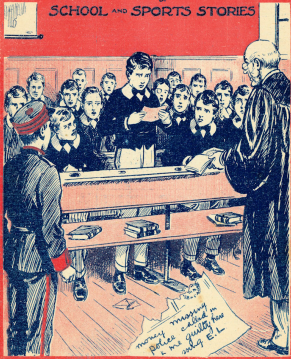


OUR EIGHT HUNDRETH ISSUE—AND STILL THE FAVOURITE!

The GEM 2^D

No. 800
Vol. XXXI.
June 15th, 1925.

LIBRARY
OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTS STORIES



THE FATEFUL MESSAGE!

(A Storying Incident from "LITTON'S BETRAYAL" The Grand, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co. published in this issue.)



Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

Address all letters: The Editor, "The Gem" Library, The Phoenix House, Farringham Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every	Monday
"THE MAGNET" Every Monday	
"THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday	
"CHICKLES" Every Thursday	
"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"	Published Yearly

My Dear Cousins, Eight hundred numbers of the Gem! Think of that! Is it not a feat of which to be proud? I know well enough my friends all over the world will be extra proud of the good old Gem because of all it has done for years past, and likewise for the reason that it has striven so splendidly into its eighth century of fortnightly weekly numbers. Now papers pop up, but such an achievement as that which can be put this week to the credit of the Gem, setting up the reputation of the Gem on Wednesday paper as never before, is not won in a hurry. One of these days I shall have something further to say of the history of the Gem.

LOOKING BACK!

Of course, I am not going to spend much time looking into the past. Those people who are lucky enough to possess a set of the Gem volumes can do that unaided. It is just the fact of the first record to which I want to draw the attention of my cousins. Eight hundred weeks is something very much like six-tens years! And the Gem remains at the top of the poll. Its grand years of St. Jim's continue to go like wildfire. It has swung away from success to success, and it can count its victories by hundreds. Its popularity never stood higher. Just as when Mr. Martin Gilford first set the race, so now. We go from better to better. What's more, Gem's history is a tale! The times have glided. Some of the years have been hard and extraordinarily difficult ones. But the Gem came up smiling, and thanks to its special years, helped very materially to dark days to keep things humming, and to bring the good cheer and happiness which everybody would be in a bad way. Long life to the Gem!

"CLEARING HIS NAME!"

By Martin Gilford.

Next week's story is No. 401 of the Gem is worthy of the magnificent tradition of the paper so all like so well. It would be impossible to say what Tom Merry & Co. have accomplished. The Gem, and the company of good fellows whose exploits are recounted week in, week out, mean more than I can set down in a few lines. The St. Jim's favorites have played up in grand style from the long ago spring of the innings. So will it continue! And the coming
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 200.

years need fear no rivals and no competitors. It is simply splendid, and gets there, not alone for interest and sparkle, but for its strong appeal to the heart. As we know, Ernest Lovison returns to St. Jim's after his sojourn at Greyfriars. The plot has been a good one. No need to go into details. What we are deeply interested in is how Lovison manages to carry on. He is in a tremendous difficulty; plotters are busy. What does he do? That you will see in next week's exciting book-alive story with its dramatic wind-up. Make a special note of this tale, for you will find it more than worth your while. Don't get left because the newspaper has sold out—which he will have done in a dead certainty, unless he has kept your copy according to schedule, properly earmarked for you and nobody else. Lovison has been through some amazingly bad times, but he is a stickler. You will be interested in this last problem which he has to face. Up to a point difficulties are good. Ernest Lovison has had his share.

"ST. JIM'S NEWS."

Edited by the Rev. Dr. Holmes.

An extra special edition of the "St. Jim's News" will be one of the many excellent features of the Gem for next week. This is very important. The supplement is the official paper of St. Jim's. It is most reasonable that the

RESULT OF "BLACKPOOL" PICTURE-PUZZLE COMPETITION.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

T. TAPPING.

61, New Road,
Spalding,
Huntingdon.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following nine competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

H. Monk, Top Hill Cottages, Oller, Hildesheim; A. Williams, 22, Montagu Street, Devon; B. J. Harris, Huddersfield, West-riding; Mrs. E. Clapp, 5, Charlotte Street, Cambridge; Mr. E. H. D. Bower, 28, Marlborough Terrace, Putney; W. O. Collins, Wimpson, Ipswich; E. Marshall, Scarborough; Tom Green, Thorpe Bar, Essex; Basil Brooks, 25, Norfolk Square, Hackney Road, E. 8; Ernest Bristle, 41, Dove Street, Stepney, Bristol.

With one competition, with two errors each, divide the top prize of £5 each. The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLITERS.

Blackpool's record has been a prolonged struggle with financial misfortune. The town's summer population is enormous. The football season begins. Blackpool is comparatively deserted. The Gem has had one grand player, but has been unable to retain them.

referred Head should be asked to conduct it for one week. We shall see how the business ought to be done. You will be vastly interested in the issue for which the doctor is responsible. We all like Dr. Holmes. He acknowledged his mistake in connection with the harrowing in business fashion. The Head is a sportsman—hard to convince, of course, when he has decided on a certain course of action—and he feels he is right, but then so a croaky body like is worth his salt! Dr. Holmes never stood in greater esteem than now. If anyone can represent St. Jim's as editor of the supplement weekly it will be. I am certain you will say by his chief ally in the occasion. The Special "Head" Number of the "St. Jim's News" tackles the whole subject admirably, and there we can know it. But the beloved Editor has not wanted the "trap" for which the supplement is celebrated.

"ROUNDED-UP!"

By Captain Mahalan Akroed.

This is a grand long complete tale of the forest rangers. As you may imagine it introduces that plucky ranger, Dave Klain. Dave is up against a big game, and no mistake. Single-handed he is on the trail of an unscrupulous gang of thieves who ever hold up a stage. The hunters have got away with a big load of valuables, and when the rangers come up with them after much hard riding it looks as though he has had his trouble for nothing. Hopelessly outnumbered, he is made prisoner by the rangers. Then it comes itself into show with against numbers and strength. Dave Klain seems to have got himself into a perfectly hopeless position. Just wait and see what he does and how he does it. This is a really fine yarn, and one calculated to keep any reader on the jump. You cannot be the life of you are here in the world justice is to be done, and the law vindicated. There is something else connected, and the reader is riched in a tale which fairly grips hold of the imagination.

"THE SPIDER OF THE NORTH!"

Next week's installment is packed with thrills. Tom Compton is held just as to turn the tables on the invisible Spider. The latter stands at nothing. It is funny what he is set for. The times involved are tremendous, and the carry on of the story next Wednesday is just magnificent in its intensity and power.

OUR COMPETITIONS!

There are as yet several only left. I know there is decrease interest taken in both competitions, which form an important feature of the Gem.

THESE SUMMER DAYS.

None of us don't get the time for more holidays, but you can make a bit of a hole when it is a question of seeing the country and having a whiff of the leather-scoped breeches on the downs. There is no time like the present for getting away into the wilds, either by means of Shanks' pony, or with the aid of the friendly jigger. The woods and fields just now make up a simple woodland—plenty to charm any fellow, whether he be a naturalist or just a hard-working chap who has never had the time to look into the marvels of the countryside. Trees, land, butterfly, flower, there is always something to interest. There are always dozens of eye-appeals in any countryside.

Your Editor.

LEVISON'S RETURN!

Ernest Levison, back from his prolonged visit to Greyfriars, is puzzled and hurt by the coolness with which he is received at St. Jim's. A Great School Story, Tense with Gripping Situations.

By Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER I. Gus's Idea!

"SOMETHIN' wath rough?"
"Bats?"
"Waddy, Blake—"
"Bosh!" said Herrie. "We shall be busy on Wednesday, ayber!"

"Yas, Bui—"
"We're going up the river on Wednesday!" said Bigby.
"In the eve, deah boy."
"Gusy, old man," said Blake, in a tone of patting remonstrance, such as one might use to a small child, "Gusy, old boy, cut it out! Leave it to Study No. 5."
"I couldn't—"
"Levison's all right," continued Blake. "But, after all, Levison don't matter to this study. In fact, I can't say I've specially noticed that he's been away."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth turned his eyes upon his three chums, more in sorrow than in anger.
"I really think that you fellows might play up, in the eve," he said. "Levison has been away some weeks—"
"He might have made it months," remarked Blake, "and still this study would have survived!"
"He has been getting a lot of credit at Greyfriars," said Arthur Augustus, "wath' golden opinions from all sorts of people, you know, as some poet or other remarks. He helped the Greyfriars chaps to win a big cricket match. I regard it as a precious capital to give him a reception when he comes back."

Blake & Co. yawned deeply.
They liked Levison of the Fourth well enough, and they liked still more his young brother Frank of the Third. But it could not be said that they had missed either of them very sorely during their absence from St. Jim's. They were glad to hear that the Levisons were coming back—fairly glad. But they saw no reason why Levison's return should disturb the even tenor of their way in Study No. 5.

Arthur Augustus appeared to hold a different opinion.
"It is wath' bad manners to yawn when a chap's talkin'!" said Arthur Augustus severely.
"If a chap's going to yawn, he must yawn while you're talking, old boy. You see, you never leave off!"
"I think that Levison performed the hat-trick twice in the match he played for Greyfriars," said Arthur Augustus impressively.

"Good!" said Blake. "More power to his elbow. Now, we shall want to take some grub in the boat to-morrow—"
"Levison widens to-morrow—"
"I know! We'd better pool our cash, and see how far it will go," said Blake thoughtfully. "The wath'er's lovely, and a picnic on the island—"
"I am not goin' to picnic on the island to-morrow, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus freely. "I am goin' to give Levison a reception when he comes back. I trust you fellows will wally woad."
"You'll change it, Gusy?" said Blake, looking seriously at his noble chum.

"Eh, wath'?"
"Your shirt, old man. You use it too much."
"You attack me!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I shall refuse to allow you to take part in the reception now! Go and get coked!"

And the woad of St. Jim's walked out of Study No. 5 with his noble nose in the air, leaving his chums chuckling.
With a brown on his brow, Arthur Augustus walked along to the Shell passage to give Tom Merry the benefit of his suggestion. He found the Terrible Three in Study No. 10 in the Shell. They did not seem to be thinking about Ernest Levison, although that distinguished youth was to return to St. Jim's on the morrow.

Tom Merry had a cricket bat in his hand, and he was arguing with Manners and Leather waddy.
"It's all rot!" said Tom, as Arthur Augustus appeared in the office. "You fellows have got to play! Don't talk to me about the new picture at the Wayland Cinema, Monty, chuck it! Go for your camera, Manners, if you mention it again, I'll—I'll jump on it!"

Manners and Leather grinned.
"It's only a trial match to-morrow," said Leather.
"You're going to play?"
"Not much of a game!" said Manners.
"You're going to play!"
"Fray some my bratin' in, deah boys," said the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the door.
"You've crossed—run away!" said Tom Merry, without turning his head. "Now look here, you two chaps, if you don't turn up to-morrow afternoon, I shall jolly well leave you out of the House match!"

"You see—" stajeted Manners and Leather simultaneously.
"Yes, I see—I see a pair of blessed dackers!" said the captain of the Shell severely.

"Bui Jove! Are you fellows playin' cricket to-morrow?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Yes!" granted Tom Merry. "Trial match!"
"Bettab put it off!"
"Wath'?"
"Leave it till Saturday, deah boy!"
"Futhead!"

"Good wath'er!" said Monty Leather heartily. "Even Gusy talks some sometimes. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings—"

"Waddy, Lewthab—"
"Gusy's made a really good suggestion," agreed Manners. "You see, Levison is comin' back to-morrow," said Arthur Augustus. "Levison and young Frank, you know."
"I know," said Tom. "Wath' about it?"
"Levison has been away a wath' long time, and he has been wath' distinguishin' himself at Greyfriars. I was thinkin' it would be a good ideak to give him a bit of a reception when he comes back."

Tom Merry laughed.
"Give it to him by all means," he said.
THE GUY LARKIN.—No. 120.

"Yess, but I want you fellows to wally woad, too!"
 "We shall be playing spickes, too!"
 "This is wathah a special occasion, Tom Merry," Lewison has been gettin' no end of credit evah at Greyfriars—
 "Has he?" exclaimed Lewish.
 "Yess, wathah!"
 "I hope he will settle up before he leaves!"
 "But Jove! I do not quite believe that remark, Lewish," said Arthur Augustus, puzzled. "What is he to settle up?"
 "His bill, if he's been getting credit."
 "His, ha, ha!"
 "An' Jove! I believe you are only pretending to misunderstand me, Lewish, for the sake of danger in a beauty game!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I do not mean that sort of credit, I mean—"
 "Never mind what you mean, old fellow. Life's too short for you to explain what you mean—if you mean anything. Now, about the new picture at the Wayland Picture Palace, Tom—"
 "Better the new picture—"
 "Are you fellows goin' to wally woad and help me give Lewison a reception?" demanded Arthur Augustus seriously.
 "Don't worry!"
 "I do not regard that as an intelligible answer, Tom Merry!"

"My dear son," said Marston, "you forget that we are in the Shell. The Shell is Middle School—almost vacant!"
 "Wah!"

"We hardly know that there's such a Form as the Fourth in existence," continued Marston calmly. "It would be beneath our dignity to take official cognizance of the Fourth. Fourth-Formers may come, and Fourth-Formers may go, but the Shell—"

"I regarded you as an ass, Marston! I regarded you as a snobish ass, Tom Merry! And I regarded you, Lewish, as a silly ass!"

And with that crashing retort the swell of the Fourth marched out of Study No. 10, followed by a chuckle; after which the argument was renewed among the Terrible Three, and the rival claims of cricket, pictures, and cameras debated, with an air of disregard of the important fact that on the morning Ernest Lewison of the Fourth was coming back from Greyfriars.

CHAPTER 2.

Rally Round!

"TOMORROW!" said Sidney Clive.
 Ralph Rockness Cardew, who was reclining in a comfortable, if not precisely graceful, attitude in the swivel-chair in Study No. 2, looked up at Clive as the latter spoke.

"To-morrow?" he repeated.
 "Yes, I'm jolly glad. Aren't you?"
 "Glad?" said Cardew.
 "Yes, son, I suppose you're glad!" said Clive, rather warmly.
 "Certainly, if you say so," asserted Cardew. "If you suppose I'm glad, old bean, I'm no end glad; in fact, as that Indian chap at Greyfriars would put it, the gladfulness is terrible. But since we're both so jolly glad, would you mind droppin' me a hint of what we're glad about? Don't think I'm sensitive. But I'd like to know."

Sidney Clive gave a grunt.
 "You're forgetting what's happenin' to-morrow," he said sharply, and with a slight touch of scorn.

"You know what a memory I've got," pleaded Cardew. "Lewison's always raggin' me for forgettin' to do my lines. But now I come to think of it, I remember."

"Oh, I'm glad you remember," growled Clive.
 "No glad to make you glad," said Cardew amiably. "But I hardly think you'd be interested in what's happenin' to-morrow, old man."

"Not?" exclaimed Clive.
 "Well, it's not in your line, is it?"
 "Not in my line?"

"I thought not. Still, if you are interested, we'll go into it together," said Cardew kindly. "It's run at three o'clock at Abbotsford—"

"Oh! What is it?"
 "The Abbotsford Cup Race. My fancy's Favorite Boy. If you think you know a better horse—"

Sidney Clive jumped up.
 "Look here, you silly wally—" he broke out hotly.

"Oh, good! What are you gettin' excited about? You haven't backed the wrong horse by any chance?"

"You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, Cardew!" Cardew nodded.

"I am," he answered. "But couldn't you be ashamed of yourself, too, old bean. You've preached at me so and so, when a wicked interest in horse-racing and such

THE LITTLE LAMBERT.—No. 302.

blackguardly proceedin', and now you're getting excited over to-morrow's race yourself."

"I'm not," roared Clive.
 "My mistake, then. But you look excited. Look in the glass, old bean, and you'll admit it yourself."

Clive took a couple of turns up and down the study before he would trust himself to answer. Cardew watched him with a lazy smile. The sturdy South African junior came in a hah before Cardew's sprawling figure sat fast.

"So you've forgotten that Lewison's coming back to St. Jim's to-morrow?" he exclaimed.

"Lewison?"
 "Yes, Lewison!" snapped Clive. "Perhaps you've forgotten, son, that he is our study-mate and that he's been over at Greyfriars for some weeks with his brother Frank."

"Dear me!" said Cardew. "Old man, you know what a memory I've got! I mean, what a memory I haven't got. Now I come to think of it, the name Lewison does seem familiar to me."

"Who a-t?"
 "I know I've heard it before," said Cardew calmly. "Let's see, wasn't his other name Ernest? He had a brother in the Third Form, named Fred, or Frank, or something—"

Secret from Sidney Clive.
 "Who checked his Form, master and cleared out of school," continued Cardew, with the air of a fellow trying to recall half-forgotten facts. "It came out that he had—or hadn't—done something or other, and he's perished for punishin' away, or else he isn't punished—something to do with a garden, I feel sure. And he was bound wanderin' by some Greyfriars fellows, who took him in like good Samaritans, and Lewison was sent for to stay with him, and—and now he's coming back. I remember it all now, perfectly. I know I'd heard the name Lewison somewhere."

Sidney Clive's clouded face had gradually cleared, and he grinned.

"You silly old!" he said. "So you were pulling my leg." Cardew chuckled.

"Dear old man," he said, "you go around takin' a fellow to pull your jolly old leg, you know! You've been sittin' like a stuffed owl for ten minutes without sayin' a word, and suddenly you bark out 'To-morrow'! So I deduced, like jolly old Sherlock Holmes, that you'd been thinking about Lewison, an' I couldn't resist pullin' your leg."

Clive laughed, his good-humour quite restored.
 "So far from forgettin' him," continued Cardew, "I was just thinkin' when you barked of takin' his horse-ownin' a pleasant one to-morrow—"

"Oh, good!"
 "Meanin' him, of Abbotsford, you know, and takin' him to the race—"

"What?"
 "And makin' it a really jolly afternoon," said Cardew, with enthusiasm. "We can cheer old young Frank somewhere."

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap; you can't pull my leg a second time, you know," said Clive good-humouredly.

"Lewison said in his letter that he would get to Wayland Junction at three to-morrow afternoon. We're going to meet him there."

"How?"
 "Don't you want to come?" demanded Clive.

"Lots! Hoop! But I believe the Third Form are rather keen on young Lewison comin' back. Wally and Reggie and Joe, and, in fact, a whole mob of lanky little brats, may be at Wayland greetin' Frank of the Third."

"Let them."

"Certainly. But are we goin' round with a mob of lanky little brats and unwashed necks?" asked Cardew. "Why not let the Third escort the comin' fellows to the school, and—and meet Lewison here?"

"Followed?"
 "Yess, wathah!" said a voice in the doorway. "I regard you as a fellow, Cardew!"

Cardew glanced round, and nodded cheerily to Arthur Augustus P'Arry.

"Dear old man," he said, "you are at liberty to regard me in any character you are pleased to assume for the purpose."

"But Jove! I mean that you are a fellow, Cardew, not that I am a fellow, you see?"

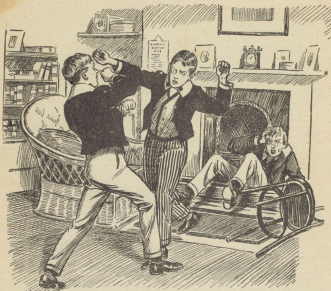
"Then you've got it wrong, Gussy. Do you reverse?"
 "Wah!" Arthur Augustus stopped into Study No. 2. "I mean that I shall need with some support in this study," he said.

"Hoop!" asked Cardew. "Without any visible means of support? If a pound-note is any good—"

"Wathah! My dear," explained Arthur Augustus, "is to give Lewison a reception when he comes back to-morrow, with the wippin' party he has distinguished himself at Greyfriars, and spend the lunch of St. Jim's, and all that, you know. Are you fellows goin' to wally woad?"

"How does a fellow wally?" inquired Cardew innocently.
 Clive chuckled.

"I have spoken to Blake, and he has treated my suggestion



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his arms flying wildly, rushed into Study No. 7, like a hawk in full career. Clive yelled as he encountered Gray's knobles with his nose, and he went bounding across the study, and collapsed in the fender. Huckle looked away, fighting savagely, with Arthur Augustus pouncing him hard. (See page 4.)

with decision," said Arthur Augustus, "and Tom Moray and Munnah and Lawlish were simply chocky, you know. But so this is Levison's own study, I trust I can rely on you chaps to wally wound. My ideal is for Levison's friends to turn up at the station in a body, you know, and receive him."

"With three cheers!" asked Cardew.
 "Well, perhaps that would be walth demostwative," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.
 "You don't say so?" murmured Cardew.

"It stands to reason that Levison will be walth locked, fadin' in at the station, you know, to grip him a reception," said D'Arcy. "My young sweetheart Willy is goin', with Munnah's nish and Joe Pwaps. I am thinkin' of gathin' in fellows right and left, you know, and makin' a walth crowd of 'em. You like the ideak, Clive?"

Clive smiled.
 "Good?" he said. "The more the merrier!"
 "You will be comin', Cardew?"
 Cardew reflected.
 "You say you're gathin' in fellows right and left?" he asked.

"Yess, walth!"
 "Well, Clive will be all right——"
 "Yess, and you——"
 "I shall be left."
 "Wha-wat?"

"Well, how, you know," explained Cardew. "I'm goin' to receive the retormin' here in gathin' in the study. I feel that there ought to be some sort of greetin' on the happy hearth, so it were. Catch on?"

"Yess, perhaps there is somethin' in that," assented Arthur Augustus unobtrusively, while Clive grinned. "The other fellows jart turn up at the station and greet Levison in a body——"

"Good! You fellows can be there in a body, and I shall, of course, be there in the spirit!" murmured Cardew.
 "But Jove!"

Arthur Augustus took out a little pocket-book, and made an entry.

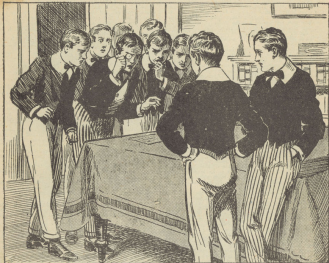
"This is my list of fellows meetin' Levison at the station," he said.

"How many so far?"
 "Him! One."

"What?" ejaculated Cardew.

"Only Clive's name so far," confessed Arthur Augustus. "However, I am goin' to make up a very respectin' crowd. I must hurry along."

And Arthur Augustus departed, leaving Clive and Cardew grinning. The chairs of Study No. 7 were very glad that Ernest Levison was coming back—Clive openly pleased, in his frank way, and Cardew perhaps as pleased, though he affected a lairy touchiness on the subject. But they did not expect the event, however gratifying to Study No. 7, to make a sensation in the School House. Other fellows were not likely to get aside their usual avocations because Levison was coming back. It was very kind of Arthur Augustus—very kind and thoughtful—but Cardew and Clive were of opinion that the enthusiastic crowd at Wayland Junction on the occasion of Ernest Levison's return, would be conspicuous chiefly by its absence.



"I ought to have told you fellows about Levison before," growled Oliver. "I— I felt knocked over—it is too utterly rotten. I'll show you the wire, and you'll understand." He held it on the table, and the partners crowded round to read it. There were very grave faces as they read the crumpled message. (See page 11.)

and the topic was extremely distasteful to Piggott. The topic was the return of Levison minor, due on the morrow.

Wally of the Third was very keen on the subject. So was Manners minor. They were Frank Levison's special chums; and they had missed Frank during his stay at Greyfriars. Joe Frayne and Hobbs and Charly Gibson joined in the talk on the subject with some interest. But Piggott was irritated. Piggott did not like Levison minor, and he did not like Levison's friends; indeed, Piggott liked nobody in the whole world excepting Reggie Piggott, who was really not a shabby fellow at all.

"Give us a rest!" went on Piggott, as D'Arcy minor stopped and glared at him. "The bed up."

"You're bed up!" roared Wally of the Third.

"Right up in the air!" said Piggott indignantly. "A fellow would think that a ducked boy had never been away from the school for a few weeks before. How Levison minor?"

"Why, you cheeky little beast!" began Reggie Manners severely.

"I jolly well wish they'd keep him at Greyfriars for good!" scowled Piggott. "I don't want to see his wretched face here here again."

Wally of the Third slipped off the desk upon which he was seated. Piggott backed away, not liking the look on Wally's face.

"Piggot's fed up, you fellows," said Wally in measured tones. "Piggot down's you! Old Frank to come back. Old Franky ran away from school because of a trick Piggy played on Mr. Solly, and, if Piggy hadn't been found out, Frank wouldn't be allowed to come back at all. Piggy is a cad, you fellows. Piggy is a first-class rotter; and Piggot is going to be ragged."

"Hear, hear!" said Reggie Manners.

"We'll rag Piggy off because Solly walloped him after he was found out," went on D'Arcy minor. "Now Piggy's asking for more, like Oliver Twist. Piggy has got to learn to behave himself decently. Lay him over this desk."

"Look here!" began Piggott, beginning to wish that he had not made his entrance audible.

"Lay him over that desk. Young Hobbs, you got me a ruler."

"What-fo?" said Hobbs.

Piggott made a run for the door of the Form-room.

"Stop him!" shouted Wally.

Manners minor made a rush after Piggott, and caught him at the door, just as Piggott dragged it open.

"You're wanted," growled Reggie, taking Piggott by the ear.

Piggott turned desperately. As a rule, Piggott avoided fights; but he was desperate now. Wally had taken a business-like grip on the ruler, and Piggott did not want that ruler applied personally. So—to Reggie's great surprise—Piggott hit out, so suddenly and furiously, that Manners minor sat on the floor of the Form-room, with a loud bang, and a hoarse yell.

"Oo!" roared Manners minor.

"My only Aunt Jane! He's bowled Reggie down!" ejaculated D'Arcy minor. "Collar him, some of you!"

But Piggott, still more terrified at what he had done, as he saw Reggie sprawling, dashed out of the Form-room, and fell down the corridor. Manners minor jumped up.

"After him!" he yelled.

Reggie led the pursuit. There was a dash of crimson on his nose, and his temper was at white heat.

With a whoop, half a dozen lads rushed after Manners minor.

Piggott, looking back from the corner of the passage, saw the whole mob in hot pursuit, and fled for his life.

"After him!"

"Stop him!"

"Collar him!"

Piggott passed as he ran, Reggie Manners was about a foot behind him as Piggott passed Mr. Bailton's class. At
THE GUY LITMANT.—No. 303.

any other time Piggott would as soon have dashed into a lion's den as into a Housemaster's study. But vengeance was close behind him, and he did not stop to think. He passed the door, then stopped and whirled back and barred the door open, and rushed into the study.

Reggie Manners stopped just in case.
 "Hook it!" panted Wally.
 "It's all right, Radzie's out!" called out Frayne.
 "Oh! Good!"

Piggott, meanwhile, came to a halt in the Housemaster's study, behind the table. Had Mr. Radzie been there, Piggott would certainly have been called to account for rushing into the room in that unconscionable manner. Fortunately he was absent. But, although the Housemaster was not there, the flag did not venture to invade the sacred precincts, and collar the offender. Haggling in a Housemaster's study was rather too serious a thing for even Wally & Co. to undertake.

The lags crowded round the doorway, and Piggott peered behind the table and glanced at them.

"Come out!" said D'Arcy minor.
 "She's in!" panted Piggott.
 "I'll give you punching a chap's nose!" gasped Reggie Manners. "Look at my nose! I'll make yours like it, only more so." Come out!"

"Hook him out!" said Jamieson.
 Wally shook his head.
 "Can't rag him," he said. "Let's clear; some dashed profan may come along. We'll wait for Piggy in the next passage. He won't dare to stay here long."

And Wally & Co. retired, closing the door.
 Piggott breathed hard. It was risky to reveal in the Housemaster's study; he did not know when Mr. Radzie might return, and he did not want to be found there by the Housemaster. But it was all more risky to venture out, in the present mood of Wally & Co., and Piggott decided to remain as the loser of two evils.

He sat down in Mr. Radzie's armchair to wait—not in a happy mood. But he remembered, now he had leisure to think, that he had heard that Mr. Radzie was going to Aberdeen that afternoon; so there was no immediate hurry of news. He decided to give Wally & Co. an hour or so to cool down—by which time it was possible that their wrath would have evaporated. They were not likely to haunt the passages on the watch for him for very long.

But after a quarter of an hour in the solitary study Piggott was tired of waiting, and he decided to chance it. He rose from the armchair and crept to the door, to listen for sounds without. He did not wait a master or a prefect to see him slinking out of the Housemaster's study.

There were footsteps in the passage, approaching the door; and Piggott started. The footsteps were the light of Mr. Radzie's; but it was quite possible that someone was coming to the study. The lag crept to the window, and squared himself out of sight behind the curtains.

A few moments later the door opened.
 Someone came in, closed the door quietly, and crossed the room to the telephone. Piggott heard the receiver taken off the hook. Then a voice said:

"Trunks?"
 Piggott started.
 It was the voice of Backe of the Shell.

Evidently Backe knew that the Housemaster was away and not likely to return soon, and had taken advantage of the fact to give himself the use of the telephone for a trunk call. Piggott grinned. Mr. Radzie was likely to find an unreasonable trunk call entered upon his account at the end of the quarter.

Piggott did not show himself, though he had nothing to fear from Backe of the Shell. He was inquisitive by nature, and he determined to know what Backe had to telephone about. He wondered whether the black sheep of the Shell had the nerve to see the Housemaster's telephone in connection with his sporting speculations.
 "Courtfield!"

That was what Backe was saying into the transmitter. Piggott's eyes opened wide. He knew that Courtfield was the exchange for Greyfriars School—where Lewison was, namely Backe of the Shell was not ringing up Greyfriars to speak to Ernest Lewison—his enemy!

"I don't know the number," Backe was going on. "I want Greyfriars School, near Courtfield, in Kent."
 That reply apparently satisfied the Exchange. Piggott heard Backe replace the receiver, to wait for the Exchange to tell him when he was "through."

Piggott wondered. What on earth would Backe have to say to Lewison, the St. Jim's fellow at Greyfriars? Was he going to speak to Lewison, though? Backe knew two or three fellows at Greyfriars—Skinner of the Remora, for one. Skinner had spent a holiday with Backe once—the two being birds of a feather. Perhaps he was going to speak to Skinner. Piggott of the Third meant to know.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 99.

Backe moved unthinkingly about the study while he waited to be called. He was anxious at being there; but he did not venture to leave, but he should miss his call. Once or twice Piggott heard him creep to the door, evidently to listen. There was a sudden lull from the telephone, and Backe stored an exclamation of relief, and ran back to it, and jerked off the receiver.

Piggott was almost trembling with curiosity by this time. Unseen, his presence unsuspected by Backe, he listened with all his ears.

"Is that Greyfriars? Mr. Quob speaking— Thank you! Would it be possible for me to speak to Skinner—Skinner of the Remora? I'm awfully sorry to trouble you, but it's important—I'd be in a very kind, sir— Thank you!"

A short silence.
 "Is that you, Skinner? Backe speaking from St. Jim's. How are you getting on, old fellow? Good! Lewison will thank you—what?"

Piggott, of course, could not hear what was said in answer on the telephone. Backe's half of the conversation had to suffice for him.

"You don't like that old—what? I thought you wouldn't. You've had trouble with him! No wonder. Well, he's coming back to St. Jim's to-morrow, and you'll be first of all. I say, Skinner, will you help me to pull his leg to-morrow? His friends have all making no end of fun about his coming back, and I'd like to put a spoke in his wheel."
 Piggott would have given a great deal to hear Skinner's reply. But he could guess its purport from Backe's next remark.

"Good man! Lewison used to belong to your school at one time, and I understand that he left a jolly jolly reputation behind him. Well, the fellows here know that, and nobody would be really surprised to hear that Lewison had come a wander at Greyfriars. If you could manage a telegram, say, to Clive, here, to-morrow morning—"

Piggott breathed hard.
 "Of course, it's only a joke—it would come out later. But it would rather mark up their giddy reception—what? File it on their—put it in a robbery and the police— Ha, ha, ha!"

"How?" murmured Piggott.
 "I'll square for the wire, of course. Dash it all, you know, I've got plenty of money! Make up a real thriller, and Clive have it in the morning. He's Lewison's best pal here, and he's the chap the old would naturally tell first. Something really rich. Ha, ha!"

Piggott peered out from behind the curtain. Backe was heading eagerly over the telephone, and Piggott caught his profile eager, crest, and malice. Evidently Skinner's replies were pleasing to Backe's ear.

"Good! Something like that. Of course, you see no risk. What's to know? Good man! Done!"

A few more words were exchanged, and then Audrey Backe put up the receiver. Evidently he was satisfied. Piggott heard him shuffle as he went to the door. A moment more, and the door closed an Audrey Backe. Then Piggott emerged from behind the window-curtain, and Piggott, too, chuckled.

He waited a few minutes for Backe to get away, and then left the study, hoping that the coast was clear by this time. Wally & Co. certainly had cleared off. But Reggie Manners—regardless on account of a swollen nose—was still on the watch. As Piggott turned the corner of the corridor he was collared.

"Now, then—" said Reggie Manners grimly.
 And for the next few minutes Piggott of the Third was involved in trouble.

But as he bathed his nose, in a bath-room, afterwards, Piggott felt relaxed. The return of the Lewisons, on the morrow, was not to be exactly as Wally & Co. anticipated—if Backe's little scheme of vengeance was a success. There was relief in that reflection for Piggott—and also in the reflection that Backe, the wealthy black sheep of the Shell, would be under his thumb afterwards. So Herbert Piggott felt fairly well satisfied—in spite of the really painful state of his nose.

CHAPTER 5.

Gussy Going Strong!

TOM MURRY broke into a sudden run. Manners and Lewison, with looks of alarm, followed his example.

"Hook it!" exclaimed Tom.

"Run for your lives!" gasped Lewison.
 And the Terrible Three ran. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was bearing down upon them in the quadrangle, halted, and jammed his celebrated moccasins into his eyes, and gazed after them in amazement.

"But Jews!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.
 It was morning—and the breakfast-bell was nearly due to

ring, Arthur Augustus had a sheet of paper and a pencil in his hand—apparently his list for the great Levison reception that afternoon.

Perhaps that was why the Terrible Three had fled. Arthur Augustus, with his list, to which he was as keen to add, was in danger of becoming a bore.

"Hold on, you fellows!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"I don't think!" muttered Messers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Terrible Three laughed, and ran, and disappeared into the Refreshment Room.

"But Jove! I must remember the supplied Gussy. 'I wonder if those fellows have shaken off their wackies!' It really looks like it. I say, Kangaroo, stop a minute, Kangy!"

Harry Noble of the Shell did not stop. He took one glance at the list in D'Arcy's hand, and fled.

"Stop, you ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

Kangaroo vanished.

"But Jove! I really think they are all off their wackies!"

exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great exasperation. "Talked, dash boy!"

Talbot!"

To his relief, Talbot of the Shell did not bolt. He slackened down with a smile, and Arthur Augustus joined him.

"I was going to ask you, Talbot—"

"I guessed it!" grunted Talbot.

"You see you were wackish friendly with old Levison—"

"Quite."

"Then you will join in the reception this afternoon?"

Talbot shook his head.

"Wendy, Talbot—"

"Inhuman engagement," said Talbot respectfully. "I'd really like to come. But I'm booked for the afternoon."

"Nervous mind evident, prominent—"

"It isn't that," explained Talbot. "Miss Marie is going downing in Weybeck, and I'm going to marry the lot."

"Oh, very well, if it is an engagement with a lady, of course you cannot put it off," said Arthur Augustus graciously.

"But it is very odd that the only fellow who will give me a chance of speakin' to him is a fellow who is already irreversibly fixed for the afternoon."

Talbot grinned.

"These give the broker bell!" he said.

And the juniors went in to breakfast. At the Fourth Form table, Arthur Augustus bestowed looks of scornful indignation upon Blake and Herries and Digby. He felt that he was not receiving the support which he was entitled to look for in his own study.

After breakfast he fastened upon Blake & Co. in the corridor. But Blake & Co. were not to be caught.

"They dodged Arthur Augustus, and ran laughing into the quadrangle."

"Blake!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Where are you wanted to, you men?"

Blake & Co. vanished without an answer.

"But Jove! This is really very annoying," said Arthur Augustus. He took the list from his pocket and scanned it.

Sidney Clive's name was there, Gussy's own name was there, and there were the names of D'Arcy sailor and Messers graciously.

Notice of the Third. These, apparently, were all that had rallied round so far. Backs of the Shell stopped to glance at the paper over Gussy's shoulder, and the crowd of the Fourth gave him an indignant look.

"Pussy keep your distance, Wack!" he rapped out.

"Make 'up a crowd, what!" said Backs.

"I want to discuss the matter with you, Wack. I regard you with despising—I mean contempt."

Backs laughed mockingly.

"Four names, and one your own?" he pointed. "Looks like a giddy success, I don't think!"

"You had no right to look at that paper, Wack."

"So that's how much Levison's friends care about his giddy humbugging!" grunted Backs. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows are dodging you right and left to keep out of your giddy reception."

"Wendy, Wack—"

"Put my name down, Gussy!" broke in Tom Merry's voice, and the captain of the Shell gave Backs a glance that made him feel uncomfortable.

"But Jove! I shall be very glad, Tom Merry."

Arthur Augustus put the name of the captain of the Shell on the list, and looked inquiringly at Messers and Levison, who were with him. They nodded together.

"Put me down!" said Messers.

"Stick or swim together!" said Monty Levison broadly.

"I say, Gussy, is there going to be a speech at the reception?"

"I was thinkin' of addressin' a few well-chosen words to Levison, dash boy."

"Oh so short, wasn't you, as a reward to us for turning up?"

"Wendy, Levison!"

"Don't worry about the well-chosen, but concentrate on the few!" advised Levison. "That's the way to make a speech popular."

"Wack!"

Arthur Augustus, greatly pleased at having recruited the Terrible Three, walked away in search of Blake & Co. He felt that his admirers could do no less than follow the example of the heroes of the Shell.

Tom Merry gave his comrades a comical look.

"We're for it now," he remarked. "But we couldn't hear that old Backs bawling in without sitting on him, could we?"

"But what price the stinkin' bird!" grunted Levison.

"Well, you fellows were backing out of that already," said Tom.

"After all, there's Saturday."

"And I can get away with the camera after meeting Levison at the station," remarked Messers thoughtfully.

"And I shall be right on the spot for the cinema," said Monty Levison.

"So everything is in the garden is lovely."

"Anyhow, we're shut up that old Backs and his rotten messin'," said Tom. "That's something."

Arthur Backs, really, had helped in Gussy's rally. Backs was not a fellow to help his friends, as a rule, but alone his opinion; yet he was grinning as he went out into the quad with Crooks. The latter regarded him curiously.

"Do you know what is the contents of your battin' in, Backs?" he asked.

"Well, what?" said Backs, grinning.

"You've made those fellows decide to back up D'Arcy in his net. And now they're done it, other fellows will."

"You think so?" asked Backs.

"I'm jolly sure of it! Instead of two or three fellows meeting Levison now, there'll be a whole crowd, and a regular triumph for the cat."

"Good!"

"Is that what you wanted?" demanded Crooks, in surprise.

"Yes, old boss, just that."

"Housed if I understand?"

"You see, suppose there was bad news from Levison today—"

"Bad news?"

"News that he was being sent back to St. Jim's in disgrace—"

"There won't be!" said Crooks, in blank astonishment.

"He seems to have made friends all through Geophriars, from the Head down to the lags."

"So they say."

"Oh, red! It's true enough!"

"Very likely. But a telegram from Levison saying something different would make rather a sensation, what?"

"And if there's a whole crowd of fellows booked to meet Levison at the station, Study No. 9 won't be able to keep that telegram dark, what?"

"By jolly hoo! But why should Levison—"

Backs broke off suddenly. "Backs! Is this a plan?"

"I shouldn't wonder!" yawned Backs. "I'll tell you about it if you like."

"Don't!" said Crooks promptly. "I don't want to know anything about it. Your games aren't safe, old chap."

And Crooks strolled away by himself, quite pleased at the idea of Levison's humbugging being "macked up," but equally determined not to have a hand in any of Arthur Backs's risky proceedings. Backs shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

Crooks was right upon one point, at least. The names of the Terrible Three on D'Arcy's list had an encouraging effect on other fellows. Study No. 6 felt that it was up to them to rally round, if Study No. 10 in the Shell rallied; and Blake and Herries and Dig joined up. And before morning lessons, Figgins & Co., of the New House, gave in their adhesion. So did Kangaroo of the Shell. So Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched into the Fourth Form room that morning with a pleased and satisfied expression upon his aristocratic face.

His great idea was going to be a great success, and the action of Ernest at Levison's return to St. Jim's was going to be marked as a great success.

During morning lessons, Arthur Augustus gave a great deal of thought to the few well-chosen words he was going to utter at the reception on the platform—rather to the detriment of his lessons. But there were times when a fellow really couldn't bother much about lessons; and this was one of the times.

CHAPTER 8.

A Telegram for Sidney Clive!

THE next lesson was proceeding in the Fourth Form room, when Toby the page tapped at the door and looked in.

Mr. Leithen glanced round.

He did not like the interruptions of lessons. The Form did, but the Form master didn't.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Telegram, sir—"

"Oh, very well!"

"For Master Clive, sir."

Mr. Latham passed his lips.

Fellows were not supposed to receive communications from the outside world when classes were in progress. But a telegram might mean illness, or something serious.

"You may give it to Master Clive," he said. "Clive, you may read your telegram."

"Thank you, sir," said Clive.

The South African junior was surprised. His face was rather troubled as he stood up. He was not expecting a telegram from anyone; and his first thought was that it was a cable from his home in the southern hemisphere, which could only mean bad news. But he was quickly relieved on that point; it was not a cable—merely an ordinary inland telegram.

Tilly rolled, and Clive opened the buff envelope; the lesson proceeding while he read the telegram.

Several fellows glanced curiously at him; especially Cardew. It had occurred to Cardew that possibly the wire was from Levinson, announcing some change in his arrangements.

Clive started as he read, and a black look came over his face. Several fellows noticed that the colour changed in his cheeks.

"Bad news?" whispered Cardew.

Clive nodded.

"Levinson?"

Another nod.

Mr. Latham glanced at Clive over his spectacles.

"You have read your telegram, Clive?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it any matter that demands immediate attention, my boy?" asked the master of the Fourth kindly. "In that case—"

"No, sir."

"Very good."

"May I give the telegram to Cardew to read, sir?"

"Certainly, Clive."

Subway Clive passed the telegram to his desk, and sat down. The expression on his face had caught the attention of almost all the Fourth, and there was a good deal of wonder and surmise. Clive's face was a little pale, but quite composed, as he sat down.

Cardew read the telegram without a sign of his thoughts appearing on his face. Whatever was the news in it, it had not overthrown the cool composure of the deputy of the Fourth.

He slipped it into his pocket, and gave his attention—or at least attention as usual—to Mr. Latham.

That was the end of the incident, till the morning break came after the second lesson.

Three or four fellows gathered round Clive as the juniors came out of the Form-room.

"Not bad news, old chap, I hope?" said Arthur Augustus.

"Nothing to do with the old folks at home, what?"

"Nothing, thanks," answered Clive.

"You looked a bit knackered over, I thought," said Lumsley-Lansley.

"Did I?"

"I had I was mistaken," said Lumsley-Lansley. Clive nodded, and turned away with Cardew.

The two juniors walked away by themselves.

The Shell came out a few minutes later, and Arthur Rucke looked for Trimble of the Fourth. He wanted to know what had happened during lessons with the Fourth, and if anything had happened.

He was pretty sure that Skinner, his mate at Greyfriars, had played up; it was worth the while of a fellow the Skinner to keep in the good graces of the professor's son and heir. But he could see that there was no sign of a sensation in the Fourth, so far. If anything had happened, however, it was easy to pump it out of the chattering Trimble.

"You joining in the giddy reception this afternoon?" asked Rucke, tapping Baggie Trimble on the shoulder with crossed forefingers.

Trimble granted.

"If Arty hasn't asked me—"

"Him? he?"

"I mean, I refused," said Trimble hastily. "I can't sense a half-holiday hanging around silly stations waiting for me, or more anybody is worth up. All very well for P' Arty."

"Levinson's coming after all, then?"

"Oh! I suppose so," said Trimble. "I haven't heard that he wasn't."

"Well, he might put it off, as they're sipping so much of him at Greyfriars," Rucke remarked carelessly. "But in that case, of course, he would send a telegram, as his pals are expecting him."

Trimble jumped at the word telegram.

"My hat! Very likely that's it!" exclaimed Baggie.

"That's what!"

"Clive had a telegram this morning in class," said Trimble. "It wasn't from his own people, either."

The Gown Lesson.—No. 200.

Rucke's eye glanced.

"Was it from Levinson?" he asked.

"He seems to be keeping it rather dark," said Trimble. "He's not told anybody about it, only Cardew. He looked jolly knackered over when he read it in class."

"Knackered over!" repeated Rucke.

"Awful!" said Trimble impressively, drawing as he put imagination as usual for details. "Turned quite pale; ghastly, in fact."

"What sort?" said Rucke. "Even if Levinson's not coming back today, I suppose Clive can't mind very much."

"Don't see why he should. But he looked thoroughly knackered over. I thought he was going to faint!" said Trimble, still more impressively.

Rucke laughed.

"I tell you he did," said Trimble warmly. "I saw him! Lots of fellows saw him!"

"But nothing can have happened to Levinson, surely," said Rucke. "He can't be in trouble at Greyfriars, can he?"

"In trouble!" Trimble caught at the suggestion. "I wouldn't wonder! I never liked the chap. He was in trouble there a long time ago, when he was a Greyfriars chap—before he came to St. Jim's, you know."

"But that's a long time ago," said Rucke. "He can't have got himself into deeper again, can he?"

Trimble's little round eye gleamed. The suggestion caught his fancy at once, as Rucke was well aware that it would.

"That's it, of course," said Trimble eagerly. "He's been up to something, and he's bowled out. I—I thought so all along, Rucke. It—it flashed into my mind as soon as I saw the telegram, in fact."

"Not much goes on that you don't see, Trimble," remarked Rucke admiringly.

Trimble smiled.

"I fancy I'm as sharp as the next man," he said. "They won't pull the wool over my eyes in a hurry. I say, suppose Levinson's been found out in something, and turned out of Greyfriars in disgrace—sent back here under a cloud, you know—"

"You think it possible?" asked Rucke. "I shouldn't have guessed it myself, but now you put it like that—"

"Well, you ain't quite so keen as I am, old chap," said Trimble faintly. "You see, I've got my eye-teeth out. I see things."

"You do!" asserted Rucke. "Blamed if I don't beat Shoolick Holman, the way you've worked this out, Trimble."

And Rucke strolled away, feeling satisfied that he had started the ball rolling, as it were.

If Levinson's claims wanted to make a secret of the telegram from Greyfriars, they were not likely to succeed here, with Baggie Trimble as the trick.

"You had about Levinson, isn't it?" said Trimble, ten minutes later, when he came on the Terrible Three.

"Oh—what?" asked Tom Merry.

"His trouble at Greyfriars, I mean."

"Is he in trouble at Greyfriars?" asked Tom blankly.

Trimble grinned.

"Didn't you know?"

"No, I didn't! And I don't believe it now, either," said the captain of the Shell gravely.

"I should have thought Clive would have told you," said Trimble, "as you're one of the party going to meet Levinson—"

"Has Clive told you anything?" demanded Manners.

"You see, he had the telegram in class," explained Trimble. "He was quite knackered over by the news, poor chap. Looked quite ill."

Trimble's yarning again, said Lovelace. "You got into trouble once, Trimble, for spinning yarns about Levinson of the Fourth. Now you're going to get into trouble again—in the extent of one term!"

"I say—Largo! Yooop!" roared Trimble.

Bump!

The Terrible Three sat on the ground, and walked on. That was all the gratings they displayed for early information imparted by the latter of the School Blues.

But by the time the juniors went into the Form-room again a good many fellows had heard of Trimble's yarns. The gist of the telegram incident, and they wondered. In the Fourth Form room, Subway Clive was the object of some curiosity, and the fellows could not help noticing that he was troubled and worried, and that he was called to order by Mr. Latham more than once. And the impression spread in the Fourth that there was something—something very wrong with Levinson at Greyfriars.

CHAPTER 7.

"OH!"

"W"RARDY, dear boys?"

"Ready, ay, ready!"

"Fall in and follow Casey!" sang out Monty

Lovelace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"It's a bit unfeeling of me to come bustling in like this, after relieving my friends of my company for an hour," said Lawson satirically, "but I've turned up again like the bad penny in the story." "I'll be sorry to—there's been trouble at Greyfriars," said Tom. "Thanks," said Lawson. "There's troubles everywhere, but they blow over!" (See page 11.)

"Well, Lawthah—"

"Ready, you slackers?" roared Kangaroo of the Shell. Quite a little army of juniors had gathered outside Study No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage in the School House.

Tom Merry & Co., so laboriously recruited by Arthur Augustus for the great reception at Wayland Junction, were ready to start. They arrived at Study No. 9 in a body, rather surprised that Clive had not shown up, or Cardew. Lawson's path were naturally exposed to take the lead.

Clive and Cardew stood both in the study. Clive looked deeply troubled; Cardew looked less concerned than usual. Something seemed wrong.

"Ready?" repeated Arthur Augustus. "I presume you fellows are comin' to meet old Lawson?"

Clive and Cardew exchanged a glance.

"The—the fact is—," stammered Clive.

"Anything up?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes—"

Some of the army in the passage exchanged queer glances. Terrible's battle had reached all ears by that time.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's aristocratic countenance fell.

"Bai Jove! Lawson's comin', isn't he?" he asked.

"What a wind-up for Gussy's glossy starting if he isn't comin'!" grinned Figgins, of the New House.

"Woolly, Puggay—"

"Isn't he coming this afternoon after all?" inquired Messers.

All eyes were fixed now upon Sidney Clive's crimson face.

"I—I've had a telegram from him," stammered Clive.

"How—how—? I—I suppose I'd better let you fellows see it."

"If he's not coming, you might have let us see it before," said Monty Leather, rather dryly. "Most of us have kept the afternoon open for the sake of going over to meet the Lawsons at the station."

"Yess, walloh!"

"Isn't it just like our Gussy to cram his feet into it?" said Blake.

"Would it be Gussy if he hadn't?"

"Woolly, Blake—"

"Well, is Lawson coming?" asked Kerr.

"No!" said Clive desperately.

"Why not?"

"He—he—he—he's in trouble, it seems."

"Oh!" said several voices.

"Some fellows are born to trouble, as the jolly old sparks fly upward," yawned Ralph Rockcross Cardew. "Lawson's one of them. Better let them see the wire, Clive."

"Don't, if there's anything private in it," said Tom Merry.

"We're not inquisitive."

"Walloh not."

"I ought to have told you fellows before," growled Clive. "I—I felt so knocked over by this, though—it's too utterly rotten! I'll show you the wire, and you'll understand."

"Better, I think," said Kerr. "There's already a yarn going round that Lawson has got himself into disgrace at Greyfriars, and it's just as well to make known the facts, whatever they are."

"Yess, walloh! There's somethin' in that."

"I don't see how anythin' can have got out," said Cardew, raising his eyebrows. "Nobody's seen the telegram, except Clive and little one. And we've not said a word."

"You've looked a lot, though," said Horrie—"at least, Clive has. Anyhow, I've heard you or three yarns already."

"Here's the telegram," said Clive sharply.

He laid it on the table, and the juniors crowded round to read it.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh!"

There were very queer faces now. The telegram ran:

"Don't expect me to-day. In trouble here. Money missing. Police called in. I know you will believe in me; but they think me guilty here. Writing—K. L."

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Good heavens!" said Tom Merry.

"Poor old Lawson!"

"What a frightful wind-up for his holiday at Greyfriars!" said Manners.

"Yes, walloah!"

Sidney Clive's face was utterly switched.

"Of course, I know Levinson's innocent," he said. "I can't understand how he could come under suspicion. I believe he's got some enemies at Greyfriars—especially a fellow named Skinsie—but most of the fellows there are good chaps with him. I can't understand it. For this has been put on him somehow."

"That sounds a bit thick," said Kerr.

Clive's eyes flashed.

"Do you believe Levinson is guilty?"

"No, I don't. But the Greyfriars authorities can't suspect him unless they've got good reason," said Kerr. "It's a mistake, of course—at least, I hope it is; but I wouldn't start all sorts of reckless suspicions."

"It's a put-up job of some kind."

Kerr made no reply to that.

"Anyhow, there it is," said Clive. "I—I'd have liked to keep this quiet till Levinson was cleared, and he could explain. But—but you fellows had to know he wasn't coming, and stop."

"Dear old Gussy, with his dear old foot shoving in!" murmured Lawther. "No need for anybody to have known, only—"

"I—I really could not become anything of this kind, Lawther, when I accepted a reception for Levinson," said Arthur Augustus, with crimson cheeks.

"Do you ever forgive anything, old bean?" asked Blake.

"I—I am frightfully sorry that I letted in, as it turns out," said Arthur Augustus. "Pwaw accept my apologies, Clive."

"It can't be helped," said Clive wearily. "Of course, you fellows won't talk about this in the House."

"Of course not!"

"Walloah not, doak boy!"

"Levinson will be cleared, of course. I'll show you his letter when it comes," said Clive. "I can't make it all out; but it's made me feel pretty rotten. I—I'd have told you fellows before, but—but—"

"That's all right," said Tom Merry. "Never mind us. I've awfully sorry, but, of course, Levinson will get through all right."

"I'm sure of that."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his comrades departed with troubled faces. They passed Wally of the Third and Reggie Manners in the passage on their way to Clive's study. The two lads were looking very drowsy and bright. A minute later they came on Hasko, who was hanging about, perhaps waiting for them.

"Just starting for the guilty reception, what?" asked Hasko, with a grin.

"No!" snapped Tom Merry.

"Is it off?" chuckled Hasko.

"It is off, walloah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Isn't Levinson coming, after all, then?"

"He is not coming."

"My hat! Anything's happened? I've heard Trimble sayin' something—"

"Trimble is a wottah, Wally, and you are apothah. I decline to tell you a word. Levinson is innocent, I am sure he is."

"Shut up, you one!" muttered Blake.

"Walloah, Blake, I was not goin' to tell Wally that Levinson is—pawoosah! Leave off druggin' at you cullah, you ones!"

Arthur Augustus' cheeks did not leave off changing at his collar. They dropped until Gussy was safely landed in Study No. 5. There, Blake and Hewitt and Digby glared at him.

"You silly one—"

"Walloah, Blake—"

"You fawloahs cheap—"

"Walloah, Hewitt—"

"You burbling cuckoo—"

"Walloah, Dig—"

"Oh, bump him!" said Blake. "But for his fatherhood whose of greivir Levinson a reception at the station Clive wouldn't have told anybody a word about it. Bump him!"

"You stahh one— Oh wottah!"

Bump!

"I wogged you—"

Bump!

"Oh wottah!"

And Blake & Co. left the study, leaving Gussy sitting on the carpet in a state of breathless indignation and wrath.

The Gun Library.—No. 293.

CHAPTER 8.

The Return!

"E RNIER!"

"Yes, Frank!"

"Next station Wayland?"

"Good!" said Ernest Levinson, with a smile.

Frank Levinson's legs were eager. They had been very kind to the lag at Greyfriars School; he remembered everyone there with kindness. But he was very glad to be coming back to St. Jim's.

Levinson of the Fourth shared his feelings. He had enjoyed his stay at Greyfriars upon the whole. There had been troubles, but they had blown over, and Levinson had won golden opinions. He had more than his himself right in the eyes of the jokers who had once been his schoolfellows. Heavy Wharton & Co. had seen him off on that journey back to his own school, and the parting had been most cordial. But Levinson was looking forward to getting back to St. Jim's, and repeating the merry circle to which he belonged there.

"Wally will be at the station, I expect," said Frank brightly. "Boggs, too, most likely. I shall be jolly glad to see them."

"I suppose Olive will turn up," remarked Levinson.

"And Cardew, of course!"

Levinson laughed.

"Cardew will be too laxy to come to the station, I expect. But I'm pretty certain that Clive will take the trouble."

"It will be jolly to see the fellows again."

"Yes, rather!"

The train slowed down.

"Wayland Junction! Change 'ere for Rykomba and Woodhill!"

The two jokers alighted.

Ernest Levinson looked up and down the platform. There was a shade of disappointment on his face.

No St. Jim's fellow ran in sight. As a Wednesday was a half-holiday at St. Jim's there was no reason why any fellow, but he chaps, should not have turned up at the station. Nobody had turned up, however.

Frank's face fell very considerably.

He had been looking forward so keenly to seeing his chums of the Third, and he had never doubted for one moment that D'Arcy minor, at least, would have taken the trouble to come and greet him. He had expected Manners minor, too, and perhaps Joe Fyngoo and Carly Gibson. But at least Wally of the Third might have turned up.

"Oh you—did you tell them the train was never coming by, Ernie?" asked Frank, with a frown in his voice.

"Of course!"

"Then—"

"I dare say they're at Rykomba, for the local," said Levinson. "After all, it wasn't arranged for anybody to be at the station. We go across the bridge, Frank!"

He led the way to the local platform.

Frank followed him, cheered up again. No doubt his friends were at Rykomba waiting the local train from Wayland Junction. After all, Wayland was a long way from St. Jim's.

The brothers were seen in the local train, rambling away towards Rykomba. Both were none silent and thoughtful then before, however.

Whether Arthur Augustus' great idea of a reception, had it come off, would have pleased Levinson very much, can hardly be said. Certainly, however, he would have been pleased to see his friends at the junction and to walk home through the wood with them instead of taking the local train. And there was no doubt that they knew what he would prefer.

Cardew he did not expect to make any mention; he knew the laxy nature of the St. Jim's clock. Cardew's friendship was more earnest; but it was extremely undemonstrative; and any mention was not in his line. But Levinson had counted on Clive as a certainty.

Still, Sidney Clive was sure to be at Rykomba Station, and that was good enough.

The local train ran into Rykomba—the pretty little country station with Mungo graniteh beds along the platform. Levinson major and Levinson minor jumped out of the train.

They looked up and down the platform; but the appearance of Wayland Junction was repeated; there was no St. Jim's fellow in sight.

"Outside the station, perhaps," said Frank hopefully.

Levinson of the Fourth nodded and led the way from the station. Outside the station, however, no St. Jim's cap was to be seen.

Levinson compressed his lips a little.

Certainly it had not been arranged for his friends to meet him on his return. There had been some reference to it in letters from Clive; but no definite fixture had been made. Nevertheless, as Levinson had been away from school for some weeks, surely one or the other of his friends might have taken the trouble. Rykomba was not ten minutes from St.



Clive lighted the gas. Then there was a shout from the two juniors. "Levison, by gad!" "Harry to startle you!" said Levison excitedly. "You don't seem to have expected me to-day! Harry!" (See page 11.)

Jim's on a bike, and it was a half-holiday and a very fine afternoon.

"Come on, Franky," said Levison. "We'll walk it!"

Frank's glance lingered up and down the street. Only the previous day he had had a letter from Wally of the Third, full of friendship and mistakes in spelling. And now he was coming back Wally hadn't taken the trouble to walk or ride a mile to give him a greeting.

The fog's lip quivered.

"I dare say old Solly's detained them," he said suddenly.

"He would, you know! Old Solly's a boss!"

"He can't have detained Fourth Form chaps!" granted Levison. "I dare say they didn't think it worth while to come. Why should they, if you come to that?"

"I'd have come if Wally had been away for weeks, and I, too," said Frank.

"Well, let's go going. Nobody's here."

Frank gave a last glance round, and followed his brother down the old High Street of Hylcombe. They emerged into the country road leading to St. Jim's, and both looked about them keenly as they walked on. They were still in hopes of seeing their friends, who might be late in coming to meet the train.

But it was not like Clive, at least, to be late in keeping an appointment; he was the very reverse of Cardew in that. Levison reflected that Clive might be under detention. Such things happened at times. But it was an odd coincidence if Frank's chums in the Third were under detention, too, on the same occasion. It looked more like a case of "out of sight, out of mind," and Levison's bright expression had gone, and Frank's speaking countenance spoke his disappointment only too plainly.

"Hallo, that's a St. Jim's cap!" exclaimed Frank suddenly.

"It's Rocks."

Rocks and Crooke of the Staff were ambling along the lane. They greeted at the sight of the two Levisons.

"Hallo, you back?" said Crooke.

"So you've turned up!" said Rocks.

"Yes," said Levison curtly. "Is there a cricket match on this afternoon?"

"Not that I know of."

"There was going to be a trial match, but I understand it's got off till Saturday," said Crooke.

"Then Clive isn't—"

Levison broke off abruptly. It had come into his mind that Clive might have been wanted in a cricket match, and so could not come out. But he did not want to confide his thoughts on the subject to the two black sheep of the Staff—his old enemies.

"Clive!" repeated Rocks. "Clive isn't playing cricket! He's gone out for the afternoon, I think."

"Gone out?" said Levison.

"Yes; Cardew's got a car out, I believe," drawled Rocks. "You know Cardew's swankin' ways—regardless of expense, an' all that. I shouldn't wonder if they've havin' a good time."

Levison was extremely unwilling to let Rocks see what he felt; but he could not hide the black cloud that settled on his brow. Cards and Clive had gone out for the half-holiday in a car—regardless of the fact that their chum was coming back to the school that afternoon! It was "out of sight, out of mind" with a vengeance.

"Dash it all, they might have stayed in for Levison, after he's been away weeks!" said Crooke.

"I don't believe they've gone out!" burst out Frank indignantly. "They're trying to pull your leg, Ernie!"

"Just like the rest, if they are!" said Levison bitterly.

"Come on, Frank!"

"Pulling your leg!" repeated Rocks, raising his eyebrows. "Nobbin' of the kind. If you don't believe me, ask Tapples as you go in. Cardew checked him a hob for openin' the door of the car."

"I don't believe it!" said Frank.

Rocks laughed.

"Dear me, the school hasn't missed you so much as you

(Continued on page 14.)

"Something Quite Different" in Detective Stories!



THE RIVER MYSTERY!

BY EDMUND BURTON.

Another of the Amazing Exploits of
ANTHONY SHARPE—Investigator.

CHAPTER I.

A Call From the Thames Police—Fog Play!

"RIGHT-RO! We'll be along in a bronco at shakes, old man!"

Anthony Sharpe's eyes held a moon that usually leapt gleams in their depths as he laid down the telephone receiver and turned to Tim O'Carroll, his boy assistant.

"Got your hat, passenger," he said. "We're bound for the River Police headquarters. That was our old friend, Winton."

"What's up, sir? Anythin' big?" "I should think so, considering—" Sharpe paused. "However, we'll know soon enough. They've just picked a man out of the Thames, and the circumstances are certainly curious."

O'Carroll slipped on a macintosh and cap, considering during the process how such a curious occurrence as the finding of a body in the River Thames could be of such evident importance, and was presently accompanying his master in search of a taxi.

They were met at their destination by Detective-Inspector Winton, of Scotland Yard, whose reddish face wore a peculiarly animated expression. Plainly he also was excited by this almost everyday find.

"Ah, Sharpe! These you are at last!" the C.I.D. man greeted. "Come in here! See that?"

He pointed to the body lying on a slab, the well-built figure of a man of about forty years of age. He was, of course, quite dead, but what made the thing look so ghastly was the fact that both his wrists and ankles were bound tightly with a strong cord.

"Good heavens!" Sharpe exclaimed. "A most deliberate murder, if ever there was one! When and where did they find him?"

"Not very far away about an hour or so ago," Winton said. "And, seeing that the affair was plainly one of foul play, they phoned the Yard. Now, look here—that's what I thought you'd be specially interested in!"

He indicated the dead man's chest, where the shirt had been opened, and Sharpe bent forward, Tim looking over his shoulder. A distinct mark was visible, deeply impressed in the skin—a small ring surrounding the letter "X."

"X," muttered O'Carroll. "I say, sir—"

"Yes, lad," the investigator cut in promptly, "you already know something about this sign. Why, it's not three
THE GUN LIBRARIAN.—No. 180.

weeks ago since your astuteness saved my life, when it was threatened by the suspicious individual who carries on his depredations under that trade mark!"

Sharpe was, of course, referring to the recent case in which he had been within an ace of death, when captured by a gang of bank thieves under the leadership of the unknown personage. He had been tied to a chair, beneath which was a cylinder charged with more high explosive intended to be fired by the opening of a door to which wires were attached. Tim, however, had overheard the plot, and led the raiding party into the gang's headquarters by another way; but, unfortunately, the thieves had made good their escape in the confusion.

And now here was the sign of the mysterious "X" cropping up again under new circumstances, which gave Anthony Sharpe rather a thrill of satisfaction. He had already crossed swords with this elusive criminal on three distinct occasions, only to taste defeat, and he was keenly desirous of running him to earth.

"Anything else," he asked, suddenly turning to Winton, who nodded quickly.

"Yes," the C.I.D. man held out a saturated envelope upon which the ink had run, making the name and address

unintelligible. The postmark, however, was readable.

"Here," Posted yesterday morning in Battersea," Sharpe muttered as he studied it. "That doesn't tell us much—Hullo, the note made in typed, and evidently with a non-copping ribbon, for it's hardly smudged!"

"Holding it up to the light, he read:

"Meet me tonight, Cheyne Walk, end of Albert Bridge, at 11.45 prompt. Very important.—X."

"That's all," said Sharpe. "It narrows the compass somewhat; but it's not much of a clue, for it bears no address."

He commenced a minute examination of the dead man's clothing, but found nothing else which could help him. There was some money in a wallet, but no letters of identification, also a gold watch in the waistcoat pocket, its plainly robbery was not the residue of the crime. Suddenly, however, the investigator stopped short, staring into the passive face at close quarters.

"Well," asked Winton quickly, "what is it?"

"Only that I've seen this fellow before," returned the other confidently. "I recognize him now as being one of those who were present in that house where I was caught and tramped up. He's a



Sharpe bent forward and scanned the man's chest. A distinct mark was visible, deeply impressed in the skin—a ring surrounding the letter X.

member of the gang we so nearly ran to earth, Winton, only to find the blinds drawn when we reached that garage at the other end of the tunnel we discovered. You remember?"

"As if I could forget it!" rapped back the Scotland Yard man. "Well, what now?"

Sharpe was silent for a minute or two; then he turned quickly.

"We'd best hurry to Chelsea, and see if anything can be picked up there, though it's a forlorn hope," he said. "Otherwise, beyond the fact that we believe the mysterious 'X' to be responsible for this piece of work, we are altogether in the dark. The ruffian he covered up his tracks well—no usual!"

Winton rubbed his bristling hair in perplexity, and silently followed the pair on of the police-station.

CHAPTER 2.

The Coffee-stall Proprietor—A Chance Threat!

CHRYNE WALK, as many people know, starts the Thames from Let's Road to Chelsea Embankment, being connected with the other side of the river by the Battersea and Albert Bridges. At the end of the last-mentioned Sharpe stopped the taxi and got out, followed by Winton and Tim O'Garra.

It was now falling dark, and lanes were beginning to cast their reflections on the sluggish-moving water close by; whilst, only a few yards away, a coffee-stall proprietor was busily washing up, preparing for his evening rush of business.

Anthony Sharpe glanced round, furtively letting his eyes rest upon that coffee-stall. Then, mechanically followed by the others, he capriciously strode towards it.

The proprietor—a big, good-humoured looking fellow with a pair of very bright eyes—gave a friendly nod.

"Well! Be you, mister! Corbin at!"

"Three coffees, please," Sharpe interrupted. "Nice weather—eh?"

"It is that," agreed the man, fixing his clear eyes on the detective's face. Then he passed in the act of drying a large cup, and stared aghast.

"Why—why," he muttered, "you're the very spit o' that 'ee, Anthony Sharpe! I've often seen his plate in the papers."

The investigator smiled, but made no reply, whereas the good-humoured gentleman turned his gaze upon Winton's powerful, square-shouldered form.

"A cop—a regular cop! Might be from the Yard!" he murmured, when Sharpe interrupted him with an amazed chuckle.

"You're an observant man, and you're quite right," he said, speaking at last. "We are both detectives, and I wonder how if your apparently loose pronunciation could help us! Were you here last night at about 11.45?"

Winton glanced anxiously at his friend, as though fearing the result of taking a straight into their residence, but made no comment. He had a most wholesome respect for Anthony Sharpe's intuitions.

"Was I 'ere!" the coffee-stall owner answered. "Course I was! I'm always 'ere, from seven till now midnight. Why?"

"Ah, all nearly midnight!" the investigator repeated. "Well, listen! Did you, by chance, notice anything unusual taking place close by—a tall man who met another one, or perhaps more than one, shortly before that hour—?"

"Yes, I did, sir, as it 'appens," the



Anthony Sharpe, disguised as a glazier, covered the two men whilst Tim O'Garra blew faintly on a police-whistle.

fellow interrupted. "Just before quarter to twelve last night a bloke came strollin' along an' stops over yonder." He nodded towards the bridge. "He seemed to be waitin' for someone; also he seemed agitated. So he kep' jerkin' his 'ead from side to side, and startin' at every sound. I'd just shut the stall an' turned out the light, so he didn't notice me standin' in the shade; but I couldn't 'elp squintin' 'im, 'cause there was 'ardly a soul about at the time, an' he was right under that lamp, there—"

"Yes, yes!" Sharpe cut in eagerly. "Don't mind all these trimmings. What took place then? Or did you not wait to see?"

"Oh, I saw all right, sir!" the man continued. "I was just about to move off, when a big closed car drove up an' two other chaps got out. They says a few words to the tall bloke, who backs away as if scared o' 'em; but presently he enters the car so quiet as a lamb, an' it drives away. I mentioned the matter to the sleep—bag parading air policeman—who passed along a few minutes later, but he didn't seem to think much of it. Said the chap might 'a' been drunk, an' that his fourth was 'a—"

"Did you chance to notice the number of that car?" Sharpe asked quickly; and the man's left eye closed slowly.

"Bair' fond o' detective games, an' rather impressed by wat took place, I made a mental note of it," he answered. "My father said I was always an observin' kind o' soul, an'—"

"Yes, yes! But what was the number?"

"I C O U N T," said the coffee-stall owner emphatically. "An' I'm 'ere! But a bit of a 'ee myself, I may be 'ere missin' it—but I thought it looked as if some attempt had been made in 'is that number. There was some talk 'bout on the back playing last night of it had flaked off, possibly with the 'detective'."

Sharpe smiled as he entered the desired particulars in his notebook; then he handed the man enough to pay for the coffee ten times over.

"You 'ere's certainly a loss to the Force," he said, "and have evidently missed your vocation. Anyway, you've well earned what I've given you. Now,

Winton, back to the Yard as fast as we can hustle!"

"Why, what's got you, old man?" asked the perplexed inspector, as they re-entered the taxi. "You seem to be extra keen."

"I'm always keen when I find a clue, however fragile it may be," returned Sharpe.

"Possibly we're clatching at shadows—but shadows must have a substance behind them—and though we may be going on a wild-goose chase, there's certainly no further information to be had here."

CHAPTER 3.

The Home at Wintledon—Poked Again!

SOME time later two taxis drew up at the end of a well kept residential road in Wintledon, and eight figures in all descended. They were Anthony Sharpe, Tim O'Garra, Winton, and five picked men of the C.I.D.

Sharpe and his assistant, however, would scarcely have been recognized unless one had seen the transformation which took place in their appearance when they reached Scotland Yard after their visit to Chelsea; for the investigator now wore a sandy wig, with moustache to match, whilst Tim's mustaches were concealed by a coat of oil-stained overalls. Also, he carried a plumber's toolkit in one hand, with a blow-lamp in the other.

The name and address of the supposed owner of the car which had been seen on Chryne Walk the previous night had been traced by the number furnished by the coffee-stall proprietor. Hence the reason for this sudden descent upon respectable Wintledon.

After a brief subdued conversation Sharpe and Tim strolled away, presently entering the gateway of a large detached house a few yards down the road. The investigator rang the bell, and the door was opened by a squatly-built man, whose powerful shoulders suggested tremendous strength. He was dressed as a manservant, but somehow did not seem to lack the part.

"What if you want?" he asked gruffly, after closely spying them up and down.

(Continued on page 21.)



seem to think?" he asked. "If you're expectin' to see your big pals before tea, young Levison, you're off-side. D'Arcy minor and Manners minor are at Wayland, if you want to know."

Frank started. "Did they go to the station, after all?" he exclaimed. "The station? They've gone to the pictures." "The—the pictures?" stammered Frank. "Just that!" "It's not true," Racker laughed again. "Well, I ought to know, as I stood them the seats," he remarked. "I had a couple of reserved seats, and, as I didn't want them, I gave them to the lads. They went." "I don't believe it! You're lying!" exclaimed Frank, almost crying with indignation and rage. "If I were big enough, I'd jolly well punch your head for saying such rotten things, you cad!"

"I'm big enough!" said Levison of the Fourth. "Here, keep off!" roared Racker, jumping away. Crash! Levison's left caught Aubrey Racker on the chin, and he went sprawling in the dust of the road. Crooks backed away in alarm.

"Oh! Oh! You rotten ruffian!" gasped Racker, sitting up dazedly. "Oh, my nose! I—I—I!" "Get up, and come on, you blackguard!" said Levison, between his teeth. Racker got up; but he did not come on. He looked away, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. The look on Ernest Levison's face was more than enough for him. "Come on, Frank!"

The two Levisons walked on towards St. Jim's, the elder with a dark and messy brow. Frank was smiling now. "I'm jolly glad you knocked him down, Ernie!" he said. "Serve him right for telling such rotten lies!" "They weren't lies!" granted Levison.

"Who-ah!" "It's the truth!" said his brother testily. "I knocked Racker down because he was robbing it in, like a sneaking cad; not because he was telling lies. I could see that he wasn't."

"Oh!" gasped Frank. The walk to the school finished in silence. All the happiness of the horse-racing was gone now. Old Taggles, the porter, knocked his ancient hat to the two juniors as they came in at the gates.

"Good to see you back, Master Levison!" said Taggles civilly. "Thanks! Have you seen anything of Carden?" asked Ernest Levison.

"Perhaps at the bottom of his heart he nourished a faint hope that Racker's tale, after all, had been false. "Yeas! He's gone out in a car with Master Clive." "You don't know when they'll be back?" "No, sir. They'll have to be back for calling-over." Levison nodded, and walked on with his brother. Jarroon of the Third, in the quadrangle, gave Frank Levison a hail. "Hallo, kid! Turned up again, like a bad penny?"

"Here I am!" answered Frank. "Where's Wally and Roger?" "Gone to the pictures." Levison minor's brow darkened. "Sure of that?" he asked. "Yes, but!" grinned Jarroon. "I saw Racker give them five tickets—Racker of the Third, you know—and I asked if he had one for me, too. He hasn't!" Levison and his brother walked on to the School House in grim silence.

CHAPTER 9. The Horse-racing!

TOM MEVRY was standing on the steps of the School House, with his hat under his arm. The "reception" being off, Manners had gone out with his camera, and Lovett had cycled over to Wayland to the pictures. Tom Mevry was going to get some cricket practice;

NO GENIUS NEEDED TO READ THIS EASY CRICKET CONTEST AND CARRY AWAY A BIG CASH PRIZE!

First Prize £5. Second Prize £2 10 0, & 10 Prizes of 5s. each.

What You Have to Do!

Here is a splendid cricket competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find an easy picture-puzzle. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, which gives the history of the Hampshire Cricket Club, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Hampshire Cricket Club" Competition, Care Office, George House, George Square, K.C. 4, so as to reach the address not later than THURSDAY, June 14th, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of 5s will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded in a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor shall be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnum," and "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enclose "HAMPSHIRE CRICKET CLUB" COMPETITION, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name

Address

G.....

Blake & Co. of Study No. 6 were already on the cricket ground.

Tom gave a start at the sight of the Levisions coming up the path to the House.

"My only hat! They've come," he ejaculated.

Levision of the Fourth was looking gloomy enough. He gave Tom Merry a slight nod after the description of his own chums. Levison did not expect the captain of the Third to be particularly enthusiastic about his return. Levison was sensitive; and he was not given to wearing his heart on his sleeve for days to peek at.

"So you're back?" exclaimed Tom Merry.
"Yes, we're back!" said Levison briefly. "Going down to the cricket?"

"I was just going," said Tom. "I—I suppose you don't feel inclined to fit after a long journey?"

"No, not quite!" said Levison grimly.

"Your pals are out, I think," said Tom. "You'll come to tea in my study, Levison?"

"Thanks, no? I think Frank and I will have tea in my study, on our first day home," said Levison, and he passed on with his brother.

Tom Merry passed a moment, perplexed. He had not had the latest idea, of course, of seeing Ernest Levison that afternoon after seeing the telegram in Clive's study.

Apparently Levison, after having changed his plans once, had changed them again—so far as Tom Merry could see.

He was at no loss to account for Levison's gloomy look—the cloud under which, as Tom supposed, he had left Greyfriars accounted for that. After a moment or two of hesitation Tom turned round, and called to Levison.

"Hold on a minute!"

"Well!" said Levison, stopping.

"Clive and Carlow will be sorry they've missed you—"

"Thank so!" said Levison, with an expressionless face.

"I'm sure of it. Clive was looking awfully down," said Tom.

"I fancy Carlow made him go out in the car to cheer him up a bit."

"Good!" said Levison. "I hope he's cheered him. I suppose Clive would be looking rather down, in the circumstances."

There was a sarcastic tone in Levison's voice that Tom did not understand.

"Well, he looked it," he said.

"Poor fellow!" said Levison satirically. "A bit out of order of me to come bawling in like this, after relieving my friends of my company for so long. But I've turned up again like the bad penny in the story, you know?"

"I—I'm sorry if—if there's been trouble at Greyfriars," said Tom, hardly knowing what to say, with Levison in this cynical and unaccountable mood.

"Thanks! There's trouble everywhere, but they blow over," said Levison. "I can't say I had this a happy change after Greyfriars!"

And he gave Tom a short nod and walked into the House.

Tom Merry put his hat under his arm again, and walked away slowly and thoughtfully as the cricket field.

He did not understand Levison's return, after the telegram.

And he did not in the least understand Levison's evidently bitter mood. Had there been serious trouble at Greyfriars?

It was not Tom's business to inquire, if Levison did not choose to tell him. So he walked down to the cricket.

Levison went into the House, and Mr. Railton, the School House master, met him in the hall.

"I'm glad to see you back again, Levison," said Mr. Railton, shaking the Fourth-Former by the hand.

"Thank you, sir," said Levison, his brow clearing a little.

"Dr. Holman has received a very excellent report of you from the headmaster of Greyfriars," said Mr. Railton.

"You seem to have done remarkably well in every way there, Levison. I am glad of it."

And, with a kind nod, the Headmaster went on his way.

Levison went to Mr. Lockhart's study to report his return to Mr. Selby, the master of the Third. After leaving Mr. Railton, whose greeting was very kind, Ernest Levison went on to his own study, No. 3 in the Fourth.

The room was empty and alert, and seemed decidedly unwholesome. This was all the return that Levison had looked for.

There were plenty of signs of his chums' presence in the room. A gold-headed cane belonging to Ralph Rockness Carlow lay on the table; a cup of Clive's was on a chair. Levison tossed both cup and cane into a corner of the room and sat down.

He was a little tired after his journey, and a little hungry. But he did not feel disposed to seek refreshment. His face was downcast and gloomy. This was his home-coming, after a long absence. His friends would not even stay indoors when they knew he was coming, to give him a word of greeting.

It was too much trouble for them to come to the station for him, and they could not even put off a motor-car excursion. And Clive had been looking down," had he?

Why? Because Levison was coming back, and he did not want his old chair in the study again? For what other reason?

His lip curled bitterly.

Not a fellow to give him a welcoming word except Tom Merry, and even Merry of the Third had seemed constrained.

There was a knock at the door, and Frank came in, with his knees by dropping. The bag did not seem far from tears.

"Hallo, lad!"

"There's nobody about," said Frank. "Everybody seems to have gone out, Ernie."

"Why not, on a fine half-holiday?" said Levison indifferently.

"Let's get some tea here, Frank."

"I—I thought Wally and Reggie would want to see me," muttered Frank.

"Well, I thought Clive might like to see me!" said Levison, laughing. "Never mind! Let's see each other, Frank! Tea along with me to the tuckshop, and let's get some grub!"

"Right ho," said Frank a little more brightly.

Levison's major and minor visited the tuckshop, and came back with materials for tea in the study. Baggie Trumble scouted at them in the quadrangle, but did not speak.

Boilers of the New House called a "Chaccio!" from a distance on his way to the cricket.

In Study No. 3 Ernest Levison and his brother had tea, and it cheered them somewhat. After tea, Frank, looking more cheerful, left the study, perhaps to hunt up some of his friends in the Third.

Levison remained alone in the study.

There was a step in the passage presently, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyes came peering in at the doorway.

"Tom Merry mentioned that you were back, dear boy," he said.

"I had to!"

"I'm awfully sorry, Levison!"

"Am you?"

"Yes, wotnah! I trust you understand, dear boy, that you have our sympathy!"

Levison stared at him, his brow darkening. Was the neglect of his chums already a topic in the School House?

"Thank you!" he said so curtly and satirically that Arthur Augustus started a little.

"I mean it, Levison," he said.

"Do you? Thanks! Shut the door after you!"

Hot words trembled on Gussy's lips, but he restrained them. If Levison was in trouble, perhaps a few rally words could be availed.

"I can see that you do not desire my company, Levison," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I will wait."

"By!" said Levison indifferently.

And Arthur Augustus did.

Levison sat and stared at the slowly darkening window, with bitter thoughts in his mind and bitter feelings in his breast. The clock was ticking on the old quadrangle of St. Jim's. He could hear the crickets coming in. Clive and Carlow could not be very long now.

How was he going to greet them when they came into the study? Levison hardly knew.

If this was all they cared for his return, certainly he did not intend to display any pleasure at seeing them again. And he certainly was not going to show them how much they had hurt him. An expressionless face, a cold carelessness of manner—perhaps that was the best way. He breathed a little harder as he heard landlord steps and a familiar voice outside the study. The door was thrown open.

"Get a match, Clive!" returned Carlow, and seeing Levison in the gloom of the study.

"Yes. Here you are."

Clive lighted the gas. Then there was a shout from the two juniors.

"Levison, by gad!"

"Levison!"

Ernest Levison rose from his chair.

"Sorry to startle you!" he said satirically. "You don't seem to have expected me to-day! Sorry!"

He walked to the door.

"Levison—"

"Oh, don't worry! I hope you had a good trip in the car! Excuse me now—I want to speak to Talbot!"

"Levison—"

Levison affected not to hear. He walked out of the study and strolled down the passage, humming a tune. Carlow and Clive, left in the study, stared at one another blankly.

Arthur Railton, in his study, was alternately rubbing a damaged nose and wringing over the screws of his scheme. But the success had been greater than Racks dreamed—greater than he had ventured to anticipate.

THE END.

Look out for next week's story of St. Jim's, entitled

"GARDENING WITH MARIAM!" by Martin Clifford. It's a real good story and you cannot afford to miss it, boys.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 300.

OUR SPECIAL DERRY DAY STORY!



by Captain
Malcolm Arnold.

A Thrilling Story, Featuring Those Two Favourite Characters—Ginger Dan and Tu Sin.

CHAPTER I.

En Route for Epsom!

ALONG the busy roadway, the patched old caravan drawn by the shaggy nag, Ginger Dan was walking ahead of the horse, and Tu Sin, with Bill at his heels, was peering along the strip of grass to the left.

For the whole of that day a steady drizzle had fallen, and as luck would have it, the two wags had struck a particularly bad stretch of roadway. To make matters worse, Tu Sin had taken what he considered to be a short cut without notifying Ginger Dan, with the result that, after striking along a side road for the best part of two miles, the caravan was halted on the edge of a quarry, and Ginger Dan, coming out of the vehicle, told Tu Sin a few grim lines-tracks before backing the caravan round and heading off to find the road again.

This small incident had deepened the usually cheery soul of the long, lean Clark, and what with the rain, the rocky roads, and the tightness of his belt, Tu Sin was feeling particularly depressed.

For the life of him the Clark could not understand why Ginger Dan should be so insistent on reaching Epsom Downs that particular Wednesday; but Dan had a vein of stubbornness in his composition, and when it came to the point, he was the real leader of the train.

"I've never missed a Derby, you yellow image," Ginger Dan said, "and I'm not going to do it now. If we've got to push this blitherin' caravan up on the downs, we'll be there to-morrow morning—so that's the long and short of it!"

Dank had fallen, and they were still, apparently, miles away from their destination. The drizzle from the trees, and the clouds racing across the sky, and the loneliness of the road, seemed to have affected Bill, the sheepdog, for he poked along at the heels of Tu Sin, a wet, miserable sight.

They had lighted the lamp on the right of the vehicle, and its yellow beams fell across the old rug plodding on steadily between the shafts.

With his hands deep in his pockets, Tu Sin paced along, and, rounding a bend in the road, saw ahead of them a

line of tiny, red lamps, mere pin-points of light, owing along the dark surface ahead.

"That settles it!" Tu Sin cried, breaking the long silence at last. "The blinking road's up now!"

Dan had also caught sight of those warning signals, and, as Tu Sin came across to him, Dan grinned.

"Nothing doing, Tu Sin! It's only one half of the road. We'll get past all right."

The caravan wheeled on down the roadway, and, presently it reached the wooden barrier that guarded the caravan store. Just behind the barrier was a small waterproof-sheet shelter. There was a charcoal fire burning in front of it, and, seated on an upturned box in the shelter was a grey-haired old fellow, puffing contentedly at a pipe.

He had looked forward out of his shelter as the caravan had halted, and Tu Sin, slipping his hand into his pocket, drew out a bag of chestnuts. He had been munching them raw during the journey, and had found them extremely unpalatable.

"I wonder if that highly honorable personage would permit me to roast a few chestnuts, Ginger Dan? I've just about done. If I don't get something to eat, I shall be dead before we reach Epsom."

Bill had already slipped under the barrier, and was standing with his nose dangerously close to the charcoal fire.

Dan looked at his chum, then at the dog, and smiled his head.

"All right, old chum," he said. "We may as well call a halt."

To the right of the barrier was a patch of smooth turf under the trees, and Dan turned the carriage on to the same. A roasting was produced, and the horse was given its food, then Dan came back to the shelter.

Tu Sin was already squatting under it, and there were a dozen chestnuts arranged around the hot blaze.

"This is my friend, Ginger Dan, Mr. Thompkins," Tu Sin announced.

The old watchman nodded to the stout-shouldered youngster.

"Come in and make yourself comfortable, kiddie," he said. "Plenty of roasts for all of us."

Dan squashed himself into the narrow space, seating himself on another box. The long journey had fatigued him, and it was very comfortable to sit there

with the heat of the charcoal fire warming his limbs through his sodden garments.

"Gipsies, are you, eh?" Mr. Thompkins remarked presently. "Well, it's the first time I've ever seen a yellow gipsy before."

Tu Sin grinned.

"The honourable gentleman wants me to tell his fortune, Dan, but I'm no good at that stuff."

Presently a pair of the chestnuts were roasted to a sticky, and Tu Sin crossed them with quick, adept fingers. He handed one to Thompkins, and as soon as it reached the old fellow's palm he dropped it.

"By Jinks, that's hot! What's the matter with those yellow fingers of yours that you don't feel the heat, eh?"

Tu Sin was calmly peeling a smoking chestnut, and Ginger Dan laughed.

"He isn't like ordinary human beings, Mr. Thompkins," he said. "He never seems to feel any sort of pain or much else."

Roasted chestnuts are a cheap treat, but remarkably filling, and, when the old watchman brought out a bottle and brewed some tea, Tu Sin felt that peace had returned to the world again.

"You chaps be going on to Epsom, eh?" the watchman observed. "It is a grand service you're from the downs, you know. It'd have been better if you stuck to the main road."

"Couldn't risk it, Mr. Thompkins," Dan retorted. "There are too many cars and charabancs in the early morning, and we'd never get through. This is a quieter road, and I know it will take us right on to the course."

"Yes, that's true, and it won't be used very much to-night, I've thinkin'," the old fellow went on. "For we've been digging here for the past six weeks. There's a rare big hole up along the road, I can tell you. They're laying them new underground telephones, and they lay them deep."

He took out a great turnip of a watch and glanced at it.

"It's quarterpast ten. I'll have to go round and look at the barriers," he said, rising slowly to his feet. "Must see they're all right, you know."

"We'll come with you," said Ginger Dan; and he and Tu Sin accompanied the watchman down the barrier, examining the half-dozen lanterns that were strung along between the supports.

Tu Sin peered at the cavity guarded by the barrier, and shook his head.

"Wouldn't like to drive anything into there," the Chick said. "There'd be a nasty bump at the bottom."

The road was up for half its width, and there was only just room for an ordinary vehicle to pass on the unbroken side. They had reached the end of the barrier and had turned to walk back up the road, when a thin voice called to them, and, halting, they looked round.

"Why, goodness, it's my old woman," Thompkins declared. "What is she doing out at this time, I wonder!"

They saw the indistinct figure come hurrying up the wet road, and, as the old woman drew nearer, Thompkins called to her.

"What's the matter with you, Sasia? What brings you out in this wet, eh?"

"You'll see to some 'ouse at once, Sasa," came the quavering reply. "Jim has been hurt—knocked down by a car, and 'e won't let me send for the doctor. Says he's all right, but I'm sure 'e's been hurt serious. You'd 'ave to come 'ome and look after him."

She had caught the old fellow by the sleeve, and was tugging at him. They were standing close to one of the lamps, and Ginger Dan saw the look of distress and dismay that came on to the bearded face.

"You know well enough I can't come home, Sasia," the old fellow

declared. "I must stay here and look after things."

Tu Sin nudged Ginger Dan. Here was a way of engaging their kindly host.

"That's all right, Mr. Thompkins," Dan said. "Tu Sin and I will wait here until you come back. We'll see that nothing goes wrong."

The old fellow hesitated, and the women tugged at his arm again.

"You're real bad," she wailed. "You'll have to come and see to him, Sasa. You'll have to come."

"Yes, you must go," Ginger Dan put in. "It's quite all right. We'll wait here until you come back."

"All right, ladies, but mind you keep the lamps lit, too. I'd never forgive myself if an accident happened. I've been on this job for ten years, and I'm the safest man on the road."

And with that the old man hurried off with his wife, and Dan and Tu Sin walked back along the barrier to where the doctor stood.

CHAPTER 2.

A Dastardly Plot!

"A DARN nasty road this, Dan!"

Tu Sin remarked. "Soddy good job there not much traffic! I wouldn't like to drive a big car down here."

They made themselves comfortable in

the tarpaulin-covered shelter, and presently Tu Sin, curling up on a seat in the corner, began to nod. Dan also found himself dropping into a half-doze.

Just what happened then Dan had only a very hazy idea of, but he was roused from his slumber by a sudden confusion barking from Bill, then next moment those came charging into the shelter a couple of rough-looking men. One of them aimed a vicious kick at the sleeping, hauling the animal over, and as Dan leaped to his feet the fellow turned and drove at him.

Tu Sin, in the act of rising, was grasped by the second man, and they were down together over the back of the box.

Another couple of men appeared, and joined in the fray. Dan fought bravely, but the odds were against him, and presently he found himself a-prawl in the front of the shelter, with one of the ruffians leaning over him, while the other man tied him up hand and foot.

A grant and-a scuffle heralded the arrival of Tu Sin, who was being dragged bodily out of the shelter by his heels, and he was kicking and squinting like an owl. But he, too, was overpowered, and finally the two youngsters were picked up and carried across to the other side of the road, where they were dumped unconsciously into the hedge.

"You look after those chaps, Bob," a



Ginger Dan and Tu Sin, bound up hand and foot, watched the group of rough-looking figures as they altered the position of the barrier, making it appear as though the left-hand side of the road was under repair.

gruff voice ordered, "If they try to make a noise again, 'em!"

One of the attackers, a thicket man, took up position over the youngsters. He had a heavy club in his fist, and he swung it menacingly as he nodded down to them.

"Better keep your mouths shut," he said. "I've you 'em!"

Ginger Dan dropped back on the heap of soft earth, and watched the group of rough-looking thugs. He saw one that there were five of them, including the man who had mounted guard.

One of the group was wearing a light-colored waterproof, and he seemed to be the leader. For Dan heard his gruff voice bark out an order. Immediately the men commenced to work, and for a moment Dan was puzzled to explain their object.

He saw them tackle the end barrier. Lifting the three-cornered supports, and carrying them round on to the unbroken side of the track. Then the barrier was lifted, and placed behind the barrier in its new position, and the chaotic barrier was also carefully removed.

Finally, the end lamp was carried round and fixed on the front barrier, and like a flash the majority of the men were gone to Dan. These roughs had altered the position of the barrier, making it appear as though it was the left side of the road that was under repair.

Any vehicle coming down that road would swing to the right, and would run on headlong into the excavation.

"Here, hear it, you brute, what the damn are you getting up to?"

Dan's voice broke out in an angry shout, and To Sin, glancing up, saw the body guard raise his arm.

A quick thrust of To Sin's bound legs landed on the man's knees, and the heavy eyelid fell on Dan's shoulder instead of his head, while the guard rolled over into the roadway, a stream of cuts leaping from his lips. The fall and the shout attracted the attention of the other men, and they were carrying across to the bridge. An other guard picked himself up to make a headlong leap at To Sin, the leader of the gang grabbed him.

"All right, Bob," he said. "We know how to stop them squawking. We'll gag the young boss."

He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and, leaving over To Sin, threw the yellow handkerchief, and in another moment the gag was slipped over the young Chick's mouth.

To Sin heard Dan struggling, as he, too, was gagged, then, at another command from the leader of the gang, the two chains were lifted and carried down the road for a few yards to a gateway, and on into the fields, where they were dumped on the wet ground.

"You take your tin and be quiet!" the harsh voice of the leader called. "We don't want to do you any harm, but if you squawk again you'll get it!"

He turned away, and Dan saw the group pass out of the gateway. One of them paced into the road, taking up position there, and possibly the number of their voices came to Dan's ears, and he listened intently.

"The van left Marshall's place at seven o'clock," the lanky voice declared. "They won't drive it very fast, and they ought to be here about eleven at the outside. They won't take no chances with Valerie King, you can bet your boots!"

A quick thrill ran through Ginger Dan as he heard the name, Valerie King. That was the famous chestnut and belonged to Lord Westbury—the favorite of the Berke.

A hoarse guffaw sounded, then another voice chimed in.

"Rubbish! he'd take no chances—oh! That's why he's running the car up by road in a special motor-van. But I reckon he'll find it not so easy to put a grain the boys."

The group moved nearer to the gate, their chains clanged together.

It was a trap, a diabolical plot, arranged by those ruffians. That reserved barrier would make the unsuspecting driver of the motor horse-van swing to the right, and the famous three-headed would probably be seriously injured if not killed when the smash came.

Ginger Dan knew very well that Valerie King was the people's favorite that year, and there had been many bets made on it. There was little doubt as to who those roughs were. They were some gang working by their shady ruses, the crook bookmakers, and they were as merciless as they were craft.

To prove that roll from running in the great race they were prepared to work van and injure driver, for, as the great vehicle plunged headlong into the excavation, the man at the wheel might well be killed.

"You shanks! You brutes!" Ginger Dan muttered through his set teeth.

Presently he heard another remark that brought a chuckle from the group.

"Jim Thompson will earn his money all right, keeping that old fool of a father of his away," the speaker said. "Anyhow, he won't be in a hurry to get back, for he'll reckon those two youngsters will look after things for him. We'll 'ave to look after 'em afterwards. They'll be thinkin' sorry that they took on the job by the time we've finished with 'em!"

There was deadly muttering in the work, and Dan realized the danger they were in. He and To Sin had wandered into a delectable plot, and were in danger of their lives.

CHAPTER 2.

Saving the Favourite!

SUDDENLY Dan heard a low snuffling by his side, and a moment later the cold nose of Bill was thrust against his damp cheek. Dan shifted slightly so that the knotted handkerchief was pressed against the shepherd's jaw.

Twice Ginger Dan moved his head, rubbing the wet handkerchief against the wet nose of the dog. Bill, scent of unusual interest. Something had happened to his young master. That tight strip around his jaw was hurting him. Bill nosing forward, sent his sharp teeth very carefully into the folds of the handkerchief, and began to tug and strain, until at last the handkerchief fell from Dan's lips, and he rolled over on his side.

"To Sin, listen! We've got to get out of this—in quick time!"

The lanky Chick moved slightly, and Dan scented his way towards him, aided by turning his back and raising his bound wrists, he brought them in contact with To Sin's long, lean fingers, and the Chick set to work, untying the knot on Dan's wrists.

It was a burning, painful process that To Sin began then, for the rope was wet

and the knots were tight, and he could only feel for them blindly.

As he worked at the bonds Dan watched the figures by the gate. He saw one of them slip out into the roadway, then return presently, and again the man's voice arose.

"Ought to be here by now, I tell you. I 'ope 'a hasn't been and gone and done as and taken another road."

"Ought to be here by now, I tell you. I 'ope 'a hasn't been and gone and done as and taken another road." "Ought to be here by now, I tell you. I 'ope 'a hasn't been and gone and done as and taken another road." "Ought to be here by now, I tell you. I 'ope 'a hasn't been and gone and done as and taken another road."

Dan felt the bonds slip and go slack, and a quick twist saw him free his bound wrists. Rising to a sitting position, Dan hurriedly removed the bonds from his ankles, and, turning, he listened to Sin.

"Quick, To Sin, we must get away from here! We've got to warn the driver of that van by hook or by crook!"

There was no sort of chance of them getting past the guard by the gate, and Dan decided that they would have to move down the hedge nearer to the barrier on the road. He and To Sin moved away stealthily, reaching the hedge, and keeping on down it until they found a gap which allowed them to creep through into the strip of grass beside the road.

As To Sin followed Dan they heard a low, warning cry from the road, and, turning, they saw the figure of the man who had been on guard these slipping across to the gate.

"It's coming—the van's coming!" they heard him whisper.

An instant later a thin shaft of light appeared around the bend in the distance, and a moment after the heavy chattering of a powerful engine came to their ears. They saw the huge, lovable outline of the van drumming down the centre of the road, with the beams of light from the headlights cutting a swath of light in front of it.

It passed on down the hedges, and Dan realized that it was travelling at a swift pace. No doubt the driver had been delayed, and was now making up time.

For a moment the ragged youngster hesitated, then a quick plan flashed into his mind. The leap—the red leap! If he could reach it and signal to the driver, he might be able to warn the man in time.

Next moment Dan leaped out into the roadway, and tore down towards the barrier. He was half-way there before the gang of ruffians at the gate caught sight of him, and a wretched cry went up, then the sticky figure of the man who had been on guard in the road came galloping down it to try and overtake the youngster.

To Sin, crouching in the grass below the hedge, waited until the fellow was opposite him, then, with a lunge, the lanky vagrant charged at the speeding figure. To Sin's arms went round the man's thighs, and he brought him down with a crash on the wet surface of the road.

They rolled together on to the grass, and scowled headlong into the ditch below the hedge, To Sin clinging to his hold like a leech, while the ruffian lifted a barefooted blow on the Chick's head and shoulder.

To Sin held the head of the driver of the motor-van as it came charging past, and, jerking himself free from his antagonist, the lanky Chick came to

The
DETECTIVE
MAGAZINE



With a lunge, Ta Sin charged at the burly ruffian and brought him down with a crash, then, hearing the drumming of the motor van, he looked ahead and saw the starry Ginger Dan standing beside the barrier waving the red lamp of warning above his head.

his feet. He had a brief vision of Ginger Dan standing beside the barrier, with the lamp in his hand.

He saw the starry youngster leap forward, waving the lamp above his head. The motor-van had already crossed to the right of the road to avoid the barrier, but, as that young figure appeared waving the red danger signal, there came the scrape and grind of powerful brakes.

Next moment the huge van drove onward, crushed into the barrier and shuddered, and went rattling on across the road, its wheels spinning uselessly on the chert-strewn surface.

Leaping forward, Ta Sin went darting down the roadway, his hand in his mouth, for it seemed to him as though Ginger Dan had been swept away, knocked down by that hurtling vehicle.

As he reached the smashed-up barrier a figure crawled from behind the wrecked shelter, and Ta Sin gave a shout of relief, as he caught at his chum's arm.

"Are you—yes all right, Dan?"

"Yes," Dan gasped; "but I jolly nearly had the wind knocked out of me by that blinking barrier!"

"The van had run onwards for a good ten yards, and they turned towards it now just as the driver climbed out of his seat and paced into the hole of light."

"Here, what the dickens is the game?" the man called, as Dan and Ta

Sin came scrambling across the broken barrier towards him.

A shout from behind them rang out, then, a moment later, there was the quick crash of a revolver, and a bullet whizzed down the road. Dan lunged into the beam of light, and, gripping the driver by the arm, jerked him aside into the shadows.

"There's a gang tried to wreck your van," the youngster gasped. "And it looks to me as though they are comin' for you now."

He swung round and pointed. There were three burly figures emerging from the gateway, and they came down the road at a run. There was another report and a flash, and the bullet started into the woodwork of the van. Dan heard a quick, shrill whiney from the animal inside.

The ruffians, backed in their attempt to wreck the van, were making a last desperate effort to achieve their purpose.

"Keep quiet! I was warned that something like this might happen, and I came prepared!"

The driver thrust Dan against the van, then a moment later his arm was raised, and two quick reports followed. It was a small automatic—a deadly weapon at close range—and one of the charging figures buckled up with a shriek, falling on his face on the roadway.

The remaining figures made excellent targets, while the great van behind the

driver and the youngsters concealed them with its black background.

"Come on, you stinks!" the driver called. "I've got a lot more for you, and you'll get it!"

But that first disaster had struck fear into the heart of the ruffians, and the other two men halted, stooped over their companions, and next moment they were staggering back to the gateway again. They vanished, and, listening intently, Dan heard their hurried flight through the long grass of the field.

"That's all right, mister," Dan said at last. "I'd reckon they've gone."

The driver stepped out into the hole of light, followed by Dan and Ta Sin, and, going to the other side of the van, the man reached an electric torch, and switched it on. The light fell across the roadway, and, with a quick, sudden breath, Dan saw that the front wheels of the great vehicle had halted only a foot or so away from the deep excavation. Had it gone another yard, it would have toppled over into the black gap.

"There! That's the narrowest dare I've ever had!" the driver said. "By jiny, I reckon I've got you to thank for it!"

He nodded towards the broken barrier, and turned to Dan again.

"What was the general idea, anyhow, young 'un?" he asked.

The Gem Linnær.—No. 800.

Dan explained the whole affair, pointing to the wrecked shelter and the smashed supports.

"That was Pelley's gang," the driver said. "He has been out to get at Valerie King for the last two months."

He held out his hand to Dan. "There are a whole heap of folk in England who ought to be darn grateful to you two chaps!" he said. "Anyhow, here's one of 'em right on the spot!"

He shook hands with Dan and the yellow youngster by his side, then turned to the van.

"Will you be at Epsom to-morrow?" he asked.

"You bet!" said Dan.

"Right! I want you to slip up to the paddock, if you can. I'll be on the look-out for you. The boss is going to hear all about this, and I reckon you won't suffer by it, either. They're waiting for me, and I'm going to deliver Valerie King, or let 'em!"

It took some maneuvering before the van was finally swung on to the unbroken surface of the road, and Dan and To Sin watched until its red lamps vanished in the distance, then, returning to the driveway, the old nag slid out again, and as they drew clear round the wall, a quavering voice belted them.

It was the old veterinarian, and he came running along the road, to halt as he reached the vehicle.

"What happened? What happened? I heard shots. What happened?"

Ginger Dan's chin tightened.

"Only a little bit of an accident, Thompson," he said. "You'll find the barrier broken a bit, and the shelter smashed; but if you really want to know what happened, you'd better ask that royal son of yours, for he was in the case."

They left the old fellow staring miserably at the wreckage, and the current flowed on quietly through the night, heading for the dreary uplands that led to the Downs.

CHAPTER 4.

An Evening Race!

AT noon on the following day there appeared in the great thorough which was galloped outside the gates of the paddock two youngsters—one a ragged, ginger-haired youth, the other a tall, lanky Chink.

Now, the paddock on Derby Day is a somewhat exclusive audience, and the custom of police on duty there was to it that only the elite venture to enter. And so one of them standing in front of To Sin, leaned out and grumbled at the Chink's ears.

"Now then, my lad!" the policeman said. "You're in the wrong place, you are. Better go along to the course, for you can't go here."

"I'm sorry," said To Sin, "but the honorable gentleman in the uniform is making an error. This honorable personage has been invited to enter this entirely exclusive position—"

"There they are, my lad!"

From the entrance to the paddock the driver's voice sounded, and he came out, heading for To Sin and Ginger Dan, while behind him came a tall figure in immaculate clothes, the traditional top-hat, the morning-coat, that are always worn at the great meeting. Behind Lord Woolvoxy came Randall, a dapper, clean-shaven individual, and at the sight of the corner of the favorite THE GUN LEANER.—No. 100.

the throng gathered around the entrance pressed closer.

"It's all right, constable," Lord Woolvoxy said. "I'm arranged for these two friends of mine to enter here."

The driver indicated Dan.

"That's the chap who showed the red light, my lord, and jolly nearly got smashed up doing it."

His lordship put his hand on Dan's shoulder.

"There's someone wants to see you," he said—"at least, I'm sure he does—or he ought to—and you'd better come along at once."

And so it came about that two ragged youngsters were marched through the paddock flanked with the warden of the land, and Lord Woolvoxy walked between them, chatting as though he had known them all their lives.

At the range of loose-boxes he halted, and one of one of them there stopped a beautiful chestnut colt.

"Here he is," said Lord Woolvoxy.

"It is Valerie King."

Now, Valerie King was rather a bad-tempered animal, who had his likes and dislikes, and a stranger was rarely always resented. Ginger Dan walked quietly up to the colt as it was held by the stable-boy, and, reaching out, patted the old man's neck, thrust his hand into the ragged lad's chest, blowing a deep breath over him—a perfectly friendly look.

"Well, I'm hanged!" Lord Woolvoxy broke out. "That's rather amazing, isn't it, Randall?"

The stable-boy holding the colt was obviously nervous of his task. They had been having a rather bad time with the colt all that morning.

"You know something about horses, then, young 'un?" he said to Ginger Dan.

The lad's hand was lighted up.

"I love 'em!" said Ginger Dan. "These ain't anything so good in the world as a horse!"

Randall turned to his lordship.

"The King has been kicking all morning, my lord," he said. "I think it wouldn't be a bad thing if this lad were to stay with him until he's ready for the race."

His lordship smiled.

"Herd the King over to him," he said.

The matter was placed in Dan's brown palm. Nor did Lord Woolvoxy explain to any of his friends how it came about that it was a ragged youngster who walked the favorite round the paddock to be admired by the throng there. And when the colt was saddled, with the famous jockey in the saddle, it was Ginger Dan who led it out on to the course for the preliminary parade.

To Sin and Ginger Dan watched the race from the grandstand. They saw the start, and that parading, before-dinner club of the first half-mile that tests the stamina of the colts. The black-and-yellow, his lordship's colors, appeared in the van, and in the dip Valerie King had slipped into the place by the rails.

Gradually the field was thinning out, and at long last the leaders appeared, swinging round Tottenham Corner.

A great brown colt had challenged Valerie King, and they were racing neck by neck, with another chestnut a length away. Valerie King was lying down to it now, running true as an arrow, beating to the rails, held there by the skill of his clever jockey.

Nearer and nearer they tore. Now the brown would forge ahead, then the speckling chestnut would challenge it,

and draw level again. Ginger Dan could hear To Sin breathing heavily, and he glanced at his chain. The police face revealed the keen anxiety that the Chink was feeling.

"Come on! Come on, most highly delectable and honorable Valerie King!" To Sin's voice came thin between his clenched teeth. "May the ever kindly Gods of Speed lead their wings to your boots, and may the Gods of Darkness obliterate completely the designs of that—that dastard brown colt!"

"Come on, Valerie! Come on, Valerie!"

A roar—a wild, deep-throated roar—began to swell.

"Marshall wins! Marshall wins!"

The brown thoroughbred forged ahead, and was half a length in front now.

"Oh, highly honorable Valerie King, huzza—huzza!"

To Sin raised a long, lean, lanky arm above his head, stroking his grey, and as he did so, Valerie's jockey made his last effort. A touch of the whip, an urge of apple arm, and the chestnut fairly leaped to his command. His nose brightened red, and clearly but surely it came on the brown colt. Nearer and nearer, until now more it was racing neck by neck with its challenger.

"Oh, oh, oh, beautiful and honorable Valerie King—come on!"

"Valerie wins! Valerie King wins!"

The chestnut leaped out ahead, and freely passed past the winning-post, a full length in front of its rival. To Sin brought his hand down swiftly, and snatched it fairly in the centre of the shining black silk topper worn by an immaculately dressed spectator in front of him.

Dan grabbed at To Sin's arm, and made a headlong leap into the throng.

"That's just what you thinking I'd would do, you yellow ass!" Ginger Dan said. "We'll be checked out now all right, so we'd better get out before it happens!"

To Sin grinned.

"What is a top-hat in the excitement of the moment?" he retorted. "I know that gentleman bet on Valerie King. I see him do it. And if it hadn't been for this honorable personage, and for you, Ginger Dan, those would have been to Valerie King here for him to back! Is not that worth a silk hat?"

To Sin's logic was like To Sin himself—extremely Oriental.

But half an hour later, after Lord Woolvoxy had led Valerie King on to the paddock, To Sin and Ginger Dan, seated in the lower-box, gave Mr. Randall a full account of what had happened on the lonely road, and the ten-pound note that Randall gave to the youngsters as a small present from his lordship made To Sin smile delightedly.

"Damn, why I grumbled at you for being in such a hurry to get to Epsom, Ginger Dan," he remarked, when, long hours afterwards, back in their caravan, they had enjoyed a sumptuous supper and were planning their next move. "We did darned well out of it—and I wouldn't mind if there was a Derby race every day!"

"Wouldn't you, eh?" Dan asked.

"Well, I would. It's a bit too exciting. But, in any case, the chap, we've got something to talk about in a long time, for we've saved a Derby winner, and there aren't many people who can say that."

(Another splendid story of the adventures of West and west: "ROUNDED UP!" By Captain Melfort Arnold.)

A STORY OF THRILLS AND BREATHLESS SITUATIONS!



THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

TOM COMPTON, a young farmer, formerly of Barton's Mill, sets out to track down the "Spider," whose evil power has become the curse of Lancashire.

Mill after mill had suffered at the hands of this mysterious foe. At last Tom, in chance, actually catches the Spider in Barton's Mill. He gives chase, but the Spider, a sinister figure in blue gaiters, makes good his escape. He dresses a wonderful trick, however, from which Tom Compton obtains valuable information.

Tom is unable to save Barton's Mill, which is blown up, the owner being killed. From that time it becomes Tom's only ambition to crush the Spider. He obtains a post through a friend, Dick Stearns, on the staff of the "Chronicle," the office of which are next to those of the Spider. Here he meets Dennis Dale, another victim of the spider's handiwork, who promises to guide him in his great fight. The Spider plans to capture Compton and Stearns, but his attempt proves fatal.

Later, another mill is threatened, and Peter Grant, the manager, calls for Compton's assistance. With the Spider's plan in his possession, Tom hurries to the scene, and in time to avert disaster, but is himself captured by the Spider's handiwork, who prepares a cruel death for him. Dennis aids strenuously, in the nick of time, and rescues his partner. Free once more, Tom sets Gray to make his report.

(How read on.)

Ready for a Day's Work!

COMPTON led the mill-owner into the room where the infernal machine had been found, and showed him the iron cast, and the cooked gun-cotton. He then led the way into the room they had held against the Spider's men.

Mr. Peter Grant looked wonderingly at the still wet floor, and started when he saw the bullet-holes in the door.

"Yes," said Tom grinning, "it will cost you some petty and pains to make that door look respectable."

"Quick!" said Mr. Grant anxiously. "Tell me all about it. My conscience reproaches me for letting you face this hidden danger alone—a mere boy—when I had failed to discover it!"

"Your mill was turned to be blown up at 4.35 precisely," said Tom. "That was exactly proved, as I knew it before I came here. I stopped the infernal machine, and smothered the gun-cotton. Those four men you trusted were traitors, in the Spider's pay. They took me in, too. The Spider had wind of my

coming here, and that I knew about the bomb. He sent a messenger to change the plan, and burn the place down, and me with it. It was a very pretty plot. They tied a bladder of paraffin to that bomb in the ceiling, with a lamp below it, and left me gagged and bound underneath."

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Grant. "My poor boy!"

"Not at all, sir! If you could ask the Spider's men, they would tell you who is feeling poorest just now. Dennis Gale, downstairs, was on my track—he's the smartest youngster in the city—and started the game. They came back, and went for us with pistols, hoping to make a quick job of it, but we turned the knee on them, and they got a free walk. I don't think they'll trouble us any more just yet."

"Then you have saved the mill?" cried Grant, surprised, stretching out his hand to Tom. "My boy, you are a marvel—a wonder! You have earned the—"

"Wait!" said Tom. "It isn't finished yet, sir! The house is standing, but you don't suppose the enemy will let you run the mill!"

"No," said Grant, more gloomily, "that can never be in this doomed city. What you have told me is enough. This terrible secret enemy, with death and ruin in either hand, makes it impossible for an honest man to work his trade. I must sell the mill and machinery for what it will fetch, and begin life again elsewhere."

"If you'll excuse me, sir," said Tom, "that's all right! I'm paid in full for this secret enemy, and I'm not going to be beaten. If you'll let me, I'll hold this mill—open it on Monday morning in the usual way, and run it myself for a whole day. The Spider is a bit discouraged, and if you'll make me over-looker, I'll undertake to whip him out, and leave the mill running full strength, and turning out all the goods you please, in twenty-four hours. More than that, I think I shall be able to speak the Spider's game for good and all!"

"Can you?" exclaimed Grant. "Can you do it? But no! It will end in your death, my brave lad! You cannot engage with a foe single-handed!"

"With Dennis to help me," said Tom, "I'll do it, I only want your authority to act. Dennis, sir, don't back-out!"

"You shall do it!" said Grant, freed by the boy's enthusiasm, "though it's a poor stroke on my part to let you face the danger."

"Don't worry about that, sir," said

Tom. "Leave it to Dennis and myself. You must give me an absolutely free hand, though!"

"In every way," said Grant. "Act as you please!"

"Very good," said Tom. "In the first place, your lenses are wanted. If you'll take this note to the address on it, a fresh lot will be delivered and installed before daylight on Monday morning. Then your engine must several repairs. I'll have an engineer I know working here all night. There are a dozen other orders the Spider has put in your wheel. I'll have them all straight on Monday at opening time."

"Good heavens!" said Grant. "It can't possibly be done!"

"Yes, it can," said Tom. "But the men will be the most important thing. There are details, though. The men will come to a head on Monday, and should be far flying. Now, sir, you can go home to bed, and Dennis and I will watch it for you."

"I'll go," said Grant. "I'm an old spinner, and a business man of forty years' standing, but this is beyond me. Tom Compton, if you can do what you say, and live to claim the money, I'll make that £500 into £1,000, and hand it you on Tuesday night."

"That's all right, sir!" said Tom. "Now you can go home to bed. We'll manage the rest!"

The mill-owner departed; and Tom, after knocking up the door again, beckoned his sharp little partner to him, and told him of the contract he had taken.

"Now, then, Dennis," he said, "listen with both ears, and I'll tell you how we're to do it. First, here's a list of thirty names. You must see those men in the next two hours, and let them all read this note. We shall want honest hands on Monday, and I think I've chosen right. Then take one of these notes to those four firms. See the managers in their private houses, and show them this. It's Morton Kane's card. They're big-wigs, all of them, but not one will refuse. Do you see?"

"Rather!" said Dennis, with a wink.

"Above all, you must take care you are not shadowed by the Spider's men. That won't be difficult, as I'll show you, though it's little showing you need in that sort of thing."

"I sha'n't be followed," said Dennis. "I'll get into 'r neat pard, an' into 'r street lower down."

Blowing his back inwardly at having

THE GREAT LANCASHIRE—No. 805.

such a sharp little ally, Tom gave Dennis some more careful instructions, and a quarter of an hour later the little power, with the water Tom had given him and inside his jacket, and one of the captured screwdrivers, in case he was attacked, slipped out of a window on to the top of the yard wall and remained in the darkness like a bat.

Tom kept peered vigilantly all the time Dennis was away, relaxing to what of course, though something told him the enemy was likely to leave him alone for a few hours at least.

Two hours passed slowly by. Tom was impatient to get to work, but he could not leave his rival till his partner returned. He perfected all his preparations against another surprise; and, armed with a screwdriver, he took down six or seven bolts from the wall of the passage and fastened them up lightly and rapidly on the doors and shutters by which an enemy might enter.

"Nobody can get in now without raising a din," he said. "It's time Dennis was back, if he's as quick as I give him credit for. I hope nothing's happened to him."

Tom was beginning to feel anxious when the arranged signal was heard at the door, and he let Dennis in. A tall, capable-looking man was with him.

"All's done as they said, Tom," said Dennis, aside to his friend. "I've been to all 's places, and I've not been failed neither."

"Well done, young 'un!" said Tom. "The game's in yer hands now." He turned to the man. "Are you ready for a night's work, John Lockett?"

"Ready an' willing," said the man.

"I know that," said Tom. "Do you know why you've been out of a job?"

"I didn't," said Lockett. "But I've

had my eyes opened lately. I've had some queer offers since I lost my last place—too queer for an honest man—so I refused 'em."

"Just so," said Tom. "It's the Spider's men that drove you out, and tried to rope you into their gang. Now you've got a chance to get some of your own back. We're fighting the Spider here, and you're going to help us. Double risk, double pay."

"I'd have done it for nothing," said Lockett. "I've been hearing of you lately, Tom, and this is a job that suits me. Give any orders, an' I'll carry 'em out."

"To mark them," said Tom. "There's a terrific lot to get through before Monday, but we'll do it. You must get the engines straight in the power-room first. They've been tampered with. Come and see."

"Ah!" said Lockett, flinging off his coat after an examination of the engines. "There's been dirty work done here. I'll put it right, Tom, never fear."

They left him hard at work, and Tom and Dennis started a hard hour of labour among the looms. With occasional help from the engineer, they got rid of the cut frames, and made all ready for the new ones.

The rest was sheer hard work, without ceasing. Dennis went out for supplies, and the three worked by spells, sleeping in turns, and keeping guard as well. In the small hours of Monday morning two vans arrived quietly at the post gate, and the new parts of the machinery were rapidly put in place by a dozen skilled men. Soon after daybreak Tom and his

two partners ceased work, and the young leader said, with vast satisfaction, that all difficulties had been overcome, and the mill was in thorough order, Grant's

engineers arrived, and Tom, who had taken complete command, put Lockett at the head of them.

Then the steam buzzers began to hum, the gates were being open, and Grant's Mill was ready for the day's work.

A Clean Crew!

TOM stepped smartly out to the door, and found not only that the men Dennis had hinted up for him had arrived, but that a free fight was on the point of starting between them and some of the hands who worked in the mill.

"Quiet, there!" ordered Tom. "Any man who wants to fight can fight at 5 p.m. Mill starts in five minutes. All weapons and card-sharp knives to get to their rooms first. Make way, there, and let the ladies through!"

A thickish brook from Dennis, standing close by Tom. He saw trouble ahead. The girls fled in laughing. Tom knew he was safe there. The Spider had no women on his side—so far, at all events. But the men staid for a moment in amazement, and then a derisive laugh arose. A big, fubby-looking man, with a blotted face and angry eyes, came shuffling through them.

"What's this?" he roared. "What be thee doing here, thou whelp?"

"Ay, who's 't' cub gives orders to?" cried half a dozen voices, as the hands surged forward. "Pitch him out o' that!"

"Leave him to me, lad!" cried the fubby-looking man, striding up the steps towards Tom. "Now, then, first, what be the perked up there like a cock-sparrow for? Who put thee there, Tom Compton?"

"Mr. Peter Grant put me here," said Tom coolly; "but I stay here without any help. I'm head screwdriver of the mill. Here's Mr. Grant's order in writing. Take a look, all of you, for I shan't show it to you again!"

"What a lot of a power for over-boke!" roared the man. "Then whelp, I'm head screwdriver here, an' have been for a month!"

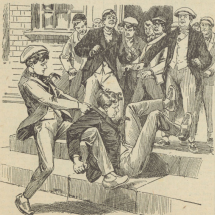
"You, your month's up," said Tom. "You can get rental in the outside for your wages, and take yourself off! And when that's done," he added, in a quiet undertone, "that only the man would hear, you can go back to Hargreaves Buildings and tell the Spider to find you another job."

A fierce snarl broke from the man's lips, and a cheer of encouragement from about half the men, he rushed at Tom and made a grab at him. In another moment he found himself gripped in two wiry hands, his legs locked from under him, and Tom heaved the ruffian down the steps like a sack, across the yard, and cast him into the gutter outside. It was done so quickly that nobody had time to interfere, and Tom was back on the steps again as the astonished mob began to surge forward desperately.

"All men who'll strike a blow for Dunscombe come here to me!" cried Tom.

A cheer broke from the crowd, and the men Dennis had procured, with a dozen others, forced the rest aside and ranged up with Tom. The mob, called and greeting, seeing themselves outnumbered, subsided.

"Now we know where we are," said Tom, stepping into the hall. "File in, orderly and quietly, two by two. That's it. Stop a bit, my lad! You go into the room on my left hand, and you, and you,



Suddenly the ruffian found himself gripped in two wiry arms, and Tom Compton heaved him down the steps like a sack. "Back to the Spider with you!" he cried.

Morris', Joe Barrows! Glad to see you've got a job again! Go through the right-hand door, and you, and you, too!"

The crowd was thoroughly in hand now. There was no more trouble. Tom stood in the hall, and as the men came to be separated, then skillfully into two batches. Through the door on his right, which opened into the changing-rooms, he passed all the men Dennis had raised for him, with about a dozen of the others, and into the ante-rooms on the left he sent most of those who had worked for Peter Grant.

His keen eyes detected the dangerous ones as they entered the hall, and not one escaped him. They were a very second-rate-looking crew, a large proportion of them foreigners, and the rest, though Dorchester men, were of the same kind. You know them for what they were—parties of the Spider's game, and more than one of them he recognized as among those who had attacked the mill on Saturday when the fire-boss was victor. Mr. Peter Grant's mill had been stoutly packed. They had not expected the present arrangement.

"That's all my lot," said Tom, when all had filed in. "Now that we've separated the sheep from the goats we'll get to work. Goats, you can go. Take your belongings and depart in peace!"

The men in the left-hand room, crowding at the door, stared in blank amazement, and then burst into angry cries, mingled with many a German and Belgian oath.

"We will not go!" they shouted. "Der mill is ours to work! Kill der cab!"

"Goats," said Tom quietly, "if you are not out of the place in thirty seconds the sheep will pitch you out, and you won't like it. They are good, honest Dorchester sheep, Englishmen every one, and Lancashire lads at that, with big fists and hard muscles. Out with you while there's time!"

Tom's hands in the changing-rooms crowded forward cheerfully, ready and willing to assist the Spider's gang. But the "goats," not having their favorite side of four to one, had no stomach for fighting. Their force grew weaker, and they hurried out into the yard, and slunk sulkily away.

"Now, lads," cried Tom to his men, "have you all changed? To work, then! Time's up!"

The whir and humming of the machinery started, and in a very short time the whole mill was in full swing. The reeling-frames, whorls and stops, and the stomach of whirling spindles, kept up a continuous hum that was music to Tom's ear. He set his shoulders to work, and was everywhere at once, and his heart filled with joy and pride as the men and machinery did their work.

The hum and roar of the great mill began, and in a few moments it was in full blast again, every man at his place. Tom forgot the learning and scolding of his several in pleasure at seeing his own success.

The Spider had been fairly beaten, and the victory was won.

Maddened Horses!

"WHILE a clean crew now," he said joyfully to Dennis—"and proved! Grant's Mill is on its legs once more, and no harm can come from inside, any way. I think we've killed the order. Our old friend Joe Simpson is the assistant man we've got, and I shall make him



As the madheaded horses tore down upon Tom Corroton, the wagon-pole caught him sideways on the shoulder, sending him flying against the wall.

head overboard. Hallo! Who's coming up? The owner, by George!"

It was Mr. Peter Grant who came up the staircase, and he greeted Tom anxiously, but warmly. Tom went with him into a private room.

"I was hardly believe my eyes!" said Grant. "The mill is full swing! And I had given up hope! Lad, you have power and a great nerve behind you, but it is to your native wit that you owe the victory. To think I left it in your hands as a forlorn chance! Come, let's go into this matter together."

Tom spent the next two hours in close consultation with Mr. Grant. They went through the mill and machine-rooms, and Tom explained how he had wooded out the bands. They were together for some time in the mill-owner's private room, and Mr. Grant recognized what was plain enough, that his mill was stronger on its feet than it had ever been, and had defeated the enemy entirely.

"Well, sir," said Tom at last, "I have put your mill right, and now I must get into the field again. I've got work to do, and hope soon to strike a blow here."

"I won't try to keep you," said Grant, putting up and down the room. "There's no salary I wouldn't give you to stay on and run the mill; but you've greater work on hand, of course. I can see that if anybody in England can fight and conquer the great ones who'd devouring us all, it's you, my lad! You're a wonder! Here's the sum I promised you, and well you've earned it!"

"A thousand thanks, sir," said Tom, as Grant drew notes by that amount from his pocket-book. "It's too much for the little I've done."

"It's the amount I promised you, and you must take it," said Grant. "You have saved me ten times the sum. If I were Peter Grant, bankrupt, I couldn't give it you; but as I'm Peter Grant,

with one of the biggest mills in Dorchester working full time, thanks to you, it's a mere nothing. Take it, lad, it'll help you to fight the Spider. And, remember, you can count on me and my partners at any time you need to."

"Then I'll take it, sir," said Tom. "Money's a great weapon. Half of it shall go against Dennis Gale's name, though. Without him, I shouldn't have been able to run the mill. And now, sir, I'll go. You must make Joe Simpson your manager, and don't change a hand or take a fresh man into the mill, if you value your life and fortune, without letting me know!"

"Good-bye, lad," said Grant warmly; "and a good night to your sword in the great fight!"

They shook hands with a heavy grip, and Tom went out, Dennis seeing him to the yard gate.

"I'll leave you in charge to finish the day, Dennis," he said. "There's nothing to fear now for a spell. I'm going to the bank, and then on to Hargreave Buildings."

"All right," said Dennis. "I'll take care an evening about a man here. The men'll soon settle him; they've steady in hand now."

Tom made his way as quickly as possible to the Provincial and Commerce Bank, where he was glad to rid himself of the £1,000.

Dorchester was hardly the place to carry such a sum about in. He thought, as he paid the amount in, that the employees looked curiously at him.

The assistant-banker, delivering the receipt, went and had a short consultation with the manager behind the glass screen, and Tom thought he heard the words "distant him." But presently the pass-book counterfoil was signed and stamped, and Tom set off for Morton Kane's office.



My Readers' Own Corner

Send Your Latest Riddle to Me!

TUCK HAMPERS AND MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR WIT!
(If You Are Not a Prizewinner This Week, You May Be Next.)

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

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER.

HIS OWN DEDUCTION!

An old American negro was asked by the proprietor of a store how he happened to need credit when he had such a good crop of cotton. "De ducks got beat all de cotton, sah," was the mournful reply. "What do you mean, de ducks got it?" "Well, you see," explained the old man, "I seed dat cotton up to Memphis, an' dey dedacks de freight, an' dey dedacks de storage charges, an' dey dedacks de commission, an' dey dedacks de taxes; you see, sah, de ducks got 'em all dat cotton, an' dat's why I'm here."

The equivalent of the value of a Tuck Hamper has been awarded to H. C. Waghman, 186, Bolwer Road, Ipswich, Essex, South Africa.

A MISAPPREHENSION!

Going in to a sports' shop, a man asked for a tennis-racket. The assistant brought some for inspection, but the man only shook his head. Growing rather impatient, the shopman said: "What sort do you want?" "I want one with a pair of shoes tied to it!" answered the man.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Sarah Boreham, 58, Wood Street, Chapel Lane, Wigan.

A VERY CLOSE SHAVE!

The village cricket team was doing pretty well, and their coach, but—the local architect—had yet to make the long trousers which was customarily exported from him. But in the first over a risky short run was met with a confident appeal for "run out." The village barber was inspired and he answered the appeal with an emphatic: "Not out!" "Ah," said the batsman, with a sigh of relief to the umpire, "that was a close shave!" "It was that," agreed the umpire, "and—in an outside whinger—if you want it in the back of having a disaster afterwards, I should have said: 'Next gentleman, please!'"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Yolland, 62, Broadfield Road, Sheffield.

SOME KICK!

At an Army disposal sale, a man brought a mule. As he had brought a friend with him they decided to ride it in town. The owner mounted, and, after taking a short distance, found that the animal would not proceed. The man who was walking encouraged it with a stick, and was rewarded with a kick in the stomach, knocking him into a newly made gutter. After a few minutes he arose with a new kerotone in his hands and threw it at the mule, but hit the owner on the back of the head instead, knocking him into the road. On seeing this, the driver of the vehicle fringed unconsciously and lay down in the gutter again. Neither of them spoke for a long time, but at last the owner sat up and said to the other, who had just opened his eyes: "What's the matter, Bill?" To which the other replied: "That mule kicked me in the stomach." "Oh, that's nothing," said the owner, "he kicked me on the back of my head!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Dennis Peake, 12, Victoria Street, Hoxleigh, Staffs.



THIS WEEK'S "SPECIAL CAMPING-BOYS' NUMBER"

The Magnet.

"THE RIVER MYSTERY!"

(Continued from page 15.)

"It's about the broken bath tap," Sharpe replied. "Surely we couldn't get 'em earlier!"

"Tap? There's no broken bath tap here, so far as I know," said the man. "You've made a mistake."

Sharpe pulled out a crumpled slip of paper and pointed at it.

"No, we aren't. This is the 'Olio,' ain't it? Mister Grimshaw's 'case'?"

"Yes, that's right," admitted the servant in some perplexity. "But, anyway, come into the hall an' I'll inspire."

The pair stepped inside and stood watching their feet on the doormat until the broad-shouldered individual had passed out of sight; then Sharpe turned swiftly to Tim, with a translucent light gleaming in his eyes.

"To really get action, lad, we've on the right agent!" he whispered. "That fellow's another member of the gang; I recognized him at once as one of them who were present at that other house when—"

"When?"

"He broke off on the second reprimand, followed by a taller man in evening-dress, whose face was rather sallow and thin-lipped."

"I'm afraid there must be some error," he began. "We did not catch—"

"Hush up, 'X'! I think I've got you this time!"

The sudden transformation was extraordinary. One moment the plumber and his boy had been standing quietly on the mat; the next a wicked-looking individual appeared in the plumber's hand, covering the pair with deadly accuracy, whilst his boy was blowing loudly on a police-whistle.

Both men involuntarily raised their hands above their heads and gaped in amazement as they looked slowly away.

"What is the meaning of this unpardonable outrage?" gasped Grimshaw. "It's some new form of housebreak-

ing."

"Don't talk! 'X'!" snapped Sharpe. "And stand where you are! If you move a step you'll only have yourself to blame! He hears!"

The detective uttered a baffled exclamation as the light suddenly snapped out, plunging the hall into darkness even as a rank of feet actually descended the centre of the U.L.D. man in answer to Tim's signal.

Then they heard another sound from the blackness in front—the sound of swiftly retreating footsteps, followed by the bang of a door—and Sharpe's electric torch flashed out, only to find the hall empty.

"Well, have you got 'em?" asked Winton, as he entered. "We—"

"I had two of them, but there must be others elsewhere," Sharpe said, a note of deep chagrin in his voice. "They vanished off the light at the most inopportune moment, but we'll get 'em yet! Scatter, and don't hesitate to show at the slightest sign of opposition. These fellows are pretty desperate!"

The raiding party went at it rather actively, one of them finding the main switch and re-illuminated the house. But only two captives were made—the man-servant and another thick-set fellow, who glared aggressively at his master.

The investigator had by now removed (Continued on next page.)
The Gem Library—No. 226.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.
The GEM LIBRARY.
No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

