

"WITTY WILL WYNN;

Or, The Strange Adventures of a Clown." Our New Serial. (See Inside.)

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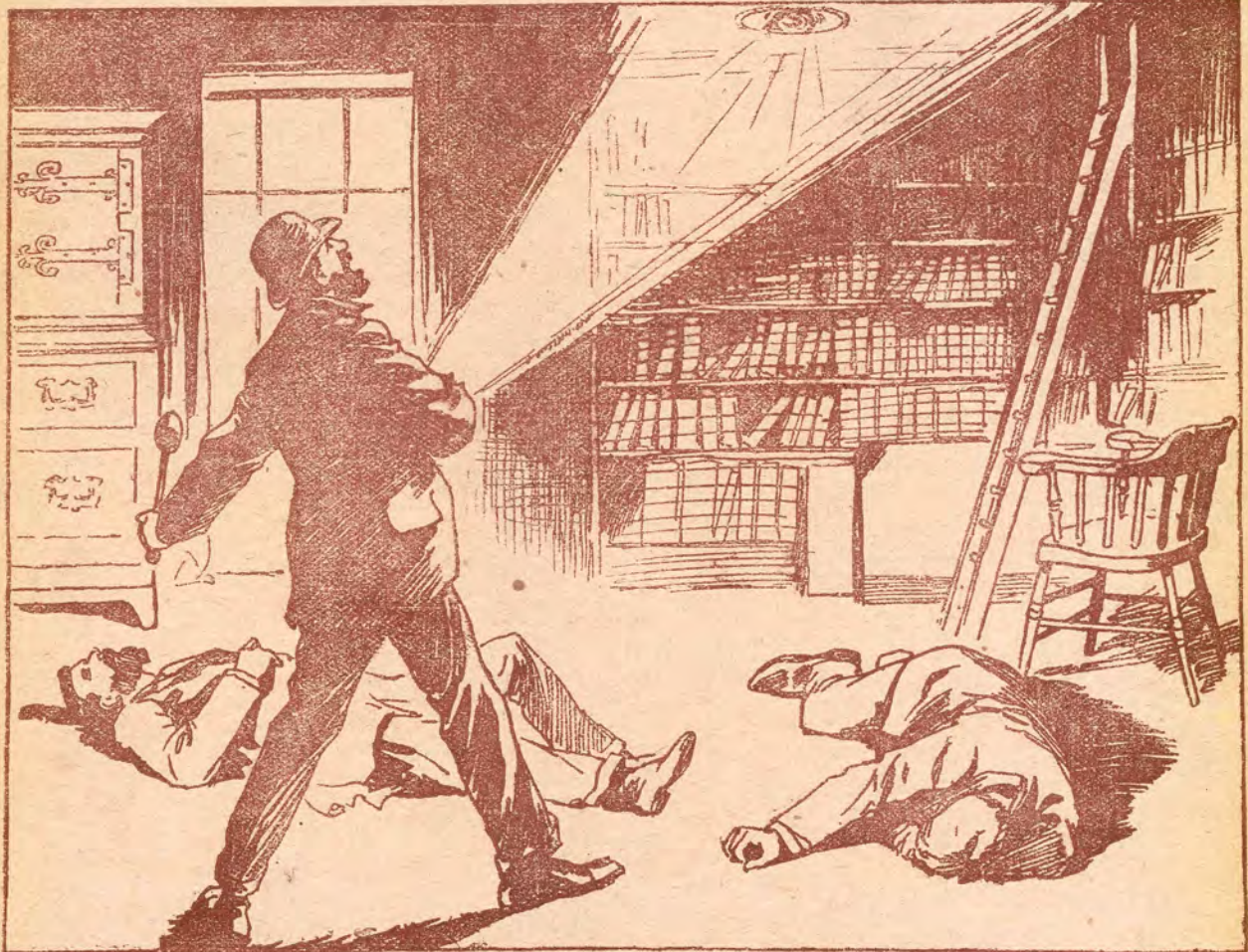
UNION JACK



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AN AVENGING EYE.



Through that disc he saw a single eye—like the eye of a human being, only larger, far larger, glaring down down at him. What was it?

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY.

No. 196.

AN AVENGING EYE;

Or, Dead Man's Cavern.

By H. S. WARWICK,

Author of "A Belt of Diamonds," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

JACK BARRY'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL—HE MAKES A FRIEND AND AN ENEMY—THE HINT OF A STRANGE SECRET.

"Hallo, new boy, what's your name?"

"Jack Barry."

"I hope your father's a gentleman?"

"I hope so, too!"—coolly.

"No cheek! What is he?"

"You seem to take a great interest in my affairs. I wouldn't let other people's business worry you so much, if I were you, or you may have an attack of heart-disease!" quoth Jack Barry curtly, turning away.

Jack Barry was a lad of about fifteen, and this was his first day at Elmbridge School. He was getting just a little tired of being asked his name. Besides, he did not like the manner of his questioner, a boy some ten or twelve months older than himself, whose manner was decidedly bullying.

"Look here, my good fellow, I'm not going to stand any bloom-

ing cheek from you!" cried the other, for Walter Leeson saw that two or three of the little group of boys standing-by were laughing, and he felt that the snubbing which the new boy had given him was responsible for their mirth.

"You'd better take care, or I may have to give you a lesson in respect!" he cried. "What can you do?" "Do you play cricket?" "No."

"Or football?"

"No!" answered Barry curtly.

"Oh, you milksop! Why didn't you bring nurse to take care of you? Anyway, you've come to the right place to get your softness knocked out of you! We don't stand molly-coddles here, do we, boys?" cried Leeson.

"I see. Then you very kindly think of taking me in hand, and making me less of a milksop?" asked Jack Barry blandly.

His would-be tormentor was somewhat amazed. He could not make this new-comer out. Dense-headed as he was, Leeson could perceive a strain of irony in Barry's retort.

By reason of his strength, Leeson had acquired a certain amount of authority over a good many lads of his own age in the school. And yet this new-comer, who was shorter than him by an inch or more, set him at defiance! He could see that the boys near were grinning.

The bully felt that his power would be lessened unless he made the new boy realise that he would have to keep a more respectful tongue in his head.

So he answered threateningly:

"Yes; jolly soon, too!"

Jem Barry smiled.

"Although I'm English, I haven't been in England long," he said calmly. "I've been living in America. Most Yanks have plenty of bounce, as you know, so I'm used to hearing brag. And that's perhaps why I take more notice of actions than mere words."

"Why, you young cub—" began Leeson, raising his clenched fist. The other interrupted him.

"Oh, I'm not to be frightened like that!"—standing with his hands in his pocket. "Boys," Jack said, addressing those standing by, "I told you just now that I'm not much of a hand at cricket or football. I've never had the chance out there. They are both glorious games, and now that I've come to England to live, I mean to get in for them hot and strong."

He paused for a moment. His words rang out manly and true, and, approving the sentiment, his listeners began to feel that this "milksop" had some grit in him.

"As for this whipper-snapper," he went on, calmly surveying the angry Leeson, "I've one word for him: I can't play cricket or football yet, but I have mastered the science of using my fists. I'm a peaceable beggar; but I stand no nonsense. And anyone who interferes with me runs the risk of getting his head jolly well punched!"

His words, and the cool tones of self-reliance with which he said them, won Jack Barry more than one friend among the increasing knot of onlookers.

No one liked Walter Leeson, though many were afraid of him. It was a refreshing novelty to see the bully set at defiance.



Through a gap in the hedge a man crept stealthily and followed Edward Barry. They had been spied upon after all!

"You threaten me, then?" stormed Leeson, growing infuriated at the jeers of the crowd.

"You are at liberty to take my words anyway you please!" retorted Jack contemptuously. "Their meaning is plain enough, I think."

"I take it that you are inviting a sound thrashing, and you shan't be disappointed!" cried the bully.

The scene was a part of the playground at the back of the gymnasium-buildings. It was the place where the school fights generally came off. The boys scented a fight now of more than usual interest.

The bully, confident in his own strength of muscle, was evidently well pleased at his success in provoking an encounter in which he had no doubt that he would be an easy victor. However, as though he thought it sounded rather magnanimous, he said:

"I give you the chance of apologising."

Jack Barry only laughed.

"Never was a good hand at eating my own words," he answered carelessly. "I only apologise when I am conscious of being in the wrong. My candid opinion of you is that you are a bully and a coward. But keep your bullying threats for those who fear them. If you want to fight, I'm your man!"

Jack had rubbed shoulders with the great world in his wanderings abroad with his father. This experience had been invaluable in teaching him a self-reliance older than his years. And his active life, and his father's judicious training, had hardened his muscles, and given him no little skill in the art of self-defence.

Hence his confidence in himself was by no means unjustified. And the fight began.

Leeson opened the attack by striking at Jack. No one was more surprised than he to find that his blow was stopped very neatly, and a fist came into smart collision with his chin, making his teeth rattle like dominoes.

Forgetting, in his passion, the little science he ever knew, Leeson made a wild rush at Jack, striking out furiously. Our hero stepped back, easily parrying the blow; but in so doing his foot slipped, and he fell.

By this time all the evil passions in his opponent were roused. Bending down, Leeson would have struck his fallen foe, amid sudden cries of "Shame!" only at that moment a pair of arms pinioned him from behind.

"No, you don't, you coward!" cried a clear young voice, that came from the boy of about Jack's own age, who had intervened to prevent foul play.

With an angry cry, Leeson shook his captor off, but not before Jack Barry had sprung to his feet, none the worse for his fall. The ring of onlookers saw that a dangerous light had come into Jack's eye. It was as though he now fully realised the nature of his opponent, and would give him no mercy.

The fight that followed is still talked of in Elmbridge School.

At first Jack stood on the defensive, and not one of the heavy slogging blows that Leeson aimed blindly at his lighter opponent reached its mark. The more desperate he grew the wilder became his blows. Jack remained coolly on the defensive. He was biding his time.

Then, when Leeson was winded his punishment began—punishment short but severe. With the blow on his forehead that grassed him, the bully's defeat was decisive. Suddenly he acknowledged that he had had enough.

There was little sympathy for Leeson, whilst our hero found himself the object of murmurs of congratulation from his school-fellows—for what true British boy does not like to see the tables turned upon an aggressor?

But Jack broke away from the little group, and, singling out the boy who had frustrated Leeson's attempt at foul fighting, walked towards him. Holding out his hand, he said:

"I have you to thank, old chap, for coming to my assistance when Leeson wanted to take a cowardly advantage of me. I'm jolly grateful!"

"Oh, it was nothing! I am only too glad you took that bully down a peg. Your name's Barry, isn't it? I think I shall like you, Barry. My name's Crofton—Tom Crofton. Come along for a stroll."

He linked his arm in Jack's as he spoke. The two boys walked away, exchanging confidences.

"Don't I wish I could mill like that, Barry!" exclaimed Crofton enviously.

"Do you? Well, let's make a bargain. I'll teach you to box, and you shall coach me in the games English boys play. I've never had the chance of learning them."

"That's a bargain. But how is it you've never played these games when you were at school in America?"

"Ah, I've never been to a school before. You see, I've lived such a roving life, and my father has been the only school-master I've ever had. It was he who taught me how to use my fists. He taught me other things, too!" And a note of affectionate pride came into the boy's voice as he spoke of his father: "He taught me to hate lies, he bade me stand up for

the weak, to hate anything mean or underhand—but there, I'm boring you."

"Not a bit of it! You have just come to England, then?"

"Yes. Dr. Bennett is an old friend of my father's—they met in America. That is why I came to his school. I've only been in England a couple of days."

"Your father, then, has stayed behind in America, I suppose?" said Crofton.

A curious expression came into Barry's face that puzzled his new friend.

"I don't know that that is a question I have any right to answer," he said slowly. Then, seeing the look of surprise with which Tom Crofton met this odd reply, he continued: "Yes, I think I'll tell you. You and I are going to be chums, and I know I can trust you. My father is in England. But it is absolutely necessary that no one should know it. Oh, don't mistake me! It is not the English law he is afraid of. He is not hiding from the police. But he is guarding a secret which a band of scoundrels would sacrifice even human life to learn!"

"Good heavens!" Tom Crofton was startled. "But surely the police could protect him? Could he not have these scoundrels imprisoned?"

"My father does not know his secret foes by sight, or even by name. The chief of them is known as 'the Tiger'; so much he knows, not more. My father believes he has thrown them off the scent, otherwise his every footstep would be dogged."

Just then the school-bell rang for tea, and as they walked towards the schoolhouse, Jack changed the subject.

Deeply interested though he was by this hint of a strange secret, Tom Crofton understood that his friend wished to say no more about this matter, so he refrained from asking further questions.

He little dreamed how this chance acquaintanceship was very soon to lead him across the dark threshold of mystery, into a veritable maze of strange adventures.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF A HIDDEN TREASURE—A MYSTERIOUS SOCIETY OF CRIME—A SPY!

The two boys soon became fast chums, and their growing friendship induced Jack to tell Tom Crofton more of the secret at which he had hinted.

"It has occurred to me," he said, as he and Tom went out for a stroll on the next half-holiday afternoon, "that I had no right to pique your curiosity the other day without telling you further. I won't ask you to keep as a secret what I am going to say, as I know I can fully trust you—"

"Of course you can, old chap."

"Well, you shall know all. We spring from an old Irish family, that once lived in a great mansion not far from the coast near Dundalk Bay. The Barrys had always been loyal to the Stuarts, and, after the young Pretender's rising in 1745, it became known to the Government that our family had secretly aided the rebellion. From a private source the head of our family heard that he was to be arrested, and his lands forfeited to the Crown. He determined to hide his wealth, and escape abroad in disguise with his son—his wife was dead—until the storm should have blown over. This is a long story, old chap. I'm afraid; but you wouldn't understand the rest of it if I didn't begin at the beginning."

"Go on. I'm awfully interested. The story is just like a romance," said Tom.

"The coast on that part of Ireland is very rugged. The cliffs tower upward to an enormous height. Half-way up the cliffs is a cavern looking out over the sea. Anyone would say that it was inaccessible unless one climbed down by a rope. But those few in the secret knew that a narrow, underground tunnel led from the interior of this cave directly into a cellar in the mansion of the Barrys. My ancestor Rupert Barry took the bulk of his fortune, in gold and jewels, which he, of course, could not carry with him in his flight, down this secret passage and buried them there. The entrance to the tunnel he had strongly walled up, to keep the secret of the hidden fortune safe. Then he and his son got out of the country just in time, and crossed over the sea to America."

"Did he come back again only to find the fortune stolen?"

"No," answered Jack. "We have reason for believing that it still lies hidden there. Well, the fugitive died without ever coming back, and for generations the family either forgot the story of their wealth in Ireland, or treated it with disbelief. Thus for nearly a century and a half the treasure has lain buried in that secret tunnel, unsought for, because unsuspected."

"Then how did you come to learn the secret?" asked Tom.

"In a curious way. One day my father received a letter from England, from a friend of his called Mr. Handford—"

"Mr. Handford? Why someone of that name lives at the Grange, only a couple of miles from here. Can it be the same?"

"Yes; it is the same. It was he who introduced my father

and Dr. Bennett. Mr. Handford is fond of dabbling in antiquarian matters, and by chance, in a very old book, he stumbled across extracts from a letter written by the exiled Rupert Barry to a friend in England, which mentioned the existence of the treasure. In this letter my ancestor did not give many details, but he spoke of having made a careful chart of the locality of the hiding-place, and also of the particular cleft in the cliff-side, by which entrance would have to be made to recover the fortune.

"He spoke of having for safety put this chart into an oak-chest."

"Such was the news my father received from Mr. Handford. Then commenced a hunt for the oak-chest, which had gone out of the possession of our family a generation or so ago. At last it was found in the possession of the daughter of an old servant. There, in a secret drawer, was found the chart, carefully stowed away."

"By Jove! how exciting!" cried Tom. "Go on."

"My father foolishly spoke of his discovery; the story got about. Then we learnt that a gang of unscrupulous men had resolved to steal the chart. Efforts were made in America to obtain it. The house was broken into; my father received a note threatening his life if the treasure-chart was not given up. He was fired at just before we left America."

"But this gang you speak of—" interrupted his friend.

"A band of criminals whose daring deeds have from time to time caused a sensation, both in America and on the Continent. So far the police have not succeeded in breaking up this desperate league," answered Jack. "For safety, my father sent the chart to England, to the care of Mr. Handford, letting it be known that it was no longer in his possession. This baffled the rogues for the time. We have reason to believe that the leading spirit of this gang has his headquarters in London, so my father came to England secretly, and in disguise, hoping thereby to throw these men off the scent, otherwise his footsteps would have been dogged."

"It seems incredible that at the end of the nineteenth century such things are possible!" cried Tom.

"Yet they are possible—nay, actual facts. A detective told us that this gang is responsible for many crimes that have set the world wondering. The members are crafty and cunning; they stop at nothing to effect their evil ends. We may be sure they will not give up this quest without a struggle. Even now, no doubt, they are hunting for the whereabouts of my father."

"Then is the fortune so very great?"

"It is supposed to be worth three-quarters of a million!" was the startling reply.

"Three-quarters of a million!" Tom gasped.

"Yes; the Barry diamonds were known all over Europe. But now, old fellow"—looking at his watch—"I must ask you to leave me. I have an appointment here this afternoon with my father. We cannot be too careful, so we arranged to meet at this quiet place, where we are not likely to be seen by any of our unknown foes."

Jack had not long to wait before his father came. Mr. Barry told his son that he was going that night to the Grange to see his friend, Mr. Handford, when the final arrangements for the recovery of the fortune would be made.

"It will make us rich, boy, beyond our wildest dreams!" cried Mr. Barry enthusiastically. "It is well to be cautious; but I think we have outwitted the scoundrels, and the risk is over. Once we have the treasure and have banked it, these bandits will no doubt accept their defeat, and see the futility of harassing us any further."

Risk over, Edward Barry? Even as you speak perils are crowding in your path, and soon you will carry your life in your hand! No, darker perils than you dreamed of have to be encountered ere that coveted treasure lies within your grasp!

"Mr. Handford has been in Ireland," went on Mr. Barry. "He has explored the locality, and by the aid of the chart has located the cavern-opening. There is no doubt the story is true in every detail."

Father and son sauntered on together for some time, talking earnestly. Then they said good-bye, and parted.

Through a gap in the hedge a man crept stealthily and followed Edward Barry. They had been spied upon after all!

There was a smile on the evil face of the man who followed in the gathering dusk.

"Then, as we suspected, you are in England, Edward Barry, and the chart was sent to your friend at the Grange!" he muttered to himself. "My agent in San Francisco had his wits about him, in advising me to keep an eye on his son—through the young cub I have discovered what I wanted! Your disguise makes you look very different from the photograph I have of you, Edward Barry; but I have penetrated it! Now look to yourself, matched as you are against the Tiger! In the coming struggle for that hidden hoard none shall bar my path!"

Thus, across broad seas, from the new world to the old, these human bloodhounds, of whom this man was the chief, had tracked their quarry.

CHAPTER III.

LEESON'S PLOT—"NOT EXACTLY!"—A BATTLE ROYAL IN THE DORMITORY—WAPSHOTT IN THE WARS—TERRIBLE NEWS.

That night, after tea, during the intervening half-hour before evening "preparation," Tom said to his friend:

"I've got some news for you, old chap."

"Pleasant news, I hope."

"Well, I think you'll be glad you knew of it in time. There's a whisper going round that Leeson and one or two kindred spirits in his dormitory mean to play some kind of practical joke on you to-night when we're all supposed to be asleep."

"Thanks for the tip. Forewarned is forearmed. I happen to bar unpleasant practical jokes, and I sha'n't stand much of Leeson's tomfoolery."

"Rather not! I've got a plan," said Tom. "The other four chaps in our dormitory are decent enough fellows, and none of them have too much love for Leeson. Besides, there's an old feud between our dormitory and Leeson's. We had more than one midnight set-to last term. We're pretty equally matched—six in each dormitory, you know. I've passed the word to the other chaps, and so when Leeson and his pals come to pay their respects to you, they'll find—"

"That they've yet to catch a weasel asleep! By Jove! they shall get more than they bargain for!" cried Jack.

"Prep" over, the boys had supper, and then retired to the dormitories.

"Lads," said Tom Crofton, jumping on to a bed, and addressing his five companions in approved stump-orator style, "as I've told you, we may expect an invasion to-night by the enemy—that is, Number 5 Dormitory. Though the attack is doubtless, aimed merely at one of our number, loyal comradeship demands that the affront shall be resented by us as a body!"

"Hear, hear!" was the response in low but emphatic tones.

"Boys, we've beaten 'em before in many a glorious encounter, and we'll beat 'em again to-night! Remember, Elmbridge School expects to-night that every boy in our dormitory will do his duty!"

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed "Podgy" Wapshott, in forgetfulness of all prudence, with an amazing strength of lung-power, at the same time stamping enthusiastically—a proceeding which brought a reprimand from Tom Crofton upon his devoted head.

"Shut up, you old ass, kicking up all that row! You forget that Nature endowed you with such depth of lung that you'd make your fortune if you were put in a side-show, and labelled 'The Human Foghorn!'"

And Tom shied a pillow at the corpulent one's head, which caused Wapshott to advance upon his tormentor, puffing and blowing like a grampus, with a very fierce, stand-no-nonsense sort of expression on his face.

But as he saw that Tom was mischievously soaking a sponge, for which missile he probably would be the target, Wapshott changed his mind about retaliation, and decided to "forgive" Tom, which was prudent of him.

The lights were put out, and the youths of Elmbridge Academy were supposed to have sunk into slumber.

The dormitory door of Number 5 was almost opposite in the long corridor, and about half an hour after the lights had been put out, and the junior-master, Mr. Crockett, had been the round to see that everything was as it should be, the door of our hero's dormitory was cautiously opened.

Leeson's head appeared in the moonlit room. He looked round furtively.

Everyone seemed to be fast asleep. That Wapshott was no one could doubt, for his snores came at regular intervals, like the firing of minute-guns at sea.

Leeson beckoned to several other boys outside, who followed him in on tiptoe.

One of them was carrying a basin half-full of water.

"Now, Jones," said Leeson in a whisper, "put that basin carefully on Barry's bed."

This was a favourite practical joke of Leeson's—an invention of which he was proud, though there was little enough to be proud of in such an ill-natured "joke." He would balance a basin half-full of water on the bed of a sleeping boy in such a position that the first movement of the sleeper was enough to overturn the water, saturating the bedclothes that covered him.

But before Leeson's ally Jones could accomplish this amiable design, Jack suddenly showed himself very wide awake indeed.

"Not exactly!" he exclaimed, leaping from the bed.

His example was instantly followed by the other inmates of the dormitory, except Wapshott, who was enjoying his "beauty sleep."

Jones, a boy with rather less courage than a rabbit, promptly deposited the basin on the nearest chair, and prepared for flight. His intention was thwarted by a lusty blow from Tom Crofton's bolster, which sent him sprawling upon the peacefully slumbering body of Wapshott.

Wapshott, only half-awake, yet vaguely understanding that some outrage was being committed on his corpulent form, grabbed hold of Jones's hair with a frantic clutch, and held on like grim death, even yet not quite sure whether he was not in the midst of some fantastic nightmare.

Meanwhile Jack had flown at Leeson, and, taking the practical joker more or less by surprise, managed to get his head in chancery.

A struggle ensued; but Tom, coming to second him, the two chums turned the tables very neatly on the instigator of it all by forcibly thrusting Leeson's head into the basin of water which he had brought for Jack's discomfiture. He presented a pitiable object as his head emerged dripping wet, whilst he spluttered in articulate rage:

"Good fun these practical jokes of yours, ain't they, Leeson?" grinned Tom Crofton. "Shampooing is cheap to-day!"

Behind them a general melée was in full swing, the other occupants of the dormitory belabouring the invaders with bolsters. Altogether it was a very pretty scene.

It was left to Wapshott to add the finishing touch.

Jones had struggled free from his grasp, leaving a good deal of hair in the fat boy's hand; but, unappeased by this sacrifice, Wapshott arose in his wrath, puffing like a motor-car, and hurled his pillow at the boy who, he believed, had deliberately assaulted him.

His intention was of the best, but his aim was deplorably uncertain. The pillow whizzed over Jones's head, and was flying through the open door, when a spectacled face appeared there, stern and glaring, just in time to receive the missile, the weight of which made him stagger, and knocked off his eyeglasses.

"Oh, lor! I'm in for it!" groaned the wretched Wapshott. "It's old Crock, and I've broken his window-panes!"

Immediately he dived under the bedclothes, and pretended to be tranquilly sleeping.

It was remarkable how soon the angry voice of the junior master, as he groped for his spectacles, caused the enthusiasm of the combatants to dwindle.

At once hostilities ceased.

"This is disgraceful—positively disgraceful!" Mr. Crockett spluttered. "Wapshott"—at the mention of his name the fat boy started as violently as though a cannon-ball had whizzed by him—"I suspect you are the ringleader in this! It was you who hurled that bolster at me—an act of gross insubordination I shall not fail to report to Dr. Bennett!"

Wapshott feebly groaned. He vividly pictured to himself those few minutes he was likely to spend in the doctor's study on the following day. Very little would be spoken during the visit—no, the doctor would probably not say much; it would be in another way that he would convey his disapproval of the breach of discipline. We need not say more than that after such interviews the transgressor would display a pathetic inclination to sit.

Mr. Crockett took down the names of all the boys, then sent back the invaders to their dormitory. The others retired to their beds, with gloomy forebodings of what the morning would bring forth.

"It will be a regular field-day for the doctor to-morrow," Wapshott was heard to say mournfully. "There'll be a run on canes at the village shop!"

"Anyway, whatever happens—and there will be no end of a row!—we gave Leeson 'what cheer!' There's some consolation in that," said Tom Crofton.

"Yes. By the way, did you hear a couple of pistol-shots whilst the row was going on?" Jack said reflectively.

"No."

"I did. Only faintly, mind you. Yet I'm sure I heard them—a couple of shots fired in quick succession, a long way off. Poachers, I suppose."

The morning came. More than one boy went downstairs with no appetite at all for breakfast.

Contrary to custom, the doctor was not at his accustomed place that morning.

A report got about that before breakfast a messenger had come, and the doctor had been seen leaving the house with a white, scared face.

It was said that something had happened—what, no one knew, yet something terrible.

Before morning school began the doctor returned. He looked white and haggard.

He sent for Jack Barry to come to his study.

With an infinite compassion the doctor broke the news.

He had been sent for, he said, by the police to assist in identifying a man who, from letters found on him, was believed to be the father of one of the pupils at Elmbridge Academy.

That man was suspected of having wilfully murdered Mr. Handford, of the Grange, and his name was—Edward Barry!

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE OLD GRANGE—A STARTLING INTRUSION— "MURDER MOST FOUL!"—WHAT WAS ON THE ROOF?

But we must hark back to the preceding night.

The dusk had fallen as Mr. Barry, after leaving his son, made his way up the long avenue that led to the Grange.

In response to his knock the door was opened by a man of a somewhat forbidding cast of countenance. Oddly enough, the expression on the man's face caused a momentary feeling of mistrust to rise up in Edward Barry.

But, telling himself that his prejudice was a foolish one, he asked for Mr. Handford. He was at once shown into his friend's presence.

It was the first time these two had met for some years, and their greetings were cordial.

They sat down to dinner, waited upon by the manservant who had opened the door. Dinner over, they retired to the library. This was a long room built out from the rest of the house, which was used by Mr. Handford for his experiments, for he was an orthustastic scientist and astronomer. The room was lighted by electric light.

Kindred, the manservant, came in with coffee, and asked if anything further was wanted.

"No, Kindred, we shall not want anything further," said Mr. Handford. "It is your evening out, I believe. You can go as soon as you please."

"Very good, sir."

There was a sort of covert smile on the man's face as he left the room.

"Not a very prepossessing man in appearance that servant of yours," said Mr. Barry.

"No; not that I am influenced much by appearances, or I suppose I shouldn't live in a house that people tell me is gloomy and desolate-looking, with only one servant to disturb the silence," Mr. Handford rejoined, lighting a cigar. "Still, there's something in the man's looks I don't quite like. I've only had him a few months, and it has struck me lately that I wasn't particular enough about his references. I often think I'm too easy-going, you know," he laughed, "as no doubt you noticed, contrary to the usual rule for valets, I have allowed my man to wear a beard. He begged to be allowed to retain his beard as his throat was liable to cold. So I told him he might wear a dozen beards if he liked. But I have sometimes wondered if he had some deeper motive—"

"You mean—"

"As a disguise. But there, I expect I'm uncharitable, for really I have no tangible grounds for my suspicions. Living in a big, lonely old house alone gives one too much time for brooding. A queer old house it is, full of secret panels and winding passages—not unlike your old ancestral home in Ireland in that respect. Ah, a lucky find that of mine that led to the discovery of the existence of those missing Barry jewels!"

As he spoke, Mr. Handford went to a secretaire, and, unlocking a drawer, took out a small sheet of time-stained parchment.

"Yes, although ever since that chart was unearthed, I've felt it safer to carry this about with me," said Mr. Barry. From his pocket he had taken a small revolver, which he placed on the table with a grim smile.

Mr. Handford picked it up.

"Loaded, I suppose?" he asked.

"Yes; all the six chambers."

"A pretty toy! I like the chasing of the metal part of the handle. Your name is engraved on it, I see." Mr. Handford put the weapon down on the writing-desk, as he went on talking: "Well, as you know, I got back from Ireland to-day. I thoroughly investigated the locality. The old house where Rupert Barry lived still stands; it is a farmhouse now. I made a point of getting to know the people, and pretending to be an antiquarian, they let me see over it. With difficulty I made out what had once been the entrance from the house to the secret tunnel. What solid masonry! The good people who live there would have been incredulous if I had told them that what is now part of a wall had ever been a doorway. It is whitewashed over. No, if anyone has set foot in that tunnel since your ancestor hid his family treasures, he has reached it by the mouth of the cave—a possibility that I think we may at once dismiss."

"And even if anyone had, who would dream that a fortune lay buried at their feet?"

Handford smiled.

"Who, indeed! The people about there call it Dead Man's Cavern—some old legend, I suppose. The cliff is sheer, and the cave mouth gapes thirty feet below the summit. A hundred yards below thunder the great breakers of the Irish sea. A difficult descent, Barry."

"That is a detail. You will be ready to start to-morrow?"

"Yes; I have made all arrangements. I have procured a stout rope ladder by which the descent can be effected. You have a head steady enough for the feat?"

"Oh, yes!" said Edward Barry, with a smile.

"That is well. Thousands wouldn't tempt me to do it. But then I'm older and far from strong. I can wait at the top and let down a basket to you, by which the treasure can be brought bit by bit to the surface."

"We shall arouse no suspicion, you think?"

"My dear Barry, I am already looked upon as a crack-brained antiquarian in that part. I shall introduce you as a kindred spirit—only, if possible, more crack-brained still!" Mr. Handford cried, with a laugh. "So, should anyone see me laboriously hauling the basket to the top of the cliff, they will assume that you are an enthusiastic geologist, fossil-hunting, and the only comments we should cause would be that we were fools for our pains!"

"Everything shapes well. And this little piece of time-yellowed paper is the charm that is to bring us good luck," said Edward Barry, looking at the chart, with its diagrams and notes in crabbed handwriting, the ink on which had faded terribly during the hundred and fifty years since it was written. "Hallo! What-ever's up there?"

Mr. Barry had suddenly noticed a round disc of glass, in circumference barely as large as a plate let into the ceiling.

The moon, hitherto concealed, had at that moment sailed from behind the masses of dark clouds, and the moonlight, suddenly shining through this disc, had attracted Mr. Barry's attention by its odd effect.

Mr. Handford laughed.

"Oh, that is—"

He broke off abruptly in the middle of his sentence, crying harshly: "What was that?"

They knew that Kindred was out, yet both men had distinctly heard the door creak.

They turned in time to see the figure of a man standing just within the door.

The next moment the intruder put a finger on the brass knob on the wall just by the door—he seemed to know where it was—turning off the electric light.

At once the room was plunged in darkness, except for the moonlight that entered through the disc in the ceiling and between the half-drawn curtains over the window.

The same thought flashed through the brain of each of the startled men—that the intruder had come with the object of stealing the treasure-chart.

"Who is there?" cried Mr. Handford.

There was no reply.

He remembered that his friend's revolver lay on the writing-desk. He seized it and fired at the figure he could see faintly outlined against the darkness.

His hand shook, and the bullet, missing its mark, imbedded itself in the lintel of the door.

Evidently the intruder had not expected this reception, for he uttered an ejaculation. The next instant he returned fire, with fatal effect.

With a shriek James Handford fell. He would have no further concern for the lost fortune, for he lay dead with a bullet in his brain.

For the moment Edward Barry had stood stupefied by the suddenness of the attack. Then he flung himself upon the man and a struggle ensued.

His revolver dropped in the struggle; but, freeing one hand, the murderer drew a life-preserver from his pocket, and struck his adversary with it on the head as they swayed to and fro.

Still Barry kept his hold, though his grip was relaxing. Then another fierce blow from the heavy weapon, and he fell senseless by the side of his dead friend.

"Now my road to fortune is clear. The chart is somewhere about, and in another minute will be mine."

As he spoke the assassin's foot touched the revolver that had

fallen from his hand. He picked it up and dropped it into his pocket.

Strapped to his waist was a dark-lantern. Sliding back its shutter, he flashed the light across the room, in search of the chart which had been in Barry's hand when he opened the door.

Then by chance a stream of light was flashed from his lantern upon the disc in the ceiling.

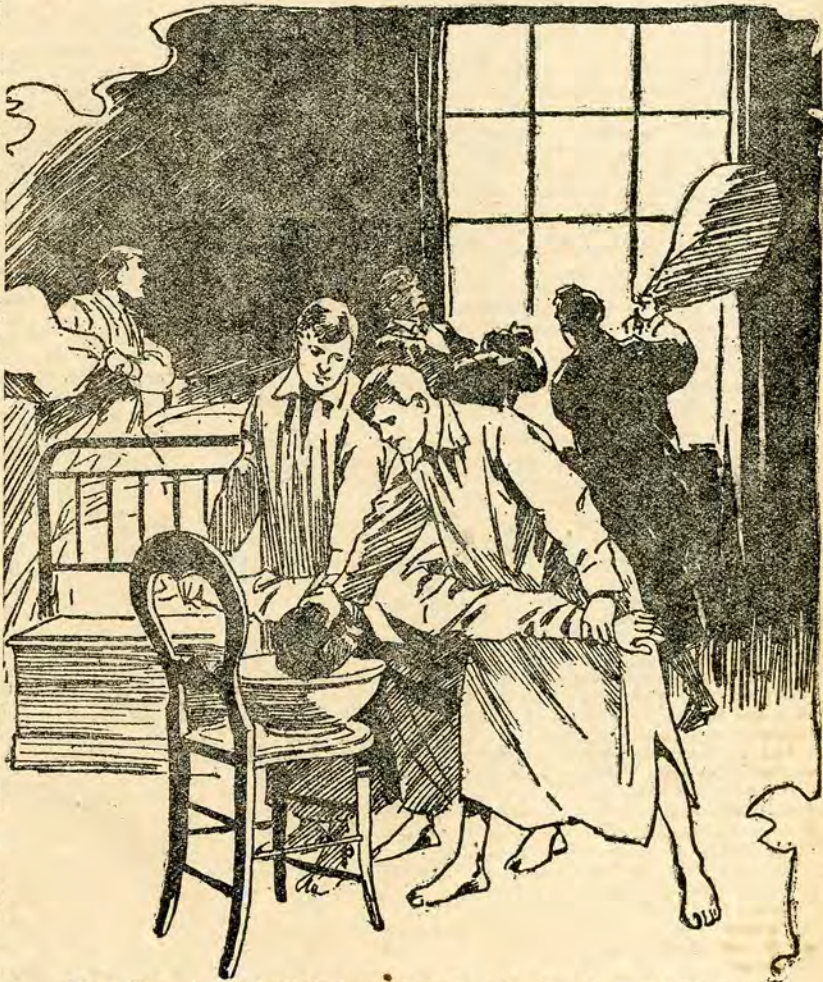
For a second the man paused, absolutely still.

He saw something there which terrified him.

This man, who had not shrunk from murder in pursuit of his evil ends, was a coward, and a mad, unreasoning terror seized him.

Through that disc he saw a single eye—like the eye of a human being, only larger, far larger, glaring down at him.

What was it?



They thrust the bully's head into the basin of water he had brought for Jack's discomfiture.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CHART—A TEMPORARY CHECK—ARRANGING CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE—WORK FOR THE POLICE.

An overwhelming panic seized the murderer.

That steadfast, staring eye, that seemed to transfix him, held him spellbound for a moment, and drove from his brain all thought of the errand which had brought him to the old house.

Yielding to an impulse, he turned and fled out of the fatal room, down the broad flight of steps, as if pursued by furies.

But greed of gain was this man's master passion. As the cool night air beat upon his temples, his presence of mind—and with it his avarice—returned.

"Bah! I was a fool to let wild fancies overcome me! That chart, I mustn't lose that."

But it required the exercise of all his nerve to re-enter the house.

He paused a short time as if to pull himself together, then he stepped inside.

Flashing his lantern in front of him, he was startled to see a prostrate form lying outstretched at the bottom of the flight of steps. Looking closer he saw that it was Edward Barry. Evidently he had only stunned his second victim slightly, and Barry had recovered sufficiently to drag himself down the stairs—or had he fallen down them?—for he lay as dead, quite senseless.

Stepping over the body, the man known as the Tiger re-entered the room that had witnessed his crime.

He felt almost afraid of looking up at that strange disc. But a glance reassured him. The staring eye he had seen was no longer there. He saw only clear moonlight.

"A trick of the fancy," he told himself. "After all, what could there have been? Overstrung nerves do play one strange tricks like that at times."

Yet for all his words, the room held vague elements of terror for him; that dread, silent figure there, white-faced in the streak of moonlight, unnerved him.

He hunted round. Nowhere was the chart to be found. Yet he had seen it distinctly in Edward Barry's hand.

At any rate it had vanished—had disappeared during that interval of terror when he had rushed from the room.

A thought struck him. Perhaps it was still on Barry's person. He crept out of the room, with a sense of relief to be away from that still ghastly figure.

Down the creaking stairs he went, and bent over the inert body at the foot of the flight. His search was fruitless. The chart was not there.

Where could it be? Perhaps, he thought, Barry, with the last supreme effort of his failing strength, before he staggered out to the head of the stairs, had concealed the chart in some hiding-place at hand; behind a secret panel, no doubt. Old houses like this were sometimes full of such places.

Yes, that was the solution, he felt sure. His search upstairs had been so thorough that he must have found it, had it been there.

He was baffled; but only baffled for the time, he told himself, as he stole out of the house darkened by the shadow of his crime. He would come again and hunt till he found what he sought. There was no one to forestall him.

Barry himself, now lying in heavy, deathlike stupor, would not be able to recover what he had hidden—and this human tiger smiled at the thought. For, with fiendish ingenuity, the assassin had set himself to finish what chance had begun—to leave seemingly conclusive proof that Edward Barry had murdered James Handford!

The injured man would no doubt lie there until he was found on the next morning—for the assassin was well acquainted with the household arrangements—when the woman, who acted as day servant, on her arrival early the next day, would find—what she would find. Naturally her first step would be to summon the police.

And so the Tiger would be able to throw the guilt on another's shoulders. What a master-stroke of policy that was!

Early the next morning the woman who came each day to do certain household work was startled to find the door open.

She walked in, then recoiled in terror.

With a scream she rushed out, and when she entered again two policemen accompanied her.

At the foot of the stairs, moaning and muttering deliriously, lay a man whose hand even yet was grasping a massive gold watch and chain, afterwards identified as the property of Mr. Handford.

Upstairs the morning light fell through a curious round disc of glass in the library roof upon the body of the master of the house, stark and cold.

"This delirious chap shot the old gent," one of the police sagely gave as his opinion, "and was making off with the plunder, when, in his haste, he falls down these stairs and gets concussion of the brain or something. It ain't often we can lay our hands on a murderer so near his victim."

One other strange fact was elicited.

Mr. Handford's manservant, Silas Kindred, had disappeared. After a while it became known that he had taken a late train to London on the previous night. The police at once instituted inquiries for the missing man.

The newspapers made great harvest out of the sensational news, and the account of the crime was read eagerly.

Not the least interested of these readers was the man who enjoyed the sobriquet of the Tiger. As he read he chuckled evilly to himself.

"It was a happy thought of mine to put the dead man's watch and chain in his hand! That will hang him."

Thus circumstances looked very ugly for Edward Barry—not that he knew, for he was lying delirious in the hospital.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CORONER'S INQUEST—A BULLET MARK ON THE DOOR—THE VERDICT—A MIDNIGHT VISIT TO THE OLD GRANGE—THE CHART FOUND—THE BOYS SEE A STRANGE SIGHT IN THE FATAL ROOM.

The coroner held the inquest on the body of James Handford. The jury found that the deceased had met his end by wilful murder. Edward Barry was committed for trial at the next assizes, whilst a warrant was issued for the arrest of the dead man's servant on the charge of being accessory to the crime.

The weeks passed on. Of Silas Kindred the police could find no trace. He had vanished as completely as if the ground had swallowed him up. And, in oblivion of the charge hanging over him, Jack's father lay in the hospital, raving and delirious, between life and death.

But, terrible as the injuries to his head had been, they did not prove fatal. Slowly he began to mend, but his reason seemed hopelessly gone.

At last he stood in the dock. He looked vacantly round in a pitiable way. It was evident that he had no idea of his position. When called upon to plead "guilty" or "not guilty," he seemed unaware that he was being addressed. He mumbled some vague, incoherent words.

The counsel for the Crown dwelt briefly on the known facts of the crime, and of the circumstantial evidence: the fact that a revolver, bearing the name of the prisoner, was found in the room, one chamber of which had been discharged, of the dead man's watch discovered in the grasp of the accused. It was a suspicious fact that (as had been discovered was the case) the prisoner had recently come to England in disguise and under an assumed name. Robbery appeared to have been the motive, though, of course, several circumstances combined to make the case exceedingly difficult: the mental state of the prisoner, which was such that he had been unable to instruct the counsel for the defence; and the disappearance of the dead man's valet under circumstances that pointed directly to a share in the crime.

Witnesses were called, among them being Dr. Bennett, who bore testimony to the friendship existing between deceased and prisoner, and his own past friendship with the latter.

The counsel for the defence spoke. He dwelt on the unlikelihood of a man of competent means attacking and murdering his friend for gain. He mentioned a strange fact, which he wished to bring strongly to the consideration of the jury: that on the night of the crime two shots had been heard coming from the direction of the Grange, and had been remarked on at the time by the hearer; the person who had heard the shots was the son of prisoner. Unfortunately, he could not give evidence, as he lay dangerously ill, but he would call a boy to whom the fact of hearing two reports had been mentioned at the time.

"What does this prove, gentlemen of the jury? I assert that it is a significant fact, when I add that the police, on searching the fatal room, found a bullet embedded in the lintel of the door. Now the room had been quite recently painted, but the bullet had entered the woodwork since it was painted. This is easy of proof. Gentlemen, one revolver, with one discharged chamber only, was found by the police. Yet two shots seem to have been fired on that night. I submit, gentlemen, that we have yet the murderer to find, and that, when the truth comes to light, it will be found that it was the bullet of that other revolver that pierced James Handford's brain, and the revolver was taken away by the real assassin as he fled from his victim."

But this point was deprived of its effect in the judge's summing-up. He pointed out that, granting the facts, the second revolver—if there had been a second—might have been taken by Kindred in his flight.

The jury retired, came back, gave their verdict. They found Edward Barry guilty.

As everyone had expected, medical evidence was forthcoming to show that the prisoner was insane. Edward Barry was sentenced to be "detained during her Majesty's pleasure," in one of the State criminal asylums.

The news of his father's terrible condition and the charge against him, proved a shock so great to Jack as to produce an attack of brain-fever. For weeks he lay on the borderland between life and death.

He came back at last to life, and the world about him, a ghost of the light-hearted boy that had been.

When he was out and about again, he had a good deal to live through; for, of course, everyone knew that his father had been tried and found guilty of murder, and that probably only the loss of his reason had saved him from the gallows.

Manifestly it was unfair to make the lad suffer for his father's supposed sins, and many of the boys were manly and sympathetic enough to try to act towards him as though that awful

crime had not been committed. But meaner natures, like Leeson's, acted in a manner that was as galling as it was petty.

But through that period of silent persecution Jack Barry walked with his head high, too proud to show how deeply he felt.

And all the while Tom Crofton stuck by his chum with heart-whole loyalty. In Dr. Bennett, too, Jack found a real friend. Some schoolmasters might have declined to retain as a pupil the son of a condemned man. But Dr. Bennett only remembered that the boy was practically friendless, and determined to do his duty towards him.

All day long Jack brooded over the mystery that had clouded his life. That his father could be guilty was a possibility he refused to entertain for a moment.

"I'd give ten years of my life, Tom," he said, "to find the actual murderer, and bring home the guilt to him. That the missing servant knows the secret I feel confident—probably he is the actual culprit. Tom, I've been thinking lately that I should like to go to the old Grange. It sounds like a wild-goose chase, I know, yet perhaps we might stumble across a clue."

Tom gave a little shiver.

"It's empty now, and given over to the ghosts and rats. At night it is an eerie, desolate place," he said. "You didn't hear the rumours, Jack, for you were ill at the time; but it is reported in the village that the dead man walks. Anyway, more than one claim to have seen a dark figure in the grounds after nightfall."

Jack cried excitedly:

"Tom, are you game to go with me to the old house by night?"

"Well, the prospect isn't inviting. Still, if you were bent on going I wouldn't hang back. But surely the daytime would be better? We could get in unobserved," was the answer. "I don't think I'm a particularly nervous chap; but I admit that there is something uncanny about that house I don't like. Besides, the doctor wouldn't let us go."

"We could get there without the doctor knowing. Haven't you told me yourself that last term you and another chap, for a wager, climbed out of the landing window on to the roof of those outbuildings and back again without being detected?"

"Yes, that's true. There's a loose bar outside the window, which we can remove and replace. But why not go by day?" argued Tom.

"I'll tell you. Of course, you don't believe any more than I do in the existence of ghosts. And if a figure has been seen in the grounds of the Grange, that figure was flesh and blood. Who could have so great an interest in visiting this place by stealth as the murderer, anxious to hide any possible clue to his identity?"

"By Jove! I never thought of that!" cried Tom.

"Now you see why I want to go at night. We may see this mysterious figure—may be able to find out the guilty man!"

"I believe you are right!" cried Tom, sharing his friend's enthusiasm. "And I'll go with you."

"I shall be glad to have you with me, old fellow," said Jack warmly. "I feel that in a way it's my duty to go. If we are cautious, there is nothing to be afraid of."

And yet, perhaps, each of the lads felt his heart beating faster that night as they stole into the avenue at the end of which the old Grange stood, lonely and desolate, with the wind moaning drearily round its eaves.

But they had too much pluck to think of turning back; besides, too much was at stake for them to forego the quest which they had in view when they made their cautious descent by the landing window.

They both wore tennis-shoes, to deaden the sound of their footsteps, and they had equipped themselves with a dark-lantern. Each carried a short, heavy stick, in case they were called upon to defend themselves.

The boys stood and looked up at the dark, silent house for a moment; then they looked for a means of entrance.

They had expected that their only means of getting-in would be by smashing a pane of glass to admit of the catch being slipped back.

But this expedient was not needed.

They found a small window at one side of the house unfastened.

"Evidently it was by this window that the person whom the villagers thought a ghost made his entrance," Jack whispered to his companion.

As noiselessly as possible they opened the window, and with fast-beating hearts climbed through into the dark passage.

They closed the window and listened.

All was silent as a tomb.

They could hear no one moving, though they waited several minutes.

"Whoever the nocturnal visitor is, he has not come here to-night, I think—not so far, at any rate," said Jack. "The house is empty."

"We had better go forward," said Tom.

"Stop a moment. I have an idea," rejoined our hero. "If he comes to-night, he will no doubt enter by this window, so we'll just lay a trap for him; then if he does come we shall be prepared. I picked this up outside." Jack took from his pocket a smooth round stone, in size rather bigger than a marble.

This he placed carefully on the top of the lower sash.

"No one can open that window without causing the stone to fall," he said. "If we hear it crash down we shall know the mysterious intruder is here."

Then they made their way along the passage, through the hall, and up the staircase. The great house was wrapt in silence, broken only by the creakings of the stairs, and the scurrying of half a dozen rats to their holes.

There was a sense of desolation all about which touched them with a feeling of awe.

Up the stairs and along the dust-encumbered corridor, and into the room which, from the newspaper description, they judged to be the fatal room.

It smelt horribly close and musty. Most of the furniture had been removed, but the great heavy curtains still hung in folds by the window, through which the moonlight flooded the room.

As they stood there a sudden feeling of despair came over Jack. What clue could that bare room afford?

Was his father always to lie under that terrible charge of murder?

Then a strange thing happened; it was almost like an answer to his thoughts.

Tom was standing by the old-fashioned grate, with his hand on the mantelshelf, when he suddenly gave a violent start. He had heard a sound, which reacted on his overstrung nerves.

It was a footfall on the gravelled path outside.

As he started, he clutched at the mantelshelf. He felt it move, as though loose, and some plaster fell. Looking closer, he found that it was but loosely held in its socket, and that it had come forward from the wall several inches. Very little pulling would have dislodged it altogether.

Then, simultaneously he and Jack espied something that made the latter's heart leap.

It was a piece of paper that had been pushed out of sight at the back of the loose mantelshelf.

Jack seized it. He saw at once that his conjecture was right.

It was the chart!

More quickly than it takes to tell, the explanation of a part of this murder-mystery presented itself to his mind.

By some opportunity his father had been able to hide the chart there from the murderer of his friend, just before he had escaped from the room, only to crash senseless to the foot of the stairs.

This was the motive that had drawn that mysterious figure, which the villagers had seen more than once, to make nightly visits to the old Grange. Doubtless it was the murderer himself revisiting the scene of his crime in order to hunt for the coveted chart.

And whilst these thoughts flashed through Jack's brain, he felt that in all probability the footstep that had just now startled them down below outside the house was that of the unknown assassin come to renew his search.

"He shall never have it!" muttered Jack.

Hastily he put the chart into his pocket.

At that moment they heard the stone they had placed to give warning crash down.

The unknown man was making his way in by the window, as they had anticipated.

"Quick! We must hide behind these curtains. We haven't time to get out of the room unheard. Be ready to use your stick on the first intimation that our presence is discovered," Jack whispered.

Silently the two boys concealed themselves behind the heavy folds of the curtains, as light footsteps made their way upstairs.

The next moment an evil-faced man entered the room.

Jack, watching through a small hole in the moth-eaten curtain, noticed that the man's first action on entering was to glance up apprehensively at one particular place in the ceiling.

The look of dread was succeeded by an expression of relief.

"I am a fool!" the man muttered to himself, "to expect to see anything there. Yet I always look for it each time I enter this cursed hole! That eye seemed so real that even now I could half-fancy it was no wild delusion. It seemed to stare me through and through."

He began gently tapping on the polished boards, once passing so near to where Jack was standing, that the boy held his breath lest his breathing should reach the man's ear and betray his hiding-place.

But the intruder soon abandoned this task, and commenced tapping on the wall, which was half oak-panelled, as if to discover any part that sounded hollow.

But if there were any secret panels they were deftly constructed. The boards gave back no hollow sound.

"Curse my luck! I seem doomed to failure!" the man muttered angrily. "Yet the chart must be hidden here! Three times I have searched, yet without avail. But I'll find it, even if I have to pull down half this boarding!"

He paused for a moment. Then he continued impatiently: "Yes, I am a fool to think to find the secret hiding-place this way. I must bring tools to wrench this oak-paneling from the walls. Ah! What was that?"

He had started violently, as a dark object struck against the window-pane. He recovered his self-possession with a laugh.

"Only a bat! My nerves seem all out of order. I mustn't drink so much brandy. And the memory of the dead man always comes back to me so vividly in this room!" He shuddered. "I'll leave my search to-night. I am only wasting time in trying to find the secret place without tools!" he muttered aloud, as though the sound of his voice gave him courage.

He went out of the room. The boys listened for the closing of the window behind him, and then ventured out from their place of hiding.

They could hear his retreating footsteps on the gravel of the path.

The two boys looked at each other in eager excitement.

"Were we not wise to come? I have little doubt in my mind that it was that man who fired the murderous shot. As I watched him, Tom, that conviction grew in my mind till I felt almost tempted to—well, to make a fool of myself!" he said, with a short laugh, "and ruin everything by springing upon him. Of course, we should have been no match for a man of his build."

"Wonder what he meant when he spoke of a terrifying

'eye'?" mused Tom. "It seemed to be in connection with that queer little skylight."

"We may solve that mystery, too, with patience," Jack rejoined. "Be sure I don't mean to lose this clue. Come along."

Quickly they made their way back to the school.

CHAPTER VII.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DOCTOR—LEESON OVER-REACHES HIMSELF—IMPRISONED IN A LIVING TOMB—THE ESCAPE.

So important did this discovery seem to them, that the two boys decided to inform Dr. Bennett of their escapade and its result, feeling sure that under the circumstances he would not be severe.

Directly after breakfast on the following morning they went to his study, and told him what the reader already knows.

He reprimanded them sternly, not only for their serious breach of rules, but also for incurring the grave risk of falling into the hands of so desperate a scoundrel. Then he said that under the circumstances he was disposed to punish their offence lightly on their undertaking not to break bounds again, and merely imposed on each a slight imposition.

"It was a wild notion for you lads to hope to track a villain down," he said. "But you certainly appear to have made a discovery that may lead to important results when the police are informed of it. I will lay the facts before them without delay."

One portion of their adventure Jack withheld.

He told the doctor nothing of their discovery of the chart. He felt that to do so would serve no useful end.

The police would doubtless require its possession, and Jack did not feel inclined to relinquish it. Moreover, were the fact published, the man who had been searching for it would naturally have no further motive in visiting the tenantless house.

Soon after the two boys had gone, Leeson appeared and tapped at the doctor's study-door.

He came out again in a few minutes with a malicious smile on his face, and, finding the two chums in the playground, came up to them.

"I say, you two, the doctor wants to see you. You are to go to his study at once."

Wondering why they were wanted, the boys obeyed. Just as they reached the study-door, Leeson remarked malignantly:

"You two are going to catch it hot, I can tell you!"

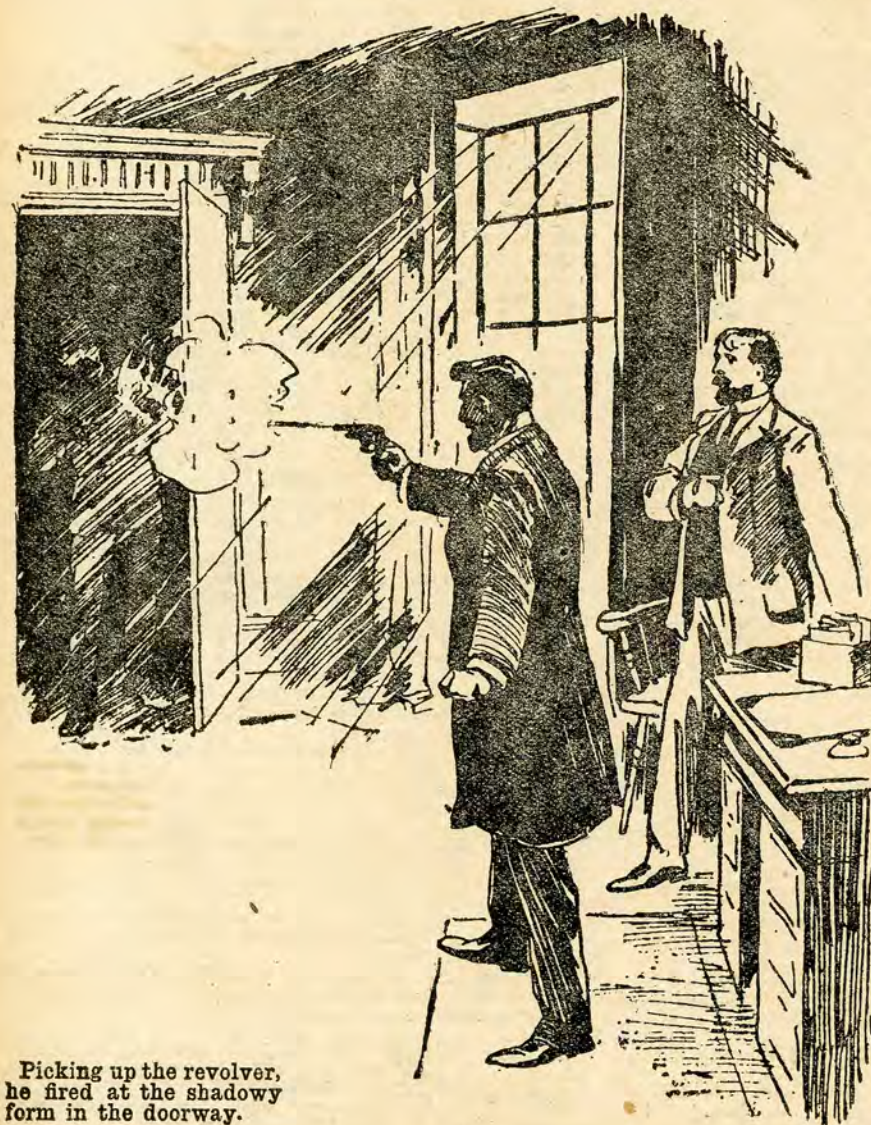
At that moment the door opened, and Dr. Bennett appeared. "Come in, boys. You, too, Leeson."

The three of them entered.

"A few minutes ago," began the doctor blandly, "Leeson came to me to give me the information that you two boys took a midnight stroll, quite against all rules last night."

Leeson was grinning. Jack found himself involuntarily clenching his fists. But the sneak's face began to fall as the doctor went on.

"I did not tell Leeson that you had already made full confession of your offence. I sent him to bring you here in order that I might inform him, in your hearing, that I strongly disapprove of tale-bearing in my school. It fosters a bad spirit in a boy if one in authority encourages such a practice. I won't have spying or tale-bearing in my school! You hear me, Leeson?" said the gentleman sternly. "As it is, Barry and Crofton, I let you off the impositions I gave you. Leeson, I hope you will try to cultivate a better spirit."



Picking up the revolver, he fired at the shadowy form in the doorway.

Very crestfallen was Leeson as he slunk away. And all the satisfaction he obtained out of his intended revenge was to find himself sent to Coventry by all his schoolfellows as soon as the pretty little story got about.

Dr. Bennett laid the story of Jack's visit to the Grange before the police. A watch was accordingly set.

For two nights nothing happened. On the third night a thickset man came as far as the gate. But he did not enter. Perhaps something aroused his suspicion, or perhaps he caught a glimpse of the plain-clothes men in hiding. At any rate he at once turned and bolted.

The police immediately gave chase; but a delay in opening the rusty iron gate gave the man a start, and they lost sight of him in the darkness.

For a few nights longer the police watched. But the man did not come again. Evidently he was alarmed to find that his movements had attracted attention.

Then the boys heard that at last a new tenant had been found for the Grange.

The months passed by, and no new discoveries were made, and a sense of despair began to grip Jack's heart.

Meanwhile, his father remained an inmate of the asylum. He was not regarded as a dangerous patient; it was merely that his reason was impaired, his memory gone. In many ways he was just like a child.

His head continued to give him much pain, and at last the chief medical man decided that the operation of trepanning was necessary, as there were signs that part of the skull was pressing upon the brain.

The operation was performed; then the patient gradually grew better. His senses became clearer. He even began to recollect bygone events.

But of all that had happened on the night when the murder took place, his mind remained a hopeless blank.

Words fail to picture his mental agony—all the horror of gradually realising his position, which fuller knowledge came to him as the dark cloud began to lift from his brain. And a fierce impotent hunger grew in his heart to regain his freedom.

"I am not guilty!" he would cry despairingly. "Why do you keep me shut up in this living tomb?"

Of course, his utterances only tended to confirm the belief in his madness.

And so, as the weary months rolled on—each day finding a slight increasing improvement in his mental powers, if none in his memory of that period that seemed as if blotted from his brain—Edward Barry's martyrdom increased.

And there was the certain knowledge that he was a prisoner for life.

Surely enough to make a man lose his reason completely.

Thus like centuries the leaden hours crept by, until one night his chance came.

Unlooked-for, unexpected, through a disaster that nevertheless brought him good fortune, his chance came.

How it occurred no one knew—there was no time for such inquiries in the wild hurry and confusion.

For one dark night a red, lurid glow lit up the starless sky and the country-side. And the terrible news was bruited for miles around that the great criminal asylum was on fire, and the mad inmates in danger of being burnt alive.

Fire! In the presence of that terrible foe order and discipline have to go by the board.

Whilst all the attendants and warders were thinking only of fighting the flames, Edward Barry, unheeded in the confusion



A knife was in his hand. With it he began to saw the rope.

and excitement, stole out at the back, and, with the strength lent by despair, scaled the high wall of the exercise ground.

Once more he was free.

Free!

For a minute he stood, with the cool night air beating on his fevered temples, scarce daring to trust his senses. Only there behind him was the great burning building, where lately he had been a prisoner—and before him lay life and liberty.

Free!

Over the wild open country he ran, as though hunted by bloodhounds, scarcely daring to look round lest he should find himself pursued—tearing along with panting breath, sometimes plunging almost up to his knees in the soft marshy ground, racing for dear life.

But free!

CHAPTER VIII.

A SECOND VISIT TO THE OLD HOUSE—A STRANGE MEETING—A LIGHT IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS OF THE TENANTLESS GRANGE—"THE PAST IS COMING BACK TO ME!"

A little more than six months had elapsed since that dark deed was committed in the old Grange.

The new tenants had come, careless of the evil reputation now clinging to it.

But they did not stay many weeks.

Perhaps the remembrance of what had once happened within

its walls was a more unpleasant memory to be faced than its tenants had expected.

Servants did not care to come, on account of the uncanny tales told of the place, or if induced to come stayed but a little time.

So a few months saw the tenants' departure, and the last van-load of furniture removed, leaving the old place once more to the rats.

When he heard that the Grange was once more empty, the thought came to Jack Barry that probably a renewed hunt would be made for the chart, by the man who seemed bent on obtaining possession of it at all costs.

And so it came about by an odd coincidence of chance—or was it fate?—that on the day after his father had escaped from the asylum, Jack had obtained permission from Dr. Bennett to watch with Tom Crofton outside the old house, to see if nightly mysterious visits would begin again.

They had heard as yet nothing of the fire at the asylum. News does not travel fast in country-places, and although a daily paper was delivered at his house each day, Dr. Bennett more frequently than not forgot to open it.

At first the doctor had demurred about granting permission, fearing that harm might come to the lads.

But when he saw how feverishly eager Jack was, and how certain he was that his plan would ultimately lead to the clearing of his father's name, the old dominie reluctantly consented that they should hide in the grounds and watch.

"But you must not go inside the house again, as your foolhardy impulse led you to do before," was his injunction. As it was, he felt misgivings about having given his permission.

"I wonder if I've been an old fool!" he muttered to himself more than once after they had gone. "Only I couldn't resist that poor lad's pleading—he was in such deadly earnest. For whether his father is innocent or not, his son believes him guiltless. And if he thinks he can help to clear his father's name, well, I have no right to discourage him, even if I think his hope is but a will-o'-the-wisp. By jingo! I like that boy!"

Meanwhile, Jack and his chum had set out on their errand. They reached the gate, and looked down the dark, desolate avenue of trees.

On the lonely road not a soul was to be seen.

They pushed open the gate and entered.

At that moment Tom plucked his friend's sleeve.

"Jack!" he whispered, "we are not alone. There is someone hiding there!"

His words were true enough.

Standing back under the shadow of the trees was a tall, spare figure, that stood motionless watching them as they entered.

But the next moment, with a cry, the man came swiftly forward to them.

"Jack! My boy—my boy!"

And, lost in amazement, Jack cried "Father!" as Edward Barry gripped his son's hands and drew the lad to him in wild joy.

Tom Crofton looked on in bewilderment at this strange scene.

"Tom, this is my father," Jack told him, adding: "But, father, how came you here?"

"I escaped last night from my place of captivity," Mr. Barry said, with a shudder. "A fire broke out at the asylum, and I got away in the confusion. Whether my escape be known or not, I have had no means of ascertaining. It may be they think I perished in the flames. Under cover of the dark night I made my way to the house of an old friend in the suburbs of London. There—thanks to his generous pity—I was able to change my clothes; otherwise I should have been unflinchingly recognised and recaptured. Jack, boy, they say I am mad. But it's not true! I'm sane now. You believe it, don't you, Jack?" he asked piteously.

"Of course I believe it, dad!" cried Jack.

"Yes, I'm sane now, only I can't remember. I only know that some terrible event with which my fate was linked occurred in your house; that in consequence my reason left me for a time. And I was injured, too, about my head. I fell down some steps, they tell me. My memory of what happened there is a blank—a blank! But the clue lies in that dark house!" he cried. "And I have come to find the clue to the events of that night, which will give me back my memory!"

"They say you—*you* murdered your friend there, father!" said Jack; "but I never believed it. I wouldn't believe so foul a slander of you. And I think you may to-night be brought face to face with the man for whose crime you suffered!"

"Ah, yes! Murderers are often drawn by some strange influence we cannot understand to revisit the scene where they took human life. Jack, your words seemed to have touched some chord of memory—something forgotten. Vague, disconnected thoughts seem to shape themselves in my mind; but when I try to grasp them they elude me. But I think that the faintest fact associated with the events of that night would

be a clue whereby I could remember everything!" he said excitedly. "Ah! What was that?"

What, indeed?

Up on one of the windows of the house a light had suddenly flashed—a light that moved, then suddenly died out. It was as though someone had struck a match.

The rats were at work!

Excitedly Jack told his father of the mysterious man whom they had seen hunting for the chart.

"Did you hear him speak?"

Then Jack remembered the man's look of fear as he gazed up at the disc in the ceiling. He told his father of this.

"The disc! Ah, I remember it! I remember speaking of it to Handford. And he said—what did he say? And what happened then?"

Mr. Barry passed his hand over his brow with a puzzled look on his face.

"It's no good," he said wearily; "I can't remember! I can't remember!"

"But if you saw the face of the man——" Jack began eagerly.

"Yes! If the man you saw is the murderer, and I were to see his face, that might cause it all to flash back into my mind! That light we saw just now may mean he is there. Can we get into the house?"

He was starting forward, but Jack grasped his arm and pulled him back.

"Hush! Back out of sight!" he whispered excitedly.

The slight wind had carried to his ears the sound of footsteps coming down the road.

Noislessly they stepped back into the dense darkness cast by the shadow of the trees.

Then they saw a figure pause at the gate.

The mystery was deepening.

The figure at the gate looked up and down the road, as if to ascertain whether he was unobserved; then he entered the gate.

It was evident he did not suspect the presence of the three who were watching him so keenly; the wind had borne the sound of their voices in the opposite direction.

Nevertheless he looked suspiciously on either side of him as he walked down the avenue, and it was noticeable that he carried something in his right hand which in the dim light looked like a revolver.

Who was this man, and who the person in the house? And were they accomplices?

Jack had already made up his mind that this man in the avenue was the man they had seen in the fatal room, for his evident caution showed that he was alive to the possibility of being watched, after the unsuccessful attempt of the police to capture him some months ago.

Surely he must think the prize in prospect worth the winning to run such risks!

Mr. Barry was trembling with excitement. Something in the figure seemed familiar to him.

"That is the murderer!" he whispered hoarsely, after the figure had passed. "The past is coming back to me! The past is coming back to me!"

Forgetful of prudence, he would have started forward, but the boys restrained him.

The figure stopped and looked back down the avenue, as if to thoroughly satisfy himself that he was not being watched. Then he stepped behind the shadow of a tree.

Though he was out of sight, Jack knew he was still there.

"Wait!" he whispered earnestly. "It is a ruse on his part. He wants to make sure that the police are not on the watch before he dare venture inside. With his revolver he could make a fight of it out here, but once in the house he would be trapped. Ah, there he is again!"

The figure was again visible.

Giving a last look down the avenue the man walked stealthily to the house. No doubt he was satisfied in his mind that, had any of the police been on the watch, they would have emerged from their hiding during those few minutes of his disappearance, thinking he had entered the house. But in this case diamond had cut diamond!

The next moment the figure disappeared.

This time Jack knew that the man had made his way into the dark, silent house.

CHAPTER IX.

A CRY FOR HELP—FACE TO FACE—OUTWITTED ONCE MORE—AN EYE-WITNESS OF THE CRIME.

"We must follow!" cried Edward Barry excitedly. "Fate led me here to-night to solve this dark mystery, and clear my name!"

"There are at least two men in that house," said Jack, "and you are weak. We shall be carrying our lives in our hands."

Jack was no coward, but knew that the cause they had at heart would not be advanced by foolhardiness.

"To-night I have the strength of half a dozen men!" cried Edward Barry. "If they are armed—well, I am armed, too. I have a revolver. I mean to confront that man face to face. But I shall enter the house alone, you must not share the risk!"

"If you go, then I go, too!" said Jack firmly.

"And I!" added Tom.

"You are brave lads," said Mr. Barry. "We must use caution, and take the villains by surprise—cover them with my revolver before they can find their weapons."

As he spoke, Jack's father took off his thick woollen stockings and put them on again over his boots to deaden the sound of his footsteps.

They crept to the window by which they had entered on their former visit.

It was open. They climbed silently in.

Mr. Barry had his revolver in his hand. The two boys gripped their sticks firmly.

A strange surprise awaited them.

From upstairs came the sound of scuffling of feet, the laboured imprecations, as of two men engaged in a terrible struggle.

What could it mean?

Up the creaking stairs and into the fatal room the trio hastened.

Then they saw that a life-and-death struggle was taking place there in the moonlight that streamed through the cobwebbed window.

One of the combatants had been forced down, though still maintaining the struggle; the other, in whose hand gleamed a murderous-looking knife, was the man whose entrance to the house the new-comers had just witnessed.

The man beneath was evidently exhausted—all his failing strength was directed to prevent the uplifted knife from being plunged into his body.

Rushing forward, Jack strack the winning man's right hand with his stick. The knife dropped.

"The murderer! James Handford's murderer!" screamed Edward Barry, as he saw the face of the owner of the knife. It was the man called Tiger. "I remember all! I remember all!"

As he felt the blow on his wrist the Tiger leapt to his feet, shaking off the relaxing grip of the man he had meant to kill.

There was the look of a hunted beast in his eyes as he faced the three who had entered so unexpectedly.

Edward Barry tried to grasp his revolver. But he was trembling from head to foot. The excitement of finding his memory return seemed to turn him dizzy.

If only he could grasp his weapon and hold it to the scoundrel's head and make him prisoner; but the supreme moment found him suddenly powerless. His boasted strength had left him. He staggered back against the wall.

With his eyes fiercely bent on Jack, the Tiger darted his hand towards his pocket where his revolver lay.

It was Tom who undoubtedly saved his chum's life.

Quick as the Tiger's action had been, Tom was as ready.

As the man's hand emerged from the pocket, Tom desperately struck at him with his heavy stick.

The revolver flew out of the man's hand across the room.

"Lend me your revolver, father!" cried Jack, rushing across to his father.

But before he could gain possession of it the Tiger, with an oath, had rushed from the room, banging it after him.

Revolver in hand, Jack darted to the door.

Before he reached it they heard the key turned in the lock. They were prisoners.

The Tiger had escaped them.

"It is my fault the man has escaped us!" faltered Mr. Barry, in tones of self-reproach. "I am weaker than I thought. The sudden flood of memory was too much for me."

Meanwhile the man whose life Jack's timely intervention had undoubtedly saved, rose, white and trembling. For the minute he had lost the power of speech.

"The past has all come back to me!" cried Edward Barry again, whilst the two boys tried vainly to burst open the door.

"You—you are the murdered man's servant, Silas Kindred, and he who would have killed you is your late master's assassin. But how to prove my innocence?"

Struggling to regain his speech, the man he addressed at last found words.

"I can and will prove it!"

"You? How can you prove it?"

The answer came back: "I saw the crime!"

CHAPTER X.

SILAS KINDRED'S STORY—THE WITNESS ON THE ROOF—"THE ROYAL PARDON."

The door was of oak, and, despite their efforts to burst it open, for a long time the lads failed to make any impression on it. At last it flew open, with part of the lock wrenched off.

But the long delay occasioned had given the Tiger ample time to make his escape.

"You saw it?" Mr. Barry cried incredulously, in reply to Silas Kindred's words.

"Yes."

"Then you can testify to my innocence?"

"I can, and I will. You've saved my life to-night, and I'll repay that debt by cleansing your name from the stain of guilt," said Kindred solemnly.

"You say you saw the crime—I am bewildered. You were not an accomplice of that man?"

"No, Heaven forbid! I've been a bad lot in my time, but I've never spilt human blood. Listen, and you shall hear my story.

"I'd been in prison—I may as well out with it. I'd been a valet, and I had stolen from my master. I was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

"Before my time had expired I was let out on ticket-of-leave. My temper wasn't improved. I knew I was watched by the police, and the thought that Scotland Yard was on the look-out for me to make another slip and land me in limbo again maddened me.

"So I decided to efface myself if I could. I omitted to report myself, and slipped off quietly. The police lost sight of me.

"Hitherto I'd always gone clean-shaved. Now I grew a beard and moustache. That altered my appearance more than you'd think. I felt I could throw off my past and begin a new life without fear of detection.

"By the aid of some 'cooked' references I got the place here as manservant to Mr. Handford. He was an easy-going gent. He allowed me to wear a beard, since I explained I was subject to a weak throat. Well, to be as brief as I can, I got wind as how you and the master possessed the secret of some big hidden treasure between you.

"I thought I'd like to know more about it. So on the night of the murder, as you and he sat chatting here, I determined to spy on you.

"How? I'll tell you. Have you noticed that disc of glass up there in the ceiling? Mr. Handford had it put there; it was part of an invention of his that he never finished; something to do with a fixed telescope, for he was mad on astronomy, and that is a strong magnifying lens.

"Well, I got upon the flat, leaded roof. I thought I'd be able to see you there. I watched you for a time. How queer you looked through the lens, magnified, as you were, till you seemed like giants! When I looked again a man had stolen into the room. Then I saw the murder take place——"

"Yet you did not come to our help, or even tell the police," interrupted Mr. Barry.

"I'm coming to that. Just after he knocked you down with his preserver, the murderer looked up and saw me watching him through the lens—that is, he would see one eye.

"I recognised the man. His name is Lester Rawdon, otherwise known as the Tiger—one of the most desperate ruffians in London. It was not likely I was going to face him when I was unarmed and he had a revolver, which he would not have thought twice about using on me.

"I climbed down in a hurry from my perch and made my way to the town. There was the intention in my mind to go straight to inform the police.

"But on the way thoughts came to me. I said to myself that by the time the police arrived the Tiger would have flown, and only a couple of dead men there. I thought you were done for.

"They might say I was the culprit, trying to put 'em off the scent. They might also, in the course of their inquiries, discover I was a ticket-of-leave man who had failed to report himself. Who'd have believed my story of seeing the murder through a skylight?

"I decided to bolt. It wouldn't do to be mixed up in this affair. They might hang me before they found I was innocent! I took the train to London. Next day the papers were full of the murder. 'Where's the valet?' they asked. I knew the police would be hunting for me, with that warrant out for my arrest.

"To throw off the scent anyone who might have traced me to London, I shaved my face clean. Then I fell out of the frying-pan into the fire. A plain-clothes man spotted me as the ticket-of-leave, and I was nabbed for not having reported myself.

"I kept mum, you may bet, about being the valet. I knew that, having run away, would look like guilt. So I was sent back to quod to do the six unexpired months of my sentence, and those clever police never for one moment dreamed that the missing valet in the big murder case was the man they had just sent back to prison!

"I came out again a few days ago, and I made my way here because—well, because I knew of a recess behind a secret panel where my late master often placed valuables, and I wanted anything I could find. Whilst here I was surprised by the Tiger. I told him what I knew of the murder, and said he must pay me for keeping mum. He attacked me—the rest you know," concluded Kindred.

"You are ready to swear to what you have just told me in a court of law?" asked Edward Barry eagerly.

"Yes. Your coming saved my life, and I'll do it at whatever risk to myself. And I may get into trouble, you know, for by keeping silence I have made myself an accessory after the crime. But I'll speak out and clear you, never fear. And you?"

"I shall give myself up to the police, fully confident that now I can prove both my sanity and my innocence," said Mr. Barry.

And so it proved. It was not long before Edward Barry was a free man—released on "the Queen's pardon," since the law never admits that it has erred.

As for the Tiger, the police could find no trace of that cunning scoundrel.

CHAPTER XI.

BY THE IRISH SEA—THE HUNT FOR THE LOST TREASURE—THE TIGER AGAIN—RETRIBUTION.

On a desolate part of the Irish coast a man and two boys were standing.

Before them were the beetling crags and the sheer descent of the cliff, half-way down which gaped the mouth of the cavern where lay the treasure buried by the dead-and-gone ancestor of the Barrys ere he fled across the sea into a land of exile.

At last the time had come when that hidden hoard was to yield itself up to descendants of the man who had once owned it.

The recovery of the gold and jewels had to be effected secretly. For although the treasure had rightfully belonged to the Barrys, and Edward Barry felt that morally he was justified in claiming it, yet the fact remained that after the fatal '45 the Crown had confiscated the land and possessions of the man it had called traitor; and the estate had now passed into other hands.

How the law stood on the point, Edward Barry did not quite know—he thought probably the lord of the manor could claim the treasure.

But Mr. Barry had made up his mind that he—and he alone—should be master of his ancestor's wealth. Accordingly he had laid careful plans to find and remove the treasure with the utmost secrecy.

In their rôle of geologists, Mr. Barry, Jack, and his chum Tom Crofton excited but little notice in the village. So they had been able to openly make preparations for the descent.

There was no one in sight to watch them descend.

They had securely fastened a rope ladder to a couple of stout stakes driven into the earth some distance away from the edge of the cliff.

Jack went down first.

The rope swayed horribly, and a false step meant death. But Jack had the coolest of heads and the steadiest of nerves.

They watched him go down till he reached the lodge of the cavern opening. Then the necessary implements were lowered, and finally Mr. Barry and Tom safely made the descent.

By aid of the chart, they had not much difficulty in finding the place they sought.

It was some twenty feet from the opening, where the cavern had narrowed into the winding passage that had once led to the ancestral home of the Barrys.

Lifting the pick, Jack struck the first blow. They heard the echoes ringing away down the winding tunnel.

Pick and spade soon did their work.

The hearts of all were beating rapidly.

Soon they would see if their labour was in vain—if by any fate they had been forestalled.

No, the treasure was there—found at last!

It was like Aladdin's cave, there in the light of the lantern; yellow guineas innumerable, and jewels that a princess in the "Arabian Nights" might have worn—glittering diamonds, blood-red rubies—the price of a king's ransom!

Yet, at that moment of triumph, Edward Barry's thoughts suddenly wandered back to the memory of one fatal night,

when his friend, whose tragic doom robbed this joy of half its pleasure, had spoken exultantly of their secret.

"The scoundrel, who in his avarice recked nothing of bloodshed, shall even yet be brought to justice!" cried Edward Barry, as he stood there with the treasure at his feet. "So far he has baffled the police. Now that I am rich I will spare no expense, leave no stone unturned, to bring him to the gallows!"

Even as the words were on his lips a strange sound startled them.

It came from above their heads—a low, evil laugh.

They heard it distinctly, though it came from the ground above them.

Whose laugh was it?

"What fools we were not to leave someone at the top, to see to it that no one played tricks with the rope ladder!" exclaimed Jack's father.

It struck him that the laugh might come from some farmer's lout, who intended to play some ill-natured, practical joke—perhaps cut the rope.

He halted swiftly to the mouth of the cave, and crying out "Hallo! you there!" began to ascend.

Then his blood suddenly froze.

Over the edge of the cliff above an evil, mocking face appeared.

It was that of the murderer of James Handford!

"You are at my mercy now! You thought you'd done with me, but I've been on the watch!" cried the Tiger exultingly, with a mad gleam in his eyes. "Go to your fate!"

A knife was in his hand. With it he began to saw at the rope.

"Murderer of James Handford!" cried Edward Barry. He did not finish his sentence.

The name of the man he had slain made the Tiger pause and shudder.

Suddenly his eyes dilated, as though some awful vision had risen up before them.

He shrieked: "Why do you haunt me, James Handford? Your dead eyes pierce me! You beckon, and I must follow!"

Flinging up his arms, the Tiger made a step forward, then fell, almost striking the man on the rope ladder as he crashed down.

Far below the teeth of the jagged rocks caught him, and the rising tide carried the body out to sea.

An evil ending to an evil life.

That is the story of how the lost treasure came back after many years to its rightful owners, and here this tale must end. Perhaps some other time I may be able to tell you, dear reader, more about the schooldays of Jack Barry and his chum Tom Crofton.

THE END.

LIFEBOAT DICK

OR,

Won from the Sea.

BY

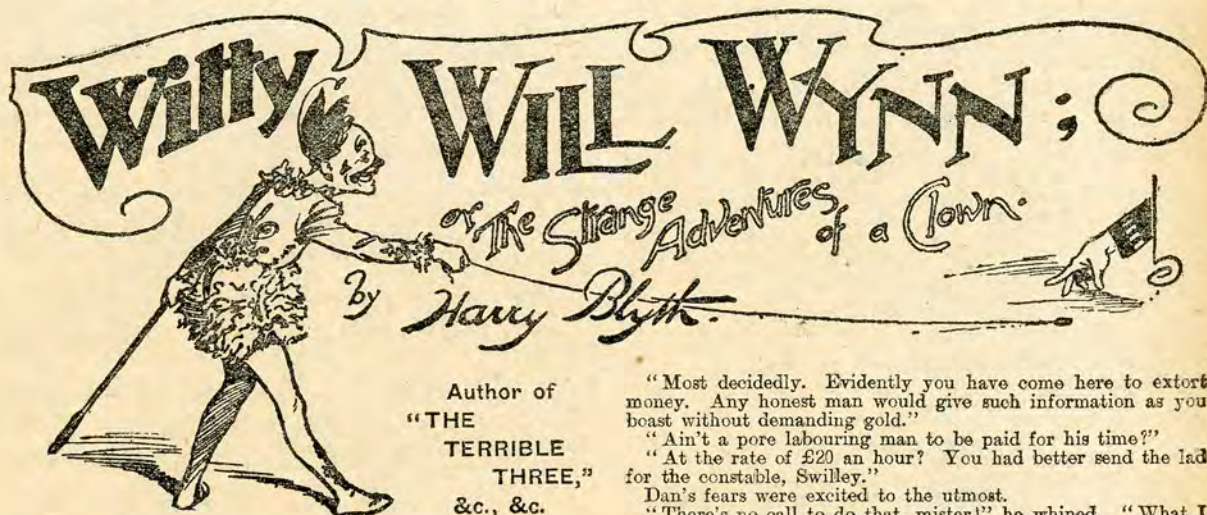
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Witty Will Wynn is a boy clown in Professor Romah's "Temple of Matchless Mirth," situated, when the story opens, at Oldham. After the performance is over for the evening, Will Wynn is left in charge of the show. He is having his supper when he hears shouts, and, going out, discovers that a number of caravans and tents are ablaze. A lion breaks loose. Will lassoes it, and, getting tangled in the rope, is dragged along the ground.

A ruffian-looking man sets him free, and taking him in his arms, quite unseen, carries him to a house in one of the lowest parts of the town. In the meantime, Professor Romah discovers his loss, and seeks his clown in vain. Next day a man comes to Romah, and says that his master, a Mr. Copples, wishes to see him at once about Wynn.

The evening after Wynn was carried off, Dan who captured him and an accomplice, take him out of the town to a gloomy-looking building. Here they halt, and order Will to climb a pipe which runs up the side of the house, enter a little window, and open the front door for them.

Will climbs up at once, intending to alarm the inmates.

Then the thought strikes him that if he were to do so they might not believe him, and charge him with burglary, so he decides to escape.

He enters a room, and, to his great surprise, finds a young lady there, dressed in walking attire. She tells him that she is about to run away from her guardian, Mr. Copples. Ada Graham is her name. Together they leave the house. They are walking along when Will hears Dan speaking: so they crouch down under a hedge. Dan and his friend Mike appear on the scene, and see the pair. Will knocks Dan down, but is stunned by Mike. Mike is about to take Ada Graham's jewels, when a dog springs at his throat. Professor Romah proceeds to Mr. Copples's, and is shown up to him. Copples offers Romah £2,000 if he will give Wynn to him. Romah tells him that he has disappeared, and goes off. Copples discovers that Ada has left him. Meantime, Wynn and Ada safely reach the show. Dan calls on Mr. Copples.

CHAPTER VII.

TRAPS AND TRAPPERS.

"Well, my good man, and what may you want with me?"

Mr. Copples spoke sharply, and Dan, as he twisted his cap in his hand, regarded the miser sideways, in a half-shy, half-defiant way.

"I understood as how you had lost a little gell," said he. "Well, I can tell you where to lay your hands on her a treat. But good information is worth paying a good price for. Say twenty quid, and I'll speak the tale."

"Which asylum have you recently escaped from? The young lady is my legal ward. Doubtless I shall have no difficulty in finding her for myself. But if you know where she is, and decline to tell me without payment, I shall simply lock you up on a charge of abduction with a view to blackmail."

This reception fairly staggered Dan. He wondered whether he was awake or dreaming. Joe Swilley, Mr. Copples's man, grinned consumedly.

"Lock me up!"

"Most decidedly. Evidently you have come here to extort money. Any honest man would give such information as you boast without demanding gold."

"Ain't a pore labouring man to be paid for his time?"

"At the rate of £20 an hour? You had better send the lad for the constable, Swilley."

Dan's fears were excited to the utmost.

"There's no call to do that, mister!" he whined. "What I know I'll tell you freely, an' I'll skip off sharp as a cat out of a bag. The party has made her way to Oldham, and I expect you will find her with Romah, the showman."

"Ah, now you talk like the sensible man doubtless you are. It pays best in the end to be straightforward."

"Yes, I know!" returned Dan savagely. The discomfited rogue would have given much to have been able to "jump" on the miser, while as for that blinking, jibing Swilley, one dare not even hint at the awful things he felt against him in his dark heart. "I'll say good-day, and—thank you!"

"Not so fast—not so fast! We may do a little business together yet."

"Oh!" came from Dan incredulously. He wondered what they were "getting up" for him next.

"Was the young lady alone?"

"Alone? No. If she had been we should have—I mean, governor, she was with that varmint, that slippery toad, Witty Will Wynn. Oh, my butchering bones! I'll twist the life out of him when I do get hold of him!"

"A very proper speech. My sentiments to a T."

"Ere, governor, air you a-getting at me?"

"Not in the least. You spoke about £20 just now. Are you ready to earn that sum?"

"In course, so long as the work ain't menial, and regular hours are not expected."

"You bring that boy to me and the money shall be yours."

"Is that right?"

"Yes."

"Well, I reckon I shall soon 'claim.' I kidnapped him once, and I can do it again."

"What did you want him for?" Mr. Copples asked the question with the keenest anxiety.

"That's neither here nor there!" sullenly answered Dan, his cheeks flaming. "Before the week is out you shall have him. I suppose you want him alive?" He lowered his voice, and peered into the other's eyes with more resolution than he had yet displayed.

Mr. Copples did not answer. He stood stock still, and returned the ruffian's querying gaze with interest. Mr. Swilley seemed like one turned to a statue, and there was a great silence.

"My word is my bond," said the miser at last. "I said £20 on production of the boy. If he should be so unhappy as to die on the journey the money would be yours all the same."

"I takes yer!" roared Dan, with an extensive malediction. "I've got yer set, me pretty toolip, and I'm your man! I don't say as how the job couldn't be done this very night. So long as the young rat is outed you stumps up?"

Copples was somewhat nonplussed at the brutal openness with which Dan discussed the projected horrible crime. Here was "straightforwardness" with a vengeance. As specious words were not likely to deceive the scoundrel, Mr. Copples, making a virtue of necessity, dropped into candour himself.

"I should want undeniable proof of death. I do not design to be played with. Twenty pounds are not to be found for the asking."

"Your friend has a dry, hanging lip," said Swilley sarcastically. "I will bring him up a mug of ale, while you settle your affairs between you."

Outside the door, Joe rubbed his hands with every manifestation of triumphant cunning.

GIVE THIS COPY TO A FRIEND.

"They shall plot and do their murders alone," muttered he. "I will have no hand in such work. The deeper old Hunks Copples plunges into crime, the tighter and tighter becomes my grip of him—the nearer and surer comes his wealth to me."

He drew himself some beer, and sat down in the great cellar to consume it with gusto. As he drank, he smiled and smiled, and still again smiled.

"Very good," said Dan: "I'll bring the body here. Lor, you could not have given me a job as so touches me heart. The cussed whelp! Why it will be a regular labour of love to cut him!"

The fellow's enmity puzzled Mr. Copples; but he reckoned it a coincidence fortunate for his dastardly schemes.

"It will be a rather dangerous thing to cart about the country?" suggested he.

"Not bit! I shall put him in a sack. Among others filled with potatoes, he'll look like one of the same. But look here, governor, I shall want a bit of ready to work on. I'm fair stoney!"

"Oh, of course. That's quite right. It won't do to be without a shilling in your pocket. There! what do you say to that?"

"Heavens! You do want 'em done for at first price, with 95 per cent. off at that. I ask you, as a reasonable man, what's the use of half-a-dollar? Why it don't run into eight quarts, which is only an evening's refresher."

"The less you have now the more you will have to take when we come to a settlement."

"Yes, I know. But it is half-a-thick'un or nothing!"

The miser grinned in a diabolical way as he mostly did when compelled to part with money. His expression was like that of a man in the agonies of having a stubborn tooth drawn.

He rang the bell, and Joe Swilley returned.

"Take this worthy gentleman"—his tone was so acid that it seemed to bite those who heard it—"and give him as much beef and ale as he can manage—"

"That will cost thee a pretty penny, master!" put in the rogue referred to, with a leer.

"I leave him in your hands till to-morrow, when he will depart on certain business we have agreed on."

"All right. Come along. Let's see, what's your name?"

"It happens to be Dan. But names don't count. Call me 'brother.'" He slapped him heavily on the back with his ponderous hand. "Birds of a feather, you know, brother—birds of a feather!"

They left the apartment, Joe almost staggering under the weight of Dan, who, in access of affection, had put his brawny arm round his neck.

For some time Mr. Copples remained held by his varying thoughts.

At last such a brightness as might come from the evil place lit up his sardonic features.

"Ay, that shall be the way!" he muttered. "Once he brings the boy here, murdered and murderer shall both go down the trap to the awful place where all traces of their existence will rapidly disappear. All evidences of the crime and the criminal will be done away with, and I shall be freed at last from the menace of that shocking villain, Joe Swilley."

"By heavens, 'brother, you have fine times here!" roared Dan, lowering at a draught another pint of the cream-topped amber fluid. He took it from a quaintly fashioned brown mug, and found it deliciously cool. He did not spare the beef. A couple of pounds disappeared before the activity of his roughly-used knife. "Oh, yes, 'tis a rare place. What have you to do but to eat and drink your fill. Smoke, then eat and drink again? Brother, if you want an assistant in that business I warrant to keep you merry so long as tongue will wag and legs hold. Another and another. Encore, encore! and hurrah!"

Joe eyed his guest with no very pleasant expression.

"Some dogs," said he, "are made for indoors, some for outside. I am intended for the house, and you for the road. You would look too well after our property if you were here."

"Ah, I always thought there was a tidy bit of swag here to be had for the finding."

"Did you now?" Joe's eyes twinkled. "It would take some finding, all the same. No, my lad, Mr. Copples is not the gentleman to leave anything of value in an unsafe place."

Dan lit his pipe, and, soothed by repletion, sank into a semi-dreamy state, which allowed him to do more than keep the tobacco going.

Nothing worth relating occurred till Dan was shown into the rough apartment which was to serve for his bedroom.

"There's your bed, and you can suit yourself what time you turn out in the morning."

As Swilley went away he gave a sigh of relief, for he was distinctly glad to be rid of his boisterous companion.

"Never mind," he said to himself, thinking of the annoyance he had endured. "I may have the satisfaction of getting the fellow hanged yet."

Soon Dan was in a deep sleep, and so continued for about a couple of hours. When he awoke he felt fresher than was usually the case.

"That ale must have been a first-class lot," he reflected, as he restlessly tossed and turned. He did not feel at all like going off again.

"Now I have the chance, it would not be half a bad idea to get acquainted with the lay of the land in this house. Perish me! if I don't have a go at it some day. There must be heaps of lovely quids here. If any of 'em does for me, it won't matter. I can easy make an excuse."

He got to his feet. From force of habit there invariably were silent matches and a bit of tallow candle in one of his pockets.

He lit the latter, and crept out on to the landing. There was nothing to direct him which was the best way to turn. He chose the right, because in that direction there was carpet.

Presently he stood by a handsomely-polished oaken door.

From his point of view it suggested wealth within. Cautiously he turned the heavily embossed brass handle. It yielded readily, without noise, and his ugly feet sank into rich pile of great thickness.

The door behind him swung back quickly, and shut with a click.

The place he was in was handsomely furnished in antique style. Costly ornaments adorned it, and there was china there so rare and ancient that one piece would fetch enough to keep a simple man all his days.

Dan was no connoisseur of such art. Plain gold and silver satisfied him.

His eyes fell on a high and elaborately curved cabinet, doubtless many hundreds of years old. It had neither handle nor sign of lock.

"I reckon there is something good in there," said he, shaking his shock head sapiently. "It's one of them old things with secret springs. Blessed if I don't see whether I can't ferret out the trick of it!"

He succeeded quicker than he had expected; but at once had reason for cursing his "good luck." The doors flew apart with a scream. From within sprang out a terrible thing—neither man, nor monkey, nor like aught besides ever seen on earth.

Dan set up a yell of supremest terror. Then he dropped to the ground, where he lay writhing in a white sweat of fear.

CHAPTER VIII. UNDER THE KNIFE.

"Witty Will Wynn! Witty, Will, Wynn! Hooray! Hurrah! Bravo!"

These and similar cries came from thousands of throats. The merchants on the platforms stopped their cackle. The steam whistle of the roundsabout gave a scream of delight. The ghost illusion lady forgot to take money. The Fire King allowed that he was beaten to bust, and the Living Mermaid said: "There, now!" By that mighty concourse the good news was roared out, a very thunder of voices proclaiming the good news that Witty Will Wynn had at last returned.

It is not suggested that everyone there was acquainted with that young gentleman. But his disappearance had caused a profound sensation throughout the town, and his recovery produced the wildest excitement, which naturally ran to its fiercest in the fair-ground itself.

Professor Romah saw the commotion from afar, and he waited in an agony of impatience for the lad to reach the Ornate Temple of Mirth and Marvel.

"Drat the people!" said his portly spouse, "they are so crowding round the boy he'll never get here. Why he's got a girl with him!"

Leading Ada Graham by the hand, Will did his best to force his way as quickly as possible through the tightly packed mass of humanity to the show. As for that cunning old Sharp, he was so well acquainted with mobs that he passed among the legs with the greatest unconcern, and without being once trodden on. He scrambled up the steps, and fawned upon his master, who was too anxious for the arrival of Willy to bestow on him all the caresses he deserved.

Half a minute later, the boy clown and Miss Graham stood on the platform also.

"Please take care of her, madame," said he. "Later I will tell you all about my adventure." He made a dart into the show.

"Come here!" cried Romah. "What the dickens are you up to now?"

"I am going to get into my togs to be sure. There will be such a run on the show to-day you will get tired taking money. But they won't come in till they see me in my war-paint."

"What a genius, what a precious genius! Ain't he now?" cried madame ecstatically.

"I am sure he is very clever," ventured Ada shyly.

"Clever? He's better than clever—he's good!" sententiously declared the professor.

"Come into the pay-box with me, you precious lamb," said madame to Ada. It was evident to madame that the girl was of a superior class—one of the quality, maybe—and that was sufficient to make her effusive, "and we will see what some bread-and-cheese and beer and an onion will do for you."

"Ho, ho! Hi, hi!" cried Tommy Welch, champion cackler. "Return of the great, little, small, large champion waistcoat-splitter, Witty Will Wynn! Remember, ladies and gentlemen, it is only here that you can see this phenomenon of mirth, and bear in mind the charge is therepence, and threepence only. One price to all classes, including the blind, and that charge threepence!"

Then Witty Will himself makes a somersault on to the platform, spick and span, white and vermilion, a tricky, natty little package of mirth.

"Hallo! Here we are again! I say, Mr. Welch, why don't you pay me back that sovereign you never borrowed? Do you know, sir, why some people call this town 'Rusty'?"

"Indeed I do not, Mr. Wynn."

"Because it's Old—ham. Good-morning, Mr. Professor, I am glad to see you alive and well. How is Mrs. Professor, and all the professorettes? My word, but you do fancy yourself behind a good cigar!"

"Why should you suppose that now?"

"Because I never saw you in front of one."

Then more whirling in the air, the clash of cymbals, streams of music from the great organ, every conceivable variety of contrivance for ear-splitting—such a hideous din as made one sure that Babel had come again, madder, more frenzied than before.

And how they poured into Romah's Temple of inextinguishable laughter, and home of exhaustless optical delusions! No sooner was one house "out" than another immediately took its place. Of a truth, on that day there was "no waiting." When the welcome time for closing did at last come all connected with the show were dead beat.

Will accompanied the professor home to get a good square meal into him before retiring to his bed in the show, and Ada was, of course, with madame.

Now, and for the first time, was our hero able to give a full account of his strange adventures. The recital was often interrupted by expressions of astonishment and indignation. When the Romahs heard that Miss Graham had come from Mr. Copples's establishment their amazement was boundless.

"There is more in this than meets the eye," remarked the professor.

"As the monkey said when he shook up the egg-box!" chimed madame.

"The young lady is welcome to stay with us until she decides on her future plans. But if Mr. Copples has a legal claim on her I must not defy him. I should have to give Miss Graham up to him if he claimed her, or run the chance of being locked up. Of course he may never think of looking for her here. Why should he? So we won't bother till the trouble comes."

Ada expressed her gratitude, and Will made tracks for the show, where Sharp was waiting his arrival with some impatience.

On the following afternoon, and while a pause in his work allowed him a chat with madame, he espied, mounting the steps, the form of Copples.

"Miss Graham!" cried he hurriedly, "get from here by the side door at the other end of the show. Copples is coming!"

She needed no second bidding—did not wait for some instructions he would have given her. Like a gleam she passed away, and soon had the stupendous temple some distance behind her.

Watching his time, narrowly calculating his distance, Will threw himself on the platform on his hands; then hands-over-head, and over, and over, and over till his feet landed on that portion of Mr. Copples's anatomy usually supposed to contain his dinner. The impact sent him flying from the top step into the midst of the gaping crowd beneath, to the frantic delight of the general, but to the irritation of the few who received his full weight. But to assuage the feelings of even these there was his tall hat, and that was promptly crushed in over his face.

"Toppers" are not regarded with favour in Oldham at any time. So much malicious joy was shown in the concertinaing of this one. Copples evinced most miraculous wrath, and he was foolish enough not only to abuse all "the scum of Oldham," but to strike out right and left.

So they ripped up his coat the whole length of the back. Someone made sure of his watch. His waistcoat was torn to ribbons, and his shirt fluttered in the breeze in ragged strips. They got him down, and would undoubtedly have "punched" [i.e., kicked] him to death, had not the police rescued him, though at some peril to themselves.

"Look here," said the constable, who had dragged him from his assailants, and when they were without the crowd, "what do you mean by this, eh?" He shook him like a rat. "Anytime you come here there's a rumpus. Poking your nose where it is not wanted, I expect. You ought to be ashamed of yourself at your time of life. You clear out, and don't let me get hold of you again, or you'll know something!"

"How dare you talk to me like that! Don't you know who I am?"

"You're a great nuisance."

"My name's Copples—"

"I don't care whether it's Copples, or Bopples, or what. I know you are always inciting people to break her Majesty's peace."

"I shall report you. You are a disgrace to the force."

"That's it, is it!" He seized the ill-fated miser by such collar as remained to him, and treated him to a very fine variation of "policeman's knuckle." "I reckon we had better give him a night's lodging, Tom," said he to his mate.

"Yah! Too much trouble. Give him a lift in the breeches and have done with him."

So Mr. Copples was ignominiously expelled from that paradise of shows. He limped away wretched and forlorn enough, and feeling in his ragged heart that he could even go so far as spending money to be revenged.

"It's a pity I happened to catch the old gentleman," said Will, keeping a serious face. "Of course it was an accident."

"Of course," agreed the professor, who secretly had enjoyed the catastrophe amazingly.

"I wonder where Miss Graham has gone to?" continued Will.

"So do I. Let us hope that she does not fall into bad hands."

"She has a wonderful lot of common sense and courage, too,"

said the witty one. An old man could not have looked more sagacious. "I think she will know how to take care of herself."

When business was over that night he went out hopeful of discovering some news of her. True, the late hour was unpropitious for the success of such an inquiry. Nevertheless there were certain places where he thought it just possible to hear of her.

The show-ground itself proved unproductive, so he wandered farther afield.

He was not aware that from the moment he left Romah's temple he was shadowed by one who craftily followed him step by step, and yet was never seen. Sometimes the sinister figure crouched in the darkness of a cart, in the shades of the high buildings, or lurked in the mouth of a court. But never did he lose sight of his prey, or betray his own presence.

Silent, subtle, and deadly, the mysterious form was scarcely a yard behind our hero, when he was putting the key into the side door of the show, which, as we have explained, was on the ground level.

As the bolt slipped back, the stranger drew a knife that glistered in the moonlight, raised it high above his head ready to bring down with overwhelming force to Will's heart.

(To be continued in next Friday's UNION JACK.)

THOSE FUNNY MEN

Whose adventures make you laugh so,
are Lanky Larry and Bloated Bill.

This week they are funnier than ever.

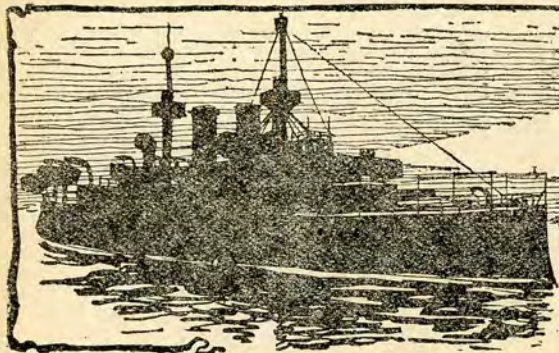
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A TREMENDOUSLY THRILLING INSTALMENT OF THIS SERIAL NEXT FRIDAY.



FROM THE QUARTERDECK.

I fully intended publishing the result of the "Favourite Authors Competition" this week, but the Fates—or, rather, my readers—were against me. So many have tried their luck that my assistants have not yet been able to go through all the letters. I can promise you the result next week, however. Probably I shall give away some extra prizes, as there were so many competitors.

Speaking of the competition reminds me of a letter which came with one of my reader's attempts. Here it is:

"Dear Editor,—I am trying for your puzzle, and I hope it is no catch.—Yours truly,
W. R. MAIR."

Now, what do you think of that?—What a pity it seems that a small—very small, I trust—percentage of readers cannot believe, if they fail to get a prize, that the Editor is dealing fairly with them.

I am quite sure that if the doubters will write to some of the winners next week, they will soon be satisfied that when the Editor of the UNION JACK offers prizes, he awards them.

I am not quite sure how it stands now, "Perplexed," but a few years back the Victoria Cross had been most often awarded to the following regiments: Bengal Staff Corps, 35; Royal Artillery, 30; Royal Engineers, 22; 24th Foot, 16; 9th Lanciers, 13.

All of you know Mr. Maxwell Scott's name, I am sure, and I am equally sure that you all like his stories. Well, next week's UNION JACK will contain a particularly good story from Mr. Scott's pen, specially written for the UNION JACK, entitled:

"LIFEBOAT DICK."

Order a copy now, or you may not get one.

The Akkas, who live a short distance to the west of the Lake Albert Nyanza, Central Africa, are the smallest race of mankind, "X." They were discovered in 1870, and more recently investigated by Emin Pasha. They are fully grown, but four feet in height, while a living Akka woman, of whom Emin Pasha sent careful measurements, was barely three feet ten inches in height.

The "St. Hubertus," a German sporting journal, contains an account of the "dogs of war" which have been added to the Jager regiments at Lubben. The dogs are intended for postal service. Each company has two dogs—sheep-dogs, after many comparative experiments, were chosen as the best race for the particular work. A dog master is appointed, whose duty consists chiefly in drilling and exercising his four-footed subordinates. Each dog has a small leather bag fastened to his collar, and in this are placed the letters and notices which he has to convey between the department and headquarters. As the dogs are to be used also for the seeking out of the wounded and missing, it is a part of the education of each dog to be familiarised with every individual soldier belonging to his own company.

Bank of England notes are made from pure white linen cuttings only, never from rags that have been worn, "Clerk." So carefully is the paper prepared that even the number of dips into the pulp made by each individual workman is registered on a dial by machinery, and the sheets are carefully counted and booked to each person through whose hands they pass. The printing is done by a most curious process in the bank building. There is an elaborate arrangement for securing that no note shall be exactly like any other in existence; consequently there never has been a duplicate bank-note except by forgery. The stock of paid notes for seven years is said to amount to 94,000,000, and to fill 10,000 boxes, which, if placed side by side, would stretch over three miles.

It will, perhaps, interest some readers to know how much fuel a locomotive burns. This, of course, depends upon the quality of fuel, work done, speed, and character of the track. On luggage trains an average consumption may be taken at about 1 to 1½ pounds of coal per carriage per mile. With passenger trains, the carriages of which are heavier and the speed higher, the coal consumption is greater. A luggage train of thirty carriages, at a speed of thirty miles per hour, would, therefore, burn from 900 to 1,350 pounds of coal per hour.

*Don't miss friends,
The Skipper*

"UNION JACK" LEAGUE.

901, E. H. Whitell, Stockton; 902, G. Wise, London, S.W.; 903, E. T. Heneage, Dublin; 904, J. S. Harr, Machynlleth; 905, J. Dolan, Camlough, co. Armagh, Ireland; 906, E. Waters, Egremont, Cumberland; 907, R. Hugh, Carnarvon; 908, T. Barlow, Southport; 909, J. Arcott, Stratford, E.; 910, W. H. Every, London, N.; 911, R. A. Hamar, Hyfryg Twt, Hill; 912, J. B. Jory, London, S.W.; 913, J. Anderson, Montrose; 914, H. Thomas, Custom House, E.; 915, T. Light, London, S.E.; 916, A. J. Boreham, Bury St. Edmunds; 917, J. S. Hay, Egremont, Cheshire; 918, J. Thomas, Penmaenmawr; 919, F. G. McLaren, Glasgow; 920, P. R. Cload, Stonehouse, Devon; 921, N. Mingham, Cardiff; 922, A. Tibbury, Portsmouth; 923, F. W. Comley, Swindon; 924, C. Kerby, Chingford; 925, F. Brown, Walsall; 926, A. E. Lock, Gateshead; 927, R. Heron, Middlesbrough; 928, A. Lewis, Kendal; 929, G. Sneaton, Leeds; 930, A. B. Coombe, Penzance; 931, A. Hill, Swindon; 932, F. Wales, Sheffield; 933, B. Davies, Birmingham; 934, G. H. Cullen, Belfast; 935, H. Whittaker, Sligo, Ireland; 936, J. H. Hollington, Louth; 937, S. Thirk, Castleford, Yorkshire; 938, C. Goater, Southampton; 939, R. H. Little, Stranraer; 940, H. Touriss, Lincoln; 941, T. Halton, Dorrington, Salop; 942, W. J. Wrewin, Stonehouse; 943, C. Williams, Dorrington, Salop; 944, J. Parkes, Willenhall; 945, H. E. Sawden, Huddersfield, Devon; 946, F. W. Mellis, Perth, N.B.; 947, F. A. Rogers, Leicester; 948, G. W. R. Golding, Bristol; 949, G. H. Broome, Wolverhampton; 950, P. Keough, Northumberland; 951, J. W. Thorpe, Manchester; 952, W. West, Liverpool; 953, R. David, Cameroon; 954, A. Deas, Whitelegg; 955, A. R. Weeks, London, W.; 956, W. Dockrill, Luton, Beds; 957, H. Jameson, Arbroath; 958, J. Duncan, London, E.; 959, J. Stewart, Glasgow; 960, L. Gordon, Mossend; 961, F. Wells, Paddington, W.; 962, H. Burgess, Walsworth, S.E.; 963, H. Lennox, Killyth; 964, R. Kirkhope, Glasgow; 965, A. I. Barry, St. Helier's, Jersey; 966, W. Smith, London, N.E.; 967, S. Johnson, Dudley; 968, J. Young, Bolton; 969, J. H. Cole, Hull; 970, A. Wartski, Victoria Park, N.E.; 971, C. D. Evans, Birmingham; 972, R. Johnston, Coatbridge; 973, J. Wigley, Birmingham; 974, A. Mitchell, Woolwich; 975, A. J. Morris, Poole; 976, J. Coats, Edinburgh; 977, H. S. Boulton, Bristol; 978, C. Bird, Birkenhead; 979, M. McGrath, Bootle; 980, J. Bainbridge, Appleby; 981, F. Taylor, Oldham; 982, H. Russell, Stockton; 983, W. Matthewson, Liverpool; 984, J. Devonport, Wednesfield; 985, W. H. Stanley, Aylesbury; 986, J. Craig, Whitelegg; 987, A. Butters, Whitelegg; 988, O. Hewitt, Bayader; 989, R. T. Harford, Exeter; 990, W. Margerison, Bradford; 991, P. J. W. Ashman, Clapham, S.W.; 992, T. Gregory, Bolton; 993, J. Partington, Pemberton; 994, C. R. Chelmers, Alloo; 995, S. Whittaker, Sligo, Ireland; 996, A. Stinson, Plaistow, E.; 997, A. Underwood, Leighton Buzzard; 998, E. Leggett, Lowestoft; 999, W. H. Rabbetts, Blandford, Dorset; 1000, J. J. Taylor, Runcorn, Cheshire.

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