

WILL YOU OBLIGE?—See Page iii. Cover.

Every

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem.

GUSSY'S GUEST!

A Splendid New, Long, Complete Story dealing with the Amusing Adventures of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Blake & Co. Scent a Jape.

HAVE you ordahed any fish for this studay, Blake, deah boy?"

Jack Blake looked up, and his fret-saw ceased its operations for a moment. Blake, of the Fourth, was an amateur carpenter, and fretwork was his latest development. He had flooded Study No. 6 in the School House with photo-frames, paper racks, and weird-looking inkstands. He was engaged now upon his masterpiece, a fretwork design of the School House at St. Jim's, and his expression showed that he had no time to be bothered with idle questions.

"Fish?" he repeated.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Fish. Have you ordahed any?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Blake's chum and study mate, had suddenly entered Study No. 6 with a telegram in his hand, and a puzzled expression on his face.

"No, ass!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shurrup!" said Blake. "I'm busy. I'm being interrupted by two silly asses now."

Herries and Digby, also denizens of Study No. 6, were sitting on the table, watching Blake's operations with the fretwork, occasionally offering advice that was ungratefully received, and jolting him from time to time.

"Have you ordahed any fish, Hewwies?"

"No, fathead!" said Herries.

"Have you ordahed any fish, Dig?"

"Of course I haven't," grunted Digby.

"Then," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "it is vevy remarkable."

Herries and Digby stared at him. Blake went on with his work.



D'Arcy raised his silk hat very poittely to Fisher T. Fish of Greyfriars. "Glad to see you, deah boy," he said. "Same here," said Fish affably, as he shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's. (See Chapter 7.)

"What is there remarkable about it, chump?" asked Herries politely.

"Because, you see, I haven't ordahed any fish, eithah," explained D'Arcy, as if that made it quite clear.

That mysterious remark caused Blake to look up again, though he was engaged upon a very delicate bit of the clock-tower at St. Jim's.

"Dotty?" asked Blake.

"I wefuse to answah that wiculous question, Blake. I wpeat that it is vevy wemarkable. You say that you have not ordahed any fish—"

"Of course I haven't, fathead!" roared Blake. "What the dickens should I be ordering fish for?"

"Hewwies and Dig say they haven't ordered any fish. I, myself, have certainly not ordahed any fish. I should wemembah it if I had. And if nobody in this studay has ordahed any fish, I quite fail to undahstand why they should telegraph to me that the fish is goin' to be delivahed to-morrow."

Arthur Augustus held up the telegram.

The curiosity of the chums of Study No. 6 was aroused by that time. They jerked the telegram away from the swell of St. Jim's, and read it. Considering that nobody in the study had ordered the fish, it was certainly, as D'Arcy declared, a little remarkable. For the telegram ran:

"D'Arcy, School House, St. James's College, Sussex. Arriving Wednesday, three, F. T. Fish."

Blake and Herries and Digby read the telegram in astonishment, and read it again, and Herries even turned it upside-down, as if he hoped to make some meaning out of it by doing so. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy polished his eyeglass and gazed at his chums.

"What do you make of that, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Thwee F. T. Fish. Of course, F. T. stands for Fwesh Tinned—that's cleah enough. Mr. Sands, the gwocer

Next Wednesday:

"AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!" AND "THE CORINTHIAN!"

in Wylcombe, is advertisin' what he calls Fwesh Tinned Fish, and I wemembah his boy Gwimes bwingin' some heah the othah day for the house-dame. But why should anybody be sendin' us thwee fwesh tinned fish, when we haven't ordahed any? I wegard it as vevy remarkable."

"Must be a jape," said Blake at last.

"Somebody's pulling Gussy's leg, as usual," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Sure you haven't ordered any fish?" asked Blake.

"Quite sure, deah boy. I should wemembah it if I had. Besides, I do not like tinned things—you nevah know what they're made of."

"Might be a present from somebody," Dig. suggested.

Blake shook his head.

"Anybody sending a present would sign his name," he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Besides, three tins of fish wouldn't make much of a present. It isn't a present. It must be a jape. Some silly ass has been ordering fish for this study for a joke, and the grocer has wired to say they're coming."

"Bai Jove!"

Blake wrinkled his brows in thought. His fret-saw was sticking in the fretwork tower of St. Jim's, but he had forgotten it. Even fretwork took a back seat at the idea of Study No. 6 being japed by a practical joker. If it was a jape, it was "up" to the chums of No. 6 to discover the jape and foil the jape. That was the pressing business of the moment. So Jack Blake thought it out.

"Somebody's pulling our leg, and we've got on to it through the grocer sending this wire," he exclaimed. "The question is, who's the silly ass? It might be the New House chaps—"

"Yaas, that is vevy pwob."

"Or it might be Tom Merry & Co—"

Dig. gave a shout.

"Got it! It's Lowther! You remember his little game with Ratty—ordering things for him by telephone."

The Fourth-Formers grinned at the remembrance. The School had not yet ceased to chuckle over that jape on Mr. Ratcliff. That gentleman had fallen foul of Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther; and Monty Lowther had "got his own back" in his own peculiar way—by ordering huge quantities of goods from various tradesmen by telephone, to be delivered to Mr. Ratcliff at St. Jim's. Mr. Ratcliff had been driven almost frantic as goods and goods and goods piled in from various quarters, which he had never ordered or dreamed of ordering.

"Lowther, of course," said Blake with conviction. "He's been at the telephone again, and he's ordered some of that precious fresh tinned fish for this study. And they'll stand round and yell when it's delivered."

"The awful wottahs!"

Blake chuckled.

"But this telegram knocks it on the head," he said. "Now we know—and forewarned is forearmed. We can give Monty Lowther a Roland for his Oliver. Jolly lucky that old Sands thought of wiring to us. Come on. We'll 'phone to Sands, and turn the tables on the Shell bounders."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 hurried out of the study. Three juniors of the Shell were coming down the passage, and they paused at the sight of Blake & Co.'s excited looks. They were Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell.

"Hallo! Whither bound?" asked Monty Lowther. "Wherefore those excited looks, my infants?"

"Weally, Lowthah, you wottah—"

"Is it a New House raid?" asked Manners.

"Or has the order gone forth that all Fourth-Form kids are to wash their necks?" Tom Merry wanted to know.

Blake did not reply to the chipping of the Shell fellows. He waved his hand to his followers, and shouted:

"Charge!"

The Fourth-Formers charged. The charge was sudden and terrific. The Terrible Three were bowled over, and they rolled on the linoleum roaring, and the four juniors hurried on, chuckling. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther sat up, dusty and breathless, and blinked at one another.

"The—silly chumps!" gasped Manners. "What did they do that for?"

"The rotters—"

"The outsiders—"

"After them!" roared Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three, incensed and indignant, jumped up and rushed after the Fourth-Formers. They wanted vengeance, and they wanted it at once. They rushed down the passage and down the stairs, after the chums of the Fourth. But they had to halt then. Blake & Co. had walked into the prefects' room, and into that sacred apartment, where the great men of the Sixth most did congregate, it was impossible to pursue them. The Terrible Three halted outside the door, baffled and furious.

"You rotters!" howled Lowther. "Come out!"

To which the dulcet tones of Arthur Augustus replied:

"Wats!"

Kildare of the Sixth looked out of the prefects' room, frowning.

"Now, then, none of your rags here!" he exclaimed.

"Clear off!"

And the Terrible Three, bottling up their vengeance for a future occasion, cleared off.

CHAPTER 2.

Tit for Tat!

KILDARE turned back into the prefects' room, and frowned at the chums of the Fourth. Blake & Co. were looking very meek and mild.

"What do you kids want in here?" demanded Kildare.

"Please we've come to ask a little favour!" said Blake meekly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What do you want?"

"We want to order something from the grocer's," Blake explained. "Of course, we could go down to the village, but we shouldn't be back in time for calling-over, and being such good boys—"

Kildare laughed.

"Do you mean that you want to use the telephone?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can use it, and then clear out."

"Thanks awfully, Kildare."

Kildare went back to the window, where he had been discussing with Darrel of the Sixth the prospects of the First Eleven in the coming football season. Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy gathered round the telephone. There was a telephone in the prefects' room for the use of those august personages. Juniors were allowed to use it after asking permission from a prefect. When the room happened to be empty, they used it without going through that ceremony. Which helped to account for the discrepancy between the list of calls kept at the exchange, and the list kept at St. Jim's.

"Bettah let me telephone, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, as Blake took up the receiver.

Blake snorted and rang up.

"Rylcombe, 101," he said.

"Blake, deah boy, you had bettah leave it to me," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "You see, it will be necessary to be very cautious—"

"Sands would recognise your silly voice," growled Blake.

"There is nothin' whatevah out of the common wun about my voice, deah boy, and I fail to see why Mistah Sands should wecognise it any more than he would wecognise yours."

"Go hon!"

The bell rang. Blake spoke into the receiver.

"Is that Mr. Sands?"

"Yes, sir," came back a voice that Blake recognised as the voice of Grimes, the youth who carried baskets for the Rylcombe grocer.

"Mr. Sands speaking?" asked Blake innocently, disguising his own voice.

"No, sir. Mr. Sands is hout. I'm speakin' for 'im."

"Very good. You have received an order for some of your fresh tinned fish from this school—this is St. Jim's."

"Yes, sir."

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COUPON.

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"The what?"
 "The Turks, deah boy."
 "Turks!" yelled Blake. "Do you think I'm putting Turks into a fretwork model of St. Jim's, you frabjous ass."
 Then it was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's turn to be astonished.
 "Gweat Scott! Is that a wepresentation of the school?" he exclaimed.

Blake gave him a withering look.
 "What did you take it for, fathead?"
 "Bai Jove! I took it for a Balkan battlefield, deah boy," said D'Arcy, innocently.
 Blake let go his fret-saw, and picked up a ruler, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just time to get out of the study. Jack Blake resumed his fret-sawing amid suppressed chuckles from Herries and Digby.

CHAPTER 3.
Prompt Delivery.

TOM MERRY looked into the cupboard in his study in the Shell passage, and gave a sad shake of the head. Like the celebrated Mother Hubbard, when he got there the cupboard was bare. It was long past tea-time—and the chums of the Shell were hungry. After their unfortunate encounter with the Fourth-Formers, they had gone out for a spin on their bicycles, and they had come in ravenous.

"Nothing doing?" asked Lowther.
 "Half-a-loaf," said Tom Merry.
 "Half-a-loaf is better than no bread," said Manners. "But I don't think it will go round among three. How's the exchequer?"
 Tom Merry turned his pockets inside-out in eloquent response. Monty Lowther extracted a bad threepenny-piece from his pocket, gazed at it sadly, and put it back again.
 "You had half-a-crown this morning, Manners," said Lowther.

"Yes, and I was going to bring in one of old Sand's Fresh-tinned Fish, as he calls them," said Manners.
 "Good idea—but we can do without it, if you've still got the half-crown. I'll cut down to the tuck-shop—"

"No go!"
 "I don't mind—"
 "The half-crown is gone, vanished, disappeared. I had run out of films—"
 "Films!" roared Lowther. "Do you mean to say you've wasted the last half-crown in the family for rotten films for a rotten camera."

"It isn't a rotten camera," said Manners, indignantly.
 "It's a jolly good camera, a presentation camera that was given me by a man—"
 "I know—because you put your silly head into a silly fire to yank out a silly kid. I wish you'd got it burnt off, you ass, before you blued that last coin on silly films. Can we eat films?" shouted Lowther.

"I don't know whether you can, but I know you're jolly well not going to try, with my films at any rate," said Manners, warmly.
 "Peace, my infants," said Tom Merry, chidingly. "We can't eat the films, and we can't eat each other. We shall have to ask ourselves out to tea."

"Tea's over," said Lowther, with a grunt. "Everybody's finished hours ago. Might have dropped in on old Lathom, and pretended he'd asked us—Levison does that sometimes when he's stony, and old Lathom never remembers whether he's asked a chap or not. But old Lathom has fed dogs ages ago."

"What about Study No. 6?"
 "They've finished, of course—they'll be doing their silly prep now—"
 "I was thinking of a raid. They charged us in the passage to-day for nothing. We haven't settled with them yet. We can't allow it to pass—quite against the prestige of the Shell. And we can't bump them to-morrow, because we're playing cricket with them. Let's go and raid No. 6, and collar whatever they've got."

"Hear, hear!"
 Tap!
 "Oh, come in," said Tom Merry.
 The study door opened, and Grimes, the grocer's boy from Rylcombe, presented himself with a basket on his arm. Grimes grinned and nodded to the chums of the Shell, who stared at him in astonishment. There was a large and heavy package in the basket on Grimes's arm, and it was evident that he had come to deliver goods.
 "Good-evenin', gentlemen," said Grimes.
 "Top of the evening to you," said Lowther, affably.
 "You've mistaken your way, Grimey. The house-dame doesn't live in this study."
 "I've brought the goods," explained Grimes.

"Well, is it a new dodge to deliver groceries in junior studies?" asked Tom Merry, in perplexity.
 "I was hordered to bring 'em specially to this study, Master Merry, and 'ere I am," said Grimes.
 "Great Scott! Is that little lot for us?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "What on earth is it?"
 "The Fresh-tinned Fish, sir."

The Terrible Three exchanged glances of astonishment. As they had not ordered any of Mr. Sand's special line in Fresh-tinned Fish, they were naturally amazed.

"All of it fish?" asked Manners.
 "Yes, sir."
 "How many?"
 "Twenty tins, sir, same as was hordered."
 "My hat! Somebody has been making us a thundering big present," said Tom Merry. "I wish whoever it was had put in a little variety. A few jars of jam would have been better than twenty tins of fish. Still, they will make the half-a-loaf go down."

"Hand 'em out, Grimey," said Lowther. "Sorry I can't give a sovereign tip—I've left my cheque-book at the bank."
 Grimes grinned, and handed out the package. He unfasted it, and disclosed a stack of twenty good-sized tins.

"Thanks awfully," said Tom Merry. "Some Good Samaritan knows we're stony, and has sent us that little lot as a present, I suppose. I—hallo—what's that?"
 Grimes presented the bill.
 "One pound to pay, please."
 "Eh!"
 "Twenty tins at a shillin' each, sir, that's one pound," said Grimes, in surprise.

The Terrible Three stared at him.
 "Yes, twenty tins at a shilling each would be a pound," agreed Monty Lowther. "I can do that in my head, without the aid of a net. But if you're under the impression that we are going to pay a pound for twenty tins at a shilling each, my estimable Grimes, that is where you are offside. See?"

"I was told to wait for the money, sir."
 "Well, no objection to that," said Lowther, with an air of consideration. "Would you like to sit down, Grimey? You can wait as long as you like. You can wait until you turn into a waiter, if you choose."

"I got to get back," suggested Grimes.
 "Then we won't detain you," said Lowther, pleasantly.
 "I s'pose this 'ere's a little joke," said Grimes. "But I really got to get back, Master Lowther. Would you mind paying the bill?"

"Look here!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I don't know whether you are starting as a humorist, Grimes. We have not ordered any tins of fish, and we haven't any tin to pay for them. See? There's a mistake somewhere."
 Grimes shook his head.

"They was hordered two hours ago," he said, "and 'ere they are. They was asked for specially for to-night. I thought that p'raps you young gents was givin' a feed or somethin', and I 'urried down with them as soon as Mr. Sands come in."

"Ordered!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Who ordered them?"
 "One of your young gents, by telephone," said Grimes.
 "Telephone!" shouted Tom Manners and Merry together.
 "Yes, sir. I took the horder myself."
 "Lowther, you ass! Is this one of your little jokes?"
 "Lowther, you chump, have you been playing the giddy ox?"

"Of course I haven't!" roared Lowther. "Do you think I should order the stuff for my own study, you fatheads. I don't know anything about it."
 "I've got to get back," said Grimes.

"It must be a jape," said Tom Merry. "Grimey, old man, I'm sorry you've had the trouble; but that stuff wasn't ordered by us. You'd better take it back."

"I can't take back stuff hordered, Master Merry, without special instructions," said Grimes, looking obstinate. "Them tins was hordered 'ere, and 'ere they are. I come in a 'urry with them, too."

"Well, I'm sorry. It was a joke of somebody or other."
 "P'raps you can settle it with 'im, if you pay the bill," Grimes suggested.

"Can't pay the bill. My dear Grimes, the whole exchequer in this study is reduced to one threepenny-bit, and that's bad!"

"Well, wot's to be done?" said Grimes.
 "Take 'em back."
 "Can't, sir," said Grimes. "Shop's closed, for one thing, and I'm goin' 'ome. Besides, I ain't no instructions to take 'em back."
 "Then leave 'em here."
 "Can't leave 'em without the money, sir. You know that

Mr. Sands never gives credit to the young gents, sir. 'Tain't our custom."

"Well, if you won't take 'em or leave 'em," said Lowther, "you'd better put 'em in the basket and stand there with them. We can have our tea just the same; you needn't bother about us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm waitin' for that pound, sir," said Grimes.

"Keep it up!"

"Look 'ere, young gents—"

"Oh, rats!"

"I got to be paid."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell, looking into the study, where the voices were growing a little excited. "My hat! You fellows laying in supplies for a siege? Have the Germans landed?"

"It's a rotten jape," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Some silly ass has ordered this rubbish for us by telephone, and we're not going to take it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Tom warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Cornstalk. "Another of Lowther's little jokes, I suppose. He's so funny that he plays jokes on himself! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't order them, you chump!" shouted Lowther.

"I'm waitin' for the money, please," said Grimes respectfully, but with an air of dogged determination.

"Look here, Grimes, if you don't clear out, we'll sling you out," said Monty Lowther, who was losing his temper fast. Like a true humorist, he could never see the humour in a joke that was turned against himself. "And we'll jolly well chuck your tins of Fresh Tinned Poison after you!"

"I got to wait for the money," said Grimes grimly.

"Look here, you ass—"

"Look here, you fathead—"

"We're stony broke, if you want to know," roared Tom Merry. "Understand that?"

Grimes scratched his nose thoughtfully.

"You shouldn't horder the things, then, sir," he said.

"We didn't order them!" said Tom Merry wildly.

"I s'pose I shall 'ave to leave 'em without the money," said Grimes. "But I shall get into a row with Mr. Sands if they ain't paid for to-morrow."

"Take 'em away!"

"Can't, sir."

And Grimes settled the matter by walking out of the study. The Terrible Three roared after him with one voice.

"Come back, you silly jay! Come and fetch this rubbish! We're not going to pay for it!"

But Grimes was deaf. He marched on and disappeared.

The Terrible Three glared at the piles of tins on the table. Kangaroo rolled in the armchair and roared with laughter. It seemed funnier to the Cornstalk than it did to the chums of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha! Twenty tins at a bob a time! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared the exasperated juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three fell upon the almost hysterical Cornstalk, and yanked him out of the chair, and hurled him bodily into the passage, and slammed the door after him. Then they were left alone—with twenty tins of fish piled on the table.

CHAPTER 4.

A Slight Misunderstanding!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY looked into Study No. 6 with a twinkle in his eyes. Blake and Herries and Digby were doing their preparation.

"Come along, deah boys," said D'Arcy.

"What is it now, image?" demanded Blake.

"I wefuse to be called an image. I have just seen Gwimes, and it appears that he has delivahed some goods to Tom Mewwy. I thought we might dwop in and see how they are gettin' on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth-Formers jumped up from their preparation at once. They were very keen to see how pleased the Terrible Three were with the sudden and unexpected arrival of twenty tins of Mr. Sands's special line in Fresh Tinned Fish.

They hurried along the passage, and found Noble of the Shell leaning against the wall, gasping for breath, and with tears of laughter on his cheeks. The Cornstalk looked at them, and gurgled:

"Have you heard? Twenty tins at a bob a time—ha, ha, ha! Lowther is so funny that he has been japing himself! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust they are pleased, deah boy?"

"Yes, they look pleased!" roared Kangaroo. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake knocked at the study door and opened it. Three

furious faces were turned towards him. The Terrible Three expected to see the hilarious Cornstalk again, and they were ready to charge.

"Hallo!" said Blake affably. "I hear you've been ordering supplies on a large scale. Standing a specially big feed?"

"No!" yelled Tom Merry.

"You seem to have laid in a big supply of fish," said Blake, scanning the tins piled on the table. "What's it for, then?"

"It's not for us."

"Present from somebody?" asked Blake.

"It's a rotten jape of some rotter; some silly ass has been ordering this rubbish for us by telephone, and old Sands will want to make us pay for them. Grimes wouldn't take them back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you've come here to cackle, you can get out!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll have to pay now, as you've received the goods."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I wish I knew who it was that has been so jolly funny!" howled Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, it's funny, isn't it?" grinned Blake. "Funnier than ordering three tins for our study—eh?" And the Fourth-Formers roared again.

"What! Has somebody been ordering them for you, too?" demanded Lowther.

Blake winked.

"Oh, come off!" he said. "You know jolly well that you ordered three tins for No. 6 by telephone."

"I!" yelled Lowther.

"Yes, you, you funny ass. So we countermanded the order," explained Blake, chuckling. "And as it was a pity to disappoint the grocer man, we gave him an order for you instead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you gave him this order?" stuttered Lowther.

"Exactly. One good turn deserves another."

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha! I wegard it as vewy funnny."

"You chumps!" shouted Lowther. "We didn't order anything for you. You've got the wrong pig by the ear, you fatheads!"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"But we haven't—we didn't—we never thought of it!" howled Lowther.

Blake whistled.

"Honour bright?" he demanded.

"Yes, you chump!" said the Terrible Three together.

"Oh, bai Jove! You have put your silly foot in it this time, Blake, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "It must have been Figgins & Co., aftah all."

"The New House bounders!" said Blake. "Oh, my hat! Well, it wasn't our fault. Lowther is so jolly funny on the telephone, we naturally thought it was Lowther. If you keep a wild, funny man in the study, you've only got yourselves to blame."

"Yaas, wathah; that's quite cowwect."

"You can pay for them!" exclaimed Manners warmly.

Jack Blake shook his head.

"No fear; they're yours. But I'll tell you what we will do—we'll take half a dozen of them off your hands at a tanner a time!"

"You—you—you—"

"Yaas, that's a good offah."

"You frabjous asses!" growled Tom Merry. "What put it into your silly heads that we had ordered stuff for you? Has it been delivered?"

"No; we got a wire saying the three tins were going to be delivered to-morrow, and we telephoned and changed it over for you."

"A wire!" exclaimed Tom Merry in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that old Sands spent sixpence on a wire over a three-shilling order?"

"Yes. Queer, wasn't it?"

"He must make a whacking profit on this stuff if he can afford to acknowledge three-bob orders by telegram," said Tom Merry. "More likely there's some mistake, and you've put your idiotic foot into it."

"Wats! Here's the wiah," Arthur Augustus drew the telegram from his pocket, and laid it on the pile of salmon-tins.

The chums of the Shell looked at it.

"Arriving Wednesday three F. T. Fish."

"What on earth does he call it F. T. Fish for?" said Manners.

"That is an abbreviation, deah boy, for Fwesh Tinned Fish," Arthur Augustus explained.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY!

"AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!"

"Looks to me more like a name," said Tom Merry.
 "A name? How could it be a name?"
 "Well, Fish is a name, and F. T. might be the initials. Are you sure this telegram was sent from Rylcombe?"
 "I suppose so, as it comes from the grocer's there."
 "How do you know it comes from the grocer's, ass? Look here!" Tom Merry read from the form. "Handed in at Courtfield."

"Courtfield!" said Blake. "Where's that? I've heard the name before."

"It's the junction near Greyfriars, where you change if you're going there," said Tom Merry. "Don't you remember?"

"That's a jolly long way from here," said Blake in surprise. "What on earth could old Sands want to send his telegram from Courtfield for?"

"It can't be from Sands at all."
 "Oh, rot!" said Blake. "Then who is it from? Who else sells Fresh Tinned Fish?"

"Yaas, wathah! Answah that, deah boy!"
 Tom Merry did not answer it. He looked at the telegram again, and then he suddenly went off into a roar of laughter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?" demanded Blake, with an uneasy feeling that perhaps some mistake had been made after all.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Look here, you chump—"

"Explain, you ass!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry, the tears running down his cheeks. "Oh, you asses! Oh, you burbling jabberwocks! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you image?" shrieked Blake.
 "If you don't explain—" yelled Lowther and Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The juniors rushed upon Tom Merry. They seized him, and jammed him against the wall of the study.

"Now explain, before we jam your silly napper on the wall!" shouted the exasperated Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! I—I—" gurgled Tom Merry. "It doesn't mean three tins of fish. It means that Fish is coming at three o'clock."

"Well, it might mean that," said Blake. "But it doesn't make any difference what time the fish comes. This telegram means that it's coming."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Bang!

Tom Merry's head came into violent contact with the study wall.

"Oh! Ow! Yah!"
 "Now explain, before we bust the wall with your silly skull—"

"Ow! You chumps! Can't you see? There's a chap at Greyfriars named Fish. A Yankee chap, bristling with initials—"

"Oh!"
 "His full name's Fisher Tarleton Fish, I think. Anyway, he calls himself F. T. Fish. And that's what's coming to-morrow."

"Bai Jove! Then it's not Fresh-Tinned Fish at all!"
 "Ha, ha! No, it's a Yank—a live Yank!"
 "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 5. A Fall in Fish.

HERE was no doubt about it.

Tom Merry had read the riddle.
 Now that the juniors came to think of it, they remembered the American boy at Greyfriars School, whom they had seen on the occasion of a visit to play cricket. F. T. Fish was not in the Greyfriars junior eleven, certainly; but he was not the kind of fellow to allow himself to pass unnoticed anywhere, and he had made himself known to every member of the St. Jim's party.

The mystery of the telegram was explained now. F. T. Fish, of the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars, had sent that telegram from Courtfield, near his school, to announce that he was arriving at St. Jim's at three the following day.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Blake at last. "I suppose that's it. If that silly ass Gussy had remembered asking Fish to come here—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Rotten bad form to forget issuing an invitation," said Monty Lowther.

"But I haven't invited him!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"What? He's wired to you to say he's coming."

"Yaas, it appears that he has, but I haven't invited him. I weally don't know what he is comin' for. I wemembah the chap now you speak of him, but I had uttahly forgotten his existence. I don't know him."

"We've been writing to Greyfriars about fixing up the footer match," said Tom Merry. "I heard from Wharton, their junior skipper, that one of them might be coming over to see us about it, and I said that we should be glad to see him."

"If it's about the footer, he should have wired to me, as secretary," said Manners.

"He may have wired to me as the most important person," said Arthur Augustus, in a thoughtful sort of way. "Yaas, that is pwobably how it is."

"But he isn't their sec.," said Lowther. "Their sec. is a chap named Nugent."

"May have some important business to see us about," said Tom Merry, "or it may be just a friendly visit. Americans are free and easy, you know—and after all, we would make any Greyfriars' chap welcome—they'd do the same for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "One of their chaps came to see Gussy some time back—what was his name?"

"Gwuntah," said D'Arcy, "Gwuntah, or Shuntah, I think."

"Bunter," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Perhaps Bunter's given a glowing account of St. Jim's hospitality, and Fish is coming to see what it's like."

"Bai Jove! I should wegard that as a gweat compliment."

"Well, we'll make him welcome, and entertain him," said Tom Merry. "It's rotten luck to be stony just now—we shall have to stand something decent in the way of a feed—"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Well, you've got enough fish, anyway—" Blake remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "F. T. Fish—Fwesh Tinned Fish!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "After all, it was a vewy natural mistake to make—"

"For you—yes!" growled Lowther.

"Weally Lowthah—"

"And now you fatheads can see that you put your foot in it, you can take that fish off our hands," said Tom Merry.

The chums of the Fourth looked serious. Undoubtedly it was "up" to them, under the circumstances, to take the consequences of their extraordinary mistake. Arthur Augustus rose to the occasion in his usual graceful manner.

"Yaas, it's up to us," he said. "We'll take the wubbish. I'll send Sands the money to-morrow, deah boys."

"It's a quid," said Lowther.

"A soveveign, deah boy," said D'Arcy, gently but firmly.

"Quid—?"
 "Soveveign—"

"Well, as Gussy is going to pay it, he can send a quid or a soveveign, just as he pleases," grinned Tom Merry. "Now take your blessed potted goods away, Gussy. We want the table. We'll take one off your hands, if you like, for three-pence."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Lowther's got a bad threepenny-bit, so if you want to make a bargain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "We'll have one on tick," said Manners. "You shall have the bob on Saturday, Gussy."

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Now carry off the other nineteen," grinned Lowther. "They're your property now."

Arthur Augustus regarded the pile of tins in dismay. But there was no help for it. They were his property, and had to be removed from the Shell fellows' study.

"Pway lend a hand, deah boys," said D'Arcy, resignedly.

But Blake and Herries and Digby were already gone. Arthur Augustus looked round from his contemplation of the stack of tins, and found himself alone with the Terrible Three. Lowther was already busy on the borrowed tin, with a tin-opener, and Tom Merry started lighting the fire, and Manners got out the tea-things.

"Bai Jove! Those boundahs have gone," said D'Arcy. "Howevah, I suppose I can cawwy them. I've seen a man at a circus cawwy fifty tins piled up, and put them on his nappah. You might lend me a hand to get hold of the beastly things, deah boys."

The Shell fellows grinned, and lent a hand. Tins were placed on D'Arcy's hands, as he held them out, and piled up against his chest. The pile rose higher and higher. The tins were placed in a double stack against his fancy waistcoat, and they rose to his chin, and then beyond his chin. The odd one

ANSWERS

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of the nineteen, laid on top of the rest, just met the aristocratic nose of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Mind how you go," grinned Lowther.

"Oh, I can manage all right, deah boy. I'm not so clumsy."

And Arthur Augustus trod cautiously out of the study with his load. The Terrible Three chuckled as they watched him go. The stack of tins toppled perilously, but Arthur Augustus was very, very careful. He trod his way down the Shell passage as carefully as if he were walking on ice.

Unfortunately, just as he turned into the Fourth-Form passage, Knox of the Sixth came along in a hurry. The prefect met the Fourth-Former in full career. The collision would not have mattered much at any other time, but it mattered very much now.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, "look out——"

But Knox of the Sixth had no time to look out. Biff!

"Yawooh!"

Arthur Augustus staggered backwards, with tins of fish showering upon him, thick as leaves in Vallambrosa.

Biff! biff! biff! crash! crash!

"Ow! Ow! Wescue——yawooh! Oh!"

Knox staggered back, and gasped, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You young ass. Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! crash! crash!

"Oh, bai Jove! Gweat Scott! Wescue! Yah!"

Blake and Co. rushed out of their study. The sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sprawling amid strewn salmon-tins made them yell. Arthur Augustus sat up dizzily amid the flood of tins, and blinked at them. He groped for his eyeglass, but a Fresh-tinned Fish had plumped on it, and the famous monocle was in fragments.

"Bai Jove! Ow! Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you fellows cacklin' at? I fail entirely to see anythin' to cackle at. Ow!"

"You'll pick up all those tins, D'Arcy," said Knox. "I've a good mind to give you lines for being so clumsy. Don't do any more of these conjuring tricks in the passage." And Knox walked on chuckling.

"Are you wottahs goin' to lend me a hand with these tins?" said Arthur Augustus, sulphurously, as his chums roared.

"I'll help you, D'Arcy, old chap," said Levison of the Fourth, who had come out of his study with Mellish. "You've been laying in a big stock of fish, haven't you? Lend a hand, Mellish."

Mellish grinned and lent a hand. So did the chums of No. 6, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's new possessions were carried into Study No. 6, and stacked there. Arthur Augustus sat down and gasped. It was not till some time later that it occurred to him to count the tins, to make sure that all had been gathered up. When he counted them he found that there were seventeen. He looked along the passage, but failed to discover any more. He would have asked Levison if he had seen them, but Levison's door was locked, and he did not reply to a tap on it. Inside Levison's study, Levison and Mellish were enjoying an unlooked-for supper—the chief item on the bill of fare being Fresh Tinned Fish!

CHAPTER 6.

A Feast of the Barmecides!

JACK BLAKE finished his preparation, and looked at the study clock.

"What price a little supper?" he said.

D'Arcy looked up.

"That's accordin'," he said. "It depends on the amount of money you spend on it, deah boy."

"Did you work that out in your head?" said Blake, admiringly. "Look here, we're laden up with things to eat. What price standing a little supper? There's plenty of time before bed, and we don't want that salmon to eat its head off in the cupboard, do we?"

"Good egg!" said Dig. "I'm getting peckish."

"We've got nineteen tins of fish——"

"Seventeen, deah boy. Two are missin'."

"Well, seventeen is enough to feed a giddy army. The Fourth are playing the Shell to-morrow, and we shall have the New House bounders in our team. It's pax with Figgins and Co. Suppose we ask them over to supper."

Arthur Augustus nodded at the clock.

"Quartah past nine, deah boy. Bed-time at half-past."

"That's an American clock, fathead. It's a quarter to nine. Heaps of time. I'll buzz over to the New House and ask the chaps. You fellows get the table laid."

"Wighto, I'll ask some of our fellows, too."

Jack Blake walked out of the study whistling. For once the warfare between School-House and New House was suspended. When the Fourth played the Shell, the respective teams were drawn from both houses. Figgins and Co. of the New House

were to play in Blake's team on the morrow. The football season was beginning, but cricket was dying hard. The weather was fine and sunny, and the juniors had arranged a last match to fill up the half-holiday.

Blake returned with his friendly foes from the New House—quite a little crowd of them. Figgins and Kerr and Wynn, the famous Co., Redfern and Owen and Lawrence. And Reilly and Kerruish of the New House came in with D'Arcy. Study No. 6 was crowded almost to its limit.

"Jolly glad to see you fellows," said Figgins, affably. "We're going to lick the Shell to-morrow, to wind up the season properly. Fatty Wynn's in great form."

"Yes, I'm pretty sharp set," said Fatty Wynn, whose thoughts were on the little supper. "We didn't have much for tea—only a pie and a cold chicken and some saveloys, as well as the toast and shrimps. Jolly decent of you chaps to ask us over."

"We've come into a fortune in the shape of tins of fish," Blake explained. "Seventeen shilling tins."

Blake dragged the stack of tins out of the cupboard. Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened at the sight. There were a dozen fellows in the study, but seventeen large-size tins of fish were ample to go round.

"Sorry there's nothing else," said Blake, politely. "Plenty of bread-and-butter—but only fish besides. We would have got something to follow if the tuck-shop wasn't closed."

"My dear chap, this is ripping," said Fatty Wynn. "If you've got a tin-opener, I'll lend you a hand opening them. I've tried old Sands' Fresh Tinned Fish, and it's all right."

"Anybody got a tin-opener?" asked Blake.

"One in my pocket-knife," said Herries, producing that article.

"But how on earth did you get seventeen tins of fish?" asked Figgins in amazement.

Blake explained.

The New House fellows roared over the story. But a sudden thought occurred to Kerr. Kerr was a Scotsman, so naturally he thought of things that escaped the attention of less canny youths.

"You say that they told you on the telephone that some tins had been ordered from the school?" he asked.

"Yes," grinned Blake, "and, of course, that made us dead certain that Lowther had been pulling our leg."

"And you cancelled the order over the 'phone?"

"Of course. We cancelled that order, and ordered twenty tins for Tom Merry's study instead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it turned out that Lowther hadn't ordered any?"

"Yes, I've said so."

"Well," said Kerr, with a chuckle, "it seems to me that you've put your little hoof into it again."

"What do you mean?" demanded Blake warmly.

"Why, if the tins were ordered, and Lowther hadn't ordered them, they must have been ordered by the house-dame. And you've cancelled an order by Mrs. Mimms."

"Oh, my hat! I never thought of that."

"She'll be expecting her giddy tins, and she won't get them," grinned Kerr.

"Phew!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that, eithah. Blake, deah boy, you have weally put your foot in it. There will be a wov. Mrs. Mimms will think that we have cancelled her silly ordah for a joke, and she will speak to Waitton about it."

"Better telephone again," suggested Dig.

"Too late. Sands is closed, long ago."

Blake grunted.

"Well, a chap can't think of everything," he said. "Sufficient for the day is the salmon thereof. Let's have supper."

"How do you work this blessed thing?" asked Fatty Wynn, who was busy with Herries' pocket-knife. "Where's the tin-opener?"

"Simple enough," growled Herries. "I'll open it." He took the pocket-knife from the fat Fourth-Former. "Oh, I forgot! It broke the other day when I was prising open a box with it. Sorry!"

"Haven't you got a tin-opener in the study?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"We always depend on Herries," said Blake severely. "Now he's left us in the lurch."

"There's a corkscrew in the knife," said Herries. "You can try with that if you like."

"I'll try it with the blade," said Fatty, taking the knife again.

"No you won't!" said Herries warmly. "It'll break."

"That's all right. There's two blades. If one breaks I'll try the other."

"You—you ass! Let that knife alone!"

"Look here, Herries——" began Blake.

"Twy with the pokah," suggested Arthur Augustus. "Bash the tin with the pokah, you know, and vewy likely it will burst open."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, I'll try the corkscrew," said Fatty Wynn. "I'll—"

Fatty Wynn was interrupted. The study door was opened, and Knox of the Sixth came in. The juniors looked at Knox in a hostile way. Knox was a bully, and they did not like him; but as he was a prefect, he had to be treated with outward respect. Knox grinned as he saw the stack of tins on the table.

"Just going to feed, eh?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blake belligerently. "No harm in having supper in the study, I suppose?"

"Not so long as it's your own grub," said Knox. "Come in, Mrs. Mimms. Here's your tins of salmon. I knew these young rascals had them."

"What?" shouted the juniors.

Mrs. Mimms, the stout house-dame, followed Knox into the study. Mrs. Mimms was a kindly soul, but she was looking angry now.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed. "Yes, here they are, indeed. You are very bad boys to take the goods delivered for me—very bad indeed!"

"I say, they're our tins!" exclaimed Blake in dismay, as Mrs. Mimms began to gather up the fresh tinned fish into a large bag she carried.

"You young rascals!" said Knox. "Mrs. Mimm's ordered them from the grocer's, to be delivered this evening, and they didn't come. But I remembered seeing D'Arcy loaded up with them, and heard that Sands's boy had been here, so I guessed you young sweeps had raided them. Blessed if I ever heard of such cheek!"

"Look here, they're our tins!" shouted Blake. "Gussy is going to pay for them to-morrow. These ain't the tins you ordered, Mrs. Mimms."

"I ordered sixteen tins by telephone," said Mrs. Mimms. "They were to be delivered to-night. How can you say that these are not the tins, Master Blake?"

"But—but—"

"Take them away, Mrs. Mimms," said Knox. "These young rascals must have got Grimes to deliver them here instead of in the kitchen. Have you got the cheek to say 'at you ordered this stack of tins for this study, Blake?'"

"Well, not exactly. It was a sort of mistake. But—"

"It was a sort of mistake that will get you fifty lines," grinned Knox. "Take them away, Mrs. Mimms. Sixteen, I think."

"There are seventeen tins there!" shouted Blake.

"Yes, seventeen," said the house-dame, who was counting them. "I shall leave the odd one. I do not know why Mr. Sands delivered seventeen tins when I ordered sixteen. I shall not pay for the extra one."

And the house-dame left the study with her heavily laden bag. The juniors gazed after her, open-mouthed, as she disappeared with their feed. Knox chuckled and picked up the solitary remaining tin. Fatty Wynn's eyes were fastened on that tin, and he had the corkscrew ready. But the corkscrew was not wanted.

"You'll take fifty lines each, Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy," said Knox. "I shall confiscate this tin."

And Knox walked out of the study with the tin under his arm. That night Knox had salmon for supper in his study.

The juniors were too overcome for words for some moments. They had asked numerous guests to supper on the strength of that huge and unexpected supply of fresh-tinned fish. And the fresh-tinned fish was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream. The feast had turned out a Feast of the Barmecides—that peculiar banquet in the Arabian Nights where the viands vanished as fast as they were put upon the table.

"Oh!" groaned Fatty Wynn at last.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, rotten!"

Jack Blake looked at his guests with a sickly smile.

"Sorry, you chaps," he murmured. "I—I didn't expect this, you know. There—there's still the bread-and-butter."

"Thanks!" said Redfern, with elaborate politeness. "I fancy we've got large supplies of bread-and-butter at home. Good-night."

"Faith, and I'm not hungry for bread-and-butter, thankin' ye all the same, Blake darling," said Reilly.

And the guests melted away.

The chums of Study No. 6 were left alone in their study with grim faces. Blake broke a painful silence.

"It's all Gussy's fault, of course," he said at last.

D'Arcy extracted an eyeglass from his waistcoat pocket. The swell of St. Jim's had an unlimited supply of those in THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

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dispensable articles. He adjusted the monocle in his eye and gave Blake a withering look.

"I fail to see how you make that out, you duffah," he said.

"It's all through your inviting blessed Yankees to come here, with idiotic names like Fish—"

"But I have already remarked that I did not invite him—"

"And making silly mistakes over silly telegrams!" roared Blake. "Any silly idiot ought to have known what the telegram really meant."

"Wats! You did not know!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I wepeat—"

"Fathead!"

"Duffah!"

"Chump!"

"Wottah!"

"Frabjous ass!"

"I wefuse to weply to such oppwobvious remarks!" said Arthur Augustus, with great dignity. And he walked out of the study, and Blake transferred his opprobrious remarks to Herries and Digby, who replied in kind. And the chums of Study No. 6 wreaked their wreat hand relieved their feelings in a terrific slanging match.

CHAPTER 7.

An Arrival in Style.

FISHER T. FISH, of the Lower Fourth-Form at Greyfriars, stepped out of the train in the little station of Rylcombe.

Fisher T. Fish was a slim, keen-faced youth. He had sharp features, and sharp eyes of an uncertain colour. His complexion was sallow—a little freckled. He walked with the air of a fellow who owned the earth, or, at least, was conscious that, owing to his extraordinary merits, he ought to own it. Keeness, coolness, and an illimitable confidence in himself, seemed the chief traits in the character of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

He cast a patronising look up and down the platform, bordered on one side with flower-beds. It was a very quiet little country station, and seldom woke up, excepting on the occasions when St. Jim's or the Grammar School broke up for holidays.

"Regular Sleepy Hollow, I guess!" said Fisher T. Fish aloud, as he scanned the platform. "I wonder if any of the jays have come to meet the trains. Hallo!"

An elegant youth, natty and spotless, from the tips of his gleaming boots to the crown of his shining silk topper, was crossing the platform to meet the American junior. A monocle gleamed in his eye, and Fisher T. Fish knew him. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth-Form at St. Jim's—a young gentleman whom Fish had marked down, in his mind, as a "jay" of the first water.

Arthur Augustus had felt it incumbent upon him to come down to the station to meet his guest. He had requested his chums to join him in doing his Transatlantic visitor that honour. Blake had politely told him that he would see him further first. The Fourth were playing the Shell that afternoon, and Blake explained that he would see both D'Arcy and his guest at the bottom of the Ryll, quite cheerfully, before he would risk missing the Form match. The utmost he would do was to put D'Arcy on the list as last man in, if the Fourth batted first, so that the swell of St. Jim's would have a chance of getting back to the school in time for his innings.

If D'Arcy did not return in time, Kerruish would be played in his place. But even the risk of being left out of the Form match did not deter Arthur Augustus from doing the polite thing. With Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, courtesy came first and last and all the time.

D'Arcy raised his silk hat very politely to Fisher T. Fish. He hardly remembered the Yankee junior of Greyfriars, but he concluded that this must be Fish, as he was the only fellow in Etons who had alighted from the train.

"Glad to see you, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

"Same here," said Fish affably, as he shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's. "I guess you had my wire, what?"

"Yaas."

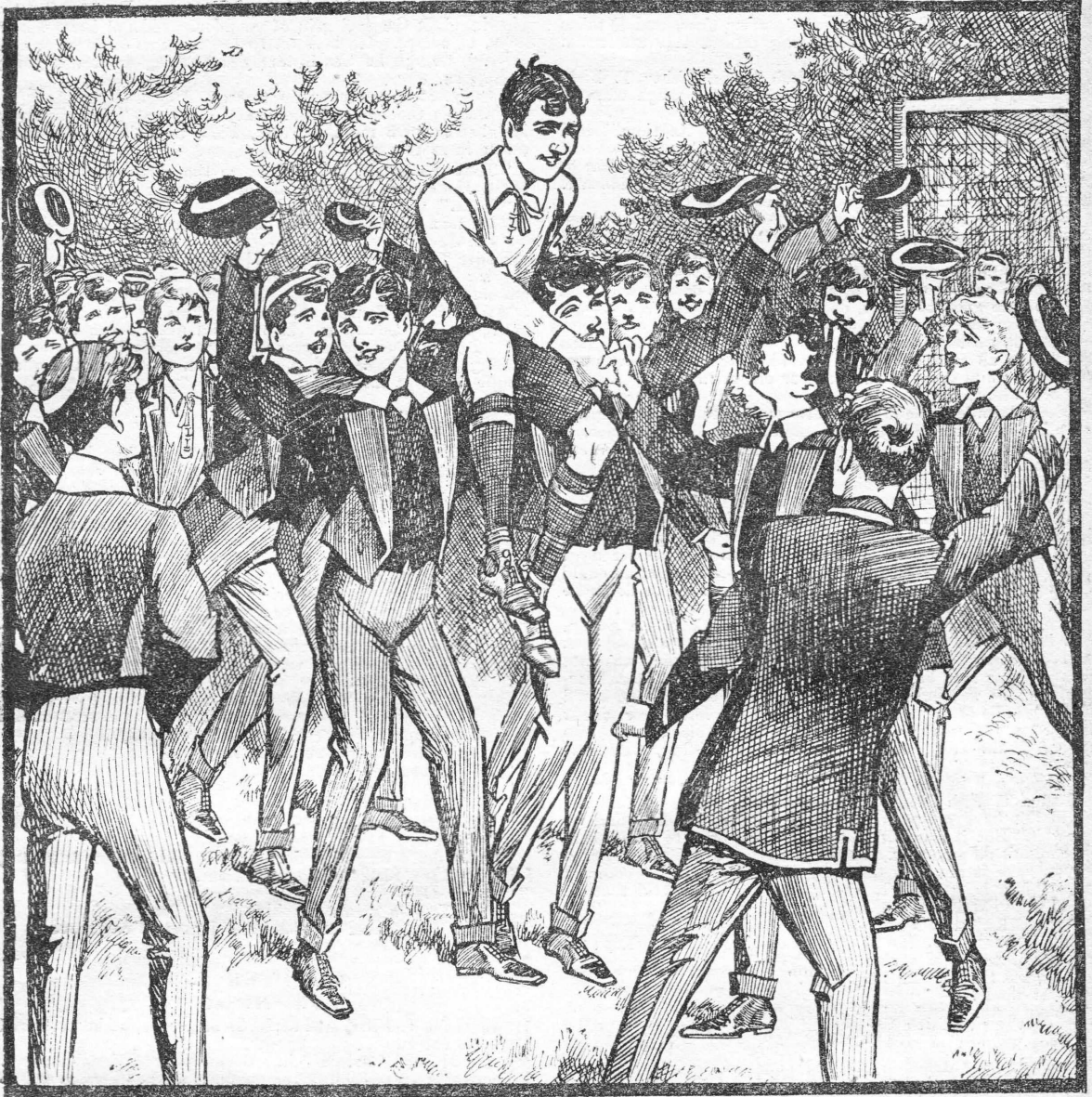
"I kinder reckoned I'd give you a look up," Fish explained. "Wharton's given me some messages for your sec. But I guess I've really come over to see you."

"You are vewy kind. I weward it as an honour," said Arthur Augustus, in a stately way.

Fisher T. Fish nodded, as if he regarded it as an honour, too.

"Pretty sleepy here, what?" he said, as they walked out of the station.

"Sleepiah than Gweyfwiahs?" asked D'Arcy mildly.



Bolsover major and Skinner seized Vernon-Smith, and carried him off the field on their shoulders. Round him the Removites crowded and cheered, and Harry Wharton was the first to shake his hand. "I congratulate you," said Harry. "You played a ripping game!" (An incident from "BRAVO, THE BOUNDER," the splendid tale of the Greyfriar's Juniors which is contained in this week's issue of our grand companion paper, "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

Fish yawned.
 "Nope! Got me there! First time I came to this old island I fell asleep. Like getting into bed, you know, after New York. Ever been to New York?"
 "Yaas."
 "Guess it struck you as some city, eh?"
 "Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had to reflect a little before he understood. At St. Jim's, he studied English, German, and French, as well as Latin; but American was not in the curriculum. It was a new language to him.
 "Yaas," he said, at last. "You mean as a gweat city?"
 "Just a few," said Fish.
 "Yaas."
 "You spotted the skyscrapers, what?"
 "Yaas; you mean those howwid gweat buildin's evah so high—"
 "Horrid!" said Fish, with a sniff. "I guess that's your English ideas. My word! They're the last word in construction—some. Why, in some of our burgs, I can tell you, we've got skyscrapers that simply shut the sun out, right out

of sight. Down on the side-walk you feel as if you were underground. What do you think of that?"
 "It must be wotfen," said D'Arcy, gently, under the mistaken impression that Fisher T. Fish wanted sympathy.
 "Rotten!" ejaculated Fish. "Oh, my hat! I swow!"
 "You—you what?" gasped D'Arcy. The verb to swow was entirely new to him.
 "Oh, that puts the lid on," said Fish. "Did you ever go on the trolleys?"
 "Twolleys!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in amazement. "Certainly not. I believe my luggage—"
 "Your baggage, you mean?"
 "My luggage was wheeled on twolleys, pwobably, but I should certainly not think of being wheeled on a twolley myself, I should wegard it as undignified."
 Fisher T. Fish chuckled.
 "I believe you call 'em trams over here," he replied.
 "Oh! Yaas. I certainly went on the twams."
 "Trolleys!"
 "Twolleys, if you like, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, gracefully yielding the point. "I've got a twap here to take

us to St. Jim's. The station cab is vewy slow, and it takes some time to walk. We're playing cricket this afternoon. Pewwaps you would like to see the match?"

"Yep. Cricket is my strong holt," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll play for you if you like, if you've got a tough team to beat. I guess that's just where I live."

"I'm playin' in the eleven, if I get back in time," said D'Arcy. "Here is the twap. Pway jump in."

Fisher T. Fish jumped in, in the driver's seat, somewhat to Arthur Augustus's dismay. He had intended to drive himself. The horse was a good one, and somewhat mettlesome.

There were a good many things Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could not do, perhaps; but among the things that he could do, was picking out a good horse. His knowledge of horse-flesh was unlimited, and at the livery stables they never tried to palm off a crook on him when he wanted a drive.

"You are goin' to dwive, deah boy?" he asked.

"I guess I'm some of a driver," said Fish.

"The horse is wathah fwesh."

"That's all right. I guess I could drive the freshest mustang you could scare up in Texas or out of it."

"All wight, then."

D'Arcy's code made it imperative to him to yield to a guest on all points. He did not mind making the little sacrifice, if Fish could drive. And the Yankee schoolboy seemed very confident about it.

Fish gathered up the reins in a business-like manner, and the trap started down the old High Street of Rylcombe.

The horse was fresh, and the horse was intelligent. He had felt the hand of a master on the reins when D'Arcy drove him from St. Jim's. He did not feel the hand of a master now. It took the horse about two minutes to discover that he could do as he liked with his driver, and he proceeded to do as he liked.

The first thing he liked to do was to break into a gallop, and he took the trap down the village street at a speed that was alarming. The High Street of Rylcombe was not arranged for that kind of thing. Children played there fearlessly, geese wandered where they would; countrymen stood in the middle of the old street to chatter the latest news about the crops, the weather, and Farmer Giles's black bull. The career of the trap, with Fisher T. Fish driving, was fearsome.

"Pway pull in the horse, deah boy," murmured D'Arcy.

Fisher T. Fish shook his head. As a matter of fact, he could not have pulled in the horse to save his life, and he knew it. But it was not Fisher T. Fish's way to admit that he couldn't do anything. Hamlet's advice, to assume a virtue if you have it not, was taken by F. T. Fish. If he couldn't do a thing, he guessed it was up to him to pretend that he could if he liked, but wouldn't take the trouble.

"All O.K.," said Fish, airily, as the horse ran away with him, "I always give the beast his head, you know. Yep!"

"But if you wun ovah somebody—"

"I guess they should keep clear."

"But weally—"

"You watch me!" said Fish, confidently.

D'Arcy did not watch him, however, he watched the street and the inhabitants thereof. He watched geese run cackling to escape, he watched frightened hens sailing into shops or houses; he watched Gaffer Jones make a wild spring for his life, leaving behind him the stick with which he had plodded about Rylcombe for unnumbered years. He heard the shrill squeal of a pig as the wheel of the trap grazed it.

Then, fortunately, they were out of Rylcombe, with nobody killed.

On the wide country road Fisher T. Fish said he would let the horse have his head—the horse having already taken it.

The squeaks and yells and squeals and cackles had excited the horse, and what had begun in mischief ended in real fright. The horse was running away, and it required an iron hand on the reins to pull him in. As Fish could not pull him in, he let him dash on, and the pace of the trap increased alarmingly. The light vehicle swayed and bumped from side to side, and the occupants clung to it. It looked as if they might be shot out any moment, if the trap did not overturn them into the ditch and roll over on them.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally wish you would pull him in, deah boy."

"I guess he's going all right."

"But it is dangewous. Suppose we meet a cyclist?"

"All the worse for the jay on the jigger, I guess."

"Weally, Fish—"

"It's all O.K. He's tiring himself out, and I guess he'll slacken."

Fortunately they did not meet a "jay" on a "jigger." But the horse showed no signs whatever of tiring himself out. He was good for many miles at that rate, and it was doubtful if D'Arcy himself could have pulled him in now. And Fisher T. Fish could as easily have carried him in his arms as pulled

him in. But the cool grin of confidence did not leave Fish's keen, thin face. He held on to the reins as if he were still driving, though he was inwardly wondering what was going to happen.

A grey tower rose over the trees.

"There's the school!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Pewwaps you had bettah give me the weins, Fish, deah boy. We can't dwive in at this wate."

"That the gate?" asked Fish, as the great stone gateway of St. Jim's came into sight down the long road.

"Yaas."

"I'll turn him'in, and then he'll slacken down."

"Bai Jove!"

Fisher T. Fish probably would not have succeeded in turning the horse in at the gateway, but for the fact that the animal knew the way well, having often been driven by D'Arcy of the Fourth. He was willing to turn in at the gates, and he turned in. But he did not slacken down; he dashed on furiously, and gravel flew in clouds from under the lashing heels. There was a shout from fellows in the quadrangle—a shout that rose to a roar.

"Look out!"

"Stop him!"

"Pull him in, you ass!"

The horse dashed on, fellows scattering before his charge. Fish dragged him aside as he seemed bent on charging up the steps of the School House. The horse careered away off the drive, with the trap bounding behind. On the cricket field, the juniors were busy, but play ceased at the sight of the trap and the runaway horse. For the runaway, seeing the playing-fields stretching wide before him, dashed right at them, and with a clatter of hoofs and a rattle of wheels he came thundering upon the cricket-pitch.

The fieldsmen scattered like magic.

The trap drove on over a wicket, and the wicket-keeper leaped for his life. Someone ran at the horse's head and he swerved suddenly. There was a crash as the trap overturned, and the horse went over with it, sprawling and lashing. D'Arcy and Fisher T. Fish rolled over on the turf out of reach of the horse. The swell of St. Jim's sprawled on his crunching topper. Fisher T. Fish sat up dazedly.

The cricketers surged round in fury.

"You fathead—"

"You crass idiot—"

"You lunatic—"

"You dangerous duffer—"

"Who is it?"

"Pway don't wag him, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, faintly. "It's Fish, from Gweyfwiahs."

"Fish! Oh!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned feebly.

"Yep! I'm Fisher T. Fish—and I guess I've arrove."

CHAPTER 8.

Fish Helps!

FISHER T. FISH had arrived—or arrove, as he preferred to call it.

He had "arrove" in a decidedly sensational manner.

There was no possibility for anybody at St. Jim's to fail to learn the fact that Fisher T. Fish of New York had arrove.

The cricketers, who had been about to commit assault and battery on the escaped lunatic who had interrupted the game, and ploughed up the pitch, paused in time.

The kicking horse was soothed and secured, and led away. Tom Merry, who was fielding, picked up the American junior. Blake dropped his bat and helped Arthur Augustus to his feet.

The swell of St. Jim's was a little dazed.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Is the horse hurt?"

"No, he's all right," said Blake.

"Good. Is that cwass ass hurt—I—I mean is Fish hurt?"

"Ha, ha! I think not."

"I guess I'm all right," said Fisher T. Fish. "It would take more than that to hurt me, I reckon. We don't grow soft over there."

"Over where?" asked Blake.

"In the Yew-nited States," explained Fish.

"I should think a fellow who drives like that must be in a be-nighted state," murmured Monty Lowther.

"I'm glad there's no damage done," said Fish, looking round.

"No damage," howled Figgins. "Look at the pitch."

"Yaas, wathah, and look at my clothes," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have wolloed ovah on the pitch—my clothes are howbly dirtay—"

"You can't touch pitch without being defiled," said Monty Lowther, solemnly. But Arthur Augustus was not in the humour to appreciate Lowther's puns.

"Pway don't make idiotic jokes, Lowthah," he said. "I regard this as wotten. Fish told me that he could dlive."

"I guess that's just where I live," said Fisher T. Fish. "You can't scare up many galoots on this side that can drive like me."

"None at all," grinned Tom Merry. "There are some fellows who would drive like you, if they could—but we keep 'em shut up in Colney Hatch, out of harm's way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you wouldn't mind getting off the pitch, we'll go on playing," said Figgins, gruffly.

Fisher T. Fish walked off the pitch. He was a good deal shaken, but his airy confidence had not deserted him. And he was not really displeased at having arrived in such a sensational manner. Fisher T. Fish loved the limelight. He strolled to the pavilion, and stood dusting himself down and looking on as the cricketers resumed the game. Blake and Herries were batting, and the score showed four down for the Fourth-Form, for twenty-six runs.

Arthur Augustus disappeared into the School House. He had to change into his flannels for the match, and he felt badly in need of a wash and a brush-up anyway. He was in good time for the game. Fisher T. Fish's brilliant driving had at least landed the juniors at St. Jim's in good time—though it had landed them on their necks.

Fisher T. Fish joined the group of waiting batsmen, and joined cheerily in the remarks passed upon the play. From Fish's observations, it appeared that he was a first-rate cricketer. At all events, he certainly had no hesitation in passing criticism on the play.

"I guess your field wants 't to get a move on, some," he remarked to Figgins.

"What's the matter with 'em?" asked Figgins, not very cordially. He was not very favourably impressed with the Transatlantic junior.

"Slow," said Fish. "All-fired slow."

"Top-notch fieldsmen at Greyfriars, I suppose?" said Kerr sarcastically.

"Nope; much the same. I find everything very slow over here. You should see how we play cricket over there, in the Yew-nited States."

"You play cricket over there?" asked Redfern, with heavy sarcasm.

"Not so much as you do over here," said Fish. "But we play it. Quality instead of quantity, I guess."

The juniors looked at him as if they would eat him. St. Jim's prided itself upon its cricket. If Fish had not been a guest at St. Jim's, he would have been answered in words plainer than his own. But he had a double claim on the forbearance of the St. Jim's fellows—as a guest, and as a stranger in a strange land. So they gave him his head, as Kerr expressed it in a whisper. But, like the horse to which Fish had given its head when he drove it, he would have taken it in any case.

"I'd like to show you some cricket," Fish remarked. "I guess I could open your eyes, some. Yes, sir."

"Bravo, Blake!" shouted Dig., as Blake drove the ball away. Kangaroo of the Shell was bowling, and bowling well, but Blake was scoring fast.

Fisher T. Fish grinned patronisingly.

"Wasn't that a jolly good hit?" demanded Dig., a little excitedly.

"Yep, I dare say. But the bowling's weak," said Fish. "That guy won't take that wicket in a month of Sundays. You watch out."

The next ball down knocked Blake's middle stump out of the ground, and Jack Blake carried his bat out. The juniors looked at the oracle from New York. They were sorry to see Blake's wicket go down, but there was some satisfaction in seeing Fish's prediction falsified as soon as it was out of his mouth. But if they expected to see Fisher T. Fish looking sheepish, they were disappointed.

"I guess I could show that pilgrim how to bat," was all Fish said.

Figgins grunted and went in. Jack Blake caught Fish's remark, and his eyes glinted. He had batted well, and it was only the first class bowling of the Australian junior that had beaten him. Blake prided himself upon being a cricketer from a cricketing county, and Fish's criticism touched him on the raw.

"Do you bat for Greyfriars?" he asked.

Fish shook his head.

"No. I guess I haven't time to play for the junior eleven. Besides, it wouldn't really do. No good having a top-hole cricketer among a lot of average jays. Like a whale among the tadpoles, you know."

"I'd like to see you bat," growled Blake.

"I'll bat for your team, if you like," said Fish readily. "If you've got a tough proposition in this match, and want help, I'm your antelope."

Blake hesitated. He was very keen to see the Greyfriars

Yankee bat, to see whether there was anything in his "gas." If he was half so good a cricketer as he evidently believed he was, he would be a valuable addition to any team. But he shook his head. It would not do to take the risk. The match was a pretty close one, and Blake could not afford to risk throwing away a wicket.

Herries went down to Yavasour's bowling, and Redfern went in. Redfern and Figgins between them made the fur fly. The runs began to pile up. The juniors were cheering the two New House fellows loudly when Arthur Augustus arrived upon the field, in spotless white, with a Panama hat on.

"How's it going, deah boys?" he asked.

"Six down for fifty," said Blake.

"Not a bad avewage," said Arthur Augustus. "If I make a century, the Shell won't have the slightest chance of beatin' us."

"Go hon!" snorted Blake. "I've made eighteen, so you're dead certain to make a century, I don't think."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Hullo! There goes Reddy!"

Redfern had been caught out by the Cornstalk. Reilly went in. But the Belfast junior had bad luck. He had only made four when a deadly ball from Kangaroo whipped out his leg stump, and he came off looking rather blue.

"Eight down for fifty-four," said Blake.

"I guess this side wants bucking up," remarked Fisher T. Fish, apparently quite unconscious of the fact that he was taking liberties in passing such open criticism on the cricket. Trifles like that did not trouble Fisher T. Fish. "Now, that galoot ought to have played back to that ball."

Reilly, who had just come off the pitch, gave the American junior a basilisk glare as he heard that remark.

"Ye howling gossoon!" he exclaimed. "I played a bit too far back, and that's why I was out. Phwat do you know about cricket, intirely?" When Reilly was excited, the accent of the Emerald Isle came out more strongly, and he had reason to be excited now. He was greatly inclined to "dot" the Yankee junior's sharp nose.

"I guess I know the game from A to Z," said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "That ball would have been a boundary for me."

"Sure, and it's a pratin' ass ye are—"

"Steady!" murmured Blake. "Honour the guest that is within thy walls."

"Shurrup, Reilly."

Reilly grunted and walked away. He did not wish to be rude to a guest, but as he confided to his chum Kerruish, he was "fed up intirely" with Fisher T. Fish already. But Fisher T. Fish was not at all disconcerted by Reilly's plain speaking. He was a plain speaker himself—very.

Figgins was out at last. The score was at seventy when his wicket fell. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put on his gloves. Fisher T. Fish touched him on the arm.

"I guess you've got a low score," he remarked.

"Yaas; I'm goin' to twy to buck it up."

"Other side good at batting?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you haven't much of a look in, I guess. That fat chap at the other end seems some of a stonewaller, and what you want is a really top-notch bat at this end to pile up the runs."

"Yaas; I'm goin' to pile up all I can, while Fatty Wynn stonewalls," explained D'Arcy.

"Better put me in."

"Eh?"

"I guess I'd pull the game out of the fire for you," said Fish confidently. "I don't say I should make a century. The other fellow couldn't keep up his end long enough, I guess. But so long as the fat chap can keep the innings open, you can count on me for the runs. I guess you've better play me."

"Weally, Fish—"

Arthur Augustus looked distressed. He did not like to refuse a request made by a guest. But he felt that Fish's request was unreasonable. Fish's batting was an unknown quantity, and if it was anything like his driving, it was not likely to do the side much good. And Arthur Augustus wanted to bat. He had high hopes of pulling the game out of the fire with brilliant batting, while Fatty Wynn stonewalled at the other end.

"Better do it," said Fish urgently. "I don't like to see you beaten."

"But you're not in flannels, deah boy."

"I guess I can bat as I am."

"You see, I'm not the skippah," said D'Arcy feebly.

"You must speak to Blake."

Fisher T. Fish turned to Blake.

"Put me in and save the match," he said tersely. Blake grunted.

"I suppose it is up to us to play him, if he wants to," murmured Arthur Augustus, aside. "I wish you had put him in instead of Hewwies or Weilly."

"Catch me!" said Blake. "I'll put him in instead of you, if you like. It can't make much difference—you can't play Kangy's bowling."

"Weally, Blake, I fully intend to make a century——"

"But Kangaroo doesn't intend to let you, and it's Kangy's intentions I'm thinking of," grunted Blake. "I suppose you would be good for a dozen, with luck."

"Last man in," called out Figgins.

"If you like to stand aside for Fish, I'll put him in," said Blake.

Arthur Augustus suppressed a groan.

"All wight," he said. "Ask the Shell chaps to wait a few minutes while he changes. I'll lend him some clobber."

Fisher T. Fish did not take long to change. He came out of the pavilion in three minutes. He accepted D'Arcy's beautiful bat, and swung it lightly as he walked on to the field. The Fourth-Formers watched him with keen interest. After all, in spite of the superabundant "gas" of Fisher T. Fish, it was possible that he was a good bat, and nobody but D'Arcy had faith in D'Arcy's power of piling up a century. D'Arcy would have made a dozen runs—with luck, twenty or so. The fellows who had played Greyfriars knew that the juniors there were good cricketers, and it was likely enough that Fish was as good as the rest. So they were contented to see him go on, and they were ready to cheer him to the wide if he made a good score.

Fisher T. Fish took up his position at the wicket with airy confidence. It was the last ball of an over, and Kangaroo of the Shell was bowling. The Australian looked along the pitch, marked Fisher T. Fish with his eye, and smiled. The fieldsmen knew his smile, and they smiled in anticipation.

Down came the ball, like a four-point-seven shell. Fisher T. Fish swiped at it gaily, and his bat described a circle in the air.

Crash!

Fisher T. Fish looked at his wicket. The middle stump was clean out of the ground, and reposing along with the bails. From the whole field came a joyful chirp:

"How's that?"

And the umpire sniggered as he chirped in response:

"Out!"

"I guess that gets me," said Fisher T. Fish. "I say, wasn't that a trial ball?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess this is where you get off the earth," remarked Manners, the wicket-keeper.

Fisher T. Fish walked off. The crowd before the pavilion greeted him with grim looks. He had batted for them and had scored a duck. Fatty Wynn came off wrathfully. He was not out, and he was angry.

"What did you send that idiot on for, Blake?" he demanded excitedly.

"Shush!"

"Gussy would have been bad enough!" howled Fatty. "He would have run me out, I expect——"

"Weally, Wynn——"

"But to plant that straddling cuckoo on me, and chuck my wicket away——"

Figgins and Kerr led the wrathful Fatty away to console him. Fatty Wynn was in a humour to lay his bat about Fisher T. Fish. The innings was over, and the Fourth were all down for seventy runs. The Shell fellows were smiling. They were good for a hundred, anyway, if a hundred should be wanted.

Blake could have said many things to Fisher T. Fish; but he restrained them. He felt that the Greyfriars chap must be feeling pretty bad at having let his side down in that disastrous manner. But he did not know F. T. Fish.

There was no sign of abatement in the jauntiness of that cheerful youth.

"I guess that lets me out," said Fish calmly. "You see, the bowling was wild, very wild. I'm accustomed to playing first-class bowling over there. Things happen like that sometimes. First-class bat knocked out by a bad bowler. You see the point?"

Blake & Co. did not reply. Their feelings were too deep for words.

CHAPTER 9.

F. T. Fish Shows How it is Done.

THE Shell innings opened with Tom Merry and Kangaroo at the wickets. Blake led his merry men out to field, Fisher T. Fish among them. Arthur Augustus had gently hinted to Fish that he needn't trouble to field; but Fish was stone deaf to gentle hints. He had shown the

St. Jim's fellows what batting was like "over there," and now he was going to show them what fielding was like, and bowling. He calmly requested Blake to let him bowl the first over.

Blake gave him a look that ought to have withered him on the spot—but Fisher T. Fish took a great deal of withering.

"Bowl the first over," said Blake.

"Yep!"

"We're playing cricket, you know," said Blake, sarcastically. "This isn't a screaming farce."

"I guess it would encourage the side, if you get the hat trick in the first over," said Fish. "You've made a pretty low score, and as it's a single-innings match, you've got to pick up on the bowling. That's where I come in. I'm a dab at batting, but bowling is my strong hold."

And Blake gave him the ball, out of sheer curiosity to see what he would do. Fisher T. Fish made his preparations very carefully. He felt that the eyes of all the field were upon him. All the spectators were watching him. It was a great opportunity for F. T. Fish to open the eyes of the Britishers on the subject of bowling, and he was prepared to do it.

He bowled to Tom Merry. He took a little run, and turned himself into a catherine-wheel, and the ball went down. The wicket-keeper gathered it in with a grunt. It was the widest of wides.

But Fish was not abashed. He sent down the second ball, and waited for the crash of the wicket. It was the crash of the bat that he heard. The ball flew—but the batsmen did not run. Tom Merry knew it was a boundary.

"Ahem!" murmured Fish.

The third ball was knocked away for three. Then Kangaroo was facing the bowling. The rest of the over added ten runs to the score, and the Shell fellows smiled. Blake, in a deep voice, told Fisher T. Fish to go into the field, and tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn was the champion junior bowler. In the House-matches, his bowling was the terror of the School-House fellows. In the Form-matches, he was the terror of the Shell. Fortunately for the Fourth, Fatty was in top form. Fatty was inspired, also, by a desire to show Fisher T. Fish how to bowl. Tom Merry's wicket fell in Fatty's first over, and Vavasour who followed him in, was dismissed for a duck's egg. Then came Bernard Glyn, and he scored two, and fell. And the Fourth-Formers yelled in appreciation of the hat trick.

As the field crossed over, Fisher T. Fish spoke to the Fourth-Form captain.

"Where's the ball?"

"Why, what do you want with the ball?" asked Blake, in sarcastic astonishment.

"Ain't I bowling again?"

"I guess not!" grinned Blake.

"I say, you'd better take advantage of a good bowler when you've got one," urged Fisher T. Fish. "That fat chap's had good luck, but it was all flukes. I guess I can show you some really scientific bowling."

"Yes—with seventeen more on the Shell score," growled Blake. "Thanks; I've had some! You can field if you like, or you can sit down and look on. I don't care which."

"I guess I'm not here to spectate," said Fish. "I'd like to save the match for you. But I guess I can show you some fielding."

"Like your batting and bowling?" queried Figgins.

"I guess fielding is my strong hold. You watch out for my catches. Where am I to field?"

"Anywhere you like," said Blake, politely. "The further off the better."

Fisher T. Fish sniffed. He was wearing out Blake's politeness. But he was resolved to show the Britishers what catches were like. As it happened, he had a good opportunity in the very next over. Kangaroo drove the ball away, and the batsmen ran. The ball came whizzing right at Fisher T. Fish. Kangy had been a little careless, perhaps because his keen eye had spotted Fish was no good. Fish saw the ball coming, even he could not fail to see that it was an easy catch. His hand went up for it, and touched it, and he fumbled it and let it drop into the grass. There was a roar.

"Butter-fingers!"

"Oh, you chump!"

"Send it in, you fathead!"

For Fisher T. Fish was staring at the ball, in great surprise, and the batsmen were still running. Blake dashed up and recovered the ball at Fish's very feet, and returned it; but the batsmen had scored three.

After that, Fisher T. Fish was specially favoured by the batsmen. If he had muffed the easiest of easy catches, it was safe to send him the ball; he made a flaw in the Fourth-Form armour, so to speak, and the batsmen knew that he would never catch them out. And he didn't. He had opportunities

enough, but not one of them materialised. The utmost Fisher T. Fish could do was to get in the way of the other fieldman.

The Shell score was at sixty, with four wickets yet to fall. Kangaroo was not out yet, and he looked as if he would never be out. Clifton Dane was at the other end, and the Canadian was backing up the Cornstalk manfully. Fatty Wynn exerted himself upon the wickets in vain, and Blake tried his hardest, and Figgins tried his hardest, but still the batsmen were there.

Fisher T. Fish urged his skipper to put him on to bowl again, but Blake's reply was so gruff that he dropped the subject.

But fortune smiled upon Fatty Wynn again. The score was at sixty-five when he bowled Kangaroo clean out. In the next over Clifton Dane was caught out by Kerr. Eight down for sixty-five! The Fourth-Formers breathed again. There was a chance yet—a slim and slender chance.

All their reliance was upon Fatty Wynn. And the fat Fourth-Former rose nobly to the occasion.

Lowther was dismissed for a duck's egg, and the score stood at nine down for the same figure, as the over finished.

Last man in!

Manners and Thompson were at the wickets for the finish. Two for Manners—sixty-seven. One more—sixty-eight! Then one for Thompson—sixty-nine. One wanted to tie—two to win! But if a wicket would only fall—

"Go in and win, Fatty, old man!" said Blake, who had bowled the last over, giving the ball to the Falstaff of the New House.

Fatty Wynn grinned.

"They're jolly well set," he said. "But I'll do my best. If you hadn't played that howling duffer—"

"I know that!" grunted Blake. "Go in and win, and shut up."

Fatty Wynn went on again to bowl. Thompson was receiving the bowling now; and he took one of the first ball. The scores tied. There was a jubilant murmur from the Shell fellows. The game was safe now, from their point of view—at the worst it could only be a draw. From the Fourth-Form point of view, at the best it could only be a draw. But that was better than a defeat—and they watched Fatty Wynn hungrily as he prepared to bowl Manners. Manners swiped away the ball, and away it went into the long field.

Smack!

Fisher T. Fish was there—had he caught the batsman out? His hand had touched the ball—the whole field heard the smack. The batsmen were running. There was a roar of wrath from the field as Fisher T. Fish was seen to stoop for the ball. He had fairly had it in his hand when he had let it fall. Even then there was time to save the game, if the return had been smart. The wicket-keeper looked imploringly—Fish had caught up the ball—there was time to hurl it fairly into the wicket-keeper's hands, and for the wicket to be knocked to pieces before the batsman could get home.

But Fisher T. Fish knew a trick worth two of that!

He generally did.

He sent the ball for the wicket.

A good throw-in would have knocked the wicket over before the panting batsman could have reached it. But it was unfortunately a bad throw-in. The ball dropped short, and the bat clicked on the crease. The wicket was saved—and the Shell had taken the odd run they wanted.

"Shell wins!" chuckled Tom Merry. "A run and a wicket. Hurray!"

Blake rushed towards Fisher T. Fish. What he was going to do will never be known, for Arthur Augustus dashed on the field in time.

"Blake, deah boy—"

"Lemme gerrat him!" said Blake, wildly. "Let me get his silly head in chancery—only for a minute—"

"Weally, Blake, a visitah—"

The fieldsmen closed round Blake and dragged him away. Fisher T. Fish walked off the field looking quite jaunty.

"Sorry you chaps are licked," he said to the glowering Fourth-Formers. "I did my best for you. But I guess it was too tough a proposition. One first-class player isn't enough in a team. The odds were against me."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy slipped his arm through his guest's, and walked him hurriedly off the field. Fisher T. Fish was in danger of massacre.

CHAPTER 10.

Kerr Has An Idea.

FISHER T. FISH sauntered into the tuck-shop with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Many of the cricketers gathered there after the match. Partly owing to the aid of Fisher T. Fish, the game had ended much sooner than was anticipated. Fisher T. Fish confessed that he was peckish, and allowed D'Arcy to order him a supply of the best that

the Dame Taggles could furnish. Fish sat on a high stool at the counter, and disposed of a cold chicken, which he washed down with coffee, at the same time laying down the law to the St. Jim's juniors on the subject of cricket.

The fellows stared at first—it was amazing to hear a fellow who had proved himself a crass duffer at every branch of the game, laying down the law, and criticising players who could have played his head off.

But that was Fisher T. Fish's little way.

Some of the fellows were inclined to be angry, but they soon "got on" to Fish's character, and began to take him humorously, and even led him on to "gas" by way of pulling his Transatlantic leg.

"Yes, I guess you should see us play over there," said Fisher T. Fish, having finished eating, and commenced operations with a large toothpick. "I guess it would be a sight for sore eyes, what?"

"It must be," grunted Blake, "if they all play as you do. I admit I never saw a cricketer quite like you before."

"And you never will, in this old island," said Fisher T. Fish, airily. "They don't grow here. What you want is hustle, sir—hustle. Hustle all the time. Now, in New York we make things hustle—just a few. My popper made and lost three fortunes before he became a millionaire. Now he's got a million dollars."

"Whose?" asked Blake innocently.

D'Arcy gave his chum a warning look; but Fisher T. Fish only chuckled.

"Very smart for a Johnny Bull," he commented. "But I guess the race is to the swift over there. It's get on or get out."

"Same as in a pack of giddy wolves," murmured Figgins. "I don't think I should brag about that myself."

"We learn to do things over there," said Fisher T. Fish, who seemed never tired of expatiating upon the great qualities of his beloved country. "Not talk—but do! That's us! Business from the word go. Savvy?"

"Not talk—but do!" murmured Blake. "Oh, my hat! And to see him muff that catch—"

The Terrible Three came into the tuck-shop. Tom Merry called to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Grimes is waiting to see you, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"Mrs. Mimms has settled for sixteen tins, and you've got to settle for four," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Pay up and smile."

"Yaas, but it's wotten." And Arthur Augustus slipped out of the tuckshop to settle with Grimes for the four tins of Fresh Tinned Fish, one of which had been lent to Tom Merry, and two of which had been raided by Levison and Mellish, while the fourth had been confiscated by Knox the prefect.

The chuckles of the juniors, as D'Arcy departed, caused Fisher T. Fish to look inquiring.

Tom Merry explained to him the mistake over the telegram, and the ordering of the twenty tins of Fresh Tinned Fish by the chums of No. 6.

Fisher T. Fish roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! I guess I made my wire plain enough."

"If you'd put in the word 'o'clock' after 'three,' there wouldn't have been any mistake," said Blake.

Fish shook his head.

"I guess that was impossible."

"Eh? How was it impossible?"

"It would have run over the twelve words," explained Fisher.

"Oh!"

"As it was, I had an argument at the post-office about 'School House' being one word!" said Fish indignantly. "Wanted to make out it was two words. Fact! I stood there for a quarter of an hour jawing at them before they'd admit that it was only one word; and then it was only to get rid of me. But I guess they couldn't come any of their old buck over me—Nope. They would have to get up very early in the morning to take a rise out of F. T. Fish!"

The juniors grinned. It would certainly have been difficult to overcharge a fellow who was ready to spend a quarter of an hour arguing over a halfpenny. Fisher T. Fish might own a millionaire for a "popper"—perhaps—but he evidently had learned the value of money, and how to take care of it.

"No; I guess Fisher T. Fish is wide awake all the time," said the Yankee schoolboy, with satisfaction, as he started on jam-tarts. "I guess he knows his way about—just a few! I guess I shall have to be spry to-night when I get back."

"How's that?" asked Tom Merry.

"I shall be late. It's a half-holiday at Greyfriars, the same as here. But my train won't get in till ten o'clock—half an hour after bedtime for the Lower Fourth. I guess I shall have to use all my wits to get out of a licking."

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, who had returned to the tuck-shop, having settled with Grimes for those famous tins of

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A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Fresh Tinned Fish. "Have you come away without asking permission?"

"I didn't want to ask permission, I reckon."

"Why not, dear boy?"

"Because it would have been refused," chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "It was easier to absquatulate—"

"To what?"

"Absquatulate," explained Fish. "That means vamoose."

"And what may vamoose mean?" asked Blake.

"I swear! You don't know what vamoose means?" exclaimed Fish, in surprise. "Well, my hat! It means to slide. Know what that means?"

"Yaas, of course," said D'Arcy. "Slide is an English word. But I uttably fail to see how you can slide in this warm weathah. Have you a skatin'-wink at Gweyfwhahs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fish.

Arthur Augustus looked surprised and nettled.

"Weally, Fish, I do not see the joke. How can you possibly slide without ice to slide on? I fail to see."

"Slide means to levant!" roared Fish.

"Levant! Gweat Scott! And what does that mean?"

"You don't know that word? Gee-whiz! When I say levant, I mean, to pull up stakes."

"Pull up stakes!" said D'Arcy dazedly. "What stakes?"

"Oh, great snakes!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Don't you study English? Pull up stakes means to mizzle—get out—absquatulate—travel—clear. Got that?"

"Oh, now I compwehend!"

"As I was saying, it was easier to absquatulate without asking first," explained Fish. "I shall get out of a row somehow when I get back—you bet! Fisher Tarleton Fish never gets left. That's his strong holt."

"But suppose the Head discovers that you've absquatulated without permission?" said Kerr. "He might send somebody after you."

"Not an expensive railway journey, I guess."

"He might telegraph to somebody here to send you back. Suppose he wired to the police-station to look for a runaway junior?"

Fish laughed.

"I guess that's not likely," he said. "He'd wait till I got back, to lick me. But if he did, I guess I should wriggle out somehow. I guess I'm not leaving this hyer show till the eight train."

"I should like to see you arguing it out with a bobby."

"My dear kid, I should pull that bobby's leg, and raise his blind, you bet," said Fisher T. Fish confidently.

"Raise his blind!" said the juniors blankly. They could dimly guess at the meaning of the American verbs to absquatulate, to vamoose, to slide, to pull up stakes—but to raise a blind was quite beyond them.

"Never heard of that?" asked Fish compassionately. "I guess the English language is making bigger strides over there than it is on this side. When I say I should raise his blind, I mean that I should straddle his ante."

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"That means, go one better, of course," said Fish. "And if I had to argue it out with a Johnny-Bull bobby, I kinder calculate that I should annex the jackpot."

"Would you weally?" gasped D'Arcy, who had never even heard of a jackpot, and hadn't the faintest idea how it was annexed.

"I guess so—some!" said Fisher T. Fish.

Having finished his refreshments, Fisher T. Fish slid off the high stool. Jack Blake mentioned that he had to go in to get on with his fretwork, and Fish caught at it at once.

"You go in for fretwork—eh?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" said Blake: "I'm making a fretwork model of St. Jim's. I made the design myself. Brooke helped me draw it, and I'm cutting it out. It's to make an ornament for the study, you know. Like to see it?"

Blake felt a little more cordial towards the muffer of catches and thrower-away of wickets when he found that he was interested in fretwork.

"I guess so," said Fish. "I'm nuts on fretwork myself. If you've got a difficult bit on hand, I guess I could help you out."

"Come up to the study," said Blake. Fisher T. Fish strolled away with the GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

rhums of Study No. 6. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn walked away towards the New House—Kerr with a peculiar twinkle in his eyes. The Scottish junior was evidently thinking something out. Figgins and Fatty Wynn were grinning. Fish amused them.

"What do you think of that merchant?" asked Kerr at last.

"Walking gasworks," said Fatty Wynn.

"I wish I could see somebody pull his leg, and take a rise out of out of him," said Figgins. "I'm blessed and dashed if I ever heard a chap gas as he does!"

"Good egg!" said Kerr. "I'm on!"

"What are you thinking of?"

"Suppose the Head of Greyfriars missed the bounder, and was waxy about his taking French leave, and wired to the police-station in Rylcombe for him to be collared and sent back?" said Kerr.

Figgins stared.

"He wouldn't."

"He might," said Kerr.

"Well, he might, if he was very ratty; and Fish is enough to make anybody ratty," said Figgins. "But—"

"Well, he's going to," said Kerr deliberately.

"Eh?"

"At least, a bobby is coming here for Fish."

"What! How do you know?" exclaimed Figgins, in astonishment.

"Because I'm the bobby," said Kerr coolly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"We've got a bobby's uniform in the props of the Junior Dramatic Club. You know I played Police-constable Fatsides in our comedy," said Kerr. "The fellows here know it, but that cheery merchant doesn't. What do you think?"

Figgins and Fatty Wynn roared.

"It would take him down a peg or two, and stop the escape of gas," Kerr suggested.

"But he's a guest," said Figgins, hesitating.

"Not our guest. He belongs to the School House chaps. Nothing to do with us. Besides, it's up to us as Britishers to show that that blessed Yankee isn't quite so smart as he fancies he is."

"It would be a ripping joke; but—"

"Jolly good wheeze!" said Fatty Wynn. "If he hadn't been a visitor, I'd have hammered him for chucking my wicket away as he did. The Shell beat us, and all through that frabjous ass!"

"That's true," said Figgins. "He ought to be boiled in oil!"

"And look at that catch he muffed—and the way he threw in the ball and saved their last wicket for them!" said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "And after that to gas about cricket as if he knew the game better than we do! Why—"

"We'll do it," said Figgins. "Come on, Kerr!"

And the three juniors, chuckling, disappeared into the New House.

CHAPTER 11.

Fish Makes Himself Useful.

JACK BLAKE and his comrades led the guest from Greyfriars into Study No. 6.

The fretwork model lay upon the table in that famous apartment.

When it was finished it would make a silhouette of St. Jim's, seen from the quadrangle, and Blake was very proud of the idea.

He had left off the work at a very difficult bit of the clock-tower, which required great care.

Fisher T. Fish looked at it and nodded. "Is this it?" he asked, not very enthusiastically.

"That's it," said Blake.

"I guess you've got a few things to learn in fretwork," Fisher T. Fish remarked. "You don't mind my saying so, of course?"

Blake glared.

"Oh, not at all!" he gasped.

"What's this?" asked Fish, tapping the clock-tower.

"That's the school tower."

"Yes? I guess that will want careful handling," said Fish, regarding it attentively. "I'll do that bit for you, if you like."

He took up the fretsaw.

"Hold on!" said Blake uneasily. "Can you handle that?"

NEXT
WEDNESDAY :

AT THE
ELEVENTH
HOUR!

A Grand Story of Tom
Merry & Co. at
St. Jim's.
Don't Miss It!
Order Early.



"You watch me!" said Fisher T. Fish as he took up the reins. D'Arcy did not watch him, he watched the geese run cackling to escape, frightened hens sailing into shops or houses, and he watched Gaffer Jones make a wild spring for his life. "Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "I weally wish you would pull him in, deah boy;"

(See Chapter 7.)

Fish looked surprised.

"I guess that's just where I live," he said. "You watch me."

He started operations without waiting for any permission. That was one of his little ways. Blake did watch him—very uneasily. There were some hours of work in that fretwork model already, and he didn't want to see it spoiled. Fisher T. Fish started with a heavy hand, and Blake gave a gasp.

"Hold on! You're not following the line!"

"That's all O K. You watch!"

"But I say—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Stop it!" roared Blake, as the fretsaw zigzagged. "You—you chump, you've cut off the top of the clock-tower!"

"Gee-whiz, so I have!" said Fish, with a nod. "I guess this isn't a good saw. You should see the fretsaws we use over there. I—"

"You ass! You're sawing down through the library now!" howled Blake. "Leave it alone!"

Politeness failed Blake as he saw the work of his hands, being cut to pieces. He grabbed the fretwork model, and jerked it away from Fisher T. Fish, breathing hard.

"Let it alone, you ass! You've ruined it already!"

"Sorry. I knew there was something wrong with the saw," said Fish.

Blake, with feelings that could not be expressed in words suitable for a visitor's ears, put away his fretwork. Fisher T. Fish glanced at the clock on the study mantelpiece, and started.

"Gee-whiz, it's not so late as that!" he exclaimed.

Blake snorted.

"No; that's an American clock."

The American junior grinned.

"Half an hour fast," he commented. "Why don't you put it in order?"

"I've put it in order once or twice, but it only makes it go faster."

"Oh, you don't know how to handle clocks!" said Fisher T. Fish, taking the clock from the mantelpiece. "I guess I'll regulate it for you. I guess I'm a dab hand at regulating clocks. Some!"

"Weally, Fish, deah boy, you needn't twouble—"

"No trouble at all," said Fish. "It won't take me a minute." He took out the back of the clock.

"There's somethin' or othah there you pweess one way to make it go slowah, and anothah way to make it go fastah," said D'Arcy.

"Better be thorough," said Fish, with a shake of the head. "I'll take a squint into the works and see what's wrong."

"Don't bust it!" said Herries, in alarm. "It's an American clock, but it's the only one we've got, and we can guess at the time by it."

"I'll make it go like a chronometer," said Fish.

"I say, what are you unscrewing there?" asked Blake warmly.

"That's all right. I guess—"

Buz-z-z-z-z-z-z! Whiz!

Something jumped out of the clock and caught Blake on the ear, and Blake roared.

"Ow! What's that?"

The clock had ceased to tick. It was not likely to gain any more.

"I guess the mainspring's broken," said Fisher T. Fish calmly. "Sorry, I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to do anything for that clock. It was a bit too far gone, I calculate." He put it back on the mantelpiece.

The chums of Study No. 6 exchanged glances. A great and almost overpowering desire was upon all of them to seize Fisher T. Fish by the scruff of the neck, and bump him upon the study carpet, but they nobly restrained that desire. Fisher T. Fish never knew what a narrow escape he had had.

He was looking round the study, as if in search of fresh worlds to conquer. His eye fell upon Herries's cornet, and he made a stride towards it.

"You play the cornet—eh?" he asked. "I guess I'm a dab at playing the cornet. I'll—"

"No, you won't!" said Herries excitedly, jumping between Fish and the cornet. "You'll jolly well let my cornet alone."

"Weally, Hewwies, deah boy—" murmured D'Arcy.

"Let's get out of doors," said Blake hastily. "What do you say to a spin on a bike, Fish? It's lovely weather for a spin."

"Yaas; that's a good idea."

"Yep!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm great on cycling, I guess. I'll go slow, so that you galoots can keep up with me."

Jack Blake was famous on the cycle track at St. Jim's. Again he felt an almost overmastering desire to bump the keen.

"Keen on cycling—eh?" he asked.

"Correct."

"Won no end of races, I suppose?"

"I guess I don't trouble about races. You see, it wouldn't be exactly the thing—the other fellows wouldn't have a look-in. It would be a walk-over all the time for me. But I'll give you a little run if you like, just to show you how we wheel over there."

"Good egg!" said Blake. "Come on."

"Yaas, wathah! I'll lend you my bike, Fish, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus led the way down the passage with his guest. Blake and Herries and Digby followed them, and in the lower passage they signed to the Terrible Three to join them. Tom Merry & Co. came up.

"That—that bouncer is going to show us how to cycle," said Blake, in suppressed tones, as Fish strolled on with D'Arcy. "You chaps come, too. We'll get him on the cycle track, and see what he can do. Of course, he can't cycle any more than he can play cricket, or drive traps, or mend clocks. I'm beginning to understand him now. We'll leave him a thousand miles behind, and see if it will stop his gas."

The Terrible Three chuckled in chorus. They were quite willing to lend their aid in reducing the volume of Fisher T. Fish's gas. And the School House juniors marched down cheerfully to the bike-shed for their machines. There would be much solace and satisfaction in making Fisher Tarleton Fish confess that there was at least one thing that he could not do.

CHAPTER 12.

Something at Cycling.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, in the kindness of his heart, had offered to lend Fish his machine. Somebody had to do so, as Fish had no cycle with him—and it was "up" to D'Arcy, as the Yankee schoolboy was his guest. But as he remembered the fate of the fret-work and the clock, D'Arcy felt some inward misgivings.

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"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers,

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

He was quite assured in his mind that Fish could not do anything extraordinary in the way of riding, but he might do anything extraordinary in the way of damaging bicycles. And Arthur Augustus's "jigger" was the handsomest and most expensive of jiggers. It had cost D'Arcy's "pater" twenty guineas, and D'Arcy was very careful with it. And the way Fish dragged it off the stand in the bike-shed was not reassuring.

"I—I suppose you can wide, deah boy?" said D'Arcy uneasily.

Fisher T. Fish smiled.

"That's just where I live!" he said.

"I should not like the machine to be smashed up."

"Well; that depends on the other riders," said Fish. "If they run into me on the track, I can't answer for what happens to the jigger."

"Oh, that's all wight; they won't wun into you! But pewwaps you might wun into them."

"I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut. You watch me, that's all!"

There was no doubt that Arthur Augustus would watch him.

"You've got a cycle-track here—what?" said Fish, as they wheeled the machines out.

"Yes; and a jolly good one," said Tom Merry.

"You should see our cycle-tracks over there," said Fish. "Dandy ones, I can tell you. How many laps are we going to ride?"

"How many can you stand?" asked Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! I guess I could tire you all out, and come up smiling at the finish," said Fish. "I don't want to be hard on you. Make it six."

"Right-ho!"

"And I'll give you once round as a start," said Fish.

"What!"

"You start a lap ahead, to give you a chance," explained Fish.

"We'll start level," said Tom Merry, with a grin. "Perhaps you won't have many laps to spare at the finish."

"Well, I don't want to kill you, I guess."

"You won't kill us," grinned Blake. "Here we are,"

Fisher T. Fish tried the bicycle. Then he raised the saddle a little, his thin legs being longer than D'Arcy's.

"I guess this is O K!" he said.

"You can start us, Gussy," said Monty Lowther. "You're not riding. Bang your eyeglass on the post here for a signal."

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—it would bwreak my monocle!"

"Go hon!"

"I will say one, two, thwee, and go!" said Arthur Augustus, taking up his stand beside the track. "Are you weady?"

"Quite ready!" grinned Manners.

"Yep!"

"One, two, thwee!" Arthur Augustus paused. "Go!"

And they started.

Round went the racing wheelmen, six of them keeping pretty level, and one straggling behind. The one was Fisher T. Fish. He was working away at the pedals as if for his life, but the St. Jim's juniors were simply walking away from him. There was a chuckle from the juniors who had gathered to see the race.

"I kinder guess this is where the Yank gets left," remarked Kangaroo of the Shell, in imitation of Fish's beautiful American language.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in, Fishy!" shouted D'Arcy minor, of the Third Form. "Put your tinned beef into it! Get a move on! Hustle!"

"Weally, Wally—" murmured his major, in remonstrance.

"Get off and push it!" howled Wally. "You'll go faster! Get out and walk, Fishy, or I guess you'll get left."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway shut up, Wally," said Arthur severely. "That isn't the way to talk to a guest, you young wascal!"

"Tain't my guest," said Wally cheerfully. "I wouldn't own him. My only Aunt Jane! Did you ever see a chap ride like that?"

The cyclists had swept round a whole lap before Fisher T. Fish had done half. They had expected to beat him, and to beat him easily, but they had not quite expected that. They were laughing as they rode now. Long before Fish had completed the lap, they passed him on their second round, and Monty Lowther playfully tickled his ear as he passed.

"Oh, I swow!" gasped Fish.

He was panting for breath, and labouring heavily with the machine. The bike was going beautifully; it was a rider that was wanted.

"Pway don't make idiotic jokes, Lowthah," he said. "I wegard this as wotten. Fish told me that he could dwise."

"I guess that's just where I live," said Fisher T. Fish. "You can't scare up many galoots on this side that can drive like me."

"None at all," grinned Tom Merry. "There are some fellows who would drive like you, if they could—but we keep 'em shut up in Colney Hatch, out of harm's way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you wouldn't mind getting off the pitch, we'll go on playing," said Figgins, gruffly.

Fisher T. Fish walked off the pitch. He was a good deal shaken, but his airy confidence had not deserted him. And he was not really displeased at having arrived in such a sensational manner. Fisher T. Fish loved the limelight. He strolled to the pavilion, and stood dusting himself down and looking on as the cricketers resumed the game. Blake and Herries were batting, and the score showed four down for the Fourth-Form, for twenty-six runs.

Arthur Augustus disappeared into the School House. He had to change into his flannels for the match, and he felt badly in need of a wash and a brush-up anyway. He was in good time for the game. Fisher T. Fish's brilliant driving had at least landed the juniors at St. Jim's in good time—though it had landed them on their necks.

Fisher T. Fish joined the group of waiting batsmen, and joined cheerily in the remarks passed upon the play. From Fish's observations, it appeared that he was a first-rate cricketer. At all events, he certainly had no hesitation in passing criticism on the play.

"I guess your field want's to get a move on, some," he remarked to Figgins.

"What's the matter with 'em?" asked Figgins, not very cordially. He was not very favourably impressed with the Transatlantic junior.

"Slow," said Fish. "All-fired slow."

"Top-notch fieldsmen at Greyfriars, I suppose?" said Kerr sarcastically.

"None; much the same. I find everything very slow over here. You should see how we play cricket over there, in the Yew-nited States."

"You play cricket over there?" asked Redfern, with heavy sarcasm.

"Not so much as you do over here," said Fish. "But we play it. Quality instead of quantity, I guess."

The juniors looked at him as if they would eat him. St. Jim's prided itself upon its cricket. If Fish had not been a guest at St. Jim's, he would have been answered in words plainer than his own. But he had a double claim on the forbearance of the St. Jim's fellows—as a guest, and as a stranger in a strange land. So they gave him his head, as Kerr expressed it in a whisper. But, like the horse to which Fish had given its head when he drove it, he would have taken it in any case.

"I'd like to show you some cricket," Fish remarked. "I guess I could open your eyes, some. Yes, sir."

"Bravo, Blake!" shouted Dig., as Blake drove the ball away. Kangaroo of the Shell was bowling, and bowling well, but Blake was scoring fast.

Fisher T. Fish grinned patronisingly.

"Wasn't that a jolly good hit?" demanded Dig., a little excitedly.

"Yep, I dare say. But the bowling's weak," said Fish. "That guy won't take that wicket in a month of Sundays. You watch out."

The next ball down knocked Blake's middle stump out of the ground, and Jack Blake carried his bat out. The juniors looked at the oracle from New York. They were sorry to see Blake's wicket go down, but there was some satisfaction in seeing Fish's prediction falsified as soon as it was out of his mouth. But if they expected to see Fisher T. Fish looking sheepish, they were disappointed.

"I guess I could show that pilgrim how to bat," was all Fish said.

Figgins grunted and went in. Jack Blake caught Fish's remark, and his eyes glinted. He had batted well, and it was only the first class bowling of the Australian junior that had beaten him. Blake prided himself upon being a cricketer from a cricketing county, and Fish's criticism touched him on the raw.

"Do you bat for Greyfriars?" he asked.

Fish shook his head.

"No. I guess I haven't time to play for the junior eleven. Besides, it wouldn't really do. No good having a top-hole cricketer among a lot of average jays. Like a whale among the tadpoles, you know."

"I'd like to see you bat," growled Blake.

"I'll bat for your team, if you like," said Fish readily. "If you've got a tough proposition in this match, and want help, I'm your antelope."

Blake hesitated. He was very keen to see the Greyfriars

Yankee bat, to see whether there was anything in his "gas." If he was half so good a cricketer as he evidently believed he was, he would be a valuable addition to any team. But he shook his head. It would not do to take the risk. The match was a pretty close one, and Blake could not afford to risk throwing away a wicket.

Herries went down to Vavasour's bowling, and Redfern went in. Redfern and Figgins between them made the fur fly. The runs began to pile up. The juniors were cheering the two New House fellows loudly when Arthur Augustus arrived upon the field, in spotless white, with a Panama hat on.

"How's it going, deah boys?" he asked.

"Six down for fifty," said Blake.

"Not a bad avegage," said Arthur Augustus. "If I make a century, the Shell won't have the slightest chance of beat-in' us."

"Go hon!" snorted Blake. "I've made eighteen, so you're dead certain to make a century, I don't think."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Hullo! There goes Reddy!"

Redfern had been caught out by the Cornstalk. Reilly went in. But the Belfast junior had bad luck. He had only made four when a deadly ball from Kangaroo whipped out his leg stump, and he came off looking rather blue.

"Eight down for fifty-four," said Blake.

"I guess this side wants bucking up," remarked Fisher T. Fish, apparently quite unconscious of the fact that he was taking liberties in passing such open criticism on the cricket. Trifles like that did not trouble Fisher T. Fish. "Now, that galoot ought to have played back to that ball."

Reilly, who had just come off the pitch, gave the American junior a basilisk glare as he heard that remark.

"Ye howling gossoon!" he exclaimed. "I played a bit too far back, and that's why I was out. Phwat do you know about cricket, intirely?" When Reilly was excited, the accent of the Emerald Isle came out more strongly, and he had reason to be excited now. He was greatly inclined to "dot" the Yankee junior's sharp nose.

"I guess I know the game from A to Z," said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "That ball would have been a boundary for me."

"Sure, and it's a pratin' ass ye are—"

"Steady!" murmured Blake. "Honour the guest that is within thy walls."

"Shurrup, Reilly."

Reilly grunted and walked away. He did not wish to be rude to a guest, but as he confided to his chum Kerruish, he was "fed up intirely" with Fisher T. Fish already. But Fisher T. Fish was not at all disconcerted by Reilly's plain speaking. He was a plain speaker himself—very.

Figgins was out at last. The score was at seventy when his wicket fell. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put on his gloves. Fisher T. Fish touched him on the arm.

"I guess you've got a low score," he remarked.

"Yaas; I'm goin' to twy to buck it up."

"Other side good at batting?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you haven't much of a look in, I guess. That fat chap at the other end seems some of a stonewaller, and what you want is a really top-notch bat at this end to pile up the runs."

"Yaas; I'm goin' to pile up all I can, while Fatty Wynn stonewalls," explained D'Arcy.

"Better put me in."

"Eh?"

"I guess I'd pull the game out of the fire for you," said Fish confidently. "I don't say I should make a century. The other fellow couldn't keep up his end long enough, I guess. But so long as the fat chap can keep the innings open, you can count on me for the runs. I guess you've better play me."

"Weally, Fish—"

Arthur Augustus looked distressed. He did not like to refuse a request made by a guest. But he felt that Fish's request was unreasonable. Fish's batting was an unknown quantity, and if it was anything like his driving, it was not likely to do the side much good. And Arthur Augustus wanted to bat. He had high hopes of pulling the game out of the fire with brilliant batting, while Fatty Wynn stonewalled at the other end.

"Better do it," said Fish urgently. "I don't like to see you beaten."

"But you're not in flannels, deah boy."

"I guess I can bat as I am."

"You see, I'm not the skippah," said D'Arcy feebly.

"You must speak to Blake."

Fisher T. Fish turned to Blake.

"Put me in and save the match," he said tersely. Blake grunted.

"I suppose it is up to us to play him, if he wants to," murmured Arthur Augustus, aside. "I wish you had put him in instead of Hewwies or Weilly."

"Catch me!" said Blake. "I'll put him in instead of you, if you like. It can't make much difference—you can't play Kangy's bowling."

"Weally, Blake, I fully intend to make a century—"

"But Kangaroo doesn't intend to let you, and it's Kangy's intentions I'm thinking of," grunted Blake. "I suppose you would be good for a dozen, with luck."

"Last man in," called out Figgins.

"If you like to stand aside for Fish, I'll put him in," said Blake.

Arthur Augustus suppressed a groan.

"All wight," he said. "Ask the Shell chaps to wait a few minutes while he changes. I'll lend him some clobber."

Fisher T. Fish did not take long to change. He came out of the pavilion in three minutes. He accepted D'Arcy's beautiful bat, and swung it lightly as he walked on to the field. The Fourth-Formers watched him with keen interest. After all, in spite of the superabundant "gas" of Fisher T. Fish, it was possible that he was a good bat, and nobody but D'Arcy had faith in D'Arcy's power of piling up a century. D'Arcy would have made a dozen runs—with luck, twenty or so. The fellows who had played Greyfriars knew that the juniors there were good cricketers, and it was likely enough that Fish was as good as the rest. So they were contented to see him go on, and they were ready to cheer him to the wide if he made a good score.

Fisher T. Fish took up his position at the wicket with airy confidence. It was the last ball of an over, and Kangaroo of the Shell was bowling. The Australian looked along the pitch, marked Fisher T. Fish with his eye, and smiled. The fieldsmen knew his smile, and they smiled in anticipation.

Down came the ball, like a four-point-seven shell. Fisher T. Fish swiped at it gaily, and his bat described a circle in the air.

Crash!

Fisher T. Fish looked at his wicket. The middle stump was clean out of the ground, and reposing along with the bails. From the whole field came a joyful chirp:

"How's that?"

And the umpire sniggered as he chirped in response:

"Out!"

"I guess that gets me," said Fisher T. Fish. "I say, wasn't that a trial ball?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess this is where you get off the earth," remarked Manners, the wicket-keeper.

Fisher T. Fish walked off. The crowd before the pavilion greeted him with grim looks. He had batted for them and had scored a duck. Fatty Wynn came off wrathfully. He was not out, and he was angry.

"What did you send that idiot on for, Blake?" he demanded excitedly.

"Shush!"

"Gussy would have been bad enough!" howled Fatty. "He would have run me out, I expect—"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"But to plant that straddling cuckoo on me, and chuck my wicket away—"

Figgins and Kerr led the wrathful Fatty away to console him. Fatty Wynn was in a humour to lay his bat about Fisher T. Fish. The innings was over, and the Fourth were all down for seventy runs. The Shell fellows were smiling. They were good for a hundred, anyway, if a hundred should be wanted.

Blake could have said many things to Fisher T. Fish; but he restrained them. He felt that the Greyfriars chap must be feeling pretty bad at having let his side down in that disastrous manner. But he did not know F. T. Fish.

There was no sign of abatement in the jauntiness of that cheerful youth.

"I guess that lets me out," said Fish calmly. "You see, the bowling was wild, very wild. I'm accustomed to playing first-class bowling over there. Things happen like that sometimes. First-class bat knocked out by a bad bowler. You see the point?"

Blake & Co. did not reply. Their feelings were too deep for words.

CHAPTER 9.

F. T. Fish Shows How it is Done.

THE Shell innings opened with Tom Merry and Kangaroo at the wickets. Blake led his merry men out to field, Fisher T. Fish among them. Arthur Augustus had gently hinted to Fish that he needn't trouble to field; but Fish was stone deaf to gentle hints. He had shown the

St. Jim's fellows what batting was like "over there," and now he was going to show them what fielding was like, and bowling. He calmly requested Blake to let him bowl the first over.

Blake gave him a look that ought to have withered him on the spot—but Fisher T. Fish took a great deal of withering.

"Bowl the first over," said Blake.

"Yep!"

"We're playing cricket, you know," said Blake, sarcastically. "This isn't a screaming farce."

"I guess it would encourage the side, if you get the hat trick in the first over," said Fish. "You've made a pretty low score, and as it's a single-innings match, you've got to pick up on the bowling. That's where I come in. I'm a dab at batting, but bowling is my strong holt."

And Blake gave him the ball, out of sheer curiosity to see what he would do. Fisher T. Fish made his preparations very carefully. He felt that the eyes of all the field were upon him. All the spectators were watching him. It was a great opportunity for F. T. Fish to open the eyes of the Britishers on the subject of bowling, and he was prepared to do it.

He bowled to Tom Merry. He took a little run, and turned himself into a catherine-wheel, and the ball went down. The wicket-keeper gathered it in with a grunt. It was the widest of wides.

But Fish was not abashed. He sent down the second ball, and waited for the crash of the wicket. It was the crash of the bat that he heard. The ball flew—but the batsmen did not run. Tom Merry knew it was a boundary.

"Ahem!" murmured Fish.

The third ball was knocked away for three. Then Kangaroo was facing the bowling. The rest of the over added ten runs to the score, and the Shell fellows smiled. Blake, in a deep voice, told Fisher T. Fish to go into the field, and tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn was the champion junior bowler. In the House-matches, his bowling was the terror of the School-House fellows. In the Form-matches, he was the terror of the Shell. Fortunately for the Fourth, Fatty was in top form. Fatty was inspired, also, by a desire to show Fisher T. Fish how to bowl. Tom Merry's wicket fell in Fatty's first over, and Vavasour who followed him in, was dismissed for a duck's egg. Then came Bernard Glyn, and he scored two, and fell. And the Fourth-Formers yelled in appreciation of the hat trick.

As the field crossed over, Fisher T. Fish spoke to the Fourth-Form captain.

"Where's the ball?"

"Why, what do you want with the ball?" asked Blake, in sarcastic astonishment.

"Ain't I bowling again?"

"I guess not!" grinned Blake.

"I say, you'd better take advantage of a good bowler when you've got one," urged Fisher T. Fish. "That fat chap's had good luck, but it was all flukes. I guess I can show you some really scientific bowling."

"Yes—with seventeen more on the Shell score," growled Blake. "Thanks; I've had some! You can field if you like, or you can sit down and look on. I don't care which."

"I guess I'm not here to spectate," said Fish. "I'd like to save the match for you. But I guess I can show you some fielding."

"Like your batting and bowling?" queried Figgins.

"I guess fielding is my strong holt. You watch out for my catches. Where am I to field?"

"Anywhere you like," said Blake, politely. "The further off the better."

Fisher T. Fish sniffed. He was wearing out Blake's politeness. But he was resolved to show the Britishers what catches were like. As it happened, he had a good opportunity in the very next over. Kangaroo drove the ball away, and the batsmen ran. The ball came whizzing right at Fisher T. Fish. Kangy had been a little careless, perhaps because his keen eye had spotted Fish was no good. Fish saw the ball coming, even he could not fail to see that it was an easy catch. His hand went up for it, and touched it, and he fumbled it and let it drop into the grass. There was a roar.

"Butter-fingers!"

"Oh, you chump!"

"Send it in, you fathead!"

For Fisher T. Fish was staring at the ball, in great surprise, and the batsmen were still running. Blake dashed up and recovered the ball at Fish's very feet, and returned it; but the batsmen had scored three.

After that, Fisher T. Fish was specially favoured by the batsmen. If he had muffed the easiest of easy catches, it was safe to send him the ball; he made a flaw in the Fourth-Form armour, so to speak, and the batsmen knew that he would never catch them out. And he didn't. He had opportunities

He wasn't going to call Towser off. Nobody else could do it. The juniors were in what F. T. Fish would have called a quandary. They stood and consulted together, and watched Towser—and Towser watched Fisher T. Fish.

CHAPTER 14. Startling News!

FISHER T. FISH was beginning to look anxious. The shed upon which he had clambered was the building used to shelter the pets belonging to the St. Jim's fellows—the "menagerie," as the juniors called it. It was detached from all other buildings, and there was no escape for the besieged junior, unless a kindly aeroplane should swoop down and rescue him. Fish's position on the sloping, corrugated iron roof was far from secure, and far from comfortable. He sat there, and clung on, looking down at the patient bulldog.

The thought of falling into the jaws of Towser made cold thrills run along his spine. He had said that he had a way with Towser, and it had failed. But if he dropped off the shed, it was certain that Towser would have a way with him that would not fail.

"I say, you chaps, call that bally dog off!" shouted Fish. "He won't come, deah boy."

"Look here! I can't stay here all night!" howled Fish. "Can't you make him sit up?" asked Lowther. "You were going to make him sit up. It seems to me he's made you sit up instead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I guess I'm not touching that mongrel again. You call him off, so that I can skip."

The juniors tried to call Towser off. They called him "Towser," and "Towsy," and "Good dog," and "Good old doggie." Towser did not take the slightest notice. Blandishments were lost on him. He was deaf to the voice of the charmer.

His master had bidden him "watch" the Yankee school-boy. And Towser had his own reasons for watching him, too. And he watched him.

"Towsah, old boy, pway come away," said Arthur Augustus, venturing to touch the bulldog caressingly on the head.

Towser turned his head and opened his jaws, and D'Arcy stepped hurriedly back.

"Bai Jove, the awful beast was goin' to bite!" "It's too bad of Herries," said Tom Merry, gasping with merriment, but very much puzzled what to do. "Shall we drive him off with brooms and things?"

"Not an easy job," said Blake. "Fish said he would handle him," said Monty Lowther. "Let him handle him, and it's all simple enough. Get down and handle him, Fishy."

"I guess I'm stopping hyer till that dog's gone." "But you've got a way with dogs—"

"I guess I freeze to this roof." "Suppose we try to tempt him away with somethin' to eat."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Cut off and get some meat from the kitchen. Cookey will give you some if you tell her what's the matter."

"Right-ho!" Arthur Augustus ran off at top speed. He returned in about ten minutes with a large piece of meat in his hand, holding it carefully in a fragment of newspaper. He held it out to Towser. Towser did not even sniff at it. Towser had business on hand, and he was not to be tempted from his duty.

"Towsy, old man, take a bite," urged D'Arcy. "You wotten beast! Eat it, you wottah! Dear old doggie! This way, you know, you wotten, wotten wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's no good, deah boys; he won't move."

"He'll have to be driven off," said Tom Merry. "Get sticks and stable brooms and anything, and we'll march on him. He'll have to shift."

"It's the only way," grinned Digby. The juniors armed themselves for the fray. They took brooms from the stableyard, and rakes and sticks and other things from the wood-shed. They marched on Towser in a body, with threatening gestures. Towser did not move until D'Arcy poked him in the ribs with a rough broom-head. Then Towser snarled. Towser's snarl was terrifying, and it was a warning that he meant business. The juniors involuntarily jumped back.

"Oh, pile in!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You ain't afraid of a dog, are you?"

Considering that Fish was clinging to the roof of the shed in mortal fear of Towser, this remark was what might have been called in his own language "pretty considerable cool."

"You jump down and handle him!" shouted Blake wrathfully.

"Nope." "Then shut up!" said Blake, forgetting for the moment that Fisher T. Fish was a visitor.

"Weally, Blake—" "Oh, ring off!" growled Blake. "What the dooce are we going to do with that confounded dog? Look here, we've got to charge him! Come on!"

"Steady, the Buffs!" grinned Lowther. They charged.

Towser jumped up then, and there was a wild yell from Tom Merry as the bulldog fastened on him. The juniors scattered. Tom Merry jumped away, leaving half a trousers-leg in Towser's jaws.

"Bai Jove! Has he bitten you, deah boy?" Tom Merry gasped.

"Just grazed the skin. Oh, look at my bags!" "Wuined, bai Jove! It's howwid!"

"Look here! Are you going to get that blessed dog away?" bawled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I can't stay up here till the cows come home!"

Towser had resumed his place and his watching. The juniors held a hurried consultation. What was to be done? If they had been willing to smite Towser hip and thigh at the risk of seriously injuring him, he could have been driven off or disabled. But, naturally, they did not want to do anything of the sort. Fisher T. Fish was the cause of the trouble, and it was not fair that Towser should suffer.

"Herries will have to come and call him off," said Tom Merry at last. "I'll go and change my bags. You chaps find Herries and bump him till he agrees to call Towser off."

"Yaas, that's a good idea!" "Hold on!" yelled Fish. "Don't you absquatulate and leave me here alone with that dog!"

"We're going to fetch Herries." "Look here! I guess—"

Toby, the School House page, came round the corner of the School House. There was a grave and alarmed look on Toby's face.

"Is a gentleman named Master Fish here?" he asked. "I guess I'm that antelope."

"Master Herries told me I should find you here, sir," said Toby. "You're wanted."

"What's the trouble?" asked Tom Merry. "There's a policeman asking for Master Fish, sir. I've showed 'im into Study No. 6," said Toby.

The juniors jumped. "A policeman!"

"Yes, sir. He says Master Fish has run away from Greyfriars, and he's come to take him back."

"Oh, crikey!"

CHAPTER 15.

The Arm of the Law.

TOM MERRY & CO. simply gasped. It had been suggested, more in jest than in earnest, that the Head of Greyfriars might think Fish had run away from school, and apply to the police to send him back. Nobody, of course, had supposed for a moment that such a thing would happen.

And now it had happened. A policeman in Study No. 6, waiting for Fisher T. Fish, to take him back to Greyfriars.

"Well, I swow!" gasped Fish. "My only hat!"

"Well, this is a pretty kettle of fish!" gasped Manners. "A pretty kettle of Fisher T. Fish!" grinned Lowther. But no one laughed. The matter was too serious.

Herries came into sight with Figgins and Fatty Wynn of the New House. The three juniors were grinning.

"Seems that somebody is looking for Fish," said Figgins.

"Fat bobby in Study No. 6," said Fatty Wynn. "Call that bulldog off!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "Herries, you chump, call that blithering dog off! I'll slip out of the school and get down to the station while the bobby's in the study."

"Yaas, that's a good ideah!" "I guess you can tell him I'm gone as soon as I've vamoosed," said Fish. "Call that dog off, do you hear?"

Herries heard, but he did not call the dog off. "Herries, old man—"

"Look heah, Hewwies—" "Can't interfere with the law," said Herries stolidly.

"If there's a policeman wanting to see Fish, he's going to see Fish. We can't break the law."

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A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Bai Jove!"

"If Fish bunks, the bobby might go to the Head inquiring," said Manners thoughtfully.

"I guess I'm going to light out all the same," yelled Fisher T. Fish. "Will you call that dog off, you jay?"

"No, I won't!" said Herries. "Toby, go and fetch the policeman here!"

"Yessir," said Toby. And he hurried away.

"Look here!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm not going back to Greyfriars in charge of a bobby! Call that dog off!"

"You can argue it out with the bobby," said Herries calmly. "You said that if anything of the kind happened you'd pull the bobby's leg and manage it all right. Well, now's your chance!"

"Yaas, wathah! There's somethin' in that!" agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Fisher T. Fish did not appear to think that there was anything in it. He simply raved. The idea of being taken back to school in charge of a policeman was unthinkable. He would leave all St. Jim's laughing behind him, and he would find all Greyfriars laughing when he arrived there. Fish was not very keenly sensitive to ridicule, perhaps, but this was the limit.

He was still raving when the constable arrived on the scene, piloted by Toby. The juniors all looked at the policeman with painful interest. He was a short, fat constable, with a red, ruddy face and thick whiskers and beard. His feet were very large, and he walked with a sounding stride.

He stared stolidly at the juniors, and at the bulldog, and at the frantic youth on the roof of the shed. Figgins and Kerr and Herries were grinning, as if they saw some comical side of the matter that was lost on the other fellows. Tom Merry & Co. were serious enough. D'Arcy whispered to Tom Merry that if a "soveveign" was any good, he was ready to tip the limb of the law to that extent. But Tom Merry shook his head. He had heard tell of a policeman who could not be bribed, and for all he knew, this might be that very policeman!

"Which of you young gents is Master Fish, of Greyfriars?" asked the fat constable, in a deep and rumbling voice.

"I guess there's no such person here," said Fisher T. Fish, denying his own identity with perfect coolness.

The policeman shook his head.

"I've got certain information that he is here," he replied. "Is it you?" he added, dropping a heavy gloved hand on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's shoulder.

The swell of St. Jim's jumped back.

"Bai Jove! Certainly not!"

"Master Fish is an American, I understand," said the officer. "The young gentleman on the shed is the person, I think."

"I kinder guess you can't figure it out that I'm an American, any more than the other galoots hyer," said Fisher T. Fish.

"As if a dead donkey wouldn't know him by that accent!" gasped Blake.

The constable signed to the junior to descend.

"Please come down, Master Fish!" he said.

"I guess it can't be done till that dog's gone."

Herries called off Towser. Towser had done his duty. The bulldog reluctantly obeyed his master's voice, and abandoned his prey. The chain clinked as Herries fastened it on the bulldog's collar, and never had any sound appeared more musical to the ears of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

"Now, please step down, sir, so that I can take you in charge," said the constable.

"I guess I'm not going to be taken into charge," said Fisher T. Fish. "Where's your warrant? I suppose there's some law in this hyer old country, ain't there?"

"No warrant is necessary for taking a runaway schoolboy back to school, sir."

"But I ain't a runaway schoolboy!" yelled Fish. "I'm here on a visit, I guess."

"You must settle that with your headmaster, sir."

"I guess I'm not going with you."

"Then I shall have to take you by force."

"Look here, don't you lay hands on a free American citizen!" roared Fish. "Why, it's up against the American constitution, and the Star-Spangled Banner, and the Monroe Doctrine, and everything. You just walk your chalks. You hear me?"

"Will you kindly step down, sir?" said the policeman stolidly.

"I guess not."

"Will one of you young gentlemen lend me a ladder?" said the policeman calmly. "I must proceed in the execution of my dooty."

Herries obligingly fetched a short ladder, which the policeman placed against the side of the shed. The juniors looked

on in dismay. Fisher T. Fish brandished his fist at the red face of the policeman as he stepped on the ladder.

"I guess that I shall dot you on the nose if you come up!" he shouted.

"Bai Jove! You mustn't wesisit the law, Fishay, deah boy."

"Better go quietly, Fish."

"It can't be helped, you know."

"Grin and bear it."

Fisher T. Fish snorted. Good advice was showered upon him from all sides, but he did not seem at all inclined to avail himself of it.

"I guess I'm not going with that jay," he said. "You watch out, bobby. If you put your cabeza in reach of my fist, you get a sockdolager on the nose. You watch out!"

"I've got to hexecute my dooty."

"Bust your dooty. You walk your chalks out of hyer."

The fat policeman did not "walk his chalks." He steadily ascended the ladder, and his red face came within easy hitting distance of Fisher T. Fish's fist. The St. Jim's juniors almost held their breath. If the Yankee junior was reckless enough to strike a policeman, there was no telling what the consequences might be.

But there was no need for alarm. Fisher T. Fish brandished his fist until the red face was close upon him, and then he left off brandishing it. In the American language, he had "wilted." His dire threats to the policeman were only a little more of his abundant flow of "gas."

The heavy gloved hand descended upon his shoulder, and he was jerked down the ladder to the ground. There he would have run; but the hand had closed upon his shoulder with a firm grip.

Fisher T. Fish was a prisoner—in the hands of the law!

"I guess this lets me out!" groaned the Yankee schoolboy. "The Head must have been off his chump when he wired for this jay to fetch me. Oh, gee-whiz!"

"Why don't you pull his leg?" asked Herries.

"Or raise his blind?" said Figgins.

"Or straddle his ante?" suggested Fatty Wynn.

The juniors grinned, in spite of the seriousness of the situation. Fisher T. Fish looked very far from attempting any of those operations. The hand of the law had crushed him. He looked quite crumpled.

"I guess I'm in for it," he groaned. "What a played-out old country, where a pilgrim can't give himself a holiday without being collared by a bobby. Oh, Jee-rusalem!"

"Yaas, it's vevy wuff," said Arthur Augustus, sympathetically. "I should recommend you to womonstrate with your headmastah, you know. It's wotten."

"You come with me," said the policeman. "We're catching the eight o'clock train, and there ain't too much time."

"Look here," said Fish, "I was going to catch that train, anyway. I guess there isn't any need for you to come with me."

"I've got my dooty to do."

Arthur Augustus sidled up to the policeman, with a sovereign glimmering in his palm. He had resolved to try it, in spite of the well-known fact that members of the Force are utterly impervious to the influence of bribery and corruption.

"I say, officah—" murmured D'Arcy. "If you'd let my friend off—"

"Dooty, sir."

"And if a soveveign would be any good—" whispered D'Arcy.

"What!" thundered the policeman. "Tryin' to bribe me in the execution of my dooty! I'm ashamed of you, sir. I'm a pore man—pore but honest."

"My hat!" ejaculated Lowther. "Are you the chap? I've heard of you before."

But the juniors did not grin at Lowther's little joke. Arthur Augustus hastily slipped the offending sovereign back into his waistcoat pocket.

"Sowwy!" he murmured.

"Bribe me!" gasped the policeman. "Good heavens! Bribe me! I'm a pore man, sir, but never 'ave I took a bribe."

"I beg your pardon, officah," said Arthur Augustus. "It was vevy w'ong of me. I owe you an apology. I apologise most sincerely."

"Very well, sir, the matter's hended. Come along, Master Fish!"

Master Fish came along—he couldn't help it, with that firm grasp upon his collar. And the junior followed.

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CHAPTER 16.

Fish Has the Last Word!

THE news that Fisher T. Fish, the visitor from Greyfriars, had left his school for the long journey without permission, and was being taken back by a policeman, had spread. Crowds of juniors of both Houses came to see him marched off.

Tom Merry & Co. were very uneasy that the masters might see the policeman from the School House windows; but the officer was very considerate. The juniors tried to get him to take the path by the elms, where he would be out of sight from the windows, and they found it quite easy to manage. The policeman was very good-natured—or perhaps he had his own reasons for not wanting to be seen.

Quite an army of juniors marched round them to the school gates. Taggles had come out of his lodge to lock the gates, and he stared at the procession in amazement.

"Well, my hey!" he gasped. "Wot's that?"

"I guess it's my unlucky day," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Wot's he arrested for, officer?" asked the school-porter.

"Run away from school," said the policeman.

"I ain't run away!" roared Fish. "I guess I was paying a visit."

Taggles grunted. Taggles did not approve of boys at all, and he was not sorry to see one of the obnoxious race getting it "in the neck."

"That's right," he said. "Take him away, officer. I ope he will get a good licking from is 'cadmaster—that's wot I ope."

"Oh, you go and eat coke, Taggy!" said Tom Merry.

The policeman paused, and fixed his eyes upon Taggles with an intent gaze.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said.

Taggles stared.

"Yes, it's me," he said—"wot about it?"

"A hold offender," said the policeman. "Don't you let me catch you drunk and disorderly agin, my man, that's all."

Taggles turned crimson, and the juniors chuckled gleefully. "Wotcher mean?" spluttered Taggles, nearly speechless with wrath. "I ain't never seed you afore, and well you know it."

"Drunk and disorderly—forty bob or a month," said the policeman. "Who paid your fine last time, my man?"

"I ain't never been fined," yelled Taggles. "You slandering villain! I ain't never been drunk and disorderly."

The policeman wagged a gloved finger at him.

"You be careful," he admonished. "I've got my hey on you."

Taggles struggled for words; but before he could find any, the policeman had marched his captive out into the road. Tom Merry & Co. followed. The Co. had already obtained permission from the housemaster to see their guest to the station when he departed for the eight o'clock train at Rylcombe. The other fellows had to remain within gates, excitedly discussing the happening. Down the road towards Rylcombe marched the fat policeman, with his hand on the collar of Fisher T. Fish. Tom Merry & Co. walked round them with serious faces. Only Herries, and Figgins, and Fatty Wynn did not look serious. They were grinning all the time.

They reached the station, with twenty minutes to wait for the train. The policeman took the Greyfriars junior upon the platform, and the St. Jim's fellows accompanied them there. They were very sympathetic towards the down-hearted Fish, but they could do nothing to help him. The arm of the law was too strong for Tom Merry & Co.

"Bai Jove, this is a wotten endin' to the aftahnoon!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I'm vevy sowwy this has happened, Fishay."

Fisher T. Fish groaned.

"Not so sorry as I am," he said. "I guess I could have handled the Head all right if I had walked on on my lonesome. But if I'm marched in by a bobby, it's a mule of another colour. I reckon it's a licking."

"Wotten!"

"It's jolly awkward not bein' able to bwibe a policeman," Arthur Augustus confided to Blake. "Of course, it's vevy noble of them, and all that, but it makes things doocid awkward sometimes."

"It does—it do," agreed Blake.

"It's all right for Fish," said Herries. "He's only got to pull the bobby's leg, or raise his blind, or whatever it is. Besides, nobody ever takes a rise out of him, so he's bound to come out all right, isn't he?"

"Pwaw don't pile on a chap when he is down, Hewwies!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Oh, rub it in!" said Fisher T. Fish resignedly. "I guess I've come out at the little end of the horn this journey."

"You don't admit it?" said Herries, in astonishment.

"I guess it's up against me."

"Sure you didn't plan this all along, so as to make a striking exit?" suggested Herries.

Fisher T. Fish considered. He would willingly have said so, but he felt that such a yarn would not hold water, and he shook his head.

"Nope!" he said.

"Heah comes the twain!" said Arthur Augustus disconsolately.

The train was coming in. It stopped in the station, and the policeman marched his prisoner towards it. He opened a carriage-door, and told Fisher T. Fish to "op it." Fish hopped it, and sat down in the carriage with a lugubrious visage.

The St. Jim's fellows crowded round to shake hands with him and wish him luck. The policeman stood by the carriage-door, not getting in himself. He was unfastening his helmet, and he took it off as the juniors were saying good-bye.

"Ain't you getting in?" demanded Fish, with a gleam of hope.

The policeman shook his head.

"Can't," he said, in quite a different voice. "I should be late for calling-over if I did, you see."

"Wha-a-at!"

"You see, I belong to St. Jim's," said the policeman calmly, "and I've got to get back along with the other fellows. Sorry!"

There was a roar of surprise from the juniors. They knew the voice now. As they stared blankly at the policeman he dragged off the thick whiskers and moustache and beard with one pull of the hand.

The juniors yelled:

"Kerr!"

Fisher T. Fish sank back in the carriage seat, gasping. His breath was taken away. He was greatly relieved, but—

"Kerr!" howled Tom Merry.

"Kerr, you rotter!"

"Kerr, you fwoightful spoofah!"

"It's Kerr! Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Are you still going to say that nobody could take a rise out of you, Fishy?"

"Nobody could pull his leg—what?" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"He knows how to handle policemen!" grinned Herries. "You fathead, Fish, do you think I should have let him nab you if Figgy hadn't told me who it was?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I swow!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "This lets me out! Gee-whiz! You—you—you're not a policeman! Well, carry me home to die!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand back, there!" called out the porter.

The juniors, shrieking with laughter—as much at the expression upon Fisher T. Fish's face as at the joke of the New House juniors—crowded back. The carriage-door was slammed, and the train started.

"This is where the Fish-bird sings small!" chuckled Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who said the age of miracles was past?" grinned Kerr. "He actually hasn't a word to say for himself—not a word! Ha, ha, ha!"

But Kerr was mistaken.

The window of the carriage jammed down, and Fisher T. Fish leaned out excitedly as the train moved on, gathering speed.

"I say, you jays!" shouted Fish.

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"Don't you think you took me in! I guess not—some!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I guess I knew it all the time. I was just playing up, you know, to see how far that jay would carry the joke! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"I guess it's not so easy to take a rise out of Fisher T."

The roar of the train drowned the rest, and the last words of Fisher T. Fish were lost to the juniors of St. Jim's.

"Gas, to the last!" grinned Blake. "Of all the nerve—"

"Of all the cheek—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Tom Merry & Co. walked back to the school, chuckling over their peculiar experiences with the Yankee at St. Jim's.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of the Chums of St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled: "AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!" by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of "THE GEM" Library in Advance. Price One Penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

HIS OWN STOKER.

Two Irishmen were crossing the ocean on the way to America, when one of them, by name of Pat, died. The usual preparations were made for burial at sea, but the lead weights customarily used in such cases could not be found. The captain, therefore, substituted lumps of coal. Mike, the other Irishman, took a last long look at his friend. Suddenly he blurted out:

"Well, Pat, my friend, I always knew you were going there, but I'm hanged if I thought they'd make you carry your own coal!"—Sent in by A. C. Gilbey, Walsall.

SAY THESE QUICKLY.

Six thick thistle-sticks.
Flesh of freshly-fried flying-fish.
Swan swam over the sea, swam, swan, swim. Swan swam back again. Well swum, swam!
A growing gleam glowing green.
The bleak breeze blighted the bright broom-blossoms.
Susan shineth shoes and socks, socks, and shineth Susan. She ceaseth shining shoes and socks, for shoes and socks shocks Susan.

Robert Roley rolled a round roll round and round, then Robert Rowley rolled round where he rolled the round roll round and round.—Sent in by G. Mackie, Derby.

WITTY.

The lift-conductor of the Tube Railway—a young man of no more than twenty years—was expressing his views to a passenger as to the proper way children should be brought up.

"May I ask what you know about such things?" asked the passenger. "You are not married, are you?"

"No; but I've brought a few families up in my time," replied the lift man, as he gazed with pride round the lift.—Sent in by R. Clark, Bowes Park, N.

THE STRANGE ANIMAL.

Circus-Trainer (hunting for lost elephant): "Have you seen a strange animal round here?"

Farmer Giles: "O! have that! There was an injun-rubber bull round here eating my carrots with his tail!"—Sent in by J. Gosling, Hazel Grove, near Stockport.

HARDER THAN HE THOUGHT.

"You're working very hard to-day, Jake, me son," said a friend to a bricklayer's labourer. "How many hods o' mortar have ye carried up that ladder since starting-time?"

"Hush, me lad!" said Jake, with a wink. "I'm fooling the boss. I've carried the same hodful up and down the ladder all day, and the boss thinks I'm working!"—Sent in by H. W. Barfoot, Wimbledon.

EASY ENOUGH.

Jones: "Smith does draw well! Do you know he can change a laughing face into a sad one with a single stroke?"

Tommy (thoughtfully): "Our teacher can do that, too."—Sent in by E. Colston, Cardiff.

A SIMPLE DEFINITION.

Sunday-school Teacher: "What do we mean by the quick and the dead?"

Small Boy: "Them as gets out of the way of motor-cars is quick, and them as don't is dead!"—Sent in by W. Payne, Waulwyd.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

BUSINESS POSTPONED.

Benevolent Old Gentleman (entering shop): "Do you keep fountain pens?"

Smart Salesman: "No, sir; we sell them."

Benevolent Old Gent: "Not always. You can keep the one you would have sold to me had you not been so smart."—Sent in by J. C. Beveridge, Jun., Partick, Glasgow.

"CHANGE" IS GOOD FOR SOME PEOPLE.

The train was in, and the fat passenger could not locate the booking-office; but, seeing Pat, the porter, he called to him.

"Here," he said, "get me a ticket to Blackpool."

Pat ran off with the sovereign.

"Harry up!" roared the guard; and the fat passenger hurriedly took his seat in the train.

Just as the train moved off Pat came dashing up, and handed the ticket to the fat person.

"Change, porter?" asked he

"Change at Crewe!" yelled Pat, pocketing some silver.—Sent in by L. Chatfield, Manchester.

POOR TEACHER!

Tommy: "When I was two years old and my brother was six, was he three times as old as I?"

Teacher: "Yes; but—"

Tommy: "And when I was four and my brother was eight, was he twice as old as I?"

Teacher: "Certainly! I—"

Tommy: "And now I'm eight, and he's twelve, is he only half as old again as I am?"

Teacher: "Yes; why?"

Tommy: "Well, how long will it be before I catch him up?"—Sent in by Miss A. Shawcross, Cheshire.

HIS MISTAKE.

One day a country farmer was paying a visit to a music-hall in London. It being the first time he had ever been in a music-hall, he was greatly excited, and one thing he particularly noticed was the audience kept calling "Encore!"

Imagine the surprise of those present when he stood up and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Encore be hanged! Have it over again!"—Sent in by W. Whiteside, Blackpool.

PREPARING MAMMA.

"Mamma, what would you do if that big vase in the drawing-room should be broken?" asked Tommy.

"I should severely thrash whoever did it!" said mamma threateningly.

"Well, then," grinned Tommy, "you had better get your muscle up, 'cos father's just broken it!"—Sent in by T. S. Burne, Middlesbrough.

TIT FOR TAT.

Wilkins Major: "I once knew a man who turned into wood."

Wilkins Minor: "What rot!"

Wilkins Major: "Not at all. He was taken on a vessel, and then he was aboard."

Wilkins Minor: "That's frightfully old! I knew a girl who was dumb for years, and then gained speech in a minute."

Wilkins Major: "How did she manage that?"

Wilkins Minor: "She went into a cycle-shop and picked up a wheel and spoke."—Sent in by Miss N. Moore, Burnley.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

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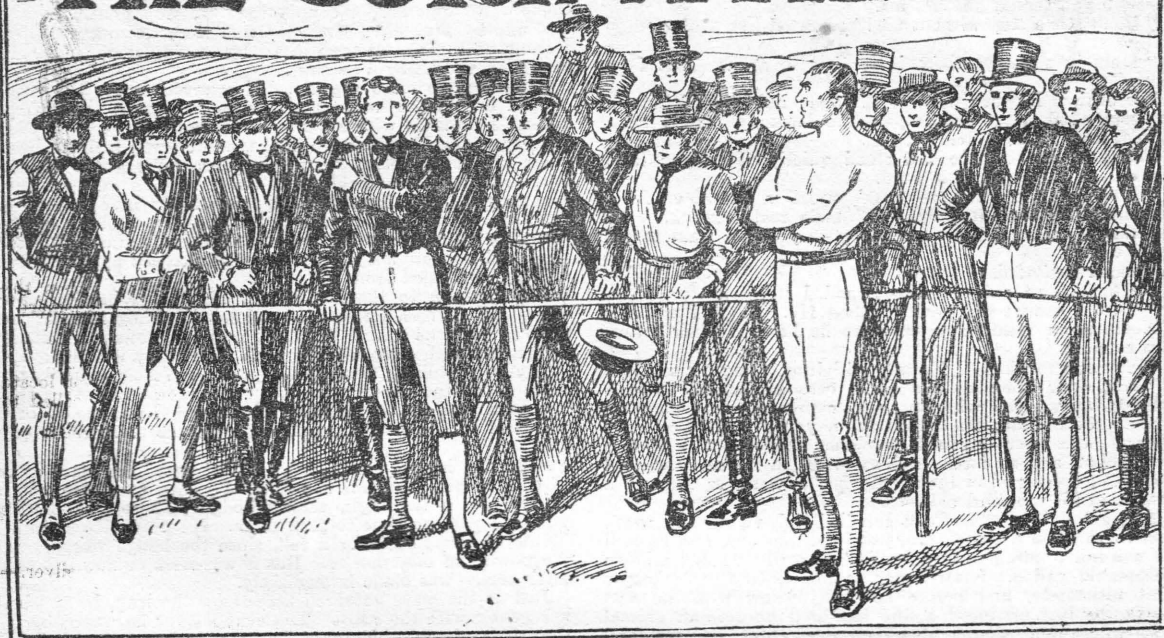
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No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

THE CORINTHIAN.



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, walks 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 Brookes' house in Grosvenor Street, Hilary

FINDS HIS FATHER AT THE GAMING-TABLES,

where he has been for three days and nights.

Sir Patrick rises from the table an utterly ruined man. 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 Hil, fighting under the name of Harley, beats him, and awakens the interest of a young Corinthian named D'Arcy Vavasour.

Hil decides to adopt the prize-ring as a career, and at a supper which is attended by the leading patrons of "The Fancy" Vavasour offers to match him for a thousand guineas against any boxer of his weight that Sir Vincent Brookes may select.

Other wagers are also to be decided between the two bucks by a cock-fight and a shooting match. Sir Vincent accepts Vavasour's challenge, and Hil goes into training at a country cottage belonging to Vavasour, where the Corinthian's famous fighting-cocks are also quartered under the care of Jem Rider. One night Hil is awakened by a noise outside, and discovers a number of men in the act of setting fire to the pens where the champion cocks are confined. With the aid of Jem Rider, Hil succeeds in putting the men to flight, and two or three days later is introduced to George, Prince of Wales, who is to watch a shooting-match arranged between D'Arcy Vavasour and Sir Vincent Brookes. At the last moment the former receives a telegram to the effect that Captain Lidstone, who was to have shot for him, had fallen from his horse and broken his left arm. Saying nothing of this misfortune to anybody save Hil, he informs the others that it is time for them to start. A heated discussion as to the pace of the horses, attached to the coaches leads to

another wager. "I'll wager that you never come within a hundred yards of my team once their heads are cast loose!" Mr. Brayne accepts the wager, and Lord Camelford also announces his intention of backing Mr. Brayne. "I never could abide funeral horses," said Vavasour calmly.

(Now go on with the story.)

Vavasour's Nominee.

A few minutes Vavasour lingered after the rest had gone. He had a word for old Jem Rider, who once more assured him the baronet's cocks were as good as beat already. Then he took Hil aside.

"I've failed, Ned," he said whimsically. "But don't let that put you off your training. You must beat Fennel. I am persuaded you can, and the loss of my wager will not interfere with you in any way. My obligations will be fulfilled whatever happens."

And down the green lane he went, a fine upright figure, turning to wave his hand gaily to Hil at the gate. When he had disappeared, Hil went briskly into the cottage.

"Harmer," he said to the boxer, who had betaken himself to a quiet corner with his pipe until the gentry had gone. "Harmer, I shall do no more training to-day."

"Oh, won't ye, my buck?" was the rejoinder.

Harmer was sulky. The easy manner of Hil, the attitude of Mr. Vavasour towards the lad, "Almost as though he was a blessed Corinthian himself," as the trainer put it, and the neglect of himself, had put him in a bad temper.

"An' why ain't ye doing no more work, me lord?" he inquired sarcastically. "Tired like?"

"No, Harmer; not tired; but I mean to take a holiday this afternoon."

"Ye does, does ye? Well, s'pose I says ye don't? I'm your trainer, my cove, what oughter be a Corinthian, or thinks hisself one, an' ye're under my orders."

"Not to the extent of your forbidding me to go out this afternoon if I wish," replied Hil, fastening on a pair of leggings.

Harmer caught the cold, twinkling eye of old Jem Rider, who shook his head slightly.

"If you goes, I goes with ye. Don't let ye get into no mischief, I don't!"

"I am going by myself!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY

"AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!"

"I'll be bust if ye do!" shouted Harmer, jumping from his seat excitedly, and dashing down his pipe. "I'm here to look after ye for Mr. Vavasour, an' I don't allow no games o' that kind."

"Harmer"—and Hil went up to him quietly—"I am up to no games; let me assure you that. But it is out of the question you should go with me."

"Don't stir a step without me!" repeated the trainer doggedly.

"I am in a hurry; there is no time to argue. But I go alone."

For answer Harmer went to the door and planted himself in front of it. He was prepared to back up his assertion with force, that was evident.

For a second or two Hil stood quietly measuring him. Then Jem Rider put in a word.

"I wouldn't go for to mak' mysel' a gaumless fool, Harmer," he advised drily. "T' lad's real jannock. Ye can tak' his word for aw. And happen ye'd not want to get hurt, man."

Harmer hesitated.

"Where're ye going?" he demanded sullenly.

"That I cannot tell you," replied Hil. "But I will say Mr. Vavasour would approve were he here. I shall return this evening."

Muttering to himself, Harmer withdrew, flung himself into a chair, and, when he had gone, consoled himself with a lengthy monologue wherein was expressed his complete opinion of beggars on horseback, a young man who gave himself airs and refused to obey orders, a would-be Corinthian, and so forth, and so forth, to all of which old Jem Rider listened without uttering a word or moving a muscle of his wrinkled old face.

Straight down to the Cock Inn in Leigh village Hil went, and there hired a horse. They showed him one, and he said he was not wanting to buy hounds' meat; he needed a horse that could gallop. His manner so impressed the innkeeper that ultimately, and before he really knew what he was doing, he had produced a fine half-bred hunter, an animal with whose long, sloping shoulders, deep chest, and powerful quarters, Hil said he was perfectly satisfied. He saddled the animal himself very carefully, but without losing a second picked up a switch and prepared to mount.

"Don't ye put a whip to her!" bawled the owner of the horse, as Hil mounted. "She'll kick 'ee off, an' bolt into next county."

But five minutes with Hil's hands on the reins convinced the mare—a wicked-tempered one, and full of corn and idleness—that it was her rider's will, and not her own she was to obey during her outing. She reared, she tried to smash his knee against a gatepost; she attempted to bolt with the bit between her teeth; she stood stock still, and refused to budge. But whatever she did the rider remained with her, never losing his temper or using his switch.

Five valuable minutes were spent, and, checked in every endeavour, the mare stood fretting at the bit. The switch fell suddenly, and she bounded forward, only to be checked with a grip of steel. Against her will, her proud head tossing, she was made to walk a quarter of a mile. Then the switch again fell upon her flank, the reins were loosed, and off she went like a shot from a gun. She had found a master and knew it. Thereafter Hil had no trouble.

That wild ride—eight miles to be covered inside thirty minutes, and on an unknown road—set the blood coursing through Hil's veins, and brought to him a feeling of exultation that acted on him like a draught of wine. So glorious was the sensation of feeling a good horse once more between his knees, of rushing through the air, that for moments he forgot what he was, and even the errand on which he was riding.

Guided by a finger-post here and there, helped by half-caught directions shouted by wondering rustics afoot or in waggons as he dashed past them, ignorant how the time sped, uncertain of the success or failure of his self-appointed mission, Hil at length eased the mare into a gentler pace for the descending of the hill leading into Ampthill village. At a little alehouse he made a brief halt to breathe the mare and allow her to rinse her mouth the while he made inquiry of the hostler as to the time and the whereabouts of Lord Alvanley's estate.

"Five minutes to the hour, sir, an' th' place ye want—be it the one as we call the old duke's?"

"How do I know?" asked Hil impatiently. "It belongs to Lord Alvanley's—that is all I can tell you."

"I rackon that's th' one," the fellow said, with exasperating slowness. "Houghton House, we calls um, at Houghton Conquest. That'll be a goodish—"

"Which direction? How far?"

"Yonder, straight forrard, and a mile. I'd—"

Hil put the switch to the mare and was off.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

"Young gent be in a hurry likely," drawled the ostler, as he dragged a hand from his pocket to pick up the sixpence Hil had let fall.

Hil was in a hurry. Nearing an old-looking house set in a wooded garden, across the road, hedge, and three fields beyond, he could see the figures of a dozen or more men. Some were together, a couple were walking gently to and fro, and by himself, a straight-shouldered, stationary figure, leaning on a cane, was one in a long driving-coat, whom Hil recognised as D'Arcy Vavasour.

Checking the mare slightly, Hil swerved across the road, backed her to the hedge and touched her with the switch, adding a pressure with his knees. Across the road—no wide one—she darted, rose at the hedge, and cleared it like a bird. Then at a long gallop Hil set her across the green pasture land, heading for the field where the gentlemen were waiting. The ground sloped from the road to the field where they were, but the hedge about it was high; none was looking in the direction whence he came, and the thick, soft grass deadened the rapid hoof-strokes of the horse, so that his approach was entirely concealed from all.

Riding down to the last hedge, Hil had a bare glimpse of one of the men forming the group detaching himself and moving towards where stood D'Arcy Vavasour, a solitary figure, but with something of pride in its very isolation.

The man walking towards him was Sir Vincent Brookes. No doubt the baronet was about to inform the other that the hour fixed for the deciding of the match was almost due, and that by the conditions of the wager he must either play or play.

Ramming his hat on his head, Hil swerved the mare so as to change her direction a couple of yards, to where was a slight gap in the high, strong hedge. There was neither gate nor gap, no time to seek them. He must ride straight. To do so was to ask for a fall, since the hedge was beyond the powers of most horses. But it was neck or nothing, and Hil's choice was made immediately.

Just as the mare gathered herself for the leap, he touched her gently with the whip. The next instant he was rising in the air, and—yes, by Jove! but the gallant hunter's hoofs would clear the timber! Leaning back in the saddle, Hil held himself ready to help the mare should she fall on landing.

But she did not, and Hil drew up almost behind Mr. Vavasour's back just as Sir Vincent Brookes came to a standstill within four feet of his toes.

"Mr. Vavasour," said the baronet in his smooth voice, "I have the honour to inform you that the time is now"—he held forward a watch for the other's inspection—"fifteen seconds to the hour. Do you agree? My nominee is on the field, but I do not see yours."

He had seen Hil ride up, and for a moment his eyebrows had lifted questioningly, but he gave the lad no more than one glance.

"I ask you, Mr. Vavasour, where is your nominee?" said Sir Vincent again, in a slightly louder voice.

It was Hil, not D'Arcy Vavasour, who answered the question.

"It is now striking the hour, sir, and I believe I am on the ground within the appointed time."

The baronet's shifting eyes glanced up quickly. Vavasour spun round on his heels and saw Hil. Astonished he must have been, but his face did not betray the fact. For a half-minute there was a tense silence. Then—

"I believe, Sir Vincent, that the conditions of the wager have been duly complied with," he drawled.

An Amazing Match.

Profound astonishment, suspicion, rage, passed across the baronet's narrow face. He did not understand. Backing a step or two, he looked from Hil to Vavasour and back again in undisguised amazement.

"What are you here for, Ned?"

The question was asked in the faintest of whispers, and in similar tone Hil replied:

"To shoot for you."

Steadfastly Vavasour regarded the lad. An explanation was necessary, but the occasion made it impossible, although Hil's reply was informing enough. And for a brief instant Hil saw the elder man's eyes flash curiously, a fugitive trembling of the firmly-closed lips. And then Sir Vincent Brookes came forward.

"Permit me!" he said politely. "Am I at fault in presuming Mr. Vavasour is labouring under a slight—and I must confess, to me, unaccountable—delusion."

"I am not aware of it, sir," returned the dandy, with equal courtesy.

He had turned to face the baronet, easy and self-possessed, though at heart the man must have been disturbed. Hil was at his elbow, still in the saddle. The other gentlemen, their

walking and talking checked, were staring curiously towards the little group.

"Not aware of it! But may I remind Mr. Vavasour that the match to be decided this afternoon is not a prize-fight," went on Brookes.

"My memory, though poor, acquaints me with the same fact," returned Vavasour equably.

"And yet—" Brookes looked significantly at Hil.

"Yes?" asked Vavasour, looking also at Hil and smiling faintly.

"Then what is this fellow doing here?" broke out the baronet in a loud, angry voice.

Vavasour raised his eyebrows.

"Mr. Harley's presence here is highly desirable," he answered. "I apprehend that the shooting-match might not take place were he absent. And permit me to say to you, Sir Vincent, that I find some resentment against your manner of alluding to my friend."

But to these last words Brookes was not listening. His face was twisted with passion, and his shifting eyes hardly visible behind the narrowed eyelids.

"You mean he shoots for you?" he at length got out.

"Mr. Harley is here for no other purpose," was the gentle answer. "I believe you might have heard him state the fact. I did so distinctly."

Without further words the baronet turned and walked rapidly to where stood the rest of the party. No sooner was he beyond earshot than Vavasour spoke quickly to Hil.

"What is the meaning of this, Ned?"

"As I said, sir, I understood that you had no one to take the place of Captain Lidstone, so I have taken the liberty of offering myself. I used to be considered a fair shot."

"But why?"

"That I might be of service to you, and because I have the hope that the debts—"

Vavasour, whose eyes had never left him, interrupted quickly:

"You owe Sir Vincent Brookes somewhat, then?" he asked.

"More than I care to think about," replied Hil between his teeth.

He was thinking of his father, the ruin that Sir Vincent had brought about, the disgrace and beggary that his father was suffering.

"Ned," said Vavasour, after a pause, "I shall consider it my lucky day when you and I met. You say you can shoot?"

"Where I lived before me—before I came to London, I was accounted a good shot with gun or rifle. I had much practice, and with pheasants—"

"It will be trick-shooting this afternoon, Ned, and Sir Vincent's nominee, Captain Friend, is a good man."

"I make no promise to win, Mr. Vavasour. I can but do my best. But to me it seemed better that one should shoot for you, even though to be beaten, than you had to forfeit. I would prefer it, were the case mine."

"And I, too, Ned. Nor will I forget this you have done."

And Hil laughed gaily.

"It is only half done yet. But the ride was glorious. Eight miles in barely half an hour. She is a good mare. The credit is hers more than mine."

"I will buy her, if the owner will sell. But here comes Sir Vincent!"

The baronet was hurrying to them, a tall, fiercely-moustached man with him, and the other gentleman straggling behind.

"It was understood Captain Lidstone was to shoot for you, Mr. Vavasour!" he cried roughly. "What means this—this substitution? It is monstrous!"

"True, Sir Vincent. But this morning the gallant captain was thrown while driving here, and his left arm broken. Kindly refer to the conditions of the wager, and you will see that either party has the right to provide a substitute in the events of accidents."

Sir Vincent could not deny it. Lord Alvanley and others—they glanced curiously at Hil—coming up, confirmed the fact. He was silent, but the tall man with him struck in:

"I assumed my opponent was to be a gentleman," he said contemptuously. "I cannot shoot against him." And he scowled at Hil, who smiled in return.

"That is as you like, of course," assented Mr. Vavasour politely. "But I would remind you, Sir Vincent—it is my turn now—that this match is play or pay. Either your good friend relinquishes his scruples, which scarcely become him; or you forfeit the stakes. Am I right, gentlemen?"

"Quite right, of course! Pay or play, Sir Vincent—pay or play!" hurried out Prince George, who was of the group. "I believe," he said, looking directly at Brookes, "that

you do not question my qualifications to be a judge of what is correct between gentlemen?"

"By no means, your Highness!" admitted Brookes quickly. "We are ready."

But the glance he gave Hil would have curdled fresh milk. Then his face cleared, his annoyance departed, and he became his usual self-contained, quiet, watchful self. He assumed a pleasant, genial air, and approaching Hil, even made apologies for his late want of courtesy.

"I am nervous," he explained. "Waiting, uncertainty, always make me so. When the time drew near for the match and Mr. Vavasour's nominee was still to come, I began to fear there would be no match. And I will not seek to disguise from you that the match is of some importance to me, Mr. Bevan."

At this mention of his true name, Hil looked at him quickly, but before he could speak the baronet continued:

"Oh, yes, I have recognised you, Mr. Hilary Bevan," he said most genially. "You were a thought hasty at our previous meeting, but I can make every allowance for the high feeling of youth."

"And now that we have met again, Mr. Hilary Bevan," he said, lowering his voice, "I am reminded that I have a piece of news to give you."

"And that is?" asked Hil coldly.

"I will tell you when the shooting is completed," smiled Sir Vincent. "I might be accused afterwards—there are uncharitable people in this world—of having attempted to spoil your nerve. Afterwards, my young friend."

And he hurried away to rejoin his nominee, Captain Friend, who was making a careful selection of the many firearms awaiting the choice of the marksmen, it having been agreed to avoid any undue advantage to either shooter from using a favourite weapon, that Lord Alvanley, their host, should provide the weapons.

Rifles were to be used, and while Hil was making his choice, Mr. Vavasour explained to him the test to which his skill would be subjected. It was a serious one enough, and none but an expert shot could hope to accomplish it. D'Arcy Vavasour's own opinion was that Hil had but the poorest of chances.

At whatever distance they chose, the marksmen were to fire alternately at pennypieces thrown into the air by a third party. The shooting would continue until one had missed three times, whereupon his opponent would be declared the winner.

An almost impossible feat, it might be said, to hit with a bullet a pennypiece falling through the air, but the feat has been performed again and again. One marksman, a friend of Squire Osbaldeston, himself a splendid shot, once succeeded in hitting no fewer than ninety-seven of a hundred pennies in this manner.

"What think you?" asked Vavasour, watching Hil as he explained the terms. "Have you ever shot so before?"

"Not quite thus," the lad answered; "but it seems to me that a quick eye and a steady hand may pull me through."

Tossing for the right to fire first, Hil's opponent won the spin of the guinea Sir Vincent Brookes sent into the air. With a derisive smile Captain Friend bowed, and asked leave to bestow the doubtful honour on Hil. Without change of countenance the lad accepted, and took up position for his first shot.

"You know how your man shoots, of course," whispered Lord Camelford to Vavasour as Hil made ready. "Do you wager? Five guineas against your man for his first shot?"

"I am willing."

"The guineas are mine!" cried Lord Camelford ten seconds later.

Hil had missed by inches.

Calmly reloading, he awaited his opponent's initial attempt. And Sir Vincent Brookes' faith in his nominee was justified. A scrap of metal was fairly nicked out of the coin's edge.

"Do you wager again?" asked the gainer of D'Arcy Vavasour's gold.

"I may as well," answered the dandy calmly.

He had looked across at Brookes, whose face was radiant as he returned the glance.

"Double?"

"As you please."

Ten guineas changed ownership, and the onlookers eyed Vavasour with frank curiosity. He had adventured his money on such a shot as Hil!

"Brought here on false pretences," observed Sky Blue Brayne, in a loud and exaggerated drawl. "It wasn't worth the fatigue of dressing to come here."

He was overheard by Vavasour—as he had intended. Vavasour turned to him.

"I think you need not go yet, Mr. Brayne," he said. "My friend has yet to get his eye in. You think him beaten already. Will you bet against his next shot?"

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NEXT WEDNESDAY!

"AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR!"

"A hundred, if you choose," the wealthy young jaokanapes replied carelessly.

"Done!"

But others were of Brayne's thinking.

But, with the exception of the Prince and Mr. Brayne, the gentlemen kept their voices low. The remarks of these two Hil could not avoid hearing. His face paled. He knew his powers as a marksman, and he knew that such poor shooting as he had shown was too bad to be true. Perhaps his arm had not recovered from the exertion of holding in the galloping mare; the nerves were still excited.

For his third shot he altered his distance, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the penny picked up drilled exactly through the centre.

The jaw of Sky Blue Brayne dropped. He hated losing money, although willing enough to squander it otherwise. Nor did it please him the more to hear Lord Camelford, himself a loser, inform an acquaintance that Mr. Brayne was ever either too late or too early.

"A chance shot that he wouldn't repeat in a month," Captain Friend told his backer.

He had but barely touched his third penny, and the services of the Prince and Lord Yarmouth, who had been agreed to as umpires, were necessary before he was credited with a hit.

But if it were chance, luck remained with Hil. He ringed his fourth coin, and hit the succeeding three beyond all dispute. His opponent also scored with each shot.

And now languishing interest was converted into the keenest excitement; every movement of the shooters was followed with the utmost attention. Betting became acutely active, and the voices of the eager wagers dropped to the lowest of whispers.

"You've discovered a marvel," was Lord Camelford's declaration to Vavasour.

"I warned you he would find himself," said the other.

Yet still the chances were in Captain Friend's favour. One miss would put Hil out, while he himself had two lives. He was over exigent in his requirements of the man throwing the coins, a keeper of Lord Alvanley, and he sent some of the onlookers into fits of annoyed quivering by the extreme deliberation with which he reloaded his weapon.

With his eighth shot he missed clean.

"Trick and tie!" shrielled young Mr. Brayne, carried away by uncontrollable excitement, and was sternly reproved by Lord Yarmouth.

"The finest match for years, Vavasour. Sir Vincent, we owe you and Mr. Vavasour our thanks for giving us so great a treat. That young man is a wonder. Were I not umpire I should be tempted to bac khim." And the Prince, whose opinions were liable to vary with circumstances, and who had forgotten his remark of half an hour before, broke into a warm eulogy of Hil's cleverness.

Two hits to each followed, and the excitement was almost painful. Beside his man, Sir Vincent Brookes was watching the loading of his piece, and urging upon him greater care. Vavasour had not exchanged a word with Hil since the shooting commenced.

"Remember, man," the former was saying angrily, "what this means to me—and you, too. Surely you are not going to allow yourself to be beaten by a country yokel."

"I'm doing my best," the self-styled captain growled. "Strikes me, that yokel is going to prove one too many for you in other ways than this."

"What d'you mean?"

"Ask O'Donnell, that long slab of cowardice and cunning that you've found work for before now."

"O'Donnell! Where did you see him? Where is he? What had he to tell you?" he cried.

Anxious indeed he was to hear of the man; for a week nearly he had been awaiting news of the carrying out of the scheme for which the ex-prizefighter had been bought.

"Where he is I don't know. Where I saw him was in Wapping. Ned Harley, you say, is the name of this boy yonder," and the captain nodded at Hil. "Well, Ned Harley was the name of the fellow of whom O'Donnell spoke. He seemed to know a lot of Harley. There had been a fight of a kind, I understood, and Harley had got the better of it. Something in which you were interested, it seemed. He mentioned your name."

"And what did he say?"

"What I've told you. Something had gone wrong."

What was the something Sir Vincent Brookes knew without further telling? The news for which he had waited so long had come to him, but it was different from what he had expected. And he felt anger against the narrator.

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" he snarled.

"Forgot it. Is it of importance? But it is my turn to shoot again. Another hit to the boy, sink him!"

(A long instalment of this grand serial next
Wednesday.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

"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."

S. O'Neill, 809e, Avenue Road, Hastings, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a reader in England or Ireland.

Miss L. Barker, c.o. Post Office, Geraldton, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 19-20.

Miss May and Olive Christie, c.o. Marrickville Post Office, Marrickville Road, Marrickville, New South Wales, Australia, wish to correspond with readers living in England, age 14-15.

L. H. Lethlean, 314, McKenzie Street, Golden Square, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with Public School boy or girl readers living in the British Isles.

N. D. Braithwaite, P.O. Box 332, Dunedin, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with girl readers in Ireland.

J. Bland, 2, Rear Brighton Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with an English girl, age 16-18.

R. Smith, 12, Coode Street, South End, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in England.

H. Cooper, 77, Cambridge Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers in Great Britain, India, Egypt, Bermuda, Mauritius, Japan, and France.

J. Kuny, P.O. Box 3425, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a boy reader in England interested in photography with Kodak cameras.

A. Bolling, P.O. Box 2,339, Johannesburg, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in England, age 18-20, interested in postcards.

A. H. Wood, 7, Gardner Street, South End, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a reader in Australia or England, age 16.

Fred Harrisonway, Blakan Mati Island, Singapore, Straits Settlements, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 18-22.

H. Perceval, c.o. Priestly, Ponga, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers under 17 years of age living in Surrey or Kent.

Miss A. Jones, "Wyndham," Gills Street, Hampton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with boy readers living in England or Ireland, age 17-20.

E. Cullen, "Broadview," Chalder Street, Marrickville, Sydney, New South Wales, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 15-16.

J. Byatt, c.o. Post Office, Northam, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 18-20.

G. H. Jenner, 132, Bristol Street, Christchurch, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with girl readers living in the British Empire, age 16-17.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

No. 1. GRAND NEW SERIES OF FOOTBALL ARTICLES.



When two teams of about equal ability meet on the football field what is it that decides which club comes out on top? There are many things which might be given as apt answers to this question—the luck of the game, for instance, often decides—but it is training which more often than anything else turns the scale in favour of this or that side.

If I were asked one of the chief secrets of the success of the Sunderland side last season, I should say it was the way in which we were trained. More games are won by the "man with the towel" than many people imagine. Not only were we trained up to a pitch of physical fitness, but we were trained to last the whole season, which is the only way in which cups and championships can be won. It is easy enough to keep men fit for three or four months, but the problem is to keep them going at it hot and strong for the whole of a long season without the players feeling the effects of the campaign to any great extent, and without the danger of going stale.

Those people who have never played football have a sort of idea that the life of the professional is just one long holiday. I should like to take these people through a first-class football season with a club which is running well in the championship, and making a fight of it in the Cup-ties. Two or three games in one week, some of which mean extra time, and each one full of great importance, would have these cynics crying out "Enough" in no time.

The best way to last a whole season through is not to do too much training—that is the way players become stale, and sooner or later arrive at the stage when they declare they are "fed up" with football.

Once in a fit condition, the average youth should not require much training to keep him in that happy state. Trainers of football teams often make a mistake in giving their men too much training, and then they wonder why it is that the players have little or no real heart for the game after, say, Christmas is past and gone.

To be trained to win means that the team must be trained to last the whole of the ninety minutes. Many a man can go the first forty-five like a trooper, but in the second half he is "done," and to get a gallop out of him is impossible. When you hear of this or that side being a "second-half team," has it ever struck you just what a second-half team means? Just a well-trained team—that and nothing more. They wear the majority of their opponents out in the opening half, and then do pretty well as they like with them. A good start may be half the battle, but on the football field it must be backed up with a good finish.

Short sprints are no good for getting a player's wind right so that it will last throughout a game. Long walks and long runs at a fair speed need to be indulged in to quite a large extent at the commencement of training. Almost the first thing a trainer of most of our League teams does, when the men report themselves after the close season, is to send the players for long walks.

Ball-punching, too, is just great as a wind provider. This does not need to be an elaborate affair. For lack of anything better, an old football filled with hay will serve the purpose of a proper punch ball. But take my advice and when you are at the punch ball just punch it. You know what I mean. No half and half affair is the punch to be. The best means of getting value out of it is to imagine that the ball is an opponent of the boxing-ring, and that you are out to finish him with every blow. If half an hour of such effort does not bring a healthy perspiration to the manly brow, nothing will, and if it does not increase your staying powers on match day then there is some-

thing wrong. The muscles want to be properly loosened, too. For this purpose get your sister's skipping-rope, and do good long turns with it. Never mind if your sister or anybody else's sister laughs or wants to know whether you have turned into a girl. I know nothing better for making the muscles loose, and the team which goes in for plenty of skipping will have one valuable asset towards winning matches. If the reader went to any of our big football grounds during training hours, he would be certain to find a few of the players there indulging in this "girl's game" with the rope. They know the real value of it, and take their turns willingly enough.

It is, of course, somewhat difficult, and it would be hardly wise to lay down hard and fast rules, and to say that each footballer who would be in a state of match-winning fitness should put in so much of a certain kind of training every week. Different people require different treatment; it would be almost unique to find a team of footballers all of whom would be fit on the same routine.

The men who are inclined to put on weight, for instance, need more training than those who would not add an ounce in twelve months if they never did any training at all.

It is amazing how quickly some people put on weight the minute the training stops. At the end of every summer two or three members of a team will come back to headquarters a stone or more heavier than when they left off training the previous April. This, of course, has to be taken off.

Just as it is difficult to describe a routine which will suit everybody, so it would be foolish to lay down laws as to what should and should not be eaten. This much, however, can safely be said. A big dinner just before a match is played will not tend to the winning of that match. A light lunch is all the majority of the players in our first-class teams have.

In regard to what a player should drink, I certainly do not think that intoxicating liquor or cigarette smoking help to make a match-winning team. I think I can safely

say that there are more teetotal footballers to-day than ever there were, and one of the results is that the play of to-day is faster and more exciting than ever it was.

Time should be found, too, to put in plenty of ball practice, and for this purpose it should be as nearly like match play as it can possibly be made. To explain what I mean let me tell you what I saw a lot of boys doing the other day. They were practising shooting—one of the best things to practice if they had gone about it in the right way. But they were all wrong in their method. They were bringing the ball to a dead stop on a certain spot every time, and shooting from there with the most careful aim. Now, how many times in the course of a season of actual match play would a forward get a chance of shooting like that? What they should have been learning in regard to shooting was to take the ball as it came to them, and to fire it into the goal at top speed without any hesitation. It has to be done in games, and it should be done in practice.

On the subject of special training for special events there is a lot of difference of opinion. Plenty of evidence can be brought to show that teams have done well on seaside training, while others have been equally successful in very important campaigns on purely home training. I have heard Barnsley players declare they would not have won the Cup had they not gone away to the seaside; while neither my own club nor Aston Villa went away from home for special training last season.

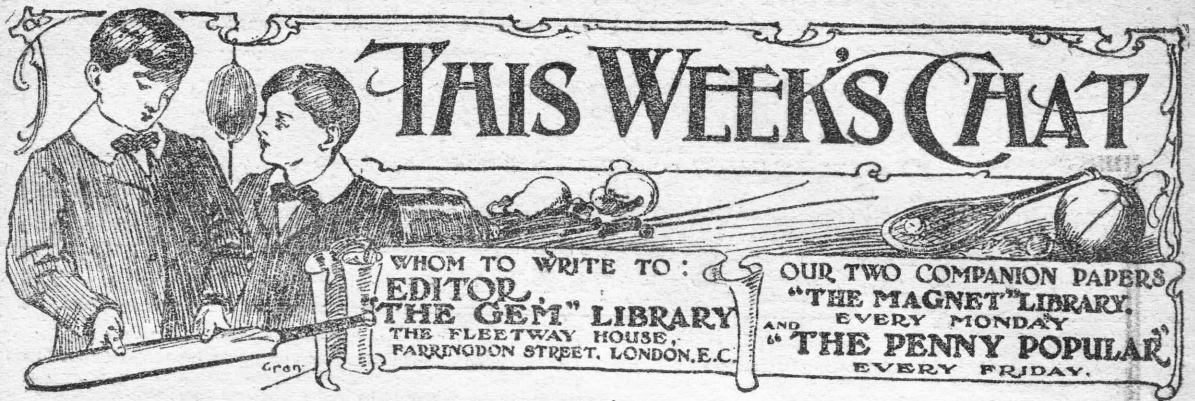
Jack Mordue

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 294.

By HAROLD HALSE,
Chelsea and English International.

Next Wednesday: **DODGES WORTH DOING!**

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
 EVERY MONDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

For Next Wednesday,

"AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR."

Under this title, Martin Clifford has written a capital yarn of the chums of St. Jim's. Trouble starts when Herbert Skimpole opens a new club for juniors interested in scientific matters, but it is not serious trouble until Levison, the cad of the Fourth, takes a hand in it. And then Tom Merry finds himself checkmated in his grim struggle against his deadly rival. How an alarming situation is eventually relieved by Arthur Augustus at the eleventh hour we must leave Martin Clifford to tell in his own way next Wednesday.

WILL YOU OBLIGE ?

My chums—both girls and boys—will see that I have given them an easy chance for doing a good turn to their Editor this week. On page iii of the cover you will find a carefully-prepared coupon, and as I am particularly desirous of increasing the circulation of your favourite paper, I feel sure very many of my reader friends will help me by filling up the page and posting it along to me. I want them to give me names and addresses of friends whom they know don't read "the Invincible Trio."

Will you oblige ?

"GEM LEAGUE" NOTICES FROM ALL QUARTERS.

I am requested to insert the following notices by readers who are anxious to add to the large number of "Gem" Leagues already in existence.

Will any girl or boy readers, 14-16 years of age, who are desirous of joining a "Gem" League for readers living in the Wood Green, West Green, South Tottenham, or Seven Sisters districts, write to Master D. McCaskill, 35, Clonmell Road, West Green, London, N., enclosing stamp for reply ?

R. S. Henley, of 101, Antill Road, Bow, would be glad to hear from fellow-readers, about 17 or 18 years of age, who would like to form a "Gem" League.

Will any boy readers desirous of joining a Leytonstone troop of Boy Scouts please apply to the Scout Hall, 104-6, Malvern Road, Ferndale Road, off High Road, Leytonstone, on any Wednesday or Friday evening, after 7.30 p.m. ?

Master Frank Bentley, "St. Kilda," Doddington Road, Wellingboro', is anxious to hear from readers of "The Invincible Trio" willing to join his "League of the Popular Three." This League is already firmly established, and your Editor can testify to the excellence of the rules that members are asked to keep, a copy of them having been sent for his approval. Master Bentley is particularly anxious to bring the number of members up to fifty as soon as possible, as it has been decided to issue badges to all members once this number has been reached.

APPRECIATION FROM ADELAIDE.

Another interesting letter from an Australian girl reader, as printed below, shows how much the advantages of "The Gem" Free Correspondence Exchange are appreciated by a whole family of Colonials.

"Adelaide, South Australia.

"Dear Editor,—I am just sending you a few lines to let you know that three boys in Belfast have written to me. Will you please accept my best thanks; my mother also wishes to thank you. She is as pleased as a cat with two

tails to think I have boys in Ireland to write to. She is Irish, so you know how pleased she is. My little sister Reta has received a letter from a boy in England. She is very pleased to have someone to write to.—Yours sincerely,
"REENIE MORGAN."

Thank you for your cheery letter, Miss Morgan.

"POPLETS" AGAIN !

The splendid competition running in our companion paper, "The Penny Popular," continues to attract more and more attention of the most favourable kind, and every post brings me numerous letters, expressing appreciation of it, not only from those who have been smart enough to win cash prizes, but also from less fortunate competitors, who, however, are keenly alive to the interest and amusement they have extracted from the great competition. Once again, therefore, I would urge all my readers who have not attempted this phenomenally successful competition to try their hands at "Poplets" without delay. "Poplets" Competition No. 21 will be contained in the issue of "The Penny Popular" which will be out on Friday. Be sure and get a copy !

HOW TO WRITE A SHORT STORY.—No. 4.

By a Successful Author.

Use simple language, study the value of each word, and strive to get more meaning into less words, without giving any appearance of cramping your stuff. You have only to read the works of such men as Dickens or Kipling to realise these things. The latter I consider the greatest exponent of short-story writing living. Read the excellent stories in the "Day's Work," notably the "Brushwood Boy" and "William the Conqueror," and if you have never read his "Jungle Books," then get them and read them before you are a day older.

Realism.—Take pains to get your facts right. Remember that in writing you are appealing to thousands of people, amongst whom there will be technical experts on almost every phrase of life. It behoves you, then, to be accurate. If you wish to write a story dealing with an operation, illness, or disease, and are not sure of your facts, go to your doctor and ask him all you want to know. If he is your family doctor, he will willingly help you; if he objects, probably the usual fee for consultation will put matters right. Carry the idea right through, and go to a specialist every time for your information, whether he be poet or tram-conductor, airman or prizefighter.

It may be you find yourself copying the style of your favourite author. This is bad, and the best way to cure yourself is by taking an overdose of the medicine. Deliberately write a parody of some passages of the author's works in question, and keep on until you discover his tricks in trade, then abandon them, and make your own tools. A good plan for testing a story is to sit down and tell it to yourself, or if not too bashful, to your friends, and if they are candid their criticisms may be useful. Above all, when you create a character, make him or her your friend, with whom you can converse, sympathise, and even quarrel, then if he or she be that real to you, there are good chances of your readers sympathising in his or her troubles and adventures, too.

(Another of these splendid "How to Write a Short Story" Articles next Wednesday.)