

ROLLICKING FINE BARRING-OUT STORY IN THIS ISSUE!

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ALL HANDS STAND BY TO REPEL BOARDERS!

(The Sixth-Formers Find Themselves Up Against a Stiff Proposition in Their Attack Upon the Rebels of St. Jim's.)

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My Readers' Own Corner!

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(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next.)

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: *The GEM, "My Reader's Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.*

QUITE FEASIBLE!

An officer of a certain regiment was one morning inspecting his company on parade when he came upon a man who had evidently not shaved for some days. "How is it you have not shaved?" asked the officer sternly. "I have shaved, sir," answered the Tommy. "How dare you say that?" fumed the officer, "and with a beard like you've got?" "Well, sir," came the reply, "it's like this. There's only one shaving glass in our room, and as there were nine of us shaving at the same time, it's quite likely I shaved some other chap's face!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harold Jenkins, 5, Police Row, Duketown, Tredegar, Mon.

TO THE POINT!

A schoolmaster was giving his pupils a lesson on the circulation of the blood. "If I stand on my head," he said, by way of illustration, "the blood rushes to my head, doesn't it?" Nobody contradicted him. "Now," he continued, "when I stand on my feet, why doesn't the blood rush into my feet?" There was a silence for a moment, then a daring youth, jumping to his feet, cried: "Because your feet ain't empty, sir!" The master asked no further questions after that.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Herbert Stubbs, 124, Rosebery Street, Moss Side, Manchester.

MERCILESS!

"You say that this man has a grudge against you?" demanded the judge. "Yes, your honour," replied Bill, the beggar. "When I was blind he used to steal the pennies from my hat, and when I was a cripple he'd run down the street with my box of pencils." "Anything else?" asked the judge. "Yes, your honour," continued the beggar. "Once when I was deaf and dumb he shot off a cracker underneath me!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. C. Hill, 5, Maurice Road, Penrose, New Zealand.

OUR TUCK HAMPERS ARE PRIME!

Remember, boys and girls, we award a delicious Tuck Hamper for the best storyette sent us each week—also half-a-crown is paid for each other contribution accepted. Cut out the coupon on this page, and send it, together with your joke, to me.

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NOT WHAT HE MEANT!

Policeman (to street musician): "Have you a permit to play this instrument in the street?" Itinerant Musician: "Noin!" Policeman (making him a prisoner): "Then accompany me." Musician: "Vith der greatest of pleasure. Vot do you wish to sing?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to William Summis, 1240, Bordeaux Street, Montreal, Canada.

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER:— A "BRIGHT" IDEA!

One day the young master of the house discovered the servant girl trying to clean the fender with a copy of the Gem. "Bridget!" exclaimed the indignant young man, "whatever are you doing with my paper? You know I only bought it this



morning." "Oh," replied Bridget, "you said yourself there was nothing like it for brightening things up, so I thought I would try it on the fender!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to Vincent Hogan, 32, Stephenson Street, North Ormesby, Middle-brough.

SOON SETTLED!

"Yes," said Swagger, "this is a turkize ring." "Excuse me," said Braggs, "the correct pronunciation of that word is 'turkwoise.'" "No, 'turkize,' excuse me." "But I say 'turkwoise.'" "Well, let's go to a jeweller and ask him." "Right!" "In order to settle a wager," said Swagger to the jeweller, "would you mind telling me if the correct pronunciation of the stone in this ring is 'turkize' or 'turkwoise'?" The jeweller took the ring and examined it carefully, then turning to the two men, he said: "The correct pronunciation is glass!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to James Newton, 4, Castletown Road, Preston, Lancs.

PUTTING IT NICELY!

Office Boy: "The Editor regrets he cannot make use of your contribution, far the offer of which he is much obliged." Fair Subscriber: "Oh! How sweet. Did he really say that?" Office Boy: "Well, not exactly, miss. He said: 'Take the stuff away, Bill, it makes me feel ill.'"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Maryery Attwood, 33, Ormiston Road, Shepherd's Bush, W. 12.

GENEROSITY!

An old woman went to a fishmonger's cart and looked at his stock with longing eyes. She was very poor, for when the hawked asked threepence for a piece of fish, she hesitated. "Have it at tuppence, mum?" grumbled the hawked. "No, it's too much," said the old lady. "Have it at a penny, then?" asked the hawked. Still the old lady kept looking at the fish, but did not buy. There was a look of pity on the hawked's face, and, turning to the woman, he said: "Here, missus, I'll turn me back while you sneak it!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Ernest Tolson, 15, Park Avenue, Swillington, Woodlesford, near Leeds.

NOT A JOKE!

This page is devoted to readers' prize-winning jokes, but this is not a joke—there's going to be a special BIG-WEEK TUCK HAMPER page here very soon now!

TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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Backing up Tom Merry!

The Chums of St. Jim's have real cause for complaint this time. Read how they continue to hold the fort over the holidays, in this Ripping Fine School Story.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

CHAPTER 1.

The Rebels of St. Jim's!

BWEAK-UP to-day!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Not for little us!" said Tom Merry. "No feah!"

Wintry sunshine glimmered on a carpet of snow in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's.

It was long past the hour for the rising-bell to ring; but Taggles seemed to have forgotten his duty that morning. The rising-bell had not rung.

Matters were not as usual in the old school.

The day of breaking-up for the Christmas holidays was generally one of excitement at St. Jim's. There was excitement in plenty now, but the school was not breaking-up.

Every door in the old School House was locked and bolted, every window was barred. Within the House there was not a single master or prefect; not a member of any senior Form.

The House swarmed with juniors—nearly every member of the Shell, the Fourth, and the Third was there.

Although it was nearly nine o'clock, some fellows had not yet turned out of bed. Some had breakfasted, and some hadn't. Some were playing leap-frog in the passage, some were punting a football about in the Sixth Form room—a room that juniors were supposed to enter with fear and trembling, if they ventured to enter it at all.

For there was a barring-out going on at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry & Co. were holding the School House against all comers. The Head, the masters, the seniors, the servants—all were over in the New House, which they had to themselves. In the great School House, with barred doors and windows, Tom Merry & Co. were in revolt, monarchs of all they surveyed; and, to judge by the excitement and high spirits on all sides, they were rather enjoying it. Leap-frog in the passages, football in the Sixth Form room, breakfast at any time a fellow liked—all showed that it was now as in that olden time, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

There was one question that the more thoughtful fellows asked themselves: What was the Head going to do? As Blake remarked, the old scout was bound to do something or other. The juniors did not know what. But what they themselves were going to do was plain and certain—they were going to stand by Tom Merry, and hold the fort in the barred School House till justice was done to the hero of St. Jim's!

Tom Merry was looking out of the hall window into the quad, with a rather thoughtful expression on his face. He looked still more thoughtful at the sight of Kildare of the Sixth coming tramping over through the snow from the other House.

"Here comes Kildare!" he remarked.

"Pewpaws he's comin' to join us!" suggested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I don't think!" grinned Monty Lowther. "A barring-out is miles beneath the dignity of the jolly old Sixth!"

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"Wot!" he said. "That would be a ridiculous view for Kildare to take. It is not beneath my dignity. And I trust," added Arthur Augustus loftily, "that I have a pwpopah sense of what is due to a fellow's dig!"

Tom Merry smiled, and opened the window. There was a sudden din from the staircase, and Arthur Augustus glanced round reprovingly, turning his eyeglass upon Wally & Co. of the Third.

"Pway don't make so much wow, you fags!" he called out.

"Bow-wow!" retorted Levison minor.

"Weally, young Fwank—"

"Don't you begin, Gus!" implored D'Arcy minor. "You

know what happens when your lower jaw begins moving. It never stops!"

"Weally, Wally—"

Crash! Bump! Thump! The fags of the Third seemed to be enjoying themselves on the staircase in a rather strenuous way. Arthur Augustus shook his noble head in disapproval. Gussy's view was that the rebellion should be carried on with calmness, dignity, and loftiness, and a careful regard for the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. It was evident that his minor in the Third did not share his view.

Kildare came up the steps of the School House, with a rather curious expression on his face.

A crowd of faces at the open window grinned at him.

"Good-mornin', deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Top of the morning, Kildare!" said Monty Lowther.

"Gussy thinks you've come to join us. Is that the case?"

"You're welcome, old bean!" said Manners.

Kildare frowned.

"Don't be such young asses!" he grunted.

"What is it, then?" asked Jack Blake. "Message of surrender from the Head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or have you merely looked in to wish us a happy New Year?" asked Cardew of the Fourth. "If so, the same to you, old bean, and many of them!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here—" began the captain of the school.

"We're lookin', deah boy."

"I've come from the Head—"

"Good!" said Cardew. "Is the jolly old boy comin' down off his perch?"

"What?" roared Kildare.

"Is his respected nibs goin' to own up that he's made a howlin' ass of himself?" inquired Cardew.

"Cardew, deah boy, that is not a wespectful way of alludin' to your headmastah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Go hön!"

"Although Dr. Holmes is at present actin' the goat. I trust you fellows will not forget the respect due to a gentleman in his high posish," said Arthur Augustus.

"Don't he talk like a picture-book?" said Blake admiringly.

"How lucky we've got Gussy with us! If we're shut up here over Christmas we shall have plenty of fun. Gussy will always do one of his funny turns, won't you, Gussy?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Suppose we give Kildare a chance to speak?" suggested Tom Merry, laughing. "Is it a message, Kildare?"

"Yes," grunted the Sixth-Former.

"Cough it up!" said Herries.

"All you fellows know that Tom Merry is expelled from the school," said Kildare.

"What's the good of telling us what we know?" asked Levison of the Fourth. "What we want to hear is that the Head's changed his mind."

"Well, he hasn't."

"Then go back and tell him it's time he did!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Tom Merry is to be taken to the station by a prefect and sent home," said Kildare. "The rest of you will leave in the ordinary way for the Christmas holidays."

"Wats!"

"Bosh!"

"Piffle!"

"Go back to bed and dream again, old bean!" suggested Cardew.

"You hear me, Tom Merry?" said Kildare.

Tom Merry nodded.

"I'm not deaf," he remarked. "Well, I'm not going."

These fellows are standing by me. We're going to hold the School House right through Christmas, if necessary—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And all next term, if it comes to that," continued Tom Merry. "By that time possibly the Head may come to the conclusion that I had nothing to do with the robbery in Mr. Ratchiff's study."

"We must twist so," said Arthur Augustus.

"The Head sends you his order to open the door at once, and submit to proper authority," said Kildare.

"Bow-wow!"

"Tom Merry is to give himself up—"

"Bosh!"

"What is your answer?" demanded the Sixth-Former.

"Rats, of course," answered Tom Merry.

"Bosh!" said Figgins.

"We're all standing by Tommy!" said Levison. "The Head's making a big mistake, and we're seeing justice done. Catch on?"

Kildare set his lips.

"You kids understand that if you don't turn up at home, your people will be anxious about you," he said. "Have you thought of that?"

"That is wathah a sewious considewation, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "But I do not see how it is to be helped. You see, we cannot allow Dr. Holmes to expel Tom Mewwy, a perfectly innocent chap, for somethin' he has not done. Pway point that out to the Head, and pewwaps he will see weason."

"You young ass!"

"Woally, Kildare—"

"If you keep up this rot," said Kildare, "there will be damage done, and some of you fags will get hurt. The Head has asked the seniors to help in re-establishing order. You will have all the Sixth and the Fifth to scrap with. I suppose you know how that will end."

"Yaas, wathah—in a feafuhl thwashin' for the Sixth and the Fifth."

"You are given an hour to come to your senses," said Kildare. "If you haven't opened the door by that time, it will be forced, and there will be lickings all round. That's all."

"Quite enough, too," remarked Cardew.

Kildare turned away frowning.

"Hold on a minute, Kildare," exclaimed Lowther.

"The prefect turned back, hopefully. Kildare would have been very glad to see the amazing revolt of the Lower School come to an end."

"Well?" he said.

"Would you mind answering a couple of questions?"

"Go ahead."

"Where did you get that face?"

"What?"

"And is it a face?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare answered neither question.

He frowned and tramped away through the snow, followed by a yell of laughter from the crowded window.

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CHAPTER 2.

The Attack on the Rebels!

NOW for the jolly fireworks!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll jolly well show Kildare how much we care for the Sixth and the Fifth!" exclaimed Grundy of the Shell truculently. "Fact is, I'm jolly glad we're having a barring-out. We shall be able to show the seniors that they're not the little tin gods they've always fancied themselves."

"Hear, hear!"

"I've always thought that a hiding or two would

do the seniors good," continued Grundy. "Well, now they're going to get it."

"You bet!"

"Don't you worry, Tom Merry," said Grundy, kindly. "We're standing by you."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'm not worrying," he said. "But—" He paused a moment, and looked over the crowd of excited faces in the School House hall. "You fellows, we're landed in a pretty serious bizney; but we're in the right, and we're going on—"

"Hear, hear!"

"I think there isn't any fellow here who believes that I had a hand in the robbery—"

"Wathah not."

"But if any fellow has a doubt about it, I'd rather he said so, and stood out of the trouble," said Tom. "I sha'n't blame him. The evidence was pretty strong—strong enough to satisfy the Head, who's a just man—or means to be. Only, you fellows know that I couldn't do such a thing—"

"No fear."

"We're backing you up, Tommy!" roared Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

"Only, as I've said, if any fellow has any doubts about it, I sha'n't blame him, and he's free to step out before the trouble begins," said Tom.

But there were no takers, so to speak. Of all the Lower School at St. Jim's, there were hardly more than half a dozen whose faith in Tom Merry's honour was not founded upon a rock. And those few weaklings had already gone. From more than two hundred throats came the reply, in a roar that rang from one end of St. Jim's to the other.

"We're standing by you."

"Hurrah!"

"Sink or swim together."

"Good men!" said Tom. "I'm jolly grateful for this. I'm sure that in the long run the Head must come to see that he's made a mistake. Anyhow, I'm sticking to St. Jim's."

"And St. Jim's is stickin' to you, deah boy."

"Hear, hear!"

"Now to your posts!" said Tom.

"Yaas, wathah."

Tom Merry was a good leader. He knew that it would be no child's play when the senior Forms started on the war-path; and he did not neglect precautions.

Numbers were on the side of the rebels; but at close quarters the hefty Sixth and Fifth would have knocked out the juniors in combat without much difficulty. But the rebels did not intend to allow them to come to close quarters.

A great deal of work had already been put into strengthening the defences of the School House. Big heavy forms and desks from the Form-rooms had been stacked up at all the ground-floor windows, backed up by other heavy articles of furniture from the masters' rooms. Even the Head's own desk was standing at the window of the Head's study, with chairs and tables and bedsteads stacked over and round it.

All doors were locked and bolted; where there were bars, they were barred. And Jack Blake had gone round with his tool-box, driving nails in wherever nails could be driven, and driving in long screws, with great industry.

The amount of damage done was already considerable; but that could not be helped. As Monty Lowther remarked, omelettes could not be made without breaking eggs.

Every fellow caught up a stump, or a ruler, or a broom, or something else that came handy, as a weapon of defence. All were ready to concentrate on the spot where the attack should come.

All was ready—more than ready—when the hour's grace had expired, and the alarm was given that the enemy were approaching.

From an upper window Tom Merry surveyed them. Nearly all the Sixth and the Fifth had turned out, to join in the effort to restore the flouted authority of the headmaster. Most of them seemed to look upon it as a rather enjoyable little excitement for break-up day; though the prefects were serious, as became their exalted rank.

Mr. Railton, the School House master, placed himself at the head of the seniors, as they marched across the quad.

The numerous array halted before the School House, some of them grinning and some of them looking very grave. Mr. Railton, certainly, was gravity itself. The present state of St. Jim's was a shock to the Housemaster's sense of order and discipline, and his only thought was to bring the rebels to submission as speedily as possible.

He came up the School House steps, and thumped with his knuckles on the great oaken door.

"Boys!" he called out.



Cutts held on to D'Arcy's collar with a grip of iron. Blake and Herries grasped a leg each of the swell of St. Jim's, Digby held him round the waist, and Cardew grasped the slack of his trousers. St. Leger and Frye then rushed up to assist Cutts in this strenuous tug-o-war. "Yow-wow-wow!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "Leggo! You are pullin' me into halves!" (See page 6.)

"Hallo, old top!" answered Cardew's cool voice from within.

"Cardew! Is that you?"

"Little me, old bean."

Mr. Railton breathed hard. To be addressed as "old bean" by a junior of the Fourth Form was another shock to him.

"Open this door at once, Cardew."

"Call again next Christmas, if you don't mind, old scout."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I command you to open this door."

"Go hon!"

"Boys!" thundered Mr. Railton.

"Man!" answered Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Cardew, that is not the way to address your Housemastah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Waitton, p'wray listen to me."

"I have no time to listen to you, D'Arcy. Open the door at once!"

"Wats! I mean, I am bound to wefuse that wequest, sir."

"It is not a request, D'Arcy; it is a command!"

"I am bound to wefuse it, all the same, sir. But I should vevy much like you to undahstand that this implies no dis-respect to you personally. We all wesepect you vevy much, sir, but as you are in the w'ong, we cannot give you your head on this occasion. I twust I make myself cleah, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to cackle at, you fellows. If Mr. Waitton butts in, we are goin' to wap him on the nappah, but I twust you fellows will wap him on the nappah as wesepectfully as possible."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Weally, you know—"

Crash, crash, crash!

There was a terrific onslaught on the door of the School

House. A dozen of the Fifth had crowded up the steps into the porch, and were assailing the big oaken door.

Cardew laughed.

"Nothin' short of a giddy batterin' ram will shift that door," he remarked. "Railton knows that! He's trying to pull our legs. The real attack is comin' somewhere else."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry's voice rang down the staircase.

"This way, you fellows!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a rush up the staircase.

"This way!"

Tom Merry's voice rang from the box-room at the end of the Shell passage. And his comrades rushed to join him to repel the attack—while below the crashing on the School House door continued.

CHAPTER 3.

Hand to Hand!

TOM MERRY & CO. crowded into the box-room. It was a rather vulnerable point for an attack, and a watch had been kept there. Downstairs, a party under the command of Talbot of the Shell was on guard, in case the attack on the front door showed signs of becoming pressing. But the garrison were numerous; and there were plenty of fellows with Tom. Outside the box-room window were flat leads, easily reached from the ground by a ladder. On the leads Kildare and the rest of the St. Jim's prefects were to be seen, with Cutts and St. Leger and some more of the Fifth. The glass had already crashed out of the box-room window in splinters, and Kildare was knocking out the sashes with blows of a heavy mallet. But within the window, planks from the floor had been nailed across with a fine assortment of nails from Jack Blake's tool-box, and against the planks were stacks of empty boxes and trunks.

Now that it was certain that only force could effect an entrance into the house, it was probable that Mr. Railton had selected that back window as the spot where damage was least likely to be serious. Kildare was not standing on ceremony. Under his heftily blows the window flew into fragments.

In a very few minutes his blows were falling on the planks and the piled trunks within.

Crash, crash, crash!
"The dear man won't get those planks off in a hurry!" grinned Jack Blake. "I've fairly riddled 'em with nails."
Crash!

Two of the nailed planks rolled down together. There was a chuckle from some of the rebels.

Blake's defensive works were not quite so impregnable as the amateur carpenter had supposed.

Crash, crash, crash!
"My hat!" ejaculated Blake.
"Bai Jove! They're goin'!"
"And there go the trunks!"
"Phew!"

"Steady the guards!" sang out Monty Lowther. "Present stumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The outside of the window swarmed with seniors, shoving at the pile of trunks, and hammering at them. The stack was reeling, and one or two boxes, dislodged, came rolling down from the stack.

"Look out!"
"Go for them!" shouted Tom Merry.
"Hurrah!"

Kildare's head and shoulders came through an opening in the barricade. He shoved on gallantly.

Perhaps the captain of St. Jim's supposed that the rebels would never venture to smite the lofty "napper" of a prefect of the Sixth. If so, he was swiftly and painfully undeceived.

Monty Lowther rushed forward to the tottering barrier with a pail of water in his hands, to which several bottles of ink had been added.

Kildare's head came right through the opening; his sturdy shoulders followed, and in a moment or two more he would have rolled in, to pick himself up and engage the juniors at close quarters. But those moments were more than enough for Lowther.

Swoooosh!

The pail fairly bonneted Kildare. The bottom of it banged on his head, as the rim jammed on his shoulders. There was a muffled, gasping roar from the prefect.

Water and ink swamped him.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

He clutched wildly at the pail. But Lowther jammed it fast, and two or three stumps beat on the bottom of it, and Kildare did not escape his bonnet till he withdrew his head.

Almost suffocated, the captain of St. Jim's fell back on the leads, streaming with water and ink. His face was almost black, and he was soaked to the skin.

"Groooogh!" he spluttered.
"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Cutts of the Fifth. "You've got it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from within. "Come in and have some more, Kildare!"

"Groogh! You young scoundrels! Groooogh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare dabbed at his face with his handkerchief. Between the streaks of ink his countenance showed crimson with fury. Kildare of the Sixth was generally a very good-tempered fellow. But he looked anything but good-tempered now.

"Come on!" he gasped.

He fairly hurled himself at the barricade. Under his rush the pile of trunks and boxes tottered. Darrell and Langton, Rushden and Jones major, Monteith and Baker backed him up energetically. Crash on crash sounded in the box-room as the barricade went reeling and tumbling.

"Play up, deah boys!" yelled Arthur Augustus, brandishing a cricket-stump.

"Yaroooh!" roared Blake.

"Bai Jove! What is the mattah, deah boy?"

"You crass ass! You've jolly well brained me!" shrieked Blake.

"Bai Jove! Awf'ly sowwy—"

"Vow-ow-ow!"

"Line up!" roared Levison of the Fourth.

The Sixth-Formers were scrambling in at the window now. Had Tom Merry & Co. faltered then, the game would have been up. But they did not falter.

They rushed to the defence, with lashing stumps and rulers and cushions, and any other weapon that came to hand.

Kildare gave a terrific yell as he caught a cricket-stump with his head, and Langton roared with a ruler on his scalp. Rushden dodged back as Manners charged with a mop. The mop caught Jones major under the chin, and Jones was hurled back as if by a cannon-shot.

"Whack, whack, whack, crash!"
"Give 'em socks!" roared Grundy.

"Eass, wathah! Huwvah!"

"That's for your napper, Darrell—"

"Yaroooooh!"

Perhaps the Sixth-Formers had not anticipated so heftily a resistance. Certainly the rebels made good the defence of the window. Back from the sill went the prefects, staggering, to collapse on the leads. Cutts of the Fifth caught Arthur Augustus D'Arcy by the collar, as the swell of St. Jim's leaped out for a last swipe at the enemy.

Arthur Augustus dropped his stump, and caught at the window-frame to save himself.

"Gwoogh! Wescue!" he gasped.

Cutts gave a terrific jerk, and Arthur Augustus was torn loose from his hold, and dragged out.

"Hold on to Gussy!" shrieked Blake.

Arthur Augustus was half out of the window, when Blake grasped his ankles, and dragged him back.

"Hold on!"
"Help! Wescue! Yooop!"

"Hang on, everybody!" shouted Tom Merry. "Let go, Cutts, you rotter!"

Cutts of the Fifth grinned, and held on to his capture. He had both hands on D'Arcy's collar now, and his grip was like iron.

Blake and Herries grasped a leg each of the swell of St. Jim's, and Digby held him round the waist, and Cardew grasped the slack of his trousers. He was well held!

But Cutts dragged on, hard.

St. Leger and Frye of the Fifth rushed to his aid, and caught hold of Gussy's wildly-thrashing arms.

"Yow-ow-ow!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "Leggo! Wow! You are pullin' me into halves, you know! Gwoooogh!"

"Hang on!" yelled Blake.

"Pull devil, null baker!" shouted Monty Lowther. "If they get you, Gussy, we'll keep your legs as a souvenir, anyhow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yavoooh!"

The prefects rallied, and made another dash at the window. But the blood of the defenders was up now, and a rain of lashes and thrusts met the assailants, and hurled them back,

WHO IS Mr. LI FANG?

See

THE YELLOW



SPIDER

THE MOST AMAZING DETECTIVE TALE ever WRITTEN—in this week's bumper issue of the "Magnet" Library. A THRILLING NEW FERRERS LOCKE TALE—Don't MISS IT. The Great Yellow Spider whose web extends all over the world.



Cutts of the Fifth stood by the kitchen table with a face of fury and a washing mop. For two hours the dandy of the Fifth laboured with plates and dishes, perspiring with exertion and simmering with fury. He was a prisoner of war, and had to abide by the rebels' orders. (See page 8.)

with some considerable damage done. For two or three minutes the window was crammed with struggling, scrambling assailants, Sixth and Fifth, but the defence was too hot. It cleared again, leaving Arthur Augustus still half in and half out, with his chums holding on at one end, and Cutts & Co. dragging at the other. And the yells of the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's could have been heard over a considerable portion of the county of Sussex.

CHAPTER 4. Defeated!

“LET go, Cutts, you cad!” shouted Tom Merry. Cutts set his teeth and dragged. There was a bruise on Cutts' head where a stump had smitten, and he was hurt and spiteful.

Tom Merry leaned out, and lashed with his stump. Prye let go, yelling. Then Manners' mop came into play, and St. Leger was swept back, letting go Arthur Augustus. But Cutts held on savagely.

But seven or eight juniors were dragging at the swell of St. Jim's now from within, and he was drawn in, though in the process he felt a good deal as if he were coming to pieces. The struggle for Arthur Augustus resembled that for the body of Patroclus of old. Patroclus, in similar circumstances, was dead, and did not worry; but Arthur Augustus was very much alive, as he testified by his terrific yells.

Cutts, loth to let go, was dragged right up to the window with his captive. Then Jack Blake, reaching out, seized Cutts by the hair.

“Lend a hand!” yelled Blake.

Cutts let go Arthur Augustus then, to hit out at Blake, and get his hair away. But it was too late. His arms were seized by Wilkins and Blake, and his collar by Lowther. Struggling and yelling, Cutts of the Fifth was dragged lodily into the box-room, a prisoner.

“Sit on him!” roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn sat on Cutts. It was not possible for the infuriated Fifth-Former to resist after that. Fatty's weight was too serious a proposition for him to deal with.

“Come on, Kildare!” shouted Grandy, brandishing a

cricket-stump in the window. “Come on, Darrell! Come on, the Fifth, and rescue your pal!”

“Yaas, wathah, you wottahs—come on and get a scawful thwashin’!” gasped Arthur Augustus.

But the seniors did not accept the invitation. The attack had failed, and they knew it, and there was hardly a fellow in the attacking party who was not hurt—some of them very painfully.

“Nothin' doin'!” said St. Leger. “I vote we beat it!” And St. Leger of the Fifth “beat it” without waiting to hear the views of the other seniors.

The Sixth and Fifth-Formers looked at one another in a sickly way. The window was crammed with defiant juniors, eager for them to come on.

“There's no chance!” said Kildare. “Those reckless young scoundrels will crack somebody's skull at this rate!”

“I believe mine's cracked already!” groaned Rushton, passing his hand over his aching head. “Ow! Wow!”

“Better report to Railton!” murmured Jones major. The seniors were already clearing off the leads. They had joined up to oblige the Head; but they had had enough of obliging their headmaster in this fashion.

The prefects were ready to carry out orders, as in duty bound; but it was pretty certain that there would be no more volunteers from the Sixth and the Fifth.

Kildare descended from the leads, and the assailants disappeared. Some of them had not noticed that Cutts of the Fifth had been made a prisoner; and those who had noticed it did not seem to care. They departed, and were glad to go.

“Better chuck that rotter out again,” said Figgins. “No fear!” said Blake. “Cutts is a giddy prisoner of war!”

“We don't want prisoners of war!” said Tom Merry. “Let me go!” gasped Cutts. “You young rotters! I'll—”

“We'll let you go in good time,” said Blake. “Just at present you're going to be tied up.”

“You—you—”

“Shut up!”

“Yaas, wathah! The howwid beast twisted my collah wound my neck, and neally choked me, you know,” said

Arthur Augustus painfully. "I am frightfully hurt, you know. I regard Cutts as havin' acted like a Hun, and broken the rules of warfare. I am goin' to thrash Cutts."

"Not quite!" grinned Blake.

And he jerked off Cutts' tie, and proceeded to bind his wrists with it. The dandy of the Fifth writhed and wriggled with rage. But there was no help for him. The juniors had odd scores against the bully of the Fifth, and Gerald Cutts was in for it.

"Now rope up his trotters," grinned Wildrake. "Here's a box-cord. Don't kick, Cutts, or I shall twist your leg—like that—"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I guess I warned you."

"Yoooop!"

Cutts, tied hand and foot, was left lying on the floor, fairly spitting with rage, as the juniors turned to repair the

IT'S A FIGHT FOR RIGHT AND

defences at the smashed window. Talbot of the Shell came up the stairs, smiling.

"They're gone below," he said. "They hardly shook the door. You fellows seem to have pulled it off."

"Yas, wathah."

"Any casualties?" asked Talbot.

"Only Gussy!" chuckled Blake. "Gussy's nearly had his head pulled off. Of course, it wouldn't have mattered much, as there's nothing in it—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What are you going to do with Cutts?" asked Talbot.

"Make an example of him," answered Blake. "He's hurt Gussy—actually laid his common hands on the one, and only—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boiling oil would be too good for him, after that," said Blake. "We could lynch him; but I believe it's against the law to lynch Fifth-Formers. He can rest there for a bit."

A torrent of rage burst from Cutts of the Fifth, and some of the expressions he used, in his fury, were by no means suitable for youthful ears to hear. For which reason Jack Blake took a handful of soot from the chimney, and jammed it into Cutts' mouth. After that, Cutts of the Fifth was too busy with the soot to make any further remarks.

Meanwhile, the planks were nailed up at the broken window again, and boxes stacked up afresh. Bedsteads were dragged out of the Fifth Form dormitory, and stacked behind the boxes, till the room was almost filled with the barricade.

"I fancy they won't get through that in a hurry!" said Tom Merry; and the rebels agreed that probably they wouldn't.

Then the garrison quitted the now impregnable box-room and trooped down the stairs, Study No. 6 taking Cutts of the Fifth with them.

CHAPTER 5.

Cutts Makes Himself Useful!

THERE were rejoicing looks in the School House now. The first victory had come to the rebels of St. Jim's—the attack had been defeated, the fort had been held.

Fifth and Sixth had been beaten in hand-to-hand encounter—which was a tremendous triumph for the Lower School. The fags of the Third were especially gleeful. Wally D'Arcy related with immense gusto how he had actually punched the nose of Darrell of the Sixth in the combat. Darrell of the Sixth was a good fellow, and Wally & Co. liked him. But he was a prefect of the Sixth Form, and his nose had been punched by a member of the Third—and it was a never-to-be-forgotten triumph for Wally. With great pride, D'Arcy minor displayed knuckles that had been barked on the nose of a Sixth Form prefect.

Tom Merry, from a window, observed a number of the seniors in the distance, in the quadrangle. They had retired in the direction of the other House, and they seemed in a rather excited state, from their looks. The victory that brought so much satisfaction to the rebels, was far from gratifying to the seniors. And they were anxious to get

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off for the holidays, too—and that was an uncertain matter now. They stared occasionally towards the School House, and Knox shook his fist several times at the barred windows of the junior fortress.

But there was no sign of further attack, and the rebels had their dinner in great spirits. All the food supply in the School House was at their disposal; and there were sufficient provisions to last several days at least. It was soon, after dinner that Darrell of the Sixth came across the quad—with a nose that showed only two prominent signs of Wally's knuckles. Tom Merry hailed him cheerily from a window.

"Looking for another scrap, Darrell?" he asked.

Darrell frowned.

"We're leaving," he said. "The Head says we're to break up as usual—the senior Form."

"And you've come over to say good-bye?" asked Monty Lowther. "That's jolly polite of you, Darrell."

"I've come over to tell you we want our things," grunted Darrell. "Our boxes and things are in this House. We want them."

Tom Merry laughed.

"We'll let you have your things," he said.

"Open the door, then."

"No fear; we're not taking chances. We'll sling your things out of the hall window, and you can come over and fetch them."

"You cheeky young rascal!"

"Is that the Sixth Form way of askin' favours?" inquired Ralph Reckness Cardew. "Make him say 'please pretty Tommy.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Darrell crimsoned with wrath. But he held his peace. All the belongings of the School House seniors were in the School House, and it was necessary to be civil to the rebels if the goods were to be handed over.

"That's all right," said Tom reassuringly. "We'll sort out the stuff and bundle it out of the window; then you fellows can gather it up."

"You've got Cutts in here?" asked Darrell.

"Oh, yes."

"Well, his friends want him."

"Can't spare him yet," said Jack Blake, shaking his head. "I suppose you know the rules of war, Darrell. Prisoners can be made to do work behind the lines."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"Cutts is doing the washing-up!" explained Blake.

"Oh!" ejaculated Darrell.

"It's rather a come-down for his lordship; but, you see, he's got no choice in the matter. After he's washed up we'll sling him out."

Darrell opened his lips to speak, but closed them again. He realised that it was useless to argue with the victorious rebels; and threats were still more useless.

He tramped away with a frowning brow; and Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to drop the seniors' belongings from the hall window. Kildare and the rest fetched them away in grim and frowning silence, subjected to a fire of chaff all the time from the rebels at the windows.

Meanwhile, Cutts of the Fifth was busy.

RIGHT AGAINST MIGHT!

WHO WILL WIN?

The dandy of the Fifth was in the kitchen below; and after the rebel dinner there was an amount of washing-up to do that was almost overwhelming. None of the rebels could see why they should do it when there was a prisoner of war at their disposal.

So Gerald Cutts was set to the task.

His first reply was a savage refusal; but a little argument convinced him that it was wiser to obey orders.

The chief argument used was a cricket stump; but it was backed up with a fives bat and a ruler.

Such arguments could not be resisted long.

Cutts stood at the kitchen table, with a face of fury and a washing-mop. Endless plates and dishes passed through his hands—and there were some breakages at first. But the cricket stump came into play, and the breakages ceased.

For two hours Cutts of the Fifth laboured, perspiring with exertion and simmering with fury. Then his task was done.

"Bai Jove, you fellows, it would not be a bad idea to keep Cutts in our service," remarked Arthur Augustus. "With

a few more lickin's, he would make a vewy good kitchen-maid."

"Too sulky!" said Herries. "Can't stand sulky servants." Cutts ground his teeth.

"Will you young feuds let me go now?" he articulated. "Us what?"

"You—you—you—" gasped Cutts. "Do you mean us young gentlemen of the Fourth Form?"

inquired Jack Blake, taking a business-like grip on his stump.

"Yes," gasped Cutts. The dandy of the Fifth had had enough of Blake's stump.

"Good! That's better."

"Yaas, wathah! You are not weally vewy careful in your choice of expressions, Cutts," said Arthur Augustus reprovingly.

"I think we can sack this housemaid now," said Blake. "We sha'n't give you a character, Cutts. You're sullen."

"And careless," said Herries. "Breaks the crocks. We can't be always stumping this kitchen-maid for breaking crocks. Better sack him."

Cutts controlled his fury with difficulty. Blake & Co. led him up from the kitchen. Cutts was only too glad to be "sacked." His face lighted up at the sight of the open hall window, and freedom beyond. Blake took up his station beside the window, stump in hand.

"You can cut!" he said.

Cutts eyed him evilly. He had a suspicion that the stump was to descend as he scrambled through the window.

"Keep off, you young rotter!"

"Cut!" snapped Blake. "By Jove, if you don't go, we'll keep you a prisoner, and make you wash up to-morrow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The threat was enough. Cutts of the Fifth made a desperate jump for the window, and bolted through.

Whack!

His anticipations were well-founded. As he passed through

can—if it can be avoided—pitch it to them that we're running the school, having doped the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a bit difficult," said Tom Merry. "I've been trying to think that out—"

"Don't!" said Lowther. "Leave the thinking-out to me. I've got the necessary mental apparatus—"

"Fathead!"

"I've got it!" resumed Lowther. "Somebody has got to sneak out at the back on the strict q. t. and buzz along to the post-office and send telegrams."

"Bai Jove! I should not weally like to telegraph to my palah that I am stayin' on heah to bah out the Head, Lowthah."

"I fancy that would make our people jump a bit," remarked Manners.

"Ass!" said Lowther politely. "That isn't the point. The telegrams will read, 'Staying with Tom Merry for Christmas.'"

"By Jove!"

"Bit—" said Blake.

"Being extremely veracious chaps we are bound to tell the exact truth," said Lowther. "Well, we are all staying with Tom Merry for Christmas, aren't we? No need to mention that Tommy's holding his little party at the school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!"

"But that won't do for me, you know," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I can't wire home that I'm staying with myself."

"No, ass; you can wire that you're staying with Manners. You will be staying with Manners, won't you?"

Tom Merry rubbed his nose.

"Yes, I suppose so!"

"Well, then, if it's the fact, where's the liarm in stating it? Stick to the facts, and you're all right."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, we can't leave our people without a word," he

IT'S A HARD FIGHT FOR TOM MERRY & Co—

WILL THEY WIN THROUGH?

—YOU'LL LEARN MORE NEXT WEEK!

the window, Cutts was well-placed for a swipe, and the cricket stump swiped. There was a fendish yell from Cutts as he rolled out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well hit!"

Cutts picked himself up outside, and shook a furious fist at the juniors, and strode savagely away.

Soon afterwards the juniors had a view of the seniors departing. Sixth and Fifth were breaking up for Christmas as usual. They had done their best to help the Head out of his difficult position, and they had failed. And so they were going—leaving the Head with his difficulty still unsolved.

The garrison of the School House were glad enough to see them go. The rebels were left in triumphant possession of their position.

A little later the Head was seen to step out into the quadrangle, and look steadily towards the School House for a few minutes.

The juniors expected him to approach; but he did not come. After a few minutes he went indoors again.

"Givin' us up as a bad job," remarked Cardew. "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, it looks to me as if this jolly old barm'in'-out is goin' to be a tremendous success."

"Looks like it!" agreed Tom Merry.

And in the School House, at least, all was merry and bright.

CHAPTER 6.

A Narrow Escape!

"I'VE got it!"

Monty Lowther made that remark.

"Well?" asked Tom Merry cheerily.

"You see, our people will be expecting us home to-day," said Monty. "If we don't turn up, there'll be no end of alarm. Some of the old folks at home might even come hopping along!"

"Bai Jove!"

"The Head may be counting on that to help him out," continued Lowther. "Now, we can't leave our people hanging up for us, not knowing what's happened. And we

said. "It's a jolly good idea, Monty, and I'm blessed if I know how you thought of it!"

"Brains, you know!" said Lowther.

"Bai Jove, I hardly think it can be that, Lowthah! I have nevah noticed that you had any bvains, deah boy."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's a good stunt!" said Blake. "Let's get the telegrams written out. Who's going to take them?"

"Bettah leave that to me, I think," said Arthur Augustus. "It will be a wathah difficult bizney, and a fellow of tact and judgment will be requiuhed."

"You would make a muck of it, old scout," said Blake.

"No good getting the telegrams sent to the wrong addresses—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And the beaks would catch you as you went, or as you came back. I'd better go," said Blake.

And Jack Blake went.

With a supply of cash for innumerable telegrams, the Fourth-Former slipped down a rope from a back window, and scudded away.

The rebels watched rather anxiously for his return.

Whether the enemy were keeping a watch, they did not know; but it was certain that any fellow caught out of the House would not be allowed to return.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head seriously as he watched from the back window. He had natural minglivings as to the success of any enterprise that was not left in his noble hands.

"There's Taggles!" he remarked.

Taggles, the porter, appeared in sight in the distance. He was not looking towards the School House, but appeared to be taking a ramble on his own, as it were. Tom Merry frowned.

"Bless Taggles!" he said. "It's time Blake was back. I suppose the Head has set him to watch for stragglers."

"Yaas, wathah! I wathah think that Blake will be goin' home for Christmas aftah all," said Arthur Augustus. "He will drop wight into Taggles' paws when he comes back ovah the wall."

"Well, Blake may get through," said Tom. "Lucky we didn't send you, Gussy. You would have been a goner."

"I regard that remark as uttably asinine, Tom Mewwy!"

"Taggy's spotted where Blake went," murmured Manners. The juniors watched the old porter anxiously. Taggles had come to a halt by the distant wall where the snow had been displaced by Blake in climbing over.

He glanced round towards the House, and a grin came over his crusty face as he saw the crowd of faces at a window.

He did not walk on, but remained where he was, evidently in the expectation of catching the junior who had gone out when he came back.

Tom Merry leaned from the window and shouted:

"Taggles!"

"Yes, Master Merry?" grinned Taggles.

"Go round to the front of the house, old scout. I'm going to chuck you a Christmas-box from the window!"

Taggles grinned.

"Ead's orders, Master Merry!" he answered.

"We've sacked the Head, you know!" called out Cardew.

"Pr'aps!" assented Taggles. "But I don't want the

Ead to sack me, young gents. Ead's orders is to nail any

NEXT WEEK

THE GREAT SIEGE!

of you young raskils that come out, and see that you don't go in ag'in. Somebody's gone out 'ere!"

"Don't you want a Christmas-box, Taggles? What about a quid?"

"Chuck it over 'ere, sir!"

"No fear! Go round the House——"

Taggles shook his head.

"I'm ang'ing on 'ere!" he answered.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Dig. "There's Blake!"

Jack Blake's head rose into view over the wall. He clambered over, and dropped inside before he saw Taggles.

The next moment Taggles' heavy hand was on his shoulder.

"I was afraid of this!" said Arthur Augustus sadly.

"Now, if I had gone——"

"Hook it, Blake!" roared Tom Merry.

"You come alonger me, Master Blake!" said Taggles.

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Groogh! Hoooooochoo!"

Blake had been taken by surprise. But he acted promptly.

As Taggles tightened his grip on the junior's shoulder, Blake lowered his head and butted. The butt took effect on Ephraim Taggles' well-filled waistcoat.

Taggles staggered back, and sat in the snow, almost dragging Blake with him. The junior, fortunately, jerked himself loose.

The next instant he was running for the House.

"Put 'it on!" yelled Tom Merry, in great delight. He rattled the rope down from the window.

"Yaas, wathah! Wun like anythin', deah boy!"

Taggles staggered-up. Blake was running hard, and the porter lumbered on his track, gasping for breath.

Blake reached the rope, and grasped it.

"Pull!" he panted.

"All hands!" shouted Tom Merry.

There was no time for Blake to climb the rope; Taggles' outstretched hand was close behind him. He grasped with both hands and held on, and the juniors above dragged up the rope.

Blake was jerked off the ground, with his legs flying. Taggles made a jump at him, reached up, and grasped one ankle.

"Got you!" he gasped.

"Leggo!" roared Blake.

"Come down, you young raskil!" shouted Taggles. "I've got you!"

"Bai jove! Pull up, you fellows! Pull like anythin'!"

"Yoop!" howled Blake, as the juniors pulled with all their force. Taggles had an iron grip on his ankle, and it looked as if Taggles would be pulled up, too—which would have been decidedly painful for Jack Blake.

Fortunately, Blake had one foot free. He swung that foot round, and his boot came into violent contact with the side of Taggles' head.

Bang!

"Wooooooop!" roared Taggles.

He relaxed his grasp, clutching his hapless head with both hands, and roaring. Blake shot up almost like an arrow as he was released, and came up to the window-sill so suddenly that the top of his head crashed on the noble nose of Arthur Augustus, who was leaning out.

"Oh!" howled Blake.

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"Wow!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake was grasped and dragged in. He rubbed the top of his head.

"What silly idiot banged me on the napper?" he demanded.

"Yow-ow-ow!" wailed Arthur Augustus.

"I knocked my head on something——"

"Yow-ow! It was my nose!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Oh deah! I am afraid my nose is broken! Wow!"

"Isn't it just like Gussy to jam his silly nose on a chap's head?" exclaimed Blake, in great exasperation.

"Ow, wow, wow!"

Tom Merry slammed the window shut. Below, Taggles rubbed his head with one hand and shook the other, clenched, at the juniors. Then he tramped away, a sadder, if not a wiser, school-porter

CHAPTER 7.

Christmas at St. Jim's!

CHRISTMAS DAY!

It was a strange enough Christmas for Tom Merry and Co. of St. Jim's.

That old school, usually left with very few occupants on that festive date, was almost as full now as in term time.

And the excitement of the barring-out was quite enough to compensate the juniors for missing the home fires and the Christmas puddings.

The Sixth and the Fifth were gone; and the few juniors who had not cared to back up Tom Merry were gone also. They were not missed.

Almost the whole of the Lower School were standing by the hero of St. Jim's, and there was no sign of wavering.

And although the St. Jim's juniors, instead of scattering to the four corners of the kingdom, were barred inside the School House, the occasion was a festive one. Fatty Wynn was chief of the commissariat; and Fatty Wynn could be relied on to turn out a Christmas dinner in good style. All the stores of the School House were open to him, and Fatty made a liberal use of them. Many hands helped in mixing the Christmas pudding—a most tremendous pudding, boiled in sections under the skilled superintendence of David Llewellyn Wynn.

Fatty Wynn was undoubtedly an asset; and he was quite in his element as principal chef. His fat face beamed with satisfaction as he presided in the kitchen.

It was probable that the rebels of St. Jim's were going to have a more enjoyable Christmas than the enemy over in the New House. Tom Merry and Co. wondered what move the Head would next make—for that he was bound to make some move sooner or later was certain. But they did not worry. Certainly, Dr. Holmes had no force at his command for an attack, now that the seniors were gone. And if his policy was to leave the rebels alone till they tired of the revolt, the rebels agreed that he had a long yait before him, which would tax his patience to the limit.

While the preparations were going on for the Christmas festivities, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy might have been observed to be wearing a very thoughtful expression. Great thoughts, apparently, were working in the aristocratic brain of the swell of St. Jim's. But, as a matter of fact, Gussy's unusual thoughtfulness was not observed, the other fellows being too busy to heed the wrinkle in his noble brow.

"Blake, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus remarked, after a lengthy period of cogitation.

"Don't worry, old chap, I'm making mince pies!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Hand me that dish!"

"Bothah the dish!" said Arthur Augustus warnily. "I have been thinkin', Blake——"

"Rot!"

"You uttah ass——"

"Run away and play, old fellow!" urged Blake. "We're busy!"

"I have been thinkin' sewiorly——"

"Go and do some more!" suggested Blake. And the chief of Study No. 6 devoted his undivided attention to the mince pies, apparently considering them of more importance than Gussy's cogitations.

WILL TOM MERRY & Co. BACK OUT?

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Taggles' heavy hand dropped upon Blake's shoulder, but the Fourth-Former acted promptly. As Taggles tightened his grip, Blake lowered his head and butted. The butt took effect upon Taggles' well-filled waistcoat, and he went staggering back into the snow. (See page 10.)

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. And he walked away in search of a more sympathetic hearer.

He found Tom Merry and Co. in Big Hall, making arrangements there for the Christmas spread. It was rather a "cheek" for the rebels to use Big Hall; but, being successful rebels, they had cheek enough for anything. There were two big fire-places, and in each of them a cheery fire roared. A crowd of fellows were decorating the walls. Over-night, a daring party had raided the Head's garden for holly, which was obtained in abundance. The scarlet berries glistened in the light with a very cheery look. The firelight played on the old stained-glass windows.

"Hallo! Come and lend a hand, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "You've been slacking!"

"I have been thinkin' Tom Mewwy." "Any result?" asked Monty Lowther. "Feel a pain anywhere?"

"I regard that as an idiotic question, Lowther, and I refuse to reply to it. You fellows are awash that this is Christmas day!"

"I believe we suspected something of the sort," said Tom Merry gravely. "It doesn't feel quite like midsummer."

"Wats! Bein' Christmas Day, it is the time for peace and good will and things. I have been thinkin' about the Head."

"Dear old Head!" said Monty Lowther. "I hope he will be as jolly as we are to-day!" "I have been thinkin' that we ought to extend the olive-branch if poss," said Arthur Augustus. "What about invitin' the Head to our Christmas dinnah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' to cackle at in that suggestion, Tom Mewwy. I am vewy sowy about the Head. It is wathah a shock, you know, for him to play the goat like this. I was thinkin' that if I spoke to him sowsiously it might bring him round, and help him to see the ewwah of his ways. A word in season, you know!"

"Ha, ha ha!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"Weally, you fellows—"

"You ass!" said Lovison, laughing. "If you drop outside the House you'll be collared, as Blake nearly was."

"That's what I've been thinkin' out, deah boys. I am goin' with a flag of truce!" said Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

"A what?" gasped Tom Merry.

"A flag of truce, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And do you think the Head would take any notice of a giddy white flag?" demanded Clive.

"Yass, wathah! He would be bound to as a man of honah."

"It's barely possible that the Head mightn't take you seriously as a jolly old ambassador!" suggested Cardew.

"Barely!" chortled Lowther.

"Wats! I think my ideah is a jolly good one. The Head is bound to be feelin' the softenin' influence of this mewwy season—"

"I think you are," said Monty Lowther, "and you're feelin' the softening influence at the top. Softening of the brain—"

"Wats!" snapped Arthur Augustus.

And he walked away, followed by a chuckle from the juniors. Evidently they were not taking Gussy's great idea with due seriousness, much thought as he had expended upon it.

But Arthur Augustus had made up his noble mind.

If the Head could be brought round, the whole trouble would come to an end at once—which would be a great triumph for Gussy's diplomacy.

And while the other fellows were busily engaged, Arthur Augustus tied a tablecloth to a broom-handle, and opened the window on the porch of the School House, and dropped out. Talbot of the Shell spotted him, and came running up.

"D'Arcy!" he shouted.

The swell of St. Jim's looked back.

"Come back!" shouted Talbot.

But Arthur Augustus walked on across the snowy quad, with his flag of truce fluttering bravely in the breeze. A minute later a dozen windows were crowded with faces, staring after him, and a dozen voices shouted to him to return.

Arthur Augustus heard them, but he heeded not. With his noble head erect, and the tablecloth waving at the top of the broom-handle, he marched across to the New House to interview the enemy.

CHAPTER 8.
The White Flag!

"BLESS my soul!" Mr. Railton uttered that ejaculation. The School House master was staring rather gloomily from the window in the New House, into the quadrangle. Mr. Railton was not in merry spirits that Christmaside.

He was feeling deeply the hapless state into which affairs at the old school had fallen.

And the Housemaster was expected elsewhere for Christmas; but he had felt it his duty to remain with the Head. All the other masters were gone, with the exception of Horace Ratcliff, the New House master, who had been going to spend his Christmas at the school in any case. Mrs. Holmes was gone; and the Head would have been gone also, but for the barring-out. That amazing outbreak chained Dr. Holmes to the school.

The three masters had their quarters in the New House, which they had to themselves, excepting for the servants. And certainly they were not looking forward to a happy Christmas.

Mr. Railton fairly blinked at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy advancing, with his tablecloth fluttering aloft.

Mr. Railton, as an old soldier, might have been expected to recognise a flag of truce when he saw one. But he didn't. Flags of truce were not associated, in his mind, with broom-handles and tablecloths. He could only wonder why the swell of the Fourth was bearing that amazing trophy across the quadrangle.

"What is it, Mr. Railton?" asked the Head.

"D'Arcy of the Fourth Form is coming here."

Dr. Holmes' troubled face brightened.

"Very good. Let us hope that this is a sign that the reckless boys have come to their senses. Doubtless he has come to ask for forgiveness. I sincerely trust so."

Mr. Railton made no reply. He trusted so, if it came to that. But he did not think so.

From the beginning, Mr. Railton had had a lingering doubt of Tom Merry's guilt. And the emphatic manner in which all St. Jim's had rallied round the expelled junior, strengthened his doubt.

Mr. Railton was prepared to support his headmaster in every measure he might take; but he did not expect surrender from the rebels.

As Arthur Augustus came up the steps, Mr. Railton threw open the door of the New House. An icy blast, laden with snowflakes, rushed in.

"D'Arcy—"

"Good-mornin', sir!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

"You may come in, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir."

D'Arcy came in, and Mr. Railton closed the door again. Then he looked curiously at the swell of St. Jim's.

Dr. Holmes came forward. Mr. Ratcliff, with a sour face, looked out of his study.

"Well, D'Arcy?" said the Head, in a not unkindly tone.

"I trust that this means that my rebellious boys are returning to their duty."

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"As a matter of fact, sir, we are weady and willin' to return to our duty," he said. "But on condish—"

Dr. Holmes raised his hand.

"Junior boys cannot be allowed to make conditions with their headmaster," he said. "There must be unconditional surrender; and then I will deal with all of them as leniently as possible."

"We are not goin' to suwwendah, sir."

"What!"

"Unless Tom Mewwy is set wight, sir, we are goin' to hold on, all through next term if necessary."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Have you come here to be insolent, D'Arcy?" he demanded.

"I hope not, sir! I should regard insolence to my head-mastah as vewy bad form. I have come ovah to ask you to dimnah."

"Wha-a-t?"

Dr. Holmes blinked at the cheerful Gussy. Whatever he had expected, he certainly had not expected that.

"That's the ideah, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "We are goin' to celebrate Christmas in pwopah style, sir, in spite of the unfortunat' misunderstandin' that is goin' on. Fatty Wynn has made a wealdy wippin' Christmas puddin'—I am suah you will like it, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Blake is makin' no end of mince pies—"

"D'Arcy!"

"It will be a weal wippin' spweed, sir. We are all sowwy for the misunderstandin', and we hope you will come woud."

We shall be glad to see Mr. Wailton, too; and—and Mr. Watchif," added Arthur Augustus, with an effort.

"Upon my word," snorted Mr. Ratcliff.

"We twust, sir," continued Arthur Augustus, "that by this time you are beginnin' to wealdes that you have made a wudiculous mistake with wegard to Tom Mewwy—"

"D'Arcy!"

"And we should like to buy the hatchet, sir, and forget all troubles in a jolly Chwistmas celebration. I twust you will come, sir."

Dr. Holmes stared at the cheerful Gussy.

"I—I suppose this is not intended to be insolence," he said, at last.

"Bai Jove!"

"It is, I suppose, crass stupidity."

"Wealdy, sir—"

"Tom Merry is sentenced to expulsion from the school, and that sentence will be carried out," said the Head.

"Every boy who has taken part in this reckless rebellion will be severely punished."

"Vewy well, sir," said Arthur Augustus loftily, "I have wasted my time, I see. I had hoped, sir, that by this time you would be prepared to listen to reason. I am sowwy to find you such a vewy obstinate old gentleman."

"D'Arcy!" gasped the Head.

"I will now return," said Arthur Augustus, "I have done my best—and it is your fault, sir, if this vow continues."

"You will not return," said the Head grimly. "You will be sent home, D'Arcy, and the same will be done with every boy who leaves the School House and falls into my hands."

"I twust, sir, that you will wespheet a flag of twuce."

"A-a-a what?"

Arthur Augustus pointed to the tablecloth, gracefully draped round the broom-handle.

"That is a flag of twuce, sir."

"You utterly wudiculous boy," exclaimed the Head angrily.

"How dare you talk such nonsense to your headmaster!"

"Wealdy, Dr. Holmes—"

"Mr. Railton, will you be kind enough to take this boy to the station, and see him into the train for his home. There is a train this afternoon that will take him to Eastwoud."

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Railton.

"In the meantime, lock him in a study," said the Head.

"I pwotest!" shouted Arthur Augustus, as the Housemaster's grasp fastened on his shoulder. "I pwotest! Mr. Wailton, as a soldiah you should wespheet the white flag—"

"Don't be absurd, D'Arcy!"

"Look heah— Oh cwumba!"

In the Housemaster's grip Arthur Augustus was marched away to an empty study, twirled into it, and the door was closed and locked on him.

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Bai Jove! Wotten tweachevy! I should wealdy have expected Mr. Wailton to wespheet a flag of twuce! They are actin' just as if they do not take me sewiously at all!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Possibly Arthur Augustus was right, and he was not being taken with the seriousness that was his due. But he was taken, at all events—and he was a prisoner in a locked study, with the happy prospect before him of spending his Christmas afternoon in a railway-train, leaving behind him the rebels of St. Jim's, to get on the best they could without the assistance of his well-known tact and judgment.

It was a dismaying prospect. For Arthur Augustus had no doubt—not the slightest—that without his assistance the whole rebellion would go to "pot." And, in great wrath and indignation, he hammered at the door of the study, and demanded at the top of his voice to be set at liberty.

CHAPTER 9.
The Rebels to the Rescue!

"THE ass!"

"The frabious chump!"

"The burbling jabberwock!"

"The crass duffer!"

Those remarks, and many more, were made by Tom Merry & Co., as they stared through the whirling snowflakes in the quad from the windows of the School House.

Arthur Augustus had disappeared into the New House, and they had not seen him since. And they did not expect to see him. It was all very well for Arthur Augustus to declare that his tablecloth was a flag of truce. It was certain that the Head would not enter into the game, as it were. Tablecloth or no tablecloth, Gussy was not likely to escape the hands of authority once he had ventured into them.

"He's gone!" said Cardew. "They'll nobble him and whisk him out! We've lost our comic man who was going to cheer us up over Christmas! It's hard lines on us!"

"The awful chump!" growled Tom Merry.



Blake reached the rope and grasped it. "Pull!" he panted. "All hands!" shouted Tom Merry. There was no time for Blake to climb the rope; Taggles' outstretched hand was close behind him. He grasped with both hands and held on, and the juniors above dragged up the rope. (See page 10.)

Jack Blake growled wrathfully. The adventure of Arthur Augustus had drawn most of the fellows away from the Christmas preparations. Fatty Wynn, however, had declined to be interested. Fatty was superintending the boiling of the Christmas puddings, and he was not likely to quit that important and congenial task on account of such a trifle.

"They've got him, of course!" said Blake. "But they're jolly well not going to keep him!"

"They won't want to!" grinned Cardew. "He'll be sent home, of course! There's a train to-day, I believe!"

"The ass!" said Tom. "We can't have it! But—"

"If they don't let him out, we're going to fetch him!" said Jack Blake determinedly.

"Phew!"

"After all, why not?" asked Herries. "There's only two or three old fogies over there, and we could mop them up easily enough!"

"Mop up the Head!" murmured Manners.

"Well, we're going to rescue Gussy!"

"Can't leave him in the hands of the giddy Amalekites!" said Digby. "He's an ass, and we'll bump him when we get him back, but we're not leaving him in their clutches!" Tom Merry nodded.

"After all, we can do it!" he said. "We've got the force on our side—for the present!"

"Yes, rather!"

There was no doubt upon that point. It was pretty obvious that the Head must be intending to raise force from somewhere to deal with the rebels, but it was equally clear that so far he had not done so. Now that the Sixth and Fifth were gone, force was overwhelmingly on the side of the schoolboy insurgents.

That state of affairs was not likely to last long; but, fortunately for Arthur Augustus, it was the state of affairs for the time being.

Tom Merry picked out three dozen fellows to follow him, leaving the rest in garrison. He led his flock out of the School House and across the quadrangle.

They advanced boldly towards the New House, though

their hearts beat fast at the thought of dealing with the Head and the Housemaster at close quarters.

Mr. Railton saw them coming, and opened the door of the House. He was surprised and he was pleased. Not for a moment did he suppose that this was an advance in force, and that an attack was coming.

From the interior of the House a hammering sound reached the ears of the rescuers as they advanced. And this voice of Arthur Augustus in tones of wrath was audible.

"I demand to be released at once! Open this beastly door!"

"That's the one and only!" grinned Blake.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Silence in that room, D'Arcy!" called out Mr. Ratcliff angrily.

"Wats!"

"What? What?"

"I refuse to take any notice of you, Watty!"

"Upon my word! I—I—"

Tom Merry & Co. arrived. Mr. Railton fixed a rather steely look on the captain of the Shell.

"I am glad to see this," he said quietly. "I am very glad to see that the ringleaders in this revolt have come to their senses."

"You're makin' a little mistake, sir!" said Cardew.

"We've come for Gussy!"

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Come on, you fellows!" exclaimed Tom.

"Hurrah!"

The rescuers rushed into the New House. Mr. Railton stood in the way, angry and indignant; but he was borne back by the rush. He struggled in great wrath; but the odds were too much, and he was bundled into a study, the key was transferred to the outside of the door, and he was locked in.

"Now for Gussy!" grinned Blake.

"Where are you, D'Arcy, you fathead?" roared Grundy of the Shell.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 77A.

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

I have several times been requested to devote a number of the "St. Jim's News" to the one and only Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Hence this special Gussy Number.

Of course, I had to inform Gussy of my intention, and he promptly offered to take the job right out of my hands. His scheme was to make the "St. Jim's News" a little handbook on "How to Dress," by a member of the aristocracy, but the offer was declined with thanks, much to the disgust of that blue-blooded aristocrat.

Then he offered to write what he called some "humorous and instructive" articles on such subjects as "Why lavender kid gloves are not worn with drab-coloured, silk spats," and "Toppers for all occasions."

This little offer was likewise turned down, and Gussy figuratively shook the dust of my editorial sanctum from his nattily-shod feet. He told me that if the number was a failure, it would be no use coming to him for sympathy. Monty Lowther wept salt tears at this pathetic departure, until Manners threw something at him.

Then we settled down to work in peace, and were just getting well away, when there came a gentle tap upon the door.

"May I come in, dear boys?" asked a well-known voice.

I gave the desired permission, and Gussy again entered.

"I wonder if you could publish a little article on 'How to sing a tenor solo,' dear boy?" he asked, in his dulcet tones. "It's brightly written, and wathah amusin'."

Well, it would have really hurt the good little ass if I had told him I couldn't, so I resolved to take it. Monty Lowther has revised and altered the effort at my request, and the result is quite different to what Arthur Augustus originally intended it to be.

Marvellous to relate, Baggy Trimble heard what was afoot. How that youth finds out these things beats us sometimes.

Baggy, to our surprise, turned up with a little poem he had written upon the subject, which I have found room for. Coming as it does from the brain of a Trimble, it is as that youth says, 'brilliant composition, floocent and clever.' The original spelling and punctuation have been left in. Doubtless much of its "brilliance" would be lost if we attempted to sub-edit it!

There are several other compositions, all of which I trust you will find palatable.

TOM MERRY.

"GUSSY!"

By Bagley Trimble.

(To the Honorable Arther Orgustus D'Arcy.)

Of all the fellows in the skool,
Thear isn't one like Gussy.
He always keeps seed 8 and cool,
Excepting when he's fussey.
He always is erbout his togz,
Which worries me extremely,
I never care a bit when mine,
Are very far from seamly.

His pater is a nobel lord,
Like moast of my relations.
The plate that decks his festiue bord,
Has lasted generations!
Like sum of that at Trimble Hall,
Or else at Bagley Towers,
The Trimbles' country manshon which,
I've talked erbout for howers.

We're proud of all such famous names
As Trimble and D'Arcy,
Though of the 2 you must admitt,
My own is much mor clarsy.
A Trimble faught at Agincourt,
Where Nelson moped up Boney,
Lets hoap like the gallent warrior,
Was never like me,—stoney!

IMAGINARY EPITAPH.

ALAS, DEAH BOYS!
GATHAH WOUND AN' WEEP!
For beneath this Spot weposes
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY,
the nuttiest of the Nuts,
the swelliest of the Swells.
In his life-time he was
"The glass of fashion and the mould of
form,
The observed of all observers."
(Shakespeare).

His wardwobe, deah boys, consisted of
SIXTY SHININ' SILK TOPPAHS,
TWENTY-SIX STWIPED WAISTCOATS,
A VAWIETY OF CWICKET BLAZAHS,
SEVEWAL SCORES OF WAINBOW-
COLOURED SOCKS,
UMPTEN PAIRS OF TWOUSANS,
an'

NUMEVOUS SILK SPATS.
Many of the toppahs, I feah, have been
used as concertinas; an' some of the
twousals wepose in the jaws of
Hewies' bulldog! The reman dah of
Gussy's garments will be despatched to
the Britwish Museum.
"Adieu for ever, Vere de Vere!
And you may surely trust us
To shed a sad and silent tear
For you, the great Augustus!"

HOW TO SING A TENOR SOLO.

By
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

A tenor solo is a very difficult thing to sing properly. I have several times given an exhibition of my powers of singing with some little success.

Occasionally the audience have been moved so much that they have tried to imitate me, with, however, very small success. If they think they are singing when they make a noise rather like a cat, or Herries' dog Towser, they are sadly mistaken.

When I pointed this out to them, Herries, in his usual tactless way, said they were catcalling me. Really, that fellow has got no tact or judgment whatever.

Then, of course, one has to be very careful as to what sort of song one sings. It is no use a fellow with a ripping tenor voice attempting to sing "Coal Black Mammy," or "Ma," or any of these modern ballads. He must sing sentimental verses such as "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes," or "Love through the Years."

Blake suggested that a fellow with a voice like mine should sing "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep!" I quite failed to grasp his meaning. He seemed to consider it a very humorous remark, but Jove!

The song did not suit my voice a bit, and, like so many of his ridiculous suggestions, was quite impos.

The accompanist, too, is an important person. He must know your style of voice, and be able to get the best out of your singing. For example, my peculiarity when I sing is that I hover longer on the top notes than on the lower ones. Once Digby requested me to come off quickly before I fell off.

A most absurd remark. Herries once complained that my singing upset his dog Towser, a brute which has no respect whatever for a fellow's trousers. As a matter of fact, it is his dog Towser which upsets my singing. No sooner do I start practising than the animal jumps up at me and makes my clobber in a disgraceful condition.

A fellow can never do his best under such trying conditions. I have often requested Herries to remove Towser when I am singing. He merely said he would send in the bill to me if Towser was taken ill.

Now this was not only rude, it was utterly ridie. When I told him so, he got out his beastly cornet and started blowing it.

I sincerely trust that other tenor soloists do not have to put up with the same trying experiences that I do.

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MORE FREE FOOTBALL PHOTOGRAPHS

Coming SOON.

A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE.

By Monty Lowther.

The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy knitted his brows and gazed thoughtfully at the array of socks which he had spread upon the floor.

"Now, which?" he murmured, much perplexed. "Ah! Which indeed."

The choice of his socks always occupied a considerable portion of his leisure time before breakfast.

There came a discreet tap upon the door, and Robinson, his wonderful valet, entered.

"Good mornin', sir!" Robinson then carefully shaved his master, after which he assisted him to dress. The manner in which he did so, caused the Hon. A. A. to be recognised as the most perfectly dressed man in Bond Street.

"The Honourable Arthur Augustus sighed contentedly as he put all except the pair in question in a heap. Robinson then carefully shaved his master, after which he assisted him to dress. The manner in which he did so, caused the Hon. A. A. to be recognised as the most perfectly dressed man in Bond Street.

"The Honourable Arthur Augustus sighed contentedly as he put all except the pair in question in a heap. Robinson then carefully shaved his master, after which he assisted him to dress. The manner in which he did so, caused the Hon. A. A. to be recognised as the most perfectly dressed man in Bond Street.

"Gussy! Are you ready?"

A great bellow sounded from the bottom



There was a dismal howl as Herries' canine pets flung themselves at D'Arcy. "Dwaggon off!" he cried.

of the stairs, followed by a clattering and bumping.

"Good mornin', Hewwies, deah boy!" The exquisite one beamed as his former school friend entered.

Collects Herries, the famous dog fancier, together his three canine friends together and nodded.

"Fine mornin'!" he remarked briefly. "Towser the II. is a bit restive this mornin'."

"I'm vewy sorry, Hewwies," said Gussy. "Humph!" grunted the other. "That won't make you any better. Come and have a look at him."

Together the two old friends descended the carved oak staircase of D'Arcy's magnificent town house. The kennels were situated at the back and were filled to overflowing with Herries' numerous pets.

There at this moment, and a dismal howl as six canines flung themselves at poor Gussy. "Yowooogh! Dwaggon off!"

Herries, after a struggle, managed to detach his pets.

"Your fault, you ass," he yelled, "for wearing dogskin gloves."

Just at this moment, as things were getting interesting, I awoke up. I had dozed off in the Common-room and remember Gussy and Herries were having a heated argument over Towser.

It is weird what funny things one does dream at times.

GUSSY GETS A SHOCK!

By George Figgins.



"COMING to have a kick at the footer, Gussy?" asked Jack Blake. "No, wathah not, deah boy," answered Gussy, in a very abstracted fashion. "I have an appointment with Mr. Snip. He's makin' me a new overcoat, deah boy."

"What do you want a new overcoat for, your arblin' dummy?"

"Weally, Blake, I must ask you not—"

"Oh, all right, then," growled Blake, and he and Digby left Study No. 6.

Gussy stood staring after them for a few moments. To him the engagement was an important one. What could be more important than a new overcoat? He only had two, and a third was absolutely a necessity. He quite failed to see his chums' point of view. He sighed as he put on his shining topper, and stepped off briskly in the direction of Rylcombe.

Meanwhile, Blake had been discussing Gussy in a most heated way.

"Look here, Dig," he remarked, "it's about time we put a stop to that silly chump's capers."

Digby fully agreed. "This is the third half he's wasted over that blessed overcoat, and he's hardly had any footer practice at all. What are we going to do?"

The two chums thought deeply, and at last Blake slapped Digby on the back.

"Got it!" he cried triumphantly. Digby staggered under the blow, and looked puzzled.

"Got what?" he asked. "Wait and see," said Blake mysteriously. "Where's Herries?"

"Down with Towser, I think," replied Digby.

"Then come on and find him," said Blake, "and 'll break the news."

"You'll break your neck if you don't pull up," gasped Digby, as Jack Blake rushed him along at a furious pace.

Herries was soon found, and Blake proceeded to unfold his scheme amidst cracklings from his fellow plotters. Shortly after the three started off for Rylcombe, too, each with a mysterious bundle under his arm.

"Is there anything further, sir?" asked Mr. Snip, washing his hands with invisible soap.

Gussy turned to a different angle in order to see how his new overcoat hung at the back.

"No, thank you, Mr. Snip." The little tailor bowed, and rushed to open the shop door as Gussy left. The swell of St. Jim's was one of his best customers.

Gussy strolled out into the village, noting with joy that his new garment caused a mild sensation. All the local stopkeepers came to their doors to see the swell pass. Gussy walked blissfully on, swinging his silver-knobbed malacca cane, unaware of the fate awaiting him.

He turned out of the village into Rylcombe Lane, and was strolling back in the direction of St. Jim's, when three masked figures sprang out upon him from the hedge.

"Your money or your life!" said the foremost, in a menacing voice.

Arthur Augustus stopped. To say the least, he was astounded. The three desperadoes seized him, and dragged him into the wood.

"Welease me, you wottahs!" cried Gussy, struggling wildly. "I shall give you a most fearful thwashi, bai Jove!"

The leader of the attackers laughed sarcastically.

"That's a nice overcoat he's wearing," he remarked. "Have it off him!"

"Weally, don't you dare— Ow, ow!" A none too clean handkerchief was thrust into D'Arcy's mouth, and his heels died away.

The bag was secured, and to stop his wild struggles his hands and feet were also tied. "Got the other duds?" whispered the leader.

"Here they are," said another, as he dragged three bundles out of the bushes. "Good! Take his others off!"

They proceeded to divest Gussy of his outer garments. A choking sort of noise came from the victim as he saw the togs which they were going to provide him with.

A huge pair of trousers, patched and tattered, were first pulled on him. A coat, which looked even older than the trousers, was next placed upon his shoulders. Finally, an old cap and a huge pair of hobnail boots were placed by his side.

The bandits then collected together the clothes they had commandeered, and cut loose Gussy's hands.

While Gussy was struggling with the knots at his feet, they made off. By the time he was entirely free they had disappeared.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Gussy. "The awful wottahs!"

He eyed the awful clothes with which he had been provided with deep disgust. He shuddered painfully as he glanced at the boots, but there was no help for it. He pulled them on, and donned the cap, and dimly crawled back into Rylcombe Lane.

He had hardly proceeded a hundred yards when he ran into a crowd of us. Tom Merry, who was amongst the party, called a halt as the swell approached.

"Good heavens! What a frowsy old tramp!"

Gussy jumped. "Weally—," he began.

"Good gracious!" cried Tom Merry. "It's Gussy!"

"Ought to be ashamed of himself," said Lowther severely, "wearing togs like that."

"I've been attacked!" shrieked Gussy. "Eh?"

"I've been assaulted, and my clothes have been stolen."

"He's wandering!" said Tom Merry. "Here comes Blake."

"Take your innaatic away," said Lowther, as Blake came up with Herries and Digby. "He says his clothes have been stolen." He tapped his head significantly.

Blake nodded, and the chums led the protesting Gussy away.

He failed entirely to understand the yell of happy laughter which floated to him, but he began to understand when he found a neat bundle upon the study table in which were the missing clothes.

It will, however, be some time before he gets over his adventure with the bandits

"Good heavens!" cried the Juniors, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared upon the scene. "What a frowsy old tramp!"

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"Good heavens!" cried the Juniors, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared upon the scene. "What a frowsy old tramp!"



"BACKING UP TOM MERRY!"

(Continued from page 13.)

"Bai Jove! Weally, Gwunday—"

"Here he is!"

"Stand back!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "I order you! I command you! I—I— Oh! Ah! Whoooooop!"

Mr. Ratcliff was rushed over without ceremony. Nobody respected Mr. Ratcliff, and he was not dealt with gently. He went spinning headlong, and collapsed upon the floor, howling and gasping.

"This way, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus, in great delight.

The door was opened the next moment. Dr. Holmes came hurrying on the scene, his gown fluttering, his face scarlet with wrath.

"Boys!" he thundered. "How dare you—"

"Bump him!" shouted Grundy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wha-a-at?" stutted the Head. "Wha-a-at did you say, Grundy? Can I believe my ears?"

"Bump him! Bump the Head!" roared Grundy truculently.

"Bless my soul!"

Dr. Holmes backed away hurriedly. It was only too clear that the rebels were not to be subdued by the terror of his glance. His glance had lost all its terror for the juniors of St. Jim's.

But only the egregious Grundy thought of bumping so august a personage as the Head. Tom Merry grasped George Alfred Grundy by the collar and dragged him back. "Shut up, you ass!" he gasped.

"Look here—"

"Come on, Gussy, you frabjous chump!" howled Blake.

"I wish to speak a few words to the Head befoah I go, Blake. Dr. Holmes, I am surprised at you—"

"Come on, you ass!"

"Weally, Blake— Leggo my collah—leggo my hair! Dig, you wottah! Hewwies, you wuffian, leava go!"

But Arthur Augustus' chums did not let go. They rushed the rescued swell of St. Jim's out of the House. The rescue party followed fast.

Mr. Ratcliff sat up in a dazed state. Mr. Railton hammered on a locked door and shouted to be released. Dr. Holmes gazed at the hilarious party retreating across the quadrangle, scarcely able to believe the evidence of his eyes.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured, aghast. "Goodness gracious! Upon my word! Bless—bless my soul!"

And that was all the Head of St. Jim's could say.

Tom Merry & Co. rushed the rescued ambassador into the School House, and the great door was locked and barred and bolted again. And then—

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Gwoogh! You uttah asses!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Leave off! Gwoogh! Yoop! I will give you a feahful thwashin' all wound!"

"Now will you play the giddy ox again?" demanded Blake.

"Yawoooooop!"

Bump! Bump!

"Whooop! I—I will thwash you all wound— Yawwooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was left sitting on the doormat, in a dishevelled and dazed state. But he did not proceed to thrash the rescuers all round. He was too busy for that. For quite a long time Arthur Augustus was busy in trying to get his second wind.

CHAPTER 10.

Very Merry!

FATTY WYNN'S plump face beamed over the festive board.

Every other face was merry and bright.

The Christmas dinner in the barred School House was a great success. Greatest of all was Fatty Wynn's Christmas pudding. Every fellow present, following the example of Oliver Twist, asked for more.

Fatty Wynn himself did justice to it—more than justice. He looked very shiny, and showed a strong disinclination to move when the feast was over.

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"Feeling chippy, old fellow?" asked Tom Merry, clapping the fat Fourth-Former on the shoulder.

"Ow! Don't jolt me!" murmured Wynn.

"Eh? Why not? Like another helping?"

Fatty Wynn sighed.

"I'd like another," he said regretfully. "But—but seven helpings of a pudding like that are quite enough. Enough's as good as a feast, you know."

"Bai Jove! I should think that seven helpin's were watah too much!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "But twy a mince-pie, deah boy!"

Fatty shook his head slowly.

"Like a little fat pork?" asked Monty Lowther humorously.

Fatty Wynn shuddered.

He was beginning to feel that his enthusiastic appreciation of his own cookery had perhaps carried him a little too far. Seven helpings of Christmas pudding seemed to jostle one another rather uncomfortably.

He was mercifully left to repose while the other fellows cleared the tables.

Then Monty Lowther seated himself at the piano—which had been rolled from the music-rooms into Big Hall. Some damage had been done to the instrument in its travels, and some to walls and corners; but that could not be helped. It was not a time for taking heed of trifles. As Monty Lowther remarked, Christmas came but once a year, and a barring-out still more seldom.

Lowther was a good pianist, in what Manners called a splashdash way. Manners had a classical taste in music, while Monty's taste ran to ragtime. But there was no doubt that Monty's style was more generally appreciated than that of Manners. With the delightful frankness of the Lower School, the juniors would probably have told Manners to ring off if he had given them a Beethoven sonata or a Hungarian rhapsody by Chgkighozvsky. While as soon as Monty Lowther began to drum on the keys there was an enthusiastic crowd round the piano at once.

Outside the December dusk was thick, and snowflakes whirled against the old stained glass windows. But within all was merriment and jollity. Big log fires blazed and sparkled; all the electric lights were going at full force. Every window of the School House blazed with light into the winter darkness.

What the Head thought, if he looked across the dusky quad at the flaring windows of the School House, the rebels did not know or care. In fact, they had almost forgotten the Head. Cardew remarked that he was a back-number, and the juniors agreed that he was. From the School House—for the Head to hear if he chose—rolled a chorus in scores of merry voices. Grundy of the Shell delighted the company with Good King Wenceslas, the only drawback being that he had forgotten most of the words and all the tune. But there were plenty of other fellows to put in both. And Cardew of the Fourth, being observed to wear a slightly superior smile during the merry proceedings, was dragged out and ordered to deliver a coon song, on peril of his life. Coon songs and Cardew had little in common; but as it was agreed that he should be bumped till he had delivered himself of it, there was no choice in the matter for the dandy of the Fourth. He wriggled in the grasp of the grinning juniors, rather repentant of the superior smile.

"I don't know any dashed rubbish!" he protested.

Bump!

"Yo-ow!"

"Go it, Cardew!" grinned Levison. "You're in for it!"

"Yaas, watah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "You have weally asked for it, you know, deah boy!"

"Let go!" yelled Cardew. "I won't!"

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, you rotters! I tell you—"

Bump!

The third bump was enough for Ralph Reckness Cardew. He sang his song, to a rattling accompaniment from Monty Lowther. Then there was a general comment of "Rotten!"

"I sha'n't put a copper in the hat for that, Cardew!" remarked Blake.

"Ha, ha! Watah not!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Cardew, and he retired from the scene.

"Now then, Gussy!" called out Blake.

"Bai Jove! If you fellows would weally like me to sing," said Arthur Augustus modestly.

"My dear man, we know you're going to, anyway!"

"Weally, Goah—"

"Get it over, old chap!" suggested Wally of the Third.

"Don't linger out the agony!"

"You are a cheeky young wapscaillon, Wally!" exclaimed his major. "If this were not a festive season, I should give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"How lucky for you it's a festive occasion!" remarked Wally.

"Bai Jove! I—"
Lowther crashed on the keys.
"Waiting for you, Gussy! What's it going to be—Dinky Dinah, or 'How I Love Sprats for Tea'?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"
"None of your dashed classics!" said Blake warningly.
"The fact is, deah boys, I was goin' to sing—"
"I knew he was!" said Gore.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I was goin' to sing 'O du mein holder Abenstern,' f'wom Tannhauser, you know."

"You're jolly well not!" said Blake. "No German! Cut it out! Besides, it's weepy-waily Wagner stuff. Chuck it!"
"Weally, Blake—"

"Make it 'Dinky Dinah'!" urged Lowther.
"I refuse to make it 'Dinky Dinah, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I do not know 'Dinky Dinah,' and I v'gard it as piffle! 'Star of Eve' is weally vewy good, and I will sing it in English if you like."
"Order! Cut it out!"

"I have a second choice," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I will sing the 'Toveador's Song' f'wom 'Carmen' in Fwench!"

"No, you won't!" said Blake. "Come down to common earth, old duck, and make it 'Sprats for Tea'!"

"Wats! How do you like 'Thwee Fishahs,' then?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I was weservin' that for an encore."
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

Gussy's artless confession took them by storm. There was a terrific roar of laughter in Big Hall. Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass, and glanced round in surprise. He did not see where the joke came in.
"Weally, you fellows—"

"Make it 'Three Fishers,' if you like," said Blake. "Now then, Lowther, can you buump it out?"
"On my head," answered Lowther.

"Pvay excuse me, Lowthah, but I should pwefer Mannahs to accompany me," said Arthur Augustus. "You change evewythin' into wag-time, you know, and this is a sewious mattah."

"Jolly serious, when Gussy sings!" murmured Dig. Monty Lowther grinned, and rose from the stool.
"Here you are, Manners! Take it on for the tragic interlude. Some of you fellows telephone for the ambulances."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners sat down to the piano, and ran his long, slim fingers over the keys, in his artistic way. Arthur Augustus coughed.

"I haven't any music, you know—"
"Never mind—carry on!" said Blake. "Life's short, you know."

"Weally, Blake—"
"Are those fishermen never going to start?" inquired Wally of the Third.

"Dwy up, you young wascal! The fact is, deah boys, I weally forget the words," confessed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That is wathah a dwawback in singin' a song."

"All serene," said Lowther. "I'll prompt you. I'll scribble the words out for you to refer to."

"Thank you, deah boy! I wemembah the first two verses all wight, but the third has quite gone."

"Why not cut it out?" asked Gore.
"Weally, Goah—"
"Shut up, Gore! Now then, Gussy!"

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them now!" quoted Cardew, and there was a chuckle.

Manners was on the prelude now. He played it twice, and Arthur Augustus weighed in a couple of bars late. Manners contrived to coincide, however, till Arthur Augustus, getting into the swing of the thing, bucked up and left him behind. Manners put on a spurt and overtook him, and then, as Gussy lingered lovingly on a favourite note, he shot ahead. But they were almost neck-and-neck at the close of the first verse.

Meanwhile, Monty Lowther was scribbling words of the third verse that the swell of St. Jim's had so unfortunately forgotten. Lowther wrinkled his brows thoughtfully over the task, perhaps in an effort to remember. Or perhaps he was improving on the original composition.

Arthur Augustus ploughed on through the second verse of the "Three Fishers," and the juniors were reduced to seriousness by this time. The expression of painful intensity on the face of Arthur Augustus, to say nothing of the notes he produced, would have made any audience serious.

Then Monty Lowther slipped the paper he had scribbled into D'Arcy's hand, and the swell of St. Jim's nodded his thanks, and sang the third verse from what was written. It was a remarkable verse. The audience jumped as they heard it.

"Three kippers were swimming around in the wet,
Not wanting a bit to be caught and killed,
They looked at the boat, and they looked at the net,
And they hadn't the slightest desire to be grilled.
And the storm came on, and the fishers were drowned,
So the kippers kept merrily swimming around—"

At that point the audience could restrain their feelings no longer. It was dawning even upon Arthur Augustus that there was something wrong with those words.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
It was a roar that drowned the voice of the hapless singer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Bai Jove—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Lowthah, these are not the wight words! I do not wemembah the wight words, but I feel shah that these are not wight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You uttah ass, Lowthah—"
Monty Lowther wiped his eyes.

"It's all right, Gussy! They're jolly good words; I made them up specially for you—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus' noble eye gleamed wrath through his eyeglass. There was no doubt that his song was a success—as a comic effort. The juniors rocked with laughter. But it was not a comic success that Arthur Augustus had wanted.

"Lowthah, I v'gard you as an uttah beast! I am goin' to twash you—"

"Here, order!" roared Blake.
"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus made a ferocious rush at the humorist of the Shell. Lowther dodged, laughing almost too much to dodge, and Arthur Augustus tripped over Grundy's long legs.

"Yawwooh!"
"Order!" shouted Tom Merry. "Gussy, old man—"

"I am goin' to twash Lowthah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther fled down Big Hall, dodging right and left, amid howls of laughter. With his eyeglass streaming at the end of its cord, Arthur Augustus rushed in pursuit.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Lowther dodged out of the big doorway, and Arthur Augustus rushed after him, and they disappeared, both going strong.

"Oh dear!" gasped Blake, wiping his eyes. "Gussy will be the death of me yet!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was five minutes later that Monty Lowther came back, and he came alone. The juniors were still chortling.

"Where's Gussy?" demanded Tom Merry.
"I fancy he's in the Fourth Form room," said Lowther demurely.

"What on earth's he doing there?"
"Thumping on the door."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Thump, thump, thump! The sound of loud hammering on a locked door rang from the distance."

"You see, he chased me into the Form-room, and I dodged him round the desks and got out, just in time to save my life—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"So I turned the key. He seems a bit excited."

Bang, bang, bang, bang!
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry hurried to the rescue of the imprisoned swell of St. Jim's. But there was a talk through the keyhole first: and the door was not unlocked till Gussy had promised to leave the fearful thrashing over till after Christmas. Then the swell of St. Jim's rejoined the hilarious company in Big Hall.

His expression was lofty and dignified. He regarded Monty Lowther with icy disdain. But Monty, with heroic self-sacrifice, proposed that Arthur Augustus should sing "Star of Eve"; and the other fellows, with equal heroism, supported him. And then all was calm and bright.

Christmas was over, but the St. Jim's barring-out was still going on. What the next development would be, the rebels of St. Jim's could not guess, but they were cheery and confident. And at least they had had a merry Christmas, though they were kept at school by backing up Tom Merry.

THE END.

(Excitement is intense in next week's rollicking fun school story entitled: "THE SIEGE OF THE SCHOOL HOUSE!" By Martin Clifford. Dr. Holmes goes to extreme lengths in trying to bring about the downfall of the Rebels of St. Jim's.)



Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

(Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his Reader Chums.)

Address your letters to The Editor, The GEM Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My dear Chums,—We are getting into the thick of things in the barring-out series. Without a doubt the story next week gets ahead in gripping interest of any of its forerunners.

"THE SIEGE OF THE SCHOOL HOUSE!"

That is the title of the coming yarn. You might oblige me by taking very special notice of this story. It has a vigour about it of the most noteworthy kind, and, what is more, it shows just the rare old fighting spirit of St. Jim's. Of course, we all admire the fighting spirit. It is that spirit which has made the British Empire of which we are all jolly proud. People who take hard usage without standing up for the right are altogether out of it; it is bad for them and bad for the other side. Giving way to injustice is so much encouragement to tyranny.

ST. JIM'S IN THE RIGHT OF IT!

There is no question that in this big dispute at St. Jim's the "rebels" have plenty of reason on their side. And there is real punch and vim in the narrative of how the wee chaps stood up for a good cause. You have never met the popular favourites under better conditions.

There are hard knocks, naturally, but these are taken in good style. It is a fight, and the story next Wednesday of the siege simply carries the reader off his feet with its splendid fire and dash. We have had barrings-out in the old days, but nothing to compare with the present set-to. It is a conflict with misguided authority which will be remembered for many a day in St. Jim's and wherever the GEM is read.

"REPORTED MISSING!"

You should take particular note of the fine story of the sea appearing next Wednesday under the above title. It has got the wonderful romance of the sea in every line of it, and you will be interested in the strong dramatic plot of this powerfully written yarn. There is no need for me to go into details, but this story has the element of piracy in it, also a rather baffling mystery, to say nothing of a very queer character who has been living far out of the world, and who cherishes a hope of revenge on people whom he fancies have treated him ill. A splendid part is played by the hero, who is called upon to champion what at one moment looks like a lost cause.

What you will like most in this trenchant tale of the ocean is the intense
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reality of it all. The writer knows the sea, and has felt the mystery of it to the full. I am always glad to have a story of the deep, for it is bound to supply a new impression. You find yourself in a fresh world of fascinating novelty every time a well-written sea yarn comes along.

EXTRA SPECIAL!

Another treat next week will be found in the thrilling tale of Chinese intrigue.

"THE AFFAIR OF THE YELLOW CLOUD!"

There is no need for me to say much about the subject of this entrancing tale. It just shows the relentless bitterness of the members of a Chinese secret society. And here the renowned detective, Anthony Sharpe takes a hand. The great crime investigator finds himself up against an atrocious murder, and he runs the guilty to earth. It is simply wonderful in the manner in which the detective pieces the broken bits of evidence together and discovers the motive of the crime, also the reason why the victim over linked himself so unfortunately with a gang whose watchword was revenge. Don't miss this magnificent story.

OUR SERIAL.

Mr. Duncan Storm has something extra fine next week. The Wolves are going strong!

A TUCK-HAMPER SURPRISE!

The GEM will shortly have a very welcome bit of news concerning our famous Tuck-Hamper Competition. There is going to be a Special Tuck-Hamper Week. I will refer to this matter again. It is a big surprise, and will, I am sure, be received with three times three, as it were. A Tuck-Hamper is a cheery affair, and when— But the news will keep. Watch Chat for future developments.

YOUR EDITOR.

RESULTS OF THE FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORIES COMPETITIONS.

SOUTHAMPTON.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

WILLIAM SCOTT,
424, Parliamentary Road,
Glasgow.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution contained one error:

Miss E. Puttock, 87, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been divided among the following seventeen competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

- F. Kennedy, 4, Fishers Vennel, Perth;
- John Kennedy, 4, Fishers Vennel, Perth;
- George Down, 30, Alan Street, Hobburn-on-Tyne;
- Harry Morgan, 27, Victoria Road, Folkestone;
- Ernest Bunyard, 31, Harold Road, Sittingbourne, Kent;
- R. A. Camp, Radclow Park, near Chelmsford, Essex;
- John Culchikus, 17, Low Albon Street, South Bank, York;
- R. W. McGinness, 528, Okham Road, Bardsley, Ashton-under-Lyne;
- L. Jackson, 199, Radcliffe Street, Oldham;
- Louie Pagan, 234, St. George's Road, Bolton;
- F. Broomfield, Rosebery Road, Felixstowe;
- J. Donetta, 122, St. Mary's Road, Edmonton, N. B.;
- Clara Love, 20, Emmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset;
- Samuel Bishop, 45, Wordsley Green, Worsley, near Stourbridge, Staffs.;
- Raymond W. Kernick, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham;
- Stanley Barrie, 19, Ferris Terrace, Ardrossan;
- F. S. W. Wilfen, Bridge End, Bocking, Essex.

SOLUTION.

Southampton Football Club, like numerous other famous clubs, owed its inception to the sportsmanship of a band of youths associated with a religious institution. It began at St. Mary's Church, Southampton, and was naturally called St. Mary's Football Club. The eleven made wonderful progress, and have a brilliant record.

EVERTON.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between the following two competitors:

- W. BOYD BARRIE,
19, Barrie Terrace,
Ardrossan;

- ROBERT CARPENTER,
5, Strickland Street,
Elswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne,

whose solutions contained one error each.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided between the following two competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

- Leonard Carpenter, 5, Strickland Street, Elswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne;
- Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth Street, Sunderland.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been awarded to the following ten competitors, whose solutions contained three errors each:

- John Hudson, 165, Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town, N.W. 5;
- Frances K. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Sunderland;
- Arthur Cooper, Jun., 55, Rutland Road, South Hackney, E. 9;
- Mrs. A. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan;
- Mrs. A. F. Clinch, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan;
- Arthur Wm. Diver, 55, Rutland Road, South Hackney, E. 9;
- James Horn, 119, High Street, Rothsay;
- J. Pattinson, 17, Clementine Terrace, Carlisle;
- Alfred Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Worsley, near Stourbridge;
- Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopstou, Bristol.

SOLUTION.

The Everton club was formed a long time before it was realised that it was destined to rank as one of the finest football clubs in this country. At one period Everton was the wealthiest club in the League, in which it has generally gained a prominent place.

