

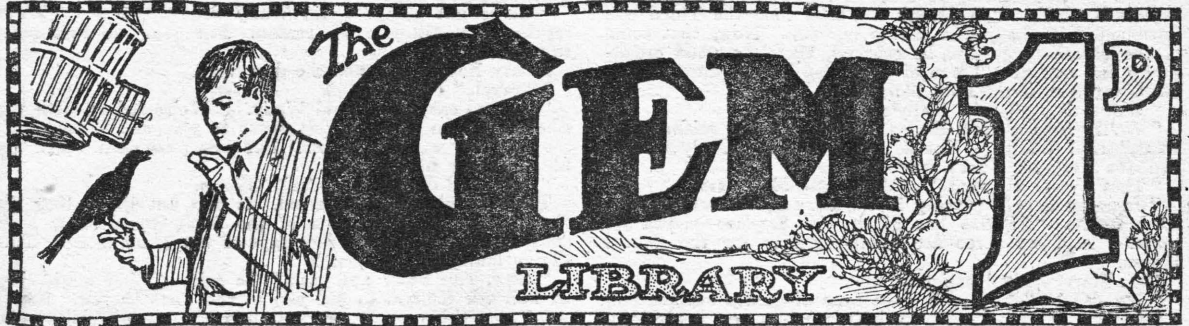
NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

"THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!"

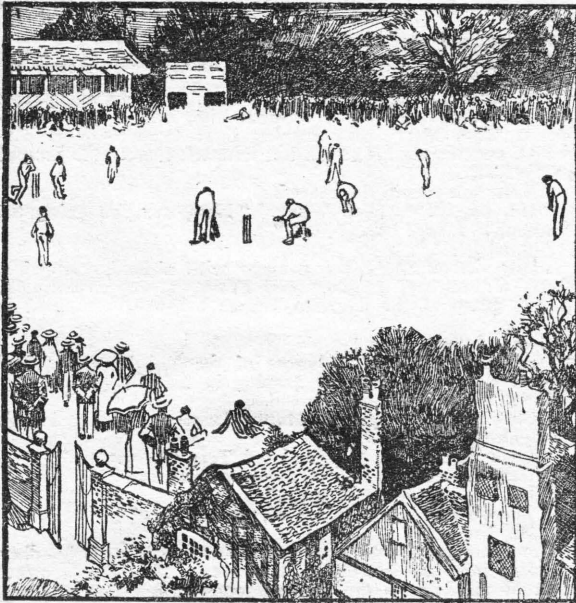
By  
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Every

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem.



WALLY  
ON THE  
WARPATH

A splendid, new, long, complete School  
Tale of Tom Merry & Co. versus the  
Fags of St. Jim's.

- - BY - -  
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.  
In or Out?

**T**HUMP!  
Tom Merry jumped as that startling summons came at the door of his study. Manners and Lowther growled.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were busy. Tom Merry had a sheet of impot. paper before him on the table, and a pencil in his hand. He was scribbling names on the paper, in the intervals of chewing the end of the pencil. Manners and Lowther were looking over his shoulder, giving advice.

"Thump!"  
"Oh, come in, you silly ass, whoever you are!" called out Tom Merry resignedly. "I shall never get this blessed list finished!"

The study door opened, and four juniors presented themselves—four members of the Third Form at St. Jim's. The Shell fellows glared at them. They were very busy, and they did not want to be interrupted, especially by mere fags. Tom Merry waved his pencil at them.

"Buzz off now, Wally!" he said. "I'm busy! I'm making up the list of the team for the House match. I'll see you presently."

"You'll see me now," said Wally, otherwise D'Arcy minor of the Third.

And his three companions—Jameson and Gibson and Frayne of the Third—chimed in in determined tones:

"You'll see us now!"  
Monty Lowther reached out in a careless sort of way for a cricket-stump. Manners dropped his hand upon a bat that lay on the study table.

But Wally & Co. did not seem to be intimidated by those

hostile movements. They drew a little closer together, and stood their ground defiantly.

"We've come to see you, Tom Merry," said D'Arcy minor.  
"We've come to see you," said Jameson and Gibson and Frayne, in a kind of chorus.

Tom Merry nodded.  
"I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you," he said amiably.  
"It's an honour to receive visits from the Third Form, I know. We duly appreciate it. But if you could put off your visit till another time—"

"We should appreciate it still more," said Manners.  
"Exactly!" said Lowther. "In fact, we'll take the will for the deed, and you needn't trouble about making the visit at all."

"Rats!" said Wally.  
And Jameson and Gibson and Frayne chimed in together:  
"Rats!"

"Well, be quiet, then," said Tom Merry, with exemplary patience. "Don't talk, and I can get on with this list. The question is, you chaps, whom are we to put in in Kangaroo's place, as he is crooked? He ought to be scalped for getting crooked just before a House match; but there you are, he's crooked. Who's going in?"

"That's what we've come to talk about," said Wally.  
"Oh!"

"You've come to give us some fatherly advice about making up the House team?" asked Monty Lowther sarcastically. "Thank you for nothing! Good-bye!"

"Shut the door after you," added Manners.  
The fags of the Third did not stir. They exchanged glances, and stood their ground. It was evident that Wally & Co. were in deadly earnest.

"May as well out with it!" said Wally.

Next Wednesday:

"THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!" AND "THE CORINTHIAN!"

No. 289 (New Series). Vol. 7.

Copyright in the United States of America.

"Out with it!" chimed in the chorus.  
 "We've been talking it over in the Third Form-room," explained Wally. "We think it's high time the Third was represented in the junior House matches. Now, that some of the eleven happen to be crooked, there's a good opportunity for starting. Three of your men are on the sick list. Well, we're ready to take their places."

"We're ready!" said Wally's followers.  
 "We'll give the New House bounders all the cricket they want," said Wally. "You'll put me in and Curly Gibson and Joe Frayne. That's what we want."

"That's what we want!" said the Third-Formers.  
 "Jameson here is playing in the New House team," pursued Wally. "Figgins has given him a place—shows his sense. And we three are going to play for the School House."

Tom Merry smiled patiently.  
 "My dear kid," he said, in a tone of gentle explanation. "this is a cricket-match. It isn't marbles, or hop-scotch, or noughts-and-crosses. If it were marbles, or hop-scotch, or noughts-and-crosses we'd play you with pleasure. But it happens to be cricket, so I'm afraid we shall have to leave the Third Form out. Good-bye!"

"That's where you make a mistake," said Wally. "It's time the Third had a show in the House matches. Can't we play cricket?"

"Can't we?" demanded Curly Gibson and Frayne indignantly.

Tom Merry shook his head.  
 "Not up to House-match style," he said. "Sorry, Wally. But it can't be did. You see, we're not playing marbles or hop-scotch, or—"

"Oh, ring off!" roared Wally. "I don't want all that over again. We've come here because you're making up the list for the House match. Kangaroo and Herries and Reilly are crooked. You're going to put in three of the Third Form. Fair play's a jewel. If we lose the match we'll admit you're right."

Tom Merry laughed.  
 "But we're not going to risk losing the match," he said. "Figgins & Co. will be in great form next Saturday, too. Fatty Wynn's bowling is top notch. We can't afford to take risks. If it were marbles—"

"Oh, shurrup!"  
 "Or hop-scotch," said Tom Merry imperturbably.  
 "Ring off, you ass!"  
 "Or noughts-and-crosses!"

"Cheese it!" shouted Wally. "Look here, the Third have been talking this over! We want to have a show in the House team. Who are you, anyway—you Shell bounders? My dog Pongo could play cricket as well as some of you."

"Better," said Curly Gibson.  
 "Much better," said Joe Frayne.  
 "We're going in!" said Wally. "We claim our rights! We're going in!"

"You're mistaken," said Monty Lowther blandly. "You're going out. The only question is—will you go out on your feet, or on your necks?"

"It can't be done, Wally," said Tom Merry. "Not really, you know. If it were noughts-and-crosses now, or hop-scotch—"

"I don't want any more of your rot," said Wally sulphurously. "I want to play in the junior House team. Now, what do you say about it?"

"Oh, I say rats!"  
 "Same here!" said Lowther. "Rats! And many of 'em!"

"Then there's going to be trouble," said Wally.  
 "Spare our grey hairs!" said Lowther imploringly. "As you are strong, be merciful! Hit chaps your own size, and pass over small fry like us."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "And now run away like good little kids!" said Tom

Merry. "I've got to make up the list for the eleven on Saturday, you know."

"We're not going!" said Wally determinedly. "We're staying here till you see reason. I'm going to talk sense to you."

Monty Lowther opened the door wide.  
 "Travel!" he suggested.

"Go and eat coke!" said Wally. "We're fed up with you Shell-fish. I'm going to talk sense to you, and if you don't see it, there will be trouble. For two pins we'd wreck the blessed study for you!"

"We could do it," said Curly Gibson.  
 The Terrible Three grinned. It was not likely that the three famous fighting men of the Shell would allow their study to be wrecked by four fags of the Third Form. Tom Merry laid down his pencil.

"Now, run away and play," he said. "You might just as well ask Kildare to put you in the First Eleven. If you want something to do, go and find some clean collars and put them on; and you might wash the ink off your paws while you're about it. Good-bye!"

"Are you going to put us in?" yelled Wally.  
 "Ahem! No! We're going to put you out, if you don't travel!"

"Then here goes for a start!" said Wally.  
 And he laid a grip upon the edge of the table, and tilted it up towards Tom Merry.

The captain of the Shell gave a roar, as books and papers and an inkpot slid down towards him, and shot over his knees. Tom Merry was wearing light trousers as it happened, and the stream of ink left its mark there. He jumped to his feet.

"You young ass!" he roared.  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wally. "Now, are you going to? Yaroooh! I say! Yah! Oh!"  
 Bump!

Wally descended in the passage with a loud concussion. Curly Gibson and Jameson and Frayne struggled furiously in the grasp of the Terrible Three; but they struggled in vain.

Bump, bump, bump!  
 One after another the heroes of the Third were ejected from the study, and rolled gasping in the passage.

Then the study door slammed.  
 "Cheeky fags!" gasped Monty Lowther, setting his tie straight.

"Look at my bags!" ejaculated Tom Merry.  
 Monty Lowther looked at them and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! They're inky!"  
 "There's nothing to cackle at, you duffer!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry snorted, and jerked away Lowther's handkerchief to mop the ink off his trousers. Then the laborious task of making up the junior House eleven was resumed, without interruptions from ambitious cricketers of the Third Form.

## CHAPTER 2.

### An Important Meeting.

"BAI Jove, Wally, you young wascal!"  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form—D'Arcy major—uttered the words in tones of horror as he sighted his minor in the passage. D'Arcy was coming up to Study No. 6 with Blake when he met the heroes of the Third departing after their unsuccessful visit to Tom Merry's study.

Wally was certainly looking the worse for wear. Wally never was very careful about his personal appearance—in that respect offering a striking contrast to his elegant major. But just now he was looking decidedly his worst. His hair was ruffled, his clothes were rumpled and dusty, his collar was hanging by a single stud, and his tie was gone. It was not surprising that Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye, and surveyed his minor with a glance of the greatest severity.

"Wally, what are you goin' about in that state for? I twust you have not been fightin', you young wuffian?"

"Wrestling with a garden-roller, perhaps?" suggested Jack Blake.

Wally snorted.  
 "I've been to see Tom Merry," he said. "We're going to play in the junior House team—three of us. It's time the Third had a show. That's what we've agreed on. Tom Merry doesn't seem to see it. We're going to make him! Savvy?"

"I wegard savvy as a vulgah expression."  
 "They chucked you out?" asked Blake, with a grin.

"Yes," growled Wally.  
 "Well, what did you expect? My dear kid, we can't have

**"THE GEM" Library**

**FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE**

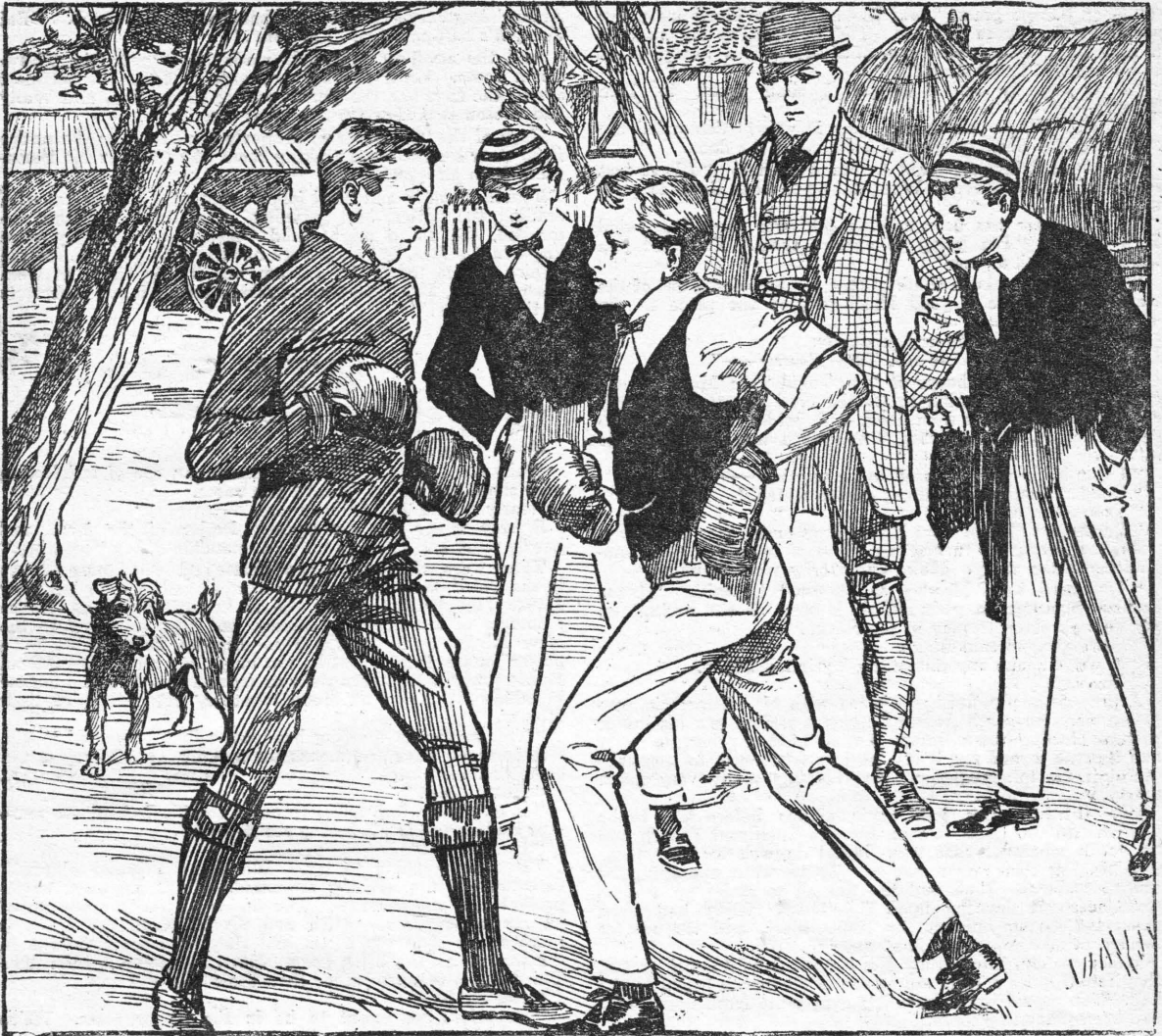
**COUPON.**

G

289

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, MAGNET No. 289, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.

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



"I'll whack you out of creation, you young cad!" said Levison, between his teeth. "Come on and begin the whacking!" said D'Arcy minor cheerfully. And they started! (See Chapter 7.)

little fags in the House team," said Blake patronisingly. "We shouldn't let Tom Merry put you in if he wanted to."

"No feah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Quite imposs., Wally."

"We're going in all the same, or there will be trouble," said Wally. "We're fed up with the cheek of the Fourth and the Shell. We could raise a team in the third that would beat you hands down."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll jolly well do it, too!" howled Wally. "We'll wipe up the ground with your precious House team, and then perhaps you'll admit that we're up to playing Figgins & Co."

Blake roared.

"Oh, come on," said Wally. "Don't waste time talking to these silly asses—"

"You're doing all the talking," remarked Jameson.

"Don't jaw! Come on!"

And the heroes of the third marched disdainfully on their way. Their dishevelled looks caused many grinning glances to be thrown at them as they proceeded. Levison and Mellish of the Fourth met them on the landing, and howled with laughter. Now, Wally had had no chance against the Terrible Three, but he was not disposed to be laughed at by two slackers like Levison and Mellish.

"Give 'em something to cackle about, you chaps!" he said.

"Here, hands off!" roared Levison.

"Chuck it!" shrieked Mellish.

But the four exasperated fags did not chuck it. They

piled on Levison and Mellish, and whirled them off their feet, and bumped them on the landing, and left them gasping there. Then, somewhat comforted, Wally & Co. proceeded in search of a much-needed wash and brush-up.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wore a thoughtful expression upon his aristocratic countenance as he went into Study No. 6 with Blake. Digby was there, but Herries was absent, being "down" with a cold in the school sanatorium. Digby was getting tea in the study, and there was a fragrant odour of fresh toast.

"I've been thinkin', deah boys—" Arthur Augustus remarked, after a long pause, during which he had consumed buttered toast silently.

"Go hon!" said Blake. "Pass the jam."

"About young Wally—"

"Oh, blow Wally!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. Upon the whole, deah boys, as Hewwies is laid up and won't be able to play in the House match, I weward it as reasonable that my minah should be put in. Wally is a vevy good cwicketah, you know."

"Can't play fags," said Digby.

"But my minah—"

"Oh, blow your minor!" said Blake. "Your minor's major is trouble enough."

"Weally, you ass—"

"Pass the toast. We're going to beat Figgins & Co., though old Herries and Kangy and Reilly have caught rotten colds and laid themselves up," said Blake.

"I think I shall speak to Tom Mewwy about it—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 239.  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.  
Order Early.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!"

"Keep off the grass!" said Blake. "The Third are never played in the House matches. They can get up fag matches if they like. Gussy, old man, your minor is a worry—same as his major. Let it drop!"

"I decline to let it dwop. I shall speak to Tom Mewwy—"

"Hullo! Who's taking my name in vain?" demanded the captain of the Shell, putting in his head at the door.

"Come in, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I have just seen Wally. Bai Jove! What have you been doin' to your twousahs?"

"Your minor has been spilling ink over them," growled Tom Merry. "I'm going to change them. You said you wanted to speak to me."

"Yaas. I have been thinkin' that as Hewwies is out of the team it would be a good ideah to give the place to my ninah—"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry promptly.

"If you say 'wats' to me, Tom Mewwy—"

"Well, I do—and heaps of 'em!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "We're not going to let the New House lick us because we've got three men down with colds. If you want to strengthen the team, Gussy, there's one way you could do it."

"I should be vewy pleased to do anythin'—"

"Good! You can stand out of the match."

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" And Tom Merry went on his way chuckling.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon his two companions in the study. Blake and Digby were grinning.

"I weward Tom Mewwy as an ass," he said. "I see nothin' whatever to gwin at, deah boys. I am backin' up my minah's claim to play in the eleven."

"Back away!" said Blake.

"It won't make any difference," grinned Digby.

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus finished his tea with his aristocratic nose in the air. Although Arthur Augustus seldom saw his junior without reading him a lecture of some kind or other, he really had a great regard for Wally, and he frequently took up the cause of his minor—perhaps not helping Wally very much thereby.

The Third-Formers had made claims before this to be admitted to the junior team; but the Shell and Fourth had no doubt whatever that they would do well to keep those matches in their own hands. There were enough good cricketers in the Shell and the Fourth to make up a good team, without drawing upon the Third. Wally had often expressed strong opinions on the subject, and the matter seemed to be coming to a head now.

When the chums of Study No. 6 went downstairs after tea, they found quite a little crowd round the notice-board in the hall. The crowd were chuckling over some fresh notice that had been pinned up there.

"Bai Jove! What's goin' on, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Your blessed minor again!" grinned Bernard Glyn, of the Shell.

The juniors pushed their way through the crowd, and read the notice on the board. It was written in Wally's sprawling handwriting, on a sheet of paper that showed thumb-marks, and it was written in Third-Form orthography.

Notice!

"A meeting of the Third Form will be held in the form-room at half-past six p.m. The subject of discushun will be the admission of the Third Form players to the House team. Sined, W. A. D'Arcy.

"Well, if W. A. D'Arcy's cricket is as good as his spelling, he must be a regular Fry!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I think I shall attend that meetin'," remarked Arthur Augustus. "I do not approve of youngstahs backin' up against their eldahs, as a wule. But I weally considah that my minah ought to play in the House team."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Piffle!"

"Weally, you silly asses—"

"Rubbish!"

"I wefuse to listen to such oppowbvious wemarks."

Arthur Augustus consulted his handsome gold watch. "Bai Jove, it's half-past six! I'm goin'."

And the swell of St. Jim's made his way to the Third-Form room. Until evening preparation began at half-past seven, the fags had the Form-room to themselves, and Wally had chosen that time for the great meeting.

Fags of the Third Form, properly impressed by the notice from their leader, were making their way towards the Form-room from all quarters.

Fourth-Formers and Shell fellows contented themselves with reading the notice, and grinning. As Monty Lowther remarked, the Third might hold "meetings" till they were black in the face, but they were not likely to get caps for the Junior House team. That team was in the hands of Tom Merry & Co., and there was no admission for fags to the seats of the mighty!

CHAPTER 3.

The Challenge.

"FELLOWS, chaps, and gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Wally!"

Wally stood upon a form and glanced an eye of satisfaction over the crowd in the Third-Form room.

Nearly all the Third were there. D'Arcy minor was undisputed leader of the form, and hardly a fag had failed to obey his mandate of the "meeting."

There were, of course, School House and New House fellows in the Third, as in all the other Forms at St. Jim's; but New House fags backed Wally up as keenly as School House members of the Third. Jameson had been admitted to the New House team, it was true—Figgins being short of a player for the team. But he was only one; and in the School House junior team there were no fags at all. It was a matter in which the Third all stood together, irrespective of their Houses.

"This important meeting has been called," resumed Wally, "to consider ways and means for making Tom Merry & Co. come to their senses."

"Hear, hear!"

"It may seem impossible to make the Shell chaps see sense—or understand it when they see it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But we're going to try. What is the junior eleven?" demanded Wally, getting animated. "It's supposed to represent the junior forms. The senior eleven is made up of all the senior forms—Fifth and Sixth. Now, the Sixth is more senior than the Fifth, and they have more fellows in the team than the Fifth have. Now, my point is this: The Third Form is more junior than the Shell—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Therefore we ought to be in the junior team. We're more junior than they are."

"Hear, hear!"

"But the First and Second are more junior than we are!" grinned Frayne.

"If Frayne is going to talk rot—" began Wally warmly. There was a yell:

"Shut up, Frayne!"

"Oh, all right!" said Frayne. "I was only sayin'—"

"Well, don't," said Wally. "Gentlemen and fellows, are we going to stand it? Figgins has set an example by putting Jameson into the New House junior team—"

"Good old Figgins!"

"Tom Merry ought to follow that example by putting some of us into the School House junior eleven. They say our form isn't up to a House match—that we can't play cricket as well as they can—"

Groans!

"They make out that we can't play cricket. Why, we could play their heads off! I can't help suspecting that they're afraid we should show them up, and put them in a back seat. Who are the Shell, anyway?"

Deep groans!

"Gentlemen, I see that you agree with me," said Wally. "I've got a way of proving to the Shell and the Fourth that we can play cricket as well as they can."

"Bravo!"

"We're going to challenge the School House junior eleven to a match, and make them play the Third."

"Hurray!"

"They won't said Frayne.

"Then we'll make 'em!" said Wally. "If they refuse our challenge, we'll worry and chip them into it. See?"

"Hear, hear!"

"But Tom Merry is a sportsman, and I don't think he'll refuse. The silly asses will take us on and expect to beat

ANSWERS

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

us. We'll take all the beating they can give us," said Wally disdainfully.

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, if you are all agreed, we'll draw up a letter to send to Tom Merry, in the name of the whole Form, challenging him to a cricket match, the Third against the junior House team."

The fags roared applause.

Wally, greatly pleased with the reception of his idea, descended from the form. The fags gathered round him as he took pen and paper to draw up that message of defiance to Tom Merry & Co.

Wally chewed the end of his pen thoughtfully. He was a youth of many gifts, with a ready wit in talk, but he was not a great letter-writer. He was conscious, too, that his orthography left something to be desired. Mr. Selby, his Form-master, had often told him so, with more emphasis than politeness. That letter to Tom Merry of the Shell would require careful manipulation.

"Ahem! How shall we begin?" said Wally thoughtfully.

"Address it to 'The Silly Asses of the Shell and the Fatheads of the Fourth!'" was Jameson's brilliant suggestion.

"Must be polite," said Wally. "I'll begin, 'Dear Merry'—show him we're on an equal footing with him, and blow his old Shell!"

"Good!"

Wally wrote "Dear Merry," and paused for further inspiration. The Form-room door opened, and the eyeglass of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gleamed in upon the meeting.

"Bai Jove! Heah you are!" remarked Arthur Augustus genially. "I've come—"

"Get out!"

"Weally, you young boundahs—"

"This is a Third Form meeting!" said Wally severely. "Get out, Gussy. No time to bother with Fourth-Form kids now."

"But I've come to—"

"Travel!"

"You cheekay young wascal, Wally!"

"Shove him out!" said Wally.

"Weally, you young wottahs, I've come—oh! Pway listen to me—ah!—yah!"

The door slammed, and Arthur Augustus leaned against the opposite wall to recover his breath. But he opened the door again after a minute or so.

"Pway allow me to explain—" he began.

A horde of fags rushed at the swell of St. Jim's again, and again he was hurled forth and the door slammed upon him. Then Wally resumed the letter.

"Dear Merry,—Inasmuch as the Third Form consider themselves entitled—how many 'I's' are there in entitled, Jameson?"

"Two, I think."

"Three!" said Frayne.

"One!" said Smith minor.

Wally sniffed.

"Fat lot of good you are to help a chap," he said. "Now, inasmuch as the Third Form—"

"Hold on!" said Jameson. "What does 'inasmuch' mean?"

Wally snorted again.

"That's just like a New House kid, asking silly questions. Inasmuch! I suppose you know what inasmuch means?"

"Well, what does it mean?" Jameson persisted.

"It—it means—means inasmuch, of course," said Wally. "It's a good word, and is used in legal documents. It will show Tom Merry that we mean business. I suppose you don't know how many 'n's' there are in 'inasmuch'? I've put one."

"Leave it at that," said Curly Gibson, "and get on with the washing."

"I don't like the word," said Jameson. "We want the chaps to understand the letter, you know."

"Rats!" said Wally. "Now—Inasmuch as the Third Form consider themselves entitled to play in the junior eleven, they consider—"

"That's 'consider' twice," said Curly Gibson, looking over his shoulder.

"They consider," roared Wally, "'that they are—are entitled to play in the eleven. Therefore, they hereby declare—' How many 'i's' in 'declare?'"

"One, of course!"

"Well, I've put one," said Wally; "that's all right. 'They hereby declare that they are going to play in the eleven, or there will be trouble.' It's a double 'b' in trouble, isn't it?"

"Only one 'b,' said Jameson. "I'm certain of that."

"All right. I'm going to make another copy, of course," said Wally. "The Third Form also declare that if the Shell want to see how they play cricket, the Third Form

heerby challenge them to meet them in a match, when they will show them that they can play cricket as well as them if they care to play them."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Jameson anxiously. "Is that clear?"

"Of course it is, fathead!"

"Who's 'they,' and who's 'them,' then?"

"We're 'they,' and they're 'them,' of course! Can't you read English? Now—The Third Form are ready to meet the junior eleven on Wensday afternoon—"

"There are two 'd's' in 'Wednesday,'" said Curly.

Wally grunted and put in another "d," making it "Weasdday."

"That doesn't look right to me," he said.

"Well, I know there are two 'd's,'" said Curly. "Selby told me so."

"Well, Selby ought to know," admitted Wally. "That's what he's paid for. Now—If the junior eleven refuse this challenge, it will be taken to mean that they know they can't play cricket and are afraid of the Third Form."

"Hear, hear! That's all right," chuckled Frayne.

"That'll make 'em sit up."

The door reopened.

"Here comes your blessed major again, Wally!" growled Smith minor.

"Chuck him out!" said Wally, without looking up.

"Bai Jove! Ow! Oh! Yawwooh!"

Bump!

The door closed again.

"I think that letter's all right," said Wally. "They'll be bound to meet us, you know. We'll chip 'em bald-headed if they don't. Now I'll make a fresh copy of this, and we'll send it to them."

"Hear, hear!"

Wally made a careful copy of the letter, and the finished article had only three blots and a couple of smudges to mar its beauty. The letter was enclosed in a somewhat soiled envelope, which was still more soiled when Wally had carefully closed it with a grimy thumb.

"I'll give this to Toby to take to Tom Merry," said Wally.

"My only Aunt Jane! There is Gussy again!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking in again.

"You young wascals!" shouted the swell of St. Jim's. "I was comin' here to—"

A rush of the fags overwhelmed the swell of the Fourth, and he was left sprawling in the passage, as Wally & Co. proceeded in search of Toby, the page, to bear the letter to Tom Merry. Arthur Augustus picked himself up, gasping, to find that the meeting was at an end, and the fags gone. He took his way wrathfully to Study No. 6, where he found Blake and Digby at work on their preparation. They greeted their dusty chum with a chuckle.

"Meeting go off all right?" asked Blake.

"Ow!" panted D'Arcy. "The young wottahs! They would not give me time to explain that I was comin' there to back them up, and they thwew me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for wibald laughter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you silly chumps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Digby.

And Arthur Augustus sniffed scornfully, and proceeded to brush himself down.

## CHAPTER 4.

### The Answer.

LEIVISON of the Fourth was waiting for Tom Merry when the chums of the Shell came in from cricket practice. The Terrible Three were looking very ruddy and very cheerful after an hour at the nets. Tom Merry had high hopes of beating the New House junior team in the coming House match, though three of his men were "crooked." He had not yet decided how to fill the places, and there were a dozen ambitious youths at least who were fully convinced that their names ought to go down.

The chums of the Shell would have passed Levison without speaking, in the doorway of the School House, but he called to them, and they stopped. Their manner was not cordial, however. They were on the worst of terms with the cad of the Fourth.

"Can I speak to you a minute, Merry?" Levison asked, with unusual civility.

"No law against it," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "What do you want?"

"You haven't filled the places in the House team yet?"

"Not yet."

"Will you put me in?"

Tom Merry stared at him. Levison, the slacker of the

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

Order Early.

Fourth, was not much given to cricket—or, indeed, to any healthy or manly game.

"You want to play?" asked Tom.

"Yes, I don't see why I shouldn't have a chance," said Levison. "I'm a pretty good batsman, if you come to that. I don't see why you should pass me over because we're not on good terms personally."

"I shouldn't pass you over for that reason," said Tom Merry quietly. "I'd put in anybody who could do the side credit. But you have neglected your practice for a long time, and you'd hardly be in form for Saturday. Yes, I know you can play if you choose, and well, too, but you don't choose—that's the trouble."

"Smoking cigarettes in the box-room is more in your line," said Monty Lowther. "Stick to your twelve-pennies, and don't trouble about cricket, Levison."

Levison smiled unpleasantly.

"I'll stick to practice till Saturday, if you'll give me a chance, Merry," he said. "I want to play, and I don't see why I shouldn't have a chance. The team isn't up to full strength, and you've got to find three players from somewhere."

"I'm going to decide about that to-morrow," said Tom Merry. "Still, if you want to do the decent thing, I wouldn't like to stand in your way. If you like to stick to practice, and I think you're good enough, I'll put you in."

"Thanks! I'll show you I'm good enough."

"Right-ho!"

The Terrible Three sauntered into the junior common-room. Tom Merry was looking a little puzzled.

"Blessed if I know what's come over Levison," he remarked. "He never cared for cricket. He can play, but but he doesn't like the game. What on earth makes him so keen about getting into the team for Saturday?"

"Wonders will never cease," yawned Lowther. "If he's going to turn over a giddy new leaf, I don't mind lending him a helping hand. It's quite true about his being a good bat, if he chooses to take the trouble."

"Some rotten trick in his mind, more likely," said Manners. "I don't trust that chap half an inch."

Tom Merry nodded. He knew Levison too well to think of trusting him, but it was difficult to surmise what bad motive the cad of the Fourth could have for wanting to get into the House eleven. If the black sheep of the School House wanted to turn to better ways, however, Tom Merry was quite ready to help him, and even to stretch a point in his favour.

"I was lookin' for you, Master Merry," said Toby the page, as Tom slung his bat down on the table in the common-room.

"Here I am; look away!" said Tom Merry.

"I've got a letter for you, Master Merry."

"A letter for me?" Tom Merry looked in surprise at the grimy envelope Toby laid on the table. "Where did that come from, Toby?"

"Master Wally; he give it to me to give you, sir."

"Oh, thanks!"

Toby grinned and vanished. Tom Merry picked up the letter.

"Something more about the fags playing in the House team," yawned Lowther. "Official communication from the Third Form, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry opened the letter, and the chums of the Shell chuckled as they read it. Other fellows gathered round to read it, too, and the chuckles were loud and long. Wally's effusion was certainly funny, from the reader's point of view. It ran:

"Dear Merry,—Inasmuch as the Third Form consider themselves entitled to play in the junior eleven, they consider that they are entitled to play in the junior eleven. Therefore they hereby declare that they are going to play in the eleven, or there will be trouble. The Third Form also declare that if the Shell want to see how they play cricket, the Third Form hereby challenge them to meet them in a mach, when they will show them that they can play cricket as well as them if they care to play them. The Third Form are ready to meet them on Wensday afternoon. If the Junior Eleven refuse this challenge, it will be taken to mean they know they can't play cricket and are afraid of the Third Form.—Sined: W. A. D'ARCY, Third Form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Original composition, by Walter Adolphus D'Arcy," grinned Monty Lowther. "They are ready to meet them if they and them arrange that them and they—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheeky young beggars!" said Tom Merry. "Fancy the Third Form meeting the junior House eleven! Catch me!"

"Might play 'em and give 'em a lesson for their cheek!" said Blake.

"Rats!" said Lowther. "The Fourth have Form matches with the Third; but the Shell couldn't think of such a thing. Infra dig, dear boy."

"Ass!" said Blake. "If the Fourth—"

"Fathead! If the Shell—"

"Can't waste time on fags!" said Tom Merry. "We shall have to send an answer to this! Rats will do!"

"Better send 'em an official communication like their own," said Monty Lowther, taking up a pen. "Better put it into Third Form spelling, too, so that they will understand it." And he began to write.

Monty Lowther grinned as he wrote the reply to Wally & Co. When his composition was finished, the juniors read it over with yells of laughter.

"Dear Wally,—The junior eleven are in rescat of yores of even dait. They consider that they are not equal to them, and that them are not therefore to meet they, they being afrade of them, and them, therefore, refews the chalenge given by they. But if they want them to meet them, and they inasmuch consider that them should meet them or they, they are a set of silly fags, and they hearby declair to them that they refewe. They hoap that they will stopp being cheeky fags, and if they want something to doo, they advise them to wash their nex.—(Sined) TOMMY MERRY."

"How's that?" asked Lowther.

"Out!" grinned Tom Merry. "It will do rippingly! Seal it up, and give it to Toby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the School House page was despatched with the reply to Wally. D'Arcy minor and his comrades opened that anxiously-expected letter in the Third Form-room, amid much excitement.

Wally looked a little puzzled over it at first, and then he realised that the letter was written and spelt in a humorous strain.

"They won't play!" said Wally.

"Then we'll make 'em!" growled Jameson.

The entrance of Mr. Selby to take the Third Form in preparation stopped the warlike discussion for a time; but Mr. Selby found his Form unusually inattentive that evening. Lines fell thick and fast upon Wally & Co.; but they did not care for lines. Wally was on the warpath, and all other matters just then were as trifles light as air.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Wally Means Business.

"WHAT'S the little game, Levison, old man?"

Percy Mellish of the Fourth asked the question with much curiosity. Levison had just come off the cricket field, with a bat under his arm. It was the day after the Third Form challenge to Tom Merry & Co. which the juniors had "refused," and Levison had gone down to the nets immediately after morning lessons were over.

Levison was such a black sheep and slacker that his pal and study mate could not help being astonished at this new development. Levison was one of those clever fellows who choose to follow a wrong path. He could have done many things if he had chosen, but he did not choose. The quick wit and resource that might have distinguished him in classes or in sports was generally turned to playing ill-natured japes and tricks, and he wasted his leisure hours in idle loafing. He could have been a good cricketer, and sometimes he had shown a great proficiency for a short time; but he always fell away again, and returned to his loafing ways.

Hence Mellish's surprise. Levison had been batting well, having asked Digby of the Fourth to pitch him a few. Dig had obliged, and had been surprised to see that Levison stopped them all, and knocked them away pretty well. Levison's weakness was in running after he had hit; his wind was bad, owing to his habit of smoking cigarettes, and his want of exercise.

"What are you fagging at cricket for?" asked Mellish, as he joined Levison and walked away with him. "The weather's too hot for that, I should think. You're not taking up the game as a cricket maniac like Tom Merry, I suppose?"

Levison grinned.

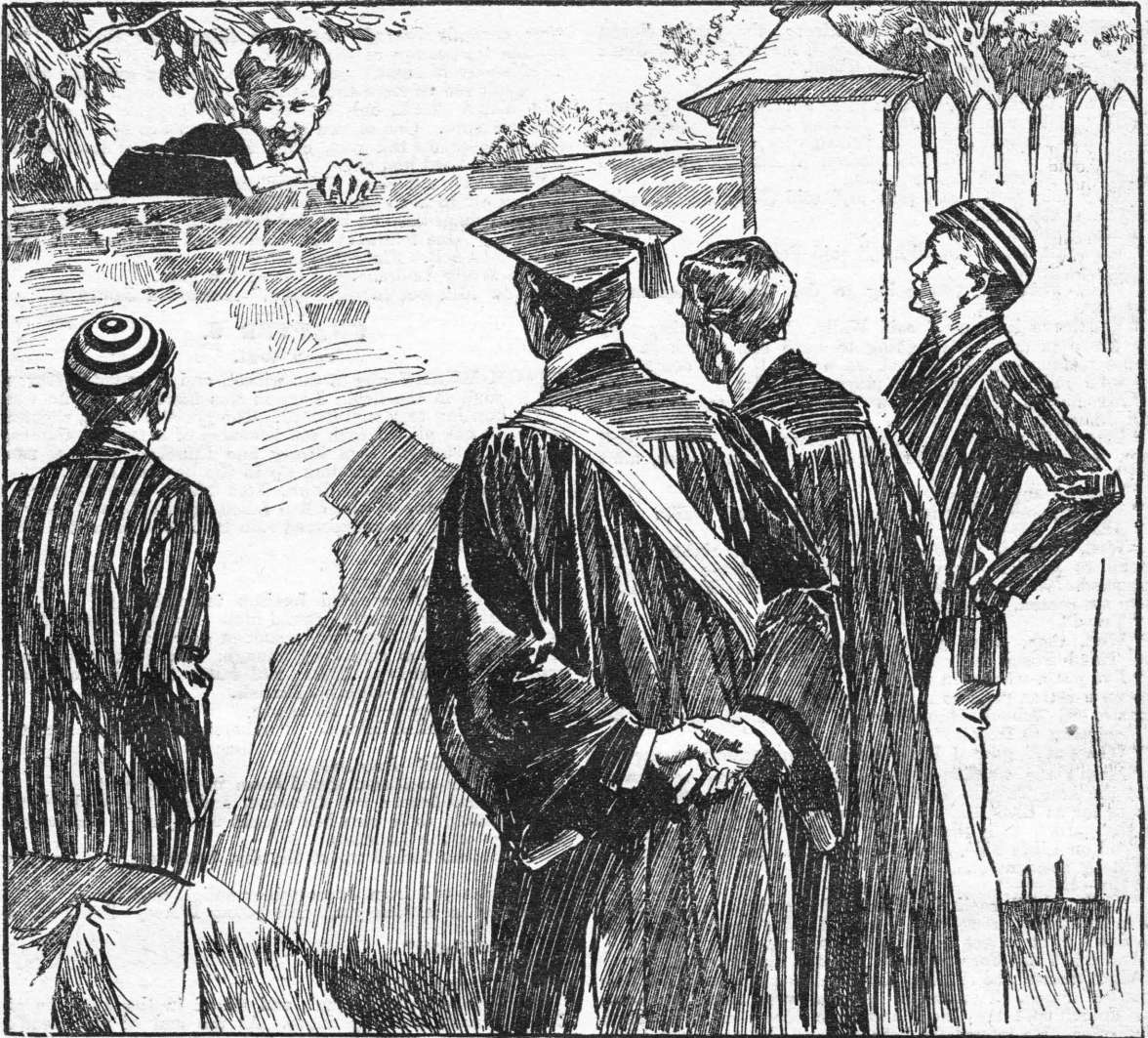
"Oh, no! But now there are three men out of the team, I've got a chance of playing for the House. Kangaroo and Herries and Reilly won't be out of sanatorium before Saturday, and if they are, they won't be fit."

"I know that. But what do you want to play for? We've agreed that House matches are all rot."

"Quite so. But I've a reason this time."

"You want to show the fellows you can play for the House if you choose? Blessed if I should think that worth the trouble?"

"I shouldn't, either," said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't like fagging after a silly ball, any more



"What are you doing there, D'Arcy minor?" said Mr. Railton grimly.  
 "Ahcm! I—I—I'm admiring the view, sir!" replied the surprised fag.  
 (See Chapter 6.)

than you do. But I've got an uncle coming down to the school to see me on Saturday, and if I could play in the House team while he's here, it will mean something good for me. He's keen on cricket and all kinds of rot, and if he knew I cut it he would keep his pocket-book in his pocket. See?"

Mellish chuckled. He understood his friend's motive now. It was a motive he could understand and sympathise with.

"May be a quid, or might possibly be a fiver, if I get a look in in the House match," yawned Levison. "I'd 'fag even if you offered to stand him a whack of the fiver."

"What-ho!" said Mellish. "Better not let Tom Merry know that, though. He wouldn't put you in for that reason, even if you offered to stand him a whack for a fiver."

"I expect he'd punch my head if I offered him that," grinned Levison. "No; I'm going to pile it on about sport and manly exercise and honour of the House, and that sort."

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo, wherefore the cackle?" asked Monty Lowther, as the two precious young rascals came upon the Terrible Three in the quadrangle. "Been playing somebody an extra special rotten trick, Mellish?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Mellish, turning away.

Levison paused to speak to Tom Merry.

"I've just put in half an hour at the wicket," he said. "Digby couldn't take my stumps. He tried."

"Yes, I was watching you," said Tom. "You bat jolly well, considering the little bit of practice you get. You don't put on much pace, though, running. If you want to

play in the House team, Levison, you'll have to do some sprinting, and I may as well tell you plainly that you'll have to stop smoking."

"I've stopped that," said Levison, with unusual meekness.

"Honour bright?" asked Tom Merry suspiciously.

"Honour bright," said Levison unflinchingly. "No good keeping that up when a chap's trying to get into form. I'm not a fool."

"Well, that's all right," said Tom Merry, more cordially. "If you mean this seriously, Levison, I'm more than willing to back you up. And I like your batting. If you're a bit more fit by Saturday, I think I shall put you in."

"Good!" said Levison. "I'll take care to be fit enough. I'm going out for a sprint this afternoon."

"Good for you."

As the chums of the Shell came in to dinner, Wally & Co. met them in the hall. The fags of the Third were looking grim and determined.

"Halt!" said D'Arcy minor. "Are you going to play us this afternoon, Tom Merry?"

Tom shook his head, with a smile.

"I'm afraid not, Wally."

"We consider that they are not good enough for them, and them, therefore, refuse to meet them, inasmuch as they decline to meet them or they," explained Monty Lowther blandly.

The Third-Formers frowned. They recognised the parody of Wally's somewhat involved letter of challenge.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wally crossly. "Keep all that for

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

NEXT  
WEDNESDAY!

"THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD,  
Order Early.

the 'Weekly.' Look here, Tom Merry, the junior eleven have got to play us, or we'll make it clear to all St. Jim's that they are afraid to meet the Third."

"Go ahead!" said Tom, laughing.

And the Terrible Three went in to dinner. Wally frowned darkly. His comrades were looking at him expectantly. And Wally realised how much prestige he would lose in the Third Form if he did not succeed in his undertaking to bring Tom Merry & Co. to reason.

"They jolly well won't play us," said Curly Gibson, with a shake of the head.

Wally grunted.

"We can't make 'em, either," said Frayne.

Another grunt.

"Well, what are you going to do, Wally?" demanded Jameson.

"You leave it to me," said Wally. "Whether they play the Third or not, we're going to have our whack in the House match, and that's what we want. If they don't play us, we'll jolly well stop 'em playing at all!"

"My hat, I don't see how you're going to do that!" said Jameson, with a whistle.

"Lots of things you don't see," remarked Wally. "Look here, we're standing up for our rights in this matter, ain't we?"

"H'm! I suppose so."

"You suppose so! Ain't you sure?" roared Wally.

"Ahem! Yes—sure. What about it?"

"Well, then, if we're standing up for our rights, we're bound to go for them baldheaded, and leave no stone unturned. We're justified in using any methods of making them see reason, ain't we?"

"Ye-es."

"Well, then, we're going to make 'em understand that the Third Form can't be left out," said Wally savagely.

"I've got a wheeze in my head. In the first place, they've got up a rotten practice match for this afternoon. Shell and Fourth, all School House chaps, instead of playing us. We're going to stop it!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Wally's three companions at once.

"Mum's the word," said Wally. "I suppose you know that the hose Taggles uses in the Head's garden can be run out as far as Little Side. A fellow standing at the end gate in the garden with the hose could play it over the cricket ground on Little Side, nearly as far as the pavilion. Taggles did it by accident once."

"But—but—"

"Nuff said!" replied Wally. "Mum's the word. Let's go in to dinner, or we shall have old Selby down on us, and we don't want to get detained this afternoon."

And the Third-Formers went into the dining-room.

After dinner the junior House eleven prepared for the practice match. Twenty-two players were made up from the Fourth and the Shell, and Tom Merry made Wally a kind offer. He tapped the hero of the Third on the shoulder in the quadrangle.

"We're making up twenty-two for practice," he said. "If you like, you can stand in, Wally. You're all right for that much."

"Yaas, wathah, Wally," said Wally's major. "Come on, deah boy!"

Wally sniffed.

"Can't be done!"

"We want the House eleven to play the Third," he said.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I wegard Wally's suggestion as weasonable. I don't like the ideah of a D'Arcy bein' left out."

Tom Merry laughed.

"My dear chap, the Third can play the Fourth in Form matches, but they can't play the House eleven. We might as well ask the Sixth to play us. What do you think they would say if we did?"

"Something wude, probably," said Arthur Augustus, in a thoughtful sort of way.

"Exactly! Now, Wally, we'll shove you and Jameson into the side for practice, if you like."

"Rats!" said Wally. "The Third will play you and lick you, if you like! But I'm not fagging at practice for you."

"Go and eat coke, then!"

And Tom Merry made up his twenty-one, and they went down to the cricket ground. Levison of the Fourth was put in the scratch side for practice. The juniors were soon busy at the wickets, and they forgot all about Wally & Co.

But Wally had not forgotten.

The chums of the Third watched the beginning of the practice match, and then strolled away towards the Head's garden. As if to favour their enterprise, they saw the hose lying where Taggles had last used it, in full view in the garden. The Head's garden was sacred to the Head and the masters, and the Head's family, and juniors—especially fags—

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

were severely barred. But little things like that did not trouble the scamps of the Third.

"Nobody in sight," said Jameson, peering over the gate. "Can't see us from the Head's house, through the trees," said Wally. "The only trouble is that Taggles might come and interrupt. One of you chaps keep an eye open for him, and if he comes this way, bring him a message from somewhere and head him off."

"Ha, ha! All right, I'll go," said Joe Frayne. And he hurried off to keep watch for Taggles.

"You chaps keep back," said Wally, to Jameson and Curly Gibson. "One fellow in the garden will be enough, in case one has to bolt, I'm going in."

And Wally vaulted lightly over the gate.

"Now look out for fireworks!" murmured Jameson.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Very Wet.

TOM MERRY was at the wicket, and the scratch eleven were in the field. Levison was bowling, and he was bowling very well indeed. The practice match, though naturally not played with the keenness of a regular fixture, was going strong. Tom Merry and Lowther had just run four, and Tom was standing up to the bowling again.

Just as the ball came down, Tom Merry gave a jump.

A sudden spray of water had fallen upon him, and he was so surprised at the unexpected rain that he allowed the ball to pass his bat.

Crash!

The wicket was down!

"How's that?" shouted Levison triumphantly.

Tom Merry was staring round him. He had a momentary impression that a remarkably sudden downpour of rain had set in, which was surprising enough, as the sky was clear and blue and sunny. Water had fallen thickly upon him, and he was wet through his flannels.

"What on earth—" he began.

"Hallo!" yelled Blake. "Where's that water coming from?"

Sizz! Swish! Swoosh!

The cricketers stared round them in amazement.

The wicket-keeper was drenched, and several of the batsmen awaiting their turn had caught the spray of the water, and some of the fieldsmen.

The juniors looked up at the sky, but there was no sign of rain.

A sudden yell from Jones minor enlightened them.

"There he is, look you! It's young D'Arcy—he's got the hose!"

"Great Scott!"

"My hat!"

"The young villain!"

The juniors swung round, and stared in the direction of Jones minor's pointing finger. At the end of the Head's garden was a gate that gave on the playing-fields. Sitting on the gate was D'Arcy minor of the Third, with the hose trailing behind him, and his thumb on the nozzle. He waved his disengaged hand cheerily to the juniors.

"Wet?" he called out.

Tom Merry shook his fist at the scamp of the Third.

"You've soaked me, you young idiot!" he roared.

"Go hon!"

"Put that hose down!" yelled Blake.

"Rats!"

"Wally, you young wascal, you have made me quite wet! I ordah you to put that hose away at once, as your majah! You heah?"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gussy."

"If you send any more of that water this way, we'll come to you and slaughter you!" shouted Manners.

Wally grinned. His reply was a fresh jet of water from the hose, which caught Manners fairly under the chin. Manners roared, and sat down on the turf.

"Stop it!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"I'm stopping you," called back Wally. "You can play the Third, if you like, but you're not going to play the giddy goat. Savvy?"

"You—you—you—yaroooh!"

A jet of water swamped over Tom Merry. He staggered against his stumps, and knocked them out of the ground. The crease was shimmering with water in the sunlight now. The cricketers were simply infuriated.

"No good talking to him!" gasped Blake. "We'll collar him and slaughter him! We'll turn the hose on him, and bump him, and squash him! Come on!"

Blake led a rush towards the garden. The other fellows followed him fast. They were all anxious to get to close quarters with Wally.

Wally slipped down on the inner side of the gate, which was locked, and quite strong enough to stop a rush. He



rested the hose on the top bar, and let fly with the full force of the powerful jet of water.

Swish! Swish! Slooosh!

"Oh! Ow! Yah!"

"Yawwooh!"

"Groogh!"

As the charging juniors came up to the gate, the full force of the streaming water smote them, and fairly bowled them over. Tom Merry caught it under the chin, and was swept backwards, and he went down, clutching at Blake and dragging him down, too. Water swamped upon the juniors, choking and blinding them with its flood, and they were bowled over like skittles. And as they staggered about the water continued to swamp upon them, drenching them to the very skin.

Digby and Lowther and Clifton Dane succeeded in reaching the gate, and clutched at it to clamber over. But the hose was turned on them quickly, and the water, smiting them at close range, simply drove them from their hold, and they reeled back.

Wally, on the safe side of the gate, played the hose upon the struggling, gasping mass of juniors mercilessly.

It was too much for them.

They scrambled out of the way of the water, running as if for their lives.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally. "There's plenty more! Come and have some more! No extra charge for a shower-bath! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Ow!"

"The awful young villain!"

"Ow! Groogh!"

The drenched and dripping cricketers sheltered themselves in and behind the pavilion. Wally grinned at them over the gate.

"Are you going to play the Third?" he bawled.

"I'll Third you, when I get hold of you!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! My clobber is simply ruined, you know!"

"The—the young imp!"

"We'll scalp him! We'll slaughter him! Oh, crumbs!"

The enraged cricketers glared towards the triumphant scamp of the Third. Some of them scuttled away to towel themselves down and change their clothes. The practice match had reached a sudden termination. It was hardly possible to play cricket under the fire from the garden-hose.

"Some of us could get into the garden along the wall, and take the young rotter from behind," suggested Levison. Levison had dodged into the pavilion, and had succeeded in keeping dry, except for a few splashes.

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry.

Two or three of the juniors ran for the garden wall, at a distance from the gate. They clambered up, but as their heads appeared above the top of the wall there came a whiz of rapid water from the garden, and they rolled back again. Wally was evidently on the watch for them.

"Come on!" yelled Wally. "The more the merrier!"

Kerruish and Vavasour, who were still dry, ran further along the wall, and began to climb. But just as they were clambering over, a sharp voice from the quadrangle hailed them.

"Stop! Get down at once!"

"Oh, crumbs! Spotted!" groaned Kerruish.

The two juniors dropped back. Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, was taking a stroll in the quadrangle with Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, and the two masters had come upon the juniors just as they climbed the wall. Mr. Railton looked at Vavasour and Kerruish very severely.

"You are not allowed in the Head's garden," he exclaimed severely. "You know that."

"Nunno, sir!" stammered Vavasour.

"You will take fifty lines for— Goodness gracious!"

Mr. Railton broke off as a head rose on the inner side of the wall, and the grinning face of Wally of the Third appeared in sight.

"Come on, you duffers!" chuckled Wally. "You get over the wall, that's all, and I'll give you beans. Why, you silly chumps—oh! Oh, my only Aunt Jane!"

Wally broke off suddenly as he caught sight of the two masters.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Mr. Railton looked at him grimly.

"D'Arcy minor!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?" stammered Wally.

"What are you doing there?"

"Ahem! I—I—I'm admiring the view, sir!" murmured Wally.

"Come over at once."

Wally cast a rather uneasy glance at Vavasour and Kerruish, and then clambered over the wall, and dropped at the feet of the Housemaster. From the distant cricket-pitch the

drenched juniors eyed him vengefully. But it was impossible to visit vengeance upon the scamp of the Third in the presence of a Housemaster and a Form-master.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "You are very wet, D'Arcy minor. You have been playing with the garden-hose, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," said Wally.

"You will take a hundred lines," said Mr. Railton. "Go and dry yourself at once."

"Yes, sir," said Wally meekly.

It was worth a hundred lines, Wally considered, especially as the presence of the masters preserved him from the vengeance of the drenched cricketers.

He scuttled off to the School House, where his chums rejoined him, and the Third-Formers roared over the discomfiture of Tom Merry & Co. Mr. Railton and Mr. Lathom continued their stroll, fortunately not going in the direction of the cricket-field.

On the junior ground, Tom Merry & Co. were furious. The cricketers were dripping, and soaked to the skin, and the pitch was almost swimming in water. The practice match had come to a sudden and inglorious end.

"Bai Jove! I shall have to go and change my clobber!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "I advise you fellows to do the same."

And they did, and then they looked for Wally. But Wally, who had a sufficient allowance of the wisdom of the serpent, though he was somewhat lacking in the innocence of the dove, had gone out with Jameson and Curly, and was not to be found within the walls of St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 7.

### A Licking for Levison.

GGRRRRRR! Levison of the Fourth stooped for a stone.

Levison was in a bad temper. He was under the necessity of taking exercise to fit himself for the match on Saturday, if he hoped to play—but he did not like exercise. Also, he had had to start on his sprint alone, as Mellish cared for exercise still less than Levison did, and could not be induced to run with him. Crooke of the Shell had refused, too, in the plainest possible language, to exert himself that warm afternoon. So Levison went alone, and just now he was feeling tired, hot and cross. As he came tramping over the footpath through Farmer Oates's fields, the growl of the dog burst on him, and he caught sight of Pongo, and his eyes gleamed as he stooped to find a missile.

Pongo belonged to D'Arcy minor, and he did not like Levison. Levison was cruel to animals, and Pongo had had more than one cruel kick from him, when his master was not by. And so Pongo growled at the sight of the cad of the Fourth.

Levison cast a quick glance round as he rose after seizing a stone. Wally was not in sight; in fact, nobody was. The farmhouse was hidden from view by a haystack, and Levison guessed that Wally had stopped there to ask for a glass of milk, and that Pongo was wandering while his master was resting.

Whiz!

Levison was glad to see Pongo just then; he wanted a victim for his ill-humour. And he flung the stone with a spiteful aim.

There was a yell from Pongo as the missile struck him on the flank, and he scuttled away, barking furiously.

"There, you rotten beast!" muttered Levison. "That's one for you! My hat! I'll give you another, and another, hang you!"

And Levison looked round for another stone. Before he could find one a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he was jerked to his feet.

"You young brute!" said a stern voice. "What are you pelting the dog for?"

Levison swung round. A young man held him by the shoulder in a grip of iron, and Levison recognised Farmer Oates's son. The young man had a whip in his hand, and he looked very much inclined to lay it about Levison's shoulders.

The cad of the Fourth wriggled in his grasp.

"He—he growled at me," he muttered. "I haven't hurt him. Anyway, he's not your dog."

"He's my dog, though!" yelled Wally, rushing round the stack, attracted to the spot by the howls of his favourite.

"You cad, Levison! What are you doing to Pongo?"

"Oh, blow Pongo!" said Levison, jerking himself away from the young farmer. "The beast growled at me. Keep him on a chain if you don't want him pelted."

Wally's eyes gleamed.

"So you've been pelting him, have you?" he said, between his teeth. "You cad! I'll jolly well teach you not to pelt my dog."

Smack! Wally's hand came across Levison's face with a

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.  
Order Early.

report like a pistol-shot. The cad of the Fourth staggered back with a yell, and then leaped at Wally. The young farmer's grasp closed on him again.

"No, you don't!" he said.

"Let me go!" yelled Levison. "I'm going to lick the young cub!"

"Yes, let him go, Mr Oates," said Wally, clenching his fists. "He's bigger than I am, but I'm ready for him."

The young farmer hesitated.

"He's too big for you, kid," he said.

"Oh, I can handle him," said Wally. "Jameson, hold my jacket." Jameson and Curly Gibson had followed Wally from the farmhouse.

"Well, all right," said the farmer. "But wait a tick. If you're going to fight here, you'll have to have the gloves on. I can lend you some."

"I don't want any gloves," growled Levison.

"But you're going to have them, whether you want them or not," said George Oates coolly. "Wait till I get them, and I'll keep time for you."

"Righto!" said Wally.

George Oates strode away towards the house. The young farmer was an amateur boxer, and was known for his skill in and around Wayland, and, as a matter of fact, he was not averse to seeing a "mill" between the two schoolboys. Wally was evidently keen for the combat, though the advantage of age and size was with Levison. But Levison did not seem quite so keen.

"Hullo! Where are you going, Levison?" exclaimed Wally, as the cad of the Fourth made a movement.

"I'm going on," said Levison, with a sneer. "I'm not going to fight a fag."

"You're jolly well not going on," said Wally. "You've pelted my dog, and hurt him. You're going to take a licking for it. Look after him, you fellows."

Wally and Jameson and Curly surrounded the cad of the Fourth. Levison gritted his teeth savagely. He was no match for the three of them, and he knew it.

"Look here," he said, "I don't want to fight you, D'Arcy minor. I came out for a sprint, to get into form for the House match on Saturday, and fighting will put me off my form."

"You play in a House match!" said Wally with a sniff. "Don't be funny."

"Yes, that's altogether too rich," said Jameson with a chuckle. "Don't pile it on, Levison. Give us an easier one."

"I tell you it's true. Tom Merry's promised me a place in the team if I'm in form."

"Rats!"

"Don't you believe me?" howled Levison.

"No fear!"

"I tell you—"

"What's the good of telling us that a rotten slacker like you is taking up cricket, and playing in House matches?" said Wally contemptuously. "Don't talk rot! Anyway, you should have thought of that before you chucked stones at poor old Pongo. Look at him. Trying to lick where your stone cut him, you cad!"

"Here comes Georgey," said Jameson. "Now, then, Levison—"

"Look here—"

"Shut up!" said Wally. "Thank you, Mr. George. There are your gloves, Levison, and if you don't put them on, you'll get my knuckles."

Levison gritted his teeth as he put on the gloves. He did not want to fight, though he was pretty certain that he could lick a Third-Former. But Levison always preferred to serve his turn by "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," instead of open combat. But he had no choice in the matter this time.

"I'll whack you out of creation, you young cad!" he said, between his teeth.

"Come on and begin the whacking," said D'Arcy minor cheerfully.

And they started.

Levison was older and bigger and heavier; but Wally was all grit. He seemed made of iron, too. When the Fourth-Former's savage drives got him upon the face, Wally hardly ceased to grin for a moment. And he returned the blows with interest. Levison soon felt his head singing.

Bump!

Levison was down on his back in the grass.

"Hurray!" roared Jameson. "Down with the Fourth!"

"Gerrup!" growled Curly Gibson. "You're not finished yet."

Levison staggered to his feet, his face pale with rage, and his eyes burning. He tore off the gloves with savage haste.

"Look out, Wally!"

But Wally was looking out. He tossed aside his gloves also, as the cad of the Fourth rushed at him, hitting out

furiously. Levison was stopped by a terrific upper-cut, that sent him staggering back, and then Wally's bare knuckles came on his face—crash, crash, left and right, right and left!

Levison gave a yell and dropped on the ground again. Wally stood panting.

"Time!" said Mr. George, with a grin.

Levison groaned. His eyes were closing up, and his nose seemed to have doubled in size, and was streaming crimson. He had reason to regret that he had taken off the gloves to finish that fight.

"Want any more?" asked Wally genially.

"Ow! No! Hang you! No!"

"Oh, buck up, for the honour of the Fourth!" grinned Jameson. "What will the Fourth say to you if you're licked?"

Levison did not reply. He scrambled to his feet, and giving Wally a glare of hatred, staggered away.

Wally rubbed his nose with his handkerchief. He had had a hard knock there, and the handkerchief came away red.

"Bravo the Third!" roared Jameson.

Wally chuckled.

"The Fourth will get their rag out about that, though they don't like Levison," he remarked. "They won't like a Fourth-Form chap being licked by a fag. The rotter will let Pongo alone after this, anyway."

And Wally & Co. returned contentedly to the farmhouse to finish their tea, Wally carrying Pongo, snuggling under his arm.

Levison limped away towards St. Jim's, with black rage in his heart, and an ache in most of his bones. His sprint was over for that afternoon, and he knew that when Tom Merry saw the condition he was in he would not have much chance of playing in the House team. On Saturday he was likely to be adorned with two gorgeous black eyes, as well as a swollen nose. And he gritted his teeth as he dragged his heavy foot-steps back to St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Levison's Accusation.

"GREAT SCOTT! What have you been doin' to your chivvay, Levison?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put up his eye-glass with extra care, to survey Levison as he came into the quadrangle.

Levison scowled.

"I twust you have not been fightin' with the Gwam-mawians, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "It was vewy weckless of you to get into that state when you are twyin' to get a place in the House team for Satahday."

"It's your precious minor!" said Levison, between his teeth. "He's done this to me to keep me out of the team on Saturday."

"Bai Jove! What?"

"Tom Merry's as good as promised me a place in the team, and Wally wants it himself, so he piled on me and did this," said Levison.

"Wats! Wally would not do anythin' of the sort," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "And you ought to be ashamed of yourself for being licked by a Third-Form kid, if he did!"

"There were three of them," said Levison sullenly.

"I don't believe a word of it. It would be quite imposs. for a D'Arcy to act in such a wotten mannah."

"Well, he did. The three of them piled on me and didn't give me a chance," said Levison. "I'll make 'em pay for it, too."

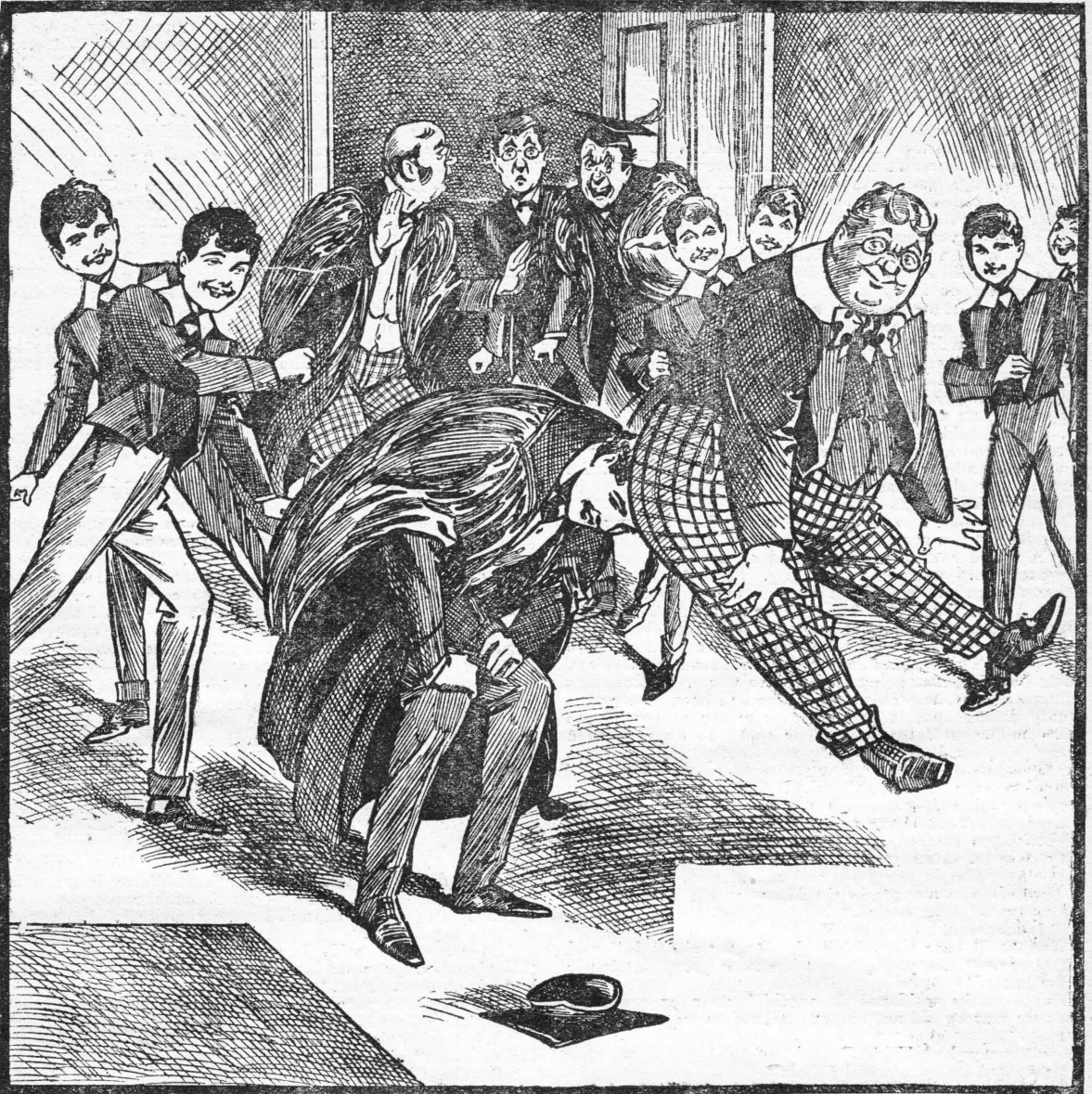
"Wats!"

"It's in keeping with what he did this afternoon—turning the hose on the cricket-ground," said Levison. "He spoiled the match this afternoon, and now he's put me off my form for Saturday."

"Weally, Levison—"

Levison tramped on towards the School House. The state of his face drew many glances upon him as he went in. He bathed his eyes in the Fourth-Form dormitory, but that did not do them much good. They were already black, and growing much blacker, and Levison looked at the reflection of his face in the glass with a furious scowl. His uncle, in whose good graces he wanted to keep, was coming on Saturday. Instead of finding him in the House team, playing cricket, his esteemed relative would find him hanging about with a pair of black eyes and a thick nose. Levison grew more and more furious as he reflected on it, and saw all prospect of the hoped-for fiver vanishing. There was nothing for him to do but to write to his uncle and plead illness, and put the old gentleman off.

That was all he could do now, and the trouble he had already taken in cricket practice was sheer waste. His feelings towards Wally were savage and bitter. If any means



Junior after junior vaulted over the bending form of Mr. Knutt. Mr. Capper came out of his own room, and joined the Fifth Form-masters, looking in to see what the unaccustomed disturbance was about. He had fancied that the new master was having trouble with the Remove. He almost fainted as he saw what was going on. "Good gracious!" he murmured. (An amusing incident in "THE "NUT" OF GRLEYFRIARS!" the splendid, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., contained in this week's issue of our companion paper, "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, which all "GEM" readers will specially enjoy. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

came Levison's way for revenging himself, he was not likely to hesitate. And the accusation he had already made to D'Arcy major seemed a ready means. A fellow who knocked out another fellow just before a cricket match, was likely to "catch" it from the others. If he could sustain his accusation against Wally, the scamp of the Third would be booked for an exceedingly unpleasant time.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left with a frown on his noble brow, and a troubled feeling in his breast. He did not believe what Levison had said, and yet—there was the disfigurement of the Fourth-Former's face to prove it. It did not seem really likely that Levison had been so damaged in a fair fight with a lad younger and smaller than himself.

And Wally's reckless conduct of late lent colour to the accusation. Wally had turned the hose on the junior cricket-ground, and stopped the practice match, and the members of the House team and the scratch eleven were all waiting to see him about it. If he had done this to Levison in addition, there was trouble in store for the reckless fag.

"Wherefore that worried brow, oh, my infant?" asked

Jack Blake, waking D'Arcy out of his reverie with a sounding slap on the shoulder.

"Ow, you ass!" gasped D'Arcy. "You have wuffed my jacket, and thwon me into quite a fluttah. I wish you would not be such a wuff beast."

"What are you tying your eyebrows up into a knot for?" demanded Blake.

"I was not doin' anythin' of the sort, you ass! I was thinkin'. Have you seen Levison just now, deah boy?"

Blake grinned.

"Yes; he looks as if he's been butting his face against a brick wall, or a specially hard set of knuckles."

"He says that Wally did it, Blake."

Blake snorted.

"If he's let a Third-Form fag give him two black eyes, I've a jolly good mind to give him another one for disgracing the form!" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! I weally don't see how you can do that, deah boy; he hasn't thwee eyes," said Arthur Augustus in astonishment.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.  
Order Early.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake crossly. "Why, he ought to be able to eat Wally. He's half a head taller, and quite two years older, if not more. It's a disgrace to the Fourth!"

"Yaas, wathah! He says that there were three of the young wascals, and they all piled on him at once."

"Oh, I see. Then I won't give him that other black eye," said Blake considerably. "I don't know that I could handle more than three of the Third at once, myself."

"But Wally wouldn't have acted in such a wotten way, Blake, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "Levison says they deliberately knocked him out, so that he couldn't play in the House match."

Blake looked very grave.

"If Levison can prove that, Wally will get into trouble," he said. "I must say it looks like it. Wally has been playing the giddy ox lately about that blessed House match, and I suppose he knew Levison was let into the team for Saturday."

"Pwobably he didn't know that, deah boy."

"I hope not; we'll ask him when he comes in. Anyway, I don't see how a fag by himself, without help, could have handled Levison like that."

"Levison isn't a fightah."

"No; but he'd rather fight than have black eyes served out to him, and he can box when he likes," said Blake. "It looks pretty bad for Wally. Only Levison is such an awful fibber that we shall want proof."

"Yaas, wathah, that's quite twue."

The juniors went into the School House. Tom Merry came downstairs with a very serious expression on his handsome face. A number of the juniors had seen Levison by this time, and heard what he had to say. Some of them were looking very grim. Wally's claim to be played in the House team had been taken in a humorous spirit at first. But his action on the cricket-field that afternoon had made the juniors take it more seriously, and all of them had agreed that the scamp of the Third would have to be taught a lesson. Now, it looked as if he was going from bad to worse. If Levison's account was true, the Third-Form fags had been guilty of a ruffianly attack upon a prospective member of the House team. And even if the hose affair could be forgiven as a reckless jape, the later happening could not possibly be overlooked.

"You've seen Levison?" asked Blake, catching Tom Merry's expression.

"Yes," said Tom Merry seriously. "He's simply knocked out—both eyes blacked, and his nose swollen, his lip cut—simply done in. He says Wally and Curly Gibson and Jameson piled on him in the fields and did him in, although he told them he was playing in the House match on Saturday. That was practically settled."

"It is incredible, deah boy."

"Well, we'll hear what Wally has to say about it," said Tom Merry. "The young rascal has been going altogether too far lately."

"Yaas, but he wuld not do anythin' mean or cowardly. I am sure that he did not know that Levison was to play on Saturday."

"Levison says he told him."

"Yaas; but he is an awful fibbah."

"Of course, you don't believe me," broke in Levison's sneering voice. "You can please yourself about that. All I care for is playing in the House team on Saturday."

Tom Merry looked at him.

"You can't do that," he said. "Even if you were fit, I couldn't put a fellow in the team with two black eyes like yours. They'll be as black as ink on Saturday. Some of the fellows' relations are coming—there will be uncles and aunts and sisters and cousins. What the dickens would everybody think if a player went in with a chivvy like that? Very likely the Head would interfere."

Levison scowled—his scowl looking black and almost Satanic in the disfigurement of his face.

"You mean that you're going to leave me out," he demanded, "after practically promising me the place?"

"That was if you were fit," said Tom Merry quietly.

"You can't say you're fit, in that state, I suppose? No good telling me you can see straight with your eyes bruised in that way—you can't! You'll be crooked for a week."

"If young D'Arcy can get his way by crocking members of the team, some of you others had better look out," said Levison bitterly. "It's as easy for three young hooligans to pile on you as on me."

"Weally, Levison—"

"If what you say about Wally is true, Wally is going to have a lesson he won't forget in a hurry," said Tom Merry quietly. "You're ready to repeat it before him, I suppose, and stand to it?"

"Of course I am; and if he isn't jolly well ragged, I shall go to Mr. Raiton and complain about it," said Levison.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

"No need to do that; if you can prove it against him, he'll get it in the neck from us," said Tom Merry. "As soon as they come in, we'll march them into my study, and you can say it out before them—and we'll see. It's only fair to hear what they say before we rag them."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You know what the young cad's capable of, by what he did this afternoon!" growled Levison. "We had to chuck up the practice match."

"I know. But that's different. Anyway, we'll see. Let's get down to the gates, you fellows, and collar Wally as he comes in. We'll give them a fair trial, and treat them accordingly."

"Hear, hear!"

And Tom Merry & Co. waited at the school gates for Wally and his comrades, to capture them as soon as they returned to the school. Levison waited in the School House, with a spiteful satisfaction in his breast. He had suffered severely at Wally's hands, but if his cunning did not fail to serve his turn, the scamp of the Third was destined to suffer more severely still.

## CHAPTER 9. Put on Trial!

"MY only Aunt Jane!"

D'Arcy minor paused in the road as he uttered that exclamation. It was growing dusk, and the heroes of the Third were late in. Pongo had taken it into his head to follow on the track of an elusive rabbit, and Wally had followed on Pongo's track in vain. Pongo had proved even more elusive than the rabbit. Jameson and Curly had succeeded at last in getting Wally to come home, leaving Pongo to wander at his own sweet will; and they had just time to get in before calling-over. As they came up to the school gates they caught sight of the Terrible Three standing there.

"Those bounders are waiting for us!" growled Wally. "They haven't got over their washing this afternoon yet."

The scamp of the Third eyed the Shell fellows uneasily. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther occupied the gateway, and they would not easily be passed. The fags came on cautiously, and halted out of reach.

"Waiting for us to come in?" asked Wally affably.

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Kind of you, I'm sure. But don't trouble—run away, or you'll be late for calling-over."

"We're waiting for you," said Manners. "We want you."

"Now, don't play the giddy ox!" said Wally, in a tone of patient remonstrance. "I told you I should make you sit up if you didn't come round, and I made you sit up. I'm willing to make it pax now."

"So are we," said Jameson and Gibson generously. "You've had your ducking, and you've had your lesson, and it's all over. Pax!"

"It isn't about your jape on us that we want to see you, Wally," said Tom Merry quietly.

"What is it, then? Have you decided to play us in the House team?" asked Wally.

"It's about Levison."

"Levison!" Wally chuckled. "Have you seen him? Pretty good for a Third-Form chap, eh? I think he will remember it for some time."

"So will you, you young rascal!" said Tom Merry sternly. "Come in! We want you."

Wally kept at a safe distance.

"Not till you make it pax!" he said.

"Here comes Taggles to lock the gates," said Monty Lowther. "You can take your choice of coming in or staying out."

Taggles, the porter, came down to the gates with his bunch of keys. The three fags looked at one another. They did not want to be locked out.

"Ere, you come in!" said Taggles, blinking out in the dusk at the heroes of the Third. "I'm a-going to lock up."

"Rush for it!" whispered Wally.

There was nothing else to be done. The three fags made a sudden rush, and Wally dexterously pushed Taggles into the arms of Tom Merry. The fags dodged the Shell fellows, and fled across the quadrangle.

"Ere, what's the game?" ejaculated Taggles. "The young raskil! I'll report 'im. Master Merry, leggo my 'air!"

"I was holding you up, Taggles," grinned Tom Merry.

Taggles righted himself.

"You could 'old me up without 'olding me up by the 'air," he said severely. And he grunted ungratefully as he proceeded to lock up the gates.

The Terrible Three followed the fags to the House. They had to appear at calling-over as well as Wally & Co. When

they came into Big Hall, Wally and Jameson and Curly Gibson were there with the Third, and they grinned at the Shell fellows. In the midst of their own form, they were not afraid of the Shell.

"Better collar them as they come out," said Manners. "Must get Jameson before he scuttles off to his own House." Tom Merry nodded, and the word was passed to Blake and the rest.

When calling-over was finished, and the boys marched out of Big Hall, quite a crowd of fellows gathered round Wally of the Third. But Wally was on the watch, and he escaped into the Third-Form room.

The juniors met in council in the passage. With all the Third round him in the form-room, the capture of Wally would not be an easy task. And it would be still less easy to carry him off to Tom Merry's study. The Third were content to rally to the rescue of their leader.

"Pewwaps you had bettah leave it to me, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "I will go in and speak to Wally, and tell him he's wanted."

"Ass!" said Blake. "He won't come."

"Wats! I am suah that Wally did not act as Levison declares, and, therefore, he will be willin' to come and say so. If we promise to say no more about his jape with the hose this aftahnoon, he will come all wight."

"Well, you can try," said Tom Merry. "I hope he will be able to prove that Levison is lying."

"Leave it to me, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, with a wave of the hand.

And the swell of St. Jim's marched into the Third-Form room. A hostile crowd of fags met him with a howl.

"No Fourth-Form kids wanted here," said Wally. "You can buzz off, Gussy!"

"Clear out!" roared Jameson.

"Travel!"

"Yah!"

"Wally, deah boy, this is a sewious mattah. In the first place, we are pwepared to ovahlook your wascally conduct with the garden-hose, although you wuined my clothes. Levison has accused you—"

Wally sniffed.

"Levison can go and eat coke!" he said. "I licked him once, and I can do it again, if he wants any more!"

"Levison declares that thwee of you piled on him—"

"That's a whopper!"

"Yaas, deah boy, I know it is, and I want you to come and say so before Levison, and shut up his wotten mouth."

"Oh, I'll do that all right," said Wally. "Come on, Jimmy, and you, Curly. We'll soon stop Levison's lies!"

"Hold on!" said the cautious Jameson. "We want it understood that we're to come back safe and sound. No larks!"

"That's it!" said Curly Gibson. "Trust a Scotchman to think of that. We want a safe-conduct, Gussy major."

D'Arcy hesitated a moment. If Wally was found guilty, he was to be punished; but, after all, the chief question was to put him on his trial and ascertain the truth.

"Vewy well," said the Fourth-Form ambassador. "I give you my word that aftah the inquiry you thwee chaps shall be allowed to come back here, befoah we take any furthah steps."

"That's good enough," said Wally. "Come on!"

And the three fags willingly followed the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus led the way up to Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage.

All the Co. were there. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, Blake and Digby. Levison was there, too, looking very black and very blue.

"Here he is!" growled Blake.

"Pway allow me to speak, deah boys—"

"Oh, you've spoken enough," said Monty Lowther. "Give your jaws a rest, old chap. You will get a crick in the neck if you keep on."

"I insist upon speakin'. I have promised Wally a safe-conduct, and aftah the twial he is to be allowed to go. He has only come under that condish."

"All serene," said Tom Merry. "If he's found guilty, we'll lay hands on him soon enough, if there were as many of the Third as there are sands on the giddy sea-shore."

"What's the row about?" asked Wally, grinning as he looked at Levison's bruised and discoloured face. "Levison looks a sight, I know; but he brought it on himself. You Fourth-Form chaps shouldn't tackle the Third if you're afraid of hard knocks."

"You're accused of a jolly serious thing," said Manners. "But we're going to give you a fair trial. Speak up, Levison."

"Yaas, wathah! Woll out your lies again, Levison," said Arthur Augustus encouragingly.

Levison gritted his teeth.

"You've heard what I have to say," he growled. "Those three young rotters piled on me in the fields. They treated me like this. I told them I had to play in the House team on Saturday, and they only hit harder. They meant to knock me up, so that I couldn't play. Do you think that that kid could have handled me like this alone?"

"Well, I shouldn't have thought so," said Tom Merry. "What have you got to say to that, Wally?"

Wally's eyes were blazing with indignation.

"It's all lies!" he said promptly. "Levison fought me, alone, and Curly Gibson and Jimmy only looked on to see fair play."

"You handled Levison like that, all by yourself?"

"Yes. I'll do it again, if he likes."

"Did he tell you he was playing in the House team on Saturday?"

"Well, yes," admitted Wally. "He did; but I didn't believe him. He never plays cricket. You must be off your rocker if you're thinking of putting a rotten slacker like Levison into the House team, and leaving out a chap like me."

"But you knew he was going to play when you handled him like that?"

"No, I didn't. I tell you I didn't believe a word of it."

"That is vewy pwob, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Right enough," he said. "Levison never plays in the House team, and his word isn't good enough to be taken, so I suppose Wally was right in not believing him. Still—"

"Hold on!" said Blake. "What was the row about? What did you tackle Levison at all for, young D'Arcy, if it wasn't to crock him for Saturday?"

"Because he chucked a stone at Pongo, and cut 'im," said Wally, his eyes blazing again.

"Oh!" said Tom Merry. "I see. You didn't tell us that, Levison."

"It isn't true," said Levison.

"You didn't hurt Pongo?"

"Pongo wasn't there," said Levison coolly. "Young D'Arcy has only just thought of that."

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Wally, in rage and amazement.

"Silence in court!" said Blake. "It can easily be proved, one way or the other. If Pongo was cut by a stone, we've only got to look at Pongo to see."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Get him here, Wally. You can smuggle him into the house—"

"I can't," said Wally.

"Why not?" demanded Blake suspiciously.

"Because he didn't come in with me. He went after a rabbit, and I lost him."

"Oh!"

There was a grim silence in the study.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Bowled Out!

LEVISON smiled sneeringly.

He had seen the fags come in without Pongo, and so he knew, of course, that the dog could not be produced as evidence.

There was a long silence. The juniors knew well enough Wally's affection for Pongo, and how unlikely he would be to desert him outside the gates if he could possibly help it. It really looked as if Levison's story was true, after all.

"So you left Pongo out of doors?" asked Tom Merry at last.

"I had to," said Wally. "We had only just time to get in before calling-over, as it was. The little beast went after a rabbit."

"Then he's lost?"

"Oh, he'll turn up all right. He knows his way back to the school," said Wally. "He's been lost before. He'll come in to-morrow all right."

"What a likely yarn!" sneered Levison.

"Why, you know it's true, you blackguard," said Wally hotly. "You stoned poor old Pongo, and you know it. Herries licked you once for doing the same to his bulldog."

"Yaas, I wemembah that."

"And Gibson and Jameson did not touch Levison?" asked Lowther.

"Never laid a finger on him," said Jameson. "He's not a nice person to touch."

The juniors looked at one another doubtfully.

"Pity you haven't got Pongo here," said Digby. "That would settle it one way or the other. If Levison hurt the dog, he ought to be licked, House match or no House match."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you wanted to fight Levison," said Tom Merry, "you

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order Early.

ought to have had the gloves on. That would have made it all right."

"We did have the gloves on," said Wally. "Levison took them off of his own accord, because he wanted to lam me with the bare knuckles. Then I took mine off."

"What? Where did it happen, then?"

"Near Farmer Oates's place."

"How did you get boxing gloves there? I suppose you didn't go out for a stroll with boxing-gloves in your pocket?"

"Young Oates gave them to us. You know George Oates is a boxer. We should have fought it out with the gloves on if Levison hadn't taken them off."

"It's all lies," said Levison coolly. "It wasn't anywhere near Oates's farm. That's miles from here, and these young cads piled on me in the Acre Field."

"Oh, what a whopper!" said Jameson.

"George Oates will tell you how it happened," said Wally. He saw it all."

"Ahem!" said Tom Merry. "That's all very well. Your blessed witness is miles away, and we can't get at him—and your blessed dog is lost, and we can't see him. It looks jolly suspicious to me."

The looks of all the juniors showed that they thought it decidedly suspicious, too. The explanations of the Third-Former certainly sounded a little lame.

"If you don't believe me—" began Wally hotly.

"It isn't a question of that, but of proof," said Tom Merry quietly. "You've spoiled Levison's chance of playing in the House team. If we suspect you of doing it on purpose, you've only got yourself to thank, after playing the giddy goat as you've done lately."

"Oh, rats!" said Wally disrespectfully.

"And you won't improve matters by rotten cheek!" began Blake wrathfully.

"Yaas, you should be wespctful to your eldahs," said Arthur Augustus chidingly. "Pway don't be a cheeky young ass, Wally."

"I think I've proved my case," said Levison. "You fellows can do as you like about it. I think I ought to be played in the House team, as I've been crooked on purpose by those young rotters. It's not my fault."

"It's impossible, with you in that state," said Tom Merry.

"I wish we could get George Oates to tell us whether he knows anything about it. But we can't—"

Wally snorted.

"You could, if you had as much sense as a rabbit," he said rudely. "Haven't you ever been to Oates's farm?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Didn't you have your silly eyes open, then? Oates is on the telephone."

"Oh!" said Blake.

"And you can use the telephone here in the prefects' room if you want to," said Wally. "Go and ring up Oates, and ask him."

"My hat! I didn't think of that."

"Of course you didn't!" said Wally sarcastically. "It's necessary for a chap-in the Third to do your thinking for you."

"Well, I didn't know Oates was on the telephone. Where are you going, Levison?" Tom Merry broke off.

"I'm going to bathe my eyes—"

"Your eyes have been bathed enough for a bit. You can stay here until I've spoken to Oates over the wire," said Tom Merry sharply.

"If George Oates tells any lies to favour those young rotters—" began Levison.

"He won't do that; we know him, and we know he's fair and square. Keep Levison here, Blake, while I go to the phone."

"You bet!" said Blake.

Levison had changed colour now. He had never even thought of the telephone, and that valuable invention of modern genius seemed likely to upset the cunning accusation he had made against the hero of the Third. His manner was quite enough to make the juniors suspicious. It was pretty clear that the cad of the Fourth did not want to stand the test of the telephone.

"I—I don't really want the matter to go any further," said Levison falteringly. "I've told you fellows just how it happened—"

"You've told us the fags piled on you in the Acre Field," said Tom Merry sternly. "Now we'll see what George Oates has to say about it."

"Look here—"

"See that he doesn't get out, you fellows."

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther left the study. Levison made a movement to follow, but Blake and Digby were in the way. Levison's heart was beating hard now, and he looked like an animal caught in a trap—as indeed he was.

Tom Merry lost no time in going to the telephone. There happened to be no one in the prefects' room. Tom Merry took up one receiver and Manners the other. He rang up the exchange, and, having found the number of Oates's Farm in the book, asked for it. In a few minutes the voice of the young farmer came along.

"Hullo!"

"Is that George Oates?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes. Who are you?"

"St. Jim's. You know D'Arcy minor? Was he at your place this afternoon?"

Tom heard a faint chuckle over the wires.

"Yes," came the reply.

"Did he have a fight there?"

"Who's asking?"

Tom laughed. Mr. George evidently did not intend to give D'Arcy minor away, if it was a master inquiring about his fistical adventures.

"I'm Tom Merry. It's all right. Levison accuses D'Arcy of piling on him with two other chaps, and we want to know whether it's true."

"It's a blank lie!" came the prompt reply. "It was a fair fight; I saw it all."

"Was D'Arcy minor's dog there?"


"The dog? Yes. Pongo."

"Had Levison chucked stones at him?"


**NUMBER 16.**

**"THE GEM" LIBRARY  
PORTRAIT GALLERY.**


**ORDER  
NEXT WEDNESDAY'S ISSUE  
IN ADVANCE.**



**1. MISS P. FAWCETT.**



**2. LEFEVRE.**



**3. MR. WODYER.**

"Yes. I caught him at it."  
 "That settles it," said Tom Merry grimly. "Thank you, Mr. Oates. Good-bye."

He hung up the receiver.  
 "Now for Levison!" said Manners. "The awful cad! He was lying again, as usual!"

The Terrible Three returned to the study. Levison was waiting for them in a state of great uneasiness. He had still had a hope that George Oates might be away, and so be unable to give the required information. But that hope died away as soon as he saw the faces of the Terrible Three.

"Well?" asked Blake.  
 "I've spoken to George Oates," said Tom Merry quietly. "It's all as Wally says—every word. George Oates, himself, caught Levison stoning the dog."

"The awful cad!"  
 "The howwible Ananias!"  
 Levison made a spring for the door. Blake put out his foot promptly, and the cad of the Fourth stumbled and fell headlong, with a yell.

"Not quite so fast," said Blake genially. "You've got a nice little set of lies to answer for, Levison, my infant."

"Yaas, wathah!"  
 "Satisfied now?" asked Wally, with a sniff.  
 "Quite satisfied," said Tom Merry. "I beg your pardon."  
 "Oh, that's all right!" said Wally. "You've played the giddy ox. But I suppose it was no good expecting anything else of you. The only decent thing you can do now is to put us in the House team."

Tom Merry laughed.  
 "I'm afraid that can't be done, Wally."  
 "They are afraid to play them or they," remarked Monty Lowther. "But if them were equal to they, and they and them were to play they—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Oh, shut up!" growled Wally. "Look here! You'd made up the team, and you'd put Levison in, hadn't you?"

"Yes; that's so."  
 "Now, there's a place vacant again, as Levison is out?"  
 "Yes; but—"  
 "Play me, then the Third will be satisfied, with one man in the team."

"Will they?" muttered Curly Gibson.  
 "Figgins is playing a Third-Former," urged Wally. "He's put Jameson in. You put me in, and make it all square. That's fair play."

"Yaas, wathah! I agree with what Wally says. I weally considah that it is up to you, Tom Mewwy."  
 "I'll consult the cricket committee, and we'll see," said Tom Merry.

And with that Wally had to be satisfied. The three fags left the study, and then the juniors turned their attention to Levison. The cad of the Fourth was standing with a sullen brow. He had made a false accusation, and he had been unexpectedly found out, and he knew that there was punishment to follow.

"You are a cad, Levison!" said Tom Merry. "You've jolly nearly made us rag D'Arcy minor unjustly! We're going to rag you justly! See?"

"If you touch me I'll complain to Mr. Railton," said Levison, between his teeth.

"Good! Then you shall have something substantial to complain of," said Tom Merry. "Lay him on the table. I've got a slipper here."

And the struggling Levison was laid face downwards on the table, and Tom Merry made rapid play with the slipper, to an accompaniment of wild yells from Levison. Twenty sounding thwacks were administered, and then the cad of the Fourth was ejected from the study. He picked himself up, and limped away to his own room with a face white with rage, and eyes burning like live coals. Mellish, his study mate, glanced at him as he came in in surprise.

"In trouble again?" he asked.  
 Levison flung himself into a chair, and then hurriedly rose again. After that slipping a chair was not a comfortable place, and he preferred to stand.

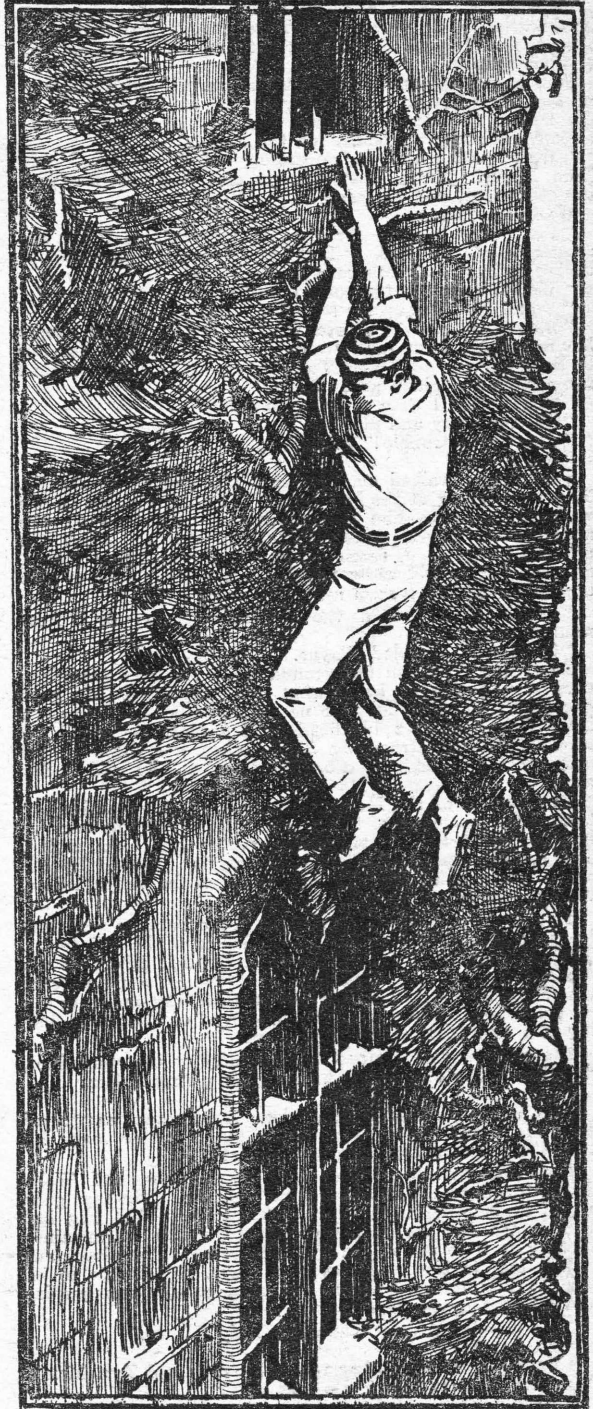
"I'll make them sit up for it!" he muttered, grinding his teeth.

"But you were on such jolly good terms with Tom Merry lately," grinned Mellish. "Is there a rift in the lute so soon? Ain't you playing in the House team, after all?"

"No!" growled Levison.  
 "Phew! What about your uncle?"  
 "I've written to put him off, confound him! But—but I'll make those rotters smart for it!" hissed Levison. "If I don't play in the team, I'll see that the team don't—"  
 He paused.

"You'll see what?" asked Mellish curiously.  
 "Mind your own business!"

And whatever revengeful thoughts were working in Levison's mind, he did not confide any of them to Mellish.



It seemed an age to Tom Merry. A century—long centuries—as he worked downward, ever downward, with aching arms and dizzy head

## CHAPTER 11. Put to the Torture.

"MADE up your mind yet?"  
 Wally asked the question the next morning after lessons. He was waiting for Tom Merry when the Shell came out of their Form-room.

Tom Merry shook his head, and smiled in a rather worried way. To a certain extent, it was only just that Wally should have the place left vacant by Levison in the junior House team; but there were other considerations to be weighed. Wally was a remarkably good cricketer for a

Third-Former. But the House match was certain to be a hard tussle, for at least two of Tom Merry's best men were absent, and Figgins & Co. were known to be at the top of their form.

Tom Merry had enough to think about, without the claims of the Third-Formers—especially as the match was one of the last of the House matches, and the rival Houses were already counting up points for the season.

"Wally, old man, you're getting on my nerves," said Tom Merry. "Why can't you go and play marbles with the other fags, and be quiet?"

Wally snorted.

"I'm going to play for the House team, or know the reason why!" he said. "I think we're jolly moderate in asking to have only one man in the team."

"Well, I'll consult the committee this evening; but—"

"You'll back me up for selection—eh?"

"I'm afraid not. You see, Figgins & Co. are in simply howling good form, and we've got all our work out out to keep our end up," said Tom Merry. "This isn't a time for playing the giddy goat, Wally."

"That's what I want to stop you doing."

"Oh, run away and play!"

"There'll be trouble!" said Wally.

"Brr-r-r-r!"

Tom Merry walked on, leaving Wally glaring wrathfully. Tom was smiling at the idea of the Third-Form going on the warpath to coerce him in his selection of players for the all-important House match. But he did not smile ten minutes later, when, coming back round the School House, after a visit to his white rabbits in the shed, four or five fags made a sudden rush upon him from ambush.

"Collar him!" yelled the well-known voice of D'Arcy minor.

"Got him!" chuckled Frayne.

Tom Merry was on the ground, with the fags sprawling over him, before he knew what was happening. He gave one shout, and then he gave no more, for Wally dragged a large flour-bag over his head, and secured it round his neck. Then the struggling Shell fellow was lifted in the arms of the chuckling, chortling fags, and carried bodily away.

The captain of the House eleven struggled violently; but there were too many of the fags for him. The bag over his head drowned his shouts, and prevented him from seeing. The ambush had evidently been carefully planned by the astute leader of the Third. Wally was on the warpath now, with a vengeance.

Tom could not see; but he knew the ground so well that he guessed that he was being carried into the old tower. That ancient building, part of the original fabric of St. Jim's, was unoccupied, not indeed being in a fit state of repair for habitation; and it was a good distance from the School House. There was little likelihood of his chums finding him there, unless the fags chose.

The prisoner was dumped down heavily on the stone floor, and then Wally's voice was heard again giving orders:

"Rope him up!"

Tom Merry renewed his struggles. But a noose was passed over his wrists and drawn tight, and another over his ankles, and knotted with equal thoroughness.

Then the captain of the Shell lay helpless, and Wally deigned to draw the flour-bag from his head. The fags gave a yell of laughter as his face was revealed. The bag had been empty; but enough of its original contents had remained sticking to it to rub off on Tom Merry's face and hair, and reduce him to the whiteness of a ghost. Flour was in his hair, in his nose and mouth and ears, and he was gasping and snuffing spasmodically.

"It's a giddy ghost!" chuckled Curly Gibson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you cheeky young rotters!" spluttered Tom Merry.

"Let me loose at once! Do you hear?"

D'Arcy minor nodded.

"Yes, we hear!" he said cheerfully.

"Untie me!" roared Tom Merry furiously.

"No fear! You're a giddy prisoner. Shut the door, Curly, in case any silly ass comes nosing round!" said Wally. "If you call out, Tom Merry, I shall shove my handkerchief into your mouth, and gag you as they do the brigand in Figgins's serial in the 'Weekly.' Savvy?"

"You—you—you—"

"This is where you take a back seat," explained Wally calmly. "The Third are on the warpath. I made you a liberal offer—only one place in the House team—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'd rather watch you eating flour," said Wally with a grin, as Tom Merry spluttered the dusty stuff out of his mouth. "But to come to business. We've laid you by the

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

heels to make terms. You're going to play Curly and Frayne and me in the House team?"

"I'm not, you young ass!"

"Then we shall put you to the torture, same as Figgins's brigand does his prisoners when he wants ransoms for them," said Wally. "We've picked up quite a lot of tips from Figgins's serial in the 'Weekly.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally jerked out a copy of Tom Merry's "Weekly" from under his jacket, and opened it at the page of the thrilling serial written by Figgins of the New House. Figgins's taste in literature was somewhat lurid, and ran to brigands, carbonari, banditti, pirates, slavers, and other fearsome beasts of the same kind. Tom Merry had often grinned over Figgy's instalments of the "Blood-Red Brigand"; but he did not grin now as Wally read out a description of the torture inflicted by that richly-hued gentleman upon a hapless prisoner who declined to pay his ransom.

"Ha," cried the Blood-Red Brigand—"so Wally read out—" "ha! At last I have thee in my clutch! Pile the burning coals upon his neck, and drive the red-hot steel into his feet, and saw off his hands with a red-hot saw! Pour the boiling lead into his waistcoat-pockets! Ha, ha! Behold him writhe!"

"That sounds rather hot, doesn't it?" said Wally, with a chuckle. "Figgy has got a splendid imagination. That Blood-Red Brigand must have been a regular corker. Now you know what to expect, Tom Merry, if you don't pay your ransom—I mean if you don't shove us into the House team."

"Let me loose!" roared Tom Merry.

"Are you going to do the decent thing, or do you prefer the torture?"

"I'll jolly well give you a thick ear when I get loose!" grunted Tom Merry.

"It's the torture, then. Sorry we haven't got any red-hot saws or boiling lead," said Wally thoughtfully. "Still, we shall be able to behold you writhe all the same. Take hold of his nose, Jimmy! You've got fingers like a pair of pincers."

"What-ho!" said Jameson.

He took Tom Merry's nose between his finger and thumb.

"Squeeze!" said Wally.

Jameson squeezed.

"Grooo-ooogh!" spluttered Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha! Behold him writhe!" yelled Wally.

And the fags roared with laughter. Tom Merry roared with pain.

"Had enough?" asked Wally genially.

"Groogh! Yes! Hoogh-groogh!"

"Good! Are you going to do the decent thing? Three of us in the team?"

"No!" yelled the Shell fellow.

"Give him another nip, Jimmy!"

Jameson cheerfully gave the prisoner another nip.

"Grooogh!"

"Now, then, Tommy, are you going to give in?"

"No! Groogh! No!"

"Obstinate pig!" said Wally. "It will have to be the red-hot saw after all. We'll leave him here to think over it."

"Rescue!" bawled Tom Merry, in the faint hope that some of his chums might be near the old tower.

Wally chuckled, and jammed his handkerchief into the Shell fellow's mouth. The handkerchief had seen service, and was not in the cleanest possible state; but it was quite all right as a gag. Tom Merry's voice died away in a faint grunt.

"Now we'll leave you here for a bit," said Wally. "Nobody's likely to find you. When you want your dinner, perhaps you'll come round and see sense. If you miss afternoon lessons you may get into trouble with old Linton. It's your own look-out. Come on, you fellows."

And the fags, grinning, quitted the old tower and closed the heavy door after them, and Tom Merry was left alone.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Fatty Wynn's Find.

FIGGINS of the Fourth linked his arm in that of Fatty Wynn and grinned. Fatty Wynn, though he was one of Figgy's best chums, did not seem to appreciate that mark of affection. He wriggled.

"I say, Figgy, ain't you going down to the cricket before dinner?" he asked.

"Yes, my son—and so are you!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"I'll join you there," said Fatty Wynn.

"You'll come with me," said Figgins.

"I—I say, Figgy, I'm hungry, you know," said Fatty Wynn. "Dinner isn't for more than half an hour yet, and—Mrs. Taggles has some lovely new tarts—"

"I knew what you were after," said Figgins, dragging his



plump chum away from the tuck-shop, upon which Fatty's eyes lingered lovingly. "I've told you that you're in training. We've got to beat the School House in the House match."

"But the House match isn't till Saturday," protested the fat Fourth-Former, "and—and to-day's only Thursday—and I'm hungry—"

"Take his other arm, Kerr," grinned Figgins. "I've told you you're in training, Fatty, my fat tulip! No more gorging till after the House match. If we beat the School House, we're ahead of them for the season. You're going to stick to practice, and keep on short commons, and bowl your very best on Saturday."

"I always play better on a solid foundation, Figgy, old man."

"Rats! Come on!"

"Just a few tarts. Say a dozen—"

"This way!"

"Only six, then. Four, three, only two!" pleaded Fatty Wynn.

"This way!" said the inexorable Figgins. "You're in training. I'm going to keep an eye on you at dinner, too, and see that you don't have a second helping of pudding."

"Look here—" began Fatty Wynn wrathfully.

"We can't have our champion bowler getting crooked through overfeeding," chuckled Kerr. "You're in for it, Fatty! Come on!"

And the unhappy Falstaff of the New House was dragged down to the cricket-ground. It was very hard on Fatty Wynn. The luscious tarts in Dame Taggles's little shop seemed to dance before his eyes. He had money in his pocket, and it was burning his pocket until it was expended in tarts. Fatty Wynn's fat face was quite clouded as he went on to bowl.

But Fatty was watching his opportunity. When he handed the ball over to Redfern for a change, he strolled into the pavilion. Figgins and Kerr considered him safe there, and went on batting.

But Fatty Wynn was very deep. He dropped out of the window at the end of the pavilion, scuttled round the building, and reached the tuck-shop.

There his money was quickly exchanged for a bag of fresh and lovely jam tarts.

But the fat Fourth-Former did not dare to linger. Figgins might be on the track at any moment. He put the bag under his arm and hurried out.

He caught a glimpse of Figgins sprinting towards the school shop, and fled.

"It's rotten!" gasped Fatty Wynn, as he dodged away among the old elms. "As if a chap can't have a snack before dinner! Rot!"

He had turned his steps in the direction of the New House, but he paused. Figgins was sure to look for him there. Doubling round the gymnasium, Fatty Wynn made for the old tower. That building was distant enough to be safe for him, at least, until he had consumed the tarts.

The old oaken door was closed, and Fatty Wynn pushed it open and ran in. The interior was very dark after the brilliant sunshine of the quadrangle.

Fatty Wynn was opening his bag of tarts when he gave a sudden start. There was a low meaning sound in the dusky room.

"M-m-my hat!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn. "There's some blessed animal here."

Grunt!

Fatty Wynn looked round uneasily. He started again as he caught sight of a form seated on one of the old stone benches, motionless.

"Great Scott! Wha-a-at's that?"

Grunt!

For a moment Fatty Wynn almost fancied that the reputed ghost of the old tower had presented itself to his inspection.

But a second glance assured him that it was only a junior, smothered with flour, and tied up with great lengths of rope. "Great Scott! Tom Merry!" exclaimed the New House junior in astonishment.

"Why don't you speak, you ass?" asked Fatty Wynn.

Grunt!

"Oh, my hat!" Fatty perceived that the captain of the Shell was gagged. He took a big bite out of a tart, to go on with, and then jerked the stuffed handkerchief out of the Shell fellow's mouth.

"Ow!" gasped Tom Merry. "Thanks."

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"Who fixed you up like that?" he asked, going on with his tarts, and keeping one eye on the doorway.

"The Third Form rotters!" gasped Tom Merry. "Untie me, Fatty, there's a good chap."

"Oh! It isn't a House rag, then?" said Fatty Wynn.

"No; it's Wally. Cut me loose."

"Wait a minute. I want to eat these tarts—"

"Can't you eat them afterwards?" howled Tom Merry, exasperated.

Fatty Wynn shook his head. His jaws were too busy for the moment to allow of speech.

Tom Merry eyed him as if he would eat him.

"Will you cut me loose, you fat idiot?" he demanded sulphurously.

"Wait a tick," said Fatty Wynn, with his mouth full. "Figgy may be along here any minute. The silly ass doesn't want me to have any tarts."

"Ass! Fathead! Blow the tarts! Let me loose!"

"Sha'n't be a tick."

"You—you dummy—"

"Here he is!" roared Figgins, rushing into the tower, with Kerr at his heels. "He's been eating tarts! Collar him!"

"Only—only nine!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Look here, you leave my tarts alone! I— Oh, groogh! Yah! Yah! Grooogh!"

Figgins seized the three remaining tarts and plastered them wrathfully over Fatty Wynn's face.

"Gerroogh! Ow! You silly ass!" spluttered Fatty Wynn.

"I— Ow! Groogh! Yah! Oh!"

"Now come on!" howled Figgins. "I'll— Hallo! My hat! What's that?"

"Tom Merry!" yelled Kerr. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry glared at them.

"Let me loose, you cackling asses!" he shouted. "Can't you untie me, you dummies? Let me loose, you silly jossers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins obligingly took out his penknife and cut through Tom Merry's bonds. Then the three New House juniors quitted the old tower, Figgins and Kerr chuckling, and Fatty Wynn furiously dabbing at the jam on his face with his handkerchief.

Tom Merry dusted away the flour furiously. He did not want to appear in the quadrangle looking like a ghost. He had been in the old tower half an hour when Fatty Wynn came in, and he was cramped and in a decidedly wrathful temper by this time. He had just finished dusting himself, when there was a sound of footsteps and voices outside. He smiled grimly as he recognised Wally's tones.

"We'll see whether the silly ass has come to reason yet," Wally was saying. "If he hasn't, we'll give him the frog's-march."

"Good egg!" said Jameson.

Quick as thought, Tom Merry sat down, as the fags had left him. In the dusk they did not see for the moment that Tom Merry's bonds were gone.

"Have you made up your mind yet?" chuckled Wally.

"We're ready to— Hallo! Why, my only Aunt Jane! Ow! Yah!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Tom Merry had suddenly leaped up and rushed at the fags, hitting out right and left. His right swept Wally off his feet and laid him on the floor. His left laid Jameson across Wally. Then Curly Gibson went down, and then Frayne and the four fags rolled on the floor, roaring.

Tom Merry gave them a grim look and strode out of the old tower.

Wally sat up. He felt his nose carefully, to make sure that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't.

"Ow!" gasped Wally. "My only Aunt Jane! Ow! The beast has got loose somehow! Ow!"

"Groogh!" mumbled Jameson. "You couldn't have tied him safely. Ow! Oh, you silly ass!"

"Oh, my eye!" moaned Frayne.

"Oh, by dose!" mumbled Curly Gibson.

There was a chorus of mumbling and moaning as the helpless fags picked themselves up. They had been roughly handled, and their prisoner was gone. Wally was looking rather blue, and his faithful followers were glaring at him furiously.

"Well, we're dished this time!" growled Wally.

"You silly duffer!" roared Jameson. "Nice mess you've got us into, with your blessed schemes, haven't you? Look at my nose!"

"Look at my eye!" howled Frayne.

"Oh, bump him!" yelled Curly Gibson. "Bump the silly ass! If he can't think of any better schemes than this, bump him hard!"

The fags wanted to bump somebody, badly. Tom Merry was out of reach, so they bumped Wally. They bumped their unfortunate leader hard, and stamped away, and left him gasping.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Wally. "Oh, scissors! Oh!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

And Wally limped out of the old tower after his comrades, groaning, and feeling that life was not worth living in such an uncertain world.

CHAPTER 13.  
A Precious Pair.

WELL hit, Wally!"  
"Bravo!"

Tom Merry heard the shout, and paused on his way to the cricket-pitch. It was the day following his unpleasant adventure at the hands of the fags, and since that turning of the tables in the old tower Wally had apparently gone off the war-path. At all events, he had not given Tom Merry any further trouble. The scamp of the Third seemed to be devoting himself to cricket practice, perhaps in the hope of being picked for the House team on his form alone.

And his form was certainly good. Tom Merry stood watching him for some time. Wally was at the wicket, and Curly Gibson was bowling. Wally was batting wonderfully well for a fag of the Third form, and when he ran his pace was very good. Tom Merry looked at him with an approving eye and nodded.

"Wally is shapin' all wight, Tom Mewwy, deah boy," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice at his elbow.

"Yes, he's looking up," said Tom.  
"Quite a good ideah to put him into the House eleven, Tom Mewwy. You haven't decided on anybody instead of that wottah Levison, yet."

Tom Merry pursed his lips.  
"He's jolly good for a fag," he admitted. "But the fact is, I'm blessed if I can put him in, after his awful cheek. When a chap ties up the cricket captain and squeezes his nose to make him give way, it's time the cricket captain got his back up."

Arthur Augustus grinned. Tom Merry's experience in the old tower was the talk of the School House, and the fellows had all chuckled over it. Tom Merry did not chuckle his dignity as captain of the Shell, and great chief of the junior House team, was concerned in the matter.

"Yaas, it was awfl'y cheeky of Wally!" Arthur Augustus agreed. "All the same, it would be the pwopah capah to play

him in the House eleven. I weally do not appwove of a D'Arcy bein' left out, Tom Mewwy."

"Then I shall have to wriggle along somehow without your approval, Gussy," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "I'll try to bear it."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"  
"By Jove, that was a good hit!" said Tom Merry, as the leather flew from Wally's bat again, and the fieldsman started in pursuit. "The young beggar is hot stuff. I don't deny that. If it wasn't for his awful cheek, I might think of it."

"I twust you will put him in, deah boy. I'm afraid the young wascal has some othah plot in his bwain, and Figgins & Co. may not happen along next time to wesease you," said Arthur Augustus, with a grin.

Tom Merry's brows knitted.  
"Ass!" he said politely. "Do you think a cricket captain is going to be argued with like that? I'll jolly soon show your minor whether he can rag me into putting him into the team. He's going to stay out—that's flat."

"Bai Jove!"  
And Tom Merry walked away. Arthur Augustus looked a little dismayed. He wanted his minor in the team, if only for the honour of the name of D'Arcy, and he really considered that Wally's form entitled him to a cap for the House eleven. But it was certain that the cricket captain couldn't allow himself to be convinced by such arguments as Wally had used. A cricket captain who allowed himself to be coerced in his selection of the team was not of much use to the School House Junior C.C.

"Well, is Wally going in?" Levison's sharp, unpleasant voice broke in upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's meditations.

D'Arcy frowned at him majestically.  
"I twust so," he said. "Anyway, you're stayin' out, Levison. And I shall be obliged to you if you will wefrain ffrom addressin' me, Levison. I wegard you as a wottah."

D'Arcy walked off with his nose in the air. Levison cast a dark glance after him. He had heard the exchange of remarks between D'Arcy and Tom Merry, and he was busy thinking. He hurried after D'Arcy and rejoined him, walking by his side in spite of the evident distaste the swell of the Fourth showed for his companionship.

"You ought to keep an eye on your minor, D'Arcy," he

**£5 for 'CONFESSIONS'**

**A**

**Novel & Amusing  
New Competition**

**CHEER BOYS CHEER** contains this week full particulars of a competition that is quite unlike any that has ever been organised by this popular weekly journal before. It's really new, and is entertaining and interesting to everybody. There's *no entrance fee*, and **£5** is offered in prizes.

**CHEER BOYS CHEER**

**GOOD BOOKS  
— BUT CHEAP —  
FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

**3 NEW ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3D. COMPLETE LIBRARY.**

**Specially Published for  
the Summer Holidays.**

**No. 235. "THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS!"**  
A Splendid, Complete Tale of Gordon Gay & Co.  
By **PROSPER HOWARD.**

**No. 236. "THE FLYING ARMADA!"**  
A Magnificent Complete Story of War in the Air.  
By **JOHN TREGELLIS.**

**No. 237. "KING CRICKET!"**  
A Grand Tale of the Great Summer Game.  
By **CHARLES HAMILTON.**

**PLEASE ASK ALWAYS FOR "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3D. COMPLETE LIBRARY.**  
**On Sale Everywhere. Price 3d. Each.**

said, "I fancy he's hunting for trouble. If he should do anything to muck up the House match—"

D'Arcy started.

"Wats! Wally would not think of doin' anythin' of the sort," he exclaimed.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"You know how he mucked up the practice match. He's got a scheme in his head now—"

"I wefuse to believe it, Levison."

"Look here—"

"And I decline to listen to any more of your wotten wemarks."

D'Arcy marched off at a quicker pace, and Levison did not follow him this time. He remained by himself, scowling. He joined Mellish and Crooke a little later, and the precious trio repaired to the tuckshop. Levison, who was in funds, strode ginger-beer and dough-nuts, and over their refreshment the three cads of the School House conversed in low whispers.

If Tom Merry & Co. had observed them then, they would have guessed that mischief was brewing, but Tom Merry and his friends were on the cricket-field, thinking of anything but Levison and his wretched scheming.

The junior House match was on the morrow, and both teams were out at practice for the last time. Figgins & Co. were in great form, and Fatty Wynn's bowling had seldom been better. Fatty Wynn was the great man of the New House team and Figgins placed great reliance upon him. That was very flattering to Fatty Wynn, but the fat hero found it a little awkward, too, for his visits to the tuckshop were under a rigid censorship. Figgins almost allowed him to mouth-fuls, as Fatty Wynn complained bitterly—without getting any sympathy for his sufferings.

When the practice was over, both teams came crowding into the tuckshop for liquid refreshment, in the form of ginger-beer and lemonade.

"Hallo, slacking, as usual?" exclaimed Jack Blake, as he caught sight of Levison and Mellish and Crooke finishing their dough-nuts.

Levison did not reply; he strolled out of the shop with his friends, and the ruddy, cheerful cricketers crowded up to the counter, demanding ginger-pop.

There was a sardonic grin on Levison's face, and Crooke's expression was a reflection of it, but Mellish was looking a little uneasy.

"No need to feel funky," said Levison, with a scornful look at his companion. "It will be as safe as houses."

"The fellows will be wild if the School House loses," muttered Mellish.

"That's what we want. If they want us to wish the School House luck, they should give us a chance of playing for the House."

"Yes, rather," said Crooke viciously. "I've asked Tom Merry for a place in the team, and he's said no as plain as you please. He's put in Fourth-Formers over my head, and he's thinking of putting in a Third-Form fag—and I'm a Shell chap! I'd like to see the House licked, if only to make the fellows see that Tom Merry isn't the best possible captain they could dig up anywhere."

"And it will be put down to young D'Arcy," resumed Levison. "That's the beauty of it—we shall pay out both at once. D'Arcy minor has fairly laid himself open to it, by the way he's been playing the giddy ox lately."

"Tom Merry won't be easy to handle," said Mellish.

"Pooh—three of us!"

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, don't be a funk. You can keep out of it if you like," said Levison contemptuously. "Crooke and I could manage it by ourselves."

"Well, if you don't mind, I'd rather," said Mellish promptly. "I wish you luck, but I'd rather not rag Tom Merry, especially just before a House match."

"Keep your mouth shut, then, and leave it to us," said Crooke, with a sneer.

"I'll do that," said Mellish.

And Mellish gladly left "it"—whatever it was—to Levison and Crooke. Whatever the scheme was, it seemed to afford much satisfaction to Levison and his precious friend, and they discussed it in whispers, and chuckled over it with great glee.

That evening, as Tom Merry was doing his preparation in the study with Manners and Lowther, D'Arcy minor looked in. D'Arcy minor had a truculent expression on his face.

"Well?" said Tom Merry, looking up.

"Well?" said Wally.

"Well?"

"Oh, blow your 'wells'!" growled Wally. "You know jolly well what I've come for."

"Is it to ask more questions about them and they?" queried Monty Lowther. "If they and them will play them and they—"

"How many of the Third are playing to-morrow?" shouted Wally.

"None!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Not even me?"

"Not even you! We realise what a fearful loss we shall suffer, but we're going to bear it as well as we can. If we survive—"

"Oh, talk sense!" snapped Wally. "There will be trouble. I've a jolly good mind to raid the blessed pitch, and stop the game."

"If you did, my son, you wouldn't stop the game, but you'd get such a terrific licking you wouldn't be able to crawl home," said Manners.

Wally snorted.

"There'll be trouble!" he said.

"Thanks for the tip. I expect you'll find the trouble, if there is any. Good-evening."

"Look here—"

"Shut the door after you," said Tom Merry blandly.

"You silly lass!"

Monty Lowther picked up a cricket-stump, and rose to his feet. Wally left the study, and he closed the door behind him with a slam that could be heard at the end of the Shell passage. The Terrible Three chuckled, and returned to their preparation.

## CHAPTER 14.

### Caught Napping!

THESE was one subject, and one subject only, uppermost in the minds of the juniors of St. Jim's the following morning.

It was cricket.

The juniors often condescended to take a deep interest in the First Eleven matches. They followed the fortunes of Kildare and the School eleven with kindly interest. But for events of really first importance in cricket annals the junior House-matches loomed largest in their minds.

During the season the record of House-matches between the rival juniors had been pretty level. Whether the School House juniors would come out of the season a few points ahead of the New House, or whether the case would be the reverse, was a deep question which was not settled yet, but it was certain that it would be a close thing. Much depended upon this House-match, and both sides were determined to win it, in order to prove conclusively that they were cock-House of St. Jim's.

The School House fellows were, if possible, keener about it than Figgins & Co., for on the season's record Figgins & Co. were a little ahead in points. A win would send them far ahead, while it would give the School House only just the start of their rivals. The thought of being left behind in the race for cricket honours spurred on the School House juniors to terrific efforts.

It was unfortunate that Kangaroo and Reilly and Herries were still laid up with their colds. They were pulling round now, but they were not fit for play. Tom Merry had filled their places, with one exception.

That place would have been Levison's, if Levison had been lucky. As it was, it was not filled yet, and the whole of the Third Form, at least, thought that it ought to go to Wally. Wally himself, of course, thought so most decidedly.

Tom Merry had not claimed yet, for the simple reason that there were many claimants, all of whose claims were about as well founded as one another.

The vacant place was still unfilled on Saturday morning, and Tom Merry turned it over in his mind during morning lessons. He was not quite decided whether to let Wally have it. That was not a matter he was supposed to consider in lesson-time, and so Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, appeared to think, for he bestowed upon Tom Merry a hundred lines for his absent answers before the morning was out.

Before dinner Tom Merry left the School House and went round to feed his white rabbits as usual. The rabbits were in their cage in the shed where the juniors kept their pets, and which the St. Jim's fellows called the "menagerie."

Tom Merry was thinking of the House match, and the still vacant place, as he entered the shed, and of anything but trickery, at that moment.

The door opened outwards, and Tom Merry pulled it open and strode in.

As he did so an open sack descended over his head and shoulders, completely enveloping him, and two pairs of arms were thrown round him, and he was borne to the ground.

Tom was taken so utterly by surprise that he had no time to utter a sound or to struggle.

He fell heavily on the earth, and two forms piled on him, and his hands were dragged together, a slip-knot passed over them and drawn tight.

The sack was kept over his head, completely shutting out

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order Early.

the daylight, and the ends of it were pulled tight with a string about his waist.

The Shell fellow was dazed for a moment or two, so astounded was he by that sudden and unexpected attack. He had not caught the slightest glimpse of his assailants. They had been waiting for him inside the shed, with the sack raised ready, having doubtless watched his approach from the window, and the instant he appeared the inverted sack had swooped down on him as he passed the doorpost. The interior of the shed, too, was very dusky, compared to the brilliant sunshine without, and Tom Merry's eyes had seen nothing.

But though he had seen nothing, he thought he knew who his assailants were.

Wally again, of course.

He began to struggle in the sack, but it was useless. It choked him and confused him, and his hands were tied. He was dragged to his feet in the shed.

"Now, Wally!"

It was a muttering voice. He did not recognise the voice, but he heard the name, and he was quite certain now of his assailants.

"Wally, you young rascal," he gasped, "let me go! Take this sack off my head!"

He heard a chuckle; but received no other reply. Then he was hurried out of the shed.

He gave a shout, but the sack muffled it, and the next moment a cord was passed round the sack and tied, closing it tightly over his face, so that he could hardly breathe. It was impossible to shout now.

He was hurried along, with a grip on either arm. Blind-folded as he was, he thought he knew where he was being taken. His captors were hurrying him round to the old chapel—a spot likely to be utterly deserted at that time, when the fellows were going into their Houses to dinner.

Thence he was hurried on and pushed through a doorway, and he knew that he was in the old tower again. Tom Merry was in a state of fury by this time.

He had no doubt whatever that he was in the hands of the fags again. And he was "fed up" with Wally & Co. But he was utterly helpless. With the sack over his head, and his hands tied, he could not resist. And he was almost suffocating in the thick sack, tied closely over his face. His head was swimming with the heat of it.

He expected to stop now that he was in the tower; but he did not. He was hurried to the old spiral stairs, and up the stone steps—up and up and up. Whenever he paused, the hands that were grasping him dragged at him savagely, and once or twice he was roughly bumped. He was surprised as well as hurt. Wally was a reckless young rascal; but he was not brutal, and Tom Merry wondered.

He tried to speak through the thickness of the sack; but there was no answer. He was stopped at last, in the top-most room of the old tower, as he knew.

"What is your little game, you young villains?" he gasped. Only a chuckle responded.

Then the two rascals passed a rope round him, knotting it securely, and fastening his legs as well as his arms. He was thrown on his back on the floor, a mass of ropes and knots, the sack still over his head and face. But a penknife was drawn carefully across it to admit air through a slit for him to breathe.

Tom Merry was astounded. This looked as if he was to be left in that condition. And he could hardly believe that Wally would be guilty of such brutality. And there was the House match in the afternoon.

Tom Merry felt a chill.

Was he to be shut up there to miss the House match? Was that Wally's game? He heard receding footsteps, and he shouted desperately.

"Wally, you young idiot, let me go! Have you forgotten the House match this afternoon? Let me go at once! Do you hear?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That mocking laugh was all Tom Merry heard in response. Then the door of the room closed, and he heard iron bars being put in their places.

Tom Merry groaned.

He was a helpless prisoner now. Even if he could wriggle loose of his bonds, he could not get out of the room. It was a room that had been used as a cell for refractory monks in the old days, and the door was of thick oak, and the bars of solid iron. The window was sixty feet or more from the ground.

The House match would be starting ere long. And what then? Tom Merry could not doubt what he had been brought there for. He was to remain a prisoner in the old tower while the House match was played and lost. For the School House eleven had plenty to do to win, even with Tom Merry in the ranks. And without their captain and best bat they would be walked over by Figgins & Co. Tom Merry gritted

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

his teeth with rage as he struggled with the ropes that were knotted on his limbs.

## CHAPTER 15.

### The House Match.

"WHERE'S Tommy?"

Monty Lowther asked that question as the Shell fellows went into the dining-room. Tom Merry was not in his place at the dinner-table.

"Gone up to change before dinner, perhaps," said Manners, who was already in his flannels.

"He had changed," said Lowther.

Mr. Linton glanced along the table.

"Is not Merry here?" he asked.

"No, sir. He's gone to feed his rabbits," said Vavasour, who had happened to know of Tom Merry's intention.

"Indeed! He should be here to his dinner."

But dinner finished without Tom Merry. Manners and Lowther were looking and feeling perplexed as they left the dining-room with the other fellows. They knew that Tom Merry had gone to feed his rabbits; but there was no reason why that should occupy him till dinner-time. What could he be doing?

They went round the School House, and looked into the shed. Tom Merry was not there. When they came back, more puzzled than ever, a good many fellows were inquiring for Tom Merry.

"Hallo, Lowther, where's Tom Merry got to?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I want to know if he has decided to put Wally into the team?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked.

"Can't find him," said Lowther.

"Bai Jove! What?"

"The silly ass seems to have gone off somewhere," said Lowther, with a worried look. "I say, I suppose your silly minor hasn't been playing any more of his tricks? Wally

Wally, who was with his major, grinned.

"No larks," he said. "I'm still hoping that Tom Merry will do the sensible thing. I'm ready to play."

"Wally has been with me evah since mornin' lessons," said D'Arcy minor. "He was bowlin' me a few before dinnah, and he went into dinnah with me. Besides, Wally would not play a twick on Tom Mewwy just before a House match."

"No fear!" said Wally. "Besides, I want to play. The last place isn't filled yet."

"Where the dickens can Tom Merry me, then?" said Lowther, convinced that Wally knew nothing of the whereabouts of the captain of the Shell. "What has he taken himself off for like this, and missed his dinner?"

"Look for him?" Digby suggested.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors looked for Tom Merry, and, in fact, hunted high and low for him. Two or three of them even looked into the old tower, perhaps doubting Wally's assertion that he had not played any tricks on the junior captain. But the old tower was empty, and no one thought of mounting to the top of the long spiral stair. They might suspect Wally of a reckless "lark," but not of a deliberate attempt to keep the House captain from the match. It was close upon time for play when the dismayed and astonished juniors gathered again on the cricket ground, without Tom Merry.

"What's the matter with you chaps?" asked Figgins of the New House, who was already on the ground with his fellows.

"Tom Merry's missing," said Lowther shortly.

Figgins stared.

"Missing! My hat! What's he missing for?"

"Blessed if I know! He went to feed his rabbits and disappeared. He didn't come in to dinner. He's missed that."

"Must be ill," said Fatty Wynn seriously. "A chap wouldn't miss his dinner if he could possible help it. He's had an accident."

"He must have gone out," said Blake. "We've looked for him everywhere. Can't understand it. We can't find that he's had a telegram or anything. And we know he intended to play, because he changed into his flannels."

"It's weally vewy remarkable," said D'Arcy. "I'm afraid I must give it up. I wogard it as a widdle."

"Wally again?" asked Kerr suspiciously. "You know his lark the other day, when we found Tom Merry tied up like a turkey for Christmas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wally has been with me evah since mornin' lessons," declared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "As a mattah of fact, deah boys, I was thinkin' that the young ass might play the giddy ox in some mannah, and I have been stickin' to him and keepin' an eye on him."

"Good luck for Wally!" growled Lowther. "If I thought he'd had a hand in this, I'd—I'd—"

"Oh, never mind that!" said Wally cheerfully. "The question is, what's going to be done? If Tom Merry doesn't turn up, you're not going to cut the match?"

"No fear!"

"We'll wait a bit, if you like," said Figgins. "It won't do to wait too long though. We shall both be doing a lot of batting, and we shall want time to play in. Suppose we give Tom Merry an extra quarter of an hour?"

"Good egg! That's agreed!"

The juniors waited.

But Tom Merry did not return. What could have induced the junior House captain to absent himself at that moment was a mystery. He might have had a telegram from home with bad news, and rushed off to catch a train. But surely he would have spoken a word to someone first? That he could have had an accident within the school walls was impossible. He would have been found by the search.

It was a puzzle; but the juniors could only conclude that he had been called away in some mysterious manner. They could not suppose that he was leaving the team in the lurch in this way on purpose. As for his having been seized and shut up to keep him away from the match, they did not suspect that. The idea was not likely to come into their heads—especially after Wally had been proved to have been under his major's observation all the time—a very fortunate circumstance for Wally.

The quarter of an hour passed slowly. Still no sign of Tom Merry.

Some of the juniors were growing exasperated, and some were puzzled and perplexed, and even a little alarmed.

But most of the New House junior team hinted pretty plainly that it was time for play, and that if the School House skipper didn't choose to turn up, it was no good wasting the afternoon waiting for him.

Kangaroo was vice-captain of the School House junior eleven; but he was in sanatorium now, and not in the team for the House match. In the absence of both captain and vice captain, Jack Blake of the Fourth took the lead. Blake had a little puzzle to solve before the match. There was a vacant place to fill, and Tom Merry's absence left another vacant place. Blake thought it over, and signed to Wally.

The scamp of the Third came up eagerly.

"You're in your flannels, I see," Blake remarked, with a grin.

"Yes, rather! Do you want me?"

"You'd better get in. We shall want another man, too."

"Make it Curly," suggested Wally.

Blake shook his head.

"One of the Third is enough. Curly's not up to this match. Gore—where's Gore?"

"Here I am!" sang out Gore of the Shell.

"If Tom Merry doesn't turn up in time to bat, you can take his place," said Blake. "Of course, if Tommy comes in time, he will play."

"Good enough!" said Gore cheerily.

Blake tossed with Figgins for choice of innings. He won the toss, and decided to send in the New House to bat. That would give Tom Merry more time to return, if he meant to return. It would be two hours at the very least before the School House batsmen were wanted. And if Tom Merry was coming back, he would surely be back by then.

"I suppose you'll let us play a substitute to fill, Figgy?" said Blake. "If Tom Merry doesn't come back, we shall keep the same man on to bat."

"Of course," said Figgins.

"You'll be wanted to field, Gore."

"Right-ho!" said Gore.

Blake led his merry men out to field. There was still no sign of Tom Merry, and the cricketers had no more time to think of him now. All their attention had to be given to the game.

Figgins and Kerr opened the innings for the New House. Round the field quite a crowd had gathered, even some of the seniors condescending to come. Some of the boys' relations had come to see the match. Glyn's father and sister could be seen seated outside the pavilion, and D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel was expected later in the afternoon, as well as the sisters and cousins and aunts of other fellows.

"Your uncle isn't here, Levison? Mellish grinned, as he stood with his idle hands in his pockets, leaning against a tree near the ground.

Levison snapped his teeth. Levison's eyes were rimmed with deepest blue-black now, and looked even more disfigured than when they were quite black. It was likely to be some time yet before he was quite recovered from his encounter with D'Arcy minor of the Third.

"No," said Levison, "he's not coming. And Tom Merry's not coming, either."

Mellish grinned a little uneasily.

"So that worked?" he muttered.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Crooke of the Shell.

"But you weren't spotted?"

"No fear! Wally will get the benefit of it!" chuckled Levison.

"Not Wally," said Mellish, with a shake of the head. "He's got a giddy alibi. Didn't you hear what the great and only Gussy was saying?"

"No, I didn't," growled Levison.

"He's been keeping Wally under his eye ever since morning lessons," said Mellish, with some enjoyment of the growing uneasiness of his companions. That was Percy Mellish's amiable nature. "He was afraid Wally might play the giddy goat, and he's been keeping him under his eye. He hasn't lost sight of Wally all the time. It's a clear alibi for D'Arcy minor."

Levison grunted angrily.

"That fool D'Arcy is always putting his silly foot in it!" he muttered. Still, it doesn't make any difference to us. They couldn't prove anything."

"I hope not, for your sake!" said Mellish agreeably. "I shouldn't care to be in your shoes if Tom Merry bowled you out."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Levison.

There was a shout from the crowd now, interrupting the talk of the precious trio. A ripple of hand-clapping floated round the field.

"Bravo, Figgy!"

"Well hit!"

The batsmen were not running. It was a boundary. Figgins and Kerr were going strong at the wickets.

The New House score was piling up handsomely. It was at thirty when Figgins was caught out at last. Fatty Wynn joined Kerr at the wickets. Fatty Wynn was a great bowler, but he was a respectable bat, too, and he added ten to the score before Jack Blake bowled him. Then Redfern went in. Kerr's wicket went down, and Lawrence joined Redfern.

Redfern and Lawrence between them made the fur fly, as the delighted Figgins expressed it. Runs piled up. The score had topped eighty when Redfern was caught out at last. Owen came in to join Lawrence, and brought it up to ninety-six with his aid.

The New House fellows were feeling highly satisfied. It was a single-innings match, and all depended on the score of that innings. Even the "tail" of the innings proved dangerous. Pratt knocked up ten, and Thompson of the Shell eight, and then Jameson of the Third came in.

Wally, who was in the long field, greeted his friendly enemy with a yell.

"Go it, Jimmy!"

And Jameson grinned at the fieldsmen as he took his place at the wickets. Figgins was perhaps a little doubtful about his Third-Form man, but Jameson made quite a decent figure at the wickets. He knocked up seven runs for his side, and would have knocked up more, but a nimble figure leaped up at the ball as he drove it, and there was a click of leather on palm, and Wally chuckled.

"How's that?"

Wally tossed the ball into the air and caught it again as it came down straight as a die. And there was a yell for the hero of the Third.

"Well caught, D'Arcy minor!"

"Bravo, Wally!" yelled Curly Gibson and Frayne and the Third generally.

"Yaas, watah! Bwavo, Wally!" shouted Arthur Augustus from cover-point. "Vewy well caught, deah boy!"

"Sorry, Jimmy," yelled Wally. "All in the day's work, you know."

Jameson grinned.

"That's all right," he said. "I'll catch you out, you boulder."

Figgins clapped Jameson on the shoulder as he came off.

"Very well done, kid!" he said. And Jameson was happy.

The New House innings was "petering" out now. The announcement of all down for a hundred and thirty-five was greeted with cheers from the New House. Figgins & Co's innings was over, and there was a pause.

Then the School House fellows remembered Tom Merry. The captain of the Shell had not put in an appearance. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy found his cousin Ethel outside the pavilion with Glyn's sister Edith as he came off from fielding. Cousin Ethel had already heard of Tom Merry's extraordinary absence, and she was as puzzled as the juniors.

"It's extwaordinawy, deah gal," said Arthur Augustus. "The boundah is cuttin' the House match, you know. We're goin' to play Goah instead, and it may mean losin' the match. Of course, I shall buck up like anythin' and take a lot of wuns."

"To say nothing of the ducks' eggs!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

When the time came for the School House to bat there was still no sign of Tom Merry. Gore of the Shell gave Blake an inquiring look.

"I'm afraid we shall want you, Gore," Blake remarked. "Last man in, if Tom Merry doesn't turn up."

And Gore nodded assent.

Blake opened the innings with Lowther. Figgins & Co. went out to field, and Figgins grinned as he tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn. Fatty Wynn grinned, too, as he received it. "Go and put 'em out of their misery, Fatty!" said Figgins. "What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn.

Jack Blake, however, was not so easily put out of his misery. He stood up to the New House bowling well, and scored runs. Lowther had bad luck—Fatty Wynn taking his wicket for a duck's egg, after a three for Blake. And there was a yell from the New House crowd.

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

"Give us tht hat trick, old man!"

And a little later Fatty Wynn gave it them. Arthur Augustus came when Fatty was bowling his fifth over, Redfern having taken Manners's wicket in the last. Arthur Augustus gave Cousin Ethel a reassuring nod, as though to impress upon her that she was going to see the innings saved. Unfortunately, it did not work out quite like that. Fatty Wynn was in his best form, and Arthur Augustus's wicket went down at the first ball. The swell of St. Jim's gazed down at his wrecked wicket in surprise.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "What an extwaordinaw fluke!"

And he walked off. Digby came in, and there was another "fluke," Dig being dismissed for a duck's egg. Then came Vavasour, and Vavasour was caught out by Figgins from the next ball. Then the New House roared.

"The hat trick! Hurray!"

Jack Blake was looking a little blue. The wickets were going down fast, and the runs were going up slowly—very slowly. Kerruish came in, and the Manx junior knocked up ten runs before he was caught out by Redfern.

But the innings was going very badly. The School House juniors were seven down for forty runs when Blake's wicket fell. Blake went off with a grim expression on his face. Three more wickets to fall, and ninety-five runs wanted. And the grins on the faces of the New House fellows showed only too plainly that they considered it all over bar shouting—and Blake was inclined to agree with them.

## CHAPTER 16.

### Well Won!

AND Tom Merry!

In the little room at the top of the old tower, the captain of the School House junior eleven was still writhing in his bonds.

He had been there for hours, and it seemed centuries to him.

Faintly, from afar, he had heard the shouts from the cricket field, the volume of sound reaching even to that distance.

The Shell fellow had not been idle. He had not rested a moment, and his efforts had told at last. Inch by inch he had struggled out of the ropes that bound him—they were certain to yield in the long run—and he had not ceased to struggle. His hands were free at last—but hours had passed.

But when his hands were free the rest was simple. He dragged asunder the cords that bound his lower limbs; he jerked off the suffocating sack, and stood up, free at last, panting, perspiring, and furious.

He rested a few moments to recover his breath after that long and painful struggle. He was free, personally, now; but he was still a prisoner in the topmost room of the ruined tower.

When he tried the door he found it, as he expected, fast. The iron bars were in their places outside, and the door, which opened outwards, could not be moved. After a few minutes Tom Merry gave up the attempt; it was useless.

He crossed to the window, and caught the bars in his hands and drew himself up and looked out.

In the distance he could catch a glimpse of the cricket ground.

He saw the School House batsmen running, and he knew, from that circumstance, that the New House must have batted first. For the afternoon was late now—the sun was sloping down in the West. What was the New House score? How were the School House doing? If he could get out before the last wicket went down there was still time to bat for his side.

The old bars in the window had been strong in their day.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

but they offered little resistance to Tom Merry now. In ten minutes he had hacked one of them from the crumbling mortar that held it, and was able to squeeze head and shoulders through the opening.

But as he looked down, even the brave-hearted junior hesitated.

Below him was a sheer descent of sixty feet or more, and there was nothing but the clinging ivy to offer him hold.

He had determined to climb down—but—

A fall was death!

Far below was the hard earth, and only the frail support of the ivy would be between him and a fall that was certain to be fatal.

He looked towards the cricket-field again. If he shouted he would not be heard. The combined voices of a hundred fellows cheering barely reached him where he was.

And there was no chance of anyone coming near his place of imprisonment. All were on the cricket-ground, and all eyes were on the cricket.

But it was only for a few moments that Tom Merry paused.

He would not stand there idly watching his side defeated—and he knew that it would be that. The School House could not spare a man in that closely-contested match. Even as he looked, he saw Blake's wicket fall, and heard the roar of the New House triumph.

It had to be done.

Tom Merry set his teeth, and squeezed himself through the narrow opening. Clinging to the remaining bars, he swung from the window, and felt for a hold below on the ivy.

The ivy, ancient and thick and heavy, was very strong. It held his weight, and he swung clear, his hands grasping the stout tendrils.

He dared not look down.

Foot by foot he worked his way downwards, feeling and looking about him for a safe hold, but keeping his eyes from wandering earthwards. He knew that the dizziness of the height would have made his head swim.

Slowly, slowly, slowly!

It seemed an age to Tom Merry. A century—long centuries—as he worked downward, ever downward, with aching arms and dizzy head.

But he was down at last.

At last!

As he felt the firm earth under his feet, the junior reeled and fell, and remained for five full minutes, exhausted, breathing hard and deep.

Then he rose, and started for the cricket-field.

Well for Tom Merry was it then that he was accustomed to keeping himself fit and hard. That brief rest had restored his strength, and he broke into a quick run. All eyes were on the pitch, and he was not seen till he dashed up to the pavilion.

Then there was a shout.

"Tom Merry!"

"Here he is!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally. "Where have you been?"

"Yaas, wathah! Where have you been, deah boy?"

Tom Merry's eyes blazed.

"I've been tied up hand and foot—shut up the top of the tower!" he almost shouted. "And you know it, you young villain!"

Wally jumped.

"I? I don't know anything about it."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Blake. "How did you get out, then?"

"I climbed down the ivy."

"Great Scott!"

There was a hush of awe. The juniors realised only too clearly the terrible peril their leader had run.

"Bai Jove! That was fwithgully wisky, deah boy."

"There was no other way. I was shut up there to keep me away from the House-match. And it was Wally—"

"It wasn't!" howled Wally.

"Steady on!" said Blake, catching Tom Merry's arm as he made a movement towards D'Arcy minor. "It wasn't Wally. He's been with Gussy ever since morning lessons. It's a clear alibi. We thought of that."

"One of the rotters who collared me spoke to another as 'Wally,'" he said.

"It was a wotten twick, to make you think it was Wally," exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "If I hadn't been keepin' an eye on Wally, you would believe that he had done it. I'll wagah it's that cad Levison again."

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"I shouldn't wonder. If you're sure you haven't lost sight of Wally—"

"Quite suah, deah boy."

"Do you think I'd do such a thing?" howled Wally. "Why, I—I—I—"

"All right," said Tom Merry. "I'm sorry. I'll find out afterwards who it was. How is the match going?"

Blake's face was long.

"Hundred and thirty-five for the New House," he said. "We're seven down for forty-three now. Wally hasn't batted yet—I put him in—and I was going to play Gore if you hadn't come back, but now—"

"Sorry, Gore," said Tom Merry, with a smile.

"Oh, all serene," said Gore heroically. "I want the House to win. You may just pull it out of the fire—who knows?"

"I'll fry," said Tom Merry.

There was a shout.

"Well caught, Reddy!"

"Man in!" said Blake.

And Tom Merry took his bat and went in. The New House fieldsmen greeted him with a cheer. They were glad to see the School House junior captain back among his team. And Fatty Wynn went on to bowl, to greet Tom Merry with his most dangerous "twisters."

Eight down for forty-three—that was the score. If Tom Merry was to pull the match out of the fire, he had plenty to do!

But it was in such moments that Tom Merry of St. Jim's was at his very best.

He soon showed that his experience in the old tower had not impaired his form. The first ball from Fatty Wynn was knocked away for two, and the second for four, and the third was a boundary. Then the School House yelled, and Cousin Ethel clapped her hands in delight. There was a chance yet!

Tom Merry had added twenty to the score when his companion at the wickets was bowled by Fatty Wynn. Nine down for sixty-three. Blake looked at Wally.

"Last man in!" he said grimly.

"Play up for the Third, Wally, old man!" said Curly.

"What-ho!" said Wally.

With perfect coolness the scamp of the Third made his way to the wicket. He gave Tom Merry a cheeky grin as he passed him.

"Depends on you and me now, Tommy!" he said.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Play up, Wally, and don't take risks," he said.

"Right-ho! Rely on me."

And Wally played the game of his life. It was in vain that the bowlers tempted him to hit out and take risks. He declined. He knew what was wanted—to keep the innings open for Tom Merry to score. And he did it. Fellows who had uneasily expected that the Third-Former would try to "show off" his own powers, and be clean bowled in the first over, were soon relieved of their fears. Wally's head was extremely level. He wanted to prove that it was worth while to play him, and he proved it up to the hilt. His caution was astonishing. Only now and then he stole a single run, in order to give the bowling to his captain. At other times he blocked the balls with a patience that made the School House fellows howl with delight.

And Tom Merry was in great form. Never had he seemed such a mighty hitter. The way the score jumped made the New House fellows rub their eyes.

Eighty, ninety, hundred, hundred and ten—twenty! Figgins was looking serious now. Fatty Wynn was doing his

best. But still Wally stopped the best that Fatty Wynn or Redfern could send him, and still Tom Merry knocked the bowling far and wide. And the batsmen ran and ran, and though Wally was panting, he ran well—almost as well as his captain.

Hundred and thirty—thirty-three! Hundred and thirty-four! One wanted to tie, two wanted to win, and the School House crowd were almost in hysterics now.

"Play up!"

"Hurrah!"

"Play up! Play up!"

Fatty Wynn was bowling again, to Tom Merry. The great bowler of the New House sent down a ball that would have puzzled many a county bat. But Tom Merry was in the flood tide of success just then. Clack! went the willow on the leather and the round, red ball sailed away, and away, and away! Redfern made a desperate leap at it, and for a moment the School House hearts stood still, but he did not reach it, and the batsmen were running across and across—and then there was a roar!

"School House wins! Hurrah!"

School House had won!

Tom Merry had saved the match, and the delight of the School House was unbounded. And Wally had saved the match, too, and the Third Form simply rose to the occasion. Wally was shouldered round the field by the exuberant Third, and the Fourth and the Shell were almost surprised to hear themselves roaring out cheers for Wally.

It had been a close thing and Figgins & Co. took it cheerfully. There was a great celebration after that famous match. In the general glee, little thought was given to the trick that had been played on Tom Merry; Tom himself had almost forgotten it by that time. The real culprits were not discovered, though the Co. had a shrewd suspicion whom they were. Levison was safe, but he had not succeeded in doing the harm he intended, and his disappointment was his punishment. Nobody thought or cared for Levison now, in the general satisfaction.

In Tom Merry's study, Cousin Ethel and Edith Glyn and Figgins & Co. and the chums of Study No. 6 joined the Terrible Three at a very crowded but very happy celebration, and Kangaroo and Herries and Reilly, fresh from school hospital, joined the merry feast. It was a great occasion; but it was perhaps outdone by the celebration that was going on at the same time in the Third Form room.

There Wally was the hero of the hour, and the Third could not make enough of Wally. He had won—he had played in the House team; he had won the match—at least, the Third considered that he had—and as nothing succeeds like success, Wally was a great man. The scamp of the Third enjoyed his triumph to the full, and certainly it was a very happy ending to the exploits of Wally on the Warpath.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of the Chums of St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY," by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of "THE GEM" Library in Advance. Price One Penny.)

# 45 SHILLINGS FOR PRIZE MONEY

## EVERY FRIDAY IN

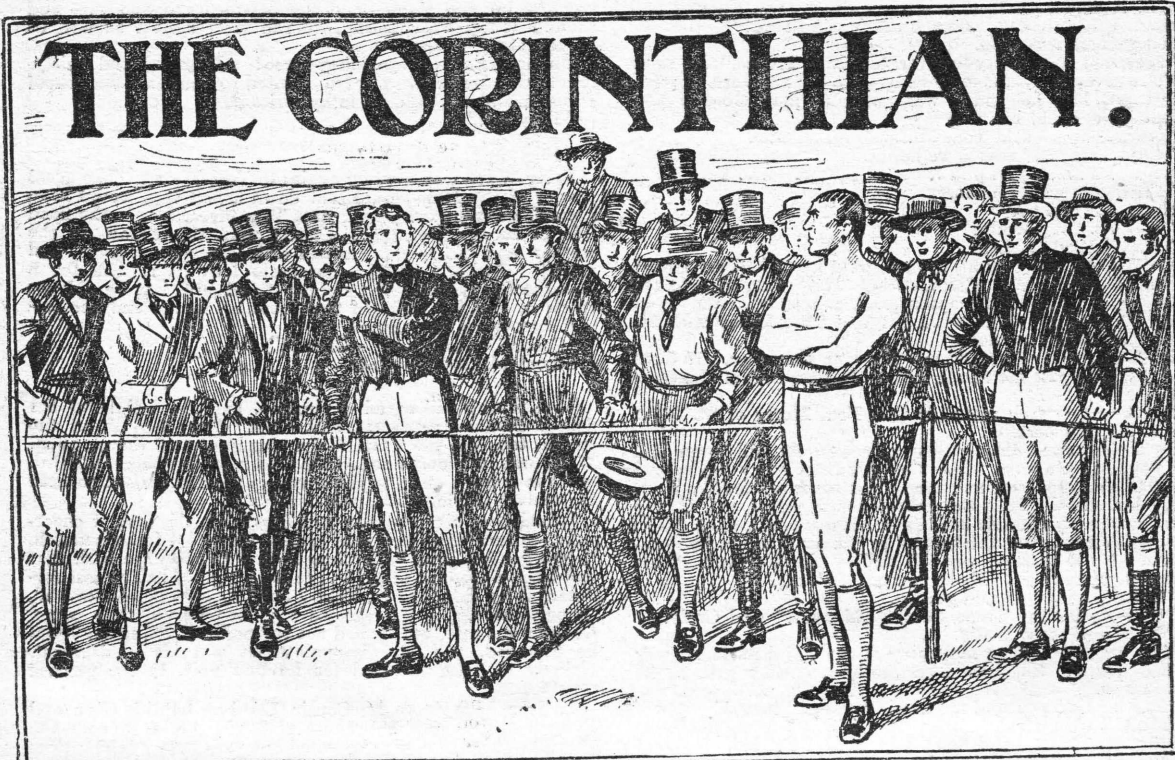
# THE PENNY POPULAR

Get a copy to-day, and try your hand at "POPLETS."

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD. Order Early.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY! START TO-DAY.



**A Magnificent New Story of the Old-Time Prize-Ring.  
By BRIAN KINGSTON.**

**READ THIS FIRST.**

Hilary Bevan, a sturdy young Britisher of gentle birth, who has been living in the country, sets out to walk to London

**TO SEE HIS FATHER,**

Sir Patrick Bevan, whom he has not met for three years. Arriving at his father's house, Hil learns that the latter has been absent for three days at the house of Sir Vincent Brookes, one of the leading bucks of the time. He also learns that Sir Patrick has earned the nickname of

**"PLUNGER" BEVAN,**

and is heavily in debt, having dissipated his fortune.

Bending his steps to Sir Vincent Brooke's house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary finds two sheriff's men waiting outside to arrest his father when he should come out. The lad enters the house, and

**FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES,**

where he has been, without intermission, for three days and nights. Among the circle of faces round the tables, Hil recognises a friend in Squire Oliver, a big landowner from his neighbourhood.

Sir Patrick rises from the table an utterly ruined man. Hilary, his heart full of grief, slips out of the house, and, engaging the two waiting sheriff's men in a fight, puts both of them to flight, thus saving his father from immediate danger of arrest. The sum for which a warrant is out against Sir Patrick is only twenty guineas; and in order to raise this amount, Hilary's next act is to accept a challenge offered in the prize-ring at Moulsey Hurst. His opponent is a Jew pugilist, Barney Isaacs by name, while Tom Owen, a well-known ringside character, seconds Hil. Fighting under the name of Farley, Hil gains a decisive victory, and awakens the interest of a young Corinthian named Darcy Vavasour, who offers to back him "against any second-class fighter in England." Hil refuses that offer, but accepts a seat in the buck's carriage back to London.

(Now go on with the story.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,  
Every Monday.

**Our Companion Papers.**

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"  
Every Friday.

**Face to Face with a Villain!**

It would have been churlish to refuse the Corinthian's offer, and Hil was a gentleman. Besides, several hours would be saved.

It was a curious drive, and not unattended with danger, for Darcy Vavasour was a gentleman who prided himself on fast travelling, and there were occasions when his companion fully expected to be taking part in an accident that would have meant the complete destruction of horses, vehicle, and passengers. Never had Hil taken part in such a drive, but his companion's face never altered in expression or colour, even when a smash appeared a certainty. Scant opportunity was there for conversation, but now and again Hil caught the driver's eyes momentarily diverted from the horse to himself, and in them was a puzzled, questioning expression.

At the entrance to Hyde Park, Hil, with many expressions of gratitude, asked to be set down. Vavasour nodded to him carelessly as he turned in the direction of Grosvenor Street.

"Vastly puzzling," observed Mr. Vavasour to himself as he took his horses at a gentle pace towards Piccadilly, his house being in St. James's Street. "Unless my instincts deceive me, Edward Farley is acquainted with another name, and that, I dare swear, one not altogether unknown. You and I must see each other again. There's something decidedly familiar in the shape of that nose. The whole face, too—well, well, it is not only time that plays queer tricks!"

Five minutes' brisk walking brought Hil to the house of the man he was so anxious to see, and, Sir Vincent being in, his name brought him ready admittance.

It was in a small room lined with bookcases that Hil, for the second time, saw the man to whom, as he was not yet aware but was soon to learn, his father owed to no slight extent the ruin that had befallen him. Rising from a table littered with bills, I O U's, and slips of paper covered with calculations, Sir Vincent smilingly welcomed Hil, offering his hand. But Hil affected not to see the hand. It was



impossible to suggest friendship with a man who had been guilty of an action so despicable as to have placed outside his own house minions of the law to arrest a guest whom he was entertaining within. An ugly light leaped into Brookes' eyes as he noted the affront.

"To what do I owe this pleasure?" he asked, smiling evilly.

"That the payment of the twenty guineas for which my father is indebted to you may be discharged," Hil replied promptly.

Sir Vincent affected not to understand.

"But I fear—" he began.

Hilary cut him short.

"Do not lie!" he said contemptuously. "You had men waiting to arrest my father last night upon this debt. Well, it exists no longer. Here is the money," and he flung the coins on the table.

"And if I will not take them?" asked Brookes slowly.

"But you will." For an instant the two looked each other steadily in the face, then Sir Vincent's restless eyes turned away. "And you will give me a receipt and full quittance," Hil added.

"Gentlemen do not give receipts," cried Brookes, with an ugly snarl.

"That is precisely the reason why you will," retorted Hil.

The blood leaped into Brookes' narrow face, and his eyes rolled viciously. Half a pace he came forward, his hands clenched tightly. And Hil smiled at him—a cold, contemptuous smile—but with something in his face behind the smile that the other saw. He stopped abruptly, mastering himself by a violent effort.

"You shall have the receipt," he said, and sat down to write. "Here is what you ask for; but if you think this paltry sum has spared your father from ruin and beggary you are deceived. He is ruined utterly—poorer than the beggar in the streets. Go to the home which is no longer your home and see for yourself. Into the pit of destitution he shall go, and you along with him. The society of gentlemen shall be closed to you. As for you—"

But Hilary, the receipt in his hand, was leaving the room. Such a scoundrel was not worth a reply.

### Sold Up!

The inherited passion for gambling, restricted by the want of means while he had been in the Army, had been afforded the amplest opportunity for indulgence when Sir Patrick Bevan, shortly after his retirement, had succeeded to a large fortune. It was the one blemish upon an otherwise fine character, and the temptation had proved too strong to be resisted.

Conscious of his weakness, but unable to conquer it, Sir Patrick had sent his son into the country to live, that he might not become acquainted with his father's fatal weakness.

It was a gambling age, and Sir Patrick had found no difficulty in obtaining assistance towards the squandering of his wealth. The most ready to help him had been Sir Vincent Brookes, his friend for more than twenty years. A high player himself, Sir Vincent had encouraged him, and the former's house had been the scene of even higher and more extravagant play than took place at such a notorious club as White's.

That Sir Vincent had a hidden motive in this Bevan was quite ignorant. He believed the former his sincere friend, and had no knowledge of the secret hatred the other had cherished since Sir Patrick's marriage.

Sir Vincent had loved the woman who became Bevan's wife, and from this sprang the hatred that was to be gratified only by Bevan's complete ruin.

Unsuspecting of the truth, Sir Patrick had been equally unaware that his supposed friend, eager to accomplish his ends, had not scrupled to assist ill luck. Among those who had gathered about the card-table was a Captain Cokeley, and a more skilful sharper than this person never handled a card. Whenever the captain played against him, Bevan was a more than usually heavy loser.

Unconscious of the presence in the room of the son whom he had not seen for three years, Sir Patrick Bevan had seen his last guinea swept away. The staking of the five thousand pounds upon the turn of a single card had been the last throw of a wholly desperate man. If he won, he might retrieve himself. If he lost—well, the end had come!

The end did come. Sir Vincent Brookes had not been above taking a lesson or so in card-cutting from his rascally accomplice.

Leaving the house, ignorant of the service that his son's skill in fisticuffs had done him, Sir Patrick walked direct to his house. The faithful Foster was waiting him, and answered his master's inquiry by saying that all the servants had gone to bed.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

Next Wednesday: "THE MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD, Order Early.

"Then wake them up again—all of them—and tell them to come into the large room!" ordered Sir Patrick. "I have something to tell them, and the sooner the better!"

Inside ten minutes a dozen hurriedly-clothed men and women were gathered in the large room, wondering what whim possessed their master. He quickly informed them.

"I have called you here," he said, without any preamble, "to let you know that you are all discharged! To-morrow morning you may go to find a new employer; I no longer have need of your services!"

One by one the astounded servants received what was due to them and retired, convinced their master was mad. Foster alone remained, and to him was given the reason for the strange proceeding.

"Foster," said the baronet, "this house no longer belongs to me. To-morrow everything in it will be removed and sold. The horses and carriages in St. James's Mews will be disposed of also. You have been with me a long time, and I can trust you. I want you to stay here, and see that the removal is properly carried out. An excellent firm will undertake the business, but it is well I should be represented."

Foster drew himself up, and saluted as though it were a military command he had received.

"Yes, sir." And then, quite as an afterthought: "What about me, sir?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Orders, sir, for me when the house is empty."

"Why, you need stay no longer!"

"And—begging your pardon, sir, asking questions—where do I go?"

"Where do you go?" Sir Patrick stared at him. "Why, where you like, man! I have no further orders for you. Your wages are paid. You are your own master. You are doing me a favour by staying to-morrow."

"Begging pardon—no, sir!" the soldier-valet said obstinately. "Still under orders, sir. Under your orders, sir; eleven years on Service, four years civil—under orders still, sir!"

"But my good fellow," cried the baronet impatiently, "don't you understand? I am your master no longer, nor the master of anybody or anything! The enemy has been too strong for me. I have surrendered unconditionally. In plain English, my good man, I am ruined! I own nothing!"

"Not even my own self-respect!" he muttered to himself turning away.

For he was thinking of his son.

Foster, his face stolid, his body stiff as a ramrod, followed his master with his eyes. He needed no telling of the truth; it was already well enough known to him. The frequent calls at the house of duns and creditors had been sufficient. But he failed to see that the ruin of his master meant the termination of his own service. He was still in the same position when Sir Patrick turned to go out of the room.

"You're still here!"

"Yes, sir. Until I'm told what is my crime, sir, that I'm to be drummed out of your honour's service like this, sir!" replied Foster. "If I may say so, sir, even General Wellington punished only the guilty!"

"But, man, I am more poor than the servants I have dismissed!" Sir Patrick cried, in amazement. "I cannot keep you with me if I would. You are a good fellow, Foster; but to remain with a beggar—it is absurd!"

"Then you order me to leave you, sir?"

"I advise you to do what common-sense tells you."

"Yes, sir."

And Foster saluted again. He went out of the room, humming an old soldiers' song when out of earshot. He was to do as he liked, and what he like and meant to do was to remain with his old colonel whatever happened. So happy was he for the permission given that he clean forgot to inform Sir Patrick that his son had come to the house that afternoon. Nor did he remember it until long after his master had left the house next morning, and then only because Hil himself arrived on the scene.

This was early in the evening, following the interview with Sir Vincent Brookes.

The baronet's threat was true enough; Hil's home was no longer a home. Outside the house in St. James's Square were drawn up a number of vans, and passing between these and the house in a continual stream were a dozen or more men, each with his burden of a packing-case or some article of furniture to be stowed away in one of the vans.

The whole of his father's belongings were being carried away to be sold towards the payment of his debts.

Foster was standing in a small room off the hall, literally keeping an eye upon the removers, and reprimanding with barrack-room vigour any that showed clumsiness in dealing with the articles they handled. Two or three clerks and a representative of the firm to which the disposal of the goods had been given, who were superintending the work, had

told the old soldier more than once that his presence was not required; but to all Foster had given the same answer:

"Orders received. I stay here until the house is empty."

Ultimately, they left him alone; and if there were any remarks at his expense indulged in, the makers took care they were made out of his hearing. The chastisement that befell one brawny fellow who made some saucy remark to Foster's face impressed them. The words were scarcely out of the man's mouth when he found himself gripped by the throat, and jammed against the wall, through which the fierce old soldier threatened to ram his head if there were a repetition of his impudence.

At the sight of Hilary, Foster was powerfully affected. Where had his young master spent the previous night? What had happened to him? For a slight swelling under Hil's ear—mark of the one serious blow that Barney Isaacs had got home—did not escape his alert eyes.

"I am all right," Hil replied impatiently. "Do you know where my father is, John?"

"No, sir."

"Have you not seen him? Has he not been?"—"home," Hil was about to say, but substituted—"here?"

"Sir Patrick arrived here last night, sir—I should say, early this morning," Foster said precisely.

"Yes?"

"He called all the servants, sir, paid them their wages, and dismissed them. He told me to stay here until the house is empty."

"Did he sleep here?" demanded Hil, impatient of the other's habit of answering the question, and no more.

He was anxious about his father.

"Yes, sir. He left the house this morning."

"To go where?"

"He did not tell me, sir."

"And you did not think to ask?"

"No, sir. Don't ask questions in the Army of a superior officer."

One more question Hil tried. Had Foster told Sir Patrick of his—Hil's—coming?

"No, sir. I should have reported that, but I did not. I ask pardon, sir. But it was all so unexpected, sir, and—like this—"

Foster looked helplessly about him, and broke down.

And Hil had not the heart to be angry.

Despairingly he stared out of the window at the line of vans. More than ever did he now long to be with his father, and Fate, it seemed, intended continuing the separation his father had commenced. His father was gone—where, he had no means of knowing. It was possible that he might have gone to Coldharbour; but no one at Coldharbour was aware that Hil was in London. He had left the tiny village without acquainting anyone with his intention.

Everything had gone wrong. Everything was muddled. And all at once Hil was conscious of being very tired. Mentally and physically the lad had been through much during the past forty-eight hours; now the reaction had set in. Wearied of mind and body, he dropped upon a seat beneath the window, and fell asleep.

About this same time Sir Vincent Brookes was interrupted by the entry of his man into the room where Hil had left him, with the information that a gentleman desired urgently to see him.

"Well, and who is he? Didn't he give you a name, numskull?" snapped Brookes.

The interview with Hilary Bevan had left his temper very much on edge, and he was in a confoundedly bad humour. The knowledge that Sir Patrick Bevan had escaped the trap set for him was galling. He had counted on seeing the work of the previous night completed by his enemy's conveyance to the debtors' prison.

To have been forced to receive the money wiping out the trivial obligation on which so much depended made him furious. And, worst of all, he had been compelled to swallow the biting insults of his enemy's son. Hilary Bevan should pay bitterly for his insolence, but this thought was but little consoling at the moment.

"The gentleman gave his name, sir, as Captain Cokeley," the servant explained.

"Then tell him to come in at once."

(There will be another long instalment of this grand prize-winning story in next Wednesday's issue of "The Gem" Library. Please order your copy early.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 289.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

## A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl; English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

W. Turner, 41, Nen Boyd Road, Neutral Bay, Sydney, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living U.S.A., age 12-13.

E. Midlane, Fraser Avenue P.O., Vancouver, British Columbia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 20.

G. H. Shepherd, Parilla, Vremorne Street, Unley, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the United Kingdom, age 16.

W. L. Phillips, care of George Bros., P.O. Box 81, Germiston, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl readers in England, age 16-18.

R. Wilkinson, Collingwood, E.P.O., South Vancouver, British Columbia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in Ireland or England, age 14-15.

Miss Ida Proctor, Leighton, Cochrane Street, Garden Vale, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in Scotland and in Victoria, age 17.

H. Mays, P.O. Box 44615, Johannesburg, Transvaal Province, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in Canada, Australia, and the British Isles, age 17-21.

Miss V. Slight, 87A, Gouger Street, Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader, age 16-17.

E. R. Marsh, 329, Bay Street North, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a reader, age 16.

Miss Tildesley, 17, Bright Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers, age 15-16.

H. Elliott, 20, Cayuga Street, Brantford, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a reader interested in postcards, age 17-18.

R. M. Gillies, Barrington Avenue, Kew, Melbourne, Australia, wishes to correspond with a reader who understands French.

R. Galpin, Hundred of Rudall, Gleve, West Coast, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15-16.

C. B. Foye, 8, Sixth Street, La Rochelle, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in Canada, age 17-21.

E. W. Diggery, care of E. P. Herald, Litho Dept., Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 17-18.

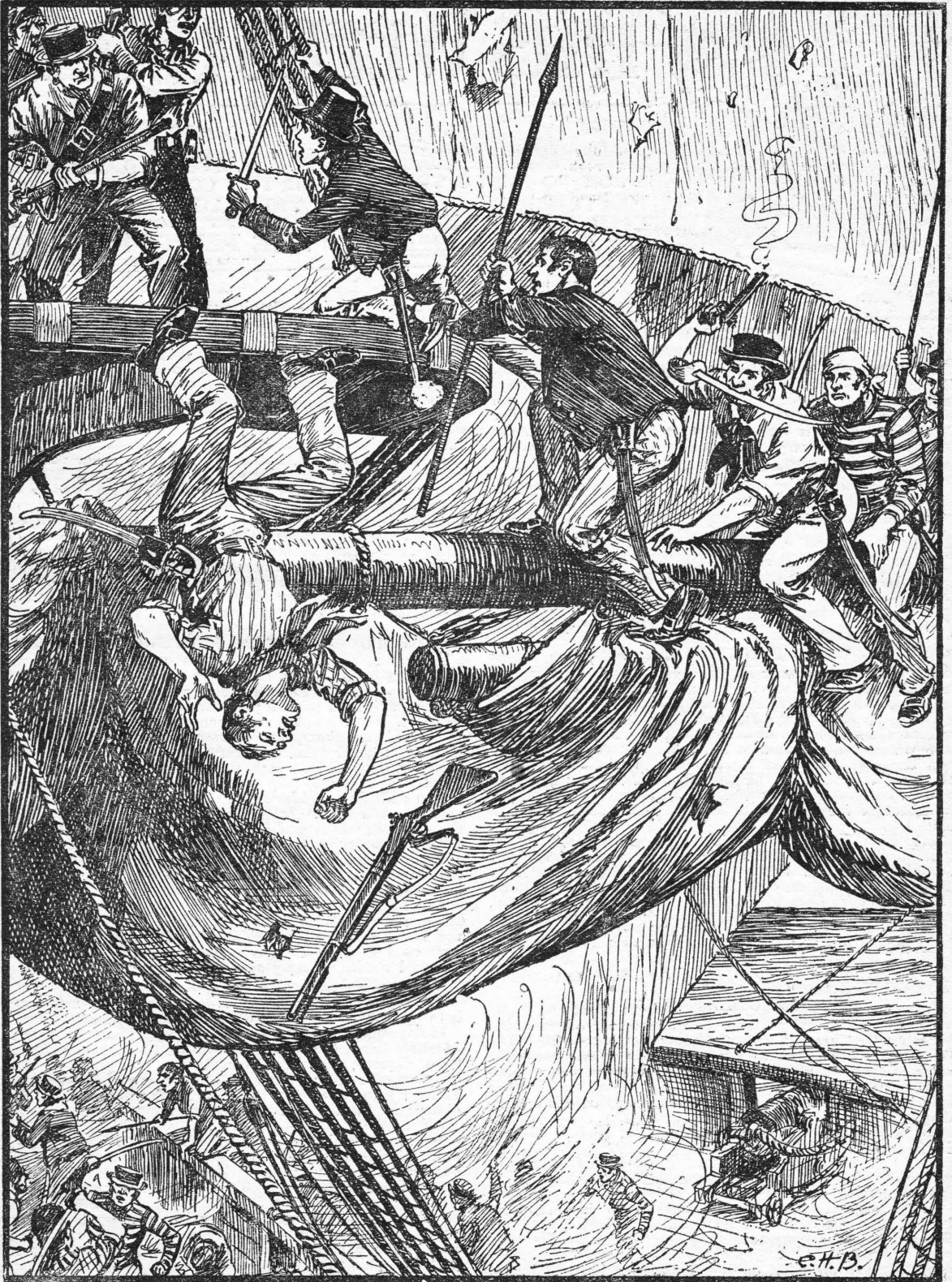
B. Roomer, 52, Marshall Street, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Colonies.

Rider F. Olsen, P.O. Box 368, Durban, Natal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 17.

E. Burgess, Woodstock, Box 564, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with an English girl reader, age 17.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

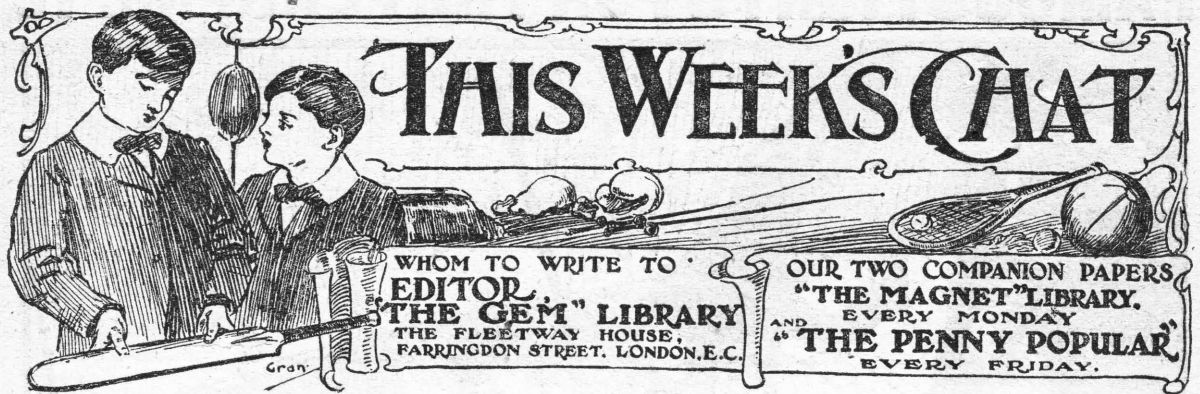
# FAMOUS FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG. No. 16



*Specially drawn for "THE GEM" Library by C. H. Blake.*

It was in the desperate fight between "The Shannon" and "The Chesapeake" on June 1st, 1813, when the crew of the British man-o-war were being harassed by musketry fire from "The Chesapeake's" main top that a display of gallantry was performed by a handful of Britishers, which compelled even their deadly foes to wonder! Midshipman William Smith with five men crawled along the "Shannon's" fore-yard, clambered on to the Yankee's main-yard, and storming the main-top, silenced the fire! It was a wonderful achievement!

## OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday,

**"A MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!"**

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In this grand, long, complete story of the chums of St. Jim's, Tom Merry's uncle, General Merry, comes home from India, and pays a visit to St. Jim's—a visit that is destined to cause a good deal of excitement before it is ended. For Tom Merry's life is threatened by a mysterious peril, the gravity of which is only recognised by the Indian veteran.

**"A MESSAGE OF MYSTERY!"**

is a rollicking schoolboy story, with a strong spice of adventure to it, which will make its own appeal to readers of every age and rank.

**A "POPULAR" COMPETITION.**

I venture to remind my readers once again of the splendid and most popular competition,

**POPLETS.**

which is still running in our grand companion paper,

**"THE PENNY POPULAR."**

Every week a number of "Penny Pop." readers are receiving cash prizes, varying in value from £1 to 1s., simply for writing down a couple of words.

The merit of a "Poplet" consists of the aptness it bears to the example chosen, of course; but it is not necessary, as some of my readers seem to think, for a "Poplet" to contain any very deep meaning in order to win a cash prize. Many of the winning "Poplets," on the contrary, have consisted of very simple words, which have won prizes merely by reason of the appropriate sense in which they have been used.

Everybody has an equal chance of winning a prize at "Poplets," so that it behoves everybody to try their hand at this fascinating, simple, and entertaining competition. This week's number of "The Penny Popular" contains twelve examples from which "Poplets" may be constructed, and I urge my chums to get a copy of our splendid companion paper to-day, and take advantage of the chance thus offered them of winning

**CASH PRIZES FOR "POPLETS."**

**SPECIAL NOTE.**

I recently received a Postal Order from a reader signing himself "T. Turner," with a request that a copy of "The Gem" should be sent to a chum of his weekly until the value of the P.O. was expended. My generous reader, however, omitted to give his chum's address, telling me his name only, so that I have not yet been able to carry out his instructions.

If "T. Turner" will let me have his chum W. C.'s address, I will send the latter the books.

**REPLIES IN BRIEF.**

J. Gunyon (Commercial Road, E.).—To increase your height, first you must give up smoking, in any form, until you are at least twenty-one. The exercises most suitable in your case are:

Pulling out the chest on the Swedish or horizontal bars. The flying rings and the bridge ladder exercises tend to stretch the body. If you have a gymnasium you will gain your desire by practising the above, provided you are not of short stature by nature.

S. Grant (Dublin).—Thank you for your letter, enclosing two sketches. It is difficult to form an opinion of your work from these, as they appear to be copies of Miss Ascough's work. The three-quarter length figure is distinctly a good drawing, and if you are capable of turning out original work as good as this I should certainly recommend you to submit some of your drawings to papers using this style of work. The other sketch is not so good, and falls short of the standard required for publication. You did not put your full address, or I would have returned your sketches.

H. Hassett (Hobart, Tasmania).—Thank you for your long letter and suggestions. Some of these are excellent, but there are, unfortunately, certain difficulties in the way which prevent me from carrying them out. In reply to your question, both the "Gem" and "Magnet" Libraries contained sixteen pages, excluding covers, when they were one halfpenny. Many thanks for your offer to do all you can to help on "The Penny Popular." I should like to be able to make all the alterations you ask for, but you must remember I have a very large number of readers to please, whose tastes are not always exactly similar.

**HOW TO BECOME A PHOTO-PLAY ACTOR.**

The art of acting for the pictures is closely allied to that of writing picture plots, and if you have read the article on "How to Write a Picture Plot," you should have no difficulty in writing a picture play for yourself and your friends to enact. Or you could select some film that you have seen at the picture-house, the leading character of which you think you could take, and carefully write up the scenario scene by scene. Then ask some of your friends who are equally interested to help you to enact the photo-play chosen. If you wish to do things as they are done in the studios, you must proceed thus: Instead of taking the various scenes in the order in which you saw them on the scene, take No. 1 setting first—which, for argument's sake, may be a drawing-room. If scenes 3, 5, 7, and 20 take place in the drawing-room, enact those scenes first—the whole four of them—and then proceed to the next setting. In the real producing this is done for convenience, and the different scenes are afterwards allocated to their respective places on the film. When all your interiors are finished, you may proceed with your exteriors, and when these figure in the streets I should strongly advise the very early morning.

**Methods of Getting Engagements.**

Provided you feel satisfied with yourself, your next course is to write very carefully to the following British producers:

Motograph Film Company, Motograph House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.; Barker Motion Photography, Ltd., 1, Soho Square, London, W.; Crieks and Martin, Ltd., Croydon, Surrey; Hepworth, 2, Denman Street, W.; London Film Company, St. Margaret's, Twickenham, Middlesex; H. Martin, Quinton Avenue, Kingston Road, Merton Park, S.W.

Write a brief letter, setting forth your qualifications, age, and enclosing a photograph, together with stamped addressed envelope for a reply. If it is convenient, an interview is much more satisfactory. To commence with, you would probably be put on the "Casual" list, and when they wanted an actor with just your qualifications you would receive a postcard, asking you to turn up at the Studios at a certain time, when a small sum, including any expenses incurred, would be paid you.

*The Editor*