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Number 8

THE END OF DEVIL HAWKER



There is a Full-Length Colored Print Which Shows Him to be Tall and Magnificently Proportioned, With Broad Shoulders, Slim Waist, Clad in a Tightly Buttoned Green Coat, Buckskin Breeches and High Hessian Boots

THERE is a fascinating little print shop at the corner of Drury Lane. When you pass through the old oaken doorway and into the dim dusty interior, you seem to have wandered into some corridor leading back through time, for on every side of you are the pictures of the past. But very specially I value that table on the left where lies the great pile of portrait prints heaped up in some sort of order of date. There you see the pictures of the men who stood round the throne of the young Victoria, of Melbourne, of Peel, of Wellington, and then you come on the D'Orsay and Lady Blessington period, and the long and wonderful series of H. B., the great, unknown John Doyle, who, in his day, was a real power in the land. Farther back still you come on the bucks and prize fighters of the Regency—the pompous Jackson, the sturdy Cribb, the empty Brummell, the chubby Alvanley. And then you may chance upon a face which you cannot pass without a second and a longer look. It is a face which Mephistopheles might have owned, thin,

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY ORISON MACPHERSON

shoulders, slim waist, clad in a tightly buttoned green coat, buckskin breeches and high Hessian boots. Below is the inscription: "Sir John Hawker"—and that is the Devil Hawker of the legends.

In his short but vivid career, the end of which is here outlined, Hawker was the bully of the town. The bravest shrank away from the angry, insolent glare of those hateful eyes. He was a famous swordsman and a remarkable pistol shot—so remarkable that three times he started the knecap of his man; the most painful injury which he could inflict. But above all, he was the best amateur boxer of his day, and had he taken to the ring, it is likely that he would have made a name. His hitting is said to have been the most ferocious ever seen, and it was his amusement to try out novices at Cribb's rooms,



With a Bitter Curse, He Realized That However Imprudent Jakes Had Been, He Had Not Been Such a Fool as to Carry His Papers About With Him

which were his favorite haunt, and to teach them how to stand punishment. It gratified his pride to show his skill, and his cruel nature to administer pain to others. It was in these very rooms of Cribb that this little sketch of those days opens, where, as on a marionette stage, I would try to show you what manner of place it was and what manner of people walked London in those full-blooded, brutal and virile old days.

First, as to the place. It is at the corner of Pantion Street, and you see over a broad, red-curtained door the sign: THOMAS CRIBB. DEALER IN LIQUOR AND TOBACCO, with the Union Arms printed above. The door leads into a tiled passage which opens on the left into a common bar behind which save on special evenings, a big, bull-faced, honest John Bull of a man may be seen with two assistants of the sparring-partner type, handing out refreshment and imbibing gratis a great deal more than was good for their athletic figures. Already Tom is getting a waistline which will cause his trainer and himself many a weary day at his next battle; if, indeed, the brave old fellow has not already come to the last of his fights, when he defended the honor of England by breaking the cast-iron jaw of Molyneux, the black.

If, instead of turning into the common bar, you continue down the passage, you find a green-baize door with the word "Parlor" printed across one upper panel of glass. Push it open and you are in a room which is spacious and comfortable. There is sawdust on the floor, numerous wooden armchairs, round tables for the card players, a small bar presided over by Miss Lucy Staggs, a lady who had been accused of many things, but never of dishonesty, in the corner, and a fine collection of sporting pictures round the walls. At the back were swing doors with the words "Boxing Saloon" printed across them, leading into a large bare apartment with a roped ring in the center, and many pairs of gloves hanging upon the walls, belonging, for the most part, to the Corinthians who came up to have lessons from the champion, whose classes were only exceeded by those of Gentleman Jackson in Bond Street.

It was early in the particular evening of which I speak, and there was no one in the parlor save Cribb himself, who expected the quality that night, and was cleaning up in anticipation. Lucy wiped glasses languidly in her little bar. Beside the entrance door was a small, shriveled weasel of a man, Billy Jakes by name, who sat behind a green-baize table, in receipt of custom as a bookmaker, dog fancier

or cock supplier—a privilege for which he paid Tom a good round sum every year. As no customers had appeared, he wandered over to the little bar.

"Well, things are quiet tonight, Lucy."
She looked up from polishing her glasses. "I expect they will be more lively soon, Mr. Jakes. It is full early."

"Well, Lucy, you look very pretty tonight. I expect I shall have to marry you yet."

"La, Mr. Jakes, how you do carry on!"
"Tell me, Lucy: do you want to make some money?"
"Everyone wants that, Mr. Jakes."

"How much can you lay your hands on?"
"I dare say I could find fifty pounds at a pinch."
"Wouldn't you like to turn it into a hundred?"

"Why, of course I would."
"It's Saracens for the Oaks. I'd give you two to one, which is better than I give the others. She's a cert if ever there is one."

"Well, if you say so, Mr. Jakes. The money is upstairs in my box. But if you can really turn it into —"

Fortunately, honest Tom Cribb had been within earshot of this little debate, and he now caught the man roughly by the sleeve and twirled him in the direction of his table.

"You dirty dog; doing the poor girl out of her hard-earned savings!"
"All right, Tom. Only a joke! Only Billy Jakes' little joke! . . . I wouldn't have let you lose, Lucy!"

"That's enough," said Tom. "Don't you heed him, Lucy. Keep your money in your box."

The green swing door opened and a number of buxom, in black coats, brown coats, green coats and purple, came filing into the room. The shrill voice of Jakes was at once amplified and his clamor filled the air.

"Now, my noble sportsmen," he cried, "back your opinions! There is a bag of gold waiting, and you have only to put your hands in. How about Woodstock for the Derby? How about Saracens for the Oaks? Four to one! Four to one! Two to one, bar one!"

The Corinthians gathered for a moment round the bookie's table, for his patter amused them.

"Lots of time for that, Jakes," said Lord Rufton, a big bluff county magnate and landowner.
"But the odds are shorter every day. Now's your time, my noble gamblers! Now's the time to sow the seed! Gold to be had for the asking, waitin' there for you to pick

up. I like to pay it. It pleases me to see happy faces round me. I like to see them smiling. Now's your time."

"Why, half the field may scratch before the race," said Sir Charles Trevor—the smiling imperturbable Charles—whose estate has been sucked dry by its owner's wild excesses.

"No race, no pay. The old firm gives every gamster a run for his money. The knowing ones are all on to it. Sir John Hawker has five hundred on Woodstock."

"Have fifty on the filly for the Oaks, Lord Rufton. Four to one!"

"Very good, Jakes," said the nobleman, handing out a note. "I suppose I shall find you after the race."

"Sitting here at this table, my lord. Old established place of business. You've got a certainty, my lord."

"Well," said a young Corinthian, "if it is as certain as that, I'll have fifty too."

"Right, my noble sportsmen. I book it at three to one." "I thought it was four."

"It was four. Now it is three. You're lucky to get in before it is two. Will you take your winnings in paper or gold?"

"Well, in gold."
"Very good, sir. You'll find me waiting at this table with a bag of gold at ten by the clock on the day after the race. It will be in a green-baize bag with a grip, so as you can easily carry it. By the way, I've got a fighting cock that's never been beat. Would any of you gentlemen —"

But the door had swung open and Sir John Hawker's handsome figure and sinister face filled the gap. The others moved toward the small bar. Hawker paused for a moment at the bookie's table.

"Hallo, Jakes; doing some fool out of his money as usual?"

"Tut, tut, Sir John, you should know me by now."

"Know you, you rascal! You have had a cool two thousand out of me from first to last. I know you too well."

"All you want is to preserve. You'll soon have it all back, Sir John."
"Hold your tongue, I say. I have had enough."
"No offense, my noble sportsmen. But I've a brindle terrier down at the stables that's the best at rats in London."

"I wonder he hasn't had a nip at you then. . . . Hulks, Tom."
 Cribb had come forward as usual to greet his Corinthian guests.
 "Good evening, Sir John. Going to put them on to-night?"
 "Well, I'll see. What have you got?"
 "Half a dozen up from old Bristol. That place is as full of milling coves as a bin is of bottles."
 "Then play light, Sir John. You cracked the ribs of that lad from Lincoln. You broke his heart for fighting."
 "It may as well be broke early as late. What's the use of him if he can't take punishment?"
 Several more men had come into the room; one of them exceedingly drunk, another just a little less so. They were two of the Tom and Jerry clique who wandered day and night on the old round from the Haymarket to Panton Street and St. James, imagining that they were seeing life. The drunken one—a young hawback from the shires—was noisy and combative. His friend was trying to put some term to their adventures.
 "Come, George," he coaxed, "we'll just have one drink here. Then one at the Dive and one at the Cellars, and wind up with broiled bones at Mother Simpson's."
 The name of the dish started ideas in the drunken man's brain. He staggered in the direction of the landlord.
 "Broiled bones!" he cried. "D'you hear? I want broiled bones! Fetch me dish—large dish—of broiled bones this instant—under pain—displeasure."
 Cribb, who was well accustomed to such visitors, continued his conversation with Hawker without taking the slightest notice. They were discussing a possible opponent for old Tom Shelton, the navy, when George broke in again.
 "Where the devil's those broiled bones? Here, landlord! Ole Tom Cribb! Tom, give me large dish broiled bones this instant, or I punch your old head." As Cribb

still took not the faintest heed, George became more bellicose.
 "No broiled bones!" he cried. "Very good! Prepare defend yourself!"
 "Don't hit him, George!" cried his more sober companion in alarm. "It's the champion."
 "It's a lie. I am the champion. I'll give him smack in the chops. See if I don't."
 For the first time Cribb turned a slow eye in his direction.
 "No dancin' allowed here, sir," he said.
 "I'm not dancing. I'm sparring."
 "Well, don't do it, whatever it is."
 "I'm going to fight you. Going to give old Tom a smack in the chops."
 "Some other time, sir. I'm busy."
 "Where're those bones? Last time of asking."
 "What bones? What is he talkin' of?"
 "Sorry, Tom, but have to give you good thrashing. Yes, Tom, very sorry, but must have lesson."
 He made several wild strokes in the air, quite out of distance, and finally fell upon his knees. His friend picked him up.
 "What d'you want to be so foolish for, George?"
 "I had him nearly beat."
 Tom looked reproachfully at the soberer friend. "I am surprised at you, Mr. Trelawney."
 "Couldn't help it, Tom. He would mix port and brandy."
 "You must take him out."
 "Come on, George; you've got to go out."
 "Get to go! No, sir; round two. Come up smilin' time!"
 Tom Cribb gave a sign and a stalwart potman threw the pugnacious George over his shoulder and carried him out of the room, kicking violently, while his friend walked behind. Cribb laughed.
 "There's seldom an evening that I don't have that sort of nuisance."

"They would not do it twice to me," said Hawker. "I'd send him home, and his wench wouldn't know him."
 "I haven't the heart to touch them. It pleases the poor things to say they have punched the champion of England."
 The room had now begun to fill up. At one end a circle had formed round the bookie's table. On the other side there was a group at the small private bar where very broad chaff was being exchanged between some of the younger bucks and Lucy, who was well able to take care of herself. Cribb had gone inside the swing doors to prepare for the boxing, while Hawker wandered from group to group, leaving among these fearless men, hard-riding horsemen of the shires and dare-devils at every sport, a vague feeling of repulsion which showed itself in a somewhat formal response to his brief greetings. He paused at one chattering group and lookedardonically at a youth who stood somewhat apart listening to, but not joining in, the gay exchange of repartee. He was a well-built young man with a singularly beautiful head, crowned by a mass of auburn curls. His figure might have stood for Adonis, were it not that one foot was slightly drawn up, which caused him to wear a rather unsightly boot.
 "Good evening, Hawker," said he.
 "Good evening, Byron. Is this one of your hours of idleness?"
 The allusion was to a book of verse which the young nobleman had just brought out, and which had been severely handled by the critics.
 The poet seemed annoyed, for he was sensitive on the point.
 "At least I cannot be accused of idleness today," said he. "I swam three miles downstream from Lambeth, and perhaps you have not done so much."
 "Well done!" said Hawker. "I hear of you at Angelo's, and Jackson's too. But fencing needs a quick foot. I'd stick to the water if I were you." He glanced down at the malformed limb.
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"Go Wait Until the Oaks are Cut," said Hawker. "In September I shall present My Little B.M. Meanwhile, Perhaps a Note of Hand."

THE END OF DEVIL HAWKER

(Continued from Page 5)

Byron's blue-gray eyes blazed with indignation.

"When I wish your advice as to my personal habits, Sir John Hawker, I will ask for it."

"No harm meant," said Hawker carelessly. "I am a blunt fellow and always say what I think."

Lord Rufton plucked at Byron's sleeve. "That's enough said," he whispered.

"Of course," added Hawker, "if anyone does not like my ways, they can always find me at the White Club or my lodgings in Chestnut Street."

Byron, who was utterly fearless, and brave, though he was still only a Cambridge undergraduate, to face any man in the room, was about to make some angry reply, in spite of the well-meant warnings of Lord Rufton, when Tom Cribb came bustling in and interrupted the scene.

"All right, my lords and gentlemen. The fighting men are in their places. Jack Scroggins and Ben Burn will begin."

The door of the sparring saloon. As they fled in, Hawker advanced quietly and touched the reckless baronet, Sir Charles Trevor, upon the shoulder.

"I must have a word with you, Charles."

"I have to get a ring-side seat, John."

"Never mind that. I must have a word."

The others passed in. Devil Hawker and Sir Charles had the room set to themselves, and gave for Hawker, rousing his money at his distant table, and the girl, Lucy, coming and going in her little alcove. Hawker led Sir Charles to a central seat.

"I have to speak to you, Charles, of that three thousand you owe me. It pains me vastly, but what am I to do? I have my own debts to settle, and it is no easy matter."

"I have the matter in hand, John."

"But it presses."

"I'll pay it all right. Give me time."

"We are cutting the oak at Selincourt. They should all be down by the fall. I can get an advance then that will clear all that I owe you."

"I don't want to press you, Charles. If you would like a sporting flutter to clear your debt, I'm ready to give it to you at once."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, double or quits. Six thousand or nothing. If you're not afraid to take a chance, I'll take it with you."

"All right, John. I don't like that word."

"As you were always a brave gamster, Charles. Just as you like in the matter. But you might clear yourself with a turn of the card, white, on the other hand, six thousand Selincourt timber is going, six thousand will run to you with that three."

"Well, it's a sporting offer, John. You say the turn of a card. Do you mean one simple draw?"

"Why not? Sudden death. Win or lose. What say you?"

"I agree."

A pack of cards was lying on a near-by table. Hawker stretched out a long arm and picked them up.

"Will these do?"

"By all means."

He spread them out with a sweep of his hand.

"Do you care to shuffle?"

"No, John. Take them as they are."

"Shall it be a single draw?"

"By all means."

"Will you lead?"

Sir Charles Trevor was a seasoned gambler, but never before had three thousand pounds hang upon the turn of a single card. But he was a reckless plunger, and roared with laughter as he turned up the queen of clubs.

"That should do you, John."

"Possibly," said Hawker, and turned the ace of spades.

"I thought I had cleared myself, and now it is six thousand," cried Trevor, and staggered as he rose from his seat.

"To wait until the oak are cut," said Hawker. "In September I shall present my bill. Meanwhile, perhaps a note of hand—"

"Do you doubt my word, John?"

"No, no, Charles, but business is business. Who knows what may happen? I'll have a note of hand."

"You're good. I'll have it by the post tomorrow. Well, I bear no grudge. The luck was yours. Shall we have a glass upon it?"

"You were always a brave loser, Charles." The two men walked together to the little bar in the corner.

Had either looked back he would have seen a sight which would have surprised him. During the whole incident the little bookmaker had sat absorbed over his accounts, with a pair of piercing eyes glancing up every now and then at the two gamblers. Little of their talk had been audible from where he sat, but their actions had spoken for themselves. Now, with amazing, but furtive, speed he stole across, placed up one card from the table and hurried to the bar, concealing it in his coat. The two gentlemen, having taken their refreshment, turned toward the boxing saloon; Sir Charles disappearing through the swing doors, from behind which came the rattle of the bell, the breathing of hard-pressed men and every now and then a murmur of admiration or of criticism.

Hawker was about to follow his companion when a thought struck him and he turned to the card table, gathering up the scattered cards. Suddenly he was aware that Jakes was at his elbow and that two very shrewd and malignant eyes were looking up into his own.

"Hain't you best count them, my noble sportsman?"

"What'd you mean?" The Devil's dark brown brows were drawn down and his glance was like a rapier thrust.

"If you count them you'll find one missing."

"Why are you grinning at me, you rascal?"

"One card missing, my noble sportsman. A good winning card, too—the ace of spades. A useful card, Sir John."

"Little Billy Jakes has it. It's here"—and he slapped his breast pocket. "A little playing card with the mark of a thumb nail on one corner of the back."

"You infernal blackguard!"

Jakes turned and shrunk away from that terrible face. "Hands off, my noble sportsman! Hands off, for your own sake! You can knock me about, that's easily done. But it won't end there. I've got the card. I could call back Sir Charles and the rest!"

"It's all a lie—a lie."

"Right you are. Say so, if you like. Shall I call in the others, and you can prove it a lie? Shall I show the cards to Lord Rufton and the rest?"

Hawker's dark face was moving convulsively. His hands were twitching with his desire to break the back of this little weasel across his knee. With an effort, he mastered himself.

"Hold on, Jakes. We have always been great friends. What do you want? Speak low, or the girl will hear."

"Now, that's talking. You got six thousand just now. I want half."

"You want three thousand pounds. What for?"

"I'm a man of sense. You know what for. I've a tongue, and I can hold it if it's worth my while."

Hawker considered for a moment. "Well, suppose I agree."

"Then we can fix it so."

"Say no more. We will consider it as agreed."

He turned away, his mind full of plans by which he could gain time and disavow the whole business. But Jakes was not a man easily fooled. Many people had found that to their cost.

"Hold on, my noble sportsman. Hold on an instant. Just a word of writing to settle it."

"You dog, in my word not enough?"

"No, Sir John, not by a long way. . . . No, no, I'll take me. I'll yell. Keep your hands off. I tell you I want your signature to it."

"Not a word."

"Very good then. It's finished." Jakes started for the door of the saloon.

"Hold hard! What am I to write?"

"I'll do the writing." He turned to the little alcove where Lucy, who was accustomed to every sort of wrangling and argument, was dozing among her bottles.

"Write, my dear; wake up! I want pen and ink."

"Yes, sir."

"And paper?"

"There is a billhead. Will that do? Deane me, it's marked with wine!"

"Jakes seated himself at a table and scribbled while Hawker watched him with eyes of death. Jakes walked over to him with the scrawl completed. Hawker read it over in a low mutter:

"In consideration of your silence . . . He paused and glared.

"Well, that's true, ain't it? You don't give me half for the love of William Jakes, Esquire, do you now?"

"I'll sign it. . . . Curse you to hell!"

"Let it out, my noble sportsman. Let it out or you'll bust. Curse me again. Then sign that paper."

"The sum of three thousand pounds, to be paid on the date when there is a settlement of the money in the name of Sir Charles Trevor."

Well, give me the pen and have done. There! Now give me that card."

Jakes had thrust the signed paper into his inner pocket.

"Give me the card, I say!"

"I've got the money is paid, Sir John. That's only fair."

"You devil!"

"Can't find the right word, can you? It's not been invented yet, I expect."

Jakes may have been very near his passion at that moment, but the furious passions of the bully had reached a point when even his fears of exposure could hardly hold him in check. But the saloon door had swung open and Cribb entered the room. He looked with surprise at the ill-assorted couple.

"Now, Mr. Jakes, time is up, you know. You've passed your hours."

"I know, Tom, but I had an important settling up with Sir John Hawker. Had I not, Sir John?"

"You've misled the first bout, Sir John. Come and see Jack Randall take a novice."

Hawker took a last scowl at the bookmaker and followed the champion into the saloon. Jakes gathered up his papers into his professional bag and went across to the little bar where Lucy was waiting.

"A double brandy, my dear," said he to Lucy. "I've had a good evening, but it's been a bit of a strain upon my nerves."

He was brooding over his own rather precarious affairs, which involved every shilling which he could raise, when there was the click of hoofs beside him and there was Billy Jakes upon his well-known chestnut colt.

"Good evening, my noble sportsman," said he. "I was looking out for you at the stable, and when I saw you ride away, I thought it was time to come after you. I want my settlement, Sir John."

"What settlement? What are you talking of?"

"Your written promise to pay three thousand. I know you have had your money."

"I don't know what you are talking about. Keep clear of me or you will get a cut or two from this hunting crop."

"Oh, that's the game, is it? We will see about that. Do you deny your signature upon this paper?"

"Have you the paper on you?"

"What say you?"

It was not well, Billy Jakes, to trust yourself alone upon a country road with one of the most dangerous men in England. For once your cupidity has been greater than your shrewdness.

"What say you?" those deadly, dark eyes to right and to left, and then the heavy hunting crop came down with a crash upon the bookmaker's head. With a cry, he was sprung from the colt, and he had hardly reached the ground before the Devil had dropped from the saddle, and, with his left arm through his bridle rein to hold down his plunging horse, he was rapidly running his right hand through the pockets of the prostrate man. With a bitter curse, he realized that the scoundrel Jakes had been, he had not been such a fool as to carry his papers about with him.

Hawker rose, looked down at his half-conscious enemy, and then slowly drew his spur across his face. At a moment later, he was on his feet, the saddle and the two yellow London-wares, leaving the sprawling and bleeding figure in the dust of the highway. He laughed with exultation as he rode, and vengeance was sweet to him, and he seldom missed it. What could Jakes do? If he took him in the street, he was on it as well as only such an assault as was common enough in those days of violence. If, on the other hand, he pursued the matter of the card and the agreement, it was an old story now, and he would take the word of the little bookmaker against that of one of the best-known men in London? Of course, it was a case of forged and blackmail. Hawker looked down at his bloody spur and felt well content with his morning's work.

His name was raised to his feet by some kindly traveler and was brought back, half conscious, to Newmarket. There, for three days, he kept his room and nursed both his injuries and his grievance. Upon the fourth day he was in London, and at night he made his way to the Albany and knocked at a door which bore upon a shining brass plate the name of Sir Charles Trevor.

It was the first Tuesday of the month, the day on which the committee of Waiter's Club was wont to assemble. Half a dozen of them had sauntered into the great board room, decorated with heavy canvases on the walls, and with highly polished dark mahogany furniture, which showed up richly against the blue and red Kidderminster carpet. The Duke of Bridgewater, a splendid, rubicund old gentleman, gray-haired but virile, leaning heavily upon an amber-headed cane, came hobbling in and bowed affably to the waiting committee.

"How is the gout, Your Grace?"

"A little sharp at the stirrup. But I can still get my foot into the stirrup. Well, well, I suppose we had better get to work."

He took his seat in the center of a half-moon

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"That is also my opinion," came from several of the committee, and there was a general murmur of acquiescence.

"I thank you, gentlemen," said Hawker, rising. "With your permission, I shall bring this sitting to an end."

"Excuse me, sir: there are two more witnesses," said Lord Rufton.

"Jake, you can withdraw. Leave the documents with me."

"Thank you, my lord. Good day, my noble sportsmen. Should any of you want a cock or a terrier —"

"That will do. Leave the room." With many bows and backward glances, William Jake vanished from the scene.

"I should like to ask Tom Cribb one or two questions," said Lord Rufton. "Call Tom Cribb."

A moment later the burly figure of the champion came heavily into the room. He was dressed exactly like the pictures of John Bull, with blue coat with shining brass buttons, drab trousers and top boots, while his face, in its broad, bovine serenity, was also the very image of the national prototype. On his head he wore a low-crowned, curly-brimmed hat, which he now whipped off and stuffed under his arm. The worthy Tom was much more alarmed than ever he had been in the ring, and looked helplessly about him like a bull who finds himself in a strange inclosure.

"My respects, gentlemen all!" he repeated several times, touching his forehead.

"Good morning, Tom," said the Duke affably. "Take that chair. How are you?"

"Dammed hot, Your Grace. That is to say, very warm. You see, sir, I do my own marketing these days, and when you've been down to Covent Garden and then on to Smithfield, and then trudge back here, and you two stone above your fighting weight —"

"We quite understand. The chief steward will see to you presently."

"I want to ask you, Tom," said Lord Rufton, "do you remember the evening of May third last in your parlor?"

"I heard there was some harney about it, and I've been lookin' it up," said Tom. "Yes, I remember it well, for it was the night when a novice had the better of old Ben Burn. Lor', I couldn't but laugh. Old Ben got one on the mark in the first round, and before he could get his wind —"

"Never mind, Tom. We'll have that later. Do you recognise these cards?"

"Why, those cards are out of my parlor. I got them a dozen at a time, a shilling each, from Ned Summers of Oxford Street: the same as —"

"Well, that's settled then. Now, do you remember seeing Sir John here and Sir Charles Trevor that evening?"

"Yes, I do. I remember saying to Sir John that he must play light with my notions, for there was one cove, Bill Summers by name, out of Norwich, and when Sir John —"

"Never mind that, Tom. Tell us, now, did you see Sir John and the bookmaker, Jake, together that night?"

"Jake was there, for he says to the girl in the bar, 'How much money have you, my lass?' And I said, 'You dirty dog —'"

"Enough, Tom. Did you see the man Jake and Sir John together?"

"Yes, sir: when I came into the parlor after the bout between Shelton and Strong. I saw the two of them alone, and Jake, he said that they had done business together."

"Did they seem friendly?"

"Well, now you ask it, Sir John didn't seem too pleased. But, Lord love you, I'm busy these evenings that if you dropped a shot on my head I'd hardly notice it."

"Nothing more to tell us?"

"I don't know as I have. I'd be glad to get back to my bar."

"Very good, Tom. You can go."

"I'd just remind you gentlemen that it's my benefit at the Five Court, St. Martin's Lane, come Tuesday week." Tom bobbed his bullethead many times and departed.

"Not much in all that," remarked the Duke. "Does that finish the case?"

"There is one more, Your Grace. Call the girl Lucy. She is the girl of the private bar."

"Yes, yes, I remember," cried the Duke. "That is to say, by all means. What does this young person know about it?"

"I believe that she was present." As Lord Rufton spoke, Lucy, very nervous, and cloaked by the knowledge that she was in her best Sunday clothes, appeared at the door.

"Don't be nervous, my girl. Take this chair," said Lord Rufton kindly. "Don't keep on currying. Sit down."

The girl sat timidly on the edge of the chair. Suddenly her eyes caught those of the august chairman.

"Why, Lord bless me!" she cried. "It's the little Duke!"

"Hush, my girl, hush!" His Grace held up a warning hand.

"Well, I never!" cried Lucy, and began to giggle and hide her blushing face in her handkerchief.

"Now, now," said the Duke. "This is a grave business. What are you laughing at?"

"I couldn't help it, sir. I was thinking of that evening down in the private bar when you bet you could walk a chalk line with a bottle of champagne on your head."

There was a general laugh, in which the Duke joined.

"I fear, gentlemen, I must have had a couple in my head before I ventured such a feat. Now, my good girl, we did not ask you here for the sake of your reminiscences. You may have seen some of us unbending, but we will let that pass."

"You were in the bar on May the third?"

"I'm always there."

"Cast your mind back and recall the evening when Sir Charles Trevor and Sir John Hawker proposed to cut cards for money."

"I remember it well, sir."

"After the others had left the bar, Sir John and a man named Jake are said to have remained behind."

"I saw them."

"It's a lie! It's a plot!" cried Hawker.

"Now, Sir John, I must really beg you. It was the Duke who was cross-questioning now. Describe to us what you saw."

"Well, sir, they began talking over a pack of cards. Sir John up with his hand, and I was about to call for West Country Dick — he's the chucker-out you know, sir, at the Union Arms — but no blow passed and they talked very earnest-like for a time. Then Mr. Jake called for paper and wrote something, and that's all I know, except that Sir John seemed very upset."

"Did you ever see that piece of paper before?" The Duke held it up.

"Why, sir, it looks like Mr. Cribb's bill-head."

"Exactly. Was it a piece like that which you gave to these gentlemen that night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Could you distinguish it?"

"Why, sir, now that I come to think of it, I could."

Hawker sprang up with a convulsed face. "I've had enough of this nonsense. I'm going."

"No, no, Sir John. Sit down again. Your honor demands your presence. . . . Well, my good girl, you say you could recognize it?"

"Yes, sir, I could. There was a mark, sir. I drew some burgundy for Sir Charles, sir, and some sopped on the counter. The paper was marked with it on the side. I was in doubt if I should give them so soiled a piece."

The Duke looked very grave. "Gentlemen, this is a serious matter. There is, as you see, a red stain upon the side of the paper. Have you any remark to make, Sir John?"

"A conspiracy, Your Grace! An infernal, devilish plot against a gentleman's honor."

"You may go, Lucy," said Lord Rufton, and with curtsies and giggles, the barmaid disappeared.

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"You have heard the evidence, gentlemen," said the Duke. "Some of you may know the character of this girl, which is by all accounts excellent."

"A drab out of the gutter."

"I think not, Sir John; nor do you improve your position by such assertions. You will each have your own impression as to how far the girl's account seemed honest and correct conviction with it. You will observe that had she merely intended to injure Sir John, her obvious method would have been to have said she overheard the conversation detailed by the witness, James. This she has not done. Her account, however, tends to corroborate—"

"Your Grace," cried Hawker, "I have had enough of this!"

"We shall not detain you much longer, Sir John Hawker," said the chairman, "but for that limited time we must insist upon your presence."

"Insist, sir?"

"Yes, sir, insist."

"Be seated, sir. This matter must go to a finish."

"Well!" Hawker fell back into his chair.

"Gentlemen," said the Duke, "alips of paper are before you. After the custom of the club, you will kindly record your opinion and hand to me. Mr. Foynts? I thank you. Vandeleur! Bunbury! Rufton! General Scott! Colonel Tulton! I thank you. He examined the papers. "Exactly. You are unanimous! I may say that I entirely agree with your opinion." The Duke's rosy, kindly face had set as hard as flint.

"What am I to understand by this, sir?" cried Hawker.

"Bring the club book," said the Duke. Lord Rufton carried across a large brown volume from the side table and opened it before the chairman.

"C, D, E, F, G. Ah, here we are—H. Let us see! Houston, Harcourt, Hume,

Duke of Hamilton—I have it—Hawker. Sir John Hawker, your name is forever erased from the book of Watler's Club." He drew the pen across the page as he spoke. Hawker sprang frantically to his feet.

"You cannot mean it! Consider, sir; this is social ruin! Where shall I show my face if I am cast from my club? I could not walk the streets of London. Take it back, sir! Reconsider it!"

"Sir John Hawker, we can only refer you to Rule 19. It says: 'If any member shall be guilty of conduct unworthy of an honorable man, and the said offense be established to the unanimous satisfaction of the committee, then the aforesaid member shall be expelled the club without appeal.'"

"Gentlemen," cried Hawker, "I beg you not to be precipitate! You have had the evidence of a rascal bookmaker and of a serving wench. Is that enough to ruin a gentleman's life? I am undone if this goes through."

"The matter has been considered and is now in order. We can only refer you to Rule 19."

"Your Grace, you cannot know what this will mean. How can I live? Where can I go? I never asked mercy of man before. But I ask it now. I implore it, gentlemen. Reconsider your decision!"

"Rule 19."

"It is ruin, I tell you—disgrace and ruin."

"Rule 19."

"Let me resign. Do not expel me."

"Rule 19."

It was hopeless, and Hawker knew it. He strode in front of the table.

"Curse your rules! Curse you, too, you silly, babbling jackanapes. Curse you all—you, Vandeleur, and you, Foynts, and you, Scott, you doddering toast-and-water gamester. You will live to mourn the day you put this indignity upon me. You will answer it—every man of you! I'll set my

mark on you. By the Lord I will! You first, Rufton. One by one, I'll weed you out! I've a bullet for each. I'll number 'em!"

"Sir John Hawker," said the Duke, "this club is for the use of members only. May I ask you to take yourself out of it?"

"And if I don't—what then?"

The Duke turned to General Scott. "Will you ask the hall porters to step up?"

"There! I'll go!" yelled Hawker. "I will not be thrown out—the laughingstock of Jermyn Street. But you will bear me, gentlemen. You will remember me yet. Rascals! Rascals everyone!"

And so it was, raving and stamping, with his clenched hands waving above his head, that Devil Hawker passed out from Watler's Club and from the social life of London.

For it was his end. In vain he sent furious challenges to the members of the committee. He was outside the pale, and no one would condescend to meet him. In vain he thrashed Sir Charles Bunbury in front of Limmers' Hotel. Hired ruffians were put upon his track and he was terribly thrashed in return. Even the bookmakers would have no more to do with him, and he was warned off the turf. Down he sank, and down, drinking to uphold his spirits until he was but a bloated wreck of the man that he had been.

And so, at last, one morning in his rooms in Charles Street, that dueling pistol which had so often been the instrument of his vengeance was turned upon himself, and that dark face, terrible even in death, was found outlined against a blood-soaked pillow in the morning.

So put the print back among the pile. You may be the better for having hoosed Tom Cribb upon your wall, or even the effeminate Brummell. But Devil Hawker never, in life or death, brought luck to anyone. Leave him there where you found him, in the dusty old shop of Drury Lane.