

GRAND YARNS OF THE ST. JIM'S AND GREYFRIARS CHUMS INSIDE!

The GEM 2^d



"WHAT'S HAPPENED
TO
MY CLOTHES?"

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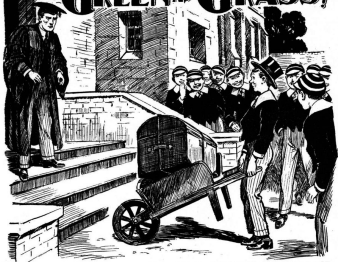
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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GREEN AS GRASS!



"Boy!" exclaimed Mr. Halton, staring in astonishment at Algernon. "What does this mean? Who are you?"

"If you pip-pip-please," stammered Algernon Blackingsop, "I'm the new boy."

CHAPTER 1.

News for Tom Merry!

"**S**TAND and deliver!" Blagg the postman jumped. He had halted outside the gates of St. Jim's to reap his breeze, for the summer afternoon was very warm, and the long white road from Rylcombe was hot and dusty. And as he stopped he received that startling summons, and three figures rushed upon him from the shady side gateway.

"Halt!"
"And deliver!"

It was only the Terrible Three of the Shell, however, and Blagg grinned as he blinked at them. He was used to humorous greetings from these cheerful youths. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther surrounded him, and Monty Lowther levelled a fountain-pen at his head.

"Money or your life!" he said solemnly. "If there isn't a remittance for one of us in that bag, Blagg, you die the death! Shall out?"

"Afternoon, young gentlemen," said Blagg cheerfully. "I think I've got a letter 'ere for Master Merry."
Tom Gun Lassus.—No. 1483.

"Hand it over!" said Monty Lowther. "If there's cash in it, Blagg, your grey hairs shall be spared! We are stony broke and desperate!"

Blagg grinned and fumbled in his bag. The chains of the Shell watched him anxiously. They were certainly stony broke, if not exactly desperate. Funds were low—in fact, had reached vanishing point. The afternoon's post was all that stood between the Terrible Three and famine; hence their anxious watching of the village postman at the school gates.

Manners and Lowther were not expecting letters, but Tom Merry had a lingering hope of a letter from Miss Priscilla Fawcett, his old governess. And Miss Priscilla's letters were generally accompanied by remittances. Miss Priscilla seemed to know by intuition that money burns holes in schoolboy pockets; and that riches take unto themselves wings and fly away more swiftly at school than anywhere else.

"Ere you are, Master Merry!"

Blagg handed over the letter and went his way. The Terrible Three looked eagerly at the prize. The postman's was Hackleberry Heath, and the hand-writing was that of Miss Priscilla

Fawcett. The three juniors gave a cheer.

"Bared!" exclaimed Monty Lowther dramatically.

"Open it—quick!" said Manners. Tom Merry jerked the envelope open. There was a letter inside, and he unfolded it quickly. Then a blank expression came over his face. Monty Lowther and Manners were watching him anxiously.

"How much!" they inquired simultaneously.

"Six!"

"What?"

"It isn't a remittance, after all," said Tom Merry dully.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Better go and look in at Study No. 6," said Tom Merry. "We may be able to make a raid there. Gony's generally in funds!"

"Read the letter," was Manners' valuable suggestion. "There may be something about a remittance coming later."

"More likely advice about health, and inquiries about taking medicine!" roared Monty Lowther. "I must say that I don't think so much of your guardian as I did, Tommy. She has disappointed

—MEET ALGY BLENKINSOP IN THIS SPARKLING LONG YARN, AND HAVE A GOOD LAUGH.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

ms. This avowal is really incredible!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry. He was reading the letter.

"What's the news—remittance following?"

"No."

"Then you needn't bother to read the letter," said Monty Lowther. "Let's go and look in Blake. I'm expecting for a signet ring."

"Hold on," said Tom. "There's some news in the letter. We shan't be able to go up the river this afternoon."

"Why not?" demanded Manners and Lowther at once warmly.

"At least, I shan't be able to go," said Tom, "and I think you fellows ought to stick to me, in a fearful emergency like this."

"Something the matter?" asked Manners.

Tom Merry gave a deep groan.

"Yes, I'll read it to you," said Tom Merry, with an expression of anguish upon his face. "Here it is. No need to read all the letter. It's rather long. Begin here!"

"I hope you are taking regular doses of the Magical Mixture," read out Lowther, "and that you are careful not to get your dear little feet wet—"

Tom Merry turned crimson.

"Not that part?" he exclaimed hastily. "Never mind that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, this is where it begins," said Tom, turning the page over, and Lowther and Manners read together:

"By the way, you will be delighted by some news I have for you. A dear lad named Algernon Blenkinsop is coming from Hockleberry Heath to St. Jim's. You will remember getting his father, the Rev. Rabbitts Blenkinsop, who is such a dear man, and so interested in the conversion of the natives of the Torresolal Islands. Algernon is his youngest son, the other thirteen all being older than Algernon, and he is such a nice, quiet boy, and so simple.

"I am sure you will like him, and will do your best to be a friend to him at the school. I think it is possible that the other boys—some of them are so rough—may make fun of dear Algernon, because he is very simple and nice, and stutters a little. But I know that my darling Tommy will be kind and good to him and protect him. I hope you will take Algernon to your heart, dear Tommy, and ask the headmaster to put him in your study.

"You will find him very good and kind, and his conversation very interesting and instructive. He knows a very great deal about missionary work in the Torresolal Islands. I know, dear Tommy, that Algernon will become your dearest friend."

"That's all," said Tom Merry. "Now, what do you think of that?"

"Don't ask me what I think of it!" said Monty Lowther, in a deep voice. "If a chap who stutters and talks about missionary work in the Torresolal Islands is put into our study, he will be found dead there shortly afterwards. I know that."

"There's a postscript," said Tom Merry dully. "Listen. Algernon arrives at Rykombe Station by the half-past three train, and so it is a half-holiday. I am sure you will go to meet him, my

dear Tommy. Take him into your care, and cherish him, for my sake, and the sake of his dear father, Mr. Rabbitts Blenkinsop, who is such a good man."

"I'm not going to the station to meet him!" bawled Monty Lowther, with quite unnecessary vigour.

"Well, I must," said Tom Merry. "I can't refuse Miss Fawcett. She's such a good sort. I only hope the kid won't come into the Hall. My golly hat, I wonder what her plan is!"

"Really, Tommy, it's the bad! You'd better write Miss Fawcett and tell her to ask Mr. Rabbitts to send him to the Torresolal Islands instead of St. Jim's. It would be a more suitable place for him," said Manners.

"Hallo, there's another postscript overlaid," said Lowther.

"Is there?" asked Tom. "I missed that. My hat, this is good!"

"Hurrah!"

The Terrible Three brightened up as they read the final postscript. For it ran:

"P.S.—I have given dear Algernon a pound note to hand to you when he arrives at St. Jim's, as I thought you might like to make some little celebration to welcome him."

"I don't know about celebrating Algernon, but a quid's a quid," said Monty Lowther. "We're staid—we're

St. Jim's has had all sorts of new boys, but never one like Algernon Blenkinsop before. As green as grass, born to have his leg pulled, Algy is fair game for the jokers; and from the moment of his arrival at St. Jim's his adventures are one long laugh—for others!

hungry—and we are thirsty. Gentleman, Algy stutters and talks about the Torresolal Islands; but Algy's got a quid, and I suggest that it's our bounden duty to go and meet Algy at the station."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners.

Tom Merry grinned and looked at his watch. Then he uttered an exclamation.

"My hat, it's a quarter to four already! The train's been in a long time."

"Oh, that's all right! We shall find him rooted to the platform, with the hayseed growing out of his hair," said Lowther. "Come on. Let's go for Algy."

"Let's!" said Manners.

And the Terrible Three, greatly comforted by that postscript, and willing to make the best of Algy in the circumstances, walked away down the lane towards Rykombe to meet the youth from Hockleberry Heath.

CHAPTER 2.

Fallen Among Friends!

"PLEASE can you tell me the way to St. Jim's?"

Gordon Gay of the Fourth Form at Rykombe Grammar School looked round as he was addressed by a somewhat timid voice.

Gordon Gay and his cousin, Wootton major and minor, of the Grammar School, were chatting together outside the village station. They had been strolling round Rykombe that afternoon in the amiable hope of falling in with

some St. Jim's fellows and ragging them, by way of passing a half-holiday with a little harmless and necessary amusement.

No St. Jim's juniors had been spotted, however, and the three Grammarians were thinking of wounding their way homewards when a strange youth came out of the station, and approached them, after blinking round for some minutes as if in search of someone.

Gay and Wootton major and Wootton minor looked at him with interest.

He was a somewhat striking-looking youth.

He was about their own age, but taller, being decidedly lanky in form. His face was chubby, glowing with rosy health, and his eyes were big and blue and cancer-like in appearance. His face expressed the most unlimited simplicity, and yet there was a lurking spark of satisfaction about it, which showed that the verdant youth was pretty well satisfied with himself. He wore a large silk hat, under which little tufts of yellow-coloured hair could be seen. He addressed Gordon Gay politely.

Gordon Gay & Co. exchanged a jocular grin. They had been looking for some of their old rivals of St. Jim's, and looking in vain. And here was a youth of the most verdant appearance inquiring his way to that school, evidently, therefore, a new boy for St. Jim's. A youth whose whole appearance, from top to toe, showed plainly that he was here for the special purpose of having his leg pulled. Gordon Gay & Co. could have fallen upon him and hugged him. The afternoon would not be wasted after all.

"St. Jim's?" repeated Gay, to gain time.

"The strange youth nodded.

"Yes, please. I'm a new baby for St. Jim's, you know."

"My dear kid, you've come to the right shop," said Gordon Gay blandly.

"What's your name?"

"Algernon Blenkinsop."

Gay appeared overcast for a moment.

"My hat! That's a stunning name! Are there any more at home like you?"

"Yes, indeed. My thirteen brothers are very like me," said Algernon, apparently surprised by the question.

"Thirteen!" gaped Gordon Gay.

"Oh, my hat! What a giddy family! And you're going to St. Jim's?"

"Yes. I was to be met here, but no one seems to have come," said Algernon, in a slightly injured tone. "Unless, indeed, you are Tom Merry?"

Gay winked at his cousin.

"Exactly!" he agreed. "Allow me to introduce myself. Tom Merry is your servant. Manners and Lowther."

And Wootton major and minor took off their caps and bowed solemnly. Algernon brightened up at once.

"I am so glad to meet you!" he exclaimed. "Miss Fawcett told me she had written to Thomas Merry to meet me at the station, and that he might bring his friends with him. I have something for you, Thomas—a pound-note Miss Fawcett gave me to hand to you!"

"Ahem! Never mind that now!" said Gay hastily. "Keep it for the present!"

"Yes, Thomas. You don't mind my calling you Thomas?"

"Not at all. Don't mind. Now," said Gay seriously.

"I suppose you don't know much about Public Schools and their manners and customs?"

"I'm afraid not. You see, I have

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always lived at Hackberry Head, that is a very rural and retired place."

"Truly rural, to judge by appearance," murmured Wootton major.

"Well, of course, we're going to look after you," said Gay reassuringly. "Now, the first thing is to make a good entrance at the school. A lot depends on that. In fact, your whole career at St. Jim's may depend upon the impression you make when you enter for the first time!"

"You don't say so?" exclaimed Blenkinsop.

"But I do! Now, Blenkinsop, my dear boy—"

"Blinksop!" said Algernon mildly. "Yes, I meant Blenkinsop. Now, look here—Hullo! Here came those boarders!" exclaimed Gordon Gay.

At the end of the street the Terrible Three appeared in sight. They were walking quickly towards the station. Gordon Gay did not lose a second. He grasped Blenkinsop by the arm and dragged him away, rushing him at top speed round the nearest corner. They were very, utterly awkward and breathless, went unrecognised. The two Woottons followed fast. In a twinkling they had disappeared.

"What—?" muttered Algernon.

Gordon Gay put his finger to his lips.

"Shush!"

"D-d-d-but—"

"Did you see those three kids?" asked Gay, in a mysterious voice.

"Yes; but—"

"You've only got away in time," whispered Gay. "They're three awfully desperate characters, and belong to a kind of reformatory in this neighbourhood. It's a shocking thing that they're allowed out loose, considering that they're committed crimes of the deepest dye!"

"You d-d-don't say so!" gasped Algernon.

"See if they're gone, Wootton—I mean, Lovelace."

Wootton major peered round the corner. The Terrible Three, who had not caught sight of the Grammarians, so quickly had they vanished, walked into the station.

"They're gone in," said Wootton.

"We must be low for a bit," said Gay, in an awed whisper. "Goodness knows what might happen if you met those chaps, Algernon!"

"If-goodness gracious!"

"If you come across them again, bolt at once," said Gay. "I warn you, as an old hand. The moment you see them simply bolt for it. Never mind where you are. It's quite possible some of them may pretend to be friendly to you, for the purpose of taking you by surprise, you know. Don't let them get near you. Simply bolt!"

Algernon swallowed that whole. His round blue eyes looked more like saucers than ever.

"Thank you so much, Thomas!" he gasped.

"Not at all!"

Gordon Gay looked cautiously round the corner. The Terrible Three were in the station some minutes, and they came out again, and looked about them with a puzzled air. They were evidently in search of Algernon. But Algernon was lying low with his new friends, and was not to be seen.

"I suppose he's started for St. Jim's," Monty Lovelace remarked.

"Then we ought to have passed him on the road," said Manners.

"May have taken the wrong road. I know he's an ass!"

Tom Harry nodded.

"Yes, that's it," he said. "He can't see the road."

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have gone by the road, or we should have passed him. He must have taken the footpath through the wood. We'll go back that way and keep an eye open for him."

In the quiet village street the voices of the Terrible Three were quite audible to Gordon Gay, at the corner, a dozen yards away. He grinned cheerfully, keeping back out of view. Tom Merry & Co. walked away and disappeared down the street.

"Are they g-g-gone?" stammered Blenkinsop, as the Australian junior came back to him.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Yes; but I fancy they're looking for you, Algy."

"You d-don't say so!"

"Yes, they've heard of you, and they're after you!"

"G-g-good gracious!"

"Keep your eye open for them. They may follow you to St. Jim's. They've got cheek enough for anything, and they're desperate characters! If you see them, hold! Remember that. It may save your life!"

"Oh dear!"

"And now you'd better get to the school as quick as possible, where you'll be safe," said Gay. "Come on! I suppose you left your box in the station."

"Yes."

"As you're new to Public schools I'd better give you a tip about that. The Head is frightfully down on slackers. If you want there in a cab with your box, I don't say he would scold you, but he might!"

"You don't say so?"

"He likes to see a fellow exerting himself," explained Gay. "If you want to make a good impression you must take your box to the school yourself."

"B-but I couldn't carry it," stammered Blenkinsop, in dismay. "It is too heavy."

"That's all right. You can wheel it. I'll show you where to get a wheelbarrow."

"You are k-k-kind."

"Of course. It's my intention to be kind. Come on!"

They returned to the station. The Terrible Three were gone, and as they were going through the wood there was little likelihood that they would fall in with the new boy again till after he reached St. Jim's. Under Gay's direction, Algernon's box was brought out of the station, and dumped down on the pavement.

"You are so-care the Head would like me to wheel it in on a wheel-b-b-barrow!" asked Algernon.

"My dear chap, you don't know the ropes. The Head's a rather peculiar chap."

"He mustn't be, Thomas."

"Exactly. You can hire a wheelbarrow here," said Gay, leading the way to the messenger's opposite the station. "You'll have to pay a look for the hire; but I'll pay that, in the circumstances. And another look for a chap to fetch it back when you've done with it."

"You are very k-k-kind!"

"Don't mention it."

Gordon Gay quickly arranged for the loan of the wheelbarrow, and Algernon wheeled it out. The three Grammarians lifted the box upon it.

"We'll give you a hand with it down the street," said Gay. "We can't go into St. Jim's with you. We've got a rather important engagement—ahem!—somewhere."

"Very well, Thomas."

Algernon took the handles of the wheelbarrow, and the Grammarians

helped him push it away. Algernon, who was evidently unaccustomed to exercise, was soon perspiring and panting. The barrow was wheeled out of the village at last, and they went down the lane towards St. Jim's. Gordon Gay was as grave as a judge, but Wootton major and minor were almost choking.

The old tower of St. Jim's appeared in sight at last. Then the Grammarians halted.

"Sorry, but we must go now," said Gordon Gay regretfully. "We'd like to come in with you; we really would."

"Ha, ha! Rather!" roared Harry Wootton.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Gay severely. "Shut up! Go straight on, Algy, and when you come to the big stone gateway, turn in. That's St. Jim's."

"Thank you, Thomas!"

"See you later," said Gay. "Come on, you chaps!"

The three Grammarians beat a retreat. It was high time, for they were very close to the enemy's country, so to speak. Algernon Blenkinsop paused for a moment to mop his perspiring brow, and then took up the handles of the wheelbarrow again and pressed on. A few minutes later he was wheeling his box on the barrow in at the gates of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

The Arrival of Algernon!

"**B**UT JIM! Whatever does this mean!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arvy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's stopped in his elegant manner in the quadrangle in blank amazement.

He peeped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye, and surveyed the astonishing sight before him. A youth, with a silk hat pushed back from his red and perspiring brow, and his Eton's very dusty, was wheeling a barrow in at the school gates, and upon the barrow reposed a large box.

"Great Scott!"

"Hullo!" said Jack Blake, coming out of the School House. "What on earth's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of fellows at once to view the newcomer.

Taggles, the porter, came out of his lodge, and almost fell down at the sight of the new junior.

"What's that?" he asked.

Algernon Blenkinsop paused, and let the barrow rest for a moment, turning his saucer-like eyes upon the porter.

"Good-afternoon!" he squeaked.

"Oh, my boys!"

"This is St. Jim's, my g-g-god man, is it not?"

"Yes," gasped Taggles. "But what do—"

"Thank you so much! I am the new boy. Will you tell me which is the School House, my good man?"

Taggles, the porter for words, pointed out the School House. And Blenkinsop took up the handles again, and wheeled the barrow up the drive.

A shriek of laughter greeted him.

Algernon seemed surprised by the laughter. He looked round at the pulling juniors with wide-open eyes as he wheeled the barrow onward.

"Oh, great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who is it? What is it?"

"This takes the giddy biscuit. Ha, ha, ha!"

Half St. Jim's had gathered round the newcomer by the time he reached the steps of the School House.

The roars of laughter had brought Mr. Bailton, the Housemaster, out of his study, and he came out of the doorway of the School House to see what was the cause of the uproar.

He started at the sight of Bleskingsop. "Blimey my soul!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Algernon paused, and let the barrow drop, and breathed hard. He could not wheel the barrow up the steps, or probably he would have done so.

"Boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bailton. "Who are you?"

Algernon blinked at him. "If you pip-pip-pip—" he stammered. "If I what!" gasped the astounded Housemaster.

"If you pip-pip-please, I'm the new boy."

"Oh, you are Bleskingsop?" exclaimed Mr. Bailton.

"Yes, sir, if you pip-pip-please." "And what do you mean, Bleskingsop, by coming here in this fashion, wheeling your box here on a wheelbarrow?" thundered the Housemaster.

Algernon opened his eyes wide. "I—I thought it would pip-pip-please the Head, sir."

"You thought it would please the Head! Are you insane, boy, or is this impudence?"

"Nunno, sir. Thomas told me so," said Algernon, in dismay.

"Thomas! Who is Thomas?"

"Thomas Merry, sir."

"Oh, Merry of the Shell! Do you mean to tell me, Bleskingsop, that Merry advised you to bring your box here in this ridiculous manner, and that you were stupid enough to take his advice?" Mr. Bailton asked witheringly.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"

"Then I shall speak to Merry about it. Come, please call the porter to take this box in, and to take that barrow away!"

"Yes, sir," chuckled Care of the Shell.

"You may come in, Bleskingsop. I am your Housemaster. Follow me!"

"Yes—er, sir!"

And the dusty and perspiring youth from Huckleberry Heath followed Mr. Bailton to his study.

The crowd in the quadrangle roared. The extraordinary arrival of the new junior was something novel in their experience. That any boy could be so incredibly "green" was amazing. But Algernon had evidently acted in good faith, in the innocence of his heart.

"Oh, that bouncer Merry!" ejaculated Kargore of the Shell. "What an idea, to send that freshman on here with his box on a barrow."

"But what a howling idiot!" said Levison of the Fourth.

"What a herb-like corker!" chuckled Mellish. "He must be as green as grass, or a good bit greener. Ha, ha, ha!"

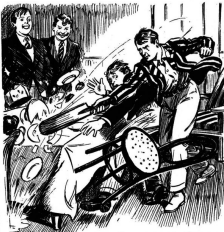
"Bai Jove! It was a wathah wotter trick to play on a new kid," said Arthur Augustus severely. "I shall remember with Tom Morrey about this."

"The silly ass!" said Horrie. "He ought to be sent to a home for idiots, I should think. I wonder what Form he's going into!"

"He's going into the School House, anyway," grinned Figgins of the New House. "That's a bit of luck. They might have shoved him into our House."

"Proper place for him," said Digby.

"Oh, my hat! I wonder what study he will have! If they put that awful ass into No. 5—"



As News wiped at Algernon with the hat the new boy leaped out of the chair. Algy was green, but he was not green enough to stop that, but! There was a terrific crash as the hat, meeting with no resistance, crashed amidst the mockery on the table.

"Bai Jove!"

Most of the juniors waited for Bleskingsop to come out of the Housemaster's study. They were curious to see something more of the verdant youth. He came out at last, and found a crowd looking for him. He blinked round at them with his mackerel-like eyes.

"If you pip-pip-please," he said, "is Levison here?"

"Hallo! What's wanted!" said Levison.

"Are you Levison of the Fourth Form, please?"

"Yes."

"Then I am very pleased to meet-mum-mum—"

"He's very pleased to meet-mum-mum!" said Levison, in wonder. "What on earth is he talking about! Anybody know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm very glad to meet-mum-mum—"

"Mum's the word!" chuckled Lemley-Lemley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm very glad to meet-mum-mum-make your acquaintance," jerked out Bleskingsop at last.

"Oh!" said Levison. "Well, the pleasure's all on your side."

"Mr. Bailton says I'm to shake-shake-shake—"

"Well, shake, then—it's time you did!"

"To shake-shake-share your study."

"Oh!" ejaculated Levison. "Is that it! Look here, we've three in that study already, and we don't want a tame lunatic added."

"Rather not," said Mellish.

"I guess he can come in," said Lemley-Lemley. "You're welcome,

kid. I'm in that study, too, and you'll be an improvement on Levison and Mellish, anyway."

"Thank-shank you! You are very k-k-kind."

"So you're in the Fourth!" said Blesky.

"Yes, pip-pip-please. Will someone shake-shake me the way to the study."

A peculiar gleam came into Levison's eye. Levison had a peculiar turn of humour, and it occurred to him at once that this decidedly green youth would afford him any amount of entertainment. So he assumed a cheerful grin, and took Algernon Bleskingsop's arm.

"Certainly," he said. "I'll look after you."

"Thank you!"

And Levison led the new junior away. The crowd dispersed, still chattering over the advent of the cheerful Algernon. They were still discussing Algernon, with many chuckles, when the Terrible Three returned to St. Jim's some time later.

CHAPTER 4.

Making Himself At Home!

ALGERNON BLESKINGSOP walked away contentedly with Levison. The end of the Fourth was bland and friendly, and it would have required a sharper youth than Algernon to see through the end of the Fourth.

"I suppose you feel a bit tired after your journey—what?" asked Levison.

"Yes, a little," confessed Bleskingsop. "It is quite a long distance from Huckleberry Heath to this school, Algy."

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It was very fatiguing whodling the bus here on the barrow. I am also somewhat dumpy. I should like a wash very much."

"You can get that in your study," said Levinson calmly. "The studies here are very well got up, you know—sort of bed-sitting-room, with everything you want. Here's your room."

Levinson had led the new junior by a roundabout course to the Sixth Form passage. He opened the door of Knoc's study. He had seen Knoc on the cricket ground, and so knew that there was no danger of the bully of the Sixth coming in just then. Algernon stepped into Knoc's study, and surveyed his new quarters with satisfaction.

"Dear me! This is very nice!" he exclaimed. "I had no idea that junior studies were so large as this!"

"Glad you like it," said Levinson. "And how very comfortable to have a bed in the study, nicely arranged in an alcove!" went on Algernon. "I understood that all boys below the Sixth sleep in dormitories, and only used their studies for working in."

"Oh, that's quite out of date!" said Levinson airily.

"But there is only one bed," said Algernon, slightly puzzled. "Surely one bed is not enough for three or four boys!"

"Ahem! The other beds are specially made up at night," murmured Levinson. "We—no sleep in hammocks here, you know, some of us!"

"Do you really?" said Algernon, his eyes spanning wide.

"You'll find everything you want here," said Levinson, with a wave of the hand. "In that cupboard, Knoc—I mean, we keep our grub. If you're hungry, help yourself. Take anything you like—you're quite welcome."

"You are very kind indeed."

"That's all right. I'll leave you here now."

And Levinson quitted Knoc's study and joined his friends, Melnik, Gore, and Crooks, in the quadrangle, and the young rascals yelled with laughter when they heard where Algernon was. Knoc

was one of the worst bullies at St. Jim's, and when he found Algernon making free with his quarters and his provisions, there was no telling what would happen, but it was certain to be something violent.

Algernon, without suspicion, made himself at home in Knoc's study. He washed himself at Knoc's washstand, and dried himself with Knoc's towel, and brushed down his dusty clothes with Knoc's brush, and combed his hair with Knoc's comb. Then he opened Knoc's cupboard, and his eyes glistened with satisfaction as he saw the contents.

Knoc intended to stand a tea that afternoon to Cutts of the Fifth and Stokes and another friend or two, and the supplies were already laid in. These were ham and cold beef, and cake and tarts, and jam in abundance, and nice little rolls and buns.

Algernon set out Knoc's spread, and proceeded to pile into it. He had brought a very healthy appetite with him from Huckleberry Heath, and he did full justice to Knoc's provisions.

He was enjoying himself immensely when the study door opened, after a light tap, and a very well-dressed and somewhat suspicious-looking fellow came in.

It was Cutts, the dandy of the Fifth, although Algernon did not know it. He hadn't the honour of Gerald Cutts's acquaintance so far.

The senior glanced at Algernon in surprise.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Who on earth are you? What are you doing here?"

"I am having tea," said Algernon.

"Oh, you're the new kid who came in with a barrow, aren't you?" said Cutts, with a grin. "You are a bright specimen, I must say."

"It is very kind indeed of you to say so," replied Algernon gratefully. "I am very pip-pip-pleased to make a good impression."

"Mad," said Cutts, addressing space, "quite mad! Look here, young shaver,

I've come to tea. Do you know where Knoc is?"

"I am sorry, but I do not know Knoc," said Algernon. "But if you have come to tea, please sit down. You are very welcome, and there is plenty for all."

Gilmore of the Fifth came in. He had come to tea, too, and, like Cutts, he was a little early. Knoc was still on the cricket ground. Gilmore stared at Henkings, and then looked inquiringly at Cutts.

"What's the little game?" he asked. Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

"Blamed if I know!" he said. "I found the merchant here, looking into Knoc's tent. I should say there would be murder done as soon as Knoc comes in. Blamed if I ever heard of such cheek—a new kid in the fags coming into a senior study, and tucking into a Sixth Former's tea! I don't know what this school is coming to!"

"My dear fellow, you are mistaken!" said Algernon, in surprise. "This is my study."

"Your study!" shouted Cutts and Gilmore together.

"Yes, certainly!"

"You're not in the Sixth!" roared Gilmore.

"No; I am in the Fourth."

"It's a jape!" gasped Cutts. "Some one has shoved him in here! Hallo! Here comes Knoc at last. Knoc, old man, you've got a new study-mate."

Knoc of the Sixth came up the passage. He had his hat under his arm.

"Hallo! What's that?" he asked.

Then he stood transfixed. He had not seen Algernon arrive, and did not know him from Adam. He only saw a perfect stranger in his study, with many signs that he had made himself at home there, devouring his food. Knoc's eyes almost started from his head. He lost his voice for some moments. The two Fifth Formers looked on, grinning, wondering what was going to happen to the amiable Algernon.

Algernon did not seem to think that anything was going to happen. He smiled up at Knoc—a welcoming smile.

"Who are you?" stammered Knoc at last.

"Algernon Henkings, please. Would you like to have tea?"

"Who told you to sit down to my food?" roared Knoc.

"Your food! Surely you are mistaken," said Algernon. "This is my study!"

"Your study?" gasped Knoc. He let his hat slide down from under his arm, and took a busby-like grip on the cane handle. "Your study? I suppose you're mad; and I always brain batsmen who get into my study! Now, then—" And Knoc rested at Algernon.

If the whip of the bat had reached Algernon, it would not have brained him, as it was not aimed at his head, but it would have hurt him considerably. Algernon was green, but he was not green enough to try to stop the bat.

He leaped out of his chair with surprising celerity, and bounded away in alarm. Knoc's hat, meeting with no resistance, swept through the air, and crashed upon the credenza on the table, and there was the sound of a terrific smash.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Cutts. "Mind your eye! You're breaking up the happy home!"

"I'll smash him!" shrieked Knoc. "I'll—" He bounded round the table after Algernon.



The SCHOOL of UNWANTED BOYS!

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Algerman was in a state of wild alarm, but he did not stop to argue; he realized that it was a time for action, not for words. He leaped wildly for the door, dodging round Cotts and Gilmore. Knox rushed after him, bumping into Cotts and hurling him across the study. He seized himself from the shock, and Algerman slipped out of the study. Knox panted, and dashed after him.

Down the passage went the frightened Algerman like a deer. But Knox was faster. His heavy footsteps came closer and closer, and as Algerman reached the end of the passage, Knox's outstretched hand tapped his shoulder. Another moment, and Algerman would have been in the grasp of the avenger. In sheer terror, Algerman threw himself across the floor, and, as it happened, it was the best thing he could have done. Knox, unable to stop himself in time, tripped over the junior, fell across him, and rolled on the floor, dazed and breathless. Algerman was on his feet again in a twinkling, and fleeing for his life.

It was a full minute before Knox scrambled up, considerably hurt. He looked round for Algerman, but that youth had disappeared. Knox, rubbing his head and muttering remarks which would have earned him the sack if the Head had heard them, returned to his study in a state of fury.

Algerman had found safety in the quadrangle. He stopped to take breath under the old eaves, panting, and still in a state of great alarm.

"My goodness!" he murmured. "This is a dreadful! My dear papa said that I should find some of the boys very rough; but really—really—"

And Algerman mopped his brow, wondering what his papa would have thought if he could have seen him then.

CHAPTER 5.

A Run for Life!

"YOU borders!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the Terrible Three came into the quadrangle.

Arthur Augustus had been waiting for them to come in, and he turned his eyes upon them with a severe expression.

Tom Merry & Co. were exasperated, fazed, and dusty. They had spent quite a considerable time looking for Algerman Hunkinson, under the persuasion that the youth from the country was somewhere on the woodland paths. But they had not found him, and they had returned to St. Jim's at last, hot and tired, and a little cross, and wondering what had become of the new junior.

They stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he greeted them with reproachful accents.

"Hallo, what's hitting you now?" asked Leather, rather gruffly.

"Nobbin' is hittin' me, Leather, and I regard the question as ridiculous," said Arthur Augustus, "and I consider it my duty to tell you that I do not approve of it."

"Wandering again!" said Manners, tapping his forehead. "Poor old Great!"

"Wally, Manners, you know perfectly well what I am alludin' to. Such a trick on a new boy is really put all bounds."

"A new boy?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Has the new boy come, then?"

"Yess, wathah!"

"My hat! How on earth did we miss him, then?" exclaimed Tom Merry in



surprise. "It's all right, chaps! He's come!"

"You were perfectly aware that he had come, Tom Merry, since you sent him home with his box on a wheelbarrow!"

"What?"

"You don't mean to say it wasn't you?" asked Jack Blake, coming up.

"The new kid said that Tom Merry advised him to bring his box on a wheelbarrow!"

The Terrible Three looked amazed. "His box on a wheelbarrow!" said Tom faintly.

"Oh, ye gods and little fishes!" murmured Leather.

"Didn't you really know, dear boys?"

"Knox?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "We haven't seen the new kid, I had a letter from my old governess about him, and we went down to the station to meet him; but we were late, and we missed him. We've been looking for the ax. Do you mean to say that he arrived here with his box on a wheelbarrow?"

"Yess, wathah!"

"Somebody must have been japing him," grinned Blake. "He certainly said Tom Merry had advised him to do it. Somebody's been taking your name in vain, old son. You should have seen Hallion's face when Algerman came up with the wheelbarrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is the silly ax now?" asked Tom. "He must be frightfully green to be japed like that. I've got to take him under my wing."

"Wah, son, joy of him," grinned Blake. "The last I saw of him he was with Leavin'. He's been put in Leavin's study."

"Then he's not in the Shell!" said Leather. "Good! You won't be able to have him in our study, Tommy!"

Tom Merry drew a breath of relief. He was quite willing to do all he could for the new boy, but he certainly didn't want the verdant youth from Huckleberry Heath fixed in his study. As the new junior was in the Fourth, that was, fortunately, impossible.

"Better see him, though," said Tom. "Anybody know where he is?"

"Here's Leavin'," said Blake. "Ask him. Leavin', where's the new kid?"

"I think he's in the quad somewhere," said Leavin' calmly. "He's been in some trouble with Knox. I saw Knox chasing him out of his study. He seems to have fancied that Knox's study was his study, and made himself at home there. Quer, wasn't it?"

"Bad Jove!"

"Very queer," said Blake suspiciously. "I dare say you could explain how he came to make the mistake."

"I dare say," asserted Leavin' coolly. "I never saw anybody quite so green. Are they all as green as that in Huckleberry Heath, where you come from, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry did not reply. He was looking round the old quadrangle.

"Is that the moment?" he asked, as he caught sight of a lanky youth under the old eaves.

"That's the duffer," said Blake. "Well, I'd better speak to him," said Tom. "Come on, you chaps! He's got my spirit, remember!"

The Terrible Three started towards the new junior. Algerman was looking away towards the School House, and he did not see the Terrible Three till they were close on him. He did not turn his head, in fact, till Tom called out to him.

"Hallo, Hunkinson?"

Algerman looked round then, and as his eyes fell upon the Terrible Three he turned quite pale and started back. He recognized at once the three desperate characters against whom Gordon Gay had warned him so solemnly. Evidently they were after him, and had fairly run him down in the quadrangle of St. Jim's.

"Keep off!" gasped Algerman.

"That!"

"Keep away! I—I— Help!"

Algerman turned tail and ran as if for his life. The Terrible Three stood rooted to the ground, staring after him in astonishment.

"What's the matter with him?" exclaimed Manners.

"Is he mad?" gasped Leather.

"Great Scott! He really seems to be a little bit wacky in the cranium!"

Tom Merry & Co. broke into a run after Algerman. They had to make his acquaintance, in order to take him under their wing, as Miss Fawcett had requested; and, still more important, in order to obtain the pearl Miss Fawcett had entrusted him with for her ward.

Algerman was running towards the School House, but he remembered that the dangerous Knox was there, and veered off towards the New House.

"Aftah him!" yelled Arthur Augustus, waving his eyes in great excitement.

"Too to see in, Algy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algerman drew near to the New House and looked back. The Shell fellows were close behind. With a gasp, he dodged up the steps and ran into the House. Figgins & Co. were standing in the doorway, chatting. Algerman rushed through them, and Figgins roared to one side, and Kerr on the other, and Patsy Wynn went spawling. Without a glance at the wreck he had made, Algerman sailed on, and dashed up the stairs.

"What the trump does this mean?" roared Figgins, struggling to his feet as the Terrible Three came up breathlessly. "What the—who the—how the—"

"Where's that fanatic!" gasped Tom.

"What the—"

"Come on!" yelled Leather, catching

Tom's arm.

"The Gas Lincor—No. 1,400."

a glimpse of Algernon on the stairs. "The way!"

The three fellows rushed upstairs, leaving Figgins & Co. staring. Algernon reached the Fourth Form passage, and passed to take breath; but the sight of the three desperadoes tearing up the staircase set him on again. He went down the passage at top speed, and, seeing an open doorway, plunged in.

It happened to be Redfern's study, and Redfern, Owsa, and Lawrence were at tea there. Algernon did not even see them. He grabbed the door, slammed it shut, and turned the key in the lock. Then he staggered to a chair and sank down, almost sobbing with relief.

"Oh dear! Saved! Goodness gracious!"

Redfern & Co. were on their feet in utter astonishment. They stared at the sopping jurist.

"Who the deuce are you?" demanded Redfern.

"Oh dear! Save me!"
"It's that new merchant in the School House," grinned Lawrence—"the dotty fellow who came with his box on a wheelbarrow."

"Well, this study isn't an asylum for dotty fellows," said Redfern. "Look here, young Hopsal, what do you want here?"

"They're coming after me!" panted Algernon.

"Eh? Who are after you?"

"Those three desperate young villains from the reformatory! They are going to rob and harm me!" panted Algernon.

"My hat!"

There was a wrench at the door-handle and then a loud thumping on the panels. The parsons had arrived! Algernon palpitated.

"Here they come!" he shrieked. "Don't open the door! They are desperate! Help!"

"Open this door!" roared Tom Merry. "Let us in, Reddy!"

"Right-ho!" said Redfern. "Keep your wool on!"

"Don't open the door!" yelled Algernon. "They're dangerous!"

"We'll chance it," grinned Redfern, and he unlocked the door. "Now, you School House benders, come and take this babbling fanatic away."

The Terrible Three rushed in. Algernon leaped up and sprang across the study and seized the poker from the grate. He brandished it round his head, and there was a crash as the poker came in contact with the clock on the mantelpiece.

"Keep off!" yelled Algernon.

"Look here—"

"I will defend myself! I will not be robbed and attacked! I—"

Tom Merry almost collapsed.

"Robbed and attacked!" he articulated. "My only uncle's messenger hat! What kind of a ravine lunatic have they played on us now?"

"I know you!" panted Algernon.

"You—you raffish! I know you belong to the reformatory—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Redfern.

"You've found out now, Tom Merry."

"I was warned against you," said Algernon. "Tom Merry—"

"What! I'm Tom Merry!"

"Oh, it's that japer again, been stuffing him up with paper now?" gasped Lawrence. "Oh, my hat! Green as the girl's grass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put that poker down, you idiot!" said Redfern. "Somebody's got to pay for that clock and mantelpiece—"

"It's all right, Blinksop," said Tom Merry. "The Gem Library—No. 1,488."

laughing. "You've been japed, you see. Somebody's been palping your bag. I'm Tom Merry. I came to the station to meet you and missed you."

Algernon looked at him suspiciously. But the yells of laughter from the New House fellows convinced him that there was nothing to be feared. He put down the poker.

"If you are Tom Merry, I have been deceived," he said. "But the three boys who met me at the station told me they were Tom Merry, Manners, and Leather, and pointed you out to me as dangerous characters. They said you belonged to a reformatory in the neighbourhood."

"My hat! Most have been some of the Grammarians," said Redfern. "And this born idiot took them for St. Jim's chaps. Take him away and bury him!"

"Come on, Algernon!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "You've got a quid for me that my government gave you. Come and help us blow it at the tuck-shop."

"You are very kind," said Algernon, convinced at last. "I am truly sorry for the mistake. If I meet those boys again I shall speak to them severely. I shall tell them that I consider their conduct reprehensible."

"That will simply crush them!" said Monty Leather solemnly. "They will probably go right away and drown themselves."

"You don't say so?" ejaculated Algernon.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along!" said Tom, seizing Algernon by the arm. "Ready, you chaps come, too. We've got a quid to blow."

"Hear, hear!" said Redfern.

And they descended the stairs together. They found Figgins & Co. prepared to bar the way, with respectful bows. But an invitation to the school deep disarmed Figgins & Co., and they joined the party in great good humour. The chains of Sturdy No. 6 joined them in the quad, so quite a little army invaded Dame Taggles' tuckshop. The pound note was duly produced and handed over by Algernon, and the jurors proceeded to "blow" it in various living.

CHAPTER 6.

Salute!

THE next day Algernon Blinksop took his place in the Fourth Form.

The peculiar manner of Blinksop's arrival at St. Jim's had drawn general attention to him, and the juniors especially were very much interested in the verdant youth. He was so excessively simple that the other fellows in the Fourth found him quite amusing.

The Fourth Form had to wait a little for Mr. Latham, their Form-master, in the morning, that gentleman not being always quite punctual. As a rule, the Fourth Formers would have filled up the interval with throwing paper pellets at one another, or perhaps playing leap-frog in the Form-room. Now their attention was turned to Blinksop. It was already becoming a general amusement to pull Blinksop's leg.

Lawson had taken him in hand, and the other fellows hunted, pinning as Lawson talked to the wide-eyed, open-mouthed Algernon.

"You haven't met Mr. Latham yet?" Lawson asked.

"Yes, he spoke to me yesterday," said Blinksop.

Lawson looked very grave.

"Did you make the salute?" he asked.

"The—the what?"

"The St. Jim's salute."

"Nonsense! I-I have never heard of it," said Algernon, looking distressed. "I trust I have not neglected any act of proper respect towards Mr. Latham. My dear papa has told me to be always respectful to my kind teachers."

"Well, as you didn't know, I dare say Latham won't say anything about it," said Lawson consolingly. "But, of course, he'll expect you to learn about it by this time, and you'd better do it when he comes in."

"I will, certainly, if you will explain to me—"

"With pleasure," said Lawson. "As Mr. Latham goes to his desk you have to make the salute with both hands. I suppose you know that all the old Public schools have their own special customs. St. Jim's is just like the rest. You put the tip of your thumb to the tip of your nose—like this, and then stretch out all the fingers as far as they will go. That's called the First Salute!"

"That seems quite easy!" said Algernon.

"It's easy enough," said Lawson, while the rest of the Fourth gurgled helplessly at seeing Algernon practice the First Salute. "That's what you do as Mr. Latham enters. He will stop there—"

"I should jolly well think he would!" murmured Blake.

"And Algy had better stop there, too!"

"Yess, wotnot! I weally think—"

"Shut up, you chaps! Latham may be in any minute, and Algernon will get into trouble if he doesn't salute him properly. Having made the First Salute, Blinksop, you then put the tip of the thumb of the left hand to the tip of the little finger of the right hand, and stretch out all the fingers in the same way. This is called the Second Salute, and is used for Form-masters. The First Salute is for prefects."

"I see."

"There, you can do it already," said Lawson. "Mind, stand up in your place immediately Latham comes in, and give him First and Second Salute."

"Thank you so much, Lawson!"

"But Jove, you know—"

"Shurrup!" said Blake.

"But, really—"

"He can't be an ass enough to do it," murmured Dicky. "But if he does—"

"Oh, my hat—"

"Yess, and I weally consider—"

"Here comes Latham!"

The Form-room door opened and Mr. Latham entered. He blinked humorously at the boys over his glasses, and went towards his desk. Lawson nudged Blinksop, and the new boy, anxious to do his duty, stood up in his place. Mr. Latham paused, and glanced at him.

Blinksop raised his right hand, and, looking directly towards the Form-master, placed the tip of his thumb in his nose, and extended the fingers of his hand.

The master of the Fourth jumped, and stood looking at him, scarcely able to believe his eyes. Then, as he stood rooted to the floor in astonishment, Algernon raised his left hand, put his thumb to the little finger of his right, stretched out the fingers, and added the Second Salute.

Mr. Latham looked quite dazed. From the Fourth Form came an irrepressible yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon did not heed the laughter. He did not understand it. He was doing his duty, according to instructions, and that was enough for him.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Lathom at last. "Am I dreaming?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon Blinkinsop still stood before the Form-master, his fingers stretched from his nose in salute. If all had gone well Mr. Lathom ought to have looked pleased. But all was apparently not going well. Mr. Lathom certainly did not look pleased. Blank amazement in his face gave place to anger, and thunder gathered on his brows.

"Boy!" he thundered.

Algernon jumped.

"Yes, sir?"

"What do you mean? How dare you, sir, treat your Form-master with—with such unbecomingly insolence!" shouted Mr. Lathom. "Silence, boys; how dare you laugh! Blinkinsop, you—you are an insolent young rascal, sir!"

"You—you don't say so!" gasped Algernon, his hands dropping from the salute. "I—I was only saluting you, sir."

"What?"

"I—I thought you'd be pleased, sir," said Algernon, in dismay, and Mr. Lathom reached a case of his desk.

"You—you thought that I should be pleased by this unbecomingly impertinence?" ejaculated Mr. Lathom. "Are you out of your senses, boy?"

"No-no, sir. I hope not. I—I understood that that was the regular salute for a Ful-Ful-Form-master. I was told—told so!"

"Ah," exclaimed Mr. Lathom, "someone has been deceiving this incredibly stupid boy! Who told you this ridiculous thing, Blinkinsop?"

Levinson gave Blinkinsop a warning look. The unfortunate Algernon understood then, and he stammered. He realized that he had been japed, and he knew enough of schools, at least, to know that he was expected not to "streak."

"I—I—I'd rather not say, sir," he stammered. "I ful-ful-ful—"

"You what?"

"I ful-ful-ful-fear that the boy has deceived me, sir. I assure you, sir, that I acted with the best intentions, sir, and never intended to be impertinent. I should be very sorry indeed to embarrass—"

"To what?"

"To unbecomingly impertinent, sir. I intended to give you a kick-kick-kick-ordinary salute, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled the Fourth.

"You—you dreadfully stupid boy!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "I see that someone has been practising on your inexperience. You must not believe all that you are told. Take your place, and I will pass this matter over."

"Ti-th-thank you, sir. I am un-un-un-sure, sir. In the circumstances, sir, I am gig-gig-gig-gig—"

"Enough!"

"I am gig-gig-grateful to you, sir, for your kick-kick-kindness, and I shall be cook-cook-cook-careful, sir—"

"If you say another word, Blinkinsop, I will cane you!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Dear me! Sit down instantly and be silent."

And Algernon obeyed at last; but it was some minutes before the Fourth Form could be reduced to a proper state of gravity for lessons to commence.

CHAPTER 7.

Levinson Makes a Collection!

LEVINSON heard the new boy dismistral of him after that experience in the Form-room. It was a case of once bitten and twice shy. Algernon did not bear malice; he was too kind and good-natured for that.

He even presented Levinson with a little tract, which he said was written by his dear papa, entitled "Hold to the Truth; or, the Cost of a Lie." Levinson did not read the tract. He stuffed it down Algernon's back, and the well-meaning youth experienced considerable difficulty in extracting it again.

Algernon was well supplied with treats suitable to all occasions, and he presented them to all sorts of fellows. He was also very eloquent on the subject of missionary work in the Torres Strait Islands. Algernon, green as he was, was not at all backward in coming forward, and he made himself quite prominent.

That evening in the study, when the four juniors were at tea, he talked about the Torres Strait Islands and the splendid work done there in inducing the natives to give up cannibalism and take to trousers. Lumber-Lumber raved and retreated from the study. Mellish threatened to bump Algernon's

provide the Booby-Cooby Islanders with wheelbarrows. At present, you know, they have to carry this—the pearls in sacks on their shoulders, and if they had wheelbarrows it would be even so much better for them. He is going to provide them with wheelbarrows, with tracts written out on them in the Booby-Cooby language, so that they will have the words always under their eyes."

"What a noble work!" exclaimed Algernon in enthusiastic admiration. "How proud you should be of your brother, Levinson!"

"I am!" said Levinson solemnly. "I've been making a collection—some of the fellows have actually been with-out your parts for the sake of contributing to the fund. I myself have stopped eating toffee for six weeks and saved up the money. Mellish has sold his bicycle to raise money for it. Unfortunately I cannot raise any more, and the fund is still short of ten shillings. I don't know what's to be done."

Algernon beamed.

"How very ful-ful-ful—"

"What?"

"Ful-ful-fortunate! I have ten shillings that my dear papa gave me for pocket-money before I left home."

"Have you really?" said Levinson. "But I can't let you contribute it all. Oh, no; we couldn't think of that, could we, Mellish?"

Mellish shook his head solemnly. "The unfortunate thing is, that a ship only goes to the Booby-Cooby Islands once a year," went on Levinson. "If I don't get the money sent off this evening, it will miss the ship, and the Booby-Cooby Islanders will have to wait for their tracts—I mean their wheelbarrows, for another whole year. That is what is worrying me. It kept me awake all last night in the dorm thinking about it."

Algernon groped in his pocket for the ten-shilling note.

"My dear Levinson, you must take it. I need not say. I am proud and happy to assist in such a man-noble work."

"Well, if you insist," said Levinson reluctantly, and his thin fingers closed upon the note. "This is very noble of you, Blinkinsop."

"Betwixt us and send it off at once," said Mellish, rising with alacrity. "I'll come with you, Levinson."

"So will I, my dear fellow," said Algernon.

But Levinson quietly laid his hand upon Algernon's shoulder, and pushed him back into his chair.

"No, I won't trouble you, Algy," he said. "You stay here, and—"

"No, no; I will come. It is so ful-ful-trouble at all."

"I'm in want of a tract to send to a chap in the village," said Levinson hastily. "Look out one dealing with—with drink, will you, and have it ready for me when I come back?"

"Oh, certainly, Levinson!"

And leaving Algernon thus congenially employed, the two young rascals quitted the study. They went clunking down the passage. The chairs of Study No. 6 were chatting outside their doorway, and they looked suspiciously at Levinson and his comrade. When those two cheerful juniors were pleased, it was generally the sign that someone else had reason to be displeased.

"Hallo, what rotten trick have you been playing now?" asked Blake gravely.

"Plead out!" retorted Levinson. And he hovered on with his companion, and they had no time in getting to the school shop. That was the intended destination.

THE GUN LAMARZ.—No. 1, 480.

THIRTEENTH TIME LUCKY!



Old David: "Why do you keep tossing that penny in the air, my boy?"

Boy: "Well, I'm tossing up to see whether I shall go to school or play truant, and twelve times it's come down wrong!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. HATCH, 20, Chatham Road, Wandsworth Common, Battersea, London, S.W.11.

head in the fender if he did not leave off; but Levinson clipped in.

"Don't take any notice of Mellish, Blinkinsop," he said. "He does not understand these serious subjects. Go on! I'm actually interested."

Mellish stared blankly at his chair; and Levinson closed one eye—the eye that was furthest from Algernon.

Then Mellish understood, and held his peace. Algernon rattled on cheerfully. He was well up in his subject.

"That's jolly interesting," said Levinson, with a nod and stifling a yawn. "I'm specially keen on that kind of thing, because my brother's a missionary in the—the Booby-Cooby Islands. You have heard of them?"

Algernon shook his head.

"I am un-un-sure, I cannot say—say I have," he remarked.

Mellish changed a chuckle to a cough just in time, at a warning glance from Levinson. This was the last Mellish had heard of Levinson's missionary brother.

"The fact is, I'm making a collection for him," went on Levinson blandly. "He requires twenty pounds in order to

of the unfortunate Algeron's one-and-only hen-shilling note.

"But Jove, they've been playin' some trick on Blenkinsop!" said Arthur Augustus. "I really do not approve of these pranks on Blenkinsop. Let's go and see him."

The strains of the Fourth looked into Blenkinsop's study. They found him rooting among piles of tracts. He looked up with a beaming smile.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, "I have been very much mistaken in Levinson! I really had a hard opinion of him, because he procrastinated this morning. But he is really a noble fellow."

"Is he?" said Blake. "This is the first we've heard of it; and you're the only chap that's made the discovery. What has he been doing now?"

"It is really splendid," said Algeron. "He is making a collection to send to his brother, the missionary in the Booby-Gooby Islands."

"What?" yelled Blake.

"But Jove!"

"He has denied himself the luxury of tiffin, and Mellish has sold his bicycle for the benefit of the fund to provide the Booby-Gooby Islanders with wheelbarrows."

"My hat!" Blake staggered against the door. "Oh, my only sainted Aunt Josephine!"

"And he required just ten shillings to make up the required sum, so I—"

"Do you mean to say that he's squandered a half-quad out of you?" asked Herries.

"My dear Herries, it was for the collection."

"The rotten scoundrel!" scolded Blake. "That's going too far. He's jolly well not going to catch the duffer out of his money!"

"Watch out!"

"It's a beautiful scindle!" said Eighy. "My dear fellows, it is a marvellous work, and I am delighted to find that my estimate of Levinson's character was entirely mistaken. He—"

"You frazzles an!" roared Blake. "Levinson hasn't any missionaries in the family—more likely he has convicts. He'd washed you!"

"Oh dear! You don't say so!"

"This is where Study No. 4 stops in," said Blake. "Where has Levinson gone, fatted?"

"He has gone to send the money to the mission."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come to the tuckshop more likely!" growled Blake. "Come on, you fellows! We'll make the cad refund that half-quad. You come, too, Blenkinsop."

"I am um-m-m-m-sorry, but I am looking out a tract for Levinson."

"Well, I dare say he needs it; but that can wait. Come on!"

And Blake craned Blenkinsop by the collar and whisked him out of the study. There was a shower of tracts in the air as Algeron thus departed. They settled like snow over the study, but Algeron was not allowed to stop and gather them up. He was rushed away down the passage, and the Fourth Formers, in their haste, nearly collided with the Terrible Three, who were coming up to their study.

"Hallo. Which board?" exclaimed Leather.

"Levinson has washed this silly jay out of a half-quad," said Blake. "We're going to make him disgorge. You can come and lend a hand if you like."

"What's he?"

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And the Terrible Three followed the Fourth Formers, and they arrived, breathless, in the tuckshop.

CHAPTER 8.

Not a Success!

LEVINSON and Mellish were seated upon high stools at the counter, enjoying themselves. Each of them had a plate of jam tarts before him, and several empty ginger-beer bottles showed that they had not been wasting time. Blenkinsop's ten-shilling note was not likely to last long at that rate.

The two young passels looked rather alarmed as Tom Merry & Co. swarmed in. Danne Taggles, who was serving them, looked surprised.

"At it already—eh?" said Blake generally. "Have they paid for any of those things yet, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Not yet, Master Blake."

"Good!" Levinson, my son, will you have the kindness to hand Blenkinsop back his note?" asked Blake, in a tone of elaborate politeness.

"Yess, waddah, as otherwise we shall deprive you, your young wassal, and deprive you of your pleash by force," said Arthur Augustus severely.

Levinson set his teeth.

"There seems to be some mistake, my dear Levinson," said Blenkinsop mildly.

"Blake says you have no brother who is a missionary."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Monty Leather. "That's too rich! Levinson, with an imagination like yours you could be a novelist, or a journalist, or a Member of Parliament. There's been nothing like it since Ananias."

"I full-fer-dear, Levinson, that you have deceived me," said Algeron scornfully. "I doubt now very much whether there is such a place at all as the Booby-Gooby Islands."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I certainly do not remember to have seen them marked on the map. In the circumstances, Levinson, I must request you to return my ten-shilling note, which you have obtained from me by full-fad-fad-fake pretences."

"And we'll give you one minute to do it in," said Tom Merry grimly. "Jagging a greenhorn is one thing, Levinson; but swindling him out of his money is another. And the sooner you learn the difference the better it will be for you."

Levinson set his teeth.

"Look here, Blenkinsop lend me that half-quad—"

"Cheese that, and hand it over!"

"I'm not going to do anything of the sort. I—I shan't be able to pay for those things."

"That's your look-out! Hand over the lot!"

Levinson and Mellish exchanged looks of dismay. They had "diddled" Algeron successfully out of his money, but they had not expected Nemesis to overtake them in this way.

And Danne Taggles did not offer credit, especially to follow him Levinson and Mellish, who were extremely undesirable in all money matters. If the money was returned to Algeron now, Levinson and his chum would be left in an exceedingly awkward position.

But there was no help for it. Tom Merry & Co. were in earnest. Blenkinsop, as looking at the two young passels reproachfully, but the other juniors looked threatening. They were evidently not to be trifled with.

As Levinson hesitated the juniors closed round him and Mellish.

"Hand it over, Levinson," said Mellish usefully. "You can let me alone, you

fellows, I've not got it. I really hadn't a hand in the matter at all. I simply came here with Levinson to—"

"To share in the pleash, you young wassal!" said Arthur Augustus. "I regard you as a pair of wotsahs!"

"Now, Levinson—"

"Hands off!" growled Levinson. "The silly an can have his half-quad if he likes. He lent it to me."

And Levinson jerked out the ten-shilling note, and handed it to Algeron.

Arthur Augustus wagged his forefinger at Levinson admonishingly.

"Foxy let this be a lesson to you, dear boy!" he said. "Weduct oveh your wassal conduct, and wessolve to turn oveh a new leaf. I am verry much awdward that you will come to a verry bad end if you keep on like this."

"Oh, go and eat cake!"

"Weally, Levinson—"

"Come away, fatted!" said Blake, seizing D'Aray by the arm. "Levinson will get all the nonsense he wants from Blenkinsop. You needn't pile in. Kin on!"

Tom Merry & Co. departed from the tuckshop, taking Blenkinsop with them. Levinson and Mellish slid down from their stools. The least was over. It was an unfinished match, so to speak. And Danne Taggles remained to be dealt with. She was looking at them with a grim eye. She made a calculation with a stump of pencil upon a fragment of wrapping paper, and stated the result in uncompromising accents.

"Four shillings and twopenny, please."

"Hum!" said Levinson. "You—you see, Mrs. Taggles—"

"I'll see you later, Levinson," said Mellish, moving towards the door.

"No, you won't!" said Levinson. "You're in this with me. You'll have to stump up half."

"Can't be did. I've only got three-penny!" said Mellish. "You won't standing treat. You ordered the things. Didn't he, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Yes, you ordered the things, Master Levinson. Four shillings and twopenny, please."

"I—I can't settle it now!" growled Levinson. "I've only got a tanner. You can have that. I'll settle another time."

"You know I don't allow credit," said Mrs. Taggles. "You will settle now!"

"Those rottenners have collared my cash!" said Levinson, going anxiously through his pockets. "Hand out your three sh., Mellish. And here's seven-penny. You'll have to leave the four bob over for a bit. I tell you I'm sorry."

"I will leave it until this evening," said Mrs. Taggles grimly. "Unless you pay this evening, I shall complain to your Housemaster."

And the good dame turned away, and Levinson and Mellish quitted the tuckshop in dismay.

"This is a go!" said Levinson. "Where are we to get four bob from, Mellish?"

"Don't say 'no'!" snapped Mellish. "It's no business of mine! I didn't quite like the idea of squandering money out of Blenkinsop like that, anyway, but I let you run on. You're too insignificant, Levinson."

"Why, you—you—" exclaimed Levinson, clenching his fists.

Mellish walked away.

There was evidently no help to be had from Mellish.

Levison walked to the School House in a decidedly uneasy frame of mind. He knew that Dame Taggles meant what she said, and if she complained to Mr. Railton it was pretty certain that the whole story would come out, and Levison knew that the Home-master would think of the swindling of Algernon.

The end of the Fourth looked in at Crooke's study. He was on chemistry terms with Crooke of the Shell, and Crooke had plenty of money. He also had a gift for looking after it with great care.

It was not an easy matter to extract a loan from Crooke; but Levison resolved to try. He came in with an agreeable grin, and started by relating the little joke on Algernon.

Crooke roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! That's too rich!" he exclaimed. "You are an awfully deep lugger, Levison. You'll be a millionaire some day, or a convict, or something of the sort!"

"Funny, wasn't it?" grinned Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say so. Ha, ha, ha!"

Only Tom Merry and the rest found it out, and made no hand back the half-quad," said Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha! That's funnier still!" roared Crooke. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I owe Mrs. Taggles four bob," said Levison. "I suppose you don't mind lending me four bob for a few days, Crooke, old chap?"

Crooke became quite grave all of a sudden. The humor of the matter no longer appealed to him, apparently.

"Sorry!" he said. "I'm rather short of money. And you never pay up a loan, Levison. You owe me money now."

"When I get my allowance—"

"Two bob a week, isn't it?" said Crooke, with a sneer. "Thanks! It's not good enough. Sorry I can't oblige you!"

"And you call yourself a pull!" snorted Levison.

"Chap isn't obliged to find his pals pocket-money, I suppose," said Crooke, with a pawk. "You're always over-reaching yourself, Levison. You should be more careful. Excuse me now, will you! I've got my prep to do."

Levison left the study with a black liver. He tried Gore next. The Shell junior was amused at the story of the missionary in the Booby-Gooly Islands, but when Levison came to the point he "droze up" as promptly as Crooke had done.

Levison stamped out of Gore's study and slammed the door—with the prospect of an unpleasant interview with Mr. Railton before him.

CHAPTER 3.
A Burnt-Offering!

"B A L Jove! What's the matter with you, Levison?"

It was nearly bed-time when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came upon the end of the Fourth, in a corner of the passage. Levison had his hands tucked under his armpits, and was sweating them hard, and heading forward painfully, and groaning at the same time. Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass and looked him over.

"Is that something new in grammar, dear boy?" he asked.

Levison sneaked at the smell of St. Jive's.

"You matter!" he gasped. "Ow! I've been through it! You! Railton gave me six on each hand! Groogh! Ow!"

"Bai Jove! I'm awery—though I dare say you deserved it!" said D'Arcy. "But what have you been lickered for this time?"

"You know jolly well!" said Levison, between his teeth. "Mrs. Taggles complained to him because I couldn't square

up four bob. Then it came out about that fool Blinksnap. And my allowance is stopped to pay Mrs. Taggles, and I've been lickered— the—ore!"

And Levison squirmed his hands again. "Wendy, it was your own fault, Levison. But why didn't you borrow the money from one of your friends? Crooke, and Gore have plenty of money."

Levison gritted his teeth. "They wouldn't lend it to me," he said. "I'll make them sorry for leaving me in the lurch like that, somehow. Ow! Ow!"

And Levison wriggled away, still mumbbling and groaning.

"Bai! Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "He is a wretch, but it was up to the other wretches to stand by him. I regard them as mean beasts! But it serves him right!"

And, with that comforting reflection, Arthur Augustus went his way.

Levison was still looking pained and ratty when the Fourth Form went to their dormitory. He found a tract laid upon his pillow—a kindly gift from Algernon Blinksnap. It was entitled, "Honesty is the Best Policy; or, the Little Boy who Lied!"

Levison picked it up and looked round with a gloaming eye for Algernon. Blinksnap met his glance with a beaming smile.

"That is for you, Levison," he said. "It was written by my dear papa. I have some more which may be useful to you when you have read that."

Levison clenched his hands hard. He was inclined to repay Algernon's kindness by smiting him hip and thigh; but he restrained himself. It was not his policy to quarrel with the weakest path.

"Thank you, Blinksnap," he said. "This is really kind of you."

"I am so glad you like it," said Algernon. "Some fellows to whom I have given little tracts are not pleased at all. Some of them have been quite



Raising his two hands, Algernon deliberately extended his fingers from his nose at Mr. Lathorn. The Form-master could scarcely believe his eyes. "Goodness goodness!" he gasped. "Am I dreaming?" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth Form. Algy did not heed. He only knew he was doing his duty! THE GUN LIBRARY—No. 1, 408.

rude about it. Knox of the Sixth actually called me violently because I gave him a tract entitled, 'Keep Your Tongue; or, How Georgie Lost His Prize.' It was a very good tract, written by dear papa. I do not see as all why you fellows are laughing. I have a tract which may be very useful to you, D'Arcy."

"But Jove!"

"Yes, it is entitled, 'Waste not, Want not, or, the Vanity of Fine Raiment.'"

"You speak as if" said Arthur Augustus witheringly, "Do you think that every fellow is bound to dress as you do in Huckleberry Houth, you beautiful fathead? I regard you as a swabber and, Hlinkinsop!"

"But reflect, my dear D'Arcy," urged Algernon, "You have six or seven pairs of trousers, and the inhabitants of the Tootalorsal Islands have no trousers at all—actually none at all! Would it not be better to send the money to the Tootalorsal Fund? My dear papa raises a collection for the Tootalorsal Islands regularly every year before he goes on his summer holiday— What over are you fellows laughing at?"

"What the fellows were laughing at remained a mystery to the gentle Algernon.

The Fourth Formers turned in, and were soon sleeping the sleep of the just. One of them did not sleep, however, perhaps because he was not one of the just. After the other fellows were asleep, Levinson except out of bed, and he was busy for a quarter of an hour with Hlinkinsop's clothes, and he chuckled silently as he crept back to bed.

The rising-bell clanged out in the very summer morning, and Algernon Hlinkinsop was one of the first out of bed. A pained expression came over his face when he tried to pull his trousers on. They came on to a certain distance, and then stopped. His feet refused to emerge.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Algernon. "This is very extraordinary. What ever is the matter with my trousers?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "They've been seen up!"

"You don't say so!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There was no doubt about it. The 'legs' had been seen up during the night, and the sleeves of the jacket were treated in the same way. Algernon regarded his 'dollober' in dismay. The sewing had been strongly done, and it was not an easy task to undo it.

"But Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "That is wretched a wotten trick! It is wotten to play pranks on a chap's clothes."

"Dear me!" said Algernon. "I shall have to put on some other clothes. This is really very annoying."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goodness gracious! Someone has taken away the key of my box, and it is locked!" exclaimed Algernon, in tones of distress.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fear that someone has been playing a practical joke upon me," said Algernon, as if that had just dived upon him.

And the janitor chuckled. Algernon sat down to unpack the contents of the "bags," and the rest of the partners went downstairs and left him still lone. Algernon "dressed" early chapel, and he was late for breakfast. Mr. Lathom gave him a sharp reprimand, and declined to listen to any explanation.

But Algernon was determined to explain. His papa had impressed upon

him to be a good boy at St. Jim's, and, as he had pathetically afterwards, it was impossible for him to leave the Form-master under the dreadful impression that he had been a bad boy.

"It was really not my fault-fault, sir," he said. "If you will be so kind—"

"That is enough!" said Mr. Lathom. "If it occurs again you will be punished!"

"Yes, sir, b-b-b-ain—"

"I desire to hear nothing more," said the Fourth Form master, with a frown. "Pray be silent, Hlinkinsop!"

"But, sir, I wish to give you a kick-kick—"

"What?"

"A kick-kick-omnie explanation, sir. It was owing to the ful-fuf-fuf-act that my tut-tut-trousers were seen-seen-seen up—"

"That will do, Hlinkinsop!"

"But my tut-tut-trousers—"

"If you say another word, Hlinkinsop, I shall dismiss you without breakfast!" said Mr. Lathom, uncompro-mised. "And the next boy who laughs will be cared!"

So Algernon gave it up. Levinson joined him as they left the dining-room.

"Rather nasty, old Lathom," Levinson remarked. "Why don't you give him a tract on the subject, Hlinkinsop? Just leave it on his desk in the Form-room, where he will find it. He will take it very kindly."

"My dear Levinson, that is a most valuable suggestion. I shall certainly act upon your advice!"

When Mr. Lathom came in to take the Fourth that morning, and went to his desk, he blinked in astonishment. In a prominent position on the lid of the desk lay a sheet, with the title in large letters:

"BE PATIENT; OR, THE COST OF A HASTY WORD."

Mr. Lathom's face assumed a most extraordinary expression. He took up the tract in his finger and thumb, and held it up, and his eyes roved over the class. The Fourth Formers gasped. They had nearly all been presented with tracts by Algernon, but that that chivalrous youth would venture to "plant" sheets of his Form-master had never occurred to them. They waited for the storm to burst.

"Someone," said Mr. Lathom, his voice trembling with anger—"someone has had the audacity—I may say the unparalleled audacity—to place this—this obnoxious paper here for me! I demand to know who has been guilty of this impertinence!"

"Oh crumbs," murmured Blake, "this is where Algy gets it in the rack!"

"Yes, wretch! The organ too!" Hlinkinsop rose in his place.

"If you pip-pip-pip-please, sir—"

"Did you place this obnoxious and ridiculous paper here, Hlinkinsop?" asked Mr. Lathom in an awful voice.

"If you pip-pip-pip—"

"Come here, Hlinkinsop!" Hlinkinsop came out before the Form-master reluctantly. Levinson had assured him that Mr. Lathom would take his little attention kindly; but kindness was not to be discerned in the Form-master's countenance at that moment.

"How dare you place this paper here, Hlinkinsop?"

"I was tut-tut-tut-ing to pip-pip-please you, sir," stammered Algernon. "It is really a very good tract, sir, written by my dear pip-pip-pip-gaga!"

"Hold out your hand, Hlinkinsop!" intoned Mr. Lathom.

Algernon held out his hand, under the

impression that Mr. Lathom was going to hand him the tract. He jerked it back in alarm as the Form-master's eyes came swooping down. The case, meeting with no resistance, arched upon Mr. Lathom's own leg, and he strove a head of pain.

The Fourth Form burst into an irrepressible giggle. Algernon had not intended anything of the sort, but Mr. Lathom did not know that. He grasped the verdant youth by the collar, and whacked him across the shoulders with great energy.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh!" roared Algernon, struggling and wriggling in the Form-master's grasp. "Oh! Owi! Yarsooop! Dear me! My goodness! Yarsooop!"

There was a roll of laughter from the Fourth. In Algernon's wild wriggles, several bundles of tracts that were stuffed into his pockets came rattling out, and fluttered open, and a regular shower of tracts rained round him on the floor. Mr. Lathom gasped with astonishment. Every student that he gave Algernon ceased that month to shed more tracts, till it looked like a snow-fall.

"Blow my soul," exclaimed Mr. Lathom, "this is—this is extraordinary! I fear that this boy is not right in his head. Hlinkinsop, what do you mean by having your pockets full of these ridiculous and obnoxious papers? Answer me, sir!"

"If you pip-pip-please—"

Algernon.

"Collect them up, sir, and take them to the gate and burn them at once!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "Do you hear me?"

"But-but-but-but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But-but-but-but—"

Algernon. "Oh, sir! I—I—"

"Immediately," shouted Mr. Lathom, "otherwise I shall come you severely! Not a word! Burn that rubbish at once!"

"My—my—my—goodness!" gasped Algernon.

But the Form-master was not to be trifled with, and the distressed Algernon had to gather up that valuable literature and stuff it into the gate, and light it. Then he was sent back to his place, with an imposition of two hundred lines.

Algernon wore a dolorous look the rest of the morning. The impost did not worry him so much as the loss of the tracts, with which he had hoped to do extensive good, and, like Rachel of old, he mourned for that which was lost and would not be restored.

CHAPTER 10.

Up the River!

"AND Algernon!" said Tom Merry.

Manners and Lathom grinned.

It was Saturday afternoon; and as there was an important cricket match to detain the Terrible Three, they were planning to go up the river. The junior eleven was playing the Third Form, and might, men like the Terrible Three were not needed to deal with Willy & Co. of the Third. They left that match to the lower lights.

But Tom Merry was mindful of the request Miss Priscilla Fawcett had made. He was asked to look after Hlinkinsop, and he was full of good nature. Manners and Lathom were good-natured, too; but they did not relish the idea of having the verdant youth from Huckleberry Houth "planted" on them, as it were.

"He won't do any harm," urged Tom

Merry: "We'll make him steer the boat, too, so he will be useful. The other fellows don't seem to years for his company very much, and it's up to us to look after him a bit."

"But we're going to bathe," said Leather, "and I bet you that duffer can't swim!"

"We'll teach him!"

"Leather," roared Leather, "I'm not going to spend my half-holiday in teaching a blessed duffer to swim!"

Tom Merry shook his finger at him indignantly.

"If Algernon were here, he would give you a tract about 'Usefulness; or, the Dreadful Fate of the Lively Boy Who Wanted to Enjoy Himself!'" he said severely.

"Let him give me any blessed tract, that's all," said Leather indignantly.

"Oh, let him come!" said Messers indignantly. "I can see you mean to have your way, Tom, so there's no need to waste breath. Come on!"

And the Terrible Three looked for Blenkinsop, and took him along with them. Blenkinsop was very pleased to go. He liked Tom Merry; and Miss Fawcett had counselled him to make a close friend of him. Blenkinsop meant to do so.

"This is very tick-kick-kind of you, Thomas," he said. "You don't mind if I call you Thomas, do you?"

"(O-)" said Tom Merry. "Make it Tom, for goodness' sake!"

"And back up," said Leather.

"He's got to get the boat out."

"Certainly, Montague. You don't mind if I call you Montague?"

"You can call me Uncle William if you like," said Leather resignedly.

"Now, then, get a move on. Can you swim?"

"Yes, I can swim a little," said Blenkinsop. "I have often bathed in the delightful stream at Huckleberry Heath. I can also row. I shall be very pleased to row you up the river."

"May as well give him an oar," said Messers, as they carried the boat out.

"I don't suppose he can row; but we'll make him work."

"I shall be delighted to work, my dear Henry—you don't mind if I call you Henry?"

"Any old thing," said Messers.

The boat was launched, and the Terrible Three entered it. Blenkinsop brought the oars down to the edge of the raft. He tossed one of them in, naturally missing Leather, and as he lifted another, the Shell fellow roared:

"Catch it, you silly ass!"

"Certainly, my dear Montague."

And Algernon chuckled—*not in the sense that Leather intended.* The oar banged into the boat, and the ass dropped on Leather's boat heavily. Leather gave a ferocious whoop.

"You heaving fellow! What did you chuck that for?"

"But you told me to chuck it!" exclaimed Blenkinsop in surprise.

"Oh, you—yes—yes—yes!" Words failed Leather. He grabbed the other oar away from Blenkinsop just in time.

"Come in, Blenkinsop!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Here, take an oar, and sit down. Ow! Don't brain me with it!"

Blenkinsop's oar was passed through the rowlocks, and he sat down to row. Messers took the lines. Leather sat beside Blenkinsop, taking the other oar. Tom Merry took a tape. They pulled out into the river. The fellows on the landing-raft looked after them, and howled with laughter. Blenkinsop's rowing was a sight for gods and men.

"That's an oar, not a spade," said Leather, breathing hard, "and if you

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lewther Calling!



Hallo, Everybody! It's sticking out a mile. What is it? Brighton pier. What's the centre of gravity? "Y," of course.

Now, what has ten legs, grows all night, and eats its own? You don't know! Neither do I!

Guess you'd want to do big things.

What about washing elephants?

I am asked to contribute a report that Skinkape is preparing a lecture on "Cards and their Whys?" Ow!

By the way, is your sheath backward? If so, bend it forward.

Quickly, now: What's the diff. between a Jeweller and a gambler?

One sells watches and the other watches cells.

What is a Bright Young Thing? "

says Figgins. A baby glowworm.

Then there was the Wiseman who said his garden needed a lot of water, because (there were so many leaks in it!

A gramophone record was used in evidence at a Wayland trial. But, of course, there were two sides to it!

"When is a cake nicely done?"

says Fatty Wynn. About ten minutes before you remember to take it out of the oven!

Jan that end of it under my chin again, I'll slaughter you."

"My dear Montague—"

"Shut it faster through the rowlock, instead! You're not supposed to hold an oar in the middle like a balancing pole!" yelled Leather.

"Full away," said Tom Merry, looking round. "There are no crabs in this river, Alg, so you needn't waste time trying to catch them."

"I was not trying to catch anything, Thomas," said Blenkinsop in surprise.

"You'll catch something without trying to, if you're not careful!" growled Leather.

"My dear Montague—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Leather bent to his rowing, and Blenkinsop followed his example. He bent to it a little too earnestly, and caught Tom Merry in the middle of the back with his oar. There was a roar from the captain of the Shell.

"Ow! What's that?"

"It's only Alg!" grinned Leather.

"I am sorry, Thomas—"

"Ow, you ass!" growled Tom Merry, wriggling. "Here, you take my place! I'm not going to sit in front of you; you're dangerous! Can you pull a pint?"

"Yes, indeed. I was considered rather a good oarsman at Huckleberry Heath."

"They must be tremendous watermen there, then," said Monty Lewther sarcastically.

Tom Merry took Blenkinsop's place beside Leather, and Blenkinsop was entrusted with a pair of oars. He pulled away lustily. In his rowing at Huckleberry Heath he had not, apparently, ever considered it necessary to keep in

a leader writing an article made a slight slip. A printer's error.

"Fashions in dogs are changing," says Horrie. Every day has its dog.

Headline: "Jump In Oil." It's not compulsory, of course!

The matron has been buying new crockery. No "old crocks" in the School House!

"I should like to sing songs at the piano," says Clara. If you had a piano you could, old chap, if you had a voice.

I hear policeman's helmets are to be fitted with microphones. Now they'll talk through their hats.

How's this? The new botanist looked very pleased when he came off after taking an hour over five rows.

"I better account to the book," he explained to his skipper. "Yes, but the prince was a jolly sight too long!" snapped the skipper.

Woolfing is advised for health. A grapple a day keeps the doctor away.

"How can I prevent my wits from fading?" inquires a reader. Just keep up the instalments, old chap.

Snappy One: "Tell young Gibson not to sit like an idiot," said Knox to D'Army minor. "Oh, he's not sitting," replied Wally.

One to finish: Two villagers who had never seen a golf match watched Mr. Linton lift the ball out of the rough on to the green, where it rolled across the sword and dropped neatly into the hole. "Luzum," ejaculated one of the villagers, "he's got a job on now!"

Chin, chin, chop.

time. His oars described weird angles, and sometimes they were deep in the water, and sometimes they weren't.

The progress of the boat was not fast, and the roar of laughter from the raft came ringing across the river.

"Back up, for goodness' sake!" growled Leather. "We didn't come out here to give an exhibition! Pull, you ass!"

Blenkinsop pulled. He pulled very hard indeed, but unfortunately both his oars missed the water altogether that time. The result was that Algernon flew backwards, and his back flourished in the air as he pitched over Tom Merry and Leather.

"Oh dear!" he gasped. "My good-by-good-bye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the raft.

"Lie down!" roared Leather, as Algernon was scrambling up. "You'll have the boat over next! If you touch those oars again, I'll scold you!"

Tom Merry crossed Algernon's oars, which were floating away, and laid them aboard.

"Sit down and hold tight!" he said, laughing. "Don't bother to row. We can manage!"

"But I should be delighted to help you, Thomas. My papa has always cautioned me not to be lazy, and allow other fellows to do the work. I—"

"Here, come and take the lines, if you must do something," said Messers; and he jerked Blenkinsop into the stern.

"Now sit tight and steer, and don't jaw!"

"Certainly, Henry!"

The Terrible Three rowed, and Algernon steered, and the boat gathered speed. The raft disappeared astern.

THE GUN LAMBERT.—No. 1, 88.

but there were a good many boats on the river opposite the school grounds, and careful steering was required. Algerson steered very carefully. He jerked hard at the line as they passed a boat containing Cutts and several other Fifth Formers.

Unfortunately, he pulled the wrong line, and the next moment there was a crash, and a roar of fury from Cutts & Co.

"You thumping asses! Where are you rowing?"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Fifth Form boat was rocking like a rocking-horse. The Fifth Formers glared at the Shell fellows, and roared at them. Cutts' row of language was eloquence itself. Monty Leather pushed off, raising the rear of his oar against Cutts' chest for that purpose.

The boats separated, and Cutts sat down with sudden violence. He jumped up again, raving; but the Terrible Three were pulling hard, and were out of reach of vengeance. Manners dragged Blenkinsop out of the stern seat, and took the lion again.

"My dear Henry!" said Algerson, thinking at him. "Cannot I do anything to help?"

"Yes, you can sit down and not move!" said Manners. "If you move so much as a finger, I'll fetch you a lick over the napper with this boat-hook—"

"Oh dear!" said Algerson.

And he sat down.

The Terrible Three rested upon their oars about a mile up the river. The Rhy! was narrower there, and deep woods shaded the shore on both sides.

"We're going to visit here," said Tom Merry. "You'd better sit in the boat, Blenkinsop. It's too deep for you—if you swim as well as you row."

Blenkinsop looked doubtfully at the deep river swirling past the boat.

"My papa has warned me never to go out of my depth," he remarked. "But I should very much like to bathe, Thomas."

"Oh, all right! We'll pull you in to the shore first, then," said Tom. "Give way, you chaps!"

The boat drew in to the distant bank, whose the water was shallow among the willows, and Blenkinsop landed.

"Now, mind you don't go out of your depth," said Tom. "We'll come back for you presently. All right?"

"Yes, my dear Thomas!"

The Shell fellows pulled away again. They were all good swimmers, and they did not want to paddle about in the shallows with Algerson. The boat pulled away to the island in the river and there they attached the painter to an overhanging bough, and then stripped in the boat for the swim. In a few minutes they were enjoying themselves in the water, and had forgotten all about Algerson.

CHAPTER II.

A Change of Airs!

"My hat! It's Algy!"

"Algs, by gum!"

Gordon Gay and Wootton major stopped and looked out through the openings of the willows.

The two Grammarians were strolling through the wood along the Rhy!, when they caught sight of the festive Algy dipping in the water. Algerson was in the shallows, splashing about with a great deal of noise, and puffing and blowing like a grasshopper.

Gordon Gay's eyes twinkled as he

gazed at Algy from the trees on the bank. The chance of the Grammar School had intended to bathe themselves, but Gay changed his mind now. His glance wandered up and down the grassy bank.

"His clothes must be here somewhere," he murmured.

Wootton chuckled. "Good egg! It will be funny to watch his face when we've hidden his clothes!" he murmured.

"We're not going to hide them," said Gay coolly. "We're going to take them away. We'll have them with the porter at St. Jim's!"

"Oh, crumbs! But—but how will he get home?" gasped Wootton.

"Well," remarked Gay, "we shall have to get him some clothes, I suppose. After making friends with Algy, and allowing him to call me Thomas, it's up to me to look after him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You look for his clothes, and sail 'em, while I cut off on my bike," said Gay. "I shan't be long. Don't let him see you."

"Right-ho!"

Gordon Gay ran through the wood. The Grammarians had ridden there on their bicycles, and left the machines on the bridge-path, only a hundred yards distant. Gay quickly reached his bicycle, and mounted it, and pedalled away towards Weyland.

Meanwhile, Wootton major, keeping out of sight of the bathing Blenkinsop, sought for that unsuspecting youth's clothes.

Algerson had folded up his clothes very carefully, and placed them on the bank. He had only just entered the water when the Grammarians came upon the scene, and he was not thinking of coming out yet.

Wootton soon found the clothes, and gathered them up, carrying them away into the wood; and then he watched Algs, and waited for the return of Gordon Gay. It was nearly half an hour before Gay returned. Wootton heard his bicycle on the bridge-path, and then Gordon Gay came through the trees, with a bundle under his arm.

Wootton glared at it.

"What an earth have you got there?" he asked.

"Clothes for Algs," grinned Gay. He opened the bundle. Wootton major, with difficulty, suppressed a shriek when he saw what it contained!

"Oh, you ass! Feminine clothes!" he gasped.

Gay looked calmly. "The good Algy is so sweet and gentle, I think he would make a ripping young lady," he remarked.

"I get this lot cheap at my Selcom's," in Weyland. "They're rather small for a girl of Algy's age—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I think he will wear them; he can't go home without. The colour scheme is pretty good—any variety of colours. They were a job lot, they said, but I couldn't worry about the cut or the fit. Take 'em, and put 'em where you found Algy's things."



The Fifth Formers glared at Tom Merry & Co. and Monty Leather pushed off, raising the rear of his oar against the chest which sat up.

Wootton, almost suffocating with laughter, obeyed. Then the two Grammarians gathered up Blenkinsop's clothes, and went their way rejoicing, with the satisfied feeling which follows a friendly action.

Quite unconscious of the change that had been made, Blenkinsop continued to dipper himself in the water for some time after the Grammarians were gone. The Terrible Three had not come back, but Algerson felt that he had had enough at last, and he crawled out of the water into the willows, and towelled himself down with much satisfaction.

He looked away towards the island, but the chance of the Shell were out of sight, though he could see the boat in the distance moored to the bank.

Algerson determined to dress, and wait for them on the bank. He had several tracts in the pockets of his clothes, with which he could pass the time very pleasantly.

Having towelled himself down, he stopped towards the spot where he had left his clothes, and then his big, round eyes almost started from his head. He gazed at the clothes like a fellow in a dream. Clothes were there, but they were not his clothes.

"G-goodness gracious!" gasped Algerson, picking up a blue shirt with white spots, and staring at it. "Some female person has left her clothes here. I did not know that ladies bathed in this spot. Oh dear! This is simply dreadful!"

He dropped the shirt, made a wild rush for the towels, and wrapped them round him. Then he ventured to look round again. There was no sign of his clothes, and no sign of any other



As the two boats collided, thanks to Algy's steering, for that purpose. Cutsie sat down with sudden violence, and of Algy's eyes!

were, do you think a feminine gender could dress in your clothes by mistake, you silly jester? Some silly ass has taken your clothes, and left the others. Oh, my hat! Is this the clothes?"

He stared at the clothes left for Algy, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The chaos of the Shell lifted the "clothes" to examine them. There was the short skirt of bright blue with white spots, a very large bodice of red, a pair of red stockings, and a feminine hat. That was all, but was enough to throw the juncos almost into hysterics.

"Oh crumbs! Fancy Algy going home in that!" gasped Lovelace.

"I—I kick-kick-can't do it!" gasped Algy. "I begin to think that somebody has been playing a practical joke on me."

"O my beginning!" sobbed Lovelace. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The Shell fellows almost wept. But the idea of taking Algy home in such attire was too dreadful, and they hunted through the thickets for his clothes, hoping that the practical jokers had only concealed them. But it soon became clear that Algy's garments had been taken away. The unfortunate was shivering by this time. The sun was going down, and damp towels did not keep him warm.

"What ever am I to do, Thomas?" murmured Algy.

Thomas trembled.
"Blessed if I know! You must get some clothes on, or you'll catch cold. And you can't come home without any clothes."

"And he can't stay here for ever!" gasped Lovelace.

"And we haven't even a coat with us!" said Mamma. "There's nothing else for it. You'll have to get into these things, Algy."

"I kick-kick-can't! I don't know how to put them on!" wailed Algy.

"Blessed if I quite do, either," said Tom Merry, picking up the skirt and surveying it gingerly. "I think this thing goes over the head. Show your silly head here, and I'll help you. There!"

"You see! You put the big end on first," said Lovelace. "You've got it upside down."

"So I have!" said Tom Merry, reversing the garment. "Friggle that down over you, Blenkinsop!"

"Groo-hoo-hoo-hoo!" came in muffled tones from Algy, almost suffocated with his struggles inside the garment.

The Terrible Three grasped it together and dragged it down. It was very short and very tight for Algy, and did not rest quite neat round his waist.

"There ought to be something to pull it tight," said Lovelace, scanning it.

"No, there are none. It won't meet. We shall have to hook the heels into Algy if they're to be hooked into anything."

"Oh dear!" gasped Algy.

"I've got some string," said Tom

"We can tie it round his waist. It comes down below his silly knees, and the stockings are long enough. Get the stockings on, kid."

"Oh dear!" groaned Algy, as he struggled with the stockings. "If my dear papa could see me now—"

"He would have a fit, I should think," gurgled Lovelace, almost overcome by the sight of Algy in a blue skirt and long red stockings. "You—you look a picture!"

"Now the other thing," said Tom.

"Does this rotten thing fasten at the front or the back, you chaps?"

"Give it up," said Lovelace. "Some of 'em go on one way and some another. I believe. You may be able to tell by the sleeves. Work it on the way it looks sandy, Algy."

"It does not feel comfortable at all," moaned Algy.

"The boots have taken his cap," said Tom Merry. "Shove the hat on, Algy."

"Oh dear—oh dear! I believe I shall fracture my ribs! Ha, ha, ha!"

The sight of Algy in red stockings, blue skirt, red bodice, and a fancy hat was too much for the juncos. They threw themselves into the grass and wept. Algy's face was white, however. He was not accustomed to providing north for his acquaintance, but to enter St. Jim's in that guise was a little too much for him.

"Oh dear! Everybody will stare at me if I go home like this!" he mumbled.

"I fancy they will!" murmured Lovelace. "But it looks stunning! Get into the hat, and keep down out of sight as much as you can. You'll pass for a girl, but nobody will take you for a beauty."

"It is not-too too b-b-bad!"

"Get in!"

Algy stepped into the boat. The Terrible Three wiped their eyes and followed him, and pulled off. They could not look at Algy without laughing, and they pulled away down the river in a breathless state.

CHAPTER 12.

Algy's Curious Excitement!

"GREAT Scott! I wonder who that is!"

The chaos of Study No. 3 were pulling back to the school raft, after a row down the river. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was steering, and he let go the lines, and ran to his feet and jammed his eyeglasses into his eye in great astonishment.

"Bad Jove!"

"What's the matter?" asked Blake.

"Great pip! Ha, ha, ha! Those Shell boundahs have a lady in their boat, and she is really dressed in an extraordinary manner. Look at them, dear boys!"

"I haven't any eyes in the back of my head, father!"

"It is really extraordinary. She has short hair. But Jove, it isn't a girl at all. It's that cross am Blenkinsop, dressed as a girl!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"What?"

Blake, Herries, and Digby screamed round them to stare at the Shell boat. At the sight of Algy they burst into a shriek.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a crowd of fellows on the raft, and all eyes were turned upon the peculiar passenger in Tom Merry's boat. Some of the fellows recognized Algy, and some did not. He was not easily recognizable in his strange attire. The Terrible Three brought

THE GUN LUMBER.—No. 1482.

bather. It was extraordinary. Algy sought wildly up and down the bank, but he sought in vain. He was still seeking when there was a splash of water in the water, and the boat leaped along the willows.

"You here, Blenkinsop!" called out Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three had finished their swim, and they had dressed in the boat, and returned to Algy.

Blenkinsop came into view on the bank, looking very red and flustered.

"I am here, Thomas—"

"Get into your duds, then. We want to get home to tea," said Tom.

"We're hungry. Why haven't you dressed, you am? Do you want to catch cold?"

"My kick-kick-clothes have gone!" wailed Algy.

"Oh crumbs! Some silly ass has been along and hidden his clothes," growled Mamma. "Why don't you look for them, you chaps?"

"Somehow else has been bathing here and d-dressed in my clothes by mistake, I think," said Algy in distress.

"Well, if he's dressed in yours he must have left his own," said Tom Merry. "Find 'em and get into them."

"I have found them—"

"Well, tumble into them, and let's get off!"

"I kick-kick-kick-can't!"

"Why not?" demanded the Terrible Three together.

"They—they won't do for me!" wailed Algy. "She has taken my clothes by mistake, and left me here."

"SHE!" roared the Shell fellows.

"Yes."

"You—you frazzles am!" exclaimed Tom Merry, springing ashore. "There are no lady bathers here, and if there



Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, Chums! Our next ripping St. Jim's yarn shows Martin Clifford in one of his most sparkling and humorous moods. It's not an easy thing for an author to put over successfully humour which will be fully appreciated by all readers, for, as you probably know, what will appear funny in the eyes of one reader may seem ridiculous to another. But our author's brand of humour is both wholesome and funny, and is always guaranteed to give the maximum of amusement to the majority of readers.

You will certainly appreciate fully the fun to be found in:

"TON MERRY'S BODYGUARD!"

Troubles never come singly, we have often been told, and in this tip-top story Tom Merry gets more than his share. His troubles are not serious—in fact, they are distinctly funny to everyone but Tom! Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom's guardian, pays one of her periodic visits to St. Jim's, and, as usual, she is very concerned for her "dear Tommy's" health, much to the junior's discontent.

Matters for Tom, however, are made more awkward than usual by the glib proceedings of a glib fortune-teller, who reads Tom's hand. Miss Priscilla takes the gipsy's warnings very seriously, and she compels the Head to safeguard Tom against imaginary dangers. In consequence, the unfortunate junior is "gated," he is forbidden to take part in cricket, and, worst of all, a "ton" arrives at St. Jim's to act as his bodyguard! The fun and laughter this highly amusing situation causes, and how Tom eventually escapes from all his troubles, make a story which will be read with delight, and not a few chuckles, by every "Gemite." Look out for it!

"HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!"

In the most gripping chapters of this great Greyfriars yarn—the popularity of which is simply unbounded—readers

will learn how Harrow Singh, the Nabob of Banagrip, first came to Greyfriars. "Bully" soon becomes a popular figure in the Bective, and his cheery good-nature makes him liked by all, with the exception of Walbroote. But when the latter tries to bully Harrow Singh, the ease with which the slim and graceful Indian handles the Form bully, fairly opens the eyes of Harry Wharton & Co.

Don't miss reading of the exciting adventures of Harrow Singh at Greyfriars. Order your Gem in advance.

THE BLUE RIBBON OF THE ATLANTIC!

The Blue Ribband of the Atlantic has been a good deal in the news of late, and a reader in Newcastle has written to ask if anything else attaches to the breaking of the record for the Atlantic crossing besides the honour and glory for the liner and its crew, and the pride a country feels at one of its ships winning the coveted honour. Most certainly there is. A very handsome and much-prized trophy is held by each liner which breaks the record. The trophy is cast in solid silver. It weighs nearly thirty pounds, and stands four feet high. It was presented for international competition by Mr. H. K. Hales, to add an impetus to ship-building.

Mr. Hales personally presented the trophy in Italy when the Box broke the record in 1923. But the Italian liner didn't hold the Blue Ribband long. In the same year the Normandie won the coveted trophy for France. By the time you read this it is to be hoped that our own Queen Mary will have annexed the Blue Ribband for England—a feat she would have accomplished on her maiden voyage but for the fog which lost her the record by only two hours and a half.

PEN PALS COUPON
27-6-38



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest in each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Charles Griffiths, 11, The Quay, Waterford, Ireland; pen pals; age 13-18; Africa.
Miss Edna Nash, 21, Ashbrook Road, Stirchley, Birmingham; girl correspondents; age 14-24.

THE TALKING MONEY-BOX!

Are you thrifty? Whether you are or not, this latest money-saving idea, which originated in America, might be of interest to you. It is based on the old idea of the money-box, but with modern improvements, chief of which is that the money-box thanks you very politely when you drop a coin in it and praises you for your thrift! The notice of the coin entering the box sets in motion a grasshopper record with which it is fitted, and which only revolves for a set period. The more coins you put in, the more commendation and praise the money-box bestows on you!

What happens if you are tempted to smash open the money-box when you are short is not stated. At least, it ought to revile you as a very bad wretch for not resisting the temptation to replenish the exchequer by such a weak-willed, destructive method!

FLOTSAM OF THE FLOODS!

While we are on the subject of money—it's an ill-flood that washes no one any wealth! That's a new version of the old proverb, and a story of the floods they experienced a little while back in the States is responsible for it. It happened in Dandridge, Tennessee. After the floods had subsided, and the local river had assumed its normal aspect, someone discovered several sudden five-dollar notes caught in trees which had been under water along the river banks. The news promptly set all Dandridge seeking for five-dollar notes, and business was closed in the town while the inhabitants searched eagerly for the valuable flotsam of the floods. And many of the seekers found more wealth that day than they could possibly earn in a month by working. The explanation of Dandridge's windfall was that the notes had been concealed by thieves after a robbery, and the floods had done the rest. Well, someone's loss was certainly Dandridge's gain!

THE HUMAN DYNAMO!

A man who can read by a light supplied from the electricity of his own body! Such is Count Benony, of Budapest. In the mornings particularly, when he is fresh, his body is strongly charged with static electricity, and by touching the contacts of a bulb he can cause the filament to glow quite bright enough to enable him to read in the dark. Everyone has electricity in the body, but it must be very rare for a man to possess so much electric power in his body as to be almost a human dynamo!

TAILPIECE.

Birds: "This is a sunset my son painted. He studied painting abroad, you know."

Jinks: "So I should imagine. I never saw a sunset like that in this country!"

THE EDITOR.

The Boys' Only Club. The fees have now been reduced. Readers are asked to send a postcard to the Secretary, Valence, Blackpool Road, Lea, Preston, Lancs.

Francis Macklin, Bank of N.S.W., Collarwood, N.S.W., Australia; stamps; age 12-18.

Miss Adelaide Gann, 798, North Green Street, Greensboro', North Carolina, U.S.A.; girl correspondents; age 14-24.

Miss Joannette Barr, 37, Granpian Street, Sandyville, Glasgow; girl correspondents; age 16-18.

Gordon Williams, 8, Madras Place, Brighton; age 11-17; stamps.

Miss Olga Gator, Guest House Place, Colgate Walk, Selly Oak, Birmingham; girl correspondents; age 15-18; stamps; women.
The Gem LANCER, No. 1,480.

School, left this "eye patrol for Master Blankinson, sir," said Yaggins.

Tom Merry opened the parcel. Algernon's clothes were inside. There was a little note, too, in Gay's handwriting: "With kindest regards from Gordon Gay."

"The Grammarian!" murmured the Terrible Three.

"You don't say so?" ejaculated Algernon. "Gay must have found my clothes and returned them for me. This is really most kind of Gay, and I must feel an opportunity of thanking him."

"You—yes—yes— Oh, there isn't a word for you!" said Monty Lovelton in disgust.

And the Terrible Three left Algernon to change his clothes, which he did with great relief, at the same time thinking out a nice little speech with which, when opportunity offered, to thank Gordon Gay for his great kindness.

CHAPTER 13.

Caught in the Act!

GORE of the Shell stopped to speak to Levinson and Mellish when the Fourth Form came out after lessons on Monday afternoon. George Gore's manner was mysterious. "In the old tower at five," he murmured, and passed on.

Mellish nodded, but over Levinson's face there came a peculiar expression. His knee wobbled. Gore's cryptic remark meant—

"You're coming, Levinson?" asked Mellish, a little doubtfully. For the last few days Levinson had not been on the best possible terms with his old associates. He could not forget the flogging he had received from Mr. Basilton in consequence of the refusal of his "friends" to lend him the small sum of five shillings to settle with Davey Tappet. Levinson had a short memory for benefits, but a very long one indeed for injuries of any kind.

"No, I don't think I'll come," said Levinson. "I haven't any pocket-money this week, and I can't stand my wack." "Crooks will stand the smokes," said Mellish.

"I don't care to sponge on Crooks." Mellish stared at him. It was the first time he had observed any scraps of that kind about Levinson.

"Well, just as you like," he said. "I'm going."

"That's your business," said Levinson, and walked away by himself with his hands in his pockets. Towards five o'clock he observed Gore of the Shell making his way towards the old tower of St. Jim's. Gore slipped in quietly, as if desirous of avoiding observation.

A few minutes later Crooks followed him in, in the same stealthy way. Five minutes more, and Piggott of the Third strode up to the old building and puffed in quickly. Mellish of the Fourth was the last of the party. When he also had gone into the old tower, Levinson walked away from his post of observation grinning.

It was what the young rascals called a "smoking-bee." They met in secret to smoke cigarettes, and pretend to enjoy it. The only real enjoyment about the matter being a sense of "deftness" in their stealthily breaking the laws of the school.

Levinson was generally one of the party, but on this occasion he had his own reasons for standing out. He walked away in search of Algernon Blankinson, and found that cheerful

youth on the cricket ground, looking on at the juniors practising.

Blankinson had an idea that he could play cricket, and he had made one or two attempts since coming to St. Jim's, causing great laughter to resound over the playing field. He just knew one end of a bat from the other, and that seemed to be the sum total of his cricket knowledge.

He was watching the players now with a critical eye, and nodding his head sagely, perhaps comparing the Terrible Three unfavourably with the cricketers he had seen at home in the rural seclusion of Blackberry Heath.

Levinson tapped him on the elbow, and Algernon turned on him with a suspicious look. Even Algernon could be suspicious. Levinson's collection for the Booby-Cooby Islanders had shaken Algernon's faith in him.

"Watching the game—eh?" said Levinson cordially. "I saw you at it on Saturday, Blankinson. You've played a lot of cricket, I should think."

Algernon smiled amiably. "I was considered rather a good bat at Blackberry Heath," he said modestly. "I hope that Thomas will put me in the eleven soon. I hear that there is to be a House match on Wednesday, and I should very much like to pip-pip-pip."

Levinson grinned at the idea of Algernon playing in a House match. He was just as likely to play in a match at Lord's.

"If you had a little time to spare now, Blankinson—"

"Certainly," said Algernon. "What is it? I hope you are not thinking of playing any more of those pip-pip-practical pip-pip-jokes on me, Levinson? I disapprove of pip-pip-practical jokes."

"Not in the least. I was wondering whether you would care to look after some chaps who are getting themselves into trouble," said Levinson blandly. "You're not on good terms with them, I know—"

"That makes no difference," said Algernon. "I should be very glad to show them a good example. I still have some tracts—"

"It isn't a matter of tracts," said Levinson. "You see, there are some chaps making up a party to smoke. That's very bad for their health. If they were found out, too, they would be punished. I am very anxious about them."

"That is very like-kik-kid of you, Levinson!" said Algernon. "Pray tell me where they are, and I will certainly go at once and speak a word in season."

Levinson shook his head.

"They'd boot you out," he said. "That wouldn't be any good. My idea is that you might tell Kildare, and take him along with you. You see, Kildare would point out to them the error of their ways, and they couldn't boot him out, because he's in the Sixth!"

"But would Kildare take the trouble?" asked Algernon.

"Oh, yes; he's an awfully good-natured chap! And he wouldn't punish them—ah—root at all. He would simply speak to them gently and kindly, and make them see the error of their naughty ways. I would do this myself, only I'm on rather bad terms with Kildare, and don't care to speak to him. But you're so good-natured—"

"Not another word!" said Algernon. "I will do immediately. You are sure that Kildare won't punish them? I think he is a perfect saint!"

"Quite sure. He will take them by the hand and speak to them in kind and gentle tones," said Levinson. "That's his way."

"What a dear, good, kind fellow!" said Algernon. "My dear papa would like him very much. Where are those magnificent eggs, Levinson?"

"In the old tower passage." "I will find Kildare at once."

And Algernon hurried away, intent upon his good work.

Levinson grinned a sardonic grin. Kildare's method, if he found the "smoking-bee" at work, was not likely to be as Levinson had described them to Blankinson. Quite different, in fact.

Algernon found Kildare in his study. The captain of St. Jim's gave him a questioning nod.

"Well, what is it, kid?" he asked.

"If you pip-pip-pip—" began Algernon.

"If I what?" asked Kildare, in astonishment.

"If you pip-pip-please, I have something to tell you, Kildare. There are some misguided youths smoking cigarettes in the old tower, and—"

Kildare fixed him with a stern look. "Do you know that this is smoking?" he exclaimed. "You should not tell tales, Blankinson!"

"G-g-goodness gracious! I certainly did not mean to tell tales," said Algernon, in distress. "I was mentioning this so that you could speak to them, Kildare, and point out to them the error of their ways. As you are in the Sixth, I think they would not venture to kick you out if you remonstrated with them."

"I think not!" said Kildare. "As your intentions are good, you young men, I won't kick you for smoking—"

"My g-g-goodness!"

"But don't tell tales any more. However, as you've told me, I must look into the matter."

And Kildare picked up a cane and left the study.

Algernon hurried after him in alarm.

"I—er—er, Kildare, what are you taking the cane for?"

"To remonstrate with them," said Kildare, with a laugh.

"But—"

Kildare did not wait for the dismayed Algernon to finish. He strode away to the old tower. It was in a somewhat secluded spot, and quite safe, as a rule, for the "smoking-bee."

Kildare strode in, and a scent of tobacco wafted upon his nostrils at once. Algernon's information was evidently well-founded. From the narrow stairs that led to the first story came a sound of voices:

"Give me a match, Mellish!"

"I say, those lags are jolly good!"

"Have another!"

Kildare smiled grimly and strode up the stairs. He heard an exclamation of alarm from the room above, but the smokers had no time to prepare for his coming. He strode into the room, and a gasp of dismay greeted him.

The captain of St. Jim's looked round with a grin on his face.

Crooks and Gore of the Shell, Mellish of the Fourth, and Piggott of the Third were there, and the atmosphere of the room was thick with smoke. Each of the juniors had a cigarette going, and there were burnt matches and tap-ends scattered on the floor. The four young rascals sat transfixed as the prefect strode in. Their cigarettes seemed to become loaves in their mouths.

"Well!" said Kildare, looking at them.

"Oh!" murmured Gore.

There was a sudden yelp from Percy Mellish. In his terror at the sight of the prefect he had allowed his cigarette to burn down to his lips. He spat it

out, and yelped with pain and clasped John hand to his mouth.

"You silly young rascals!" said Kildare sternly. "Throw that rubbish away at once! Now turn out your pockets! Put all the smokes you have on the floor!"

He watched them while they obeyed. Between the effect of the cigarettes and fear of the consequences, the "kooks" were pale and sickly. A heap of cigarettes and several cigars came out of their pockets. Kildare carefully stamped upon them till they were reduced to fragments. Then he watched the case in the air.

"I won't tell you how idiotic this sort of thing is, because you know it as well as I do," he said. "But you've broken the rules of the school. You know that, too. Hold out your hands. You first, Gore!"

"Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Oo-oo-oo-oo!" groaned Gore.

"Now you, Crooke!"

"Look here—" began Crooke.

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Kildare.

Crooke's hand came out quickly enough then, and the case twirled again, and Crooke joined Gore in producing a chorus of groans.

Mellich and Piggott had their turns next. Then Kildare pointed to the door with his case.

"Get out!" he said. "And if I catch you again—"

The four ushaggy "kooks" crawled out of the Tower. Kildare followed them out and walked away to the School House without another glance at them. Gore & Co. squeezed their hands and groaned dimly.

"How the dickens did he spot us?" growled Crooke. "We've smoked these a dozen times without being found out! Hallo, and! What do you want?"

That question was addressed to Blenkinsop. He came up with a concerned and distressed expression upon his face.

"My dear fellows," he exclaimed, "I trust that Kildare has not cased you? I hoped that he would speak a word in man-to-man when I told him about you—"

"You told him about us?" roared Gore.

"Yes, for your own mis-er-takes—Dear me! Please let me go! O-oo! Wharrr you doing? Yarrook! Oh dear! Goodness gracious! You-oo!"

And Algernon uttered wild ejaculations as the four smokers piled on him. But they did not heed his ejaculations. They swept him over and bumped him, and rolled him on the ground till Algernon was quite unaware whether he was on his head or his heels. His impression was that a particularly violent hurricane had smitten him.

When Gore & Co. were satisfied—which was not till they were tired—they left him, and Algernon sat up on the ground in a dazed state. His jacket was split up the back, his collar hung by a single stud, his hair was wildly ruffled, and he was smothered with dirt and dust. He was in a state of almost idiotic bewilderment.

"Oh dear!" he gasped. "My goodness! What would my dear pig-piggins say if he could see me now? Oh, goodness gracious! Oo, oo, oo! I will never seek the welfare of those ungrateful boys again—never!"

And he never did.

CHAPTER 14.

A Very Valuable Recruit!

TOM MERRY & Co. came out of the Form-room on Wednesday with cheerful faces. It was a bright and sunny day, and that afternoon there was the House match—the School House versus the New House. Tom Figgins & Co. were in great spirits, Merry & Co. were in merry was anticipating a victory. Tom Merry was expecting a visitor that afternoon. His old governess and guardian, Miss Frawella Fawcett, was coming. And as Miss Fawcett generally left a substantial tip with her dutiful ward there was a prospect of a handsome fee in the study to follow the cricket match.

Blenkinsop, who had just come out with the Fourth, turned to the Terrible Three with his usual beaming smile.

"Not at all, my dear Thomas," he replied. "I am quite prepared to play in the House match if you require my services."

"To-to-to what?" gasped Tom Merry.

"I was considered rather a good cricketer at Hackberry Heath," said Algernon. "If you would like me to play I am quite at your service. Figgins says he would like to see me in your shirt."

"I dare say he would," grinned Monty Leathor. "But we're not making arrangements to give the match away to Figgins."



"Look out, Blenkinsop!" yelled the School House forwards as the ball whizzed towards Algy. The new boy's hand went up—crack! His fingers closed round the ball and held it. By the clearest of fates, Algernon had won the match for his House!

Miss Frawella was coming down to see her ward, and also to see how Algernon Blenkinsop was getting on in the school. She was deeply interested in the welfare of the fourteenth son of the Rev. Rabbitt Blenkinsop. She had told Tom in her letter that she hoped to find him on the best of terms with Algernon, and that she would see them playing football or marbles together like dear little boys.

As it was the middle of the cricket season he was not likely to find them playing football, and marbles was not a game much patronized by Shell (follows); but Miss Frawella was kindly ignorant upon those matters.

"We must get Blenkinsop to come to see the match, and he can talk to Miss Fawcett while we play," Tom remarked. "She is a good old soul, and she likes to watch us, though she doesn't know the difference between cricket and hopscotch. Hallo, Algy! Are you busy this afternoon?"

"I would do my best," said Blenkinsop. "I have no doubt that I shall score a large number of runs if my wicket is not knocked down. Generally I am prevented from doing my best by my wicket being knocked down."

"That does make a difference to a chap's worry, doesn't it?" remarked Blenkinsop. "But it wouldn't be quite fair to play you, Algy. You must give the New House a chance."

"You can cover and look on, and take care of Miss Fawcett," explained Tom. "You will be awfully useful to us—off the field."

"I should prefer to play—" "That's settled then," said Tom, apparently not hearing. "Turn up on the ground at half-past two for the start. It will be a pleasure to play under the eyes of a really good critic of the game."

"E-he, my dear Merry—" "But the Terrible Three were walking. The Cox Library—No. 1,408.

eyes. Algernon looked very thoughtful, and sought out Virginia & Co.

"Tom Merry does not appear to want me in his team, my dear George," he said. "You don't mind my calling you George?"

"Not a bit," said Virginia affably. "But why doesn't Tom Merry want you? He doesn't often get an offer from a player like you."

"I cannot quite account for it. However, if you like, I am willing to play in your team, George."

George gasped.

"Man-man-my team! No, thank! I—I mean, you see, we can't play School House chaps in a New House team in a House match. Otherwise," said Figgins solemnly, "we should jump at the chance—simply jump at it with both feet! But, under the circumstances, it's quite impossible—quite."

And Figgins walked away hastily, seeming to be suffering from acute internal pain.

After dinner the Terrible Three walked down to Rycolambo to meet Miss Fawcett at the station, and escorted her to St. Jim's. The kind old lady was accommodated with a seat in the shade of the pavilion to watch the game. Miss Fawcett liked seeing Tom Merry play, and she always had a fixed conviction that it was Tom Merry who won the game if it were won; and if it were lost, of course, it was the other fellows who had lost it.

She greeted Blackiecap affectionately, and asked him after his health, and told him the news from Blackberry Heath while Tom Merry & Co. were preparing for the match.

Figgins & Co. came down to the field, and raised their caps very politely to Miss Fawcett. When Tom came out of the pavilion in his flannels, Miss Fawcett signed to him. She had been talking cricket with Blackiecap now. Tom came up, with a smile.

"You are just going to kick off?" asked Miss Fawcett.

The good old lady had picked up a certain number of expressions from the juniors, and she used them indiscriminately to prove that she was not wholly ignorant of the game that interested her ward so much.

Tom Merry smiled.

"Yes," he said cheerfully.

"Algernon is a good cricketer," said Miss Fawcett. "He has often played at Blackberry Heath, and scored a large number of—of goals."

"Has he really?" murmured Lovelace. "He must be an awfully good player. He must be to score goals in a cricket match."

Tom Merry stamped on his foot.

"I should like to see Algernon playing with you, Tommy dear," said Miss Fawcett. "Please let him play while I am here."

The School House cricketers looked at one another. The importance of a House match was quite unknown to Miss Fawcett. To her eyes Tom Merry & Co. were simply a number of dear little boys playing in a dear little game.

"Oh, my only hat!" murmured Blake. "And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stipulated—"

"Hai Jove!"

Tom Merry reddened a little. It was difficult to refuse Miss Fawcett's request, and impossible to make her understand that it was impossible for Algernon to play in a House match.

"Alorn! I—I— You see, dear, the team is full up," said Tom hurriedly. "We have all the eleven here."

"But why could not Algernon play as *Tux Cap Lassus*."—No. 1, 588.

"well?" asked Miss Fawcett innocently. "Why not play twelve instead of eleven?"

"Oh, F-F-Figgins would object!"—
"I am sure Figgins would not mind," said Miss Fawcett. "Figgins is a very good-natured boy. I will speak to Figgins—"

Tom Merry suppressed a gasp. "That wouldn't be any good," he murmured. "You see, it's—it's the rules of the game."

"My dearest Tommy, I very much want to see you and Algy play together. I am sure you could arrange it somehow."

The cricketers tried not to grin. Tom Merry felt horribly uncomfortable. If he played Algernon he risked throwing away the match, and the rest of the team would be ready to snub him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came to the rescue.

"It's quite impossible to refuse the request of a lady, Tom Merry!" he murmured. "One of the chaps will have to stand out, and you must play Blackiecap. It's awfully hard, but, really, you cannot hurt Miss Fawcett's feelings."

"You see! Sherrup!" whispered Blake.

"Woolly, Blake, I consider it Tom Merry's duty! Good heavens, I trust, come before cricket, three of the fellows must stand out for Algy, and the rest of us can play up like anything!" and he turned to Figgins & Co. "I hope you will try to please me in this matter, Tommy dear!" said Miss Fawcett gently.

Tom gave his chance a hopeless look. He felt that he could not refuse, and he resolved to risk being snubbed afterwards by his team.

"All right," he said resignedly. "I'll play him."

"That is my dear good Tommy!"

"I accept your offer to stand out, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"What! I did not offer—"

"You see, did. You suggested one of the fellows standing out to make room for Algernon."

"You utter an!" said D'Arcy in a fretful whisper. "I meant one of the other fellows, of course!"

"Lord Algy, your hat," said Tom Merry, suddenly deaf.

"I refuse to stand out!"

"Get into your flannels, Blackiecap-Gumy, old man, you'll look after Miss Fawcett while we're playing, won't you?" said Tom. "Coming, Figgins!"

And Tom Merry tossed with Figgins his choice of innings. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood rooted to the ground. The rest of the team burst into a joyous shriek. The expression on D'Arcy's face was, as Lovelace remarked, worth a guinea a box. But there was no help for the unfortunate Arthur Augustus; he had made the suggestion, and it had been accepted, and it was only fair that he should be the sacrifice.

"Hai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as the cricketers moved off and left him standing beside Miss Fawcett's chair. "Hai Jove! I regard this as a Uttaly wotten! It is simply throwin' away the match, too!"

"Are you not playing, Arthur?" asked Miss Fawcett.

"Ahorn! No, my'm, I altered Arthur Augustus. I—I am simply a spectator in this situation, I—I want to watch Blackiecap playin'."

Politeness came before everything with Arthur Augustus, and he crashed down his inward feelings and devoted himself to Miss Fawcett.

Tom Merry won the toss, and elected

to bat first. He opened the innings himself, with Kangaroo at the other end. The rest of the batsmen stood waiting their turn, while the New House team went into the field. Miss Fawcett raised her glasses and glared at them.

"Why does not Algernon play with Tommy?" she asked Arthur Augustus. "Ahorn! He goes on Irish!" D'Arcy explained. "It's one of the rules that only two chaps go on at a time, my'm."

"But Figgins has eight—nine—ten boys with him," said Miss Fawcett, puzzled. "Is that quite fair—eleven on one side and only two on the other?"

"Yes; it's one of the rules, you know."

"Dear me!" said Miss Fawcett. "Of course, there is very much in these little games that I do not understand."

"Yes, my'm! I—I mean, not at all!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Are they going to kick off now?"

"Yes, my'm!"

"Ah! I see, the fat little boy—Wynn—is going to throw the ball to Tommy!"

"Hai Jove! He won't throw it. It is he—"

"There! He has thrown it!" said Miss Fawcett.

"Ahorn! That wasn't a throw. He bowled it," said Arthur Augustus.

"Dear me! What is the difference?"

Arthur Augustus did not feel equal to explaining the difference.

"Hai Jove! That was a good hit!" he exclaimed, as Tom Merry sent the ball away almost to the boundary.

"That will be a three at least!"

The batsmen were running, and Miss Fawcett watched them with great interest. Three runs were taken, and Kangaroo stopped at the hitting end. There was a cheer from the School House fellows round the field. It was a good beginning. Miss Fawcett joined in the ripple of handclapping.

"Is that a goal, Arthur?" she asked.

"That's a three."

"Three goals!" asked Miss Fawcett, in surprise.

"None! Three wares! We don't take goals in this game, you know."

"Dear me! I suppose there is really a great deal of difference between cricket and football," said Miss Fawcett thoughtfully, as if that had just occurred to her.

Arthur Augustus grinned and agreed that there was.

CHAPTER 19.

The Catch of the Season!

"WELL, howled! Oh, well howled, girl!"

The New House crowd roared.

Fatty Wynn had sent down a ball that beat Tom Merry to the wicket, skilled batsman as he was. There was no run to Tom Merry's credit, and his wicket was down. His side had batted for at least three times as many from him, but his luck was out. The formidable Fatty had been one too many for him. Tom looked quietly at his wrecked wicket, and tucked his hat under his arm and walked off. He gave Blake a nod to go on in his place.

Perhaps the knowledge that he was to play Blackiecap against such dangerous opponents as Figgins & Co. had got on Tom Merry's nerves. Certainly he had not shown up at his best; and, considering that there was a rank duffer in the team, the best was wanted of all the School House players. But it could not be helped, and Tom Merry took it as philosophically as he could. He contrived to smile with an unobscured face as he joined Miss Fawcett.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

"Have you finished playing already, Tommy dear?" asked the good lady.

"Yes, I'm out," said Tom.

"It's a single-innings match, so I shan't be hitting again this afternoon, worse luck."

" Bravo, Blake!"

Jack Blake was hitting away in great style. Between them, Blake and Kangaroo were making the far fly. But a catch by Figgins at point dislodged Blake and he came out, with the score standing at twenty-five for the School House.

"When is Algernon going to play?" asked Miss Priscilla.

"Oh, I'll send him in next!" said Tom. "May as well get it over," he added to himself. "Back up, there, Bunkinson; man it!"

"Yes, Thomas, I am quite ready," said Algernon, taking up a bat. "I have great hopes of making a century—perhaps two. I shall certainly do my very tub-bub-best."

And Algernon walked out to the vacant wicket. A general cackle greeted his appearance there. Redfern held the ball, and Redfern grinned at his comrades. Algernon took up a position at the wicket, standing well away from it, and bending over his bat. He blinked along the pitch at Redfern.

"Now I am quite ready!" he said cheerfully.

Redfern took a little run, and the ball came down like a bullet. Algernon's bat swept the air, described a complete circle, without hitting anything but the atmosphere, and Algernon, losing his balance, sat down.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that?" shrieked the New House.

"Out! Ha, ha, ha!"

Algernon sat in a dazed state, and blinked round for the ball. He had not seen it, and he wondered dimly where it could possibly be.

"Dear me!" murmured Algernon. "Have you seen the ball, you fellows? I do not think that my bat struck it, or I should have observed it. Where is the ball?"

"Here it is, you foolhead!" said the wicket-keeper, holding it up.

"My goodness! What is the matter with my wicket! It is quite disarranged—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get off the grass, you ass!" said Leather, coming along to take Algy's place.

"Because me, Leather, I have not hitted yet—"

"You're out, foolhead!" roared Leather.

"You don't say so!" ejaculated Algernon in surprise. "Oh dear! I conclude, then, that the ball must have struck my wicket."

"Oh, crassh!" Yes, it struck the wicket," argued Leather; "and I'll strike you if you don't clear off! You're out!"

"I did not see it," said Algernon.

"But, of course, I take your word for it, my dear Montague. If you insist upon it, I will certainly go away; but I should have liked to hit a little longer. You are quite sure—Ow—ow!"

Yes, I am going!"

And Bunkinson dodged the lunging of Leather's bat and cleared off.

Redfern, as soon as he could control his laughter, bowled again. Algernon looked a little crestfallen as he came into the pavilion. His fellow-batsmen were laughing; they could not help it, but they felt inclined to bump him all the same. It was a wicket lost for

nothing, and the School House gained all their wickets. Miss Priscilla gave Algernon a kind smile as he rejoined her.

"You are tired already?" she asked. "I am not too-tired, but I am out," Algernon explained. "Owing to my not hitting the ball, it appears to have struck my wicket. I really think they might give me a second chance, as we do sometimes at Huckleberry Heath, but it does not appear to be the custom here. I must not kibble-complain. I assure you that I have done my best, Thomas."

"I'm sure you have!" said Tom Merry grinsly. "But it's a great disappointment, after the century we were expecting from you—Hallo! There goes Kangy!"

Kangaroo was out, and Maunson went in. The New House bowling was deadly.



Butler (entering unlighted room): "Is that your Montague?"

Montague: "Yes; that's right, gar'ner!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Ross, Linden-Loss, Morrow Road, Burghley-on-Sea, Somerset.

and the School House batsmen were not making a second number of runs.

The wickets fell at a steady rate. With nine down, the score was at 65 runs.

Bolly and Clifton Daze were the last men in. But they brought the score up to 85 before Daze was caught out by Kerr.

"All out for 80!" said Blake. "Well, it's not bad, considering that we were playing Algernon. We've got to see that the New House bowlers don't beat it, that's all."

"Are you finished, my dear boys?" asked Miss Fawcett.

"Only our innings," explained Tom Merry. "Figgins & Co. are going to bat now, after we've rolled the pitch a bit."

Miss Fawcett looked round in surprise—perhaps for the pitch.

"My dear Tommy!" she said anxiously. "Surely there is a porter, or somebody like that, kept here for doing dirty work of that kind! You will make your dear little hands very black if you roll pitch. You know, there is a general that you cannot touch pitch without being defiled. At all events, I hope you will put some gloves on."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"My dearest Tommy—"

"I mean the cricket-pitch," Tom Merry explained. "The—the ground, you know."

"Oh, I see!" said his guardian,

"That is quite different. You, my dear Arthur, I think I should like some biscuits."

Arthur Augustus was looking after the good old lady nobbly. Figgins & Co. refreshed themselves with doughnuts and ginger-beer; and then the New House innings opened. Figgv and Redfern went to the wickets, and Tom Merry led his men into the field. Algernon blinked round him.

"Where shall I field, Thomas?" he asked.

"Wherever you like, so long as you keep out of the way," said Tom Merry politely.

"You do not want me to bowl!"

"Nonsense; you won't bother you to bowl. Get along there—father off—and keep your eyes open—not your mouth, father—your eyes! If the ball comes your way, catch it!"

"I will certainly do my tub-bub-best."

Blake opened the bowling and Figgins proceeded to knock the ball all over the field, and piled up runs with Redfern. Tom Merry changed the bowling several times, but Figgins was not to be caught. Figgins continued to hit mighty sweeps, and the score piled up.

Redfern was caught out at last, and Lawrence came in, and Blake bowled him first ball. The field cheered up. Owen followed Lawrence, and fell after playing two balls, and the School House fellows roared applause. And when Blake took Thompson's wicket with the next ball the enthusiasm was unbounded.

" Bravo, Blake!"

"Hurrah! Well bowled!"

Tom Merry's face brightened up. It was not to be a walkover for the New House, at all events. Four out for 80!

After that, Figgins and Patty Wynn made a stand for some time, but the fat Fourth Formey fell to a deadly ball from Tom Merry. Then Kerr was caught out, with the score at 45, Figgins was going strong still. He had the bowling again, and the score jumped to 55. Figgins & Co. were already anticipating victory with wickets in hand when fortune smiled upon the School House again. Connor, Rax and Frost were bowled out in quick succession for a couple of runs apiece; seven down for 59. Then Figgins and Dibble made the running, and the score was at 85 when Dibble fell to Jack Blake's bowling.

Figgins and his next partner piled up the runs. It was in vain that Tom Merry & Co. piled Figgins with all kinds of bowling. Figgins was unapproachable. When the bowling came to Figgins there was "nothing doing" for the School House; but there was a very much doing for Figgins. Up went the score by leaps and bounds, and the New House fellows cheered as heally when it reached 95. Then Figgv's partner was caught out; nine down for 95.

"Last man in!"

Snatch misce joined Figgins.

Seven runs were wanted to win, and there was a shout from the New House crowd.

"Go it, Figgv!"

And Figgv grinned, and "went it." He started with a boundary off Tom Merry's bowling, and the New House yelled again. Three wanted to win, the next lot would do it, in all probability. The field were breathless as Tom Merry prepared to deliver the fateful ball. The fieldsmen were all eyes and hands, watching for chances. Figgins waited stody for the ball. It came down at last.

Snack!

The willow met the leather, and it

(Continued on page 22.)

THE GAZETTE.—No. 1, 492.

HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Peter Handkens of the Remove is supporting his wife Marjorie on a visit to Grayfriars, and Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Hunter are with him to the station to meet her, Wharton restlessly breaking objections to do so.

On the way the juniors pass two gipsy women, and are astonished to hear a sudden cry from one of them. They question the gipsies about it, but are told to mind their own business.

The claims of the Remove resume their journey to the station, but on arriving there they discover that Marjorie Handkens, who came by an earlier train, has already set out for Grayfriars. The juniors are somewhat mystified, for they should have met the girl on the road.

Harry Wharton recalls the cry from the gipsy women, and the juniors, realising she might have been kidnaped, chase back after the women. They overtake them some distance past Grayfriars, and straightforwardly attack the gipsies, but are beaten off.

Walter is thereupon dispatched to the village police station to fetch help, while the other juniors follow in the wake of the women, which have departed at a fast pace. By the roadside the juniors see a girl in rags and with no shoes, and she turns out to be Marjorie Handkens, abandoned by the gipsies after being robbed of her clothes and jewellery.

The claims of the Remove decide to retrieve the pursuit of the gipsies, and with Marjorie they head for Ferrydale, a nearby village.

(You read on.)

On the Kidnappers' Trail!

THE Green Man at Ferrydale was a comfortable little hostelry. Mine host was a comfortable little man with a rubicund face. His wife was a comfortable little woman with an almost equally ruddy complexion. There was an air of homelike comfort about the inn that is sometimes found in old-fashioned wayside hostries.

And at the Green Man the third Grayfriars juniors and Marjorie Handkens received a warm welcome. They had only to explain the circumstances, and mine host and his wife were busy about their comfort at once.

Marjorie Handkens was led away at once by the barman handily, while the boys were provided with a much-needed wash, and were able to freshen off some of the mud and dust left on them at their encounter with the gipsies. Marjorie was leaning with smiles when she rejoined the juniors in the comfortable oak-panelled room where a meal had been laid.

Outside the inn the dusk was coming on, but in the shadowy little room, in which the bright lights never quite extinguished the shadows of the old one, all was pleasant.

The juniors were hungry, and so was Marjorie, a fact of which she made no secret. And the food was good and wholesome. Bread-and-butter and good cheese, cold boiled bacon, and steamed eggs were quite appetising enough for hungry schoolboys.

Marjorie watched now in a brown frock belonging to one of the innkeeper's. THE CHUMS OF THE REMOVE.—No. 1, 462.

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long Grayfriars stories appearing every Saturday in the "Magnet.")

children, and plain as the garb was, she looked very charming in it. Her face was very bright and her eyes seemed always laughing. The way she presided at the table enchanted the juniors.

And over Handkens himself had come a change. Even among fellows who were friendly to him he could never avoid saying things that had a sting in them; but on this occasion he seemed to have quite turned over a new leaf. He was as cheery and chatty as the rest, and so Bob Cherry said afterwards, during the whole course of the feed nobody felt inclined to bill Vaseline's nose, once.

"You won't see much of Grayfriars to-day, Marjorie," Harry Wharton remarked. They were all calling her Marjorie now, at her own request.

"When you get to the school it will be quite dark."

"But I have to go home by the six o'clock train," Marjorie exclaimed.

"Mother will be worried."

Harry Wharton & Co. were up against a tough proposition in bringing to book two lawless gipsies who had already beaten them in one encounter. But that only served to make the Chums of Grayfriars more determined to go through with the dangerous task they had set themselves!

"That's all right, Marjorie," said Handkens. "I shall wire from here. There is a telegraph office in Ferrydale. I can send a wire to say that you are staying at the school all night. Of course, that's what you'll have to do."

Marjorie looked rather uneasy.

"We'll explain to the Head as soon as we get back," said Handkens. "Mrs. Locke will take jolly good care of you. She's the Head's wife, you know. She told me to be sure to take you to see her this afternoon while you were at the school."

"That was very kind of her."

"You will have to stay. Why, you couldn't catch that train home if you started now! We are miles from the station. The telegrams will make it all right."

Marjorie still looked troubled.

"You are going after the gipsies?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Why not let them go and come back to the school? You will get into trouble for staying out after dark, you know."

"That's nothing. I expect the Head will let us down lightly when he knows the reason," said Bob Cherry. "Anyway, we're going to risk it."

"Marjorie is uneasy about us," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Isn't that it?"

The girl nodded with a slightly tremulous smile.

"Yes," she said frankly; "I'm afraid they will hurt you. They are such big, hulking ruffians, and you—you—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"And we're only boys, you mean?"

"You are very plucky," said the girl.

"You have proved that. But if they hurt you—"

"We shall take care of ourselves. We promise you not to run into danger," said Harry reassuringly. "Now, would you rather remain here for us to return, or would you prefer to be driven over to the school at once?"

"Oh, I shall wait!" exclaimed the girl. "I shall wait here. You are going?"

"Yes; it's already getting dark."

"You will come back as soon as you can?" asked Marjorie anxiously.

"You may rely upon that."

The girl was evidently uneasy, but she did not try to dissuade them. The juniors had made up their minds to make a fight to a finish with the two ruffians who had kidnaped her, and nothing would have turned them from their purpose. Besides, there were Marjorie's watch and basket to be considered.

The four juniors said good-bye to the girl, and she watched them go from the door of the inn. The juniors had easily been able to find four stout couples to take with them, and, thus armed, they felt fully a match for Melchior and his companion. The next meeting with the gipsies was not likely to end so badly for them.

They set out from the inn, and the gathering dusk swallowed them up from the sight of the anxious girl.

In the Hands of the Gipsies!

THE dusk on the country road grew thicker. Harry Wharton had obtained some information at the inn regarding the gipsies.

They had halted the caravan at the Green Man to give the barman water. Then they had passed on down the road and there was little doubt that they would take the turning to Brays Common, to camp upon the wide-stretching grassland.

"We'll try the common first, at all events," Harry Wharton remarked as they resolved the first turning. "If they're not there we'll look farther, but there's little doubt, I think, that they're camped for the night."

"Pretty certain," Handkens agreed. And the juniors tramped on steadily down the lane towards the wide common. The rest and the refreshment at the inn had revived their strength, and they were feeling quite fit again. The lane gradually changed into a footpath, leading over the furry common. The juniors kept their eyes open, on all sides, for a trace of the gipsies.

It was now quite dark. A few stars glimmered in the sky, but blackness lay like a pall upon the common. The bushes and trees rose dim and ghastly through the gloom. Harry Wharton uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Look there!"

A red glimmer came through the gloom from some distance ahead.

"A fire," said Newport quietly.

—TELLING OF THEIR EARLY DAYS AT GREYFRIARS SCHOOL.



Suddenly Barongro stared at the thickets, directly towards the spot where Harry Wharton was crouching. The janitor's heart stood still for a moment. Had the ruffian seen him? Wharton little knew that Melchior was creeping round behind him!

"Yes; a fire on the common. They have camped there, I should say. It was just as I expected."
"We shall soon see."

The janitors pressed on. Their faces were very serious now, and they were gripping their cudgels tighter. They had plenty of pluck, but they knew that it was no light matter to attack (so powerful and unscrupulous ruffians in that leafy place. But they never thought of turning back.

The glimmer of the fire grew reddier as they advanced. It glimmered a hundred yards or more from the huts, beyond thick ferns bushes which shut the gipsy camp off from view.

The janitors halted on the grass by the roadside. There was little or no doubt that the caravans were camped on the other side of the bushes, and that they were now close upon the foe.

Through the dark bushes and trees came suddenly the red glimmer, but the boys could see nothing else. A vague sound or two was wafted through the silence of the night.

"Wait here!" Harry Wharton whispered. "No good hurrying into a thing like this. I'll go through the bushes first and spot them and see how matters stand."

"They may spot you."
"I shall take care. I'll come back for you."

"You may get a crack on the head."
"Well, if I don't come back in a quarter of an hour, you can do as you think best," said Harry.

"Good! You're leader. We'll wait," said Bob Cherry.

Harry nodded and disappeared into the dark bushes. Under the trees the darkness was thick, and he could not see a yard in front of him. Damp, clinging leaves brushed his face, and he stumbled over trailing roots.

Once he caught his foot and fell heavily. The noise he made was considerable, and he lay for a couple of

minutes listening, wondering whether he had alarmed the gipsies.

But no sound came from the camp beyond the thickets. He rose and pushed on again, more cautiously now. The red glimmer of the fire had disappeared for a moment; but now he caught it again through the bushes. He drew closer and closer, till only a mass of thicket intervened between him and the camp.

He crouched close behind the bush, feeling secure in the darkness, and watched the scene before him with keen and eager eyes.

It was, as he had fully believed, the camp of the gipsies. The two vans were drawn up close to the trees, with the shafts in the air, and the shaggy horses had been turned loose to graze.

The fire blazed up brightly against the darkness of the common. Beside it, on a log, Barongro was sitting, eating bread and cheese with a knife. On the steps of one of the caravans was the old cross they had seen in the van, and she was also eating and seemed to have no attention for anything else.

These two seemed to be the whole party. If there were others belonging to it they were not to be seen.

Harry scanned the place keenly. He could not see Melchior, and he wondered where the leader of the two ruffians was. He might be in one of the vans, and if so, it was now a favourable moment for attack, so that the ruffians could be taken separately.

Harry Wharton was just making a movement to rise to return to his chums when Barongro made a movement. He laid down his knife, and took something from his pocket—something which flashed and glistened in the firelight.

The greed in the man's swarthy face was sufficient to tell Harry Wharton what it was, although he could not see the object clearly. It was undoubtedly the gold watch which had been stolen from Marjorie Hazleboro.

"You won't keep that long, you

hound!" muttered Harry Wharton grimly.

Suddenly Barongro thrust the watch into his pocket again and stared at the thicket, directly towards the spot where Harry was crouching in the shadow of the bush.

The boy's heart stood still for a moment. Had the ruffian seen him? Surely that was impossible in the dense shadow of the bush.

Yet why was he staring so intently towards the thicket? A sudden feeling of uneasiness smote Harry, and he turned his head to look behind him. As he did so there was a rattle, and a strong hand grasped his shoulder from behind, and a knee was planted in the middle of his back. He was crushed face downwards to the ground, and the knee planted on his back pinned him there. There was the sound of a low chuckle.

"So you are spying, are you?"
It was the voice of Melchior, the gipsy. Harry writhed under with rage that the discomfort he was suffering. But his position made him absolutely helpless to struggle.

"Ha, ha! I think I know you. You are the leader of those fool schoolboys; the gipsy's harsh voice went on. "I thought I heard a voice in the thickets, and I have found you. What are you doing here?"

"Let me go, you hound!"
The gipsy laughed again.
"That is hardly likely. Where are your friends?"

"Find out!"
The knee ground painfully into his back, and Harry Wharton gasped. He gave a cry, but his face was pressed into the grass, and the cry was stifled.

"Ha, ha! Are they near at hand, then?"

Harry gasped, but could not speak.
"So you're still followed us. Why?"
"To hand you over to the police, you see."
The One Leader.—No. 1, 66.

ruffians?" gasped Harry. "And we shall do it yet!"

"We shall see. At least, you shall never give us trouble again," said the gipsy. "If I do not crack your skull with this cudgel it is because you would be more dangerous to me dead than alive."

"You are afraid."

The knee jammed harder on the boy's back, and he could scarcely breathe. The gipsy laughed again—a harsh and savage laugh.

"Perhaps I am," he said. "But I shall not spare you otherwise, you spying whelp! You shan't give information that would cause us trouble. You'll be bound and gagged in the van until morning, and to-morrow we'll stand you without money or clothes in the heart of the common. How do you like that?"

Harry did not reply, but, in spite of the pain he was suffering, a smile that the gipsy did not see came over his face.

His chains were to wait a quarter of an hour for him, and already that time was nearly up. It would not be long before Nugent, Haseldene, and Bob Cherry came upon the scene. There was a surprise waiting for the gipsy ruffian, for it was evident that Melchior did not believe that his friends were at hand. The ruffian dragged Harry to his feet.

Harry Wharton could have cried out that for aid he wished; but he did not do so. The cry would have warned Melchior that his chains were there, and Harry's hope was that the juniors would be able to take the kidnappers by surprise.

With the ruffian's powerful grip on his collar, Harry was dragged to the camp. Barengro showed his yellow teeth in a savage grin as he came into the light of the fire.

"He was alone, Melchior?"

"Yes; spying on us."

Barengro's hand slid into his ragged coat and came out with a clasp-knife in it. He opened the knife slowly.

Harry's eyes met his calmly, without flinching. He knew that the ruffian was seeking to terrify him; but had the gipsy been in earnest Harry would not have feared him.

"Shall I finish him now, Melchior?" asked the ruffian, coming closer to Harry, the opened knife glinting in his hand.

"Kiss!" exclaimed Harry. "You shan't, and you know it! Do you think you can frighten me with this child's play?"

Barengro's yellow teeth showed in a mocking grin.

"Put away your knife, Barengro!" exclaimed Melchior, with a laugh. "You can't use it now. Get a rope, and bind this insolent whelp with it!"

"I'll bind him fast enough!" muttered Barengro.

He dragged a coarse rope from one of the vans, and Harry was fang to the ground, and Melchior held him while the other ruffian bound him. Barengro drew the cords so tightly that the boy winced with pain, but he would not allow a sound of it to pass his lips. He set his teeth hard to endure it. Melchior watched him with a savage grin.

"Make the knots secure, Barengro."

Barengro was making the knots secure. The both rose in ridges on Harry Wharton's wrists and legs as the ropes drew tighter. The ruffian was finished at last, and he rose from his task. The boy lay on the ground, unable to move a limb.

"Throw him into the van," said Melchior, sitting down on the log and taking out his pipe, and slowly filling it

with tobacco. "Perhaps some of his spirit will be gone by the morning. A night in those bonds would break most spirits, I think."

Barengro chuckled and dragged Harry to the van. He was hung in and fell heavily on the hard floor, and lay there, unable to help himself, just where he fell. The door clattered shut, and he was left alone in intense darkness.

To the Rescue!

BOB CHERRY, Nugent, and Haseldene were waiting under the dark trees by the road over the common. The time dragged by on loaded wings, and still Harry did not return, and they heard no sound from the thickets that lay wrapped in silence and darkness close by them.

Uneasiness was growing in each heart. Bob Cherry was the first to break the heavy silence.

"It won't be a quarter of an hour now," he murmured.

"I shouldn't say so," muttered Nugent. "Wharton ought to be back by this time," said Haseldene. "We had better go and look for him. He may have been caught by the gipsins."

"But we should have heard something," Nugent observed.

"Not if he got a sudden crack on the head."

Nugent shuddered. When he thought of Harry Wharton lying in the under-woods, somehow, under a savage blow from a gipsy's bludgeen, he realized how much his friendship with the new boy at Greyfriars had come to mean to him.

"It is possible that that is what has happened," said Bob Cherry abruptly.

"Harry Wharton is not the fellow to run into danger recklessly, but he may have blundered into the gipsins. I think we had better go and look for him."

"Come on, then!"

The juniors gripped their cudgels tighter, and, with fast-beating hearts, made their way slowly and cautiously through the tangled bushes, keeping the ruddy gleam of the gipsins' fire before their eyes as a guide.

The light of the fire grew stronger, and they came out at last into the open, close by the spot where Harry Wharton had watched the gipsy's camp, and where he had been seized by Melchior.

The three juniors looked eagerly towards the camp in search of any sign of their missing chum.

Melchior and Barengro could be seen sitting by the fire smoking their pipes. The old woman was invisible, and had doubtless retired to sleep in one of the vans.

Melchior and Barengro were talking, and in the stillness of the night the sound of their voices came to the boys crouching on the edge of the thicket. But the words could not be distinguished, for they were in the Romany dialect.

There was no sign of Harry Wharton. Bob Cherry's brow contracted. He was uneasy, yet it was possible that Harry was still in the thickets, safe and sound. He might have missed the light of the fire and gone astray.

Haseldene muttered a sudden low exclamation.

Bob pressed a warning hand on his shoulder, fearing that the gipsins would hear. But the two ruffians did not look up, and the low murmur of their voices continued uninterrupted.

"What is it, Haseldene?" whispered Nugent. "Be careful!"

"Look!" muttered Haseldene.

He pointed to a small object lying in the grass a few yards from the thicket

in the shadow of which the boys were crouching.

Bob Cherry and Nugent started violently as they saw it. There was no mistaking it, surely as it lay in the grass on the verge of the circle of light cast by the flickering fire. It was a school cap.

"Harry's cap!" muttered Nugent under his breath.

"Harry Wharton's cap, right enough!" said Bob Cherry. "He's been here. They have done something with him, that's certain."

The boys were silent for a few moments. What had the gipsins done with Harry Wharton? Was it possible that they had harmed him? Bob Cherry sprang to his feet.

"Come on!" he said.

"We're ready!"

"And hit hard!" muttered Bob. "It doesn't matter how much you hurt them, only knock them out before they can knock us out, that's all."

"That's the idea!"

The three juniors, their hearts beating faster and their determination screwed up to sticking-point, dashed towards the gipsins, their cudgels firmly gripped in their hands. The light was dim, and their footsteps made no sound on the grass, and so for the moment the two ruffians did not observe them.

The juniors were close upon them before Melchior and Barengro saw their danger and spring to their feet.

Melchior aimed at a savage oath as he faced the rush of the Greyfriars juniors. His cudgel was out of his reach, but he looked a dangerous foe as he stood, his big fists clenched, waiting to meet the attack. Barengro made a spring for his weapon, which was lying in the grass where he had carelessly tossed it.

But the juniors gave the gipsins little time. The attack was sudden and determined. Bob Cherry and Haseldene rushed straight at Melchior, while Nugent gave his attention to Barengro.

The latter had reached the spot where his cudgel lay, and was stooping to recover it, when Nugent's stick descended with terrible force. It caught the stooping gipsy on the back of the head, and he pitched forward helplessly on his face in the grass.

Nugent's arm was flung up for a second blow, but it was not needed. Barengro neither stirred nor groaned. The blow had stunned him. And Nugent, realising that one foe was disposed of, turned to aid his comrades. And two to one at that were, they needed it.

Melchior had received Bob Cherry's blow on his left arm, and although his arm dropped numbly to his side, he struck savagely with his right, and Bob went reeling into the grass from the blow.

Melchior then sprang at Haseldene, and the junior faltered. He was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. He had shown himself in a new light that day, and surprised his friends. But at a critical moment like this his courage failed him.

The powerful, savage-faced gipsy, springing at him grimly, made him falter, and he aimed an ineffectual blow and retreated. But it was the worst step he could have taken. Melchior was upon him in a moment, and had wrenched the cudgel out of his following hand.

A harsh, mocking laugh fell from the gipsy's lips as he swung up the cudgel. The next second Haseldene would have dropped in the grass under a fierce

blow; but Nugent was on the spot. His weapon crashed on Melchior's shoulder, and with a yell of pain the gipsy dropped the dagger to the ground.

Bob Cherry was on his feet again now, dazed but dauntless, and as ready for a fight as ever. He rushed to Nugent's aid.

Melchior retreated before the juniors, his face contracted with pain, his black eyes blazing with rage.

"Give in, you fool," exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Melchior sprang back and turned and ran. But the juniors were too quick for him. Bob Cherry's dagger descended with a crash on his shoulder, and he reeled. As he reeled Nugent struck fiercely. Melchior pitched over and fell, and the juniors sprang upon him before he could rise.

He struggled feebly under their weight, but he was dazed by the blow and almost helpless. Bob Cherry shouted to Haseldens.

"Get a rope, or something, quick, Wharton!"

Haseldens started. He was bewildered by the rapidity of events, and his face was burning with the consciousness of the show he had made in the fight. But he obeyed Bob Cherry, and quickly found a rope hanging to one of the vans and brought it to the spot.

Melchior, in spite of his desperate resistance, was bound hand and foot, and the juniors did not neglect to draw the knots tightly.

Then they rose from their prisoner, breathless. Melchior lay in the grass, breathless, too, unable to stir hand or foot. His swarthy face was convulsed with rage, his black eyes scintillating like a snake's. From his lips poured a continuous stream of imprecations.

"Now the other," said Bob Cherry.

Barrage had raised himself on his elbow. His senses were returning, but he was still too dazed to realize what had happened, or where he was.

Three juniors flung themselves upon him at once, and he was pinned to the ground. Another rope was soon found, and he was bound, as Melchior had been.

The Goyfriars juniors had won. But they felt as yet none of the rapture of victory. Where was Harry Wharton? If he were lying insensible or injured in the thickets, their success would have been dearly bought.

Bob Cherry returned to Melchior. The savage gipsy was still cursing, but bent over him threateningly.

"Where is Harry Wharton?"

A savage oath was the only answer he received.

"Tell me, you hound! Where is he?"

But the gipsy replied only with curses. Bob Cherry was greatly incensed to see his colleague as the blackguard, but he refrained.

"Let's shoot for him!" exclaimed Nugent.

"If he's within the sound of our voices he will answer."

"Right-ho! Tell, then!"

And the Goyfriars juniors yelled:

"Wharton! Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Wharton! Hallo!"

The shout rang far over the dark commons, echoing away into the shadows. And, to the joy of the juniors, a voice replied:

"Hallo!"

"Ho in the van?" exclaimed Nugent, dashing towards the caravan, from which the answering cry had come.

"He Jove, so he is! Wharton!"

"Help!"

"We're coming!"

The juniors tore open the door of the van. It was pitch-dark within. Nugent struck a match, and Harry Wharton

was revealed, lying on the floor of the van, bound hand and foot.

He gave them a cherry grin.

"Jolly glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "Got me out of those ropes, for goodness' sake! I'm nearly dead with creep!"

Nugent's pocket-knife came out, and the ropes were soon seen through Harry Wharton was free.

The Triumph!

BOB CHERRY gave a cheer that might have been heard from every quarter of the great commons, and slapped Haseldens on the back with an energy that made him stagger.

"Hurrah for us!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Don't scare me, Nugent!"

"Better get out of the van."

"Oh! Don't! I'm being tortured!"

On!"

The returning circulation in the cramped limbo was making Harry Wharton writhe with pain. Nugent understood, and he chafed the junior's ankles while Bob Cherry did the same with his wrists. Harry bristled with pain, but it soon abated.

Then his chains helped him out of the van. Harry was looking rather white, but he was rapidly becoming himself again.

"Where are the gipsies?" he asked.

"You have beaten them, of course, but—"

Bob Cherry pointed to the two bound figures lying in the grass.

"There they are."

"Both prisoners?"

"Yes, rather!"

Melchior's stream of execration had ceased. Perhaps he had realized that

swearing could not help him, or perhaps he was out of breath. He lay silent now, his swarthy face sallow, his black eyes glowing in the twilight. Barrage, who was evidently the weaker scoundrel of the two, began to whimper.

"Let me go, young gentleman! I will give you back what I took from the girl. The watch is in my pocket, and Melchior has the locket, and the clothes are in a bundle in the van. Let me go!"

Harry Wharton smiled grimly.

"Not likely!" he said. "You are going to prison, you scoundrel! If it were only for the trouble with us we might let you off; but fellows who kidnap a girl and rob her ought to get the worst we can give them, and you're going to get it!"

"But—"

"Hold your tongue!" growled Melchior. "We'll get our revenge for this. They cannot keep us in prison long, and then we shall take our revenge!"

Harry Wharton laughed scornfully.

"You'll see how we care for your revenge!" he exclaimed. "We'll have to get these fellows to the police station now."

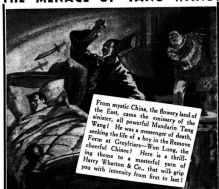
Bob Cherry looked round in a doubtful way.

"How are we going to do it, Wharton? It's a jolly long walk from here, you know. I suppose we could make them walk, but—"

"My sister is waiting for us at Ferrydale," said Haseldens. "I, at least, must return there; but you—"

"We shall return there," said Harry Wharton, "and take these rascals with us. The landlord of the Green Man will take them in charge, and send them over to the police station, as there is not one in Ferrydale."

THE MENACE OF TANG WANG!



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"That's a good idea!"
 "Good!" said Bob Cherry. "But it's a long walk, and to drive those two brutes along won't be easy."

"There's no need for us to walk," said Harry Wharton. "We can harness up a horse to one of these vans and shove the gipsies inside."

"Good! I never thought of that!"

"That will be an easy way of getting them to Ferrydale. Then the landlady of the Green Man can send them over in the same van to the police station. See if you can catch one of the horses."

Bob Cherry and Nugent hurried away to get one of the grazing horses.

The door of the van into which the old gipsy cross had retired had opened now, and the woman was staring at the juniors and blinking her black eyes wildly. But she did not venture to make any attempt to release the gipsies. That would have been useless, and with her, so long as she remained quiet, the juniors had no intention of interfering. Harry Wharton walked towards her.

"Where are the things stolen from the young lady to-day?" he asked quietly. "If you give them up we shall not interfere with you."

The old woman granted, but made no other reply.

"Do you hear?" asked Harry Wharton sharply. "Do you want to be sent to prison along with those two scoundrels?"

The old woman blinked wildly at him, and withdrew into the van. Then a bundle was flung out, and it fell at the boy's feet. Handcuffs picked it up.

"These are Marjorie's things," he said. "Let the old wretch escape. Hello, Nugent has got the horse!"

Nugent and Bob Cherry were exchanging with the animal they had captured. The boys soon had it harnessed into the shafts of the empty caravan, and then the two gipsies were dragged into the letter and the door fastened upon them. Bessie was whining, and his companion cussing furiously. Harry Wharton led the horse away towards the road, and the rattle of the jacking wheels drowned the voices within the vehicle.

The van turned into the road. Then the juniors climbed up in front, and Harry took the reins.

"Bessie!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If this isn't a regular triumph I don't know what is. We ought really to take this rig-out to Greyfriars and arrive there at a gallop. That would make a sensation."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I fancy the horse would fall down dead before we got there," he remarked. "And how's he to gallop with this heavy van behind him?"

"What a practical fellow you are—"

"If he drags us as far as Ferrydale we'll be satisfied," said Nugent, laughing. "And we'll go home in some other conveyance. By Jove, we have had a day out, and so mistake!"

"After the least comes the reckoning," said Handcuffs. "What are you going to say to Quelch, Wharton?"

"Nothing," said Harry.

The caravan lumbered and clattered along the lane. The lights of Ferrydale came in sight at last. Harry drove the van up in good style to the Green Man and brought it to a halt.

Two men in uniform rushed out instantly. A constable sprang to the horse's head, and an inspector came close up to the van.

"Get you—oh!" said the latter. "Of all the nerve, driving up openly like this—Why, it's a lorry!"

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Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. "Inspector Scope?" he exclaimed. "You—why—you are Greyfriars' lack, surely!" exclaimed the amazed inspector. "What are you doing with this van?"

"We've captured it," said Harry coolly. "Did you get our message from Billy Hunter, inspector?"

"Yes," said Inspector Scope. "He came to the police station, and the story he told us made us come out at once. There have been other complaints against the gipsies, but this was a definite charge we could arrest them upon, you see, as we lost no time. We lost you, however, and arrived here and learned that you had gone in search of the gipsies."

"And we found them," grinned Bob Cherry.

"I see you have, as you appear to have captured their van. But where are the gipsies?"

"Inside!"

"What?" yelled the amazed inspector.

"Are you inside?"

"Are you joking?"

"Not at all. Look for yourself."

The inspector went to the rear of the van and opened the door. The constable flashed his lamp within, and there, sure enough, were the two gipsies, lying bound. Inspector Scope grinned with satisfaction.

"Ah, I've got you now, you beauties, have I?" he said. "You won't get away in a hurry, either. You may as well remain there till we get to the police station."

And he closed the door of the van again and fastened it. The Greyfriars juniors descended from the van. They were looking and looking very pleased with themselves.

"You can hand this over to me," said the inspector, indicating the van, with a great deal of satisfaction. "I'll see that your services to the law are properly recognised. We will take charge of the van and the prisoners, and I think you had better be getting back to Greyfriars."

"I think so, too," said Harry Wharton. "You are welcome to those rotten. They have some articles of jewellery belonging to Miss Handcuffs—"

"I will take care of that. Miss Handcuffs will have to appear at the prosecution. By George, I'm glad to have my hands on those scoundrels!"

The caravan lumbered off, with the inspector driving and the constable sitting by his side. They were looking extremely satisfied, as they had every reason to be.

Marjorie Handcuffs was standing at the door of the inn, and she greeted the juniors with a bright smile.

"I have been so anxious about you," she said. "But never mind. Are you going to Greyfriars now?"

"Yes; I'll see about a conveyance," said Harry Wharton.

Handcuffs was carrying the bundle restored by the gipsy cross. He gave it to Marjorie, much to her delight, and she retired to prepare herself for the journey.

The only conveyance that Harry Wharton could get was a trap belonging to a farmer, but anything was good enough so long as it carried them safely to Greyfriars.

By the time the trap was ready, Marjorie Handcuffs reappeared, and Harry Wharton having settled the bill with the host of the Green Man, the Greyfriars party drove off in high spirits.

The Return!

"GREYFRIARS!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. The big gates set in the arch of stone, with the two lamps burning over them, loomed up in the gloom, as Harry Wharton drove the trap to a halt.

The drive had been a pleasant one. The four juniors and Marjorie Handcuffs had kept up a cheery chatter all the way, and the distance had seemed as nothing to them. The gates of Greyfriars loomed in sight all too soon.

"Here we are!" said Bob Cherry. "And, by George, it's really time! Listen!"

The great clock of Greyfriars was booming out. Ten notes echoed through the silence of the night.

"Ten o'clock," said Nugent. "What will the Head say?"

He jumped down and clanged at the bell. The gates were quickly opened. The school porter was evidently on the look-out for the returning juniors, who had failed to turn up at calling-over, and had, of course, been missed. A lamp glimmered in the darkness. Harry Wharton shook the reins.

"Stand aside, there!"
 "My keys!" grumbled a voice in the darkness. "Nine going home, I must say—very nice going home! My keys!"
 "Get out of the way! I want to drive in."

The porter stood aside. Harry Wharton drove the trap through the gateway and up to the School House. The light was burning in the Head's study and the hall door was open, a glimmer of light falling into the Close.

The trap came to a halt before the House. In the light of the hall appeared the form of Wingate, the school captain. He came out and looked quietly at the juniors.

"So you've got back?" he said. "Yes, turned up like the bad penny you've heard about," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Here we are, as large as life and twice as natural."

"Why—what—who is this?"

"My sister," said Handcuffs. Wingate helped Marjorie down from the trap. He was looking perplexed.

"You're all to go into the Head's study," he said. "You had better come, too, Miss Handcuffs. Where did you get that trap, Wharton?"

"I hired it in Ferrydale. It was the only conveyance I could get."

"And what are you going to do with it now?"

"I promised to have it sent back in the morning."

Then it will have to be put up for the night.
 And Wingate called to the school porter, who gratefully led away the horse. Harry Wharton slipped a shilling into his hand, however, which somewhat mollified him.

Several Sixth Formers came out to stare at the juniors as they made their way to the Head's study. The Lower Form at Greyfriars were in bed.

Dr. Locke rose from his seat, an awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown, with an awe-inspiring frown upon his face, as the juniors entered the study.

In spite of the excellent conveyance they had to make, the juniors felt a slight sinking at the heart.

"And so," said the Head in a deep voice which seemed thunderous to the ears of the Recorders—"so you have returned!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly.

The Head adjusted his pipe-case.

"But—er—who may this be, pray?" And his eyes dwelt in surprise on Marie-Jolie Haseldene.

"My sister, sir," said Haseldene. "If you will allow me to explain—"

"Bless my soul! How comes she here?"

"She came down to Greyfriars to see me this afternoon, sir."

"Ah, yes, I remember!" said the Head, recalling that his wife had spoken to him about Haseldene's sister. "But at this time of night—"

"She was kidnapped by gipsies, sir."

"Eh?"

"Kidnapped—"

"Are you serious, Haseldene?"

"Yes, sir. The fellows will tell you—"

"Tell me what has happened, Wharton," said Dr. Locke, who knew Haseldene of old, and was far from trusting to his word—though, on the present occasion, he would have been safe in doing so.

"Certainly, sir! Miss Haseldene was forced in the lane by a set of rascally gipsies, as she was walking to the school, and they forced her into the van and carried her off. We found out what had happened, and followed—"

"Dear me! I am sure you are telling me the truth, Wharton, but this story is most surprising. Go on."

"We had a tussle with the rascals, sir—I mean, with the gipsies, and got the worst of it. After that they robbed Miss Haseldene, and left her by the roadside, where we found her."

"Bless my soul! They must be brought to justice."

"That is already done, sir."

"Ah, good! The police—"

"The police didn't do it, sir," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "You see, sir, we left Miss Haseldene at the inn in Ferrydale and went after the rascals—"

"That was a rash thing to do—"

"And we found them camped on Brave Common, sir," said Nugent, taking up the tale, "and we collared them."

"There was a fight," said Haseldene, "and they were loked." He coloured a little at the remembrance of the part he had played in the fight. "They're in the hands of the police now, sir, and the things they stole from my sister have been recovered."

The Head rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"My boys, you appear to have acted in an exceedingly rash but very plucky manner indeed. I can only say that I am overjoyed to find that you are not hurt. In the circumstances, I shall, of course, overlook any being absent from call-cover, though I have been very anxious about you, sir."

"And surely this girl's parents will be anxious, too?"

"I sent dad a wire from Ferrydale, sir," said Haseldene. "I told him Marie-Jolie would be staying at Greyfriars for the night, and would explain when she returned to-morrow."

"That was well. You may go to your dormitory now, my boys, and I will overlook this matter, in consideration of your brave conduct. But, remember!"—the Head went on in a very significant tone—"no more running after gipsies. One adventure of this kind is quite enough."

"Yes, sir," said the juniors together.

"Mrs. Locke will look after your sister, Haseldene," said the Head.

"Come with me, Miss Haseldene Good-night, boys!"

"Good-night, sir! Good-night, Marie-Jolie!"

"Good-night!" said the girl, with a sweet smile.

Then the Removites went up to their own quarters. They found one or two fellows awake in the dormitory, among them Billy Bonter.

"We're well out of that," Bob Cherry remarked; "but you've got to face the Quack-bird in the morning, Wharton."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Perhaps he'll let you off in view of what's happened."

"I don't want to make capital out of it," said Harry Wharton. "If there's going to be a row, I can face it. I suppose I was wrong to go out against orders," he added, in a lower voice. "I was in a temper, I suppose. But I'm not afraid to face the music."

Better Friends!

"YOU will come into my study before prayer, Wharton," said Mr. Quack, with a stern brow, as he met Harry Wharton going down with the Remove.

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Quack turned away. The Remove master was evidently angry, and Wharton's chance looked sympathetic. As Bob Cherry remarked, he had known what to expect when he deliberately disobeyed a master, but it was hard enough all the same.

After breakfast Harry Wharton slowly made his way to the study of the Remove master. He tapped at the door, and Mr. Quack's voice bade him enter.

He opened the door and went slowly in. Mr. Quack was standing by the



Nugent struck a match as he entered the carriage and Harry Wharton was revealed, lying on the floor, bound hand and foot. "Jolly glad to see you!" exclaimed Harry. "Get me out of these ropes, for goodness' sake!"

The Removites undressed and got into bed. Harry Wharton was the last to go to sleep in the Remove dormitory.

In spite of the carelessness he assumed about the matter, he was feeling a considerable amount of anxiety as to the result of his interview with the Remove master on the following morning.

It was not that he feared punishment. But he had acted hastily, and reflection had shown him that he had done wrong, and with that feeling in his heart he did not like the prospect of the coming interview.

Feeling himself in the right, he could have faced anything. But this was quite different. It was not the first time that his intractable temper had forced him into a false position.

But it was useless to think about it, and he fell asleep at last. The afternoon had tired him, and he did not open his eyes again till the rattle-bell changed in the morning.

table, evidently waiting for him. A cane lay on the table.

A grin came over Harry's face as he saw it. The thought of punishment was always sufficient to harden his heart, which kind words would undoubtedly have softened. His was a nature which could always be led, but never driven.

"Come in, Wharton!"

The Form-master's tone was unexpectedly cordial. Harry glanced in surprise at his face. Mr. Quack was no longer frowning, and as he met the master's glance he nodded with a smile.

Wharton's surprise showed in his face. The Form-master noticed it.

"No, I am not angry with you, Wharton," he said. "I was very angry yesterday, and had made up my mind to punish you severely for what I could not but regard as a deliberate disobedience of my orders. So I still believed when I spoke to you this morning. But I have

