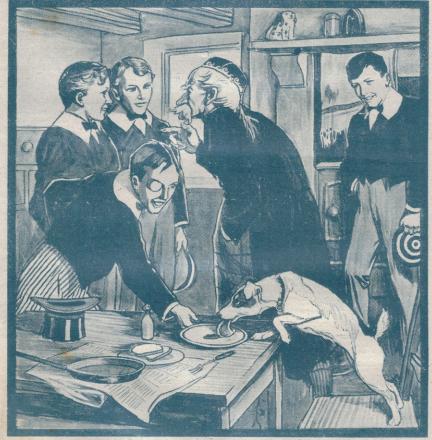
## THE ST. JIM'S PARLIAMENT!

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





IN THE HOUSE OF PEPPER!

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# THE ST.JIM'S PARLIAMENT

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete Story of Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's.

# MARTIN CLIFFORD

CHAPTER 1. Quite a Brilliant Idea!

"B AI Jove! I've got a weally wippin' ideah!"
So spake Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, looking up from his prep in Study No. 6. "Bury 'it. Gustavus! We've had

"Bury 'it, Gustavus! some," replied Jack Blake.

"But this is-"
"They all are!" said Herries. "There never were such ideas—outside a lunatie

Weally. Hewwies "Oh, let him tell it, you chaps!" igby said. "If he don't let off steam

"Oh, ret Digby said. "If he don't res there'll be a giddy explosion." "Ring off, you asses!" growled Blake. "I haven't finished my English into haven't finished my range. haven't finished my range. k vet. How would you put 'strong Greek yet. How we palisades,' Herries?"

"Any way you like, old scout." answered Herries generously. "I don't mind.

"How have you put it?"

"How have you put it?
"That won't help, because I'm wrong, and I know it. Have a shot for yourself, and you may be right—though it's a hundred to one against. Rotten language. Greek! The people who speak such a lingo very nearly deserved to have a king like Timo—but not quite."

"How have you got it, Dig?"

I haven't got it at all. I left a blank to put it in if anybody else happened to

"I can tell you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

He told them. And he seemed to be right, too—or nearly enough right for the Greek words to pass muster with Mr. Lathom.

"Gustavus, you're not quite the absolute ass you look," said Blake kindly.
"I can now give you exactly one minute thirty-five and one-tenth seconds for the telling of your latest luna-ahem :idea.

"Wats, Blake! I have a gweat

"There's no evidence of that," said

Dig. shaking his head.
"But I didn't mean—"
"Right-ho! Glad you're willing to take back such an unsupported state-"Right-ho!

"Do not be idiotic, I pway, Digbay! I do not wetwact, an you are vewy well awash that I nevah intended to wetwact. What I have said, I have

"Won't do, Guesy. The only point of resemblance is the monocle," remarked Monty Lowther of the Shell, looking in at this moment, and catching the last sentence.

"Resemblance to what?" asked

Herries.
"Say rather whom. Who was it that said 'What I have said, I have said '?"
"Why, Gustavus did, you ass! You heard him." replied Dig.

"D'Arcy merely quoted."

it somewhere!

"You are positively puewile, Digbay It is imposs to conduct a weasonable convahsation with you!

"It is-for you, retorted Dig point-

"But Lowthan has got it. Bwavo, owthan! You have tumbled while all Lowthah! You have tumbled wine a these othah asses are wefusin' to listen! "What have I got, Gussy? Nothin What have I got, Gussy? Nothin

"What have I got Gussy' Nothing catching. I do hope and trust! Don't say it's German measles. I could never begin to respect myself again if I had anything so frightfully Hunnish as that!"

"You've got my ideah, I mean,

"I can't help that. I didn't ask for it, and I'm not responsible for the con-sequences. I hope the other fellows won't be too rough on me for an accident These things are like the rain, like that. These things are like the rain, they fall alike on the just and the un-just. But I'm awfully sorry for you, old fellow-you may never have another!" Oh, wing off, Lowthah! I believ I believe

you are even a biggah idiot than these fellahs! rapped out Arthur Augustus, while Blake and Herries and Digby

That's the result—the dreadful result of having your idea," said Lowther saily, "I'm not sure that the Hunny measles wouldn't have been better after

all."
"Weally you are positively widie! Did votanty you are positively winter. Dut you not mention a certain vewy famous statesman as you came in?"
"Did I? I don't remember. Who was it? Titus Ontes, Bill Bailey, or Harry Lauder?"

"It was Chambahlain."

"Ah, now I see! As a matter of fact.
I didn't mention him. I merely alluded to him-made what our dusky friend at Greyfriars calls a suggestive remark. But that is quite in accordance with your usual charming inaccuracy, Gussy. What about Chamberlain? Are you in possession of his mantle, so to speak? Remember that he left a son in the same line of business—and a good man, too!"

"Well, it's just this, Lowthah. I have been thinkin'

"Say no more! That is enough! hat accounts for everything! You shouldn't, Gussy—you really shouldn't! Your poor head was never designed to stand such a strain."

"I have been thinkin' that it would be a wippin' good ideah to have a St. Jim's parliament!" blurted out the indignant swell, in sheer desperation.
"Rot!" snorted Digby

mignanc swell, in sheer desperation.
"Rot!" snorted Digby.
"Played out!" said Blake.
"It would only be a rotten debating society," added Herries. "And who wants that?"
"Hold on!" and who wants that?"

"Hold on!" put in Lowther. "I'm not so sure that there's not something in not so sure that there's not something in it. You don't mean a mere debating society, do you, Gussy?' "Wathah not! A pwopah Parliament, with elections, an'—an—an' all that, you

"A Cabinet and a Speaker and a

"Oh! Might have known he'd cribbed | Prime Minister and an Opposition," went

on Lowther.
"Plenty of opposition, if old ass Gustavus thinks he's going to be Prime Minister," said Digby.

Minister," said Digby.
"It's Gussy's sort of do—it ain't my sort, by long chalks," Herries said. sort, by long chalks," Herries said,
"Gussy ain't happy unless his jaws are
going like clappers. Much better start

going like clappers. Much better start a band!"
"You can be a silent member, Herries," Lowther said.
"What? So that you can gas all ties time Gustavus ain't doing it? But you wouldn't wait for him to stop. I know Messes that. Duct on asses' jawbones-Messre. D'Arcy and Lowther!"

D arey and Lowther:

"It's a wippin' good ideah," said
Gussy stubbornly, "Lowthah sees it,
an' I have no doubt whatevah that Ton
Mewwy an' Talbot an' the west will see
it also."

"If you're going to hand over your iddy idea to the Shell—" began

Blake warmly.

"Oh, let 'em have it! It's the sort of mouldy notion that ought to suit the giddy Shellish," said Dig. "Wait till the elections, my boy," said Lowther. "Then we shall have you

Lowtier. Then we shad nave to fairly boiling over with excitement—rashing down the corridors, shouting, 'Vote for Lowther!' and—"Vote for the merry old Kaiser, you

mean, ass ! "Oh, certainly, Dig. if he's a friend of yours! But I didn't know you'd

turned pro-Hun. "You bounder!" snapped Dig. "I'll give you pro-Hun!"

"Don't get giving yourself away like that, old scout," replied Lowther sooth-

that, our season, ingly.

"Elections ain't half a bad notion." said Herries. "There's nothing much except footer going on this term. Footer's all right, but it isn't everything."

Digby groaned. Here was Herrics

going over to the enemy! about my line," said estly. "I'll give you a "Premier's Lowther modestly. place in my Cabinet, Gussy, even if you

have to come in without a portfolio."
"Oh, weally! That is altogethan too
thick, Lowthal! You will not be
allowed to butt in like that, let me tell you."
"Of course he won't. Like his blessed check!" growled Blake. "I shall take

at job, naturally."
"You will do nothin' of the sort,

"Why not, Gustavus? The idea came

from this study, so it's only right that a member of this study should have the Premier's job. Dig ain't keen. Herries is guile impossible—"

Oh, is he?" roared Herries. "Of course you are! Do have a little

"Of course you are:
sense! As for our Gussy—"
"An' what about me, pway, Blake?"
"An' what about me, pway, Blake?" "Ask yourself, old scout! If we going to carry this wangle through, must start by getting the school to take it seriously. And who could possibly take it seriously if we let the biggest ass at St. Jim's-well, no, I ain't sure about that; I don't want to be unfair to

Grundy-"Wats! I am sowny that I evah said a word about the scheme to a set of howlin' idiots like you fellahs; and if you do not change your tone, Blake, I shall uttahly wefuse to have anythin' whatevah to do with it?"

"Hooray! There'll be a chance for the giddy scheme, then!" yolled Herries.

"Come and talk it over with Tommy and Talbot, Gussy," said Lowther. "Manners won't try to bag all the offices, because he's out with his camera."

"If Gustavus goes, we all go," said Wats! I am sowwy that I evah said

"If Gustavus goes, we all go," said Blake firmly. "We know you Shellfish. You'd bag our scheme, and swear blind you'd thought of it yourselves."

So they all went.

#### CHAPTER 2. A Slight Mishap to Grundy.

IGBY crept on tiptoe to the door.
He opened it quickly, and seized by the neck someone who was crouching outside.
"Yoooop! Yaroooh! Oh. don't, igby! That hurts!" howled Baggy

Digby!

Trimble.

"Listening at the keyhole, the rotter!" growled Dig, shaking the hapless Baggy till his fat cheeks quivered like

Baggy till ins as some pale jellies.

"I-I never even dreamed of such a thing. I was only tying up my bootlace. Grooh! Stoppit, Digby!"

"Let this be a lesson to you not to lave your bootlaces coming undone in the Shell passage, Trimble, "said Monty Lowther solemnly, "Nothing at all loose is allowed in these proper precincts." cinets."
"Yah! I suppose I can walk along

"Yah! I suppose I can walk along liere if I choose?"
"You suppose wrongly. At some time in the past you may have been capable of walking, Baggy; but that time was before you came to St. Jim's. No one here has ever seen you do anything but waddle."

here has ever seen you on anything out waddle."
"Does the blessed passage belong to you, I'd like to know?" demanded Baggy, puffing out his cheeks and trying to look defant.
"Well, it does in a way," replied Tom Merry, the junior captain of the school. "But we am't a bit greedy about it. You shall have the use of the floor, anyway. Bung him, you fellows!"

You shall have the use of the floor, anyway. Bump him, you follows?"
And Digby and Blake and Lowther and Herries bumped Baggy with zeal and vigour.
"Yarooh! Cads!" burbled Baggy, as he meandered away. "Who cares about your rotten, piffling old parliaments? Silly kids' game, I call it!"
But Gusy's idea was not thus contemptuously regarded by most of the members of the Shell and Fourth. Talbot, whose opinion carried weight, said that it want half a bad notion—much more in it than in the ordinary debating society wheeze. Manners, coming in. more m it than in the ordinary debating society wheeze. Manners, coming in, gave it his support. Noble and Dane and Glyn were summoned to the conclave, and pronounced it good. Later on some of the now enthusastic dispiles of the great Arthur Augustus saw Levison & Co. in No. 9, and Julian & Co. in No. 5.

in No. 5. Levison and Clive said it was all right, and Cardew added that it ought to be "doosid comic," anyhow—an opinion which caused Gussy to frown upon him

severely. The fellows in No. 5 were unanimously in favour. No one thought of asking Grundy's opinion. That was a deplorable omission, for George Alfred Grundy was quite the greatest man in the Shell-in his own est mation, at least. And forget to let others know it. And he did not

And the New House juniors were not told. They would be told later, for already they were cast for parts in the minds of some of the promoters of the scheme.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a little bit disgruntled when a crowded second meeting was held later in the day. Tom Merry and Lowther and Blake appeared to think the scheme quite as much theirs as his-rather more so, if anything. It had proceeded from his massive brain; but already everyone seemed to have forgotten that fact, and he feared that there would be no unanimous movement to make him Premier. In fact, it seemed likely that if there were to be any movement at all in that direction, he would have to start it himself. No one else showed any signs of doing so.

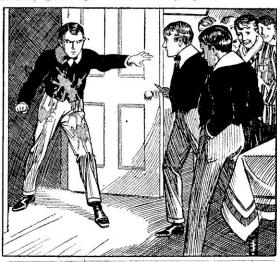
thin' so howwid as that!" said Arthur Augustus, with a shocked look upon his face. "We must awwange matrahs so that it is quite impos."
"No, no!" said Clifton Dane. "We

"No, no!" said Clifton Dane. "We must have a square deal, Gussy. No

"I should not think of suggestin

"I should not think of suggestin' anythin' that could faishally be called, a
wan-le. Dane: but I must say that it
would be wathah wufi if my administwation should be turned out—"
"Who says it's going to be your administration, Gustavus?" asked Digby
who stood near the door. He had stood
there all the time, and he had something
hidden under his jacket. It looked
rather as if he were anticipating another
visit from the immissive Bauvy. from the inquisitive Baggy.

"Weally, Dig-



Grundy's Mishan. (See Chapter 3.)

Even Dig, who had poured scorn upon the idea at first, now talked as though he were at least an equal partner in it, and had as much right to be cast for the Premier's part as anyone else! "What about the New House crowd?" sked Kangaroo. "Do we take them

asked Kangaroo. "Do we take them in?"

"Oh, rather! Let's get everything fixed up, and then invite Figgy & Co. to be the Opposition," replied Tom.
"Oh, good egg!" cried Blake. "I was wondering where we could get our Opposition from; and, of course, there would be no fun without it."
"This is not funnay, Blake. You are takin' it entiably in the wong spiwit," said Arthur Augustus severely.

said Arthur Augustus severely.
"If it isn't funny, it won't be a bit like the merry House of Commons," re-

like the merry House of Commons," re-marked Lowther. "That's funnier than a giddy circus, if you look at it the right way. There's real humour in the notion of paying some of the members £400 a year to impede business by spout-ing rot, I think." "Suppose the Opposition arises in its strength and chucks out the Govern-ment," asked Tailbog, smiling,

"Oh, weally, I nevah dweamed of any-

But Digby had turned, taken from under his jacket what he had concealed there, and placed it against the keyhole. Two or three of those nearest had heard steps in the passage. Now they saw Digby's right elbow more quickly

forward.

forward.

There followed a roar like the roar of a bull. The door burst open, and Grundy rushed into the room.

The waistcoat and trousers of George Alfred Grundy were liberally splashed with red ink from the squirt which Digby had kept ready for Trimble.

Lat Digby did not appear at all taken

aback. Who did that?" bellowed Grundy. I did," auswered Dig, grinning.

"I did," answe

He had no chance to say more. Grundy gripped him in a hug like the hug of a grizzly bear, bore him to the ground, and started upon what looked like a rough, scientific experiment designed to elucidate the question whether Dig's head or the floor was the harder. But that scientific problem was never

solved. Kangaroo, Herries, Levison, and Blake yanked Grundy off. And the four THE GEM LIBRARY .- No. 506.

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of them, all pretty hefty, had their work [

cut out to do it.

The great George Alfred was really angry. He struggled hard, and made

various remarks by no means of a complimentary character.

When at last he had been wrenched off, and was suffered to stand without hands upon him, though a living barrier was between him and Digby, his wrath was by no means appeased.

But no one had expected it to be, so no

one was disappointed.

"I'll have an apology for that!" he roared. "You can't treat me in that fashion—me, you know!"
"Hanged if I'll apologise!" retorted

"Hanged II An appropriate Spring of the Angel Spring of the Spring of th

a new pair. You needed 'em."

"Yaas, Gwunday, you weally do dwess
in a most shockin' slovenly style. An' there is no excuse for it in your case, as there might be if you were pooah-"Dry up, you tailor's dummy!"

"Don't grumble, Grundy," said Monty owther. "I'm not grumbling, and it "Don't grumble, Grundy," said Monty Lowther. "I'm not grumbling, and it was my ink that Dig used to decorate your clobber with. And it's war-time, you know, and ink's up, like everything else. Be a philosopher, Grundy—like me!"

"I'd sooner be dead!" howled Grundy. "You are the silliest ass I ever knew, bar none, Lowther! What did you do bar none, Lowther! What did this for Digby, you utter idiot?" "You do not appear to une

"You do not appear to understand. Grundy," said Lowther blandly. "It was

my ink-"
"Hang your ink!"

"I have not the slightest objection to that course. It will entail hanging you, Grundy—unless you take off the bags, which might be considered improper. But I don't think anyone present will raise any difficulty about such a minor

raise any difficulty about such a minor detail as hanging you with the bags."

"Ass! I want to know what you did this for, Dighy?"

"It does not seem wholly an unreasonable query, Dig," remarked Talbot. "If you can make it clear to Grundy that was done quute in a friendly way—"

Grundy snorted.

"Well, it was meant for Baggy," said
Dig. "But Grundy's only got himself to
thank. If he comes playing Baggy's

you mean, you raving lunatic?" hooted Grundy.

"Listening at doors, and all that sort

"You rotter! I'll teach you-"You rotter! I'll teach you—"
"Gently, gently, Grundy!" said
Kangaroo, interposing a stalwart frame
just in time. Harry Noble was somewhere near Grundy's fighting weight, and
was one of the few who could thrash
him. Digby would have had no chance at all.

Well, I'll admit you don't seem to have been listening at the keyhole," said Dig generously. "If you had been, you'd have got it in the neck instead of

the bags.

"But there's so much neck about Grundy, Dig," said Lowther. "He cannot be judged by ordinary anatomical standards. Still, I really think he would have had to stoop in order to negotiate the keyhole."

the keyhole."
"Oh, ring off! You're one of those funny merchants who want kicking badly!" snapped Grundy, who never could stand Lowther's japing, partly because he could not understand half of it.
"No job for you then, Grundy! You never do anything otherwise than well, do you."

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"I say, Grundy, what did you toddle along for?" asked Tom Merry.
"I've come to the meeting," answered The come to the meeting," answered The come to the meeting," answered The come to the meeting, and the company of the company of

"I've come to the meeting," answered the great man of the Shell.
"Who invited you?" demanded Blake.
"And who told you anything about the meeting?" inquired Dig.
"This game," murmured Lowther, "is called Questions and Answers. But the answers are in the dim future. Everybody's asking questions. It says some-thing for the inherent optimism of human

nature that they all appear to be expecting answers."
"Baggy Trimble told me, if you want to know," said Grundy.

"The man has no manners," remarked Lowther softly. "No sooner do I make an observation full of profound knowledge of human nature than he proceeds to controvert it."

to controvert it."
"There you are!" cried Dig. "And you got what I meant for Baggy, and it serves you jolly well right for listening!"
"I asked you who invited you, Grundy?" repeated Blake.

"I assessed the formula of the property is it? This ain't a blessed teaparty, is it? The as good a right here as anyone else, I suppose—ch?"
"Oh, let him stay!" said Manners.
"It's no use arguing with the chump!"
"Let me?" snoted forundy. "I'd jolly well like to see anyone put me out!"
"Is that a challenge?" asked Tom Merry, with a glint in his blue eyes.
"Look here. I came—."
"Look here. I came—."
"So we perceive," said Lowther.
"So we perceive," said Lowther.

"Look nere. I came" said Lowther.
"So we perceive," said Lowther.
"But you are not the great Julius, you know, Grundy. Caius Julius Caesar might say, 'Veni, vidi, vici,' but Georgius Alfredius Grundius, though he has come and seen, cannot claim as yet to has come and seen, cannot claim as yet to have conquered. Shall we put him out, Tommy?

"No; let him stay," replied Tom Merry. "After all, he really has a right to be here if he wants to. There's no reason why we should make a deep, dark secret of this bizney. 'Tain't like old Grundy's secret society, you know.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Grundy scowled. He did not care much for being reminded of the secret society.

It had not been a distinguished success. But Grundy stayed, and added his powerful voice to the rest. In fact, Grundy did his share of the talking and a bit over. And, though they did their best to get the notion out of his head, and were certainly candid enough about it, Grundy went away at length, firm in the determination to be Premier in the projected St. Jim's Parliament—or to make it hot for everybody!

#### CHAPTER 8. Not Wasted.

RAGGY TRIMBLE went rolling dis-consolately down the Shell passage.

These were bad days for Baggy. No one loved him, and the war went on without any regard for his feelings.

Now and then he would look down at his all too ample waistcoat, and see there signs of wasting that were quite invisible to others. Lowther, indeed, maintained that there was no vestige of waist about Baggy. But then, Lowther had no sympathy-none at all.

It was not the endeavour to keep inside the food rations that troubled Trimble. He did not try to. All his plans were for getting outside them—for circum-

venting them. But money was the trouble. Baggy talked of his big remittances from Trimble Hall; but no one ever saw them

not even Baggy. In fact, no one—not even Baggy—had ever seen Trimble Hall! With money, one could get round the regulations, and forget the war. Without

But what avails to discuss so sorrowful a case?

Baggy was determined not to remain without cash if by any means he could get it—any means that did not involve too much risk.

And before new it had chanced to Baggy to find out things which had a market value to someone.

Wherefore, hearing the sound of voices within Study No. 10, he stooped to the keyhole, impelled doubly—by inquisitive-

respond impened douby-by inquisitiveness, and by greed of gain.

Probably it was not much of a secret.
There seemed to be several fellows present besides the Terrible Three. But it might be saleable. And, anyway, Baggy

might be saleane. All, anymo, wabou wanted to know, you know.
So Baggy listened. Baggy heard something, and stayed to hear no more. Baggy rolled away, chuckling fat

thing, and superstanding fat sharper colled away, chuckling fat chuckles.

"Old Grundy will like to hear this," he said to himself. "The worst of it is that you never know how Grundy will take things. He's as likely as not to chuck the said to the said to the said to himself." you out on your neck, when he ought to be grateful. But he ain't mean when you get on the right side of him. I'll say that of Grundy.

It did not occur to the very obtuse mind of Baggy Trimble that on the very rare occasions when he had managed to get on the right side of Grundy it had never been by retailing the proceeds of

his eavesdropping.
With all his faults, George Alfred
Grundy was as straight as a gun-barrel,
and had an utterly honest and abounding contempt for sneaks, spies, informers, and all such creatures.

Trimble halted for a moment before the door of Study No. 3. Then he pushed it open.

"Yarooogh! Ow-yow!" he howled. Three distinct streams of dark and abominably-smelling liquid had descended

anominany-mening induo and descended upon his round head.

"You silly ape! You've gone and spoiled our booby-trap!" hooted Grundy.

Trimble had certainly spoiled the booby-trap. But he had not done it intentionally, and it was insult added to injury to reproach him for it.

Wrath flared up in the breast of Baggy, and he made a dash at Grundy.

In a calmer moment Trimble would as soon have thought of attacking a tiger in its native jungle as of going for Grundy. And at another time George Alfred

Grundy would as soon have thought of running away from a mouse as from

Baggy Trimble,
And now Baggy dashed to the attack,
with an evil-smelling liquid running down
him, and Grundy ran!
Trimble, you

"Here, you keep off, Trimble, you fat worm! I'll slaughter you if you don't! Keep off, I say! Don't come near me!

Wilkins and Gunn had scuttled at once. whiting and could had scuttled at once. They grimed as they saw the agitation of their great chief.
"Ha, ha, ha! You ain't running away from Baggy, surely, old scout?" chortled

Gunn.

Grundy, dodging round the table, gave

no reply, save a scathing glance.
Gunn and Wilkins had to dodge, too.
It was not safe to take it for granted
that Baggy's ire was aroused solely

against Grundy. against Grundy.

Wilkins came into collision with
Grundy. Wilkins was offered as a sacrifice. Grundy pushed him into the arms
of Baggy, and Baggy parted with a considerable whack of the horrible stuff. He

sucrane which of the horrible stuff. He rubbed his face against the face of Wilkins, and left it there.
"Ouch! Yooop!" yelled Wilkins.
"Cheese it, you fat beast! Cheese, it, I

say!"
Gunn dodged under the table.

seemed the safest place. Grundy cleared the table in a wild vault, but Baggy pursued still, making strange sounds, and looking very much like a targed Eskimo. Then Baggy perceived Gunn, and stooped to conquer.

Baggy was always clumsy. That he should drag down the cloth was only to be expected. And Grundy was clumsy, too. That he should trip over the cloth

was not wonderful.

But it was the hardest of hard luck for Grundy that the basin in which the still be on the table, and half full. In their zeal the three had overrated the amount needed.

Perhaps Wilkins might have arrested the fall of the basin. But Wilkins could not see very well. The stuff was in his the fall of the basin. But whichs could not see very well. The stuff was in his eyes. And it is not quite certain that Wilkins would have wanted to stop it, anyway. Wilkins had a great belief in fair shares.

Splash! "Ouuuuch!"

Right upon the devoted head of George Alfred Grundy came the awful mixture, filling his eyes and nose and mouth,

almost stifling him.

"Ow, yow! Keep off, Baggy, you rotter! Owwww!"

That was Gunn, under the table.
Baggy had clutched Gunn lovingly round the neck. And, on the whole, Gunn thought that he would rather have walked under the booby-trap than have had this thing happen to him. For he got all that the greediest fellow could have wanted of the stuff, with Baggy in addition. And being kissed by Baggy was not what Gunn considered a luxury.

was not what Gunn considered a luxury.
"There! Now you've all three got it,
you beasts!" howled Baggy.
Then the frenzy departed from him,
and he was greatly afraid because of what

the had done.

He tried a bolt, but Grundy caught him by the leg and pulled him down.

Then Grundy lifted himself partly up, and sat down hard upon Baggy's fat

"Gerroff! You're squashing me!" bleated the heir of the house of Trimble, "Shut up, and stay there till we've made up our minds how we're jolly well going to kill you!" retorted Grundy.

Gunn crawled from under the table. moaning. Wilkins, having gouged the stuff out of his eyes, found humour in the situation, and gave a weak and watery

"After all, you chaps, the stuff wasn't wasted!" he said.

"It was meant for Digby, and this bloated worm came along and spoiled it!" hooted Grundy.

Oh, you chaps are silly asses! Digby's with the rest in No. 10—you might have known that!" burbled Baggy, from under

"How should we know? We don't go about listening at keyholes!" retorted Grundy. "I sent a messenger to Digby, and, of course, I expected him to come!" "That's just why he bleated Baggy. wouldn't !"

And, when one came to think of it, there was something in Baggy's argument. Digby was not to be caught quite

ment. Digby was not to be caught quite so easily. The three saw that now.
Grundy let Baggy get up. In his own peculiar way, the great George Alfred was really quite a sportsman. And Wil-kins and Gunn were sportsmen, too. They were not half as angry with Trimble as might have been expected,

"But you ain't jolly well going to hook it till you tell me what you came here for!" said Grundy, with immense

"What is this beastly stuff?" asked Baggy, rubbing his face with his hand.

and looking at the hand, perhaps sur-prised to find that the mixture had made it even dirtier than usual. There was some excuse for his surprise, for the usual state of the hands of Baggy was grubbi-

"All sorts!" replied Gunn, with a grin. "There's soft soap in it, and vine-gar and ink and soot, and a bottle of some nice-smelling medicine that Wilky had, and some milk that had gone sour, and some sardine oil and calcium car-bide—I forget the rest. But it wasn't

bide—I forget the rest. But it wasn't wasted, anyway!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Baggy. "No; you chaps don't look as if it had been wasted! He, he, he!"

"Not so much of your 'He, he, he!"
said Grundy darkly. "Now, just you tell me what you came in for. We don't want you here, you know, you fat rotter!"

"I came to tell you something, but I'm not sure that I'll tell you now!" replied Trimble importantly.
"It it's anything you found out by—""

If it's anything you found out by "If it's anything you found out by—
"But it ain't—really, it ain't!" bleated
Baggy, "This was told me by—by—ch,
by a chap who don't want his name mentioned.

is the chap?" demanded 'Who Grundy.

"I say, old fellow, if he don't want his name mentioned, Baggy can't tell you!" Wilkins.

Wilkins and Gunn, though straight enough, were not quite as lofty as Grundy in the matter of refusing to listen to

in the matter of refusing to listen an news got by eavesdropping methods. "It's about this Parliament dodge," said Trimble. "He, he, he! They'll jolly well score over you if you don't hear, so you'd better listen."
"We're listening," said Gunn. "Buck up! It's about time we got this stuff

off our dials. If it sets there's no telling whether it will ever come off!"

"Oh, come along to the bath-room!" said Grundy. "I don't want to hear the fat worm's rubbish!"

#### CHAPTER 4.

Three Run Amok ! ALLO!" cried Blake. "Blessed ALLO!" cried Blake. "Blessed it three giddy niggers haven't strayed into the place!"
"They air niggers. They're a new race—a piebald race!"
"Niggers—niggers!" Lowther said.
"They we been using Someone-or-other's

World Renowned Soap to make them white, and the black's coming off in spots.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy elevated his celebrated monocle.
"Deah me!" he said. "Whatevah can these extwaordinawy cwaatchahs be? Is

there a circus in the village, deah boys?

"Where did you get that face, Grundy?" sang out Manners. The trio from Study No. 3 had chosen

an unfortunate moment for transferring themselves from the study to the bath-room. They had run right into Blake & Co., who had just left No. 10, while the Terrible Three stood in their doorway.

Baggy hard, and scrambled under the table in No. 3. Baggy had had enough. He saw no reason why he should be ex-posed to further outrage and insult. He would wait until the coast was clear.

would wait until the coast was clear.
"Is that the way you like it done,
Grundy?" inquired Digby politely.
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.
Blake put finger and thumb to his nasal

organ, and screwed up his face.
"My hat, it smells!" he said, in muffled tones. "You shouldn't do it, you chaps! "Tain't civilised to smell like that."

"Smells is hardly the word, Blake," rrected Lowther. "It—er—" corrected Lowther. "Niffs!" said Digby, holding his nose.

"Reeks!"-said Herries, doing ditto. "Hums is the correct expression," Lowther said. "It fairly hums!" "Yooop!" howled Grundy. And he rushed at them.

Wilkins and Gunn rushed too.

Grundy was not the brightest junior at St. Jim's. But he was not so obtuse as some thought him. In a general way, Grundy would have scorned to take a lead from Baggy Trimble. But in this particular case he

took one. He flung his arms around the neck of Robert Arthur Digby, and pressed his face lovingly to the countenance of that

"Ow! Stoppit! You beast—you rotter!" roared Dig.
"Weally, Wilkins! This is an out-

wage-a positive-

"Chuck it, Gunn! Wharrer doing?" spluttered Blake.
Herries bolted. So did the Terrible

Three. But they did not bolt in time.

Grundy & Co. realised the necessity Grandy & Co. reaused the necessity of haste if they were to make a really good job of this thing. And the burly body of George Alfred Grundy hurled itself against the door of No. 10 before those within could get it quite closed.

those within could get it quite closed.
Then did Grundy take vengeance for
terms of chipping at the hands of Monty
Lowther. Had Lowther been Grundy's
brother, returned unexpectedly from
long captivity in the land of the Huns,
Grundy could not have hugged him
harder. In fact, Grundy had uo brother, and would not have hugged him if he had had. But Grundy hugged Lowther. And Gunn had Herries in his grip, and

Wilkins was pressing his loathsome em-braces upon Manners.

Tom Merry snatched up a chair, re-tired into a corner, and howled defiance. "I'll jolly well brain you if you try that game with me!" he yelled. The three released their victims, and

The three released their victims, and went as one man for Tom.
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Digby and D'Arcy.
"Xou've got to go through it, Tommy!" cried Manners.

"Go it, Grundy!" shouted Lowther.
"He can't brain you—no one could!
They ain't there!"
"Pax!" roared the leader of the Shell.

"Pax!" roared the leader of the Shell.
"Oh, Tomms Tommy, how could you fall so low?" wailed Lowther.

"Pax be hanged! P'r'aps you'll stop your chortling now!" hooted Grundy, as he tore the chair from Tom's grasp, and

he tore the chair from Tom's grasp, and seized him in deadly grip.

"Lemme get at him! Don't bag it all, Grundy, you pig!" howled Wilkins.

Onn said nothing. But he was getting at Tom. And Wilkins really had little cause for complaint. He also was

doing his share.
"There!" said Grundy, in triumph.
"That's enough, you chaps! If they
feel like chortling after this, let 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It appeared that they did feel like

chortling. The running amok of Grundy & Co. had its comic side. To their victims it was a real surprise that Grundy should have been so ready of action. They did not know that they owed that to Baggy Trimble. .
Tom Merry roared as heartily as the

Tom Merry roared as hearthy as the rest. Only Arthur, Augustus failed to see the affair as a joke. "Bai Jove!" he panted. "This is weally too bad, Gwunday. It is beyond

the gidday limit! You—"
"Oh, dry up, Gussy!" snapped Blake.
"Go and look at your phiz in the glass! That'll@make you grin, if you've any notion of what's really funny."

"If I look funniah than you do,

THE GEM LIBRARY.-No. 506.

## THE BEST 30. LIBRARY THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 30. LIBRARY, NOW ON

"Well, you do! You had something to start on, with a face like yours!" "I hope you fellows are satisfied now?" said Grundy, with heavy

Grundy, sarcasm.

"We've had enough certainly," ad-nitted Tom Merry. "We'll make it pax mitted Tom Merry. "We'll make it now, Grundy, and all go and clean up.

"I say, Grundy, was that little lot meant for me?" asked Digby. "Young Frayne said you wanted to see me in your study."

"Yes, you blessed fathead! didn't you come?"

"Because I ain't quite such a blessed fathead as you take me for, old chap! Who got it? For I suppose you weren't quite asses enough to walk under it quite asses enough to walk under it yourselves. I dunno, though—you might

be."
"Trimble got it," replied Grundy

"Good egg! Where is the bounding

Baggy?"
"How should I know? I'm not worrying about Baggy.

Baggy was not in the bath-room, and he did not arrive there till some time after the rest. They left him still at it when they had finished, though that was some little time later, for the stuff clung.

"I shouldn't worry about deing any more, Baggy," said Monty Lowther. "It more, Baggy, 'said Monty Lowther.' It isn't really necessary, having regard to your ordinary standard of uncleanliness. Nobody's likely to notice."
"But it niffs so!" wailed Baggy, "Oh, I didn't think you'd mind a little thing like that."

When Grundy & Co. returned to No. 3 they found a pencil scrawl on the table.

"Tom Merry and those roters think they are gowing to hier the barne in the field between hear and Glyn House for there sily old Parlement. They immajen it belongs to Mr. Rodwell, but it dont old Pepper has it, that lives in the littel house behind the post-offls. Rodwell gave up the field at Midsummer. If you look sharpe you can be ahed of them.—

read it out aloud. Grundy snatched it from his hand as soon as he

had finished.

had finished.
"So that's what Baggy came to tell me," he growled. "Like his blessed check, I must say! We know well enough how he got hold of the news!"
"Well, that don't matter a heap, as I see it," said Wilkins, who had a practical mind. "And I don't see that the thing

itself matters unless you really mean all the stuff you've been giving us about running an opposition show."

"Mean it? Of course I mean it, you fat-headed chump!" hoofed Grundy.
"Do I ever say anything I don't mean?"
"I should hope so," replied Wilkins.
"If you mean the things you say sometimes you're a sillier ass than you—"
"None of your cheek, George Wilkins!

I'm not jolly well going to stand it, so that's straight."

Grundy never had been able to get Gunn and Wilkins into a proper attitude of respectful awe towards him; but he still resented their treating him as if he were one of the common herd, and slinging at him the doubtful compli-ments that were so frequent among the

ments that were so frequent among the juniors of St. Jim's.

"Hallo, Trimble, what do you want?" So ferocious was the face that Grundy turned upon Baggy that that heroic youth wished he had not come along

"I-I-oh, it's nothing, Grundy. At least, nothing much," faltered Baggy, backing.

"Oh, you can say what you've got=to The Gem Library.—No. 506.

"He, he, he! You're the wittiest chap I know, Grundy; but that ain't true, you know. I'm not dirty—not any

dirtier than anyone else!"
"What? Mean to tell me that I'm
no cleaner than you are?" hooted Grundy.

Grandy.
"Nun-nun-no! I wouldn't go so far as that, Grundy. But, then you're such an exceptionally particular chap. I'm as clean as Gunn or Wilkins, anyway!"
"Oh, are you?" roared Wilkins.
And Gunn moved forward in a threat-

ening manner

"Stoppit, Wilky! Don't, Gunn! I-I never meant you fellows-

I never meant you fellows—I meant to say—er—Herries and Blake!" "Go down on your knees and say that you're a dirty pig, and you apologise to us, and you'll never do it again, and we'll forgive you!" said Wilkins

authoritively. "Here, stop that bullying, you two!" snapped Grundy. "Wha-a-a-t?" gasped Wilkins and

Gunn together. "Stop that bullying, I say! I don't approve of bullying, and I won't have it in this study!"

in this study:"
The faces of George Wilkins and
William Cuthbert Gunn were full of rebellion and wrath. It was quite true
that Grundy always said that he objected that Grandy always said that he objected to bullying; and there was no doubt that he meant what he said. Yet there were people at St. Jim's who called Grundy a bully—and meant what they said. And certainly the hand of Grundy had been heavy upon Wilkins and Gunn often enough, though his heavy-handedness had never disturbed their friendship badly.

"Yes, you stop it, you two!" said aggy, taking heart. "Grundy ain't Yes, you stop it, you two!" said Baggy, taking heart. "Grundy ain't going to let you do as you like, you know. Beastly bullies, both of you! But my pal Grundy won't let—"
"If you call me your pal again I'll skin you alive! What do you want here, you bladder of lerd?"

you bladder of lard?" "I—I—Grundy?" Did you get my note,

"Yes. What about it?"
"I—— Well, you know, it's what they call exclusive information, and—and it ought to be worth something. Don't you think so, Grundy? You were always a fair-minded chap. I'll say that for

"Yes, I'm a Trimble," and fair-minded Trimble," answered Grundy darkly.
'And your blessed information is worth something, and I'll give you what I think it's worth!"

this worth:

Baggy, in his greedy obtuseness, grinned, and held out a podgy hand.

"That ain't where I'm going to give it to you!" hooted Grundy. "Turn

round !" Baggy turned. But it was to flee, and

Grundy only got in one kick.

#### CHAPTER 5. Mr. Pepper.

"W HO is this chap Pepper?" asked Grundy, after he had kicked the door to behind him. He spoke as if his mind was

made up to something.
"Don't know him," replied Wilkins.
"You never know anything of any use!" said Grundy scornfully. "I never saw such chaps as you are!

saw such chaps as you are!"
"Yes, you do know him, Wilky," said
Gunn. "So does old Grundy. I hadn't
heard his name befare; but he must be that weird merchant who gets his clobber

out of a rag-bag."
"Oh, I know now, Gunny!" replied
Wilkins. We saw him the other day—

say! I sha'n't eat you. I like my grub | don't you remember, Grundy? The clean!" journy with the knickers that looked as if they had been made out of an old horse-rug, and a shiny freek-coat, and button boots, and a straw hat with the brim half gone!"

"And the bike, with one solid tyre and one pneumatic, and the spokes tinkered up with umbrella-ribs, or something of the sort," grinned Gunn. "It can't be that chap," said Grundy.

"That chap can't have any money, I'm

"Bet you he has, though!" answered unn. "They say he's a miser, and has Gunn. bags of sovereigns hidden away somewhere!"
"Who says so?"

"Who says so?"
"Folks in the village."
"It's rot!"
"Why? There have been misers before now," said Wilkins. "What is there against one of them coming to live at

now," said Wilkins. "What is there against one of them coming to live at Rylcombe?"
"But he couldn't keep sovereigns like that! All the gold was called in long ago!"
"Yes; but they didn't search for it,"
said Gunn "This ain't Germany. They trusted to people's honour. Well, a misor wouldn't, have any honour "Tain't. have any honour -

"I can't have anything to do with a man of that kind," said Grundy loftily. "He's got no patriotism!"

"But he's got a barn, and if you don't hire it. Tom Merry and that crowd will," replied Wilkins.

Wilkins and Gunn had not been consulted about the St. Jim's Parliament, or invited to the meetings, and they were by no means loth to stir up Grundy against the scheme.

Of course, any opposition scheme that Grundy tried to run would turn out a dismal failure. Grundy's schemes had a way of turning out dismal failures, though it was always the fault of someone else—according to Grundy.

But there would be some fun in it first. And it would be one up against Tom Merry & Co. if Grundy barged in and secured the barn before they had discovered about the change of ownership.

Wilkins and Gunn bore no malice against Tom Merry & Co., but they wel-comed the opportunity of scoring over

them, nevertheless.

them, nevertneess.

"Yes; he's got a barn, as you say—that is, if he has got it," replied Grundy slowly. "And I ain't satisfied with Merry and that crowd. It's the old story over again. Everything goese by favouritism, not by merit." There's no over again. Everything goes by favouritism, not by merit. There's no chance of their electing me Premier—not

a scrap!"
"But there might be if you hired the barn before they could get it," said Gunn.
"There ain't another like it anywhere
near. They began to build for a bungalow, you know; but then they changed their minds. It didn't turn out a bun-galow, but it's a ripping fine barn!"

"Let's cut along and see this merchant Pepper at once," said Grundy. "I never saw such chaps as you two are for wasting time in gassing!"

They got out their bikes, and hurried off to the village.

Mr. Erasmus Zachariah Pepper was at

A rap at the door of the dirty little cottage behind the post-office brought him to it.

him to it.

The knickers of which Wilkins had spoken were noticeable at once. Both in material and in cut they were quite unlike any other pair the three had ever seen. But they were at least a pair, which was more than could be said of his stockness which was more than could be said of his stockness which was more than could be said.

ings or his boots. One of the boots was a boot of the heavy, nail-studded type worn by agricultural labourers, the other was a shoe. One of the stockings was heather mixture, the other blue, with a chaste ;

yellow turn-over.

His waistcoat appeared to have been made out of a piece of sacking, and he wore a purple smoking-cap with a green tassel.

tassel. He was skinny, and sharp of nose. Dirt seemed engrained into the very pores of his skin. His little grey eyes, overhung by fierce grey eyebrows, gleamed with greed. His grey moustache was yellow with tobacco, and he was chewing as he stood there.

They did not like the look of Mr. E. Z. Pepper at all. But, after all, this was not a social call. They had merely come

on business. "What d'ye want?" he snapped.

"What d'ye want?" he snapped.
"I say, about your barn..."
"Speak up, can't you? I'm a bit hard of hearing," said Mr. Pepper, with one hand curved behind his right ear.
This was untrue. Mr. Pepper's hearing was as good as his sight, and that had nothing the matter with it. But it suited him to pretend deafness.
"I say, you know, that barn of yours, you know!" shouted Grundy.
"You needn't you at me in that

"You needn't yell at me in that fashion. Speak clear, if you can, and I'll make shift to hear you. I must say boys' manners ain't what they used to be in

my time."
"Nor their habits," whispered Gunn to Wilkins. "They've taken to washing their ears since that. Perhaps that will

Keep them from going deaf."
Grundy heard, and guffawed. Mr.
Pepper heard also, but his face remained Pepper heard also, but his face remained quite stolid. Ho would get even for that speech in his own way if the chance offered; but he was not going to argue the matter. Perhaps he knew that no argument would convince anyone who saw him that he was not dirty.
"Your barn, you know," said Grundy.
"Barm? I haven't any. The Government won't let a man brew these days."
"What barn?"
"The one in the field near our show."
"The one in the field near our show."

"The one in the field near our show." "Oh, you come from a show, do you? I took you for schoolboys. Don't you go telling me that you've burnt that barn of mine down, now

"We haven't burned your barn down and we're not from any show," replied Grundy impatiently. "We're from St. Grundy impatiently. "We're from Lim's-St. James'-the school,

know!" "What show are you talking about,

"I wasn't talking about any show. It's

only a way of speaking."
"Well, I don't take to it. I like the

plain truth. I may be deaf-"You jolly well are!" muttered

But therein Grundy was wrong.

"And I may be poor---

"But you ain't!" murmured Wilkins. And therein Wilkins was right. Mr. Erasmus Zachariah Pepper was so far from being poor that he could have bought up half Rylcombe parish.

"But if I'm deaf and poor-"And dirty!" whispered Gunn.

"And dirty!" whispered Gunn.
"If I'm deaf and poor, I ain't to be
insulted, nor to be told lies to! And
you've been telling me lies. If you're
from the school you can't be from a
show; you ain't from the school, and
contrariwise!"
"Q.E.D.," remarked Wilkins. "Go it,

Bage!"
Oh, hang it, I've had enough!"
snapped Grundy. "Come along, you chaps! This fellow's too—"
Chaps! "July hard!" said Mr. Pepper.

"Here! Hold hard!" said Mr. Pepper.
"What was it about the barn? You can You can come inside if you want to talk about that—at least, if it's in the way of business. I've got no time to waste, and Grundy.

nothing to give away, so you may as well

understand that from the start."
"Oh, never mind about the old barn! We didn't come along to ask you to give us anything!" said Grundy huffily.

"Look here, don't go off like that!" pleaded Mr. Pepper. "My temper ain't what it might be to-day—I don't mind owning that. I had a bad expence given owing that I had a bad viscous from in change this morning by some rascal; and when I tried to pass it, the baker was rude about it."

"P'r' aps he thought you were a rascal for trying." Grundy suggested

for trying," Grundy suggested.
"Eh? Why should he? That sin't reason. I couldn't afford to be a loser on it. But, come in—come in!"

#### CHAPTER 6. A Deal with Mr. Pepper.

THEY went in. The place was dirty, but not dirtier than one might have expected after seeing its owner. A half-starved dog lay its owner. A half-starved dog lay on the sacking which served as a hearthrug. On a table lay a package of what the butchers call "bits." which were evidently intended for the evening meal of Mr. Pepper. One glance at the dog was sufficient to make one sure that he never fed so luxuriously.

Mr. Pepper thrust the dog aside with his foot, and planted himself in front of those old, untidy grate, with his hands in the pockets of those very remarkable

"Well, what about my barn?" he said.
"I want to hire it," replied Grundy

bluntly.

And what for?" "To hold meetings in."

Grundy did not care to attempt explaining to Mr. Pepper about the St. Jim's Parliament.

"Ho! Meetings—ch? Stop-the-war meetings, d'ye mean?" "No!" hooted Grundy. "Do I look

like that sort of thing?"
"Hum! Can't judge people by what
they look like. For the matter of that,
you look—but, never mind that! That barn, you know—well, properly speak-ing, that ain't a barn. You might call it a commodious and eligible residence. was thinking about going to live in it myself. If I let it to you, that'll have to be considered in the price. I dessay you've noticed that I've had a window or

two put in? They had not. But, on the whole, they They had not. But, on the whole, they thought that the barn would certainly be a more desirable residence than Mr. Pepper's very dismal little cottage. "How much do you want for it—by the week, I mean?" asked Grundy, going direct to the point. "How much will you give?" asked Mr.

Pepper.
"I'd rather you put a figure on it," said Grundy.

"Ah! But I might not ask enough!"
"Well, I shouldn't mind that."
"But I should," said Mr. Pepper.
They found it easy to believe him.

You might ask too much, you know !" said Gunn.

said Gunn.
"That ain't likely. My conscience wouldn't let me. Besides, it couldn't be too much if you were willing to pay it. That's a beautiful barn—more like a mansion!"

"Shall we say ten bob a week, !
four weeks certain?" inquired Grundy. He had a fiver from his Uncle Grundy in his pocket, and knew that more was easily obtainable from the same generous

source "Ten bob a day?" asked Mr. Pepper, with hand to ear. "Yes, that's a fair

price, I think!"
"'Ten bob a week,' I said!" howled

"Yah! Why don't you say twopence-

halfpenny?"
"I will, if you will!" replied Grundy

promptly.

"Ah! You will have your little joke. "Ah! You will have your name joan.
"Ah! You will have your name joan.
But it's no good talking about ten bob
a week. My conscience wouldn't let me

let at that."
"Same old conscience that made him
try to pass the bad tanner," murmured Wilkins.

"Mr. Pepper means his conscience wouldn't let him take so much, I think!" said Gunn politely.

said Gunn politely.
"Then you think wrong!" snapped
Mr. Pepper. "Look here, young di!
I'm no haggler. You're well-to-do; I
can tell that from the cut of your jib.
I'm a poor man. You wouldn't try to
drive a hard bargain, I'm sure. Done
with you for double the money, and two months certain!"

Wilkins nudged Grundy. But it was Wildins integed Grundy. But it was no use nudging Grundy when he had made up his mind to do anything. And now he had made up his mind to hire that barn, whatever it cost him.

"That will be eight pounds," he said.
"I suppose two on account will do you?" Mr. Pepper's hearing seemed now to have improved wonderfully.

"You don't reckon right, young sir," he said. "Thirty-one and thirty-one make sixty-two-nine weeks, as near as a toucher! We'll-call it nine. And five in advance is a fair thing.

"Don't you be had like that, old chap!" whispered Gunn.

"Just you keep your breath to cool your porridge with!" snapped Mr. Pepper, who heard that quite well. This affair is between me and the young gentleman opposite—I didn't catch your name, sir!"

"Grundy-George Alfred Grundy,"

"Grundy—George Alfred Grundy."

"Ah! And a very nice name, too—for them that like it. Now, let me put it all down in black and white. We don't need a lawyer—he would make a five-guinea job of it. And I know as much as any of 'em."

Mr. Pepper produced a very scratchy.

Mr. Pepper produced a very scratchy.

pen, some pale and muddy ink, and the fly-leaf of an old book. He wrote quickly, and in a clear, good hand, an agreement as between Erasmus Zachariah epper on the one part, and George Affred Grundy on the other, whereby the said Pepper did, on payment by the said Grundy of £5, being part—— And so on, and so on.

Mr. Pepper evidently knew all about it.

Grundy did not, and he was rather im-reseed. Wilkins and Gunn looked on pressed. Wilkins and Gunn looked on sadly. They had not realised, when they urged upon Grundy the hiring of the urged upon trundy the miring of the barn, that it meant his parting with the fiver in his pocket at once, and thereafter a period of plain living in Study No. 3. "I'd rather have gold," said Mr. Pepper, looking at the five-pound note

"I'd ratus"
Pepper, looking at the now,
doubtfully,
"What's the odds?" asked Grundy,
"That's a Bank of England note—as
good as gold anywhere."
"Gold's good the world over!" said
Mr. Pepper, "These things would be

"That's impossible; and if it happened

nothing else would matter a scrap!" re-plied Grundy, who was, in his way, as staunch and thoroughgoing a patriot as could well be imagined.

could well be imagined.
"Nothing—except money," said Mr.
Pepper. "Money always matters. But
if you haven't the gold I must take this."
He took it, and rustled it, and looked at the water-mark, and behaved generally in a manner that put the great Grundy's

"I don't like that chap. He's not much THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 506.

"You were a silly chump to shell out all that whack!" said Wilkins candidly. "He'd have taken ten bob a week if you had stuck out. And that's a blessed sight

too much!"
"Well, it will be a score over the other
growd, anyway," said Gunn. "I say, crowd, anyway," said Gunn. 1 say, you chaps, I'll bet that yarn about the

you chaps. It bet that yarn about the bags of gold is true! Pepper's got the cut of a miser all over!!"
"If I found his bags of gold I'd jolly well denounce him!" snapped Grundy.

"No one's got any right to have gold these days. It's rotten unpatriotic." "Well, he ain't likely to let you find them," answered Wilkins. "You bet that merchant hangs tight to what he's got!"

#### CHAPTER 7. Another Deal with Mr. Pepper.

"M weally fwightfully sowwy, Tom Mewwy, but this is every sou I've got at the pwecise moment!"
said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy,

said Arthur Angustus D'Arcy, producing a ten-shilling note.

"Oh, Gusey, Gusey! And we counted on you as the one giddy plutocrat among us?" said Tom reproachfully.
"Bai Jove! I'm feathfully sowsy! I lad a fivah last week, an' I may have anothah next week—1 hope so, anyway. But they are not so fwequent as they used to be. How much have you collected altogethah, deah boy?"
"This makes two quid, I dare say it'll do. The barn isn't in use for anything, and Rodwell ought to jump at a chance

do. The barn isn't in use for anytuing, and Rodwell ought to jump at a chance to let it for a few shillings a week,"
"We had bettah go along an' intalview Rodwell at once. These of us will be quite enough—you an' I, deah boy, an' Lowthah or Talbot; that would do!"
"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry.

But four went, after all. Talbot was busy; but Blake insisted that if Gussy were going, he must go to look after

They met Grundy & Co. about half-

to Rylcombe.

way to Rylcompe.
"What were those bounders grinning ?" asked Blake after they had passed. "Were they?" said Lowther. "When were they?" said Lowther. "When Nature has treated fellows so badly in the way of faces it really isn't easy to tell. But now I come to think of it, Grundy's gorilla physiognomy did look rather different from usual." "Of course they were grinning!"

"Of course they were grinning!" suapped Blake. "And they've got something up their sleeves against us, I'll bet?"

"Oh, they may only have smiled at Gussy, you know. You couldn't blame anyone for smiling broadly when he anyone for smiling broadly when looked at Gussy, Blake."
"Weally, Lowthah, I fail to see broadly when he

"Try goggles instead of the monocle, old chap! I always said that thing was

no real use to you."

They found Mr. Rodwell at home, but that carried them no farther on their

"My lease ran out at Midsummer," said. "The field an' the barn were he said. bought by a man named Pepper. if he don't soon look out an' do seme-thing with the land he'll have Govern-ment on his track, I'm thinkin' Queer chap as ever I saw—both ends an' the middle of a regular miser, I should say. He'll let you the barn, I fancy. But you'd better look out that he don't do you down."

"What would be

"What would be about figure?" asked Tom Merry. "Well, it's a first-rate barn, an' it might be worth a good deal to anyone who wanted it badly. But no one about lere does. As things are, I'd have been glad to take twenty pound a year for it,

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 506.

old hunks get more than nine bob a week out of you—ten at the outside."
"Thanks, very much, Mr. Rodwell,"

"You're welcome, my lad. Good-day to you."

They rode off. In the village they made inquiries as to the domicile of Mr. Pepper, and were directed thither.

The door of the cottage stood open, and Erasmus Zachariah was to be seen within, preparing a meal. The within, preparing a meal. The butcher's bits" were now in a fryingpan on the fire, and what looked like a home-made loaf baked by someone who didn't know how, stood on the table. The lean dog sniffed hungrily, and watered at the mouth. The four St. Jim's juniors did not water at the

"What d've want?" demanded Mr. Pepper, looking up from his cooking.

"We've called to see you on business," said Tom. "But if it's an inconvenient time we can look in later."

"No time's wrong for business. Come along in, and in half a minute I'll be ready to attend to you."

He produced from a cupboard the

broken fragment of a big dish. A cinder from the hearth served to tilt this, and he turned the contents of the frying-pan on to it.

#### DON'T FAIL TO READ "FRANK RICHARDS' SOHOOLDAYS,"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

#### IN "THE BOYS' FRIEND." **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

"I ain't one that lives in luxury, like you young gentlemen," he said, perhaps noting the fact that the fasticious nose of Arthur Augustus had lifted just the veriest trifle. "This is wholesome meat, and my stomach ain't proud. Now what

can I do for you?"
"But you'll let your grub get cold while we're talking," said Blake.
"That don't matter. Maybe I sha'n't eat so much."

"It's about the barn in your field we called," Tom said.
"Ah! Oh, indeed! The barn," said

Mr. Pepper. He picked up one of the unsavoury morsels from the dish be-tween a dirty finger and a dirty thumb, and popped it into his mouth. 'Are you willing to let it?" asked

"I am," replied Mr. Pepper, without a moment's hesitation.

He made no pretence of being deaf his time. Nor did he mention his

this time. Nor did he mention his conscience. That was perhaps as well, all "What's your price?" asked Tom.
"What'd you want it for?"

"Oh-well, you might say for meetings?

"Prayer meetings?"

"No. Nothing of that sort."

"Ah! I might have let it cheaper if it had been for that," said Mr. Pepper it had been for that," said Mr. Pepper piously. Then he looked at them in a very suspicious way. "Not for gambling, I hope?" he said severely. "Certainly not for gambling," replied

"Oh, no. That would naturally make it more expensive," put in Lowther. "I shouldn't think of letting it for such

"I snother tunink of letting it for such a purpose. A-betting?"
"Well, we're not going a-betting, or yet a-gambiling," Lowther cut in. "Such gambolling as there may be will be quite

better than a Hun!" remarked Grundy, as they rode back to the school.
"You were a silly chump to shell out effect. But you hards' to let the that would make a differ! Perhaps you would come and gambol effect. But you hards' to ught to let the with us one day, Mr. Pepper? You appear of an innocefulty playful nature."

Mr. Pepper answered the humorist of the Shell only by a scowl.

"Just you four?" he asked of Tom.

"Oh, no. Forty—fifty—perhaps

more.

"You'll be damaging the That's got to be considered, you know. "Not beforehand, I think. fairest way would be that we should pay for any damage we do after it's done. But I don't think there will be any worth speaking of.

The half-starved dog had jumped on to a chair, and was wistfully contemplating his master's unappetising meal. Pepper had turned his back. D' Pepper had turned his back. D'Arcy pushed the dish nearer to the dog. The animal sniffed the meat. But as yet it

was too hot for him.
"Then we'll fix it that way-if we come to terms. I'll look in every now and then, and let you know what the bill for damages is. That's the best way to for damages is, keep straight." "But we haven't fixed the price yet,"

Tom said.

"Oh, the price! We sha'n't haggle about that, I reckon." As Mr. Pepper had already let the barn for more than it was worth, he could afford to be generous. But he had no intention of being so.

Now the dog, greatly daring, put his nose into the dish and gobbled up a scrap of the meat. He looked at D'Arcy with something as near like a wink as a dog could give, and annexed another morsel. His master did not see. Encouraged by the expression on

D'Arcy's friendly face, and lured on by the delectable flavour, the dog proceeded to make short work of Mr. Popper's

to make since meal.

"Go it, old cripple!" murmured Blake, who had just twigged.

"We won't haggle," said Mr. Pepper.
"Say a pound a week, and no extras."
"I don't see what extras there can the same that's done, and a cont see what extras there can be except any damage that's done, and we've agreed to pay for that," Tom replied. "As for your price, it's a heap too etiff."

"Well, we'll say nineteen—and six," said Mr. Pepper, with a gush of

generosity.

"You may say that—we sha'n't! It will be nearer the figure if you say nine-and-six. And that's really too much." and six. And that's really too much.

The dog had now cleared up every

scrap of meat, and was licking the fat from the dish. His stump of a tail wagged with delight. "Eh?" said Mr. Pepper, with his

hand to his ear. "He's developed deafness.
n, I fear, Tommy," A had sign, murmured Lowther.

"I-said-nine-and-six!" velled Tom.

"Well, I said nineteen-and-six, too.

What are you arguing about?"
"Chuck it, Tom! He's a land-shark,"

said Blake.
"We aren't buying the barn; we only want to hire it." Ton said firmly.
"Half-a-sov. a week is our limit, and you can't raise me a threepenny bit on that."

Mr. Pepper reflected. That would make thirty shillings a week-at the rate of seventy-eight pounds a year-which will rent a good-sized house in a good

neighbourhood, and is by no means bad, even for a barn that is half a bungalow. As for the double tenancy, Mr. Pepper meant to let his tenants fight that out hetween them. It was none of his busi-ness, he held. And the agreement to which Grundy had appended his which Grundy had appended his illustrious autograph bore no date. That was another point in Mr. Pepper's favour. He did not intend to date this one unless he had to.
"Make it three months, cash down?

and it's a deal," said Mr. Pepper. "But you drive a hard bargain with a poor

man, I must say."

As Tom had only two pounds, he could not make it three months, cash down. And he would not have done so in any case. It was very unlikely that the St. Jim's Parliament would have a the St. Jim's range. life of three months.

"Four weeks down, that with a

life of three months.
"No," he said. "Four weeks down, and gayment weekly after that, with aweek's notice, good on either side."
Mr. Pepper saw that he had to deal with a more businesslike fellow than Grundy, and he regretted it. But it was too, much to hope for two Grundys

in one day. We don't want a contract, I s'pose," he said. "That's a job for a lawyer, and they charge like—like the Light Brigade at Balaclava."

A receipt ought to be enough," said Tom.

"I'll give you that, and you can give an undertaking to pay for any me an damage done.

Pepper turned to get pen and ink and find a book with a blank flypage available as paper. He still failed to notice that his dog, for once in its poor, staryed life, had had a meal.

"I shouldn't sign any agreement to pay for damages, Tom," said Lowther. pay for damages, 10th, said Lowder.

"He'll do you down some way if you do, I'm jolly sure. He's a shark!"

"That's actionable language, young man!" said Mr. Pepper sharply. "H I

hear any more of it, my solicitor—"
"You'd better be deaf again," replied
Monty Lowther. "Especially if it's the
same solicitor who charges like the Light ·Brigade."

Brigade."

Mr. Pepper seowled. But he did not let his resentment stand in the way of business. In a few minutes he had drawn up a brief agreement as to damages, which Ton eigned, and Blake witnessed, Lowther refusing point-blank to put his name to it in any way; and two pounds had passed, and a receipt for that sum had been given.

As he put the notes and silver carefully in his pocket, he turned and saw the empty dish.

#### CHAPTER 8.

And Yet Another Deal with Mr. Pepper. ITH a howl of rage, Mr. Pepper rushed at the dog. The creature fled to a corner, and cowered there, quivering all

"Here, hold on!" cried Blake. "We're not going to have you knock that

"We're not going to have you knock that dog about, you know!"
"Who's going to stop me? He's my dog, I believe?! Come here, Binks, you cur, and I'll threah you within an inch of your life! had sense enough not to move. He looked at the four juniors in a

way that appealed to all their hearts.

"Weally, Mr. Peppah, I do not considah that you should thwash the poor fellow for wolfin' his grub a twifle too soon," remonstrated Arthur Augustus. "He's never been taught to say grace,

"He's never been taught to say grace,
suppose?" added Lowther.
"His grub? Do you think I buy
butcher's meat for a cur like that? That
meat was cooked for my own eating, and
it cost me sixpence!"
"If you will allow me to pay for it, I
said to happy to do so, Mr. Peppah,"
said Gussy pelitude of the sort of the said custy pelitude of the sort of the sort of the sort of the said that of the sort of the said classy pointers. Guess feel rate guilty, but he could not feel sorry. It was so evident that Binks had stood in real need of that meal; and, in spite of all the warnings of amateur Food Conline breed was a bit doubtful, he had a



Binks on Guard. (See Chapter 10.)

trollers, Arthur Augustus was still of opinion that no one should keep a dog and starve him.

Mr. Pepper was gracious enough to accept the sixpence-without thanks.

"I shall drown the brute!" he said vengefully. "That's the third lot of grub he's sneaked, and I've only had him a fortnight. I took him for a bad debt chap going into the Army-but he'll never be any good to me. He's no watchdog. He'd as soon bite me as the next man!"

"He must have been feabfully hungwy, Mr. Peppah," pleaded the tender-hearted Arthur Augustus.

"If he tried to make a meal off that merchant he must have been in an acute state of starvation," murmured Monty Lowther.

"I do weally beg that you won't dwown him, Mr. Peppah! It was weally more our fault than his. We encouwaged him to cat the gwub, you know.

"Ah! That's where you signed his death-warrant!" replied Mr. Pepper grimly.

It was more than Gussy could bear. He felt his responsibility acutely. Binks must not die!

"But, weally, Mr. Peppah——" "You'd better buy him. That's the

"You'd better buy only way out of it!"
"But I do not want a dog. I like dogs
"But I do not want a dog. I am suah no end; but it isn't poss. I am suah they will not allow anothah dog at the

school just now." school just now. There had been trouble with Mr. Rat-cliff about Figgins' dog; and, though old Spot had escaped, it was 'pretty well understood that, while the food regula-tions lasted the canine population of St.

Jum's must not be added to.

an, wen, he am't worth much-a mere common cur-cheap as dirt, his sort! He may just as well be got rid of." But if Binks had no pedigree, if even

pair of very eloquent brown eyes, and was quite a presentable dog, apart from his extreme thinness. And he had been the property of a man who had now gone to fight for his country—that counted, too. The man in khaki would not like to too. The man in khaki would not like to hear of the slaughter of Binks, D'Arcy felt sure.

"He don't mean it!" whispered Blake. "He wouldn't kill the dog while there was a chance of getting some ass to give tenpence-halfpenny for him!"

"But he is starvin' the poor fellow, the w'etch!" answered Gussy.

"Are you going to buy him, or am I to drown the cur?" inquired Mr. Pepper. "Well, at the pwesent moment I am feahfully hard up, Mr. Peppah; but if

you will give me cwedit-

"You're young D'Arcy, Lord East-wood's son, ain't you? Yes, I'll give you credit, sir." They stared, amazed that Mr. Pepper should know so much. But Mr. Pepper knew more about St. Jim's and the fcl-

lows there than they imagined. "Vewy well, then, I'll buy him. Come

here, Binks!

Binks came at once, wagging his tail delightedly. He seemed quite to understand. "Five pounds will pay for him," said

Mr. Pepper pleasantly.
"Wha-a-at!" gasped Arthur Augustus.
"You mean five bob!" said Blake

bluntly.

'And that's a liberal price for a worth-"And that's a interal piece for a worth-less cur," added Tom.

"That was only a manner of speak-ing," explained Mr. Pepper.

"I will give you ten shillin's, though I

a win give you ten saidin's, though I considah you are showin' most unpwincipled gweed, Mr. Peppah," said the swell of the Fourth, caressing Binks. 'I'd sooner drown him!" snapped the

hard bargainer.

Well, then—"
Hold on, Gustavus!" chipped in "Hold on, Gustavus!" chipped in The Gem Library.—No. 506. Blake. "Leave this to me! I'm York-

shire, you know!"

He turned to Mr. Pepper. "Ten shillings, and that's the last word!" he said.

word!" he said.
"Cash down, then!" was the reply.
They had not that amount among them.
"Oh, weally, Mr. Peppah, I suppose
you will take my I O U?" said Gussy.
"Yee-for fifteen. I wouldn't take his
-he's Yorkshire!" answered Mr. Pepper,
with a wrathful look at Blake, "I was
done down by a Yorkshireman once!"
"Mist have been a long time ago,"
"Mist have been a long time ago,"

said Blake. "I honour that Yorkshireman!" mur-

mured Lowther. Gussy signed an I O U for fifteen shillings, promising to redeem it within a week. As Lowther pointed out, the inweek. As Lowther pointed out, the in-terest was the mere trifle of 2,600 per cent. per annum, which was calculated to cent. per annum, which was calculated to beggar a millionaire. But Mr. Pepper said that was not the way to look at it, and, for his part, he would not mind beggaring all the millionaires in creation—which they found it easy to believe.

They departed. Binks seemed very willing to go. He never even looked back at his master of a fortnight. Perhaps he had not forgotten that other master, now in khaki; but certainly he had taken to D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus slipped into a shop to buy some dog-biscuits.

Attur Augustus supped into a supper buy some dog-biscuits.

"That's a downy old bird, that Pepper," said Blake, while Tom Merry negotiated the entrance of the key of the barn-which key weighed nearly a pound

"He's a vulture—a regular bird of prey," said Lowther. "I can't get rid of prey," said Lowtner. "I can't get rid of a dread suspicion that there's some do in all this. But Tommy has the key, and the barn's certainly there, so it's hard to

see how there can be."
"We ought to have asked him whether Grundy had been to see him," said Blake, who could not forget the grins on the

who could not forget the grins on the faces of Grundy & Co.

"Grundy wouldn't have come away without the key," said Tom. "Besides, what could Grundy want with the barn?" But Grundy had forgotten all about the

D'Arcy came out of the shop, Binks trotting at his heels as if he had run there ever since puppyhood.

"Where are you going to lodge Binks?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, he will have to be put in the barn, I guess!" said Tom.
"But that will be fwightfully lonely for

him." protested Arthur Angustus.
"Well, you can go and sit with him," replied Tom, grinning. "You can't very well have him in your study—not that I

"Or that it matters much in a menagerie like that," remarked Lowther blandly.

Lowthah, I shall wefuse any longah to wegard-

"Ring off, Gustavus! They want to hing off, Gistavus! They want to bag Binks for the menkey-house—otherwise No. 10, Shell passage," said Blake. "But they can't. We won't have the manners of Binks spoiled by contact with Lowther." Lowther

"I thought you were going to say Manners, Blake. You missed a chance

there."
"A Yorkshireman, old scout, prefers
the truth to a pun," replied Blake.

## CHAPTER 9.

Baggy Blabs!

HE Terrible Three were discussing arrangements for the election in Study No. 10 next day.

Thus far the united wisdom of

all concerned had not managed to hit upon a feasible scheme.

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There would be candidates in plenty, but where were the voters coming from? Everyone would want to stand for elec-

tion. Everyone, that is, in the Lower School—the Forms below the Fifth. The Fifth and Sixth would look upon the whole scheme from a standpoint of lofty. superiority, no doubt; but in matters of this sort nobody minded about opinion of the two senior Forms.

The fags had caught on. A deputa-tion consisting of Wally D'Arcy, Frank Levison, Reggie Manners, and Jameson had waited upon Tom Merry & Co. to

had waited upon Tom Merry & Co. to put in a strong claim for representation for the Third—and plenty of it! "Waited upon" sounds polite; but it cannot be said that Wally & Co. sounded specially polite, and in the event they had to be put out by force. The New House had rallied well. Figgins was quite ready to load the Opposition of the Composition of th had fair play.

Even Racke, Crooke, and their set were interested. There were rumours that they proposed to form a party of Irreconcilables, pledged to give the Government all possible trouble, but not to support the official Opposition.

Grundy also was said to be trying to get together a party of his own. He had Wilkins and Gunn as a nucleus, of course. It had not transpired thus far that they had won any recruits.

But all this was no help towards settling the election problem. For that problem was just this—who were the voters to be when everyone proposed to stand for election? And, arising out of that question, as Monty Lowther said in his best parliamentary style, was this—who was to settle which of the horde of events of the control of the c would-be candidates should be allowed to stand?

The Terrible Three were giving the knotty problem their very best attention—even Lowther taking it seriously—when there came a modest tap at the door.

"Come in, if you care to risk it!" elled Tom. "But if you're anyone we velled Tom. "But if you're anyone we don't want to see, you'll jolly well go out on your neck!"

It was Baggy Trimble who responded to this hospitable invitation.

to this hospitable invitation.
"That's ruly heroic, Bargy!" said
Lowther. "But it won't save you. We
don't want-to see you.—we never do—and
you know that. So it wasn't a risk you
were taking. You were bucking against
a dead cert, which is foolish."
"Oh, I say Lowther, don't be an ass!"
pleaded Bargy. "Tve got something to
tell you, you know—something it's
important you should hear! He, he,
he!"

he "You can't have anything important," said Lowther, gripping him by the ear.
"But if you have, tell it in three words, and bunk before worse befalls you!"
"Yaroooh! Leggo my ear!" howled

Baggy. "Got the earache?" inquired Lowther

kindly.
"No, ass! Why should I have the earache?" earacne?
"Nemesis—also draughts through key-holes. Very much the same thing, come to that."
"I haven't——"

"In three words, fatty!"
"About the barn!" "About the spluttered

Trimble What about the barn?" snapped

"Oh, leggo my ear, Lowther! That hurts!" "Leave the worm alone, Monty, and let him tell what he's got to tell, will

you?"
"To hear, Thomas, is to obey. Proceed, Bagley Trimble of Trimble Hall!"

The egregious Baggy smirked at that.
"Look here, you know, if you chaps mean to get that barn you'd better hurry up," he said.
Now it was rather remarkable, seeing

how well-posted Baggy made it his business to be about other people's business, that he should not yet have discovered the hiring of the barn by either of the rival parties. But so it was. "Why?" asked Tom, looking at him very hard.

Baggy was not very reliable; but he had a way of getting advance information, and it sometimes paid to give heed unto him.

and across Tom's mind there flitted the memory of Jack Blake's doubt about forundy. Moreover, Tom was not in-clined to trust the grasping Mr. Pepper a yard. Perhaps he had come to that frame of mind rather late; but that was

frame of mind rather late; but that was how ho felt now.

"If you haven't got it already, you'd better look sharp, or Grundy will be before you, you know. I thought I'd just give you a warning. He, he, he!"

"How does Grundy know anything about it?" rapped out Tom. Oh, how should I know?

Somehody told him, I suppose," faltered Rangey.

Baggy.

"And how do you know he knows and thing about it?" asked Manners. "He wouldn't tell you."

"Well then I heard him

"I-I— Well, then, I heard him talking it over with Gunn and Wilkins."

taking it over with Gunn and Wilkins.
"Where were you when you heard?"
"Never mind that, Manners. I don't care a lot for Baggy's ways of finding out things, I'll own. But if there's anything in this, I must say I think Grundy is playing it rather low on us," Tom

said.

It ain't like old Grundy to be spiteful," Manners remarked. "But it's un commonly like Baggy to tell whoppers.

commonly like Baggy to tell whoppes."

"I'm not telling whoppers Manners.
I should scorn the action You follows know very well how truthful I are it wouldn't be spite," said Lowther, "Grundy would think it a fair score over us; and I'm not prepared to deny it myself. After all, we rejected with deepisery Grundy's offer to be Prime Minister, with half-adozen or so portfolios. It wasn't exactly a modest offer; but one doesn't expect figs from thistles:"

"That's what it is." said Trimble, modding. "Grundy says if you wen't let him be Prime Minister you sha'n't have the barn."

have the barn."
"Did he tell you so?"

"Did he tell you so?"
"Nun-no. Not exactly. But I heard him say so to Wilkins and Gunn."
"Baggy's knees are dusty. Grundy & Co. are slovenly beggars. Herlock Sholmes deduces that Baggy may be tell-Shoimes deduces that Baggy may be teling the truth, unlikely though it seems," said Lowther. "He has just come from under the table in No. 3."
"Tain't Grundy & Co. If there's dirt under the table it's the housemaids' fault," Manners replied. "We don't dust

out our own studies. I think it's because Baggy's too big a sloven to use the clothes-brush, and he's been down on his

clothes-brush, and he s been down on his knees begging someone's pardon,"
"Jotson, you amaze me! You are de-veloping the rudiment of a brain!"
"Drop it, Monty! This may be

"Drop it, Monty! This may be serious!" said Tom.
"How so, Thomas? What does it matter what Grundy attempts when

"Don't say too much! Baggy ain't to you to much: Baggy am't to be trusted, you know that! Look here, you fat worm, if there's anything at all in your giddy yarn, how did Grundy come to know anything about us meaning to hire the barn?"

"I—I—someone must have told him.
Didn't I say so before?" stammered

Baggy. "Who? That's the question! There

ant t such a heap of chaps here who are mean enough to listen at keyholes. And we know jolly well that none of the fellows who were in the eeeret would go bluring it out to Grundy. "There's Mellish," said Trimble suikilv. ain't such a heap of chaps here who are

sulkily.

And it was true that Percy Mellish of the Fourth was quite capable of conduct of that kind. He was a futing studymate for Baggy.

mate for Baggy.

"You say Mellish told him. Manners, you go and look for Mellish. If he's not guilty he ought to know what Trimble's saying about him. And if he is, there's no use in putting off his execution?

"Right-ho, Temmy!" said Manners.

"Here, I say, Manners, don't cut off like that! I never said it was Mellish, did I?"

The Terrible Three grinned The Terriblo Three grinned. Baggy was the only fellow in the Fourth or Shell who could not lick Percy Mellish. Even Baggy had accomplished that feat once. But that was under the spur of a misplaced affection. And evidently Baggy had no desire to be confronted with Mellish and the spurious and the spurious sections of the second section. lish now in order to make an accusation

lish now in order to make an accession of the this face.

"It wasn's Trimble, by any chance?" asked Lowther.

"Numot Of-of course not! If I had told Grundy, should I have come along to warn you chape?"

"Just what you would do, you Hun!" snapped Manners.

"My hat, yes!" said Tom. "Of course, the worm tried to make Grundy pay for the news. He may have brought it off, we he may not."

or he may not." Not!" sai said Lowther decidedly. "Grundy don't care for that kind of thing. He has no use for sneaking eaves-

thing. He has no use for sneaking eaves-droppers. I dare say he told you eo, didn't he, Baggy?"
"Yes, he—I mean, no, he never said anything of the sort! How could he when—Oh, stoppit, Manners! Stoppit, Lowther! Ow-yow!"
Baggy had given himself away. If not Mellish, the eavesdropper must almost certainly have been Baggy; and Baggy refused to confront Mellish, which was suspicious. And now Baggy had as good as admitted the crime—at least, so the Terrible Three considered. Terrible Three considered.
"Bump him!" said Tom.

Yaroooh!"

"Yarooon!"
"Hallo, deah boys! Bein' kind to
Baggy?" asked the voice of Arthur
Augustus at the door.

You can go now, you fat worm!" said Manners.

Trimble went.

"How's Binks getting on, Gussy?" asked Lowther, who was a good deal taken with D'Arcy's latest purchase. "He seems quite all wight in the barn.

He was no end pleased to see me; but he are was no ena preasen to see me; but he does not make a widiculous fuss about bein' shut up in the barn between times. I say, deah boys, if you get any bones or gwistle at dinnah that you can't eat—"

"We never get any bones or gristle that we can eat, Gussy," said Lowther. "If you find that you can make away with such things, I should like to examine your teeth.

"Save them for Binks, will you? You can stick them in your pockets, you know "Nice for our pockets-I don't think !"

remarked Manners.

"That's all wight, if you take an old envelope in. Oh, I say, Tom Mewwy, I must have cithah dwopped the key somemust have extant awopped the act some where or have left it in the lock; it isn't in any of my pockets!"
"Crowded out by the old envelopes— full of bones and gristle," suggested

Lowther.

"Look here, Gussy, you idiot, this won't do!" snapped Tom. "Baggy says Grundy is after that barn, and Blake

rather fancies he saw Pepper before us. |

"Now that I come to think of it, I wemembal that I did meet Gwunday an' Gunn an' Wilkins on their way."
"You chump! You fathead! Why didn't you say so before? Come on, you chaps!"

CHAPTER 10.

Disputed Possession.

HAT'S the row?" "WHAT'S the row?"
Blake hailed the four as they dashed across the quad, Tom Merry leading. Low-his heels.
"Grundy! Gone to the bara! You were right, Blake; he's after it! And this frabjous idiot has left the key there!"

this frablois find has let the key there!"
"Oh, weally, Tom Mewwy—"
"Ring off! There's nothing to be said for you, Gussy, so don't try to say it!"
"Dig! Herrics!" roared Blake.
"And Digby and Herrics came rushing

and added themselves to the little At the gates stood Levison, Cardew, and Clive.

and Clive.
"Seen Grundy?" select Tom.
"Yes. He went past a little while ago." replied Levison.
"Come along, then! You may be wanted!"

"Can't you seven handle Grandy with-out help?" asked Cardew lazily. "Of course we can! Don't come if

"Of course we can! Don't come if you don't want to, Cardew!"
"Oh, I'll come! Only Grundy an' I aren't on speaking terms, an' I wasn't sure that it would be strict etiquette to help in handlin' him, that bein' so. If you say it is, I've no more to 4sy, by gad! But I hope you aren't goin' to run all the way. Runnin' don't suit my delicate constitution."

Cardew was running alexanida as he

Cardew was running alongside as he talked, and talked easily as he ran. Car-dew's delicate constitution did not prevent his being able to do things that most fellows could not. And there was no fellows could not. And there was no particular reason why it should, as its delicacy was only a figment of his imagination.

There were ten now, and they ran hard.

When the barn came into sight over the hedges there was no sign of Grundy & Co. But when Tom Merry's band reached the gate of the field they were visible at once.

They had not got inside the barn, and for this Binks was responsible.

Grundy had unlocked the door, in which Arthur Augustus had so carelessly left the key. But he had been halted on the threshold by Binks.

Every hair on Binks' small body bristled, and his white teeth showed in a grin that Grundy did not like at all. Binks evidently regarded himself as in

Eat less Bread

charge of the barn, and was not disposed to admit intruders.
"Ahoy there, St. Jim's bounders!"

came a voice from down the road.

came a voice from down the road.

"Oh, hang it all, there are the Grammarians, and we simply haven't got time to attend to them now!" said Tom.

"We'll collar the key, and then give them scoke!" Blake replied.

St. Jim's, aboy!" sang out Gordon Gay, the leader of the Grammarian

juniors. By Gordon Gay side were Frank Monk

and the two Woottons, and behind them were Carboy, Mont Blanc, the French were Carboy, Molic Ambers, Molic Boy, and several more.
"Go to Jericho!" yelled Tom Merry.
And he sped on through the field.
And he sped for through the field.

And he sped on through the field. Grandy was trying to coax Binks. He appeared to have spent a considerable time in trying; but Grandy liked dogs, and was not so impatient as might have been expected. He would not have devoted so long to coaxing an inferior animal like Trimble.

"Good old doggie! Nice old boy!" said Grundy. "Br-r-r-r!" said Binks.

"Oh, come along, then! Good old fellow!" "Br-r-r-r!"

Grundy took a step or two nearer. Binks advanced to meet him.

Grundy took a step or two back. The good old doggie really had rather busigood old doggie really had rather busi-ness-like teeth, and it would not do to risk too much, though Grundy was in a hurry for that key. He had unlocked the door; but, then, Binks had gone for him, and Grundy had retreated, leaving the key in the lock.

Binks halted. He did not want to hurt Grundy & Co.; but they had to under-

stand that there were limits.
"I say, Wilky, I'll draw him, and you can slip in behind and grab the key," said Grundy.
"No jolly fear!" answered Wilkins

"No joby lear!" answered whisins promptly.

"Don't be a funk! He's only a little chap, and I can hold him all right."

"Well, I'd rather see you helding him before I slip in behind him, and I don't know that I should be keen then."

"Whose dog is he?" asked Gund.

The other fellows were close up now, and then heard Gundr's reply.

The other fellows were close up now, and they heard Grundy's reply, "Dunno, Yes, I do, though. I saw him at that rotter Pepper's cottage. The swindler needn't think I'm jolly well going to pay rent for his barn, and be jolly well kept out of it by his dog!" "There you are!" said Tom, "That proves it! Baggy was tolling the truth for once!"

"And I hope the shock of doing it will make him ill," Lowther said charitably. "It ought to."

Grundy heard, and faced round upon them, his massive brow glooming. Binks allowed his wicked-looking teeth

to go into retirement, and greeted Arthur Augustus with a friendly wag of his tailstump. But he did not desert his post.

"What do you chaps want?" demanded Grundy, looking hostile.
"We've come for the key of our barn,"

said Blake. "Gustavus here had it to gaid Diake. "Gustavus nere had it to pay a visit to his dog, and, being a born eilly ass, left it in the door." "But the dog, not being a silly ass, plainly didn't intend to allow outsiders to

annex it," added Lowther.
"Oh, weally, Blake—weally, Lowthah-

Grundy broke in upon Gussy without

"So it's D'Arcy's dog, is it?" he growled. "You'd better call your dog off, D'Arcy, or he'll be sorry for himself! oit, D'Arcy, or ne'll be sorry for nimeel! As for the barn, that's mine-for the time being. I've paid rent for it, and I'll jolly well see that you chaps don't THE GEM LIEBARY.—No. 506. intrude. "It's you who are the outsiders,

"Better collect the key, as it's your

' replied Lowther, grinning. barn," re "Rot!" growled Grundy. "Just you call that dog off, D'Arcy!"
"Off what, Gwunday?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently. "I weally cannot

perceive that Binks is meddlin' with anyor anyone whatevah."

thin' or anyone whatevah."
"I want to get that key, and I mean
to get it, too!" hooted Grundy.
"Well, get it!" retorted Tom.
Grundy made a movement forward.
"Br-rr-r!" said Binks warningly.
Grundy concluded that victory did not

lie that way.

"What do you mean about its being your barn?" he snapped.

your barn?" he enapped.

Arthur Augustus stepped past Binks, who made no objection, erized the key, and put in a pocket of his trouser.

"Now, Tom Mewwy," he said, "we can discuss mattala with Gwunday on a pwopal an' amicable footin'."

But Grundy did not appeare to see things in that light. The collaring of the key by D'Arcy seemed to make him feel even less amicable.

"Gimme that dashed key!" he hooted.
The Grammar School juniors were coming in at the gate now.

But Grundy, though he had been hard up against the Grammar School in his time, and had indeed suffered as much at their irreverent hands as most fellows at St. Jim's, paid no heed to

that. "Hold hard, Grundy!" said Tom Merry. "You can't convince us by bellowing, you know." ... "It may be tuneful, but it's not argu-

remarked Lowther. ment

"I don't want to argue with you. I min't going to argue with you!" yelled Grundy. "I hired this barn, and paid the rent in advance. Is that good enough?"

enough?"
"Not likely!" replied Tom. "We've hired it, and we've paid the rent in advance. And here's the giddy receipt!"

Grundy clutched at it. "No fear!" said Ton "You may look, but I can't hind him.

trust you to touch." Herries, Digby, and Manners seized Grundy. He began to struggle. "Don't do that, Grundy," said

"Don't do that, Grundy," said Cardew, in his cool, mocking way. "It's really a compliment to your very deter-mined character, by gad! If I were in your boots they wouldn't hold me. They would know that I hadn't resolution enough to tear the thing up."

Grundy seemed to understand. ceased to wriggle, and looked hard at the receipt. His jaw fell when he saw it was in due form. He had thought Tom Merry & Co. might be bluffing.

But then his face lighted up again. "Rot!" he said. "Not half good nough! A measly couple of quid-"Not half good enough!

why, I paid the swindler five!" "Somebody's been had, then," said Bloke

"Show us your receipt, Grandy." "It rather strikes me, do you know,

that everybody's been had-except, of course, the dear Pepper," said Lowther.
"Show it, old scout," said Gunn.
"He's got it, you fellows; we saw it written. And we were first, too."

"We met you as we came back," added Wilkins.

"I'm not going to show these bounders any receipt," said Grundy obstinately, "If they can't take my word for it—"

"We'll take your word all serene," id Tom Merry. "But we ain't going said Tom Merry. "But we ain't going to let you take the barn. That ain't quite our notion of a fair exchange." THE GEM LIBRARY.-No. 506.

CHAPTER 11.

United Against the Foe! TOU chaps had better submit the matter in dispute to arbitra-Gordon Gay, tion," said Gordon coming up behind "We'll be pleased and proud to settle it for you, I'm sure."

The Grammarians were in force. More of the tribe had come along, and they now outnumbered the St. Jim's crowd, which totalled thirteen, if Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn could be relied upon to back up. There were fifteen of the

Rylcombe juniors.
"Hear, hear, old chap!" cried Frank
Monk. "They'd have been clawing each other's giddy hair in a moment. come up in time to play the kind uncles, and prevent that. Their little hands

and prevent that. 'Their little hands were never made'—you know the rest." Probably Gordon Gay & Co. had no belief that their kind offer would be accepted.

But if they had any such belief they were soon disillusioned.

"Oblige us by being pleased and proud elsewhere, Gay," said Monty Lowther

"Hop it!" snapped Tom. got business to attend to. Come along for a hiding later on, when we have the

time to spare.' "Run away and play marbles," said Blake, "That's more in your line than sticking your little snubby noses into the affairs of your betters."

Yaas, wathah!

"Yeas, wathan."
"Yes, run away and play, you silly louts!" hooted Grundy.
Grundy had declared himself. After that he could not shy at doing his bit for St. Jim's in the combat that was

bound to follow.

"Oh, sock it into them!" roared Gordon Gay. "They've fairly asked for it !

"Put them out the interfering bounders!" shouted Tom. And then the battle closed. Grundy rushed straight at Frank Monk, locked his arms around him, and strove with might and main to bear him to the ground.

Tom Merry tackled Gordon Gay Tom Merry tackled Gordon Gay. Ralph Reckness Cardew, with a cry of "Here's for you, Algy, dear boy!" went for Lacy, his schoolfellow of old days at Wodehouse.

Arthur Augustus went for Wootton major, Manners for Wootton minor, and Levison for Carboy.

There began a succession of single combats, with the odd two on the Grammarian side hovering on flank and rear, wherever they saw a chance to help, and

making themselves a nuisance.

Binks, at the open door of the barn, danced up and down, barking wildly.

But he seemed to know that he must not

take part in the fray.

The first success fell to St. Jim's.

was not a big one. No one on either side had any high opinion of the prowess of Carker, and when Gunn, deserting Morland, dashed at Carker and got him down, no one was surprised to hear Carter yell "Pax!" and announce that he had had enough.

So was disposed of one of the Grammarian skirmishers. And now Lacy was out of the fight. He had lashed out savagely at Cardew with fists—seldom resorted to in these battles, at least until tempers ran high-and Cardew had retaliated in kind. A little of that proved enough for Algernon Lacy, and Cardew proceeded to seek out and engage the other skirmisher.

"There's for you!" hooted Grundy, as Frank Monk staggered in his bearlike hug, and went over.
"Rescue!" yelled Manners.

Someone had tripped him up, and

Someone had tripped him up, and Wootton minor was sitting on him. "Wescue!" panted Arthur Augustus, Wootton major had borne him to earth. "Help, Gay!" sang out Carboy. He had found Levison an unexpectedly tough opponent, and was now struggling opponent, and was now struggling on the west with Levison on with him on the grass, with Levison on

But there was no help from Gordon

Gay. He had his hands full. Wilkins' antagonist had I Wilkins' antagonist had him down; but Grundy hurled himself into the fray, pulled the Grammarian off, vanked Wilkins to his feet, and returned in hot haste to renew his conflict with Monk, now on his feet once more.

Clive bundled over Wootton minor, and Manners are. But Blake was down, with two of the rival school on top of him. And Digby had hit someone's elbow with his nose, and had gone aside to staunch the flow of the red, red

blood.

"Good old Grundy!" velled Gunn, as Frank Monk sprawled again.
"Alas for the Entente Cordiale!"

"Alas for the Entente Cordiale!" puffed Lowther, as he scated himself upon the heaving bosom of Mont Blanc or perhaps rather farther down than ne word "bosom" can correctly be the word used to indicate. "Arise off ze stomach of me!" urged

Mont Blanc.
"Non. non!" answered Lowther.

"Parlez vous Francais! Nah poo!"
"Pile in, St. Jim's!" shouted Tom.

"File in, St. Jilin's; should be a wife of the control of the cont them ! grip. They were so well matched that so far neither had been able to get the

other down. To and fro the tide of battle swayed,

and none might tell as vet to which side victory would incline.

Lacy had stalked off, and Carker had

Lacy had stalked off, and Carker had slunk away. The numbers were now equal. Digby was back in the battle. He went to the help of D'Arcy, and Wootton major had to shift. But Levison had deserted Carboy to attend to someone else, and Carboy sailed in to the aid of the Australian junior. Then Wootton minor, having lost Manners somewhere, tackled Dig; and Gussy was borne back to the very door of the barn by two fewens of superior weight. by two foemen of superior weight.

He sprawled. It was more than Binks could bear. Binks had evidently become strongly attached to his now master already. He showed it now by attaching himself to the trousers of Wootton major in the region which may be described as the sit-downs.

"Yoop!" howled Wootton. There followed a rending sound. Merry and Gordon Gay, who had just rolled over together, relaxed their mutual grip, and sat up, roaring with laughter.

Wootton major was struggling frantically to tuck in his shirt-tail. Grundy, sitting near, with Frank Monk breathless beside him, had grabbed it.
"Yaroooh!" yelled Wootton major.

"Yarooh!" yelled Wootton major.
"Kill the beastly dog, somebody! Leggo of my shirt! Oh, it's you, is it,
Grundy? I'll give-you—"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Saint-

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Saints and the Grammarians in one great hilarious chorus as Binks capered around with a section of excellent grey trousering in his mouth, and Wootton major tried to drag himself away from Grundy, and Grundy,

quite unsmiling, held on grimly, "Oh, ring off, Grundy, you roter! Oh, I say, this is too beastly thick! We didn't bargain for dogs, and it ain't a straight do

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The combat had ceased, and more than half the warriors were rolling on the ground in ecstasies of delight. Only two faces were without grins. Wootton major didn't feel like grinning, and Grundy's face was as solemn as an

owl's. Lowther declared afterwards

Lowther declared afterwards that Grundy did not see anything funny in it. He said Grundy had looked at his own countenance so often in the mirror that his sense of humour—if he had ever possessed one—had been killed, and he didn't know anything funny when he saw it. But that was doubtful. For Grundy held on, in spite of Wootton's frantic squirming. And Wootton could do no more than squirm, lest he should lose the tail of his shirt.

Pax!" "Oh, chuck howled Wootton. chuck it, Grundy!

"You own you're licked?" demanded

Grundy.
"No-yes! Anything you like-only leggd!"
"Own you're licked Gay?" asked Tom

Own you're licked Gay?" asked Tom Merry.
"Not likely, Tommy! We haven't begun to be. But we'd better chuck it—after poor old Wootton's awful loss! Ha,

ha, ha!" Grundy let go, and Wootton major sat

down at once. "What on earth am I to do?" he

moaned. "Sit there till someone fetches you another pair of bags. Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Lowther. "Collar D'Arcy's bags! Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Frank Monk.

"Take 'em off and borrow a needle," suggested Herries.

THE GEM LIBRARY.

"Weally Monk, I am supwised at such suggestion! I assuahedly should not "I'll have them, though!" yelled

And he rushed at Wootton major. Arthur Augustus.

But Binks rushed at him, and Wootton sat down again in a hurry—which Lowther, with tears streaming down his face, said was like locking the stable-door after the bird had flown. It was a trifle mixed; but that was no time for being

mixed; but that was no time for being cool and calm.
"The white flag!" shouted Blake.
"Where? Wootton ain't showing it.
He's taking no end of care not to," replied Gordon Gay.
"Oh, cheese it, Gordon! I say, go

"Oh, cheese it, Gordon! I say, go and fetch me a pair of bags!"
The order was addressed to Wootton minor, whom his bereaved brother had seized by the leg.
"No fear! Don't you think I know a joke when I see it!" retorted Wootton minor.

Wootton minor. "Find the grass coolin', Wootton?" inquired Cardew blandly.
"He'll get rheumatism," chuckled

Levison.

Wootton major gave a sudden deft jerk, and capsized his brother across his

legs.
"Come on, dog! Have some more!"
he shouted. "This chap thinks it's no
end of a joke. Come and be funny with him!"

But Binks had no further use for samples of trousering, and he ignored the invitation.

"We'd better call it a draw, Gay, I think," said Tom. "All things conthink," said Tom. "All things considered, it can't be said that the white flag was really hoisted on your side, can it? Ha, ha, ha!"

it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along, Wootton. We'll protect
you from rude eyes on the way back,"
said Frank Monk.

"I want a pair of bags! I don't want any of your rotten protection!" howled Wootton major.

But he had to be satisfied with that. The Grammarians marched off in a compact body, of which the victim of Binks' devotion formed the centre. Grandy turned te Tom Merry. "Now we'll settle our affair, Merry,"

he said loftily.

Tom looked at his watch.

"Not before dinner, old chap," he said neerily. "We shall have to scoot unless we're to be late."

And it was not settled that day, and the terms of settlement cannot be told here. More was to come of the double dealing of Mr. Erasmus Zachariah Pepper, as will be related in due course. And more-much more-was to come

of the St. Jim's Parliament, in spite of all the difficulties that beset it at the outset, as will also be recounted.

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great

Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's-"GRUNDY THE PATRIOT!" by Martin Clifford.)

## The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday: "GRUNDY THE PATRIOT!" By Martin Clifford.

By Martin Clifford

There is more about the projected St. Jim's Parliament in this story, and atthough the schemes for it with the schemes for it with the schemes for the scheme to the scheme story and the scheme for which the barn which George Alfred Grundy and Tom Merry have both hired from Mr. Erasmus Zachariah Pepper, whom Rytombe calls a miser. Grundy discovers that the village yarn is true. How he discovers that the determination to which he cause in the determination to which he cause from the scheme of the scheme scheme with the scheme scheme and Wilkins were all sent to samy; and charming Marie Rivers, of whom some of you complain you don't hear enough, fits across the scene, and the great Grundy actually condescends to ask her for advice—though he does not take it after it is given. But does Grundy ever take advice?

#### OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

This will be dated November 17th, so we are not so very far of it now. There will be the usual extra-length the now. There will be the usual extra-length without syling. And there will be a good, long instalment of a The Twins from Tamania," which bids fair to rival in popularity any serial we have ever published. But it is of something else I was a superior of the supplement which was given with the Christmas Number of 1915. It gave a lot of information relative to the gave a lot of information relative to the supplement of the supplement with the superior of the supplement with the superior of the supplement feature of the Christmas Number this year. Those of you wasted as far as you are concerned, and the supplement of the supplemen

## NOTICES.

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By W. Fawcett, jun., Willow Pond Hotel,

## TO THE BOYS AT

### THE FRONT.

IF you are unable to obtain this publication regularly, please tell any newsvendor to get it from

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Football—Leagues, etc.

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## Our Great New Serial Story.

NEW READERS START HERE.

THE TWINS FROM TASMANIA are
PHILIPP ADERWINT, known
to their friends as FLIP and FLAP. They
have with them a remarkable coekatoo,
whose name is COCKY. Flip takes the bird
have high them as the state of the state of the
white Flap goes to Cliff House. They fall in
on the way with some of the Higheliffe nuts,
and GADSPY forces a quarret on Flip, and
is well thrashed. The Colonial boy, however,
makes friends with the other nuts, and
is well thrashed. The Colonial boy, however,
makes friends with the other nuts, and
MR HISTOR. But VAVASOUR and MONSON
MERTON. But VAVASOUR and MONSON
MERTON. But VAVASOUR and MONSON
MERTON. But VAVASOUR HAZELDEXE.
PHYLLIS HOWELL, and CLARA TREVILYS.
PHYLLIS HOWELL, and CLARA TREVILYS.
PHYLLIS HOWELL, and CLARA TREVILYS.
Gets to know that PETER HAZELDEXE, of
Greyfriars, Marjorie's brother, is in some
forts to know that PETER HAZELDEXE, of
Greyfriars, Marjorie's brother, is in some
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of the state o NEW READERS START HERE. stops on their arrival. Ponsonby gets Langley, the Higheliffe captam, to give Flip a place in the school footer eleven, with a view to depriving Courtenay's team of his help. Some of the nuts get into a scrap with the Famous Five of Greyfriars, and Flip Merton, and Tunstall come to their rescue.

The upshot is that Flip fights and beats Bul-strode, and has an inconclusive combat with Bob Cherry. Ponsonby arranges a five-a-side battle-the nuts versus Harry Wharton & Co. (Now read on.)

Strode, and . Bob Cherry.

\*\*Guiff and Hazel.

OING to Higheline, Squiff?"

Recover Peter Hazeldere, of the Recover Peter Hazeldere, of the Spoke, and he addressed Sampson "Yes. Are you?"

That's Why I addressed Sampson "Yes. Are you?"

"That's why I asked," replied Hazel, a

trific sulkily.

He had his bicycle, as Squiff had, and had waited at the gates for Squiff to catch him

up. "Shouldn't if I were you," said Squiff bluntly.
"Why?" snapped Hazel.

"If you want it straight—but you don't, I know, because you ain't the sort that does —because Pon and his gang are no good to

—because Fon and no page —because Fon and no page —because Fon and no page —because Hazel, scowling, as he mounted.

"Granted. I'll say no more."

"I get enough of that sort of thing from Wharton!" Hazeldene grumbled.

"Whartons" a better friend to you than I make any pretence of being. I've said all I may to say.

They rode in silence for a few minutes after that. Then Hazel burst out with:
"You think I'm a fool?"
"Thought's free," said Squiff coolly.

"But you do think it?"

"Not exactly that, either. Say I know it; that's nearer the mark," and it will be a seen to mark." and it will be a seen to mark. "I know, Hazel." amusement, I know, Hazel." amusement at ail. What vernous mith does?" All on't call, at anusement at ail. What are holidays for?" Another graphing and piling up debts you can't pay." the Boundier are very different chaps." That's true, yoo. And a fellow don't have the seen the seen the seen that a fellow don't have the seen that a fe "So you're going on that tack, are you, Hazel? It's a rotten poor one. You and the Boundier are very different chaps."
"But that's no reason why he should do

"I'm not excusing the things the Bounder pes, my good ass! I don't agree with half does, my good ass!

of them."
"But you're chummy with him!" protested

a But you're common,
Hazel.

Form thinks a heap of lim! Even the chaps that aren't friendly with lim think a heap of him! But—"
"Dun't be such an absolute ass, Hazel!
Yes, we do think a lot of Smithy. At his thing the such as a lot of Smithy. At his life of things—risk his life of the lide of cenerous things—risk his life. In the life of the like Skinner; stand up to a rotten tyrant like leffersy; play the game at a pinch, whatever he may do when he's fooling round." round.

you mean that I don't play the "Hazel snarled. - Do

game?" Hazel smarled,
"You crtainly don't-except by fits and
starts. If I'd been in Wharton's shoes, I'd
"He would if it wan't for Marjorie.
"Iain't me he cares anything about."
"I dare say that's true, 's said Squiif frankly,
"There's your sister again. There ain't a
decent fellow in the Form who doesn't think
a heap of her. She's real bounga-as nice and
you're nothing but a blessed misjance to her.

a heap of her. She's real honna—as hice and good a little girl as ever stepped! And you're nothing but a blessed misance to ber. That don't make us love you any better. You asked for this, Hazel, and you needn't blame me if you get more than you like." Hazel's flushed face bent low over his handles for a moment. Then he straightened himself up, and his eyes met Squiff's for the clear's eyes were not good at meeting others. "I—— Look here, Squiff, I know that's true about Marjorie. I own it. I wish I could be—well, then, a better brother to her!"

her!"

"That's a sign of grace," said Squiff drily,
"Oh, it's easy enough for you to say that
sort of thing, and be beastly superior, and
"I'd go and ha— No, never mind! I
don't want to jump on you too hard, Hazel.
There's new trouble, I can see. Don't tell
me unless you want to' but I'll listen if it
on't promise to help. Wharton's money
may go into Pon's pockets. Mine don't—I'll
see to that!"
"Who said I owed Pon anything?"
"Who said I are I But I wouldn't eare to bet

see to that!"

"Who said I owed Pon anything?"

"I didn't. But I wouldn't care to bet that you do do—aff that. I never say such, that you do do—aff that. I never say such, the said of the said I said a said I said a said I said a said I said a said I said

true, too. And a fellow don't

"That's true, too. And a tenow more really enjoy it. You know how it is, Squilf—it gets hold of you—"No, I don't know. It never got hold of me, and I don't fancy it ever will, Hazel. So you owe Pon money, and I suppose you're will you have been supposed to the work of t

"Ordered you, you mean."
"I don't! Do you think I'd take orders

"Ordered you, you mean." If don't be you mean.
"I don't! be you think I'd take orders from Ponsonby." On how to, while he's colling the control of the colling the

Then it's to suit his own ends. Pon never was decent for the sake of decency, and if ever fancied I twigged him being so I should reckon there was something wrong with the

recson there was sometaing wrong with the works in my brain-box.

"I don't believe Pon's as bad as all that. Marjorie detests him. I know; but that's only because she thinks he's bad for me. But that new chap at Higheliffe—Derwent—is no end chummy with him."

new chap at Inguine-chuminy with him."
"And I guess his sister feels very much the same about it as yours does."
Hazel nodded, looking thoughtful.
"Yes." he said; "she does. Marjorie let that slip when I saw her last. I don't think she meant to. But they are only girls; they can't judge. Miss Derwent's quite a nice soe meant to. But they are only girls; they can't judge. Miss Derwent's quite a nice girl, though."
"Of course she is!" said Squiff. "Ain't she Australian?"

Australian?"
"No. Tasmanian."
"Same thing."
"Not likel," Tasmania ain't Australia.
Any ass knows it's an island."
"And everyone who isn't an ass knows that
it's a State of the Australian Commonwealth." Oh, I didn't!"

"Well, I didn't include you." replied Squiff, with a grin. "You're going over to arrange about that fight, I suppose?" said Hazel.

"Guess again, and you'll guess wrong."

"Guess again, and you'll guess wrong.
"Are you in it?"
"I am not. Rather wish I was."
"A silly mugs' game, I call it!" said Hazel,
with lofty contempt.
"It's certainly a bit harder work than nap
or banker," Squiff answered. "But, on the or banker, Squil answered. "But, on the whole, not more dangerous, I think."
I wonder what Pon proposed it for?"
Su do I. If you can flud that out, Hazel, it was a superstantial while your going to High-

ic may be worth while your going to High-cliffa, after all."

"Pon ain't likely to tell me if he's got any shady game on."

"Oh, be doesn't trust you to all that extent?"

extent?"
"Look here, Squiff, do you think I'd be rotten ead enough to betray my own side?"
whole I don't think that's four precise line of country. Here we are?"
Frank Courtenay and Rupert de Courcy stood at the gates of Highelifte together.
"Why, it's Field, by gad?" said the

Caterpillar, ignoring Hazel entirely. "Doorld pleased to see you. Field, to long as you thing stemuous, by gad! Pranky, here, keeps me up to the mark, y'know; but I rather bar any more. I chased the boundin' ball for a solid hour this mornin', an' I really haven to You knock your chalking arpharatus too

"You work your talking apparatus too hard, Caterpillar—that's what tires you out," said Squiff. "But I haven't come to see you, chaps at all, as a matter of fact. It's Pon I'm after."

I'm atter."
"Pon's popularity increases by leaps an' bounds, Franky." remarked the Caterpillar.
Hazel had wheeled his machine in past them, and had now met Gadsby and

Vavasour. "Is it Field?" right about this fight business.

is it right about this fight business, ield?" asked Frank Courtenay.
"Yes; that's what I've come about."
"Oh! Not for the pleasure of secin' the ser Pons's

Pon? dear Pon?"
"I'd see Pon hanged first, Caterpillar!

"Til see Pon hanged first, Caterpillar! He's a blessed sight too tricky for my liking." "Ah! Nothin' like goin' in with your eyes skinned, dear boy! Pon won't take you in an' do for you quite as easily as he mirth "What made Whatton agree to this foolery!" Frank Courtenay inquired. "You don't like it then, Courtenay? Well, if it's any confort to you to know it, Whatton don't like it much, either." "Hy he should ever have agreed to it. "Pily he should ever have agreed to it." "Pily he should ever have agreed to it." "Till you would be tween the schools, and, goodness know, there's

then. It only means more had blood between the schools, and, goodness knows, there's been enough of that? "Wharton hadn't much choice." And it

been enough of that!"
"Wharton hadn't much choice. And it isn't going to cause any ill-feeling between us and you feilows, anyway."
"I hope not. Well, pop in and have some tea with us before you cut back, old chap. I misss you prefer to take tea with Ponsonby.

of course."
"Your fellow herald, Field," said De Courcy lazity, "has grown impatient. He has been taken by the merry Gaddy an' the amiable Vavascur to the august presence of Pon."
"Hazel's got mothing to do with this binney. He came ever on his own. and Squid," —111 trot along, See you two

Vavasour, and Hazeldene Gadsley. together in the passage when Squift came up

to see Poissonby.

"You'll find all the giddy warriors in there," said Gadsby, indicating Pon's study, with a leer that made Squiff long to kick

Aren't you one of the chosen is;" asked Squiff. champions; No. I'm not

"No. I'm net!"
"Bessly wissppointing for you. I should say. I do hope it wasn't on account of the little affair with Derwent? You carry some of his marks still, I see."
"Sneerin, swankin' cad!" snarled Gadsby, as Squill passed into Ponsonby's study.
"Oh. I don't know! There are worse chaps than Squill," Hazel replied.
"He's another of these Colonial rotters! I hate them—don't you. Vay!"
"Absolutely" said the dandy of the

'I suppose it's no good thinking of seeing n till he's got through with Squiff?" said Pon

Not a scrap. Got any tin on you?" Hazel flushed.

Hazel flushed. Gadsby's meaning was brutally plain. He wanted a game, but not on terms of 1 O U's. "Oh, yes." answered the Greyfriars junior, weak as ever in the face of temptation. "But where shall we go? You chaps seem to be

turned out of your quarters."
"Come along to No. 0," said Gadsby. "No body there—only that dashed bird of "Come along to No. 6, said Gadsiy. No-body there—only that dashed bird of Derwent's. An' those three will be ratty if we make the place full of smoke. Merton an Tun seem to have chucked it since Derwent came along. He'll make old Pon an' Tun seem to have chucked it Derwent came along. He'll make old pi before he's finished, shouldn't wonder for So the three made No. 6. the so the three made for No. 6, the study which Flip Derwent shared with Merton and Tunstall.

"Nice boys—oh, nice boys!" chuckled

Nice Cocky, as they entered.
"You take care, or I'll wring your dashed neck!" said Gadsby viciously.

Fixing It Up. "Histing it Up.

OW de do, Field?" said Pon-onby, in his lordiest manner. "Pieased to see you."
"Thanks!" replied Squiff drily.

He knew how much Pon's affability was worth. But he shock hands.
"I saw you at the gates, an' Monson

Merton and Tunstall and Monson shook Merton and Tunstall and Monson looked a triffe hands, too, though Monson looked a triffe frequency of the five champions. It seemed to being one of the five champions. It seemed to him a little too much in the line of being one of the five victims, for the nuts mever had been up to the Remove fighting level, and Monson had no great faith in the new fellow's ability to tip down the scale on side

know Derwent, I think?" said Pousonby.

Ponsonly.

"Well, we've met—and exchanged compli-ments," said squiff. "I can't say we have been properly introduced."

"I wasn't over and above civil," admitted Flip, grinning. "But I don't think you'll count that against me, Field."

"Oh, not likely." "Squiff said. And they gripped hands. There was nothing of the mutty flabbless about Derwent's grip, Squiff mutty flabbless about Derwent's grip, Squiff noticed.

noticed.

In the come from the reabouts the many place. This were or Mindelay, or somewhere, don't you, by gad? 'drawled Pon.' "We come from places hundreds of miles apart; but we're both Australians, and I'd recommend you to study geography a little, Ponson or the commend of the commendation of

Mandalay is in Australia."

"My dear man, I ain't interested in geography—frightful bore, I call it." said Pon, yawning. "As for studyin'—what do you think we keep a tame Mobby for? He have been been to asked well to think of knows his place too dashed well to think of expectin' us to study. But if you're both pleased about bein' Colonials. I'm pleases. though I shouldn't care for it myself,

His tone was almost insufferable. If the crowd had been the usual nutty one, Squiff would have felt inclined to chuck his mission then and there. But Gadsby and Vavasour were absentees; and no Greyfriars fellow objected to Merton and Tunstall as they did those two. Moreover, the frank, healthy e of Flip Derwent made Sampson Quincy Iffley Field teel more at home.
"Let's get on with the washing," he said.

"Tet's get on with the washing, he said, and he said down, "I take it you have authority from Whar-ton to settle things?" said Pon. You may certainly take it that way. That's what I've come here for," replied Squiff.

Do you make any proposals as to time. place, an' so on ?

place, an' so on?"
"Wharton and the rest say that, on the whole, they'd as soon leave that to you."
"Doosid kind of them! Gloves, I take it?"
"Yes, I should say so."
Squiff did not add that it was far better for the Higheliffe champions that gloves should be used. But he thought it.
"Let's see—your five are Wharton, Cherry, Name Herrey James Cam Shub, who is no more a nigger than you are!" Squiff corrected life.

"Oh, don't get on your ear! I'm not good at pedigrees, by gad, outside racin'. Well, here are our five. Now we don't see pairin' off."

"Von don't see what?" asked Souiff. "We'd prefer to fight five against five-not in pairs.

No one at Greyfriars had thought of that, and for a moment the ambassador felt doubtful.

But it was only for a moment. For quite ertainly no one at Greyfriars had any doubt of the ability of the Famous Five to lick the

or the ability of the Famous Five to lick the best five of the nuts, with cloves or without, "You don't agree—what?"

"You don't agree—what?"

"On, I agree all serenc? Our chaps won't mind. There must be some understanding as to what makes a finish, though. Suppose four of one side are down and out, and only one of the other, are the blessed four to pound away at the one till be sings out that he's had enough?" It's all very well to say form a second to the there is no more fight left in him. He may scramble up again."

"But you'll admit you're licked—I meather sither side must own up to being licked if all

in him. He may scramble up again."
"But you'll admit you're licked—I mean, either side must own up to being licked if all five are down, Ponsonby?"
"Certainly, as long as there's more than one of the other lot on his dashed fect an ready to go on."
But why more than one? Ain't one good

Squin could not quite see what the leader of the nuts was driving at, and he felt a hit suspicious. But Pon had no very definite end in view; he was only making the terms as favourable to his own side as he could manage in the uncertainty of what might happen in

in the uncertainty or what migas were the fray,

"Five down one side, only three on the other—a win. Five down on one, an' four ou the other—two minutes by the watch to give the other—two minutes by the watch to give any readm. Is that fair, Field;"

"I think that will do." Squiff said gravely.

"I think that will do." Squiff said gravely.

"The terms conded as if the nuts were

The terms sounded as if the nuts were going into this affair in the most determined do-or-die spirit. But that was not like the nuts, and there was excuse for Squiff's puzzlement.

was for the venue, don't you think the sands down beyond Pegg would be a dashed good place? inquired Pon.
"That will do—as long as it's far enough beyond," the Greyfriars junior answered.
"We don't want a crowd of outsiders gaping

Time-to-morrow afternoon, shall we

"I say, though, Pon, that isn't the best time for me," Flip put in. "Courtenay asked me to play for the Form Eleven to-morrow." "You didn't promise him, did you?" snapped Pon.

snapped Pon.

"I didn't, as it happened—because of this. I wasn't sure when you'd fix it for. But he knows that there's po first team game, of the state of the s

"As you didn't promise Courtenay, I don't see that there's anythin' in it." Cecil Ponsee that there's anythm in it, teen Founds, sonly said. "Hang Courtenay, anyvay? An' as you're booked for the first, I don't see myself what you want to bother about a piffin' Form game for. You can't throw us over for Courtenay, you know, my dear over for Courtenay, you know, my dear

don't want to," answered Flip, flushing,

"I don't want to," answered Flip, flushing.
"I'll say no more, except that I don't quite see why playing for the school team need binder my turning out for the Forih when they've no fixture."

Pon land wen his point, and was wise enough to let it go at that. But Squiff could guess that there were wheels within wheels here. It was not a usual thing—even at so she's a school as Highelff—for a new fellow she's a school as Highelff—for a new fellow the state of the state o

Something more than that beamen is. There was little more to arrange. A referee would be needed, and it was Fijp who suggested Squil's himself for that post of honour and responsibility. To the Greyfriars fellow's surprise, Pon made no objection. He said he would much rather have Squiff than said he would much rather have squitt than some Higheliffe chaps he knew, anyway. No one took any notice of the sneer, which was levelled at Courtenay and De Courey, as everyone knew. Pon wanted Gadsby as timekeeper; but they

compromised on Drury. "Stay an' take a hand at nap. Field?" asked

"Stay an' take a hand at nap, Field?" asked Pont.

"No, thanks. Dead out of my line."

"No, thanks. Dead out of my line."

"Oh, I forgot! You're one of the Puritans, to the forgot! The said to the forgot out the forgot out of the forgot in the forgot out of your line, I suppose, an' we'll undertake not to poison you."

"The forgot of the forgot of the forgot out of your line, I suppose, an' we'll with Courtenay and De Cource," said Squiff.

"Thanks of the forgot of Cource, said Squiff.

"Thanks of the forgot of the forgot of the with the forgot of the forg

Hazel in the Toils!

AZELDENE was certainly not playing

AZELDENE was certainly not playing the Puritan just then. Banker is not a game on the Puritan list. at all, and he knew it. He had only a few sufficier, and he needed what he had for other purposes. But Hazel was one of those whose only way of resisting temptation is to keep at a distance from it. When it came close he was sure to fall.

Cocky was in one of his most conversational Locky was in one of the most conversational moods. He did not talk to these three as he did to Flip, or to Morton and Tunstall, who had become his very good friends. His remarks were of rather a sarcastic kind-outle as though he perceived the folly of

remarks were of father a sareastic kind-ultic as though he perceived the folly of what they were at.

"Nice boys! Oh, very nice boys—I don't think?" he said, and then he gave a shrill, prolonged whistle.

If That is a knowne old bird," said Razel, grinning as he swept up his winnings on the

"That't the brute!" said Gadsby savagely.
"One of these days I shall do for him!"
"Well, don't ask me to help you, you

"Well, don't ask me to help you, you know," answered Hazel lightly. "I've nothing against him—or the chap he belongs to." "Tricky—oh, dev-i-lish tricky!" said Cocky.

"Shut up!" roared Gadsby.
"Shut up!" roared Gadsby.
"Not—if—I—jolly—well—know it—by—Jupi-ter!" said the crested bird slowly, with a pause after each word.

"Hanged if I ever saw another remarked Hazei. "He talks straight back." hin ! Gadsby said. "It's

armarsen Hazen. "He talks straight back."
"Oh that's nothin!" Gadsby said. "It's
just one of the things Derwent's fond of
savin', just in that way, too. An' the by
Jupiter' he picked up from that silly ass
Metton." Merton.

"Algy's all right-all right-o!" put in Cocky.

"I shouldn't care to talk secrets before him," said Hazel.

I'll trouble you for five bob, old sport," Vavasour said.

Why didn't the dashed girl twin take him, gad?" growled Gadsby, who was losing and gad: not like it.

did not like it.

"She wanted to, didn't she" asked Hazel.

"I heard something about it. They're both as end fond of old tekents it. They're both as end fond of old tekent Cliff.

Boss. foo.

They'd bar a dog there; but old maids like parrets and all that sort of thing."

"Why shouldn't she have him? inquired Vavacour, grinning slyly.

"What do you mean, ass?"

"Oh. by gad, I'm not such an ass. Gaddy! It wouldn't be half a had move to put the griddy bird, case an' all, over the second of the second of the second of the second of the waste of the She wanted to, didn't she?"

emper grew rapidly worse as he continued to

icmper grew rapidly worse as he continued to lose.

"Con-found the rotten bird" he snailed.
"What goed would that do, Vay, anybow?"
What goed would that do, Vay, anybow?"
What goed would that do, Vay, anybow?"
I want to be the proper of the control of the property of the creature, 'kinow, an' we were too gallant to let her pine any longer. So we took tim along—twiggez-vous: An if by we were lowerin' it, an' Cocky flew away, an' the cruel rooks an' magnies an' things pecked him to death, 'kinow—well, that wouldn't be our affair, would it?"
It was rather surprising to find Vavasour, the emptiest-headed of all the nuts, coming twith a scheme all on his own, though the control of the control

lar-away none counted for with risp perwent. If Cocky were missing nothing but physical force—and plenty of that—would keep Flip from going in search of him. Classes or cali-over, footer or even a fight, it would be all one. Each or any of them would have to wait till Cocky had been found.

"I should think Vay had better drop

wait till Cocky had been found.

"I should think Vaw had better drop using his brains if he can't use them to any better purpose than that," said Hazeldene.
"Leave the cockatoo alone, and let's get on

with the game."
Hazel was winning thus far. mazer was winning thus far. He had a tenshilling note and quite a little pile of silver before him. He had put down his cigarette, the burning end of which was making a hole in the tablecloth. His hands were shaking with excitement, and his eyes gleamed.

He was not built for gambling. He could not been con-

not keep cool.
Gadsby tapped Vavasour's shins under the
table. The scheme Vavasour had outlined
the country of the control of the country of the
real anything. It struck him that it would
be quite a good notion if Peter Hazeldene
could be got to take the risk.
Vavasour's brains were not likely to run to
a scheme as deep as this. But Gadsby was

crafty enough.

Across the table the dandy winked at his pal. He saw that Gadsby was meditating a

Hazet last on the next round, but was a

winner again on that which followed. He was feverishly excited now. If only he could keep on for half an lour or so in this vein he could face Pon without a tremor—pay the chap off—and, of course, never get into his debt again—till next time!

debt again—till next time:
"You're in luck to-day, old sport, by gad;"
said Gadsby cheefly.
That should have been enough to make
Hazel suspicious, for Gadsby was known to be a bad loser.

But it had not that effect. The Greyfriars junior was too full of pleasure at his own success to wonder why Gadsby should be so unusually attable

unusually affable.

Had he but known it, there was no present reason for his dreading Pon. That magnanimous youth had not summoned him to Higheliffe to dun him, but only to be kind—to chiffe to dim him, but only to be kind—to retrain in the most marked manner from playing the harsh creditor. If was all part of four shift to the control of the shift of the period of the shift of the shift of the shift of the pected that, it is doubtful whether he would have worried about if.

But Pon was at the back of Hazel's mind all the time. Hazel had the weak, foolish

But Pon was at the back or trees, coulant all the time. Hazel had the weak, toollah all the but the but the weak toollah was debt of bones. All debts are more or less so-gambing ones rather less than more, perhaps. Hazel, who would have betrowed from anyone who would have better by Pon, would not have worried a tenth part as unter about repaying the bean.

Basila i aslia ilia ika ikawa ilaifi

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grant to be be the first of the first of

Now he thought he saw a chance to pay Pon without borrowing from anyone. For a time he went on winning. Then the tide turned, and he saw his winnings slipping way from him. He would have stopped; but the fascination

of the game was strong upon him, and, more-over, he knew that Gadsby and Vavasour

would resent his proposing a stoppage.

So he went on, growing more morose with each lessening of his pile, but as feverishly

existed as ever.

And now he began to feel something of Gadshy's virulent hatred towards Cocky.

"Why ion't that wretched bird dry up?" he "Why ion't that wretched bird dry up?" he snapped, as he passed more money across the

Chuck him out of the window!" said

Gadsby, with an evil grin.
"Mind whose toes you tread on;" chuckled

Cocky.

"He means Derwent will attend to you if you meddle with him, by gad!" said Vava-

you memore the problem of the problem will be used to get Vavasour to meddle with cheek the had boped at first that Gadsby would carry out his precious scheme. Now he was hoping that Hazdelene would. That would suit him just as well. Derwent would suit from the could not be brought to book. The not afraid of Derwent! snapped Hazdel.

Hazel.

"Big talk! Big talk! remarked Cocky.

"On, ain't be got a lovely, love-ly face?"

Hazel's face, as he got up and approached
the bird, was far from lovely. The drawn,

wan look of the luckless gambler was upon it, and an angry gust of passion disfigured it. further as he arose from his seat, selzed the cage, and shook it viciously. Cocky gave an angry seream. "Oh, stop that, you crass idiot! You'll have Derwent here!" protested Vavasour.

Cocky sa.

"Oh, stop that, you con"Oh, stop that perwent here!" profested Vavahave Derwent here!" profested Vavahaking in his elegant shoes.

"Hazel nin't afraid of Derwent, by g
said Gadsby. "Hazel can lick him
to fight the fell

Rats! I'm not going to fight the fellow. iid Hazel. "But that beastly bird does get said Hazel. "But on a chap's nerves.

He sat down again. beastly

He sat down again.
"Oh, my hat?" he said. "Look at the blessed tablectoth! One of your beastly togeneties has burnt a hole right through it."
"Nours—not ours," said table, it is not the dashed tablectoth and the said table table table the said table ta

Those chaps won't be best picased about is smoking in here, I guess, as you say Merton and Tunstall have chucked it.

He pulled the tablecloth farther over the edge on his side, and Gadsby and Vavasous exchanged winks.

That cleans me out!" said the Greyfriars

junior next moment. "Oh, we'll take your paper, y'know!" said Gadsby, to Vavasour's surprise.

Gadsby, to Vavasour's surprise.

Pon might have taken Hazel's I O U's, for Pon knew that the weak, wayward fellow would pay up. But Gadsby, himself a rogur, had less faith in human nature than Pon, because he had less knowledge of it.

"I don't kinew," said Hazel doubtfully.
"I don't kinik I will, hanks, Gaddy, I'm up to my giddy ears in debu now, you know of gardsby, wo of your creditors—what?" said Gadsby.

We when the biggest one. And I guess he expects me to shell out something on account to day. But I can't. I haven't anything but a copper or two left."

a copper or two left."
Gadsby made an offer which caused Vavosour to open his eyes very widely.
'Look here, old scout, we're pals, you
know. Shall I lend you a couple of quid or
so to sweeten Pon-eh? You don't want Ponkicking up a shine secause you can't poy-

Gadsby offering to lend money-and to an outsider

For the nuts looked upon Hazel as an out sider. They were ready onough to gamble with him; but there was no friendship in

that. moment Vavasour utterly failed to comprehend it He knew that Gadsby was aware that Pos

The New that Gassy was aware that Fos-did not expect anything on account from Hazel. He only wanted to hold the del's over the Greyfriars Junior's head in order to further his own schemes. Then Vaxsour's cycs fell upon Cocky, and

understood.

It was double-dealing on Gadsby's part He would be working against Pon's plans is Hazel accepted.

But Vavasour had no objection to treacher.

-even treachery to Pon, for whom his feelings were as friendly as to anyone to whom he ings were as friendly as to anyone to whom he looked up as a leader. And Vavasour was a good deal in love with his own plan to annos Flip Derwent. That was what Gadshy was plotting for, he felt sure. He waited anxiously for Hazel's answer. It was not as ready as might leave been

expected.

expected.

At heart Hazel neither liked nor trusted these two. And Hazel was suspicious. It was not for nothing that Gadsby warded to become his creditor, he felt sure.

But here his fatal weakness told.

With a couple of pounds he could face Poulight-heartedly. As it was, he dreaded the

"It's jolly good of you, Gaddy!" he said slowly, "I suppose I might as well owe it to you as to Pon."

to you as to Pon."

Better, my boy—better!" replied Gadshy.

I sha'n't be so rough on you if you're a bit
behind with it. For a chap who prides him
self on his Norman blood an' all that, there's trifle too much of the Israelite about Pon. by gad olutely!" said Vavasour, Abs

"Absolutery" said vavasour. He test a little bit nervous in talking treason thus. But he wanted to back up Gadsby. The two pound-notes had just changed hands when the study's rightful occupants

(To be continued next week.)

20-10-17