

"THE MADNESS OF MANNERS!" This week's topping complete school story.

No. 957. Vol. XXIX.—June 19th, 1929.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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THE WORK OF YEARS THRUST INTO THE FLAMES!

The reckless act of revenge which causes so much trouble for Harry Manners of St. Jim's.

OUR "SCARLET STREAK" COMPETITION

First Prize £5,

AND FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS, BOYS!

(RESULT OF CONTEST No. 5 appears on PAGE 9.)

HERE is the tenth and final picture-puzzle in the popular competition we have been running in conjunction with our amazing serial story entitled: "The Scarlet Streak." The puzzle shown below represents a paragraph built upon the story of the Scarlet Streak, which our artist has put into picture-puzzle form.

In attempting to solve the puzzle it will help if you read the story and see the film; also, the sense of the sentences will assist you. But you should remember each picture or sign may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words.

Try your hand at solving the paragraph—you can see that the opening words are "Livingston Scott is a . . ."—and then write your solution IN INK on a sheet of paper. Cut out the puzzle and the coupon together; attach your solution to the tablet, and, having signed and addressed the coupon IN INK, post your effort to:

GEM, "Scarlet Streak," No. 10,
Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.O. 4 (Comp.),

so as to reach there not later than FRIDAY, JUNE 25th. Any efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded for the correct, or most nearly correct, solution. The other prizes will follow in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to divide any of the prizes should it be necessary in the case of ties.

You may send as many efforts as you like, but each must be complete in itself, and must consist of a solution, a puzzle, and a signed coupon. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified. The decision of the Editor will be absolutely final.

No one connected with the staff or proprietors of this journal may compete.

Our Grand Story, "The Scarlet Streak," has been filmed by the Universal Co. Read the story and see the film.

"SCARLET STREAK" No. 10.

I enter "Scarlet Streak" Contest No. 10, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....



GEM. Closing Date, Friday, June 25th.

IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT! Accused of something he hasn't done, and conscious of the scorn with which Mr. Linton now regards him, Manners is obsessed with the idea of "getting even" with his Form-master. A chance comes his way, as he thinks, to square accounts; but having tasted the doubtful sweets of revenge, Manners would give anything in the world to undo the harm he has wrought!



THE MADNESS OF MANNERS!

A Dramatic Long Complete Story
of Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's,
with a powerful human interest.

By

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.

Lines—Lines—Lines!

"MANNERS!" rapped out Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell Form at St. Jim's.

"Yes, sir," replied Manners.

"You were talking! Take a hundred lines!"

Manners looked aggrieved.

Certainly he had been talking. Punishment was not a matter to grumble at. But it did seem to Manners that Mr. Linton was overdoing it in giving him a hundred.

Fifty would have met the case, and fifty could have been done after morning classes, and still have left some time before dinner for the photographic work Manners was keen to get on with.

He shuffled his feet noisily, without meaning to make a noise.

"Manners!"

"Yes, sir."

"If you do that again you will get more lines!"

Manners stifled a groan. It seemed to him that the Form master was all on edge that morning.

Others had thought the same thing.

Mr. Linton was never exactly easy-going. He had less charity for slight offences than had little Mr. Lathom of the Fourth, for instance. At times he was severe. But he always meant to be fair, as they knew.

To-day he had been dropping on to fellows for very slight offences. Manners was not the first to get an impot. But that was no comfort to Manners.

Gore, sitting next to him, stretched out his legs a few minutes later, and his heels scraped the floor.

"I warned you, Manners! Take another hundred lines!" snapped Mr. Linton.

Manners might have denied that he had been guilty. Gore might have spoken up.

But Manners merely glared at his Form master, and Gore bent his head over his exercise-book and said nothing.

The glare was wasted, for Mr. Linton's head was down again. Perhaps it was as well.

When noon and the order to "Dismiss" came, Manners went to Study No. 10 in the Shell passage without waiting for his chums, Tom Merry and Lowther.

They came in within ten minutes or so, in flannels and blazers.

"Coming down to the nets, Manners?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" answered Manners crossly. "How can I, with two hundred lines to do? I wasn't coming, anyway."

"Then it doesn't matter so much about the lines," observed Lowther.

"Fathcad!"

"Come along, Thomas," said Lowther. "Manners would rather be alone."

"Of course I would! How can a fellow get on with anything with you jabbering like a treeful of monkeys? I say, Tom, old Linton is a beast!"

"Well, I wouldn't say that," answered Tom Merry. "He certainly did drop on you a bit heavily. But you were talking."

"I spoke two words!"

"Linton hadn't the chance to count them, you see. Fifty lines per words is pretty stiff, I admit."

"And you did shuffle your feet," added Lowther.

"Not the second time. That was Gore. Shuffling one's feet isn't a crime, in any case, is it?"

"Gore ought to have owned up," said Tom Merry.

"Go and tell him so!" snorted Manners.

They did not go to tell Gore so. But they left the study.

"Linton was really a bit drastic this morning," Tom Merry said to Lowther.

"He was. I fancy the old bird's been overdoing it lately, and is nery."

"Overdoing what?"

"Midnight oil bizney. He's writing some great work, you know, Thomas—not the sort of thing you or I would read to while away an idle hour, but a Work with a capital W."

"I didn't know. Luck to it, as long as he doesn't expect his Form to read it! But the sooner he's through with it the better, if it's going to make him as rough on us as he has been to-day."

But, as it chanced, neither Tom Merry nor Lowther had suffered in person, and, down on Little Side, they soon forgot Mr. Linton's severity.

It was not so easy for Manners to forget. It was, in fact, impossible.

The study was hot, and to Manners seemed stuffy. He would not have noticed heat or stuffiness had he been able to get on with his photographic work. But they made the imposition seem all the more unbearable.

He scrawled on. Soon he began to feel thirsty.

A look into the cupboard made it clear that the supply of pop was exhausted. Manners made up his mind to go across to the tuckshop.

He found Baggly Trimble of the Fourth gazing in at the window, his mouth watering.

No one else was in the quad. It lay empty in the sunshine, while from the playing-fields came the cheery sound of bat and ball meeting and the hum of voices.

It is quite clear that Manners could not have been at the nets and in Study No. 10 developing, at the same time. But he felt it as a big grievance that he should not be with his comrades.

The sight of Baggly annoyed him. Baggly was really too greedy for anything.

Presumably the fat Fourth-Former had no cash, and had come to stand in front of the tuckshop. Like a very plump

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peri at the gate of Paradise, Baggy often did that. Not once in a hundred times did anyone ask him in. But "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and Baggy, as Lowther said, was almost human, anyway.

It so happened that on this occasion Baggy was not in his usual stony-broke condition. He could not jingle the money in his pocket, for it was a solitary sixpence, and there was nothing to jingle it against. But his podgy thumb and forefinger were on it as he stood gazing in at the window, and he was debating in mind, with all the seriousness so momentous a question called for, how best to spend that sixpence.

Manners would have passed in without speaking. He never wasted time on Baggy, even when in a good humour, and just now he felt morose.

But Baggy spoke.

"Hallo, Manners!" he said affably.

"Hallo yourself!" growled Manners.

"I say, Manners, have you been getting any lines lately?" Manners started and flushed with annoyance.

"Look here, you fat boulder," he said sharply, "don't you—"

On the face of it, Baggy was being cheeky. Manners did not stop to think that it was hardly likely the Fourth-Former would have heard anything about his impositions. He was sure that Baggy intended impudence.

"Here, I say," mumbled Baggy, backing away a yard or two, "I didn't mean any harm. I only asked you whether you'd been getting—"

"Once is enough! You say it again, and I'll make you sorry for it!"

But Baggy was too keen on business to heed the warning. And how was Manners to guess that Baggy meant business, or Baggy that Manners was smarting under a sense of injustice on account of punishments that he considered undeserved?

"I only asked you—"

That was too much for Manners.

He seized Baggy by the collar and administered to him three or four hearty cuffs.

"Manners!"

Mr. Linton had come up behind them. To him the assault seemed quite unprovoked, and he uttered the name in a shocked tone.

Manners swung round, releasing Baggy.

"What does this mean?" demanded the master.

"He was cheeky," replied Manners.

"You mean that he said something that you did not like? But that could hardly justify such a savage assault upon him."

Baggy's face took on a woebegone expression. Those cuffs really had not hurt Baggy much. He was used to being cuffed, since he was in the habit of asking for attentions of that sort. But he thought it worth while to make the most of Manners' attack.

So he screwed up his face and put a hand to his head.

"I believe you have an imposition to do for me, Manners?" said Mr. Linton.

"Yes, sir. Two hundred lines."

"How is it you were not at work upon it?"

If Manners had answered that he had done some sixty or seventy lines the Form master would have been satisfied.

But Manners felt too sulky to give any such information. "I came over for a bottle of ginger-beer," he said.

"Oh, indeed! There is no harm in that. But I cannot overlook your assault upon Trimble. You have many faults, Manners, but hitherto I have never thought of you as a bully."

There was as little of the bully in Manners as in any fellow at St. Jim's. But he would not explain. He had already said that Baggy had checked him. He thought that should be enough.

"You will do me five hundred lines instead of two hundred, Manners!"

Having said that, Mr. Linton walked away.

Manners glared after him, his hands clenched, his face scarlet, his eyes agleam. At that moment Mr. Linton seemed worse than the worst of all the Grand Inquisitors of the bad old days.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Baggy Trimble.

He backed away again as Manners turned upon him.

He fancied that it was fear of Mr. Linton that kept the Shell fellow from going for him afresh.

But it was not that. For the time being Baggy was too mean a thing for Manners to wreak his wrath upon him.

"Br-r-r!" growled Manners, stalking into the tuckshop.

Baggy waited till Manners came out before he entered.

The Shell fellow returned to his imposition.

Baggy, having laid out his sixpence to what he deemed the best advantage, repaired to the study which he shared with Percy Mellish.

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CHAPTER 2.

Partners!

MELLISH stood at the table. Before him lay a number of sheets of exercise paper, all written upon, mostly in atrocious scrawls.

For nobody did lines any better than the worst which he thought might pass muster. And, in consequence, one fellow's lines were apt to look very like those of another, to anyone who did not examine them closely.

"Sold any more?" asked Baggy eagerly.

"Yes. Two hundred to Lumley-Lumley. I gave him some of Lowther's—I think they were Lowther's—anyway, the writing was near enough like Lumley-Lumley's for Lathom to take it—and those two do write a bit alike."

"That's another bob! Hand over the tanner, Mellish! I'm going back to the tuckshop."

"Oh, are you, my pippin? You stay here and play salesman for a bit. I don't see why I should do all the work while you take half the cash."

"Well, it was my wheeze," protested Baggy.

He looked at the sheets of exercise paper almost lovingly. They meant to him more visits to the tuckshop—more rabbit pies, sausage rolls, tarts, cakes, and the like.

Baggy felt proud of himself. The obtuse mind of Baggy Trimble had had a brain-wave.

It had all come of his habit of poking his nose into what did not really concern him. Mellish and Baggy were a pair in that way, though Mellish was far more cunning than Baggy in putting to use knowledge thus acquired.

Mellish had more than once blackmailed with success, though Nemesis had usually overtaken him in the end. Baggy's blundering attempts at that kind of thing had almost always brought Nemesis upon him at once.

But there was no question of blackmail here.

Trimble and Mellish had set up in partnership as "lino merchants," and had good hopes of supplying all the Fourth-Formers who had money to spare and consciences not too tender with any lines that might be meted out to them by Mr. Lathom, at sixpence a hundred.

For the matter of that, who had tender consciences where lines were concerned? It was a common occurrence for the fellows in a study to share among them an imposition given to one of their number, and between that and the buying of lines there was no great gulf fixed.

Mr. Lathom, of the Fourth, gave fewer impositions than Mr. Linton.

Hence it seemed reasonable to suppose that if the lines shown up to the master of the Shell could be secured regularly, the supply of Messrs. Trimble and Mellish would prove equal to the demands of the Fourth.

"Can't make out why he doesn't tear them up, like other masters," said Mellish. "I expect he does generally, only he forgot to do it with this lot. It will be a bit of a sell if we can't get any more, for I'm hanged if I'm going to write lines at a tanner a hundred."

"He, he, he!" chortled Baggy. "I don't believe he ever does tear them up—just chucks them into the waste-paper basket. I saw Toby, the page, with this little lot, and I sneaked into his den and found them in the first sack. I shall watch out again, you bet, Mellish!"

"Watch out for Toby, too, then," counselled Mellish. "If he gets on to what you're doing he may spoil the game. There wouldn't be enough in it for us if he insisted on a share of the profits."

"Oh, I'm too clever for Toby!" said Baggy self-complacently. "I say, Mellish, that chap Manners is a beast! I asked him if he'd been getting any lines lately, thinking that I might do a stroke of business with him. And what do you think he did?"

"Bumped you!" returned Mellish, grinning.

"He went for me like—like a tiger! But I got my own back. Old Linton came up, and gave three hundred fer bullying!"

"Whew!" whistled Mellish. "That's hot stuff! I shouldn't have thought anyone would have put anything that could be done to you as high as three hundred lines, Baggy. But you were a fathead."

"Fathead yourself! What do you mean?"

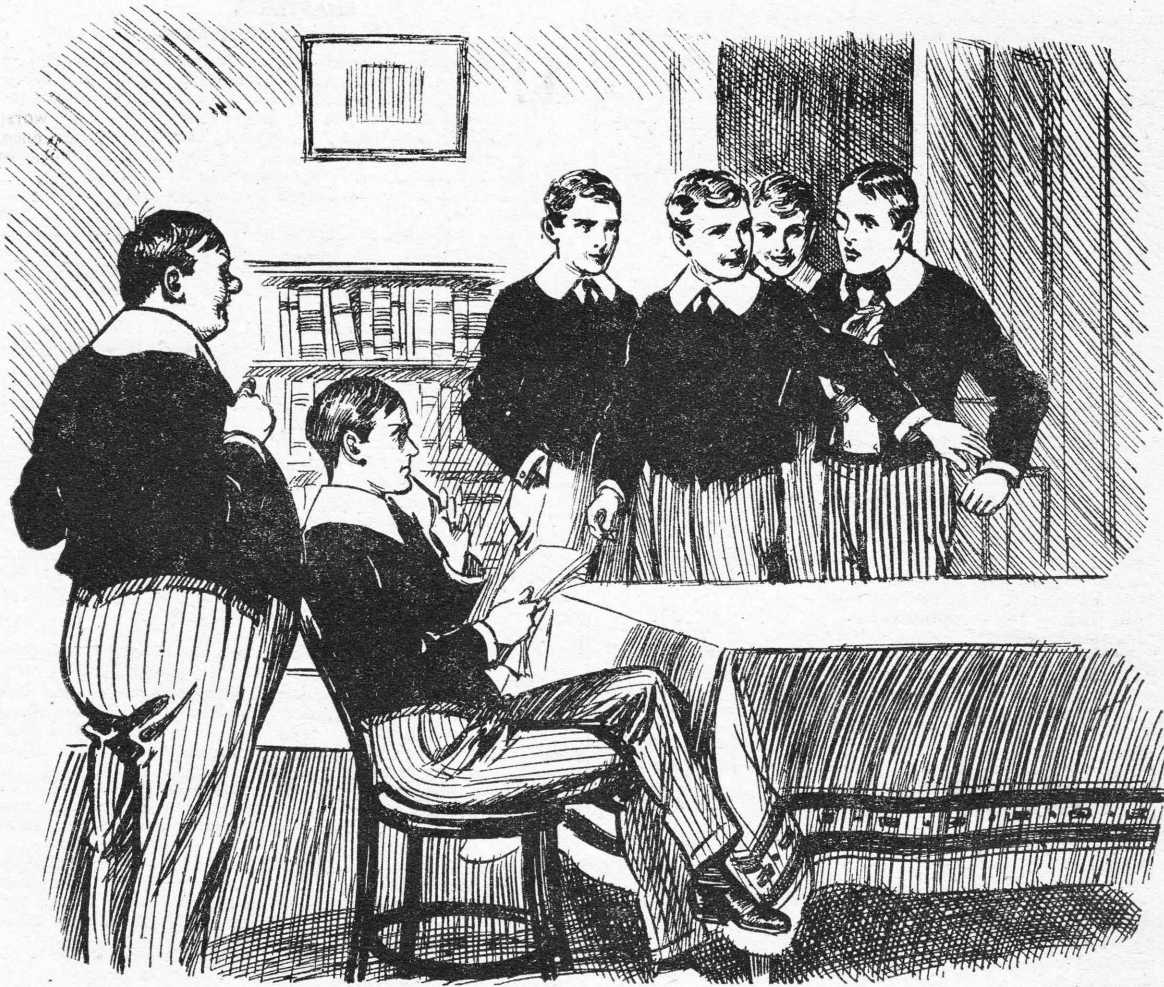
"I told you to keep off the Shell."

"I don't see why I should. They get more lines than we do, and—"

"Chump! Footling chump! Don't you see that you'll spoil the game if you go trying to sell fellows their own lines? They may look pretty much alike, but a chap can tell his own, you bet! And Linton might get on to it. Lathom never will—not in a hundred years!"

"There's something in that," Baggy admitted. "I say, hand over that tanner, Mellish—I'm starving!"

"Don't you think I'd better stick to the cash till enough has collected to give you a real blow-out, Baggy? Snacks are no use to you."



"Want to buy any lines, you chaps?" asked Baggy Trimble. "They're quite cheap—sixpence a hundred!" "I am quite sure that they would not dream—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "Oh, wouldn't we!" snorted Herries. "You speak for yourself. I've got fifty to do. Hand me over fifty—that's threepence!" (See Chapter 2.)

"No, I don't!" answered Baggy decidedly. "I should have to be watching you all the time. Hand over!"

Mellish handed over six pennies, and Baggy was about to return to the desired haven when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stuck his head into the study.

"Twimble, Hewwies tells me that he saw my penknife in your possession. I must ask you to hand it ovah at once, and I shall wequiah a full and pwopah explanation as to how you came to be—"

"Here's your old knife, Gussy. I found it in the passage. I didn't know it was yours. How should I? But I'll take your word for it. I know you wouldn't tell a lie about it."

That attempt at a compliment failed to mollify the swell of the Fourth.

Certainly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not in the habit of telling lies. But just as certainly Baggy Trimble was. And as that knife had the initials "A. A. D'A." upon it, Gussy could not easily believe that Baggy was ignorant of its ownership.

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Want to buy some lines, Gussy?" inquired Baggy, anxious to turn the course of the conversation.

But Arthur Augustus was in one of his ultra-virtuous moods.

Never was he otherwise than straight. But it was only at times that he became strait-laced.

This was one of those times.

"I do not buy my lines, Twimble!" he said severely.

"When I am given an impot I considah it a mattah of honah to w'ite it myself!"

"Oh, come off it!" said Mellish. "I've seen all the other three in Study No. 6 writing lines for you before this!"

"That is wathah a diffewent mattah."

Arthur Augustus spoke severely. But, in spite of himself, he was interested in the many sheets spread over the table. Mellish had not had time to cover them up as he came in.

Arthur Augustus elevated his celebrated monocle. "You have a gweat numbah of lines there," he remarked.

"Yes. You see, Baggy and I have set up in business as line merchants. We don't care about cricket, and we'd like to turn an honest penny."

"I cannot believe that Baggy w'ote any of those lines," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Why not?" queried Baggy.

"Because they are all compawatively clean," replied Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Mellish.

Baggy was about to thrust out his hands for inspection. But common-sense conquered indignation. It was galling to be accused of always having dirty hands; but the accusation could not be met satisfactorily by the production of hands which were, at that moment, even dirtier than usual.

So Baggy thrust them into his trouser-pockets, and contented himself with glaring at Arthur Augustus.

"It doesn't matter a jot whether Baggy wrote them or whether I did," said Mellish, keen to do business. "The point is, do you want to buy any?"

"I do not. I have no lines to w'ite."

"Well, you jolly soon will have! You're always getting them. Old Lathom will stand a good deal, but he won't stand being argued with."

"I admit that when I have pointed out to our respected Form master, as one gentleman to another, that he was in the w'ong he has not always taken a cowwect view of my pwotest. But, weally, Mellish, there is somethin' wathah fishy about those lines! I distinctly wecognise Lowthah's handw'itin' ovah there!"

Study No. 6 sometimes said that Arthur Augustus could not see through his monocle. If that were true, the unen-

cumbered eye was doing good work, for the sheet of lines to which he pointed was actually in the fist of Monty Lowther.

"Rats!" said Mellish. "I tell you—"

"Are you there, Gussy?"

Jack Blake's voice sounded from the passage.

"I am heah, Blake. Come in, deah boy! I desiah your opinion on a mattah of some importance."

"Well, I like that!" burred Trimble. "Asking chaps into our study as if it belonged to him!"

"It's all right," said Mellish. "We may do business with those fellows. You bet they won't think it's 'a mattah of honah' to write their lines themselves. What's honour got to do with impots, anyway?"

"Mellish, if you do not wefwain frowm mimickin' me I shall considah it my duty to—"

"On your ear again, Gussy?" asked Blake, appearing in the study, with Herries and Digby behind him. "What's the matter now?"

"The mattah is, Blake—"

"Want to buy any lines, you chaps?" inquired Trimble.

"I am quite suah that they would not dweam—"

"Oh, wouldn't we?" snorted Herries. "You speak for yourself, old top! What's the price, Baggy?"

"Sixpence a hundred."

"I've only got fifty to do. That's threepence. Hand me over fifty!"

Baggy looked at Mellish. Mellish shook his head.

"We're not selling anything under a hundred—anyway, we're not taking less than sixpence a time," said Mellish.

"Oh, all serene! Give me a hundred. I dare say it won't be long before I get another fifty."

"I pwotest—"

"Dry up, Gussy! What's it got to do with you?"

"I haven't any lines to do at present," said Digby. "But I've a little spare cash, and one never knows the day or the hour. I'll take a tanner's worth, Mellish. This ain't half a bad idea of you fellows, if only you'll keep it up."

"Life," said Blake sentimentously, "would be robbed of half its terrors if one was only sure that to be given lines did not mean having to do them."

"How many are you buying, Blake?" asked Baggy eagerly.

"None at present. None to do, no cash to spare. See, Baggybus?"

"I pwotest—"

"What in the world is the matter with you, Gussy?" asked Herries.

"I pwotest against these nefawious twansactions! I—"

"Gussy riding the high horse again," said Blake resignedly.

But Herries, as a buyer, was not resigned.

"You just dry up, Gussy!" he snapped.

"I wefuse to dwy up! I considah that Mellish an' Twimble should be bumped for puttin' temptation in the way of weak minds—"

"Oh, I've a weak mind, have I, you tailor's dummy?" howled Herries.

"Me, too!" chimed in Digby "Herries, old bean—"

"That's it. Let's bump Gussy!"

"Blake, deah boy, make them desist! Wescue, Blake!" shrilled Arthur Augustus, as Herries and Digby laid violent hands upon him.

Jack Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not weak-minded enough to interfere, Gussy," he answered.

"Yawoogh! Stoppit! Dig—Hewwies, I shall have to give you both a most feahful thwashin'!"

But, strange to say, neither George Herries nor Robert Arthur Digby was in the least alarmed by that dire threat. They proceeded solemnly to bump Arthur Augustus, in spite of all his struggles.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Blake.

"He, he, he!" chortled Percy Mellish and Baggy Trimble.

But when the chums of Study No. 6 had gone Mellish said to Baggy:

"I'd just as soon you hadn't said anything to Gussy about buying lines, Baggy. You never know quite how he'll take things. He got on to Lowther's fist, and now that he's been bumped he may take it into his silly head to go talking in the Shell."

"Oh, never mind!" answered Baggy. "That's another tanner you've to hand over to me, Mellish. If you ask my opinion, we're getting on like a house on fire!"

Mellish handed over the sixpence, grumbling. He could not keep Baggy out of the business, for Baggy had started it. But Mellish was rather afraid of Baggy's indiscretions.

His dread was not without foundation. Arthur Augustus might forget all about the matter for the time being. But he was sure to remember it sooner or later, and he might talk.

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CHAPTER 3

The Persecution of Manners!

"LINTON'S the giddy limit!" said Manners.

The Terrible Three were back in Study No. 10 in the Shell corridor, and by the tone of Manners' voice he was not his usual cheery self.

"I'd hardly say that," answered Tom Merry. "I've known worse. Selby, f'rinstance, and Ratty. Say the worst you can of Linton, and he's not half as bad as they are."

"There isn't a pin to choose among the three of them," said Manners.

"What's Linton been doin' now, the cheery old soul?" inquired Lowther.

"Cheery old soul your grandmother! He's been dropping down on me for bullying Baggy, and given me an extra three hundred lines to do."

"That makes five hundred lines, then, all told," said the captain of the Shell feelingly. "It really is a bit thick. We'll help him, won't we, Lowther?"

"I should like to know first why he bullied Baggy. Bullying's wrong on principle. What is worse, it's inexpedient when a master is looking on."

Lowther could be very annoying when he chose. His notions of humour never greatly appealed to Manners. At times like this, when Manners' temper was ruffled, they seemed maddening.

"I'm not asking either of you to help me," Manners growled, "and I'm not offering to take your help."

"You haven't been offered mine," said Lowther, grinning. "And Thomas spoke in haste. If he had taken time he would have insisted on knowing why you bullied Baggy before—"

"Don't be an ass, Lowther!" roared Manners. "The fat rotter had the blessed cheek to ask me whether I'd been getting any lines lately!"

"Well, you got two hundred. You might have told him so in a civil fashion. That would have satisfied his thirst for information. Though why Baggy should interest himself in the matter of Shell lines is more than I can understand," said Lowther.

"It was just cheek, and I cuffed him for it," retorted Manners hotly. "Then Linton came up, and, though I told him Baggy had cheeked me, he gave me another three hundred lines."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Lowther. "Things are coming to a pretty pass if our Form master doesn't perceive the great gulf fixed between the Shell and the Fourth, and the iniquity of any member of the inferior Form daring to do more than breathe in our presence."

"Get out!" shouted Manners. "You're more than I can stand. Think you're funny, don't you? I'd just like to see you in my place, that's all."

"We'd better clear, Monty," said Tom Merry quietly. "Sorry you're so huffy, Manners."

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther left the study, leaving the door ajar.

Manners got up and slammed it with a slam that reverberated down the Shell passage.

"He's got his wool off badly," said Lowther, as the two walked down the corridor.

"That's why it's best to leave him alone," said Tom Merry sagely.

Behind the closed door Manners sat with his head in his hands, thinking deeply.

He knew that it would have been far more sensible to get on with the imposition. Five hundred lines took a lot of doing; but matters were not improved by delay.

He knew that Lowther's japing was just Lowther's way. He recognised the fact that Tom Merry had not said a word to which he had any right to object. Tom Merry had offered to help, and his offer was sincere. He never teased as Lowther did.

But Manners felt sore with both his chums. That feeling, however, was weak compared with the burning resentment he cherished against Mr. Linton.

What did Linton mean by singling him out in that way? What had he done that Linton should be down on him?

For a quarter of an hour he sat asking himself such futile questions as these. Then he grabbed a pen and began writing as if for his life.

He had been chosen to play for the Shell against the Fourth next day, and he had just remembered the fact. Unless the impot was done he could not turn out.

Manners was quite a useful cricketer, but he was not a regular member of the Shell team, and to play for the Form meant more to him than it did to fellows whose choice was not in question.

His pen scampered over the pages. When Tom Merry and Lowther looked in again, just before dinner, a small pile of sheets, each containing twenty-five lines, lay before him.

Manners had not lost his moroseness. But Lowther

abstained from chipping, and Tom Merry spoke to him as if there had been no tiff, and the three went down to dinner together on their usual amicable terms.

"I'm not going to give old Linton a chance to get at me this afternoon," Manners told his chums when they were going in to classes.

But there he reckoned without George Gore.

Manners and Gore never had got on well together, and it was unlucky that they chanced to be sitting side by side just then.

For half an hour or so everything went quietly enough. Mr. Linton had no occasion to call anyone to order.

Manners got through his quadratic equations in quick time, and brought out a chess problem cut from some newspaper.

Gore, who was by no means a mathematical genius, struggled for a time with the difficulties of the problems.

Then it struck Gore that it really was labour in vain to struggle with $x y z$'s when Manners had already done the work, and to copy what Manners had done would be easy.

The paper on which Manners had worked out his equations was under his elbow as he sat.

Gore gave a little tug at it.

Manners looked round.

Gore winked.

In an ordinary way Manners would have understood and raised no objection.

He understood now. But he objected.

Gore had been responsible for his getting lines in the morning, and had not owned up. It was like Gore's blessed cheek to expect a favour now!

So Manners kept his elbow firmly down.

Gore gave another little tug. He had forgotten all about the incident of the forenoon.

"Don't be a pig, Manners," he whispered.

Manners' eyes gleamed.

"You rotter!" he cried. "I'm not going to—"

"Manners!"

Mr. Linton's voice sounded.

Tom Merry felt like groaning.

Fresh trouble! And it was really not the fault of Manners. Tom had seen what happened.

Mr. Linton had not. He had not heard Gore's whisper. But he had heard Manners' reply.

"Bring up the paper before you, Manners!" snapped Mr. Linton.

With the Form master's eyes upon him there was no chance for Manners to change the papers. It was the chess problem he held in his reluctant hand as he walked up to the rostrum.

"Oh, indeed, Manners!" Mr. Linton's tone was harsh.

"Chess is a game which has engaged many fine intellects, and possibly a good exercise for the mind. But the present subject of study is algebra not chess."

Manners might have palliated his offence by the statement that he had finished his equations. It was even possible that Mr. Linton might have accepted this as a complete excuse. In any case, had that explanation been given, he would not have done what he did.

But Manners would not speak. The sarcasm rankled. He imagined every fellow in the Form-room grinning behind him. In point of fact, hardly anyone was grinning. Only fellows like Racke and Crooke thought it was a joke that Manners, whose standard of conduct in class was as high as most, should be jumped on thus.

Even George Gore was sorry.

"Hold out your hand!" snapped Mr. Linton.

Manners held out his hand, and received three strokes.

They were not very hard. The physical pain was nothing to worry about. But Manners was hurt mentally—smarting under a keen sense of injustice.

He kept his chin up as he went back to his seat, but he avoided the eyes of the other fellows.

"I'm sorry, old chap!" whispered Gore.

And Gore meant it. But Manners did not believe in his sincerity.

As he got into his seat he thrust out an elbow to push away Gore, who had leaned towards him. The elbow took Gore in the eye, and drew from him an exclamation of pain.

"Yooop!" he ejaculated.

"What is the matter, Gore?" asked the Form master.

Manners answered.

"I dug him in the eye with my elbow," he said sullenly.

"Dear me! Come here, Gore, and let me see whether any damage has been done. The eye is an organ of which one cannot be too careful. I trust that it was an accident, Manners. I am reluctant to believe that you would do such a thing of intent."

"He got in my way," mumbled Manners.

"Speak up! If you are apologising you should at least let Gore hear your words, and, on the whole, I think the Form should hear."

"I wasn't apologising. I only said that he got in my way," answered Manners, in a much louder voice.

Tom Merry, Lowther, Talbot, Kangaroo, Dane and Glyn—the best fellows in the Form, and the fellows who liked Manners best—stared in surprise.

It would have been less amazing had Gore been the speaker. But that Manners should utter words so churlish, after what Mr. Linton had said, really was cause for wonder.

"What a silly ass Manners is," whispered Lowther in Tom Merry's ear.

Manners himself was strung up to accept without flinching further punishment.

But Mr. Linton merely gave him words of cold rebuke.

"I think on reflection you will see that you are utterly wrong, Manners," he said.

The tone was worse than the words. Manners felt that his Form master had put him quite outside the pale, and that his doing so was grossly unfair.

"Come here, Gore," said Mr. Linton, in a very different voice.

Gore had his handkerchief to his eye, which was watering profusely. But he did not want any fuss made.

"It's all right, sir—at least, it will be in a minute or two," he said.

Mr. Linton did not press the point, and the lesson continued.

When the algebra papers were shown up he examined that of Manners very closely. The equations were all properly and neatly worked out. For a moment the Form master felt sorry that he had used the cane to Manners. He guessed the truth now.

But the boy had deserved what he got, if only for his conduct on his return from the rostrum. Mr. Linton had always thought very well of Manners. The Terrible Three had given him trouble at times, but it had never been the worst kind of trouble.

Now it seemed to him that he must have been completely



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mistaken in his opinion of Manners. Racke or Crooke could not have behaved much worse.

As for Manners, he was quite sure that he had been according to his Form master respect to which he was in no way entitled. He was a wretched tyrant, and one was not called upon to respect that sort of creature!

At tea Manners talked about persecution—till he found that both Tom Merry and Lowther were utterly unsympathetic. Then he dried up, and for the remainder of the meal would not speak a word.

As soon as tea was over he got up and went out, still in silence.

Tom Merry and Lowther looked at one another—also in silence—a silence more eloquent than words.

CHAPTER 4.

Going for Gore!

IN the passage Manners met Gore.

Gore's right eye was still red and watery; but to Gore's credit it must be put the fact that he cherished no grudge.

"I was coming along to see you, Manners," he said.

"What for?" snapped Manners.

"Only to say that I'm sorry I got you caned—that's all."

"And you expect me to believe that?"

"I don't see why I should trouble to say it if it wasn't true. But it won't be true long, if you're going to take that tone. Hang it all, man, I only wanted a squint at your equations! That's no crime. The rest was accidental. I'm willing to believe that you didn't damage my peeper on purpose."

"You can believe what you like about that," said Manners fiercely. "But I don't accept your apology! You got me an impot this morning when you might have owned up and—"

"Owned up to what?"

"Shuffling your great, ugly feet—that's what!"

"They're no bigger and no uglier than yours. And why should I have owned up?"

"I'm not going to argue with you!"

"Well, I don't know that I want to argue," said Gore. "If you won't accept my apology you can do the other thing. I'm sorry I offered it."

"You're a howling cad, Gore!"

"What?"

"I say you're a howling cad!"

"For two pins I'd punch your head, Manners!"

"You needn't wait for the pins. Punch it! And here's something to encourage you to try!"

With that Manners' open hand flashed out and caught Gore a stinging smack on the cheek.

Gore stood for a second or two in utter amazement. Even when he had talked of punching Manners' head he had not expected a fight to follow. In what Manners had said of his being more apt to talk than to fight there was some truth.

But no fellow with any spirit can take a slap of the face meekly. Gore was not a hero; but he had courage, and he did not fear Manners.

He struck back, with fist, not open hand. Manners ducked, avoiding the punch, and sprang in like a wild cat.

So hot was his assault that Gore gave ground at once. Manners pressed on.

Gore continued to give ground, making hardly any attempt to return the blows Manners rained upon him. A fight in the Shell passage was a serious misdemeanour; and Gore wished now that he had not asked Talbot's advice.

Talbot had told him that an apology ought to put matters straight, and that in his opinion an apology was owing by Gore, though he admitted that it would not be too much if Manners apologised in his turn.

Talbot, who was in many ways older in mind than most of the Shell, often played the peacemaker. But in this case his well-meant efforts had been worse than useless.

"Stop it, Manners!" breathed Gore, dropping his fists at last. "If you must fight let's go somewhere else. It's no use getting into fresh trouble, you idiot!"

Manners answered no word. With grim, flushed face he pounded away at Gore's face and body, exulting inwardly when he felt his enemy flinch from the punches.

Study doors along the corridor opened, and fellows looked out.

"I say, you chaps," cried Harry Noble. "Here's Manners and Gore scrapping!"

"Go it, you cripples!" yelled Racke.

"Hit him back, Gore, you funk!" chimed in Crooke.

"What's the use of running away?"

"Oh, stop it, Manners!" urged Tom Merry.

But Manners paid no heed to Tom Merry. He punched on, while Gore continued to give ground till he had reached the top of the staircase.

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There, with his back to empty space, and the fear of a nasty fall in his mind, he made a rally, and got home on Manners' nose, causing it to bleed.

"Come away!" said Talbot. "You'll be breaking your silly necks if you're not careful!"

But the dropping blood made Manners yet more furious. He drove in a fierce jab that took Gore very near the mark.

"Oh!"

"My word, he's done it now!"

Gore toppled backwards, down the stairs, with a yell of fear.

No one had seen Mr. Linton coming up the stairs. Hardly anyone was quite sure that it was Mr. Linton until that gentleman extricated himself from under Gore on the landing.

The Shell fellow, in his fall, had bowled the master clean off his feet.

It was not to be expected, however, that relief at having saved Gore from possible untimely demise, and Manners, from the consequences of his temper, should be the uppermost thought in the Form master's mind.

Mr. Linton was a spectacle. His mortar-board had fallen off, showing to those above the big bald spot on his head which he usually concealed. His collar had broken from its fastenings, and his gown was torn. He was pale and shaking with wrath.

He did not speak to Gore, who lay groaning, but marched up the staircase to where Manners stood at the top, ready to face the music.

Manners' face was as pale as his Form master's. Manners knew that he had gone too far, and that he was in for even bigger trouble than before. But his mind was made up to stubbornness.

"You again, Manners!" spoke Mr. Linton, in a kind of breathless croak.

Racke sniggered until Kangaroo seized him by the back of the neck.

Mr. Linton might look a figure of fun; but the occasion was by no means humorous, and Racke's ill-timed levity was not calculated to improve it.

Manners saw no use in replying. Mr. Linton had not asked a question, he had simply made an accusation.

Talbot and Tom Merry scuttled down to the landing and helped Gore to his feet. He had not suffered any real damage, for Mr. Linton had broken his fall; but the wind had been knocked out of him.

He came upstairs between them, and Talbot spoke in his ear on the way.

"Don't make it any worse for Manners than you can help, old man. It will be pretty bad anyway."

To no one else would Gore have paid any heed just then. But he liked Talbot as he liked no one else at St. Jim's. It was largely due to Talbot's influence that he was no longer the black sheep he had been in the past, and he knew it.

"Who was the aggressor?" asked Mr. Linton.

He looked at Manners in speaking, as though he had no doubt about that—as though the question were a mere formality. So, at least, thought Manners.

"I slapped his face," Manners replied defiantly.

"That isn't all, sir!" gasped Gore, scarcely yet able to speak after his winding.

"I say, he needn't make it out worse for poor old Manners!" said Lowther to Clifton Dane. "It will be bad enough anyway. But Gore always was a rotter!"

Next moment he felt sorry. For Gore, though still speaking with difficulty, went on:

"I said I'd punch him. He hit me first, that's all."

For a moment the face of Harry Manners softened. His eyes met Gore's, and the message they sent was that the quarrel was at an end.

But it was only to Gore that Manners had softened, not to "the tyrant."

His face was hard and defiant again as Mr. Linton said:

"I must hear more of this. It is all connected with the trouble in the Form-room this afternoon, I am sure. I desire to deal out even-handed justice, and I cannot do that unless I know the whole truth, Manners!"

Manners was mute. His mind was obstinately made up. He would say nothing to excuse himself. Let Linton do his worst!

But Gore spoke. And those who heard had seldom thought so well of Gore as they did then.

"I may as well own up, sir," he said quietly. "All along it was really more my fault than Manners'. When he got lines for shuffling his feet this morning it wasn't him—it was me. I ought to have said so at the time. And this afternoon I wanted to have a squi—a look at his quadratics. He'd finished them when you called him out."

"Indeed! Your statement certainly puts a fresh colour upon the matter, Gore. You have done rightly in confessing. But I cannot hold Manners free from blame."

Manners' face said as plainly as words could have done: "Nobody asked you to!"

It was no wonder that hard, defiant face brought back Mr. Linton's wrath.

He was doing his best to be fair, in spite of what he had suffered, and this mutinous attitude angered him greatly.

"Have you nothing to say, Manners?" he snapped.

"Only that the fault was entirely mine for the fight, sir," replied Manners.

Now this was true, and was no more than what Manners should have said. But he certainly should not have said it in the way he did.

"Come with me, Manners!" commanded the master.

Manners followed him. Behind them the fellows crowded round Gore and patted him on the back—some of them literally, others metaphorically, by words of approval. It was generally felt that Gore had shown up more than commonly well.

Only Racke and Crooke sneered, and they dared not sneer openly.

Mr. Linton led the way to his study. Before he spoke he changed his torn gown for another, fastened his collar, and put on a fresh mortarboard. Manners was left standing, growing more obstinate with every second that passed, while these things were done.

The Form master turned.

"I had thought of caning you, Manners. I shall not do so, however, for I hold that corporal punishment should

"That's right," he answered. "Sixpence a hundred—any quantity supplied, and satisfaction guaranteed."

"Let's look at some of them," said Gore.

Baggy stared, as if surprised at the demand.

"Don't worry," said Gore. "I'm not buying a pig in a poke, that's all. Linton is rather particular, and your scrawl, with your dirty fingermarks on it, might make him say things."

"These lines are all right," replied Baggy. "I didn't do—I mean Mellish does some of them, and his hands ain't dirty. Not that mine are, of course, but—"

"Cut the cackle and come to the horses!" broke in Gore impatiently.

Baggy produced from the cupboard some specimens of the alleged work of himself and Mellish. Baggy was so obtuse that he would have been quite capable of exhibiting to Gore some of Gore's own handiwork.

But, as it chanced, that error was not committed.

Gore, looking at the sheets Baggy held out to him, thought they were uncommonly like Manners' work. He did not believe that they could be, though there lurked in his mind a doubt as to the bona fides of the enterprising firm of Trimble and Mellish.

It was a bit of luck that they should look like Manners' writing, though. Not much in it, for everyone scrawled lines. Yet even so there were differences, which a keen eye might note—and Mr. Linton's eyes were keen enough.

Gore took two hundred lines and paid a shilling.

Baggy gloated as he pocketed the cash. No need to say

Result of "Scarlet Streak" Competition No. 5.

£10 WON BY GEM READERS!

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. THE FIRST PRIZE OF £5 has therefore been awarded to:

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whose effort, containing three errors, came nearest to correct.

THE FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH have been divided among the following seven competitors whose solutions each contained four errors:

L. C. Burridge, 1/107, Prescott Street, Hockley, Birmingham.

A. V. Fincham, 1, Foxton Villas, Fengate, Peterborough.

G. E. Jones, 13, Princess Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.

E. Keith, McKinnons Land, Dalintober, Campbellton.

R. W. Kernick, 103, Showell Green Lane, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

C. Rowiston, 28, Dalestorth Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

C. Wood, 10, Wolsey Road, Blackpool, S.S.

The correct solution was as follows:

Count K. is a mysterious character who has disguised his correct name under an initial. He poses as a friend of Crawford, but is also in league with the Monk. The head of the crooks does not trust him, however. All readers of this periodical who see the film will agree that Count K. is a most interesting individual.

not be administered in the heat of annoyance. You will take five hundred more lines, and you will be in the Form-room immediately after dinner to-morrow to finish them. The loss of the half-holiday is not too great a penalty for your fault. I am afraid you have an obstinate temper, Manners. You can go!"

Manners departed sullenly.

Why, this meant that he could not play for the Shell! And he had been counting so much on playing. He was sure that he was in better form than he had ever been before.

He could not play—unless—but was it possible?

The original five hundred lines were not yet finished. On the top of these he had another five hundred. It was a task that might well have appalled the stoutest heart to get these done by dinner time next day.

That he could have help he knew. But he would not accept it. Not a line should Tom Merry or Lowther write for him!

He would slog away at every available minute. He would get up long before rising bell next morning.

Somehow those lines should be done in time!

When he came back to No. 10 he was still looking so morose that it was plain to his chums he was best left alone.

But Tom Merry did ask him one question.

"This won't interfere with your playing to-morrow, will it, old chap?"

"Why should it?" growled Manners.

Then he set to work again, and Tom Merry and Lowther left him to it.

CHAPTER 5.

The Generosity of Gore!

"I HEAR you're selling lines, Baggy," said Gore. Baggy Trimble was alone in the study. Mellish, more astute than Baggy, had seen the danger of doing business with the Shell. But Baggy would not realise it properly, and had no notion of turning away a customer.

anything to Mellish about this! Mellish would rag him for dealing with a Shell fellow. Besides, half was really too much for Mellish. Twopence in the shilling would have been plenty.

Gore went away in a very thoughtful mood, moved in a way that was not usual with him.

The glance from Manners, which told him that their quarrel was over, had affected him. The outspoken approval of Manners' friends had wrought powerfully in him. It was not often George Gore found himself generally regarded as a good fellow.

He wanted to help Manners, but he knew that he must not do it openly.

Arthur Augustus had talked, as might have been expected, and half the Shell knew that Baggy and Mellish were selling lines, though it had not come to the ears of the Terrible Three.

Talbot had mentioned that Manners was slogging away at his impot., evidently meaning to get it done in time to allow of his playing in the match. No one but Manners knew just how heavy that impot. was, but Talbot had a notion that it was something pretty stiff.

So Gore had hit upon the idea of buying lines to help Manners out. The money was a trifle, but there really was generosity in the deed.

Never in his life had Gore meant better. He could not foresee the trouble his action was to bring about.

Now he was faced with a difficulty. He could not offer the lines to Manners. They would certainly be refused.

They must be an anonymous gift. Perhaps so they might be taken.

Gore hung about quite a long time in the passage, hoping that Study No. 10 might be left empty for a minute or two. But, though Tom Merry and Lowther left the study more than once, Manners stayed on, plugging away with aching head and cramping fingers.

At length Gore made up his mind that his one chance was to come down after lights out.

That was taking a risk, of course. But Gore had often taken the same risk to do things that meant much more trouble if discovered.

It would be a trifle awkward if he were caught in Study No. 10. But he was on quite decent terms with Tom Merry and Lowther, and after what had happened a few hours earlier he could hardly be suspected of meaning to play any trick upon Manners.

He thought it best to wait an hour or two after lights out, and, while he waited, he fell into a doze. But he heard the school clock strike ten, and scrambled out of bed and put on some of his clothes.

Then he slipped out of the dormitory, with the lines in his pocket.

As he reached the study floor he heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and recognised the tread of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster.

A door close to him stood ajar, and darkness within showed the room unoccupied. Gore had dodged into it to hide for a moment before he realised that he was intruding upon Mr. Linton's domain.

Never mind! As the Shell master was not there it could not matter.

Gore held his breath as Mr. Railton passed the door. Then he gasped, for now someone else was coming upstairs. It would be awkward for him if it proved to be Mr. Linton.

He must get out at once, trusting not to be seen in the dimly-lighted passage.

In his haste he brushed something off the table, and heard a thud on the floor. He did not wait to pick up what had fallen. Mr. Linton could do that.

He could not guess how much trouble his omission to do that was to cause!

The person on the stairs had halted. Gore dodged down the Shell passage. He could see the tall form of the Housemaster ahead. He slipped into one of the studies.

As he stood in the darkness Mr. Railton's voice came to him.

"Why, Manners, what does this mean?"

Gore thanked his lucky stars that he had not blundered into Study No. 10. He meant good, not harm, to Manners; but not for worlds would he have had Manners know of it.

"I've got a big imposition to do, and I want to play for the Shell to-morrow, sir," replied Manners.

No one not knowing him well who heard him then could have believed that it was the same fellow who had spoken in such very different tones to Mr. Linton. Manners expected that his burden would be added to; but he had no grudge in anticipation against Mr. Railton. His voice was apologetic and respectful.

"I'm sorry, my boy; but it won't do," said the Housemaster. "I saw the light as I came across the quad, and it brought me up here at once. You must go back to bed, Manners! This is against the rules. But the offence is a small one, and I shall not punish you for it."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You mustn't feel encouraged to do it again, you know, Manners."

"No, sir," said Manners.

Mr. Railton went. Manners switched off the light, and followed him.

Gore waited a minute or two. Then he stole into Study No. 10 and lighted a match, screening it with his hand.

Manners' pile of lines lay on the table. Gore took from his pocket the eight sheets—twenty-five lines to each—he had purchased from the line-merchants, and smoothed them out as well as he could with one hand.

The match burned his fingers, and he let it drop. He lighted another.

It would not do to put the lines on top of the pile. He lifted off half a dozen sheets, and stuck his contribution under them. Manners might know exactly how many he had done. But his being disturbed by Mr. Railton made that less likely; certainly he had not waited to count before following the master.

George Gore went back to bed with a curious glow of pleasure.

He little guessed what harm he had done to Manners in seeking to do him good!

CHAPTER 6.

Fetches off the Field!

MANNERS was not quite as early as he had meant to be next morning. But he was in the study by half-past six.

He counted the sheets of lines, to make sure how many he had still to do.

An expression of perplexity came over his face.

He counted again, and yet again. There were more sheets than he had imagined it as possible he should have done. But, of course, he must have done them.

"My aunt, I must have slogged in harder than I thought!" he murmured. "I shall get them done in time, after all!"

Manners would have known even at a glance had any

sheet there not been in his writing, though it might have puzzled anyone else to tell. But every sheet was. The lines Baggly Trimble had sold Gore had actually been written by Manners, as it happened.

There was still a snag. Mr. Linton expected him in the Form-room after dinner. But Manners had made up his mind to ignore that appointment.

If the lines were all done and duly delivered, he ought not to be kept in. That was how Manners reasoned it. The tyrant Linton could not have it all his own way!

The lines were done. A quarter of an hour before the dinner-bell sounded Manners took them to Mr. Linton's study.

He knew that the Form master was not there, for he had just seen him in the quad. He preferred that Mr. Linton should be absent. Manners did not desire argument. He wanted to get cool and work the cramp out of his fingers, and do his best to be fit for the game that afternoon.

Tom Merry had promised him that he should go in first with Talbot. Manners was elated at the prospect of that honour. But some doubt as to how Mr. Linton would take things lurked in his mind.

He said nothing to his chums. He had not told them that he was booked for detention. He had not even told them how many lines he had been given. They had fancied that he had been caned when taken to Mr. Linton's study the afternoon before.

Manners went off to Little Side as though he had not a care on his mind.

The Fourth had a strong team—Blake, D'Arcy, Digby, Figgins, Kerr, Fatty Wynn, Redfern, and Julian, all included. But the Shell, with the Terrible Three, Talbot, Kangaroo, Dane, and other good men, were confident of victory.

They were yet more confident when Tom Merry won the toss from George Figgins.

Manners put on pads and gloves, and accompanied Talbot to the wickets.

It was a great occasion in the eyes of Manners, but hardly in those of his partner, who was one of the crack players of the St. Jim's junior team. So perhaps it was as well that Talbot took first ball, for Fatty Wynn, who started the bowling, was at his best.

Fatty at his best was difficult to cope with. The six balls of his first over included two that might have bowled anyone.

They did not bowl Talbot, but it was not without difficulty that he played them out of his wicket, and he did not score a run during the over.

Blake went on at the other end, and Manners had a stroke of luck.

Jack Blake's first ball was as bad as a ball can be. It was two yards short of a decent length, and a good foot outside the off-stump.

It asked for hitting, and Manners hit it, pulling it round to the boundary. He scored a 2 off the second ball, though that was quite a good one; and off the last ball of the over he made a cut for three.

Thus he faced Fatty Wynn with nine already to his credit and his confidence established.

Fatty had reckoned Manners easy money.

Fatty did not find him so.

He threw up his hands when Manners hit him for 4. But there was nothing fluky about that stroke. It was a good honest drive to the off.

Seldom before had Manners batted so well. He got to 20 while Talbot was still in single figures. Talbot left for 15, and Tom Merry came in.

Redfern was bowling in Blake's place by this time; and Manners went to 40 with a hard stroke past short leg.

Ten minutes later he reached 50. He had given no chance, and it really looked more than likely that he might make his century.

His comrades were exultant. The Fourth began to look glum.

Manners made a mighty drive over the bowler's head, well clear of any fieldsmen. Redfern turned and chased it, but gave up when he saw that Figgins was after it.

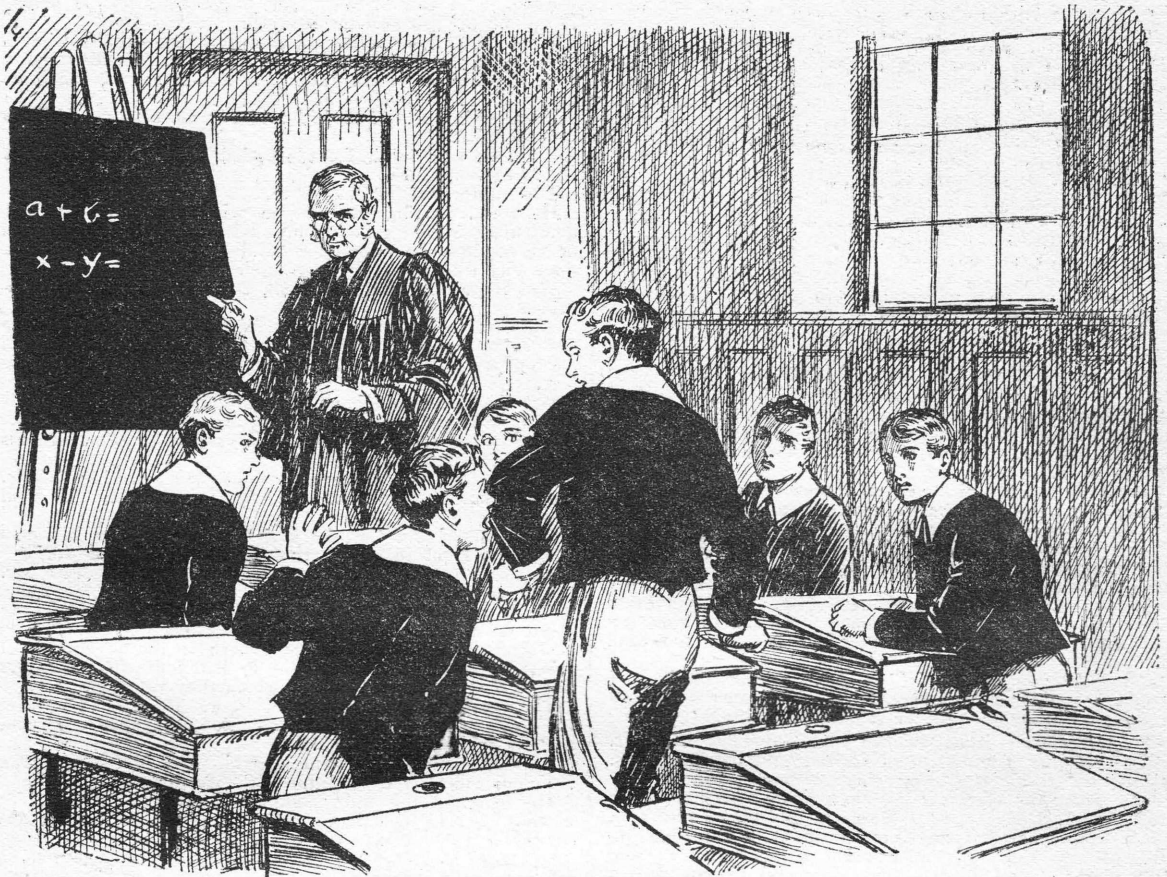
As Figgins picked up the ball Mr. Linton all but tumbled over him. The Shell master looked like an avenging fury. Figgins would hardly have recognised him but for his cap and gown.

Mr. Linton had no keen interest in cricket, and seldom appeared on Little Side. But he did know enough about the game to be aware that it was against custom for anyone not taking part in it to intrude upon the field, and he was not the man to commit a breach of etiquette without strong cause.

He brushed Figgins aside as one might brush a troublesome puppy, and held on his way, his gown flapping.

"Chuck the ball in, Figg!" yelled Blake.

Blake had not seen. Manners and Tom Merry had not seen. They were still running, and had crossed for the fifth time.



As Manners got into his place he thrust out an elbow to push away Gore, who had leaned towards him. The elbow took Gore in the eye. "Yooop!" he ejaculated. "What is the matter, Gore?" asked Mr. Linton, turning from the blackboard. "I dug him in the eye with my elbow," answered Manners sullenly. (See Chapter 3.)

But nearly everyone else had realised by this time that there was something seriously wrong, and the fellows in the field stood agape, wondering what was coming.

"Trouble, Thomas!" said Kerr to Tom Merry. "Linton with wrath on his face! What have you been doing, old top?"

"Nothing," replied Tom.

But his heart sank. He guessed that this boded trouble for his chum.

And now Manners saw.

A hard look of defiance came upon his face. Here was the tyrant again, spoiling the best chance he had ever had of making a century!

Mr. Linton came up. Ignoring everyone else he swooped upon Manners.

"Come with me this instant, Manners!" he said sternly.

From the other end of the pitch Tom Merry gestured to Manners.

Refusal to go was out of the question, and Tom Merry knew it, if Manners did not.

For the moment Manners really had thought of refusal. He had persuaded himself that he was in the right. But he saw that it would not do.

Silently, sullenly he unbuckled his pads and gloves, cast them on the turf, and stood ready to go.

Mr. Linton turned upon Tom Merry.

"Merry, were you aware that Manners was detained this afternoon?" he snapped.

"No, sir."

"That is as well," said the Form master coldly. "Had it been otherwise, I should have regarded you, as junior captain, in the light of a partner in his guilt!"

Tom Merry had nothing to say to that. To him it seemed that Mr. Linton was rather unreasonably furious. Manners had done his lines. But of course he had put himself badly in the wrong by failing to turn up in the Form-room.

"You are ready, Manners?" the master asked.

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Linton stalked away. Manners followed, his head well up, trying to look as though he did not care.

The game did not go on for several minutes. The players stared after master and boy as they made their way towards the School House.

"Rough luck!" said Figgins. "Never saw old Manners in better form. What's it all about, Tom?"

"I really don't properly know," answered the leader of the Shell.

Harry Noble came out to take Manners' vacant place at the wicket. The game continued. But the hearts of Tom Merry and Lowther were not in it, and there were others who felt anxious about Manners.

If they had known more they might have been yet more anxious.

Manners knew that he was in for trouble. He did not know yet how heavy that trouble was to prove.

Mr. Linton spoke no word till they were in his study.

Then he said:

"I could not have believed this of you, Manners!"

"I did my lines, sir. I know you told me to go to the Form-room after dinner. But I supposed that was because you thought I could not get the imposition done before then."

"I might accept that excuse, though it is a weak one, if I could believe it true," said Mr. Linton.

"It is true!" shouted Manners, stung into rage.

"It is not true, Manners, and you know it! You say that you 'got the imposition done.' Just exactly what do you mean by that?"

"If you think I had anyone to help me you're mistaken, sir. I wrote every line myself."

"When?"

"Between yesterday noon and dinner to-day. I got up at six this morning to get the work done."

"And the lines you left on my table were all done during the time you mention?"

"Yes, sir. I have said so already."

Manners had not the least idea that he was wrong in stating this. He was telling the truth as he knew it. He had forgotten his surprise at finding the heap of sheets bigger than he had expected, and even if he had remem-

bered it he could not possibly have guessed what had happened.

"Think again, Manners!"

Mr. Linton's tone was very severe; and yet anyone less angry than Manners might have perceived mercy behind the severity. The Form master did not want Manners to commit himself finally to a false story.

"There's no need for me to think again, sir. On my word of honour it's just as I say!"

"Then what do you make of this, Manners?"

Mr. Linton showed Manners a sheet of his lines. Then he turned it, and on the back were some pencil notes in the Form master's own writing.

"I don't know anything about that, sir. Isn't it possible that you took up that sheet, and made the notes without thinking what paper you were using?"

There was no guilt in Manners' face, but his voice was not quite steady.

This was a very awkward situation. Mr. Linton must have made a mistake, of course. But it would not be easy to get him to perceive that.

"I have not written a line with pen or pencil since I left the Form-room this morning," said the master.

"Then I can't explain it, sir. I only know that I'm telling the truth."

"Don't lie to me, boy!" said Mr. Linton sternly.

"I'm not lying, and you've no right to accuse me of it! I'm not going to stand it!"

"You are not only lying, but you have resorted to a very mean trick. What proportion of the lines you have shown up were actually done during the time you mention I cannot say," said the Form master sternly. "But I am convinced that some of these lines were taken from my wastepaper-basket—lines which you had written a few days ago!"

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Manners wildly. "I haven't been to your wastepaper-basket. I never touched anything in it or thought of touching anything."

"I regret that I cannot believe you, Manners!" said Mr. Linton coldly. "There is proof positive that you are lying. I distinctly recall pencilling these notes—I cannot say exactly when, but certainly less than a week, and certainly more than two days ago. I blame myself for carelessness. I have unfortunately fallen into the habit of throwing impositions into the wastepaper-basket without first tearing them across. But it had never occurred to me that a member of my Form would sneak into my study and possess himself of them to store against future need."

"You say I did that, sir?" exclaimed Manners in horror. "I swear I didn't!"

"It is of no use, Manners! The evidence is circumstantial, perhaps, but it lacks nothing of completeness," said Mr. Linton. "Your offence is a heavy one. But for the fact of your previous good conduct I should ask Dr. Holmes to deal with this matter, and in that event you might go near to being expelled. But, as it is, I will deal with it myself."

"I'd rather go before the Head!" cried Manners passionately. "I should get justice from him! I can see that I sha'n't get it from you!"

"You will not get complete justice. It will be more tempered with mercy than, perhaps, it should be, Manners," answered the Form master grimly.

He went to the cupboard for a cane.

For an instant the mad thought of resisting punishment was in the mind of Manners.

But there came another thought—that of his people. To resist meant a struggle, and the sequel to that would inevitably be expulsion.

He must face the music.

For the physical pain he cared no more than most fellows. Members of the Shell and Fourth at St. Jim's were used to canings.

But the master's scorn, the horrible injustice of it all, were like a corroding acid to his soul.

As long as he lived he would hate Linton!

There was a mistake, of course; it was impossible for Manners, even then, to imagine that the Form master was base enough to invent such a charge.

But why couldn't he believe a fellow, and look further into it? Why did he persist that one was lying?

Manners held out his hand without being told to do so.

His face was white and set, and his teeth gripped his lower lip.

But his face was not more white and set than Mr. Linton's, and his feelings were hardly more bitter and tumultuous.

Swish!

Six on each hand Manners took, and never once winced.

"Go to your study, Manners, and remain there until the rest return from cricket," said Mr. Linton, when he had

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finished. "I cannot allow you to go back to the game. Have you anything to say to me before you go?"

"Yes. You'll be sorry for this some day—that's what I have to say!" exclaimed Manners. "You've called me a liar. I could stand the caning, if it was not for being at detention. But—but—"

Manners bolted. If he had said any more he would have broken down.

What he said might have sounded to Mr. Linton like a threat of vengeance.

The master did not take it so.

He stood looking out of the window upon the sunlit quad after Manners had gone. His face worked, and two or three times he passed his hand over his forehead, as a man does who is utterly perplexed.

Was it possible that, after all, there had been some mistake?

Manners had always been straight. He might have yielded to the temptation to pick lines out of Mr. Linton's wastepaper-basket had it presented itself to him accidentally.

But that he would have sneaked in on purpose to do it the master found it hard to believe. If he were base enough for that it would be quite easy to reckon him base enough to swear to a lie.

Mr. Linton had believed that he was speaking falsely. He was not so sure now. He was, indeed, very far from sure.

If it turned out that he had made a mistake Manners was quite right in saying that he would be sorry for it—how sorry possibly Manners could not realise. For Mr. Linton was essentially a just man.

He looked again at those pencilled notes.

No, there could be no mistake! He remembered so clearly making them. He could turn to the very page of the thick typescript of the book he had finished a few days ago, after years of labour, to which they referred.

The typescript lay on his table now. He lifted the sheet of blank paper which covered the title-page. "Etruria and its People" was the title.

Then he remembered something else that had been driven from his mind by the trouble with Manners.

He searched the study again. He knew it useless, for already he had looked everywhere, and the lost article was too bulky to be concealed easily.

"It isn't possible that that misguided boy should have taken it off, surely?" he murmured. "But no—why should he? And, after all, it does not matter so very much now that the script is complete and ready for the publishers. Though it would have been convenient to have kept it, too."

The thing that Gore had brushed from the table in the darkness the night before had been found on the floor by the housemaid who had Mr. Linton's study in charge. She had transferred it to the wastepaper-basket, which Toby, the page-boy, had taken away a little later. It had occurred to Gladys Margery that it was hardly like him Mr. Linton, usually a tidy man, to leave anything on the floor. But she had reasoned that, since he was so tidy, anything found on the floor could hardly be of value.

In ten minutes she had forgotten all about it, and Mr. Linton did not chance to think of questioning her.

He looked high and low for the duplicate sheets, but nowhere could he find them.

After all, it could not matter greatly. He would soon be getting his proofs. But he would have liked to keep the copy.

CHAPTER 7.

Revenge!

TOM MERRY and Lowther, returning from the game on Little Side, found Manners sitting at the table with his head in his hands.

A glance showed them that he had probably been sitting thus for hours. There was no sign of his having occupied himself with anything—no litter of photography, not even an open book.

"We just pulled through, Manners, thanks to your fifty," said Tom Merry.

"Did you?" returned Manners tonelessly, and with no seeming interest.

"I never saw you in such form," said Lowther.

Manners did not answer that.

"Buck up!" Lowther adjured him. "After all, every day has a to-morrow. It was rotten being hauled off the field like that; but you'll get over it. And, anyway, you made fifty. I'd be as pleased as Punch if I'd done as much."

Manners maintained a stony silence. His success for the Form was like Dead Sea fruit now. He did not care about it, or about anything—except, perhaps, getting even with his Form master.

Not that he was plotting revenge. His notion of getting even lay rather in the hope that the Form master would discover the ghastly mistake he had made and would be overcome with remorse.

"Better tell us about it, old chap," said Tom Merry kindly.

He honestly believed that Manners would be better for letting himself go a bit on the subject of his wrongs, or he would not have spoken thus.

"I'll tell you this," said Manners fiercely. "I'll tell you that Linton isn't the decent sort we've always thought him, even when he was down on us. He's a brute—a rotter—a wretched tyrant!"

"Oh, draw it mild, Manners!" said Lowther.

"It's all very well for you! You haven't—"

Manners stopped short. He had been going to let out the accusation made against him. But he found that he could not bear to talk of it, not even to these most loyal of chums.

"Haven't what?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, go to Jericho! I don't want to talk about it."

"After all, Manners, it was rather a bad break not to turn up for detention after you'd been told you must," said Tom Merry. "That was an error of judgment. I'd have kept a place open for you in the team, and as soon as you'd shown up your lines Linton would have let you clear. At the worst it would only have meant half an hour's delay."

"Oh, would it? That's all you know, Tom! If I hadn't done what I did I'd never have got to Little Side at all. Not that I care about that now."

"You ought to care," Tom Merry said gravely. "I've told you that it was through your innings we won. We had only seven runs to spare at the finish."

"Well, I don't care," said Manners sullenly.

There was no arguing with him in that mood. Tom Merry gave up the attempt at consolation.

"If you'll shift away from the table I'll lay the cloth for tea," said Lowther.

Manners moved to the armchair.

But he would not have any tea. He would not even drink, let alone eat. He sat moody and silent.

The other two were more than ready for their tea. But they could not enjoy it.

"Don't be a death's head at the feast, Manners!" pleaded Lowther.

"Oh, dry up! I'm not meddling with you. Can't you leave me alone?" replied Manners bitterly.

They left him alone after that.

Their talk was at first of the game—how Figgins had all but pulled it out of the fire for the New House, and would no doubt have managed it, but for that running catch of Clifton Dane's in the long field.

Manners heard, but hardly took it in. He was brooding on his wrongs.

Then he pricked up his ears at the mention of Mr. Linton's name.

"Yes, he's finished it at last," said Lowther. "Been at it, on and off, for donkey's years."

"What's it about?" asked Tom Merry. "Not that it's likely to be anything that would interest me."

"Oh, I don't know. It does interest me a bit. Those old Etruscans—"

"Old which-ers?"

"Etruscans. Lars Porsena and all that crowd, you know."

"What, in 'Horatius'?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Yes, that might be worth reading. But I don't suppose old Linton would spread himself on the fighting parts."

"Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march to Rome!"

spouted Lowther dramatically.

"Fine stuff!" commented Tom Merry. "Not like that awful 'Elegy' thing."

Lowther had something to say in favour of "Gray's Elegy."

Manners did not listen. His mind had gone back to Mr. Linton again—not in connection with ancient Etruria, but with himself.

That Manners could be very moody his chums knew of old. But they had never seen him worse than he now was.

All through Sunday he hardly spoke. He did not read. He would not go for a walk. He did not touch his beloved camera or any of his photographic apparatus, and he would not say one word of what was troubling him.

They left him alone. It was the only thing to do.

But others worried him, without meaning to.

After Tom Merry and Lowther, there was no one at St. Jim's for whom Manners had a higher regard than Talbot. But he was positively rude to Talbot when he inquired as to how he got on with Linton.

Talbot had discretion enough not to ask too many questions as to the cause of the trouble. Such discretion was not given to the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy was genuinely concerned about Manners. Someone had told him Manners was moping in Study No. 10. Arthur Augustus felt sure that what was needed was bright and entertaining conversation.

So Arthur Augustus looked in.

Tom Merry and Lowther had gone for a Sunday afternoon walk with Talbot. Manners had refused, without any unnecessary politeness, to be of the party. He had said plainly that he was fed up with everyone else.

If Arthur Augustus had heard that it would have made no difference to his kindly intentions. He might conceive of a fellow's being fed up with everyone else, but even then he would have felt sure that his famous tact and judgment might do some good to that fellow.

So he looked in on Manners.

"Well, Mannahs, deah boy, how goes it?" he asked.

Manners growled like a bear with a sore head.

"That is scarcely an intelligible answer, Mannahs. I inquired in a friendly mannah how goes it? Your weply—if such it can be called—was a growl."

Manners' answer to that was another growl, deeper and angrier.

"Weally, deah boy, it is extremely difficult to cawwy on a convahsation in this mannah!" remonstrated D'Arcy.

The growl of Manners grew articulate.

"I don't want conversation of any sort, and if I did I should bar your silly twaddle!" he said.

"Weally, Mannahs! I have been thinkin'—"

"Rats! You can't think. The apparatus is wanting." "That is wude and untwue, Mannahs. I do not get cwedit for it, but I am a much deepah thinkah than people imagine. I have been thinkin' that it is possible that you got into twouble with Linton by showin' up some of Baggay Twimble's lines."

"Have you gone perfectly potty?" snorted Manners. "How could I show up Trimble's lines?"

"By payin' sixpence a hundred for them, deah boy. Twimble and Mellish are sellin' them at that pwice to anyone who will buy. I have wemonstated in vain. Blake considahs it a joke, and Hewwies and Dig have actually bought lines from the wottahs! I am glad to know that you are above that kind of deception."

In some vague, confused way Manners seemed to scent a relation between this and his alleged crime. But what could connect them? He had had no dealings with Baggay or Mellish, and all the lines he had shown up had been in his own hand.

"Get out!" he said roughly.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"There's the door! You're on the wrong side of it. Get on the right side and shut it after you!"

D'Arcy went, feeling hurt. He had done his best, but Manners was not to be comforted.

The matter of Trimble and Mellish, line merchants, passed clean out of Manners' head for the time being.

He sat brooding on the wrong that had been done him. Not the caning—as he had said, he could have accepted that as punishment for disobedience, though it would have been rather a savage punishment.

But to be called a liar! That was what rankled in his soul.

He got up and looked out of the window. The weather had changed. There were clouds massing, and a chilly wind blew. Manners shivered, and let down the sash.

(Continued on page 15.)

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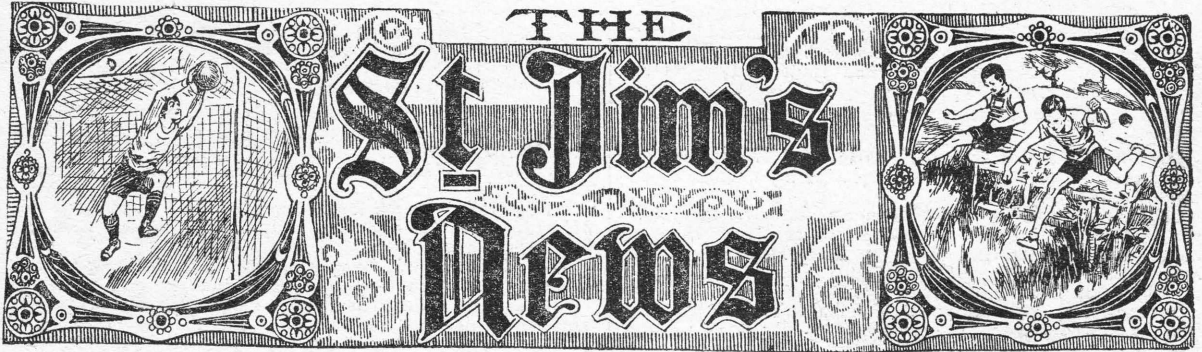
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EDITORIAL!

By TOM MERRY.

BY far the most popular institution at St. Jim's is the little tuckshop, nestling under the old elms in a corner of the quadrangle.

The gymnasium, the library, the Common-room, all have their votaries; but the tuckshop is preferred to all other places. The atmosphere of Dame Taggles' little shop is very pleasant and restful, after a strenuous afternoon's cricket beneath the blazing sun; and in the brief morning break at eleven o'clock we scamper to the tuckshop for tarts and ginger-pop in accordance with time-honoured custom.

Dame Taggles does a roaring trade, and she richly deserves to. All her tarts and pies and buns are home made, and she is a past-mistress in the arts of catering and cooking. Her motto is "First-rate quality at medium prices." No inferior ingredients are used; there is no profiteering; and you get "a square deal" at the tuckshop every time! Such well-known epicures—I prefer that word to "gormandisers"—as Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble will readily bear out my statements.

The tuckshop at St. Jim's has had a long and chequered history. It was founded in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, when I expect it was known as "Ye Tucke Shoppe." We do not know who the first proprietress was. Some buxom dame, most likely, who was a popular favourite with the St. Jim's fellows of that period.

For several generations the tuckshop flourished merrily; but in the eighteenth century it was closed down, while Dr. Sternforth was headmaster of St. Jim's. This Dr. Sternforth was, by all accounts, a tyrant of the first water, and a beastly killjoy into the bargain. He decided that there was too much gluttony going on in the school—too many study feeds, and too much eating between meals. I dare say the old buffer was right; but it must be remembered that in those days the school meals were very plain and frugal, and the tuckshop was even more necessary than it is to-day. The closing of the tuckshop caused something like a riot at St. Jim's, and the indignant pupils paraded the quadrangle with banners, demanding that their rights should be restored to them. The tyrannical doctor, however, stuck to his guns, and for ten long years the tuckshop stood forlorn and forsaken, with shuttered windows. In those days there was no bunshop in Rylcombe, and Wayland was a mere village, boasting only one sweet shop, where cakes and pastries were unobtainable.

After Dr. Sternforth resigned the office of headmaster his place was taken by a more humane Head, who at once gave directions for the tuckshop to be re-opened.

Since then the tuckshop has gone gaily on its way, suffering little in the way of interference. It has had to close down for short spells, however, during dark periods of the country's history, when food supplies were threatened; and during the Great War, of course, the St. Jim's fellows were rationed, like everybody else, and purchases at the school shop were strictly limited.

TOM MERRY.



By Dick Brooke

(A long way after Longfellow.)

UNDER the elm-trees' pleasant shade,

The college tuckshop stands;
Where luscious tarts, and
lemonade,

Are served by busy hands;
And good Dame Taggles hovers there,
Awaiting our commands.

Her hair is flecked with silver streaks,
Her face is calm and kind;

Her voice is gentle when she speaks
(Except to Trimble, mind!)

For that fat rascal begs for "tick,"

And the good dame's disinclined!

Week in, week out, from morn till
night,

You can see her serving tarts;

Delicious morsels of delight

To gladden schoolboy hearts.

And her apple-cheeked and beaming
face

True friendliness imparts.

And fellows coming out of class

Flock in at the open door;

Besieging her in a mighty mass,

And clamouring for her store.

Like Oliver Twist, they then insist

On having a trifle more!

She goes each evening to the town,

To see the picture show;

She sees the cowboys, bronzed and
brown,

Over the prairie go.

Galloping fast on their fiery steeds,

When the evening sun is low.

Next morning finds her in the shop,

Dispensing tarts and cakes,

And foaming draughts of ginger-pop,

And the perfect pies she bakes,

To the hungry and thirsty schoolboy
throng,

The Gussies and Wynns and Blakes!

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,

Onward through life she goes;

A genial Dame, with troops of friends,

And scarcely any foes.

Long may she reign in her little shop,

From dawn till night's repose!

TUCKSHOP TOPICS!

By ERIC KILDARE

(Captain of St. Jim's).

DAME TAGGLES has presided at the tuckshop during three reigns—those of Queen Victoria, King Edward, and the present Sovereign. Her earliest customers are now middleaged men, and when they revisit the school they declare that the worthy dame is as nimble and energetic as ever!

The tuckshop came into being in the reign of Good Queen Bess; but very little of the original structure remains. On two occasions the little shop has been the scene of a fire, and it has had to be reconstructed.

The predecessor of Dame Taggles was "Mother Miggs," who presided over the tuckshop for forty years. She was a popular personality, but her cooking and baking left much to be desired. She had neither the skill nor the up-to-date facilities of Dame Taggles.

It is said that when Queen Elizabeth paid her memorable visit to St. Jim's she inspected the tuckshop, and condescended to taste a glass of cordial. Dame Taggles can claim, therefore, that her little emporium has been patronised by royalty; but she is a modest soul, and the words "By Royal Appointment" will never appear over her door.

Dame Taggles' best customer, in a strictly financial sense, is Aubrey Racke. Her politest customer is Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Her most trying customer is Baggy Trimble, who insists upon regarding the tuckshop as a "tick shop."

The best day's "takings" at the tuckshop amounted to fifteen pounds. A heat wave was responsible for this handsome turnover. It was a Saturday, and from morning till night Dame Taggles was busy dispensing "ginger-pop" and strawberry ices. Twice she had to telephone to Wayland for fresh supplies of minerals and ice.

Dame Taggles' worst day occurred back in the winter, at a time when the fellows were all saving up for the Christmas holidays. The day's takings amounted to only five-and-sixpence, and only ten customers came into the shop all day!

The St. Jim's tuckshop would seem to have a rosy future before it. From time to time certain killjoys have suggested that the shop should be abolished, but the school governors have no intention of doing this. Possibly they recall their own schooldays, and the glorious feeds they enjoyed at the tuckshop!



SHAKESPEARE at St. Jim's!

Sonnets to Sausage
Rolls, and Treats at
the Tuckshop.
BY
MONTY LOWTHER.

SHAKESPEARE is popularly supposed to have been educated at the Grammar School at Stratford-on-Avon; but I have my doubts. I should say that he was a St. Jim's fellow, because St. Jim's turns out—I don't mean expels!—all the really brainy people. Otherwise, I should not be here!

Besides, there is direct evidence to show that Shakespeare was a St. Jim's fellow. Visitors to the school punishment-room will notice some lines of verse engraved on the historic wall. The lines are in Old English, and are as follows:

"Heare I byde, a foolish fagg,
Doomed to detention for a ragge!"

The couplet is signed "W. S."—the initials of the Bard of Avon. Of course, you might argue that those letters stand for "William Smith," or "Wilberforce Snodgrass"; but I am quite satisfied, in my own mind, that they stand for Will Shakespeare.

Shakespeare of St. Jim's! I have no doubt he was a very popular fellow—

skipper of the Shell, most likely, and captain of the junior archery team. If there was a "St. Jim's News" in those days, you can safely wager that Shakespeare was the editor. He would also have written all the school plays, and acted in them, for Shakespeare was a fine actor as well as a playwright.

No doubt the famous bard was a frequent visitor to the school tuckshop when he was a boy at St. Jim's. The man who wrote "Let me have men about me who are fat," and "Let good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both," was bound to have been a mighty gorging, and possibly as plump as his own creation, Falstaff.

Can't you just picture Shakespeare of the Shell scampering off to the tuckshop after morning lessons, with a crowd of fellows at his heels? When they had swarmed into the shop, he would say:

"Good-morrow, worthy dame! We would fain sample thy delicious doughnuts, and roll thy strawberry ices on our parched tongues!"

"Yea, verily!" the others would chime in. "Trot out thy dainties, good

dame, that we may eat, drink, and be merry!"

To which the tuckshop dame would reply, like the pisaner did to Simple Simon, "Show me first your penny!" (In those days you could get a thumping good feed for a penny.)

Being a generous fellow, Shakespeare would stand treat to all his chums, including Raleigh and Drake, and Ben Jonson and Milton.

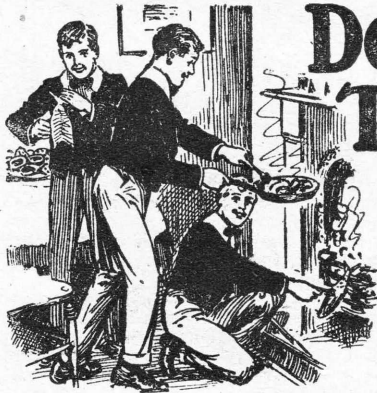
(Monty, you duffer! Milton hadn't been born when Shakespeare was a schoolboy! There was an interval of forty-four years between the births of these two bards.—ED.)

In those days, the tuckshop would have been a place fit for heroes to feed in. Steaming joints of venison, savoury roast duck, and enormous pigeon-pies—to say nothing of prime hams suspended from the ceiling—could probably have been obtained there. For it was an age of mighty eaters, of tremendous trenchermen, and such dishes as I have mentioned were regarded as mere snacks.

Imagination boggles at the thought of what the official meals in Hall must have been like! Even Baggy Trimble's boundless appetite would have been gratified. How Baggy would love to have lived in "the good old days"!

One of these days, when we go treasure-hunting, we may have the luck to come across some old manuscripts which will prove incontestably that Shakespeare was at St. Jim's. How ripping it would be to discover, hidden in the dark vaults, the drafts of Shakespeare's earliest plays—"The Taming of the Form master!" "A Midsummer Night's Feed!" and "As you Bike It!" Such a find would bring a fortune to the finder, and keep him in pocket-money for the rest of his days.

May the lucky finder be the one-and-only fellow who believes that Shakespeare was at St. Jim's!



DO WE EAT TOO MUCH?

"Impossible!" says Baggy Trimble.
But, some people have different
views.

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

It is impossible to eat too much! I have often been warned that one of these days I shall go off pop like a punctured football through overfeeding, but I have yet to hear of an orthentic case of a fellow bursting! It simply duzzent happen. In my opinion, there ought to be four tuckshops at St. Jim's—one in each corner of the quad. Then we shouldn't have to cue up for our tuck like we do now. One of the tuckshops should be a "free" one for the convenience of fellows who happen to be on the rox. If the Head cares to establish a free tuckshop at St. Jim's, I can assure him in advance of my loyal patronage!

MR. HORACE RATCLIFF:

In my opinion, the boys at this school consume an inordinate quantity of indigestible foodstuffs. They prefer eating jam-tarts to eating the bread of knowledge. Sometimes I have noticed that the boy Wynn, of my House, has quite a bilious appearance, and the corpulency of his figure is disgusting in one so young. Wynn assures me that he is "naturally plump," but I feel certain that if the school shop were abolished his figure would be reduced to normal and graceful proportions. I only wish it was within my power to close the

shop, and convert it into an establishment where boys might undergo periodical fasting. (Of all the killjoy suggestions, this fairly takes the cake!—ED.)

REGINALD TALBOT:

I suppose most of us are rather partial to "the fleshpots of Egypt," but as we happen to be growing boys, with keen and healthy appetites, an occasional snack at the tuckshop is not harmful. According to Nature's laws, we eat less and less as we grow older, until at seventy we find that one meal a day suffices us. But this would be a starvation diet to a fellow of fifteen. So let us "eat, drink, and be merry," and flick our fingers at the killjoys who would abolish the tuckshop to-morrow if they had the power!

FATTY WYNN:

Personally, I eat just sufficient to sustain life, and no more. Of course, my opinion of what is a sufficient quantity to sustain life may not coincide with the opinions of others! Four solid, substantial, and satisfying meals a day, with three hefty feeds in between, and a midnight feed to wind up with, are just sufficient to keep body and brain in perfect trim. A lesser quantity would cause a state of malnutrition, and possibly starvation!

MISS MARIE RIVERS (the school nurse):

In the course of my duties in the school sanny I have very few cases of overfeeding to deal with. Trimble of the Fourth is practically the only offender in this respect; he continually comes to me looking yellow and bilious. But Trimble is the exception that proves the rule, and I say emphatically that the St. Jim's boys, as a whole, are very temperate in eating and drinking.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

No, deah boys; I do not considah that we eat to excess. Of course, there are a few exceptions. Just as some fellows talk too much, or swot too much, or spend too much time over their toilet, so there are fellows who gorge too much. Baggy Twimble, for instance. If Baggy were to cut down his consumption of tuck by one-half, he would be fit an' healthy instead of havin' a bloated and hawwel-like appearance. Speakin' genewally, howevah, we are quite modewate in the amount we eat. Even our midnight feasts are enjoyed more for the fun an' excitement they cause than for the actual gorgin'. Our study feeds, too, should be regarded as convivial functions wathah than orgies. Personally, I should not dream of eatin' too much. It would spoil my perfect figgab, bai Jove! Excuse me now, deah boys! I'm just off to the tuckshop for a little snack!



THE MADNESS OF MANNERS!

(Continued
from
page 13.)

"I could do with a fire," he thought.

He wondered whether Tom Merry and the others would get back before the storm broke, for it seemed that there must be a storm. He shrugged his shoulders. What did it matter to him?

Misery is usually selfish, and Manners was utterly miserable.

Fires were not laid in Shell studies in June. But in Mr. Linton's own special sanctum a fire was always laid. The Form master was rather a chilly individual, and there were days even in what should have been the height of summer when he could not keep warm.

He had put a match to his fire that afternoon, and had drawn his table nearer to the cheery blaze. He was looking through the pages of his type-script for the last time. To-morrow it would go to the publishers who had already agreed to give it favourable consideration.

It may be that in early days Mr. Linton's imagination had been stirred by that brave ballad of "Horatius." Anyway, he could hardly remember that time when the Etruscans, who were great in Italy while Rome was not even yet a name, had not interested him.

There was fascinating mystery in the subject. Close research by many a learned professor had failed to do more than make out a few words here and there of the Etruscan language. More was known of Babylon or of Assyria than of ancient Etruria.

Mr. Linton knew as much about it as it was well possible for a man to know, and he believed that his book would throw fresh light on the Etruscans.

What it meant to him it would not be easy to exaggerate. When a man has spent the greater part of his leisure for a quarter of a century on one special subject the work must have become a part of his very life.

Mr. Linton was almost sorry that he had finished. He fingered the typed pages lovingly.

He knew that these last few weeks, while he was getting to the end, very anxious to leave out nothing that mattered, to have everything in good order and clearly stated, had told upon his nerves. He had caught himself being more than usually snappish.

Perhaps that had helped to account for his anger with the unfortunate boy Manners.

It was natural that he should think of Manners then, for those pencil notes had been upon the Etruscan topic. He had not realised at the time what paper he was using, and doubtless, having turned it over, had cast it into the waste paper basket.

That was what had happened. Baggy Trimble had retrieved it thence, or rather from the sack into which Toby, the page, had emptied the basket. The waste paper was a requisite of Toby's. It did not bring him wealth; but he looked after it pretty sharply.

No, Mr. Linton decided, he had not been unfair to Manners. The offence was bad enough; the denial was worse.

Yet he felt sorry for the boy. Manners had seldom got into his black books in the past. If it had been Racke or Crooke, or even Gore, he would not have felt the same about it.

He got up. Mr. Railton had shown more than a little sympathy with his work at times. He thought he would go and tell the Housemaster that he was sending it to London to-morrow.

Hardly had he left the study before Manners passed the open door.

He passed; but he came back. It may be that the fire drew him. It was burning up very cheerfully, and Manners was cold. But it is more likely that some vague idea of vengeance was in his mind. To the thought of vengeance it had come during his lonely brooding.

The pile of typescript lay upon the table, plain for anyone to see.

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Manners read the title—"ETRURIA AND ITS PEOPLE."

Why, this must be the thing Lowther had been gassing about! The wrongs he had endured at the hands of Mr. Linton burned up in Manners, and in that conflagration conscience and honour went down before the wind.

Harry Manners, decent and straight and generous, did then what would have been a more than commonly base deed for the worst rascal at St. Jim's!

He was not himself when he did it. Physically he was below par, and his mental state was worse than his physical.

He snatched up the typescript and hurled it upon the blazing fire. He took the poker and held it down so that it might be thoroughly consumed.

The flames licked up round it greedily. The edges of the sheets curled. Here and there a word stood out with startling distinctiveness. He saw "Lars Porsena"; he saw "Clusium."

What was it in the sight of those names that seemed to make something break inside him?

To most boys of any imagination and spirit, even though they do not care for poetry in general, the lay of "Horatius" makes appeal. In it Macaulay has concentrated courage, patriotism, sportsmanship. Horatius, Spurius Lartius, Herminius, would have been the very men to play in a test match, or to be the backs and goalkeeper in an international Soccer game!

Manners had felt that spell as others have; and on a sudden there came to him the certainty that the thing he had done was a mean and cowardly thing—far worse than what Mr. Linton had accused him of doing!

He tried to snatch the typescript from the flames, and scorched his right hand in the attempt.

Then he fled—not to the study, but up to the dormitory, where he had no right to be at that hour.

He had not been gone five minutes when Mr. Linton came back. A visitor had called upon Mr. Railton, and the Shell master had thought it best to clear out.

He was just in time to see that the blazing heap on the fire was the cherished work of his life.

He was not in time to rescue even a part of it. As he watched hopelessly the flames licked at it. Not a page was left complete. It might burn for an hour or two yet, for a mass of paper does not easily consume utterly. But for any practical purpose it was already destroyed.

Mr. Linton dropped into his chair, looking like an old and broken man.

Above, in the Shell dormitory, the boy who had wreaked upon him this cruel revenge lay on his bed and cried like a child.

Manners would almost have been willing to die than to have the clock put back half an hour.

But the deed done is irrevocable. Manners had had his revenge, and it was as dust and ashes in his mouth.

CHAPTER 8.

Two Under the Weather!

TOM MERRY found Manners in the dormitory, and the sight of his chum alarmed him.

Manners' face was blanched. His teeth were chattering. He was ill, but his illness was quite as much of the mind as the body.

Whether Tom Merry guessed that or not, he took the right measures. Within an hour Manners was in "sanny."

He did not want to go. He felt that he ought to confess and face the music. But Tom Merry was too masterful for him, and Manners was so overwrought that the temptation to put off the evil hour was strong in him.

Tom Merry left him in front of a good fire. Nurse Marie Rivers said that she did not think it was influenza; but it was evident that Manners had, at the least, a nasty chill, and she would see that he soon got to bed. Twenty-four hours or so there might put him right.

But Manners felt that a whole lifetime could never put him right. He had done a deed that would haunt him to his dying day.

In the first shock of his loss, Mr. Linton was hardly able to think clearly.

But when he began to think it was only natural that he should recall what Manners had said.

It seemed a threat of vengeance now.

Was it possible that the wretched boy had gone as far as this in his desire to get even?

The Form master did not want to believe it. But something like conviction gradually forced itself upon him.

There was in him no longing to punish Manners for the crime, even if he were guilty. Mr. Linton was past anger. But he could not let this go without inquiry, at least.

He went along to Study No. 10 and tapped at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" cried Tom Merry.

When the Form master entered Tom Merry and Lowther rose to their feet. Mr. Linton's visits to the studies, unless there was a row on, were very rare.

"Oh, I didn't know it was you, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"Where is Manners?" asked the master abruptly.

"In the sanatorium, sir, with a bad chill. I don't think it's flu; but he looked pretty queer."

"When did he go?"

"An hour or so ago."

Mr. Linton, in his state of shock, had taken little account of time. To him, at the moment, this seemed a perfect alibi for Manners. He might come to doubt later, but he had no doubt then.

"Oh! Never mind, Merry," he said.

He retreated.

"Old Linton looked pretty queer," said Lowther. "I hope there isn't anything fresh wrong."

"What should there be?" returned Tom Merry. "Goodness knows, there's been enough already!"

Mr. Linton had looked queer then. He looked queerer next morning, after a sleepless night.

He had told no one of the loss of the typescript. He could not bear to talk about it.

He had tried to comfort himself with the thought of Carlyle, who had faced a similar loss heroically, and had rewritten "The French Revolution."

But he found no comfort in that. Carlyle was a great man. Mr. Linton did not delude himself that he was great. But he knew that he had done good work during those years which now seemed wasted.

And it had all been in vain! He had not the courage to start in on it again.

The Shell did much as the Shell liked that Monday. But nothing very bad was done. Racke and Crooke, and the rest who might have seized on the occasion, were kept in order by Tom Merry and Talbot and Kangaroo, and others of their sort.

Mr. Linton had never won the affection of the fellows as Mr. Railton had. But he had always been just, if sometimes severe, and they respected him.

"Looks twenty years older," said Lowther to Tom Merry and Talbot in Study No. 10 at tea-time.

"It isn't only that," Talbot said. "He couldn't fix his mind on the work. Some of the fellows gave him absurd answers, and he took no notice. Gore said that Lady Jane Grey was the fourth wife of Henry the Eighth."

"That was wrong, but I can't see that it was absurd," returned Lowther, "always ready for an argument."

"She couldn't have been."

"Why not?"

"Because she wasn't born soon enough, old chap!"

"Got you there, Lowther!" said Tom Merry, chuckling.

But Tom Merry was unusually silent for the most part.

He was worrying about Manners.

On the face of it there was little to connect the evident trouble of Mr. Linton with his chum. And yet Tom Merry had a feeling that they were somehow connected.

He went to see Manners after tea.

"He's pretty nearly all right," said Marie Rivers. "It was only a chill. He had a temperature last night, but it's normal now. I can't help thinking, though, Tom, that he has something on his mind. He isn't a bit like himself. He won't talk, and he seems to have lost interest in everything."

Tom Merry found that Nurse Marie was right.

Manners was in a quite unapproachable mood. Nothing could be got out of him.

Tom Merry did not mention Mr. Linton's visit to the study; he did not, indeed, mention Mr. Linton at all. He waited for Manners to say what the trouble was.

But Manners was dumb on that score, and little better than dumb on any other.

"I shall be back in Form to-morrow," he said just before Tom left.

But he did not say it cheerfully or hopefully.

He was back, though he did not look very fit. He had lain awake most of the night. But he wanted to get back. He felt that he could not stand another night alone in sanny. The Shell dormitory, where at least he could hear as he lay the breathing of his comrades, was far preferable to the accusing silence of the ward, untenanted save by him.

Mr. Linton took no special notice of him, seeming unaware that he had been away. That day saw the Form master even more absent-minded and helpless than Monday had done.

The others could not understand at all; but Manners understood.

His revenge had been even more complete than he could have dreamed. It had left Mr. Linton a broken man.

And what had it done for Manners?

He felt that he could never hold up his head at St. Jim's again.

Tom Merry was patient with him during this time of trouble. Lowther was not. Patience was not Lowther's strong suit.

"Oh, buck up, Manners!" he said. "I can't for the life of me see what you are grouching about now. Linton isn't down on you any longer; he isn't down on anybody. We're having the easiest time we've ever had. I'm sorry if anything's gone wrong with the old bird; but I must say that the change is for the better as far as the Shell's concerned."

"I'm not grouching," replied Manners.

That was all he said, and it was true.

He was not grouching, but he was utterly miserable.

He knew what was the matter with the Form master, if no one else did.

Manners could not understand why nothing seemed to be known as to Mr. Linton's loss. He would have expected that steps would have been taken to find out who had been responsible for it.

He almost wished that there would be an inquiry. Anything seemed better than to go on like this, feeling himself disgraced for ever, while no one else knew that he had strayed from the path of honour.

Arthur Augustus looked in at Study No. 10 one day after morning classes.

"I say, deah boys," he asked, "has Baggy been twyin' to sell you lines?"

"Lines?" returned Lowther. "Why should Baggy want to sell us lines? Even if he did there would be a poor market. In the Shell just now no lines are being given. The millennium has arrived. The behaviour of the Shell is such that impots are dead off. The canes rusts, if canes do rust. Anyway, it's not in use."

Manners felt like punching Lowther's head.

Lowther seemed to rejoice in the change in Mr. Linton. To Manners, knowing what he did, that change was the sign of a tragedy.

"I do not undahstand—"

"No one expected it of you, Gussy!" broke in Lowther. "How should you understand when your aristocratic cranium is void within?"

"Oh, stop wottin', Lowthah! I am talkin' sewiously. Baggy and Mellish are doin' quite a bwisk twade in lines at sixpence a hundwed. Hewwies and Dig and Blake have all bought some. Lathom is handin' them out pwetty fweely just now."

"Well, what about it?" asked Tom Merry. "I don't know that it's quite the correct thing that fellows should deal in lines like that. But there really isn't very much in it. And if Baggy's writing lines at sixpence a hundred it's a sign of industry, at least—about the first sign of it I've ever heard of in Baggy's case. Mellish, now—"

"But I do not believe that Baggy is witin' the lines, or Mellish, either," said Arthur Augustus. "The last hundwed Hewwies bought looked to me vewy much like your witin', Tom Mewwy!"

"My hat! Have you come to accuse us? Think we're standing in with Mellish and Trimble on the line deal—eh? You're dead off it, Gussy!"

"I didn't think anythin' of the kind, Tom Mewwy. I give you ewedit for bein' above that kind of thing."

"I trust so," said Lowther. "Mellish and Trimble are supplying the lines at sixpence a hundred, you say. If we were doing them for the line merchants it is obvious that only a part of the sixpence would come our way. Say, three-pence—and that's giving Baggy and Mellish credit for more generosity than is in them. Can I see myself writing lines at three-pence a hundred? I cannot. I am poor; but, thank goodness, I am too lazy for that."

"One fellow's lines look very much like another fellow's," remarked Tom Merry.

"Yaas. No, I mean. Yaas, that is twue in a degwee. No one bothahs to w'ite lines in his best fist. But theah are diffewences, and I do not think that your lines, Tom Mewwy, would look quite like Twimble's."

"I hope they wouldn't have dirty fingermarks on them, anyway," replied the junior captain, smiling.

He did not take the matter seriously, while to Lowther it was quite a joke. But D'Arcy himself was in earnest, and Manners was beginning to feel an interest in the matter. He had paid small heed to D'Arcy before, but the story made him think now.

ANSWERS

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So that was what Baggy had meant when he asked whether Manners had been getting any lines lately?

Manners did not repent of having cuffed Baggy. There were heavier sins than that weighing upon him.

But if Arthur Augustus was right, Mellish and Baggy were selling to members of the Fourth lines written by Shell fellows!

That was queer, to say the least of it.

Manners could not even then make it fit in with those lines of his which Mr. Linton said had been shown up to him twice.

How could that be, when he knew that he had written them during that strenuous time when he had been labouring to get his big imposition done in order that he might play in the Form match?

And yet—yet somehow it did seem as though the story D'Arcy told and the trouble with the Form master about those lines did dovetail in a way—if only he could see how!

He gave up the attempt, and settled down again to his dull misery.

Arthur Augustus also gave up the attempt to inspire Tom Merry and Lowther with the disgust he felt at the dealings of Trimble and Mellish.

Tom Merry would not take it as a matter that concerned him as junior captain, and Lowther made jeers about Herlock Sholmes.

"I considah that you fellows are lackin' in the wudiments of wight thinkin'," said Arthur Augustus before he left. "I am surprised at you, Tom Mewwy! I should not have thought that you would welish havin' your lines hawked about among the Fourth."

"It is a come-down for Thomas," said Lowther. "But think what a joy it must be to merry old Lathom to get nice lines once in a way, instead of the grubby sheets he gets from you kids!"

The Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy departed with his aristocratic nose in the air and an expression of withering contempt upon his noble features.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther.

But Manners did not feel at all like laughing; and Tom Merry did not see it as quite so great a joke as Lowther did. Arthur Augustus might be wrong; but if he was right Tom Merry did not much care to have lines in his hand, however come by, shown up by Fourth-Formers as their own work.

CHAPTER 9.

Manners Owns Up!

"YOU'VE hardly spoken a word for a blessed week, old fellow!" said Tom Merry to Manners, a few days later.

Had Lowther been there Manners would only have replied with a growl.

But Lowther was not there, and the kindness of Tom's tone stirred something in Manners.

"I know, Tom. I can't tell you why; but I'm as miserable as a fellow can be, and I don't feel that I can ever be happy again!"

"That's rot, you know. You can't possibly have done anything so bad as to justify you in talking like that. There isn't anything wrong at home, for Reggie's chippy enough. So it must be something you've done, and I can't help thinking it's connected with your trouble with Linton."

Reggie was Manners' minor, of the Third Form.

"No, there's nothing wrong at home, and Reggie doesn't know that there is anything wrong with me," replied Manners major. "I don't suppose he'd worry if he did know. Not that I want him to. I don't ask anyone to worry about me, I'm not worth it!"

Tom Merry, standing beside him, laid a hand on his shoulder.

"What's the use of having chums, Manners?" he asked softly.

"What's the use of anything?" returned Manners bitterly. "You'd stand by me if I was in trouble," said Tom Merry. "You have stood by me before now, and by Lowther, too. Won't you let us—"

"Not Lowther! I can't stand his japing. I might tell you, but—"

"All right, tell me! I promise I won't say a word to Monty without your leave. But you're all wrong, Manners. His japing doesn't mean that he can't feel for a pal."

"I couldn't tell him. I suppose he will have to know. When you've heard you'll very likely think that I'm not fit to be your chum any longer. That's how I feel about it."

"Whatever you've done I'm your chum still, Manners," said Tom Merry steadily.

Then out came Manners' story. It shook Tom Merry.

His friendship was too firm to be shaken. That stood like a rock.

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But it seemed to him all but incredible that Manners should have done this wicked and spiteful deed.

Perhaps in telling the story Manners bore too hard upon himself.

It was impossible for him to bring back now the burning indignation against the Form master which had prompted his action. It was dead. His feeling for Mr. Linton now was one of pity.

"And there's nothing I can do!" he finished.

"There's one thing," said Tom Merry gravely.

"What is it? I can't see anything!"

"You can own up!"

Manners stared at him. The thought of doing that had hardly occurred to him. It seemed so useless. It could not bring back the burned typescript.

"I—I suppose so," he mumbled. "But what's the good?"

"Only that it will help to set you right with yourself," said Tom Merry. "You'll go melancholy mad if you keep on the way you're heading!"

"I shall be sacked if I own up!"

"You may be. I won't be sure that you won't. Manners, you must see that this matters no end to me—and to Lowther. If you're sacked St. Jim's will never be the same place to either of us. But it isn't the same place while you're like this; and now that I know, old fellow, I can't see anything for it but the one straight thing."

For the first time for days Manners felt a gleam of something like hope.

This was at the worst something definite—something that would end his suspense. Tom Merry was right. He could not go on drifting.

"I'll do it!" he said, between clenched teeth.

"That's right! I won't offer to come with you. Linton wouldn't like it. But I'll wait for you outside his door. And, Manners, don't you go thinking that Monty doesn't care!"

"Don't wait for me. Find Lowther, and tell him while I'm with Linton," said Manners brokenly.

But he braced himself for the ordeal. There was plenty of pluck in Harry Manners.

He tapped at Mr. Linton's door.

"Come in!" spoke a voice that hardly sounded like the Form master's.

Manners entered.

Mr. Linton sat at the table. But there was no sign of any work before him. There was not even a book. Manners could easily guess how he had been sitting—elbows on table, chin on hands, staring at the wall and yet not seeing it.

Just so had Manners sat through many hours during the last few days. He had come to realise what the loss of hope must mean to another.

It was not hope that buoyed him up now—only his own courage, reinforced by Tom Merry's. If Tom Merry had cared less there would have been no such support for his chum. But Manners knew how much Tom Merry did care.

"You, Manners? What is it?" asked Mr. Linton dully.

"I have come to confess, sir."

"To confess what? That you did not tell me the truth about those lines?"

"No, not that. I did tell you the truth. I don't suppose you'll be able to believe that, when I've owned up to what I did, but it was the truth."

"And what have you done, Manners?"

Mr. Linton's voice was toneless. He did not seem to care whether he got an answer to the question he put. Manners had the curious notion that even now he might have drawn back—might have gone out without telling—that Mr. Linton would never have inquired further.

"I burned your typescript, sir!"

It was out now! Manners held his breath.

He had not known what to expect. Somehow he had been sure that the Form master would not rage. Mr. Linton seemed past that.

But certainly he had not expected the utter calmness of the reply.

"Did you, Manners? I fear that I must have been very unjust to you to induce so base an action on your part. I am glad that you have come to me to confess it, however."

Mr. Linton paused—at least, Manners supposed that he had merely paused.

But he seemed to have nothing more to say. Manners waited, but no more came from him.

"I suppose it's no use saying how sorry I am now, sir?" spoke the conscience-stricken boy at length. "That won't do any good. Of course I know that I must be punished."

"I am not going to punish you, Manners."

"But the Head will have to know, and he will, sir."

"I shall not report the matter to the Head, my boy. It will rest between you and me," said Mr. Linton wearily.



"But for the fact of your previous good conduct," said Mr. Linton quietly, "I should ask Dr. Holmes to deal with you. As it is, I will deal with the matter myself." "I'd rather go before the Head," said Manners passionately. "I should get justice from him! I can see that I sha'n't get it from you!" (See Chapter 6.)

"I will try to let it make no difference in my dealings with you. It shall make no difference! You have done the right and brave thing in confessing. I can only forgive."

"I—I—" There was a lump in Manners' throat that made it very hard for him to speak. "I—I'm afraid, sir, that this has been an awful blow to you!"

"Only the work of my life gone—only the work of my life—and nothing left to live for!"

It was hardly as though the master spoke to Manners—rather as though he were talking to himself.

"But surely you could do it again, sir? I can guess that it would be a big job. But I would help. I'm a pretty good typist. I could give you all my spare hours. You might dictate, you know—you could remember it, surely? There isn't anything I wouldn't do."

"I will not refuse your offer, Manners. I know it comes from a sincere desire to make amends. But I cannot accept it—now. Perhaps later—not now. Go, my boy!"

But Manners, as he went, was miserably sure that he would never be called upon to give that aid. It would not have amounted to much if given, perhaps, yet it would have meant a good deal to him.

But Mr. Linton would never be able to start his book again. He was too broken-spirited.

Tom Merry and Lowther were both there when Manners got back to Study No. 10, and Lowther's face was as grave as Tom Merry's.

"You've heard, Lowther?" asked Manners.

"I've heard, old fellow."

"And it makes no difference to you?"

"What difference should it make? If we three can't stand together, who can?"

The choking sensation in Manners' throat grew worse.

"What's Linton say?" asked Tom Merry.

"He forgives me—that's all."

"Linton's a brick!" said Lowther warmly.

"I—I'd almost rather be punished—anything short of the sack," said Manners. "It's not to be told—only we three will know of it besides him. It makes me feel mean and small."

"That won't hurt you," replied Tom Merry, with wisdom that went for the moment beyond his years. "You've been feeling mean and small, and it was nearly driving you mad. This is different. You've done the right thing. You will always be sorry for what you did to hurt Linton, but never for owning up!"

CHAPTER 10.

When Toby Kicked!

"I SAY, Mellish, this is a rummy go!" said Baggy.

"What's a rummy go?" returned Percy Mellish.

The firm of Trimble & Mellish, line merchants, had been driving quite a brisk trade.

Mr. Lathom seemed to have changed characters with Mr. Linton. While the Shell received few lines the Fourth got many. Trimble & Mellish had sold right out once. A second stock had been got in, and they had been obliged to use some of that themselves.

Mellish had grumbled at that, especially as Baggy's impositions were heavier than his. He wanted all the sixpences he could gather. He was not quite prepared to write lines in order to gather them. But it was going to hamper trade if Baggy went accumulating lines to write at the present pace, and would not write them.

Baggy had been stirred up to make another raid upon Toby's wastepaper-bags. He had returned with the spoils.

Among them was something that puzzled Baggy.

It was a bulky wad of typing paper, certainly not lines. Baggy did not know much about such things; but he recognised this as a carbon copy of some work.

It seemed to have no beginning, however. The earliest page was numbered as seven.

Mellish, sorting out the more valuable matter that had come with it, did not feel specially interested.

But when Baggy bent over his find in curiosity, Mellish repeated his query. It must be something out of the ordinary that stirred Baggy's sluggish mind. Baggy was inquisitive enough, it was true, but not in matters of this sort.

"What's a rummy go?" repeated Mellish.

"This is. It was with the lines, but it's something different. Looks dry stuff to me, but—"

Mellish was looking over Baggy's shoulder now.

"Etruria," he read aloud. "Clusium. I seem to know that word. Pisæ—that's the old name for what we call Pisa now—where the leaning tower is, you know, Baggy."

"I don't know anything about any leaning towers. I've seen the crooked spire at Chesterfield—that's all," replied Baggy, turning over the leaves. "I say, Mellish, what's that thing about the three bounders who kept some bridge or other? I know Lars Porsena was mixed up in it somehow, and here's his name!"

Mellish, who knew "Horatius," had not time to answer, for at that moment Toby Marsh, the School House page, burst into the study.

"I say, Toby, you know—" began Mellish in reproof. "You hand me those back again, Master Trimble!" cried Toby. "You've been stealing my waste-paper! Taking money out of my pocket, that is! I sell that! It ain't a fat lot I get for it, but it's my rights, and I ain't going to have you coming in and—" "Hallo! What's wrong here, Toby?" asked Jack Blake from the door.

Herries and Digby and D'Arcy were all with Blake. Mellish pressed a shilling into Toby's hand.

"Don't you tell them anything!" he whispered. "We'll make it right with you, Toby!"

But the page was smarting under a sense of wrong, and a mere shilling was not a sufficient salve for the smart.

"I won't take it, Master Mellish!" he cried. "It ain't square. Here's Master Trimble comes burrowing into my waste-paper sacks and taking armfuls and armfuls—I dunno what for. It's good money to me—I can't see what use it can be to him, but he does it. I suspected him before—now I know! I saw him at it, and I'd have stopped him then, only cook called to me. But I ain't going to stand it, and that's flat!"

Blake gave a long whistle.

"So that's where the lines came from?" he said. "Oh, it's no good trying to hide them, Mellish! You rotters—pretending that you wrote them yourselves, and all the time sneaking them out of the waste-paper basket!"

"Oh, bai Jove! I told you all along, Blake, deah boy, that there was somethin' extwemely fishy about this biznay," said Arthur Augustus, "but I did not suspect quite such howwible depwavity!"

"It's a bit off, but I don't know that it's quite as bad as all that, Gussy," said Herries, grinning. "If a master is soft enough to chuck lines into the w.p.b. without tearing them up he hasn't much right to complain if they get used over again."

Blake grinned. Herries grinned. To them it was a joke. Arthur Augustus did not grin. He had objected to the line merchant business from the outset, and he meant to be consistent about it.

"Can't be Lathom," said Digby. "He has his little lot shown up to him in the Form-room, and he always slits them across and then across again."

"It is not Lathom," D'Arcy said, scanning the lines through his monocle. "On a pwevious occasion I wecognised Lowthah's fist. Now I can see Goah's—I think he writes worse than anyone else in the Shell, unless it is Cwooke."

"Who's taking my name in vain?" asked Gore, looking in.

He had been passing, and could not help hearing.

"What I want to know is where I come in," said Toby crossly. "Master Trimble here—"

"Baggy has been stealin' lines from the waste-papah sacks in Toby's den, and he and Mellish have been sellin' them at sixpence a hundred, Goah," explained Arthur Augustus. "I am suah you will agree with me that it is a most wepwehensible pwoceedin'."

"Whew! So that's how it was the lines I bought from you looked so much like Manners' fist?" said Gore. "I wondered then. Baggy's writing is like nothing on earth, and Mellish's isn't like Manners'."

"I withdwaw my wemark, Goah," said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "It is vevy evident to me that you have no pwopah appreciation of the extweme wepwehensibleness of the pwoceedin's. Othahwise you would not have bought lines."

"Oh, dry up!" snorted Gore. "Look here, Mellish—"

"I didn't sell you any lines, Gore," broke in Mellish. "If you've any quarrel with anybody it's with Baggy. I told him not to do business with Shell fellows."

"What I want to know is where I come in," repeated Toby. "A bob don't put things right, nor more won't two bob, nor three! I—"

"Get out!" commanded Baggy.

"What?" exclaimed Toby.

"You just get out! You're a blessed menial, and it's like your cheek to come barging in here trying to black-mail us! I dare say if the truth was known you've no right to the waste-paper at all."

"Get out, you say?" hooted the incensed page boy. "You just put me out, you fat lump!"

And Toby began to roll up his sleeves in a deliberate manner that made Baggy feel very uncomfortable—especially as all the rest, even Mellish, seemed to consider the situation humorous.

"I am not going to fight with a buttons," said Baggy, with a weak attempt at dignity.

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"I shouldn't, if I were you," Digby said. "He'll kick you if you do."

Toby was a hefty youth, and far more than a match for the obese and cowardly Baggy.

No one was inclined to let them scrap. But everyone thought it funny to allow Baggy to show the white feather.

Toby squared up.

"Put me out!" he said defiantly.

"I wouldn't lower myself to touch you!" retorted Baggy.

At that, before anyone quite realised what he meant to do, Toby went for the fat junior.

Biff!

In an instant Baggy's head was in chancery, and Toby was punching away lustily at his face.

"Yow! Yooop! Yarooogh!" howled Baggy. "Stoppit! Oh, crumbs!"

His cries brought other fellows flocking in—Cardew and Levison and Clive, Lumley-Lumley and Julian, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther. The study was full, and a crowd was gathering in the passage.

Blake and Herries dragged the warlike Toby away.

He was so enraged that tears rolled down his face.

"I'm going to Mr. Railton!" he cried. "I ain't going to be done down by that fat thief, not for no one, I ain't!"

No one imagined for a moment that he would carry out his threat. Few understood any more than that "fat thief" was a polite reference to Baggy.

"What's it all about, Blake?" Tom Merry asked.

"I will tell you, Tom Mewwy! You had bettah heah it fwom me, because I must wegwefully say that Blake does not look upon it in a pwopah light. You see those papahs?"

"You tell us, Blake!" said Levison. "We don't want a blessed sermon—only an explanation."

"Weally, Levison—"

But already attention had been distracted from Arthur Augustus by his own words. The fellows had naturally looked at the table, and all saw that it was bestrewn with lines. Some knew the writing as their own, but these were few, for the majority of the juniors were of the Fourth Form.

It was Manners who spotted the mysterious bulky pile over which Baggy had been puzzling.

"Tom! Lowther!" he exclaimed. "Look here!"

They looked. For the moment they could not understand. Afterwards Manners wondered how it was he had been able to guess at a glance, for he had known nothing about the duplicate script which Gore had knocked from the table in Mr. Linton's study, which the housemaid had picked up and put into the wastepaper-basket, to be carried away by Toby, to be retrieved by Baggy Trimble, and now—

"What is it?" asked Tom Merry.

Manners' eyes were dancing; he was almost beside himself with joy.

"It is—it must be!" he cried. "Look, Tom! Look, Monty! 'Etruria'—'Clusium'—'Luna'; it's a copy of Mr. Linton's typescript!"

"But surely if there had been a copy—"

"Doubting Thomas!" gibed Lowther, almost as glad as Manners himself. "There's no 'if' about it! This must be a copy."

"So that's where these bounders got the lines they've been selling us!" sounded the voice of Lumley-Lumley. "Well, I'm not going to pretend to be virtuously indignant, like Gussy; but I do think—"

"You owe me an apology for that, Lumlay-Lumlay!" broke in the swell of the Fourth. "I have pwetended nothin' whatevah. I have wefused to buy lines; while othahs have basely—"

"Cave!" sounded from outside the study.

But the warning came too late for the throng to disperse. The fellows could do no more than make way for Mr. Railton, who came like a big steamer in the wake of a fussy tug, Toby being the tug.

From the outskirts of the crowd a few of the faint-hearted melted away. But most stayed. They were not going to deny that they had bought lines, if there was an inquiry, as there was pretty sure to be, and they wanted to hear what Mr. Railton had to say.

They heard no more than:

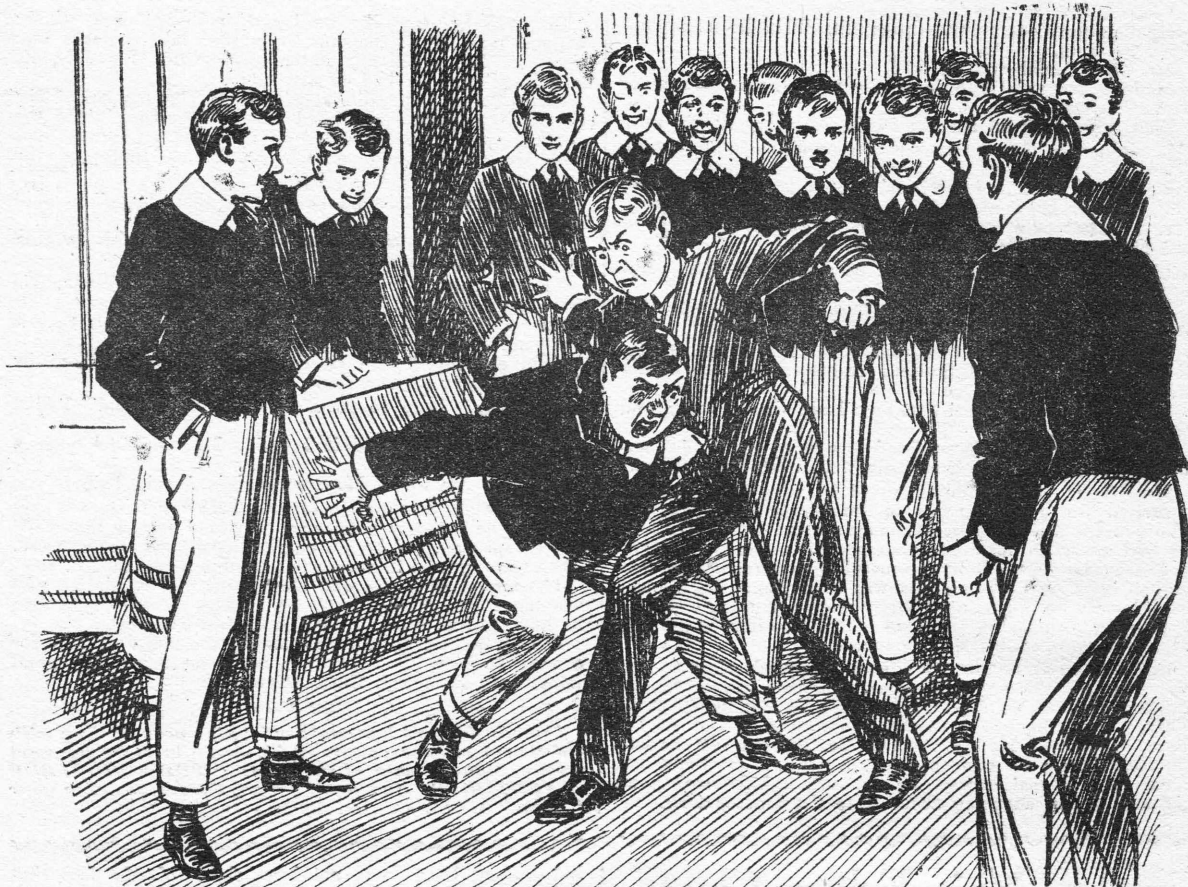
"Disperse at once, all of you, except Mellish and Trimble!"

Manners picked up the duplicate typescript. He had no notion of being able to get away with it unobserved, but he felt that he could not bear to leave it there.

"What is that, Manners?" demanded the Housemaster.

"I think—no, sir, I know that it belongs to Mr. Linton," answered Manners.

"Let me see. What! You don't mean to tell me that this is the lost duplicate? Take it at once to Mr. Linton, my boy," said Mr. Railton. "I told him that he had given up too readily the notion that it might be discovered. But



"Put me out!" said Toby defiantly. "I wouldn't lower myself to touch you!" retorted Baggie Trimble. At that, before anyone quite realised what he meant to do, the page-boy went for Trimble. In a moment the fat junior's head was in chancery, and Toby was punching away lustily at his face. "Yow! Yooop!" howled Trimble. "Stoppit! Oh, crumbs!" (See Chapter 10.)

he had lost all hope. This will be the best of good news to him!"

It was not twenty-four hours since Victor Railton had heard of his colleague's heavy loss, and he would not have heard then had he not asked about the work. He had said at once that Mr. Linton should have instituted an immediate search for the missing duplicate, but had had regretfully to admit that there was little chance of its recovery by this time.

Mr. Linton had said nothing about Manners. The House-master did not guess how much the taking of that bundle of typescript meant to the boy who had believed himself guilty of wrong irreparable, and now found that it was not irreparable, after all!

"Come with me, you two!" said Manners.

"No," Tom Merry said firmly. "You must go alone, old scout."

Manners' knees were trembling, and his backbone seemed turning to water, for all his joy. He was almost afraid of what the revulsion of feeling would mean to the Form master. But he went to the Form master's study, for all that, and knocked timidly at the door.

"You, Manners! What is it?" the master said, looking up with dull eyes as the junior entered the room.

"Look here, sir—look here!" exclaimed Manners.

Mr. Linton looked. He staggered, putting his hand to his forehead, and Manners feared that he was going to faint.

"It can't be!" he murmured weakly, clutching at the edge of the table for support.

"But it is, sir! I knew at once it must be, though you had never told me that there was a duplicate copy. I'm sorry, a few pages seem to have been torn off. But perhaps they won't matter so very much?"

Mr. Linton sank into the armchair. The revulsion of feeling was so great that he could not yet feel the joy he should feel.

"You knew nothing about it, Manners. I would not tell you, after your confession, lest I might arouse false hopes in you as to finding it," he said at last. "I felt sure that it never would be found. At the moment of missing it I

did not regard the loss as important, though I made a careful search. Afterwards it seemed useless to prosecute inquiries. It was too late. How did you find it, my boy?"

"It wasn't I who found it, sir, really. There isn't a scrap of credit due to me. But—but I don't know how to tell you what I feel, sir. I thought I could never be happy again; but now I could stand on my head for sheer joy!"

Mr. Linton forgot to ask again how it had been found. He was to learn later. Then it hardly seemed to matter.

It was as though before the eyes of Manners a transformation took place in him. He did not take on the appearance of youth. That would have been rather too much to expect at his age. But the haggard look had gone from his face; his eyes were different. He was the Mr. Linton of old.

He fingered the pages of the carbon copy caressingly.

A lump came into the throat of Manners, and a mist was before his eyes.

He had done a base and cruel thing. But the damage was repaired, and he did not know how to be thankful enough.

"Manners!"

Mr. Linton's voice was queer. Manners replied hoarsely, because of that silly lump.

"Yes, sir."

"We have both been in the wrong. I ought to have known you too well to believe you guilty of meanness. I let my temper get the better of me. I am not making excuses for you. If I told you that what you did was excusable you would not believe me. But I want to make you understand that I consider myself not guiltless."

"You're—you're too good to me, sir!" gasped Manners.

Then his head went down on his arms, and the tears came.

Mr. Linton patted his shoulder.

"Cheer up, Manners!" he said. "Providence has been very good to us. You will not have to remember bitterly the wrong you did me, since it has been repaired. I have not to mourn the loss of the fruit of long years of work. You shall help me with the missing pages. I think I can recall them almost word for word, and I will dictate them to you. Be comforted, my boy!"

Manners gave one great gulping sob. Then he sat up and dried his eyes.

Mr. Linton held out his hand.

Manners grasped it and went. There was no need for more words between them.

They were back on the old footing—or very nearly so.

It was not in nature that either should ever quite forget. But there would be no resentment in their memories. When Manners got another imposition, even though it might not be deserved, he would suffer no burning sense of wrong. Mr. Linton would be able to think again of Manners as one of the best fellows in his Form.

There was something that still needed explanation. But explanation was forthcoming.

Mr. Railton instituted a very thorough inquiry into the line-selling business. He could not take it lightly.

He got from the line merchants a full confession, and he found out who had bought lines, and went into the matter with them.

They were made to feel that they had behaved badly, and they were punished.

Trimble and Mellish were fined as well as punished otherwise. The fruits of their iniquity went into the poor-box.

But Baggy got something out of it, after all. Manners surprised him by taking him to the tuck shop, and letting him eat his fill. It cost Manners several shillings which he had meant to devote to photographic material. But he felt that he owed Baggy something for retrieving that carbon copy, and this was his way of paying. He did not explain why he did it, and Baggy went about for a day or two in the vain belief that one of the Terrible Three had at last recognised his shining merits.

Only for a day or two, for then it was made clear to him that Manners was not a true pal. Manners caught him at the cupboard in No. 10, and was quite unfriendly about it.

Gore was among the delinquents in the matter of the lines, of course. He did not tell Mr. Railton that he had purchased them for someone else's benefit. That would not have been a real excuse, and it would have served no purpose to say anything about it to the Housemaster.

But, talking over the matter with Talbot, not wholly without memory of the popularity that had come to him when he had tried to lighten trouble for Manners, he mentioned what he had done.

Now, Talbot, who did not know of the matter of the burned typescript, had heard during the time since the duplicate had been discovered of the mystery of those lines with Mr. Linton's notes on the back of one sheet; and he perceived what had happened.

"You ought to tell Manners about that, Gore," he said quietly.

"I don't want him to thank me, and I bar his ragging me," answered Gore.

"I don't think it's in the least likely he'll thank you. He may rag you. But he ought to know," Talbot said. "It means a lot to him. It will clear up something that is worrying him."

"Oh, all right," said Gore, more readily influenced by Talbot than by anyone else.

"You may have to go and confess to Linton," Talbot added.

"I couldn't. Hanged if I will! I should feel such a fool!"

"I think you will if Manners explains," said Talbot.

Manners did not explain at first. He called Gore a silly ass—but he spoke in a friendly way, for he saw that Gore had meant well, and he felt charitable towards all the world. Then Gore pressed to know what trouble it had caused.

The upshot of it was that Gore went to Mr. Linton, who was more than glad to have the mystery cleared up, though he had resolved never to hold it against Manners.

It may be that Mr. Linton thought the better of Gore for coming to him. But that was not a matter of any great importance to George Gore, anyway.

THE END.

(Martin Clifford has another topping yarn dealing with the world-famous chums of St. Jim's in store for next week. Make a note of the title: "THE SCHOOLBOY INVENTOR!" And don't forget, chums, to order your "Gem" WELL IN ADVANCE.)



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

LONGER STORIES!

GEMITES always prick up their ears, so to speak, when they see this headline, for their thoughts turn, naturally, to longer St. Jim's stories. Well, after this week, there will be longer St. Jim's stories. How's that? Ninety-nine out of every hundred of you will be pleased, I feel sure, at this welcome change, even although it means the displacement of the St. Jim's News. Still, we can't have our bread buttered on both sides. The first story on these new lines will be before you next week, together with the opening chapters of the grand adventure serial by Sidney Drew I have previously made mention of, and which I shall refer to again in the following par. But to return to this first St. Jim's story of the "extra length." It deals with Bernard Glyn and one of his inventive spasms, and Mr. Martin Clifford carries his readers along on a strong tide of interest. Humour there is in plenty, as is only to be expected with Glyn and his inventions, and there is also a strong dramatic theme underlying the lighter structure of the yarn. You'll enjoy it, there's not the slightest doubt about that, boys, so keep your peepers open for next week's issue.

"A PHANTOM THRONE!"

To those in the "dark" as to what that means, let me hasten to inform them that "A Phantom Throne" is the title of the wonderful serial story Sidney Drew has written specially for the GEM. It deals with the Royalist plot in Germany to restore the ex-Kaiser to the throne, and from that you can gather the sort of yarn you are booked for. It simply abounds in thrilling and dramatic situations.

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but Sidney Drew does not lose sight of the fact that "Gemites" like to laugh now and again, even if situations are fraught with peril. Your old pals Ferrers Lord, the millionaire yacht owner, his nephew Val Hilton, David Ap Rees, the shrewd-headed Welshman, Gan Waga, and others too numerous to mention here, all figure in this amazing tale of political intrigue. You'll enjoy the first chapters no end, and when you come to my italics at the curtain, reminding you to read the following week's instalment, you'll be saying, "What does the Ed. do that for? I'm jolly well making certain of the next chapters, anyway, without any reminders from him." Don't forget, my lads. Starts next week!

"THE SCARLET STREAK!"

I want to remind you chaps that this week's offer of £10 in connection with "The Scarlet Streak" Competition concludes the series. If you're keen to pick up some of the fine cash awards waiting to be won, you'll wire in with this week's simple Picture-Puzzle, and send in your effort right now. Never put off till to-morrow, etc., you know. If you want more encouragement still, take a squint at the result of Competition No. 5, given on page 9, and just picture what you would do if you won some of that prize money. 'Nuff said!

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE SCHOOLBOY INVENTOR!"

By Martin Clifford.

Being an extra long complete yarn of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, with Bernard Glyn and Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School, in the limelight.

"A PHANTOM THRONE!"

By Sidney Drew.

A grand opening instalment of the finest adventure story of the year. Tell your pals about it in advance, and get them to start with the first instalment. Thanks! Cheerio, chums.

Your Editor.

BOB'S CHANCE! For months Bob Evans has dreamed of the sensation the full story of the Scarlet Streak would create in newspaperdom, and now comes his chance to "tell the world"—to give his paper the scoop of the century!



The Concluding Chapters of this Thrilling Story of Romance and Adventure.

A Shock for the Monk!

IN the deep water at the foot of the cliff, Mary lay tangled in the clinging weeds that grew about the rotting woodwork of some long-lost hull. One glimpse Bob got of her through the green of the water all about him, and with swift strokes he made for her moving, struggling form.

With strong hands he tore the brown weed from about her arms and shoulders. He sent a haze of debris floating upwards as he kicked away a baulk of sea-soaked wood; then he caught her by one arm and struck out strongly for the surface.

She slipped from his hold as they neared the surface and began to swim upwards. Evidently she was not hurt by the fall from the cliff. They reached the surface with lungs straining, and gulped salt-laden air as they fought against the great waves that swung down on them.

A dozen times they were overwhelmed by the waves as they swam side by side for the flat-topped rocks that showed to one side of the cliff base. They reached them safely. Bob scrambled out, and then pulled Mary up.

"Did you see who was in that car?" Mary gasped, the moment that she was clear of the water. "It was Leontine!"

"Leontine!" Bob exclaimed.

He stared at Mary, while he shook some of the water from his clothes. Leontine, driving a car as hard as it could go, and taking the road which led down to Pirate Cove!

Bob did not know that Leontine was now playing a lone hand. The Monk had rejected her attempt to rejoin his gang, and she was after the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak on her own—racing to get to the cove first.

But, although Bob did not know her motives, he had always been suspicious of her. He stood with an arm about Mary's shoulders, staring reflectively over the rocks. It was as he stared that he found himself looking at a broken hulk set beside a stretch of sand, with massive rocks growing near it, and a screen of bushes behind.

"What's that wreck?" he exclaimed. "Isn't it the—"

He broke off, and glanced swiftly about him. From the base of the cliff the coast dropped abruptly back, the high ground shelving down. Where the slope became less pronounced, it was possible to

see a short stretch of rough road—the road to Pirate Cove!

"It's the cove!" Mary exclaimed. "That's the ship, and the anchor must be on the other side of it. We're there, Bob!"

Impulsively she started forward, but Bob stopped her. "We're not there, and it'll take us some time to get there over these rocks," he said quietly. "Anyway, we shall travel a bit quicker if we get some of the water out of our clothes."

They spent a little while relieving themselves of the burden of sea-water that soaked them as a result of their immersion. Then, in the hot sunshine, they clambered over the rocks and hurried towards the broken hull that showed on the far point of the cove. But, though they hurried, the distance over the broken shore was greater than they thought, and more than half an hour elapsed before they reached the spot at which the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak were hidden, and in that half-hour many things happened.

Leontine did not pause a moment in her wild career after so narrowly missing Mary's horse. The very sight of the inventor's daughter and the young reporter riding near her was only an incentive to Leontine to travel more swiftly.

Her car skidded on almost every bend until she reached the slope to Pirate Cove. The Ford roared down it at terrific pace, then braked to a halt at the bottom. She leaned over to the seats behind her and grabbed one of the shovels. A moment later and she was out of the car, running forward towards the black bulk of the old ship.

The hull was trapped between gigantic rocks, and at one side hung a mighty anchor, rusted with age and pitted by the salt air and the ravages of wind and wave. A glance at her wrist-watch showed Leontine that it was almost exactly twelve o'clock. She marked the place at which the shadow of the anchor fell, and started to dig madly.

The sand fairly flew from her spade, and she was quick to see that it was but loosely packed. In less than a minute the metal head of the spade clicked against something hard. She dropped the tool and delved with her hands, tucked her long fingers about the side of a small, flat, black box, and whipped it triumphantly from the hole.

So absorbed was she in her work that she failed to

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

BOB EVANS has sacrificed his career as star reporter for the "Daily Times" in order to aid

RICHARD CRAWFORD and his daughter, MARY, in their fight against a gang of crooks headed by

THE MONK. Mr. Crawford has invented a terrible death-ray machine which is known as the Scarlet Streak, and the Monk seeks possession of it. The inventor disappears, and Mary and the rest believe him to be dead; only COUNT K.—who is a friend of the Crawfords, but who was at one time in the Monk's gang—knows that the inventor is in hiding on Catalina Island, where he is building another Scarlet Streak to replace one which has been accidentally destroyed.

The plans of the Scarlet Streak are hidden at Pirate Cove on the island. Mary seeks them in order to carry on her father's work. She races to the cove on horseback, accompanied by Bob; the Monk and a man named Pug Logan travel by car, while LEONTINE—who has quarrelled both with the Monk and with Count K.—also goes by road. The car all but runs into Mary's horse, and the animal bolts. Mary is flung sheer over a cliff into the sea; Bob dives to her rescue, and, under water, he sees that she is entangled in weeds and wreckage!

(Now read on.)

hear the approach of the Monk's car. The Monk and Pug Logan sighted her while they were still some little distance off, and with a swift twist on the steering-wheel the machine thrust quietly into the bushes near the wrecked ship.

Screened by the foliage, the Monk watched Leontine as she dug swiftly.

"Better rush her!" Pug Logan growled. "You don't want her to get away with the plans, do you?"

"Wait!" snarled the Monk, and his lips twisted into a thin smile. "If she finds the blueprints, we'll get them. We'll get them off her easily enough!"

It was at that moment that Leontine drew the box from the hole. For a moment she stood looking at it; then she straightened up, glanced swiftly around, and raced for the Ford. She flung the box in without stopping to open it, leaped to the driving-seat, and sent the machine roaring forward, almost before either the Monk or Pug could realise what she was doing.

She thought that the crooks were hard on her heels, and she dared not delay even the few moments that it would take to open the box. She did not know, however, that the Monk was already on the scene.

The Ford went rattling and banging up the slope. It was half-way up when the Monk's machine came hurtling in pursuit. For all the start that Leontine had gained the crooks' powerful car swiftly overhauled her, and the chase lasted less than a couple of miles.

Leontine turned her machine to a road that skirted the coast, and it was as she sent the Ford skidding round a curve that the Monk yelled to Pug, who was at the wheel: "Get her now, Pug!"

The ex-pugilist pressed on the accelerator pedal, and the car seemed to leap forward. Full to the back of the car it went, thrusting the tail of the skidding machine round. Skillfully Pug skidded his own car on the inside of the other, just as the Ford's off-side wheels left the road.

For an instant the tyres bit on the grass that edged it. The fraction of a second later and the car skidded to the steep slope that ran down to the cliff beyond. The machine leaped into the air, heaved completely over, pitching out Leontine and everything else in the body.

Leontine fell and slithered a dozen yards before she came to a stop on the steep, grassy bank, while the Ford went on downwards, rolling over and over until it plunged out of sight above the lip of the cliff, and finally shattered itself on the rocks far below.

Dazed and shaken, Leontine lay there, while the Monk and Pug stopped their machine and leaped out. The Monk's keen gaze had glimpsed the little black box as it was shot out of the car. It had been flung to the side of the road, and he snatched it. With strong fingers he eagerly wrenched open the lid, to find that the sole contents of the box was a single sheet of paper!

"It's a letter to Mary Crawford!" the Monk exclaimed disgustedly, as he opened it out. "It's in old Crawford's writing, too! Curse him! What the—"

"What's that at the bottom there?" Pug cut in, as he looked at the sheet; and the Monk's gaze followed his pointing finger to the only part of the letter that mattered to them:

"The blueprints I have with me. Count K. will bring you to me.

"YOUR FATHER."

"The count!" snarled the Monk. "The count! I always suspected that smooth hound! Crawford's not dead—and the count knows where he is!" His sunken eyes blazed with a ferocity that made even the hardened Pug Logan catch his breath.

The Monk crumpled the paper in his hand, and for an instant he stared down to where Leontine lay down the slope. Then, abruptly, he swung round to the car.

"The count! All right, I'll settle with him!" he growled. "Now I know where I am! If I find the count, I'll find Crawford—find Crawford, and I get the Scarlet Streak plans!"

With the words, he jumped into the car.

"Back her round, and make for Pirate Cove!" the Monk rapped at Logan. "We'll keep a watch on there and see what happens—the count may turn up, and if he does we can spy on him from the top of the hill!"

Leontine roused as she heard the car move off. She climbed unsteadily to the top of the slope in time to see the machine streaking around the bend. Lying there, she had heard enough to tell her that the blueprints were not in the box, and she had heard what the Monk had said afterwards.

She was shaken, but she was not much hurt. Like the Monk, she now knew that the count would lead her not only to Mr. Crawford's hiding-place, but to possession of the plans of the death-ray machine.

After a few moments' rest to steady her reeling brain she, too, started in the direction of Pirate Cove.

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The Attack!

TOILSOME, scrambling over sea-worn rocks and patches of soft sand brought Bob and Mary to the cove. They stared blankly in the shadow-filled hole below the rusted anchor, then Bob dropped to his knees and began to delve in the sand. He found nothing.

He glanced at Mary, and saw that she was smiling wryly.

"It's no good, Bob. Somebody has been here before us!" He straightened up as she spoke, and she moved away to lean against the stout shank of the old anchor.

"It's the Monk!" Bob said quickly. "It can't be anybody else. Well, I know where the Monk is hanging out—and Mr. Scott will lend me enough men to make Pug Logan's place look like—"

He broke off, as Mary shook her head hopelessly. "The Monk is too cunning not to have thought of anything you can do!" she told him. "If he has been here and has got away with the plans, then it's certain that he is making quite—"

Her voice died away as they heard the swift hum of a car tearing down the narrow road to Pirate Cove. It had stopped by the time they turned; the count leapt from it, to walk hurriedly towards them. There was half a smile on his face as he said:

"You've found—nothing?"

"Nothing!" growled Bob. "The Monk got here first!"

"Nothing but the hole and the spade that made it!" Mary said, as she stepped forward. "I'm afraid we're beaten, and—"

"Don't give up!" The count's eyes were gleaming as he spoke, and that strange smile was still playing about his lips. "Return to the Scott home—I will soon have good news for you!"

"Good—news!" exclaimed Mary, while Bob looked at the count narrowly. Somehow, Bob had always liked him, and from his manner the young reporter drew renewed hope.

"Yes, good news!" the count repeated. "I was afraid that—in fact, I was almost certain that you would find nothing when you got here! I've been working on my own, and I—"

He broke off, then added: "Let me run you to Mr. Scott's house. There is something I must do before I tell you everything!"

Both stared at him wonderingly. They questioned him, but he would tell them nothing more, and a few minutes later they were in his car, speeding back to Mr. Scott's home—and, as they went, the Monk and Pug Logan watched from the top of the cliff. They started up their machine, and followed in close and silent pursuit.

The count dropped Bob and Mary, then he sent his car on towards the secret shack in which Mr. Crawford was hiding with his now completed second death-ray machine. He ran his car off the road to the trail that led to the shack, and stopped near the building.

As he jumped from the car, a man appeared from out some nearby bushes. He was a big-shouldered, keen-eyed fellow, and his hand went to his hat in a gesture that was half a salute.

"Everything all right?" the count asked.

"Yes, sir. The rest will be down here in about a quarter of hour!"

"Good! But I wish they were here now!" the count said curtly. "I don't like the way things are going. All right!"

He stepped away and made straight for the shack, rapping deliberately on the door. The inventor opened it cautiously, peered out, then opened the door wider, and the count stepped in.

But he did not enter unseen. The Monk, Pug Logan, and two other men had followed in a car, and their machine was now on the edge of the wood, safely hidden. They had come the rest of the way on foot, and had been just in time to see the count leave the man and enter the shack.

The Monk snarled as he watched from behind a screen of bushes.

"I knew that the count wasn't on the square!" he grated. "If that man isn't some sort of cop, I'll—"

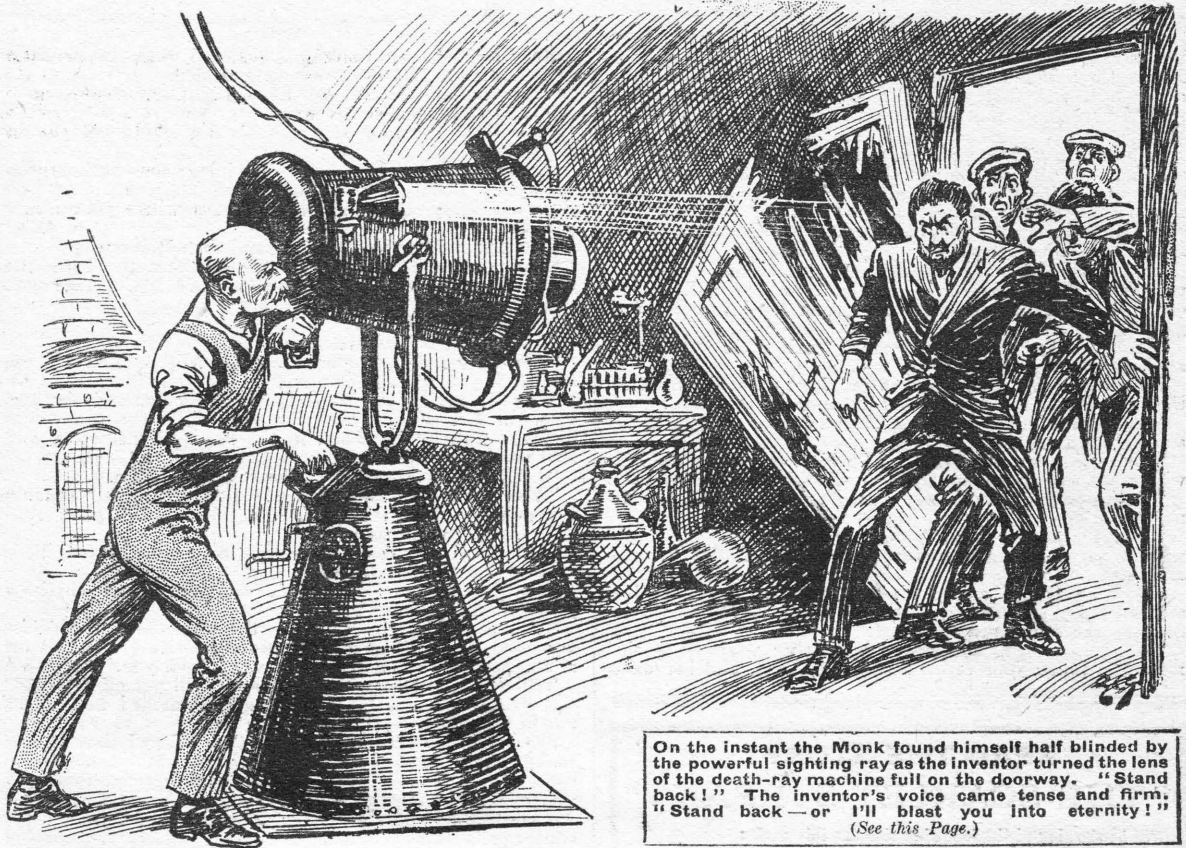
He broke off as he turned to Logan. "Wait until the count clears out, Pug, then go and flop that fellow over there. When you've done that, we'll rush the place—this is where Crawford is hiding, for a certainty!"

Inside the shack, the count was talking quickly.

"The Monk just beat Bob Evans to Pirate Cove—at least, I think it was the Monk, but it may have been Leontine," he said. "Anyway, they've got your letter to Mary, and—worst of all—they know that you're alive and that you and I are working together!"

The inventor's lips tightened. He stood a moment, thinking. Then:

"Bring Mary to me, at once!" he said. "If the Monk



On the instant the Monk found himself half blinded by the powerful sighting ray as the inventor turned the lens of the death-ray machine full on the doorway. "Stand back!" The inventor's voice came tense and firm. "Stand back—or I'll blast you into eternity!" (See this Page.)

has my note to her, he may discover us before we can turn the new model over to the Government!"

"I don't think there's much fear of that!" the count assured him. "But the Monk can work swiftly! I don't want to take too many chances. However, I shall have help here very shortly, and—well, I'll fetch her and chance it!"

He turned to the door after a quick handshake; less than a minute later his car was bumping over the trail back to the road.

Mr. Crawford barred the door, then turned to the new Scarlet Streak. He had tested it, and the machine was working in a fashion that brought a light of joy to his lined face. Outside the shack showed a score of broken and shattered tree-stumps, which testified to the power of the death-ray machine.

Its gleaming metal tripod and shining bulbous head looked strangely grim and powerful in the light of the big room; the inventor went round his machine, giving it the final touches that it needed.

He switched on the sighting ray, and made one or two adjustments—while in the bushes near at hand, Pug Logan knocked out the solitary guardian of that lonely shack, and the Monk and his men moved stealthily through the rank grasses to the front of the building.

Through the window the Monk got a glimpse of the inventor. He leaped from the sharp glow of the sighting ray as it slashed through the glass, and rejoined his men just by the door.

"He's alone!" the Monk rasped. "It'll be easy. We'll smash in the door and rush him before he—"

His words were interrupted as Pug Logan sneezed violently. The sound—unusual in the quietude of the wood—came to the inventor's ears, and he stepped to the window. He got a glimpse of the four crooks, and they saw him at the same moment. Mr. Crawford jerked down the blind over the window, then leaped to the door just as Pug Logan and the Monk flung their weight on it.

The door shuddered, and the heavy wooden bar across it shook and strained under their assault. Again the men flung their weight on the woodwork, and the bar cracked ominously. The inventor saw that it would not hold for more than a few seconds, and he jumped to his machine, flinging the sighting-ray directly on the door, while with his right hand he found the heavy switch which would release the livid, lashing death-ray which had come to be called the "Scarlet Streak."

Outside the shack the Monk grabbed up a chair on which the inventor had been wont to sit during sunny

afternoons. With a single powerful swing the Monk smashed in the window-frame, and he flung himself across the sill into the room.

On the instant he found himself half blinded by the powerful sighting-ray as the inventor turned the lens of the death-ray machine full on him. The Monk cowered, one arm across his eyes.

"Stand back!" The inventor's voice came, tense and firm. "Stand back, or I'll blast you into eternity!"

At that moment the door gave under the assault of the gang, and it crashed open as the bar broke in a shower of splintered wood. The Monk leaped before them as they plunged into the room.

"Don't rush him!" he gasped.

Behind them Pug Logan bent almost double as the white light from the Scarlet Streak flung full on them. For an instant he stared at the white-overalled form of the inventor, then Pug slipped backwards across the threshold and disappeared. Mr. Crawford did not see him go.

"One move, and I'll throw the switch!" the inventor gasped; and his hand trembled on the fatal ebonite knob as he spoke.

The Monk and his companions stood like men turned to stone, not daring to move. Only too well did they know the power of the livid ray that would tongue from the rounded, heavy lens if the inventor's hand dropped on the switch.

For long seconds they stood there, bathed in the brilliant light, and then Pug Logan's thick-set figure appeared in the window at the other side of the shack, behind Mr. Crawford.

The Monk saw him, and he was quick to seize his opportunity.

"Stop where you are, Pug!" he called sharply; and, at his words, the inventor glanced over his shoulder. He saw the prizefighter shaping to leap at him, and he swung the Scarlet Streak round to cover him.

On the instant the Monk shot full length at him, his men at his heels.

Half a minute later and they were holding the struggling figure of the inventor helpless in a chair.

The Last Card is Played!

BACK at Livingston Scott's house Mary was waiting anxiously to learn the secret which the count had promised to disclose. Bob was with her, and it seemed ages since the count had left them; actually it was only a few minutes.

Neither of them knew what had happened to Leontine,

and they were not disposed to inquire. She had got a lift from a passing motorist, and had arrived at the Scott homestead soon after themselves. On the journey from Pirate Cove the count had dropped Bob a hint or two about her, and that was quite sufficient for the youthful reporter to guess that she was more for the Monk than for themselves.

Leontine herself was not certain of the way things were shaping, and she determined to keep in the background as much as possible. She wanted to know what was happening, but she dared not let the count see her; that was why she reconnoitred from the corner of the veranda on which Mary and Bob were sitting.

"I do hope the count hurries back," Mary said. "I don't understand what he was driving at before he left. What could he mean—my father is dead, and the blueprints are gone!"

"He's a queer chap, is the count," said Bob. "I've got an idea that— Here he is!"

He started from his chair as a car drew up at the front of the house, and the count came leaping up the steps.

Mary moved quickly to meet him; she said nothing as he smiled down at her.

"Come with me," he said. "I will take you to the one who alone can prove the truth of what I promised you."

"You promised good news!" Mary told him quickly. "Is my father—"

"You'll see very soon!" the count cut in. "I don't want to say anything just now. I want both of you to come and—"

His voice trailed away; his eyes narrowed as Leontine stepped from around the corner of the porch. She thrust between the count and Mary.

"If you go with him you are trusting yourself to the man who killed your father!" she exclaimed, and her dark

eyes flashed as she whipped round to stare accusingly at the count.

Mary started, and Bob's fists clenched until the knuckles showed white. But the count only smiled.

"Your father is not dead," he said quietly.

Leontine laughed at his words.

"He lies!" she told Mary. "It's a trick to get you in his power."

"It's the truth," the count exclaimed; and as he spoke he pushed Leontine away and faced Mary again. "You must not delay—the Monk might learn where your father is hiding!"

Once again Leontine laughed, and then Bob cut in: "Listen, Mary. If the count is speaking the truth, he will tell you where your father is, and I will take you there!"

Mary nodded quickly.

"Yes, will you do that, count?"

"Certainly I will," he answered heartily. "You can use my car if you wish. Come on!"

They descended the steps to the machine, and the two entered. Bob leaned over the side while the count told him the way to the shack in the heart of the wood, and Bob nodded as he listened.

"I'll be right after you!" the count told him.

"You'll have to move, then!" Bob laughed. "Because I'm going to drive this machine as hard as it'll go!" And with his words he sent the car roaring forward.

As it went the count spoke to the man who had been driving the machine for him.

"Get busy now! We don't want to chance anything going wrong, and—"

"The men have just left for the wood, sir," the driver answered him. "The other gents are waiting on the road at the back of the house for the word from you."

"All right; I'll go with them, and we'll get off at once!" the count said crisply; and Leontine watched him as he strode away.

She hesitated a moment or so, then slipped through the room behind to the back of the house, ran around the corner, and paused by an empty car that stood there. It was one of Livingston Scott's machines, but Leontine did not hesitate to make use of it. She jumped in, pressed the starter-pedal, and started off after Bob and Mary, following the directions which she had overheard the count give to the youthful reporter.

And down in the shack in the wooded hollow the Monk and Pug Logan were pushing the death-ray machine towards the door.

"That's just in case any of your friends try to scotch us!" the crook snarled to where the inventor was being held down in the chair. "Now, I want the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak—and I want 'em quick!"

"You'll never get them!" Mr. Crawford ripped back at him.

"Won't I?" the Monk grinned evilly. "There's ways and means of making you talk if you—"

"You can't get away with the machine," the inventor told him. "And you won't find the plans if you look for a week. What's more, you haven't got a week in which to look. There's no—"

Pug Logan cut in on his words with a sharp exclamation as he stared out through the doorway.

"Who's that?" he asked quickly; and he pointed to where a car was skimming along the road which led down to the hollow.

Twice the car disappeared on the winding road, then it came into full view, and the Monk snatched up a pair of field-glasses that lay close at hand. He adjusted them swiftly, then followed the movement of the car.

"It's Bob Evans and the girl!" he exclaimed. "That mad young devil has turned up again, but I'll fix him this time! I'll fix him for good!"

He turned to the inventor, and shook his fist in his face.

"Sit there and watch! I'll give your machine a test like it's never had before!" And he whirled round to the Scarlet Streak.

The Monk knew how it worked, and he switched on the sighting-ray, while the men holding Mr. Crawford heaved him back on the chair as he tried to break free.

The Monk gazed out of the doorway, and he brought the sighting-ray to bear on a point where the road topped the hill. A moment after, and Bob's machine flashed into view—then stopped!

The Monk laughed as he saw it, and his hand slipped out to the lever which controlled the death-ray.

Up on the hill Bob and Mary were looking down from the stationary car, picking out the view of the shack in the

READ THE STORY!

"THE SCARLET STREAK!"

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SEE THE FILM!

heart of the wood, Mary smiling as she viewed the place in which her father had been hiding.

And down in the shack the Monk was glancing at the inventor as he began to close the heavy switch.

With a choking cry, the inventor flung himself forward. His very desperation imbued his lean body with sinewy strength, and for an instant he was free!

He flung himself at the Monk, hurling him away from the machine, while the rest of the gang piled on him to draw him back.

Mr. Crawford fought madly, flinging the men off—while up on the hill Bob sent his car forward, unaware of the narrowness of their escape.

And behind him, Leontine drove her machine, watching them warily. She let them get ahead, then she pulled up in the spot at which they had stopped, and she, too, stared down at the shack.

Down below, the Monk gathered his strength and hurled himself at the struggling form of the inventor. Mr. Crawford saw him coming, and he lashed out at him. His fist caught the crook full on the side of the head and knocked him backwards.

The Monk went down at the foot of the Scarlet Streak; his falling body brushed against the switches. His head crashed down the ebonite knob—the switch that loosed the death-ray!

From the lens of the Scarlet Streak there flashed a livid ray that was blinding in its intensity. Out across the open it tongued—straight to where Leontine sat staring from her car.

There was a quivering roar that seemed to shake the very earth. Black smoke rolled from where the ray slashed home as the Monk twisted and knocked up the fatal switch.

And where Leontine's car had been, there was now nothing but wafting smoke, blackened earth, and scorching grasses, and a light grey dust that slowly settled down over everything for yards around!

With the loosing of the death-ray, Mr. Crawford tore away from the men. He leaped to the door and slammed it shut, then grabbed a chair and lashed out at the gang as they tried to close with him again. One man he sent headlong, then the rest were on him, using their weight and strength to bear him down, punching at him viciously—using what weapons they had in an effort to knock him up into insensibility.

Bob heard the sounds of the fight as he pulled his car up before the cabin. He shot out of it and went racing for the door, with Mary close behind him. He saw Mr. Crawford on the floor, and the Monk came at him as he dived through the doorway. Bob met him with a smashing right that sent the arch-crook reeling back, then he jumped at the struggling group.

He hauled Pug Logan off the inventor and sent him flying across the room; he crashed another man to the floor just as Mary came running in.

"Father!" she exclaimed, and she tried to help him up while Bob gritted his teeth and waded into the gang with both hands.

Outside the count jumped from a car that came roaring up the trail—a car which was loaded with men. They reached the cabin on the run, just as Bob was settling something of his account with Pug Logan. Twice he smashed the prize-fighter backwards, and twice Pug Logan came at him again—and then the man saw the count and his companions coming in through the doorway.

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Without hesitation, Pug shot through the window behind him; Bob started to follow him.

"Let him go!" the count roared. "He can't get away, Bob! The place is surrounded!"

The Monk dived desperately for the doorway, but half a dozen hands fastened on him. Before he knew what was happening, the steely glitter of handcuffs flashed before his eyes and the metal snapped home about his wrists. The rest of the gang were pounced on, dragged to their feet and served in the same way.

"Get them out of it!" the count ordered, and Bob turned to watch in amazement as the Monk was dragged towards the door.

The bearded man raised his handcuffs high above his head and tried to smash out at the count, but his captors hauled him back. Raving and cursing, the crook was hauled through the doorway, as also were the others after him.

"And that settles them!" the count exclaimed cheerfully, as he stepped towards Bob.

"What's all this?" the young reporter demanded.

"What's the—"

"Bob, my name is not Count K——. I'm Marshall, of the Secret Service!" came the answer, and he laughed at Bob's amazement. "I joined the Monk and his gang to protect Crawford in his great work!"

"You're a— a Secret Service man!" Bob gasped. "A—"

He broke off as he turned to where Mr. Crawford was coming forward, one arm about Mary's shoulders.

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"I shall never be able to thank you enough, Marshall!" he said, as he held out his hand, and then he explained to Mary and Bob how he came to be there and what the "Count" had done for him. "He's been planning to round up the Monk and his gang ever since you landed on the island!"

"And a good place to round them up, too," Marshall cut in. "They couldn't get away. But I cut things very fine, another ten minutes—" He checked and added: "Well, I think your Scarlet Streak has done a little work already to-day, from what I saw as we drove along the road. Something went—"

"Yes, it was the Monk who let off the death-ray!" the inventor told him. "He tried to get Bob and Mary with it—but I managed to stop him!"

"Then he got Leontine!" Marshall exclaimed. "She was in front of us—he must have hit her! This machine of yours is a terrible weapon, Mr. Crawford, and it—"

"My object in inventing a machine of such destructive power was to enable our Government to carry out its ideals of universal peace—and put an end to all wars!" the inventor broke in.

A tall man stepped from behind him, and touched his shoulder. He had come in with the count, although he had taken no part in the arrest of the crooks. He shook his head as he looked at the inventor and said slowly:

"But the Government has decided that the nature and power of the Scarlet Streak would defeat the purpose you had in mind!" The inventor stared at him blankly, and the stranger went on: "It would not bring universal peace—it might bring a desire for world domination! The Government will recompense you for all your work—it will buy your invention, but it cannot use it in warfare!"

Mr. Crawford was unconvinced but, later on, he saw the reasons for the Government's contention; and although the Scarlet Streak could never be put to the use he had intended, much of the research work he had done brought to light things which were of transcendent importance in a more humane sphere.

Bob Evans listened. Suddenly he exclaimed: "The story of the Scarlet Streak would be the biggest scoop in years—how I would love to write it!"

He turned to Mary as he spoke, and she smiled up at him. She started to speak, but the man who had talked with her father stepped across and patted Bob on the shoulder.

"You shall write the story—and the 'Daily Times' will publish it!" he said.

"I'll write it!" Bob gasped. "I've been sacked—I've lost my job with the 'Times'!"

"You'll have it back!" the stranger told him, and he drew a card from his pocket as he spoke: "That will tell you who I am! I am owner of the 'Daily Times'—and you are still my star reporter!"

Mary looked at Bob. "I'll come with you!" she exclaimed. "You told me once that you were a newspaperman first, last, and all the time. Let's see you prove it!"

Accompanied by Mary, Bob hurried off and wrote up the required copy.

And while the world read of the sensational happenings, down in the little shack Mr. Crawford himself superintended the destruction of the Scarlet Streak. They burnt all the blueprints and plans, and Secret Service men smashed the death-ray machine with sledge-hammers until it retained no semblance to its former shape.

The thing was utterly destroyed, and in a little while the rotting timbers of the old shack fell in on to the wreckage; spiders weaved their webs on the broken steel and birds nested in the debris.

And so, while the Scarlet Streak lay rusting in its tree-walled tomb, church-bells rang merrily, and Bob Evans walked from the altar with Mary on his arm. For through peril and hazard he discovered his love for the girl who had shared his dangers—and the chief guest at the wedding was the man who had called himself the "Count."

THE END.



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