"BARRED!"

This week's dramatic story of the Chums of St. Jim's, introducing Cousin Ethel and George Figgins . . . inside!

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

The GEM 2d LIBRARY

No. 952.
Vol. XXIX.
May 8th,
1926.

GUSSY RUNS UP AGAINST TROUBLE—AS USUAL!

(A "thumping" good incident from the long complete school yarn inside!)

OUR "SCARLET STREAK" COMPETITION

First Prize £5,

AND FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS, BOYS!

HERE is another of our topping new one-week competitions, you fellows. You will enjoy it, because it is a novel idea, with some jolly good prizes which simply *must be won.*

You are all reading our grand new serial, "The Scarlet Streak," which appears on page 23 of this issue. Well, we have written yet another paragraph about it, which the artist has put into picture-puzzle form.

This, by the way, is the fifth of a series of one-week contests, and with each new puzzle there will be more splendid prizes.

In attempting to solve the puzzle it will help you if you read the story *and* see the film; also, the sense of the sentences will assist you. But you should remember each picture or sign may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words.

Try your hand at solving the paragraph—you can see that the opening words are: "Count K. is a . . ."—and then write your solution IN INK on a sheet of paper. Cut out the puzzle and the coupon together; attach your solution to the tablet, and, having signed and addressed the coupon IN INK, post your effort to:

GEM, "Scarlet Streak," No. 5,
Gough House, Gough Square,
London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so as to reach there not later than FRIDAY, MAY 14th. Any efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

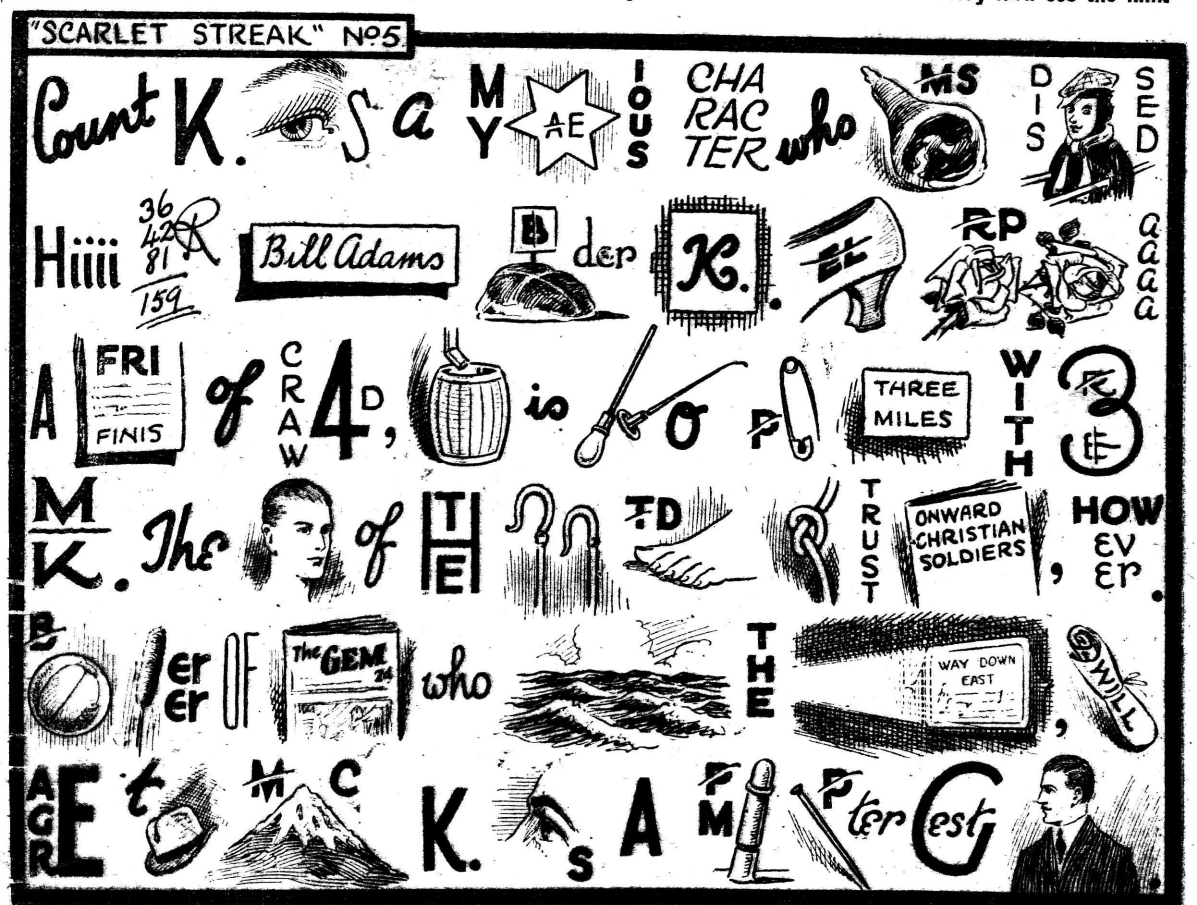
RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded for the correct, or most nearly correct, solution. The other prizes will follow in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to divide any of the prizes should it be necessary in the case of ties.

You may send as many efforts as you like, but each must be complete in itself, and must consist of a solution, a puzzle, and a signed coupon. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified. The decision of the Editor will be absolutely final.

No one connected with the staff or proprietors of this journal may compete.

Our Grand Story, "The Scarlet Streak," has been filmed by the Universal Co. Read the story *and* see the film.



I enter "Scarlet Streak" Contest No. 5, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

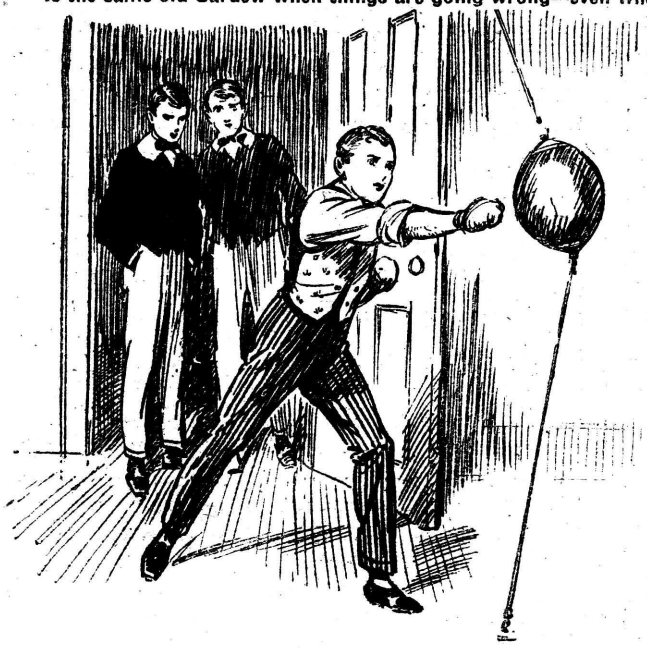
Address.....

.....

5

GEM. Closing Date, Friday, May 14th.

ROUGH ON CARDEW! To be accused of something he hasn't done is bad enough, but to be further accused of taking shelter behind a girl is rubbing it in with a vengeance! But Cardew, cool and nonchalant when things are going right, is the same old Cardew when things are going wrong—even when he is——



BARRED!

A Powerful and Dramatic New Long Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, introducing Cousin Ethel and Ralph Reckness Cardew.

BY

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.
Trouble Expected!

"SCRAPPING?"

"Yes."

"With whom?"

"I don't know."

Cardew of the Fourth made that reply with his usual cool nonchalance. From his manner, it might have been supposed that it was quite an ordinary thing for a St. Jim's fellow to enter into a "scrap" without being aware of the identity of the opposing party.

Levison and Clive stared at him. They had arrived at the door of their study—Study No. 9 in the Fourth.

There they had found Ralph Reckness Cardew busy.

They had expected to find Cardew in the study, and—knowing him as they did—had expected to find him stretched in the armchair, with his feet on the table, and possibly with a cigarette in his mouth.

Instead of which, the slacker of the Fourth was displaying a new and surprising energy.

A punch-ball had been rigged up in the study, between a staple in the floor and a hook in a beam that crossed the ceiling.

Cardew, in his shirt-sleeves, with the gloves on, was punching the ball.

He was punching it quite industriously and scientifically, and seemed to be in great form.

Levison and Clive jumped to the conclusion that their study-mate had a "scrap" on with somebody, and that he was getting into shape for it. Cardew was not very keen on scrapping, being much too careful of his good-looks; but he had a sardonic temper and a biting tongue, which often landed him into trouble automatically, as it were. Neither of his study-mates was ever surprised to hear that Cardew had a row on his hands.

The two juniors stood in the doorway and watched him. Cardew of the Fourth, with all his slack and idle ways, was fit as a fiddle, and a good man at games and at boxing when he chose. His bursts of energy never lasted very long, but long enough to keep him fit.

Crash!

The ball spun away from Cardew's right hand, and flashed back, and spun away from his left.

Cardew stepped back from it.

"I'm not sure of that hook," he said, with a glance at the ceiling. "Though you fellows have told me that I'm always carpin', I'm not really a good carpenter. You chaps are in the line of fire if the hook comes out."

Levison laughed.

"Then chuck it!" he said. "Besides, we've come in to tea. Are you seriously going to scrap with somebody?"

"Awfully seriously, dear man."

"But whom?" demanded Clive.

"I've told you I don't know."

Sidney Clive made a rather impatient gesture. He was used to Cardew's whimsical ways, but sometimes he seemed a little fed-up.

"Fathead!" was his reply.

"Frozen truth!" answered Cardew seriously. "I'm absolutely certain that I've got a fight on my hands. But I don't know yet who is to be the happy victim—I haven't been told. I'm expectin' to hear any minute."

"We needn't ask who's to blame, anyhow," said Clive rather gruffly.

Cardew nodded.

"You needn't!" he assented. "You can guess that much in advance, Clivey, even with a rather dense intellect like yours, old bean. I am to blame."

"Oh! You own up to that?" asked Levison.

"Dear man, so far as I am concerned, this study is the Palace of Truth," answered Cardew. "I own up! Why not? I never tell lies—too much trouble to remember 'em. Look at the tangles that Trimble gets into by tellin' lies! The strait and narrow path, old beans, gives a chap less brain fag."

Cardew sat on the corner of the table.

He had been putting in some hefty practice at the punch-ball, but he did not seem tired. His lazy face was a good deal keener in expression than usual. Possibly he was looking forward to the "scrap" as a break in the monotony. Cardew found, or professed to find, life at St. Jim's monotonous.

"Suppose that ball had been D'Arcy's nose," he said. "Do you think the noble Gussy would have come up to time after that punch?"

Levison frowned.

"You're not going to scrap with D'Arcy?"

"Possibly."

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Clive. "I suppose you know whether you've had a row with D'Arcy or not?"

"Not!" said Cardew.

"Well, then, you burbling ass——"

"Perhaps it will be Blake," said Cardew. "I don't know; but it may turn out to be Blake."

"If it turns out to be Blake you will find yourself up against something tougher than a punch-ball," said Ernest Levison. "Have you been rowing with Blake of the Fourth?"

"Not in the least."

"Then what are you going to fight him for, fathead?"

"I'm not at all sure that I'm going to fight him," said Cardew calmly. "It may be Herries, or Digby. Or it may be the whole study one after another. I don't know—and don't care."

"You mean that you've got some trouble on with Study No. 6 in the Fourth?" asked Levison. "All those fellows belong to that study."

"Exactly!"

"Well, you're in the wrong, then!" grunted Clive. "Those

fellows are all good at scrapping, if it comes to that; but they never hunt for trouble."

"Dear man, I've already admitted that I'm in the wrong," said Cardew lazily. "As the poet has touchingly remarked, 'twas ever thus."

"Oh, rats!" said Clive.

Levison of the Fourth eyed Cardew rather uneasily. St. Jim's fellows sometimes wondered what it was that bound the three chums of Study No. 9 so firmly together. They were all unlike one another—Clive, quiet and steady; Levison, cool and keen and sagacious; Cardew, whimsical, volatile, sardonic, often irritating. But they were firm friends; though there was no doubt Ralph Reckness Cardew sometimes tried the patience of his friends very severely.

"Look here, Cardew," said Levison abruptly, "this won't do!"

"Why not, old bean?"

"If you've done something at Study No. 6 you can tell them you're sorry, and settle it without a scrap."

"But I'm not sorry!" said Cardew cheerily. "And, like Ananias—was it Ananias?—I cannot tell a lie!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Asses, old bean, like poets, are born and not made."

"But what have you done, then?" asked Levison.

Cardew grinned.

"Listen, and I will a tale unfold," he answered. "Yesterday there was a House match played—you fellows probably remember, as you played in it. I, as usual, was slackin' about. I watched you at cricket for some time, till your terrific energy made me feel tired, and then I wandered away for a little solace. I found it in a cigarette."

"Oh, chuck it!" grunted Clive.

"But at that point," continued Cardew, with great gravity, "I remembered that if I smoked in this study you fellows would probably whiff the wicked baccy when you came in, and I should get a jaw. I felt too tired to stand a jaw—you know what you are when you get goin', old beans. So I drifted into Study No. 6, reclined luxuriously in D'Arcy's expensive armchair, and smoked a few smokes."

"You silly ass!"

"Dear man, I felt the silliest ass in the wide world when Cousin Ethel looked in and caught me playing the goat," said Cardew. "I didn't even know that Gussy's cousin was coming to St. Jim's yesterday; never dreamed, in consequence, that she would look into his study to speak to him—never imagined, in fact that anybody would ever want to speak to Gussy at all if they could get out of it. So when that charming countenance appeared in the offing you could have knocked me down with a coke-hammer!"

Clive burst into a laugh.

"You must have looked a fool!" he remarked.

"I looked one, felt one, and was one," said Cardew. "I retreated as soon as I could, leaving Miss Ethel in possession. That was how I came to see the finish of the House match and the glorious triumph of Figgins of the New House."

"But what's the row with that study? You haven't explained that, with all your gas!" said Clive.

"Why, it occurred to me while I was smokin', that a scent of the pernicious weed might linger in the room, and that Blake, when he came in, would ask, like the Great Huge Bear in the fairy tale, 'Who's been smokin' in my study?'" explained Cardew.

"Oh, I see!"

"So now you know the trouble," said Cardew. "I knew there'd be a row if th y found it out, and I didn't care a rap whether they found it out or not, and there you are! See?"

"I shouldn't blame Blake for punching your silly head for smoking in his study," said Clive.

"Neither should I, dear man. I should only punch his head in return, to the best of my humble ability."

"But it's all rot,' said Levison. "That was yesterday, and they haven't ragged you about it yet. Probably they don't know anything about it."

"So I thought!" assented Cardew. "Like a giddy murderer who has safely hidden the body, I thought I was goin' on the even tenor of my way with my jolly old crime undiscovered. But murder will out, you know. This mornin' after class, I heard that Blake was askin' after me very particularly."

"What did he want?"

"Can't say! Hearin' from Trimble that he was inquirin' after me very particularly, I went for a walk till dinner-time, in order to amuse him," said Cardew calmly. "He was still inquirin', I presume, till dinner."

"You ass!"

"After dinner, Herries cornered me as we came out," went on Cardew. "Herries was very keen on an interview. For which reason I ran a race with him, and won it!"

"Fathead!"

"In class this afternoon Digby whispered to me that he

and his friends wanted to speak to me after lessons," resumed Cardew. "It appeared to me in the light of a genial entertainment to let them want! So I offered to fag at bowlin' for Cutts and St. Leger of the Fifth, and they kept me busy—too busy for Study No. 6 to worry me!"

Clive gave a grunt.

"You silly owl!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you wanted to put their backs up by dodging them all day, just because they wanted to pin you down!"

"Exactly; they are more entertainin' with their backs up!"

"Oh, you're a silly ass!"

"But now," went on Cardew—"now they're bound to run me down, unless I cut tea—and I'm not goin' to cut tea even to worry Study No. 6. The fact that all Study No. 6 are anxious to get to grips with me indicates that they know who smoked in their study yesterday, and that the next item on the programme will be the punchin' of noses. Hence the punch-ball and the strenuous exercise at which you discovered me. Study No. 6 are goin' to put up a man, and I'm goin' to lick him, if I can! If they give me my choice I shall pick out D'Arcy. I want to black the eye he keeps his eyeglass in. It's often occurred to me that Gussy would look no end entertainin' trying to screw his eyeglass into a black eye. I shall go all out for that eye."

"Bai Jove!"

"Talk of angels!" said Cardew, slipping off the study table. "Here's the one and only! Trickle in, Gussy—trickle in, old bean!"

CHAPTER 2.

Cardew Declines!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the ornament of the Fourth Form, looked in at the open doorway of Study No. 9.

His face was very severe.

The celebrated monocle that glimmered in his eye was turned upon Ralph Reckness Cardew grimly.

"I heard your wemark, Cardew——" he began. "I will mention, Cardew, that I wegard you as a babblin' ass!"

"Dear man!"

"And a slackin', smokin' wottah!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I twust, as you are a distant welation of mine, that it will not turn out that you are a wascal, as well."

"I trust so!" said Cardew gravely.

"I have come heah to ask you——"

"I know—I know," assented Cardew. "I've been gettin' my muscle up for your special benefit, Gussy! Look!"

Cardew lounged across to the punch-ball.

"Weally, Cardew——"

"Now, suppose that that ball was your boko, Gussy," said Cardew. "How do you think you would come up after one like this?"

Crash!

Cardew put all his beef into the drive at the suspended ball.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was exactly in the line of fire, but he was out of reach had the cords held.

But they did not hold.

Quite probably Cardew was aware of how much the hook and the staple would stand after punching the ball so long, and knew just how much they had loosened.

The punch-ball flew, and fairly crashed on the startled nose of Arthur Augustus.

"Whoooop!"

Cardew gazed at the fallen swell of St. Jim's.

"Dear me," he said; "it's gone! Who would have foreseen that a punchball would jerk loose all of a sudden like that! And I fixed it up with my own fair hands—and I'm a jolly good carpenter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Ow, wow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on the floor in a dazed state, fingering his noble nose, as if to ascertain that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't.

The crimson trickled through his fingers, as he tenderly caressed his nose.

"Hurt, old man?" asked Cardew.

"Gwooogh!"

"Accidents will happen," said Cardew regretfully.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet. He dabbed his handkerchief to his damaged nose, and it was stained with red. Over the dabbing handkerchief he glared at the dandy of the Fourth.

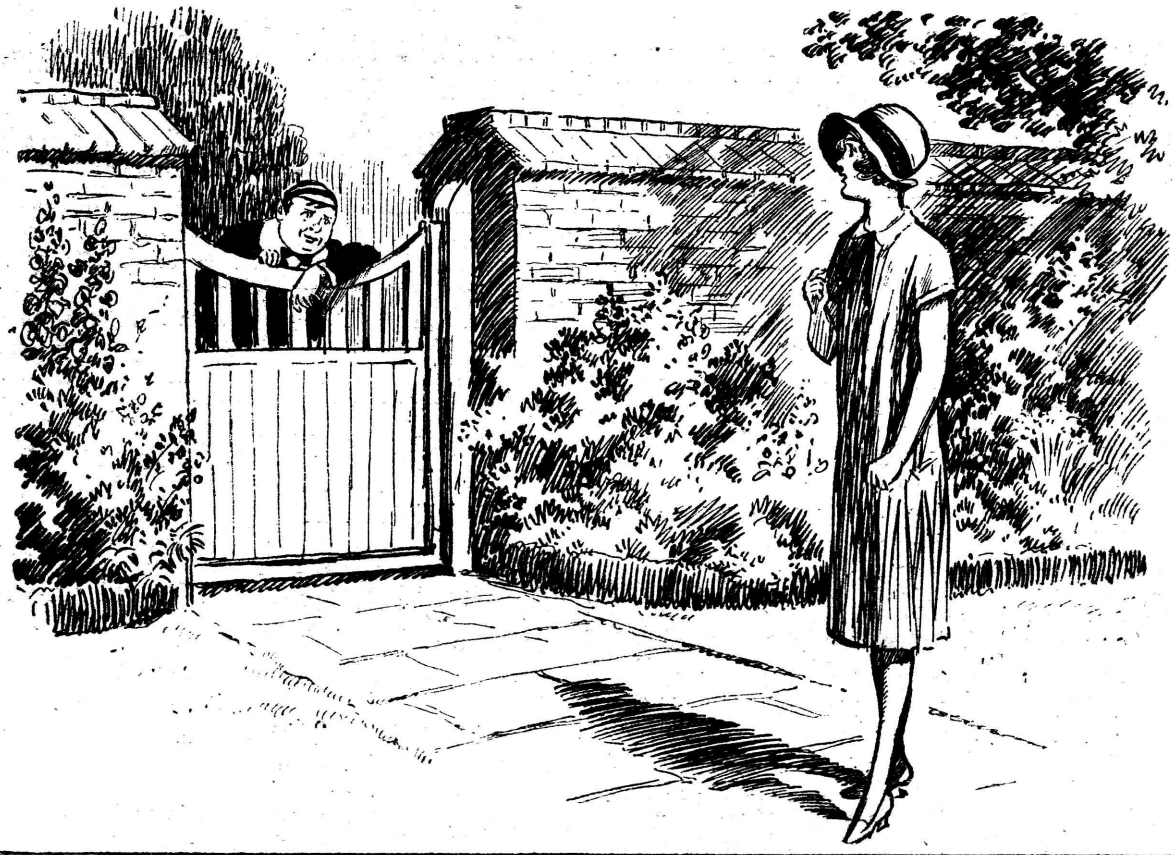
"Gwoogh! By dose! You have vewy nearly smashed by dose, you wuffian. Gwooogh! I must go and bathe by dose—ow!"

With his handkerchief pressed to the injured member Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tottered away.

Cardew sighed.

"Fancy that rotten punch-ball givin', like that!" he said.

"You didn't know it would?" said Levison.



"I shall not mention anything about the ten-pound note," said Cousin Ethel. "Is that all?" "Yes, that's all that's important," said Baggy, leaning on the gate and giving Ethel a goggling look which he would have described as the "glad eye." "But let's have a chat, Ethel! Don't go!" (*See Chapter* 3.)

"Well, I may have had a suspicion. Poor old Gussy, he will have to leave it to Blake, or Herries, or Digby, now," said Cardew. "He won't want any more on his nose, it stands to reason. Shall we have tea, dear men, before the next fierce warrior comes along from Study No. 6?"

Cardew kicked the punch-ball under the table, and slipped on his jacket. Levison and Clive eyed him dubiously. Chummy as they were with Cardew, they were never quite satisfied with him, and now they were less satisfied than ever.

Cardew did not seem to observe it. He smiled agreeably at his study-mates, and cleared some books and papers from the table.

"Shove out the cloth, one of you," he said. "Don't stand there slackin', dear men. You're always tellin' me not to slack, and now I'm settin' you an example of energy."

Levison, in silence, spread the cloth, and Clive sorted out things from the cupboard. Cardew picked out the spirit-stove, and set the kettle on it in the fender.

A footstep approached Study No. 9, and stopped at the door. Cardew looked up at his chums with a grin.

"Another giddy warrior on the war-path," he said. "I knew they'd run me down at tea-time. Trot in, Blake, or Herries, or Digby, whichever you are, dear man."

But it was not a member of Study No. 6 who knocked at the door and opened it. It was Tom Merry of the Shell.

"Oh! You!" exclaimed Cardew. "Welcome as the flowers in May, old bean. I was expectin' a giddy enemy, and behold, a friend! Thomas, I was never so glad to see you."

Tom Merry looked at him rather curiously.

"Just in time for tea," went on Cardew. "It's an honour and distinction to entertain Thomas, the brightest ornament of the Shell, and junior captain of the House. You've come to tea, haven't you?"

"Thanks! No," said Tom.

"Let me persuade you," said Cardew affably. "Fetch along Manners and Lowther, and tell them we have a cake, and a jar of jelly, and two kinds of jam. Even the captain of the House need not look down on a spread like that. You haven't had tea, by any unlucky chance?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"Too bad! Sit down, all the same, and give us some of your light and entertainin' conversation. You don't know what an entertainin' fellow you are, Thomas, when you try—an' sometimes when you don't try."

Tom Merry's face did not relax.

Levison and Clive could see that he had come to Study No 9 for some special purpose, and that the purpose was not a pleasant one. Cardew, undoubtedly, could see it, too; but it was his way to meet trouble with airy badinage.

"The fact is, Cardew——" said the captain of the Shell.

"I know!" smiled Cardew. "You've come as a second, and you feel a little awkward about it. All serene, dear man, I won't bite you! Are you Gussy's second?"

"Gussy's second?" repeated Tom, opening his eyes. "No."

"Blake's, then?"

"Nobody's."

"You haven't come here as a second, to arrange the jolly old time and place of a deadly combat?"

"No."

"Great gad! Have you come to look for trouble on your own?" asked Cardew cheerfully. "I seem to be in the wars—four Fourth-Formers thirstin' for my gore, and now a Shell duffer buttin' in. Thomas, old bean, I'm sorry to seem disobligin', but I shall have to put your name rather far down on my list. Study No. 6 have a prior claim."

"Look here, Cardew——"

"But what's the trouble with you?" inquired Cardew. "I haven't been smokin' in your study, in an absent-minded moment, have I?"

"Not that I know of," said Tom, staring at him.

"Then why do you want to scrap?"

"I don't."

"Oh, good! I thought you did. I don't want to, either, so we're quite in agreement. But why that knitted brow, Thomas, and that stern and uncompromisin' glitter in your eye?"

Levison and Clive grinned—they could not help it. But Tom Merry was evidently in a serious mood—an unusually serious mood. His face grew graver.

"We want you to step along to Study No. 6, Cardew," he said.

"Is it a raggin'?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"Then what?"

"To ask you something."

"Dear man, if it's money, ask Levison or Clive. I have the misfortune at present to have a fixed address in Stony Street."

"Don't be an ass! We've got to ask you something. Will you come along to Study No. 6?" asked Tom impatiently.

"Who are 'we'?" asked Cardew. "If Study No. 6 want to see me—possibly with hostile intentions—what has it to do with a Shell fellow, even the junior captain of the House?"

"I happen to know about the affair, Manners and Lowther, too. We shall all be there."

"Sittin' in judgment on poor little me?" asked Cardew sorrowfully. "By gad! It's about time I mended my naughty ways, if they bring such stern frowns to the manly brow of Thomas, and cause all the good little boys in the School House to sit in judgment. Thanks. I won't come."

"D'Arcy came to ask you, but——"

"My hat! I thought he'd come to challenge me to mortal combat," said Cardew in surprise. "Hence the present state of his nose. By the way, how is his nose gettin' on?"

"Will you come?" asked Tom, unheeding.

"I'm just goin' to have tea, old bean."

Tom knitted his brows.

"The fact is, Cardew, you've been dodging all day, and it looks bad. But will you come after tea?"

"No!"

"Why not?" asked Tom, his lips setting.

"Because I don't choose," said Cardew coolly. "By gad! Do you think I'm a sneakin' little fag to be called over the coals? I'm ready to answer for what I've done, with or without gloves. Any jolly old member of Study No. 6, or any buttin' ass in the Shell, for that matter. In fact, I'm anybody's game."

"It's not a matter to be settled by scrapping," said Tom Merry.

Cardew's lip curled.

"Do you mean that you good and noble youths are thinkin' of reportin' it to the Housemaster?"

"Unless it's cleared up, it must come before the Housemaster, sooner or later, or the Head," said Tom. "Look here, Cardew, come along to Study No. 6 when you've finished tea. Nobody wants to spread the thing over the House."

"Dear man, I don't mind a little bit," said Cardew. "You can sing it out from the highest chimney, if you like. You can stand on top of the clock-tower and yell it forth, dear man, so far as I'm concerned. You can tell it in Gath, and whisper it in the streets of Askalon. Dash it all, ring up 2LO and have it broadcast, if you like."

"If you don't come, we must come here," said Tom. "If you choose to have it talked out before your friends——"

"They know all about it already, old bean."

Tom started.

"They know?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly! They're as shocked as you are. Clivey regards me with sorrowful disdain. Levison can scarcely refrain from sheddin' tears. Both of them are convinced that I shall come to a bad end; and I feel sure they are right."

Tom Merry stared at him blankly.

"I don't understand you, Cardew," he said. "Either there's a mistake somewhere, or you're a cool and thorough rascal. Anyhow, if you won't have it in private, you'll have to have it in public. If you want your tea, have it. We shall come along in a quarter of an hour."

And the captain of the Shell quitted the study abruptly.

"Kettle's boilin'," said Cardew, with a smile to his chums. "Serious old judge, Thomas—what? Fancy all this fuss about smokin' a few cigarettes in a fellow's study? Why, he could find Racke's study reekin' with smoke, if he looked in there, and I could tell him of some studies in the Sixth Form where the noxious weed is not wholly unknown. Who's makin' the tea?"

"Look here, Cardew, tell us what's up," said Levison abruptly.

"I've told you."

"Don't be an ass!" said Ernest Levison impatiently. "It was a silly trick smoking cigarettes in Blake's study. But the fellows are not making all this fuss about a trifle like that. There's something else."

"Think so?"

"Yes, I do. What is it?"

"You've got me guessin', dear man. Honest Injun, I don't know of anythin' else," said Cardew. "Of all the manifold sins on my conscience, I've only that one against Study No. 6. Good gad! You don't think I raided the study cupboard in Baggy Trimble's style, do you?"

Levison laughed involuntarily.

"No, ass! But you've done something——"

"Honour bright, no!"

"Then I jolly well can't understand it!"

"Same here," said Clive, whose face was very serious. "I don't understand it at all!"

"Limited intellects, old beans, that's the trouble. Lots of things you don't understand. Who's makin' the tea? Am I to soil my own elegant fingers? What a life!"

Cardew made the tea, and sat down at the table with a cheery, smiling face. Generally he was leisurely over his tea; now he seemed rather in a hurry. His tea was, in fact, unfinished when he looked at his watch and rose from the table.

"Don't interrupt yourselves, old kids!" he said. "I've got to cut across to the New House to see a man!"

"Tom Merry will be back here in a few minutes."

Cardew nodded.

"Yes. That's why I've got to see a man in the New House," he answered.

And Cardew walked away down the passage, whistling softly an operatic melody, leaving Levison and Clive staring at one another rather blankly.

CHAPTER 3.
Trimble Aks for It!

"ETHEL!"

Cousin Ethel did not seem to hear.

She was walking in the Head's garden, enjoying the sunset and the pleasant scent of flowers, when a fat face looked over the gate from the quad.

Certainly she was within hearing as Baggy Trimble of the Fourth hailed her. Possibly she did not like being addressed as "Ethel" by the fat junior. Possibly she did not want to speak to Trimble of the Fourth at all. Nobody, in fact, ever had any desire to speak to Trimble of the Fourth, and Ethel was not an exception.

"Ethel!" hooted Trimble.

Still Cousin Ethel's head did not turn.

"Miss Cleveland!"

Then the girl looked round.

"Did you call me?"

"Yes, I did," said Baggy Trimble, in an injured tone. "I called you three times, Ethel."

Ethel Cleveland's fair face set a little.

"Please do not call me Ethel," she said, realising that only plain English was comprehensible to Trimble.

"Look here! You know——"

Trimble broke off as Ethel was turning away.

"I say, hold on. I can't come into the garden; juniors ain't allowed to, you know. I say, it's important."

Ethel turned reluctantly back.

"If you have anything to say to me——" she said.

"Lots," said Trimble. "I want to tip you the wink."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Yesterday afternoon I met you at the station, while the other fellows were playing cricket, you know."

"You told me that my Cousin Arthur asked you to do so!" said Ethel severely. "I have learned since that he did nothing of the kind."

"Well, it was a pleasure, you know," said Trimble. "I had a jolly long walk; but, dash it all, I don't mind. But that ain't what I was going to say, Ethel—I mean Miss Cleveland. Don't go away. Look here! At the station I asked you to change a ten-pound note for me."

"And I did so," said Ethel. "Is that all?"

"I asked you to keep it dark, because—because fellows ain't allowed to have such whacking tips from their people, as a rule," said Trimble, blinking at her.

"Yes, yes," said Ethel impatiently. "I quite understand that. I have not mentioned it."

"You see, I supposed you were just coming to see your cousin Gussy at the school and going again," explained Trimble. "Now I hear that you are staying with the Head's wife for a week or so."

"That is the case."

"Well, I thought I'd tip you the wink to be careful," said Baggy. "Of course, I—I get lots of big tips from my people. My pater's rolling in money, you know. He keeps four motor-cars at Trimble Hall. But our Housemaster would be waxy if he knew I had tenners at a time. I—I might get a licking. You see how important it is."

Ethel smiled faintly.

"Yes," she said. "In fact, I think you had better take your ten-pound-note back and return me the pound-notes I gave you. I did not understand how the matter stood when I changed it for you."

"Can't be did," said Trimble. "I've spent three of them already, and a beast who made out that I owed him a pound made me settle up when he found I had some money!"

"Oh!" said Ethel.

"It's all right," said Baggy—"quite all right. Only,

don't you mention to anybody that I gave you the tenner—see It would get me into a row!"

"I shall not mention it," said Ethel. "Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all that's important," said Baggy, leaning on the gate, and giving Ethel a goggling look which he would have described as the "glad eye." "But let's have a chat, Ethel! I say, I've seen you being bored by that fat-head Figgins more than once, and I've wondered how you can stand it. Silly ass, isn't he? Biggest fool in the New House, and that's saying a lot! I—don't go, you know."

But Ethel, with one cold glance of disdain at the fat Baggy, turned and walked away and went into the Head's house.

Trimble blinked after her in surprise.

"Well, my hat!" he murmured. "I wonder what made her clear off like that, when we were getting on so fine?"

That was the problem that the fat and fatuous Baggy had to give up. That Ethel could be indifferent to his fascinations was impossible. So her sudden departure had to remain inexplicable.

There was a footstep behind Baggy, and he turned to see George Figgins, of the New House Fourth, coming under the trees to the little gate.

Figgins of the Fourth had an eager and expectant look on his face which faded away at once at the sight of Baggy Trimble. He stared quite grimly at the fat School House junior.

"What the thump are you doing here?" he asked gruffly.

"Eh? I suppose I've as much right here as you have!" said Trimble warmly.

Figgins grunted.

Baggy's statement was incontestable. Yet Figgins looked, and felt, disposed to knock Baggy's bullet head against the gate.

The New House junior glanced over the gate, among the flower-beds and shrubberies of the Head's garden. Baggy Trimble followed his glance, and grinned at the disappointed expression that came over Figgy's speaking countenance.

"She's gone in!" he chuckled.

"What?"

"We had quite a pleasant chat," said Baggy patronisingly. "My dear fellow, it's simply useless for you to butt in—you're left quite out in the cold!"

Figgins began to glare.

"I wondered why she went in so suddenly," grinned Trimble. "I dare say she saw you coming. That would be it, of course. My dear man, you don't know how to talk to girls."

Figgins seemed to choke.

"I dare say you've never given a girl the glad eye in your life," said Baggy disdainfully.

"Never!" said Figgins. "You fat scoundrel——"

"Eh?"

"You unhealthy worm!" gasped Figgins. "I wish you were something else than a fat, slacking, funky rabbit, and I'd make you put up your hands and give you the licking of your life!"

"Look here, you know——"

"As it is," went on Figgy, "I'll jolly well kick you!"

"Look here, you New House cad—— Yaroooooh!" roared Baggy, as Figgins suited the action to the word.

Baggy Trimble spun away, with Figgins' hefty boot behind him.

"Now come back and have another!" hooted Figgins.

"Whoooop!"

Baggy did not come back for another. One was more than enough! He fled for the School House at top speed.

George Figgins, with an angry grunt, leaned on the gate, watching the garden. He had strolled along in the hope of seeing Cousin Ethel, and exchanging a few words with his girl chum; and, but for the interposition of Baggy Trimble, he would have been successful. But Ethel had gone in, and Figgins waited at the gate a quarter of an hour in vain.

George Figgins shoved his hands deep into his pockets, and tramped away to the New House.

CHAPTER 4.

Tea with Figgins & Co!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW strolled gracefully across the St. Jim's quad, with his hands in his pockets, and a cheery, amiable smile on his face. He looked like a fellow at peace with himself and with all the world; and, as a matter of fact, Cardew was in a very pleasant and cheerful humour. It amused his peculiar nature to "draw" anyone. Tom Merry & Co. were set on an interview with him; and so he found entertainment in irritating and baffling them. He hardly knew what their reason was, only he guessed that it was hostile; it was dawning on his mind that there was something more serious on hand than the question of a smoke in the study. He did not know what it was, and he did not care; seven irritated fellows were going to Study No. 9 to seek him, and it entertained him to clear off before they arrived and leave them fuming.

Tom Merry & Co., certainly, were fellows whom it was not quite safe to treat in this off-hand, cavalier manner. But Cardew, whatever his faults, had unlimited nerve. He would have bearded the lion in his den, the Douglas in his hall, without turning a hair. The more the seven were exasperated, the more entertainment he derived from the situation, and he did not give a single careless thought to the consequences.

He walked into the New House as if it belonged to him, and two or three New House juniors gave him looks. Redfern and Owen were considering whether to collar the cheeky-looking School House man and bump him down the steps, when Cardew came up to them with a pleasant smile and nod.

"Figgins at home?" he asked.

Redfern eyed him.

"You've looked in to see Figgy?"

"Exactly."

"Well, he came in a few minutes ago. You can pass," said Redfern, giving up the idea of bumping Cardew, as

he had apparently called to pay a friendly visit to a New House man.

Cardew nodded coolly, and went up the stairs. He sauntered into the Fourth Form quarters, and knocked at George Figgins' door.

"Hallo! Come in!" called out Figgy's voice.

Cardew walked in.

There was tea on the table in Figgy's study—a rather late tea. Figgy had kept his comrades waiting for the meal—Kerr waiting with his usual cheery patience, Fatty Wynn taking a succession of ample nibbles while he waited.

Now the three had sat down to a cheery meal together, which was interrupted by the arrival of the School House fellow.

"Hallo! Anything wanted?" asked Kerr, rather surprised to see Cardew there. Excepting in the Form-room, the New House trio saw little of the dandy of the Fourth, as a rule, and certainly they could not be called friends of his.

"You've hit it," answered Cardew.

"Well, what is it?" asked Kerr.

"Tea!"

"Eh?"

Cardew lounged into the study and stood looking at the three, with a pleasant smile on his face.

"Owin' to circumstances over which I have no control, dear men, I've had barely a mouthful of tea," he said. "Knowin' all about the celebrated hospitality of the New House, I've butted in here to take a snack, if you'll let me sponge on you."

Figgins & Co. looked at him. Like many other St. Jim's fellows, they never quite knew how to take Cardew. Certainly the dandy of the Fourth, the grandson of Lord Reckness, generally rolling in money, was not the sort of fellow to "sponge" for a tea like Baggy Trimble.

"I suppose that's gammon!" said Figgins, after a pause. "But if you've really come in to tea, you're welcome!"

Fatty Wynn nodded cheerily. There was an ample spread on the table, in spite of the liberal nibbles Wynn had allowed himself while waiting for Figgins to come in. Next to enjoying a feed himself, Fatty Wynn liked to see other fellows enjoying one.

"Take a pew, old man," he said. "I don't remember that you've ever tea'd with us before."

"It's never too late to mend, is it?" said Cardew. "To be quite frank, tea isn't the only reason I've dropped in."

"I thought not," said Kerr rather dryly. "But sit down all the same and join us."

"Thanks, old bean."

Cardew pulled a box to the table; there were only three chairs, all of them occupied; and Fourth Form fellows did not indulge in much ceremony. Cardew sat on the box, and Fatty Wynn helped him generously to fish and chips—fish and chips that had been cooked over the study fire by Fatty's own skilful hands, and were, as Figgy told him, a "dream."

"This is awfully decent of you chaps," said Cardew. "Lucky for little me that you're teain' rather late. I wanted to offer my congratters, Figgins, on the rippin' innings you put up yesterday in the House match. It was no end of a game."

"Did you see the match?" asked Figgy.

"Some of it—especially your toppin' innings at the finish. Didn't you hear me yellin'?"

"No."

"I was wildly enthusiastic," said Cardew gravely. "Some men only cheer their own House. But cricket is cricket, isn't it? You beat my House. But what's the odds? It was ripping cricket!"

Figgins smiled quite genially on Cardew. This was the proper spirit of a sportsman, in Figgy's honest opinion. Fatty Wynn nodded with a smile. Kerr did not smile. To the Scottish junior, it was plain enough that Cardew was merely indulging in his usual game of leg-pulling.

"You've got a thumpin' good cook in this house," said Cardew. "We don't get tuck like this over the way. But how do you get the House cook to put up a study spread for you?"

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"I turned out this little lot over the study fire," he said.

"Oh, you're pullin' my leg!" said Cardew. "No fellow could turn out grub like this over a study fire. It's a giddy dream!"

David Llewellyn Wynn beamed.

"Honest Injun!" he said.

"Well, by gad! I wish you'd change your House, old man, and come an' live in my study!" said Cardew.

Wynn chuckled. If Mr. Lathom praised his construe in the Form-room, if fellows cheered his bowling, it did not unduly excite him. But when he had turned out something artistic in the line of cookery, he liked to hear his efforts properly appreciated. Both Figgins and Fatty Wynn, by

this time, considered Cardew a much more agreeable fellow than they had ever supposed him to be.

Kerr's face was growing grimmer, however.

He was well aware that Cardew did not care twopence about Figgy's wonderful innings in the House match of the day before, and that, if he had seen it at all, he had seen it only by chance. He was aware that Cardew knew perfectly well that Fatty Wynn had turned out the fish and chips over the study fire. And he more than suspected that the dandy of the School House was laughing in his sleeve.

"By the way, I'm glad of a chance of speakin' to you, Kerr," went on Cardew affably.

"Are you?" said Kerr dryly.

"I've been havin' an argument with a fellow about Burns," explained Cardew.

Kerr's face relaxed.

"I didn't know you were interested in Burns," he said.

"The fact is, I read a lot of poetry," said Cardew. "You wouldn't guess it, I dare say, but I'm rather keen on it. I don't mean namby-pamby stuff—I can't stand Swinburne at any price, f'rinstance. I mean the genuine goods—like Bobby Burns. Now, take Burns' lines to a giddy field mouse——"

"Oh! You've read that?" said Kerr in surprise.

"Is there anybody who hasn't?" asked Cardew, raising his eyebrows. "Sorry for him if there is. Now, takin' the line 'The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley.' Jolly good line, you know. Now, I admit I'm not well up in the Scottish dialect. Chap I was arguin' with said it was 'oft.' I said that in Burns it is 'aft'—Scottish style. Was I right?"

"Quite right," said Kerr.

"I haven't a copy of the thing," said Cardew, "but I shouldn't wonder if you had, Kerr——"

"Yes, rather!"

"I wonder if you'd lend it to me to go through again. Some time when you don't want it, you know."

"I'd be jolly pleased," said Kerr amicably.

And then, as his keen eye caught a sudden glimmer in Cardew's eyes, he stiffened up, and his face grew grimmer. It dawned upon his mind that Cardew was pulling his leg in his turn.

The Scottish junior rose from the table. Civility to a guest prevented him from speaking what was in his mind, but he had had enough of Cardew's conversation.

"Hallo! Not finished yet?" asked Fatty Wynn in surprise.

"Yes, thanks, old man."

There was a tramp of feet in the passage. A knock came at the door, and it opened. Tom Merry looked in, and behind him were Manners and Lowther, Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy.

Cardew glanced round.

"Oh, gad! Run down!" he said. "What a life!"

CHAPTER 5.

A Surprise for Cardew!

TOM MERRY & CO. came into the study.

The seven juniors, whom Cardew had successfully dodged all day, had run him down at last.

Cardew rose from the table and lounged across to the fire-place. There he leaned idly and gracefully on the chimney-piece, with an amused smile on his face. Figgins & Co. looked astonished.

"Hallo, it's raining School House men!" said Figgins with a laugh. "You're too late for tea, old sons."

"We've come for Cardew," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, here he is if you want him," said Figgins, puzzled. "Cardew's tea-ing with us for once."

"I've finished, and I'm quite at your service, gentlemen," said Cardew airily. "I really thought I should be able to keep up this game of hide-and-seek till dorm. But you've got me."

"Have you been dodging these fellows?" asked Kerr.

"Dear man, with the perspicacity natural to a North British mind, you have guessed it in once," said Cardew.

"But what's the game?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"It's a game of hide-and-seek, as played in the nursery of our early youth," explained Cardew. "These men are seekin', and I am hidin'. They started the game, and I'm keepin' the ball rollin'. What's the odds? One game is as good as another."

"Well, you can't keep it up any longer, anyhow," said Blake.

"I admit a fair catch!" said Cardew with a nod. "The game is yours, gentlemen. If you're tired of hide-and-seek, shall we play marbles?"

"What?"

"Or hop-scotch?" asked Cardew gravely. "Or we might

all sit round in Figgy's study, if Figgy doesn't mind, an' play hunt-the-slipper. Anybody got a slipper?"

Tom Merry fixed his eyes upon him.

"I don't know what you're driving at, Cardew," he said, "but this sort of talk won't do any good."

"My dear man, I'm drivin' at suggestin' a new nursery game, as you men seem keen on nursery games. You've been playin' hide-and-seek all day—I suggest a change. Marbles, hop-scotch, hunt-the-slipper—I'm game for anything. Musical chairs," went on Cardew seriously, "would be out of the question for so many children—there are only three chairs and a box, even if Figgins would agree to musical chairs in his study. So far as the music goes, of course, Herries could fetch in his cornet."

"You cheeky wottah——"

"You there, Gussy? How is your nose gettin' on?" asked Cardew. "I wouldn't presume to offer advice to a fellow of tact and judgment like yourself; but if I did, I should recommend him to keep his boko out of the way of a punch-ball."

"Bai Jove! I——"

"Sorry to butt into your study like this, Figgins," said Tom Merry, "but we want Cardew. He's been dodging us all day, and his latest wheeze was to come over to this House. So we followed on."

"We'll see you back to the School House, Cardew," said Lowther.

Cardew shook his head.

"Not at all," he answered. "I'm enjoyin' myself here, and gettin' on fine with these New House men. In fact, I've been thinkin' of turnin' down my House, and askin' my grandfather to change me over to the New House—I'd do it like a shot, if Figgins would agree to take me into his study."

"Oh, my hat!" said Figgins.

"I'm rather fed up with the School House at present. Look what awful blighters we have in our House!" said Cardew. "I don't want to be personal, of course—but seven faces like yours in one House—isn't that rather like what some giddy novelist calls the Thing-too-Much?"

"Bai Jove!"

Figgins & Co. grinned.

"Are you coming back to the House, Cardew?" asked Blake.

"Thanks, no!"

"Then we'll jolly well take you by the neck," said Herries hotly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You forget," said Cardew gently, "that at the present moment I am a guest in this study, and my friends here are bound to stand by a guest. I am sure I can rely upon them to play the game."

"We'll mop up these New House bounders fast enough, if it comes to that!" snapped Herries.

"Will you, by Jove?" said Figgins, with a warlike look.

"Yes, rather! We'll——"

"You cheeky School House smug! We'll jolly well see. We——"

"Order!" rapped out Tom Merry. "Shut up, Herries, old man—draw it mild, Figgy! We haven't come here for a House row, and we're not going to let Cardew start one, though I've no doubt it would amuse him to laugh at us all round."

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"Just what I was going to remark," said Kerr dryly. "Keep the giddy peace, my infants."

"All the same, Cardew's a guest," said Fatty Wynn doubtfully. "We can't let these School House men handle him in our study."

Cardew laughed.

"Why worry, dear men?" he asked. "You've cornered me at last, and I'm bound to hear you talk. It's my sad fate to be bored—well, go ahead and bore me. Anyhow, I suppose you don't want to fix up a scrap for this evenin', at such a late hour? Make any jolly old arrangements you like, and I'll play up to-morrow. If Gussy desires an additional ornament to his boko, I'll do my best—if not, make it Blake, or Herries, or Dig—or all the lot one after another. I'm quite indifferent."

"That's all right," said Figgins. "If you're looking for Cardew to fix up a scrap, no need to walk him off if he doesn't want to go. You can fix it up here."

"We're not," said Tom.

St Jims Jingles!

No. 35—PATRICK REILLY, OF THE FOURTH

THIS junior from the Emerald Isle
Is full of mirth and merriment;
His antics always raise a smile—
He's eager to experiment
In wondrous wheezes, lively larks,
And humour ripe and rollicking;
And there are very few gay sparks
So frisky and so frolicking.

He "digs" in Study Number Five,
The home of gay hilarity
And keeps that snug retreat alive
With jovial jocularity.
Hammond and Julian both declare
Life never lacks variety,
So long as they enjoy and share
The genial Pat's society.

Though not exactly famed in sport,
There's nothing wrong with Patrick;
His bowling's of the useful sort—
He once performed the "hat-trick."
At fisticuffs he's fairly smart,
Though not a record-breaker;
He takes reverses with good heart—
He's neither funk nor quaker.

"PAT."

He bids defiance to the Fates,
His smile is always sunny;
The Irish "bulls" he perpetrates
Are really very funny.
They never fail to entertain
His schoolboy friends and neighbours,
Who laugh until they get a pain—
Tickled to death, be jabers!

The juniors love to gather round
And listen to his blarney,
But not a fellow will be found
When Patrick sings "Killarney."
His voice is neither low nor sweet,
Nor mellow nor melodious;
Musical folk, in full retreat,
Declare it's simply odious.

Had I the pen of good Tom Moore,
The premier Irish poet,
I could pay tributes by the score
To Patrick—faith, I know it!
His spirit's never crushed or cowed,
Though Fate may treat him vilely;
And Erin's Isle may well be proud
Of good old Patrick Reilly.

NEXT WEEK:—REGGIE MANNERS, of the Third.

"Not!" exclaimed Cardew.

"You know it's not that!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell angrily.

"My dear man, I know nothin' of the kind! I've been under the impression hitherto that you were huntin' me down for smokin' in Study No. 6 yesterday afternoon. That's why I thought the jolly old study was thirstin' for my gore. If it isn't that, what is it?"

"You thought it was only that?" exclaimed Tom Merry, staring at Cardew.

"Quite."

"Then why have you been dodging us all day, if you thought it was only that?" demanded Digby.

"Just for amusement, dear man—a little harmless and necessary amusement!" drawled Cardew. "It was hide and seek, and it amused me."

"And that was all?" asked Tom.

"In toto—quite all!" said Cardew. "Really, you're puzzlin' me, and almost beginnin' to interest me. Has anythin' dreadful happened in Study No. 6—I mean, more dreadful than smokin' a cigarette, if there is anythin' more dreadful in your opinion? Have you found a body under the table?"

"Look here, Cardew——"

"If so, I plead not guilty," said Cardew calmly. "I am fully aware that smokin' cigarettes is the first step on the downward path. But there are a lot more steps before you get to homicide—a whole staircase full. Really, I have not got to homicide. If there is a body hidden in Study No. 6, please I didn't do it!"

There was a chuckle from Figgins & Co.

"I think that's about enough gas!" said Blake abruptly. "Look here, Cardew, we've got to have this out! If you won't come over to your own House and hear it in private, you can hear it now, before these New House men. Take your choice."

"Go ahead!" said Cardew. "I'm not comin' back to the House till I choose—and I don't choose yet."

"You want it out before these chaps?" asked Tom Merry.

"Not at all—I want nothin' except to see your back, old bean. But if you're bound to go on talkin', I'll listen as politely as I can—only askin' you to cut it short, because you're borin' these New House men as well as me, and they've done nothin' to deserve it."

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"You were in Study No. 6 while all the fellows were out playing cricket yesterday afternoon?" he said.

"Guilty!"

"A ten-pound note was left on the table. We want to know what has become of it."

CHAPTER 6.

Accused!

CARDEW stared at Tom Merry.

The nonchalant, mocking look dropped from his face like a mask thrown aside. His face set, his eyes gleamed and he made a step towards the captain of the Shell, his hands clenching.

"You rotter!" he said, between his teeth. "Do you mean to say that money's missin' from Blake's study, and you're askin' me what's become of it?"

Tom Merry eyed him steadily. Cardew's anger was deep and fierce, but it was not likely to scare Tom Merry.

"I mean exactly that!" he said quietly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you're suspected, and you're clear of it, thank yourself," said Blake. "You butted into our study without permission, in our absence, and you've been dodging us all day when we wanted you to explain. The ten-pound note is missing, and was in the study when you went there."

"You fool!" said Cardew.

"Look here——"

"You burbling idiot! I've been dodgin' you all day to pull your leg, because I thought you were kickin' up a shindy about my smokin' a fag in your study!"

"Rot!" said Herries. "It looks to me as if you've been dodging because you were jolly well afraid!"

Cardew breathed hard.

He realised that the matter was serious now—terribly serious. He had begun to suspect that there was something more in it than a smoke in the study; but certainly he had not suspected this, or anything like it. It dawned upon him that his irritating course of conduct throughout the day had strengthened suspicion—if it had not given birth to suspicion in the first place.

But his coolness returned. The anger died out of his face, the glitter from his eyes. He smiled.

Figgins & Co. looked on in silence. The New House trio were already aware that D'Arcy's ten-pound note was lost, as they had been asked to keep an eye open for it on their side of the quadrangle. But all they knew so far was that the banknote was gone, and that possibly it had blown out of the study window. They had helped to search for it, without success, and they had been asked not to speak of the matter to others, lest a story should get about that there had been a theft.

Now it seemed that a theft was suspected.

There was deep suspicion in the looks of the School House seven, and the New House trio could not help sharing the feeling. This unexpected development threw a new light upon Cardew's conduct during the day. What might have been only a sort of inconsequent, careless malice, now seemed to take on another aspect. Why, after all, had Cardew been eluding the explanation the School House fellows required of him?

There was a short silence in the study. Cardew broke in, in cool, drawling tones.

"So there's a tenner missin', is there?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"I don't expect you to believe me, as you seem to have made up your minds that I've bagged it, but, really, this is the first I've heard of it," said Cardew. "Whose tenner was it?"

"D'Arcy's."

"Really, I needn't have asked," said Cardew, with a nod. "Only Gussy has tenners—and only Gussy is ass enough to leave them lyin' about."

"That's so," assented Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"D'Arcy had taken the tenner out of a letter from his father, and laid it on the table, and then he left the study suddenly," said Tom.

"That ass Blake was lungin' at me with a bat——"

"And the dear fellow left the tenner on the table while he was playin' through the House match?" asked Cardew.

"Weally, Cardew, I was not likely to think about it while I was playin' cwicket! I take cwicket wathah more sewiously than you do."

"No doubt!" assented Cardew. "So it comes to this—Gussy left a tenner on the table; I dropped into the study to smoke, saw the tenner there, and bagged it. Kind of thing I would do, of course."

"It's not the kind of thing you would do, so far as I know you, Cardew," said Tom quietly. "When we learned that you had been in the study, we simply wanted to ask you about it. The tenner was there, and you were there. And you deliberately kept out of our way all day."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My mistake!" said Cardew. "I perceive now, my young friends, that I have acted with giddy thoughtlessness; but then, you see, I did not know that Gussy had been strewin' banknotes about the study."

"There was only one banknote, Cardew—a tennah."

"Quite so, dear man; I did not know that Gussy had been strewin' one banknote about the study," said Cardew gently. "Let us speak by the card, as Shakespeare remarks, or equivocation will undo us. In these matters one cannot be too careful."

"You can be as funny as you like," said Blake. "But we're after that tenner, Cardew, and you've got to explain."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"What am I to explain? That I did not take the tenner? That it was not on the study table when I went in? Dear man, if I'd taken it, I should explain all that so fast it would make your head swim."

"Did you see the tenner?" asked Tom Merry. "I never suspected you, Cardew, till you began dodging out of the way to-day. I wanted to hear what you could tell us about it all."

"But now you do suspect me?" asked Cardew.

Tom paused a moment.

"Well, I've got an open mind," he said. "It seems almost impossible that a fellow like you would come down to stealing."

"Thanks!"

"If suspicion's on you, you've brought it on yourself by playing the fool," said Tom. "You ought never to have gone into Blake's study, and you ought not to have kept out of our way all day when you knew we wanted to speak to you. You've asked for it if you've got it. Anyhow, I suppose you can tell us whether you saw the banknote there?"

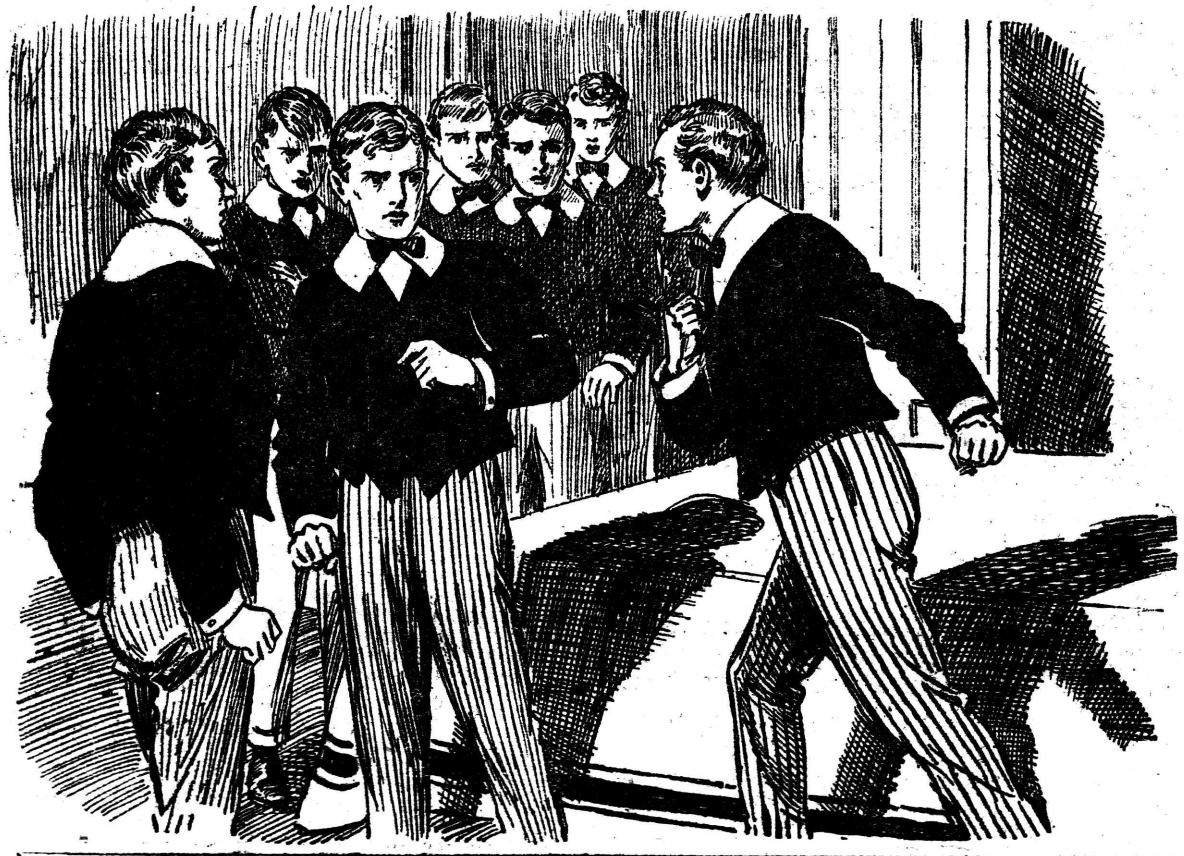
"I did not see it."

"D'Arcy left it on the table beside his father's letter."

"I believe I noticed a letter lyin' there; but, of course, did not notice it specially," said Cardew carelessly. "If there was a banknote I did not see it. May I make a suggestion—not as a prisoner at the bar, but as the only fellow here with any common-sense?"

"Well?"

"When I went into the study the door and window were wide open, and the passage window was open, too. There



"A ten-pound note was left on the table in Study No. 6, while all the fellows were out playing cricket yesterday afternoon," said Tom Merry. "We want to know what has become of it." Cardew stared at Tom Merry. The nonchalant, mocking look dropped from his face like a mask thrown aside. His face set, his eyes gleamed, and he made a step towards the captain of the Shell, his hands clenching. (*See Chapter* 6.)

was a fairly hefty draught blowin' through the study. A banknote doesn't weigh much more than a feather. Mightn't it have blown away?"

"We've thought of that."

"What a brain!" said Cardew. "I never admired you so much, Thomas. You really thought of that?"

"A dozen fellows have searched for the banknote, and it can't be found. It stands to reason it would have been seen before this blowing about the quad," said Tom.

"Yes, it seems likely."

"The banknote was taken from the study," said Blake. "We don't want any airy theories about it. Gussy left it on the table, and somebody took it away. We want to know who."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cardew laughed.

"But if the study was left empty anybody might have happened in," he said. "I don't want to brag. But doesn't my character, faulty as it is, stand a little higher than some others in the School House? Why jump on me for a beginnin'?"

"We've thought of Trimble, if you mean that," said Tom. "Trimble might have gone into the study to raid the cupboard and seen the banknote—and goodness knows what a fool like Trimble might have done! But we've proved that he never went into the study before you."

"A giddy Sherlock Holmes!" said Cardew admiringly. "May I ask how you worked it out, Mr. Holmes?"

"Hammond of the Fourth had lines yesterday afternoon, and was in his study, with the door open, till after three," said Tom. "From him we know that nobody went into Study No. 6 during that time. About three Trimble started for the station, as he had the cheek to go and meet Cousin Ethel there, so he's out of it. He was at the station before half-past, so a fat, crawling fellow like Trimble couldn't have started much later than three."

"Marvellous!" said Cardew. "Excuse my speakin' in the style of Dr. Watson, but you remind me so much of Mr. Sherlock Holmes——"

"When Cousin Ethel came she called in at Study No. 6 to see D'Arcy, not knowing that he was still at cricket. She stayed till Gussy came in, so it was nobody after you who pinched the banknote. Of course, it's possible that somebody butted into the study between the time Hammond went down with his lines to Mr. Lathom and the time you got there with your filthy cigarettes. That's what we've wanted to ask you all day. Did you see anybody hanging about the study when you went there?"

"No."

"It was well after three, as Hammond never saw you go in. What time was it you went there?"

Cardew reflected.

"Can't remember. I'd been watching the cricket till I got fed-up. But it was between three and four."

"And you saw nobody about?"

"Nobody! To the best of my knowledge the passage was deserted," said Cardew. "I never saw a soul nor heard a sound."

"Bai Jove! That is wathah evidence against you, Cardew!"

"I know that, old bean!"

"Weally, Cardew——"

"So it comes down to this," said Blake, with a look of deep distrust at the dandy of the Fourth. "If you didn't have the banknote it was taken by somebody who dodged in in the short interval between the time Hammond went down and the time you got there."

"Precisely!"

"Well, that wants some swallowing!" said Blake gruffly. "We know you were there, and we don't know that anybody else was there."

Cardew laughed lightly.

"Do you know what you're sayin'?" he asked.

"I think I do. What do you mean?" growled Blake, uneasy, in spite of himself, at the peculiar, whimsical look on Cardew's face.

"I left Miss Cleveland in possession of the study."

"What about that?"

"Lots! You're not suspectin' Cousin Ethel of stealin' the banknote, I presume?"

"Cousin Ethel!" repeated Blake dazedly.

"Bai Jove! You fwightful wottah——"

"You villain!" roared Figgins.

Cardew held up his hand.

"I'm not suggestin' it, dear men; don't jump to idiotic conclusions—I wouldn't dream of suggestin' such a thing!"

"You'd better not!" growled Figgins savagely. "Why, I'd——"

"Never mind what you'd do, dear man—somethin' drastic, I've no doubt. I'm not suggestin' it for the infinitesimal fraction of a second. Blake's suggested it."

"I!" yelled Blake.

"You!" said Cardew urbanely. "You say that I am under suspicion because I was there, and the banknote was there. I am pointin' out that Cousin Ethel was there, and the banknote was there. I agree with all the gentlemen present that anyone who suggested that Miss Cleveland had bagged it would be a rotter, a villain, and all sorts of things. I beg to point out, however, that there is exactly as much presumptive evidence against Miss Cleveland as against me. I was there—likewise the banknote. Miss Cleveland was there—likewise the banknote. Do I make myself clear to your limited intellects?"

Blake drew a deep breath.

"There's one point you forget," he said. "If you slipped it into your pocket before Cousin Ethel came in——"

"But what if another person dodged into the study and slipped it into his pocket before I came in? Just as likely, dear man. The position is precisely the same."

There was a long silence.

Every eye was fixed upon Cardew, and fixed on him inimically. Logically, his position was sound enough. There was no more evidence against him than against Cousin Ethel—and that was unthinkable. But logic did not appeal much to the resentful juniors. The mention of Ethel's name in such a connection roused their deepest anger.

"Well," said Cardew at last lightly, "what's the verdict, gentlemen?"

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"I feel like smashing you for mentioning Miss Cleveland's name at all!" he said.

"Only as an illustration, dear man!" protested Cardew.

"You had no wight to mention it at all," said Arthur Augustus fiercely. "It was the act of a cad!"

"It looks to me," said Blake savagely, "as if Cardew means that if we inquire after the banknote it will lead to a lot of unpleasant discussion, with Cousin Ethel's name dragged into it."

"Bai Jove!"

Cardew flushed crimson. Certainly he had not meant anything of the kind; his ironical and malicious humour had led him on, with no thought of what others might think of his words, as usual.

"That's a rotten lie!" he said, between his teeth. "I mentioned Miss Cleveland's name to show you that you were makin' fools of yourselves. If there is an inquiry about D'Arcy's silly banknote I shall not mention her name, and you know I wouldn't." His eyes gleamed. "I'm fed-up with this! You accuse me of stealin'. I refuse to say another word. If you believe what you say, go to Mr. Railton and demand an inquiry. I refuse to say another word till I'm called before my Housemaster."

And with that Ralph Reckness Cardew swung out of the study.

He left a grim silence behind him—and a fixed belief in his guilt. Every face was dark—George Figgins' was almost haggard. Figgy was the first to speak.

"For mercy's sake, you fellows," he said haltingly—"for mercy's sake, not a word about this! You can't have Cardew up for it without Ethel's name being dragged into it. What would she think? What would she feel?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Is it possible that he is rotter enough to have counted on that?" he muttered.

"It looks like it," said Blake. "Anyhow, we can't say a word in public without the risk of dragging Ethel's name into it. We can't do that."

"Wathah not."

"It means dropping the whole thing and letting the banknote go," said Manners.

"Let it!" said Arthur Augustus at once. "What does a wotten banknote mattah, compared with gettin' my cousin's name talked up and down the school while she is on a visit to St. Jim's?"

"And that rotter will keep it, then!" said Herries.

"If he's got it——"

"Doesn't it look as if he's got it?"

"Yaas, wathah! But we can't say anythin'. I beg of all you fellows not to utter a word."

And that was agreed upon unanimously, and Tom Merry & Co. left Figgins' study and walked back to their own House.

In the hall of the School House they passed Cardew—lounging there and chatting with Levison and Clive as if he had not a single trouble in the world on his shoulders. The juniors passed him as if without recognition.

CHAPTER 7.

Cut!

"FRIDAY," said Cardew, "is an unlucky day."

It was the following day, and the Fourth had come out in morning break. Cardew seemed to be in his usual careless humour, but Levison and Clive looked a little troubled. They felt, as it were, that trouble was in the air—as yet they did not exactly know what. From the looks of some fellows in the Fourth, and others in the Shell, they had no doubt of it; and the same thought was in both their minds—what had Cardew done?

Friendship generally implies faith, and Levison and Clive were certainly Cardew's friends. But in some matters, at least, he was not a fellow to inspire faith. Gladly enough they would have sided with their chum against his adversaries, but they were haunted by the knowledge that almost without doubt he was in the wrong.

Neither junior answered Cardew's remark, and he smiled in his airy way and repeated it.

"Wasn't it said of old that Friday is an unlucky day, you chaps?"

"What on earth do you mean?" asked Clive.

"To-day is Friday," explained Cardew, "and I'm unlucky. I'm cut."

"Cut?" repeated Levison.

"Look!" answered Cardew.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was walking elegantly along the gravel path. He did not seem to see the three juniors there. Cardew made a movement into his way, and smiled and nodded with great affability. That left D'Arcy no chance but to see that he was there.

To the amazement of Levison and Clive, the swell of St. Jim's stared Cardew icily in the face, with lofty contempt, and moved round him and walked on scornfully.

"That's my luck!" sighed Cardew. "Gussy has cut me dead! Didn't I tell you Friday was an unlucky day?"

"What does it mean?"

"Mean?" said Cardew. "Do Gussy's actions ever mean anythin'?"

"It's not because you bumped the punch-ball on his nose last evening. D'Arcy wouldn't cut you in quad for that."

"There's something else," said Clive.

"Think so?" smiled Cardew. "Well, come and take a little walk under the elms—I can see Blake & Co. there, and you know what nice chaps they are."

"You were going to row with them yesterday."

"I'm not goin to row with them to-day. I'm goin' to brave the horrors of the marble eye."

Study No. 9 walked under the elms, and came on Blake and Herries and Digby there. Blake & Co. nodded rather shortly to Levison and Clive. They very pointedly did not take the slightest notice of Cardew.

"Haven't you a smile for me?" asked Cardew gently. "Just a teeny weeny grin?"

"Don't talk to us!" growled Blake.

"Why not, dear man? There was a man who wasted his sweetness on the desert air, and another who cast pearls before porkers. Why, then, shouldn't I follow their example?"

"Oh, clear off!" snapped Blake.

"You jolly well know we bar you!" exclaimed Herries hotly. "I wonder you've the cheek to speak to decent fellows!"

"But I'm not; I'm speakin' to you chaps!" said Cardew amicably.

"You'd better hook it!" said Digby disdainfully. "We don't want any of your sneering piffle, I can tell you! Come on, you fellows! Let's get away from him! He makes me sick!"

"Same here," said Blake.

The three juniors walked away, turning their backs on Cardew, and joined Arthur Augustus in the distance. Levison and Clive stared hard at Cardew. He smiled quite unperturbed.

"Black Friday, what!" he said. "All Study No. 6 have turned me down and despise me! Let's go and seek comfort from the Shell."

"Look here, Cardew——"

"Oh, come on! I see the beneficent countenance in the distance. Let us greet Thomas."

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell were standing in a little group, talking in low tones, when Cardew came up with his puzzled friends.

"Top of the mornin', Thomas!" said Cardew.

Tom Merry's blue eyes blazed with scorn as he looked at Cardew.

"Keep your distance, and don't speak to me!" he exclaimed.

"Turned down again!" sighed Cardew. "Do you feel the same, Lowther?"

"Yes, only a little more so," said Lowther.

"Won't you speak to me—not even if I offer to listen to your latest jest, and pretend not to know that you got it from 'Answers'?"

Monty Lowther reddened, but did not answer.

"And you, Manners——"

"Leave me alone!" snapped Manners.

"Won't you ever show me your latest photographs, dear man, and tell me all about your camera? I'll put it on that I'm interested."

Manners' face became as pink as Lowther's. The Terrible Three swung round and walked away.

"Floored again!" said Cardew, with a sigh. "What a mornin' we're havin', old beans!"

"What does it mean?" exclaimed Levison, in dismay. "What has Tom Merry got up against you, Cardew?"

"I wonder!" said Cardew. "I seem to be out of luck in the School House. Let's try the New House. This way."

Cardew led his perplexed comrades on towards the New House, where Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were to be seen. The three New House juniors met him as Blake & Co. had met him, and as the Terrible Three had met him. Kerr was coldly contemptuous, Fatty Wynn flushed and scornful, Figgins seemed to look on him as he might have looked on a serpent.

"Am I in your black books, dear men?" asked Cardew.

"Get out!" said Figgins thickly. "I don't want to hit you, Cardew—you're not fit for a decent fellow to touch! But get out of it!"

"I gather from that that you are displeased with me, old bean," said Cardew lightly.

"You rotter! Hook it!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Look here!" almost shouted Levison. "What's the row? What are the fellows turning Cardew down like this for?"

"Don't you know?" asked Kerr.

"No, I don't, and I want to know," said Levison hotly.

"Well, you ought to know him pretty well, as you're in his study," said Kerr, with a curl of the lip. "I should think you know him well enough by this time to turn him down. We do, and other fellows do."

"Poor little me!" sighed Cardew.

Figgins & Co. tramped away with that. They had no words to waste on a fellow whom they regarded as a thief, and as a thief who had had the baseness to shelter himself behind a girl's good name.

"That's the lot, I think," said Cardew thoughtfully. "Let's see—how many? Ten noble and high-thinkin' youths have turned me down with crushin' contempt. Hadn't you two chaps better follow their example? You've got their word for it that I'm the outside limit."

"Will you tell us what they mean by it?" asked Clive.

"They mean that I'm barred."

"But why?"

"Ah! The whyfulness is terrific, as that Indian chap at Greyfriars would say," smiled Cardew. "Better seek knowledge at the fountain-head—ask Tom Merry. Thomas is one of those johnnies born with a little hatchet in their mouths—he cannot tell a lie. I can, as you know—and sometimes do. Ask Thomas."

He strolled away by himself, whistling, and proceeded to find a little whimsical amusement in incessantly crossing the path of Arthur Augustus and his friends, as they walked in the quad. Every time he drew near them, Blake & Co. looked black, and D'Arcy assumed his most scornful and withering expression; and a good many fellows soon observed that something was going on.

Meanwhile Levison and Clive sought Tom Merry, and they found him as the Shell were going in for third lesson.

"Hold on a minute, Tom Merry," said Ernest Levison, in the Form-room passage. "I want to ask you something."

Tom Merry held on, rather reluctantly. He had no quarrel with Levison, whom he respected, and Clive, whom he liked a good deal. But he could foresee easily enough that they were bound to back up Cardew in a dispute, unless they were told the facts of the case, with proof. And it had been decided already that nobody was to be told the facts. Cousin Ethel's name was to be guarded, whatever happened.

"You've got something up against Cardew?" said Levison of the Fourth—"you and a lot of fellows. Cardew's our pal, as you know."

"I know," assented Tom.

"Well, what is it, then?"

"Nothing I can tell you, Levison," said the captain of the Shell. "We bar Cardew, and we think we've got good reason."

"Do you mean that he's sent to Coventry?"

"Not exactly; we bar him personally, that's all. Dash it all!" exclaimed Tom with a touch of irritation, "I suppose a fellow's not bound to speak to another fellow, if he doesn't choose?"

Levison's face hardened.

"No; but he can't speak to him one day and turn him down the next," he said. "That's a cad's game."

"Levison!"

"Well, explain yourself, then!" exclaimed Levison hotly. "You've got something against my friend. Give it a name."

Tom Merry was silent.

"It's not because he played the giddy ox, and smoked in Blake's study, I suppose? All this fuss isn't about that."

"Of course not," said Tom crossly.

(Continued on page 16.)

Figgins laid the bill on the cash desk, and unfolded the ten-pound note, which was folded in half when Ethel handed it to him. The young lady in the cash desk was about to reach out her hand for the banknote, when Figgins suddenly jerked it back. The young lady regarded him with mild surprise, but Figgins did not even see her. His eyes were fixed on the number of the banknote in his hand: 0002468. (*See Chapter* 10.)

EDITORIAL!

By Arthur Augustus D'Arcy (taken down from dictation by Monty Lowther).

MY DEAH WEADAHS,—It is with gweat pwide an' pleasuah that I now pwoceed to addwess you.

You have a new Editah this week—for one week only—an' I have no doubt that, on seein' my illustwious name at the top of this Editowial, you will considah yourselves in clovah. Yaas, wathah!

I do not mean to be at all dispawagin' to Tom Mewwy. He is not a bad Editah, but he lacks those pwiceless qualities of tact an' judgment which an Editah should possess, an' which I possess myself in a marked degwee.

Let me give you an illustwation of my editowial tact. Gwunday of the Shell bwought a stowy to me just now—a stowy that was uttahly widic, besides bein' wildly impwob. If I were addicted to speakin' in the vernaculah, I should descwibe Gwunday's stowy as bosh, tosh, an' baldah-dash! But I didn't tell Gwunday so. Aftah pewusin' the stowy, I surveyed him thwough my celebwated monocle, an' addwessed him thus:

"Gwunday, deah man, I am afwaid this yarn of yours is fah too supewiah for the 'St. Jim's News.' It would be ovah the heads of our weadahs. I suggest that you send it to the 'Highbwows' Gazette,' or some othah intellectual papah. They would simply jump at it, bai Jove!"

Gwunday was as pleased as Punch to think that his stowy had made such a pwofound impwession on me.

"Thanks awfully, Gussy!" he said. "I had a feeling all along that my story was too good for the 'St. Jim's News.' I'll send it along to the 'Highbrows' Gazette' right away!"

Now, Tom Mewwy would not have tweated a contwibutah so tactfully. He would have told Gwunday, without makin' any bones about it, that it was a wank bad stowy. There would have been a heated argument in the editowial sanctum, an' Gwunday would pwobably have gone out on his neck. I am wesolved that no such unpleasant scenes shall occur whilst I am occupyin' the editowial chair. A little tact will work wondahs, an' I twust I shall be good fwiends with all my contwibutahs, even when their contwibutions are wejected.

But you will be wondahin' what has happened to Tom Mewwy this week. The fact is, he has been workin' vewy hard this term at his multifawious duties, an' I considahed it only wight an' pwopah that he should take a west. So he is handin' ovah the editowial weins to me, an' this numbah of the "News" is bein' compiled in Studay Numbah Six in the Fourth Form passage.

It is wathah a pity that Tom Mewwy will not hand ovah the editahship to me permanently. I wequested him to, but he said that "One week of Gussy would be about as much as his readers could stand." How vewy wude! I shall have to considah the advisability of administahin' a feahful thwashin' to Tom Mewwy!—Evah yours, deah boys,

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

GOOD OLD GUSSY!

By Jack Blake

FEW fellows are faddy or fussy
Concerning the cut of their clothes;
But the stylish and elegant Gussy
Holds sway in a kingdom of hose.
His raiment is rare and resplendent,
His toppers are sights to behold;
When Gussy is in the ascendant,
Beau Brummel's left out in the cold!

His wardrobe is jolly extensive,
His trunks and portmanteaux are full;
He wears the most stylish, expensive,
And elegant clothes in the school.
He is smart and majestic on Sundays,
We bow when he swaggers in sight;
He is scarcely less kingly on Mondays,
His suits are a dream and delight!

His tailors in Bond Street are busy
Attending to Gussy's desires;
They work till their heads grow quite dizzy
And each weary cutter perspires.
They dote upon Arthur Augustus,
He proves quite a gold-mine to them;
They say, "He can faithfully trust us
To see to each seam and each hem!"

For Gussy is prompt in his payment
(Or, rather, Lord Eastwood is so);
The bills that pour in for new raiment
Would fill many paters with woe.
His lordship, however, is rolling
In riches, and promptly pays out;
A fact which is very consoling
To Arthur Augustus, no doubt!

Perhaps it will soon be the fashion
For the olden-time garb to appear;
And Gussy possesses a passion
To dress like a gay Cavalier.
There's nothing would please him so greatly
As swaggering, sword at his side,
Serene and majestic and stately,
With all a true nobleman's pride!

Extra-Special
"STONE AGE" SUPPLEMENT
next week.
DON'T MISS IT, CHUMS!

THINGS WE DID NOT KNOW.

Some amusing "howlers" gleaned from the exercise books of St. Jim's fags.

B.Sc. stands for Boy Scout.

A barmecide is a dangerous lunatic.

A blizzard is the inside of a fowl.

Conscription is what is written on a tombstone.

St. Jim's was founded in the ninth century by the Cistercian Order of Monkeys.

A brute is an imperfect beast; man is a perfect beast.

In India a man out of a cask may not marry a woman out of another cask.

An ibex is where you look in the back part of a book to see what is in the beginning.

A welsher is a native of Wales.

People who live in Paris are known as Parasites.

George I died of appleplexy through eating too many apples.

Bicycles were invented by a pedlar.

A pollytician is a kind of parrot.

Elephantiasis is a disease, caused by too much elephant-riding.

The last words of Guy Fawkes were: "I have this day lighted a candle in England which will never be put out."

Shakespeare was one of the minor poets. His best-known works are "The Merry Wives of Macbeth," "The Taming of Julius Cæsar," and "A Midsummer Night's Tempest."

BAGGY TRIMBLE'S BLUFF!

By Ernest Levison.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stood before his study window with a frown on his classic face.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and the St. Jim's junior eleven had assembled in the sunny quad with their bags. They had an "away" match with Greyfriars.

Gussy was not playing. He had sprained his ankle in a practice match the day before, and Dick Roylance was taking his place in the eleven. Naturally, Gussy was disappointed at not being able to turn out, but that was not why he was frowning.

The swell of St. Jim's had taken over the editorship of the "St. Jim's News" for one week only, and he was anxious to find somebody who would travel over to Greyfriars with the team and write a report of the game. He could not go himself—he had to nurse his damaged ankle—and he could not very well ask one of the St. Jim's players to report the match. The report would have to be written by a spectator, and Gussy could find nobody who was going over to Greyfriars with the team. Hence his frown.

"It's wotten!" he remarked to himself. "I badly wanted a weport of the match for the 'News,' but I suppose I shall have to let it slide."

"I say, Gussy——"

Arthur Augustus turned from the window, to find Baggy Trimble hovering in the doorway.

"I hear you're wanting somebody to go over to Greyfriars and report the match," said Baggy. "Well, here's a willing horse."

"You are willin' to weport the match, Twimble?"

"Certainly!"

Arthur Augustus looked a little dubious. Baggy Trimble was not the sort of fellow he would have chosen for the job. Baggy's knowledge of footer was not extensive, though it was certainly peculiar. He would have been more at home reporting a bunfight or an eating contest.

However, it was decent of Trimble to make the offer, and a report of the match by Trimble would be better than no report at all.

"Vewy well, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall be pleased if you will w'ite a bwief descwiption of the game. Don't let it wun to more than two hundwed words. You will have to huwwy. Tom Mewwy an' the othahs are just off."

Baggy Trimble lingered in the doorway.

"Ahem! I shall want my travelling expenses, Gussy," he said. "You can't expect me to pay my own fare when I'm going as a representative of the paper."

"Bai Jove. I hadn't thought of that. You are quite wight, deah boy. How much is the weturn fare to Gweyfwiahs?"

"I forget."

"Same heah. But ten shillin's will covah it. Take this ten-shillin' note, an' wun! You'll just manage to catch up the othahs if you put a spwint on."

Baggy Trimble grabbed greedily at the Treasury note and fled. Arthur Augustus watched him hurrying across the quad a moment later, and, feeling relieved at having found a football reporter, he settled down to write his Editorial.

Some hours elapsed before Gussy saw Baggy Trimble again.

It was seven o'clock in the evening when Baggy entered Study No. 6 with his report. It was a hastily scribbled report, and it was well within the specified word-limit. Arthur Augustus blinked at it in dismay. He was disappointed, not only at the perfunctory manner in which the report had been written, but at the astounding fact that St. Jim's had been badly beaten at Greyfriars by no less than ten goals to nil!

Trimble's account of the match was as follows:

"GREYFRIARS v. ST. JIM'S.

"At Greyfriars, on a muddy ground, these old rivals met in mortle combat. St. Jim's had a poor side. It was strengthened by the absence of D'Arcy, who was standing down with a sprained ankle; but it was sadly weakened by the absence of Trimble, whose pressence in the team would have made all the differense. Greyfriars attacked strongly all the way through, and goles were scored in rapid suxxession by WHARTON (3), NUGENT, VERNON-SMITH, and PENFOLD (2 each), and HURRY SING. St. Jim's were overplayed at all points, and were sent home with their tales between their legs like wipped currs. Perraps they will give Trimble a plaice in the team next time!"

That amazing report rendered Arthur Augustus speechless, and before he could recover from his astonishment Baggy Trimble had vanished.

With a stunned expression on his face, Arthur Augustus went down into the hall.

The St. Jim's footballers had just come in. They were looking very pleased with themselves. Certainly they did not seem like a team that had been thrashed to the tune of ten goals to nothing.

It occurred suddenly to Arthur Augustus that his noble leg had been pulled.

"How did the game go, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"Topping match!" said Tom. "We just scraped through by the odd goal in five."

"Bai Jove! Then that wottah Twimble has deceived me! He weported that Gweyfwiahs had licked you by ten to nil!"

Monty Lowther grinned

"That's what I told him, just to pull his leg," he said. "Trimble was waiting for us at the station when we got back, and he wanted to know all about the match, so I led him up the garden."

"Gweat Scott! But—but didn't Twimble go with you to Gweyfwiahs?"

"Eh? No jolly fear! He seems to have spent the best part of the afternoon at the bunshop in the village. Came into some money unexpectedly, he told us."

Arthur Augustus gave a yell as he realised the full extent of Baggy Trimble's deception. Then he hobbled away to his study, from which he emerged a moment later, armed with a cricket-stump. He was going to look for Trimble!

GUSSY IN PARLIAMENT!

A forecast of his maiden speech in the House of Lords. By R. R. Cardew.

THE new Lord Eastwood (formerly the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy) delivered his maiden speech last evening to his noble and illustrious contemporaries in the House of Lords.

His lordship started his speech at 9.30 p.m. He was still speaking when the last of the lords tottered drowsily from the House at 6 a.m.

"My deah boys"—this unconventional opening had a mixed reception of smiles and frowns—"it gives me a feelin' of extwaowdinawy pleasuah, bai Jove, to delivah my first Pahliamentawy owation.

"I am a gweat sticklah for fwee speech. Yeahs ago, when I was a boy at St. Jim's, this was denied me. Whenevah I attempted to addwess a meetin' I was howled down an' pelted with wotten eggs an' things. I am glad to notice that your lordships have not bwought any ammunition into the House for the purpose of checking my owation. (I fancied I saw a peashootah in Lord Tomnoddy's hand just now, but I must have been mistaken; it was pwobably his pipe!)

"Well, deah boys, I wish to dwaw your attention to the pwesent state of affaihs pwevailin' in this countwy. It does not meet with my appwoval, an' now that I am in Parliament I mean to bwing about some dwastic altewations.

"To begin with, the Unemployment Question distwesses me vewy gweatly. I gathah fwom the Ministah of Labah that there are no less than six men out of work at the pwesent time. They are in weceipt of five shillin's a week unemployment pay, which is imposin' a gweat burden on the Bwitish taxpayah. I am determined to put an end to unemployment in this countwy without delay, an' in ordah to do só I shall find work for each of these six men. I need an extwa butlah, an' a gardenah, an' a valet, an' a chauffeur, an' a footman, an' a man-of-all-work for my household, an' I pwopose to offah these situations to the six unemployed men." (Murmurs of applause.)

"Now, with wegard to the House of Commons, I have long been of the opinion that it is a 'wash-out.' The House of Lords is quite capable of diwectin' the destinies of the nation, an' we do not wequiah the services of a Pwime Ministah, or a Chancellor of the Exchequah, or a Home Secwetawy. I am quite capable of performin' all these duties off my own bat." (Cheers, and cries of "Swank!")

"I therefore pwopose, deah boys, that we scwap the House of Commons, and that the House of Lords wuns the countwy in futuah. Those in favah, kindly show your hands." (A solitary hand went up—that of Lord Ekko. The remainder of their lordships had fallen asleep during the new Member's discourse.)

"I say, deah boys, I considah it is most awfully wude of you to go to sleep whilst I am speakin'! It is fwightfully bad mannahs, bai Jove!"

Their lordships bestirred themselves, Lord Eastwood continued his chinwagging, and he was still going strong at 6 a.m., despite the fact that his noble and illustrious audience had melted away.

It is understood that Lord Eastwood will introduce a number of new Bills into the House to-morrow—including a Tailor's Bill!

"BARRED!"

(Continued from page 13.)

"There's something else?"

"Well, yes."

"What is it?"

No answer.

"You won't say what it is? You cut my pal in open quad, before a score of fellows, and you won't say what he's done, if he's done anything!" said Ernest Levison between his teeth.

"I can't!" Tom Merry coloured uncomfortably. "I can't say a word about it without risking dragging in another's name. I can tell you that much, and I can't tell you any more."

"And you think that's good enough?" exclaimed Sidney Clive.

"I think it will have to be good enough," said Tom tartly. "If you want to know more, ask Cardew."

"He's told us to ask you."

"Well, I tell you to ask him, then! Anyhow, I've got nothing to say, except this—you know me well enough to know that I wouldn't be down on a fellow for nothing."

With that, Tom Merry joined Manners and Lowther, and went into the Shell Form-room with them. Levison and Clive looked grim; but it was time for them to go to their own Form-room, and the matter had to drop.

In third lesson, in the Fourth Form-room, many more eyes were turned upon Ralph Reckness Cardew than upon Mr. Lathom. All the Fourth knew by this time that Cardew was "barred" by a crowd of the leading fellows in both Houses. Why, nobody knew—but they knew the fact, and it interested the Fourth Form deeply. Baggy Trimble was especially bursting with curiosity, burning to know what it was all about, and he whispered so many eager questions on all sides that he earned fifty lines from Mr. Lathom, and a rap from the pointer on his fat knuckles. But nobody could, or would, enlighten Baggy, and he remained devoured with unsatisfied curiosity.

Mr. Lathom became aware of some unusual suppressed excitement in his Form, though he was very far from guessing the cause.

The only fellow in the Fourth who seemed absolutely unconcerned was Ralph Reckness Cardew himself. Ten fellows—every one of them liked and respected in the Lower School of St. Jim's—openly barred Cardew, and it was obvious that they deemed, at least, that they had adequate cause. Where Tom Merry and Blake led in the School House, and Figgins & Co. in the New House, the majority of fellows were pretty certain to follow. It looked as if Cardew was booked for general avoidance. And he did not seem to care in the very least.

CHAPTER 8.

Cardew's Way!

TOM MERRY & CO. had taken their line, and they kept to it.

On Saturday all the Lower School knew that Cardew of the Fourth was "barred" by the junior captain and his friends.

Nobody need have noticed it specially, but for Cardew himself.

The dandy of the Fourth had never been specially intimate with Study No. 6. He had little to do with the Shell, scarcely anything to do with the New House fellows.

Had he accepted the situation quietly, without fuss, probably it would hardly have been noticed that Tom Merry & Co. had barred him, and were determined to have nothing to do with him, and not a word to say to him. Certainly, Tom and his friends desired nothing said on the matter; they were only too anxious to bury the whole episode in oblivion, for fear that Cousin Ethel's name might be dragged into unpleasant discussion. D'Arcy had given up hope of seeing his ten-pound note again. He had had a rather painful interview with his tailor, and Mr. Wiggs had agreed to wait for better times with his little bill. Only too gladly would the chums of St. Jim's have allowed the matter to drop at that.

It was through Cardew that the affair became the talk of the Lower School. He was barred—and he had drawn general attention to the fact at the very beginning—and he kept it in the limelight.

Once it was generally known, curiosity was naturally very keen on the subject.

What had Cardew done?

That he had done something, and something serious, few fellows doubted. Tom Merry & Co. were not the fellows to take such a line lightly, and without cause. And their silence was explained by the suspicion that Cardew had done something for which he might be "bunked" from the school, and their natural reluctance to bring such a fate upon him whatever he had done.

Levison and Clive were not satisfied with that. But they obtained no satisfaction from Cardew.

In reply to their pressing questions, he smiled and shook his head.

"Nothin'!" was his reply. "Absolutely nothin'. For once, dear friends of my youth, you see in me the spotless sheet of innocence, without a single crime on my jolly old conscience. Believe me or not, as you like, but there it is."

"They think at least that you have done something," said Levison.

"Granted."

"What is it?"

"Ask them," smiled Cardew.

"We're asking you!" growled Clive. "Why can't you tell us?"

"Mum as an oyster, dear men. I've got nothin' to tell you."

"If you've done nothing, why do they think you have done something?" persisted Levison.

"Ah! There you have me," sighed Cardew. "Wasn't it said of old, 'though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him.' That's the only reason I can think of."

"You mean that ten fellows—all decent and level-headed chaps—are fools?".

"Exactly!"

"That won't wash," said Clive abruptly.

Cardew's eyes glittered for a moment.

"Does that mean that you are joinin' the giddy enemy, Clivey? Don't let me stop you."

"It doesn't," said Clive. "I'm sure there's some mistake somewhere. But it's no good beating about the bush. I'm equally sure that you've laid yourself open to suspicion, and asked for this. You've brought it on yourself in some way."

"Right on the wicket!" assented Cardew. "I have asked for it, and I have got it. My only excuse is that I didn't know what I was askin' for, and it came as a surprise to me when I got it."

"And you won't explain?" asked Levison patiently.

Cardew's mocking face became serious for a moment.

"I can't!" he said. "Believe me or not, I can't! I can't let the matter be thrashed out without draggin' in——" He broke off.

"Dragging in what?"

"Nothin'!" said Cardew lightly.

"Some other fellow's name, do you mean?"

Cardew laughed.

"No—I'm not thinkin' of any other fellow."

"Then what are you thinking of?"

"Nothin'! Do I ever think of anythin'?" And Cardew strolled away, leaving his chums puzzled and exasperated.

It was Saturday morning, and classes were over for the day. There were a swarm of fellows in the quadrangle, and many eyes were turned on Cardew. He stopped to speak to Talbot of the Shell, who answered civilly enough.

"Thanks, old bean!" said Cardew.

"Eh! What are you thanking me for?" asked Talbot.

"The gift of a kind word, old scout. Don't you know that I am barred by Thomas and his high-minded friends, and that I am writhin' in woe and humility as a consequence? You're not in it, what?"

Talbot looked uncomfortable.

"No!" he said. "I know nothing about the matter. I can't imagine what you've done to put up so many backs all at once."

"My little way—pretty Fanny's way, you know," said Cardew negligently. "But can't you take Tom Merry's word for it that I'm a fearful sinner? You know the high-minded and gifted Thomas—you can rely upon him?"

"I know that Tom would not turn you down without a good reason," said Talbot quietly. "But he has said nothing to me, and I have not asked him. It seems odd to me that you should parade it in this way."

"Fellows take things differently," smiled Cardew. "I find the present situation amusin'. Dash it all, aren't we told to suffer fools gladly? Well, I'm sufferin' them gladly! What more do you want?"

Baggy Trimble hooked on to Cardew as he left Talbot of the Shell. Baggy wanted to know, and he was fairly feverish with unsatisfied curiosity by this time. He caught Cardew by the sleeve.

"I say, Cardew——" he almost gasped.

"Hallo! Aren't you barrin' me, too, Trimble?"

"No, old chap! Not at all!"

"Saturday's an unlucky day as well as Friday!" sighed Cardew. "Can't you bar me, too, Trimble? Won't you if I ask you as a special favour?"

There was a chuckle from half a dozen fellows who had gathered round. Every ear was keen to hear what Ralph Reckness Cardew had to say—if he had anything to say.

"Look here, old chap, tell us about it," urged Baggy. "I'm your friend, you know—really——"

"Don't say that, old fat bean. I shall begin to think that I ought to be barred. A fellow's judged by his friends, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Trimble. "What is Tom Merry down on you for? There's something."

Cardew looked very serious.

"You'll keep it dark if I tell you?" he asked.

"Yes!" breathed Trimble.

"Not a word to a soul?" asked Cardew, apparently oblivious of the fact that a dozen pairs of ears were eagerly drinking in every word.

"Not a syllable!" gasped Baggy Trimble, almost breathless with eagerness.

"Well, the trouble with Tom Merry is—sure you won't breathe a word?"

"Yes, yes!"

"The trouble is——" Cardew paused again, as if in doubt whether to make the communication after all.

"Yes—what?" gasped Baggy.

"He doesn't like the way I do my back hair!" said Cardew gravely.

"Wha-a-at?"

Cardew walked on, leaving Baggy Trimble staring blankly, and the other fellows laughing.

At dinner that day, Cardew had a cheery, smiling face.

He asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to pass him the salt—and received a stony glare along with the necessary article. He asked Blake to pass the pepper, merely to enjoy Blake's expression as he did so. He addressed one or two remarks to Herries and Digby, with a genial affability quite unaffected by their black looks in return.

He left the dining-room with Levison and Clive, and paused in the doorway to ask D'Arcy how his nose was getting on, and whether he had been doing any punch-ball exercises lately. Arthur Augustus passed him without replying, in wrathful disdain.

"Are you coming down to the cricket practice, Cardew?" asked Levison rather restlessly.

"No—the giddy exertion, and the marble eye, would be too much for my feeble constitution, taken together."

"You'd better come," said Clive. "Nobody wants to keep you away from the cricket, at any rate."

"If they did, dear man, I should come like a shot, bravin' the exertion an' the marble eye!" said Cardew, laughing. "As the matter stands, I'm not goin' to. You fellows go an' urge the flyin' ball, as the giddy poet says. I'll loaf around and show the fellows how frightfully cut up I feel at bein' barred by all the good men at St. Jim's."

Levison and Clive joined the cricketers, and Cardew, as he had stated, loafed about—but certainly he did not look cut up. If being "barred" by Tom Merry & Co. gave him any discomfort, he did not display the slightest outward sign of it.

CHAPTER 9.
Cardew Explains!

GEORGE FIGGINS, for once, was not to be seen on Little Side while the cricket practice was going on. Figgy, generally, was a "whale" on such matters, and very keen on coaching New House fags who were backward, and keeping New House men right up to the mark. And on this special afternoon Kildare, the captain of the school, had the practice in charge, and when Kildare was taking the juniors in hand it was always worth a fellow's while to turn up. Yet Figgy, keen cricketer and strenuous youth as he was, cut the cricket that afternoon without a second thought.

Kerr and Wynn, when they walked down to Little Side, did not even ask Figgy if he was coming. There was no need to ask—they knew he wasn't. And they bore cheerfully with their chum—Figgy was good enough at games to allow himself a little relaxation now and then. Had a match been on, no doubt Kerr and Wynn would have

dragged Figgy down to the wickets, had that drastic step been necessary. But they kindly allowed him to out practice if he liked—and on this occasion he liked.

While his comrades busied themselves with the leather and the willow, George Figgins was occupied in a way that was rather unusual for him, and resembled rather the manners and customs of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the School House.

Standing before a glass in the dormitory in the New House, Figgy was trying on necktie after necktie, discarding one after another with glum dissatisfaction.

Figgy's rugged face shone from recent ablutions—his hair had been carefully combed and brushed, though nobody would have guessed as much, to look at it. Figgy's hair was a little unruly—a circumstance that never troubled him as a rule. On this especial afternoon it worried him a little, and the set of his necktie worried him a lot. He wondered why he never could make a necktie look as D'Arcy or Cardew made it look—but he never could. His natural gifts did not lie in that direction. He surmised sadly that there was a knack in those things. No doubt there was, and Figgy was never likely to acquire it. If he asked a fellow how his tie looked, the fellow was very likely to reply that it looked as if Figgy had been trying to hang himself. Really, it was not so bad as that, but indubitably Figgy's tie never had the exquisite finish that some fellows' ties had.

All Figgy's ties, and all Fatty Wynn's, had been tried and thrown aside, and most of Kerr's. One of Kerr's, at last, was found to look well—that is, as well as Figgy could expect his tie to look. He slipped on his best jacket—which looked like D'Arcy's worst one at the very best. He did not even dare to glance at his trousers—he knew that so far as trousers went he never would be a well-dressed fellow.

Fellows had told Figgy that he had too many elbows and knees. He had, of course, only the usual number; but somehow they seemed rather more in evidence than most fellow's elbows and knees. Figgy was generally regardless of such things; but on this Saturday afternoon he seemed to be regarding all sorts of trifles that as a rule did not disturb his healthy equanimity. Really, he rather envied fellows like D'Arcy and Cardew, and wished that he could be a little more graceful. Figgy would have jumped into the deepest water to save his worst enemy—if he had had an enemy—but he would not have looked graceful while he was doing it.

When he had finished, at last, after bestowing a very unusual length of time upon his personal decoration, Figgy was not satisfied with the result.

As he went downstairs, a little red from his exertions, he wondered what Cousin Ethel could see in such a rugged, clumsy chap, whom his best friend would never have called handsome.

Evidently Ethel could see something, for Figgy was the one fellow at St. Jim's who had been given the rare privilege of accompanying Ethel that afternoon on a walk to Wayland.

He had the honour and distinction of calling at the Head's house for Miss Cleveland, and walking off in possession of the prize—a prize greatly envied by other fellows.

Gladly would Figgy have done Ethel more credit—in the ways of good looks and elegance of attire. He was quite unconscious of the fact that, though neither elegant nor graceful, he looked a strong, healthy, manly fellow, with a rugged face, it is true, but a face that had truth and loyalty written all over it, and was very pleasing to the eyes. Fellows he passed in the quad glanced at him, and nodded and smiled with friendly looks—the mere sight of "old Figgy" was enough to call up a friendly expression on most faces. "Kindest friend and noblest foe" was a description that applied to Figgy; though he was so good-natured that he found it difficult to be anybody's foe.

But his genial face darkened a little as he passed Cardew lounging under the elms, with his hands in his pockets, idle as usual.

Figgins had no intention of speaking to the barred junior—for which reason Cardew ranged up alongside the New House junior, with his most agreeable smile on his face.

"Anythin' happened?" he asked.

"No."

"But you're not at cricket?"

"No."

"Losin' a chance of exertin' yourself?" said Cardew in wonder.

Figgins quickened his pace.

Cardew was mocking and ironical as usual; and Figgy was one of the fellows who barred him, and was determined to have nothing whatever to do with him. But Figgy was on his way to see Cousin Ethel now, and that circumstance softened his heart to all the world.

Cardew accelerated a little, to keep pace with Figgins. He knew from Figgy's direction that he was going to the Head's house, and he, of course, guessed why. There was no danger of Figgy cutting up rusty on such an occasion, howsoever much Cardew irritated him; not that Cardew would have cared. Figgins, certainly, could have knocked him into a cocked hat in a combat; but Cardew was absolutely without fear in his composition, and utterly regardless of such considerations.

To get Figgy's rag out, when he was going to see Cousin Ethel, seemed rather amusing to Cardew.

"Found the tenner yet?" went on the dandy of the Fourth.

Figgins frowned.

"Leave me alone, will you, Cardew?" he asked. "You know I don't want to speak to you."

"Don't you?" asked Cardew, with an air of surprise.

"You know I don't!"

"But I'm such an entertainin' chap when I get goin'," argued Cardew. "Besides, look at my patience! I can listen to a chap talking rot for hours, without turnin' a hair. So you ought really to like talkin' to me."

Grunt from Figgins.

"Besides, I want to know about the tenner," said Cardew. "I'm accused of stealin' it, you know."

"I know that."

"That explains my interest in it," said Cardew. "You fellows ought really to let me know if it turns up."

Figgins paused, and looked at him.

"You've got it," he said abruptly.

"You really think so?" asked Cardew, without a sign of anger.

"Yes."

"Though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him," murmured Cardew, as if communing with himself.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Figgins.

"Hold on a minute," said Cardew, with a little more seriousness of manner. "I'm goin' to be serious for a moment, Figgins. I don't care a twopenny rap what Tom Merry thinks of me, or Manners, or Lowther—or any of the merry crowd in Study No. 6. Kerr can think what he jolly well likes, and Fatty Wynn can go and eat coke! But, for some reason or other, I hate to have you think such a thing of me."

Figgins stared at him.

"Why me especially?" he asked.

"Blessed if I quite know," said Cardew candidly. "Chiefly, I think, because you're such a transparent ass——"

"What?"

"I respect your opinion, dear man," said Cardew. "No, I'm not pullin' your leg—I mean it. Somehow or other, it gives me rather a twinge for you to believe such a rotten dirty thing of me. We're not friends, and never shall be—I can't say I like your company, any more than you like mine—but somehow it gives me a nasty twinge for you to think me such a filthy cad. Why, goodness knows."

"I suppose you're gammoning as usual," said Figgins uneasily.

"Honour bright, no. That's why I'm goin' to tell you what I don't condescend to tell any of the other fools," said Cardew calmly.

"The other what?"

"Fools!"

"Look here, Cardew——"

"I'm lookin'," said Cardew. "I'm goin' to tell you this—I've been accused of baggin' a banknote from D'Arcy's study. I should go straight to my Housemaster, an' drag the whole matter out into the daylight, but for one reason."

"If you're innocent, you can't have a reason."

"You can't guess it, then?"

"No," said Figgins.

"You're not bright," said Cardew. "Your jolliest old pal would never compliment you on your intellectual keenness, Figgins."

"Oh, chuck it!" said Figgins.

"You'd let yourself be cut into little pieces, sooner than have Miss Cleveland's name talked up and down the school, Figgins."

"What about that?" said Figgins gruffly.

"And you still can't guess my reason for not goin' to the Housemaster and demandin' an inquiry?"

Figgins looked at him.

"Because," said Cardew quietly—"because an inquiry means the very thing you'd hate to happen. It means that every person who was in or near the study when the note was taken, will be questioned by the Head—and all will be equally under suspicion until the banknote is found. It means that Miss Cleveland will be one of the bunch."

"Cardew!"

"Nobody, I think, would be rotter enough to breathe a word of suspicion against Miss Cleveland. That's unthinkable. But there is the position—a girl's name mixed up in

a scandal of a theft, and only the fact that she is a girl protectin' her from the same accusation that has been made against me. That's what an inquiry by the Housemaster means, Figgins, and that's why I haven't driven those fellows to repeat their accusation before Mr. Railton."

Figgins stared at Cardew. The dandy of the Fourth was strangely in earnest. Figgins had never seen him in such earnest before.

"Believe me or not as you like," said Cardew, with a return of his old light manner, "that's my reason. You can see how the matter stands as well as I can, if you choose to think. I can't throw the accusation back in the teeth of the fellows who made it without the risk or rather the certainty of draggin' a girl's name in the mud. I wouldn't say this to any other chap. I say it to you because you're the fellow to do exactly the same in my place. And you understand?"

Without waiting for a reply, Cardew swung round on his heel and walked away, leaving Figgins staring after him blankly. Figgins went on to the Head's house, deep in thought, wondering. Had Cardew spoken the truth? Was that light, sneering, fleering fellow really in earnest? Or was this some more of his leg-pulling? Figgins wondered.

Cardew wondered, too, as he walked away—wondered at his own earnestness, and laughed at himself. He had joined Figgins in the quad with the intention of ragging and tormenting him, and instead of that he had come under the spell of Figgy's frank, loyal nature, and had tried to clear himself in Figgins' eyes.

"Ass!" he said, as he strolled under the elms. "Ass! What the deuce does it matter to you that that clumsy frump thinks any more than any other fool? You've let yourself down, you ass! He will tell the other fools, and they'll think you're tryin' to sneak round into their good graces—great gad!"

He had gritted his teeth.

"But what's become of the tenner all the time? The number's known—0002468, that's the number. They've all been searchin' for a tenner with that number. Who's got it? Somebody's got it. It's a practical certainty that nobody went into the study before I did. And if the tenner was there, it was there when I left—when I left Ethel Cleveland there. But it's impossible—impossible——"

His face darkened.

"It's impossible—unthinkable! But it wouldn't seem unthinkable to a good many if it all came out. If I stand under suspicion, Ethel stands under the same exactly. It's horrible; but there it is. And what does Ethel matter to me that I should let fellows think me a thief, rather than risk draggin' her name in the mire? Nothin' at all—not a rap! If ever I were ass enough to give a thought to any girl at all, it would be Levison's sister. Not Ethel! And yet—yet——"

He shrugged his shoulders impatiently and walked on.

CHAPTER 10.
Found!

TOM MERRY & CO. were quite enjoying themselves that sunny afternoon on the cricket-ground. But probably no member of the Co. was quite so happy as George Figgins. Figgins, as he walked away from the Head's house with Cousin Ethel, had a face like unto the sun that beamed at noonday. He had quite forgotten the difficulties with his necktie—forgotten that his jacket never would look as if he were born in it as D'Arcy's jacket always looked. Such trifles vanished into nothingness in the presence of Cousin Ethel. If Ethel was satisfied with him, evidently there was nothing to be dissatisfied about. And Ethel's kind, smiling, serious face showed that she was happy that bright afternoon.

Mrs. Holmes glanced after them with a kind smile as they left. She liked Figgins. Figgy was exactly the kind of fellow she would have liked a daughter of her own to be friendly with, had she possessed a daughter of Ethel's age.

Figgins was walking on air as he piloted his precious charge down to the gates. Figgy's manner rather indicated that he supposed Ethel to be made of the most fragile china, liable to break at a careless touch. As a matter of fact, Ethel was quite a healthy and fit young lady, very pleasant to look upon, but decidedly not fragile. Still, she somehow liked Figgy all the better for his kind, protective air.

Ethel was going to do some shopping at Blankley's Stores in Wayland, but that was rather an excuse than a reason for a pleasant walk through the woods and tea at Blankley's. Still, the shopping was going to be done, and many fellows would have regarded such an excursion as a bore. Not so Figgy! Ethel would ask him his opinion about colours and shades, and Figgy would give his honest opinion, which was about as valuable on such matters as that of a walrus. His fixed opinion was that Ethel would look ripping in anything.

A walk through the woods in early summer was pleasant enough at any time. On this happy afternoon the woods were at their best—their very best. Figgy had never before seen such beauties in Wayland Woods. The sky was a little overcast, but never had the sun shone more brightly for Figgy. Probably he would have considered it a beautiful afternoon if it had poured with rain. Fortunately, it didn't.

(Continued overleaf.)

TUCK HAMPERS AND MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR WIT.

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

MANCHESTER BAGS THE TUCK.
CANNY MAC!

Sandy McTavish went to London, seeking some new ideas for his cinema in Aberdeen. At one of the cinemas in London, he noticed a big heading, stating that people of 99 years of age and over were admitted free. Back in Aberdeen he put in capital letters outside his cinema, "People of 99 years of age and over admitted free, providing they are accompanied by their parents!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Miriam Rosenthal, 10, Bury New Road, Strangeways, Manchester.

QUITE SIMPLE!

"Where is the manager's office?" asked the caller. "Follow the passage until you come to the sign 'No Admittance,'" replied the new office-boy. "Go upstairs till you see the sign reading 'Keep Out.' Follow the corridor till you see the sign 'Silence.' Then yell for him, sir!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Philip H. Owen, 10/153, Icknield Port Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

SOMETHING WRONG SOMEWHERE!

A young recruit fell into line with the sick parade squad. "Now, my lad, what's the matter with you?" snapped the medical officer, when his turn came to be examined. "Well, I don't know exactly," said the young recruit. "The corporal says I'm only half-baked, the sergeant-major says I want my head boiled, and the platoon officer says I'm exceedingly raw!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to William Penman, "Burnbrae," Bath Street, Kelty.

POOR CHEMIST!

A chemist was startled to receive the following note, scribbled in haste, a few days ago: "Dear Sir,—My baby has eaten all his father's plaster of parish; send an anecdote quick by the enclosed girl; also send a bottle of O Dick Alone as I am feeling a bit historical!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. A. Maxwell, 112, Upper Georges Street, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

THE BEST KIND!

Old Gentleman: "So you are looking for a square meal, eh?" Tramp: "No, sir; I'm looking for a round one." Old Gentleman: "I've never heard of such a thing. Pray what is a round meal?" Tramp: "One that hasn't any end to it, sir!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Crackles, 58, Northumberland Street, Derby.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

THE GEM LIBRARY.

No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

At Blankley's Stores there was much interesting matching of silk for jumpers. Figgins thought it remarkably clever of Ethel to be able to make a jumper that could actually be worn, just like a thing bought in a shop. He wondered what luck he would have if he tried to make a jacket, and felt considerably humbled by the comparison.

Figgins could hit a ball to the boundary for another fellow to fetch back when he had hit it there. Ethel couldn't have done that. But Ethel could make things. When it came to adding to the world's stock of useful goods, Figgy realised that boys were "not in it" with girls. If Ethel wanted a new jumper, she could buy the stuff and make one. If Figgy wanted a new jacket, his father had to find the money for a tailor. Quite useful and enlightening reflections passed through Figgy's honest mind as he stood at Blankley's counter with Ethel.

But Ethel did not make all her jumpers, for she sighted one on a stand which she pronounced to be a "dream"—and in which Figgy was certain on the spot that she would look ripping.

That jumper was purchased, and a bill was made out which came to the sum total of two pounds three shillings and sixpence.

"I shall have to change my ten-pound note," said Ethel.

Figgins grinned cheerily.

"Lucky you, to have tenners."

Ethel laughed.

"I don't often have," she said. "I had my allowance just before I left home to come to visit Mrs. Holmes. Will you pay at the desk while I take the parcel?"

"What-ho!"

Ethel extracted the ten-pound note from her little purse and handed it to Figgins with the bill.

Figgins walked away to the cash-desk, which was at a considerable distance.

He laid the bill on the desk and unfolded the ten-pound note, which was folded in half when Ethel handed it to him.

The young lady in the cash-desk was about to reach out her hand for the banknote, when Figgins suddenly jerked it back.

The young lady regarded him with mild surprise, and then turned her attention to another customer who had come along to pay.

Figgins did not heed her.

He did not even see her.

His eyes were fixed on the ten-pound note in his hand with a stare of astonished incredulity.

0002468.

That was the number on the note.

Ten-pound notes were rare enough with Figgins of the Fourth. It was doubtful whether he had ever possessed one himself. Naturally, he looked at a note of such large denomination when he was passing it. The number on it struck him like a blow in the face.

0002468.

That was the number of the banknote that had been stolen from D'Arcy's study on Wednesday—the day Ethel had waited in the study for her cousin to come in from the cricket.

A ten-pound note—numbered 0002468. Figgins knew the number well enough.

He had helped in the search for the missing note, while a hope had remained that it had been blown about somewhere. D'Arcy had the number from his father's letter that had come with the banknote.

Figgins' head spun.

D'Arcy's missing tenner—this was D'Arcy's missing tenner! How on earth—how on earth was it in Ethel's possession?

Ethel did not even know that D'Arcy's note was missing. Very carefully indeed had the chums of St. Jim's kept that unpleasant episode from her knowledge.

What did it mean?

What could it mean?

Two banknotes could not have the same number. A mistake like that could not occur at the Bank of England.

Had D'Arcy been mistaken in the number of his note?

In a moment of relief, Figgins told himself that D'Arcy was ass enough for anything. Then he remembered that Kerr—that cautious Scottish youth—had asked to be shown Lord Eastwood's letter, to make sure upon that important point.

0002468 was the number given in the letter from D'Arcy's father. If a mistake had been made, Lord Eastwood had made it, not D'Arcy.

A gentleman who was so careful as to copy down the number of a note he was sending off in a registered letter was not likely to be so careless as to make a mistake in that number.

Figgins shook himself, feeling a little chill.

This was D'Arcy's note. He knew that. What was the good of surmising this, and surmising that? It was the banknote which D'Arcy had left on the table in Study No. 6, and which had been missing when he came back, and which Cardew had been judged guilty of taking.

This was the banknote—beyond doubt.

How had it come to Cousin Ethel? To allow himself to entertain a doubt of Ethel was impossible. If Cardew had taken the note, he could not have given it to Ethel. Cardew had not taken it!

Cardew had not taken it. Cardew, the barred junior, was as innocent as Figgins himself, for here was the note.

Back into Figgy's startled mind came Cardew's look and words only that afternoon. He read more into them now than he had read at the time. Cardew had not taken the note, and a hideous suspicion had crossed his mind that Ethel had taken it. Figgins felt it. That hideous suspicion had come into Cardew's mind, only to be angrily dismissed. But for a moment it had come!

Figgins shivered.

Of course, there was some explanation. He had only to ask Ethel where she had obtained the note. That was easy enough. And Ethel would explain. Of course!

Figgins became conscious of the fact that the cash-desk lady was regarding him with wondering amusement.

He flushed crimson.

To pass the ten-pound note—D'Arcy's note—was impossible. He could not do that. Fortunately, Figgins was in funds, and he was able to pay the bill with his own money. He paid it, put the ten-pound note into his pocket, and moved away to rejoin Ethel—like a fellow in a dream.

CHAPTER 11.
The Mystery!

COUSIN ETHEL greeted Figgins with a smile as he rejoined her. Her glance became a little wondering as she saw his flushed face, and noted that his eyes drooped before hers. Something seemed to have upset Figgins while he was gone to the cash-desk.

"And now tea!" said Ethel brightly.

"Tea!" repeated Figgins vaguely.

Ethel had a little parcel, and Figgins did not even remember to take it from her. He did not remember that she would be expecting the change from the ten-pound note.

"Tea! Oh, yes!" muttered the dazed Figgy.

"You are going the wrong way," said Ethel gently, as Figgins started. "Tea is on the first floor. We go up the staircase."

"Oh, yes! I forgot!"

Ethel smiled.

"You are forgetting many things this afternoon," she said, amused. "You have forgotten to give me my receipt."

"The—the bill! Oh, yes! Here it is!"

Ethel raised her eyebrows in surprise, as Figgins gave her the receipted bill. Naturally she had expected Figgins to hand her the change from the banknote along with it. What was the matter with Figgins?

"And my change," she said gently, wondering what made Figgy so absent-minded all of a sudden.

"Change?" stammered Figgins.

"Yes; the change of the ten-pound note," said Ethel, in utter wonder. "You are not ill, are you?"

"Ill? Oh, no!"

"You seem very strange," said the amazed Ethel. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing!" gasped Figgins. "I—I didn't change the tenner. I—I thought I'd pay the bill with my loose change, see?"

"Why?"

"Well, I—I thought that——"

"But I wanted the banknote changed," said Ethel, a little vexed. "I have very little other money, and I must change it. Now I owe you what you have paid, so the banknote must be changed, all the same."

Figgins was dumb.

He could not say to Ethel: "I did not change the banknote because I recognised it as one that had been stolen." The matter had to be explained in some more gentle way than that.

"Then you still have the banknote?" asked the girl.

"Yes," gasped Figgins.

"Very well. Give it me."

Figgins handed over the tenner. Ethel packed it away again in her little purse, Figgy's eyes following it as if fascinated.

"I cannot very well ask them to change it here, without buying something, I suppose," said Ethel. "Never mind. Mrs. Holmes will give me what you have paid on my bill, when we go back. But I really don't quite understand."

Ethel's face had grown grave. She did not understand, and she was a little displeased. Figgins realised that.

"Let's have tea!" he said abruptly.

"Very well."

Figgins piloted Miss Cleveland to the tea-room on the first floor at Blankley's, and they sat down at a little corner table by a window, overlooking the old High Street of Wayland.

Figgins had been looking forward to tea with Cousin Ethel. Now the brightness seemed to have vanished. The thought of that ten-pound note folded up in Ethel's purse haunted him. How had she come by it? She could not know that it was a stolen note. That was impossible.

It was impossible for Figgins to imagine any means by which the stolen note had come into Ethel's possession.

He sat in utter discomfort, silent, worried; and Ethel, after one or two attempts to break through his gloomy abstraction, gave it up, and sat silent, with grave face, and lips somewhat set. She did not understand Figgins now, and she did not like him in this mood. She began to be sorry that she had come to Wayland with him that afternoon. This, certainly, was not what she had expected of Figgins.

Suddenly Figgins' face brightened.

He had thought it out!

Cardew—that villain Cardew—had taken the note, as all the fellows believed. Ethel had found him in the study. Figgy remembered that. And Cardew, pretending that the note was his own, had asked her to change it for him. Ethel, having just received her allowance from home, would be able to change it, and had done without suspicion. A load rolled from Figgy's mind as he worked out that theory.

"Ethel!" he gasped.

Ethel was quite annoyed by this time. She looked at Figgins with cold inquiry.

"You remember the other day—Wednesday—you found Cardew in D'Arcy's study when you went there for D'Arcy?"

"Yes."

"He asked you to change a tenner for him, didn't he?"

"No."

"No!" ejaculated Figgins, utterly taken aback.

"Certainly not!"

Figgins could only gaze at her. He was all at sea again. That explanation would have covered everything—and it was not so! Cardew had not asked Ethel to change the ten-pound note. It was not from Cardew that Ethel had obtained it.

Ethel rose from the table.

"Ethel!" muttered Figgins, at last, as they came in sight of the school gates. "Ethel, I've a reason for asking. Tell me where you got that banknote." Ethel turned and faced him. "I do not understand you," she said in a low but distinct voice. "Either you are impertinent and curious, or else you are foolish enough, and wicked enough to suppose that I have a banknote that is not my own. In either case I have nothing more to say to you!"

(*See Chapter* 11.)

"I think we had better return to the school," she said.

"If—if you think so," muttered Figgins. He rose also. Both were silent as they left Blankley's.

As they walked back through the woods, Figgins was cudgelling his brains for a way to explain, and to receive an explanation. Ethel's look was growing colder and colder, and she walked fast. Figgins felt miserably that the afternoon had not been a success after all. But what could he do? The banknote had to be restored to D'Arcy, its owner, and he could not find words in which to tell Ethel how the matter stood. Suppose she fancied, for a moment, that he suspected her of having taken the note? What was she to fancy when he told her that the banknote was a stolen one? But how—how had it come into her hands?

They were in Rylcombe Lane again before Figgins broke his gloomy, abstracted silence.

"Ethel!" he said.

The girl walked on fast, without speaking. In point of fact, she was very near to tears. The afternoon, which had opened so happily, had ended so miserably, and she did not know why.

"Ethel, would you mind——"

"Yes?" as he paused, flushing.

How was he to speak?

"Would you mind telling me——" He broke off again.

"What?"

"I—I'm just asking, you know," stammered Figgins. "I—I'd like you to tell me where you got that ten-pound note, Ethel, if—if you wouldn't mind."

Ethel looked at him in icy surprise.

"I never knew you were so curious!" she said.

"Curious!" stammered Figgins. He realised that his question must look curious, inquisitive, as if Baggy Trimble had asked it.

"I don't see why you should be interested in such a thing," said Ethel. "I don't understand you at all to-day."

"Won't you tell me, all the same?"

"It is a matter of no importance whatever," said Ethel. "But as it happens, I cannot tell you."

"You cannot?"

"No; as it happens."

"But—but why should it happen that you cannot tell me?" asked Figgins, with an icy feeling at his heart. "You don't mean that it's a secret?"

"In a way, yes."

"A—a—a secret?"

Ethel nodded, and walked on faster. George Figgins hurried after her.

"Ethel—dear Ethel—I'm not curious—really not. But—but I do want to know—I've a reason——" She did not look at him, and he stammered on. "Ethel, a ten-pound note is a lot of money—I mean, a large banknote—for a girl like you. Suppose Mrs. Holmes asked you where you had it——"

"Mrs. Holmes would not be so foolishly inquisitive."

"Oh!"

That was a "facer" for Figgins. He was silent for quite a long time as they walked on towards the school, Ethel's face averted and her lips compressed. Figgy's brain was in a whirl. Why was it a "secret" where Ethel had obtained that banknote—that banknote which someone had stolen from D'Arcy of the Fourth?

"Ethel," muttered Figgins at last, as they came in sight of the school gates—"Ethel, I've a reason for asking. Tell me where you got that banknote."

Ethel halted, faced him, and her eyes gleamed as George Figgins had never seen them gleam before. He had never dreamed that Cousin Ethel would ever look at him with her eyes bright with scorn; but there was scorn in her glance now.

"I do not understand you," she said, in a low but distinct voice. "Either you are impertinent and curious, or else you are foolish enough and wicked enough to suppose that I have a banknote that is not my own. In either case, I have nothing more to say to you."

Ethel hurried in at the gates.

Figgins stood for a few moments stock still. Ethel was angry with him; Ethel had turned him down; Ethel had nothing more to say to him. And she would not tell him how she had come by the banknote. Even if his question seemed curious, if it seemed inquisitive, why should she not tell him? There could be no "secret" about it if she had come by the stolen banknote honestly. Figgins started, and bit his lip as he realised that he was now using the word "if" in this connection. Not that—that was impossible—he could not lose his belief in Cousin Ethel without losing his belief in all things. That was impossible. But why was it a secret? The note had been stolen, and it was a secret how she had obtained it. Figgins' brain seemed to reel under the problem. On less evidence than this he had adjudged Cardew guilty. Ethel could not be guilty, if there was faith and truth anywhere in the universe. But what did it mean—what did it mean?

CHAPTER 12.

A Surprise for Tom Merry & Co!

TOM MERRY & CO. raised their caps as Cousin Ethel passed them in the quad. Cricket practice was over, and the juniors were sauntering at their ease when Ethel came in and hurried to the Head's house. Quite willingly the juniors would have stopped for a little chat with Cousin Ethel—indeed, they rather expected her to stop for a few words at least. But Ethel, with barely a nod in acknowledgment of their greeting, hurried on, and the door of the Head's house closed behind her.

"Bai Jove! My cousin seems to be in wathah a huwwy, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

"Your nose did it, old man," said Monty Lowther. "A nose like that would give anybody a shock."

"Weally, Lowthah——" Arthur Augustus passed his hand tenderly over his noble nose, still swollen from its violent contact with Cardew's punch-ball.

Tom Merry's face was serious.

"Ethel looked upset," he said. "Nothing's wrong, I hope. Blessed if I didn't think she looked almost like blubbing."

"Bai Jove!"

"Nothing can have happened surely," said Blake. "Nobody here would offend Ethel in any way, I suppose."

"Wathah not!"

"Plain as your face, old man—and that's sayin' a lot!" said a cool, drawling voice close at hand.

Tom Merry & Co. glanced round at Cardew.

"Pway do not addwess me, Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "You know vewy well that you are barred, and I wefuse to addwess a single syllable to you!"

Cardew laughed lightly.

"Still barred?" he asked. "But surely if a chap cannot speak he may gaze upon you from a distance with respectful admiration? Do you grant me that much, Gussy?"

"Wats!" snapped Arthur Augustus, as his comrades grinned.

Tom Merry broke in.

"You were saying, Cardew, that it's plain what has happened to worry Cousin Ethel. If you know——"

"I am the man that knows!" assented Cardew. "If you will deign to receive information from an unhappy youth pinin' under the weight of your displeasure——"

"Oh, don't be an ass! What has happened—if you know?"

"Figgins!" said Cardew.

"Eh?"

"Figgins has happened," said Cardew gravely. "Miss Cleveland has been out walking with Figgins."

"What about it?" growled Tom crossly. "What has Figgy done?"

"Bored her, old man," said Cardew. "What could Figgins do? What does Figgins ever do? Obviously, he has bored her. Hinc illae lacrimae."

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Tom angrily. "I might have known it was some of your cheeky foolery."

"Yaas, wathah! All the same, deah boys, it is wathah odd," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The fact is, I have noticed more than once that Figgins of the New House wathah seems to think that Ethel is his cousin, and not mine—he does weally, you know. Weally, it is not wespectin' a fellow's wights of pwopahty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' to cackle at in that wemark," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall speak to Figgins; you know what a clumsy ass he is, and he may have been tweadin' on Ethel's feet or somethin'——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Hallo! There he is!" exclaimed Blake. "Hi, Figgy—this way!"

George Figgins had come tramping in at the gates, his eyes on the ground, pale and troubled. He started and looked round as the School House fellows hailed him.

"What's the row?" asked Tom Merry.

"Row?" repeated Figgins.

"Yes. Ethel's just come in looking quite upset. Has anything happened?"

"Oh! Yes—nothing!" he stammered.

"Well, that's lucid, at all events!" said Monty Lowther, with a stare at the New House junior.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Give it a name!" smiled Cardew. "My theory is that you have bored her, old bean, in your well-known style; while Gussy thinks you have trodden on her feet—also a little way of yours."

"Pway do not butt in, Cardew."

Figgins started and looked at Cardew. His face was flooded with crimson. Of the fellows who had "barred" the dandy of the Fourth, Figgins alone knew that he was innocent. He knew it now. Howsoever that stolen banknote had come into Ethel's possession, it was plain enough to Figgins that Ralph Reckness Cardew had had nothing to do with it.

Figgins was not the fellow to continue to do anyone wrong if he could help it.

"Oh! You, Cardew!" he stammered. "I—I'm glad to see you! I—I'm sorry—I mean I'm sorry I thought of you as I did. I was mistaken—all these fellows were mistaken!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Cardew, more surprised than any of the others. "Are you takin' up leg-pullin' as a light an' genial occupation, Figgins?"

"No, you ass! I—I know that you never touched D'Arcy's banknote," said Figgins, with a crimson face and sinking eyes. "Never mind how I know—I do know! I'm sorry I ever suspected you; though you asked for it, with your silly tricks!"

"Well, my hat!" said Cardew, with a whistle.

"It's all very well to say that Cardew is clear," said Tom. "But if you've found that out you can tell us how. If he's clear, nobody here wants to do him any wrong. How do you know?"

Figgins was silent.

The matter could be explained somehow—somehow—he was sure of that. But until it was explained, clear as the sun at noon, he could not and would not say that he had seen the stolen banknote in the hands of Ethel Cleveland. He did not answer.

"We're waiting," said Tom.

"I—I can't tell you anything—now——" said Figgins haltingly. "I was bound to speak as I did—now that I know Cardew's innocent."

"How do you know that—if you know it?"

There was no answer from George Figgins. He shook his arm free from Tom Merry's detaining grasp and walked away hurriedly to the New House. The juniors were left staring after him blankly—and among all the astonished faces the most astonished was that of Ralph Reckness Cardew.

THE END.

(Figgins has set himself a hard task—how hard he has yet to learn. Mind you read next week's fine school story which is entitled "Figgins' Sacrifice.")

THE MAN WHO ALWAYS GETS HIS STORY! That's how they speak of young Bob Evans in newspaperdom—and yet when he ferrets out the most sensational story of modern times he deliberately withholds it from the reading public. Read this instalment and see why!

THE SCARLET STREAK!

A Narrow Escape!

A MOMENT before the terrible apparatus of the Scarlet Streak was set in motion, Bob dashed out at the fierce features of his powerful assailant. He saw Mary on the balcony behind the man, trying to drag him away.

The fellow had the strength of a bull, and already Bob was groggy from the terrific scrap in the laboratory. The man thrust Mary aside, and again came plunging at Bob. The young reporter closed with him, and they both went down.

As they fell, Bob heard Mary cry out. He had a momentary glimpse of the metal staples securing the balcony to the wall; they were breaking from the brickwork under the weight of the struggling figures!

The staples came away in a little flurry of brick-dust, and Bob felt the balcony tilt. Abruptly it dropped still farther. An instant later he was dropping through thin air to the lawn beneath!

Before he hit the turf there came an appalling roar from over his head. He saw a lurid streak of red light flick out through the window; he had a vision of brickwork vanishing to nothing; there was a gout of grey smoke, and then he himself was rolling over and over on the grass, half the breath knocked from his body at the impact.

When Bob sat up he found that they were near the porch which ran at that side of the house. All around him was broken furniture from the balcony above—a couple of wicker chairs and a smashed couch that had fallen with them.

He staggered to his feet. He saw Mary lying near him, and close against her was the figure of their late assailant, who had fallen with them. The man was stirring, but he made no attempt to renew the fight.

Bob slipped his hands under Mary's shoulders, and he half-carried her to a chair on the porch.

"What—what has happened?" she gasped.

"The balcony g a v e way," Bob told her, "About the luckiest thing that ever happened, too! The Scarlet Streak went off just as we were dropping—a second later and we'd have been where all those out of that hole have gone—into nothing!"

He jerked his head to where a great hole in the wall above them was discernible. It was a tremendous size, and it was plain that pretty well the whole wall at that end of the laboratory had vanished. The death-ray machine had blasted solid brickwork into nothingness! It was more than sufficient proof of the amazing power of Mr. Crawford's terrible invention.

Up in the laboratory the gang were pulling themselves together, while the Monk stood staring at the hole. He jumped to the side of the machine, just as the man who had switched off the ray turned to him.

"How did it happen?" gasped the Monk.

"It was him—fell against the switches!" the man said, and he jerked his thumb to the senseless form of the butler, lying sprawled on the floor of the Scarlet Streak. "I pulled the switch open soon as I saw what was happenin'—didn't know what it would do. Looks like it's done Henry in; caught him an' Evans an' the girl properly!"

"Well, they didn't know much about it!" the Monk said callously. "But we'll have to get away! We shall have half the neighbourhood here in no time now! We'd take this machine if we could; but we'll never be able to get clear with it if we tried!" he added viciously. "To think we've got the thing in our hands, and can't——"

He broke off as Leontine came through the laboratory door. Her dark, flashing eyes were wide and startled, and she stared in blank amazement as she saw the cavity at the end of the laboratory, and the members of the gang pulling themselves up—nursing jaws which Bob's fists had hit!

"For heaven's sake get away from here!" Leontine exclaimed. "You've made enough row to bring all the police for twenty miles around!"

She saw the still form of the inventor lying on the floor, and she gazed at him for a moment, summing up the situation.

"Quick—take Crawford to the House with the Closed Shutters!" she exclaimed. "If we've got him, we can get anything else we want—we can force him to tell us where he keeps the blueprints, if it's too dangerous to come back here for the machine itself!"

The Monk saw that there was sound reason in her words, and he knew that the Scarlet Streak must have attracted some attention, while the hole in the side of the house would of a certainty attract still more.

Count K. was watching

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

BOB EVANS, a young reporter on the "Daily Times," has been ordered by his chief editor to discover all he can about the Scarlet Streak, a wonderful invention which emits a powerful destructive ray. The inventor is

RICHARD CRAWFORD, who has been working on the death-ray machine for years with the sole assistance of his daughter MARY. Bob discovers that a gang of crooks, under the leadership of a man known as

THE MONK, are after the Scarlet Streak. The Monk is aided mainly by two unscrupulous members of his gang, LEONTINE and COUNT K. They are trying to get the invention in order that they may terrorise the world.

The gang makes an attack upon the inventor's house during the absence of Mr. Crawford and Mary. The two come back with Bob after a frantic telephone message from the butler. The gang are in the inventor's laboratory, and the Monk has discovered how to work the Scarlet Streak. Bob leads the attack against the gang, aided by the butler and Mr. Crawford. The two latter are speedily disabled, while Bob is forced on to the balcony outside a big window at one end of the room. Mary tries to pull Bob's assailant off, and the two men and the girl are struggling on the balcony, when the butler is knocked off his feet and falls against the switches controlling the death-dealing ray of the Scarlet Streak. The livid red ray shoots out of the lens straight to where Bob and Mary are fighting on the balcony! When the smoke clears away, all the men in the laboratory can see is a gigantic hole in the wall!

(Now read on.)

outside the house, and he was staring at the hole as though he could hardly believe his eyes. He had seen the red flash of the Scarlet Streak, and now, through the intervening bushes, he made out the figures of Bob and Mary, as the youthful reporter assisted the girl to a chair on the porch.

The count also saw the man Henry, they called him—trying to get to his feet. He watched the fellow for a moment or so, then he sighted Leontine running from the front of the house and calling to him.

"Somebody switched that death-ray machine on!" she said quickly. "They've killed Evans and the girl, and poor old Henry's gone, too! We daren't stop here; the Monk's bringing Crawford out to the car! We've got to get away before the police come to——"

She broke off as she hurried with the count to the car, just as the Monk and one of his men brought out the still form of the inventor. They put him into the back of the car, and Leontine got in with him, then the Monk turned to Count K.

"This is the very deuce of a mess!" he said. "It's a lucky thing that that machine leaves no trace of——"

"It didn't touch Evans and the girl!" the count cut in. "The balcony broke and let them down just before the ray hit the window. They're round there now, and Henry's trying to—— Here he comes!"

The man who had fallen from the balcony appeared, staggering round the corner of the house. He shouted hoarsely as he saw his rascally associates, and the Monk and the count helped him into the car.

Seconds only afterwards it shot off down the drive, with the inventor of the Scarlet Streak a prisoner in the hands of his greatest enemy.

* * * * * * *

As soon as Mary had recovered sufficiently to be able to stand she insisted upon going up to the laboratory to where they had left her father. They found the butler on his feet, one hand clutching the side of the Scarlet Streak.

The big lens of the bulbous-headed machine was turned to the hole which it had made at the far end of the laboratory. The butler was staring at the gap as though he could hardly believe what he saw. He started as Bob and Mary came into the room.

Anxiously, Mary glanced about the laboratory. Everything was in the utmost disorder; apparatus was scattered, and all the drawers had been emptied by the gang when they were searching for the plans of the death-ray machine.

There was no sign of her father, and Mary stepped towards the butler.

"Father—what's become of father?" she asked quickly. "Where is he?"

The butler stared about him in dazed fashion before he replied:

"Took him away, miss."

"Took him——"

Mary swayed at his words.

Already she herself had been in the Monk's hands, and she could guess at her father's fate now that the arch-crook had him in his power. The butler caught her, and he helped her to rest against the metal tripod of the giant machine.

"Maybe they haven't got far!" the butler gasped. "P'r'aps I can see which way they go."

His shaking hands fumbled at his torn collar as he stared through the doorway to the passage beyond. Still half dazed, he staggered from the laboratory and made his way down the stairs to the front of the house; but by that time the Monk and the rest had long since disappeared.

Bob crossed the floor to Mary, and she caught his arm as she tried to stand without support.

"This is terrible—terrible!" she half whispered. "It's all on account of dad's invention—the Scarlet Streak. It's a ray that destroys anything it touches!"

Bob stared at her as she spoke. He looked at the machine, then looked at the girl again.

"I know that," he said slowly. "This is the Scarlet Streak, and it's the very story the 'Daily Times' sent me out to get!"

His eyes glowed at the words and the thought of all that it meant to himself. His chief had sent him out with no clues and nothing to guide him, and yet he had accomplished what had looked like the impossible!

"But, Bob," Mary exclaimed, and she caught his coat, "surely you're not going to report all that you've——"

"You bet I am!" Bob exclaimed. "I'm going to phone my paper! It's the biggest scoop for years!"

He turned to the telephone that stood on the side of the bench along the wall, and he called the number of the "Daily Times" into the mouthpiece.

Mary stepped close to him.

"No, no!" she gasped, and her voice was trembling. "It would bring the agents of every country upon us—they would stop at nothing to possess this machine, for it holds the world at its mercy!"

She caught at the phone as she spoke, and tried to pull it from him, but Bob hung on.

"That's what makes it a great story. I'd be a traitor not to turn it in!" he exclaimed. "It would——" A voice in the receiver attracted his attention. "Hallo? 'Times'? Evans speaking! Put me through to the chief right away, will you? Hurry, miss!"

Mary caught her breath as she heard his words. At any cost she must stop him giving the news of the Scarlet Streak to his paper—it would be the most disastrous thing possible. It would advertise the existence of her father's terrible invention, the possession of which meant the lordship of the world, which was something that Bob did not realise.

"Hallo, that you, chief?" she heard Bob call over the phone. "This is Evans—yes, Bob Evans. What? I've got something good for you!"

It was then that the glint of steel on the bench near the phone caught Mary's eye—a pair of shears! She had them in her hands a moment later, and from behind Bob she stretched the keen blades towards the green flex of the telephone.

"Yes, something good!" Bob repeated. "Certainly I'll tell you; that's what I got on for. It's about the—— Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! What's happened to this——" Bob glimpsed Mary standing close against the bench, the bright shears in her hand, the severed flex of the telephone-lead lying near them.

He jammed the useless instrument down on the bench and caught her by the shoulders.

"What did you do that for?" he demanded harshly.

"Because it would be fatal for my father and for all of us if you tell your paper about the Scarlet Streak!" Mary gasped. "Don't you understand that all the criminals in the whole world will be down on us? With the Scarlet Streak in his possession a man could rule the earth! You don't understand the power of the machine!"

She spoke quickly, passionately, as she went on:

"It will destroy anything that the ray touches—anything! Look what it did to the wall over there! The ray can be thrown to any distance—one sweep on the machine, and half the city would dissolve into dust in the fraction of a second!"

Bob looked at her uncertainly.

"I think you're—you're exaggerating a bit," he said slowly. "Anyway, I've got my paper to consider. They sent me to get this story—and it's a scoop! Don't you realise that the bigger and more powerful the Scarlet Streak is, the bigger the scoop the 'Times' will make!"

Mary could not but admire his loyalty to his paper, but she knew that, somehow or other, she must stop him making his report. She understood only too well what would happen once the news was published!

She stepped close to him and looked up into his face. There were tears in her eyes as she pleaded:

"Bob, you said you cared for me! Prove it by keeping our secret!"

Slowly, Bob shook his head.

"My paper comes first," he answered quietly. "I've got my duty to do, and I must do it!"

He stood looking at the Scarlet Streak, eyeing its bulky shape, noting details that he would put into his story for the "Daily Times." Mary watched him, and then she tried a last, desperate expedient to turn him from his purpose.

In the drawer in the bench nearest the doorway, she knew that her father kept an automatic pistol. It was in one of the few drawers that the gang had not had time to turn out. Noiselessly she opened it, and a moment later the weapon was in her small, gloved hand.

"Now, Bob! Now will you give up the idea of making this report?"

Her little chin was squared as she eyed him, the gun pointed at his chest. His eyes widened as he stared down at it.

"You sha'n't leave here until you swear not to reveal what you've learned!" Mary said quickly. And Bob, watching the pistol, saw that the muzzle was shaking in her trembling hand.

"There's no need to pull a gun on me, Mary," he said quietly. "All the automatics in the world won't make any difference. I've made up my mind!" He stretched out his hand, and the weapon dropped from her fingers to the floor, landing on its side. Bob slipped an arm about her shoulders.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but to a newspaper man his paper must come first—first, last, and all the time!"

Mary stared at him unbelievingly.

"You—you know what it will mean?" she gasped. "And you say you—you——" Her voice choked for a moment. "Then you—are going to print—the story?"

Bob looked down at her. He hated to have to say it, but he had a duty to do.

"Keep where you are," said Mary, her clear voice cutting through the uproar as she menaced Harley with the revolver. "And don't move!" (See Page 27.)

"I must!" he said.

She caught at the edge of the bench as he spoke. For a long second they stood staring at one another, then Bob turned to the door, passed across the threshold and closed the door behind him.

Mary stood staring at the panels. She knew that Bob did not understand the terrible forces that his newspaper report would arouse. From all over the world the agents of foreign countries would come rushing to try and get their hands on the Scarlet Streak.

The country that owned the death-ray machine would be the most powerful in the world—and if a crook owned it, he would be able to force his wishes on nations powerless to gainsay him! Possession of the Scarlet Streak meant kingship of the whole earth—and Bob Evans was going to publish the report that would unleash incalculable strife!

Mary leant against the door. She had suffered much the last few hours. This final blow was more than she could bear. Her father in the hands of the Monk, and Bob deserting them!

Slowly Mary sank to the floor and lay huddled there, her face in her hands.

When Bob left Mary he went straight to his room, not far from the "Times" office. He did not go to the newspaper office, because he wanted to think out all that Mary had said to him.

A dozen times Bob started for the door with the intention of making his report, and a dozen times he checked himself. He thought that he would write his report in his own room, and sheet after sheet he inserted in his typewriter, plucking them out one after the other as he found that something was stopping him from work.

That something was his indecision. Once he had a chance to think it out, he could see that what Mary said was right—the report would be certain to create a tremendous sensation. It was certain to arouse all the conflicting elements of which she had spoken.

At the same time, there was his duty to his paper.

He thrashed the matter out alone, and took no count of the passing hours. Evening faded into night, and night gave place to the chill of dawn; dawn slid into warm morning—and it was then that Bob strode to the curtains and pulled them apart, to see the sun shining through. It had been a sleepless night for him, except for a couple of hours when he had dozed off in his chair in front of his typewriter.

He stood looking out of the window. In the distance he could see the massive bulk of the "Daily Times" building. He stared at it, then:

"Right! You get the story!" His decision was abrupt. He slipped into his coat, grabbed his hat—and he left the room to make a report that would set the world in a ferment of strife.

The Lost Story!

IN the House with the Closed Shutters Mr. Crawford was seated alone in a room, striving feverishly to complete the Cross Word puzzle that would lead to the hidden blueprints.

The plans of the Scarlet Streak had been hidden away by him, and he alone knew where they were. Without them reproduction of the single existing specimen of the death-ray machine would be impossible. The inventor did not know what might happen to him, and he wanted to leave some clue to the whereabouts of the plans.

It was as he worked there that he heard a key turn in the lock of the door. Swiftly he slipped the puzzle beneath the pad on which he had been writing, and he sat back in his chair as the man whom the gang called Henry came into the room. He was a big fellow, with huge, muscular shoulders and great sinewy hands.

He carried a tray of food in his hands, and he set it down on the table before the inventor.

"There y'are—get outside that!" he snarled. "It's a sight more'n you deserve! If I 'ad my way it's bread and water I'd feed yer on! What's all this?"

He caught sight of the Cross Word puzzle sticking out from beneath the pad; he picked it up, lifting two or three other sheets with it. He stared at the puzzle for a moment or so, then flung it down with a gesture of contempt.

"You want somethin' to do, I should think!" he growled, then strode across the room and slammed the door behind him.

The inventor watched the door close, ere he started from his chair; he tiptoed across the room, and stood listening by the door. He heard the voice of Henry, and he smiled as he heard it, then he returned to the table, set the tray of food on a chair, took out the papers again, and once more started to finish the Cross Word puzzle.

In the outer room Henry stepped to where the Monk was standing with Leontine and the count.

"He's working one of them Cross Word puzzles," Henry said.

"The old fool!" the Monk growled. "The laboratory at his house was full of the darn things! But now we've got him here, I bet I'll——"

He broke off as the count called to him.

"It's time we did something!" he exclaimed. "You know that Evans got away, and he may be starting some kind of mischief. There's one way we can get what we want out of Crawford—we'll persuade him to tell his daughter to come here with the blueprints!"

There was a world of meaning in the expression he put into the word "persuade." Henry grinned. The Monk's thin lips curved behind his beard, and his dark eyes glinted evilly.

"Fetch him, Henry!" he said in a voice that was low and sinister.

The big man nodded. A few seconds later and he was again turning the key in the lock on the room in which the inventor was imprisoned.

As he heard the key turn, Mr. Crawford once more covered up the papers on which he was working.

"Come on, you!" the man called to him as he entered the room. "You're wanted outside! Step lively!"

Apparently the grey-haired inventor did not step lively enough, for the crook grabbed him by one shoulder and half flung him towards the door; the force with which he propelled Mr. Crawford showed something of the strength in the man's powerful frame.

The inventor staggered into the other room, and he pulled up to find himself staring into the dark, evil features of the Monk. They stood eye to eye, and the inventor drew himself up as he gazed at his enemy. The Monk came straight to the point.

"Phone your daughter to come here and bring the blueprints with her!" he hissed.

A slow smile curved the inventor's lips, and his chin lifted as he answered:

"Never! She's not going to get into your clutches again, if I can help it!"

The Monk glared at him. He knew the spirit of the inventor, and he knew that it would not be easy to break him down. From behind him, Leontine sidled forward, a slow, cruel smile curving her lips.

"Let Henry show how strong he is," she said.

The inventor started, and the Monk caught his movement. Over in a far corner the big, ugly brute was watching the scene, an anticipatory smile on his evil face. He saw the Monk beckon, and the man picked up a pack of playing-cards as he moved towards the group.

"Show him!" hissed Leontine softly.

The man riffled the thick pack of cards in his hands. He hunched his shoulders, gripped the cards with his fingers, and, with the starting eyes of the inventor watching him, he tore the pack slowly in two!

It was a tremendous feat of strength, and Mr. Crawford knew it.

The man flung the torn cards to the ground, and he flexed his muscles as he faced the inventor.

"That's 'ow strong I am!" he snarled at him. "I pity yer if the boss sets me on to you!"

The Monk thrust his face close to Mr. Crawford's.

"Don't be a fool!" he said. "You can't get away from here. Have those blueprints brought, and I'll let you go. If you don't——"

He gestured to Henry as he spoke. The man lifted his hands, and his muscular, twitching fingers hovered near the inventor's throat.

"If I set about yer——" the man threatened.

Mr. Crawford looked at the Monk, and there was half a smile on his face as he said:

"You want my daughter to bring the blueprints here?"

"That's it!" the Monk said eagerly. "You tell her to——"

"She doesn't know where I've hidden them," said Mr. Crawford quietly. "And if anything happens to me, no one will ever know!"

* * * * * *

Back in the inventor's home, Mary had spent a night of torture. She knew that Bob had not made his report, for a telephone message to the Times Building had told her that he had not been there. It was when she knew that the final edition of the "Daily Times" would be going through that she telephoned once more—to learn that Bob had just come into the office!

Then he had gone to give the paper his story.

Mary made up her mind just as swiftly as Bob himself had come to his own decision. She hurried up to the laboratory; from the floor there she picked up the neglected automatic pistol, and thrust it into her handbag, then she sent for the car, and in a matter of minutes she was being hurried to the "Times" office—prepared to stop Bob's story at any cost!

As she left the house Bob was entering the "Times" office. The first man he saw was Mr. Harley, the chief editor. Across the width of the room the boss looked at Bob intently—at his tired eyes and the frown on his brow. Hurriedly he strode towards him.

"You've got the story?" he asked, and he could not keep a timbre of excitement out of his voice.

He dropped his hands on Bob's shoulders as he spoke, and he grabbed the youthful reporter's hand when Bob nodded.

"Come on, my boy! There's your typewriter! Let me have that story, and I'll stop the machines!"

Obediently Bob slipped a sheet into the typewriter on his desk, while the boss pulled out his watch. Suddenly he dropped a hand on Bob's shoulder.

"Never mind that—put it right on the linotype! It'll save time."

Bob nodded, and the boss caught his arm, hurrying across the room. Now that he had decided to give the paper the news that he had won, Bob was the keen newspaperman once more. Yet, back of his mind, was a doubt that he could not stifle. Was he doing right?

With the boss he hurried down to the composing-room, and dropped into a seat before one of the linotype machines. The boss pulled out his watch as Bob began to tap the keys.

"Don't stand over me with that watch!" Bob exclaimed. "I'll get out the story as quick as I can!"

And as he spoke his fingers tipped rapidly at the light keys of the machine.

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"Well, let's have it as fast as you know how," the boss said. "I'll keep everything waiting for it!"

He grabbed a telephone that stood near the machine, and called into it: in a second or so he got a reply.

"Hallo! Hold up the presses! Bob Evans has a big scoop—we've got to make over the front page!"

Down below, where the gigantic printing-machines thundered out the first copies of the edition, a man hung up the receiver of the telephone at his desk, and darted forward. He went the round of the machines, stopping them one by one. In a little while, where there had been noise and the clatter of machines, there was only an unaccustomed silence—the machines were waiting for Bob's story.

In the composing-room men stood waiting and watching Bob as he worked. As the type was set up, it was taken from the machine by one of the men and set up on a forme, while Mr. Harley himself helped to set the headlines that were designed to startle the world.

Twice Bob's fingers faltered on the keys as he thought of what this story must mean to Mary and her father, but he went on. The boss could see that there was something worrying the star reporter, and he was anxious to get the story set up in type before Bob changed his mind—as he appeared likely to do.

It was as Bob reached almost the end of his story that Mary dashed from the car and entered the building. She knew her way up to the room in which Bob usually worked, but he was not there. She stopped a boy who was passing.

"Where is Mr. Evans?" she asked quickly.

"D'you want to see him, miss?"

"I do—and it is very urgent!" Mary said. "I must——"

"He's in the composing-room—you'll have to wait," said the boy.

The composing-room! Too well did Mary realise what those words meant. She stood stock-still as the boy turned from her; next moment she was dashing across the office towards the far door which, she knew, led to the floor used by the printers.

She reached the end of the composing-room. She saw a little knot of men working at the far end, and she got a glimpse of Bob as he sat back, with a word to Mr. Harley, who was at his side—he had finished the last word of his report!

Behind her Mary heard the office-boy calling to her. He caught her arm.

"You can't come down here, miss! It ain't——"

Mary dashed past him.

"Bob! Bob!" she called as she ran, and the young reporter rose from his seat and stared as he saw her running towards him. From the tail of his eye he saw the chief taking the last of the type from the machine. "Bob!" Mary's voice was breaking as she came up to him. There were tears in her eyes, and distraction on her face. "You mustn't let the story go through, Bob!"

"It's done now!" he told her grimly. "Set up in type, and——"

She caught his arm.

"It's not for my sake, or for my father's, but for the whole of humanity!" she pleaded.

Her hands were trembling in his own, and all his old doubts revived. He looked to where the boss and compositors were working to lock the type in its forme.

"I was sent out to get the story, and——" he began

"But don't you realise what it will mean?" came Mary's agonised voice. "It will unleash the furies of the world!"

Bob had argued that out with himself overnight, and in his heart he knew that Mary was sounding a true note of warning. Bob understood in that moment that it was because he was proud of his reputation as the man who always got his story that he had been anxious to give his paper the inner history of the Scarlet Streak.

It was for his own gratification—his own selfishness—that he was doing this. And when he saw the matter in that light there was only one thing to do!

"You're right!" he muttered; a moment afterwards he was jumping to where the men were talking, a proof of the story now locked in the forme.

Bob was amongst them before they saw him coming. He grabbed the proof-sheet from the type, and passed it back to Mary, then he picked up the heavy forme itself and turned with it lifted high. The chief caught him as he moved.

"What are you doing? Are you crazy?"

Bob's eyes glared into his.

"I'm going to kill that story!" Bob exclaimed. And he sent him flying as he pushed past with the forme in his hands.

Close at hand was a huge vat full of molten lead—used for melting down type—once the forme was thrust into that there would be no trace of the story. Mary could be trusted to look after the proof-sheet.

As he ran he heard Mr. Harley yelling behind him, telling the three men near the vat to hold Bob back. The trio made a rush for him, while Harley and the rest followed.

Mary saw that the others would catch Bob if they were not stopped, and from her handbag she whipped out the automatic that she carried.

"Keep where you are! Don't move!" Her clear voice cut through the uproar as she menaced Harley and the rest with the weapon; they pulled up when they saw the grim expression on her face, then one of them took a chance and made a dive for the gun.

He wrenched it away, and then two or three of them tried to snatch from her hand the proof of the type that Bob was trying to destroy.

Bob was crashing the heavy forme at the men who were attacking him. Two of them he sent spinning, and then he half stunned a third; that left him a chance to heave the thing into the vat of molten metal.

He could feel its terrible heat as he turned. He got a glimpse of the blazing, burning, heaving contents of the great vat as he stepped on to the low platform that gave access to it.

Once again the men rushed him as he poised, with the heavy forme uplifted. He turned to meet their attack—too late! With a vicious plunge, one of them crashed his fist at Bob's jaw.

The force of the punch and the weight of the leaden forme sent Bob heeling backwards—full above the great vat of molten metal—dropping towards it—overbalanced and plunging to an awful death!

(Was so gallant an action to meet with so unjust a reward as death?—Next week's instalment of this powerful serial will enlighten you. Order your copy well in advance, for remember there will be another £10 offered in Prizes in connection with this great film story next week.)

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

WOULD IT BE SNEAKING?

A LOYAL Gemite who, in the circumstances I am about to enumerate, rightly wishes to remain anonymous, writes and tells me that a certain fellow at his school has been known to crib his way through the exams, with the result that he has come out first in nearly everything. My correspondent, naturally, resents this, and wants to know whether it would be sneaking if he placed a note on his Form master's desk explaining matters. Well, frankly, it would. True, it would be dealing with a rascal in a rascal's own way, but I'm sure it would leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Two wrongs do not make a right. But surely my chum has enough gumption to tackle the wrongdoer himself, and surely, too, he will find enough support from the other fellows at his school to see that things are put right. If the fellow who cheated finds the whole Form arraigned against him he might be shamed into making a clean breast of the matter to his master. Alternatively, if he hasn't that amount of decency left in him, the whole Form should protest to those in authority. But for one fellow to take the responsibility of this step would be to invite unwholesome criticism later on. Personally, however, I don't think the cheat would stand by his guns if he were tackled by the whole Form, and methinks he would soon put matters right in his own way, even if it meant a licking at his master's hands. Let me know of any further developments, my chum.

CLUB SWINGING!

Several of my readers are interested in club swinging, and one of them wants to know if it is a healthy pastime. It is very healthy, my chum. If the correct stance is maintained throughout the movement, a great deal of benefit may be derived. The feet should be about twenty-four inches apart, the knees should be braced back, so that the calf muscles "feel" the exercise. The body should not sag forward when the clubs are in motion, and the shoulders should be kept squared. My chums should see to it that they do not swing clubs that are too heavy for their wrist strength, and beginners should practise with only one club at first, otherwise they will be doing some damage.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"FIGGINS'S SACRIFICE!"
By Martin Clifford.

That's the title of next week's St. Jim's story—and a right good story it is, too, boys! Mind you read it!

"STONE AGE" SUPPLEMENT.

Tom Merry & Co. contribute an extra-special Supplement to next week's GEM, with the above mentioned subject as its centre piece. Well worth reading!

"THE SCARLET STREAK!"

Look out, too, for the next instalment of this thrilling story, and make up your minds to enter the simple competition, which is based upon the story and the film, offering £10 a week. Chin, chin, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.