

HERE'S THE PAPER WITH A BIG BANG IN IT!

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EVERY
WEDNESDAY.



TOM MERRY & CO. CELEBRATE THE "FIFTH"!

THIS YARN IS CERTAINLY NO DAMP SQUIB—



CHAPTER 1.
Fireworks!

“**W**HAT is the difference between a squib and a hat?” asked Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Harry Manners, Lowther’s study-mates, stared at him.

It was close on bonfire night; everything in Study No. 10 of the Shell at St. Jim’s indicated that fact. In one corner of the study, propped on a chair, and lolling drunkenly against the wall, was a guy. What or whom that guy represented was a question hard to answer. To judge by the hideous mask it wore, it represented the demon of a pantomime. On the table, and scattered on chairs and bookcase, were fireworks, small and large, of every description.

To judge also by that supply of fireworks, Study No. 10 were in funds that November day, and were determined to have a record flare-up on the Fifth.

Tom Merry and Manners were busy at the table sorting fireworks. But they paused and stared at their chum as he asked that extraordinary question.

“What is the difference—” began Tom blankly. “Is—is that a conundrum, Monty?”

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“Or is it one of your jokes?” demanded Manners accusingly.

Monty Lowther seemed himself to be convulsed with merriment. It certainly seemed to him to be a joke—and a very funny one. Monty Lowther was the humorist of the Shell. He contributed the Comic Column to “Tom Merry’s Weekly.” That was why his chums looked at him now with sudden suspicion.

“You—ha, ha, ha!—dense owls!” laughed Lowther. “Can’t you see it?”

“See what?”

“The joke—the answer!” said Lowther, a trifle warmly.

“Is there a joke—is there an answer?” asked Tom Merry, quite puzzled. “Heaps of difference between a squib and a hat, I should say!”

“Tom!” said Manners, winking solemnly at his chum. “But what is the difference, old chap?”

“Cough it up, old scout!”

said Tom encouragingly. “We’ll laugh whether it’s funny or not—just to oblige you.”

“You—silly owls!” gasped Lowther, glaring.

“Well, we give it up! What is the difference, old chap?” said Tom anxiously.

“Why”—Lowther started to laugh again—“one you let off and the other you put on! See? Ha, ha, ha!”

School House, New House and Grammar School . . . all against all in this whirling, whiz-bang, long complete yarn of St. Jim’s!

—IT'S GOT A BANG IN IT—AT BOTH ENDS!

WHIZ!

The Glorious Fifth!

BANG!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Tom Merry and Manners eyed him fixedly, their faces showing some concern.

"But where's the conundrum come in?" asked Tom, frowning.

"And where's the joke?" asked Manners seriously.

Lowther stopped laughing and glared.

"You footling owls!" he snorted. "Can't you see it? One—"

"Yes, yes, old chap!" said Tom hastily. "But a squib doesn't always go off!"

"And a hat doesn't always go on, either!" said Manners.

"Look here, you—you—"

"And where's the point, anyway?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I can make sense of it! Are you sure you've got it right—"

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther heatedly.

"Hold on! Stop and go over it again, old fellow—"

"Rats!"

And Monty Lowther flounced out of the study, banging the door after him with unnecessary violence. Being a humorist, Monty could see the humour in his conundrum, and it annoyed him intensely when other fellows couldn't. Or, possibly, Monty realised that it wasn't quite so funny after all, and was anxious to hide himself!

"Poor old Monty!" grinned Tom. "Too bad—we ought to have laughed, you know! Though it was really patrid, even for Monty!"

"We'll ask for it again, and then we'll roar!" said Manners, with a chuckle. "Mustn't forget to laugh in the right place, though. Hallo, here he comes again!"

There was a tap and then the door opened. But it wasn't the humorist. It proved to be none other than Gordon Gay, the leader of the juniors from the local Grammar School at Rylcombe. Behind him were his chums, Frank Monk and Carboy.

"My hat! Gordon Gay!" ejaculated Tom, staring.

"What the thump are you doing here, Gay?"

"Just a peaceful visit, old infant!" said Gay, his cheery face wearing a broad grin. "We've come about the match on Saturday, old sports. I say, what a whacking stack of fireworks you've got!"

And Gay stared enviously at the fireworks.

"Yes; we're going to lick your measly Grammar School show into a cocked hat this time!" said Tom Merry grimly.

"Well, it looks as if you will!" admitted Gay ruefully.

"We just happen to be on our beam ends, and we've hardly a cracker between us. But—my hat! What a ripping likeness, Tommy! That guy—it's you to the life!"

"The very image!" assented Monk solemnly. "Just as you look when we lick you at footer, Merry, old bean! But you're surely not going to burn a guy of yourself, old chap?"

"I thought you'd come on a peaceful visit!" said Tom Merry, with deadly grimness. "But if it's trouble you want—"

"All serene—only my little joke!" chuckled Gay cheerily.

"What's this about footer?" said Tom. "We're busy! Cough it up and clear!"

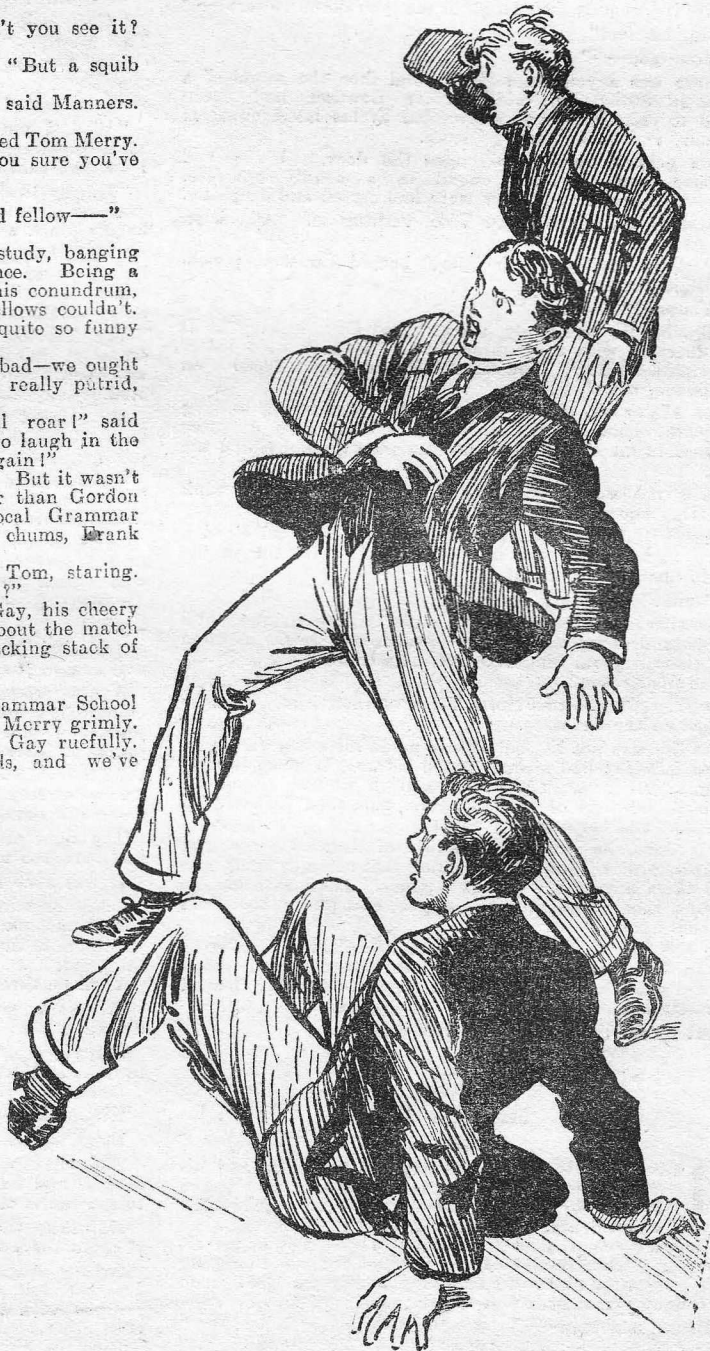
Obviously, Tom didn't enjoy being compared with that awful guy!

"All serene—keep your giddy wool on, old scout!" grinned Gordon Gay. "We want to know if you fellows will put off Saturday's game with us until next Wednesday—just as a favour?"

"Oh!" Tom Merry frowned. "Why?"

"The giddy Wootton brothers have been called home—pater ill," said Gay briefly. "And it's just our luck that Jones mi is in sanny with a cold—our three best men off. And—"

"Oh!" said Tom, frowning. "But—"



"I know it's a bit thick asking you to change the date," said Gay pleadingly. "But—we know you'll want us to give you a good game, Tommy—"

"Well, that's so," admitted Tom, with a laugh. "Well, I think we can change the day. But I'll ask Blake about it. Come along!"

"Right-ho!"

They went along to Study No. 6 of the Fourth, Gay's glance lingering enviously on the fireworks as he followed Tom out. Manners, being on the footer committee, went with Tom. As they arrived outside Study No. 6 they heard Lowther's voice within, followed by laughter.

"You—you footling idiots!" he was hooting. "Can't you see the joke? One's let off and the other—"

"Yes, but don't we keep telling you that you haven't explained the joke yet, old chap?" came Blake's voice soothingly. "But perhaps it's a serious conundrum—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses!" came Lowther's voice furiously. "Why, if you jolly well laugh at me, you dense rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—"

There was a yell from Blake, and then the sound of a scuffle in Study No. 6. Evidently Lowther had again failed to raise the laugh he wanted by his latest effort at humour, and he had lost patience.

Tom grinned and pushed open the door. Blake and Lowther were waltzing round in a deadly embrace. Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were looking on and laughing.

"Monty, old man!" said Tom, rushing in. "Chuck it, you ass!"

"Perhaps you'll see this joke!" hooted Lowther, punching Blake's nose.

"Yoooop!"

"Trouble in the family, what?" said Gay, looking in at the doorway with a grinning face. "I think we'd better call again, Tommy. You can let me have your decision on the phone, old chap."

Tom Merry did not hear—he was too busy trying to drag his irate chum off Blake. Gordon Gay, with a queer glimmer in his eye, backed into the passage and closed the door.

"Why not wait—" Monk was beginning, but a wink from Gay silenced him.

"Shush! Just the chance I wanted!" breathed Gordon Gay. "You chaps push off—quick! Wait for me in the lane! Shan't be a minute!"

"Right!"

Knowing their chum, Monk and Carboy grinned and disappeared along the passage towards the stairs. Gordon Gay glanced about him, and then he scudded back to Study No. 10 in the Shell.

He darted inside and closed the door after him. Then he jumped to the fireplace.

The fire was not lit, but it was made all ready for lighting—a fact Gay had already noted before. Working swiftly the practical joker of the Grammarian Fourth nipped off the coal, heedless of soiled fingers, and then he removed the sticks and some of the paper.

This done, he grabbed handfuls of fireworks—rip-raps, crackers, catherine-wheels—anything that came to hand, and piled them among the flattened paper. Then, satisfied, he placed a sheet of paper over the pile, and put on the sticks and coal again.

He had just finished the job, and was picking up a stray rip-rap from the hearthrug, when footsteps and voices sounded outside. With a startled gasp, Gordon Gay leaped for safety behind the couch, and crouched down.

Next moment the Terrible Three came in.

CHAPTER 2.

Exciting!

MONTY LOWTHER was arguing heatedly, and his chums were attempting to soothe him. But Blake & Co.—by refusing to see Lowther's joke—had touched him on his tenderest spot.

"Couldn't see a joke like that!" Lowther was almost shouting. "Thickheads! Even if they are too thumping dense, they needn't try to be funny at my expense! And you fellows are as bad!"

"Monty, old man—"

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"Jealousy!" snorted Lowther. "Blake wants to do the comic column in the 'Weekly,' I know! He's always trying to run my work down! He saw the joke all right!" said Monty bitterly. "Oh, yes! But he had to pretend he didn't and be funny about it. Think I'm having my leg pulled like that?"

"Never mind!" said Tom Merry soothingly. "We'll keep the joke for home consumption, old chap! Tell it us again!"

"Do!" said Manners. "What was it? Lemme see—what's the difference between a catherine-wheel and a cap, wasn't it—or something like—"

"You footling, benighted ass, of course it wasn't!" snapped Lowther, glaring. "I'm hanged if I'll repeat it again, though!"

"Good! I—I mean, why not keep it for the 'Weekly'?" said Tom hastily. "I say, tell us that one about the Yarmouth bloater—the one you invented during the vac, you know. It's a scream—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, help us with these dashed fireworks, then!" said Tom mildly. "I say, this pile seems smaller somehow, you chaps. Look! Some of the dashed fireworks seem to have gone!"

"What rot!" said Manners.

"Well, I put half a dozen rip-raps here, anyway," said Tom, frowning at the table. "Four have gone—Phew! I suppose that cheeky Gay couldn't have boned any?"

"Hardly likely," said Manners, shaking his head. "You must be mistaken, Tom. Gay might raid the lot, but he'd hardly pinch a handful of giddy fireworks, dash it all!"

"Well, I suppose he wouldn't!" grunted Tom. "Anyway, let's get busy again. None too much time before to-morrow night! Luckily it's Wednesday, and a half! We've got to finish that guy yet, too!"

The Terrible Three got busy. Behind the couch Gay crouched, hardly daring to breathe. Ten minutes passed, and then a tap came on the door, and the elegant form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared.

He entered the study gracefully, and placed his silk hat on the table, likewise his lavender gloves. Evidently Gussy was going out.

"Hallo, here you are, Gussy!" said Tom Merry briskly. "There's the giddy letter on the mantelpiece, old scunt! Mind you don't forget it. Close the door after you!"

"Bai Jove! You are not vewy polite, Tom Mewwy!" said Arthur Augustus reprovingly. "Especially to a fellow who is doin' you a favah, you know!"

"We're busy, old chap! Hop off to the village—there's a good chap! There's the letter!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—Howevah, if you are busy I will excuse your lack of politeness!" said Gussy stiffly.

And he crossed to the mantelpiece to get the letter he had offered to register at the post office for Tom. And it was just then that Gordon Gay played one of his notorious practical jokes.

As a practical joker Gordon Gay had few equals, and he was as daring as he was reckless. He was certainly both now—and thoughtless in addition.

The sight of Gussy's topper, brim upwards on the table, had been too much of a temptation for Gordon Gay.

It was done in a couple of seconds.

Like lightning Gay whipped from his pocket a box of safety-matches. Just as swiftly he struck one and applied the flame to the business end of the rip-rap, still clutched in his hand.

Then he threw it.

It was a good shot—indeed, Gay could scarcely have missed at that short distance.

The rip-rap, with a faint splutter at first, soared through the air, and dropped neatly into the silk hat. And then—Bang!

"What the—"

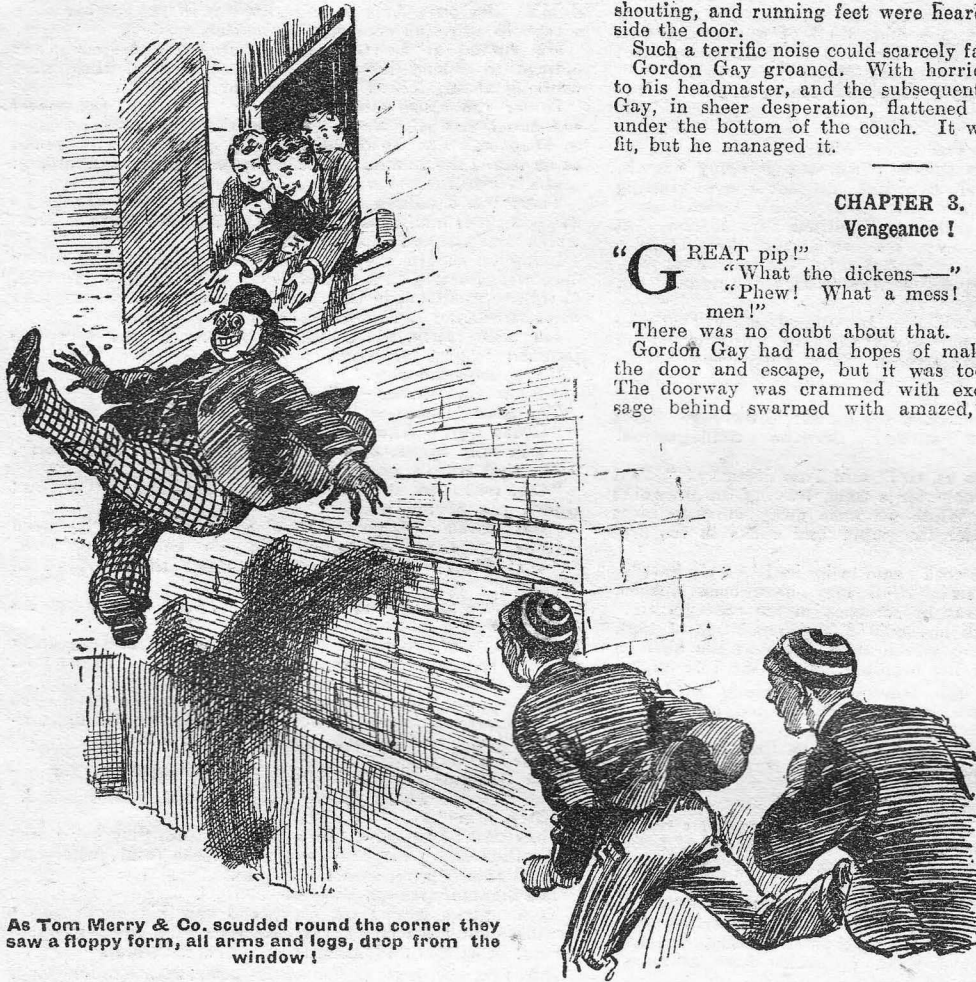
Bang, bang, bang, bang! Sizzzzzz! Bang, bang!

The rip-rap was going great guns within the hat. It banged and sizzled furiously as if raging at being confined to the limits of Gussy's silk hat.

Naturally the sudden series of explosions came as a surprise to the Terrible Three, and to Arthur Augustus.

Arthur Augustus leaped nearly two feet into the air. Lowther fell backwards out of his chair, and as they jumped with the shock, Tom and Manners bumped into each other.

Rip, rip, rip! Bang, bang, bang! Sizz-zzzz-zzz! Bang!



As Tom Merry & Co. scudded round the corner they saw a floppy form, all arms and legs, drop from the window!

"What the— What— Oh, great pip!" yelled Tom Merry. "Look out! Your topper's on fire, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus shrieked and made a mad leap to rescue his topper. The rip-rap had leaped out of the topper now and was jumping about the floor. It had already scattered sparks far and wide, and suddenly a cracker went off with a terrific bang. It was followed instantly by a rocket which soared to the ceiling, and then fell back on to Lowther, who yelled fiendishly.

A couple of catherine-wheels next went into business, so to speak.

Bang, crash! Bang! Whiz! Fizzzzz! Bang!

"My toppah!" shrieked Gussy.

He grabbed it and tore at the lining frantically. He ripped the burning lining out, heedless of damage to his elegant hands. He tore the burning silk out and flung it on the coals and sticks.

It burned there a brief moment, and then the paper caught alight. Then the sticks caught. And then—then the fireworks, placed under the paper by Gordon Gay, caught alight!

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

The fireplace was one mass of flashes and flying sticks and fireworks. Tom Merry & Co. howled and yelled as they jumped about trying to avoid the whizzing, flying fireworks, while the uproar was terrific.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gordon Gay.

He fairly shivered behind the couch.

The practical joker had certainly not expected such a commotion as this—not yet, not until he was clear, at all events. He had expected a bit of fun with Gussy's hat. And he had expected great things when the juniors lit the fire that evening.

But Gussy had saved the Terrible Three doing that. And now it looked as if Gordon Gay was "for it." Here he was, trapped within the room. Already excited voices were

shouting, and running feet were heard in the passages outside the door.

Such a terrific noise could scarcely fail to arouse attention. Gordon Gay groaned. With horrid visions of a report to his headmaster, and the subsequent sack before his eyes, Gay, in sheer desperation, flattened himself, and crawled under the bottom of the couch. It was a frightfully tight fit, but he managed it.

CHAPTER 3.
Vengeance!

"GREAT pip!"
"What the dickens—"
"Phew! What a mess! Someone's for it, you men!"

There was no doubt about that.

Gordon Gay had had hopes of making a mad break for the door and escape, but it was too late for that now. The doorway was crammed with excited faces. The passage behind swarmed with amazed, startled juniors and seniors.

There was a sudden commotion as Kildare and Darrell came charging through, scattering juniors right and left.

"You footling young idiots!" gasped Kildare, as he took in the scene. "D'you want to have the house on fire?"

He and Darrell joined the alarmed Terrible Three and Gussy as they strove to stamp out exploding, spluttering fireworks, burning paper and sticks.

Bang!

The last squib exploded, and the unexpected but exciting firework display came to a

sudden and spluttering end.

The Terrible Three blinked at each other dizzily. Arthur Augustus, just as excited and bewildered, retrieved his topper—or what was left of it—and after jamming his eye-glass in his eye, he blinked at it dismally. During the confusion someone had planked a foot through that silk-hat—it was badly scuttled.

"Oh, bai Jove!" he gasped faintly. "Oh, gweat Scott! Look at my toppah!"

"And look at the room!" groaned Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat! How on earth did it happen?"

"That's something you young idiots will have to explain, I fancy!" said Kildare grimly, as he mopped his heated face. "Oh, here's Mr. Railton, now!"

The Housemaster of the School House came rustling in, his features registering great alarm.

"What has happened? What— Ah!"

Mr. Railton sighted the scattered fireworks—or the remnants of fireworks. His brow went grim.

"What is the meaning of this, Merry? You are well aware that fireworks are not to be let off in the House—you know the rules!"

"Oh! Oh, yes, sir! We—we didn't let them off, sir!"

"What? Nonsense! Now, then—"

"They—they went off themselves, sir," gasped the unhappy Tom Merry. "We—we were just talking when they—they suddenly began to go off. That is— Oh!"

Tom Merry suddenly remembered how the sticks and coal in the grate had behaved when the burning silk lining was cast on them. It was a practical joke! Some unknown miscreant had hidden the fireworks amid the sticks and coal in readiness for when the fire was lit. That was it.

"It—it must have been a joke of someone's, sir!" faltered Tom.

"A joke! It is a very serious matter, Merry!" said Mr. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,186.

Railton angrily. He went to the window and flung up the sash to let the smoke and smell of gunpowder out. "Good heavens! The house might have been set on fire! Explain how it started—at once, Merry!"

"It started in D'Arcy's topper—I mean, silk-hat, sir!"

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! What do you mean, Merry?"

"Some uttah wuffian thwew a wip-wap into my toppah, sir!" spluttered Arthur Augustus, his noble eye glinting at Monty Lowther—greatly to that youth's astonishment.

"That—that's what started it!" gasped Tom Merry. "It—it wasn't our doing, sir! We—we aren't likely to have mucked up our study like this just for the fun of it. Besides, it's wasted nearly all our fireworks, sir!" added Tom with a hollow groan.

The Housemaster nodded. It seemed clear that the Terrible Three were not likely to have willingly let off the fireworks—even for a lark. It was equally unlikely that Arthur Augustus would have willingly placed a lighted rip-rap in his own silk-hat.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the master, frowning. "But someone must have started the—the conflagration. How—"

"It—it's a mystery to us, sir!" said Tom dismally. "We'd just been out of the room for a time, leaving the fireworks safely on the table. While we were away someone must have hidden some under the paper and sticks in the fireplace."

"But how did a firework come to be in D'Arcy's hat?"

"Goodness knows, sir! It—it may have been thrown, alight, from the doorway by someone in the passage, sir!" suggested Tom, though he doubted the possibility of that. "But that's how it started, and then, throwing the burning lining of the hat into the fireplace started the rest off!"

"Very well," said the Housemaster grimly. "I will accept your statement that it was not caused by any boy in this study, Merry. But such a risk must not be taken again. In future, no fireworks must be brought into the House under any circumstances whatever!"

"Oh!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Kildare, you will kindly acquaint the prefects of my decision on this matter!" snapped Mr. Railton. "I also will have an order placed on the notice-board to that effect!"

"Very good, sir!"

"The risk is too great where juniors are concerned!" said Mr. Railton. "All fireworks must be kept out of doors—in the new toolshed behind the chapel. Merry, you will convey the remainder of these fireworks there at once."

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled Tom.

Mr. Railton dismissed the staring crowd, and soon the Terrible Three were alone again. They stared at each other dismally.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Tom Merry. "This beats the band! Still, we're lucky not to have been licked or lined—dashed lucky! Railton's a sport!"

"But how did it start?" snorted Manners, hugging a scorched hand wrathfully. "Someone did it—"

"I know vewy well who did it!" shouted Arthur Augustus heatedly. "It was you, Lowthah, you feahful idiot!"

"Me?" yelled Lowther.

"Who else would play such a wotten pwactical joke?" hooted Arthur Augustus. "You thwew that wetchid wip-wap into my hat! I had no intention of givin' you away to Wailton. But I insist upon givin' you a feahful thwashin' heah and now, Lowthah, for your wotten joke!"

"Well, my hat!" said Lowther. "Why, I never dreamed of doing it, you—you benighted ass!"

Manners and Tom Merry were also staring rather suspiciously at Monty. They did not remember where Monty had been standing at the time, and it was certainly possible.

"You—you didn't, Monty, did you?" gasped Tom, eyeing him blankly.

"Not to get your own back over that—that joke matter?" suggested Manners.

"Of course I didn't!" almost shrieked Lowther. "I might have chucked a rip-rap into Gussy's hat if I'd thought about it, but I jolly well didn't!"

"And I am convinced that you did, Lowthah!" shouted Gussy in great wrath. "Who else would do such a weekless thing? It was one of your sillay pwactical jokes, and I am goin' to thwash you for it. Put your hands up, you wottah!"

And Arthur Augustus rushed at Lowther.

Really Arthur Augustus was taking a little too much for granted. Certainly Lowther was the biggest and most reckless practical joker in the House, but he very often got blamed for what he hadn't done.

Arthur Augustus ought to have made sure first. But he

didn't. For once Arthur Augustus was in far too towering a rage to stop and consider the matter.

He rushed at Lowther, and that innocent youth was obliged to defend himself. The next moment they were waltzing about, locked in a grim embrace.

Under the couch Gordon Gay writhed. He was nearly suffocated and stiff with the tense posture he was obliged to keep to. But he could not help gurgling with mirth as he heard the sounds of battle between Gussy and Monty. His mirth did not last long, however.

There was a sudden howl from Lowther as one of Gussy's avenging fists landed on his chin, and Lowther tripped backwards and crashed into the couch.

Being on castors the couch slid back slightly, the junior underneath acting as a sort of brake to its progress. In fact, so tightly was Gordon Gay jammed beneath the couch, that when it did move, a howl of anguish escaped him.

He was fairly squashed, whilst one of the legs was jammed against his nose.

"xarooooooooooooop!"

"What the thump—"

The battle ceased as that wild howl of anguish rang out. "Great pip! Who on earth—"

"You silly idiots, stop scrapping!" howled Tom Merry. "But that wasn't you who yelled, Lowther!"

"Ow, ow! No, it wasn't!" gasped Lowther. "Ow, ow! Gussy, you raving lunatic!"

"Bai Jove! Someone gave a feahful yell!" gasped Arthur Augustus, quite startled, as he jumped back. "Gweat Scott! There's someone undah the couch, Tom Mewvy!"

"So there is!" yelled Manners. "Look! I can see his foot, and— Look out!"

Gordon Gay groaned. The game was up, and he knew it. To linger longer was asking for it, and he decided now to make his long-delayed break for liberty.

He scrambled with difficulty from beneath the couch—the couch fairly heaving as he scrambled. He jumped up, red-faced, dusty, and panting. There was a howl.

"Gordon Gay!"

The Grammarian leader leaped madly for the door. The Terrible Three yelled, and Arthur Augustus yelled. "Stop him!"

They understood now. In a blinding flash they knew who had filled the fireplace with fireworks and who had pitched that rip-rap into Gussy's hat.

The sight of Gordon Gay was enough.

Tom Merry leaped for Gay, and ran his chest into a terrific slam from Gay's fist. As he reeled back, gasping, Arthur Augustus and Manners collided with him.

But Lowther was at the door now, and Gordon Gay, desperate, darted round the table, with Lowther tearing after him. Gay leaped aside, grabbed a chair, and sent it crashing in Lowther's path. Unable to stop in time, Monty Lowther went headlong over the chair, falling into the fender amid a terrific clatter and crashing.

Gay was at the door now, easily avoiding the grabs of Manners, Gussy, and Tom, who got into each other's way in their desperate eagerness to get hands on the enemy.

He tore it open, and flew for his life.

"After him!" shrieked Tom Merry, barging into the half-open door. "Yooooop! After him! It was Gay—it was that boulder who played that trick with the fireworks. After him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And they went after him, Tom Merry a good first, with the raging and much-bruised Lowther bringing up the rear. They went pounding along the passage, and thundered downstairs.

But Gay was already on the floor below, having slid like greased lightning down the banisters.

At the bottom Knox of the Sixth made a desperate grab at him; but Gay ducked desperately and went on, Knox overbalancing and sprawling on his face on the mat.

"Yooop!" roared Knox. "Why, what—"

As Knox lay there, winded, Tom Merry, followed by Manners, Gussy, and Lowther, took flying leaps over his prostrate form. They vanished through the School House doorway into the quadrangle, and Knox sat up dizzily and blinked after them.

CHAPTER 4.

A "Mis-guy-ded" Plan!

"ROTTER!" said George Higgins.

"Beastly!" agreed Fatty Wynn, nodding. "It may even be one of us!"

"Very likely!" assented Francis Kerr grimly.

"Every time we meet those School House worms they grin, as if they'd got something on."

"They're making a guy right enough!" said Figgins gloomily. "I've heard them gassing about it several times. It may be of me. From the way Tom Merry grinned at me this morning, I believe it is."

"Well, you do make rather a good subject, Figgy!" said Kerr, rather thoughtlessly. "With your long legs—"

"You cheeky owl! If you want a thick ear—"

"I—I mean to say, what's the good of worrying about it?" said Kerr hastily. "They may just be pulling our legs, or perhaps it's a guy of old Ratty, our Housemaster, that they're making!"

"Well, won't that be nearly as bad!" said Figgins heatedly. "We could make a guy of Ratty—we have done so more than once. But we're not allowing those School House sweeps to guy a New House beak!"

as he watched the Terrible Three and Gussy vanish through the gates on the heels of the fleeing Grammarian.

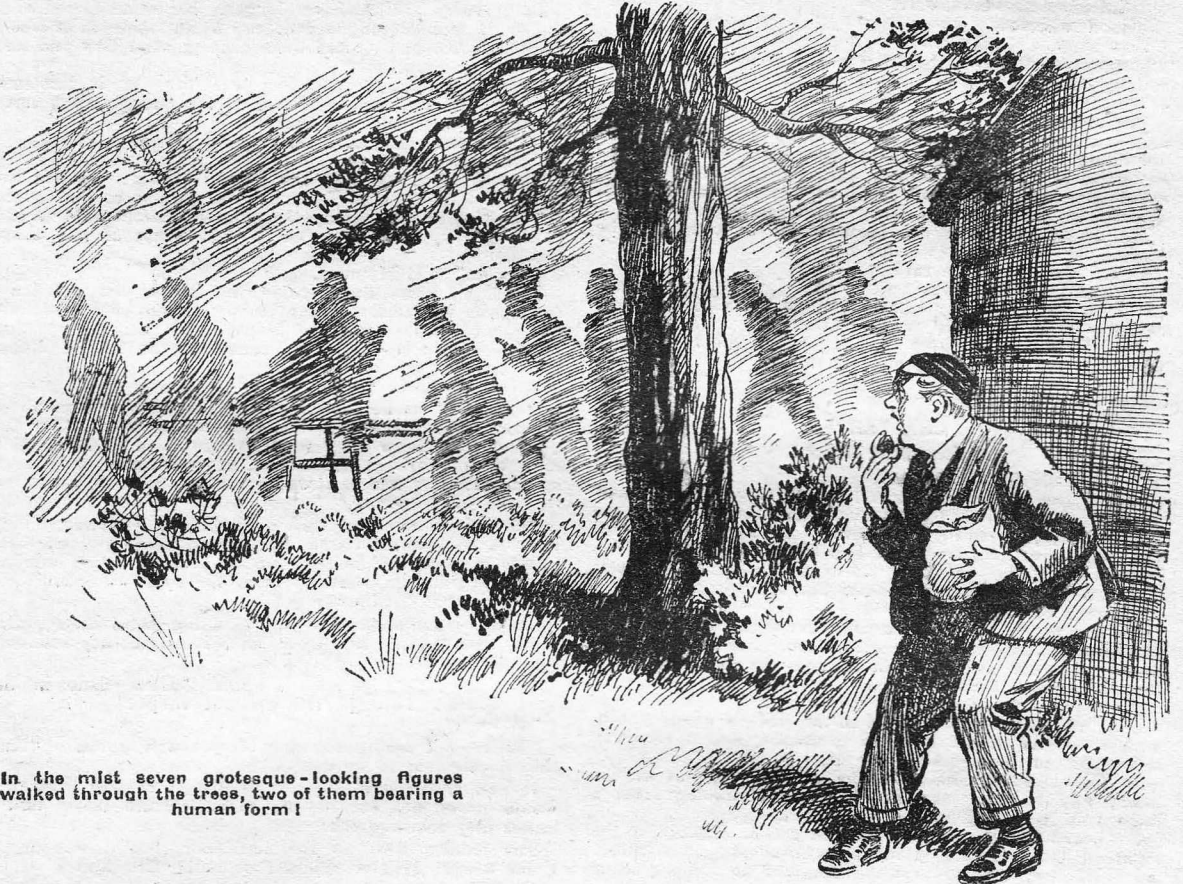
"But—"

"The chance of a lifetime!" breathed Figgins. "They're tearing after Gay for some reason or other. It's a thousand to one they've not locked their study door this time! Now's our chance!"

"But—but the risk?" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Blow the risk! Dash the risk! Who cares about the risk? Come on!"

And George Figgins led the way at a run towards the School House. But he displayed caution once he had reached it. During lessons New House men had to enter the School House, and their presence passed unnoticed. But outside lessons they were very soon noticed, and their



In the mist seven grotesque-looking figures walked through the trees, two of them bearing a human form!

"We can't very well stop them, old chap!"

"In any case, we're only suspecting, Figgy! We don't know what they're up to."

"They're making a guy!" said Figgins darkly. "I know. I saw the shadow of it on the blind from the quad last night. I saw them making it. And from the way they've been grinning at us lately, I'm certain that guy's a representation of one of us."

"We must find out somehow!" said Kerr.

"We're going to!" snapped George Figgins, his eyes gleaming. "It's in Study No. 10—Tom Merry's study. We've got to get in there somehow. They're pretty certain to keep the door locked—that's the trouble. But—"

"Hallo! What's that?"

There sounded a sudden commotion from the School House across the quad. As the three New House juniors looked that way they were just in time to see a wild-looking figure come tearing down out of the School House doorway and leap down the steps.

After the figure came four more figures.

"Phew! Gordon Gay!" gasped Figgins. "That—that daring bouncer must have been up to something there!"

"And Tom Merry and his pals are after him!" said Kerr. "I say, shall we join in after Gay? We owe the cheeky bouncer a few scores ourselves."

"No!"

George Figgins rapped out the word, his eyes gleaming

presence was looked upon with suspicion by the rival School House juniors.

But Figgins took the risk. He led his chums boldly into the House and up the stairs. They reached Study No. 10 without incident, and then Figgins' heart leaped. The door was wide open!

The trio scuttled inside, and Figgins closed and locked the door behind him.

"What luck!" he gloated. "There it is—there's the blessed guy! Look! But blessed if it's like anyone or anything!" he added, quite puzzled. "Phew! What's been happening here?"

He gave a jump as he saw the scattered fireworks and remnants of fireworks. Despite the open window the smell of gunpowder still lingered in the study. There was a smell also of burnt wool from the hearthrug.

"Great pip! They've been letting off fireworks, or something!" gasped Kerr. "Did you ever! The nerve!"

"Must be potty!" said Figgins. "Unless— That's it! That lunatic Gay has been up to his monkey tricks here, I bet! You know what he is! Phew!"

"That's it!"

"Well, it's our chance—now or never!" snapped Figgins, grinning. "We've got to collar that guy! We'll heave it through the window, and then run round and get it! On the ball! If we're— Oh!"

The doorknob rattled.

"Shush!" breathed Figgins.

There came a muttered grunt from outside.

"Beasts!" came the grunt. "Suspicious beasts! Locked the door, after all! I suppose they think a fellow might come after the cake! Beasts!"

Figgins chuckled softly.

"That fat beast, Trimble!" he breathed. "He's come after a cake, or something! Tom Merry ought to be grateful to us. By locking the door we've saved his cake!"

The New House trio chuckled. There was a silence outside the door, and then they heard Baggy Trimble move away.

"Good! The fat worm's gone—given it up!" grinned Figgy. "Now, buck up! I say, we might as well collar some of these fireworks, too!"

"Good wheeze!"

Figgins & Co. got busy.

Meanwhile, Baggy Trimble was also busy—he was busy rolling out of doors as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

The New House trio had forgotten the fact that keyholes held a tremendous fascination for Baggy Trimble.

Finding the door locked, Baggy had, out of sheer curiosity, stooped and peeped through the keyhole. He could not see much—but Figgins himself stood right opposite to the door, and Baggy glimpsed him.

He understood now the faint sound of chuckling he fancied he heard from within.

It was a New House raid.

Obviously the cake was quite "off" for the time being. In any case, Baggy was a loyal enough School House man to know what he ought to do. Like Figgy, Trimble had spotted the Terrible Three scudding out of the House, and now Baggy went scudding after them.

CHAPTER 5. Something Doing!

GORDON GAY ran hard.

But Tom Merry ran harder. Gay was stiff and aching. That tense period of hiding under the couch, expecting every moment to be discovered, had been more than trying—it had been a nightmare. The joker was still feeling the effects of it—especially the effects of being jammed hard between the floor and the hard framework of the couch.

He was not in the best condition for sprinting, and Tom Merry was. Moreover, he had a righteous indignation to spur him on. As they shot through the gates Tom was scarcely a yard behind Gay.

"Stop him!" yelled Tom.

A figure had appeared ahead in the lane—a weedy youth, with a bulging forehead, huge spectacles, and a far-away expression in his pale blue eyes.

It was Herbert Skimpole, the scientific genius of the Shell, and Skimmy was ambling along, reading from a huge volume nearly as big as himself.

He heard Tom's yell, and blinked rather dazedly at the form of Gay bearing down upon him at great speed. Then Skimmy seemed to wake up, and he jumped aside convulsively.

It was not to stop Gay, however, but to get out of his way.

Gay hadn't anticipated such a move. The consequence was he barged full into Skimmy. Skimmy roared. His volume went one way and his spectacles another, Skimmy himself sat down with a tremendous bump, and Gordon Gay sprawled headlong over him.

"Yarroooooop!" wailed Skimpole, nearly flattened.

Tom Merry pelted up triumphantly.

"Got you!" roared Tom. "On him, chaps!"

It really looked as if Gay's career was ended. Arthur Augustus, followed by Lowther and Manners, sprinted up. The next moment a wild and whirling struggle was in progress in the lane. Gay howled, and, as if in answer to his howl, two figures came rushing from the hedge.

They proved to be Frank Monk and Carboy.

"Run for it, Gav!" yelled Monk, and he charged Tom Merry, sending that startled youth sprawling.

The sudden attack was so unexpected that the two Grammarians quite turned the tables for the moment. Lowther followed Tom in a sprawling heap as Carboy charged him, and then Arthur Augustus went rolling over. Gordon Gay leaped to his feet, butted Manners in the waistcoat, and bolted, scudding for his life. After him went Carboy and Frank Monk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Roaring with laughter, the three Grammarians tore up the lane. Doubtless enough, Tom Merry and Co. would have followed, but just then Baggy Trimble arrived.

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"Hold on! I say, Tom Merry!" he panted excitedly.

"Figgins—"

"Out of the way, you fat ass! Come on!" roared Tom. "But Figgy's after your guy!" shrieked Baggy. "Stop! Those New House bouncers are in your study pinching your guy and fireworks!"

"What?"

Tom Merry was on the point of rushing away, but Trimble's startling news pulled him up short.

"It's a fact!" squeaked Trimble excitedly. "Those New House rotters—I spotted 'em through the keyhole! I—I heard them cackling inside, you know! Quick!"

"F-Figgins!" stuttered Tom blankly. "You say Figgins and his pals are in our study—No. 10?"

"Yes! Quick! I've seen 'em!" howled Trimble.

"Oh, my hat!"

Tom Merry hesitated no longer. He remembered that the study was left unguarded, and it was more than likely Figgins & Co. had sighted them chasing after Gay and had seized their opportunity.

Vengeance upon Gordon Gay was forgotten in this new danger. In fact, Gay & Co. were far enough away now, and he knew pursuit was hopeless.

"Come on!" shouted Tom, in great alarm.

"Yaas, wathah!"

They scudded back at top speed. Half-way across the quad an idea came to Tom, and he shouted to his chums.

"Come with me, Monty—this way! Manners, you and Gussy go up and trap 'em! Get some of our chaps together!"

"Right!" said Manners.

He didn't guess Tom's game, but he did not question—there was no time. Arthur Augustus and he bolted into the House, while Tom and Monty, with Trimble ambling in the rear, tore round the corner of the School House building.

Then Tom gave a howl.

It was just as he had guessed. Tom was a keen-witted junior. He knew the New House fellows were after the guy, and he knew they would never dare to attempt to take it out through the School House. Their only hope of capturing it was to drop it through the study window into the quad below.

And this was exactly what Figgins & Co. were doing when Tom scudded round the corner. Tom sighted them at the window, and in that instant a floppy form, seeming all arms and legs, dropped from the open window.

It was undoubtedly the guy.

At the window showed the grinning faces of Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. But their grins faded as they suddenly sighted Tom and heard his yell.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Figgins. "Done—done in the eye! Quick! Through the window, chaps!"

"But—"

"We're not losing the guy!" yelled Figgins. "And they'll collar us if we don't!"

It had occurred to Figgins as almost certain that they would never get out of the School House safely now—unless they followed the guy!

The studies were on the first floor, but it was not a great drop. Figgins shinned over the sill, and dropped safely to the ground.

Kerr came next and Fatty Wynn, having much more weight to carry, was not so successful. He fell clean on top of Kerr, bowling both Kerr and Figgins over. The trio rolled over amidst howls of pain, and just then Tom Merry and Lowther rushed up.

They fell upon the New House men and smote them hip and thigh.

"Rescue, School House!" bawled Tom.

Figgins & Co. had the advantage in numbers at the moment. But Fatty Wynn was quite winded after his heavy fall, and Figgins and Kerr were nearly as "bad." But all three scrambled up and closed with Tom and Monty.

As it happened, Levison, Cardew, and Clive happened to be strolling near and they came rushing up as they heard the cry for aid.

"Hook it!" yelled Figgy.

He grabbed the guy, and made a mad break to get away. But Tom Merry was on him in a flash again, and then Levison & Co. pelted up. The guy went to earth, and the struggling eight fought desperately over it.

"Rescue, New House!" shrieked Figgins.

It seemed too bad that they were to be robbed of their prize on the post, as it were. From across the quad came an answering yell however, and Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen, three New House men, came rushing up, and they piled in with a will.

But Manners and Gussy had realised the birds had flown by this time, and, collecting the few School House

men indoors, they came rushing out and round the House to the scene.

The battle went on hot and furious, the guy forgotten now. Other fellows joined in—from all over the quadrangle the yells of "Rescue, School House!" and "Rescue, New House!" were bringing reinforcements from both sides.

Over the gravel-path and the flower-beds the battle raged. But it did not last long. New House was little more than half the strength of School House, and though the gallant Figgins & Co fought well, they were outnumbered and put to rout at last.

Figgins was the last to go, and he looked like a ragged guy himself as he bolted, with a dozen School House men tearing after him. He vanished into the New House, and a roar of triumphant cheering came from the victorious School House.

"We—we've licked 'em!" panted Tom Merry, mopping a damaged nose, but very cheery and satisfied. "It was a jolly close thing, though; another moment and they'd have got clear with our guy!"

"Where is it?" demanded Manners breathlessly. "Looks to me as if they might just as well have got away with it."

And, from a practical point of view, it certainly did. Scattered about was plenty of straw and rags—the inside of a guy! Scattered about also was an old jacket—or the remnants of a jacket—a pair of trousers, and a torn collar and tie. The mask the guy had sported was torn to shreds; that was all that was left of the guy.

It was certainly a hollow victory.

"Oh, the—the silly owls!" breathed Tom Merry. "And to-morrow's the Fifth! We've scarcely time to make even an ordinary guy. Blow Figgins and all his works! Still, they haven't collared it, and that's something!"

It was poor consolation, as Tom admitted; but it was much better than allowing their New House rivals to collar the guy, and the School House warriors went indoors for a much-needed clean-up, feeling, on the whole, satisfied.

CHAPTER 6. The Only Way!

"I INSIST!"

Arthur Augustus was the kind of fellow who often did insist. On this occasion, perhaps, he was entitled to insist.

It was the following day—the great and glorious Fifth had arrived at last.

And it was a half-holiday—a Wednesday. There was great satisfaction in that fact. A fellow who had delayed getting in his stock of fireworks until the day of days had ample time to remedy his slackness.

Tom Merry & Co. had walked into Rylcombe to buy fireworks. Owing to Gordon Gay's queer idea of a joke their supply had been sadly depleted. What was left of the supply had been, by Mr. Railton's orders, stored in the new toolshed. It was a wise order in Mr. Railton's view. The new shed was of corrugated iron for the most part, and it was certainly safer than a juniors' study, where anything might happen.

But the supply was not now enough in the view of Tom Merry and his chums of the School House. And, fortunately, Gussy was in funds to some extent. He had two pounds left out of his last five. Those two pounds were now to be expended to the uttermost farthing on replenishing the firework stock.

As the money was the property of the Honourable Arthur Augustus, he felt he was entitled to buy just what fireworks he pleased. Possibly he was right. Blake felt that it was unwise to trust Gussy to buy fireworks. On the way to the shop he might easily see a new hat or a tempting new necktie in another shop, and bang would go the two pounds, or most of it, on something far different from fireworks.

That was Blake's view, which he placed before Arthur Augustus. But that youth was insistent. He insisted on spending his own money as he liked.

"I insist!" he repeated as they entered Rylcombe village. "Allow me to point out, Blake, that the money is mine!"

"Just so, you dummy; but—"

"I insist! I'll promise to buy fireworks, of course," said Gussy indignantly. "I consider you a most unweasonable wottah, Blake!"

"Oh, all right!" said Jack Blake wearily. "Have your own way. But if you come out with a new waistcoat instead of fireworks we'll scrag you!"

"I should wufuse to be scawgged, Blake. And I wufuse to be bullied in this mannah! Kindly leave this matter to me!"

"As you please, fathead! We'll come and see what you got, though!"

"Aftah what you have said I wufuse to allow you to

be pwesent while I am selectin' the beastlay fiahworks!" snorted Gussy. "You will only bothah me, and put me in a fluttah with your wotten cwiticisms and wemarks, Jack Blake! Kindly wemain outside the shop!"

"But, you idiot—"

"Oh, let Gussy rip, Blake!" laughed Tom Merry. "After all, it's his giddy treat! Shove off, Gussy, and we'll wait for you in Mother Murphy's, old bean!"

"Vewy good, Tom Mewwy!" said Gussy, and he stalked on ahead with his noble head in the air.

With Blake growling, and Tom Merry chuckling, the juniors went into Mother Murphy's and ordered refreshments while they awaited Arthur Augustus.

Arthur Augustus resumed his stately progress along the High Street, towards the general store, to buy fireworks. Near the general shop he came upon several youths standing outside an outfitter's shop window. Gussy recognised Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, Carboy, and Mason, of the Grammarian Fourth Form.

Something appeared to be amusing them highly, to judge from their laughter.

"The very image!" Frank Monk was chortling. "Did you ever see anything like it? Old Gussy to the life!"

Arthur Augustus paused.

"Absolutely D'Arcy's chivvy and form!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "I say, what a ripping lark to buy it and burn it to-night! Talk about a guy!"

"The very idea!" said Monk, with enthusiasm. "Great pip! Just think now those St. J.'n's bonders will rave when they hear we've burned an effigy of old Gussy! What a score for us!"

"Phew! We'll buy it!" said Gay firmly. "It'll cost a bit, but it's worth it to get a guy like that—what? Gussy, the Guy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The tailor's dummy!" chortled Monk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus seethed.

It was clear—or seemed clear—that the Grammarians had no idea he was behind them, listening to their ribald remarks! He stepped closer, and with gleaming eyes stared in the shop window. He gasped at what he saw.

It was a wax figure—a real tailor's dummy! It wore Etons, and even Gussy could not help seeing that the face bore a striking resemblance to his own aristocratic features. Certainly the wax had suffered from the sun, and the nose was a bit melted, likewise the chin. But the astounding likeness was there.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus gasped involuntarily, and the Grammarians jumped. They seemed taken aback at sighting him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! Here he is!"

"You—you fwrightful wascals!" hissed Arthur Augustus.

"I—I say, Gussy, old man—"

"You wibald wuffians!" shouted Arthur Augustus heatedly. "How dare you compare me with that wretched dummay?"

"My deaf old Gussy—"

"I am Gussy only to my fwiends, Gordon Gay, you feahful, cheekay wottah!" hooted Arthur Augustus. "You—you dare to buy that—that wotten dummay!"

"My dear man," protested Gay, raising his eyebrows, "is it any concern of yours what I buy?"

"I am well awah of your weason for buyin' that dummay!" shouted Gussy indignantly. "You intend to burn it as a guy of me, you fwrightful wascals! I—I wufuse to allow it!"

"My dear old fruit, how can you stop it?" asked Gordon Gay, winking at his chums as he withdrew his purse from his pocket. "Now, you fellows, rally round with the cash! We'll club together to buy this dummy!"

"Yes, rather! Lemme see if I have a quid! Hallo, where are you going, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply. He gave the grinning juniors a look of towering wrath, and then he fairly rushed into the shop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians simply howled as they saw Gussy in the shop. They knew what he was after.

In the shop, the proprietor, Mr. Jacobs, eyed Gussy with polite servility.

"Good-afternoon, Master D'Arcy! And what can I have the pleasure of doing for you, sir?"

"I—I wish to buy that wretched dummay in the window," gasped Gussy. "Please be quick and sell it to me, Mr. Jacobs! How much is it?"

Mr. Jacobs nearly fell down.

"That—that dummy!" he gasped. "But, really, sir—"

"The one in the window!" hissed Arthur Augustus

frantically. "That of a schoolboy with a wathah melted nose, you know! How much is it?"

"G-good gracious! Dear me! It—it is not for sale, Master D'Arcy. But—but if you really desire it you may have it for two pounds, sir."

"Bai Jove!"

"It is really worth five—to me, at least, sir," said Mr. Jacobs, eyeing Gussy as if that youth were about to ask to buy the counter next. "But—but if you really desire the—the dummy, sir—"

"I do—I simply must have it, Mr. Jacobs!"

"Two pounds, sir, is a reasonable figure—"

"Heah it is, then, Mr. Jacobs!"

"Very good, sir!" gasped Mr. Jacobs, as Gussy parted with his two pounds. "Shall—shall I send the figure up to the school, sir? I suppose you want it for theatricals—or possibly for a guy," he added, with sudden enlightenment. "Yes, yes; I will send it at once—it is sold at two pounds without the clothes, of course, sir."

"I do not want that beastly dummay or the clothes!" said Arthur Augustus heatedly. "All I wish is for you to destroy that wotten dummay at once!"

"To—to destroy it?" stammered Mr. Jacobs.

"Yaas! Burn it! Smash it! Buwy it! Ddown it! Get wid of it any way you like, Mr. Jacobs!" said Gussy savagely. "But I insist upon it bein' destroyed!"

"Really, sir! G-g-good gracious! But—"

"I have bought it," said Gussy angrily, "to pwevent othah persons buyin' it. Those feahful wottahs outside were goin' to buy it, and to guy me with it to-night, Mr. Jacobs. I must insist that you destroy it at once!"

"Oh! Ah! I—I understand, Master D'Arcy!" gasped Mr. Jacobs, though he didn't. "Very good, sir! I—I will destroy it!"

"I can wely upon that, Mr. Jacobs?"

"Y-yes, sir! Certainly, sir— Oh, yes, sir!"

"Vewy good! Good-aftahnoon, Mr. Jacobs!"

And with a triumphant gleam in his noble eye Arthur Augustus marched out of the shop—minus his two pounds! He met a howl of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you wibald wuffians—"

"Have you—ha, ha, ha!—bought it, Gussy?" shrieked Gordon Gay.

"Yaas, you fwightful wottah!" said Gussy indignantly. "I have bought it, and it is to be destroyed! Your wotten intention has been fwustwated, you feahful wascals!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was a vewy good thing that I came along just then!" shouted Gussy, glaring at the hilarious Grammarians. "Othahwise—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gay. "You—you prize packet! We never intended to buy the thumping thing, Gussy!"

"Wha-at?"

"We saw you coming along and were pulling your leg!" shrieked Frank Monk.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ever been had?" yelled Gay. "How much did you pay for it, Gussy? What are you going to do with it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians shrieked with laughter. Arthur Augustus did not answer their questions, however. He saw it now. He had been spoofed! They had, after all, seen him coming! They had never intended to buy the tailor's dummy at all. And now, he had parted with his two pounds—the two pounds for the fireworks!

Arthur Augustus shook with wrath. And instead of answering Gay he made a mad, furious rush at the laughing crowd.

Instantly he was collared and seated with a bump on the pavement, his wildly waving fists being knocked aside. There was a shout from Mother Murphy's along the street. Hearing the laughter, Tom Merry & Co. had rushed out—in time to see Gussy's downfall.

"Look out!" yelled Gordon Gay, almost hysterical with laughter. "Here's a crowd of Saints! Run for it!"

Flight certainly was indicated. Only stopping to bang Gussy's topper over his eyes, Gay took to his heels. Still yelling with laughter, the heartless Grammarians disappeared in the distance.

Tom Merry & Co. ran up. The hat was jammed tightly over Gussy's eyes, but after a struggle they managed to get it off.

"What's happened, Gussy?" hooted Blake. "We knew you'd get into trouble alone."

"Those—those feahful boundahs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "They—they have spoofed me. They—they—they—"

Gussy choked. But they got the sad story from him at last.

"And—and you swallowed that?" yelled Blake furiously.

"And you've parted with that two quid?"

"Oh, yaas!" groaned Gussy; there was no denying the soft impeachment.

Blake fairly danced with wrath. But calling Gussy names was not likely to bring back the two pounds. And after a consultation they decided to interview Mr. Jacobs on the subject.

Fortunately, Mr. Jacobs was amenable to reason. The juniors at St. Jim's were good customers, and he did not desire to offend them—not for the sake of two pounds, certainly. And eventually he agreed to buy back the dummy—at a profit to himself of five shillings.

Still, the chums were glad enough to get thirty-five shillings in the circumstances, and after bumping Arthur Augustus for his innocence, they took matters into their own hands and bought the fireworks without his valuable aid. Then they returned to Mother Murphy's to finish their refreshments.

CHAPTER 7.

Another Gunpowder Plot!

"P OOR old Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay & Co. were still laughing when from the far end of the High Street they saw Tom Merry & Co. finally disappear into Mother Murphy's.

"They must have sold the dummy back to Jacobs!" laughed Gay. "Old Jacobs wouldn't dare to refuse—"

"Yes; but he'd insist upon a whacking profit—trust old Jacobs?" grinned Frank Monk. "I say, did you notice they went into Binks', the stores? That means they've ordered more giddy fireworks!"

"My dear man, I'm not blind!" said Gordon Gay, his eyes glimmering. "And we're going to have those fireworks—and a heap more besides, my pippin!"

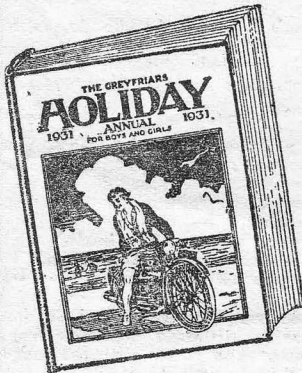
"Oh dear! Are you still on that wheeze?" groaned Monk.

"Absolutely!" said Gay. "Look at us—hardly a dozen penny squibs between the lot of us! Is it right, is it just that they should have so many and we so few?"

"Ha, ha! Certainly not, Archie!"

(Continued at foot of next page.)

A Budget of Ripping School Yarns

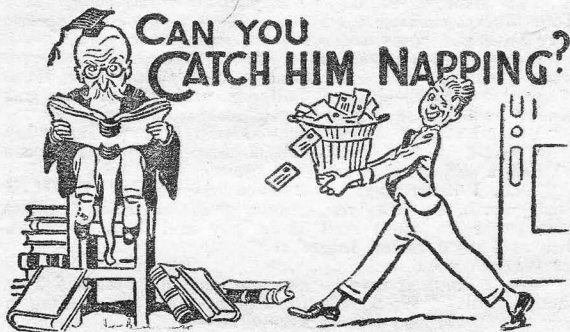


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Whiskers is getting worse and worse! There's no holding him. He thinks he's the big brains of the world! Come along, chums—can't you stump him?

"HALLO, my lad!" said the Editor as I tripped into the sanctum the other morning. "Many happy returns of the 'fifth.' Do you know anything about fireworks, Whiskers?"

"Yes, sir," said I. "I know they're very dear this year, and rockets are still going up."

"A reader in Harrow wants us to explain to him how Roman candles are made? How they get those stars to shoot out of the top—you know the idea, what? Perhaps you can throw some light on the jolly old Roman candles?"

"I expect I shall soon be putting a light to them," said I, "and getting my whiskers singed into the bargain. However, with reference to these balls of flame that shoot out of Roman candles—they are made of a special composition which usually contains metallic filings, and is made up with gum and spirits of wine, dusted with gunpowder and dried."

"Can you explain how different

coloured fire is obtained in fireworks?"

"Yes, sir. These colours are produced by the heated vapours of certain metals. Sodium, for instance, gives a yellow colour, calcium gives a red. Strontium gives crimson, barium gives a green, and copper will give either green or blue. Many of the methods used in making the more elaborate kinds of fireworks are secrets known only to the trade, and are closely guarded."

"Now," said the Editor, "perhaps you will explain to James Marriage, a Chelmsford reader, what a creole is?"

"The word creole, sir, is used to describe the descendants of people who at one time settled in the West Indies. A great many people use the word 'creole' to describe people of mixed blood, but this is not correct. Actually 'creole' has nothing to do with colour at all, and may be used for a person of European extraction just as easily as for a negro or anyone else."

"And the next query, Whiskers, is from a reader at Rye. He wishes us to tell him something about the game called curling. Can you?"

"Curling, sir, is a game in which the players propel large, rounded stones over ice towards a certain mark known as the tee. The game has been very popular in Scotland for about three hundred years, and in some parts of Scotland it is known as 'kuting.' The stones cost at the very least £2 a piece. The idea of the game can best be described as

'bowls played on ice.' The idea is to group the stones round the tee, and the nearest to the tee scores a point. It is possible to give the stone a twist, just as you give a bias to the ball in bowls, and send it round the back of a guarding stone and drive it away. The great thing in throwing the stone is to avoid cracking the ice. I'll just give you an idea, sir. Supposing this is the stone," said I, picking up the Editor's favourite paper-weight, "and supposing this is the tee. See?"

"I see," said the Editor genially.

"This is the tee."

"Now, sir. I throw the stone, so, towards the tee—" At that moment the office boy came in, and the paper-weight dropped in the middle of the tray he was carrying.

"You clumsy idiot!" roared the Editor. "You've hit the tea!"

"Yes, sir," said I, "that's the idea of the game." Thereupon I helped the office boy collect the pieces of sardine sandwich, etc., that had been dispersed over the sanctum carpet. I was so upset that I told the Editor I couldn't answer another query, really I couldn't, and the office boy saved the situation and the sandwiches by reciting an impromptu verse that he had composed that morning. It went somehow like this:

"When I wake up in the morning, and I think of our old Ed., I stop gaping, stretching, yawning, and jump blithely out of bed. I swallow down my bloater, and I nearly eat the plate; the Ed. has got a motor, so of course he's never late. When I get there I get busy, fill the inkwells full of ink, till old Whiskers gets quite dizzy, says he wants to sit and think. So I polish up his noddle with a brick to make it glow, and he looks just like a model in a mouldy wax-work show."

"That's quite enough of that," I interrupted sternly; but as the old Editor was chortling at the moment, I decided to make a bolt for it.

"THE GLORIOUS 'FIFTH'!"

(Continued from previous page.)

"We're having those fireworks," said Gay, with great enthusiasm. "Think of it! I heard Railton say all fireworks were to be stored in the new toolshed. I know it—a big, corrugated iron affair behind their chapel. We're going to raid 'em. Just think—all the fireworks of every chap in the School House will be there—stacks and stacks, I expect. What a chance!"

"But how," inquired Carboy politely, "are you going to do the trick? If you're still thinking of that mad wheeze with the guy—"

"I am, old fruit!"

"But—but it's hopelessly mad—hare-brained!" stuttered Carboy.

"Potty!" said Frank Monk, shaking his head. "It couldn't work, old man! Don't do it!"

"I jolly well am!"

"But you'll be collared—"

"I've risked being collared more than once—just a few times, in fact," smiled the scapegrace of the Fourth. "I'm doing it. I shall have to face the music if I'm boned. And why should I walk all the way to St. Jim's when those chaps will be so considerate as to carry me!"

"But they'll spot—"

"Rot! Bunkum!" Evidently Gay's reckless mind was quite made up. "I'm doing it. Easy enough! You chaps turn me into a guy. With old clothes on, an old hat, tufts of straw sticking from my sleeves and trouser bottoms, and a mask tied on, I shall make a ripping guy!"

"You don't even need a mask to be the part!" said Carboy facetiously. "Your own chivvy—"

"Don't try to be funny, old scout—you're funny enough without trying," said Gay cheerfully. "Well, that's the programme. You chaps rig me up and tie me into a chair—just so that I can release myself when the giddy time comes. The chair will be on poles, of course, for carrying."

"Yes, but—"

"Then we allow those fatheaded Saints to collar me!

It'll soon be dusk, and in the dusk they won't know the difference between me and a real guy!"

"Nor in the daylight!" murmured Carboy.

"Rats! Well, they capture me and carry me to St. Jim's, see? And what will they do then?" demanded Gay.

"Ask me another! Shove you in a strait-waistcoat, I should think!"

"Fathead! Well, they'll shove me into the toolshed among the giddy stacks of fireworks, of course!" said Gay, his eyes glimmering at the thought. "Then they'll clear off for call-over—leaving me alone with the fireworks!"

"H'm! It—might work. But it's frightfully risky, old chap. Don't do it!"

"Bow-wow! Well, I shall then release myself, shove as many fireworks as I can collar into a sack, or something, and then make tracks. You fellows can be waiting for me in the lane outside!"

"Well, it—may work!" said Frank Monk thoughtfully.

"It's going to," returned Gay coolly. "The jape of a lifetime, my pippins! Think of those asses carrying me there to raid their giddy property! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Excuse me not laughing now," said Carboy, "but I'd rather wait until it's come off, old chap! But how—"

"Ass! Easily enough! We've got to let 'em know there is a guy waiting to be pinched," said Gay, frowning thoughtfully. "No good going there to lay the trail. Tom Merry's wide, and he'd smell a rat! I wonder— Oh, good!"

Gay's keen eyes gleamed as he sighted three fags ambling along the High Street. They were three bright Grammarian fags, and they were busy pitching lighted squibs at each other.

Gay called to them, and they approached cautiously.

"Just a minute, Scrubby," said Gay, taking a florin from his pocket. "This is my last two bob, but if you'd like to earn a ginger-pop at Mother Murphy's yonder—"

"What's the game?" demanded Scrubby Mason, who was Mason's young brother. "No larks now—"

"My dear kid, you'll never earn such easy money again. We want you to carry on a little private conversation in the tuckshop—for the benefit of some Saints in the back room there. Get the idea?"

"Oh!" Mason minor understood and chuckled. "We're on. Hand the dibs over!"

And after a whispered conversation and much chuckling, Gay handed the florin over to the grinning fag. Then, after seeing the fag safely into Mother Murphy's, Gordon Gay & Co. made off for the Grammar School at top speed. The great plot was plotted, but whether it would come off or not remained to be seen.

"Time to be moving, old sports!" said Tom Merry, draining his glass of ginger-beer. "We've got that dashed guy to make yet, remember! Blow Figgins and all his works!"

"Soon make it," said Blake. "Plenty of time, old bean! Just a sack stuffed with straw, and some old clobber and a giddy mask! We'll pin a label on and let everyone know it's Ratty. But we'll want a mortar-board from somewhere."

"Mustn't let those New House worms get wind of it this time!" said Lowther. "I vote we make it in the toolshed and leave it there until the bonfire's lit!"

"Good wheeze!" assented Tom, rising. "Well—"
He paused as the bell over Mother Murphy's door suddenly clanged, and several fags came in laughing noisily.

"Only some beastly little Grammar School fags," said Blake, pulling aside the curtain and peeping out. "Young monkeys!"

"Hold on! Shush!" breathed Tom.
He had just caught a sentence spoken by one of the laughing fags.

"It's a scream, you chaps!" the fag was saying gloatingly. "Best buy you ever saw! Old Gay's a clever chap, and no mistake!"

"Old Hake will rave if he gets wind of it," said another voice. "He's a prefect, and he's bound to make a fuss! Fancy old Gay daring to make a guy of a prefect!"

"Not much chance of him seeing it—not until it's too late, anyway," said Scrubby Mason, shaking his head. "Gay's pretty wide. He and his pals have made it in the old barn at the bottom of the playing-fields, you know."

"And it's there now?" said another fag.
"Oh, yes! I say, it would be rather a lark if we pinched it and did those cocky Fourth bounders one in the eye!"

"Too risky! No fear!" chuckled Scrubby Mason.
"But Gay's somewhere in the village now—he and his pals! What about doing 'em one—"

"No fear! Take my tip, and let those bounders have it to themselves! I'm not having Hake skinning me—no fear! But— Three ginger-pops, Mrs. Murphy, please!"

The fags laughed and chatted as they drank their ginger-beer, going on to discuss the celebrations for that night. Tom Merry stared at his chums, motioning for silence.

The Grammar School fags soon drank their refreshment and departed as noisily as they had arrived. The St. Jim's juniors looked at each other.

"You—you heard that?" demanded Tom.
"Yaas, wathah!"

"What d'you think of it?" said Tom, his eyes gleaming.
"If it's genuine—"
"It must be," said Manners slowly. "Those kids themselves spoke of raiding it. But—"

"You never know. Gay's a triguntully crafty chap," said Tom Merry, shaking his head. "It—it may be a trap—he may have put those kids up to spinning that yarn."

"Why on earth should he?" demanded Blake, whose eyes were gleaming with excitement. "We know how those chaps hate Hake—he's a bullying prefect just like our Knox. It's genuine enough, you ass!"

"Yaas, wathah! Guyin' that wottah Hake is just what they would do," agreed Arthur Augustus. "You are wathah a suspicious chap, Tom Mewwy!"

"Well, I know Gay," said Tom hesitatingly. "Still, it—it's worth the risk, you fellows, perhaps. Phew! What a score if we could raid their guy and burn it at St. Jim's. They'd never forget it."

"Wathah not!"
"Yes, I think it may be genuine enough," resumed Tom thoughtfully. "We'll risk it, anyway—save us making a guy at all. If you fellows are game—"

"I'm game," said Blake promptly.
"Same here!"

All of them were game. Tom Merry & Co. were always ready for such an expedition, risky or otherwise. There was the chance that it was all spoo—a trap set for them by the wily Gordon Gay. On the other hand, it might not be, and Tom Merry & Co. were quite willing to take the risk.

But they resolved to be wary.
They drained their glasses, and then, after a cautious glance out into the High Street, they set off for the Grammar School at a run. That Fifth of November looked like being an exciting one for Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 8.

An Easy Capture!

"HERE'S the barn!"
"Good!"

"Keep your eyes skinned!" said Tom Merry, glancing about him warily.
"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on, then!"
In single file Tom Merry & Co. crept along the hedge bottom towards the barn. Not a soul was in sight yet. Over the tops of the leafless trees in the distance showed the gabled roofs of the Grammar School.

The conspirators could see the old barn clearly, and Tom's eyes glimmered as he noted that both of the big double doors were wide open.

Nearer and nearer the St. Jim's raiders crept. Over the fields the November fog was stealing, but Tom already fancied he could glimpse dark forms just inside the barn.

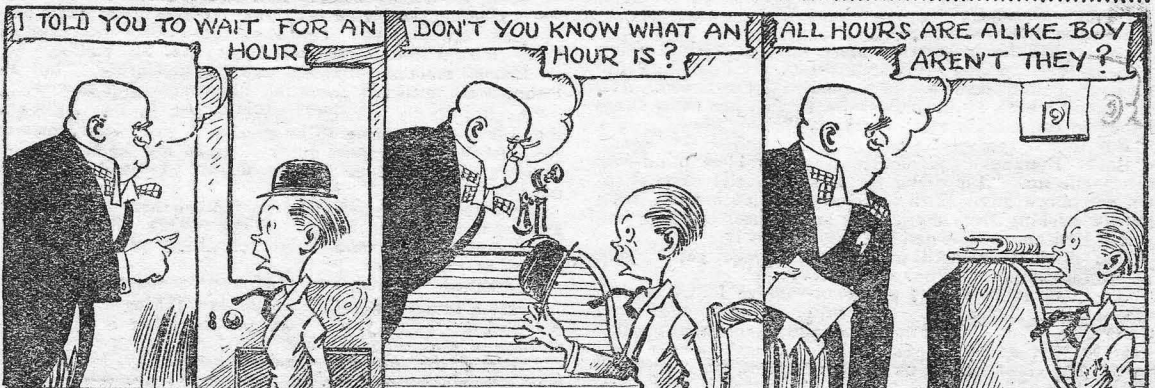
They were within twenty yards of the place now, and Tom called a halt. To their ears came voices.

Then a junior came to the doorway of the barn and stared out cautiously, gazing towards the Grammar School.

"That settles it," breathed Tom Merry. "They're only keeping a look-out for anyone approaching from the school. It's genuine enough. Come on, and when I give the word go for 'em!"

"Wight-ho, Tom Mewwy!"
Nearer still, and now they could make out the figures in the barn. There were three of them—Frank Monk, Carboy, and Mason major. Of Gordon Gay they saw no sign—or imagined they didn't. What they did see, however, was that the Grammarian trio were grouped round a guy that appeared to be tied into an ancient chair. From

Potts, The Office Boy!



the seat of the chair stuck out scout poles as handles, back and front.

"Looks a good one!" breathed Blake. "Well, we're seven to three! I fancy this is a walk-over, Tommy."

"Ready?" asked Tom softly.

"What-ho!"

"Then up and at 'em!" grinned Tom.

And the St. Jim's raiders charged from their hiding-place and rushed at the barn.

There was a shout from within, and the Grammarian trio came rushing out into the open. They yelled as they sighted the enemy bearing down upon them.

"Oh, my hat! It—it's those St. Jim's bounders!" yelled Frank Monk. "Back up! Carboy, rush off and fetch Gay and a crowd—quick. We'll hold them—the cads are not collaring our guy after all our trouble!"

"No fear!"

Carboy dashed away, apparently greatly alarmed. Frank Monk and Mason stood in the doorway of the barn and faced the oncoming enemy.

They appeared to be resolved to fight to the death in defence of their guy. But their hearts seemed to fail them remarkably quickly. Indeed, Tom Merry was surprised at the feeble resistance they put up.

It was over in a few brief seconds. Monk and Mason struggled a little, and then they broke desperately away and fled after Carboy.

"Soon had enough!" panted Blake, holding his chin where Monk's fist had landed.

"Afraid we should make them guys, too," grinned Tom Merry. "But—my hat! What a ripping guy!"

It certainly was a good guy! The clothes were ragged, and the guy was surmounted by a ragged felt hat. But the figure was remarkably good and lifelike. Indeed, Tom Merry gave a sudden start, almost thinking he saw eyes gleaming through the mask.

But that was impossible, of course, and it was dark in the gloomy barn. Nor had they time to examine their prize.

"Collar it!" gasped Tom. "Quick! They'll bring half the thumping Grammar School after us soon. Phew! It's thumping heavy!"

It was very heavy—remarkably heavy for a guy. Tom took one end and Blake the other. They started at a run—or they intended to do so, but they found the weight of the guy prevented running with it.

"The dashed thing must be made of wood or something," said Blake. "Well, all the better! Phew! This is a score! They must have spent ages making this guy."

They hurried it out into the open, and started off across the fields with their prize. Now they could see the guy more clearly they realised it was an even better one than they had expected. Certainly the mask was a cheap affair, and bore no resemblance to Hake of the Grammar School Sixth Form. But the card on the guy's breast bore the legend: "Pake, the bully!" and that was quite enough for Tom Merry & Co.

Gleefully they bore their prize off, Tom Merry and Blake staggering beneath the remarkable weight of it. But they realised they were still within five minutes' run of the Grammar School, and desperation made them hurry. It was not easy going, either, for the dusk was thick now, and the way rough.

They reached the path through the wood soon, and then Lowther and Manners gave Tom and Blake a rest and took charge of the guy. Here it was darker, but the path was clear and made progress easier.

"Go it!" snapped Tom Merry, glancing behind him again and again. "We shan't be safe until we're at St. Jim's, you know! Pfew! It's the most lifelike guy I've ever seen—I mean the way it's stuffed."

"Must be full of straw and bricks!" panted Lowther.

"Straw and bricks!" snorted Manners, fairly staggering along. "Look here, I'm about done. You take a turn, Gussy!"

"I'm whacked, too!" said Lowther.

So Arthur Augustus and Herries took a turn with the guy, while Digby and Tom Merry helped as best they could at either side.

The lights of St. Jim's twinkled through the trees at last, faintly through the thickening mist. Never had the lights seemed so welcome. Still had come no sounds of pursuit, though once or twice they had fancied hearing shouting.

But nothing happened, and they reached the school wall at last.

"Better not go through the gates," said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Old Taggy might ask questions. I say, what about the side gate? Won't be locked yet!"

"Good egg!"

It was risky, for only masters and prefects were allowed to use the side-door in the school wall. After scouting round Blake announced that the coast was clear, and the door was cautiously opened, and the heavy guy was carried through.

Beyond was a woodland path under the leafless elms, leading into the quad after winding round the back of the tuckshop. It was almost dark by this time, but the juniors knew every inch of the way. Round the back of the tuckshop and on through the trees, went the cautious procession, and then round the rear of the chapel.

The corrugated iron toolshed loomed up at last through the dusk and mist of the November evening. The door was only latched, and the heavy guy was hurried inside. There was a sudden, muffled howl as the juniors carrying it staggered into the doorway and banged against the doorpost.

"Oh! Sorry, Gussy!" panted Herries.

"All wight, Hewwies, I didn't yell!" said Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "Are you hurt, Digbay—did you yell?"

"Eh? Oh, no, I thought it was you!"

"Bai Jove! I'm sure one of you fellows yelled out!" panted Gussy. "Howevah, thank goodness we are heah at last, deah boys!"

"Shove it down anywhere and let's get in, or we'll be late for calling-ever!" chortled Tom Merry gleefully. "We've done it, chaps! But I vote we take off this card with Hake's name on."

"But why on earth—"

"And shove Gordon Gay's name on instead!" chuckled Tom Merry. "We'll guy Gay. And when he hears about it—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Good egg!"

"Wippin', bai Jove!"

And, little dreaming that Gordon Gay had already "heard about it," the chums of the School House departed, closing the door after them. And as they went a deep, low chuckle came from the "guy." It was the "guy" that had howled in fact, its head having been banged against the doorpost when the guy-bearers had staggered through the doorway. But the yell had not been traced to the guy—fortunately for Gordon Gay. And the pain was gone now.

So the "guy" chuckled. Gordon Gay's great scheme looked like "coming off." He was alone with the enemy's

(Continued on next page.)

The Long and Short Of It!



store of fireworks—they were at his mercy. But Gay was cautious, and though his limbs were stiff and aching from his uncomfortable position on the ancient chair, he did not move hand or foot yet. He meant to make sure the coast was quite clear first.

CHAPTER 9.
"It's Alive!"

"PHEW!"

Fatty Wynn was astonished.

He was startled as well as astonished.

Fatty Wynn had been visiting the tuckshop—not an unusual circumstance by any means for him. Fatty, in fact, seemed to move and have his being in or around the tuckshop. Like Baggy Trimble, Fatty Wynn's favourite building at St. Jim's was the tuckshop nestling under the ancient elms.

Fatty had been sent for cakes and tarts to supplement tea. Unlike Baggy Trimble, Fatty had a good conscience, and he was a dutiful fellow—a fellow who could be trusted, as a rule, to bring back, whole and untouched, whatever he was sent for in the grub line.

On this occasion, however, Fatty failed in his trust somewhat. Certainly there was some excuse. Mrs. Taggles' jam-tarts were fresh, and they looked exceptionally tempting and Fatty was frightfully peckish. Moreover, it was Fatty's own pocket money that was supplying the extra delicacies for tea.

Fatty could scarcely be blamed in the circumstances. At all events temptation assailed him, and he fell. Outside the tuckshop he slipped round the corner, opened the bag of jam-tarts, and started to sample one. He sampled one and started on another. And it was just then that he sighted the startling procession.

Under the trees the mist was thick, and the figures looked strangely grotesque. There were seven figures walking through the trees in single file. Two of them carried what appeared to be a chair, and on the chair was a seated form—a human form.

"G-g-g-g-g-g-g-g!"

Fatty nearly choked in sudden, startled fear. His eyes nearly started from his head on beholding that silent, ghostly procession.

The procession came nearer, going round the rear of the tuckshop.

Then Fatty got a glimpse of the ghastly, hideous face of the figure in the chair. Moreover, just then he heard a cautious muttered voice.

"Careful, chaps! Phew! Isn't this beastly guy heavy?"

"Yaas, wathah! Gwoogh!"

There was a gasping, panting reply—obviously from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Fatty could not mistake that beautiful accent!

"Oh!" breathed Fatty Wynn, the colour coming back into his podgy cheeks with a rush. "It—it's a guy, and—they are those School House chaps. Phew! I must tell Figgy this!"

And Fatty swallowed the last crumb of jam-tart and bolted across the dim, misty quadrangle as fast as his fat legs would carry him.

He arrived in the New House, panting and blowing like a grampus. Figgins and Kerr stared at him.

"I—I say, Figgy! Quick!"

"Jam on his chivvy!" remarked Figgins severely. "That means he has been scoffing the tarts!"

"Quick!" gasped Fatty, dropping into a chair. "Those School House bounders—guy! Oh crumbs!"

"Eh?" exclaimed Figgins, alert at once. "What's that about School House worms, Fatty?"

"I—I saw it—a g-guy!" gasped Fatty breathlessly.

"They've taken it into the toolshed, I think!"

He gasped out what he had seen, and George Figgins' eyes gleamed as he listened.

"Good man, Fatty!" he breathed. "They must have made another one then—just finished it, I expect! And they've taken it round and shoved it there after dark, so we shouldn't get wind of it!"

"That's it, you bet!" said Kerr, nodding. "Another guy of Ratty, I'll be bound—or one of you, perhaps, Figgy!"

"Come on!"

"But what about tea, Figgy? Tea first!"

"Rot! Come along, Fatty, you ass! Fancy bothering about tea at a time like this?" shouted Figgins. "Rout Redfern and his lot out!"

As it happened, Redfern was just emerging from his study, and Owen and Lawrence were soon called, and the matter explained swiftly.

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"There's no lock on the toolshed—only a latch!" said Figgins gleefully. "We're on this! We'll give those School House bounders guy! Oh, yes! We'll shove a ticket on it and call it 'Tom Merry'!"

"Good egg!"

The New House juniors bolted downstairs, and tore round towards the toolshed. Near it they displayed more caution, however, and Figgins went forward to scout round, while his chums remained in hiding close at hand.

Figgins crept up to the little window, and peered inside. He could see little—just the figure of the "guy" seated in his chair.

But it was enough.



The procession broke and wilted as the deadly

"Oh, good! Fatty didn't dream it, then!" murmured Figgins. "Now for—G-g-g-g-g-good heavens!"

George Figgins was as near to fainting in that second as ever he was likely to be.

For as he stared at that remarkably lifelike guy, he distinctly saw the figure step down from the chair. Then he heard the strike of a match, and a light flared up, revealing the ghastly, fiendish mask of the guy.

Then, to Figgins' ears came a faint sound of a chuckle.

But for that chuckle—and the striking match—Figgins would, without a doubt, have bolted for his life, terrified out of his wits. But the match and chuckle did it.

"G-good lor!" he gasped. "It—it's alive! What the thump—"

He blinked, still astounded, into the shed. He saw the form moving about. He saw it pick up an old sack, and started bundling packages of crackers and loose fireworks into the sack.

It was an extraordinary proceeding for a guy to perform, to say the least of it—even a live guy! But suddenly the glimmering of an idea occurred to Figgins.

The guy belonged to Tom Merry & Co., undoubtedly. Fatty Wynn had heard Arthur Augustus speak, and had

recognised his voice. They undoubtedly did not know the guy was alive, or they certainly wouldn't have placed it there and left it.

But who—what—

That the live "guy" was an enemy of Tom Merry & Co. Figgins couldn't help suspecting. And just then Kerr scudded up with an urgent warning.

"Someone coming! Tom Merry's crowd, I think! Quick!"

"Go and stop him, then! Tell him to keep quiet on his giddy life!"

"Wha-at? But the guy—aren't you going to collar it, Figgy?"



soot and flour "bombs" did their fell work!

"Shush! Keep cool, old chap! That giddy guy's alive!"

"It—it's alive! What the thump—"

"Quiet! Stay there!" hissed Figgins. "There's something jolly queer about this!"

And Figgins rushed softly away, and it was he who met Tom Merry and other School House fellows as they came along cheerily to the shed. Tom had taken the card with Hake's name on indoors to make the alteration—printing Gay's name in its place. It was finished now, and Tom was going to fix it on. All would then be in readiness for the procession.

He stared as Figgins loomed out of the mist, seething with excitement.

"Figgy, what on earth—"

"Shush!" breathed George Figgins warningly. "Look here, Tom Merry, where the thump did you get that guy from?"

"That guy? My dear man, that belongs to us, old sport!" chuckled Tom Merry, though he eyed Figgins suspiciously. "We raided that from the giddy Grammarians. But it's a School House win—you New House worms can keep off the grass!"

"I thought as much!" said Figgins, with a deep, deep chuckle. "Well, you've been had, old dears!"

"What!"

"That guy's alive, my infants!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Alive?" nearly yelled Tom.

"Shush, you ass! Yes. I peeped through the giddy window just now. I saw the thing step down from its chair and strike a match!"

"Wha-wha-what?" gibbered Tom.

"At the moment it's stuffing your fireworks into a sack for all it's worth!" chuckled Figgins. "If you've raided that guy from the Grammarians, then I bet my Sunday hat that that guy's Gay!"

"Oh!"

"Great pip!"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

The chums of the School House stared blankly at Figgins.

"I'll admit I came along to raid your guy!" grinned Figgy. "Fatty spotted you carrying it there, and we just came to pinch it if we could. But luckily I squinted through the window first!"

"And—and you say the beastly thing's alive! G-good lor! M-my sainted Sam! Then—then it must be that awful rotter, Gay!"

"And—and we carried him all the way here!" gasped Lowther. "No—no wonder it was heavy; no wonder it was lifelike! But—"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed; and, warning them to keep silent, he crept cautiously to the little window. Ready for anything as he was, he gave a violent start as he glimpsed the dim, moving form within. The light was out now.

Like a ghost, Tom Merry joined his chums again. Among themselves the School House fellows and New House fellows were most deadly enemies. But against outsiders—especially the Grammarians—they were bosom pals and comrades-at-arms.

"You—you saw it?"

"Yes, you're right, Figgy!" breathed Tom Merry, his eyes dancing in the gloom. "It's that daring, reckless bounder Gay, for a pension! What—a what a nerve! But we'll try his nerve this evening, my pippins!"

"Going to rush him now?"

"Eh? No fear!" grinned Tom. "Now, listen! We're going to give Gay the fright of his life—and his pals, too, if we have luck! We'll visit the shed now noisily—let him know we're coming! If it's Gay after the fireworks he'll nip back into the chair again for a cert—he'll know it's not time for the bonfire yet! Well, when he does that, we'll march in and pretend we've spotted nothing!"

"Bai Jove! But—"

"But we'll make jolly sure he doesn't get out of the chair again! We'll gag him, and tie him more firmly into the chair—in case he falls out, see?" grinned Tom. "Then we'll leave him, and call for him when it's time."

"Oh!"

"Just imagine how he'll feel!" said Tom. "He thinks we don't know he's a giddy live guy, and he'll think we're going to chuck him on the bonfire. And, being gagged, he won't be able to tell us. See?"

"Oh, great pip!"

"Bai Jove!" gurgled Gussy. "What a seweam! It will serve the cheeky wottah wight!"

"He's got a trifle too much nerve and cheek has Gay!" said Tom. "We really must teach him a lasting lesson! He won't forget this 'Fifth' in a hurry! Come on—and mind you don't laugh or give the game away!"

"Wight-ho!"

They made for the shed, making as much row as they dared. Tom Merry seemed to take a remarkably long time over the job of unfastening the door. From indoors came the faint sound of scurrying.

The juniors marched in at last. As they expected, the guy was in its rightful place—seated in the chair.

"Here we are!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "We'll just stick this card on its chest, you chaps! My only hat! Won't old Gay just rave when he hears we've burnt a guy of him at St. Jim's?"

"Yaas, wathah! Shall I stwike a match, deah boy?"

"No—much too risky with all these fireworks about! We'll be able to see all serene! Got plenty of cord?"

"Here you are, old chap!"

"Good! While we're about it we may as well tie the beastly-looking thing safely into the chair. Don't want it to topple out when we're carrying it!"

"That mask looks none too safe, either!" remarked Blake. "Here, I'll tie this handkerchief over its chivvy!"

The guy gave a convulsive start. But nobody seemed to notice it. Blake's words and Tom's words had filled Gay with sudden alarm, but before he could open his mouth to yell—though he hadn't quite grasped the horrid danger yet—the handkerchief was swept round the mask, and tied tightly behind, while cords were run swiftly round his arms and legs.

Before Gay had quite grasped the position he was a helpless prisoner in the chair.

Then Gay really grasped his hapless position.

He was tied securely hand and foot, and he was gagged. And—so far as he was aware—Tom Merry & Co. hadn't the faintest idea that he wasn't a real guy—that he was flesh and blood!

And now he was gagged and could not let them know otherwise.

What would happen? What could happen? They would carry him in the procession and then they would fling him on to the bonfire—unless a miracle happened to save him!

Gay, as he realised what it meant, gave another convulsive start, and then he started to gurgle and struggle frantically.

But the cords were bound tightly, and only a smothered gurgle came from behind the mask. Under his struggles the chair shook on the wooden floor, and certainly his gurgles, muffled as they were, should have been heard.

Yet Tom Merry & Co. did not appear to see or hear anything.

"That's that!" remarked Tom Merry with satisfaction. "Won't the fellows just cheer when they see Gay the Second go up in flames, what?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Pity we can't invite Gay to see it himself," chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha. Yes, rather!"

And Tom Merry & Co. left the shed, laughing uproariously. Gay imagined they were laughing at Blake's remark, but they weren't. In that terrible moment of horrified despair, Gay regretted from the bottom of his heart having thought of his wonderful scheme for bagging other people's fireworks!

But it was too late now.

The door slammed and the footsteps and laughter died away.

Gordon Gay struggled and gurgled until he could struggle and gurgle no more. At the back of his mind was a desperate hope that he, in his turn, was the victim of a jape, and that they knew the truth. But it was only a hope, and the danger was there—a very real and unpleasant danger for the reckless practical joker.

CHAPTER 10. More Guys!

"OUR win!" chuckled Tom Merry.
"Poor old Gay! Imagine his feelings now!"
"Yaas, wathah!"

"But where do we come in?" snorted Figgins.
"Our win, you mean, Tom Merry. But for us you'd have lost your guy, your fireworks, and your giddy tempers! And think how the Grammar School bounders would have crowded. We should never have heard the last of it!"

"That's it!" grinned Kerr. "A New House win, Figgy! These slow-coaches from that casual-ward they call the School House ought to go on their bended knees and thank us!"

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn. "But what about tea, Figgy?"

"Bai Jove! It is wathah twue what Figgay says, deah boys," remarked Arthur Augustus. "Digby and Hewwies will have tea weady for us by this time. I suggest that we invite Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn as some recognition of their weally useful help!"

"Well, we'll call it a St. Jim's win, Figgy," grinned Tom. "As for tea—my dear men we haven't finished yet. I'm hopeful of collaring a few more Grammarian guys yet."

"What do you mean, Tommy?"

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Hasn't it occurred to you fellows," he remarked sagely, "that it's unlikely Gay's alone in this game of his! It was all a jape from beginning to end, of course! Those fags in Mother Murphy's were put up to it by Gay. That giddy conversation was for our benefit!"

"You're right, Tom! Ph-w! 'nd we never—"

"I suspected a trap," said Tom, "but when I saw the guy—well, I fairly tumbled for the spoof! It was all arranged beforehand, of course—and very neatly arranged, too. No wonder those chaps put up such a feeble fight to save the blessed guy!"

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"We were done brown!" admitted Blake. "But—"
"Gay's idea was, of course, to collar our fireworks," said Tom grimly. "He overheard Railton ordering us to store them in future. Well, he isn't likely to have come here alone. I mean that I bet he's arranged for some of his pals to be waiting outside St. Jim's—to help him carry the fireworks if it came off!"

"My hat! You're right, Tom!"

"Tell us all about it," said the somewhat mystified Figgins. "Looks to me as if you infants have been properly dished!"

Tom Merry told the sad story, and Figgins chuckled explosively.

"So that's it," he chuckled at last. "If that's their game, then it's a cert that Gay's pals will be prowling about outside!"

"Just that!" assented Tom. "And we're now going to collar 'em if they are! The more Grammarian guys we can get for to-night the better!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Cut back and get some fellows together, Gussy," said Tom briskly. "You might get some of your men together, too, Figgy. We're going to search until we find 'em if they are about!"

"Right-ho, old sport!" said Figgins. "We'll wait until we've got a crowd! No good starting until we have—unless we want to lose them."

Arthur Augustus and Redfern scudded off towards the lighted school buildings. Tom Merry and the rest waited, keeping eyes and ears open. Somewhere amid the dusky trees round about the school wall they felt sure Gay's chums were in hiding.

It was worth a little trouble anyway, as Tom pointed out. Fatty Wynn wanted his tea, being quite satisfied with the capture of Gordon Gay. But he smothered his hungry feelings and stayed.

Soon dark figures began to stream across from the New House and School House. A Grammarian raid was an unusual thing, and the St. Jim's fellows were only too eager to hunt for the daring raiders.

Tom soon gathered the little crowd together and gave his orders. Then the juniors departed, scattering among the trees, while others scudded out into the lane to search there.

For several minutes the search went on quietly, and then, quite suddenly, from somewhere behind the tuckshop there came a yell.

"Here they are—this way!"

There followed sounds of a desperate struggle and sundry smothered yelps. From all sides the St. Jim's searchers came racing to the spot. In the gloom Tom Merry sighted a group of struggling forms and then he sighted another form just swarming up the school wall.

It vanished over the wall, and then came a yell from the lane in Figgy's well-known voice.

"Got you! I've got one of 'em!"

Tom Merry called over the wall as he rushed up.

"Bring him round, Figgy. Who is it?"

"Carboy! It's dear old Carboy! What a lovely guy he'll make!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom chuckled and ran back to the group—the struggling had ceased now. He found Frank Monk and Mason held fast in the grasp of Blake, Herries, Digby, and Levison of the Fourth.

"Good men!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Two more guys! But where's Gay? If these chaps are here then Gay can't be far away!"

Frank Monk gasped—a gasp of relief. He and his chums were captured, but evidently Gay had not been caught. He had got away—possibly with the fireworks, though Monk wondered how they had missed him!

He little knew. And it was not part of Tom's plan to tell him. In a few moments Figgins and three other New House men came round through the dim trees with the luckless Carboy in their midst. Carboy groaned as he sighted his chums held fast by the enemy.

"You—you bounders!" gasped Frank Monk. "How did you tumble?"

"Never mind that, old scout. Where's dear old Gay?"

"Find out!" snapped Monk, with a warning glance at his pals. "Tell 'em nothing, chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. couldn't help laughing at that. Monk glared at them suspiciously, but he did not dream of the truth.

"Look here, let us go, you fellows," he begged. "Dash it all, you're not going to keep us away from our firework display! Be decent!"

"Well, I like that!" gasped Blake involuntarily. "You didn't come here to raid—"

"Never mind what they came for," grinned Tom Merry. "They're staying as guests for our display—honoured guests! We're short of guys, and they're going to be extra guys! We've got one—a real ripper! Thank you very much for making it for us, Monkey! It's a top-hole guy and no mistake! It was worth carrying home, at all events, heavy as it was!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you rotters!" gasped Frank Monk, giving his chums a sudden, startled glance. "Look—look here! You—you haven't still got our guy—the guy you raided from the barn, you rotters?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll see, old sports!" laughed Tom Merry. "Tie 'em up and gag 'em—mind you gag 'em securely! Then we'll hide 'em until our procession's ready to start."

"In the toolshed?" asked Lowther.

"No fear! In the old woodshed!" smiled Tom. "We mustn't shove them with our captured guy or they might try to damage it—or pinch it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look—look here!" gasped Frank Monk in great alarm. "That—that guy isn't what you think! It—it—Gug-gug-grough! Gug!"

That was all Monk had time to say, for next instant a handkerchief was whipped round his mouth.

As if Tom Merry & Co. had no desire to hear the remarks

Having spelt out "Annother," he proceeded with "G-U-Y."

"Oh!" gasped Wilkins, grasping what he was printing. "What the thump are you doing, Grundy? What's that for?"

"You'll jolly well see in a minute!" said Grundy darkly. "Lemme see, is 'Linton' spelled with two 'n's'— Oh, yes—L-I-N-N-T-O-N! That's right!"

"Is it?" ejaculated Gunn.

"Of course. Good! I've got it right, then."

"Have you? And is that word 'Another' you spelled out just now?" asked Wilkins.

"Of course," said Grundy, pausing to admire his printing. "Well, that'll do?"

"But what's the big idea, Grundy?" exclaimed Wilkins, in some alarm as he glanced over Grundy's shoulder.

Then he jumped at what he saw; actually, it was just as Grundy had printed. In large letters was the legend:

L I N N T O N

A N N O T H E R

G U Y.

"Oh, great pip!" gasped Wilkins. "Wha-what's that for, you awful ass?"

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of the captured Grammarians, they were all treated alike, swiftly and deftly. They were gagged and bound, and then they were hustled along to the old woodshed, boots being brought into play when they showed signs of hanging back.

By this time the eyes of the Grammarians were nearly starting from their heads, and it was clear they had something of great urgency to communicate to their captors. But Tom Merry & Co. didn't hear—only frantic gurgles come from behind the gags. And leaving the three captives still gurgling and struggling in vain, the St. Jim's juniors went indoors to tea.

CHAPTER 11.

Very Much Alive!

"A-N-N-O-T-H-E-R!" articulated George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy, apparently, was spelling a word out aloud.

Wilkins and Gunn looked at him.

Tea was over in Grundy's study. During tea Grundy had been almost silent—a very unusual circumstance with Grundy. He negotiated his tea with a very rugged frown of thought on his brow. Wilkins and Gunn had wondered very much what was causing their leader to do such an uncommon thing as to think.

They had not asked, however, and they had watched with some curiosity as Grundy pushed aside the tea-things, took from the cupboard a large sheet of cardboard, and started to print upon it. And as he printed he spelled out aloud.

"I'm going to guy Linton—see?" said Grundy grimly.

"But—but—"

"You know what happened this afternoon," said Grundy warmly. "Linton licked me—jolly unjustly, too!"

"But you fairly asked for it!" said Wilkins.

"Asked for it?" stuttered Grundy. "Idiot! You know as well as I do what happened, George Wilkins! We were doing an essay on Christopher Columbus. I spelled Christopher the right way, naturally—'C-r-i-s-t-o-f-e-r.' Well, as you know, he said I was wrong, that it was spelled 'C-h-r-i-s-t-o-p-h-e-r!'"

"So it is, you ass!" laughed Gunn, winking at Wilkins.

"You were wrong, you—"

"Don't be a silly owl!" snorted Grundy. "Think I can't spell! I've found Linton out in mistakes like that before. The man's ignorant, as I've always said. Well, just because I insisted upon pointing out his mistake, and that I was right, the cad licked me—me, mind you! If it had been one of you kids it wouldn't have mattered."

"Oh, wouldn't it?"

"Not at all. But he licked me. The man's down on me for some reason or other. Well, I'm going to guy him—to get my own back. I'm fed-up with his rotten injustice!"

And Grundy wriggled as if he still felt the effects of Mr. Linton's caning.

"But—but what's the idea?" demanded Gunn. "Are you going to stick that on his back, or what?"

"Fathead! No—on the guy, of course!"

"But you haven't a guy?"

"I know who has, though!" grinned Grundy. "What about those kids—Tom Merry and his pals?"

"That guy was mucked up—torn to shreds in that scrap with the New House," said Wilkins.

"I know that," said Grundy calmly. "But they've got another one from somewhere—a beauty, I believe. Trimble got wind of it somehow—I heard the fat ass saying Tom Merry's lot carted it into the toolshed. I myself spotted Tom Merry taking a piece of cardboard downstairs. I bet it was a notice something like this to shove on the guy."

"And—you're going to shove that on it, Grundy?" gasped Gunn.

"Exactly! I shall take Tom Merry's card off and shove this on," said Grundy, with a chuckle. "In the dark they won't notice it during the procession, perhaps. But they'll see it when they get in the giddy firelight from the bonfire. Then won't the chaps sit up and take notice!"

"Yes; and someone will make you sit up, too!" said Wilkins, taking a deep breath. "If you do that mad trick—"

"I'm doing it!"

"But if you're found out it'll mean the sack for you, you benighted idiot!"

"Rot! Think I'm the man to get caught out?" grinned Grundy. "See the idea now? I slip out, get into the toolshed, and fasten this on Tom Merry's guy!"

"Don't do it, old man," pleaded Gunn. "You'll land yourself—"

"Bosh! I don't know whom Merry's new guy represents, but it doesn't matter. I shall want a mortar-board!"

"Oh dear!"

"And an old gown," said Grundy, nodding. "I fancy I know how to get hold of both—in fact, I know just where there is an old gown and a mortar-board. I shall borrow 'em for the job. Then when they spot the card, everyone will know who it's for. See?"

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other and groaned. It was useless, of course, to argue with Grundy. He would have to be given his head. Argument would only make him more determined to carry out his hare-brained plan. Grundy, obviously meant it. He was in a deeply hurt mood, full of bitter resentment against Linton for having "unjustly" walloped him.

"Grundy—" began Wilkins.

"Grundy, old man—" murmured Gunn.

"Shut up!" said Grundy. "Come along—"

"No fear!"

"Then stay behind if you funk it," said Grundy disdainfully. "I fancy I can carry out a little job like this on my own. Here goes, anyway!"

And Grundy marched out of the study taking the cardboard with him.

"The—the ass!" breathed Gunn, looking in great alarm at his chums. "Look here, we'll have to stop him somehow!"

"Oh, let 'the idiot rip!" said Wilkins, breaking out into a sudden chuckle. "Tom Merry's bound to spot it simply because of the mortar-board and gown. Grundy hasn't thought of that. Tom Merry will simply muck his game up at once!"

"Oh," said Gunn, "of course! Thank goodness!"

And Wilkins and Gunn let Grundy rip, feeling quite sure that Grundy's mad scheme would soon get discovered and dished by Tom Merry.

Meanwhile, Grundy easily found the discarded mortar-board and gown, and stuffing them under his jacket he made tracks for the toolshed.

He soon was inside that gloomy shed, and, striking a match, he looked about him. His eyes fell upon the guy at once, and he gave a violent start and dropped the match, so lifelike did the guy look.

"M-my hat!" he gasped. "It—it quite gave me a turn! Blessed if it didn't seem to move!"

He didn't risk another match, being afraid of the light being seen from outside. But he could see the dim outline of the form in the chair, and he moved towards it.

He could see the white square of cardboard on its chest, and, dropping the gown, mortar-board, and his own card, he stepped forward to tear it off.

"Gurgle, gurgle!"

Grundy was a brave youth, but he nearly leaped from his skin, and his heart almost stopped beating as that weird, gurgling came from the "guy."

He also leaped back in his sudden fright.

Unfortunately he happened to be standing just in between the two handles of the chair at the moment. And as he leaped the handle took him behind the knees, and over he went, his feet swooping upwards and the rest of his burly person crashing backwards.

Naturally he clutched out desperately in a frantic attempt to save himself, and he caught hold of the guy itself.

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There was a terrific crashing in the toolshed as Grundy and the guy, also the chair, went over together.

"Yarroooooo!"

Grundy's yell was earsplitting as the whole weight of the chair and its contents nearly flattened him out. Gordon Gay was no lightweight.

But if Grundy was hurt, the Grammarian leader was much more so, being tied hand and foot to the chair. And the fall had torn both mask and gag free somewhat. A kind of strangled howl came from behind the displaced mask. As the mask happened to be within an inch of Grundy's face at the time, Grundy got the shock of his youthful life.

A guy which shrieked like that was a little too much, even for the gallant George Alfred.

He gave one wild yell, leaped madly to his feet, and bolted for the door. Then he rushed, shouting, out into the misty quadrangle—right into the arms of three juniors who happened to have been crossing the quad just then, and had been attracted by Grundy's wild yell.

They were Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn.

Crash!

Grundy's headlong rush scattered Kerr and Wynn, but Figgins managed to make a grab and hold Grundy.

"Leggo!" roared Grundy frantically. "It's alive!"

"Wha-what?"

"The—the guy! It—it's alive!" gabbled Grundy. "It—it—"

"Oh!" gasped Figgins, understanding. "You silly owl! Here, hold on! What the thump have you been doing to it? Why— Look out!"

Another figure came bolting out of the shed, shedding cord and ragged coat as he came.

It was Gordon Gay.

That terrible fall had not only torn the gag free but the wrench had snapped the cords. And, finding himself free, Gay, naturally made a dash to escape.

Figgins saw the dim figure coming, but he was too late to stop the fleeing Grammarian. Before Figg could even move, Gordon Gay was past and tearing for the gates.

He vanished into the thick November mist.

"Gone!" hooted Figgins. "You've released him, you fooling owl!" he roared at the astounded, flabbergasted Grundy.

"But—but— Who— What—" gasped Grundy. "It—it was alive! I—I heard it—I saw it—"

"Of course it was!" hissed Figgins. "It was that rotter, Gay, and—"

Figgins paused—a sudden idea had come to his fertile brain.

"It was Gay from the Grammar School!" he said, with a sudden chuckle. "But come inside, Grundy—quick!"

Figgins rushed to the shed and went inside. Grundy, wonderingly followed him, Fatty Wynn and Kerr wrathful and hurt, doing likewise.

Inside the shed Figgins turned.

"We've lost Gay," he said to Fatty and Kerr. "But we're not going without a giddy guy for this chair. What price a School House man to take Gay's place, Kerr? Just a little surprise for Tom Merry! See the idea?"

"Oh, quite!" said Kerr, with a deep chuckle. "Say the word, Figg!"

"Look here," began the bewildered Grundy. "What—" Grundy got no farther, for just then Figgins said the word.

"At him, chaps!"

"What-ho!"

Crash!

George Alfred Grundy yelled with surprise and wrath as the New House trio fell upon him and brought him crashing down. A wild and whirling struggle followed, but Grundy was quite taken by surprise, and before he could even get his fists into action, he was twisted over, and Fatty Wynn took a seat on his back, pinning him down.

In a flash Figgins had whipped his big fists together, and though Grundy began to struggle then hard enough, it was too late.

A match was struck, and cord was bound round Grundy's wrists. Even then Grundy did not realise their fell intention—not until he was plumped into the chair, and his kicking feet and wriggling arms bound to the arms and legs.

Then he knew, and his wrath was towering and majestic. He wriggled and writhed, and he bellowed with rage until a handkerchief was bound round his mouth and secured. Then the mask was fastened over his red and furious features.

"A beautiful guy!" chuckled Figgins, striking yet another match to view the effects. "Yes, I fancy those School House infants won't spot the difference—yet! Mind you don't choke, Grundy!"

Gurgle gurgle, gurgle!

"He seems annoyed!" remarked Figg. "Doesn't appreciate the honour we're doing him. Ta-ta, old nut! You'll

soon be leading the giddy procession, and you always were a fine leader!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And the New House trio left the toolshed, feeling their School House rivals were booked for a little surprise.

CHAPTER 12.

A Little Excitement!

BANG!

Z-z-z-z-zip! Crash! Bang! Fizz-zzzzz! Bang!
The great moment had arrived. Behind the kitchen gardens was the deep, ruddy glow of the bonfire, casting flickering firelight on the already grimy but excited and cheery faces of the celebrators. Flames and sparks shot skywards; smoke and the smell of gunpowder hung about in the November mist, and the uproar of shrieking and yelling from fags and juniors was deafening, only rivalled by the hissing and crashing of the fireworks.

November the Fifth was always a great night at St. Jim's, and the hilarious juniors were going it strong now.

Usually the School House and New House fellows had rival processions, with rival guys. But this time they had—or apparently had—combined forces to guy the Grammar School.

"Here's the giddy guy!" shrieked Wally D'Arcy.

"Hurrah!"

There was the blare of a cornet, and the buzzing of a comb and paper band, and roars of cheers and laughter as the procession came on to the bonfire field from the school.

There was a rush of fags and juniors towards it, and then yells of surprise and laughter as it was seen that four guys swayed high above the shoulders of the crowd.

In the glare of torches and a smother of sparks, the procession surged on towards the bonfire. Herries led the way with his celebrated cornet; behind him came the band—Shell and Fourth juniors nearly bursting in their terrific attempts to extract music from their paper-covered combs.

"Go it!"

"Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who are the guys?" came a chorus of yells.

It was really difficult to tell, but someone sighted the names, and they went from mouth to mouth in a flash.

"Gay, Monk, Carboy, and Mason! Grammarian bounders! Hurrah!"

"All guys! Hurrah for St. Jim's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The guys swayed and rocked grotesquely amid the excited, howling crowd. The fellows carrying them seemed on the verge of collapsing—it was all they could do to keep the chairs holding the guys steady.

Then the news got round that the guys were real flesh and blood, and when the crowd realised that the four guys were actually rivals from the Grammar School, their excitement and delight knew no bounds. They shrieked and roared with laughter and hilarity.

And it was clear to all now that the guys were actually live "guys." In the flickering light from the torches their eyes rolled and glittered weirdly behind their masks. Moreover, they wriggled and struggled frantically, and the chairs holding them shook and swayed with increasing danger of collapsing.

Only Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. knew the state of minds of the hapless three Grammarians, however.

Still under the delusion that the leading guy was Gordon Gay, and that the St. Jim's fellows did not know it was Gordon Gay, their state of mind was one of frantic horror and anxiety.

They struggled desperately to release their arms and legs; they gurgled and gurgled frantically in their efforts to make their captors know the dreadful truth. At the back of their minds was the suspicion all the time that Tom Merry & Co. knew the leading guy was no dummy, but actually Gordon Gay himself. But the risk that they didn't know was enough to fill them with horror and alarm.

But above the uproar their gurgles went unheard and unheeded.

Bang! Crash! Ta-rah-rah-rah! Fizzzzzz! Bang!

"Down with the Grammarian guys!"

"Into the bonfire with 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The procession surged on to the blazing bonfire amid a terrific shindy. But it did not reach it. There came a sudden shout—an alarmed shout! Then came a roar from out of the blackness beyond the radiance of firelight and torchlight—a roar that brought sudden joy and thankfulness to three, at least, of the guys.

"Rescue, Grammar School! Up Grammarians!"

"Look out!"

"Back up!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Oh, great Scott!"

"Oh, gweat pip! Gwammawians!"

Never had the St. Jim's fellows been so astonished as they were when they heard that Grammarian war-cry.

That the Grammarians would dare to invade the sacred precincts of St. Jim's, even to rescue their men, was more than they had imagined or bargained for.

But here they were undoubtedly.

They came rushing into the ruddy glow from the black mist, and their caps were recognised at once. All were armed, either with padded footer stockings or paper bags.

In the paper bags—as the startled Saints soon discovered—was soot and flour.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

The paper bags began to fly, and there were roars of rage as the bags burst among the procession, scattering flour and soot in clouds.

"Back up!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Guard the guys, chaps! Back up!"

Tom Merry & Co. were utterly taken aback by the sudden, alarming turn of events. Tom could only imagine that the Grammarians had missed Gay & Co. and had sent a rescue party. He little dreamed of the truth—that Gay himself had gone to fetch help for his chums. Only Figgins & Co. guessed that. But it was too late now—Figgins realised now the mistake he had made in not warning Tom Merry of the danger, the danger he himself had overlooked.

The procession wilted and broke up in confusion as the deadly flour and soot "bombs" did their fell work, bursting in faces and causing utter dismay and hopeless confusion.

Tom Merry yelled out orders, but his orders went unheeded in the general din and confusion.

The four guys rocked and swayed, and then they vanished as the chair-bearers let go and the hapless guys went crashing down. Then the Grammarians charged the procession, and the padded stockings began their fell work.

In a matter of seconds the procession was a mad riot, and over the unhappy guys the battle waxed fierce and deadly.

It did not last long, however. Gordon Gay had organised the raid well. Certain of his followers had been instructed to attend to the release of the guys, whilst the rest did the fighting. In a few moments Monk, Carboy, and Mason was free, and when he saw that, Gordon Gay gave the order to retreat.

But it was much easier given than obeyed. The St. Jim's juniors were recovering from the sudden surprise now, and they were in a big majority. Tom Merry was almost hoarse with yelling, and his wrath knew no bounds as he glimpsed the three guys free from their masks and bonds.

"Back up!" he roared frantically. "They're getting away, you howling dummies! Back up! They— Oh, great pip!"

Just then Tom Merry got the shock of his life. He came face to face with Gordon Gay, who gave him a thump with a padded stocking.

As Tom knew the first guy was still in his chair he was naturally astounded.

He sat down with a bump, too astonished to hit back for the moment. By the time he was on his feet again Gay had vanished, and the Grammarians were fleeing, yelling with triumph.

"After them!" roared Tom Merry. "Oh, my only hat! Dished and done on the post! After them!"

But it was not to be. Practically all the Grammarians had gone, and the fighting rearguard broke away just then and vanished into the darkness just as Kildare, with three other prefects, rushed up.

"That's enough!" roared Kildare. "You silly young owls, come back! You hear me? Come back! I'll report the fellow who disobeys me!"

Kildare's voice was strong, and it rang out above the uproar.

Blake and a dozen other fellows who had started off hot foot after the raiders stopped and came back into the glare of the bonfire, most of them sooty and floury.

"What the thump happened, Merry?" demanded Kildare, who was looking astounded. "Were those fellows Grammar School chaps?"

"Ow, ow! Yes, Kildare!" panted Tom.

"But what—"

"Only a lark!" said Tom Merry, grinning. "You see, we captured some of 'em and made guys of 'em! Those others came to their rescue!"

"Oh! Oh, my hat!" gasped Kildare. "Mean to say those weren't real guys you were parading round?"

"Nunno! They were Monk, Carboy, and Mason. But—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kildare.

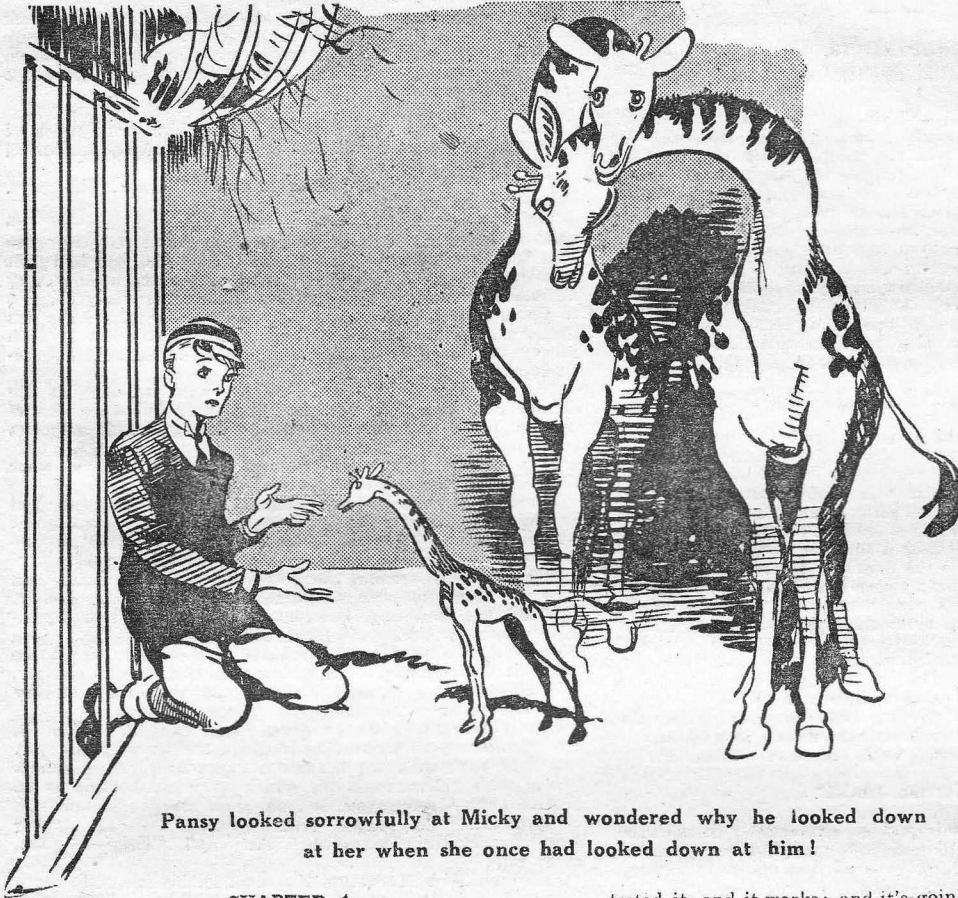
He walked away, still laughing, and his fellow prefects followed his example, also laughing. Obviously, there was to be no row!

"Oh! Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry, blinking about

(Continued on page 22.)

A SIDE-SPLITTING COMPLETE STORY OF A SMALL BOY WITH LARGE BRAINS!

MICKY'S MICRO MIXTURE!



Pansy looked sorrowfully at Micky and wondered why he looked down at her when she once had looked down at him!

CHAPTER 1.

Micky Tries it on the Dog!

FROM the box-room at the top of the house there came a whoop of triumph that would have turned any old-time Red Indian a jealous green. The whoop was followed by the crash of an overturning table; and Mr. Mings put down his newspaper, with a sigh.

"I tell you," he said, more in sorrow than in anger, "that boy of ours will blow the house up yet; or else he'll set it on fire, or else—"

"Anyway," he vowed, not for the first time in his life, "it's going to stop! It's got to stop! I can't sit down to read my paper in peace."

As he shuffled over to the door, with the intention of going upstairs to investigate the cause of the whoop and the crash, Mrs. Mings smiled secretively at her darning-needle.

"His schoolmaster said—", she began.

"I know what his schoolmaster said!" snarled Mr. Mings. "And if he knew what I know he'd have known better than to say it. Maybe the boy has a genius for chemicals—but he's too young to be told so. Possibly he will grow up to become one of the world's greatest scientists—if he doesn't blow himself and all of us sky-high first. He—"

"He never uses gunpowder, or anything dangerous like that, dear," protested Mrs. Mings mildly.

"Whatever he uses," retorted Mr. Mings, in the act of opening the door, "I'm going to stop it! I mean it this time! I—"

Unfortunately for his intentions, the door opened inwards, and Micky Mings—author of the whoop of triumph, overturning of the table, and cause of all the trouble in the house—chose that moment to come in; and he did it so quickly

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—having descended the stairs five at a time—that Mr. Mings went reeling backwards and almost sat down on the kitchen stove.

"You—" he began, and then curiosity overcame anger as he saw the light of a great knowledge beaming from his only offspring's flushed, excited face.

Aged fourteen, Micky Mings was a prodigy. He did things with "stinks" that turned old grey-headed men greyer still. He did them easily; and now he flourished in a trembling hand a large glass phial filled with a greyish powder.

"I've got it!" he roared.

Mr. Mings felt inclined to answer, "I know what you're going to get—and that's a licking!" But, as always happened, he swallowed his spleen, and in a faint, awed voice said:

"Yes, Michael? What is it this time?"

"My Micro Mixture. I mean that's the name I've given to it. And I've

tested it, and it works; and it's going to—"

"Did it make you howl? And did it upset the table?" demanded Mr. Mings grimly.

"No; that was an accident," explained Micky in one breath. "And I rushed out and knocked the table over and whooped with joy; because there's no cod about this mixture at all, because I've tried it on Pongo, and it works."

Pongo was the family dog, a fox-terrier of normal size. There had also once been a family cat, which had died as a result of something Micky had "tried on it." And Mr. Mings remembered this and showed renewed traces of alarm.

"If anything has happened to Pongo, Michael—"

"No, father. Here's Pongo—here in my pocket. He's alive and quite well. Look!"

The announcement that Pongo was in Micky's pocket was no sooner made than a goggle-eyed Mr. Mings found himself staring at something the boy's extended hand thrust under his nose. At first glance it might have been taken for a white rat. And it was certainly alive; for it wriggled and squealed, and seemed to be a bit surprised at itself.

"What ever—" babbled Mr. Mings, starting back in amazement.

"Michael!" screamed Mrs. Mings. "Haven't I told you that you must never bring pet rats into the house?"

Micky made the sort of gesture that Mr. Gladstone must have made when Parliament failed to understand him.

"It isn't a pet rat!" he hissed. "Ain't I telling you? It's Pongo! I gave him a taste of my Micro Mixture, which shrinks things. He's all right really; he— Look! I'll prove it!"

While his amazed parents strove to master their astonishment Micky lowered Pongo to the floor, pulled his tail and made him bark, and then frightened him into running and jumping all over the kitchen floor.

GIRAFFE SMUGGLED OUT OF THE ZOO!

Amazing Scenes in Central London.

Shrunk to a fraction of a fox-terrier's normal size as he was, Pongo's feelings can only be guessed at. As he scuttled around the kitchen on his reduced legs he must have found it a bigger kitchen than ever it had been before. When he sought a final refuge inside one of Mr. Mings' carpet slippers he must have wondered how it was that he had never been able to get inside such a hiding-place before. And Micky, having demonstrated to his own satisfaction that Pongo was at least alive, said:

"What about you, dad? Would you like a taste? It's quite harmless, and not nasty like pills and things, and it only shrinks you up like Pongo."

Mr. Mings, however, chose that moment to realise that if his boy could do such things to dogs he could also do them to the world at large. That meant that he might become a menace to society, like the mad inventors he had read about. And he decided that the sooner he confiscated Micky's Micro Mixture the better it would be.

Yet he was neither a young nor an active man; and Micky seemed to have an uncanny knack of guessing just what passed through the paternal mind. Without stopping to give any further explanations or demonstrations, he turned on his heel just as Mr. Mings reached out for the phial.

"Michael!" bellowed Mr. Mings.

But Michael was out of the kitchen door and going down the front hall like a speedway crack.

"Michael," repeated Mr. Mings, starting in pursuit, "if you dare to—"

But the front door opened and closed.

"Michael!" howled Mr. Mings vainly. "Will you come back and give me that terrible invention of yours at once?"

Michael was already a street away from home and running strongly, and so did not hear. When a distracted Mr. Mings came back from the front door, beaten, it was to ask a distracted Mrs. Mings what he could possibly do.

"Shall I call the police? I can't run after him with old worn legs like mine. He'll be let loose on London, and there's no knowing what trouble he may not cause."

The only response Mrs. Mings could think of was to point to Pongo, who, now that Micky was safely out of the way, came out of the carpet slipper and, under their very noses, commenced to assume his normal size again.

Apparently the effects of Micky's Micro Mixture did not last long, and it was with some relief, if also with amazement, that Mr. and Mrs. Mings watched Pongo become once more what a self-respecting fox-terrier should be.

"Perhaps it won't be so bad as we fear, dear," said Mrs. Mings. "After all, he's so clever that we ought not to discourage him."

"If I only knew where he'd gone!" sighed Mr. Mings.

CHAPTER 2.

Pansy Passes Out!

HAPPENING to have a shilling and some coppers in his pocket, Micky had gone straight to the Zoo without thinking twice about it. He invested a hard-won threepence in buns, bored holes in them with his fingers, and loaded the holes with Micro Mixture, and then sat down to solve the knotty problem of where to present the buns.

"Elephants?" he thought. "No, I don't want an elephant. Most bears we're told not to feed, and I couldn't get at them if I shrank 'em, anyway." He scratched his brainy head. "Kangaroos, monkeys," he mused, "zebras, and— I know! I've got it! A giraffe!"

He had always felt sorry for giraffes with their racy, slender legs and their graceful, long necks. It had seemed to him a pity that they should be confined in a cramped space. Apart from which, the idea of shrinking a giraffe appealed to his sense of humour.

"They're harmless, gentle creatures, too—from the look of 'em," Micky muttered, as he made his way to the giraffe house. "And once I've shrunk one, I can put it in my pocket and take it home and start a private menagerie of my own."

That taking somebody else's giraffe home might be regarded as stealing did not occur to Micky's mighty mind at all. Great inventors had no use for sordid, ordinary, everyday details when it came to a question of testing such a discovery as the wonderful Micro Mixture.

There was, however, the giraffes' keeper to be considered. Up to the instant he stepped inside the giraffe house Micky had not thought of a keeper, nor considered how he was to avoid his watchful eye.

But luck was with him. At the other end of the giraffe house there was trouble with a zebra which had been taken ill. As it was also neither the Zoo's busiest day nor busiest

hour, what few people were present had crowded themselves around the stricken zebra, deserting the other exhibits in their anxiety to see what the keeper was going to do about it.

Hence, Micky did not hesitate. His prepared bun went through the wide bars of the stable, and a giraffe whose name was alleged to be Pansy brought her lofty head low to the ground to sniff at it suspiciously. But the Micro Mixture had an alluring scent and a still more appealing taste, and Pansy fell.

The bun was no sooner in her mouth and in course of being eaten than Pansy began to shrink.

Three other giraffes, which had ranged their stables uncomplainingly, looked down at last with horrified eyes. Then they looked at each other, wondering if a baby giraffe had just been born. But when they realised that Pansy was already smaller than the smallest baby giraffe ever known, they grew alarmed about it, as well they might.

Micky's next action added to their alarm. He dived under the barrier irrespective of keepers, zoo riders, or anything else. The bars beyond were wide enough for him to easily squeeze through, and he did so in the moment that Pansy became small enough also to squeeze through.

Micky coaxed Pansy towards him with a second bun, keeping his third and remaining bun for future emergency. As soon as Pansy had scoffed that second bun, the good work was more than done.

Pansy became as small as Pongo, the terrier, had been when at normal size, and was still shrinking. Also, her unusual size had left her in a dazed state of mind. She still had the feeling that her neck was normal, yet it did not reach very high. Then she looked sorrowfully at Micky, and wondered why he now looked down on her, whereas, when she had graciously accepted the bun, she had looked down on him.

Far from explaining these mysteries, Micky waited a few moments longer—until Pansy was the size of a Pekinese—then seized her rudely by the neck, tucked her inside his coat, and made his exit from the cage.

It was then that his worries really began. His first fear was that Pansy, because of the second Microed bun, might shrink too much until there was nothing left of her at all. And his second was that the keeper might, after all, have seen it all from the corner of his eye.

Fortunately, however, his stunt had not been noticed. The sick zebra still occupied the limelight, and Micky walked out as he had come in, but at a quicker pace. Then he headed for the nearest way out of the gardens.

"Dogs not admitted," he thought. "If I am caught, I can't make the excuse that it's a dog under my coat; and they wouldn't believe me if I said it was a squirrel. So—let's hope I shan't be caught!"

He took side-tracks or short cuts whenever anything that looked like a keeper loomed ahead. And, although he did not dare to open his coat and look, it seemed that Pansy had now stopped shrinking. She had commenced to wriggle protestingly instead, and it was with a groan of sheer relief that he finally flung himself through a cliking turnstile, turned over his few remaining pence, and decided that the quickest way home was by bus.

"Before they miss the giraffe and raise a hue and cry," he told himself.

But he never took the bus. As he hurried along the pavement, still anxious to place the Zoo a safe distance behind and to take the first bus that came along, Pansy's struggles grew more violent, and, to Micky's horror, began to prove too strong for him to hold down. Still worse, his coat began to bulge alarmingly, and he was conscious of the curious, suspicious stare of more than one passer-by.

Then Pansy grew heavier, and Micky, who had found her as light as a toy dog, now felt as if he was struggling with an Alsatian heavy-weight. He began to sweat—with fear as well as with effort. For he realised the worst—that Pansy was assuming her normal size again.

The top button of Micky's coat parted with a pop. As it did so, Pansy's graceful head emerged, and Micky found himself now to be clinging affectionately to Pansy's slender neck. As he gave a wild look down, he observed that Pansy's legs had grown out from the bottom of his coat and were almost touching the ground.

Micky did not know what to do. His first instinct was to drop Pansy and run for it—until he found that it was more a matter of Pansy dropping him. For Pansy suddenly found her feet and broke into a jerky run.

How it happened he did not remember exactly, but Micky found himself astride Pansy's back and holding on tight to her neck. In his anxiety to hold the growing giraffe down, he had unconsciously thrown one leg over its shoulder.

As Pansy set off at a healthy gallop which looked like ending at Euston or King's Cross, Micky remembered

that, in his enthusiasm over inventing the Micro Mixture, he had forgotten to see how long its effects would last. And Pansy was now back to full size again!

CHAPTER 3.

A Free Tour of London!

THE prospect before Micky was an appalling one, and he realised it all of a sudden. For Pansy's pace not only quickened, it grew jerkier and more awkward than anything that the lad had ever experienced before.

He had taken elephant rides in his time; but in howdahs, which made them tolerable; and with a dignified slowness, which made them pleasurable. And he had ridden on camels and had sat astride horses—plus harness.

But this giraffe business was something the like of which not even professional jockeys or circus people had been called upon to attempt. Apart from the question of Pansy's speed, there was the awkward shape of her body, sloping gently tailwards as it did. Although Micky's first temptation was to slide down towards that tail, and there drop off into the roadway, his nerve failed him and he did not do it.

He hung still more grimly around Pansy's long, strong neck. That seemed safest. He planted his dithering feet on Pansy's shoulders, and Pansy ran on.

Now, several years of close confinement in a small space had given Pansy a mistaken outlook on life. She had never

been properly brought up, and she did not know London. She did not know even the rules of the road, speed limits, or the meaning of policemen on point duty.

True, Micky tried to instruct her.

"Pansy!" he babbled. "Good old Pansy! Jolly old Pansy! Be a good girl and I'll give you an-an-anun-unun-another bu-bu-bun!"

But jolly old Pansy did not seem to be listening. The last time she had had a run on her own like this had been in a big game preserve in Rhodesia, where the soft ground had yielded to her feet and no tall houses had loomed on either side of the way.

Not feeling quite at home, Pansy grew panicky. Her eyes grew wild as she heard a shout and saw people turning to stare at her. As female giraffes go, she had always suffered from bashfulness, and had hated being stared at. She ceased to listen even to Micky's pleading voice as it floated up to her from the bottom of her long neck.

"Pan-pan-pansy!" wailed Micky, each word or part of a word being jerked out of him in keeping with Pansy's bobbing gait. "It-it's nun-no u-u-use, Pansy! We'll be arrested!"

Arrest held no terrors for Pansy. With no definite idea of where she was going, but with a very firm intention of going somewhere, she commenced a non-stop tour of London, which was talked about afterwards for many weeks.

By the time she commenced that tour she had naturally

(Continued on next page.)

THE GLORIOUS "FIFTH"!

(Continued from page 10.)

him dazedly. "What—how did it happen? Something went wrong, you fellows! Gay must have got loose—"

"No, he didn't!" yelled Jack Blake. "We've still got him, anyway! Look!"

He pointed where some juniors were lifting up a chair. On the chair, still bound to it, and still masked, was a wriggling, gurgling form.

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, great pip! We've still got Gay!"

Few fellows had spotted Gordon Gay amid the confusion, and they howled with delight as the guy was raised on high.

"But it isn't Gay!" shrieked Tom Merry, rushing up to the spot. "I've seen Gay free—he led those Grammarians bounders just now!"

"What?"

"Put it down!" yelled Tom Merry, suddenly apprehensive. "We've been spoofed somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Put it down and let Tom Merry see the guy, chaps!"

Tom Merry started.

"Figgins, you rotter! What d'you mean?" he gasped.

"I—I—"

He paused as the guy was lowered with a shake and a bump. The crowd surged round to see it, and a yell of laughter arose as the eyes were seen to be rolling behind the ghastly mask, while a frantic spluttering gurgle came from behind it.

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Figgins & Co.

Tom Merry rushed forward and tore at the mask. It came off at last, and with it came the gag.

There was a howl—an astounded howl.

"Grundy!"

"GRUNDY!"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Figgins & Co. "What price the New House now?"

Tom Merry shook his fist at George Figgins. He was utterly astounded and bewildered. But he was also seething with wrath and indignation.

"You rotten traitor!" he roared. "You—you've let us down, Figgins! You've released that Grammar School bounder and shoved Grundy in his place!"

"I jolly well haven't!" laughed George Figgins, nearly weeping with merriment. "It was Grundy who released Gay!"

"Wha-at?"

"Grundy let him free; he barged into the toolshed and out him free somehow—just what Grundy would do!" yelled Figgins. "We came along just as Gay rushed out. We tried to stop him, but he got away."

"And—and Grundy released him?" stuttered Tom, glaring at that hapless youth.

"Yes, old chap. So we thought he ought to be punished for it," chuckled Figgins. "We shoved him in the chair in Gay's place."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter, and Grundy suddenly found his powers of speech and yelled.

"Cut me free, you fools—cut me free!" he howled furiously. "Let me loose, and I'm going to smash the lot of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry jumped forward and cut Grundy free. Grundy shook off the cords, and then, though he must have been frightfully stiff, he made one flying leap at the hysterical George Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha! Look out!"

The juniors scattered. Figgins got Grundy's first hefty blow in the right eye and Grundy's second in his left. And Figgins stopped laughing suddenly, and did not wait for a third from Grundy. He turned and bolted, with the enraged Grundy tearing after him.

Even Tom Merry was roaring now with laughter. Had it been any other School House man it might have been different. But Grundy was the fellow who always did these things, and they felt he deserved it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Blake, wiping tears from his eyes. "So Grundy led the procession after all! He always was a fellow who wanted to be leader, wasn't he? Never mind, we've had some fun, and I fancy we got the best of it over the Grammarians after all! Neither Gay himself nor his pals will forget this little lot in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather not!"

"Just imagine how Monk and his two pals were feeling all the time!" laughed Tom Merry. "Yes, I fancy we got the best of it, Blake! And now where are those giddy fireworks? We'll give guys a rest!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a record celebration. Figgins reappeared later on, but his two eyes looked suspiciously shady, and he did not look very merry. But he soon cheered up as the revelry proceeded, and soon the air was alive with whizzing rockets, banging crackers, whirling catherine-wheels, rip-rapping rip-raps, squibbing squibs, and dancing sparks.

The flames leaped higher and higher, and sparks shot skywards amidst hilarious laughter and cheers. Then, when the fire died down and the fireworks gave out, the prefects came on the scene again and shepherded the juniors and fags off to their quarters.

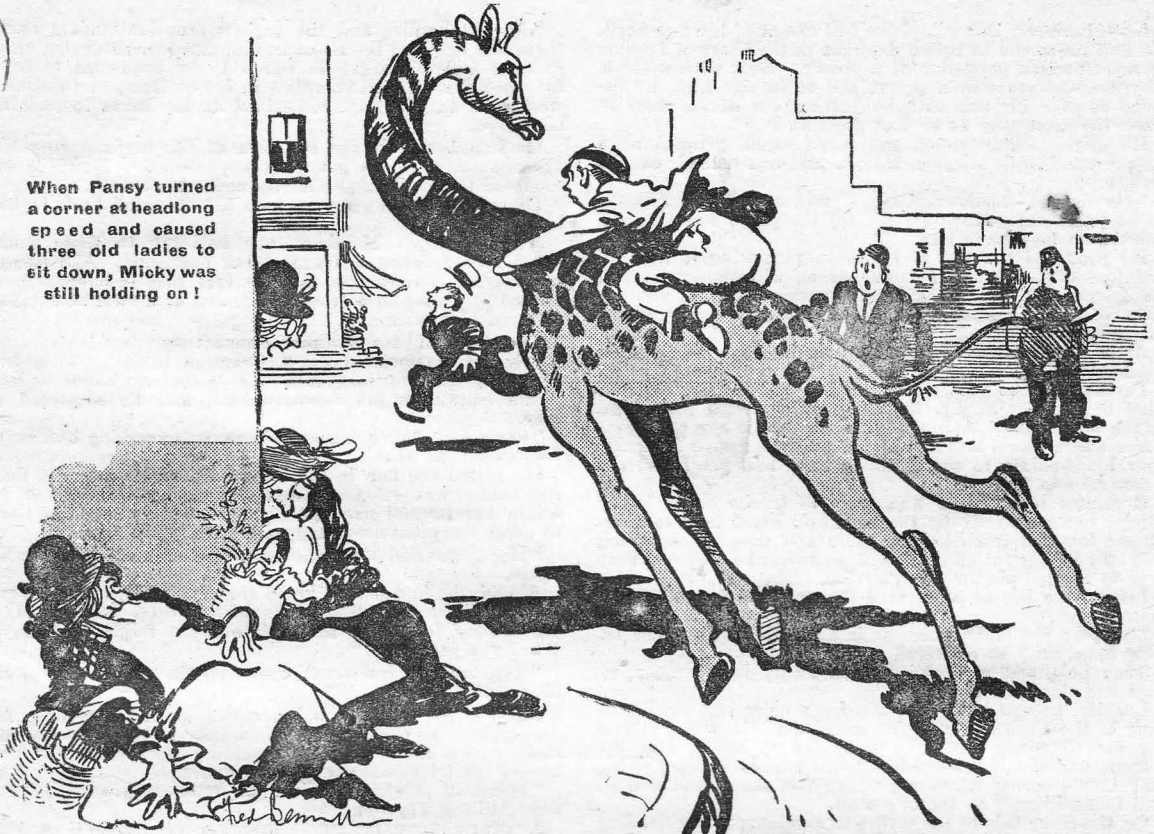
All agreed that it was an unusually exciting and successful bonfire night—only Grundy seeming to have doubts as to that.

Whether the Grammarians felt so or not the St. Jim's juniors did not know—or care. But it was weeks and weeks before Gordon Gay & Co. forgot the night—and it was certainly weeks and weeks before Tom Merry & Co. allowed them to forget it, and the word "Guy" brought blushes and dismal remembrances to the Grammarians.

THE END.

(Book your seats with Tom Merry & Co. for a tour round the world commencing next week in: "THE SCHOOL IN THE CLOUDS!" the first yarn in a grand new series showing Martin Clifford in tip-top fettle.)

When Pansy turned a corner at headlong speed and caused three old ladies to sit down, Micky was still holding on!



attracted attention. A policeman on point duty had just held up a stream of traffic when Pansy, side-stepping a Rolls-Royce, took exception to the squeak of a smaller—and cheaper—car's brakes. She flashed past both traffic and policeman like the figment of a dream, caused a lorry and motor-cycle to collide as they pulled up to avoid running her down, and went on her way with splendid disdain.

Even experienced motorists, who thought they knew what to do in an emergency, were so surprised to see Pansy on the broad highway that they naturally pulled up to let her pass. And when she was at the zenith of her speed, a second policeman, with outstretched arm, was ignored—and that was that.

The policeman blew his whistle and refused to have the law defied. Micky told Pansy that she was a fool, and meant it; but he did not dare let go of her neck. When she turned a corner at headlong speed and caused three old ladies to sit down on the footpath and faint, he was still holding on.

Pansy took a look at Euston Station and decided, from a distance, that she did not like it. Without halting to explain why, she turned in her tracks and went to explore Bloomsbury.

Unfortunately, she did not do it sanely and quietly and smoothly, taking her time about it. She ran as desperately as only a wild, traffic-scared giraffe could have been expected to run—zigzagging this way and that, causing pedestrians to fly into sheltering doorways, and involving amazed motorists in turns and sudden stoppages and unexpected skids.

Pansy, by the sheer novelty of her presence, became queen of the road.

All the same, there was pandemonium behind her. Police had commandeered private cars, private motorists had followed the police, and there was a veritable mob of indignant citizens coming in Pansy's wake.

If they found it hard to catch her up, that was because they had to observe the rules of the road, and Pansy didn't bother. Whether she ran on the pavement or not did not worry Pansy. The short cuts she took through by-streets were amazing, even to Micky. When she upset a street scavenger whose back happened to be turned, she did not stop to apologise.

Yet Bloomsbury, despite its comparative quietness, did not appeal to her for long. Although by now a little breathless, she took it into her graceful head to cut a dash in the West End.

By then Micky had given up telling her to stop, given up thinking, and given up wondering how it was going to

end. He sensed that astonished crowds were coming in his wake. He saw amazed people either turning to stare or turning to run. And he felt certain that he would only break his neck if he chanced letting go and trying to jump to the ground.

So Pansy continued her little adventure, and took Shaftesbury Avenue for granted. Half-way down it a fire-engine, dashing across to a fire, annoyed her, and she took some more of her short cuts, thereby making matters still more awkward for the pursuit.

It was as if she had known that a phone message had gone through ahead of her, warning a special batch of police to be ready with nets, and to shoot her if the need should arise; for her last short cut brought her into Trafalgar Square, where no one expected her, but where, nevertheless, she decided to quench her thirst.

But her decision was no sooner made than yet another policeman's shout of "Come down off that!" to Micky was misunderstood by Pansy. Unused to being spoken to harshly, she forwent her drink of Trafalgar water and stampeded across the Square in an entirely new direction.

At which Micky's heart sank for the last time. He had hoped to find Pansy exhausted and limping long ere this. The slow-down she had made when she had thought of the drink had given him just a gleam of hope; but when Pansy headed into Wardour Street and went at it as hard as ever, he just groaned and held on.

And then came the unexpected, in the shape of a traffic block, which shut off all chance of approach through Wardour Street's narrowest part.

Pansy slowed down and contemplated the dismal prospect with a keen, bright eye. The corner of that keen, bright eye then suggested that the best thing to do was to make another short cut—through an opening on her right.

She sped through the space between two shops and came to an amazed standstill as she found that she had blundered into a mews, where all was peaceful and quiet, with not a soul in sight.

She calmed down miraculously, stood sweating and trembling, and gave Micky his chance to slip swiftly to the ground.

CHAPTER 4.

Pansy Goes Through it Again!

THE comfortable knowledge that his feet were restored to solid earth worked on Micky like a charm, and set his shrewd and inventive brain in motion again. Since he had left the Zoo it had been merely in a terrible whirl.

Now, however, he realised the full extent of his own peril. He had been seen in broad daylight in the heart of London in unauthorised possession of a giraffe. And, with a vision of years and years in a prison cell to inspire him, he decided to save his own skin by getting out of the mess in much the same way as he had got into it.

He gazed wildly round the mews; then grinned as a hot-pie merchant's tricycle, forlorn and unattended, caught his eye.

"Having let me down, Pansy," said he, "I now proceed to let you down. Have a bun; for the police are after us, and there's no time to lose."

He produced the last of his buns, peppering it with an overdose of the Micro Mixture as an afterthought. And Pansy, not having learned from experience that it was not good to trust in Micky's buns, took it as greedily as she had taken the others.

At once, and more rapidly than she had done in the Zoo, she began to shrink.

Perhaps it was that, after all her adventures, she was glad to shrink. Micky, for his part, was still more glad to see her shrink. And while he waited for her to assume a size which would best suit his purpose, he looked anxiously over his shoulder to see if the pursuit had yet found out where he was.

A minute later Pansy was down to terrier size. Micky caught her vengefully by the neck and lifted her, and was almost tempted to choke her there and then. Conquering this idea by a great effort of will, however, he carried Pansy over to the hot-pie merchant's trike.

Lifting the lid, he discovered the aperture beneath to be empty.

"Suppose the bloke who was in charge of it has gone off duty for a bit," he muttered.

Then he thrust a much-shrunken Pansy inside the aperture and slammed the lid.

Luckily, he acted just in time, for a noise like the beginning of the French Revolution sounded at the street end of the mews. Since this noise suggested to Micky that the pursuit had at last tracked him to his lair, he made a flying leap into a corner where a packing-case stood, mounted it, and found himself on top of a wall.

On the other side of the wall was another passage leading out again into the street. And as Micky dropped down into it he heard an awful, thunderous voice:

"Anybody about here?" It was the voice of authority—the voice of the law. "Anybody seen a giraffe in here?"

Nobody saw a giraffe; and Micky did not wait to explain where a giraffe might be found.

After the police and the curious crowd attendant upon them had deserted the mews in despair—for, naturally, they did not look for a giraffe where Pansy happened to be—the hot-pie merchant, complete in his uniform, and finished with work for the day, came back to the mews to reclaim his tricycle.

He had left it in the seclusion of the mews during his absence on a cigarette-buying expedition. Now, as he mounted it, he whistled cheerily under his breath.

There was nothing more to do but to pedal back to his headquarters.

Mister Hot-pie Merchant was half-way to those same headquarters, when a strange thing happened. And it was not only its strangeness, but the fact that it happened in Piccadilly Circus in a traffic block and at a rush hour, that annoyed him.

The flap of his hot-pie compartment suddenly rose slowly, as if upraised by a phantom hand. Then his reasoning powers told him that phantom hands didn't tackle empty hot-pie compartments, and he suspected a joke.

"Some fool shut a kitten in here, or something like that, I suppose," he said.

He raised the flap in the same unfortunate moment that the traffic was released; and Pansy, just proceeding to attain her normal size again, thrust up her neck in time to greet the point-duty man with an inquiring eye.

"Hoy!" snarled the policeman, and he halted the traffic again.

Already he had been warned that a giraffe was at large.

"Hoy!" he repeated, while Mister Stop Me and Try One almost fell from his saddle with fright. "Hoy! What you got there?"

"Stop me and try one!" answered the youth. "I mean blowed if I know!"

Pansy grew rapidly, and a crowd gathered round. As she outgrew the confined space in which she had been placed, there was a nasty noise of crackling woodwork, and the box of the tricycle began to split apart.

"Handcuff it, for the love of Mike!" groaned Mister Stop Me and Try One.

A drayman, with more presence of mind than the astounded policeman, leapt down from his dray with a tarpaulin and a rope.

"Lemme see to it!" he roared. "Never bin faced wiv a 'armless kangaroo before, ain't yer?"

"It's a giraffe," answered the policeman—"or, at least, so I have been informed."

After which Pansy was the centre and object of a scandalised crowd. While her legs grew and her neck grew, the crowd saw her roped, despite her struggles of protest. When she was eventually lifted into the dray, which took her back to the Zoo, the crowd went its way. But it went wonderingly, asking itself what would happen next.

"I was always under the impression," said one learned gentleman to another, "that it took many years for giraffes to grow to their full stature."

Miles away, in a homely kitchen, Micky Mings was explaining to a devoted Mother Mings about a slight mistake he had made with his new invention.

"It isn't perfect yet," he stated. "It works, of course; but it doesn't last. I've got to do some more experimenting to find a way, not only of shrinking things, but of keeping 'em shrank when I've shrank 'em."

Whereat he rushed upstairs to the attic, and his father subsided behind his newspaper with a feeble beat of protest.

THE END.

(If you've stopped laughing, turn to page 17 and read the announcement of the red-hot new series which start in the GEM next week!)



Pansy thrust up her neck just in time to greet the point-duty man with an inquiring eye!
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,186.

FOLLOW NED HARDY IN HIS LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE.



The Fighting Middy!

BY
DAVID GOODWIN

"Art for Art's Sake!"

BOTH Ned and Jinks nearly fell down. They stared at the clothes-shop man open-mouthed.

"Are you off your chump?" said Ned. "Twenty pounds! Why, you can get one made to measure by a first-class London tailor for eight pounds!"

"Ah, but this is a very speshul suit, sir! An' it's been worn by a lord."

"Hang your lord! We haven't any time for playing the fool!" said Jinks. "What's your price, without any rotting?"

"I've told you twenty pounds, an' cheap, too. That's my price. If you don't like it," said the tailor, with a sneer, touching the mud-plastered suit with his foot, "get out of it again an' put this lot on!"

"Great Scott! I can't!" said Jinks, deeply agitated. "Here, Ned, you cut on ahead and get back in time—there's no need for us both to get hauled over the coals!"

"I'm blowed if I will! I'll wait for you," said Ned. "As for you," he added, turning to the clothier, "you're a low-down sharper!"

"Hang it all, I must have the clothes; there's no help for it!" said Jinks desperately. "It'll take me half an hour to dress in those soaking things, and there'll be a rare row. I haven't got twenty pounds. Can't you knock something off for luck?"

"Not a 'alfpenny! But I'll meet you half-way, young gent—seeing as you are a young gent, and a King's officer, I'll take five pounds cash, and you'll sign a bill for the other fifteen pounds."

Ned protested strongly against such a barefaced swindle; but Jinks, with the fear of breaking leave and having no uniform next day, before him, had to agree to any terms as long as he caught the pinnace before she left; indeed, he had no choice. The boys could only muster two pounds between them, and as it was all they had, the shopman took it.

"Sign this IOU for eighteen pounds," he said, "an' give me your father's address. I know your name an' ship!"

Jinks did both, and as the boys left the shop Ned turned back to the man.

"If ever there was a shark on two legs, it's you!" he said hotly. "I should like to put a meat-hook and chain into you, you beauty!"

The man only rubbed his fat hands and grinned, which so enraged Ned that for very little more he would have pitched into the man. Jinks took him by the arm and ran him out, however, and so little time was there that they raced at full speed the whole way to the Asia Pontoon.

They fully expected to be late, but luckily the pinnace had been delayed for orders. She put on all speed on the way back, and the middies joined their ship once more just in time. They reported to the officer of the watch, and went below.

It was noticed, however, that Ned and his pal Jinks seemed a trifle fatigued during the evening entertainment in the school-room, and the cut on Ned's forehead came in for some comment.

It was generally assumed that the two had fallen out, and the pair allowed it to rest at that. Jinks woke up from a bad dream in the middle of the night, yelling that the

Victorious had run aground in a mud-puddle, but the other middies calmed him with a few wet sponges, and retired to rest again without waiting to ask what he meant.

"Where did you get that cut over the eye?" said Sub-Lieutenant Grimshaw to Ned next morning.

"Keeping the flag flying, sir," said Ned blandly.

"Indeed?" said Grimshaw, with an acid sneer. "I should advise you to get another on the opposite side of your head. It improves your appearance. With a broken nose and a black eye as well you'd be comparatively good-looking, and less of a disgrace to the gun-room."

His joke—if such it may be called—struck Ned as a poor one; but it seemed to please Grimshaw hugely. He was in quite a good temper that morning, in comparison, and during the interval before breakfast was piped, he scabarded one of the middies in a playful yet savage manner,

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HOW THE STORY STARTED.

MIDSHIPMAN NED HARDY, son of a line of sea captains, is appointed to the Victorious, the same ship from which his brother Ralph has been cashiered in connection with a robbery. Misfortune soon befalls the new snotty, for he is made the scapegoat of a Russian plot to wreck the British Navy. Thanks to a warning note from Ralph, Ned succeeds in establishing his innocence and bringing his enemy to book. Granted shore leave Ned and his pal Jinks are wending their way through a maze of narrow streets when they are suddenly attacked by four roughts. A fierce fight ensues, and the gang are eventually beaten off, leaving Ned with a long cut over the temple and Jinks looking a pitiful wreck in his mud-sodden clothes. Entering a near-by second-hand clothing shop, Jinks tries on a uniform which turns out to be an excellent fit. "As a favour," says the wily tailor, rubbing his hands, "I'll let you have it as low as twenty pounds!"

(Now read on.)

and laid down the law loudly to the other sub-lieutenants about the handling of battleships in steam tactics.

"This ship might be made twice as smart as she is," he said. "If we could get the same discipline all over her that I keep in the gun-room, she'd do a lot better. More ginger is what's wanted—and common-sense. Now, in those bow-and-quarter manoeuvres we did the other day the ships were much too far apart, and the Victorious ought to have slipped behind under the Thunderbolt's stern, instead of going across her the way we did."

"Think so? I thought the Owner handled her rather well," said Hart.

"It might have been done much better. What's wanted is more dash and initiative. I could show you how, with a ship like this—"

Grimshaw went on thus for ten minutes, and all through the meal that followed. While the middies had to keep silent, he laid down the law and boasted of what he would do if he were in command of the Victorious; and, without directly saying so, conveyed the idea that her present skipper was very small fry indeed, and might learn a great deal from Sub-Lieutenant Grimshaw, if he wished to.

Jinks kicked Ned under the table and winked, and Ned grinned back. He was rather less amused than some of the other middies, all the same, for Ned had conceived a decidedly deep respect for Captain Raglan since his dealing with him, and it galled the middy more than a little to hear his idol abused stealthily by an officer like Grimshaw. The other sub-lieutenants said little, and the middies, of course, nothing at all.

"The old Grimmer was in form this morning," said Jinks, as they went out. "It's a pity he don't get the Owner turned out as a waster, and make the Admiralty give him the job."

Ned nodded; and after the first hour's instruction in the school-room he was found in a corner of the gun-room—all the sub-lieutenants being absent—with a big sheet of cartridge paper, two feet square, pinned on an atlas-cover for an easel, and nursed across his knees as he worked away with a soft drawing-pencil.

"What are you scribbling at?" asked Jinks, coming up to him, and as he looked over Ned's shoulder a broad grin spread over his face.

"My Aunt Maria! I never knew you could draw like that! It's nailing good!" said Jinks, laughing. "I say, we ought to have it framed!"

"Might make a mutiny, eh?" grinned Ned, working away with his pencil.

Several of the other middies crowded round, and soon they were all rocking with laughter.

Ned's sketch showed a gigantic, overbearing Sub-Lieutenant Grimshaw, with a ferocious countenance and great swagger, drawn to the life, waving his arms, and explaining to a wretched and trembling little Captain Raglan—who was no taller than Grimshaw's boot—how he really ought to run the Victorious.

The two caricatures were excellent likenesses, and very cleverly drawn. Ned had a natural talent for such work, and had produced a picture which made every member of the gun-room laugh till he shook.

"That's jolly smart, 'pon my soul!" guffawed Keppel. "You'll have to do us some more, Hardy! Look at the wner shaking like a leaf! Look at Grimshaw's phiz! Hallo!"

"What have you got there, Hardy? Show it to me!" said Grimshaw's voice fiercely; and everybody started.

The senior sub-lieutenant had come up behind the group so quietly that they did not see him till he was upon them. Ned rose quickly, and thrust the drawing away.

"Give me that! Do you hear me?" thundered Grimshaw.

There was no help for it; Ned handed him the picture in silence. Grimshaw took it and gazed at it; his face became positively blue with rage.

He glanced at Ned with eyes that started out of his head, so infuriated was he. For some seconds he could hardly get his breath.

"So this is your work, is it?" Grimshaw snorted. "This is the way you employ your time! This thing"—he struck the drawing with his hand—"is the vilest and grossest attempt to subvert discipline and insult a superior officer that I've ever seen in my life! It is little better than mutiny!" he spluttered. "A direct and public insult to the captain!"

"It's not meant to insult the captain, sir!" said Ned hastily. "Only a bit of fun!"

"It's meant to insult me, I suppose!" shouted Grimshaw. "I care nothing for that; but it does insult the captain, and so affects the whole ship! Fun, you call it!" he said fiercely. "Better men have been broken for less, before you! I shall not deal with you myself. It is my duty to lay this before Captain Raglan!"

He stormed out of the gun-room, clutching the caricature in his hand, leaving a startled assembly of middies behind him.

"My aunt! Is he going to show it to the skipper?" said Ned, agast. "I can see my finish!"

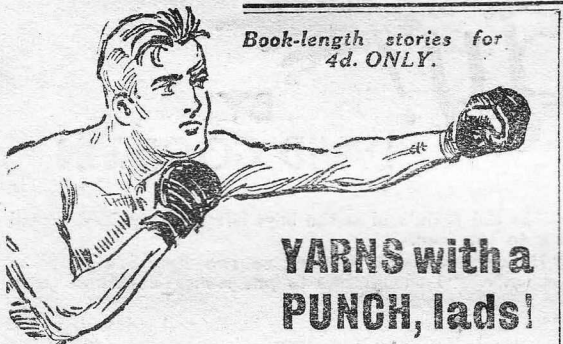
"So can a lot of us—and serve you dashed well right!" snapped Wexton.

"Shut up, you ass!" said Jinks scornfully. "You sit tight, Ned! Got to face the music, anyhow. What an outsider the chap is!"

"Jinks is right! I know who'll get a flea in his ear if he's really goat enough to show that thing to the Owner!" said Keppel authoritatively.

Ned felt relieved, but it was with an anxious eye he watched the infuriated Grimshaw's back vanish down the alleyway. The senior sub-lieutenant was in too much of a rage to consider very carefully what he was doing, and temper makes fools of better men than Grimshaw. He made his way forward like a whirlwind, and got a message taken to Captain Raglan, requesting an interview.

Nothing else would do; but Grimshaw must see the captain. The first-lieutenant was no use to him—not even the commander. And in due course, still as red as a lobster, and nearly boiling over, he appeared in the dread sanctum.



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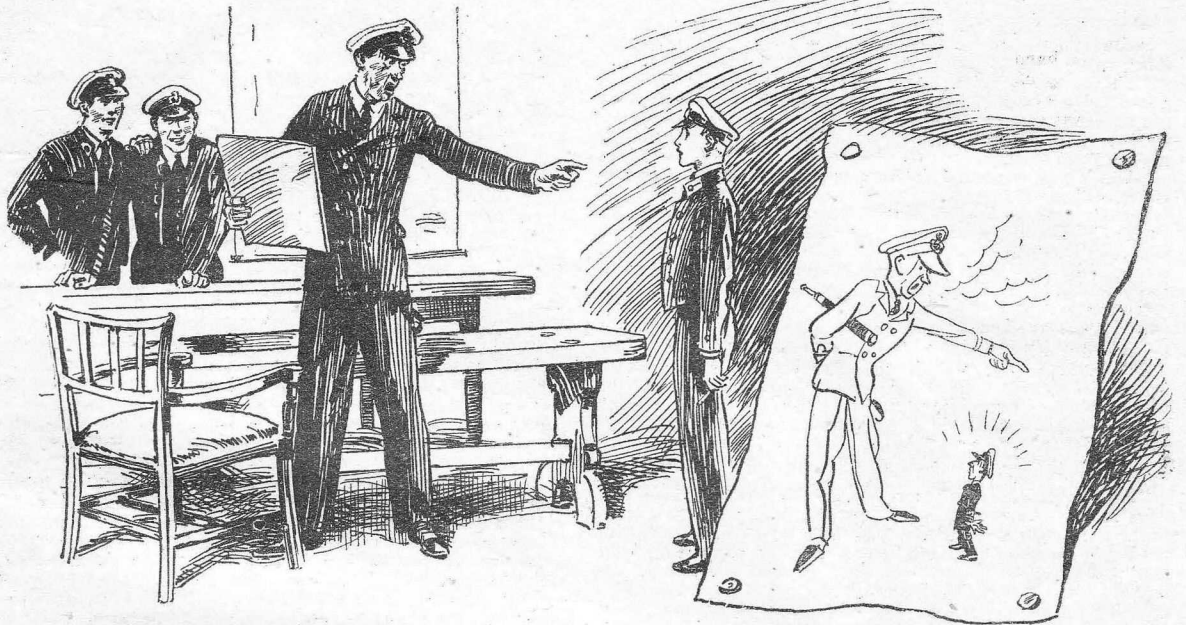
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"So this is your work, is it?" snorted Grimshaw. "This thing! It's little better than mutiny!"

"I have to report an act of insubordination so gross and so serious that I have no option but to place it before you, sir!" spluttered Grimshaw; and he spread the sheet of cartridge paper on the astonished captain's desk. "This was done by the most troublesome and undisciplined of the whole gun-room mess—Mr. Edwin Hardy. As you will see, sir, it is a public insult to yourself, as well as to me!"

Captain Raglan took the caricature, and looked at it. He bit his lip till it nearly bled, his shoulders shook, and his eyes filled with water.

"Well, Mr. Grimshaw?" he said, in rather tremulous tones.

"I thought, sir, such a—a mutinous and seditious action as this, in holding the chief officer of the ship up to public ridicule, would be best dealt with by you officially!" said Mr. Grimshaw explosively.

The captain, who had now got his voice under control, turned in his seat, and looked at Grimshaw in a puzzled way, as if wondering what to make of him.

"Really, Mr. Grimshaw," he said dryly, "if you are unable to restrain the—ah—artistic impulses of your juniors, I don't see why you should call on me to do it."

"Sir!" gasped the sub-lieutenant.

"Do you draw, yourself, Mr. Grimshaw?"

"No, sir, I don't!"

"Ah! If you did, you would see that the perspective of this effort is rather good. It is evident that it represents the state of feeling in the gun-room." The captain smiled, and made the sub-lieutenant a mock bow. "I congratulate you, Mr. Grimshaw, on bulking so largely before the eyes of your juniors. But I never interfere in matters of art, and I must leave this affair in your able hands."

Grimshaw, seeing that his leg was being pulled, grew redder in the face than ever. He began dimly to suspect that he had made an ass of himself.

"There is a proverb, Mr. Grimshaw, which says 'Gently over the stones!' Accept my felicitations on the tact you have shown in this matter, so far. You may leave this work of art with me, and I will deal with the matter as I think fit. Don't let me detain you!"

Grimshaw made for the door, when the captain called him back.

"By the way, Mr. Grimshaw," said Captain Raglan, tapping with his pen the enormous portrait of the sub-lieutenant towering over the little captain, "I fear it will be some time before you are promoted to this extent. However, we all live in hopes! Good-morning!"

Grimshaw left the cabin, almost crying with rage, though he did not dare show it before the captain, who, as soon as Grimshaw had gone, fell back in his chair and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. He rang the bell, and sent for Commander Langford, and soon the two senior officers of the Victorious were rocking with mirth over Ned's caricature till their sides ached.

"And you mean to say, sir, that Grimshaw brought you this?" exclaimed the commander.

"Yes!" gasped the captain, wiping his eyes. "I think

he expected me to hold a drumhead court martial over it, or something."

"I'm afraid he'll never make an officer, our good Grimshaw."

"It doesn't look like it," said the captain. "Not the right type—for the Victorious, at any rate."

"When Grimshaw left the cabin, more infuriated than ever because his vengeance had been balked, and his leg well pulled, he made straight for the gun-room, and, striding up to Ned, he gripped him by the shoulder and hauled him out from among the middies.

"You will come up before the proper authorities in due course," said Grimshaw savagely. "In the meantime, I am to deal with you!"

He ran Ned into the school-room, which was empty at the moment, and there, pulling him across a bench, administered his favourite weapon, the dirk-scabbard, across the tightest part of the middy's trousers till his arm was tired.

"Another win for me!" said Ned, shaking himself, as he rejoined his youthful brother officers. "If Grimshaw thinks he can dirk-scabbard away the joy of setting him down on paper for the skipper to grin at, he's welcome! Art for art's sake—what! He made that up about my going up before the giddy authorities!"

"Rather!" said Keppel gleefully. "And about them ordering you a whacking, too. You can see the Owner jolly well roasted him for being such a drivelling idiot!" added the senior middy, who had the fiendish insight of his rank.

Grimshaw carefully avoided Ned for the rest of the week, and the middies of the gun-room chuckled with unholy glee over the bully's discomfiture.

On the morning after Grimshaw's snub, Jinks came up to Ned, holding a long blue paper in his hand, and looking rather solemn.

"What the dickens d'you think this means?" he exclaimed, as soon as he set eyes on Ned, giving him the paper. "It was handed me by some chap who came to the fore-gangway in a boat this morning."

Ned looked at the paper. It was headed "Portsmouth County Court," and required "Mr. Victor Jinks, R.N.," to appear at the court on the 2nd inst., and show cause why he should not pay Mr. John Kay, of Quay Rents, Portsmouth, the sum of eighteen pounds, together with thirty shillings costs.

"Why, it's from that tailor fellow you got the uniform from when you spoiled your own in the fight we had with the toughs ashore!" said Ned.

"Yes; I've got a letter from my father, too, saying he's had a bill from the man which he can't understand; and that he's not going to pay eighteen pounds for a second-hand uniform. He's written and told the tailor that he's a swindler. I forgot all about it, so I never wrote to the dad as I meant to."

"Well, he's quite right," said Ned. "The man is a swindler—your governor's hit the mark without any telling."

I expect the tailor Johnnie knows it is no good trying to swindle your father out of the money; so he's sent this thing to try and frighten you."

"That's about it!" said Jinks wrathfully. "So here goes!" He crumpled the summons up and flung it over the side into the sea, where a seagull swooped down towards it, but passed it scornfully by. "What does the fellow take me for?"

"Aren't you supposed to turn up in the court, or something, though?"

"I don't know," said Jinks cheerfully. "But I shan't, anyhow. I believe it's all rot. I'm a King's officer, so they can't summon me, or whatever it's called," he added, quite believing what he said. "I suppose something'll have to be paid, though."

"I tell you what," said Ned. "We gave the ruffian two pounds cash as deposit at the time, and that's quite as much as he'd get for the old uniform from anybody."

"Right-ho!" returned Jinks, more cheerfully still; and, in blissful ignorance of the pains and penalties to which he was exposing himself by taking no notice of a county court summons, the middy dismissed the subject from his mind.

"Sonny," said Jinks, grinning, as he met his chum ten days later in the gun-room, "you remember that swindling tailor chap who sold me that suit after we had the row with the louts on shore? Well, here's another paper he's sent me." Jinks pulled a buff-coloured, printed sheet, with his name on the outside, from his pocket. "It's something to do with the county court, but I'm blessed if I know what it means. You might have a squint at it."

Ned did so, and neither of the middies could make head nor tail of its meaning, except that Jinks' debt had apparently grown to twenty-five pounds.

Being rather puzzled, they showed it to Keppel, who came up just then.

"Why, this is a judgment summons!" said the senior, as several other middies pressed round. "You must have had an ordinary summons first, and you didn't go to court, so they've pronounced judgment against you to pay the money, as well as lawyer's costs."

"Yes, I had the first one," said Jinks. "I didn't worry about it."

"Didn't you?" said Keppel. "Well, you'd better start worrying now. The money is to be paid on—let's see—the fourth. Why, that was yesterday? Haven't you brassed up?"

"No fear!" said Jinks. "The chap's a swindler, and—"

"That doesn't matter; he's got the court on his side now."

"Well, what happens next?" said Jinks.

"Why, the chap you owe the money to can get a distress-warrant, or whatever they call it, at once, and he can seize your goods at your house and sell 'em, if you don't pay him."

Jinks laughed hugely, the middies joining in the chorus. "Not having any house or any goods, I needn't lose any sleep over that," he said.

"You'll be all right as long as you don't go ashore in Portsmouth," said Keppel, grinning. He may have got a committal order; and, if so, he could get you arrested. It all comes of not attending the court. My governor's a K.C., so I know all about it. Of course, you're all right as long as you stay aboard here."

"And we sail for Chatham to-morrow," said Ned.

"Right!" said Jinks. "Half a minute, while I go and get my letters for the mail. Back in a jiffy, Ned."

"How on earth did Jinks get let in for twenty-five pounds?" asked Keppel, as the former disappeared.

"It was that night we went ashore, and he got his clothes ruined in a fight," said Ned. "The whole thing's a rotten fraud!"

Ned commenced to tell his brother officers how the disaster had come about, and everybody was listening in astonishment when Jinks came flying back into the gun-room with a face as long as a fiddle.

"I say, the beast's here!" he cried. "He's got aboard!"

"Who? What beast?" exclaimed Ned.

"The tailor! He's sneaked aboard somehow, and he's sitting on my sea-chest, and says he's going to seize it and sell it unless I pay him at once! He's got a writ, or something!"

A chorus of fierce indignation broke out among the middies.

"Have a care, you fellows," said Keppel. "If he's got a writ he has the law on his side. You'll get in a ghastly mess if you interfere with him."

"What! On a King's ship?"

"That doesn't matter," said Keppel. "Once in possession, you can't turn him out. If he's got the writ, he's acting as his own bailiff."

"But he's got my sea-chest—everything I own in the world!" almost howled Jinks.

(There's no mistake about it, chums, poor old Jinks is in an awkward fix. But if anyone can help him out, it's Ned . . . or his bulldog. Look out, then, for another ripping instalment, next week.)



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