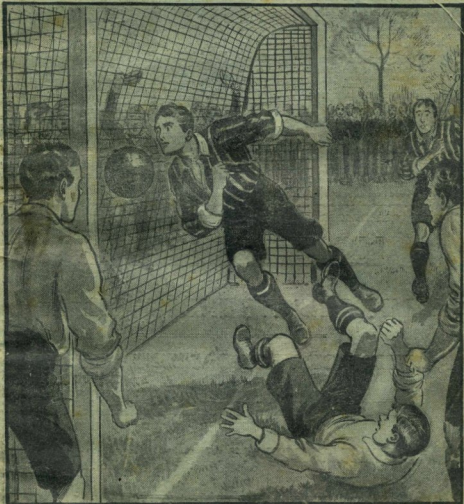


MONEY FOR READERS!

Complete
Stories
for ALL
and
Every
Story
in
GEM.

The GEM LIBRARY

No.
350.
Vol.
9.



Arthur Augustus slung the net over the goal-mouth. It was a beautiful centre. The right back tried to get his foot to it, and the goal-keeper came out, but Tom Merry flung himself at the ball. Before anyone had time to realise the danger, Tom Merry and the ball were at the back of the net!—(An Exciting Incident in the Grand Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. in this issue.)

THIS WEEK'S CHAT.

The Editor's Personal Column.

For Next Wednesday—

"THE KING'S PARDON,"

By **Martin Clifford.**

In next week's grand long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., the juniors receive a visitor who proves to be a detective from Scotland Yard, and he is in search of their one-time chum Talbot, who used to be in the Shell Form at St. Jim's. Levison, who had good cause to dislike the upright, manly junior while he had been at St. Jim's, endeavours to help the detective, but the movements of Tom Merry & Co. upset his calculations in a startling manner. Talbot, just returned from Germany, falls in with an old acquaintance, who uses threats to make the lad perform actions of the most dangerous nature, but Talbot succeeds in turning the tables on the enemy. In recognition of his services, Talbot is the recipient of

"THE KING'S PARDON,"

much to the satisfaction of Tom Merry & Co., but to the bitter disappointment of Levison.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"A Clyde-side Reader."—Many thanks for your most interesting letter. There was no Summer Double Number of the "Gem." Kerr's Christian name is George.

"A. T." (A reader sixty years of age).—Very proud to receive your splendid letter. Yes, the author is the same. There would have been a Double Number of the "Gem," but the war put a stop to the scheme. In reply to your query re the 5d. book, there is just on three times the amount of reading—serials, etc., excerpted. The coloured cover printing is costly. Many of my younger readers find pleasure in corresponding with their fellow-countrymen in different parts of the world whether they know them or not. This, in my opinion, is right, and I encourage it as much as I can.

G. Hope (Cheltenham).—Thanks for your letter. Have you seen the rules governing the Storyette Competition? Send your efforts on a postcard.

"Freckles."—F. L. W. (and others).—You will see by reading through my Chat on col. 1 that Talbot will return to St. Jim's next Wednesday. Order early.

"A Loyal Welsh Reader."—Your stametto cannot be taken into the competition as it is not written on a postcard, as set down in the rules.

E. W. Nelson (Fulham).—It would incur too much expense to do as you suggest.

"A True Reader" (Brighton).—Many thanks for your letter and verses. I am sorry the latter are not quite up to the requisite standard.

James Shannon, Main Street, Davinsdale, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England or America.

Chas. E. Ivey, 417, Bartlett Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in any part of the world, age 20-24.

D. Pritchard (Newcastle).—I am sorry I cannot do as you suggest.

COLOURED FLAGS.

Our cheery little companion paper, "Chuckles," contains quite a novel feature, which should especially appeal to all my patriotic chums, and to those whose hobby it is to collect emblems and designs. On the front page of "Chuckles" each week will be found a coloured reproduction of the flags of those nations which are playing such a prominent part in the historic war now raging on the Continent.

The drawings are splendidly executed, and beautifully coloured, and it will be well worth your while to cut them out and retain them as souvenirs of the present crisis.

The flag of the Great Powers have already appeared, but your newsagent will probably be able to supply you with the requisite back numbers. The present issue of "Chuckles" contains the flag of Serbia, and next week that of Japan, our powerful ally in the East, will appear.

Apart from this new feature, there is much entertaining reading matter to be found in this delightful little paper, while its pictorial jokes are of the highest order.

You will be well advised, therefore, to place an order with your newsagent to-day for "Chuckles," the premier coloured comic, on sale every Saturday at one halfpenny.

NOW ON SALE.

Three New Additions to

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. Library.

No. 277. **"PRIDE OF THE PRAIRIE!"** A Thrilling Story of the Wild West.

By **CLAUDE CUSTER.**


No. 278. **"BUFFALO BILL'S CIRCUS!"** A Splendid Story of Bill Cody, Scout.

By **CLAUDE CUSTER.**

No. 279. **"PETE'S CIRCUS!"** A Magnificent Story of Jack, Sam, and Pete.

By **S. CLARKE HOOK.**

ASK ALWAYS FOR

 **"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.**

PUBLISHED IN TOWN
AND COUNTRY EVERY
WEDNESDAY MORNING

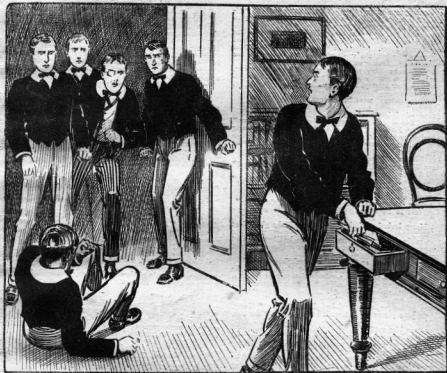


COMPLETE STORIES
FOR ALL, AND EVERY
STORY A GEM!

TOM MERRY & CO. ON GUARD

A Grand Long, Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



The juniors pounced upon Mellish, and Lumley-Lumley threw open the study door. Before the Paul Pry of the Fourth could struggle he was rushed into the room. To Tom Merry's surprise Levison looked white and scared, and in the excitement of the moment he was attempting to smuggle a bundle of papers out of sight. (See Chapter 6.)

CHAPTER I.

Arthur Augustus' News.

"WAY stop talkin' a minute, deah boys—"
"Ring off, Gussy?"
"Order!"

Tom Merry banged on the table of Study No. 6 with a ruler with the vague hope of obtaining silence.

"I vote we lay the matter before the Head!" he shouted.

"Better ask Mr. Railton!" yelled Jack Blake.

"Mr. Ratcliff, you mean," remarked Figgins, the long-legged leader of the New House juniors. "I propose the matter be left entirely in my hands."

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Lae down, Gussy!"

"Jack Blake, if you're going to have Gussy at this meeting, you'll have to sit on his head!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"I suitably refuse to allow Blake to sit on my head! Don't be widdy, Monty Lowther!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arvy, with dignity. "As I was womarkin', deah boys—"

"If you've already remarked it," exclaimed Lowther, "what's the good of remarking it again! Gussy has finished, you chaps!"

"You uttain see, Lowther!"

Tom Merry waved his ruler in the air. A very weighty question was being discussed in Study No. 6 that afternoon, and the captain of the Shell at St. Jim's did not mean to allow the meeting to stray from the main issue.

Next Wednesday:

"THE KING'S PARDON!" AND "A BID FOR A THRONE!"

"There is no doubt the Head will give us permission, you chaps."

"Rather not!"
"And there must be heaps 'St. Jim's juniors could do," went on Tom Merry. "Directly the idea came to me—"

"To me, you mean?"
"You noisy duffals!" shrieked Arthur Augustus above the uproar. "You are wastin' precious time while our country is at war—"

"And giving the Germans socks!"
"Yaas, wathah, Figgay, and in the gwave cires—"

"Gussy's finished his second speech, kids!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Get on with the washing!"

"You feathal ass, Lowthah!"
"Why not head a deputation to Kildare?" exclaimed Harry Noble. "I'm ready to act as spokesman—"

"Rais!"
Arthur Augustus gasped aloud under the strain of attempting to obtain a hearing. Already his arm was beginning to ache through holding up his hand.

He had only just come into Study No. 6, the famous room he shared with Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby of the School House Fourth Form. Instead of finding Jack Blake & Co. quietly preparing tea, the swell of St. Jim's discovered the study full to overflowing with juniors from both Houses.

And the noise they were all making was deafening. Arthur Augustus simply could not get a word in edgeways. He made another attempt in a despairing yell.

"Tom Mewwy—"
"Of course we shall wear Scouts togs!"
"Rather!"
"Figgay, deah boy—"

"And Kildare can act as scoutmaster for the lot of us," added Harry Noble. "It will all have to be properly organised because it is a serious matter. There must be bridges and signal-boxes and all sorts of things to be guarded."

"Oh, Kildare will find us plenty to do!"
"Tom Mewwy, Jack Blake, Figgay, you noisy duffals!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Pwyy stop talkin'!"

"That's the third speech Gussy has made in five minutes," said Monty Lowther severely.
"You wotlah, Monty!"

"Lie down, Gussy, or you'll be bumped out of the study."
"I refuse to lie down. Our country is at war, deah boys!"

Tom Merry looked at Jack Blake. Jack Blake glanced at Figgins.
"There really was some serious business to be discussed that afternoon, and serious business and Arthur Augustus did not always blend well."

"In a way it's hard on the kid," grinned Tom Merry.
"Oh, he needn't be turned out of the study if he'll lie down on the couch and have a sofa-cushion put on his face, and let Fatty Wynn sit on it," added Figgins magnanimously.

"How does that strike you, Gussy?"
"You silly ass, Figgay!"

"Then he'll have to go," sighed Jack Blake. "Gussy, this hurts your parent more than it hurts you. On the ball, chaps!"

"Yes, turn him out!"
"We can't have people bursting into a private meeting and making three speeches in succession!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "All together!"

A rush was made for the swell of the School House, and he was promptly seized in gentle but firm arms. Tom Merry took him by the knees and Figgins by the shoulders.

"Don't drop him, you chaps!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus gasped loudly.
"You wuffians!" he yelled. "You weekless wuffians, release me instantly!"

"Put him down in the passage outside!"
"If he struggles, bump him!"

"Tom Mewwy, I shall administrah a feeshal thwastin'!" Jack Blake, I regard you as a waggin' yong wuffian!" Figgay, you wotlah of the first watah, release me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fatty Wynn threw open the study door, and Tom Merry, Figgins, and Jack Blake rushed Arthur Augustus out into the passage. There was a sudden shriek from Arthur Augustus and a startled yell from Tom Merry.

"Look out, you chaps!"
"My sainted aunt!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Before anything else could be said the four straggling juniors thudded into the small of someone's back. Tom Merry had just time to see that the someone was Taggles, the porter, when the four juniors went down to the passage floor with a sounding bump.

Arthur Augustus went down with a bump, and Taggles sat on him. The swell of St. Jim's shrieked wildly. Then an awful thing happened.

A large bucket slipped from Taggles's shoulder, toppled over, and emptied an awful quantity of whitewash upon Arthur Augustus. Taggles, who had been on his way to mark out the senior footer-ground, scrambled to his feet.

"Which it serves you right, Master D'Arcy!" he bleated.
"A coming of a rush into the back of a man which you did—"

"Great Scott! Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgins stared at Arthur Augustus, then rolled about in the passage in paroxysms of mirth. And certainly the swell of St. Jim's presented a startling picture at that moment.

He was still sitting on the passage floor, and he was holding his arms out on each side. From almost every portion of his usually immaculately groomed person steady little streams of whitewash were pouring.

"Gweat Scott! My onlay toppah!"

"Hallo! What's happened?"

Fatty Wynn and Monty Lowther came from the study with surprised expressions on their faces. They glanced at Arthur Augustus, and promptly gave vent to shrieks of laughter.

Absent-mindedly the swell of the School House screeched a whitewash monologue into his still more whitewashy eye.

"You—you uttah asses!"

"My aunt!"

"Gussy, what did you do it for!" meant Monty Lowther.
"Oh, why did you do it?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Well, comes of trying to interrupt a serious meeting, Gussy!" exclaimed Tom Merry severely. "You have only yourself to blame."

"I uttably refuse to admit I am to blame!"

"If you hadn't interrupted a jolly serious meeting—"

"You shwivkin' duffah, Tom Mewwy!" raved Arthur Augustus. "I came to prevent you wastin' precious time awawagin' to ask the Head to allow us juniors to help the Government by guardin' bridges, et ceterwah."

"My hat!"
"Do you call arranging to help the Government when the Old Country is at war a waste of time, Gussy?" gasped Tom Merry.

"An uttah waste of time in the cires, because it is already awawaged we are to help."

"En?"

"What's that?"

"Kildare and Dawwel and a lot of othah seniors have held a meetin', deah boys, and it has been decided that all the school is to help!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "It was an uttah waste of time your awawagin' a meetin' which had already been awawaged."

"My hat!"

"And the Head is running the bizney, Gussy?"
"Yaas, wathah, Jack Blake. They are havin' a school meetin' in Hall now."

"Good egg!"

"Gussy, you ought to have told us before."

"Bai Jove!"

"If we've missed having a say in the matter I shall blame you entirely!"
"Gweat Scott, Tom Mewwy! I was tryin' to explain when you all rushed at me like weekless wuffians!"

"Well, tryin' is no good in time of war," grinned Monty Lowther. "You've got to do things then. Come on, you chaps, or we shall miss the meeting—"

"Yes, get on with the washing, kids."

"Wait a minute, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus.
"Pwyy don't go without me!"

The juniors stopped and burst into roars of laughter.
"My aunt, you can't come into Hall like that, kid!"

"No, wathah not!" gasped Arthur Augustus, with a shudder. "Howevah, it will not take me more than an hour to have a bath and change my attah. Tom Mewwy, stop, you wotlah! Jack Blake, you wuffian—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors scudded away, and Arthur Augustus stood staring after them. But the sound of laughter coming from the Third Form quarters decided him, and he fled for the bath-room.

ANSWERS

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE

is the principal character in one of "CHUCKLES," &c. the complete stories contained in

CHAPTER 2.

Tom Merry & Co. on Guard.

"**H**ALLO, deah boys!" were Tom Merry, Lowther, and Maaners, and Jack Blake & Co. of Study No. 6.

The six juniors were dressed in their neat scouting uniform, and they stopped and stared at Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's was resplendent in a brand-new suit, something really bewildering in the nature of a waistcoat, and beautifully-fitting patent-leather shoes. He scowled his monocle into his eye and viewed the other juniors with a friendly glance.

"I'm just comin' to the meetin', deah boys, and I have a weally vippin' ideah to lay before the Head—"

"Ho, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, I fail to see any reason for witbald laughin in my very ordinary wearin'."

"Ass! The meeting was over ages ago!"

"Was it weally?"

"Rathler!"

"We are just going down to the railway-line," added Tom Merry, his happy, good-looking face a little graver than usual. "You see, Kidare heard that the Territorials who were guarding the line were wanted for coastguard work immediately, and he offered help from St. Jim's at once."

"Bai Jove, 'twas Kidare—"

"And so there was an need for a long school meeting," added Jack Blake. "Old Kidare had only to explain to the chaps what was to be done, and divide the scouts up so that the railway-line will be properly guarded all day long."

"Bai Jove, that will be vippin'!"

"And we are on duty first," said Tom Merry. "You are to come with us, Gussy, and there's no end of a fog. It's going to be jolly exciting!"

"Wathah! Gweat Scott, you will have to wait until I change my attah again, though!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I couldn't possibly scout in this brand-new suit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it won't be more than half an hour before I am weady, deah boys."

"Oh, don't be hurry yourself, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove, that is a very sensible and thoughtful wearin', Lowthah! I always have considered that dress in a mattah that should not be hurried myself, though in the present circumstances, when there is serious duty to attend to— Pray don't go, deah boys—"

"Oh, you'll know where to find us, kid!"

"Yaas, wathah—in this passage!"

"No jolly fear!" laughed Monty Lowther.

"We are going down to the railway-line just as quickly as we can, and you can follow just as quickly as you can. Those Terriers want to catch the train back to headquarters."

"Gweat Scott, I nevah thought of that!"

"Well, you have now, kid."

"Yaas, wathah! And in the very serious circumstances, I cannot do anything but excuse your washin' away. I shall be down at the railway-line in no time, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus ran back to the dormitory, and the other juniors hurried from the school, laughing. Once outside, they became serious again though, and pulled their scarves tighter round their throats.

A wet, chilly fog hung over the usually sunny Sussex countryside, and it seemed to be getting thicker every minute. The Terrible Three of the Shell and Jack Blake & Co. broke into a brisk trot.

When they reached the station it was difficult to see more than a few yards in front of them, and they ran on to the platform to report themselves to the stationmaster. They were received with a hearty welcome.

Ten minutes later they were being sent along the line to different points, and the Territorials were at liberty to leave.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Monty Lowther were told off to guard the points near the signal-box, and the other juniors were scattered along the line. Before long Figgins & Co. would arrive to take charge of other posts, and the juniors forgot all about the discomfort of the fog in enthusiasm for their work.

And it was sound, careful work they were doing. In a small way they were helping their country against her enemies. They all entered upon their duties quietly and seriously.

For over half an hour they patrolled slowly up and down the line, listening for the slightest sound, but a deathlike silence seemed to hang in the fog. Then suddenly Jack Blake was startled by a sharp cry close to him.

"Who goes there?"

Tom Merry gave the challenge in clear, ringing tones, and

Jack Blake stepped silently to his side. Monty Lowther and Herries loomed up in the fog, with eager, grave faces.

"What was it, Tom?" whispered Jack Blake.

"I thought I heard someone moving along the embankment."

"My hat, so did I!" breathed Herries.

The juniors strained their ears, but the deathlike silence held away again. There was absolutely nothing to be heard but the dripping of the moisture from the few trees which grew near the signal-box.

Jack Blake was about to turn away.

"A rabbit, or something," he whispered. "I—"

"Dry up!"

This time there could be no mistake. The sound of human footsteps was audible to them all.

"Who goes there?" flashed Tom Merry again.

"There was no answer. The footsteps had stopped, and again there was nothing to be heard but the dripping of water from the trees.

"Quick! Across the line!"

Tom Merry whispered the words, and the other juniors moved forward without a sound. Scouting had always been a serious matter to the juniors of St. Jim's, and there was no need for anyone to give commands.

They all instinctively spread out into a crescent-shaped formation.

Advancing quickly and yet in dead silence, they all converged upon one point. Again they acted together in stopping. They were across the line by now, and the lights from the signal-box could just be made out.

For nearly a minute the juniors stood stock-still, straining their ears. There was not a sound to be heard anywhere.

"Must have been a false alarm, after all!"

Jack Blake breathed the words in Tom Merry's ear. The captain of the Shell was about to answer, but before the words could leave his lips Herries and Monty Lowther suddenly dashed ahead.

"There he is!"

"Quick, you chaps!"

Tom Merry and Jack Blake sprang ahead too. They had just made out the indistinct outline of someone moving slowly along the wet grass which bordered the railway-line.

"Altogether!"

"Head him off if he makes a dash for it."

"Good egg!"

The juniors rushed ahead. Tom Merry and Jack Blake were leading the way, and they lost no time.

They saw a tall, slender form start to its feet, and that was enough for the St. Jim's juniors. They went for the slender form with a rush.

"Collar his legs, someone!"

"Altogether!"

Tom Merry thudded into the unfortunate individual's back; Lowther rushed at him like a Rugby forward.

"Bump him over!"

"Look out! We shall be in the pond!"

"My hat!"

The captive was evidently possessed of plenty of grit, for he put up a great struggle against overwhelming odds. He was borne to the ground, with the juniors crowding on top of him.

"Gros-yah!"

"Oh, my aunt!"

"Phew!"

The struggling mass of humanity rolled down the steep incline which led to a small pond which formed a break in the railway embankment.

Tom Merry grabbed wildly at Jack Blake, and Jack Blake seized Monty Lowther.

Their captive yelled wildly:

"You uttah vuffians! Gweat Scott!"

"Oh, I like that!"

"No accounting for tastes, then!" growled Monty Lowther.

"When you've done with my arms, Herries, I'll have it back!"

"His, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry sprang to his feet with a laugh.

"My hat, it's Gussy!"

"We've caught Gussy, kids!"

"His, ha, ha! Gros!"

The whole crowd of juniors splashed into the pond, and for a moment there was silence. It was broken by a shriek in the well-known tones of Arthur Augustus.

"You weckless vuffians!"

"My sainted aunt!"

"You uttah Aves!" raved Arthur Augustus, kneeling up in the water, which was not more than a couple of feet in

THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 350.

A Magnificent New Long, Complete School Tale of

Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



depth. "You despoilate wascals to wash at me in that fearful mannah!"

"It serves you right, Gussy!" he exclaimed. "I gave you a fair challenge."

"Great Scott, I regard you as an utterly wockless wotnah, Tom Merry!"

"Why didn't you answer my challenge, then?"

"Because I didn't want you to know I was there!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "I was watchin' some wuffian doin' somethin' to the railway-line, and if I had answahed your wotten challenge he would have heard me!"

"Someone on the railway-line?"

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy—someone cweepin' along neah the signal-box, bai Jove!"

Tom Merry started. The juniors at St. Jim's could not always take Arthur Augustus seriously, but there was no doubting his earnestness now. The juniors stood still.

The shrill note of the up-train sounded in the tunnel, but the signal light close to them was still red. The juniors could hear the train thudding along, although it was not travelling very rapidly on account of the fog.

With another shrill whistle the engine rumbled past them, slowing down for the signal. Tom Merry heard the screech of the brakes, and for a moment the train came to almost a standstill.

The train was nearly empty, but both Tom Merry and Jack Blake saw a man leaning out of a first-class window. He was leaning so far out that he unconsciously attracted the juniors' attention.

"Bai Jove, he'll fumble out, deah boys!"

"The engine-driver has got his signal red," exclaimed Jack Blake. "See the red light turn green—"

"Great Scott!"

Arthur Augustus gave vent to an exclamation of surprise, and Tom Merry wheeled round. A man had suddenly loomed up in the fog, and was gliding swiftly down the railway embankment. He was making straight for the compartment out of which the other man was leaning.

Tom Merry & Co. started forward.

CHAPTER 3.

The Man on the Line.

"Bai Jove!" "He's going to board the train!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"He'll perch do it, deah boys!"

The juniors spoke as they ran, but the train was gathering speed rapidly. The noise of the engine drowned the juniors' footsteps and voices.

They saw the man in the train wave his hand to the other man who was running down the embankment, but it was perfectly obvious to the juniors that the train would be speeding past the signal-box long before the runner could reach it. If it was the man's intention to board the train and join his friend he was doomed to disappointment.

But it seemed strange that he should want to board the train in this startling manner. The station was only about half a mile back along the line, and it always stopped there.

"My hat!"

"See that, Blake!"

Tom Merry had no time to answer. The man they were watching had raced down the embankment, and the man in the train flung something from the window. The juniors were too far away and the fog too dense for them to see what the object was, but they were all certain that something hurtled through the air and disappeared in the fog.

The man on the embankment turned and disappeared after it. There was no doubt in the minds of Tom Merry & Co. that the whole thing had been prearranged, that the man in the train had meant to hand the mysterious something to the man on the embankment.

And now the whole strange little episode had vanished. The train had gone, but the rumble of its wheels over the line made it impossible for the juniors to tell whether the man on the embankment was still there.

For a moment or two Tom Merry did not know what to do. The affair was strange, even startling, but it might easily be capable of a simple, harmless explanation. Arthur Augustus, who seldom harboured suspicions about anyone without very good cause, broke the silence.

"Perwaps the man on the embankment was wash enough to leave a parcel in the train, and his friend vevy kindly threw it out to him."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"How could the bounder have got from the station quicker than the train, and why was he waiting here to have the

parcel thrown out to him, ass?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Yes jolly well know you were watching him yourself."

"Bai Jove, that is verty true!"

Tom Merry suddenly darted forward. Jack Blake and Herries followed.

"I say, what are you doing on the line?"

Tom Merry flashed the words out, and the next moment he and Jack Blake were face to face with a tall, well-built man they had never seen before. He had the collar of his mackintosh turned up almost to his ears, and his cap was well down over his eyes. It was impossible for the juniors to see his face.

"What are you doing on the line?" asked Tom Merry again.

"I don't see what that has to do with you boys!" ground out the man, an angry note in his voice.

"We are on guard here!"

"Yaas, wathah, and have evrey wight to question tweepassah, you know, although I trust you won't think it wude."

"I missed my way in this confounded fog."

"Yaas, weally, but—"

"And I suppose I wandered through a break in the fencing somewhere—"

"Great Scott—"

"And I narrowly missed being run over by the train!" snapped the man, with a sneer. "Now you can go and report to your scoutmaster, and in future mind your own business."

And, muttering to himself, he strode away and was swallowed up in the fog. The juniors stood staring after him.

"A pretty thin story," remarked Jack Blake quietly.

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

"As if there could be a break in the railway fencing," said Tom Merry scornfully. "The man must have taken us for raving idiots. He was there for the purpose of receiving that parcel from the man in the train, chaps."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And I don't believe he found it," went on Tom Merry. "Did you notice how he looked about him as he walked off?"

"My hat, yes!"

"And he hadn't got a parcel or anythin' else undah his arm, deah boys!"

"That's so, and the thing which was thrown from the train was too big to go into a pocket."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"Jolly funny bizney, anyway," exclaimed Tom Merry, shaking his head. "Suppose we scout along the line a few yards and see if we can find the parcel, or whatever it was."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors spread out, but the task from the first was a hopeless one, unless they were to be favoured by unusually good luck. It was impossible to see more than a yard in front of one now, and really none of them had any idea where the parcel could have fallen.

The juniors scouted along the line for a good ten minutes, but they could find nothing.

Tom Merry made a mental note of the spot, and called a council of war.

"Cornstalk & Co. relieve us, and are about due," he said.

"I vote we tell Harry Noble what happened, and get them to keep a pretty good watch just about here."

"Good egg!"

"And then the word can be passed on to Lumley-Lumley and the others who are to watch afterwards."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And, if necessary, we'll tell Kildare and Darrel, who are to take the night watch," added Jack Blake. "That chap didn't find his parcel, and he'll come back for it when the fog clears."

"That's so."

"And we'll see to it that a St. Jim's chap is near when he picks the thing up!" exclaimed Tom Merry grimly. "He'll have to explain matters, and it'll have to be a satisfactory explanation."

"Rather!"

The juniors stood in a group talking in lowered, earnest voices, and a few minutes later Bernard Glyn, Clifton Dane, and Harry Noble came up to relieve them. Tom Merry explained what had happened in a few words.

Harry Noble listened gravely.

"You can trust us to keep our eyes open, kid," answered the Cornstalk, when Tom Merry had finished. "What was the chap like?"

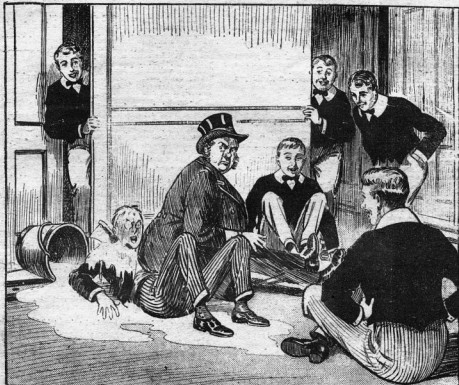
"We couldn't see verry well, deah boy, as he had his mackintosh collar turned up verry high."

"Well, we'll keep a decent look out, anyway."

"And pass the word on to the next patrol!"

"Yes! Levison's lot."

Tom Merry and Jack Blake started. They had forgotten



Arthur Augustus went down with a bump, and Taggles sat on him. Then a awful thing happened. A large bucket slipped from Taggles' shoulder, toppled over, and emptied an considerable quantity of whitewash upon the swell of the Fourth. Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins rolled about the passage in paroxysms of mirth. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 1.)

that Levison's patrol was to be on guard after Cornstalk & Co. "Y-yes, pass the word on, of course," said Tom Merry doubtfully.

The captain of the Shell and Harry Noble exchanged glances. Neither of them liked to say that they distrusted Levison in the matter of patrol work, but both juniors were conscious of a little uneasiness.

Levison had done so many things to earn his schoolfellow's distrust.

Tom Merry shook off the feeling of uneasiness.

"Yes, pass the word on to Levison," he said quietly. "I hope the fog clears while you are on duty, Noble."

"Yes, so do I."

"And if you find the pawcel bring it up to the coll., deah boy," added Arthur Augustus. "We would wait with you, only we must get back to our rotten pewp."

And Tom Merry & Co. hurried away in the fog.

CHAPTER 3.

A Curious Request.

UTTER rot, I call it!"

Levison spoke the words aloud, in a complaining, irritable voice.

He was on his way down to the station, and he ought to have been hurrying in order to overtake Mellish and Lumley-Lumley, his study companions, who had left St. Jim's before him. But there was no hurry about Ernest Levison that evening.

He hated this patrol work he had been told off to do. He would have preferred to have stayed in his comfortable study, smoking cigarettes and reading the latest American fiction he had a weakness for.

But the order had come from Kildare that he was to join Lumley-Lumley and Mellish, and relieve Cornstalk & Co. at the railway line. Levison had tried to get out of it, but there never was any getting out of duties when Kildare, the brawny captain of St. Jim's, gave an order.

Levison walked on slowly through the fog, becoming more irritable and disheartened with every step. He glanced at anything but the uninviting doorway of the Green Man, as if he would rather have gone into the inn than do duty guarding the line.

"Awful rot!"

He muttered the words aloud again, then stopped in his sauntering walk. Someone was coming out of the Green Man, and there was something about him which attracted Levison's attention.

The man was tall, and wore a muskintosh, with the collar turned right up to his ears. He glanced curiously at Levison, hesitated, then stopped.

"Going down to help your schoolfellows guard the railway-line?" he asked, with a slight sneer. "I mean, going to help your country in her hour of need?"

"I've got to do some rotten patrol work, if that's what you mean!" replied Levison, with a growl.

"Hope you'll enjoy yourself."

"Lot of rot, I call it!"

"Well, candidly, so do I," said the stranger, more affably. "I seem to know your face. Is your name Levison?"

"Yes," answered the St. Jim's junior curiously.

He couldn't remember ever having seen the stranger before, but the man did not explain.

"My name is Rodgers," he said. "Come and have something to drink."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

"THE KING'S PARDON!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY—

Levison hesitated. He was not above going into the Green Man upon occasion, but it might not be safe to-night, with Kidzare and other unions about.

"I don't think I will, thanks."
"Some other time, then."
The man lapsed into silence, but he appeared to be watching Levison closely. He seemed to be satisfied with what he read in the junior's discontented, irritable face.

"Look here, Levison," he said suddenly. "Would you like to earn a sovereign?"

"Depends."
"In other words, you would if there isn't too much work attached," said Rodgers, laughing. "I was crossing the railway line near the signal-box just now, and dropped a bundle of papers somewhere on the permanent way. I couldn't find it in the fog."

"The fog will clear in a few minutes, most likely."
"Yes; but I don't want to go back there myself. I have a milliard match on here."

A trace of a smile played about Levison's mouth. He did not believe the man's story, but he saw no reason why he should tell him so.

Levison had plenty of brains of a certain cunning type, and the hint that there was a sovereign to be earned made him cautious.

He waited for Rodgers to go on.

"If you are going to patrol the line it ought to be quite easy for you to find my papers, Levison," he said. "They must be within fifty yards of the signal-box, and they cannot possibly be far from the rails themselves. If you find the papers, and bring them to me here, I will give you a sovereign."

"If I find anything I suppose I ought to take it to the station-master, really."

"Yes. Only he's scarcely likely to give a sovereign for a bundle of useless old letters."

Levison grinned again to himself. If the letters were old and valueless, it was strange that Rodgers should offer a sovereign for them. Levison made a mental note of that.

"I don't mind looking along the line for you," he said.

"That's the idea!"

"Of course, I have my duty to consider first," added Levison cunningly.

"Oh, of course!"

"We St. Jim's juniors are taking this patrol business seriously," exclaimed Levison, a little nettled at the man's answering laugh.

"Rather! That's why you called it awful rot, I suppose."

And with a short laugh the man walked away.

CHAPTER 5.

Levison's Find.

"HERE comes Levison!"
Jerrold Lumley-Lumley sang out the words in a rough but not altogether unpleasant voice. Mellish, the Paul Pry of the Fourth, looked at his study companion suspiciously.

"You've been a jolly long time coming, Levison!"

"How I!"

"Rather! We've been here nearly half an hour."

"Better late than never, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley, with a grin. "This is pretty slow work, Levison."

Levison glanced along the line, and nodded. The fog still hung thickly over the countryside, and the damp mist seemed to have turned to a drizzling rain.

The prospect of an hour's patrolling did not appeal to Levison.

"Beastly!" he growled.

"And awful rot, too," agreed Mellish. "I say, what made you so late, Levison?"

"What's that got to do with you?"

"Nothing, of course; but—"

"Well, dry up!" snapped Levison. "If you chaps don't mind I'll guard the signal-box."

"But I'm on duty there!"

"Well, go on duty somewhere else, Mellish!" retorted Levison, and he walked on a few yards down the line.

Lumley-Lumley, once the Outsider of St. Jim's, laughed briefly at his companion's ill-humour, but Mellish's face showed his curiosity. Like Levison, Mellish, too, had plenty of cunning, and the bigger junior had roused his curiosity by his gruffness.

Mellish stood still, watching the other's retreating form. He was puzzled, and could not make it out.

"Wonder why Levison was so anxious to guard the signal-box, Lumley-Lumley?" he exclaimed suspiciously.

THE GEN. LIBRARY.—No. 350.

"Oh, I don't suppose he had any reason!"
"He generally has some reason for what he does, though."
"Couldn't have had this time."
"—I don't know so much about that," answered Mellish, unconvinced. "I say, it's no good our keeping guard together. It'll be better if we separate a bit."

"Right-ho!"
"I'll give a shout if I see anything."

"Yes; don't attempt to attack a desperate bomb-laying German single-handed," said Lumley-Lumley, laughing. "You might do him some bodily harm on the spur of the moment."

The millionaire's son laughed again as Mellish walked away, and it did not interest him in the least that the Paul Pry of the school was following Levison. As a matter of fact, neither Levison nor Mellish interested Lumley-Lumley at all, and he took no pains to pretend otherwise.

He crossed the line, and patrolled his "beat" carefully.

A few yards away, Mellish had forgotten all about patrol work. With quick, silent steps, he had all but overtaken Levison, and he was startled at his study companion's behaviour.

Levison was walking along the permanent way, his head lowered, and his eyes fixed on the ground. He was obviously searching for something, and Mellish could not make it out.

It was not like Mellish to take seriously to patrol work. The Levison Mellish knew would have found some sheltered spot, and passed the time smoking cigarettes.

But Levison was not doing that. There could be no mistake that he was looking for something along the line.

"Jolly funny!"

Mellish muttered the words to himself and strained his eyes to follow his schoolfellow's movements. Levison was even groping about in the grass at the side of the line now.

Suddenly Mellish saw him drop to his knees, and the next moment Levison was holding a parcel in his hand. Mellish could not see what the parcel was, but he distinctly heard Levison's exclamation of triumph.

Mellish opened his mouth in astonishment, then crouched down at the side of the line. Levison was coming back with quick strides.

A few seconds later the sound of voices told Mellish that Levison had joined Lumley-Lumley, and the Paul Pry of the Fourth broke into a run.

"Going to chuck the patrol work because you've got a headache?" Lumley-Lumley was saying. "It is a bit damp and unpleasant, isn't it, Levison?"

"You can believe me or not—"

"Right-ho! I'll take my choice, then— Hallo, who goes there?"

"I—Tom Merry!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley heartily. "One of our watch is leaving because he has a headache."

Tom Merry glanced at Levison scornfully, then drew Lumley-Lumley aside.

"I got permission to come down to the line again," Tom Merry exclaimed quickly. "Has anything happened near the signal-box while you've been on duty?"

"Nothing at all, I guess."

"No one been here?"

"Not a soul!"

"Good!" breathed Tom Merry; then, looking round to see that Mellish was out of hearing, he told Lumley-Lumley what had happened while his patrol had been on guard.

"Mind, there may be nothing in the binney," he concluded with, "only the man was obviously lying when he said he got on the line by mistake."

"Pshaw, yes."

"Harry Noble didn't want to tell you when you relieved him because Levison and Mellish were with you."

"I see. Are you absolutely certain a parcel or something was thrown from the train?"

"Absolutely!"

"Then there is something fishy going on, I guess."

"Yes, we all think that!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I'm pretty certain the man couldn't find the parcel, so it must be along the line just near the signal-box now—"

"Stars! Levison was on duty there!"

"Well, he knew nothing about the binney, so he couldn't have found the parcel!"

"No, that's so!"

"Levison hadn't a parcel in his hand when he left us just now, had he?"

"No; I didn't notice one," answered Lumley-Lumley. "I say, let's have a scout along the line now."

"Rather!"

"I guess we'll keep Mellish out of it, though."

"Yes; we'll keep Mellish out of it," answered Tom Merry quietly. "My hat, the fog is clearing!"

"Then perhaps the man you saw on the line will come back for another search."

"That's what I'm expecting," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Jack Blake and Gussy will be along in a few minutes, so we shall be ready for the chap, whoever he is."

"Yes, we shall be ready for him!" said Lumley-Lumley, and he squared his shoulders and a grim expression settled about his mouth.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley alone would not have been an easy junior to tackle, for even in the old days, when he had been a rank outsider, he had never shown the white feather. It was not likely that he would know the meaning of fear now that he had turned over a fresh leaf.

The two juniors hurried along the line, searching every foot of the way, and listening all the time for the return of the man Tom Merry & Co. had seen on the line.

Once or twice they encountered Mellich, and the Fourth-Former found it difficult to keep his amazement from showing on his face. He had already seen enough to know that Tom Merry and Lumley-Lumley were also searching along the line.

Mellich was bewildered, but he said nothing of Levison's find. He could not make head nor tail of the mystery, but if there were anything to be gained for himself, it was more likely to be gained through Levison than through Tom Merry.

Mellich realised that, at any rate, so he held his tongue. It would not be long now before he would be at liberty to return to St. Jim's, and he waited anxiously for the minutes to pass.

CHAPTER 6.

Mellich—Says!

"**B**AJ Jove, there's nothin' heah, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus spoke in disappointed tones, and there were equally disappointed expressions on the faces of Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Lumley-Lumley.

The fog had completely cleared by now, and for over an hour the three juniors had searched along the line diligently. They had found nothing.

"I'm afraid the man must have found the parcel afish all, Tom Mewwy."

The captain of the Shell shook his head in a puzzled manner. "I don't think he did, Gussy."

"Well, there's nothin' heah now—"

"No; there isn't anything here."

"My funny find!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "You are certain the man didn't come back while you were on guard, Lumley-Lumley?"

"I guess my ears are pretty keen, and I didn't hear a sound."

"You must have heard if he had come."

"I guess so."

The juniors looked at one another doubtfully. Tom Merry and Jack Blake had already told Kildare of the affair, and the St. Jim's captain had seemed to view the matter seriously.

He had sent Tom Merry back to the railway-line at once with instructions to search every inch of the permanent way. The juniors had made a thorough search. It seemed almost impossible that anything lying on the ground could have escaped their notice.

And now Kildare and Darrell had come down to keep guard, and they also were searching. Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

"I suppose we'd better get back, chaps."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"No good staying here, anyway," exclaimed Jack Blake. "I wish we'd found the beastly parcel!"

It was no good wishing, though, and the juniors mounted their machines and cycled back. Mellich had departed some time ago, but none of the juniors gave Mellich or Levison a thought.

It seemed impossible that Levison or Mellich could be connected with the mystery, for, as far as Tom Merry & Co. knew, they had not heard a word of the train episode. The mystery and suspicious nature of the affair made the juniors unusually silent.

They cycled on slowly, Tom Merry leading the way. Jack Blake was just behind, leaning over his handlebars, his forehead wrinkled in a puzzled manner.

Suddenly Arthur Augustus's voice rang out in a warning shout: "Pway look out, deah boys—"

"Eh?"

"There's someone in the woad! Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus swerved to avoid a tall, well-built man, who was standing in the middle of the road. The swell of St. Jim's shrieked, twisted his handlebars round, and skidded. He sat down in the muddy road with a thud.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

Arthur Augustus gasped, and scrambled to his feet. He picked up his machine, screwed his monocle into his eye, and stared at the tall man through it.

"Bai Jove! Why didn't you get out of the way! I wang my bell—"

The tall man did not answer. He glanced once at Arthur Augustus, then peered closely into the faces of the other juniors.

The man's own face was strangely white.

"Are any of you lads named Levison?" he growled out.

"Gweat Scott, no!"

"Have you seen Levison?"

"Yaas, wathah! He was down on the railway-line with us, onlay he wathah because he had a wotten headache."

"Or said he had," added Lumley-Lumley. "Do you know Levison?"

Again the man did not answer for a moment or two. He was still looking at the juniors.

"Are you going back to the school?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Shall you see Levison?"

"I expect so!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Why do you want to know?"

"Because—because Levison promised to call to see me at the Green Man, and didn't turn up," answered the man furiously. "Tell him to come to me at once, or there will be serious trouble!"

"Weally—"

"Trouble enough to get him expelled from the school even!"

Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle further into his eye, and stared harder at the man.

"In the cirs, we shall have to wufuse to give your wotten message!" he said frigidly. "The Green Man is out of bounds, of course, and if I do happen to mention the-mattah to Levison, I shall stongly advise him not to come neah the wotten place!"

"It will be pretty serious for him if he doesn't!"

"Wats! Pway come on, deah boys, as I cannot help regarding this gentleman as an outsider!"

And Arthur Augustus cycled on quickly.

The other juniors followed, but the little incident-stuck in their minds. None of them could remember having seen the man before, but that did not prove anything.

Levison often frequented the Green Man, and, of course, he met a lot of scamps and outsiders there that Tom Merry and the other decent juniors of St. Jim's never saw; but somehow this man did not look like an ordinary frequenter of the Green Man. He was very different-looking from Banks and the other bookmakers who visited the inn, for instance.

It was another little mystery, which had to be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Levison has been botting again, I suppose!"

"Serve him right if he is in trouble, then!"

"Bai Jove! I wondah if he has, deah boys—"

"Looks like it."

Arthur Augustus lapsed into silence. He was one of the best-natured juniors in the school, and always as ready to help a fellow he did not like as he was to aid a chum.

If Levison were in trouble, the swell of St. Jim's was ready to proffer him help.

"I think I shall offer a little advice to Levison when we wotch the coll," Arthur Augustus remarked thoughtfully.

"It is vey prob he hasn't realised the uttah wottenness of beittin—"

"Oh, he's a rotter himself!"

"That's true, Lumley-Lumley, deah boy, but a little good ndiv—"

"You'll only get stanged, I guess."

"I shall use tact and judgment, and put the mattah vey carefully," answered the swell of St. Jim's. "If he has monay twoubles, I may be able to suggest a way out of his difficulty. I considah one should leave no stone unturned in these mattahs!"

Lumley-Lumley grinned, but it was a friendly grin. However much the juniors of St. Jim's might laugh at Arthur Augustus, all had a real admiration for the sterling stuff which lay under the surface.

They followed Arthur Augustus into the college, and went with him to the corridor upon which Levison's study opened. It was fairly certain Levison would be in the study now, ostensibly doing his prep.

More likely he would be smoking a cigarette behind a locked door, but that did not deter Arthur Augustus. He was ready to offer Levison help if he had been ten times more of an outsider than he was.

"I shall bwack the mattah vey carefully, deah boys—"

"It won't matter how you break it."

"No, I don't agree with you there, Lumley-Lumley."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

answered Arthur Augustus. "A little tact and judgment—"

Bai Jove!
Arthur Augustus started. The juniors had almost reached Levinson's study by now, and they saw Mellish in front of them.

Mellish was on his knees in front of a study door, his eye glued to the keyhole. It was the study Levinson, Lumley-Lumley, and Mellish shared.

There could not be the slightest doubt that Mellish was spying on Levinson.

"The uttah wotah!"

"The howling cad!"

The juniors started forward hotly. Levinson might be an outsider, but it nettled Tom Merry & Co. to see him being spied upon by a junior who was considered his chum.

Mellish must have been the rankest of outsiders to do a thing like that.

"Bump the cad!"

"Come on, chaps!"

"Bump him!"

The juniors raced down the passage, and they pounced upon Mellish before he had time to rise to his feet.

"You rotters!—You cads!"

"Bump him!"

"Altogether!"

The juniors seized Mellish up, and Lumley-Lumley threw open the study door. Before the Paul Pry of the Fourth could struggle he was being rushed into the room.

"Levinson, here's a chum of yours!"

"The uttah wotah was spyin' through the keyhole!"

The juniors stopped speaking, and stared at Levinson. Tom Merry and Jack Blake let Mellish drop to the floor, for Levinson had started to his feet.

Tom Merry's surprise, Levinson's face was white and scared-looking, and in the excitement of the moment he was making an absurd attempt to smuggle a bundle of papers out of sight.

"W-what are you chaps doing in my room?"

"Well, it's my room as well, isn't it?" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley, looking at his study companion curiously.

"You must be a set of cads to burst in upon me like that?"

"Rats!"

"Clear out at once!"

"Oh, we'll clear out all right!" said Tom Merry curtly, "And you needn't trouble to hide those papers; we don't want to see them!"

"We are not rotten spies like your friend Mellish?"

"Was Mellish spying on me?"

"I wogot to say he was, and that's why we washed in without knocking!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I must remark that your reception was pootly wooten in the eyes, Levinson—"

"Oh, rats!"

Levinson was rapidly recovering his composure. He seemed greatly relieved now that his bundle of papers were out of sight.

"I'm sorry I flared up," he ground out, "but you startled me. I'll have it out with Mellish afterwards!"

"Oh, we're sorry we came in at all!" said Lumley-Lumley, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You are a nice sort of chap to attempt to do a good turn for, and no mistake! I guess we'll quit, kids!"

"Yass, pway let's have this wooten sunday, deah boys?"

"Yes, come on."

The juniors trooped from the room, with Arthur Augustus leading the way. Even Gussy's good nature revolted against the surly reception they had received at Levinson's hands.

The good turn the swell of St. Jim's had meant to do the cad of the Fourth was forgotten.

"The chap is an uttah wotah—a wank outside!"

"Oh, we knew that all along!"

"Yass, wotah; and Mellish isn't much better, bai Jove!"

"Worse in some respects!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I wonder what that cad Levinson was hiding away in that drawer!"

"I was wondering that, too," said Lumley-Lumley quietly. Tom Merry turned quickly. There was a note in the voice of the millionaire's son which arrested attention.

They all waited for Lumley-Lumley to speak.

"Of course, Levinson may have been hiding some betting-papers, or something like that," Lumley-Lumley said. "I suddenly remembered, though, that Levinson was on duty at the signal-box not so long ago."

Bai Jove! "What do you mean, deah boys?"

"Well, suppose Levinson did find that parcel, and the papers we saw came out of the parcel?"

"Great Scott! I never thought of that!"

"My hat!"

But Tom Merry shook his head.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

"Of course, it may be that, but it doesn't seem likely, unless Levinson found the parcel by chance!" the captain of the Shell exclaimed. "In that case, he would probably have said something about it to you, Lumley-Lumley!"

"He wouldn't if he thought there was something valuable inside."

"Bai Jove! I'm afraid you are wight there, Lumley-Lumley!"

"Mind, it's only a theory."

"Yes, of course."

"I wonder what Mellish was spying on him for?" exclaimed Jack Blake quickly.

Lumley-Lumley started. He had suddenly remembered something else.

"Start! When Levinson came down to the line he insisted upon taking Mellish's place, and patrolling near the signal-box!" the millionaire's son exclaimed. "I remember Mellish saying he wondered why Levinson was so anxious to go to that spot!"

"Pshaw!"

"My aunt, that's funny!"

"Yes, it's funny," said Lumley-Lumley—"very funny!"

The juniors looked at one another doubtfully. If Levinson had found the parcel, why had he kept it? And what had the parcel contained?

The juniors could not make head nor tail of the affair. It seemed absurd to connect Levinson, a Fourth-Form junior, with the incident Tom Merry & Co. had witnessed on the line, when a man had deliberately busg a parcel from a moving train to another man, who was obviously waiting to receive it. And yet it was a striking coincidence that Levinson should have insisted upon patrolling the only spot on the line where the parcel could be.

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders and he set his teeth.

"We are going to get to the bottom of this, chaps!"

"Bai Jove, wotah!"

"We were on guard when it happened, and it is up to us to clear the matter up."

"We will, too!"

"Come to Study No. 5, chaps!"

"We'll thrash this matter out one way or another," said Tom Merry grimly. "We'll do that if we have to bump the truth out of Levinson."

And the juniors hurried along the passage towards Study No. 5.

CHAPTER 7.

The Telephone Message.

YOU rotten cad, Mellish!" Levinson stood by the table, breathing hard. His fists were clenched, and there was an angry, vicious expression in his eyes.

Mellish flinched and glanced uneasily at the door.

"I don't see why you should call me that, Levinson!"

"You were looking through the keyhole, or something—"

"No, I wasn't!"

"Bah!"

Levinson disliked Tom Merry & Co. more than he disliked any of the juniors at St. Jim's, but he knew they would never descend to lying. Levinson would have believed Tom Merry's lightest word before Mellish's solemn vow, although he might not have admitted it.

"You were looking through the keyhole, Mellish!"

"No, I wasn't, Levinson! If you touch me—Oh!"

Levinson flung across the study and gripped Mellish by the arm. He twisted the arm back savagely.

"You were looking through the keyhole, Mellish—"

"No, I wasn't, Levinson, really! Well, if I did, I couldn't see anything!"

"That's just as likely to be a lie as the other was!"

"No, honour bright—"

"A lot you know about honour!"

Mellish's eyes sparkled. He would have liked to have repeated the same remark to Levinson, and he would have been equally justified.

But Levinson still had hold of his arm, and Mellish's one idea was to pacify his so-called chum.

"On my word of honour I couldn't see anything, Levinson, he whined. "Your back was turned to the door—"

"Ah!"

"You know it was, yourself!"

"Well, what were you spying for?" growled Levinson.

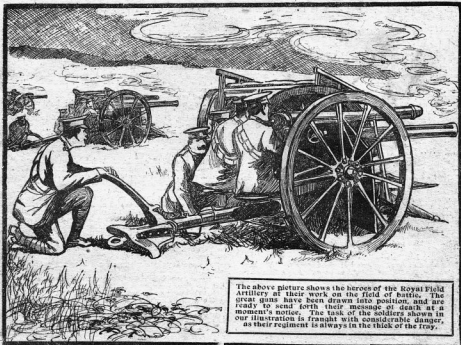
"What made you look through the keyhole?"

"I—I wanted to see if anyone were in the study."

"That's another lie!"

"I—Levinson—I saw you pick up a parcel on the railway-line—"

"You cad, you saw that?"



The above picture shows the heroes of the Royal Field Artillery at their work on the field of battle. The great guns have been drawn into position, and are ready to send forth their message of death at a moment's notice. The task of the soldiers shown in our illustration is fraught with considerable danger, as their regiment is always in the thick of the fray.

"Yes, by chance; and, of course, it's no concern of mine. Levison, please let me go!"

The bigger fellow flung Mellish away from him and stood glaring at him. Mellish was openly frightened.

"I won't breathe a word, Levison! I swear I won't!"

"If you did I'd half kill you!"

"I wouldn't think of it."

Levison was still glaring at his study companion. He took a couple of quick steps to Mellish's side.

"The parcel I found contained nothing but a bundle of— of advertisement handbills, do you see?" he ground out.

"I'm going to throw the things away, but I don't want anyone to know I found them."

"No, of course not—"

"Well, clear out of the study."

"Right—ho, Levison!"

"Hurry up!"

Mellish left at a run. He shut the door with a slam, and hastily put the length of the corridor between himself and Levison.

Mellish stopped then, with a curious, puzzled expression on his face.

He was close to the telephone box, and he leaned against the door, his hands deep in his pockets. But Mellish could make nothing of the affair, for he had spoken truly when he had said he had seen nothing through the keyhole of Levison's study.

All he had been able to make out was that Levison had been doing something at the table. Mellish had not seen anything else.

He did not believe a word of Levison's story about advertisement handbills, but he could think of no possible explanation. It was all a long way beyond Mellish.

"Jolly funny, anyway— Hallo!"

Mellish started. The telephone-bell was ringing loudly just behind him, and instinctively the Paul Pry of St. Jim's darted into the telephone-box. He stopped the bell by picking up the receiver.

"Is that St. Jim's College?" Mellish heard an unknown voice speaking over the wire. "Will you please tell Levison to come and speak to me at once!"

Mellish started violently. It was a curious coincidence which had brought him to the telephone at that moment.

Mellish hesitated. A cunning, unpleasant expression crept into his eyes, and he pressed the telephone receiver closer to his ear.

"I am Levison!" he said, in a muffled voice. "Who is speaking?"

"Rodgers! Why didn't you come to the Green Man, as you promised?"

"I—"

Mellish purposely faltered, but he was a little startled at the note of anger in Rodgers' voice. The man, whoever he was, seemed to be in a fury.

"Did you find the parcel on the line I told you about?" he demanded menacingly.

Mellish started again. For a moment he was at a complete loss what to say, and his hesitation was, perhaps, the best thing he could have done for his own purpose of finding out things.

"Did you find the parcel? Look here, my lad, unless you come to the Green Man before breakfast to-morrow, I shall come to the school!"

Mellish wracked his brains for something to say, and again chance helped him. There was a boring sound, and the call was cut off.

The end of the Fourth stood still with the receiver in his hand. He heard some juniors coming along the passage, and he made up his mind quickly.

No doubt the man Rodgers would attempt to ring up Levison again, and Mellish did not want that to happen yet. He wanted time in which to think over things first.

With another flash of cunning, Mellish laid the receiver down on the scribbling desk instead of hanging it up on the hook. That would prevent Rodgers, or anyone else, ringing up St. Jim's until the receiver was put back into its proper position.

Mellish thought quickly. He could easily deny having been near the telephone-box.

He slipped out of the little compartment and ran silently along the corridor. His thoughts came in a whirl of confusion, as he tried to put two and two together.

He had never heard of Rodgers, but at least one thing was

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

certain. Levison had been sent down to the line with nest purpose of looking for the parcel Mellish had seen him pick up.

It was not a chance find, and Levison's story of a bundle of handbills was an obvious lie. Mellish began to get excited over the mystery he had stumbled upon, but as yet he could not understand it in the least.

He went into the library and tried to puzzle it out, but the more he tried, the further the solution seemed to slip away from him. The only decision he arrived at was to say nothing about the affair to anyone, yet, for if it were worth Levison's while to be mixed up in the mystery, it might be worth someone else's while as well.

Mellish thought of himself as that possible someone else, and for once in his life resolved to hold his tongue.

CHAPTER 8.

Arthur Augustus's Visitor.

"PWAY come in, deah boys!"

"Right-ho, Gussy!"

"And take a chair, Figgys!"

"Good again!" said Figgins cheerfully. "This one'll do. Where shall I take it to?"

Arthur Augustus turned a reproving glance on the grinning leader of the New House juniors, and rapped gently on the table of Study No. 6.

"Ordah, deah boys! Pway let us have ordah, as a vevy wicious wathah has to be considered!" exclaimed the swell of the School House. "It is absolutely excess, that a fellow of tact and judgment should be in the chair, so you chaps had better take your instructions from me!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Loveliah—"

"Two lots of rats!" retorted Monty Leather. "We have all come here to discuss what is to be done about that affair on the line this afternoon, and we don't want to listen to an imitation of an old hen cackling!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Oh, you imitate an old hen cackling jolly well, Gussy! I'm not saying anything against that."

"You uttah ass!"

"Yes, you imitate an utter ass well, too; but we don't want a variety entertainment this afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus narrowed his monocle in his eye, and stared at Loveliah through it. The humorist of the Shell shivered, and allowed his knees to knock together in rapid succession, so Arthur Augustus turned his back on him.

"As I was remarkin' when Loveliah so wudely broke in—"

"What are you imitating now, Gussy?"

"Monty, you waggin' wathah!"

"Lie down, Gussy!"

"I refuse to lie down!"

"Ring off, ass!"

"I refuse to ring off—I refuse— Bai Jove!"

The door was wing open, and Taggles stood in the doorway. He looked at the juniors, and sniffed loudly.

"There's a gent awaiting in the 'all for Master D'Arcy," he said. "He says as he must see you at once, and that he can't say what his business is, which is nice goings on, and so I say it."

"A—a gentleman to see me, bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Pway tell him that I am takin' the chair at a vevy important meetin', Taggles."

"What sort of a gentleman, Taggles?" said Tom Merry curiously.

"Which I don't know, except as how he's got a yellowish face and a scar on his cheek," sniffed Taggles.

"A scar on his cheek?"

"An' his name is Punter," went on Taggles. "Captin' Punter, so he sez."

"Pantah, bai Jove!"

"My hat!"

The juniors looked at each other in amazement. Most of them had met Captain Punter, cardsharpener and outsider, at one time or another, and all had the same opinion about him. The man was a rank outsider, although at one time he had so doggi been in the Service.

No one knew that for certain, but it was absolutely certain that he was a cad, and capable of most low-down, dishonest tricks. That he should have dared to call at St. Jim's for Arthur Augustus was amazing.

"The uttah cheek!"

"Rather!"

"He has come to try and get some money from you, Gussy, I expect," said Jack Blake quietly. "Say you can't see him."

"Bai Jove!"

"The man is a cardsharpener and an amateur bookmaker, and all sorts of things."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy."

"Well, you are not going to see him?"

Arthur Augustus removed his monocle from his eye and thoughtfully polished it. His good nature and great generosity were coming to the surface again.

He looked doubtfully at the other juniors.

"The wathah may be in touble, deah boys!"

"Well, if he is, he has brought it upon himself."

"Perhaps he's twyin' to turn oval a fresh leaf, and a little good advice—"

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah, it does sound inprob; but, undah the circs—"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgys jumped to their feet. Tom Merry faced Arthur Augustus quietly.

"If you're going to see Punter, I'm coming."

"That's vevy good of you, Tom Merry."

"And so am I."

"Same here."

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in relief. "I woaldy do not feel up to facin' an uttah wathah like Puntah alone. Pway come with me, deah boys!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Figgys, and Arthur Augustus filed from the room. They followed Taggles down the stairs, and found Captain Punter waiting for them in the hall.

His face seemed more sallow and unpleasant-looking than when the chums had last met him, and the scar on his cheek showed up more vividly. He met the juniors without any show of embarrassment, although there were many shady shades in Punter's career known to the juniors.

Some of the things might have landed him in prison if his wife had been less keen and his luck worse. He nodded carelessly.

"Is there anywhere where we can have a quiet chat?" he asked.

"Pway come into the visitor's woom," answered Arthur Augustus, and he opened the door.

Good breeding was as much part and parcel of the character of the swell of St. Jim's as was generosity, and he opened the door of the visitor's room for Punter to pass in first. The man did not fail to notice the little act of courtesy, and he looked at Arthur Augustus curiously, but the swell of St. Jim's was glancing away.

Punter laughed shortly.

"You don't seem overpleas'd to see me."

"Weally. However, there is no need to discuss the point, Captain Puntah."

"No, there is no need to discuss it."

The man lapsed into silence for a moment or two. Perhaps he was thinking of the days when he, too, had been a gentleman.

He faced the juniors with an impatient shrug of the shoulders.

"Some of you lads were on duty guarding the line when the four-thirty fast train from Wayland went through," he said. "I believe you were near the signal-box, D'Arcy?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"You were?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Did you see anything thrown from the train window?"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry jumped to his feet before Arthur Augustus could finish his sentence. It occurred to the captain of the Shell in a flash that the man they had seen on the line and who they knew had searched for the parcel thrown from the train might be Captain Punter.

The Shell junior looked hard at Captain Punter. The two men were of the same build, and what little Tom Merry had been able to see of the other man's face they were not dissimilar in features.

Jack Blake caught Tom Merry's eye and shook his head. There was a difference in the two men, and none of the juniors present remembered having seen a scar on the cheek of the man they had encountered on the line.

The men could not be the same. Tom Merry was certain of that now he was meeting Captain Punter's eyes.

From Punter's own words he was connected with the affair, though.

"Did you see anything thrown from a train window, D'Arcy?" he asked again.

"Bai Jove, yaas—"

"Wait a minute, Gussy."

Tom Merry spoke quickly, and Jack Blake and Figgys nodded approval. If Captain Punter wanted information he would have to establish his right to it.

"What do you want to know for?" said Tom Merry shortly.

"That doesn't concern you."

"Weally, I considah it concerns us a vevy gweat deal, Captain Puntah."

The cardsharp hesitated and bit his lip. He seemed to be musing up his mind whether to explain to the juniors or not.

"If I tell you, will you give me your word of honour not to let the story go further?"

"I don't see how we can promise that until we know—"

"Oh, yes, you can, Merry."

"Well, Captain Puntah, I am afraid I must agree with Tom Merry, we exclude Arthur Augustus. You must realize that we were on Government duty at the time, and we have already reported the affair to Kildare. We shall have to report your explanation, unless it is absolutely a personal matter, but Jove!"

"It is a personal matter."

"In that case, I really see no reason—"

"Well, the story is only a few words long!" exclaimed Captain Punter quickly. "Some letters concerning myself and family were stolen by a blackmailer. I was on the train trying to recover them, and the blackmailer threw the parcel out of the window. If you found the parcel, I know you will hand them back to me, D'Arcy."

"But we didn't find the letters."

"Ah!"

Arthur Augustus started, and Tom Merry frowned. In a flash the Shell junior realised that Captain Punter had obtained the information he required.

A cunning, unpleasant smile crept into the man's face.

"If you didn't find the letters I needn't keep you longer," he said, with a short laugh. "Thank you for the information, D'Arcy."

"You gave me your word of honour that it was a personal matter, Captain Puntah—"

"Oh, it was a personal matter all right!" retorted Punter. "My word is my bond, you know, and my honour a gilt-edged security. Good-afternoon!"

And with another short laugh, the cardsharp left the room.

CHAPTER 9.

Mellish Meets His Match.

"YOU shrieking ass, Gussy!"

"Weally, Eggay!"

"You howling duffer!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgins faced Arthur Augustus indignantly. The swell of St. Jim's viewed them loftily through his monocle.

"Weally, deah boys, if you had left the mattah entirely in my hands—"

"Ass!"

"Bubbling duffer!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We left it a lot too much in your hands, and you gave Punter the very information he wanted. Ass!"

Arthur Augustus waved his hand loftily.

"In the cures, I will ovaahk your wathah wough-and-weddy remarks," he said magnanimously. "I wegwot to say that Puntah was very unconvulsious if he took advantage of my slightly flustahed state—"

"I should jolly well think he did!"

"If the mattah had been left entirely in my hands I wathah think my natavah tact and judgment—"

"Rats!"

The juniors looked at one another doubtfully. After all, Captain Punter had been very clever in obtaining the information that Tom Merry & Co. had not found the parcel thrown from the train. The swell of St. Jim's could scarcely be blamed for having come off second best in a duel of wits with a professional cardsharp.

Tom Merry admitted that with a laugh.

"Anyway, it's no good crying over spilt milk."

"No, wathah not!"

"Gussy is an ass, and always has been—"

"Weally, Figgay!"

"Yes, really!" said Figgins wearily. "Punter hasn't got the letters, if they were letters, though—and that's something!"

"A very great deal, as a mattah of fact—"

"Yes, there is that."

"Let's get back to Study No. 5!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"No good staying here slanging the one and only."

"No, wathah not—I mean, let's get back to our studay at once, deah boys, and talk the mattah ovah very coolly," agreed Arthur Augustus. "I have made up my mind to remonstwah with Captain Puntah ovah his unconvulsiousness, and I trust he will realise that he has not acted as a gentleman, but Jove!"

"That won't worry him much, ass!" laughed Figgins. "Come on, chaps!"

And the juniors filed from the visitors' room.

Jack Blake swung the door to as he passed out, and the slight slam it caused echoed across the room. The noise had scarcely died away when the cupboard door was pushed open, and Mellish clambered out into the room.

Mellish was looking excited and anxious. "Without a moment's wasted time he raced down the hall and out into the quadrangle. Then he scudded towards the school gates.

He heaved a sigh of relief when he caught sight of Captain Punter's form retreating along the road, and he promptly spurred. He reached Punter's side in a breathless state.

"I can't stay long, but I think I can give you the information you want," he panted.

Punter started. He glanced at the junior suspiciously.

"What are you talking about?"

"About those—those letters the blackmailer threw from the train," panted Mellish. "I—I dare say I could tell you where they are."

Mellish had had no time to think of any possible danger in his unsavory plan, but he thought of it now.

Punter seized him roughly by the arm.

"Can you?"

"Yes, I think so—"

"Then thou out with it, or I'll give you the worst thrashing you've ever had in your life!" growled the cardsharp.

Mellish gasped. For a moment or two he was too frightened to go on with his plan. He looked timidly over his shoulder, and the sternness of St. Jim's reassured him a little.

He faced Punter with pretended determination.

"Information that is valuable is worth a reward," he stammered. "If you give me half-a-sovereign I'll tell you who has the letters."

"You know who has them?"

"Yes; and if you give me half-a-sovereign—If you dare to touch me—"

Mellish gasped again. Punter had him by the wrist, and the man's fingers were closed tightly on the junior's arm.

"Out with it!" Punter cried. "Out with it, or I'll fling you over that hedge!"

"I'm not going to tell unless—Help!"

"Who has the letters?" snarled Punter. "Quick, boy, or—"

He did not finish his sentence, but he forced Mellish's arm back, and the junior was terrified. The glint in the man's eye drove every trace of pluck out of the Fourth-Former.

"Tell me quickly! Who has the letters?"

"Levion!" gasped Mellish. "I saw him pick them up on the line—"

"Ah!"

"Promise you won't say I told!" whined Mellish. "Levion will be furious—"

"Yes, I promise not to tell," answered Punter; and he flung Mellish from him.

Turning on his heel, the man walked rapidly back towards St. Jim's, and Mellish followed him with scared eyes.

The plan the cad of the Fourth had thought so brilliant had failed miserably. Instead of the half-sovereign he had expected, he had got nothing, and his arm still ached where Punter had twisted it.

"The best!" muttered Mellish, in a rage. "The cad!"

"Eh? What's that?"

A surprised, pleasant voice broke in upon the junior's muttered words and made him jump. Mellish turned hastily, in—is that you, Kildare?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" laughed the brazen captain of St. Jim's, in his usual cheery manner. "Who is the boss and a cad?"

"No—no one—"

"That's right!" said Kildare, with another laugh. "No one is ever quite a cad—I mean, in every way, you know. The worst of people have at least one good point, if you can find it. Are you going back to the School House?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell Tom Merry that I have just been telephoning to Highcliffe," added Kildare. "They have agreed to send over a football team to play our junior eleven to-morrow afternoon; and a threepenny gate will be charged, the proceeds going to the War Fund. Tell young Merry to get together the best team he possibly can, because Highcliffe are sending over a very warm side."

"All right, Kildare."

"And spread the news all over the school," said the St. Jim's captain. "It's the duty of all St. Jim's fellows to

turn up at the match, for every penny added to the War Fund helps.

And, with a friendly nod, Kildare walked on. Melch followed slowly, but he was not thinking much about the War Fund or the football match. The Paul Fry of the Fourth was unhappy and angry-looking. He was trying to think of some means which would enable him to get even with Captain Punter, but he was likely to find that a very difficult task.

CHAPTER 10. The Highcliffe Match,

"JOLLY good news, hai Jove!"
"Rather!"
Figgins & Co. of the New House, the Terrible Three of the Shell, and Jack Blake & Co. of Study No. 6 heard the news of the football match in great excitement.

The Highcliffe games were always exciting, for the rival teams were well matched, but this time there was the added interest that the match would be helping the Prince of Wales's splendid War Fund.

"We ought to raise a wippin' sum, deah boys."
"My hat, yes!"
"And we can have a collection on the ground."
"Rather!"

Tom Merry & Co. knew that practically every junior in the school would turn up to see the game and pay his three-pence admission. Even non-athletic juniors like Skimpole, the brainy man of the Shell, would be there. It was a splendid idea of Kildare's.

"And we must get a jolly good team out!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Hai Jove, yass! In the cires, deah boys, I would suggest that the match be left entirely in my hands—"

"Bats!"
"Weally, Lowthain!"

"Lemme see," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We have Merry, Maaners, and Lowther the pick of the bunch—Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn; Blake, Herries, Digby; and as Gussy is a friend of the family I suppose we shall have to put him in the side. Of course, he'll be a passenger—"

"Weally, Tom Merry!"

"But he's a trier," added the Shell junior mildly. "We can stick him out on the wing somewhere, and although it'll be like playing one short—"

"You uttah ass, Merry!"

"We needn't pass to him," added Tom Merry. "No, don't apologise, Gussy!"

"Great Scott! However, I refuse to listen to your wotten remarks. You know vevy well, Tom Merry, without me the team would be on the rocks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Highcliffe chaps will be here at half-past two," exclaimed Jack Blake. "Harry Noble is down guarding the line, but he is to be relieved at one o'clock. We shall have out a full team, chaps."

"Yass, wathah! Hai Jove, I must wash away and see if my new footah attiah has awviced, deah boys!"

It was the morning after Arthur Augustus's interview with Captain Punter, and that not very pleasant episode had been forgotten for the moment. The football match, with its main object of providing money for the War Fund, overshadowed everything.

The Highcliffe fellows arrived in good time, full of confidence, and a little inclined to swell heads, as usual. Ponsoby of the Upper Fourth, talked loudly of the splendid form of their side the moment he reached the pavilion.

Tom Merry & Co. grinned. It was not often that the St. Jim's junior eleven succumbed to the Highcliffe side, although the matches were always well fought out.

And the juniors were rolling up to the ground in great style. Many of them put down sixpences and shillings at the admission-box, and didn't wait for their change. St. Jim's was responding magnificently to the call for money for our soldiers' families and the widows and orphans the great war must leave behind, especially as they had recently forwarded the sum of fifty pounds to the Fund.

Even the players themselves insisted upon paying.

THE GEN LIBRARY, - No. 360.

"I have no siveah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, as he pushed a five-pound note through to Hancock in the admission-box. "Pway don't trouble about the change, as I have no pocket in my knicknaks."

"Good old Gussy!"

"Wot, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus walked on, a little pink. A few minutes later the Highcliffe side came out of the pavilion, and Darrol, the second prefect of the School House, whistled the juniors to their positions.

Highcliffe went off with a rush, their left wing breaking through in good form. A fine dash by Digby brought the movement to an end.

Digby booted ahead with a good kick, and for a moment it looked as if Tom Merry was going to dash through.

A Highcliffe defender nipped in time, though, and the visiting forwards were attacking again.

A good pass in from the Highcliffe wing set their centre-forward going, and he raced through. Kerr made a great attempt to stop him, but the Highcliffe fellow got his shot in.

That!

The ball left the forward's foot at a terrific pace, but Fatty Wynn, in the St. Jim's goal, was as safe as a bank. He drove the leather out with his sturdy fist.

Kerr got his foot to the leather, and the next moment it was sailing down the ground at a fine pace.

Tom Merry gained possession, tricked the centre-half neatly, and transferred to Jack Blake. The junior from the broad acres dashed ahead, shouldering Ponsoby over in his stride.

Ponsoby, outwardly not unlike Arthur Augustus, but really with none of the sterling qualities which went to make up the character of the swell of St. Jim's, scowled, and scrambled to his feet. But Jack Blake was almost through.

A back rush at him. A half-back came tearing up, but the chief of Study No. 6 shot hard and true.

The Highcliffe goalkeeper flung himself across his goal mouth, but he could never have reached the ball in time. Then there was a sounding thud.

"Oh, hard luck, Blake!"

"Yass, wathah!"

"Botten!"

Jack Blake had hit the upright with a shot which had deserved a better fate. It was rank bad luck, but there was a cheery grin on Jack Blake's face.

Tom Merry banged him on the shoulder.

"Jolly good shot, Blake!"

"Might have been better, kid. Look out, Dig!"

The Highcliffe left wing were racing up the ground again, but Digby was a real thorn in its side. He stopped the outside man with a sturdy shoulder-charge, and he got the ball away to his forwards.

But Highcliffe were playing a desperate game.

They had one or two defeats to avenge, and they were doing their best to square accounts in this match. They were playing with a tremendous amount of dash.

Occasionally Ponsoby was not quite as fair as he might have been, but a few good old-fashioned shoulder-charges from Kerr, the Scots junior, showed him unfairness did not pay. The rest of the Highcliffe side were trying to hurl themselves through the St. Jim's defence by force of sheer weight.

"Like the Germans at Liege," grinned Fatty Wynn. "Oh, well played, Kerr!"

Kerr was putting up a great game. As hard as nails himself, he always chose best when some pretty stiff charging was the order of the day. And there was some very stiff charging indeed that afternoon!

The St. Jim's juniors were playing the prettier football, but Highcliffe had a couple of tremendously heavy full backs, who did not stand upon ceremony. They bundled into the lighter St. Jim's forwards with great rushes.

Tom Merry & Co. were standing up to the charges in splendid fashion.

"Altogether, St. Jim's!"

"On the ball, chaps!"

St. Jim's made a fine attempt to rush through, for half-time was very close now. If a goal could be obtained before the whistle went for the interval, it would be a tremendous help.

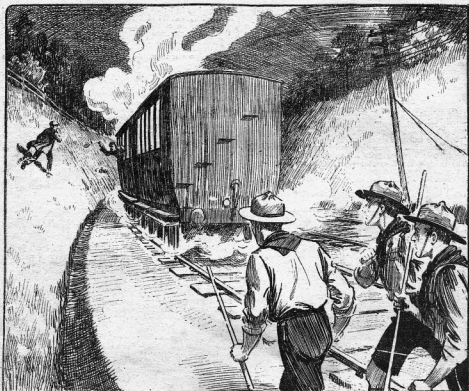
FOR NEXT WEEK:

THE
KING'S
PARDON!

OR,
TALBOT'S
RETURN.

—By—
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.
PRICE ONE PENNY.



The man the juniors were watching raced down the embankment, and at the same time the gentleman in the train flung something from the window. "My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Did you see that, Blake?" (See Chapter 3.)

Tom Merry knew that, and flashed the ball to Jack Blake when there could have only been about four minutes to half-time. The chief of Study No. 6 gained fifteen yards of ground, then whipped the leather back to the captain of the Shell.

Merry raced on, and seemed to have the goal at his mercy, then he slipped. A back dashed in and cleared. It was the rankest bad luck, and there were groans from all round the touchline.

"No luck, Merry!"

"Hard cheese, kid!"

"My hat!"

The St. Jim's supporters gasped aloud. The Highcliffe forwards were sweeping up the ground again with a terrific rush.

The home defence tried hard to stop them, but Kerr was bowled over by a huge charge, and Tom Merry held his breath. The Highcliffe centre-forward was dead in front of goal.

"Come out, Wynn!"

"Come on, Faisty!"

The Fullstaff of the New House did not require a second invitation. He rushed from his goal-mouth like a bull at a gate. He got to the ball in magnificent style, then he and the Highcliffe centre-forward went down.

But by the rankest of luck the ball rolled away to the left. If it had rolled to the right Digby could have booted it out of the ground. As it was, though, the leather was right in front of the empty net.

Tom Merry raced back wildly. Figgins came scudding in from the line, then there was a gasp of dismay.

A Highcliffe forward had kicked the ball into the net with a feeble, soft sort of shot, and the whistle was sounding for a goal and for half-time.

Highcliffe had drawn first blood!

CHAPTER 11.

On the Stroke of Time.

"PLAY up, St. Jim's!"

"Altogether, Tom Merry!"

The St. Jim's junior eleven lined up for the second half in grim determination. They all had set expressions about their mouths, and Kerr, the Scots' junior, had rolled up his sleeves.

St. Jim's might have to admit defeat, but they were going to put up a fight. They gave proof of that the moment the ball was kicked off.

A clever piece of footwork by Tom Merry paved the way for a very nice pass to Jack Blake, and the chief of Study No. 6 whipped the ball across to Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's took the leather in his stride, and careered along the touchline in fine style. His monocle was streaming out behind him at the end of his black silk cord, but he had the ball under perfect control.

Ponsonby rushed at him, and Arthur Augustus tricked him beautifully. The Highcliffe player thudded down to the turf.

"Sowwy, deah boy!"

"Groo!"

Ponsonby's face darkened, but that was not likely to stop Arthur Augustus. He dropped in a perfect centre at the end of his run.

Tom Merry got his head to the ball, and there was a terrific cheer from the spectators.

"Goal!"

"Well played, Tom Merry!"

"O-oh!"

The ball had thumped against the cross-bar. It seemed to hesitate as to what to do, and finally scraped over for a goal-kick.

Tom Merry had missed scoring by three inches.

"Oh, no luck!"

Figgins looked ruefully at the captain of the Shell. Twice now the St. Jim's side had struck the woodwork. It was hard work playing against luck like that.

But Tom Merry & Co. were not going to let ill-luck stop them. They took no notice of the confident grin on the faces of the Highcliffe side, and redoubled their efforts. Before the second half was ten minutes old a veritable capture game was in progress.

Highcliffe caught the excitement, and played desperately. They were not nearly so clever as the home side, but the luck was with them. They were clinging to their one-goal lead splendidly, in spite of all the efforts of the 'St. Jim's juniors.

"Play up, deah boys!"

"Watch their centre!"

"Give the ball to Figgy!"

Tom Merry was in possession, and he screwed round. He slipped the leather to Figgins like lightning.

The chief of the New House juniors had always been a born sprinter, but he surpassed himself that afternoon. He raced ahead at a pace which very few on the field could have touched.

His long legs carried him through the visiting half-back line with amazing ease, and one of the backs was beaten by a huge sweep. Figgins was making a bee-line for goal.

"He's through!"

"Shoot, Figgy!"

"Sho-o!"

Figgins swerved again. He wanted to make sure of his shot, then Ponsooby came stroaking across from the wing. The swell of Highcliffe dropped to his knee, and his left leg shot out.

There was a thud, then Figgins sprawled over.

Ponsooby had swept his legs from under him.

"Foot!"

"Penalty!"

The shouts rang out indignantly, and Ponsooby went pink. Figgins's knees were bleeding where they had struck the turf.

"I'm sorry," Ponsooby had the grace to say. "I tried to play the ball—"

"That's all right!"

Figgins answered quietly as Darrel came running up. He glanced at Figgins and Ponsooby, and pointed to the ground.

"Another foot further on, and it would have been a penalty," he said curtly. "Play the game, Ponsooby!"

The Highcliffe fellow said nothing, and his colleagues packed their goal. Keer took the kick, but there were a whole crowd of fellows between him and the net, and the free kick came to nothing, as usually happens in such cases.

It was another instance of rank bad luck.

"Absolutely rotten, but Jove!"

"You are right there, Gussy," said Digby, in disgust. "The luck is dead against us."

"Yaas, wathah! And we shall have to play up like anything!"

"Well, look out!"

For another ten minutes play was very even, the Highcliffe defence putting up a very good game. Their heavy backs were as sound as brick walls, and their halves did not mind work.

Tom Merry's face became very grave, St. Jim's had all their work cut out that afternoon.

Increasing the pace until they were giving a whirlwind display of splendid football, the home side gradually wore down the Highcliffe team, but the goals simply would not come. At ten minutes from time, the visitors still had the one lucky goal lead.

"Play up, St. Jim's!"

Tom Merry gritted his teeth. He recognised Kildare's voice, and the captain's words spurred him on. The Shell junior sprang in the air, and headed the ball brilliantly to Jack Blake.

The chief of Study No. 5 promptly back-heeled to Arthur Augustus, and the next moment the swell of St. Jim's was racing along the touchline at a pace which would not have disgraced Figgins.

Ponsooby rushed at him again, and Arthur Augustus had no time to swerve this time. He charged into Ponsooby, and the Highcliffe player went down.

"Sowwy, deah boy! Come on, Tom Mewwy!"

"Look out, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah, Figgy. Wush—wush like anything!"

Arthur Augustus went on with the ball, drew the back, then swung the leather across the goal-mouth. It was a beautiful goal, and the leather came down promptly in front of the net.

The right back tried to get his foot to it, the goalkeeper came out, then Tom Merry flung himself at the ball. Before

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 350.

anyone had had time to realise the danger, Tom Merry and the ball were at the back of the net.

The captain of the Shell had scored by flinging himself through the goal-mouth.

"Oh, well played, Merry!"

It was Kildare's voice again, and Tom Merry flushed.

He ran across the field and banged Arthur Augustus on the shoulder.

"Yah! Groo!"

"Good centre, Gussy!"

"You uttah ass!"

"It was your goal, really!"

"You silly duffah!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "If you stuzike me on the wotten shouldah again—"

"Well, it is a rotten shoulder, as a matter of fact," chuckled Tom Merry. "You can't help that, though, Gussy, and we forgave you for that ripping centre. We forgave you being a silly ass as well."

"You waggin' duffah! However, play up, deah boys, as it will novah do to dwah the match. Pway play up for the honah of St. Jim's, bai Jove!"

And Tom Merry's side did play up, too! Right from the kick-off they overwhelmed the Highcliffe players, and Tom Merry and Jack Blake made splendid efforts to get through.

But to the very end of the game the bad luck held sway.

Again and again Tom Merry sent in hard, fast shots, but there was always something just a little wrong. Either the shot was luckily charged down by a visiting defender, or the ball travelled just those few important inches the wrong side of the uprights.

Kildare laughed in dismay.

Fate was being frightfully unkind to the St. Jim's junior eleven.

When there were only a very few minutes more left of the match the scores were still equal, and Highcliffe had given up all attempts to obtain the winning goal.

They were content to strive for a draw, and were packing their goal cleverly. Tom Merry and the rest of the St. Jim's forward line had to try and fling themselves through practically the whole Highcliffe side even to see the net.

"All together, St. Jim's!"

"Show them what we can do, deah boys!"

"Hooray!"

Tom Merry had received the ball somewhere near the centre circle, and was stroaking up the ground in splendid form. Ponsooby tried to trip, but he was bowled over for his pains. Tom Merry was carrying everything before him.

Still, there was very little time left. Even if Tom Merry got through untouched, "Time" might be whistled before he had time to score.

Darrel had his watch in his hand, and he would never stoop to giving St. Jim's the advantage of a second. The second prefect of the School House would be more likely to penalise his own side by shortening the game than lengthen it.

But Tom Merry was covering the ground at a great pace.

He swerved round the left back and rushed to meet the other defender. A smile of confidence flashed across the Highcliffe player's face.

He thought he could stop Tom Merry now, He rushed straight for the St. Jim's junior's chest.

But Tom Merry got his foot under the ball. With a beautifully judged kick he lifted the ball over the full-back's head, and raced round him.

The goalkeeper rushed out as a last resource, but Tom Merry had fastened on to the leather again. He glanced once quickly at the net, then shot.

Thud!

The ball left his boot at a terrific pace, and an instant later it crashed to the back of the net. St. Jim's had obtained the lead at last.

CHAPTER 12.

Startling News.

"WELL played, Tom Merry!"

"Wippin'—absolutely wippin', deah boy!"

"Hooray!"

The cheers from the St. Jim's partisans were deafening. Highcliffe would never be able to equalise again, for time must be almost up.

Certainly Darrel was allowing the ball to be taken back to the centre circle, but he had his watch in his hand all the time. The Highcliffe centre-forward kicked off, and the visitors made a despairing rush, but it was all over.

Darrel was whistling loudly, and St. Jim's had won the game.

The spectators rushed on the field, and Tom Merry's hand was in danger of being wrung from his arm. He laughed good-naturedly as he pushed the juniors back.

"Don't be silly asses, chaps!"

"You've no idea what a ripping game it was to watch!"
"Splendid!"

Kildare came up, grinning broadly. The brawny captain of the old school was always just as pleased when the juniors won a match as when his own senior side were victorious.

"Yes; it was a splendid game to watch," he said in his pleasant way. "You all played up finely, and the collection made on the ground for the War Fund reached a startling sum."

"Wigger!"

"Yes, St. Jim's have done well this afternoon," answered Kildare quietly. "Hallo! More war news, then?"

A newspaper-boy had just come on the field, a bundle of papers under his arm, and a contents' placard in front of him.

"French and Belgian victories in Belgium! Great stand of a British battalion! German spies at work in Wayland!"

Tom Merry, Kildare, and Arthur Augustus started and ran forward. Wayland was the junction for Rylocombe, and was a fairly large town, only a short distance from the school.

The newspaper-boy's cry that German spies had been at work in Wayland was startling news to St. Jim's fellows.

Tom Merry bought a paper with the coin he had used to toss up for choice of goals in the football match, and Figgins & Co., Jack Blake, and the Study No. 6 chums, and Monty Lowther and Manners, all tried to lean over the shoulder of the captain of the Shell.

"Let's have a look, Tom Merry!"

"Lemme see, sss!"

"Figgins, pray get out of the way!"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry gasped aloud. A badly-printed paragraph in the stop-press column was staring him in the face.

"My sainted aunt, look at that, chaps!"

"G'wreat—G'wreat Scott!"

Tom Merry stared at the paragraph in amazement. It was not long, but it was intensely important.

"It is almost certain now," the paragraph ran, "that some very valuable plans of a certain but unspecified fortification have been obtained by someone who is an enemy of the country. The plans were in the possession of Captain Blackman, of Wayland, and it is known that he had had them in his bag in the afternoon train which started from Wayland yesterday."

"Before the end of the journey Captain Blackman discovered his loss, and the police were communicated with. Up to the time of going to press the plans have not been recovered, but it is being persistently rumoured that the spy who obtained possession of them must have had a confederate who was thoroughly conversant with our military routine. It is even being hinted that some British officer is implicated."

Tom Merry allowed the paper to be snatched from him, and stood staring at Jack Blake. The chief of Study No. 6 looked very grave.

"The afternoon train from Wayland!" he repeated thoughtfully.

"G'wreat Scott, the vevy train we saw, deah boys!"

"The one that parcel was dung from?"

"My hat!"

The juniors stood still, trying to grasp the situation. Captain Blackman had had the plans in the train, so they must have been stolen from him during the journey.

The paragraph did not say whether the train had been searched or not, but it would have been. The loss of the plans had been discovered before the next stop after Wayland, and everybody travelling would have been searched. Whoever stole the plans must have got rid of them during the journey.

And Tom Merry & Co. had seen a parcel thrown from a carriage window.

There had been someone waiting to receive it, too. It could scarcely have been a coincidence.

Arthur Augustus let his monocle drop from his eye.

"G'wreat Scott! And we were only a few yards away from the plans!"

"If the parcel did contain the plans?"

"Of course it did, Herries!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "My hat, if only we had collared the parcel!"

"We did our best, deah boys!"

"Yes; only we ought to have done better!" growled Tom Merry. "I feel pretty feeble about it all!"

The captain of the Shell stopped speaking. Levison was pushing his way through the excited little crowd of juniors, and his face was pale and reared-looking.

Lowther was re-reading the stop-press paragraph, and Levison leant over his shoulder.

"My—my hat!"

Levison gave vent to the exclamation of amazement in a startled voice. The other juniors looked at him.

"What's the matter, Levison?"

"Yaas, watah! What is the matter?"

"N-nothing," stammered Levison. "I—I—Here's your paper, Lowther!"

And he walked away.

The juniors were still looking at him, but none of them spoke. Just for a moment, it again flashed across Tom Merry's mind that Levison might possibly know something about the parcel which had been thrown from the train, but the captain of the Shell had to dismiss the idea. There seemed to be no evidence against Levison.

Mollish was the only one who knew that Levison had found the parcel which Tom Merry & Co. now believed contained plans of a certain fortification, but the Paul Fry of the school was far too scared to say a word. He hurried away after Levison, but he had no intention of speaking to his study companion.

Mellish was too startled to want to have anything more to do with the affair.

Tom Merry was still looking vaguely after the two juniors when Lumley-Lumley caught his arm. There was a keen, steady light in the eyes of the millionaire's son.

"Levison knows something about the business, Merry!"

"The captain of the Shell wheeled round. He faced Lumley-Lumley anxiously.

"What makes you say that?"

Lumley-Lumley thought for a moment or two, then shrugged his shoulders. He did not exactly know what it was that made him think Levison was implicated in the starting affair.

Years ago, when Lumley-Lumley had been just Jerrold Lumley, he had roughed it with the roughest as a street arab in the Bowery, in New York, and later in many other parts of the strange and unsavoury quarters of the globe. He had to care for himself in those days, before his father had made his fortune, and the junior, little more than a child then, had learned to read faces. He had had to learn that, or he would have gone under.

And now he had read something in Levison's face, even if he could not explain how he read it. Levison knew more of the stolen plan outrage than he meant to tell.

Lumley-Lumley was certain in his own mind.

"You'll find I'm right," he said quietly.

"I'm not saying you are wrong, old chap; but—"

"Levison knows something, I guess! Stars! Who is this?"

Tom Merry turned again, and a frown settled upon his cheery, hand-some face. Captain Punter was crossing the football-ground towards them.

"Is Levison here?"

The words were jerked out sharply, and Captain Punter looked from one junior to another.

"Bai Jove!"

"Levison was here a minute ago," said Punter.

"Yaas, watah, Captain Puntah. Howvah, I wish to speak to you, so I am glad you are deah. I wish to wemonstrate with you about the unscrupulous misnah—"

"Has Levison gone to the school?"

"Weally, Captain Puntah—"

Punter looked at the silent juniors standing by Tom Merry, and shrugged his shoulders. He turned on his heel, and strode away.

Arthur Augustus stood viewing him through his monocle in lofty amazement.

"G'wreat Scott! He must have heard my remark!"

"I guess he heard all right!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"Say, chaps, what do you think Punter wanted Levison for?"

"Bai Jove!"

"There's no saying!" exclaimed Tom-Merry hastily. "It's no good jumping to the conclusion that Punter is in the business as well—"

"Punter was pretty anxious to get that information from Gussy about the parcel thrown from the train, anyway!"

"Yes, I know, Blake; but we don't want to jump to conclusions," answered Tom Merry. "I'm going to ask Kildare about it."

"Yes, that's it."

"This is too serious a matter to run risks about."

"Bai Jove, yaas! Although, if the affair were left entirely in my hands—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Don't cackle, Gussy!" exclaimed Figgins. "Come and catch up Kildare!"

And the juniors broke into a run.

CHAPTER 13.
Levison is Scared.

"My hat!"
Levison muttered the exclamation aloud, and covered his lips. He looked fearfully scared, and his looks did not belie him. He made for his study at a run.

The lock of the door was broken; but Mellish had fixed up a temporary hook, and Levison closed the door and fastened it. He was conscious of great relief now that he was safe in his study.

Hastily unlocking the drawer in the bookcase, he took out a bundle of papers. They were the papers he had told Mellish were advertisement handbills.

But they scarcely looked like handbills. Some of the papers were covered with small handwriting in German, others had plans drawn to scale; but the meaning of the script, and the plans were equally a mystery to Levison.

He looked at them again for about the twentieth time, and his face went white.

From the moment he had read the stop-press paragraphs in the paper about the plans stolen from Captain Blackman Levison had known that the plans were in his possession.

The parcel Levison had picked up on the line contained one of Britain's secrets, which a traitor was selling to her powerful foe.

Levison was almost certain of that now, but he wanted to make quite sure. He slipped out of his study and into Cutts's room. The junior was back again in his own room in a few seconds, and he had a German dictionary with him. He hastily looked up a word here and there, and the proof was forthcoming.

Again and again the word fortification appeared in the manuscript, and there were all sorts of technical terms relating to armaments.

Levison shut the dictionary with a shudder. What could he do with the plans? They ought to be sent back to Captain Blackman at once, but there would be an awful row. Levison knew that, but he also knew he would have to face the row.

After all, he had not known that they were stolen plans. Certainly it would be difficult to explain to the Head that he had kept the papers, hoping to make money out of them, but Levison was not above lying.

He would have to think of some story to tell the Head. In the meantime, the plans must go back to Captain Blackman, and Levison had a vague idea of cycling over to Wayland with them. It would be dangerous, of course, but something must be done.

Suddenly Levison's thoughts broke off with a jerk. Someone was tapping at the door.

"Who is there?"
"Is that you, Levison?"
"Yes!"

"Open the door, then—quick!"
Levison sprang to his feet, and thrust the stolen plans back into the drawer. He did not recognise the voice of the speaker on the other side of the door, and was terribly scared.

"I'm busy with my prep just now!"
There was no answer in words, but the door was suddenly sent flying open. The catch Mellish had fitted fell to the floor with a clatter.

"Captain Punter!" gasped Levison.
"Yes!" growled Punter. "I tried to find you last night, and I have been hanging round the school all day. You have some papers in your possession which do not belong to you!"

"N-no!"
"I tell you you have!" flared up Punter. "Where are they, boy?"

Levison did not answer, and Punter rushed at him. He caught the junior by the arm, much in the same way he had seized Mellish the previous night.

"Where are the papers, boy?" he said furiously. "Quick, or by the powers I'll twist your arm! Ah, in that drawer!"
Levison had unconsciously glanced towards the bookcase, and Punter was quick to seize the cue. He pushed Levison aside, and was across the study with a couple of strides.

A moment later Levison saw him thrusting the papers into his pocket.

"You—you mustn't touch those!"
"If you breathe a word about my having been here," interrupted Punter, "you will get into serious trouble. Don't forget that!"

"Stop! You mustn't touch those papers!"
Beside himself with anxiety, Levison sprang across the room, but it was too late. Punter was already hurrying along the passage.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 350.

FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE

is the principal character in one of "CHUCKLES," 1/2.

the complete stories contained in

"CHUCKLES," 1/2.

Levison looked out, but he did not dare to follow. He could not tackle Punter single-handed, and if he called for help he would have to explain what he wanted help for.

Levison wrestled with his conscience. He thought the papers were going into the enemy's hands, that it was his duty as a Britisher to do his best to prevent Punter leaving with them, but he did not move. In many ways Levison was a coward. If he had Punter stopped, Levison's own share in the affair must come out.

Levison shuddered, and a moment later he heard a side door slam. Punter had made good his escape.

Levison stood by the table, his face still white. He knew where his duty lay. He ought to go to the telephone and ring up the police. It would be easy work for the authorities to capture Punter, if they knew before he reached the railway-station.

But Levison did not move from his study. He was afraid of the consequences to himself if he telephoned to the police. Still, what was he to do? Levison was a rank outsider, but he had no desire to be a traitor to his country. It takes a very rank outsider indeed to be that.

Suddenly Levison started back with a short cry of dismay. Rodgers, the man who had offered him a sovereign to find the papers on the railway-line, was standing in the doorway. Rodgers's face was dark and furious.

"You little cad!" he said angrily. "You mean bound, Levison!"

The junior did not answer. Once that morning he had caught sight of Rodgers, but Levison had kept out of his way. Now Rodgers had come to him in just the same way Punter had, by slinking into St. Jim's.

Levison tried to pull himself together.

"What have you come here for?"
"You know well enough, you little cad," said Rodgers furiously. "Why didn't you come to the Green Man last night?"

"I couldn't find the—the parcel you spoke of, so where was the good?"

"That's a lie!"
"No, it isn't!"

"I tell you it is!" cried the man. "You did find the parcel, and you have it now."

And, springing forward, Rodgers whipped up a single-stick, and stood over the junior.

"Where are the papers?" he demanded. "Levison, I will thrash you to—within an inch of your life unless you tell me!"

"I haven't got them!"
"Where are they?"

The single-stick hissed through the air, and came down on Levison's shoulders. The junior started back with a cry of pain.

"I haven't got them, I vow I haven't!"

"Then who has?"
"A man named Punter!" gasped Levison. "He came here just now and took them by force. I swear he did!"

"Punter!"

Rodgers let the single-stick drop from his hand. He looked vaguely round the study as if he had not Levison had received the blow.

Then, in a sudden fury, he slapped Levison across the face with his open palm, and the junior was sent staggering over a chair. By the time he had scrambled to his feet, Rodgers had gone.

Like Mellish, he had not come well out of this strange business. And it was not over yet. Levison knew that he had still to get out of the sea of trouble his greed had landed him in, and the junior could not see what was to be done.

CHAPTER 14.

The Return of the Stolen Plans.

"BAL Jove!"
Arthur Augustus gave vent to an exclamation in a startled voice. His chums, Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby, looked at him. The Terrible Three of the Shell and Figurs & Co. of the New House, chuckled loudly.

The juniors were just about to leave the railway-station. They had been on guard along the line all the morning following the great football match, and they had just been relieved by Constable & Co., Kerruish, and Beilly.

Tom Merry & Co. were about to go home back to the school for a well-earned lunch, and Arthur Augustus was barring the way out of the station.

"Get on with the washing, Gussy!"

"Look alive!"
"Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus had turned round, and was staring over the shoulders of the other juniors. The Swell of St. Jim's was



The above illustration depicts a thrilling incident which took place on the outskirts of Solssons. A British despatch carrier, dashing across country on his motor cycle, found his way barred by a Uzbek scout. Interfering his speed and drawi. g his revolver, he rushed straight at the enemy, who made a cut at him with his sabre. Immediately a shot rang out. The Uzbek, mortally wounded, fell from his horse, and the plucky Britisher continued on unscathed

looking at the train, an express which was almost due to start.

"What the—?"

"Who the—?"

"Ben Jove, did you see that man who washed past me just now, dear boys?"

"I saw someone go past."

"Yaas, wathah! Did you recognise his face?"

"Never saw it, kid!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wheeling round. "Why?"

"Because I believe it was the wascal we speke to on the wayline—the wascal who was looking for the parcel!"

"No!"

"I believe it was, Hewwies!"

Tom Merry & Co. wasted no more time in argument. They raced back across the platform and over the bridge. They spread out, and peered into all the compartments of the express.

Arthur Augustus had very likely made a mistake, but the juniors were leaving nothing to chance. They walked nearly the whole length of the train without seeing anyone who remotely resembled the man Levison knew as Rodgers.

Then, in front of the very last first-class carriage, Tom Merry uttered an excited exclamation.

Jack Blake came hurrying up.

"Phew!"

"Is that the man, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry went boldly up to the door and opened it. There was one solitary passenger, a man with a mackintosh, the collar of which was turned right up to his ears. It was a perfectly fine morning, and the mackintosh roused Tom Merry's suspicions at once.

The man did not even glance at the juniors. He was looking out of the further window, and showed no signs of turning his head.

"Yes, it's the man!"

Tom Merry spoke quickly, and sprang into the compartment. The man jumped to his feet, with an angry snarl.

"What do you lads want? Who are you?"

"I think you know that," said Tom Merry, very grimly.

"We have met before."

"I—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"THE KING'S PARDON!"

A magnificent new, long, complete school. The art
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Don't you think it will save time if you come to the station-master and explain what you were doing on the railway-line in the fog?"

"I told you I missed my way."
"You must have climbed the fence to do it," said Monty Lowther. "Did you find those stolen fortification plans? That is what we want to know."

The man started violently.
"I know nothing about any fortification plans!"
"You'll have to convince the authorities of that," interrupted Tom Merry. "I should advise you to come out of the train quietly."

"Yass, wathah; as it will be wrotten if we have to have a wov."

The man looked at the juniors, and knew that they were determined. He also knew that he could never stand a chance in a tussle with them.

He bit his lip, and faced Tom Merry.
"Look here, I haven't got the plans," he said in a low voice. "My brother has them."

"Your bwothah?"
"Yes, Punter—Captain Punter. He took them from one of your schoolfellows—Levison."

Tom Merry gasped aloud.
"Punter took the plans from Levison?"
"That's what I said!" snarled the man. "Punter is my brother, although neither of us are particularly proud of the relationship."

"Wathah not. I mean—"
"Well, you'll have to explain to the authorities!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Your story may not be true."

"Levison will tell you it is. He could also tell you that I gave him a sovereign to look for the parcel you appear to have seen thrown from the train by a certain army officer of German extraction, who has probably fled to his country by now."

"You offahed Levison a sovereign to look for the wrotten parcel?"

"Yes; and the young cad found it and stuck to the parcel!" growled the man who called himself Rodgers.
"Then my brother took them from him."

"Of all the wrotten affairs—"
"You were going to send the plans to Germany, of course?"

Tom Merry spoke grimly. The man shrugged his shoulders.

"I wasn't going to keep them for exhibition work," he said. "Anyway, I haven't got the plans, and I never had them, and the police will have a difficult job to tax me with the theft. If you want to do your country some good you had better set off on Captain Punter's track."

Tom Merry glanced at Jack Blake. Then suddenly Rodgers flung open the opposite door. Before any of the juniors could move the traitor had sprung out on the line. He dashed away into the wood, and at the same moment the guard whistled for the train's departure.

To reach the wood Tom Merry & Co. would have to wait for the train to steam out of the station, and then cross the line. There was absolutely nothing else to do.

"Make a wush for it diwetty we can, deah boys!"
"Get ready to jump down on the line!"
"Here's Lumley-Lumley, chaps!"

The millionaire's son came up at a run. He was hot and breathless.

"I've come up from the town like the wind!" he panted. "Who were you talking to in the train?"

"The chap we saw on the line."
"I guessed it was!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley. "Well, he doesn't matter. I got the whole story out of Levison. It is Punter who has the plans!"

"Bai Jove! Then Wedgah's wrotten stoway was true!"
"Yes, if he told you Punter took the papers from Levison," answered the millionaire's son. "We've got to go after Punter all we know, I guess."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stopped speaking. A newspaper boy was passing the railway-station, shouting the contents of an early war edition.

"Mysterious return of the stolen plans! Startling mystery!"

Figgins, the champion sprinter of the New House, heard the words, and scudded away. He was back again in a few seconds with the paper opened.

"Just look at that, chaps!"

Again there was a stop press paragraph, and the juniors read it in amazement.

"The fortification plans so mysteriously stolen from Captain Blackman have been as mysteriously returned," the paragraph ran. "The paper, intact, with the addition of much manuscript in German, were received by Captain Blackman this morning by the ordinary post. The plans were returned anonymously."
Tom Merry gasped aloud!

"My hat!"
"Punter-must have returned the plans himself."

"Yass, wathah!"
"But what does it all mean?"

"Bai Jove, Figgys, I wathah fancy that Puntah sent the papahs back to save his bwothah from bein' a traitor to his country!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We all know that Puntah is a wrottah of the first watah, but even a wrottah of the first watah would stop at betwayin' his country!"

"My aun!"
"You think Punter's brother was ready to sell plans to Germany, but that Punter wouldn't let him?"

"Yass, wathah, Dighay, deah boy! Puntah was once an Army man, and vevy likely his one good point is respect foah our magnificent Army. I wrottah think Puntah has done the wright thing foah once, chaps!"

"I guess that's what I think," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "What do you say, Tom Merry?"

"Yes, I think Gussy has hit it."

"Yass, wathah," said Arthur Augustus modestly. "I am wathah good at summim' up mattahs like this. As the plans have been returned, and no harm has been done, it appeahs that there is nothin' else for us to do, bai Jove, except to go back to St. Jim's foah dinnah!"

And the juniors went back.
They reported the whole affair to Kildare, of course, and the captain of St. Jim's had nothing to say against what had been done.

He agreed entirely with Arthur Augustus's summing-up, and what Kildare thought was good enough for Tom Merry & Co.

THE END.

6/6 each



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL.

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Trains the eye and cultivates the judgment. Range 100 yards. Targets 24. per 100. Nonclean Ball Cartridges, 24. per 100. Shot, 1/2 per 100. Send for list. CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, WHITE'S STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

VENTRILOQUISM. Learn this wonderful and laughable art. Fullers instructions with the eye and cultivates the judgment. Range 100 yards. Targets 24. per 100. Nonclean Ball Cartridges, 24. per 100. Shot, 1/2 per 100. Send for list. CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, WHITE'S STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographs Material for Cameras, send for Samples and Catalogue FREE.—Works: JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

89 CONJURING TRICKS. 21 Joke Tricks, 20 Puzzles, 20 Games, 12 Letters, 420 Jokes, 25 Shadowgraphs, 22 Money making Receipts worth 400, and 1,000 non-dependable illustrations, 7d. F.O. Order.—SUGHERS, FARRINGTON, BARBERS, N.E.B.M. Grand Colonial Novelty War Pickets, 7d.

Applications with regard to advertisement space in this paper should be addressed, Advertisement Manager, "PLUCK" Series, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Monday.

NEXT WEDNESDAY.

THE KING'S PARDON!

A Magnificent Extra-long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and

TALBOT OF THE SHELL

Admirers of Talbot Must Not Miss Reading this Special Story. ORDER EARLY.

OUR GRAND NEW WAR SERIAL.



READ THIS FIRST.

Paul Satorys, the rightful heir to the throne of Istan, lives quietly in England as a private gentleman until he hears that his place in Istan has been usurped by an adventurer named Jem Stanton, who is the exact double of Satorys. Worse than this, Stanton has decoyed Grace Lang, Satorys' fiancée, out to Istan with him. Grace, however, discovers the deception and escapes from the usurper. She falls into the hands of a tribe of natives, who make her their queen, and call her Nada. Satorys, himself, is subsequently captured by the natives and brought before the queen, who, however, he does not recognise owing to her veil. Nada offers to help him, and Paul leads her native troops against Istan. He is defeated, however, but saves himself by donning the uniform of an Istan officer, and mixing with the Istan Army. With his faithful followers, Peter Mardyke and Anton, he enters the city, and gets into conversation with an Istan officer. He learns that Germany has declared war on England, and that the troops of Istan are going to England to help the German invading forces. Paul Satorys, with Peter Mardyke and Anton, succeed in reaching England with the Istan troops undetected. Staking all on a bold coup, Satorys then declares himself to the army as the rightful king, and calls upon his troops to follow him over to the side of the British in a body. The men of Istan are won over, Stanton, the impostor, flees, and Satorys comes to his own again. At the head of his army, Satorys attacks the German position. The British troops co-operate with the men of Istan, and the German divisions are annihilated. The Allies depart for France, and a fierce war rages in Europe. Satorys—with a French officer who afterwards turns out to be Grace Lang—is captured by the Germans, and imprisoned in a fortress, where he once more meets Jem Stanton. The latter endeavours to persuade Paul to turn against England, and imparts the information that Germany has built the long-talked-of Channel tunnel. Having apparently fallen in with Stanton's plans, Paul is shown a Zeppelin. Suddenly knocking Stanton into the airship, Paul calls Peter Mardyke, and the airship is cut free. They reach England in safety, warn Colonel Vyse, and the tunnel is blown up. Paul then sets out for London to interview the King and Lord Kitchener.

(Now go on with the story.)

In London.

London was more than calm. It possessed that fine spirit of sublime patience, though the world was, as it well knew, being set back a score of years, so far as ordinary progress and the advance to the great goal of free humanity were concerned.

"It beats me altogether," said Peter one evening, just before his master and he were setting off once more into the maelstrom of the war. "Here is this German Kaiser talking as though he were something very special, and yet I never heard of anything extra good he ever did!"

"No more did I, Peter," said Satorys. "And here there is poor old Belgium, where the chaps are as brave as they are mad, with its gardens all spoiled, leave those other things about which I for one don't like to think,

A Bid for a Throne.

A Thrilling War Story.

By CLIVE R. FENN.

and the Kaiser talking as though the Belgians had done a dirty trick by defending themselves. Oh, he's mad, sir—that's what's the matter with him! He ought to be locked up right away, though it is too late to help all the thousands of poor folk who have lost everything they had just because he would like to go to war. It's my opinion, sir, that for the future, instead of calling a man a murderer—if he happens to be one—or a thief, or a liar, all you need do is to round it off and say he is a German. There you would have him, sir, all in one!"

Satorys nodded. Anxious as he was to leave London, despite the fact that many highly-placed friends urged him to remain—at least, for a longer time, and rest after all he had undergone—he was frightfully anxious as to the girl who to him was still Miss Lang, although she had gone through the ceremony of marriage with the scoundrel Stanton, who was once more at large in Europe, able to accomplish great barns, thanks to his intimate knowledge of England, and to the fact that he was probably still working hand and glove with his German allies.

She had told Satorys that she did not wish to say anything which should keep him from duty.

"I am safe enough here in London amidst all our friends," she said. "And if I had my way, I should go back myself to take my part in the great work of freeing Europe from its enemy. But as for that, maybe I had best remain. Yet you shall not be thwarted by me. You have your army out there, fighting bravely for the good cause, and I feel as though the splendid men of Istan were my countrymen, too!"

Stanton Meets His Match.

Satorys would have been less inclined than ever to leave the girl, well protected as she was, had he known the real power of Stanton, who to the German headquarters represented an important link with the country they intended to subdue.

But he did not know, and a few days after his interview with the highest in the land he started with Peter for the base in France, resuming his command of his own troops, by whom he was rapturously acclaimed.

There was talk enough in the camp—where Satorys found Anton Duigny, who was much moved at the sight of his old chief—of the surprise for Germany in the shape of the collapse of the tunnel. There was also talk of the onward march to Germany, and the hoped-for visit of her old skill—not alone in the field, where men were sacrificed by the thousands, and with utter disregard for anything but a temporary strategic advantage, but also in the way of intrigue, and Stanton was fated to know this, as on his escape from the clutches of the English soldiers he found himself hauled into the submarine.

It was a relief, and yet not so much of a relief as might have been thought. Capture in England meant, as he knew quite well, his relegation to prison as an ordinary prisoner—a criminal who had not once only, but a score of times, run his head against the stiff criminal code of Great Britain: but as he sank back in the tiny cabin of the Underboot 4 he shivered at the thought of what might lie before him at the hands of his German "friends."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

A Magnificent New, Lost, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

He had not long to wait for the knowledge of what would be required of him.

The commander lieutenant of the submarine treated him with courtesy; but late that same day he was moved to a warship, which had so far managed to escape the attentions of the ever-alert cruisers of Admiral Jellicoe.

Here he was introduced to one of those all-knowing gentlemen which Germany has the talent of producing in such great numbers—an individual who was half spy and entirely rogue, a man whose business it was to work hand-in-hand with the Raptile Press of his country, and to aid and abet his masters of the baronax in Berlin in their international scheming for world power.

So far, of course, Germany had had prodigious reverses; but there was in the nation—a nation drilled out of pretty nearly all strong and noble individual thought by reason of the crushing boot-heel system—a strange quality of the rebound, and the possibilities of still making good use of Stanton were closely scrutinized by those high in authority.

The German spy had had strong notice to quit from all British circles.

Now, it was only persons of the type of Stanton—individuals who had nothing more to lose, and who lived in deadly fear of England and her laws—who could conceivably be useful to the secretly-moving intriguers of Berlin.

To his amazement, Stanton, shorn now of all remaining dignity derived from his usurpation of the power in Istan, found the Herr who was awaiting him in the saloon of the warship primed in every detail of his past.

"You have done very badly, Mistrar Stanton," said the German gentleman, as he sat facing his visitor on the other side of a table which was strewn with many maps and papers. "You had done very badly indeed, but ze Emperor knows that you had erred principally because you are a fool, is it not so?"

Stanton began to excuse himself. The highly-polished German gentleman leaned back in his chair, lit a long cigar, carefully felt the points of his moustache and smiled. Then he yawned.

"You had muddled everything," he said coldly. "If you had your deserts you would be shot now as a spy—a fool who has brought us only fresh trouble. But ze Emperor is good, and he wish to gif you ze chance to do petter. Where is ze lady?"

"The lady!" cried Stanton. "But I do not understand. You have no right to question me in this manner, sir. You seem to forget that I am his Imperial Majesty's ally."

Herr Blumstock laughed quietly, a strange, purring laugh, which did not promise any special good for the man who was before him arranged as a thief.

In a moment all suggestion of German pronunciation departed from the Herr, and he was the perfect cosmopolitan—a person who puts on an accent the same as another would slip on another coat.

He blew a cloud of smoke from his cigar, and there was something in his manner now which caused Stanton to feel humbled and small, a mere cipher in the hands of a man who was far stronger, cleverer than himself, a rogue, but a wonderfully successful rogue, who goes forward with perfect confidence to the perfection of his plans.

Look here, Mr. Stanton, it would, I think, be better if you dropped all that. Our men were on the look-out for you at Lowlands the other day, and well it was for you. If we had not saved you, the likelihood is that you would be safe in some prison over there. In my country we drink to the 'day,' the day when England is in the dust, her national life throttled out of her by our master, the Emperor. Already that day would have been here but for the clumsy fooling of such knaves as you and the man we had placed at Lowlands to disarm suspicion as to the tunnel and keep guard."

He paused, and took another pull at his cigar, and Stanton said nothing, for the reason that he had nothing to say. He was only hoping that the full story of his mistake in confiding the truth to Paul Satorys might not have come to the ears of the man who spoke to him like a master.

"It is very funny," said Blumstock, rather soft once more in his treatment of his "fa." "You seem to imagine, Mr. Stanton, that we have not heard, but nothing is hidden from us, so I may tell you, and the mishap to the tunnel, a mishap which will be repaired, was due to you. You told Paul Satorys what you knew. You drink too much wine, Mr. Stanton. You betray your upbringing. There is no need for you to attempt to deceive me. It is a waste of time, and there were those amongst us who would have had you shot, but we are careful about the lives of those people who may be of use to us. We are going to be very careful of you."

Stanton moved restlessly. "I am afraid that I can be of no more use," he said, lowering his eyes.

"I see not. I am never afraid like that. Your life has

been spared, Mr. Stanton, so that you may make good your faults. You are not a king. We will leave all that. You are our servant to go and come as we choose to tell you, and there is much that you will be able to do for us in London."

"You do not wish to send me back to London?" gasped out Stanton.

There was a smile. Herr Blumstock's manner became even more soft and oily.

"That is where you are to go. It will be in a day or two. Remember, Mr. Stanton, that you have done much harm. You will be very pleased to have the opportunity to make good, as I said, and you shall have the chance. If you do not take it, you will be shot."

"But I should be recognised," pleaded Stanton miserably, all his assurance gone in the face of the calmness of the man confronting him, this terrible man who missed nothing, who seemed primed in every detail of his past.

"Oh, no! It will, of course, be very unlucky for you if you are recognised, but you must be wary. Mr. Stanton, you must be adroit, and walk carefully. It is to London that you go. There is a lot of good work to do there. Ah!"—for the time being he seemed to forget the presence of Stanton—"these English think that all is well, that a few extra troops will win them the war, but it is not so." He swung round in his chair and took a pile of correspondences from a shelf behind him.

"See here, Mr. Stanton, you were condemned fifteen years since for forgery, is it not so?"

He did not even pay the man he was addressing on the subject of a very doubtful and toady past the compliment of looking at him, but went on inspecting the little package of papers, a complete dossier presumably of the life of his victim.

"You do not speak. I asked you whether it was not true that—"

"Yes, it is true," said Stanton sullenly.

"Thank you! You should always reply to a question." Stanton dabbed his forehead with his handkerchief. There was something positively diabolical about the other—something which suggested a dream, a peculiar and distinctly unpleasant dream—a dream which harmonised with the scene, the severe-looking cabin, the filmy smoke from his interlocutor's cigar, and the bright light from the electric lamp overhead.

"You were rather clever to think of impersonating Paul Satorys, but you were not clever enough to play the character as it should have been played. A gentleman can never be impersonated except by another gentleman."

"You wish to insult me?"

There was still a lingering trace of pride in Stanton, something which clung to him from his brief regal experience as King of Istan.

"There is no question of insults, Mr. Stanton. I am talking business, and I wish to help you. Paul Satorys is our enemy. He has returned to his army. The field is clear. The lady is in London."

He paused. In the momentary silence Stanton had a glimmering of what the mystery of German "diplomacy" really was, the patient, tireless working of well-equipped men towards a given goal; men who could wait their time, years even, proceed with caution, underpin the structure of anything that they wished to destroy—something which worked on, though the air was rent with bursting shrapnel, though columns of smoke shot out the true perspective of things to some.

Herr Blumstock was the ideal secret agent, and in picking up the thread which had been well-nigh ruined in the clumsy grasp of the man before him, he seemed to suggest triumph—the triumph which accomplishes its work in a benign, quietly-moving, undisturbed way.

"What do you wish me to do?" asked Stanton disconsolately, for the idea of throwing himself back into the furnace of London, where everybody was watched, everybody who was strange, whose business was not crystal clear, sent a chill through his blood.

"I will tell you. Of course, you are not clever. You are, on the contrary, stupid, weak, rather pitiable. You cannot rise to the real things of the world. But you will have to do. You must try to control that look you have now as though you had just picked a pocket and were afraid of a policeman."

It might well have been from the manner of the other that nothing very special was occurring, that Belgium was not a smoking ruin, its cities desolated, its women homeless, ruin and misery and grief stalking abroad, the camp-following ghoul of the Kaiser's hordes, with farms ablaze, starvation reigning in a myriad homes, or what had once been homes. Herr Blumstock was a German, and well fed. What did the rest matter to him?

Besides, intrigue was yet to further the cause of the blood-

stained rulers at Berlin—Berlin which was to escape the Cossacks, and be the city where the big clock of the world would be wound up for all the future!

So argued Herr Blumstock. He was one of many who were working underground, helping the military element by unclean intrigue, and all the dirty, underhand, opportunistic philosophy which reeked nothing of life so that a given purpose was achieved.

"There is no need for you to ask questions, Mr. Stanton," he said coldly, as he picked up a gold-rimmed pipe-nose which had been lying on the table before him, and placed it on his nose, surveying Stanton through the glasses with that dispassionate air of superiority which is common to a German professor with his dusty, inhuman mind.

"Yet I must know what I am to do."

The Herr smiled and raked his fat hand.

"I will tell you," he said.

In The Pay of Germany.

Stanton stared at Herr Blumstock. He could hardly summon his thoughts, but in face of the superb equanimity of the other, it seemed to Stanton that nothing was altogether impossible, and that, maybe, even the throne of Istan was still within his reach.

He was one of those little-minded men who must perforce cling to an immediate, material hope of gain. At present he was crushed by the thought of non-success, not because of the ingloriousness of failure in itself, but for the reason that he felt vaguely that he was despised by those who were now his masters, his German masters. He was not in any way troubled by the war, or by the thought that he was more than ever implicated in the plots of the enemies of his country. It was something else—the humiliating notion of contempt which was present in every word the bland Herr spoke.

"We shall send you to London, Mr. Stanton. Your play-acting is not over at all. Germany wants you, and she will pay you. It has been decided that you will represent us in London, but for your own sake you had better be more careful."

It was then that Stanton regretted that he had ever meddled with the bigger things of the world, things which he could not control, only tamper with like some bungler who interferes with a wonderful, delicate piece of mechanism. He wished that he had never seen Paul Satorys, never, at any rate, listened to the old lag in Portland who had suggested his impersonating the heir to the throne of Istan. He recognised now that the whole business was beyond his powers, and he felt afraid, afraid of continuing an intrigue which he realised must end all for him.

"I do not think that I can do as you wish," he said haltingly.

"There is no question of what you wish. You have to obey orders, Mr. Stanton, and even now arrangements are made for you to return to London as King of Istan. You will hear much, you will do much, and you will serve us well!"

Stanton's face assumed the tint of bad chalk. He wanted to be out of it. He yearned desperately to have the chance of getting back to his former humble character. Better occasional upsets with the London police, with bursts of liberty now and then; better the low, safe life of obscurity, picking up what was to be found, living as scores of men he used to know were wont to live, than to be the sport of this terrible, polished personage, who was speaking as though there were no such thing as war in Europe.

It would be very pleasant to be an insignificant member of the confraternity which lived by its wits, to be as he used to be, to forget Europe and the appalling big things which he did not understand!

The Herr gave a slight cough, a masterful cough, and then he took another cigar. Stanton was brought back to a full sense of his position by the tramp of a sentry at the door of the cabin.

"A sudden bright idea occurred to the captive.

"It would be no use at all sending me to London," he said. "Paul Satorys is free. He will have been in London, and, for all we can tell, he may be there now!"

The Herr looked pityingly at the speaker.

"Mr. Stanton, you are a coward, and it is my regret that we have to work with such poor instruments as you; but it is necessary, and we must make the best of it. Paul Satorys is not in London. He has returned to the front. He will not stay there. He will receive a letter advising him that the lady, Miss Lang, is in danger. The lady will write it herself—so he will think. He will return to England of his own free will. By that time the lady will have left London. She will be at one of our places not far from the capital. At Larches she will be quite safe, quite; and Paul Satorys will be safe, too. We have many men there, as elsewhere, and you—you will have no need to fear anything at all, Mr. Stanton, so long as you do our bidding, for neither the lady, who is your

wife, nor Paul Satorys, will be able to do you harm, or declare that you are the false Satorys, for both will be prisoners."

"I see," said Stanton feebly.

"It is well that you do see. Now it is for you to show us what you can do. In a few days' time you will start. London will receive you well. You will learn much. You will be able to circulate the reports which we desire to be circulated. Above all, you will act as our agent for the receipt of orders and the sending of despatches."

Stanton was about to object, but there was that in the Herr's manner which forbade further opposition. Yet every word he had heard sounded to him like a death-knell. He told himself that he would be discovered, treated as a spy. That was just what he had to be, a spy, and the prospect was terrible.

Blumstock seemed perfectly well aware of what was passing in the mind of the man before him. At any other time he might have been amused, but the occasion was too serious.

"You will proceed to Amsterdam as soon as we get to port," he said. "From Amsterdam you will travel to London, and await instructions at a place we shall specify."

"But," said Stanton, "I suppose I prefer not? Suppose I decline to help any more? I have not sold myself to Germany that I know of."

It was not a strong plea, rather the hesitating essay of a weak man who is anxious to feel his way to some sort of action.

"Oh, you will not refuse!" said the Herr pleasantly. "There is no question of that. Listen, Mr. Stanton. It is very urgent that we learn certain movements which are going on in London, and although our own people serve us well, there are some duties which can only be properly discharged by a Britisher. You are the man we have selected, and if you faithfully perform the duties we shall assign to you, the past may be overlooked. But it would be wise on your part if you remembered this, Mr. Stanton—your death was settled for your action at Stralwick in communicating the secret of the tunnel to Satorys. By obeying us now it may be that you will be pardoned."

To argue was hopeless. Stanton was silent. It was not that he disliked working against Britain. He was thinking of his own skin now. If he were left alone he felt that he would be able to worry through, to live a secretive, hidden life in the London which he loved, just as he had done before—before he had committed the great error of his life in trying to rob Satorys. That had been his undoing.

Blumstock went on talking. It would have been a pleasure to hear Blumstock talk to any man who was not so fearfully and egotistically preoccupied as Stanton, for the Herr showed in every remark he made the wonders of the German character, and the well-nigh miraculous persistence with which the prime enemy of Britain went to work. It was little indeed to him that hundreds of thousands of the sons of the Vaterland had already given their lives to a cause which had for its object the slaughtering of the Continent of Europe. The German would triumph in the end, of course, and he was proud of his idea, for it sprang from him, of utilising the ruse-garde Stanton, and making him one of the representatives of Germany in Britain.

Blumstock was one of a class, a man of unfeverish swiftness, intensely practical, and even in his threats to Stanton he was impassive, almost courteous.

"It will be wise for you to strive your best," he said. "The least sign of defection, and things will be extremely awkward for you!"

But by that time Stanton was quite convinced. He felt as though he were in a net, but there were worse things outside the net, and he submitted to everything. During the few hours that he remained on the German warship he learned much—learned again some of his old cunning which had slipped away from him—and he braced himself to play once more a part which had been his own choosing at the outset.

Meanwhile, Blumstock had been very busy. Stanton reached London, and awaited orders, lying very quiet at the little hotel which he had been told to stop at, and keep quiet.

It was not for him to know, although he was to be one of the chief actors in the next scene, that Paul Satorys, at the seat of war, had duly received a letter, written, as he thought, unmistakably by Miss Lang, urging him to return to London for a few days. Satorys had disliked the notion of leaving the Army, but at that period there had come one of the inevitable pauses in the campaign, and after deep consideration he decided to go. The whole of Northern France was clear, and as for foul play he would have been ready to scout the idea.

But on reaching London he found a second letter awaiting

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

him, thanks to the ingenious working of the Blumstook maid, telling him that Miss Lang had left town for the country.

Stanton, meanwhile, was ordered to await further instructions at the address which he had given, not to talk, to be seen about as little as possible, and to be ready at a moment's notice to do what was required of him.

If he had dared to disregard the messages he received, Stanton would have done so; but Von Blumstook had successfully established a state of funk in the mind of his tool, just as he intended to do, and, moreover, Stanton was aware of the existence of a horde of spies in London. He was only one of the secret agents of the German Government.

Seated in a corner of a humble little cafe which he patronized nightly with his patronage, Stanton read of the prodigious activity of the British Government faced with an emergency which was without parallel in the history of the Anglo-Saxon race. He was scared by what he read. The take-things-easy-and-don't-fuss attitude of the Briton which had prevailed for many a long year had given place to an alert vigilance which was perhaps equal to the insidious underhand policy of the German Emperor and his advisers, who, while professing deep friendship for Britain, had sowed the country with secret agents, armed agents, too. Berlin had not been treacherous by halves.

But Stanton was afraid. He was afraid of being questioned by a detective. There were hundreds of keen detectives all over the place. To be sure, he was not a German, didn't look like one, and it was obvious Germans who were being rounded up in scores, and asked the most searching questions as to what they fancied they were doing, with the useful step being taken of giving them all a change of air in case their replies were not absolutely satisfactory.

But Stanton was one of the accredited agents of Berlin, and the network of underground plotting by which he realised he was surrounded precluded any notion of escape. It seemed to him as he walked at night—he seldom took courage to emerge from his humble lodging in an obscure quarter till dark—and walked furtively to the cafe, where at least he could feel a moment's freedom, and breathe easier as he devoured the papers, that he was being watched by hundreds of eyes, like moving through a crowded darkness.

He knew Von Blumstook was somewhere close, that the terrible, smiling, bland-spoken German was his master, holding him in a vice. And then, somehow, as the days slipped away and nothing happened—nothing, that was, which really concerned the contemptible individuality of Stanton—the man began to feel more comfortable.

Perhaps Von Blumstook had forgotten him. Perhaps the masterful Herr was dead. Perhaps—There were scores of "perhaps" which brought some sort of consolation to the dingy little soul of Stanton. Maybe the high mightiness of Berlin had deemed the notion absurd of imposing a false Paul Satorys on the world.

Not that there were not great happenings out there in Europe, where the British Army was covering itself with glory, the soldiers advancing slowly but surely, sweeping the invaded territories clear of the German pest, marching resistlessly onward, carrying out the grand plan of action thought out by Lord Kitchener and General French, pushing eastward to the accompaniment of a song, "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," only they changed the "Tipperary" into "Berlin."

It was to such a London that Paul Satorys journeyed, anxious, of course, but indisposed to think that any very serious danger menaced Miss Lang, for London was safe, had never given way to panic, not even now that its streets were plunged into gloom at a night as a precautionary measure against German air-riders.

He found the house where Miss Lang had stayed, and a very polite servant, a white-whiskered, John-Bull-like personage, who looked the family butler to the life, told the visitor that the lady had been called away to see some friends at a place called Larches, twenty miles out of the metropolis.

Paul Satorys came and went as a private citizen, although a king, and he had journeyed back to England alone, leaving Peter with Anton at the front. He was at the moment far from thinking that the hand of Germany was to be seen in his recall. It struck him that Miss Lang would probably have some information to give him touching Stanton; and even now the news that she had left London did not seem astonishing.

He did not know.

If he had but known it is possible that the war might have come to an end sooner, but there was nothing to rouse his suspicions, to inform him that that careful worker, a patronizer of cunning in the person of Von Blumstook—Blumstook, who had Stanton up his sleeve—had prepared the ground.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 350.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 10.

Every Monday.

Every Friday.

Every Saturday, 2.

There was nothing too small, too insignificant, for a German worker in the great scheme of intrigue. The friends with whom Miss Lang had been staying had been made use of as well. The girl had been deprived of their support just before she had, on her side, received a message asking her to hurry to Larches to see her old nurse, whom she was informed was dying.

It is no single detail had Blumstook erred in thus clearing the ground for his coup. Miss Lang would have detected Stanton in a second. She had to be removed so that a false Paul Satorys might once more figure in the world of London, and serve the cause of Germany as a highly paid and unsuspected spy.

Satorys turned away from the house, and gave the address of the place where he was told Miss Lang was staying, and he never troubled to glance again at the apparently innocent old butler, another of Blumstook's creatures, who stood a second in the doorway, and smiled as he saw the success of the ruse.

"They won't let him go in a hurry," said the man, as he closed the door.

Satorys was planning for a speedy return to the coast of war as soon as he had quieted Miss Lang's scruples. He was making up his mind to urge the girl to have her marriage with Stanton annulled so that she would be free to become the wife of the man who had always loved her, as the car glided out of the deserted trunk road to the south-west, and entered a deep and shady avenue with high banks on either side, fern grown and shaded with sycamore and beech-trees which were only just beginning to shed their leaves.

The car drew up before a long, low white house, a flight of steps which led into a formidable-looking vestibule, grated, and more like the entrance to a fortress than to a private residence.

Satorys sprang out, and, without thinking, ran up to the front door, while simultaneously from right and left several men ran forward, one of them speaking to the chauffeur, who was also in the pay of the German Bureaux.

"All right, then?" said the man.

The chauffeur smiled.

"Quite right, sir," he said.

Satorys saw a manservant at the top of the steps. He was about to ask the footman for Miss Lang, when, with a cry of rage, he saw that he had been trapped, for the seeming servant drew back, and gave place to other men, who threw themselves on the visitor, driving him back on to a low seat, and pinioning his arms before he had recovered from his surprise or could think of drawing his revolver.

"I don't think that you will be hurt, sir," said a man, who approached and gazed down at the helpless prisoner, who could not move hand or foot, "so long as you are satisfied to remain here. You are in the power of the German agents, who are as numerous and powerful as ever, notwithstanding all that the British police have managed to do. It was necessary that you should be held safe."

"Dug!" cried Satorys, as he struggled to free himself, and then relaxed his efforts as he realised all resistance was for the moment at any rate, vain.

The man who had spoken smiled contentedly.

"You were in our way, Paul Satorys. You ousted our nominee from the Throne of Istan, and diverted the Istan Army from its original purpose in coming to Europe. You are the enemy of our great Kaiser, and it was only right that you should be arrested. You need not imagine that the police will be able to set you free. It is the intention of Germany to replace the man whom you resemble back on the Istan throne. But that will be for later."

Satorys gave a harsh laugh. He was thinking of the devoted soldiers of his own countries who were fighting side by side with the gallant armies of Britain, France, and Russia; and he knew that the mistake which had cost him his liberty before would never happen again.

The next words of the German agent caused him a doubt.

"The lady, Miss Lang, is here too. It may be that you will be permitted to see her. It is not important. The new King of Istan will be free from the danger of recognition. He will be here to assist us greatly in our new plans."

The speaker gave a sign. Satorys was seized, and hurried off, to be locked up in a collar-like apartment from which escape was out of the question.

Satorys was left there, pinioned still, cursing his credulity which had caused him to be led into the trap, but thinking as well, not only of the pitiable plight of the girl he loved, but of the alarming fact which was becoming clearer and clearer to him as he lay there in gloom—the fact that England still had a powerful foe within the gate, a relentless enemy, which was preparing to spring when the signal was given, undismayed by the thought of the disasters which had already overtaken the German arms.

An Old Pal!

Stanton still waited for his orders. Suspense is humbling to some people. In the case of the individual who was now completely under the domination of his German masters, it had a crushing effect.

He decided the peril he would have to encounter when once it pleased the fat and smiling Von Blumstock to tell him to act. To be sure, there were certain compensations in his position now. He had been supplied with sufficient money for his immediate needs, and though it was a very different London to the town he had known in the past, a sterner, more rigorous London, with people taking life seriously, thinking but little of the lighter side of life, yet Stanton, in his new character of German secret agent awaiting orders, was able to pass the time fairly pleasantly.

It had never occurred to him that he might be recognized by some one or other of the men he had known in the old days, men who, sometimes in prison, sometimes, but not often, out; but this contingency was not at all remote, as the double of Paul Satoris was fated to find.

Stanton was strolling down the Strand one evening, when there was a shuffling, apologetic sort of step behind him. He did not look round. It was not until he had reached Bridge Street that he drew up, half suspicious, half disposed to ridicule his fears. And then somebody behind spoke.

"You don't remember me, Jem Stanton?"

Stanton gave a nervous start, and peered at the speaker. London was very dark in those days, for there was always the chance of German Zeppelins raiding, and the lights usually showing would have assisted the foe.

Facing Stanton, at the corner of the street just about where it gave up being a street, and became a bridge linking up the north and south parts of the town, the impostor saw a very shabbily dressed man, a vague, somewhat uneasy individual, with a worn, unhappy-looking chin, and a shifty, furtive eye.

No, Stanton did not remember the stranger, that was, he did not wish to remember, had no direct intention of recalling who the man was, though a corner of his brain was busy, and he knew it was dangerous to be recognised, knew that the magnificent Herr would not approve at all. He looked right and left, fearing even in those times to be seen speaking to such a person as the seedy-looking creature who had suddenly sprung up as from out of the deep.

"Well, I should say that you ought to know me, Jem Stanton, right enough, seeing what a good turn I did you when we was together down there." There was a wink. "You aren't going to pretend you never saw your old pal, Sam Bouzka, who spotted the chance you had of pretending to be Paul Satoris, surely?"

"Hush!" murmured Stanton.

(Another long instalment of this grand serial next Wednesday.)



FROM THE FIRING-LINE!



A Series of Letters of Enthralling Interest received direct from Corporal Charles, of his Majesty's 5th Dragoons, who is an old reader of "The Gem" Library, and is now on active service on the Continent with the British Expeditionary Force.

(Exclusive to "The Gem" Library.)

No. 3.—HOW WE SAVED PARIS.

MAKE no error about it. It was the British that saved Paris from being invested and the rest of France from being used as a chasing-ground by the Kaiser's grey-geared hosts.

Mind you, I'm not saying that our good pals the Frenchies didn't act their part. But it was Tommy Atkins & Co. who bore the brunt of that fortnight's rush from Mons to Paris, who led the Germans head and shoulders into the trap Field-Marshal French set for them, and who, with barely a rest, began the Battle of the Marne, which crushed the enemy and sent him flying back for "der dear Vaterland" with all the speed he could muster.

My word, we have had a month of it. First, there were two weeks of rushing and fighting for over a hundred miles, whilst we led the Germans on, and then, at the right-about-turn, we set about chasing them back the way they'd come. And, like Charley's Aunt, they're still running as I write this despatch to you, with the aid of a stump of pencil, a couple of inches of candle-wick, and the top of an empty half-beef tin as a writing-desk.

My work as a despatch bearer finished at Namur. The forts were falling like card castles as I left the town. Already the Germans were swarming along the roads to Dinant. It was not till after I left that they swept through the town and gained the passages of the Sambre river, which allowed the enemy to swarm along in such force that Field-Marshal French was soon faced with an army four times the number of our brave boys.

It would have meant being surrounded and annihilated if we'd stayed to fight it out. Our generals were up to the German game. We were not going to provide the Kaiser's lot with another Sedan. So we bunked; but, though we Tommyies didn't know it then, General French and General Joffrè were laughing up their sleeves all the time.

I'm not going to tell you much about the retreat. You probably know all about it by this time. Fighting rearguard

actions, destroying bridges, mowing down the packed German infantry in masses, and pounding them with artillery, though it stamps the army which can do it successfully with the hall-mark of efficiency, is not so pleasing to Tommy Atkins as giving the foe a taste of cold steel, whether it's an infantry bayonet or a cavalry sword. We were glad when it was over.

It was a rare piece of good fortune that enabled me to get to Mons and join my old pals in the King's Dragoons before a single British shot was fired. An officer attached to the French general staff gave me a lift in his motor-car, after, falling to beg, borrow, or steal a nag, I had started to walk to Charleroi.

My old colonel warmly shook my hand when I reported to him the serious state of affairs at Namur. He rushed off to headquarters. I know now they didn't believe things were half so grave as I reported.

But when the patrols kept sending in messages of the approach of the enemy, our boys were rushed up at all speed. I was among the first lot of cavalry that went out to meet the Uhlans. We were to keep them busy whilst our infantry took position and scraped something of a trench before them.

My, what a scrap we had! Those terrible Uhlans! Terrible in "frightening children and old women!" We went through them like brown-paper. We chopped and skewered them at our ease. They lacked, squeaking and yelling, helpless with terror. Mad English they called us. I believe we were. For we had seen enough of their brutal savagery in Belgium to see red every time I looked at a German.

Only the hundreds of thousands of them and our own few numbers saved them, every man, from being chopped up into mince-meat.

We went without grub, we went without sleep, so that we could out the brutes down. We were moving back all the time. As you know, a rearguard action falls almost entirely

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 350.

FROM THE FIRING-LINE!

(Continued from page 23.)

upon the cavalry. Whilst the infantry skedaddle and the artillery move back to another position, it's the mounted men who engage the enemy and give them cause for thinking. So you can guess that us chaps in the dragoons had some fighting.

I started to count how many saddles I'd emptied, but gave it up after the first hour. And I'm only an amateur, so go to speak, at the retreat. Every one of our boys deserved the V.C. for that retreat to Meaux.

I could fill a volume with incidents I saw and took part in. Hero's one, as heroic a charge as was performed at Balacava by the Light Brigade.

It was near Maubeuge where it occurred, and the 9th Lancers were the heroes. The retreat was in full swing when a German battery of eleven guns opened fire from a wood. For once in a while the Germans got absolutely perfect range, and their shells wrought terrible havoc amongst our men.

The guns were hidden behind piles of forage, which gave them the appearance of miniature haystacks. For hours they continued to hurt our death and destruction. Cavalry were signalled up. The 9th Lancers beat the King's Dragoons in racing to the spot by a couple of minutes.

"Boys, we've got to stop those guns!" cried their gallant Captain Grenfell. "Who'll follow me?"

The whole regiment, brave lads all, were off ere we had pulled up and learned the business in hand. They rode straight at the guns, wheeling into the open, and charging under a storm of lyddite from other German guns covering the road.

They were real death or glory boys. Nothing could stop them. Straight to the guns they galloped. Every German gunner was cut down. When the guns were put out of action all that was left of the brave boys galloped back, again being mowed down by the murderous German artillery.

All honour to brave Captain Grenfell, who, though wounded in the thigh, and having two fingers injured, yet kept his seat in the saddle, and brought his lads through the storm of shot and shell.

And so the days went by, fighting and retreating, till we crossed the Marne and stood in the shadow of Paris, so to speak. Von Kluck, the general commanding the German right, tried to persuade himself that the British were done for. No sooner had he marched his men across our front, and tried a new encircling movement, than he discovered he'd stepped into the trap our generals had carefully laid for him.

We gave them pepper. The Kaiser's gang didn't like it. In a mad panic they bolted Berlin-wards, whilst we gave them as much assistance and encouragement in the way of shot and shell and cold steel as we could get out of every man, horse, and gun.

Sixteen times they built pontoon-bridges across the Marne, and every time they finished the job, the Allies' artillery presented them, "free, gratis, for nothing," with a nice collection of shells that split the pontoons into splinters.

Nor were we chaps in the Dragoons idle. With other squadrons of cavalry, we chased and slaughtered the enemy for all we were worth. We were heading them off all the time. We only stopped when our poor horses sank down from sheer exhaustion, and we ourselves fell asleep in our saddles.

It was Tommy Atkins & Co. who bore the brunt of the German attack, and who were the first to get the barbarians on the run. Don't forget that. We saved Paris. We turned the whole course of the war. Our plan at first was to keep the Germans in France busy, whilst our Russian Allies had a little argument with the Austrians at Lemberg and advised a few hundred thousand Germans in East Prussia to get out of the cold at Konigsberg.

We did more than keep them busy. We rolled them back, and we're going to keep rolling them back till we get to Berlin. It's going to be a race between us and the Russians, and I've got an idea who'll be in Berlin first.

So far, I've got through without a scratch, though I've lost many a good chum. I've had many a narrow squeak, as I've already told you. This afternoon I had a closer shave than I've ever had from the regimental barber.

We were out with the Scots Greys, saying good-bye to the scurrying German hosts, after having captured five or six transport waggons, and more than twice as many guns, by the way, when we rode after a regiment of the enemy's infantry.

Directly they saw us they flung down their rifles and put up their hands. That meant surrender, of course. We were charging down the slope with such a rush that we couldn't pull up. We galloped through them, and began to wheel round, when the dirty tykes picked up their rifles again and gave us a volley.

One bullet shot through my sleeve and passed out at the elbow. Some chaps weren't so lucky. But for every one of our boys who went down we made six Germans suffer. We charged them again and again, chopping them up, and never stopping till they flung themselves down squealing for mercy. We took over a hundred of them prisoners, but as many more of the treacherous curs will never fire another shot.

Just at the moment we're having a brief spell, having ridden to a standstill. The latest news is that the Germans, right, under Von Kluck, is preparing to make a stand on the north of the Aisne, where they've got a strong position.

But next time I write I hope to be able to tell you how we shifted Von Kluck and his gang of "cultured" barbarians. Don't be surprised if you hear we've encircled them barons in that famous "ring of steel" with which they're threatened us.

(Another stirring letter from our Chum at the front will appear next Wednesday. Order your copy of the "Gem Library," in advance!)

HOW D'YOU DOOTY DO DO?

Bit down in the mouth, eh?
Well, well! That's easily cured!

BUY
CHUCKLES 1D.
2

The Best Coloured Comic
Paper in the World.
Full of Jokes and Stories.

BREEZY BEN & DISMAL DUTCHY
ON THE FRONT PAGE!



A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.

Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE

QUITE A "MISS."

"Auntie, are we late?" murmured Angela, as they ascended the steps of Mrs. de Vim's mansion.

"Of course we are!" said the old lady in a flurried voice. "You will stop titivating so long, that we're late everywhere we go!"

Feeling very small, Angela meekly followed auntie. "What name, please?" asked the pompous individual in the hall.

"Miss Cocker," answered the austere old lady, very primly.

"And Miss Cocker, too!" joined the niece hurriedly. "Keep quiet, child!" auntie sternly enjoined.

The flunkey opened the door and ushered them into the assembly.

"Miss Cocker and Miss Cockerton!" he announced.—Sent in by B. Krowitz, Commercial Road, E.

MAL-DE-MER.

A true story comes from one of the big millinery establishments in London. A young lady employed therein spent her holidays in Paris, and on her return impressed upon her friends the grand time she had spent, and more especially did she dilate on the splendor of the cooking.

"Did you have any mal-de-mer?" inquired a wag.

"Oh, yes," was the unsuspecting reply. "We had that terrible sea-sickness."

And she did not understand the laughter which greeted her, until it was explained that "mal-de-mer" was French for seasickness.—Sent in by B. Carter, Halifax.

VERY CUTTING.

Irato Lady (entering locksmith's shop): "You cut keys, don't you?"

Locksmith: "Yes, m'm."

Lady: "Come along with me at once. I want you to cut the keys out of the piano in the flat above mine!"—Sent in by Alfred E. Tedman, London, S.E.

WHY THE BOY DIDN'T PLAY.

An elderly gentleman, clad in an immaculate suit of black, was seated on a bench in the park admiring the glorious day. A small boy lay on the grass near at hand, and stared intently at the gentleman, who for a time said nothing.

"Why don't you go and play with the other children?" he asked at length.

"Don't want to," the boy replied.

"But it isn't natural for a boy of your age to be quiet. Why don't you want to?"

"I'm just waitin'," answered the boy. "I want to see you get up. A fellow painted that seat about fifteen minutes ago!"—Sent in by Miss Q. Mitchell, Weston-super-Mare.

FOUR PAPER!

The teacher had the letters c-a-t on the board, and was trying to impress their meaning on the children. But little Tommy Trotters could not understand at all.

"Think," said the teacher. "What is it that has whiskers, and comes up on the doorstep late at night and bays to come in!"

"Oh, I know!" said little Tommy, a smile flitting across his face. "It's father!"—Sent in by T. P. Williams, Port Sunlight.

DIFFERENT SOLDIERS ON SUNDAY.

Little Bobby had been supplied with a lovely box of tin soldiers as a birthday present, and they so delighted him that he played with them at every conceivable opportunity.

One Sunday morning, however, on entering the nursery, his mother was extremely shocked to discover Bobby marshalling his miniature army on the table.

"Oh, darling," she said, "you shouldn't play with those soldiers on the Sabbath!"

"It's all right, mamma," piped out Bobby, "they're the Salvation Army to-day!"—Sent in by Miss Ivy Webb, Rotherhithe.

TWO OF A KIND.

A gentleman on the platform of a railway-station said to a small boy:

"C-can you t-t-tell m-me w-what t-t-time the next t-t-train goes?"

The small boy did not answer. He merely grinned. The gentleman put his question again, with the same result, and then strode angrily away.

A youth who was strolling near said to the boy:

"Why did you not answer that gentleman?"

The boy laughed ruefully.

"D-do you t-think I w-w-wanted a l-l-larking? He'd t-think I w-w-was m-m-mocking him!"—Sent in by W. Stephens, Burton-on-Trent.

SUPERSTITIOUS.

Mike: "Begorra, an' I had to go through the woods last night where Casey was murdered a year ago, an' that they say is haunted! An', bodad, I walked backward the whole way."

Pat: "An' what for wuz yo' after doin' that?"

Mike: "Faith, man, so that I could see if anything was coming up behind me!"—Sent in by Norman Primo, Buxton.

NOT LOST—BUT GONE BEFORE.

Pat had just taken his watch to the watchmaker's.

"How long has it been broken?" asked the watchmaker.

"About four months," replied Pat.

"Then why did you not bring it before?"

"Well," said Pat. "I was feeding the pigs four months ago, when I dropped it in the trough, and we have only just killed the pig!"—Sent in by W. Adams, West Hendon.

HARDLY FAIR.

"Did you tell your master that I helped you with your French exercise, Gerald?"

"Yes, Peter."

"What did he say?"

"Said he wouldn't keep me in to-day, 'cos it didn't seem fair I should suffer through other people's ignorance!"—Sent in by F. Nelson, Liverpool.

EVERY MAN TO HIS TRADE.

"I don't know what ever I am going to do with that boy of mine. He is careless and absolutely reckless—in fact, beyond all control."

"Good! You can make a taxi-driver of him!"—Sent in by C. Shaw, Leeds.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED.

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the sender will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED—The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in other than on postcards, will be disregarded.

iv

"THE GEM" LIBRARY.

BUY THIS NUMBER OF OUR
COMPANION PAPER,

NOW ON SALE!

The Penny Popular

NUMBER 106
VOLUME 5

3 GRAND
COMPLETE
STORIES.



THE ARMY AIRSHIP TO THE RESCUE!

(A Thrilling Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of, Tom Merry and Co.)

21754