



THE FAG'S HONOUR!



SNAPPING THE PREFECT!

(A Dramatic Scene in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.) 27-3-13.



CHAPTER I. Fag Wanted!

"FAG!" The harsh voice of Knox of the Sixth echoed along the Sixth Form passage in the School House at St. Jim's.

Several of the Sixth, Fifth, Shell, and Fourth fellows, on their way to the playing fields that autumn afternoon, heard it—and smiled.

And quite a number of Third-Formers—members of the fag tribe for whom ears that call was intended—heard it; but though they heard, they heeded not. At least, they heeded only to the extent of giving the fifth Form passage a very wide berth on their way out of doors.

At no time did the young gentlemen of the Third pine for the honor of fagging for Knox, much less on a fine "half." And the face of Knox of the Sixth grew darker and darker as he scanned the last few stragglers hurrying past, in the vain hope of the belated appearance of an unfortunate Third-Former.

Silence fell at last upon the now deserted passage of St. Jim's, and the prefect was turning with a scowl to enter his study, when he paused.

Further along the door of Kildare's study opened, and Walter Adolphus D'Arcy of the Third emerged, and hurried down the passage.

Knox's face set grimly as he stopped out in the path of the fag.

"One moment, D'Arcy."

Wally D'Arcy stopped, and his cheery face clouded.

"I say, Knox, I'm in rather a hurry," he exclaimed. "I'm just off to Burchester on my bike!"

"Quite a mistake—you're not!" said Knox blandly. "You're going to do a few jobs for me this afternoon, my young friend."

Wally's eyes gleamed.

"I say, that's a thick!" he said indignantly. "I've not your fag, I've only just finished clearing up Kildare's study, and I'm jolly well going out now. Let me pass, Knox!"

And young Wally made a sudden rush to slip past the senior, but apparently Knox had anticipated such an intention. His hand shot out, and Wally was pulled up with a jerk.

"Leggo, Knox, you brute!" he

shrieked. "If you think I'm going to spend the afternoon fagging for you you're mistaken. Leggo!"

But Knox did not "leggo." Tightening his grip on the fag's shoulder, he heaved him, struggling, into the room, and, locking the door, placed the key in his pocket.

"Now, my infant," he remarked grimly, "if one of you're going to fag for me, you've got to do it, and you've got to be ready for two, or I'll know the reason why!"

D'Arcy minor faced the prefect, angry and mutinous.

"I won't," he said defiantly. "Kildare's let me off for the rest of the day, and you've no right to snub me for you, Knox."

The prefect's eyes gleamed. He was well aware that he was risking a collision with Kildare by forcing his fag to work for him. But Knox was in a savage and reckless mood that afternoon.

Wally set his teeth as Knox reached for his assistant.

"If you strike me with that, Knox, I shall strike back!" said Wally through set lips.

"What!"

Knox stared at it he could scarcely believe his ears.

"You—you'll strike back!" he ejaculated. "Are you mad, D'Arcy? Do you know you're speaking to a prefect!"

"Perfect or no prefect, I won't be cowed for nothing, Knox! You've a fag of your own."

"Never mind my own fag. Young Piggott hasn't turned up, and I'll settle with that young scamp later," he said in a grinding voice. "Are you going to obey me or not?"

"I won't!" said Wally recklessly.

"Then hold out your hand, D'Arcy."

"What?"

"Won't you, by gad!" said Knox severely.

And the enraged senior brought his case into vigorous play.

Loah, loah, loah, loah!

Wally winced helplessly in the prefect's grasp as the case whirled across his shoulders. Knox was quite within his rights in causing a rebellious junior—a right that Knox never failed to exercise. But he was not exceeding his rights, and he knew it—and Wally knew it also.

"THE FAG'S HONOUR!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Magnificent Long Complete Story

of

TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's.

"Whoop!"

Knox released the fag as the latter's boot thudded on his shoe. He staggered into a chair, rubbing his aching limbs feverishly. Wally stood gasping and breathing heavily, his eyes gleaming.

"You—you young brutes!" stammered Knox savagely. "I'll—I'll smash you for—"

"Keep off!" warned Wally fiercely. "Leave me alone, or—"

Wally's words ceased as the prefect dropped him furiously, and once again the cane was lashing on the junior's shoulders. It was the most severe licking the fag had ever had, and he collapsed limply into the nearest chair, when Knox passed through the door breathless.

"Now," he gasped, "will you obey me, or shall I give you some more?"

"I—I've had enough, Knox, you brute!" said Wally faintly. "I—I'll do your fagging. But—but I'll pay you back for this, you—you beastly bully!"

Knox laughed unmercifully as he flung down the cane. But there was little triumph in his laugh for all that. Now he felt calmer he was some too easy in his mind as to the possible result should

Wally choose to mention the thrashing to Kildare—or even to Arthur Augustus, Wally's brother in the Fourth.

It would mean trouble, and Knox had quite enough trouble to contend with just then without for. But for all that it was plainly not Wally that Knox was worrying about as he paced restlessly about the room, his brow knitted in thought.

Quite suddenly the prefect ceased his restless pacing, and without a word to the fag who had commenced idly sitting in the room, walked to the door and, unlocking it, passed out, carefully locking it after him.

A moment later he was striding along towards the Fifth Form passage.

At the door of the study he turned to the left of the Fifth he stopped, and, locking open the door, entered.

CHAPTER 2.

The Sorrows of Knox!

CLIFFORD was seated at the table reading and smoking. He did not even attempt to remove the cigarette from his mouth on the prefect's entrance. Possibly the fact that

franking was one of the prefect's pleasant little habits accounted for that.

"Hallo, Knox, old man!" he exclaimed. "How—? By gad, man, you look pipped! What's up?"

Knox took a cigarette from the box Cutts pushed towards him with fingers that trembled a little, and laughed easily.

"Nothing much," he said carelessly. "Fact is, I'm in a bit of a hole—run of dashed bad luck on the gee-gee, you know. Nothing to worry about, of course. But, I say, I dropped in to know if you'd care to come in for a cup of tea on a jaw later on!"

Cutts smiled slightly and shot a glance at his visitor. Cutts of the Fifth fancied he knew what the "jaw" would be about. It was fairly evident that Knox, having hunted all other means of raising the wind, was about to "touch" Cutts in a last hope of getting himself out of the scrape.

Cutts of the Fifth mentally decided that the hope would not be realized.

"Thanks, I will," he said after a pause. "I'll drop in later on." But that reminds me—I saw that brute Banks last night."

Knox gave a start.

"Did you?" he exclaimed carelessly.

"Did he—I should just say he did! He simply raved, man. He's fairly out for your good. Said you promised him a tenner on account, and— But here's a note he asked me to give you. Sorry I forgot it until now."

And, taking a dirty-looking piece of paper from his pocket, Cutts handed it to the prefect, who tore it open savagely, his brow darkening as he read it.

"The beastly swindler!" he said, with a nervous laugh. "It's only bluff. The blackguard knows better than to come up with a bluff."

"He's a vicious brute—he'd come up like a shot, I think. I'd go carefully with him if I were you, old man."

"Hang him!" said Knox bitterly. "I wish—"

The prefect broke off suddenly, and crumpling the note into his pocket, rose to his feet, with a laugh.

"Anyhow, hang the beggar now! I'll settle with him shortly!" he said briskly.

"I'll expect you in later on, then, Cutts!"

Cutts nodded, and directly the door had closed on his visitor he laughed softly. Cutts, who was more than a bit of a "nery blade" himself, had often been in a similar hole, and he knew perfectly well how Knox was feeling just then, despite his careless manner.

And indeed the prefect felt little like laughing as he strode moodily back to the study.

The note from Banks, of the Green Man, in Hylcombe, was not unexpected, and only just into writing the verbal threats of "trouble" the sharper had made in his last few interviews with him.

And Knox knew that "trouble" with a rascally bookmaker meant a sudden end to his sportsman and scholastic career at St. Jim's.

Wally D'Arcy looked up fiercely from the fireplace as the prefect re-entered the room a minute later.

"There's a letter on the floor there, you know," he exclaimed sullenly. "You brought it, and, as he couldn't get it, I told him to shove it under the door."

Knox grunted, and picked up the letter from the carpet. He tore it open eagerly as his eyes scanned the writing on the envelope. It was from home; and, though he had overdrawn his allowance already, he clutched at the hope of

a remittance as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

But his face fell as he drew out a single sheet of notepaper—and nothing else. Rapidly scanning the letter, he slipped it savagely gloomily into his pocket, and threw himself gloomily into the easy-chair.

For some moments he sat staring dully before him. Then his eyes converged on Wally D'Arcy, busy lighting the fire, and his brow grew more thoughtful, a strange expression coming over his face. And, looking round just then, Wally was quite startled at the look fixed upon him.

But he would have been more startled had he known what was passing in the senior's mind at that moment.

The prefect's face set grimly, and, as though having made up his mind, he jumped to his feet and passed out, locking the door after him again.

Without hesitation he strode along the passage, and with a cautious glance around, slipped into Kildare's study.

Inside, he pushed the door to and hesitated, his face white. What he was about to do was past the limit, even for him. But threats of Mr. Banks, of the Green Man, were still ringing in his ears, and the blackguard of the Sixth set his teeth grimly and determinedly.

There was not much danger, really. Kildare, he knew, was out on the playing-fields. But Knox's hands trembled a little as he picked up the captain's cross, lying neatly folded on a chair, and hurriedly went through the pockets. Then, with a bunch of keys in his hand, he went to Kildare's desk, and, opening it, took out a small cash box.

The box contained the cricket fund—thirteen pounds odd. Knox knew the amount, having seen Kildare checking the accounts only a couple of days ago. And, taking out a ten-pound note, the prefect locked the box again in the desk, and replaced the keys in Kildare's pocket.

Then, slipping the "tenner" carefully in his letter from home, he left the study hastily—too hastily for Baggly Trimble, who happened to be kneeling outside the door, with one beady eye glued to the keyhole.

There followed a sudden, alarmed gasp and a Bendish yell as the unfortunate Baggly toppled backwards, striking the linoleum with a bump. Next moment the prefect's heavy grasp fell upon the fat youth, and he was hauled roughly to his feet.

"You—you spying young toad!" breathed Knox savagely. "You were spring at the keyhole!"

"I didn't! I wasn't!" yelled Baggly, in alarm. "Oh, my ear! Leggo! Yow!"

"What up, you fat fool!" bussed Knox, glancing anxiously up and down the passage. "Shut your confounded row!"

"Then leggo my ear, Knox, you beast!" wailed Baggly. "I wasn't spring! I didn't see you take that bank-note from Kildare's desk—in fact, I wasn't near the keyhole! I didn't spot you sneaking into the study! And, as for coming to see what you were up to, never even thought of it! I simply happened—Yarrooh!"

Baggly Trimble roared as the prefect hurled him with furious rage across the passage. The fat youth dropped to the floor with a resounding bump and a yell.

The angry prefect was striding away when he stopped suddenly, as the full significance of Baggly's knowledge dawned upon him.

The thought that Baggly Trimble, the biggest spy and sensation-monger in St. Jim's, had witnessed his action in Kildare's study filled him with sudden apprehension.

Certainly, he had had no intention of actually stealing the note, only to "borrow" it for a short time. But Baggly did not know that, and the fellows to whom Baggly would spread the tale wouldn't either, nor would they believe it if they were told.

It would take some explaining, and the senor realized that he would have to stop Baggly's prattling tongue at all costs—at least, until he had carried out the little scheme he had in mind, and could get the note back again.

There was quite an amused smile on Knox's face as he stepped towards the fat youth and helped him to his feet.

"You silly young idiot!" he grinned, with just a trace of annoyance in his tone.

"Don't make such a row, or you'll give the game away!"

Baggly almost forgot his injuries in his astonishment.

"The—the g-game away!" he stammered.

"Yes, you'll spoil the whole joke," said Knox smoothly. "Fact is, I'm playing a little practical joke on old Kildare, an' naturally I don't want it to come out yet. Now, don't mention this business until I tell you. By the way, you like jaw-texts, don't you?"

"Rather, Knox, old man!" smirked Baggly, with a curious grin on his fat face.

Knox winced a little at the "old man" as he passed a forin into the eager hand of Baggly Trimble.

"There you are, then—get some!" said Knox. "And—and, if you care to come to my study after tea, I'll—I'll give you something else. But mum's the word! You understand!"

"Trust me," said Baggly, with a knowing grin—"trust me! I won't say a word—not a word! And—and I'll slip in to see you to-night, old chap!"

"That's all right, then," said Knox. And, with an apparently genial smile, he strode away.

Unfortunately, Baggly Trimble did not see the gleam in the prefect's eyes as he went along the passage, or he would perhaps have guessed that the "something else" Knox promised was something Baggly would not like a bit.

For by that time the "tenner" would be back in Kildare's desk, and the senior would have nothing to fear from Baggly Trimble.

CHAPTER 3.

Wally Stokes Up.

"O H, gad!" Gerald Knox made that ejaculation as he swung open his study door and stared into the room, for the place simply reeked with smoke, and through the haze young Wally D'Arcy, his cheerful face black and smudged, could be discerned poking the fire vigorously.

"What the dickens— Here, you young sweep, what's all this dashed smoke mean!" roared Knox, coughing violently.

"What smoke!" queried Wally innocently.

"What smoke? My hat! Why, the blessed plug fairly reeks with it, you filthy little brute!"

"Oh, crumbs! So it does!" ejaculated Wally, as if the fact had just dawned upon him. "The blessed smoke doesn't seem to be going up the chimney somehow!"

Wally might have added that this was because he himself had closed the ventilator.

"Well, you'd better start making it go up the chimney, my son, or there'll be up the Gem Library—No. 607.

trouble!" snapped Knox angrily. "And buck up with tea, you lazy little slacker! It ought to—"

He broke off as the door opened, and Cutts of the Fifth stroiled in. "Here we are, old man!" he began genially. "Hope I'm— My hat! Is the merry old home on fire?"

"That dashed fool of a fog!" explained Knox, pointing to a chair. "It'll clear when the fire burns up. Sit down, old man!"

Cutts sat down, and for some moments the two "blades" chatted and smoked—and so did the fire. Knox seemed in the best of spirits—a fact that struck Cutts as strange, considering everything.

"Seem merry and bright all at once, Knox, old man," he ventured casually, at length. "Anything turned up, you know?"

For answer Knox smiled, and drawing the letter from his pocket, extracted the banknote and threw it carelessly on the table.

"From home?" he said briefly. "Bit of dished good luck—what!"

Cutts picked up the "tenser," his eyes opening wide.

"My hat, rather!" he exclaimed. "Fairly saved your— Hallo! Sorry!"

As Cutts was handing the note back, it slipped and fluttered slowly on to the hearthrug at Wally D'Arcy's feet.

Steeping, the fog picked it up, and handed it to the Sixth-Former, who folded it and placed it—or, rather, seemed to—back into the envelope with the letter. At any rate, neither Cutts nor Wally D'Arcy had the slightest suspicion that the banknote was not in the envelope (as the prefect carefully slipped it behind a photo-frame on the mantelpiece).

"My hat, Knox, old man!" gasped Cutts, with a grin. "Do you always keep your banknotes on the mantelpiece?"

"Oh, it's safe enough there!" laughed Knox lightly. "In any case, it won't be mine long, worse dashed it— Oh, hang!"

Knox jumped to his feet with a snort of anger as Wally poked the fire and a fresh billow of smoke poured into the room.

"What the deuce are you up to, you young fool?" he began.

Then he bent down and looked in the fireplace.

"Why, the little sweep's got the ventilator down!" he roared.

And, giving the fog a cuff that sent him spinning across the room, Knox snatched up the poker, and pushed the ventilator back with a vicious slam.

"If that isn't a bit thick!" he shouted, glaring at Wally, as that junior stood rubbing his ear ruefully. "I believe the young scoundrel closed that on purpose!"

"Shouldn't be surprised," granted Cutts, coughing. "It certainly is a bit thick, if you mean this dashed smoke!"

"Oh, hang it!" gasped Knox, choking. "Let's go out for a stroll while it clears."

"Goin' to suggest that myself," said Cutts, rising from his chair in relief.

At the doorway Knox paused, and frowned darkly at young Wally.

"We're goin' out for about twenty minutes, you young slacker," he snapped grimly. "If this smoke isn't cleared and tea ready by the time we return, look out for squalls!"

And, strangely enough, there was a faint smile on Knox's face as he turned the key in the lock and strolled along the passage with Cutts.

Knox, in fact, had been puzzling his brains for some feasible excuse to leave Wally alone in the study for a few minutes. And Wally's little trick with the ventilator had provided that excuse.

On the School House steps Knox stopped suddenly.

"Oh, gad!" he ejaculated, in well-assumed alarm. "Hanged if I haven't left my table-drawer unlocked. Dash it all, that young sweep'll be poking his nose into—"

"Things little boys shouldn't see—what?" finished Cutts, with a grin. "Better trot back an' lock it, old bean."

"My hat, yes! I won't be a sec."

And, leaving Cutts standing alone on the steps, Knox hurried back to the Sixth Form passage, but not to his own study. At Kildare's study door he paused, and, after a quick glance round, entered. After that Knox's actions were strange.

Taking a crumpled banknote from his jacket pocket, he folded it neatly and replaced it in the cashbox. Then, after locking this and the desk, he slipped the keys back into Kildare's pocket, and a moment later left the study.

There was a satisfied smile of relief on Knox's face as he rejoined Cutts of the Fifth out in the quad.

The most dangerous part of his scheme was now completed, and Knox fondly imagined he had little to fear from Esqy. Trimble should that over-talkative youth choose to prattle about the strange thing he had seen take place in Kildare's study.

CHAPTER 4.

Fagging for Knox!

"NOW, I'll start getting tea ready for Knox!"

Wally D'Arcy murmured these words to himself as the door closed on Knox of the Sixth and Cutts of the Fifth.

There was a cheeky grin on the face of Walter Adolphus. Though Wally did not like fagging for Knox, he was determined to go to no end of trouble over getting the prefect's tea ready.

With this kindly intention, Wally set about the task cheerfully, and after laying the tablecloth, he set it out neatly for two.

Then he took the teapot, and, having half-filled it with a liberal mixture of soot and ink, laid it in the fender until the kettle boiled.

He next took out the jam, and thoroughly mixed it with a quantity of salt and pepper.

After which he emptied the mustard-pot over the butter, and mixed this up well also, the butter being quite soft.

Then Wally emptied what was left of the salt and pepper into the milk-jug. These elaborate preparations being completed, he began to make toast.

By the time toast was made the kettle had boiled, and Wally filled the teapot and "battered" the toast. He had just finished when the door was kicked open, and Knox and Cutts entered.

Knox looked round with a satisfied smile. The smoke had cleared away, the fire burned brightly, and the kettle sang cheerfully on the hob. Everything seemed merry and bright.

Wally put the filled teapot and plate of hot toast on the table.

"Tea's ready, Knox," he announced nicely. "I say, can I go now?"

The prefect appeared to reflect as he drew a chair to the table, and signed to Cutts to do likewise. Wally edged a little nearer to the door; he had no desire to be at hand when Knox and Cutts commenced tea.

"Yes," said Knox, at length. "I think we can now dispense with your invaluable services, my young friend. Sent!"

"Thanks, Knox?" said Wally, more meekly still.

And Wally D'Arcy, with a curious grin on his cheeky face, "scattered," and his footsteps died down along the passage.

Knox smiled when he had gone, and picked up the plate of toast.

"Thanks?"

Cutts took a slice of the proffered toast, and Knox put the plate down and helped himself. They took a simultaneous bite, and immediately jumped from the table.

"Gurrerrrrh!"

For quite a minute Knox and Cutts spluttered and gasped furiously.

"Grooch! Yow! It's mustard!" gasped Cutts, rubbing his burning lips with his handkerchief. "That young sweep's put mustard on the toast! Oh, crumbs!"

Knox grabbed the teapot with a savage imprecation, and poured out a becupful of the liquid Wally had so carefully concocted. Without a glance at it, he gulped it down to ease his burning throat.

"Grooch! Yaroooh! Gurrerrh!"

Cutts wisely jumped away as the prefect, his face working spasmodically, rushed to the fireplace, choking and spluttering.

"Groog! Wally—young—beast!" he gasped, at last. "I'll skin him! Ink an' some other filthy stuff in the tea, too! Yow-ow! I've swallowed it! I'll—I'll—"

For quite a minute Knox spluttered and gasped and raved. Then gradually the effects of the mustard and the mixture he had swallowed wore off.

He returned to the table with gleaming eyes.

"That—the little brute!" he said, in a grinding voice. "I'll smash him for this! I'll make him wish he'd never been born! Oh, hang! Luckily, there's the bread-and-butter left and the jam. We'll have to make shift with that, Cutts, old man."

"Don't bother for me," said Cutts hastily. "I'm not touching that jam, or the bread-and-butter, until it's been analysed."

Knox dipped a spoon into the jam, and tasted it cautiously; then he pulled a face and roared.

"Why, the young sweep's nucked up the whole tea!" he gasped savagely. "Dash it all! I'll—I'll—I'll—"

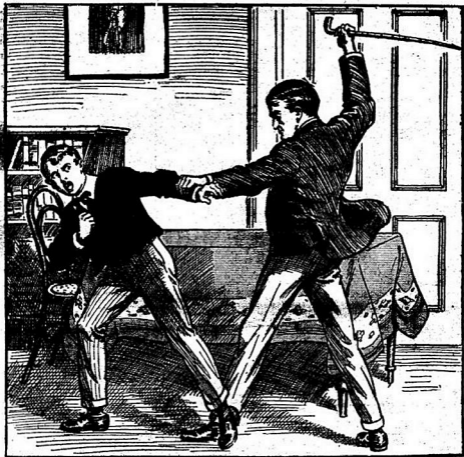
"Better come an' take tea with me, after all," suggested Cutts drily. "Come along!"

Knox took a sudden deep breath, and his lip quivered. The sudden unexpected ending to his little tea-party quashed his plans. He had intended, during the progress of the meal, to "denly remember" the tenner.

"home," and to find it missing, was Cutts as witness. All his plans would be useless without the invaluable evidence of Cutts to back him up.

For a brief moment he hesitated, his brain working rapidly. And then, as Cutts strolled towards the door, the prefect's eye gleamed as he thought of an idea's simple means of strengthening the evidence.

"Thanks, Cutts—I will!" he assented



The prefect gripped Wally furiously! and once again the cane was flashing on the junior's shoulders. It was the most severe flogging the fag had ever had. (See chapter 1.)

slowly. "I'll be along presently, when I've cleared this muck away."

Cutts nodded, and departed. And next second Knox's actions were as swift as they were strange.

Snatching the envelope from behind the photo-frame on the mantelpiece, he dipped it into the fire, and allowed it to burn for a second; then, blowing out the flame, he rushed to the door, and excitedly called Cutts back.

Cutts had reached the end of the Sixth Form passage, but he hurried back at Knox's urgent call.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, eyeing the prefect's grave face in astonishment. "What's the matter now?"

"Look at that!" said Knox grimly, handing Cutts the charred envelope. "I found it in the grate!"

Cutts gave a start as he took the envelope.

"My hat!" he gasped in alarm. "It's—it's— You don't mean to say—"

"You saw me put my tinner in that envelope and shove it on the mantel-

piece," said Knox, in a grim tone. "And now I find the tinner gone, and the charred envelope in the grate. What do you make of it, Cutts?"

"Oh gad!" gasped the Fifth-Former.

"Looks to me as though that young scamp D'Arcy has pinched the blessed note, and tried to burn the envelope. My only hat!"

Knox shook his head decidedly.

"I don't know," he said gravely.

"He's a young sweep, but—no, looks to me as if he's destroyed it—burnt it in revenge for the licking! The silly young fool!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Cutts. "It's jolly serious! What are you goin' to do about it, Knox?"

"I'm hanged if I know what to do!" replied Knox, frowning thoughtfully.

"As a prefect, it's my duty to report such a serious matter at once. At the same time, in justice to the young beggar, I feel I ought to see him about it first. Perhaps he's hidden it as a silly joke."

Cutts shot a curious glance at the pre-

fect; he knew Knox's special brand of strict justice.

"Well, it's your own bizzney," he remarked drily. "Anyway, come along to my show now for tea. And— Hallo! There's young D'Arcy's brother! Why not send for the little sweep and tackle him about it? You can see him in my study."

"Good idea—I will!" said Knox carelessly. "Though I don't suppose for a moment the young rascal will turn up."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, resplendent in spotless flannels, came along, his famous moustache glimmering in the dark passage.

He stopped and eyed the two coldly as Knox signed to him. Gusey did not like Knox or Cutts; and he never troubled to hide his dislike.

"Well, Knox?" he queried politely.

"I wish to see your brother, D'Arcy," said Knox gravely. "Will you find him, an' tell him it's about a very serious matter, an' he's to come at once! Oh,

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and tell him he'll find me in Cutts' study."

The swell of St. Jim's stared curiously at the two big fellows. But the grave faces of the seniors, and the fact that it was his own brother who was wanted decided him.

"Very well, Knox! I will try to find my young brotchah, and send him to you!" he replied, with dignity.

And Arthur Augustus, with a very worried frown on his noble features, turned his steps to the Third Form quarters.

What the two shady seniors wanted with Wally he could not guess; but that it meant trouble for the reckless young rascal was pretty plain—even to Gussy.

But there were no signs of trouble on the cheerful face of Walter Adolphus as Arthur Augustus looked into the face of Common-room a little later. Wally, indeed, looked anything but worried as he stood surrounded by curly Gibson, Jameston, Reggie Manners, Levison mirror, and half a score of cheery Third-Formers, to whom he was relating something—and something that made those young gentlemen laugh very much.

Wally, in fact, was just telling of the trouble he had taken to make Knox's tea-party a success.

"Hallo, Gussy! Wherefore that frown?" he grinned. "Wast me, old top?"

"Yess, you disrespectful young scamp! I have a message for you, Wally!"

"Cough it up, then, Gussy, old not!" said Wally.

"Knox wants to see you on a very important matbah," said Gussy, eyeing his brother savagely. "He wants to see you in Cutts' study at once."

Wally chuckled.

"Toll Knox to go an' oat coke!" he remarked cheerfully. "Or coal, if he prefers that!"

"Walls!" said Gussy warmly. "What have you been doin', you young wascal!"

"Nothin', old top," grinned Wally—"at least—only gettin' Knox's tea ready!"

"Bal Jove! That is very strange," exclaimed Arthur Augustus in surprise. "Knox appeared to be very upset about something!"

"Perhaps that was because I put mustard on the toast!"

"Eh!"

"Did ink and root in his tea," added Wally thoughtfully.

"Wha-what!"

Wally nodded cheerfully.

"You—you young wascal!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You—you've been waggin' a prefect! Weally, Wally, you had bettah obey him! He—"

"Rate!" said Wally. "Catch me goin' to ask for a lakin'—not much, you buzz off an' mind your own birney, old top!"

"Buzz off!" said Wally. "Blessed if you don't get on my nerves with your eddum cackle, Gussy! Travel!"

"You—you cheeky young wascal!"

Several youthful hands grasped the noble Arthur Augustus, and he was gressly but firmly pushed out. The rest of his remarks were addressed to the empty passage.

"Bal Jove! The cheeky little scamps!" muttered Gussy indignantly, turning the door knob angrily.

But the door was locked, and with a sort of indignation Gussy gave it up and turned away.

But Arthur Augustus looked very worried as he made for Study No. 6 in the Fourth passage. He was really very concerned about young Wally, and felt

convinced there was trouble in store for that cheery youth.

And he was right!

CHAPTER 5.

Gussy is Worried!

"THERE is something' wadically w'ong, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that statement in grave tones, as he sat down to tea in Study No. 6.

It was rather late that afternoon, owing to the belated appearance of Arthur Augustus. But as Gussy himself was standing the spread, his study-mates, Blake, Herries, and Digby, and Tom Merry & Co., who were guests of honour, had awaited his coming with stoucal resignation.

"There is somethin' wadically w'ong, deah boys!" repeated Gussy gravely. "I am vevy worried about my young brotchah Wally!"

"Then worry no longer—try these sardines!" said Blake, with a chuckle. "If you start worrying about that young scamp you'll be kept busy. What's the silly young as been up to now!"

Arthur Augustus, with many shakes of the head, explained, and there were many chuckles as Gussy related how Wally had got Knox's tea ready.

"Good old Wally!" chuckled Blake.

"But that's nothing to worry about, Gussy, old top. He'll only get a lakin', an' it'll do the cheeky rascal good!"

"That is quite true, Blake!" exclaimed Gussy seriously. "But I feeb—I vevy much feeb, deah boys, that the waggin' is far more serious than a meah waggin'. With my knowledge of Knox's character, I am sure he would have been waggin' and vevy angry indeed at bein' waggid. But—"

"My hat! And wasn't he!" gasped Tom Merry, with a stare.

"But swamps to relate," proceeded Gussy thoughtfully. "I woun his mannah he did not appear to be angry at all. He appeared to be meah concerned than angry. And the expressions on the faces of both Knox and Cutts were vevy grave."

"Gosh!" murmured Monty Lowtber.

"Therefore," went on Gussy, turning his eyelids frigidly upon Lowtber, "I have every reason to believe it was not the waggin' Knox wished to speak to Wally about, but that the young wascal has got himself into vevy serious trouble!"

"Vevy grave and vevy serious trouble!" corrected Monty Lowtber humorously.

D'Arcy's noble eye gleamed through his eyelids. From the genial grin on the faces of his hearers, it was plain to Arthur Augustus that they were not treating the subject with due seriousness.

"Wally, I do wish with fellows would be serious!" protested D'Arcy indignantly. "I fail to see anythin' funny in the fact that my young brotchah is in serious trouble. My judgment is wercly at fault, an'—"

"Then try these sardines, they're top!" grinned Blake. "Let's hear your judgment on them, Gussy!"

D'Arcy was frowning thoughtfully, and did not appear to hear Blake's request to try the sardines. Then, as if he had made up his mind, he rose to his feet.

"Wray excuse me, deah boys!" he said graciously, but firmly. "The matbah is w'ovvlin' me vevy much, an' I cannot vevy well until I have discovered the truth. I am now goin' to see Knox—"

"But what about tea, as!" roared Blake.

"I wofese to dream of tea undah the

cires!" said Gussy, almost tragically. "I am goin' to extract the truth—from Knox. With my tact and judgment—"

Then Arthur Augustus passed as a tap should at the door, and Talbot of the Shell looked in.

"Gussy here! Hallo! There you are, Gussy! You're wanted in Knox's study, old top. What have you been up to—pinchin' Knox's fags!"

"Weally, Talbot!"

"Anyway, somethin's up, Gussy!" grinned Talbot. "Better look out! Knox looked no end queer!"

And, nodding cheerfully, Talbot withdrew.

D'Arcy's frown deepened, and the rest of the tea-party looked at each other.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "It is as if something's up, after all. Better Gussy!"

And Gussy, shaking his head gravely, went. His noble features were a worried look as he tapped at Knox's door on the Sixth Form passage.

"Come in!"

D'Arcy entered as the prefect's deep voice sounded within the study. Gerald Knox was seated at his table. He looked up with a very grave expression as the junior entered, and closed the door.

"Ah, sit down, D'Arcy!" he began quietly, pointing to a chair.

Arthur Augustus ignored the chair, and faced the prefect stidly.

"You wished to see me, Knox?" he exclaimed coldly.

Knox's eye gleamed as he noted D'Arcy's studied politeness. But his tone was quite level and almost genial as he answered.

"Yes, I have rather a serious matter to discuss with you, D'Arcy," he said gravely. "My concerns four young brotchah Wally."

"Pvay proceed, Knox! I trust my brotchah has done nothin' vevy w'ong!" Knox shook his head sadly.

"I'm sorry to say that I have every reason to believe he has, D'Arcy. To be quite frank with you, the matter concerns a ten-pound note—that is missing from my study."

Arthur Augustus gave a jump.

"A—a ten-pound note! Weally, Knox!"

"It is a very painful matter, D'Arcy. But—"

"Bal Jove!" ejaculated Gussy. "Do you actually accuse my brotchah of stealin'!"

"I certainly do not accuse your brotchah of stealin', D'Arcy," replied Knox earnestly. "But the banknote has gone, and everything points to—"

"Bal Jove! That is enough, Knox!" gasped Gussy hotly. "I decline to consider for one moment the possibility that my brotchah had anythin' to do with your missin'!"

"One moment, D'Arcy! Perhaps I'd better give you the facts—"

"The weally think that would be advisable, Knox," said Gussy, in a tone of icy dignity.

And in cool, serious tones, the prefect gave the facts, as he wished them to be known. Of his visits to Kidder's study of the real ownership of the "ten-pound" from "home," and of his slight-of-trick with it before placing the envelope on the mantelpiece, he made no mention.

But he placed special stress on the facts that both Cutts and Wally had seen him place the banknote behind the photo-frame, and that Wally had been locked in the room alone until they returned to find only the charred envelope in the grate.

As Knox told it, the evidence seemed fairly conclusive against young Wally, and Gussy's indignation gave place to

Increasing apprehension and dismay as he listened. But it was the quiet, considerate manner in which the cunning prefect related the affair that convinced Arthur Augustus D'Arcy more than anything else.

"And a flicker of a smile overspread Knox's features as he noted the obvious distress on Gussy's face.

"So it all amounts to this, D'Arcy. Without the shadow of a doubt, either your brother has destroyed the note by accident, or he has wilfully destroyed it to get his own back for the thrashing I was obliged to administer for insubordination!" said Knox.

"But Jove!" said Knox, with a shake of the head, "the very fact that the younger refused to come when sent for shows me to think that the latter view is the correct one. I—"

"Weally, Knox," exclaimed Gussy, in great distress, "I amash you that he was reluctant to see you solely because he expected a thoushin' for waggin' your—"

"I wish I could think so," said Knox kindly. "But the very fact that your brother refused to get his own back makes me feel certain that I am right."

"But Jove!" said Knox, with a shake of the head, "the very fact that the younger refused to come when sent for shows me to think that the latter view is the correct one. I—"

"At the same time, if this wretched business came out there is no knowing what the fellows would think. You realise that, of course, D'Arcy!"

"Yaa, that is very true. But—"
"There would be a rotten scandal! And though possibly your brother would escape expulsion, he would certainly be flogged and disgraced!"

"O-oh!" gasped D'Arcy.
"Now, I want to save the kid from that, partly for the sake of the good name of St. Jim's, and also because—well, after all, he's only a youngster," said Knox, with a smile. "And that is why I propose not to report the matter—"

"The—that is very good of you, Knox," said Gussy, a little doubtfully.

"Not at all," said Knox. "Catts has promised to keep the matter dark, and I see no reason why anyone else concerned need know anything about the wretched affair. That's why I sent for you, D'Arcy, to see if we couldn't settle the matter between ourselves without unnecessary publicity and scandal."

Knox paused, and eyed Gussy somewhat anxiously.

He was well aware that Arthur Augustus was, perhaps, the only fellow in St. Jim's who was at all likely to be taken in by his hypocritical alms. And it was pretty plain, from poor Gussy's distressed and agitated manner, that in the confidence of his heart, he was taken in badly.

But Knox was about to put even Gussy's simplicity to a severe test.

"The only trouble, unfortunately, is temporary," said Knox sadly. "Of course, you understand that your brother did not realise the seriousness of his action when he destroyed the note. Your people are wealthy, and the loss of a tenner meant no serious loss from his point of view."

"But Jove!"

"But to me it means a very serious loss indeed—no, quite see that, D'Arcy!"

"Yaa, wathah!" gasped D'Arcy, in great concern. "But we—weally, Knox, I amash—"

"In fact, it has put me in a beastly hum," went on the prefect gloomily. "Mind you, I don't for one moment suggest that you yourself should make the money good—that would be beastly unfair to you. I merely mention the fact so that you can point out to your brother the gravity of his action, if he hopes that it will be a severe lesson to him."

"But Jove! That is really most awfully generous of you, Knox," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "But I amash you that I would never dream of allowing you to swallow from my brother's mistakes—wathah or othahwise. Weat amashah, deah boy, that the tennah will be refunded to you. I will write home to my patah at once."

Knox reflected a moment. "I don't like it," he said, with a shake of the head. "I don't like the idea of upsetting your people with the wretched affair. If it could be managed without their knowing the truth, well and good. But—"

"Pway do not worry, Knox! I will meashly state that I want the money for a friend in trouble, and I am quite meash my patah will turn up trumps. That will be quite all right, deah boy!"

The "deah boy" drew a deep, deep breath. His daring scheme certainly looked like coming off.

"Very well, D'Arcy," he murmured, in a tone of deep resignation. "As you insist, of course, I will leave the matter of the cash entirely in your hands."

"But I wish you to clearly understand, Knox," went on Gussy freely, "that I do not believe Wally has destroyed the note willingly for one moment, and I propose to hear what he has to say before I do anything in the matter. Perhaps—"

"I wish to hear what he has to say," said Knox, frowning indignantly. "In fact, now I come to think, I strongly advise you not to mention the affair to anyone—not even your brother, D'Arcy. You know what a reckless young rascal he is. If he has destroyed the tenner unintentionally, he will naturally deny having

touchd the thing, and—and will kick up a fuss. And that is just what we are striving to avoid."

"But Jove! Weally, I nevah thought of that!" ejaculated Gussy, in dismay. "Howevah, I will think the matter ovah; an' thank you vevy much for your forgivin' spawit, Knox. It is vevy kind and considerate of you!"

"Not at all!" murmured the prefect. And the prefect nodded quite genially as Arthur Augustus left the room, very distressed in mind, and with his noble brow dark with gloom.

CHAPTER 6.

BAGGY MAKES HAY.

KNOX'S grave and considerate manner vanished, and he laughed softly, as the door closed on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

His little scheme for extracting the necessary tenner from the simple and unsuspecting Gussy already looked like succeeding—in fact, Knox already looked upon Gussy's ten-pound note as a "dead cert."

And to a sportive fellow like Knox, whose "dead certs"—after the unaccountable manner of "dead certs"—usually proved anything but certain, the prospect was very pleasing.

The fact that his daring and unscrupulous scheme was nothing more nor less than a barefaced swindle did not worry the blackguard of the Sixth in the least—even if it ever occurred to him.

And Knox of the Sixth looked quite merry and bright as he lit a cigarette and lounged in his easy chair, reflecting happily upon the simplicity of human nature—and of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's in particular.

But what was poor Knox's joy feeling and looking when the door opened suddenly, and Baggy Trimble looked in, evidently to pay his promised call.

And there was a mysterious and knowing grin on the fat face of Baggy as he rolled confidently and impudently into the sacred apartment of Knox the prefect.

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And the sunshine of Knox's smile, so to speak, faded abruptly.

"Here I am, Knox, old fellow!" said Baggy, with an agreeable smirk. "Called in as I prom—here, I say, wha-wha's that for?"

"It was pretty clear what 'that' was for. Knox had risen grimly to his feet and picked up his cane, his brow dark and thunderous.

"You—you impudent young lord!" he ground out furiously. "You dare to—"

"I—I say—look here!" gasped Baggy, in alarm. "You asked me to come—you know you did! And—I say—yooop!"

Baggy hadn't intended to say "Yooop!" He said that because Knox had gripped him angrily, and had raised his cane aloft. But before the cane fell Knox's expression changed suddenly, and he hesitated, as a sudden thought struck him.

After all, it would be much safer not to give Baggy the "something," he had promised. True enough, now the howled tenner was replaced, he had little to fear from Baggy Trimble.

His word as a prefect would easily be taken before the word of the egregious Baggy, and if Kildare did trouble to investigate the yarn he would, of course, find the contents of his desk in order.

But it was also certain the yarn would reach the ears of those concerned in his little plot; and that was the last thing Knox wanted. It would raise the suspicions of even the unsuspecting Gussy.

And Knox gritted his teeth as he realized that he would have to seal Baggy's tongue at all costs—at any rate, until he had D'Arcy's tenner safe in his pocket. But his face wore quite an amused expression as he hung down the cane with a laugh.

"My hat!" he chuckled softly. "Did you think I was going to let you? Nunno! I don't treat my pals like that, Trimble! Only my fan, old chap—sit down, kid!"

Baggy sat down—his surprise almost as great as his relief.

"I suppose you haven't mentioned that matter—about my little practical joke on old Kildare, Trimble, old chap?" asked Knox carelessly.

A cunning gleam flickered for a moment in the fat youth's eyes.

"Not a word!" replied Baggy, with a smirk. "I haven't said a word about it, old chap."

Knox winked at the "old chap," but held himself in with an effort.

"Good!" he said, forcing a smile. "You're a sensible chap, Trimble. Not that it matters much, of course. But—the fact is, I'd rather you didn't mention the matter at all."

"Really, Knox, old man!" said Baggy. "I hope I'm not the fellow to tell tales about a pal."

Knox shot a sharp glance at his visitor. "I—I'm sure you're not, Trimble! Then—then I can rely on you keeping our little secret—eh?"

"Quite!" said Baggy, with a curious grin on his fat face. "Trust me—I won't say a word, unless—ahem!"

"Unless what?" asked Knox quickly.

"Ahem! The—the fact is, Gerald, old man, I'm—I'm rather a delicate chap, you know," explained Baggy, with a somewhat cautious glance at the prefect. "And unless I get plenty of grub I get faint—and—"

"That's very sad," said Knox grimly.

"Very!" assented Baggy, growing bolder. "And when I feel faint I often say things I oughtn't to, you know!"

"Dado you? That's very strange," said Knox, strolling across to the cupboard eventually. "That reminds me! I've

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rather a decent cake here—care to try it?"

"Rather!" said Baggy cheerfully. The prefect took a large plum-cake from the cupboard and cut a slice. It was rather a big slice, but Baggy had finished it almost before Knox had put his knife down.

"Like another piece?"

"Thanks! It's topping cake, Gerald, old man! You don't mind if I have another slice this?"

Knox didn't mind, and Baggy had another after that, and another. In fact, there was very little left of Knox's plum-cake when the senior rose to his feet at last, having grown a little tired of using the cake-knife.

"That's awfully good of you, Gerald!" commented Baggy, with a longing glance at the last slice of cake. "That cake's jolly good!"

"Don't mench!" smiled Knox. "Glad you like it! You must drop in whenever you feel faint, and—"

"Thanks, I will!" said Baggy. "I'll come in to tea to-morrow if you like, and—"

"Dado!" said Knox, with a hideous smile. "Sorry I must run away now. Got to see Cutts of the Fifth. Don't bother to shut the door."

But Baggy hadn't even glanced at the door. He was crying the prefect heartily.

He had already had a florin, and practically the whole of Knox's cake, but he did not feel that at all a satisfactory reward for his silence even for one day.

To keep such a secret locked up in his ample bosom, and to deny himself the delightful joy of relating the astonishing story to all and sundry, was untold agony to Baggy Trimble, and Baggy felt it only right that Knox should pay for his sufferings.

"That was how Baggy looked at it, and he had already decided in his fat mind that Knox was to be his veritable horn of plenty—a useful provider of loans and feeds innumerable—as the price of his silence.

Knox raised his eyebrows inquiringly. "Ahem! The trouble is," murmured Baggy, "it's—it's only prep time now, and—and that little snack won't keep me up till supper, I'm afraid, old fellow. I sup—suppose you couldn't lend a few bob—just a little loan between pals, of course—"

"Be—certainly!" gasped Knox, feeling in his pocket.

"Thanks, old man—merely a loan, of course!" said Baggy, turning towards the door as he pocketed the half-crown Knox handed over. "Now I'll be trotting. By the way, you don't want that last slice of cake, do you?"

"Nunno!" gulped Knox, stifling a frantic desire to smite the cheery Baggy hip and thigh. "Ta—take it, by all means, old fellow!"

"Thanks, I will!" said Baggy Trimble.

And he did.

CHAPTER 7.

Keeping it Dark.

"WHAT'S up with Gussy?" Tom Merry asked that question as he met Blake, Hercules, and Digby in the Fourth Form passage immediately after dinner the following day. It was a question that quite a number of fellows had asked Blake that morning.

But it was a question even D'Arcy's own study-mates could not answer. No amount of argument or persuasion could induce the noble Gussy to unburden his soul.

"Blessed if I know!" granted Blake moodily. "We've pleaded to hear the trouble with giddy tears in our eyes, but the obstinate chump won't say a word!"

"Think it's something to do with Knox and young Wally?" suggested Tom Merry. "The beggar sent for him last night, you know."

"I'm certain of it!" muttered Blake, with a frown. "And that's what we don't like about it. But don't you worry; we'll get it out of him. We're not letting the silly chump get mixed up in any shady business with that rotter!"

"Goin' to try gentle persuasion!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Gentle or otherwise!" snapped Blake. "But this thumpin' secrecy's got to stop! If you chaps care to lend a hand—"

"What-bo!" grinned Tom Merry. "Lead on, old top! We're great on gentle persuasion!"

And, led by Blake, the juniors moved in a body towards Study No. 5.

Blake stopped at the door of the study and turned the knob; then he gave a muttered ejaculation.

"My hat! The blessed door's locked!" he gasped. "What the thump—"

Blake paused as a distressed voice came from within the room.

"It is howwid—really howwid! It is vovv difficult to know what to do!"

"Gussy!" murmured Tom Merry. "Who the dickens is he talking to?"

"Himself; he does sometimes!" granted Blake, kicking angrily at the





While Reggie began to get busy with the gun, Jameson proceeded to search Knox's table drawer. The young scamp jerked it out and emptied the contents in a flood over the floor. (See chapter 2.)

door. "Open this door, Gusey, you howling chump!"

For a moment there was silence within the study. Then came a worried voice, louder this time.

"Waste! P'way wun away, deah boys! I am vevy busy an' vevy worried!"

"Blivy be banged!" roared Blake wrathfully. "Open this door, Gusey. We want to come in!"

"De wun away, Jack Blake! I am busy thinking! I wank to be alone to concentrate my mind upon a vevy serious problem!"

Blake drew a deep breath.

"Look here, Gusey, if you don't—"

he began, when he stopped and chuckled.

"I say, Dig, old man," he called out loudly, "just run up to the dorms and fetch a few of Gusey's hat-boxes down. They'll do nicely to sit on while we're waiting for Gusey to finish concentrating. Luck up!"

"Hai Jove!"

From within the study came that startled exclamation, followed immediately by a sudden scuffle. Next second the door-lock clicked, and the door flew open, revealing D'Arcy's flushed and averted face.

"Hai Jove! Don't you dare to touch my satchel, you wottable!" he shrieked.

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

D'Arcy jumped back with a startled gasp as Blake, Herries, and Digby, with Tom Merry & Co. behind them, crowded, grinning, into the room.

Arthur Augustus jammed his famous monocle firmly into position, and stared wrathfully at Blake as that youth locked the door and placed the key in his pocket.

"You—you fearful, spoofin' wottable, Blake!" he ejaculated. "I weally believe you did not intend Dig to touch my hat-boxes at all. It was weally a wuss to make me open the door!"

"Right on the wicket," smiled Blake grimly. "And now, on down, Gusey, old chap. We're going to talk to you like a father!"

"I uttaly refuse to sit down, an' I uttaly refuse to talk to you like a fath—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You couldn't, Gusey!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Though you often do talk like a riddy grandmother!"

"Weally, lowdship!"

"Stop resting now!" granted Blake.

"Look here, Gusey, we want to know, and we intend to know, what's in the wind. What's the trouble between you and that shady rotter, Knox?"

D'Arcy's wrath vanished, and his aristocratic features clouded.

"Weally, deah boys," he stammered

slowly, "I wewet I weally cannot outside in you. Knox has strongly advised me to keep the mattah dark."

"All the more reason why you should tell us!" said Tom Merry quietly.

"My hat, yes!"

"So it's a secret between yourself and Knox, is it?" exclaimed Blake, in a deadly voice.

"Yass! I am vevy sorry—"

"And it'll amount to this, then—that you Jan't want your secrets to the biggest outsider in St. Jim's—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"But your own loom chunn—the fellows who've stuck by you through thick and thin—you cannot trust."

"Hai Jove!"

D'Arcy eyed his chums in a state of great doubt and uncertainty. As a matter of fact Gusey himself was very uneasy on that point himself. Also, though in the innocence of his heart, he was quite satisfied that Knox's advice to keep the matter dark was actuated by kindly and considerate motives, he could not help feeling there was something not quite straight and above board about the affair.

"Weally, Blake," he murmured in great distress, "I never looked at the mattah from that point of view. Perhaps, I—I'd better tell you—"

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

"Fudge, you—here—what—"

D'Arcy paused doubtfully. "I think you jolly well had better," said Blake warmly. "If that rotter Knox, advised you to keep it dark, then you can bet your boots he's got some jolly shady reason for it."

"I should jolly well think so!" granted Herries.

"Blake is quite right," muttered Tom Merry quietly. "Knox is an unprincipled black-guard—you know that as well as we do, Gussy. Let's hear the trouble, Gussy, old man. You can rely on our advice, for what it's worth!"

"Very well, I will tell you, dear boys," said D'Arcy slowly. "But it is a very serious matter indeed! Knox charges young Wally with destroying a ten-pound note belonging to him. And—"

"What—what?"

"It is a really howid affair," said Arthur Augustus. "Fortunately, however, Knox has very kindly assumed me that— But I will relate the story from the beginning, dear boys."

And, amid many signs of amazement, Gussy related the astonishing story of Knox's "tenner," as Knox had related it to him.

"Well, my word!" gasped Blake when he had finished. "And do you actually mean to say, Gussy, you utter, utter an, that you swallowed that yarn! Why, you silly chump, I don't believe the rotter ever had a 'tenner' at all. I believe the whole thing's a swindle from beginning to end!"

"It does sound jolly fishy!" muttered Tom Merry. "What proof have you, Gussy, that Knox really had a tenner?"

"Both Cuts and Wally saw it!" answered Gussy.

"How do you know it?"

"Knox told me, dear boys. He said—"

"K-Knox t-told you!" stammered Blake. "Oh, you—your born idiot! Do you mean to say you were going to replace the blessed tenner without questioning young Wally?"

"Of course," said Gussy in surprise. "Knox stoutly advised me—"

"That's enough!" snapped Blake in disgust. "You—you howling ass, Gussy! Cannot you see, chump, that Knox would be the last to blow in St. Jim's to want to keep the thing dark if he really had lost a 'tenner.' Why, if a plain enough—be never had one. The whole thing's a rotten swindle!"

"Looks jolly well like it," said Tom Merry grimly. "My hat! It's amazing! But we'd better send for young Wally. Look here—I'll go for him now: I'll tell him all about it—he'll come quickly enough then!"

It was quite five minutes before Tom Merry returned. But with him came Wally D'Arcy, his face red and wrathful. Plainly Tom Merry had found it necessary to tell him about it.

"Look here, Gussy, you old ass!" began Wally warmly. "What's all this about Knox's 'tenner'?"

"Well, Wally, you disrespectful—"

"What silly rot has that rotter been stuffing you up with!" roared Wally wrathfully. "Why, I've never seen the blessed tenner since Knox stuffed it on the mantelpiece."

"Oh, dear!"

"Oh, crumbs, Wally!" gasped Blake.

"Then Knox really had a tenner?"

"Course he did!" snorted the fag. "I saw it—in fact, the careless ass dropped it an' I picked it up for him. But if the rotten bloid says I've touched it since, he's a thumpin' liar!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, more distressed than ever now Wally admitted having seen the note. "But are you sure you haven't destroyed the beastly note by accident, Wally?"

Wally snorted.

"Oh, do give your chin a rest, Gussy! How the thump could I destroy the rotten thing without knowing it, when the note was on the mantelpiece? Course I haven't, ass!"

"But you—! Well, it is howid! I really think, dear boys, that it will be best for all to write to the patch for the money, an—"

"That you jolly well won't!" snapped Blake. "The whole thing beats me, but I'm jolly certain there's trickery in the business somewhere."

"Hear, hear!"

"If you'll take my advice, Gussy," said Tom Merry quietly, "you'll go with your brother to Railton, and tell him all about it. Have the whole business cleared up pronto and above board. If Wally speaks the truth, he'll have no need to fear the consequences!"

"But, really, Wally, well, perhaps—"

"Don't you worry about me, old top," growled Wally. "I haven't touched Knox's hanknote an' I'm not afraid to go before Mr. Railton or the Head. And if you don't—I will!"

"That's the spirit!" granted Blake.

And if Gussy had any sense he'd say the same. I'm hanged if I know what a little game is in waiting, the strict top's dark, but I'm jolly certain, if he has really lost a 'tenner, and it doesn't turn up, he'll kick up a dickens of a shime about it sooner or later. So it'll be all the better for Wally if he reports the business first."

Arthur Augustus nodded doubtfully; but even he could see the horse-sense in Blake's words.

"Very well, then," he exclaimed, after a pause. "I will take your advice, an' I really hope it will be for the best."

"Good!" said Blake in relief. "I'm certain— Hello! There goes the bell for classes! Better leave it till after lessons, now, Gussy!"

"Very well, Blake! I will go with Wally to Mr. Waitton immediately after lessons."

And, feeling satisfied that D'Arcy was going to do the right thing at last, Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. trooped after Wally to afternoon lessons.

CHAPTER 8.

Searching for Knox's Tenner.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS came out of Mr. Railton's study with a very concerned and agitated look on his face. With Gussy was Wally, his brother, and for once that irrepressible young rascal also looked quite serious.

A few yards along the passage quite a crowd of fellows were waiting. Besides D'Arcy's chums of Study No. 5 and Tom Merry & Co., Wally's chums of the Third—Frank Levison, Curly Gibson, Jameson, and Reggie Manners—were there. And all were anxiously waiting to hear the result of the interview with Mr. Railton concerning Knox's missing "tenner."

"Well," exclaimed Blake, as they surrounded the two, "how did you get on?"

"Wotten!" replied the swell of the Fourth gloomily. "Mr. Waitton has decided that the case is too serious for him to deal with, and the matt'ch is to be taken before the Head. We have been ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to be sent for at any moment."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was afraid he would," growled Blake gloomily. "But you can depend upon it, old Railton already smells a rat. You're sure you told him every word—"

about Knox wanting you to keep it dark, an' all that, Gussy?"

"I feel I did not, Blake. At the moment I felt that would have been very ungrateful atfah Knox's generosity. I mostly told Mr. Waitton the facts about the missin' banknote. But I wish I had now, foah—"

"Well, you—you ass, Gussy!" snorted Blake. "You say to make a mess of— Hello! Here's Knox now!"

"And Mr. Railton," murmured Herries. "My hat! Doesn't old Knox look ratty!"

Mr. Railton's study door had opened, and the School House master came out, with a grave, thoughtful face. Knox's face was dark and lowering. Catching sight of the group of juniors, he shot a glance of concentrated fury at Arthur Augustus as he turned and followed the House-master towards the Head's study.

"Knox is a wottah!" said Gussy warmly. "I am very disappointed in Knox. In his study he appeared to be most kind and considerate. But now I feel he has come out in his true colors, for foah Mr. Waitton he made the evidence as black as he could against young Wally."

"I'm not surprised," remarked Tom Merry. "Now the business has come out and he knows he stands little chance of getting his tenner out of you, he'll make the best of it as he can for young Wally."

And that, indeed, was the opinion of others besides Tom Merry. They did not know what the shady prefect's little game was, but they felt certain, from Knox's furious face alone, that the bringing of the affair into the light of day had somewhat upset that little game.

The juniors were still discussing the affair when Cuts of the Fifth strode up from the direction of the Head's study.

"A've got an' a minor, an' you are both ratted at once in the Head's study," he said, with a curious, mocking glance at young Wally. "Better buck up, the pair of you!"

"Very well, Cuts!"

Arthur Augustus and Wally headed for Dr. Holmer's study, followed by the concerned glances of their chums. And a moment later Herries and Digby were following their leader towards Study No. 5 to get tea ready. Tom Merry & Co. wended their way towards the passage for the same purpose, leaving Wally's chums to discuss the matter alone—which they did excitedly and volubly.

"Well," snorted Curly Gibson, "this is a nice go, an' no mistake! What are we going to do about it? These old fogies do nothing but gas, an' it's up to us to help old Wally out of the blessed hole."

"Blessed if I know what we can do, old scout!" muttered Jameson thoughtfully. "Unless— My hat!"

Jameson chuckled.

"We could go to search Knox's study for the merry old tenner—if there ever was one. I'll bet old Knox never troubled to search for it—what?"

"Oh, crumbs! You mean—"

"I mean what you think I mean," grinned Jameson. "We owe the rotter one or two scores, and now we owe him for licking old Wally yesterday. And it's up to us to pay our debts. It's a bit risky, but— Are you on?"

"Rather!"

"Then come on!" said Jameson, leading the way.

And the four young rascals of the Third trooped to Knox's study to carry out their kindly intention of searching for the prefect's missing tenner.

"All serene!" murmured Jameson, with a cautious glance round the door.

"Nobody here! I think I'll start on the pictures."

And Jameson started on the pictures by twisting the cords, and leaving them

hanging upside down. But evidently he did not find a banknote behind them, for he went next to the bookshelves, and cheerfully tipped the books in a heap over the floor.

There was still nothing doing in the banknote line; but the fag, still enthusiastic, went to the mantelpiece, and, finding nothing but the works inside the clock, filled the remaining space with a handful of candles, and, after lighting, turned his attention to the area.

There were two large vases, and the fag really felt hopeful about these, but again there was nothing doing. Save for a few unpaid bills, the vases were empty. Leaving these inside, he emptied a handful of soot into each, and filled them to the brim with water from the kettle.

Then, after turning the photos in the photo-frames upside-down, Jameson earned to help his chums, who were struggling to take the carpet up.

It was a difficult job, but they managed it between them, and, after piling the chairs on the table, covered them over with this and the tablecloth.

"What about the table-drawer?" grinned Reggie Manners.

"Good egg! But I'll attend to that. You can be emptying this bottle of gum over the easy-chair while I'm searching the drawer, Reggie, old man."

And while Reggie obediently began to get busy with the gum, Jameson proceeded to search Knox's table drawer. Fortunately, the drawer was unlocked. The young scamp jerked it out, and emptied the contents in a flood over the floor.

"Hallo! Here's a box of cigs!"

"Shove 'em in the fire, Curly!"

"And here's a blessed racing-paper! My hat! It's got Knox's writing in the margin! I'll shove this in the fire, too!"

"Half a mo! Don't burn the cigs yet! Let's have a squint at that paper!" said Jameson quickly.

Curly Gibson handed over the pink paper with a grin.

"Spot the notes in the margin!" he chuckled. "My hat! That would take some explaining to the Head—what?"

"We'll take charge of these," exclaimed Jameson grimly. "They may come in useful in case Knoxy wants to thank us for searching for his merry tenner. Anythin' else?"

"Only rubbish. Hallo! What this? Oh, crumbs!"

Curly Gibson gave a startled gasp, and handed a dirty, crumpled slip of paper over to his chum.

"It's a blessed note from that swindling bookmaker Banks," he muttered. "Threatening old Knox with blue murder if he doesn't let him have ten pounds on account by the 17th—that's to-morrow. My hat! I oughtn't to have read it!"

Jameson hesitated. He was no heener to pry into Knox's private papers than Curly was. But he thought of Wally, and his cheery face set grimly.

"This looks jolly fishy!" he exclaimed, crumming the paper into his pocket.

"We'll show this to Wally, an' see what he thinks of it."

"But it's Knox's private—"

"Can't help that—besides, we're only borrowing it. Strikes me it's going to be useful. And now we'd better be fiddling away. Half a mo', though! We'll leave Knoxy a note."

And, picking up pen and paper, the fag scribbled a few lines, as follows:

"Dear Knox,—We have searched your study, but regret we have not found your tenner—only a few fags, and a copy of 'Red Snip,' which we have decided to keep, in case you wish to thank us for our kindness in searching for your banknote."

Jameson refrained from signing this

elegant epistle—for obvious reasons. And, after handing it round for approval, he sealed the envelope, addressed it, and placed it in a conspicuous position on the mantelpiece.

Then, after thoughtfully filling the table drawer with the contents of the coal-scuttle, the young rascals streamed from the room, having "searched" to their complete satisfaction—though they hadn't succeeded in finding the missing tenner.

CHAPTER 9.

Before the Banks.

GERALD KNOX followed Mr. Railton to the Head's study with sea legs and a fast-beating heart.

He had fondly imagined the glibbie Geesy would have kept the business a close secret for his brother's sake. But now the affair was taking a serious turn.

It was pretty plain now that his little scheme would have to be fought out to the bitter end. And the prefect realised that he would have to fight hard if he was to come through the affair safely.

But the Sixth-Former's face showed nothing of his inward uneasiness as he stood by whilst Mr. Railton briefly related the story of the banknote, the Head listening in surprise and dismay.

"Kindly state the facts in detail, Knox!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes quietly, when the House-master had finished.

The prefect explained in cool, level tones—now, strangely enough, with no desire or attempt to shield Wally D'Arcy. In fact, Knox frankly charged the fag with destroying the note. And Dr. Holmes' face set grimly as he listened.

"Why did you not report this matter, yourself, Knox? He questioned sharply.

"Because I did not view the affair in a serious light then. I still had hopes that the note would turn up, sir."

"Have you questioned the junior?"

"No, sir. He refused to come when I sent for him. I then sent for D'Arcy junior, hoping he would persuade his brother to explain what he had done with it. My only desire was to save the youngster from trouble, if possible. That was why I delayed reporting the affair; though, of course, I fully intended doing so if the junior did not confess."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Very well, Knox. But I sincerely trust the matter is not so serious as you appear to imagine. Perhaps I had better see Cutts. Kindly ask him to step in here, Knox."

When the prefect had gone, Mr. Railton and the Head looked at each other gravely.

"Well, Railton, what is your opinion of this wretched affair?" asked Dr. Holmes quietly.

"I hardly know what to think," said Mr. Railton, frowning. "If the facts are as Knox states, there seems little doubt that the boy has destroyed the note."

"Then you do not entertain the possibility that—the wretched boy has stolen the money?"

"Not for one moment, sir," said Mr. Railton emphatically. "The boy is well supplied with pocket-money, and that supposition is extremely unlikely. Nor do I believe he has destroyed it wilfully. He is mischievous, but is not of a very evil disposition to base actions whilst in my House: I have always held a high opinion of him."

"That is greatly in the boy's favour, certainly," said Dr. Holmes. "But his threat to Knox, and the fact that he re-

fused to visit Knox when sent for, inclines me to think that the boy has destroyed the note wilfully—possibly owing to a sudden temptation. However—"

The Head broke off abruptly as a knock sounded at the door, and Knox entered, with Cutts of the Fifth behind him. Knox had already acquainted Cutts with the state of affairs, and a moment later the Fifth-Former was answering the questions Dr. Holmes put to him without hesitation.

His evidence bore out in every detail Knox's own story. And, with the exception of one detail, was quite truthful; but it was a very important detail. It was to the effect that Cutts had actually seen the prefect replace the ten-pound note in the envelope.

As a matter of fact, Cutts had not; he had merely taken the action for granted.

Cutts was perhaps as big a rascal as Knox; but, to do him justice, he honestly believed Knox had replaced the note, and he honestly believed Wally was guilty of the charge.

"Thank you! I think that will do, Cutts," said the Head grimly, at length.

"Will you please tell D'Arcy major and D'Arcy junior to come to me as you go out? Knox, you may leave this matter in my hands now."

And at the Head's nod of dismissal Knox departed also. There was a grim silence in the room when the two seniors had gone. Both master and Head were looking very grave now, and it was plain they had already formed their opinions as to Wally's guilt, whatever Wally's own defence was likely to bring forth.

"Come in!"

Dr. Holmes bent his gaze scrutinisingly upon young Wally as he followed his master into the room; a moment later, Mr. Railton motioned Arthur Augustus to wait by the door, to that worthy's indignation.

"The fag met the Head's keen gaze steadily enough."

"You are aware of my reason for sending for you?" began Dr. Holmes, not unkindly.

"Yes, sir."

"Knox of the Sixth has brought a serious charge against you, my boy. He declares that you have destroyed, or are otherwise responsible for the loss of a banknote for ten pounds from his study. Mr. Railton, however, tells me you deny the charge. Now, I wish you to give me a clear and detailed statement, omitting nothing, of your movements yesterday afternoon."

Wally flushed, and hesitated a moment. Then he told his story of the affair. And, wisely enough, he omitted nothing.

And a faint smile appeared on the face of even the Head as Wally related how, with much energy and labour, he had prepared Knox's tea.

But Dr. Holmes' brow was dark when Wally had finished. The junior's story, in the main, bore out the statements of Knox and Cutts. And the fag apparently only had his own word and his good name as a defence.

"Then you admit having seen and handled the note?" asked the Head, after a pause.

"Yes, sir," answered Wally. "But since handing the note back to Knox I have neither seen nor touched it."

"You did not see Knox place it in the envelope, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir—at least, I remember seeing him place the envelope behind the photo-frame, and I suppose he had done so."

"Ah! And you admit, I suppose, say-

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ing you would pay Knox back for the punishment he gave you for insence?"

Wally hesitated; but Arthur Augustus stepped forward eagerly, "Pardon me, Dr. Holmes," he began politely, "I wathah fancy I can explain bothah—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!" snapped Mr. Raitton sharply. "Kindly refrain from speaking until you are asked!"

Arthur Augustus fell back, his noble face crimson.

"Answer me!" said Dr. Holmes, turning again to Wally.

"Yes, sir. But I did not mean anything serious."

"H'm. You persist in your statements that you did not destroy the note wifely, and yet you are certain you did not destroy it by accident?"

"Yes, sir. I did not touch anything on the mantelpiece. I am positive of that."

The Head eyed the junior with a worried frown. Somehow, Wally's statements rang true. And yet the evidence of Knox and Cutts was irrefutable.

He shot a look at Mr. Raitton, and their eyes met.

"Have you any question you wish to ask D'Arcy, Mr. Raitton?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not, sir. But I would like to put forward a suggestion."

"Pray proceed, Mr. Raitton."

"It is that the matter be held over for a day or two, in order to subject Knox's study and belongings to a thorough searching. According to Knox's own statement, this has not been done, and it is in view of this fact, and in strict justice to the junior, that I put forward the suggestion. Possibly in the interval something may turn up to throw light on the affair."

The Head reflected for a moment. It was pretty clear, though, that in his own mind he had already come to a decision—a decision decidedly unfavourable to Wally. But he could hardly ignore the suggestion in justice to the lag.

"Very well, Mr. Raitton. I will defer my verdict. And I sincerely hope and trust that something will occur in the meantime to clear the matter up. But—"

Dr. Holmes paused, and turned to Wally. "You heard Mr. Raitton's suggestion, D'Arcy. I will defer the matter for forty-eight hours. My boy, if you have any confession to make, these is time, and I advise you to make it now."

"Bal Jove!"

"I have nothing to confess, sir," said Wally indignantly. "I have told the truth!"

"The Head pursed his lips.

"Very good, then, D'Arcy! I will send for you when required. You may go!"

And Wally left the room without another word.

But Arthur Augustus did not follow him—not immediately. He stepped forward determinedly, his face pale and distressed.

"One moment, Mr. Holmes! Pray listen to—"

"Ah! You may go, D'Arcy major! Your evidence will not be required after all, my boy!" said the Head.

"Weally, sir!" stammered Gussy indignantly. "I have very good reasons for—"

"That will do, D'Arcy. You may go!"

"But—but, weally—"

"Go!"

And Arthur Augustus gasped and went.

CHAPTER 10.

A Broken Friendship.

IT WAS a gleam of triumph in Knox's eyes as he left the Head's study and strode towards the Sixth Form passage. So far he had come through the business with flying colours. Whatever came to light during the examination of young Wally, he felt pretty certain what the result

would be—the faces of both Dr. Holmes and Mr. Raitton had told him that.

And if Wally D'Arcy were proved guilty, it could only mean one thing. Besides being severely punished, the lag would be obliged to make good the "missing tenor," and his little scheme would be a success after all.

Knox laughed softly as he kicked open his study door. But the laugh died suddenly as he stared in amazement at the scene of havoc within. For a moment he could scarcely believe his own eyes.

Then he saw the envelope on the mantelpiece, and with a grasp of fury he crossed the room, and tore it open savagely. With feelings too deep for words, he scanned the brief note. A moment later he was searching frantically among the heap of papers on the floor.

He arose at last empty-handed, grinding his teeth with helpless rage. His study—a prefect's study—had been raged; presumably by fags. And he could do nothing—he was helpless. The hidden threat in the lag's weirdly-spelt note decided him upon that.

For quite five minutes Knox raged impotently. But realising at last that there was nothing else for it, if he wished to keep the thing a secret, he set to work putting the room in something like order, murmuring savagely to himself.

By the time he had finished, he was nothing less than furious. And he was pacing up and down the room, still in this state of mind, when Baggy Trimble called for tea.

It was, perhaps, a most unfortunate time for Baggy to call. Knox was not in the mood for callers, for one thing, and he was already fed-up with Baggy's friendship for another.

He had, since tea-time the previous evening, made Baggy quite a number of small loans, and was getting just a little tired of being referred to as "Gerald, old pal," by the fat junior.

Knox stopped his pacing, and eyed Baggy with a fierce scowl. Trimble, unfortunately, failed to see it. He was looking round the room with quite a disappointed look on his fat face.

"I say, Gerald, old man," he grumbled in a hurt tone, "isn't tea ready yet? I hope—I really hope you've not had tea without me!"

Knox did not answer—in words. Without pausing, in his blind rage, to reflect on the possible consequences, he made one bound, and snatched his aspirant. A moment later, the sound of loud swishing, intermingled with howls of pain and wails of woe, were proceeding from Knox's study on the Sixth Form passage.

"Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!" "Yarooohh! Murder!" shrieked Baggy, squirming frantically in the prefect's grip. "Ow! Ah! Stoppiss! I'll tell everybody— No, I won't— Yes, I will! Yooop! Stoppiss!"

But Knox did not stop it.

"Whack, whack, whack, whack!" Loud and long the unhappy Baggy's yells echoed, and the enraged prefect was still going strong when hurried footsteps sounded outside. Next moment the door was flung open, as Kildare, with a crowd of fellows behind him, appeared in the doorway.

"Stop that, Knox!" said Kildare, stepping forward. "What on earth is the matter!"

The prefect dropped the cane with a breathless gasp.

"Nothing, Kildare!" he rapped out furiously. "Nothing that requires your dashed interference, anyway! I—"

"Yes, it does!" yelled Baggy, with a vindictive glare at Knox. "I'm jolly well going to show him up, Kildare! He's—"

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"Shut up, Trimble!" snarled Kildare angrily. "What were you thrashing Trimble for, Knox?"

"He daren't tell you, Kildare—he jolly well daren't!" yelled Baggie viciously. "His swanking me because I spotted him pinch some money from your desk, Kildare!"

"Who what?"

"I saw the latest steal a blessed banknote from your desk yesterday afternoon, Kildare!" gasped Baggie. "That's why the brute—"

"Try another one, Baggie, old top!" came the voice of Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you lying young idiot!" breathed Kildare, more amused than angry. "What do you mean by telling me such stuff as—"

"Ask him!" panted Baggie wildly. "It's the truth, I tell you! I saw—"

"Shut up! And clear out, you jolly ass!" roared Kildare. "I'm a young good mind to thrash you myself for telling such thumpin' lies. Cut off!"

"Hold on!" said Knox quickly. "I'd rather you looked into this matter, Kildare!"

"He had recovered his calmness, and met the captain's surprised look with a smiling smile. Baggie's statement, though it happened to be quite true, was so remarkable that Knox had little fear of Kildare or of anyone else hearing it. But it was as well to remove all possible doubts for all that."

"What rot!" said Kildare, with a smile. "You surely don't imagine I place any credence on a yarn like that, Knox!"

"No! but all the fellows are not blessed with your common-sense, Kildare!" said Knox, with a scarcely veiled sneer.

Knox grinned at Trimble, with a smile of malicious anticipation on his fat face, rolled out after the captain. The rest of the fellows followed in a chattering crowd. They wanted to see what happened to Trimble when Kildare found he had had his trouble for nothing—as he very quickly did.

And Trimble gaped and looked dumfounded as Kildare took from his cashbox a five-pound note, and, after roughly counting the broken cash, replaced it with a grim look. It was plain, even to Trimble's amazed eyes, that the captain had found everything as it should be.

"You—you spoofing young rascal!" said Kildare. "If you hadn't already had one licking, I'd give you another for telling such senseless lies. As it is, you can do me five hundred lines—and now clear!"

"But—but I say, Kildare——" spluttered Baggie frantically.

Kildare's hand strayed towards his case, and Baggie didn't stay to finish his sentence. He rolled past the rows of grinning faces with feelings to sleep for weeks. Only one fellow did not appear to be grinning at Baggie's latest wonderful yarn; and that fellow, strangely enough, was Cardew.

Cardew was looking thoughtful as he lounged lazily after Trimble, to that unhappy youth's study. A moment later he was listening to the tale from Baggie's own lips—a tale Baggie evidently told very well, for he managed to borrow half a crown on the strength of it from Cardew.

But Cardew's face wore a curious expression as he lounged along the Fourth passage. At Study No. 6 he passed and entered, to find Tom Merry & Co. with Blake & Co. The Terrible Three had apparently not been in long, for Monty Lowther was busily retaining Baggie's astounding yarn, amid many chuckles. Even the worried frown of Arthur

Augustus broke into a smile as he heard it.

"What's the joke, old bean?" asked Cardew quietly.

"Trimble is," said Lowther. "The silly spiffin'—but you were there, and heard it."

"I heard Trimble's story," drawled Cardew. "But I didn't see any jakes."

"You—you didn't see—? Why, dash it all, you don't mean to say you believe that silly chump's rot?"

"Every dashed word!" said Cardew. "My last! Then you're a bigger ass than I thought you were, Cardew, and that's saying a lot!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Thanks!" said Cardew calmly. "By the way, Gussy, old top, I suppose it's quite true, that merry business of Knox and your brother Wally?"

"Haj Jove!" gasped Gussy, in dismay. "You've heard about the wotten affair, then?"

"All over the shop!" said Cardew, with a yawn. "That's why I believe our old friend Baggie's yarn, old nut!"

"What on earth—? Are you potty, Cardew?" asked Blake.

Cardew smiled, and strolled to the door.

"He had quite a long chat with our friend Baggie," he observed casually.

"Cute chump, Baggie?" It appeared as if spotted friend Knox helping himself to a very banknote yesterday afternoon out of Kildare's cashbox—a 'tenner' it was, I understand—"

"But, you raving ass, didn't Kildare bowl Trimble out!" said Lowther witheringly. "Didn't he find his blessed money in order, chump?"

"Yass. That's why Knox's merry old 'tenner's' missing," yawned Cardew. "Think it was his spirit!"

"And Cardew departed."

"I knew it would come to this," murmured Lowther sadly. "And such a young and promising youth, too!"

"The sarcastic chump!" howled Blake. "Why the chump doesn't he say straight out that he's a rotter?"

"Half a one!" said Tom Merry, in a startled tone. "I believe I've got it! Oh crumbs! He's right, too!"

"What the thump——?"

"Why, it's as plain as daylight!" gasped Tom earnestly. "He means that Knox's 'tenner' was Kildare's all the time—that the rotter never had a 'tenner' of his own at all. He simply borrowed it out of Kildare's cashbox, and returned it after letting young Wally and Cutts see the blessed thing! Trimble must have been spying round, and spotted him take it!"

"Haj Jove!"

The juniors exchanged startled glances. "But why the hell say him put it back in the envelope," muttered Harrow.

"Wally only supposed he did. He says he didn't actually see him put it back," said Tom Merry quietly. "And I'm certain Cutts didn't, either. That rotter would say anything!"

"Well, my word!" ejaculated Blake.

"What a thumpin', barefaced swindler!"

"Would you believe it?" said Tom Merry. "I felt certain there was trickery in the business somewhere. And now it's plain enough in view of Baggie's story. The whole thing's a daring scheme to swindle a 'tenner' out of innocent old Gussy. There are several details not quite clear—that 'burro' envelope, for instance! But only Knox himself can explain that."

"What on earth are we to do about it! Go to the Head and tell him our suspicions——"

"What's the good of that?" exclaimed Tom Merry gloomily. "The Head would never believe a rascal's thing like that

about a prefect. And as for Baggie—well, he isn't likely to take Baggie's word before Knox's!"

"But, dash it all, we can't let the thing go on! We've got to save young Wally, somehow!"

"That's right enough," replied Tom Merry. "But that's plenty of time, as Gussy says Wally's been granted forty-eight hours' grace. Surely one of us will think of a better way to doh Knox before the time's up. Anyway, it's prep time now. We'd better wait!"

Blake frowned thoughtfully. Tom Merry's advice was sane enough, and it was certainly wiser to keep their suspicions to themselves, until they had some definite proof, at least.

"Very well," he grunted, with a nod. "We'll sleep over it, at any rate. But if I haven't thought of a scheme before Wally's time's up, then we'll jolly well risk it, and go to the Head. Is that agreed?"

"Yass, wailah!"

And, having agreed upon that, Tom Merry & Co. departed to do their prep. But both in Study No. 5 and in No. 10 on the Shell passage prep was gone through in a very desultory manner.

Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. were too busy thinking out a suitable plan for dohing Knox's scheme, and saving Wally D'Arcy, to worry their heads about prep.

CHAPTER II.

Snapping Knox.

"TALK about angels, yerder's Knosy in front, now!"

Tom Merry & Co. were sauntering along the towpath by the shining Ryl. It was a Selorday—a mild, and quite a bright autumn afternoon. But the Terrible Three were not looking very merry and bright for all that.

Since the talk in No. 5 the previous evening the combined brains of both Co's had been engaged unconsciously on the problem of saving D'Arcy's man. But no single flash of inspiration had so far rewarded their efforts.

And Tom Merry & Co. were even then discussing the astounding affair of Knox's banknote, when Lowther made that remark as the tall figure of Knox himself came in sight along the river-path.

"I'll snap him, I think!" grinned Manners, giving the camera he carried a tender pat. "The back entrance of the Green Man will make a jolly suitable background for Knosy—what?"

"Don't be an ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "The beggar'll pitch you and your blessed camera into the river if he sees you as he has!"

Tom Merry broke off with a startled exclamation. The prefect had just reached the little wicket-gate that gave admittance to the garden of the Green Man Inn, and, after a quick glance round, he passed through, and the gate swung to shut him.

"Well, I'm blessed!" gasped Manners. "He's gone into that beauty pub, and in broad daylight, too! Charming conduct for a prefect in the Sixth—what?"

"I suppose he's going to spend the afternoon playing billiards," muttered Tom Merry, in disgust.

The click of ivory balls came to them clearly as they strolled past in the shadow of the high hedge fronting the garden.

Manners stopped suddenly, with a curious expression on his face.

"I say, you chaps," he exclaimed slowly. "I've got an idea!"

"En! What is it?"

Manners' eyes gleamed determinedly. "I'm going to have a squint at old

Knox playing billiards!" he said coolly. "But—"

"What—what?"

"But possibly Knox may object to my seeing him," continued Manners. "He may even come chasing me. In that case I want you chase to collar him at all costs. Pitch him into the river! Do anything with him, but don't let the beggar catch me—see?"

"Why, what the thump—Here—"

Tom Merry broke off with a gasp of alarm, and sprang forward. But Manners hadn't stayed to argue. Kludging his chum's detaining hand, he shot a swift glance up the garden path, and slipped through the gate.

A moment later, hugging his camera, he was trending swiftly round the inside of the hedge. Fringing the lawn were trees and shrubs, and once through the gate it was a simple matter to approach the house unseen from the windows.

Manners was quite aware of the grave risk he was running—even of being seen on the premises of such a disreputable place. But Manners was not running such grave risks merely to watch Knox playing billiards.

And a second later the daring junior was peering cautiously into the open French window of the billiard-room. The balls had ceased to click, and at first Manners could only see the greasy-looking marker standing by the table with a cue in his hand.

Then he spotted Knox over in the corner talking to a flashy individual in shirt-sleeves. It was Mr. Banks, cord-sharper and bookmaker.

Manners gave a soft grunt and waited.

It seemed to the watching junior that Knox was giving the sharper an explanation—and an explanation of the "bookie" was reluctant to accept. But apparently the explanation—if it was that—was eventually accepted. When the two approached the table after a while, Banks was smiling quite agreeably. Knox's face as he walked across the room and selected a cue wore an expression of intense relief.

Mr. Banks took the cue from the marker's hand.

"Undred up!" he queried genially. "Yes!" assented the prefect, lighting a cigarette carelessly.

Round the corner, outside the window, Manners began to fiddle with his camera. For some minutes after the ivory balls had been clicking, Manners watched and waited. Then his eyes glared.

Knox, his cigarette hanging loosely from his lips, was bending down over the table about to take a shot. Behind him stood the marker, a half-emptied glass in his hand. And a yard to the left stood Mr. Banks, puffing cheerfully at a fat cigar.

Manners set his teeth, and with heart thumping a little, stepped boldly and silently on to the threshold of the lofty French window.

Knox looked up suddenly. For a few seconds he stared over his cue in dumb-founded amazement, his eyes gazed helplessly on the camera with Manners behind it. Then:

"Click!"

And, simultaneously with the click of the shutter, Knox awoke. With a roar like the roar of a bull, he made one frantic bound round the table. But he was not quite quick enough. Manners was already speeding like the wind down the garden-path.

"Come back!" yelled the prefect fran-

tically, leaping in pursuit. "Come back, you young—Whoop!"

Leg that seemed to appear from nowhere, shot out as the furious senior reached the gate. Knox went sprawling, and rolled over and over on the top-path.

"At him!" came Tom Merry's voice sharply.

Knox had barely ceased rolling on the grass bordering the river-path, when Lowther leaped like a panther at the prostrate senior. One body above, and he was sent rolling again, with wildly-waving limbs, down the grassy slope.

"Splash!"

Knox hit the river with a tremendous splash and a wild howl. And Tom Merry and Monty Lowther didn't stop to see what happened to him after that. In the distance Manners was like the famous Charley's Aunt—still running. And, roaring with laughter, the two juniors peiled along the top-path after him, toward St. Jim's.

They had the slightest idea what Manners' little game was, but they had a fairly clear idea what Knox's game would be if he caught them.

Twenty minutes later they reached the School House, breathless and panting. Tom Merry was looking grim as he led the way to Study No. 10. He had quite enjoyed the encounter with Knox; but he felt an explanation was required from Manners, for all that.

"The man! Talk on the Shell passage. "Seen that as Manners come in, Talbot?" queried Tom Merry.

"Yes, old top! Saw him scudding up to the box-room a couple of minutes ago," said Talbot curiously. "What's up?"

Tom Merry gave a jump. Manners used one of the box-rooms as a dark-room. In a flash the meaning of Manners' extraordinary actions dawned upon him.

"Mr. ha! What a topping whizz!" he exclaimed delightedly. "Good old Manners! Come on, Monty!"

And leaving Talbot staring after them in astonishment, they peiled up the staircase. At the door of the box-room Tom Merry stopped. From inside sounded a soft chuckle.

"Let us in, Manners, you brainy bouncer!" called Tom Merry.

"Can't do, did, old top," came the voice of Manners. "I'm busy developing films. Run away, and be getting tea ready! I'll be down in an hour."

Tom Merry grinned as he led the way down again. Monty Lowther looked more puzzled than ever as he followed his leader into Study No. 10.

"What on earth's the game, Tommy?" said Lowther irritably. "Why the dickens—Oh, crumbs! You don't think Manners has had the nerve to take a photograph of Knox in that pub?"

"What a brain!" murmured Tom Merry admiringly. "You've actually thought it out for yourself!"

"Rats! But what's the idea? Surely he doesn't propose showing the photograph to the Head? Why, it would get the beggar sacked!"

"Without a doubt!" said Tom Merry.

"But I don't fancy that's the merry idea. I fancy that photo's going to be useful. If Knox doesn't find his speed 'tender' on 'ear young Wally when he knows we hold that trump-card over him, I'll—I'll give Grundy his cap!"

"My word! It's great!" gasped Lowther.

"It is—it are!—Anyway, we'll soon know if that is Manners' giddy wheeze. And while we're waiting we'll get tea ready."

And Tom Merry and Monty Lowther sat about getting tea—their faces quite merry and bright. It really looked as though Manners had hit on a wheeze for dishing Knox at last.

CHAPTER 12.

The Knock-Out for Knox.

WHEN Manners of the Shell came into Study No. 10, about an hour later, he found quite a crowd of fellows awaiting his coming with eager expectation. Blake & Co., with Wally D'Arcy had looked in to see if the Terrible Three had yet thought of an idea for dishing Knox. And to them Tom Merry had related the afternoon's happenings, and especially Manners' idea—at least, what they suspected was Manners' idea.

Manners grinned as he met the questioning glances.

"You—you beggar!" said Tom Merry admiringly. "You actually had the nerve to go into that beastly pub to photograph Knox! Is that your little wheeze?"

"Middle stump, first ball!" assented Manners, with a chuckle. "You backed me up really well, Tommy, I must say! Tea ready?"

"Kettle's almost on the boil; but never mind tea now!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What's the giddy game, Manners?"

Magners looked surprised.

"It isn't a game—it's a serious business," he explained. "I've been taking Knox's photograph—an' it looks like turning out jolly good, too! You've no idea what a merry blade Knox looks with a gag in his mouth and a billiard-cue in his hand. I'm going to offer him one to put on his study mantelpiece!"

"Knox will be pleased!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"I hope so! But it's really to help Wally that I'm doing it. My idea is to offer the photo as a reward, if he'll buck up and find his missing 'tender.' I'm inclined to think he'll go to no end of trouble to find it then—especially when I tell him I intend to present the photo to the Head if the 'tender' remains lost."

"Bai Jore!"

"I should jolly well think so!" roared Blake, in delight. "Why, you're a giddy genius, Manners! With that photo in our hands we've got Knox absolutely beaten! It's just the thumpin' wheeze! Hallo! What the dickens have you got there, Wally?"

Diving a hand suddenly into his pocket, young Wally had produced a folded pink paper and a slip of dirty, crumpled note-paper. It was the copy of "Racy Snips" and the threatening note from Banks, the bookmaker in Ryloombie—the articles the young rascals of the Third had "borrowed" the night before.

Wally handed the missives to Blake with a chuckle.

"Just remembered 'em!" he grinned. "They'll do to back up the photograph, old top!"

"My only hat!" gasped Blake, handing the articles round for inspection. "No wonder the rotter was desperate for money! That note explains the reason for the whole scheme! Where on earth did you get those things, Wally?"

"A pal gave them to me, old scout!"

Ashur Augustus gave a jump. "Bai Jore, I wathah, fancy I know! Wally, you young wascal, I weally believe those wotten things were taken

from Knox's study when your chums were waggin' it last night!"

"My hat, Guasy! How do you think things out!" murmured Wally admiringly.

"Really, you—"

Guasy broke off with a jump as the door flew back, and Gerald Knox strode into the study. The senior's face was pale, and his eyes were gleaming as they rested on Manners.

"Manners!"

"Hallo, Knox!" said Manners genially. "Want me?"

"You'll come to my room at once!" said Knox, in a gruffing voice.

"Not to-day, old top!"

"You-you won't come!" said Knox savagely.

"If it's about the photo," said Manners apologetically, "I'm sorry, but it's not ready yet. But I hope to have quite a few printed to-night."

"The prefect fairly trembled with rage. "You—you young rascald!" he gasped furiously. "You—you dared to photograph me! If you don't give me that film at once, I—I'll—I'll give you the thrash—"

"That's awfully good of you, Knox!" smiled Manners pleasantly. "But I don't want you to give me anything for it, dear boy. Mind you, it isn't exactly a gift. It's like this, you know, I'm very concerned about that lost 'tenner' of yours, Knox. An' I really think that, if you had a bit of encouragement, you'd turn to and find it. So I propose to offer the photo as a reward."

"What?"

"Of course," said Manners, "if the tenner remains lost, then I'm afraid the reward's off. In that case I propose to make the Head a present of it!"

"The—tho H-Head!" stammered Knox.

"I—I—"

The prefect's voice failed him, and he took a step forward, his hands clenched.

"And I'll tell you what I'll do," went on Manners reflectively. "If the photo isn't a sufficient inducement, I'll offer you something else as well. I happen to have a couple of articles that were found in a prefect's study yesterday. They're not my property, really. But I'm sure the owner won't mind my giving them to you, Knox."

"What—what do you mean?" gasped the prefect, almost in a whisper.

"They're not of much value, really," said Manners gently. "One is a copy of 'Racy Snips'—it's not a new one, by the way, for there are pencil notes in the margin—and the other is merely a note from a gentleman name of Barkes. Perhaps you know the sporty chap who's lost the things, Knox?"

"You—you—"

"Mind you," warned Manners, with a shake of the head, "I'm only holding this splendid offer open for a brief period. In fact," he said, changing his tone suddenly, "to put it plainly, unless you go to the Head and clear young Wally D'Arcy with regard to that banknote before seven o'clock to-night, then a photograph, with a copy of 'Racy Snips' and the note, goes to Dr. Holmes! Will that suit you?"

"Mind you," warned Manners, with a shake of the head, "I'm only holding this splendid offer open for a brief period. In fact," he said, changing his tone suddenly, "to put it plainly, unless you go to the Head and clear young Wally D'Arcy with regard to that banknote before seven o'clock to-night, then a photograph, with a copy of 'Racy Snips' and the note, goes to Dr. Holmes! Will that suit you?"

For quite half a minute the baffled senior stared speechlessly at Manners, his face working spasmodically. Then Blake broke the painful silence.

"The game's up, Knox—you-you rotter!" he said, with a curl of the lip. "We know all about your dirty swindle, and you may as well own up and clear young Wally! If you don't—"

"I—I'll see you dashed well-hunged first!" spluttered Knox hoarsely, finding his voice at last. "I—I—"

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:
THE MAGNET. THE BOYS' FRIEND. THE GEM. THE PINKY POPULAR. GEMMLES.
 Every Friday. Every Monday. Every Wed. Every Friday. Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

For Next Wednesday

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Make absolutely certain of being able to read

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by ordering your next copy of the "Gem" Library to-day. Otherwise you may be disappointed.

VERY IMPORTANT.

October 15th is going to bring with it a great treat for boys and girls, and I want to give a few details concerning it. I am referring, of course, to

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

But before attempting to describe in any way the contents of this great new book, I should like to offer a word of warning.

There is going to be a tremendous demand for copies, both from readers of the Companion Papers and others, and as the Annual makes a very special appeal to my own readers, it is essential that they should place their orders early.

I shall be very sorry if I receive letters from any of my loyal chums writing me that they cannot obtain a copy of the "Annual," as it will not be possible for me to do anything for them when all the copies in the shops have been sold.

The edition is limited, and once it is out of print those who have not secured their copy will be unable to do so.

A WORD ABOUT THE CONTENTS.

It will not be more than a word, for space will not permit me to give anything like a description of the scores of excellent features in the "Holiday Annual." Perhaps the biggest attraction to readers of the Companion Papers will be the

FOUR LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES.

"Reactions at Greyfriars" is the title of the story by Frank Richards, which, of course, deals with the famous Harry Wharton & Co., and the other leading lights at Greyfriars.

"The Wandering Schoolboy," by Martin Clifford, is the St. Jim's story, dealing with Tom Merry & Co., and the rest of the famous boys of that establishment.

"Rivals of Rookwood" is the grand long yarn by Owen Cooper, and, as the title implies, it deals with the great Rookwood School.

"Fighting for his Honour" is the title of a second long, complete story at Greyfriars by Frank Richards. These stories are among the finest ever written by these famous authors. They are splendidly illustrated, and each has a full-page art photograph, beautifully reproduced, depicting a great incident.

A GREAT REDSKIN STORY.

This is entitled "Straight Pine's Sacrifice," and is a grand yarn, that will appeal to all readers.

One of the four beautiful coloured plates in the book illustrates a thrilling incident in this story.

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A MAGNIFICENT PLAY

is one of the outstanding novelties of the

book. It introduces Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, and will provide great entertainment and amusement for old and young at winter parties.

STAMP COLLECTING.

is dealt with by a great authority on the subject in a brilliant little article. It will be found most helpful and instructive to all who follow this interesting hobby.

A GOOD BOXING ARTICLE

is also included among the dozens of new and striking features.

The Portrait Galleries of the three famous schools, together with "Who's Who?" will appeal very strongly to all readers of the Companion Papers.

There are numbers of other splendid contributions which I have not room even to mention, but make sure of obtaining the book for yourself—price 2s.; without doubt the best five shillings' worth obtainable anywhere.

Make a note of the date—October 15th—and order your copy at the earliest possible moment.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD"

making its reappearance in about three weeks' time. This is another event which I want you all to hear in mind. The "G. H." is going to create a new record in school journals, and if you are not able to get a copy after the 20th, you will have missed a great treat.

The only thing to do to guard against this is to place an order with your newsagent as soon as possible. It is not much trouble to do this, so set about it at once and avoid disappointment.

TUCK HAMPERS.

Magic words! How attractive it sounds, doesn't it, to talk about tuck hampers? Well, they are going to be given away in connection with a splendid competition, which will be announced in No. 1 of the "G. H."

If you enter for it, you may be a winner. There's no reason why you shouldn't be. Everyone has an equal chance. Just get that well into your mind, and determine to get the first number and order.

OCTOBER 20th.

NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS.

A. Deacon, 3 & 4, Southern Place, off South Street, London, S.E. 1, offers 23 for "Gems" 1-450. Write first.

J. Mayne, 29, Scott Street, Woodhouse, Leeds, offers, cheap, 22 "Gems," 23 "Magnets," 27 "Boys' Friends." Stamp for particulars.

L. Marks, J. Priory Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, offers large stock of Companion Papers, etc., for sale. Write for particulars, with stamp, for return postage.

H. Neate, the Niblet, High Street, Burnham, Bucks.—"Magnet" and "Gem" before 89. Write first.

F. W. Jones, 28, Inglestone Road, South Norwood, London, S.E. 25, offers "Magnets" and "Gems," from Nos. 460 to current numbers. Will sell in bundles of fifty.

W. G. Payne, 62, Llanishan Street, Heath, Cardiff, offers for sale, three copies of "Magnets," and five sets of "Gems." Clean copies only. 2d. each offered. Write first.

Albert Wilson, 2, MacLean Street, Patrick, Glasgow, has a large assortment of back numbers of "The Companion Papers"—"Magnets," from 361; "Gems," 368, etc. Write, for terms.

THE FAG'S HONOUR

(Continued from page 15.)

"Then there's nothing more to be said," said Blake curtly. "We'll go to the Head, and tell him everything! And we'll demand an inquiry into Trimble's story. But if you've any sense, Knox, you'll take the chance now you've got it. You know jolly well that the photo alone would get you sacked from St. Jim's! Better go!"

The prefect hesitated, his face white with suppressed rage. To be beaten by juniors—just when his plot looked like succeeding, too—maddened him beyond words. But he was beaten, and he knew it; the juniors' grim faces told him they were in deadly earnest.

"I'll go to the Head now!" he choked at last. "Give me those—those things!"

"We'll give you the note and the paper directly we've proof you've been to the Head!" said Tom Merry grimly. "The photos and the film we'll keep for a time, in case of accidents. But you can take my word for it that nobody save ourselves will hear about it if you do the right thing, Knox."

The prefect hesitated, but evidently he decided to take Tom Merry's word. With a pale and furious face, he turned and left the study without another word. The juniors looked at each other in silence.

"Think he'll do it!" asked Blake.

"I'm certain he will. There's nothing else for him to do," said Tom Merry.

And Tom Merry was right. Five minutes later Kildare looked in, with a smile.

"D'Arcy minor here! Ah, you're wanted in the Head's study, D'Arcy!" said Kildare.

Wally nodded, and followed the captain from the room. He was not away long. And when he reappeared, his grinning face gave them the answer.

"All serene!" he chuckled. "Dismissed without a stain on my character. Quite a decent old bird, the Head! Almost fell on my neck and kissed me! He said—"

"Hai Joo!" gasped Gusey, in delight. "Then the wightful wottah has actually confessed, Wally!"

"Not a bit of it, old top!" said Wally, with a sniff. "He's cleared me by telling thumpin' lies, of course. Said he'd found his merry old tenner in the pocket of another coat! Anyway—"

"And didn't the Head ask to see it?" asked Blake.

"Nonsense! But he wasn't half waxy, and no mistake—jawed old Knoxy for his carelessness no end! My hat, but you should have seen the rotter's face!"

"It's been a nasty knock for Knox!" chuckled Lester.

"Yess, wathah! But pevah mind that washed, dash boys!" observed Arthur Augustus, with a beaming smile. "I would like to remark that I feel very much obliged to you fellows for wallyin'!

wound Wally in his hour of trouble, an' I wouldn't that such a wally happy trooper! As the howlid affair should be celebrated by a wally extra wippin' feed! I still have three Bwadhuys left out of my last wemittance—"

"Good old Gusey!" came the hearty chorus.

And ten minutes later quite a merry party assembled in Study No. 6. Besides Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co., Wally had been allowed for once to bring along his chums of the Third—Jameson, Frank Levinson, Reggie Manners, and Curly Gibson.

It was a bit of a crush, but none the less enjoyable for that. And the faces of host and guests were merry and bright as they celebrated the happy ending to the affair of Knox's missing tenner.

Knox of the Sixth lay very low for some days after that, and it was plain from his pale, harassed face that he was living in constant dread of the expected "trouble" from Banks, the bookmaker.

But the days passed, and nothing happened. And it became clear that either the rascally prefect had found some means of satisfying the demands of the sharper, or that Banks was too cunning to kill the goose that laid his golden eggs.

THE END.

Don't miss "THE AMATEUR ADVERTISER"—next *Wally-shay's G and L*, *Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co.* of *St. Jim's*—by *Marion Clifford*.

NOTICES.

A. G. J. McKirrow, care of Standard Oil Co. of N.Y. Trinidad, Shanting Province, China—Numbers 1-99. "Gem" and "Magnets." The complete sets are wanted, and a reasonable price is offered. Only those who have the entire collection need write.

A. Kirk, 17, Fisher Row, Oxford, offers 2d. each and postage for copies of "Gem" before 1914.

L. Elphinstone, 50, Stirling Street, Cape Town, South Africa—seek numbers "Gems," 1914.

A. Benn, care of Max Bonn, Ballou, Cape Province, South Africa—"Magnets," 51, 52, 119, 122, 172, 173, 192, 244, 278, 282, 305, 341, 392, 394; "Gems," 226, 228, 225-6, 245-6, 249, 330; also "The Pledge of 82 Lins," and old numbers of "Horseshoe Library."

D. Wynn, 2, Wellington Terrace, West-which, B.C. 19, offers a large number of the Companion Papers, etc.; 12s. the lot.

Frank Hayes, 153, Great Street, South Reddish, Stockport, near Manchester, wants copies of "Magnets" which contain lists of "Magnet" stories.

Ian Smith, 25, Plantation Road, Stornaway, Lewis, N.B., offers Companion Papers of recent issue for sale.

L. Tojman, 39, Harcourt Road, Alexandra Park, N. 22—"Gems" and "Magnets" before 1914, 1d. each, with postage. Write first.

Frank Hart, 14, Glen Street, Paisley—"Elvals and Chums"; sd. offered in good condition. Write first.

Miss Doris Farrant, Clouston, Halfpenny, Newcastle—"Gem" 191 and 202; sd. each offered. Write first.

Wendell Backland, Monticello, Slough, Bucks—"Penny Populars," "Making of Harry Wharton," "Taming of Harry Wharton," and "Ranger Lewis His Menager"; 2d. each. Write first.

D. G. Williams, 5, Park Street, Swansea, South Wales, offers Companion Papers from January 1914.

Miss M. Fyfe, 12, Lismore, Gold Top, Newport, Mon.—"Gem" for September 1914, 1914. Write first.

E. Blackwood, 11, Queen's Gate, Inverness—"Magnet" Christmas Number, 1912. Would exchange for "Gem" Library, Vol. No. 5.

J. W. Davis, 20, Sydenham Avenue, Leicester—"Magnets" before 419; "Gems" before 439; [d. offered. Would exchange numbers before 370.

Harry Noon, 109, King Richard Road, Leicester, wants Companion Papers before 620. Will any reader oblige him?

N. Wood, 22, Ball Street, West Bromwich, Staffs.—"Gems" with stories of Cardew of the Fourth.

W. E. Greenwood, 21, Eberstone Street,

Leigh, Lancs.—"Hunter and Bunter" and "The Son of a Sailor"; 3d. each offered.

L. Tobias, 113, Geert Road, West Ham, E. 15—any red-covered "Magnet" or blue-covered "Gem." Write first, stating price.

A. E. Turner, 61, Arct Road, Salford, Birmingham—double numbers of "Gem" or "Magnet" in good condition each offered. Also old copies of Companion Papers.

J. McClatchie, 61, Avenue Road, Lurgan, Antrim, Ireland—"Magnets" of 1914 and 1915.

Fred C. Clarke, 52, Fitzpauls Road, Bristol, wants "A Very Gallant Gentleman." Write first.

Wm. Boyd, 7, Wilton Terrace, Edinburgh—"Gems" 406-412; also "Sailor Lew Library," 153. Write first, stating price.

A. Harper, 33, Ansell Road, Brighton, S.W.—offers Nos. 440 to 506 "Magnet" for 12s.; also "Gems" 400 to 506 for 15s.

Our Grand, New Serial Story, "The Treasure Seekers," has been unavoidably held over this week. The First Long Instalment will appear in Next Wednesday's "GEM."

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