible now. See what you've done!"

"Wathah, Blah—"

Tom Merry made a quick stride to the door. He was the first to recover from his astonishment. He tore the door open, and was into the passage.

Lynn had reached the head of the stairs, hurrying along.

"Hold on!" called out Tom Merry.

Lynn did not seem to hear. He began to descend the stairs, but the Shell fellow dashed after him, and caught his shoulder. Then Lynn looked round.

"What is it?" he muttered. "I—I must go and find the house-dame!"

"Not yet!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"But—but—"
"You haven't had your tea."

"No, but—"
"Come back."

"I—I—"
Tom Merry drew the boy along the passage. Lynn went half-way back to the study, and then passed resolutely.

"I can't come," he said. "You're very kind, but I can't come. I understand that I've made a kind of myself; I ought to have seen that D'Arcy—I mean, Master D'Arcy—I was making a mistake; but—"

"He wasn't making a mistake when he took you for a decent chap," said Tom Merry. "You must excuse us; we were taken by surprise when you told us. We thought you were the new kid that's coming into the Fourth this week. But there's no reason why you shouldn't have tea with us, boot-boy or no boot-boy!"

"Yess, wathah," said Arthur Augustus, coming out of the study. "Fwag twot in, Lynn. We're goin' to have a wathah spread!"

"This way in!" said Blake. "Ehss you, it's all right!"

Lynn turned his crimson face from one to another of the janitors.

"But Mr. Rathion wouldn't like it," he said.

"Oh, he wouldn't mind!"
"I—I'm a servant here, you know—"
"Come in!"
"I—I say—"

The janitors settled the matter by marching him into the study, and sitting him down in a chair at the table. They looked at him sympathetically, and Lynn's worried and troubled face fell less.

It was a curious situation, certainly.

But the same thought was in the mind of all the janitors—they had taken Lynn for a new boy in the school, and when they discovered the mistake they did not intend to treat him with rudeness. They had asked him to tea, and the fact that he was the House boot-boy made no difference to that. They could not change their treatment of him without being guilty of bad breeding—which all of them, and especially Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, were incapable of.

Besides, there was no harm in having the boot-boy to tea, so far as any other could see.

There were fellows at St. Jim's, such as Mellish and Levine, of the Fourth, and Crooke of the Shell, with whom Lynn compared very favorably.

Indeed, Arthur Augustus, table owner of a great house as he was, always held the firm opinion that to be or not to be a gentleman depended wholly and solely upon a fellow's own personal manners and customs.

Lynn, somewhat to his own surprise, was soon feeling at his ease. The heartiness of the janitors could not fail to have that effect.

Having the boot-boy to tea appeared rather as an adventure to Tom Merry & Co., and they enjoyed it.

And they did not make the mistake of ignoring the fact that Lynn was in a servile position, as if it were something too unpleasant to be mentioned. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who could always be depended upon for tact in matters of personal behaviour, hit the right note at once.

"I've wathah glad I made that wathahous mistake, you know," he remarked, as he helped the boot-boy to burn and hard-boiled eggs. "Fwag pass the salt to Lynn, Horvick, deah boy. Bread and butter for Lynn, Blah. I'm jolly pleased to make your acquaintance, deah boy. Do you like your tea strong or weak? Weak tea for Lynn, Monah—"

"You are very kind," faltered Lynn.

"Wathah! I understand now what Tobay was wathah' about, I suppose you are goin' to work with Tobay—what?"

"Yes, if he is the pargo here. I shall be under him."

"Tobay is a very decent kid," said D'Arcy. "I wathah like Tobay. You'll find him easy enough to get on with. I suppose you have to work—what?"

Lynn smiled over his ham and eggs.

"Yes," he said. "It's not from choice. Only—"

"Yess!"
"I should work, anyway, of course; only I'd rather work at schoolwork if it were possible."

"I suppose so," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "It's awful, I suppose. But I suppose you don't like muggin' up Latin, do you, as a matter of fact?"

Lynn sighed.
"I've never had a chance to learn any Latin," he said. "I should like to."

"But how? Would you?"

"Yes; a County Council school like I was nearly fourteen," said Lynn.

"You're the way to learn things," said Arthur Augustus. "We don't learn so much here, of course, not useful things—which is worth hard on the fellows who have to earn their livin' here when they leave school. You see, they don't learn anything here to help them to earn any money, and it must be worth difficult to live without any money. I've never tried it, but I should say it was hard!"

"Go on!" murmured Blake.

"The jam, kid," said Digby. "Do you play football?"

Lynn looked eager for a moment.

"Yes," he said. "I mean, I have played all I could, when it didn't interfere with my work. I may be able to join a team in the village, I hope—the errand boys, and so on."

"There's a good village team," said Tom Merry.

"Grimes, the grocer's boy, is captain of it, and we have played them."

"We'll introduce you to Grimes," said Mussy Leather.

"Chap here named Lamsley-Lamsley is very chummy with Grimes."

"You're very kind."

"Another cup of tea for Lynn, Blake, dash boy?"

Lynn bowed himself enjoying that food in the study—which he had certainly never expensed to enjoy, when he obtained the post of subordinate boot-boy in the School House at St. Jiv's. He had naturally expected to be kept at an awful distance by the public-school boys—and, indeed, he was destined to discover that all the St. Jiv's fellows were not like Tom Merry & Co.

These cheerful juniors took an interest in him from the beginning, for there was no trace at all of the "boundary" in Lynn. The kindness he received did not cause him to forget that he was boot-boy, and that it was, in fact, kind now that he was receiving. His nature was too frank and sensible and straightforward for him to think of repaying kindness with over-sightfulness. Indeed, he was more likely to go in the opposite direction.

They had finished, when there came a tap at the study door, and Toby looked in.

"At the sight of Lynn sitting at the tea-table in the study, Toby almost fell upon the door."

"Hallo!" said Blake. "What do you want?"

"I-I—I—Lynn is wanted downstairs," muttered Toby. "I say, sir, do you know met Lynn? He's the new boot-boy."

"Yess, we are aware of that, Toby," said Arthur Augustus, in his stately way.

Lynn rose to his feet.

"Thank you very much, young gentlemen!" he said.

"You have been ever kind to me!"

"Not at all, dash boy. Good-bye!"

And Lynn followed Toby from the study.

"Decent chap!" said Messers, after a pause.

"Yess, wathah! I wogued him as a friend," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I don't see that it makes any difference his bein' a boot-boy. I suppose somebody must clean boots, or else the boots wouldn't be cleaned!"

"By Jove!" said Tom Merry. "Did you work that out in your head, Gony?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am gair' to look afiah Lynn," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy firmly. "I wogued him as a decent chap. I cannot quite comprehend his venerable dashin' to study Latin; but every fellow has his little weaknesses. I am gair' to look afiah him!"

And Arthur Augustus kept his word.

CHAPTER 3. Toby's Subordinate.

Lynn followed Toby downstairs, the School House page looking at him very curiously out of the corner of his eye. Lynn did not appear to observe it. He was hurried in thought.

"His harin' tea with Master Blake—hey?" said Toby.

"Yes, wathah!" said Toby.

"They were very kind to me," said Lynn.

"I should say as they was!" agreed Toby. "These young gents is as good as gold. They ain't all like that!"

"I suppose not," said Lynn, with an involuntary sigh.

"No hear," said Toby. "But don't you go thinkin' as how you're on a equality with 'em, young Lynn, unless they're 'in kind to you!"

Lynn flushed.

"I'm not likely to do that," he said.

"Only speakin' for your good," Toby hastened to say. "There's a big difference between you, and you'd better remember it—or you'll get pulled up sharp."

"I know that."

"Race would this is, ain't it?" said Toby meditatively.

"'Ere's you and me a-chairin' of boots for other boys no older than ourselves, and no better, for as I can see. Some is born lucky, and some ain't!"

"I suppose so."

"Desay it's all for the best," said Toby philosophically.

"I know I'd rather work the knife-machine than learn all the things they have to learn. It's easier!"

"I suppose it's easier."

"More useful, too. You can always earn your living working a knife-machine and cleanin' boots. But 's'pose you earn a cropper after learning these things they learn, 'ow are you going to live? You can't get paid by the hour for speakin' Latin and such!"

"Hahly, I suppose."

"'Ere we see the 'ouse-dame. Old Mrs. Minnie is a good sort, though she do insist on the blessed knives looking like razor blades. You go in 'ere!"

Toby had stepped at the door of the housekeeper's room. He knocked and opened the door, and pushed Lynn inside, and went his way.

"You'll find me in the boot-room arterwards," he said.

Lynn's interview with the 'ouse-dame did not last long. When it was over he penetrated into regions farther below, and discovered the boot-room, and Toby in it.

"I suppose you know you're under my orders?" was Toby's greeting.

Lynn nodded.

"I'm papa, and you're second boot-boy," Toby exclaimed.

"No, 'ere is 'avin' that clear from the fact."

"None at all."

Toby looked at him suspiciously. The new boot-boy spoke very slowly and clearly, and Toby vaguely felt that his own grammar and pronunciation were not on a level with Lynn's, and felt that it was something of a "cheek" on the part of the second boot-boy to speak better than his superior in position.

"You don't want to put on any airs 'ere, you know," said Toby.

Lynn looked surprised.

"Certainly not," he said.

"You've been educated, I 's'pose?"

"I was at a Common School."

"You don't want to speak as tiberic as the young gents, you know," said Toby warningly. "They wouldn't like it."

"Wouldn't they?"

"They wouldn't," said Toby, with emphasis. "They'd think as you was putting on airs, out of your position, you know."

Lynn smiled faintly.

"All I supposed to drop my alitches because I clean the boots?" he asked.

"Well, it might be better for you," said Toby. "You don't want to let people suppose you don't know your place."

"I see." Lynn was evidently averse to argument. "Can I begin my work now?"

"Ain't you chud after your journey?"

"I've rested, and I don't want to slack."

"There you go!" said Toby, holding up a warning and yet over-earn-dagger. "Boot-boys don't say 'slack.' Make it ease or now."

Lynn laughed.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I will try to learn."

"Good! I don't mind teaching you things," said Toby cordially. "Look 'ere! This 'ere is the knife-machine. I clean all the knives 'ere. That's one of your duties."

"Yes."

"If you ain't tired, then, you can begin now, and I'll show you 'ow to work it."

"I'll begin at once."

"Take off yer jacket, and put that there apron on," directed Toby.

Lynn did as he was bidden, and soon had the knife-machine going. He cleaned knives at a great rate and with great ease. Toby watched him with approval. In spite of little things about the new boot-boy which Toby did not think suited to his position in life, he was certainly a keen and conscientious worker. When the knives were finished, Toby switched his new subordinate on to the boots. There were three in all.

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

always boots to be cleaned, he explained. Boots would creep up all day, as well as the regular two hundred pairs in the morning. There were always two hundred pairs of boots to be cleaned before the rising-bell rang out for the boys to get up.

"Which seems gettin' up previous early," Toby remarked. "But that's the way to be 'calthy, healthy, and wise, you know. Show us 'em pes clean boots. That those pair belongs to Master Merry. Start an 'em!"

Lynn started on Master Merry's boots. He cleaned them with painstaking care and with an artistic finish. Toby was moved to re-examine at what he regarded as labor wasted.

"No need to be too thorough," he said to his pupil. "They ain't made of gold, to be polished, you know. You needn't go all over them as if they was gait' to be examined with a microscope."

"What's worth doing is worth doing well, isn't it?" said Lynn.

"But you ain't doin' boots 'cause they're worth doin', but 'cause you've got 'em," said Toby.

"All the same, I'd rather do them really well."

"Well, every body has his taste," said Toby. "I don't take all that trouble. But cleanin' them boots is your job now. Wet 'ate pes got on your 'ank!"

"Housemaid's gloves," said Lynn.

"Wot for?"

"To keep my hands clean, of course."

"Do you always clean boots in housemaid's gloves?" demanded the astounded Toby.

"Yes."

"To keep your 'ank clean?"

"Certainly."

"And wot do you want to keep 'em so clean for?"

Lynn appeared to find that question difficult to answer. He rubbed away at another pair of boots without replying.

"I 'ope that don't seem that you're got holes above your station," said Toby. "You'll 'ave a 'ard life 'ere, if that's it."

"I hope not."

"Then boots is Master Lervison's," said Toby. "No need to be so careful with them. Master Lervison is a beast; and if he finds out that you've got any feelings, he'll take a bit of pleasure in raggin' and tormentin' you. I'll show you 'ow to make the boots uncomfortable inside with a punkife."

"I—I'd rather not," said Lynn.

"It's the only way to get your horns back on a feller like Master Lervison," Toby explained, " 'cause you won't be able to answer 'em back when he raggs you."

"I'd rather not damage his boots. Besides, he hasn't done anything to me yet."

"He sees will!" said Toby.

And Lynn was destined to discover that that was true. Not all the School House fellows were of the same stuff as Tom Morry & Co. Toby soon left Lynn to his work and proceeded about his own duties with the comfortable feeling that he had secured a very valuable subordinate, who was not likely to complain if more than his fair share of the work was put upon him. Which disposed Toby quite kindly towards the new boot-boy of the School House.

CHAPTER 8.

Lervison is Surprised.

Lervison, of the Fourth, came into his study chattering. His study-mates were there—Mellich and Hook and Lumsley-Lumsley.

They all three looked at Lervison inquiringly. When Lervison was asked it was generally a sign that something uncomfortable had happened to somebody else.

"Well, what's the joke?" demanded Jewell Lumsley-Lumsley. Lumsley-Lumsley was not on good terms with Lervison, and seldom wasted much politeness upon him.

"The joke of the season," grinned Lervison. "There's a new boot-boy come here—chap named Lynn or Lynn, or something. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing funny in that, is there?" said Hook.

"Only D'Arcy mistook him for a new boy and took him to his study and fed him," said Lervison. "He's downstairs now, cleaning boots. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Mellich.

Lumsley-Lumsley grinned.

"Just like Guss," he remarked. "Well, the boot-kid is a real bet on the off, and no harm done, I guess."

"The funny thing is that Gussy is quite taken with him," said Lervison. "He refers to him as his friend Lynn."

"My hat!" said Mellich.

"Well, wot shouldn't he?!" said Lumsley-Lumsley. Lervison sneered.

"I dare say you don't know why he shouldn't," he replied. "You're very chummy with a greaser's boy yourself."

"I guess I wouldn't be chummy with you," said Lumsley-Lumsley, "and if you say a word against old Grimes you'll get a tap on the nose, Lervison."

"Oh, rats! They're doing the worst possible thing for that kid, taking notice of him and puttin' silly ideas into his head," said Lervison. "He will have to be put in his place again. I'm the chap to do that."

"Not the chap to avoid your own business, I suppose!" suggested Lumsley-Lumsley.

"It's everybody's business to see that servants don't get on their feet," said Lervison loftily. "If there's any sense about him, I'll take it out of him fast enough, you can depend on that."

"Tap!"

"Come in!" called out Lumsley-Lumsley.

The door opened and the new boot-boy entered, with a pair of boots in his hand. The masters all looked at him curiously. Lynn's manner was very quiet and respectful, and there was certainly no fault to be found with him. But the restless, tormenting nature of Lervison was not to be denied. Lynn's position placed him at the mercy of the sad of the Fourth, to worry as much as he liked, and Lervison was not the kind of fellow to forego an advantage of that sort. The master's suspicion that Lynn had ideas "above his station" was sufficient to make Lervison resolve to put him in his place.

"Is this Master Lervison's study?" asked Lynn, in his low, clear voice.

"Yes," said the owner of that name.

"I've brought your boots, sir. Toby said you wanted them brought to your study where they were cleaned."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Lynn."

"Boot-boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you're the new servant?" said Lervison, watching the new boot-boy's quiet, intelligent face to see whether the word lost him.

But Lynn was quite calm and unmoved as he replied.

"Yes, sir, I'm the new servant." Then he moved to the door again, having placed the boots upon the floor near the wall.

"So your name's Lynn?" said Lervison.

Lynn stopped.

"Put those boots under the table."

Lynn took up the boots and put them under the table. There was a very unpleasant, distasteful tone in Lervison's voice—a tone that only a vulgar nature would see to a servant or to anybody else. But Lervison's nature was not conspicuous for its refinement. A faint flush was rising to Lynn's cheek. He remembered the warning Toby had given him, and he realized that he was being made the sport of Lervison's peculiar nature.

"So your name's Lynn?" said Lervison.

"Yes."

"You what?" demanded the junior.

"Yes, sir."

"That's better. Don't forget your manners. A good servant always has good manners, if he's been properly trained," said Lervison.

"More than some juniors have, I guess," remarked Lumsley-Lumsley. "You cut off, Lynn. This silly one is only ragging you."

"Thank you, sir?"

"Stop!" exclaimed Lervison, as Lynn turned to the door again. "Don't go till I tell you."

Lynn hesitated.

"I suppose you know you're under the orders of all the fellows here?" pursued Lervison. "You're to do as you're told. You are the servant of D'Arcy and the rest have been encouraging to see in Study No. 6?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you think it's like your cheek having tea with gentlemen?"

"No, sir."

The calm reply took Lervison a little aback. Lumsley-Lumsley chuckled, and Hook grinned, and even Mellich looked pleased to see Lervison cut back a little. A glint of anger came into the eyes of the sad of the Fourth. He wanted to "draw" the boot-boy, and the boot-boy declined to be drawn.

ANSWERS

"You pulled yourself off on them as a new boy, didn't you?" he demanded.

"No, sir."

"D'Arcy thought you were a new boy when he took you to his study?" Levinson persisted.

"Yes, sir."

"Then why didn't you tell him you weren't?"

"I did, sir."

"And they had you to tea all the same?"

"Yes, sir."

"And I suppose you've got it into your low-class head, from that, that you're just as good as any other fellow here?" sneered Levinson.

"No, sir."

"Oh, you haven't! Can't you say anything else excepting 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,'?" snapped Levinson, feeling that he was somehow getting the worst of it.

"Yes, sir."

"Then say something else, for goodness' sake, and don't chatter the same thing over and over again like a parrot, will you?"

"No, sir."

Levinson turned red with anger.

"Look here, if you check me, it will be the worse for you!" he said between his teeth. "I don't stand much chance from a boot-boy, I warn you!"

"No, sir."

"I've a jolly good mind to pull your ear now, as a warning to you to be respectful to your betters!" said Levinson.

"If you touch him, Levinson, I'll wipe up the floor of the study with you!" said Harold Lamsley-Lamsley quietly, but very meaningfully.

"Mind your own business!" growled Levinson.

"I guess you've jawed enough," said Lamsley-Lamsley.

"Lynn, old lad, you can leave off. Don't mind Levinson; he's a crank outside and out, you know, and was brought up in a slam, and doesn't know any better."

"That's a lie!" roared Levinson.

"Your masters speak for you, I guess," said Lamsley-Lamsley.

"Shut up! You make me tired! You leave off, Lynn!"

"Certainly, sir?"

"Shut, till I tell you to go, you cad!" shouted Levinson furiously.

"I'm afraid I must return to my duties, sir," said Lynn.

"You sha'n't go till I order you!"

"I'm afraid I must, sir."

Lynn quitted the study, and closed the door behind him, leaving Levinson crimson with rage and mortification.

Lamsley-Lamsley and Hook and Meliah burst into a laugh.

"Well, you didn't scare off his wench, I must say," remarked Meliah.

"Blessed if I'd let myself be put down by a boot-boy, Levinson!"

"Levinson started to his feet.

"I'll jolly well put him down!" he exclaimed. "I'll show him whether I'm going to stand any check from a mermaid!"

"Come back, you fool!" exclaimed Lamsley-Lamsley, as Levinson ran to the door.

But Levinson did not come back. He tore the door open and ran into the passage, and darted after the boot-boy.

Lynn was about to descend the stairs, when he was overtaken—as he had been by Tom Merry a couple of hours earlier—but in a very different way. Levinson grasped his coat and pulled it.

"Take that for your check!" he snarled.

"Hi!"

Lynn did not stop to think. His feet, clutched as hard as iron, caught Levinson full in the face, and the cad of the Fourth rolled yelling along the passage. From Lamsley-Lamsley, who was looking out of his study, came a yell of approval.

"Well hit!"

CHAPTER 8.

Levinson is Persuaded.

LYNN stood panting, his face crimson, his eyes blazing. Study doors opened all along the passage. The boys, the fellows, and the foolishly yell Levinson had uttered had brought a crowd on the scene at once.

"Who's the matter?"

"Who's fighting?"

"But Jove! Lynn!"

"Levinson sat up dazedly. His nose felt several sizes too large for him, and there was a trickle of red running down his flushed face. He could hardly believe what had happened.

Lynn, the boot-boy, the new servant, had struck him—Levinson of the Fourth! It seemed incredible—and it meant the "sack" for Lynn on his first day in his new employment.

Levinson had only to show his streaming nose to the House-master, for that; or, at least, so he considered.

"Did you hit Levinson, Lynn?" asked Tom Merry.

The "terrible Three" were almost the first on the scene; they did not want to miss a fight if there was one going on.

"Yes, sir, I am sorry. But he laid hands on me, and I do not think it is my duty to allow that. I hope you don't think so, Master Merry?"

"Certainly not!" said Tom Merry angrily. "How dare you, Levinson! What are you ragging Lynn for, you cad?"

"Yess, watah, you wotter cad!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"What is the matter with Lynn, you frightened wotah?"

Levinson staggered to his feet. "He—a servant! I can't fight him—can't fight with a servant! I shall report this to Mr. Radston, and the school will be discharged!"

"Will you?" said Blake, taking hold of Levinson's arm as he moved towards the stairs. "I know jolly well he wouldn't have done it if you hadn't tried to handle him. You thought he would be afraid to hit back, of course?"

"Yess, watah, you wotah!"

"Let me go!" yelled Levinson.

Lynn was looking a little pale. It had meant much for him, that new berth in the School House at St. Jim's; and now he had lost it—on his first day. He had no doubt about that.

Tom Merry was not likely to keep his situation in a school. Yet he was not sorry for what he had done. Tom Merry tapped him gently on the shoulder.

"Don't be downhearted," he said, in a low voice. "We'll stand by you."

"I shall be asked, I suppose," said Lynn heavily. "Why couldn't he let me alone? I haven't done anything to offend him!"

"You won't be asked," said Tom quietly. "This matter won't be mentioned to the House-master at all."

"But he says he will—"

"You shall persuade him not to."

Lynn gave the "Shell" fellow a grateful look, and hurried away. Levinson was struggling in Blake's strong grasp. But he was not likely to get away, unless Jack Blake chose to let him.

"I'm going to the House-master, I tell you!" said Levinson furiously.

"Do you think I'm going to let a servant treat me like that?"

"You thought it on yourself, you dirty cad!" said Lamsley-Lamsley. "He was ragging the poor kid for nothing, you fellows—trying to raise his dander, I guess, and Lynn wouldn't be down. Then he ran out of the study after him. It was just sheer childishness of Levinson's, and it would be beastly if Lynn got the push over it!"

"But, wotah?"

"But he will see it!" said Levinson violently. "Even old Radston won't let a boot-boy stay here who starts fighting with the fellows!"

"You've not going to mention this matter to Radston?" said Tom Merry.

"I am—and at once!"

"We'll see if you can be persuaded not to," said Tom.

"Bring him to my study, you chaps; it's further off. And we don't want the prefects to hear him. He may make quite a row while we're persuading him."

"It's he, he?"

"And Lynn, rushing feverishly, was rushed along the passage in the midst of a crowd of juniors, into Tom Merry's study.

He was whirled into that study, and bumped into the table, and rolled on the carpet, dragging down Jack Blake and Herries and Monty Lowther with him in a heap on the floor. There was a chorus of yells, but the loudest came from Levinson. Jack Blake jumped up, rubbing his head.

"Ow! I've bumped my nape against something!"

"You?" growled Lowther. "It was my chin! You!"

"I buffed my knee against something," said Herries.

"Was it your nose, Levinson?"

"Ow, ow, ow!" Levinson sat on the carpet and clasped his nose.

"Well, it hurt my knee," said Herries. "It's your own fault. Keep your silly nose to yourself!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Levinson, dash me, stop that row. Get up and be wagged!"

"I guess this is where we put you through it, Levinson!" grinned Lamsley-Lamsley. "What is it going to be?"

"Something huzzing, with booby oil in it," suggested Monty Lowther, still hiccupping in spite of a terrific ache in his chin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a slipper here," said Tom Merry. "I used it on Levinson once before. Lay him across the table."

"Hear, hear!"

"No, there, there!" said Monty Levebor. Levebor was yanked off the floor, and plumped struggling upon the table, face downwards. He wriggled in horrible anticipation. Tom Merry took up the slipper.

"New Levebor!"
"You! Lemme go!"
"Hold the woman tight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, watching the proceedings through his eyelashes. "I do not, as a rule, approve of cruelty to animals; but in this case I regard it as imperative to be severe."

"You! I'll go straight to Mr. Pellon and say— Yarsook!" Levebor laid out a terrible yell as the slipper came down.

"But Jove, Mr. Wallins would be verry much surprised if you went to him and said yarsook, Levebor!" said Arthur Augustus in amusement.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You ragged that kid Lynn for talking, because he's a book-boy and can't answer you back," said Tom Merry. "Is'n't that so, Levebor?"

"You! Leggo!"
"I guess it's so," said Lumber-Lumber. "I was there." "He's done the same with Binks when he was here, and he says, 'Toby the same way,'" said Blak. "He's too mean to be!"

"He's going to be stopped," said Tom Merry. "Now, Levebor, though you were to blame, it would get wrong Lynn into trouble if you reported to the Housemaster that he had hit you. You're not going to."

"I am!" roared Levebor.
The slipper rose and fell with all the force of Tom Merry's muscular arm. Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yah! Ah! Yah! Oh!"
"Will you promise, because he's tall, to let the master drop, Levebor?" asked Tom Merry calmly. "We've brought you here to persuade you. We're going to persuade you, if I use up this slipper to rag, and have to start on you with a football boot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I'm going to report him. I'll get him raked. I'll—"
Whack, whack, whack!

Levebor yelled furiously and struggled, but four or five jabs were hailing him down on the table, and he could not get loose. The dust rose in a cloud from his garments as the slipper rose and fell.

"But Jove," said Arthur Augustus in disgust. "I regret to remark, Levebor, that you woefully require a doctor. You do not take proper care of your twoahs, Levebor."

"Whack, whack, whack!"
"Hold on!" roared Levebor in anguish. "I—I—I'll do as you want, if you like."

"Good! You're not going to make any trouble for Lynn with the Housemaster or the house-dame, honoro bright!"

"Honoro bright!" said Levebor, between his set teeth.

"But Levebor really hasn't any sense of humor, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy doubtfully. "He won't keep his word, you know."

"If he doesn't," said Tom Merry grimly, "what he's just said will be a joke to him he'll get. If you break your word, Levebor, you'll be shipped again, and frog's smashed, and deced in the river and generally slaughtered. Now you can get out, you cad!"

Levebor was released, and he rolled off the table. "You rotters!" he began.

"Get out!" shouted all the jantons together, and Tom Merry made a threatening motion with the slipper.

And Levebor got out.

And that threatened report was not made to the Housemaster. Levebor realized that Tom Merry & Co. were in deadly earnest, and he did not venture to break his word. But towards Lynn, the book-boy, he felt a bitter and malicious hatred—even more than towards Tom Merry & Co.—and Lynn was destined to feel the effects of it.

CHAPTER 7.
Brought to Light!

TOM MERRY & CO. had stood by the boot-boy from a sense of justice and fair play.

But they had, naturally, very little to do with him. He was not much in evidence, and during the following days they almost forgot his existence.

Lynn, however, attended to his duties assiduously. Never had the many boots of the School House been so well and conscientiously cleaned—never had the knives had so excellent a polish—never were laborious duties done more carefully and thoroughly. Miss Minzsa, the house-dame, was very pleased with Lynn, and she told Toby that Lynn was worth two of him. At which Toby only grinned. He was very well pleased with Lynn, too. Lynn did her more than his fair share of the work, and never grumbled. All the

servants in the School House thanked Lynn, as people are bound to like a fellow who is quiet, conscientious, and obliging.

For his leisure hours, which were not many, Lynn had his own occupations, which it made Toby's head ache even to think about.

In the little attic at the top of the house, which was Lynn's room, there were books, well-thumbed and worn, over which Lynn spent much time.

But that peculiar taste of the boot-boy was not generally known. He did not talk much about himself.

But for Levebor, of the Fourth, Lynn's life in the School House of St. Jim's would have been pleasant enough.

The work was not hard, but it was continuous, and took up most of his time; but he had a reasonable amount of leisure, and he was not of the complaining kind.

And Lynn was a sensible, level-headed boy. He had his ambitions, and he would have been better pleased not to have to start life so low down in the scale. But he knew there was nothing to be advanced of in any kind of work, so long as it was honest and done well. He envied the school-boys, who had nothing to do but to study, the thing he longed most to do. But it was a perfectly good-saturated avy—

—a trace of bitterness or jealousy crept into it. They had the look, as it happened—that was how he looked at it. Other circumstances might have made him a public school-boy, and any fellow at St. Jim's a book-boy. Such things were determined mainly by chance in an uncertain world—mostly by chance of long-ago, before any of them were born.

There was only a difference of circumstances between him and the school-boys. It did not hurt him to address a boy of his own age, or younger than himself, as "sir." Why should it? The "sir" was simply a verbal recognition of the difference in circumstances, which indubitably existed, and would have existed just the same if it had not been verbally recognized. There was no nonsense about Tom Lynn. Any place on the social ladder could be made honorable by good and honorable conduct. And if words ever interfered that inferiority of position implied inferiority of mind or conduct, he was willing to let them convulse so.

He was in a famous seat of learning; and although a boot-boy was not supposed to take any interest in classes or class-work, he was able to pick up crumbs of knowledge, as it were, that fell from the rich men's table.

The dorm in his side was Levebor of the Fourth.

Levebor had possessed him in the first place from sheer laziness and malice, without knowing or caring anything about him. It was merely a case of Satan feeling work for him, and he to do it.

But the New Lynn had struck had changed all that. Levebor's feelings were no longer of idle malice, but of bitter and personal hatred. And he sought for opportunities of making his hatred felt, and he found many.

He came into contact with the boot-boy as often as he could. He delighted to give him orders in a bullying tone, and to find fault with him. But Tom Lynn bore it all with quietness, and was never tempted into answering back as he felt inclined.

And Levebor, failing to catch him in anything that could be represented as cheek, looked round for more telling methods of making his bitterness felt.

His desire was to persuade the boot-boy into something for which he could be "sacked," and he gave that suitable purpose a great deal of thought.

Even Mellish, though in most things a fellow after Levebor's own heart, gave "fed up" with his malice.

"Why can't you let that kid alone, Levebor?" Mellish demanded, a week after Tom Lynn had come to St. Jim's.

"He's devil enough. He hasn't done anything. Why can't you give the poor beast a rest?"

Levebor grinned his teeth.

"I'm going to get him the push, somehow or other," he said.

"What for?"
"I hate the beast!"

"Because he hit you?" grinned Mellish. "Why don't you tek him, then?"

"Fight a boot-boy!" said Levebor loftily. "No, I haven't come down to that!"

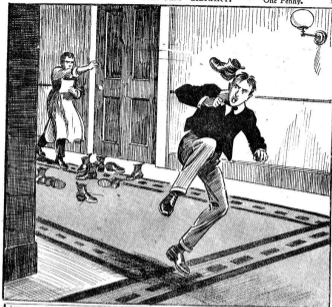
"And he looks as if he could take care of himself, too," said Mellish, with a chuckle. "I fancy you'd have all your work cut out."

"He's a cheaky outter!" said Levebor. "Do you know what he's got in his garter? He's got a Latin Principia there, and he studies."

"Oh, rumbly!" said Mellish, with a yawn. "What a total fancy raggling up Latin without being forced to!"

"He has no idea of his position. He ought to be taught."
"How do you know what he's got in his room, though?" asked Mellish.

"I've looked."
"I guess you're one of the meanest rotters a-going."



Lynn grasped a heavy boot and swung it into the air. While! Cuts heard the whizzing of the boot, and gave a fiendish yell as it caught him on the side of the head. "You young scoundrel! I'll smash you for this!" he yelled. (See Chapter 11.)

Levison," said Lamsley-Lamsley, coming into the study at that moment. "So you've been springing in the servants' quarters?"

"Mind your own business!"

"I guess it's a dirty trick. It's you that ought to be the boot-boy," said Lamsley-Lamsley, in disgust. "Some fellows are born to be rogues, and you're one of them. I guess it's simply ridiculous for you to be a schoolboy here, and Lynn a boot-boy. Why, he's worth fifty of you!"

"You've got a fellow feeling for him, I suppose," Levison sneered. "What are you yourself—a rotten adventurer? Where would you be if your father hadn't made money? And how did he make it?"

"Are you criticizing my father?" asked Lamsley-Lamsley, coming towards Levison, and pushing back his cuffs.

"Oh, get off! I don't want a row with you," said Levison, backing round the table. "Are you going to clean up with Lynn as you do with Giroux, the grocer's boy?"

"I'd rather clean with him than with you, at any rate," said Lamsley-Lamsley coolly. "He's a better sort than you are. If the poor kid is trying to teach himself things he ought to be encouraged, not set upon."

"I believe in servants keeping their places,"

"No harm in his mugging up Latin if he wants to. I'd lend him a hand with it if I had three," said Lamsley-Lamsley. "Hallo, what have you got there?"

Levison had taken a sheet of paper from his pocket, and was regarding it with a grin. It was a sheet of the thick white paper in which sugar is wrapped in grocer's shops, and it had been lined with a pencil, and was covered with writing in a cursive hand.

"It's a specimen," said Levison. "If you want to see it you can come into the common-room. I'm going to pin it up."

And Levison left the study.

It was evening, and there were a good many fellows in the junior common-room when Levison came in, followed by Mellish and Lamsley-Lamsley.

The sight of Levison passing a sheet of sugar-paper on the wall drew all eyes upon him.

"Bal Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What is that?"

Levison chuckled, and waved his hand towards the scribbled paper on the wall.

"Gentlemen, allow me to present a sample of the educational work of the lower classes. We have an unsuspected genius in our midst! Look!"

The juniors crowded round the paper in surprise and curiosity. The words upon it were in Latin. It was an exercise such as might have been written out by a boy in the Second or Third Form.

"Great republican proflig. Legitimus Romanus davo professorum fortis. Alexander Magnus militis profligis inter fide. And so on for the whole sheet."

"What on earth does that mean?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"It is an exercise!" asked Blake.

"Yes; that's what it is," said Levison. "Observe the lovely round hand, as taught by the Council Schools. Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Council Schools!" said Tom Merry, peevish.

"Who wrote that, then?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell.
 "Why isn't it written on exercise paper?"
 "Because the chap who wrote it couldn't get hold of exercise paper, without stealing it," said Levison.
 "What do you mean?"
 "Can't you guess who did that?"
 "No."
 "Lynn!" said Levison, with a chuckle.
 "Lynn!" exclaimed the printer.
 "Yes, Lynn, the boot-boy! He's learning Latin! Ha, ha, ha!"
 "My hat!"
 "Great Scott!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Some of the fellows laughed. The idea of it struck them as funny. Some of them looked serious, with a compassionate feeling for the poor lad who was laboring against so many difficulties.

"Awful cheek!" said Fred of the Shell.
 "Servants are coming to something in our days!" roared Brooks. "I wonder what the Housemaster would say to a kid mugging Latin when he ought to be cleaning boots!"
 "He cleans the boots all right," said Tom Merry. "I don't see why he shouldn't mug up Latin in his spare time if he wants to."

"Yes, wothah!" said D'Arcy. "I regard it as very meritorious!"
 "You would!" roared Levison. "I think it's pure, unadorned cheek, and funny! A boot-boy learning Latin! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where did you get that paper?" asked Mansers.
 "Oh, I found it!"
 "But where?"
 "First on!"
 "He's been sly in Lynn's room," said Lemley-Lumley. Tom Merry turned an angry glance upon the end of the Fourth.

"Have you been to Lynn's room without being asked, Levison?" he exclaimed.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.
 "The end would hardly have the cheek to ask me to his room, I suppose," he said, with a sneer. "It hasn't come to that! I suppose I can go into a servant's room if I want to, can't I?"

"An Englishman's house is his castle, servant or not!" said Tom Merry. "It was a mean, dirty trick to go there without permission, and it was stealing to take his property away. You had better take it back."

Levison hit his lip. His intended joke in holding an arrogant boot-boy up to ridicule seemed to have fallen flat. Arthur Augustus came over to the paper, and unrolled it from the wall.

"Let that paper alone!" shouted Levison.
 "I refuse to let it alone, I am going to take it back to its owner," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "You cannot be trusted to do so, Levison."
 "Good old Gussy!"

And with the paper in his hand Arthur Augustus D'Arcy quitted the common-rooms, and went in search of Tom Lynn. And in the common-rooms there was a buzz of talk on the subject of that peculiar discovery, many of the fellows laughing and many of them, not distinguished for hard work in the Form-rooms, wondering that Lynn should be as enough to grind at Latin when he wasn't driven to it.

CHAPTER 8.

Arthur Augustus Offers to Help.

LYNN was in the boot-room.
 In that room he performed many of his labours besides the cleaning of boots. The knife-making was there, and in that room, too, he cleaned the silver. He was sitting on a box, with his apron on, and a huge pile of spoons and forks on a table before him, and a box of some polishing powder, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped at the door.
 Lynn looked round in surprise. It was not customary for anyone to tap at the door of the boot-room before entering.

"Come in!" called out Lynn.
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered.
 Lynn rose to his feet respectfully at once. D'Arcy waved his hand.
 "Praw don't rise, deah boy!"

But Lynn had already risen, and he remained standing, the charter in one hand, and a spoon in the other.

"Praw excuse this intrusion, Lynn," said Arthur Augustus graciously. "I have something's break that belongs to you, and I have come to restore it." He laid the sheet of newspaper on the table.

Lynn glanced at it, and his face became red.
 "I—e—" he began.

"That is your property, Lynn?"

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"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Every Magazine.

"Yes, sir."
 "Levison had it in the common-rooms, so I brought it to you."

Lynn's brow wrinkled.
 "I left it in my room, sir," he said.
 "I'm afraid Levison went there and took it, deah boy. Praw allow me to apologise for such disgraceful conduct on the part of a St. Jim's chap!" said D'Arcy, in his most stately manner. "I assure you that we are all ashamed of him."

Lynn smiled.
 "It does not matter," he said.
 He recommenced polishing spoons as he spoke. He had a great deal of work to do, and even for the pleasure of D'Arcy's conversation he could not neglect his work.
 "You are very busy, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"Yes, sir."
 "Am I bothahin' you if I stay a few minutes? Praw be quite frank!"

"Not at all, sir. I can go on working," said Lynn. "It is very kind of you to come here and speak to me, Master D'Arcy."

"Wate!" said Arthur Augustus, clasping from his stately manner. "That's wothah! I've got something to say to you, Lynn."

"Yes, sir," said Lynn, taking up another spoon and polishing away.

"As Levison pleased that papah up on the wall of the common-rooms, I could not help seeing it, so I am sure you will not object me of showin' an undue interest in your private affairs," said D'Arcy. "I should not like you to suspect me of impertinence."

Lynn's look was almost affectionate as it rested upon the aristocratic features of the swell of the Fourth. He wondered how many fellows in the big public school would think that it was possible to be impertinent to a boot-boy. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a gentleman to his skin finger-tips.

"I think you are the best and kindest young gentleman I have ever spoken to, sir," said Lynn, with deep sincerity.

"It appears that you are muggin' Latin in your spare time," said D'Arcy.

"I am trying to learn, sir," Lynn coloured again. "I hope you don't regard it as cheek on my part. I don't mean it like that. It doesn't mean that I'm forgetting my position, Master D'Arcy. But even a boot-boy may think of rising in the world."

"I regard it as extremely meritorious, deah boy. It shows that you've got plenty of British grit. I trust you will regard me as a friend, my deah kid. You have been muggin' up Latin by yourself!"

"Yes, sir."
 "Would you like some help?"
 "Help!" repeated Lynn.

"Yes."
 "I—I don't understand—"

"I mean, I'm willin' to help you if you like," D'Arcy explained. "I'm not a very brilliant scholar myself. I don't really get distinguished for that kind of thing. But of course I'm pretty well up in Latin. I should like to help you, and I could pass on to you, you know, some of the instruction I got from Mr. Levison, my Form-master."

"Yes, sir?"
 "I'll regard it as a duty. Have you seen Brooke—a chap in the Fourth?"

"Yes, sir. He's a day-boy. I think."

"That's right. Well, that chap Brooke earns his own livin'" said Arthur Augustus, pausing to see the effect of that astonishing announcement upon Lynn.

"Does he, sir?"

"I suppose it doesn't seem so surprisin' to you, as you do the same yourself," said D'Arcy meditatively. "But it is very much to his credit. His pouch went on the works, you know, and he had to earn money to pay his fees here, and he does it. What I was givin' to say is, that I help him with his work sometimes. I go over to his house, you know, and pile in the articles. He packs postcards and things for shopkeepers, and I sit and watch him."

Lynn smiled.
 "I mention that simply to show that I'm accustomed to helpin' people, and can make myself useful," explained D'Arcy. "I'm set at all a slackah. Once, when I got into a woe here, I left the school and got a job, and earned my own livin' for two days. I assure you that it's a fact."

Lynn started upon a fork.

"So you see, I'm just the kind of chap to lend you a hand," said D'Arcy. "Would you like me to?"

"I should be very glad, sir."

"That's it a go."

"But—let have you the time, Master D'Arcy?"

"Lots of time, deah boy. Now, what time do you study?"

"Oh, is—to see him?"

"Lynn?"

"Yes, Master Kildare."

"Did you pinch Levinson downstairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"It's all right, Kildare," said D'Arcy, coming down the stairs. "It's lucky that I happened to be present, or those wretches would be telling you all sorts of lies about Lynn."

"D'Arcy! So you came here with Levinson?"

"No fear!" said Arthur Augustus promptly. "I certainly would not go anywhere with a wretch and liar like Levinson. I happened to be with Lynn in the room, you see, when they came there to see him. I was coachin' Lynn."

"Coaching him?"

"Yess, he's studier'n Latin, you know."

"Oh!" said Kildare, with a curious glance at the flushed face of the best-boy. "Well, that's no business of mine. So these three came to rag the best-boy?"

"Yass, wathah! They were goin' to learn his books."

Kildare's eyes glared.

"I—I say, that was only a job," stammered Crooko.

"We think it's like his cheek to be learning Latin, you know, and we were going to put him in his place."

"It is no business of yours what he does in his own room," said Kildare. "You came to Lynn's room to interfere with him."

"Well, no—no—" stammered Crooko.

"You have acted like a cork," said Kildare. "Lynn is in employment here, and that alone should make you learn his place. What has he done to you?"

"He's a cheeky cad, and doesn't know his place," growled Lerran.

"I'm afraid your opinion on that subject isn't very valuable, Levinson. You three came here to rag his room—a room, accordingly, which things to do, considering his position here, as he isn't able to hit back. I'm going to rag you."

"Look here, wo—"

"You first, Levinson. Hold out your hand!"

"But I—I—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered the captain of St. Jim's. Levinson held out his hand, and then the other. He received two tremendous cuts that made him howl with anguish.

"Now you, Mellich!"

"I—I say, I only came here with Levinson, you know," stammered Mellich.

"Hold out your hand!"

And Mellich added his hands to Levinson's. Then came Crooko's turn, and he wriggle and wriggled under the infliction. Kildare pointed down the passage with his cane.

"Clear off!" he said sternly. "And if you trouble Lynn again, I shall give you something you'll remember longer. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

And the ends of the School House went—without a word, but with many sobbing groans. Kildare turned to Lynn, and his frowning face relaxed.

"I'm sorry this has happened, Lynn," he said kindly. "If there is anything of the kind again, you must come to me or to Mr. Hailson, and let us know."

"Thank you, sir."

Kildare nodded and strode away.

"In! by the back, dash boy!" said Arthur Augustus authoritatively. "A wogalah brick—what!"

"Indeed he is," said Lynn.

"One of the very best!" said D'Arcy. "Well, good-night, dash boy! I don't think you will be troubled by these wretches in your own quarters any more."

"Good-night, sir!"

And Arthur Augustus went his way, leaving the drudge of the School House in his room, to work over his books for yet another hour before he went to bed.

CHAPTER II.

Boot-Boy and Footballer.

"GOAL!"

Tom Merry slackened pace on his bicycle as the shout rang across the village green.

The Terrible Three were cycling through Hycombe on Saturday afternoon. Earlier in the afternoon they had been playing in a football match at St. Jim's, and they had ridden thence, the village afterwards. Tom Merry wanted to see down to the grocer's boy. Grimes was captain of the village junior team, and the St. Jim's junior eleven had regular fixtures with them, a fact which Crooko, of the Shell, and some other fellows of the same sort deplored. Crooko declared that he would never play against a team of errand-boys and such like; but as he was never likely to have a chance of playing, that really did not matter very much. Grimes & Co. could have made rings round Crooko at any kind of game.

Tom Merry did not see that it made any difference whether

he followed "errand" as Latin or carried a grocer's basket during the week, so long as he played a good game of footer on Saturday afternoons. That was the most important thing to consider in making football fixtures. Or, as Monty Loutcher put it in his "Weekly Comic Column" manner, it didn't matter twopence whether he ground Latin or ground coffee.

"They're playing," said Tom Merry, as he noted the crowd on the village green. "I expect we shall find Grimes there. Let's watch it to a finish."

"Right-ho!" said Managers and Loutcher cheerfully. And they jumped off their machines, leaped their feet against the railings of the green, and joined the crowd of onlookers.

Protruding nearly all the village seemed to have gathered to watch that footer match, which was now very near its close.

Grimes & Co. were playing a visiting team from Abbotford, and the shouts of the onlookers indicated that Grimes & Co. were getting much the best of it.

"How's the score?" asked Tom Merry, addressing a junior in a mortar-board cap in the crowd. It was Gordon Gay, of the Fourth Form at Hycombe Grammar School.

Gordon Gay nodded and smiled.

"Two to nil," he said.

"For Grimes?"

"Yes. They've got a new player in the village team; he's a cough-drop," said Gordon Gay. "I've never seen him before, but he's playing up like a giddy international. I fancy they've never seen footer in his style in Hycombe before."

"Where's he playing?"

"Inside-right."

The Terrible Three looked out the Hycombe inside-right, and they uttered an exclamation of astonishment in chorus.

"My hat!"

"You know him?" asked Gordon Gay curiously.

"Know him? I should say so!"

"Jolly good player, wherever he is," said Gordon Gay.

"He's scored one of the goals, and he gave Grimes the pass that got the other. What's his name?"

"Lynn."

"Who is he?"

"Boot-boy in our House at St. Jim's."

"You don't say so! He plays splendid footer."

"Kipping!" said Tom Merry.

The chorus of the Shell watched the inside-right. It was undoubtedly Tom Lynn, though as feet they had not noticed him in the blue shirt and striped knickerbockers of the Hycombe Socialists.

Lynn shined well in football garb. His face was flushed now and very handsome. He did not see the St. Jim's players. All his attention was given to the game. The Abbotford men were packing their goal, striving to defend; but Grimes & Co. were pressing hard, and undoubtedly the most dangerous among them was Lynn, the drudge of the School House.

"Kipping!" repeated Tom Merry, as Lynn obtained the ball, and here it occurred. "He's going through them like a knife through cheese!"

"Like a Russian battleship through a fleet of fishing-smacks!" said Loutcher.

"He, he, he!"

Lynn was away with the ball. The crowd, thick on the village green, roared applause. Lynn was through the defence, he simply walked round the backs, and he beat the goalkeeper with a fast shot that gave him no earthly chance. Grimes clapped him on the shoulder. Grimes had come up too late to take a pass—but the inside-right had kicked the goal—and Hycombe went three up.

"Bravo!" shouted Gordon Gay and the Terrible Three together.

Lynn seemed to distinguish their voices amid the cheers of the crowd, for as the players walked back to the centre of the field, he glanced in the direction of the St. Jim's fellows. The colour in his flushed cheek deepened a little as he saw them. He raised his cap in salute. The Terrible Three waved their hands to him in return.

"That was a ripping goal!" said Tom Merry to his companions. "I had that Lumpy-Lumpy had taken the kid down here to introduce him to Grimes. I'm glad he's in the team. It's a good thing for him to drop into a good footer team here."

"Good thing for us, I must say!" broke in the disagreeable voice of Crooko of the Shell. Crooko and Gore had come out of the village tuck-shop, and joined the crowd on the green.

"What do you mean?" demanded Tom Merry, his lip curling as he glanced at the red of the Shell.

"St. Jim's juniors are playing that team next week!" said Crooko.

"I know that; it's a regular fixture!"

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A. Macdonald, New Lead, Composite School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I always get an ache in the evening, Master D'Arcy."
 "Wippin'! I'll coach it a point to get my feet, dear boy, and then I'll come up to your quarters and pike in. That all right?"

"I don't know how to thank you."
 "Pray don't trouble about that. It will be a pleasure. Now, I won't bother you any more, as you are busy. An' sover, dear boy!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy quitted the boot-room. Blake and Herrick and Digby were in Study No. 5 when D'Arcy came in. Blake scanned the serious and thoughtful countenance of his noble charge.

"Given young Lyons his giddy paper?" he asked.
 "Yess."
 "Now you'd better do your prep, if you're going to do it."

"Yess. I shall have to back up with it," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "I've got some other work to do to-night."
 "Other work?" said Herrick. "Been getting lines?"
 "No, Herrick."
 "Lenses to write?"

"Yess. But I'm goin' to put them off till to-morrow. Lenses will do any time. I've got to do some coaching to-night."
 The chains of Study No. 6 stared at him.

"Coaching?" said Blake sharply.
 "Yess, withal!"
 "Driving a coach, do you mean?" asked Digby, in amazement.

D'Arcy chuckled.
 "No, dear boy; the coach is goin' to do the driving."
 "What do you mean, image?" asked Blake.
 "I'm goin' to help a chap."

"Brooke again?" Blake inquired. "Are you going to help the poor chap again?"
 "I believe my assistance is worth valuable to Brooke when I go out to help him," said D'Arcy stiffly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "However, it is not Brooke this time. I am goin' to coach Lynn."

"Lynn?" gasped Blake.
 "Yess, withal! I regard it as very meritorious of him to be staggered up Latin, and I'm goin' to lend him a hand, you know. I'm goin' to give him some coaching every evening 'till his work is done."

"Oh, my hat!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll be set any more for laughter. I suppose a fellow is bound to help another fellow who's down on his back. That's a maxim of the Boy Scouts, too—to do a good turn to somebody or other—and I'm a Boy Scout."

"Poor old Lynn!" sighed Blake.
 "I regard you as an ass, Blake! I'm goin' to help that chap. I regard him as being extremely meritorious. I trust there is no one in this study who is amiable enough to regard it as an extra dig to help a boot-boy!"

"Oh, no," said Blake. "I was thinking of Lynn. If you help him by sitting on his bed and talking—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am goin' to wish in like another's. Now, pray don't talk any more, dear boys. I've got my preparation to do!"
 And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did his preparation, while Blake and Herrick and Digby exchanged smiles.

CHAPTER 9. The Coach.

TOM MERRY and Massens and Lovelock stopped in the passage and stared. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was coming along, laden with books. He had a Latin Principia in one hand and a Latin dictionary in the other, and a stack of input papers under one arm and two or three class-books under the other arm. And the Terrible Three regarded him with inspiring astonishment.

"Starry!" asked Lovelock sympathetically.
 "No, dear boy. I have something left out of my last batch, if you chaps are hard up."

"Then you're not going to the parashooter's?"
 "Certainly not, you ass!"
 "Not raising the ass your books?"

"Wessly, Lovelock!"
 "Then what's the little game?" asked Tom Merry.
 "I'm goin' to act as coach."

"Oh, coach!"
 "There is nothing to be surprised at. I'm goin' to coach Lynn in Latin."
 "You are?" roared the chains of the Shell, in chorus.
 "Yess. Why not?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Pray cut the cockle, dear boys! I fail to see anything to laugh at."

Tom Merry patted him on the back.
 "Well, in Golly, old man! I regard it as extremely meritorious of you!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, wails!"

And the swell of St. Jiar's went on his way, leaving the Terrible Three grinning.

Arthur Augustus ascended the stairs with his burden. High up in the house he went to the narrow stairs that led to the topmost attic, where he tapped at the door with the Latin grammar.

"The door was opened at once by Tom Lynn.
 "Heh! I am, dear boy?" assessed Arthur Augustus cheerfully.
 "Come in, sir!"

Arthur Augustus went in. It was a small room, but neatly furnished. The window was a dormer, and in daytime it gave a view of the wide playing fields of St. Jiar's, with the river beyond. Now it looked out upon a deathly sky streaked with stars.

There was a little wooden bookcase hanging on the wall, and it was full of books—shabby old volumes evidently purchased on second-hand stalls, and cheap editions of classics. There were books on Lynn's little table under the solitary gas-jet. The book-boy had been working since D'Arcy arrived.

Arthur Augustus set down his load upon the table.
 "I've brought my books," he said. "I've also brought another sort, pupah. You will find it better than that sugar-papah stuff."

"Thank you, sir!"
 "Now we're goin' to work weally hard," said Arthur Augustus. "Pray don't give me your chair. This box will do wippily."

But Lynn insisted upon giving the chair, and D'Arcy graciously yielded the point. Lynn sat down on the box beside him.

"Now, how far have you got?" asked Arthur Augustus.
 "Are you studying this book?"
 "Yes, Principia Latina, Volume One."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."
 "Show me where you are."
 Lynn opened the book.
 "Bah! Jove! You are handlin' deponent verbs—eh?"

"Yes."
 "Very good! Bah! Jove, do you know you're jolly near fit to go into the Fourth Form—if you didn't happen to be a boot-boy, my dear chap?" said D'Arcy, looking at Lynn's confusion.
 "Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take the place of a Form-mastah, and you are the pupil. See!"

"Yes."
 "You'll prepare a lesson undah my direction, and then I'll make you recastute, the same as we do in class."
 "Oh, good!"

And they set to work.
 The idea of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as a coach had made the School House fellows smile. But Lynn did not smile; he keenly appreciated the kindness of the swell of St. Jiar's, and he found D'Arcy's coaching useful.

As a matter of fact, Lynn was quite as far advanced in the study of the Latin language as D'Arcy was, and would quite tickle up as high a place in the Fourth Form if he had had the luck to belong to it. But there were many little deficiencies in the learning of the self-taught boy—matters of pronunciation, and so forth. For though it does not matter in the least how a dead language is pronounced, and although different countries have different ways—all of which would undoubtedly be impossible to a Latin if such a person could return to the earth to hear—still, there are accustomed ways of doing those things, and it was necessary to learn to do them in the accustomed way.

In that, at least, Arthur Augustus was of great assistance—and his co-operation, too, was very agreeable to the lad who had always worked and studied in solitude.

To Lynn the time of study passed with unaccustomed pleasure. He made the discovery before long that there were some things he could have told Arthur Augustus; but he had far too much tact and right feeling to think for a single instant of "showing off" to the kind-hearted junior who was helping him.

An hour passed away very quickly, Arthur Augustus finishing by setting a certain portion of work to be prepared for the next day.

"Now it's bedtime," he remarked. "I woudly coincide that you are gettin' on famously, Lynn, dear boy!"
 "I don't know how to thank you," said Lynn.
 "Oh, that's all right!"

There was a footstep outside the door, and the sound of a whispering voice—the voice of Lovelock, of the Fourth.
 "The cod's in his room."

Then a shriek.

"Never mind, we can go ahead, all the same. He won't dare to tell of us," said Crooke, and he stepped forward.

"Right-ho!"

"But Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

The door was flung open.

Arthur Augustus, from where he stood, could not be seen from the doorway, the open door shutting him off from view.

Lynn stepped forward as Levison and Crooke and Mellish came in together.

"What do you want?" he asked.

The three ends of the School House grinned.

"We're come to visit you," Crooke explained.

"We think it's like your rotten cheek to be mugging up Lynn and that kind of thing!" said Levison contemptuously.

"We're going to stop your cheek! See?"

"We're going to make a bonfire of your giddy lesson-books, and give you a licking if you raise any objection," added Crooke.

Lynn flushed hotly.

"You have no right to come into my room!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!"

"Will you leave?"

"No fear! Don't talk to us, you boot-blackening cad!" said Levison.

"File in, you chaps! Here's his rubbish!"

Arthur Augustus had not said a word so far. He left Lynn to deal with his visitors. But his eyes were beginning to gleam, and he was glad that he happened to be in the boot-boy's room at that moment.

Levison stepped towards the cheap bookcase on the wall, his companions following him. They had their backs to D'Arcy now, and so did not see him, although the door was no longer between them.

"Books galore!" sneered Levison. "My hat! Here's a Latin Testament, and a book of botany, and Horace's Odes, and Virgil. Oh, crumb! What a learned boot-cleaner!"

"He, he, he, ho!"

"Can't clean boots and knives to the tune of Horace's Odes!" said Levison. "It's our duty to destroy these things that keep a servant away from his work!"

"Oh, quite!" grinned Crooke.

"Let my books alone!" said Lynn severely.

"Rats!"

"You uttish cad!"

The three rappers swung round at the sound of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's unmistakable voice. They stared at him dumbly.

"D'Arcy!"

The swell of St. Jim's advanced towards them, his eyes gleaming.

"Yes uttish, unspeakable vottahs! How dare you come into Lynn's quarters without permission!"

"Not bloody to ask permission of a servant!" sneered Levison.

"A fellow's quarters are sacred to all decent chaps!" said D'Arcy. "You came here to wag him and destroy his books! You are beastly vottahs! Get out of this room at once!"

"Go and eat cake!"

"If you don't get out, I shall put you out!"

"All three of us!" grinned Crooke.

"Yess; all three!"

"Quite sure you could do it?"

"If you'll, I'll warrant Lynn will help me, too!"

"If that had not been a drag on a St. Jim's chap he will get the order of the boot!" said Levison.

"You uttish vascal! It is seven and cowardly to take advantage of the fact that he is in employment here!" said D'Arcy wrathfully.

"Rot! No need to stand on ceremony with a kitchen drudge," said Levison.

"It is very much to his credit if he studies as well as a drudge!" below stairs," said D'Arcy. "But it is not your business, anyway! Are you going?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Then we shall eject you! Come on, Lynn!"

"I've warned you what will happen if that gentleman touches us," said Levison.

"Wats! If there is a woe, I shall explain the whole of the case to Mr. Wallton, and you will be eased!" said D'Arcy.

"Look here—"

"File in, Lynn, deah boy! I'll see you through if there's any trouble afterwards."

"I wish they'd go away quietly," said Lynn, looking distressed.

"That's just what we're not going to do, Drudge!" said Levison, apparently finding some relish in that unpleasant word.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 220.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Will you go, you vottahs?"

"No."

"Then I shall chuck you out on your beastly rocks!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed to the attack.

CHAPTER 10.

No Luck for Levison.

BUMP! Crooke, of the Shell, in the grasp of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, rolled on the floor. Lynn did not hesitate a second about backing up the swell of St. Jim's.

Well he knew that the matter might be represented in such a way afterwards that it would cost him his employment in the House.

But he could not fail to back up his kind and generous friend, and he was harrung, too, with anger at the invasion of his room by the insolent ends of the School House.

Levison and Mellish turned upon D'Arcy, to drag him off the yelling Crooke; but they found that they had the boot-boy to deal with.

Lynn sprang upon them like a tiger.

"Harrak off, Drudge!" roared Levison, as a group of iron closed upon his colleague. "Don't touch me, you cad!"

But Lynn did not heed.

His grip had fastened upon both the jokers at once, on the back of their collars; and his grip was like that of a steel vice. They struggled furiously to loose themselves, but they could not do it. Lynn swung them round, and their heads came together with a loud-sounding concussion.

Croak!

"Yah!"

"Ow!"

"Go it, deah boy!" gasped D'Arcy. "I've got this vottah!"

"Gurreff!" murmured Crooke.

"I'm ginn to chuck you out, you vottah cad!"

Bump, bump!

Lynn had yanked Levison and Mellish to the doorway. He bang them out one after the other, and they banged and rolled on the landing.

Then came bump, bump, bump, as Levison rolled down the narrow stairs to the passage below, roaring and yelling; Mellish lay and gasped.

D'Arcy and Crooke were rolling on the floor of Lynn's room. Crooke was the bigger and heavier of the two, but he did not possess D'Arcy's pluck and determination, and he soon crept down and thought only of getting away.

D'Arcy rolled him to the doorway and rolled him out, and he bumped on Mellish on the landing.

Arthur Augustus rose, flushed and breathless and dusty, but triumphant.

"The vottahs! Chucked out, hai Jove!"

Lynn panted.

"They're gone," he said. "I think one of them has rolled down the stairs. I hope he is not hurt."

"Serve him right if he is."

The stairs were very dark, and D'Arcy and Lynn peered down. There was a sound of grunting and muzzling from below.

"It's Levison," said D'Arcy. "Are you hurt, Levison, you vottah?"

"Ow! Yes, hang you!"

"Serve you right!" said Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle.

"Hallo! What's that?"

It had not occurred to them for a moment that the uproar must have reached other ears and attracted attention.

Kildare, of the Sixth, the head prefect of the School House, had come up with a cane in his hand, imagining that it was some "rag" of the juniors that caused the disturbance.

"What's this row here?" shouted Kildare, from the bottom of the garret stairs. "Hallo! Who's this?"

He stumbled on Levison. "Get up! Who are you?"

"Ow, ow!"

"Is that you, Levison?"

"Ow! Yes."

"What are you doing here?"

"I've been assaulted by the Drudge—that rotten boot-boy," howled Levison. He sought to be socked. It displeased him.

Kildare felt for his matches, and lighted the gas in the passage. Levison staggered to his feet, limping, dusty, dishevelled, furious.

Kildare fixed his eyes upon the end of the Fourth.

"Now, what's that?" he demanded. "You say that the boot-boy pitched you downstairs?"

"Yes," howled Levison.

"What were you doing up there? There's only one garret up those stairs, and it belongs to Lynn. Why did you go there?"

"Boston, I call it—playing grand-boys and all kinds of rascals," said Crooke, with a sneer. "But this is altogether too thick—to play a team containing a boot-boy belonging to the school!"

"Playing our own boot-boy?" grinned Goro. "Who ever heard of such a thing?"

Tom Merry started a little. It had not struck him in that light before; but when he came to think of it, it certainly would be a little queer, playing a team including the boot-boy of the School House.

"Of course, it's impossible!" said Crooke.

Tom was silent.

"I don't suppose the Head would allow such a thing," went on Crooke victoriously. "It would be disgraceful!"

"I don't see that there would be anything disgraceful in it," said Tom Merry quietly. "Lynn was quite within his rights in joining the village team."

"Yes; they're about his class!" sneered Goro.

"Exactly; so he joined them, as he had a perfect right to do. Goro has a fixture with us next week—and he's not likely to leave and stay the best player. Lynn is far and away the best player in the team."

"I might on the wall!" remarked Gordon Gay.

"If Goro brings Lynn with him next Saturday, we can't possibly raise any objection!" said Tom Merry.

"Why should you?" said Gordon Gay. Gordon Gay came from the great and breezy land of Australia, and he took a wide view of things. "I suppose the chap won't leave the boots uncleaned while he plays footer—and what else matters?"

"Gentlemen can't play with a boot-boy, I suppose?" said Crooke.

"Gentlemen could," said Monty Leather. "Perhaps you couldn't, Crooke. But then you wouldn't have to, set being either a gentleman or a footballer."

Crooke turned crimson.

"I certainly wouldn't play," he exclaimed. "If I belonged to the junior eleven, I'd resign rather than submit to such a thing."

"Well, you don't belong to it," said Tom Merry dryly. "And you're never likely to, unless you give up smoking, and other rotten things, and train yourself to get it. So I really don't see how it concerns you at all."

"It concerns me as St. Jim's chap! What is the school ceasing to—playing our own servants in a footer match!" sneered Crooke.

"If he gets leave from his work on Saturday next week, and Goro plays him, we shall have to put up with it," said Tom Merry. "As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't matter in the least. I'm set a study at all events."

"You mean that I am one!" sneered Crooke.

"Yes—though what you've got to be established about, I'm blessed if I can see!" said Tom Merry, with a disparaging glance at the waddy figure and unbecomingly face of the head of the School.

"If that low cad plays in a match against the school, there will be a row," said Crooke, sneering his hands. "It will be a regular scandal!"

"And he struts away with Goro."

"Your giddy boot-boy doesn't seem to be popular," remarked Gordon Gay, with a laugh.

Tom Merry frowned.

"Some of the fellows are down on him," he explained. "He's a really decent kid, and tries to study in his spare time, and some of the chaps think it's cheek. I can't see any harm in it."

There was a murmur from the crowd.

"Good! Good!"

"Lynn again!" grinned Gordon Gay.

"You've got a budding Blomster for boot-boy in the School House at your show."

"Looks like it!" laughed Tom Merry.

"Hoarse?"

The whistle went, and Abbotford retired hopelessly beaten.

The Terrible Three joined Grimes as he came off the field with his men.

"You've got a good man there, Grimes," said Tom Merry.

Grimes grinned.

"Yes; Master Merry—I'm glad he's not in the school at St. Jim's, instead of the boot-room—I shouldn't like him playing against us."

"Yes; Master Merry—I'm glad he's not in the school at St. Jim's, instead of the boot-room—I shouldn't like him playing against us."

Tom Merry smiled.

"I wish he were in the school," said Tom Merry. "There would be a place for him in the junior eleven."

"I should say so! He's a regular scroucher!" said Grimes.

"I s'pose there's no objection to my puttin' him in next Saturday, Master Merry? If you wouldn't like it, you just say so, and I'll leave him out, of course—but with him in, I think we might have a good chance of pulling off the season."

"Well, that's a temptation," grinned Monty Leather.

"Put him in by all means," said Tom Merry heartily.

"and if he helps you pull off the match, Grimes, you're welcome to it. We want you to bring the best team you can raise."

"And the other gentlemen?" hinted Grimes. "I know it's rather a queer thing, the boot-boy playin' against his employer's school."

"I don't see why. Anyway, nobody will object, I know that—nobody belonging to the team, I mean—and the others don't count."

"Right—ho, then!" said Grimes. "Three o'clock on Saturday, Master Merry."

"Good!"

And the Terrible Three mounted their bicycles and rode back to St. Jim's. Tom Merry was in a thoughtful mood. There was no reason whatever why Tom Lynn should not play for the eleven he belonged to, against St. Jim's or any other team—but Tom felt that it was a curious situation, and that it might lead to trouble. But so long as he was assured that the position he took up was the right one, Tom Merry was prepared to face the trouble.

CHAPTER 12.

Better Not!

TOM MERRY & CO. were in their study that evening, discussing football and coast chemistry, when a tap came at the door, and Tom Merry called out cheerily:

"Come in, father!"

Lynn came into the study.

"Hello, kid!" said Tom kindly. "Test right in! I say, we saw you playing footer to-day for the Kyleshahe kids—it was ripping!"

"First class!" said Monty Leather. "Where did you pick up your Blomster bumper, Lynn? You didn't give the other side a look-in?"

Lynn smiled.

"I've always played football when I've had a chance, sir," he said.

"Good thing," said Tom Merry. "You will make a ripping player if you loop on, Lynn. It was worth watching!"

Lynn flushed with pleasure.

"Thank you, Master Merry," he said. "It—it's that I've come here to speak to you about, sir, if you'll excuse the liberty."

"Excuse rate?" said Tom Merry obligingly. "Get it off your chest, kid! Is there anything we can do for you?"

"It's about the match next Saturday."

"Of course, I was glad to join Grimes's team. Master Lumsley-Lumsley was kind enough to introduce me there, and they are a team of fellows in my own station—and I didn't know at that time that they had fixtures with this school. I did not know that St. Jim's would play a team of—well fellows like Grimes and me."

"What's the matter with fellows like Grimes and you?" asked Tom Merry.

"Well, nothing, I suppose, but the difference in—is position, and all that."

Lynn stammered. "I—I thought—"

"You thought of—well, then," said Tom Merry. "There are some snobs here who are set against playing the village, but that's nothing. They don't count."

"But—but I did not know about their match with St. Jim's," said Lynn. "I suppose you wouldn't like me to play next Saturday?"

"Why should we mind?"

"Then you don't mind?" asked Lynn.

"Not a bit!"

"And—and the other young gentlemen—they don't mind?"

"Not the members of the team, certainly."

Lynn drew a deep breath of relief.

NEXT WEDNESDAY:

BY WHOSE HAND?

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Biff! Lynn did not stop to think. His fist, clenched as hard as iron, caught Levinson full in the face, and the end of the Fourth yelled yelling along the passage. From Ignacy-Landay, who was looking out of his study, came a yell of approval. (See Chapter 5.)

"Then I may play, if I can get the time off?" he asked.

"Of course."

"Thank you very much, Master Merry."

And Lynn left the study. As he went quietly down the passage, Levinson and Mel's came out of their room. Levinson's eyes glistened at the sight of the boot-boy. Since that evening at the hands of Kildare, Levinson had not ventured into the Drudge's room again. He was, indeed, somewhat at a loss how to make the Drudge feel his dislike—until the news of Lynn's football proclivities reached him, and he saw another opening.

"So you play football, Drudge?" he asked, stopping Lynn in the passage.

"Yes, sir," said Lynn.

"The word 'drudge' grated on his ears, and Levinson knew it—which was the main reason why he used it.

"Playing in the team of grocer boys, and butcher boys, and chemist's boys—eh?"

"Yes, sir. Grocers has been kind enough to let me play for them."

"Just your mark, of course."

"Yes, sir, just my mark," agreed Lynn eagerly.

"And you've got the cheek to think of playing for them against this school?" exclaimed Levinson contemptuously.

"Master Merry says there is no objection."

"And you don't see any objection yourself? You think it's quite right and proper for a boot-boy and kitchen drudge to play faster against the school that employs him to clean boots and knives?"

"I asked Master Merry," followed Lynn.

Levinson sniffed.

"Oh, of course, Tom Merry wouldn't like to hurt your feelings—he's too soft for that. You'll find that I'm not soft like Tom Merry, I presume you?"

"I have never thought that you were like Master Merry in any way, sir," said the boot-boy; and his tone implied more than his words.

"None of your cheek, you say?" said Levinson angrily.

"Look here, Tom Merry doesn't like to set you down, though he knows it's rotten cheek on your part, the same as we all do.

I can tell you he will get pretty well ragged by all the fellows if he allows such a thing."

"Yes, rather!"

Tom Lynn's expression changed.

"Do you mean that Master Merry will get into any trouble through his kindness to me?" he asked, with a troubled look.

"Of course he will. All the fellows will be down on him."

"Can't you see yourself that it's a cheek of a servant like yourself to think of playing us at footers?" demanded the end of the Fourth, perceiving his advantage.

Lynn winced.

"I suppose it is," he said in a low voice.

"Of course it is," said Lerrion; "and Tom Merry will get jolly well ragged over it. I can tell you!"

He swung away scornfully, and Lynn went downstairs with a clouded brow. Lynn realized only too clearly that the situation was a peculiar one, and he had been perfectly willing to leave the decision to Tom Merry. Tom Merry had decided that he could play for Grimes & Co.; but if that was to cause trouble for the Shell fellow among his school-mates, that was a new and painful thought for the Dredge.

His usually cheerful face was darkly clouded as he went into the boot-room. He had work to do there; and in the boot-room he found Toby cleaning a silver candlestick. Toby looked up from his rubbing with a curious gaze at the sight of Lynn's face.

"Allo! What's the matter, you fellow-me-lod?" asked the page.

Lynn hesitated, and then explained. Toby whistled.

"Dida! know you was a footballer?" he said. "You'd better let it alone. The young gentles wouldn't like a boot-boy playin' of their games, you know."

"But everybody has a right to play footer, I suppose," said Lynn; "and the village fellows are chaps like you and me, Toby."

Toby nodded.

"I know that, mate. But it's a bit thick playing the school, you know. I don't know as the 'Ousemaster would like it for you."

"Mr. Ralston seems a very kind man to me."

"Yes; but there's things to be considered," said Toby. "Lots of 'em being in a school like this, you know. The wonder to me is that you 'ave'n't been sacked when they found you was learnin' Latin and such."

"But why?"

"Tain't in your station," grinned Toby. "It's up to the likes of you and me to be 'umble, my son. Worry respectful to your betters, even if they ain't any better nor you. Do you savvy? Get all the tips you can, and never put on airs."

Lynn coloured.

"I 'ave never taken any tips?" he exclaimed.

"More fool you!" said Toby. "Why shouldn't you?"

"I 'ave paid wages for my work," said Lynn. "Tips are charity. I never want to have any money that I don't earn."

Toby burst into a roar.

"Whose was your brought up?" he demanded. "'Oo, be!"

"If fellows only 'ad the money they earn, wot would all the young gentlemen 'ere do for money? They don't earn any, and their fathers don't earn any. But they has plenty. Why, now that Master D'Arcy 'ave taken a fancy to you, you could make a nifty income out of 'im if you liked; he's werry free with his money!"

"I hope he will never offer me any," said Lynn miserably.

"Do you mean to say that you wouldn't take it?" demanded Toby, opening his eyes wide.

"No, I wouldn't."

"But why not?"

"Tis are charity; I don't want that."

"You'd refuse to take it?" gasped Toby.

"Yes."

"Well, hawney," said Toby, "see're a queer fish! Why, we makes a nifty 'arvel betwixt stairs when the school breaks up for the holidays, you know. Some of them tip right and left. Master D'Arcy always gives me a 'arf-quid. I 'eppose when he offers you one, you'd say no-hey!"

"Yes."

"Then you'll offend 'im," wailed Toby. "'Don't you begin to put on airs above your station, my boy, 'cause you're learnin' Latin and such. It'll get you into trouble. The gentry don't like it, I can tell you!"

"I don't think Master D'Arcy would be offended," said Lynn.

"And he ain't give you any tips so far?"

"Certainly not."

"Well," said Toby, "all I've got to say is that you're a haw, and you don't know a good thing when you see it! You'll learn better when you've been in service a bit longer. I 'awey. You got broken in, you know, like a 'orse!"

"But why shouldn't a chap be decent and independent, although he's in service?" asked Lynn. "There's nothing disgraceful in being in service, is there?"

Toby scratched his nose thoughtfully.

"I s'pose," he said, "if 'eppose there must be, as folks looks down on it so much. They looks on us as a different kind of flesh and blood."

"But we're not," said Lynn.

"Tut tut! Lerrion.—No. 298.

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"No, we ain't, nothing!" said Toby. "I 'eppose we're the same uncosouth. But a fellow who 'appens to be born rich don't think so.—Is a place like this, a fellow who works for his livin' is—well, he ain't considered like the others of course."

"But if nobody did any work at all, what would become of the country?" asked Lynn. "I suppose it's necessary for work to be done, isn't it?"

"I 'eppose so," agreed Toby.

"And surely the fellows who do the work ought to be respected more than slackers who stand by letting things do?"

"Oh, be!" said Toby, to whom this was an entirely new idea. "You do git queer fancies into your 'ead, I must say!"

"And how can there be anything to be ashamed of in being a servant, if there's nothing to be ashamed of in keeping servants?" asked Lynn. "If there's anything rotten in it, it must be much rotteness of the people who keep the servants, because they're educated and ought to know better. If a fellow looks down on me for cleaning knives, he ought to look down much more on the Housemaster, who engaged me to do it—as he's older than I am, and knows better what's right and what's wrong?"

Toby scratched his nose again.

"Well, that sounds all right," he admitted. "But—well, all the same, if you want to keep your berth, and not get into trouble, I'd advise you to be 'umble. I 'eppose you 'ave 'er toberkin' is logic; but logic ain't no good 'cept for jawin'. You stick to your work, and be 'umble. That's wot they like. Lark at 'em behind their backs as much as you like, but be 'umble as their faces. That's the way to get on in service, my son, you take my tip. And arbor your blessed football, don't you rely too much on Master Merry's kindness; all the fellows ain't like 'em. You steer close of it!"

And that football match, which had loomed up very agreeably in the imagination of the dredge of the School House, faded into the background again. Lynn felt that it would not do. Trouble for himself! he did not mind; but to bring trouble upon the parsons, who had been kind and generous to him—he was prepared to make any sacrifice rather than do that.

CHAPTER 13.

Lynn is Made Useful.

CUTTS of the Fifth came into the bicycle-shed, and glanced round him. There was no one in the shed with the exception of Lynn, who was cleaning a bicycle. It was not really in Lynn's line of duties—a very long list—to clean bicycles for the parsons; but Arthur Augustus's bicycle certainly wanted cleaning. The swell of St. Jim's had had a fall, and the bike was raked with mud, and Lynn had seen it, and it occurred to him that there was an opportunity of doing a little in return for the kindness of the swell of St. Jim's. So he was cleaning away cheerfully, making the bike look as clean and bright as a new pin, when Cutts of the Fifth came in.

Cutts, the elegant and dandified Fifth-Former, stood looking curiously at Lynn, who did not notice him for the moment. Lynn had not been long enough at the school to know all the fellows by name or sight; but he had observed Cutts, who made quite a prominent figure in the little world of school. He knew that he was rich, that he was followed admiringly by a crowd of the fellows; but he did not know that Gerald Cutts was a black sheep, that he gambled and smoked and broke bounds after hours, the circumstances being little secrets that Cutts of the Fifth kept as carefully as he could from general knowledge.

"Awfully busy, what?" said Cutts.

Lynn looked round quickly at the sound of Cutts's voice, and rose to his feet.

"Yes, sir," he said respectfully.

"You're the new kid in the kitchen, I understand?" said Cutts.

"Yes, Master Cutts. I'm glad when you're cleaning a bike!" said Cutts, with a grin.

"My best! The kitchen is coming to something in these days," said Cutts, much amused. "But never mind that. I want you to do something for me, kid."

"Certainly, sir," said Lynn, always ready to be obliging, although he had not taken Toby's sage advice about being "umble." It was his duty to be respectful, but he did not see any special reason for familiarity.

"I suppose you can find time to get down to the village this evening?" Cutts asked.

Lynn's heart sank a little as he thought of his sweet liberty, devoted to study, being cut down still further. But he answered as cheerfully as he could.

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"If you wish me to, sir." "I don't want you to do it for nothing. I suppose you'd rather be smoking terrible cigarettes after your work's done—oh, and reading the thrilling adventures of Dead-Shot Dave and Blood-Boiled Bill!"

"I don't read that kind of book, Master Cotts, and I don't smoke."

"No! Quite a little paragon of a boot-boy," said Cotts, laughing. "Still, if you don't smoke, all the better. You're safer to send to Simpson's. I'll stand you a bob for going."

"Thank you, Master Cotts; but I don't want to be paid for it. I'll go for you with pleasure, if you want me to."

"Do they ever bribe you with money in the way of wages here?" asked Cotts aggressively.

"I am well paid enough, sir."

"And you don't want a tip?"

"No, thank you, sir."

"Well, please yourself, but I must say you're a queer fish," said Cotts, in amusement. "You can go for me, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"I want you to go into Simpson's. It's next to the Green Man, you know, and ask him for a box of the usual for G. C."

Lynn looked surprised. That seemed to him a very peculiar order to give, but he supposed that Gerald Cotts knew his own business.

"Here's the money," said Cotts, handing him a sovereign.

"Mind you don't lose it."

"I will be careful, sir."

"And don't carry the box home on your head," added Cotts.

"On my head?" said Lynn, in astonishment.

"I mean, don't show it round. Slip it under your coat, if you've got a coat, and keep it out of sight. I don't want everybody at St. Jim's to see it. I suppose you understand?" added Cotts impatiently.

Lynn did not quite understand, as a matter of fact. He did not see why the box of "the usual" from Simpson's should be concealed from sight. But again he considered that Cotts of the Fifth probably knew his own business best.

"Very well, sir, I will be careful," he said.

"And don't smoke any coming home," said Cotts. "They will be too strong for you. You'd better stick to your Wild Columbine at a thousand a penny, and there's a bob for it if you want it."

"Thank you, sir, I'd rather not."

"Please yourself."

And Cotts shrugged his shoulders, and left the like-sold.

Two Lynn went on clearing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's handsome jigger. He could not help thinking about what Cotts had said. Cotts was sending him for a box of cigars, and it seemed curious that the wench of the Fifth could pay for a box of cigars more than twice as much as Lynn received for a week's work. But what struck Lynn most was the secrecy of the proceeding. He did not know the rules of the school. The rules of the kitchen were strictly prohibited by the laws of St. Jim's, and he was not aware that Cotts gave little smoking parties in his study, with the door locked. "Smoking-box," the "Mades" of the Fifth called them. There was something suspicious about his commission that troubled Lynn a little. But he did not feel that he could refuse to oblige Cotts.

After his work was done that day, Lynn found time to go down to Kyleshoe. He had to hurry, in order to be back to meet D'Arcy in his study, for the cooking was going on regularly, excepting when Lynn happened to be wanted, and had to be late.

It was quite dark in the quadrangle at St. Jim's when Lynn came in. He did not enter the school gates, but passed there to go round to the side entrance.

He entered the little gate used by the servants and tradesmen, and passed as these or four dim figures loomed up in the gloom.

"There he is!"

"Collar the cad!"

Before Lynn could be on his guard there was a rush, and he was shoved roughly backwards, and fell heavily to the ground, with Levison and Crooke and Molish sprawling over him.

CHAPTER 14.

In Honour Bound!

Lynn lurched down heavily, and the box of cigars crashed to the ground. The boot-boy struggled in the grasp of the raggos. He knew that they must have seen him go out, and had watched him in the dark on his return, with the intention of ragging him. And he was taken at a disadvantage. He heard the cigarette crash under a heavy foot as Crooke trampled over it. Then there was an awkward fall.

"Hallo! What's this?"

"Only some grocery or other," said Levison. "Lead a hand to bump the cad!"

But Crooke gave a yell.

"It's not grocery; it's cigars!"

"What?"

"Look here!"

Crooke's boot had smashed the box, and a good many of the cigars. The Shell fellow held up a handful of them. The raggos snuffed at them.

"Good cigars, too," said Levison. "I say, if he was bringing them for one of the masters there will be a row."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Where are these cigars, Lynn?" demanded Crooke.

"They are for—" "Master Cotts" Lynn was going to say, when he remembered Cotts's injunction of secrecy. "I was sent for them," he finished. "Will you let me get 'em please? I shall hit out if you don't."

"Who sent you for them?"

"I will not tell you."

"You'll be a justice—here or somebody?"

"No."

"Was it a master?"

"No."

"Let the cad get up," said Levison. "We've done with him. This is better than ragging. We've got him by the short hairs now."

"What do you mean?" asked Crooke. "There'll be a row if Knox or Selton or Cotts, or whoever it was, sees his smokes in this state."

"There's going to be a row," said Levison viciously, "and that cad is going to get it right in the neck. It's a serious thing to smuggle cigars into the school for the boys, and a servant was sacked last term for doing it. I'm going to take those cigars to Mr. Ralston."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Give me those cigars!" exclaimed Lynn, in alarm.

"Rats! You get back into your kitchen, and keep ready to be called upon the carpet and sacked!" grizzled Levison.

"We shall get somebody else into a row as well as the Dudge if we go to Ralston," murmured Molish.

"I don't care! Let him look out for himself," said Levison coolly. "I'm not going to let slip a chance like this, no fear. We've got the rotter now, and I'm going to make him wriggle. It's the seek!"

"You've no right to take those cigars from me, Master Levison," said Lynn unshyly.

"I'm doing my duty in helping to stop this sort of thing," said Levison loftily. "I'm going to frustrate your kessick tricks, rather. Come on, you fellows!"

The three jokers walked away. Lynn looked after them, hesitating. He could not, of course, represent himself of the broken cigar-box by force. The three were too heavy for him. And it would have been a very serious matter for the boot-boy to attack these jokers of the House he worked in. He felt that the best thing he could do was to report to Cotts, and leave him to recover his property.

Levison & Co. marched off triumphantly to the School House-master's study. Mr. Ralston was there, and his eyes opened wide when Levison laid the best cigar-box on his table.

"What ever is this, Levison?" he exclaimed.

"I thought it my duty to bring it to you, sir," said Levison, very respectfully. "They were being smuggled into the school by one of the servants."

Mr. Ralston's brows contracted.

"Indeed! How did these cigars come into your possession, then, Levison?"

"We suspected that the boots, sir, was employed to fetch in cigars and things," said Levison calmly. "He looks that kind of fellow, and some of the fellows have seen him barging about Simpson's shop in Kyleshoe. So when he came in just now we stopped him, and made him give up the box. He wouldn't give it up at first, and it got broken when we took it away. We considered it our duty, sir, to let you know what was going on."

Mr. Ralston looked at him sharply. Levison, Molish, and Crooke were the very last fellows in the School House whom he would have suspected of being troubled with a heavy sense of duty.

"You are sure that these cigars were not being fetched for you of the masters?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."
 "Do you know for whom they were intended?"
 "Oh, no, sir. One of the seniors, I suppose."
 "Which servant was it?"
 "The new boot-boy, sir, Lynn. I think his name is."
 "Very well; you may leave the cigars here."
 "Yes, sir."

Levin & Co. departed. A malicious smile was on Lynn's face as he left the study. He felt that he had delivered a blow at his enemy, when the drudge of the School House would not easily be able to recover from. Such an act as smuggling tobacco into the school for the boys was a very serious offence, and was certain to be visited very severely upon the delinquent.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Cooke.
 Lynn came in sight, going towards the Fifth Form passage. He did not glance towards the janitor.

"So it was one of the Fifth!" grumbled Melish. "Curtis, perhaps—or Prye or Gilmore. I say, they will be rusty about it."

"Let 'em be!" said Lynn.
 Lynn went on his way, and tapped at the door of Curtis's study, and entered. Curtis was talking to Prye of the Fifth, and Lynn could not help hearing the words, "three to one against." Matters of sport evidently occupied the attention of the Fifth, and they regarded sport purely and simply from the point of view of making money out of it, like so many so-called sportsmen.

"Hallo, kid!" said Curtis, not unkindly. "Got 'em?"
 Lynn explained.
 Gerald Curtis uttered an angry exclamation.
 "You young fool! What did you let them get the box away from you for?"

"They were three to one," said Lynn. "I couldn't help it."
 "And—and they're taking them to Railton!"
 "So Master Levinson said."

Curtis gnawed his lip. Prye shrugged his shoulders.
 "There'll be a row, Curtis," he said. "Railton will be frightfully damn odd. It will mean trouble—bad trouble."
 "Have you given me away, you young idiot?" demanded Curtis roughly, turning to Lynn.
 "I didn't mention your name."
 Curtis drew a breath of relief.

"Good for you! Keep it dark, do you hear? If those whips have really sneaked to Railton, you'll be questioned, and asked whom you were fetching the cigars for. Mind you don't give me away."

Lynn looked troubled.
 "But what am I to say if Mr. Railton asks me?" he said.
 "Anything you like, so long as you don't mention my name."

"Do you mean that you will tell him yourself, sir?"
 Curtis burst into an angry laugh.
 "Tell him yourself! Are you petty, you silly young art? Don't you know that I might be sacked from the school for it?"

Lynn's eyes opened wide.
 "You are not allowed to have cigars, sir?" he asked.
 "Didn't you know that, idiot?"
 "No, sir; I didn't know it. I should not have fetched the cigars if I had known it," said Lynn, with spirit.

"Don't check me," said Curtis, grinding his teeth. "I'm not likely to stand teach chawing from a hand-grinder or whatever you are. Hold your silly tongue!"
 Prye murmured something in a low voice, and Curtis's expression changed. His friend had warned him that it would pay to be civil to a "kid" who had it in his power to run him if he chose. The discovery that the cigars were for Curtis might actually lead to his expulsion, or if it did not there would be a public reprimand, and the eye of authority would be directed upon him, making it extremely difficult for him to carry on his little game in the future.

"Never mind what I said, kid," said Curtis, more kindly. "I've had a quid over it, and the cigars will be confiscated now. I say, you look a decent little chap, and I'm sure you don't want to get me into trouble over this."

"Certainly I don't, sir."
 "Then don't say a word about my sending you for the smokes. And, look here, if it turns out all right I'll make it worth a half-quad to you."

"I don't want any money, thank you!"
 "Oh, you're jolly queer," said Curtis impatiently. "I don't understand you. It looks to me as if you've got ideas in your head that don't quite agree with the boot-room and the Game Library—No. 285."

"THE MONEY" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

the half-machine! The answer you change 'em the better for you."

Lynn bit his lip, and his heart was bitter. The drudge of the School House was evidently not expected to indulge in the luxury of smoothness. The finer feelings of human nature appeared to be the exclusive property of Gerald Curtis and his class. Curtis would have knocked down anybody who had offered him half-sovereign, but he did not sympathize with a similar feeling on the part of a boot-boy.

"But just as you like," added Curtis. "All I've concerned about is not being given away. Keep it dark!"

"But Mr. Railton may ask me—"
 "Oh, tell him some lie or other," said Curtis carelessly. Lynn turned crimson.

"I never tell lies!" he exclaimed indignantly.
 "Oh, don't talk that rot to me!" said Curtis irritably.
 "Ye gods! What is the kitchen coming to! I suppose the janitor have been talking nonsense of you, and it's got into your head, young shaver. Is that it?"

Lynn had hard work to keep back the tears from his eyes. Why should he not have a sense of honour, as well as another, although he cleaned boots and knives for a living? Curtis saw the quiver in the poor lad's lip, and gazed at him in awkward wonder.

"Oh, all right; I didn't mean to hurt your feelings," he said. "If you don't sell 'em all the better. You're mighty particular for the servants' hall, I must say. George Washington of the boot-room, by Jove!"
 Prye checked.

"You'll keep it dark, young shaver!" asked Curtis.
 "But Mr. Railton may order me to tell him, and he is my employer, sir," said Lynn, sorely troubled in mind by the difficulties of the position.

"You mean you're going to sneak?" said Curtis severely.
 "Sneak! I said Lynn, with a start.
 "Don't jaw him like that, Curtis, old man!" muttered Prye. "He doesn't understand. You could get one of the juniors on his honour, but you can't expect a boot-boy to understand that kind of thing."

Lynn's lip quivered.
 "I'm not in the position of one of the schoolboys here, sir," he said. "They could refuse to answer and be caned. But I shouldn't be caned; I should be discharged if Mr. Railton were dissatisfied with me."

"Then you're going to give me away?" said Curtis furiously. "Well, go on, then, you worm. You snotter young odd! I suppose I was an idiot to think that a drudge of the kitchen could know what a sense of honour was."

Lynn turned quite pale. The words stung him on the raw, as Curtis intended they should. Curtis was a keen observer, and by this time he thought he had correctly gauged the nature of the Drudge. A kid with ideas above his own station, trying to equal his superiors by cultivating truthfulness and a sense of personal honour, Curtis said to himself cynically. He would get it knocked out of him in the long run, but while it lasted Curtis could make use of it to swear himself.

"I won't say a word," said Lynn.
 "Now, look here," said Curtis, in the grating manner he knew how to assume when it suited his purpose, "you're a decent kid, and I'm sorry I spoke as I did. I put you on your honour not to give me away."

It did not occur to Lynn for the moment that Curtis had no right to put him on his honour to keep a flagrant dereliction of duty. But the peer led was only too glad to find that he was not regarded, after all, as a proven to whom a sense of honour was necessarily an unknown quantity.

"I promise!" he said.
 "Honour bright!" asked Curtis.
 "Yes, sir!"
 "That's all right, then."

Lynn left the study slowly and heavily. Prye looked curiously at the blackguard of the Fifth as the door closed behind Lynn.

"Do you think he'll keep his word?" he asked incredulously.
 Curtis nodded.

"I believe so. I've sized him up, I fancy," he said, with a cynical grin. "Queer kid, been reading foot-books, I suppose, and getting ideas that don't belong to the boot-room. Bless you, the country's full of 'em in these days. They think they're as good as we are, or a little better, perhaps. Funny, ain't it?"

"He may get the push if he won't answer Railton."
 "Well, I'll tip him half-a-quad when he goes, if he does," said Curtis carelessly. "Now, about that handkerchief Delchester; it's three to one against Bully Boy—"



"Quick, sir! Clutch me, and climb!" (An incident from the grand tale of *Greyfriars School*, entitled "THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!" by Frank Richards, which is contained in the current issue of our splendid companion paper "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on sale everywhere. Price One Penny.)

And the blades of the Fifth were soon deep in the interesting and important question of Bally Boy's chances in the Delicacies Handicap, and they forgot the very existence of the drugge of the School House.

CHAPTER 15. Cuffin is Surprised.

TOBY met Tom Lynn as he came down after his visit to Gerald Cuffin's study. He clapped the new boot-boy vigorously on the shoulder.

"Where 'ave you been?" granted Toby. "Been lookin' for you everywhere. Mr. Railton wants to see you in his study."

"Very well," said Lynn quietly.

"Wot's the row?" asked Toby, curiously regarding the boot-boy's troubled face. "Ave you been up to something, key?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Mr. Railton was lookin' pretty stiff," said Toby. "Wot 'ave you been a-doin' of, you young lass?"

"I'd better go," said Lynn.

"You better 'ad!" agreed Toby.

Lynn proscribed himself at the Housemaster's study. Mr. Railton looked at him with a stern brow, and pointed to the box of cigars on the table.

"Lynn, I am informed that you brought these cigars into the school!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"You were sent for them by one of the boys?"

"Yes, sir."

"His name?"

Lynn was silent.

"Do you hear me?" asked Mr. Railton, raising his eyebrows and his voice a little at the same time.

"I—I'm sorry, sir," faltered Lynn. "I did not know it was against the rules of the school for the boys to send for things at the tobacconist's. If I had known it I should not have fetched the cigars."

"Quite so, and you will understand, Lynn, that you are never to do anything of the kind again, if you wish to keep your situation here."

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 258.

NEXT WEDNESDAY—"BY WHOSE HAND?" A Magazine, New, Lent, Complete School Tale of Tom Nerry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Very well, sir."

"But I wish to know the name of the boy who sent you?"

"I promised him not to tell, sir."

"Nonsense!"

Lynn's lip quivered miserably. He wondered if the Housemaster would have said "assistive" so sharply if it had been a St. Jim's fellow who made the answer. Was a promise supposed to amount to nothing with a drudge?

Mr. Bailton looked at him with a new interest. So far, he had not noted Lynn any more than he was accustomed to noticing the page or the housemaid.

"Come, Lynn," he said, less sharply. "You say you did not know it was wrong to fetch the cigars. If the boy asked you to promise not to tell, you must surely have guessed that it was against the rules of the school."

"I promised afterwards, sir."

"Indeed? After Levinson had taken the cigars from you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have seen the boy since, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he asked you to promise not to tell me his name, and you did so?" Mr. Bailton made an angry gesture. "You should not have made that promise, Lynn. Your duty is towards your employer, and not towards a boy who employs you as dishonourable comrades."

"I suppose so, sir," faltered Lynn.

"However, I will not ask you to break a promise—to do so would be very wrong," said the Housemaster. "I must ask you to be more careful in the future, or I fear it will be impossible for you to remain in service here. You may go."

"Thank you, sir."

Lynn left the study, breathing hard.

Mr. Bailton, then, did not think it impossible for a boy to have a sense of honour. That was encouraging, at least. And Lynn realized clearly enough that he ought not to have made that promise to Cutts of the Fifth, and that he was lucky not to have been discharged for what he had done. It was a lesson to him not to mix himself up in any way in the affairs of the St. Jim's fellows—a lesson that he determined to lay to heart.

His work was done till the time for gathering up the boots overnight. He went up to his room, and found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy awaiting him there.

"Fray excuse me for coming in when you weren't back, dear boy," said the swell of the School House gracefully.

"Time for work, you know."

"Then he noticed the cloud upon the Drudge's face.

"Anything wrong, dear boy?"

"It's all right," said Lynn. "I'm ready, Master D'Arcy."

"Been doing any football practice lately?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he opened the books, ready for the coaching process.

Lynn shook his head.

"I don't have much time, sir, and Grimes and the rest don't have much."

"You must be in form for Saturday, you know, old chap." "Saturday?" said Lynn, colouring.

"Yes, wretched! I suppose you haven't forgotten that you're going to play for Grimes against the janial eleven."

"I shan't be playing, sir."

Arthur Augustus raised his eyebrows.

"Not playing?" he ejaculated.

"No, sir."

"Can't you get off?" asked Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "But love, that's wretched, you know! I suppose there's no hope to be done, and you'd have to ask permission."

"Yes, I should have to ask permission, sir," said Lynn, willing to let it go at that.

"And you might not get it?"

"I might not, sir."

"Well, I trust you will be able to," said D'Arcy encouragingly. "Now, let us wish it at the Latin. We were working at the fourth conjugation, I believe."

And the coaching commenced.

After the janials had gone to bed, Gerald Cutts of the Fifth came upon Lynn in the passage, laden with boots. As he had heard nothing from the Housemaster, Cutts knew that the Drudge must have kept his word, and he was feeling kindly disposed towards Lynn. It was a condescending kindness, of course, as was visible for a great man like Cutts of the Fifth to feel towards a mere kitchen drudge.

"You didn't give me away, after all, young chawer," said Cutts.

"No, sir," said Lynn quietly.

"Well, you're a good little chap, and you can be useful to me," said Cutts. "How would you like a half-quad to do as you like with?"

"No thank you, Master Cutts."

THE GEN LIBRARY—No. 208

THE MAGNET LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"Look here," said Cutts, lowering his voice. "If you like to be useful to me, I can make it well worth your while. I often want a kid to fetch things, and take messages, and keep it dark, you know. I find I can trust you. If you make yourself useful to me I'll see that you don't lose by it."

"I can't do anything against the rules of the school, sir," said Lynn, "and since you speak about it, I'll say it was wicked and wrong of you to make me fetch the cigars, and promise not to tell. I might have been discharged from my place if Mr. Bailton had been very kind to me."

"Good heavens!" said Cutts, in a dazed sort of way. "Glad however! Have you got an amateur procedure to clean our boots? Are you off your dot, you silly young fool?"

"I said what I think, sir."

"You cheeky whelp! This is what comes of being kind to you, I suppose. You think you can cheek me because of a little secret like that?"

"No, sir, I don't mean to be cheeky. But I won't ever do anything of the kind again."

"You won't. Won't! You dare to say that to me, you gentleman?"

"Yes, Master Cutts."

Cutts gave him one look, and then reached out and heard his own message. Lynn recoiled against the passage wall, and there was a clatter of falling boots on the floor. Cutts strode away down the passage, Lynn straightened up, his eyes blazing. Gerald Cutts had finished the matter by leaving his eye, as he supposed; but Lynn was fed up. Not if his place had been at stake would he have evoked that from Cutts. He grasped a heavy boot. It belonged to Elvies of the Fourth, and swung it into the air.

White!

Cutts heard the whining of the boot, and half turned, and gave a scandalous yell as the boot caught him on the side of the head.

Boop!

"Oh, ow! You young scoundrel! I'll smash you for that!" yelled Cutts.

He ran furiously at Lynn. The boy stood his ground, his fists clenched, his eyes blazing.

"I shall hit back if you touch me," he said, between his teeth.

"Cutts! Sued back!" Kildare's voice broke in, as he came hurrying along the passage. "I saw you strike him, you brute. How dare you?"

"He checked me!" howled Cutts.

"He has never smacked a cheeky kid to me," said Kildare. "What did he say?"

"Mind your own business."

"I'm a prefect, Cutts, and this is my business. Keep your hands to yourself. If you touch that kid again I'll knock you flying."

"Said Kildare, a blaze coming into his blue Irish eyes—a blaze that warned Cutts to be careful.

"I'm willing to tell Master Kildare what I said," said Lynn quietly.

But that was the last thing that Cutts wanted. He did not want the head prefect of the School House to know that he was the fellow who had sent for the box of cigars. He rubbed his head, and gave Lynn a feroceous glare, and strode away. Lynn had made another enemy in the School House at St. Jim's.

Kildare looked curiously at him.

"Thank you, sir," said Lynn gratefully.

"That's all right," said the captain of St. Jim's. "Cutts had no right to strike you, Lynn; but I'd be careful how I sling boots at fellows, all the same, if I were you. Good-night!"

CHAPTER 16.

Tom Merry Takes a Hand!

TOM MERRY & Co. came out of the Fern-rooms cheerfully after morning lessons on Saturday.

It was a clear, cold day, a half-holiday, with a good match in store for the afternoon, and the boys of St. Jim's did not want more than that to make them happy.

"Levinson forward to playing the boots this afternoon!"

Three and Study No. 6, is animated discussion of football in the Fern-rooms passage.

"Jam so!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"He oughtn't to be allowed to play!" growled Crooke.

"Rats!"

"He won't!" said Levinson, as he walked away with Crooke.

"I fancy that will be all right. I've given him a jarring on the subject."

"Oh, rot!" said Crooke. "You were saying the other day that he was going to be sacked over that affair of the cigars; but now, all of a sudden!"

"Bailton's such a soft ass! If it had been Batty, of the

New House, Lynn would have got it in the neck, right enough, hang him!"

"But it wasn't," growled Crooks, "and Cutts gave me a licking yesterday. He didn't say what it was for, but I know all right."

Levinson rubbed his ear reflectively. His attempt to get the Drudge necked had certainly been a failure; and Gerald Cutts had shown no admiration at all for the street sense of duty which had impelled the cash of the School House to take the box of cigars to the Home-master. Cutts had taken opportunities of bestowing sound, likings as all three of the juniors who had been led astray by that misguided sense of duty.

But Levinson had his consolation. He felt pretty certain that Lynn wouldn't be able to play in the football-match. The fear of being in trouble upon the kind friends who had been dearest to him was more than enough to make the Drudge sledge that pleasure, much as he would have enjoyed it.

And when Grimes & Co. arrived in the afternoon for the match, Tom Merry discovered that the Drudge was to be absent from the Kildare ranks.

"One of your men here, of course," said Tom, as he shook hands with Grimes. "I'll run into the house and tell him you're come."

Grimes shook his head.

"I've heard from Lynn that he can't play, sir," he replied. "Got a better man?"

"No, a worse!" said Grimes, rather dolefully. "I'm afraid you'll be giving us another licking, Master Merry. But it can't be helped."

"But why can't Lynn play?" asked Figgins, of the New House. Figgins was a good man in the junior eleven. Figgins bore no malice for that little skirmish outside the back-shop on the day Lynn had arrived to take up his duties at St. Joe's.

"Dunno," said Grimes. "He wrote he couldn't, that's all. I s'pose he can't get off."

Tom Merry wrinkled his boyish brows thoughtfully.

"That's rotten," he said. "I understood he would be able to get the time off. Of course, if he can't, he can't. You really want to play best!"

"Well, he" said Grimes. "But if he can't get leave—"

"It mayn't be that," said Tom Merry. "It may be some rot or other—some cad may have been getting at him. I'll see."

"Yess, wathah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Let's go and look him out, Tom Merry, dear boy."

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus hurried into the School House. They found the door of the boot-room open. Lynn was standing at the window, looking out.

"Grimes & Co. have arrived," said Tom Merry. "Grimes wants you to play."

"I—I can't, Master Merry!"

"Why not?"

"Well, Lynn hesitated, "I—I haven't asked leave."

"Why didn't you?"

Lynn was silent.

"Yass, away enough that question, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Why haven't you asked leave off for the afternoon, Mrs. Mirra says you'll give it you."

"I—I think I'd better not play, if you don't mind, sir," stammered Lynn.

"Could rather not?"

"Yes, I—I'd rather not."

Tom Merry looked very grave.

"Now, look how, look," he said seriously. "If you'd really rather not, that's one thing, of course. But are you sure about it? Is it some other reason? Has anybody been saying anything to you about it?"

"Master Levinson said—"

"Yass, we might have guessed it was Levinson," said Arthur Augustus. "I have a great mind to look for Levinson, and give him a football thrashing, the titah wathah!"

"Never mind what Levinson says or doesn't say can make any difference to your playing for Grimes."

"It-it won't do, Master Merry. I'm a servant, you know," Lynn faltered. "The other young gentlemen would be down on you if you played no."

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"Let 'em be down on me," he said merrily. "The gentleman wouldn't, you can be sure of that; and the others don't matter."

"Wathah not?"

"Come with me to Mrs. Mirra," said Tom, catching Lynn by the arm. "If there's anything that need be done just now, they will do it. To-day's a good day, ain't you, To-day?"

To-day, who was looking in at the doorway of the boot-room, grinned. He would have done anything to oblige Tom Merry.

"Course I will, Master Tom!" he said. "Lynn can get off if he likes, only—tom's right in his position to play, you know. I've advised him—"

"Oh, take your advice away and boil it," said Tom Merry good-humouredly. "Come on, Lynn, and we'll interview the house-keeper."

Lynn—lucky enough at least for a chance to play—suffered himself to be led away by the School fellow. Mrs. Mirra was found amenable to reason. She gave Lynn permission at once to leave the house for the afternoon.

"So that's all right, young shaver," said Tom Merry, as he marched Lynn triumphantly away from the house-keeper's room. "Where are your things? Time to change."

"Oh, Master Merry—" faltered Lynn. His chest was too full for many words.

"Back up and change," said Tom. "Come down to the ground as soon as you're ready. I'll go and tell Grimes you're playing."

And Tom Merry and D'Arcy returned to the football ground. Grimes's rigger face lighted up when he heard that he was to have his wonderful inside-right in the team.

"We'll give you a good fight this time, Master Merry," he said jubilantly.

"I hope you will!" said Tom Merry heartily.

Lynn came out in a few minutes and joined the Kildare lads. Levinson & Co. were looking on, and they stared blankly at him as he came into the field.

"The Drudge?" ejaculated Mellich.

"No he's playing, after all!" answered Crooks.

Levinson grunted his teeth.

"I hope there'll be a new crew it," he muttered. "I hope Tom Merry will get called over the cross. I hope—"

"How your hopes!" growled Crooks. "I know you were talking out of your hat all the time. He's going to play, and you're a silly chump!"

"Let's hit him, anyway!" said Mellich.

"Good egg!"

Hiss—ss—ss!

The sudden sound of hissing drew many eyes upon them. Some of the footballers ran over to the spot.

"What's that row about?" demanded Tom Merry, with a glitter in his eyes.

"I suppose we can hit those cheeky litches boys if we like!" roared Levinson.

"That's just where you make a mistake—you can't!" said Tom Merry. "Collar the cads, and we'll give them something to make another kind of row about."

"Yass, wathah!"

"Now, hands off! Yah! Oh! Gooch! Yassoh! Help!" Levinson and Crooks and Mellich rolled on the turf, and picked themselves up and ran for their lives. And there was no more howling at that football-match.

CHAPTER 17.

Brave, the Drudge!

TOM MERRY won the two, and Grimes kicked off. There was quite a crowd round the football ground.

The fellows had heard that the best-boy of the School House was playing in the ranks of the victors, and the peevish news brought them down to watch.

"The kiddie kitchen-boy, by gams!" said Cams of the Fifth. "Pipping soccer. Rather a new line in kitchen boys, I should say."

"Doughts't so be allowed," said Prys.

"That's just what we say!" broke in Levinson eagerly. He had rather a good opinion of the ground, though he was careful not to indulge in any more howling. "Does't you think that Kildare ought to interfere, Cutts?"

"Better tell him so," said Cutts, with a grin; "there he is watching."

Levinson hesitated, and they went over to the captain of St. Joe's. Kildare and Darrel had stopped to look on.

"By Jove," Kildare was saying, as Levinson came up, "that kid is hot stuff! Blessed if I can guess where he picked up that style. Look at him!"

"And he's a boots," said Darrel. "He can't have much time for practice."

"He makes the most of his chances, anyway. Look at that. He's simply walking through them! Enough?"

"By Jove, I'll see that that kid has some dozens of footer practice after this, as he's so keen on it."

And Levinson, as he heard that remark, decided that he wouldn't request Kildare to interfere, after all.

Some of the fellows had queer expressions on their faces as they looked on. It was certainly very peculiar to see the lad who cleaned their boots playing in the visiting team. But as they watched Lynn, their expressions gradually changed to sheer admiration.

There was no doubt that the Drudge was a fine footballer.

(Continued on page 25.)

Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

PAT AS A PORTER.

For some time Pat had been out of work, and he couldn't get a job anywhere.

Latterly Pat gladly accepted a situation as a railway-porter, but he was in a bit of a fix as to how he could remember the destination of the trains which came into the station.

The stationmaster had given Pat a whole list of names, most of which he forgot. When the train came in, Pat lost his head completely, and called out the following:

"How ye are for where ye're goin', and ye're in; there-fore, come out!"—Sent in by R. H. J. Smith, Wallall.

HIS MISTAKE—EDITOR.

I'm only a postcard in the pin,

Waiting for attention—

Only soon to be cast aside,

That is the Ed's intention.

I'm only one 'twist thousands laid,

Soon to be "crumated."

Only a few short hours to live;

Then to die—"I listed.

Only one brief moment now,

The Editor has me taken.

Only a glance—a cruel smile,

Alas! I am forsaken!

—Sent in by Harold G. Keller, Bradford, Yorks.

The sweet young lady was being shown through the locomotive works.

"What is that thing?" she asked, pointing with her dainty

finger.

"That," replied the guide, "is an engine-boiler."

She was an up-to-date young lady, and at once became

impressed.

"And why do they call engines?" she inquired.

"To make the engine tender," politely replied the guide.

—Sent in by G. Hammersley, Stoke-on-Trent.

BOUND TO DRINK IT.

Pat had "listed into the Army, and one day was brought before the sergeant for stealing his comrade's share of liquor.

"What did you do it for?" asked the sergeant.

Said Pat indignantly:

"It wasn't for stealing it. I put his liquor in the bottle,

and mine was at the bottom. Share, wasn't I obliged to

drink his before I could drink my own?"—Sent in by A. Saggie, Nottingham.

Lord Ranfurly once had some shirts made at a Syley tailorshop.

A few weeks later the haberdasher—a rather distinguished-looking man—and the pro-Cesard were thron

together on board the New Zealand steamer. Lord Ran-

furly remembered the fact, but

could not place it.

"Good morning, my lord!

Fine weather, isn't it?" began

the other. And as the peer

extended his hand, with a look

of perplexity, the haberdasher

answered: "Made your

shirts, my lord."

"Of course!" cried the

new Governor. And, turning

to his aide-de-camp, he pre-

sented him. "Captain B—,

allow me to present Major

Sober!"—Sent in by D. Blue, Bournemouth.

The GOLF LIBRARY.—No. 220.

"THE MAGNY" LIBRARY. Every Monday.

The United Charities of Chicago once enabled a small boy to visit the country for the first time in his life, and he had, therefore, never seen a windmill.

The guide was somewhat taken aback, when the little chap

cried out on the sight of one:

"Ose, mister! But is that some electric fan you've got out

there cooling the bags?"—Sent in by C. Shan, Leeds.

ONE TO PAT.

As usual, the American was bragging about the great

things which they had on the other side of the "Herring

Pool." The segment this time was about railways.

"Why," said the Yank, "in America we have a bond on

the railway which is so sharp that the engine-driver can

shake hands with the guard!"

"Share, that's nothing!" replied Pat. "In Old Ireland

we have a bond on the railway that sharp that ye can see

the back of yer own head!"

Then the Yank shut up.—Sent in by George Lane, Old

Kent Road, S.E.

BOOY POLISH.

The empire's ass applied for free admission on the ground

that he wanted "to see his father's picture."

"Mother says she wants that packet of sandwiches back,"

he said.

"Sandwiches back! I ate 'em an hour ago!" replied the

surprised parent.

"Then she'll 'ave to clean your shoes with salmon-and-

skating paste," returned the youngster. "Mother put the

brown-boot polish in the sandwiches!"—Sent in by Miss

Dorothy Cook, Hill.

NO SCORE.

He was one of those clever men who always like to show

their smartness.

"Now, watch me take a nice bit of that tramp," he said,

as Tired Tim approached him. And then he listened solemnly

to the yawn of hard luck.

"That's the same tale you told me last time you spoke to

me," he said, when the beggar had finished.

"Is it?" was the answering question. "When did I tell it

you?"

"Last week," said our hero.

"Maybe I did," admitted Tired Tim. "I was in good luck

then." And he passed on.—Sent in by A. Kiddy, Foston, near

Bristol.

First Boy: "I call my dog 'Santiago,' because he's only

half-bred."

Second Boy: "That re-

minds me of a goat we called

'Nearly,' because he was all

hair; and a prize cock we

called 'Robinson,' because he

rove so."—Sent in by Master C. Bull, Stafford.

EASILY EXPLAINED.

The girl had a toddy-hour

which was cross-eyed. When

she chided him it "Gladly," a

friend asked the reason.

She answered: "Because in

Stanley-school the teacher

said, 'Gladly my cross I'd

love.'"—Sent in by L.

Green, Woblaston, Staffs.

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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

THE CORINTHIAN.



A Magnificent New Story of the Old-Time Prize-Ring.

By BRIAN KINGSTON.

READ THIS FIRST.

Hilary Bevan, a sturdy young Britisher of gentle birth, who has been living in the country, walks to London.

TO SEE HIS FATHER.

Sir Patrick Bevan, whom he has not met for three years. Arriving at his father's house, Hil learns that the latter has been absent for three days at the house of Sir Vincent Brookes, one of the leading bucks of the time. He also learns that Sir Patrick has carried the nickname of

"PLUNDER" BEVAN.

and is heavily in debt, having dissipated his fortune.

Sending his steps to Sir Vincent Brookes' house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary

FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES.

where he has been for three days and nights. Sir Patrick rises from the table an utterly ruined man. Hilary's next act is to accept a challenge offered in the prize-ring at Moutley Harb. His opponent is a Jew pugilist, Barney Isaacs by name, while Hil, fighting under the name of Harley, beats him, and swallows the interest of a young Corinthian named D'Arcy Varasour.

HIL DECIDES TO ADOPT THE PRIZE-RING AS A CAREER,

and at a supper which is attended by the leading patrons of "The Fancy" Varasour matches him for a thousand guineas against any boxer of his weight that Sir Vincent Brookes may select.

Immediately after the contest, Sir Vincent tells Hil that his father is lying dangerously ill at Barnham. Without hesitation, Hil springs on a horse and makes for Barnham.

Arrived there, he finds that nothing is known of his father, and that

SIR VINCENT HAS DECEIVED HIM.

Before he can return, however, Hil is caught by a press-gang and sent to sea. After many exciting adventures he manages to return to No Man's Land in Hertfordshire, where he is due to fight Fennel, a Birmingham pugilist. Hil arrives in the nick of time, and the fight proceeds before a large gathering.

(Now go on with the story.)

"His Goose is Cooked!"

Hil's opponent lashed out, and there was a sharp smack. Then came a blow. Hil had neither retreated nor attempted to parry the blow. By the casual movements, he kept backwards at the hips, thus evading the stroke, and at the same moment dug out his left arm. Back went Fennel, a red splash about his eye, which was winking and blinking, and in the other a pained expression, as though he were unable to account for what he had received.

A rather lighter blow had followed his opponent up, but Hil swayed back, waiting, harsh ready to hit or parry. With a shake of the head, Fennel went in again, delivering right and left in quick succession. Two jolting blows caught him in the face, and a trickle of colour was immediately visible below his upper lip. Immediately there was a shout from Hil's corner, and the intimation that the first point had gone to his opponent appeared to fluster Fennel. Misjudging his distance, for Hil had stepped back, he put in a tremendous round-arm blow, overbalanced and fell upon his face.

This, of course, brought the round to an end, and, while the seconds went to pick Fennel up, and Hil walked to his corner, the spectators voiced their opinions, compared the merits of the two fighters, and made and accepted wagers.

First blood had gone to Harley, but this fact—and the knowing ones were strong among the Birmingham party—did not in the least cause apprehension.

"A feathered fighter, the Lar'ner," declared a loud-voiced Midlander, flourishing a huge fat. "Give me a oove as he's!"

"Go into the ring and ask the Lemoner to gie 'ee a clout, then!" laughed someone. "Your man is as slow as an old hen!"

"A guinea to another Fennel lick 'em!" the Birmingham man shouted eagerly. "He'll stand by 'em!" all day. Your man won't!"

"Willn't be asked to," was the jeering rejoinder. And the bet was made on the spot.

The assistants, the gentlemen connoisseurs, were delighted with Hil's science, his coolness, and the neat manner in which he made his points; but there was money in plenty for Fennel, whose evident great strength and hard, wear-and-tear look, spoke strongly of his ability to take punishment. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 258.

Moreover, of his endurance the provincial party, against the Londoners on principle, and ever glad of the chance to "wipe their eye," had as manner of doubt. Besides, it was early days to talk of one being better than the other. Fennel's name was yelled encouragingly, and there were exclamations for Sir Vincent Brookes for having made choice of so good a man.

Fennel came to the scratch with a grin on his face. Leary Dale Baldwin had been whispering advice, and what the Pride of Westminster did not know of ring craft was not worth troubling to learn. Hill was not smiling; he had his arms crossed in hand, and knew it, and a trifling sneer at the contest did not make him rash.

Fennel stood still. He was no squarer, but a good, death-right fighter; yet he was not altogether destitute of cunning. He fiddled with his hands, trying to draw Hill, and asked a drive on the nose for his pams. Suddenly he bent in his left very low, and as Hill's arm drove his feet down, chipped in a mighty blow with his dexter hand. Full over the heart it landed, and Hill staggered. But automatically he had countered with his own right, his low landing but a shade after Fennel's, and the Birmingham man, hit flush on the mouth, was momentarily stopped.

"Now!" yelled Baldwin, jumping about excitedly, while the delighted crowd expressed its entire approval.

But Fennel was barely quick enough. He coughed out a tooth, and lunged after his man, but Hill retreated, his left arm advanced. After him went Fennel, smashing in blows that went astray, and getting a jolting blow occasionally; but he succeeded in driving Hill to the ropes.

"Give him pepper!" roared the Fennelites; and, with a satisfied smile, Sir Vincent Brookes issued for a word to the tall man at his elbow.

A fence rally was taking place, and the man who had landed at Hill as a feathered blitzer was reminded of it when with three successive left-hand body-blows Fennel was hit back. But he was game and tough as a bull-terrier, and each time he came back. A straight hit—the best he had attempted yet—tore Hill low on the forehead, sending his head back, and before he could recover himself, Fennel had got in for the close. His muscular arms clipped his opponent about the body, and, with a gigantic heave, Hill was lifted from his feet and forced across the upper rope. Pressed there, and able to deal but ineffective blows in return, with Fennel's body close to his, and receiving him with lightning force so that his feet again on the solid earth, he was unable to prevent the other releasing one arm, and fixing him by the neck; then Fennel got his right free, and used it as a gun hammering in nails.

The pain of the rough ropes grinding into his bare flesh was maddening, but desperately as he struggled, Hill could not release himself. Already hundreds of voices were frantically proclaiming the Birmingham man the winner. Hill's seconds were shouting to him, but their voices were drowned by the terrible clamor. The excitement was intense, and some were frowning that Hawley would be a better man before he was freed.

But the bettors were premature. Gathering all his strength, Hill got a hand under his opponent's chin, and by main force prised him away so that he was able to slip. His feet touched the turf. With a side blow at the ribs, he forced Fennel to move slightly, enough to allow of him slipping out. Up went his hands; but he was dazed and half-blinded by the hammering he had received. He sent as shot horse, but Fennel was upon him like a cat, and again gripped him. Men were shouting themselves hoarse. Headlongmen roared. To and fro were screeched bets. The war was deadly.

And then Hill was lifted, swung across his opponent's hip, and hurled forward by a cross-buttock with force sufficient, it seemed, to shatter every bone in his body.

"His goose is cooked!" observed Captain Cokerly grinsly, turning to his stalling patron.

How Hill Stayed in the Ring.

There is a quality of fitness of which is the prerogative of youth, and in no sport does it show so prominently as in so valuable as in boxing, still more in the game of fencing as it was known a hundred years ago. After thirty years of age—before in some—it declines, and no skill or power on earth can renew it.

It is the quality of physical recuperation. In youth is a reserve of power of which the older man knows but the shadow. His reserve is less; he has so much less to draw upon. His recuperation may be greater, but the body is not responsive. Given a youth of health and strength, and that power of recuperation is nothing short of marvellous. It is in this power that has caused so many men, once the best of fighters, to go down when matched with youngsters of lesser skill, perhaps, but greater vitality.

The Gem Library—No. 298.

It was this power that saved Hill.

In the strong arms of old Tom Owen he lay without moving while being carried to his corner, what time Captain Barclay kept his eyes fixed on the face of his watch, and the glass bettors that Ned Hawley would win thought ruefully of the money soon to part company with them.

That terrible fall had driven every ounce of breath out of his body, shaken his brain, and partly stunned him. Following upon the terrific hammering upon the ropes, he was in such condition to warrant the remark of Captain Cokerly and old Tom Owen's Vavasour with apprehension; so the latter's credit, he it said, was so much because of his lost wagers as for the safety of Hill himself.

Sitting on Ward's knee, with old Tom Owen working deponently at him with water-cooled spears, brandy, and some, he muttered words that never reached the lady's dazed brain. Hill carried his head upon his supporter's shoulder, gasping for the breath that would not come. He was inert, nerveless, eyes wide open and expressionless, and lips apart.

"Wake up—wake up, boy!" Owen was bawling frantically, his mouth to Hill's ear. "Ye ain't beat yet!"

A dozen tricks known only to the old Glee seconds did Tom make use of, but still the boxer did not respond.

And, notwithstanding the hands of Captain Barclay's watch moved onward the dial.

Thrusting his own timepiece into his left, D'Arcy Vavasour walked to the corner and stood in front of Hill. Something of recognition came into the lady's eye; his body moved feebly.

"Time is almost up, Ned, and Fennel is ready," said Vavasour, in a low voice, bending down over him and taking one hand.

"He can't stand, sir. He's beat," said Joe Ward, and then a mighty roar rose from the nervous crowd.

"Fennel wins. Hawley's beat!"

Hill raised his head feebly; a tremor ran through him from neck to heels. His hands clenched and he attempted to regain his feet.

"He shall not go up again," Vavasour said decidedly. And then Captain Barclay's loud voice announced the termination of the half-minute's rest that the rules allowed between rounds.

"Time!"

An exultant grin on his hard face, Fennel jumped from the knees of Richwood, and ran briskly to the scratch.

Hill was on his feet, put out a hand to push Vavasour aside, and went to meet Fennel, amid a sudden deaf silence. Tom Owen grabbed at his arm, but he drew himself free.

He could not see clearly. His legs were unsteady. The hardness of faces and figures about the ring were but a scruple. He could not control his breathing, and he had but a vague idea where he was. But instinctively he seemed to know that in front of him was the man he was there to meet, and to beat if he could, and while he could still stand and see his duty was to be facing that man.

To the scratch he went slowly, as a blind man feels his way, his arms sagging feebly in front of him. And Fennel, walking quickly to him, struck him sharply on the chin, a blow he made no attempt to guard.

"Take him away!" somebody yelled.

And two seconds after yelled another:

"He's fighting!"

And Hill was fighting. That blow on the chin was sharp and painful, and it seemed as though the pain travelled to his brain and awakened something that had been sleeping.

"Finish him; ye can't slip a-vinching!" screamed the Pride of Westminster to his man.

And Fennel went in and struck again.

But, to his surprise, the blow was parried, a jabbing hit caught his nose, and then Hill was upon him. The crowd found his voice again, and used it, splitting the sky with their shouts.

Never had there been seen anything like that which followed since the great battle between Wood, the Coachman, and George Ingelton, who had fought for twenty-five minutes after a blow in the first round that broke his jawbone and stopped him.

"The moment of the game!" declared the crowd.

"He's win yet," asserted those who had backed him; and they took their hands out of their pockets.

Taken wholly by surprise, Fennel was forced to retreat. He had believed his man beaten, and, behold! he was full of fight. His blows were costless, and, although no great force was behind them, so confused was Fennel, he attempted no return.

"Vat are you doin'? Can't you see the man's beat?" shouted the coterie, Ralvins, angrily.

But that was what Fennel could not see. He was driven to the ropes, and, in getting away, slipped down.

"You was trickin' us!" old Tom cried reproachfully, when

He had his man side on Ward's knee again. "What made you get down so in the other round?"

"But Hil did not explain until many rounds later how it had come about Fenzel had gained this terrible advantage upon the ropes. The blow on the forehead had done it; the foot of Fenzel's hand had brushed across one eye, driving several of the lashes inside, temporarily blinding him and leaving him incapable of seeing or offering any resistance against what his opponent was doing."

"Vavasour was still in the corner, and he anxiously inquired of Hil if he would continue."

"And Hil replied, He was still shaky; his breath was not close back; but his splendid, youthful strength, the heritage of a strong and hardy line, bolstered by his own class, hard, old-school life, was returning. The shock had been severe, but the power of recuperation was overcoming its effects."

"You've a man in a million, Vavasour," said Lord Yarnmouth to him, as he went back to his place. "Whose do they breed such fellows?"

"You think he will win?"

"I am not wagering on him. I fear this is but a flash in the pan we are seeing. He is scientific, and his game is unshakable, but he is young, and I doubt he can long survive his punishment on the ropes, and the hell after. The Birmingham man has the strength although nothing of a winner."

"We shall see."

"Nearly half an hour that round occupied, and there were some about the ring who began to grumble, calling upon the men to fight. But Hil was not to be prevailed on out of the line he had taken. He heeded on the advice Harry Lee had given. Strong Fenzel undoubtedly was, and by skill, the essence of skill, it was necessary to bring him down to Hil's level. Therefore, Hil fought strictly on the defensive, stopping the bull-like rushes he made, but advancing little and holding himself back from engaging in exhausting rallies used he had recovered from the effects of the second round."

"More than once Fenzel put down his hands, hopeless of penetrating the defence opposed to him."

"How can I get at him?" he once asked, turning round to his seconds.

"Believe me, the Leary One, shouted advice to him, but Fenzel was a fighter, with his own ideas, and unable to adopt himself to the criticisms Hil maintained."

"Finally, the round ended with an unexpected attack by Hil, and Fenzel was clearly hit off his legs by a right-hand body blow."

Irritated by this reverse, the men who had come down from the Midlands town to see their champion, was urged him to "go in an' make th' whippersnapper bright." He tried, and found Hil willing to meet him at his own game.

A striking rally followed, both men getting in some heavy blows. A mighty chopping blow broke through Hil's guard, drawing the crimson from his lip, and he gave as good a set with a right cross-counter that caused his supporters to yell excitedly.

Foot to foot the boxes stood, neither giving ground an inch, and when at last Hil slipped and went to ground, the win had departed from Fenzel's face and stayed away. He had discovered that the "feather-bed hit" could deal blows that left a sting behind them. His ribs were a dull crimson, and he drew breath with difficulty, while his efforts to get at Hil's eyes had not been very successful. The lad's forearms were turning black and purple with constant guarding, but he was strong on his legs, and walked to his corner easily.

"Eyes money now. I think, Sir Vincent?" called Lord Carnesford to the baronet, who retired and shook his head.

"I think you must give me the odds, my lord. Fenzel is the older man by a dozen years."

"A tear-away brawler, and nothing else," joined in Mr. Brayne. "The other's the man for my money. He has the science."

"I would accommodate you, sir, but I am carrying off I wish."

It was true that the baronet was beginning to feel uneasy. Taken entirely aback by the appearance of Hil just at the moment when his triumph had seemed complete, he had accepted the situation philosophically, the more because he genuinely believed that Fenzel was more than a match for his opponent. Accordingly he had watched the termination of the second round, and, as with others, had been confounded by the sudden change that had come over Hil. And as round after round ended, and he saw the lad quite fresh, fighting with apparently undiminished strength, he was filled with anxiety.

Did Hil win, then the triple wage with Vavasour was lost, and himself placed in a serious position. All his fine schemes for gaining that wager had gone astray. More depended on the result of the battle than he was able clearly to think of. In spite of the large sums of money he won at play, his

financial standing was precarious. His creditors were numerous. He had lost heavily ever both the shooting and the cocking matches. To lose yet a third time might mean ruin.

And this white-decked lad in the ring, the son of the man he had hated and hated, would be the cause of his downfall.

A fierce expression came into his shifting eyes as he watched the fight, whispering audaciously upon Hil whenever the lad went in a good blow, and exhorting Fenzel each time the latter failed.

"The fool—the fool! He doesn't know his trade!" he hissed, scowling.

Slowly the betting travelled in Hil's favour. Recovery after the second round had been despatched, and vigorous had stood even after the long tiring round. But when it was seen that he was actually himself, was willing to loose the fighting and handed those blows to his adversary's eye, they got their enemies, and the provincials were given the opportunity of laying out their money at good odds.

A staggering one-two, after one and a quarter hours' fighting, that sent Fenzel clear through the ropes within ten seconds of going to the scratch completely established the "Lancashire" as the favourite. "A home to a hen" on his winning, so the knowing ones declared. And when he observed that cautious Tom Belcher had wagered a guinea on Harley's winning, Sir Vincent turned upon the man next him.

"We are losing," he whispered.

"Who'd have expected it?" returned Cokerley.

"If you hadn't been a fool, you could have provided against it," his patron snapped.

"The Birmingham men are getting savage," went on Cokerley. "If their man is licked and their money lost, they will stick at little. A rush on the ring—the ropes cut—no decision given by the referee!"

He looked meaningfully at Cokerley.

"You want me—?" began the sceptical stammeringly.

"Go amongst them," commanded his master, in a whisper. "A guinea or two here and there; you have a particularinger. That waste no time. Fenzel will not last much longer."

(This thrilling sporting story will be continued in next Wednesday's issue of "THE GEM LIBRARY." Order your copy EARLY!)

BOYS!

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"STRAIGHT AS A DIE!"

(Continued from Page 11.)

His class was quite up to that of the St. Jim's fellows—indeed, as the play went on, it became evident that there were not more than three or four fellows in Tom Merry's class who were equal to him.

And not only was Lynn's play of the best, but he "played the game" all the time. No selfish keeping of the ball, no attempting to score on doubtful chances instead of passing, no selfish, and no bluff. Just a clean, straight game, played for the side. Giffins was entering with delight as he watched him. For once the villagers had a chance of winning. They were accustomed to being "done" by the Saints, as was only natural, considering the limited time they had for practice. But matters seemed to be shaping very differently this time.

"Goal!"

It was a sudden shout as the leather went in from the foot of the Dudge, even Fatty Wynn in good failing to save. "First blood for the boulders!" cheered Levison to the fellow next to him, who happened to be Betty, of the Fourth. "I wonder how Tom Merry will like that!"

"Faith, and he looks as if he does!" grinned Reilly.

For Tom Merry had eluded the Dudge on the slider, with a hearty "Good run; that was ripping!"

And Levison ground his teeth. It was evident that a goal against him did not make Tom Merry regret that he had been instrumental in getting the Dudge into the village team.

That was the only goal taken in the first half. When the game was restarted after the interval, St. Jim's played very hard. And they harassed the Dudge with their smart attacks.

Goal came to Tom Merry in about twenty minutes. And the St. Jim's crowd cheered. The score was level now.

Then a hard gruelly tangle went on. Both sides were putting all their best into it. Lynn had forgotten the boot-room now, the soles of Levison—he had forgotten everything but the great game of footer. He was no longer the draught of the School House—he was a keen footballer fighting for his side, and he played up wonderfully.

The defence was sound, and the ball went back into the victory half, and then Lynn was upon it. He was away in a flash, seeing his opportunity—his own forwards were too far to help him. It was a single-handed rush for victory. And it looked likely to succeed. It was the last chance of a win. All the crowd knew that, and they watched Lynn breathlessly.

He had beaten the halves, and he eluded the rank of Berries, and piled in with only the goalkeeper to beat. Fatty Wynn was watching, but the lightning shot that came in caught him napping for once. The plough hand missed the leather by an inch, and the ball was in the net!

There was a roar:

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Dudge!"

It seemed like a dream to Lynn to hear the St. Jim's fellows cheering. They were cheering him—the boot-boy, the Dudge!

"Hurray!"

"Bravo, Lynn!"

And Lynn walked off the field with those shouts ringing in his ears, and his heart too full of happiness for words!

Later in the evening, Lynn and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat in the little attic over the Latin Principals and the imposed papers, working. The Latin was getting on feverishly, and there was every prospect that Tom Lynn would be as good a scholar as he was a footballer.

"Hal' Sovo!" said Arthur Augustus, when he rose. "Do you know, dear boy, I can't hardly teach you anything more! I really think you know more than I do. But I'll tell you what—Tom Merry can take you on further than I can, as he's in the Shell; and he says he's goin' to do it, if you like. Is that all right?"

And Lynn could only stammer his thanks. When he knelt by his bed that night, in his petition to the Father of us all, he prayed for blessings upon the kind and generous lads who made life so much happier and brighter for the draught of the School House!

THE END.

(Another grand, long complete tale of Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's and Westwood, entitled "By Whose Hand?" by Martin Clifford. Order your "GEM" LIBRARY in advance. Price one penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 208.

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GRAND NEW SERIES OF FOOTBALL ARTICLES!

WORK on the WING

By *J. Hodgkinson.*

OF
BLACKBURN ROVERS.

The forward line which is successful in these days is the forward line, the members of which play together, with a complete understanding of each other, and allow that understanding to dominate the whole of their play. I think we may take that for granted. By single-handed efforts individuals of the forward line may get through occasionally, but it is by combination that the majority of the goals are scored.

That being so of the whole forward line, it is obviously necessary that in the first place the men on the wings should have a complete understanding with each other. Without a knowledge of each other's methods, and without working to a proper plan of campaign, a wing pair cannot hope to be successful.

As I treat an outside man myself I shall, in the course of these hints, treat mostly of the work of the outside man, and an important part of the play of a football side is it. It is being more and more realized that it is to the outside men that a side must, to a large extent, look for the carrying of the play into the camp of the enemy. Because of his position, the outside wing man has a better chance of making headway than the player in the centre of the field; there is, for instance, much less opposition.

You may not have thought of that before; but, believe me, the best way for the attacking part of the team to make headway is to feed the outside men often and well, and if those outside men know their duties, they will see to it that the inside players have plenty of chances to beat the opposing goalkeeper. That being so, it follows that, in the first place, it is necessary for the outside man to possess a good turn of speed. The faster he can travel with the ball, the better his chance of beating the opponents, too. If the outside player is faster than the men who are opposed to him, he should be given so end of chances for turning that speed to the very best account, and for that reason forward passes which will enable him to take the ball in his stride should be given to the wing men. Of course, in addition to his speed, the outside man must cultivate cleverness with the ball. Not always will he be able to beat opponents by sheer speed—half-backs and full-backs can sometimes make a bid—and then he will have to resort to some other dodge by which to get the better of his opponents.

Should I tell you the secret of the success of Meredith—a player with a world-wide reputation. Well, in the first place, he has plenty of pace, and in the second, an excellent head that he is going to be complete control of the ball all the time. The young footballer must not make any mistake about this. Speed is a fine asset—with its help he will be able to attempt things which would otherwise be quite beyond him; but he must never delude himself with the idea that speed is everything. Control of the ball is equally important, and until he practices this, his speed will be of precious little value to him.

Another word of warning is necessary here. Just as speed will be of no use to him without skill in ball manipulation, so cleverness with the ball at his feet will be of little use unless he is making headway all the time, and providing openings for the rest of his forwards.

This is what I mean. The outside man should be going ahead all the time. There is a big temptation to the clever player to be too clever. When he has beaten a man once he often waits for the same player to come back again and be beaten once more. This is sheer waste of time and effort.

Did you ever hear that So-and-so made rings round another man? Well, it seems to me that it is very little use making rings round your opponent. What should be aimed at is to beat a player once, and once only, and then go ahead until the next opponent is met.

Even wags do not consider quite good wing men often waste so end of opportunities beating a player five or six other times when the other forwards are waiting out their patience waiting for the centre which never comes. Best aimed that the best way to goal is the shortest way, and the sooner you get the ball into a shooting position, the better for everybody concerned.

In the same way it is necessary in the interests of the side that the wing man should get the ball into the centre as soon as he has drawn his opponents towards him, and when his own inside men are in a position to take the pass. There is no need to see to the centre flag with the ball every time, as every wing man will insist on doing, because the longer the centre is delayed the more likely it is that the defenders will be ready and waiting for the ball when it does come along. In centring the idea should be to get the ball across when the backs are away from goal.

On this question of centring the ball alone pages could be written. We must pass over it quickly, however, with one big hint to go on with. Don't get into the habit of centring the ball right into goal. By that, I mean not enough for the goalkeeper to jump out and push the ball away. I know that the centre which drops down just in front of the goal post will bring applause from the spectators, but the numbers of goals which come from this sort of centre are so few that they can well be neglected. Remember that the goalkeeper can see his hands to the centre, but that the forward has only his head to use, and obviously if the ball comes where both of them can get at it, the forward has very little chance.

Now the ball should be centred so far away from goal that the goalkeeper would be running a risk if he came out to try and get the ball away. In the same way corner-kicks should not be played right where the goalkeeper can get his hands away, but a little further from goal. After all, corner-kicks are just centres, with the ball at a standstill—that is the only difference.

I have often been asked by young players whether the outside wing man should score goals. It is not an question which can be answered with a direct yes or no. Mainly, it is the duty of the outside man to provide openings for the inside forwards. If he sees goals being scored from his centres then he should be happy, whether he is seeing goals himself or not. The best wing men are those whose play brings most goals.

At the same time, however, there occasionally comes the opportunity for the wing man to do a cut in and get in a telling shot. As a guide to when he should do this, it may be laid down that he should never do it unless he is well past the back or there are no colleagues in a position to have the ball passed to them. Then, and then only, should the outside man try his luck at goal. It is useless to attempt to score goals from the wing when there is anything like a good goalkeeper between the posts, and to attempt to do so is only so much wasted effort.

J. Hodgkinson

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 282.

ANOTHER ARTICLE BY A WELL-KNOWN FOOTBALLER NEXT WEDNESDAY



OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE—



THIS WEEK'S CHAT

WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
THE "GEM" LIBRARY,
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
 EVERY MONDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

For Next Wednesday.

"BY WHOSE HAND?"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In this grand long, complete tale of the crimes of St. Jim's, a deed is committed in the dark quadrangle, which reflects deep shame upon its perpetrator. All St. Jim's is agreed upon that point, but the question is, who is the culprit? Circumstances point towards a certain New Heave boy, who has done little to win popularity with his schoolfellows, so that St. Jim's is the more ready to harbour suspicions against him. As is only right, the case is proved against the true culprit in the end, largely owing to the prickings of his own conscience. Howard Glyn and the fireworks he constructs, with due regard to the proximity of Gay Fawkes Day, provide a great deal of fun, in contrast to the serious questions of

"BY WHOSE HAND?"

which runs all through the story.

A GREAT NEW SERIES OF ARTICLES.

My readers will find on the Chat Page of this week's "Magnet" Library the first of a special series of exclusive articles dealing with a subject, which, besides being of everyday interest to all, is of nothing less than vital importance to many of my readers.

In the first article, "How to succeed as a Clerk," the writer deals with the vital question from the clerk's own point of view—the clerk who asks himself the searching questions: "Am I getting on as I ought to be? And if not, why not?" These questions have been answered in a helpful and common-sense manner, and it will pay every Gentle who has, or will have, to earn his, or her, own living, to peruse this article carefully, for the sake of the valuable hints to be picked up from it.

HOW TO WRITE A SHORT STORY.—No. 8.

Placing the Story.

When you have finished your story revise it thoroughly, and when everything seems to you to be satisfactory, either have it typed out or write a very clear copy yourself before you send it out. Use ordinary quarto paper and envelopes which will just take this folded once. Write a short note to the editor, stating the title of your story, and announcing

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As an advertisement we give every reader of this paper a splendid present absolutely FREE simply for sending 12 Shillings and New Year cards at 1d. each. (Stocks, Embossed, Patterns, Gloss, etc.) Our new Year Lists contain 125 cards of different free gifts for everyone, including Ladies and Gent's Gold and Silver Watches, Outside Pendants, Cigars, Telescopes, Chains, Rings, Amulets, Cigarettes, Gramophones, Air Guns, Bicycles, Toys, etc., etc. All you need do is to send us your Name and Address in postage will do) and we will send you a selection of lovely cards to suit you at 1d. each. When you send the money obtained and we will immediately forward you the chosen cards to the Grand List we send you. Start Early, for a limited number only.

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that you are enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope in case of rejection. Then sit tight and wait. Don't keep worrying the editor every week about your story. It is only one of hundreds awaiting attention. One beginner sent a story to a well-known magazine, and after three weeks of waiting wrote an inquiring note, asking for news of it. The editor replied, "Here's your story. We were thinking of using it; but as you are in such a hurry we couldn't think of it."

"Supposing your story comes back?" My dear reader, let me assure you that it very often will come back. There is no Royal road to success.

When a story is returned, there are several explanations. 1. It may not be the kind of thing that paper is requiring. 2. The plot may not be strong enough. 3. It may be too long, or there may not be enough dialogue or action in it. Very well. Make a careful study of your story side by side with one published in the paper that rejected it. Then root out all the faults you can find, and write it again, more on the lines of the paper you are trying to get in with, and send it back again. Personally, I know of several instances when a paper, having first rejected a story, has accepted it after re-consideration in this manner.

I don't advise you to write blindly, whether Goshes be at your elbow or not. Genius is a wonderful thing, but knowledge of the requirements of your market is quite as good. Personally, I always write for a definite market. This is not, as some would maintain, dogmatic to act; in fact, it is uplifting it. Select a paper you have read regularly for a long time, and whose style you are familiar with, and write stories which you think will be suitable for it. Don't think you can get into a first-class magazine to begin with. Content yourself with the handier weeklies, which pay one guinea a column and higher according to merit, on acceptance.

The "Writer's and Artists' Year Book" will give you a complete list of all papers published, together with their requirements in the way of literary matter. You can buy this for a shilling, or see it for nothing in your local reference library. Short stories should be short. A story of 2,500 words is acceptable with most papers, providing it conforms with their desires in other directions.

The weeklies pay the beginner best for several reasons. First among these being that they use topical stories, which are published quickly, and payment is made either on publication or shortly afterwards. Whereas, with the monthly magazines, who are looked up monthly, even years ahead with stories, payment is delayed sometimes until one has forgotten the existence of one's story.

Write a little day by day, but write the best. Far better write one thousand words per day of your very best, than dash off three or four thousand words of meaningless rubbish.

If you happen to know a great deal about a matter which is in the public mind, such as railways during a strike, then write a story, bringing out your inside knowledge, and pack it off as quickly as you can.

Before finishing this article, which I trust has helped those who are ambitious to become fiction writers, and interested those who look on from afar, let me impress upon you that you must not be so rash as to throw up your ordinary work for short-story writing, dictated by the "guinea-a-column" idea." Many a young author has failed on account of this. When you have a banking account of £50 earned by your pen to your credit, then throw down the pen, and take up the pen to earn your living, but not until.

(A splendid new series of special articles will begin on this page next Wednesday, entitled "Advice to Cinema Authors." Order in advance.)



A GRAND STORY ALL GEMITES WILL ENJOY READING.

A BAFFLING TRAIL!

A Splendid Long, Complete Story, Dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of the Three Famous Characters—
JACK, SAM & PETE.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.

Jack, Sam and Pete are puzzled by the mysterious trail of
the unknown beast.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Wounded Man—A Mysterious Fox—Pete Rescues His
Fox from the jaws of Death—A Mysterious Trail.

SOME years ago a party of hunters of big game in Africa, while following a wounded elephant, came upon a narrow stream which flowed from beneath a mass of red rocks, though where it came probably no man will ever know.

At any rate, in this country, all glimmering in the twilight, by a group of pine-gird, that wounded elephant roamed, and the bull-dog men who followed the party went down on their knees and gazed in the river mud. They were only poor hunters, and richer men than they have gone down on their knees and gazed in mud for gold.

Well, they ranged in Red Rock Diggings, brought up mining implements, and started operations with moderate success. Their eyes had in the forest for them, and some gold in the earth. The latter they periodically ran to the settlement, and having surrendered their hard-earned gold, returned to Red Rock Diggings to seek a fresh supply.

But in one thing they were wise.

However drunk they got, they never revealed their secret source of wealth. The name of Red Rock Diggings was well known, but its situation was a mystery, and it was only through Harry Grogan, a reliable trader, that George, who the diggings by that Jack, Sam, and Pete straddled on the spot.

The six miners lived in a hut, which they had constructed by blocks of sandstone, plastered together with cement of their own making, and roofed with timber. The work did them credit, and they were very proud of it, but they did not want strangers to share their prize, and when the three comrades suddenly entered the place every man had one spring forward, with an angry nervous growl.

"What do you want here?" demanded a tall, long man, whose hands were stained with blood. He went by the name of Sam, and was a leading light amongst those miners, because he had wonderful luck and skill.

"We came here quite by chance."

"Then, see you here," cried a short, thick-set man, "you

don't go by chance, or at least at my name in this country you'll get ahead?"

"I reckon it's a guess that two out of three is," said Sam, placing his hand on his forehead wearily. "The first man who finds a nugget will get a bullet through an arm."

"What's all that?" demanded Pete, pushing Sam aside, and stepping up to a rough table on which a man lay. He was wrapped in the sheet, and had an ugly wound in his breast. "Who did that?"

"The boss," answered Sam, looking at the man, and gazing thoughtfully around the place. "Was Fred?"

"Frog a bit, mate," exclaimed Sam, stepping forward. "If we've got to draw on each other we can do it presently; but it's our duty as men to see to this poor fellow first. Give him a drop of spirit, if you have any. Just rub over his leg. Got any tea?"

"It's all right, boss," said Sam, watching Sam bend up the wound. "He knows more about it than me. It's all right, mate. You needn't be afraid of me firing while you are looking after Fred."

"Golly! We ain't afraid!" exclaimed Pete. "If you started firing down we'd be a bit more anxious for you to be afraid."

"Come outside, and look!"

"Nonsense, old boss! His child are just going to look after Sammy's interests while he looks after Fred's, and Jack is the same way. You may be long like me, but you can't always go by looks; but we ain't trusting you loaded that we can see you."

"How! You has told you to go out," cried a hulking man behind, stepping up to Pete menacingly. "Don't you go!"

"What's your name, old boss?" inquired Pete.

"Jack."

"His name is Pete."

"He don't matter to me what it is, Sam, or I'll give you a smack in the eye, and you won't want two of them, or I will you!"

"Nonsense! I ain't taking any of dem. Only take things I want, such as Sammy's horse. You best old before you go!"

"Why, you thinking about a dinner, take—ugh!" Jack struck him on the chest with a force that completely doubled him up and made him gape.

"You're making two much noise for de unknown, old boss!" cried Pete, pushing him up by his heavy arms. "You come along with your horses. Nonsense! You can't dance your weapons and my arms round here—no. Oh, you dear little Jack! I could kill you."

"Watched! Watch! Watch! You're crushing my ribs!" "That's de worst of being so affectionate, ain't it? Now, Jack, you best get a horse to load, and it may save you getting hurt a bit in de world. Think I can hold you in one hand, 'cos you ain't no stronger as you think you are. May as well take your weapons, if you can try to shoot me. Now, I'll just check you into this barbed-wire!"

Pete pulled his opponent into the "night-hill" stream. As he reached some horse, Sam, who in the shape of small and large fish-bone, and on there the very same spot, turned. The two crossed fish to rear like a wounded bull, and after the usual half-hour's language.

"Now, I wonder what the man is making of the body about?" asked Pete. "Don't see nothing in a change of bodies to make all the row about. Hey, Jack, take you see as a nigger's nest, or are you only trying to sing? Wanda die blow been de dead?" and he brandished a horn.

"Don't be! You're not! Get those dented horns out of me!"

"But don't come under de head of my contract. I only entered in put you into de business, not to take you out of de job. All you best get to do is to struggle about a bit, and you're most bound to get back. Nonsense! Hey! Don't take him. Don't you is suffering pain concert. You can leave that by his power. Regular musical concert, ain't it?"

"You vantage!" howled Jack, when he at last got free.

(Continued on page 10, of cover.)

"If I don't pay you for this, may I be drawn and quartered?"

"Don't you bother about dat, Job," said Pete, striking a match as he trousers. "I do any little job like dat free, gracious, and for nothing. Check you in again if you like, without extra charge."

"Will you fight me fair?"

"Well, I ain't very fair. Nonsense, Job! I won't fight you."

"Why not?"

"Because you are a nigger old man, old host."

"Alarmed at a rigger's well, that's a good 'un. Har, har, har! So you won't fight me?"

Job sheered this out, because Ezra and Bill were coming towards them.

"Nonsense! I ain't going to fight," said Pete. "You are hurt quite badly enough already. Don't mind putting you across my knee and spanking you if it would serve de rest of de company, but I'm mighty sure day wouldn't like to see you knocked about."

Pete was standing with his back to the river, apparently intent on his pipe. Job was not going to lose such a splendid opportunity as that. He made a sudden rush at Pete and dealt a furious blow at his face.

It appeared that Pete suddenly relaxed. He went down at a heap, and, sprawling over him, Job pitched headlong into the river amongst the rushes.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete, swinging round and sitting on the steep bank, while his legs dangled over the water. "You dat man is making signals wid his legs. 'Spect dat woman wrong end up."

The fact is Job's head had stuck in the mud, and when he appeared right end up, his face was about as black as Pete's.

The strange part about it was that although the water only reached Job's waist, he uttered a yell of terror, while he scrambled up the bank as though some awful peril were behind him.

And so it was. For following in the soft mud at the river's side was a huge crocodile. He had caught a glimpse of it as he rose to the surface, and as the dreadful reptile started slowly towards him he was almost helpless with terror.

Suddenly it made a snap at the seat of Job's trousers, which fortunately were baggy. Pete sprang the terrified man by the arm, and raising the axe which he had grasped in his right hand when he saw the peril, he struck at the reptile's head with all his strength.

The blow came crashing through the thick bone, and the crocodile fell backwards, ripping out a large square of cloth.

"Near dat dat, Massa Job!" exclaimed Pete. "Are you killed?"

"No, mate! But I should have been if it hadn't been for you. Just you go on ahead, while I follow you."

"Nonsense! You are first, Job."

"I ain't a-going first!" roared Job.

"Yah, yah, yah! How's dat, sah?"

"Never you mind how it is. I ain't having a nigger gaffering at me, even if he has saved my life."

"Yah, yah, yah! Come long, boys!"

Job kept about three yards behind them. Then a peal of wild laughter appeared to come from the bushes behind him, and, uttering a yell, he bolted past the other three men and dashed into the building, followed by hoofs of laughter.

Even the wounded man Fred, who had regained consciousness and who caught a glimpse of Job, commenced to laugh. "Here! You stop that!" exclaimed Sam. "You will have to wait till that wound gets well before you start gaffering like that."

"I'm all right, mate."

"I reckon I know how you are?" retorted Sam. "You will be all right in a day or two, if you keep quiet and don't go getting drunk."

"But he does look mortal funny, too. How did he lose all that cloth?"

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "An old crocodile caught him. But how did you get dat wound?"

An expression of terror came into the wounded man's eyes, and he gazed around as though he expected to see some fearful fiend in the woods.

"It was the beast," he murmured.

"Here, mates!" exclaimed Ezra, beckoning the comrades from the building. "You're fixed up that wounded man a treat, and you've proved to us that you're a decent sort. Maybe we haven't proved the same to you. Now, see here! I found a bit of a nugget about forty or fifty miles lower down the river. Take it, and go away from here without any questions asked or answered. We don't want anyone to know we are living here."

"We shall certainly say nothing about it," exclaimed Jack, refusing the gold. "It is no business of ours. But we don't need your gold, and if we did we should not take it like that. We have a larger fortune than we shall ever need, Ezra. How, what do you mean about the beast? What beast is it?"

"That's things in the African forest as white men don't know of."

"How, mate, as you value your life?" murmured Ezra,

"Granted! We ourselves have seen some strange things," said Jack.

"I have seen stranger," declared Ezra. "You haven't seen the beast."

"I reckon if we do we will put Pete alongside it," said Sam. "Then you shall have beauty and the beast."

"It's no joking matter, mate," said Ezra. "You'd say so, too, if you had seen it."

"What's dat beast like," inquired Pete.

"A hideous monster."

"Well, so is Sam; but den he ain't dangerous except when he's shooting. You never know what he is going to do when he starts firing. But we would mighty much like to see dat beast?"

"Fred saw it. That's how it would serve you. Still, if you don't value your life, just view the mine."

"Are dey far from here, sah?"

"No. I wish they was a thousand miles further! Follow along the river, and when you come to the lake you'll see them; and mind you, you'll see more than you want to."

"What's dat?"

"You've seen your burial place. As sure as you're living men now, you'll be dead ones if you go near those ruins."

"But no! You die, boys, I ain't fond of ghosts and dat."

"Thought you wanted to see the beast?"

"Think I had better look at you, Sam. An ordinary specimen of de beast seems to be 'bout as much as de child requires. It's 'bout Ezra can give us a description of dat animal dat will also be the best of going to look at him."

"Ah, it is terrible!" growled Ezra. "I ain't never seen anything like it!"

"Is it anything like a camel or a flea, or any of dese things animals?"

"Not a bit."

"Say a hippopotamus or an ostrich, den?"

"You ain't got no conception of dat beast, mates. Even you see it you'll never forget it."

"I rader 'spect you had never seen it, Ezra," observed Pete.

"Wah! I hadn't!"

"Well, you don't seem to know much 'bout dat animal. You don't seem to know woder it's like a Jerusalem mule or a butterfly. Does it live on grass or shikweed?"

"It lives on human beings!" growled Ezra, in a horrified voice. "It's des a fool of their bones!"

"Think it's a hen?"

"No. I fumes what it is. There's no animal like it."

"That's my opinion, Ezra," said Jack, laughing. "It is a sort of invisible beast, the outcome of vivid imagination."

Here Ezra uttered a wild yell, and leaping out: "The beast! The beast!" bolted into the building, slamming and locking the door.

The comrades saw nothing in the bushes in the direction in which Ezra had been gaffing; but they evidently did, for he leapt into the bushes.

"I rader nut dat beast is going to get better," observed Pete. "Bellup! Dat sounds as if Bory is getting better!"

He had heard a yell, and as Pete sprang towards the bushes Bory came back, looking very scared.

"Golly! It must be a mighty funny beast for Bory to be afraid of him!" exclaimed Pete. "Spect we shall hab to go and see de complexion of dat animal!"

"I reckon if we can strike it dead on this swampy ground I shall be able to tell what animal it is," said Sam. "Come this way. I had better go first. Pete's little swivels would cover the trail of an elephant. May I be what if a dozen! Look like a young elephant's trail! See here! These two round holes are made by the hind feet. This smaller one—"

"What the name of Pete can it be? Why, one of the feet is in the shape of a man's hand!"

Opposite the front footprint was the distinct impression of a human hand. For some moments the comrades stood gazing at the extraordinary trail in mute amazement; then Sam followed it further along, but the trail over the swampy ground was the same. Where the fourth foot should have gone appeared the distinct impression of a man's hand.

"Well, if we had pointed Ezra to describe that animal, I reckon it would puzzle me to describe the trail!"

"Dat's ever enough, Sam," declared Pete. "Anyone can tell what animal dat trail belongs to!"

"Well, what animal is it?"

"Dat trail, sah, belongs to de pig."

(Whether Pete was correct or not is his earliest description of the animal which made the mysterious trail, and how the three famous comrades faced in their attempt to probe deeper into the mystery of the "thing" which kept the miners in a constant state of terror, is told in *S. Clarke Mack's* famous story in the current issue of *The Penny Paper*, which is the continuation of the great story, "A Hellish Trail" appears. Ask for *The Penny Paper*, to-day. *For an article elsewhere.*)