



PERFECT HARMONY!

By
TOM MERRY
(of the Shell Form)

When Gussy, the tenor, and Herries, the cornet player, get going, it's time for their chums to do the same. But it was the rival musicians' discord that eventually brought perfect harmony.

THE FIRST CHAPTER DISCORD!

"I'll sing thee songs of Awaby
An' tales of fair Cashmeeah——"

"**C**HUCK it, Gus!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth at St. Jim's paused in his solo to bestow on Herries a frigid glare through his celebrated monocle.

"I fancy I heard a diswespectful wemark fwom you, Hewwies, but I twust I was mistaken," he said, with deadly calm. "What I thought you said was——"

"Chuck it!" finished Herries, with a nod. "That's exactly what I said, and exactly what I mean. Chuck it!"

Two bright pink spots gathered on D'Arcy's cheeks as he looked across the table of Study No. 6 at George Herries.

"Do I gathah that you object to my singin'?"

"Well, who wouldn't?" asked Herries. "But apart from that, I'm

just going to start practising on my cornet, and I can't possibly do it while you're kicking up that awful row. Chuck it, there's a good chap!"

"Well, of all the fwightful nerve——"

The remainder of D'Arcy's speech was not heard, for at that moment Herries put his cornet to his lips and blew—hard!

Arthur Augustus took a step forward, but something happened to make him take a quick step backward a moment later.

That "something" was a deep and menacing growl from Towser, Herries' bulldog.

"Ware Towser, Gus!" called out Blake, who, having finished his prep., was preparing to go down to the Junior Common-room with Digby. "He won't improve your bags if he gets his teeth in them."

"I uttably wefuse to allow that beastlay bulldog to get his teeth in my bags——"

Herries put down the cornet for a moment.

"If you start calling Towser a 'beastly bulldog,' I'm not going to be responsible for what happens," he said darkly. "Towser's rather proud; you ought to know that by this time, Gus."

"Towsah's a wotten nuisance, if you want my opinion of him," said Arthur Augustus candidly. "But I don't pwopose to waste my time talkin' about Towsah. I want to spend the time fwom now until bedtime in pwactisin' singin', an' I must wequest you to stop blowin' that feahful instwument to enable me to do so."

"You can request till you're black in the face, old bean, but there's nothing doing!"

"Well, we're off," grinned Blake. "Why don't you two harmonise? You can play the cornet, Herries, and Gus can sing to it!"

"If you think I would sing to that fwightful din——"

"If you think I'd play an accompaniment to that fathead's awful voice——"

"Come on, Blake!" groaned Digby. "Let's take a stroll down to the pneumatic drills they're using to dig up the Wayland High Street, and get a bit of comparative peace!"

"Coming!" chuckled Blake, and the two left together.

Arthur Augustus, with a frown, struck the tuning fork he carried against the study table, and took his note.

"La, la, la, la!" he warbled, going up the scale; then he started again:

"I'll sing thee songs of Awaby
An' tales of——"

Toot toot tootle toot!

Herries had started again—and against the strident notes of Herries' cornet, D'Arcy's light tenor voice stood no earthly chance.

For the second time, Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Hewwies, you feahful wottah, if you continue makin' that din——"

Tootle toot toot!

"I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'——"

Toot tootle toot!

"An' you will have nobody else but yourself to blame. Now, you boundah, are you goin' to leave off or not?"

Tootle tootle toot!

"Vewy well. I am weluctant to punish an old fwriend, but there is nothin' else for it, I am afwaid. Put up your hands!"

Tootle toot tootle!

Arthur Augustus made a rush at the exasperating cornet player.

The next moment, Towser was making a rush at Arthur Augustus!

The swell of the Fourth uttered a yell.

"Hewwies, you wank outsiders, if you don't keep that feahful dog away I'll—— Whooop! Keep off, Tousah, you w'etch!"

Arthur Augustus dodged and Towser made another rush.

An instant later, a startling thing happened.

Backing in frantic haste to escape Herries' ferocious pet, the swell of the Fourth reached the study window.

It was a warm evening and the window was open at the bottom. Arthur Augustus collided with the bottom of the window-frame, then staggered backwards through the opening.

Immediately after, with a wild yell, he vanished from sight!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

PEACE!

CRASH!

The cornet, unheeded now, dropped from Herries' hands to the floor. Herries stared at the open window for an instant in petrified horror.

"Gussy!" he said huskily. "Gus, old man——"

Then Herries jumped to his feet and fairly flung himself across the room to the window. His heart seemed to stop beating altogether as he looked out.

What he saw, however, brought a sobbing cry of relief to his lips.

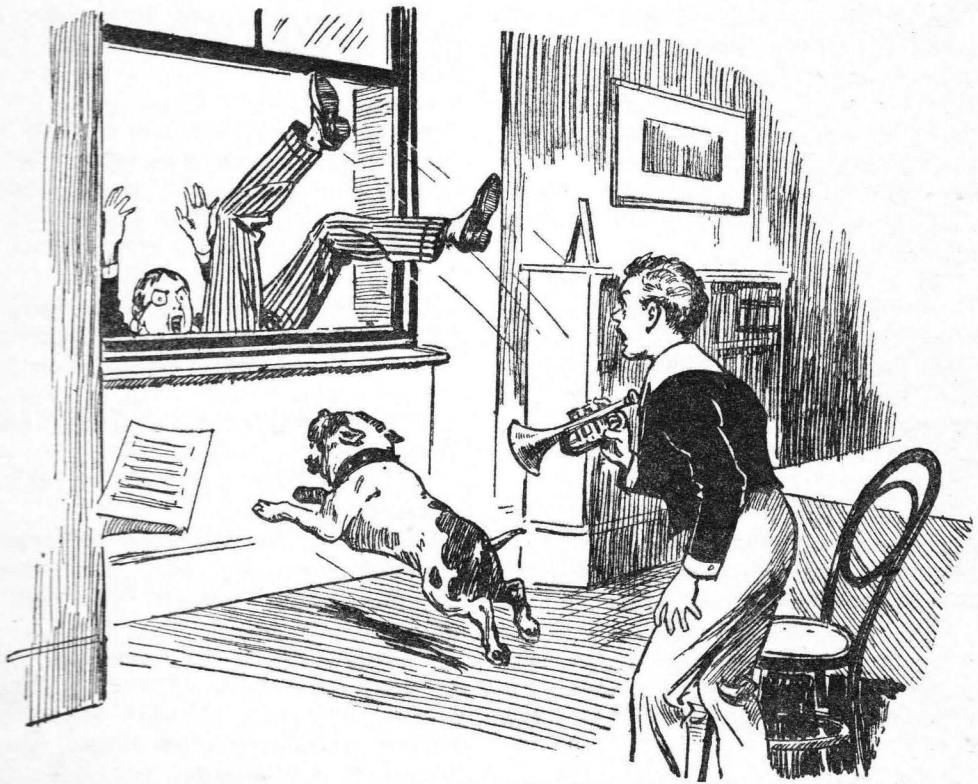
By a miracle, the swell of the Fourth

had been stopped in his downward flight by a protruding nail in the wall just below the window-sill, and was hanging by the back of his jacket a few feet below the level of the window!

"Gus, old chap! Thank goodness!" breathed Herries. "Keep still—don't move a fraction! I'll be down to help you in a brace of shakes!"

There was an answering murmur from Arthur Augustus.

Herries swung himself over the window-sill, tested the strength of the old ivy beneath him, then lowered himself below the window. In a few seconds he was beside the



Backing in frantic haste from Herries' ferocious pet, Arthur Augustus bumped into the bottom of the window-frame. Next moment the swell of St. Jim's overbalanced through the opening and, with a wild yell, vanished from sight!

precariously hanging swell of the Fourth.

Far below him in the twilit quad he heard excited shouts as the few strollers noticed the amazing scene. They sounded very distant, and Herries shivered for an instant as he realised what a distance lay between himself and the ground. But with an effort he overcame the momentary fear and concentrated on the task of saving D'Arcy.

"Feel all right, Gus?" he asked. "If I lift you round, think you'll be able to hold on to the ivy without help from me?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Thank goodness for that!"

Herries lowered himself a further couple of feet, found a firm place for a hold with his left hand, then gripped Arthur Augustus round the waist with his right. Slowly but surely, he turned the swell of the Fourth. He felt D'Arcy's jacket move away from the nail that had supported him, and for an instant held him up entirely unaided.

Then Arthur Augustus put out his hands and gripped the strong branches of ivy that were now in front of him, and the weight was shifted.

"All—wight—now, deah boy!" panted Arthur Augustus.

"Fine! Climb back, then, and I'll follow!"

The swell of the Fourth hoisted himself up and climbed back through the open window, and immediately afterwards Herries was following suit.

Blake and Digby were back in the study to help them in, together with a crowd of others, and there was quite a cheer as rescuer and rescued stood safe and sound once more on the firm floor of Study No. 6.

"And now that it's all over, just how did it happen?" asked Blake.

Herries and Arthur Augustus looked at each other.

"Well, it was my fault, really," said Herries.

Arthur Augustus polished his monocle with a silk handkerchief.

"Not at all, deah boy," he said. "The fault was entirely mine."

"I insisted on playing my blessed cornet——"

"I'm afwaid I insisted on my singin' takin' pwecedence——"

"Towser went for Gussy——"

"Vewy natuwally, Towsah wasn't goin' to see his mastah assaulted——"

"And Gussy fell out. My fault all through."

"Weally, deah boy, I insist that the fault was mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The interested crowd yelled. In view of the strained relationship that had existed between the rival musicians immediately before the accident, the sudden regard of Herries and D'Arcy for each other was rather funny.

"Well, it's jolly lucky it's ended up in such a way that we can get a laugh out of it, anyway!" Blake remarked.

"I suggest you close the window now. Then you can start arguing for the rest of the evening about whether Herries' cornet or Gussy's tenor voice takes priority!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries looked thoughtful.

"Well, I was just thinking about that practice. Perhaps my cornet can wait for a while. You'd better do your singing practice first."

"Weally, Hewwies, I am surprised at your makin' such a widiculous suggestion. I wecognise now that your cornet pwactice is a fah more important mattah. I give way to you with pleasuah!"

But Herries shook his head.

"You're too good, Gus, but I wouldn't dream of taking advantage of your generosity. I insist on your going first."

"Bai Jove! I shall do nothin' of the kind. It would make me too uncomfortable for words, deah boy. Pway pick up your cornet and begin at once!"

"Here's your tuning fork, old man. Take your note and get going!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why not toss up for it?" suggested Dig.

"I uttably wefuse to toss up for it! I have already decided that Hewwies shall pwactise first."

"I'm jolly well determined that you shall practise first, Gus, old man."

"My hat! Far as I can see, there's only one thing for it now," grinned Blake. "As you're both too polite to start first, you'd better abandon practice altogether and finish up the evening with us in the Common-room."

"Well, I'm quite willing to stay in the Common-room till Gus has finished——"

"I am perfectly willin' to spend half-an-hour in the Common-woom till Hewwies has finished——"

"In other words you're both calling it a day and packing up!" grinned Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"With you singing, and Herries cornet blowing, there's been nothing but discord around here lately. Now that you're both going to give music a rest, we may get a little harmony!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a moment the two musicians seemed inclined to register a protest. Then they too grinned, and a few moments later they went down to the Common-room, arm-in-arm.

THE END

Songs of the Seasons



THE grand old season dawns with chill
And frosty melancholy,
The snow is thick on vale and hill,
The red is on the holly,
The cold has gripped in iron bonds
The bridleways and hedges,
The solid ice is on the ponds,
And snow is on the edges.

The trees stand bare against the sky,
Their branches black and mournful,
The rooks greet winter with a cry
Which sounds a trifle scornful;
But we ourselves enjoy the days
That bring such signs of sadness;
To us the chilly winter ways
Are full of joy and gladness.

And Christmastide is on the way,
The season glad and hearty,
When hearts are young and smiles are gay
At every Christmas party;
What healthy fun the snow betides!
In plenty it's awaiting,
With snowmen, snowballing and slides,
Tobogganing and skating.

When apples, oranges and dates
Are stacked away in barrels,
When late at night the village waits
Awaken us with carols,
When frost is on the window pane,
When days are dark and murky,
We know it's time to greet again
That king of birds, the Turkey!

We spend our evenings by the fire,
And what is more delightful?
For after football we desire
No better rest at nightfall;
Then bring out bishops, pawns and rooks,
And stage the mimic warfare,
Unless a choice of thrilling books
You'd rather have as your fare.

Let winter months be hard and rough,
The fun is all the keener;
We're growing sturdy, brave and tough
In football's gay arena;
For giving us the Christmas joys,
And many other reasons,
We'll hail the brave old Winter, boys,
As king of all the seasons.

A PUZZLE PICTURE—FIND THE HIDDEN FACES



Billy Bunter caught in the act of raiding the School pantry by Mr. Quelch, his Form-master ! Sammy Bunter was there, too, with Dicky Nugent and Myers. See if you can spot their faces.

Nothing Suxceeds Like Suxcess



In this amazing article HORACE JAMES COKER, of Greyfriars, tells "Holiday Annual" readers how he achieved success. We think it only fair to add that his hints to success, like his spelling, are not altogether reliable or to be recommended!

"How did you acheeve your amazing suxxess?" is a question often addressed to me by admiring yungsters.

To a fellow like myself, who has been suxxessful in so many direcshuns, it's a question with a duzzen answers. So, for the benefit of ambitious lads who would fain follow in my foot-steps, here are a few tips.

First, if you want to rise to the dignified ranx of a senior Form, hard work and dilligent study alone will take you there. A chap with my varied interests, of corse, duzzent get much time for skool work, and I don't mind admitting that my Aunt Judy, by wacking the Head with her um-

brella till he agreed to put me in the Fifth, helped my skool career considerably. For you ordinary chaps, however, I recommend hard work and dilligent study only!

Suxcess in the grate game of footer is the next consideration. This is a very difficult thing to acheeve; the footer kaptin is usually fearfully jellus of your outstanding abillity on the footer field and tries to keep you out of the team as much as he can. My own method of dealing with the problem is to pour withering sarkasm over the jellus kaptin till he admits that I'm a grate player and puts me in the team. If this fails, I give him a "sock" on the jaw. This is one

way of achieving success as a football player.

Naturally, it doesn't stop at that. When you get your place in the team, it's up to you to show them your real worth. The first time I got into the Form team, I took good care to see that I was in the limelight from the kick-off to the finish. I was here, there and everywhere. The fact that I was outside-left didn't imply that I was left outside, I can tell you!

When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball on his own, I rushed in and took it from him. When the goalie was in difficulties, I rushed back and helped him. The jellusy shown by the rest of my side was truly amazing. They yelled and shouted at me so much that the opposing team were dubbed up with laughter most of the time! Owing to mistakes on the part of others, I scored 3 goals against my own side and we lost 3-nil. I came



The fact that I was outside-left didn't mean that I was left outside! When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball I rushed in and took it from him.

off the field feeling well satisfied with myself, and that fact enabled me to put up with the cheap sneers and gibes of the rest. A grate man gets used to that sort of thing!

Then there's the problem of achieving success in the social life of the school. My tip is: take the deepest possible interest in everything, whether it's anything to do with you or not. Above all, remember to take command. If it's a party, be the life and sole of it—do all the singing and tell all the funny stories. You'll get plenty of fun out of it yourself, and if the rest pretend to be fed up to the teeth with you, you'll know it's only their jellusy. There's always someone about ready to accuse you of being an interfering bizzbody, but a really grate man can afford to ignore such taunts.

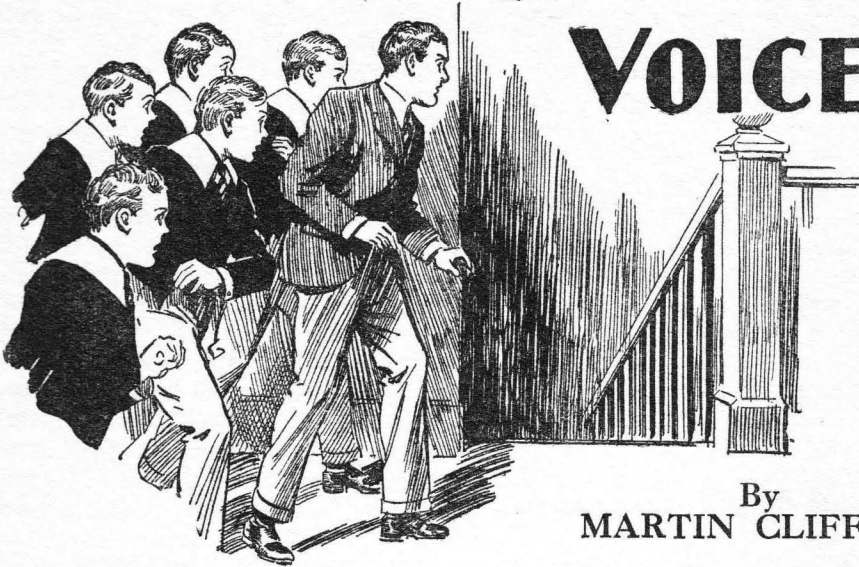
I need hardly tell you to preserve your dignity. Fags and other small fry can be kept in their places by clipping their ears or tweaking their noses. With seniors, it's just as well to tell them now and again what a dignified fellow you are. In time, if you tell them often enough, they'll appreciate it.

But when all is said and done, nothing succeeds like success. The fact that I've succeeded again and again makes it easy for me to climb higher and higher on the Ladder of Life. Fellows often laugh when I tell them this—one of the things I can never understand is why fellows laugh so much when I talk—but you can't get away from the facts!

Well, I've told you how to achieve success. But I don't suppose for a moment that you'll do it.

Your name's not Horace Coker, you see!

THE PHANTOM VOICES!



By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

The voices and sounds that came from nowhere! That's the weird mystery which puzzles St. Jim's, until Tom Merry & Co. get on the track of it.

THE FIRST CHAPTER INEXPLICABLE!

CLANG! Clang! Clang!
"What the dickens——"

Tom Merry of the Shell at St. Jim's looked up from his prep. in Study No. 10 with a start. Manners and Lowther, from the other side of the study table, stared across at their leader rather blankly.

"The school bell!" remarked Manners.

"At this hour!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "What on earth does it mean?"

"Must be a fire, my infants," Lowther said, getting up from the table. "Needs looking into, anyway."

"Let's look into it, then," said Tom briskly. "Come on!"

The Terrible Three abandoned prep. and went out into the passage. Other study doors were opening as they emerged from No. 10, and startled voices were asking what was "on." In a few seconds the entire Shell, with the exception of Skimpole, whose prep. time was spent mostly devouring the learned volumes of Professor Balmcrumpet, and Glyn, who took advantage of every spare minute to pursue his scientific experiments, had joined the buzzing throng.

"Must be something jolly serious," Gore opined.

"They wouldn't ring the bell at this time of the night if it weren't," Kangaroo remarked. "Yet there doesn't seem to be much excitement downstairs."

"Just what I was thinking," nod-

ed Tom Merry. "Still, we'll go down and see. We don't want to be caught in a fire or anything like that."

"No jolly fear!"

And the Shell marched en masse down the stairs at the end of the passage.

The clanging ceased as they reached the floor below, and at the same moment Kildare of the Sixth came into sight. The Shell fairly rushed to meet Kildare—to the quickly evidenced surprise of that senior.

"Is it a fire, Kildare?"

"Not a public swishing at this hour, is it, Kildare?"

"Where do we have to go, Kildare?"

"Quiet, you young idiots!" hooted Kildare, above the din. "Are you all crazy? There's no fire, no public swishing, and nothing else. Why aren't you all doing your prep?"

"Because the school bell was ringing."

"We thought it was ringing for a fire."

"Or a swishing——"

"For goodness' sake don't all speak at the same time!" Kildare roared. "I don't know what the thump you're talking about! To begin with the school bell hasn't been ringing at all!"

"Eh?"

"The school bell hasn't been ringing, I tell you!" yelled Kildare. "Is this some weird jape, or are all you kids potty? Which is it? You can tell me, Merry—you've usually some pretensions to sanity!"

"It's neither, Kildare," Tom answered, scratching his curly head in bewilderment. "It was the school bell, as plain as a pikestaff, and we concluded it meant the House was on fire or something. How you failed to hear it beats me!"

"Well, I did, anyway, and I'm

perfectly certain nobody else on this floor heard it, either," said Kildare. "Strikes me someone has been playing a lark with you up there. You'd better all get back to your prep. before Mr. Railton comes along, anyway. And if you come out again before your due time, there'll be trouble."

"Right-ho, Kildare!"

"Keep your wool on, old sport!"

The juniors returned to their studies, most of them considerably puzzled. There was no doubt in their minds as to their having heard the school bell, and it was surprising and disconcerting to find Kildare denying that it had rung.

Within a few minutes peace and quietude reigned over the Shell passage once more.

But the reign of peace and quietude was not a lengthy one. Scarcely had the juniors settled down to their prep. again before sounds of intense human activity smote on their ears. To their utter amazement, they heard the scudding of footsteps, the thudding of a ball and the shouting of many voices, just as if a football match was in progress at their very doors.

Thud! Plonk!

"On the ball!"

"Play up, St. Jim's!"

"It's some fearful asses playing footer outside!" gasped Tom Merry, in Study No. 10. "Who the dickens can it be?"

As if in answer to his question, the strident voices outside called out the names of some of the players, just then—and the Terrible Three fairly blinked at each other as they heard the names shouted.

"Go it, Kildare!"

"Follow up, Darrell!"

"Goal!"

"Kildare and Darrell!" breathed Tom Merry. "Kildare and Darrell,

playing footer in the Shell passage! What, in the name of goodness —”

The Terrible Three, as if moved by a single impulse, rushed to the study door to see the incredible thing.

They fairly jumped at what met their eyes. Instead of a passage crowded with enthusiastic indoor footballers, they saw a passage absolutely deserted!

Other fellows who were peering out of their doorways, drawn out by the same noises as had attracted Tom Merry and his chums, looked equally startled.

“Did you hear it?” Kangaroo called out.

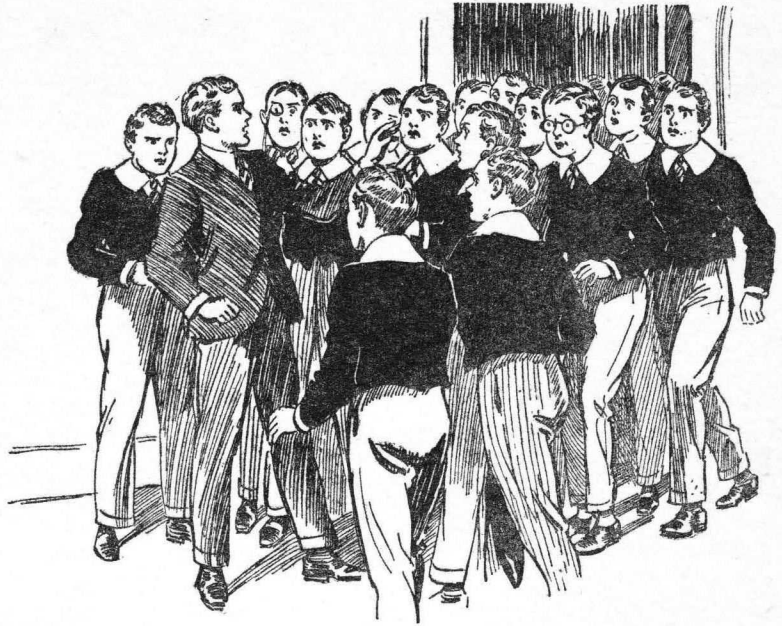
“Couldn’t miss it!” Tom answered. “But where have they all gone?”

“I thought I told you kids to get back to your prep!” came Kildare’s voice from the stairs at that moment, and the Captain of St. Jim’s himself came sauntering down the passage. “What’s the idea this time?”

“Oh, so you are there!” exclaimed Tom Merry, quite relieved. “If you hadn’t shown yourself, Kildare, I should have begun to think we were all suffering from delusions. But what’s the idea of you and Darrell playing footer in a junior passage?”

“Wha-a-at?”

“I—I suppose you’re not going to



The Shell juniors crowded round Kildare excitedly. “Is it a fire?” they exclaimed. “Not a public swishing, is it, Kildare? Where do we have to go?” “Quiet, you young idiots!” hooted the St. Jim’s captain. “Are you all crazy?”

deny you were playing footer here a minute ago, are you?”

“Playing footer?” gasped Kildare blankly. “Are you completely off your rocker, Merry?”

“But we heard you!” roared Gore. “You and Darrell! What’s the good of denying the truth?”

Before Kildare had time to reply to that question, a fresh interruption came, in the shape of a terrific din reminiscent of the falling of a particularly heavy booby-trap.

Crash! Bang! Crash!

“Yaroooogh!” came a strangled howl from somebody, and, then the juniors heard a stern voice which they all recognised.

“Boys! What is the meaning of this?”

“The Head!” murmured Tom Merry, and he and the rest of the Shell and Kildare, too, turned towards

the stairs. And then came a fresh shock which Kildare experienced with the rest, this time.

There was no sign of the Head—nor, indeed, of the booby-trap or the “boys” to whom they had quite clearly heard the Head speaking!

Now, it was Kildare’s turn to look startled.

“That’s funny,” he remarked. “I distinctly heard the Head then.”

“Just as we heard the school bell, and you and Darrell playing footer,” said Tom Merry. “As you say, Kildare, it’s funny—very funny!”

“Can’t make it out at all,” confessed Kildare. “I suppose there must be some explanation of it, but what it is, I’m dashed if I can see just now. Anyway, get back to your prep. now, and if you hear any more school bells ringing and footer matches being played and booby-traps crashing, just see if you can’t ignore ’em till you’ve finished your work!”

“We’ll do our best, Kildare,” grinned Tom Merry. “But you can’t get away from it, it’s very mysterious!”

THE SECOND CHAPTER

TOM MERRY’S DEDUCTIONS

“**V**EWY extwaordinawy!”

“Rats!”

“Weally, Blake——”

“Piffle!” said Blake cheerfully. “It’s mass illusion. Feeble-minded people like you Shellfish are liable to it.”

“Look here, you fat-headed Fourth frump——”

“Peace, you idiots!” laughed Tom Merry. “This is a matter for serious discussion, not Form fights.”

It was half-an-hour later. Prep. was over and in the Junior Common-room the Shell had just been telling the Fourth all about the mysterious

outbreak of Voices and Sounds in the Shell passage. They had expected the Fourth to be greatly impressed, but they were completely disappointed in that expectation. The Fourth, far from being impressed, were incredulous and even derisive.

With the exception of Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. Arthur Augustus was very much impressed, and somewhat annoyed with the rest of the Fourth for not being equally impressed.

“I wegard the whole thing as vewy extwaordinawy,” he repeated, having given Jack Blake a withering glare through his celebrated monocle. “It stwikes me, deah boys, that you have expewienced a manifestation of Unseen Forces.”

“Whatter?”

“I am not, I twust, superstitious or simple ovah these mattahs,” said the swell of the Fourth. “But there are many things which scientists, now-adays, wecognise cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of science—ghosts, for instance, and spectahs. Haunted houses, in the opinion of many gweat men, are an actual fact; houses which, in some mannah, have got into the gwip of evil spiwits!”

“Oh, crikey!”

“In my opinion, it is more than poss. that the Shell passage has become the happy huntin’ gwound of some fiendish Force which has started playin’ devilish twicks with the occupants,” said Arthur Augustus seriously. “It sounds wathah fah-fetched, I know——”

“My hat! Just a bit!”

“But it is a sewious possibility,” the swell of the Fourth said, with a serious shake of his head. “Pwo-bably we shall soon find out. If some of you youngstahs are stwuck down in the dark by invisible hands——”

“Ye gods!”

"Or if one or two of you die suddenly of fright, then we can be pretty certain that some demoniacal spirit possesses the place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth, at any rate, shrieked, though it was noticeable that not all the Shell men present joined in the laugh. Not many of them entertained D'Arcy's suggestion that an evil spirit had taken up its abode in the Shell passage. The thought, however, that great men did sometimes believe in haunted houses was not comforting after the peculiar things that had happened in the Shell passage half an hour before.

It was as the laugh died away and Jack Blake opened his mouth to express his blunt opinion of D'Arcy's amazing solution to the problem that the voice of Darrell was heard.

"Now, then, kids!" said Darrell, to the shocked surprise of the juniors, who had scarcely had five minutes in the Common-room. "Bed-time! Up you go!"

There was a yell.

"What's the idea, Darrell?"

"It's only half-past eight, old bean! You've made a mistake!"

"Hurry up,

there!" came Darrell's voice again.

"You're five minutes late already!"

"Why, you awful fibber——"

"Half-a-mo!" said Tom Merry, suddenly. "Where is Darrell?"

"Eh?"

"He's not in the doorway. Where is he?"

"Outside, I suppose," said Jack Blake, staring. "You're—you're not thinking——"

"That it's the Voices again?" asked Tom Merry. "Matter of fact, that's just what I am thinking!"

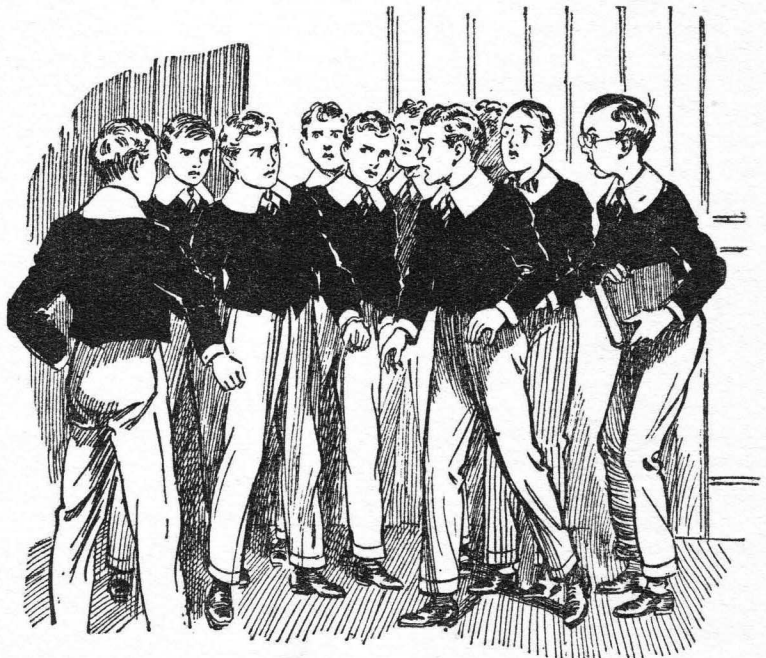
"Oh, my hat!"

There was a rush to the door.

Not a sign of Darrell was to be found!

"Must have gone," said Blake wonderingly.

"Just japing us, I suppose?"



"Can't you choose a better time than this to discuss the footer club finances, Tom Merry?" said Jack Blake. "Footer can wait till we've cleared up the mystery of the Voices!" Tom Merry stared. "Who are you talking to? I didn't say a word!"

suggested Monty Lowther sarcastically. "The sort of thing any prefect might be expected to do, of course!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Digby. "Rather funny if there's something in Gussy's crack-brained idea after all!"

"If you wefer to my ideah as cwack-bwained, Digbay, I'll——"

"Supernatural forces are indubitably at work, my good youths," broke in Skimpole, struggling to the front with a massive volume clasped affectionately in his arms. "Professor Balmycrumpet says that the appearance of material phenomena emanating from the Unseen World must be accepted as an occasional, if not frequent, occurrence. If some of you juveniles would care to glance at this book——"

"Buzz off, Skimmy!"

"But Professor Balmycrumpet says——"

"Blow Professor Balmycrumpet!"

"Gentlemen, chaps and fellows!" broke in Tom Merry's voice at that moment, to the surprise of the crowd. "This meeting has been called to discuss the finances of the footer club."

All eyes were turned on the leader of the School House juniors.

"Can't you choose a better time than this to discuss the footer club finances, Tom Merry?" Blake asked. "One thing at a time, you know—and besides, we discussed it all last week, I thought!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Footer can wait till we've cleared this bizney up, Merry!"

Tom Merry stared.

"Who are you talking to, fatheads? I didn't say a word!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Bai Jove! It must be the Voices again, deah boys!"

"The giddy spooks!" grinned Kangaroo. "There's no doubt about it now, kids. We're bewitched!"

"Ye gods!"

The Common-room fairly buzzed. It was ridiculous, of course. Witchcraft had long since ceased to be believed in. And yet—if it wasn't witchcraft, what other strange power was it that brought the voices of fellows they knew into their midst with such lifelike fidelity as to deceive the sharpest ears?

For the rest of the evening the juniors could talk of nothing else but the Voices, and after lights out in the dormitories, tongues still wagged freely on the subject.

In the Shell dorm., discussing them with Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry subjected them to quite an analysis.

"There are several things that stand out about them, my infants," he said. "The first is that they have a limited radius. Kildare didn't hear the tolling of the school bell, despite the fact that we all heard it quite clearly. The second is that they're not relays of sounds from other parts of the school—the mere fact that my voice was heard while I was present proves that. The third is that they're all sounds of things that might well have happened at one time or another. I could almost swear that I used the actual words used by the Voice to-night when we held that footer meeting last week. The fourth is—are you chaps listening?"

The only answer was the sound of deep and regular breathing—and Tom Merry, with a snort of disgust at his chums' inability to remain awake to hear his chain of deductions, settled down on the pillow himself and was soon in the arms of Morpheus

—despite the puzzling events of the evening!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THE UNHONOURED PROPHET!

THERE was a thoughtful frown on Tom Merry's face as he came out of the Shell Form-room on the following morning. He shook his head when Monty Lowther suggested punting a football about in the quad.

"Don't let me stop you, old bean. But I'm anxious to clear up this Voice biz-ney, and I have an idea there'll be some more examples of it in the Shell passage before dinner."

"We'll stay with you then, Tommy," said Lowther, "though if it really is a case of the House being haunted, it won't happen in the light of day—not according to the rules of the very best spooks, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three accordingly went up to No. 10 and waited to see what would happen.

Their vigil was soon rewarded. They had hardly been in the study five minutes before quite a pandemonium of noise broke out and they heard, to their astonishment, the familiar sounds associated with the school tuckshop during a rush-hour.

The customary crowd of patrons could be heard jostling each other at the counter, refreshment, both solid and liquid, was being ordered, paid for and consumed, Dame Taggles was bustling about attending to orders, and the juniors, several of whose voices could be recognised quite distinctly, were chipping her just as they did in reality. Judging by the sounds, Dame Taggles' little shop had been suddenly



As the study door swung back the crowd of offended juniors surged in. Rather surprisingly, Glyn was kneeling in front of his machine as though he hadn't heard the newcomers.

transferred to the Shell passage. Yet when the Terrible Three looked out, there was nothing visible to explain it.

The din stopped just as suddenly as it had started. Manners and Lowther looked at their leader with rather exasperated expressions on their faces.

"This'll make me wild if it goes on much longer," Manners remarked.

"It seems to come from nowhere. Did you hear it, Glyn?"—the last to Bernard Glyn, who had just come out of his study and was walking past them towards the stairs.

Bernard Glyn made no reply, and from the distant look in his eyes the Terrible Three judged that his thoughts were occupied with one of the numerous scientific problems that engaged his attention out of school hours.

"Glyn's up to something again," grinned Lowther. "He's been busy for weeks on some new stunt. Kangaroo and Dane have got so fed up with the crowds of junk he's been accumulating that they've been digging in other studies and leaving him on his own lately."

Tom Merry's eyes were fixed thoughtfully on the door of the study from which Bernard Glyn had just come.

"Yes, I'd noticed myself that he became a lone wolf again last week," he remarked. "He was in the Common-room last night, though, when the Voices were about."

Something in Tom Merry's tone made his chums look at him sharply.

"My hat!" exclaimed Manners. "You're not suggesting——"

"Tommy, old scout," said Lowther, "you don't think that Glyn——"

Tom Merry nodded slowly.

"I'm suggesting and I'm thinking that Bernard Glyn may be able to give us the solution to the mystery of the Voices!"

"Great pip! You think, then, that it's some invention——"

"Some crack-brained, idiotic machine——"

"I think that without wasting any more time we might profitably have a look round Glyn's study," smiled Tom. "This way, kids!"

And he led the way across to Study No. 5, and without any more ado walked into that apartment.

"Ye gods! Mind you don't lose yourselves!" gasped Tom, as they entered.

It was a facetious warning, but it was almost justified in all seriousness. Glyn's study was not a tidy place at the best of times, but on this occasion Glyn had out-Glynned himself, so to speak. The place was piled high with electrical and wireless equipment of every description, while plans and blueprints galore littered the desk and table and floor. It was very evident that Glyn had been working!

When they had got their bearings, the Terrible Three started examining the papers on the desk at which Glyn had been sitting before he left the study.

"'Sound Recording,'" said Tom Merry, reading the titles of the papers as he came to them; "'Sound as Electrical Energy'—'Storage of Sound in Form of Electricity'—'Re-transformation of Electrical Energy into Sound'—'Reproduction'—my hat, chaps, this looks like what we're wanting to find!"

"'Simplification of Process—Glyn Method,'" quoted Lowther, reading from another paper. "This is it right enough, Tommy! The secret of the Voices is a secret no longer! It's just another invention of that fat-head Glyn!"

"And if this isn't the invention itself, then I'm a Dutchman!" yelled Manners, who had been exploring the outer reaches of the inventor's study. "Look—it's all fixed in this cabinet, like a blessed wireless set!"

He knelt on the floor beside the cabinet, and pressed a knob belonging to the apparatus inside it—and proof that it was indeed the Voice

Machine was forthcoming immediately. With startling suddenness, a clamour of voices arose in the study, and the Terrible Three had the strange experience of listening to a perfect sound reproduction of a tea-party in Study No. 10, with their own voices supplying most of the dialogue!

"Well, that's the limit!" gasped Tom, as Manners switched off again. "You can see through it now?"

"What-ho!" grinned Manners. "That was the tea-party we threw last week when Glyn came along with that mysterious-looking box under his arm. We wondered what was in the box, then. Now we know!"

"It was the recording apparatus for this affair!" gasped Lowther. "The bouncer must have been going round collecting sounds for days—the rising-bell, the First Eleven footer match, that booby-trap incident, Tommy addressing the footer club meeting—"

"In brief, just everything we've heard and probably a lot more besides!" finished Tom Merry. "He's experimenting in a new method of collecting and recording sounds and turning 'em on like you turn on water at the tap!"

"And he's had the cheek to lead everyone to think the blessed House is haunted in the process!" remarked Manners disgustedly. "Of course, we recognise that he's a giddy genius, but——"

"We realise he's the Eighth Wonder of the World," grinned Tom Merry. "But——"

"But we think at the same time that he ought to be jolly well bumped for leading his old pals up the garden!" wound up Lowther. "Having agreed on that, we'll now find him and carry out the sentence!"

"What-ho!"

The Terrible Three quitted the

study. But before they could carry out their intention, the dinner-bell intervened—the real bell, and not a phantom one from Glyn's amazing Sound Machine! So the bumping of Glyn was postponed—and as Glyn vanished again soon after dinner, it had to be postponed until afternoon classes were over.

By that time the news of the solution to the mystery of the Voices had spread right through the Lower School, and when Tom Merry led his followers up to the Shell passage in search of the inventor, a formidable army fell in behind him.

The door of Glyn's study was locked. A dozen fellows promptly followed up that discovery by beating a wild tattoo on the panels.

"Open the door, Glyn!"

"Come out and be bumped, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up to that moment the crowd had been quite cheery, if a little annoyed at the thought of having been made to look silly by the St. Jim's inventor. But the remarks in Glyn's voice that immediately followed their knockings on the door considerably altered their cheery demeanour.

"You're a crowd of blithering bandersnatches!" they heard yelled at them from within the study. "Of all the imbeciles I ever met, you chaps are the most imbecilic!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"On looks, you ought to be attending a school for congenital idiots! If they ever held a prize competition for nitwits, I'd advise you to go in for it—you'd all tie for first place!"

"Well, of all the nerve——"

"Break in and collar the cheeky ass!" hooted Gore. And the crowd hastened to respond. It was a case of insult added to injury now, and the

blood of the offended juniors was up!

There was a wild rush and a crash. An instant later, the lock was broken; the door swung back and the crowd surged in.

Rather surprisingly, Glyn was kneeling in front of his machine, hard at work as though he hadn't heard the newcomers. But the juniors were too excited to think of the implications of that fact. They swarmed round Glyn and lifted him off his feet. Glyn gave a yell.

"Look here, you idiots, what do you think you're——"

"Bump the cheeky rotter!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

"Ow wow! You howling lunatics——"

And then, the crowd became aware of a peculiar circumstance.

While Glyn was yelling fiendishly, another voice exactly like Glyn's was continuing to yell out uncomplimentary remarks of the kind that had annoyed them outside!

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Lowther. "Hold your horses, you men! It wasn't Glyn—it was only the machine!"

"What!"

"Ow! Of course it was the giddy machine!" hooted Glyn furiously. "I didn't know any of you knew about it, but since you do, that was what it was, anyway! I'm trying it out before I broadcast it in the New House. It's intended for Figgins and his pals—not for you!"

"M-m-my hat! He's right!"

"Sorry, Glyn!"

"Our mistake, old bean!"

"Consider yourself not bumped, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling coons!" roared the St. Jim's inventor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors shrieked.

"Well, there's a sort of poetic justice in it, anyway," grinned Tom Merry. "It serves you jolly well right for not confiding in your old and trusted pals!"

"You silly cuckoos!"

"Of course, deah boys, this doesn't dispose of the possibility of houses bein' bewitched sometimes," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, surveying Glyn's invention thoughtfully through his monocle. "On the question of supernatuwal phenomena——"

"Blow supernatural phenomena!" said Jack Blake cheerfully. "On the question of japing the New House, I vote we all pile in and help Glyn before Figgy and his pals hear about this. It'll be the jape of the term!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Kim on, Glyn!"

Glyn grinned.

"All right, you fatheads! You don't deserve it, but I'll go ahead with it, and I promise you I'll score over the New House more than they've ever been scored over before!"

And Glyn duly went ahead with it—and if he didn't score over the New House more than they had ever been scored over before, he at least scored in a way that proved distinctly a "new one" on their old rivals!

THE END