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The GEM

2^d

EVERY
WEDNESDAY



"FOR LOVE OF LADY PEGGY!"
UNIQUE, COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY
inside

HERE'S SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW IN SCHOOL STORIES—

For Love of



"Two minds with but a single thought—"
LADY PEGGY! And the two minds
 belong to Jack Blake and Fatty Wynn
 rivals for the favour of Lady Peggy
 Brooke, the tomboy of Spalding Hall!

CHAPTER 1. Out of It!

"**B**LOW Figgins and Gussy!"

It was Jack Blake of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's who made that glum remark.

"Hang Tom Merry and Talbot!"

David Llewellyn Wynn, of the New House, who was tramping along gloomily at Blake's side on the road over Wayland Moor, sniffed as he gave vent to his feelings regarding Tom Merry and Talbot of the Shell.

But neither Figgins nor Gussy heard Blake's muttered remark about them; and neither Tom Merry nor Talbot caught Fatty Wynn's indignant observation. Though the four juniors in question were strolling along only a few paces in front, they were far too pre-occupied at the moment to notice Blake and the fat Fourth-Former from the New House.

George Figgins, the leader of the New House, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, were walking on either side of Ethel Cleveland, Arthur Augustus' pretty cousin, and were deep in conversation with her. Tom Merry and Talbot were on either side of Doris Levison, the charming sister of Ernest Levison of the Fourth. All four of the St. Jim's juniors seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely.

Not so Blake and Fatty Wynn!

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They were both feeling distinctly out of it.

There had been a match that afternoon between a School House team and an eleven from the New House. Ethel and Doris had come over from Spalding Hall School, where they were pupils, to watch the game. Now the juniors were seeing them back to Spalding Hall.

Blake and Fatty Wynn had accompanied the other four, expecting that it would be very pleasant to stroll over the moor to Spalding Hall with Ethel and Doris. But from the first they had found it quite impossible to get in a word edgeways!

Blake had wanted to talk to Ethel. But Figgins had a very warm admiration for the girl, and so had her cousin, Arthur Augustus. Between the two, Ethel was fully occupied, and Blake had been completely left out in the cold.

Fatty Wynn very much liked Doris Levison. But with Tom Merry on one side of her and Reginald Talbot on the other the Falstaff of the New House had failed in his intention of tacking himself on to Doris and enjoying her cheerful society.

So Blake and Fatty Wynn had dropped behind disgustedly, glaring at the other four juniors and exchanging sniffs and growls.

"This is rotten!" grunted Blake. "Blow Gussy!"

"As for that ass Tom Merry—" snorted Fatty Wynn.

"As for Figgins—"

"Talbot ought to be given a lesson in blessed manners!"

—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO. & THE GIRLS OF SPALDING HALL!

Lady Peggy

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD



growled Fatty Wynn virtuously. "Fancy sticking at Doris' side all the time like that! She must be fed up with him by now."

From the bright expression on Doris' face, she was anything but fed up with the society of the handsome Shell fellow at her side. But Fatty Wynn was scarcely a fair judge!

With glum faces, Blake and Fatty Wynn trudged on in the rear.

In the match that afternoon, which had ended in a narrow victory for the School House, Blake had distinguished himself by hitting up 50 for his side. He was not conceited about his batting abilities, but he had rather hoped that Ethel had noticed his great innings, and would congratulate him on his score.

Fatty Wynn was not inclined to swank about his bowling, though he was the finest bowler in the junior school. But he had pulled off a hat-trick that afternoon, and had wondered whether Doris had noticed that interesting fact.

But neither Blake's 50 nor Fatty Wynn's hat-trick had been even mentioned!

And Blake and Fatty Wynn were feeling sore.

The gates of Spalding Hall came in sight at last, and Ethel and Doris said good-bye brightly to their escorts. They were quite unaware that Blake and Fatty Wynn were feeling hurt, for both of the disgruntled pair summoned up bright smiles as they shook hands and raised their caps. The

two girls vanished through the gates, and the six juniors turned to walk back to St. Jim's.

Figgins glanced at Fatty Wynn, and eyed him curiously.

"You're looking a bit fishy about the gills, old chap!"

"Rats!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Well, it was a wippin' stwoll, deah boys!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "Didn't you think so, Blake?"

"No!" snorted Blake.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and surveyed Blake in faint concern.

"Feelin' all wight, deah boy? You're lookin' a bit queeah."

"Of course I'm all right!" snapped Blake.

"Well, you look wathah queeah," repeated the swell of St. Jim's. "Not feelin' gwoggay? You were out battin' in the hot sun for quite a while, you know. You didn't contwact sunstwoke, I twust, when you were knockin' up those 19 wuns you got?"

"Nineteen?" hooted Blake. "I got 50, you dummy!"

"Bai Jove! Did you weally? I must have been thinkin' of Manaahs. Pewwaps he was the chap that got 19."

Blake glared at his aristocratic chum with feelings almost too deep for words. The others chuckled—all except Fatty Wynn.

"If you paid more attention to the cricket instead of fussing round the Spalding Hall girls all the giddy time, you'd know who scored what!" sniffed Blake bitterly.

Arthur Augustus coloured.

"Bai Jove! I uttably wepudiate the suggestion that I fuss aound the gals!" he snorted warmly. "A gentleman must be polite, howevah, and make suah that ladies are comfortable! Isn't that so, you chaps?"

"Of course it is!" laughed Tom Merry.

He eyed Blake and Fatty Wynn curiously. Then he grinned as he realised the reason for their disgruntled faces. It was clear to the captain of the Shell that the pair were feeling a little sore at having been rather "out of it" during the walk over the moor.

"Rats!" out in Fatty Wynn, with a grunt. "Blake's jolly well right. There's a sight too much hanging round Spalding Hall these days!"

"Hear, hear!" growled Blake.

"Asses!" chuckled Talbot.

Arthur Augustus eyed them coldly.

"Weally, you duffahs, I considah—"

"Oh, shut up, Cussy!" sniffed Blake. "You jaw too much. Give your chin a rest."

"Bai Jove! I shall considah it my dutay to administah a feahful thwashin', Blake, unless you cease addressin' me in that wude mannah! I considah—"

Thump!

Blake, thoroughly exasperated, had planted a squared fist on his chum's elegant nasal organ. Arthur Augustus sat down on the dusty road with a yell.

The swell of St. Jim's sat glaring at Blake dazedly, with his shining topper tilted dangerously over one ear. He scrambled up with a furious snort.

"You uttah wuffian, Blake! I shall administah a feahful thwashin' for that!"

Arthur Augustus hurled himself at Blake. But Tom Merry and Talbot pushed their way between the two.

"Chuck rowing, you idiots!" grinned Tom. He took Blake by the arm and led him on. "I s'pose you two are feeling a bit sore because we rather collared the girls—"

"Rats!" snorted Blake, colouring.

"Fiddlesticks!" growled Fatty Wynn, equally red.

Though Tom Merry had spoken the truth about the matter, neither of the disgruntled pair was willing to admit the fact!

"We consider there's too much hanging round Spalding

Hall these days," said Blake doggedly. "It's silly, if you ask me!" he added, with a superior tilt to his nose.

"Hear, hear!" agreed Fatty Wynn, with a lofty sniff.

The superior attitude in which Blake and Fatty Wynn had taken refuge was distinctly galling to the others. They glared at them. But Tom Merry chuckled.

"Rats!" he said cheerfully. "You're talking through your hats, and you know it!"

"Look here—" began Blake, very red. But Tom interrupted him.

"Ethel and Doris were telling us that there is a new girl arriving at Spalding Hall to-morrow evening. She's going to share a study with them. We're going along with the two girls to meet her. You'd better come, too!"

"Catch me!" sniffed Fatty Wynn.

"Or me!" sniffed Blake loftily.

"What did Doris say her name was?" put in Figgins.

"Peggy Brooke," Tom told him. "She's got a handle to it, too—her father's a blessed earl! Lady Peggy Brooke."

"You won't come and meet her to-morrow?" Talbot asked Blake and Fatty Wynn, with a grin.

"No!" snorted Blake fiercely.

"Catch us!" agreed David Llewellyn Wynn, with another lofty sniff.

And Fatty Wynn and Jack Blake marched on towards St. Jim's with their noses in the air.

Their chums might find pleasure in "hanging round" Spalding Hall, as they put it. But they had suddenly discovered that they themselves were far above such things!

CHAPTER 2.

Lady Peggy Arrives!

"READY, you chaps?" Tom Merry had put his head in at the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. It was after tea on the following evening.

"Wathah, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned away from the mirror, at which he had been putting the finishing touches to his immaculate toilet, and placed his shining topper carefully on his aristocratic head. Digby and Herries took up their caps and crossed towards the door with the swell of St. Jim's. Tom Merry glanced at the fourth occupant of the study.

"Not coming, Blake?"

"No!" snapped Blake.

From the grim look on the face of Jack Blake as he stood astride the hearthrug, it was quite evident to Tom Merry that the leader of the Fourth was sticking by his guns.

The others were off to Spalding Hall, to go with Ethel and Doris to Wayland Station to meet Lady Peggy Brooke, the new girl who was arriving at Spalding. But Blake had declined to go with them in the first place, and he was still dogged in his refusal.

Tom Merry chuckled, and Blake glared at him.

"What are you cackling at, you dummy?" he hooted.

"Nothing!" grinned Tom.

"Sure you won't come along?" murmured Digby.

"Yes!" roared Blake.

"Then good-bye, deah boy!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I considah you a feahful ass, you know!"

With which parting shot the swell of St. Jim's sailed gracefully from the study and closed the door behind him.

"Blessed lady-killers!" sniffed Blake. "Catch me!"

He snatched up a book and dropped into a chair. But he soon chucked the volume irritably aside and jumped up.

The irate Fourth-Former strode from the study, downstairs, and out into the quad.

It was possible that at the back of his mind Blake was finding it rather dull with all his chums gone off to Spalding Hall, and that he was almost wishing he had swallowed his pride and accompanied them. But he would not have admitted that fact to himself for worlds.

As he stood at the top of the steps glaring into the quad, he caught sight of a fat figure rolling towards him.

It was Fatty Wynn. Blake brightened, and went down the steps to meet the Falstaff of the New House.

"So you've not gone with the others?" observed Wynn.

"Catch me!" sniffed Blake loftily.

"Or me!" answered Fatty Wynn, with his little nose in the air. "I let Figgy and Kerr go alone. Blessed lady-killers!"

The two eyed each other with a mutual feeling of very satisfying superiority. Blake had cheered up a lot.

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TO-DAY!

You will find the THIRTEENTH Free Coloured Picture Card in this issue. Isn't it great? A worthy addition to your set!

"I'll tell you what," he suggested. "I've got a cricket pad that wants mending. Let's go into Rylcombe with it."

"Good! We can have a snack at Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop!" chuckled Fatty Wynn, his eyes glistening.

Two minutes later, Jack Blake and David Llewellyn Wynn were passing out through the gates together, Blake with his cricket pad under his arm.

Fatty Wynn was not a fast walker, and it took them some little time to reach the village. But though he did not shine at walking, he did at eating, and the evening had worn on considerably by the time he rolled out of the village tuckshop, wiping jam from his mouth, with Blake at his side. The cricket pad had been left at a shop to be repaired.

It was as the two turned a bend in Rylcombe Lane on their way back towards St. Jim's that Blake gave a sudden exclamation.

"My hat! Look!"

A cab was standing at one side of the road, lurching over at an angle, while the old horse cropped the roadside grass, and the red-faced cabby stood scratching his head and surveying a broken-off wheel. And standing at the cabby's side, swinging her hat in her hand, was the slim figure of a girl of about their own age.

"Been and gorn and busted clean orf!" the cabby was saying in doleful astonishment as he surveyed the wheel.

"Yes," agreed the girl cheerfully. "It's busted all right!"

She turned her head as Blake and Fatty Wynn came along, and the two St. Jim's juniors fairly goggled.

"Phew!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

"G-great Scott!" gasped Blake, equally breathless.

For the girl standing by the broken wheel struck each at the very same moment as being the rippingest girl he had ever seen. They gaped.

Her bobbed hair was an unruly mass of red curls. She had freckles, a little snub nose, and a happy grin. She looked something of a tomboy. There was a dancing light in her brown eyes that seemed to show that she was fairly brimming with fun and cheek, and always up to any mischief going.

She surveyed Blake and Wynn coolly, swinging her hat.

"I say," she said, with sudden heat, her eyes sparkling in a warlike way, "there's nothing funny about me, is there?"

"F-funny?" gurgled Blake. "Nunno!"

"Then what are you staring at me like that for?" she demanded.

Blake and Fatty Wynn went crimson. They fumbled with their caps, overcome with embarrassment.

"Awfully sorry!" mumbled Fatty Wynn. "I—I didn't know I was staring!"

"My hat!" ejaculated the girl, grinning. "Well, you jolly well were!"

The cabby was still staring mournfully at his wheel.

"Been and gorn and busted clean orf!" he muttered again.

"So you said before, you know!" exclaimed the red-haired girl severely. "The question is, what are you going to do about it? I've got to get to Spalding Hall!"

Blake and Fatty Wynn jumped.

Their eyes went to the trunk on top of the broken-down cab. The initials P. B. were clearly to be seen.

"Great pip!" cried Blake. "Are you Peggy Brooke? Lady Peggy Brooke, I mean?" he added hastily.

It was the girl's turn to look astonished.

"Yes, rather! But how did you know that?"

Between them Blake and Fatty Wynn explained. Lady Peggy Brooke surveyed them with dancing eyes.

"That's ripping!" she cried. "You can show me the way to Spalding Hall. And, I say, if you could carry the trunk between you—"

"Rather!" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"You bet!" grinned Blake.

And two minutes later Jack Blake and David Llewellyn Wynn were staggering up the lane with the trunk between them, while Lady Peggy Brooke, the new Spaldingite, walked beside them, gaily swinging her hat.

"Isn't it a ripping evening?" she remarked cheerfully.

"Rather!" gasped Blake, shifting his grip; for the trunk, he discovered, was astonishingly heavy. "I say, how was it you were in that cab? Ethel Cleveland and Doris Levison and some of our chaps went to Wayland to meet you—"

AN AMAZING NEW SERIAL OF ADVENTURE!



The Robot Man!

By H. J. ALLINGHAM

Out there in the wild jungles that border the mighty river Amazon, young Jack Carter comes face to face, in the most amazing and terrifying circumstances, with the very man he has journeyed so many miles to find, Professor Rollins, inventor and—madman!

The Elusive Bird!

JACK CARTER expected to see Captain Storm's writhing body dashed with violence to the ground, there to lie, mangled and disfigured, in the rank grass or on the rocky ledge. But nothing of the sort happened.

For several seconds the iron monster remained quite still, stiff and upright, holding its helpless captive at arm's length.

Then slowly it turned and, still maintaining the same attitude, marched solemnly away across the vast, rolling plain. Jack, awaking as from a trance, turned and dashed into the cave.

"Where—where are you going?" gasped Harry Frobisher, in terror at being deserted.

But before he could scramble to his feet and follow his chum, Jack returned, carrying a pair of powerful field-glasses belonging to Captain Storm.

Going to the verge of the rocky ledge he peered through the glasses at the retreating figure.

The gloom of night was now rapidly disappearing before the advance of the coming dawn, and all objects were clearly visible for a long distance in every direction, so Jack was able to follow the movements of the monstrosity.

The gigantic shape moved in long, stiff strides straight away from the rocky ledge across the level plain for two

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Reports having been received to the effect that Professor Rollins, who went to South America to explore the unknown regions through which the Amazon flows, is held in captivity, an expedition is formed to go in search of the missing scientist. Misfortune, however, befalls the party, for their leader dies. Undeterred by this early setback, Captain Storm, a broad-shouldered, muscular man, determines to carry on; but only three members of the original party—Teddy White, a middle-aged Cockney, and two youngsters named Jack Carter and Harry Frobisher—show their willingness to accompany him. Headless of the perils and dangers ahead, the four plucky adventurers push on into the unknown and unexplored regions.

hundred yards or so and then, bearing to the right, proceeded in a half-circle as though it were coming back, but vanished suddenly in the shadow of the hill on which the boys were perched.

Jack lowered the glasses and looked down at his chum. The face of the older boy was very pale, but the terror had gone from his eyes. He had regained his nerve.

Something in his appearance drew Harry Frobisher back from the very verge of hysteria.

"Do you believe in magic now?" asked Harry; and there was only a little tremor in his voice.

"No, less than ever!"

"But—"

"Yes, I know; it's terrible and—and queer!" Jack's brow was knitted in a puzzled frown.

"What are we going to do now—now that Captain Storm is dead?" asked Harry, shivering again.

"I don't think Captain Storm is dead."

"Eh?"

"I don't think they mean to kill him."

"They? Who?"

"I don't know—yet," replied Jack; and again he seemed to be staring at nothing.

"What makes you think the captain is alive?" persisted Harry.

The mere suggestion brought the colour back to his cheeks and lifted the weight of horror that had crushed him.

"I was watching him," said Jack. "He stopped struggling, but he did not hang limp like a dead body. He looked more like a man who had slipped on a high scaffolding and was clinging to save himself from falling. The Thing, too, was holding him gently, almost tenderly, carefully, as though anxious not to hurt him—at least, that's how it seemed to me."

Harry Frobisher gasped.

"Good gracious! Jack, how did you see all that?" he exclaimed. "I only saw the Thing with its ghastly face. Do—do you think it is alive?"

A peculiar wail emanating from the jungle fails to unnerve the intrepid adventurers, and they carry on until they reach a cave in the hillside where they make camp. With Captain Storm keeping guard outside the cave, the other members of the party turn in to rest. They are awakened from their slumbers some two hours later by a startled cry. Rushing to the mouth of the cave they are horrified to see a huge steel monster formed like a man, but of such prodigious height that its mighty hand over-tops the tallest forest tree. The next moment this enormous iron monster seizes the captain by the waist, and lifts him high up above their heads, writhing and struggling helplessly.

(Now read on.)

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"No."

"Then it must have men inside it."

"No. Inside is a mass of complicated machinery. I caught a glimpse of that when it turned. I saw it through the hole under the armpit."

"Then it's magic!" cried Harry, with conviction. "A machine can't act like a man and be gentle and tender and careful. That's idiotic!"

"The Thing is a machine," persisted Jack gravely, "as much a machine as a battleship. When I was a nipper I was taken to an exhibition in London, and they had there a miniature lake, and on it was a swarm of model battleships, and cruisers, and torpedo-boat destroyers, and other craft. And they all moved about and performed the most complicated manoeuvres, and there wasn't a single collision. How was that done?"

"Wires?"

"No, there were no wires."

"Clockwork?"

"No; it wasn't clockwork, either. The whole thing was worked by a man who sat in an office at the other end of the hall, with a chart in front of him."

"Then you think—"

"I think a lot of things, old fellow, but that doesn't help much. The important question is, what do we know? Well, we know this—that Thing is a machine. It is only made like a man to frighten people. It is as much a machine as a battleship, and somewhere behind it is a brain—a jolly clever brain. It may be a hundred miles away, or it may be close at hand. That's what we've got to find out."

"Everything all serene, young gents? Any 'elp wanted?"

Teddy White, crawling on his hands and knees, had emerged from the mouth of the cave as far as his head and shoulders.

On seeing the chums engaged in quiet conversation his fears, aroused by Captain Storm's startled cry, had abated somewhat.

Hastily scrambling to his feet he came forward, rubbing his hands and smiling cheerily.

"Goin' ter be a nice day," he remarked. "A little 'ot maybe, but that won't 'urt us arter wot we bin through, will it? Take things as they come, and don't make no complaints. That's my motter. Hallo! Where's the cap'n? Gone off on 'is own? Now that ain't right—that ain't no ways right! It ain't accordin' to plan or agreement. And I won't agree to it. I makes my protest 'ere and now. Now listen to me, young gents—this is serious. I'm an older man nor wot you are—a man of eggspience—and I knows wot's wot. We got to stick to the cap'n!"

"But—" began Harry; but the little man went on unheeding.

"'Arf a mo', Master Frobisher—'arf a mo'! When I talks I got something to say, and you best 'ear me out. We got to stick to the cap'n—we ain't got to let 'im out of our sight. It's 'im wot hev got the 'eadpiece. If we ever gets out of this 'ere mess alive it'll be the cap'n wot leads us! Without 'im we are like three lost sheep. So mark my words! Where 'e goes we got to foller!"

As soon as the two chums could get a word in they attempted to explain what had happened. At the end of their recital, however, the little man shook his head.

"Young gents," he said, "it ain't for me to say wot's proper in the way of a joke and wot ain't proper, me being only a ignerent man. And if so be it's a secret betwixt you and the cap'n, and I ain't to be in it, well, I knows me place, and I says no more."

And with that he turned haughtily away.

Harry was about to go after him to make yet another attempt to convince him, but Jack caught his chum's arm and held him back.

"Let him go," he said. "He'll know soon enough, and perhaps, after all, it is best as it is for the present. Teddy is unhappy because he thinks we are fooling him, but if he had seen that Thing as we saw it he would be a jolly sight more unhappy, wouldn't he? Leave him alone."

"But what are we to do?"

"Eat!" said Jack. "Thank goodness we can't starve in this country even if we never get back to our stores. We can pick our dinner off the trees."

"Yes; or dig it out of the ground. The native carriers showed me the roots that are good to eat," replied Harry.

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Indeed, it was a marvellously fertile country to which the comrades had penetrated.

Apart from the wild fruit, which grew in profusion, there were wide stretches of cultivated ground from which the owners had for some mysterious reason fled.

The chums, however, decided not to go far afield to-day in search of a meal.

The cave was a good place of shelter, and the rocky ledge on the hillside a good observation point. It would be best not to go too far away while unknown dangers were about.

Harry Frobisher, whose courage had now quite returned, was all for making an early expedition in the track of the Thing to see if they could not follow it to its lair and so find out what had happened to Captain Storm; but Jack advised caution.

"If they meant to kill the captain he is already dead, and we can do nothing; if they mean to spare his life—as I believe—then there is no hurry. We will keep a sharp look-out and bide our time."

Meanwhile, they went in search of food. Teddy White, although still injured and aloof in his manner, went with them. He was not going to be left alone.

"We won't go down into the valley," said Jack. "Let us work round the hillside and see if we can't get back to the ledge that way."

The trio plunged into the wooded slope, but they had not gone far before the undergrowth, with its tangled vines and luxurious prickly bushes became so thick that their progress was slow.

Had it not been for the experience they had gained from the natives during their journey from the coast, they would have been unable to get through at all.

The scene through which they passed was one of amazing beauty.

Tropic blooms, gorgeous in colour—red, purple, and white—hung in festoons on all sides; birds of resplendent plumage flew about their heads, while rich, luscious fruits of many kinds hung in clusters from the branches within reach of their heads.

Fascinated by the sheer splendour of their surroundings the trio pressed on for perhaps an hour, and then suddenly and unexpectedly they emerged into an open glade.

Teddy White, after a careful inspection of the ground to make sure that it was free from a special kind of noxious insect which he had learned to fear, flung himself down.

"Ow about a little rest to enjoy the booties of nacher, young gents?" he suggested.

The others assented quickly enough and joined him, but a few moments later Jack Carter's attention was attracted by a bird of a particularly lovely plumage which, perched on a branch only a few feet away, seemed to be watching them.

It was so tame that Jack was tempted to see if it would allow itself to be captured.

Very slowly he rose to his feet and advanced cautiously towards the bird. He had almost reached it when it flapped its gorgeous wings and retreated a couple of yards into the bush.

Jack followed still very silently and cautiously.

Again it retreated, and Jack, in his efforts to reach it, left his comrades perhaps some thirty yards behind him, so that he was shut off from them by a thick wall of undergrowth.

Reluctant to go further, he made one final attempt to capture that splendid but elusive bird, and made a swift leap forward with outstretched hands.

He missed the bird by an inch, and at the same moment his foot caught in a tough ground vine, and he pitched forward headlong on his hands and knees.

When the boy scrambled to his feet he found, to his surprise, that he had hurled himself into another clearing.

It was smaller than the one he had just left, and in other ways different. For one thing, it looked as though it had been made not by Nature but by the hand of man, the undergrowth having been cut away.

In front of him was the side of the hill, rising sheer, while behind him, and on either side, was the almost impenetrable forest.

Jack half-turned, intending to make his way back to his comrades and inform them of his discovery, when he was startled by the sound of a human voice quite close to him.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to a fellow-countryman?"



PROFESSOR ROLLINS, inventive genius, and creator of the Robot Man.

New House fellows. "I agree with Gussy. It's like your blessed New House cheek, trying to butt in on our picnic!"

"But look here—" began Fatty Wynn.

"Go and eat coke!" said Blake, glaring at him.

"Look here, you School House bouncer!"

"Look here, you New House waster—"

Blake rose to his feet, looking distinctly warlike.

Figgins & Co. had come along to Study No. 6 with peaceful enough intentions. It had not occurred to them that there would be such strong opposition to their joining Blake & Co.'s party! But now they were getting a little warm.

"I tell you—" began Figgins hotly.

"Shut up, Figgins, and cleah out!" snorted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You chaps aren't wanted to-morrow, so pway twy to wealise that!"

"Rats!" cried Fatty Wynn angrily. "If you ask me—"

"Nobody does ask you!" roared Blake. "Hop it!"

"Why, you blessed prize cuckoos!" snorted Fatty Wynn. "I tell you we're coming to-morrow, anyway!" cried Figgins. "Ethel said she'd like us to be there. The giddy river doesn't belong to you asses!"

Blake & Co. and Figgins & Co. glared at one another in grim silence for some moments.

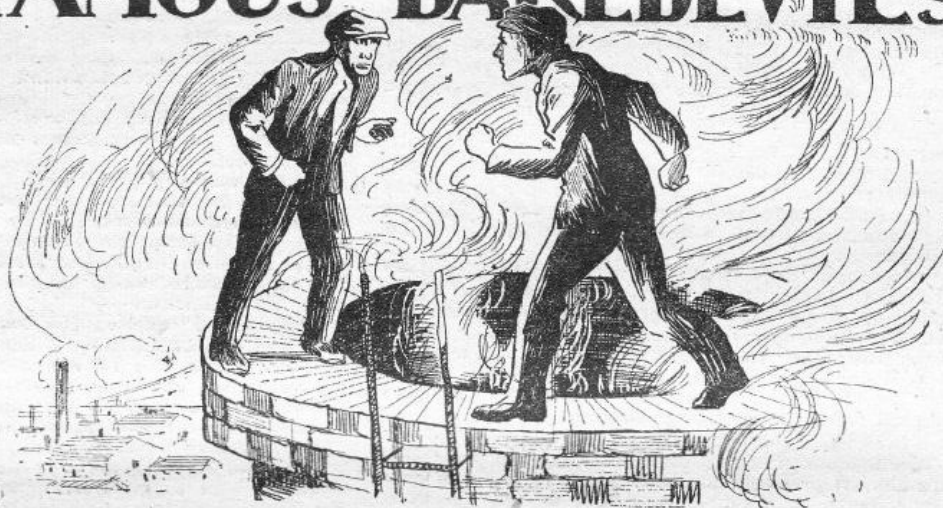
Herries and Digby and Kerr were all more or less disinterested; they none of them minded particularly if the others were in the party. But now that a row seemed to be brewing they were all three ready to back up their respective sides loyally.

So Herries and Digby glared at Figgins & Co. as wrathfully as did Blake and Arthur Augustus. And Kerr surveyed Blake & Co. as grimly as did Figgins and Fatty Wynn!

"Cleah out, you boundahs!" roared the swell of St. Jim's.

(Continued on next page.)

FAMOUS DAREDEVILS!



Every boy and girl loves to read of the daring exploits of national heroes—men who have taken their lives in their hands either in the cause of science or for the love of adventure. This special series of articles, then, will appeal to all.

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FIGHTING like a madman on the top of a 150 foot chimney shaft, that is but one of the thrilling experiences which has befallen William Larkins, the world famous British steeplejack.

No man has led a more hazardous life than he in the course of his everyday work. Every minute, every hour aloft, he has carried his life in his hands.

Crawling along slender parapets high above the ground, ascending to the narrow lip of towering factory chimneys, dangling precariously from tapering church steeples—these feats he has taken as a matter of course during his thirty years' experience "on top of the world."

How did he come to battle with a madman? It happened thus. Larkins and two assistants were working on a Deptford chimney-shaft at a height of 150 feet.

Soon after commencing operations the weather became hotter and hotter, until the midday sun was blazing pitilessly down upon them, while the constant smoke and fumes from the chimney did not improve matters.

Larkins was about to issue instructions to cease work for dinner, when he noticed that one of his companions had a curiously wild look in his eyes.

"This is what I call a dog's life, Mr. Larkins!" he growled.

"Never mind, old chap," replied Larkins. "We shall soon finish the job."

And then some sixth sense warned the latter that the man was not responsible for his actions. The fellow raised his hands above his head and made to fling himself down the inside of the chimney to certain death.

Quick as lightning Larkins and his other assistant flung themselves desperately forward and grabbed the madman's leg just in the nick of time,

because already his head and shoulders had disappeared over the shaft-lip.

Then commenced a wild, grim struggle on the narrow ledge, as the maniac fought with superhuman strength to free himself from his mates' clutches and fulfil his suicidal resolve.

Every moment Larkins expected the whole three of them to plunge over the side and crash headlong to their death. Every second on that swaying chimney-top was fraught with horror.

Luckily, the smoke and fumes, which until then had been a bugbear, now proved their saviour, for the madman, hanging head downwards, was soon stifled and rendered unconscious. And immediately he stopped struggling his mates were able to pull him to safety.

William Larkins followed in his father's footsteps when he adopted the hazardous profession of a steeplejack.

One of the most thrilling and exacting jobs he ever attempted was in his early days, when he climbed the snow-covered Scottish mountain of Ben Vraggie, 1,256 feet high, to carry out some restoration work on the first Duke of Sutherland's monument, which was perched on the top.

It was in the middle of the winter. Gales were raging. It was terribly cold, and, in addition, there was the daily ascent and descent of the mountain, which necessitated leaving the nearest town of Golspie very early in the morning, and knocking off work at about two o'clock in the afternoon, if Larkins was to return home before dark.

For eight days he fought the icy elements, being almost frozen out on several occasions.

He accomplished the job successfully; but his troubles were not over, because no sooner was the work finished than a terrific blizzard began to rage, and

Larkins badly wanted his ladders and gear, which were still lashed to the monument, for another job.

The other work was too urgent to enable him to wait even a few days for his apparatus, and so he and several of his assistants climbed the steep slopes of Ben Vraggie under conditions which bade fair to rival the Polar regions.

So appalling were the elements, and so difficult and dangerous the ascent, that a hardy, local labourer, who had courageously volunteered to act as guide, collapsed from sheer exhaustion.

Even when Larkins and his companions reached the top they were not yet out of the wood. They found the ladders and ropes were frozen stiff to the statue, as hard as iron, and a good deal of the gear completely buried in the snow.

After hours of heart-breaking toil, while the blizzard howled and screamed around them, they managed to cut away the frozen ropes with hatchets, and descend in safety with the ladders to the warm welcome of Golspie.

Those are but two incidents in William Larkins' adventurous life as a steeplejack. He and the men of his hazardous profession are among the greatest daredevils of our time. They are the fellows who make our streets safe for us to walk along. They are the guardians of the air. They see that steeple and chimney, roof and parapet, monument and statue, do not come crashing down upon our heads because of fault or flaw in their construction.

Hats off to William Larkins, King of Steeplejacks! And hats off to his fellows, daredevils working "on top of the world!"

(Next week our special contributor deals with Sir Henry Segrave, the famous racing motorist.)

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"I'd like to see you clear us out!" snorted Fatty Wynn.

"We jolly well will, if you don't scat!" hooted Blake.

"Come on, then!" invited Figgins warmly.

Blake & Co. did not need a second invitation. They hurled themselves at the intruders. The next moment a fast and furious fight was raging in Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was at grips with his old rival, George Figgins. Herries was interlocked with Kerr. And while Digby opened the door ready for the proposed ejection of the New House trio, Blake tackled his fat rival for chief place in Lady Peggy's friendship, and went down in a heap on the carpet with Fatty Wynn on top of him.

"Grooooh!" gasped Blake.

David Llewellyn Wynn was no featherweight! Blake lay helplessly winded, with the Falstaff of the New House seated on his chest. David Llewellyn seized him grimly by the nose and pulled it.

"Yoooop!" howled Blake. "Leggo by doze, you wodder!"

"Talking German?" chuckled Fatty Wynn. "Sorry, don't understand the giddy lingo!"

He pulled Blake's nose again, and with a tremendous heave Blake unseated him. The two rolled in a wild struggle against the table, and there was a crash as it overturned, shooting books and papers and inkwells on to the floor. One of the inkwells landed on Fatty Wynn's face, transforming his features into the likeness of a nigger minstrel's.

"Grooooh!"

Bump! Crash! Bang!

Arthur Augustus, with his eyeglass flying on its cord, was busy trying to black both Figgy's eyes. Figgy was taking the same pains with Arthur Augustus. The two grappled and went down in a heap on top of Blake and Fatty Wynn.

Herries had got Kerr down, but was holding him there with difficulty. Digby darted to Blake's aid as Fatty Wynn, struggling up, dealt the leader of the Fourth a punch on the jaw that made him see stars. With a chuckle Digby seized the wastepaper basket and jammed it down over the fat New House fellow's head on to his shoulders.

"Oh! Yow! Help!" gasped Fatty Wynn, struggling to free himself from the wastepaper basket.

But it was too tightly jammed to be easily got rid of! Fatty Wynn stumbled blindly about, looking very much like Tweedledum all prepared for battle. Then, tripping over the prone figure of Arthur Augustus, who had just gone down before a hefty punch from Figgins, Fatty Wynn pitched headlong.

It was at that critical moment that Gerald Knox, the most unpopular prefect in the Sixth Form, chose to fling open the door and stride into the study, ashplant in hand, to find out what all the noise was about.

"Yaroooooh!"

Knox gave a wild howl as Fatty Wynn's head, encased in the wastepaper basket, jammed into his waistcoat.

Crash!

Knox collapsed on the floor, with Fatty Wynn sprawling across him. Utterly winded, the Sixth-Former sat dazedly panting on the carpet, wondering vaguely if St. Jim's was in the throes of an earthquake.

"Grooh!" Fatty Wynn sat up beside Knox, winded and breathless. "Oh! Yow! Pull this off, somebody!"

Knox's dazed look changed to one of fury as he collected his wits after that knock-down blow. He reached out a hand and grasped Fatty Wynn by the collar. But unluckily for him, David Llewellyn had no idea that Knox had even arrived on the scene. When he felt his collar grasped in that hostile grip, he imagined that it was Blake or Arthur Augustus who had seized him.

"Take that, you rotter!" hooted Fatty Wynn, from beneath the wastepaper basket.

And with a terrific swipe of his fist David Llewellyn Wynn landed a tremendous punch on Knox's nose, which flattened out the Sixth-Former on the study floor.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Blake in horror.

The other combatants had all scrambled to their feet on the arrival of Knox. There had been no time to warn Fatty Wynn, however.

"That's done it!" groaned Figgins.

He and Blake darted forward, and with a terrific heave they dragged the wastepaper basket from the fat Fourth-Former's head. Fatty Wynn blinked dazedly, then his glance fell on the figure of Knox beside him. Knox was just sitting up, with a hand to his damaged nose.

Fatty Wynn's eyes fairly goggled from their sockets.

"G-great Scott! Knox!"

Knox rose painfully to his feet and picked up his fallen ashplant. When he spoke, with a hand still clasped over his battered nose, his voice was oddly thick!

"Cobe to by study at once, all ob you!" he stormed, with watering eyes. "I'll stop you liddle rodders fighting in your studies!"

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Gerald Knox stamped from the room. Blake & Co. and Figgins & Co. followed him dismally.

Ten minutes later, as they came out of Knox's study one by one, squirming painfully, with their hands tucked under their armpits, their faces were still more dismal than ever. At the top of the stairs they met Talbot of the Shell.

"My hat!" exclaimed Talbot. "What's up? Licked?"

"No!" gasped Blake, scowling. "Knox has been cutting us each a slice of cake, that's all! So don't ask blessed silly questions."

Talbot chuckled and passed on. The squirming procession went their way with gasps and groans.

For the moment, at any rate, the little matter of the river picnic on the following afternoon was shelved!

CHAPTER 5.

The Plot that Failed!

"I'VE got it!"

It was Jack Blake who made that remark to his three chums during first break the following morning.

"Got what, deah boy?"

"A scheme to keep Figgins & Co. from butting in this afternoon, of course," grinned Blake. "Although we warned them off yesterday, I shouldn't wonder if they still tried to barge along."

"Figgay has cheek for anythin'!" snorted the swell of St. Jim's. "I weally cannot undahstand how Ethel can stand the fellow!"

Herries and Digby chuckled.

"This is my scheme," went on Blake. The four chums of the Fourth were standing by the entrance to Monsieur Morny's class-room, for French was the next lesson. But as yet no other juniors had arrived on the scene. "Figgy will think we're taking one of the school boats up the river this afternoon—"

"Aren't we?" queried Herries.

"No!" chuckled Blake. "That's the stunt! Figgy and that ass Wynn will be hanging round the boathouse all the afternoon expecting to intercept us, and tack themselves on. So we'll go to Dimmock's boathouse, up the river, and hire a boat there! See? Then we'll pick up the girls where we arranged."

"Ha, ha, ha! Good!" chortled Digby.

The idea of Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn waiting at the school boathouse all the afternoon, wondering what had happened to Blake & Co., tickled them vastly.

"Bai Jove! That's a weally wed-hot ideah, Blake!" grinned the swell of St. Jim's. "We shall have to take gweat care that Figgins doesn't see us goin' out of gates, though."

It was not Figgins, but Fatty Wynn, whom Blake was worrying about. But he nodded.

"Oh, we'll work it all right!" he chuckled.

At that moment the little French master came bustling up, followed by a swarm of Fourth-Formers, and Blake & Co. filed into the class-room.

There were grins upon the faces of all four. They were quite sure that Figgins & Co. intended to tack themselves on, despite the fact that they had been told in no uncertain terms that they were not wanted. But if Blake's little plan worked without the New House trio guessing it, Figgins & Co. were going to get left that afternoon in more ways than one!

"There are the gals!"

Blake & Co. had turned a bend of the river, in the big rowing-boat they had hired at Dimmock's boathouse. Standing on the bank a little way ahead were three girlish figures. Blake turned the boat in towards the bank.

"Poor old Figgins!" chuckled Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Fourth had succeeded in leaving St. Jim's unobserved by Figgins & Co. And by now, they felt sure, the New House trio would be waiting patiently at the school boathouse, expecting their School House rivals to turn up there for a boat at any moment!

At the thought, there were broad grins on the faces of all four as the boat came alongside the towing-path, where the Spalding Hall girls were standing, looking very pretty and charming in their summer frocks and broad-brimmed straw hats, with the Spalding Hall colours round the brims. Each was carrying her bathing-costume and towel. They greeted the four St. Jim's juniors with smiles.

"Here you are!" cried Ethel.

"Hallo, everybody!" exclaimed Doris brightly.

But it was upon Lady Peggy Brooke that Blake had fixed his eyes. She grinned at him cheerfully.

"My hat!" murmured Lady Peggy, nodding at the hamper on the floor of the boat. "That's a big one! There must be enough grub in there for a hundred."

"Well, there's plenty, anyway," chuckled Blake. "Let me help you in."

Two minutes later the little party was rowing up-stream, with Herries and Digby at the oars.

"Glad to see you have wemembahed to bwing your bathing things, deah gals," remarked the swell of St. Jim's, with approval. "We'd thought we would go to Merton Island, and there is wippin' bathin' to be had fwom there."

"Oh, good!" cried Lady Peggy, with dancing eyes.

She took off her hat and shook her jolly-looking auburn curls, smiling warmly at Blake.

"You've not brought that fat friend of yours along with you, then?" she observed.

"Ahem!" Blake coloured. "Nunno! You see—"

"Why didn't you? I liked him."

Blake could not very well have explained that this was precisely the reason why he had not brought Fatty Wynn along. He coloured to a still deeper shade of crimson.

"And Figgins," broke in Ethel. "When I saw him yesterday, he said he'd be coming along, too!"

There was a disappointed note in Ethel's voice. Arthur Augustus went decidedly pink.

"As a mattah of fact—"

at once taken a boat and gone off up the river in hot pursuit.

A few minutes ago Blake & Co. had been feeling very cheery and triumphant; but now it was Figgins and Kerr and Fatty Wynn who were grinning cheerily and looking triumphant.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and the swell of St. Jim's glared at their rivals with feelings almost too deep for words.

"Lovely afternoon for the river!" observed Figgins, with a grin at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"And for a bathe," nodded Fatty Wynn, in a jovial voice. "No objection to us joining the party, of course?"



The boat in which Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn were clutching frantically at one another, tipped suddenly sideways. There was a terrific splash as the two juniors, locked in a wild embrace, fell clean into the river. (See Chapter 6.)

He did not finish his sentence. Shooting up-stream round the bend behind them had come another rowing-boat, with three St. Jim's juniors pulling at the flashing oars. They were overhauling the big, heavy boat ahead at a fast speed.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Blake, Herries, and Digby stared at the overtaking boat in utter consternation.

"Figgins!" breathed Blake faintly. "And Kerr! And—and Fatty Wynn!"

CHAPTER 6.

A Little Wetting!

THE New House trio had seen them. They slowed down and came drifting alongside, with cheery grins on their faces.

"Hallo, everybody!" sang out Figgins.

"Afternoon, Lady Peggy!" murmured Fatty Wynn, blushing.

"Why, it's Fatty!" cried Lady Peggy. "Hallo!"

Blake ground his teeth. The evident pleasure with which Peggy greeted Fatty Wynn annoyed him. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed a decidedly chilly look upon the grinning face of George Figgins as Ethel smiled upon him very brightly.

It seemed as if Blake's little scheme had failed to work after all!

As a matter of fact, Figgins & Co. had happened to hear from Grundy of the Shell that Blake & Co. had gone out of gates. So it did not take the New House trio long to tumble to the little trick that was being played on them! They had

in the presence of the girls from Spalding Hall it was impossible for Blake to decline their company. He glared at Fatty Wynn's grinning face wrathfully, but swallowed his feelings.

"Nunno!" he mumbled.

"Glad to have you, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus politely, with a glance at Figgins that would have stretched George Figgins lifeless in the bottom of his boat could looks but kill.

"Good!" chuckled Figgins.

And the New House trio resumed their oars, keeping abreast of the bigger boat and exchanging bright conversation across the few yards of intervening water with the rest of the party.

Glum though they were at first, Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy managed to cheer up after a while. After all, Figgins & Co. could not rob them of the company of the Spalding Hall trio! Once they made up their minds to the fact that their rivals of the New House were now included in the party there was no reason why they should not enjoy themselves nevertheless.

By the time they reached Merton Island the rival parties had cheered up wonderfully. The Spalding Hall girls were all in high spirits, and Blake had to admit that Lady Peggy was giving him every bit as much attention as she was to David Llewellyn Wynn!

"Here we are!" sang out Blake, as the boat was turned in towards the little wooded island. "I say, Gussy, old hoss, help me take the boat round to the end of the giddy island to moor it out of the stream, will you?"

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

The girls landed, accompanied by Herries and Digby, who were carrying their fair companions' bathing kit.

"Bring our bathing costumes along with you, Blake, old scout!" cried Herries from the bank.

Blake, pushing the boat out into the stream again, nodded.

Kerr had landed on the island and joined the others; but Figgins and Fatty Wynn paddled round after Blake and the swell of St. Jim's to moor their boat out of the stream, too. As the two boats rounded the corner of the island, well out of sight and sound of the Spalding Hall trio, Arthur Augustus gave Figgins an icy glance.

"Weally, Figgay, I considah it a fearful nerve of you three boundahs to tack yourselves on to the partay in this uncalled-for mannah!" snorted the swell of St. Jim's warmly. Figgins chuckled.

"Tried to give us the giddy slip, didn't you?" he grinned cheerily.

"But it didn't come off!" chortled Fatty Wynn.

All Blake's pent-up feelings suddenly boiled over.

"You fat cuckoo!" he roared. "I've a jolly good mind to duck you in the blessed river!"

"You?" sniffed Fatty Wynn. "You couldn't duck a fly in an ink-pot!"

The two boats had drawn in under the overhanging willows at the end of the island by now, side by side. Blake had made the rope fast to a branch, and Figgins had done the same for his boat. Fatty Wynn was also on his feet, and he and Blake glared at one another wrathfully.

"You burbling jabberwock——"

"You frabjous dummy——"

"Take that!"

"Owch! You take that!"

Blake and Fatty Wynn were hitting out lustily, and the boats swayed. Figgins gave a yell.

"Look out, you silly lunatics! You burbling idiots, you'll have us in the water!"

But the two staunch admirers of Lady Peggy were far too busy to heed Figgins' warning shout. They continued to let fly at one another with busy fists. Arthur Augustus jumped to his feet in alarm.

"Stop it, you fwabjous asses! Bai Jove! Yawooooop!"

Blake had lost his balance. He fell against Arthur Augustus, sending the swell of St. Jim's sprawling wildly into the next boat. Figgins gave a shout and leapt out on to the bank just in time. The next moment the boat in which Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn were clutching frantically at one another had tipped sideways.

There was a terrific splash.

"Oh! Yaroooooh!"

Locked in a wild embrace, Fatty Wynn and Arthur Augustus disappeared beneath the surface of the Rhyll!

CHAPTER 7.

In Borrowed Plumes!

FORTUNATELY, both Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn were sound swimmers, and it did not take them long to get to the bank of the island and flounder out of the water, drenched and gasping.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins could not stifle his merriment. He gurgled helplessly.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" hooted Fatty Wynn.

"This is fwightful!" wailed Arthur Augustus miserably.

"Go hon!" grinned Blake, as he jumped ashore after having righted the overturned boat. "You look nice and dry!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"You lunatic!" snorted Fatty Wynn. "It was all your blessed fault we went in!"

"Weally, Wynn——"

There was a sudden excited yell from Figgins.

"Great pip!" He stared out from the bank. "The bathing togs!"

Arthur Augustus had been carrying the bundle of bathing things when Blake had upset him. Now they could be seen vanishing rapidly down-stream. As the horrified juniors stared after them they saw the bundle disappear beneath the surface.

"They've gone!" groaned Blake. "Now we can't bathe!"

"Blow bathin'!" snorted Arthur Augustus. "I am soppin' wet, and all my clobber is wuined! Oh deah!"

"Well, come along and we'll see what we can do about it!" growled Blake.

He picked up the tea hamper and trudged through the trees towards the spot where they had left the others, with Figgins at his side. Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn trailed miserably after them, leaving a trail of puddles as they came. And the yell of laughter with which Herries

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and Digby and Kerr greeted their appearance did nothing towards cheering them up!

There were looks of concern on the faces of Ethel and Doris; but Lady Peggy Brooke, after a moment of staring astonishment, began to gurgle helplessly, as Figgins had done.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lady Peggy. "What a mess you two do look!"

Fatty Wynn smiled a ghostly smile, then glared at the grinning juniors. Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass and shivered.

"Ow! It's feahfully cold! Weally, your-fellows, I wish you would stop cacklin' like a lot of hyenas!" he added fiercely, under his breath.

"You two must change your clothes at once!" declared Ethel decidedly. "Put on your bathing things and dry those!"

"That's all vevy well, deah gal!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "But the bathin' clobber is gone!"

"What?" howled Herries and Digby.

"Oh deah!" cried Ethel, her pretty face a picture of dismay. "You two will catch your death of cold if you don't change!"

"But we have nothin' to change into, deah gal!" repeated the swell of St. Jim's miserably.

"That's the trouble!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Looks to me as if we shall have to miss the blessed picnic, Gussy, and buzz back to St. Jim's!"

There was a sudden exclamation from Lady Peggy:

"My hat!"

The others turned to her in surprise. Peggy's brown eyes were gleaming excitedly. She gave a little gurgle of merriment.

"I've got an idea!" she announced. "Ethel and Doris want to bathe. Well, while they're bathing, you two must change into their togs! Then you can dry your own over a fire."

"W-w-what?" gasped Fatty Wynn faintly.

"Bai Jove! Wats! I—I mean, nunno!" cried the swell of St. Jim's hastily, with a look of utter horror on his face. "I—I weally couldn't dream of it!"

"Rather not!" agreed Fatty Wynn.

At the idea of the figure he would cut in Ethel's or Doris' clothes, Fatty Wynn fairly shuddered.

But there were broad grins on the faces of the other juniors. Figgins chuckled.

"That's a great idea!"

Fatty Wynn and Arthur Augustus glared at him. Ethel smiled.

"I really think it is a good idea," she agreed. "You couldn't possibly get all the way back to the school without catching terrible colds in those soaked clothes! Doris and I will go and change into our bathing things, then you can borrow our clothes."

"But, Ethel, deah gal——"

"No, I insist! It's the only way!"

And Ethel and Doris picked up their bathing costumes and vanished into the trees, leaving the swell of St. Jim's and David Llewellyn Wynn staring at one another in glassy-eyed dismay.

"But we shall look such fwightful asses!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Never mind that—you always do, old chap!" chuckled Kerr.

"Bai Jove! Weally, Kerr——"

"Now, then, no more grousing!" broke in Lady Peggy severely. "It's my idea, so you might try to be polite about it!"

"Oh deah! Yaas, but——"

Arthur Augustus lapsed into an unhappy silence. Fatty Wynn said nothing more, either. He did not wish to offend Peggy, whatever happened. But he could not help but feel vaguely suspicious of the dancing twinkle in her eyes. It seemed just possible that Lady Peggy was getting a lot of fun out of their predicament, and would get still more out of seeing them arrayed in Ethel's and Doris' clothes!

"I'll go and see if their things are ready," said Lady Peggy calmly, and vanished into the trees.

"This is feahful, deah boys!" panted the swell of St. Jim's. "Weally, the gals are vevy kind, but——"

"Don't worry, Gussy! You'll look lovely!" chortled Blake.

"Pway do not be an ass, Blake! I considah——"

He broke off as Peggy returned into sight, carrying two bundles of clothes that caused Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn to shudder. But there was evidently no help for it now, and they took the bundles with as good a grace as they could muster.

Peggy went off again to rejoin Ethel and Doris. She chuckled merrily as she vanished.

And, amid a running fire of chaff from their fellow

(Continued on page 12.)

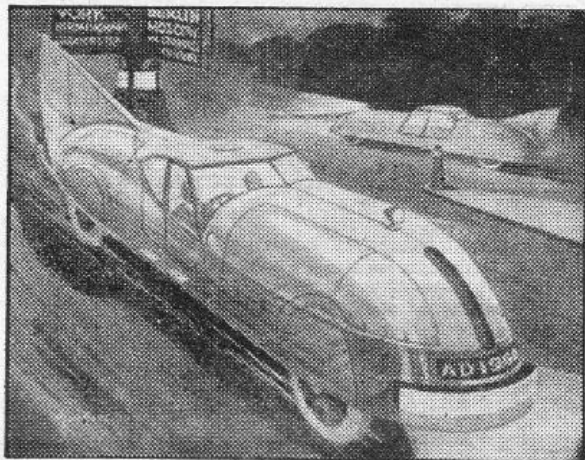
To be able to travel at 200 miles an hour in a touring-car, is yet another dream of the future. But Mechanical Science will bring this about as surely as it has already made tremendous changes in our world.

This speedy touring-car that will one day take the place of those already on the road, is the subject of next week's **GRAND COLOURED PICTURE CARD**, which will be presented **FREE** with every copy of the **GEM**.

Get next Wednesday's issue and add this Free Gift Card to your set!



MARVELS of the FUTURE!



No. 14.—A 200 m.p.h. Touring-Car!

HAD you lived in the eighteenth century and found yourself smitten with the fancy to go from, say, London to York, you would have thought nothing of taking a full week for the journey—in a bone-jolting horsed coach. The time is coming when the same journey will be completed, in absolute comfort, in something under an hour by touring motor-car!

Even to-day the Golden Arrow—that mighty wonder-car of Sir Henry Segrave's—could whizz from London to York in about three-quarters of an hour, if the roads were good enough! But these amazing 200 miles per hour touring-cars of the near future will be very unlike, externally at least, Segrave's record-breaking racer.

They will be built so that driver and passengers will be shut in completely, and there will be a huge "fin" attached to the tail of the car to facilitate steering. But, like Segrave's car, they will be fashioned almost on the lines of a projectile—a bullet-like box of tricks that, completely streamlined, will shoot itself to its predetermined stopping place at a pace far in excess of that now possible away from a racing or other specially prepared track.

Another peculiarity about these great touring-cars will be the headlight, which will extend in a semi-circle around the front of the bonnet. They will need those lights, too! Britain will be far too small then for the owner of a 200 m.p.h. car—and too crowded, for these machines will be as numerous as small family motor-cars are now. But the Channel Tunnel will solve all that.

What about foot passengers, did you say? There won't be any on the roads these monsters take. Great highways will be made across the face of Britain, on which it will be illegal for walkers to trespass. There will also be a law regulating the speed of the touring cars thereon—not regulating it upwards, but downwards. For there must be no such

(Next week's article in this intensely interesting series of Marvels of the Future will deal with "A Giant Helicopter," a subject which is also included in our topping series of coloured Picture Cards.)

thing as leisurely driving to hold up the whizzing traffic. There will be a *minimum* speed limit of forty miles an hour, and the car that drops below that will be run in

for loitering!

These motor speedways will converge on the Channel Tunnel, through which the swift traffic will pass to France, and then all over the Continent, where other special roads will have been constructed. These are already planned and mapped out, and work will commence on them when the international conference of motor-car clubs comes to a final agreement with the various governments concerned.

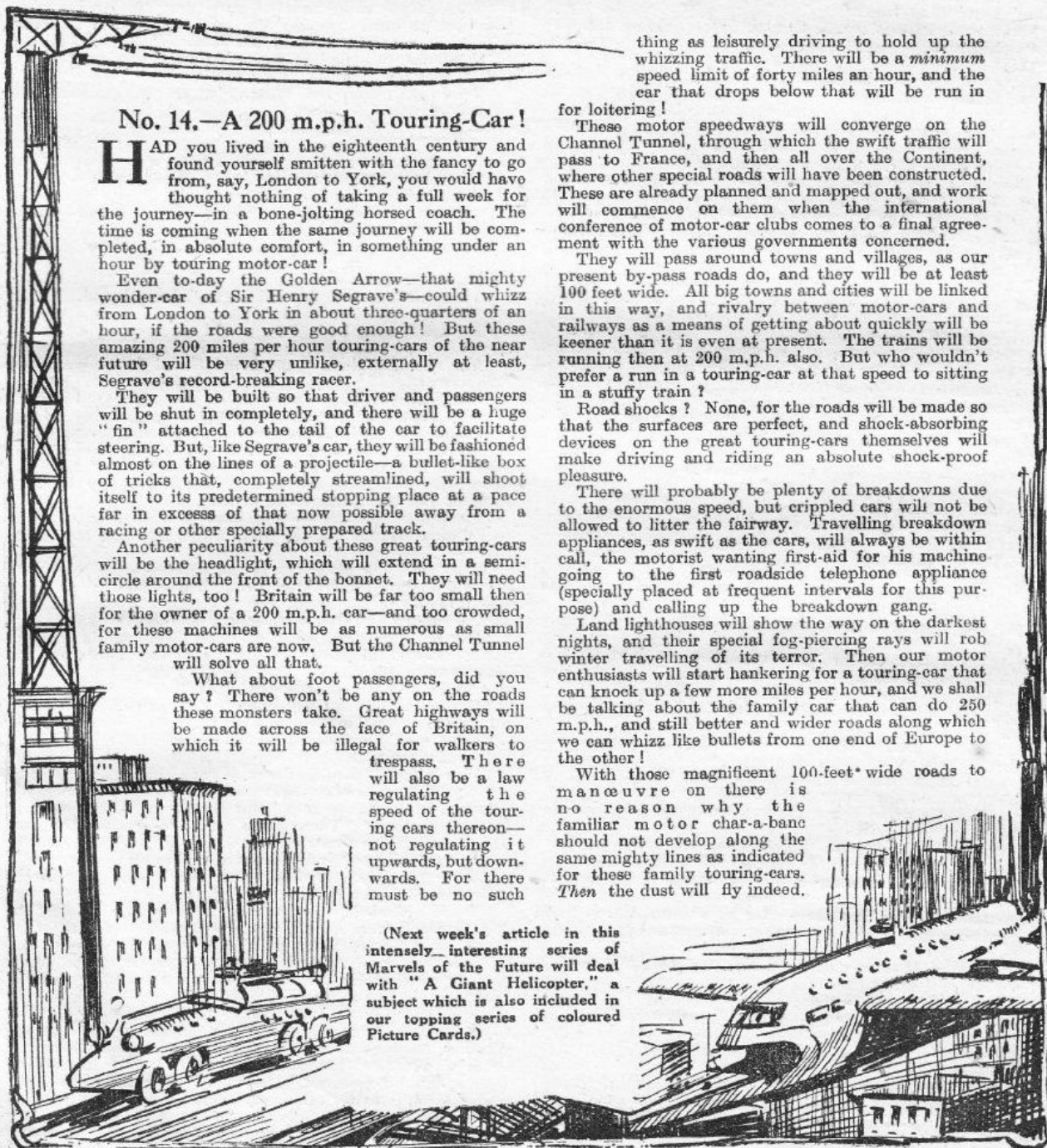
They will pass around towns and villages, as our present by-pass roads do, and they will be at least 100 feet wide. All big towns and cities will be linked in this way, and rivalry between motor-cars and railways as a means of getting about quickly will be keener than it is even at present. The trains will be running then at 200 m.p.h. also. But who wouldn't prefer a run in a touring-car at that speed to sitting in a stuffy train?

Road shocks? None, for the roads will be made so that the surfaces are perfect, and shock-absorbing devices on the great touring-cars themselves will make driving and riding an absolute shock-proof pleasure.

There will probably be plenty of breakdowns due to the enormous speed, but crippled cars will not be allowed to litter the fairway. Travelling breakdown appliances, as swift as the cars, will always be within call, the motorist wanting first-aid for his machine going to the first roadside telephone appliance (specially placed at frequent intervals for this purpose) and calling up the breakdown gang.

Land lighthouses will show the way on the darkest nights, and their special fog-piercing rays will rob winter travelling of its terror. Then our motor enthusiasts will start hankering for a touring-car that can knock up a few more miles per hour, and we shall be talking about the family car that can do 250 m.p.h., and still better and wider roads along which we can whizz like bullets from one end of Europe to the other!

With those magnificent 100-foot-wide roads to manoeuvre on there is no reason why the familiar motor char-a-banc should not develop along the same mighty lines as indicated for these family touring-cars. Then the dust will fly indeed.



"FOR LOVE OF LADY PEGGY!"

(Continued from page 10.)

juniors, Fatty Wynn and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy began their enforced change of garments, while their own soaked clothing was set up on sticks around a large fire that Figgins kindled.

Their shoes, at any rate, were soon dried, which was fortunate, for neither of them could possibly have squeezed their feet into the dainty shoes of the girls!

And when at last the transformation was completed, and they stood, crimson-faced and miserable, in their feminine garb, a great yell of laughter from Figgins and Kerr, Blake and Digby and Herries did nothing towards comforting them!

The juniors fairly shrieked.

"Oh, great pip!" gasped Blake. "What a dainty young thing Fatty does look!"

"And what an aristocratic-looking damsel Gussy makes!" chortled Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn grinned sheepishly. The Falstaff of the New House was always ready to take a joke against himself, and he realised that he must look decidedly comic.

But Arthur Augustus did not grin! He felt his ridiculous position keenly, though, as a matter of fact, with his slim build, he made a far more presentable-looking young lady in Ethel's garments than did the fat figure of the grinning New House fellow. Fatty Wynn had not found it easy to squeeze himself into Doris Levison's clothes; but now that he had succeeded he made a really astonishing looking damsel!

He rolled across towards the fire.

"Chuck rotting, you fellows!" he grinned. "Though I must say, if I look any more rummy than old Gussy does—"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Wynn!"

Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle tightly into his eye to glare at Fatty Wynn, and the effect of the eyeglass, combined with his feminine garb, brought a fresh yell of mirth from the rest.

"I say, miss," chuckled Blake, "you're the first girl I've ever seen with an eyeglass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall be compelled to administah a feahful thwashin', Blake, if you do not wefwain fwom makin' fatheaded wemarks!" snorted the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh, hush!" exclaimed Blake, in pretended horror. "That's not a ladylike way of talking, you know! I'm— Oh! Yow! Yarooooogh!"

With a decidedly unladylike movement Arthur Augustus had jumped forward and grasped Blake by the nose. He pulled hard, and Blake yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Go it, ye giddy cripples!"

Blake broke free at last, and was about to hurl himself at his aggressor when he remembered that if he were to bowl his chum over his borrowed garments would suffer.

"You silly jay!" hooted Blake, clasping his painful nasal organ.

Then he broke off quickly. Lady Peggy had entered the clearing.

At sight of Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn in their borrowed plumes she became almost helpless with laughter. But at last she dried her eyes, and surveyed the two discomforted juniors gaily.

"My hat!" she gasped. "You two look priceless!"

Then there were two more ripples of laughter as Ethel and Doris came swimming into view round the corner of the island.

Like Lady Peggy they went into paroxysms of mirth at the spectacle presented by Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn.

The swell of St. Jim's adjusted his eyeglass and surveyed his cousin unhappily.

"Ethel, deah gal, I weally—"

"But you look charming, Arthur!" announced Ethel bravely, with twinkling eyes.

"Bai Jove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no doubt that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and David Llewellyn Wynn were providing plenty of amusement for their friends that afternoon, even though they were not enjoying the joke themselves.

But the height of their misfortunes had yet to come.

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The whole party went off to the farther end of the island to watch the three girls diving, Lady Peggy having changed into her bathing-costume, too. And when at last they returned to the clearing to see whether the wet clothing of the luckless pair was yet dry, it was to find in their stead a heap of smouldering cloth.

In their absence the drying clothes had caught alight, and were now no more.

With utter horror in their faces, the swell of St. Jim's and David Llewellyn Wynn stared speechlessly at the charred remains.

CHAPTER 8.

Lady Peggy's Little Jape!

"OH, crumbs!" groaned Fatty Wynn.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the remnants of his smouldering clothes with feelings too deep for words. He merely gasped faintly.

"Great pip!" cried Figgins. "I say, that's awkward!"

"Awkward?" roared Fatty Wynn. "I'll say it jolly well is! What the dickens are we to do now?" He glanced down at his feminine attire in blank dismay. "Doris will be wanting her togs!" he gasped. "What on earth are Gussy and I to do?"

"Some of you chaps must at once wow back to the school and fetch us some clobber," declared the swell of St. Jim's, with grim determination in his face.

"Catch me missing the picnic to fetch you your blessed togs!" grunted Herries. "I want my tea."

"Your fault for not looking after your clobber, you idiots!" grinned Figgins.

"Bai Jove! Weally, Figgins, you ass—"

Lady Peggy appeared among the trees, and the swell of St. Jim's broke off hastily. Peggy was changed back from her bathing-costume into her ordinary clothes.

"Ethel and Doris are still swimming," she announced.

"They don't want to come in yet. So it doesn't matter if your clothes aren't dry yet, you two—"

Then she gave a gasp as her eyes fell on the smouldering remains by the fire.

Blake chuckled.

"Their clothes are dry all right," he grinned. "A bit too dry now."

"My hat!" said Lady Peggy. "I say, you're in the soup now!"

"You're right there!" mumbled David Llewellyn Wynn.

"This is awful!"

"Some of you chaps must fetch our clobber fwom the school," repeated Arthur Augustus, in a pleading voice.

But none of the fellows seemed at all anxious to oblige. It was a long row to the school, and whoever went would miss the rest of the picnic. No one saw why he should suffer for what, in the first place, had really been the fault of the two juniors concerned.

"I suppose some of us will have to go," grunted Blake to Figgins. "After all, the girls will want their togs before long—"

"That's so," nodded Figgins. "But—"

Lady Peggy interrupted him. There was a gleam of real mischief in her eyes. But her face was solemn enough as she turned to Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn.

"It's not fair that some of the others should miss the picnic because of you!" she said severely. "It's all your fault you got soaked. I think it's only fair that you should go and get your own clothes."

"But—but how can we, deah gal?" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "Not in this clobber."

"Why not?" demanded Lady Peggy firmly. "I think you look very nice."

"W-w-what?" panted Fatty Wynn.

"You'll have to go back to St. Jim's as quickly as possible, and change into your own togs," went on Lady Peggy serenely. "Then bring those back here for Doris and Ethel. They won't mind bathing till then, I know."

The two unhappy juniors stared at her in horror.

"You—you don't weally mean that?" breathed Arthur Augustus feebly.

"I do!" Lady Peggy gave a little gurgle of laughter.

"With Doris and Ethel's hats on you'll look all right. Come on! I'll go along with you!"

There was a chorus of chuckles from the other juniors as they watched the expression on the faces of the luckless pair.

They all realised that Lady Peggy wanted to accompany Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn in their strange disguise to enjoy the fun when they arrived at St. Jim's. And with winks at one another they agreed to back her up. It would certainly be a wonderful rag to send Gussy and the fat Fourth-Former off to St. Jim's in their present get-up.

"That's a good idea!" nodded Figgins, trying hard to keep a straight face. "Off you go!"

"You—you—you—" Arthur Augustus glared at

Figgins and struggled for words. But in the presence of Lady Peggy it was impossible to tell the leader of the New House what he thought of him. "Oh deah! Weally, Lady Peggy—"

"Come on!" grinned Lady Peggy. "Put this hat on!"

Arthur Augustus was too polite to resist as she planted a hat with the Spalding Hall ribbon on his aristocratic brow. But there was no doubt that the addition made all the difference to his appearance. With his short hair thus concealed, the swell of St. Jim's made quite a tall and striking-looking young lady.

"Bai Jove! I—I weally must pwotest—"

But Gussy's protests went unheeded, as did Fatty Wynn's. Public opinion was all against them. And with ghastly expressions on their crimson faces they realised that there was no escape for them.

Fatty Wynn made the fattest Spaldingite imaginable when Doris' hat had been pulled well down over his ears, concealing his shorn locks. But since there was evidently no help for it, Fatty Wynn decided to make the best of a bad job. Anyway, he told himself, Lady Peggy would be going with them. That was something. He grinned as he saw that Blake was looking a little disconsolate over that fact.

"Come on, Gussy!" mumbled Fatty Wynn. "We can't get out of it! Everybody'll be out on an afternoon like this, and I dare say we can sneak across the quad without being spotted."

The swell of St. Jim's brightened a little at that thought. But he made a final despairing protest.

"Weally, Lady Peggy, I—I do not wish to appeah wude, but weally—"

"I think it is jolly rude of you to keep grousing like this," said Lady Peggy decidedly.

"Oh deah! Vewy well, then. But—"

"Come along!" grinned Lady Peggy. "Or Ethel and Doris will have to wait too long for their togs! This way to the boat."

With miserable countenance, and his eyeglass tightly jammed into his eye beneath the brim of his Spalding Hall hat, the swell of St. Jim's followed Lady Peggy and climbed into the smaller of the two boats, together with Fatty Wynn.

"You'll have to join a ladies' rowing club, Gussy!" sang out Herries, from the bank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway do not be an ass, Hewwies!"

With scarlet faces Gussy and Fatty Wynn picked up their oars and pushed out into the stream. Lady Peggy, sitting in the back seat with a grin on her pretty face, waved to the crowd of juniors on the bank gaily.

She was enjoying herself immensely. Always ready for a "rag," Lady Peggy Brooke was getting lots of fun this afternoon out of the two hapless St. Jim's juniors!

"We'll be back soon!" she called out. "So long!"

Figgins kissed his hand to Arthur Augustus, and Arthur Augustus glared back at Figgins. The juniors gave a yell of merriment as the two strangely-clad Fourth-Formers dipped their oars and pulled off down the river.

"Oh, what a scream!" gasped Kerr. "Gussy's face!"

"And look at Fatty!" choriled Digby. "Oh, my hat!"

"Lady Peggy enjoys a good jape!" chuckled Herries.

"Rather! Ha, ha, ha!"

And with a chorus of chuckles the juniors watched the boat containing the new Spaldingite and her victims vanish round the bend.

CHAPTER 9.
More Trouble!

"ALL clear!"
It was Fatty Wynn who gave that murmur of satisfaction.

He and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, accompanied by the merrily grinning Lady Peggy, had stepped cautiously into Wayland High Street, from a side-road leading up from the river.

Despite all Lady Peggy's mischievous attempts to persuade them, the two St. Jim's juniors had utterly declined to go to the school boat-house in their feminine guise! They had left the boat in a secluded backwater at a point where the river passed fairly near Wayland, and had hurried into the little town intent upon getting a taxi-cab to take them to St. Jim's.

In a taxi-cab they could land right at the doors of their respective Houses safe from observation.

Their one fear had been that the High Street might be crowded with fellows from St. Jim's. But, as Fatty Wynn had just remarked, the coast was clear. Not a St. Jim's fellow was to be seen as they turned along the High Street in the direction of the station-yard, where a taxi was sure to be had.

With the broad brims of their straw hats pulled well

down over their faces, the two pseudo-Spaldingites hurried along the pavement, Fatty Wynn gasping for breath as he rolled along in his painfully tight costume on one side of Lady Peggy, while Arthur Augustus sailed elegantly along on her other side.

"Don't take such big steps, you sillies!" breathed Peggy. "Oh deah! No, I suppose not!"

Arthur Augustus altered his gait to a less manly stride, with a groan. Already the strain of his enforced masquerade was beginning to tell upon him. At that moment, the swell of St. Jim's would have given a term's pocket-money for even an old pair of trousers!

But to the juniors' relief, no one in the High Street paid much attention to them as they hurried along. One or two smiles were aroused by the sight of Fatty Wynn's plump figure, almost bursting from Doris' garments; for David Llewellyn made about the fattest schoolgirl that had ever been seen! But otherwise the trio were unheeded.

They were near the station now, and it was with a gasp of relief that Arthur Augustus caught sight of a waiting taxi.

But the next moment his jaw had dropped. There were exclamations of horror and dismay from both Lady Peggy and Fatty Wynn. The trio stopped dead.

For out of a side-road in front of them had emerged a "crocodile" of schoolgirls. And accompanying it was the brisk little figure of Miss Finch, the headmistress of Spalding Hall.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Lady Peggy.

Already they had been seen.

"Help!" panted Fatty Wynn, in utter panic.

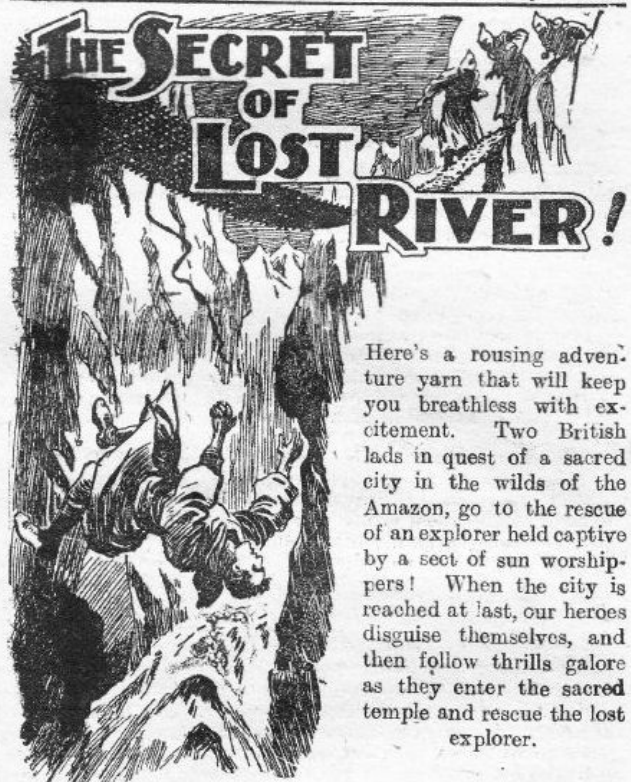
He turned as if to bolt, but Lady Peggy caught his arm.

"Don't be an ass!" she whispered fiercely. "Stick here—it'll be all right! She's short-sighted."

"Bai Jove! But—"

(Continued on next page.)

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The swell of St. Jim's broke off with a groan. The procession was abreast of them now. Miss Finch beamed at the trio through her glasses. But, as Peggy had said, she was decidedly short-sighted. She recognised Peggy, and she recognised the garments worn by the other two as belonging to Ethel Cleveland and Doris Levison. Their faces, deep in the shadow of their hats, she did not notice.

"Why, girls!" exclaimed Miss Finch brightly. "So you are on your way back to the school? You had better fall in behind."

Arthur Augustus jumped as if he had been shot. Even Lady Peggy looked blank for the moment.

"Let's bolt for it, Gussy!" groaned Fatty Wynn wildly.

But to bolt now would be to expose the whole thing, and no doubt land Lady Peggy into a first-class row with Miss Finch! Despite their horror at their predicament, the two St. Jim's juniors had chivalry enough to think of Peggy; almost before they realised it, they had fallen in dazedly in the rear of the little "crocodile" with her.

"Oh deah! This is frightful! Whatever will—"

"Shut up!" breathed Lady Peggy. "She'll hear you!"

The swell of St. Jim's lapsed into a despairing silence.

Down the High Street the procession marched, giggling explosively for the most part. The Spalding Hall girls had been quick to tumble to the facts of the case, for Peggy had given a hasty whispered explanation to the girl beside whom Fatty Wynn was rolling breathlessly, and the story had been passed up the double line like wildfire. Arthur Augustus, sailing along at Peggy's side in the rear-most file, wished that the earth could open and swallow him up.

Fortunately, the taller girls were in the rear files, so that Arthur Augustus was not conspicuous. Without his eye-glass, he did not make a bad-looking girl, and so, unless Miss Finch happened to notice the extraordinary bulk of the figure she had taken to be Doris Levison, the two juniors were safe enough for the present at any rate.

The "crocodile" turned out of the High Street in the direction of Spalding village. As they did so, Arthur Augustus caught his breath.

"G-gweat Scott! Wacke!"

Strolling towards them were three figures wearing St. Jim's caps. Racke, Crooke, and Mellish, the cads of the School House, were approaching, with grins on their faces, as they raised their caps politely to Miss Finch.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Fatty Wynn in utter dismay.

Too late, he lowered his head. Racke had caught sight of his face as the procession went by, and Racke had jumped almost out of his skin.

He said something to Crooke and Mellish, and they too started convulsively as their eyes fell on the two rear files of the Spalding Hall "crocodile."

"G-G-Gussy!" panted Mellish faintly.

"And Fatty Wynn!" gasped Crooke.

It was too late to conceal their identity now! Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn glared at the three cads of St. Jim's, crimson-faced. Racke & Co. were grinning broadly.

They raised their caps again with extravagant bows. Miss Finch, at the head of the "crocodile," was well out of earshot.

"Good afternoon, Miss Flossie!" murmured Racke.

"Charmed to meet you!" gasped Mellish.

How the pair of Fourth-Formers came to be in their present plight was a mystery to Racke & Co. But now, with their first amazement over, they were fairly chortling.

"Shut up, you fwabjous asses!" breathed the swell of St. Jim's fiercely as he hurried by. "If you bwaeathe a word about this at St. Jim's, I shall administah a feahful thwashin' to each of you!"

"S-same here!" stuttered Fatty Wynn.

"Oh, those are harsh words, Miss Jemima!" exclaimed Racke in a shocked tone. "No nice girl would use them!"

But the next moment the grin on Racke's face vanished abruptly. In passing, Fatty Wynn reached out an arm and, with an exasperated snort, punched Racke on the nose.

Racke sat down in the road with a bump and a yell, and the little procession passed on, leaving the cad of the Shell sitting in the dust dazedly. Miss Finch had failed to notice his antics, fortunately, and Fatty Wynn chuckled as he rolled on with the rest. So did Arthur Augustus and Lady Peggy.

"Good shot!" murmured Lady Peggy. "Right on the nose! Serve him right."

But the faces of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and David Llewellyn Wynn were thoroughly glum as they and the giggling Spaldingites marched on towards Miss Finch's establishment.

How they were to escape from their predicament was not worrying them so much now as the knowledge that Racke & Co. would set St. Jim's ringing with the news of their amazing masquerade as pupils of Spalding Hall!

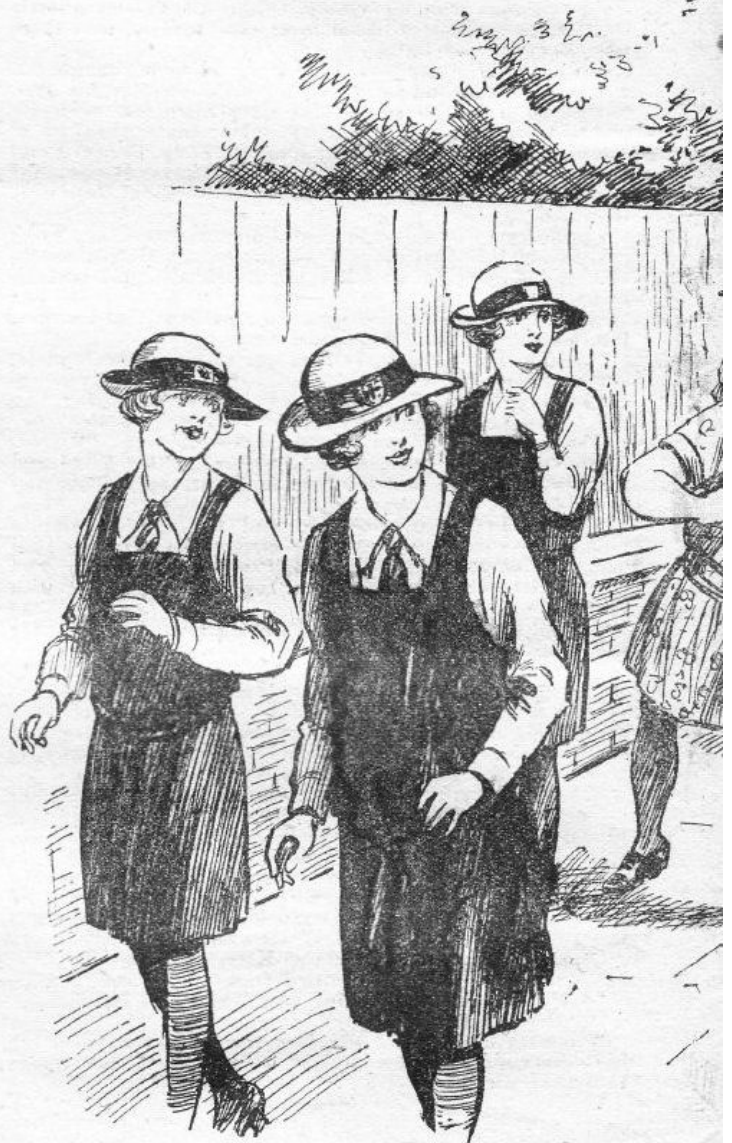
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CHAPTER 10.

The New "Girls."

IT did not take long for Miss Finch and her "crocodile" to reach Spalding Hall. The girls were marched into the house without a chance arising for the two St. Jim's juniors to break away. When they were at last dismissed in the Hall, Peggy seized them by the arm. "Quick!" she breathed. "Come along with me, before you're spotted!"

And before the other Spaldingites had time to gather round them, Lady Peggy had rushed Arthur Augustus and



"If you bwaeathe a word about this at St. Jim's," said Arthur A a feahful thwashin' to each of you!" "Oh, those are harsh words, At that, the disguised Fatty Wynn reached out an arm, and, with

Fatty Wynn up the stairs and along the Fifth Form passage to the study she shared with Ethel and Doris.

In the study, with the door closed, Lady Peggy gave way to helpless laughter. The luckless pair surveyed her with rather mixed feelings.

"Now what's to happen?" groaned Fatty Wynn.

"We are pwopahly in the soup!" sighed the swell of St. Jim's. "I considah—"

"Rats!" broke in Lady Peggy cheerfully. "You're all right now. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll telephone for a taxi for you, and you can sneak out to it when the coast's clear!"

Fatty Wynn brightened.

"Oh, good! But, I say, what about Ethel and Doris? They'll want these togs!"

"I'll send some others along for them by Sammy Thrupp, the porter!" said Lady Peggy. "He's a good sport, and he'll like a row on the river, anyway. Wait here."

In fear and trembling the two disguised juniors waited, while Lady Peggy hurried off to arrange matters. She was back before long, grinning cheerfully.

"That's all right," she announced. "Thrupp's gone to the island with fresh togs for Ethel and Doris, so they'll be all right. And the taxi's on its way here!"

"Bai Jove, that's wipin'!" beamed Arthur Augustus, adjusting his eyeglass. Then he groaned. "If only Wacke & Co. hadn't spotted us in Wayland, evewythin' would have been all wight!"

But the swell of St. Jim's was a little too optimistic. Their troubles were not over yet, by any means.

From the study window they saw the taxi arrive a few minutes later, and Peggy hurried down to tell the man to wait. Then, when the coast was clear, she led Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn cautiously downstairs. They met one or two giggling Spalding girls on the way, but they were all in the secret, and they helped keep cave as Peggy smuggled her companions out into the quadrangle, where the taxi was waiting.

"Cheerio!" she whispered.

With wildly fluttering skirts, Arthur Augustus and Fatty



Augustus, as he hurried along with the procession, "I shall administah miss Jemima!" exclaimed Racke. "No nice girl would use them!" and he exasperatedly snorted, punched Racke on the nose. (See Chapter 9.)

Wynn made a bolt for the taxi. Arthur Augustus flung open the door.

"St. Jim's!" he cried to the driver.

But before Arthur Augustus could jump in, there was a sudden sharp voice behind them. The two juniors turned with a start.

Miss Finch had appeared at a doorway behind them, and was hurrying towards them with a beaming smile.

"Why," she cried, "so here you are! It is Celia and Mary, is it not?"

Arthur Augustus and David Llewellyn stared at her with goggling eyes.

They did not know that Miss Finch was expecting two new girls that evening, or realise that they had been mistaken for the expected new arrivals. But Miss Finch imagined that the two "girls" had just alighted from the waiting taxi, having just come from the station. She beamed at them.

"You are rather earlier than I had expected!" she murmured. "But your luggage has arrived safely, and is waiting for you in your study."

And before they had time to guess her intention, Miss Finch had warmly kissed each of them on the cheek.

"Oh, lor'!" breathed Fatty Wynn, shooting a despairing glance to where the dismayed figure of Lady Peggy could be seen watching from a distant doorway.

The face of Arthur Augustus was a picture.

"Now, which of you is Celia, and which is Mary?" queried Miss Finch brightly. "Are you Mary, my dear?" she added, glancing at Arthur Augustus.

"Nunno! Wathah not!" gasped Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Then you are Mary!" exclaimed Miss Finch, turning to Fatty Wynn. "And you are Celia? Now come with me, and I will take you to your study at once."

There was no help for it, without betraying their true identity. As in a dream, the two juniors followed the little headmistress of Spalding Hall as she re-entered the house.

Back to the Fifth Form passage they were taken, and shown into a study a few doors down from Lady Peggy's. Some luggage standing on the floor evidently belonged to the real Celia and Mary, now on their way to Spalding Hall, little dreaming that their places had been taken for a while by two juniors from St. Jim's!

"You have had tea?" inquired Miss Finch, and Fatty Wynn nodded hastily. "Then perhaps you had better change into your school costumes and come downstairs in ten minutes. I am just about to take the department class, my dears. You can join it!"

Miss Finch rustled from the room, closing the door behind her, leaving Arthur Augustus and the Falstaff of the New House gazing at one another with glossy eyes.

"Now the game's up!" groaned Fatty Wynn.

"Bai Jove, yaas! Whatevah will Miss Finch say when she discovahs?" panted the swell of St. Jim's faintly.

But the next moment the door opened hastily, and Lady Peggy appeared. She closed the door quickly behind her, and faced the pair with a gleam of desperate determination in her bright eyes. She carried a bundle under her arm.

"It's all up!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "There'll be an awful row! We've got to go downstairs to the department class. She thinks we're somebody else—"

"I know," nodded Peggy coolly. "Well, there's only one thing to be done. There'd be a frightful row if you were caught, so you jolly well mustn't be. She hasn't spotted you yet, so there's no reason why she should at all. You'll have to go through with the department class, and then it'll be easy to get away afterwards. I've squared the taxi-man, and he's waiting a little way down the road."

"But, Peggay, deah girl—"

"I—I say, we can't possibly! We—"

"Shut up!" cried Lady Peggy. "And do as you're told!"

Hastily she unrolled the bundle on the table, revealing two school costumes, as worn by the Spalding Hall pupils, and a couple of golden wigs, evidently from the school theatrical store.

Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn stared at her dumbly.

"Gweat Scott! I—I considah—"

"You've simply got to!" pleaded Lady Peggy. "I shall get it in the neck otherwise. If Miss Finch spots you now, I—"

There was nothing under the sun that Fatty Wynn, at any rate, would not have done for Lady Peggy.

"All right!" he mumbled.

"Bai Jove! Look heah, Wynn! I considah—"

"Rats! Be a sport, Gussy! Miss Finch never saw through us just now, with hats on, so there's no reason why she should with wigs. We'll do it, Peggy!"

"Good egg!"

And Lady Peggy vanished from the study. The door closed, and the two juniors made their hasty change of costume. With their wigs on, as Fatty Wynn had said, there was really very little likelihood of the short-sighted little headmistress guessing their true sex. Arthur Augustus looked quite a presentable Spaldingite when the change was completed; and Fatty Wynn, though he certainly looked tubby enough for two, made a jovial-looking young lady, at any rate!

Peggy reappeared a few minutes later, with two pairs of shoes for them.

"I bagged them out of one of the mistress' rooms," she laughed breathlessly. "She won't notice till I put them back, and they ought to be big enough for you!"

Even so, it was rather a tight squeeze for the two St. Jim's juniors to cram their feet into the shoes provided. The feet of both were useful enough on the footer field during the Soccer season, but they were scarcely fitted to be clad in ladies' shoes!

From somewhere below could be heard a bell, and the hurrying footsteps of Spaldingites trooping downstairs.

"The girls all know about you!" grinned Lady Peggy.

"But none of them will give the show away. You both look quite all right! Come on."

With miserable faces, the two "new girls" followed Lady Peggy from the study and down the stairs, to the big room where Miss Finch was about to instruct them in the art of a lady-like deportment!

CHAPTER 11.

The Deportment Class!

"H A, ha, ha!"

There was a chorus of rippling laughs as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and David Llewellyn Wynn stumbled into the big room on their unaccustomed high heels.

A dozen or so Spaldingites were gathered there, but Miss Finch herself had not yet put in an appearance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, look at them!"

"Oh dear! How funny!"

The two disguised St. Jim's juniors stared round with scarlet countenances.

On all sides the grinning faces of pretty girls were fixed upon them.

Several of them were girls whom the juniors had met on previous visits to Spalding Hall. Norah Grant, the captain, was there, laughing with the rest.

Arthur Augustus gave her a sickly smile.

"G-good evenin', Miss Gwant!"

Norah Grant tried to answer, but she broke off into a peal of laughter instead, and the colour of the swell of St. Jim's face went an even deeper shade of red than before.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "I—I say, I can't walk properly in these blessed shoes, Gussy!"

"Neither can I, deah boy!"

"You'll soon learn!"

chuckled Peggy. "This is the deportment class, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Spaldingites shrieked. They had gathered round the two St. Jim's juniors in a laughing circle. But they turned away quickly as the door opened and Miss Finch rustled into the room.

"Line up, girls!"

The Spaldingites lined up, and Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn, with inward groans, lined up with them.

Lady Peggy slipped between them.

"Peggy, deah gal—" murmured the swell of St. Jim's miserably.

"Sssh! Shut up!" breathed Peggy.

"But these shoes are fwightfully painful—"

"Never mind!"

"N-no, but weally—"

"No talking, girls!" exclaimed Miss Finch severely.

Arthur Augustus gasped and kept silent.

The deportment class began!

Miss Finch was very keen about deportment, and even some of her regular class did not find it easy to please her as they attempted to imitate the little headmistress' instruction.

Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn certainly did not shine!

At the best of times, David Llewellyn Wynn was not exactly a graceful individual. Now, with high-heeled shoes squeezing his feet, he looked more like an elephant with corns than anything, as Lady Peggy told him afterwards.

Arthur Augustus was more accustomed to moving in an elegant fashion. But even he, as he sailed round the room in the line of softly giggling Spaldingites, found Miss Finch difficult to please! It was with great difficulty that he kept his head at all and did not become utterly panic-stricken beneath the eagle eyes of Miss Finch, as did Fatty Wynn.

"Celia!"

Arthur Augustus jumped as he remembered that he was supposed to be the young lady of that name.

"Bai Jove! Y-yaas?" he gasped.

It was Miss Finch's turn to gasp.

"Dear me! Really, Celia! 'By Jove' is by no means a nice expression for you to use!"

"Oh cwumbs!"

"What?" cried Miss Finch sharply. "Goodness gracious! I am afraid you have picked up some very regrettable expressions somewhere, Celia! Understand, once and for all, that you cannot use them here!"

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"What?" cried Miss Finch sharply. "Goodness gracious! I am afraid you have picked up some very regrettable expressions somewhere, Celia! Understand, once and for all, that you cannot use them here!"

And Miss Finch glared at the swell of St. Jim's very severely through her spectacles. Arthur Augustus was crimson.

"You do not walk at all nicely, Celia!" went on Miss Finch coldly. "Pray do not take such absurdly long strides! It is not ladylike."

"Oh!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He had forgotten to be careful of his gait, despite a warning from Lady Peggy. He altered it hastily. Miss Finch turned her attentions to David Llewellyn Wynn.

Fatty Wynn saw her eyes on him, as he endeavoured to walk round the room in a really lady-like way, and lost his head completely. He caught one foot against the other, and the next moment had gone sprawling on the floor with a terrific concussion.

Bump!

"Gerrrooogh!"

The fat Fourth-Former sat up dazedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Spaldingites shrieked.

"Girls!" thundered Miss Finch. "Silence! Mary, get up at once!"

David Llewellyn Wynn staggered to his feet, hobbling painfully.

"Yow!" he gasped. "Oh!"

He hobbled back to his place in the line. Miss Finch pursed her lips.

"Mary, come here! Halt, girls."

"M-me?" panted David Llewellyn Wynn.

"Yes!"

Fatty Wynn, with a horrified glance at Lady Peggy and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, rolled towards Miss Finch.

"I am afraid your deportment is anything but—ah—graceful!" exclaimed Miss Finch. "Now, follow me across the room, and copy my movements!"

"Oh lor'!"

Fortunately, Miss Finch did not hear that muttered exclamation from her fat "pupil" as she turned to demonstrate how a young lady really should walk.

With elegant steps Miss Finch sailed across the room, and Fatty Wynn rolled after her, wishing that the earth would open and swallow him.

The sight of the fat junior's attempts to imitate Miss Finch's elegant deportment was almost too much for the watching Spaldingites.

Giggles and suppressed laughs were to be heard, and Fatty Wynn went the colour of a ripe beetroot. He glanced miserably at Lady Peggy and saw that she, too, was hardly able to stifle her merriment.

Then the tragedy happened!

In his desperate attempts to imitate Miss Finch, Fatty Wynn suddenly lost his head again. His feet seemed to get mixed up in some extraordinary way, and the next moment he had gone sprawling on the slippery floor a second time.

But this time, in shooting forward, he had crashed into Miss Finch!

"Oh! Whooooops!"

David Llewellyn Wynn collapsed in a breathless heap on the floor, with Miss Finch sitting dazedly on top of him. His wig fell from his head.

"My hat!" groaned Lady Peggy. "That's done it!"

CHAPTER 12.

Bowled Out!

"OH!" gasped Miss Finch faintly. "Oh! Goodness!" The bewildered lady sat on Fatty Wynn's broad chest and panted.

"Yow!" mumbled Fatty Wynn. "Oh! Please gerroff!"

Norah Grant and two or three other Spaldingites darted forward and raised Miss Finch to her feet. Fatty Wynn scrambled up, clutching his wig.

But it was too late to replace it on his cropped head! Miss Finch gazed at him in dazed horror.

"A—a boy!" breathed Miss Finch weakly. "Oh, bless my soul! A boy!"

A very grim sparkle came into the eyes of the little headmistress. She had recovered from the first shock of her upsetting at the hands of the supposed new girl, and now it did not take her long to recover from the shock of the amazing discovery that it was not a girl at all!

With grimly gleaming eyes, Miss Finch surveyed the

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crimson-faced St. Jim's junior as though her gaze bored clean through him. Then her eyes swept towards Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"And you!" cried Miss Finch biting. "I suppose you are a boy, too!"

With an angry pull, she whisked the wig from the startled head of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh! Bai Jove!"

"Silence!" thundered the little headmistress in a voice that caused the two unhappy juniors to shake in their shoes.

"So you are not Celia and Mary at all! You have impersonated them for a joke!"

"Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Nunno! At least—"

"You—you see, ma'am, as a mattah of fact—"

"Silence! I wish to hear no excuses for your impudent hoax!" cried Miss Finch, in tones so icy that Fatty Wynn told himself it was a wonder the air did not freeze around her. "Follow me!"

She turned and sailed from the room.

With sheepish glances at the Spaldingites, the two St. Jim's juniors slunk after her.

Lady Peggy darted forward.

"It's rotten!" she cried. "I'll tell her it's all my fault—"

"You won't do anything of the kind!" growled Fatty Wynn. "We're 'n for squalls, but that's no reason why you should be, too. It can't help, you saying anything."

"But—"

"Not a giddy word!"

And with that strict injunction, Fatty Wynn rolled from the room on the heels of the swell of St. Jim's, in Miss Finch's stormy wake.

Ting, ting, ting!

The telephone bell in the handsome study of Dr. Holmes, the headmaster of St. Jim's, tinkled sharply.

The old Head picked up the receiver and placed it to his ear.

"Hallo! Miss Finch? Ah! Good-evening, madam—"

Then, as he listened, Dr. Holmes seemed to jump almost out of his skin.

"Bless my soul! Two of my boys! Masquerading as new pupils at your school? In—in feminine apparel! D'Arcy and Wynn? Good heavens!"

At the other end of the wire the voice of the little headmistress of Spalding Hall was so exceedingly indignant and irascible that Dr. Holmes felt almost guilty himself.

"My dear Miss Finch—" he began soothingly.

But the voice of Miss Finch continued to scold in most biting terms. The Head turned a little pink.

"Hem! Of course, madam, the two boys shall be punished severely for their prank. I beg you to—ah—quieten yourself. I—"

But the Head could scarcely get a word in edgeways.

"The woman seems to imagine that I am to blame!" gasped the Head to himself feebly. "Anyone would think I have arranged the whole prank myself! Bless my soul! Will she never stop?"

He shifted uneasily in his chair.

"I can assure you, madam, that the two boys in question shall be adequately punished!" he gasped at last, breaking in on the flow of indignation from the other end of the wire. "I will send—ah—suitable garments immediately, and on their return to the school I will interview them myself at once! Good-bye, madam!"

And Dr. Holmes jammed the receiver hastily back on the hook, and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. He touched a bell, and Toby, the page, appeared.

"Send Master Merry to me at once!"

Toby vanished, and the Head's brow grew stern as he rose to his feet and paced the carpet in an almost agitated way. Miss Finch's flow of biting anger had quite upset the usual equanimity of the dignified old Head!

There was a tap on the door, and Tom Merry entered the study. The captain of the Shell was looking puzzled at the unexpected summons. Dr. Holmes fixed him with a grim look.

"I have just received an extraordinary communication from the headmistress of—er—Spalding Hall!" exclaimed the Head. "The lady is most upset. However, that is by the way. She actually said— But no matter. It seems that two Fourth Form boys, D'Arcy and Wynn, have ventured to play a most foolish and impudent prank. They have impersonated two expected new arrivals of Spalding Hall, and imposed upon Miss Finch for a considerable time! I want you to hurry over to Spalding Hall, and to take with you an outfit of clothing for each of the—er—offenders. Please give Miss Finch my compliments, and if you can—er—pacify her in any way—"

The Head broke off and sat down, passing a hand across his brow.

"Very good, sir!" murmured Tom Merry, trying hard to conceal his astonishment.

The captain of the Shell left the study, grinning and amazed.

"Great pip!" breathed Tom. "The silly asses! They'll get it in the neck properly!"

Some minutes later Tom Merry was cycling briskly out of the gates of St. Jim's, with a large suitcase strapped to the carrier of his machine.

There was still a broad grin on Tom's face. But he could not help feeling sorry for Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn.

There was trouble in store for them! Of that there was no possible doubt, no possible doubt whatever!

CHAPTER 13.

Lady Peggy to the Rescue!

WITH majestically frowning brow, Dr. Holmes paced his study carpet, brooding over the irascible comments of the angry little headmistress of Spalding Hall.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured again and again. "I can only imagine that the poor lady was most upset to have used such terms!"

He touched the bell sharply, and Toby appeared in answer to the summons.

Toby was grinning.

All St. Jim's knew of D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn's masquerade by now, and Toby had not been long in learning it, too. For Racke & Co. had returned to the school full of the story. And the punch on the nose that Racke had received from David Llewellyn Wynn's unmaidenly fist had made the cad of the Shell all the more eager to let everyone know of their march down Wayland High Street at the tail of the Spalding Hall "crocodile."

"Yessir!" grinned Toby.

"Have Master Wynn and Master D'Arcy returned to the school yet?"

"No, sir. Not yet, sir."

Toby vanished, still grinning. The Head resumed his worried pacing to and fro. Then he went to a cupboard and took out a cane and laid it on the table.

There was a tap on the door. Toby appeared again.

"A young lady to see you, sir!" gasped Toby, who was looking rather breathless and bewildered.

"A—a young lady?" ejaculated the Head.

"Yessir. Lady Peggy Brooke is the name she gave, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

The Head was not used to being visited by young ladies! He stared at Toby in bewilderment. Before he could speak again, a slim, determined figure pushed Toby impatiently aside and planted itself in front of the headmaster of St. Jim's.

"I say, are you the Head?" inquired Lady Peggy calmly.

"Cos, if so, I want to see you."

Dr. Holmes jumped.

He was not used to being addressed in that free and easy way. He gasped.

"Yes, I—I am the headmaster."

"Oh, good egg!"

"I—I beg your pardon!" gasped the Head faintly.

"I just said 'good egg!' ", explained Lady Peggy.

"Bless my soul!"

The Head frowned majestically. Lady Peggy smiled a cheery smile.

The frown died from the old Head's face. He, too, smiled.

There was no doubt that Lady Peggy looked very pretty, standing there with a determined gleam in her brown eyes. She had cycled over from Spalding Hall in great haste, to reach the school before Fatty Wynn and Arthur Augustus returned with Tom Merry, once again clad in their own

(Continued on next page.)



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clothes! She had slipped away from Spalding Hall without bothering about a hat, and her auburn locks were wildly tumbled, and her face was a little flushed from her haste.

"You may go, Toby!" exclaimed the Head.

Toby went—to confide to old Taggles, the porter, that a most amazingly cheeky young lady had forcibly insisted upon his taking her to the Head.

"When I says as how the 'Ead's busy, she takes hold o' my hair and pulls it!" beamed Toby. "'Don't talk rot,' she says. 'You take me to the beak!' My heye, she's a nib, she is!"

"Dunno what young ladies is a-comin' to!" growled Ephraim Taggles. "Orful, I calls it."

"Oh, I dunno!" murmured Toby. "Pretty she was, and no horror!"

In the Head's study Dr. Holmes motioned his visitor to a chair.

"Pray be seated—er—Lady Peggy!"

"That's all right, thanks," returned Lady Peggy easily.

"I'll stand. I just wanted to see you a minute—"

"Ah, yes! Now, what did you wish to see me about?" beamed the Head, surveying the girl with kindly eyes through his spectacles.

"It's about Wynn and D'Arcy," explained Lady Peggy.

The Head jumped.

"Bless my soul!"

"I suppose they're in for a row?" murmured Lady Peggy.

"A—a row?" gasped the Head. "You mean, they will be punished for their recent prank?"

"That's the idea," returned Peggy. "They'll get it in the neck?"

"In—in the neck?"

The Head passed a hand over his lofty brow.

"Ahem! Yes, they will get it—er—decidedly in the neck, as you put it!" he murmured faintly.

Lady Peggy smiled her most entrancing smile.

"I say," she suggested in a confidential tone, "what about letting them off?"

The Head stared at her dazedly. Suddenly Lady Peggy's eyes widened as they fell on the cane lying on the table.

"My hat!" she exclaimed. "You're not going to wade into them with that?"

"W-wade into them?" breathed the Head feebly.

"Please don't!" pleaded Lady Peggy. "You see, as a matter of fact—"

She broke off. "You won't split to Miss Finch if I tell you something?"

"Anything you say shall be treated as confidential," the Head gasped.

"Good for you! Well, you see, it was really all my fault that D'Arcy and Fatty—I mean, Wynn—got into this mess."

"Your fault, Lady Peggy?" ejaculated Dr. Holmes in astonishment.

"Rather! I made them do it. I thought it would be an awful rag. You see, they looked so frightfully funny—particularly Fatty." Lady Peggy gave a gurgle of laughter.

"You've no idea! And then, by mistake, they got let in for the department class, and, of course, they made an awful mess of it. And Fatty Wynn fell down and pulled Miss Finch down, too, and she sat on him, and—and—"

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Lady Peggy could not continue. At the memory of the department class she broke into helpless laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head adjusted his spectacles and surveyed her with a very peculiar expression on his face.

"Bless my soul! Miss Finch actually suffered physical violence from the young scoundrels?"

"No; Fatty did from her!" gurgled Lady Peggy. "She sat on him!"

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

"It was a scream!" gasped Lady Peggy. "You ought to have been there. You missed a real good laugh. You'd have yelled!"

"I trust I should have done nothing of the kind!" cried the Head hastily.

"You couldn't have helped it," Lady Peggy assured him. "You'd have gone blue in the face, laughing."

"B-blue in the face?" ejaculated Dr. Holmes weakly. "Bless my soul!"

"Anyway, it was all my fault. So you will let them off, won't you?"

And Lady Peggy again bestowed upon the rather dazed headmaster of St. Jim's her most entrancing smile.

"Ahem!"

"Think how funny it all was!" urged Lady Peggy.

The Head put on a majestic frown. He seemed about to speak, but changed his mind. The frown remained with obvious difficulty. A slow smile appeared on his handsome old face.

"That's it!" Lady Peggy observed cheerfully. "Smile!"

The Head did smile. His smile grew quite broad. He chuckled.

Lady Peggy breathed a sigh of relief.

"Really, my dear!" exclaimed the Head, "I must admit that, from your account, the—er—happenings at Spalding Hall seem to have contained a certain humourous element!"

"You bet they have!"

"And you assure me that it was your fault rather than theirs, Lady Peggy—"

"It was—honest!"

The Head broke off as a tap sounded on the door. It opened in response to his command, and the glum faces of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and David Llewellyn appeared in the doorway. The Head started. So did the two dejected juniors at the sight of Lady Peggy.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, surveying her through his eyeglass with the uttermost astonishment.

"Hallo!" said Lady Peggy.

"Er—come in, my dear boys!" said the Head.

Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn jumped.

They had certainly not expected to be greeted as "dear boys" upon their arrival at the Head's dreaded sanctum. They glanced at one another dazedly, and entered the room. The Head smiled. He did not want to, but he did. He had caught Lady Peggy's eye.

"Miss Finch has informed me that you boys were involved in a—ahem—practical joke at her school!" exclaimed the Head, polishing his glasses. "I sent for you to express my strong disapproval of your action."

"Ye-e-es, sir!" mumbled Fatty Wynn, eyeing the table, where the cane lay,



YOUR EDITOR SAYS!

TWO MORE TO COME.

With the Free Picture Card given away in this issue your set should number thirteen. That means there are three more cards to come to complete the collection. And what a collection it will be! There is no doubt about the popularity of these wonderful free gifts. I have only to glance over the letters of appreciation that have flooded into this office to realise that.

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME!

We find in "The Mystery of River Grange!"—next week's long complete tale of St. Jim's—that very charming girl, Lady Peggy, of Spalding Hall, figuring very prominently. And, of course, where Lady Peggy is, so will you find Fatty Wynn and Jack Blake, her two great admirers.

The plot is cleverly interwoven by the master-pen of Martin Clifford, and when I tell you that this is one of the best yarns we have had from this famous author, you will know what a treat is in store for you next week.

Talking of treats, what do you think of our new serial, "The Robot Man"? As a story of thrills and adventure, I personally think you will find it hard to beat. There will be a further long instalment of this new serial in the programme for next week, and in it we hear more of the amazing Professor Rollins.

The Merry old "Oracle" has his corner in next week's number, in which he gets a chance of disposing of a few more questions from "Gemites." Then there will be another special article dealing with the life of a "Famous Daredevil." The hero our contributor has chosen this time is Sir Henry Segrave, the famous speedman.

WHILST ON HOLIDAY

you might well remember this important piece of news. A GEM representative will be visiting all seaside resorts during the summer, and to all those readers of the GEM who display their copies prominently, he will present a free gift selected from the following list: Kites, large balloons, mystery packets, and novel windmills. See that you catch the eye of the GEM man.

YOUR EDITOR.

"My strongest disapproval, in fact!"
 "Y-yes!"
 "A most disgraceful affair!" went on the Head thoughtfully. "Let it not occur again. You—ahem—may go."
 Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn almost tottered from the room. They were too amazed even to speak. The Head turned to Lady Peggy.

"I think you're a real sport," she breathed.
 "Bless my soul! That—that is very kind of you!" beamed the Head.

"Well, I must buzz back to Spalding Hall, or I shall be in the soup," smiled Lady Peggy. "Good-bye! And, I say, thanks awfully!"

They shook hands. In answer to the bell, Toby appeared to conduct the Head's triumphant visitor downstairs. Alone in his study, Dr. Holmes polished his glasses again, with a rather dazed look upon his face. Then he smiled slowly.

"A—a sport!" he murmured softly, not without satisfaction in his tone. "Dear me! A sport!"

And, humming a light tune, the headmaster of St. Jim's sat down at his desk to continue correcting some Sixth Form Greek papers, with quite a jocular expression upon his usually grave face.



The disguised Fatty Wynn saw Miss Finch's eyes on him, as he endeavoured to walk round the room in a really ladylike way, and he lost his head completely. He caught one foot against another, and the next moment went sprawling on the floor with a terrific crash. "Geroooooop!" "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Spalding girls. (See Chapter 11.)

CHAPTER 14.
 Rival Lotharios!

"GREAT Scott!"
 George Figgins made that remark. Figgins had entered his study in the New House with Kerr, to find Fatty Wynn there. It was the sight of their chum's unusual appearance that caused them to stare.

Fatty Wynn was anything but a dandy as a rule. But this evening, two days after his exploit with the swell of St. Jim's at Spalding Hall, David Llewellyn appeared to the astonished gaze of his chums as a thing of beauty and a joy for ever!

He was standing before the glass adjusting his tie. A shining silk topper ornamented his brow; snowy white spats graced his feet. His waistcoat was one that even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy might have envied. Gloves and a silver-headed stick lay ready beside him on the table.

Kerr shaded his eyes and gave a sharp cry. Fatty Wynn turned quickly. His face reddened, and he grinned sheepishly.

"Er—hallo, you chaps!"
 "What on earth—" gasped Figgins.
 "Where did you get that tile?" demanded Kerr wonderingly.

"Hem!"
 Then Kerr jumped. On second glance that topper looked somehow familiar. It was clearly not Fatty Wynn's own property, for it was distinctly too small for him. Kerr snatched it off his chum's head and glared suspiciously inside it.

"You—you bounder!" he gasped. "My topper!"
 "Hem!" Fatty Wynn coughed. "Y-yes, Kerr, old man. I knew you wouldn't mind lending it me. You see, I'm just going over to Spalding Hall—"

Figgins chuckled. Fatty Wynn coloured violently.
 "Oh, I see!" said Kerr. He grinned. "That's the reason for all the glad-rags, eh? Whom are you going over to see?"

Fatty Wynn's face deepened to the colour of a beetroot. Kerr winked at Figgins. They could guess very well whom their chum was intending to visit.

"Ahem!" Fatty Wynn coughed. "As a matter of fact, old man, I—I was going to see Lady Peggy!"
 "Not really?" chuckled Figgins.

"Who'd have thought it?" grinned Kerr.
 Fatty Wynn glared at them.
 "What are you dummies cackling at?" he roared.

"Gimme that topper!"
 "Rats!" retorted Kerr warmly. "This is my best topper! Use your own blessed topper, you fat pirate!"

"Mine's a bit moth-eaten," pleaded Fatty Wynn.
 "Never mind!"

Fatty Wynn glared at Kerr. It was not unreasonable of Kerr to object to lending his best topper, but to Fatty Wynn it seemed utterly unreasonable. Anyway, he meant to have that topper.

Biff!
 "Yarooooogh!"
 Kerr sat down on the study carpet with a thud as his chum's fist thumped him in the ribs. The topper rolled across the floor, and David Llewellyn snatched it up and crammed it on his head and darted for the door.

"Come back, you fat pirate!" hooted Kerr.
 But already Fatty Wynn had vanished from the study, and was pounding down the stairs. Kerr scrambled up. He broke into a chuckle.

"So Fatty's turning into a gay Lothario!" he grinned.
 "There he goes!" chortled Figgins, at the window.

The fat figure of David Llewellyn Wynn had rolled into
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view below from the New House steps. But he did not head for the gates at once. He hurried off in the direction of Dame Taggles' little tuckshop, to emerge from it clasping a huge box of chocolates bound with a satin ribbon.

"There goes a present for Lady Peggy!" Figgins grinned. "Fatty's got it badly, if you ask me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The two New House juniors chuckled. Then, a few moments after Fatty Wynn had rolled out of the gates and disappeared, Figgins jumped.

Another immaculate figure in topper and spats had appeared in the quad. This time it was Blake, crossing towards the gates from the direction of the School House. Blake was carrying a huge bouquet of flowers very carefully. There was a silver-knobbed stick under his arm; his hands were gloved, and from the expensive look of his topper it seemed highly likely that it was one of the numerous collection owned by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "borrowed" for the occasion.

"Another giddy Lothario!" gasped Kerr. "Lady Peggy's going to have plenty of visitors this evening!" chortled Figgins.

"What would they say if each knew his blessed rival was on the warpath, too?" chuckled Kerr.

But as yet, at any rate, Fatty Wynn had no idea that Jack Blake was following to Spalding Hall! Had he known, his contented smile might have been less cheerful as he rolled on his way clutching his noble gift.

"Nothing like tuck to give to a girl," ruminated the Falstaff of the New House.

Had he known that David Llewellyn Wynn was already on the road to Spalding Hall, Jack Blake might have been smiling to himself with far less satisfaction as he strolled out of the gates of St. Jim's, whistling, bearing his bunch of the choicest flowers he had been able to purchase in Wayland.

"Girls always like flowers," murmured Blake. "Nothing like flowers to give to a girl."

The two competitors for first place in Lady Peggy's friendship were both blissfully unaware of the shock that was awaiting each of them upon his arrival at Spalding Hall!

CHAPTER 15.

A Little Argument.

HAD Blake walked his fastest it would not have been long before he overtook Fatty Wynn, for the fat New House fellow was anything but speedy!

But Blake wanted to make sure that Lady Peggy would have finished tea by the time he arrived, and so he took his time. Even so, he would have overtaken Fatty Wynn had not David Llewellyn taken a short cut across some fields near Spalding village.

As it was, the two approached the gates of Spalding Hall from different directions, and came abruptly face to face by the gateway.

Blake's eyes seemed almost to start from his head. So did Fatty Wynn's.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Blake.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

The two rivals stopped dead, surveying one another with grim looks.

"Why, you fat ass—"

"You silly bounder—"

"What are you doing here?" roared Blake.

"What are you doing here?" sniffed Fatty Wynn.

They glared at one another. Fatty Wynn, with his box of chocolates clutched beneath his arm and Kerr's topper, looking a few sizes too small for him, tilted precariously over one eye, snorted. Jack Blake, with Gussy's best tile sinking over his ears somewhat, clasping his flowers awkwardly in his unaccustomed hand, breathed very hard.

"Look here," began Fatty Wynn. "If you've come to see Lady Peggy—"

"If you're here to see Lady Peggy, you chump—" began Blake at exactly the same moment.

They broke off together, glaring with hostile eyes.

"Or have you come for the deportment class, Fatty?" chuckled Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn went very red indeed.

Though Lady Peggy had saved him and Arthur Augustus from the Head's wrath regarding their masquerade at Spalding Hall, nothing on earth could have saved them from the merciless chaff of their fellow juniors. They had been ragged unmercifully about it; and at Blake's derisive chuckle Fatty Wynn saw red.

"You—you—"

"Not got a hairpin on you?" grinned Blake.

Biff!

Fatty Wynn, exasperated beyond endurance, had hit out, and his fist landed on Blake's nose. Blake gave a gasp, and the glossy topper shot from his head.

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The next moment the rivals were at it, hammer and tongs!

Fatty Wynn staggered back from a jab in the ribs, and the box of chocolates slid from his grasp. But he scarcely noticed it in his desire to get at Blake. He surged forward with brandishing fists, and there was a scrunching sound as one of his feet trod on the gaily ribboned box.

The lid came off, hanging around his ankle, and chocolates were scattered far and wide.

"Take that!"

"And take that!"

"Yooooooop!"

"Yow! Yarooogh!"

Biff, biff, biff!

Blake's flowers had fallen and had been trampled under-foot. What had once been a fashionable topper—the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—had also suffered from being trodden on! Another gleaming topper—the property of George Francis Kerr—was now jammed down on Fatty Wynn's head, with the top open like a lid.

With whirling fists the pair battled to and fro across the road.

After the first two minutes their previous immaculate appearance was changed to the likeness of a couple of battered tramps.

Blake's left eye was already turning purple. Fatty Wynn's nose was a battered crimson. With wildly ruffled hair and a bleeding lip, Blake was hitting out with far more heat than science. Fatty Wynn, his collar almost torn from its moorings, whirled his fists like the arms of a windmill. And then a voice from the gateway broke in upon their thoughts like a bolt from the blue.

"My hat!"

It was the voice of Lady Peggy herself.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Blake.

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Fatty Wynn.

They turned their battered faces to the gateway, blinking and breathless, in utter dismay.

Standing there, with open-mouthed astonishment on her pretty freckled face, was Lady Peggy Brooke.

"My hat!" she repeated breathlessly. "Go it, you two!"

But Blake and Fatty Wynn had no intention of "going it" any more! With crimson countenances they hastily mopped their faces and adjusted their collars and ties.

"I—I never saw you there!" gasped Blake apologetically.

"Awfully sorry!" stammered Fatty Wynn. "We—we were just having a little argument—"

"I noticed that," agreed Lady Peggy. "What about?"

"Ahem! You see—"

"Hem! That is—"

Lady Peggy's eyes fell on the trampled bouquet and on the wreckage of the chocolate box and its scattered contents. She jumped. Blake and Fatty Wynn went an even deeper shade of crimson.

"Who are the flowers and choos for?" asked Lady Peggy in great astonishment. "My hat! They don't look much good now!"

"I—I was bringing you a few flowers, as a matter of fact," mumbled Blake. "Girls always like—I mean, I thought you might like 'em!"

"For me?" gasped Lady Peggy. "Oh!"

"I'd brought a few choos for you," explained Fatty Wynn, blushing furiously. He surveyed the ruined box glumly.

"Afraid they're mucked up now, though."

"They're mucked up all right," agreed Lady Peggy gently. "But thanks awfully, all the same—both of you."

She glanced from one to the other with rather an odd look in her brown eyes. "Well, I think you're a couple of frightful asses, anyway!" she burst out hotly.

"Oh!"

"Ahem!"

"You'd better shake hands, hadn't you?"

Very sheepishly the two rivals shook hands.

"I—I think we'd better get along," mumbled Blake. "We can't come in like this, you see."

"Good-bye!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

He, like Blake, was anxious to get away as quickly as possible. Each felt that he was scarcely shining in Lady Peggy's presence!

Together the two Lotharios turned and tottered away down the road. From the gates of Spalding Hall Lady Peggy watched them go, with a dancing gleam in her eyes. Once out of her sight, Fatty Wynn turned a baleful eye upon Jack Blake.

"You frabjous lunatic!" groaned David Llewellyn. "It was all your blessed fault!"

"You mean it was all your silly fault!" hooted Blake, glaring at him.

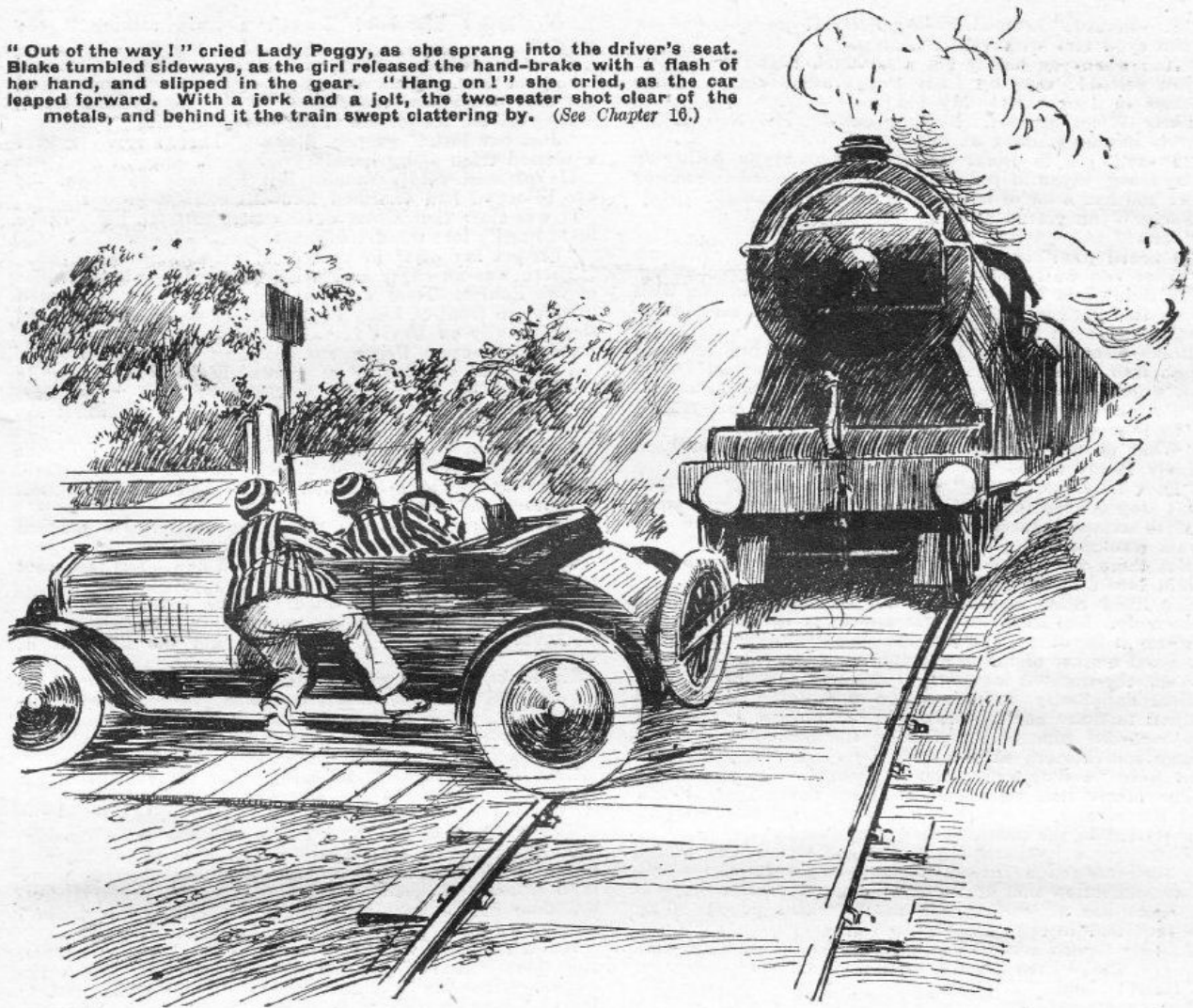
The rivals halted, glaring at one another with equal heat. For a moment it looked as though there would be another free fight.

"Oh, rats!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Br-r-r-r!"

(Continued on the next page.)

"Out of the way!" cried Lady Peggy, as she sprang into the driver's seat. Blake tumbled sideways, as the girl released the hand-brake with a flash of her hand, and slipped in the gear. "Hang on!" she cried, as the car leaped forward. With a jerk and a jolt, the two-seater shot clear of the metals, and behind it the train swept clattering by. (See Chapter 16.)



The rivals resumed their march in silence.

But it was quite certain that from now onwards the grim rivalry between Jack Blake and David Llewellyn Wynn for the regard of Lady Peggy would be fought to a finish!

CHAPTER 16.

In Deadly Danger!

"WELL held, sir!"

A lusty chorus of cheers burst out around Little Side.

It was the following Saturday afternoon, and the junior eleven had been playing a strong eleven from Rylcombe Grammar School.

Gordon Gay & Co. had been battling doggedly to obtain an odd couple of hundred runs which were needed to beat the St. Jim's score. Gordon Gay, the captain of the Grammar School team, had carried his bat right through from the first wicket to the last, and missed his century by only half a dozen runs. But the last man in had skied the ball when the Grammar School total was only nine short of the St. Jim's score.

And the ball had dropped like a stone into the hands of Tom Merry—a catch that had brought victory to St. Jim's!

The St. Jim's players left the field looking very bright and cheerful. The spectators gave them a hearty cheer, and another to Gordon Gay for his spectacular innings. Gordon Gay grinned a trifle ruefully.

"To think we only wanted ten more for a win!" he remarked to Tom Merry. "If only you'd missed that blessed catch—"

"Tommy never misses 'em!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther turned towards a group of deck-chairs under the trees where three pretty figures were seated.

Cousin Ethel, Doris Levison, and Lady Peggy had come over to watch the match.

"What a splendid catch!" exclaimed Ethel enthusiastically as Tom Merry approached.

"Rather!" cried Lady Peggy.

Tom Merry coloured modestly.

The three Spaldingites had been given tea earlier, during the tea interval, and now they rose to go despite the protests of the juniors.

"Well, we'll walk with you!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Wathah, deah gals!" nodded Arthur Augustus, who had sailed up and attached himself to Cousin Ethel with a glare at George Figgins, who had also joined the group.

Arthur Augustus snorted. But it was impossible to attempt to snub the cheery-faced Figgins in front of Cousin Ethel, and so the swell of St. Jim's suffered in silence as Figgins fell in on Ethel's other side as the little party moved off towards the quad.

From the bright way in which Ethel was already talking to Figgie it would have been quite obvious to anyone but Arthur Augustus that Ethel would have been very disappointed had the lanky leader of the New House not accompanied them. But Arthur Augustus was perhaps deliberately a little obtuse in refusing to see that Ethel liked George Figgins rather better than anyone else at St. Jim's.

Ahead of them, Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and Ernest Levison of the Fourth, were walking with Doris Levison. The four juniors seemed perfectly willing to share Levison's sister's company between them.

Last of the party to pass out of the gates came Lady Peggy—with Blake on one side and on the other David Llewellyn Wynn.

Since their great battle outside the gates of Spalding Hall Fatty Wynn and Jack Blake had scarcely exchanged a word.

Each had contrived to visit Lady Peggy since then, but luckily they had not again happened to meet! This evening, however, each had made up his mind to see Lady Peggy home, and neither was willing to give in to the other for a moment. So the two rivals glared at one another from either side of her, and tramped on in grim silence.

"Ripping game, wasn't it?" remarked Lady Peggy.

"Rather!" exclaimed Blake.

"Great!" nodded Fatty Wynn.

"That was a jolly fine catch at the wicket of yours," murmured Lady Peggy, glancing at Blake.

"Er—thanks!" beamed Blake. Fatty Wynn looked glum. Blake eyed him with veiled triumph.

"And when you nearly got a hat-trick that time, Fatty, I just yelled!" went on Lady Peggy admiringly. "Three wickets in four balls! My hat!"

Fatty Wynn beamed. Blake grunted. The New House demon bowler grinned at him.

"I say," put in Blake suddenly, "don't you bother to come along, Wynn, if you don't want to! I heard you telling Kerr you had a lot of letters to write this evening."

Fatty Wynn glared at him.

"Rats!"

"I heard you!" snapped Blake.

"They can wait, anyway," said Fatty Wynn, colouring. "But didn't you tell Gussy before the match that you were going into Rylcombe when it was over to do some shopping? Don't let us keep you."

Blake went very red. It was true that he had intended to go into Rylcombe, but that was before he had known that Ethel & Co. would be at St. Jim's to watch the match.

"I'm not going into Rylcombe after all!" he snapped.

"Oh!" sniffed Fatty Wynn.

"What do you mean? Oh!" demanded Blake hotly.

Lady Peggy halted.

"Look here, you idiots," she broke out warmly, "if you don't stop quarrelling, I'll walk by myself! So shut up!"

With crimson faces and mumbled apologies the two rivals tramped on.

But there was rather an unhappy look upon the usually bright face of Lady Peggy.

She liked Blake immensely, and she liked Fatty Wynn immensely. She liked them far and away better than anyone else at St. Jim's, and she was glad they liked her. But she liked neither of the pair better than the other, and she had not the slightest intention of choosing between them.

But, apparently, neither Blake nor Fatty Wynn was content to share her friendship. Each wanted to feel that she regarded him as the pick of the bunch. And Lady Peggy told herself, as she walked on between them, that they were "a couple of absolute idiots!"

The others had vanished ahead by now. Lady Peggy and her rival escorts turned along a rutted lane to take a short cut to the moor, at her suggestion.

There was a level-crossing at the end of the lane, where the road crossed a little-frequented single railway track. It was not often that trains went along it, and there was no signal-box to control the gates, which people using the lane had to open for themselves.

As they turned a bend in the lane and the crossing came in sight, Blake gave a sudden exclamation.

"Hallo! Look!"

The nearer gate was standing open, and a small motor-car was blocking the line. A woman, evidently the driver, was stooping in front of the car trying to start the engine.

"Awkward place to get stuck," grinned Fatty Wynn.

The lady glanced up as they approached. She was breathless with her exertions. Blake and Fatty Wynn raised their caps and halted.

"Can I help at all?" inquired Blake politely.

"I wish you could get the engine started," confessed the car's owner in a worried tone. "I let the engine stop somehow." She glanced nervously along the line.

"Let me try," exclaimed Blake, forestalling Fatty Wynn. He grasped the starting-handle and dragged it round.

It was not easy to turn, and soon Blake was puffing and gasping. Fatty Wynn had a try, but he was unable to do any good, either.

"I see there's a cottage just down the road there!" exclaimed the lady anxiously. "I'll go and see if there's a man who can do it."

She hurried off before either of the juniors could offer to go in her place. Fatty Wynn and Blake looked at one another.

"If a train comes along it'll be good-bye to this blessed car!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"Go on! Have another shot!" suggested Lady Peggy.

Blake and Fatty Wynn both stooped to grasp the starting-handle again. Each felt that it would be a distinct score over his rival if he could start the stranded car. But in their haste their heads met with a loud crack.

"Yaroooop!"

Blake and Fatty Wynn rubbed their injured parts and glared at one another. Then Blake grabbed the handle before the Falstaff of the New House had a chance to do so, and gave it a savage twist. There was a roar from the engine.

"Good shot!" cried Lady Peggy. And Blake glanced at Fatty Wynn with a triumphant look.

"It's more giddy muscle that you want!" sniffed Blake.

"Br-r-r!"

There was a sudden cry from Lady Peggy. She flung out a pointing hand.

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"Oh, look! My hat! There's a train coming!" she panted.

The two juniors turned with startled faces and stared along the line. It curved out of sight behind some trees, but they could hear the rumble of the approaching train, and could see the smoke rising over the trees.

"Just our luck!" gasped Blake. "There's scarcely ever a blessed train along here!"

He glanced wildly round. But the lady to whom the car belonged had vanished into the cottage garden.

It was clear that there was no time to fetch her. Blake leapt hastily into the driving-seat.

"I'll get her off!" he exclaimed grimly.

There was an eager expression on the face of the leader of the Fourth. Here was just the chance he had wanted to shine in front of Lady Peggy. Here was where he could score heavily off David Llewellyn Wynn.

"Quick!" cried Peggy anxiously.

There was a grinding of gears. Blake was not quite the expert driver that he would have liked to appear, however, and the car remained stationary. Blake struggled with the gear-lever with increasing flurry.

Unfortunately for him the gears were of a different arrangement from those of the car he had driven before. Besides which, in his excitement, he had quite forgotten to release the hand-brake.

"Blow!" panted Blake, perspiring freely. He glanced hastily along the line.

The approaching train was not far off now. His face went rather white. So did that of Lady Peggy.

"Can't you do it?" she cried.

"Ye-e-es," answered Blake uncertainly, struggling with the gear-lever. "I—I don't quite get the hang of it, but—"

He broke off, and gave a startled gasp as he found, to his dismay, that one of his feet was jammed among the foot-pedals. At that moment the shrill whistle of the train sounded piercingly as it swept into view.

Blake's face went very white.

"My foot's caught!" he cried; and his voice was not quite steady.

"Great pip!" breathed Fatty Wynn hoarsely.

The Falstaff of the New House saw the train coming, thundering upon them. There was time in plenty for him to move off the line to safety. But that thought never even entered his head. He rushed forward, dragged open the door of the car, and groped desperately for Blake's imprisoned foot.

Again the train whistle screamed as the driver saw them. But there was no time for the train to stop. With the whistle screaming it roared towards the crossing, where David Llewellyn Wynn laboured frantically to save the life of his School House rival.

"Run, you ass!" panted Blake hoarsely, white to the lips.

Fatty Wynn was tearing at the laces of Blake's shoe, and, with a last jerk, the leader of the Fourth dragged his foot from it. He could not jump free from the car at once, for Fatty Wynn was still kneeling on the running-board, barring his way. Blake groaned. In that moment he honestly believed that they were both done for.

But as he shut his eyes instinctively, waiting for the end, a flying figure scrambled over the dickey-seat behind and dropped beside him.

It was Lady Peggy!

"Out of the way!" she panted.

Blake tumbled sideways out of the driving-seat as she dropped into it. The girl released the hand-brake with a flashing movement of her hand, and slipped in the gear.

"Hang on!" she cried to Fatty Wynn, as the car leapt forward.

With a jerk and a jolt the car shot clear of the gleaming rails. Behind them the train swept clattering by, with the pale face of the engine-driver staring down at them and shouting hoarsely.

Blake found himself laughing shakily.

"That—that was a narrow squeak!" he stammered.

Lady Peggy drew a sobbing breath.

"My hat!" she breathed. "I thought you were both done for!"

She stopped the car. There were tears of relief in her shining eyes as she gripped the juniors' hands.

CHAPTER 17.

Burying the Hatchet!

A MINUTE later the lady who owned the car came up. She was quite in ignorance of the narrow shave that her car had had from destruction, although she had heard the train go by.

Blake still felt as though he were moving in a dream as he watched her drive off down the lane.

(Continued on page 28.)

AN AMAZING NEW SERIAL OF ADVENTURE!



The Robot Man!

By H. J. ALLINGHAM

Out there in the wild jungles that border the mighty river Amazon, young Jack Carter comes face to face, in the most amazing and terrifying circumstances, with the very man he has journeyed so many miles to find, Professor Rollins, inventor and—madman!

The Elusive Bird!

JACK CARTER expected to see Captain Storm's writhing body dashed with violence to the ground, there to lie, mangled and disfigured, in the rank grass or on the rocky ledge. But nothing of the sort happened.

For several seconds the iron monster remained quite still, stiff and upright, holding its helpless captive at arm's length.

Then slowly it turned and, still maintaining the same attitude, marched solemnly away across the vast, rolling plain. Jack, awaking as from a trance, turned and dashed into the cave.

"Where—where are you going?" gasped Harry Frobisher, in terror at being deserted.

But before he could scramble to his feet and follow his chum, Jack returned, carrying a pair of powerful field-glasses belonging to Captain Storm.

Going to the verge of the rocky ledge he peered through the glasses at the retreating figure.

The gloom of night was now rapidly disappearing before the advance of the coming dawn, and all objects were clearly visible for a long distance in every direction, so Jack was able to follow the movements of the monster.

The gigantic shape moved in long, stiff strides straight away from the rocky ledge across the level plain for two

hundred yards or so and then, bearing to the right, proceeded in a half-circle as though it were coming back, but vanished suddenly in the shadow of the hill on which the boys were perched.

Jack lowered the glasses and looked down at his chum. The face of the older boy was very pale, but the terror had gone from his eyes. He had regained his nerve.

Something in his appearance drew Harry Frobisher back from the very verge of hysteria.

"Do you believe in magic now?" asked Harry; and there was only a little tremor in his voice.

"No, less than ever!"

"But—"

"Yes, I know; it's terrible and—and queer!" Jack's brow was knitted in a puzzled frown.

"What are we going to do now—now that Captain Storm is dead?" asked Harry, shivering again.

"I don't think Captain Storm is dead."

"Eh?"

"I don't think they mean to kill him."

"They? Who?"

"I don't know—yet," replied Jack; and again he seemed to be staring at nothing.

"What makes you think the captain is alive?" persisted Harry.

The mere suggestion brought the colour back to his cheeks and lifted the weight of horror that had crushed him.

"I was watching him," said Jack. "He stopped struggling, but he did not hang limp like a dead body. He looked more like a man who had slipped from a high scaffolding and was clinging to save himself from falling. The Thing, too, was holding him gently, almost tenderly, carefully, as though anxious not to hurt him—at least, that's how it seemed to me."

Harry Frobisher gasped.

"Good gracious! Jack, how did you see all that?" he exclaimed. "I only saw the Thing with its ghastly face. Do—do you think it is alive?"

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Reports having been received to the effect that Professor Rollins, who went to South America to explore the unknown regions through which the Amazon flows, is held in captivity, an expedition is formed to go in search of the missing scientist. Misfortune, however, befalls the party, for their leader dies. Undeterred by this early setback, Captain Storm, a broad-shouldered, muscular man, determines to carry on; but only three members of the original party—Teddy White, a middle-aged Cockney, and two youngsters named Jack Carter and Harry Frobisher—show their willingness to accompany him. Heedless of the perils and dangers ahead, the four plucky adventurers push on into the unknown and unexplored regions.

A peculiar wail emanating from the jungle fails to unnerve the intrepid adventurers, and they carry on until they reach a cave in the hillside where they make camp. With Captain Storm keeping guard outside the cave, the other members of the party turn in to rest. They are awakened from their slumbers some two hours later by a startled cry. Rushing to the mouth of the cave they are horrified to see a huge steel monster formed like a man, but of such prodigious height that its mighty hand over-tops the tallest forest tree. The next moment this enormous iron monster seizes the captain by the waist, and lifts him high up above their heads, writhing and struggling helplessly.

(Now read on.)

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"No."

"Then it must have men inside it."

"No. Inside is a mass of complicated machinery. I caught a glimpse of that when it turned. I saw it through the hole under the armpit."

"Then it's magic!" cried Harry, with conviction. "A machine can't act like a man and be gentle and tender and careful. That's idiotic!"

"The Thing is a machine," persisted Jack gravely, "as much a machine as a battleship. When I was a nipper I was taken to an exhibition in London, and they had there a miniature lake, and on it was a swarm of model battleships, and cruisers, and torpedo-boat destroyers, and other craft. And they all moved about and performed the most complicated manoeuvres, and there wasn't a single collision. How was that done?"

"Wires?"

"No, there were no wires."

"Clockwork?"

"No; it wasn't clockwork, either. The whole thing was worked by a man who sat in an office at the other end of the hall, with a chart in front of him."

"Then you think—"

"I think a lot of things, old fellow, but that doesn't help much. The important question is, what do we know? Well, we know this—that Thing is a machine. It is only made like a man to frighten people. It is as much a machine as a battleship, and somewhere behind it is a brain—a jolly clever brain. It may be a hundred miles away, or it may be close at hand. That's what we've got to find out."

"Everything all serene, young gents? Any 'elp wanted?"

Teddy White, crawling on his hands and knees, had emerged from the mouth of the cave as far as his head and shoulders.

On seeing the chums engaged in quiet conversation his fears, aroused by Captain Storm's startled cry, had abated somewhat.

Hastily scrambling to his feet he came forward, rubbing his hands and smiling cheerily.

"Goin' ter be a nice day," he remarked. "A little 'ot maybe, but that won't 'urt us arter wot we bin through, will it? Take things as they come, and don't make no complaints. That's my motto. Hallo! Where's the cap'n? Gone off on 'is own? Now that ain't right—that ain't no ways right! It ain't accordin' to plan or agreement. And I won't agree to it. I makes my protest 'ere and now. Now listen to me, young gents—this is serious. I'm a older man nor wot you are—a man of eggsperience—and I knows wot's wot. We got to stick to the cap'n!"

"But—" began Harry; but the little man went on unheeding.

"'Arf a mo', Master Frobisher—'arf a mo'! When I talks I got something to say, and you best 'ear me out. We got to stick to the cap'n—we ain't got to let 'im out of our sight. It's 'im wot hev got the 'eadpiece. If we ever gets out of this 'ere mess alive it'll be the cap'n wot leads us! Without 'im we are like three lost sheep. So mark my words! Where 'e goes we got to follow!"

As soon as the two chums could get a word in they attempted to explain what had happened. At the end of their recital, however, the little man shook his head.

"Young gents," he said, "it ain't for me to say wot's proper in the way of a joke and wot ain't proper, me being only a ignerent man. And if so be it's a secret betwixt you and the cap'n, and I ain't to be in it, well, I knows me place, and I says no more."

And with that he turned haughtily away.

Harry was about to go after him to make yet another attempt to convince him, but Jack caught his chum's arm and held him back.

"Let him go," he said. "He'll know soon enough, and perhaps, after all, it is best as it is for the present. Teddy is unhappy because he thinks we are fooling him, but if he had seen that Thing as we saw it he would be a jolly sight more unhappy, wouldn't he? Leave him alone."

"But what are we to do?"

"Eat!" said Jack. "Thank goodness we can't starve in this country even if we never get back to our stores. We can pick our dinner off the trees."

"Yes; or dig it out of the ground. The native carriers showed me the roots that are good to eat," replied Harry.

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Indeed, it was a marvellously fertile country to which the comrades had penetrated.

Apart from the wild fruit, which grew in profusion, there were wide stretches of cultivated ground from which the owners had for some mysterious reason fled.

The chums, however, decided not to go far afield to-day in search of a meal.

The cave was a good place of shelter, and the rocky ledge on the hillside a good observation point. It would be best not to go too far away while unknown dangers were about.

Harry Frobisher, whose courage had now quite returned, was all for making an early expedition in the track of the Thing to see if they could not follow it to its lair and so find out what had happened to Captain Storm; but Jack advised caution.

"If they meant to kill the captain he is already dead, and we can do nothing; if they mean to spare his life—as I believe—then there is no hurry. We will keep a sharp look-out and bide our time."

Meanwhile, they went in search of food. Teddy White, although still injured and aloof in his manner, went with them. He was not going to be left alone.

"We won't go down into the valley," said Jack. "Let us work round the hillside and see if we can't get back to the ledge that way."

The trio plunged into the wooded slope, but they had not gone far before the undergrowth, with its tangled vines and luxurious prickly bushes became so thick that their progress was slow.

Had it not been for the experience they had gained from the natives during their journey from the coast, they would have been unable to get through at all.

The scene through which they passed was one of amazing beauty.

Tropic blooms, gorgeous in colour—red, purple, and white—hung in festoons on all sides; birds of resplendent plumage flew about their heads, while rich, luscious fruits of many kinds hung in clusters from the branches within reach of their heads.

Fascinated by the sheer splendour of their surroundings the trio pressed on for perhaps an hour, and then suddenly and unexpectedly they emerged into an open glade.

Teddy White, after a careful inspection of the ground to make sure that it was free from a special kind of noxious insect which he had learned to fear, flung himself down.

"Ow about a little rest to enjoy the booties of nacher, young gents?" he suggested.

The others assented quickly enough and joined him, but a few moments later Jack Carter's attention was attracted by a bird of a particularly lovely plumage which, perched on a branch only a few feet away, seemed to be watching them.

It was so tame that Jack was tempted to see if it would allow itself to be captured.

Very slowly he rose to his feet and advanced cautiously towards the bird. He had almost reached it when it flapped its gorgeous wings and retreated a couple of yards into the bush.

Jack followed still very silently and cautiously.

Again it retreated, and Jack, in his efforts to reach it, left his comrades perhaps some thirty yards behind him, so that he was shut off from them by a thick wall of undergrowth.

Reluctant to go further, he made one final attempt to capture that splendid but elusive bird, and made a swift leap forward with outstretched hands.

He missed the bird by an inch, and at the same moment his foot caught in a tough ground vine, and he pitched forward headlong on his hands and knees.

When the boy scrambled to his feet he found, to his surprise, that he had hurled himself into another clearing.

It was smaller than the one he had just left, and in other ways different. For one thing, it looked as though it had been made not by Nature but by the hand of man, the undergrowth having been cut away.

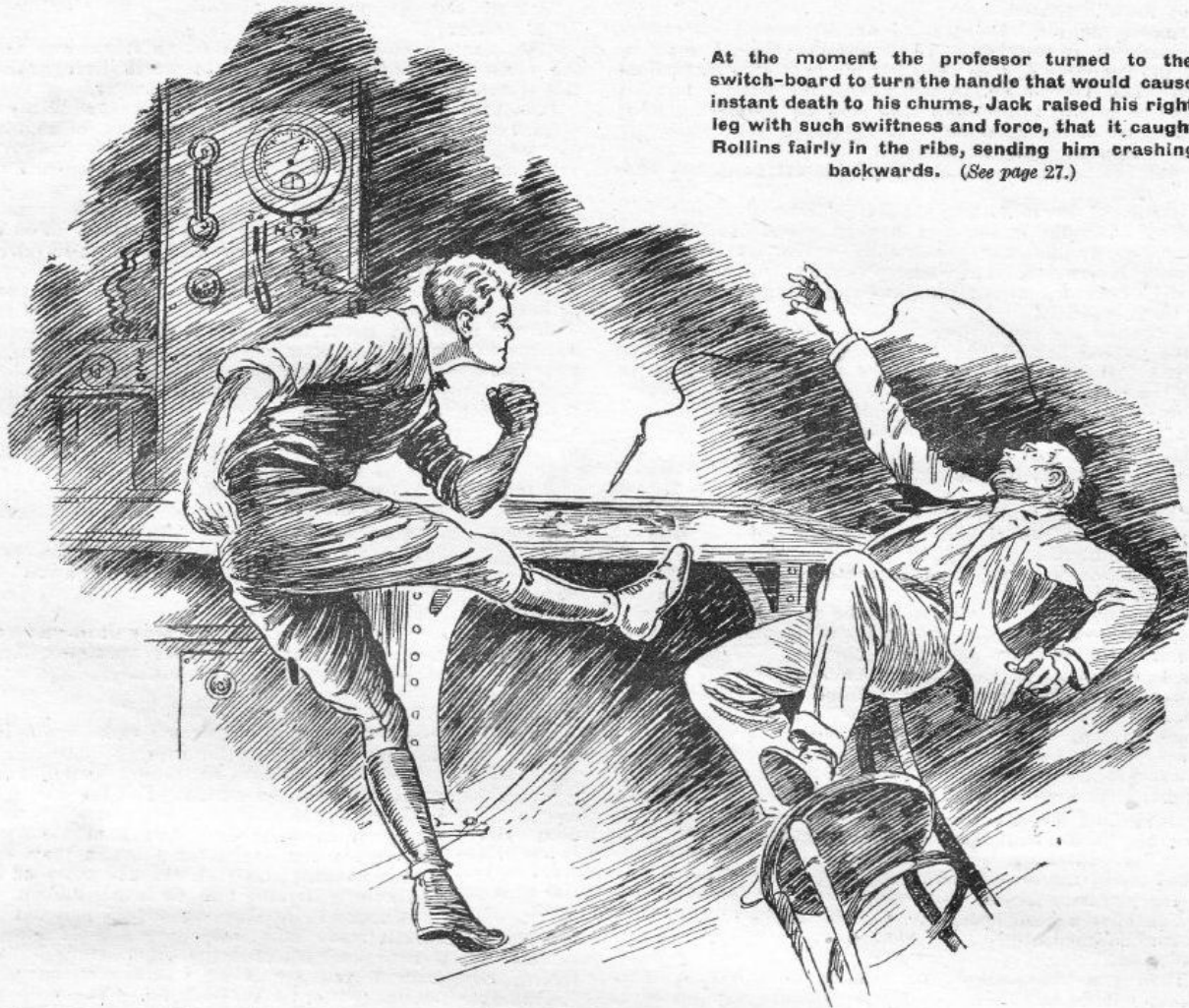
In front of him was the side of the hill, rising sheer, while behind him, and on either side, was the almost impenetrable forest.

Jack half-turned, intending to make his way back to his comrades and inform them of his discovery, when he was startled by the sound of a human voice quite close to him.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to a fellow-countryman?"



PROFESSOR ROLLINS, inventive genius, and creator of the Robot Man.



At the moment the professor turned to the switch-board to turn the handle that would cause instant death to his chums, Jack raised his right leg with such swiftness and force, that it caught Rollins fairly in the ribs, sending him crashing backwards. (See page 27.)

The Brain Behind The Thing !

WITH a jump Jack wheeled round again, his eyes half-starting out of his head.

In front of him, scarcely two paces away, with his back to the solid hillside, stood a figure which had certainly not been there a moment ago.

It was the figure of a man, some fifty years of age, short in stature, dressed in spotless white ducks, and wearing a big sun hat.

His face was bronzed and ordinary in feature save for the eyes, which were the most extraordinary Jack had ever seen.

They were a cold grey, keen, deep set, and penetrating to an almost unbelievable degree.

It seemed to the boy as though each of those eyes emitted a ray of piercing white light, and the effect upon him was so disturbing that he could not speak.

The stranger smiled, and, raising his hat, repeated his question in another form.

"An Englishman, I think?"

"Yes, sir," repeated Jack confusedly. "My name is Carter."

"And mine is Rollins—Professor Rollins! You probably have not heard of me."

Jack's eyes grew bigger, and he uttered a startled ejaculation.

"Professor Rollins!" he cried. "Why, sir, we have come to look for you. I belong to the Rollins Relief Expedition."

"Indeed! Then I am doubly glad to meet you, Mr. Carter," said the stranger, smiling again and holding out his hand.

As Jack gripped the hand he was struck by the feel of it, so soft and yet so firm. It was like cold velvet, with a lining of steel, and it was quite white, as though never exposed to a tropic sun.

"I am indeed glad to find you are safe and well, sir," said the boy. "Your friends in England have been very anxious about you and your expedition."

"Yes, yes, no doubt," replied the other. "I see the insect pests of this otherwise admirable country annoy you a great deal, Mr. Carter."

Jack laughed.

"Yes, the flies are a nuisance," he said.

"I must give you something for that," observed the professor—"a little preparation of my own. You see, they don't come near me. If they do they die!"

He laughed—a soft, musical, and extremely pleasant laugh—and at the same time brushed from his white coat sleeve the dead bodies of a few insect pests which had fallen there.

"I shall be very grateful if you will, sir," said Jack, with a smile, "and so will my companions. I did not know there was any cure for the plague."

"Science can find a cure for every evil," replied the professor smoothly. "Come this way and I will show you something."

He turned, and his white hand fluttered over the face of the solid rock behind him, scarcely seeming to touch it. Instantly what appeared to be a steel door slid aside, and a beam of white electric light shot out into the gloom of the forest.

"This is my workshop," said the professor pleasantly. "Please come in."

He passed through the aperture, and Jack followed him, wondering.

Instantly the steel door slid back into its place, so noiselessly that Jack did not know it had closed.

But, indeed, had it shut with a resounding clang it is quite possible he would not have noticed it, so amazed was he with the sight that met his gaze.

He found himself in a large and brilliantly-lit chamber fitted out as an electrical workshop, with every kind of up-to-date electrical contrivance.

The hall itself, hollowed out of the very heart of the hill, was an ancient construction, no doubt, but everything in it was startlingly modern.

Jack was gazing about him spellbound when the professor touched him on the arm.

"We will not delay here," he said. "My staff is now resting. You shall see them when they are at work. You will, I think, find it interesting. This is the finest scientific electric plant in the world—not the largest, you understand, but the finest—the most efficient for modern research. Come now, let me show you my own private den."

But Jack hesitated.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "I am immensely interested, of course—it is wonderful. And another time I shall be only too thankful if you will show me over this marvellous place. But I must get in touch with my friends now. I left them in the forest, and they will be wondering what has become of me by now."

The professor, who had paused before a small door in the wall, turned his head and fixed his extraordinary eyes on the boy.

"Wonder?" he said thoughtfully. "Why shouldn't they wonder? Wonder is the first step to knowledge. We see something we do not understand. We wonder. Our curiosity is aroused. Then comes inquiry and experiment. Finally, we reach an explanation and knowledge is born. Let them wonder."

He opened the small door.

Jack looked behind him for the door by which he had entered. It had vanished. There seemed nothing to be done but to humour his strange guide.

Reluctantly he followed the professor.

They entered a moderate-sized circular chamber, which was almost dark in comparison with the brilliantly-lighted workshop they had just left.

It had a kind of funnel roof, and from a small aperture at the top of the funnel a shaft of daylight entered.

This fell on a large, circular table in the centre of the room.

The surface of the table seemed to be covered by a picture—a landscape—the details of which were remarkably sharp and clear.

Jack had scarcely time to glance at this, however, when his companion pointed to a chair and invited him to sit down.

Jack obeyed, though he felt restless and uneasy. He had an uncomfortable feeling that he was gradually becoming subject to a will stronger than his own.

This feeling grew stronger when the professor also took a seat, and, without speaking, fixed his searching eyes upon him. The silence lasted for several seconds, and then at last the professor spoke:

"You have a good head, Mr. Carter. Have you studied science?"

"No, sir."

"Then you can scarcely be said to be alive. A man without science in this age is like a creature without eyes, nose, or ears. But it is not too late. You are young, and I will teach you. We will do great things together, you and I, Mr. Carter."

"You are very good, sir, but—"

Jack moved restlessly in his chair.

He wanted to protest, but for the life of him he could not think of anything to say.

The man went on as though he had not been interrupted, that dreamy, half-mystic look coming again into his cold, piercing eyes.

"Just now you spoke of wonder. I will show you many wonders. Do you know what lies beneath our feet, deep down in the bowels of the earth?"

"No, sir."

"Wealth—untold wealth! Not merely gold and diamonds, but that most precious, most valuable of all minerals—radium. I know it is there although no clod of earth has yet been turned. I know because I have seen it!"

The cold grey eyes were now shining with an unearthly light, and Jack began to wonder whether he was in the presence of a madman or a genius.

But quite suddenly the professor's mood changed. Smiling pleasantly, his tone became quietly conversational once more.

"You shall see it, too. Beneath that rolling plain outside is a vast deposit of mineral wealth. You shall see it with your own eyes presently, for by means of an invention of mine—an extension of the X ray—we can now look through the solid earth and rock. But that is only one of the marvels with which I will make you acquainted. You are greatly privileged, Mr. Carter."

"I appreciate that, sir, but now I really must go," said Jack, rising to his feet.

A faint smile flickered over the face of Professor Rollins. "You will go when I give you permission, and not one day, not one hour, not one moment before," he said gravely.

Jack stared in amazement, his anger beginning to rise.

"You mean to keep me here against my will?" he demanded hotly.

"I mean to keep you here."

"A prisoner?"

"No, no! A colleague, an assistant, a fellow-worker in the cause of science—the only cause worth living for in this queer world," replied the professor gently.

Jack took an angry step forward, and then suddenly he seemed to feel rather than hear the presence of someone else in the room.

He looked about him swiftly, but could see no one.

The professor smiled again.

"Be calm," he said soothingly. "It will save so much time, and in the end the result will be the same. You are quite powerless. I have faithful servants here. You remain with me. I have long wanted an assistant—young, intelligent, of my own nationality, and with just your shape of head. I have decided to engage you, and you will stay with me until my great task is finished. You will soon become so interested in your work that you will not regret your lost liberty. Opposition to my will is useless. I have made my decision. The sooner you reconcile yourself to it the better it will be for you."

A cold chill went through Jack Carter's whole body, but it was characteristic of him that he lost neither his nerve nor his temper.

He was convinced now that the man before him was mad, but it was a madness controlled by a powerful and logical brain.

The boy decided swiftly that he, too, must be cool, calm, self-possessed, and await his chance.

He even contrived to smile.

"You mean to keep me here until you have completed your great task, professor?" he asked without raising his voice.

"Yes."

"And how long will that be?"

The dreamy, mystical look came again into the man's hard, metallic eyes.

"Who can say?" he mused thoughtfully.

"The days pass so swiftly. But not long—not long now. I shall be old, but you will still be young in the day when our final victory is achieved—seven, eight, ten years, perhaps."

Jack gasped, and then the absurdity of the whole thing striking him, he laughed aloud.

"You mean to keep me here a prisoner for ten years?" he exclaimed.

"Twenty, if need be," retorted the other coldly. "Oh, foolish boy, cannot you see what I am offering you? Knowledge, wealth, power! When I am gone, with the weapon I have placed in your hands you can make yourself master of the earth! I will train you to succeed me. That is your destiny. But until that hour comes you will serve me and do my bidding!"

"I see," said Jack, keeping a tight hold upon himself.

Beyond question the man was mad, and Jack had always heard it was dangerous to irritate lunatics by contradiction. No doubt, sooner or later, they would get out in the open air. Then he would make a bolt for it. Meanwhile, he would handle the unfortunate professor as tenderly as possible.

"Perhaps you will tell me some more about your work, professor," he said good-humouredly, "especially as I am to share it."

The man nodded approvingly.

"Look at that!" he said, and pointed to the table.

In the Nick of Time!

JACK turned his gaze upon the table and perceived that the picture which covered it was, by some camera obscura contrivance, a reflection in miniature of the whole surrounding country.

As he examined it, he was able to pick out the hillside and the rocky ledge on which he and his comrades had stood when that awful Thing came out of the gloom.

The professor moved to his side.

"By this little invention I am able to see what is going on outside, to detect any unwelcome intruder, and to take such steps as are necessary to drive him away or—otherwise get rid of him. With the aid of my Robot—"

Jack turned on him, startled out of his self-imposed control.

"The mechanical monster? It is yours?" he cried.

"Naturally. A mere toy, but ingenious, and it has served its purpose admirably. All this country was thickly populated when I came. The people had to be got rid of. I tried many means, but the ignorant natives were very much



You'll like young Harry Frobisher, who is one of the band of adventurers in this amazing new serial of mystery and thrill.

attached to their land and would not go. However, the Robot did the trick."

Jack stared at the speaker, fierce anger rising within him. But realising how much depended upon him, he with a great effort, conquered his rage and spoke calmly.

"Then you are responsible for what has happened to Captain Storm?"

"Quite so," replied the professor coolly. "I tried to frighten him and his party away, but he was obstinate, and so I had to adopt other methods."

"You killed him?"

"Oh no," replied the professor. "I think he will be a quite useful workman when he has been properly disciplined. At present he is obstinate and unreasonable, but that will pass. Now look at this."

"Are you aware, Professor Rollins," said Jack, in a tone of suppressed passion, "that Captain Storm came out here at the risk of his life to rescue you, and restore you to civilisation?"

"Yes, an unwarrantable interference in my affairs; but I overlook that. My colleagues in London ought to have known that I am quite capable of taking care of myself. However, I shall find some use for the good captain. He is of a low order of intelligence, but when I examined him I found he had certain qualities, and I decided not to destroy him. But we have more important things to consider. You are interested in my Robot? Let me show you how he works."

Jack's fingers were itching to get at the inhuman monster's throat, but again he mastered the impulse and decided to bide his time.

Side by side he and the inventor bent over the table on

His heart leaped into his mouth as he saw two figures standing on the very edge of the cleft on the hillside.

They were tiny figures, but quite clear and distinct. He could see the expression on their faces. They were holding hands like two frightened children, and gazing out with horror at the approaching monster.

And suddenly as he looked Jack saw one of the figures collapse in a wrinkled heap like a wet garment dropping from a clothes-line. It was Teddy White.

Harry Frobisher, still holding his prostrate comrade's hand, stood motionless, staring at the Thing.

"What are you doing?" gasped Jack. "Don't you see you are frightening them? Make it go back! Make it go back!"

"Don't be impatient!" murmured the professor. "It will go back when it has finished its job. Watch now; this is very interesting. I am going to make it speak. I shall utter the words barely above a whisper, but they will be heard out there in a voice of thunder. Sound, you know, is only vibration, and can be magnified to any extent with suitable appliances."

Jack was frozen into a kind of numb helplessness. He could only stare stupidly, as one fascinated, at the scene being enacted before his eyes.

Then the professor, reaching for a kind of telephone receiver, began to speak into it in a soft, clear, deliberate whisper:

"White men, your hour has come! Meet it with courage, for nothing else can avail you now. You have penetrated into secrets not meant for such as you. Therefore you must die! Console yourself with the knowledge that you are sacrificed in the sacred cause of science!"

Ask The Oracle!

The great Chang Wu, a Chinese philosopher, says that "wisdom is to be desired more than ripe pomegranates." And our Office-boy says that the Oracle will get ripe tomatoes as well if he comes down his road handing out the brand of wisdom he gets off his chest in the office from ten to five!

Q. What are the Diamond Sculls?

A. A race rowed each year at Henley Regatta, T.C.D., between single amateur scullers. The first Diamond Sculls race was rowed as long ago as 1844.

Q. What is a moss-dog?

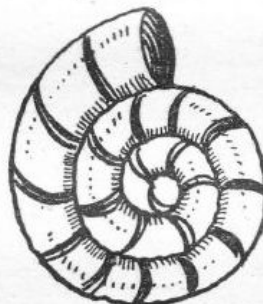
A. This is a different kind of animal, one of the two-legged variety. It is an army term for a mean and parsimonious fellow—a miser, muckworm, churl, screw, skinflint, curmudgeon, lickpenny, scrimp, niggard or codger. So now you know, "Nifty Ned!"

Q. Who is the wisest man that has ever lived?

A. Alas, modesty forbids me to answer

this question, Egbert Dellow, of Rotherhithe. A certain king called Solomon is reputed also to have been great in learning. Now excuse me, as I hear that imp of an office boy, who has been peering over my shoulder, giving three hearty boos from the other end of the room. One of these days I shall lay "rough on rats" for him!

Q. What is the "spirula peronii"?



Spirula peronii—a curious species of shell.

A. A curious species of shell. Earlier in the year quite a number of them stranded on the sands of Whitesand Bay in Cornwall, and they were supposed to herald a warm summer

Q. What is a chupatty?

A. A thin cake of unleavened bread, and one of the most popular forms of diet in India and certain other parts of the East.

Q. Who was Sir Joshua Reynolds?

A. A very famous English painter. "Regular Subscriber." By the way, keep it up—your subscription, I mean.

Q. What is a pye-dog?

A. "Pye" is an Indian term derived from the Hindustani *pahi*, meaning an outsider. So a pye-dog is an outsider—an ownerless, or pariah dog.

Q. What is a dead-eye?

A. Young Bobby Jay, of Bristol, says in a poignant letter that he knows only too well what a black eye is, being the smallest chap in his class and having curly hair as well. But what the thump a dead-eye is has got him licked, although he heard a couple of Bristol seafarers talking about one. This, my luckless chum, is a round, flat block of wood with a rope or iron band around it, and pierced with three holes for lanyards. Dead-eyes are employed in the rigging of sailing ships.

which was reflected so vividly the sunlight picture of the outside world

At the side of the table was a bench with a kind of switchboard above it.

From the bench the professor picked up what looked like a silver pencil. Jack noticed that it had a wire attached to it which trailed away into the gloom.

"Now with this little pointer I control the movements of the Robot," said the professor. "Presently you shall know how it is done, but first I will give you a demonstration."

Seating himself in front of the switchboard, the professor began to move the pencil slowly with his white, delicate hand.

"Keep your eyes on the picture," he said over his shoulder. "You see that clump of trees on the north-east corner of the plain?"

"Yes," replied Jack.

"Watch that!"

Jack obeyed, and presently he observed emerge from the shadow of the tree-clump the ugly, grotesque figure of the Thing.

Even in miniature it had a horrible and fearsome appearance, and Jack felt a shiver go through him.

Slowly, but with a kind of deadly purpose, and with giant strides, the monster began to walk across the sunlit plain.

"Ah!" exclaimed the professor suddenly. "Your friends have returned from the forest. That is very fortunate. It gives me the opportunity of completing my demonstration before your eyes."

Jack glanced swiftly across the plain to the rocky ledge on the hillside.

He paused, and then, pushing the receiver from him, spoke again in his natural, ordinary voice.

"You see, they are paralysed with fear. They cannot move. They are conveniently placed, for the sweep of the Robot's right hand. All we have to do now—"

"You are not going to kill them?" cried Jack hysterically.

"Why, of course," replied the professor, in a surprised tone. "Of what use are they to us? An ignorant Cockney and a schoolboy! And, of course, they must not be allowed to go away and tell what they have seen. I should have all the busybodies of Europe down on me. Of course they must be removed. But it is quite painless. Just watch!"

Jack was staring at the table. He saw the Thing reach the hillside, he saw its giant arm upraised, and then—he awoke as from a trance.

He turned and beheld the professor leaning eagerly over the switchboard.

Making no sound and uttering no cry of protest or appeal, Jack raised his right leg, and, with the swiftness, the force, and the accuracy of an old footballer, he let fly.

His boot caught the absorbed professor fair and square and with terrific violence just below the ribs.

The astonished gentleman was lifted bodily out of his chair and crashed to the floor in the gloom which encircled the outer rim of the room.

(This is only a taste of the thousand-and-one thrills you're going to get in this powerful story of amazing adventure. Watch out, then, for next week's gripping instalment, chums; it's the real goods!)

"FOR LOVE" OF LADY PEGGY!"

(Continued from page 22.)

"Come on!" said Lady Peggy, and took his arm. Her other arm slipped into Fatty Wynn's.

Together the three of them crossed the line again, and walked on in silence towards the moor.

For a while none of them spoke.

Blake and Fatty Wynn were both feeling a trifle small.

They had both been anxious to shine in front of Lady Peggy, for reasons that now seemed rather mean. Instead, she had pulled the fat out of the fire for them, and had won the laurels!

But, at any rate, their nerve-racking experience had lifted Blake and Fatty Wynn out of their antagonism.

As they caught each other's glance now, the two rivals grinned faintly. On a sudden impulse Blake stopped and held out his hand. Fatty Wynn gripped it.

"Thanks, old man!" said Blake simply. "It—it was ripping the way you stuck by me, when you could have got clear so easily!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Fatty Wynn, colouring; but he gripped Blake's hand tighter for a moment.

"Rats be blowed!" ejaculated Blake. "It was just fine!"

"Anyone would have done it!"

"I don't think, you ass! I tell you—"

"I tell you, you dummy—"

"Shut up, you two!" broke in Lady Peggy, with a little laugh that was not quite steady. "You're not going to start quarrelling again, are you, you idiots?"

"Rather not!" grinned Fatty Wynn.

"You bet we aren't!" chuckled Blake.

Lady Peggy surveyed them with rather an odd look.

"I wonder if you see now what perfect asses you have been?" she murmured.

Blake and Fatty Wynn each knew what she meant. They realised that Peggy had understood their hostility; and they felt very small.

"You see," went on Peggy, with her arms still slipped into theirs as they went on, "I like you two awfully, both of you; and I should hate you to be anything but the best of pals to each other. Specially after—after what happened at the crossing! I think you were both frightfully brave!"

"Fatty was," put in Blake quickly.

"Oh, rats!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Oh, but you were!" said Peggy firmly. "It was just fine the way you tried to get his foot clear, with that train coming! And the way you told him to get clear when you thought you were done," she went on slowly, turning to Blake, "that was just as ripping! I'd never have had the pluck of either of you!"

"But you did the best thing of the lot!" gasped Blake.

"Of course you did!" cried Fatty Wynn hotly.

"Oh, rats!" said Lady Peggy shortly. "I only jumped into the car on the spur of the moment, honestly. If I'd

had time to think about it—as you two had—I shouldn't have done it at all!"

Blake and Fatty Wynn grinned. They were not going to argue about it; but it was clear from their faces that they did not believe that for a moment.

Lady Peggy grinned cheerfully. She took off her hat and swung it. Her glorious red hair danced gaily in the wind as they struck off across the moor in the direction of Spalding village.

"Anyway," said Lady Peggy, "what a giddy adventure, wasn't it? My hat!"

Jack Blake planked down half-a-crown on the counter of Mrs. Taggles' little tuckshop.

"Another plate of tarts, please, Mrs. Taggles!"

"Certainly, Master Blake!"

"Good egg!" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

It was later that evening.

Blake and Fatty Wynn had returned to St. Jim's together, and had gone straight to the tuckshop, where they were indulging in a cheery little feed to celebrate the burying of the hatchet between them.

"Wade in, old man!" grinned Blake, as the fresh supply of tarts was placed before them.

"Thanks, old hoss!" Fatty Wynn took a tart. "Two more ginger-pops, please, Mrs. Taggles!"

"Very good, Master Wynn!"

"You know," said David Llewellyn Wynn, as he selected another tart, "she's a ripping girl!"

"Rather!" nodded Blake, lifting his glass of ginger-pop. Their eyes met; they both grinned.

"She likes us!" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"Both of us!" agreed Blake.

"Both of us equally!" added Fatty Wynn thoughtfully.

"That's fine!"

"Ripping!"

They shook hands solemnly.

That the almost bitter rivalry between them now was over for good was clear. Blake and Fatty Wynn were willing to admit that their girl chum liked them both equally, and were content to know that she did, at any rate, like them better than any other fellows at St. Jim's. On that understanding they buried the hatchet.

Jack Blake and David Llewellyn Wynn were going to try to share Lady Peggy's warm friendship for them without squabbling in the future.

There was bound to be a certain amount of friendly rivalry between them. But each was determined that it should never develop again into real hostility. That would be almost impossible, after having been so near to death together—they and their girl chum!

Blake and Fatty Wynn raised their glasses. And together they said:

"Here's to Lady Peggy!"

THE END.

(Lady Peggy appears prominently in next week's rousing long story of St. Jim's, entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF RIVER GRANGE!" If you fail to read it, chums, you'll miss the treat of the week.)



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