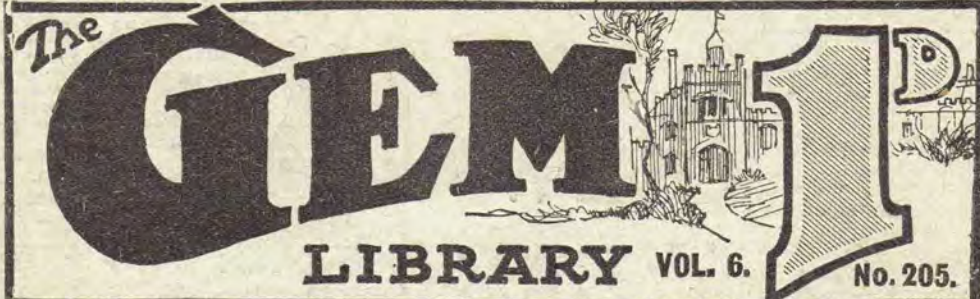


"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
"WINGS OF GOLD!" and **A GRAND COMPETITION.**

By Sidney Drew.

Choose Your Own Prizes.



"I—I can hardly believe that you mean to go without giving me away," muttered Levison. "I suppose you mean it? I know you do. I wish I could save you. I wish— But what's the good of wishing? If I say a word I shall have to go in your place. I can't face it. But—but—I'd like you to say that you forgive what I've done, D'Arcy, before you go." There was a long pause. "Vewy well," said D'Arcy, with an effort. "I forgive you, if that's what you want. Twy to be a more decent chap in the future, Levison." "I—I will!" muttered Levison.

(A dramatic incident in the splendid complete school tale inside.)

NEW BOOKS

FOR THE

NEW YEAR!

Three New Additions to

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^D. LIBRARY.

Now on Sale!

No. 178:

"Pete's Emigrants."

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the thrilling adventures of the famous comrades—Jack, Sam, and Pete. By S. CLARKE HOOK.

No. 179:

"Under the Southern Cross."

A Grand, Complete Adventure Tale, introducing "The Three R's." By REGINALD WRAY.

No. 180:

"Paddy Leary's Schooldays."

A Splendid, Complete Tale of School Life. By T. C. BRIDGES.

Ask always for

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^D. LIBRARY.

ART FRETWORK

Fretwork is the most fascinating and certainly the most popular of all home hobbies. It is easily accomplished, and magnificent results are obtainable after a few hours' practice. As a

SPECIAL OFFER

we have made up a special advertisement parcel of our famous fretwork designs, consisting of eight sheets, which includes about eighteen designs packed in a strong permanent art portfolio. We will send one to each applicant who sends 3d. stamps to cover cost of postage and packing.



HOBBIES LTD

Dept. 37

DERHAM.

TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL

PACKED FREE. CARRIAGE PAID.

MEAD Coventry Flyers

Warranted Fifteen Years. Puncture-Proof or Dunlop Tyres; Coasters, Speed Gears; latest improvements, &c.

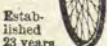
From £2. 15s. CASH OR EASY PAYMENTS.

500 Shop-sold and Second-hand Cycles from 15s.

Write for Free Art Catalogue and Special Offer on Sample Machine. Agents wanted at once.

MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. 233K

11, Paradise Street, LIVERPOOL.



Established 23 years.

POPULAR BOOKS. (Written by Experts.)—"Boxing" illus.; "Conjuring," illus.; "Tricks with Cards," illus.; "Handcuff and Gaol Breaking Mystery Exposed," illus.; "Ventriloquism" Really explained; "The Great Reading Exposed" only 4d. each; lot 14, carr. paid.—Porritt, Publishers, Walmersley Rd., Bury, Lancs.

REMARKABLE GIFT!! TO ALL FRETWORKERS.

Send 2d. stamps for postage on our Gift Parcel to Fretworkers, which contains: (1) Our Book, "Fretwork"; (2) Large 6d. Design for Handsome Article of Fretwork Furniture; (3) Novel Design for Fretwork Steeplechase; (4) Great Illustrated Catalogue of Penny Designs. ALL FREE. The 2d. is for the postage. Apply to-day to

NATIONAL FRETWORKERS' ASSOCIATION, (Desk 35), 57, Farringdon Road, London.

SPORT.—The Sure Shot Catapult, entirely new design, with supply of shot, 1/-, post free.—WICKS BROS., NORWICH.

BLUSHING.

FREE, to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to Mr. D. TEMPLE (Specialist), 8, Blenheim Street, Bond Street, London, W.

6/6 each



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Will kill birds and rabbits up to 50 yards. Noiseless Ball Cartridges, 9d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. 100 birds or rabbits may be killed at a cost of 9d. only. Send for list. CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, Whittall Street, BIRMINGHAM.

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Cameras, send postcard for Samples and Catalogue **FREE**—Works: JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

FREE.—As an introduction to other wonderful new novelties, send 4 stamps to defray cost of postage, packing, &c., &c., for which we will send you the greatest, delightful, and most laughable novelty on earth. Thousands already given away.—Address, Messrs. WONDER CO., Novelty Dept., ILKESTON.



A SILVER WATCH FREE

For Postal Order 1s. (or 13 stamps) we will forward a massive 18-ct. Gold Simulation Chain, together with our generous offer of a Solid Silver Watch Free per return post (lady's or gent's). These Watches have solid silver cases, reliable movements, and are guaranteed time-keepers. We are simply giving them away to introduce our goods. —(Dept. C), LONDON SUPPLY STORES, Invicta House, Swancombe, Greenhithe.

SPECIAL OFFER.—Ventriloquism (copyright), success certain, 7d.; Tricks with Cards, 7d.; Conjuring, 7d.; Tricks and Puzzles, 4d.; Book of Magic, 4d.; Boxing, 4d.; Wrestling, 4d.; Book of Tricks, 4d.; lot, 2/-, carr. paid. Catalogue Free.—Messrs. WONDER CO., Publishers, ILKESTON.



6d. DEPOSIT.

This Handsome Phonograph, with large Flower Horn and Two Records, complete, will be sent to any address on receipt of 6d. DEPOSIT and upon payment of the last of 18 weekly instalments of 6d. Two 1/- Records are given free. Send for Price List of Latest Models.

The British Mfg. Co., P 24, Great Yarmouth.

Next
Thursday:

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
Order Your Copy Early.

Every

Thursday.



Complete Stories for All and Every Story a Gem.

HIS FALSE POSITION!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale
of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER 1. Quite Impossible.

"I WEGARD it as imposs.!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, made that statement with an air of having finished the matter. There frequently was a tone of finality in D'Arcy's remarks, which, however, were by no means received as final by his chums in Study No. 6 in the School House.

"I wegard—" went on D'Arcy.

"The question is—" said Blake thoughtfully.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake."

Blake nodded.

"Exactly. The question is, what's going to be done? I'm jolly well not going to stand it any longer, for one!"

"Nor I!" said Digby emphatically.

"Nor I!" said Herries.

And Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell—who had come into the Fourth-Form study to discuss the matter with Blake & Co., nodded their heads in sympathetic agreement.

"We're certainly not going to stand it!" said Tom Merry. "No fear!" said Manners.

"It's impossible!" was Monty Lowther's opinion. "We can't be expected to put up with it! And I'm not going to!"

"Yaaa, wathah!" said D'Arcy, finding an opening again. "As I have remarked, I wegard it as imposs., and I considah—"

"But what's going to be done?" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Of course, it was all Gussy's fault in the first place—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"But that isn't the question now. The facts of the case are these—Monteith has taken it upon himself to rag us, and we're not going to stand it. I don't care whether he's a prefect or not. We're not going to stand it. Why, the fellow isn't even in the School House!" said Tom Merry warmly. "And for chaps like us to be ragged by a New House fellow—well, it's the limit!"

"It's past the limit," said Blake. "Ever since the election—"

"The rotter's been down on us!" said Monty Lowther.

"And although it was Gussy's fault in the first place—"

"Weally, Digby—"

"We're not going to put up with it any longer!" said Digby.

And the juniors collected in Study No. 6, in the Fourth-Form passage in the School House, said, in chorus:

"Hear, hear!"

Feeling was running high among the School House juniors. D'Arcy, doubtless, was the original cause of the trouble, though it was not really exactly correct to say that it was his fault.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, had been called away from the school the previous week, and as it was supposed that he might not return, there had been an election for a new captain. Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, had regarded his chance as a certainty, especially when the rival candidate had withdrawn from the contest. To the surprise of all St. Jim's, a junior had put up for election, and the School House juniors had rallied round him, and succeeded in electing him, and so for a day Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was captain of St. Jim's. Kildare had returned, and D'Arcy had gracefully yielded the command into his hands again. But during his brief period of authority he had made a bitter enemy of Monteith. The New House prefect had opposed him in every way, and D'Arcy had stood

Next Thursday:
"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!" AND "WINGS OF GOLD!"

No. 205 (New Series.) Vol. 6.

Copyright in the United States of America.

high upon his dignity. His personal dignity was always a great question with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Monteith had certainly been "put through" it. He had been ordered off the football-field for insubordination, he had been thrown out of a School House study for refusing to obey his captain, and now that it was all over, and Kildare was in his old place as captain of St. Jim's, Monteith was still nursing his wrongs.

Although he was in the New House, and Tom Merry & Co. belonged to the School House, his position as a prefect gave him many opportunities of worrying the juniors, and he did not neglect one of his opportunities.

He could not forgive D'Arcy for having ordered him about and covered him with ridicule, and the fact that he had brought it upon himself did not comfort him. And he could not forgive the School House juniors who had succeeded in electing D'Arcy to the captaincy.

When the brief period of D'Arcy's authority was over, the juniors were willing to let bygones be bygones, and forget all about the matter.

But Monteith could not forget. He had a nature that led him to treasure up every slight, real or fancied.

And he had made himself very, very unpleasant to Tom Merry & Co., and especially to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

And the conclusion that Tom Merry & Co. had come to was that they were not going to stand it.

The meeting in Study No. 6 was quite unanimous on that point.

They were not going to stand it—and Monteith was to be taught that he could not rag School House juniors with impunity.

But how?

That was the question. It was easy to decide what was to be done, but it was not quite so easy to decide how to do it.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the meeting of juniors with a frown upon his aristocratic face.

"I wegard it as imposs." he repeated. "We cannot put up with Monteith—it's a question of our personal dig."

"Oh, blow the dig!" said Blake. "It's a question of personal comfort. A chap can't go out into the quad. without being heckled."

"He's tried to fag me!" said Tom Merry, glowering.

"Me, captain of the Shell?"

"What did you do?" asked Digby.

"I said 'Rats' and he gave me fifty lines," said Tom Merry. "Of course, a New House prefect has no right to interfere with a School House chap. That's a rule. But what does Monteith care for rules?"

"Are you going to do the lines?"

"No!"

"Then he'll complain to Linton, and Linton always upholds the prefects," said Blake. "You will get a hundred from Linton if you don't do Monteith's fifty."

"I'd rather do a thousand for Linton than fifty for Monteith. Linton's our Form-master. Monteith's a rotten outsider!"

"Hear, hear!"

"He's got to stop it," said Monty Lowther. "We haven't had a minute's peace since Gussy played the giddy goat—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"And Knox is Monteith's backer in everything, and Knox is a School House prefect, and can get at us," said Manners. "He's a more unpleasant beast than Monteith, really."

"Oh, Knox would soon shut up if we could shut Monteith up."

"But how are we going to do it?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"We can't bump a prefect," said Blake thoughtfully. "That would be going it a bit too thick."

Tom Merry laughed.

"No, we can't go so far as that," he agreed; "but something's got to be done."

"Pway listen to me, deah boys. I've got an ideah."

"Oh, go on!"

"I've been thinkin'. Suppose we make up our minds to treat Monteith with cwushin' contempt?" suggested the swell of St. Jim's, evidently pleased with his idea.

"Eh?"

"Suppose we pass him in the quad., and turn up our noses at him, and genewally treat him with cwushin' contempt? I wegard that as a wippin' ideah."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Fathead!"

"Look here, Tom Mewwy—"

"I think Monteith would stand that without being much hurt," grinned Tom Merry. "I—Hullo! What on earth's that row?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

It was a sudden yell from the quadrangle, under the windows of Study No. 6.

The discussion broke up at once, and there was a rush of the meeting to the study window to see what was the matter. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the first to reach the window, and as he turned his eyeglass upon the scene in the quad. a flush of indignation came into his face, and he uttered an angry exclamation.

"Bai Jove! The uttah wottah!"

CHAPTER 2.

Knocked Down.

"YAROOOOH! Leggo!"

It was the voice of D'Arcy minor of the Third Form—Wally, the younger brother of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. That cheerful youth was twisting in a most uncomfortable way, the cause being the grip of a finger and thumb upon his ear. The finger and thumb belonged to Monteith, the obnoxious prefect of the New House.

Wally wriggled in the grasp of the senior, who looked down upon him with angry brows. Jameson and Gibson, Wally's chums in the Third, stood aside, glaring, but unable to interfere. For a Third-Form fag to interfere with a prefect was unknown and impossible. But interference from a prefect of the rival House was always bitterly resented by a School House junior.

"Leggo!" roared Wally.

"You young cad—"

"Yow! Leggo my ear, you beast!"

Monteith did not let go. Instead of that, he compressed his grip until it seemed to the unfortunate fag that his ear was in the clutch of an iron vice.

"I'll teach you to buzz your muddy footer at me!" said Monteith, between his set lips. "This is some more of your School House impudence."

"Ow! I didn't!" howled Wally. "I didn't see you coming."

"You lying young rascal!"

"I'm not lying!" said Wally fiercely. "And you're a rotten cad to say so! Ow!"

"Take that—"

"I didn't see you coming; and, besides, the footer didn't touch you," said Wally. "You can't say that it did."

"You meant it for my head."

"I didn't."

"It missed me by about an inch," said Monteith. "I know very well what you meant, you cheeky young sweep!"

"Leggo!"

"Take that—and that!"

"Yowp!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, burning with indignation, threw up the study window and leaned out. He shouted down to the New House prefect.

"Monteith! Let my minah go instantly!"

Monteith looked up in sheer amazement.

"Hullo! Is that you, you saucy cad?" he exclaimed.

"Let my bwothah go, I tell you!"

"Shut up, Gussy!" murmured Blake. "It's no good giving orders to a prefect, you ass! It will only make him worse."

"Wats!"

"Look here—"

But D'Arcy was not listening. He was crimson with anger. He waved his hand to the prefect in the quadrangle.

"Let Wally go at once, you bwute, or I'll come down to you!"

Monteith burst into a laugh. The idea of a junior of the Fourth Form coming down to him struck him as comical.

"Come down, you young cad!" he said. "I'll give you a hiding, too!"

"Bai Jove!"

Monteith, as if to tempt the swell of St. Jim's to his doom, began to box Wally's ears right and left. Wally roared and struggled.

D'Arcy, crimson with indignation and rage, rushed across the study to the door. Digby caught him by the shoulder.

"Gussy, hold on—"

D'Arcy did not reply. He wrenched himself loose, and rushed out of the study. His footsteps rang along the passage and down the stairs.

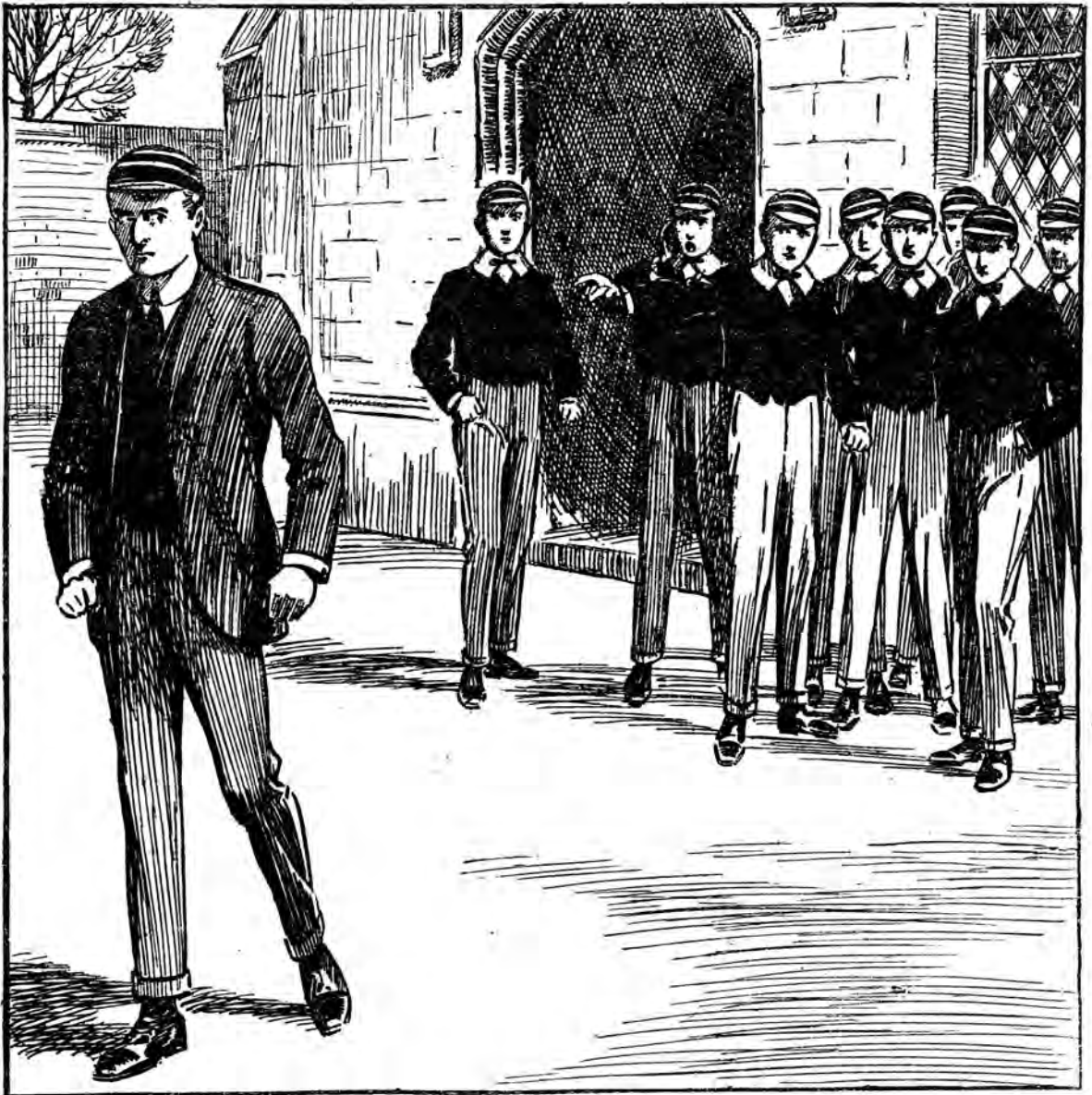
The juniors looked at one another in dismay.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "The fat's in the fire now! If he punches a prefect he'll be flogged!"

"After him!" exclaimed Blake.

"Come on, then!"

Tom Merry & Co. rushed out of the study. As they ran downstairs several more juniors joined them, curious to know what was going on. Kangaroo of the Shell, and Reilly and



Tom Merry began to hiss, and in a moment it was taken up by the whole crowd of juniors. "Cad! Bully! Hiss-s-s-s!" Monteith set his lips and strode away; and the hissing of the juniors followed him to the very door of the New House. (See chapter 3.)

Levison and Hancock and Brooke of the Fourth, rushed out into the quadrangle with the crowd, and other fellows came up from all sides to the scene of the altercation. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was first upon the spot.

When Arthur Augustus was indignant he was reckless, and at the present moment he did not care what he did. He was going to stop Monteith from bullying his young brother; he knew that, and he did not think of anything else. The swell of the Fourth rushed up, with his eye gleaming war behind his eyeglass. Monteith, with a grin, boxed Wally's ears again, as if to provoke D'Arcy major further. Probably that was what he wanted to do.

"Let him go!" shouted D'Arcy.

"Stand back, you young fool!"

D'Arcy's eyes blazed.

"If you swike my minah once more, Monteith, I shall go for you!"

Smack—smack!

D'Arcy kept his word.

Like an arrow from a bow he dashed at the prefect, hitting out, and his fists crashed together in Monteith's face.

Monteith gave one gasp, and fell heavily to the ground.

CHAPTER 3.

Kildare Takes a Hand.

"GREAT Scott!"

"Phew!"

A crowd of fellows had seen Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's desperate action. The sight of a prefect falling to the ground, under the hammering fists of a junior, was a sight seldom or never seen at St. Jim's before.

Monteith was hurt; but he was more astonished than hurt. He lay on the ground, gasping, hardly able to realise for a moment that he had actually been knocked down by a Fourth-Former.

Wally staggered away, his ears burning, his head swimming. D'Arcy steadied him with a hand upon his shoulder.

"Get behind me, Wally!"

"Rats!" gasped Wally. "If he goes for you, I'm going to lend a hand."

"Weally, Wally—"

"What is this?"

It was a sharp, stern voice. Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, arrived upon the scene, at the same moment

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!" A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

as Tom Merry & Co. Kildare's handsome face was very stern, and his eyes were flashing. His usual good-humoured look was quite gone. He stared at the fallen prefect, and then gave him a hand to rise.

Silence fell upon the crowd of juniors.

They hardly dared to think what would happen now.

"Monteith! What is it?"

Monteith staggered on his feet, standing unsteadily. There was a bruise on the side of his nose, and his left eye was closing. D'Arcy had hit very hard. And there was plenty of weight and strength in the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Monteith's face was white with rage.

"Where is he?" he muttered.

"Who?"

"That whelp—D'Arcy."

"You don't mean to say that D'Arcy knocked you down?"

Monteith snarled.

"Didn't you see it? I'll smash him—I'll smash the young bound—"

"Hold on, Monteith, old man!" said Kildare quietly. "You can't fight a kid in the Fourth Form. It would be too ridiculous. If D'Arcy has done this, he will be punished for it. You can trust me to keep the juniors of my House in order."

Monteith paused.

"Very well," he said, between his teeth. "So long as he's punished, and made an example of, that's all right."

Kildare turned to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's had subdued his excitement now, and he was a little pale. He had had time to realise the seriousness of what he had done. But he did not lose courage. His clear blue eyes met Kildare's angry gaze without flinching.

"You have struck a prefect, D'Arcy," said Kildare, in a hard voice.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Have you any excuse to make?"

"He was bullyin' my minah!"

"I was punishing D'Arcy minor for buzzing a footer at my head," said Monteith. "Ever since the election, these kids have been backing up against me in this way."

"Whatever Monteith was doing, you know that you have no right to strike a prefect, D'Arcy," said Kildare sternly.

D'Arcy was silent.

"Monteith was ragging Wally too rottenly," said Tom Merry, speaking up for his friend. "He——"

Kildare turned upon him sharply.

"I did not ask you to speak, Merry."

"But——"

"Silence!"

Kildare looked at D'Arcy again.

"You will come with me at once to the Head, D'Arcy," he said. "This is too serious a matter for a prefect to deal with."

"Weally, Kildare——"

"I shall leave it to the Head to decide upon your punishment," said the captain of St. Jim's. "If he decides upon a flogging, it will be no more than you deserve."

"Bai Jove!"

"Come! I suppose you are satisfied to leave it at that, Monteith?"

The New House prefect nodded.

"Yes, I am satisfied."

"Good! Come, D'Arcy!"

"Vewy well, Kildare," said D'Arcy quietly.

Without another word he followed the captain of St. Jim's from the spot. The crowd of juniors stood silent and dismayed. D'Arcy was a universal favourite at St. Jim's—even fellows who made endless fun of his elegant ways liked him—it was impossible not to like one who was so kind, so good-natured, and such a thorough sportsman. The crowd of fellows all looked glum enough as he followed Kildare, and disappeared into the School House.

Monteith turned away. There was a spiteful smile upon his face; he was satisfied with the extent of D'Arcy punishment. At the least it would be a severe caning, and condemnation from the Head—whose opinion D'Arcy respected very much. The New House prefect felt that he had succeeded in avenging at last his humiliation over the late election at St. Jim's.

The look upon Monteith's face did not escape the juniors.

Tom Merry hissed.

In a moment it was taken up by the whole crowd—New House fellows as well as School House:

Hiss-s-s-s-s!

Monteith turned a furious face upon the crowd.

"You young rascals——"

Hiss-s-s-s-s!

The prefect clenched his hands. He was inclined to rush upon the crowd of juniors, hitting out, but a saving remnant of common-sense warned him that he would make himself ridiculous by doing so—and he would undoubtedly be roughly handled, too. There was safety in numbers; and all the juniors could not be caned at once, and if Monteith had charged that crowd, it was certain that he would have been bumped over in the quad.

of common-sense warned him that he would make himself ridiculous by doing so—and he would undoubtedly be roughly handled, too. There was safety in numbers; and all the juniors could not be caned at once, and if Monteith had charged that crowd, it was certain that he would have been bumped over in the quad.

"Cad!"

"Bully!"

"Rotter!"

"Yah!"

"Hiss-s-s-s!"

Monteith set his lips, and strode away—and the hissing of the juniors followed him to the very door of the New House.

CHAPTER 4.

Facing the Music.

D R. HOLMES'S quiet voice bade Kildare enter, as he tapped at the study door. Kildare opened the door, and signed to D'Arcy to enter first. The swell of St. Jim's, with a troubled face, but a firm step, passed into the study, and Kildare followed him in and closed the door. Dr. Holmes glanced at the two boys, the senior and the junior, laid down his pen, and his kind face became grave. He could see that something very unusual had happened.

"What is the matter, Kildare?"

"I have to report D'Arcy, sir, for striking a prefect."

"Goodness gracious!"

"He knocked Monteith down in the quadrangle, sir. I thought I had better leave the matter with you to deal with."

"Quite right, Kildare. It is a serious matter."

Kildare quitted the study, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy alone with the Head. The swell of St. Jim's stood very firmly upon his feet, his eyes fixed on the carpet.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir."

"You do not deny what Kildare has stated?"

"No, sir."

"You have actually knocked a prefect down?"

"Yaas, sir."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"I suppose you know that your punishment for such an action will be very severe," he said. "I cannot pass it over, if I would."

"I suppose so, sir."

"What was your reason for committing this unheard-of action, D'Arcy? You have always had a good reputation in the House hitherto, I believe."

"He was bullyin' my minah, sir, and I intahfered."

"You interfered with a prefect engaged in administering punishment to a junior of the Third Form!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes sternly.

"Yaas, sir!"

"You must know that that was wrong, D'Arcy."

The junior was silent.

"And it was only your opinion that Monteith was carrying the punishment to excess, I suppose?" went on the Head.

"Any of the fellows would say so, sir."

"Juniors, I suppose?"

"Well, yaas!"

"Juniors are very liable to be mistaken as to the amount of punishment they deserve," said the Head very dryly.

"Under any circumstances, D'Arcy, nothing can justify a boy in the Fourth Form knocking down a prefect. The thing is utterly unheard of, and discipline must be maintained. I am doubtful whether I ought not to flog you in public, but upon the whole I shall administer a severe caning instead."

SANDOW'S BOOK FREE!

Just published, a new book showing how Sandow won Health and Fame, beautifully illustrated, and explaining how every man and woman can obtain robust health and perfect development by exercise.

SPECIAL OFFER.

To every reader who writes at once a copy of this book will be sent free.

Address: No. 17, SANDOW HALL, BURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

is the title of the splendid, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MACNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

D'Arcy set his lips.

"Vewy well, sir," he said.

Dr. Holmes rose to his feet. He selected a cane, with a very grave expression upon his face. Dr. Holmes did not like administering punishment, a fact the boys knew very well; but he did not shrink from what he considered his duty.

As for D'Arcy, he could hardly say whether he thought that he ought to be punished or not. Undoubtedly discipline had to be maintained in the school, and juniors could not be allowed to strike prefects, themselves being the judges of whether they were justified in doing so.

But it was hard upon the swell of St. Jim's; and in D'Arcy's heart, usually full of kindness and good feeling, a very bitter feeling towards Monteith was growing up.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

D'Arcy held out his hand quietly.

Dr. Holmes was not a believer in the efficacy of the rod, as a rule. But on some occasions he was severe, and this was one of them.

D'Arcy was soundly caned.

He endured the caning without a murmur, although the pain of it made his face go white, and brought a hard, strained look into his eyes.

When it was over, Dr. Holmes laid down the cane.

"You may go, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, sir!" said D'Arcy quietly.

And he quitted the study.

Tom Merry & Co. were waiting for him in the passage.

"Had it bad?" asked Blake sympathetically.

"Yaas," said D'Arcy, with a catch in his breath.

"It's a rotten shame," said Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"It's a wotten shame," he said. "Not for the Head, though—I suppose he had to cane me, undah the circs."

"Well, yes; but—"

"It's all Monteith's fault, the wotten cad!"

"We'll make him sit up for it!" said Blake vengefully.

"I dont know how, but we will."

"I will, wathah," said D'Arcy, with a click of the teeth.

Tom Merry looked rather uneasily into the set, white face of the Fourth-Former.

"Hold on, Gussy!" he said. "What are you thinking of doing, old man?"

D'Arcy did not reply.

"Gussy, what idea have you got in your head?"

"None, at pwsent," said D'Arcy; "but I am goin' to punish that wotten cad Monteith, somehow. He's a weptile, and ought to be ewashed."

"Hear, hear!"

"Mind how you go for him," said Monty Lowther. "You see, a prefect has the upper hand, and you don't want to give him a chance of going for you again."

D'Arcy did not reply. The juniors went down the passage together gloomily enough. Mellish and Levison, the cads of the Fourth, were in the hall, and they grinned as they looked towards D'Arcy.

"Been catching it?" grinned Levison.

"Yaas."

"Well, you've really been asking for it, for a long time, you know," said Levison. "It all came of your playing the silly ass over the election, you know."

Biff!

Jack Blake's fist caught Levison upon the mouth fair and square, and the cad of the Fourth staggered away and measured his length upon the floor.

Blake looked down at him with blazing eyes.

"Have you got any more to say, you howling cad?" he asked, between his teeth.

"Oh!"

"Get up, you cur!"

Levison rose slowly to his feet. He did not return Blake's blow, but stood regarding him with glittering eyes.

"I'll make you sorry for that!" he said, in a low voice.

Blake laughed scornfully.

"You won't make me sorry for knocking down a rotten cad," he said. "Pah! You're not worth talking to."

And he turned his back contemptuously.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went up to his study.

He was not seen again till afternoon school. When the Fourth Form were going to their Form-room for afternoon lessons, Figgins & Co., of the New House, joined D'Arcy in the Form-room passage. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the Fourth, were always the champions of the New House in their little rows with the School House juniors. But they liked their head prefect as little as the School House fellows did.

"I'm sorry!" said Figgins. "I've heard about it, Gussy. Monteith is a beast."

"Thank you vewy much, Figgy, deah boy."

"It was rotten!" said Kerr. "Monteith's been frightfully

tonchy ever since Kildare came back. We've had lots of trouble with him ourselves."

"Yes," said Fatty Wynn, with a sigh; "he collared a pork-pie of mine yesterday."

"It's a beastly shame, Gussy!" said Figgins. "If I were in the Sixth I'd give him a hiding. But this is one of the things juniors have to put up with."

"I'm not goin' to put up with it!"

Figgins stared.

"I don't see what you can do," he remarked.

Arthur Augustus did not reply, and the Fourth-Formers went into their class-room. During afternoon classes D'Arcy's face was very pale and set, and he went through his work almost like one in a dream. It was evident that he was thinking of his wrongs, and of the punishment he intended to mete out, in some as yet unknown manner, to the head prefect of the New House.

CHAPTER 5.

A Licking for Levison!

"FAG!"

It was Monteith who called.

Levison, of the Fourth, looked round, and walked quickly away. It was the day after the trouble between Monteith and D'Arcy, and in the clear, keen winter's morning a good many of the School House juniors were out in the quad, punting a ball about before breakfast. Levison, who very seldom joined in any healthy exercises of that sort, was lounging about the quad, with his hands in his pockets, when Monteith called to him. Monteith had come out of the gym., and Levison happened to be near the door of that building.

According to rules established at St. Jim's from time immemorial, seniors had the right to tag only juniors of their own Houses. But James Monteith had never adhered to that rule; and of late he had taken a peculiar pleasure in tagging School House juniors, leaving New House fellows alone. The juniors knew perfectly well that it was in revenge for the fall they had given him over the election, and they chafed under it; but it was difficult to resist.

It was not easy for a junior to stand up for abstract rights against the authority of a prefect. Monteith had the power in his hands, and he used it without scruple. Tom Merry & Co. were the chief victims, but any School House junior seemed to be considered fair game by the spiteful prefect.

The simplest thing to do under such circumstances was to turn a deaf ear to the call, and to escape if possible.

That was what Levison tried to do now.

But Monteith was not to be easily escaped. He had seen Levison, and he repeated his call, shouting to Levison by name.

"Fag! Levison, come here!"

Levison paused.

"Come here at once, Levison! Do you hear?"

Levison gritted his teeth, and turned back. He did not dare to resist an open order like this, and it was no longer possible to pretend not to hear. He came slowly and reluctantly towards Monteith, with a very sulky expression on his face.

"What do you want?" he asked surlily.

"I want a fag."

"You've no right to fag me. Oh!"

Smack!

Levison reeled under the smack of Monteith's open hand. He clapped his hand to his ear, and stood looking at Monteith with glittering eyes.

"You bully!" he muttered under his breath.

"What? What did you say, Levison?"

"Nothing," said Levison sullenly.

"Go to my study in the New House," said Monteith angrily. "Fetch my coat. You'll find it hanging on the door. Bring it to me here."

"All right!"

Levison walked away to the New House. Monteith returned into the gym., and then Levison's pace slackened down. He was greatly inclined to go into the School House, and neglect the errand altogether. But he thought of Wally's punishment, and decided that he had better do as Monteith had told him. He entered the New House, and the first person he met was Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House. Mr. Ratcliff frowned at him.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

"If you please, sir—" began Levison.

Mr. Ratcliff pointed to the door.

"Go out at once!" he said. "You have no right in this House, Levison, and I am determined to put down the House quarrels that are continually going on, at least so far as this House is concerned. Mr. Ratcliff may keep the School House in the state of a bear-garden if he pleases, but I will have nothing of the sort here. Take fifty lines."

"But, sir—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Go!"

"I came here to—"

"A hundred lines, Levison; and I shall mention your impertinence to your Housemaster," said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "Now leave the House at once, or I shall cane you. Not another word!"

There was no choice for Levison; he had to go. With a very dubious expression upon his face, the junior crossed the quad, again. He had to tell Monteith that he was not allowed to enter and fetch the coat, and he was very doubtful about how Monteith would take it. Again he was tempted to beat a retreat into the School House, but again came the reflection that Monteith would not forget, and that he was bound to meet the prefect again in the course of the day. He went into the gym.

Monteith was talking to Knox, of the Sixth, a School House prefect. He looked towards Levison as the latter entered the gym.

"Where's my coat?" he demanded.

"I haven't got it," said Levison sullenly.

"I sent you for it!" snapped Monteith.

"Yes, but—"

"You haven't brought it?"

"No; because—"

"Come here!"

Levison backed away.

"Look here, Monteith," he exclaimed, "I couldn't get your coat. Mr. Ratcliff—"

"Don't tell me any lies," said Monteith. "I know perfectly well why you haven't got the coat. Come here!"

"I'd lick the young cad if I were you, Monteith," said Knox; and he strolled out of the gym.

"I'm going to," said Monteith.

Levison panted.

"Look here, Monteith! Mr. Ratcliff stopped me; he wouldn't let me—"

"Don't tell lies!" said the prefect harshly.

"But I tell you—"

"I know your reputation," said the prefect, truly enough. "You are the worst liar in the School House, excepting Mellish, perhaps. But you don't deceive me, you young fool. I know your little game; you don't want to tag."

And he caught Levison by the collar.

The cad of the Fourth struggled.

"Let me go!" he yelled. "I tell you— Oh, oh, oh!"

Smack, smack, smack!

Levison yelled as Monteith boxed his ears savagely. Levison never could bear pain. He struggled in vain in the powerful grasp of the prefect. Hardly knowing what he was doing, he kicked out savagely, and his boot caught the prefect on the shin.

Monteith gave a yell of anguish.

A kick on the shin is painful at any time, and Levison had kicked hard. He made an attempt to wrench himself away; but, in spite of the pain in his shin, Monteith held him fast.

"You young ruffian!" the prefect gasped. "I'll make you sorry for that."

"Let me go!" yelled Levison.

"Yes; I'll let you go, when I've thrashed you," said the New House prefect between his teeth.

And he did thrash Levison, with a savage force that made the junior writhe and twist and kick furiously. But Monteith took care not to get any more of the kicks, and he thrashed Levison till his arm ached.

Then he flung him away from him, and strode from the gymnasium.

He limped a little as he went. There was a big bruise on his shin, and he was still suffering excruciating pain.

Levison lay where Monteith had flung him—dazed and white, and almost sobbing. It was but seldom that tears were seen in Levison's eyes, but they were there now.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh, the brute—the brute!"

He staggered to his feet at last. He had had such a thrashing as he had never experienced before, and for the time he was too dazed and suffering to think even of revenge.

That thought came later.

He did not leave the gym, till the bell was ringing for the Fourth to go into morning lessons. Several of the juniors noticed Levison's flushed face and burning ears.

"Had a row?" Mellish inquired.

Levison ground his teeth.

"Yes."

"Monteith?"

"Yes."

"All in the same boat," said Mellish. "D'Arcy yesterday, and you to-day. Monteith's getting a little too thick. What did he do?"

"Licked me," said Levison, his lips setting in a tight line.

"Hang him! I'll—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

He broke off, and said no more. Mellish gave him a curious look.

"You'll what?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Levison.

"Better give him a wide berth," said Mellish. "The fellows say that D'Arcy is getting up some scheme for settling Monteith, but it's a dangerous game to play. A prefect's a prefect, all said and done. Better let it alone—that's my advice."

"Keep your advice to yourself, then," said Levison.

Mellish grinned.

"All, right; don't get ratty. Only, don't expect me to back you up if you're going for a prefect. I draw the line at that."

Levison's lip curled.

"I don't expect you to," he said contemptuously.

"Better let it alone—"

"Oh, shut up!"

And Levison walked away, leaving Mellish grinning.

A witty writer, mistaking wit for wisdom, as witty writers so often do, has said that there is always something in the misfortunes of our friends that is pleasing to us. It certainly was the case with Percy Mellish. Anyone who had seen him follow Levison into the Form-room, grinning, might easily have supposed that he was Levison's enemy instead of his friend.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Declines.

"BLESSED if I like it!"

Jack Blake made that remark.

School was over, and the Terrible Three had paused in the passage to chat with Blake & Co. of the Fourth. Tea was the subject under discussion, and it was admittedly a most important subject.

Tom Merry had had a remittance from his old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett. Digby had had a postal-order from his "pater." The idea had occurred to them to combine resources, and have a tea of unusual magnitude that evening. The grand question was, whether it should take place in Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage, or in Study No. 6—and whether Figgins & Co. of the New House should be invited.

Jack Blake had been unusually silent. As a rule, he had no difficulty whatever in contributing his fair share to a conversation. But now he was silent, and his glance had followed the retreating form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the latter went upstairs. Then he broke silence with the remark that he was blessed if he liked it.

All eyes turned upon him at once.

"If you don't like the idea, you've only got to say so," remarked Tom Merry, a little huffily. "I thought it would be a good wheeze to stand the feed together."

"So it is," said Herries. "What the dickens are you talking about, Blake?"

"I don't quite like it," said Blake, with a frown.

"Then it's off," said Tom Merry.

"Eh! What's off?"

"The feed."

"What feed?"

"You ass!" roared Tom Merry. "Have you been to sleep standing up, like a giddy horse? Haven't you heard what we've been saying?"

Blake reddened.

"Sorry. I haven't," he said. "What were you talking about?"

"About tea, you fathhead!"

"Oh! I was thinking about Gussy," said Blake. "Blow tea!"

"Oh, blow Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "I was thinking about tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's getting serious," said Blake, "and I'm blessed if I like it."

"Blessed if you like what?" asked Tom Merry, perplexed.

"Haven't you noticed Gussy?"

"Not specially. Has he got a new necktie?"

"Don't be an ass!"

"A new fancy waistcoat, then?"

"Fathhead! He's got something on his mind," said Blake. "He's still thinking about that row with Monteith yesterday."

"Oh, he'll get over that!" said Manners.

Blake shook his head.

"That's just it," he said. "He doesn't show any signs of getting over it, and that's what I'm worried about. He's hardly spoken to-day; and he's been quite snappish, and that's not like Gussy. It's weighing on his mind. You



"You like Aunt Portia and Acacia Lodge," Cousin Peter went on, turning his attention to the jam tarts. "I don't. Very well, you can go there, and be fed on seed cakes and tracts, and I'll go to Greyfriars and have a little fun. See?" (For the above incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, entitled "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE," which is contained in this week's issue of our grand companion paper "The Magnet" Library. On sale at all newsagents. Price One Penny.)

know what a stickler he is for his precious dignity. He can't get over having been caned by the Head, because of Monteith. I'm sure he's got some blessed, dotty idea in his napper for getting even with Monteith, but he won't say a word on the subject. It worries me."

Tom Merry looked grave.

"We'll make him have a jolly tea, and cheer him up," he said. "Look here, you fellows, go and get in the grub, and take it to my study, and Dig can cut across and fetch Figgins & Co. We'll have Kangaroo and Lumley-Lumley and young Reilly, and make a jolly party of it. And Blake and I will bring Gussy, whether he likes it or not."

"Good egg!" said Digby.

"I don't believe he'll come," said Blake. "And if we have tea in Study No. 6, he'll go out. I don't half like the frame of mind he's got into."

"Let's go and see him."

"Well, that won't do any harm, I suppose," said Blake.

And Tom Merry and Blake went up to the Fourth-Form passage, while the other fellows went upon their various errands of gathering in the guests and the provisions for the feed in Tom Merry's study.

Tom Merry and Blake went into Study No. 6. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was standing at the window, looking out into the wintry dusk of the quadrangle, and so absorbed in

gloomy thought that he did not hear the two juniors enter. Blake coughed loudly.

"Ahem!"

D'Arcy did not turn his head.

"Ahem-m-m!" coughed Tom Merry.

The swell of the Fourth could not help hearing that. He turned his head, and nodded to the two juniors, but his face did not relax.

"Coming to tea in my study, Gussy?" said Tom Merry jovially.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"No. Pway excuse me, deah boy."

"But it's tea-time."

"I am not hungwy."

"Rot!" said Blake bluntly. "You must be. Who ever heard of a real human boy who wasn't hungry at tea-time?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Besides, we want you to come," said Blake. "Tom Merry and Dig are standing this feed between them. Kangy and Reilly and Lumley are coming, and Figgins & Co. And we—we want you to sing a tenor solo after tea."

Even that did not move D'Arcy.

"Thank you vewy much," he said. "But weally, deah boys, I do not feel at all in form for singin'. I'd weally wathah not come."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co, at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

"Now, look here, Gussy, you've got to come," said Blake. "You can't miss your tea. And you're jolly well not going to mope any more."

"I'm not mopin', deah boy."

"Yes, you are—about the licking you had yesterday," said Blake. "You're thinking of some scheme for downing Monteith."

D'Arcy was silent.

"It can't be done," said Blake argumentatively. "You can't back up against a prefect, you know. It's impossible. Besides, if you can think of any dodge, we'll all help you."

"Like anything!" said Tom Merry heartily.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I don't want to dwag you fellows into it," he said.

Blake started a little.

"Then you've got some scheme in your head?" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus did not reply.

"Look here," said Tom Merry seriously. "This isn't doing you any good, you know, Gussy. It's not right or healthy to mope like this. Shake it off!"

"I'll shake it off when I've punished Monteith," said D'Arcy.

"What are you thinking of doing?"

No reply.

"You've got a scheme?"

"Yass, wathah!"

"Tell us what it is."

The swell of the School House did not speak.

"Look here, Gussy, we'll help you and back you up!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We can't say any fairer than that. You can rely on us."

"I'm not goin' to dwag anybody else into it. Look here, deah boys, I wish you'd leave me alone for a bit," said D'Arcy abruptly. "I don't feel inclined for company just now, and that's the twuth. Pway wethere!"

Blake and Tom Merry exchanged a hopeless glance, and left the study. They knew from experience of old how useless it was to argue with the swell of St. Jim's when he had made up his mind. D'Arcy had a certain quality in his nature which he called firmness, but which the other fellows called obstinacy.

"Blessed if I like it!" said Blake again, as they went down the passage. "When Gussy gets into that sort of temper, you never know what's going to happen. I don't always quite understand Gussy. I hope he's not thinking of anything that will get him into trouble with the Head. I shall jolly well keep an eye on him, I think."

"You'd better," said Tom Merry.

And the subject was dropped, but it left Jack Blake feeling considerably uneasy about his chum.

Arthur Augustus remained alone in the Fourth-Form study. He had not lighted the gas, and the dusk had fallen thickly. There was a step at the door, and someone came in, but in the growing darkness D'Arcy could not see who it was.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Me."

"Levison?"

"Yes," said Levison, closing the door, and coming forward in the gloom. "What are you in the dark for, D'Arcy?"

"I pwefer it."

"I want to speak to you, D'Arcy." Levison's voice was low, and had a strange sound in it, like the hissing of a snake. "I've had some trouble with Monteith to-day. He picked on me, and gave me an awful licking—for nothing."

"The wottah!"

"Will you help me?" muttered Levison. "I've got a scheme for making the rotter smart for what he's done, and I want someone to help me. You've got just as much up against him as I have, and you're game, I think."

"I'm game enough," said D'Arcy quietly. "But—"

"I've got a good idea," said Levison, between his teeth. "Monteith has taken to having a sprint round the quad, of a night now, to keep himself in form for footer. He always follows exactly the same way—I've seen him a lot of times—round by the clock-tower, you know, and down the path alongside the Head's garden. It will be pretty dark to-night, and a couple of us could wait for him there—"

"Weally—"

"A cord tied across the path would bring him down," said Levison, between his teeth. "We could have a couple of cricket-stumps with us. In the dark he'd never see who hit him, and we could keep our mouths shut afterwards. I—"

"Look here—"

"I shouldn't care to do it alone," said Levison, "and Mellish is too cowardly. If you care to help me, we'll make Monteith sorry he touched either of us."

"You cad!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

In the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"What!"

D'Arcy's eyes were gleaming.

"You dare to pwoopose to me to attack a fellow in the dark, and hit him when he's down!" he exclaimed angrily.

"You are an uttah cad!"

Levison gritted his teeth.

"I suppose we can't go for a prefect openly," he said sullenly. "I don't want to be expelled from the school, if you do."

"Expelled or not, I shall go for him openly!" said D'Arcy. "And if he were ten times as gweat a bwute, I wouldn't hit him in the dark!"

"Say you're afraid, and have done with it!" sneered Levison.

"I am not afwaid, you wottah! But—"

"Well, what I've said to you is in confidence," said Levison, backing away a little. "You won't repeat it?"

"Of course I won't, you wottah!"

"Not a word—honour bright?"

"Honah bwight! Now get out of my studay!" said Arthur Augustus. "You make me sick!"

And Levison got out.

CHAPTER 7.

D'Arcy Does Not Turn Up.

FATTY WYNN grinned cheerfully as he came into Tom Merry's study in the School House with Figgins and Kerr. Fatty Wynn was always cheerful when there was a feed about. Tom Merry's study looked very bright and cheerful. There was a large fire burning in the grate, and it cast a ruddy glow over the study; and the gaslight gleamed upon crockeryware and a clean tablecloth. When the juniors were in extra funds, they could stand a feed in good style, and the clean tablecloth was a tribute to the extra extent of the feed. The good things that were piled up there made Fatty Wynn's mouth water.

"I say, this is jolly!" said Figgins.

"And jolly kind of you to ask us over, especially as our head prefect's been such a beast!" said Kerr. "We would scrag him for you if we could."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Never mind. Thank goodness he's yours and not ours!" he replied. "Sit down—if you can find anything to sit on."

"Where's Gussy?" asked Kerr.

Tom Merry's face clouded for a moment.

"He's not here."

"Not seedy?" asked Figgins.

"Oh, no!" said Blake. "I'm afraid it's a case of Achilles sulking in his tent, only old Gussy isn't sulking. He's still feeling bad over that affair with Monteith and the caning from the Head."

"Poor old Gussy!"

"It was beastly rough!" said Fatty Wynn. "Monteith showed signs of improvement once, but he's as bad as ever now. He confiscated a pork-pie of mine the other day."

"Awful!" said Monty Lowther.

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Fatty Wynn, innocently. "I think even Monteith might have stopped at that. It was such a ripping pork-pie, too—quite a perfect one, and hot and fresh—just what a chap wants in this cold January weather, you know. I always get hungrier than usual this time of the year, too. I don't know why."

"I wish Gussy would come," said Blake. "But you know what he's like when he's made up his mind—wild horses couldn't argue him out of it."

"It's rotten!" said Kerr.

The juniors all agreed that it was rotten, as they sat down to tea in Tom Merry's study. They would have been glad to have Gussy there, even if it was to sing one of his famous tenor solos, and few inducements could make the School House juniors stand those solos patiently.

But tea was a cheerful meal, all the same. D'Arcy's dignity was easily wounded. But it was bound to heal in the long run—the juniors hoped so, at least.

Only Blake's face remained a little less cheery than usual.

He could not help thinking of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and wondering what the scheme might be which the swell of St. Jim's had in his mind for getting even with the New House prefect.

That D'Arcy would do anything mean or underhand, Blake felt was impossible; but in his excited state, the swell of St. Jim's was capable of any reckless action, which might easily end in his being expelled from St. Jim's.

And Jack Blake was very anxious about his chum.

After a time, while the buzz of talk ran high in the crowded study, Jack Blake slipped out and ran along the passage to Study No. 6.

He intended to speak to the swell of St. Jim's, and make another attempt to get him to join the merry little party in the Shell study.

It was dark in No. 6 when Blake arrived there, and he pushed open the door and peered in, in the gloom.

"Not here, Gussy?"

There was no reply.

Blake struck a match.

He looked round the study anxiously in the glimmer of the match. The room was empty. Arthur Augustus was not there.

The match went out.

Blake stepped into the passage, and slowly went towards the stairs. He was feeling unusually anxious on the score of his chum. He had never known D'Arcy quite in his present mood before, and he wanted to see him.

"Seen Gussy?" he asked, meeting Levison on the stairs.

Levison shook his head sullenly.

"No."

The cad of the Fourth paused on the stairs, and watched Blake go down and go into the common-room.

Then Levison quickly descended, and passed out into the deep dusk of the quadrangle.

Blake looked into the junior common-room. A good many juniors were there, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not among them.

"Seen Gussy?"

"I haven't," said Clifton Dane, of the Shell. "Have you lost him?"

"I want to speak to him."

"Not here," said Bernard Glyn, looking round. "I think I saw him go out into the quad. a little while ago."

"Into the quad?" repeated Blake.

"Yes. I remember—ten minutes ago, or thereabouts."

"Thanks, Glyn."

Jack Blake went out on the steps of the School House. The night was dark, but very fine. A thin crescent of moon glimmered behind the old clock-tower, but it shed little light in the old quad., shadowed by buildings and tall trees.

Blake caught sight of a dark, moving shadow by the elm-trees, and ran out to intercept it.

"Gussy, old man!"

Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Hallo, Blake!"

"What are you doing out here, Gussy?"

"Walkin' about."

"But look here—"

"I've got wathah a headache, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "I wathah think the air here will do it good, you know."

"Feeling seedy, Gussy?" asked Blake anxiously.

"Well, I don't feel vewy bwright," said Arthur Augustus frankly. "But I'm all wight, you know. You needn't wowwy about me."

"I wish you'd come in to tea," said Blake.

"Pewwaps I'll give you a look in pwesently."

"Don't be long, then."

Blake went back into the house.

He was relieved in his mind; but he wished that D'Arcy would have gone with him. It was unlike D'Arcy to brood over his wrongs in this way, and Blake could not quite understand his chum.

"Gussy all serene?" asked several voices, as Blake re-entered Tom Merry's study.

Blake nodded.

"He's got a headache, he says, and he's gone to walk it off in the quad.," he replied. "He's going to give us a look in presently."

"Jolly good!" said Tom Merry.

And the juniors went on with the feed. Arthur Augustus did not come, and when Blake glanced at Tom Merry's clock, it was nearly an hour later.

"Wonder where Gussy is?" said Digby, getting up from the table, which was very nearly cleared by that time.

"Hark!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The study window had been opened, for the room was crowded and hot. From the dark, silent quadrangle there came a sudden sound of a sharp cry.

CHAPTER 8. Levison's Revenge.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY started. The cry that rang as far as the window of Tom Merry's study in the School House, rang more loudly and sharply in the ears of the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy, as he tramped under the old elms, heard the sharp cry, and the sound of a fall, and he stopped in his walk and listened, his face changing colour.

The cry came from the direction of the path along the wall of the Head's garden, and in a flash there came back into D'Arcy's mind what Levison had said to him.

Had Levison been foolish enough—

The thought did not finish in his mind. There was another

sharp cry of pain from the darkness, and D'Arcy ran towards the spot.

He ran into a shadowy figure that was running from the path, and he stopped, with a breathless ejaculation:

"Levison!"

"Silence!" muttered Levison thickly, and his eyes were gleaming strangely in the gloom. "Hold your tongue, for goodness' sake!"

"What have you done?"

"You know."

"You've hit him—down—"

"No—no!" muttered Levison hastily. "On my word, I haven't touched him! He—he's only bumped over on the cord!"

"Oh!" said D'Arcy, in relief.

"But—but you know what it will mean if it's known I did it!" Levison muttered. "Not a word about seeing me here, D'Arcy! Remember, you promised to keep mum!"

"Vewy well!" said D'Arcy. "But—"

"Promise!"

"I pwomise!"

"Good!"

Levison disappeared into the shadows.

Arthur Augustus hesitated. It was no business of his to succour Monteith, the bully whom he had been planning to punish. But—

Monteith was calling out in pain. What did it mean? If he had been running hard when he caught his foot in the cord across the path, he might have had a nasty fall; he might even have broken a limb. D'Arcy's kind heart could feel no malice or resentment, with a thought like that in his mind. He ran quickly towards the spot.

The gloom was thick, under the trees that grew over the wall of the Head's garden. Leafless as the trees were, they shut out the faint glimmer of the moon, and there were no stars.

"Help! Oh!"

Then there was a groan.

"Bai Jove!" muttered D'Arcy. "He must be hurt! Levison is a silly ass! The chap's leg might be bwoken, bai Jove!"

He stumbled over a fallen form in the path by the wall—a form that was painfully rising. There was a cry again, and then a pair of hands clutched at the swell of St. Jim's in the darkness, and grasped him.

"I've got you!"

"Monteith!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah—it is I! What has happened?"

"You young villain!" said Monteith thickly. "You know what you've done! Help! Help!" He raised his voice, and shouted.

Arthur Augustus struggled in the grasp of the prefect.

"Let me go, you wotthah!"

"Help!"

"I came here to help you!"

"Hold your lying tongue! Help!" shouted Monteith.

Lights were dancing in the quadrangle now.

Monteith's cries had reached half the ears in St. Jim's, and fellows were pouring out into the quadrangle.

Kildare's voice could be heard ringing in the distance.

"What's the matter? Where are you?"

"Here!" shouted Monteith.

The captain of St. Jim's came striding up. There were a crowd of seniors and juniors behind him, and with them came Tom Merry & Co. Fatty Wynn still had a half-finished tart in his hand.

D'Arcy wrenched himself away from the prefect.

"You uttah wotthah!" he gasped. "I—I—"

"Stop him!" shouted Monteith.

"Stop who?"

"D'Arcy!"

"D'Arcy, stop!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Stop here!"

"Vewy well, but—"

Kildare flashed the lamp upon Monteith. Two or three more fellows had bicycle lanterns, and Lumley-Lumley had a pocket electric lamp. The light gleamed upon the prefect, and a cry of horror rose from the whole crowd.

Monteith was in running clothes. He had been taking a sprint round the path in the dark, when he stumbled over the cord stretched across the path. The cord was there, and close to it was a quantity of broken glass. Monteith had crashed down upon the broken glass, and his hands and knees were badly torn, and there were gashes on his face. His scanty garb, in many places, was stained with blood.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Kildare, aghast.

"Oh!" murmured Blake. "Gussy, what have you done?"

Arthur Augustus whirled round upon Blake. His eyes blazed with anger.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!" A Splendid, New, Long, Complete, School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Blake, do you think I did that?"

"I—I don't know! Who did?"

D'Arcy was about to speak. The name of Levison was upon his lips. But he remembered his promise.

He had had no idea of this when he had given his word to Levison.

But he had given it.

A promise was a promise, and if he broke it, the end of the Fourth would be expelled from St. Jim's for this villainous act of revenge.

He could not break his word.

The unuttered words died upon D'Arcy's lips.

"Well?" said Blake.

D'Arcy was silent.

Kildare's hand dropped with an iron grip on D'Arcy's shoulder.

"Did you do this, D'Arcy?"

"No, Kildare."

"He's lying," said Monteith fiercely. "He's lying! He actually fell over me as I was getting up, and I seized him, or he'd have run."

"There's blood on D'Arcy's hands," said Mellish.

It was true enough.

Monteith's hands were bleeding profusely, and a great deal of the blood had been transferred to D'Arcy in their struggle.

The fellows gazed at it in horror.

To their minds it seemed like conclusive proof.

"Good heavens!" muttered Kangaroo.

"Oh, D'Arcy!"

"It's horrible!" said Figgins, in a low voice. "He must have been mad."

D'Arcy gave a cry.

"I didn't do it! Do you think I should play a wotten cowardly twick like that? You must be mad, I think."

"Who did, then?" sneered Monteith.

D'Arcy did not speak.

"You were here?" said Kildare.

"I was walkin' undah the twees, when I heard Monteith call out."

"Liar!" said Monteith.

"You wottah!"

"Silence, D'Arcy. What did you do when you heard Monteith cry out?"

"I came here to help him."

"You came here to help Monteith?" said Kildare grimly.

"Yaas."

"You knew it was Monteith, then?"

"Yaas."

"How did you know it?"

The crowd listened breathlessly.

How, indeed, did D'Arcy know that it was Monteith who had fallen over the stretched cord? The cry Monteith had given, that cry of pain, might have been uttered by anybody at St. Jim's. It was not till after D'Arcy was in his grasp that he shouted for help, and his voice could be recognised.

"I heard Monteith's cry. I did not know it was Monteith. How did you know it was, D'Arcy?"

D'Arcy was silent.

"You know, because you knew that that cord was to be stretched across the path there, with the broken glass for him to fall on?" said Kildare harshly.

"No, no—not the glass. I nevah knew that."

"I'm afraid you won't get anybody to believe that," said the captain of St. Jim's drily. "You couldn't have known it was Monteith tumbling down here, unless you knew that the trap was laid for him."

"Plain enough," said Knox.

"I knew it," said D'Arcy. "I didn't know about the glass, but the wope—yes. I knew a chap thought of doin' it. I didn't know he'd done it."

"And you came to help Monteith?"

"Yaas."

"It's a lie!" said Monteith fiercely. "It's a lie! He was close here when I came by. I saw a shadow move by the wall just before I fell over the rope, and came down on the glass. He was here."

"The fellow who did it was here, you mean," said Jack Blake, speaking up for his chum, though in a doubtful and hesitating way.

"Someone was here, at all events, then," said Kildare quietly. "If it was some other fellow, he must have run off, and passed quite close to D'Arcy, if D'Arcy was running up at the same time. Did you see anybody, D'Arcy?"

"It was dark," said Tom Merry.

Kildare took no notice of the remark. He had seen that D'Arcy's face had grown very pale and strained.

"Did you see anybody, D'Arcy?" he repeated.

The junior did not answer.

"Will you speak?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

IS the title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"Yaas, I did," muttered D'Arcy.

"Who was it?"

No reply.

"Who was it, D'Arcy?"

"I—I can't tell you."

"Why not?"

"I pwomised not to!"

CHAPTER 9.

Condemned.

HERE was a long pause.

D'Arcy stood erect, defiant.

There was condemnation in almost every face now.

Hardly a fellow there but believed that the explanation, made at the last moment by the swell of St. Jim's, was a mere subterfuge, a dodge adopted because there was no real explanation to give.

It was easy to say that he had promised not to reveal the identity of the fellow who had played that trick upon Monteith.

But it was not so easy for fellows to believe him.

Kildare's face grew very hard and stern.

"You saw the fellow, then, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Yaas."

"And promised not to give him away?"

"Yaas."

"And then you came to help Monteith?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And you expect us to believe that?" said the captain of St. Jim's contemptuously.

"Certainly," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I expect my word to be taken."

"I think you will be disappointed, then," said Kildare drily. "I think the yarn is a little bit too thick. Go into the House. This matter is for the Head to decide. Monteith, you'd better get those cuts seen to at once. Let me help you."

"Thanks, Kildare!"

Monteith moved away towards the New House, leaning on Kildare's arm.

The crowd broke up.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away towards the School House, feeling like a fellow in the grip of a torturing dream.

There was suspicion in every face round him—suspicion or condemnation.

Even his own chums were silent.

Jack Blake, as a rule, would have stood by D'Arcy through thick and thin, and would have hit out promptly at anyone who suggested that the swell of St. Jim's was capable of any mean or cowardly action.

But now he felt overwhelmed.

What was he to think?

Monteith had been hurled upon the broken glass by the hidden cord, and D'Arcy had been upon the spot.

D'Arcy, as all the House knew, had been mentally elaborating some scheme for avenging the injuries he had received from the New House prefect. He had refused to reveal what it was. He had said that he would not drag other fellows into it.

Was this the scheme?

How could the fellows doubt?

D'Arcy had always been believed incapable of a cruel or base action, but D'Arcy had not been himself lately.

His wrongs had preyed upon his mind, and he had been excitable, strangely sullen, almost feverish of late.

In that miserable frame of mind had he done this wretched thing?

Blake felt his heart as heavy as lead.

Was it possible to doubt it?

The explanation the swell of St. Jim's had given was too feeble. True, D'Arcy had always been supposed to be incapable of a falsehood. But, faced with the sudden realisation of what he had done, and with the prospect of being expelled from the school in disgrace, had he not lied?

It was only too probable.

The terrible weight of evidence was against the swell of St. Jim's, and he felt it himself, and his head bowed a little as he walked into the School House.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the hall.

But no one spoke to D'Arcy.

He went slowly and quietly up to his own study, and no voice was raised to address him as he went.

"I say, this is rotten, you fellows!" said Figgins, in a low tone. "I could never have believed it—never!"

"It seems impossible now!" said Kerr.

"Can't be much doubt about it. Of course, Gussy wasn't quite himself. He's been almost in a state of hysterics," said Figgins, anxious to find any excuse possible.

"Poor old Gussy!" said Fatty Wynn. "It was Monteith's fault in the first place! What did he want to be such a cad for?"

Figgins & Co. took their leave, and returned to their own House. Even Fatty Wynn did not feel inclined to go on with the feed after what had happened.

Tom Merry & Co. gathered in a gloomy group in the hall. "I suppose there's no doubt about it?" said Tom Merry, looking at Blake.

Jack Blake did not reply.

"It's horrible!" said Digby.

"I can't quite believe it of Gussy!" said Kangaroo. "The rope across the path, yes. Though that's a rotten, dangerous trick in the dark. But the broken bottles—ugh!"

"It's horrible!"

"Gussy must have been mad—mad as a hatter!" said Bernard Glyn. "That's the only way to account for it."

"It's done him in, so far as this school is concerned!" said Mellish.

"Oh, shut up!" said Blake. He had no desire to hear the opinion of the sneak of the Fourth on the subject.

"Well, I'm right," said Mellish angrily. "A fellow who'd play a rotten, beastly trick like that ought to be expelled. He's not fit to go to a reformatory even, I should say. I don't like Monteith, but I should draw a line at tumbling a chap over on broken glass."

"I can't believe it!" cried Blake. "It's impossible! It's a thing that only a beastly hooligan could do! Gussy couldn't do it!"

Mellish sneered.

"He did it right enough," he replied. "Monteith caught him fairly on the spot."

"Hold your tongue!" said Blake fiercely.

And Blake looked so dangerous that Mellish thought he had better do so. He retreated, and gave other and more sympathetic hearers the benefit of his opinion that D'Arcy would be expelled from St. Jim's.

There was little doubt on that subject in any mind.

Blake realised that clearly enough. Such an outrage could not possibly be pardoned. If D'Arcy was guilty, D'Arcy's career at St. Jim's had come to an end.

Expulsion, indeed, was a light punishment for a fellow who could be guilty of so cowardly and cruel a revenge.

Blake groaned aloud at the thought.

D'Arcy—he who had always been so brave and honourable and above-board, such a sportsman in every way—how had he come to this? What twist of the mind had made him guilty of this thing?

Blake had never felt more thoroughly "rotten" in his life than he felt at this moment, when the guilt of his best chum appeared to be too clear for reasonable doubt.

D'Arcy was in Study No. 6 alone! None of his chums cared to go there and see him. What could they say to him?

Perhaps D'Arcy expected them to come. Perhaps he expected them still to believe in him, and stand by him. For he looked up eagerly as the handle of the door turned.

The door of the study opened, but it was Levison who came in. Levison of the Fourth, as white as chalk, with terror in his eyes!

D'Arcy looked at him without speaking.

Levison came quickly towards him, his hands trembling, his lips twitching with the fear that was upon him.

"D'Arcy!" His voice was strained and hoarse. "D'Arcy! You—you haven't given me away."

"No!"

"Oh! Good!"

It was a cry of relief.

"Mind, you promised," said Levison, a little more calmly. "You can't break your word."

"I know that."

"It's all right!" said Levison. "I've punished him for both of us! He won't play footer again this season, I fancy, the hound! I—"

"Get out of my study!"

"Look here, D'Arcy! I rely on you! Not a word!"

"I shall not break my promise, you cur!" said D'Arcy scornfully. "If I had known the twath, I should never have given it. But I shall not break it."

Levison breathed deeply.

"Nobody will know!" he said. "There isn't a clue—"

"They suspect me!" said D'Arcy.

Levison started.

"You!" he muttered.

"Yaas."

"But—but why? You were not there!"

"I went to help Monteith, and he collared me!" said D'Arcy bitterly.

"You—you fool!" muttered Levison. "What did you want to help him for? Why couldn't you run, as I did? You fool! You've only got yourself to thank."

D'Arcy clenched his hand.

"I'll keep my promise!" he said. "But get out of my study! Don't talk to me! You make me sick! I can't stand the sight of you! Get out at once, or I shall knock you down, Levison!"

Levison gave him one bitter look, and left the study. His heart was throbbing with renewed fear! D'Arcy was suspected! Levison cared little for that in itself. But under such a strain, would D'Arcy's promise hold good? Would he keep his word?

Would Levison have kept his word under such conditions? He would have laughed at the thought of it. He knew that D'Arcy had principles of honour which he—Levison—did not even understand. But—but would he keep his word now?

Levison was sick with fear and disquietude. D'Arcy had to face the music for what he had not done, but Levison's punishment, too, had begun!

CHAPTER 10.

How Wally Heard the News!

"NOTHING like a good, fresh herring properly cooked!" said Wally.

Wally knew.

In all the Third Form at St. Jim's there was no cook equal to Wally. And when Wally started his performances at the Form-room fire of an evening, there were always plenty of fags about to help him dispose of the result.

Until the hour for evening preparation, the Third Form fags had the Form-room to themselves, and Wally, on this particular evening, was truly great. He had effected a purchase of fresh herrings for a ridiculously small sum, and even Jameson and Gibson, who had hinted doubts as to the freshness of the herrings, had been silenced by demonstration.

Wally had rubbed one of the herrings over Gibson's face, holding him by the back of the neck while he did so, and Gibson had hastily recanted, while Jameson made haste to state that he had only been joking.

Then Wally cooked the herrings.

The Third-Formers had no studies, and in the common-room they were overshadowed by the Fourth and the Shell. It was in the Form-room that the social life of the Third was lived. True, it would be necessary to open the windows wide, and wave exercise-books about in an energetic manner to disperse the powerful smell of cooked herrings before Mr. Selby came in to take the Third in evening preparation. But that, as Wally pointed out, was only healthy exercise. And, besides, young Frayne could be made to do it.

The herrings were getting on nicely.

Six herrings, impaled upon pens, were artistically arranged before a glowing fire, and the smell of them was really delicious. Wally was the only fellow in the Third who cooked herrings at the Form-room fire without burning them. Sometimes they were well done—very well done. But that was all!

"This is better than feeding in a stuffy study!" said Wally.

"Yes, rather," said Jameson.

"You bet!" chimed in Curly Gibson.

"Oh, erikay! Yes," said Frayne.

"Nothing like a good fresh herring!" said Wally.

"Not here!" agreed Jameson.

Wally turned a ruddy face from the fire, and bestowed a glare upon his humorous chum.

"Look here, Jameson, you silly ass!"

"But cooking will make them all right," said Jameson. "I've cooked a herring when it was almost walking, and it turned out all right."

Wally sniffed.

"These herrings are first rate," he said. "If you don't want a whack, say so, and I'll take your bit."

"Oh, I don't mean that!" said Jameson hastily.

"Then shut up!" said Wally.

"Ain't they pretty nearly done by now?" asked Frayne.

"Very nearly," said Wally. He looked round again.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

"What's all that blessed jaw going on? Blessed if it isn't like being inside a parrot's cage at the Zoo."

There was indeed an unusual buzz of voices. Most of the Third had gathered in a big group at some distance from the fire, where Wally was busy with the herrings, and they were talking eagerly, evidently about some topic that was peculiarly interesting.

Some of them glanced curiously towards Wally as they spoke, as if the topic that interested them concerned D'Arcy minor in some way.

"Hallo, young Pike!" called out Wally. "What's the jaw about?"

Pike coloured uneasily.

"Oh, nothing!" he said.

"What are you giggling at me for then?" demanded Wally.

"I wasn't," said Pike.

"Well, don't, then," said Wally. "I think these jokers are about done now. Have you got the plates ready, Jimmy?"

"Yes, I've got the plates," said Jameson, rather absently. He had caught a word or two from the group of fags.

"Hand them over then, ass!"

"All right, Wally!"

Wally stared at him.

"What's the matter with you, Jimmy?" he demanded.

"Those chaps are saying something," said Jameson.

"Something about your major."

"Oh, blow my major!" said Wally. "My major will turn my hair grey before he's done. Hand over the plates, you fathead! We don't want to be eating herrings when old Selby comes in. You know how he sniffs round when we've been cooking here."

"Yes, I know."

"What are you kids jawing about?" demanded Wally, looking at the excited group of fags. "What's that about my major?"

"I had it from Mellish of the Fourth," said Pike.

"Then it's most likely lies."

"All the chaps are talking about it in the passages," said Fane.

"Talking about what?"

"Your major."

"What's the matter with my major? Has he been falling foul of Monteith again?" Wally demanded impatiently.

"Yes."

"Well, I hope he's hurt him this time."

"He has," said Fane, with such a peculiar intonation in his voice that Wally started, and rose from the fire.

"Is there anything really wrong?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I only know what the fellows are saying," said Pike hesitatingly. "There's Mellish in the passage. Shall I call to him?"

"You can if you like," said Wally uneasily.

Mellish was looking into the Form-room. Mellish was very pleased to be the bearer of ill tidings to anybody, and especially to D'Arcy minor.

"Tell Wally what you told me, Mellish," said Pike.

Mellish nodded, and came in.

"Doesn't he know?" he asked.

"Not yet."

"My only Aunt Jane!" exclaimed Wally. "What's it all about? Hang it all, I suppose Gussy hasn't hung, drawn, and quartered Monteith, has he?"

"Jolly near it," said Mellish.

Wally strode towards the cad of the Fourth. His eyes were gleaming dangerously.

"Look here, what is it?" he demanded abruptly.

"Your major has been going it a bit too strong, that's all," said Mellish pleasantly. "He rigged up a cord for Monteith to tumble over in the quad—"

"Served him right."

"And shoved a lot of broken bottles and things for him to fall on," said Mellish. "Monteith is cut all over his hands and knees and chivvy, and I dare say he will have lockjaw and die. If he does, it will be rough on your major, won't it?"

"Shut up, you cad!" muttered Jameson.

"Well, young D'Arcy asked me what had happened."

Wally stood quite still.

"Not quite catch on," he said slowly. "Do you mean to say that the fellows are saying that my major made a chap fall over on broken glass?"

"Yes, and he did it right enough!"

"The herrings are burning!" exclaimed Joe Frayne.

The herrings, indeed, were speaking for themselves. But Wally did not seem to notice the strong smell of burning, or to hear what Frayne said.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

His eyes were fixed upon Mellish, and his hands were clenched convulsively.

"You say he did it?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mellish.

Wally waited for no more. He ran right at Mellish, hitting out. Mellish was a Fourth-Former, and much bigger than Wally. But he did not have the least chance against the cock of the Third. Wally's attack swept him off his feet, and he bumped heavily upon the floor of the Form-room.

"Oh!" he roared.

"You cad!" said Wally. "I'll teach you to say foul lies about my major! Get up, you cad, and put up your hands!"

"Hold on, Wally—"

"Let me alone!" roared Wally. "I'll smash him! I'll smash anybody who says that my major did a rotten, cowardly thing like that! Is there anybody here says so?"

He glared round at the circle of fags.

They were silent.

Mellish did not get up. Wally glared at the silent fags, and strode to the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Jameson.

"I'm going to see my major."

"But, I say—"

"Oh, rats!"

And Wally went out. A buzz of voices broke out when he was gone. The fags had not cared to say what they thought in Wally's presence. But there was no doubt as to the opinion they held. To them, as to the rest of St. Jim's, the guilt of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy seemed quite clear.

CHAPTER 11.

One Champion.

TOM MERRY & CO. were still talking over the affair in low tones in the common-room, when Wally came in. Wally's manner was decidedly truculent. His hands were still clenched, as if he wanted to knock somebody down, and his face was white, and his eyes had a glint of steel in them. He walked up to the chums of the School House, and their talk died away as he came.

"What's this about my major?" asked Wally.

"I'm sorry, Wally—" began Tom Merry.

Wally made an impatient gesture.

"Blow your sorrow! Tell me what's happened?"

Tom Merry explained.

Wally breathed hard through his nose as he listened. When Tom Merry had explained, Wally looked round at the group of juniors almost threateningly.

"Do you fellows believe that Gussy did this?" he asked.

There was silence.

"Do you believe it, Blake?"

"I don't know what to believe," said Blake.

Wally burst into an angry, scornful laugh.

"You don't know what to believe—about your own chum?" he exclaimed. "Well, then, you're as big a rotter as Monteith or Mellish!"

Blake turned crimson.

"Look here, Wally—"

"You know Gussy well enough to know that he couldn't do a thing like that, if he tried!" said Wally fiercely. "If anybody suggested it to him, Gussy would hit him. You know that!"

"I know he wouldn't, under ordinary circumstances—"

"Under any circumstances, you silly ass!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, you make me ill!" said Wally. "When a chap's accused of a thing like this, it's time for his friends to stand by him, not to stand in a corner cackling and looking like a blessed crew of moulting fowls!"

The juniors looked very uncomfortable. Herries made a movement as if to take the fag by the ear, but Tom Merry restrained him.

"Let him say what he likes," he said. "The poor kid must be cut up over this. We all are!"

"I jolly well will say what I like," said Wally angrily. "And I like to say this—that any chap who says that Gussy did this, is a liar!"

And Wally stamped out of the common-room.

He tramped up the stairs to the Fourth-Form passage, and kicked open the door of Study No. 6. Arthur Augustus was there alone. The elegant junior's face brightened up a little at the sight of his minor.

"You've heard, Wally?" he asked.

"I've just heard about it," said Wally.

"You don't believe I did it?"

Wally snorted.

"Do you think I'd come and see you, if I believed you did it, you ass?" he exclaimed. "I know you didn't do it."

"Thank you, Wally, dear boy!"

"Oh, rot!" said Wally. "Look here, from what Tom Merry says, it seems that you know who did it."

D'Arcy nodded.

"Then why don't you tell?"

"I can't!"

"Why not?"

"I gave him my word."

Wally sniffed.

"Wasn't that just like you, you silly owl!" he exclaimed, in exasperation.

"Weally, Wally——"

"I never knew such a chap as you are for looking out for trouble," said Wally. "Of course, you can't break your word; but what an idiot you were to give it!"

"It's too late to think of that now, Wally."

"I suppose it is," said Wally. "But look here, the chap will own up, now it's put on you, if he's got a rag of decency in him!"

D'Arcy smiled faintly.

"I'm afraid he hasn't, Wally, old man."

Wally glared.

"Do you mean to say that you think he'll keep mum, and let you take the blame for this?" he exclaimed.

"I know he will!"

"But what do you mean by making promises to such a rotten worm, then?" exclaimed Wally. "You oughtn't to have had anything to do with such a cad!"

"I didn't know how bad it was, when I promised him."

"Blessed if you ain't enough to make a chap's hair go grey, or to make him bald!" said Wally. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your silly head."

Arthur Augustus was silent.

"I'm going to find out who it was," said Wally. "I suppose you will have to keep mum, as you've promised?"

"I must."

"But look here, are you sure you promised," said Wally. "If you merely said that you wouldn't mention something, that's not a promise. Look here, can't you see that this puts you in a false position altogether? Nobody in the blessed school will believe that you know who did it, and won't give his name!"

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"I know that well enough, Wally," he said miserably. "But it can't be helped. It was a weak promise."

"Did you say honour bright?"

"Yaas."

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!"

Wally was silent now. The scamp of the Third had his faults—many of them. But he would never have dreamed of breaking a promise, or of recommending anybody else to do so, whatever the consequences. A promise made was a thing fixed—it was impossible to break it.

But the position was intolerable.

"I'm afraid there's nothin' to be done," said D'Arcy heavily. "Monteith weally thinks that I did it. He saw the chap in the dark, and found me there. He won't believe that I heard him yell, and went to help him."

"Naturally he wouldn't," said Wally testily.

"It can't be helped, Wally. What are all the fellows sayin' about it?"

"They all think you did it."

"Tom Mewwy—and—Blake—and all?"

"Yes."

D'Arcy's face went a shade paler.

"I think they might take my word," he said. "I've never told a lie to any of them. But I suppose they think the evidence is too strong."

"It's jolly strong," said Wally. "If you weren't my major, I shouldn't believe you either—it's enough to stagger anybody. Everybody knows you had some silly scheme for getting even with Monteith, and you wouldn't say what it was."

"It wasn't a silly scheme," said D'Arcy indignantly. "It was a jolly good ideah, but I wouldn't dwag the othals into it."

"What was it?"

"I was goin' to thwash him," he said.

Wally stared.

"Thrash a prefect?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You silly ass! You'd have been expelled if you'd struck a prefect again. You got it pretty stiff the first time."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"You don't undahstand, Wally. I wasn't goin' to touch him here. But next half-holiday, I was goin' to tackle him outside the gates of St. Jim's. Outside the school, we should meet on equal terms, you see—as one gentleman to another, and I was goin' to make him stand up to me. If I got the worst of it, I shouldn't have cared—I should have given him somethin' as well. Do you undahstand?"

"No, I don't!" growled Wally. "I suppose you'd have given him a black eye, or a thick ear, and he'd have pretty nearly killed you."

"I shouldn't mind, so long as I had avenged my personal dig."

"Oh, you ass!"

"Weally, Wally——"

"It was just like you," said Wally, with a sigh of resignation. "You and your precious dig. Poof! Very likely he'd have taken you by the collar, and licked you with his walking-cane, without giving you a chance to touch him."

"I should have wufused——"

"Br-r-r-r! Look here, I suppose I shall have to get you out of this," said Wally. "I'll find out who laid that trap for Monteith."

"Wats! Look here——"

"Oh, rot! I haven't the patience to talk to you," said Wally. "You are enough to make anybody tired, you are really!"

"Look here, Wally——"

"Oh, rats!"

And Wally stamped out of the study.

Arthur Augustus was left alone. He was plunged in gloomy thought. He had had time to think the matter over, and he realised what a false position he had placed himself in by his hasty promise to Levison. Levison had had no right to ask that promise, and if D'Arcy had known the true circumstances, he certainly would not have given it. But the promise was given now.

What view would the Head take of the matter?

There was only one view he could take. Arthur Augustus would be adjudged guilty, and the rest was not doubtful. He would be expelled from St. Jim's; he would be lucky if he were not flogged as well.

Only one thing could save him—if Levison confessed. That was the least likely thing to happen under any circumstances, and D'Arcy knew it.

If only his own chums had stood by him and believed in him! Yet D'Arcy did not blame them very much for wavering. How were they to know? Yet if they would come to him—— He started as the door opened.

It was Kildare.

The St. Jim's captain was hard and cold.

"You are to come to the Head's study, D'Arcy," he said, in a voice like ice.

D'Arcy rose without a word.

CHAPTER 12.

Waiting for the Verdict!

OUTSIDE in the passage a crowd gathered thicker and thicker.

D'Arcy had been taken in to see the Head.

The news was soon over the whole school.

New House fellows and School House fellows gathered in the passage, waiting for Arthur Augustus to come out of the Head's study.

What would the verdict be?

There was only one possible verdict in the general opinion of the St. Jim's fellows. D'Arcy's guilt was as clear as daylight. He would be expelled. The only question was whether he would be flogged as well.

And most of the fellows considered that he deserved it.

Monteith had gone to bed in the New House, and the doctor from Rylcombe had attended his injuries.

It was known that the prefect was badly cut, and that he would not be able to take his place in class again for some days, and it was more than likely that his part in the school games was finished for the season.

Monteith was not popular, but everybody felt sympathy for him now. It was admitted that he had been rough upon the juniors, and D'Arcy especially had been badly treated. But nothing could excuse such a cruel and cowardly outrage as that which Monteith had suffered.

He was badly hurt, but his injuries might have been much more severe. No voice was heard in the whole school to say that it served him right. One or two fellows who thought so did not venture to say so.

Every voice condemned the outrage. As it was universally believed that D'Arcy had done it, it followed that D'Arcy was condemned.

As for his story that he knew who had done it, but was

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co, at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

ANSWERS

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

bound by a promise not to give the real culprit away, that was regarded as a cock-and-bull story.

Even his own chums hesitated to credit it.

Tom Merry & Co. were in a very unpleasant position. They wanted to stand by Arthur Augustus, but it seemed impossible to do so without appearing to justify what had been done. And they could not do that.

Yet it was a great shock to them to think that the swell of St. Jim's might be expelled. What had possessed him to do it? That was the question that worried and troubled them.

Only one voice was raised to declare belief in D'Arcy's innocence, and that was the voice of his minor. And fellows did not argue it out with Wally. They respected him for sticking to his brother, and they were sorry for the shame that his major had brought upon him.

How long was D'Arcy going to be?

"I wish he'd come out," said Blake uneasily. "I—I wonder whether he will be sacked?"

"Stands to reason," said Tom Merry gloomily.

"Isn't it rotten?"

"Yes. Poor old Gussy!"

"What on earth made him do it?" said Manners. "That's the question. It's so utterly unlike old Gussy."

"Must have been off his rocker," said Kangaroo.

"Right off it, I think."

Blake wrinkled his brows in an effort of thought.

"Of course, what he says is quite possible," he said rather feebly. "Old Gussy is just the ass to make an idiotic promise like that."

The fellows were silent.

They would gladly have helped Blake to believe in his chum; they would gladly have believed in him themselves. But they could not do that.

"I must have a jaw with Gussy about it," said Blake. "It may be possible—just possible."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"But who could it have been, then?" he asked.

"Well, lots of fellows had grudges up against Monteith," said Blake. "I remember once the juniors of his own House tied him up in a cellar, or something. There was an awful row about it at the time. Lots of fellows would be glad to give him one."

"But not cutting the chap up on broken bottles," said Tom Merry, shuddering involuntarily at the thought of that horrible fall upon the jagged glass.

"Well, no; the fellow who could do that would be a frightfully mean skunk," Blake agreed. "I shouldn't have imagined there was a fellow at St. Jim's mean enough."

"But there is!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Gussy's the last chap one would have thought of to do a thing like that," Blake remarked wretchedly.

"You see, why should Gussy make such a promise, if that story's true?" said Tom Merry. "If it was to a friend of his, one could understand it; but we know it wasn't. It couldn't have been! We know all his friends here, and we know there isn't one of them cad enough to do such a thing, or awfully mean enough to hold his tongue and let Gussy suffer in his place."

"Chap who could do that would be a frightful rotter," said Glyn.

"Yes. And why should Gussy make a promise to a frightful rotter?"

"Goodness knows!" said Blake, feeling his last hope shattered. "I don't know why he should."

"Suppose you turn over the meanest cads in the House in your mind," said Lowther. "Which of them was likeliest to do the trick?"

Blake pondered.

There were black sheep in the School House at St. Jim's, as everywhere — fellows like Levison and Mellish, of the Fourth, and Crooke, of the Sixth, and Knox, of the Sixth, were capable of a good many bad actions, no doubt. But were they capable of this? More capable than D'Arcy, certainly. But Knox was Monteith's own friend, and Crooke, of the Shell, had been Monteith's firmest backer in

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

the election business, and was favourably regarded by the New House prefect. As for Mellish or Levison, why should they do it? And, even so, why should D'Arcy promise to either of them to keep his wickedness secret? D'Arcy was well known to be on the worst of terms with both the cads of the Fourth.

It seemed a tangle from which there was no escape.

The more Blake tried to think it out, the more tangled he became. Only one solution of the puzzle seemed possible—that D'Arcy was guilty.

"I give it up!" said Blake desperately. "But—but I feel that I ought to stick to old Gussy, whether he did it or not. After all, a chap's chum is his chum."

"Something in that," agreed Tom Merry.

Wally stood regarding the chums of the School House with a grim look. He had listened to what was said, and now he broke in.

"Gussy doesn't want any of your sticking to him, Blake!" he exclaimed hotly. "If you can't take his word, you can leave him alone!"

Blake looked very worried.

"I can take his word, Wally," he said, with unusual mildness, "only—it's a bit too thick now, you know."

Wally snorted.

"I take Gussy's word," he answered, "and I'd take it against any evidence. So would you if you were decent."

"Now, look here—"

"Oh, shut up! I don't want to talk to you," said Wally. "I can't lick the whole rotten House—though I'd like to—or I'd wade in now and wallop the silly lot of you. But don't jaw to me; you make me tired!"

At any other time Wally would certainly have been bumped, and bumped hard, for talking to Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers in that strain. But there was no danger of that now. Tom Merry & Co. felt too much for the fog in his present misery of mind to think of resenting anything he might say.

Wally's eyes turned restlessly on the door of the Head's study. Once or twice the juniors in the passage had heard a murmur of voices, but they could distinguish nothing.

Would D'Arcy never come out?

There was a sudden movement in the crowd; a buzz of deep-drawn breath. The handle of the Head's door had turned.

The door opened. Another buzz. D'Arcy appeared in the doorway erect, collected, with pale cheeks, but firm lips and steady eyes.

He came out and closed the door behind him, and walked down the passage, the juniors standing back to give him room to pass. Blake pressed forward.

"Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus looked at him.

"Well?" he said.

"What's the verdict, Gussy?"

Tom Merry laid a hand on D'Arcy's arm.

"Are you sacked?"

D'Arcy raised his head high.

"Yaas."

The juniors fell back. They had expected it—they could hardly have dreamed of anything else—but it was a terrible shock to them.

"Sacked!" repeated Blake.

"Yaas."

"Oh!"

"I am expelled from St. Jim's," said D'Arcy quietly.

"I explained to the Head that I was innocent, and that I had nothin' to do with the mattress. He did not believe me. I am expelled from St. Jim's, and I am to leave by the first train in the mornin'. That's all."

"It's a shame—a rotten shame!" almost sobbed Wally.

"Sacked!" repeated Blake dazedly.

Arthur Augustus walked down the passage, and the crowd were left to discuss the matter. D'Arcy's head was high and his step was firm. He might be guilty—all the school believed him guilty—but one who was perfectly innocent could not have carried himself more proudly and bravely.

Next Thursday:

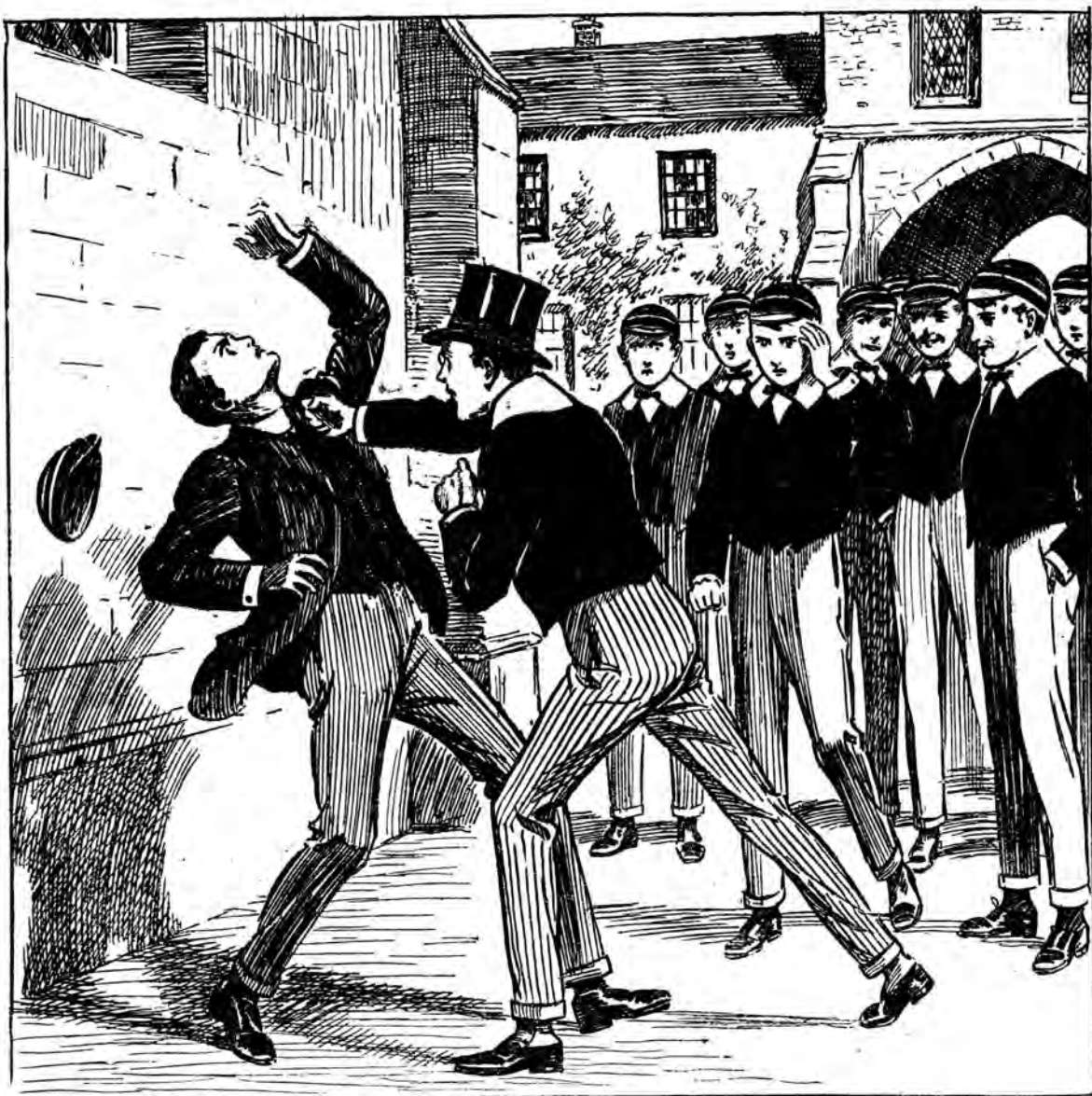
THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale
of Tom Merry & Co. and Bernard Glyn.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

And a Grand, New Feature!

Please order your Copy of "The GEM" in Advance.



Like an arrow from a bow Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dashed at the prefect, hitting out, and his fists crashed in Monteith's face. The New House prefect gave one gasp, and then fell heavily to the ground. (See Chapter 2.)

CHAPTER 13, Levison's Remorse.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had no more to say; but the school soon knew the details of what had passed in the Head's study. Kildare and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, had been present. Dr. Holmes had listened patiently and kindly to D'Arcy's explanation. But the weight of evidence was too strong. Arthur Augustus himself could hardly blame the Head for declining to take his bare word against such a mass of proof. Dr. Holmes was very quiet and very sad, but he was very firm. D'Arcy was adjudged guilty of having revenged himself upon the New House prefect in a cowardly and cruel manner, and he was expelled from St. Jim's.

Expelled!

It was a terrible word, and it rang unpleasantly in the ears of the juniors. It meant so much to a lad. A fellow who had been expelled from a public school, especially on such a charge, could hardly hope to obtain admittance to any other school of good standing. It meant a stain upon his name for life.

Yet, if he was guilty, he deserved it.

No one questioned that; and in spite of Wally's vehement championship, and Blake's lingering hope, all St. Jim's had made up its mind upon that subject.

Arthur Augustus did not appear in the common-room again. He went up to the dormitory to pack his boxes. The swell of St. Jim's had plenty of packing to do, and he was to leave the school by the first train in the morning.

Even yet it seemed almost like a dream to his chums.

Gussy was going—old Gussy—the swell of St. Jim's—the fellow they had so often chipped about his fancy waistcoats and his diamond-and-ruby sleeve-links, and his eight or nine silk hats all kept in neat boxes.

What would the Fourth Form be like without Gussy? What would the School House be like without that familiar face?

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Blake again and again.

Wally was going about looking like a ghost.

All his accustomed high spirits—too high, as a rule—had departed. Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, who was not usually very kind, had excused D'Arcy minor from evening preparation. Wally could certainly not have given it a fragment of a thought. He was evidently in no fit state for it.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

Jameson and Gibson and Joe Frayne tried to sympathise with him. But the only real comfort they could have given would have been an assurance that they believed in his major; and they could not give that. They did not believe in him.

"I'm going to find out who did it somehow," Wally said fiercely, in the Third Form-room, after evening prep. was over, and Mr. Selby was gone.

An uncomfortable silence followed Wally's remark.

The hero of the Third looked round fiercely upon the silent fags. As a rule they were not silent; but they had nothing to say now. They did not want to wound Wally's feelings.

"Well, you blessed stuffed dummies, haven't you got anything to say?" Wally demanded.

"I haven't," said Jameson.

"You believe my major did that rotten, beastly, cowardly thing, of course?" said Wally bitterly.

"Well, you see—" hesitated Jameson.

"And so do you, young Frayne?"

Frayne did not answer.

Wally breathed hard through his nose. He had thought and thought on the subject, trying to think whom the real culprit might have been, and how he could bring it home to him, till his brain was in a whirl. He was upset and excited and irritable, and in a mood to quarrel with anybody.

"Can't you speak, you young chump?" he roared.

"Well—I!" stammered Frayne.

"Well—I!" mimicked Wally. "Can't you speak English?"

"Well, I suppose he did it," said Frayne reluctantly.

Smack!

"Now come on!" said Wally, squaring up to Frayne, as the unfortunate fag reeled back from the slap upon the face. "Come on, you fathead!"

Frayne backed away.

"I'm not going to fight you, Wally," he said. "You can punch my head if you like; I don't care, if it relieves your feelings, old man. Go it!"

Friendship could not go further. But Wally did not take advantage of the generous offer. The anger died out of his face, and he looked white and miserable.

"It's all right, Frayne," he said; "I'm sorry I smacked your head. Don't talk to me, that's all; I can't stand it. But I'm going to find out the rotter who did that to Monte. I don't know how, but I'll do it."

"I hope you will," said Jameson lamely.

Wally tramped out of the Form-room, with his hands driven deep into his pockets. His major was expelled. He must save him somehow. But how? How was he to find out who had really done that wretched thing? And the time was so short—it was close upon bedtime now—and D'Arcy major was to leave by the first train in the morning, and St. Jim's would know him no more. To gain time—time to make some discovery—how was he to do that?

Wally tramped the passages, and thought it out. But at the end of his thinking he seemed no nearer a solution of the problem than before.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus was busy in the Fourth Form dormitory. He wanted to get his packing done before the juniors came up to bed. He did not want to become an object of public notice and sympathy. Like most sensitive natures, he shrank more from pity than from anything else.

He wondered whether his old chums would come up to help him pack. He hoped that they would not. Something wet was on his lashes as he bent over his boxes. Packing was a miserable task; it was like saying farewell a hundred times to the old scenes he loved so well. This waistcoat he had worn when Cousin Ethel came to tea in the study; that topper had figured on another important occasion; he had first worn his green and black necktie to tea with the Head—and so on. Everything, as he packed it in the boxes, had some association attached to it that made a lump rise in his throat as he thought of it.

The dormitory door opened.

A junior came in with white cheeks and staring eyes. It was Levison. D'Arcy looked at him grimly, without a word.

Yet even he could feel a twinge of pity for the wretched junior.

Levison dared not own up what he had done. If he wanted to, he dared not. To face expulsion—he had not the courage! He simply could not do it! Bad Levison undoubtedly was—bad at heart. But he was not heartless; he was not without feelings. He felt how much he was wronging D'Arcy; he felt, dimly, how nobly D'Arcy was repaying his meanness and cowardice. Levison's heart was heavy, and his conscience was torn with remorse and fear; and perhaps remorse predominated.

He looked at the open boxes and at the scattered property of the swell of St. Jim's, and for some moments he could not speak.

"You're really going?" he gasped at last.

D'Arcy nodded.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

"You're sacked?"

"Yaas."

"And—and you're really going—without—without giving me away?"

Levison's tone and look showed that he could hardly believe it yet.

"I gave you my word," said D'Arcy simply.

Levison choked.

"I—I'd own up if I dared!" he muttered. "I'm a beast—a rotten beast—I know I am, D'Arcy! I—I'd never have believed that there was such a decent chap in the world as you are. I—I'd own up, but I can't! I dare not!"

"It's all right."

"It isn't all right," groaned Levison. "Do you think I'm such a rotter as to let you go like this, without—without feeling what a frightful worm I am? I—I'd go to the Head at once, and—and tell him, only—"

"I don't expect you to, Levison."

Levison laughed bitterly.

"You know I haven't the pluck," he muttered. "If—if it were only a caning, or even a flogging; but I daren't go home. I daren't face my people and tell 'em I've been sacked. I couldn't do it!"

"It's all right," said D'Arcy again.

"And—and you don't bear any malice?" muttered Levison. D'Arcy was silent.

"I'm a fool to ask that, of course," said Levison wretchedly. "I know how you must hate me; of course you must."

"I don't hate you, Levison," said D'Arcy, after a pause. "You had no right to get that promise out of me; you know that. I shouldn't have given you my word if I had known what a howlible thing you meant to do. If you were a decent chap, you'd release me from my promise now."

"And—and then you'd tell?" muttered Levison.

"I—I don't know. I suppose so. You ought to tell; any decent chap would own up, undah the circs. But a decent chap would never have done as you did."

"You don't know how he treated me."

"Yaas, I know it well enough; but that's no excuse. It was a beastly, dirty, cowardly twick. But it's no good talkin'. You don't mean to own up."

"I daren't!"

"It's all right."

D'Arcy turned to his packing again. He carefully smoothed out waistcoats and folded them. Levison watched him for some minutes in silence.

"Can I help you?" he asked at last.

"No, thanks."

"And you really mean to go, without giving me away?"

"I've said so."

"I—I can hardly believe it," muttered Levison. "I suppose you mean it? I know you do! I wish I could save you. I wish— But what's the good of wishing? If I say a word I shall have to go in your place. I can't face it. But—but—I—I'd like you to say that you forgive what I've done, D'Arcy, before you go."

There was a long pause.

"Vewy well," said D'Arcy, with an effort. "I forgive you, if that's what you want. Twy to be a more decent chap in the future, Levison."

"I—I will!" muttered Levison.

He left the dormitory. Arthur Augustus went on with his packing. It was all finished, and the boxes were ready for cording up, when the Fourth Form came up to bed.

CHAPTER 14.

The Last Night at St. Jim's.

KILDARE looked into the Fourth Form dormitory. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting upon his bed, taking his boots off. The Fourth-Formers came in quietly.

"Go to bed without any row, you kids," said Kildare. Perhaps the captain of St. Jim's thought that there might be ragging in the dormitory.

But there was no danger of that. Whatever the Fourth thought of Arthur Augustus, they were not likely to rag him. The price he had to pay was heavy enough.

"All right, Kildare," said Blake.

Kildare walked away. The Fourth began to undress themselves to go to bed. Many glances were cast towards the swell of St. Jim's. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not meet any of them. He seemed to be quite engrossed by the task of undressing, and folding up his clothes in his usual neat and orderly way.

Jack Blake came over to him.

"Gussy, old man!" he said.

D'Arcy looked at him then.

"Well, Blake?" he said quietly.

"Did you do it?"

"I have already said that I did not, Blake."

"Then you know who did?"

"Yaas."

"And you won't give him away?"

"No."

"Because you've promised?"

"Because I've pwomised."

Levison, who was listening, plunged hastily into bed. He was afraid that his face might betray him to the other fellows. But no one was looking at Levison.

"You don't believe me, Blake," said Arthur Augustus. "I suppose the evidence is weally too stwong. Most fellows who had done such a thing would lie about it aftahwards, I suppose. But I did not do it. You ought to know me bettah than to think for a moment that I could be such a cad. You've known me a long time."

Blake looked directly into his face.

"I do believe you, Gussy!" he cried. "I believe every word you say. I know you couldn't have done such a rotten thing."

"Thank you, deah boy!"

"But—but we must find out who did," said Blake huskily. "You can't leave us like this, Gussy. You sha'n't!"

"I'm sowwy enough to go, Blake."

"We'll find him out somehow," said Blake. "Look here, I suppose it was a School House chap. Was he in the Fourth?"

D'Arcy smiled faintly.

"It's no good dodgin' wound a pwomise like that, Blake. If I was goin' to give him away, I'd do it openly. It would be wotten to give you hints to find him out. I can't say anythin'. It would be caddish."

"But look here, if the fellow isn't an utter worm, he must own up!" exclaimed Blake.

"That's his bizney."

"Oh, I wish I knew who it was!" Blake exclaimed, clenching his hands. "I'd smash him; I'd smash the rotten cad! Oh, if I only knew!"

"Go ahead with the smashing," said Mellish, with a sneering laugh. "He's standing in front of you now."

Blake swung round.

"Do you mean D'Arcy?"

"Of course, I do."

"You cad!"

Mellish grinned.

"Everybody here knows who it was," he said. "Blessed if I can see how D'Arcy has the nerve to keep it up like that. Hallo, what are you doing?"

Blake had made a sudden rush at Mellish. He seized him by the shoulders, and dragged him off the bed. Mellish struggled; but he was a child in the hands of the sturdy Yorkshire junior.

"Did you do it?" shouted Blake.

"What?"

"I remember seeing Monteith cuffing you yesterday," said Blake, "and you're mean cad enough to play that rotten trick, or any other. Did you do it, you cad?"

"Let me go!" roared Mellish.

Blake shook him savagely.

"Did you do it?"

"Ow! Oh! Help!"

"Let him alone, Blake, you ass!" growled Hancock. "There's no suspicion against Mellish. I think you're going off your silly rocker. We all know who did it."

"Help!" roared Mellish.

The door opened, and Kildare came in, with an angry frown upon his face. He glanced towards Blake and Mellish, and then strode towards them.

"What's this row about?" he demanded angrily.

"Ow!" gasped Mellish. "Blake's gone mad, that's all. He's accusing me of having done what D'Arcy did to Monteith."

"What do you mean by it, Blake?"

Blake released Mellish, and stepped back. He realised that he had been a little hasty.

"I didn't accuse him," he said. "I asked him if he'd done it. He's cad enough."

"Don't be a fool. Take fifty lines," said Kildare, frowning. "Now go to bed without any more noise, or you'll get into trouble."

Jack Blake turned in miserably enough.

Kildare put out the lights in the Fourth-Form dormitory and retired. There was silence in the dormitory, instead of the usual cheery chatter.

Gloomy depression hung over most of the fellows, especially those who were, or had been, the chums of the swell of St. Jim's.

One by one they dropped off to sleep.

But there were two to whom refreshing slumber did not easily come. They were Levison and D'Arcy—the guilty boy, and the brave lad who was to suffer in his place.

Levison, with his heart full of remorse, found it difficult to

sleep. For long hours he lay and watched the glimmer of moonlight at the windows.

D'Arcy was very wakeful.

It was his last night at St. Jim's—the last time he would go to bed in the old dormitory! It seemed impossible! He had played his last game of footer there. He would never join again in the rush for goal, never hear again the shouts ringing round the old playing-fields of St. Jim's. When the cricket season came round again, and the fellows went down to the wickets, he would not go with them. St. Jim's was ended for him; this was his last night at the old school!

D'Arcy's pillow was wet ere he slept.

It was hard to give it all up—hard to go forth from his old school, from his old chums, with a brand upon his name, and for another's sin!

But he was bound in honour, and it was useless to complain. He slept at last, the sleep of courage and innocence, and he did not wake again till the rising-bell was clanging out through the keen, frosty air.

Clang! clang!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat up in bed. He looked round the dormitory—its rows of white beds, the juniors yawning, the dim winter sun glimmering in at the windows. Had it all been a dream, or was this really the dawn of his last day at St. Jim's?

It was no dream! He stepped out of bed, and began to dress himself. Blake looked at him with a haggard face; he had slept badly enough.

"Gussy, old man!"

D'Arcy looked at him patiently.

"Something's got to be done!" muttered Blake. "Something must be done! You can't go—you sha'n't go!"

"I know its wotten, old boy!"

Levison turned out and began to dress himself. His face was chalky white. Mellish, with a savage look at Blake, muttered to Levison.

"The cad's going to-day, old man—jolly good thing, too! I wish the rest of Study No. 6 were going to be expelled along with him."

Levison turned upon him fiercely.

"Shut up, you cad!" he exclaimed.

Mellish stared.

"What do you mean, Levison? You don't mean to say that you're sorry he's going? What are you driving at?"

"Shut up, hang you!"

Levison clenched his fist, and Mellish back away in amazement and alarm. He could not understand his friend at all that morning.

CHAPTER 15.

Wally Tries!

WALLY met his major when the latter came downstairs. Wally's face was the picture of misery.

It was very plain that he, too, had slept badly. His usually ruddy face was pale, and had lines upon it that had never been there before. He looked at Arthur Augustus, his heart too full for words.

D'Arcy gave him a kind smile.

"Don't feel so wotten about it, kid," he said. "It can't be helped."

"You sha'n't go!" said Wally.

"I'm afraid I must."

"You sha'n't! You sha'n't! Something's got to be done!"

"There's nothin' to be done, deah boy."

"Look here," said Wally, lowering his voice hesitatingly. "you're not going to muck up your whole life to please some rotten cad. The fellow who did that trick ought to own up."

"I know he ought."

"But he won't," said Wally.

"Wathah not."

"Then you'll be justified in giving him away," said Wally. "A promise is a promise, but in the case of a rotten cad like that—"

Arthur Augustus's brow grew very stern.

"Don't talk like that, Wally," he said. "Are you recommending me to break my word?"

"Well, look here—"

"Don't be a young ass!" said D'Arcy severely. "Suppose I broke my word, and the othah chap was expelled instead. What would all the fellows think of me for breakin' a solemn promise? What would you think of me?"

"Well, you see—"

"And what should I think of myself, which is the most important of all," said D'Arcy. "It won't do, kid. It's quite impos."

"But—but you can't go," said Wally. "I suppose you're right, Gus; but you can't go! You sha'n't go! I'll appeal to the Head."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"No use, kid. I've explained to the Head already, and he doesn't believe me."

"What about Monteith?" said Wally eagerly. "I hear that he's up this morning. Suppose you go and see him."

"What would be the good?"

"Well, if you made him believe that it wasn't you played that rotten trick on him, he might intercede with the Head. He's not wholly a bad chap, you know; and he couldn't want you to be sacked for nothing. If he thought you were innocent, he'd speak up for you to the Head."

"He wouldn't believe me."

"He might, and—"

"Besides, I should refuse to ask a favour of Monteith," said Arthur Augustus. "I would rather be sacked than ask anything of that fellow!"

"Oh, don't mount the high horse, for goodness' sake," groaned Wally. "Think of father. What will he say when you get home? And the matter?"

D'Arcy's face worked a little.

"I'm sorry to have to give them any trouble, of course," he said. "But they will take my word, Wally; and they will approve of my wufusin' to bweak a pwomise."

"Look here, Gussy—"

"There's nothin' to be done, Wally. I shall have to gwin and beah it, and so will you. And I'm goin' to keep a stiff uppah lip. It is necessary to show these fellows that a D'Arcy can stand things without whinin'."

Wally drove his hands deep into his pockets and strode away. He was in a savage mood. During long hours of wakefulness he had thought and thought of possible means of saving his brother, but no plan had presented itself. An appeal to Monteith was the only thing he could think of. And that, indeed, was a desperate resource. The prefect was not good-tempered, or amenable to reason, at the best of times. And now, suffering under the injuries inflicted by a cowardly and cruel revenge, he was not likely to be in a more kindly and reasonable mood than usual.

Wally tramped in the quadrangle, with puckered brows and tight lips. What was to be done? How was Arthur Augustus to be saved? Almost insensibly Wally's steps took him in the direction of the New House.

Something like an idea had been slowly forming in his mind—it was a desperate idea, with little of hope in it—but it was something, and it was worth trying. It could do no harm, at all events.

Wally entered the New House, and made his way to Monteith's study. He knocked at the door, and the sharp, querulous voice of the prefect bade him enter.

He entered.

Monteith was up. He was seated at the table, upon which his breakfast was laid. Monteith was not a pleasant sight to look at. His hands and his face were bandaged up, and there were red streaks upon the bandages. The prefect had been very badly cut by the broken glass; and although none of his injuries might be dangerous, they were very painful, and likely to be so for some time to come.

He scowled at the sight of the Third-Former. A D'Arcy was not likely to find favour in his sight just then.

"What do you want here, you young cad?" was his angry greeting.

Wally restrained the reply that rose to his lips; it was necessary to be very civil to the New House prefect, if he was to gain his point.

"Can I speak to you for a minute?" he asked.

Monteith grunted.

"Has your brother confessed?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, he's going this morning, anyway," said Monteith, "and the school ought to be glad to be rid of a rotten cad!"

Wally's eyes glinted.

"There's a mistake about it, Monteith," he said, as quietly as he could. "Gussy didn't do it. He couldn't do such a rotten, cowardly thing."

"Don't talk rot!" said Monteith harshly. "You know that he did it, as well as I do, and as well as he does himself."

"Will you give him a chance, Monteith?"

"What on earth do you mean?" asked the prefect, staring.

"Look here, suppose for a moment that Gussy didn't do it."

"I can't suppose anything of the sort. You'd better get out of my study. I'm not in a humour for jaw."

"But just suppose for a second that he didn't," urged Wally earnestly, "in that case, if it was somebody else all the time, you wouldn't want him to be expelled, would you?"

"Of course not!" snapped Monteith.

"Well, then, you could prove it one way or the other, if you liked."

"It's proved already."

"Do listen to me, Monteith," pleaded Wally. "You know what a rotten thing it is for a chap to be expelled, and you ought to be willing to give him every chance."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

Is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"Well, what have you got to say?" said Monteith grudgingly.

"The chap who did it is afraid to own up—he doesn't want to be flogged or expelled. Of course, he ought to own up, but he won't. But if he were sure of not being punished he might."

Monteith stared blankly at the fag.

"What on earth do you mean?" he demanded.

"If you spoke to the Head he might agree to tell the whole school that if the chap who did it owned up, he shouldn't be punished," said Wally eagerly. "If that were allowed, then I believe the fellow would have the decency to speak out. He couldn't be such a fearful rotter as to let Gussy be sacked when he could own up without being punished."

"You young ass! Then D'Arcy major would own up to save himself."

"I mean that Gussy should be excepted, of course. If any other fellow owned up—"

"Some friend of his might do it to save him."

"Not likely! Besides, it wasn't a friend of Gussy's who did this—Gussy hasn't any friend who would be villain enough to do such a thing. It was some rotten cad."

"And you're asking me to have him let off punishment?" sneered Monteith.

"He'll be let off punishment if Gussy is expelled in his place."

Monteith thought for a moment. Wally watched his face eagerly. It was the last chance for Arthur Augustus.

"I suppose there's some trick in this," said Monteith, at last. "You've got somebody ready to own up, I suppose."

Wally flushed.

"Not at all! I never thought of such a thing! I—"

"Well, I'm not going to have anything to do with such rot!" said Monteith harshly. "Get out of my study! D'Arcy major is guilty enough, and he's going to take his punishment. I only wish he were going to be flogged as well!"

"But just think a minute, Monteith—"

"Oh, get out!"

"Won't you—"

"Get out of my study!" roared Monteith, half rising from his chair.

It was useless to linger. Wally turned to the door and opened it, and Monteith sank back into his chair, glaring at him.

"I shall go to the Head!" said Wally desperately.

Monteith laughed sneeringly.

"Go to him, then, you young fool! Only get out of my study!"

Wally went out and closed the door behind him. His heart was very heavy. He had hoped little from his interview with Monteith, and it had profited him nothing. He tramped back slowly and miserably to the School House.

CHAPTER 16.

The Appeal to the Head.

TOM MERRY met Wally on the steps of the School House. The Shell fellow's face was very dark and gloomy.

Tom Merry had thought over the mystery long and painfully. He had come at last to the same conclusion as Blake of the Fourth—that it was impossible that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could have done that for which he was condemned; that, strange and incredible as it seemed, D'Arcy was innocent, and was really allowing himself to be bound by a rash promise to the real culprit. D'Arcy was very well known to have an extremely fastidious sense of honour, and though this was a very extreme case, it was not at all unlike the swell of St. Jim's. Tom Merry had tried to think who the culprit might be, but that was buried in mystery. He could turn probably names over in his mind, but even if he guessed the right one, there was no possibility of finding proof. And without proof vague suspicions were of no use.

"Hallo, Wally!"

Wally gave him a savage look.

"Waiting to see my major sacked?" he asked.

Tom Merry coloured.

"No, kid."

"Why not? You believe he did that rotten thing."

"I don't believe it."

"You did yesterday," growled Wally.

"Well, you must admit that the evidence was pretty strong," said Tom Merry, with a sigh. "If it were any other fellow I should not have changed my mind. But Gussy is such a queer beggar, and—and I think he's telling the truth."

"Very queer to tell the truth, I suppose?" said Wally contemptuously.

"I don't mean that. But—well, it's a queer business altogether. I wish I could see some way out of it," said Tom Merry.

"You can help me if you like."

"How?"

"I'm going to the Head."

"Not much use, I'm afraid. The Head has condemned Gussy, and you haven't any new light to throw on the matter, I suppose?"

"I've got an idea, though."

"What is the idea?" asked Tom Merry, not very hopefully.

Wally explained. Tom Merry's face did not grow any more hopeful as he listened. It was a chance, perhaps; but it was very probable that the suggestion would meet with the same reception from the Head as from Monteith.

"Anyway, it's worth trying," said Wally obstinately; "and it would look better if some of Gussy's friends who still believe in him came in with me. If we go now we shall just catch the Head before he goes to brekker."

"Might as well try it."

"Call some of the chaps, then. Blake is sticking to Gussy, though all the rest have gone back on him."

"That's hardly a fair way to put it—"

"Oh, rats! I'll wait five minutes."

"All right."

Wally waited in the hall, with a gloomy brow. When Tom Merry returned Jack Blake and Herries and Digby were with him. Herries and Digby were sorely doubtful in their minds, but they always followed Blake's lead. And Blake was only too glad to try the remotest chance of saving his chum.

Wally looked at the Fourth-Formers rather sourly.

"Come on, then!" he said.

And they tramped away towards the Head's study. Dr. Holmes was there, in a very pensive mood. He was thinking of the case of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—he had thought it over very carefully, and he could see no way out of it excepting the "sacking" of the swell of St. Jim's. Against such a mass of proof was it possible to take the bare word of the culprit? It was impossible. The Head was satisfied that justice had been done. But he could not help feeling sorry for the wreck of a promising career.

"Come in!" said the Head quietly, as a tap sounded on his door.

The door opened, and Tom Merry, Blake, Digby, Herries, and Wally presented themselves to the surprised view of the Head of St. Jim's. The five juniors marched into the study, and Digby closed the door.

Dr. Holmes looked at them inquiringly.

"Yes?" he said, with a note of interrogation.

The juniors exchanged glances. They had not settled who was to be the spokesman. Wally settled it for them by stepping forward.

"It's about Gussy, sir," he said—"I mean my major."

"Yes," said the Head quietly.

"We all think that he is innocent, sir."

The Head's brow clouded.

"I am sorry I cannot think the same, D'Arcy minor," he said. "I do not blame you for believing in your brother, even against strong proof. But you should not have come here. There is nothing to be done."

Wally reddened. It required some nerve to go on after that under the severe eyes of the doctor. But Wally was fighting for his brother, and he would not give in.

"Will—will you let me suggest a way of getting at the truth, sir?" he asked. "I know it could be done, sir, if you would do it—to place the whole thing out of doubt."

The Head looked at him very curiously.

"I should certainly be glad to do that," he said.

"Well, sir, you see—"

"You see, sir," said Tom Merry, helping Wally out. "Wally thinks—we all think—that the chap who did that trick is afraid to own up because he doesn't want to be sacked from the school. If he were assured of not being punished, sir, he might own up."

"Assured of not being punished?" repeated the Head slowly.

"Yes, sir."

"But I could not give such an assurance to the perpetrator of such a wicked outrage, Merry."

"But to prevent injustice being done, sir," exclaimed

Jack Blake eagerly. "We all know that Gussy didn't do it, sir, and some awful rotter is keeping his mouth shut because he's afraid of the sack."

The Head pursed up his lips.

"I cannot think so, Blake."

"Then it wouldn't be any harm to make the announcement, sir," said Tom Merry eagerly—"an announcement that if any fellow other than D'Arcy did that trick he wouldn't be punished if he owned up, and gave some proof that he had done it—"

"It would be a most extraordinary proceeding," said the Head. "It would look as if I had doubts as to D'Arcy's guilt, although I had expelled him. You must see for yourselves that it cannot be done."

"But think of my brother, sir!" said Wally, choking. "He—he didn't do it—I know he didn't! He's innocent, sir, and he's going to be sacked because the other chap is afraid to speak out! Oh—"

Wally could get no further.

The tears, which the cane of Mr. Selby could never extract from him, were coursing down his cheeks, and his voice trailed away in a sob.

Tom Merry felt a lump in his throat. The Head was evidently much moved. He had a kind and tender heart, and even a hard-hearted man might have been moved by the sight of the fag's misery.

He made a gesture at last.

"Leave me now," said the Head. "I will think it over—I will try to decide what is best to be done. If I can decide to do as you suggest, I will. Heaven knows I wish to leave no stone unturned to get the truth of this matter established beyond all doubt. But leave me now."

The juniors silently left the study.

"What will the Head do!" muttered Digby, in the passage.

"Goodness knows! But there's a chance!"



CHAPTER 17.

The Final Chance.

"AFTER breakfast the school will assemble in Hall."

That was the notice pinned up on the notice-board in the School House. There was another to the same effect in the New House.

"You know what that means," Kangaroo remarked miserably. "I thought Gussy was going to leave quietly, but that means a public expulsion."

"Perhaps a flogging," said Mellish, with a grin.

Kangaroo turned his back on the cad of the Fourth.

"Perhaps!" muttered Blake. "But, no—it's impossible! The Head's said nothing about a flogging—he wouldn't do that."

"Of course he wouldn't!" said Tom Merry.

"A public expulsion!" said Levison, looking at Blake with strained, startled eyes. "What is that for? I thought Gussy was going quietly."

Blake gave him a savage look.

"Something for you to rejoice over, you cad—you and Mellish!" he said.

"I don't feel much like rejoicing," muttered Levison. "I'm as sorry for D'Arcy as you are."

Blake looked at him curiously.

"Well, you're looking pretty sick," he said. "Do you mean to say that you're worrying over Gussy?"

"I'm sorry for him," said Levison thickly.

"Then I take back what I said," said Blake. "Blessed if I know why you should be sorry, though. You don't care twopenny for Gussy."

Levison turned away without replying.

"I wonder," said Tom Merry, looking at the notice-board—"I wonder if that means that the Head is going to do as we asked?"

Blake's eyes gleamed hopefully.

"It's possible," he said. "Anyway, I know that a public expulsion wasn't intended, and there's no reason to suppose that the Head has changed his mind."

"It's a chance for Gussy, then."

The chums looked round for the swell of St. Jim's. D'Arcy came downstairs with his overcoat on.

"I am goin', you fellows," he said.

"Not yet," said Blake. "Look at that!"

He pointed to the notice on the board.

Arthur Augustus read it.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

NEXT THURSDAY: "THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"That has nothin' to do with me," he said. "I don't belong to St. Jim's now. And if I go into hall with the Form, I shall lose the twain."

"Blow the train!"

Mr. Railton came out of his study.

"All boys into hall!" he said briefly.

"Am I to go, Mr. Railton?"

"Certainly, D'Arcy!"

"Vewy well, sir!"

"Come on!" said Blake, linking arms with the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy hesitated.

"If this is meant for a public expulsion, I shall wefuse to go," he exclaimed. "I should uttably wefuse to submit to anythin' of the sort!"

"It can't be," said Tom Merry. "If it were, the prefects would take you in, in case you dodged."

"Yaas, but—"

"Besides, it's something else; no time to tell you now, but I think something is going to happen," said Blake.

"Come in!"

"Weally, Blake—"

But there was no time for talk. Fellows were crowding into Big Hall from all sides. The juniors were marshalled in Forms, and frowning prefects walked up and down to see that they were in order. The hall was crowded, and curiosity reigned supreme. The general impression was that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was to be expelled in public, after all, though all the school had supposed otherwise hitherto. Figgins & Co. gave Arthur Augustus a sympathetic look as he came in and took his place in the ranks of the Fourth.

"I'm sorry, Gussy," whispered Figgins, "and I don't believe a word of it, now I've had time to think it over."

"Thank you vewy much, Figgay, deah boy!"

"Silence, you juniors!" shouted Knox.

There was still a buzz in the crowded hall. The Head had not yet entered. Arthur Augustus stood very erect in his place in the Fourth. Most eyes were turned in his direction, and the swell of St. Jim's bore the general scrutiny without faltering.

Levison was near D'Arcy, pale and miserable and shrinking. If all attention had not been given to D'Arcy, Levison's looks might have excited surprise and even suspicion.

Levison was probably the most miserable fellow in St. Jim's at that moment. Bad he might be, but he was not bad enough to see a fellow expelled for his fault without remorse and self-reproach. And, added to that, was a lingering terror that at the last moment D'Arcy might lose courage and speak out.

The cad of the Fourth was in a most unenviable frame of mind. He was longing for this to be over. Would the Head never come?

A good impulse in Levison's breast urged him to speak out himself—to own up there, before all the fellows, that he was guilty and that D'Arcy was innocent. He knew that he ought to do it; he knew that that was right, and that keeping silence was terribly, cruelly wrong. He knew that if he allowed D'Arcy to be sacrificed, remorse would haunt him and torment him.

But he had not the courage.

At the mere thought of expulsion, of being driven from school, of facing the people at home, of his father's anger, his mother's tears—at the mere thought of it his heart seemed to die within him.

He could not!

He would have saved D'Arcy, if he could, at almost any cost; but not that—not that!

Would this scene never be over? Why could they not have let D'Arcy go quietly? He would have been gone by now! Would this ever end? It seemed to Levison that every careless glance turned upon him was reading his guilty secret, that every murmur was a whispering voice accusing him. Would it never end?

The buzz in the hall died away.

The Head had entered.

Levison licked his dry lips. It would soon be over now.

Dr. Holmes stood at the upper end of the hall, upon the raised dais, an imposing figure in his gown.

He surveyed the assembled school, silent, breathless, waiting for him to speak. When he spoke, his deep, clear voice rolled through the hall.

"Boys, you are all aware of the outrage that was committed yesterday, of the dastardly attack made upon a prefect. You are all aware that D'Arcy major, of the Fourth Form, has been sentenced to be expelled from the school, because the evidence made it quite clear to every reasonable mind that he was guilty."

A slight murmur.

Wally, wedged among the Third, hung on the words of the Head.

What was he going to say?

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

Is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"But," resumed the Head slowly and quietly, "in order that even the culprit may not say that a stone was left unturned in order to establish the truth beyond all possible doubt, I have now ordered the school to be assembled, and I have something to say to all present. The statement of D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, is that the outrage was committed by some other boy, whose name he knows, but which he promised, in a hasty moment, not to reveal. If this statement is true, that other boy—the guilty party—is here present, and is restrained from speaking out by a cowardly fear of the consequences of his cowardly action."

Another murmur.

"In order that got a chance may be left untried, I now make an offer to that boy, if that boy is not merely a figment of the real culprit's imagination. If any boy here present, with the exception of Arthur D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, was the author of the outrage perpetrated upon Monteith, of the Sixth, let him come forward and speak out. If he does so, I undertake that he shall not be punished for what he has done. He shall not be expelled, he shall not be flogged, he shall not be caned. He shall come and speak freely, and he shall go freely, and the matter shall be buried in oblivion. I make this offer because I will leave no chance untried. If this offer is refused, I think that even the condemned culprit cannot further maintain his innocence. If, therefore, any boy present, other than D'Arcy, of the Fourth, has anything to tell me, let him stand forward and speak. What I have promised I will perform. I pledge my word!"

There was a breathless silence.

The school was astounded.

For some moments a pin might have been heard to drop in the great hall of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 18.

At the Last Moment.

D R. HOLMES waited.

The silence was growing painful, oppressive.

Surely, surely, if any fellow other than D'Arcy had done that wretched thing, he would take advantage of the Head's offer, and own up!

If he had a rag of decency left he must be willing to prevent so fearful an injustice at the mere cost of speaking out, unpunished. Common prudence, too, should urge him to do so, for there was always danger of the truth being discovered; and the truth discovered meant relentless punishment for him, all the more relentless because he had allowed an innocent lad to suffer in his place.

The whole school waited.

Dr. Holmes stood like a statue. He did not expect an answer. But he had felt it his duty to make this last effort to place the matter beyond doubt.

There was a sudden sound in the breathless silence of the hall—a sound of shuffling feet, as someone moved.

Every eye swept round towards the sound.

A junior dragged himself, unwillingly, as it were, from the ranks of the Fourth.

With deadly pale face, the wretched boy staggered out into public view.

There was a murmur.

"Who's that?"

"A junior—a Fourth Form kid."

"It's Levison!"

Knox, the prefect, made an angry gesture to Levison.

"Get back into your place!" he exclaimed, not understanding.

Levison made no reply.

He moved slowly up the hall, and every eye in the great assembly was fixed upon him. Jack Blake gripped the arm of his chum.

"Gussy—Gussy!"

D'Arcy looked at him.

"Was it," murmured Blake—"was it—"

Arthur Augustus set his lips.

"Let him speak!" he said.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "And I never guessed! Kick me when we get out of this, Blake!"

"I will!" said Blake simply.

Levison walked staggeringly up the hall. Dr. Holmes's gaze was fixed upon him as he advanced.

Wally watched him from his place in the Third.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he muttered.

Jameson nudged him.

"It was Levison, Wally!"

"Yes, and he's going to own up!" said Wally. "I've done it! It was my idea. Thank goodness the Head had sense enough to take it up! You never know these masters. They're not reasonable animals, as a rule."

"Silence there!" said Kildare.

And the muttering in the Third died away.

Levison advanced towards the dais upon which the Head stood. There was not a vestige of colour in his face. His eyes were gleaming with unnatural light. His coming forth in this way was indication enough of what he had to say, of course, before he uttered a word.

The whole school knew the truth now. Even Monteith, standing there with the Sixth in his bandages, knew it, and knew that he had wronged D'Arcy.

Levison stopped at last before the Head. The severe eyes were fixed upon him.

"Well, Levison?"

The Head's voice was like ice.

He knew what was coming, and he was glad—glad that he had taken this course, and saved himself from inflicting a terrible wrong upon an innocent lad. But he had nothing but contempt for the wretched boy before him. He would pardon him, because he had pledged his word to do so—but that was all. He could not look at him without scorn.

"What have you to say, Levison?"

"I—I did it, sir."

"You perpetrated that outrage upon Monteith?"

Levison gasped.

"Yes, sir."

"You placed the cord across the path, and the broken glass for him to fall upon?" the Head asked, his voice vibrating with scorn.

"Yes, sir."

"Why?"

"Because he bullied me, sir," said Levison, with a flash of spirit. "He beat me like a dog."

Monteith coloured uncomfortably. He remembered that scene in the gym., and he understood that, badly as he had suffered, he had brought it upon himself.

"Indeed!" said the Head. "Is this true? It is a rule of the college that School-House boys are under the orders of their House prefects. Did you take it upon yourself to administer punishment to Levison, Monteith?"

"I may have punished him, sir," stammered Monteith.

"For what?"

"He may have refused to fag for me——"

"You have no right to fag School House boys. You know that very well."

Monteith bit his lip, and was silent.

"He fagged me, sir," said Levison, with a glance of hatred at the bandaged prefect. "He sent me for his coat, and Mr. Ratcliff ordered me out of the New House before I could get it. Monteith wouldn't believe me, and he licked me for not getting the coat. Then I made up my mind to punish him."

There was a murmur in the hall.

"Silence!" said the Head. "All this may be very true, Levison, though you are known to be an untruthful boy, and I cannot, therefore, attach full weight to any statement you may make. But even if it is true, it does not excuse such a wanton and barbarous attack as you made upon Monteith. Nothing could possibly excuse that."

"I—I was excited, sir, and—I was sorry afterwards."

"I hope that is the case, Levison. And is it a fact, then, that D'Arcy was induced to make this promise to keep your secret?"

"Yes, sir. He didn't know what I'd done; he thought Monteith had had a tumble, that was all!" muttered Levison. "I'd have owned up, only——"

"You had not the courage to tell the truth," said the Head sternly.

Levison hung his head.

"I am glad that the truth is established now, at all events," said the Head, after a pause. "You have been guilty of a base and wicked action, Levison, for which I should expel you

instantly from the school, if I had not pledged my word otherwise. The excuses you make for your conduct do not weigh at all. However much you were wronged, it was base and cruel to do as you did. The only atonement you could have made was to have owned your guilt—and that you have not done till assured of being unpunished. I cannot express the scorn I feel for your conduct, Levison. But I shall keep my word with you—you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!" faltered Levison.

And slowly he turned and left the crowded hall.

"D'Arcy!" said the Head.

"Yaas, sir!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with his face very bright, stepped out of the ranks of the Fourth. He advanced towards the Head with a firm step. There was a cheer in the hall; the fellows simply roared.

"Good old Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

The doctor held up his hand.

"Silence!"

The shouting died down.

"D'Arcy, you have narrowly escaped suffering a great injustice. With the evidence as it was, I cannot blame myself for having condemned you. But I am more than glad that the truth has been established, and I am sorry you should have been suspected. There is no stain upon you now—you are exonerated—you will remain at the school, and I say before the whole college that I consider you a credit to St. Jim's."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You have a high sense of honour, which would be a credit to any boy and any school," said the Head. "I warn you to be more careful, in future, about making rash and ill-considered promises. You should always reflect before you pass your word; for the word once passed cannot honourably be broken. That is all, D'Arcy."

And the Head shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's, and left the hall.

There was a roar.

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

Tom Merry & Co. made a rush. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was surrounded by enthusiastic friends. In the joy of the moment he could forgive them all their doubts. Tom Merry was shaking his right hand, Digby his left, Wally was thumping him on the back, and Blake was digging him joyfully in the ribs. Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!" roared the juniors.

"Bravo!" roared Figgins. "Three cheers for good old Gussy!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

And Arthur Augustus was rushed out of Big Hall in the midst of a wildly enthusiastic crowd. Kildare shook him by the hand; and even Monteith had the grace to mutter that he was sorry. In the joy of the moment, the fellows could forgive even Levison; in fact, the cad of the Fourth was almost popular, for having spoken out at the last moment and saved the swell of St. Jim's.

"It's all wight, deah boys—it's all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm quite willin' to ovahlook your bein' a set of silly asses; I'm sure you can't help it. But it's vewy lucky for me that young Wally had more sense than the lot of you put together, isn't it?"

"Ahem!" said the juniors.

And Wally heartily agreed.

THE END.

A GRAND NEW FEATURE NEXT WEEK

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d.

Order Your Copy well in Advance!—It Will Contain

"The Lancashire Lad's Invention!"

A Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co., by Martin Clifford—

"Wings of Gold!"

by
Sidney Drew—

Our "Present" Competition.

Choose Your Own
Prizes—

AND A SPLENDID
NEW
FEATURE.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.
A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF A WONDERFUL SERIAL STORY.

WINGS OF GOLD!

The Story of the Most Terrible and Amazing Journey Ever Made By Man.

Edited from the Notes of Maurice Fordham, Esq.

: : By : :

SIDNEY DREW.

LAST WEEK'S OPENING INSTALMENT.

While on an exploring and collecting expedition in the frozen Antarctic on board the yacht *Foamwitch*, Maurice Fordham and Lancelot Morton, two healthy and wealthy young Britishers, one day bring down with their guns an enormous golden-winged bird, the like of which they have never seen before. Their friend, Professor Von Haagel, the uncouth, clumsy German, who is famous throughout the world for his scientific knowledge, becomes intensely excited at the sight of the prize, which he christens "*Wings of Gold*," and pronounces half reptile, half bird—an absolutely unknown variety.

A return to the yacht is made. On the way the party falls in with some of the yacht's crew, amongst whom are Joseph Jackson—Shoreditch Joe—a garrulous Cockney, who has made the strange choice of selecting for his constant companion a game bantam; William Tooter, the hairy first mate; and Teddy Morgan, the ship's engineer. As soon as the vessel is reached, the giant bird is dissected by Lance, who takes from it and hands to Von Haagel a small object about an inch in diameter. This the latter examines, and pronounces it to be the shell of the long-extinct ammonite. From this wonderful discovery it is inferred by the learned professor that beyond the barriers of eternal ice must be another land, a more temperate region, so far unknown to man.

The yacht returns to England, where Lance Morton, at his beautiful home, Netbrooke Lodge, is visited by an old friend, Matthew Redland, to whom in former days he had lent money. Redland tells Morton that he has invented a practical airship, and that with it, in recognition of past kindnesses, he will make his benefactor a millionaire.

The inventor there and then, in the dark grounds of the mansion, gives a marvellous exhibition with a small model of his aeronef, until Morton, wild with enthusiasm, shouts: "We'll build an aeronef and voyage to the Land of the *Wings of Gold*!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Man Overboard!

When the great shipbuilding firm of Fordham declined a contract to build two cruisers for Japan there was a good deal of talk. There was more talk when the works were practically closed for three months, the hands being paid regularly just the same. Some eighty trusted men only were kept on. All approach to the yards and factories was carefully guarded. On January 7th the works were again opened, and on that date the *Foamwitch* hoisted anchor. She was bound for Sydney, but she did not reach that point. When three weeks overdue she was given up for lost.

But the gallant *Foamwitch* was far from being lost. Early in March she signalled, "*Foamwitch*, all's well!" to the Norwegian Antarctic vessel.

She was then on the 18th parallel, and steaming south—
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

Is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

wards. On the evening of the 5th, two days afterwards, the piano in the saloon was rattling merrily. It was blowing more than a landsman's breeze, and William Tooter, muffled up to the eyes, had to stamp his feet to keep warm. To the south the aurora was flickering, and showing up pale, fan-shaped rays of light. Some floating ice had been seen, and the yacht was at half speed.

Fordham closed the piano, and asked for the cigar-box. Von Haagel passed it to him.

"Well, professor," said Morton, "we're getting along nicely, thank you. We'll be ashore in less than a week. How long ought it to take us to go clear across the Pole from open water to open water?"

"Himmel!" puffed the professor. "Dot depends. We should do it in nine days. Redland is ein grand yellow, but he is ein inventor, and so we must not believe all he says. Ach, yes, he has ein vondervul brain, but he is—"

Von Haagel touched his forehead, and Fordham and Morton nodded. There is often a very narrow boundary between genius and madness. "Mad Mat" was undoubtedly a genius, and he was undoubtedly eccentric.

"He's a bit of a load on my mind, poor chap," said Morton. "He keeps me in terror. He's got a kind of barrel now rigged up right over the propeller. He'll be overboard one of these times."

"What's his idea?" asked Fordham, striking a match.

"Hanged if I know. He's got a regular cargo of queer instruments up there. I fancy he's trying to find out some new way of taking a reckoning. I saw a chart there under a glass, with a little tube of quicksilver in it. The tube seems to shift about. That's about as far as I've got. I can't help liking the chap."

"Nor can I," said Fordham. "He's queer, though, at times. Do you think he'll play square? We ought to get something for the £40,000 we've spent. We've built the ship, but it's no better than a ship without water unless we know the secret of the motive power. He might easily cheat us."

"I do not dink dot, Maurice," began the professor. "Mit der motive bower der invention is worf forty million, not forty—Himmel!"

Clang, clang! Clang, clang!

The wild notes of the bell clashed through the ship. The three friends leapt to their feet. A whistle screamed, and there was a wild turmoil of footsteps and shouts. Then came a cry echoing from above:

"Man overboard!"

Morton was first on deck. The reversed screw churned and lashed. Snowflakes whirled through the shrouds and dimmed the lights.

"It's Mister Redland, sir!" shouted a voice.

"Help, help!"

Lance heard the faint, choked cry. He rushed astern. In an instant he was grappling with Jackson. Lance struck out madly, and the little Cockney went reeling backwards.

"Stop him! Knock him down!" screamed Fordham.

"Lance, you fool! Lance—Lance! Come back, you—Lance!"

It was too late. Morton had dived headlong into the dark, icy water. Tooter was howling orders from the bridge. A dozen lifebuoys hurtled over, and the men rushed to the davits. The signalling-bulbs of the shrouds flashed out, and then the great gleaming eye of the searchlight gleamed out.

"Steady, you lubbers!" roared the mate. "Let go!"

Down went the boat, and her crew swarmed into her. A rocket whizzed up into the air and exploded. A dozen vivid bluish stars cast down their light, but the snow was too dense. Great oily-looking waves shouldered up, and went hissing over the plates. Red sparks poured from the funnel and drifted ahead.

"Steady, you blinking lubbers! Go!"

Another boat pulled away and was lost in the dusk.

"Silence all!" roared the mate.

Lance rose to the surface, chilled to the bone. He had never known water so hideously cold. He cleared his eyes. A smooth-topped wave hurled him upwards. He caught a glimpse of the black stern of the Foamwitch and her shining lights. High above him he saw the slanting rays of the searchlight. Lance kicked off his slippers. The wave raced him forward and down into the black gap below. He hurtled down the incline and was tossed up again.

"Help!"

Lance turned. The glare of the searchlight was in his eyes. For a second it blinded him. It shone white on something that tossed behind him. Lance clutched at the object—a lifebuoy. Then he listened. He felt sure he heard an agonising cry. The ship seemed a tremendous distance away. The lamps were quite dim. Once more a wave lifted him to what seemed a mountainous height.

"Help!"

The cry again. Lance took a deep breath.

"Where are you? Shout again!" he called. "Shout, Mat! Keep up, old chap, and shout!"

No answer. Lance glided down into a gloomy valley of water. Then he was pulled below by some unseen hand. Some pressure round his throat was choking him—strangling him. The awful truth flashed through his brain, and he fought and bubbled for breath. He was in the clutch of a drowning man!

His heart was bursting, there was an awful roaring in his ears, great jets of flame appeared to surround his head. His brain reeled and swam, and then the cool, sweet, and wonderful air gushed into his lungs, and a lantern was flashing above him.

"Nah, I reckon he's goin' ter chase hisself rahnd a treat," said the well-known voice of Jackson. "I thort my bantam was drahd once; he 'ad that same jerky look abaht him when he was a-comin' rahnd. If I was King of Hengland, I'd give him a ton of Victoria Crosses, and no error! Not arf, I wouldn't! 'Ere, try a tiddle, sir! It's brandy, sir! Just try it!"

"We've got them both," shouted Fordham.

"Hurrah, hurrah!" rang the cheers from the yacht.

In twenty minutes Lance was sitting in the saloon almost as well as ever. He was watching the door, and so was Fordham. It opened softly at last. The professor entered without a sound, and the woe on his face told its own story.

"There's no hope then?" asked Lance.

"Ach, no, Lance!" sighed Von Haagel. "Der heart vos too weak, der shock was too great. Ach, no! He is choost gonscious, but he gonnod live. I haf done mein pest for der poor yellow. He asks for you, Lance."

Morton sighed and rose. They followed him noiselessly. Redland's eyes were open when they entered the cabin, but they had lost their brilliancy and restless energy. He smiled when he saw Morton.

"I was too late, old chap, or you wouldn't be so seedy," said Lance. "Never mind, you'll be as fit as a fiddle in a day or two."

"No, no; I'm done, old boy!" whispered Redland. "The—ship lurched, and—get the key. It's under my pillow. The—steel box—the blue paper."

"Don't worry, Mat," began Lance; but the professor's frown checked him.

He found the key and unlocked the box. It contained only one folded paper.

"A—pen— And hold my hand, Lance."

Slowly, guided by Morton, the pen scrawled across the paper two shaky words—Matthew Redland.

"Sign here, professor, and Mr. Fordham."

The two men obeyed. Redland's face lighted up.

"Lance!"

Morton bent lower.

"I have—have kept my promise to you, Lance," said Redland almost inaudibly. "I have made you a millionaire, La—"

He dropped back heavily. Lance did not leave his bed-

side through the long night. Redland never spoke again. They buried him at sea, and Lance Morton, with a heavy heart, unfolded the document for the first time and read:

"To the truest friend and the truest man I have ever known I leave the priceless secret, for which I have toiled so long. To Lancelot Morton, Esq., I bequeath the sealed envelope containing the chemical formula of the motive power used to work my invention. The envelope is concealed in the tube of my microscope, between the brass and the black lining."

MATTHEW REDLAND."

Lance carried the instrument into the saloon. He screwed off the upper lens and shook out the metal tube. The envelope, heavily sealed and addressed to him, was there.

"Open it, professor!" he said huskily.

"Himmel!" he cried. "It is madness! It means nothing!"

"Nothing?" gasped Fordham. "Let me see!"

He stared at the jumble of figures and letters and scratched his head.

"A thousand to one it's a cryptogram!" he said. "It's—no! Gad, I've got it!"

"Ice ahead!"

The cry came through the open port. Lance looked out. In the pale sunlight a bluish haze hovered above the water to the south.

It was the reflection of the everlasting ice—Gates of Mystery!

The Motive Power—A Burial at Sea—Von Haagel Repeats His Theory—At Anchor.

It was an evening of excitement, though the dark shadow of death brooded over the vessel. Fordham, the doctor, and the professor were genuinely upset. Death is terrible at any time, but it seemed ominous that its hand should have grasped a victim at the very Gates of Mystery. All the same, the poor inventor had not been a man to win sympathy or affection. Lance Morton, however, with his big, soft, woman's heart, was quite cut up. He took no notice of the others. The professor's eyes burnt brightly enough to melt his glasses as he worked over the cypher.

The doctor and Fordham bent over him, eager and intent, as he puffed and snorted.

"Himmel!" he gasped, staring at the sheet covered with his scrawled writing. "Dot is not Cherman, and dot is not English."

"Try French, dad," said Fordham affectionately.

Von Haagel beamed at Maurice.

"Ach, Maurice," he said. "I like mein poy to call me dot! I am very fond of mein dear English lads—mein two dear prave poy. Ach, yes, I love you to call me 'dad!' Now, we have here der cipher—and ciphers are nod hardt mooch. Let us Vrench try, as you dell me, Maurice."

The professor could speak English in moments when calm, but in moments of enthusiasm or excitement his accents became thick and markedly German.

No cryptogram has ever yet been invented that brains and patience cannot solve. Von Haagel had attacked Redland's message by the old and deadly method. In every tongue certain letters appear with great frequency. In English the letter "e" predominates. Von Haagel was a magnificent linguist, and he loved to ferret out mysteries.

"It is not Vrench!" he puffed. "Ach, where are my prains? I am one pig fool!"

"Why?" asked Fordham.

Von Haagel's pen absolutely flew. Then he flung it down, and stood up, the perspiration gleaming on his honest, good-natured face.

Lance Morton was staring out at sea when the professor's hand fell gently upon his shoulder.

"Lance, dear poy!"

"Yes, dad?"

"You are a millionaire, dwice ofer!" said Von Haagel. "The cipher is in Latin!"

"Yes?" cried Fordham and the doctor presently.

"And it tells the motive power of the vessel, and how to make it."

"But what is it?" snapped Fordham. "Confound it, professor, don't keep us sitting on pins!"

"It is liquid air."

Morton laughed and shrugged his shoulders, and Fordham growled.

"A regular sell!" said the doctor. "I've liquefied air myself in small quantities, and I know what it costs to do. The idea is old—well, it's years old. Unfortunately, nobody has been able to harness it, and the apparatus needed to make a spoonful costs a small fortune."

The professor mopped his head vigorously.

"Dot is true," he answered. "I have also liquefied air. I was der first man to succeed. Ach, many times I nearly blew myself to bits! I can, I think, see the thing to make

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

it quickly and that thing is here. Ach, Himmel! Dot man had der brains of ten million people. Poor yellow—poor yellow! Lance, give me der key of his trunk."

"There it is," said Morton listlessly.

Blowing like a grampus, the professor came back. He placed two cylinders on the table. They were joined together by a tube. He bent over the paper and read, amidst breathless silence, translating the Latin into English:

"After countless experiments, I discovered that air could be liquefied in one simple operation, without any of the costly, clumsy, inadequate apparatus now in use. The cylinder marked 'X' contains an explosive, whose components I give on this sheet. The second cylinder is filled with air compressed to only four atmospheres. Place the two cylinders in a vice, and fire the explosive by means of a trigger. The explosion will liquefy the air in the second cylinder. The valves have given me years of labour to perfect, and still they are perfectly simple. When charged, place the cylinder on the model, as explained above."

"Bring the model and a vice, Maurice!" said Von Haegel, his voice trembling.

Fordham soon returned. The vice was clamped to a table. Von Haegel screwed up the iron jaws and pulled the trigger. There was a sharp report, and the saloon became filled with a pungent smell.

"Now, Maurice!"

Even Morton had shaken off his sad lethargy. He hastened to tie a piece of silk cord to the wonderful model—his legacy from the dead.

Fordham, with an excited laugh, pushed the professor aside. He was too clumsy to be allowed to tamper with delicate and intricate machinery.

Maurice unscrewed the cylinder and dropped it into its place.

"Is that right, Lance?" he asked.

"Yes, old chap. Pull the centre lever."

Fordham stepped back. The vertical screws began to revolve. A long-drawn fr-r-r-r-r! growing louder and shriller rang through the room. The little model rose from the table until the silk cord stopped its upward flight.

The four men stood gazing at it silently.

"Goodness!" said Fordham, seizing the cord. "How she can pull! Set her propellers, Lance."

He dragged the model down and held it with both hands. Morton clicked over another lever, and set the broad, fin-like helm afloat.

Fr-r-r-r-r!

The little aeronef shot up and whizzed round in a circle.

Von Haegel crowed and puffed with delight.

"Wings of Gold!" he cried. "Ach, yes, Wings of Gold, indeed! Lance, dear lad, you are a millionaire many times over! Ach, wonderful, wonderful! Look how she fly! And it is liquid air that her dorse drive! Oh, beautiful, beautiful!"

Von Haegel stepped back to obtain a better view, and sat down in the brass coalbox.

As usual, the natural instinct of a falling man prompted him to seize the nearest object. This happened to be a massive old-fashioned cruet, which a tornado could hardly have upset. The professor, however, overturned it with the greatest possible ease, and covered himself with a mixture of mustard, pepper, salt, and Worcester sauce.

"Bless the dear chap, he's at it again!" chuckled Fordham. "What, in the name of folly, did you do that for?"

The professor sneezed and blinked as Lance helped him up.

"Ach, I am almost poisoned and blinded!" he groaned. "Dot was not right to laugh when I was hurt. Atishoo! I wonder why I was born to be so clumsy?"

"You smell worse than a pickle factory!" said Lance. "Why the dickens don't you look where you are going? You want a nurse! Go away and wash the perfume off!"

"Dot was der hottest sauce I haf effer tasted!" groaned Von Haegel. "Ach, I do not mind if I amuse you, you rascals! A-atishoo! Himmel! I shall—a-a-a!—sneeze the—atishoo!—head from mein body!"

He departed, spluttering; and Fordham dragged down the model.

Matthew Redland sank and slept close to the everlasting ice he was fated never to view. Von Haegel read the solemn service in the starry dusk. As the flag-draped body slid into the sea the Aurora Australis suddenly blazed up and shot great pillars of light across the sky.

"Good-bye, poor old chap!" said Morton sadly.

It was as bright as day. The jagged ice pillars shone as white as if carved from solid alabaster. Von Haegel closed his book, and turned to watch the wondrous sight. As if by magic the white flaming glare suddenly turned to crimson. Then it died out.

"Ough!" said Fordham. "How ghastly!"

He went on the bridge. Tooter, muffled in a bearskin coat, was whistling dolefully. It was very cold, and the rigging

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

was white with rime. Sparks danced from the funnel and streamed away, to be lost in the billowing smoke. There was a light in the chart-house, and Jackson was in there, refreshing himself with bread, pickles, and stout. Beside him was the bantam, its keen little eyes watching every mouthful.

"How's the glass, Will?" asked Maurice.

"Steady as a blessed rock!" answered the hairy man, with a salute. "It ain't going to blow for a month, by the look on it. If we don't get good weather now it ain't no good a-looking for it. We ought to be ashore early to-morrow."

"Nah, Smacker, go and chase yerself!" remarked Jackson from the chart-house. "I ain't a-goin' to fill that crop o' yours no more. Not arf, I ain't! Yer might be a blessed orstrich! Go and chase yerself, I tell yer! Want some stout, eh, to keep yer muscle up?"

Fordham was compelled to laugh as he saw the bird drinking out of the Cockney's mug.

"Drunken little beggar!" he said. "I think he takes after his master. That you, Teddy?"

Teddy Morgan, black, and shiny with oil, had come from the hot engine-room for a breath of fresh air and a smoke. Much depended on Morgan. Fordham was himself a skilled engineer, but he hardly felt competent to supervise the putting together of the aeronef alone. He had implicit faith in Morgan's abilities.

He gave his servant a hearty slap on the shoulder.

"When do we get to business, sir?"

"What an impatient boulder you are, Teddy!" said Fordham. "We'll give you work enough in a bit, don't you fret. Tooter says we'll have something more solid than deck under our feet to-morrow."

"Good job, too, sir! I'm itching to stick the thing up. Well, I'm blessed! What's that ahead?"

A luminous line stretched right across the ice.

"Only a reflection on the blessed ice!" grunted the hairy man. "It's a sign of fair weather."

Morton had gone to bed when Fordham returned to the saloon. As the barometer rose, the thermometer fell. Von Haegel was writing up the log, but he threw down his pen and blotted the ink.

"Maurice," said the German, "I have something been thinking."

"Well, what have you been thinking, dad?" asked Fordham, with a smile.

"Ach, mein lad, it is many things! It was poor Redland that brought the thoughts. Mine doubts have all vanished. We shall build a boat that shall vly, and perhaps we shall wrest the secret from the cruel ice. But there, dear lad, we go into the unknown. We know not what shall we face. We shall be like many, walking through strange places in darkness. I was born for science, and for science I would gladly die. But you are so young both. Your path of life leads on through sunshine, and fortune has given you all to make you happy. Dear lad of mine, I wish you and Lance would with the ship stay, and let me go alone to seek the land of the Wings of Gold and the ammonite."

Fordham took several seconds to select a cigar, and then he yawned.

"You are a silly old fossil!" he remarked.

"Ach, yes! I do not to that say 'No,' Maurice."

"And you aren't fit to look after yourself. You'd fall out of the thing ten minutes after you'd started. You're a blundering, good-natured, thick-headed old villain! When you go alone, dad, it will be raining bananas, and the moon will be of a delicate green tint. That's the ultimatum, my learned and respected tutor. Mention this matter to me again, and, as captain of this vessel, I'll have you clapped in irons as a mad mutineer!"

Von Haegel smiled benignly, but Fordham felt that they were both looking into darkness.

They were about to attempt in stern reality what had hitherto been only a scientific dream. One man, it is true—the ill-starred Andre—had essayed to reach the North Pole by balloon. A few strange rumours, spoken by savage lips, alone gave the hint of the Frenchman's fate. The North Pole and the regions surrounding it are not the tangle of mystery that the Antarctic regions are. But they had strong hopes of success. Andre's balloon had been a mere feather, that could be swept here and there at the whim of every breeze. Its rise and fall could, to a certain extent, be controlled, but it could not be steered.

The problem of aerial navigation could only be solved in one way, and Matthew Redland had solved it. All machines lighter than atmosphere are worthless, except as dangerous toys, and the horrible list of tragedies that mar the pages of the history of science proves it.

Von Haegel and Fordham talked for a long time. The stout little professor was wildly enthusiastic. He had only told the truth when he had said he was willing to die for

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

Is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MACNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

science. The wonder was that science had not killed him years ago.

"And I would wager, Maurice," he said, "if I ever did gamble, that much that I say shall come true. In the great Ice Age the ice moved from the North, driving all life, animal and vegetable, before it. We, who read the rocks and stones, know that. Maybe, some forms of life go for ever, killed by the cold. The rest go South, South, South, as the awful ice creeps along. And then the ice goes back again, little by little, and the creatures follow it. But how far did the ice go?"

"No man knows that," said Fordham.

"Ach, true, dear lad!" said Von Haegel. "But that is what I think, and I have told you often. If it reaches the South Pole it could not melt. Perhaps there was ice there before, we cannot tell. The changes are so many. But I repeat this again. The animals retreat before it. Millions and billions die, but others live. A few get so far that they cannot return, for the ice that never melts keeps them back. The bird-bizzard, and ammonite we have found. They have been extinct for millions of years, everywhere civilised man has trod. And yet they live over yonder."

Maurice Fordham could only nod. The professor's theory could not be refuted, but could it be proved? Time would show.

"Well, I'll go to bed," said Maurice Fordham. "I feel a bit low after what has happened. If we strike the bay to-morrow we'll have enough to do to keep us from thinking. Good-night, dad!"

"Good-night, dear lad—good-night!"

Maurice slept well. He woke with a quick start. Something was wrong—something was wanting. It was a second or two before he understood. What he missed was the familiar throb of the propeller. There was a tap, and the door opened, revealing Jackson with a cup of coffee and a steaming jug of hot shaving-water.

"What's wrong, Jackson?" asked Maurice drowsily.

"Nuffin', sir," said the Cockney. "Only the kitten is laid up in the 'ospital through the old bantam a-chasin' hisself round its fice. We're at hanchor, too, sir, and it's a-snowin' like a bag of fivers."

Von Haegel and the Bantam—Hard Work for All—Another Tumble for the Professor

Breakfast was a hurried meal. A sudden rise of temperature had brought down the snow. It lay two feet deep over the deck, and festooned ropes and spars. Furs were served out, and grog forbidden in favour of cocoa. The vessel had anchored in a bay that was landlocked, except for one narrow outlet. There was plenty of surface coal of a fair quality to be obtained. Their impatience caused much grumbling against the weather, but the barometer was hopeful.

"It seems clearing a bit," said Lance, tapping the instrument, "and if this thing isn't a regular liar, we ought to be able to get ashore presently and make a start."

Fordham and the professor began to laugh. Lance heard a terrific "Wow-wow!" and turned to see what was the matter. A half-grown kitten with a bandaged and plastered head flashed through the doorway, and went up the bookcase like a streak. Behind it came the bantam in hot pursuit, every feather on end.

"Hang that bird!" grinned Lance. "He's got as much fight in him as a naval brigade. Get hold of the little—Look out!"

They had no time to look out. The Smacker was able to fly as well as run. He flapped to the top of the bookcase, and the horrified cat dived wildly into the air. It descended on to a dish of ham and eggs, and bounded out again. With diabolical accuracy of aim it shot a couple of fried eggs out with its hind legs, planting an egg in each of the professor's eyes.

"Ach, Himmel!" roared Von Haegel, losing his command of English. "Der prute me blinded haf! Donnervetter! Ach! Spyt! I gannod see ein dail. Ach, shaf! Phew!"

"Why are you so greedy, dad?" laughed Fordham.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why do you take two eggs at once?"

"Go and chase his fice, Smacker," said Lance, mimicking Jackson. "Oh, go and chase his features, cocky!"

"Cock-a-doodle-do-oo-oo!" crowed the delighted bantam.

It followed the kitten, leaving Maurice and Lance convulsed with mirth. Von Haegel laughed with them a few minutes later, for his good temper was quite amazing.

"Du meine gute!" he puffed. "It is the custom to gif eggs at Easter in mine country, and it is a pretty gustom. I have never had two presented me at once by a cat. Ach, no! Dear, dear, dear! Well, I like to see mine dear lads happy, even if they laugh at their poor old professor. Laugh away, mine boys—laugh away!"

The falling flakes thinned, and the dull sky brightened. All hands were summoned to clear the decks of their white

burden. Teddy Morgan was a genius in labour-saving devices. He quickly dispensed with shovels and brushes, and fixed up a dozen pipes.

"Stand clear!" shouted Tooter.

The scalding steam hissed and roared, and mounted upwards, hiding everything. They could hear the water racing into the scuppers and pouring overboard. In ten minutes there was not a scrap of snow visible.

"Well done, Teddy!" said Lance. "That's not so dusty for a small child! You deserve a very small tin medal, with 'a present for a good child' stamped on it."

"Beautiful snow, beautiful snow, where do you come from, where do you go?" quoted Maurice.

"Nar I can't build my lovely snowman," sighed Jackson. "I've a good mind to tell the Smacker to chase his fice for him."

Tooter shouted for a boat to be lowered. The shore did not look inviting. It was white desolation, and a biting wind tossed up the snow in smoky wreaths. The davits rattled as the boat went down.

"It'll be harder work if the ground is frozen," said Lance.

"That depends on how deep it is, sir," said Morgan. "If we can bring the ship close up, I'll guarantee to thaw sufficient ground in twenty minutes, by the watch. I can run the steam pipes out on a drum, and bust three foot of frost as easy as winking. Keep the lead going, Josh, and pull easy."

Jackson swung the leaded, tagged and leathered line over the bow. Close to the shore he found five fathoms.

"Good enough," said Fordham. "We can float in that with some to spare."

"It will save us three days' work," said the engineer. "We'll get a couple of anchors on her, and we can swing the stuff clean ashore with a bit longer beam on the crane. I'll have to prop her up a bit, for some of those segments weigh more than cotton-wool, and I don't want a spill. That's the very spot. Try it, Josh!"

"As deep as a factory chimney, and not 'arf!" cried the little Cockney.

Von Haegel rubbed his gloved hands. The spot was bleak and desolate enough to give an ordinary person suicidal mania. It made no such impression upon the explorers. They were accustomed to eye-aching expanses of snow, and cheerless scenes of utter loneliness and utter wretchedness.

Jackson rolled in the snow like an Eskimo dog, and dashed a ball of it into Tooter's hairy face. Mr. Tooter fell upon him, and they sank together in a drift.

Morgan looked round him, and drove a crowbar down. It struck with a metallic sound.

"Ach, you will the steampipes want, Morgan!" said the professor. "It sounds hard."

The ground was frozen into the consistency of marble. Morgan pulled back to the vessel with Tooter. Tooter handled her splendidly. Anchors were let go, and she was brought close in. The sky cleared, and the pale sun shone down; in earnest they set to work.

The magic working steam soon cleared a piece of ground sixty feet long by twenty feet wide. The buzzing, clanking crane swung beams and scaffolds ashore through the midst of steam. Picks and spades were wielded vigorously in the softened earth.

At three o'clock twenty-eight poles were erected, fourteen on each side, and the skeleton of the scaffolding was complete. These were strengthened by wire stays, and the crosspieces were bolted in. The bantam appeared to take a remarkable interest in everything.

"Ach," said the professor, "we progress magnificently! I wonder—I wonder—"

He shaded his eyes and glanced gloomily towards the South, across the glaring wilderness of snow.

"By your leave, sir!"

Three men were carrying a pole on their shoulders. Still in dreamland the professor stepped back to let them pass, and promptly fell over a wire stay.

"Bless the man, he's at it again!" said Fordham, going to the rescue. "What did you do that for?"

"I—I—ach—I was, thinking, dear lad!" sighed Von Haegel.

"I tell you what, old chap," said Maurice, "if you'd think less and look more, you'd have more chance of keeping yourself out of hospital. You'll be smashing yourself into little bits, one of these days!"

Luckily the professor was not damaged nor even shaken. A professional tumbler could hardly have taken the risk Von Haegel did without seriously endangering his life and limbs. He puffed, snorted, and rubbed, and smiled again.

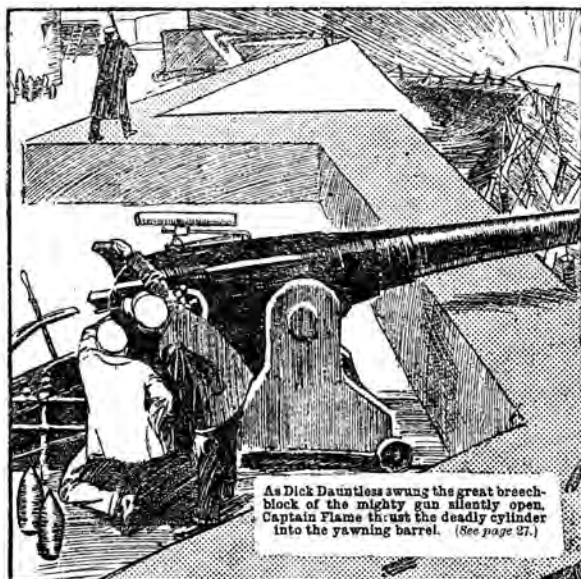
(Another grand long instalment of this magnificent serial story next Thursday; also a SPLENDID NEW FEATURE! Be sure to order next week's "Gem" Library in advance. Price one penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION!"



As Dick Dauntless swung the great breech-block of the mighty gun silently open, Captain Flame thrust the deadly cylinder into the yawning barrel. (See page 27.)

In No. 10 Battery.

At any cost, the submarine must be prevented from leaving the harbour.

There was little time to decide what was best to be done.

Every moment brought the submarine nearer.

Puzzled and anxious, he hastened towards his nearest man.

As he did so, one of his leaden-soled feet caught against an obstruction protruding from the harbour's muddy bottom.

At the same time the subdued clink of iron on iron fell upon his ears.

Dropping on his knees, he groped in the mud, to find some three fathoms of chain, and a small anchor, buried in the soft deposit beneath his feet.

Eagerly Dick Dauntless called the nearest man to his assistance.

With his aid he drew the anchor and chain from the mud, explaining his intentions as he did so.

Barely had the last link been drawn free, ere, moving at barely six knots an hour, the submarine approached.

There was no danger of their being seen in that thick, dark water, so, drawing aside, they allowed the hull of the slowly-moving vessel to pass by, until, just as they began to feel the draw of the slowly revolving screw, Dick touched his companion on the shoulder. Grasping the anchor, they hurled it with all their might at the revolving propeller-blades.

Then they flung themselves face downwards in the mud, to escape being knocked off their feet by the lashing chain, as the anchor, caught on the shaft of the submarine's propeller, the chain was whirled round two or three times ere, with a jar which must have shaken the submarine's crew almost off their feet, the creeping craft came to an abrupt halt.

Then she disappeared from the watchers' eager eyes as she rose slowly to the surface, where, as they afterwards discovered, she floated helplessly out to sea, and fell an easy prey to the Kravonian fleet.

Half an hour afterwards the Octopus returned, and Dick Dauntless and his men having been taken on board, she seized the connected anchor-chains of the destroyers with her strong tentacles, and backed slowly out to sea, drawing the eight long, low-lying craft after her.

So slowly did the car move, so gentle, yet irresistible, was the pull which drew the destroyers after her, that it was not until they had reached the narrow harbour itself that the Northerners knew of the danger which menaced them.

But even then it never entered their heads that they were being drawn out to sea by a submarine foe. They thought that in some mysterious way the destroyers had slipped their cables, and were floating seaward on the outgoing tide.

The utmost confusion now reigned on board the Northerners' vessels.

Men rushed about, obeying a dozen contradictory orders, and the destroyers commenced bumping heavily against each other as some went full-speed ahead, others backed water, only to collide so heavily with each other that two of their number sank beneath the waves, and were dragged helplessly over the bottom.

But ere this happened, the Island of Blomstadt had been left astern, and a number of Kravonian torpedo craft, accompanied by a small cruiser, appearing between them.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

is the Title of the Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. appearing in this week's "MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

DEEP SEA GOLD

The Concluding Chapters of a Story dealing with the Adventures of Captain Flame and Dick Dauntless on board a Wonderful Submarine Motor-Car

... By ...

REGINALD WRAY.

selves and the land, the Northern officers, realising the impossibility of resistance, surrendered without striking a blow.

Having thus cleared the harbour of the torpedo-boats which might have made it impossible for ships to have forced their way inside, Captain Flame hastened towards where he had left the captured mines packed at the foot of the stout stone wall of a fort some quarter of a mile away from the main defences.

Ordering Jack Orde and a couple of men to follow him, Captain Flame connected the mines with wires attached to a small battery Jack Orde carried fastened to his belt.

The wire was wound round a reel, which paid out as the four men made their way to a tall rock just in front of the sea a quarter of a mile from the shore.

On this Captain Flame left Jack Orde, with orders to press an ivory button on the outside of the small box containing the battery, which would then explode the mines, and blow one of the enemy's principal forts into the air, and at the same time attract their attention from the main attack.

This done, Captain Flame re-entered the Octopus, leaving Jack Orde alone on the solitary rock, to await the preconcerted signal.

And now the Octopus's head was turned once more towards the harbour, through which she felt her way until, at length, she came to rest alongside a deserted wharf.

Leaving only Mr. MacIntyre and one hand on board the submarine car, Captain Flame led the rest of the crew silently on to the wharf.

As he felt the solid stonework beneath his feet, Dick Dauntless looked curiously around him.

He was standing in the centre of an almost complete circle of warehouses, store-rooms, barracks, and the houses of Blomstadt's small civil population.

Beyond the houses he could see the frowning forts built on the high ground that surrounded the bay.

Believing it impossible that a hostile fleet could ever penetrate the harbour, the Northerners had concentrated the greater part of the guns on the outer works, leaving the harbour itself guarded only by one small fort—No. 10—the rear of which was open towards the town.

Captain Flame knew every inch of the island. Without a moment's hesitation he led his men through side streets, and between the walls of barracks and warehouses, straight towards No. 10 fort.

As they approached their destination, Dick Dauntless saw the dark forms of numerous sentinels pacing the walls, and, some three hundred yards from where they were now crouched, in the shadow of a large building, the huge, long form of a ten-inch gun.

Leaving his men where they were, Captain Flame beckoned Dick to follow, and, dropping to the earth, crept slowly and cautiously towards the gun.

Strapped to Captain Flame's back was a round, cylindrical object, some eight inches in circumference and about eighteen inches in length, the nature of which the boy tried in vain to guess.

Not that he had much opportunity for reflection.

Again and again they were within an ace of discovery by some passing soldier. Once a sergeant's guard passed so

close that the boy, believing discovery certain, drew his automatic pistol, determined to sell his life dearly.

But, all unsuspecting of danger from within, the little body passed by to relieve the sentries.

It was not until the old guard had repassed them that Captain Flame gave the signal to continue their stealthy advance.

At last they reached a mighty platform, crowded with complicated wheels which worked the elevating and depressing gear upon which the huge gun rested.

And now came the most dangerous part of their work.

It is true that the gun-pit was plunged into inky darkness, and fortunately the gunners were not sleeping around their weapons, as was the case nearer the sea; but not a dozen yards from where they crouched they could see the upright forms of the sentries pacing the wall, from behind which, in time of action, the huge gun would fire.

Ere they had left the Octopus, Dick had received instructions what to do, and, stripping the covering from the breech, he rapidly whirled round a wheel which operated the huge iron plug which formed the enormous breech bolt.

As the huge mass of steel swung silently open, Captain Flame thrust the cylinder from his back into the yawning barrel, then carefully and swiftly the breech bolt was screwed home, the covering replaced, and the two retraced their steps to the waiting men.

Dick Dauntless expected Captain Flame to return to the Octopus; but instead of doing so, he led the way, with the confident step of one to whom his path is well known, towards where a short, squat lighthouse arose behind the fort, from whence, in time of peace, a bright light burned, guiding warships and Government transports into the harbour.

But now the light was extinguished, and a solitary sentry paced before the lighthouse door.

The man was leaning on his rifle, asleep, or so lost in thought that the first intimation he received of danger was when his rifle was snatched from his hand, and a heavy coat thrown over his head to stifle his outcries as he was borne to earth by Captain Flame's companions.

Swiftly the sentry was carried inside the building, and, having been stripped of his overcoat and felt cap, was carefully bound and gagged, whilst, lest the absence of the sentry should attract attention, a Kravonian took his place outside the lighthouse.

Mounting a short, winding staircase, Captain Flame and Dick Dauntless entered the lantern, leaving their companions on guard below.

Already a faint glow in the western horizon proclaimed the approach of day.

Presently Captain Flame laid his hand on Dick's shoulder, and pointed silently through the glass panes seawards.

Looming from out the morning mist, appeared the huge form of a Kravonian ironclad steaming swiftly towards the harbour's mouth.

Then a loud explosion shook the air as Jack Orde fired the mines which had been entrusted to his care, blowing the greater part of the doomed fort into the sea.

Almost at the same moment a bugle blast, followed by the boom of a big gun from the fort to the left of the entrance, showed that the Northerners had detected the approach of the Kravonian fleet.

Captain Flame comes to his own at last.

Immediately the sleeping town awoke to life, drums rolled, hoarse orders resounded on every side, drowned by the constant roar of the huge ordnance with which the town was protected, as the Northerners opened fire on the Kravonian fleet.

But though at such short range the advancing flotilla must have suffered severely, not a shot was fired in return until the foremost ship, from which floated Admiral Dauntless' pennant, had entered the harbour's mouth, upon which the guns of the fort could not be trained.

Then for the first time the attackers took up the challenge, and their huge guns, at almost pointblank range, sent shot after shot crashing into the rear of the defences, as ship after ship passed into the harbour.

But ere the flagship had left the tortuous channel, the artillerymen had crowded round the huge piece of ordnance in No. 10 fort.

Breathlessly Dick Dauntless watched the men throw open the breech, and thrust within the yawning orifice the sharp-pointed shell, and two round white packages, which he knew to contain powder.

Then the gunners sprang back, and as the muzzle of the huge gun dropped, until its fearful missile would have raked the admiral's ship from bow to stern, the gun-captain jerked the lanyard.

An ear-splitting explosion followed, and the gun-pit was hidden beneath a pall of white, yellowish smoke.

When the smoke cleared away, Dick Dauntless shuddered.

A fearful spectacle was presented to his gaze.

The huge gun had been split from breech to muzzle, the forts wrecked, and the gunners were lying about in all directions.

Presently from out a large building, now shattered and burning, that had stood on a hill in the rear of No. 10 fort, fluttered a white flag, and a hearty burst of cheering from the Kravonian ships proclaimed that Blomstadt, the invulnerable, had fallen.

A week later Horakow, the ancient capital of Kravonia, flung open her gates to welcome the lineal descendant of her ancient kings.

Upon receipt of the news of the fall of Blomstadt, the hardy Kravonians had risen en masse, and, after two pitched battles, and innumerable skirmishes, had driven their Northern conquerors from the sacred soil of the fatherland.

In the magnificent uniform of his own Royal Guard, with Jack Orde and Dick Dauntless—the former in a captain's, the latter in a colonel's uniform of the same distinguished regiment—on either side, Captain Flame, or as he was now called, Paul I. of Kravonia, rode at the head of his victorious troops into his ancient capital, beneath the frowning gates of which he received, at the hands of the Kravonian Archbishop, the Iron Sword, the symbol of his acceptance as king by the people of Kravonia.

Through the crowded and gaily decorated streets of the metropolis, the procession wended its way, hailed at every step by the joyful acclamations of an emancipated people.

At the entrance to the massive cathedral, King Paul I. alighted, and there took the oath of allegiance to his subjects, and received once more the diadem which had already been placed upon his head in the State Room of Admiral Dauntless' flagship, the "King of Kravonia."

It was an impressive ceremony, and Dick Dauntless, as he heard King Paul utter the solemn words which pledged him to be a father to the Kravonians, and to rule that mighty nation with justice between man and man, could scarcely realise that the dignified figure at the altar was the man with whom he had enjoyed so close a friendship throughout so many long, adventurous months.

The ceremony over, the newly-crowned King and his Court repaired to a huge castellated building, standing on a precipitous rock in the centre of the capital, from which the Northern governor of Kravonia had been ejected but two days before.

And there the banquet, which terminated the festivities, over, Captain Flame, Admiral Dauntless, Dick, and his chum Jack Orde, foregathered in a luxuriously-appointed chamber that commanded a wide view of Horakow and the surrounding country, now glittering with innumerable sparks of light from bonfires blazing to welcome back a native king over an independent country once more.

With his robes of state, King Paul had doffed much of his kingly dignity.

"And now, Dick, which is it to be? Will you and Orde remain at my Court, where I can promise you an honourable post, and a handsome income, or will you, still enjoying the rank of Colonel in my Guards, which carries with it an established position at Court, receive the Governorship of the Island of Rest, and command of the Octopus, in which to explore the many parts of the Ocean that yet remain unvisited?"

Dick looked hesitatingly at his chum, then, reading the answer in Jack Orde's eyes, replied:

"Let me have the Octopus, and I would not change places with the Emperor of the North itself."

And thus it is that Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde are still exploring the hidden depths of the waters which cover the greater part of the earth.

The Island of Lost Hopes has changed its name, for the mighty forces of Nature within its crater have been harnessed to machines producing more peaceable commodities, and in that far-away Pacific island has grown up a factory, worked by free labour, from which a greater part of the archipelagoes are supplied.

But though the two chums are often welcome visitors in Kravonia, they have not abandoned their proud position as Britishers, for they have two fine adjoining estates in the Eastern Counties, to which they occasionally retire when tired for a time of the life of adventure to which they have devoted themselves.

Mr. MacIntyre divides his time between the Octopus and the island factory, which he has taken under his entire management.

Mopsa remains with the boys, and is as mischievous and full of tricks as ever.

A larger submarine-car has taken the place of the Octopus, which still enriches the world with the deep sea gold which gave Kravonia its independence, and is now a source of constant happiness to thousands of the poor and miserable who throng the crowded streets of Europe.

THE END.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 205.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE

**Next Week's Story.**

For next Thursday Martin Clifford has in preparation a most interesting, amusing, and exciting school story, dealing with the chums of St. Jim's, under the title of

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION,"

This means, of course, that Bernard Glyn, the amateur inventor of the School House, is "at it again," and I am certain that all my readers—more especially those hailing from the North of England—will be delighted with the stirring and exciting events brought about by the latest product of

"THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION."

SPECIAL NOTE! Please make a point of ordering next week's copy of THE GEM Library in advance!

My Readers' Suggestions.

From time to time I have received suggestions from many kindly readers who have written to give me the benefit of their opinions and advice on matters pertaining to the policy of this paper. Some of these suggestions have been particularly valuable, a fact which I have acknowledged by immediately adopting them. Others have been such as are likely to prove helpful in the future, and these I have carefully put by for future reference.

In all, however, the number of suggestions I have received has been so enormous that it absolutely precludes my acknowledging each separately as I should like to do. I must therefore crave my readers' indulgence, and assure them that their helpful suggestions have been duly appreciated by me, though I have been unable to write to each personally to tell him or her so. The only way I can make acknowledgment of such a multitude of suggestions as I have received, is through the medium of this short message. To all who have so kindly helped me in this way I give my very best thanks!

Replies in Brief.

R. Redhead and N. Shields.—The issue you mention was dated Feb. 5, 1910, and is No. 104 of Vol. 4.

W. Barnard, Barking, Essex.—I am afraid I cannot give you an accurate estimate of the value of your coin. You should apply to an expert in such matters. Perhaps the Editor of the "Connoisseur," Temple Chambers, E.C., will be able to help you if you write to him.

A. W. Warrington.—No; the stories you mention are not yet published in book form.

H. P., Walworth.—To the best of my knowledge, there is no money to be earned by staying in Madame Tussaud's all night.

W. W., Walthamstow.—You will be able to obtain the book you require from Messrs. Samuel French & Co., 25, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

Our Correspondence Exchange.

S. Forest, of 46, Bow Lane, Leeds, England, would like to correspond with GEM readers, either sex, living in any part of the world.

Fred Ross, of 108, Old Bethnal Green Road, London, N.E., wishes to correspond with a young lady of the same age, between 18 and 19. Lady clerk or typist preferred.

Miss Cecily F. Windle, of 123, Union Street, Oldham, would like a chum interested in football, etc., to correspond with her. Age about 17—18.

Miss D. M. Williams, 36, Oval Road, Gravely Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman reader of THE GEM.

Master H. Hill, School of Geography, 39, Broad Street, Oxford, would like to correspond with a girl chum, age about 15, either in England or abroad.

Points about Winter Photography.

In these dark days, many an amateur will be packing his outfit carefully, and storing it where the winter frosts and damp will not reach it, and where it will keep in perfect condition for the next summer season. This should not be so, for, though the winter holds little enough attraction to warrant the keeping of the photographic outfit unpacked, and in full use, it holds quite sufficient to tempt the keen amateur photographer to increase his store of good negatives. If the tyro is "out for blood" in the form of good landscape negatives, what better subject could he wish for than a snow-bound landscape view?

To be successful in outdoor winter work, it is necessary to have a camera with a fairly rapid lens working at a large aperture. It follows that if a good negative is to be obtained in the dull light of the winter months, the most must be made of the little light there is by the use of a large stop.

Naturally, owing to the long exposure necessary in winter, it will be seen that landscape photographs are by far the easier to turn out successfully. Snapshots may be attempted, if the weather is extra bright, but the results will not, of course, be so good.

The greatest difficulty that besets the beginner in winter work is estimating the correct exposure necessary, and the tendency leans more towards under-exposure than to over-exposure. The easiest way out of the difficulty is by using an exposure meter, until such a time as practice renders it possible to judge correctly, or nearly so, at a glance, the right exposure.

The brightest hours of the winter-day are between eleven a.m. and two p.m., at the latest. This is, therefore, the best time to make your negatives.

With regard to the kind of plates that are most suitable for this work. A fairly rapid, and backed brand of plate, that gives good density, but not too much contrast, must be used if a good result is to be looked forward to. Of these plates there are plenty on the market. If the plates are not backed, the resulting negative, especially if it is a snow scene with houses or trees showing up black against the background, will be entirely spoilt by halation.

Halation is caused by the reflection of light from the glass side of an unbacked plate, and causes the objects to have a misty and blurred appearance. This halation will probably be more pronounced with a snow scene than with any other, owing to the abundance of white light, which is reflected from the snow.

Great care must be exercised in all operations, and especially in the developing of the exposed plates.

If the object to be attained, viz., a negative with plenty of detail, rather thin, and with not too much contrast, is borne in mind, and if due care be exercised, success, or partial success, ought to attend all the efforts of the amateur photographer.

Back Numbers Offered and Wanted.

Arthur Huntley, of 50, Sophia Street, Docks, Cardiff, has a number of back numbers of THE GEM and "The Magnet," which he will give to any who may require them.

Will any reader oblige Master James Venables, of 40, Ordnance Road, St. John's Wood, with back numbers of THE GEM and "The Magnet" Libraries free of charge?

Master Henry J. Symcox, of 178, Milkwood Road, Herne Hill, S.E., has from No. 92 to present issue of THE GEM Library, and No. 150 to present issue of "The Magnet," which he wishes to dispose of. Will any reader in need of such issues write to him?

Master S. Woolfson, of 235, Burdett Road, Limehouse, E., wishes to obtain old back numbers of THE GEM and "The Magnet" Libraries.

K. Carelan, of Blackhall Street, Dublin, Ireland, wishes to obtain any back numbers of THE GEM.

THE EDITOR.

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!" is the title of the grand, long, complete school story, by Frank Richards, contained in this week's number of our splendid companion paper, "THE MACNET" Library, the cover of which is reproduced below. Ask for "THE MACNET" Library to-day. Price 1d.

The Magnet 1^d

Library

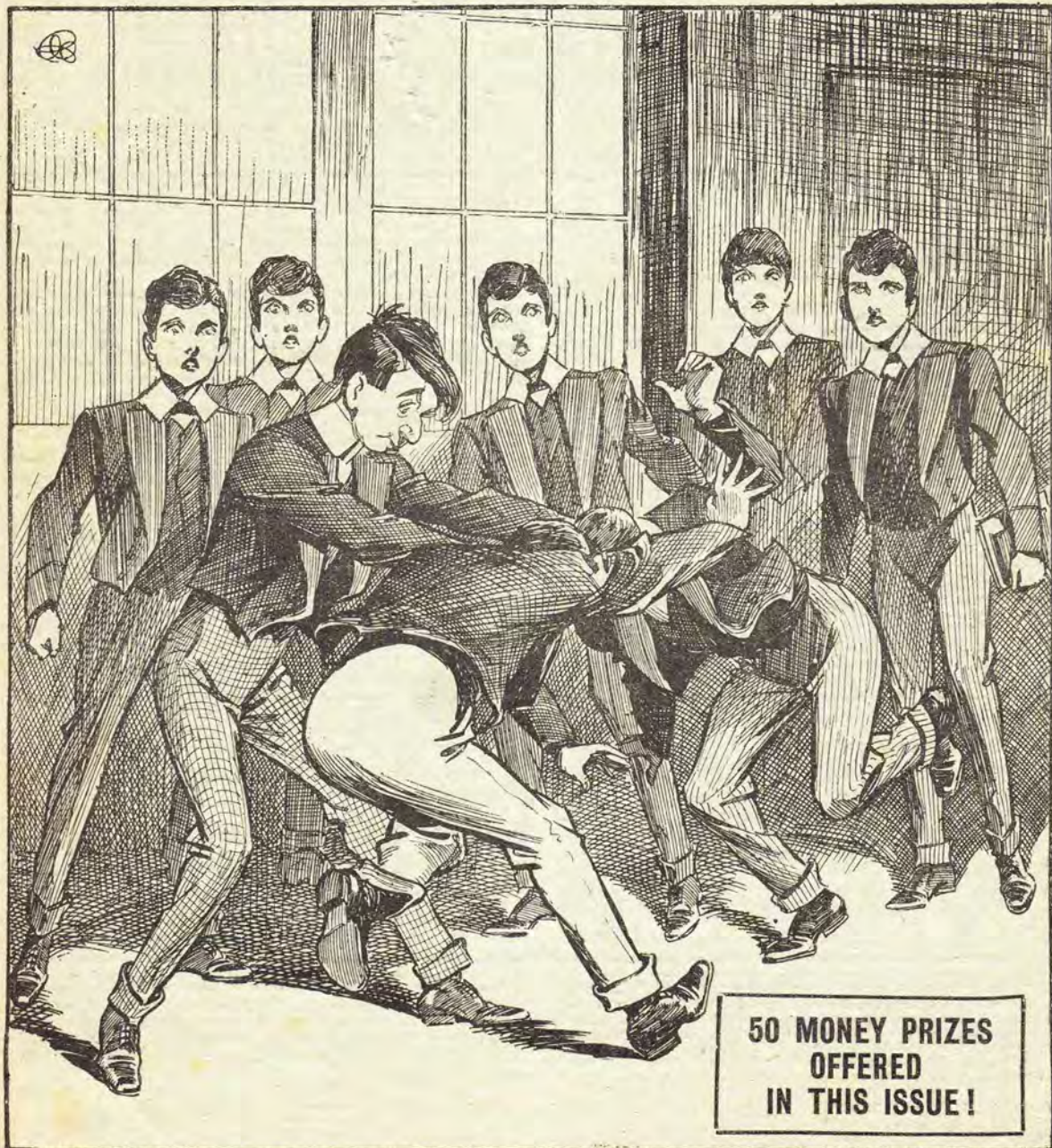
A Companion Paper to
"THE GEM" LIBRARY.
The Popular Thursday
School-Story Book.



No. 205.

The Complete Story-Book for All.

Vol. 6.



**50 MONEY PRIZES
OFFERED
IN THIS ISSUE!**

THE DUFFER OF GREYFRIARS GIVES THE BULLIES A SURPRISE!

A Simple Competition for Readers of The GEM Library.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Collect as many coupons as you can, similar to the one on the front cover page of this issue, cut them out, and paste them neatly on the form supplied below. Then post the page complete to the Editor, GEM Competition, 23, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C., so as to reach him by the first post on Tuesday, January 16th, 1912.

Each week we shall award to the ten readers who send in the greatest number of coupons, TEN HANDSOME PRESENTS chosen by the winners themselves.

POINTS TO BE CAREFULLY NOTED.

All coupons sent in each week must be cut from the current week's issue of the GEM Library.
The coupons printed in spaces 1 and 2 of the form below are Presentation Coupons, which are given you free to start your collection.

Please underline the Present, in the comprehensive list given below, which you most desire to receive in the event of your proving one of the weekly winners.

Competitors collecting more coupons than space provides for on this page must use a form from another copy of No. 205 of The GEM; but the two Presentation Coupons will not count more than once.

Be very careful in cutting out the coupons to cut neatly round the peculiarly shaped outline, and to paste the coupons neatly on the form. The Presents will be awarded primarily according to number of coupons sent in, BUT IN THE EVENT OF A TIE OCCURRING BETWEEN TWO OR MORE COMPETITORS FOR ANY ONE OF THE PRIZES, THE NEATNESS OF THE FORMS WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN DECIDING THE WINNERS.

The decision of the Editor on this or any other point connected with this competition will be final and legally binding.

		3	4	5	6	7	8
Cut out the coupon to be found on the front cover and paste it down in this space.		All coupons pasted up on this page must be taken from No. 205 of THE GEM.					
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Competitors are only entitled to make use of two Presentation Coupons each week.							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
				Please underline the present you would like in the event of winning.			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Ask your friends to help you collect the coupons.				Competitors collecting more coupons than space provides for on this page must use another sheet. The Presentation Coupons, however, will count only once.			

GRAND LIST OF PRESENTS! CHOOSE ANY ONE BY UNDERLINING IT! READ THE RULES PRINTED ABOVE!

Penknife, Fountain Pen, Mouth Organ, Box of Chocolates, Brooch, Pencil Box, Magnetic Compass, Scout Billican, Scout Knife and Fork, Scout Semaphore Flags, Scout Haversack, Jar of Sweets, Cigarette Card Album, Picture Postcard Album, Cuff Links, Telescope, Nail Scissors, Electric Torch, Stamp Album, Hat Pins, Photographic Dark Room Lamp, Photographic Album, Dog Collar, Dog Whip, Clothes Brush, Hair Brush, Story-Book, Box of Paints, Kite, Steam Vertical Engine, Doll's Tea Set, Harmless Pistol, Amusing Game (taken from a large assortment of novel table games), Box of Draughts, Set of Chessmen, Bicycle Bell, Bicycle Repair Outfit, Bicycle Oil Can, Bicycle Lamp, Fishing Rod (3 joints), Spirit Level, 2-ft. Four-fold Boxwood Rule, Hatchet, Fretwork Saw, Cricket Ball, Serviette Ring (with initial engraved).

Write very clearly! } NAME and ADDRESS _____

The Editor's decision on all matters concerning this competition must be accepted as final and legally binding in all respects, and acceptance of this rule is an express condition of entry.