

"THE LAST LAUGH!" "YOU'LL FIND LOADS OF LAUGHS IN WITHIN."
THE LIVELY LONG ST. JIM'S STORY

The GEM 2^d



TOWSER'S
ROBOT
DOUBLE!

No. 1,498. Vol. L.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending October 20th, 1938.

Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterbury Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.



2
SCHOOL HOUSE AND NEW HOUSE ARE AT IT AGAIN IN ANOTHER ROUND OF RIP-ROARING
RAGGING AND ROLLICKING RIVALRY!

The LAST LAUGH!



Covered from head to foot with ash, their eyes red and watering, the unhappy trio partly came straggling out of the study, followed by volleys of abuse. Cassie Bihal and the janitors in the passage had retreated to a safe distance, and they greeted Tom Merry & Co. with many chuckles.

CHAPTER I.

Fatty Wynn Feels Hungry!

THREE dozen jam tarts—

"Hallo!"

"Two whole cakes—"

"What—"

"One seed, one currant. And two dozen ginger-beers—"

Figgins, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, stared at Fatty Wynn in astonishment. Fatty Wynn was standing outside the school tuckshop. There was a dreary expression upon his face, and he was repeating his remarks in a dreary sort of way, as if the consumption of these delicious commodities composed up blinding visions before his stupid eye.

"What are you babbling about?" demanded Figgins.

"And a bag of biscuits," said Fatty Wynn, in the same dreary tone. "And two tin of pineapple!"

"Dusty!" said Kerr, with a shake of the head.

"And a dozen doughnuts!" said Fatty Wynn, with a heavy sigh.

Figgins and Kerr grasped their fists upon the shoulders and shook him.

"Now, what are you rambling about?" Figgins demanded. "Explain, before we bump you, you fat duffer!"

"Fatty Wynn gasped.

"Largo, you mean! I—I say, Figgins, I've got a suggestion to make—a jolly good suggestion. You know the New

THE NEW LITERARY—No. 1,486.

House has always been up against the School House at St. Jim's—"

"Of course it has," said Figgins, "and New House is Cook House—and always has been, and always will be!"

Figgins spoke with serene conviction. As chief of the New House janitors, he had no doubt whatever on that point.

"We've always been rowing with Blake and Tom Merry, and the rest of the School House benders," pursued Fatty Wynn.

"And we've always going to," said Kerr.

"What—ho?" said Figgins.

"That's where my jam comes in," said Fatty Wynn. "Don't you think that these House rage have gone far enough?"

"What?"

"Don't you think that the time has come to enter the right hand of friendship to the School House?" said Fatty Wynn, going quite eloquent.

Figgins & Co. of the New House were always "up against" the School House fellows; and Fatty Wynn had always been as keen as a snipe of the other members of the Co. The change that had suddenly come over him was simply astounding.

"I'll extend my right hand and give you a thick ear if you talk rot to me!" said Figgins darkly. "What's come over you?"

Before Fatty Wynn could reply three janitors came out of the tuckshop. They were Tom Merry, Mansons, and

Lowther of the Shell—the Terrible Three of the School House, and the deadly, but friendly, rivals of Figgins & Co. The Terrible Three were all laden with parcels, showing that their purchases had been extensive. They grinned and nodded to the New House fellows, and walked away towards the School House, and disappeared into its wide portals.

"Looks as if they've been shopping for a jolly sage," said Kerr. "I wonder what they've got there!"

"I know," said Fatty Wynn. "I heard 'em giving their orders. Three dozen jam-tarts, two whole cakes, one currant and one seed, two dozen ginger-beers, a bag of biscuits, two tin of pineapple, and a dozen doughnuts."

"They must be going to have a big spread in Tom Merry's study, and they've forgotten to ask us!" grinned Figgins.

"Unaccountable oversight!" chuckled Kerr.

"I say, you chaps," said Fatty Wynn earnestly, "don't you agree with me? Isn't it time that these disorderly House rage were stopped, and the right hand of fellowship was extended to—"

"To collar some of Tom Merry's sock!" demanded Figgins, in disgust.

"Ah! No, I mean—"

"You mean you want to go to the feed, and that's why you want to stop gone with the School House!" roared Figgins.

A LAUGH-A-LINE LONG YARN OF NON-STOP FUN—FEATURING ALL THE FAVOURITES OF ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Nancy—not exactly; but on an occasion like this—"

"Like what?"

"Well, like—the present occasion, you know," stammered Fatty Wynn. "If we burned the hatchet, you know, we could celebrate it by—by joining them and—"

"And molting some of their tuck?" growled Kerr.

"Well, you see—"

Figgins shook a dim forefinger warningly at his fat chum.

"You fat duffer! You—you stammered. You'd sell your giddy birthright for a mess of porridge, same as Jacob did—"

"It was potage!" howled Kerr. "And it was Esau, not Jacob."

"I don't care who it was, or what it was!" said Figgins. "I know Fatty would go and do likewise. He would give away the good position of the New House as Cook House of St. Jim's to have a whack in the School House feed." He is a disgrace to the New House!"

"Oh, Fatty!"

"And I order him to be hanged, to bring him to a better state of mind," said Figgins severely.

"Here, I say—yah!"

Bump!

Fatty Wynn, suddenly grasped by his two chums, was brought to the ground with a concussion that made him roar:

"Oo, oo! Large, you silly ass!"

Yarbook!

"Give him another!"

"Oo! I say, I'll slaughter you!"

I—Oh! Yah!"

Bump!

"Bat Jove!" said a voice—the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the wren of the School House. "Trouble in the family, eh?"

Figgins & Co. looked round. Fatty Wynn sat on the ground and gasped. His devoted chum had administered that lesson with thoroughness. Fatty Wynn was trying to get his second wind, and seemed on the verge of apoplexy.

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed him with a grin. The wren of the School House was dead in his heat, and looked a churning picture, from the tips of his gleaming boots to the crown of his beautiful silk hat.

"Bat Jove! You'll make the school work if you bump Wynn in the quad, you know," said Arthur Augustus.

"What's the matter, dear boys?"

"Grough!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Discipline," explained Figgins.

"Fatty Wynn wants to sell his birthright for a mess of porridge!"

"Bat Jove!"

"I see, D'Arcy, old man." Fatty gasped. "I—I was looking for you. I—I want to have a jaw with you. I—I want you to stir me a brace o'—"

"Woadly, Wynn, you are wery fat-twin!" Bat Jove! I am engaged this afternoon, as we're havin' a big feed in Tom Merry's study."

"Oh, I don't mind—I'll come—"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"Japoon, dear boy. Owing to a wery special and particular reason, we are not havin' any New House koadsah."

"Look here—"

"Bovvy, dear boy—pray excuse me, as I have to crush the west of the grub for the feed."

And Arthur Augustus walked into the backshop.

Fatty Wynn frowned at his comrades as he gazed.

"Why didn't you back me up, you silly ass?" he growled. "On an occasion like this you ought to be oird to the School House kids. I don't hold with these blessed House rags. The right hand of friendship!"

"Shurrup!" said Figgins. "They're not havin' any New House shape; that means that they're going to plot something over their blessed feed."

"Something up against us," said Kerr, with a nod.

"Yes, rather! We've given them the kybock lately, and I suppose they are getting their little backs up, and want to get their own back!" said Figgins, with a snarl. "But we're going to take the bull by the horns. This is where we come in!"

"Where?" asked Fatty Wynn, scowling.

"Here, behind! When Gump comes out of the shop—"

"Well!"

"Laden with tuck," said Figgins impressively. "Then we jump on him."

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**Which House is Cook House at St. Jim's? "School House!"**

**near Tom Merry & Co. "New House!" retort Figgins & Co.**

**And then the rivals are at grips again, rag and counter-rag**

**swinging in rapid rotation until—**

**Well, read who has the last laugh!**

~~~~~

hiff his pepper over his coat, and collar the tuck. And that will show the School House that they'll have to get up very early in the morning to keep their end up against us."

"Oh, good egg!" said Fatty Wynn enthusiastically. "I say, Fatty, you're a giddy genius, you know! It's high time we aquashed those School House boarders—they've been altogether too cheeky lately. It's time we really gave them the kybock."

"Ha, ha, ha! What about the right hand of fellowship!" roared Figgins.

"Ahem! Well, you see— Ahem!"

"Yes, I see. I see that so long as you get hold of the grub, that's all you care about," growled Figgins.

"Now start up, and wait for Gump to come out. And when I say the word, jump on his neck!"

"What-ee?"

And the New House trio waited and watched.

CHAPTER 2.

Batted Baskets!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was giving orders on a liberal scale in the backshop.

Dame Taggles, with a sweet smile on her face, was handing out good things galore. Evidently a celebration of unusual proportions was toward in the School House of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry, Manners and Lovelace were in fettle, and the same good fortune had befallen the chums of Study No. 6—Blake, D'Arcy, Herriss and Digby.

And the chums of the School House were evidently bent upon improving the situation, while the funds lasted.

Outside the tankshop the New House juniors could hear the cheerful voice of Arthur Augustus giving orders. And they grinned blissfully. D'Arcy was ordering a feed for them, though he did not know it. Ranks of this kind were not at all uncommon occurrences among the rival juniors of St. Jim's. It was all in the game, and the side that got "left" never thought of complaining.

"Foxy put them in a basket or something, ma'am," said Arthur Augustus, when his long list of orders had been at length fulfilled.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

"I am afraid I shall not be able to carry it myself, but my friends are coming to help me. They ought to be here. How much, please?"

"Two pence, five shillings, and threepence-halfpenny, please, Master D'Arcy."

"Wight! he! Change this frah, please!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Fatty Wynn ostentatiously. "What a spread!"

"Shut up!" murmured Figgins.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in the doorway with a large basket in his hand, the weight of which appeared to bother him. He looked towards the School House through his famous monocle. Blake, Herriss and Digby, busy with the preparations for the great feed in Tom Merry's study, had apparently forgotten that he wanted their aid.

But just then he spotted them coming out of the School House. Figgins & Co. spotted them, too.

"Back up!" murmured Figgins.

"We've got to collar that basket, and get it over to the New House before those boarders arrive! Follow your uncle!"

And the Co. closed round D'Arcy.

"I'm going to carry that basket for you, Gump," said Figgins kindly.

"Thank you wery much, Piggay!" said Arthur Augustus, as the long-limbed chief of the New House juniors lifted the basket from his grasp. "You are wery wery good, and I'm awery I cannot ask you to the feed."

"Oh, that's all right! We're going to eat ourselves!"

"Woadly, Figgins! I say, dear boy, you're gear' in the w'ing direction!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great astonishment. "The basket is to be carried to the School House, not to the New House, you see!"

"You mistake!" Figgins called back cheerfully. "Ah, reverse!"

"Bat Jove! You awful wretch! Is it a waid! You foolish burlough! I command you to bring that basket back at once!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roll of laughter floated back from the New House trio as they pushed the captured basket away towards the New House.

Arthur Augustus waved a frantic hand to Blake & Co., who were running towards the spot. They had seen what had happened.

"Womus, dear boys!" yelled D'Arcy. "These wretches have collared the grub! Wun like arphitis!"

And D'Arcy dashed after the new House raiders.

Figgins & Co. ladle with the heavy

THEY CAN LAST.—No. 1,499.

basket as they were, covered the ground in great style. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy panted furiously after them, and some distance behind him came Blake, Herries, and Digby at top speed.

Figgins & Co. had a good start, and with common luck they would have escaped with the prize. But it was not to be—Figgins' luck was out. Ahead of the Betting raiders a sturdy junior appeared in view—Harry Noble of the Shell, otherwise known as Kangaroo and one of the leading lights in the School House. Kangaroo was sauntering across the quad carelessly with his hands in his pockets, when a yell from Jack Blake warned him of the state of affairs.

"Kangy, look out! Stop this!" Kangaroo jumped into the path of the raiders with an agility worthy of the animal from which he derived his nickname. Figgins & Co. were close to one, but there was room to elude behind. Kangaroo grasped Figgins and brought him down, and the basket dropped on the ground.

"Get the last ones, Kerr, and leave me to squish this silly an!" roared Figgins.

Kerr hesitated a moment, both to leave his claim in the grip of the enemy; but he obeyed. Grasping the basket he rushed on. Figgins grasped Kangaroo, and they rolled on the ground. The Cornstalk had delayed the raiders long enough to give the pursuers a chance, and D'Arcy, with a start, came up with Kerr and Fatty Wynne as they ran on with the basket.

"You sneak wretches! Stop!" Arthur Augustus snatched himself as Kerr and grasped him round the neck, and Kerr came to the ground with a heavy bump.

"Gosh!" gasped Kerr. "Ow! Geroff! Ow!"

"Woooa, deah boys!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Hold him!" panted Jack Blake. "We're coming!"

"I've got the wotah—"

"Collar the grub and get on, Fatty!" Kerr yelled.

"Right-ho!"

Fatty Wynne had turned back to his claim's aid, but it was evidently more important to save the captured basket from capture. Fatty Wynne made a dash for it, and grasped it, and rushed on towards the New House. But the basket was heavy, and Fatty Wynne had no chance. Jack Blake was after him, and he tackled Fatty Wynne in Booby style, and brought him down.

"Bump!"

"Ow! Oh! Yah!"

"Get him!" shouted Blake triumphantly. "Collar the basket, Herries—quick, before any more of the cads come round!"

"Right-ho!" chuckled Herries.

Herries and Digby picked up the basket and bore it off in triumph. All three of the members of Figgins & Co. were captured now, and struggling in the grip of their captors. Tom Merry & Co. had hurried out of the School House to help—and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynne were each grasped by two pairs of sturdy hands.

Figgins groined and gasped painfully.

"Down! Bottom! Check it, you cads—we've done!"

"Geroff my neck!" gasped Fatty Wynne, addressing Blake, who was sitting there. "You've got your old basket. Geroff my neck!"

"You cheeky New House brawler!" said Tom Merry severely. "You have forgotten that the School House is Cook House of St. Jim's, and you have the

awful nerve to raid our tummy! What have you to say before you are sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and hanged!"

"Go and eat cake!" replied Figgins indignantly.

"Roll 'em over, and push some jam-tarts down their necks!" said Tom Merry.

"Ow—ow!"

"Oh! Yah!"

"Geroff!"

And the School House juniors walked away laughing, leaving Figgins & Co. "groughing" wildly, in a state of sickness and constipation impossible to describe.

CHAPTER II.

A Little Celebration!

TOM MERRY'S study was crowded. It was one of the largest studies in the Shell passage in the School House, but all its space was severely taxed by the convivial party that had gathered there.

They were all School House fellows, members or allies of the famous Co. that had waged warfare upon the juniors of the New House.

There were Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and Digby from Study No. 6, Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, Kangaroo and Clifton Duro of the Shell, and Healy of the Fourth.

The table was spread in an unusually festive style.

In the wide, open grate blazed a huge fire, piled high, for it was a bitterly cold winter's day.

The study looked very cosy and comfortable, and the viands displayed on the table were, as Mussy Lowther remarked, grateful and comforting.

Both studies being in demand, the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. had occasioned concern for that handsome spread, and foster practice had given them keen appetites to enjoy it.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, as soon as the last guest had arrived, "gentlemen, the festive board is spread!"

"Hear, hear!" said the gentlemen.

"Pile 'em!" added Blake.

"What-ho?"

And the gentlemen piled in.

For some little time few words were spoken, few sounds being heard beyond the clatter of knives, forks, and plates, and the clinking of cups and glasses.

But when the keen edge had been worn off their appetites, conversation divided the attention of the juniors with the viands.

Tom Merry coughed emphatically to draw that he had something to say. And the tea party were all attention at once, it being understood that the meeting was for business as well as pleasure.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "we have met upon a rather important occasion. It has been admitted for hundreds of years that the School House is Cook House at St. Jim's. It is universally recognized that it is the first duty of every School House chap to stand up for his House, and put the New House brawlers in their place, and keep 'em there."

"Hear, hear!" said the meeting cordially.

"Passed unanimously!" said Kangaroo. "Shove the jam this way!"

"For that reason," said Tom Merry, "this meeting has been called. It is necessary for all School House fellows to stand shoulder to shoulder in the great cause. We have wasted our energies in civil war—"

"Oh!"

"Study No. 6 up against this study," explained Tom Merry. "We have tagged one another when our duty was to tag Figgins & Co. bald-headed. When I hit Blake, or Lowther bumps D'Arcy, it practically amounts to civil war."

"Bai Jove! I regarded it as wotah sport!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake came to his feet, a gleam in his eye.

"Sorry to interrupt the honorable chairman. But I should like the occasion to be specified when I have been licked by anybody. I may have a bad memory, but I certainly don't remember anything of the sort."

"Order!"

"Figure of speech," Tom Merry explained. "I was merely pointing out that we have wasted time in mutual warfare."

"Well, we can let it go at that," agreed Blake. "But when you talk piffle about having licked me, then—"

"Exactly! At this level the basket is buried, and from this hour forth we march in alliance against the common foe."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, we are now going to lay plans in common to defeat the New House brawlers, to subvert their politics, and frustrate their knavish tricks, and give them the kibosh generally."

"Hear, hear!"

"Figgins & Co. have been on the war-path lately," went on Tom Merry. "Only half an hour ago they actually had the cheek to raid our grub!"

"Yess, wotah-ho!"

"And if these chaps had been some Shell chaps around, they'd have got it away all right."

"Oh, blow the Shell!" said Blake. "Gussy let himself be collared, that was all. We can't help Gussy being a duffer. He was born like that."

"I refuse to be characterized as a duffer, Blake!"

"The New House wouldn't catch us napping, as they did Gussy," said Tom Merry. "The New House would have to get up very early in the morning to take a rim out of this study."

"B-r-o-u-e-r!"

"You see, we are up to their little games," Tom Merry explained loftily. "Why, if this very feed was being held in Study No. 6, I shouldn't wonder if Figgins & Co. got up to some little game to snook it up."

"And they'd succeed, too," said Manners, with a solemn shake of the head. "But here they wouldn't have any chance, and they know it."

"They'd serve us all up in the study, or something," remarked Lowther. "But they won't try it on with us. They know better."

Blake snorted.

"Well, let's have a little less gas, and get to business," he said.

"Get the wotah and come to the house!" suggested Kangaroo. "And would you mind passing the jam again? That jam is good!"

"I was only pointing out that this study has a natural right to lead, for the general good," Tom Merry explained. "As it is impossible for the New House brawlers to catch us napping, you see—"

"Hallo! What's that?" asked Clifton Duro, looking round towards the door.

"What's what, am?"

"Somebody at the door."

"Come in!" called out Tom Merry.

But the door did not open.

The handle, however, was seen to move a

little. Somewhat excited, Tom Merry stepped to the door and turned the handle and pulled. But the door did not open.

"What's the matter with it lately?" asked Kelly.

"Amen! It seems to be fastened outside, somehow," murmured Tom Merry, reddening.

And from Blake & Co. there came a roar:

"Ha, ha, ha! Who's caught napping now? Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 4.

On the Warpath!

"ROTTEN!" growled Fatty Wynn. "Beastly!" said Kerr. "Quite the rotten limit!" said Figgins.

The New House Co. were in Figgins' study. They were looking and feeling decidedly "rotten." Their raid upon Arthur Augustus D'Arre's basket of provisions had not been a success, and they had been roughly handled in the course of it.

They had changed their jammy collars and washed off the jam in the dormitory, surrounded by a grissing and sympathizing crowd of juniors from their own House.

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence, their rivals for supremacy in the New House, had chucked without limit over Figgins & Co.'s adventure. Thompson of the Shell had inquired politely whether it wasn't time they were out of business—in fact, all the New House juniors laughed and grinned over their defeat, and hinted that Figgins & Co. were on their last legs.

Figgins was sitting on the corner of the table, his hands plunged into his trouser pockets, and his brow wrinkled in thought.

"All the fellows are chipping us," growled Kerr. "It would have been better to leave the rotten tummy alone."

"It wasn't rotten tummy; it was jolly good tummy," said Fatty Wynn, with a "gh."

"And now they're feeding on the fat of the land, and grinning at us," said Kerr.

"And out of our reach," added Wynn. "It's no good trying to raid them in their own House, I suppose? We should have a giddy house's nest sound us in so time."

"The laugh's up against us!" said Kerr. "We can't even sneak up their feet. That would be some satisfaction."

Figgins brought down his palm upon his knee suddenly with a clap that sounded through the study like a pistol-shot.

"We'll do it!" he exclaimed. "Do what? We're done!" growled Kerr.

"We're not going to take a defeat lying down, I suppose?" said Figgins. "Besides, we must do something to keep up our prestige. And I've got a scheme."

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr and Wynn simultaneously. "Pile in!"

"We're going to sneak up their feet," said Figgins. "We're going to make them sorry for themselves."

Kerr shook his head. "We can't get into their House," he replied. "We could get in, of course, but as soon as they saw us they'd call up a horde of their blessed hoodlums and chuck us out on our necks. No go, Figg!"

"I'm not talking about raiding the study. There are more ways of killing a kangaroo than feeding it on molasses,"

said Figgins. "Now, how many ways are there into a study?"

"Two, I suppose," said Kerr, with a stare—the door and the window.

"Three!" said Figgins. "There's the chimney."

"My hat! Are you thinking of coming down the chimney on them?" howled Kerr. "Why, they'll have a fire in the grate—and a big one, too, most likely."

"I know that. That's my little game."

"Blamed if I see it!"

"Then don't jaw till I explain," said Figgins politely. "I suppose you know there's a trap in the roof of the New House in case of fire?"

"So it's quite easy to get on the roof, and by getting across the roofs of the gym, and the library, and the museum, we can get on the roof of the School House."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"And what's to prevent us from jamming something in their chimney?"

"What's-at?"

"And if one of us could sneak into their House and fasten the door of their study on the outside—"

"My hat!"

"I rather think they wouldn't enjoy our feed—for it really is our feed, as we had raised it," said Figgins triumphantly.

"Jolly risky!" said Fatty Wynn.

"If you are afraid of the risk—"

"Rats! If you want a thick cut, Figg!"

"Look here, Fatty Wynn—"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Order!" said Kerr. "Don't begin chipping now, for goodness' sake! We'll try it. It won't hurt us if it

doesn't come off. I'll get into the School House and fasten up their door. I can do that, as I've got most brains—"

"You can do it," said Figgins. "It won't require so much brains, so you can do it all right. I'll get on the roof. And if Fatty thinks it's too risky, he can go and eat coles."

"Rats!" said Fatty Wynn. "I shall come with you, of course. You would make a heap of it without me."

"Then back up!" said Figgins.

And the trio left the study, their preparations being quickly made.

The Co. separated, Figgins and Fatty Wynn making their way to the top of the House, and Kerr descending the stairs. Kerr snatched out into the quadrangle in a careless sort of way, and strolled over to the School House.

Ray, Kervoisk, and Lovison of the Fourth were chatting on the School House steps, and they gave Kerr a suspicious look.

"Kiddies in his study!" asked Kerr carelessly.

"Yes," said Kervoisk.

"Good!"

And Kerr walked calmly into the House.

The juniors, supposing that he had been sent over from the New House with some message for Kiddies, the captain of St. Jim's, allowed him to pass without question.

But once inside the School House, Kerr did not make his way to the Sixth Form passage; he scolded up the big staircase and reached the Shell quarters, where he fastened his coat.

Tom Merry's study was closed, and Kerr could hear the voices of the party



"I say, Figgins, you're quite in the wrong direction!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "The basket is to be carried to the School House, not to the New House!" "Your mistake!" Figgins called back, as the New House trio made off with the basket of coles. "An' rever!"

within. There was no one to be seen in the passage.

Kerr paused outside the study.

He took a dog-chain, with a padlock attached from his pocket. The chain was long enough to extend across the passage. Kerr slipped a loop at the end of the chain over the handle of Tom Merry's door silently, and drew it tight. Then he stretched the chain across the passage to the door-handle of the room opposite. He passed the end of the chain round the door-handle, slipped the tongue of the padlock through the links, and clipped it shut.

It had not taken him a minute, but the study door was fast enough now. No amount of pulling from within could have broken the chain, and even from outside it could not easily have been unfastened without a key to the padlock.

Kerr checked softly. But he had not been wholly unheeded. The handle of Tom Merry's door turned, and there was a pull.

"It's fastened!"

The roar of laughter from the Fourth Formers within the study was echoed by Kerr in the passage.

Tom Merry shouted through the keyhole:

"Hallo, there?"

"Hallo!" replied Kerr cheerfully.

"My hat! That's Kerr!"

"Right first time!" said Kerr calmly.

"You enter! You've fastened the door!"

"Right again!"

"We'll come out and speak you!" shouted Tom Merry, tapping at the door.

"You've got to get the door open first!" chuckled Kerr.

"We'll jolly soon do that! Lead a hand, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Who's caught napping!"

"Yess, watahah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Who's caught napping?"

ping this time, Tom Merry, duck his hat!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Oh, wait! You're caught napping as much as I am!" he said. "Leave off chucking, and lend a hand with this door!"

Tom Merry and Leather grasped the door-handle. Three or four fellows caught a grasp upon them in turn, dragged their weight to the pull. They slung away together, and the pull on the door was really terrific. But the door did not budge. It yielded perhaps half an inch, as the chain was drawn taut, but then it held fast.

"Pull away!" said Kerr encouragingly. "I don't think you'll be able to break the chain. But you're welcome to try."

"The chain! Oh, my hat!"

The pull ceased. Tom Merry & Co. realized that it was no use. Tom put his mouth to the keyhole and bawled:

"New House code! Reason!"

His voice rang along the passage. Kerr bent a hurried glance. His work was done, and he did not want to be caught there by a crowd of School House fellows. He descended the stairs by the simple and rapid method of sliding down the banisters, and hurried out of the School House.

Kerr scudded across the quadrangle, and waved his hand to a fellow who was looking over the parapet of the New House.

It was the signal to Figgins. Kerr's part of the work was done, and it remained for Figgins and Fatty Wynn to do the rest. Kerr chuckled as he stroled into the New House. But his chuckle died away as, happening to glance towards the school gates, he caught sight of the graceful figure of a girl entering there.

"Oh, my wife, hat!" ejaculated Kerr.

"Conia Ethel!"

And he whistled. Ethel Cleveland, the cousin of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, walked across the quadrangle towards the School House.

CHAPTER 8

Smoky!

TOM MERRY & CO. had all risen from the tea-table now.

The Fourth Formers were still grinning, and the Terrible Three were looking quite cross.

"Fairly caught!" grinned Blake. "Never mind; we can finish tea with the door shut. Somebody will come along and open it, I dare say!"

"Yess, watahah! As soon as the fellows discover that Tom Merry has been caught napping!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, choose it!" said Tom Merry. "You make me tired! I believe those bounders have got some other trick up their sleeves. We must get this door unfastened."

He hammered on the study door with his fist. Monty Lowther, who was sitting in the room adjoining the next study, where Gore and Skimpole were having their tea.

George Gore came out into the passage. He stared at the chain stretched across, and chuckled.

"Hallo!" he called out. "What's the row?"

"Is that you, Gore? Get the door open, will you?"

"Can't!"

"Why can't you?" roared Tom Merry, whose temper was growing unexaggerated.

"There's a giddy chain and a padlock!" yelled Gore. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me!" said Skimpole, blinking at the chain through his big spectacles. "It certainly seems impossible to unfasten that chain, Tom Merry!"

"Get a crowbar or something, and break it, Skimpole!"

"That's a jolly good idea. I'm having my tea. Skimpole can go and hunt for a crowbar, if he likes. You fellows should keep your eyes open."

"Look here, Gore—"

Gore went back to his study and shut the door, laughing. It did not matter to him how long the Co. remained imprisoned in Tom Merry's room.

"Skimpole!" called out Tom Merry.

"Skimpole!"

"Yes, my dear Merry!" said Skimpole.

"Get something and break the chain, Skimpole, old man."

"Certainly," said Skimpole, blinking at it. "I will consider how it may be done, my dear Merry." Skimpole was a scientific youth, much given to deep thought. "Perhaps I could break one of the links of the chain with a pair of pincers. Do you think so, Merry?"

"Yes, yes! Try!"

"I am sorry, however, but I have no pincers," said Skimpole. "It would be best, perhaps, to find a key that would fit the padlock."

"What! I really do not know where I could find such an article. The difficulty appears to me to be insuperable, my dear Merry."

"You—you are!" said Tom Merry unphilosophically, through the keyhole.

"Go and call some of the fellows who've got more sense than you, then."

"I should be extremely pleased to oblige you, my dear Merry, but I am convinced that there is no one in the School House who answers such a description," said Skimpole, with a shake of the head.

"Ass! Fatshead! Go and call Gips!"

"Certainly, my dear Merry."

And the amiable Skimpole trotted along the passage towards the end

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study, where Bernard Glyn, the genius of the Shell, was at work upon one of his valuable inventions. Tom Merry turned from the door, breathing hard.

"May as well finish tea," he remarked. "No hurry to get out, after all. Glyn will soon get the door undone. My hat! How smoky it is!"

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"Yaaa, wathah! I was just notice' it, deah boy. It is veevly smoky indeed in this study. I am awfully tired in some'ing s'wing with the chimney."

The fire had certainly become extremely smoky all of a sudden. Smoke, instead of going up the chimney, as usual, poured out into the room. Tom Merry rubbed his smarting eyes.

"That chimney wants sweeping!"

grunted Horrie.

"It was all right five minutes ago."

"Well, it isn't all right now."

Tom Merry stared at the grate in wonder and alarm. Smoke was pouring out more densely now, and filling the room. Mervy Lowther ran to the window and opened it wide. But it made little difference. The room was so thick with smoke now that all the imprisoned juniors were coughing and sneezing.

"What on earth's the matter?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "It's the first time the blessed chimney's gone like that."

"There and 'wands!" gasped Reilly. "Sure, ye might have the chimney swept before ye have a tenpenny in yer study!"

"Oh, hai Jove! I'm veevly satisfic'ed, deah boys!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors made a rush for the window and crowded there. They were coughing, sneezing, and their eyes and noses were smarting. Tom Merry gave a sudden shout of wrath.

"It's Piggins! That's why that boonder Kerr has factored us up in the study. The rotters have got at the chimney!"

"Oh, crumb!"

"Oh, crikey!" growled Blake. "We served them a trick like that once. Ow! One good turn deserves another. You-ow! My eyes!"

"My nose, ow!"

"Oh, crumb! This is veevly awful! I am smothered with black! Our clothes will be ruined!"

Tom Merry rushed desperately to the door and hammered upon it. It was only too clear now why the door had been chained up. The atmosphere of the study was becoming unbearable. Smoke was pouring out of the open window, and curling out under the study door.

"Glyn!" roared Tom Merry.

"Skimpole! Skimpole!"

"My dear Merry—"

"Back up with the door!" shouted Tom Merry. "We're being smoked out!"

"Dear me!" said Skimpole sympathetically. "I am very sorry indeed, my dear Merry."

"Have you told Glyn, father?"

"Yes, but he declines to open his study door. It is locked. He said he did not want to be interrupted. He also added very impolite expressions which I will not repeat."

"Oh, you—you are! Go and call somebody else, quick!"

hissed Tom Merry.

"When shall I call, my dear Merry?"

"Call Ray, Karruth, Page—anybody—but be quick."

"I was going to say—"

"Buzz off!" roared Tom Merry.



HOPEFUL!

Teacher: "Why are you so late this morning?"

Misty: "Pleasa, I dreamed I was at a football match, and they played across time!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Walter Thomas, S. Mayfield Villa, Postpiper, Gillingham.

Skimpole departed again. Inside the study the atmosphere was thick—almost thick enough to cut with a knife. There was an incessant chorus of coughing, sneezing, grunting, and snorting.

"Oh, crikey!" growled Blake. "Catch us coming to this study again!"

"Oh, great Scott! This is simply frightful, you know."

"He-r-r-r!"

"It's not getting any thicker," said Tom Merry hopefully.

"No; they don't want to suffocate us," growled Marston. "It's only to smother up our feed, and make us as black as soaps. Oh, my aunt!"

"When is that silly ass Skimpole coming back?" said Tom Merry. "Fancy being shut up like this! The New House chaps will grin us to death or it. Ow!"

Tap!

"There he is!" exclaimed Digby, as the knock came at the door of the study.

Tom Merry plunged through the smoke towards the door.

"You silly father!" he shouted through the keyhole. "So it's you, is it? You silly, treacherous apology for a boarding-school!"

"Oh dear!" exclaimed an astounded voice. "Tom Merry?"

"Tom Merry almost fell on the floor.

"For the reason that replied was not the voice of Skimpole. It was the soft, clear voice of Cousin Ethel—in tones of great astonishment, which was quite natural, considering the manner in which Tom Merry had addressed her."

CHAPTER 8.

Not Nice!

"**C**OUSIN ETHEL!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hai Jove!"

"Oh, Tommy, you are! Grouch!"

"Whatly, Tom Merry, I regard it as watter had fern to call my cousin a freshwater codfish!"

"Father!" gasped Tom Merry.

"You think I knew whom it was? Ethel! Is that you, Ethel?"

"Yes," came the soft voice outside the door.

"Oh, I didn't know!"

"I looked into Study No. 8, and Arthur was here, so I came on here."

"I am here, deah gal!"

"I—I—I am sorry! I—I—I was saying things," stammered Tom Merry. "I thought it was Skimpole who was outside the door, Miss Cleveland. You—you see, we've been chained in here by a treacherous ass, and Skimpole hasn't come enough to let us out."

"Hai Jove! I can hear her laughin'," murmured Arthur Augustus. "I widda what she is laughin' at!"

"Us!" growled Mervy Lowther.

"But there is nether 'fussy in this extremely painful position—"

"I'm so sorry, Ethel," Tom Merry was saying through the keyhole. "So sorry! Of course you understand, I didn't know you were there."

"Oh, of course," said Ethel cheerily.

"Perhaps I can remove the chain."

"Oh, good! We're being smoked out in here. Some awful beast has got on the roof and stuffed something into the chimney!"

"Get the chain loose, if you can, Miss Ethel," growled Blake. "We're being suffocated."

"Yaaa, wathah!"

"I will try," said the girl.

Ethel bent over the chain and examined the padlock. It was certainly strong enough to defy all her efforts.

There were a good many juniors collecting in the passage now, and they were all grinning. Spirals of smoke crested out from under the study door, and through the keyhole, and explained the state the study was in.

"Perhaps I can help you, Miss Cleveland," said a quiet voice.

Ethel turned her head, and smiled at Kerr of the Fourth.

Probably a suspicion dawned on her that Kerr knew more about that chain and padlock than any of the School House fellows there. Some of the latter were looking grimly at Kerr; but they could not collar the New House junior in the presence of Ethel Cleveland. Kerr was quite secure, and he knew it.

"Can you get the chain undonned?" asked Ethel demurely. "It looks very strong, and the padlock is locked."

"Perhaps I could find a key to fit it," said Kerr.

"Really?"

"I think so!"

Kerr groped in his pocket and found a key, which turned out to fit the padlock coaxily. He unlocked it, and the chain clinked loose.

Cousin Ethel opened the door of Tom Merry's study.

Then she started back with a cry.

A heavy volume of smoke rolled out, and the girl coughed.

"Oh dear!"

"Don't go in!" exclaimed Kerr anxiously. "Keep back, Miss Cleveland. Something seems to have gone wrong with the chimney!"

"Kerr, you wathah—"

"Kerr, you hear—"

"Looks rather smoky in there," said Kerr calmly. "Does your chimney want sweeping?"

"Hai Jove!"

"You—you—"

"I unaid the chain for Miss Cleveland, and Kerr. 'Lucky I happened to have a key that fitted the padlock, wasn't it?"

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry, realising that he could not slaughter Kerr with Cousin Ethel was there. "You lucky—awfully lucky! M-much obliged!"

The Girl Lament.—No. 1,488.

"Oh, don't mess!" said Kerr. The unhappy tea-party came streaming out of the study, followed by volumes of smoke.

Cousin Ethel and Kerr and the juniors in the passage had retreated some distance to elude the smoke. The tea-party, as they streamed out of the study, were greeted with chuckles galore. They certainly looked very queer. Their faces were almost black, their eyes red with smarting, and black soot covered them from head to foot.

"Oh dear!" murmured Cousin Ethel.

"Poor Arthur—"
"But Jove, I feel wathah wotter, doah gal!" confessed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I feel howdahdy dirty. Do I look dirty?"

"Yes do."
"Howdah! But Jove, I will give those loaves a feashful thowashin' all round."

"How did it happen?" asked Kerr.

"Why, you feashful wotter!"

"Arthur!" said Ethel gently. "Kerr opened the study door for you."

"Yess, the—the—he did, did he?" gasped D'Arcy.

"Yes; he happened to have a key in his pocket that fitted the padlock."

"He—he happened to—" gasped D'Arcy. "Kerr, if it were not for the presence of Cousin Ethel, I would—"

"You would wash yourself, I suppose?" suggested Kerr. "Well, the best thing you can do is to lose off out of the presence of Cousin Ethel, and get that wash. You need it."

"Gwat hoost! You—yes—"

"Come on!" exclaimed Blake, grasping his aristocratic chain by the arm.

"This way to the door. Excuse us, Cousin Ethel, we're rather too dirty to be seen, owing to the way Tom Merry got his chimney in order when he was visitors."

"But it was those wotter—"

"Come on!"

And D'Arcy was dragged away, and the rest of the smoke-blinded tea-party followed, and Cousin Ethel walked out into the quadrangle with Kerr. Outside the New House, Figgins and Patsy Wynn were awaiting, wondering what had become of Kerr. As they caught sight of Kerr and Cousin Ethel, Figgins suddenly came sprinting across the quadrangle.

"He dragged off his cap with a grin of pleasure, and Cousin Ethel smiled very sweetly as she shook hands with him.

"I didn't know you were coming, Miss Cleveland!" Figgins exclaimed.

"I heard D'Arcy expected to see you this week, but if I'd known—ahem!"

"There's been some sort of accident in Tom Merry's study," said Kerr solemnly.

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

"Yes; something wrong with the chimney."

"The—the chimney?"

"Yes; it smacked a very great deal. And somebody had opened the door up outside, and they couldn't get out."

"You—you don't say so?" murmured Figgins. "What a pity! It should happen just when Miss Cleveland was coming! The fellows couldn't have known."

"Luckily, I had a key that fitted the padlock, and I let 'em out," said Kerr, with refreshing coolness. "They looked a lovely set of guys, didn't they, Miss Ethel?"

"They looked very weskay," said Ethel.

"I jolly lucky you happened to have a key!" gasped Figgins. "W-w-wasn't it, Miss Cleveland?"

"Very lucky indeed!" said Ethel seriously.

And Figgins hastily changed the subject. And when Arthur Augustus—

—closed, and in his right mind again, so to speak—came out of the School House to look for Ethel, he was intensely surprised to find her chatting with the chaperon Figgins, and apparently quite enjoying it.

"What! Two of you fellows can come, if you like, as there will be room in the trap for two as well as Ethel and me," said D'Arcy.

"Shall I bring Tower?" asked Horrie.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyes upon his chain with a withering look.

"Tower! Certainly not! That wotter building has no respect whatsoever for a fellow's trousers! Besides, there will be no room in the trap. Patsy Wynn, Blake and Dig had bettah come, and you can go and talk to Towash."

"Oh, rats!" said Horrie.

And Arthur Augustus marched off in the telephone. Expense was no object to the noble Arthur Augustus. Meanwhile, Figgins, having escaped from the School House, had hurried over to his own side of the quadrangle, with his eyes gleaming with excitement. Kerr and Patsy Wynn met him outside the House. Patsy Wynn was looking a little lugubrious.

"Rather a rotten failure, that wotter of yours, Figg!" he remarked, with a doleful shake of the head.

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Figgins warmly. "It worked like a charm."

"I mean that there isn't much chance of being asked over to the feed. They're bound to have a feed now Cousin Ethel's come—"

"Cousin Ethel's having tea with Mrs. Holmes," growled Figgins; "and if you talk to me about feeds again, I'll buff you! Blessed if you ever think of talk about anything but feeds, as if a feed was the most important thing in the world."

Patsy Wynn raised his eyebrows.

"Well, isn't it?" he demanded.

"Er—" gasped Figgins. "Sharrup! Look here, I've just dropped into Study No. 6 to tell them to make it pax, in the circumstances—"

"Did you go out on your neck?" inquired Kerr.

"Well, jolly noastly," confessed Figgins. "They don't want to make it pax till they've got their own back. Just as I got to the study, Gussy was saying that he was going to get a peep-toop to drive Miss Cleveland over to Glyn's house. She's staying with Bernard Glyn's people, you know. The trap's coming to the gate about six, and Gussy is going to drive Ethel home."

"Well, he won't ask us to go with him," grinned Kerr. "Just like Gussy to live a trap instead of a taxi!"

"We needn't wait to be asked," said Figgins calmly. "My idea is that we've the proper persons to drive Cousin Ethel home."

"Oh!"

"We can't leave the job to Gussy. He would say likely got the trap turned over. You know what an ass he is. It will be quite dark before six, and it's as easy as wishing to fit in ambush in the lane, if we got out before the gates are closed. We can take three of four fellows with us."

Kerr opened his eyes.

"But with Miss Cleveland there, Figg, we can't rush the boundaries—"

"We shall have to be diplomatic, of course," agreed Figgins. "I'm only particular about one thing, and that is, to shift the School House boundary out of the trap, and drive Miss Cleveland home to Glyn House."

"Don't they resist?"

"We'll assault 'em!"

"But we can't assault 'em without a row, and Miss Cleveland—"

"We won't have a row if we can help it. Of course, Miss Cleveland mustn't

CHAPTER 7.

Caught in the Trap I.

"I SHALL drive Ethel!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's dress looked at him.

They were in Study No. 6, Cousin Ethel had gone into the Head's house to see Mrs. Holmes. The moment she had disappeared, Figgins & Co. had disappeared, too, in the direction of their own House. They did not want to remain at close quarters with Tom Merry & Co. just then.

"Of your cooker again?" asked Jack Blake.

"Certainly not, dear boy! I am going to drive Cousin Ethel."

"You offer indeed! What are you habbling about?" demanded Blake.

"How are you going to drive Cousin Ethel?"

"In a trap. You may be aware," said D'Arcy, "that Ethel is staying at Glyn House with Bernard Glyn's sister Edith. She is going back those afiah noon, Mrs. Holmes. I am going to drive her in a trap."

"Oh, I see!" said Horrie. "Why not hire a car from the village? It might be safer."

"Do you mean to imply that I cannot drive, Horrie? I regard you as an ass. I prefer horses to take any day. Ethel leaves here at six o'clock, and they can send a trap from Wylcombe by six, and have it ready at the gate."

"But Jove! How dare you put your extremely disagreeable face into this study, Figgins!"

Figgins grinned into the study.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!" said Blake warmly. "You dervy ass!"

"Pax, while Cousin Ethel is at St. Jim's, you know," said Figgins, holding up his hand in sign of peace.

"Ethel's in the Head's house now, and we're going to bump you for your cheek, you New House underdog!" roared Horrie. "I haven't got the smoke out of my eyes yet, you ass!"

"I fancy you cheep must have looked more like swamps," chuckled Figgins.

"Collar him!" shouted Blake.

Figgins slammed the door and fed.

Blake, Horrie, and Digby dashed out into the passage, but the languid sisk of the New House was gone. They returned into the study, breathing hard.

"The wotter wotter!" said Arthur Augustus. "I dare say he would like to make it pax while Cousin Ethel is here. He seems to regard Ethel more as his cousin than as my cousin, but Jove! I have a jolly good mind to go out to the New House and give him a feashful thowashin'."

"Well, what about that trap?" asked Blake. "We can easily get leave out of gates to take Cousin Ethel back to Glyn House. I suppose I'd better drive."

"Wats!"

"Now, look here, Gussy; be reasonable," said Blake.

"Wats! Two of you fellows can come, if you like, as there will be room in the trap for two as well as Ethel and me," said D'Arcy.

"Shall I bring Tower?" asked Horrie.

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"Don't they resist?"

"We'll assault 'em!"

"But we can't assault 'em without a row, and Miss Cleveland—"

"We won't have a row if we can help it. Of course, Miss Cleveland mustn't

be allowed to see that there's anything on." "But how are you going to avoid it? You see?" Figgins scowled.

"What a fellow you are for arguing. Korr! I must say you might try to help, instead of starting difficulties all the time."

"Oh, all right; but I don't see—" "Come on, then. Call Roddy" and Owen and Lawrence—they'll help."

Roddy, Owen, and Lawrence willingly agreed to lend their aid, and six juniors started for the gates in the dark, and slipped out before Taggie, the porter, looked up.

The winter evening had fallen upon the old quadrangle of St. Jim's when the trap arrived at the gates, and the men in charge rang the bell, and Taggie opened the gates to him.

"Wait 'ere," said Taggie. "And the man waited with the trap. He did not observe six juniors in the shadows of the trees on the other side of the road, but they were there. Figgins and Co. were ready. At six o'clock Arthur Augustus D'Arcy presented himself at the door of the Head's house, and found Miss Cleveland ready for him. Blain and Egger were with him. The Terrible Three met them in the quadrangle."

"Going for a spin on the bikes," Tom Morry explained. "Kidnaw has given us passes out. We're going to escort you to Glyn House, in case of accidents."

"I trust you do not presume that accidents could happen to the trap when I am driving," Tom Morry said. "Certainly not!" said Monty Lowther; "only—only the horse might look round and see your face, you know, and then—"

"Weally, Lowther—" "Let's get the bikes out," said Tom Morry. "We'll be after you like a shot, Gungy."

"Yes, dash boy!" Miss Cleveland and the Fourth Formers walked down to the gates together. The trap was waiting outside, with a really handsome horse between the shafts. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a really good judge of horses, and he soon discovered. He had hired the trap several times before just for the joy of driving it.

"Here we are!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Thank you, William! Quite a weally nice go-gone, isn't it, Ethel?"

"Yes, indeed!" said Ethel. "I'll let you drive if you like, dash gah," said Arthur Augustus generously. "Fray let me hand you in!"

Cousin Ethel was handed into the driver's-seat, and she settled and gathered up the reins. Arthur Augustus had his feet on the step to follow her, when there was a sudden rattle of voices, a rush of footsteps in the dark lane. Arthur Augustus felt himself seized round the body and whisked away from the trap. At the same moment Blain and Digby were collared, each by two pairs of hands, and forced down the road at top speed before they could even yell.

Cousin Ethel looked round—a junior jumped up beside her, and another jumped into the back of the trap. A pair of hands gently relieved her of the reins, and the horse started as the reins were shaken. The trap bowled away down the road, and from the distance behind a voice died away faintly:

"Bai Jove! You wotnah! I—I—"

Cousin Ethel looked at the junior



"Bap!" exclaimed the young man from the city. "Is this bull safe?" "Well," drawled the terror, "he be a lot safer than ye are!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. W. Hunter, 28a, Darnley's Hill, Hampstead, London, N.W.2.

lodge her in amazement. It was Figgins.

"Dear me!" Ethel exclaimed. The darkness concealed Figgins' blunder.

"I—I—I— Excuse me, you know!" he stammered. "I—I— Some of the chaps have a very important appointment with Gungy, so I've taken his place. I hope you don't mind!"

"But—but—" "It's rather a dark road to Glyn House, you know," murmured Figgins. "We left our wares bound to take you home, in case of—of accidents. There was a man rodded in the lane once, you know."

"But Arthur—" "Ripping horse this is, isn't it?" said Figgins.

"I think we'd better go back for my cousin," said Cousin Ethel very gravely.

"Rather difficult to turn in this narrow lane, don't you think?" suggested Korr, from behind. "We can pick him up after taking you home, Miss Cleveland."

"But Arthur will be angry," said Ethel doubtfully.

Figgins shook his head. "Oh, no; he's the best-tempered chap in the world, your cousin!" he said reassuringly. "Besides, Fatty Wren and Roddy want him."

"Do they really?" "Yes, they do really. It's very important," said Figgins, "and we're halfway to Glyn House now. Better keep on, don't you think?"

There was a sudden ringing of bicycle bells behind the trap, and a well-known voice shouted:

"Stop, you bounders! Stop, you brigands! We'll daughter you!"

CHAPTER 5.

Many Questions!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY struggled in the grasp of the juniors who had collared him. A fat hand over his mouth checked the remarks he wanted to make—very emphatic remarks. His silk hat

rolled in the road as he struggled. The trap was dashing away, and its lights disappeared down the lane.

"Grough! You wotnah! Oh—" "Let him go now, Fatty!" said Roddy's voice cheerfully. "Figg's gone!"

Arthur Augustus was released as suddenly that he sat down in the road with a bang.

He sat there aye-gaped for breath. "Oo—oo! Oh, you wotnah! You wotnah!"

"This is where we smile!" chuckled Redfern. "What's Cook House at St. Jim's—oh!"

"New House!" chattered Owen and Lawrence and Fatty Wren together.

"Good-bye, Bluffell!" roared Redfern. And the New House juniors vanished into the gateway just as three bicycle lamps came gleaming into sight.

Blain and Digby picked themselves up out of a bed of fern in the dry ditch and vanished into the road.

"Done growled Blain. "Dashed!" granted Digby.

Arthur Augustus jumped up. "Atah them, dash boys! They've cawwed of Cousin Ethel!"

"An!" growled Blain. "They've half a mile away by this time, and if you can run as fast as a horse, I can't!"

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Tom Morry, as the Terrible Three wheeled their machines out. "Where's the trap? Where's Cousin Ethel?"

"Figg's has collared the trap!" growled Blain.

"Oh, my hat!" "The wotnah wotnah has carried off my cousin!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Fray lend me your bike, Tom Morry, and I'll run him down as soon as I've found my hat—"

"Leave it to us," said Tom Morry. "We'll run him down. Put it on, you chaps!"

"Right-ho!" said Manners and Lowther.

And the three Shell fellows peddled down the road at top speed.

"Fray Figgins turring kidnapper in his old age!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Once aboard the ligger, and the girl is safe! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shere it on!" exclaimed Tom Morry. "I can see the lights."

The Terrible Three accented on as if they were racing on the cycle track. It was, perhaps, fortunate that there was no traffic in the lane. The lights of the trap gleamed ahead, and they heard the patter of the hoof-beats. Tom Morry shouted to the New House juniors as they whizzed behind the trap.

Figgins looked back. Three cyclists loomed up in the gloom.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Figgins. "Those Shell bounders!" muttered Korr. "Never mind, I'm ready for 'em. I spotted them, and I guessed there would be some bikes along, and I got ready."

"Stop, you kidnappers!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Stop, you bounders!" "Is Arthur following us?" asked Ethel.

"No; only some Shell bounders," said Figgins. "There—there appears to be a— a misunderstanding. They—they can't know that we arranged to see you home."

"Oh," said Ethel, "you arranged it?"

"Yes, certainly!" The trap rumbled on, the front wheels of the bikes almost touching it now. The Terrible Three shook their hats at Korr, but they could do nothing more.

THE GUN LINGERER.—No. 1, 499.

It was not quite possible to jump from a bike into a trap.

Kerr had taken a little packet from his pocket, and was opening it. The packet contained tasks. As Kerr remarked, he was quite ready for the cyclists. Kerr was always ready for everything—he was a very thoughtful fellow.

He shook out a little shower of tasks behind the trap. A minute later there was a sharp exclamation from Manzoni.

"Keep on, you chaps! I've got a puncheon."

And Manzoni dropped out of the race.

"Oh, you rotter!" gasped Tom Merry, shaking his disengaged feet at Kerr. "You—you speeder! You—you—"

Pop!

It was Leather's tyre this time.

Mossy Leather dropped behind and jumped off his machine.

Tom Merry kept on, though he was expecting a tyre to go at every moment.

"Better get back," Kerr suggested gently.

"You New House bounder!"

"You School House chump!"

"I'll—I'll squash you—"

Pop!

Tom Merry's machine dragged under him. He shook a frantic fist at Kerr and stopped behind in the race.

The trap rumbled on, and the three cyclists disappeared from sight.

Cousin Ethel looked back.

"Have they gone home?" she asked in surprise.

"Yes, I think so."

"Goodness gracious! How curious!"

"Yes, queer, isn't it?" agreed Kerr.

"You never know what those School House chaps will do next. Mixed mischief, you know!"

Cousin Ethel looked puzzled.

She had not seen Kerr manipulating the packet of tasks, and it seemed extraordinary to her that the three shall fellows should have had punctures all at the same time, and at such a critical moment.

"By the way, you'd like to drive, wouldn't you?" said Figgins, handing the reins to Cousin Ethel. "First to the left now. It's all right about Gussy. I'll explain to him what we got back."

"I certainly thought Arthur intended to come with me," said Ethel.

"He was really prevented at the last moment," explained Figgins. "But it's all right; we'll get you home safe enough."

And they did.

The trap drove up to Glyn House, and Ethel was handed over to Miss Edith Glyn; and then good-byes were said, and Figgins and Kerr drove away in the trap.

Figgins chuckled as he drove out into the lane.

"Did them that time?" he murmured. Kerr grinned.

"There'll be a row when we get back," he remarked. "They'll be waiting for the trap."

"They can wait!" said Figgins cheerfully. "We'll take it back to the stables and walk home. We can get in through the side entrance, and they can go on waiting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy won't want the trap any more to-night, you know; and he can't really be left obliged to us for taking it home for him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the deep scheme was carried out successfully.

The Gem Librarian.—No. 1,428.

CHAPTER II.

A Long Walk!

"O H, the bounders!"

"The wretches!"

"The beasts!"

"They're done us!"

"We'll smash them when they get back, We'll slaughter them!"

These exclamations, and many more of the same sort, were uttered by the disgraced School House juniors, as they waited for the return of Figgins and Kerr in the trap.

Taggles had looked up the gates; and Tom Merry & Co. were waiting just inside. Wilkins, the man who had brought the trap, was waiting in Taggles' lodge to take the trap back to Rylands when it was done with. The Terrible Threes had got up their punctured bicycles, and joined the Fourth-Formers again at the gates. They were anxious for the speedy Figgins to return. They wanted to see him very badly.

But the trap did not appear.

"They're a jolly long time gone to Glyn House!" Blake exclaimed. "They can't have stayed to supper, surely!"

"Oh, the wretches! They can't be back soon!"

"They couldn't miss calling-over," said Minty Leather.

"We shall miss it if we stay out here much longer!" growled Manzoni.

"We'll go in to call-over and come back," said Tom Merry. "I'll give Taggles a hot net to open the gates in a hurry if they arrive while we're gone."

"Right-oh!"

Taggles took the hint—and a shelling, and the School House fellows hurried away to attend calling-over.

After that they returned to the gates.

"Have they come in, Taggles?" Tom Merry asked.

"No, Master Merry," replied the porter.

"My hat! Where can they be?"

"They're a jolly long time!" growled Blake. "They must have missed calling-over in the New House. Ratty will be down on them!"

"Where's our right?"

"What about our peep?" said Digby, after another long pause.

"Blow the peep!"

"Well, we've got to do it, you know, or there'll be trouble with Lathson in the morning!"

"Blow Lathson!"

And the ladies waited.

From the gates they could see a light gleaming in Figgins' study in the New House. They knew his window very well.

"Fifty Wym's there, I suppose," said Tom Merry. "But where on earth was Figgins and Kerr be? Surely they can't be staying at Glyn House all this time!"

"Well, I'm going to do my peep!" said Digby.

"Go and eat cake!"

Digby walked away to the School House. Tom Merry & Co. were growing decidedlyasperated by this time.

The delay on the part of Figgins and Kerr was extraordinary.

If they had missed calling-over, they still had their usual evening preparations to do, unless they wanted trouble in the Form-room the next morning.

What did it mean?

"It's simply amazing!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy exclaimed. "I wonder if there has been an accident? That an Figgys is an enough for anything!"

"I think I'll set off to the New House and see if I can find out anything," said Blake. "They may have got leave to stay out till bed-time."

"Not likely?"

"Well, they're staying out, anyway. I'll see."

Blake ran off towards the New House. Jameson of the Third was just going into the House, and Blake stopped him.

"Seen anything of Figgins and Kerr?" he asked.

"Not since calling-over," said Jameson. "In their study, I suppose."

Blake jumped.

"Calling-over?" he shouted.

Jameson nodded.

"Do you mean to say that Figgins and Kerr were at calling-over in the New House?" Blake shouted.

"Course they were!" said Jameson.

"Did you see them?"

"Yes."

"But they're out of doors!" howled Blake.

"Are they?" said Jameson. "Then they must have gone out since calling-over. I saw them there. Ratty was taking the names."

"Oh, my only aunt!"

Blake dashed back to the gates.

"It's all up, you chaps!" he gasped. "Figgins and Kerr are in their House. They were at calling-over!"

"What?"

"Jargon!"

"But they haven't come in!"

"They've done something with the trap, and sneaked in somehow without our seeing them!" growled Blake.

"We've been dashed again!"

"Bad Jerry!"

"The awful apaches!" gasped Tom Merry. "And we've been waiting here a couple of hours. But—am you sure?"

"Jameson says he saw them at calling-over!" growled Blake.

"Let's make sure, anyway!"

The whole party started for the New House. Blake tossed a pebble up to the window of Figgins' study. The window was opened at once, and three smiling faces looked down at the infuriated School House fellows—the good-humoured countenances of Figgins, Kerr, and Wym.

"Hallo!" said Figgins affably. "Come to my good-night? Now, that's what I call really polite!"

"Quite the polite thing!" agreed Kerr.

"Just like Gussy!"

"You utter wretches!"

"Where did you get in, you rotters?" roared Tom Merry.

Figgins considered.

"Lathson set, about an hour and a half ago, I think," he replied. "We were in some time before calling-over."

"You—you beasts!"

"We didn't see you come in!" howled Leather.

"Perhaps you weren't watching the tradesmen's gate?" Figgins suggested.

"In fact, you couldn't have been, as you would have seen us."

"Oh, you—you—"

"What have you done with my trap, you lathful wretches!"

"Taken it back to the stables, of course!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"After the generous way you lent it to us, we felt we were bound to do that much. Don't trouble to thank us, Gussy; it was quite a pleasure!"

"Quite a pleasure!" echoed Kerr and Patty Wym.

Arthur Augustus brandished an infuriated fist at the smiling faces looking down from the window.

"You lathful wretches! If you will come down here, I will give you a lathful thrashing!" all wound.



There was a sudden rush of footsteps in the dark lane, and Arthur Augustus fell himself seized and whirled away from the trap. At the same moment Blinn and Glyn were captured and tossed down the road. Figgins & Co. were convinced that they were the best ones to escort Cousin Ethel to Glyn House in D'Arcy's famous pony-trap!

Figgins looked best.

"After we've taken the trouble to take the trap home for you, Glyn?" he said reproachfully.

"Is that what you call gratitude?" asked Kerr.

"Shocking!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "You awful apocafish! The man is still waitin' to take the trap back to W-umber!" pulled the ear of St. Jim's.

"My hat! Is he? Then all I've got to say is that you ought to give him a good tip for waiting for you so long," said Figgins.

"You—you—you——" Worth failed Arthur Augustus, and he could only shake his fist frantically at Figgins & Co.

"Well, good-night!" said Figgins affably. "So kind of you to give us a look in!"

And the window was shut down.

The School House fellows looked at one another speechlessly. Then Arthur Augustus walked away to Missis Wilkins and the justice made their way to the School House to start upon their belated prep.

But their preparation was interrupted many times by ejaculations of wrath, and it is to be feared that they gave less attention to their prep than to wild and wrathful plans for taking an exemplary vengeance upon Figgins & Co. of the New House.

CHAPTER 10.

Herrie is Wrathy!

BAND, bang!

Kangaroo and Clifton Dune of the Shell thumped loudly on the door of the end study.

The door was locked.

When Bernard Glyn, the schoolboy instructor, was at work upon one of his

striking and valuable ideas he always locked the door to prevent interruption. The fact that he was supposed to share the study with Noble and Dune did not trouble him in the least. And though the two Colonial juniors were very much attached to their class, their friendship was sometimes put to very sore trials.

Glyn sometimes made the study rock for days with fearful chemical smells, and sometimes used up all the study cockchewers as vessels to hold queer-looking and weirdly-smelling compounds.

More than once Kangaroo and Dune had sworn solemnly to slaughter him if he used the study as a laboratory any more, but Glyn went on his way unheeding.

Just now they wanted to get into their study to do their preparation, and they could not get in. They could hear Glyn moving about inside, but he did not even answer to their knocking.

"Will you open this door, you frazzled-an!" Kangaroo inquired in sulphurous tones. "We've got our prep to do."

"Don't bother."

"Aren't you going to do your own prep, fathead?"

"No time."

"Listen will want to know about it in the morning, you ass!" shouted Clifton Dune.

"Never mind Jaxon. I'm nearly finished now, too."

"Then let us in!"

"Can't!"

"Why not, you chump?" roared Kangaroo.

"I'm busy!"

"Look here, Glyn, we'll slaughter you! We'll scalp you! We'll——"

Grr-r-r-r!

"My hat!" exclaimed the Constable, knocking off his hat of dirty threats as he heard that deep and terrific growl in the study. "The silly ass has got a dog there!"

"What on earth is he doing with a dog?" said Dune, puzzled.

"Thump, thump, thump!"

"Open the door, Glyn!"

"Go and eat coke!" replied Glyn. "I tell you I've nearly finished my experiment, and it's going to be a howling success. I can't be interrupted now. Go and do your silly prep in the Form-room! Go and eat coke! Don't bother!"

Grr-r-r-r!

"Is that Herrie's bulldog you've got in there?" demanded Kangaroo. "You know he isn't allowed in the House since he tried to bite the Head, you chump! You'll get a licking if a prefect finds him here!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's not Herrie's bulldog!"

"Then what dog is it?"

"None!"

"What not! You haven't got a dog," said Kangaroo. "My hat! How he's growling! Look here, Glyn, what are you doing to that dog?"

"None at all, and don't bother!"

Kangaroo stopped down and applied his eye to the keyhole. He knew very well that Bernard Glyn had no dog at the school, and so the Shell fellow's reply puzzled him. He uttered a sharp exclamation as he looked in through the keyhole.

Upon the study table, in a direct line with the keyhole, was the form of a dog—a big, ferocious-looking bulldog—and if it was not Towser, it was Towser's double.

"Why, he's telling his!" Kangaroo exclaimed, aghast. "He's got Towser

THE GUN LINGERER.—No. 1408.

there. And he's got an electric wire fastened on the poor beast!"

"My hat!" said Clifton Dane. "We'll squash him if he's taken to tormenting animals. Glyn, you lightning, what are you doing to that dog?"

"Ban off!"
Thump, thump, thump!

The two College juniors were determined to get into the study room. Bernard Glyn was an extremely scientific youth, and he was liable to forget everything else in his keenness for experiments, but it hardly seemed possible that he had taken to experimenting with a live dog. If he had, his alumni had made up their minds what they would do, and it would be very painful for Bernard Glyn.

The thumping at the door soon brought a crowd along the passage. Shell follows, and South Foreman crowded up, inquiring what was the matter. The growling of the building could be distinctly heard proceeding from the study. Levison of the Fourth looked through the keyhole and gave a yell.

"He's got Towser there!"
"Towser?" exclaimed Tom Merry.
"Yes; Herries' bulldog! And he's electrifying him!"

"Impossible!"
"Look for yourself!"
"Glyn wouldn't do such a thing!" exclaimed Tom Merry, agitated.
"Besides, Towser wouldn't let him. He'd bite!"

"May be, fastened, somehow," said Levison. "Anyway, that's what he's doing. You can see for yourself."
"Don't believe it!"
"Look!" grinned Levison.

Tom Merry looked through the keyhole. There was the building, plain enough, standing on the study table. The window was open, the teeth were gleaming, and the eyes rolling wildly. There was a battery on the table, and a wire ran from the battery to the neck of the dog.

Glyn's hand was on the battery, and Tom could see that he was working a switch, and each time he pressed it that deep and horrible growl came from the building.

Tom hammered on the door.
"Glyn, you brute! What are you doing to Towser?"

Only a chuckle replied from Bernard Glyn.

Levison scolded away about the passage to Study No. 4. Blake, Herries, Dicky, and D'Arcy were there doing their preparation, when Levison burst in on them. They stared at him. Levison, the cad of the Fourth, was not popular in Study No. 4.

"I say, Herries—"

"Well, what do you want?" growled Herries.

"Glyn's got your bulldog in his study, and—"

"Rats!"

"And he's torturing him—"

Herries half rose.

"Sit down, ass!" said Jack Blake.

"We all know what a liar Levison is, and we show Glyn wouldn't do anything of the sort. Clear out, Levison!"

Levison sneered. He had not come to Study No. 4 for Towser's sake, but with the amiable desire to cause trouble between the two studios. Blake & Co. were on very friendly terms with Glyn of the Shell, which was quite a sufficient reason for Levison to want to see them at loggerheads.

"Well, it's true!" he said. "He's got him in his study, and he's electrifying him."
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1499.

him. You can hear him growl in the passage!"

"Robbink!" said Herries, but a little weakly.

"Wait!" said Arthur Arganton.

"Clear out, Levison, or shall I throw you out on your neck?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if he was my dog, I wouldn't let him be tormented!" he said.

"If he were your dog, you'd torment him yourself!" said Blake.

"Herries runs from the table."

"There seems to be a row of some sort going on in the passage," he remarked. "I'll get along and see. If Levison's been telling lies, I'll wallop him!"

There certainly was a row in the passage. The united voices of a score of fellows could be heard. Something, at all events, was going on, whether Levison was telling the truth or not.

Blake, Dicky, and D'Arcy followed Herries from the study.

A shout greeted Herries as he joined the crowd outside Glyn's door.

"It's your dog, Herries!"

"Listen to him!"

Gr-r-r!

"Well, that sounds like Towser!" said Herries.

"But Glyn wouldn't hurt a dog. I wonder what he's growling for!"

"Look through the keyhole!" suggested Mallik of the Fourth.

Herries looked through the keyhole. A terrific change came over his face as he saw what was going on in the study. He jumped up and kicked furiously at the door.

"Glyn, you rotter! Glyn, you beast! Open this door, or I'll kick it down!" snarled Herries.

"I'll smash you! I'll pulverize you! Open this door, you cad!"

"Let us in, Glyn!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Oh, leave off!" said Bernard Glyn.

"You've got my dog there!" shrieked Herries.

"I haven't!"

"You—you liar! I've seen him!" yelled Herries furiously.

"You're giving him electric shocks, you beast! I'll smash you! If you don't open the door I'll hurt it in!"

Crash, crash, crash!

"Stop that row!" shouted Bernard Glyn. "You'll have the prefects here, you ass!"

"Let me in!"

Crash, crash, crash!

Glyn hastily unlocked the door. He did not want to have the masters and the prefects hurrying to the spot to see what the row was about. Herries burst the door open, and rushed into the study. He made one spring at Glyn, and scoted him, and began to pound him frantically.

Glyn staggered back, struggling in vain to ward off the shower of blows dealt by the infuriated Fourth Forman.

"Hold him!" he gasped. "He's mad! Herries, you ass—grough! Herries, I'll—I'll—Yah!"

"Take that—and that—and that!"

"Yavook!"

The two juniors rolled over on the study floor clumping furiously. Tom Merry ran to the table, to release the building from the electric wire. Then he gave a gasp of relief, and burst into a laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hai Jee! That is no laughing-matter, Tom Merry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Leave off, Herries! He's all right!"

"I'll all right him!" said Herries,

who was pommeling away furiously.

"I'll smash him! I'll teach him to torment dogs! I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's not a dog!"

"Wh-what?"

"It's a dummy!"

"Oh!" gasped Herries.

CHAPTER 11.

Too Much in a Hurry!

BERNARD GLYN staggered to his feet as Herries released him.

He was looking very much the worse for wear.

A crimson stream ran from his nose, and his collar was torn out, and his hair was ruffled, and he was gasping for breath.

"You ass!" he gasped. "You wild fanatic! Go—sw!"

Herries gasped.

"Sorry! Why didn't you explain? It looks just like Towser!"

"Of course it looks like Towser, ass, when I took Towser for my model, idiot!" yelled Glyn. "It's the model I made of Towser a long time ago, and you've seen it before, you frazzled ass!"

Herries nodded.

"Yes, I remember now. We called it Towser minor," he said. "I'd forgotten all about it. I thought it was destroyed."

Glyn dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"I've revived it," he explained, "with improvements. As you hadn't been a silly, frazzled rascal, you'd have known that I wouldn't hurt a dog, you silly ass!"

"Well, you see—"

"But how on earth have you made it growl?" demanded Tom Merry.

"It's a gramophone arrangement inside, worked by electricity," Glyn explained. "When the motor's set going, the dog growls, and the glass eyes move, and the jaws open."

"My hat!"

"Is that what you've been at work on all day?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, it's jolly clever!" said Herries, surveying the dog. "Looks just as if it were real. Not so good-looking as Towser, but very like."

"Better-looking than your beastly bulldog!" growled Glyn. "I've taken all the trouble to make him to speed the New House change. You fellows have let Piggins & Co. do you in the eye so much lately I thought it was time I took a hand."

"How are you going to do it?"

"Well, if I get out from lessons early to-morrow, and put him in Piggins' study, under the table, with the great going—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Tom Merry heartily. "You should have explained before Herries punched your nose!"

"Serve him right for keeping us out of the study," said Arganton. "I was going to punch his nose myself. You can consider that I've done it, Glyn, and we'll call it square."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Care!" exclaimed Levison from the passage.

Knox of the Sixth strode into the study. He gave a jump at the sight of the building on the table. He frowned, but there was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. The body of the Sixth was down on Blake & Co., and he was glad to have an opportunity of reporting them to the Housemaster for a diagram breach of rules. For ever since Towser's famous attempt to bite the

Head, Heeries had been strictly forbidden to have him in the house, or to let him off his chain. And not for a moment did Knox suspect that it was not a real building he saw before him.

"So I've caught you, you young rascal!" said Knox.

"I object to being called a rascal, Knox!"

"Who brought that dog here?" demanded the prefect.

"I did," said Bernard Glyn meekly.

"Take it away immediately, and then report yourself to Mr. Railton!"

"But, I say, Knox—"

"Take it to the kennels at once!"

"But I want to keep it here," said Glyn.

And the janitors, seeing the mistake Knox had fallen into, grinned gleefully. The durney hallway looked very life-like, for the mechanism was working. The eyes rolled, the jaws moved, and the deep growl came from the depths of the throat. Knox, in fact, was keeping a somewhat uneasy eye on the bulldog, not caring to venture too close to him.

"You know dogs are not allowed in the House!" said Knox. "If you don't immediately take that dog back to the kennels, I shall march you in to Mr. Railton!"

"Wroolly, Knox—"

"And all the janitors here will take a hundred lines each!" said Knox. "You are all in this breach of the rules!"

"But there isn't any breach of the rules!" grinned Glyn. "You say, you are talking out of the back of your neck!"

"Mustn't check a prefect?" said Mervy Leather solemnly. "That's your second breach of the rules—altogether, a pair of breaches!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox grasped Bernard Glyn by the collar.

"Come with me!" he exclaimed.

"We'll see what the Housemaster has to say about it, you young rascal!"

"Oh, all right!"

And the bully of the Sixth reached Glyn away, and Tom Merry & Co. burst into a roar of laughter. Knox was evidently in deadly earnest, and had not the slightest idea of the mistake he was making. Straight into the Housemaster's study he marched Bernard Glyn.

Mr. Railton, who was chatting with Kildare of the Sixth, turned and looked at them in surprise.

"I have to report Glyn for a gross breach of House rules, sir!" said Knox. "He has a building in the study, and he refused to take it back to the kennels when I ordered him to do so!"

Mr. Railton frowned.

"Glyn, this is very serious! You know that you should obey a prefect?"

"Certainly, sir! But I couldn't take a building back to the kennels when there isn't one in my study!"

"What! There is no dog there?"

"No, sir."

Knox stared blankly at the Liverpool lad.

"You awful young liar!" he shouted, bearding himself with rage.

"Come, Knox! That is not the language for a prefect to use!" Mr. Railton said severely. "You will kindly moderate your expressions—in my presence, at least."

"—I beg your pardon, sir! But—"

but he is lying outrageously! There is a building in his study at the present moment, and a crowd of janitor boys there. Why, you could see it there yourself if you go, sir, unless they have wreaked it away while I came here."

"Do you deny that there is a dog in your study, Glyn?"

"Yes, sir."

"You saw one there, Knox?"

"Certainly, sir. And it is there now."

"This is very extraordinary!" said Mr. Railton, in surprise. "I will go to the study at once. Excuse me for a few moments, Kildare."

And the Housemaster walked out of the study, followed by Bernard Glyn and Knox. They ascended to the Sixth passage, Knox looking maliciously triumphant, Glyn very demure and quiet. The chattering in the end study died away as the Housemaster strode in.

Mr. Railton's glance fell immediately upon the spurious imitation of Towser, which the janitors had removed from the table to the centre of the room while Glyn was gone.

"Glyn, how dare you deny that there is a dog in your study!" said the School House master.

"You say, sir!" said Knox.

"Yes; I say. What have you to say, Glyn?" asked Mr. Railton sternly.

"There isn't a dog here, sir," said Bernard Glyn respectfully.

"What?"

"Have any of you fellows seen a dog here?" asked Glyn, appealing to Tom Merry & Co.

There was a general shaking of heads.

"I haven't," said Kangaroo.

"Wathak not!"

"Oh, no; there isn't a dog here."

"Nothing of the kind, sir."

Mr. Railton stared at the janitors, and then at the life-like bulldog, hardly knowing whether to disbelieve his eyes or his ears.

"What does this mean?" he asked angrily. "Is this a conspiracy to treat your Housemaster with disrespect? You can all see that dog, I presume!"

"Oh, that isn't a dog, sir!" said Bernard Glyn cheerfully.

"What?"

"It isn't a dog, sir."

"Are you insane, boy? What do you mean? How dare you tell me that is not a dog! What is it, then?" gasped the Housemaster.

"A model, sir."

"A—what?"

"A model, sir—one of my inventions," said Glyn calmly. "If you touch it, sir, you'll see that it isn't alive. Knox seems to have fancied that it was a dog."

"GO AFTER PAIN'S"

Earthquakes—Big & Little Terrors—Flying Eagles
Schneider Planes—Rocketeers—Bengal Bursters
Humming Spiders—Hydra-Headed Comets

PAIN'S
FIREWORKS

it, but it isn't. I made that. I can't make real dogs, sir. Quite impossible."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The amazed Housemaster bent down and touched the mechanical dog. Knox's face was a study. The touch of the hand, of course, showed immediately that the imitation of Tower was not alive.

"How my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Hailton, greatly astonished. "This is indeed a very clever contrivance, Glyn. I certainly supposed that it was a real dog. You should have explained to Knox that it was a mere piece of mechanism."

"Knox was in such a hurry, sir."
"Of course, you may keep that in the study, if you like," said the Housemaster, smiling. "It is not likely to do any damage. And really, Knox, I wish you would make sure of your grounds before you make reports to me and waste my time."

"The prefect set his teeth."
"Are we to do the lines, sir?" asked Blake desperately.

"The lines! What lines?"
"Knox gave us a hundred lines each because the dog was here—I mean wasn't here—"

"Certainly, you need not do them. Come, Knox!"

The Housemaster quitted the study, and Knox, with a savage look at the juniors, followed him. And Tom Merry & Co. chuckled loud and long.

CHAPTER 12.

A Little Joke on Figgins!

WHEN the juniors came out of the Form-rooms on the following day, after morning lessons, there were many smiles among them.

Tom Merry & Co.
Bernard Glyn had left the Form-rooms on some errand before lessons were over, and had been away a quarter of an hour. When he returned, a wink to the Terrible Three told them that the deed was done. The imitation of Tower was "planted" in Figgins' study in the New House, ready to give the Co. the scare of their lives when they went to their quarters. Figgins & Co., as they came out with the Fourth, noted the smiles among their rivals, and wondered at the cause.

"What's the little joke, Tom Merry?" Figgins asked, as he passed the Terrible Three in the passage. "Thinking of waiting at the gates for traps that don't come back?"

"Oh, rats!" said the Shell fellow.
"Oh, talking over the jury time you had in your study yesterday?" grinned Kerr. "Wasn't it lucky I had a key that fitted the padlock, you know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And Figgins & Co. walked on cheerfully. They had scored over the School House very conspicuously of late, and they were feeling extremely satisfied with themselves. The winks of the School House fellows followed them as they quattered across the quad to their own House.

"There's something on among those merchants," said Figgins. "I wonder what it is. Some little scheme for getting their own back, I suppose."
"They can't keep their wits up with us," said Kerr. "We've done them in the eye, hair and square, and they ought to beg well."

"Only they won't!" grinned Figgins. "They never knew when they are loked. I'll get my doctor, and we'll have a punt about till dinner."

And Figgins ran up to his study.

The Gem Librarian.—No. 1482.

As he opened the door a deep, low growl fell upon his ears.

"My hat!" ejaculated Figgins.

He stared blankly at the figure of a building under the table. The building's eyes were turned towards the door, and they were rolling strangely. The jaws moved slightly, and at intervals the low growl came from the cavernous throat. Figgins stopped abruptly.

"Tower, the building, was reputed to have a somewhat uncertain temper, and Figgins had not forgotten that he had once attempted to bite even as against a person at the Head of St. Jim's himself. A dog who would bite the Head would bite anybody, certainly—and Tower's teeth were dangerous."
"Hallo, Tower, old man!" said Figgins affectionately.

"Towey, old boy! I say, Tower!"
"Dipnd!"

"Now, Tower, be a good chap," said Figgins, advancing a little and putting out his hand. "Good boy!"
"G-r-r-r!"

Figgins jumped back hastily. He had been going to pat the building's head, but that deep, fierce growl warned him off.

"Caring down, Figger!"
Kerr called up the stairs.

"There's a blessed dog in the study!" Figgins called back. "Horries' building."
"My hat!"

Kerr and Wynn came up, and looked in at the doorway. The dog's eyes rolled at them, so wildly that the juniors began to fear that Tower was mad. Certainly the line Tower never rolled his eyes in that dreadful manner.

"That's what those letters were grinning about," said Kerr, a light breaking on him. "They have planted that beast here on us, to keep us out of our own study."

"Old Ratty will make a row, if he sees him," said Figgins. "And the beast may start running about the House any minute. Suppose he come on Mr. Hatchell?"
"Great Scott! There would be a row."

"I suppose I can pass him and get my books," said Figgins anxiously. "Dogs are all right if you know how to treat 'em, you know. I can always get on with dogs—only Tower is rather an uncertain beast. I say, Towey, old man—"
"G-r-r-r!"

The three juniors backed involuntarily out of the study. That growl was so deep and savage and menacing that it almost chilled their blood. Certainly a dog that growled in that manner was not safe at close quarters.

"We could shut the door and leave him here," Fatty Wynn suggested.

"But we should have to clear him out afterwards. We can't have our blessed study garrisoned by a blessed building!" exclaimed Figgins. "Besides, I want to get my books."
"Make a dash for it!"

"And suppose the beast jumps on me?"

"He looks jolly dangerous," said Fatty Wynn. "See how he's rolling his

eyes. That isn't natural in a dog. He's mad, I believe."

"A mad dog isn't safe," said Figgins.

"Horries ought to be kicked for leaving the beast loose."

"G-r-r-r!"

"Hallo! Got a dog here?" asked Redfern, coming along the passage.

"Better not let our respected Housemaster see him. Ratty doesn't like dogs."

"It's Horries' beastly building, and he's taken possession of our study!" growled Figgins. "I believe he's mad—look at his eyes. They're simply horrible!"

"My word, he does look dangerous!" said Redfern, glancing into the study.

"Kick him out!"



"Have any of you fellows seen a dog here?" asked Redfern. "Oh, no! There isn't a dog here!" Mr. Hailton hardly knowing whether

"You kick him out!" suggested Figgins.

"Allow! Rather rough on poor old Tower to kick him," said Redfern thoughtfully. "Better go and tell Horries, and get him to fetch the brass away."

"And have those School House rotters crowing over us?" growled Kerr.

"They've planted him here as a joke on us, of course. We're not going to let those bouncers think we're afraid of a rotten building!"

"Look here, we're going to clear him out," said Figgins resolutely. "I'm not afraid. You've got a hat and some mumps in your study, Reddy. Get 'em, and we'll go for him!"
"Right-o!" said Redfern.

He hurried to his study, and returned with a cricket bat and three stumps. Toss armed, the four juniors advanced into the study.

"G-r-r-r!"

"You can growl as much as you like, you ill-tempered beast!" said Figgins.

"But you're going out! Now, out you go, 'Shoo!"

The bulldog continued to roll his eyes and growl. Figgins made a threatening swing in the air with the cricket bat.

"Shoo!" he roared.

But the bulldog refused to "shoo." The waving of the bat did not seem to frighten him in the least. Reddies, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn brandished the stumps and "shooed," but the bulldog did not stir.

"He'll jump at us in a minute!" said Fatty Wynn.

"I'll brain him if he does!" said Figgins crossly. "I'm fed-up with the beast! Give him a poke with your stumps, Reddy, and I'll stand ready to

"I'll finish him!" he said.

"Hold on!" said Reddies, catching his arm. "Let's plant him on the other shape. We've been taken in, you know. Stick him in the passage and leave him there. Besides, it's a shame to damage him—must have taken Glyn a lot of time to fix him like this. Stick him in the passage and leave him for the other shape!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. dragged Towser out into the passage, and planted him there, with many chuckles. They had been taken in, and they were by no means averse to "passing it on," as it were. Then Figgins took his footer, and the four juniors went downstairs—and in the excitement of a post-about in the quad they soon forgot all about the mechanical Towser.

CHAPTER 13.

The Death of Towser!

"GOODNESS GRACIOUS!"

Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House, uttered that exclamation in hurried tones.

The Housemaster had been in the Third Form dormitory upstairs. There had been a nag there, the previous night, and some damage had been done; and Mr. Horace Ratcliff had been examining it carefully, with the intention of mending down very heavily upon the delinquents concerned. His way down to the stairs lay along the Fourth Form passage. He was half-way to the head of the stairs when he sighted a ferocious-looking bulldog standing in the middle of the passage and staring directly towards him.

The attitude of the bulldog was menacing—the jaws were working, the eyes were rolling, and from its deep throat came a threatening growl.

"Gre-e-e-e!"

Mr. Ratcliff stopped dead.

"Hairy" was not a hero.

He was a good deal of a tyrant in his House, and more or less of a terror to the junior boys; but he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. His face went quite pale at the sight of the bulldog, and a cold shiver ran down his spine.

"Goodness gracious!" he ejaculated.

"That is Horrie's bulldog—and he has let it loose again! It is dreadful! The wretched brute ought to be sent away from the school! It is outrageous! One of the boys must have introduced it into the House! What is to be done!"

The Housemaster stood still, eyeing the bulldog uneasily.

To get to the stairs, he had to pass the bulldog, within a few feet of him on either side, and Towser's looks showed what he might expect if he came within reach.

But he could not remain where he was indefinitely. He was wanted in the dining-room in a short time to preside at dinner. He thought of calling for help, but he refused. Mr. Ratcliff was not brave, but he was sensitive on the subject.

"What ever am I to do?" he muttered. "Horrie shall be severely punished for this. That dreadful dog ought to be killed! Shoo!"

But Mr. Ratcliff, "shoo" had no more effect than Figgins' "shoo" a short time before in the study. The bulldog took no notice, but continued to roll his eyes and growl deeply and menacingly.

Mr. Ratcliff waved his hand in the hope of intimidating the dog; but Towser was not in the slightest degree intimidated.

The Housemaster felt desperate. At any moment someone might come upstairs and find him in this ridiculous position, pinned up in the passage, and not daring to pass the dog.

He knew the laughter that would follow, though not in his presence, and that the incident would become a standing joke in the New House.

"It is outrageous—infernal!" he muttered. "I—I think I will venture to pass him!"

He advanced a few paces.

GR-E-E-E!

Mr. Ratcliff backed away again, with great haste.

That deep and threatening growl went to the very marrow of his bones, and he could almost feel the sharp teeth of the bulldog closing upon a link.

He stood regarding the menacing dog with furrowed brows, wondering what on earth he was to do. There was a sound of voices below, and he grew desperate. Juniors would be coming up, and he would be seen—held at bay by a mere dog!

He set his teeth and strode into one of the studies, and seized a poker. Then he came out into the passage again, with the air of a man who had resolved to do or die.

He would pass Towser, and at the first motion to attack him he would bring down the poker on the brute's head and brain him.

With his heart in his mouth the Housemaster advanced cautiously. If the bulldog had made a motion Mr. Ratcliff would certainly have darted back more quickly than he advanced. But the animal seemed unconscious of his peril. His eyes were still rolling wildly, but not specially at Mr. Ratcliff.

Closer and closer the Housemaster crept. He kept close to the wall as he advanced, the dog's head being turned a little away. It was strange that Towser did not turn his head towards him. Was he blind, or dead?

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes glanced.

Only a few more paces, and he would be near enough to bring the heavy poker down with a terrific crash upon the bulldog's head.

Then, leaving the brute dead or stunned in the passage, he would be able to make his escape.

At that moment Figgins & Co., coming upstairs after their post-about in the quad, were about to turn the corner of the passage when they spotted Mr. Ratcliff and the bulldog. They dashed back quickly, not wishing to be seen. Their Housemaster might ask them some awkward questions.

Mr. Ratcliff, scared as he was, did not notice the juniors. He advanced closer and closer towards the bulldog.

Still Towser did not turn his head; still he was unconscious of his peril. The poker was in the air now.

GR-E-E-E!

Mr. Ratcliff, with nervous fervor, brought the poker down, right at the bulldog's head.

Crash!



He looked Mr. Ratcliff. There was a general shaking of the stars at the juniors and then at the little bulldog, rolling his eyes or his ears!

swing him with the bat if he jumps at you."

"Right-ho!" said Reddy.

He jabbed the stump at the bulldog.

Crack!

That was certainly not the sound the juniors expected to result from jabbing a cricket stump at a bulldog. Reddy's stump jabbed on a hard surface.

He gazed open-mouthed at the bulldog.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped.

"It isn't alive!" yelled Figgins.

GR-E-E-E!

The four juniors fairly jumped at the bulldog. They grasped him and rolled him over. He did not stir a muscle. His eyes continued to roll, and he growled continuously, but that was all. His limbs were rigid.

Figgins gasped.

"That's a dog at all! It's one of Horrie's tricks, the bouncer! It's a dummy bulldog!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Figgins raised the bat in the air.

Towner did not yell. He did not cry. He did not grovel any more. There was a slight sound of whining inside him, as if a mechanism had stopped suddenly, that was all. The big head dropped on the floor, and the building lay still. But Mr. Ratcliff was not satisfied. He brought the poker down twice again, in his terror that perhaps the ferocious beast would turn upon him, and then ran past the motionless dog, his gown rustling.

As he turned the corner of the passage he met half a dozen juniors, and Mr. Ratcliff, as he saw them, calmed down, and tried to look as if he had not been raving.

Figgins and the rest looked innocently at their Housemaster, who was flushed and flustered, with a poker grasped in his hand, and gasping for breath.

"Haps," exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, in a voice he vainly endeavored to render steady, "please carry away that body. Remove it from the House."

"That—that body, sir?" said Redfern. "Yes; I have been compelled to kill Horrie's bulldog," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Somehow it got into the House, and attacked me."

Figgins & Co. exchanged glances. "Attacked you, sir?" murmured Figgins.

"Yes; it sprang at me in the passage—"

Figgins almost staggered. "Spring at you, sir?" he gasped.

"Yes; it sprang at my throat, and I was compelled to strike it down. I have had a very narrow escape," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Take the body away, please, and see Taggles is bury it!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Certainly, sir?"

"Did he bite you, sir?" said Kerr anxiously. "No; fortunately, I snatched his teeth," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I had, however, a very narrow escape. If I had not my presence of mind I should have been very badly bitten. Always remember, my boys, in time of danger, to preserve your presence of mind."

"Oh, sir?"

Mr. Ratcliff had been so scared that he almost believed that the bulldog had sprung at him. But the juniors, who knew that the mechanical dog could no more hate springs than it could have fears, could hardly help chuckling. Mr. Ratcliff descended the stairs, handing the poker to Redfern, to replace in his study; and then the juniors prepared to carry away the "dead body."

"Sprang at him?" murmured Figgins. "Spring at him, you know! Oh, you hat!"

"And we saw he was scared out of his wits!" grinned Redfern. "But, I say, he's killed this poor beast—but what will he say when he sees the real Towner about the school again?"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors lifted the mechanical dog—mechanical no longer—and carried him downstairs. They bore him across to the School House, and Tom Merry & Co., who were in the quadrangle, gathered round.

"How's your giddy mechanical marvel?" said Figgins. "I'm sorry to see he's dead. He sprang at Ratty in the passage, and Ratty brained him."

"What?" gasped Little Merry.

"Sprang at him?" yelled Bernard Glyn. "Why, he couldn't move."

"Well, Ratty says he sprang at him, and that's why he killed him. And I suppose Ratty ought to know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The silly ass! He's damaged my

model!" growled Bernard Glyn. "I suppose you fellows get a scare when you found him in your study—what!"

Figgins & Co. looked mildly surprised.

"Scared? My dear chap, why should we be scared about a mechanical dog?"

"But you didn't know he was mechanical when you saw him, I'll bet!" exclaimed Glyn excitedly. "You were jolly well scared. You took him for Towner!"

"We didn't take him at all—we left him!" said Figgins. "My dear chap, you will have to think of something better than that if you want to take a tip out of the New House, you know. We've got our eye teeth out, you know. Ta-ta!"

And Figgins & Co. walked away laughing.

"Sold again!" growled Habs. "Lot of good you shall shape backing up

"I think not, sir," said Horrie demurely. "He looks as if he were alive, sir."

"Is he not severely injured?"

"Not at all, sir!"

"Extraordinary!" murmured Mr. Ratcliff, in utter astonishment. "I gave him three distinct and quite terrible blows, and certainly I thought that he was killed. Horrie, if your bulldog gets into the New House again, I shall request the Head to have him sent away from the school."

And he strode away, very much puzzled.

Mr. Ratcliff had heard of a cat having nine lives; but he had never heard that a bulldog was gifted with ten, and how Towner could have survived those terrible swings with the poker was a mystery Mr. Ratcliff never quite succeeded in solving.

CHAPTER 14.

A Really Big Scheme!

"MY only hat!"

Tom Merry uttered the exclamation.

Lothian and Manners gave him inquiring looks. Tom Merry had a letter in his hand, which he had been reading; but he had let it drop on his knee, and he had been thinking deeply. The subject of his thoughts it was easy to guess—the important subject of giving Figgins & Co. what the juniors called the "kybock."

The successive triumphs of Figgins & Co. had had an overpowering effect upon the School House juniors. Unless the obnoxious New House was put into its place, how could Tom Merry & Co. claim that their House was Cook House of St. Jim's? And that was a claim that could not possibly be given up, though the skies fell.

"Well, what's the news?" said Manners. "That letter is from Grieffranz, isn't it?"

"Letter!" said Tom Merry vaguely. "Oh, yes! I wasn't thinking of the letter. But it was the letter, put the idea into my head, though. It's from Wharton, the captain of their junior footer team, you know. We write to one another sometimes. He mentions that a Grieffranz chap was kidnapped a few weeks ago—carried off in a giddy motor-car by a chap who was going to hold him to ransom."

"By Jove!"

"That put the idea into my head," said Tom Merry.

"What idea?" demanded his chums. "I suppose you'll agree that we've got to have no more returned to dish Figgins & Co. It's a case of all hands on deck. We've got to ditch those biggars, or else run up that the New House is Cook House of St. Jim's."

"What's the scheme?" asked Lothian. "We're on, whatever it is."

"Why shouldn't they be kidnapped?"

"Who-a-ah!"

"Kidnapped, and carried off in a motor-car, you know," said Tom Merry, growing animated. "It is really a big idea, you know. You don't often get an idea like that."

"Not outside a hectic anytime," agreed Lothian.

"Or a home for idiots," asserted Manners.

Tom Merry smiled.

"Look here, you silly asses, it's a big idea. Gassy hires a car sometimes from the garage at Weyland when he's in funds, and I suppose he can do it again.

(Continued on page 18.)



against the New House. You'd better leave it to the Fourth."

"Yess, wathah!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I'll bet you they were taken in, too, of course, they wouldn't say so!"

growled Bernard Glyn. "I jolly well think Ratty ought to pay for the damage he's done to my model. I suppose it's no good asking him, though?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say not!"

roared Kangaroo. "If he found out that he was a dummy, after saying that it sprang at him, I fancy he would be sorry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Later that day, as Mr. Ratcliff was taking a turn in the quadrangle, he suddenly stopped, his eyes almost starting out of his head. Horrie of the Fourth was crossing the quad, and at his heels was his big bulldog. There was no mistake about it—it was Towner, and there was not even a hump on his head.

Mr. Ratcliff called to Horrie in great astonishment. For the moment he almost fancied that it was the ghost of Towner that he saw.

"Horrie!"

"Yes, sir?" said Horrie, stopping and turning round.

"Your dog is not dead, then?"

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.



HALLO, chums!

"Why don't you publish all readers' letters," writes Jack Peters, of Coventry, "and let us see what other readers have to say?"

Thanks for your letter, Jack. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to accede to your request; but what do you think would happen if I did that? There would only be half the Gem left for stories! And then so many readers would write in complaining of this, that their letters would probably fill the other half of the Gem! No; I think a personal reply from me is the best course. But when a reader has something of unusual interest to tell me, then I put his letter in the Chat.

Talking of readers' letters, I have amply been amused and/or with them lately, and it is as much as I can do to answer one day's mail in a week. So I hope that all those readers who are awaiting replies will forgive me. I answer each letter myself, and every one requiring a reply will receive it in due course.

FORMING A "GEM" CLUB.

Verrall Johnson, of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, writes to ask if I have any objection to his—or is it her?—forming a Gem club. Why should I? I'm all in favour of Gem clubs. I know for a fact that there are many in existence. They bring readers into personal contact with one another; new friendships are formed, and new interests and enjoyments found. Go ahead with your Gem club, Verrall Johnson, and I wish you the best of luck! Let me know of the club's activities. The same applies to other Gem clubs. I am very interested in them.

"GEM'S GUILTY SECRET!"

In little over a week now we shall be in the midst of celebrating Guy Fawkes Day. The Gem's own celebration of the event will be to run a special St. Jim's story, which you will have in your hands next Wednesday.

Naturally, the chance of St. Jim's prepare to make the most of fireworks night, and in the course of their preparations there is no little fun and laughter. But on the eve of Guy Fawkes Day some thing happens which gives a shock to St. Jim's. Crooke, the mad of the Shell, is found in the quadrangle, struck down in the dark by someone unknown. Who did it? Suspicion points its finger to Keuzi Ras, the Jam of Handelope, who has uttered threats against Crooke because the latter has used insulting remarks to the Jam. The evidence is very black against Keuzi Ras, and

when Guy Fawkes Day dawns it finds the Jam in the punishment-room, awaiting the "sock." Yet there is one junior in the school who knows Keuzi Ras is innocent all the time!

Here is a dramatic situation which, combined with the fireworks adventures and misadventures of the St. Jim's juniors, will grip and hold the interest of readers in this powerful long yarn. Make sure you don't miss the fun and thrills of fireworks day at St. Jim's.

"GRAND OPERA AT GREYFRIARS!"

It is ambitious, to say the least, for Harry Wharton & Co. to attempt to play grand opera, yet this is the latest idea of the Remove chums. Stret's famous "Carmen" is chosen for the first representation of grand opera at Greyfriars, Temple, Dalrymple & Co. of the Upper Fourth, the rivals of the Remove, so off at the idea; but the Wharton Operatic Company turn a deaf ear to their scolding and make good progress with their rehearsal. Temple, Dalrymple & Co. thereupon decide to put a spoke in the wheel of their dream, which, of course, leads to trouble—for the Upper Fourth follows!

You'll thoroughly enjoy Frank Richards' next sparkling story of Harry Wharton & Co.'s early adventures.

TRY THIS!

Our office-boy came in to see this morning.

"I've got a trick up for you," he said.

"Oh, you have, have you?" said I. "Don't you think I've got something else better to do? Never mind, I'll try anything once."

"Write down a sum of money, including pence, shillings, and pence, the pounds being a single figure and at least two more in number than the pence. Don't let me see it."

I wrote down £5 12s. 4d.

"Now," went on the office-boy, "reverse your sum and subtract that from the amount you first thought of."

Reversing my amount, I got £4 12s. 4d., which subtracted from £5 12s. 4d. leaves £1 12s. 10d.

"Next, reverse the answer," said the office-boy, "and add it to the amount you had left."

Reversing £1 12s. 10d., I got £12 12s. 10d., and adding them together, my total was now £13 12s. 10d.

"The answer to all that arithmetic,"

said the office-boy—who, of course, had not seen my total—"is £13 12s. 10d."

"That's quite right," I remarked.

"How did you know?"

"Because the answer always comes to the same," was the reply. When the office-boy had gone I tried the sum with other amounts, but the answer was always £13 12s. 10d. Try it yourselves!

"HARRY WHARTON'S AMAZING RELATION!"

Something else you must try, if you have not already done so, is our popular occupation paper, the "Magnet." This week's grand number contains a sparkling cover-to-cover story of the drama of Greyfriars. The yarn tells of an amazing page which is played on Harry Wharton, a goods uncle being played on him. Then, to add to the amusement of the situation, the real uncle turns up! You must read all about it by getting the "Magnet" to-day.

A GRAND DANCE.

Are you interested in dancing? If so, you will be assured of a jolly evening if you go to the carnival dance of the Henry Edwards British Film Club. It is being held on Friday, November 8th, at the New Burlington Galleries, Burlington Gardens, Piccadilly, W. Many famous film stars will be present, and there will be spot prizes and all kinds of surprises and novelties. Tickets, price 5s., may be had from the Hon. Secretary, 21, Ambury Avenue, Stroutham Hill, S.W.1.

PEN PAL.

Edward G. Dixon, 4, Norfolk Road, Oremouth, Cape Town, South Africa; age 12-13; always sports; India, East and West India, Singapore.

At Greening, 10, Annand Street, North Fitzroy, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia; age 12-13; always sports.

At 21, A. A. Munnah, Thiruvai's Hall, Avroon, Gold Coast; pen pal; age 12-13.

Miss Lloyd, Alhambra Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton; age 12-13; sports, stamps, football; 1000s, overseas.

P. Robinson, 25, Cliff Road, Leicester; overseas, motor, stamps, sports.

Miss Shirley Jeffrey, 14, Tyrone Road, South Tottenham, London, E. 15; girl correspondent; overseas; age 12-13; film, stamp, travel.

Miss Betty T. A. Gilbert, 22, Thurston Road, Kingsland, Tottenham, Newham; girl correspondent; age 12-13; swimming, stamp, football; 1000s, overseas.

Miss M. P. V. Van Ryn, Belmont, South Africa; age 12-13; swimming, photography.

Miss Edna Paris, 1, Park Gate, Eastbourne, Sussex Road, Gillingham, Cape Town, South Africa; girl correspondent; stamps.

THE EDITOR.

The Gem LITERARY—No. 1, 1928.

PEN PAL COUPON

12-10-28

(Continued from page 14)

New, Figgins & Co. are going over to Glyn House to see on Wednesday. Glyn said he'd expect them. They will be coming back after dark—by that lonely lane from Glyn House that runs into Rylands Road. Nothing could be better."

"But—but—"

"The car is in waiting. Gussy can drive a car. He's driven one in his power's car at Eastern House without killing anybody. We can rig Gussy up as a chauffeur, and stick him on to drive."

"But—but—"

"We can be masked, and covered to the teeth—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Figgins & Co. are suddenly seized by a gang of armed ruffians, and slung into the car, with pistol at their heads—"

"Fudge!" yelled Leather and Manners together.

"Well, better at their throats, then," answered Tom Merry. "Kidnappers generally have revolvers. I believe, but we can't get any, I suppose. But a gleaming dagger, or a flashing stiletto and—"

"Down it mild!"

"Beard hand and foot and gagged," roared Tom Merry enthusiastically.

"What do you think of that?"

"I don't see how a gleaming dagger, or a flashing stiletto could be bearded hand and foot, or gagged, either," said Mervy Leather, with a shake of the head.

"Am!" roared Tom Merry. "Figgins & Co. will be bearded hand and foot and gagged, same as the beavers are in woods."

"Oh, I see!"

"What do you think of the scheme?"

"Oh, rotten!" said Leather.

"Rotten!" said Manners.

"Fairhead!" said Tom Merry. "It's a ripping scheme. I tell you, and I'll be glad to talk it over with Blake, as you go down enough to understand it."

Leather and Manners chuckled, and went on with their preparation as Tom Merry strode out of the study, closing the door with unnecessary force.

Tom Merry's latest scheme certainly did seem a little wild at first sight.

But the captain of the Shell stuck to it.

Study No. 4 received it at first with thoughtful laughter; but they came round in time as the possibilities of the scheme were discussed.

And Leather and Manners, though they agreed that the scheme was rotten, were quite ready to do their best to back up their study leader.

And, indeed, as the plan was discussed, every fellow contributing a suggestion or two, it began to look more feasible, and if it went well, there was no doubt that Figgins & Co. would be most thoroughly liked.

And all the School House fellows were beginning to wish Figgins & Co. were being to ditch Figgins & Co.

The New House trio were holding their heads very high. They had sneered over the School House, and the School House had not succeeded in retaliating. If the prestige of the House was to be maintained, it was understood that Figgins & Co. had to be brought down off their perch.

But there was one fellow in the School House to whom Figgins & Co. were as sweet as sugar just now. That fellow was Bernard Glyn. They took a deep interest in Glyn's inventions; they watched some of his experiments; they invited him to show them a chemical experiment in their study.

The Gem Lasser.—No. 1488.

which made the whole passage swell for twenty-four hours afterwards.

Bernard Glyn remarked that Figgins & Co. were remarkably intelligent chaps, and his opinion of them rose very high. It was likely to fall to its former level, as a matter of fact, as soon as Cousin Ethel's visit to Glyn House came to an end.

Glyn had asked Figgins & Co. over to his place to tea on Wednesday, and the Co. had joyfully assented. Figgins wanted to go because Cousin Ethel was there and Fatty Wynn, though not specially keen on that point, dreamed splendid day-dreams of the lovely spreads that Glyn's sister prepared for her friends. Kerr wanted to go because his chums wanted to, so all three were happy.

Glyn was staying the night at home, as he sometimes did, his father's home being very near to Jim's. After tea, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were to walk back to St. Jim's by themselves.

It was just after the three New House juniors had gone away with Glyn that Tom Merry dropped into Kildare's study. Kildare was having tea with Darrell and Langton of the Sixth.

Tom Merry vented and politely requested passage. He was quite prepared to brook bounds if passage-out were unobtainable; but he knew that he could depend upon old Kildare's good nature.

"We want to go for a run in a car," he explained. "Gussy's hired a car from Weyland, and we may be out till calling-over, if you'll let us, Kildare."

Kildare supposed that the juniors would have a chauffeur with the car, as they generally did when they hired one.

"All wrong!" he said. "Don't be later than eight."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry joyfully. "I say, there are six of us going, Kildare. Make it for Leather, Manners, Blake, Guss, Kangaroo, and your humble servant."

Kildare nodded, and wrote out the pass.

Tom Merry left the study highly pleased.

"All right, dear boy!" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when he came down the passage.

"Right as rain!"

"Good egg!" said Blake. "We've telephoned for the car. It's going to be here at five."

"That's right," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "Figgins & Co. leave Glyn House at six. It will be as easy as splitting of a giddy log."

"Yes, wraith!"

And the chums of the School House went down to Doctor prescriber to while away the time until the hour for starting on their expedition.

CHAPTER 12.

Kidnapped!

"GOOD-BYE, Ethel!"

"Good-bye!"

Figgins & Co. turned away from the door, and walked down the drive to the gates of Glyn House.

It was a dark, misty evening, and the trees in the park looked up dark and spectre-like as the juniors started along the drive. All three of them were looking very cheerful. Figgins was always happy when he was with Cousin Ethel, and Fatty Wynn was always ecstatic when there was a big spread. Kerr had spent a pleasant

hour with Bernard Glyn in his work-shop, where the schoolboy inventor showed him his treasures. Altogether the three juniors had had a very cheerful afternoon, and they were feeling perfectly satisfied with themselves and the universe generally as they turned their footsteps homeward to St. Jim's.

They left the park gates behind them, and walked down the dark lane towards the Rylands Road, by which their way lay to the school.

"Jolly!"

"Glyn is a decent chap, though he's in the School House?"

"Isn't she ripping?" said Fatty Wynn, with a sigh.

Figgins passed to stare at his chum. The only "she" in the wide world for Figgins was Cousin Ethel, and he had never heard Fatty Wynn express such a rapturous admiration for that young lady before. He did not know whether he could like it.

"Yes," said Figgins shortly.

"There isn't another girl in all the world like her," said Fatty Wynn.

"Don't you think so, Kerr, old chap?"

"Yes," grinned Kerr.

"I think I ought to see her often," said Fatty Wynn.

"I feel a real regard for her, you know—a really deep friendship."

"Look here!" began Figgins hotly.

"Sh! Don't you?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"Yes, but—"

"Precious her girls like her!" said Fatty Wynn. "The chap who is going to marry her is jolly lucky!"

Figgins stopped dead.

"Marry her?" he ejaculated.

"Yes; don't you think he's a jolly lucky banger?"

"He! Who?"

"Chap she's engaged to," said Wynn, with a glance at Figgins, wondering at the assignment of his long-legged chum.

"You silly am!" scolded Figgins.

The fat Fourth-Former jumped.

"Sh—what? What do you mean, Figg? What's the matter?"

"What do you mean by saying she's engaged, you silly fathead? If you mean it for a joke, I don't see the point of it, and I can tell you that I don't like jokes about girls! They're in rotten bad taste, for one thing!" said Figgins earnestly.

"But—but she is engaged!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Chump! She isn't!"

"She is! I've seen the chap! Why, you've seen him, too! We all know him!"

"You silly bunter!" howled Figgins.

"Are you potty? You know jolly well that she's too young to be engaged to anybody!"

"Pook—rot!" said Fatty Wynn. "I suppose a girl is old enough to be engaged at twenty-five!"

"Two-twenty-five!" gasped Figgins.

"She's twenty-five said Fatty Wynn. "Twenty-five last birthday, I believe."

"You—you—you silly am! She's younger than I am!" howled Figgins.

"She's three months and two days younger than I am!"

Fatty Wynn stared at his excited chum with a gaze of almost idiotic bewilderment.

"Have you gone potty?" he demanded. "I know she's twenty-five. She's ten years older than her brother, and he's fifteen!"

"Edith! She hasn't got a brother!"

"Hans! Got a brother!" said Fatty Wynn, backing away from Figgins, convinced now that he was laboring under a sudden attack of insanity. "Glyn's sister hasn't got a younger brother!

Who is Glyn of the Shell, then, if he isn't her brother?"

"Glyn's sister?" said Figgins faintly. "Yes. Are you dotty? Has the ginger-bread got into your head, or what?"

"We were you speaking about Edith Glyn?" murmured Figgins. "I— I thought you were—were speaking of somebody else!"

"You're off your dot, I think!" said Fatty Wynn crossly. "Blessed if I can understand you! Whom else should I be speaking of? Nobody else made any of the cakes, that I know of."

"Cakes?" said Figgins. "Yes. Glyn's sister made the cakes herself, and I said she was a ripping girl, and so she is. Precious few like her," said Fatty Wynn, "and I said the chap she's engaged to is a lucky bargee! She'll make cakes like that for him some day."

"I— I thought you were speaking of Cousin Ethel," murmured Figgins, his face quite scarlet in the darkness.

Fatty Wynn scoffed. "Cousin Ethel's all right," he said. "But I don't believe she could make cakes the same as Glyn's sister does. They're better than you get at Bann's in Kilmote. I think Glyn is a lucky chap, too. If I were her brother, I'd get her to send me some cakes like that up to the school every day!"

"Oh, bless the cakes!" said Figgins. "Blessed if I ever noticed whether there were any cakes or not!"

"Oh, you're dotty!" said Fatty Wynn. "What were you thinking about, then, if you were not thinking about the cakes?"

Figgins did not reply to that question. The jostlers walked on, and they had almost reached the turning into the Hylcombe Road when they noticed a motor-car drawn up by the side of the road in the darkness. The lights were out, and the car was almost invisible in the darkness under the trees. The jostlers glanced at it curiously as they passed.

Just as they got past the car there was a sudden rustle of feet in the darkness.

Six dim forms sprang upon the three juniors.

Before the Co. realized what was happening, they were seized and hurled to the ground, and their captors were kneeling on them.

"Ow!" gasped Figgins, as he wriggled with his face in the dirt, with a knee planted in the small of his back. "Ow! Lorge! Lorange! Lorange! You catter! Oo! What's the game?"

He twisted his head round to look up at his assailant. He saw a figure in a dark overcoat, the face concealed by a black mask. The sight of it made him stare.

"Bind them!"

"Bind a hoarse, deep voice from one of the masked men.

"Hold on!" yelled Kere. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Stab them if they resist!"

"My hat! Footpads!" said Figgins. "Well, you won't get much out of an you return! I've got no tin, and only a watch!"

The masked ruffians did not speak again. They held the captured juniors tightly, and one of them went to the three in turn, and bound them hand and foot. Figgins & Co. had no chance to resist. As soon as they were bound, handkerchiefs were tied over their eyes to blindfold them, and then gags were thrust into their mouths. Then they felt themselves lifted into the car.

"Get her going, Bill!"



Just as Figgins & Co. got past the car, six dim forms, with faces concealed by black masks, sprang upon them. Before the New House Co. realized what was happening, they were seized and hurled to the ground.

"Ave yer got 'em safe, Jim?"

"Yes!"

That was all that was said. One of the ruffians jumped into the driver's seat, and another scooped beside him. The other four clambered into the car after the captured juniors, who were huddled on the floor.

The car jolted forward, and rolled out swiftly into the Hylcombe Road. It turned away from the direction of the school, and headed away at a great speed.

Figgins & Co., unable to speak, unable to see, unable to move, lay huddled on the floor of the car, among the feet of their kidnapers, amazed and alarmed.

It had all passed so quickly that it seemed like a dream.

They were kidnaped.

There was no doubt about that. But by whom—by what? If it was of the Fourth or Cotts of the Fifth had been kidnaped, it might have been for ransom; but the New House juniors were not rich, and they were not valuable prizes for kidnapers. But they were kidnaped, there was no doubt about that.

"Northampton in an hour!" muttered the deep, hoarse voice.

"If we ain't stopped, Jim?"

"Who's to stop us?"

"The young gents will be missed!"

"But they won't know where to look for 'em. We shall be at Northampton in an hour, and then we'll hide 'em safe enough."

Silence again. Figgins & Co. could not speak, but they could hear, and they listened to every word with avidity. They were being taken to Northampton—a great distance from St. Jim's. The car left no traces—there was little likelihood of their being traced.

Figgins left himself roughly shaken

by the shoulder. The gag was jerked out of his mouth.

"Don't you yell!" said the hoarse, husky voice. "You'll get six inches of this 'ere knife under yer ribs if yer doze. Look 'ere, what's yer name?"

"I—I—I'm Figgins!"

"That's right, I got the right party. Your father's a barman, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then he'll be able to pay for yer—boy! He'll pay two 'undred quid to 'ave yer back safe and sound, I reckon!"

"He jolly well won't!" said Figgins with spirit. "You'll get sent to prison for this, and that's all you'll get, you scoundrels!"

"None of yer moon, unless you want to get this 'ere knife in yer ribs, young shaver! You're in despair 'ands, I can tell yer that!"

"I'm not afraid of you!"

"Give him a wipe on the nose, Jim!"

"I'll settle 'is 'ack for good if he gives me any of 'is chin-wag," said the deep voice. "If yer father won't pay for yer to be sent 'ome, young shaver, we'll send 'im yer score or yer one per registered ton, as a reminder that we're in want of the money. Now! Now you can shut up!"

"Look here—grogh!"

The gag was jammed back into Figgins' mouth.

The kidnapers did not speak again. In silence, so far as the occupants were concerned, the car rumbled on.

Excepting for the kidnapers' notion of Northampton, the juniors had not the faintest idea of the direction the motor-car took.

It dashed on at high speed, and mile after mile flew under the rapid wheels. The captured juniors could not exactly judge the speed, but they knew that it

The Gun Lizard.—No. 1,422.

was not less than an average of forty miles an hour. The country roads were deserted, and the chauffeur let the car go. An hour passed, still in grim silence save for the rattle of the car. Forty miles had been covered, and the car was still rattling on through the dark winter evening.

"My hat!" thought Figgins. "A good forty miles from St. Jim's by this time. My only hat! How can we get back, even if we get away from the house? And precious little chance of that!"

The car stopped at last.

"See we are!" said the rough, hoarse voice.

They had arrived, but where they were the kidnappers had not the faintest idea.

CHAPTER 16.

The Last Laugh!

FIGGINS felt the hard, heavy grasp upon his shoulder again. "You 'ear me?" said the hoarse voice. "Look 'ere, young shaver, we don't want to 'urt yer. If you give yer word not to struggle or say owt, we'll take the ropes off yer. What do you say?"

The gag was removed to allow Figgins to reply.

"You rotter!" gasped Figgins. "Now, talk sense. We're going to take you into a safe place. If you like to walk, you can walk. If not, you're going to be dragged. You can take your choice. Now what is it to be?" "Promise not to resist for ten minutes, and we'll let yer loose. Otherwise, you'll stay tied up, and a bit tighter."

"We'll walk," said Figgins. He was beginning to feel extremely uncomfortable, though his hands were not tied very tight.

"You others say the same?"

"Yes!" gasped Fatty Wynn and Kerr, as their gags were removed.

"I'll trust yer," said the hoarse voice. "Mind, I've got this 'ere knife ready for yer if you break yer word!"

"We shan't break our word, you boss," said Figgins. "We've given our word—for ten minutes. We're not going to slip in your paws, you can bet. We'll hold our own, and you'll be mad to cross."

"Let their blooming legs loose, mates."

The gags were replaced in the juniors' mouths, and their arms remained bound. One of their captives examined the blindfolding cloth tied over their eyes to make sure they could not see. Then their legs were untied, and they were led from the car, stepping one after another to the ground.

The cold night wind blew on their heated faces.

Where were they?

Certainly not in a town of any kind; there was the deep silence of the countryside round them.

"You got to get over this 'ere wall, lively, now!" For a moment a hoarse voice coughed Figger's neck and he shuddered. "Eep 'em over, mates!"

The juniors were lifted in turn upon a wall and lowered down on the inner side. Then they heard the motor-car drive away. There were only five of their captives round them now on the inner side of the wall. They were in an open space of some sort, and in complete darkness. Blindfolded, gagged, and their arms bound, they were helpless in the hands of the kidnappers, even if they had not given



"Don't bother me—I'm writing to my best girl."
"But why are you writing so slowly?"
"She can't read very fast!"

Half-a-penny has been awarded to K. Ebbels, 13, Beaconsfield Road, Washfield-on-Hill, Sussex.

their word to struggle. They used their ears—the only sense left to them—but they could hear nothing to indicate where they were.

"Now him on," said the hoarse voice, "and mind, not a blooming trick, or you get this 'ere knife in yer bloomin' ribs!"

Figgins & Co. were searched away in the midst of their kidnappers.

Several times the party passed, and Figgins guessed that the kidnappers were listening and looking about them cautiously.

They stopped at last. Not a glimmer of light came through the blindfolds, and they knew that they were still out of doors and in darkness. Figgins & Co. heard a door creak on its hinges.

They were hurried through a doorway still in darkness. There was a muffled clank, and one of the kidnappers uttered an exclamation.

"Look out!"

A bicycle had been knocked over in the darkness, as Figgins & Co. knew by the sound.

"Get a light, Bill!"

"'Ere you are!"

A match glimmered, and there was a well of oil. A lantern had been lighted. The rays of light glimmered through the blindfolding cloth, but the juniors could not see.

"They're safe now, mates. So long as they can't yell for 'elp, they'll be all right. We can leave them 'ere for a bit."

There was a sound of retreating footsteps, and the door closed.

The light was still burning. Figgins & Co. were left alone. The kidnappers were gone. The three juniors, their arms still securely bound, were unable to remove the cloth from their eyes; but all three of them made the discovery at the same time that the gags in their mouths were loose, and could be removed with a little trouble.

Figgins was the first to get rid of the gag.

"Ow!" he gasped when he recovered his voice. "Oh, my hat! What do you think of this, you chaps?"

"Grough!"

"We're forty or fifty miles from St. Jim's," said Figgins. "But you heard what that villain said; if we shout for help we shall be heard. Fie in!"

Kerr and Wynn spat out the gags at last.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Kerr.

"But suppose they hear us and come back?" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"We've got to chance that. I shouldn't wonder if they're gone; but we'll wait a few minutes to give them a chance to get out of hearing," said Figgins eagerly. "My hat, this is a jolly adventure, and no mistake! I wonder where we are?"

"It's a shed of some sort," said Kerr.

"I heard a bike knocked over."

"So did I. A blessed, I suppose."

"Let's yell," said Kerr. "We may be heard by somebody, even if those rotters hear us, too, and come back. All together!"

And with all the force of their lungs the three juniors roared:

"Help!"

Their voices rang through the shed, and to a considerable distance beyond it. They shouted again and again with all their force.

"Help!"

"Somebody must hear us!" gasped Figgins. "I—I say, I can hear somebody coming!"

"Those rotters, perhaps."

"Give another yell before they can stop us."

"Help, help, help!" roared the juniors.

There were undoubtedly sounds of footsteps close to the shed now. Figgins & Co. heard the door open.

Was it their kidnappers returning?

—

"Help, help!"

A shudder.

"Help!" shouted Figgins desperately.

"Whatever you are, come and help us. We've been kidnapped by a gang of scoundrels and brought here. Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. jumped.

"You rotters, whoever you are!" shouted Figgins indignantly. "Come and let us loose. I tell you, we've been kidnapped and brought forty or fifty miles from our school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't you see we've tied up?" shrieked Kerr. "Come and let us loose before these scoundrels come back."

Hands glided over Figgins & Co. They felt their bonds cut, and the fragments of rope fell around their feet.

They grabbed at the blindfolding cloth immediately, and dragged them off.

Their eyes, so long in the darkness, blinked in the sudden light.

Then it occurred to Figgins & Co. that a mistake had happened, or that they were dreaming. There was a laughing crowd in the shed, and the doorway was crowded, and outside there was noise—all roaring with laughter. And the amazing part of it was that they were all St. Jim's fellows.

The dazed juniors recognized Tom Merry & Co.—Blake, Herries, Dight, Clifton Dana, and a score of other faces they knew. And in the crowd there were Now Home fellows, too—Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence, and a damn more—all laughing.

Figgins & Co. blinked, and stared in wild amazement at the yelling crowd.

"I—I say, I—I'm dreaming!" panted Figgins. "How did you fellows get here?"

A SPARKLING STORY IN WHICH BUNTER THE ANGLER GETS CAUGHT AND BULSTRODE THE BULLY GETS BAGGED!

BILLY BUNTER'S COMPETITION!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Billy Bunter gets the idea of running a fishing competition in the *Greyfriars* at *Greyfriars*, but Harry Watson & Co. show a lack of interest in the scheme. They are more interested in the fact that a new school is being built close to *Greyfriars*.

They go to have a look at it, and meet an old friend of Fritz Hoffman, of *Brookwood Foreign Academy*, a school which was temporarily situated at *Greyfriars* for a time. The German boy tells Harry Watson & Co. that the new school is to accommodate the pupils of *Brookwood Academy*, and that he himself is coming to *Greyfriars* until the new school is ready.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter has been busy trying to convince fellows to contribute prizes to his fishing competition. After tea in Study No. 1, Bulstrode, the *Remore* bully, sends in his contribution. Bunter opens it, and is suddenly enveloped in a shower of pepper. Scolding as if for a wagger, he rushes off to put his head under a tap. In the process he collides with Hoffman, and the latter gets some of the pepper. Bunter then has to look himself in a bath-room to scrape the smudge of the German boy.

The next day, a half-holiday, Margaret Handbaird, sister of Handbaird of the *Remore*, and a friend of Harry Watson & Co., puts a rival to the school, and the scheme meets far at the post.

(Now read on.)

Bunter Fishes for Pike!

"A CH, mein Bunter!" Billy Bunter looked up with an expression of alarm as he heard the voice of Fritz Hoffman. He had not come into contact with the German junior since the pepper incident of the previous day, having carefully avoided him. But there was no avoiding him now. The sturdy young German stood looking down at him as he sat on the bench under the elm-trees.

But a glance at the German's good-natured face was sufficient to reassure Billy Bunter. Fritz Hoffman had evidently forgotten or forgiven the pepper incident, for he was grinning genially.

"Ach, Bunter. You was pesty mit yourself."

"Yes, I'm rather busy," said Bunter, with an air of some importance. "I'm arranging the details of my great fishing competition."

"Was is dat, ten?" "I'm getting up a fishing competition. There's a prize for the greatest number of fish caught in a certain time, and another prize for the biggest fish, and so on. Six good prizes. First prize, a pair of dumb-bells, cost fifteen shillings. I haven't settled about the others yet."

"I tink I enter dat competition, ain't I?" "Entrance fee, one shilling, paid in advance."

"Oh?" "If you like to enter now, I can put you down."

The Gas Leman.—No. 1, 498.

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarn of *Greyfriars* appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnum.")

your name down at the head of the list, Hoffman."

The German junior shook his head. "Better take the chance while you can," said Bunter. "It's only a shilling. I'll give you a receipt for it, and you hand the lot of extras."

"I tink I look at mein shilling twice before, ain't it?"

"Well, you're losing a good thing, that's all I can say," said Bunter. "I suppose you don't go in for fishing much? I'm a duffer at it."

"You was fish a great much?"

"Well, not so far. You see I haven't a rod, and it's difficult without a rod, though I've made matches with a can on the end of a string on a stick. I could tell you about a big trout I caught that way, but I know you wouldn't believe me. None of the fellows believe that."

"Ach! I do not wonder. But if you are fond of fishing—"

"It's my hobby, you see. As a matter of fact, I expect to walk off with the first prize in the competition myself."

There was no catching any *Remore* junior with Billy Bunter's fishing competition, but there was a "catch" when Bunter went fishing!

I'm expecting a postal order every day now, and when it comes I'm going to buy a really ripping fishing-rod."

"You like to fish for pike?"

"Yes, I can fish for anything."

"Pig pike in a pond?"

"Big pike! What is a pig pike?"

"Oh, you mean a big pike?" said Bunter, interested at once. "How did the pike get in the pond, then?"

"Ach! I know dat it is dere, dat is enough."

"But, I say, there aren't any pike in the pond, you know," said Bunter.

"I see it dere mit mein own eyes before."

"Well, if you really saw it, Hoffman—"

"I did see it, I tell you."

"Of course, a fellow may have caught one and let it go in the pond. Blessed if I know how it could have got there any other way. Do you know whether it was put in the pond, Hoffman?"

"I tink so; in fact, I tink I see it put in."

"Good! That accounts for it."

"But I suppose you not able to catch pike?"

"My dear chap, I'm a duffer at

fishing. I could catch the biggest pike in the park, I can promise you that. A pike is a good fish, nothing to me. Unfortunately, I haven't a fishing-rod."

"Ach! You cannot fish without rod."

"Can't I?" said Bunter, with a superior smile. "I'll jolly soon show you. I've fished with a tin can before now!"

"Haf you eber caught pike in a tin can?"

"Well, no, I can't exactly say I've caught pike," admitted Bunter. "I've caught lots of sticklebacks, though."

"There is a difference—"

"Oh, that's nothing! Of course, you greater fisherman give way at the first difficulty, but an old hand can manage all right. I'll jolly soon have that pike out of the pond, I promise you."

"I tink I like to see you fish for it."

"Then come along, old fellow, and you shall watch me, and it will put you up to a wrinkle in making for pike."

"Mit a tin can," murmured Hoffman, as he followed Bunter.

Billy Bunter was really in earnest. The chance of the *Remore* had seemed inclined to scoff at his prowess as a fisherman, and Bunter wanted to show them what he could do in that line. It he landed a big pike under such difficulties, they could hardly laugh at his fishing competition any more.

It was really a difficulty, having no fishing-rod. But, as Bunter himself remarked, genius could always overcome difficulties. A stick and a string and a tin can applied the difficulty, and Billy Bunter, planting himself on the plank bridge, commenced to fish for pike.

Fritz Hoffman watched him, with his broad German face wrinkled in smiles.

Other fellows gradually drew round, and when it became known that Bunter was fishing for pike, the smiles became general.

Bunter cared little for that. As a matter of fact, he was used to having his enterprises grinned at by a mocking crowd, and it was no new experience to him. When he landed a pike in the tin-can, the grin would be on the other side. So he fished away patiently.

"My hat! What's Bunter up to now?"

It was Bob Cherry who asked the question.

The chance of the *Remore* had come in sight of the bold fisherman, and they stared at him in amazement. Margaret Handbaird was with them, of course, and the girl looked on at Billy Bunter's curious angling with great interest.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob Cherry. "What are you doing there with that tin, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter looked round.

"I'm fishing for pike."

Bob Cherry gave a roar.

"You're whistling—for what?"

"Fishing for pike."

"Pike—in that pond?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"With a tin-can?"

"You see, I haven't a fishing-rod."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Please don't laugh like that,

YOU CAN'T BE DULL WITH THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS—STARRING THEM IN THEIR EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.

Cherry. You will very likely score the fish away, and I shan't get the pike."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent, wiping his eyes. "I think Banty gets richer every day. What gave you the idea there were pike in this pond, Banty?"

"Hoffman told me."

"Well, of all the—"

"It was true," said Hoffman. "I missed my main eye and did see the pike put in the pond before."

"Oh, a pike has been put in the pond—oh! Who put it in?"

"I did myself."

"What for?"

"So as to give to fisherman a chance to distinguish himself before, isn't it?"

"But where did you get the pike from?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Ach! I found him!"

The chums of the Remore looked at Hoffman. They did not believe that he would tell an untruth, but this story did seem a little steep.

"You found him?" said Nugent.

"Ja, ja!"

"Where did you find him?" Bob Cherry demanded.

"In its place were they put up new building," said Hoffman, waving his hand towards the spot where the ground was being cleared and excavated for the erection of the new school.

The chums looked in that direction.

"You're kidding, I suppose," Bob Cherry remarked.

"How could you possibly find a pike there?"

"I found him."

"I suppose he was walking out of the river on his tail, coming to see what the workmen were doing there?" Nugent suggested.

Marjorie Hamblin laughed.

"What sort of a pike was it?" she said.

Fritz Hoffmann grinned broadly.

"Ach! Yes is telling."

"Hullo! I felt something then!" exclaimed Billy Hunter, who had been gazing about in the pond with his gun.

"I suppose it was the pike."

He jerked the gun to the surface. The water ran out of it, but the fisherman had collected nothing but mud.

"No bite this time," said Bob Cherry.

"The hindrance is postponed," said Harvey Singh. "When it arrives the

hindrance of the fish will be only equalled by the gladfulness of the fisherman."

"You see, it's not easy to fish for pike with a gun," said Billy Hunter.

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy not."

"But, of course, an old hand is a match for a pike."

"Of course. Go it, Hunter!"

"I'm going it, I assure you. How do you do, Miss Hamblin? If you like to watch me, I'll show you how to catch a pike."

"I fancy it will take rather too long," grinned Hamblin. "We'll come along in about a couple of hours, Hunter, and see if you've had a hit."

"I'm expecting to land the fish every moment."

"We'll have it stuffed and put up in the study if you do," said Harry Wharton. "We can't stop just now. Let's get along."

And the chums of the Remore and their fair companion walked on, leaving the amateur fisherman still fishing, and the grinning crowd round him still grinning.

Invitation Wanted!

HELLO, Vasiline!

It was Bulstrode of the Remore who spoke. He raised his cap to Marjorie Hamblin as the girl and her companions stopped. They had little choice but to stop, as the Remore bully planted himself directly in their path.

"Hullo, Bulstrode!" said Hamblin ungraciously, with a dash in his cheeks.

He did not like his nickname as Greyfriars spoken before his sister, and he knew that Bulstrode had used it on purpose.

"I didn't know that Miss Hamblin was coming down this afternoon," went on Bulstrode, looking at the girl.

"You didn't tell me, Vasiline."

"I didn't think of doing so."

"You might have known I should be interested."

"I don't see why. But we must be getting on. Come on, you fellows!"

Bulstrode did not move.

"I think some sort of a little celebration should be got up to honour Miss Marjorie's arrival," he remarked.

"Don't you think so, Miss Hamblin?"

Marjorie smiled.

"Not at all," she replied. "It is very kind of you; but I have only come over to Greyfriars for a couple of hours to see my brother and Mrs. Locke, and really—"

"It is an honour to the school," said Bulstrode, "and something ought really to be done. Your brother is a great friend of mine, you know. We share the same study, and you're great chums, aren't we, Vasiline?"

His glance dared Hamblin to deny it. And Marjorie's brother had excellent reasons for not wanting to quarrel with the bully of the Remore.

"Yes, of course," he said weakly.

"I think a feed in the study would be a good idea," went on Bulstrode, "if Miss Hamblin would honour us."

The girl looked at her brother. Hamblin looked red and uncomfortable.

He was determined that Bulstrode should not become anything like friendly with Marjorie, but he was to a great extent in the power of the bully.

Bulstrode knew all about the incident of the newspaper, Jason, and Hamblin was extremely anxious to keep all knowledge of that disgraceful episode from Marjorie.

"What do you say, Vasiline?" said Bulstrode, with a smile on his lips.

"Well, the fact is, Bulstrode, that we were thinking of a feed in Study No. 1."

said Hamblin awkwardly. "Wharton has arranged it—"

A black look came over Bulstrode's brow. Ever since Harry Wharton had come to Greyfriars he had been a thorn in the side of the bully of the Remore.

"Oh, very well! In that case—"

"Thank you very much all the same," said Marjorie sweetly. "I think I had better go and speak to Mrs. Locke

While the chums of the Remore walked on, Hamblin, looking very uncomfortable, conversed with the bully of the Remore. "Well, what is it, Bulstrode?" he asked. "Are you going to invite me to tea in Study No. 1?" said Bulstrode. "If not, your sister will get to know all about the newspaper-building business!"



now," she added, and she entered the house. Perhaps, with her feminine instincts, she had seen that diamond was safe, and knew that she was better away from the jewelry just then.

Balstrode had controlled his temper with difficulty so far, and now that Marjorie was gone it broke out.

"So your sister will not come to tea in our study, Yaseline?" he said.

"She is coming to Study No. 1," said Harry Wharton. "Hasseldene has already told you so."

"That's all very well, but it would be much more natural for her to come to her brother's study. You had better say it out plain, Yaseline. You won't have her in Study No. 2 because I'm there."

Hasseldene set his lips.

"Well, as a matter of fact, Balstrode, I've told you before that you've got the sort of fellow I like to see Marjorie with," he said. "You asked for plain English, and now you've got it."

Balstrode clenched his fist.

"So you are looking for trouble?"

"None of that," said Harry Wharton quietly, but with a glint in his eye.

"There's going to be no fighting with Miss Hasseldene in here."

"Who's going to prevent it?"

"I am, if necessary."

Balstrode's eyes met Harry Wharton's and his clenched fist dropped to his side again. He knew that he was to match for Wharton, though he would have knocked Hasseldene into a "cooked hat" in a few minutes. He scowled angrily.

"You will interfere in my affairs once too often, one of these days, Wharton," he said between his teeth.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't feel very much alarmed," he said disdainfully.

"I want to speak to you, Yaseline," said Balstrode, turning to him and affecting to take no more notice of the other.

"I want to speak to you alone," Hasseldene insisted.

"You'd better," said Balstrode threateningly.

"Go on a bit, will you, you chap!" said Hasseldene, colouring. "I suppose Balstrode can see if he wants to."

The chains of the Hermine walked on, Hasseldene, looking very uncomfortable, remained with the bully of the Hermine.

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

"Are you going to invite me to tea in Study No. 1?"

"It's Wharton's business, not mine."

"I suppose you are head of the matter as it's your sister who is being teased?" said the Remove bully angrily.

"Not at all. It's Wharton."

"Well, he doesn't intend to ask me. You are having the tea in Wharton's study so that Marjorie will not meet me, and you don't intend to ask me there."

Hasseldene was silent. Balstrode had, in fact, stated the case exactly.

"Well," said Balstrode, "that won't suit me."

"I don't see what you want to come for, Balstrode."

"Don't you? Well, I do. Perhaps it's just because I wasn't be passed over—won't be left out in the cold by the fellow who has spangled me ever since he came to Greyfriars," said Balstrode, with a sneer.

Hasseldene changed colour.

"You can't say I've spangled you so lately, Balstrode."

"What's that got to do with it? You see me more than a pound or two. I

haven't kept count, because I know you would never pay."

"I'll pay every penny!" exclaimed Hasseldene.

"Will you—now?" asked Balstrode.

"I can't now, but—"

"Then shut up about it. I don't want the money, and you know it. But you're not going to use me for your banker as long as it suits you, and then throw me over as soon as that suits you, too. I'm not exactly the kind of fellow to put up with that sort of treatment."

"I don't want to throw you over."

But—

"What do you call it, then? You know I like your sister, and when she comes down you keep her with you and those rotters in Study No. 1 and don't want me to speak to her. Do you think a few words from me will hurt her, eh?"

"You know you've not the sort of chap—"

"Oh, said! Well, to come to the point, I'm coming to tea in Study No. 1 this afternoon, or else your sister will get to know all about that nonpaying business."

Hasseldene gritted his teeth.

"You and I? You will tell her?"

"Why not?"

"I'll tell you to Wharton," said Hasseldene weakly. "It rests with him. There isn't much room in the study, you know, Balstrode, and there are seven of us already, including Marjorie."

"Wharton has had a dozen fellows there before now, to jaw over cricket. He can manage a tea-party of eight this time, I imagine. He will have to, anyway."

"It rests with him to say you or me—"

"Not if you ask him properly. It's natural you should want to have a friend of yours in the party. After all, they're not your friends. You know they despise you."

Hasseldene winced.

"I'll speak to Wharton," he said in a low voice.

"Do. Only remember this; if I don't get the invitation Marjorie will know all about the Greyfriars affair before she leaves Greyfriars."

Hasseldene nodded without speaking and walked away. There was a dark cloud upon his brow, but the Hermine bully was satisfied expression. He was pretty certain now that he would gain his point.

Hoffman Explains!

"LET'S go, and see how Billy Bester's getting on with his fishing," said Bob Cherry, as the chains of the Remove left Hasseldene with Balstrode. "I shall be glad to see that pike when he catches it."

Nugent grinned.

"Hoffman has some japs on there, but I'm blessed if I quite see it!" he remarked.

"The japsiness is inexplicable," said the nabob. "I do not think that our Germanic chain would tell the untruthfulness, but I do not see how he found a pike in the building plane and conveyed it to the pondful water."

"Well, let's go and see."

Buster was still on the plank fishing when the chains returned to the spot. There were fellows watching him with japes grim, and the broadest grin was on the face of Fritz Hoffman. Some signs of impatience were growing visible on the face of Billy Bester, and they seemed to afford some additional amusement to the spectators.

"Got any pike yet, Banty?" called out Bob Cherry.

Buster shook his head without looking round.

"No, Cherry. I'm beginning to think that Hoffman made a mistake, and there isn't any pike in this pond."

"Oh, stick it out!" said Nugent encouragingly.

"Well, I've stuck it out for about a blessed hour," said Buster. "It gets a bit tiring in the long run, you know. If one of you fellows would get me a jug—"

"Buster stick to the sea."

"Well, it's not easy to catch pike with a tin can."

"A really experienced fisherman can do anything."

"Yes; but, as a matter of fact, I'm not so experienced as all that," said Billy Buster, pulling his primitive fishing implement out of the water again and swinging it landwards. "I don't think I shall try any longer. Hello, what's that! My can knocked against something, I believe."

"Ow, you young villain!"

The muddy can had certainly knocked against something, and that "something" was the chin of Frank Nugent. The short-sighted angler had swung it ashore without seeing where it was going.

"Ow!" roared Nugent, as the muddy water splashed over his face.

"What's the matter there?"

"Mashed, you young idiot! You've smothered me with mud!" roared Nugent.

"I'm sorry, Nugent. I did not see you. It's a great affliction to be so extremely short-sighted."

"The short-sightedness falls mostly upon your worthy friends, I think," remarked Hurree Singh. "The foolishness of our worthy Bunter in the pondful water would be about the proper superfluities now, Nugent."

"I'll bet his nose's the quad!"

"Here, keep your nose on!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "I say, two fellows, hold him, you know. It was an unfortunate accident, and I'm sorry!"

"I'll make you sorry!"

"You shouldn't get too near me when I'm fishing."

"By Jove, he's right there!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Here, Frank, take my handkerchief and mop it off. Bunter can't help being a silly one, you know."

Nugent snipped off the end. He was never in an angry mood for long, and Billy Bester knew he was quite safe as he came off the plank. The amateur fisherman was looking very disappointed with the result of his fishing.

"I say, Hoffman," he said, "are you absolutely sure about that pike?"

Hoffman grinned approvingly.

"Most young friend, I am quite sure," he said. "I put the pike into the water and made two bands. I threw it in, I should say, and I saw it sink."

"Where did you get it?"

Hoffman pointed over to the spot where the clearing operations were going on. Bunter looked puzzled, as well he might.

"But how could you find a pike there? It was in the river!"

"Name, name Bunter."

"Then where was it?"

"In to proceed. To workmen turned it up in digging dens. They turned up several of them, and I took 'em."

Buster looked amazed. He did not know much about the habits of fish, but even he was amazed at hearing of pike being turned up by workmen in excavating.



"Dear me! What is that?" It was a chirping voice, but it nearly started the Harrovies into dropping the catch containing Buletade. Marjorie Handstone was coming along the passage, and she stopped and stared at the catch.

"Was it alive?" he asked.
 "Ah, yes," said Hoffman innocently. "Well, I did not tell you that it was alive, did I, mein Funtzer?"
 "Buntzer gave a hurl of wrath. "You—yes, Dutch villain! Have you let me go fishing there for an hour for a dead fish?"
 "It was not a dead fish."
 "Ah! Are you off your nocker! If it wasn't a live fish, it must have been a dead one, master's it?" howled Buntzer.

"Ah! You make me mistake," said Hoffman blandly. "I did not tell you that it was a fish, mein friend Funtzer."
 "Ah! You said it was a pike."
 "That is true."
 "Well, isn't a pike a fish?"
 "Ah, some kind of pike is fish, and some kind is not fish. To kind of pike that is turned out of foundation of old packing is not likely to be van fish, Funtzer. It was to kind of pike to soldier use in older time."

Billy Baxter glared at the German through his glasses, incapable of speech for the moment.

He remembered now to have heard that the workmen had come upon the site of an old building, and that some weapons of the Middle Ages had been found there.

But that he had been fishing with a tin-can for an hour for a sole such as the fishermen of the Middle Ages used in warfare was a discovery that came as a shock to the young angler. The chains of the Revoove burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It was an old pike you checked into the pond!"

"Ah, yes, I did not say that it was fishy pike. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you beast! How I've wasted an hour—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows, I wish you'd just said that German found in the water," said Billy Baxter. "I wish you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The amateur fisherman glared round

him wrathfully and strode away. A yell of laughter followed him.

"Oh, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Fancy Billy Buntzer fishing for an hour for an old pike! It's too funny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was funny indeed."

"Yes, Ho! It was as funny as your face," said Bob Cherry, "and that's saying really a great deal, you know!"

"Quite comical," purred Harrove Singh. "The foolishness of the joke was only equalled by the foolishness of the august countenance of our worthy Germanal friend!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Baxter was stalking away wrathfully when Harry Wharton overtook him. Harry had not forgotten Handstone's words at the gate, and this was an opportunity of speaking to Buntzer alone which might not recur again before they met Marjorie in the study at tea. He tapped the young angler on the shoulder.

"Hallo!" said Baxter, looking round.

"I think you've a beastly rotten cad if you want to know, and I think—"

"It's I, Baxter!" said Harry, laughing.

"Oh, is it you, Wharton? I thought I was speaking to Hoffman," said Baxter, wiping his spectacles. "Wasn't it a beastly mean trick?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I want to speak to you, Buntzer."

"Come into the tackleshop. We can talk more comfortably there, Wharton."

Harry laughed.

"I think I can speak here very well, Buntzer. Besides, I don't want you to gurge just now, as we're standing a really ripping tea in the study to Miss Handstone, and I want you to do it justice."

Baxter's eyes glistened.

"You can rely on me to do that, Wharton."

"Yes, I think I can, Buntzer. But I want to speak to you about—"

"About the stopping? You can leave

that entirely to me, Wharton. Just hold out the cash, and I'll do the rest. You can trust me to get the best in both quality and quantity for the cash."

"It wasn't that I was—"

"Oh, you mean the cooking! Of course, I'm only too ready to do anything in that line. If it's sausage and bacon, I'll turn them out absolutely perfect."

"No, it's not the cooking; it's about Handstone."

"What about him?" asked Baxter, with a visible decrease of interest in the matter.

"Why, you remember about that moneylender business? You found Handstone and that Sherry house in my study the other day, and—"

"Oh, yes! I know all about it. It happened to hear—"

"Yes, you usually happen to hear a fellow's private affairs!" said Harry, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"Never mind that now, though. I want you to be careful not to say a word on the subject before Miss Handstone."

"Doesn't Vandell's sister know?"

"Of course she doesn't! I want you to be very careful not to let a hint escape you about the matter. Don't mention it."

"Why, of course I shan't, Wharton! I think you might trust my discretion in a matter like that!" said Baxter reproachfully.

"Well, I suppose I shall have to," said Harry, not very satisfied. "Only please do be careful, Buntzer!"

"Of course. By the way, does Marjorie know about your paying the Sherry and getting Handstone out of the lot?"

"No, of course not!"

"Why don't you tell her, then?"

"Tell her!" said Harry, starting.

"Why should I tell her?"
 "Well, you like her, you know, and that would make her think a lot of you," said Baxter. "I don't understand why you don't tell her."

"I dare say you don't, Hunter. I don't expect you to. But you'll remember what I've said, won't you?"

"Oh, certainly, Wharton! I should be sorry to do anything you didn't like, especially as you're bigger than I am. If you like, I'll get up a year to tell Miss Haseldene to turn her thoughts from the subject altogether, so that she couldn't possibly suspect anything. I'll tell her what a fine chap Vaseline is, and that he has never dreamed of borrowing money from a money-lender, and that he doesn't know any man named Isaac—"

"Yes, young idiot!" exclaimed Harry, shaking him. "You'll give the whole thing away at the start—"

"Don't shake me like that, Wharton! You may make my spectacles fall off; and if you break them, you'll have to pay for them!"

"You're not to say a word on the subject at all! You understand?"

"Oh, certainly! I'll do exactly as you like; but I think my plan was a good one, all the same," said Hunter, with an injured air. "I'm an awfully deep chap when I like. But I'll do just as you say."

"Mind you do!" said Harry, not very confidently.

And he left Billy Hunter, feeling far from amused in his mind that the secret was safe in the keeping of the Owl of the Remorse.

So Much for Balstrode!

"**A**NYTHING the matter, Haseldene?"

Harry Wharton asked the question as he rejoined Marjorie's brother. Haseldene was certainly looking as if something was the matter. There was a dark shade of trouble on his brow and an uneasy, shifty look in his eyes.

"No, not exactly," said Haseldene.

"But—"

"He stopped, and a wave of colour came into his cheeks. Harry looked at him curiously.

"What is it, Haseldene?"

"Do you mind if Balstrode comes to tea with us in No. 1?" asked Haseldene abruptly.

"Balstrode! You don't want him."

"He has asked me."

"That's no reason why he should come."

"Well, he wants to come, and—and, if you don't mind, Wharton, I should like you to ask him," said Haseldene in a low voice.

Harry looked at him straight in the eye.

"I will ask him if you really want me to," he said; "but I'd rather you spoke out plainly. You don't want him, and I know you don't want Marjorie to have too much to say to him. Why do you want me to ask him? Has he threatened you?"

"Oh, I'm not afraid of a licking!" said Haseldene, with a faint smile.

"It's not that."

"You had better tell me what it is, then."

"Well, if you don't let him come, he's going to tell Marjorie about that—that rotten business with Isaac, the money-lender."

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"The rotten end!"

"He says he won't be left out of a licking!" said Haseldene. "Of course, he can tell her if he likes. There's no stopping him, and you know he's an obstinate brute!"

"I don't know. If we give way to him on this point, he may grow worse instead of better. We can't have him

boasting the show in our study. If I would put up with it, the others wouldn't. Bob Cherry would sling him out, and there would be a row."

"I—I suppose so."

"Giving way to him would only make him cocky about it, and he would come into the study to denounce, and there would be trouble."

"But if we don't—"

"There may be another way of dealing with the matter. The car is going to call for your sister at half-past seven?"

"Yes. But before then?"

"We may be able to keep Balstrode quiet until then," said Harry. "Come along to the study and let's talk it over. The others are there."

"Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Harrow Singh were in Study No. 1, making last preparations for the coming celebration. Marjorie was to come to tea at six, and there was not much time to spare. A junior's study, especially one in which he follows shared quarters, was not usually a tidy place, and there was enough to do.

"Hallo! Have you come to lead a band?" said Bob Cherry. "Where's Hunter?"

"I left him in the Close."

"That's all very well. That fender is jolly dirty, and he ought to be polishing it. We can't be disgraced by a dirty fender while Hunter goes snuffing about in the Close," said Bob Cherry.

"I'll tackle it," said Haseldene.

"Well, that's a good fellow. It's not exactly the thing to set a great polishing fender, but it's all for the good of the cause. What are you looking like a boiled owl about, Harry?"

"I wasn't aware that I was looking like a boiled owl, Bob," said Harry mildly.

"Well, you've got something on your mind. Get it off quick and then get on with the washing!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's about Balstrode."

"I say, you fellows—Hunter looked into the study—"would you like me to do any shopping for you?"

"Yes, and Bob—"

"Take this tea-telling note and buy three stags from Mrs. Minnie. If you don't get good value for the money, we'll skin you!"

"You know I do shopping better than any of you chaps, Cherry," said Hunter. "I like to be obliging, and I'll go at once. I'll put off finishing that prize lot for a bit, for your sakes."

"And for the sake of the feed!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Mind, if you cut anything on the way back, we'll pulverise you!"

"I think you can rely on me, Cherry."

"All right. Good!"

"Yes; but—"

"Do off!" roared Bob Cherry, picking up a cricket stump.

And Hunter dodged the passage and disappeared.

"Now then, Wharton, what's that about Balstrode?"

"He's going to make trouble unless we ask him to tea."

"Is he?" said Bob Cherry, with a winking look. "Let him come into the study, that's all! He'll get out of it again jolly quick."

"It isn't that. He knows about a scrape Haseldene was in with the Sherry Isaac, and he says he'll tell you understand?"

Bob Cherry became grave at once.

"I savvy! The rotter!"

"He is a rotter! Now, Miss Haseldene isn't going until half-past seven. It's going on for six now. How are we going to shut up Balstrode for an hour and a half?"

"Suppose we shall have to let him come to tea," said Nugent, looking at Harry.

"The letter took his head decidedly."

"If we do, he will want to leave the study, and we shall have a row before the feed is over. You know Balstrode."

"What's to be done, then?"

"Can't stop him jangling for an hour and a half?" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of his head. "I don't see how we're to let him, Wharton."

"The solution is difficult," said the rabob philosophically. "Perhaps if we are careful in the steamed rotter, he will hold the long-reins."

"We can't trust him, and we're not going to knuckle under to the brute," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I've thought of another way; but there isn't much time. Will you go and find the rotter, linky, and bring him here? Say we want him."

"Certainly!"

"When you come back, and he comes in, get behind him in case he tries to bolt."

"You wish to take the rotter trapfully by an astounded strategem?"

"Exactly."

The rotter beamed.

"You may trustfully rely upon my disinterestedness," he said. "The honourable rotter shall fall into the trapful snare with the blindness of the owl!"

"I know the Nabob of Bhangpur left the study. The chairs of the Remorse looked rather dubious. They did not see the drift of Harry's plan."

"What are you trying to do with him?" asked Bob Cherry. "Do with him up with a tablecloth and shove him into the coal-bunker, you know. He's too big."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm not thinking of disposing of him like that. I was thinking of the usual garret over the bar-room."

"The room where young Barker got shut up and wasn't found for hours?"

"That's it. We know that a fellow might make a fearful row there, without anybody hearing a sound. If we get Balstrode into the garret and turn the key, we need not let him out until after Miss Haseldene has gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He could stamp and yell as much as he liked, but nobody would hear him."

"He would cut up fearfully rusty afterwards."

"Let him! I suppose we're not afraid of him?"

"Oh, no! He couldn't do anything. But do you think he's likely to fall into the trap so easily?" said Nugent doubtfully.

"Why not? He expects to be asked here, as he thinks he's got Haseldene under his thumb. He's bound to come with Harrow Singh."

"Well, that's true."

"When he comes in, we—Hallo, here he is!"

There were steps in the passage, and Balstrode looked into the study. The dusky face of Harrow Singh was grinning over his shoulder. Balstrode's face wore a smearing expression.

"Hallo!" he said. "I hear you want to see me."

"Quite a mistake," said Bob Cherry. "Look in the glass, old chap, and then ask yourself the question: 'Could anybody possibly want to see you?'"

"Look here, you suit for me!"

"I want to speak to you," said Harry Wharton. "You have been bulging Haseledine, and you want to force yourself upon Miss Haseledine."

Balstrode gave a shrug.

"I'm not the kind of chap you can safely leave out in the cold."

"I understand you. Now understand me. We are not going to be threatened into asking you here, and we don't want you to come to tea. Is that plain enough?"

"Yes, that's plain enough!" said Balstrode bravely.

"And now, what are you going to do?"

"Do?" said Balstrode, with an evil grin. "Why, since Miss Haseledine's friends must be looked over so carefully to see whether they're up to the mark, I think it's my duty to enlighten her as to her brother's character. A swindling fellow who owes money to a Shenny creditor."

"You mean that you will tell Miss Haseledine about the scrape her brother got into?"

"Yes, I will."

"That's enough. We shall take jolly good care you don't have a chance! Collar the cad!"

The Removites were only waiting for the word. They rushed forward. Balstrode, realising his danger, made a spring to get out of the study. He ran right into Horree Singh, who closed his arms about the bully of the Removite and whirled him into the study again.

"Let me go, you cad!"

"Collar him!"

Balstrode was collared. In a twinkling he was on the floor, with the Removites sprawling over him.

The bully of the Removite struggled desperately. He was strong and muscular, and it was no easy task to secure him. But secured he was at last.

"Give me the cord out of the drawer!" panted Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry dragged out the cord. It was knotted round Balstrode's ankles and wrists, and then the chains of the Removite rose, and left the bully writhing on the carpet.

"My hat!" panted Nugget. "The rotter is a strong beast! I came very near banging his head on the floor. Hold your row, Balstrode!"

"Help!" roared Balstrode.

Bob Cherry thrust a cake of soap into his mouth, and he spluttered into silence. Harry Wharton glanced round the study.

"We shall have to wrap him in something," he remarked. "We can't carry him up as he is. A sack would be about the thing."

"I'll get one of the old sacks out of the box-room," said Nugget.

"Good! Cut off, then!"

Nugget departed, and in a few moments he was back again with the sack. It was drawn over Balstrode's feet, and the bully of the Removite was thrust fairly into it.

"We won't suffocate you," said Harry Wharton reassuringly. "You'll be let out in a few minutes. Not that it would matter much!"

"Be-r-r-r-r!"

"The tonguefulness of our worthy driver seems to be tied by the poppet-anns," said Horree Singh. "I will fasten the sack. Now take it up, my worthy friends."

Wharton and Nugget took Balstrode's shoulders, and Bob Cherry and Haseledine his feet. They carried him out of the study.

"Dear me! What is that?"

It was a sweet voice, but it nearly startled the Removites into dropping

the sack. Marjorie Haseledine was just coming along the passage, and she stopped and looked in amazement at the sack carried by the porters.

Tea in Study No. 1!

FOR a moment the chains of the Removite were confused, and in that moment of confusion they came near giving themselves away. Harry Wharton was the first to recover himself.

"Oh, it's only some rubbish we are carrying away," he said. "Will you excuse us for a few minutes, Miss Haseledine?"

The girl smiled.

"Certainly."

"Come on, chaps!" said Harry Wharton.

He was afraid some sound or movement might come from the sack.

The Removites rushed it along the passage.

Marjorie looked after them with a somewhat puzzled expression. She guessed that the Removites would probably tidy up their quarters in honour of her visit. But she could not imagine where so much rubbish could come from as to fill a sack.

But the sack was out of her sight in a few moments.

"My hat! That was a narrow shave!" gasped Frank Nugget, as they reached the stairs which led up past the box-room to the dimmed garret.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"It was, rather. But I'm sure she never suspected. What do you think, Vanston?"

"Well, naturally Marjorie wouldn't

expect to see us carrying a fellow about in a sack," said Haseledine, grinning.

"I don't see how she could possibly suspect."

"That's all right, then?"

"Bring him up," said Harry Wharton, ascending the stairs. "We don't want anybody to see us. We mayn't get off so safely next time."

"Right you are!"

The four chaps here Balstrode up the stairs. It was a heavy task, but they accomplished it, and Balstrode was heaped down at last in the remote garret.

There, the sack was taken off. The key was in the outside of the lock. Harry Wharton twisted the wrists of the scowling bully of the Removite.

"What does all this foolery mean?" snarled Balstrode, spitting out the soap.

"It's not foolery; we're in deadly earnest," said Harry quietly. "You're not going to have an opportunity of giving Haseledine away."

"I—I didn't really mean it—"

"We can't trust him!" said Haseledine quickly.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I wasn't thinking of trusting him. You are going to remain locked up here, Balstrode, till Miss Haseledine is gone. Then we'll come and let you out."

"You dare not! You—"

"You will soon see us as to that!" said Harry disdainfully. "We are going to lock you up now. We have untied your hands so that you can set yourself free, but you won't be able to get out of the room till we choose. Come on, chaps!"

"I'll shoot! I'll bring the masons

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"Whiston, is it?"

The chains of the Remore left the garret, and the key turned in the lock outside.

Baldredo yelled after them furiously, but his yell died away by the time they were as far down as the basement. Down the lower stair not a sound followed them. They went along the passage to the study.

Marjorie greeted them with a sweet smile.

Billy Baxter had just come in with the provisions, and Jerome Singh was laying the cloth. Naugat had produced the bottles on the fire and Rover produced the trout. The array of good things on the table was really attractive, and Remore's eyes wandered to them every moment.

It was not long before tea was made, and the business and their fair share set down in a well-spread table.

Marjorie poured out the tea and—for a wonder—there were sufficient cups to go round. Bob Cherry had packed two or three tins in a satchel up the mountain. Dick was falling, and Harry drew the blind while Bob Cherry lit the pipes. The fire went a merry glow into the study, and the light glowed on the white cloth and the shining crockery. The scene was a very cozy one, and it was no wonder that the junior's faces were beaming, and that Marjorie Hazelton was all smiles.

"Did you catch the pile, after all?" she asked Billy Baxter, as she filled Remore's cup for the second time.

Baxter smiled and.

"Yes, I didn't catch it exactly," he said. "Of course, I should have had it if I had gone on long enough."

Bob Cherry chuckled, but Baxter's inquiring look kept the chains of the Remore silent as to the real nature of the pile for which the amateur angler had fished. They would not give him away to Marjorie.

"Ah, I'm sorry you did not catch it," said Marjorie. "I fear you are getting up a great fishing competition in the school."

"Yes, I was," said Baxter, passing between two wastebills of readiness to speak. "I was, Miss Marjorie, but I'm afraid I shall have to put it off indefinitely now."

"Oh, don't do that!" said Bob Cherry. "It will be an awful disappointment for the Remore."

Baxter shook his head.

"No, you're wrong, Cherry. I don't believe they will be disappointed at all. There's no room for big ideas in the

Geoffrey's Remore—that's what it really is. I can't get a single fellow to enter. They have the shock to say they want to see the prices, as well as the proceeds, before they pay over the entrance fee."

"Well, that's rather unreasonable," said Hazelton.

"The unreasonable is only equalled by their knowledge of our own wonderful historical drama," said Harry Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I think it's unreasonable," said Billy Baxter. "I can't buy the price all I've collected the entrance fee. I think that ought to be plain to the driest intellect. It's a shame to have so much money. I think it seems. Some of them raised objections to my having my expenses out of the fees. As if a chap could be expected to get up a fishing competition for nothing."

"Too bad," said Harry Whiston.

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"By the way, where is your friend Baldredo?" asked Marjorie, turning to her brother. "I thought he was coming to tea."

Hazelton coloured.

"He was here just before you came in, Miss Marjorie," said Bob Cherry quickly. "But he had to go. He would have stayed if he could possibly have managed it, but he really had no choice in the matter."

The girl nodded.

"I didn't know Baldredo was a friend of yours, Vaseline," said Baxter, looking up. "You usually seemed an utter head down to me, especially after that affair with the Sherry."

Harry Whiston looked dejected at Baxter across the table, but the Owl of the Remore was too sharp-sighted to see it. Bob Cherry stamped on his feet under the table, and Billy Baxter gave a nod.

"Owl! Who tried on my foot?"

"Harry" said Bob Cherry, with a withering look.

"That's all very well, Cherry, but you've lost my foot. I want's going to say anything about Hazelton's affair with the Sherry either—no!"

"Sorry again!" said Bob Cherry.

Marjorie gave Bob a curious glance and rose from the table.

"I think it is about time I said 'good-bye,'" she remarked. "It has just struck a quarter past seven, and I have to say good-bye to Mrs. Locks."

"We're going to see you off at the gate," said Hazelton.

"Thank you very much for this nice tea," said the girl, with a bright smile. "It is very good to have you in the study. I wish I lived at Geoffrey's."

"By Jove, that would be ripping!" said Bob Cherry, so heartily that Marjorie coloured and laughed.

"Well, I will run away now. I shall my good-bye at the gate, then!"

The chains of the Remore gathered round Hazelton and bestowed a series of hearty smacks on his back. Hazelton staggered.

"What the dickens!"

"Don't be alarmed," said Bob Cherry reassuringly. "My dear chap, a fellow who has a sister like that ought to be congratulated. That's what it means."

"Well, you can't encourage the without losing my special relations next time," said Hazelton, rubbing his shoulder.

"I think Baxter ought to be congratulated," said Naugat thoughtfully. "He nearly gave the show away, about all."

"Yes, the young villain!" said Harry Whiston. "I believe Marjorie suspected something, and rose from the table as suddenly as if she had to place as in a difficulty. It could be like her. If you get within speaking distance

again, Remore, we'll send you into the pond head-first, to look for your pipe!"

"But really, Wharton—"

"Oh, well!"

Billy Baxter made himself scarce. The chains of the Remore went down to the gates of Geoffrey's, and a few minutes later Marjorie came down in the open car. She shook hands all round with the chains and kissed her brother affectionately, and the other fellows looking on with envious eyes.

"Good-bye!" said the girl, waving her hand as the car moved.

The junior took off their caps, and Bob Cherry, in the acceptance of his sports, raised his hand to his head. The car drove off and the duck hid Marjorie. The junior returned towards the house.

"About that net for Baldredo, I think," said Harry Whiston, with a laugh. "It's been a jolly afternoon, hasn't it?"

"It has," said Bob Cherry with a half-smile. "I say, Hazelton, when is your sister coming down again?"

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Printed in Great Britain and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Advertisement Press, Ltd., The Post-Office, 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Proprietors, 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C.4. Distributors: Messrs. J. B. Morley & Co., Ltd., 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C.4. For an order, send 6d. to any of our agents, or to Messrs. J. B. Morley & Co., Ltd., 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C.4. General News agency, Ltd., 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C.4.

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