

"THE WAY OF A WELSHMAN!" STIRRING ST. JIM'S STORY STARRING FATTY WYNN—INSIDE.

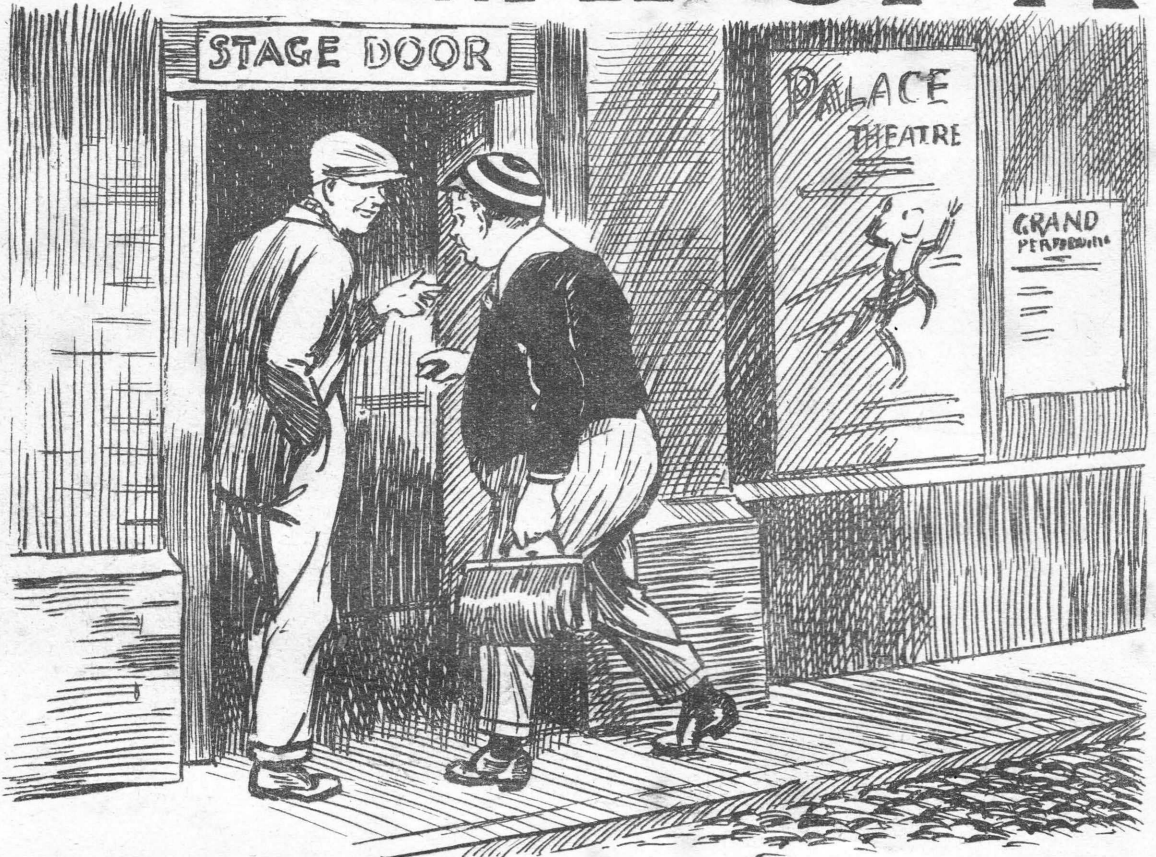
The GEM 2^d



Fatty Wynn's Win!

2
**FATTY WYNN'S MYSTERIOUS BEHAVIOUR GETS THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S GUESSING
 —AND AROUSES THE SUSPICION OF HIS ENEMIES!**

THE WAY OF A



Fatty Wynn and his companion arrived at the stage door of the Palace and went in. Levison stared in astonishment. What was the Welsh junior doing in a place that was severely out of bounds to St. Jim's fellows? "My only hat!" murmured the cad of the Fourth. "This beats it!"

CHAPTER 1.

An Astounding Discovery!

FOREIGNERS, bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form stood rooted to the floor.

He was astonished.

"Bai Jove! In Figgy's study!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

His eyeglass dropped from his eye in his surprise.

Arthur Augustus had come over from the School House to call on Figgins & Co. in the New House at St. Jim's.

It was quite a friendly call. Another cricket match with the Grammar School was coming off shortly, and D'Arcy was very keen on practice. He had come over to coax Fatty Wynn to bowl to him, the Welsh junior being the best bowler in the Lower School.

But as he came sauntering gracefully down the passage to Figgins' study, Arthur Augustus suddenly halted, and stood transfixed with amazement.

Someone was talking in the study.

That in itself was not a surprising circumstance. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, the famous "Co." of the New THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

House, did a good deal of talking in that study.

The surprising circumstance was that the talking was in a strange language.

For this is what smote suddenly upon the startled ears of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy:

"Yu ngwyn oleuni'r goceerth aew."

It was uttered in a loud, deep voice. It certainly wasn't English. Equally certain it wasn't French or German. Arthur Augustus couldn't make out what language it was.

"Tros wefisau Cymro'n marw, Annibyniaeth sydd yn galw," went on the voice.

"Bai Jove!"

"Am ei dewr, dyn!"

Whether that was the same voice or not Arthur Augustus couldn't say. Probably not, for a foreigner could not be supposed to be talking to himself in Figgins' study.

There must be two of them, of course, or there would be no talking at all. The discovery of foreigners in a junior study in the New House at St. Jim's was so surprising that it was no wonder Arthur Augustus stood rooted to the floor.

What could they be doing there?

D'Arcy knew that they were there without the knowledge of Kerr and Figgins, for he had seen the latter in the quad.

Alien criminals, perhaps, dodging away from the police, might have entered the school to hide.

Arthur Augustus remembered reading in the newspaper only the day before that two undesirable aliens, being escorted by the police to Southampton to be deported, had escaped. Supposing they had made their way to St. Jim's, and had hidden there, thinking that no one would be likely to look for them in a Public school? In D'Arcy's opinion it was not improbable.

Arthur Augustus advanced towards the door of the study with a grim brow. He meant to know what those foreigners were doing there.

But he suddenly paused.

Arthur Augustus feared no foe, but he realised that the enemy were two to one—if there were two of them—and it behoved him to get assistance to make sure that the rascals did not escape.

They would have to explain their

A GREAT YARN OF VIVID HUMAN INTEREST, IN WHICH THE WELSH JUNIOR PLAYS
A DARING GAME TO HELP ANOTHER.

WELSHMAN! *By Martin Clifford*



presence in the school. It was pretty certain that they were there for no good. Arthur Augustus, sagely reflecting, backed away quietly from the door. As he backed away he heard this remark:

"We le goelcerth wen yn flamio."

"Bai Jove, sounds like swearin', the awful wottahs!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Fancy wotten foweigners comin' into the school in bwoad daylight, and sweawin' in Figgay's study!"

The swell of St. Jim's backed away cautiously to the stairs. He wanted to keep his eye on the study door. If the foreigners attempted to leave the study, he was prepared to rush upon them and seize them, and yell for help. But the study door did not open. From the study all Gussy heard was:

"A thamfodau tan yn bloeddie."

"The howwid wottahs—swearwin' like anythin'!" murmured Arthur Augustus, backing away with great caution. "There will be a surprisise for them soon. Ow! Huh!"

The swell of the Fourth, naturally, could not see with the back of his head, and he had backed into three juniors, who were coming upstairs.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell had come from the School House; they also had desigus upon Fatty Wynn as a bowler. They were

cheerfully racing upstairs, and naturally they came upon Arthur Augustus rather suddenly.

It would not have mattered if Arthur Augustus had been seeing where he was going. But Nature had gifted him with only two eyes, both in front of his head. It was not to be expected, therefore, that he should see anybody coming up the stairs.

He backed into the Terrible Three just as they rushed up to the landing.

It was a tremendous collision, for the Shell fellows were going at the speed limit.

Crash!

Bump!

"Help!"

"Oh cwombs!"

"Great Scott!"

Arthur Augustus rolled over, clutching out wildly. Tom Merry managed to

He was prepared to forfeit the friendship of his own chums—to risk even the "sack" from school—to stand by a fellow-countryman in distress! That's the way of Fatty Wynn, the Welsh junior of St. Jim's!

catch the banisters and hang on. Manners contrived to catch hold of Tom Merry—unfortunately by his hair. Monty Lowther was less lucky. With a series of bumps and wild yells, Monty Lowther went rolling down the stairs, and landed on a mat below.

Arthur Augustus sprawled on the stairs and gasped.

"Ow! Bai Jove! Oh, you duffahs! Cwoogh!"

"Oh dear! Yow! Leggo my hair, you idiot!"

"Yaroooh!" came from Monty Lowther, as he took his last bump below. "Oh crumbs! Oh, my hat! Yowp!"

Manners changed his grip from Tom Merry's hair to the banisters.

Tom Merry fixed a glare upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that ought to have turned him to stone on the spot.

"You fearful ass!" he gasped. "You frabjous, burbling cuckoo! What do you mean by backing downstairs like a horse?"

"Hush!"

"What?"

"Hush!"

"I'll hush you!" yelled Tom Merry. "Lay hold of him! Collar him! Bump him on every step, and then chuck him out!"

"Yes, rather," parted Manners.

"Hold on, you duffahs—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"That's what we're going to do, you fathead!"

"Hold him till I gerrat him!" panted Lowther, collecting himself together at the foot of the stairs. He was surprised to find himself in one piece. "Hold him till I slaughter him!"

Lowther came up the stairs three at a time.

A crowd of New House juniors came along the passage in surprise. They had heard the bumping and the sounds of anguish.

"Hallo! What little game are you bouders playing in our House?" demanded Figgins.

"Cheeky bouders!" said Kerr: "Kick 'em out!"

"It's all right. We're only going to kill Gussy!" panted Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hush!" gasped Arthur Augustus, wriggling in the ferocious grasp of the Terrible Three. "Hush, I tell you—"

Bump!

"Yawoop! Will you hush? They will escape!" panted Arthur Augustus. "You will give the alarm, you feahful asses!"

In sheer astonishment the Terrible Three paused before the next bump.

"Eh? Who will escape?" demanded Tom Merry.

"The foweigners!"

"The—what?"

"The which?" howled Lowther.

"Hush!"

"What the thunder—"

"Hush! They're in Figgay's study!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Who are?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Hush! The foweigners!"

CHAPTER 2.

Fatty Wynn is Wrathful!

TOM MERRY stared blankly at the swell of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy evidently was not "rotting."

His face was flushed with excitement, his look was deadly earnest, and he had even forgotten to notice that his clothes were dusty and his tie disarranged.

The Terrible Three were astounded.

As they were not likely to believe that there were any foreigners in Figgay's study, they could only conclude that the swell of St. Jim's had taken leave of his senses.

Monty Lowther tapped his forehead significantly.

"Potty!" said Manners, with a nod.

"Mad as a hatter!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Hush!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful duffahs, this is no laughin' mattah! There are two foweigners in Figgins' study, and they are swearwin'."

"Figgay, old man, have you got any foreigners in your study?" asked Tom Merry.

"Any what?"

"Foreigners!"

"Is this a joke?" asked Figgins, puzzled.

"Hush!"

"Gussy says there are foreigners in your study, swearing," grinned Monty Lowther.

"There's nobody there, unless Wynn's there," said Figgins. "What on earth is the ass burbling about?"

"I am not burblin', Figgins. There are foreigners in your study, and it sounded to me as if they were swearwin'."

"My hat!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"What were they saying?" asked Lowther.

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. —you know foweigners are difficult to undahstand when they are speakin' to each other," said D'Arcy. "But it was foweign wight enough. I was comin' away to get you to help me to collah them, when you silly asses wan into me."

"When you backed into us like a blind horse, you mean, you fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. Hush! If you alarm them they may escape," said Arthur Augustus. "They must be cwiminals. Two escaped from the police yestahday. They might have sneaked in here and hidden themselves in Figgay's study."

"If there are any blessed foreigners in my study, they're going to get their noses dented," said Figgins warmly. "But there can't be! How could any foreigners get into my study, you chump?"

"I repeat that I heard them talking."

"It's impossible."

"We'll soon see," said Kerr practically.

He started for the study.

Arthur Augustus caught him by the shoulder.

"Pway be careful, Kerr, deah boy. You had bettah let me go ahead. There may be dangah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is not a laughin' mattah. If those two disgustin' wascals have hidden themselves in there they may have wevolvahs—"

The idea of two foreigners with revolvers in Figgins' study made the juniors yell. Arthur Augustus glared at them in wrath.

"Hush, you asses! You awful duffahs! Hush! You will give the alarm! Pway follow me and don't make a wow."

Arthur Augustus led the way along the passage on tiptoe.

"Fall in and follow me!" chuckled Lowther.

"Follow in your father's footsteps," grinned Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Entering into the spirit of the thing, about a dozen juniors tiptoed after Arthur Augustus, in Indian file, down the passage.

But as they neared the study they jumped, for a voice proceeding from the study was quite audible, and it said:

"Cymru fydd fei Cymru fu, yn glodus yn mysg gwledydd."

Arthur Augustus looked round triumphantly at his tiptoeing followers.

"What do you say now, you asses?" he murmured.

To his surprise, Figgins burst into a chuckle, and Kerr doubled up with merriment. But the rest of the juniors looked surprised.

"It's some foreign lingo," said Manners.

"Sounds like Wynn's voice to me," said Lowther; "though why Wynn should be talking in some foreign language beats me."

"What are you cackling at, Figgins?" Figgins could not reply; he seemed to be verging on hysterics. Kerr was wiping away tears.

"Those two uttah duffahs are off their wockahs," said Arthur Augustus.

"Follow me, deah boys, and we will captuah the wascals and make them explain their pwesence here!"

"But—I say—"

"Wats! You back me up!"

Arthur Augustus had reached the

study door. He turned the handle suddenly, threw the door open, and rushed in, with the juniors at his heels.

"Suwwendah, you scoundwels!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

Then he almost collapsed.

The scoundrels were not to be seen!

Fatty Wynn was seated at the table in the study, with a book before him. He stared in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" he demanded in amazement.

D'Arcy stared at him. Fatty's mouth was bulging with bulls-eyes, which thickened his voice a little. The sudden irruption into his study had almost caused him to swallow them, and he began to gurgle.

"Where are the foweigners, Wynn?" gasped D'Arcy at last.

"The what?"

"Those wotten foweigners!"

"Gone dotty?" asked Wynn, with a stare. "You thumping ass, you jolly nearly made me bolt my bulls-eyes! If you had I'd have scragged you! What do all you fellows want?"

"Those foweigners!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Where are they?"

"I say, take hold of him," said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "He may be getting violent soon. You can see he's mad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I heard them talkin' here!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"You heard who talking?"

"Foweigners!"

"When?" demanded Fatty Wynn.

"Just as we came up to the study."

"You—you heard foreigners talking?" gasped Wynn. "Here? In this study?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, you ought to see a doctor!" said Wynn.

"You are pwevawicatin', Wynn!" roared Arthur Augustus. "If you deny that there are any foweigners here I can only conclude that you are hidin' them. Wynn, I insist upon your tellin' me where you are hidin' those foweigners."

Fatty Wynn looked wonderingly at the other juniors.

Figgins and Kerr were in the doorway, gasping with merriment. Tom Merry & Co. were looking surprised. It was quite evident that there were no foreigners in the study. But it was indubitable that they had heard a voice speaking in a strange language.

"Who was here with you, Wynn?" demanded Arthur Augustus, after a stare round the study in search of the foreigners.

"Nobody!"

"I wepeat that I heard someone talkin' in a foweign language—"

"You may have heard someone talking," said Fatty Wynn in amazement.

"I was talking. I'm learning a song by heart, and I always learn better when I repeat the lines aloud. I've been doing that."

"Then it was not you! It was not English I heard—"

"Well, fathead, this isn't English—it's Welsh!" said Wynn. "I'm mugging up the words of the 'Rhyfelgyrch gwyr Harlech.'"

"The—the—the what?"

"What you call in your one-eyed language the 'Men of Harlech,'" explained Wynn.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry, understanding at last—Figgins and Kerr had understood long ago. "Ha, ha, ha! It was Welsh you heard, Gussy."

"Welsh! Bai Jove! Sounded like a mixture of Chinese and Awabic to me!"

Fatty Wynn jumped up. His plump face was crimson with rage. He shook a fat fist under the noble nose of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You—you—you took it for what? You—you—you—"

"I—I—I— Bai Jove! I don't know any Welsh, you know," said Arthur Augustus feebly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn made a bound for a cricket stump and another bound for Arthur Augustus. Fatty Wynn was, as a rule, the most placable and good-tempered of youths. Hardly anything ever disturbed his serenity.

But to have his beloved and musical Welsh made fun of was a little too much. It was more than flesh and blood could be expected to stand—Welsh flesh and blood, at any rate.

Fatty Wynn did not pause to speak. He uttered not a word, either in English or Welsh. The cricket stump eloquently expressed his feelings.

Whack, whack, whack!
"Yawooh! Stoppit! Why, you feaful ass— Gewwoff!"

Whack, whack, whack!
"Hold on, Fatty—"
"Don't slaughter our prize idiot!"
"Fatty, old man—"

Whack, whack, whack!
Fatty Wynn found his voice at last.

"I'll scalp him! I'll slaughter him!"
Whack, whack! "Doesn't know Welsh when he hears it! I'll teach him different!" Whack, whack!

Fortunately half the blows fell on the

furniture as Arthur Augustus wildly dodged the justly enraged Welsh junior. But Fatty Wynn was not to be dodged. That insult to the language of the land of his fathers had to be wiped out. Indeed, it really looked as if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would be wiped out as well as the insult.

Smash! Crash! Whack! Thud!
"Bai Jove! He's mad! Stop him! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hold him!"

The study clock had caught the last whack, and it flew into fragments.

Arthur Augustus flew out of the doorway. After him went Fatty Wynn, raging for gore.

Arthur Augustus had sometimes distinguished himself on the cinder path. But his performances on the cinder path were as nothing to his performance in the passage, with Fatty Wynn behind him brandishing the stump. He did the passage to the stairs in one second.

He flew down the stairs. As a rule, Arthur Augustus disdained the usual junior method of taking two or three steps at a time. It did not consort with the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. But the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere was gone now. Arthur Augustus did the stairs four at a time, and whizzed out of the New House like a stone from a catapult. He vanished from sight, and Fatty Wynn vanished after him, still brandishing the stump.

Tom Merry & Co. could not interfere. They were rolling in the study and the passage in hysterics.

CHAPTER 3.

Two to Make a Bargain!

"I WEFUSE!"
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that statement emphatically.

It was tea-time, and the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. had gathered in Study No. 6 in the School House. And Blake had suggested bringing over Figgins & Co. to tea. Supplies being ample, and it being an open secret that Figgins & Co. were short of tin, that hospitable thought had naturally occurred to Blake.

As a rule, Arthur Augustus was hospitality itself. But on this occasion there was soreness in the noble spirit of Gussy, not to mention soreness in his noble body.

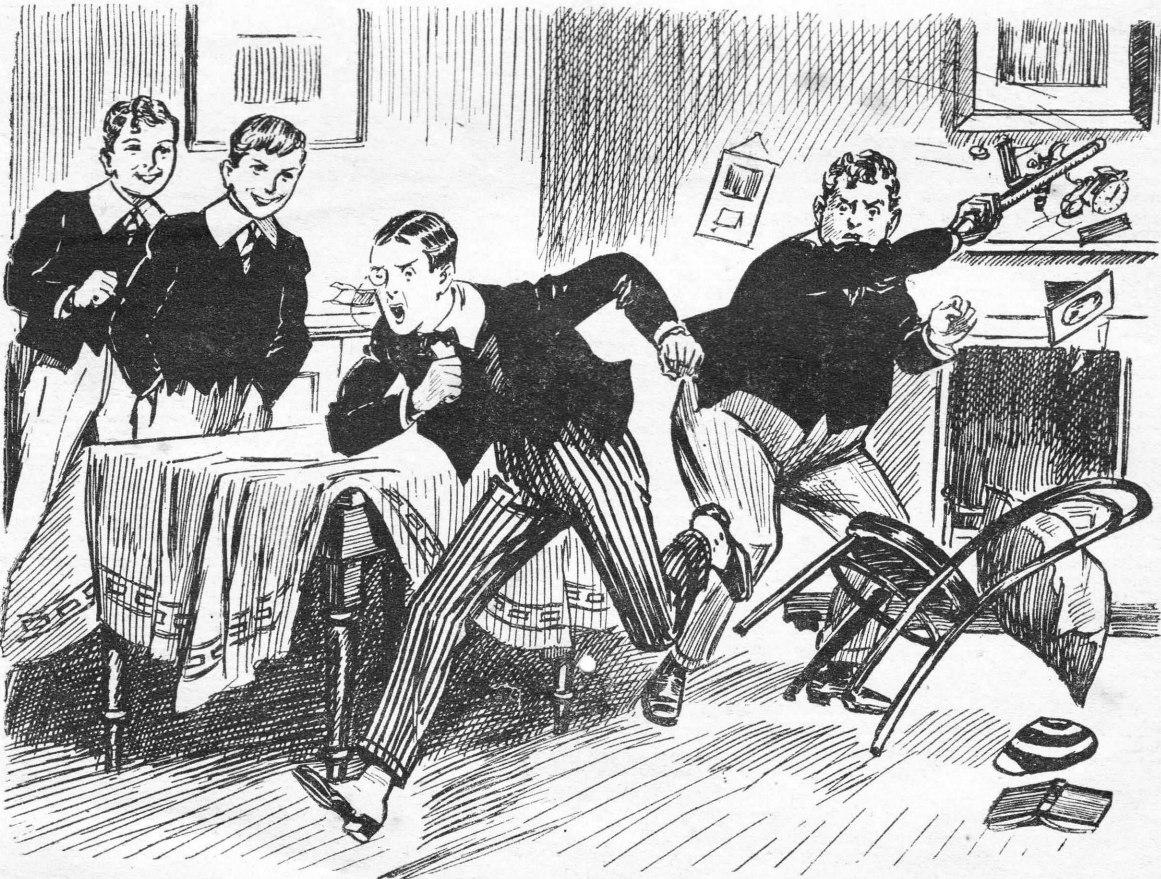
He had been chased up and down the quadrangle and round the gymnasium by the infuriated Fatty Wynn, and, really, he had barely escaped with his life.

Naturally, he was indignant and wrathful.

"I uttably wefuse!" he repeated, his voice rising with excitement. "I uttably decline to sit at the same table with that mad duffah! I have been tweated with gwoss diswespect! I have been vevy neably bwained! I am goin' to fight Fatty Wynn, not have him to tea! I shall not west till I have given him a feaful thwashin'!"

"Let bygones be bygones," suggested Tom Merry amicably.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! I am achin' in seweral places, and my personal dig has been utterly outwaged!"



"Bai Jove!" yelled Arthur Augustus, as Fatty Wynn chased him round the study with a cricket stump. "He's mad! Stop him! Yooop!! Crash! The study clock caught the Welsh junior's last swipe, and it flew to fragments. Arthur Augustus flew out of the study!"

I feel that I cut a vewy widiculous figuah bein' chased wound and wound by that howlin' ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to cackle at! I am goin' to fight Wynn and thwash him, and I request you, Blake, to cawwy over my challenge!"

"Coffee and pistols for two!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and glared at the grinning juniors.

"I wufuse to listen to this wibald mewment!" he shouted. "I wegard this as a sewious mattah!"

"Now, Gussy—" said Blake persuasively.

"I decline to listen to any argument on the subject, Blake! My mind is iwwevocably made up!"

"My idea is," said Tom Merry, "that Gussy owes Fatty an apology!"

"Bai Jove! You uttah ass! I was chased wound and wound the quad with a wotten ewicket stump bwandished ovah my nappah!"

"You owe Fatty an apology!" said Tom Merry firmly. "I appeal to all the gentlemen present. You heard him speaking Welsh, and you took it for a mixture of Chinese and Arabic."

"How was I to know it was Welsh when I do not know any Welsh?"

"You ought to know some Welsh!" said Tom Merry severely. "What do you mean by studying French and German, and remaining in dense ignorance of one of the languages of your native country?"

"Bai Jove! But you do not know any Welsh, eithah, deah boy."

"Ahem! Keep to the point!" said Tom hastily. "Don't wander from the subject, Gussy. You're always wandering from the point. You insulted Wynn—"

"But I weally did not mean to."

"In the circumstances, the least you can do is to let the matter drop. You have insulted the British language, and you must remember," said Tom Merry sternly, "that Welsh is the original British language, and was spoken in this country before your ancestors came here at all!"

"H'm! Pewwaps you are wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Upon the whole, pewwaps Fatty had some weason for gettin' his wag out."

"I should think he had," said Tom Merry.

"Then, on furthah considewation, I am willin' to let the mattah dwop."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Blake. "Now I'll go and ask the bounders over to tea. We'll get Fatty to sing that blessed Welsh song after tea, and put him in a good temper."

And, leaving his chums preparing the feast in Study No. 6, Jack Blake sauntered out of the School House and walked over to the rival establishment.

He found Figgins & Co. in their study, sitting down to a frugal tea. Funds had been very low with Figgins & Co. of late.

"Hallo!" said Blake cheerily. "We've got a feast of the gods going on in our study, and I've looked in for you chaps."

"Oh, good!"

Fatty Wynn's face brightened up. Fatty was a great trencherman, and he could have cleared the table quite easily without the help of Figgins and Kerr, and then, like Oliver Twist, asked for more.

"Three kinds of jam," said Blake, watching Fatty's face, "and a cake, Ham and eggs and gammon rashers."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"Oh!" murmured Fatty Wynn, with a beatific smile.

"And prawns!"

"Oh!" said Wynn again.

"And preserves, and jelly and pie!"

"We're on!" said Fatty.

The fat Fourth Former rose to his feet. Then he suddenly sat down again.

"D'Arcy's there, I suppose?" he asked.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Blake reassuringly. "We've calmed Gussy down! We've talked to him like Dutch uncles, and he's going to overlook it, and let bygones be bygones. He's willing to let the matter drop."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"He may be willing to let the matter drop," he growled; "but I'm not!"

Blake stared.

"Eh! You? Why, Gussy's the injured party, isn't he?"

"He looked injured!" grinned Figgins.

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"Do you think I'm going to have tea with a silly ass who insults the Welsh language?" he demanded. "No fear!"

"My hat!"

It was an unexpected difficulty. It occurred to Blake that it takes two to make a bargain. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been placated. But apparently David Llewellyn Wynn was not to be placated at all.

"Now, Fatty—" murmured Figgins.

"Fatty, old man—" said Kerr.

Another snort!

"I'm not going!"

"Well, my word!" said Blake. "Now look here, Fatty, Gussy is going to overlook the whole matter—"

"He can overlook it if he likes," snorted Fatty Wynn. "I'm jolly well not going to!"

"Fatty—" said Figgins.

Snort!

"Do be a good chap, Fatty—"

"It's a top-hole feed!" murmured Blake.

Snort!

"And we're sharp set, Fatty!" said Kerr.

Snort!

"Now, come on, Fatty—"

"You fellows can go if you like," said Fatty Wynn morosely. "I'm not going to sit down at the same table with a fellow who takes Welsh for Chinese, or whatever it was!"

Fatty Wynn was immovable. Even the description of the top-hole feed in Study No. 6 did not tempt him—which was nearly a miracle.

"Look here!" exclaimed Figgins, waxing wrath. "Don't be a silly ass, Fatty! Do you want us to have tea on a sardine each, when there's the fat of the land over the way waiting for us?"

"You go, then," said Fatty.

"We jolly well will!" said Kerr warmly. "I think you're an ass, Fatty!"

Snort!

"Gussy doesn't know any better—"

Snort!

"Oh rats!"

And Figgins and Kerr marched off with Blake, leaving Fatty Wynn still snorting.

CHAPTER 4.

Fatty Wynn is Mysterious!

STUDY No. 6 feasted royally, and while they feasted they chuckled.

Only upon the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was there an expression of severe dignity.

Fatty Wynn's refusal to come to a feed with a fellow who took Welsh for

a foreign language struck the juniors as funny. But not so Arthur Augustus. He had come off his lofty perch, as it were, and agreed that there should be peace. And Fatty Wynn had declined to accept the olive branch.

Arthur Augustus was very much upon his noble dignity.

However, Arthur Augustus' noble dignity did not detract from the merriment of the merry party in Study No. 6. Figgins and Kerr, talking of the forthcoming Grammar School match, even forgot Fatty Wynn. But when the feed was over they could not help thinking how Fatty would have enjoyed it.

"The blessed duffer!" said Figgins, when they were leaving the School House. "He has missed a topping treat; and he only had the sardines!"

"And the funds won't run to supper," said Kerr.

"We shall find him repenting," grinned Figgins.

Figgins and Kerr fully expected to find Fatty Wynn in a repentant mood when they came back to their study.

But, as it happened, they did not find him at all.

The study was empty, and the table was bare. Fatty had finished up the frugal supplies, and, apparently, he had gone out.

"Somebody else asked him to tea, very likely," said Figgins, feeling relieved at the idea. "It was too rotten old Fatty being left out of the feed, though it was his own fault."

When the time came for calling-over, Figgins and Kerr went down, expecting to see Fatty Wynn along with the rest of the Fourth.

But the fat Fourth Former was not there.

Mr. Ratcliff was taking the House roll, and when he came to the name of Wynn there was a pause.

"Wynn!" repeated the New House master unpleasantly.

Figgins was tempted to reply "Adsum," for the sake of his chum. But Mr. Ratcliff's steely eye was too keen. It was impossible to play a little trick of that kind on Mr. Ratcliff.

The Housemaster compressed his lips, and marked down Wynn as absent.

Figgins and Kerr left the Hall, wondering what had become of him. They asked the other fellows if they had seen him. Apparently Fatty had not had tea with any of the Fourth, after all. Redfern had seen him going out of gates about tea-time, and since then he had not been on view.

"Out of gates," said Figgins; "and it's past locking-up!"

"That means a wiggling," said Kerr.

Somewhat worried, Figgins and Kerr went to their study to get on with their preparation. The evening was growing old, and Fatty Wynn had not come in. They began to wonder whether he would turn up by bed-time.

Where on earth was Fatty? It was not like Fatty to sulk; he could surely not have gone off by himself in a fit of the sulks. That would not be like the plump, cheery Fatty at all. And, even so, why had he not come back?

Figgins and Kerr finished their prep, and came down to the Common-room. They hoped to see Fatty there.

But the fat Fourth Former was conspicuous by his absence.

"Anybody here seen Fatty?" queried Figgins.

"Haven't seen hide nor hair of him," said Lawrence. "He will have a ragging from Ratty when he does come in."

Figgins and Kerr looked out of the House doorway into the dusky, starlit

quad. They were getting anxious about their chum.

A fat figure loomed up through the dusk. Figgins uttered an exclamation of relief. It was the missing junior at last.

"Fatty, old man!"
Fatty Wynn came in. He looked tired, and he had a muffer round his neck.

"I'm late," he remarked.
"You've missed calling-over."
"I know."
"Where on earth have you been?"
"Out, you know," said Fatty Wynn.
"But what on earth did you stay out until this time for?"
"Well, you see—" Fatty paused.
"Well?" asked Figgins and Kerr together, in wonder.
"I'd better report," said Fatty abruptly.

Wynn went into the House, leaving Kerr and Figgins looking at one another in a state of considerable astonishment. Secretiveness was the very last trait they would have looked for in Fatty Wynn. But he was secretive now with a vengeance.

"What the blue thunder has he been up to?" ejaculated Figgins.

Kerr shook his head. He gave it up. Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, pounced on Fatty Wynn as he came in.

"Report to Mr. Ratcliff at once, Wynn."

"Yes, Monteith."
Fatty strode away to the House-master's study. Mr. Ratcliff received him with a severe frown.

"Have you only just come in, Wynn?"
"Yes, sir."

"And what do you mean, Wynn, by staying out after locking-up—until after nine o'clock in the evening?" asked Mr. Ratcliff.

"I'm sorry, sir."
"Probably. But that is no explanation. Where have you been?"

"I went for a walk, sir."
"And you have the unexampled impertinence to return at this hour of the evening!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, taking up a cane. "Hold out your hand, Wynn!"

"Swish, swish!"
Mr. Ratcliff pointed to the door with his cane, and Fatty Wynn quietly left the study. Figgins and Kerr found him in the passage, squeezing his plump hands.

"Licked?"
"Wow! Yes!"
"Well, you really might have expected it, Wynn, old chap," said Kerr. "Fourth Formers aren't allowed to come home with the milk in the morning, you know."

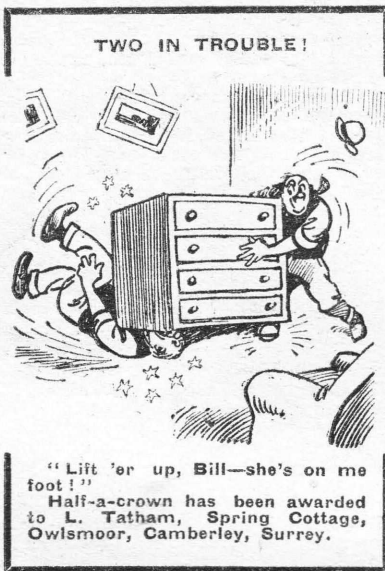
"Must get some prep done," said Fatty. "I shall have trouble with Lathom in the morning, anyway, I expect."

Fatty Wynn hurried away to the study, and he worked hard till the call came to the dormitory. Figgins and Kerr did not interrupt him. They knew the importance of making at least a show of having worked, to satisfy Mr. Lathom in the Fourth Form Room in the morning.

But when the juniors went up to their dormitories Fatty Wynn's chums tackled him.

"My hat! I'm sleepy!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Hungry, you mean!" grinned Figgins. "And there's nothing doing. Nothing left in the study cupboard. Why didn't you come to the feed, fat-head?"



"Oh, blow the feed!"
"It was a topping one," said Figgins, "and now you're simply starving—"
"I'm not hungry."
Figgins and Kerr jumped.
"N-not hungry!" they stammered simultaneously.

"No."
"But you've had nothing since tea, and it was a measly tea you had."
"I had something out."
"You had something out?" said Figgins, in measured tones.

"Yes."
"Where?"
"Oh, at a place, you know!" said Fatty Wynn vaguely.

"And suppose you kindly explain how you got something to eat out when we're all stony broke, and this afternoon you had nothing left but a penny!" exclaimed Figgins warmly. "Been getting a feed for a penny?"

"N-no," said Fatty Wynn, turning red; "not exactly."
"Then how did you get it?"
"I—I—ahem! You see—"

"I don't see! I'm waiting for you to tell me," said Figgins.
"Well, a—a—a chap treated me."
"Oh, a chap treated you, did he? Well, why couldn't you say so before, without turning as red as a turkey-cock?" said the mystified Figgins.

"Oh, bosh!" said Fatty uneasily.
"One of the Grammar School chaps, was it?"
"No, it wasn't!"
"Well, who was it?" demanded Figgins sharply. "What are you being so fatheadedly mysterious for? Don't you want to tell us what you've been doing, or whom you met? You needn't, if you don't want to!"

Monteith came in to put lights out at that point, and the Fourth—the New House portion of the Form—turned in. After lights were out, and Monteith had gone, Figgins rapped out:

"Well, Fatty?"
"Snore!"
"You blessed fat oyster, are you asleep already?" exclaimed Kerr.
"Snore!"
Figgins granted.

"I don't believe he's asleep! He doesn't want to tell us! Let him keep his blessed secrets, and go and eat coke!"

And Figgins settled down to sleep,

and in a few minutes Fatty Wynn's diplomatic snore was changed for the genuine one.

CHAPTER 5.

Trouble in the Family!

HERE was a rift in the lute!
All the New House noticed it the next day.

By the following day the School House fellows, too, had observed it.

It was amazing.
A rift in the lute! Trouble in Figgins' study! Discord among the Co.! It was a thing undreamed of! And it had happened!

It was amazing, because Figgins & Co. had always pulled together remarkably well—surprisingly well. These three cheery youths came from three different kingdoms, and they got on as if they had been brothers.

Chums, of course, fall out occasionally. There had been trouble sometimes in Study No. 6, even among such staunch chums as Blake, Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy. The Terrible Three had fallen out sometimes. Such things will happen.

But Figgins & Co.!
Big, open-hearted Figgins; Kerr, the cool, quiet Scotsman, true as steel; and Wynn, the plump, good-natured, good-tempered, serene and cheery Welsh junior; they had been like unto doves in a dovecot.

And now there was a rift in the lute! It was amazing—almost incredible—but there it was.

Not a quarrel—nothing like that; but the complete confidence that had reigned was gone. And the cheery cordiality of the Co. had naturally followed it.

Fatty Wynn was keeping a secret.

Now, Figgins was the very reverse of curious, and Kerr never minded anybody's business but his own. They were not inquisitive. Where Fatty had been, and what he had been doing when he missed calling-over on Tuesday evening, they did not care a brass button!

What they cared for was the fact that Fatty was hiding it from them.

He was evidently hiding it.
At each mention of the subject he had "sheered" off it promptly, and not a word of explanation had passed his lips.

And the two juniors could not help feeling hurt at that want of confidence. Why should Fatty be keeping a secret from them—who had never kept a secret from him?

And that was not all.
For the following day, after lessons, Fatty Wynn mysteriously disappeared the minute classes were dismissed, and did not return till calling-over. That was a Wednesday, a half-holiday.

From early in the afternoon till evening calling-over Fatty Wynn was conspicuous by his absence. Figgins and Kerr naturally wanted him to bowl to them at the cricket practice. Tom Merry wanted him to turn up, as Fatty was chiefly relied upon for bowling in the forthcoming Grammar School match.

And he had vanished.
And not a word of explanation came from him when he came in. Not a syllable. He did not offer to explain, and Figgins and Kerr did not ask a single question. They were growing dignified. If Fatty chose to go off by himself, and not tell a fellow a word about it, let him. That was how they

looked at it, but they really expected a voluntary explanation from Fatty. The explanation did not come, and as Figgins and Kerr did not ask any questions, the subject was not even mentioned.

Naturally, tea in the study that evening was a somewhat silent and dignified meal; very different from most teas in Figgins's study.

On Thursday there were afternoon lessons, but when the Fourth came out Fatty had vanished.

Again he came back in time for calling-over, and did not mention a word. Figgins and Kerr were in a state of almost frozen dignity by this time. They spoke to Fatty Wynn with an air of scrupulous politeness. When scrupulous politeness comes in, friendship has usually gone out. So the unhappy state of Figgins' study was known by that time to the whole of the Lower School.

Tom Merry & Co. were somewhat concerned about it. True, Figgins & Co. were their rivals, and deadly foes. But that did not make any difference. They were worried to see this discord among the inseparables.

Tom Merry, too, was greatly concerned in the matter. For Fatty Wynn was "chucking" cricket, and Tom was junior cricket captain. If Fatty stayed away from practice much longer he would have a bone to pick with his captain.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, however, was chiefly concerned, the swell of St. Jim's being celebrated as a peacemaker. Often and often had Gussy chipped into other fellows' rows to pour oil on troubled waters, generally

getting thoroughly "slanged" by both sides—the usual fate of peacemakers.

But Gussy was giving this matter a great deal of thought.

On mature reflection he had fully forgiven Fatty that outbreak with the cricket stump. A fellow whose native language had been mistaken for Chinese or Arabic did well to feel ratty, and Gussy generously admitted it. But though Gussy had forgiven Fatty, Fatty had not quite forgiven Gussy. This made the role of peacemaker a little difficult. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy never shrank from difficulties. So when the Fourth came out of their class-room on Friday afternoon the swell of St. Jim's bore down on Figgins & Co., brimming with good intentions.

"Coming down to the cricket?" George Figgins was asking.

"Not this time," said Wynn. Figgins' face was set a little. Without a word of explanation Fatty Wynn was making off by himself.

"He doesn't want us," said Figgins, in a low voice, which was a little bitter, in spite of himself. "Come on, Kerr!"

Figgins and Kerr went for their bats. Fatty Wynn made for the gates, and Arthur Augustus joined him.

"In a hurry, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus affably.

"Yes," said Wynn, without turning his head.

"Goin' out?"

"Yes."

"Little walk—what?" asked Arthur Augustus, with undiminished affability. Fatty Wynn's manner was not encouraging, but D'Arcy did not need encouraging. Having decided what to do, he did not need encouragement.

"I'll come with you, deah boy."

Fatty Wynn halted in the gateway. "You won't!" he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"Buzz off!"

"Weally, Wynn, that is not vevy polite to a chap who offahs to go for a walk with you!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Fatty Wynn gave a snort.

"I've got no politeness to waste on a silly idiot who insults the Welsh language!"

"I have reflected on that mattah, Wynn, and I am willin' to tendah an apology, and to ovahlook your exceedingly wuff conduct!"

"Ugh!"

"Are you speaking Welsh now?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently.

Fatty Wynn glared. He had only given a disdainful grunt. Arthur Augustus was simply going from bad to worse. Many peacemakers do that.

"From one gentleman to another an apology sets any mattah wight!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Ugh!"

"I am sowwy to say, Wynn, that I do not undahstand Welsh!"

"You thundering idiot!" roared Fatty Wynn. "I wasn't speaking Welsh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, buzz off, before I mop up the ground with you!" said Fatty.

"I should uttably wufese to be mopped up, Wynn!"

"Ugh!"

Fatty Wynn started down the lane. Arthur Augustus hesitated a moment, and then started after him. He gently tapped the plump junior on the shoulder.

"Wynn, deah boy—"

"Hallo! Buzz off!"

"I wish to speak to you, vevy particularly, Wynn!"

"I'm in a hurry!"

"Howevah, I will not detain you long. I have noticed, with weal sorrow, that you are not on the best of terms with your fwends—"

"Like your cheek!"

"Bai Jove, I could not help noticin' it, Wynn! It is vevy noticeable, you know!"

"Oh, rats!"

"My ideah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, "was to offah my services to help to set mattahs wight. I shall be vevy pleased to do anythin' I can. Pway confide the whole mattah to me, deah boy!"

"You silly ass!"

"Eh?"

"Go and eat coke!"

Fatty Wynn started off. Arthur Augustus started after him, this time not with the intentions of a peacemaker—not with peaceful intentions at all. He was wrathful now.

"Wynn, you howwid boundah! I wegard you as a wotah," he shouted, "and unless you withdwaw immediately your wude wemarks, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'!"

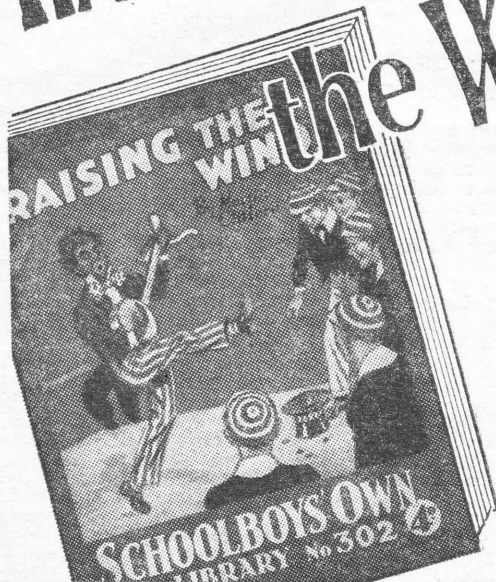
"Will you buzz off?" roared Fatty Wynn.

"I wufese to buzz off! I insist—"

What happened next seemed like an earthquake to Arthur Augustus. His hand was on Fatty Wynn's shoulder, stopping him. The plump junior turned on him like a flash; and Arthur Augustus was grasped and swept off his feet, and pitched bodily into the dry ditch beside the road. The ditch was half-full of ferns and nettles. The ferns did not hurt Arthur Augustus, but the nettles did.

RAISING THE WIND!

This Book-Length Schoolboy Yarn costs you 4d only!



A sparkling long story of Tom Merry & Co., the St. Jim's chums, telling of their amazing and amusing efforts to raise the wind when they find themselves stony broke! It's the laugh of a lifetime! Make sure of your copy now.

Ask for No. 302 of the

SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

Now on sale at all Newsagents. 4d

The swell of St. Jim's squirmed in the nettles and roared.
 "Oh cwombs! You howwid beast! Gweat Scott! Ow, I am stung! Yawooh! Give me a hand out, and I will thwash you!"
 Arthur Augustus scrambled out of the nettles in a state of towering fury. He looked round for Fatty Wynn, to take instant vengeance, but Fatty Wynn had disappeared.

CHAPTER 6.

The Mystery Deepens!

WHERE'S Wynn?" Tom Merry asked that question on the junior cricket ground. All the members of the junior eleven were there, excepting Fatty Wynn, as well as a crowd of other youthful cricketers who had come down for practice. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had arrived in a somewhat flustered state, with a red spot on the tip of his aristocratic nose, where a stinging nettle had done its deadly work.

"Wynn?" said Figgins. "Oh, he's gone out!"

"Gone out," said Tom Merry, with a frown, "and it's the Grammar School match to-morrow! What the dickens does he mean by it?" "Better ask him!" said Figgins shortly.

"How can I ask him when he's not here, fathead? Why, he's chucked practice nearly all the week!" exclaimed Tom Merry wrathfully. "The fat boulder knows we depend on him to take wickets to-morrow! Does he want Gordon Gay & Co. to beat St. Jim's hollow? The fathead! I've a jolly good mind to drop him out of the eleven!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Fatty Wynn as a beast!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically.

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Figgins warmly. "Do you want an ear to match your nose, you dummy?"

Figgins might be on strained terms with Fatty Wynn, but naturally he was prepared to take up the cudgels for an absent chum. Nobody was entitled to slang his chum but himself.

"I wepeat that the person is a beast! He willed me in a bed of stinging-nettles, and wan off before I could thwash him! I wepeat as often as I like that he is a beast, and I wegard him with uttah despision—I mean contempt!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus heatedly.

"Chuck it!" said Kangaroo of the Shell. "We've come here for a cricket practice, not a dog-fight! Order!"

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"Well, this won't do!" said Tom Merry. "I'd chuck Wynn right out of the eleven, only we can't spare him. But I do say it's rotten. What the dickens is the mater with the chap? Where does he go mooching off by himself like this?"

"Better ask him," said Figgins moodily.

There was a chuckle from Clampe of the Shell, a New House fellow. Figgins bestowed a glare upon Clampe. He did not like Clampe, who was a yellow-complexioned youth, and always had cigarettes in his pockets.

"What's the cackle about?" demanded Figgins. "I know what you want to insinuate—that Fatty's gone somewhere he wouldn't care to tell about. Say it out plain if that's what you mean, and I'll wipe up the ground with you!"



"He hasn't told you, anyway," said Clampe, backing away a little, "and I know jolly well he was smelling of tobacco when he came in last night."

"That's a lie!" said Figgins, in his painfully plain English. "Lots of fellows noticed it. Redfern did."

Figgins glanced at Redfern of the Fourth, who looked uncomfortable. "That isn't true, is it, Reddy?" asked Figgins.

Redfern coloured. "What does it matter?" he said. "Oh, do shut up, Clampe! Let's get on with the cricket. We're wasting time!"

Figgins' eyes flashed. Tom Merry and his companions looked startled. It seemed impossible that honest old Fatty could have any shady motive for clearing off by himself, strange as his conduct was. Fatty Wynn was the last person who might have been expected to follow in the footsteps of Clampe and Mellish and Levison, and that set.

"That won't do, Reddy!" exclaimed Figgins, his voice rising unconsciously. "If you say that Fatty was smelling of tobacco when he came in—"

Figgins paused. "You won't call me a liar, I suppose?" said Redfern quietly.

Figgins was mute. He knew that Redfern was the frozen truth itself. "But was it so?" asked Kerr, in his quiet way.

"Well, it was," said Redfern. "Several chaps remarked on it. But it's nothing against Fatty. He could have picked up that niff in a smoking carriage on the railway."

"Where's he been on the railway?" sneered Clampe. "Bow-wow to that!"

"He hasn't been smoking," said Kerr. "For one thing, Fatty is stony. We've been broke to the wide in our study for a long time."

"He jolly well isn't stony," said Clampe, with a sneering grin. "He was out from dinner-time till calling-over on Wednesday. He'd have died if he hadn't had at least two or three meals in that time. And you don't get meals for nothing out of doors."

Figgins turned quite pale. It had not even occurred to him before, but he could not deny the truth of Clampe's remark, ill-natured as it was. Was it within the bounds of possibility that

Fatty was deceiving his chums as to his financial resources? Figgins' study had been barely subsisting, as it were, for nearly a week, on a remittance of Kerr's. Fatty Wynn had had letters in that period, but it was understood that there was no cash in them.

Figgins did not reply to Clampe. He turned and walked off the cricket ground. Tom Merry called after him: "Figgy, what about practice?"

"I'll come down later," called back Figgins, without turning his head.

Kerr quietly followed his chum. Clampe burst into his disagreeable cackle. He was surprised the next moment to find half a dozen pairs of hands on him.

"Here, hold on! Leggo! Wharrer you at?" roared the aggrieved Clampe. "Bump him!"

"Oh! Ah! Yah!" Tom Merry & Co. turned to the cricket, leaving Clampe rolling in the grass and roaring. They did not even explain what they had bumped him for. They left him to work that problem out for himself.

Figgins and Kerr walked away in silence. Figgins' face was very dark. He poked under the elms in the quad, and looked at Kerr.

"There's nothing in it, of course," he said.

Kerr shook his head. "Nothing," he said.

"Good!" said Figgins, much relieved by that opinion from his Scottish chum, upon whose judgment he placed unbounded reliance. "But it's queer, isn't it?"

Kerr nodded. "What is Fatty keeping it a secret for? Why the dickens did he come home smelling of tobacco? Where is he getting money from?"

"Blessed if I can guess!"

"He must be getting himself into some blessed trouble, Kerr. I think it's all rot a chap standing on his dignity, with a pal like Fatty," said Figgins, colouring. "I—I think we'd better speak to him when he comes in, and—ask him to tell us what he's up to—as a pal, you know."

"I don't think he'll do it."

"Why shouldn't he?"

"I give that up."

"Well, I'm going to see," said Figgins determinedly.

The chums of the New House had a good while to wait. Fatty Wynn came in just in time to escape being locked out by Taggles. Figgins met him with a determined and somewhat strained cordiality.

"Late for tea," he said, as cheerily as he could. "But we've got something in the study."

"Thanks! I've had tea!"

"You—you've had tea?"

"Yes, thanks!"

There was a long pause.

"Fatty," said Figgins, at last, "I want you to tell us—Kerr and me—what you are up to!"

Fatty Wynn coloured and looked uneasy.

"We don't believe there's any harm in it," said Kerr. "But we think you ought to tell us, Fatty."

"Harm?" said Fatty. "What harm should there be in it?"

"Some of the fellows noticed that you were whiffing of tobacco when you came in last night," said Figgins. "And, by Jove, so you are now!" Figgins sniffed. "If a prefect spotted that, Fatty, there would be trouble."

"My hat!" said Fatty, with a startled look. "I hadn't noticed it. I

shall have to be more careful." He grinned a little. "You duffers don't think I've been smoking, do you? Why, smoking ruins the voice."

"The voice!" said Kerr.

"I—I mean, it's bad for a chap generally," said Wynn hastily. "Catch me spoiling my wind with smoking! Not such an ass."

"You've been with somebody who smokes," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn was silent.

"I've asked you to explain, Fatty, old man," said Figgins genially.

"I can't!"

"Why not?"

"I—I can't, old chap. I would if I could, but I really can't," said Fatty, looking quite distressed. "I know you fellows—I mean, I've been feeling this. I know it looks as if I'm keeping a secret from you. But, you see—well, least said soonest mended," said Fatty lamely.

"Will you tell us where you've been getting your money from?"

"Money?" said Fatty, in surprise.

"Yes, money."

"I haven't any money, Figgy."

"You've been living on air, then?"

"Well, no! I—I haven't missed any meals. I couldn't, you know," said Fatty Wynn. "But dash it all, you don't think I'd keep it dark if I had any money, do you? Is that the kind of chap you take me for?"

"Why can't you tell us?"

There was a long pause. Fatty Wynn was evidently debating something in his mind. Before he could speak the bell rang for call-over, and the juniors had to go and answer their names. As they came out after calling-over, Clampe tapped Fatty Wynn on the arm.

"Had a good time?" he queried.

Wynn stared at him.

"I've been out," chuckled Clampe. "I saw you. He, he, he!"

The fat Fourth Former started violently.

"You saw me?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"He, he, he! Yes."

"Rot! What were you doing there?"

"Eh? I was walking down Wayland High Street," said Clampe, in surprise.

Figgins and Kerr could not fail to see the relief that came into Fatty Wynn's face. It was quite clear to them that Wynn had feared for a moment that the prying Shell fellow had seen him somewhere else—some place less harmless than the High Street of Wayland.

"You silly ass!" said Fatty Wynn. "I didn't see you."

"No; you were busy talking to your aristocratic-looking friend," chuckled Clampe. "What were you talking—Dutch? I heard you as you passed me, and couldn't make out a word. Is your friend a foreigner?"

Fatty Wynn walked away without replying.

Clampe sniggered at the fellows who had paused round them in surprise and curiosity.

"A regular blighter, the fellow he was with," said Clampe. "Shabby as you like; seedy as anything. Face like a bulldog. Looked seedy, too, all over."

"No business of yours!" growled Figgins.

"Well, we're all interested in Wynn's friend!" chuckled Clampe. "He gives his old pals the go-by to go and visit an awful outsider like that chap. Looked as poor as a church mouse, or poorer. I—yah!—let go my nose, Figgins, you rotter!"

Figgins and Kerr followed Fatty

Wynn to the study, and left Clampe nursing his nose and breathing wrath.

Fatty Wynn was in the study. He had taken something from his pocket and was bending over the fire.

"You needn't be in a hurry, Fatty," said Figgins bitterly. "I can see it."

Fatty Wynn spun round.

What he held in his hand was a gaudy programme of the Wayland Palace.

Figgins and Kerr looked at him in consternation. There was at Wayland a most respectable modern Empire, where the St. Jim's fellows were allowed to go freely. But the Palace was a little old-fashioned music-hall in a low quarter of the town, and strictly "taboo" to all the respectable folk in Wayland. "Blades" like Cutts of the Fifth were suspected of visiting the place—in strict secrecy, of course, for the fact of a single visit to the Palace was more than enough to get a fellow expelled from the school.

Fatty Wynn blushed crimson. He looked open-mouthed at his chums, the programme still in his hand.

Then he turned to the fire, thrust the programme into it, and watched it reduced to ashes.

"The best thing you can do with that, Fatty," said Kerr.

Fatty did not reply.

Figgins sat down at the table. He did not need to repeat his questions to Fatty Wynn now. It was only too evident where Fatty had been. There was a long grim silence in the study while Fatty Wynn did his preparation.

It was Fatty Wynn who broke in at last, when work was finished.

"I can't explain to you chaps!" he said haltingly.

"You needn't," said Figgins dryly.

Fatty crimsoned again.

"But—but it's not as you seem to think. I'm not a blackguard."

"I never thought you were before," said Figgins.

"You think I am now, then?"

"Only blackguards go to that low den in Wayland."

Fatty rose to his feet.

"Cheese it, Figgy!" said Kerr, in his quiet way. "Fatty's going to tell us all about it, aren't you Fatty, old chap?"

"No," said Fatty Wynn, "I'm not. I'll tell you now why I've kept it a secret. It's because I should be sacked from the school if it came out, and if it came out that you fellows knew, you might be sacked along with me. But if you think I'm a blackguard, you can go on thinking so, and be hanged to you!"

Fatty Wynn strode from the study, and closed the door after him with a slam.

Figgins and Kerr looked at one another.

"Sacked from the school!" said Figgins bitterly. "I should jolly well think so, if it came out that he'd been to that low, drunken den. Has he gone dotty? Of course he'd be sacked, and serve him right—and us, too, if we abetted him."

"That's why he's kept it dark," said Kerr musingly.

"The best thing he could do," said Figgins savagely. "He's been throwing us over to go there with some seedy blackguard we don't know. Who'd have thought it?"

"I can't understand it," said Kerr. "But Fatty is all right. It looks bad—but—but—but—Fatty is all right. I know that. So do you, Figgy."

Figgins was silent. If Fatty was "all right," as Kerr said, what did it mean?

CHAPTER 7.

Tom Merry Loses His Temper!

TOM MERRY came out of the School House, after dinner on Saturday, with a somewhat grim expression upon his face.

It was the day of the Grammar School match. The St. Jim's junior team was in good form. But Tom Merry had his doubts about Fatty Wynn.

Fatty was so tremendous a bowler that probably his neglect of practice during the past week had not affected his form. He could always be relied upon to take wickets. It was not that that worried Tom Merry. It was the suspicion that perhaps Fatty Wynn had another of his mysterious excursions on for that afternoon. Owing to the absence of the fat Fourth Former Tom had not had an opportunity of speaking to him lately. He was making an opportunity now.

The champion junior bowler could not possibly be spared from the team. He had cut practice, but he could not be allowed to cut the match—if such an idea was in his mind. It really did not seem possible; but Tom Merry meant to be informed definitely upon that point.

He found Figgins and Kerr chatting outside the New House, but their fat chum was not with them.

"Where's Fatty?" asked Tom at once. Figgins jerked his hand towards the House.

"Oh, good!" said Tom, relieved. "I was afraid he might be playing the giddy goat again this afternoon, and going out."

"The fact is——" began Figgins hesitatingly.

"Well, what's the fact?"

"Fatty isn't playing to-day!"

Tom Merry's jaws squared.

"Does he say so?"

"Yes; he asked me to tell you."

"And his reason?"

"He didn't give any."

"He's fit, isn't he?"

"So far as I know."

Tom Merry stared hard at the two New House juniors. They were both looking very uncomfortable.

"Look here," said Tom, after a pause, "this won't do, you know. We rely on Fatty. He has no right to leave us in the lurch like this. It's not good enough. You fellows grouse about having too many School House chaps in the team, and now——"

"Well, most of the fellows on your side think they can beat the New House hollow," said Figgins, with a sourness that was quite new to him. "Better give 'em the chance now, and see if they can beat Fatty."

"You know we haven't a bowler like Fatty in the School House, excepting Talbot," said Tom sharply. "And even Talbot isn't so good as Fatty. And Talbot can't bowl in a match on his own. We want two good bowlers, I suppose. Nobody's ever said that we've had a bowler as good as Fatty. This isn't a House match, either; it's the school that he's leaving in the lurch!"

"Well, you'd better talk it over with him," said Figgins, shrugging his shoulders. "It's no business of mine. I'm not skipper."

"He's your pal——"

"He was!" said Figgins.

Tom Merry's frown faded away.

"Dash it all, Figgy, you're not really rowing with old Fatty, are you?"

"Fatty's found new friends he likes better," said Figgins sourly. "But if you want to talk to him you'll find him in the study—singing."

"Singing!" said Tom.
 "Yes; practising a song," said Figgins. "He's always doing that lately—mugging up words, or practising his voice. That's more important than winning cricket matches, I suppose."
 "I'm blessed if I understand," said Tom, puzzled.
 "I don't understand, either," said Figgins. "You'd better talk to him yourself. If you can make him see reason, I'd be jolly glad. I've tried."
 Tom Merry, greatly perplexed, went into the New House, and up to Figgins' study. He heard the voice of Fatty Wynn as he approached—he was singing in Welsh. Tom Merry's face involuntarily cleared as he listened to the clear, musical voice of the Welsh junior.

finished that rousing chorus, and then marched into the study.
 "Ni chaiff gelyn ladd ac ymlid—"
 Fatty Wynn was going on, but he stopped as Tom Merry came in.
 "Well?" said Tom.
 "Well?" said Fatty Wynn.
 "I've just heard from Figgins that you don't want to play this afternoon."
 "It isn't exactly that. I do want to play—I want it badly, but I can't."
 "You know how much we want you. Gay and his lot are at the top of their form. You don't want them to beat us?"
 "You can keep your end up without me."
 "Well, I suppose we can," said Tom rather sharply; "the St. Jim's junior eleven doesn't depend on a single player, as far as that goes. But this is

very well with his bowling, and he's a School House chap."
 "Never mind that," said Tom. "I can pick up twenty second-rate bowlers, if I like. Look here, Wynn, this isn't playing the game! If there's anything really important, of course, you can out the match."
 "It is important."
 Tom Merry paused.
 "Will you tell me what it is?"
 "I can't do that."
 "Don't think I want to pry into your affairs!" exclaimed Tom, flushing angrily. "I don't care twopence for them, and you know it! But you've no right to stand out of the team and leave us in the lurch, without giving a good reason. If you've got to go and see a sick relation, or anything of that kind, you can say so, I suppose?"



Fatty Wynn turned on Arthur Augustus like a flash, grasped him, and swept him off his feet, and pitched him bodily into a dry ditch beside the road. The swell of St. Jim's sprawled in the nettles and roared. "Oh cwumbs! You howwid beast! Ow, I'm stung!"

Like most natives of Wales, David Wynn was born with music in his soul. He had often astonished the other juniors by his gift of "perfect pitch"—to Figgins it seemed marvellous that a fellow should be able to name any note that was struck on the piano without looking at the instrument.
 Fatty Wynn was singing in Welsh—a language that lends itself to singing. Not a word did Tom Merry understand, but he knew the tune of the "Men of Harlech."

"Yu ngwyn oleuni'r goelcerth acw,
 Tros wefusau Cymro'n marw.
 Annibyniaeth sydd yn galw,
 Am ei dewraf dyn!"

Tom Merry paused till Wynn had

one of our toughest matches—the toughest of all, excepting the match with Greyfriars, and you oughtn't to desert us like this."
 "I wouldn't, if I could help it," said Wynn, looking distressed. "But—but a chap isn't always his own master."
 "You are, I suppose, in this case? You're not detained for the afternoon, by any chance?"
 "No, no!"
 "Then why can't you play?"
 "I've got to go out."
 "Got to!" said Tom.
 "Well, yes; got to. I can't help it. I simply can't play this afternoon," said Wynn. "You know I'd like to. It makes me feel rotten standing out of the team, I can tell you. Put young Hammond in; he's coming on

"It isn't that."
 "Then you're going to stand out of the team without giving a shadow of a reason why you're deserting us?" said Tom Merry.
 "I can't help it."
 "I suppose you haven't forgotten that I'm cricket captain?" asked Tom sarcastically. "I call on you to play, as your skipper."
 "Well, I can't."
 "And you can't give a reason?"
 "Only what I've said."

"You've said nothing, except that you can't play. That means you won't. You've got another engagement on for the afternoon, and you've chucked the match because of it."
 THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"Well, yes."

"Well, I'm dashed!" ejaculated Tom Merry, his temper rising fast. "I've never heard such cool cheek. Do you think you can play fast and loose with the school team in this way? Look here, you must play! You've led us to depend on you, and you've no right to back out. I've said nothing about your cutting practice; but you can't cut our toughest match like this."

"It can't be helped."

"Can't be helped, be blowed! It can be helped, and it's going to be helped! If I left you out of the eleven without giving a reason, the whole blessed New House would soon be raging. And now you coolly tell me that you've got an engagement and can't play!" exclaimed Tom, exasperated. "It's too jolly cool. Blow your engagement! You can't cut the match for any engagement!"

"It's no good talking!" said Fatty Wynn doggedly. "If you knew—"

He paused.

"If I knew what?"

"Nothing."

"I know you've been mystifying everybody lately with some silly secret or other. If your friends like to put up with it, that's their business. But you can't play these tricks on me." Tom Merry pulled himself in with an effort. He was getting very angry. The thought of the Grammarian team, at the top of their form, coming over and finding St. Jim's deprived of their best bowler, for no reason whatever—that was enough to make any skipper angry. "Look here, Wynn, old man, don't be an ass! You know what's the right thing to do."

"It can't be helped."

Tom Merry compressed his lips.

"You won't play?"

"I can't."

"Then I'll put it plainly! If you stand out of the team this afternoon, you stand out of it for the whole cricket season, so long as I'm captain! You won't catch me depending on you again!"

Fatty Wynn drew a deep breath.

"It can't be helped," he said once more.

"That settles it," said Tom.

He left the study without another word, but his eyes glinted under his contracted brows. Fatty Wynn stood rooted to the floor in the study. He gave a deep sigh at last, and left the study with slow steps.

A few minutes later he was seen crossing towards the gates.

CHAPTER 8.

Shadowed By Five!

"HERE he comes!"

Clampe of the Shell murmured the words. And Levison and Mellish of the Fourth, and Pigott of the Third, and Crooke of the Shell, all chuckled softly.

They were in cover among the trees at a short distance from the gates of St. Jim's.

The five young rascals were keeping watch on the gates.

It was Clampe's idea, and the other black sheep were backing him up with great heartiness.

They were indignant. Being themselves black sheep, they naturally had some sympathy for another black sheep, so long as he owned up and took them into his confidence. But for a fellow to indulge in the same little relaxations as themselves, and to keep up an

appearance of despising that kind of thing, irritated them keenly. They meant to show up the humbug if they could.

Fatty Wynn had never before shown any inclination towards the ways of Clampe & Co. But that he had fallen from grace now seemed certain. A fellow who "mooched" away by himself on all occasions, and came home smelling of tobacco, and declined to explain where he had been, was evidently up to something that would not bear the light.

Clampe, in the kindness of his heart, had offered Fatty Wynn his valuable friendship and a cigarette, welcoming him as "one of the boys," and, to Clampe's unspeakable indignation, Fatty Wynn had pulled his nose, and jammed the cigarette down his back.

The fat bouncer was evidently bent on keeping up appearances, and deceiving even fellows who had found him out, as Clampe wrathfully told his precious pals.

Whereupon the black sheep had schemed a little scheme for "showing up" Fatty Wynn in the most complete manner.

They were in cover, watching for him to come out. If he cut cricket and spent the afternoon away from the school, there could be no doubt that he was "on the randan" again. And the young rascals intended to shadow him and get full information of where he went and what he did. And that information was to be detailed afterwards in the Common-rooms of both Houses.

Fatty Wynn would be "shown up" then with a vengeance. As Clampe said virtuously, he couldn't stand a hypocrite. The hypocrite was going to be unmasked if Clampe could manage it.

Fatty Wynn, quite unconscious of the five pairs of eyes fixed on him, came down the lane with a somewhat moody brow.

Fresh from his interview with the junior captain, Fatty was not feeling cheerful. He did not like missing the match, and he did not like giving the fellows the impression that he was leaving them in the lurch. He walked down the lane, with a glum face, thinking of anything but spying eyes.

Clampe & Co. grinned, and fell into his track. Without a glance behind, Fatty Wynn tramped on to the stile and crossed it, and went on by the footpath through the wood.

"Making for Wayland!" murmured Clampe.

"Oh, rather!" said Levison.

"That's where I saw him the other day, with some seedy bouncer in the High Street," said Clampe. "This time we'll jolly well see where he goes. Pub, of course."

"You never know a fellow till you find him out!" grinned Mellish. "I must say the bouncer has been keeping up jolly good appearances all the time."

"I've always suspected those chaps," said Crooke, shaking his head. "When a fellow keeps up too jolly good appearances, there's always something behind it."

"Generally," said Levison.

"The young cad, though, to try to stuff us, when we know all about him!" said Clampe indignantly. "Why couldn't he own up, and have a smoke with a chap? No worse than going to pubs, I suppose."

"Hallo! He's looking back!"

Fatty Wynn, in the leafy footpath through the wood, had paused and looked back. He started a little as he saw five juniors. He gave them a sharp glance, and went on his way again.

A little farther on he quitted the footpath, taking a beaten track through the wood. Clampe & Co. promptly followed the same track.

"He's trying to make out whether we're after him," said Levison shrewdly.

"Well, he can't stop us," said Clampe.

"He may dodge us, though," said Levison. "Look here, you keep on, and I'll clear off and watch for him on the Wayland road. It's clear enough he's going to Wayland. If he dodges you, I'll pick him up again there."

"Good egg!"

Levison disappeared in the wood. Clampe, Crooke, Mellish, and Pigott, grinning, followed closer on Fatty Wynn's track. The fat Fourth Former had no doubt left now that they were tracking him. He stopped and waited for them to come on.

They came up slowly.

"Hallo, Wynn! Fancy meeting you here!" said Clampe.

"You've been following me!" said Fatty Wynn bluntly.

"Having a little walk, you know," remarked Pigott.

"Well, go on with your walk!"

"We'll have a bit of a rest here," remarked Crooke.

The juniors grinned. They intended to rest there as long as Fatty Wynn did. The New House junior understood that, and his eyes glinted.

"What are you following me for?" he demanded.

"Anything you're afraid of being found out?" grinned Mellish.

"I don't want to be spied on."

"We'll come with you, if you like," said Clampe. "We're game for a little razzle. We don't mind a little risk."

"Hear, hear!" said Pigott.

Fatty Wynn frowned.

"I suppose it's no good telling you that you're mistaken, and that I'm not going to play any of your rotten tricks?" he asked.

"Not much!" sniggered Clampe.

"We know you, you see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well," said Fatty Wynn deliberately, "you're not going to follow me farther! You're going back!"

"Perhaps you'll make us go back?" suggested Crooke.

"Yes."

"All four of us?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn did not laugh. He pushed back his cuffs in a businesslike manner.

Clampe & Co. ceased to chuckle, and looked a little uneasy. Certainly they were four to one, but they were four wasters, not at all in good form, and the sturdy Wynn was in the pink of condition, and he certainly had more pluck than all four of them put together.

The quartet looked a little worried as the Fourth Former advanced on them with his hands up in a warlike attitude.

"Come on!" said Fatty Wynn coolly.

"Look here—" began Clampe.

"Are you going back?"

"No!" roared Clampe furiously.

"Then look out!"

Without wasting any more time on words, Fatty Wynn rushed to the attack. For very shame's sake, the four wasters could not run, though that was what they felt inclined to do. They lined up to face the frontal attack. But Fatty Wynn came down on them like a charging locomotive.

Clampe received his right on the chin, and was hurled bodily into the thicket, where he struggled, entangled and yelling. Mellish and Crooke attacked Fatty Wynn, but a jarring upper-cut laid Crooke on his back at the same moment,

and Mellish was grasped by the fat Fourth Former, and hurled upon Clampe, knocking him back into the thicket.

Pigott had already taken to his heels. Fatty Wynn looked at the other three sprawling juniors, grinned, and went on his way. It had been an easy victory, in spite of the odds.

Crooke sat up in the grass, holding his chin in both hands and groaning. Clampe and Mellish wriggled out of the thicket in a dishevelled state. They looked at one another furiously.

"Why didn't you collar him, you idiots?"

"Yow! Ow! Why didn't you? Ow!"

"Oh, my nose! You blessed funks—"

"Funk yourself! Yow! All my teeth are loosened! The beast's got a fist like a horse's hoof! Ow!"

Fatty Wynn had disappeared. The unhappy shadowers did not try to pick up the trail again. With many groans they returned disconsolately to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 9.

Levison Makes a Discovery!

"EVAN, old chap!" Levison pricked up his ears. While the rest of the shadowers had been faring so badly at the hands of Fatty Wynn,

Levison had hurried on to the Wayland road. Close by the stile which gave admission to the high road, Levison had taken cover. That Fatty Wynn was bound for Wayland he had no doubt, and he was sure of picking up the trail again if Clampe & Co. missed it. From his cover in the trees, Levison watched the stile, upon which a somewhat shabby youth was seated.

Remembering Clampe's description of a shabby youth who had met Fatty Wynn a few days before in Wayland, Levison wondered whether the boy was there to wait for the Fourth Former from St. Jim's. He was soon enlightened.

Fatty Wynn came hurrying out of the wood and greeted the youth on the stile warmly.

Levison grinned as he watched them shake hands.

The lad whom Wynn greeted as "Evan" was a couple of years older than the New House junior—a good-looking lad, but pale as if from recent illness. His clothes were shabby, but very neat and clean. He was of a sturdy build. That he was poor it was easy enough to see, and his appearance contrasted very much with that of the plump junior of St. Jim's.

Levison strained his ears to listen as the two began to speak; Levison had no scruples about that. He heard what was

said, but he did not understand it. For after the first greeting Fatty Wynn and his companion no longer talked English. Levison stared at them through the bushes.

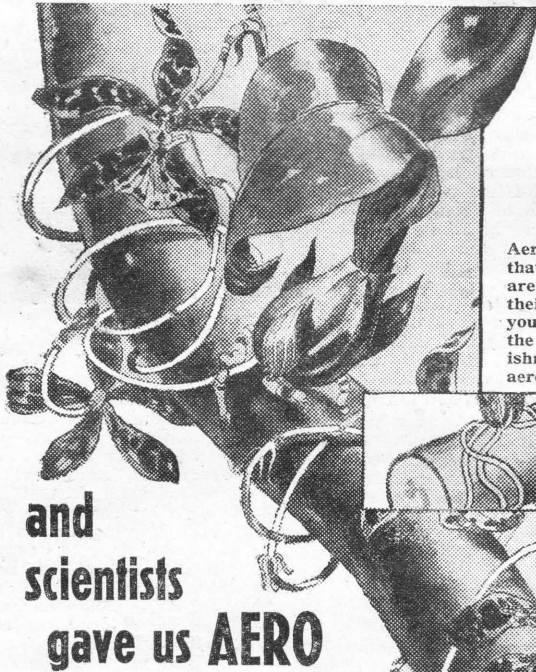
He had never heard a word of the language they were speaking, and it astounded him. It wasn't English, it wasn't French, and it wasn't German. But after a few minutes of reflection Levison guessed that it was Welsh.

He listened in wonder. To the ears of one who does not know Welsh, the language has a sound of Spanish, with a mixture of the purest German.

Levison listened to the roll of the musical syllables, and scowled. It was just his luck, he reflected savagely. He would have spotted the whole business if they had only talked in English. Quite unconsciously, the two Welsh lads were putting the hidden spy on tenterhooks. Levison could hear every word, and he could not understand a single one.

He could only watch and scowl. Who could the shabby youth be whom Fatty Wynn called "Evan, old chap," and treated in this friendly way? Certainly not a relation, or he would not have shown such signs of poverty. What was Fatty Wynn doing there with that shabby "boulder"? Levison was determined to know, so far as his eyes

(Continued on the next page.)



and scientists gave us AERO

THE GRANDEST CHOCOLATE you have ever stowed in your locker — that's Aero! A chocolate that actually melts in your mouth — gives you its full, gorgeous flavour at the very first bite!

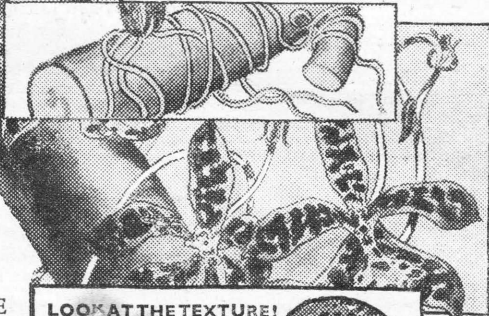
Aero has a texture no other chocolate has — a specially light 'honeycomb' texture, discovered by scientists and made by an entirely new process.

Aero is the new chocolate thrill — and it's wonderful value for your penny. Try it yourself today. You'll soon get the Aero habit!

SMOOTH, LIGHT, EASY TO BITE, WITH A NEW, EXCITING FLAVOUR!

Scientists discovered the AEROPHYTE

Aerophytes is the name given to plants that literally 'live on air.' Aerophytes are usually found on tree trunks, and their roots do not reach the soil, but as you see in the smaller picture, trail in the air, from which they suck in nourishment by means of tiny hairs. The aerophyte shown is a leafless orchid.



LOOK AT THE TEXTURE!

Look at Aero's wonderful new 'honeycomb' texture. This texture is the secret of Aero's delicious taste. It excites the taste-buds on your tongue — gives you the full, rich flavour right away.

1^d & 2^d



Patent Nos. 459 582 & 459 583

could serve him, his ears being of little use in the circumstances.

After about five minutes, Fatty Wynn vaulted over the stile into the road, and the two boys walked on to Wayland.

Levison promptly followed.

Fatty Wynn and the unknown were still talking as they walked on, and Levison found it easy to follow them unseen. In the old High Street of the market-town, too, there was plenty of cover for the shadower in the numerous pedestrians in the street.

Wynn and his companion turned into River Street—a shabby thoroughfare that led towards the river and the poorest quarter of the town. Levison kept on the track. But the trail came to a sudden end.

The two Welsh lads passed into a building and disappeared from sight.

Levison ensconced himself in the doorway of a building opposite, and watched and waited.

The house into which they had gone was a cheap lodging-house, but quite a respectable place. If Fatty Wynn was on the "razzle," as Levison elegantly termed it, that could not be the place chosen.

He was right. In about ten minutes they came out again, and Levison followed on their track once more. Fatty Wynn was carrying a bag now.

They reached the Blackbird—a notorious public-house with a bad reputation—and Levison wondered for a moment whether that was their destination. He had not the slightest doubt that their destination was a place of evil repute.

But they passed on.

On the other side of the street, Levison kept them in sight.

He gave a start as they halted outside a building upon the glass sign of which appeared the words "Wayland Palace."

At night that sign was lighted up, and shone forth as a beacon to all that was disreputable in Wayland. It was a low music-hall, where the entertainment, though relieved by a few good items, was generally of the most questionable character; coarseness vying with vulgarity for the delectation of the patrons.

As it was Saturday afternoon, there was a matinee performance at the Palace, and a crowd was already going in at the doors.

Levison caught his breath.

His blackest suspicions had not gone as far as that. He had suspected that Fatty Wynn was going to some public-house, for a smoke and a game of nap, or something of the kind. But that he was going to that low "dive," into which even Levison himself had never ventured, was astounding.

But it was true.

The two youths stopped at the stage door and went in.

Levison, on the opposite side of the way, stood rooted to the pavement. He rubbed his eyes in astonishment.

It was not easy to credit his eyes.

Fatty Wynn, with his unknown companion, had gone in at the stage door of the Palace. He was not only a habitué of a place that was severely out of bounds for St. Jim's fellows, but he was evidently on speaking terms with the shady persons who provided the entertainment.

"My only hat!" said Levison at last. "Well, this beats it! This beats the whole band!"

There was nothing to be gained by further spying. He hung about for ten minutes or so, but Fatty Wynn did not reappear. He was there for the matinee,

THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,530.

there could be no doubt about that.

The cad of the Fourth was tempted to enter the place and see the matinee for himself and attempt to spot Fatty Wynn's game.

But, though Levison had plenty of nerve, his nerve fell short of that. In the shades of the evening, and muffled up carefully against observation, he might have risked it; but in broad daylight, and in Etons, he dared not.

He walked away slowly, ruminating on what he had discovered.

The spies of the school had set out to follow Fatty Wynn and to "bowl him out." Levison had bowled him out with a vengeance now. He had only to utter a word of what he had seen and Fatty Wynn would be expelled in disgrace from the school.

Not that Levison had any intention of "sneaking" and bringing disgrace and ruin to Wynn, his Form-fellow, for whom he had no special dislike. That was not in his mind at all. But it was pleasant to his peculiar nature to feel that he had power in his hands, and it was still more gratifying to feel that he was able to show up the hypocrite.

That was one of the fellows who had always looked down on Levison's ways, who had never made any secret of his hearty contempt for the dingy black-guardism of the cad of the Fourth. What were Levison's little peccadilloes—his cigarettes, his little games of nap, his secret visits to the Green Man—in comparison with this? Levison had never been to the Palace, anyway. In comparison, Levison felt quite stainless.

He grinned gleefully as he made his way back to St. Jim's. He found his comrades in the quadrangle, looking considerably the worse for wear. They bore down on Levison at once as he came in, eager for information.

"Did you spot him again?" asked Clampe. "He got away from us in the wood."

Levison nodded.

"You shadowed him?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, good!" said Crooke. "Where did he go—the Green Man?"

"No fear!"

"Not the Blackbird?" exclaimed Mellish in awed tones.

"No," grinned Levison.

"Some blessed tobacconist's?" asked Pigott. "Is that all?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No. What do you think of the Palace?"

The four young rascals stared at Levison.

"The Palace?" said Crooke.

"You bet!"

"You're pulling our leg," said Mellish suspiciously. "He wouldn't go there; he wouldn't be idiot enough—in broad daylight! Come off it!"

"He did, all the same," said Levison. "He met another chap, and they went there together. I watched 'em go in."

Clampe drew a deep breath.

"And that's the chap who pulled my



Figgins and Kerr stared with stony eyes at the figure on the Old Wales. Then Figgins gasped. "Fatty Wynn!" The of St.

nose because I offered him a smoke!" he said with burning indignation.

"That's the chap," grinned Levison.

"He might be sacked for it," muttered Mellish.

"He jolly well would be sacked if it came out," said Levison; "flogged and sacked and kicked out in disgrace. What a pleasure for Figgins and Kerr! He's keeping this secret from them, I can see that. I fancy he's new to it, too, or he wouldn't be so dashed reckless about it. Of course, nobody from St. Jim's would be likely to be in that quarter of the town, but it was awfully risky. Looks as if he's simply determined to go to the dogs."

"Serve him right if we gave him away!" said Crooke virtuously. "We may be a bit wild at times, but we draw the line at places like that."

"We don't want to get him sacked," said Levison; "and the fellows would scrag us for sneaking, too, though they'd be pretty sick of Wynn if they knew the truth. But we're not going to have any more of his humbug!"

"Let him call me a smoky cad again!" said Clampe, clenching his fists. "Let him!"

"The awful humbug!" said Pigott. "Looking down on us—calling us blackguards, too! We'll show 'im!"

And the wasters of St. Jim's, full of virtuous indignation, waited anxiously for Fatty Wynn to come in so that they could have the pleasure of telling him what they thought of him. But Fatty



stage—a plump, sturdy figure clad in the national costume of Boy Singer on the programme was the fat Fourth Former Jim's!

The St. Jim's batting side, however, kept their ends up well. At the wicket Fatty Wynn was not missed. Hammond of the Fourth had his place in the team, and he was a good bat. The Saints secured 66 for their first innings.

Then the Grammarians batted again, and Fatty Wynn was missed even more sorely. Talbot could not produce his first innings form.

Figgins and Kerr could not help feeling and looking glum. Tom Merry was in an exasperated frame of mind.

All the team, in fact, were annoyed by the absence of the champion bowler. Fatty Wynn was badly wanted, and he was not there. If some all-important reason had called him away it would have been different; his comrades would have taken that patiently. But he had cut the match to go "mooching" off by himself somewhere, for reasons which, as he kept them secret, apparently would not bear the light.

Figgins felt that it reflected on his House. If Fatty had been dropped out of the team the New House juniors would have been up in arms upon the subject at once. He had dropped himself out, and the New House fellows had nothing to say in his defence.

In the second Grammarian innings Gordon Gay's wicket was impregnable. Even Talbot assailed it in vain. Gay was first in, and not out, and he knocked up 50 off his own bat, the score coming to 110. It was a score that the Grammarians had not dreamed of themselves, and it made them gleeful.

There was a pause for tea then, and over tea the remarks of the St. Jim's cricketers were chiefly on the subject of Fatty Wynn, and they were not complimentary.

Figgins and Kerr had nothing to say. Clampe & Co. came down to watch the last innings, and they watched, grinning. As they never had a chance of playing in the team—Tom Merry having no use for slackers and wasters—they were not disappointed to see the tide of battle going against St. Jim's. And their secret knowledge of the real reason of Fatty Wynn's absence made them chuckle as they heard the remarks of the cricketers.

Tom Merry & Co. put up a big struggle in the last innings. They had a great deal of leeway to make up, and they did their best.

Figgins, when he came to the wicket, played the game of his life. It would have been too bitter to him to see the match lost through the fault of his chum, and Figgins performed almost miracles.

Talbot backed him up manfully at the other end, and their partnership lasted long, amid loud cheers from the crowd, whose hopes were rising now.

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had come out for 6, l.b.w.—"bai Jove, deah boys, we shall pull it off, aftah all! Talbot is playin' up like a Twojan, and Figgins is weally wippin'!"

"Hundred!" said Blake, who had contributed 20 towards that 100. "And there goes Talbot's wicket!"

Next man in was clean bowled for a duck's egg, and the next was dismissed for 2. Faces grew long again.

"Last man in!"

Kerr was last on the list. The light was going now, and the batsmen had to play against time as well as against the Grammarians. But Kerr was in a determined mood. He played a cautious game to back up Figgins, adopting the policy of "making haste slowly." Figgins was hitting mighty swipes, and, though some of his hitting looked reckless, the field did not seem to have any chance.

Again the hopes of the St. Jim's crowd rose, as a 4 from Figgins brought the total of the second innings up to 110.

"Four to tie, and 5 to win!" said Tom Merry, with an anxious glance at the sky and another at the umpire.

"One more ovah," said Arthur Augustus.

Figgins seemed to be "set" for any number of overs, and Kerr was a tower of strength so far as keeping open the innings was concerned; but there was time for only one more over. Gordon Gay was bowling, and he put his best into it. But Figgins was equal to the best bowling now.

Away went the ball, and the batsmen ran, crossing four times—and the ball flashed in a second too late. And a rousing cheer from the crowd greeted the tie.

The rest was a walk-over. Figgins swiped the ball away for a run, and then the Saints greeted the victory.

"Jolly close thing!" remarked Gordon Gay. "But I'm glad we were able to finish it!"

Figgins looked very red, and breathed hard. But he was in high spirits. He had saved the match, and nobody would be able to put down a defeat to the New House. Fatty Wynn's defections could be forgiven, as his chums had pulled the game out of the fire, after all.

"I congwatulate you, Figgay!" said Arthur Augustus, patting Figgins on the shoulder. "A vevy cweditable innings indeed!"

"Thanks!" grinned Figgins. "Praise from Gussy is praise indeed! Lemme see—how many centuries did you make, Gussy?"

"I had wresolved to make a centuwy, but the umpiah fancied that my leg was in fwont of the wicket," said Arthur Augustus. "Umpiahs get these ideahs into their heads sometimes, you know."

"Well, we've beaten them," said Tom Merry. "That's a comfort! You can tell Wynn that he hasn't lost the game for us, Figgay, when he comes in."

Figgins grunted.

Tom Merry & Co. entertained the Grammarians after the match to a little study celebration, and it was after dark when the Grammarians' coach rolled away.

Figgins & Co. went back to the New House in a thoughtful mood.

Fatty Wynn had not come in yet. Clampe was chatting in the doorway with Levison and Crooke of the School House. The wasters grinned at the sight of Figgins and Kerr.

"Wynn not back yet?" asked Clampe. "Not that I know of!" said Figgins shortly.

"Staying for the first house," murmured Crooke.

"He can't stay for the second," said Clampe. "That would make him too late for bed. He will have to cut the second house."

Wynn did not come in; and Levison & Co., to their great astonishment, realised that the fat Fourth Former must be staying for the evening performance as well as the matinee.

"He's going it!" said Levison.

And if the suspicions of the wasters were well-founded there was no doubt that Fatty Wynn was indeed "going it."

CHAPTER 10.

The Grammar School Match!

TOM MERRY & CO., meanwhile, were keeping their end up against the Grammarian cricket team.

Gordon Gay and his eleven from Rylcombe Grammar School had come over, at the top of their form, with the intention of wiping out their last defeat at the hands of the Saints.

The Grammarians had batted first, and Tom Merry sorely missed his best bowler.

Talbot of the Shell was in great form, and he bowled like a champion, amid thunderous cheers from the St. Jim's crowd, but the rest of Tom Merry's bowlers made little impression on the Grammarian wickets.

The score went up, in spite of Talbot's first-rate performance, and in spite of good bowling from Blake, Kerr, and Kangaroo in turn.

The Grammarians were all down for 70 in the first innings.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

These cryptic words were expected by the cheerful wasters to provoke inquiry from Figgins and Kerr. They referred, of course, to the entertainment at the Wayland Palace, which was twice nightly.

But Figgins and Kerr did not inquire. They looked contemptuously at the wasters, and passed on into the House. They did not speak till they were in their study.

"It's come out, then," said Kerr.

"How on earth did they get on to it?" muttered Figgins. "They never saw that programme of Fatty's. He burnt it here."

"He wouldn't be ass enough to leave one about, I suppose," said Kerr. "One of the cads may have spied on him."

Figgins nodded.

"That's where he's gone, I suppose," he remarked. "Kerr, old man, suppose Monteith or Sefton should get a whisper of it—especially Sefton? That bully would be glad to catch this study out; he's got a lot up against us. Kerr, fellows have been sacked for less than what Fatty's doing!"

"I know," said Kerr gloomily. "I can't understand it. Fatty hasn't any taste for blackguardism. I should always have said that he wouldn't be found dead in a place like that low hole. I can't get on to it at all. What reason can he have for going there, Figg, unless it's a blackguardly reason?"

"None that I can see."

"Somebody must have got hold of him and must be influencing him," said Kerr. "That's all I can think of. But we can't do anything. He knows what we think about it."

Figgins gave a gloomy assent. There was nothing they could do for their wayward chum, and they were feeling sore and angry and apprehensive. For, in spite of Fatty's strange and apparently "rotten" conduct—in spite of the icy terms that now reigned in Figgins' study—the old friendship was not dead—it was only sleeping. And the thought that Fatty would be bowled out and punished filled his old pals with apprehension for him.

He was simply asking for trouble, and if the "chopper" came down, they could not deny that it would come down deservedly; but the thought of disgrace and ruin falling upon their old chum dismayed them utterly.

It was a bitter evening to Figgins and Kerr. Fatty Wynn came in once more just in time for calling-over. He did not speak to his old chums. They did not speak when they met now.

But he asked Redfern how the match had gone. That subject was evidently uppermost in his mind. Redfern gave him a stare, as Wynn asked the question in the Junior Common-room.

"Remember there was a match—what?" asked Reddy sarcastically. "Well, we won it, no thanks to you. They nearly did us!"

"Oh, good!" said Wynn, evidently greatly relieved. "You got on all right without me, after all?"

"Yes, and we can do the same again!" said Redfern.

"Oh, rats!"

"Good entertainment?" asked Clampe, coming along, with a chuckle. There were a crowd of fellows in the Common-room, and it was Clampe's opportunity.

Fatty Wynn looked at him.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"Did you speak to me?"

"Yes. I asked you if it was a good entertainment," said Clampe deliberately. "You must have liked it, as you stayed for the first house in the evening as well as the matinee."

"What are you burbling about?" asked Redfern, in wonder.

"Wynn knows!" chuckled Clampe.

"You don't mean to say you've been theatre-going, Wynn?" said Redfern, in disgust. "You haven't been to a theatre and cutting cricket for that?"

"I don't mean to say anything," said Fatty Wynn, colouring.

"That's too bad!" said Clampe, with a giggle. "Us bad boys never go to the Palace; but we should like to know what it's like. You might tell a fellow!"

"The Palace!" said Redfern.

"What rot!" said Lawrence.

"That's where Wynn's been!" said Clampe coolly. "Let him deny it if he dares!"

"Tell him he's a liar, Wynn!"

Fatty did not speak.

"That's the chap who's shocked at a fellow smoking a cigarette!" sneered Clampe. "A chap who goes to a drunken dive—place that's been fined before now for rows and disorder. No wonder he smells of tobacco when he comes home! And turns up his nose at a chap who smokes a cigarette—the blessed hypocrite!"

"I don't believe he's been to any such place," said Redfern.

"Ask him!"

"Why don't you speak up, Fatty?" asked Owen. "We shall take your word against that cackling rotter's!"

"Tell him he's lying, Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn turned away without a word.

There was a murmur in the Junior Common-room. Redfern, in great amazement, called out after the fat Fourth Former.

"Fatty, you ass! Why don't you tell us it isn't true? You know what the fellows will think!"

"They can think what they like!" said Fatty Wynn.

He walked out of the Common-room.

He left the New House juniors in a buzz.



CHAPTER 11.

Under a Cloud!

THE next day was Sunday. That day Fatty Wynn did not absent himself. He did not take the usual walk with Figgins and Kerr—that was all over. Fatty "mooched" about the quad aimlessly by himself. That he felt the estrangement from his old chums was pretty plain; but the sensitive Welsh lad was too proud to make any advances, and Figgins and Kerr had nothing to say.

What could they say?

To assume the old chummy manners, when a gulf had opened between them and their friend, was impossible. Fatty Wynn had found a new friend, and his new friend was leading him into places that a decent fellow would never enter. And Wynn had not uttered a word of explanation. In such circumstances, anything like the old chumminess was impossible.

Figgins and Kerr were by no means models—they had been brought up far from the lines of the estimable Eric. They liked a visit to the Wayland Empire, where the entertainment, if not particularly intellectual, was decent and harmless—they broke bounds every now and then, and they had plenty of faults. But there was a limit—and that limit was fixed.

If Fatty had chosen to throw over his new ways, they were willing to receive him with open arms, and welcome him back into the fold, as it were. But they were not willing to pal with a fellow who broke bounds to go to such a place as the Wayland Palace. They cudgelled their brains in vain for any reason Fatty could have for going there, which was not the obvious reason—a taste for dissipation and blackguardism.

They knew why Cutts sometimes went there with great secrecy—it was to smoke, to drink stronger drinks than were good for him, to meet low acquaintances, and hear low talk. Fatty Wynn, certainly, had never shown any sign previously of following in the footsteps of the dandy of the Fifth. But facts spoke for themselves.

His secrecy at first had bitterly wounded his chums. But the reason for that secrecy was only too obvious now.

He himself had said that he would be sacked for what he was doing, if it came out. After that, there was nothing to be said.

There were many whispers among the juniors that day and the next. Clampe, Levison, Pigott, and Mellish and Crooke, naturally, had been talking.

They did not intend to give the delinquent away to authority; but they had no intention whatever of keeping dark what they had learned, so far as the rest of the Lower School was concerned.

They professed to be indignant. Fatty Wynn had always been down on their little doggish ways—and, behold, it had turned out that he was a bigger blackguard than any member of the "smart set" of the school.

So they did not spare him.

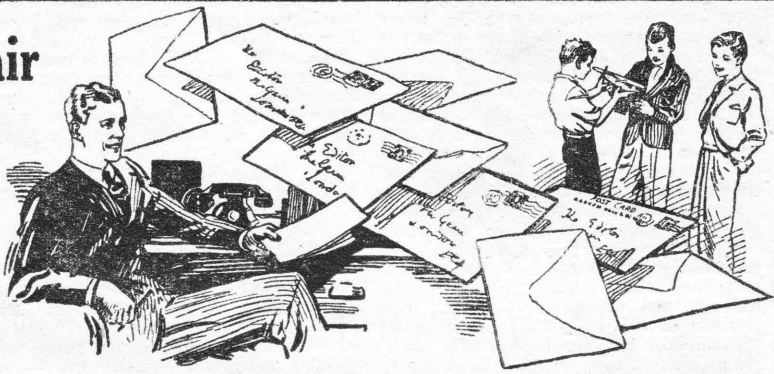
As the reputation of the wasters for truthfulness was not high, it only needed a word from Fatty Wynn to dispel the cloud that was gathering. If he had given Clampe & Co. the lie, he would have been believed.

But he did not give them the lie. He said nothing. He appeared to be unconscious of the whispering that was going on, though that was hardly possible.

(Continued on page 18.)

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal.
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
Fleetway House, Farring-
don Street, London, E.C.4.



HALLO, chums! In our grand series featuring Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and English characters at St. Jim's, the stories which have so far appeared—last week's and the one in this number—have been two of Martin Clifford's best efforts of the year. If I don't receive hundreds of letters about them from readers—particularly from Gemites in Ireland and Wales—I shall be greatly surprised. And I shall be still more surprised if my mail is not doubled after readers have read next Wednesday's yarn.

Excellent as the first two stories of the series have been, in my opinion the next one is even better. As Kerr, the Scots junior, is the star character I can be sure that all readers in Scotland will readily agree with me. But in whichever country in Great Britain you were born you will greatly enjoy

"A SON OF SCOTLAND!"

The outstanding feature of this powerful, well-written yarn is the splendid loyalty and sagacity of George Kerr, who backs up Figgins when the New House leader is accused of theft. The evidence against Figgy is as conclusive as it could be, and would convict him in any court of law. It seems that he hasn't a hope of escaping expulsion—and, as a matter of fact, he himself has given up hope. But not so his canny Scots chum. Kerr brings all his keen wits to bear on the problem of the theft—with what result you will see in next Wednesday's number.

Here is an ace-high school story that will hold the interest of readers as few stories have ever done before.

"THE FAMOUS FOUR'S GREAT JAPE!"

The aliens are coming! Once again the French and German juniors, who caused so much excitement when they stayed at Greyfriars some time back, are returning—but not to the Remove. The new school, Friardale Foreign Academy, which is on Greyfriars doorstep, is soon to be opened by the mayor, and the aliens will take up their quarters there. But all the old rivalry between the Remove and the foreigners is bound to break out again—and the fun will be fast and furious.

Harry Wharton & Co. decide to strike early at their foreign rivals, and they think out a No. 1 size jape as a welcome to the new school. They keep it secret, but they find that it isn't an easy matter. Bunter knows all about it, and Bunter talks too much. As a result Hoffman and Meunier, the two aliens of the Remove, who will join the new school when it opens, get on the scent!

You will find Frank Richards in better form than ever next week, and you will enjoy every word of his sparkling Greyfriars yarn. See that your GEM is reserved for you.

IN REPLY TO YOURS.

Now let me see what there is to answer in my mail.

J. Conacher (Whiteabbey, Ireland).—Many thanks for your letter and lists of the best St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories you have read. I'm sorry, but I cannot accede to your request regarding the GEM and "Magnet." The latter two publications, "Schoolboys' Own" and "Modern Boy" are companion papers. Glad to hear that you think they are the best group of papers in the United Kingdom. The GEM artist is Mr. R. J. Macdonald. Your joke was not funny enough for the Jester.

G. Noel (Oakham, Rutland).—The oldest boy at St. Jim's is Eric Kildare, who is seventeen years eight months. I have heard no further news of the Greyfriars film. Your joke was quite good, but it did not lend itself to a humorous picture.

J. Ray (South Molton, N. Devon).—Thanks for your list of the best St. Jim's stories and the ten most popular characters. Try again to win half-a-crown.

Miss B. Morgan (Thames Ditton, Surrey).—One of your jokes was published in the last number. Congratulations on winning half-a-crown! Pleased to know that you have been reading the GEM for five years, and that you have enjoyed all the stories. Kerr is fifteen years five months; Redfern, fifteen years four months; and Gordon Gay, fifteen and a half. I cannot tell you when Johnny Bull arrives at Greyfriars. It won't be for a long time yet.

D. Blackford (Leeds, 11).—I will bear in mind your suggestion. The characters you mention were created by Martin Clifford and Frank Richards. You can rely on Mr. Clifford to keep up his high standard of stories. Thank you for your good opinion of the old paper.

D. Wilkins (Bridport, Dorset).—Thanks for your list of the best 1936 stories. Ernest Levison first went to Greyfriars, but was expelled. He then came to St. Jim's. The series dealing with his reformation will be coming along in due course. I'm afraid your two jokes didn't offer much scope for illustrations. Better luck next time.

S. Morgan (Greenock).—Glad to hear

that you wouldn't miss the GEM for cream doughnuts! You certainly know what's best for you. The GEM artists draw their sketches to the size specified by myself. Sorry to hear that you are out of work. I hope you will soon find something to do. Try the Jester with another joke.

G. Salsbury (Walthamstow, E.17).—I think you are convinced after reading "The Lure of the Footlights" that it was not the same story as you read a few years ago. I have no news yet for readers about the Greyfriars film. The Christian names you want are Richard Redfern, Leslie Owen, Edgar Lawrence, Gerald Crooke, Arthur St. Leger, Philip Gilmore, Mr. Victor Raiton, and Dr. Richard Holmes. Thanks for your good wishes.

D. Vickers (Malpas, Cheshire).—Glad to hear that you consider the GEM the best boys' paper on the market. I should say that the three most popular masters at St. Jim's are Mr. Raiton, Mr. Lathom, and Mr. Carrington. The Customs and Excise Dept., Custom House, Lower Thames Street, London, E.C.3, will probably give you all the information you want. Your joke was funny, but not the type used in the GEM. Have another try.

Miss L. Wingfield (Henfield, Sussex).—Readers are not required to send illustrations with their jokes. As long as the jokes are described the GEM Jester will do the rest. Your two efforts failed to score. Try again. I'm sorry, but I cannot tell you when Lord Mauleverer and Johnny Bull come to Greyfriars.

Miss Devine (Shipley, Yorks).—The Shell is a term for an intermediate class. At St. Jim's, as you know, it comes between the Fourth and the Fifth Forms. Pleased to hear that you are keen on the GEM and "Magnet." Thanks for your kind wishes.

J. Dowell (Carlisle).—Many thanks for your interesting letter. I should say without hesitation that Mr. Ratcliff is the most unpopular master. Vavasour has left St. Jim's. I'm sorry your jokes were not quite suitable. But there are plenty more half-crowns waiting to be won.

L. Tyrrell (Croydon).—Balstrode is still in the Greyfriars Remove. Johnny Bull will not put in an appearance for a long time yet.

"Happy Reader" (Bramley, Leeds).—Thanks for your list of the best 1936 stories and your suggestion. The New House cricket team is Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Pratt, Thompson, French, Koumi Rao, and Digges.

Chin, chin, chums!

THE EDITOR.
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

PEN PALS COUPON
12-6-37

When he went out after lessons on Monday afternoon, everybody knew where he had gone. He was gone to the "first house" at the Wayland Palace.

It could not be supposed that the fat Fourth Former, however strong his taste for that kind of entertainment, wanted to see the same performance over and over again. It was clear that he had made acquaintances at the place, and that that was the reason he went.

Levison described the lad he had seen Fatty Wynn meet, and Levison's description was not flattering. Every time Levison described him, in fact, the unknown was a little more dingy and dubious and disreputable, till at last Levison drew a picture of all the vices personified. Levison did not stop there. He obtained a copy of a Wayland paper, in which there appeared an advertisement of the show at the Palace, and found the name of "Evan" in the list of performers.

"Evan Jones!" said Levison, showing the paper to his precious chums. "That must be the chap! Evan Jones, boy singer, in his selection of songs. Precious songs, you can bet your life! I'd like the Head to hear one of them."

"Sure he called the chap he met Evan?" asked Clampe.

"Quite sure."
"Then that settles it! He's palled on with one of the music-hall chaps, and he's gone there to have a high old time behind the scenes," said Clampe. "Shouldn't wonder if he gets squiffy!"

"It'll all come out soon," said Levison. "He can't keep this up without the prefects getting on to it. There's going to be an awful row soon, and Fatty Wynn's going to get the boot—you mark my words!"

Levison and his friends looked forward to that with complacency; but the fellows who had always been friendly with Fatty Wynn were worried. Tom Merry & Co. heard the talk, naturally, and as Fatty Wynn did not deny the charge, there was only one conclusion they could draw.

They stated publicly, and in measured language, their opinion of Levison and his spying, but that was all they could do.

Fatty Wynn was under a cloud. That it worried him was evident. He had always been the cheeriest fellow in the school, as well as the plumpest, and he grew silent and morose. He who had been the most sociable of all the juniors had taken to "mooching" by himself, with his hands in his pockets and a glum expression on his face.

He did not come into Figgins' study excepting for his preparation, and that was done in frozen silence. He had taken to having his tea in Hall.

On Wednesday afternoon, Tom Merry, after a debate with himself, looked for Fatty Wynn, and caught him on the way to the gates.

The fat Fourth Former did not stop, so Tom fell into pace beside him.

"We're playing cricket this afternoon, Fatty," said Tom amicably.

"Hope you'll enjoy it!" said Wynn morosely.

"Won't you play?"

"I'm out of the eleven, aren't I?"

"I'll put you in again."

Fatty Wynn paused then.

"You told me I shouldn't play again as long as you were captain," he said.

"I know I did. But I want you to play. Come along, old chap!"

Fatty Wynn burst into a bitter laugh. "You've heard all that jaw about me, of course?" he said savagely.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

"Well, a chap could hardly help hearing it, unless he was deaf," said Tom.

"Quite so. And, having made up your mind that I'm acting the rotten blackguard, and going to the dogs, you're willing to stretch a point to get me out of it, like a brand from the burning—what?"

Tom Merry was silent. As a matter of fact, Fatty Wynn had divined exactly what was in his mind.

"Well," said Wynn, as the captain of the Shell did not reply, "I'm not a beastly blackguard, though you're pleased to believe I am one; and—and Figgie does, too—" Fatty's voice quavered for a moment. "And I don't want to be rescued from vice, because I haven't got any vices—see? You can go and eat coke!"

Fatty tramped on, leaving Tom Merry standing where he was. He tramped angrily out of the gates, only to run into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the road.

D'Arcy planted himself directly in the fat junior's path, and Fatty had to stop.

"Want to be chucked into the nettles again?" asked Fatty.

"Pwaw don't be watty, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I'm goin' to speak to you as a friend."

"You needn't trouble."

"I insist upon twoublin'," Wynn, old man. I feel it my duty to speak a word in season," said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"Fathead!" said Wynn.

Arthur Augustus appeared to swallow something with difficulty. Fatty Wynn walked round him, and marched on. D'Arcy, not to be eluded, kept pace with him, and Fatty quickened his steps.

"Weally, Wynn, this is vevy serious, you know," he said gently. "If you do not think of yourself, you might think of your friends. Can you weconcile it with your conscience, Wynn, to go to that drunken place?"

"Silly ass!"
"Ahem! What do you want to go for, deah boy?"

"Can't you guess?" said Wynn bitterly. "To have a high old time, of course—to get rolling squiffy, and smoke cigars, and talk about gee-gees, and gamble."

"Gweat Scott, Wynn!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, with so shocked and horrified a face that Fatty Wynn, in spite of himself, burst into a roar of laughter.

"Oh, you wottah!" said Arthur Augustus, greatly relieved. "You were only wottin'! You should not twy to pull my leg, Wynn, when I was speakin' to you for your own good. Now pway let me persuade you—"

"For goodness' sake, let me alone!"

"I wefuse to let you alone," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I am goin' to pvevent you fwom gettin' yourself sacked!"

Fatty Wynn hurried on, and D'Arcy hurried, too. Fatty vaulted over the stile, and Gussy followed. The swell of St. Jim's was determined. But Fatty was determined, too. Gussy had no sooner landed over the stile than he found himself collared and whipped back over the stile again, and dropped into the road.

Fatty Wynn vanished through the wood, and though Arthur Augustus hunted him for half an hour, he did not find him. In a considerably dusty state, Arthur Augustus walked back to the school, determined to let the obstinate fellow go to the dogs in his own way, and never again to take the

trouble of uttering a word in season for the benefit of Fatty Wynn.

CHAPTER 12.

A Sudden Surprise!

"FIGGINS!"

"Yes, Monteith!"
"Come into my study, please. And you, too, Kerr," said the head prefect.

Figgins and Kerr were about to go down to the cricket field when the head prefect of their House called to them.

Feeling very uneasy, the two juniors followed Monteith into his study.

The prefect was looking very grave. He fixed a searching look upon the chums of the Fourth before he spoke. Figgins and Kerr waited in uneasy silence. They could not help feeling an apprehension that something had come to the prefect's ear concerning Fatty Wynn.

"I want to ask you a question," said Monteith, at last. "You are Wynn's studymates, and his chums. I have heard something about him."

"Yes, Monteith," said Figgins dully. "He seems to be gone out now," said the prefect.

"Yes, he's gone out."
"He's been out by himself a lot lately, I think."

The juniors were silent. The head prefect of the New House was not likely to have noticed that, unless his attention had been specially drawn to it.

"Well?" said Monteith.
"We're not so pally as we were," faltered Figgins. "Fatty often goes out on his own now."

"Where does he go?"
"Oh, out somewhere," said Figgins vaguely.

"But where?"
"I haven't been with him."

Poor Figgins was a bad hand at making evasive replies.

"Well," said the prefect quietly, "I've heard something. It seems that it's been the talk of the House for a week or so, but it's only just come to my ears. Some of the juniors were talking, I heard something by chance—unless they intended me to hear," added Monteith. "It was in the passage, a few minutes ago. Now, naturally, it isn't my business to take any notice of a chance word spoken in my hearing, but this is a serious matter. Have you any knowledge of Wynn paying visits to that low, boozy place, the Palace, in Wayland?"

No reply.

Figgins and Kerr could not deny it, since they knew it perfectly well. Denial, too, would not have helped Fatty. Monteith was questioning them as fellows most likely to know about Fatty's movements, but there were plenty of other sources of information.

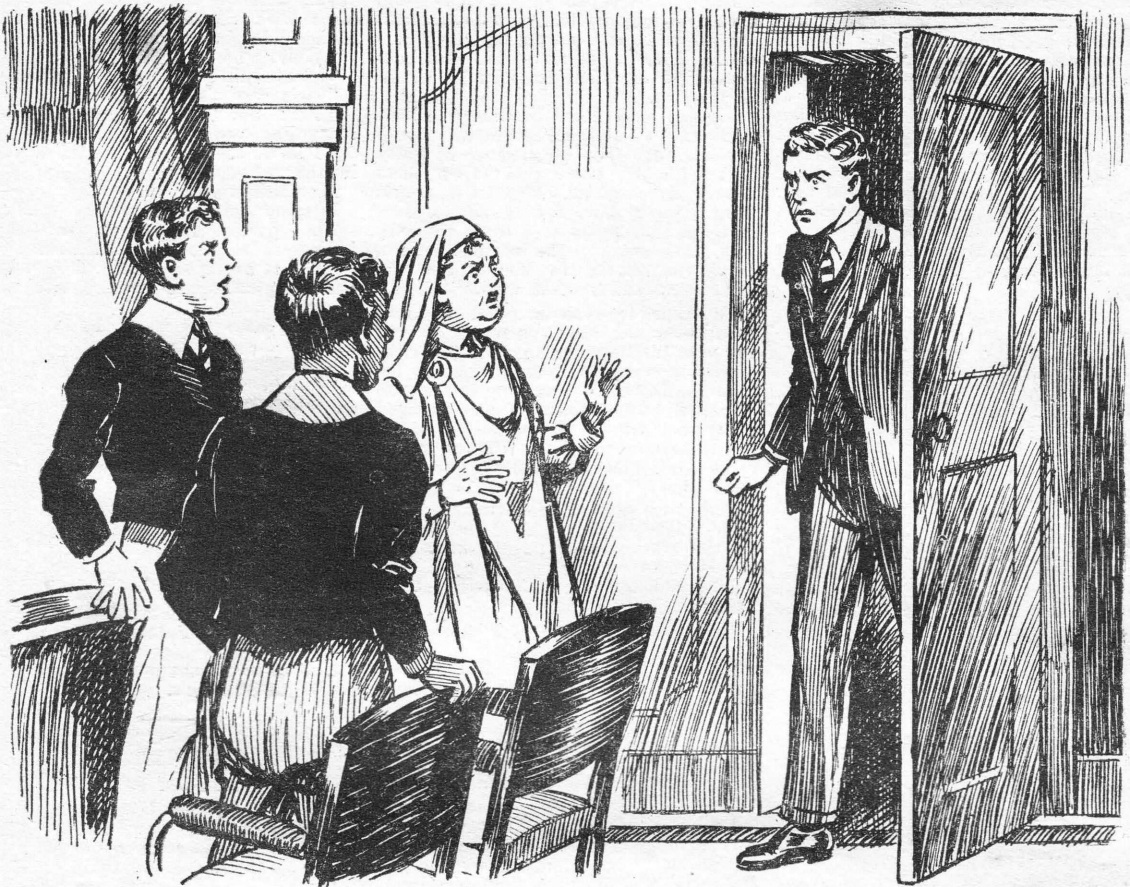
This was what Figgins had feared. The matter had been talked of so much among the juniors that it was surprising it had not reached the ears of the prefects before this. Nobody had meant exactly to "sneak," but a topic could not be discussed in the studies, in the passages, the quad, and the Common-room without sooner or later coming to the knowledge of everyone in the school.

Monteith had heard it at last. The only surprising thing was that he had not heard it days ago. It was all up now.

"If you don't answer me," said Monteith quietly, "there is only one thing I can think, Figgins. Surely

surely

surely



Monteith stepped into the box and gazed at the three juniors in silence for a moment. "What are you doing here, Kerr and Figgins?" asked the prefect. "I needn't ask what Wynn is doing." "We came to warn Fatty," said Figgins desperately. "Come with me," said Monteith. "All three of you will go before the Head!"

Wynn is not making a fool of himself—and such a blackguard! He is not that kind of kid."

"Ho never was," said Figgins miserably.

"Well, I won't ask you anything more," said Monteith. "I can guess pretty easily where he is now, and I have my duty to do. You can clear off!"

Figgins and Kerr left the study with troubled faces. They knew what Monteith was going to do—and that was to go directly there, and take Fatty away from the place, and report his conduct to the Head.

"It's all up, Kerr!" muttered Figgins. "If Monteith finds him there the Head will sack him!"

Kerr nodded. "He mustn't find him there, Figgy," he said, in a low voice. "Unless he's found there, there's no proof; the rest is only tattle and gossip, anyway."

"He's there now," said Figgins. "The matinee begins in half an hour, or less."

"Yes, we know he's there, but he needn't be there when Monteith gets there, Figgy. We've got to run some risk."

Figgins made a sign of assent, and they walked out of the New House together. They did not venture to fetch their bicycles, for if Monteith had seen them he would certainly have guessed their errand. They slipped quietly out of the school gates, and they started down the lane at a trot.

It was a risky undertaking for them. They could not warn Fatty Wynn of

his danger without entering the same forbidden precincts, and thus sharing the risks that Fatty himself was running.

But they did not hesitate. Risk or no risk, disgrace or no disgrace, they could not stand by quietly while their old chum was in peril. He was doing wrong, they could not deny that; but he was their old pal, and it was up to them to help him.

Without slackening their pace, they passed along the footpath, and came out along the Wayland road. They knew that they were well ahead of Monteith. The prefect would walk over to Wayland, and would probably not arrive till the afternoon performance was well under way. By not losing a moment, Figgins and Kerr hoped to reach the place by the time it started.

A little breathless, the two juniors arrived in Wayland, and made their way at a moderate pace to the shabby street where the Palace was situated.

They arrived in time to go in with the afternoon crowd.

There was no sign of Fatty Wynn in the crowd there; but they knew that he was in the building, as well as if they had seen him enter. They knew that he had an acquaintance behind the scenes.

Their faces flushed as they took their tickets and passed into the building with the crowd.

It was the first time that they had found themselves in such company. The seats in the Palace were cheap enough, and Figgins obtained an upper

box for a few shillings, from which he would have a view of the stuffy little hall. There he and Kerr ensconced themselves, and they kept a watch on the hall as it filled.

But Fatty Wynn was not to be seen in the audience, so far.

The curtain went up, and the first item on the programme was played—a fat man singing a stupid song full of innuendoes, which were quite lost on the two juniors, though the more experienced audience gurgled with laughter.

Figgins and Kerr were watching the audience, not the stage.

"He isn't here," said Kerr, at last, "and pretty nearly every seat is full."

"Behind the scenes, I suppose," said Figgins. "After all, he can't be coming here every day to see the same rotten show. I should think he would get fed-up with it, even if he liked the rot. If he doesn't come into the audience, Monteith can't spot him. Monteith can't go behind the scenes."

"If he doesn't spot him in the audience, he will wait outside for him, and spot him coming out," said Kerr.

Figgins wrinkled his brows. "What's to be done, old chap?"

"We must send him a warning, somehow. He's here right enough, and we may get a note to him by an attendant."

"Hallo! They're playing something decent now," said Figgins, as the orchestra started the music of the "Men of Harlech."

The audience began to yawn, and to

devote their chief attention to smoking and chattering. What was coming was one of the good items that interposed in the programme for the sake of variety, and by way of contrast, and the habitués of the Palace endured it patiently while they waited for what was to follow.

Figgins and Kerr were still watching the audience, to catch a glimpse of Fatty Wynn, if he appeared, and they did not see the singer as he came on the stage. But when the song began, they looked round, astonished to hear that it was sung in Welsh.

"We le goelcerth wen yn fflomio,
A thafodau tan yn bloeddio,
Ar i'r edwrión ddod i daro,
Unwaith e o'n un!
Gan fanllefaú tywysogion
Llais gelyuion, tryst orgogion,
A charlamiaid y marchogion,
Craig ar graig a gryu!"

Figgins and Kerr sat petrified. They gazed at the figure on the stage with stony eyes. A plump, sturdy figure, clad in the national costume of Old Wales, with the fat face made up for the stage, but recognisable by eyes that knew it so well. And if they did not know the face, they would have known the voice.

Figgins gasped.
"Fatty Wynn?"

CHAPTER 13.

The Chopper Comes Down!

THERE was no doubt about it! The Boy Singer on the programme was the fat Fourth Former of the New House at St. Jim's.

He did not see the two startled and astonished juniors peering down from the box above. The full, rich voice of the Welsh junior sounded through the little hall, and, in spite of their indifference to the "item," the audience began to pay attention.

After the first verse there was a murmur of applause, and the audience—little accustomed as they were to good singing—listened with pleasure to the rest.

Figgins had a programme in his hand, but he had not looked at it. He looked at it now. That was the third item—the number "3" was displayed on both sides of the stage.

"No. 3—Evan Jones, the Welsh boy singer."

"Evan Jones!" muttered Figgins. "That was the name—according to Levison—of Fatty's friend here; but—it's Fatty himself, Kerr."

"Blessed if I understand it," said Kerr. "That's Fatty Wynn right enough. I'd swear to his voice, if not his face. Besides, you know how he's been mugging up the 'Men of Harlech' lately."

Figgins gave a sudden gasp.

"There's Monteith!"

They caught sight of the Sixth Former suddenly.

Monteith was standing just inside the entrance to the stalls, and his eyes were fixed upon the singer on the stage.

The New House prefect's face was a sufficient indication of his astonishment, and of the fact that he recognised Wynn, in spite of his stage costume and make-up.

"All U.P.!" said Figgins wretchedly. "No good warning him now."

The song finished, and there was applause, and the last verse was

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

encored; and Wynn gave it again, and then retired, perfectly self-possessed. He might have been on the "boards" all his life, to judge by his calm self-possession. He had not seen his chums in the box.

Figgins and Kerr remained silent, thinking. What it all meant they could not imagine. The appearance of Fatty Wynn on the stage had taken them utterly by surprise. But their hearts were lighter now, for it was evident to them that Fatty had come there to sing, and not for the reason Levison & Co. attributed to him. But the utter recklessness of it amazed them.

To come to such a place for bad motives would have been worse, but yet more reasonable; to run such risks merely for the sake of appearing behind the footlights was folly itself. And how had Fatty Wynn become engaged to appear there? How had he made the acquaintance of the Palace people in the first place? What on earth did it all mean?

The two juniors felt knocked off their balance. The sight of Dr. Holmes on the stage would hardly have surprised them more.

They looked for Monteith again. The prefect had gone.

"He recognised Fatty," muttered Figgins.

"He looked like it. But"—Kerr wrinkled his brows in thought—"there's a chance. Fatty was made-up; he didn't look much like old Fatty. There's a bare chance—if we can get him out of the place without being spotted. We can send a message. Got half-a-crown?"

Fortunately a half-a-crown was forthcoming, and the half-a-crown bestowed upon an attendant secured the delivery of a note to "Evan Jones." It was to Evan Jones that Figgins directed it, as, of course, the theatre attendants would not know Fatty under his own name. The two juniors waited eagerly.

In about ten minutes a lad entered the box, and they turned towards him eagerly. But it was not Fatty Wynn.

The lad was a stranger to them—a good-looking lad, with a pale face that told of illness.

"You are the gentlemen who sent me a note?" he asked, looking at them.

"I—I—you— Who are you?" stammered Figgins.

"I am Evan Jones."

"What?"

"Didn't you want to see me?" asked Evan, in surprise.

"I—I wanted to see the chap who was singing the 'Men of Harlech' in Welsh," said Figgins. "He's a pal of ours, and we want to speak to him."

The Welsh lad hesitated.

"Oh, you can send him here!" said Figgins. "We're not going to give him away. We're here to warn him. There's a prefect of St. Jim's in the audience, and he's spotted him, and we want to put him on his guard. Are you a friend of his?"

"He has been a kind and generous friend to me," said Evan, with a troubled look. "I was afraid trouble might come of it. Is he in trouble?"

"He will be expelled from the school if the Head hears of it," said Kerr.

"There's a chance that Monteith hasn't recognised him, and he may get clear yet."

"I understand."

Evan Jones left the box hurriedly, and in a few minutes more Fatty

Wynn arrived, still in his stage costume with the make-up on his face. He looked grimly at his old chums.

"Well?" he said.

"Monteith's here," said Figgins.

"He's seen me?"

"Yes; but I'm not sure that he's recognised you. You must—"

"This is the box, sir," said a voice in the passage outside.

Monteith stepped in.

Figgins' voice died away.

The prefect gazed at the three juniors in silence for a moment.

"What are you doing here, Kerr and Figgins? I needn't ask what Wynn is doing."

"We came to warn Fatty," said Figgins desperately.

Monteith shrugged his shoulders.

"I might have guessed that. Wynn, get that foolery off, and come with me at once! All three of you will go before the Head!"

"The sack for three!" said Kerr bitterly.

"I—I'm sorry you chaps came," muttered Fatty Wynn miserably. "I—I never thought— What—what did you come for?"

"Get a move on!" said Monteith quietly.

A quarter of an hour later the three juniors left the Palace with the New House prefect.

Not a word was spoken during the return to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 14.

"Good Old Fatty!"

DR. HOLMES listened in silence while the New House prefect made his report.

Figgins & Co. stood dumb.

Fatty Wynn's plump face was pale and harassed. The "chopper" had come down upon him with a vengeance, but what troubled him most was that he had dragged his chums down with him.

Outside the study there were anxious juniors in the passage. Tom Merry & Co. had seen the three juniors marched in by the prefect, and they knew that Fatty Wynn had been bowled out at last. It was the "sack" for Fatty—there was no doubt about that—but they were more anxious about Figgins and Kerr.

"Figgay and Kerr are stickin' to him, you know," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sadly. "I pwesume that Monteith found them there with the fat boundah. It will be howwid if they get the choppah, too. That fat duffah ought to be swagged!"

"He's going to be scagged, you bet!" said Levison. "Some ass has been talking, and it's all come out. He's only got himself to thank."

"He's got to thank you, you miserable cad!" said Tom Merry fiercely. "If you hadn't spied on him this wouldn't have come out!"

"He shouldn't be a blackguard, then," said Levison sullenly. "If he hadn't put on airs, I shouldn't have bowled him out. It serves him right!"

"We'll jolly well swag Levison for spyin', anyway!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Whose this?"

The juniors stared at the lad who was hurrying down the passage, followed by Toby, the page, who looked excited.

Levison uttered an exclamation.

"That's the chap I saw him with!" he ejaculated. "My hat! What has he come here for?"

"He doesn't look much like your description of him," growled Blake. "He looks decent enough."

It was Evan Jones. "I tells you, you can't see the 'Ead," Toby was expostulating. "The 'Ead is engaged now, and if you don't stop—"

"Where is your headmaster?" asked Evan, addressing the juniors generally. "I must see him."

"He's busy now," said Tom Merry. "There's his study. But—"

"Is Wynn with him?"

"Yes."

"Has he—has he been punished?"

"He's getting it in the neck now," said Blake; "and if you're the chap who led him into making an ass of himself—"

"He did it for my sake," said Evan. "I must see the Head. He ought not to be punished; he has only been doing me a good turn."

"You've got something to say to the Head to help him out?" asked Tom Merry, his face brightening up.

"Yes; at least, I hope so."

"Come this way, then."

Tom Merry led the Welsh lad to the door of the Head's study, tapped, and opened it.

Evan Jones went in, leaving the door open.

Dr. Holmes glanced at the stranger in surprise.

Figgins & Co. stared at him, and Monteith frowned.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Who is this?"

Evan came eagerly forward, his face crimson.

"You are the headmaster, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. But what—"

"Then I must tell you—"

"I cannot see you now," said Dr. Holmes. "Pray retire at once. If you wish to speak to me, I will see you later."

"I must speak, sir. It's about Wynn."

"Oh," said the Head, "you mean that you know something of this disgraceful affair?"

Evan's lip quivered.

"There is nothing disgraceful in it, sir, as far as Wynn is concerned." Outside the half-open door, the juniors were hanging on Jones' eager words. "David has only been kind to me—too kind for his own good. If you let me explain, you will see that he was not to blame."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

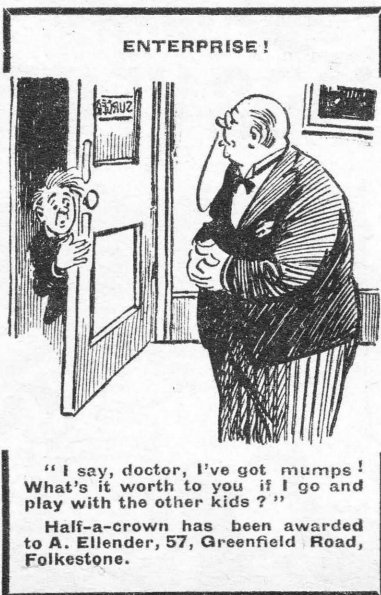
"Wynn has been guilty of frequenting a low and disreputable place, strictly out of bounds for the boys of this school," he said sternly. "He has even appeared on the stage there. There is nothing to be said in his defence. Wynn, who is this boy?"

"Evan Jones, sir," said Wynn. "He is the son of my father's chauffeur at home."

"Let me explain, sir," said Evan.

"You may speak, but it is useless."

"Wynn has only helped me when I was in distress, sir," said Evan, in a faltering voice. "I am a singer, sir; and it is not my fault that I have to sing in such places as the Palace. I cannot choose. But what I do, sir, look you, you could find no fault with. I sing the national songs of Wales. They say I have a good voice; and the people like to hear a good song sometimes, even in a programme that is full of nonsense and worse. I had an engagement to appear at the Palace to give a Welsh song in each house and each matinee. But I became ill, and I could not appear. Wynn came to see me in my lodgings in



Wayland. My father is Mr. Wynn's chauffeur, sir, and Mr. Wynn had asked him to see me when I was near the school."

The Head's expression changed a little.

The quiet earnestness of the Welsh lad had made an impression upon him.

"Go on, my boy," said Dr. Holmes quietly.

"Wynn found me ill in my lodgings, sir. He knew that I was poor, and that I could not afford to lose the money for my engagement at the Palace, but I had no choice. He offered to take my place until I was well enough to appear."

"To take your place?" said the Head.

"Yes. Wynn is a better singer than I am, and he could do my turn as well as I could. I did not realise at first the risk he would be running in coming to such a place. I am used to such places," said Evan bitterly. "I was very glad to be helped out of my difficulty. The manager was agreeable. He did not want to cut the item, and when he heard Wynn sing he was satisfied. Of course, it is not an important item on the programme."

"It was not till later that I understood the risk that Wynn would be running. He did not tell me at first," said Evan. "But—but I was glad he could do me that service, for without my pay from the Palace I could not pay for my lodging in Wayland, or the doctor's bill. He could only appear in the matinees, and the first house. The item had to be cut in the second house, and for that half my fee was docked, but Wynn saved the rest for me. My engagement ends to-day. This matinee was the last time I should have appeared. Wynn has saved me from an awkward position—and now—"

"I did not know all that, of course, sir," said Monteith, as the Welsh lad paused.

Figgins squeezed Fatty Wynn's plump arm.

"You fat boulder! Why didn't you tell us all that?" he whispered.

"I—I hope you will pardon Wynn, sir," went on Evan. "He has only been generous to a fellow who was in distress. He came to the Palace simply to sing. He has done nothing else there. You cannot suspect that he has done anything wrong."

"This certainly gives the matter a different appearance," said the Head quietly. "I accept your statement, Master Jones. You have acted very foolishly, Wynn—"

"Yes, sir!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"But you were prompted by a generous impulse. As this boy is evidently quite respectable, and as he is the son of your father's chauffeur, you doubtless felt that he had a claim on you."

"We've known each other all our lives, sir," said Fatty Wynn, "and—and it was so jolly to meet somebody to talk Welsh to again. And—and there was no harm in it, sir. I—I meant it to be a secret, and—and I didn't even tell my chums, so that they wouldn't get mixed up in it; though they thought badly of me when they found out where I was going—"

"I am not surprised at that," said the Head dryly. "You should have asked permission, Wynn—"

"But—but it wouldn't have been given, sir."

"Ahem!" The Head coughed. "No; certainly it would not have been given. However, as you seem to have erred from a generous motive, and perhaps a sense of duty towards a dependant of your family, I shall pardon you—"

"Oh, sir!"

"But you understand that in no circumstances whatever are you to enter that place again."

"Of course not, sir. You couldn't think I like a show like that?" said Wynn, a little indignant.

The Head coughed again.

"Master Jones, I am glad that you have come here and made this explanation. I trust you will—ahem!—soon find an opening for your talents in a more delectable quarter. Wynn, I shall pardon you on the understanding that you do nothing of the kind again. As for you, Figgins and Kerr, it appears that you deliberately intended to prevent your prefect from carrying out his duties."

He looked at Monteith.

"I think they acted thoughtlessly, sir," said Monteith. "If you would overlook that, sir—"

"You hear that, Figgins and Kerr? At the request of your prefect, I shall overlook your conduct. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

Figgins & Co. quitted the study promptly, Fatty Wynn putting his arm through that of Evan Jones. To their surprise, they found themselves surrounded in the passage by a mob of gleeful juniors, who crowded round Fatty Wynn to thump him on the back.

"You fat boundah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "Why didn't you tell us all about it?"

"You fat spoofer!" said Tom Merry.

"The wotah left us under a very sewious misappwehension. Howevah, you fellows will wemembah that I told you all along that Wynn was all wight."

"Ha, ha, ha! I don't remember."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You silly ass!" said Figgins to his fat chum. "You ought to have told us; you know that."

"I couldn't tell you," said Fatty Wynn morosely. "The Head's taken it very decently through Evan coming here. I didn't expect anything of the kind. I expected the chopper if it came out; and you fellows would have got it, too, if you'd been parties to it. And after you called me a blackguard, I wouldn't tell you, so there!"

"We didn't!" howled Figgins and Kerr simultaneously.

"You jolly well did—or you as good

(Continued on page 28.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

THE FIRST "PUBLIC PERFORMANCE" OF THE GREYFRIARS VENTRILOQUIST BRINGS THE HOUSE DOWN!

THE GREYFRIARS VENTRILOQUIST!



As Bunter started to make a buzzing sound in an attempt to "throw" his voice, the people near him all looked round. "Stop that row!" said a fat gentleman in the row behind, tapping Bunter on the shoulder. "You're spoiling the show!" The Greyfriars ventriloquist's performance in public was not a success!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Having had no success as a hypnotist and thought-reader, Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove takes up ventriloquism. So that he can obtain lessons from a ventriloquist performing in Friardale, Bunter wheedles a loan of three shillings out of Harry Wharton. He declares that he will pay Wharton one hundred per cent interest on the loan; but Harry treats it as a joke, knowing full well that he will be lucky if he sees his three shillings again.

Bulstrode, the Remove bully, learns from Bunter that the fat junior has borrowed money from Wharton at a high interest, and determines to make trouble for his enemy.

Bunter goes to Friardale about his lessons, but spends all the money in the tuckshop. He is lucky enough to meet Monsieur Dupont, the ventriloquist, and the latter agrees to give the junior lessons for nothing if Bunter will bring a crowd of Greyfriars fellows to his entertainment.

Meanwhile, Bulstrode, having failed to entice Levison to report Wharton for moneylending, goes to Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, himself.

(Now read on.)

Levison's Warning!

"A A-A-A-Ah!"
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
 "Ah-ah-aaah!"
 "My hat, he's at it again!"
 "Ah-a-a-a-a-ah!"

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove at Greyfriars, was certainly at it again. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank

Nugent, and Hurree Singh were coming into Study No. 1 for tea, and they found Bunter, with his mouth open, his face as red as a lobster, and a long-drawn "Ah" proceeding from his throat.

"Tea ready?" asked Wharton.

"Ah-a-a-a-a-ah!"

"Cheese it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You must be tired of ventriloquism by this time; and if you're not, we are!"

"Ah-a-a-a-a-ah!"

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

"Of all the fatheads!" said Nugent.

"A-a-a-ah!"

"The fatheadedness is terrific!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"A-a-a-ah!"

Bob Cherry seized the cheerful ventriloquist by the shoulder and shook him violently. Billy Bunter's "Ah-a-a-ah!" ended in a choked gasp.

"I say, Cherry, hold on—I mean, let go! Groo—I wish you wouldn't shake me like that. You might make my spectacles fall off, you know, and if they broke, you would have to pay for them!"

"Shut up that row, then!"

"It's not a row. It's the ventriloquial drone."

"Well, this isn't a beehive. Blessed if it isn't worse than the ventriloquial grunt!" said Bob Cherry, in disgust.

"What are you going to have next?"

"I shall start voice-throwing shortly."

"I shall start Bunter throwing out of the study if you don't keep a muzzle on that ventriloquial groan!" said Bob Cherry darkly.

"It's not the ventriloquial groan. It's the ventriloquial drone."

"I don't care whether it's a groan or a drone. Why isn't tea ready?"

"Tea? I'm sorry—"

"Where's the grub?"

"I'm sorry, you fellows, but I forgot all about it."

"You forgot all about it!" exclaimed Nugent. "You forgot all about a meal! Now, don't be funny, Bunter!"

"Really, Nugent. I was busy with my experiments in producing the ventriloquial drone. I've had a lesson from Monsieur Dupont—"

"Monsieur Dupont will get scragged if he starts you making a row like that. What we want is our tea."

"I'm sorry—"

"Let's go and have it in Hall," said Harry Wharton. "It's close on tea-time, and I don't mind for once."

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Nugent. "But I gave Bunter some tin to get some things for tea with."

"I've got them," said Billy Bunter. "They're in the cupboard. But you needn't worry about them. I can manage the lot easily."

"I dare say you could, you young comorant, but you're not going to have the chance," said Nugent, opening the

MORE ROLLICKING FUN WITH BILLY BUNTER AND HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN THEIR EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.

cupboard. "Good! Cold sausages, ham, and jam. We can get tea ourselves. This will be all right."

"I'll warm up the sausages in a few minutes," said Bunter. "I'll light the fire in a jiffy—"

"No, you won't! We'll make this do. Cherry can cut down to the shop and get some ginger-pop instead of tea."

"Right-ho! said Bob Cherry. "Tin!"

"Give him some tin, somebody!"
"I shall have great pleasure in standing the esteemed shilling," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Good! Cut off, Bob!"

"I'll be back in two ticks," said Bob. And he hastened away. Nugent and Wharton brought the eatables out on the table. Billy Bunter watched them disapprovingly.

"I say, you fellows, much better have the sausages warmed up, with some bacon, and make a decent feed of it," he said.

"Rats!" said Nugent.

"Well, I suppose I may as well go on with my ventriloquial practice," said Bunter.

"I suppose you'd better not."

"Why not?"

"Because you'll very likely die suddenly if you do."

"I say, Nugent—"

"Shut up!"

"Look here! I'm anxious to get on with my lessons. I've had one lesson from Monsieur Dupont, and there's another coming to-morrow. I want to be prepared."

"Go and practise in the box-room, then."

"You chaps will scoff all the tommy while I'm gone, I expect."

"Then stay where you are, and shut up!"

"A-a-a-ah!"

"Hold your row!"

"A-a-a-ah!"

Bunter's mouth was open, his expression fixed. He was fairly going again. Nugent picked up a sausage from the dish, stepped quickly towards the amateur ventriloquist, and jammed it into his mouth.

"A-a-a-ow-ow-ow-wow!"

Bunter gasped and spluttered.

"Ow-w-v-wow! What was that? You beast!"

"Only a sausage," grinned Nugent. "You're fond of them, too."

"You beast! You nearly choked me!"

"I'll give you choke, if you don't stop that row! We're getting fed-up with your ventriloquism."

"If I keep on, I shall soon be able to throw my voice—"

"I wish you'd throw it away and get a new one!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Pass the ham, Inky! You don't eat it. Here's some bananas for you. I wonder how long that ass Cherry is going to be with that ginger-beer?"

"Here I am!" said Cherry, entering the study as Nugent was speaking. "Just in time to hear that ass Nugent!"

"Well, you are an ass, you know. Keep an eye on Bunter, will you, and if he starts groaning again, give him something to groan for!"

"You bet!"

"I suppose I may as well have tea, then," said Bunter sulkily. "I must say you fellows don't back a chap up when

he's trying to bring credit on the study. Pass the sausages. It will be awfully good fun when I'm a full-blown ventriloquist. Pass the ham. I shall be able to make voices come from all sorts of unlikely places, and play all sorts of little games in the class-room. Pass the butter. Then there's the Upper Fourth fellows. I shall be able to get some fun out of Temple, Dabney & Co. Pass the ginger-pop."

"Why don't you practise the thing in secret, and spring it on us as a sudden surprise?" said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "That would be much better for all concerned."

"I say, you fellows, speaking of ventriloquism, I've seen that Dupont chap in Friardale, and he's given me a ticket for his performance to-night, as a brother ventriloquist."

"Good! You won't be home this evening, then?"

"Really, Cherry, that's rather a nasty way to put it. But, as a matter of fact, I want all you fellows to come."

"On the same ticket?"

"Oh, no!"

"Can you pass us in on the strength of being a brother ventriloquist?"

"I'm afraid not. You will have to pay, but you can go in the shilling seats, if you like. I want a dozen fellows to come."

"What for?"

"Well, it's a jolly good show, you know. I'm sure you'll all enjoy it."

~~~~~

*When Billy Bunter starts to throw his voice about it nearly results in the Greyfriars ventriloquist being thrown out of the theatre!*

~~~~~

Wingate will give you a pass out, if you like."

"Not good enough," said Nugent.

"But you really must come," urged Bunter. "As a matter of fact, I've answered for you to Monsieur Dupont."

"Like your cheek!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Well, the fact is, Monsieur Dupont is only giving me the lessons because I've promised to get him some support from Greyfriars," confessed Billy Bunter.

"Aren't you paying him?"

"You know jolly well that I haven't any money, and I can't afford to keep on borrowing it of Wharton at sixty thousand per cent per annum."

"What about the three bob you had this afternoon?"

"I felt so hungry when I got to Friardale that I thought I'd better have a snack. That swallowed up the three bob."

"If it costs you three bob for a snack, I'd like to know how much you'd give for a square meal," said Bob Cherry. "You ought to have brought the tin back to Wharton if you didn't want it for the purpose he lent it for. I'm afraid you want a lesson in honesty, Bunter."

"I'm paying Wharton a high interest—"

"Oh, cheese it! Hallo, Levison!"

Levison came into the study. Harry Wharton made room for him at the table, but he shook his head.

"No, I haven't come to tea. I want

to speak to you, Wharton. I suppose I may as well speak before these chaps. Of course, there's nothing in it."

"Nothing in what?" asked Harry, puzzled.

"Bulstrode has got hold of a yarn that you're starting in the moneylending line, and lending out money at interest in the Remove."

Harry laughed.

"I owe that to you, Bunter," he said. "Oh, I say, Wharton, I tried to keep it a secret, but Bulstrode pulled my ear, you know. But he promised to keep it dark—at least, I asked him to."

"You young ass!" said Harry indignantly. "There's nothing to keep dark."

"I suppose there's nothing in it, is there?" said Levison, looking surprised. "Of course there isn't," said Harry.

"I gave this young ass three shillings, and—"

"You lent it me, Wharton—"

"Shut up! I gave him three shillings, and he's worked up a yarn that he's going to pay me out of a postal order that's not coming—"

"My postal order's coming to-morrow morning. I'm giving Wharton six bob out of it in return for the three he lent me; that's cent per cent—"

"Of course, it's all rot about the postal order," said Harry. "I gave him the money. I'm not responsible for the nonsense he talks about the school."

"I say, Wharton—"

"Oh, I see!" said Levison. "I thought it would work out something like that. But Bulstrode is quite certain he's got something up against you."

Harry Wharton laughed carelessly. "Well, let him make the most of it."

"I thought I'd drop you a hint—"

"Thanks, Levison! It's kind of you, especially as—"

"Especially as you never expected a decent action from me," said Levison coolly. "You're right. But I thought I'd warn you. I haven't forgotten yet what you did for me on top of the Black Pike, you know. But that isn't all. Bulstrode is trying to fox it up for somebody to inform Mr. Quelch that you're practising usury."

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Bulstrode is going the right way to get a thick ear, and no mistake."

"I thought I'd tell you, in case anything comes of it," said Levison. "That's all. I fancy Bulstrode means mischief."

And, with a nod to the chums of the Remove, he walked out of the study.

The Famous Four looked at one another and then at Billy Bunter very expressively.

"I suppose he ought to be slaughtered," said Bob Cherry, reaching out for the bread knife in an absent-minded sort of way.

Billy Bunter jumped up so quickly that he knocked his chair over backwards.

"I say, you fellows, I couldn't help Bulstrode knowing—and he said he'd keep it dark. I don't suppose Wharton will get expelled. Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"Hold him, Nugent! I've never killed a pig before, but—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Catch him, Inky!"

"The catchfulness is terrific."

Billy Bunter dodged and darted to the door.

"I say, you fellows——" he gasped.
"Collar him!" shouted Bob Cherry, brandishing the knife.

The fat junior gave one terrified blink round, and then scuttled away down the passage like a frightened rabbit.

He left the chums of the Remove roaring with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sound of laughter echoed down the passage and reached the ears of Billy Bunter as he paused and clung to the banisters to take breath, but it was some time before the Owl of the Remove was reassured.

Bunter Manages It!

"I SAY, Wingate!"

The captain of Greyfriars stopped and looked down at the fat junior.

"Well?" he said crisply.

"Can you let us have some passes to-night?"

"How many do you want?" asked Wingate, staring.

"Thirteen, please."

The Sixth Former laughed.

"Why don't you say thirty, Bunter? Are you taking a party out to tea—or what?"

"No; we've had tea," said Bunter. "There's a show in Friardale; a ventriloquist chap is giving it, and I've got a ticket."

"Show up," said the captain of Greyfriars concisely.

"Oh, really, Wingate! That's almost like doubting my word, you know."

"If you don't show me the ticket——"

"Here it is."

Wingate glanced at the ticket presented to the amateur ventriloquist by Monsieur Dupont and nodded.

"That's all right. Come to my study and you can have a pass. Of course, you'll have to be in by bed-time."

"Thanks awfully, Wingate! But I've promised to take a dozen fellows, and I thought you would let us all have passes."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Wingate. "Still, it's a harmless entertainment, and if you're back by nine I suppose I can stretch a point. Who are the fellows going with you?"

"Wharton, Cherry, Inky, Nugent, and——"

"Well, who else?"

"Lemme see. Hazeldene, Desmond, Skinner, Russell, Smith, Price——"

"That's only ten."

"And Hoffman and Meunier."

"Good! I suppose Wharton will be responsible for the lot of you; but I shall have to speak to your Form-master. Wait for me in my study, and I'll ask Mr. Quelch."

"I say, that's awfully good of you, Wingate!"

"Yes; I suppose it is," assented Wingate. "But it will be something to be rid of thirteen troublesome youngsters for the evening."

"Oh, really, Wingate——"

The captain of Greyfriars walked away.

Bunter stepped into his study, and waited for him rather anxiously.

Wingate came along in five minutes.

"It's all right," he said. "Mr. Quelch has given permission, and here's your pass, signed by both of us. Tell Wharton I hold him responsible for the party."

"Certainly, Wingate!"

"And now cut along!"

Bunter, who had effected his purpose, cut along willingly enough. He

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,530.

re-entered Study No. 1, looking just a little nervous. But he was relieved to find that the chums of the Remove looked quite good-tempered, and that the bread knife had been put away.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry held up his hand.

"No more of your ventriloquism, Bunter. The bread knife's handy."

"I wasn't going to ventriloquise——"

"What do you mean by yarning to Bulstrode about moneylending, you young ass?"

"I didn't yarn to him. He screwed it out of me. But that isn't what I was going to speak to you about. Are you fellows coming to Dupont's show to-night?"

"Yes; if you treat us," grinned Nugent.

"I'm sorry; I can't do that. I'm stony, and shall be till my postal order comes, and then that will have to go to Wharton to pay him the principal and interest on that loan——"

"Will you get off that?"

"Certainly; but that's the fact, you know. I'm stony, or I'd be willing to treat the lot of you; but, as it is, you will have to buy the tickets."

"Not good enough."

"It's a ripping show!"

"How do you know?"

"Monsieur Dupont says so—and I suppose he ought to know, as he gives it. The fact is, I've promised for you."

"You were a little bit previous, my son."

"Well, of course, you needn't come if you don't want to, but Wingate will feel a bit annoyed after all the trouble he's taken."

The Famous Four stared at Billy Bunter.

"Wingate!" said Harry Wharton.

"What on earth has Wingate got to do with it? And how has he taken any trouble in the matter?"

"He's given me a pass for a dozen fellows to go down to the village with me this evening, and if you don't go he'll think you're jolly well ungrateful, that's all, and you won't get a pass again in a hurry. He had to go and ask Mr. Quelch for it."

"You—you young villain! Have you asked him for a pass in our names?" demanded Nugent.

"Of course I have, or you wouldn't have come. Here it is, and if you don't use it, Wingate will feel annoyed."

Harry Wharton glanced at the pass.

"This is for thirteen fellows."

"Yes; I'm going to take a dozen."

"Have all the others agreed to come?"

"I haven't asked them yet, but I suppose they'll come. If any of them can't afford the bob admission, Inky can treat them, as he's got lots of money. That will make it quite simple."

"The simplefulness is terrific!"

"You young ass!"

"I don't see why you should call me names for arranging an evening's harmless amusement for you."

"Well, most of the chaps will be glad to have an evening out, I suppose, but precious few of them will stand a shilling for the show, I imagine."

"I don't think meanness ought to be encouraged."

"We're not so rich as you, Bunter," remarked Nugent dryly. "And we can't all draw ad lib on Wharton and Inky."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"I suppose we may, as well go,"

said Harry thoughtfully. "Wingate would feel a little peeved if we declined his pass, after he's taken so much trouble, and we couldn't explain that it was that young ass making a duffer of himself as usual. It's jolly good of Wingate. Bunter ought to have a licking!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"But what about these other fellows?"

"I don't suppose they'll all go——"

"I should have the great pleasurefulness in standing the esteemed treat to my honourable Form fellows," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "At the present moment I have received the excellent remittance, and the cashfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That will make a difference, I suppose, Inky. Bunter had better go round and collect his recruits——"

"Wouldn't it be better for you to do that, Wharton?" suggested Bunter.

"The fellows would be more likely to accept your invite than mine. I forgot to mention, that Wingate told me to tell you that he regarded you as responsible for the party."

"Anything else you forgot to mention?"

"No; I think not. As you're responsible for the lot, and Inky is going to pay for admission, I think you fellows might see to the rest of it, while I get in a little ventriloquial practice. A-a-ah!"

"Cheese it!"

"A-a-a-ah!"

"If you 'A-a-a-ah' again," shouted Bob Cherry, "I'll——"

"Well, the next exercise is to do the ventriloquial drone on a different vowel," said Billy Bunter. "I'll 'Oh' next. Oo-o-o-oh!"

"That's as bad as the other."

"Ee-e-e-e!"

"My only hat! Let's get out of this. I shall commit Buntericide if I stay here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

And the chums of the Remove went out, leaving the ventriloquist in possession of the study, and droning to his heart's content.

It did not take Harry Wharton long to make up the party for Friardale. When the Removites learned that Hurree Singh was willing to stand the admission, they had no objection to going. In fact, they were delighted. An evening out was uncommon to members of the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars.

The juniors prepared to leave in good time to allow for the walk to Friardale and to be early at the ventriloquial entertainment. Billy Bunter was interrupted in the midst of his ventriloquial droning and dragged away, and the party set out for the village.

"It's rather a long walk," Billy Bunter remarked, as they left the gates of Greyfriars and went down the lane.

"Why didn't you remind me to whistle for a cab?" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I was thinking that——"

"Would you like me to carry you?"

"Oh, really——"

"I'll take you by your ankles if you like and sling you over my back!"

Billy Bunter dodged round the other side of the procession, in case Bob Cherry should carry out his obliging offer.

"I don't mean that, Cherry. What I mean is that we shall be awfully thirsty when we get to the village, and we shall pass Uncle Clegg's shop——"

"Of course we shall pass it," said Skinner. "We shan't have time to go in."

"I was thinking that if Inky had any

money left he might stand some ginger-pop." "Then you'd better leave off thinking," said Harry Wharton. "Shut up and come on." "But, really, Wharton—" "Shut up!" And Bunter did, at last.

Bulstrode the Accuser!

"WELL, Bulstrode?" Mr. Quelch's look was rather disconcerting as he jerked out the words. The master of the Remove had keen eyes, which someone had compared to gimlets, and certainly they seemed to Bulstrode at that moment to go right through him. The bully of the Remove hesitated and coloured uneasily. For the moment he wished that he had not come to the Remove master's study. But it was too late to retreat now. "If you please, sir, I have something of very great importance to say—" "Very well, say it!" "It's rather a serious matter, sir. I'm speaking from a sense of duty, but I know that that some of the fellows might look on it as sneaking, so—" "One moment," said Mr. Quelch, interrupting him. "If you are going to tell me some tale about your Form-fellows, Bulstrode, I should prefer not to hear it. I would rather that some fault went unpunished than that a boy was encouraged in the mean and cowardly pursuits of a tattler." Bulstrode went crimson. "Oh, if you put it like that, sir—" "Let me finish. If you are about to tell a tale of that kind, go now with it untold. If you have a matter of any real consequence to speak to me about I am ready to listen."

"I don't know whether you'd regard lending out money at interest in the Remove as a matter of any consequence." "What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, with a start. "I won't go on, sir, if you think—" "You must go on now, Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "If any case of that kind has come to your notice you are doing quite right in acquainting me with it. Tell me the particulars." And Mr. Quelch laid down his pen and prepared to listen with evident attention. "The fact is, sir—" "Don't beat about the bush, Bulstrode. Come to the point at once. What is the name of the boy who has been borrowing money at interest?" "Bunter." "Ah, I'm not surprised! And the lender—who must be worse than the borrower in a case like this." "Wharton." The Form-master started. "Wharton?" "Yes, sir." "Impossible." Bulstrode bit his lip. "Very well, sir, if you think it's impossible I've no more to say about the matter," he replied, and he turned towards the door. "Stop! I must hear this out. I must repeat that it seems to me absolutely incredible that a boy of Wharton's character should start such a practice as lending money at interest among his schoolfellows. But the matter will have to be sifted to the bottom now that it has been brought to my notice. I cannot forget, Bulstrode, that it is well known in the school that you are on terms of enmity with Wharton." "I hope you will do me justice enough, sir, to believe that that is not my reason for speaking to you."

"I hope not, Bulstrode. But the charge seems to me incredible. I should require the strongest proofs. What proofs have you?" "Bunter told me all about it. He borrowed three shillings of Wharton, and I saw the money. I know he hadn't any an hour before." "There is nothing in that. Bunter is in the habit, I believe, of borrowing money, and I have punished him for his laxity in such matters already. What reason have you to suppose that Wharton is exacting interest for the loan of the money?" "I have Bunter's word for it, sir." "Did Bunter tell you in so many words that he was paying Wharton interest for the loan of three shillings?" "Yes, sir." "And the amount of interest?" "Cent per cent." "I really cannot credit this, Bulstrode. Where could Bunter obtain the money to pay so exorbitant an interest?" "His people are sending him some money to-morrow, sir. He is to pay six shillings for the three shillings to-morrow." Mr. Quelch's brows darkened. "If this is true, Bulstrode, Wharton has greatly deceived me, and is not at all the boy I believed him to be. But I shall not believe that without sifting the matter thoroughly. I must hear what both Wharton and Bunter have to say. Bring them to my study at once." Bulstrode looked dismayed. "But, sir, I—I—" "Well, what? Speak out." "I thought you'd keep it secret that I had spoken to you." "How is that possible? I must examine Wharton and Bunter on the

matter, or else I cannot get to the truth with any certainty." "The fellows will call it sneaking. You say yourself that I was right in speaking to you if the thing is true, but, whether it's true or not, the chaps in the Remove will call it sneaking, and I shall be sent to Coventry if it gets out." Mr. Quelch pursed his lips thoughtfully. "I suppose you are right, Bulstrode. If you have acted from a sense of duty I should be sorry for any punishment to fall upon you." "It would be hard on me, sir, when I only spoke out for the—the honour of the Form, sir," said Bulstrode. "H'm! Yes. Yet I must sift this matter thoroughly." "Couldn't you do it without mentioning my name, sir? You could have Wharton and Bunter up before you, and it—" "Then surely Bunter will guess that you gave me the information." "Well, Bunter will chatter it to everybody in the Form, sir, and he won't be able to guess who gave him away. I know he's told Price already." "I wish to do you justice, Bulstrode, and I hope that it will prove that you have not been actuated by malice towards Wharton in telling me this," said Mr. Quelch. "Oh, sir!" "If the charge is true, you have done the whole Form a good service. Such a practice should be stamped out without delay. I shall investigate the matter thoroughly." Bulstrode was feeling a little scared by this time. "I—I hope, sir, if it proves to be a mistake, you won't think I—I put it up," he stammered. "I've only



"Knock their heads together, you chaps!" exclaimed Nugent. "That'll teach 'em!" And Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry knocked the heads of Hoffman and Meunier together with a force that elicited a loud howl from both the foreign juniors.

Bunter's word to go upon, of course, but I believe him."

"Perhaps you were very ready to believe anything against Wharton?"

"Bunter couldn't have made up a yarn like that, sir. He hasn't sense enough. He always misunderstands and exaggerates, but he never tells outright lies. Any fellow in the Form could tell you that."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"I have not the slightest doubt that I shall be able to extract the truth from Bunter," he said. "If the charge is true, Bunter will be flogged and Wharton expelled. If it is not true, I shall be guided by the circumstances in judging whether you have spoken from a sense of duty, Bulstrode, or whether you have made a false and malicious accusation against a boy whom you dislike."

"If you please, sir—"

"Enough now. I will see Wharton and Bunter a little later, so as not to mix your name up in the matter if you are innocent of intending harm. You may go now, Bulstrode."

"Very good, sir!"

And the bully of the Remove left the study.

He left Mr. Quelch frowning darkly, with a very worried look on his face. The bully of the Remove caught it as he closed the door, and he grinned savagely as he went down the passage. He quite understood what was passing in the Remove master's mind.

"He doesn't like to find this out about his favourite," murmured Bulstrode. "But it's true—he can't get out of that—it's true. Even if Bunter made up the yarn, he can't blame me for believing it. Price believes it, too. They can't hurt me, however it turns out. And if it turns out as I expect, Wharton will be expelled. Serve him jolly well right, too."

The worried look deepened on Mr. Quelch's face when he was alone. He took up his pen and dipped it in the ink, and then laid it down again with-

out putting it to paper. His brows were darkly contracted.

"It is impossible!" he muttered. "If it is true, I have been greatly deceived in Wharton. I had come to regard him with absolute confidence; to feel that I could rely upon him more than any other boy in the Form. It would be a great blow to find that I had been deceived in him."

And Mr. Quelch strove to dismiss the matter from his mind, but without much success.

Bunter Improves the Show!

"HERE we are!" said Bob Cherry.

The party from Greyfriars halted. The red brick building, dignified by the title of town hall, was before them. It was lighted up, and several large posters on boards outside notified the public of Friardale that Monsieur Dupont, the famous ventriloquist, who had performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, was giving a marvellous ventriloquial entertainment there for six nights only.

"Doesn't seem to be much of a crowd," said Nugent.

He was right. Besides themselves, there were only two boys and a little girl going in. Friardale folk did not seem to admire ventriloquial entertainments so much as, according to Monsieur Dupont, the royalties of Europe did.

"I suppose we shall be most of the audience," said Bob Cherry. "Never mind, we'll cheer as if we were on the football field, and give him a leg up!"

"Good idea!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Come in, then," said Skinner. "Inky goes first, as he's doing the paying."

"The pleasurefulness of the honourable payfulness is great."

"Both sides equally pleased, then," grinned Skinner. "Cut on."

"I say, you fellows, are you going in the five-shilling seats?"

"You young ass! Do you think Inky is going to spring a small fortune on this show?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Shilling seats are good enough for us, and too good for you."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Cheese it, and come on!"

"But, I say, you fellows, Dupont is giving me lessons free of charge because I'm bringing him customers, you know, and the more you pay the better he'll treat me in the matter of lessons."

"Tat is vat I calls cool," remarked Fritz Hoffman. "Inky pays te money, and Punter takes te lessons, ain't it?"

"Well, you see, Hoffy—"

"I zink zat Buntair take ze cake for ze cheek," observed Adolphe Meunier. "I agree for vunce viz zat Sherman rottair."

"Vat you calls me, ain't it?"

"Sherman rottair!"

"I tink tat I gif you te licking—"

"I zink zat no Sherman rottair could lick me!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry seized the French and German juniors just in time to prevent them from closing in deadly combat.

"Cheese it, you foreign fatheads!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Can't you keep from rowing even on a festive occasion like this?"

"I tink—"

"I zink—"

"Oh, shut up, with your tink and zinking!" exclaimed Nugent. "Knock their heads together, you chaps. That'll teach 'em!"

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

And Hoffman's head was knocked against Meunier's with a force that elicited a loud howl from both of them.

"Will you shut up, now, you asses?"

"Ach! I tinks I shuts up, ain't it?"

"Ciel! I zink so, too."

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton.

"Got the tickets, Inky?"

"I have the honourfulness to have taken the esteemed tickets."

"Good! I'll settle about ours later. Let's get in and take good seats!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Don't say anything. I wish you'd learn to throw your voice and throw it away. Come on, and don't jaw!"

There was no difficulty in getting good seats. The building was not too large, but the audience by no means sufficed to fill it. The Greyfriars fellows filled up a front row and made the place look quite lively.

The dull silence of the room was broken by the footfalls at intervals, as some young villager came in quietly, and by subdued voices. But the Greyfriars fellows set up a buzz of conversation that enlivened the place a little.

Then the stage was lighted up, and Monsieur Dupont appeared. There was an audience of about seventy or eighty persons, and of these about twenty were in the expensive seats, and had the indescribable air of people who had come in "on the nod." The rows of sixpenny seats were well patronised.

Monsieur Dupont was in evening dress, a trifle shiny in places, evidently having seen good service in its time. His hair was curlier than when Bunter had seen him in the tuckshop.

He had three ventriloquial figures, representing an old man, an old woman, and a child, and he went through the usual ventriloquial entertainment. He greatly entertained the Friardale folk, who were soon in ecstasies over the squeaky remarks of the old woman and the absurd replies of the old man.

"Funny, isn't it?" said Skinner. "As funny as a funeral."

A Duel between Master-Minds!



RAFFLES V. SEXTON BLAKE

This Book-Length Thriller features two of fiction's greatest characters in stern opposition...

Raffles, with his companion, Bunny Manders, rent a house near the estate of the Earl of Welland, who possesses a famous bracelet, the Fetter of Buddha. The famous gentleman-cracksman intends to acquire it by his usual carefully planned methods, little realising that Sexton Blake is a guest of the Earl. Raffles makes his bid, but finds himself in a terrible jam—with the famous Baker Street investigator as his opponent. Buy this grand story today!



Ask for No. 577 of **SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY 4^D** of all Newsagents

"Never mind; give him a cackle," said the good-natured Bob Cherry.

And he set the example by bursting into a formidable roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Greyfriars fellows played up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monsieur Dupont cast a quick glance towards the audience, much gratified by that roar of laughter which had followed a little joke which the boys had not observed.

Billy Bunter was looking thoughtful.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Don't interrupt the show, Bunty." "I say, Cherry, I was thinking that it isn't very funny, and that I might be able to help him a bit. I've been doing some voice-throwing experiments, and I think I could chip in here all right."

"Don't try."

"But look here, it would be awfully funny, you know, if I made one of the dolls say something the chap didn't mean it to say."

"Now look here, Bunter, you're harmless so long as you're quiet. Keep quiet."

"But really, Cherry—"

"Shut up!"

Billy Bunter shut up, but he did not give up his idea. Like most beginners in any art, he was impatient to get to the end before he had mastered the beginning. After a day's practice at the ventriloquian drone, he wanted to start throwing his voice.

He had tried several times in the study, and believed that he had succeeded in making his voice come from different parts of the room. He might never have a chance like this again of performing in public. It was evidently a chance not to be lost.

"I'll make a bee buzz behind Dupont first, and make him turn round," Bunter muttered to himself; and, twisting his mouth into a peculiar position, he started.

He certainly made a buzz like a bee, but, to his surprise, the people sitting near him all looked round and fixed their eyes on him.

"Stop that row!" said a gentleman in the row behind, leaning over and tapping Bunter on the shoulder. "You're spoiling the show."

"Eh?"

"Stop that row, I say!"

"What row?"

"That buzzing row."

Bunter subsided. Even he was feeling a little discouraged. The people near him evidently traced the buzzing to its source.

Bob Cherry gave him a withering look.

"You utter ass! Cheese it, will you?"

"But really, Cherry—"

"If you start again, I'll start on you, so look out!"

"I say, Hoffman, will you change places with me?"

"I tink tat I do nothing of te sort." "Will you change places with me, Meunier?"

"I zink net."

"Quiet there!" said a dozen voices.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

The stout gentleman in the row behind leaned over again, and gave Bunter another tap on the shoulder. Bunter looked round.

"If you don't keep quiet, my boy, I shall have you turned out!" he said warningly. "Just you shut up and don't spoil the show for other people!"

Under this general discouragement, Bunter was silent for a time, and the

entertainment progressed, and approached its conclusion.

But Bunter was not repressible for long. As the ventriloquist was completing the entertainment by making the old woman sing a song in a high falsetto voice, it occurred to Bunter that he could make the old man sing. No sooner was the idea in his head than it was acted upon.

"The more we are together, together, together," trilled the old woman.

"The more we are together the merrier we shall be!"

"The more we are together the merrier we shall be!" came in a bass growl from Bunter.

Unfortunately it was perfectly evident to everybody that the growl came from the fat junior.

The stout gentleman behind leaned forward and caught hold of his plump ear. Bunter yelled and squirmed.

"Shut up!"

"Turn him out!"

"Silence!"

"Go home!"

"Ow! Leggo—leggo! Ow-wow!"

"You young monkey," panted the stout gentleman, "making a row and spoiling other people's pleasure!"

Bunter rubbed his ear ruefully.

"Will you keep quiet now?" muttered Bob Cherry, clapping a hand over his mouth. "Don't move or I'll warn you."

"Goo—goo—goo!"

"Quiet!"

"You're cho-cho-choking me!"

"Well, choke quietly!"

Bob Cherry took a grip on Bunter's arm with his finger and thumb. It only needed a compression to make it a painful pinch, and Bunter thought he had better keep quiet—and he did.

The entertainment concluded, and Bob Cherry released the fat junior.

"Now you can make a row if you like!" he said.

"Really, Cherry—"

"Oh, cheer and don't jaw!"

"Bravo! Ha, ha, ha! Bravo!"

The Greyfriars juniors yelled and clapped, and made Monsieur Dupont come before the curtain three times before they were satisfied. Then they marched out of the town hall, quite pleased with themselves, and leaving Monsieur Dupont very pleased with himself.

"Jolly good!" said Harry Wharton.

"Not bad, anyway."

"I should have improved the show a lot if I had had a chance," said Bunter.

"Ah, there you are!" said the stout gentleman, stopping and scowling at Bunter as he came out. "Young monkey! What you want is a spanking—yes, sir, a spanking!"

And he marched off indignantly.

"Shall we spank him?" said Bob Cherry, looking round.

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

And Bunter was unusually silent during the walk home to Greyfriars.

Bulstrode Sings Small!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir."

"Come into my study before you go to the dormitory."

"Certainly, sir."

"And bring Bunter with you."

Mr. Quelch walked away. Harry Wharton gazed after him, and then looked round at the other Removites.

"Anybody know what's wrong?" he asked.

"Blessed if I do!" said Bob Cherry. "The pass was all right, or Gosling

wouldn't have let us in without reporting us. But Quelch has his back up over something."

"The upfulness of his honourable back is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, I know!" exclaimed Nugent. "You remember what Levison said. Quelch is on the track of that mare's nest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Harry Wharton. "Bulstrode must have given the thing away to him out of spite."

"I say, you fellows—"

"You fatheaded, ventriloquial chump, you ought to be boiled in oil!" said Bob Cherry wrathfully. "See the mischief you've done with your stupidity!"

"It wasn't my fault. If Wharton starts lending money out at interest, he expects to take some risks, I suppose!" "Oh, it's no good talking to him!" said Harry, laughing. "I'd better go and speak to Mr. Quelch. Come on, Bunter! You're in it, too!"

"I say, you fellows, couldn't one of you go instead of me? Quelch is an awfully unreasonable chap, and—"

"Come on!" said Wharton.

And, linking his arm in Billy Bunter's, he marched the fat junior off to the Form-master's study. He found Mr. Quelch there, waiting for him, with a hard and severe face.

"A very serious charge has been made against you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, coming to the point at once. "If it is true, you will have to leave Greyfriars, but the truth will have to be sifted out."

Harry Wharton's face set a little.

"I have done nothing to be ashamed of, sir, that I can remember," he said quietly. "I'm not afraid of an inquiry."

Mr. Quelch's face cleared a little.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Wharton, and I may add that I should be very slow to believe such a charge against you. It is altogether foreign to your character, unless I have been strangely deceived in you."

"Thank you, sir! What am I accused of?"

"Of lending money at interest among the juniors."

Wharton smiled scornfully.

"If I had done anything of the sort, sir, I should deserve to be expelled from Greyfriars. But I haven't."

"From the information that has been given me, it appears that Bunter borrowed three shillings of you at a high rate of interest. Is that the case, Bunter?"

"I—I don't want to give Wharton away, sir!" stammered Billy Bunter.

"Speak out, Bunter!" said Wharton, half-smiling. "I don't mind. Tell Mr. Quelch everything!"

"Oh, very well, if you tell me to!" said Billy Bunter, much relieved.

"Did you borrow three shillings of Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. I—"

"Did you agree to pay him interest for the use of the money?"

"Yes, sir."

"What rate of interest?"

"Sixty thousand per cent per annum, sir."

"What? Don't be ridiculous, Bunter!"

"I—I'm not, sir. I—I agreed to pay Wharton interest at the rate of sixty thousand per cent per annum."

Mr. Quelch turned to Wharton.

"What folly is this, Wharton? Is the whole affair a joke, or did it originate in this boy's incredible stupidity?"

Harry Wharton smiled.

"The latter, sir. If you will allow me to explain—"

"Go on!"

"Bunter asked me to lend him some money. He never pays back a loan, and whenever we give him any money we know it's not a loan, and that we shall never see it again. That's how it was this time. He always refuses to take the money as a gift, but at the same time he never thinks of repaying it, and more than once he has spoken about paying interest. But, as a matter of fact, he has never paid interest on a loan in his life."

"Oh, really, Wharton?"

"As for his six thousand per cent, that's all right. He offered me six shillings for the three, in fifteen hours' time."

"That's at the rate of sixty thousand per cent per annum, sir," ventured Billy Bunter.

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch, who was smiling now. "Continue, Wharton!"

"The loan was to be repaid with the interest when his postal order comes to-morrow morning. Of course, I should have refused an interest, if he ever wanted to pay the debt; but, as a matter of fact, I know he had no postal order coming. His postal order is a standing joke in the Firm. That's all, sir. I gave him the money, and this was about interest is only his nonsense."

"I need hardly say that I believe your statement, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "The sense is quite clear. I have learned something lately of Bunter's ways. Now, Bunter, did Wharton agree in actual words to accept interest?"

"Well, sir—"

"Did he say that he would not accept it?"

"Yes, yes, sir."

"Cannot you see what a ludicrous mistake you have made, due entirely to your own stupidity?"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I am afraid that, as Wharton says, it is useless to argue with you," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go, Bunter."

"Yes, sir; but—"

"But what?"

"Am I to pay Wharton the sixty thousand per cent—?"

"Leave my study at once!"

And Billy Bunter, feeling rather injured, at not having his question answered, left it. Mr. Quelch smiled.

"I am sorry this matter ever arose, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "I see exactly how it was. You may go."

And Wharton quitted the study.

A few minutes later Bulstrode was called into the room. He was met by a stern glance that sent his heart into his shoes.

"Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch, "I have questioned Wharton and Bunter, and I find that the whole matter is mere absurd nonsense, due entirely to

Bunter's crass stupidity. Wharton has not lent any money at interest, and has never thought of doing such a thing. You were utterly mistaken from beginning to end!"

"I—I—" stammered Bulstrode.

"I only hope," said Mr. Quelch severely, "that you were honestly mistaken, and not actuated by petty spite and malice. I fear that you are a boy of a jealous and suspicious disposition. Bulstrode! You may go, but I shall remember this!"

And Bulstrode went.

Harry Wharton rejoined his chums. He found them looking rather anxious. An interview with an angry Form-master was always an uncertain business.

"All right," asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes; it's all cleared up," said Harry, laughing. "But out of my next week's allowance I think I shall buy a muzzle for Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, Quelch says I'm not to pay Wharton that exorbitant interest, and so, when my postal order

comes to-morrow, I shall be able to stand a feed, followed by a ventriloquial entertainment."

"And the ventriloquial entertainment will be followed by a funeral if you start giving it in Study No. 1!" said Bob Cherry darkly.

"That feed did not come off. There was a fresh disappointment about the postal order."

Bunter proposed giving the ventriloquial entertainment all the same, but the proposition was negated in the most emphatic manner.

Four pairs of hands seized the amateur ventriloquist, and four boots at the same time helped him along the passage. Billy Bunter, feeling rather hurt—in a double sense—went up to the box-room to practise the ventriloquial drone.

(More lively fun and laughter with Harry Wharton & Co. next week. Make sure you read: "THE FAMOUS FOUR'S GREAT JAPE!" Order your GEM now.)

comes to-morrow, I shall be able to stand a feed, followed by a ventriloquial entertainment."

"And the ventriloquial entertainment will be followed by a funeral if you start giving it in Study No. 1!" said Bob Cherry darkly.

"That feed did not come off. There was a fresh disappointment about the postal order."

Bunter proposed giving the ventriloquial entertainment all the same, but the proposition was negated in the most emphatic manner.

Four pairs of hands seized the amateur ventriloquist, and four boots at the same time helped him along the passage. Billy Bunter, feeling rather hurt—in a double sense—went up to the box-room to practise the ventriloquial drone.

(More lively fun and laughter with Harry Wharton & Co. next week. Make sure you read: "THE FAMOUS FOUR'S GREAT JAPE!" Order your GEM now.)

comes to-morrow, I shall be able to stand a feed, followed by a ventriloquial entertainment."

"And the ventriloquial entertainment will be followed by a funeral if you start giving it in Study No. 1!" said Bob Cherry darkly.

"That feed did not come off. There was a fresh disappointment about the postal order."

Bunter proposed giving the ventriloquial entertainment all the same, but the proposition was negated in the most emphatic manner.

Four pairs of hands seized the amateur ventriloquist, and four boots at the same time helped him along the passage. Billy Bunter, feeling rather hurt—in a double sense—went up to the box-room to practise the ventriloquial drone.

(More lively fun and laughter with Harry Wharton & Co. next week. Make sure you read: "THE FAMOUS FOUR'S GREAT JAPE!" Order your GEM now.)

THE WAY OF A WELSHMAN!
(Continued from page 21.)

as did!" said Patty Wynn. "I expected you to have a better opinion of a chap you know."

"How were we to guess, you fat diffier?" said Figgins indignantly. "If you'd told us—"

"You know why I didn't tell you."

"Well, you ass, when you left us in the dark—"

"What the dickens could you expect?" said Kerr warmly.

"But what did you two chaps go to the Palace for if you're not friends with Wynn any longer?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Echo answers what for?" chuckled Tom Merry. "Don't argue any more, you three blessed chumps! You're all to blame equally for not confiding the whole matter to me and asking my advice!"

"To me, you mean, Tom Merry. As a fellow of fact and judgment—"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "may I point out to the company that it's tea-time, the supplies in our study are unusually large, and that you have a guest to look after? Who says tea?"

"Tea!" said the juniors together.

And an adjournment was made to Tom Merry's study. Evan Jones—the guest Tom Merry had alluded to—being marched off by Patty Wynn on one side and Figgins on the other.

Over tea in Tom Merry's study every cloud rolled away, and Figgins & Co. were once more on old terms—by-gones were allowed to be by-gones.

Wynn admitted that his serious conduct had led to the misunderstanding, whereupon Figgins and Kerr admitted that they had been asses to misunderstand him. So the hatred was buried deep never to be dug up again.

The rift in the lace was mended at last.

Evan Jones was the guest of honour in Tom Merry's study, and the face of the young singer was very bright and happy.

After tea Tom Merry & Co. all walked home with him, and shook hands with him all round before they parted.

In Figgins' study that evening three merry voices might have been heard. The inseparables were inseparable once more, and every cloud had vanished, thanks to the clearing up of the mystery of Patty Wynn.

(Next Wednesday: "A SON OF SCOTLAND!" Starring Kerr, the Scots junior, and telling of his great fight to save his chum Figgins. It's the story in a thousand! Don't miss it!)

LETTERS TO ADVERTISERS

When sending remittances to advertisers, you should send a postal order or a money order, unless a definite request has been made by the advertiser for stamps to be enclosed. Never send coins with your letter.

Also be sure that your name and full postal address is included in your letter.

60 Different FREE, including Horsman, Selangor, PERAK, Soreh, Alor Star, FELIPPAH, Echani, Doucang, 50 different, Pictorial, Trinidad, ANZAC (Cochin), Postage 2d., request, particulars—**ROBINSON BROS. (A), MORETON, WIRRAL.**

HAVE YOU A RED NOSE?

Send a stamp and you will learn how to rid yourself of such a terrible affliction free of charge!

Address in confidence: T. J. TEMPLE, Specialist, "Palace House," 128, Shaftesbury Avenue, LONDON, W.1. (1681, 35 years)

300 DIFFERENT, incl. Airmail, Beau Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course 5/- Details: L. A. STEBBING, 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2

SHYNESS, "NERVES," Self-Consciousness, Worry

STAMPS

BLUSHING

TALL

Your Height increased in 12 days or no cost. New discovery aids 2.5 ins. I gained 4 ins. Guaranteed sale. Full course 5/- Details: J. B. MORLEY, 17, Cheapside, London, E.C.2