

"THE SCHOOLBOY CRACKSMAN!" GREAT YARN OF THE ST. JIM'S CHUMS— INSIDE!

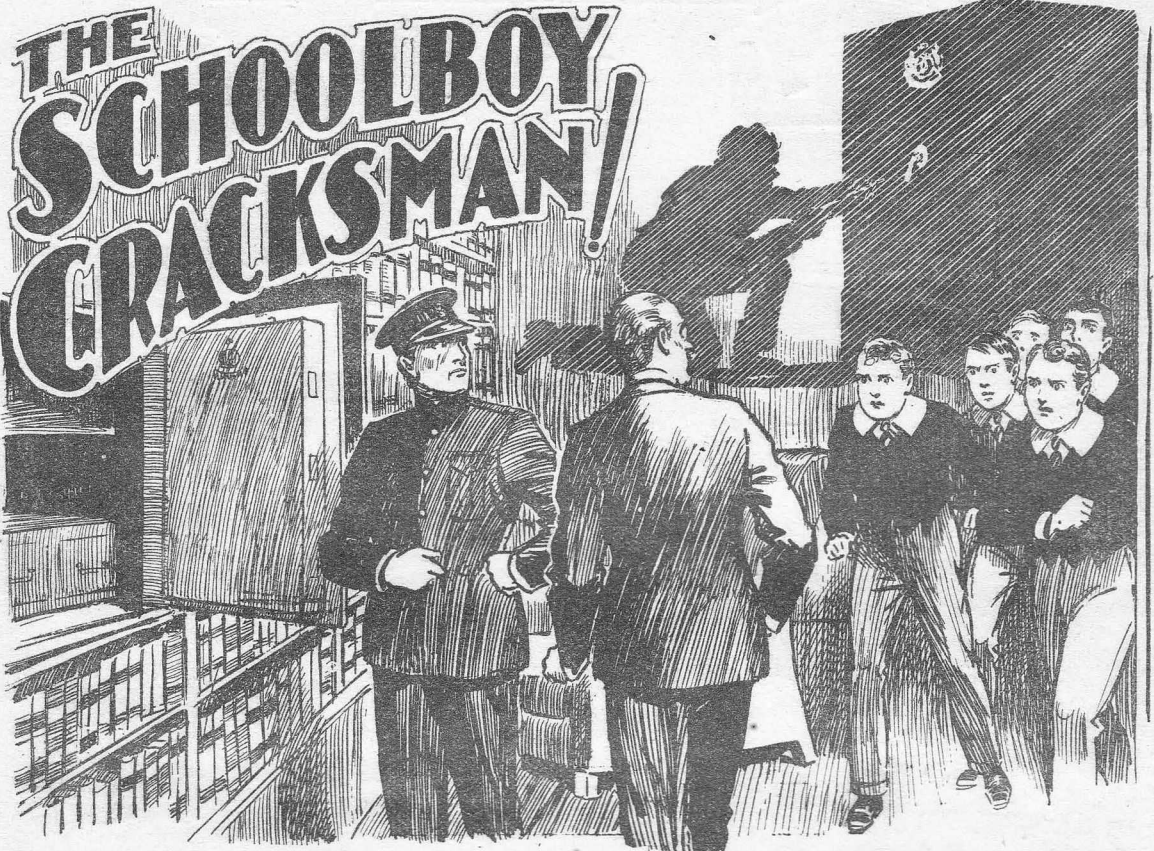
# The GEM 2d



**THE TOFF  
TO THE  
RESCUE!**

BY DAY HE WAS JUST A ST. JIM'S JUNIOR—BUT BY NIGHT HE WAS AN EXPERT CRACKSMAN!

# THE SCHOOLBOY CRACKSMAN!



As Tom Merry & Co. entered the library Mr. Glyn and Inspector Skeat were standing by the open safe. "These are the boys who were with my son yesterday," said Mr. Glyn. "It seems that Bernard showed them the safe."

## CHAPTER 1.

### "How's That?"

"YOU bowl me a few, Talbot!" Talbot of the Shell, the new boy at St. Jim's, was standing outside the pavilion on Big Side, looking on, with his hands in his pockets.

Kildare was at the wicket. It was not a match. Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was putting in some practice at the nets, and some of the juniors had been called upon to fag at bowling.

As a rule, Tom Merry & Co. did not approve of fagging. But they were always ready to fag for old Kildare, especially on the cricket ground. Bowling to Kildare was, as Monty Lowther sagely remarked, an education in itself. And it would have been a great distinction to take Kildare's wicket—if by a miracle that had happened. Not that it seemed likely to happen. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, had tried their powers, and their bowling had been knocked all over the ground.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth had followed them, with no better result. Talbot of the Shell was looking on.

The new Shell fellow had been only a few days at the school, but he had already shown that he could play cricket. And Tom Merry was curious

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to see how he would shape against Kildare.

"Wait a minute, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the ball was fielded. "I am goin' to twy old Kildare with a yorkeh. You can look out for squalls this time, Kildare, deah boy."

The St. Jim's captain laughed.

"Pile in!" he said.

Arthur Augustus gripped the round red ball in his right hand and backed away to take his little run. The other juniors looked on, grinning. Arthur Augustus had great faith in his powers as a bowler—a faith that was not shared by his comrades.

Arthur Augustus made his run, and turned himself into a kind of catherine-wheel for the delivery of the ball. But his foot slipped, and he turned a somersault and came down with a bump.

There was a yell of laughter from the onlookers:

"Ha, ha, ha! Is that how you bowl your famous yorkeh, Gussy?"

"Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus sat up dazedly. Kildare was laughing at the other end of the pitch. The group of juniors at the bowler's end were yelling. Arthur Augustus groped for his famous eyeglass and jammed it into his eye.

"Bai Jove! Is Kildare's wicket down?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not quite!" gasped Tom Merry.

"You're down. Nothing else down, so far."

"Bai Jove! Where's the ball, then?"

"Puzzle—find the ball!" grinned Monty Lowther.

The juniors looked round for the missing ball. Arthur Augustus blinked round him as he sat. But the ball was not to be seen.

"Bai Jove! This gwound feels fwightfully bumpay!" Arthur Augustus remarked as he slowly picked himself up. "Vewy bumpay, indeed—"

Blake gave a yell:

"You've been sitting on the ball, fathead!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry picked up the ball.

"Nuff acrobatic performances," he said. "This isn't a circus. This way, Talbot!"

"But I haven't twied that yorkeh yet, deah boy—"

"Take him away and put him in a strait-jacket, Blake. Here you are, Talbot!"

Jack Blake dragged his elegant chum off the bowling-crease, Arthur Augustus protesting that his "yorkeh," if delivered, would have beaten Kildare. But the juniors were not listening to him. Talbot had taken the ball in hand, and Kildare was shaping up.

Talbot took a little run, and the ball went down, and Kildare's bat gleamed in the air—and then—

# HERE'S AN ACE-HIGH YARN THAT YOU WILL REMEMBER AS ONE OF THE BEST YOU'VE EVER READ!

## By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

"How's that?" yelled Tom Merry.

Kildare of the Sixth looked down at his wicket. The middle stump was out of the ground, leaving the wicket looking as if it had paid a recent visit to the dentist's. The captain of St. Jim's looked astonished, as well he might. It was a new experience to the finest batsman at St. Jim's to be bowled by a junior.

"Well bowled, kid!" said Kildare. "We'll see if you can do that again."

"I'll try," said Talbot with a smile. Kildare was very careful with the next ball.

As it left Talbot's hand Tom Merry murmured:

"This one's off the wicket."

It was pitched outside the leg stump, and Kildare stepped into his wicket to swipe it to leg. But the leather broke in, escaped the Sixth Former's bat, and there was a clatter of the ball hitting the stumps.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"How's that?"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Kildare.

"I say, youngster, I suppose you're not a Verity in disguise, by any chance?" Talbot smiled.

"No, I just happened to be lucky, that's all."

"Well, you'll be a great acquisition to the junior eleven," said the captain of St. Jim's. "That'll do. Much obliged, you kids, for fagging for me!"

"Don't mensh, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus politely; and Kildare laughed and walked off the pitch.

"Talbot, old man, that was wippin'—simply wippin'. I could not have done better than that myself."

"Go hon!" said Monty Lowther incredulously.

"No, honah bwight, I couldn't!" assured Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you are wottin', you wottah! I considah—"

"Talbot, old man, you're a giddy jewel!" exclaimed Tom Merry, thumping the new junior heartily on the back.

"What a rod in pickle for the New House—eh, what?"

"What-ho!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! We've got a bowlah as good as Fatty Wynn at last!"

And Talbot of the Shell received quite an ovation as he walked back to the School House with Tom Merry & Co.

### CHAPTER 2. Good News!

**B**ERNARD GLYN of the Shell was waiting for the Terrible Three in their study. Tom Merry & Co. came in in high spirits. The discovery of Talbot's powers as a bowler was a source of great satisfaction to them.

Glyn was sitting on the study table, and he nodded cordially to the chums of the Shell.

"Come to tea?" asked Tom Merry. "You've come at the right time—behold!" And Tom Merry dumped down on the table a parcel he had brought from the tuckshop.

"No, I've had my tea. I've been home," said Glyn. "But I've got some news for you chaps—good news!"

"Food first! Shove the kettle on, Lowther. You can open the jam, Manners." And Tom Merry pushed Glyn off the table and proceeded to lay the cloth.

Glyn laughed and transferred his person to the armchair. Bernard Glyn was the son of a Liverpool merchant who had settled down in a country home near St. Jim's, and Tom Merry & Co. frequently went home to tea with him at Glyn House—a great treat, for Glyn's sister had a wonderful knowledge of catering for schoolboys.

"Look here, do you want to hear the news?" demanded Glyn.

"Certainly. You can make the toast while you're telling it," said Tom cheerily, shearing great slices off a loaf. "Lucky the fire's in. We're hungry, my son; we've been fagging at bowling and capturing Kildare's wicket."

"Gammon!" said Glyn laconically. "Fact—we haven't exactly captured it ourselves, but Talbot has. Same thing. By the way, you said you had some news, didn't you, Glyn?" asked Tom affably.

"Yes. My pater's got a lot of people down—quite a crowd. He's giving a cricket week."

"Oh, good!" said Tom Merry, interested. "Your pater's always doing

*When a big burglary occurred at Glyn House, near St. Jim's, it was apparent that an expert cracksman had been at work. But who was to suspect that the cracksman was a mere schoolboy—that he was a junior in the Shell Form at St. Jim's?*

things in style, Glyn. That's the advantage of being a giddy millionaire and rolling in filthy lucre. Does he want some of us to go over and coach his team?"

Glyn laughed.

"No, ass! They've got a good eleven up amongst the guests. There's Wodyer, who's engaged to my sister, and Lord Conway—Gussy's elder brother—and Yorke, who played for Loamshire, and a few more. They've got a couple of good matches on; but, as it happens, they have nothing for to-morrow, Wednesday. They wanted a one-day match to fill up the week."

"Well?"

"And that's where we come in. I put it to the pater," explained Glyn. "I told him we had an eleven here that would give 'em a good match. He thought I was talking about the first eleven!" Glyn sniffed. "Of course, I meant the junior eleven—us! He had the check to laugh when I explained; but I stuck to it, and the long and short of it is that we're challenged to take the eleven over to-morrow and play the Glyn House team."

"My hat! A whole day!"

"That's it!"

"But it's only a half to-morrow."

"I thought of that. The pater telephoned to the Head and asked leave for the junior eleven for to-morrow. The Head hummed and hawed a little bit, and consented. That's my news—is it good?"

"Good!" gasped Tom Merry. "Come to my heart!"

And the Terrible Three, leaving the preparations for tea standing, so to speak, rushed at Bernard Glyn and collared him, and waltzed round the study in a wild war-dance till he yelled for mercy.

"You howling maniacs!" roared Glyn. "Leggo! Chuck it!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Leggo!"

Glyn tore himself away at last and plummeted down in the chair.

The Terrible Three ceased their wild gyrations, panting for breath.

"Bai Jove! You seem to be wejoicin' here, deah boys," remarked Arthur Augustus, looking into the study.

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry. "There's great news! Glyn's pater is a brick. There's a whole holiday to-morrow for the junior eleven—us! We're going over to Glyn's house to play the cricket week—I mean, Glyn's pater is holding a cricket week, and we're going over to play the giddy country house team. Your brother is there—old Conway—"

"Yaas. I was thinkin' of wunnin' ovah to see old Conway," remarked Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, this is good news! I suppose it is a grown-up team at your place, Glyn?"

"Of course!"

"Howevah, we will beat them."

"Lemme see," said Tom Merry. "There's myself, skipper; Lowther, Blake, Talbot, Kangaroo—that's five. Then Figgins and Fatty Wynn—that's seven. Redfern—must have Reddy to bat—that's eight. Kerr must go in—he's a good bat and a good change bowler—that's nine. Glyn ought to go in, considering that he fixed up the match for us—I suppose you want to go in the eleven, Glyn?"

"Well, I had some faint idea in that direction," said Bernard Glyn sarcastically.

"That's ten. We ought to have Clifton Dane—"

"Clifton Dane can come and score for us, deah boy. Of course, you can't leave me out. I should wufese—"

"No, we won't leave you out," said Tom. "After all, you can bat."

"I wathah think I can. But what about Hewwies and Dig? They're in Study No. 6, you know, and I weally think all my study ought to be played on an occasion like this."

"You really think so?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then your thinker wants oiling," said Tom Merry calmly. "Go and oil it. I expect there will be a rush on the eleven; but I'm going to take the best going. Figgins & Co. will grumble at having only four New House chaps in. But we'll take Lawrence as a reserve, in case you do any acrobatic performances and get crocked—"

"Weally, you ass—"

"I'll buzz off and tell Figgins now," said Tom Merry briskly. "This will be glorious news for Figgins. Get the tea while I'm gone, you chaps."

And Tom Merry rushed out of the study and down the stairs. He sped out of the School House and scudded across the quadrangle.

Figgins & Co. of the New House were the deadly foes and rivals of the School House fellows; but they played together in the junior school team, and, considering that they were deadly foes, they were on remarkably good terms. Tom Merry dashed into the New

House and rushed breathlessly into Figgins' study.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the famous "Co." of the New House, were sitting down to tea. Tom Merry came in in a great hurry and bumped on the teatable, catching at it to save himself. The table rocked, and Fatty Wynn swallowed a very large mouthful of pork-pie too quickly and coughed violently. Figgins, who was lifting his tea-cup to his lips, started back as the table rocked, and received the tea in his neck instead of his mouth. The tea was hot, and so was Figgins' temper as a result.

"You silly chump!" roared Figgins, jumping up, streaming with tea. "Collar him!"

"Here, hold on—"

"Yes, hold on—and bump him!" said Kerr.

And the New House trio held on to Tom Merry, and he bumped down on the study carpet.

"Chuck it!" gasped Tom, struggling in the grasp of the New House juniors. "I've got good news for you, you silly fathheads—glorious news! Groogh!"

"Bump him first and have his news afterwards," said Figgins.

Bump, bump!

"Now, out with your news, and if you're spoofing, we'll bump you again!" said Figgins, mopping at the spilt tea with his handkerchief.

"Ow!" gasped Tom Merry. "Leggo! I tell you it's topping! Cricket week at Glyn's house—junior eleven going over to play their team—you fellows are coming—whole holiday to-morrow!"

"Hurrah!"

Tom Merry staggered to his feet and dusted himself.

"That's the news," he said. "Is it good—what?"

"Spiffing!" said Figgins heartily. "You can consider that we take back that bumping. I suppose you'll want a good many New House chaps on an occasion like this? Let's see. There's us three, and Reddy, Owen and Lawrence, and Koumi Rao, and Thompson—"

"Cheese it! You three and Reddy—no room for more!"

"Now, look here! For a special occasion like this we want a really good team, and you School House fellows ought to be willing to take a back seat for the good of the cause," said Figgins argumentatively.

"Rats and many of 'em!" said Tom.

"I am going to tell Talbot now."

"Playing that new chap?" demanded Kerr.

"Yes, rather! He bowls as well as Fatty—"

"Bosh!"

"Rats!"

"You should have seen him take Kildare's wicket! Ta-ta!"

And Tom Merry departed, leaving Figgins & Co. much excited over the news.

Tom Merry scudded back to the School House to carry the good news to Talbot of the Shell. He found the new junior in Study No. 8 in the Shell passage, which he shared with Gore and Skimpole.

"Talbot, old man, come to tea with us. I've got news for you, and I'll tell you over tea!"

And without giving the junior time to speak, Tom Merry dragged him away and marched him into the next study, where Lowther and Manners had tea ready. It was a joyful party that sat down to tea in Tom Merry's study.

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## CHAPTER 3.

### Ambitious Fags!

**D**'ARCY minor of the Third Form came into the Third Form Room with a grim expression on his face.

There was a smell of burning toast in the Third Form Room. Curly Gibson and Joe Frayne were making toast, apparently not with great success. Wally snorted. Frayne looked round quickly from the fire with a ruddy face. He looked relieved when he saw that the new arrival was only D'Arcy minor.

"Only you!" he said. "I was afeared it was old Selby. He's down on us feeding in the Form-room."

"Like his cheek," growled Wally. "We've a right to have tea if we like."

Frayne grinned.

"No good tellin' a giddy Form-master that," he remarked.

"Selby been going for you again, Wally?" asked Curly Gibson, noting the frown on the brow of the chief of the Third.

Wally shook his head.

"No; 'tain't Selby. The old bouncer has been much tamer since his blessed collection of coins disappeared and failed to turn up. He thinks one of us has hidden them, and he hopes they'll be found—if he's good. Jolly queer what has become of his giddy numismatic collection, when you come to think of it, isn't it?"

A troubled look came over Joe Frayne's face.

"Jolly queer!" he agreed.

Wally looked at him sharply.

"You don't know anything about that, Joe?"

"Me? No. Why?"

"You always look queer when it's mentioned, and you've been pretty down in the mouth ever since it happened," said Wally.

"I didn't have nothing to do with it," said Frayne in a low voice.

"Well, never mind Selby and his giddy numismatics. There's something else on. I've just had it from Gussy."

"Nothin' missin'?" asked Frayne, the troubled look deepening in his face.

"No, ass! Glyn's pater's having a cricket week at Glyn House, and the bouncer has got a match for the junior eleven there—whole holiday to-morrow for the members of the team."

"They do bag all the luck, and no mistake!" growled Jameson.

"I think we ought to bag some of it this time," said Wally emphatically.

"You know we've often claimed that the Third Form ought to have a whack in the junior eleven."

There was a grin from the other fags. Wally had often advanced that claim, but he could not get the junior eleven to agree to it. The junior team of St. Jim's was picked from the Shell and the Fourth, and the Third were out of it—quite out.

"Well, where does the grin come in?" demanded Wally crossly. "Look here, my eldest brother is a guest at Glyn House now—old Conway, you know. That's another reason why I should be in the junior eleven—the way I look at it."

"I don't suppose you'll get Tom Merry to look at it in the same way," grinned Curly.

"I'm going to see. I think there ought to be a couple of the Third Form in the team," said Wally. "I want you fellows to come with me, and we'll put it straight to Tom Merry. Never mind that toast—'tisn't fit to eat, anyway. Come on!"

"They'll boot us out."

"Two can play at that game. That's why I want you with me. If they cut up rusty, we'll wreck the study for them."

"Ahem!"

"Oh, come on, and don't jaw!" said Wally.

Wally generally had his way in the Third Form. Curly Gibson, Jameson, Frayne, and Hobbs followed him from the Form-room. They made their way to the Shell passage, and paused outside Tom Merry's door. There was a sound of teacups and cheery voices within. The Terrible Three were evidently in good spirits that evening.

"You can do the jawing, Frayne," said Wally.

"Me!" said Frayne.

"Yes, you. Tom Merry always listens to you, you know, because he extracted you from that giddy slum, and caused you to be brought to St. Jim's. He may take more notice of you than of me, even."

"I can hear that new chap's toot in there," said Jameson.

"The Toff!" exclaimed Frayne.

"Talbot," said Wally. "What on earth do you call him the Toff for, Joe? I've heard you call him that before."

"I—I—" Frayne stammered.

"Seems to me that you know something about that new chap that you haven't told us," said Wally severely. "Keeping secrets from your pals!"

"Oh, Master Wally! I—I—"

"Don't 'Master Wally' me!" growled D'Arcy minor. "Don't I keep on telling you that you don't live in Angel Alley, St. Giles, now, and that you're just as good as anybody else at St. Jim's? But 'nuff jaw! Come on!"

Wally kicked the study door open, and the fags marched in.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther and Talbot were seated round the teatable. They all looked at the fags in surprise as they marched in grimly.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry genially. "This is an unexpected pleasure."

"To what," said Lowther solemnly, "do we owe this great honour, gentlemen?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" snapped D'Arcy minor. "We've come here to talk business. Frayne's got something to say to you. Go it, Frayne!"

Talbot half rose from his chair, fixing his eyes with a very peculiar expression upon Frayne. The wail of the Third avoided looking at him.

"Frayne's got something to say?" repeated Talbot.

"Yes, rather! Pile in, Frayne."

"I—I—I—" stuttered Frayne.

"Go ahead, Frayne!" said Talbot in a strangely quiet voice. "If you've got anything to tell Tom Merry, don't mind me."

Frayne looked at him quickly.

"'Tain't anythin' about you, Toff," he murmured.

"I don't see why the dooce you should chip in, Talbot," said Wally testily.

"Pile in, Frayne! I'll jolly well punch your head if you don't!"

"You see, Master Tom," said Joe, "Master Wally thinks as how the Third ought to have a look in—in the junior eleven, and so—a hem!"

"Lot of good it is you doing the talking!" snorted Wally. "Shut up and leave it to me! Look here, Tom Merry. The Third Form want a couple of men in the team at least. You can put in Jameson and me—that's a chap from each House."

"Thanks!" said Tom good-humouredly.

"The team's made up. No room for fags. Much obliged, all the same."

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"Now, look here," said Wally, "I don't want trouble; but we're going to come over to Glyn House, a couple of us, or there'll be war. Savvy?"

"You should hit fellows your own size, and spare small fry like us," said Monty Lowther reproachfully.

And the Shell fellows chuckled.

"Last time!" shouted Wally. "Yes or no?"

"No!"

"Then we'll take some of the swank out of you," said Wally. "Pile in, kids!"

And the exasperated chief of the Third seized the tea-table with both hands and hurled it sideways to begin with.

Tom Merry and Lowther received a shower of teacups and saucers and plates and eatables on their chests and knees, and they gave a roar of wrath.

Before the fags had time to proceed with the ragging, the four Shell fellows were on them. Wally, struggling desperately, was whirled to the door and hurled into the passage with a heavy bump. Then—

Bump—bump—bump—bump!

Wally sat up dazedly. Frayne, Hobbs, Curly, and Jameson were distributed round him on the linoleum. Then the study door slammed, and there was a sound of laughter within.

"Ow!" gasped Wally.

"Groogh!" murmured Jameson.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Oh, crikey!" groaned Frayne.

There was a step in the passage, and Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, stopped and looked down at the dusty and dishevelled fags. Mr. Selby had a peculiar gift of turning up always just where and when he was not wanted.

"What is this?" snapped the Third Form master. "Disgraceful! Take fifty lines each and go to your Form-room at once and write them! Not a word! Go!"

And Wally & Co., with feelings too deep for words, went.

#### CHAPTER 4. Mysterious!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. set the tea-table to rights again and proceeded with their tea.

There had been a considerable breakage of crockery; but that was not an uncommon occurrence in a junior study, and the chums of the Shell did not allow it to disturb their equanimity. The Third Formers, and their claims to play in the junior eleven, had been disposed of.

"Cheeky young bounders!" Monty Lowther remarked, as he wiped butter from his trousers. "To think of playing Third Form fags against cricketers like Wodyer and old Conway, and Yorke of Loamshire. We shall need the strongest team we can take over if we're to have an earthly."

"We've got a good team," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We're very strong in bowlers—Fatty Wynn and Talbot."

Talbot smiled.

"I shall be glad to play, of course," he said; "but I hope I shan't be keeping anybody else out of the eleven. As a new chap—"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Tom Merry. "I'm cricket captain, and it's my business to make up the best team I can. We couldn't leave out a bowler of your form."

"Well, it's a stroke of luck for me," said Talbot.

"And for all of us," said Manners. "If you weren't here, Talbot, I should be in the team; but I don't mind a

bit, so long as St. Jim's wins. I'm coming, anyway, and I shall bring my camera. You'll have to palm me off as a reserve, Tommy; I'm bound to come."

"Oh, rather!" said Tom. "I think I'm entitled to take four reserves—you and Herries and Dig and Lawrence. We shall have a good time at Glyn House, too, apart from the match. Old Mr. Glyn is a brick. You've not been there yet, Talbot—you'll find it ripping. Glyn's sister is splendid. She can make cakes heaps better than you get at the tuckshop. It was simply ripping for Glyn to fix this up for us!"

"Is it far from here?" asked Talbot.

As a new boy, he had a nodding acquaintance with Bernard Glyn, who was in the same Form, but he knew nothing about the Liverpool lad's place or people.

Glyn goes in for mechanics and things, you know, and he knows all about it."

Talbot laughed.

"I don't know much about safes," he remarked, "but they say there never was a safe yet that couldn't be cracked. I'd like to see it."

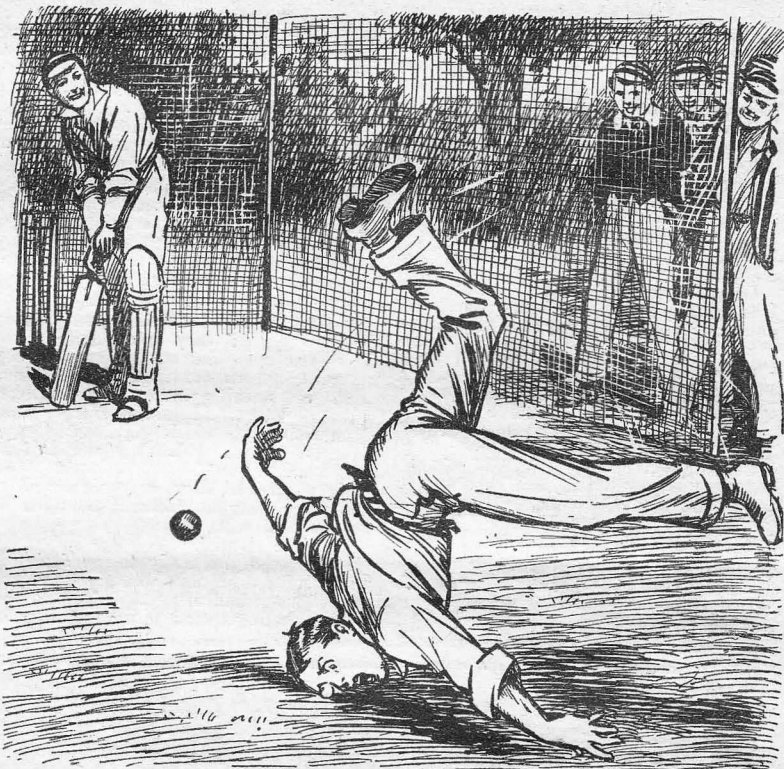
"Glyn'll show it you to-morrow, if you like," said Tom. "He's rather proud of that safe. It's stuck away in a place where a burglar would never think of looking for it, too."

"Really?" asked Talbot, with interest.

"Yes; hidden behind a section of book-case in the library," said Tom. "And there's an electric bell that rings in the butler's pantry if that section is meddled with. Glyn showed it to us."

"Must be a lot of valuables there for all that trouble to be taken?"

"Ten thousand quid at least."



Arthur Augustus made his run and turned himself into a kind of catherine-wheel for the delivery of the ball. But his foot slipped, and he turned a somersault and came down with a bump. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the onlookers. "Is that how you bowl your famous yorker, Gussy?"

"No; just off Rylcombe Lane—a tremendous big place," said Tom. "Mr. Glyn is a millionaire—made it in ships or something—and he's retired from business now, and come to live in the South—chiefly to be near his son, I think. Glyn House is topping—big grounds and a lake. Glyn never puts on any side, so you'd hardly think he's got such a ripping show at home. Why, the giddy silver plate alone is worth a fortune! And there's gold plate, too, that's used on great occasions. It won't be got out for us, of course; but I've seen it—Glyn showed it to us once. There was an attempt to burgle it once, and Ferrers Locke—you've heard of Ferrers Locke, the detective— nabbed the bounder!"

"I suppose it's all kept pretty safe, though?" said Talbot.

"Yes, rather—staked away in a safe; and there's only one key, and Mr. Glyn keeps it about him," said Tom. "Glyn says it's a safe that can't be cracked,

"Phew!"

"By the way, don't forget to take a bag with you to-morrow," said Tom. "Glyn's arranged for us all to stay the evening, and come back to St. Jim's in the morning. Of course, we shan't finish the match much before dark, and it gets dark late now, so there won't be much evening. There'll be a ripping spread after the match, too; Glyn's sister will look after that."

"That all sounds awfully good," said Talbot. "You are letting me in for a jolly good thing!"

"It's your bowling, my son. Where did you pick up your cricket?" asked Tom. "You hadn't been to school before you came here?"

"No; I had a tutor. I lived with my uncle, and I used to get a lot of cricket in one way and another."

"In Australia?" asked Lowther. "I've heard you lived in Australia."

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"I was there a good time," said Talbot.

"That was before you met Frayne in London, I suppose?"

"Frayne!"

"Yes; you remember you told us you came across Frayne in London, before he came to St. Jim's, when he was a poor little beggar in Angel Alley, before Tommy found him and planted him on his uncle."

"Oh, yes! I had come over on a trip with my uncle at the time," said Talbot.

Talbot's manner was uncommunicative; indeed, the other fellows had noticed more than once that the new fellow never said very much about himself. Where Talbot came from, excepting that he was supposed to have lived a great deal in Australia, was unknown. He never said a word about his people, and some ill-natured fellows like Gore and Levison hinted that he hadn't any. He seemed to be well supplied with money, however.

All the St. Jim's fellows knew of him was that he had helped the Head on an occasion when Dr. Holmes was attacked by footpads, chipping in in the most plucky way. After that he had come to St. Jim's, and was looked upon very kindly by the Head.

They did not want to know more than that he was a jolly good fellow, frank and good-natured, and a ripping cricketer. That was quite enough to make him popular in the School House.

Only Frayne of the Third had met him before he came to the school, and had called him by the peculiar nickname, the "Toff"; but Talbot had explained that by mentioning that he had come upon the little waif once while "slumming" in London.

The new boy rose from the tea-table. Tea was finished.

"Time for prep," he remarked.

"Right-ho!"

And Talbot left the study.

Monty Lowther wore rather a thoughtful look.

"Penny for 'em!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I was thinking about Talbot. It's rather odd—"

"What's odd?"

"When it came out that he'd lived in Australia, Kangy was on him like a bird. He thought he'd spotted a fellow Cornstalk, and wanted to jaw bush and blue-gums with him," said Lowther. "But he couldn't get anything out of Talbot. Kangaroo says he won't say a word about his life in Australia."

"Might have had a rough time there," suggested Tom Merry. "No need for him to tell us all about his people. It's his own business."

"Oh, yes, quite so!"

Talbot, meanwhile, had gone into his study, which was next to Tom Merry's. Gore and Skimpole had finished their tea and left the study. There was a very thoughtful look upon Talbot's face as he closed the study door. He paced to and fro in the little room.

If the Terrible Three had seen his frowning face just then they would have guessed that troubling thoughts were in the new junior's mind, and that, as some of the fellows hinted, there was something odd and secretive about him.

Now that there was no observer, the usual sunny expression had dropped from Talbot's face like a mask.

There was trouble in his expression—trouble and hesitation—something of shame and remorse.

"I wish they wouldn't be so jolly decent to me!" That was what the new junior was muttering inaudibly. "It makes me feel rotten; but if I didn't get into their confidence it would be no good coming here at all."

He burst into a bitter laugh.

"What would the Rabbit and Hookey Walker say if they guessed that the Toff was beginning to be troubled by scruples—by his conscience? But there shall be nothing more here—nothing more of that kind in the school. At Glyn House that's different. And I must live—but I wish they wouldn't be so decent to me!"

He made a sudden, angry gesture, as if driving away troublesome thoughts by an effort of will.

His face cleared.

He crossed the study to his desk. It was a large desk of solid mahogany, and very strong and heavy. Taggles, the porter, had groaned dismally when he

was given the task of transporting that desk to the new boy's study. It was rather an unusual piece of furniture for a junior to possess. Talbot had carelessly explained that he had picked it up cheap, second-hand. It was fitted with a peculiar lock, and it was never left unlocked, and Talbot always kept the key in his pocket.

He opened the desk, and then, on second thoughts, crossed to the study door and turned the key. He returned to the desk, and pressed his finger on a piece of ornamentation which concealed a secret spring. A lid, of which the existence would never have been suspected, opened. There was a glitter of steel within the secret receptacle as the light fell there. Steel instruments of strange shapes lay packed there, and by them was a coil of thin, strong rope.

There came a rattle at the study door-handle, and Talbot started guiltily. He hastily closed the secret receptacle, closed the desk and locked it, and crossed to the door.

"Hallo!" called out Gore from the outside. "What's this blessed door locked for?" He rattled angrily at the handle.

Talbot unlocked the door and threw it open. Gore strode in, looking surprised and angry.

"What the deuce do you keep the door locked for?" he demanded.

"The fags have been ragging in this passage," Talbot explained carelessly. "I locked the door as I was going to do my prep—"

George Gore snorted.

"Oh, rot! I'm not afraid of the fags, if you are! Let that door alone!"

"Just as you like!"

And Gore snorted again and sat down at the study table.

## CHAPTER 5.

### A Day Out!

THE next morning there were fifteen juniors at St. Jim's who were in the most exuberant spirits.

They were the junior eleven and the four reserves who had permission to accompany them to Glyn House for the country house match.

Wednesday was always a half-holiday, but on this occasion it was a whole holiday for Tom Merry & Co., thanks to the kindness of the Head.

It was very agreeable for Tom Merry & Co. to be packing their bags while the other fellows were going into the class-rooms.

D'Arcy minor was firmly convinced that the Third ought to be represented in any junior eleven that deserved the name; and if it had been so represented Wally would have shared in that whole holiday.

"We'll go over, all the same," he said to his chums. "It's a half this afternoon, anyway, and we'll go and watch them play the giddy god. Glyn will be standing a ripping tea."

"Ear, ear!" said Joe Frayne.

"As my elder brother is staying there, and as Gussy will be there, too, I can go over if I like," argued Wally. "In fact, I dare say the Glyn's will expect me to give them a look in."

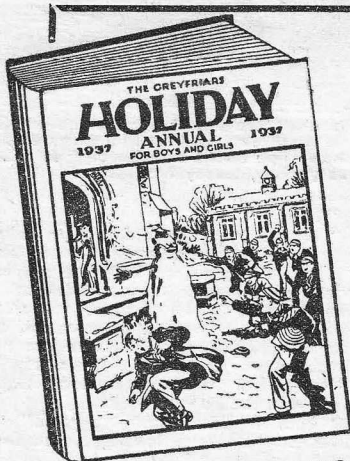
"And to take a friend or two with you?" suggested Jameson.

"Yes, rather! Like Tom Merry's cheek to be playing that new kid and leaving us out!"

"The Toff's going?" asked Frayne.

"Talbot's going," said Wally. "I admit he's a good bowler, but I would undertake to bat his head off. Hallo! There's the beastly bell! Now we've got to stand old Selby all the morning. Br-r-r!"

And the fags went into their Form-room.



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Tom Merry & Co. were not long in making their preparations. Besides their cricketing things, they had to take the necessaries for a night out. Study No. 6 packed all their things into one bag, and the four New House players also made one bag to meet their wants. Tom Merry offered Talbot a "whack" in the bag belonging to the Terrible Three, but the new junior had already packed his bag. It was a small leather one, with a very secure lock on it.

"How are we goin' to get ovah, dear boys?" Arthur Augustus inquired.

"Car's coming," said Glyn.

"Bai Jove, your patah is weally a bwick, deah boy!"

The cricketers carried their bags to the gates, to wait for the car. It was already in sight on the road—a huge Daimler, with room for all the fellows in it, with some squeezing. A good-looking young man had come over in it to meet the juniors, and they recognised Mr. Wodyer, who had once been at St. Jim's as a master, and who was engaged to Glyn's sister. Mr. Wodyer greeted the cricketers heartily, and they packed themselves into the car.

"We're going to give you a lickin', deah boy!" Arthur Augustus said cheerfully.

Mr. Wodyer smiled genially.

"We know the risk we're taking," he said seriously.

"We shall have a crowd over in the afternoon, I expect, Woddy," Glyn remarked. "I've told all the fellows to come if they like, and have a whack in the spread."

"Then I think there will very probably be a crowd," said Mr. Wodyer, laughing. "There will be a good many village folk in the ground, too, to see the game—to see us beaten."

"Yaas, watah! I have been pwactisin' a vewy dangewous yorkeh—"

"Too dangerous for use," grinned Tom Merry. "You're not going to bowl, Gussy. You haven't seen our new bowler, Mr. Wodyer—Talbot here. He's a giddy marvel."

"If our wickets go down too fast you must put D'Arcy on to bowl," said Mr. Wodyer, "and give us a chance, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Mr. Wodyer—"

The cricketers chatted merrily as the big car glided down the lane towards Rylcombe. It turned into the lane that led up to the big gates of Glyn House.

As the car moved along the broad drive the juniors could see the cricket pitch in the distance, and a number of fellows there in flannels. The house team was ready.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, screwing his monocle into his eye. "There's old Conway! How do you do, Con, deah boy?"

Lord Conway, the eldest brother of Arthur Augustus, shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's as he descended from the car.

"Glad to see you, Arthur! You've come over to watch—what?"

"Watch!" repeated Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Weally, Conway, you must be perfectly aware that I have come ovah to play!"

"Then it's all up with us!" said Lord Conway despondently.

And the juniors chuckled.

Tom Merry & Co. descended from the car in great spirits.

Glyn's pater, a kind-looking old gentleman, greeted them very cordially, and so did Glyn's sister.

"There'll be some fellows coming over in the afternoon to look on, Mops," said Glyn—Mops being the name by which he called Miss Edith Glyn. "They'll want a whack in the



OFF THE TRACK!

"Sure, if Oi can only pass the points in time, my loife is saved!"  
Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Moses, 48, Flinton Street, Hull.

spread. You don't mind, pater, do you?"

"The more the merrier!" said Mr. Glyn heartily.

"How many, Bernard?" asked Miss Glyn.

"Oh, about a hundred!" said Glyn.

"Very well," said Miss Glyn, laughing. "I will see that the spread, as you call it, is equal to the occasion."

"Good old Mops!" said Glyn.

"We are all ready, when you kids are ready," said Lord Conway.

"Weally, Conway, you are aware that I object to bein' chawactewised as a kid—"

"Change in the house," said Glyn.

"Come on to my quarters."

Tom Merry & Co. followed Glyn to his quarters. Glyn had two rooms to himself in the house; and there were several rooms adjoining, where his friends were accommodated when they stayed with him. The rooms had been prepared for the numerous guests.

"We've had extra beds shoved in," said Glyn.

"Can't spare fifteen rooms, you know, with so many people in the house. Three each in my two rooms—

that's six—four in the next—that's larger—that makes ten. Three in the next,

and two in the little one at the end of the passage. Sort yourselves out as you like."

"I suppose it doesn't matter much," Talbot remarked. And he dumped down his bag in the smallest room, at the end of the corridor.

The juniors chose their quarters; Study No. 6 taking the four-bedded room, and Figgins & Co. and the Terrible Three a room apiece. Redfern and Lawrence shared Glyn's room; and it fell to Kangaroo to share the smaller room with Talbot.

It did not take the cricketers long to change into their flannels; and in ten minutes they came out of the house in a cheery crowd and proceeded to the pitch.

CHAPTER 6.

"Well Bowled!"

Lord Conway and his team were ready.

Tom Merry looked them over with a critical eye.

They were, of course, a grown-up team, and, as such, above the weight of a junior schoolboy eleven. Some of them,

too, were first-class cricketers. Lord Conway, who captained the country house side, was an old Blue; and Yorke had played for Loamshire, and Mr. Wodyer was a fine player. They were the pick of the basket, as Tom Merry quickly decided. There were several other young men who looked like good players, and a few middle-aged cricketers.

Most of them were smiling good-humouredly, evidently not taking the match very seriously. They had been willing to take it on, to fill up a blank day and to please their host, who had been persuaded by his son. But they expected to walk over the schoolboys without the slightest difficulty, and their opinion on that point was easily to be seen.

But Tom Merry meant to show them that in the St. Jim's juniors they had a harder nut to crack than they supposed. With batsmen like Tom Merry, Blake, Figgins, and Redfern and Kangaroo, and bowlers like Talbot and Fatty Wynn, the St. Jim's side was pretty certain to put up a good game.

The pitch had been freshly rolled and was in beautiful order. It was a bright and fresh September morning, ideal weather for cricket.

Lord Conway and Tom Merry tossed, and the luck was with the former. He decided to bat first. He was overheard to make a remark to Captain Cleveland, a cousin of his and Arthur Augustus, who was in the house team.

"We'll bat till lunch and make enough to win. They can follow on their first innings in the afternoon."

And the captain smiled assent.

Tom Merry had heard the remark, and he grinned as he led his merry men out to field.

"They're going to bat till lunch, and then let us have two innings in the afternoon," he remarked, as he tossed the ball to Talbot. "They won't need to bat a second time. That's the programme."

Talbot laughed.

"We'll try to upset the programme a little bit," he suggested.

"What-ho!"

Lord Conway opened the innings himself with Captain Cleveland. Tom Merry waved his men away to field deep. He knew Lord Conway's hitting.

Talbot bowled the first over.

All the other members of the team were known to Lord Conway; but Talbot, being a new boy at St. Jim's, was unknown, and the viscount did not know what to expect. But, whatever it was, he did not think that it would be very dangerous. But the first ball from Talbot opened his eyes a little.

He played it carefully. The second ball came down, and he stopped it dead on the crease. Lord Conway began to look a little more serious. It was not the schoolboy bowling he had expected.

He did not venture to hit out until the end of the over, and then he scored 2. It was not the beginning the house team had looked for. Fatty Wynn bowled the second over to Captain Cleveland. The captain was a good batsman, but Fatty's bowling gave him plenty to think about, and the over gave him only 4 runs. Then Talbot took the ball for the third over, Lord Conway receiving the bowling again.

Talbot had got his length in the first over, and now he proceeded to show what he could do. He took his little run, and the ball left his hand like a bullet. Lord Conway played a shade too late, and there was a rattle of the "sticks" behind him.

"Begad!" ejaculated Conway.

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His middle and off stumps were reclining at different angles and the balls were on the ground. Lord Conway stared at the wicket as if he could hardly believe his eyes. He had been clean bowled out by a schoolboy in his second over for only a couple of runs! Lord Conway smiled good-humouredly and carried out his bat. He stopped to speak to Yorke of Loamshire who was next on the list.

"Look out for that kid; he's hot stuff!"

"It wasn't a fluke?" asked the Loamshire man.

"Fluke he dashed!" said Lord Conway. "He's a topping bowler."

"I'll be careful."

The Loamshire man came to the wicket. He looked out carefully for that ball which came down with the speed of a shell. But it was not a fast ball that came—it was a "slow," and it caught the Loamshire man napping. His middle stump was knocked back.

"My hat!" said Yorke.

The gentleman from Loamshire walked off with a duck's-egg to his credit.

Next man in was a stout, middle-aged gentleman who had been a great cricketer in earlier days and was still very active, and prided himself upon his batting. He took up his position, and his look plainly showed that, whatever might have happened to the old Blue and the Loamshire man, nothing of the sort would happen to him.

But he was speedily undeceived. He played the first two balls very carefully; but the third, a leg ball, broke in at a sharp angle and just nicked his leg stump.

"Well, I'm hanged!" exclaimed the stout gentleman.

And he toddled away, his plump cheeks very pink.

Tom Merry rushed up to Talbot and thumped him on the shoulder.

"Well bowled, old man!" he exclaimed. "Oh, this is ripping! You bouncer, to start the innings with three good wickets. You're worth your weight in gold!"

"I've been lucky," said Talbot with a smile.

"Lucky be hanged! It's topping bowling. We shall make hay of them at this rate."

"Yaas, wathah! My yorkeh will weally hardly be needed."

The batsmen were very careful with Talbot after that. All the house team were looking at him very curiously. The bowler who had so speedily dismissed an old Blue and a county player was worth watching.

Talbot and Fatty Wynn shared the bowling for some time, Fatty Wynn accounting for two more wickets in one over. By that time the home team were five down for the miserable total of 15 runs. Captain Cleveland, however, was still in, and he was making the running now, backed up by an old Eton man, and the score began to rise. By the time Tom Merry caught the Eton man out, at cover-point, the home figure was 40.

"Six down for 40," said Jack Blake, looking at the score. "This is where our friend the enemy comes down off his giddy perch!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

A "nutty"-looking young stockbroker joined Captain Cleveland at the wickets. Tom Merry sent Blake on to bowl to give Talbot a rest.

But the new junior speedily showed that he was as good in the field as on the bowling crease.

The stockbroker was a hitter, and he

knocked Blake's bowling far and wide, taking 11 for the over and then battling again against Fatty Wynn's bowling. He captured 6 runs from Fatty and then swept the fourth ball of the over fairly into the ready palm of Talbot, who leaped up to catch at the exact moment.

Smack!

Talbot's fingers closed on the ball, hot from the bat. He tossed it up and caught it again.

And the dashing young stockbroker disconsolately went off without the century he had been determined to make, his only satisfaction being that he had brought the home score up to the more respectable figure of 57.

"Seven down for 57!" grinned Monty Lowther. "What price batting till lunch?"

And the field smiled.

"Feel up to another over, Talbot?" asked Tom Merry.

"Twenty, if you like!" laughed Talbot.

"Go in and win, then."

The innings dwindled out. Talbot and Fatty Wynn, with occasional assistance from Blake and Kerr, disposed of the rest of the wickets. Eight down for 60—nine down for 68. Last man in.

Last man in "bucked up" the score a little, and Captain Cleveland was still batting. The score was at 90 when the captain was bowled by Talbot, and the innings ended.

"All down for 90," said Tom Merry, "and only half-past eleven. Doesn't look as if we shall have to follow on our innings this afternoon—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Well played!" said Captain Cleveland genially as the field came off. "You'll be batting before lunch, after all!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry opened the innings for St. Jim's, with Figgins at the other end. By lunch-time St. Jim's were 50 for four wickets. Tom Merry was still batting, and then the cricketers knocked off for a well-earned rest and a feed.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The Safe!

LUNCH was a cheery meal, in the big oak-panelled dining-room of Glyn House, with its wide windows looking out on the park and the cricket ground.

The juniors were in great spirits. It was not only certain that the country house team would have to bat a second time, but Tom Merry was not without hopes that his eleven would not have to bat a second innings.

Talbot was the centre of a great deal of attraction. All the house cricketers spoke to him, and the amount of "kudos" reaped by the new member of the team might have caused a pang of jealousy in a less good-natured heart than Tom Merry's. But Tom Merry never thought of anything of the kind. He was joyful at having secured a bowler who had accounted for five of the enemy's wickets—four bowled and one caught.

After lunch, the juniors strolled out to while away the time till the resumption of the match. Talbot joined the Terrible Three and Glyn.

"Like to look over the place?" Glyn asked, remembering that Talbot was a new boy and had never visited Glyn House before.

"I should," said Talbot. "Tom Merry was telling me last night about a wonderful safe your pater's got somewhere. If you're allowed to show it

"I've shown it to all the chaps," said Glyn. "I'll show it to you with pleasure. I fixed up the electric alarm myself. I do that kind of thing, you know."

"Always inventing some giddy rot," murmured Monty Lowther. "You haven't seen his mechanical dog, Talbot—and his electrical armchair, and the rest of it."

"It's a jolly good invention, this one," said Glyn. "This way!"

The Shell fellows accompanied him to the library. It was a large, lofty apartment, and the walls were lined with bookshelves. There was no one in the room just then, the guests being mostly out of doors. Talbot looked round at the well-lined walls with an interested eye.

"Looking for the safe?" chuckled Glyn.

"No; I was looking at the books," said Talbot. "There are some beautiful bindings here."

"Tell the pater that and you'll win his heart for ever," said Glyn. "He goes in for bindings and things. Now, where would you think of looking for the safe?"

"It certainly isn't in sight," said Talbot. "But Merry told me it was hidden behind a section of the book-case."

"That's the dodge. Come here!"

Bernard Glyn crossed to the wall-case beside a large open fireplace. The case looked like all the rest, firmly fixed to the wall; but Glyn pressed a certain spot in the moulding and the book-case swung away from the wall.

Instead of a panelled wall being revealed, however, the iron door of a safe sunk in the wall met the eyes of the juniors.

"Good!" said Talbot. "It would have to be a clever burglar who'd think of looking there for a safe. But where's the bell?"

"I've disconnected it—I don't want to bring the butler here now," said Glyn, with a laugh. "You see, when the pater goes to the safe, he doesn't want the bell to ring, of course. That's only for burglars. See this moulding under the case? Press it to the right, it opens the case and leaves the bell ringing; but if you press this little cornice at the same time, it disconnects the bell. Now, I'll bet you a burglar would never spot that."

"Hardly," agreed Talbot.

He looked at the massive iron of the safe door curiously. It was fitted with a new combination lock.

"You can't open it, of course?" Talbot remarked.

Glyn shook his head.

"No; the pater sets the combination and keeps it a secret, and he has the only key, too. It's the latest thing in locks, especially designed for the pater, and there doesn't exist a cracksmen who could crack it."

"You seem to let a good many people into the little secret," Talbot observed. "How many fellows know the safe is hidden here, for instance?"

"All the chaps I've shown it to," said Glyn. "But they're not likely to talk of it before any professional cracksmen, I suppose."

"No; I suppose not."

"Besides, the safe's safe enough," said Glyn. "It doesn't matter much if anybody knew where to find it, so long as he couldn't open it. It's quite invulnerable."

Talbot swung round suddenly. The french windows at the end of the library were wide open, and Talbot made a sudden run towards them.



The Shell fellows looked after him in surprise.

"What's up?" asked Glyn, as Talbot turned back from the window.

Talbot breathed hard. "Somebody was looking in," he said. "I just spotted his face for the moment. One of the servants, perhaps, out of curiosity."

"Phew!" said Glyn. He closed the bookcase over the safe door and it clicked shut. "I hope not. Still, most of the servants know where the safe is; it's not a secret from the people in the house, you know."

"Then it doesn't matter. Let's have a look at your mechanical dog, if there's time before we bat."

"What-ho!" "I've seen that weird animal," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I'm going down to the ground."

And the Terrible Three strolled away, while Talbot followed Bernard Glyn to his quarters. The amateur inventor of the Shell was soon busy, and greatly delighted in showing his mechanical treasures to the new boy. They were soon the firmest of friends, and Glyn confided later to the Terrible Three that Talbot was really a ripping chap, and quite intelligent—which Tom Merry & Co. guessed to mean that Talbot was a particularly patient and polite listener.

Glyn was so interested in showing Talbot his contrivances, in fact, that neither of them showed up in time for the resumption of the St. Jim's innings, and Blake went to fetch them, as Tom Merry and Kangaroo started batting again.

Yorke was bowling, and he started well. Kangaroo's wicket went down and Kerr came in, and was quickly dismissed, and then Fatty Wynn's wicket followed. The Loamshire man was compensating himself for his ill-luck in batting. St. Jim's were now seven down, and it was Talbot's turn to bat.

Tom Merry gave him a cheery word as he passed, going to his wicket.

"Look out for that Loamshire chap, Talbot—he's very hot."

"Right-ho!" The Loamshire man finished the over to Talbot, who stopped the ball without taking a run. Then Lord Conway bowled to Tom Merry, and Tom took a single, which brought Talbot to the batting end. Lord Conway was a good bowler; but Talbot dealt with his bowling in a masterly manner. The St. Jim's fellows, looking on, clapped and cheered each hit.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "That chap's as good a bat as he is a bowlah. He is weally quite an all-around man."

"What a bit of luck having him!" chuckled Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! It's a bit of a surprise for old Conway. Bai Jove! There he goes again. Huwvah!"

Talbot had driven away the ball, which sped away to the boundary.

"Bravo, Talbot!"

"Well hit, sir!"

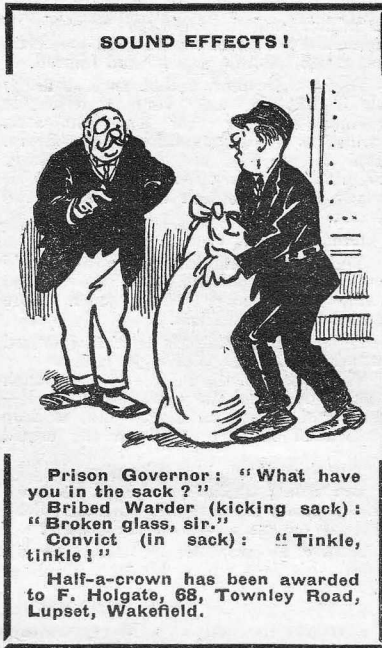
The score was leaping up now. Tom Merry was caught out in the next over, and Bernard Glyn went in. Glyn's luck was out, and he soon left. Nine for one hundred.

"Beaten their score, anyway," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Last man in! Play up, Reddy!"

Redfern of the Fourth was last man in. Figgins & Co. gave him an encouraging cheer as he went to the wicket. Redfern was a New House fellow, and for that excellent reason Figgins & Co. expected him to do great things.



Redfern fulfilled their expectation, playing a splendid second to Talbot.

Yorke and Conway and Wodyer in turn essayed to capture the wickets; but they essayed in vain. And all the time the two juniors were scoring freely, the St. Jim's fellows cheering wildly. And the volume of cheering was increased by St. Jim's fellows, who were now dropping in by twos and threes, taking advantage of the half-holiday, and Glyn's generous invitation to a tremendous feed, to come and see the match.

Gore, Levison, and Mellish were somewhat "up against" Glyn, as a pal of Tom Merry's; but they had come over, all the same, and Clifton Dane came with Reilly, Kerruish, Lumley-Lumley and Hammond and a crowd more, and the thickening crowd of St. Jim's fellows cheered every good hit.

Away went the ball once more from Talbot's bat, another boundary.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

"Good old St. Jim's!" shrieked a voice that Arthur Augustus recognised as his minor's. "Go it! Give 'em the giddy kybosh!"

"That is a wathah vulgah expwession!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Why, where is that young boundah?"

Arthur Augustus looked round in all directions, and then he thought of looking upward. He spotted his minor, Jameson, Curly Gibson and Frayne were among the crowd, which was now very thick round the ropes; but the active Wally had climbed a tree to gain a coign of vantage. Near the ground stood a big tree, a vast mass of foliage against the blue sky, and D'Arcy minor had "shinned" up the broad trunk, and crawled out upon a long branch.

He was at a height of thirty feet or more from the ground, and sitting straddled on the branch, which swayed under his weight. From the ground the fag's position looked decidedly dangerous, and D'Arcy shouted to his minor:

"Come down at once, Wally, you young ass!"

"Rats!"

"Bai Jove! If you don't come down I'll come and fetch you—or, wathah, I

would, only it would make my clobbah dirty."

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" said Wally imploringly. "Keep your wind for scoring runs."

"My wicket is down, you young duffah!"

"Duck's-egg?" asked Wally.

"You cheeky young wascal! If you don't come down I'll call Conway!"

"Bow-wow!"

Arthur Augustus frowned. Wally's position on the high branch was certainly dangerous, but he had a splendid view, and that was all the reckless fag cared about. He held on to the swaying branch with his legs as he sat, and detached both hands to clap.

Lord Conway, however, was bowling now, so Arthur Augustus could hardly call in the elder brother's authority at that moment.

"Hundred and thirty!" grinned Blake, looking at the score. "My hat! You'll have to declare, Tommy, if the game's going to be finished to-day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of declaring tickled the juniors very much, especially after Lord Conway's intention of making them follow on. Talbot was batting again now. Lord Conway sent the ball down, and Talbot let himself go at it.

Smack!

And the batsmen were running.

"Where's the ball?" yelled Blake.

There was a sound of tearing foliage, and leaves came fluttering down from the big tree, on the branch of which Wally was seated. The ball had been cut away right through the branches of the tree. It dropped out of bounds, but a shriek of horror from Arthur Augustus drew all attention away from the ball.

"Wally! Good heavens!"

All eyes were turned upon the high branch of the tree, and every face went white.

### CHAPTER 8.

#### Between Life and Death!

THERE was a buzz of horrified voices round the crowded field. The batsmen ceased running in the middle of the pitch. The game stopped; there was no thought then of cricket.

For that ball, cut away by Talbot's mighty hit, had swept through the tree past Wally, narrowly missing the fag as he sat on the branch, and the startled fag had pitched sideways.

He swung right over and down, but his desperate clutch fastened on the branch, and he hung upon it with both hands, tossing as the branch swayed, thirty feet above the ground.

"Wally! He will be killed!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Climb up, Wally! Get on the branch!"

From the fag hanging in mid-air came a gasp:

"I can't! I've hurt my arm!"

There was a groan of horror from the juniors underneath. That sudden swing on the branch, the sudden clutch to save himself, had twisted the fag's arm. He could not climb up; it was all he could do to hold on. And the sudden drag on the branch, as he had caught it, had caused it to give a deep and ominous creak.

The creak was repeated. The branch was cracking through, half-way between Wally and the parent trunk.

"Blankets! Fetch blankets to catch him!" shouted Lord Conway.

A dozen fellows raced off towards the house.

But they feared that the branch would never stand the strain till the others

returned, even if the fag could hold on so long.

Wally, his face white with pain, was holding on grimly, swinging on the creaking branch.

Joe Frayne looked up at him, his face set and stony. The waif of the Third seemed frozen with horror. Death was hanging over his chum—his best chum—the boy who had befriended him, stood by him through thick and thin, and been a splendid pal to him.

When Joe Frayne had come to St. Jim's, fresh from the slum where he had dwelt, and many of the Third had shunned him and despised him, it was Wally who had stuck to him. Wally, the son of an earl, had never hesitated for a second in making a pal of the gutter-boy, caring nothing for his rough exterior, only for the heart of gold within. And through Wally's friendship Joe Frayne had won his way on in the school; but without the generous lad his struggle would have been bitter indeed.

And there was his pal, hanging between life and death. The waif of the Third made a rush to the tree to climb it—to help Wally if he possibly could.

But as Frayne reached the tree another reached it, and pushed the fag back.

It was Talbot.

"You can't help him! Leave it to me!"

Talbot was climbing the tree the next moment. Joe Frayne would have followed, but Lord Conway had reached the spot by then, and he pulled him back.

"Keep back, kid! If anybody can do anything, Talbot can. Keep back. The branch won't bear one, let alone two!"

And Joe, realising that it was true, stepped back to watch the rescue attempt with anxious eyes.

Everyone was watching Talbot. His intention was plain—to crawl out on the creaking branch, reach down to the fag, and pull him up. And if the branch broke under his weight, serious injury or death for two instead of one.

Talbot moved with wonderful quickness. In a twinkling, as it seemed, he was upon the branch where it jutted out from the trunk; but the branch was a long one, and Wally, where he hung, was twelve feet from the trunk.

Talbot threw himself on the branch, face down, and crawled along it.

As far as the middle of it he was safe enough. Beyond that was the crack, and the branch was thinner. If he passed the middle of the branch he took his life in his hands. And not for a second did he hesitate, though the wood cracked under him as he crawled.

Wally, clutching on, unable to draw himself up, saw him coming. The fag's face was white as a sheet, but he had not lost his courage.

"Talbot!" muttered Wally hoarsely.

"Hold on! I'm coming!"

"Go back—go back! It won't bear you!"

Crack, crack!

Talbot was very close to the fag now. He was within reach of Wally.

He reached down and his strong grasp closed on Wally's collar. It was time, for the fag's strength was spent. His fingers were relaxing their hold as Talbot reached him.

"He's got him."

"Where are the blankets?"

But they had not come; it had all passed too quickly for that. Talbot did not try to drag Wally on the branch. He worked his way backwards towards the trunk, holding the fag by the collar and supporting him. The whole weight of the lad was on Talbot's right arm now. That grasp, fastened like iron on collar and shirt, held Wally suspended

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in midair, and the fag's eyes were closed now—the horror of the position had been too much for him, and he had fainted.

Backwards went Talbot as fast as he could—but it was very slowly. It seemed amazing that his right arm, strong as it was, should bear the strain. But it bore it. And now Tom Merry clambered quickly into the tree, to be ready to receive him if he reached the trunk.

Crack, crack, crack!

The branch bent low under the double weight, and from the crack in the wood came creak after creak, each more ominous than the last.

Ages seemed to pass to the agonised watchers below. Would it hold?

Talbot was in the middle of the branch again now—over the weak spot—past it—past and almost in safety—and a deep breath of relief came from the crowd below.

The branch would not break now.

But would Talbot's strength hold out till he reached the trunk, with that dead weight on his stretched right arm?

Slowly he worked backwards to the trunk, his face white, his eyes glinting, his teeth set hard.

Slowly—slowly—till his feet touched the trunk—touched Tom Merry waiting there in the fork to help him.

Then Talbot spoke in low, husky accents, telling of the strain on him.

"Who's there?"

"I'm here—Tom Merry—"

"The branch will hold here—close to the trunk. Crawl over me and take Wally. I can't hold him much more."

"I'm coming!"

Tom Merry leaned out over Talbot, as he lay flat on the branch—leaned lower and lower till he could reach the insensible fag—and drove his fingers into Wally's collar, and secured a grip upon him there, and relieved Talbot of the strain.

Talbot panted.

"Hold on; we can hold him together till they—"

"There's a ladder coming!" breathed Tom Merry.

"Thank Heaven for that!"

Captain Cleveland and the gardener could be seen dashing towards the spot, with a long ladder in their grasp. The two juniors held Wally fast, sharing the strain.

"Quick—quick!" panted Talbot.

The ladder was reared under the tree and planted against the trunk. Lord Conway came springing up it. He reached them—and his grasp closed on Wally round the waist.

"I've got him—let go!"

Gladly enough the two juniors let go. Lord Conway, with Wally over his shoulder, white and motionless, descended to the ground.

Tom Merry swung himself upon the ladder when it was clear.

"All right, Talbot?"

"One minute while I get my breath; I'll follow you."

Tom Merry descended a few rungs and waited. Talbot lowered himself from the branch to the ladder, catching at a rung with his left hand. His right arm hung nerveless to his side.

"It's all right," he said.

Tom descended and Talbot followed him. Wally had been rushed away to the house at once. Talbot reeled as he set his feet on the firm earth at last, and Tom Merry gave him a helping hand.

Joe Frayne gave a choking cry.

"Toff, you've saved 'im—you've saved my pal!"

The waif of the Third was near to tears of joy as he gripped Talbot's hand and shook it.

## CHAPTER 9.

### The Hero of the Hour!

TALBOT stood in the midst of the cricketers, breathing hard, but quite cool. The colour was coming back into his cheeks now. But his right arm was hanging stiffly by his side. It would not be of much more use for batting that day, after the strain that had been put upon it. That, however, his comrades were not thinking of for the moment. They were only thinking of the heroism the new junior had shown. He listened quietly to the exclamations round him.

"It was splendid!" said Lord Conway, laying his hand on the junior's shoulder. "I won't try to thank you, kid! Words aren't much good. But you know how we all feel."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, with emotion. "You've saved my bwothah's life, Talbot. You are a bwick!"

"It was splendid!" said Tom Merry.

"Well, I really endangered him by cutting away that ball through the tree," said Talbot, with a smile. "I didn't see the young duffer there, of course."

"He oughtn't to have been there," said Lord Conway. "It was a risky place for the young ass."

"Yaas, I ordahed him to come down, you know—"

"I'd give him a licking, only I don't think he could stand it now," said Lord Conway. "My dear kid, you've acted splendidly—splendidly!"

"Like a hero!" said Edith softly.

Talbot coloured.

"Oh, don't pile it on, you know!" he said. "What price the cricket? Reddy, if we don't get back to the pitch we shall get stumped, the pair of us."

There was a laugh. Talbot's words, however, reminded them that the game was to be finished.

The cricketers returned to the field, and the spectators crowded back behind the ropes.

"I'm sorry, Merry," Talbot said to his skipper; "I shan't be able to go on batting. My arm's frightfully stiff. And—and I feel rather done up."

"No wonder," said Tom Merry. "Of course, you can't bat again. I'll speak to Conway. We shall have to declare the innings closed. I was thinking of declaring, anyway."

But Lord Conway would not hear of it.

"Rot!" said the viscount tersely. "You'll play a substitute for Talbot."

"But that's against the laws of cricket," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, but you can if the opposite skipper chooses," said Lord Conway with a smile. "You don't think we're going to benefit on the score because your best bat has saved my brother's life and got clobbered, do you? Put a substitute in Talbot's place."

"Right-ho, then! Herries, you'll go in for Talbot."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

Redfern was back at his wicket. Herries took Talbot's place. It was unusual, certainly, but the circumstances were unusual. It would have been too hard on the schoolboy team to lose a wicket because their best batsman had saved Wally's life. Talbot joined the spectators, and he was the centre of an admiring throng.

"Hadn't you better have your arm seen to, my boy?" asked Mr. Glyn.

Talbot smiled.

"No; it's all right—only stiff. It will wear off. How's Wally?"

"Oh, the young rascal is all right! He has recovered already, and he is



Bump—bump—bump—bump! One after another Wally & Co. were sent flying from Tom Merry's study, and, with wild yells, distributed over the floor in the passage. The fags had got more than they bargained for in seeking to rag the Shell juniors!

coming out to see the game," said the millionaire with a smile.

And a little later Wally appeared. He was looking somewhat pale, but otherwise his old self. Frayne was with him, and Frayne showed more signs of the strain he had been through than Wally did. The two Third Formers joined Talbot.

"I say, you Shell bouncer, that was awfully decent of you!" said Wally.

"That's all right," said Talbot.

"I suppose you saved my life," said Wally. "I don't quite remember the finish. Joe says I fainted, but Joe's an ass. I never faint!"

"You did, Master Wally!" said Frayne.

"Rats!" said Wally. "I suppose I was a bit dazed; I never faint. But it was jolly decent of you, Talbot. You've really got my place in the eleven, but I'll say now that you're welcome to it."

"Thanks!" said Talbot, laughing.

"Hallo! There goes Reddy."

Yorke had caught out Redfern at last. St. Jim's finished with the score at 140. "One hundred and forty on the first innings for our noble selves!" chuckled Jack Blake. "And our friend the enemy bagged ninety. Three cheers for us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was an interval of ten minutes between the innings, and Tom Merry came up to Talbot a little anxiously.

"I suppose I'd better put in Herries to field for you, Talbot," he remarked. "How is your fin?"

"Still pretty stiff," said Talbot. "Otherwise, I'm all right. But don't you want me to bowl?"

"Bowl? You can't bowl with that arm!"

Talbot held out his left.

"I've got another."

"What!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "You don't mean to say you're a left-handed bowler, too?"

"My left's as good as my right," said Talbot with a smile.

"My hat! You're a giddy wonder! If you feel up to it—"

"Quite."

"Sure you're fit?"

"Fit as a fiddle."

"Then you're our man," said Tom Merry joyfully. "I didn't know you were a left-handed bowler, too, by Jove!"

"Talbot playing?" asked Blake, as they made a move to the field.

"Yes. He bowls left as well as right."

"Great pip!"

"If Talbot doesn't feel quite up to bowlin', Tom Mewwy, I'm quite willin' to tivy my yorkeh on those boundahs."

"But he does," grinned Tom Merry.

"And we can't afford to let you bowl, Gussy. We want wickets. Will you take the first over, Talbot?"

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry tossed him the ball, and Talbot caught it with his left. The second innings of the home team started with Yorke and the old stout gentleman. The rest of the house players stood looking on with surprise as they saw Talbot sent on to take the first over.

"That kid's arm won't be much use to him, surely," said Captain Cleveland. "Begad!" ejaculated Lord Conway. "He's bowling left."

"They've got a great player there," said Mr. Wodyer. "That kid will be playing for England in a few years' time. I should say."

"He certainly ought to be," agreed Conway.

They looked on with keen interest to

see how Talbot would shape with his left. The St. Jim's crowd were equally keen. That Talbot, who batted splendidly, and bowled wonderfully with his right, should be a good left-hand bowler, too, was astonishing, and all the fellows were anxious to see how he shaped. He soon showed them that there was no ground for uneasiness.

The stout gentleman was the only one who needed to be uneasy; but he was soon put out of his misery, so to speak. For the first ball from Talbot flashed past his bat and the leg stump was knocked out of the ground.

"Oh, my hat!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Well bowled, Talbot!"

"Bai Jove, I couldn't have beaten that myself!"

Next man came in, but he only survived three balls before Talbot completely beat him with an off-break.

"Well bowled!"

"Bravo!"

Lord Conway went to the wicket, and he succeeded in surviving the rest of that over. But Talbot had shown plainly enough that he was as dangerous as ever.

Fatty Wynn took the next over, and accounted for a wicket; and then Talbot, who seemed as fresh as paint after his rest, went on again. Another wicket down!

The St. Jim's team were in exuberant spirits now. Blake and Kerr did some of the bowling, but Fatty Wynn and Talbot shared most of it. Lord Conway and Captain Cleveland made a useful stand between them, and the score was at 50 when his lordship was caught out by Figgins. Then Mr. Wodyer came in, and he scored freely.

Tom Merry's faint hope of winning by an innings was knocked on the head; THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,490.

but that St. Jim's would win by runs he had not the slightest doubt. The afternoon was wearing on, but there would be time for St. Jim's to bat after tea. They would not need all their wickets, Tom Merry was assured.

Fatty Wynn finished off the innings in fine style, and at tea-time the home team were all down for 75. The whole score for Glyn House was 165. St. Jim's wanted 26 to win in their second innings, and they were all quite assured that they could get three or four times as many if they had been wanted.

Tom Merry almost hugged Talbot as they came off the field to adjourn for tea.

"You're a giddy treasure!" he declared.

"I shan't be able to bat again, though," said Talbot.

"But we only want twenty-six," said Tom, laughing. "We shall knock them up in half an hour after tea, I expect. We shall win hands down—and you'll have won the match for us. It was a good wind that blew you to St. Jim's."

"Was it?" said Talbot, with a curious smile. "I'm glad you think so."

"Not much doubt about it," said Monty Lowther. "Now for tea. Fatty's started already."

## CHAPTER 10.

### Well Won!

FATTY WYNN was enjoying himself. Tea was taken on the wide lawn in the golden sunshine of the afternoon. It was a large party, for besides the guests of Glyn House and Tom Merry's team, there were at least a hundred St. Jim's fellows there who had come to see the match, and they all shared in the generous hospitality of Glyn's pater. Fatty Wynn turned an ecstatic look upon the chums of the Shell as they came up to his table.

"This is simply ripping!" he said with his mouth full. "Topping, I call it! Glyn's pater is a brick; and Glyn is a brick, too. So's his sister. I wish I had a sister like Glyn's. She makes these cakes herself. Glyn told me so. I'm going to ask her to tell me how she does it, and I'll try my hand in the study."

"I'll give you the recipe," said Miss Glyn, laughing behind the fat Fourth Former.

Fatty Wynn looked round.

"Oh, I didn't see you, Miss Edith! Excuse me."

"Not at all. I'm glad to hear that I'm a brick, and that father is a brick, and my brother is a brick," said the young lady, smiling. "Quite an architectural family!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Talbot was very much in request. The Terrible Three wanted him, and Study No. 6 tried to capture him for their table, and Figgins & Co. were looking for him; but Wally of the Third succeeded in capturing the hero of the hour and dragging him off.

"You're coming with me," said Wally. "This way. We've got a lovely pie!"

And Talbot laughed and assented.

The fags had a little table to themselves under the tree which had so nearly seen the serious accident to D'Arcy minor. Wally seemed to have forgotten all about his perilous experience by this time. Frayne was thinking of it more than Wally was. The waif of the Third looked oddly at Talbot as he joined the fags, and Talbot gave him a friendly nod. Jameson was carving the

pie, and Curly Gibson handing him the plates. Wally pushed Talbot into a camp-stool.

"You sit there," he said. "You belong to us for a bit. You've really got my place in the team."

"Mine!" said Jameson, pausing with the carving-knife.

"Bosh!" said Wally. "Mine!"

"Look here, you School House duffer!"

"Well, you New House fathead—"

"Order!" said Curly. "Shut up and serve the pie, Jimmy! I'm hungry."

"And Talbot's hungry, too," said Wally. "Aren't you, Talbot? How's your arm?"

"Getting better," said the Shell fellow.

"Blessed if I know how you did it," said Wally. "You must be all muscle. I'm not a light-weight. It must have been a big strain, holding me at arm's-length, I should say."

"It was splendid!" said Frayne in a low voice. "I knewed you was strong, Toff, but that was splendid! You saved Wally's life, you did."

"Oh, don't pile it on!" said Talbot, laughing.

"I'll get you to show me that left-hand bowling of yours at St. Jim's," said Wally. "Jolly useful thing to be able to bowl with the left. Do you like the pie?"

"Topping!"

"Good! I've got some cakes here to follow."

The pie was disposed of, and Wally and Curly rushed away for a supply of ginger-beer to wash down the cakes. Frayne and Talbot were left alone. Joe stole a look at the handsome, grave face of the Shell fellow.

"Toff," he said in a low voice.

Talbot started and made an irritable gesture.

"I wish you wouldn't call me that," he said. "Why can't you call me Talbot?"

"I'd do anything I could to please you," said Joe. "It's 'ard to git out of old 'abits, but I'll try, Toff—I mean, Talbot—I wanter say somethin'. You've saved my pal's life. Wally's been a splendid pal to me; but for 'im I'd never 'ave been able to stay at the school. Master Merry brought me there—it was kind of him—but, you see, 'e's in the Shell, and he couldn't 'elp me much in the Third, and lots of the kids were down on me 'cause I didn't speak like the rest, and—and—you savvy?"

"I quite understand," said Talbot.

"But Wally palled on to me at once and stood by me like the real brick he is," said Joe. "You saved 'im, Toff—I mean, Talbot. I—I'm sorry."

"Sorry I saved him?" smiled Talbot.

"No. Sorry for 'avin' suspected you," said Joe. "Yes, I did. When Mr. Selby's coins were taken I did. You 'ad told me you was at St. Jim's on the straight, but when them coins disappeared, and ain't turned up since, I couldn't 'elp suspectin' that you was on the old lay, Toff, and that you 'ad done it."

"Indeed?"

"It made me feel 'orrible uneasy, though you told me you 'adn't done it," said Frayne. "I've been feelin' beastly about it ever since. But—but now I know it's all right. A feller wot would do as you've done this afternoon couldn't be a thief!"

Talbot compressed his lips.

"It's queer wot's become of Mr. Selby's collection," went on Frayne. "But I believe now that some kid has 'idden them to pay him out—they ain't

stolen. I 'ope they'll turn up in time. Anyway, I don't believe you 'ad a 'and in it. And if you did, and I know it, I couldn't give you away, arter wot you've done for my pal. If you 'ad saved my life I shouldn't feel like that; but it was Wally, you see, my best pal, and so I wanter tell you I'm sorry I didn't trust you, Toff."

"That's all right," said Talbot. "Don't talk about it. It's dangerous even to speak about those things here."

"All right. Only I wanted to tell you that."

Wally and Curly returned with the ginger-beer, and no more was said. But Frayne's words seemed to have troubled Talbot. There was a cloud on his brow now, as if the gratitude and faith of the fag weighed somehow on his mind. He rose quickly when Tom Merry gave the signal for the cricketers to turn out.

The sun was sinking now, but there was ample light for play. In any case, the St. Jim's team was safe on the result of the first innings. But Tom Merry & Co. wanted to finish the match. Had a big score been wanted, the fact that Talbot was "crooked" for batting would have been a misfortune to the side; but as the matter stood, it was not serious. Tom Merry assigned him for the last man in, and he was pretty certain that last man would not be required.

Tom Merry opened the innings with Figgins. It was quite on the cards that the pair of them would get all the runs that were wanted. But it did not come off. Figgins was clean bowled by Yorke, and in the next over Tom was caught out by Lord Conway in the slips. Redfern brought the score up to 15 before he fell, and then Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn piled on runs. Glyn was caught out, and Blake chuckled:

"Four down for 23! What price us?"

"Yaas, wathah! Two wanted to tie!" grinned Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps I had bettah go in and put them out of their misewy, Tom Mewwy."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You can go in, if you like, Gussy. A duck's-egg won't matter to us now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus; and he joined the Cornstalk at the wickets.

Arthur Augustus scored two off the first ball, and there was a cheer, not so much for the swell of St. Jim's, but for the fact that St. Jim's had now tied. If all the rest of the wickets went down for nothing they could not be beaten now. But they were not likely to go down for nothing. Arthur Augustus resolved to finish the matter with a boundary hit, but unfortunately his mighty swipe missed the ball, and the rattle of his stumps followed.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy, and he came off.

"Man in!" said Tom Merry. "Go in and finish, Blake."

"What-ho!" said Blake, swinging his bat.

The ball came down to Blake, and he nicked it away for a single. Blake and Kangaroo crossed the pitch. They had topped the score now, and St. Jim's had won by five wickets.

"Hurrah!"

"What price us?" chortled Blake.

"Hip, pip!"

"Huwwah, deah boys! Conway, old man, what pwice makin' us follow on—what!"

Lord Conway laughed good-humouredly.

"You've beaten us," he said. "You are hotter stuff than I suspected. Congratulations!"

"That's vewy decent of you, Conway, deah boy! We should have put you out of your misewy soonah—without this innin's at all, in fact, if Tom Mewwy had put me on to bowl. I had a vewy special yorkah I was going to surpwise you with."

"We should have been surprised if you had taken any wickets with it," agreed Lord Conway genially.

"Weally, Conway—"  
"Oh, ring off, Gus!" said Wally. "We've won, and I'll excuse Tom Merry for not putting me in the team now, though he was an ass."

"Thanks!" said Tom, laughing. "We've won without your batting and without Gussy's bowling, so we can pat ourselves on the back, I think."

And the St. Jim's cricketers did pat themselves on the back. They had good reason to be satisfied with their performance.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Many Guests!

**D**USK was falling over Glyn House, and the St. Jim's crowd was streaming off to get back to the school for calling-over. But Tom Merry & Co. were not going. The match had ended a little earlier than had been anticipated; but the team were staying at Glyn House for the evening.

Manners, who had been busy with his camera during the match, used Bernard Glyn's dark-room for development purposes. When Tom Merry came in to dinner they were surprised to find Wally & Co. still on the scene. The fags of the Third had not gone home.

"What are you kids doing here?" demanded Tom Merry. "You've missed calling-over."

Wally grinned serenely.  
"Blow calling-over!" he replied. "We're out for the night, my infant. Couldn't go home and leave Gussy without anybody to look after him."  
"Weally, you cheeky young wascal, I—"

"Now, don't you begin, Gus!" implored Wally.

"But you'll get into a row with Selby," said Talbot.

"No fear! I told Conway we wanted to stay, and got him to ask Mr. Glyn," explained Wally. "Mr. Glyn telephoned to the Head and got his permission. Never mind old Selby. We shan't have any prep this evening, but he'll be able to rag us as usual in first lesson to-morrow. So here we are, the four of us. Of course, I wasn't going to stay without my pals."

"No fear!" said Jameson. "We wouldn't have let you!"  
"Wouldn't you?" said Wally warmly. "I'd jolly well like to know how a New House bounder would have stopped me."

"Br-r-r-r!" said Jameson.  
"If you want a thick ear, Jimmy—"

"I want all you can give me, fat-head!"

"Then I'll jolly well—"

"Are you going to start a fight in Mr. Glyn's dining-room?" demanded Tom Merry severely.

"Ahem!" said Wally, remembering that he was not in the Form-room at St. Jim's. "Behave yourself, Jameson! What do you mean by ragging now?"

# JUST MY FUN

## Monty Lowther Calling!



Hallo, Evérybody! Electricians are usually hardy sort of men, says a writer. Wire-y chaps, in fact.

Darrell of the Sixth says he stayed at a most expensive Scottish hotel. He now knows what they mean when they sing: "By the bonnie banks." He bought them!

**Astrological Note: The stars foretell the weather will last all the week, with none over!**

Skimpole wants to know the best way of putting on weight. Swallow a cherry whole and gain a stone!

There is an agitation against foreign wheat being dumped in England. It goes against the grain.

Story: Old Jock, the confectioner, served his customer with twelve penny cakes for a shilling. "Don't you give thirteen for a shilling?" asked the customer. "Mon," said old Jock solemnly, "would ye ha' me bring bad luck on ye?"

"Keep smiling" is a sound maxim for everybody. Except the professional burglar. He takes things seriously.

"When are you thinking of buying some more jam tarts?" asked Figgins of Fatty Wynn. "Constantly," replied Fatty, with a wistful glance at the tuckshop.

If you don't mind your p's and q's I'll never bring you out again!"

"Bow-wow!" said the New House fag disrespectfully.

Wally & Co. sat down cheerfully at the long table. Talbot's face had clouded at the sight of Frayne there, but it had passed in a moment, and he did not look at the waif of the Third again. The St. Jim's cricketers were in great spirits, with the exception of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was looking worried. He confided to Blake the cause of his inward trouble.

"It's simply wotten!" he said.  
"Rot!" said Blake. "Why, that soup was a treat! We don't get soup like that at St. Jim's."

"I wasn't alludin' to the soup, deah boy."

"Well, if you mean the fish, I can only say you're an ass! Would you rather have Yarmouth bloaters than whitebait?" demanded Blake witheringly.

"The whitebait is weally toppin'. And, in any case, I trust you do not suppose that I would pass dispawagin' wemarks on the grub. I was alludin' to the fact that I am in Etons."

"Did you want to dine in your flannels?"

"You uttah ass! Of course not! But if you had not objected to my packin' some more things, I should have bwrought my evenin' clobber. You were perfectly well aware that they dwess for dinnah here, and you wouldn't let me put my clobber in the bag—"

"Oh, is that all that's worrying you?" said Blake cheerfully. "Never

Try this: "Now your boy is going to school you ought to buy him an encyclopædia," said the book salesman to Farmer Blunt. "No fear," exclaimed Farmer Blunt. "Let him walk, the same as I did!"

If I saw seven gulls on a cliff, and shot three, how many would there be left? None, if they had any sense.

Story: "You oughtn't to have green fly on your roses," said the friend to the keen gardener. "Why, what colour ought I to have?" asked the gardener.

**The lights failed during a melodrama written and produced by Wally D'Arcy. It didn't matter, because the audience had been "in the dark" from the beginning!**

Never go back the same way as you came, says a hiking manual. Not even if an angry bull bars your path?

Holiday-makers always grumble at the charges of the boarding houses. They call it purse-ecution.

Misprint from the "Wayland Courier": "On being rescued, the shivering, half-drowned tripper asked for a nice cup of hot sea."

Come on, now: Why is a little nigger whiter than a big nigger? Because he is not a tall black.

Why is a Third Form fag like a pair of flannels? They both shrink from washing.

Mr. Rateliff has been wondering what is best to put on a semi-bald head? May we respectfully suggest a hat?

Overheard in Wayland: "Hallo, Joe," said one urchin to another. "You're looking pretty glum." "Yes," responded the other, "I didn't mind mother giving my old trousers to the charity bazaar, but I had both pockets full of worms to go fishing with!"

All the best, chaps!

mind! I'll turn that into an evening waistcoat for you, if you like."

And Blake approached his knife to Arthur Augustus' chest. The swell of St. Jim's started back in alarm.

"Weally, Blake, I trust you are not goin' to play any kid's twicks at Mr. Glyn's hospitable board?" he muttered.

"But if it worries you to have your shirt-front hidden, it will be quite easy—"

"Pway wing off, you silly ass!" And Arthur Augustus did not confide any more to Blake of the trouble that weighed on his mind with regard to his clobber.

However, in spite of the fact that he was not in evening clothes, Arthur Augustus succeeded in making a very good dinner.

After dinner, Arthur Augustus obliged with a tenor solo in the drawing-room. Nothing would have induced Arthur Augustus not to give that solo. As he remarked to Tom Merry, it was only due to Mr. Glyn after his magnificent hospitality. Arthur Augustus was very particular about his accompanist, and he declined Figgins' offer to accompany him, although Figgins declared that he could play quite well with one hand. Miss Glyn's attention was occupied at the moment by Mr. Wodyer—it often was. Talbot offered in his modest way.

"Bai Jove! You play, deah boy?" said D'Arcy.

"Yes, a little bit."

"You seem to be able to do evewythin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Quite

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an all-wound chawactah, bai Jove! What about your arm?"

"That's quite all right now."

"Vewy well. I'll take you on twust."

And Talbot sat down on the music-stool.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's solo did not suffer from the accompaniment; but Monty Lowther remarked, sotto voce, that the accompaniment suffered very much from Arthur Augustus' solo, a remark that was generally endorsed.

"So you are a musician, too," said Miss Glyn to Talbot with a smile. "I shall insist upon your playing us something. Look over my music."

"I wegard that chap as a wondah," Arthur Augustus murmured to Tom Merry, as Talbot began to play a difficult piece of Raff. "He plays wemarkably well. What did you think of my solo, deah boys?"

"Ripping!" said Monty Lowther.

"You weally think so?"

"Yes! I thought you were going to rip the ceiling."

"You—you—you——" Words failed the indignant tenor.

"You're a tenor, I think?" asked Lowther thoughtfully.

"Yaas, you ass!"

"Ought a tenor to sing so low?"

"So low?"

"Solo," explained Lowther.

"Pwaj keep your wotten puns for a more suitable occasion, you ass!"

"Shurrup!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Talbot's playing toppingly. This is worth hearing!"

"Yaas, wathah! I weally think——"

"Shurrup!"

Talbot joined the Shell fellows when he had finished. Tom Merry made room for him beside him.

"Is there anything you can't do, Talbot?" he asked, with a laugh.

"Yes," said Talbot, with a sudden gloomy look.

"I'd like to know what it is, then," said Tom.

But Talbot did not reply to that. He sat with a slight shade upon his face, in silence, and Tom wondered what he was thinking of. It would have startled him if he could have guessed.

That evening wound up with a film show in the big dining-room, managed by Bernard Glyn.

Among the schoolboy inventor's other hobbies was film-making, and he gave a series of pictures of St. Jim's which he had taken himself. There was a chuckle in the audience as Arthur Augustus was seen on the screen, chasing his silk hat across the quadrangle. Then Fatty Wynn appeared, standing outside the school shop and devouring tarts from a bag.

"Lifelike, isn't it?" grinned Figgins.

"Makes me feel quite hungry," murmured Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was considerably past their bedtime when Tom Merry & Co. said good-night to their kind host and departed for their sleeping quarters. Wally & Co. had a room to themselves on the same floor as Glyn's companions. The juniors chatted for a while with Glyn, in his room, and then dispersed to their various quarters. Kangaroo yawned as he came into the room shared with Talbot.

"Well, I shall sleep to-night," he remarked. "It's been a ripping day, Talbot."

"Topping!" said Talbot.

"You don't look very chippy, though," the Cornstalk remarked, with a curious look at the new junior.

"I'm a bit tired," said Talbot.

"No wonder. You've worked harder

than the rest of us in the match," chuckled Kangaroo, "to say nothing of your giddy exploits as a heroic rescuer."

"Oh, cheese it!"

The juniors turned in. They were all pretty tired after their long day, and there was no doubt that they would sleep well. Talbot was quickly in bed, and Kangaroo turned off the light and turned in.

"This is comfy," he remarked. "I say, Talbot, did you get much cricket when you were in Australia?"

No reply.

"Talbot, old man!"

Silence.

"Asleep already? Well, I shan't be long after you," yawned Kangaroo.

And a few minutes after his head was on the pillow the Cornstalk was sound asleep. But Talbot was not sleeping.

## CHAPTER 12.

### In the Dark Hours!

**M**ASTER WALLY!

Joe Frayne sat up in bed. All was darkness in the room where the four fags were sleeping.

Two o'clock had rung out from somewhere, faintly, from the distance, the sound floating in at the open window. It was a still, calm, starry night.

"Master Wally!"

There was no reply from D'Arcy minor. He was sleeping soundly. A faint snore came from Jameson in the next bed. Curly Gibson was deep in slumber, too. Only one of the four beds had a wakeful occupant, and that was Joe Frayne's.

Little Joe was very wakeful.

"Master Wally!" he repeated, raising his voice a little.

But Wally was tired that day, and he slept soundly. Joe Frayne hesitated some moments, and then he stepped out of bed, crossed to Wally and shook him, D'Arcy minor came out of the land of dreams with a start.

"Grooogh!" he murmured. "Lemme alone! Shurrup! 'Tisn't rising-bell!"

"Wally!"

"Hallo!" said Wally, broad awake now, and he sat up so suddenly that his head came into contact with Frayne's with a sharp concussion.

"Ow!" gasped Wally.

"Quiet!" whispered Joe.

Wally rubbed his head ruefully.

"You silly ass!" he murmured. "Is that you, Frayne?"

"Yes."

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing, I 'ope," murmured Frayne. "I—I ain't been to sleep, Master Wally."

Wally stared at him in the darkness. There was a faint, starry glimmer in at the window, and he could just make out the form of the fag beside his bed.

"Nothing wrong?" he asked. "What's the matter with you, Joe? I should have thought you could sleep. I'm as tired as a dog. Not seedy?"

"No."

"Then why don't you go to sleep?" demanded the puzzled Wally.

"Oh, I can't!"

"Oh, rot! You don't mean to say that you've woke me up just because you can't sleep yourself?" demanded Wally indignantly. "I was just having a lovely dream! I thought I'd got old Selby down on the floor of the Form-room and was laying into him with a ruler. Go to bed, you duffer!"

"All right, Master Wally."

"Hold on! What's the matter?" said Wally. "Don't hurry! You haven't seen a ghost, I suppose, you young chump?"

"Quiet!"

"What am I to be quiet for?"

"I—I thought I 'eard somethin'," whispered Frayne.

"Heard something? Oh, you've been dreaming!"

"I ain't! I ain't closed my eyes," said Frayne in a strange, hushed voice.

"Why haven't you?"

"I can't."

"There's something wrong with you," said Wally. "You had too much dinner. I saw you tucking into it, young Frayne, and I knew you'd have the giddy nightmare."

"I tell you I ain't slept a wink!"

"Then you ought to have."

"I think I 'eard somethin'. S'pose there was burglars in the 'ouse?" whispered Frayne.

D'Arcy minor snorted.

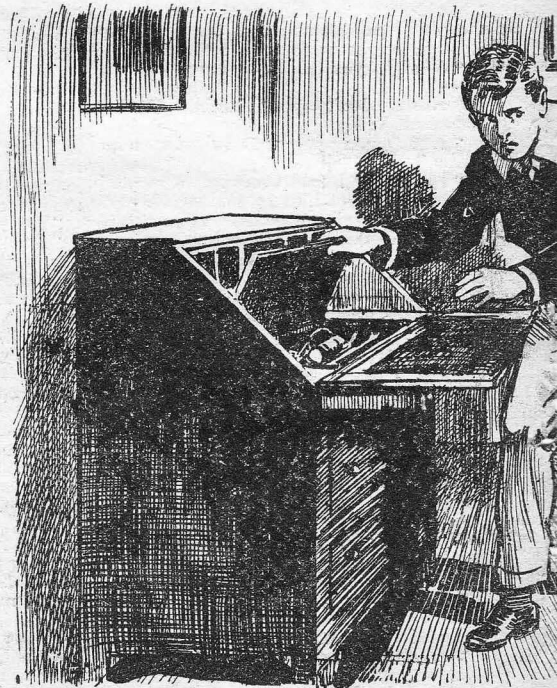
"Suppose your grandmother!" he replied. "Burglars! With about fifty or sixty people staying in the house! Rats!"

"You know there's a lot of oof in the safe—I've 'eard about it—thousands and thousands of quids' worth of stuff there," said Joe. "I—I ain't been able to sleep for thinkin' about it, Master Wally."

"More duffer you! What business have you got to be thinking about Glyn's pater's gold mugs and things?"

"I mean, supposin' there was a burglary?"

"Why should there be a burglary to-night more than any other night?"



The secret lid in Talbot's desk opened, revealing a hid  
But the next moment there came a rattle a

said Wally impatiently. "Have you seen any burglars hanging about the house?"

Joe Frayne did not reply to that question.

"It's your tummy," said Wally comfortably. "Go back to bed."

"I thought I 'eard a footstep in the passage houtside."

Wally laughed.

"Well, you young duffer, if a burglar came, he'd go for the safe in the library—he wouldn't come to the top of the house to burgle our trousers and Tom Merry's cricket bat."

"I can't sleep for thinking about it. P'raps it was a fancy," said Frayne. "But I thought I 'eard somethin'—a step in the passage—"

"Rot! There's nobody in the passage but ourselves—all the rooms are taken up with St. Jim's chaps," said Wally. "None of them are likely to turn out at this time of night, I suppose?"

"I 'ope not."

"You hope not! Blessed if you're not talking in giddy riddles. Why should any of the fellows get up in the middle of the night?"

"Course, 'tain't likely," said Frayne.

"But I can't help feelin' uneasy somehow. But, arter this afternoon, 'tain't possible—no, 'tain't possible." The wail of the Third seemed to be speaking to himself rather than to Wally.

"After this afternoon!" repeated Wally, more and more amazed. "I don't know what you're driving at, Joe. Make it a bit plainer."

"I—I can't! But it ain't possible—it ain't possible; only I can't 'elp feelin'—and then I believe I 'eard a sound."

"Jimmy snoring, I expect."

"It was in the passage. Look 'ere, Master Wally, git up, and let's 'ave a look round."

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally in exasperation. "Here I'm as tired as a dog, and you want me to get up and go burglar-hunting! You silly

young ass, I tell you there can't be any burglars. They wouldn't come up here after cricket bats. And there's an electric alarm in the safe; and Glyn says it couldn't be cracked, anyway."

"Yes, it could, if—if the right man got to work on it."

"What right man? Look here, if you mean that you've seen any suspicious party hanging around the house, say so; that's different."

Joe Frayne was silent.

"But I'll get up, if you like!" groaned Wally. "I suppose you won't let me go to sleep, now you're in a state of nerves. Blessed if I can understand you. You ain't a funk, as a rule."

"I ain't a funk now," said Joe. "I ain't afeared. Only if Mr. Glyn was robbed, arter he's been so good to all of us—"

"I'd chip in like a bird, if that was so," said Wally. "But it's all rot."

"I 'ope it is," muttered Frayne.

"Course, I couldn't say nothin'—I couldn't—arter—"

"What's that?"

"Nothin', Master Wally. But—but it come into my 'ead—and—and I couldn't sleep. I've been wide awake ever since you went to bed, and it's past two now."

"Well, you're a dummy," said Wally, who had slipped out of bed now and was drawing on his garments—"a blessed dummy! But we'll have a look in the passage if you like."

He opened the door of the room quietly. He did not want to wake up anybody else in the house, owing to Frayne's unaccountable fear of imaginary burglars.

At one end of the corridor was a broad landing; at the other, a big window, through which the starlight glistened. The passage was silent and deserted. Wally was feeling exasperated, and not without reason.

All the rooms of that corridor were occupied by St. Jim's fellows, and Wally felt how unreasonable it was to suppose that a cracksmen, if he came, would penetrate to that part of the house at all.

The loot was far away, safely locked up in the library, and that apartment was too distant for a sound there to reach the bedrooms.

"Well, there's no burglars in sight," grunted Wally.

"No, there ain't," said Frayne, peering into the passage. "Come downstairs with me, Master Wally."

"Downstairs? Bosh!"

"Let's 'ave a look in the library."

"Bosh!" repeated Wally, with emphasis. "Suppose somebody wakes up and hears us, and asks us what we're doing downstairs in the middle of the night? If you want to go down, you can jolly well go alone."

"I can't. If anything's 'appened, I want somebody with me, to prove I didn't 'ave nothin' to do with it," muttered Frayne.

"You utter idiot!" said Wally crossly. "Do you think anybody could suspect you. Oh, you're too fat-headed for words!"

"You wouldn't," said Frayne. "But some might—the perlice, for instance, when they knowed as I come from Angel Alley. I

mean, if I went down alone. You could come with me—"

"Look here," said Wally, closing the door, "you're not going down, and I'm not going down. It's nerves, that's what it is. I can just imagine Mr. Glyn's chivvy if he woke up and found us prowling about his house at two o'clock in the morning. I can't understand you. You've got no reason to suppose that a burglar would come to-night more than any other night; and if you heard anything in this passage, it couldn't have possibly been a burglar, for he wouldn't come up here."

"You—you don't understand—"

"No, I don't!" snapped Wally. "Get back to bed!"

"Let's look in the next room, anyway," urged Frayne.

"Eh! That's Kangaroo's room. Do you think the burglar has come to steal Kangaroo's cricket bat?" snorted Wally.

"The Toff's there. I—I mean—"

"You mean Talbot? Yes, and they're both fast asleep. They haven't been hearing any giddy footsteps through over-eating themselves," said Wally crushingly.

"Let's ask them, anyway."

"Oh, all right!" groaned Wally.

"You won't be happy till you get it, I suppose. Come on—and if they chuck a boot at you, serve you right!"

They stepped out of the room into the passage. Joe Frayne cautiously opened the next door. All was dark within.

"You fellers asleep?" whispered Frayne.

There was no reply, only the sound of steady breathing.

"Of course they're asleep!" growled Wally. "Don't wake them up. They'll think we're potty."

"Old on. Can you 'ear both of them?"

"Do you think one of them has jumped out of the window or has vanished up the chimney?" asked Wally sarcastically.

Frayne did not reply. He stepped into the room. The starlight glittered at the window, and faintly showed the two beds. Both of them were occupied. Frayne soon ascertained that Kangaroo was breathing deeply, evidently fast asleep; and a gleam of starlight fell upon Talbot's face, showing his eyes closed.

"Come out, fathead; you'll wake them!"

Frayne stepped back into the corridor and closed the door softly. He seemed relieved now that he had seen the two Shell fellows in bed.

"It's all right, after all," he murmured. "He's there."

"They're there, you mean."

"Ye-es, that's wot I mean."

"Come back to bed, duffer!"

The fags returned to their room. Wally turned in, feeling decidedly bad-tempered. He was sleepy, and his bare feet were cold.

"Now go to bed, and don't dream any more!" he growled.

"I ain't dreamed—"

"Rats!"

And Wally closed his eyes, and was soon fast asleep again; and Joe Frayne, relieved of the secret uneasiness that had oppressed him, dropped asleep also, and did not wake again till the morning sunshine was streaming in at the window.

**CHAPTER 13.**  
**Startling News!**

**T**OM MERRY & CO. came down in the morning bright and cheery. A merry party gathered round the breakfast-table. Many of the guests were not down yet, as Tom Merry & Co. were breakfasting pretty early, in order to be at St. Jim's THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,490.



le. Steel instruments of strange shapes lay there! door-handle, and Talbot started guiltily.

in time for the first lesson. But Lord Conway and Captain Cleveland, and several more of the house cricketers were down to see the victorious eleven off.

After breakfast the big Daimler came round to carry the juniors to St. Jim's. The bags were brought out; Talbot going to fetch his bag, and carefully placing it in the car. Joe Frayne looked in rather a peculiar way at Talbot and his bag. For a moment his uneasiness of the previous night seemed to return to him.

But his fear of burglary was apparently unfounded. Evidently no signs of burglars had been seen in the house, or there would have been an alarm.

"Bai Jove! There won't be space for fags in the car," Arthur Augustus remarked to his minor. "If you are coming in, pway don't tweek on my feet."

"Rats!" said Wally. "You shouldn't have such whopping feet."

"Why, you wascal—"  
"Lots of room, if we squeeze a bit," said Jameson, plunging in. "Stick those bags under the seats out of the way. Whose blessed bag is this?"

"Mine," said Talbot quickly. "Leave it alone; I'll move it."

"Oh, I'll shift it!" said Jameson, dragging at the bag. "Great Scott! How many pairs of boots have you got in that bag, you Shell bounder? Blessed if I can lift it!"

"I tell you I'll do it!" exclaimed Talbot, and he angrily pushed the bag away, and took hold of the bag, sliding it under the seat.

Jameson stared at him. Talbot was such a good-tempered fellow that that sudden ebullition of temper was surprising.

"Look here, you jolly well mind whom you're shoving with your School House paws!" exclaimed Jameson wrathfully. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"Sorry!" said Talbot, regaining his good-humour. "I—I had a twinge in my arm just then—"

"Oh, all right!" said Jameson, mollified at once, remembering how that arm had saved his chum the day before. "I forgot that, old man. You can shove me again if you like."

Talbot laughed. His laugh died away as he saw Joe Frayne's eyes fastened upon him with a startled look in them.

"You're mighty particular about that bag, Toff," muttered Frayne.

Talbot did not seem to hear the remark. He turned towards Mr. Glyn and Miss Edith, who came to say good-bye to their young guests.

Cordial good-byes were exchanged, and Mr. Glyn shook hands with Talbot twice over, and Miss Edith did the same. The new junior had made an excellent impression upon Glyn's people.

"Remember we shall always be delighted to see you, Talbot," Mr. Glyn said, in his hearty way. "That applies to all my boy's friends, of course, but especially to you, my boy."

"You are very kind, sir," said Talbot in a low voice.

"Mind you bring Talbot over again soon, Bernard," said Miss Edith.

"What-ho!" said Glyn cheerily. "I'll yank him over by the ears if he won't come. Now then, here we go! Ta-ta! Be good!"

And the car rolled away down the drive. The juniors inside it were pretty closely packed, owing to the addition of the four fags to the party, but they were in very lively spirits.

"What a ripping time we've had!" said Tom Merry. "Not only winning the match, but it's been ripping all round. You belong to a family of blacks, Glyn, old chap!"

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"Hear, hear!" said all the juniors together.

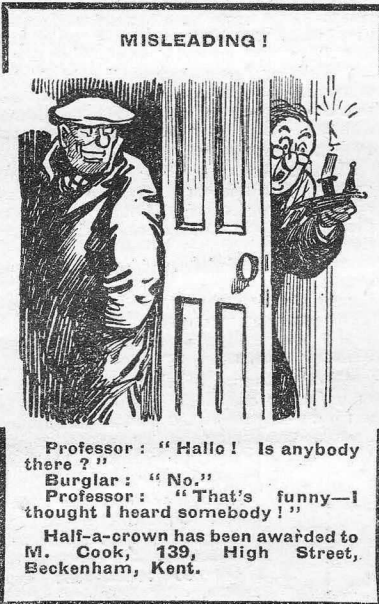
"The pater and Mops are awfully taken with you, Talbot, old fellow," said Glyn. "If I were Wodyer I should be jealous, by gum! That's what comes of being a giddy hero!"

"Oh, don't!" said Talbot. "Your father has been too kind to me. I should like to feel that I deserved it."

"Well, don't you?" said Glyn, with a stare. "Blessed if I ever heard of such a beastly modest bounder! Didn't you save young Wally's neck? It wasn't worth the trouble, I dare say, but you did it!"

"Did it like a brick!" said Wally. "And he can keep my place in the junior eleven now for keeps!"

The car arrived at St. Jim's in good time for morning lessons, and Tom Merry & Co. dispersed to their various Form-rooms. The other fellows who had been at Glyn's house the previous afternoon had spread the story of Talbot's heroism, and all the school knew it. When the Shell came out after third lesson, Talbot received a good many congratulations and complimentary remarks.



Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth came up and shook hands with him, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, spoke to him in warm commendation. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was equally kind. Soon afterwards Talbot was called to the Head's study, and he made a grimace to Tom Merry as he went.

"I shall begin to wish soon that I had let young D'Arcy break his neck," he murmured.

Tom Merry laughed. "You must bear your blushing honours—grin and bear 'em!" he remarked. "Naturally, the Head wants to have his whack!"

Dr. Holmes received Talbot very kindly.

"I have been told of what happened yesterday, Talbot," he said. "You are probably getting tired of the subject by this time—it is only natural for a very brave lad to be modest—but I must say a word. It was your courageous help to me that first caused you to come to this school, and I congratulate myself now upon having aided you to carry out your wish. You have saved your schoolfellow from serious injury or worse

at a terrible risk to yourself. You are a noble lad, and a credit to the school. Well, well, I will not say any more, excepting that I am very glad I met you that night, and that you came to this school in consequence."

And Dr. Holmes shook hands cordially with the junior and dismissed him. Talbot's face was moody as he went down the passage.

"What are they all so decent to me for?" he muttered. "If they only knew what a worm I feel—what a rotten worm! But what's the good of thinking of it? My way was fixed for me before I could speak, and it's too late to think of escaping from it now—too late!"

He almost groaned as he said it. But his face was quite clear as he came out into the quadrangle. The strange junior had a wonderful power of self-command.

A group of juniors stood outside the School House, with startled looks on their faces.

Bernard Glyn was talking excitedly. He had just come out of the House. The crowd round Glyn was thickening. Evidently something very unusual was "on the carpet." Talbot joined the crowd.

"Anything up?" he asked. "I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Glyn's just been telephoned by his pater—"

"I phoned to the pater, and then he told me the news," explained Glyn. "I was asking him about the cakes Mops is going to send, and it nearly knocked me over when he told me his news in return, I can tell you!"

"Has anything happened to the cricketers?"

"The cricketers? No; it's burglary!"

"Phew! At your house?"

"Yes. The safe's been cleared out!"

"Not in the daylight!" exclaimed Talbot, with a look of astonishment.

"Last night, ass!"

"But—but we were all there last night," said Talbot. "Do you mean to say there was a burglary with the house crowded with guests?"

Bernard Glyn nodded.

"That's just what I mean to say. It beats me. The fellow must have had the cheek of old Nick, burgling a house crammed with people!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's extraordinary. I wish I had woke up and heard the feahful wottah!"

"I wish I had!" growled Glyn. "The pater says it's an awful big haul—most of the gold plate that was easy to carry, my sister's jewels, a bundle of bonds valued at six thousand pounds, and other things. Altogether the villain has got away with a good fifteen thousand pounds!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"What a rotten shame!" exclaimed Blake. "How was it done? It couldn't have been known before we left this morning!"

"That's the extraordinary part of it," said Glyn. "If the safe had been busted, of course, it would have been discovered first thing this morning. But it was opened. There's only one key, and my pater had that, and has it still. The safe was cracked, and the man who did it must have been a regular expert. Goodness knows how it was done! But he did it—and shut the safe up after him, and didn't leave a single trace behind to show he'd been there. If the pater hadn't had to go to the safe this morning, he wouldn't have discovered it yet. But he went there, and, of course, missed at once the things that had been taken."

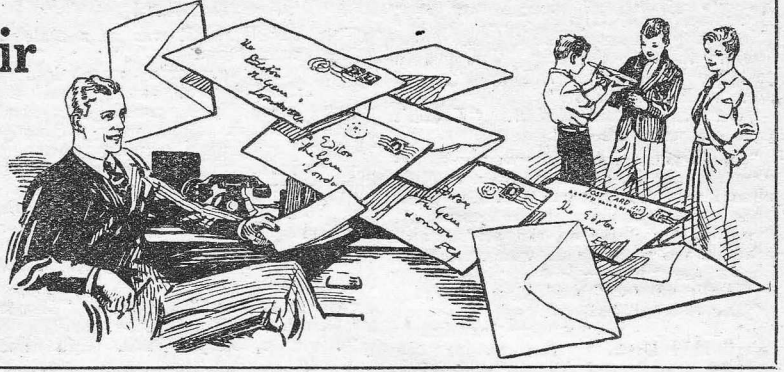
"I hope they'll catch him."

(Continued on page 18.)



# The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal!  
Drop him a line to-day,  
addressing your letters:  
The Editor, The GEM,  
Fleetway House, Farring-  
don Street, London, E.C.4.



**H**ALLO, Chums! It's out! What is? The 1937 edition of the "Holiday Annual"—and it's better and brighter than ever this year! Ever since 1920 this annual has been first favourite with all school-story loving boys and girls, but I guarantee that this year it will break all records for popularity.

I've just been reading the latest volume, and its 250-odd pages are packed with just the school stories all GEM readers will like. You can take my word for that. It contains a sparkling long story of footer and fun, featuring Tom Merry & Co., called "Mr. Ratchiff Has a Busy Day!" Then there's a great yarn of school adventure and cricket, telling how Samson Quincey Ifley Field—called Squiff for short—joined up in the Greyfriars Remove. And, of course, no "Holiday Annual" would be complete without a ripping Rookwood yarn. "Carthew Goes Too Far!" is one of the best stories of Jimmy Silver & Co. I've read.

## MEET THE PACKSADDLE BUNCH AGAIN!

But what I was particularly pleased to read in this year's annual was a thrilling long story of the Packsaddle bunch. Do you remember Bill Sampson, the six-gun headmaster, Dick Carr & Co. and the other pals of the Texas cowtown school, who used to figure in the pages of the GEM? You can meet them again and enjoy their latest adventures in "The Packsaddle Gold-Rush!"

These are but a few of the splendid school yarns in the "H.A.," while the humorous articles, jolly verse and other fine features are well above the usual high standard of this annual. It contains hours of first-class entertainment, and is worth every penny of the five shillings it costs. For several years now the rush on the "Holiday Annual" has been so great that it has been sold out in next to no time. So drop an early hint to your parents, or uncle or aunt, and I wish you luck.

## "THE TOFF'S ENEMY!"

But there's no need to drop a hint to anyone to make sure of getting this great St. Jim's yarn—that is, if you have a regular order for the GEM with your newsgagent. The third story in the "schoolboy cracksman" series is every bit as good as the previous two yarns—than which, as you will agree, there can be no higher praise for it.

Reginald Talbot, known as the "Toff" to his gang, is finding it increasingly difficult to suppress the good influence the chums of St. Jim's and his new environment are having on his character. Brought up to a life of crime, the schoolboy cracksman has been

more sinned against than sinning, and in his heart of hearts he realises that the time is not far off when he will have to decide between honesty and crime.

But, meanwhile, the "Toff" makes a very dangerous enemy in Ernest Levison, whose suspicions are aroused by certain incidents involving Talbot. The cad of the Fourth stops at nothing to expose the youthful cracksman to his school-fellows, but Levison, with all his cunning and spying, finds he has pitted himself against a fellow no less keen-witted than himself.

You'll follow this grand story through word for word with the greatest of interest and enjoyment, and, like me, you will find that you won't want to put it down till you reach the end.

## "BUNTER THE ATHLETE!"

In contrast to the powerful St. Jim's story, Frank Richards' next Greyfriars yarn is full of fun and laughter. Billy Bunter, who has played more or less unimportant roles so far in these early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., comes out strong in this story. He decides to take up physical culture, after reading a book where the author boasts to make a new man of anyone—provided he buys the physical development gadgets which the author has to sell! From Bunter's point of view, the only drawback to his becoming the strong man of Greyfriars and the idol of the school is lack of cash! However, the generosity of Hurree Singh partly helps him to overcome that obstacle, but the difficulty of making a new man of himself is not so easy to overcome, as Bunter discovers when he goes into training! Frank Richards is always at his funniest when writing about Billy Bunter, so you can look forward to a very amusing yarn.

## "THE BOY WHO KNEW TOO MUCH!"

This popular author also "makes the bell ring" with his latest new cover-to-cover story of Harry Wharton & Co. in the "Magnet." Like the GEM, the "Magnet" has gained a big reputation for clean, wholesome stories, and so I am quite sure that readers will enjoy our popular companion paper just as much as they do the GEM. If you don't read the "Magnet," just try the number on sale now, which contains a grand yarn of circus and detective adventure, starring Billy Bunter and Ferrers Locke, the famous detective. Don't forget, ask for the "Magnet," price 2d.

PEN PALS COUPON

5-9-36

## ST. FRANK'S NEWS SOON!

Following my recent announcements of the revival of St. Frank's stories, many readers have lost no time in writing to me to ask when and where they will appear. Well, I must keep you all in suspense a little longer. My plans are proceeding favourably for providing you with St. Frank's yarns regularly, and probably next week I shall have some definite news for you.

## CURIOUS CRICKET!

A most unusual cricket match, in aid of charity, is to be played soon. Two professional cricketers are to play against a full team of the best players in Wittersham, Kent. The two pro's—Ashdown of Kent, and Wensley of Sussex—will field, bowl, and bat by themselves, and as soon as one of them is out, their innings closes. It seems as if the professionals have been set a very hard task, but once before, when such a match was played at Wittersham, two pro's won! This was in 1832. A challenge was thrown out by two professionals, and the village promptly took it up, a wager of twenty pounds aside being made on the match. It ended with the "team" of two winning by 73 runs! So Wittersham will be all out to avenge a 104-year-old defeat.

## A YOUTHFUL PILOT!

There are not many boys who can boast that they have piloted a plane at the age of eleven, but this is what Jack Chapman, of New York, has done. Twice he has taken up his father's biplane, flying it all by himself, and bringing it back safely to earth again with all the skill of an experienced pilot. No doubt thousands of air-minded boys would welcome the chance to do the same as Jack.

## PIN PATIENCE!

A lot can be done with a pin, quite apart from using it for its proper purpose. For instance, an Ontario watchmaker drilled a hole clean through a pin from head to point and never split it. A hair could be pushed through the hole he made. It took him two years to do it. But even more marvellous was the feat of a London man. He engraved the alphabet and his name and address on the head of a pin!

## TAILPIECE.

"I'm sorry to have to do this," said Johnny, spreading jam on the cat's face, "but I can't have suspicion pointing its finger at me!"

THE EDITOR.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,490.

## CHAPTER 14.

## The Clue!

"Yaas, wathah!"

"They've got the police there now, of course," said Glyn. "The pater's going to get Ferrers Locke, the detective, to take up the case. I've got to go home this afternoon. I want you to come with me, Talbot."

"Certainly," said Talbot. "I don't quite see what use—"

"Don't you remember, you saw somebody looking in at the library window when I was showing you the safe," said Glyn. "The police ought to know that. I've told my pater on the phone, and he's told me to bring all who were with me at the time—"

"That's us, too," said Tom Merry.

"Yes. We'd better have lunch at Glyn House, and not stay for dinner here," said Glyn. "The sooner the quicker, you know. I'll go and speak to the Head now."

Glyn ran into the House. The crowd of fellows were left in a buzz. The news was very startling and very disconcerting. Every fellow felt the keenest sympathy towards the old gentleman who had been kindness itself to them the day before.

"It's rather awkward," Monty Lowther remarked. "The police may suspect some of the guests in the house if they can't find the cracksman."

"I hardly think so," said Talbot, with a shake of the head. "From Glyn's account, this seems to have been the work of an expert safe-breaker."

"We'll get the bikes out," said Tom Merry. "No good losing time."

As the Terrible Three went towards the bicycle-shed, Joe Frayne caught Tom Merry by the sleeve. The fag's face was white.

"Master Tom, 'old on a minute!"

"What is it, kid?" said Tom. "I'm in a hurry!"

"Only a minute—"

"Get the machines out, you fellows—Glyn's, too, and Talbot's."

"Right-ho!" said Lowther; and he ran on with Manners.

"Now, what is it, Frayne?" asked Tom Merry. "Buck up!"

"I—I 'eard somethin' just now," stammered Frayne. "Is it true that there's been a burglary at Glyn's place?"

"Yes, I'm sorry to say."

"Last night, while we were all there?"

"Yes."

"My 'at!" gasped Frayne.

Tom Merry looked at him curiously. The waif of the Third was looking utterly horror-stricken. Tom did not quite see why Frayne of the Third should take Mr. Glyn's loss so much to heart. He was hardly on intimate terms with Glyn of the Shell. Tom himself was feeling keenly enough about it, but not to the extent that Joe Frayne appeared to be feeling, to judge by his looks.

But there was no time to waste on Frayne. Lowther and Manners were running the five bikes round the House. Frayne stood as if rooted to the ground, looking dazed, and he did not speak again.

"Here, take one of these bikes, Tommy," said Lowther. "I can't wheel three very well."

And Tom Merry took his machine. Talbot had gone into the House, but he came out again as Bernard Glyn appeared.

"I've told the Head," said Glyn. "He says we're to go. Come on!"

And in a minute more the five Shell fellows were cycling rapidly towards Glyn House.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,490.

G LYN HOUSE was in a state of commotion.

The servants were looking startled and scared, and the guests were very much concerned. Lord Conway's team was playing a visiting team from the county town that day, and the cricketers were all in to lunch when the juniors arrived. There was a policeman in the hall, and Miss Edith, who met the juniors with a very grave face, told them that Mr. Glyn was in the library with Inspector Skeat from Rylcombe.

"Go in at once," she said. "Inspector Skeat is waiting to see you."

"Right-ho, Mops!" said Glyn affectionately.

And the juniors hurried to the library. Mr. Glyn, who was looking very much perturbed, greeted them kindly enough. Inspector Skeat, of Rylcombe, who was standing by the open safe, looked at them keenly as they entered.

"These are the boys who were with my son yesterday, Mr. Skeat," said Mr. Glyn. "It seems that Bernard showed them the safe—"

Glyn looked very contrite.

"I've often shown it to the fellows, dad," he said, while Mr. Skeat shook his head solemnly.

"I don't blame you, my boy," said the millionaire. "I know you have done so, and I have never had any objection. I relied upon that safe absolutely. There was no harm in doing so; it was the safe I relied upon, not the concealment of it. But it happened unfortunately yesterday that you were showing it to Merry."

"I was showing it to Talbot," said Glyn. "The others have seen it before. But Talbot's a new chap, you know. Of course, I couldn't think anybody was spying in in broad daylight. I thought Talbot was dreaming when he said somebody was looking in at the window."

"Yet that was very probably the person who afterwards rifled the safe," said Mr. Glyn. "Of course, it is possible that it was only an inquisitive servant. I hope Talbot will be able to give Inspector Skeat a description of the person."

Talbot looked doubtful.

"I caught the merest glimpse of him," he began.

"Ah!" said Inspector Skeat quickly. "Him?" He made a note in his notebook. "It was a man?"

"Oh, yes, it was a man!" said Talbot.

"Then it will be necessary only to question the menservants on the subject, to clear up whether it was a member of the household staff," said the inspector. "That is one point. What was he like, young sir? Think before you speak."

"A little man," said Talbot reflectively. "I really didn't see him properly. I doubt if I could identify him if I met him. All I remember clearly of his face was that he had something on his nose. It looked like a red bump. I remember that."

"None of the household staff here answer to that description," said Mr. Glyn.

"Then this is undoubtedly a clue," said the inspector with satisfaction. "We have it established by this young gentleman's evidence that a stranger was within the grounds at that time."

"There were a good many country folk in to see the cricket," said Mr.

Glyn. "All who cared to come in were allowed to do so."

"But not to prowl round the house looking in at the window," said the inspector.

"Some merely inquisitive person, perhaps."

"Quite possible. At the same time, it may have been a spy of the burglar, or the burglar himself, taking advantage of the fact that strangers were admitted yesterday, in order to post himself about the lay of the land here. Unluckily, if that is the case, he had the opportunity of seeing your son show these young gentlemen the location of the safe. But that is not all—it is a distinct clue. You say the man was little, and had a red bump on his nose, Master Talbot?"

"Yes, I am certain of that."

"You did not notice his eyes?"

Talbot smiled slightly.

"I hadn't time to notice anything, he whipped out of sight so quickly, sir. I couldn't say more than that they were dark. I'm pretty certain of that."

"Black, perhaps?" suggested the inspector.

"Very likely, sir; though I couldn't be certain. But certainly dark."

"I fancy that settles it," said the inspector with a satisfied air. "This young gentleman has been of the utmost service, Mr. Glyn. Of course, he doesn't know it, but he has practically given me a description of one of the best-known cracksmen in London—Jerry Hutton, who's done a stretch of three years for this very thing, and only came out three months ago. He was supposed to have cleared out for America, but I fancy the truth is he's been lying low, looking out for a fat job all the time. He seems to have found one here."

"By Jove!" murmured Tom Merry, squeezing Talbot's arm. "You're always the right chap in the right place at the right time, Talbot. None of us saw that fellow at the window."

"If Talbot's description fits a well-known criminal, it is certainly a very valuable piece of information," said Mr. Glyn, with a grateful glance at the junior. "This Jerry Hutton—is he a skillful cracksman?"

"About the only man that could have done it, I should say," replied the inspector. "Why, he's known from Land's End to John o' Groats for his skill in that line. It was a wonderful job, that." The inspector made a gesture towards the safe. "If you wasn't certain you had the key all the time, I should say—"

"I am quite certain of that," interrupted Mr. Glyn. "The key was on my watchchain when I awoke this morning, as usual, and I always keep it under my pillow at night."

"Well, that seems to settle it, I must say. The safe was cracked, and how he did it is a mystery. There ain't more than two cracksmen in England could have done it, and Jerry Hutton is one of them," said Inspector Skeat. "There was a third, but he's dead. He was called Captain Crow. Only two could have done it, and one's Jimmy Hutton."

"And the other?" asked Mr. Glyn curiously.

"Captain Crow's son—a mere kid," said the inspector. "He was an artful kid, and he used to go on the lay with his worthy parent. He was known by reputation, you see, but not by sight, and he disappeared after his father's death. 'Tain't that young scoundrel this time; it's Jerry Hutton right enough; and if we lay him by the heels—which I don't doubt—it will be thanks to this young gentleman."

And the inspector took his leave at once. Having obtained that clue, he was anxious to be at work. Mr. Glyn put his hand on Talbot's shoulder.

"My dear boy," he said, "I cannot say how grateful I am. If my property is recovered, and there certainly seems a good chance of it now, it will be owing to you. With so good and complete a description, the police can hardly fail to find this man Hutton. You have relieved my mind very much. Let's go to lunch."

Once more Talbot was the hero at the table. As Tom Merry remarked, he seemed to be always doing somebody a good turn. But Talbot was very silent, and he seemed very relieved when he quitted the house and cycled back to St. Jim's with his chums.

**CHAPTER 15.**  
**The Last Appeal!**

**T**OM MERRY & CO. reached St. Jim's in time for afternoon lessons, and went directly into the Form-room. There was a good deal of curiosity in the Shell as to the result of their visit to Glyn House, but curiosity had to wait till lessons were over.

When the Shell were dismissed, however, a crowd gathered round Bernard Glyn in the Form-room passage, and Glyn told them all he knew.

"Talbot again!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "Is there any blessed thing that Talbot can't do, I wonder?"

"Jolly lucky Talbot saw the man," Figgins remarked. "With a description of him, it ought to be very easy for the bobbies to find him."

"Of course, it's not certain that the man I saw committed the burglary," said Talbot. "I could only tell Inspector Skeat what I knew."

"Oh, it's a dead cert!" said Figgins. "What would a professional cracksmen be lurking about the house for? Looking for a chance, of course. When they find him, they'll find the swag; I think they call it swag. And you'll be the chap that's put them on the scent, Talbot. Glyn's pater ought to give you a medal."

"What a bit of luck we had Talbot in the team," said Tom Merry.

"And that I showed him the safe," remarked Glyn. "I expect the cracksmen would have spotted it, anyway, once he was inside the house. But his happening to look in just then gave him away, and it gives the bobbies a chance. So it was lucky, after all, that I was showing Talbot the safe."

"Yaas, that's all wight. Did any of you fellows spot the wottah at the window?"

"No," said Manners. "We were there, but only Talbot spotted him."

"You have a remarkably quick eye, Talbot, dear boy. I suppose that's the weally what makes you such a wippin' good cwicketah," said Arthur Augustus. "By the way, suppose you come and show me that left-hand delivewy of yours. I'll show you my special yorkeh in return."

"Right-ho!" said Talbot cheerfully.

Wally & Co. had been listening, as interested as the rest, to the talk of the Shell fellows. Joe Frayne was looking strange enough. There was a dazed expression upon his face, as if he had had a heavy blow and had not recovered from it.

"Come down to the cricket, kids," said Wally. "I want to watch Talbot with that left-hand ball of his. Pick up points, you know. Come on, Joe!"

"I—I—" muttered Frayne.



"Now that Captain Crow's dead," said Joe Frayne, "there's only one thief in England who could 'ave cracked that safe, and that's the captain's son. Wot would Inspector Skeat think if 'e knowed that you was the son of Captain Crow?"

Wally stared at him. "What's the matter with you to-day, Joe?" he asked. "You've been like a fellow in a dream all the afternoon. You gave old Selby a dozen chances at you."

"And he took every one," grinned Jameson.

"He did," growled Wally. "But it was Joe's fault. Why can't he wake up? Are you still feeling the pointer, Joe? Selby did lay it on."

"Tain't that," said Frayne.

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"I don't see that you need to worry so much about Glyn's burglary," said Wally. "It's a bad job, but there's a chance of catching the rotter now, and getting the stuff back."

"There ain't," said Joe.

"What rot, when Talbot's given a description of the man," said Wally warmly. "Jolly lucky Talbot spotted him and noted what he looked like, as it turns out that the man he saw is a well-known cracksmen. But, anyway, they didn't burgle your shirt or trousers—so what are you worrying about?"

"If I'd knowed—if I'd knowed—" groaned Frayne.

"But you couldn't know!" snapped Wally. "I s'pose you're thinking about the footstep you thought you heard last night. That's all rot. The burglary was in the library—six floors down—four or five, anyway. The burglar never came up to the top of the house at all."

"Therefore, the noise you thought you heard couldn't have been the cracksmen, therefore you couldn't possibly have done anything, and therefore it's no good your saying what you'd have done if you'd knowed, because you couldn't possibly have knowed. So if that's what's worrying you, chuck it, and come down and watch Talbot."

Wally's logic seemed to be unanswerable; though poor Joe could have found an answer to it. But he did not reply. Wally & Co. went down to the cricket field, but Frayne slipped away from them before they reached it. From a distance, however, he watched Talbot, and smiled bitterly as he saw how cool and cheerful he looked.

When Talbot came back to the School House later, Joe Frayne joined him in the quad.

"Hallo!" said Talbot with a smile. "You're not looking very fit, kid. Anything the matter?"

"I ain't feelin' fit, Toff," said Frayne grimly. "And something is the matter. I gotta speak to you. Come along with me."

Talbot hesitated a moment, but he followed the fag. Frayne led him round the House to a secluded spot near the old tower. They were safe from observation and from chance listeners there.

"Well," said Talbot, still smiling, "you seem to be rather mysterious, kid!"

Joe looked him in the eyes.

"You're going to give it back, Toff!" It was not a question or a statement, but an appeal that was beseeching.

"I don't understand you," said Talbot easily. "Give what back—to whom?"

"Don't tell me no lies, Toff," said Joe wearily. "I 'eard a step outside my door last night."

Talbot did not move a muscle.

"Did you?"

"Yes. I feared it was you goin' down; I 'ad the thought in my mind all the time. I knowed you, Toff, though I tried to trust you. When I looked into your room and found you there all right, I felt all right arter. Now I know that wot I 'eard wasn't you goin' down—it was you comin' down."

back. You 'ad passed the door fust without me 'earin' you. When Wally and me looked into your room, you was only pretending to be asleep. I half knowed it agin, when you was so ratty at Jimmy touching your bag in the car. I know now wot was in that bag, Toff."

"My dear kid—"  
"Let me finish," said Frayne. "You know I'm tellin' you the truth, Toff. Now that Captain Crow's dead, there's only one thief in England who could 'ave cracked that safe, and that's Captain Crow's son. Wot would Inspector Skeat think if 'e knowed that you was the son of Captain Crow?"

Talbot's eyes glittered.  
"Does that mean—" he began.  
"But for wot 'appened yesterday, I'd go straight to 'im and tell 'im," said Joe. "Then wot do you think would 'appen?"

"I think you would have to prove it," said Talbot quietly. "You seem to forget that the police don't know Captain Crow's son by sight. I think very likely, Joe Frayne, you'd be denounced as an infamous slanderer and expelled from this school."

Joe breathed hard.  
"Tain't that wot keeps me back," he said. "I know you've laid your plans well, Toff; I dare say you've got it all cut and dried for to prove that your name is not wot I know it ain't—and that you come from Australia, where you've never been in your life. I know you are deep, Toff, and I shouldn't wonder if you could prove a lot of lies and get me sacked for roundin' on you, jest as you say. But it ain't that that stopped me—I'd risk that."

"You'd risk it!" said Talbot, between his set teeth. "I should hardly have thought you'd risk that, Joe—for it isn't a risk, it's a certainty. But if that doesn't keep you quiet, what does?"

"You saved my pal yesterday," said Joe in a low voice. "You might have been killed. There wasn't no swindle about that. You're as brave as a bloke could be—that's honest. But for you, my best pal might be dead this minute. Arter that, you know my mouth's closed. You know I can't give you away."

"I've thought it over—it's been buzzing in my head all day, and I know I can't do it. But if you've got a 'eart in your body, Toff, you won't put it on me to be, in a way of speakin', your 'complice. You'll 'and back wot you took last night, Toff."

Talbot's face was hard. The glitter in his eyes was like steel. Tom Merry & Co. would have started if they could



have seen his face then; it was old, with years of crime and guilt seemingly graven upon it. And yet it was the same face—the handsome face of the dashing cricketer, of the hero who had risked his life to save a boy he hardly knew.

"What do you sye, Toff?" Joe's voice was low, whispering, beseeching. "Toff, I know now it was you got Mr. Selby's things. That five 'undred quids' worth of coins. Can't you let Glyn's father alone? The feller wot's been a pal to you, Toff—arter you've been treated so well by his father, and his sister, too!"

Talbot winced. But his face hardened again at once.

"If there were anything in all this balderdash you've been talking, Frayne," he said in an even voice, "do you think the loot would still be in my hands? Do you think it's still in my study?"

Frayne started.  
"I—I thought so, Toff. 'Ave you got rid of it already? Was one of the gang waitin' round the school to take it, then?"

"I don't admit anything. But if it was as you suppose, the loot is far away by this time."

"My goodness!" groaned Frayne.

"Keep a stiff upper lip," said Talbot scornfully. "Drop it out of your mind. The burglary was committed by Jerry

Hutton; the police have his description, and—"

"And they won't find him," said Frayne. "You lie, Toff! There wasn't any man at the window. Tom Merry and Lowther and Glyn didn't see nobody—only you. You 'ad it in your mind to crack the safe, then—that's why you made Glyn show you where it was. You said you saw a man at the winder, havin' it in your mind all the time to give Hutton's description afterwards."

"By the time they've found Hutton, there won't be any chance of their working back and gettin' a fresh clue. Not that they'll find Hutton, either, for most likely he's out of the country, and you know it, or you'd 'ave given a safer description, seein' that you know all the well-known thieves in London by sight. You've took in Inspector Skeat, Toff—but you can't take me in."

"Have you done?"  
"Ain't that the truth?" demanded Joe.

Talbot shrugged his shoulders.  
"Toff, ain't you got nothin' to say?" muttered Joe, as the Shell fellow turned away. "You ain't goin' to refuse wot I ask?"

"I've got nothing to say."  
"But—but you'll do wot I ask—"  
"I shall do nothing."

Joe Frayne groaned.  
"This 'ere is the finish of me, Toff. I can't give you away, and you know it. But I can't stay 'ere and know wot you're doin'; it's as bad as bein' a thief myself. I won't be your 'complice, Toff. You've finished me at this school, and much good may it do you!"

Talbot started.  
"What do you mean? You're not—"

"I'm going," said Frayne miserably. "Can I stay 'ere, and know wot you're doing of, and 'old my tongue? And can I send to prison the bloke wot saved my pal? And, besides, as you say yourself, maybe you'd prove you're all right and me a slanderer—though I'd risk that. But I ain't stayin' 'ere to be your confederate. I've got to go."

Talbot's look became kinder.  
"Don't think about it, kid," he said. "Drive it right out of your mind. Act as if you'd never seen me before I came to St. Jim's—in fact, mind your own business."

Frayne shook his head.  
"I can't 'elp thinkin' about it. If I stay 'ere, I'm as bad as you if I 'old my tongue. I've got to go."

"If you need money—"  
"I don't want stolen money, thanks all the same. I've earned my livin' once—and I can do it again. I don't

## PEN PALS

A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on page 17, to THE GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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deny I wasn't any more honest than you when I was in Angel Alley. I didn't know better. Since I've been at this school I've been as straight as a die—and I'm going to stick to it. But I don't want to go—I don't want to quit Master Wally, the best chum a poor chap ever 'ad. Toff, won't you think better of it?"

"I've nothing more to say!"  
 "Then I 'ope you'll never feel like wot I'm feeling like now, that's all, Toff," said Joe Frayne wretchedly. "You can go; I ain't got no more to say to you."

Talbot strode away.

CHAPTER 16.

The Waif's Farewell!

**T**OM MERRY and his chums were doing their preparation in the study a little later, when there was a tap on the door and Joe Frayne came in.

The Terrible Three started as they looked at him. His rugged little face was white, and there was a suspicious redness about his eyes.

"Why, what's the matter, kid?" asked Tom, greatly concerned. "Some cad been bullying you?"

"No, Master Tom."  
 "Aren't you well?" asked Lowther. "I'm well enough. I—I got something to say to you, Master Tom." Frayne's voice almost broke, but he steadied it and went on. "I got to leave St. Jim's."

Tom Merry jumped up. "Leave St. Jim's—you?"  
 "Yes, Master Tom!"

"What rot are you talking?" asked Tom. "What do you want to leave St. Jim's for?"

"I don't want to," said Frayne. "It cuts me to the 'eart, it do, really, to think of goin' away from Master Wally—and you, too, Master Tom—and the other blokes wot 'ave been too good to me. But I got to go."

"But why?" asked the amazed captain of the Shell.

"That's wot I can't tell you, Master Tom. But—but I mean it. I've got to go. And—and I want you to speak to the 'Ead for me. Ask him to let me go."

"I jolly well shan't do anything of the sort!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly. "I think you must be off your chump. It was jolly kind of the Head to have you here, and you know it. Now to go and tell him that you want to clear off, without giving anything like a reason, of course it can't be done!"

"Of course it can't, Joe!" said Monty Lowther. "You must be daft to think of such a thing. You'd have to ask Tom's uncle, anyway, as he's sending you here. You couldn't leave without asking his permission."

"And what are you going to do if you leave?" asked Tom. "Where are you going?"

"I—I dunno. Anywhere."  
 "Then you haven't made a plan?"  
 "No."

The chums of the Shell looked dumb-founded.

"You must be ill, kid," said Manners soothingly. "If there's anything the matter, explain it to us, and we'll set it right."

"That's jest wot I can't do," said Joe. "There ain't nobody wot can 'elp me in this 'ere school. I can't explain to you. Only I'll tell you this much, that if I stop 'ere I shan't be no better than a criminal—a 'complice of a criminal, anyway. You know wot I was when you saved me, Master Tom.

Well, if I stay 'ere I shan't be no better than that, and I've sworn to go straight, and I mean to stick to it."

The Terrible Three looked at one another helplessly. They could see that the fag was in a state of nervous agitation and on the point of breaking down. But what had happened to move him so was an utter mystery to them.

"You won't tell the 'Ead for me, Master Tom?" asked Frayne at last.  
 "I'll go to him, if you like, Joe," said Tom, perplexed. "But he'll only send for you at once and make you explain."

"I—I can't do that."  
 "Then it's not much use going to the Head, is it?"

"I—I s'pose it ain't. I s'pose 'e wouldn't let me go."

"He couldn't, Joe, without hearing from my uncle, at least. You're here, in my uncle's name, you know. He's taken charge of you. He would have to be referred to."

"I—I s'pose so," said Joe. "Well, you 'skuse my botherin' you like this 'ere, Master Tom. And—and I 'ope you'll always remember that I was grateful for all that you've done for me. I shan't never forget your kindness."

"Joe, old chap —"

"It's all right, Master Tom. Don't you worry about me. Good-night!"

"Good - night, kid!"

And the waif of the Third went to bed with the rest of the Form.

There was a surprise in the School House of St. Jim's the next morning.

Wally brought the news, rushing down half-dressed from the Third Form dormitory, with a white and startled face, and a fragment of note-paper in his hand.

"Joe!" he gasped.  
 "Frayne! He's gone!"

"Gone!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Gone! Run away! Read that!"

Tom Merry almost snatched at the paper. It was scrawled on in pencil in Frayne's rugged hand:

"Dear Wally,— I've got to go! I can't stay 'ere any longer. I 'ope there won't be any searching for me, 'cause

I shan't come back. Don't forget your old pal. Tell the 'Ead, and tell him as this don't mean any disrespect. I've got to go!

"JOE."

Tom Merry was speeding away to the Head's study the next moment, with the note in his hand and Wally at his heels. But the Head was at breakfast, and he ran off into the Head's house, starting the stately breakfast-table with his sudden entrance. But the note which he handed to Dr. Holmes explained the surprising intrusion.

"Bless my soul!" Dr. Holmes exclaimed as he glanced at the note. "You did quite right to bring this to

(Continued on page 28.)

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## THE CAPTAINCY ELECTION AT GREYFRIARS WHICH WAS PLAYED OUT ON THE CRICKET FIELD!

# WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?

### WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

When the Remove Form at Greyfriars decide to run a cricket team, independent of the Upper Fourth eleven, the latter Form are not slow to object. The Upper Fourth, led by Temple, Dabney & Co., rather look down on the Remove, and regard it as "cheek" for the Removites to set up a team in opposition to the junior eleven. But the high-and-mighty Temple, and his faithful echo, Dabney, get "no change" out of Harry Wharton & Co.

The Remove go ahead with their plans for a cricket eleven, and an election is held to decide who shall be captain. The candidates are Wharton, Cherry, and Bulstrode. At a meeting of the Form it is put to the vote. Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, finds that only a few support him, and it is obvious that he will be easily outvoted by the others.

But before the meeting is asked to vote for either of the other candidates, Wharton suggests that he and Bob Cherry should settle the question on the cricket field, the one distinguishing himself most in a scratch match being made captain.

The idea is unanimously adopted, and the meeting breaks up.

(Now read on.)

### The Famous Four on the Warpath.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Don't!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, but I say," went on Billy Bunter, unheeding. "It's rather interesting, you know. I've only just heard it from Skinner, and I've no doubt it's all quite correct——"

"What is it?"

"I made up my mind to tell you fellows at once as soon as you came back from the Form meeting——"

"Well, what is it?" asked Harry Wharton impatiently.

"Oh, don't be so impatient, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter. "You know Temple and Dabney are down on the idea of a Remove eleven——"

"They can be down on it till they're black in the face," said Bob Cherry. "It won't make any difference to us!"

"Hardly!" said Nugent.

"Not a bitfully," said Hurree Singh. "We shall only go on our way with the more invincibility of the determination because of the oppositeness of the esteemed rotters of the Upper Fourth."

"But what have you got to tell us, Bunter?" asked Wharton. "Do make an effort and get it off your chest!"

"I'm trying to do it, but you chaps keep on interrupting me!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "Temple and Dabney have called a meeting of the heads of the Upper Fourth in their study——"

"Have they? What for?"

"Skinner says Hazeldene told him that it was to consult upon measures for putting the Remove in their place."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "If they like to throw down the gauntlet, we'll take it up. The Upper Fourth want teaching that they can't

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## By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet")

interfere with the Remove with impunity!"

"But how does Vaseline know what he told Skinner?" asked Nugent.

Bunter shook his head.

"I don't know; Skinner didn't say."

"You can depend upon it, it's all right," said Bob Cherry. "Hazeldene generally manages to get hold of the right information. Lots of things come to the ears of a fellow who isn't above listening at a keyhole."

"I expect Hazeldene overheard something," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "I can't say I like his methods, but if the Upper Fourth are plotting against us, it's high time we went on the warpath ourselves."

"What-ho!"

"We'll see Hazeldene, anyway, and see what he says."

"Where is he, Bunter?"

"I think you'll find him in the Common-room."

*Close rivals for the captaincy of the Remove cricket eleven, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry leave it to their skill on the cricket field to decide who shall be captain!*

The Famous Four lost no time in getting to the Common-room in quest of Hazeldene.

Hazeldene, otherwise known as Vaseline, was the Paul Pry of the Remove, and few things went on in the Form, or any other Form at Greyfriars, without Vaseline getting to know all about it.

Hazeldene looked rather alarmed as the four chums ran him to earth in the Junior Common-room and surrounded him. But Harry hastened to reassure him.

"It's all right, Vaseline," he said. "We only want a word or two with you."

"Well, what's the trouble?" asked Hazeldene.

"What's that about a meeting in Temple and Dabney's study?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, it's a fact!" said Hazeldene. "I happened to hear Temple say to Dabney——"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"You often happen to hear people say things when they don't know you're near, Vaseline!" he remarked.

Hazeldene scowled.

"Oh, all right, if you don't want me to tell you——"

"But we do," said Harry Wharton. "Go ahead!"

"I heard it quite by accident. I thought they had something up be-

tween them, so—I—I mean, I was passing by chance, and——"

"That's all right! Get on with the washing!"

"Temple spoke to Dabney about the meeting that was to come off in his study for tea. He asked Dab if he had told the fellows."

"And what did Dabney say?"

"He said he had, and that there would be seven or eight fellows there to discuss the plans for putting the Remove in its place."

"Not much doubt about that, Harry," said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"No, rather not!"

"Are you going to get up some wheeze against the Upper Fourth?" asked Hazeldene.

"Well, we're going to think it over," said Harry Wharton, diplomatically. He was by no means disposed to take the cad of the Remove fully into his confidence.

The Famous Four strolled away.

"There's no doubt about it," said Harry Wharton, when they were alone in the passage. "The Upper Fourth are going to get up on their hind legs and try to smash the Remove cricket club."

"They'll find it a rather big job," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Bigger than they anticipate, I fancy," said Harry Wharton, with a smile. "Let them hold their giddy meeting. That's where we come on the scene. We'll wait till they're all in Temple's study, and then——"

"And then——"

"We shall want a screwdriver and some screws."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### Fourth Formers in a Fix!

TEMPLE of the Upper Fourth was looking serious and earnest.

Temple had made up his mind, and he meant to let Greyfriars generally know it—especially the Remove.

"They're coming," said Dabney, entering the study. "I've spoken to six fellows. That will be enough for a representative meeting, and the study won't hold a crowd."

Temple nodded.

"Quite right, Dab. Who are coming?"

"Giddy, Blane, and Fry, and Castle, Lorne, and Scott."

"Good! After all, so long as the heads of the Form settle the matter, there's no need for the small fry to be allowed to jaw about it," said Temple. "We've got to crush the Remove, and that's all there is about it!"

"Here they come!"

The members of the Upper Fourth called to the meeting were coming into the study. Fry, Scott, and Giddy came in first. They looked round anticipatively, as if in search of something.

"Looking for anything?" asked Dabney.

"Well," said Fry, "we thought—— Isn't it a feed?"

"A feed? Goodness, no!"

"Oh!" said Fry, Scott, and Giddy. Temple looked rather annoyed.

"I don't see why you should jump to

# A LIVELY YARN OF FUN AND SPORT, FEATURING THE FAMOUS FOUR OF THE REMOVE.



The cricket ground swarmed with fellows, and Harry Wharton was hoisted up and carried shoulder high to the pavilion. It was the hour of triumph for the junior who had once been the most unpopular fellow in the Remove!

the conclusion that it was a feed," he said. "I want to talk business."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you don't want to attend this meeting, Fry—"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Fry, sitting down in the armchair. "I don't mind. I'm willing to stick it out for a bit, anyhow. What do you fellows say?"

"Well," said Giddy, "I think there ought to be something to eat, but I don't mind. I don't mind if Temple talks a bit, so long as he doesn't keep us here jiving all the evening."

"That's how I look at it," said Scott. Temple was about to make a rather annoyed rejoinder when the other three invited members came in. Castle, Lorne, and Blane seemed to look round for something, just as the other three had done.

"No, there's no feed," said Temple sarcastically. "Sit down, if you can find anything to sit on, and pay attention."

Castle looked inquiringly at Fry.

"What's on, Fry?" he asked.

Fry shook his head.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "Better ask old Temple."

"I'm going to tell you as fast as I can!" snapped Temple. "This meeting is called to talk business—important business."

"Anything to do with cricket?" asked Castle.

"Yes, in a way."

"Then go ahead, old fellow. By the way, have you heard about that new wheeze they're getting up in the Remove—having a cricket team of their own?"

"Cheeky young rascals!" said Blane.

"That's what this meeting is called for," said Temple.

The meeting was all attention at once. "Shut that door, Dab, and let's get to business," said Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"You know, chaps," said Temple, looking round, "that the Remove have always been the cheekiest and most impudent Form at Greyfriars—"

"Oh, rather!"

"They've been asking to be put in their place long enough. My idea is that we've left the work too long, and ought to take it in hand in earnest now."

"Good idea!" said Castle.

"Their latest is to withdraw their support from the junior cricket club and take their members out of the third eleven," said Temple. "They're starting a new cricket team, to belong entirely to the Remove."

"Yes, we know that!"

"Well, my idea is that it's time for us to come down heavy and bust up the concern," said Temple. "What do you fellows think?"

"It's a good idea," said Castle. "But how are you going to carry it out?"

"The important point to decide is whether they're to be put down," said Temple. "If we decide that they are, it only remains to bring the weight of the authority of the Upper Fourth to bear on the matter."

"Good! But do you think they will take any notice of it?" asked Fry.

"My experience of the Remove is that they're a sight too cool and cheeky to care a rap for the weight of the authority of the Upper Fourth."

"That's so," said Castle, with a nod.

"I suppose we can put them down if we try," said Temple angrily. "If necessary we can get the leaders in here and give them a licking."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I think that— What's that at the door?"

"Nothing."

"It's somebody trying to get in, I think."

"Rot! If anybody wanted to get in I suppose he could walk in, couldn't he? The door's not locked."

"Well, as I was saying, it's simply a question of putting the Remove in their places and teaching them to regard the Upper Fourth with proper respect. I— Who on earth is that fumbling with the handle of the door outside?"

"I heard it that time," said Fry, looking round.

"Anybody there?" called out Giddy. There was no reply. But somebody was certainly touching the door handle on the outside. Dabney went to the door.

"I'll jolly soon see," he remarked. He turned the handle of the door and pulled, but, to his surprise, it would not come open.

"There's something wrong with the door, Temple."

"Rot! Why don't you pull it open?"

"It won't come open."

"Don't stand there and talk piffle like that, Dabney. It will come open if you pull it, I suppose!"

"Suppose you come and try yourself!" said Dabney crossly. "I tell you it won't come open."

"Rats! I'll jolly soon open it." Temple took the handle of the door and gave it a violent jerk. But the door did not budge. There was the sound of a chuckle in the corridor.

Temple uttered a sudden exclamation:

"There's somebody outside there! It's a jape!"

"They're holding the door!" said Fry.

"Ass! They couldn't hold it so tight as that."

"Have they locked it on the outside?" asked Giddy.

"Here's the key on the inside!"

"By Jove, so it is! I don't see what they've done, then."

"I do!" said Temple savagely.

"They've fastened a rope across from the handle of this door to the handle of the door opposite."

"By Jove, that will keep both of them closed!"

Temple hammered on the panels of the study door with his fists. He was in a towering rage at being thus fastened up in his study, and he had not the slightest doubt that the Removites were at the bottom of it. And the humiliation of being fastened up in his study by the very juniors whose defeat had been under discussion was too terrible

to think of. It was not only the jeers of the Remove, but the merciless chipping of his own Form that he had to fear.

"Open this door, you young rotters!" There was another chuckle in the passage. But the Removites deigned no other reply. There was a faint creaking sound outside, exactly what Temple could not determine.

"It's going in, Bob?" He heard Harry Wharton's voice murmur the question.

"Yes, but it's slow. You see, the wood's jolly hard."

"Never mind, so long as it does go in!"

"Oh, that's all right! This is the second screw. I'll make it four before I finish, and then the door will be safe till doomsday."

Temple gasped.

"My only hat! They're screwing up the door!" he exclaimed. "They've fastened the rope across just while they're putting in the screws to keep it safe!"

"My only aunt!"

"Open this door, you young rascals! We'll lick you for this!"

There was only a chuckle in reply.

The heroes of the Remove wasted no words on the lordly members of the Upper Fourth. Bob Cherry was busy with screws and screwdriver, and his chums were helping him all they could. The screws were driven firmly in, and the door of Temple's study would have required a battering-ram to shift it. Then the rope across the passage was taken down. It was no longer required.

Temple was still hammering helplessly on the inside of the door. His companions joined him in that exciting occupation, without making much impression on the stout oak, and making still less on the chums of the Remove.

"Will you open this door?" roared Temple at last.

This time not even a chuckle replied to him. There was a sound of receding footsteps, and then dead silence in the passage. The chums of the Remove were gone. Temple hammered for a minute or two longer in helpless fury and then desisted.

The chief members of the Upper Fourth looked at one another. They were looking sheepish. They had met together in solemn conclave to decide the fate of the Remove, and the Removites had coolly screwed them up in the study.

It was a big blow to the prestige of the Form but even that was not the worst aspect of the case. How were they to get out?

#### No Exit!

"WELL," said Fry in a tone of concentrated sarcasm, "why don't you open the door, Temple?"

Temple was looking very red and flushed with his efforts.

"I can't! Can't you see it's fastened?"

"Yes, it's fastened," said Fry. "Is this the way you're going to put down the Remove, Temple?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"What I say is," said Fry, looking round, "that I've had enough of putting the Remove in its place, if this is the way you do it. Nice set of silly asses we look at the present moment, don't we?"

"Well, you never looked anything else, you know!" said Dabney.

"What I say is——"

"You've said enough," grunted Temple. "If you can think of a way of getting this door open say so, otherwise shut up!"

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"What I say is——"

"Oh, cheese it! How are we going to get out, you fellows?"

The fellows all looked at Temple in a very expressive way.

"That's your business," said Castle.

"You asked us into your study, and we naturally expect to get out again. It's for you to settle that."

"How could I help it?"

"A chap who sets up to lead us against the Remove ought to lead us into something better than this," said Fry. "We were going to put the Remove down. Instead of that, they've put us down."

"They're not doing anything of the sort."

"What do you call this, then? We shall be the joke of Greyfriars. What I say is——"

"We've got to get out before it gets known, that's all."

"How?" asked the irritating Fry.

"Not by standing there asking fool's questions!" snapped Temple. "Hallo! I can hear somebody coming along the passage. Let's call to him, and——"

"He'll spread it all over the school!" said Dabney.

"Yes, so he will. We won't——"

"Yes, we will," said Castle. "I don't care if it's spread all over the school, or all over the country. I'm not going to stay in here all night!"

"Look here, Castle——"

But Castle was already rapping on the door. The footsteps in the passage ceased.

"Hallo, out there!" called out Castle.

"Shut up, Castle!"

"Shan't! Hallo, there!"

"Hallo!" came back a voice from the passage.

Temple groaned. It was the voice of Billy Bunter, the Owl.

"It's a Remove fellow."

"I don't care! Hallo, Bunter!"

"Hallo! What do you want?"

"Can you get this door open? It's screwed up on the outside."

"Oh, is it? Somebody been having a joke with you?"

"Well, yes. Will you get a screwdriver and take the screws out?"

"I'm afraid I'm too tired to do hard work like that. Perhaps somebody else will come along and do it."

"If you don't I'll give you a fearful licking!" roared Castle.

"Hold your row!" growled Temple.

"I say, Bunter, if you can get the screws out without attracting a lot of attention I'll stand you a ripping feed at the tuckshop."

"Good egg!" murmured Dabney.

"I say, will you really?" came back Billy Bunter's voice through the keyhole. "Do you mean that, Temple?"

"I give you my word."

"What sort of feed do you mean?" asked the cautious Bunter. "Just a few jam tarts and a bottle of ginger-pop?"

"Well, isn't that enough for taking a few screws out of a door, you young hog?" asked the exasperated Temple.

"It's a jolly long job," said Billy Bunter. "I think there are about four screws in the door, and they've been driven right in."

"The rotters! Well, go and get a screwdriver."

"What about the feed? Will there be a steak pie? I'm fond of steak pie," said Bunter.

"Yes, there will be a steak pie. Now go and——"

"And some of those nice little pork pies that Mrs. Mible makes. I'm awfully gone on Mrs. Mible's pork pies."

"There will be a couple of Mrs. Mible's pork pies. Now go——"

"What about the liquid part? I'm fond of lemonade."

"You shall have a whole bottle. Now——"

"I don't care for the bottled stuff. Temple. I'd rather have a glass of Mrs. Mible's home-made lemonade."

"You—you—of course, you shall have which you like, Bunter. And a jolly good hiding to finish with!" murmured Temple, sotto voce.

"Of course, I shouldn't like to appear exacting in any way, Temple."

"Oh, of course not!" said Temple, hardly able to contain his fury.

"As you're standing the feed I know it's your business to say what we shall have, and I'm only offering a few suggestions."

"That's all right. I adopt all the suggestions, and I'll think of some more nice things, too, while you're taking out the screws, if you'll only buck up."

"That's jolly good of you, Temple. I never did hold with the fellows who said you were a silly ass and a rotten waster. I like——"

"Oh, if only he were on this side of the door!" said Temple wildly.

"What did you say, Temple?"

"I'm anxious to get to that feed, Bunter, and to see you enjoying yourself. Will you get a screwdriver as quickly as you can, and get the door unfastened?"

"Right-ho! I'll go and borrow Wharton's screwdriver!"

"Hold on!" roared Temple.

"What's the matter now?" asked Billy Bunter, calling back as he was scudding off. "I thought you were in a hurry."

"Don't go and get Wharton's screwdriver, Bunter. Anybody else's will do."

"I don't see what you're getting at, Temple. I'll ask Wharton and Cherry to come and lend me a hand in getting the screws out."

"No, don't! I—I shouldn't like to trouble them. I—I'm not on very good terms with them," stammered Temple.

"I—I'd rather you got somebody else's screwdriver, Bunter. There's one in Castle's study."

"In the drawer of the table," said Castle.

"Oh, all right! I'm going."

"Don't say anything to Wharton, will you?"

"Why not?"

"Because I don't want you to. If you do, the feed's off."

"But I don't see——"

"Will you go and get that screwdriver?" roared Temple.

"Yes, certainly!"

"Then buzz off!"

"Oh, very well!"

And Billy Bunter buzzed off, and at the corner of the passage ran into the arms of the Famous Four.

#### No Rescue!

BILLY BUNTER uttered an exclamation as four pairs of hands seized him, and stopped his progress with a sudden jerk. His spectacles nearly fell off, and he clutched them in his hand, and jammed them on his nose again.

"I say, you fellows, let go!" he exclaimed. "What are you stopping me for? I'm in a hurry!"

"Yes; I know you are," said Wharton, taking a tighter grip on the Owl's collar. "You have just been talking to Temple through the door, haven't you?"



"Yes, Wharton. Some rotter has screwed him up in his study. A beastly rotten trick to play on a fellow, don't you think?"

"It was us that did it, you ass!"

"Oh, was it? Well, do you know, Wharton, I thought it might be, you know, because it's such a jolly clever jape, and I thought it very funny."

Wharton laughed.

"If you don't stop rattling out fibs, Bunter, I shall jam your head against the wall!"

"Oh, really, Wharton?"

"You were going to let those Upper Fourth rotters out of their study, weren't you, you young ass?"

"Well, they asked me to, you know, and I didn't like to refuse—especially as Temple offered to stand me a ripping feed at Mrs. Mimbble's."

"Well, you'll have to refuse," said Harry Wharton. "We didn't take the trouble of driving in those screws simply to afford you the pleasant exercise of taking them out again."

"Oh, I don't really want to take the screws out, Wharton, and if you stand me a feed instead of Temple, I don't mind—"

"Well, I won't stand you a feed, Bunter; but if you touch those screws, I'll stand you a thick ear!" said Wharton.

Billy Bunter made a grimace.

"Of course, Wharton, I'd do anything to oblige a fellow like you," he said.

"The obligefulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "If we shut him up in the study and apply the lockfulness to the door, he will be out of mischief."

"Perhaps if we tie Bunter up to a door handle by the neck, it will do as well."

"Oh, really, Wharton! Now I know you screwed those fellows up in their study, I shouldn't think of letting them out, of course. I'm rather sorry about that feed; but I know you're only joking. I know you'll stand it, all the same."

"Perhaps, Now, instead of opening the door of Temple's study, you can stand on guard and see that nobody else opens it."

"Certainly, Wharton!"

"My idea is," Wharton remarked, as the Famous Four walked away and left Billy Bunter alone in the passage, "that when they find they cannot get out, they'll try the window. And we want to have some of the Remove out in the Close to greet them."

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

"The gratefulness will be terrific!"

The chums of the Remove left the spot.

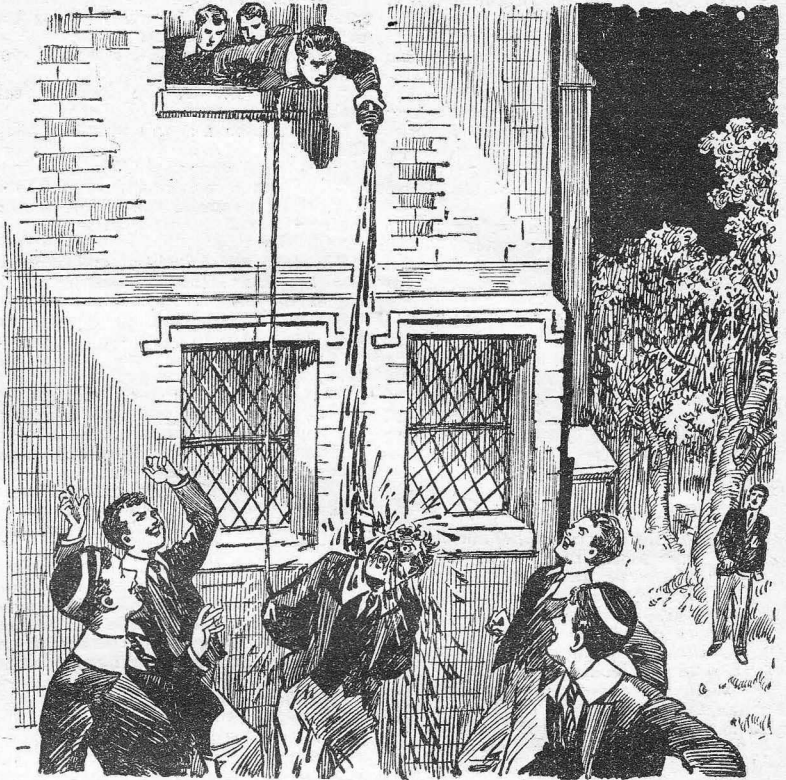
Meanwhile, Temple was growing impatient. He hammered on the door, and called to Billy Bunter.

Bunter heard him calling, but did not answer it. It was no good arguing the matter with Temple, and Bunter would not have ventured to unscrew the door for a feed of gargantuan proportions. The word of the four was law in the Remove.

Hammer, hammer, hammer!

"Bunter—Bunter, where are you? I say, Bunter, old chap, can't you hear me? Where has that young scoundrel gone to? I say, Bunter! Buck up, old fellow! Oh, wait till I get my hands on you, that's all!"

Whereat Billy Bunter grinned. Temple was fast losing his temper—what was left of it. The Upper Fourth fellows in the study were growing more and more impatient. They had their various avocations for the evening, and



A swamping shower of ink descended from the window, and there was a fendish yell from Temple, tied to the end of the rope. "Stop it!" he shrieked, as the ink swamped over him. "You're smothering me, you dummy!"

they did not relish being shut up in Temple's study.

Besides, they knew what a chatter-box Billy Bunter was. If he did not let them out he would chatter, and bring a crowd along to see the screwed-up door. The actual perpetrators of the jape might be mum, but not so Billy Bunter.

And so it proved. The shouts from Temple's study were heard, and when a fellow came along the passage and saw the grinning Bunter, he asked him what was the matter. And Bunter explained.

"Ha, ha!" shouted the junior, who happened to be Skinner of the Remove. "We must fetch some of the fellows to see this."

The fellows were not long in coming. In a very short space of time a dozen Removites were collected outside Temple's study, and they were joined by youngsters in the Third Form. The passage gradually grew more and more crowded.

"Bunter! I say, open this door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "You can't come out! You fellows ought to be in a lunatic asylum, and this is the nearest we can get!"

"I'll give you a licking, Skinner!"

"Ha, ha! You've got to get out first!"

A number of fellows belonging to the Upper Fourth came along, the news having reached them. Temple hammered on the door.

"Let us out, you beasts!"

"By Jove, they're screwed up!" said Tunstall of the Upper Fourth. "All right, Temple, old man, we'll soon have you out when we can get a screw-driver!"

"Will you?" said Bob Cherry, coming up with Nugent. "That you won't—"

not without a row, anyway! Line up, chaps!"

"Hurrah for the Remove!"

The Remove lined up. In the passage there wasn't much room for fighting, but the Removites meant business. There was a crowd of them, too.

Tunstall and his friends looked puzzled. They were greatly outnumbered, and the leaders of the Form were shut up. How to maintain a hand-to-hand fight, and at the same time draw long screws from the hard wood was a puzzle.

"Go for them!" shouted Temple through the keyhole. "Clear the boundaries off!"

"But, I say, Temple, couldn't you chaps get out of the window?"

"Hang the window! Get those screws out, or I'll punch your head presently!"

"Oh, all right! Go for 'em, kids!"

"Sock it to 'em!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Remove were there in force. The Upper Fourth fellows made a rush, but they could not drive the Remove back. Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh came dashing into the fray, and the din in the passage was terrific. The angry voice of a master was heard on the stairs.

"Stop that noise instantly!"

The combat ceased.

"Are they gone?" shouted Temple through the keyhole.

He had not heard the master's voice, and noted only the cessation of strife.

"No, they're not!" grunted Tunstall. "Old Quelch is on the stairs, and he says we're to shut it."

"Never mind Quelch!"

"You wouldn't say never mind Quelch if you were on this side of the door!"

"I'll punch your head, Tunstall!"

"Oh rats! What do you mean by getting yourself screwed up in a study, any—"

way? Nice sort of leader for a Form, you are—I don't think!"

"Just you wait till I get out, Tunstall!" roared the exasperated captain of the Upper Fourth.

Tunstall laughed scoffingly.

"Well, I think it will be a jolly long wait," he replied. "Anyway, I'm not going to have old Quelch down on me because you're an idiot enough to get locked up in a study. No jolly fear! I'm off!"

And Tunstall suited the action to the word. The Removites clustered round the screwed door and gave a suppressed cheer. Temple, inside the study, was raving.

"It will be the window next," said Harry Wharton, with a grin. "Some of you stop here and see that nobody sneaks back and unscrews the door. We want to have a little reception got ready for them in the Close. My hat! If the Upper Fourth aren't the standing joke of Greyfriars after this, I'll give 'em my head for a football!"

### Temple Catches the Ink!

TEMPLE gave up hammering at the door. In spite of the bold words to Tunstall, he did not intend to brave the wrath of the Remove master. He looked at his Form-fellows, and they looked at him. They were all looking very wrathful, except Fry, who was looking sarcastic.

"Well, you haven't improved matters much," Fry remarked. "There doesn't seem to be any getting out at the door."

"You'll go out at the window if you don't shut up!" growled Temple.

"I expect I shall go out of the window, anyway, if I want to get out at all," said the provoking Fry. "The only alternative seems to be getting up the chimney."

"Which wouldn't soot us," ventured Dabney.

The feeble pun was greeted with a chilly glare from the Upper Fourth fellows.

"If Dabney is going to make jokes, I'm off, if I break my neck!" said Fry. "Who's for the window?"

He crossed to the window and opened it. The fellows all followed him, Temple and Dabney looking rather uncertain.

"I say, we can't get out at the window, you know," said Dabney. "We shall look such silly asses if we're spotted!"

"Not much sillier asses than we look at present," said the unpleasant Fry.

"Oh, shut up! I suppose we shall have to do it. It's a long way down, though," said Temple, peering into the darkness under the study window. "Shouldn't wonder if we break our necks over it."

"Well, you go first, and then it won't matter!"

"It's your idea, Fry."

"Yes, it was left to me to think of a way out of the difficulty, though I don't put on so many airs about being leader of the Form as some people."

"Well, as it's your idea, you go first!"

"I don't see it. You're the leader of the Upper Fourth—at least, I've heard you say so, though I've never noticed you do any leading. But if you funk it—"

"Who says I funk it?" roared Temple.

"Well, go first, then!"

"D'you think I'm afraid to go first?"

"Oh rats! Go first, and prove you're not!"

Temple cast an extremely uncertain look into the darkness. All was still and quiet under the old trees in the

Close—suspiciously quiet, if Temple had thought of it. But he was thinking only of the difficulties of the matter.

"We shall have to have a rope of some kind," he said.

"There's one in the locker," said Dabney.

"Will it bear a chap's weight?" asked Castle.

"It's borne my weight," said Dabney.

"Oh, that's all right, then!" said Fry. "If it's stood the strain of your feet—"

"Oh, dry up!"

The rope was fished out and uncoiled, and the end attached securely to the leg of the table. Then the loose rope was dropped from the sill, and the end of it was heard to swish on the ground.

"It's long enough," said Fry. "Now then, Temple, off you go!"

Temple rather gingerly climbed out on the window-sill, and took a grip on the rope with both hands. He let himself swing loose, and then went down the rope hand under hand.

"You see, it's easy enough," said Dabney. "Call out when you get to the bottom, Temple, and I'll come next. Why, what's all that?"

The Upper Fourth fellows crammed the window, staring into the gloom. The strain had gone off the hanging rope, showing that Temple had reached the ground. A gasp was heard, a patter of feet, and shadowy figures loomed up in the gloom.

"My hat! It's the Remove!"

The Remove it was. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh had the unfortunate captain of the Upper Fourth in their grasp before his feet had touched the ground. He was dragged from the rope and secured.

"Let me go!" gasped Temple. "You— you rotters—"

"Collar the rope!"

"Good!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Bring his wrists together."

Temple's wrists were pulled together behind him, and the end of the hanging rope was knotted round them. He was gasping with rage, but utterly helpless in the grip of the Removites.

"That's right!" laughed Harry Wharton. "I say, you chaps up there, you can pull up that specimen of yours if you like."

"You rotters—"

"Come down and help me!" yelled Temple furiously. "What do you mean by sticking up there, you funks, while they're tying me up?"

"We can't come down more than one at a time."

"Well, come, then, you chumps!"

"Those Remove beasts will collar us one by one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Good old Dabney—he smells a rat!"

"Come and help me!" roared Temple.

"I'll punch all your beastly heads presently!"

"I'll jolly soon shift them!" exclaimed Fry. "Wait a tick; I'll get that bottle of ink from the cupboard, and if that doesn't shift them—"

He did not finish, but left the window hurriedly. Sharp ears below had caught the words, and the Removites hastily cleared back. Fry reappeared at the window. A swamping shower of ink descended into the gloom from the big bottle he held in his hands. There was a fiendish yell beneath the window.

"Ha, ha!" roared Fry. "Thought I'd shift 'em!"

"Ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"How do you like ink, Temple?"

"Stop it!" shrieked Temple, as the ink swamped down. "You're smothering me, you dummy!"

"By Jove, I'm sorry, Temple! But I've shifted them away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's all this row here?" asked Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, coming on the scene. "What the—"

The Removites, choking with laughter, vanished into the gloom. Wingate stared in amazement at the figure with the blackened face wriggling at the end of the rope.

"What the—how the—who is it?"

"It's me!" gasped Temple furiously and ungrammatically.

"You? Who are you?"

"Temple of the Fourth! I'll—I'll pulverise those Remove villains!"

"What do you mean by appearing in the Close in this state? You ought to know better, Temple. I'm surprised at you."

"Do you think I could help it?" yelled Temple. "My door's screwed up and I came down this way; then they collared me and tied me up, and then that idiot Fry swamped this ink down over me!"

"I did it to shift those kids!"

"You utter dummy!"

Wingate burst into a laugh.

"Well, I hear you've been down on the Remove cricket club lately," he said. "I suppose this is their reply, isn't it?"

"We're going to put them in their place!"

"It looks more as if they'll put you in your place," said Wingate dryly.

"Here, let me untie you. Don't any more of you come down this way. It's dangerous. Temple can get round and unscrew the door for you. And now, my advice to you is to let the Remove alone."

And the captain of Greyfriars walked away laughing.

### Captain of the Remove!

THE next day there were black looks among the Upper Fourth fellows when they met the Remove. But for the present they were taking Wingate's advice and letting the exceedingly troublesome Form alone.

The Remove were satisfied with their triumph, and for the present, too, they had no inclination for a row. This was rather an unusual state for the Greyfriars Remove, but it was accounted for by the fact that interest centred in the cricket match that was to come off that afternoon, and which was to determine whether Bob Cherry or Harry Wharton was to be captain of the new Remove team.

After morning school all the talk in the Remove was of the coming match. The two candidates were to captain rival elevens, and they were busy selecting their teams. There were plenty of good cricketers in the Greyfriars Remove, and it was not hard to find twenty-two capable of putting up a good game. In Harry's team, distinguished by red caps, Hurree Singh played, while Nugent entered the ranks of Bob Cherry's eleven.

When the time came for the match, the Remove crowded down to the cricket ground, and they were surprised and gratified by the general interest Greyfriars appeared to take in the game.

Wingate was there to look on, with several of the Fifth and Sixth, and the Remove, of course, was there to a man. Even Billy Bunter had come down to blink through his big glasses and cheer.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were there,

too. They were there to hoot and deride, but the unexpected presence of the school captain had the effect of keeping the Upper Fourth within bounds.

It was a glorious afternoon, sunny and quite dry, and ideal weather for the grand old game. There was a cheer from the crowd when Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry tossed for choice of innings.

Bob Cherry won the toss and elected to bat first. A single-innings match had been agreed upon. For there was no time for a full match to be played in an afternoon, especially if the two teams made big scores.

But, as it turned out, Bob Cherry's side had a shorter innings than they had anticipated.

Harry Wharton put Hurree Singh on to bowl against Bob Cherry, who opened the innings with Nugent. The over gave Bob Cherry seven, and he finished at the other end of the pitch, so that he still had the bowling. Harry Wharton took the ball from the nabob, and went on to bowl.

"Go it, Wharton!" came an encouraging shout.

The shout showed how much more popular Harry was becoming in the Remove. The affair of the previous day had something to do with that. He had provided Greyfriars with a standing joke in his jape on the leaders of the Upper Fourth, and the Remove appreciated it keenly.

"Go it, Wharton!"

"Play up, Cherry!"

Harry Wharton bowled. Bob Cherry played the ball, and stopped it on the crease just in time. Again and again he just blocked the ball, and then the fourth he nicked away through the slips for two. Bob still had the bowling, but he was not looking very confident. Harry's bowling was of a quality seldom met with in a junior Form, and Bob Cherry realised it.

Down came the ball again. It looked a rather easy one this time, and Bob Cherry swiped at it with the intention of sending it to the boundary. But the boundary hit didn't quite come off. The ball broke in under the bat, and there was a clatter behind him. His bails were on the ground.

"Well bowled, Wharton!"

Bob Cherry made a good-natured grimace, and carried out his bat for a total of nine. He grinned at Harry. "Well done!" he said.

And Harry smiled back.

There was nothing like malice in Bob Cherry's sunny nature, and he showed no annoyance, though he had gone in hoping to make at least twenty or more.

Next man in stopped Harry's last ball, and then Hurree Singh bowled again. The Blue Caps batted fairly well in that next over, putting on a good number of runs.

Harry took the ball again for another over, and Nugent was batting against him. The first ball was played carefully back to Wharton. But the second ball found the "timber," and Nugent stared dismally down at his wrecked wicket.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wingate. "That kid Wharton bowls well. He will be a credit to Greyfriars yet—though one wouldn't have thought it when he first came here."

Nugent tucked his bat under his arm and walked back to the pavilion.

"What price duck's eggs?" called out Bulstrode.

"Well, you ought to know," said Nugent cheerfully.

The next man in played the third ball of Harry's over very carefully; but the next ball came down like lightning and scattered his bails before he knew what was happening.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Next man in!"

The disconsolate batsman vacated the wicket and Russell went in. Russell survived one ball before his leg stump was knocked back. There was a roar of delight from the spectators.

"Well bowled!"

"Hurrah!"

Harry Wharton ceased bowling with that over. He did not wish to take too much of the game for himself, and he had done enough to show his quality.

The innings petered out for a total of 44 runs.

Wingate tapped Harry Wharton on the shoulder when he came off the field.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Keep that up, kid! We shall see you in the first eleven of Greyfriars one of these days. This is better than sulking, eh?"

Harry turned red at the allusion to his early experiences at Greyfriars.

"Yes, rather!" he said.

The first innings was over earlier than anyone expected—a result due more to Harry Wharton's bowling than to anything else. If he batted as well as he had bowled, there was not much doubt as to whom the Remove would select as cricket captain for the season.

Harry opened the innings with Hurree Singh and Skinner. Bob Cherry and Nugent, with the ball, made short work of them, and they both retired within a few moments of one another, with a total of nine to their

credit. Then Trevor was bowled for two by Nugent, and Hazeldene's wicket was next to fall, for one.

Four down for 12 was the figure when Harry Wharton went in to bat, with Santley at the other end.

There was a general movement of interest now. Most of the spectators present had seen Wharton bat before, but practice was very different from a test match, upon which a cricket captaincy depended.

How he would shape at the wicket on this occasion was an interesting problem, and all the Greyfriars fellows present were interested.

He soon showed that, whatever his failings might be, a want of nerve was not one of them. He faced Bob Cherry's bowling with perfect coolness, and though the first over proved to be a maiden, it showed that Wharton knew how to keep his end up.

Santley's wicket fell to Nugent's bowling, and then Bob Cherry bowled to Harry Wharton again. And now Harry let himself go. It did not matter what kind of ball Bob sent down, they all seemed the same to the batsman. Fast and slow, he hit them all over the field.

The Blue Caps had enough leather-hunting during that single over to last them a considerable time, and at the end of it Harry Wharton, with 17 runs to his credit, still had the bowling.

"By Jove!" said Wingate.

And the Remove were cheering. Even Dabney, Temple & Co. could not quite forbear to cheer the splendid batting of their rival.

Harry Wharton's side were seven down for 40, and he was still going strong. Another wicket fell, and a new man

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came in. But now Harry had the bowling again; and he proceeded to score three more runs.

Then another wicket went down. Nine down for 43!

Last man in, and two runs wanted to win. Harry was batting again. Down came the ball from Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton stepped out to it and swiped. The clack of bat and ball was followed by the flight of the leather. Away it went, soaring over fieldmen's heads.

There was a roar. It was a boundary, and the game was won!

"Well hit!"

"Hurrah!"

The level green swarmed with fellows. Harry Wharton was carried shoulder high from the field, in the midst of an excited crowd. Wingate slapped him on the back when he was put down before the pavilion.

It was the hour of triumph for Harry Wharton. Once the most unpopular fellow in the Form—now how changed, acknowledged on all sides as the hero of the Remove.

Bob Cherry was the first to shake hands with him.

"You've won, old fellow!" he remarked as they went in to change out of their flannels at last. "It was a complete triumph for you, and I don't complain. You're far and away the better cricketer of the two."

"Oh, rot!" said Harry.

"I mean it. You're captain!"

"The Form will have to decide that."

"Oh, they won't take long about that!" said Bob Cherry, laughing.

And Bob Cherry was right. At the meeting in the Remove-room, after the match, every member of the Lower Fourth Form Cricket Club turned up, and there was no doubt whatever as to what the general verdict would be.

Harry Wharton's name was on every lip. The splendid quality of his cricket had banished the last vestige of the old prejudice against him.

Skinner stood up and proposed Harry Wharton, in the midst of ringing cheers. His voice was hardly heard for the cheering, and when he called for a show of hands almost every right hand in the room went up.

Then Nugent called for a show of hands for Bob Cherry. The number, that went up was so few that Bob's backers did not trouble to ask for a count to be made.

Skinner jumped up again.

"Wharton has it!" he shouted.

"Hear, hear!"

"Speech—speech!"

"Silence for the captain!"

"I say, I'm awfully pleased and honoured—" began Harry.

"Hear, hear!"

"And, upon second thoughts—"

"Hallo!"

"As a matter of fact," went on Harry, "I'd rather Bob Cherry were elected captain. He'll make a much better one than I shall, and besides—"

"Rats!"

"I tell you I'd rather. Bob Cherry is the man!"

"Leave it to Cherry!" exclaimed Skinner. "Now then, Cherry-ripe, what have you got to say? Do you accept Wharton's offer?"

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"No," exclaimed Bob Cherry emphatically, "I don't!"

"Bob—" began Harry.

"Nuff said, old chap! I know what you mean, and I appreciate it, but you're the man for Remove captain, and if we had an election over again I'd vote for you. Three cheers for the cricket captain of the Remove!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The cheers were given with a will, till the Remove-room rang with them. As Hurree Singh said afterwards, the cheerfulness was terrific.

(Next week: "BUNTER THE ATHLETE!"—a humorous yarn of the Chums of the Remove, telling how Bunter sought to become the "strong man" of Greyfriars! Don't miss it.)

**The Schoolboy Cracksman!**

(Continued from page 21.)

me at once, Merry. Has the boy really gone?"

"He's gone, sir," said Wally. "Somebody's been doing something—I know that. He was queer all day yesterday. It's somebody else's fault, sir—"

"We shall discover that when he is found," said the Head. "Of course, he must be found at once."

And the Head hurried from the room, leaving his breakfast unfinished.

In ten minutes the School House was in commotion; ten minutes more, and the commotion had spread to the New House. Nothing but the unaccountable flight of Joe Frayne was discussed that morning. All kinds of surmises were afloat, the favourite one being that Joe had been scared away by some former associate in his old life in the slums.

"We'll know the truth when he's found," said Tom Merry.

But Joe Frayne was not found. Search was made far and wide. But the one-time waif of the slums knew how to elude pursuit, and he had had a long start. He had gone, and there was no news of him. Where had he fled? Back to the dens of poverty and vice in his early surroundings, perhaps, and, if so, the search was indeed hopeless.

Day followed day, and Joe Frayne's place in the Third Form Room was still empty, and he began to be forgotten by all but his own chums. But Wally did not forget, and Tom Merry did not forget, and the hope did not die in their hearts that the waif of the Third would yet come back to his old place among his chums at St. Jim's.

(Next Wednesday: "THE TOFF'S ENEMY!"—another powerful story of the Schoolboy Cracksman—in which he makes an enemy who is out to expose him to the school. Order your GEM early.)

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