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The GEM 2^D

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OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES

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CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

(The Amateur Photographer takes a bold step in "snapping" Mr. Selby. An incident from the Grand, Long Complete School Story: "MANNERS HOLDS HIS OWN!" contained in this issue.)

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

My dear Chums.—These are merry days at St. Jim's. You will hear all about what is happening in next week's rollicking yarn of the great school. No special reference is intended to Tom Merry, though he has a considerable part to play as usual. Nobody would have it otherwise.

"D'ARCY MAXIMUS!"

By Martin Clifford.

That is the new great story. It deals with many things, but one of its salient points is concerned with the way in which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy goes about things. Gussy is noble-minded. It fairly gives him the shivers to see acts of cruelty. He is prepared to administer a fearful thrashing to all wrongdoers, just for their own good, and to teach them better manners. In the new tale we find D'Arcy rescuing a donkey in distress. This patient and unfortunate animal was being harshly dealt with by its owner. D'Arcy is passing at the time; the hero of Eastwood says this kind of thing cannot go on. Even Don Quixote, the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, who hailed from La Mancha, could not have acted with more engaging zeal.

D'ARCY TO THE RESCUE!

The unlucky ass was naturally bemoaning its lot. It had more kicks than carrots; and, apparently, nobody had ever thought of saving it from its disagreeable fate, until Gussy bore down on the scene, anger of the most praiseworthy sort in his heart. You see the picture? I am not going further into the amazing events which ensue, except to point out that D'Arcy succeeds in capturing the donkey, and bearing it off to St. Jim's. It was a day of triumph. Everything is quite all right; anyhow, that was the opinion of the ass (the four-footed one!); but sundry difficulties crop up. The St. Jim's fellows welcome to a man Gussy's new colleague, but they are fairly flummoxed for a name for the newcomer. The ass does not know its own name. Give it a juicy carrot, and it is O.K. But a name the fresh arrival must have, as well as its local habitation at the school. Now you see the reason for the title Mr. Martin Clifford has chosen for his yarn. The donkey is called "D'Arcy Maximus." This shows the kindly thought for others which prevails at St. Jim's. The idea was to prevent any confusion. They already had D'Arcy major and minor. By calling the ass "Maximus" all mistakes as to identity were avoided. You will laugh till you are tired over this fascinatingly funny story. Look out for it in the GEM next Wednesday.

"THE SECRET OF THE CLOISTERS!"

By Edmund Burton.

This is a powerful detective yarn with Anthony Sharpe hard at work THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 807.

unravelling a mystery. The story has, however, a strong school interest as well. Tim O'Carroll is passing a term at the school, and some very strange events are taking place at this establishment. Something is happening quite foreign to a school, and nobody has the remotest inkling of what is in the wind. The ancient cloisters are the headquarters of the mystery, and in the business of tracking down an audacious conspiracy, the great detective passes through some hair-raising perils. He sticks to his job, of course, and you will be enthralled by the recital of Sharpe's experiences, to say nothing of the tremendous discovery the crime-investigator makes when at last the dark curtain is dragged aside, and the light let in. As we all know, there is always a certain creepy atmosphere about the age-old cloisters—the ancient buildings with their memories of the bygone, and the paved courts and alleys where footsteps are lost. The new story touches in dramatic fashion on all these things, besides giving a series of dashing adventures. Let me know what you think of this story. To my mind it is an uncommonly brilliant narrative.

"SPORTS FOR SPORTS' SAKE!"

By Gordon Wallace.

Packed with sport and thrills, this yarn is bound to give satisfaction. The Thunder Creek Sportsmen have their work cut out; for a batch of fresh arrivals at the Elkhorn Bend Colony make things lively. The newcomers are a mixed lot, but they declare their love of sport, anyway, and to get the visitors on good terms with themselves and the world in general, Hiram Coutts suggests a big sports programme. The prizes offered are handsome, and our

old friends of Thunder Creek are right down pleased, for here they see a chance of doing something more for young Syd Patterson, the lad whom they have taken under their protection. If any sportsmen are qualified to take part in an all round tournament, with footer, cricket, and lacrosse, etc., on the bill, it is the Thunder Creek company. But in this special instance circumstances of the oddest sort come in for treatment. The results are astounding. The Sportsmen of Thunder Creek always play the game. But what about the others? Take special note of this tale. It is an eye-opener.

£300 IN PRIZES.

Send in your coupons in this magnificent cricket competition. There is much money to be won by those who have made a bit of a study of cricket, and have the knack, thanks to knowledge of the game, of correctly forecasting the positions of famous teams.

AUGUST FOR EVER!

There is always something extra winning about that prime holiday month of August when apples are ripe, and you get that feeling right down to your bones that you want to see the country or the sea. This year August opens better than ever. Why so? The reason is simple. The Special August Bank Holiday issue of the GEM is a bumper number. It will contain a superb 25,000 word story of St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford, besides a host of other good things. This coming treat shows how Clive's colonial chums come over to meet the champions of St. Jim's. I have often been asked to introduce more fellows from the big Dominions. Well, they will turn up for August Bank Holiday, all bright and chirpy, and able and willing to give a good account of themselves in sport and good fellowship. St. Jim's has never in all its history had to cope with such doughty adversaries. In addition, there will be extra half-crowns for Tuck Hammer competitors that week. I want to draw special attention to the increased opportunities offered in connection with this splendid number of the famous Wednesday paper.

YOUR EDITOR.

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MANNERS HOLDS "HIS OWN!"

A Champion Yarn telling how Manners of the Shell gets more than his own back on Mr. Selby, the Master of the Third Form. A Screamingly Funny School Story.

By Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1. Wanted!

"MANNERS!"

Manners of the Shell grunted.

He was busy in the dark-room, and when the amateur photographer of St. Jim's was busy in the dark-room he was blind and deaf to all other considerations.

It was Kildare of the Sixth who was calling, and as Kildare was a prefect, and captain of the school, Manners ought really to have hastened to answer the call, Manners being merely a junior.

He ought to have done so, but he didn't.

When an amateur photographer is developing films it is no time for him to be called away from his occupation, even by a prefect of the Sixth. Manners merely grunted, and kept his eye on the developing negative.

"Manners!"

Manners didn't even grunt as his name was shouted again along the passage.

He was too intensely interested in developing, even to grunt.

"I think he's in the dark-room, Kildare," came Tom Merry's voice, in mild and conciliatory tones.

"I know he is. Lowther told me so!" growled Kildare, and he grasped the handle of the door.

Manners had omitted to lock the door.

It was thrown wide open, and Kildare of the Sixth strode in, blinking at the dull glare of the red lamp.

"Manners!"

"You silly ass!" roared Manners ferociously. He quite forgot for the moment the respect due to a Sixth Form prefect. At that moment, Manners was capable of addressing the Head himself as a silly ass. A flood of daylight upon a developing negative was calculated to make the mildest-mannered photographer forget his respect of persons.

"What?" roared Kildare.

"Shut that door, you booby!"

"Wha-a-at?"

Kildare, naturally, was not accustomed to being addressed as a silly ass and a booby by junior schoolboys. He strode at Manners, and grasped him by the collar.

"You cheeky young rascal—"

"Leggo, you dummy!"

"Manners—"

"You've ruined the negative!" shrieked Manners.

"Manners, old chap—" murmured Tom Merry, at the open door. Tom felt for his chum. He understood Manners' feelings. He had borne with the enthusiastic photographer long enough to understand him. But he realised that this would not do. Prefects must not be called boobies and dummies, even when they butt into a dark-room where developing is going on.

"Ruined!" howled Manners. "Oh, you crass ass!"

"Out of this!" said Kildare.

"By Jove, I'll hack your shins! I'll—I'll—" spluttered Manners. The developing bath was knocked over, and its contents streamed round the floor of the dark-room, as

Manners whirled round in the Sixth-Former's iron grip. He came out of the dark-room into the passage in a bundle.

"Manners, old chap—" remonstrated Tom Merry.

"There were six on that film!" roared Manners. "Now they're all spoiled by this muddling, meddling, fatheaded dummy!"

Shake!

Manners' eloquence was cut off suddenly by the shake that Kildare gave him.

"Groogh!" he gasped.

"You young ass! Why didn't you come when I called you?" demanded Kildare.

"Ass! I was developing."

"Well, I dare say that's very important," said Kildare, with a grin. "But you're wanted. Mr. Selby wants you."

"Hang Mr. Selby!"

"What?" roared Kildare.

"Blow him!"

"Why, you—you—"

"Bother him! Bother you!" yelled Manners. "Six splendid photographs spoiled. You ought to have more sense, though you're in the Sixth."

"Well, my hat!" said Kildare.

"Go easy, Kildare!" murmured Tom Merry. "Manners is potty on photographs. Just potty!"

"Potty or not, he can't talk to a prefect like that!" said the captain of St. Jim's. "This way, Manners."

Manners of the Shell was propelled along the passage by the collar quite unceremoniously.

His wrath was unabated, but there was no resisting the methods of persuasion employed by the hefty senior.

Several fellows glanced at them curiously on the way to Mr. Selby's study. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth had recourse to his celebrated monocle to assure himself that he saw aright.

"Bai Jove, what's the mattah, Mannahs?" he ejaculated.

"Only Kildare playing the goat," answered the Shell fellow.

"Bai Jove!"

"Come on!" snapped Kildart, and he marched the Shell fellow on to Mr. Selby's door.

A fag of the Third Form was coming out of the study as they arrived there. It was Reggie Manners—Manners minor of the Third. He was rubbing his hands hard and ruefully. Evidently the master of the Third had been giving his cane exercise.

"Ow, ow, ow!" Reggie Manners was remarking to the universe generally. But he stopped as he saw his brother.

"Hallo! You in for it, too, Harry?" he asked. "I say, Selby can't pitch into you. You're not in his Form. What's the row?"

"Cut off!" said Kildare before Manners major could answer, and the fag scudded down the corridor.

Kildare tapped at the door that Manners minor had just closed.

"Come in!" came Mr. Selby's sour voice.

Kildare marched his prisoner into the study.

"Here is Manners, sir!" said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Thank you, Kildare!"

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"You will come to my study when you leave Mr. Selby, Manners!" said Kildare, in a significant tone.

Manners grunted, and the prefect left the study. The Shell fellow was left facing Mr. Selby. But he was not thinking of Mr. Selby's frowning face; he was thinking of the spoiled photographs in the dark-room, and he was still in a truculent mood.

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Selby Loses His Temper!

MR. SELBY fixed his eyes on Manners of the Shell, frowning and biting his under-lip. Mr. Selby, never a good-tempered gentleman, seemed to be in a sourer temper than usual now. At such times Mr. Selby had to be treated with discretion and diplomacy, if painful results were not to accrue. But Manners was not in a humour that was either discreet or diplomatic. Six negatives on a film-roll had been ruined, and obviously he had a licking to come from Kildare. Besides, Mr. Selby was not his Form master, and had really no right to send for him and call him over the coals. Manners was in a mood to think more of what was just than of what was prudent, for Mr. Selby, after all, was a master, though he was not Manners' master, and any master had great powers of making himself unpleasant if he liked. Mr. Selby generally liked.

Mr. Selby surveyed the junior's dark, irritated face and not very respectful manner with grim disapproval. He did not choose to break the silence, so it was left for Manners to speak.

"Kildare said you wanted me."

Manners did not even add "sir," which was wrong and disrespectful of Manners. But his negatives had been spoiled.

"I asked Kildare to bring you here—or send you here, rather, Manners," said Mr. Selby. "I judge that you came unwillingly."

"Yes."

"You will not benefit by this impertinence, Manners," said Mr. Selby, compressing his lips.

"I was busy!" grunted Manners. "Kildare routed me out of the dark-room, and spoiled my negatives. I can't afford to buy rolls of films to be thrown away."

"No doubt your childish occupations are more important than the orders of a Form master," said Mr. Selby satirically.

"You're not my Form master," said Manners, greatly irritated by the adjective Mr. Selby used.

"That is true, Manners. Were I your Form master, you would not be allowed to cultivate insolent modes of speech!" snapped Mr. Selby. "Mr. Linton is far too lenient, in my opinion."

"Hadn't you better mention that to Mr. Linton, sir?" said Manners. "It's no good telling me, is it?"

Mr. Selby's eyes glittered.

"I have sent for you, Manners, on account of your minor, who is in my Form. Yesterday Manners minor was careless with his preparation, and I had occasion to punish him."

"I know that," said Manners.

"You expressed the opinion, Manners, that my punishment of your brother was severe and unjust."

Manners started a little.

"I don't see how you can know anything about what I said, Mr. Selby," he answered resolutely. "I came on Reggie, and spoke to him, but you were not present."

"Had I been present, Manners, you would scarcely have ventured to express yourself in such terms."

"A chap doesn't always say what he thinks of a master in his presence, sir," said Manners cheerfully.

"You admit using the expressions I refer to, coupled with several other disrespectful epithets?" snapped Mr. Selby harshly.

Manners almost smiled. Mr. Selby was seeking to entrap him, and he was quite well aware of it, and had no intention at all of being entrapped.

"Well, Manners?"

"I've nothing to say, sir," said Manners coolly.

"Do you admit using such expressions regarding me?"

"I admit nothing, sir."

"Do you deny it?"

"I deny nothing, sir."

Mr. Selby tightened his thin lips. Had he been Manners' Form master, with the junior under his immediate authority, he would have continued the discussion by means of his cane. But he had no authority to do that, and he had to recognise the limit.

"You are prevaricating, Manners," he said at last.

"Sorry you should think so, sir," said Manners. "I'm prepared to go before my Housemaster, if you think fit. Mr. Railton will not allow a fellow to be trapped into admitting things he may or may not have said."

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"I have proof of what you said, Manners!" exclaimed Mr. Selby. "I have it from your brother."

"That's not true."

"What?" almost roared Mr. Selby.

"It's not true," said Manners grimly. "Whatever I may have said to Reggie, he never told you."

"You—you dare to—to—to—" Mr. Selby stuttered. He jumped from his chair. "Come with me, you insolent boy! I shall take you before your Housemaster!"

"I'm ready!" answered Manners coolly.

"Follow me!" thundered the Third Form master.

He whisked out of the study, his gown rustling, his face almost crimson. He scowled at Tom Merry and Monty Lowther in the corridor and whisked past them. Both Manners' chums were looking anxious and worried.

"Manners, old man—" muttered Lowther.

"It's all right!" said Manners. "I'm going to see Railton."

"Follow me!" exclaimed Mr. Selby, glancing back.

"I'm coming, sir."

Manners followed the master of the Third to Mr. Railton's study. Tom Merry and Lowther followed on more slowly.

Mr. Railton, the School House master, fixed his eyes upon Mr. Selby, as he marched in with Manners. His quiet, steady glance was sufficient to calm Mr. Selby, who suddenly realised that he was betraying more excitement than was consistent with the dignity of his position.

"Mr. Railton, I have to report Manners to you for the grossest insolence!" said the Third Form master.

Mr. Railton suppressed a sigh. He was quite well aware that Mr. Selby's tart temper and suspicious nature did not make him popular in the masters' Common-room, or among the boys. Mr. Selby had a way of discovering offence in remarks made by his colleagues, and insolence in remarks of the juniors—he had a perfect genius for making any kind of unpleasant discovery. Probably, had Mr. Railton been headmaster, Mr. Selby's services would have been transferred without undue delay to some other sphere. But as matters stood, the Housemaster could only bear with his tart-tempered colleague as patiently and tolerantly as possible.

"What is it now, Mr. Selby?" he asked, with a slight stress on the "now."

"Manners has applied insulting epithets to me—"

"Surely not?"

"And has stated that I have spoken falsely."

"Upon my word! If there is no mistake in this, Manners, I—" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"May I explain, sir?" said Manners quietly. He was very respectful to Mr. Railton, whom he liked and respected. And by this time the spoiled films were fading into the back of his memory.

"Undoubtedly!"

"Mr. Selby asserted that my young brother told him that I had said certain things," said Manners. "I said that it wasn't true—and it isn't. My minor never did."

"Your minor shall be sent for immediately, and your statement put to the test, Manners," said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Very well, sir."

"Stop a moment!" Mr. Selby flushed. "I told Manners that I had my knowledge of his words from his brother—not that Manners minor actually told me."

Mr. Railton gave him a stare.

"Will you be a little more explicit?" he asked. "I really fail to see how you can have learned anything from Manners minor without the boy having told you."

Mr. Selby's flush deepened.

"I heard the words by chance," he explained. "By sheer accident I heard some talk among members of my Form—Manners minor, D'Arcy minor, and Levison minor."

"Oh!" said Mr. Railton, in a very dry way.

Manners' lip curled. Mr. Selby's methods of acquiring information were fairly well-known in the House—better known among the boys than among the masters. Grundy of the Shell declared that he had actually seen Mr. Selby bending to listen at the door of the Third Form room before going in to take the Third at prep—and Grundy was believed. Prying and spying were among Mr. Selby's many gifts.

"By sheer accident, of course," said Mr. Selby hastily. "I was passing the boys, and they did not see me, and I heard. Manners minor was repeating what his brother had said."

Mr. Railton's expression was very troubled.

"What have you to say now, Manners?" he asked.

"Only that listeners never hear any good of themselves, sir," said Manners, with quiet deliberation.

"What?" gasped Mr. Selby, crimsoning. "You—you hear him, Mr. Railton—"

"You have no right to make such an insinuation, Manners," said the Housemaster sternly. "You have



Kildare threw the door of the dark-room wide open and strode in. "Manners—" "You silly ass!" roared Manners ferociously, as a flood of daylight fell upon his developing negative. "What?" roared Kildare. "Shut that door, you booby!" Kildare, who was not accustomed to being addressed as a booby, strode at Manners and grasped him by the shoulders. (See page 3.)

already heard Mr. Selby say that he overheard the words by sheer chance."

"Perhaps he will explain exactly when and where he heard them, sir?" said Manners. "The fags couldn't have known he was listening."

Mr. Selby choked.

"Enough of this, Manners!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "You admit having used disrespectful expressions, which were repeated by the boys in Mr. Selby's hearing."

Manners was silent.

The Housemaster picked up his cane.

"I protest, sir!" said Manners firmly. "No other master in the House would take notice of what he overheard—or would overhear anything if he could help it. You wouldn't, sir, and Mr. Linton wouldn't, or—"

"That will do, Manners. Hold out your hand."

Manners hesitated a moment.

"You have accused a master of this school, in my presence, of acting in the manner of a spy," said Mr. Railton. "For that, Manners, I have no choice but to punish you severely. Hold out your hand."

"Very well, sir!" said Manners, setting his lips.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Manners uttered no sound as he received those hefty swishes. Only his face was a little pale when Mr. Railton had finished.

"You may go, Manners." The junior turned in silence to the door. "Remain one moment, Mr. Selby, please."

The door closed on Manners. Mr. Selby, with obvious reluctance, remained. The Housemaster looked at him with disconcerting steadiness.

"This is very unfortunate, Mr. Selby," he said. "I cannot, of course, think of doubting an assurance given me by a colleague, and I must take it that you overheard the Third Form boys speaking, by sheer chance. But you can see for yourself how very unfortunate it is."

"Really, Mr. Railton—"

"It is injudicious, as a rule, to take notice of words heard by accident," said Mr. Railton. "Personally, I never do."

"Our methods may not be the same."

"Quite so; but this is an important point. Boys punished for words overheard by chance, will soon come to believe that they are spied upon—that there is spying, listening,

eavesdropping going on. Nothing could be more unfortunate for discipline than contempt for a master on the part of the boys."

"Contempt, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Selby, his sallow face flaming.

"Any right-minded person, boy or man, must feel contempt for a listener," said Mr. Railton. "Your methods, Mr. Selby, may lead the boys to misjudge you, and in that case contempt must follow. May I advise you to take no heed of words heard by chance, and to take some heed to avoid such unfortunate chances?"

Mr. Selby seemed suffocating for a moment.

"I am answerable to the headmaster, Mr. Railton!" he gasped at last.

"Perfectly so; but in case of further trouble arising on this score, it will be my duty to speak to Dr. Holmes very plainly on the subject," said Mr. Railton. "You know best whether you wish to discuss such methods with the Head."

Mr. Selby did not trust himself to reply. Without a word he let himself out of the study, and closed the door sharply behind him. He went down the passage quivering with passion. At the end of the corridor Manners of the Shell was standing with Tom Merry and Lowther, rubbing his hands, while his chums condoled with him. The Terrible Three glanced up at Mr. Selby as he came along, and in his present furious mood Mr. Selby was not likely to fail to read impertinence in their looks—especially in Manners. He paused a moment, then strode at Manners and gave him a ringing box on the ear.

Smack!

Manners, in utter astonishment, staggered. Mr. Selby, perhaps regretting that hasty and unjustifiable action, hurried on to his study.

CHAPTER 3.

Manners Means Business!

"I—I—I—I'll—"

Manners spluttered.

Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder, Monty Lowther by the arm. Manners was making a rush after Mr. Selby—with what intentions perhaps he hardly

knew himself, but certainly not pacific ones. Whatever he meant to do, his chums wisely decided that he had better not. So they held him back.

"Let go!" panted Manners. "Let me go, you dummies! I—I—I!"

"No, you won't, old chap," said Lowther. "Can't biff a Form master."

"He's biffed me," howled Manners.

"Easy does it," murmured Tom. "He was in an awful wax. Railton's been jawing him, of course."

"I tell you—"

"Come away, old top."

Tom Merry and Lowther fairly dragged Manners away from the spot. He was casting vengeful and quite wolfish looks towards the study door that had closed on Mr. Selby.

They persuaded him—forcibly—as far as the Shell Form-room, where they sat him on a desk. Manners glared at them. They had saved him from himself, like true chums; but he was not grateful.

His ear was crimson and singing from the slap Mr. Selby had so foolishly and unjustifiably given it. But it was not the hurt—it was the humiliation that enraged Manners. Fags in the lowest Form did not have their ears boxed—such methods of punishment were severely discountenanced at St. Jim's.

"I tell you—" said Manners, between his teeth.

"Why grouse?" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Selby's a cad—can't be helped. You can't hack a Form master's shins."

"Am I going to have my head slapped?" roared Manners.

"Well, no. But if you speak to Railton—"

"Rats!"

"Or the Head—"

"Rot!"

Tom Merry smiled. Manners had suffered an injustice and an indignity, but he was not the fellow to make complaints. Certainly his complaint would have been listened to, and Mr. Selby would have been called upon to explain—a process that would have been a severe punishment for the irascible gentleman. That power was in Manners' hands; but he did not think for a moment of using it. Complaining was too nearly allied to sneaking to recommend itself to a member of the Terrible Three.

"Fancy Selby called before the Head!" grinned Lowther. "He would fairly wriggle under the old boy's eye! He couldn't deny slapping your cranium. And the Head would fix him with his glittering eye like the jolly old Ancient Mariner—"

"I'm not going to the Head," growled Manners.

"Of course you're not, old chap! Grin and bear it. After all, you can keep clear of Selby."

"I'm going to make him sit up for this," said Manners savagely.

"We'll help you," said Tom. "We'll make him wish he had patted your head instead of punching it, before we've done with him!"

"What did he want you for, anyhow?" asked Lowther. "He's no right to send for a Shell fellow to his study, really."

Manners snorted.

"It's his beastly spying! He was listening somewhere—you know his style—and heard the fags talking. Heard Reggie repeating what I'd said about him."

"That's his style," assented Tom. "Not quite up to St. Jim's style, but he doesn't know it, poor man! I've heard that he's actually been seen listening outside his Form-room door, to discover what the Third were saying about him."

"Nice man!" murmured Lowther.

"One thing's certain," said Tom. "Railton must have been giving him a royal jaw, or he wouldn't have whacked your napper, old chap. I'll bet he's squirming now, thinking you may go to the Housemaster about it."

Manners grinned.

"I saw it in Railton's eye," he said. "I got some tough cus; but it was worth it. I made it quite plain that Selby had been eavesdropping. I can fancy what Railton said to him after I left."

"No wonder he came away in a towering wax," said Tom Merry. "By the way, haven't you got to see Kildare?"

"Oh, blow Kildare!" said Manners.

"You cheeked him, you know."

"He spoiled my films."

"No wonder he came away in a towering wax," said Tom. "He's a jolly good sort. Go to him and apologise."

"He would think I was trying to get out of the licking," growled Manners. "I'm sorry I cheeked him, but I'm not going to say so to get off a licking."

"Is that so?" asked a voice in the doorway.

The Terrible Three spun round to see Kildare of the Sixth looking in.

"Oh!" ejaculated Manners.

"I told you to come to my study after finishing with Mr. Selby, Manners. As you didn't come, I came to look for you."

"Well, I'm here," said Manners, sliding off the desk. "Go easy, Kildare—I've had four from Railton."

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Kildare laughed.

"If you're sorry you cheeked me, that's enough," he said.

"Don't do it any more, that's all."

And the captain of St. Jim's walked away, with his ashplant tucked under his arm, unused.

"This is your lucky afternoon, Manners," said Tom, laughing.

"It doesn't feel much like it," grunted Manners, rubbing his hands, and then his ears. "My films, too—I'd better get back to the dark-room. Of course, that set of negatives is ruined, all owing to Selby's prying and spying, bother him!"

"Tea in Study No. 6," called out Tom, as Manners left the Form-room.

"All right!"

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther arrived at Study No. 6, in the Fourth, soon afterwards; they were "teasing" with Blake & Co. there. Manners came in rather late, with stains on his hands and a frown on his face.

"Still feeling bad?" asked Blake.

"Yes."

"Did Railton lay it on very hard?" asked Herries sympathetically.

"Eh! I was thinking of my films."

"Oh, your films!" said Digby, with a grimace. "Blow your films, old chap."

"Six negatives done in," said Manners.

"It is wathah wuff," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But it is a much more sewious mattah to have your yah boxed. I weward that as an insult. You fellows wemembah the time when Knox of the Sixth boxed my yah? I felt bound to wotire from the school until the mattah was set wight. You wemembah, Mannahs?"

"I remember you were an ass."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Well, Manners isn't going to run away from school," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "He's going to scalp Selby."

"I've got an idea," said Manners grimly. "Selby's going to pay for thumping my head, and getting me caned by sneaking. I've been thinking it out while I was cleaning up in the dark-room. I'm going to make Selby wish he'd never been born."

"Having the gloves on with him in the gym?" asked Blake, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to show him up," said Manners.

"How's that?"

"Show him up to all the school for the sneaking eavesdropper he is," said Manners. "I'll make him wriggle! It came into my head when I was putting my camera away. The camera's the thing."

"Blessed-if I see how the camera is going to help you down Selby," said Blake, puzzled.

"Lots of things you don't see, in the Fourth."

"Fathead."

"What about tea, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus.

And the seven juniors sat down to tea, and the conversation turned on cricket; and nothing more was heard of Manners' idea—whatever it was.

CHAPTER 4.

Chingachgook!

THE proceedings of Harry Manners of the Shell during the following few days, rather perplexed his chums.

Tom Merry and Lowther did not see so much of him as was their wont.

His camera—the big presentation camera, that was the pride of Manners' heart—remained unused, unmoved, in Study No. 10 in the Shell. Even on a half-holiday Manners did not take it out for a run.

Neither did he worry about cricket. When Tom Merry hinted that, unless he turned up for practice, he couldn't expect to be played in the junior House match, Manners' reply was, "Blow the House match!"

At which Tom Merry smiled cheerily; but wrote down the name of Kit Wildrake in place of H. Manners on his list. Cricket came before friendship, so far as House matches were concerned.

Manners did not mind.

Tom discovered one day that, although Manners' big camera was left unused in the study, Manners was taking about with him a little pocket kodak, and was never without it. That little kodak was Manners' constant companion in these days; though what he was going to do with it was a mystery, as he spent most of his time loafing about the passages. Apparently he was bent upon the study of "interiors," and yet he never seemed to take any photographs with that little camera that was always in his pocket ready for use.

It was perplexing.

One evening, at tea, Tom Merry and Lowther tackled Manners on the subject. That Manners was still thinking of



The Terrible Three glanced up at Mr. Selby as he came along the passage in a furious mood. The Third Form master did not fail to read the impertinence in their looks—especially in Manners'. He paused a moment, then strode at Manners and gave him a ringing box on the ear. Smack! (See page 5.)

his grievance against the tyrannical Mr. Selby, they knew; and they suspected that his new and curious proceedings had something to do with his intention of "scalping" that unpopular gentleman. But they could not make Manners out.

"What's the game, old man?" asked Monty Lowther abruptly.

"Game?" repeated Manners.

"Yes, ass! Are you after the Selby bird?"

"Yes."

"Then how—why—what?" demanded Lowther. "What do you carry that silly little kodak in your pocket for?"

"To take a photograph."

"Not Selby's, I suppose?"

"Just that—Selby's."

Tom and Lowther stared at their chum. They seemed to be able to make Manners out less than ever.

"Ever read Fenimore Cooper?" asked Manners irrelevantly.

"Yes, fathead."

"Remember old Chingachgook?" said Manners. "The jolly old Redskin who was hot stuff on the trail? Well, I'm understudying Chingachgook. I'm on the trail of the Mohawk—Selby, in this instance. And, like old Chingachgook, I'm after his scalp, and I sha'n't be happy till I get it."

"But I don't see—"

"You wouldn't!"

"Look here, you cheeky ass—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Can't we help you?" asked Tom.

"You don't know anything about photographing and taking snapshots."

"I know more than I want to know, from your wagging your chin so much on the subject, old chap," said the captain of the Shell, laughing. "But does all this mean that you're going to take a snapshot of Selby?"

"Just that."

"Then what are you waiting for?"

"Waiting for him to smile, like the professional photographer?" grinned Lowther. "You're booked for a long wait."

"I'll tell you when I've done it," said Manners. "It's bound to come off sooner or later; and then I shall have Selby on the hip—hold him in the hollow of my hand, as they say on the films. And then won't I make him sit up, just!"

Which was all that Manners of the Shell deigned to say on the subject and it perplexed his chums more than ever.

However, they gave Manners his head. There was really nothing else to be done. Moreover, they were very busy about cricket, and Manners was an obstinate fellow sometimes.

On the following Wednesday afternoon the House match took place with the New House, Manners being out of the School House junior team. He did not mind in the least. The understudying of Chingachgook, apparently, drove even cricket from his mind.

"Coming down to watch the game?" asked Tom Merry, resplendent in spotless flannels.

"Eh! What game?"

"You crass ass! The House match."

"Oh, the House match," said Manners. "Go in and win! I hope you'll beat Figgins & Co."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We sha'n't miss you, Mannahs, old man, so don't wowwy. I shall be there!"

"I may give you a look-in," said Manners. "But I expect to be busy. You see, the Third Form are holding a meeting this half-holiday."

"The Third Form?" said Tom blankly. "I suppose you're not attending a meeting of fags in their Form-room?"

Manners laughed.

"No. But I hear from my minor, young Reggie, that they're awfully fed with Selby. They're holding a meeting to discuss him."

"Young asses," said Arthur Augustus. "They'll hold the meetin', and call Mr. Selby names, and blow off steam, and that will be all. Pewwaps it will do them good to blow off steam a little. I have often thought that the speeches in the House of Commons are wathah a good institution. The silly asses might be gettin' up to some mischief if they weren't always talkin' so much."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Blake.

"Time, you fellows," called out Talbot of the Shell, and the cricketers moved off to Little Side, leaving Manners alone.

How and why Manners of the Shell could possibly be interested in a meeting of Third Form fags was a mystery to his comrades. But they had no time to elucidate the mystery. Cricket claimed all their attention. Figgins & Co. of the New House kept them very busy that sunny afternoon. Manners, doubtless, was busy also. Chingachgook, so to speak, was still on the trail; but Tom Merry & Co. forgot all about Chingachgook.

At teatime Tom Merry and Monty Lowther came back to their study with cheery, ruddy faces, and found Manners there.

Manners was seated on a corner of the study table, and the little Kodak lay beside him, and there was a grin on the generally serious face of Harry Manners.

He grinned still more when his chums came in.

"Enjoying life?" asked Tom Merry cheerily.

"Oh, yes!"

"What have you been playing at?"

"Chingachgook."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, give jolly old Chingachgook a rest, and let's have tea. You might have got it ready as you're not in the cricket, you slacker!"

"I've been busy," said Manners. "You see, I've taken the scalp."

"Eh?"

"I've scalped Selby, and Chingachgook is done with," said Manners, with a chuckle. "Never mind tea. Like to come into the dark-room and see me develop this snap?"

"You howling ass!" said Lowther. "The match isn't over yet, and we've got to bolt some tommy. Tea in Hall, Tom."

"Right-ho! Save time."

Tom and Monty went down, leaving Manners still grinning over his Kodak. In what manner he had been "playing Chingachgook" and capturing Mr. Selby's rather scanty scalp his chums did not know, and did not inquire just then. They bolted tea in Hall, and went back to the cricket. What time Harry Manners was busy in the dark-room developing and fixing, with many chuckles of enjoyment over his work.

CHAPTER 5.

A Fair Catch!

"LOVELY sunny weather!" said Manners.

As it was getting dusk when Tom and Lowther came in the remark seemed a little belated.

"It was jolly for the cricket," said Tom. "We haven't beaten the New House this time, though. That fat boulder Wynn bowls like a giddy professional. They've come out ahead by twenty runs."

"Never mind. I'll play for you next time."

"Good! Then they'll come out ahead by forty," remarked Lowther.

Manners laughed. He was evidently in high good-humour.

"Anyhow, it was a jolly good game, and our record of House matches is good enough," said Tom Merry. "Why grouse, old beans? Now for prep! I'd like to kick the chap that invented prep."

"Hard!" said Lowther feelingly.

"You haven't asked about my photograph," said Manners.

"Dear old man, fancy forgetting that!" said Tom, laughing.

"Well, how has it gone?"

"Ripping!"

"You've been out of gates?"

"Oh, no!"

"Doing insides, what?" asked Tom. "You call 'em insides, don't you, or is it interiors?"

"Interiors, fathead! I've taken one snap on the pocket-kodak. Only had time for one. But it's a corker."

"Well, that's what I call a busy afternoon!" said Tom.

"You chucked a House match to take one silly little snap on a pocket-camera. My hat!"

"It's a specially good picture."

Although it was high time for prep to begin in Study No. 10 in the Shell, it was quite clear that the affair of the snapshot had to be dealt with first. Prep could not possibly have proceeded in peace till Manners had told his chums all about it. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther assumed a look

of deep interest as well as they could. The Terrible Three pulled together so well, chiefly because they were tolerant with one another's little foibles.

"Good picture, what?" said Tom enthusiastically. "That's good! Printed it in—I mean, out?"

"Didn't I remark on the lovely sunny weather when you came in, ass?" said Manners.

"Oh, I thought you were thinking about the cricket! Sunny weather good for photographs, too?" asked Tom.

"Fathead!"

"Hem!"

"How are you going to print 'em without a good sun?" demanded Manners.

"Oh, I see! Yes, of course. Right on the wicket!" said Tom. "How, indeed?"

Monty Lowther contributed a chuckle.

"You fellows could have seen me develop it if you hadn't been so jolly keen on the cricket."

"Um!"

"Well, what's the special bootfulness of this giddy snap?" asked Lowther, with his eye on the study clock. "Tell us all about it, old chap."

"If you'd rather get on with the prep—"

"Oh! Hem! Not at all. Cut ahead!"

"Dying to hear about it!" said Tom solemnly.

"Gammon!" said Manners. "But I'll tell you all the same, because it's the catch of the term. I've been playing Chingachgook for days and days on old Selby's trail. Now I've got him and I hold him where I want him. Right under my thumb!"

"Sub-title first!" murmured Lowther.

"Got him down on his knees!" said Manners.

"Sub-title second!" murmured Lowther.

"Oh, don't be a thundering ass, old man!" said Manners. "Guess what I've been trailing Selby for? You know how he got me into a row with Railton—by spying and listening. Well, my idea was that if I trailed him like jolly old Chingachgook, I'd catch him in the act sooner or later. He's always spying, you know."

"Oh!" said Tom.

"This afternoon I got him. That's why I stayed in, because the fags were holding an indignation meeting in their Form-room," explained Manners. "I knew Selby would have wind of it. He gets wind of everything that goes on. Reggie thinks he gets young Piggott to sneak to him sometimes. I don't know about that, but I knew he'd know all about Wally & Co. gathering in the Form-room to blow off steam."

"Well?" said Lowther.

"Well," said Manners, "look what a chance it was for him! Everybody out of the House, excepting the fags. Not an eye open for Selby and his knavish tricks. I'd have betted a dozen doughnuts to a stale bun that Selby would have an eye on the Third Form room this afternoon—and an ear."

"And?" said Tom.

"There's the old wall cupboard a few yards from the door of the Third Form room," said Manners. "I've been inside it most of the afternoon."

"What on earth for?"

"Chingachgooking. Watching for the enemy."

"Blessed if I see—"

"And while the fags were holding their meeting, and everybody else was out of doors, excepting Chingachgook, the dear Selby came down the passage on tiptoe."

"Phew! Did he?"

"Looking around him as watchful as a giddy lynx," grinned Manners. "Coast quite clear, so far as he knew. Then he put his jolly old ear to the keyhole."

"Sneaking rotter!"

"Measly worm!"

"All that, and more," said Manners. "I fancy he would have heard enough to make him fairly skin the Third at prep this evening. But he was interrupted."

"You interrupted him?" asked Tom.

"My camera did."

"Your—your camera?"

"He heard it click," explained Manners.

Tom Merry and Lowther stared at their chum. Understanding rushed in on their minds all at once.

"You—you photographed Selby stooping at a door, listening at a keyhole!" yelled Tom.

"Just that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chums of the Shell.

Manners grinned.

"It was the reward of giddy patience," he said. "I knew my chance would come sooner or later, unless Selby changed his manners and customs; and a jolly old leopard doesn't change his spots, you know."

"But—but what did he do?" asked Tom.

"Jumped."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I had time only for one snap," said Manners regretfully,

"Then he was running at me, fairly running; charging, in fact!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom and Lowther.

"I got out of the House. I thought it wiser to give the Selby bird a wide berth. Whether he went back to his keyhole to listen again, I don't know. I fancy not. Knowing I had snapped him must have sickened him a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I wasn't satisfied till I'd developed," said Manners. "Now you fellows know what you missed! It was simply joy to see Selby come out in the negative! You can bet I was careful in developing that snap, and in fixing it; and after you chaps went back to the cricket I printed it out on the window-sill of Redfern's study in the New House. I thought I might as well keep a good distance from Selby."

"Let's see it."

Prep was quite forgotten now. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther looked eagerly at the print Manners exhibited.

It was an excellent photograph. It showed up the Form-room passage clearly and sharply; it showed the figure of Mr. Selby, bent at the door of the Third Form room, his ear at the keyhole. It caught a good half of his face, and the bony, bitter features came out with sharp clearness, with the light on them.

"I've locked up the negative," yawned Manners. "I've got two prints—this and another. What price Chingachgook now?"

Tom Merry whistled.

"Manners, old man, keep that dark, for goodness sake. That's enough to get Selby the sack."

"More than enough," said Manners coolly. "If I pinned up a few copies of this about the House, Selby would have to clear; he'd be laughed and sneered out of the school. And if he held on—he's got neck enough for anything—he would have to go as soon as the Head knew. Once Dr. Holmes put his peepers on this photograph, imagine his feelings—and Selby's, as soon as the Head began on him!"

"Keep it dark, old man," implored Tom. "Selby's an awful beast, we all know that; but it's his living here. You can't get a man chucked out of his job."

"The Third would thank me if I did, I fancy."

"Very likely; but these young ruffians have had a hand in making old Selby so ratty. They'd get another just as bad. There never was a school where the fags didn't want to lynch their Form-master."

"No reason why he should sneak about me to Railton, and get me licked, and slap my head," said Manners dourly. Tom Merry's face became very grave.

"Manners, old chap, this is no end of a joke—among ourselves. But you couldn't use that against Selby."

"That depends," said Manners icily.

"It doesn't, old fellow. It's a thing that isn't done."

Manners slipped the print back into his pocket. There was a very sour and obstinate expression on his face. His chums realised that his resentment towards the tyrant of the Third was deeper than they had supposed.

"Let him keep his paws to himself!" said Manners. "I don't say I'd get the brute sacked; but I'm going to make him sit up, if you talk till your chin wears out, Tom."

"Cave!" muttered Monty Lowther. And there was silence in Study No. 10 as the angular form and sour face of Mr. Selby appeared in the doorway.

CHAPTER 6.

Manners Holds His Own!

MR. SELBY stared in on the three juniors. His brows were contracted, his thin lips drawn in a tight line. It was obvious at a glance that the Third Form master was in a deep, cold rage, which he found it difficult to suppress.

"Manners!" he said, in a voice that trembled, in spite of his efforts at self-control.

"Yes, sir!" said Manners.

"I have been looking for you."

"Indeed, sir."

"You appear to have been keeping out of my way this afternoon, Manners, intentionally."

"It's a half-holiday, sir," said Manners politely.

(Continued on next page.)

GREAT COMPETITION FOR CRICKET LOVERS!
FIRST PRIZE £100. SECOND PRIZE £50. THIRD PRIZE £30.
AND 120 PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

CAN YOU FORECAST HOW THE COUNTIES ARE GOING TO FINISH UP?

WE offer the above splendid prizes to the reader who is clever enough to send us a list showing exactly in what order the seventeen first-class County Cricket Clubs will stand at the end of the season.

For your guidance we publish the order in which each of the clubs stood last year, which was as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yorkshire. | 9. Sussex. |
| 2. Nottinghamshire. | 10. Somerset. |
| 3. Surrey. | 11. Derbyshire. |
| 4. Kent. | 12. Warwickshire. |
| 5. Lancashire. | 13. Gloucestershire. |
| 6. Hampshire. | 14. Leicestershire. |
| 7. Middlesex. | 15. Northamptonshire. |
| 8. Essex. | 16. Glamorgan. |
| 17. Worcestershire. | |

What you have to do is to fill in on the coupon on this page your forecast of the order in which the counties will finish up. To the reader who does this correctly we shall award a prize of £100, and the other prizes in the order of the correctness of the forecasts.

In the case of ties any or all of the prizes will be added together and divided, but the full amount of £300 will be awarded.

All forecasts must be submitted on coupons taken from this journal, or from one of the other publications taking part in this contest.

You may send as many coupon forecasts as you like.

They must all be addressed to "Cricket Competition," Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, and must reach that address not later than Thursday, August 16th.

You may send in your forecasts at once if you like, but none will be considered after August 16th.

The decision of the Editor in all matters concerning this competition must be accepted as final and binding, and entries will only be admitted on that understanding.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Football Favourite," "Sports Budget," "Magnet," "Young Britain," "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Boys' Friend," "Pluck," "Union Jack," "Rocket," "Nelson Lee Library," "Popular," and "Boys' Cinema," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

I forecast that the Counties will finish the season in this order:

No. 1	
No. 2	
No. 3	
No. 4	
No. 5	
No. 6	
No. 7	
No. 8	
No. 9	
No. 10	
No. 11	
No. 12	
No. 13	
No. 14	
No. 15	
No. 16	
No. 17	

I enter "Cricket" Competition in accordance with the Rules as announced, and agree to abide by the published decision.

Name

Address

GEM.

Closing date, August 16th, 1923.

"You took a photograph this afternoon, Manners."
 "Yes, sir; I often do on a half-holiday."
 "You are not allowed to take photographs indoors without permission."

"Is that so, sir?" asked Manners. "I hadn't heard of it, sir. Is it a new rule?"

"You will hand over any photograph you have taken indoors to-day, Manners, in the circumstances."

"Very well, sir! I will go to Mr. Railton at once."
 "What!"

"And show him the photograph I have taken, and ask him whether there is any harm in it," said Manners, with silky politeness.

Tom Merry thought, for a moment, that the Third Form master would spring at Manners. But Mr. Selby controlled himself.

"That is not what I mean, Manners," gasped Mr. Selby.
 "No, sir! Perhaps you would not mind explaining what you mean, sir?" suggested Manners, polite as ever.

"You will hand the photograph to me, Manners."
 "But you are not my Form master, sir, or my House-master," said Manners, with an air of mild surprise. "Mr. Linton is my Form master, sir. You mean that I should hand the photograph to Mr. Linton?"

Mr. Selby breathed hard.
 "I mean nothing of the kind, Manners. I—I command you to hand me that photograph at once."

Manners did not stir.
 "You hear me, Manners?"

"I am not deaf, sir."
 "Will you obey me instantly?" snapped Mr. Selby.

"No, sir."
 "What! You dare—"

"Don't you find it a lot of trouble, sir, looking after Mr. Linton's Form for him?" asked Manners, with polite impertinence. "Of course, sir, if Mr. Linton tells me that he has asked you to take charge of the Shell, I shall consider myself under your orders. But if Mr. Linton has done that, sir, he has forgotten to mention it to me."

Tom Merry and Lowther stood silent, wondering how this would end. Manners had the upper hand, now; for it was obvious that Mr. Selby did not dare to let that photograph be seen by any member of Dr. Holmes' staff. The bare thought of the Housemaster seeing it must have made him tremble inwardly. Mr. Selby's "methods" may have satisfied his own conscience; but any master at St. Jim's, proved to have acted as Mr. Selby had done, would have been dismissed instantly. And the proof of the photograph was incontestable. Startling as such a situation was, it was in the power of Manners of the Shell to have the master of the Third Form turned out of the school.

It was that bitter knowledge that kept Mr. Selby's furious temper in check. He did not know how far the boy would dare to go; but he knew that Manners had the whip-hand if he cared to use it.

Manners, indeed, thought that he was letting Mr. Selby off cheaply with a little irony. He was quite enjoying this conversation.

Mr. Selby stood just within the doorway, his thin hands making clawing motions, his eyes gleaming under his scowling brows. He was yearning to take Manners by the scruff of the neck.

"Will you hand me that photograph, Manners?" he said at last, in a choking voice.

"I don't mind showing it to you, sir, if you just want to see it," said Manners agreeably.

Mr. Selby's eyes flashed.
 "I—I should like to see it, Manners. Certainly, I—I should like to see it."

Monty Lowther closed one eye at Tom Merry. If ever a man betrayed himself with his looks, Mr. Selby did at that moment. Obviously he intended to snatch the photograph at the first opportunity, if Manners was so trusting as to trust it within his reach.

But Manners did not seem suspicious. He felt in his pocket for the print, and Mr. Selby's eyes fairly glared with a hungry keenness. The Shell fellow took out the print.

"That's it, sir."

Mr. Selby approached to look at it, and saw the delineation of himself listening at a keyhole. His arm shot forward, and he snatched the print away from Manners.

It was an utterly undignified action in a Form master. But Mr. Selby was driven too hard, just then, to think much about dignity.

"Hold on, sir!" exclaimed Manners. "That's my property!"

Mr. Selby did not heed. He tore the photograph across, and across again, and shoved the fragments deep into his pocket. Then he turned on Manners with undisguised triumph and wrath.

"You impertinent young rascal—"
 THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 807.

"Mr. Selby!"

"You shall be punished for this, Manners—such a punishment as you have never experienced!" A cane appeared from somewhere under Mr. Selby's gown. "Hold out your hand, you young rascal!"

"Rats!"

Mr. Selby swept up the cane.

"Better hold on, sir," said Manners, with icy coolness. "I've got another print of the photograph."

"Wha-a-at?"

The cane remained upraised in the air—suspended, as it were, like Mahomet's coffin, between the heavens and the earth. Apparently Mr. Selby had not expected to hear Manners say that; that very obvious consideration had escaped him. He seemed transfixed.

"You don't know much about photography, perhaps, sir?" suggested Manners pleasantly. "Any number of prints can be taken from one negative."

The cane was lowered.

"I've got one more," said Manners.

"Give it to me at once!" said Mr. Selby hoarsely.

"And I've got the negative," said Manners. "It's locked up—I needn't mention where. I can take fifty copies from it, if I like—enough to plaster a whole wall in the Common-room, if I want to. I'm thinking of having an enlargement taken, as a present for the Head. Do you think he would like it, sir?"

Mr. Selby made a husky sound in his throat. Unpleasant gentleman as he was, Tom Merry felt almost sorry for him at that moment.

"Give me the negative, Manners!" articulated the Third Form master at last.

"I can't afford to make presents like that, sir. Films are too jolly expensive," said Manners regretfully.

"I—I will pay you—"

"Pray don't mention it, sir."

"Manners, I—I will give you a sovereign for that negative!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"That's a jolly good offer, sir, and very flattering to me as an amateur photographer," said Manners. "But I never sell my photographs, sir. If I ever go into the business as a professional, I'll be glad to consider your offer."

"Manners—" gasped Mr. Selby.

"Yes, sir," said the Shell fellow politely.

"This—is this an act of revenge!" spluttered Mr. Selby.

"Not at all, sir! Just punishment!" explained Manners.

"What!" roared Mr. Selby.

"You've treated me rottenly, Mr. Selby," said Manners deliberately. "You're a Form master, and you've acted like a bully and a sneak. If I gave you up that negative now, you'd get me licked by my Housemaster on some excuse or other. Well, I'm keeping it." "Mr. Selby made a movement. "And I warn you, sir, that if you touch me, now, with that cane, I'll go straight to Dr. Holmes, and show him the kind of man he's got as master of the Third Form."

Mr. Selby's grip on the cane became almost convulsive.

But he did not raise it.

He gave Manners a look—one look, but it was very expressive. Then he turned and left the study.

The rustle of his gown died away down the passage. The Terrible Three looked at one another.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath.

"What about prep?" said Manners cheerily.

The Terrible Three turned to prep. It was high time they considered it. But there came an interruption a little later; Levison of the Fourth glanced in at the door.

"Selby seems in a rare wax this evening," he remarked.

"Seen him?" smiled Manners.

"He passed me downstairs like a thundercloud. Somebody been ragging him?" asked Levison.

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Well, I hope he won't take it out of the Third."

Levison had a minor in the Third.

"Like him, if he does," remarked Lowther.

Manners started a little.

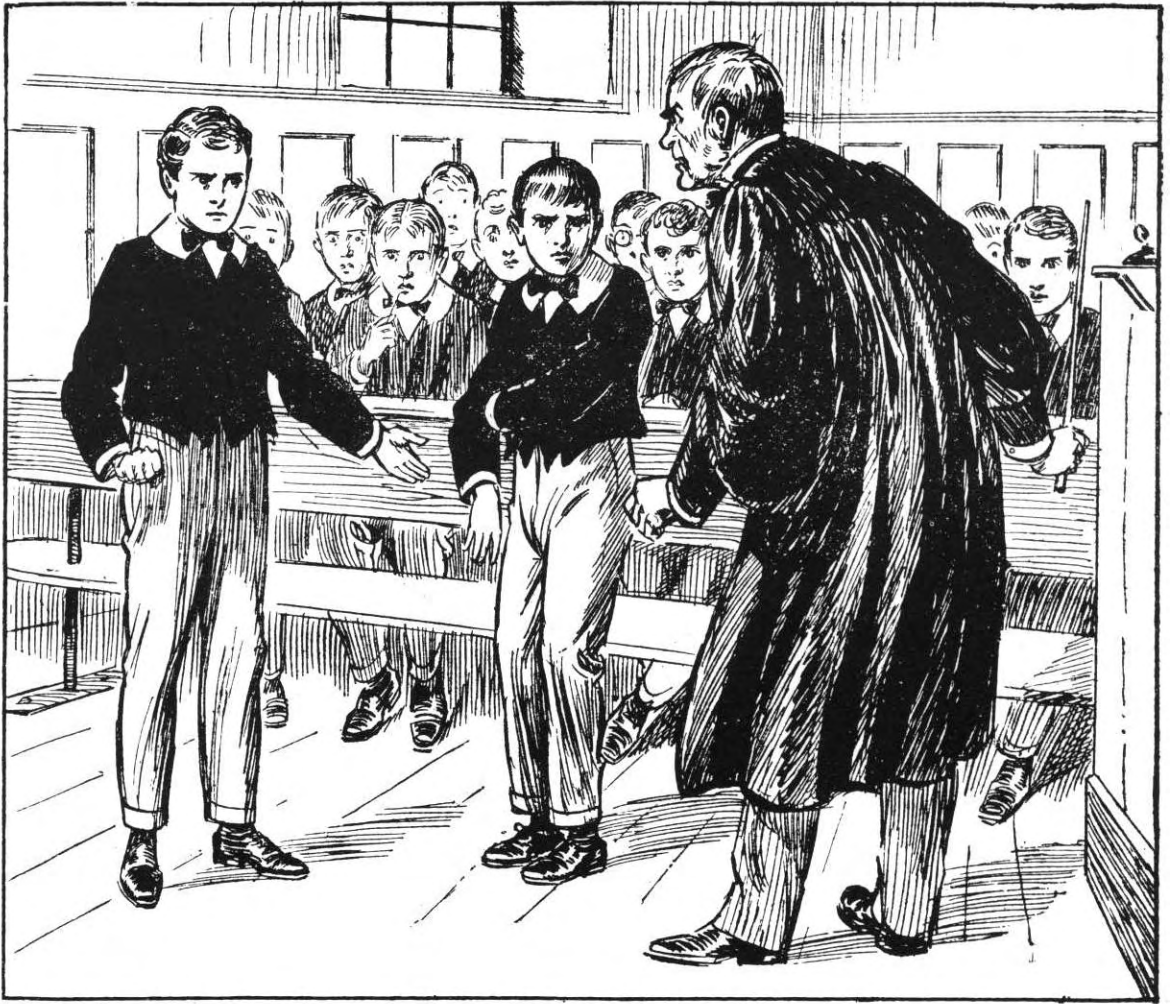
"By Jove!" he said. "Selby's taking the Third in prep by this time." Manners rose from the table. "Well, I know Selby's in a rare wax. Levison; but he won't take it out of the Third this time. I'm going to stop him."

And Manners left the study, leaving Levison of the Fourth staring blankly, as well he might!

CHAPTER 7.

Bearding the Lion in His Den!

D'ARCY minor—otherwise Wally of the Third—made a grimace expressive of dismay. Reggie Manners and Frank Levison looked at one another, and they read dependency in each other's faces. All the Third Form at St. Jim's were very quiet, very apprehensive, and very circumspect. They were gathered in the Form-room for evening preparation—which was done in the presence of a master by the Third.



Manners entered the Third Form room. His face was flushed with anger and indignation as he saw his minor fairly squirming under a lash from Mr. Selby's cane. "You're caning my brother, Mr. Selby," he said, in a suppressed voice, "and it's got to stop!" "What!" gasped the Third Form master faintly. "You're caning him because you can't cane me," said Manners, "and I won't have it!" (See page 12.)

Mr. Selby entered. He was a trifle late—owing to his talk with Manners of the Shell. As he came in, the fags saw his face, and the sight of it was enough for them. They determined to be very good that evening—so good and orderly that they would hardly recognise themselves; and at the same time they knew that prep would not be got through without trouble.

Mr. Selby's face indicated his mood; and when Mr. Selby was in that mood, it was a case of the wolf and the lamb over again. Some hapless member of the Third was certain to catch the vials of wrath.

If nobody was careless, and nobody was disrespectful, at least someone would be dull, or dense—sufficiently so to make an excuse for Mr. Selby's conscience. And when Mr. Selby wanted to punish, a very slight excuse was enough for his conscience.

Mr. Selby ought never, as a matter of fact, to have been a schoolmaster at all. Patience and a good constitution were required to see a man through the arduous duties of a fag Form master. The Third Form at St. Jim's would have tried the patience of an archangel, and undermined the constitution of a Samson. And Mr. Selby was not patient, he had a nervous temperament, and he did not like boys. He was altogether in the wrong place for him—which led to discomfort for himself, and much more discomfort for his Form.

If Mr. Selby had to correct exercises in an afternoon, the correction depended largely upon the way he had digested his lunch. When his digestion was not good—and often it was bad—he would labour through those dreary exercises in a state of suppressed fury; and woe betide the hapless fags who, as a matter of course, sprinkled their exercises with mistakes almost as thickly as Vallambrosa was sprinkled with fallen leaves.

Evening prep was one of Mr. Selby's grievances—like most men who keep out of condition, he always had a grievance. The masters of the Fourth and the Shell did not have to take their Forms in prep—Mr. Selby had to, as master of the Third. It made him bitter against his colleagues, annoyed with his Form, and dissatisfied with things generally. And if, on top of this, boys would be careless or impertinent—

Probably a Form composed wholly of perfect characters would have annoyed Mr. Selby. And the heroes of the Third at St. Jim's were very far from perfect—some of them very far indeed.

Carelessness or impertinence were not to be looked for this evening, at least. The look on Mr. Selby's face made every member of the Form nervously anxious to avoid catching his eye.

That eye roved over the Form, so obviously eager to "catch out" some luckless youth, that the fags dropped their eyes to their desks, and sat downcast and uneasy. They felt a good deal like Ulysses & Co. in the cave of the Cyclops, when the eye of Polyphemus was seeking out the next one to devour.

"Manners minor!"

"Oh, lor'!" moaned Reggie.

Mr. Selby was not consciously unjust. He did not wholly realise that he was going to punish Reggie Manners because Harry Manners had defied him. He would really have shrunk from that thought, for he was not a bad man. He was going to punish Reggie Manners for good reasons—never difficult to find, if one was determined to find them.

"How many times, Manners minor, have I told you that I will not have boys in my Form-room in a dirty condition?"

Deep silence.
 "Your hands are simply disgusting, Manners minor!"
 Reggie shoved his hands hastily out of sight. It was an instinctive movement; he knew it was useless. If Mr. Selby had not seen his inky fingers, he would have found fault with the spot on his collar, or with his untidy hair.

Mr. Selby picked up a cane.
 "Come here, Manners minor!"
 "Hard cheese, old chap!" whispered Frank Levison, as the hapless Reggie rose and drifted out to his doom.
 "It was bound to be one of us, old kid!" muttered Wally comfortingly.

That was not much comfort to Manners minor. He could have borne it much better if somebody else had been the sufferer.

He stood before the angry Form master, quaking.
 "If you please, sir," stammered Reggie, "I—I got some ink on my hands by—by accident, sir!"
 "There are, I believe, facilities for personal cleanliness in this building," said Mr. Selby.

Reggie was only a fag, and it required a moment or two for him to realise that Mr. Selby meant that he could have washed his hands.

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Reggie. "But as it was time for prep, I—I—"

"You need not make excuses, Manners minor. Hold out your hand!"

Swish!
 "Ow!" yelled Reggie.

The cut was unexpectedly hard. Mr. Selby was putting into it all that he would have liked to give Reggie's brother.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Selby. "How dare you, Manners minor?"

Reggie sucked his hand in anguish.
 "Hold out you: other hand, Manners minor!"

The Form-room door opened. Manners—perhaps hesitating a little on his way to the Third Form room—had heard Reggie's yell of pain. That did it!

Manners strode in.

All the Third stared at him, astonished to see a Shell fellow in their Form-room in the time devoted to prep.

Mr. Selby, came in hand, glared at him.
 "Manners! How dare you come here? Leave this room at once!"

Manners came forward, instead of leaving the room at once. His face flushed with anger and indignation as he saw Reggie fairly squirming under the cut he had already received. Manners was very fond of his minor; and Reggie, in his way, was attached to Manners—though certainly, as a rule, he regarded Manners' affection as one of the comic things of life.

"You're caning my brother," said Manners, in a suppressed voice.

"Manners!"
 "It's got to stop!"
 "Boy!" gasped Mr. Selby faintly.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Third Form room. The fags scarcely believed their ears.

Manners' voice broke the dead silence, ringing out loudly:
 "You're caning him because you can't cane me! I won't have it!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Reggie, almost forgetting the ache in his hand in his amazement. It was not the first time that Harry Manners had made a fool of himself on his young brother's account—that being the way the worthy Reggie looked at it; but this time he was going the whole giddy unicorn, and no mistake!

Reggie, and all the Third, expected to see Mr. Selby take the Shell fellow by the collar and march him away to the Head's study for dire judgment.

But Mr. Selby did nothing of the sort.

In the Head's study, Manners would doubtless have produced that tell-tale photograph, turning the tables very completely on the Third Form master. Mr. Selby dared not do it.

"Go back to your place, Reggie," said Manners.

"Oh, I say!" gasped the fag. "Don't be a silly ass, you know!"

"Do as I tell you!"
 "Can't you see you're making it worse for me?" whispered Reggie, in a shrill whisper. "Get out, and don't be a fool!"

"Manners!" gasped Mr. Selby, utterly at a loss.
 Manners turned to him again.
 "Will you tell my brother to go back to his place, Mr. Selby?" he asked.

Mr. Selby licked his dry lips. Into what sort of position had he fallen now? Dictated to in his own Form-room by a junior of the Shell!

But for that photograph—
 But there was the photograph! It was a stern reality which Mr. Selby had to take into account.

For a full minute he did not speak; and the Third Form watched him breathlessly. Then Mr. Selby managed to articulate:

"You may go to your place, Manners minor!"
 Reggie, too astonished to move, stood dumb. Manners took hold of his shoulder and twirled him away towards the desks.

"Do as Mr. Selby tells you, you young ass!"
 Reggie almost tottered back to his place.

Manners came closer to Mr. Selby's desk. He had power in his hands, as was very clearly proved now; but Manners had a sense of the fitness of things. When he spoke again, his voice did not reach the tensely straining ears of the fags:

"I'm sorry to butt in, Mr. Selby! But I can't let you take it out of my minor!"

Mr. Selby breathed like a man suffocating.

"Or the others," said Manners. "May I take it, sir, that there will be no more caning here during prep?"

The man was at his mercy; but even Manners wondered a little how he found the nerve to talk to a Form master like that. It was indignation that nerved him. The wretched fags should not suffer because he had hurled defiance at the master.

Mr. Selby found difficulty in speaking. He was choking with rage and humiliation. But he nodded.

"May I take that as a promise, sir?" asked Manners, with an outward air of respectful politeness.

Another nod.
 "Thank you, sir!" said Manners.

He left the Third Form room with that.
 As the door closed behind the Shell fellow, the fags of the Third looked at one another blankly, amazingly, incredulously. This really couldn't have happened; it was a dream—a vision! They looked at their Form master. He was as white as chalk, and breathing hard. His hand gripped the cane almost convulsively.

"Now we're for it!" murmured Wally.

But the Third were not "for it." The Tartar had been tamed, for once; the cane did not figure again in the proceedings of the Third that evening. Prep was resumed in an electric atmosphere, but there was no more punishment—for which the Third were duly thankful, though their thankfulness was not so great as their utter amazement.

CHAPTER 8.

The Whip-Hand!

"**E**XTWAORDINAWY!"
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that comment on the following day. He was not the only fellow to make comments.

The amazing happening in the Third Form had, of course, been talked of far and wide.

Levison minor told the strange tale to his brother, Levison of the Fourth, and to Clive and Cardew, in Study No. 9. Wally related it in Study No. 6 to his major and Blake and Herries and Digby. Trimble of the Fourth got hold of the story, and told it far and wide with embellishments.

According to Trimble's version, Manners of the Shell had rushed into the Third Form room, seized Mr. Selby's cane from his hand, and flogged him with it, while he howled for mercy!

That was as far as Baggy Trimble got by midday. By the evening, probably, the story would be richer and rarer—probably by that time it would appear that Manners had presented a revolver at Mr. Selby's head.

But, apart from exaggerations, the tale was wonderful enough, and all the Lower School of St. Jim's discussed it.

Manners had bearded the lion in his den, and the lion, contrary to all expectation, had taken it like a lamb. Manners had told the tyrant of the Third to let his minor alone, and the tyrant had meekly obeyed!

Manners, that day, was the cynosure of all eyes in the Lower School. There was the intensest curiosity on the subject. How had Manners done it? Why hadn't Selby taken him to the Head?

Was Manners going to be sacked for his cheek?

CAN YOU WORK THIS OUT?

A spy was caught writing a cipher message. When approached he hastily put away his watch. The cipher he was writing necessitated a key. Nothing was found in the watch yet it contained the key of the cipher. What could it have been?

The "Detective Magazine" is offering £250 in prizes for the solution of this little problem and eleven others equally as fascinating. See the announcement in the number now on sale, price 7d.



Tom Merry and Monty Lowther entered Study No. 10 and found Manners sitting before the fire-grate, thoughtfully stirring with a poker a little heap of burnt fragments. He looked up. "You think I ought to burn that photograph of Selby, Tom?" he asked. "Well, if you ask me, I do," said Tom Merry. Manners smiled slightly. "That's what I'm doing now, then," he said. (See page 26.)

Apparently he wasn't! Manners, that day, was cool and cheerful and smiling, and appeared to be in excellent spirits.

After dinner, Arthur Augustus sought him out. Arthur Augustus was not curious; but he wanted to know.

"I presume you have not been hypnotisin' Selby, Mannahs?" he asked, with his eyeglass fixed inquiringly on the Shell fellow.

"My dear man, I can't hypnotise wild animals," answered Manners.

"Wally says that you gave Selby ordahs, and he obeyed them," said Arthur Augustus.

"Go hon!" said Manners.

"Well, what does it mean, deah boy?"

"Mr. Selby was kind enough to act on my advice," said Manners.

"Bai Jove! I don't believe Mr. Lathom would act on my advice," said Arthur Augustus. "I have nevah ventured to offah him any, as a mattah of fact. But the Third say that Selby was weally white with wage when you told him to let your minah off."

"Do they?" yawned Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, let them rip!" said Manners. "I'm not accountable for what the Third say, old bean."

"It is vewy wemarkable," said Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Selby boxed your yah the othah day, and now he seems to be actin' on your advice. I wegard it as extwaordinawy. Bai Jove! There he is!"

Mr. Selby came along the path in the quad, and his eyes glistened at the sight of Manners.

The juniors capped him respectfully.

Mr. Selby whisked on; but there was no mistaking the meaning of the look he had given Manners.

"Bai Jove! He weally looked as if he would like to bite

you, Mannahs," said Arthur Augustus. "I cannot undahstand his actin' on your advice."

"Lots of things you can't understand, old top!"

"Here he is!" shouted the cheery voice of Wally of the Third. Three fags rushed up to Manners—D'Arcy minor, Levison minor, and Manners minor. The three minors seemed in great spirits.

"Looking for you, Manners!" chirruped Wally. "I say, Selby has given me three hundred lines, and gated me for Saturday."

"Has he?" said Manners.

"No good coming and telling Manners that, you young sweep," said Tom Merry rather uneasily.

"I dare say you asked for it," added Lowther.

"Oh, rats!" said Wally. "Look here, Manners! You seem to have a way with the beast—like a lion-tamer. He did what you told him last evening—goodness knows why, but he did! Can you get me off?"

"Oh!" said Manners.

He looked at his chums. Monty Lowther grinned; but Tom Merry was looking rather grave.

"You see, we want to get out on the river on Saturday," said Wally of the Third. "Just like Selby to bump in and spoil it. Can you get me off, old man? Do!"

"Oh, do," said Levison minor, "if you can, Manners!"

"He's jolly well going to!" said Reggie warmly. "Ain't he my major? Look here, Harry! You just get Wally off!"

"What did Mr. Selby gate you for?" asked Manners, rather uncertainly.

"Practically nothing. You know what he's like."

"Yes, I know what he's like," assented Manners, giving his ear a reminiscent rub. "I'll see what I can do."

(Continued on page 16.)



EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

WHO is Taggles? What is he, that all the chaps commend him? (Quite a Shakespearean touch about this!)

Ephraim Taggles is our aged and venerable lodge-keeper and school-porter. He is such a celebrity that there has been numerous requests for another issue of the "St. Jim's News" dealing with him.

Taggles has been here for more years than he cares to remember. Monty Lowther suggests that Taggles came over with William the Conqueror, but this is a slightly exaggerated view! Taggles is not so ancient as all that. It was in the reign of Queen Victoria that he accepted the appointment which he still holds.

The life of a school-porter is not a bed of roses. It is more like a bed of thistles. I have Taggles' own authority for saying this. "I works an' I slaves from dorn till dusk," says Taggles. "I never gets no hollerdays, an' I'm made the butt an' the larfin'-stock of the whole school. You young rips are always a-pullin' of my leg, as ever was!"

True, O Taggy! Still, what is the use of having a school-porter if we can't pull his leg?

Taggles is industrious and obliging (when you get on the right side of him), and he is quite a popular personage, in a way. Sometimes he kindles our wrath by reporting us to the Housemaster when we come in late, but we bear no malice! "Dooty is dooty, an' dooty must be done," as Taggles himself would say.

Taggles has a great liking for those who "tip" him lavishly, and a cordial dislike of those who don't! Mellish, the meanest fellow at St. Jim's, was once known to tip Taggles a halfpenny! Did Taggy say "Thank you kindly, Master Mellish"? No! He make a remark which was far more emphatic than polite. And it served Mellish right. Meanness is despicable, and to offer Taggles a halfpenny was a brazen insult. Taggles, however, is often treated much better than that; and when I pay him five bob for his contributions to this issue he will jump for joy—if he's athletic enough!

Tom Merry

SHOULD TAGGLES BE "TIPPED"?

We publish below a selection of opinions on this important question.

MONTY LOWTHER:

I am strongly of the opinion that Taggles should be "tipped." That's why I tipped him the other day—in to the coal-cellar! Strange to relate, Taggy wasn't the least bit grateful!

JACK BLAKE:

Taggles should be tipped once a year—at Christmastide. A substantial tip from every fellow at St. Jim's should be given to him on that occasion, and he ought to be more than satisfied. Why should we have to tip Taggles every time he carries a bag or a trunk for us? That's his duty, and he is well paid for doing it. Let the crusty old gentleman be tipped once a year—not once a week! Those are my sentiments, and if any fellow doesn't agree with me, I'll dot him on the— (Moderate your transports, please!—Ed.)

PERCY MELLISH:

You can call me mean and stingy, if you like; but I don't think Taggles ought to be tipped at all. I was compelled to tip him a penny on the first day of term, and I've been broke ever since! Taggles gets paid for his job, doesn't he? Very well, then. Why shouldn't he always be holding out his horny palm for tips?

MANNERS MINOR:

Taggles ought to be tipped every time he threatens to report a chap and duzzent! The other evening I came in late, and he says to me, "Master Manners," says he, "which I'll report yer, as ever was!" But he never did, so I gave him a French coin with a whole in it. Other fellows will be well advised to follow my shining egg-sample of generosity.

DICK BROOKE:

I quite agree with tipping; I think it's rather ripping. And when I tip old Taggles, he never growls or haggles. He rushes at me blindly, and murmurs, "Thank 'ee kindly!" You'll always find me willing to give old Taggy a shilling; or, in a lordly manner, to toss the chap a tanner. I think as how we oughter to be kind to our old porter!

TAGGLES MAKES A SPEECH!

On being presented with a handsome gold watch after completing twenty-five years' service as porter at St. Jim's.

DOCTOR 'OLMES, ladies, and gentlemen.

Wot I says is this 'ere—this is a werry suspicious occasion, as ever was.

Which I ain't no 'and at speech-mongerin'. I ain't 'ad the eddication wot you 'ave. When I was a young lad there was precious few schools an' the schoolmasters wasn't scholars at all.

And when the schoolmasters don't know nothing, you can't expect their scholars to get much eddication. I went to school until I was twelve, and then I was turned out to work. Yes, I was quite young when I started to earn my own living. Five bob a week was all I got, too.

But I'm wanderin' from the point, ladies an' gents. Doctor 'Olmes 'as just 'anded me, on be'alf of the school, a gold 'unter. It's a werry nice watch, an' I reckon it must 'ave cost a tidy penny. I shall sleep with it under my piller o' nights, an' when I wake up in the mornin' I shall always know when it's time to ring the risin'-bell. (Loud cheers.)

Well, Doctor 'Olmes, I pay you my best respects (touching his forelock), an' the same to you, Mrs. 'Olmes (repeating the performance), an' I 'ope as 'ow you'll both go down to prosperity as bein' the two kindest 'earted people as ever was! I also begs to thank all you young gents for your kindness in contributin' to this 'andsome present.

I shall carefully preserve it, an' shall 'ope to receive a future present.

An' now, Doctor 'Olmes, seein' as 'ow I complete twenty-five years faithful service on this red-letter day, might I make so bold as to ask you to give the school an 'alf-'oliday? (Loud cheers, and cries of "Good old Taggy!")

Which I will now pack up, as the servant-girl said when she was given notice. You must be sick an' tired of this 'ere speech-mongerin' by now. Thank 'ee kindly, ladies an' gents, for this 'ere token of esteem. When I gets back to my lodge I shall be pleased to drink your 'ealths in gin-ger-beer!

(Taggles dismounts from the platform amid thunderous applause.)



TROUBLE for TAGGLES!

BY DICK REDFERN.

"I SAY, Taggles—"
The St. Jim's porter was sweeping his doorstep when Baggy Trimble rolled up to him.

Sweeping his doorstep was Taggles' perennial task. He was always at it. Leaves in the autumn, snow in the winter, pools of water in the spring, and dust in the summer, had a habit of accumulating on Taggles' doorstep. A deluge of rain had recently fallen, and Taggles was sweeping away the puddles.

"I say, Taggles—"
The school-porter leaned heavily on his broom, and glared at Baggy Trimble.

"You get along off out of it!" he said, in peremptory tones.

"Oh, really, Taggy—"
"You 'op it!" growled Taggles. "Get along off out of it! That's wot I'm a-tellin' of yer!"

"Oh, very well!" said Trimble loftily. "I had something jolly important to tell you, Taggles. But if you don't want to hear it, I'll buzz off."

And Trimble suited the action to the word.

"One minute, Master Trimble!" called Taggles. He was curious to hear what the fat junior had to say. "Sorry I was a bit grumpy, but this 'ere sweated labour fair gets on a man's nerves. You was about to make an observation?"

Baggy Trimble retraced his steps. "Look here, Taggy," he said in confidential tones, "there's been a plot hatched against the school—"
"My heye!"

"I heard Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School jawing about it. You know what a clever impersonator Gay is?"

"To my sorrer!" said Taggles. "Well, he's going to make up as General Grumpus—one of the school governors, you know."

Taggles opened his eyes wide. "Is this honest, Master Trimble?"

"Honest Injun!" said Baggy. "Gordon Gay's going to call at St. Jim's this afternoon disguised as the general. His idea is to spoof the school, see? If I hadn't warned you you would have let him in, and all the fellows would have been fooled. I reckon my information is worth a bob at least."

So it might have been. But Taggles

wasn't parting with any shillings. Broadly speaking, humanity is divided into two classes—the tippers and the tipped. Taggles preferred to be one of the tipped.

For all that, the porter was genuinely grateful to Baggy Trimble for having warned him of Gordon Gay's little plot. When the bogus General Grumpus arrived Taggles would know how to deal with him.

"Which I'm werry much obliged to you, Master Trimble," said Taggles. "I'll make things warm for that young rip when he turns up!"

So saying, Taggles went on with his work, and Baggy Trimble proceeded on his way.

Half an hour went by. Taggles, having got rid of the puddles of water on his doorstep, stood in the doorway of his lodge and awaited developments. They soon came.

A portly, pompous-looking personage advanced along the road, approaching the school gates. Taggles stared at him. Certainly the man bore a remarkable resemblance to General Grumpus, the fiery governor.

The general—he was retired from the Army—always wore a canary-coloured waistcoat. And the person now approaching wore one. The general affected patent leather shoes and silk spats. So did this individual.

Taggles rubbed his eyes. "It's a wonderful disguise!" he muttered. "It would take in anybody! I'm glad Master Trimble put me up to it."

The portly-looking person was about to enter the school gateway, when Taggles planted himself in his path.

"Stand aside, fellow!" hooted the newcomer.

Taggles gave a snort. "Which you'll 'ave to get up werry early in the mornin' to fool me!" he said.

"Dolt! Imbecile!" spluttered the intruder, choking with rage. "What do you mean by that asinine remark?"

"Wot I says," said Taggles grimly. "You get along off out of it, afore you gets my boot be'ind yer!"

"Why, you—you gibbering fool! Are you not aware of my identity? I am General Grumpus!"

"Tell that to the Maroons!" growled Taggles.

With an impatient snort, the visitor tried to push his way past Taggles. He might with equal success have pushed his way past a solid stone wall. With arms and legs akimbo, Taggles stood and barred his path.

"Doctor Holmes shall hear of this!" roared the irate newcomer. "I'll have you dismissed from your post, an' fired out of the place, begad! You are an

impertinent rascal! Stand aside, or I will chastise you with my cane! Your age will not protect you!"

Taggles waved his hand imperiously. "You 'op off back to the Grammar School!" he said.

"The Gug-gug-gug-Grammar School?" stuttered the intruder.

Taggles nodded. "The game's up," he said. "It was up, in fact, when you fust made your appearance. You ain't General Grumpus no more'n wot I am. You're a him-postor, that's wot you are!"



Taggles gaped at the card and nearly fell down in surprise. The man was no impostor, but Major-General Sir William Grumpus, C.M.G., D.S.O., himself.

"Begad! You—you must be out of your senses, man! Here is my visiting-card. Perhaps that will convince you."

Taggles gaped at the card, and he nearly fell down. Staring him in the face was the imposing title:

"Major-General Sir William Grumpus, C.M.G., D.S.O."

"My heye!" gasped Taggles, falling back in dismay. "Then it—it's the genuine General Grumpus, after all?"

"Most certainly I am genuine, you dolt! Why in thunder should you suppose I was an impostor, begad?"

Taggles explained. And it was fortunate that he did so, or the general would have had him sacked on the spot.

As a matter of fact, Baggy Trimble's information had been quite correct. But for once in a way Gordon Gay had been forestalled. The real general had arrived before he was able to carry out his plans.

Taggles apologised most humbly to the general, who went stamping away in the direction of the Head's house. Then Taggles tottered into his lodge, to seek solace from a bottle which was labelled "Finest Home-brewed Ginger-beer."

At Christmas-time they gathers round
An' gives me bobs an' tanners;
On one occasion I received

A quid from Master Manners.
When Herries' bulldog comes to me
His tail he always waggles;
He's werry, werry fond, you see,
Of good old Ephraim Taggles!

It's nice to be so popular,
An' always tipped and treated;
But though you mightn't think it, gents,
I ain't a bit conceited.
I always smiles a cheery smile
As through the mud I draggles;
You'd have to tramp for many a mile
To find another Taggles!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 807.

THE POPULAR PORTER!

BY EPHRAIM TAGGLES.

I'M really werry popular
With the youngsters of St. Jim's.
I'm always willin' to forgive
Their wheezes and their whims.
When Master Merry comes in late,
An' through the gateway straggles,
He slips a shillin' in my palm,
An' murmurs, "Good old Taggles!"

Old Selby isn't popular,
No more is sour old Ratty;

The matron ain't liked overmuch,
Because she's often catty.
My wife, who keeps the little shop,
She hums an' haws an' haggles;
She therefore ain't so popular
As me, the worthy Taggles!

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

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



"Bravo!"

"Manners, old fellow—" murmured Tom Merry.

Manners did not seem to hear him. He walked away to the School House, the way Mr. Selby had gone. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his celebrated monocle afresh into his noble eye, and gazed after Manners.

"Is he weally goin' to twy it on?" said Gussy. "This is weally vewy extwaordinawy. I fail to see why Mr. Selby should listen to Mannahs on the subject at all."

"You fail to see no end of things, old bean, even with the aid of a pane in the eye," remarked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I—I wonder whether it will work!" said D'Arcy minor breathlessly.

"Wats! Of course it won't, you young duffah!"

"Well, Selby toed the line yesterday. Didn't he, you chaps?"

"He did, rather," said Reggie. "The beast was going to skin me, and Harry butted in and stopped him."

"It's extraordinary, but it's a fact," said Frank Levison. "Manners knows how to manage him somehow."

"How, doesn't matter, so long as he does it," said Wally. "He's got some hold over him, somehow."

"Perhaps Selby's committed a murder, and my major knows where he's hidden the body!" suggested Reggie brightly. "I've read something of that sort in a book once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, there's something," said Reggie. "Selby was as wild as a Hun, but he did as my major told him. All the Third saw it."

"Bai Jove! It is weally extwaordinawy!"

Tom Merry and Lowther strolled away, leaving the excited fags waiting for news.

CHAPTER 9.

Great Expectations!

TAP!

"Come in!" said Mr. Selby harshly.

Manners entered the Third Form master's study.

Mr. Selby's eyes glistened at the sight of him. But he controlled his feelings.

"What do you want, Manners?" he asked, as calmly as he could.

"I should like to put in a word for D'Arcy minor, sir!" said Manners politely.

"What?"

"I understand that D'Arcy minor is detained for Saturday."

"That is the case!" snapped Mr. Selby.

"Would you mind letting him off, sir?"

"Manners, this is insolence!"

"I should feel very much obliged, sir," said Manners, still polite, but with some grinniness.

Mr. Selby breathed hard.

"Manners! You dare to interfere in my conduct of my Form—"

"You have yourself to thank, sir," said Manners coolly.

"You interfered with me, though I do not belong to your Form. One good turn deserves another, sir. Don't you think so?"

"I shall report this insolence to the Head, Manners."

"I'm quite prepared to go to the Head, if you like, sir."

"You mean," gasped Mr. Selby, "that you—you will bring that—that rascally photograph to Dr. Holmes' knowledge?"

"If there is anything rascally in the photograph, sir, it is my duty to let the Head see it, and he will judge whether I ought to keep it."

"This is blackmail, Manners!"

Manners started a little.

"It—it's what?" he ejaculated.

"Blackmail!" said Mr. Selby harshly.

"Oh, rot!" said Manners, recovering himself. "You shouldn't be so free with your hands, Mr. Selby. If you smack a fellow's head, you must expect the fellow to get his own back if he can."

"Leave my study!"

"Is D'Arcy minor let off for Saturday?" asked Manners grimly.

"No!" thundered Mr. Selby. "He is not!"

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"Very good, sir!" said Manners, setting his lips. "Perhaps it will console him for his detention if I give him one of my photographs." He turned to the door.

Mr. Selby's brain almost swam for a moment. That photograph, depicting their Form master stooping and spying at a keyhole—what effect would it produce on the Third Form?

"Manners! Stop!"

Manners glanced back.

"I—I—I— You may tell D'Arcy minor, from me, that he is excused from detention on Saturday," said Mr. Selby, breathing with difficulty.

"And the lines, too, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Go! Go, before I forget myself!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"Thank you, sir!"

Manners paused at the door.

"May I suggest, Mr. Selby, that you should go a bit easier with the Third?" he asked. "I don't want to have to keep on interfering. But I can't see the fags punished simply because you can't get at me. That wouldn't be fair, would it?"

Mr. Selby gurgled.

"I hope you'll take my suggestion into consideration, sir," said Manners, still polite. "It will save both of us a lot of trouble."

With that Manners of the Shell left the study. It was time, for Mr. Selby's self-control was almost at an end. He was perilously near to assault and battery, regardless of consequences.

Manners strolled out into the quad. He nodded cheerily to Tom Merry and Lowther, and walked on to where the fags were waiting for him. Frayne and Hobbs and Jameson, and two or three more of the Third, had joined Wally & Co. by this time, and shared their eager expectation.

"All serene?" asked Wally eagerly.

Manners nodded.

"I'm let off?" yelled D'Arcy minor.

"Yes. Mr. Selby has been kind enough to excuse you from detention on Saturday, and the lines as well," said Manners.

"Hurrah!"

"Good man!"

"Hip-hip!"

"How the thump did you do it, Manners?" exclaimed Frank Levison.

Manners laughed and did not reply.

"I say, this is just gorgeous!" said Reggie Manners enthusiastically. "We can play any game we like with Selby now. You've got off after putting the beetles in his hat, Wally."

"Eh—what's that?" exclaimed Manners.

Reggie chuckled gleefully.

"Wally filled up old Selby's hat with beetles, you know. You should have seen his face."

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

"He didn't really know I'd done it, but he guessed, somehow," said Wally. "Selby's awfully keen. Horrid keen old bird. But we can do as we jolly well like now."

"Yes, rather."

"We'll rag him in prep to-night," said Wally gleefully.

"I say, Manners, will you come in again this evening and see that he doesn't cut up rusty. He's afraid of you."

"Don't be a young ass!" said Manners gruffly. "If I'd known that you'd put beetles in Mr. Selby's hat—"

"Oh, don't you begin to preach, Harry, old man!" said Manners minor. "You stand by us like a good chap. We'll make Selby feel that life isn't worth living, now we know he's afraid."

"Look here, Reggie—"

"But how do you do it, Manners?" demanded Jameson.

"Has Selby done something awful and you've found it out?"

"Wats!" broke in Arthur Augustus. "You are a young wottah, Jameson, to suggest such a thing. As if Mannahs would do anythin' of the kind."

Manners flushed.

"Oh, cheese that, D'Arcy!" he snapped angrily.

"Weally, Mannahs, I was only defendin' you fwom a vewy disagweeable suggestion."

"Fathead!"

Manners of the Shell stalked away, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced after him in amazement.

"Bai Jove! What is the matalah with Mannahs?" he exclaimed. "It is vewy extwaordinawy to jump out at a fellow who is standin' up for him."

And Arthur Augustus walked away, much puzzled.

But the joyful fags did not heed. The prospect was quite a gorgeous one for them, as Wally expressed it. Mr. Selby, for some mysterious reason, was afraid of Manners, that was clear. The fags debated the reason, and there were various suggestions. Reggie stuck to his theory that Mr. Selby had committed a murder and that Manners had seen him hide the body. It had happened just like that in a book Reggie had read, and so how could anything be more probable?

Jameson inclined to the theory that Manners had seen Mr. Selby burgling the Head's safe. Wally was disposed to think that Manners had somehow learned some dreadful secret of Mr. Selby's past, for, as Wally astutely pointed out, they didn't know what Selby had been before he came to St. Jim's. He might have been a cracksmen or a pirate, or anything.

But whatsoever the secret might be, there was no doubt on one point—that Mr. Selby was afraid of Manners, and had to toe the line.

So long as Manners of the Shell backed them up the fags of the Third could do anything they "jolly well liked."

And that prospect of endless riot and disorder appealed amazingly to the Third. Already, in blissful anticipation, they envisaged Mr. Selby being caned with his own cane. They pictured themselves chasing him round the Form-room with hurdling inkpots.

It really seemed too good to be true. As a matter of fact, it was.

The fags impressed on Reggie that he had simply got to see that his major played up, and Reggie promised with the greatest sincerity that he would do his very best to make him. If only Manners major played up life was going to be extremely jolly in the Third Form at St. Jim's.

Only Wally, who was a wary youth, cautioned his eager followers not to begin the new regime until it was absolutely certain that Manners major would play up as desired.

Which was just as well.

CHAPTER 10.

"Chuck It!"

"WELL?" grunted Manners.

"Well, all's well!" said Monty Lowther amicably.

Tom Merry did not speak.

It was the following day, and the Terrible Three had met in Study No. 10 in the Shell to tea.

There was a little constraint upon the three chums, usually so open and frank and unconscious of restraint.

Manners gave the captain of the Shell a suspicious look. He knew that Tom was not satisfied with his proceedings, and that irritated him. All the more, perhaps, because by this time he was not wholly satisfied himself.

"Well, the eggs are done," said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "You make the tea, Manners."

Manners made the tea.

"I met Selby coming in," he remarked casually.

"Dear old gent," said Lowther, keeping the conversation going, as Tom Merry was troubled and silent. "Did he ask you how your photographing was getting on?"

Manners grinned.

"He asked me for that negative."

"And he won't be happy till he gets it?" said Lowther. "Pass the salt, old man. Like your egg, Tom?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"You're not looking specially chippy, Tom," Manners remarked sarcastically, looking across the table at his chum.

Tom Merry met his glance steadily.

"I'm not feeling chippy," he answered quietly.

"Selby been boxing your ears?" asked Manners, with an air of interest. Monty Lowther could not help chuckling at that question.

"No. And I really think it's time, Manners, old man, that you might forget that he boxed yours."

"I don't like my head slapped," said Manners.

"Nobody does. But what's the god of nursing a grievance?" said Tom. "We all know that Selby is an ill-tempered brute. He ought to get a job in a prison instead of in a school. But there's a limit, old man. He had no right to box your ears, and if he was decent he would apologise. He isn't, I know."

"Then, as you admit he's not decent, I really don't see why you should be concerned about him," yawned Manners.

"You're making him look a fool to his Form."

"Can't make him look anything but what he is."

"After all, he was a bit rough on the fags, I fancy," remarked Monty Lowther. "They're unruly little savages, but Selby piled it on a bit too thick, in my opinion."

"No doubt about that," said Tom. "But if Manners is going to back up the fags against their Form master, I fancy they'll be worse to Selby than ever Selby was to them. But it's not that. I—I don't want to butt in, you know, Manners."

"Only you're going to do it all the same!" grunted Manners.

"Well, I think I ought to speak!" said Tom resolutely. "You're leading Selby a dog's life, with that power in your hands to get him sacked. It's not right, old chap."

"Rot!"

"I know he's a beast, and he treated you badly. He's an outsider!" said Tom. "He does things that people don't

do. That's no reason why you should do things that aren't done."

"So I'm an outsider, am I?" said Manners.

"I don't mean that, and you know I don't!" exclaimed Tom Merry testily. "But you've made Selby sit up for what he did, and now you ought to chuck it."

"That isn't my opinion!"

"It's mine!"

"Keep yours till I ask for it!" suggested Manners.

"Now then, you duffers," began Monty Lowther. "No ragging in the jolly old family circle!"

"I'm not ragging," said Manners. "I'm being ragged. I'll make that brute sorry he laid hands on me before I've done with him!"

"You've done that," said Tom Merry. "That was all right! But nobody has a right to hold something over another man's head. And—and a fellow of your age, Manners, hasn't a right to cheek a man old enough to be his father. It's not done."

Manners rose to his feet.

"That's your opinion, Tom Merry?"

"Yes."

"Then you can go and eat coke!"

"Look here, Manners—"

"Rats!"

Manners strode out of the study, closing the door after him with unnecessary violence. His face was clouded, and he was deeply stirred with anger—but not only anger. Somewhere within Manners was a little voice whispering that his chum was right, and that he was wrong; and for the present, at least, that little voice had only an exasperating effect on Manners of the Shell.

"Here he is!" sang out the voice of Manners minor. "Just coming to your study, old chap. I say, you didn't look into the Form-room yesterday."

"We expected you," said Wally of the Third reproachfully.

Manners looked at the two fags. He did not speak. But D'Arcy minor and Manners minor were prepared to do the talking.

"We've got a game on to-night," said Wally, in a deep whisper. "If you'll come and see us through, Manners, we're going to pelt Selby with inkpots as soon as he comes in for prep—"

"You young ruffians!" roared Manners.

"Eh! What! Why shouldn't we?"

"Look here, Harry," said Reggie Manners warmly, "you stick to us, and don't be a cad. Father told you to look after me at St. Jim's, you know that!"

"Yes, I know that," said Manners grimly, "and I'm going to do it! I'll jolly well give you a licking, you young hooligan!"

"What?" yelled Reggie. "Why, you cheeky ass—"

"Hook it!" said D'Arcy minor. "Nothing doing, old man! We'll try him another time."

And the two fags scuttled away; disappointed, but still hopeful for the future. The delightful vision of pelting Mr. Selby with inkpots was not to be abandoned if it could be helped.

Manners went glumly down the passage, and passed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. That noble youth glanced at him, but did not speak. But it seemed to Manners that he read disapproval in the glance, and it added to his irritation.

He went out to stroll in the quad, and when Tom Merry and Lowther came out he went back into the house. Tom and Monty exchanged a rather dismal glance, but they did not follow Manners. In his present mood he was better left to himself.

Mr. Selby was in the hall when Manners of the Shell came in, and he seemed to bristle all over as he saw the junior. Manners paused. He was angry and morose, but he was troubled. Was he really, as Tom had told him, doing something that was not "done" as that little inward voice told him, too? His dislike of the sharp, suspicious, irritable Form master had never been so keen; but there was an impulse in Manners' breast, which he followed. He came up to Mr. Selby.

"I'm sorry, sir!" he said, in a low voice.

Mr. Selby stared at him, not understanding.

"You provoked me, sir," went on Manners, in the same tone, "and I'm not sorry I got my own back! But that's all! I shall never speak to you again about the photograph!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"I'm going to burn it," said Manners quietly.

Mr. Selby's worried face brightened. He did not understand Manners' motives—he never did understand boys. But some slight feeling of kindness awoke him as he realised that he was let off at last.

"Thank you, Manners!" he said quietly.

And the Shell fellow walked on, and went up the staircase to his study.

(Continued on page 26.)

OUR SUPERB SHORT SPORTING STORY!



A Rattling, Fine Story of Sport, Mystery and Adventure.

CHAPTER 1.
The Smash!

"IF we only had funds!" said Jim Taylor lugubriously.

"That's just the trouble, of course," agreed Sid Bright, with a rueful grin. "But we haven't. Never mind. No good grouching. Heaps of the big athletic clubs have started as small as ours—well, perhaps not quite so small. Anyway, nobody else seems to be turning up, so I vote we get into our togs and make a start. What about a run round by the Cliff Road to Portisgate, and back across the heath?"

"Rather rough going!"

"Good training, though, old top; and the sea air will buck us up," said Sid cheerfully. "Get inside the club-room, you old lump of misery, and let's be off."

And, without waiting for his chum's further remarks, Sid dived into the club-room to change into his running-togs. After a brief hesitation his chum followed him, with a ringing laugh.

Both boys were fine healthy youngsters, and even the rather pessimistic Jim was rarely gloomy for long. Though it was more than likely that Jim had laughed, not with a sudden determination to be cheerful, but at his chum's designation of "club-room" to the little lean-to shanty at the rear of Sid Bright's home, which represented the combined offices of club-room, dressing-room, and committee-room of the Hartford Harriers.

Certainly the shanty was anything but imposing. Indeed, some irreverent local wag had added to the inscription "Hartford Harriers," painted over the low doorway by Sid Bright, an expressive "Bow-wow!" and had chalked in big letters underneath, a warning to "Beware of the Dog!"

But though their "club-room" certainly smacked of a large-sized dog-kennel Sid and Jim went on their way undismayed. They had founded the club at the beginning of the season with no capital, but with plenty of hope and no end of keen enthusiasm. What did dismay them a little, however, was the fact that, though the season was now nearly ended, the membership of the club was but a bare dozen, and half of this number showed an utter lack of keenness in the game.

And now, on this particular Saturday afternoon, only Sid and Jim had turned up for practice. It certainly was disappointing, especially as there was plenty of

good material among the youth of the district. But possibly the trouble was, as the founders agreed, in the club's lack of funds and a suitable club-room.

In a very few moments the two chums had changed into running attire, and were speeding along the leafy lanes on the outskirts of Hartford. The little manufacturing town was but a bare couple of miles from the coast, and soon the shimmering sea came into sight, and the salt tang of the sea breeze was in their nostrils.

"Jove! This is simply ripping!" breathed Sid, sniffing the air with evident enjoyment. "Those lazy slackers don't know what they're missing. Hallo, here's the cliff road already. Now put it on a bit!"

The hedges had dropped behind them now, and they were trotting over a rough cart-track over gorse-covered ground, which presently merged into the Cliff Road, stretching like a white, undulating ribbon along the cliffs into the distance.

It was better going here than on the cart-track, but it was rough enough for all that, and very lonely. The loneliness suited the chums, and they made light of the rough going. Both were as fit as fiddles, and Sid Bright, at least, was a born runner. His style was perfect, and he ran with an easy grace, beautiful to watch. Jim Taylor could move, too, despite a somewhat imperfect action. And he had plenty of grit and stamina. Together, the two had already added a certain amount of glory to the newly-formed club on the cinder-path—Sid with a five-mile championship on a rough track and a mile championship; Jim with a mile championship also in addition to a half-mile.

"But we've got to do better than that next year," Sid told his chum as they jogged along this afternoon. "It's up to us to make the club a success, and we've got to do things—make the folks sit up and take notice."

"We'll do it, too," said Jim, setting his lips. "If only we'd got a decent club-room for the chaps to— Look out! Here's a car!"

They were pattering steadily downhill between the steep banks of a gully at the moment. Both had heard the approaching roar of an open exhaust, but they had hardly expected it to be upon them so soon.

It was only a small two-seater, but it came round the corner at the bottom of the gully at a terrific speed, just as Jim shouted the warning. As he shouted, Jim

leaped for the ditch, and Sid, as nimble-witted as he was nimble-footed, leaped after him barely a second later.

Only just in time! For, though the single occupant of the car swerved on seeing the boys, the swerve would have been too late had not they jumped clear sharply.

But though the runners had escaped, the unexpected happening resulted in disaster for the car and its driver.

As the car swerved, the off-side front wheel struck a gorse-covered rock at the side of the road, and the sudden jerk wrenched the steering-wheel out of the driver's hand. The car lurched, leaped clean across the rough track, and somersaulted against the sloping bank of the gully with an appalling crash.

It all happened in a flash, and for a brief instant of time the startled chums stared aghast, stunned by the accident. Then both of them leaped forward.

The car lay half on its side now, its rear wheels still whizzing round, as the uncontrolled engine raced on. Jim dived under the wrecked car, and fumbled about a bit; quite suddenly the roar of the engine died away, and silence fell. Sid sprang to the side of the unfortunate driver, who lay motionless where he had been flung in the bracken-filled ditch-bottom. His eyes were closed, his face was white, save for a thin trickle of blood from a nasty cut on the forehead.

"Is he badly hurt?" asked Jim, almost under his breath, as he ran up. "He looks bad."

"Don't know. He's unconscious, anyway!" muttered Sid, his face anxious. "Great Scott! What on earth are we to do?"

He gently placed a bunch of bracken under the lolling head of the injured man, and, with Jim's assistance, made him as comfortable as possible. Then Sid scrambled up the sloping bank of the gully. He reached the top, and scanned the surrounding heath anxiously.

There was not a soul in sight; he had scarcely expected there would be in that lonely spot. Then his eyes fell upon the thatched roof and chimneys of a cottage some hundred yards inland; but, even as he noticed it, he remembered it was but a deserted cottage—little more than a ruin.

There was no help in sight. To make matters worse, Sid felt a few cold spots of rain, and he became aware suddenly of the lowering clouds that had been creeping up unseen during the past hour.

"What a mess!" groaned Sid. "And

it's a couple of miles almost to the nearest house."

He slid down the bank, and joined his chum, who still knelt by the injured motorist. As he did so, the latter stirred suddenly, his eyes flickered open, and he strove to get up, gazing about him dazedly the while.

CHAPTER 2.
Mystery.

"OH, good!" breathed Sid Bright. "Don't try to move yet, sir," he told the man. "We'll soon get help here, and—"

He broke off abruptly, startled a little by the look on the injured motorist's face. He was a tall man, smartly dressed, and not ill-looking; but just now his lean face was hard, and his eyes glittered with rage.

"You—you confounded little rats!" he muttered through his clenched teeth. "Why in thunder didn't you get out of the way, hang you? You must have heard the car coming."

Sid shrugged his shoulders. He could understand the man's anger, but he did not feel they were responsible.

"I'm sorry it happened through us," he replied quietly. "But it was scarcely our fault. You were more to blame, coming round that dangerous corner at such a pace. We heard you coming right enough, but you were on us almost before we knew it."

The man gnawed his lip without answering. He lay still, as if gathering his strength, and then he staggered to his feet and stumbled unsteadily over to the car.

But it was not to examine the damage; he scarcely glanced at it. He stooped beneath the upturned body of the car, and, after fumbling about for a moment,

brought to light a long, black leather travelling bag. He looked it over, and then, with a grunt of relief, glanced quickly about him.

For a moment he stood thus, biting his lips reflectively, and then, after regarding the waiting boys for a little through half-closed eyelids, he came back to them. He seemed to have got over his rage by now, for his tone was almost cheery as he said:

"Well, it can't be helped—damage is done; and I'll admit I was going it some. Anyhow, the old bus is done in, and it looks as if I'm stranded. Going to get wet, too—confound the rain! How far to the next town?"

"Nearer than two miles," said Sid Bright. "If you like, one of us will go for help—a trap or something. There's a cottage over there—an empty one. You could shelter and rest there while you're waiting."

"What about righting the car, and putting the hood up?" suggested Jim. "That would make things more comfortable."

The motorist shook his head and laughed.

"We'd be drenched through before we got the car on its legs," he said. "And as for your running three miles in this, I won't hear of it. No. The cottage will do fine, though. Is it far?"

"Just beyond the gully—a hundred yards, perhaps."

"Good! Then the sooner we get there the better. The rain will be pelting down soon," said the man. "Just a minute, though."

The boys waited while the stranger hunted out a raincoat from the wrecked car, and when he had put it on Sid led the way quickly towards the cottage, for it was already raining hard now.

The man seemed to be recovering rapidly from the accident, and the cut in

his forehead had stopped bleeding now. But he still seemed groggy on his feet, and Sid offered to carry the bag, which the man still gripped firmly. To the boy's surprise, his offer was repulsed—rather snappily, Sid thought.

But he said nothing, feeling that the man was still a bit grumpy. In any case, the bag, though big and bulky, was obviously not weighty, by the way the stranger carried it.

In silence they hurried on over the rough ground, the boys shivering now in their thin running attire. And a few seconds later they reached the cottage—a tumble-down, stone-built place, standing on a slight rise, well back from the road.

But, to the boys, at least, it was any port in a storm, and as the rickety door of the cottage creaked open to their touch they pushed it open, thankfully enough. The stranger entered after them, and glanced round him quickly. Then suddenly he seemed to become faint. Resting the bag on the stone-flagged floor, he leaned dizzily against the wall, holding his hand to his head.

"It's—it's all right," he muttered, as Sid jumped to him. "I—I think I'd better lie down a moment. Pity we didn't think to bring the rugs from the car. If—if one of you could—"

"I'll go," said Jim eagerly, glancing at the dirty floor of the cottage kitchen. "Won't take me a sec."

He was out of the cottage and speeding through the rain towards the car before the man could answer. Sid watched him from the doorway for a moment, and then he was turning to say something to the stranger, when the words died on his lips and he fairly jumped.

The man was not leaning against the wall now. He was standing upright, and he looked anything but faint. His



Like lightning, Sid lashed out behind him with one rubber-soled foot, and in the same movement he twisted and aimed a blow with his fist at the weapon in his assailant's hand. His kick went home, landing in the pit of the man's stomach and doubling him up with a grunt, but his fist missed its objective by a good foot.

lean face was hard, and his eyes glittered with malice. His right hand was outstretched and gripping an automatic, the wicked-looking barrel of which was pointed menacingly at the boy.

"Put your hands up—quick!" snapped the fellow harshly. "Smart, now! That's right!"

Sid Bright was staggered.

The thing was no joke. The deadly glint in the man's eyes, and the sight of the weapon in the steady hand, convinced him of that. His hands went up at once. There was no sense in arguing with a levelled pistol. It was the first time Sid had looked down the business end of such a weapon, and he didn't like the sensation a bit.

"Wha-what does this mean?" he stammered, fairly blinking in his astonishment at the man. "I—I—"

"It means, kid," was the snappy reply, "that you confounded little whelps have almost queered my pitch, and I'm making sure you don't get the chance to finish the job. A sound and you're for it, mind! Now, turn round, and cross your wrists behind you!"

Almost mechanically Sid did as he was told. That such a thing could take place in that peaceful countryside amazed him, and he wondered if he were dreaming.

But it was no dream. As he crossed his wrists behind him the boy felt them gripped in a hand like a vice, and he was propelled, stumbling, across the kitchen. Facing him now was a low door, and, releasing the boy's wrists, the man wrenched at a rusty bolt and dragged it open.

Sid saw a yawning blackness below, while the smell of a damp, musty cellar came to him, and he realised the fellow's intention. At the same instant he glimpsed, through the corner of his eye, that the man's right hand was lowered, and he took a desperate chance.

Like lightning he lashed out behind with one rubber-soled foot, and in the same movement he twisted and aimed a blow with his fist at the weapon in his assailant's hand. His kick went home, landing in the pit of the man's stomach and doubling him up with a grunt; but Sid's fist missed its objective by a good foot, and, overbalancing, the boy went sprawling on hands and knees. Before he could jump up the stranger had recovered himself.

With a growl, he changed his grip on his weapon, and raised it aloft. Sid saw the movement, and, with a gasp, he raised his arm to ward off the threatened blow.

But it was unavailing. His arm was swept aside, and next moment the butt of the weapon took him on the temple. It was a stunning blow, and the boy sank to the stone floor, his senses reeling. His next sensation was of falling, and then he struck something with a sickening thud, and darkness swept down upon him.

CHAPTER 3.

The Escape!

JIM TAYLOR was drenched through by the time he reached the wrecked car. But he was a good-natured, unselfish youth, and he cared less for his own comfort than the comfort of the injured stranger. Snatching the couple of rugs lying beneath the car, he rolled them swiftly into a bundle and raced back to the ruined cottage.

He had been absent from the place scarcely three minutes, but he was soon to learn that quite a lot of things can happen in that short time. Little dreaming that anything onward had taken place, he ran lightly up to the grass-

grown ruin, and, entering the doorway, dropped the rugs on the floor.

It was only then that he became aware that the small, dingy kitchen was empty. He glanced through the open doorway of the front room, and, so far as he could see, that was empty, also.

"Well, I'm blest!" he murmured blankly. "Where on earth are—"

He paused, struck even then by the strange silence and loneliness of the wretched ruin. There was no upstairs to the cottage, and the whole place seemed deserted.

"Sid, you silly ass," he shouted, "where are you?"

There was no answer, and a sudden chill foreboding came over the boy—why, he could not have told. He stood stock still a moment, and then he was about to enter the inner room when the open cellar door caught his eye. He stepped swiftly across, his rubber-soled running-shoes making wet patches on the stone floor, and peered into the dank gloom below.

He could see nothing; but, even as he looked, a slight sound behind him made him turn swiftly—but too late. He caught a brief glimpse of the motorist's lean features, tense with triumph, and looking particularly evil, with dried blood still upon them, and then the man's shoulder took him violently in the back and the boy went headlong into the blackness.

He struck the brick floor of the cellar with a jar which shook every bone in his body, and then the door above was crashed to, he dimly heard the rasp of a rusty bolt, and silence fell.

For some seconds he lay where he had fallen, breathless and half dazed with shock. Fortunately, the cellar was not deep, but in falling his head had struck the lowest step, and his senses still swam from the concussion.

He sat up at last, and as his brain cleared a little he blinked round him, hardly realising what had happened. As he did so something moved close to him, and a low groan struck on his ears.

The sound quite startled the boy for the moment, and then, though his brain

was anything but clear, he jumped instinctively at the truth.

"That you, Sid?" he breathed, groping with outstretched hand in the darkness. "What on earth's happened? Are you hurt?"

His groping hand caught something that he knew the next instant was his chum's vest, and then Sid's voice, weak and astonished, answered him.

"That you, Jim? Oh, great Scott! My beastly head! That brute whanged me one and pitched me down here! He got you, too, then?"

Jim told his chum what had taken place, and as Sid struggled up to a sitting posture he gave him an arm to lean against. Both were still bewildered by the strange happenings, and Jim's story only added to the mystery.

Presently Sid felt better, and Jim got to his feet and looked about him in the gloom. Then, though he had heard the sound of the bolt being shot, he stumbled up the stone steps and tried the door. It did not move; and, though the wood was old and rickety, a trial soon convinced him that it could not be forced without tools.

He cautiously descended the steps and rejoined his chum, who had now staggered unsteadily to his feet. They could now make out each other's white-clad forms in the darkness as their eyes became used to it.

"Well, this beats the band, Sid!" Jim exclaimed blankly. "Hang it all, that brute would hardly do all this just because we were the cause of his smash up! What on earth can it mean?"

"I don't know!" said Sid, tenderly feeling the bruise on his temple. "But he's up to no good—that's pretty clear now! Harmless people don't carry blessed guns with them, anyway! I'd like to know what that bag of his contained! But we've got to get out of this somehow!"

Jim realised that, too, for he was shivering in his wet running things. But both the boys were in splendid physical condition, and they were recovering rapidly, though Sid still felt sick and giddy. But he joined his chum in a tour of their unpleasant prison, for all that.

The horrible cellar was small and low-roofed, with bricked floor and walls. Sid had already noticed a small, dirt-crusting grating in one corner, through which the daylight filtered, and, standing on tiptoe, he peered through this. As he did so he gave vent to a satisfied grunt.

"Jove, I believe we'll get out of this yet, Jim!" he cried joyfully. "This old cottage is built on the side of a hill, and some of these bricks are loose!"

This was true enough. Indeed, not only were some of the bricks loose, but many were missing altogether. Grasping his chum's idea, Jim joined him, and soon a pile of bricks, wrenched from their setting, lay on the floor.

Then Jim found some pieces of board lying about, and, with renewed hope, the boys set about the job of tunnelling a way out of their prison in good earnest.

It was a tiring job and dirty, but grit and patience were rewarded. At the end of three minutes a hole big enough for Sid to crawl into had been dug, and then Jim took a hand. From the grating above their heads they knew they would not have to dig far, and, sure enough, at the end of another ten minutes Jim's improvised spade poked out into welcome daylight.

After that the two boys did not rest until they were standing, plastered with wet soil and looking shocking sights

MORE BIG MONEY PRIZES WON!

Result of Our Great Lancashire
Cricket Competition.

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

JOHN JONES,
466, Higginshaw Lane,
Oidham, Lancs.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided between the following four competitors whose solutions contained one error each:

J. M. Godfrey, 2, Guy St., Leamington Spa.
Alice Pace, 73, Grove Street, Leek, Staffs.
John Budd, Gellygryn Road, Pontardawe, Swansea.

Mrs. J. B. Wight, 11, Inchaffray Street, Perth.

Thirty-one competitors, with two errors each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

The Lancashire County Cricket Club originated in 1864, although the county had played numerous matches before that. The Red Rose county has reached the top of the Championship ladder six times. At the present period it is one of the best teams in the country, and includes such famous players as John Sharp, Makepeace, Parkin, etc.



The boys made a spring for shelter just as a hand and arm shot through the broken pane. In the hand was clutched a glinting weapon. " Look out, Jim ! " cried Sid. A shot rang out, and a bullet snipped the old rope which held the door, as clean as a whistle.

outside in the open. It was still raining, but for some seconds they stood panting after their exertions, and taking in deep gulps of the fresh, clean air thankfully.

" Better scout round a bit first," said Sid at last, " in case that rough-stuff merchant's still hanging round ! Come on ! "

Cautiously they worked round to the front of the cottage, but a brief search soon convinced them that the queer stranger had gone. The parlour and kitchen were empty, as was the lean-to shed at the back. The whole place was silent and deserted.

The boys then ran down to the road, and, on reaching the gully, they found the overturned car just as they had left it. There were no signs on the wet road of anyone having visited the spot in their absence, either, which was only what they had expected, for scarcely a soul passed along that lonely road in the course of a day.

" Well, it's a queer affair, and no mistake ! " remarked Sid Bright. " Anyway, it's no use hanging about any longer ! If you're ready we'll start for home ! We'd better call at the police-station and report the matter, of course ! "

They started on the long run back, and Sid set a spanking pace, for both were wet through and shivering with cold. But the brisk exercise warmed them up, and by the time the roofs of Hartford came into sight both were feelings less uncomfortable.

As it happened, they had no need to call at the police-station, for on the outskirts of the town they met a local constable, and to him they told their story. He was not an over-intelligent officer, and though he accepted the report of the accident to the car, he eyed the boys suspiciously as they told of what took place afterwards. And even when

Sid showed him the nasty bruise on his temple he was only half convinced.

But the young athletes did not stop to argue the matter. They wanted to get home, and they left him, feeling they had done their duty in reporting the matter, and having had quite enough of the adventure for one afternoon.

CHAPTER 4. The Chase!

THAT afternoon Jim Taylor had announced his intention of accompanying his father and sister to a big charity concert at Sandpool, a popular watering-place a few miles along the coast. The Taylors were a musical family, and Jim himself was no mean performer on the violin. And as a famous Scottish violinist was down on the programme, Jim was particularly keen to hear him.

So that Sid Bright was no little surprise when, about seven o'clock that evening, Jim turned up at his home.

" Hallo ! " exclaimed Sid in surprise, as he opened the door to his chum. " I thought you were going over to Sandpool. "

" Changed my mind," said Jim, with a grin. " Are you game for another run out to that empty cottage to-night, Sid ? "

" To-night ! " gasped Sid, staring.

" But—but why—what—? "

" I've lost my wrist-watch," explained Jim. " I had it with me this afternoon, and I've only just missed it. I remember taking it off and putting the thing on the stone floor when we started burrowing out of that beastly cellar; but I forgot to get it afterwards. Anyway, it was the first prize I won for running, and I don't mean to lose it. "

Sid laughed. His chum's wrist-watch

was a standing joke with him. Jim had won it in a race long before he had taken up running seriously, and he was very proud of it, and wore it always. But it was a good timekeeper, and had come in useful on more than one training spin. And though Sid doubted the wisdom of tackling such a long run after what they had already gone through, he agreed at once.

" Oh, I'm game enough ! " he said. " But it'll be dark almost before we get there. "

" It's going to be a moonlight night, though," pointed out Jim. " It'll be a grand training spin. I'm going, anyway. "

Sid raised no further objections. As a matter of fact, the thought of a moonlight run appealed to him strongly. Both boys had a change of running things, and soon they were ready. Then, after Sid had told his mother where he was going, they started out.

The rain had ceased long ago, and the whole countryside was fresh, and the air clean and invigorating. The roads were a trifle slippery, but there was little mud, and the runners recked nothing of the pools of water they encountered on the rough road when once clear of the town.

Sid set an easy pace at the start, and they kept it up, moving along stride for stride, and reserving their strength for the return journey which Sid knew would try them not a little. So that when at last the old cottage came into sight, dusk was settling over the quiet, lonely spot.

Evidently the police had taken away the damaged car, for there was no sign of it in the gully. The boys made straight for the ruined cottage, looking strangely sinister and forbidding in the gloom.

"What a beastly hole!" muttered Sid, as they ran up. "Hurry up and get your blessed watch, Jim, and let's get away from here! The old show gives one the creeps!"

Jim felt that way himself, and he slipped into the cottage with his chum at his heels. Unbolting the door of their late prison, Jim descended into the cellar, and after a moment or two he returned with the recovered watch in his hand.

"You've got it, then?" said Sid, grinning. "Oh, good! We'll have a breaker before we start back, though."

The boys squatted down on a low bench outside the kitchen door, and as they rested Jim fastened his watch on his wrist. He had scarcely finished when his chum sprang to his feet with a startled exclamation, and pointed across the heath. In the gathering gloom a man's figure could be seen approaching swiftly towards the cottage. It needed no second glance for the boys to recognise him.

"That queer brute again!" breathed Sid. "Better get out of this, Jim. If he spots us—"

The boys sprang for the shelter of a bunch of trees and thickets a few yards away, and from their hiding-place they watched the mysterious stranger stride up and enter the cottage. The door was open, and the boys saw him give a violent start as he stepped across the floor and found the cellar-door open.

For a moment or two he stood motionless, his features drawn with fear and chagrin, and then he moved swiftly into the inner room. Sid Bright nudged his chum, and, leaving his hiding-place, slipped round to the front window of the cottage. Jim joined him, and the two peered stealthily through the window.

To their surprise, they saw the man bending by the fireplace with one arm stretched up the chimney. He was groping about, and presently he carefully lowered what he was evidently hunting for on to the floor. It was a bulky object—nothing less, in fact, than the long black leather bag—that had been resting on a ledge just within the chimney.

Sid's eyes gleamed. He had little doubt that the fellow was a law-breaker now.

"Phew!" he whispered to his chum. "So that's the game! He's hidden the bag there, intending to fetch it when it's dark. I'll bet he meant to keep us in that cellar until he got clear with it! I wonder—"

Sid broke off with a whispered word to his chum, and slipped softly back to the bench. Beneath it was a length of old rope he had already noticed there, and, snatching it up, he drew the door softly to, and swiftly tied one end of the rope to the handle of the latch. The other end he slipped round the trunk of a tree close by, and made it secure.

"Get a bit of our own back!" whispered Sid. "The windows are too small, and he won't dream of trying the cellar. Now—Hullo!"

The door rattled violently, and then before the boys could spring for shelter, the man's face appeared at the grimy window close to it. There followed a startled oath, and next instant a hand and arm shot through a broken pane. Sid caught a glimpse of a glinting weapon, and gave a shout of warning.

"Look out, Jim!"

The boys scattered, but though the man fired, he did not fire at them, but at the rope. His first shot missed, as did his second, but the third snipped the old rope clean as a whistle, and even as the strands parted, the man wrenched the door open and bounded out.

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For a moment he stood glancing quickly about him, his features flushed with rage, and then he wheeled with a gasp as a shout sounded from the roadway.

Two uniformed figures were there, just dismounting from bicycles. They had obviously heard the shots, for they flung aside their machines, and came charging up the rubble-strewn slope. Though the twilight was deepening rapidly into dusk, the boys easily recognised one as the constable they had met that afternoon; the other was the local police-inspector.

"Oh, good!" breathed Jim Taylor. With a furious oath, the cornered man snatched up his bag and made a bolt for it. The boys sprang from their hiding-place, but he was round the cottage in a flash, and then, as the two officers cut across to intercept him, he doubled, and made a frantic dash for the road.

Sid Bright grasped his objective, and shouted a warning. But it came too late. The inspector slipped on the wet ground, and went down heavily as he jumped forward, and next instant the man was past, and had reached the bicycles. Drawing his automatic, he coolly put a shot into the front tyre of one machine, and slipped the weapon into his pocket just as the constable pounded up.

Leaping aside, the man caught him a neat smack under the ear, and sent him sprawling in the wet road. Then he lifted the undamaged bicycle, and, with surprising ease considering the handicap of the bulky bag, he slipped one leg over the saddle, and shot away just as the chums dashed up.

"After him!" yelled the inspector furiously.

But the boys didn't need to be told that. They knew they had a slippery customer to deal with, and they were off like a shot, with the inspector and constable bringing up a good third and fourth.

"Go it, Jimmy!" panted Sid. "We've got a score to settle with that merchant, remember. Imagine you're on the cinder-path, old son. That chap doesn't know the road, and he'll come a cropper before long."

But the fellow seemed to have the eyes, as well as the agility, of a cat, and though the boys spurred, he still drew ahead, and soon they could scarcely see his dim form.

BOYS! READ THIS!

If you like a yarn which is packed with real thrills, read "The Wire Devils," which commences in the "UNION JACK" (on sale Thursday, July 26th).

It is a story of American crookdom, and this is the theme: A band of up-to-date American criminals tap the railway telegraph wires in order to receive instructions in code from their chief, who sits like a spider in a web of wires, planning big things.

How the organisation is beaten all along the line by an independent operator, who steals their information and gets the prizes they have schemed for, makes a story after your own heart—the sort of yarn that will hold you spellbound from first word to last.

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By this time the police-officers had dropped behind considerably, and they could only hear the pitter-patter of their own steps. Both boys were beginning to feel the strain, however, now, and Jim especially had "bellows to mend." But he set his teeth and hung on to Sid's heels grimly.

But Sid's stride was shortening perceptibly, and he was labouring a little now. Never, even on the cinder-path, had the boys run such a race as this. Jim was swaying a little as he ran now, and Sid gradually forged ahead. With a feeling of elation he saw that he was gradually overtaking the cyclist in front, and, moreover, he knew that just ahead was a steep, ugly hill that would try the cyclist ahead to the uttermost.

And he was right. He could see the cyclist toiling up the steep slope, and knew that just thereabouts the road was little more than a cart-track. Realising what a wicked struggle he must be having, the boy spurred again desperately.

And even as he did so, he saw the cyclist in front dismount and fling the machine from him. Then, leaving the road, he set off at a run across the gorse-covered ground inland. He was making obviously for a dense mass of dark trees about a hundred yards across the heath, and, as he realised this, Sid cut off across the rough ground to intercept him.

"Phew!" gasped the boy, scarcely knowing his chum was yards behind. "If the beggar once gets in there, we'll never catch him, Jimmy! Buck up!"

Jimmy did not hear, but he had already grasped the danger, and though he was about all "done in" he went after his chum. By cutting across, Sid was now nearer the trees than the stranger, and it was plainly a race between the two as to which would reach them first.

That Sid must have won, the man soon saw, and as he realised it, he stopped suddenly, and, putting the bag on the ground, waited in ominous silence. Until then, all the boy had thought about was catching his quarry—what to do when he did catch him he hadn't troubled to think. But now he realised his own danger. His breath was coming in short, sharp gasps, his limbs felt like lead. He was "all in," and in no condition to defend himself, much less attack the fugitive. And, coming up behind, Jim Taylor was in a far worse state.

But no thought of funking occurred to the boys, and with his last few steps, Sid flung himself at the man, blindly dodged a vicious swing of his fist, and wrapped his arms round the fellow's body.

What followed neither of the runners scarcely remember. A perfect hurricane of savage blows fell about Sid's head and shoulders, but he clung on desperately, gasping and panting hoarsely, and next instant Jim Taylor came up with a rush and flung himself on the man's broad back.

With a crash all three went to earth still struggling, and like terriers they clung on, though the stranger's wild blows punished them severely. He was a powerful man, and they had already had proof of his agility. And had it depended solely upon the boys, the fight could only have had one end.

But just as a wildly aimed blow from the man's fist sent Jim Taylor clear of the melee, there came the heavy pounding of feet on the turf, and the constable came panting up. Without bothering to try conclusions with his fists, the stolid policeman simply hit the man a shrewd tap on the head with his truncheon, and

(Continued on page 26.)

PLUCKY TOM COMPTON'S BRAVE DEEDS WILL THRILL YOU!



A plucky Lancashire boy sets out to track down the "Spider," whose evil power has become the curse of Lancashire. This is famous David Goodwin's most powerful story.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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

Mill after mill has suffered at the hands of this treacherous foe. At last Tom, by chance, actually catches the Spider in Barton's Mill. He gives chase, but the Spider, a sinister figure in blue goggles, makes good his escape.

Later, another mill is threatened, and Peter Grant, the manager, calls for Compton's assistance. Tom hurries to the scene, and is just in time to avert disaster. After this Tom receives a strange message—a call for help from Mr. Kane, who is made prisoner by the Spider in an old hulk out at sea. Tom effects a rescue, and a fierce fight with the Spider's men ensues. Tom makes good his escape, however, only to find that Kane has mysteriously disappeared again.

Reaching Hargreave Buildings in private, he rushes noiselessly up to Kane's private office, and is just in time to see a picture slide back into position, covering a secret exit from the room.

Very shortly afterwards, Tom discovers that there is a secret lift, and that pictures conceal doors giving on to the lift. He enters the Spider's office through one of these doors, and then makes the startling discovery that Morton Kane and the Spider are one and the same man. The Spider is furious.

A fierce fight ensues, but Tom escapes unhurt. Walking along the street, a shadowy figure, whom he believes to be Gale, hands him a note purporting to have come from Dick Stearns, informing him that the Spider is sailing for America.

Tom hurries to the dock, tells one of the stewards he will come aboard later, and tips him to say nothing.

(Now read on.)

Screened by the Fog!

TOM went quietly ashore. Things had gone very well, but he was disappointed; the vessel sailed so late.

"I might have known it," he thought. "Of course, he has to start at high-water time. I shall have to stow myself away till then; it won't do to be aboard all that time. Hallo! Whom have we here?"

A dim figure came softly across the wharf through the still-gathering fog. It was a slim-looking man, of middle height, and he paused and looked at the two steamers. There was a strange bulge beneath his coat, under his left arm. As Tom passed the man peered at him, and shifted his own cap slightly to one side.

The movement, at that time and place, looked so like a signal that Tom

was struck with a sudden idea. He had never seen the man before, but Tom knew the countersign of the Spider's men, and he made it, holding up his hand carelessly, with the thumb laid across the palm.

"Goot!" muttered the man, with a distinct German accent. "Dey did not tell me dere would be one of us here. Der boss sent you—eh?"

"I'm here in case," replied Tom. "So! Well, I shall not want you. Which of dose ships is der Liburna?"

Tom pointed to the one he had just left.

"Ach! All right. I did not dink dere would be two so close, und so alike. It would not do to go aboard der wrong one in der fog. Is der old man ashore?"

"Yes." "Goot! I am all right mit der rest. It will be quick work dis time."

"How quick?" said Tom. He did not know what the man meant, but he intended to find out.

"Joost outside der Crosby. Dose long-timers are not reliable. Dey fail us last time. We make sure now." He tapped the bundle under his coat. "It cannot fail; but if it do, you will be able to tell der boss I do my best. Dat is why I tell you."

"Wait a bit," said Tom, as the man began to move off. "Are you sure he's going?"

"If he has not been already, we do nodings," said the man. "I go to see."

He vanished in the fog before Tom could say another word; and, though he could not see him, the boy knew he must have made his way aboard.

"My eye!" muttered Tom, as he hurried away from the wharf. "Tracked, after all! He gave himself away nicely. But why have they put on a man who doesn't know me?"

He thought it over rapidly as he walked into the town.

"Of course, He's one of the agents, sent to make arrangements. He doesn't look like a scrapper; a cut above them. He'll work the ropes, and get one of the Spider's ruffians aboard to do the dirty work. Tip me overboard, by accident, on the night passage, I expect. Well, forewarned is forearmed, and I'm not afraid of that happening. I must keep a look-out to-morrow for any face I've seen before aboard her."

His flight to Liverpool had not escaped the Spider's lynx-eyed spies, after all, that was evident, and this man had been sent to arrange for Tom's destruction on the vessel itself. Bitterly did Tom regret that the man had made off before he was

able to get anything definite out of him. He wondered what "long-timer" meant, and decided it was a criminal who had served a long sentence, and who apparently was not "reliable" because of his fear of another dose of gaol. They would choose someone who had so far escaped punishment, no doubt.

"But it sounds queer," said Tom. "The man'll have orders to make certain of me at all costs, between here and Queenstown—most likely there'll be two or three of them. I'd have expected a deeper plan—but no, the Spider's away already, and isn't able to arrange it in person. He doesn't want me at his tail, and to 'make sure' of me are the orders. That'll be it."

Tom paused a moment. He had plenty of money. Should he charter a tug or some other vessel to take him to Queenstown? No; he decided not. The Liburna was good for fifteen knots, and would get him there quicker.

"Besides, the game's up!" he thought, with glee. "That German sweep said: 'If he has not been already, we do nothing.' The steward will tell him I haven't been there, and I sha'n't go aboard till the ship casts her ropes off. They'll be off on a fresh tack then."

Tom took no risks that night. He went to no lodging-house, but curled himself up in an old shed on one of the wharves, and lay there wakefully, counting the hours till daybreak, and maturing his plan. The day dawned at last, but the fog was still thick, and not till half-past six did Tom make his way to the wharf.

There was bustle and toil enough there. Dim figures moved busily through the fog, and hoarse orders were shouted. Salt oaths were flung to and fro, and the two big steamers lay throbbing alongside the quay, the steam feathering away from their whistles, and the Blue Peters hanging limply from the fore-trucks, for there was not wind enough to blow the flags out.

Evidently the Liburna, the foremost one, would be away first. Tom, approaching carefully, hid behind a pile of packing-cases and watched. Most of the men about were stevedores and sailors, but a dim knot of two or three figures stood a little way from Tom's hiding-place, and presently a remark that one of them dropped made Tom start.

"He ain't comin', after all. She'll start in a minute."

"P'raps 'e's bin outed somewhere



The ruffians ashore made a savage attempt to stop Dennis, but the active little piecer, twisting like an eel, broke away from them, and with one agile bound, leaped from the quay on to the ship's deck.

else," said another of the group. "Where's Karl?"

"Gone away, after last night's job. He had done his job all right."

"Ay, an' thou did tha' job all right," said another, turning to a much smaller figure. "I wonder it took t' cub in—he's sharp enow."

"The boss puts me on all those jobs," said the small figure proudly. "He's a king at that game himself, and he trained me. I own I felt a bit nervous over it, but the fog was a help, and I kept my mouth shut, and got away as soon as it was done."

A vague, uneasy feeling took possession of Tom. He felt the speaker's words concerned him closely, but for the moment he could not feel sure in what way, and before he had time to put two and two together the steamer gave a final hoot from her siren, orders were shouted from the bridge, and she began to move away from the quay.

Whatever happened, to miss her would never do. Tom crept round the back of the shed, and even as he ran across the wharf, the morning breeze arose and wafted away the fog like a curtain. By the time he reached the ship's rail and vaulted on to her deck, everything was plainly visible.

"Just in time," said the skipper's voice from the bridge above him. "You ran it precious close, young man. I thought you were left behind. For'ard there! Get a fender on her bow!"

A Terrible Blunder!

TOM took a look back at the group he had left as soon as he was safely on the steamer, anxious to see if he recognised any of them. As the ship moved off they stood and

pointed him out to each other, jeering among themselves. Two of them Tom recognised as old enemies of his from the Spider's gang; but, to his utter amazement, he saw with them, and jeering more loudly than any, Dennis Gale!

But no, it was not Dennis Gale! It was an excellent imitation of him, but in the morning light, now that the fog had cleared, Tom saw that he was of thicker build, though he wore the same clothes, and carried himself in the same way.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Tom. "I've been fooled!"

But the consequence of what he saw had hardly reached his brain when a still greater surprise came. Running like the wind down the wharf road, and making for the steamer, breathless and panting, came the real Dennis Gale—his very self. Tom shouted and waved to him, and the boy cried something hoarsely, and increased his pace still more. The group on the quay saw him.

"Stop him!" called two of them, with a volley of oaths. And they rushed at Dennis.

"Here. Stop her! Hold on a minute, for Heaven's sake!" cried Tom to the captain.

"Can't stop now, not for anybody!" said the skipper coolly.

The steamer was moving farther away from the wharf every second. The ruffians ashore made a savage attempt to stop Dennis; but the active little piecer, twisting like an eel, broke away from them, and, with one agile bound, leaped across the space between the quay and the ship, and landed on her decks in safety.

No, not in safety. His heels lit on a greasy rag, which slid from under him like lightning, and he went backwards on to his head with severe force. Tom was by his side in a moment, but the plucky

little fellow could not rise—the fall had stunned him.

"Lord sakes!" growled the captain, glancing down. "What the deuce is all this? Do you think my ship's a playground? Who's that youngster?"

"All right, captain—Mr. Stearns' service," said Tom, in a low voice, and the skipper said no more. "Somebody show me a bunk where I can put this poor little chap."

He carried him below, and the steward—Tom's friend of the night before—showed the way to a spare berth.

"I'm something of a sea-doctor myself," he said, feeling Dennis' head gently. "It's all right, sir; there ain't no fracture, an' he ain't likely to have concussion. He'll soon come to. Better not give him brandy, but leave him to come round by himself. Rum games, these. By the way, sir, there was a party asking for you last night; but I didn't know nothing about you."

"A foreigner?" said Tom. "Just after I left—eh?"

"No, he weren't no foreigner," said the steward, "not as I could see. An' it was two or three hours after you left."

Tom looked at him keenly.

"Do you mean to say a German didn't come aboard five minutes after I left you?"

"If he did, I never see him," said the steward.

Tom judged that the man was telling the truth. He gave him two pounds, and the steward left.

"What a mess it is!" muttered Tom. "The German came aboard, but wasn't seen. Then somebody else came later and inquired about me. I wish poor Dennis would wake up. He has the key to it, I'll bet!"

Tom went over the boy's pockets in the hope of finding some written message; but there was none. He waited patiently by the boy's side, anxious for his staunch little friend, and worried by the uncertainty he was in. There before him lay the bearer of vital news—perhaps life and death hinged upon it—and could not speak.

Presently Tom went up the companion and looked out. They were already clear of the land, and steaming out between the sunken sands outside, leading to Mersey Bar and the Crosby Lightship.

Tom went down again, and, to his great joy, found Dennis opening his eyes. "Are you badly hurt, Dennis?" asked Tom.

"Nay, I think not. I've a fine headache, though," said Dennis; and he sat up. "Where am I?"

"On the Liburna," said Tom. "They tried to stop you, but you jumped aboard and fell, and stunned yourself."

"Ah, I remember!" Dennis, holding his hand to his forehead, scrambled out of the berth and sat on the edge, his eyes glowing with excitement. "Tom, we must act quickly! Tha've been fooled! It wasn't I that gave tha that note to come here!"

"No; it was a spy got up to act your part—one of the Spider's men," said Tom quickly. "He deceived me in the fog. It was he who tried to stop you on the quay."

"Ay, I saw him, t' swab!" said Dennis, who was rapidly slitting open the lining of his coat, wherefrom he took a scribbled note, which Tom had not found in his search. "I know who he is. But read that, Tom."

Tom read the note hurriedly.

"Just got your note. I sent no such instructions. You have been decoyed away by the Spider's men, and the Spider is here—not at Queenstown. The Liburna has been singled out as the next

victim. She is to be sunk at sea by an infernal machine. I have taken all steps to prevent it, but fear I have failed. The sham message was sent to decoy you aboard her, and destroy you with her.

"I am sending Dennis after you with this. For Heaven's sake leave the ship if it reaches you in time, and come back! They mean to sink her between Liverpool and Queenstown. I am following as soon as I can. You are badly wanted here. But I know if this note does not reach you, there is no hope of saving you. Pray Heaven it does."

"Dick."

"Heaven and earth!" said Tom. "Then the other note was a forgery! It was scrawled in blue pencil. I could not tell, in the gloom. We must go up at once and stop the ship, and find this infernal machine! Quick! Every moment is precious!"

He scrambled up the companion, and Dennis—whom the excitement had revived—followed close behind him. But when he reached the deck, Tom stopped dead, and stared in utter astonishment at a lifebuoy that hung on the rail before him.

"What's t' matter?" exclaimed Dennis.

"Look!" gasped Tom, pointing at the lifebuoy.

It was an ordinary, white-painted buoy, and there seemed nothing about it to astonish anybody. But painted on it in large black letters were the words, "s.s. Invernia, Liverpool."

"Invernia!" cried Tom. "Great Scott!"

He wheeled round and looked at another buoy. It bore the same legend. "A foremast-hand was passing, with a deck-scrubber in his hand, and Tom seized him by the arm.

"Is this the Invernia?" he cried. "If it ain't," said the seaman, with a surprised grin, "I must ha' bin drunker than I thought when I signed on her, that's all."

He passed on, and the two boys stared at each other.

"Then we're not on the Liburna at all!" exclaimed Tom. "That idiot on the quay told me wrong. Thank goodness!"

"The names be just alike," said Dennis. "He thought tha said Invernia, o' course. The two was close together, wasn't they?"

"Yes. But how did the captain come to give me permission through Dick's note?" exclaimed Tom. "If he'd been the Liburna's captain, I could understand."

"Easy!" said Dennis. "T' Invernia is one o' Morton Kane's cotton-ships—that is to say, t' Spider's—an' t' skipper knows Dick Stearns is Kane's agent."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Tom. "Then the Spider's bomb is aboard his own ship! By George, what a go!"

"Nay, t' infernal machine is on t' Liburna, surely!" protested Dennis.

"Not it! I came across the sweep who had it last night. He took me for one of the gang—I made the sign—and he asked me which was the Liburna. I told him this one, and he went aboard her. I see it all now! I couldn't make out what he was talking about at the time. He had the thing under his overcoat—a huge, great bulge."

"We must be dreamin'," muttered Dennis.

"Not a bit of it! I never asked anyone but a dock-labourer which was which. I gave the note to the captain without a word. Evidently it was a forged note, pretending to come from Dick, and no names were mentioned in it, of course. The whole thing's obvious.

"But, by George, there's something else! That German sweep said, 'Outside the Crosby Light,' I remember plainly, and there she is just astern of us. He'd timed it for that, and we're due to be blown to sausage-meat at any moment!"

Tom waited no longer. He had only just remembered the words, "outside the Crosby," which the German had used. They were far out from the land now, over the Mersey Bar, in deep water, and the Crosby Lightship was behind them.

As Tom raced for the bridge he wondered for a moment if the captain could know anything about it, or if he knew his employer, Morton Kane, was the Spider.

But that was impossible. No man who knew of that vile machine would voluntarily sail with the doomed vessel.

"Get off the bridge!" roared the captain angrily, as Tom rushed up the ladder.

"Waste no time in words, captain, but for Heaven's sake get your boats out! There's an infernal-machine in this ship, and it's overdue to go off. Read that!"

He thrust the note into the hands of the captain, who, astonished at Tom's words, read it rapidly.

"Is this a hoax?" he said sternly.

"On my honour, it's true!" cried Tom. "Don't hesitate, sir! Remember the fate of the Cretan and the Cyprian but ten days ago!"

"Ring off steam!" cried the skipper. "Swing out the boats, there! Take your stations quietly, men!"

The captain went hastily below, and Tom went with him. Very white was the skipper, but he did his duty, and

they made a rapid search, but found nothing.

Tom, be it said, did very little searching, for, as long as no lives were lost, he was only too glad to let the Spider's vile machine sink the Spider's own ship.

"It's no use, sir," he said. "They've hidden it too carefully. You sacrifice the lives of your men if you delay!"

The skipper made no reply, but, with a sigh, went on deck again, and swiftly and quietly every soul on board took to the boats in good order.

"Pull away, men!" cried the skipper, as soon as they were off the steamer. "There's a devil's machine in the ship that's due to blow her up any moment, and we're not safe within reach of her. Pull away! That's it! Ah!"

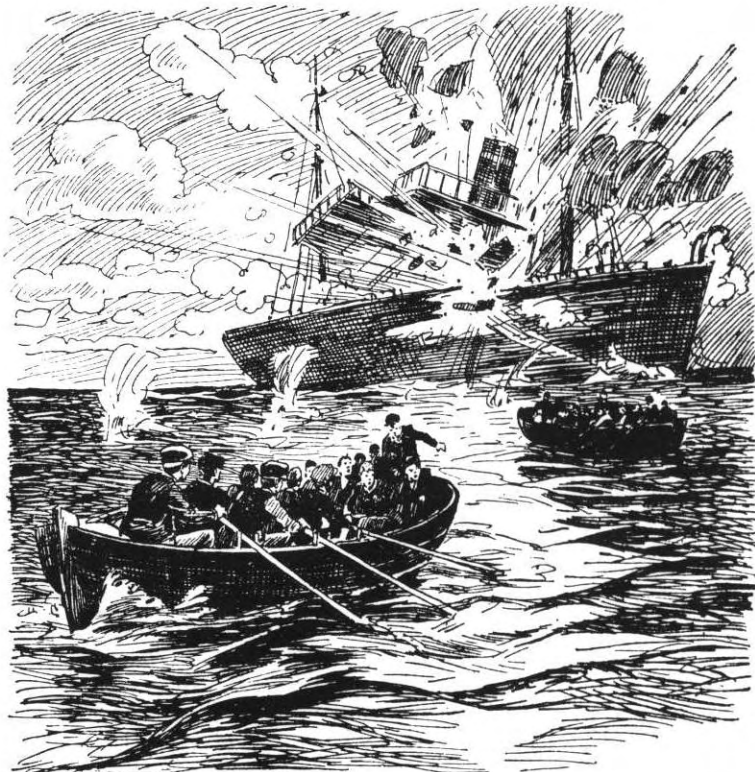
This last exclamation was drowned in a rending, appalling explosion. The steamer's decks lifted bodily amidships, a hail of wreckage and debris was hurled skywards, and her boilers exploded with a fearful crash.

Gathering Evidence!

"THERE she goes!" said Tom, with calm satisfaction, as he lay back in the stern-sheets of the boat. "That makes the topmost brick in our little edifice—the one thing we wanted, to win."

His voice was hardly heard among the after-echoes of the great explosion. For a few moments it seemed as though the boats and their crews would be wiped out, and that the big steamer would crush them all in her death-throes.

At the first crash the bridge-deck was lifted up, and a few wagon-loads of



There was a sound of a terrific explosion, and the steamer's decks lifted bodily amidships, a hail of wreckage and debris was hurled skywards, and her boilers exploded with a fearful crash. "There she goes!" cried Tom from the lifeboat.

twisted iron and scrap were flung towards the sky. Whatever the explosive was, it was enormously powerful, and the blowing-up of the boilers finished the ruin. The boats had only just drawn clear by a hundred yards or so, and at the fearful crash the men all ducked and crouched involuntarily.

But no harm came to them. The flying debris plunged back into the water short of them, though one load came down so close to the hindmost boat that it half filled her with water, and all three rocked violently on the waves it made. Then, filling rapidly, the great steamer hove up her rusty side and plunged down into the depths, leaving only her jury topmasts above water when she settled on the bottom.

The big sea-captain hardly knew what he was doing, so great was his fury. He was in the quarter-boat, with Tom and Dennis, and only two men besides, and he turned fiercely to the boys for an explanation.

"It's the first ship I ever lost!" he cried. "If I could find the man that did it I'd tear the life out of him with my bare hands! This is some foul insurance game, I'll bet!"

The boys glanced at each other. Dennis nodded.

"Look here, captain," said Tom, "I'm very sorry for you, but you'll get your own back over this before long, and I'll show you how. It's done by an enemy of yours and mine, and if you'll listen quietly for a minute—for we don't want this noised about, and I don't know those men of yours who are at the oars—I'll tell you the facts. Have you ever heard of the Spider?"

"Yes," said the captain. "I'm at sea a lot, but I've heard of him. Some seeret foreign swab at Dunchester, isn't he, who's wrecking the cotton trade and grabbing it for himself? He's the sort of rooster I should like to get my hands on!"

"The Spider is your master!" "What!" said the captain fiercely. "What are you giving me? Don't fool with me, boy, or I'll start on you! My master's Morton Kane!"

"The two are one," said Tom. "Morton Kane is the Spider, alias Schneider."

You needn't ask why he's blown up his own ship. I'm going to tell you. You heard of the fate of the Cyprian and Cretan?"

"Lost, with all hands!" said the skipper grimly.

"Blown up, captain, like your ship yonder, only their crews didn't get off in time, as yours have done. They were rival ships. The infernal machine that blew up your vessel was meant for the Liburna. The man who brought it down to Liverpool asked me which was which. I made a mistake in the fog, and he put it aboard your ship. I thought I was sailing in the Liburna, too. I am the Spider's bitterest enemy. He tried to decoy me on the doomed ship with this note. He succeeded, but not in the way he thought. He wrote the note, signing it with my friend's name; and little Dennis Gale got aboard at the last minute with a message from Mr. Stearns."

"My great Jupiter!" exclaimed the skipper.

"It's nothing now, captain. This man and his gang have been trying to put me and my friends out of the way for months past. This is his last big attempt since I discovered that he and Morton Kane were the same."

"By George, show me the way!" cried the skipper. "I shall lose my ticket over this dirty business, as sure as Fate! But that's nothing. I'd give my eye-teeth to settle the brute that's been treading on honest men so long. And you say I've been drawing his pay? Ugh! It makes me feel unclean!"

"Gently," said Tom. "Above all, you must keep your tongue between your teeth till I give the word, or you'll be put out of the way, as sure as eggs are eggs. He'll stick at nothing now. See, here's pencil and writing-block. We shall be picked up soon, and shoved ashore; but I want your account of this business in writing, as short and sweet as you can make it—sailor's-log fashion. Never mind why; just do it, and give it me. There's a tug coming now."

(Tom Compton is on the verge of making his last blow at the Spider. Be sure you read next week's thrilling instalment, boys!)

"RUN DOWN!"

(Continued from page 22.)

as he dropped back, half-stunned, the handcuffs were slipped over his wrists.

The race was over—and won; but the boys hardly realised it. They lay back on the wet ground, heedless of everything, panting and gasping painfully. It had been a gruelling run, and that short, desperate struggle had about finished them. But as the inspector, his podgy face red and flushed with unusual exertion, came running up, Sid got up and grinned at him.

"You've got him, then?" puffed the inspector. "Good for you, youngsters! You—Hallo, there's the bag with the fiddle in it, I fancy!"

"Fiddle?" gasped Jim Taylor, sitting up suddenly.

"Yes, fiddle!" smiled the inspector.

"Well, I'm hanged!" growled Sid.

"Oh, it's precious enough, for all that!" chuckled the inspector. "It's a Strad—a Stradivarius that is worth somewhere about fifteen hundred pounds, I believe. The owner, a well-known collector, lent it to Frampton, the famous Scottish violinist, to play at the concert over at Sandpool to-night. But this slippery customer here took a fancy to it, stole it from the hotel, and—well, if you youngsters hadn't reported that story to the constable here this afternoon, the rascal would have got away with it, too. Anyway, you needn't look so disgusted, for I fancy there'll be a reward of a couple of hundred coming your way for this, kids. Now, Jones, up with that beauty!"

The inspector proved to be right. The two hundred pounds reward for the recovery of the precious violin did come the way of Sid Bright and Jim Taylor. And now, instead of the lean-to shanty at the back of Sid's home, the Hartford Harriers possess a substantial, up-to-date building for their club-room, and the founders of that now famous club have no cause to grumble about either the number of club members, or their keenness.

THE END.

(The finest sporting story ever written next week: "SPORTS FOR SPORTS' SAKE!" On no account should you miss it.)

"MANNERS HOLDS HIS OWN!"

(Continued from page 17.)

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther came in for prep later on, and found Manners in Study No. 10. He was sitting before the fire grate, thoughtfully stirring with the poker a little heap of burnt fragments.

He looked up. "Still thinking the same, Tom?" he asked. "Yes," answered Tom. "But we won't argue about it, Manners, old man. Let's let it drop."

"Good idea!" said Lowther. "Agree to differ! What about prep? Anybody seen jolly old Milton?"

Manners smiled slightly. "You think I ought to burn that photograph and the negative, Tom?" he asked.

"Well, if you ask me, I do," said Tom Merry. "And chance Selby cutting up rusty as soon as he knows he's safe."

"Oh, he's always rusty, and this study can keep its end up, in one way or another!" said Tom.

"Well, I sha'n't burn them!" said Manners deliberately.

"Oh, let it drop, then!" said Tom.

"Because—"

"Never mind why. Chuck it!"

"Because I've burned them already!"

"Oh!"

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Manners burst into a laugh. The change in Tom Merry's face was like the sun coming out through a cloud.

He laughed too. "Pulling my leg, you ass?" he said. "Never mind; I'm glad you've done it, Manners, old man!"

"Same here," said Monty Lowther. "Good man."

"And same here!" said Manners. "Selby's had enough, and—and I shouldn't wonder if I went a bit too far. I've told him I'm sorry! Beastly kind of man to tell you're sorry; but there it is! Now let's get on with that dashed Milton!"

And the Terrible Three got on with Milton, with cheerful faces—harmony being restored in the family circle at last.

It is impossible for everybody to be pleased, whatsoever may happen. Wally & Co. never pelted Mr. Selby with ink-pots, after all. But perhaps it was just as well! And for some time Mr. Selby was unusually gentle with the Third—whether because he was feeling relieved and grateful to Manners, or whether because he was not absolutely certain that Manners had burnt the negative, we will not undertake to say. In Study No. 10 in the Shell all was calm and bright now that Manners was no longer on the warpath.

THE END.

(When Martin Clifford writes a humorous yarn you know it is advisable to order your copy well in advance. Well, make a note of next week's ripping story: "D'ARCY MAXIMUS!" for it's a scream from beginning to end.)



Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

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

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

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER. A GOOD "H-IT!"

Percy, of the Sloppington Sloggers, had brought his girl to see the match. There she sat, a fair vision, in the most comfy deck-chair, and the sweetest summer smile, hoping and trusting that Percy would show them what was what. With square-set jaw and a determination to make that trundling chap wish he'd never bowled a ball in his life, Percy, bepadding and begloved, strode to the wicket. Along came his chance—a sneaky, round-the-corner, knock-me-over-the-edge sort of delivery. Click! The stumps enfolded one another in fond embrace. "By Jove, Percy's got a duck, hasn't he?" exclaimed the fair girl's neighbour, turning to her in dismay. The fair girl turned crimson. "Why, yes of course, he has," she stammered prettily. "I—I'm it!"—A Tuck-Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to A. Bramwell, 7, Payton Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

ALL "GAS."

The young man was ushered into the presence of the Society palmist. "Madame," he said, "I have called—" "Certainly!" interrupted the seer. "I know all about it. Just show me your palm. Ah, I see you have met with many disappointments lately!" "Quite true." "Something which you have striven hard to obtain has eluded you time after time." "You are right." "But patience. Your end will be attained in the immediate future." "I'm very glad to hear it, madame," said the subject, as he flourished a blue paper. "I've called about your gas bill!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss E. Tranmer, 5, Raincliffe Avenue, Scarborough, Yorks.

MARKING TIME!

A negro called upon an old friend, who received him in a rocking-chair, and continued to rock himself to and fro in a most curious way. "Yo' ain't sick, is yo', Harrison?" asked the caller anxiously. "No, I ain't sick, Mose," said Harrison. There was a moment's silence, during which the caller gazed wide-eyed at the rocking figure. "Den," continued Mose, "why does yo' rock yo'self dat way all de time?" Harrison explained: "Yo' know Bill Blott? Well, he sold me a silver watch cheap, an' if I stops moving like dis, dat watch don't go!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss B. Windebank, 4, Westmoreland Street, London, W.1.

UNTHOUGHTFUL!

It was a very hot day, and a ragged little urchin was running along by the side of a tramcar. The conductor shouted to him to go away. The urchin gave him a scornful glance, and yelled: "Yah! Mean beast! Too mingy to let a bloke keep cool by rummin' in the shade of your tram!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Turner, 88, Palmers Road, New Southgate, N. 11.

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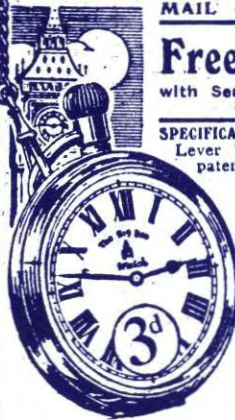
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