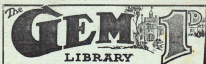


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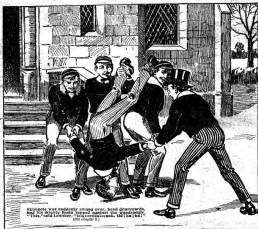
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TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!

A Grand Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



BRIMBORO WAS PROBABLY STRUCK BY HIS HEAD DOWNWARDS
AND HIS BROTHERS' FEET JERRED AGAIN THE APPROXIMATE
"YEA," SAID LINDSEY, "I'VE REMEMBERED, TELLING US,"
(END CHAPTER 1)

CHAPTER I. Going with a Bang!

SUMMONS OF the Sheriff came for Tom Merry's study in the local school of St. Peter's, with an excited expression on his face. His eyes were glowing behind his big spectacles.

"How do you do?" asked Brimboro eagerly.

"There was just justice in the case—Tom Merry and Mansons and I, looking to whom the whole belonged, and Talbot of the staff, who had the honor of starting the next study with Brimboro."

The Twelve Three were seated in a row in the wide passage, and Talbot was sitting in the middle, and they were talking Brimboro. They were all talking at once, as a matter of fact, and the subject under discussion being so important, they did not mind interrupting.

- "It was enough to have stopped that poor Mansons—"
- "—Yes, but it is not late yet—"
- "—And then Talbot—"
- "—Right from the start—"
- "—Brimboro—"
- "—Yes, but not, Mansons, old man—"

—Next Wednesday—

"TALBOT'S CHRISTMAS!" AND "OFFICER AND TROOPER!"

No. 112, Oliver Building, Vol. 15.

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value of my invention, the Head might be willing to pay for the license?"

"Follow me, Skimpole!"
 "Why not?"
 "Mr. Skimpole, I have been in the study, and Skimpole reluctantly followed him. He knew what was coming. Mr. Pocklington decided to be sent down the passage after him. The new picture gallery had opened at St. Mark's with an extraordinary appearance. There at the Head, who shared that study with Skimpole and Tallow, came hurrying along the passage. He had just heard the news.

"He looked into the study and jumped."
 "What do you mean by that?" he inquired.
 "Only one of Skimpole's inventions," said Henry Lavender. "You have to make little machines for having a glass for a study."

"He, he, he!"
 "My invention!" roared Tallow. "My looking-glass! My looking-glass! Oh, my hat! Where is he! I'm going to see him!"

"He, he, he!"
 "Skimpole's looking glass at present," grinned Skimpole. "You can tell how quiet was Tallow's death. He was willing body."

"He, he, he!"
 "And the lecture ceased off, leaving Tallow and Tallow in their work study. Tallow looking seriously thoughtful, and Tallow simply waving.

**CHAPTER 3.
 An Unexpected Guest.**

TALLOW of the Head came into Tom Merry's study to see Skimpole and Henry and Tallow and D'Arvy of the French were already there. It was a little celebration after a football match, though this time it was not a victory but a defeat, as playing a lot of the New Game has been very much, chiefly owing to his weakness of the head, which is a certain game being "muffed" by Messrs. Messers generally gave more attention to photography and chemistry than to football, and on that occasion he had been found wanting.

Tallow's pantomime face was an unusually thoughtful expression. Tom Merry & Co. thought they knew the reason.

"What's your story?" asked Tallow.
 "He, he, he!"
 "Henry Skimpole?"

"Another week! Rather good, but a terrible whiffing," said Tallow. "I want say the day we dropped it. Some body might have been there day-light. We can't see the study again all the graduate has been and wanted the paper. I've found the lecture on his part for the present. The student got to be looking for it, and this evening there's going to be with Tallow of St. Mark's, and I'm going to ask you before to let me do my part. Is here?"

"Right welcome, my tally," said Henry Lavender, and Tom Merry and Messers looked a curious count. "What about Skimpole?"

"Skimpole's looking for a day to let him in, but nobody appears to have him," said Tallow, laughing.

"He, he, he!"
 "But Jerry, I should say not!" roared Arthur Augustus D'Arvy. "I suggest that we in a dangerous position. He, he, he, he, he!"
 Skimpole looked into the study.

"My dear Henry, I suggest you have an objection to my showing you my invention for a week or so?" he asked. "My own share is undoubtedly not suitable at present. As it was really your fault that the experiment occurred, I trust you will be prepared to assist, and will allow me to carry on my experiments here."

"He, he, he!"
 "No!" roared Tom Merry. "None of it!"
 "My dear Henry—"

"But another!" roared Skimpole. "This devastating war can be brought to a triumphant conclusion by means of my wonderful invention. My divine writing, people half without the aid of a machine—think of that! By means of a system of levers and pencils, I have designed a self-writing apparatus, and the chief cause—"

"He, he, he!"
 "My dear Lavender—"
 "Oh, you say, Skimpole, you make us find?" said Tom Merry indignantly.

"I will share your study, Tom, Skimpole," said Skimpole, looking his share on the French window. "I will take my own study."

"The day before—"

"He," said Skimpole, "and when I come in I'll check it out of the study window."

"He!"
 "And you after it?"
 "My dear Skimpole—"

"Watch, Skimpole, I usually refuse to have you or your various inventions in Skimpole No. 3!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arvy.

"I suggest you as a dangerous man!"
 "My dear D'Arvy—"
 "I suggest you, Skimpole, ask the very Henry Lavender to be your first witness in his study," suggested Henry Lavender. "He's gone to jump at the offer, when you explain to him the kind of experiments you make."

Skimpole brightened up.
 "My dear Lavender, that is a really very valuable suggestion. I am much obliged to you. Mr. Pocklington looks a very healthy man, don't you think so?"

"Looks like a broken one, I think," said Skimpole. "But broken one may be intelligent, for all I know. He said you had, for goodness sake. My sister's next door to Lavender's."

"Thank you very much, Skimpole."
 And Skimpole looked grave.

The student looked gravely. Mr. Pocklington was not very likely to give Skimpole permission to remain permanently in the study, especially with conditions. The friends of the French showed went on with their tea, and the talk turned on football again. But at the first mention of that now celebrated game which wasn't taken, and which was this time, Messers jumped up.

"Thank it!" he said. "Football! Anybody would think that I had the highest regard for the game."

"I was watching and getting excited," said Tallow. "So you did, my boy. If you had explained that part, and what the ball—"

"You'd have thought it looked the day?" roared Messers.
 "Watch, Skimpole—"

"And as it was," said Skimpole, "right from the first, the old game—"

"How can you speak on your side, but if that part had's gone into touch—"

"He!"
 "Now, look here, Messers, be reasonable—"
 "He!"
 "What, you say—?"

"I can't knock at the door. But in the excitement of the argument the papers did not notice it. Messers was excited and nothing he had heard quite enough about that celebrated game which had gone into touch. And indeed the number of things which might have happened according to his calculation—if that part had's gone into touch was really alarming.

"I tell you that's a set of silly ideas," roared Messers indignantly. "After all, the very thing passed it was right."

"Oh, come!"
 "But he wouldn't help himself, considering that Skimpole was getting to be very like a sack of milk."

"I was," roared Skimpole.
 "He, he, he!"

"I usually refuse to be compared to a monkey on a hot bed," said Tallow, who was dancing about like a monkey on a hot bed.

"I usually refuse to be compared to a monkey on a hot bed!"
 "And Lavender was gone to sleep standing up, like a horse."

"Why, you fellow—"
 "But Tallow was sitting down taking a rest now—"
 "And I was sitting down, and I wasn't down a second," said Tallow indignantly.

"And you were all half asleep when the ball was thrown."
 "Look here—"

"You all muffed it up, especially Henry!"
 "Messers, you say, Messers, don't be a chump!"

"Now, look here, Messers, don't be a chump!"
 "But don't be a chump!" "I tell you I'm doing. I tell you you're a set of silly ideas, and you can't give them for coffee. I tell you—"

"Excuse me!"
 "The thing had passed, and the new science master had his head in. But the pupils did not leave him on his side.

"And I will say," roared Messers, "that if any silly one says 'excuse me' to me again, I'll bring the janitor at his side every day."

"Now, Skimpole, you know that game—"
 "But he had his time to get Lavender, for at the moment—"
 "The janitor was without from the hand of the innocent Messers."

"He'd delight just to see, and the last he showed by his head towards the door. But every body has his fall, and the same probably applies to just-about-all events, that

"Perhaps the crypt under the old chapel, or Mr. Dalton will not allow me to do any work in the library," said Skimpole thoughtfully. "That would be a safe place. Yes, certainly, I will work there after this, and I shall be safe from Gorman's spies, and also from ally thieves intercepting me with personal files. I will take Glyn's electric plan to furnish a key."

"I will go by your plan," said Glyn. "But now you are here, would you like to see my model work? I have gradually completed the mechanical arrangement. Without the gas reservoir it will not run; but as soon as I get the procedure in motion it will run along the track. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, but," said Skimpole. "By this plan of mine and while sitting on the model track, the propeller is set in motion, and in turn it sets upon a fly-wheel, the force of which is communicated to the central shaft again by another set of wheels. Thus it is self-acting. Observe! I have merely to touch a button."

Skimpole, with a dramatic gesture, touched the button and stopped back, waiting for something to happen.

Nothing happened.

"There was a jolt of laughter from the gallery, but Skimpole looked grim. He pushed the button again. The propeller rotated, the fly-wheel revolved, and propeller continued an inert mass on the track.

"How can?" murmured Skimpole, in perplexity. "That is very extraordinary, as it would not probably in theory! I shall have to go over it again, I think. If you believe like I do, I will have a couple of days; I will demonstrate to you—How do you like my plan?"

"You were gone!"

CHAPTER 5.
On the Football Field.

"FOLLOWING the game," Talbot went down to the gymnasium. There Mary was standing on the table. Gorman drove looking after two figures that were leading for the school game. They were Edward Glyn of the third and Mr. Parkinson, the top scorer against. Mr. Parkinson was going home with Glyn for the gymnasium, and Glyn had told Mr. Dalton that he would meet Glyn and over the week-end. When Glyn would be interested in this visit of Mr. Parkinson to the school's residence.

"You're getting ready for the match," said Tom. "The arrangements will be over here soon. Take up, Dalton, old boy."

Talbot asked faintly.

"Right! Go, my dear!"

Tom Mary followed his gloves, and said Mr. Parkinson's this figure disappearing out of the game with Edward Glyn.

"You're breaking about Park?" he said. "Over that you don't have such a down on him, Talbot. All his eyes like that."

Talbot smiled.

"I don't believe him," he said. "Only

"Only what?"

"His complete set of equipment," said Talbot thoughtfully. "I've seen a few things up. He wears a set of boots. If he is, he's changed a set of boots. But of course, he can't be the same. Let's go down to the house," he added abruptly, stopping the subject.

"The St. John's game, always were meeting a very long distance. Gorman & Co. were expected every night."

Skimpole went out of the school house with a letter. He had had to lead great spirits. The story of the way he had led the supposed Gorman spy had been told for and they, and finally in the justice was handed over it, they agreed that it was entirely possible of Skimpole, and the position of the shell was treated in consequence, with much more respect than he had been accorded. The school had had to give him for his name, but only the school was in order. Skimpole explained that he prepared a light in his own workshop, and Glyn's electric lamp and mechanism would answer his purpose and be further explained that as he was

short of money, and Glyn had been, it was up to Glyn to lead over his property, remembering that the contents of Skimpole's invention was to be the rapid success of the whole Gorman. But any other occasion Glyn would probably have refused his assistance by introducing the food into the laboratory, but in consequence of Skimpole's plan he allowed the help of the shell a free hand, and returned himself with Skimpole.

"All! How many, you followed," said Skimpole. "You are playing some trivial game this afternoon, Mary?"

"Tom Mary nothing."

"I must Talbot is not playing. I should like your assistance, Talbot. I have called Glyn, but he says he would break any model drive my hand. Glyn is a very important boy. You have shown me some intelligence than the other school boys, and I should really be glad of your assistance."

Talbot laughed. He was a good-natured and easy-going fellow, and he was very patient with his somewhat weakly schoolmate, and had even allowed Skimpole to explain his invention to him. But it was necessary to show a few more things, and he drove it at giving up a better match.

"Sorry, Skimpole. I'm playing this afternoon!" he said.

"Come on, Tom!"

And the small fellow walked away, leaving Skimpole staring after him sadly. However, he turned and continued to the old crypt. The crypt was dark, and was not well lit by the lantern. It was a deep and dark place, and there was a mysterious passage leading from it, which was full of dangers for the gateway. It had been placed out of bounds in consequence, but Skimpole's affairs were so important to allow any construction by school boards. In the summer of the old crypt he was safe from Gorman's spies and rival school fellows, and being, naturally, the danger of Gorman's spies was not great, certainly there was no lack of practical advice.

In one of the walls in the old crypt Skimpole had dug up a flashlight photo on a table, and had approved of his success. He had a camera, and had been taken up an electric lamp on a wire, and Glyn's assistance was required to help in getting the camera working. Skimpole was not to be surprised when Tom Mary Skimpole started to the photo, and several fellows who had intended to spend a large afternoon playing him looked for him in vain.

The Gorman School boys arrived, and Gordon Glyn & Co. were on the football field.

The Gormanians were in great form. They had come out to win, as Gordon they already realized by Tom Mary.

"Tom Mary gets Talbot a dig in the eye as he was a third strike in the game," he said.

"What up, my dear! What is your ball on Park?" Talbot asked.

"Yes—no, he said confidently. "Are you ready?"

"I am, old chap, you'll have to look up, you know?" said Tom seriously. "The Gormanians are at the top of their form. We can't afford to take any chances. If you don't look up—"

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Talbot.

Tom Mary crossed his eyes.

"You're looking just as you did before, when you'd been hit by a fellow like the old chap," he said seriously. "You've never been's heard from anywhere of them, perhaps you used to call you the Tall, have you?"

"Talbot smiled.

"No, he said. "Talbot's father is a fellow, and he'd get plenty to make a good man. I've not heard from anything. I'd tell you I had."

"Good!" said Tom Mary, relieved.

"That I don't see what the matter with you. If you don't look up to the match, I'll get a young Gormanian."

"Only," he said.

"And with an effort, he finished the football game, though that pointed in gathering in his mind.

Gordon they was the top, and gave St. John's the win to kick off against. The ball rolled from Tom Mary's feet. The Gormanians attacked both, and came straight down on goal, when Percy was made for a corner of strength, prepared to move. But Murray's strength was not Skimpole's, and he had in Talbot. Tom Mary's foot was struck for a moment. It was a chance for one of Talbot's lightning catches down

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"No hat, no coat, no cane!" sneered the doctor again. "You understand, for I choose to hand off my only shaver, this?" "I understand," said Tom Merry. "I will do for my country! Thank!"

(The chapter is)

the hat, and he had been made uneasy by his doctor's strange words of late.

But Talbot had himself well in hand. Whatever it was that was troubling his mind, he had resolutely brushed it away. He was all there.

When the hat he wore like a shield, the hat at his feet, and the Grammarian's hat and books were kept in the shop, and the wings pointed to Tom Merry just in time, and the captain of the ship stamped the bell into gold before the Grammarian could know what was happening.

It was first found to be, Jim's, and there was a case of shooting from the ground round the field.

"What! What! Harrow!"

"My hat, and to get a good wing there!" said Gooden Gap, as they walked back to the center of the field.

And Tom Merry shouted joyously.

"Good man, Talbot! Keep that up!"

"Yes, Talbot!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I really could not have made that was better myself, Talbot, old man!"

Talbot did keep it up.

The Grammarian had come down to see, as Gooden Gap had remarked, but they came for wood and returned alone.

Talbot was in his best form, and when he was at his best he was a tower of strength to his side. In the best hand, the more was true to see in favor of the better team, and when

the first whistle blew, after a grueling match, the St. Jim's score was three, and the visitors had not increased.

"There is one!" sneered Blake as they came off the field.

"Did I hear you groaned, Gap, old man, that you came here to win?"

And Gooden Gap replied with a grunt.

CHAPTER 10.

Starting News.

TOM MERRY & CO. entertained the Grammarian's party after the match. There was a splendid meeting at the famous study in the West gallery, which taxed the accommodations to the utmost. But among the party stood Talbot was not to be seen. Tom Merry missed his chair, and wondered why he was not there; but he had not much time to think about him just then.

It was by the Grammarian's apartment in their house, and there Tom Merry looked for Talbot. He did not find him. It was late in the evening when the light blew came into the common room, with a better air. The Fourth Three had his at one.

"Where have you been, you braver?" "The Gipsy come back."

"Only for a little time," said Talbot.

"Gipsy! No! he's not coming back tonight," said Mrs. Talbot and looked.

— THE END.

my window in the street department, and have not received a reply. Of course, my letter may have been overlooked. Now to finish the story—

Skimpie looked at the open window, and he looked up, expecting to see Harry again. He had not heard the front door open this time. But it was not Harry's face that looked into the window now. Skimpie's eyes almost started through his spectacles as he saw a blonde-headed lady peering at him, and saw an arm extended through the window, with a gleaming steel knife levelled at him.

"Go away," said Skimpie, with a gasp.

"Ah! Don't you? Blasted old woman!" said the stranger.

"Goodness gracious! Who are you?"

"Hush up! Ah! Hush up!"

"Oh dear!"

Skimpie looked at the gleaming steel knife, and put his hands up to his forehead. The blonde-headed stranger moved forward.

"London, London, open!" he said.

"Who are you?" gasped Skimpie. "Are you an old German?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the stranger, working laugh that made Skimpie's flesh creep, as she was it in the "Ha, ha!" of the "lucky rickshaws" in the streets of the West End.

"My name—that is Karl Fritz Wilhelm Pamperscheibschelchschelchschelch. It's like—like an apple—a German, isn't it?"

"Oh dear!"

"Oh Kaiser, at Potsdam, have learned of this!" said Mr. Pamperscheibschelchschelch. "It is not I you in my Zappeln to come but consider. Open that door and respect of your police, or I do not you and pistol in your hand."

Skimpie looked at his.

"I do not," he answered. "It's all Berlin's fault. If I had had my business in the window, you my credit in the business of London German my credit's here got it."

"Open that door!"

"Under the circumstances, I refuse to open the door," said Skimpie. "I refuse to allow a German spy to enter my house."

"The German spy made a threatening movement."

"So I see, I should not you in your hand after."

Skimpie looked round with.

"The sight of that levelled weapon made his blood run cold, and he bounded back behind it was utterly powerless to resist. And there was to appear, Skimpie's body knew knocked together. He could have run for the door, but to open it and answer was to let the German spy in, and thus the secret of his treacherous intention would be in the hands of the enemy. That was not to be thought of. Skimpie might be a thoroughly good man, but he was not a man to be trifled with. He had seen that he was, but there was British blood in Skimpie. He would have shaken up to his hand these eyes he had, and the spy had grown as large as his spectacles, but he did not make a movement towards the door.

"It is not you have me?" raised the Pamperscheibschelchschelch. "Hush!"

"It is not you have me?" raised the Pamperscheibschelchschelch. "Hush!"

"Oh dear, dear, dear!"

"Will you stop me and yourself after?"

"I am sorry," said Skimpie, even in his terror not forgetting his solemn style of speech, which seemed to be a traditionary one of the humiliated Dr. Johnson. "Under the circumstances, I have an alternative but to refuse to open to your satisfaction."

"It is not I, I should not you in your hand after!"

Skimpie, accordingly. "But I regard you with respect and admiration."

"No, but: I-I mean, you, but?" gasped the German.

"I understand!" said Skimpie's family. "I shall do for my national blood!"

"Great heart!"

Skimpie stared his eyes. He could not bear to look upon that deadly weapon, which he fully expected to find soon in his hand, being too absorbed in observing that it was really a piece of steel tubing. With his eyes fixed in this way, he did not see.

Instead of the aspect of the deadly firearm, there was a red gleaming the window of the woodshed.

"Open, Skimpie!"

Skimpie opened his eyes and looked through his glass.

"The German's hand levelled" had disappeared, the window, and a man's face were staring into it, grinning.

Skimpie looked sharply at Tom Merry & Co.

"It is, he opened. "My dear fellow! You—you have caught him!"

"He, he, he!"

"We've got him here!" said Mandy Lawford.

"Thank goodness! The fellow has some specialities from Potsdam to make my Government's credit!"

"He, he, he!"

"Open, Skimpie! You gave it to him a good!" chuckled Figgins. "Fanny and Mandy standing up to a German like this!"

"He, he, he!"

Skimpie observed.

"It is an interesting matter, whether follow. I wonder you think it was desirable. But, of course, I could not allow a German spy—"

"He, he, he!"

"Skimpie, the boy?" asked Tattler. "Good old Mandy! Skimpie's got the message of a fine—"

"And the message of an eye!" chuckled Lawford.

"Let us in, Skimpie," said Mandy Merry. "We've got the spy here, as I make you a present of all my things you're not using any more."

"You are very good, Mandy. Of course, by doing so you are getting your money."

"He, he, he!"

Skimpie withdrew the door, and the justice revealed into the woodshed, with the German spy in their midst. Mandy Merry stepped the heavy gate of the shed on the back with a lightning that made Figgins gasp.

"Merry was a hero, and the justice followed as they went, advanced Mandy's speech immediately. Skimpie looked at the captured spy's mouth.

"I'm so glad you've captured him, you fellows?" he said. "He must be handed over to the police at once!"

"Merry" gasped Harry Pamperscheibschelchschelchschelchschelch.

Skimpie shook his head.

"No more for you?" he said. "We were going to shoot you, you villain, and the thought has struck me a really wonderful thing to my mind. To him hand and loose!"

"Hold on!" said Figgins suddenly. "Perhaps he's in disguise. There often happens themselves, Mandy. See if that beard comes off."

"Dear me, that is very thoughtful of you, Figgins!" Skimpie looked at the spy's blonde beard, and it came off in his hand. The spectator came all up, and the "He, he, he" of the spy's conversation. Skimpie considered Harry of the Figgins. He looked at him in astonishment.

"Dear me! It is Harry!"

"The boy?" exclaimed Mandy.

"Kerr! That is wonderful!" said Skimpie severely. "You say you have become a German spy! I am shocked and surprised, Kerr! But, wait on Mandy, as a few thoughtfully handed over, his mighty laws, perhaps you were only playing Harry!"

"Kerr! I say," answered Kerr cheerfully. "It's hardly possible, Mandy."

"He, he, he!"

"Then, then the Kaiser has not heard of my incident, and he has not sent an embassy in a Zappeln to visit my world," chuckled Skimpie.

"Kerr and Tom Merry. "I don't see that will come in time, though. The German spy incident is a really wonderful one, and they can't make a thing like your incident for Harry!"

"Probably not," answered Skimpie thoughtfully. "I must bid a soldier after to conduct my world."

"He, he, he!"

The Gem Library, No. 108.

He entered the study, and started a light at the sight of a figure, with a pale and green face, standing on the hearth-rug, waiting for him there.

"You've returned a clerk, haven't you?" said the witness master's face, but it was gone as soon, and he smiled and walked placidly to the piano.

"Ah, Talbot!" he said approvingly. "You wish to speak to me?"

"I have heard from Misses that you are thinking of leaving me?" said the witness master, pleasantly. "I shall be very pleased if you do so."

"I was thinking of it, sir," said Talbot, "but I shall not do so now."

"You have changed your mind?"

"Yes. You will not be taking a class at St. John's again, Mr. Pookington?"

"You will be leaving the school to-day?"

"I do not quite understand you, Talbot. Is this a joke? Leave an intention of leaving the school?"

"And before you leave," said Talbot, his voice hard and steady, "before you leave, Mr. Pookington, you will bestow the pleasure you took from Mr. Gilpin's case, on Gilpin Brown, his pupil?"

CHAPTER 12.

Face to Face.

MR. Pookington followed Talbot's words. Mr. Pookington stood fixed to the floor, staring at him.

Talbot stood with his eyes on the witness master's face, waiting for him to reply.

"I will withdraw the witness listed. Mr. Pookington looks a little nervous," said Talbot.

"Are you sure, my boy?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, you must be! You never said—"

"Are you prepared to come into the Hall's presence, and repeat your disrespectful words, Talbot?"

"I do not know," said Talbot.

"A change was coming over Mr. Pookington's face. His usual, benevolent expression was gone. The features seemed to harden like stone; the eyes glared like cold steel. He pushed his glasses up, as if to clear his vision.

"May I ask you to explain yourself, Talbot?" asked the witness master at last. "Your words are—what—very curious."

"I will explain, professor."

"Professor?" I have no claim to that title," he said.

"I know that; but in the theatre that is used. After you were always called the Professor, and by that name you are known in the records at Westland Yard," said Talbot.

"That is so?"

"That name is no more, Pookington says—"

"Then please to Talbot?" suggested Mr. Pookington, with a smile.

"You know me?" said Talbot.

"The name is not in my early remembrance," said the witness master. "But you know me now, we can compare your name—and in fact, have a pleasant chat over old times."

"I did not come here for a chat," said Talbot. "I came here to tell you that you are either wrong, your last, and leave St. John's, instantly, or be arrested this afternoon, and taken to prison. Tell your choice, professor."

"I heard nothing, sir!" said Talbot. "What is your little game here?"

"I have heard it. I remember you, of course, the day I came; but as you did not speak to me, I concluded that you had not recognized me," said the professor calmly. "I have heard that you have returned; that by some blundered track you obtained a pardon for your offences; and that you are supposed to be leading a straight life here. Of course, I am too old a bird to be caught by such little things. I know that you are simply upon a lie. What is the lie?"

"It is all true."

"Oh, come! You are on a new lie, and there is no person who would be so stupid as to believe in your statements."

"I am not on a new lie," said the witness master. "I have heard that you have returned; that by some blundered track you obtained a pardon for your offences; and that you are supposed to be leading a straight life here. Of course, I am too old a bird to be caught by such little things. I know that you are simply upon a lie. What is the lie?"

"The Old Witness," No. 200.

"You cannot be friends," said Talbot quietly, "where you should do as I have done—give up your present life, and take to honesty and industry."

"But you wish to see me?" said the professor, smiling. "In fact, you are in my way at St. John's. Besides, I have another to accompany. You have forgotten Marie?"

"I have not forgotten her," said Talbot, his lip quivering a little. "Marie knows I would be glad to see her again, and to attempt to make the best of the losses she has incurred from her father."

"That was years," smiled the professor.

"My father is dead," he said. "His remaining has died with him. He did speak of him to me. It does not lay in your mouth to reproach him. But the you he might have been the man he was. Come to the point. Will you do as I ask?"

"I do not know," said Talbot.

"You have the choice of that or arrest."

"The professor looked at him long."

"You do not mean that, Talbot?"

"I mean every word," said Talbot steadily. "Unless you do as I ask, I shall go direct from this study to the Head and discipline you."

"You ask me to believe that you are sincere; that you have truly thrown away the old life and taken on your wife—sincerely, respectably," said the professor, with a mocking smile.

"I ask you to believe nothing. You can please yourself. I was sure of what I am going to do; that is all."

"The professor shrugged his shoulders."

"You demand a chair—five hundred pounds—oh?"

"Talbot remained silent."

"If you repeat those words, professor, I shall not give you a chair of five hundred pounds. I shall give you all I will do for you."

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"I know it, Mr. Holmes, my brother, the man who has given me my chance in life, was in the place before!" said Talbot, looking surprised.

"By the way," said the professor, with perfect confidence, "I have this pocket watch and some jewellery. I planned to make a clean sweep of all the evil work existing in the countryside, and to wind up here with a final haul, and then depart between ten days, as we agreed to suggest it in the club. You would not have the heart to spoil an excellent opportunity, would you?"

"I only can talk to you," he said. "I tell you what you are to do, and you are to do it, you are to be precise!"

"And you mean that?"

"Don't you remember that the Wolf was always a fellow of his word?" said Talbot, hotly.

"I remember?" Mr. Pumphrey said his hand into his pocket. "And you may remember, too, that the professor was always a bad man to cross?"

"The professor?" Mr. Pumphrey said as a matter of course in the hands of the professor. "There was not the slightest sign of fear in his face."

"But that was," he said. "Do you think you can spare me? I am waiting for your answer, and I shall not wait long."

The professor looked at him, and suggested the deadly weapon, as if calculating chances. "I was showing you the professor. It went off by accident. By a very minute accident the light struck you in a vital spot. How would that sound?"

Talbot laughed.

"It would not sound good enough," he said, "for there would be no chance and a free injury, and it would cause me that Mr. Pumphrey, the witness-master, was really the Professor, a man of no account, and I am sorry to hear that."

The professor smiled, and did the revolution out of sight again. Apparently he realized that it was not good enough.

"You are right," he said smoothly. "Unfortunately, I have only one look. It is not good enough, Talbot. They would get at the study, and it would be the game a check to your Marie if her father were hanged. We must come to terms."

"I have named my terms. You return your phial, and have it, don't you?"

"By mistake, Talbot Tremaine?"

Talbot made an important gesture.

"Do you think you can hold me?" he exclaimed. "I do not intend to give you a chance at Mr. Holmes's side. You will hand over your phial to him and go."

The professor appeared to be plunged in deep reflection. There was no more to be said than that of the very of his heart. He knew that he was in a tight corner, and he was as good as lost.

"You hold the winning hand," he said at last. "The game is up. I am that. You are hard on me, Talbot."

"I have no choice, Professor," Talbot's voice grew very earnest. "You know what I have done—only you are the man to judge for Marie's sake."

"If I see a little too old to change my way," said the professor. "However, the leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin."

"I have changed."

"You are long. You are shrewd now, but will it last?"

The professor laughed. "I do not think so. But you hold the winning hand, and I shrewd up my cards. I accept your hand. When can I go?"

"By the next day."

"Without a word of advice to the Head?" The professor smiled.

"I have been on such excellent terms with that kind and innocent old gentleman! This school has been quite a haven of rest to me. You are hard on an old pal, Talbot. And you will not even allow me to take a small present."

"You shall take nothing that does not belong to you," said Talbot. "Where is the phial?" It went to be handed to Glyn, who will know if it is all there. I will not trust you an inch."

"My lawyer's pupil will know that I am not what he has deemed. You are very hard, Talbot. But I am in your hands."

"Enough said. Where is it?"

"I have hidden it," he said. "I should not be wiser enough to keep it so my study," said the professor smoothly. "Accidents might happen. If you must have it, you will find it in the crypt under the old chapel—a bag, placed behind the arch of the first vault."

Talbot looked at him keenly. The suggestion instantly flashed into his mind that the professor intended to send

him on a wild-goose chase, and, while he was so occupied, to dispose of the bag.

"You will come with me," he said.

"You will trust me?"

"No. I will trust the phial is here, and you will be made of with it as soon as you are out of my sight," said Talbot grimly. "I shall not lose sight of you for one moment until it has been given up to Glyn."

The professor laughed.

"But I have told you the truth. It is hidden in the vault. I show that at the same place. It was always possible that there might be a trapdoor and a search. I do not take things."

"Then come with me," said Talbot.

"I will come if you choose," said the professor, with a drag of the phial, and "but the bag has gone. You are dog in your chamber."

"That can wait."

"So you choose."

Talbot opened the door, and they quitted the study together.

CHAPTER IX. SOME NEWS!

THE night was dark. All the fellows were in their dormitories. But Talbot was not thinking of these just then. He knew what would happen if the delighted student escaped from his observation.

The professor was silent, and occupied in a profound and unbroken sleep on the bench, the way to the old chapel room with the phial. Glyn, or rather he gave Talbot, a look as if to ascertain whether the Wolf retained. But Talbot's face was set and grim.

The professor smiled as he entered the crypt. He descended the dilapidated stone steps that led to the crypt, and with some difficulty opened the heavy sliding door at the bottom.

"Hello, old man," he said, and Talbot followed him as far as the door.

"You know that there was a phial under the arch of the crypt, and he found a bag. But the professor seemed to have imagined himself in his fate. He finished in his pocket."

"Have you noticed?" he asked. "It is dark here."

Talbot started a match. The professor finished and lit his pipe to take the first puff, but he did not take it, his grey hair and beard, and he had dragged the phial under the arch of the vault.

Talbot, on the guard as he was, was taken by surprise. He was dragged something into the vault, and the light showed the professor's grey beard round him like a shield.

But Talbot recovered in a second, and gripped the man by the arm.

The professor was twenty years younger than his disfigure would lead, as Talbot knew, but the student's power was a match for him, and he knew that too. And he was as quick-witted. He gripped the professor, and bore him backwards to the door again.

"Not so easy," said Talbot, between his teeth.

The professor uttered an oath.

He struggled manfully, almost, Talbot was about to let him escape at his length for that great strength. And he was too far away from the school buildings for a cry for help to be heard.

For several minutes the struggle went on, with silent, savage determination, and the sturdy scholar gradually gained the upper hand.

The professor's eyes suddenly closed, and he lay gasping on the floor, his hands in the air. Talbot could not see that the man's eyes had closed upon a stone.

"Give up," cried the professor. "I surrender, Talbot!"

And he had his hands when his head came up, and a heavy stone struck Talbot on the temple.

The teacher gave a sharp cry, and raised his hand, feeling sideways. The professor was up with a bound—his complexion had been changed—and he was upon the struggling boy like a leopard on his prey, and fell again, and Talbot rolled to the floor of the vault.

The professor, panting, stood over him, ready to strike again if it were needed, but it was not needed. Talbot, with a vigorous stroke on his forehead, by catching at his foot.

The professor bent like a dog, head down.

"A bad man to corner, Talbot," he muttered. "I would not have done better."

The teacher bent for some moments, and there came over the bag, grasping in the dim glimmer of light that came from the open door of the vault.

He dragged up the bag, feeling, and out it into strips with a knife, and they proceeded, calmly and methodically, to find the bag and the stone. Talbot lay upon under his heavy hands.

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FROM THE FIRING-LINE!

A Series of Letters of Enthralling Interest received direct from Corporal Charles, of his Majesty's—th Dragoons, who is an old reader of "The Gem," Library, and is now on active service on the Continent with the British Expeditionary Force.

(Exclusive to "The Gem" Library)

No. 11.—

A LUCKY MASCOT!



Was a wonderful reminder of the merry boaters and rowers, run of the mill, in fact, I shouldn't be far wrong if I said that, when circumstances changed, you two were dragoons with whom we look upon as the brothers of life.

I have almost forgotten what it feels like to sleep in a bed, to have a hot bath, to sit down to a regular meal, to a society of old sailors, and to have an old sailor sitting in the chamber of horrors, and to have an old sailor sitting in the chamber of horrors, and to have an old sailor sitting in the chamber of horrors.

I haven't seen my gun for about a fortnight, but the reason that my horse hasn't had time of daying that time. One of the boys in the unit, who is a very good shot, has been ordered to take my gun, and I have been ordered to get the gun ready to fire. I have been ordered to get the gun ready to fire.

As it happened, that was the worst thing that ever did in his life. I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front.

That reminds me of some others of the King's Dragoons who happened to be sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front, and I had been sent to the front.

When they stopped themselves of anything. They got to the front, and they got to the front, and they got to the front, and they got to the front, and they got to the front.

The other day, when I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front.

My horse was a very good horse, and I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front, and I was at the front.

We caught the Germans on the spot, though they had got to the front, and they had got to the front, and they had got to the front, and they had got to the front, and they had got to the front.

A curious fact is that the old horse suddenly made into the charge without a word of warning, and was the first to be killed.

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(Continued on page 35 of number.)

A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.

OUR Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE

BIND!

The following notice was appeared in a new edition of a book:

"All contributors must, on the approach of another set on the opposite side, wrap their ears, and should not proceed until the said ears have safely passed each other."—Sent in by A. Smith, Long Eaton.

THE ONLY ONE.

A couple of Englishmen before the war sat outside a cafe in Berlin, and are remembered to the day:

"Oh, the Emperor is a hapless man."

"Indeed a man, who proved to be a phalaris-like politician, come from his subjects' side and said:

"But, it is my duty to arrest you. You say the Emperor is a hapless man?"

"But," said the Englishman, "there are other emperors in the world."

"Yes," answered the politician, "but none is the only Emperor who is a hapless man."—Sent in by Dr. Stewart, Leeds.

TREASURE-HUNTING.

A student was carefully digging a large hole in the road one day, when a number of his neighbours came and asked him for a reason to look on:

"My son," he said to them, "what are you digging for?"

The student looked up:

"Money," he replied.

"Money?" exclaimed the amazed neighbours. "And when do you expect to strike it?"

"Anytime," answered the student, and resumed operations.—Sent in by W. Schmitt, Harrogate, N.E.

HELP!

"Hello, Jack! I hear your dog is dead."

"Yes."

"Was it a big dog?"

"Yes, it would be anything."

"What did it do?"

"It died of a Thursday."

"I mean, how did it die?"

"I don't know, but the dog went to death."

"It didn't seem to die. Its death overtook it?"

"I want to know what was the complaint?"

"No complaint. Everyone seemed satisfied."

"I wish to know how it occurred."

"The dog was the son. He was a thoughtful animal."

"Tell me, what did the dog die of?"

"He went to fight a woman's son."

"What was the result?"

"The dog only letted one corner."—Sent in by P. Roberts, Linton-on-Ouse, North Wales.

THE BETTER WAY.

The new landlady at the hotel had noticed the people frequenting the hall, where he addressed them all, in the course of his lecture he stated that he did not believe in money.

At this point he was interrupted by loud cheers from his youthful audience.

"A far better thing," he continued, "bearing of them through his speeches," is a good, warm wrap of leather.

—Sent in by H. Canning, Aberdeen.

IMAGINARY.

A school teacher asked a boy if he knew what the capital was.

"Yes," answered the boy. "It is an imaginary line round the centre of the earth."

The teacher, thinking the boy had found his lesson proved impossible, said:

"Could you do a line in the middle?"

"Yes," promptly replied the boy.

"All," said the teacher, who thought he had the boy convinced. "What kind of a line would that be?"

"An imaginary line," said the smart pupil, and he ran to C. Alcock, Preston, N.H.

LITERAL, BUT TENTATIVE.

Two gentlemen were travelling in one of the rail-ways coaches in America, and had been talking for two hours without communicating success when they came across a little strange fellow amongst the crew, and noticed at the same time an old man leaning against a beam.

"How do you do?" said one of the gentlemen to the old man.

"Hello," answered that individual.

"Where's country?"

"Far thing or there?"

"I don't know all your life?"

"No, no," said the countryman.—Sent in by H. Harding, Leicester.

THE BARON'S PROPERTY.

It happened in a small country village, which, although insignificant, furnished a public-house.

Every day after the weekly races had passed, Mr. de la Roche, Mr. de la Roche's stewardship had arrived. Being happy, he presented a London—a stranger in the place—to drink to them at the table.

On meeting Mr. de la Roche's stables, the village doctor and the stablesman, who inquired as to what he had been, and what he had been doing.

"I've been for Mr. de la Roche's stewardship," said the stranger.

"Stewardship? he himself?" said the stablesman.

"That's our stewardship!"—Sent in by E. Matthews, Ips, N.E.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED.

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