

GREAT NEWS FOR READERS! *See page 5.*

The **GEM** 2^D

In This Issue :

RIVAL CAMPERS!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

ROLLING IN MONEY!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Also Many Other
Grand Attractions—
and **SIXTEEN MORE**
ARMAMENTS STAMPS.



UNDER CANVAS!

THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE

5 More Bikes to be Won

2000 Other Tip-Top Prizes

FREE! FOR COLLECTING STAMPS! FREE!

KEEP at it, pals, and collect all the Armaments Stamps you can. There are still Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to be given away in the July contest—for collecting the stamps the GEM is printing every week. There are five different kinds to be collected now—**BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS**, and so on. Cut them out and try to get as many others as you can—all those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines, and Searchlights, which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are sixteen more stamps on this page! Add them to your collection right away, and remember there are more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Modern Boy" and "Magnet." And here's—

SAVE THESE STAMPS!

A GOOD CHANCE! This week's "Magnet" contains **FOUR BONUS HOWITZER STAMPS**, in addition to sixteen others—making twenty in all.

At the end of July we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. And then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. All second-prize winners will be asked to choose their own gifts.

Don't send any stamps yet! We will tell you how and where when the time comes. The rules governing the contest have already appeared and will be repeated later.

OVERSEAS READERS are in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers for whom there will be a special closing date.

(N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments Stamps with readers of "Boy's Cinema," "Triumph," "Champion," "Modern Boy," "Magnet," "Sports Budget," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller." Stamps can be cut from all these papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize or share, of course.)



**RIPPING LONG YARN OF RAGGING AND RIVALRY AT WINDYRIDGE,
WHERE TOM MERRY & CO. AND THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS ARE IN CAMP!**



From the tents Rookwood fellows suddenly swarmed. They were armed with pillows and bolsters and they started to belabour the unlucky St. Jim's fellows with right good will. Thump, thump, thump! "Yaroooh! Oh crikey!" roared the hapless raiders.

**CHAPTER 1.
A Night Alarm!**

"YAW-AW-AW!"

It was a sleepy yawn, and it came from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of St. Jim's.

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

Arthur Augustus yawned, and then he opened his eyes drowsily and blinked about him in the gloom.

For the moment he imagined himself in the Fourth Form dormitory at St. Jim's—until the whisper of the night breeze in the gorse, and the murmur of the waves on the beach below the camp reached his ears. He remembered then that St. Jim's was far away, and that he was in camp at Windyridge.

With the remembrance came a vague sort of feeling that something unusual had awakened him, and he sat up suddenly in his sleeping bag.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured, groping for his eyeglass and jamming it into his eye. "Some-thin' wakened me—some-thin' outside. I must wake Blake."

And the swell of the Fourth reached over to wake Jack Blake, who was sleeping beside him in the tent.

The next moment a muffled sort of yelp sounded—and it came from Blake.

Arthur Augustus had intended to nudge his chum into wakefulness and he had succeeded. Unfortunately, his nudge had been rather violent, and it had also taken Jack Blake full on the nose.

Hence Blake's yelp.

"Bai Jove! For goodness' sake don't make such a wow, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus in a stealthy, warning whisper. "Quiet! I—"

"Quiet! I'll give you quiet!" snorted Blake, sitting up suddenly. "Was it you buffed me on the nose just then, Gussy, you ass?"

"Wathah not, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus in surprise. "I merely nudged you—"

"Then it was you!" hooted Blake. "You've thumping well scratched half the skin off my nose, you dangerous maniac!"

"I merely poked you with my fingah—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

**By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

Rip-snorting rags are the order of the day when the rival campers of St. Jim's and Rookwood get to grips! And a series of mysterious thefts adds not a little to the excitement!

"Well, now I'm going to poke you with my fist!" breathed Jack Blake in deadly earnest.

And he hit out where he judged D'Arcy's face to be.

Smack!

"Yawoooh!"

To judge from the wild howl of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Blake's judgment was excellent. At all events, Arthur Augustus howled and fell back on his bed.

But he did not remain there. Blake had hit hard, and Arthur Augustus was hurt. He was also wrathful.

"You feahful wottah, Blake!" he gasped. "Put up your fists, you wuffian! Ow! By dose! I will give you a feahful thwashin' for that! Bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus started to do his best to keep his word. He stumbled out of the bedclothes and struck out at Blake's vague form. The next moment the two juniors were at it hammer-and-tongs.

For some seconds they thumped away at each other, and then somehow they both found their feet and went staggering and stumbling blindly about the tent in a deadly embrace.

Even a full-sized bell tent was scarcely a suitable place for such conduct—especially in the darkness, and with several other fellows sleeping in it.

At all events, there arose sundry alarmed yells as Arthur Augustus and his opponent stumbled about, rudely awakening the sleepers from slumber.

Then the two struggling forms went down again—full on top of the recumbent form of George Herries—and George Herries did more than yell.

He struck out with both fists, yelling excitedly as he did so.

"Go for 'em, chaps! Wake up and smash 'em!" he roared. "It's those Rookwood rotters raiding us! Wake—Yaroooh!"

Herries' alarmed yells ended abruptly in a strangled howl as something—it was Blake's elbow—was jammed into his mouth.

But by this time the rest of the juniors were fully aroused, and Herries' excited yells made them jump to the same conclusion that Herries had—that it was a midnight raid of their Rookwood rivals.

This was natural enough, for the rival juniors from Rookwood were camped close to the St. Jim's campers, and already there had been plenty of rags and raids between them.

At all events, the St. Jim's juniors jumped to that conclusion, and they sprang up and rushed to Herries' aid—naturally mistaking Blake and D'Arcy for the enemy in the darkness.

The next moment the tent resounded with yells and thumps as the fight became a whirling scramble of arms and legs.

But it did not last very long, fortunately. Jack Blake grasped the position at once, and he raised his voice in a wild yell.

"Stop, you asses! Can't you see it's me?" he bellowed. "Chuck it, for goodness' sake! It isn't a raid at all!"

The rest of the juniors were far too busy to see anything just then, but they heard Jack Blake's words, and they stopped suddenly.

As he felt himself released Jack Blake fumbled for a match, and, after a struggle, he managed to light the hurricane lamp on the tentpole.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

In the flickering light from the lantern the St. Jim's campers blinked at each other rather blankly—at least, all did with the exception of Blake and D'Arcy. Those juniors were looking battered and wrathful.

"Oh, you—you awful idiots!" panted Blake.

"You—you burbling jabberwocks!"

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You—you silly idiots to wash—"

"Then—then it wasn't a Rookwood raid at all?" ejaculated Digby, staring blankly at the irate faces of Blake and D'Arcy. "Someone shouted, too—"

"It was that ass Herries!" snorted Blake, glaring at George Herries. "He lost his silly head—"

"Well, what would you do if you woke up suddenly and found two silly maniacs fighting over you?" said Herries warmly. "I naturally thought it was a raid—"

"Raid fiddlesticks!" snorted Blake, feeling a rapidly swelling eye tenderly. "Anyway, it was all that dummy Gussy's fault, of course—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"We might have known it was old Gussy!" grinned Digby. "How did he start it?"

"Weally, Dig—"

"Jabbed me on the boko and woke me up!" snorted Blake. "Blessed if I can think why we don't chain the dangerous animal up at night like young Wally does Pongo!"

"Weally, Blake! If you dare to chawactewise me as an animal," said Arthur Augustus indignantly, "I shall be reluctantly obliged to thwash you again! I have already told you that I merely poked you—"

"You scratched my blessed nose—"

"If I scwatched your nose I am sowwy, Blake," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "My object was just to dig you in the wibs and wake you up."

"But why should you wake me up at all, you burbling dummy?"

"If you had allowed me to explain I could have told you that and pwevented this wumpus," said Arthur Augustus coldly. "I woke you up because I awakened to heah someone pwoolin' about outside the tent. Natuwally, I imagined it was a Woodwood waid, and I—"

"Rubbish! You must have been dreaming!" said Blake scornfully. "Anyway for goodness' sake, let's get to sleep now. You've been hearing things in your dreams, and—and—"

Blake broke off abruptly and turned his head. At that moment he himself heard something—a slight rustle at the tent flap behind him.

The rest of the St. Jim's Fourth Formers also heard it, and glanced towards the flap.

Then their jaws dropped, their eyes bulged, and their hair rose on their heads.

For the flap had suddenly bulged and burst open, and through the aperture a head was poked.

It was not a boy's head—not even a human head—it was the huge, ugly head of a most ferocious-looking bull!

CHAPTER 2.

Startling!

THERE was no doubt about it.

In petrified horror the campers stared at it, speechless and utterly unnerved.

It was an enormous head certainly, but in the flickering light of the lantern it looked gigantic

and grotesque. The wicked-looking eyes seemed to glint evilly at the horror-stricken campers.

Then Blake suddenly found his voice, and he gave a yell.

"A bull! Great Scott! Look out, chaps!"

The next instant the wildest confusion reigned in the bell-tent. The juniors lost their heads completely. Amidst howls of alarm they made a combined rush to escape from the tent—and especially from the bull.

Unfortunately, they all seemed to make for the same spot, and in a moment they were mixed up in a struggling, yelling heap as they strove to crawl under the canvas at the back of the tent.

But worse was to come.

For several whirling seconds they fought to get out, and then quite abruptly the tent itself sagged and collapsed upon them.

Luckily, the lantern was a candle-lantern, and it merely went out at once. But now the hapless campers were in deep darkness, and, under the billowy mass of canvas, they fought and struggled, amid a perfect medley of yells and howls.

By this time the nearer tents were alarmed, and presently pyjama-clad forms were running towards the scene of the disturbance.

Tom Merry was the first fellow on the scene, and he stared in some amazement at the billowy mass of canvas.

"What the thump——" he began.

"What's the matter?" interrupted Monty Lowther, rushing up just then, with Manners and Bernard Glyn at his heels. "Great Scott! Are Blake & Co. underneath?"

"Sounds like it," chuckled Tom Merry. "The blessed tent must have collapsed on them somehow. Lend a hand, for goodness' sake, before the clumsy asses are smothered."

"Ha, ha, ha! Right-ho!"

Other fellows were running up from everywhere now, and soon willing hands were at work. When the canvas was torn aside, it revealed the forms of the hapless Fourth Formers.

They sat up amid the ruins of the site, and gasped and panted and groaned, while they blinked in the light from the lanterns several fellows carried.

"What the thump's happened, Blake?" demanded Tom Merry. "Did the tent collapse while you were asleep?"

"Ow!" gasped Jack Blake, nursing his head, which had come into contact with the tent-pole. "Ow—ow! My—my head's broken, I think! Oh crumbs! Oh, my hat! Why, where's the—the bull?"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, where is the w'etched bull?" gasped Arthur Augustus, blinking about him dazedly. "Has it gone?"

"Has the beastly thing gone?" echoed George Herries, with a groan. "Ow-ow! It was awful!" "Great pip!"

The crowd stared at the hapless Fourth Formers.

"A bull, did you say?" gasped Tom Merry. "Don't talk rot, you fatheads! There's no bull here!"

"Thank goodness!" gasped Blake, staggering to his feet. "It—it was an awful brute! D-d-did you chaps see it go? It must have rushed in after us and pulled the dashed tent down!"

"Luckily, we spotted the brute!" said Herries, in deep relief. "Though it beats me why the beggar didn't charge when we were struggling beneath the tent."

"A bull!"

"Great pip!"

THE "GEM" OF THE CENTURY!

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First great yarn of a sparkling long series featuring the holiday fun and adventures of Tom Merry & Co. on a caravan tour. Travel with 'em—it's better than a real holiday!

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD

The thrilling story of Frank Richards' schooldays. Read of the famous "Magnet" author's first glimpse of Canada, and of his adventurous journey to his uncle's ranch in the backwoods of British Columbia.

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Meet the chums of St. Winifred's in this opening yarn of a powerful series! Their school is unique—it's an old wooden warship—the Benbow—anchored in a river!

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A novel feature in which George Kerr investigates a series of mysteries at St. Jim's. Read how he solves the mystery of "Mr. Lathom's Surprise Packet," and see if you can spot how the "criminal" gives himself away!

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The genius of the St. Jim's Shell gives the character readings of his schoolfellows, as observed in the stars. Figgins is the first to come under his astrological eye.

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In addition, "Laugh These Off," Readers' Prize Jokes, and Pen Pals.  
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BOOK YOUR COPY IN ADVANCE.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1.537.

A crowd of startled fellows stared blankly at the Fourth Formers.

"You must have dreamed it!" said Tom Merry, after a pause. "I saw no animal, and there's no sign of a bull. Half a minute!"

Taking a lantern from the hand of Manners, Tom started to scan the ground in the vicinity of the collapsed tent. He hunted carefully for some moments, and then he looked at Blake & Co. and chuckled.

"You dreamed it!" he repeated. "There isn't a hoof-mark anywhere. The ground's soft, and would have shown tracks if a bull had been here, you asses!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"It was a bull, I tell you!" hooted Blake wrathfully. "We all saw it and rushed to get out of the tent. Then the dashed tent fell on us!"

Tom Merry grinned. All the fellows were grinning now. Whether the Fourth Formers imagined they had seen a bull or not, it was clear—to them—that there had been no bull. The absence of tracks on the soft ground was clear proof of that.

Jack Blake breathed hard as he saw the grins.

"You—you burbling dummies!" he stuttered. "Can't you believe us, blow you? I tell you——"

"Spare us!" begged Monty Lowther. "Don't sing it over again. We want to get back to bed. You can tell us about the nightmare in the morning. By that time it will have become a field-mouse, I expect, or a bull-frog!"

"You—you——"

"Shush, shush! Never mind!" said Tom Merry soothingly. "We'll help you to get your tent up again. Come on, you chaps! All hands to the pump!"

Amid grins and chuckles the other campers helped the fuming Blake & Co. to re-erect their tent. It was done at last, and, leaving them to get their beds in order themselves, Tom Merry and the rest returned to their own tents.

"What a scream!" grinned Monty Lowther. "We'll pull their legs no end about this in the morning."

"It's rather queer, though," said Manners. "The fatheads must have seen something."

"Well, it is rather queer," admitted Tom Merry. "They couldn't all have dreamed the same dream. I—I suppose it couldn't have been anyone playing a joke?" he added, becoming suddenly thoughtful.

"That's what I was wondering," said Manners. "We mustn't forget those Rookwood chaps are on the warpath, though it's more likely to be those little imps in the Third—Wally and his pals."

"That's so," agreed Tom Merry, yawning. "Anyway, I'm going to sleep. Good-night, chaps!"

And with that Tom Merry blew out the light, and, tucking his blankets round him, composed himself to slumber again.

His chums in the tent were not long in doing likewise. They had had a tiring day, and they were tired, and within five minutes all were sleeping soundly.

But their sleep didn't last long.

Tom Merry awoke abruptly, with the sound of a most alarming yell ringing in his ears.

He was wide-awake in a flash, and as he blinked about, he was astonished to see Manners standing up, a lighted lantern in his hand, and on his face a look of petrified horror.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

He was staring with goggly eyes at the tent doorway, and the next instant Tom Merry jumped as he saw why.

The flap of the tent was drawn back, and in the aperture was framed the huge, shaggy head of a bull.

Even as Tom Merry looked, Manners gave another yell, and, dropping the lantern, he made a dive for the back of the tent.

"Look out, you chaps!" yelled Tom Merry. "A bull!"

He was after Manners in a flash, and after him scarcely a second later went another fellow in the tent.

Manners' first yell had brought them to wakefulness, just in time to see what Tom himself had seen. And Tom's yell was enough.

In one headlong dive they went after Tom Merry, and as in the case of Blake & Co., they all seemed to make for the same spot—the spot where Manners was already trying madly to scramble out.

The result was exactly the same as in the case of Blake & Co.

For several whirling seconds they struggled desperately, and then the tent sagged and flopped down upon them, burying them in its billowing folds.

If anything, the Shell fellows made more noise about it than Blake & Co. had done.

They fairly bellowed as they struggled and fought to escape from the bulging canvas, expecting every second that the bull would charge them.

At last Tom Merry succeeded in scrambling out, and as he glared anxiously about in the darkness, he fairly gulped with relief. No ominous bulk loomed up before him, but lights were flickering all about him from the vaguely-seen tents, and excited voices were calling.

"What's the matter?"

"What the thump's happening now?"

"What—Great Scott! It's another tent down!"

There was a yell as a crowd of pyjama-clad figures rushed up and surrounded Tom Merry, and he was bombarded with questions.

But doleful howls were still proceeding from the heaving mass of canvas, and instead of answering, Tom started to release his comrades. And the others lent a hand then.

Soon Tom's sleeping companions were all rescued, and then Tom Merry was ready to answer questions.

"What's happened, Merry?" demanded Kildare, who had been one of the first on the scene. "What's all the rumpus about?"

"It—it was a bull!"

"A what?"

There was a yell.

"Yes; it was a bull, right enough!" replied Tom Merry, blushing as he met Jack Blake's triumphant look. "Blake and his lot must have been right, after all. We saw it, didn't we, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather!"

"A whacking great brute!" added Manners, with a shudder. "I heard something moving outside—it woke me up, I suppose. Then I lit up, and—and I saw it at the tent flap, and I yelled."

"Well, my hat!" remarked George Alfred Grundy, in disgust. "I can understand Fourth Form kids seeing things and getting frightened, but when Shell chaps start seeing bogies——"



As Blake & Co. glanced towards the flap, their eyes bulged and their hair rose on their heads. For the flap had suddenly burst open, and through the aperture was poked the huge, ugly head of a most ferocious-looking bull!

"Oh, you shut up!" said Tom Merry crossly. "I tell you we saw it!"

"Bosh!" said Grundy. "Bunkum!"

"Hold on!" said Kildare, smiling. "We'll see if Merry's bull has left any tracks."

And he started to search the ground about the tent with the aid of his lantern.

Tom Merry and several other fellows joined in, and the vicinity of the tent was hunted for a radius of several yards.

But there were no tracks of an animal—only trampled human footmarks on the soft ground.

Tom Merry was looking more than puzzled when he gave it up at last.

"Well, this beats the band!" he gasped. "We couldn't possibly have been mistaken, you chaps. We saw it clearly."

"Well, there's been no bull here," said Kildare grimly. "It's queer. Twelve fellows could hardly have dreamed it."

"Phew!"

It certainly was queer. All the fellows were beginning to see that now, and their grins faded. The fellows in both tents could scarcely have all been mistaken, nor could they have dreamed the same dream—if it could have been a dream.

"It's someone playing a trick," said Kildare. "It looks like it, at all events. If it was, whoever did it won't dare to try it on again, I fancy. Back to bed, kids! Some of you help these chaps to get their tent up."

"Right-ho!"

Luckily the juniors' tents were situated well

away from the masters' quarters, and only one or two prefects had been aroused by the uproar.

Several Shell fellows helped Tom Merry & Co. to get their tent and tackle ship-shape, and the rest returned to their own quarters, excitedly discussing the strange happenings.

The fellows turned in quickly, but secretly quite a number resolved to sleep with one eye open—in case the bull paid them a visit!

The only fellow who did not seem at all disturbed by the strange affair was Wally D'Arcy of the Third Form.

That cheery youngster was chuckling as he walked back to his quarters with his chums, Curly Gibson, Jameson, and Frayne.

"What a scream!" he chortled gleefully. "I say, you chaps, we're looking into this!"

"Wha-a-t!"

"Don't look so funky!" grinned Wally. "We're going to bowl out the giddy bull, my pippins, and we'll see those old fogies in the Fourth and Shell never hear the last of this!"

"But—but the bull! It must have been a bull."

"Rot! It was those Rookwood chaps playing a trick, of course," said Wally confidently. "And we're going to bowl 'em out. Now, let's go and let old Pongo loose; the old chap will strain his throat if he goes on barking much longer. Come on!"

And Wally hurried through the darkness towards their tent, from which came the excited barking of Pongo, who had been disturbed by the

uproar, and his chums followed. They were feeling far from comfortable at the thought of Wally's programme, but they had the greatest faith in their leader.

Reaching the tent, Wally released Pongo, and very soon quietened him down.

Pongo was a very mischievous little dog indeed, and he was far from being well trained in most things. But he was well trained in one respect, and that was to keep still and quiet when his master desired it.

He was quiet now, save for a subdued whining as he trembled excitedly in his master's grip.

"Now," said Wally, as he explained the plan to his chums, "all we've got to do is to watch and keep quiet until those Rookwood chaps turn up—if they do turn up again. I fancy they will, though."

"But the bull?"

"Blow the bull!" chuckled Wally. "You'll know all about the bull presently."

"But—but—"

"Quiet!"

And with that Wally, still holding the excited Pongo, took up his position at the open flap of the tent, from where he had a good view of most of the tents, white and ghostly in the dim starlight. And his chums, with slippers on and coats over their pyjamas, joined him there, and in silence they waited.

CHAPTER 3.

The Bull!

"HARK!"
 "Quiet!"
 "But I—"
 "Shush! Not a word!"

The Schoolboy Impersonator!

William Wibley, of the Remove, is not much of a scholar, footballer or cricketer. But as an actor and impersonator, he has no equal at Greyfriars. If you want a good laugh, read how he makes Cecil Ponsonby, of Highcliffe—a rival school—suffer for his rascality, in

"PUNISHING PONSONBY!"

the 35,000-word super school story of Harry Wharton & Co., the cheery chums of Greyfriars, in

The MAGNET

Now on sale at all Newsagents 2d

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

"But I can hear—"

"Will you shurrup?" hissed Wally D'Arcy.

"But I can hear someone coming!" grunted Curly Gibson.

"Of course you can! So can we all!" breathed Wally in sulphurous accents. "Do you want them to hear us, you burbling dummy? Quiet! And, for goodness' sake, don't move till I give the word!"

"I wasn't going—"

"Dry up!"

There was such ferocity in Wally's low-breathed tones that Curly Gibson dried up, breathing hard.

The fags of the Third at St. Jim's had been waiting and watching for ten minutes or more now, and they were getting rather cramped in their uncomfortable kneeling position in the shelter of the tent. Moreover, their tempers were getting just a bit on edge—Wally because his followers would not keep silent, and his followers because they had little faith in his plan.

And as the long minutes passed that faith grew less and less. In the view of the fags, if the whole affair was a Rookwood rag, it was not likely to be tried on a third time.

But Wally thought differently, and was determined to keep watch until dawn if need be; and, as usual, he had his own way in the matter.

Then suddenly Pongo stiffened in his master's grasp, and his impatient whining and trembling increased in intensity. And the next moment Curly Gibson whispered:

"Hark!"

Footsteps and muttered voices had sounded from the darkness—faint, but unmistakable.

But all the fags had heard the sounds, and, after effectually "squashing" Curly, Wally turned a pair of keen eyes towards a dark copse fifty yards beyond the last tent.

Beyond the copse, some distance away, stood the Rookwood camp, and Wally knew the enemy would come from the darkness of the copse.

The next moment he saw that he was right.

Out of the darkness loomed two dark figures, and they seemed to be carrying a bulky object between them.

"Quiet!" breathed Wally again warningly. "You know what to do, Joe Frayne. When we rush 'em, you dash off and rouse those Shell and Fourth slackers."

"Right-ho! I'll—"

"Quiet!" hissed Wally.

Evidently Wally was taking no chances of his followers' voices being heard—whatever he was about his own.

In the dim starlight the two figures loomed close up, appearing big and burly, and even Wally wondered for the moment if they were men and not boys.

And then the fags heard a whispered voice:

"Here we are again! Quiet, now! We'll tackle some of those cheeky fags this time, and give them the fright of their lives!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yaas! I'll hang on to the old thing while you loosen the tent-pegs, Jimmy."

A couple of chuckles followed.

There was no doubt about it now. The first voice was the cheery voice of Jimmy Silver of the Classical Fourth of Rookwood, and the second was the drawling voice of Valentine Mornington, likewise of the Classical Fourth.

The next moment Wally gave the word.

"Now, chaps!"

At the same moment Pongo gave an unexpected wrench at his leash and sprang away, and it was Pongo who reached the Rookwood raiders first.

The next moment the silence of that peaceful summer's night was split by two startled yells.

Pongo was not by any means a ferocious dog—far from it. Certainly he could be dangerous on occasions. But in the main he was quite harmless. For all that, he had rather an unfortunate habit of nipping fellows' calves playfully.

He exercised his playful habit now on Jimmy Silver and Mornington.

With a semi-savage growl, he sprang at Jimmy Silver, nipping his calves neatly, and then, diving between Jimmy's legs and upsetting him, he snapped playfully at Mornington's legs.

"Ow, ow! Oh crumbs! Look out!" howled Jimmy Silver.

"Good gad!" gasped Mornington.

Jimmy Silver sprawled over Pongo, and over him sprawled Mornington, and the next moment both Rookwooders and Pongo and their burden were mixed up in a struggling heap on the ground, amidst startled yells and excited barks.

Then Wally & Co. joined in.

They fairly swamped the startled raiders.

"Pile in, chaps!" sang out Wally cheerfully.

"What-ho!"

The fags piled in with a will.

The Rookwood raiders were utterly unnerved by Pongo's unexpected attack, and they scarcely attempted to defend themselves for the moment.

But as Wally sang out, Jimmy Silver grasped the situation and realised it was an ambush.

"Back up, Merry!" he gasped. "It's only a gang of silly fags! Ow! Oh crumbs! I'm bitten again! Ow! Call that beastly dog off!"

Apparently Pongo was still doing his "bit."

In fact, to judge from sundry yelps from friend and foe alike, Pongo was doing more than his bit. In the darkness and confusion Pongo was finding it rather difficult to distinguish a friendly calf from an unfriendly one, so indiscriminately he nipped at all that came his way.

Pongo was enjoying himself.

But Jimmy Silver and Mornington, at least, were not.

They were fairly buried beneath the swarm of fags, and their desperate struggles were of no avail.

Half a dozen fags—not to mention Pongo—were rather a tall order for the two Rookwood Fourth Formers, and they gave in at last, and lay still, panting and breathless, with fags sitting on them to keep them down.

"Ow!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Ow-wow! Oh, you little imps! Oh crumbs! I'm whacked!"

"Good! I'm glad you own up to it at last!" gasped Wally, with a chuckle. "Better late than never. If you left it until never you'd have been mince-meat. You give in?"

"Ow! Yes—yes! Lemme gerrup!"

"Oh, gad! Oh, yaas!" panted Mornington.

"Get off my chest, you little rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Here comes the old fogies!" chuckled Wally. "Here's where we shine."

"What-ho!"

Lights were flashing again now, and for the third time that night the camp was alarmed, and the next instant Tom Merry, with a crowd of Fourth and Shell fellows at his heels, came rushing up behind Joe Frayne, who had very soon roused them.

"Got them?" he snapped, flashing the light of a lantern on the scene. "Oh, good! Jimmy Silver and Mornington, eh? Well, we've got you, my pippins!"

"You mean we've got them for you, old chap!"

chuckled Wally D'Arcy. "What price the Third now, Tom Merry?"

"Well, you've scored this time, and no mistake," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Anyway, we've collared these chaps. What the thump were they up to, Wally? Were there only two of them?"

"Yes. Look behind you, and you'll see what their giddy game was," grinned Wally. "What price the bull? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver and Mornington.

Puzzled, Tom Merry swung round and cast the light from his lantern behind him. Then he almost jumped a foot in the air at what he saw.

On the ground lay an enormous head—the head of a bull, with huge horns and glittering eyes.

Behind the head was a wooden shield, and attached to the shield was a long pole. That was all.

It was just a stuffed bull's head!

As he saw it Tom Merry understood, and he grinned sheepishly.

But the rest of the fellows roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "So that



"Garge, some dogs be more brainy than their owners."

"Oi owns one o' thart breed, Oi does!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Tasker, 7, Park Avenue, Park Lane, Whitefield, near Manchester.



was it? You rotters brought that thing and shoved it through the tent-flap, and we thought it was a rotten bull!"

"Oh, bai Jove! The feahful wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver and Mornington grinned.

"We'd have frightened the whole camp if these fags hadn't tumbled," Jimmy Silver grinned ruefully. "How the little beggars spotted it, goodness knows."

"Simple enough," said Wally D'Arcy cheerfully. "You see, I saw that bull's head hanging up in Farmer Bland's kitchen. It's the head of one of his prize bulls, or something. Anyway, when I heard you old dummies had seen a bull, and when there proved to be no tracks, I tumbled to it. I guessed these Rookwood merchants had pinched or borrowed the thing from the farmer."

"Great pip!" gasped Curly Gibson. "I saw it, too, when we went to the farm for eggs yesterday. But I never tumbled."

"It needs brains to put two and two together," remarked Wally complacently. "Well, what about these merchants? They're bowled out, and we—"

"Leave them to us," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Up with them, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You fellows look tired," said Jimmy Silver,

with a rueful grin. "Why not get back to bed and let us trot home?"

But the soft answer failed to turn away wrath.

"Likely, isn't it?" said Blake, with a snort. "You've had your little joke, my pippins, and now you've got to go through it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Rookwood juniors were hauled to their feet and their hands were tied together. They were prisoners of war, and the St. Jim's juniors weren't likely to let them "trot home" yet awhile.

Tom Merry's eyes were gleaming now.

"I suppose this is just a little joke of your own, Silver?" he inquired blandly. "Just you and Morny—what?"

"Well, in a way, it was," grinned Jimmy Silver. "The rest of the fellows in our tent knew we'd come out on the warpath, of course!"

"All the other fellows asleep, I suppose?"

"Yes; only my own pals awake, waiting—"

Jimmy Silver paused, suddenly suspecting that Tom had a reason for asking the question.

His suspicions were right, as it happened.

"So all the other fellows are asleep, are they?" grinned Tom Merry. "Good! That's all I wanted to know, old top. I suppose there are fellows left on guard, though."

"Find out!" snapped Jimmy Silver, wishing he had been more careful. "Why, what—"

"You'll see," grinned Tom. "Now, you chaps," he went on, turning to the grinning crowd. "We're going to teach these Rookwood youngsters to let sleeping dogs lie. Now we're wide awake we'll get busy and make the most of our chance. Silver has very kindly told us that the rest of the camp are asleep, so I vote we raid 'em, and pay them back some of what we owe them."

"Bai Jove! Good ideah, Tom Mewwy!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here—" began Jimmy Silver, in alarm.

"It's not quite midnight yet, so we've plenty of time," grinned Tom Merry cheerfully. "Now, my idea's this. They're bound to have left at least two fellows guarding their camp. But those two will be expecting Silver and Morny back—carrying this giddy bull's head, I expect. Well, if two of us march into their camp, carrying the giddy bull's head, they'll let us come on without suspecting danger. Then we can fall on them and stop them giving the alarm. The camp will be at our mercy then. How's that?"

"Good wheeze!"

"Then let's get busy," said Tom. "We'll sling these prisoners into an empty tent, and then we'll arm ourselves with giddy pillows and things. We'll sock into the merry sleepers, and then we'll let the tents down around their ears—just as these two merchants did to us."

"Good egg!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then sharp's the word. We'll need every Fourth and Shell fellow, and you Third Form fags can join us, too. This has got to be a record rag."

"What-ho!" grinned Wally D'Arcy.

And with that the St. Jim's campers set to work with a will to make ready for the great attack.

None of them felt tired or sleepy now, and all of them were eager and more than ready to take part in the night attack on the enemy camp.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

CHAPTER 4.

The Great Raid!

"STEADY now!"

"Steady, the Buffs!" said Monty Lowther.

And there was a chuckle in the darkness.

Everything had gone off like clockwork so far. Tom Merry had given his orders, and everyone knew exactly what to do.

Two by two, with the Shell fellows leading, the Fourth next, and the grinning, eager fags bringing up the rear, the attacking force had started out on the midnight raid, and now Tom Merry whispered the warning as the enemy camp came into sight through the trees.

In the starlight of the summer night the white tents of Rookwood camp looked like ghostly sentinels. Only from one tent came the faint glow of a light through the canvas.

"That's the tent Silver and Mornington sleep in, I expect, and it's quite possible some of the merchants are waiting up for them," grinned Tom. "Blake, D'Arcy, Herries, Lowther, Manners, and I will tackle them. The rest of you know what to do. Hallo, there are the giddy sentinels. Halt!"

The attacking force halted, amidst subdued chuckles.

"Blake and I will deal with these merchants," said Tom Merry. "Hand over the giddy bull's head."

"Here you are," said Lowther.

Lowther was carrying the heavy head by the pole over his shoulder—and he swung it round, and—whether by accident or design—he rammed the ugly nose of the defunct animal under Tom Merry's chin.

Tom Merry only just managed to stifle a gasping yell as he sat down violently under the impact.

"Ow—ow! Groogh! Oh, you—you—"

"Sorry!" murmured the irrepressible Monty. "It was rather heavier than I expected, you know."

"Oh, you awful ass!" gasped Tom. "Ugh! The horrid thing caught me right under the chin. You careless dummy!"

"Sorry! It was just a careless bull-under," said Lowther.

"Ass!"

Tom was strongly tempted to smite the humorous Lowther hip and thigh, but there was no time, nor was it the place for that.

He scrambled up, growling wrathfully, and picked up the bull's head again. Then Blake and he crept away towards the enemy sentries.

On emerging from the fringe of trees they threw aside caution and walked boldly up to the camp entrance.

The two sentries were standing chatting together drowsily, but they were alert in a moment.

They soon saw the bull's head, however, and Blake and Merry were greeted with chuckles.

"Hallo, here they come! Well, how did things go, Jimmy?"

It was Raby's voice, and as he spoke the other fellow chimed in cheerily:

"We heard the rumpus from here; was it a success?"

"Yes," answered Tom Merry cheerfully. "It was a success—for us."

With that Tom flung himself upon the speaker, who happened to be Conroy, and at the very same instant Jaek Blake flung himself at

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Do you keep moths? They make good pets. After all, they don't eat anything but holes.

I hear an American business man has bequeathed two factories to his son. Giving him the works?

Seaside reflection: The only time a fisherman tells the truth is when he tells another fisherman he doesn't believe him.

Third Form flash: "What do you think of history, D'Arcy minor?" asked Mr. Selby. "Well, sir," replied Wally, "if you ask me, some kings didn't know enough to come in out of the reign."

From U.S.A.: A Connecticut policeman, instead of handing speeding motorists a ticket, gives them a book of his own poems. The courtesy cop!

Skimpole has just poked his head in to ask: "Tell me, Lowther, are you a believer in elemental disproportion or de-energised statics, or do you just stick to the Poppenhoffer Theory?" Quite. Don't you?

Raby, while the bull's head hurtled away into the darkness, its duty done.

There were two muffled yelps of startled surprise, and after that the two Rookwood sentries were silent—with strong hands clapped over their mouths they could scarcely help being silent.

And before they could even grasp the meaning of it, there came a rush of feet, and a swarm of St. Jim's fellows came to the help of Tom Merry and Blake.

It was all over in a flash.

The sentries were gagged and bound, and dumped in a thicket, and then Tom led his men on.

The camp was at their mercy.

Leaving the rest to do their allotted tasks with the other tents, Tom Merry led his chosen men towards the lighted tent.

Here he expected to find its occupants wide awake, and he anticipated a tough resistance from them.

As he peeped into the tent, however, he found he was mistaken.

It's four occupants were fast asleep, and they

STOP PRESS: England, 1,000 for no wicket, declared. Australia, all out twice for nothing. Yes, it was a lovely dream I had last night!

Extra: A Greek scientist predicts a new ice age. Strawberry or vanilla?

Many savages did not know the meaning of laughter until the white man came, we read. Perhaps he did look a bit funny in his topee and shorts.

Before selecting the artificial nose he would wear in a new film, an actor experimented with 450 different types. Nasal manoeuvres!

Then there was the practical joking fireman who loved nothing better than a bit of hoseplay.

"Has Trimble any enemies?" asked Manners. "Of course not," replied Tom Merry, "but his pals simply loathe him!"

Try this: "Men, you have marched fifty miles, and you are a credit to your regiment," said the colonel. "Now I want a volunteer to march five more miles to fetch my dispatch case. All men who are not willing to volunteer, two paces forward—march!" Every man stepped forward, except Private Smith. "Only one volunteer?" exclaimed the colonel. "Private Smith, I am proud of you. So you are the only man who is prepared to march another five miles?" "Another five miles, sir?" gasped Private Smith. "Why, I can't even take the two paces forward!"

One more: "Your new novel needs a detective in it," said the publisher. "What for?" asked the author. "To find the plot," said the publisher briefly.

Keep smiling, chaps!

had evidently left the light burning for their absent comrades' return.

"Good egg!" murmured Tom Merry. "Get to work, chaps!"

Swiftly, and in silence, the St. Jim's raiders loosened the tent-pegs and guy-ropes so that a swift haul at the ropes would cause the tents to collapse when the time came. Then they followed Tom into the tent, armed with their pillows and bolsters.

But as they were about to awaken the sleepers, Tom whispered a word and pointed to the small camp-table on which the lantern stood.

On the table, in addition to other oddments, were a large bottle of blue-black ink, pen, and paper.

Ignoring the pen and paper, Tom Merry took up the bottle of ink and crossed to the nearest bed, which happened to contain the sleeping form of Arthur Edward Lovell.

Tom poured some of the ink over Lovell's curly hair and gently rubbed it in. Then, with his forefinger, he traced circles of ink round Lovell's eyes and nose and mouth.

When he had finished Arthur Edward looked

CHAPTER 5.

Unpleasant News!

an extraordinary sight. Almost choking with suppressed mirth, the St. Jim's raiders watched Tom as he started to work on the face and hair of Newcome, who was sleeping next to Lovell.

Like Lovell, Newcome stirred uneasily in his sleep, but he did not awake, and Tom crossed to the next bed.

But before he could do any more decorating, something happened.

The five-minute time limit Tom had arranged with his followers for loosening the tent-pegs of the various tents ended. From the tents all round them came sounds of sudden uproar as the St. Jim's fellows got to work with their pillows and other weapons.

"Time's up," chuckled Tom Merry. "Now, chaps, better get to work."

As he spoke, Tom shoved the ink on the table and grabbed his pillow. But before he could make use of it there sounded an excited barking outside, and the next instant something dashed into the tent like a whirlwind.

It was Pongo, Wally D'Arcy's pet, and evidently the light had attracted Pongo. At all events, he came dashing in, and it was plain he was enjoying the raid as much as the St. Jim's juniors.

"That blessed dog again!" gasped Blake. "Here, outside, you giddy— Oh crumbs! Yarooop!"

Crash!

After one mad rush round the tent, Pongo had dived between Blake's legs, sending Blake crashing against the camp table. In its turn the table was sent crashing against the tent-pole, and as he saw it sway ominously, Tom Merry yelled:

"The tent! Outside! Quick!"

He leaped for the tent flap, and after him jumped his fellow raiders. Lowther was the last, and as he came flying through the flap the whole tent collapsed, amid a chorus of startled yells, above which sounded the wild bellowing of Lovell.

Only just in time Tom Merry dragged Lowther clear, and then Tom gave a chuckle, and snatched a whistle from his pocket.

"Time to clear!" he said.

With that he blew a shrill blast on his whistle.

The effect was electrical.

As the whistle shrilled out there sounded a sudden lull in the hubbub of strife from the various tents, and from them surged the St. Jim's attackers.

As they leaped out they jumped to the tent ropes, and set to work on the loosened pegs with a will. The next minute tents were collapsing on every side like nine-pins going down.

"Time to make for home now, chaps!" called out Tom Merry.

And he blew another blast on his whistle.

It certainly was time, as Tom had said. From every billowing mass of canvas that had been a tent a moment ago came muffled howls.

It was time to depart, and the St. Jim's raiders departed, making for the dark copse of trees, helter-skelter. They arrived back at their own camp in a laughing, gleeful swarm.

After releasing Jimmy Silver and Mornington, the triumphant campers went back to bed to sleep the sleep of the victors.

And, with a strong guard of sentries, in case of reprisals from the Rookwooders, the St. Jim's camp was soon silent again under the stars.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

"YAWOOOOOH!"

Grrr!

"Yawooh! Yoop! Oh, bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"

"What the thump—"

"Oh, bai Jove! Go away, you wotten bwute! Wally, you young wascal—"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the shining light and ornament of the School House at St. Jim's, and just now of the St. Jim's camp at Windyridge.

There was no doubt about that. The dulcet tones of Arthur Augustus were unmistakable, and could have been heard a mile away.

Tom Merry, Monty Lowther and Manners, who were strolling round the camp after dinner, heard them, and stopped.

"What the thump is the matter with old Gussy?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Hark at him!"

"And hark at Pongo!" chuckled Lowther. "I fancy I can guess what's going on. Pongo is wiping his paws on Gussy's bags. That dog will be the death of poor old Gussy."

The Terrible Three chuckled, and ran round the tent behind which the shrill barking of Pongo and the dulcet tones of Arthur Augustus were proceeding.

As they expected, they found the swell of St. Jim's jumping about, trying vainly to avoid the attention of Pongo, Wally D'Arcy's pet mongrel, though Wally never would admit that he was a mongrel.

At all events, Pongo was there. He was leaping up madly at Arthur Augustus, who was dancing about like a cat on hot bricks in his efforts to keep the mischievous Pongo off his natty, well-creased trousers.

A few yards away Wally D'Arcy, with a couple of his chums of the Third, were standing doubled up with laughter.

"Gweat Scott, Wally! You uttah young wascal! Call your w'etched dog off, will you? Oh, bai Jove! The bwute will uttahly wuin my twousahs! Go away! Shoo, you bwute! Tom Mewwy, pway dwag this feahful animal away!" wailed Arthur Augustus, suddenly catching sight of the Terrible Three.

"Here," bawled Wally, "leave old Pongo alone, you Shell chaps! Let the old chap have a bit of fun, if he wants it! It's Gussy's tie—"

"You young wuffian—"

"If Gussy will wear jazz ties, it's his own look-out if a decent, respectable dog like Pongo objects to them," snorted Wally. "He only wants to chew it up. Chuck him the tie, Gus, and he'll leave you alone."

"You impudent young wascal—"

"Rats! Impudent yourself to wear an awful jazz tie like that!" retorted Wally.

"It isn't a jazz tie!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Are you goin' to call the w'etched bwute off, Wally?"

"Not much! Chuck him the tie, Gus, and he'll leave you alone then."

"Call him off!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, still dancing about, and almost in hysterics now. "Oh, bai Jove! Woop! Wally, you young villain— Oh cwumbs!"

Crash!

"Yaroooooh!"

Arthur Augustus was down. He tripped

backwards over a tent peg, and measured his length in the trampled grass.

Pongo gave a shrill yelp of triumph, and immediately walked over him with his muddy paws.

But Tom Merry ran to the rescue of Arthur Augustus, and dragged the excited Pongo away. Fearing harm to his pet, Wally D'Arcy dashed up and took charge of Pongo.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally & Co.

Arthur Augustus scrambled up, breathless and panting and wrathful. He made a rush at his young brother, and that young rascal took to his heels, with Pongo yelping excitedly in his arms, and with his laughing chums following him.

"Hold on, Gussy!" laughed Tom Merry. "Let the little scamp go! He'll only lead you a dance!"

"Yes; think of your dignity, old chap," urged Lowther.

Arthur Augustus thought of his dignity, and paused instead of rushing in chase of the fags.

"Oh, bai Jove!" he gasped. "That young wascal wequiah's a jolly good hidin'. He has no respect whatevah for his eldahs. And, as for that w'etched dog—"

Words failed Arthur Augustus for the moment.

"Never mind, Gussy," said Tom Merry soothingly. "He does no harm, after all, and he doesn't bite—"

"Harm!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Look at the state of my clobber. My twousahs wumpled and muddy; my waistcoat uttaly wuined! It is a vevy good thing I was weavin' my panama, and not my toppah, or that would have been wuined, too. As it is—"

"Hallo, what's up now, Gussy?" asked Blake, coming along just then with Herries and Digby. "Is our tame lunatic worrying you chaps?" asked Blake affably, turning to the Terrible Three.

"Weally, Blake—"

"No, not at all!" laughed Tom Merry. "It's old Pongo that's been worrying Gussy."

"Oh!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard. But he decided not to notice Blake's reference to a "tame lunatic."

"That feahful animal is the wowwy of my life!" he said wrathfully. "It has no wegard whatevah for a fellow's twousahs, and I am absolutely fed up with it, bai Jove! It's bad enough at St. Jim's; but now it is allowed far more latitude here. Towsah, Hewwies' wotten animal, was bad enough, but—"

"You leave old Towser alone!" snorted Herries. "If you dare to call Towser a rotten animal, Gussy—"

"I withdrow that wemark, Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus, "though he weally is a wotten bwute, but not such a nuisance as Pongo. Pongo



Dipping his forefinger in the ink, Tom Merry traced circles round Lovell's eyes, nose and mouth. When he had finished Arthur Edward looked an extraordinary sight.

is as twoblesome as his mastah, bai Jove! I do not wish to be hard on Pongo, but if Wally doesn't keep him undah bettah contwol, I shall be obliged to— Bai Jove! That w'etched animal again!"

It was Pongo again. A sudden commotion had sounded near the camp entrance, and then the juniors caught sight of Pongo, who was barking and snapping round the heels of five juniors who had just entered the camp.

"Great pip! It's Jimmy Silver and his pals!" gasped Blake. "Come on!"

The juniors followed Blake with a rush as he sped towards the camp entrance. That Jimmy Silver & Co. had dared to walk into their camp was amazing, especially after what had happened.

Then the juniors understood as Jimmy Silver started to wave a white handkerchief on seeing the St. Jim's juniors racing up.

"White flag!" grinned Tom Merry. "What's this visit mean?"

Wally D'Arcy was just dragging his pet away from the rather apprehensive Rockwooders as the chums of the School House rushed up. There were five of the Rookwood fellows—Jimmy Silver, Raby, Newcome, Arthur Edward Lovell, and Mornington.

Tom Merry was struck at once by the serious looks on their faces.

"Hallo! What do you fellows want here?" asked Tom, as they surrounded the five. "Anything the matter?"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes, something is the matter," he said grimly. "Can you fellows take us somewhere where we can talk? It's pax, of course, for the time being."

"Oh, yes! Come along to our tent!" said Tom.

The Rookwood fellows followed Tom as he walked away towards his tent, and the rest followed, wondering, and just a trifle uneasy, as Tom himself was.

Was it possible that there had been serious trouble at the Rookwood camp over the rag of the night before? They knew that Dr. Chisholm, the Rookwood Head, was rather a tartar at times.

But it was not that, as the St. Jim's fellows soon discovered.

"It's rather a rotten business," said Jimmy Silver, as the crowd entered the tent, "and we don't like having to come to you about it. But—well, something's got to be done. The fact is that during the time you were raiding our camp, a quid belonging to Morny mysteriously vanished."

"My hat!"

The St. Jim's fellows looked grave. They also looked just a trifle angry. That they had ragged Mornington's tent the night before, and that now Jimmy Silver & Co. had come to them regarding the money, seemed as if—

Jimmy Silver read the looks on the St. Jim's juniors' faces, and he hurried to explain.

"We don't think any fellow belonging to St. Jim's has taken it, of course," he said hastily. "But the money must have gone some time during the rumpus, or immediately before, and we thought it may have been brought away by accident. It was in a wallet with letters and things."

"Phew!"

"Rotten!"

Tom Merry set his lips.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

"Then I think I can answer you right now, Silver," he said coldly. "We're no thieves at St. Jim's, and if any fellow had brought the wallet away by accident, he would have discovered it by this time, and returned it!"

"I know that, ass!" said Jimmy Silver uneasily. "But—well, can't you see that we have to take such a matter up and make inquiries? It was suggested that all our fellows' tents should be searched, and they all agreed to it at once. They were searched before dinner, but nothing was found. The wallet has absolutely vanished."

"Who saw it last?" asked Tom Merry abruptly.

"Morny did himself. He placed it on the table in the tent, and he swears it was there when he left with me to play that bull's head trick on you."

"That's right," said Mornington, who was looking more bored than worried. "I left it on the table—I know that quite well. Careless of me, of course, but—"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Anyway, it's gone now, blow it!" grunted Arthur Edward Lovell. "Morny deserves to lose it, but the matter can't be allowed to rest there, of course."

"Certainly it can't!" said Tom Merry frankly. "I suppose you've done quite right in coming here about it. We were in the tent, and I myself touched the ink on the table. My hat! I remember now seeing a wallet on the table!"

"You do?"

"Yes; just before the table went over!" said Tom, frowning. "You're sure you searched the tent thoroughly?"

"Yes. We've searched every inch and every likely place. It's not there. But look here," said Jimmy Silver, his usually cheery face clouded. "I want you fellows to understand clearly that none of us think it was stolen by a St. Jim's fellow. We know it couldn't have been. But we had to come and inquire. We really came to see just the fellows who entered our tent, to ask them if they saw it, and that's all."

"I'm certain I saw one on the table," said Tom Merry grimly. "But I've seen nothing of it since. I can tell you no more than that."

"But we'll do our best to help—you can rely on that. I'll tackle every single fellow about it."

"That's good enough, then," returned Jimmy Silver, half-smiling. "Let's hope it turns up soon, anyway. But this is going to make no difference between us."

"No reason why it should."

"None at all," said Jimmy Silver, smiling again. "I mentioned it just as a warning. You fellows scored last night, but our turn will come. So mind your eye! We'll put the kybosh on you fairly next time. Come on, you fellows! We'll get back now, or we'll be late for afternoon class."

And with that, Jimmy Silver & Co. took their departure, being escorted safely from the camp by Tom Merry & Co.

But when the St. Jim's juniors returned, their faces wore rather thoughtful looks. They were quite sure that Jimmy Silver and his chums were quite sincere in their belief that no St. Jim's fellow had actually stolen the wallet, but at the same time they knew how strange it looked. They themselves had been in the tent—had ragged it—and Tom Merry himself had admitted having seen the wallet. It certainly was worrying.



The Great War closed Germany's post offices in Morocco—

FORGOTTEN KINGDOMS

Kingdoms come and kingdoms go . . . only our stamp albums reminding us of those that are little more than a memory.



—Just as it put paid to the monarchy of Montenegro.

If you use a printed album for your stamps, what hosts of entries there are in it to remind you of kingdoms now little more than a memory—episodes that made empires tumble. Look at our Montenegrin stamp—a never-failing reminder of that little kingdom hidden away in the Balkans which strove so manfully to obtain its independence from the Turks, only to lose it when it was swallowed up with Yugoslavia at the end of the Great War. The three-hundred-odd different stamps of the Black Mountain—Monte Negro they called it—are very popular with collectors, for, with the new-issue boggy banished, they can be collected complete.

“FINIS.”

Germany's defeat in the Great War put paid to all her colonial issues, when at the Treaty of Versailles the German possessions were partitioned between the Allies. Even the German post offices in Morocco were vetoed, so that our illustration writes “Finis” to this episode in German Colonial history. Whether we shall see her colonial stamps return to our album remains to be seen.

If the War stopped the issuing of German colonial stamps, it also brought forth new stamp-

issuing sections which, rather like shooting-stars, flared up to prominence in the philatelic firmament, only to peter out almost as quickly. Allenstein, Carinthia, Arbe and Veglia, Fiume, Azerbaijan. Some had issued whole sets of attractive stamps, others just one set or even a single specimen, before they slipped back into the limbo of forgotten countries.

A LINK WITH THE WAR.

Have you any Indian stamps overprinted with the short word “Kuwait?” Behind them lies still another link with the Great War. Prominent in the dreams of imperial greatness cherished by the Kaiser was a German railway line running between Berlin and Baghdad—and even beyond. Gradually through the pre-War years he planned and schemed, and by 1914, with the Turks as his allies, it seemed that his dream would come true.

But he had left Britain out of his account. By 1913, as everyone knows, the Prussian Eagle had been vanquished by the British Lion. But we weren't taking any more chances! Kuwait, a vital spot on the Indian Ocean, came into our hands, and we've held it. In 1923 the unassuming Indian overprints appeared to remind collectors of this slice of history.

CHAPTER 6.

A “Plot” Overheard!

“OH, bai Jove!” Arthur Augustus made that ejaculation in tones of deep dismay.

The swell of the Fourth of St. Jim's was leaning gracefully against the little shop counter in the small general shop at Windyridge village.

Besides selling many things in the grocery line and the ironmongery line and nearly every other line, the small store also boasted a small table where one could sit and eat stale buns and drink lemonade.

Arthur Augustus had called in on this bright summer's afternoon for a bun and a lemonade.

It was not the first visit the swell of the Fourth had made to the little village shop during the last few days, by any means. As a matter of fact, there was rather a pretty girl in charge of the shop, and Arthur Augustus was a trifle “smitten,” as Monty Lowther had put it. Arthur Augustus was very susceptible to the charms of the fair sex.

It was while he was leaning against the counter chatting to this young lady that Arthur Augustus suddenly broke off the conversation with that alarmed ejaculation. Happening to glance through the window, he had seen four juniors approaching the shop.

The four were Jimmy Silver, Raby, Newcome, and Arthur Edward Lovell—known at Rookwood School as the Fistical Four.

Naturally, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was rather

dismayed at the sight. The Fistical Four were very decent fellows, but they were rather too apt to rag Arthur Augustus—especially when they met him alone.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's innocent and unsuspecting nature was always fair game for the cheery Rookwood jokers.

Arthur Augustus had already found that out, and he was suspicious of them now. He did not want stale jam tarts to be stuffed down his collar, nor lemonade to be poured over his aristocratic hair.

“Oh, bai Jove!” repeated Gussy. “I am twapped! Those Wookwood wottahs have no respect for a fellow's clobberah.”

“What's the matter?” asked the young lady behind the counter.

“It is nothin' vewy sewious, miss,” said Arthur Augustus, though he certainly looked as if it were. “There are some fellows comin' here who are wathah wude and wuff. I would wathah not meet them. I wondah— Bai Jove!” broke off the swell of St. Jim's suddenly, sighting a stack of tinned stuff on the counter behind him. “I wondah if you would be kind enough to allow me to hide behind that stack of p'ovisions, miss?”

The young lady had already seen the four outside. They had stopped just outside the doorway, presumably to look in the window.

She grasped the situation at once and lifted the flap of the counter swiftly.

Arthur Augustus' Chesterfieldian politeness and THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

his never-failing good nature had made an impression on the young lady, and she rather liked him—as everyone else did who met him.

"Quick!" she murmured, smiling. "Here they are now."

Arthur Augustus was round the shop counter in a flash, and he managed to hide himself behind the stack of provisions just as the doorbell clanged and the Rookwood juniors entered.

All of them were smiling as they glanced round the little shop—a fact Arthur Augustus might have wondered at had he seen them.

"Good-afternoon, miss!" began Jimmy Silver, raising his cap politely. "Four lemonades, please."

"Yes, sir."

The young lady poured out four glasses of lemonade, and while she did so the Rookwood fellows talked—as if continuing their conversation.

"It's jolly risky, of course," remarked Jimmy Silver. "If the Head got to know that twenty of us were breaking bounds to-night to go to the pictures at Seamouth—"

"Jolly risky!" agreed Lovell. "I don't think it's wise, Jimmy. Why not go two or three at a time night by night—"

"More risky still that way," said Silver emphatically. "The beaks are bound to tumble if



"'Ere, what's the 'urry, Alf?"
"I'm going to stop a fight."
"Who between?"
"Me and the other bloke!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Forth, 23, St. Augustine's Road, Bedford.

fellows are breaking bounds night after night. No; my way's the best way. Let us go twenty at a time."

"It means walking home, and it means getting in about midnight," warned Raby.

"Well, what does that matter?" grinned Jimmy Silver. "It'll be jolly walking along the cliffs at midnight, and it's moonlight these nights. It'll be ripping fun. Anyway, we're going to-night, and twenty of the Modern Fourth next time. It'll be a jolly tramp there and back, without the fun of seeing the pictures."

"Yes, rather!"

"There's one thing we mustn't forget, though," said Raby. "We mustn't let a word of it reach the ears of those St. Jim's chaps."

"My hat! Rather not!"

"If they got to know twenty of us were leaving the camp to-night they'd raid us again, for a cert," went on Raby. "And, with our force weakened by twenty of our best men, they'd simply do as they liked."

"Oh, quite!" said Jimmy Silver. "But they won't get to know."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

"Of course not!" agreed Newcome. "It's safe enough. Well, shall we be getting on?"

"Right-ho!"

The Rookwood juniors drained their glasses and left the shop.

Outside, in the village street, all four chuckled deeply as they strolled away.

"Think old Gussy swallowed it?" asked Raby.

"Of course!" laughed Jimmy Silver. "It was jolly lucky you spotted him going in that shop, Lovell! I couldn't think of a safe way of letting the enemy get hold of the yarn that twenty of us were leaving the camp to-night. But it's done now."

"Worked like a charm!" laughed Newcome. "He'll go back and tell his pals, and they're bound to come and raid us to-night."

"I say, let's hide and see if D'Arcy comes along soon," suggested Raby. "If he does, we'll know he's swallowed it."

"Good wheeze!"

The Rookwood juniors had reached the sandy lane leading back from the village to the sea, and they followed Raby's suggestion and hid behind the hedge. They had scarcely done so when the hurrying form of Arthur Augustus came into sight.

"It's all serene!" chortled Jimmy Silver. "Here he comes— Great pip! Here comes Merry and his lot!"

"Good egg!"

The Rookwooders chuckled as they suddenly sighted Tom Merry & Co., with Blake, Herries, and Digby, strolling towards the village.

The St. Jim's juniors met D'Arcy almost opposite to the spot where Jimmy Silver & Co. were hiding.

The voices of the St. Jim's fellows reached them clearly.

"Hallo! Here's old Gussy now!" said Blake wrathfully. "You've been a thumping long time, ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Have you got the chocolates and the biscuits, Gussy?"

"No. You see—"

"Well, you burbling chump," snorted Blake, "what the thump have you been doing? And why are you coming back—"

"He's been spooning with the girl in the grocery shop!" grinned Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, I wepudiate the suggestion!" said Gussy wrathfully. "Howevah, pway don't wot, deah boys! I have some intewest' news for you!"

"Cough it up, then, dummy!"

Arthur Augustus did so, and, as they listened, the St. Jim's campers looked first surprised, and then gleeful.

"I wathah fancied it would intewest you," smiled Arthur Augustus. "It was quite by chance that I happened to see them appwoachin' the shop. I came away the moment I felt it safe, and I was just comin' to find you."

"Good man, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "This is a chance, and no mistake! As Raby says, with twenty of the little fellows out of the way, we'll have them at our mercy. And we'll leave some nice surprises for those twenty chaps when they return. I vote we rag their quarters—put nettles and stuff in their beds, and all that."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good! Then we'll go back now and start getting ready for the raid. We've already scored,

but we'll show those Rookwood cripples that it wasn't only a flash in the pan."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And with that Tom Merry & Co. returned to the St. Jim's camp, all of them chortling gleefully. Nothing more had been discovered regarding the missing wallet and money; but Jimmy Silver had very soon proved that they meant it when they said that the unpleasant affair would make no difference to the ragging and rivalry.

Only the previous night Tom Merry & Co. had discovered—very painfully—that their beds were filled with nettles and their pillows smothered with pepper, and they knew Jimmy Silver & Co. had already started on the warpath again.

And now Tom Merry thought he saw a chance to score.

He would have known it was a very slender chance had he only seen what happened after they had gone. From the hedge emerged the Rookwood fellows, and they doubled up and roared with laughter.

"What a scream!" chuckled Jimmy Silver at last. "I never imagined they would swallow the yarn quite so easily as that. But they've swallowed it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now we've got to get back and make preparations for their reception to-night—both at our camp and at their own camp when they leave ours. Come on, chaps!"

"What-ho!"

And, laughing uproariously, Jimmy Silver and his merry men started back for their own camp.

There promised to be queer happenings at the rival camps that night.

CHAPTER 7.

Rather a Surprise!

"**R**EADY, you fellows?"

"Ready—ay, ready!" quoth Figgins.

"All the chaps here—Shell and Fourth?" asked Tom Merry.

"And Third!" added Wally D'Arcy cheekily. "Don't you forget we're the giddy guards in this rabble of an army! If it wasn't for us—"

"Life would be worth living!" added Lowther. "Yes; we all seem to be here, O captain!"

"Now, you fellows know what to do!" warned Tom Merry. "So many to each tent, and don't rush in till I give the word! Got the nettles?"

"Yes; we've got a giddy sackful here!"

"And the pepper and flour?"

"Yes; all nicely tied up in little paper bags."

"Good! Those fellows armed with squirts of ink must mind they make good use of them, of course. The nettles will serve for the beds of the fellows who are away. We shan't need pillows or anything else on this job, I fancy. Now," added Tom Merry, "if you fellows are ready we'll start! March!"

And the St. Jim's raiders marched in a chuckling, merry crowd. It was a bright moonlight night, and much more caution was necessary this time.

But, to their surprise, they found no sentries on guard in the enemy camp when they arrived there.

"Getting slack!" chuckled Glyn.

"Didn't expect another raid so soon after the other, I suppose!" grinned Tom Merry. "Well, they're going to get what they don't expect!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

The raiders advanced cautiously into the enemy camp. Not a light glimmered anywhere. Care-

fully avoiding the tents of the seniors and masters—luckily, those were some distance from the juniors' quarters—the raiders scouted ahead and took up their positions outside the tents of their rivals.

Tom Merry allowed them five minutes, and then gave the signal—a low whistle.

As it rang out the St. Jim's raiders plunged into the enemy tents.

What happened next was not at all clear to anyone concerned. It all seemed like a horrible nightmare to the St. Jim's juniors.

For Jimmy Silver & Co. had spent quite a little time preparing for the raiders, and had a big surprise for them. It was the St. Jim's raiders who got what they did not expect.

Inside each tent opening they had placed large zinc bath-tubs, and each tub was filled to the brim with a mixture of water and flour and ink ink.

Splash, splash, splash!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip! Look out, chaps!"

"Yoooooop!"

"Yaroooooooooooooh!"

The next moment the air resounded with splashes, followed instantly by yells of alarm and sounds of stumbling and tumbling and crashing.

The foremost raider to charge into each tent went full tilt into the flat baths, and as he sprawled, his comrades, unable to pull up, sprawled over the baths.

But that was not all. From the dark interiors of the tents Rookwood fellows swarmed. They were armed with pillows and bolsters, and they started to belabour the unlucky St. Jim's fellows with a right good will.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Yaroooooooooh! Oh crickey!"

"Oh, my hat! Yarooooooooop!"

All along the double line of tents sounded howls of woe and the thudding of the pillows as the Rookwood juniors got to work in real earnest.

The hapless St. Jim's raiders were completely demoralised.

Dazed and bewildered, they sprawled and struggled over each other in the moonlight. The shock of surprise, and the unexpectedness of it all made them lose their heads completely.

"Sock into them!" came Jimmy Silver's cheery voice.

And the Rookwood juniors obeyed with a will.

But at last Tom Merry managed to rally his men a little. Tom himself had been the first to come to grief, and he had spotted at once that they had been tricked badly.

The nocturnal cinema party was obviously all spook. It had been invented to lead them astray,

(Continued on next page.)

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are

contained in the illustrated booklet, "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

and Arthur Augustus had been the Rookwooders' unconscious dupe.

The Rookwood fellows were very obviously in full force. After the first shock of surprise Tom Merry did his best to rally his men together again.

"Back up, chaps—this way!" he bawled.

Back to back now, the St. Jim's fellows fought gallantly, gradually forcing their way to the camp entrance. Even so, the luckless Saints would have found it no easy matter to escape had not the Rookwood prefects taken a hand—and a cane—in the game just then.

For several moments past lights had been flashing among the prefects' quarters, for the uproar was enough to waken the celebrated seven sleepers. And now the voice of Bulkeley, the Rookwood skipper, was heard, and the next moment he came up at a run, followed by several other Rookwood prefects.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Yells and howls of anguish followed the whacking of the prefects' canes, and as the rival juniors scattered to avoid the swishing canes, Tom Merry gave a yell.

"Now, chaps! Run for it; This way!" he bellowed.

To make sure he was heard, Tom Merry gave a shrill blast on his whistle, and then he led the way with a rush.

After him went his followers, quickly enough. Most of them were in a parlous state—wet and floury, and sore in more ways than one, and they were only too glad to retreat.

In a mad stampede they went for the entrance, sending the Rookwood fellows who tried to stop them reeling to right and left.

But the intervention of the Rookwood prefects had disorganised the Rookwooders, and Tom Merry and his men were able to charge through.

At the camp entrance Tom Merry hung back until he saw the last of his men through, and then he followed up. Luckily, the Rookwood juniors did not dare to disobey their skipper, who was bellowing to them in return, and the St. Jim's fellows pounded on through the wood, and five minutes later they were safe in their own camp.

But there a great shock met the unfortunate raiders.

Not a single one of the junior tents remained standing. In their place was merely a bulky bundle of canvas on the ground.

In hopeless dismay the hapless St. Jim's juniors stood at the entrance to their encampment and blinked aghast at the desolate scene.

It was an unhappy homecoming, and an unhappy scene for their tired eyes.

"Well!" remarked Tom Merry faintly.

"Bai Joye!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

On all sides were heard expressions of amazement and dismay.

"Oh—oh crumbs!" groaned Blake. "This—this caps it all! Oh, the crafty rotters! Some of them have just dodged us, and come along here, and dropped the dashed tents. Hallo, what—"

At that moment a muffled sound of yelling came from the store tent, close by, and the crowd rushed across to it, recognising Baggy Trimble's doleful tones.

Tom Merry flashed his electric torch into the dark interior of the store tent.

He found Baggy Trimble and Skimpole, the only two juniors who had not joined in the disastrous raid, tied back to back against the tent.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

pole. They fairly groaned with relief as Blake cut them free.

"It was those awful Rookwood beasts!" groaned Trimble. "Some of them came along just after you'd gone, and they yanked us out of our tents and tied us up here. They've done something to our tents, I believe."

"And they have treated us with gross disregard and rudeness!" wailed Skimpole. "Instead of spending a peaceful few hours with my favourite author, Professor Balmcrumpet, I have been subjected to painful indignities—"



Reaching the fringe of a little clearing, Arthur Augustus saw the unknown prowler had cut a hole in the ground close by. On the ground close by lay the sack. It seemed to be the fellow about to bury his plunder.

"Cut it short, Skimmy!" said Tom Merry. "We've all been through it to-night. We've been dished and done brown fairly! That awful burbling ass, D'Arcy, ought to be boiled in oil!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Bump him!" snorted Herries. "Bump him for letting us in for this!"

"Yes, rather!"

All the fellows were only too willing to bump Gussy; and he was bumped—soundly. It was hard lines on Gussy, in the circumstances, but it certainly relieved their feelings a bit.

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Then, leaving Arthur Augustus sitting on the ground and passing uncomplimentary remarks on all and sundry, the juniors streamed out to examine their tents.

To their surprise, they found all the pegs and guy-ropes intact. The only things that were missing—or seemed to be missing—were the tent-poles.

But as these were very important parts of the tents it was a very unpleasant discovery, for all that.

For over half an hour the tired and dispirited



Arthur Augustus saw the unknown prowler, and he was digging up the soft, leafy ground close by lay the sack. It seemed very significant to the swell of St. Jim's. Was the fellow about to bury his plunder?

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juniors searched for the tent-poles, but it was useless.

Tom Merry gave the word to give up the search at last.

"It's no good!" he groaned. "They've hid them in the wood, of course! And it's useless hunting in the dark. We'll have to sleep as best we can until daylight."

And it was so. Most of the fellows loosened some of the tent pegs, and, with the loose floorboards as supports, they rigged up temporary tents.

When they had finished, the junior part of the

St. Jim's camp looked for all the world like an Arab encampment in the desert.

Even then, however, Tom Merry & Co. had not finished making unpleasant discoveries.

For every single bed had been filled with stinging nettles, and every pillow smothered with pepper.

This was, indeed, the last straw, and the night air fairly hummed with ferocious and uncomplimentary remarks regarding the humorous Rockwooders.

But order was restored at last, and, though grunts and sneezes were heard for some time, sleep came to the weary campers at last, and soon all was silent in the St. Jim's camp.

CHAPTER 8.

A Mystery!

TOM MERRY & CO. were up very early the following morning.

And it was very necessary for them to be early. Tom knew, and every fellow knew, that there would be exceedingly awkward questions asked about the missing tent-poles.

It was all very well to be able to explain that somebody had taken them, but the question the authorities would ask would be what they—the juniors themselves—were doing when the poles were taken.

It was scarcely a question they could answer.

So, before turning in, Tom had impressed upon all and sundry the absolute necessity of finding the poles and getting the tents to rights before the rest of the camp was astir.

Tom himself was up and doing almost at the first rosy streak of dawn in the sky, and the first thing he saw was a note pinned to the flap of his own tent.

It was a brief note from Jimmy Silver, asking if they "had ever been had," and telling him the missing tent-poles would be found shoved under the floorboards of the store-tent.

It was a stroke of luck, and Tom Merry made the most of it. He roused his followers, and, though they were tired out, the juniors tumbled up, and the store-tent was visited.

Sure enough, the poles were there. The store-tent was on a raised wooden floor—to keep the stores dry—and very soon the poles were dragged out one by one.

Then the St. Jim's juniors got busy, and well within the hour all the tents were up and presented their usual appearance.

"Oh, good egg!" panted Tom Merry, wiping his perspiring brow. "That's saved us a thumping big rumpus, anyway. I suppose Jimmy Silver thought we should find the note last night. Anyway, it's all serene now. I vote we all get back to bed, chaps."

"Hear, hear!"

It was a hearty agreement, and the juniors went back to bed to finish their sleep-out. Rockwood had scored heavily, there was no doubt about that, but they felt exceedingly thankful that it had not led to trouble with the "beaks," as it might easily have done.

All the juniors were very soon asleep, and they were not in a hurry to turn out again when the rising bugle rang out clear on the morning air.

But, tired and aching as they were, the day's work had to be faced, and they tumbled up.

As the Terrible Three were strolling about the camp just after breakfast, they met Blake & Co.,

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

and Tom Merry stopped as he noted that their faces were unusually grave.

"Hallo! What the thump's the matter with you chaps?" he asked. "Not taking last night's affair to heart, I hope? It's all in the day's work. We scored the other night, and we'll jolly well score again before long."

"Bai Jove! You are makin' wathah a mistake, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head gravely. "We are not wowwyin' about last night's fiasco at all. The fact is, we were just lookin' for you fellows. Somethin' wathah wotten has happened again, deah boys!"

"Cough it up!" said Manners.

"My gold tickah has mysteriously vanished," said Arthur Augustus impressively—"vanished in the night, deah boys. Natuwally, we are wathah twoubled about it."

"Great pip! I should jolly well think so!" said Tom Merry. "Are you sure, Gussy?"

"It's right enough, Tommy!" grunted Jack Blake. "The silly dummy deserves to lose it, though. He left it on the camp table in our tent last night before we started out."

"Weally, Blake, what else could a fellow do?" asked Arthur Augustus mildly. "It would have been wank folly to take my gold tickah on such a waid. It might easily have got sewiously damaged."

"You could have packed the dashed thing somewhere!" said Blake. "Now it's gone. It means more rotten worry and suspicion all round."

"Phew!" said Lowther. "You've searched, of course?"

"Every blessed inch of the tent, and every blessed inch round the tent within twenty yards almost!" growled Blake.

"This is the second thing that's mysteriously vanished," said Tom Merry. "What about Mornington's wallet?"

"And my giddy cigarette-case?" added another voice.

It was Aubrey Racke, the cad of the Shell.

"Wh-what did you say, Racke?" asked Tom Merry.

"My silver cigarette-case has disappeared," said Racke. "I hear D'Arcy's lost his ticker."

"Yes, that's so," said Blake.

"Then we're comrades in misfortune," replied Racke. "This, of course," he added, "is strictly between ourselves. As cigarette-cases are frowned upon by the authorities, I do not propose to make my loss public."

"Phew!"

That two juniors should lose valuable articles in one night was scarcely likely. The thought dawned upon them all now.

Mornington's wallet must have been stolen. And now Gussy's gold hunter and Racke's silver cigarette-case had gone—obviously in the same manner.

When Tom Merry & Co. went into morning lessons all the Lower School were in possession of the startling news. And it was very soon clear that the masters had heard the news also, for at the end of lessons Mr. Railton sent for Racke and D'Arcy.

But fortunately—for Racke—the cigarette-case had become a card-case by the time the story reached Mr. Railton's ears—Racke himself had seen to that—and, after hearing the bald facts that both articles had been left on the camp tables and had vanished in the night, Mr. Railton dismissed them, promising to look into the matter.

But the juniors themselves were determined to

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

do that, and after dinner Tom Merry & Co. walked over to the Rookwood camp and had a conference on the subject with Jimmy Silver & Co.

It seemed only too clear now that a thief was robbing both camps under cover of the rags, and when the St. Jim's juniors left their rivals it was agreed that both sides should keep an eye open for the unknown prowler.

CHAPTER 9.

Rival 'Tecs!

"LEAVE it to me, you fellows!"

"Eh?"

"Leave it to me, bai Jove!"

"Leave what to you?" inquired Blake, staring at Arthur Augustus.

"This w'etched business of the missin' articles, of course," explained Arthur Augustus calmly.

"But why should we leave it to you, dummy?" asked Blake. "We want to catch the giddy thief, not leave him more valuables to pinch, fathead!"

"I wufese to be alluded to as a dummy or a fathead, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Oh, ring off!"

"I wufese to wing off, Blake. As I have already wemarked—"

"Don't repeat yourself, old chap—life's too short!" groaned Blake. "Besides, it's nearly bed-time."

"I am fully aware that it is nearly bed-time, Blake," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "That is why I wemarked just now that you fellows could leave it to me."

"But why—"

"I will explain," went on Gussy patiently. "The Wookwood fellows have agweed to keep watch on their camp each night, and we have agweed to do likewise here."

"That's so."

"Vewy well," resumed Arthur Augustus. "To me such a course seems uttably unnecessawy and futile. It is quite unnecessawy for seweval fellows to lose a night's sleep, and it is quite futile for any of you youngstahs to hope to catch such a slippewy individual as this w'etched thief obviously is."

"Thanks, old chap! Any more compliments?"

"Therefore," went on Arthur Augustus calmly, "I pwopose that you fellows wetaiah for the night in the usual way, and leave it to me."

"To you?"

"Yaas."

"Not to that tent-pole, or that tree, or that donkey in the field yonder—just to you?"

"Yaas. I wathah fancy you fellows will admit that as an amatuah detective I have no equal at St. Jim's, deah boys."

"Oh, my hat! Certainly not, old chap—not even in the whole wide world—though Grundy runs you close," agreed Blake affably. "So you want us to give up the idea, and just leave it to you?"

"Yaas. I see no weason why you fellows should lose your sleep," said Arthur Augustus kindly. "Just go to sleep and leave it to me. I shall watch the camp, and if I should see anything suspicious and wequiah any help I will wouse you."

"Good man! Hallo, here's Grundy!"

The Fourth Formers were standing just outside their tent at the moment, and just then Grundy's burly form loomed up in the gathering gloom.

"I was just coming to see you fellows," said Grundy briskly, "and I rather feared you'd be

(Continued on page 22.)

In Town To-day



Introducing Baggy Trimble to the Microphone. By a B.B.C. TALENT SCOUT.

INTERVIEWER: How do you do? You are Bagley Trimble of the Fourth?

TRIMBLE: I should jolly well think so. There isn't anybody else like me at St. Jim's, Mr. Interviewer.

INTERVIEWER: So I'm given to understand. As a matter of fact, Mr. Lathom seriously thought of forbidding you to broadcast, Trimble, as you had done so badly in the recent examinations.

TRIMBLE: What awful rot! I did splendidly—or, at least, I should have done if they had marked the papers fairly. But there you are—I never get a fair deal at St. Jim's.

INTERVIEWER: But now you are actually speaking over the air, is there anything special you would like to say?

TRIMBLE: Yes, rather. I dare say my old pal Vernon-Smith of Greyfriars is listening in. I'd like to tell him I shan't be able to join his party on Mr. Vernon-Smith's yacht for the vac., after all.

INTERVIEWER: Indeed? Not many fellows would turn down the chance of a fine sea trip at this time of year, Trimble!

TRIMBLE: Can't be helped, Mr. Interviewer. To let you into a secret, I'm simply snowed-under with offers this summer. Fellows simply hail invitations on me—it must be my sunny, melting manner!

INTERVIEWER: You seem to be a most fortunate individual, Trimble. Have you finally decided who to spend the holidays with yet?

TRIMBLE: Oddly enough, I haven't. Of course, old Gussy has always been so pressing it will be very difficult to turn him down.

INTERVIEWER: Failing D'Arcy, whom will you stay with?

TRIMBLE: Well, there's my old pal Billy Bunter of Greyfriars. He has a huge place, you know—Bunter Court. Pity I can't remember the exact address offhand. Bunter is a bit vague. These immensely rich chaps are, you know. I heard Bob Cherry say Bunter

Court was immense only as a joke, but Cherry was only jealous. Then Wharton was saying something about an immense take-in, but I suppose that was his rude way of referring to Bunter's healthy appetite. He has nearly as good an appetite as I have, you know.

INTERVIEWER: But if Bunter lets you down, won't you be stranded?

TRIMBLE: Not a bit. Glyn of the Shell—his pater is a millionaire—is going down to Brightsea, staying at a posh hotel, and all that. I don't care a lot for Brightsea as a rule—too many trippers—but a popular fellow has to think of his friends first and himself second, don't you think? Anyway, I've got Glyn down third on my list, even if his sort of holiday may be rather fourth class.

INTERVIEWER: Suppose Glyn has other friends coming?

TRIMBLE: In that case I may call over at the Caterpillar's place. De Courcy, you know, of Highcliffe. I met him once at a cricket match. De Courcy doesn't care for too much exertion, like me, though he was playing that day to please his chum, Courtenay—and the subject of holidays cropped up. De Courcy was kind enough to say that if ever I was near his place by the sea, drop in. He said the sea was rather deep near his place, but it couldn't be too deep for me. He knows what a fine swimmer I am, of course.

INTERVIEWER: Does he? So you think you will end up by dropping in at De Courcy's?

TRIMBLE: Perhaps. The trouble is, I'm not terribly fond of bathing. Ahem! Where are you spending your holidays, Mr. Interviewer?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I'm usually at my place on the Kentish coast at week-ends.

TRIMBLE: The Kentish coast? That's great. I tell you what, Mr. Interviewer. If you have to be away on business during the week, so much the better. I'll keep everything warm for you, and when you come down on Saturday, we'll have a grand feed and go to the pictures!

INTERVIEWER: But I didn't intend to suggest, Trimble, that you—

TRIMBLE: That's all right. Not another word. I mustn't keep you now, Mr. Interviewer, but you can expect me for the vac! Now, don't forget me, and let me have your address, won't you?

INTERVIEWER: I certainly shan't forget, Trimble. But as for the address—luckily for me, only the Editor knows that!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

out, wasting your time trying to catch that rotten thief."

"You cheeky ass!" said Tom Merry.

"I want no cheek," said Grundy grimly. "I mean just what I say when I refer to you kids wasting your time on such a job. That's what I've come about. I've come along now to tell you fellows to leave it to me."

"Oh crumbs! Here's another of 'em!"

"Eh? I'm speaking plainly, aren't I?" said Grundy patiently. "No good you kids wasting your time watching for that thief. I'll stay up and watch, and you can go to bed as usual."

"Bai Jove! Gwundy, you duffah—"

"Dry up, Gussy! I don't want to have to punch your head for cheek," said Grundy, with kindly grimness. "Well, you fellows understand? Get off to bed now, and leave it to me. If I can't run the thief down to earth, nobody else can. I don't want to brag, but—"

"You can't help yourself, what?"

"Don't try to be funny, Lowther. Well, good-night, chaps! If you do happen to hear a rumpus in the night don't get up—you'd only muck things up and spoil my game if you came along."

"Oh dear!"

The great George Alfred Grundy marched away into the gloom—apparently to begin his self-imposed vigil.

The chums of St. Jim's chuckled as they stared after him. They were too used to Grundy's swank and lofty belief in his own greatness to trouble to go after him and bump him for his cheek.

"The silly ass!" said Tom Merry, looking serious. "I hope the duffer doesn't muck up things and scare the thief away, anyhow. Well, we'd better turn in, I think, until Kildare's been round to see lights out. Then, when all is clear, we'll get up and start on the work."

"Bai Jove! Do you fellows mean to wefuse my offah to take ovah the job?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, old top! You see, that thief's got to be caught," explained Blake blandly. "Now, just you get off to bed like a good little chap and leave serious jobs to serious people."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Look out! Here's Kildare," grinned Tom Merry; and with Lowther and Manners, he slipped away and made for his own tent.

Some distance away Kildare and Darrell, armed with a lantern, were going from tent to tent, making their usual nightly round, and Blake, Herries, and Digby chuckled and slipped through the doorway of their own tent.

They naturally expected Arthur Augustus to follow, but he did nothing of the sort. He slipped round the back of the tent and vanished in the gloom. He had already placed his bolster to represent his form in the bed, and he knew the prefects were not likely to look too closely.

Blake and the others in the tent had no time to do anything in the matter, for just as Gussy vanished the prefects came along and looked into the tent. And when they had gone, Arthur Augustus had vanished.

But Blake & Co did not trouble themselves. They felt glad rather than otherwise that Arthur Augustus was not to be with them. Arthur Augustus was rather apt to be trying on such excursions.

And, meantime, Arthur Augustus was lying in the hedge at the rear of the tent. He did not move until the prefects had finished their rounds.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

But their lantern light vanished at last, and then Arthur Augustus started to scout round the tents, keeping well in the shade of the hedge.

Almost at once Arthur Augustus saw something very suspicious indeed!

It was the sight of a dark figure creeping stealthily along the inside of the hedge bordering the camp and just a few yards ahead of him.

"Oh, bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

The swell of the Fourth fairly trembled with excitement now.

All his detective instincts were aroused, and he trod after the unknown prowler, his heart beating fast.

And then quite suddenly Arthur Augustus made a rather surprising discovery.

The prowler in front was in his turn tracking another dark figure now. Arthur Augustus, indeed, had seen his figure tense on sighting the other form.

There was no doubt about it. It struck Arthur Augustus as very strange indeed. Was it possible that there were two thieves on the prowl, and that one had sighted the other and was trailing him for some unknown reason?

To Arthur Augustus it seemed very likely indeed.

He stooped suddenly, athrill from head to foot. The foremost dark form had stopped abruptly, and glanced about him stealthily. Then he stooped, as if to go under the canvas wall of the nearest tent.

And at that moment the second form suddenly rose upright and flung itself on the first form.

There arose a muffled, terrified yelp; but Arthur Augustus scarcely heard it, for he was running towards the spot now.

He reached it and flung himself valiantly at both forms.

It was a really gallant effort on the part of Arthur Augustus. But the next instant he got the shock of his life, as a terrified yelp came from beneath him.

"Yarooooooh! Yooop! Help! Murder! Oh dear! Gerroff! Oh crumbs! Yaroooooh!"

It was the voice of Baggy Trimble. And even as he heard it there came a bellow from the other dark form, and Gussy jumped as he recognised that also.

"Got you, my pippin! Hallo! Another rotter, eh? All right—I'll handle both of you! Take that! And you take that!"

Biff, biff!

It was George Alfred Grundy, and both Trimble and Arthur Augustus took what he gave them. Trimble took his on his fat little nose, and Arthur Augustus took his under the chin.

Two fiendish yells arose on the still night air.

"Yarooooooh!"

"Yoooooop! Oh crumbs!"

Grundy could punch, and he had evidently punched now—hard!

Trimble rolled one way and Arthur Augustus rolled another. And just at that moment a light flashed and running feet sounded.

Then six dim forms rushed up, and a light flashed on the scene from a pocket electric torch.

It was Tom Merry & Co., and they blinked in stupefied amazement at the sight. Then Tom Merry jumped forward just in time to prevent Arthur Augustus from flinging himself on Grundy in his towering wrath.

"What does this mean?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Grundy—Trimble—and Gussy—"

Grundy interrupted him. He sat on the ground



The Fourth Form master sat down violently as Pongo got mixed up with his legs, but the dog, after a brief hesitation, raced on, with D'Arcy's slipper still in his mouth. Unable to pull up in time, Arthur Augustus went sprawling over Mr. Lathom. "Oh cwumbs!" he gasped. "Bai Jove!"

and stared in amazement at Trimble and Arthur Augustus.

"Well—well, I'm hanged!" he exclaimed. "You—you fat idiot, Trimble! You—you burbling tailor's dummy, D'Arcy! You've mucked it up—"

"What—"

"I'll jolly soon tell you what's the matter!" snorted Grundy, his tone showing his deep disgust and disappointment. "I saw that fat worm—this crawling lard-barrel—sneaking along inside the hedge, and I thought it was the rotten thief!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "And I saw you sneakin' along, Gwundy, and I imagined you were the thief. I didn't recognise you, of course."

"Oh crumbs! And Trimble—"

"I think it's pretty clear what Trimble was after," chuckled Monty Lowther. "This tent is the store tent, and Baggy was just making a raid on the grub."

"Phew! That's it!"

That was undoubtedly the case.

For an instant Tom Merry & Co. stared at the three chief actors in the little comedy, and then they doubled up and almost exploded with suppressed laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, my hat!" gurgled Tom Merry at last.

"This beats the band! Trimble, you fat grub-raider—"

"Bump the fat rotter and pack him off to bed!" suggested Blake.

"That's the ticket!"

"I say, you fellows," gasped Baggy Trimble tearfully, still clutching a rapidly swelling nose, "don't be beasts, you know! It's all a mistake. I must have been walking in my sleep, and—"

But Trimble's protests were of no avail, and, after soundly bumping him, Tom Merry & Co. sent him "packing," and Trimble went back to bed, only too thankful to do so. Then the juniors looked at Grundy and Arthur Augustus.

"This comes of letting idiots take a hand in serious matters," said Tom Merry grimly. "Grundy, I'd advise you to trot back to bed before you make any more silly blunders!"

"Oh, let the silly ass rip!" grinned Blake. "I expect Grundy will be tracking his own shadow next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—" Grundy spluttered a moment and took a threatening step towards the laughing juniors; but, thinking better of it, he walked away into the darkness.

"Dear old blundering Grundy!" grinned

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1587.

Lowther. "Fancy having two fellows so much alike as Grundy and Gussy in one school!"

"Lowtah, you wottah—"

"Peace! This is not a time or place for squabbling," said Tom Merry warningly. "We've serious business on to-night. Are you coming with us or not, Gussy?"

"I uttably wefuse to accompany such wottahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus, almost breathless with indignation. "You are a set of gwinnin' asses, and I uttably wefuse to tweat you as fwriends any longah! Bai Jove!"

—And with that Arthur Augustus marched away—and, like the mighty George Alfred, he was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

CHAPTER 10. Very Mysterious!

"WOTTAHS!"

That was the opinion of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy regarding his chums.

Arthur Augustus was feeling very sore indeed as he marched away from them after Grundy had departed.

He was disappointed that the figure he had so skilfully tracked had turned out to be only Grundy tracking Trimble. It really was disappointing and annoying—and a trifle humiliating.

But while he felt very annoyed with Grundy and Trimble, Arthur Augustus felt still more annoyed with his chums. They had ruffled his dignity, as it were—and the dignity of Arthur Augustus was not to be ruffled with impunity.

"The wottahs!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "The cacklin' wottahs! Weally, I often wondah how I stand the wude and diswespectful wottahs. I shall certainly wefuse uttably to acknowledge them as fwriends aftah this—at least, not until they have tendahed me a humble apology!"

Coming to a gap in the hedge, Arthur Augustus dived through into the field beyond. He was not at all clear what his programme was now, but he was determined to give his chums a wide berth, at all events.

After reflecting a moment, Arthur Augustus started to move along the far side of the hedge. But quite abruptly he dropped into a dry ditch beside the hedge.

Ahead of him, moving slowly towards him with a stealthy, slinking gait, was a dark form. It was not a boy's form—Arthur Augustus saw that at a glance—and yet it was scarcely a man's form.

But it was very suspicious, to say the least of it. The slinking gait of the unknown alone was very suspicious.

Then Arthur Augustus saw that the unknown prowler was carrying a sack on his back—at least, it looked like a sack.

"Bai Jove!" breathed the swell of the Fourth. Fairly quivering with excitement, Arthur Augustus crouched down in the ditch, scarcely daring to breathe. He felt certain that he was on the right trail this time.

And Arthur Augustus did not blunder. He was a trained Scout, and he crouched down now, head lowered, face and hands hidden, his jacket swiftly dragged up to hide his white cricket shirt and bare neck.

The next moment the prowler came slinking past.

Even in the dim moonlight D'Arcy saw at a

glance that he was a rather ragged individual, with an old cap pulled down over his face, which was youthful, but exceedingly dirty. Gussy even caught a glimpse of a pair of shifty eyes—at least, they certainly looked shifty.

And the man was, indeed, carrying a sack. Certainly, it did not look well filled. But there was something in it, and the fellow seemed to be carrying it with a stealthy care.

He passed Arthur Augustus at a shuffle, glancing about him guiltily as he did so.

Arthur Augustus had no doubt whatever in his mind now—no possible shadow of a doubt.

This was the unknown prowler—the rascal who had robbed both camps in the darkness of the night.

"Bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus. "I wathah wish Blake and the othahs were with me, but—but it cannot be helped. I must tackle the wascal alone, if need be. I will follow the bwute and see what he is up to, first of all, howevah."

With that, Arthur Augustus started to tread cautiously after the mysterious prowler, and he was scarcely ten yards behind him when the fellow vanished into the deep recesses of the wood.

It needed some nerve to follow; but Arthur Augustus did follow, though his heart was thumping madly now. He dived amid the shadowy trees, and after stumbling a few paces forward, he halted, at a loss.

The trampling footsteps ahead had ceased, and silence reigned in the dark wood.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, with a shiver. "I weally do wish Blake and the othahs were here."

But even as he hesitated, Arthur Augustus heard a sudden sound that made his eyes gleam with determination.

It was the sound of digging—an unmistakable sound.

It echoed hollowly in the silent, eerie wood, and once again Arthur Augustus shivered. And it was, perhaps, no wonder. It was a late hour—Gussy reflected that it must be close on eleven—and the silent woods alone were unnerving, without the presence of the unknown prowler and that eerie, echoing sound of digging!

And here, under the trees, it was very dark. But Arthur Augustus had plenty of pluck, and after that first hesitation he set his teeth and moved forward cautiously towards the sound.

Then quite suddenly he halted. He had reached the fringe of a little clearing, lit by the pale rays of the scarcely visible moon. In the clearing was the unknown prowler, and he was digging up the soft, leafy soil with a chunk of wood.

On the ground close by lay the sack. Arthur Augustus noticed now more clearly that there seemed to be very little in the sack—just a bulge at the bottom, the rest of the sack having been twisted for carrying.

It seemed very significant indeed to Arthur Augustus.

Was the fellow about to bury his plunder? Certainly, a wallet, and a gold watch, and a cigarette-case would not cause such a bulge in the sack. But then, how did he know what other stolen property the sack contained? Indeed, it was more than likely that heaps of stuff had been stolen from the two camps—things not so valuable, and that had not even been missed yet.

It was more than possible. It suddenly occurred to the watching junior that the sack might even contain further plunder that had been stolen during the past hour or so from the two camps.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

As he stared at the digger Arthur Augustus noted that he was several inches taller, and at least four or five years older. And he was much bigger made, and stronger looking.

Arthur Augustus realised that he could not hope to come off best in a fight with the fellow. He wisely decided to waste no further time watching. He would bring help without further delay.

Arthur Augustus reached this resolve within a minute of reaching the spot, and the next moment he was treading softly back the way he had come. Then, emerging from the woods, he threw caution to the winds and set off at a run for the St. Jim's camp.

But he did not reach it. To his ears came the sudden sound of laughter, and a minute later he had run almost into the arms of Tom Merry & Co.

"Great Scott! It—it's old Gussy again!" gasped Blake. "Wnat the thump—"

"Quick!" panted Gussy. "Bai Jove! Pway be quick, dean boys! The thief!"

"The—the what?"

"The thief!" gasped D'Arcy, breathless with excitement. "I've twacked the wascal down! He is just buwyin' the plundah in a cleawin' in the woods!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Blake.

"Gussy, you awful ass—"

"Quick," shrieked Arthur Augustus, "or the wascal will escape us! I spotted him sneakin' round our camp, and I watched him—a wascally poachah, I believe he is. He looks a most feahful wuffian! He is at this vevy moment buwyin' his plundah in the woods. Follow me!"

And without waiting for a reply, Arthur Augustus pelted away.

"Come on!" snapped Tom Merry swiftly.

He was about to rush after D'Arcy when five figures appeared, running from the direction of the Rookwood camp.

They proved to be Jimmy Silver, Raby, Newcome, Lovell, and Mornington.

"Oh, it's you fellows!" gasped Jimmy Silver, as he panted up. "We were just scouting round when we heard voices, and thought we'd better investigate. What's happened? Seen anything suspicious?"

"Gussy has, I believe," said Tom.

And he swiftly related what Arthur Augustus had just told them.

"Phew!" remarked Jimmy Silver grimly. "It looks jolly suspicious, anyway. If Gussy did see him—"

"No doubt about that. Gussy's in deadly earnest," said Tom. "Come on, let's go after him!"

He led the way with a rush, and the rest followed hard on his heels.

The moon was stronger now, and running was safe and easy. They raced up, and found Arthur Augustus impatiently awaiting them at the edge of the woods.

D'Arcy held up a warning hand for caution, and then he plunged into the dark trees. The rest followed. Cautiously they pressed after the swell of the Fourth, and the next moment they were staring into the clearing.

Thud, thud, thud!

The man was still there. He was flattening down the soil with the piece of wood he had used as a spade. There was no sign of the sack!

"He's buwied it!" breathed Gussy. "Back up, you fellows!"

And with that Arthur Augustus plunged from hiding and hurled himself at the suspicious-looking man.

There was a startled howl, and a still more startled yell, as Tom Merry, followed instantly by Jimmy Silver and the rest of the juniors, swarmed out of the trees and charged at the fellow.

D'Arcy's rush had fairly bowled him over, and the next instant the juniors were swarming over him.

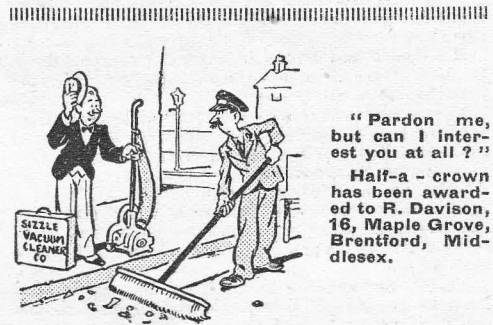
He was flat on his back in another instant with several triumphant juniors holding him down.

"Now tie the beggar up!" called Tom Merry. "Yank him along to that tree, and we'll jolly soon see what he's buried!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Despite his terrific howls, the man was hauled to the nearest tree, and tied with his back to the trunk.

"Lemme be!" he almost whimpered. "Darn it, I ain't done no 'arm! Let a bloke be! Oh corks! Don't you dig that there sack up!"



"Pardon me, but can I interest you at all?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Davison, 16, Maple Grove, Brentford, Middlesex.

But, with the piece of wood, Arthur Augustus was already at work feverishly.

Lovell grabbed another chunk of wood, and soon the soil was fairly flying right and left.

The sacking was revealed at last.

It was a dramatic moment, especially for the triumphant Arthur Augustus.

With praiseworthy unselfishness, he allowed Lovell to have the honour of dragging the sacking from the hole and untying it.

The juniors gathered round, restless with excitement.

The sack was opened at last, and into it Arthur Edward plunged an eager hand.

Then he jumped back with a startled yell, his hand empty.

"Bai Jove! What—what—"

"Ow!" gasped Lovell, his face white. "There—there's something rotten inside!"

"What?"

"A—a body, or something!" gasped Lovell faintly.

"A whatter?"

It was a gasp.

Tom Merry gave a muttered exclamation and, with a sudden, swift movement he tipped up the sack and shook it.

Something fell out and rolled on the ground.

The crowd of juniors stared at it as if suddenly petrified.

It was the dead body of a tom-cat!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

Tom Merry was the first to find his voice. "M-mum-my hat!" he mumbled feebly. "It—it's a blessed cat!"

"Bai Jove!"

The face of Arthur Augustus was a picture. From chalk white it grew to a pale pink, and from a pale pink it grew to a livid scarlet.

The rest of the fellows looked at him with feelings too deep for words.

"Keep it dark, young lads!" groaned the scared-looking yokel. "I never meant to do it—I swears I didn't! Put it back in that there hole for goodness' sake! If the missus knows I did it she'd sack me on the spot. That there durned tom-cat was the happle of her heye!"

"Oh crumbs!" choked Jimmy Silver. "Oh dear!"

"I never meant to do it, but the missus knows as I 'ad the old gun outer the kitchen this arternoon, and she'll guess as I done it, if she sees the body, and sees as he's been shot," groaned the yokel dismally. "It was all done in a moment. I sees that durned cat sittin' on the barn roof, and I let's fly without thinkin'. And durn me if I didn't 'it 'im furst go off. I hid the body in a ditch, and not darin' to do it in daylight, I leaves me room where I sleeps with old Garge, and I comes and buries it 'ere. I 'opes you won't let on. If yer does, it's the sack for me, durn it! I swears as I never—"

The scared yokel was interrupted by a perfect howl of laughter. His pathetic story had proved too much for the gravity of Tom Merry & Co., and Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they roared.

And they were still laughing when they left the clearing, after releasing the yokel and comforting his apprehensive fears by promising not to "let on."

"Well, my hat!" choked Tom Merry, wiping his eyes at last. "Gussy, old chap, you'll be the death of us yet. You're a giddy expert at discovering mares'-nests."

"And dead tom-cats!" grinned Lowther. "Anyway, I vote we get back to bed after this. I've had enough of hunting giddy thieves for one night."

"Hear, hear!"

It was an unanimous agreement from Rookwooders and St. Jim's fellows.

"We'll chuck it up for to-night, then," grinned Tom Merry. "But before we part, I think we ought to give Gussy a good, sound bumping, just to teach him not to jump to conclusions."

"Good egg!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Tom Mewwy—Yawoop! Leggo! I uttahn wefuse—woop!"

Bump!

"Yawooooo!"

The silence of the summer's night was shattered by a series of fearful howls, as the hapless but well-meaning Arthur Augustus was soundly bumped on the grass.

Then the laughing Rookwooders returned to their own camp, whilst Tom Merry & Co., leaving D'Arcy to follow when he had recovered, made tracks for home and bed.

CHAPTER 11.

Suspicion!

"LEAVE it to Pongo!"

"Eh? What's that?"

"Leave it to old Pongo!" said Wally D'Arcy emphatically. "You silly old Fourth and THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

Shell asses have tried to hunt down the giddy thief, and all you've managed to hunt down so far is a dashed dead tom-cat and each other in turn."

"Bai Jove! Weally, Wally, you impudent young wascal—"

"Oh, you give your old chin a rest, Gus!" said Wally cheerfully. "You talk much too much and don't think enough, old chap."

"Bai Jove!"

"Detective, eh?" jeered Wally, standing ready to bolt if necessary. "Fancy Gus as a detective, you chaps!"

"Just fancy!" remarked Curly Gibson, with a chuckle. "I must say it was a good job it was only the funeral of a dead tom-cat that Gussy tracked down. It might have been worse."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fags.

There was a chuckle among the Fourth and Shell chaps standing near, and Arthur Augustus went pink with wrath.

Since the previous night's unfortunate events the story of the deceased tom-cat had become public property—how, nobody knew—and Arthur Augustus had heard a great deal about it—far more than he wanted to hear.

"You—you cheeky little wottah!" he gasped. "If it wasn't for the fact that it would be infwah dig I would give you fags a jolly good thwashin', bai Jove!"

"Jolly good thing for you, then, that there is such a thing as infra dig," remarked Wally coolly. "Do give your old chin a rest, Gussy. Now, you fellows heard what I said just now. I said, 'Leave it to old Pongo,' and I mean it."

"Rats!"

"I tell you I mean it!" said Wally grimly. "Pongo's the very dog for the job. He's got a nose for crime, that dog has. I bet if he gets on the trail he'll jolly soon run the thief down. Leave it to Pongo!"

"Wubbish!" snorted Arthur Augustus. "That w'etched animal is of no earthly use to anyone, Wally. He is nothin' but a twial and a twouble to the whole community, bai Jove! Hewwies' bulldog Towsah once twacked down a wed hewwin', I believe, but Pongo would 'nevah even do that!"

"You'll see!" said Wally darkly. "He wouldn't dig up a dead cat, anyway."

"Wats!"

"No; I said a cat!" said Wally cheerfully. "I say, you fellows, seen old Pongo during the last ten minutes?" he added suddenly. "I haven't seen—Hallo! There he is just coming out of your tent, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove!"

In great alarm, Arthur Augustus blinked over towards his own tent.

He was just in time to see Pongo trot out, worrying something fluffy in his mouth.

"Only a slipper or something," said Wally, in sudden relief. "I don't think it will harm the old chap."

"Harm the bwute!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Can't you see he's got one of my best slippahs in his wotten teeth? Bai Jove! This is weally too much!"

And with that Arthur Augustus started off at top speed to meet Pongo, with the light of battle in his noble eye. As a rule, Gussy gave Pongo a very wide berth indeed, but the sight of the mischievous little terrier worrying one of his best slippers almost drove Arthur Augustus frantic.

He made a blind rush at Pongo. Pongo waited until he was a yard away, and then he moved unconcernedly to one side, and Gussy blundered past him.

Pongo then trotted away again, the slipper still clutched between his white teeth.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, while the other fellows roared. "That dog is the limit!"

The laughter made Arthur Augustus more wrathful than ever, and he made a really ferocious rush at Pongo this time. Pongo saw he meant business, and he turned and bolted, still carrying the slipper.

Arthur Augustus went after him like the wind.

"Go it, Pongo!" bawled Wally D'Arcy. "Put it on, old chap!"

"Two to one on Pongo!" yelled Jameson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Past tent after tent went the chase, and then quite suddenly came disaster.

Pongo was just about to dash past Mr. Lathom's private tent when Mr. Lathom emerged hurriedly.

There was a brief vision of Pongo mixed up in Mr. Lathom's legs, and then the Fourth Form master sat down violently, while Pongo, after a brief hesitation, raced on.

That was not all, however. Unable to pull up in time, the luckless Arthur Augustus went sprawling over Mr. Lathom.

"Poof!" gasped Mr. Lathom, as the swell of the Fourth sprawled over him.

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus, measuring his length on the ground. "Oh, bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up breathlessly, and then he held out a helping hand to Mr. Lathom.

Mr. Lathom sat in the opening of his tent, and gasped and gasped. He ignored Gussy's hand, but as Tom Merry and Blake raced up the next instant he allowed them to help him to his feet.

"Oh, bai Jove!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "How vevy, vevy unfortunate! My deah sir, pway allow me to expvess my gweat wregret for what has happened!"

Mr. Lathom mopped his brow, and glowered at the luckless swell of the Fourth.

"D'Arcy, how dare you!" he gasped. "Careless young donkey! I shall punish you most severely—poof!—for this, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, Mr. Lathom, as one gentleman to anothah—"

"Silence!" bellowed the irate master, getting back his breath. "You had no business to be rushing about in such a reckless and dangerous manner, D'Arcy! You will enter my study—my tent, I should say—and await me there! At the moment I have urgent business with Dr. Holmes. On my return I propose to cane you severely, boy! Go!"

"But, weally, sir, that w'etched dog—"

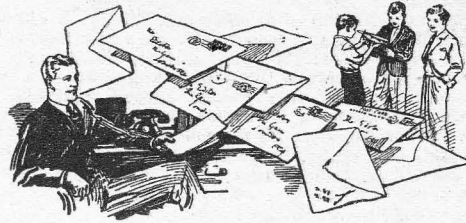
"You were chasing the dog," raved Mr. Lathom, "and I hold you responsible for the accident. As for the dog, I shall request Dr. Holmes to have it removed from the camp! I have already had occasion to speak to your brother regarding it, D'Arcy. I have found it more than once in my tent, and it has caused me much annoyance! Go into my tent and await my return, D'Arcy!"

"Oh, yaas, sir!" groaned Gussy; and he entered the tent.

"Poor old Gussy!" murmured Blake. "Always getting it in the neck!"

"Serves you jolly well right, Gussy!" snorted Wally, appearing in the doorway of the tent.

(Continued on next page.)



THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

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

HALLO, Chums! Seen the great news on page five about our stupendous new programme? Take it from me, next Wednesday's GEM will break all records for popularity—it will go down in the history of the old paper as the best issue bar none! I've spared no effort to make the GEM the outstanding boys' paper of to-day. For thirty-one years it has led the way for the splendid quality and quantity of its school stories, and next week it will be a bigger favourite than ever! Just consider the grand features of the new programme. Martin Clifford sets the ball rolling with the opening yarn of a ripping holiday series of Tom Merry & Co.

"WHERE'S OUR CARAVAN RESTED?"

The chums of St. Jim's fix up to go on a caravan tour during the summer vacation, and everything in the garden is lovely when the last day of the term arrives. But their old rivals Figgins & Co. have decided to go caravanning, too, merely to wind up the term with a record jape on the School House juniors. As there is only one caravan, it is fairly evident that one caravan party will be badly left. I will leave you to discover which party it is.

"A TENDERFOOT IN CANADA"

Next we have the first gripping story of Frank Richards' schooldays in the backwoods of British Columbia, and the yarn needs no other recommendation when I tell you that Martin Clifford has written it.

Frank Richards' arrival in Canada, his meeting with his lively cousin, Bob Lawless, and the long journey to British Columbia, are full of excitement and interest. But it's the last stage of the journey that Frank finds the most thrilling—for he and his cousin are captured by Redskins!

"THE 'BUCKS' OF THE BENBOW!"

In this powerful yarn readers are introduced to newcomers in the GEM—the chums of St. Winifred's. But the author himself is no newcomer—it's none other than popular Owen Conquest!

St. Winifred's is a floating school, housed in an old wooden warship, the Benbow. The "Bucks" are Vernon Daubeny & Co., who go the pace and "paint the town red." But one of their number—Jack Drake—suddenly discovers that life in future will not be all fun and no work. On the last day of the vacation he learns that his father is a ruined man, and that only by winning a scholarship can he hope to remain at St. Winifred's for longer than one more term!

Besides our new fiction programme, there are two novel features starting. "Detective Kerr Investigates" is run on similar lines to the "Inspector Hornleigh" series which proved such a big success on the radio. The first mystery Kerr tackles is "Mr. Lathom's Surprise Packet," and readers are asked to spot how the culprit gives himself away.

In the other new feature Herbert Skimpole will keep you amused and interested by casting the horoscopes of St. Jim's characters. Finally, Monty Lowther will be in his usual place, and jokes and "Pen Pals" complete this unbeatable number.

Chin, chin!

THE EDITOR.
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

"What the thump did you want to chase old Pongo like that for, you ass? Now Lathom's ratty, and means to get Pongo shifted, blow you!"

It was the last straw for Arthur Augustus. Usually he was very patient indeed with his young scapegrace of a brother, but on this occasion Arthur Augustus let himself go.

Rushing at Wally, he grasped that reckless fag by the collar, and, dragging him into the tent, he started to shake him with no little vigour.

"Leggo!" roared Wally furiously.

Shake, shake, shake, shake!

Arthur Augustus continued to shake his brother until suddenly Wally neatly tripped him up, and shot through the crowd in the tent opening.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd in the opening were highly entertained, and they roared as Wally vanished, while his less fortunate elder brother went headlong and sprawled with his head half under the bed.

For some seconds Arthur Augustus lay where he had fallen. Then he gave a cry, and was about to scramble up when just as suddenly he seemed to pause. Then he poked his head under the bed.

"Hurt, Gussy?" exclaimed Blake, in great alarm, rushing into the tent. "What—"

Arthur Augustus did not answer for a moment. He remained grovelling under the bed, and then he slowly backed out and rose to his feet, dusty and panting, but with a strange expression on his red face.

Then Blake suddenly caught sight of something in his chum's hand, and he yelled.

"Gussy! What—what—"

He broke off aghast—and no wonder!

For in one hand Arthur Augustus held a gold watch, and in the other hand a wallet—an expensive-looking wallet!

"That—that's your watch, Gussy!" stammered Blake.

"Quite wight, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus in a curious voice. "And this, unless I am vewy much mistaken, is Mornington's missin' wallet."

"Great pip!"

There was a buzz of utter amazement round the tent opening, and Tom Merry came in.

He stared transfixed at the glittering watch and the handsome wallet.

"Great pip! D-d-did you find those under Lathom's bed, Gussy?"

"Yaas. How—how feahfully wotten!"

Apparently Arthur Augustus had forgotten all about his little difference with Mr. Lathom now. He was looking amazed and utterly bewildered.

"It was hidden in a hole—wathah a big hole in the floorboards, and the earth appeahs to be dug out also," he mumbled. "I happened to see my watch shinin', bai Jove! It is a most wemarkable and disturbin' thing, deah boys. And there are othah things in the hole also, I am afwaid."

"Phew!"

It was a staggering surprise. To find the stolen articles hidden under the bed of the Fourth Form master was the last thing they would have dreamed of.

"It is wathah wotten," said Arthur Augustus. "But it is uttably absurd to suspect Mr. Lathom of havin' stolen them. I—"

"What—what—bless my soul! What did you say then, D'Arcy?"

It was Mr. Lathom again. He stood in the doorway of the tent, and he gazed angrily at the fellows in the tent—and especially at Arthur

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,587.

Augustus D'Arcy. Apparently he had overheard D'Arcy's last words.

"Oh, bai Jove!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

CHAPTER 12.

The Mystery Solved!

IT was no wonder Mr. Lathom looked angry. But his anger gave place to utter amazement as he saw the gold watch and the wallet in Gussy's hands.

"D'Arcy!" he gasped. "What—what is that? Can it be your gold hunter—the watch you lost recently?"

"Yaas, sir!" stammered Arthur Augustus, going pink. "And—and this is the wallet Mornington of Wookwood has lost. I—I have just found them undah your bed, sir!"

"Wha-a-at?"

The master was thunderstruck.

There was a dead silence. The rest of the juniors gathered round the tent opening waited for the storm to break.

Mr. Lathom glanced from face to face, and his own face grew pink.

"You—you dare to tell me that you—you found those articles hidden under my bed, D'Arcy?" he gasped, in a faint voice.

"Ya-as, sir!" stammered the hapless Arthur Augustus. "But, weally, sir, pway allow me to assuah you that not for one moment do I suspect that you know anythin'—that is to say—"

Arthur Augustus broke off under Mr. Lathom's glare. He realised suddenly that he had put it rather unfortunately!

Mr. Lathom's face was a study.

"Bless my soul!" he articulated at last. "This—this is too much! Never have I been so insulted by a pupil in all my scholastic experience."

"Weally, sir—"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"But, sir—"

"Silence! So you are kind enough to assure me that you do not suspect me of having stolen these articles," went on Mr. Lathom, with grim sarcasm. "Oh, very good! You will come with me to Dr. Holmes at once, D'Arcy, and you will bring those wretched articles with you. Found them under my bed, you dare to say? Stuff and nonsense!"

"But, sir, pway listen—"

"Silence! Come! Follow me!"

Arthur Augustus gasped like a stranded fish and obeyed.

As Mr. Lathom had an iron grip on his collar he had no choice in the matter. And as master and pupil left the tent Tom Merry gave a low whistle.

"Well, my hat!" he breathed. "If that doesn't run off with the giddy dog-biscuit! Poor old Gussy!"

"It is poor old Gussy!" groaned Blake. "Oh, the awful ass seems as if he's born for trouble! Let's go and see what happens to him, for goodness' sake!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors left the tent and started off for the Head's tent, through the opening of which Mr. Lathom, with his grip still on the unlucky Arthur Augustus' collar, was just vanishing.

But just as the juniors were hurrying towards it, Tom Merry halted abruptly.

"Hold on!" he breathed. "Look at old Pongo, you chaps!"

(Continued on page 30.)



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PEN PALS COUPON

16-7-33

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"Blow Pongo!" said Blake crossly.
 "But watch him!" murmured Tom Merry, his eyes gleaming. "The little beggar's waiting for us to clear, I do believe. Look at the guilty, crafty look on his chivvy! And he's still got Gussy's slipper."

"Well, what the thump——"
 "Go on! Keep on!" muttered Tom Merry. "You'll see in a sec."

And Tom Merry walked on with his chums for a few yards, and then quite suddenly he looked back over his shoulder.

As he expected, Pongo had vanished from sight. "Now do you see?" breathed Tom Merry, his eyes dancing. "Now, after me—sharp!"

And Tom Merry dashed back to Mr. Lathom's tent and rushed inside, and after him went his startled and wondering chums.

They were just in time to see Pongo, looking very sheepish, and with his tail wagging, crawl from under the bed.

The slipper was not in his mouth now. "Hold the little beggar!" snapped Tom. Blake jumped at Pongo and grasped his collar, and held him despite his whines and struggles.

Tom Merry dragged away the bed with a wrench. As it swung aside a hole in the floorboards was revealed, and below that was another hole, apparently scraped out of the earth.

Tom Merry dived a hand inside and brought forth the slipper, and then he produced from the hole Racke's silver cigarette-case, and then several other articles of less value.

There was a pocket-book, half-chewed to pieces, and there was a piece of broken mirror, and a silver photograph frame, and several other small

articles. And all of them were either chewed and torn, or had teeth-marks on them.

"Well, I'm hanged!" gasped Blake.
 "Pongo!" said Tom Merry quietly. "I thought so when I saw him hanging about outside just now. Pongo, the little rascal, is the thief!"

"Phew!"
 "Well, I'm blown!"
 For a moment the startled juniors looked at each other, and then, with one accord, they doubled up and roared with laughter.

They could not help it.
 They remembered several significant things now. They remembered that Pongo had been present at the raid on the enemy camp on the night when the wallet had vanished, and they knew he had been in the tent at the time. They also remembered that on the night when Gussy had lost his watch and Racke had lost his cigarette-case, Tom Merry had insisted upon Pongo remaining behind when they started out to raid the Rookwood camp again. Moreover, Pongo's mischievous nature was well known.

"Well, the little wretch!" choked Tom Merry at last. "My hat! Won't those Rookwood chaps roar when they hear the news! Come on, chaps! We'll take these things straight away to the Head, and we'll jolly soon prove it when we show him the teeth-marks on everything!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, rather!"
 And they went. And two minutes later Dr. Holmes and Mr. Lathom were listening in amazement to Tom Merry's story, while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy almost fell down when he heard it.

But there was no doubting the proof.
 Pongo was the thief! The teeth-marks without the other evidence were sufficient to bring his guilt home to him. And little Mr. Lathom, his usual good nature restored again, now joined the Head and Mr. Railton in hearty laughter when all was clear.

In fact, all St. Jim's and all Rookwood laughed over the disclosure, and the only fellow who did not laugh was Wally D'Arcy, Pongo's master. And Wally was indignant—wildly indignant—at the foul charge, as he expressed it, brought against his pet.

But in the end he had to admit that Pongo was guilty; but Wally still had something to be indignant about, for the sentence passed on Pongo for his crime was that he be returned to St. Jim's without delay.

Indeed, so indignant was poor Wally that he actually went to the Head himself about it, and the Head gave way to his pleadings, and Pongo remained—greatly to the regret of Arthur Augustus, it must be feared.

So ended the great camp mystery; but it did not end the rags and raids between the rival schools under canvas by any means. St. Jim's—after many smaller japes—carried out a gigantic raid a few nights later, and more than squared accounts with the Rookwood heroes.

And when at last, brown as berries and chirpy as crickets, the St. Jim's fellows and the Rookwood fellows returned to their respective schools at the end of the summer camp, it was generally agreed on both sides that it was honours even!

(Next Wednesday: "WHERE'S OUR CARAVAN RESTED?" Look out for the first sparkling yarn of a rollicking holiday series featuring the chums of St. Jim's on a caravan tour. Order your GEM early.)

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Billy Bunter removed an engraved slip of paper from the envelope and held it up to view. "My hat!" Harry Wharton & Co. stared at it. For it was a cheque for fifty pounds, made payable to W. G. Bunter!

Bunter Astonishes the Natives!

"I'M expecting——" began Billy Bunter. Bob Cherry held up his hand. "Don't say postal order," he said. "We're fed up on your postal order, Bunter. If you say postal order you get bumped." "Hear, hear!" "And the bumpfulness will be terrific, my esteemed, prevaricating Bunter," added Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But, I say, you fellows, I'm really expecting a——" "I've told you what to expect," said Bob. "Just say the words postal order and you get it." "In the neck," remarked Johnny Bull. Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five of the Remove at Greyfriars more in sorrow than in anger. "I wasn't going to," he answered with dignity. "Ye gods!" said Bob Cherry dazedly. "You're not expecting a postal order, and you don't want to raise a loan on it in advance?" "Certainly not!" "Well, my hat!" ejaculated Frank Nugent. Harry Wharton & Co. surveyed Billy Bunter with interest. It was the first time on record that the Owl of the Remove hadn't been expecting a postal order. "I'm expecting a cheque," explained Bunter. "Oh! It's a cheque this time!" said Bob Cherry, with deep sarcasm. "Yes, it's a cheque this time," answered Bunter calmly. "I've written to my pater for a cheque." "Which, of course, he will send by return of post?" asked Bob, still deeply sarcastic. "I'm expecting it by any post now," said Bunter. "I've asked the pater to make it a large

Rolling In Money!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

one, so that I can settle up some little accounts I owe in the Remove. I believe I owe you fellows some money——"

"I believe you do!" chuckled Bob.

"My idea is to get a decent cheque from the pater and square all round," said Bunter. "I've put it to him nicely, and I've no doubt that the cheque will turn up all right. It's pretty certain to come by this afternoon's post."

"About a thousand pounds, I suppose?" asked Bob Cherry, evidently still in a sarcastic vein.

Bunter shook his head.

"Not at all. Only about fifty."

"Only about fifty!" said Bob faintly. "I call that rather stingy of your pater. Only about fifty pounds!"

"That's all!" said Bunter. "But there's just one little difficulty——"

~~~~~  
*Billy Bunter's postal order has long been a standing joke in the Remove at Greyfriars—but there's no joke about his fifty-pound cheque!*  
~~~~~

"I can guess what that is," remarked Harry Wharton.

"Well, what?"

"The cheque won't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the kind!" roared Bunter. "The cheque will come all right. But there's one little difficulty. The pater's so jolly careful in money matters. He may cross the cheque for safety. He always crosses his cheques. Then there may be some delay about cashing it. That's all."

"Really all?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Now, I want you fellows to lend me ten bob to tide me over——"

"Until the cheque comes?" grinned Bob Cherry. "I don't think. We'll see the cheque first, if you don't mind."

"Ha, ha, na!"

"I don't mind," answered Bunter. "What I'm worrying about is that the cheque may be crossed. If it is, I shall have to ask Mr. Quelch to pass it through his bank, and, naturally, he won't hand over the money till it's cleared. That means delay. Of course, it may be an open

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cheque. In that case, I shan't trouble you fellows."

"You howling ass!" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones. "Do you think you can pull our legs to that extent? Your cheque will come along with the postal order you've been expecting ever since you were a fag in the Second Form—"

"And not sooner!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"If you doubt my word, Cherry—"

"If!" ejaculated Bob.

"It's a new stunt," said Nugent. "The postal order's worn out, and Bunter's made it a cheque instead. Let's bump him!"

"Good egg!"

Billy Bunter jumped back.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the giddy goat, you know. I'm not asking you to lend me ten bob till the cheque comes."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If you get a cheque for fifty pounds, Bunter, we'll lend you ten bob till it's cashed," he said.

"If you don't, we'll give you a jolly good ragging for trying to spoof us with a new yarn. That's a compact."

"Agreed!" said Bunter.

"Oh his dot!" exclaimed Bob in astonishment.

"You're going to get the ragging, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter turned up his fat little nose.

"You'll see," he answered calmly.

"Hallo, hal-o, hallo! Here's the postman."

Mr. Bloggs the village postman, was sighted in the distance. He was plodding up the road from Friar-lale towards the gates of Greyfriars, with his sack on his shoulder. There was a chuckle from the group of juniors in the gateway.

"Now for the giddy cheque!" said Harry Wharton. "Don't let that fat porpoise roll away."

"I've got an eye on him," said Johnny Bull.

"If you move off, Bunter, you get my boot."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Harry Wharton & Co. stepped out of the gateway to greet the village postman. Mr. Bloggs stopped, and breathed hard, and touched his cap. The Famous Five kept William George Bunter in their midst. They expected him to attempt to dodge now that his remarkable statement was to be put to the test.

But to their surprise Bunter showed no desire to dodge. He seemed quite eager to meet the postman.

"Anything for me, Bloggs?" he called out.

"Yes, Master Bunter."

"Registered letter?"

"Yes, Master Bunter."

Billy Bunter gave his unbelieving companions a triumphant blink.

"I say, you fellows, what did I tell you?" he chirruped.

"Seeing is believing!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Let's see the whacking cheque."

"Sign, please, Master Bunter!"

Billy Bunter took his registered letter, signed for it, and the postman plodded on with his sack. The Famous Five gathered round Billy Bunter in great curiosity as he jabbed a fat finger into the sealed envelope.

"Let's see it!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We're dying to see it! Hurry up!"

"We're on tenterhooks, my esteemed Bunter!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter jerked the envelope open.

There was a letter inside, and Bunter unfolded it calmly. An engraved slip of paper was revealed.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

"My hat!"

Bunter held it up to view.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at it. For it was a cheque! It read:

"LONDON AND SOUTHERN COUNTIES
BANK, LTD.

PAY W. G. BUNTER
Fifty Pounds (£50).

W. S. BUNTER."

Money to Burn!

"FIFTY POUNDS!"

"My only hat!"

"Phew!"

Billy Bunter grinned complacently. He twirled the cheque in his fat fingers with a careless air, as if cheques for fifty pounds a time were a mere nothing to him. Harry Wharton & Co.'s astonishment almost deprived them of the power of speech.

It was a cheque for fifty pounds payable to W. G. Bunter, signed by his father, William Samuel Bunter—there was no doubt about that.

"The pater's crossed it," said Bunter regretfully. "I was afraid he would. He's so jolly careful in money matters. Still, it means only a few days' delay."

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or is visions about?" he ejaculated. "It looks like a cheque."

"It is a cheque, you ass!" hooted Bunter.

"The chequefulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "The surprisefulness is also great!"

"I'll take this to Quelchy at once," said Bunter. He held out a fat hand. "Lend me ten bob, you fellows, to tide me over till this is cashed!"

"Caught!" said Wharton, laughing. "It's up to us! You'll have to square when the cheque's cashed, Bunter!"

"Rely on me, old chap!" Bunter loftily accepted the ten-shilling note extended by the captain of the Remove. "You fellows can make a list, if you like, of the little sums I owe you."

Billy Bunter rolled away with the cheque in his fat paw. He left the Famous Five in a dazed state.

They simply could not "get on" to it.

Bunter's yarns of his wealthy home, his wealthy people, and his titled relations were a standing joke in the Remove. His father had been seen at Greyfriars—a fat little important City gentleman, who certainly did not look as if he could afford to send his hopeful son tips of fifty pounds, and still less as if he would do it even if he could afford it. Yet here was the cheque.

"Hallo! What's the giddy excitement?" Skinner came out of the gates with Snoop, and paused to look at the astonished five. "Anything happened?"

"Lots!" answered Bob Cherry. "Bunter's got a cheque for fifty pounds."

"Gammon!" said Snoop and Skinner simultaneously.

"Honest Injun! It's from his father."

"You've actually seen it?" asked Harold Skinner.

"With our own dazzled eyes."

"My hat!" Skinner drew a quick breath. "I remember once Bunter had fivers after his pater brought off some swindle or other on the Stock Exchange. Has the old sport struck lucky again, I wonder? But fifty pounds— Phew!"

"Fifty pounds!" said Sidney James Snoop in an

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awed tone. "And—only to-day I refused to lend Bunter my bike!"

"It's never too late to mend!" suggested Bob Cherry satirically. "Rush after him and lend it to him—quick! There'll be a dozen fellows ready to lend him bikes when they've seen his cheque!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner and Snoop exchanged a glance and turned back into the gates. They had been starting a little walk that half-holiday, but they were not bothering about a walk now. If William George Bunter had fifty pounds, he also had two devoted pals ready to haunt him like shadows—to lend him bikes, and even bobs.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Bunter's going to be popular," he remarked.

"The popularity will be terrific!"

Bob Cherry was right.

As the Famous Five strolled back into the gates they sighted the Owl of the Remove. Skinner and Snoop had joined him in the quadrangle, and were walking one on either side of him—hovering round him, as it were, in the most friendly fashion. They were the first to hover; but there were destined to be some more hoverers—many more.

The Famous Five chuckled, and went down to the cricket, quite indifferent on the subject of the cheque, though still astonished. But there were plenty of fellows who were not indifferent.

Skinner and Snoop obtained a view of the cheque, and even the sceptical Skinner had to acknowledge that it was the genuine article. And from the moment that his eyes rested on it Skinner's manner to William George Bunter was like honey, only sweeter.

"I'd hike off to the bank before it closes," Skinner advised. "I'll come with you, if you like, Bunter."

"So will I," said Snoop.

"You see, the cheque's crossed," said Bunter. "The pater's so jolly careful. I can't cash it at the bank."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Take it to Quelchy. He will put it through his bank and hand me the money, of course."

"Of course," said Skinner. "He may think it rather odd your pater sending you so much, though. The Head mayn't like it."

"I'll tell him I'm going to get a new bike and a camera and things," said Bunter.

"Good! I say, this is ripping of your pater, Billy, old fellow!"

Bunter blinked at Skinner.

It was not an hour since Skinner had called him a fat toad. Now it was Billy, old fellow! Such was the magic power of a printed slip of paper!

"You were mentioning that you wanted a bike this afternoon, old scout," Snoop remarked.

Bunter elevated his fat little nose.

"You refused to lend me your bike," he said.

"I—I didn't exactly refuse—"

"You said you'd see me hanged first!"

"Well, that wasn't refusing, was it?" said Snoop jocularly. "Only my little joke, Billy. Of course, I'd be glad for you to use my bike whenever you please!"

"Same here!" said Skinner heartily. "I wouldn't lend my bike to every chap, but Billy is different—"

"Quite different among pals, you know," said Snoop.

"Well, perhaps I may borrow it," said Bunter.

"Hazeldene—I say, Hazeldene!" Hazeldene and Trevor were coming out of the School House, and they stopped as Bunter hailed them.

"Hallo, Tubby!" answered Hazeldene.

"Don't call Bunter silly names, Hazeldene," said Skinner warmly. "There's such a thing as politeness."

Hazeldene stared at him.

"Eh, what's the matter with calling him Tubby? You were calling him a greasy barrel this morning!"

"I—I—" stammered Skinner.

"You shouldn't make such jokes, Skinner," said Snoop reprovingly. "Of course, Billy knows it's only your fun, but still—"

"I admit it," said Skinner blandly. "Billy knows I wouldn't say anything to offend him."

Hazeldene and Trevor stared.

"Is this a game?" asked Hazeldene.

"Or has Bunter come into a fortune?" queried Trevor.

"You've generally got some cash about you, Hazeldene," said Bunter; "can you cash a cheque for me?"

Hazeldene chuckled.

"I dare say I could," he answered. "I'd like to see the cheque first."

"Here it is."

"Wha-a-at!"

Hazeldene blinked at the cheque.

"Fifty pounds! My only hat! Where did you get it?"

"My pater sent it, to get some things I want," answered Bunter carelessly. "I suppose you can't cash it for me?"

"Hardly—my pater doesn't send me quids in fifties," said Hazeldene, laughing. "Better take it to the Head—if it's genuine."

"Can't you see it's genuine, you ass?" hooted Bunter.

"Well, it looks all right," admitted Hazeldene.



"After him!" roared Skinner. And with a speed that was amazing considering the weight he had to carry, William George Bunter fled, with a howling crowd on his track.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,587.

Several Remove fellows were gathering round, and they all wanted to look at the cheque. Bunter showed it round willingly enough. He seemed to be enjoying the limelight he was receiving. The cheque passed from hand to hand amid exclamations of surprise and congratulation. Even Bolsover major condescended to congratulate Bunter. Fisher T. Fish examined the cheque with meticulous attention, and seemed loth to part with it again. When it was returned to Bunter, Fishy's eye followed it hungrily.

"I'm going to Mr. Quelch now," said the Owl of the Remove. "He's going to cash it for me. I shall have to wait till it's through the bank. Still, I've got some friends who'll lend me a pound or two to go on with."

"My dear chap——" said Skinner.

"My dear fellow——" said Snoop.

"I guess I'm your antelope——"

"Don't forget me, Bunter!"

Quite a procession marched with William George Bunter to the Remove master's study. Perhaps some of the fellows had a lingering doubt about the genuineness of the cheque, and wanted to see whether Billy Bunter really would take it to his Form-master. But there was no hesitation about Bunter. He marched up to Mr. Quelch's door and knocked.

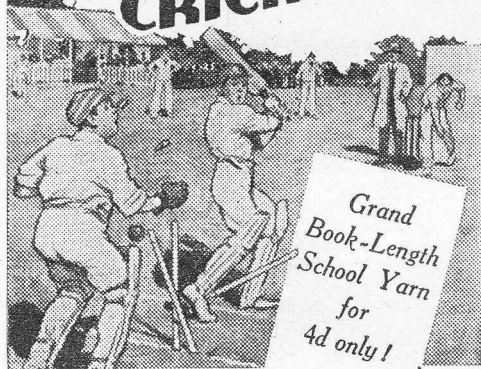
"Come in!"

Bunter entered the study and the door closed on a crowd of eager and interested juniors. They heard a murmur of voices within, but the words were not to be distinguished. Then came Mr. Quelch's clear, metallic voice:

"Certainly, Bunter!"

A minute or two later the door reopened and Billy Bunter came out. His friends—a dozen in number now—gathered round him in faithful

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array, and walked out of the School House with him. Billy Bunter's steps led him—as if by instinct—towards the school shop. And thither his numerous friends escorted him, and during the next half-hour William George Bunter, seated on a high stool at the counter, sticky and shiny and happy, had the time of his life.

Chequemate

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, my giddy millionaire!"

"Lend me ten bob, will you?"

"I don't think."

It was two days later, and William George Bunter was at the zenith of his popularity.

Never had a fellow become popular so suddenly and completely.

Before the arrival of the cheque, Bunter had been the person of the least possible consequence in the Greyfriars Remove. He had been a fat bouncer, a tubby toad, and a cringing porpoise, and all sorts of things like that.

After the cheque, the difference was astonishing. No longer a fat toad or a podgy porpoise, W. G. Bunter was an old fellow, an old chap, an old scout.

Friends sprang up around him like mushrooms.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were sworn brothers to him. Fisher T. Fish worshipped the ground he walked on, and the bank the cheque was drawn on. Bolsover major was markedly civil; lots of fellows had a kind word for Bunter.

Angel of the Fourth invited him into his study for a quiet game of nap, and was quite content to accept Bunter's IOU's for his very considerable losses. For evidently it was only a matter of days before W. G. Bunter would be rolling in currency notes.

The story of the cheque had spread—and even Loder and Carne of the Sixth had cheery nods for Bunter, whose existence they would never have dreamed of deigning to notice a few days before. Fitzgerald of the Fifth even went for a walk with him. Bunter dropped into a way of alluding to "my friends in the Sixth," or "my pals in the Fifth Form."

The glory of the fifty-pound cheque was like a halo round Bunter's podgy brow. On his great expectations he borrowed right and left.

To lend Bunter a bob or two now was, as Skinner remarked in the privacy of his study, a paying game. It was a sprat to catch a whale. Bunter was airily planning motor excursions, runs up to London to the theatres, feeds at big hotels in Folkestone; and fellows who stood by him now were to come in for a share of these good things.

For two days William George Bunter was a pig in clover, and he thrrove on it. Even Fisher T. Fish "squeezed out" a loan for Bunter—though parting with money gave Fishy a pain like the toothache.

The Owl squeezed most of his new friends dry in the course of two days. Then he had recourse again to the Famous Five. He requested the loan of ten bob in a careless and casual manner, as of a fellow to whom ten-bob notes were trifles. But they were not trifles to Harry Wharton & Co., and five heads were shaken in response to Bunter's request.

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove. "I'm rather short of money—till my cheque's cashed. Lend me ten bob

and I'll hand you a pound for it—when my cheque's cashed."

"I'll lend you a thick ear, you fat rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I suppose you're rather jealous of my wealth, Bob Cherry—"

Bob raised his boot and Bunter rolled away without finishing his remark. He looked into Hazeldene's study.

"Hazeldene, old chap, lend me a pound till my cheque's cashed—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'm making up a party for the Frivolity next week," said Bunter. "We're going up in a big car, and there's going to be a big feed and—"

"Fathead!"

"I shan't jolly well take you!" roared Bunter. "Yah! Go and eat coke!"

And he rolled along the Remove in search of a lender. Skinner and Snoop were drawn blank; they had no more to lend. They had already expended their sprays which were to catch whales. As a last resource, Bunter looked into Fisher T. Fish's study.

"I guess I'd be glad to oblige, old sport," said Fisher T. Fish. "But money is tight. Haven't you heard from Quelchy yet?"

"I haven't asked him," said Bunter loftily. "I'm not in a hurry for the money. I simply want ten bob or so for the present, but I dare

was hurrying down the Remove passage, en route for the tuckshop, in the corner of the quad. Money never remained in William George's pocket till it burned a hole there.

Fisher T. Fish folded up the I O U very carefully, to put it away safely. Fishy grinned over it with satisfaction. In a day or two he was going to bag a hundred per cent on his loan—which was good enough even for a sharp-youth who had been raised in "Noo Yark."

As he folded the paper he noticed that there was some writing on one side of it. He grinned again. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had evidently handed him a letter, with the I O U on the back, instead of having written it on a loose sheet of paper, as he supposed. Fishy unfolded the paper again and glanced at the letter. Fishy was no more scrupulous than Bunter on points like that.

"Gee-whiz!"

Fisher T. Fish jumped.

If Fishy's sharp eyes had suddenly rested on the Gorgon the sight could not have startled him more than the sight of Bunter's letter.

He read it—he read it again. He stared at it—and he gasped for breath.

"Done!" spluttered Fisher T. Fish. "Gee-whiz! Great snakes! The—the pesky spoofer! Done! Diddled! My ten bob—oh, hokey!" He

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say Angel of the Fourth will lend it to me. I'm going to take him to a few theatres when my cheque's cashed."

Fishy hesitated.

"I—I guess you're asking this infant, too?" he insinuated.

"I'm asking the fellows who can trust me with a little loan," said Bunter distantly.

"I—I guess—"

"I'll give you my I O U, if you like," said Bunter. "Money's nothing to me. I'll give you an I O U for a pound, if you like."

Fisher T. Fish fairly quivered with greed.

"Pay as soon as the cheque's cashed?" he asked.

"Same day."

"I guess I've got ten bob," said Fisher T. Fish. "Of course, I'd always be glad to oblige a friend like you, Bunter; but business is business. Just give me that I O U you were speaking of—"

"Certainly!"

Bunter fumbled in his pocket for a fragment of paper, and drew out a crumpled old letter. On the blank side he scribbled the I O U, handed it to Fisher T. Fish, and received a ten-shilling note.

One moment more and William George Bunter

glared wildly round the study, caught up a cricket bat belonging to Johnny Bull, and tore out of the doorway after Billy Bunter. He came along the Remove passage as if he were on the cinder-path, wild eyed.

Crash!

"You howling ass!" roared Bob Cherry, as Fisher T. Fish cannoned into him on the stairs.

"You—you—"

"Where's Bunter?" gasped Fishy.

"Bother Bunter! You—"

"I want the fat fraud!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"I'm going to brain him! Where is he?"

Without stopping for an answer to his question, Fisher T. Fish raced down the stairs, leaving Bob Cherry staring after him blankly.

"What's the matter with Fishy?" called out Hazeldene.

"Blessed if I know. Off his rocker, I should think," gasped Bob. "He's after Bunter with a cricket bat. He's going to brain him—"

"Fishy—"

"What the thump—"

Headless of the excitement he was causing, Fisher T. Fish rushed out into the quad, wild-eyed and gasping. He glared round for Bunter. Half a dozen fellows rushed on the excited junior.

"What's the matter with you?" roared Harry Wharton, seizing Fishy by the collar and shaking him.

"I guess I'm going to brain Bunter! My ten bob—and the other bob—and the half-crown—"

spluttered Fisher T. Fish incoherently. "What's he done?" demanded Skinner. "You let Bunter alone, Fishy! Bunter's got friends to stand by him, I can tell you."

"Yes, rather!" said Snoop warmly.

"The fat clam!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"You shut up!" said Bolsover major. "What do you mean by calling Bunter names, you skinny scarecrow?"

"Look at this!" Fisher T. Fish waved the letter wildly in the air. "Spoof—that cheque—oh, Jerusalem crickets! And he's had my last ten bob!"

"Quite potty!" said Bob Cherry, in wonder. "That's an IOU in Bunter's scrawl. What's wrong?"

"The other side—"

"It's a letter from Bunter's pater," said Skinner. "Why—what— Oh, my hat! Great pip!"

A dozen eyes saw the letter as Fisher T. Fish held it up. It was a really surprising letter—especially to Bunter's new friends. It was short, if not sweet.

"Dear William,—It is impossible for me to send you anything beyond your allowance, but I quite approve of your desire to keep up equal appearances with your schoolfellows. I have no objection to sending you a cheque, which you may show about the school. You will be very careful to return it to me by the next post.

"Your affectionate father,

"S. BUNTER."

Evidently that was the letter that had accompanied the celebrated cheque. Skinner blinked at it with quite a sickly look. Skinner had expended seven shillings and sixpence in "sprats" to catch whales that, only too clearly, never would be caught!

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Hazeldene. "But—but he took the cheque to Mr. Quelch to be cashed—"

"We—we went with him—" stammered Snoop.

Fisher T. Fish raved.

"He was pulling our pesky leg! He just went into Quelch's study and spun him some yarn—asked him to lend him a dictionary, perhaps. I guess I see it all now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"It isn't a laughing matter!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "He's had fifteen bob out of me!"

"Seven-and-six out of me!" panted Skinner.

"He owes me twelve shillings!" spluttered Bolsover major. "Where is he? Where is the spoofing cad?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Don't you feel friendly to Bunter now?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is he?" raved Fish. "I'm going to brain him! I'm going to scalp him!"

"I saw him making for the tuckshop ten minutes ago," remarked Trevor, with a chuckle.

Fisher T. Fish gave a whoop.

"Then my ten bob's gone. It wouldn't last him ten minutes! I'll have his scalp!"

Brandishing the bat, Fisher T. Fish headed for the tuckshop, followed fast by Bunter's new friends—who did not look friendly now.

It was just then that Bunter, very sticky and shiny, emerged from the tuckshop, with exactly ten shillings' worth of tuck reposing in his well-stored interior. He gave the crowd of wrathful juniors a startled blink—and, without waiting to ask questions, bolted for his life.

"After him!" roared Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Go it, Bunter!"

And with a speed that was amazing, considering the weight he had to carry, William George Bunter fled, with a howling crowd on his track.

What was left of William George Bunter, after his friends had done with him, lay in the armchair in Study No. 7 that evening and groaned. Brief—very brief—had been the popularity in which William George had basked. He had gone up like a rocket, and had come down like the burnt stick! As he groaned in the armchair he wondered dimly whether life was really worth living. Just then it felt as if it wasn't!

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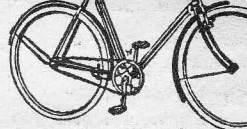
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