

Next
Wednesday:

FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD! By Martin Clifford.

Every

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem



THE ... HEAD'S PRIZE!

A SPLENDID, NEW, LONG COMPLETE
SCHOOL TALE OF TOM MERRY & CO.
AND FIGGINS & CO. AT ST. JIM'S.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

CHAPTER 1. A Study Raid.

"**W**HY doesn't the young man come?" "What's he doing, anyway?" "If Tom Merry thinks we're going to wait here all the afternoon for him, he can go on thinking it," said Jack Blake, chief of St. Jim's No. 6, of the School House of St. Jim's. "I propose we start without him." "Impose, dear boy!" "Hate!" Arthur Augustus, the swell of the Fourth Form, screwed his nose in his eye, and viewed Jack Blake through it with a lofty stare. "Did you say wait?" "No, rather not. I said raise, you see?" "Well, Blake, I must refuse to be characterized as an imposer, as I was saying. It is impossible for us to start on a raid against the New House headmaster without Tom Merry, as we promised to wait for him." "We didn't promise to wait twenty minutes, did we?" "Rather not." "Granted, dear boy. But as no time was mentioned when we made the promise, the matter is out of our hands. Besides, I have reasons to believe Tom Merry is being detained by our respected headmaster." "Tommy detained by the Head?" exclaimed Lowther. "Do you mean, Tommy has been sent to detention, Gomer?" said Manners. "No, wait a moment. However, as you are totally in the dark, it is impossible for you to understand the circumstances." "What circumstances?" "The circumstances of Tom Merry being detained by the Head, Blakey."

"What should the Head want to detain Tom Merry for in the middle of a half-holiday?" demanded John Blake. "Tom Merry isn't in a scrape, is he?" "No, wait a moment." "Then what the—how the—?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy waved his hand lightly. He seemed totally unaffected by the glances the other juniors were directing towards him. "A headmaster of a great school like St. Jim's has a great many things to think of," he said, speaking in a voice which suggested a vast experience. "A headmaster's duties are by no means confined to the class-rooms, dear boys; up a scratch of fact, the greater part of these great duties—" "Am?" "Woolly, however—" "Duffer!" "Bai Jove, Digby—" "Shocking manner!" added Jack Blake. "Tom Merry jolly well knows we've got to go to Manners' review photographic exhibition at three o'clock?" "No!" "Well, we have to go to your review exhibition, haven't we, Manners?" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Yes, yes, yes!" "Look here, you ass—" "Pshaw, don't get waddy, Manners, dear boy," Arthur Augustus hastened to add. "Jack Blake explains that how-come we're reviewing your photographs and you are not to blame. We all consider you work very hard indeed at the hobby, too, Jove!" Manners turned a deep pink. "Hate! Just because you couldn't take a decent photograph to save your life."

Next Wednesday:

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!" AND "BIRDS OF PREY!"

"How would taking a decent photograph serve Gang's life, Maaners?" asked Lowther.

"But?"

"But you said—"

"No, I didn't!" said Maaners, glancing at the laughing janitors witheringly, and then, turning on his heel, Maaners marched back into the School House. The other janitors stood grinning after him.

All of them had received neatly-written invitations to visit a certain amazed study that afternoon to witness an exhibition of photographs taken by Maaners during the previous term. But there still wanted half an hour before the doors of the exhibition were timed to open, Maaners having the finishing touches to add to the arrangements.

To fill up the time a study raid on Figgins & Co., of the New House, had been agreed upon.

It had been Tom Merry's idea because he had seen Figgins, Fyke Wykes, and Kerr, of the New House, depart down Rokeby Lane in spite of the rain. The suggestion had met with instant approval from Jack Blake, Horrie, Digby, and Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry had agreed to meet the Fourth-Formers in the School House porch, and he had not turned up. It was a most unusual thing for Tom Merry not to turn up to keep an appointment.

"When did you see him last, Lowther?" asked Blake.

"Never! I've seen him since dinner."

Arthur Augustus waved his head aside.

"Fyke don't be crazy, dear boys. No doubt the Head has got or two pressing questions to ask Tom Merry about Shell watches."

"Eh?"

"About what?"

"Shell watches, Lowther. But you will understand later on."

Jack Blake's face became grim with determination. He laid a kindly but firm hand on Arthur Augustus' shoulder.

"It's a risky, damp, wet quidnunc, Gomer."

"Yess, watch. Coughed all o'ach with wotter puddles, isn't it?" replied Arthur Augustus innocently.

"And we don't really want to bump you in any of them," continued Jack Blake, "but—"

Arthur Augustus giggled loudly.

"Gwast Scott! Wotter, Blake! Bal Jove, release me! If any of you daunt dare to try and bump me—"

"Well, it depends upon yourself," said Jack Blake grimly.

"As I've said, we don't want to bump you, but we are going to know why Tom Merry isn't here."

"Rather!"

"Bal Jove, remove your hand, Horrie! Digby, take your wretched flagons from between my collar and my neck!"

"Out with it, Gomer!"

"Gwast Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in a flutter.

"I have already told you Tom Merry has been delayed—"

"Because he is jiving with the Head?"

"Yess, watch, Blake!"

"But what are they jiving about?"

"Very important business."

"But what?"

"A matter of great importance, dear boy."

"Ain't!" shrieked Jack Blake. "What is the matter of great importance?"

"Squashin' our respected headmaster in a wotter, dear boy!"

"Ain't—differ—what? What is it?" insisted Blake.

Arthur Augustus sheepishly vouchsafed his comrade. He faced the cackled janitors with retreating calm.

"I regret to say I cannot tell you, dear boys," he exclaimed. "I would with pleasure, only I gave my word of honour not to breathe a word."

"Why didn't you say so before, you duffer?"

"With who's bumped the cackling jabbermouth on suspicion?" growled Lowther. "Hoarse! Here comes Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry, the hero of the Shell, and leader of the Terrible Three—as Merry, Maaners, and Lowther were called—came up at a run.

"Sorry I've kept you waiting, kids!" he sang out cheerily.

"The Head stopped me, and kept me jiving. Jolly low-winded jaw, too, all about hobnobs. You know he and the other masters are going to Maaners' exhibition after tea!"

"That's pretty decent of them," said Horrie.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Maaners is nearly off his rocker at the honour thrust upon him," he said, laughing. "My sainted lat, we haven't any two much time to rag Figgins & Co., kids."

Jack Blake, Lowther, and Horrie looked witheringly at Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's was smiling quizzically, apparently to himself.

"Psey don't waste valuable time cacklin', dear boys!" he said.

"Suppose Figgins & Co. have returned?" said Digby.

"It's not likely," answered Tom Merry. "Anyway, we shall have to risk that. Must do something on a beastly wet afternoon like this. Psi!"

"Yess, watch!" replied Arthur Augustus.

"Well, let's make a dash for it, then, kids."

"Bal Jove, yass, and turn-gor twosome well up! Psey wait a moment, Boker, while I turn my twosome up!"

As Jack Blake showed no signs of waiting for his share, Arthur Augustus started across the quadrangle with only one leg of his trousers turned up to any useful height. He had to sprint hard to catch the other janitor, as Tom Merry gained the porch leading to the New House.

Tom Merry peered cautiously through the open doorway.

CHAPTER 2.

A Wrecked Study.

"N O one about, eh?"

Tom Merry uttered the words in a whisper. There certainly was no one about in the hall of the New House, and the doors seemed equally deserted.

"It's watchin' wotter, dear boys."

"Can't help that!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "New for!"

Don't make a giddy sound!"

The School House janitors revealed the stairs as quietly and quickly as possible. Figgins & Co. owned a study near way along the passage, and a good many half-open doors had to be passed before it could be reached.

Any moment some New House janitor might come out of his room and raise the alarm. The risk they were running was certainly very great.

"Psey don't make a wotter, dear boys, as the consequences would probably be twigstful," said Arthur Augustus solemnly.

"Rather!"

"Ten to one Gussy would be given a bath with his clothes on," said Lowther. "Nothing like a cold bath in your togs to take the cream out of a fellow's bags."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wotter, Lowther—Horrie, psey don't talk wet!"

Tom Merry grinned.

Of course, he knew the risk they were running, but anything was better than doing nothing except watch the rain fall in the quadrangle. Tom Merry had been rendered desperate by the sound of the imminent rain.

"Here we are, kids! Not a word!"

The hero of the Shell listened at the door. No sound was coming from Figgins & Co.'s study.

"They haven't come back."

"Good egg!"

Jack Blake swung open the door, and a moment or two later the six School House janitors were in the room. Tom Merry looked the door, and looked round the comfortable little room with a delighted grin.

"Seng little place!" he said.

"Bal Jove, yass!"

"Too sang for New House borders, in fact," said Jack Blake gravely.

Raine fell because he entered upon a course of luxury and too much comfort."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgins is a decent art in his mistaken way. It's up to us to see that he doesn't fall from the same cause Raine fell. Catch hold of the other end of the table, Horrie."

"Right-ho!"

"That's it!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Turn it upside-down, only be careful not to break anything."

"Yass, watch! I covehold a fellow who would ruin another's prosperity is a wotter of the first wotter, bal Jove!"

"Rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The School House janitors set about their work at a great pace. Every chair was turned upside-down, the pictures came

"THE GEN" Library FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE COUPON.

G

260

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, MAGNET No. 260, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.

(See column 2, page 27 of this issue.)

THE GEN LIBRARY—No. 260.
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.



"On the bell, School House!" There was a yell as Tom Merry broke through the New House defense cleverly. But the next moment Figgins dashed up and bowled Tom Merry over with a terrific charge. (See Chapter II.)

fully removed from the walls, and the bookcase emptied of its literature.

The books were placed in piles about the floor; and in less than ten minutes the once neat little study had the appearance of a small second-hand shop.

Tom Merry looked around with great satisfaction.

In spite of the terrible wreck the study had been converted into, not a single article had been damaged. Nothing in the way of raids could have worked out more to the satisfaction of the School House jetties.

"What about the fire, now chaps?"

"The fish, Blakey? There is nothing remarkable about the fish, dear boy. As a matter of fact, it is rather a wicker fish."

"A fire is another instance of worsening luxury, Gnuay," grinned Jack Blake. "Do you think your ancestors, when they were savages and lived in trees, had fires?"

"I have no idea."

"Of course they hadn't, kid. Pass that large jug of water on the window ledge, Digby."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Digby moved towards the window, suddenly giving vent to a startled exclamation.

"My aunt, Figgins & Co. are coming across the quad, kid!" he cried.

"Greatest shock!"

Tom Merry & Kerr darted across the room. By a stroke of good luck it had stopped raining at last, but what was not such good luck was the fact that Figgins, Fatty Wynn, and Kerr were making for the New House.

There could be very little doubt that the three would at

last have come to their study. Tom Merry and Jack Blake exchanged glances.

"Better unlock the door?"

"Suppose so."

"Greatest shock, pray do nothing of the sort, Tom Merry!"

"If we don't, Figgins will make the alarm, and have half the New House waiting for us when we have to come out. Here, there's a lot of rope in that cupboard!"

"Good!"

Jack Blake and Lowther grinned. Tom Merry turned the key back in the lock, and stood against the wall at the side of the door.

Digby hid behind an unscrambled chair.

Footsteps in the corridor outside were already audible, for Figgins & Co. were coming along at a springing stride.

CHAPTER 3.

Author Augustus Goes Black in the Face.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Figgins pushed open the door of his study and stared in. Fatty Wynn and Kerr poured against him from behind.

"What's the matter, Figgins?" began Kerr.

The long-legged chief of the New House jetties did not answer in words. He started loudly, and rushed into the study.

Fatty Wynn and Kerr were close on his heels. Before Kerr had realized that the room was dismantled, he heard the door slam to behind him.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 360.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
Order in Advance.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

The Scots junior wheeled round. It was Lowther who had shut the door, and Kerr saw him slipping the key into his pocket.

"You frightful rotten!"

"You awful bounders!"

"Go for 'em!" roared Figgins. "Bump the howling asses!"

"Let me sell on Tom Merry!" panted Patty Wynn.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Lowther stood with their backs to the door. Herries and Dugby suddenly appeared from behind chairs, and Arthur Augustus emerged from the cupboard. He flicked some dust from his trousers—knees.

"Paw be reasonable, Figgins, dear boy?"

"Blow being reasonable, you shrieking rotten!" howled Figgins. "Go for them, chaps!"

Arthur Augustus put up his hand persuasively.

"If you refuse to be reasonable, dear boy, try and view the matter in its true proportions," he said. "If you glance around you will see that the odds are greatly in our favor, but Jove! that it is utterly useless for you to attack—"

"Yeh! Gwout! Gwout Scott!"

When Figgins glared round as advised did not transpire. He certainly looked, but it was only to rush at Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's went down before the rush, the coal-scuttle breaking his fall with a hideous clatter.

"Gwout—ow! Bai Jove!"

Figgins seized a handful of slack from the scuttle, and rubbed it well into Gwout's hair.

"Is that how you like it done, you bounders?"

"Yow! Wussow, dear boys, as I am being fearfully crushed!"

"Stick to your man, Gwout!"

"Gwout Scott! Bai Jove!"

Herries rushed to his cousin's rescue. Lowther and Kerr flung their arms round each other's neck, and rolled about on the floor.

After nearly wounding Jack Blake with a toothball charge, Patty Wynn advanced to superior odds. He lay on his face on the hearthrug, with Tom Merry and Jack Blake sitting on him.

Figgins put up a tremendous defence, but he could not do impossibilities. Kerr had long since fallen a victim to Dugby and Lowther. Figgins was the last to be vanquished. By the time he was, Herries's collar was hanging from the front of his waist, and Arthur Augustus resembled a tiger mauling, except that his nose was bleeding slightly.

"Lankeegetus!"

"Draggoff!"

"All right, Tom Merry!"

"Good!" exclaimed Lowther, grinning. "If it's all right, Patty Wynn, no harm has been done—has it?"

"You howling diffons!"

"No, really, dear boys, we could not help ourselves!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "As we had wasted your study, so had no other resource but to collar you three—"

"You raving jabberwock!"

"Lankee get up, see!"

"Baw, but it can't be done, Figgins," said Tom Merry pettily. "Not yet, anyway. Pass us some of the rope, Herries."

"Right-ho, lid!"

Figgins & Co. writhed and struggled in the grasp of the enemy, but they were helpless. They dare not call for rescue, for fear of bringing Mr. Ratcliff on the scene. The three were sorely bound, in spite of their struggles.

"Good!" said Tom Merry, with satisfaction. "Now pass the young diffons to their feet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Jack Blake dragged Patty Wynn on to the spotted table, and bound him securely to one of the legs. Kerr and Figgins were promptly bound to two more of the legs. All three juniors were compelled to stand in a very upright position, and they were facing each other.

"You—you awful rotten!" choked Figgins. "You—you fearful bounders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Our turn'll come, Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "It appears as if your turn has already come, dear boys. I suggest the whole thing be left every farney indeed."

"You shrieking diffons! You—you howling tailor's dummy!" roared Figgins.

"Bawrah, funny though the affair is, I trust you three realize that we had no other resource," lectured Arthur Augustus. "If you view the matter in the correct light—"

"Gwout Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chewiosoph Columbus!"

Arthur Augustus caught sight of himself in the looking-glass. Exactly what he had expected to see reflected by the Tom GEM LIBRARY—No. 280.

"THE MAGNET LIBRARY, Every Monday."

truthful mirror, after the coal-scuttle incident, it is impossible to say. Arthur Augustus certainly did not appear pleased with what he did see, though.

His face was grimed with coal-dust. The same substance impregnated his hair, and his collar was jet-black.

"Gwout Scott! I must wash away and wash!"

"You must rush away to the School House, you mean," said Tom Merry loudly. "It's not safe to stay here any longer. We'll send some New House kids along to cut those ropes, Figgins!"

"You rotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just you wait, Tom Merry!"

"Go on!"

And, chuckling gleefully, Tom Merry led the way out of the study. As they neared Redfern's room, Lowther put up his hand for silence.

"Don't make a giddy sound, chaps!" he said. "And don't cackle!"

Lowther pushed past the little crowd and opened the study door. Redfern & Co. were in their room, taking advantage of a wet afternoon to do their prep.

Misty Lowther faced them as coolly as if he had a perfect right to be in the New House.

"Reddy, I've just come from Figgins' room."

Redfern looked up suspiciously.

"Oh?"

"Yes, rather! Something seems to have happened to him. He has just come in from a walk, and now he's absolutely done up."

"Done up?"

"Rather! Bled if he seems to be able to move his legs at all."

"My aunt?"

"Not his hands."

"By Jove! Will she along and see him?"

"Yes, do, old chap."

Misty Lowther darted on into the passage. He had been kicking the door while telling Redfern about the calamity which had befallen Figgins, and so had been able to remove the key from the lock without Redfern & Co. seeing. Now that he was out of the room, he rattled the key back again, and locked the door.

Redfern & Co. flew across their study, and rapped at the door-knob vigorously.

"Open the door, you see!" shrieked Owen.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Open the door, Lowther, or— Come back, you young scoundrel!"

The School House kids waited away along the passage. There was no time to waste.

Lowther had left the key in Redfern's door, and Redfern could be relied upon to make enough noise to rouse the curiosity of the next study occupant.

Any moment Redfern & Co. might be liberated.

There certainly was no time to waste in getting into School House quarters.

"Hoary!" cried Tom Merry. "It's stopped raining, you chaps!"

"Good egg!"

"There's Figgins!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Heav'ly alive, Figg! Ha, ha, ha!"

The writhing face of the leader of the New House juniors was at the open window of his study. Behind him stood Patty Wynn, Kerr, and Redfern & Co.

The New House juniors positively glowered down at their rivals from the School House. Tom Merry & Co. looked up with cheery smiles.

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.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR." Every Friday.

"Which House is cock-house of St. Jim's?" cried Tom Merry.

"The School House, of course! Hearty!" chorused the rascals.

And the six scattered into their own territory, followed by the wrathful shouts of the New House jammers. Archer Augustus stopped directly the School House side of the quad, was resolved.

"But Jove! There's Bernard Glyn, dear boys, go! to fly his model aeroplane. Pray ask him to wait for me, as I read at once wash away and wash my face. I am in a fearful condition."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, you are a bit black in the face, Gussy!" grinned Lowther.

"Don't worry! Glyn, dear boy!"

Bernard Glyn stopped.

"Hello, you chaps! My only Aunt Jane! Got a job as a coal-heaver, Gussy!"

"No, washah not—I mean, don't be ridiculous. Pray wash fresh, dear boys, while I was in and change and have a bath and—"

"Have your hair cut," added Lowther.

"And his nails manicured."

"And his hair ironed."

"You foolish asses! Here comes our suspected head-mastah, but Jove!"

Archer Augustus scudded away at a great pace. Tom Merry and Jack Blake arranged their rolled attire as far as was possible, and Dicky caught Bernard Glyn by the arm.

"My nose look swollen at all, Glyn?" he inquired.

"Ha, ha! No, Dig. Been ragging the New House duffers!"

Tom Merry laughed cheerily.

"Rather! A ripping jape went off without a hitch, except that Gussy stood as his head in the coal-curtain."

The jape against the New House had been successful. There could be no gainsaying that. But if Tom Merry and Jack Blake could have known what was to be the result of that jape, they would have given almost anything they had rather than have taken part in it.

They could not know, though, as they stood there by the School House porch laughing happily. Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, mastered by with a cheery smile, just as Manners came out of the school door.

The amateur photographer of the School House shaded his eyes, and looked anxiously up at the sun which had managed to break through the rain-clouds at last. Manners looked as if he had the curve of a Balkan State on his shoulders.

CHAPTER 4.

M King Plans.

"BROTHER the sun!"

Tom Merry & Co. stared. Manners was at the top of the steps, leaning over the stone-work. Apparently he could not see the jokers below.

"Of all the rotten luck! If only it had kept on raining for the rest of the afternoon. Blow the sun!"

Tom Merry & Co. stared still harder.

"Off his rocker at last!"

"Stark, staring mad, of course," agreed Lowther; "also weak in the top story, and non compos mentis—that's Latin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners started, and came down the steps at a run. He faced the other jokers apologetically.

"I'm awfully sorry, you fellows—"

"Oh, don't mention it," said Lowther kindly. "Other people have been thoughtless enough to go off their rockers without telling their friends when it was going to take place."

"Merry, this is a serious matter, old chap."

"Rather!"

"If I want read on the spur of the moment, I should call it a serious matter myself," said Tom Merry sympathetically. "As long as you haven't bitten Skimpole, or anyone, though—"

"Bully sun!"

"Have you bitten Skimpole, then?" exclaimed Lowther gravely. "Skimpole! Skimpole!"

Bernard Skimpole, the brawny man of the Hall, started. He had been walking across the quadrangle, his spectacles eyes glued to the latest work on anatomy. Skimpole preferred books dealing with social conditions to works connected with the deluge of Red Indians and similar subjects.

He stopped in his walk, keeping his finger on his place in the book.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY.

"Did you speak to me, Lowther?"

"Rather!" laughed the humorist of the Hall. "Have you been bitten lately?"

"Dear me! Bitten? Good gracious! You don't mean to say that that dangerously ferocious animal Tower has shown signs of insanity since he bit me yesterday?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tower only bit you because you looked at him," said Horrie indignantly. "I only with you were as sane as Tower is, Skimpole."

"Dear me, don't be ridiculous! I sincerely trust the ferocious animal—"

"He's talking of you now, Manners," said Lowther solemnly.

"You raving lunatic—"

"Didn't you hear that you had bitten Skimpole, then, Manners?" asked Lowther.

"Am!"

"Well, when a chap says he wishes it had kept on raining all a half-holiday, there must be something wrong with him," said Jack Blake affably. "You can't blame us."

"Fathers!"

"And we accept your apology, Manners."

"Striking ideas!" said Manners snappishly. "I said blow the sun, and I mean blow the sun. How can I open the photographic exhibition with the room flooded with brilliant sunlight! All the more delicate half-light would simply be lost."

"Good!"

"Couldn't pull down the blind, then?"

"Or turn the photographic face to the wall, old chap!"

Manners ignored the answers.

"I know it will be a big disappointment to you chaps," he said, "but I shan't be able to open the exhibition until four o'clock. The rotten sun will be behind those trees then. Patience! at four, mind!"

"Right-ho!"

"Any of the New House kids coming?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Not to-day. It's only fair the School House should have the first opportunity of seeing the exhibit, and I've got the masters coming in these ten. I hope you chaps won't stay more than half an hour in the room—"

"More than half a minute!"

"In fact, I can only allow each fellow to stay in the room a very short time," went on Manners unobtrusively. "Of course, to-morrow or the next day second visits can be paid. Second visits usually are paid to exhibitions, you know."

"Rather!"

"I suppose I couldn't have a bed put up in the room, kid?" said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be an ass, Moony!"

"No, don't say," agreed Horrie. "It's going to be a jolly good exhibition, and I'll bring Tower, Manners, to give a sort of escort—"

"Oh!"

"Scold!" repeated Horrie stoutly. "Tower's awfully fond of pictures."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners shrugged his shoulders.

"You're a lot of cocking snoots!" he exclaimed; "and if Horrie brings his rotten, mangy building near the room, I'll—I'll stay it!"

And Manners strode on across the quadrangle, making for the open gates which led to the main road. The jokers laughed, and turned to watch Bernard Glyn.

It was really a broken up sort of half-holiday even now the rain had stopped. In spite of their chaff, Tom Merry and Lowther, and Study No. 6 juniors wouldn't have missed Manners' exhibition for anything for Manners' sake more than for the sake of his photographs.

The exhibition made a journey into Rykoute impossible, and the recent rain rendered football out of the question. In the circumstances, Bernard Glyn's wonderfully well-made model proved a great attraction.

"When's the flying begin?"

The amateur inventor shook his head. He had been "improving" the aeroplane by all sorts of fresh ideas, but whichever it would arrive or not, had yet to be proved.

Harry Nible and Clifford Dune jumped to their feet. They had been kneeling on the steps helping Bernard Glyn do something to the rest like model.

The inventor looked at the aeroplane critically.

"I say, spread about in the quad, you chaps!" he exclaimed.

"Right-ho!"

"It won't matter if it comes down on the ground, because I've got some jolly strong runners underneath," went on

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 280.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

"FIGGINS & CO'S FEUD!"

Bernard Glyn. "It would smash up if it ran into a wall, though."

"Get over by the gym," young Blake. "You slip across to the clubhouse, young Merry."

The juniors scattered in all directions except towards the college gates. No one dreamed the model could fly right across the huge quadrangle.

Bernard Glyn held his model above his head, and a cheer went up. Then, as he let it go, Dr. Holmes and Mr. Bailton watched into the quadrangle again.

The aeroplane followed for an instant or two, then went off at a good speed in a wide circle. The Head watched in astonishment.

Mr. Bailton was equally surprised.

"Bernard Glyn's aeroplane certainly was flying wonderfully well."

"Good old Glyn!"

"Look out there, Herries!"

"Hoarse!"

Dr. Holmes took his glasses from his nose and polished them thoughtfully.

"Bailton, I do not know whether you think with me, but I consider that model must have cost a great deal of hard, intellectual work," the Head said quietly. "It is Glyn's model, of course, and Glyn plays well on the football field. I am more than ever convinced on inspection like that should be encouraged. Such is chiefly useful in training the brain to reason; inventing models teaches a youngster to create."

"I entirely agree with you, sir," agreed Mr. Bailton heartily. "Glyn's work is quite satisfactory, and so is his sport, and the same can be said of Manners, who is really good at photography. There are heaps of juniors equally good at some sensible hobby. I certainly agree that this sort of thing should be encouraged, doctor!"

"And it still be encouraged, Bailton. Ah, they have finished now, I suppose. Come to my room, and we will map out the prize scheme I spoke about. It must be open to the whole school for the best model made during the next week."

Mr. Bailton followed the Head back into the School House in delight. He knew that when once Dr. Holmes took a matter up, it became a big matter.

Already plans for what was to be the most exciting competition ever held at St. Jim's were smoldering through the Housemaster's mind.

Without even having seen the masters, the juniors in the quadrangle were crowding round Bernard Glyn and the aeroplane, which had come to ground at last.

CHAPTER 5.

A Fight.

"HANDS OFF!"

"Anything broken, Glyn?"

Bernard Glyn shook his head.

"No, only a wire gone. You've got my wire pliers, Karpenev," he said.

Harry Noble, the Cornstalk, produced the pliers, and Bernard Glyn carefully joined the broken wire. He jumped to his feet at last.

"It is as right as rain again," he said. "Get back to the walk, you chaps. Here she goes!"

"Great Scott!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Step it!" yelled Bernard Glyn. "Step it, Skinner, you are!"

Skinner was fairly tall for his age, but the aeroplane which passed over his head was quite twenty feet above the ground. The leaning men of the shell blinked up at the model in a speechless manner.

"Dear me! I entirely fail to see how I can stop your model, Glyn. If it were lower, my only fear or even five feet from the ground, and wasn't going so fast—"

"Am I?"

"Glyn, try to be reasonable. Of course, if I had been standing on much higher ground, or even—"

Bernard Glyn flashed past. By some slight mistake he had altered the angle of the rudder when mending the broken wire, and the consequence promised to be a serious one.

Instead of describing another wide circle, the model was going at a fine pace across the quad, making straight for a bare tree in the field outside the college grounds.

The other juniors came scolding along at record-breaking pace.

"On the ball!"

"Run through the gates, Herries!"

"My aunt, it's all up with the Herries, Glyn, old chap!"

pointed Tom Merry.

"No, it isn't, but I didn't wind it up to the full, and I'll escape the tree all right. We shall find it in the field."

"Good egg!"

The juniors poured towards the open gates. When they were almost half-way across the quadrangle, a grinning, not very pleasant face, disappeared from the top of the wall.

The face belonged to a youngster named Jolliffe, a nephew of the landlord of the Green Man.

Most of the St. Jim's juniors knew Jolliffe by sight, but he was a very different sort of youth from Fletcher and Grange of the college, and so none of the St. Jim's juniors had taken any notice of him.

"Beautiful bit of snobs!" Jolliffe muttered.

He hesitated for a moment, and picked up a stone. By tossing it over the wall, it would be almost certain to drop on one of the St. Jim's juniors' heads.

Jolliffe half raised his hand, then, lowering it again, dashed across the field. As Bernard Glyn had predicted, his aeroplane had come to ground in the field.

Jolliffe made straight for it.

He reached the spot before the first of the St. Jim's juniors appeared in sight, and Jolliffe's face became wreathed in a grin which made him still more unpleasant-looking.

Scarcely pausing for a moment, he kicked the cleverly-made little aeroplane into fragments, and ground the valuable motor into so much useless metal.

Jolliffe chuckled loudly, and darted ahead. He had still about a dozen yards to travel before he could reach the hedge and scramble through to safety.

"You rotten old!" The words rang out in an outburst of anger. "You awful outsider!"

The hedge seaped, and Manners burst through into the field.

The Study No. 8 junior had a parcel in his hand, some light provisions he had seen to purchase for the benefit of the patients at the photographic exhibition. Manners dropped his parcel instantly.

"No you don't, you said!" he cried.

Jolliffe had almost reached the hedge, but not quite. Manners sprang up fairly, and dropped his hand heavily on the torn lad's shoulder.

Jolliffe's eyes sparkled viciously. He swung his arm round, and crashed a heavy fist into Manners' face.

Manners was partially dazed by the unexpected blow, but he recovered strongly, and Jolliffe's eyes glittered again.

"Going to fight me, you snob?" he roared.

"I'm going to give you a jolly good hiding!" roared Manners. "That was Bernard Glyn's aeroplane you kicked to bits!"

Jolliffe did not dispute the point with words. He hit out again instead. Manners was just too quick for him this time, and the moment following the two were in the midst of a good, old-fashioned fight.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Herries came up at a rush. Digby, Leather, and Bernard Glyn were only just behind. Digby was the only one of the chaps who had seen Jolliffe smash the aeroplane, for Digby had climbed over the wall instead of making for the gateway.

"Jolliffe kicked your machine to pieces, Glyn!" roared Digby. "Go it, Manners!"

"The awful young rotter!"

"Give him a jolly good thrashing, Manners!"

The juniors crowded round, and Jolliffe edged away. He dropped his hands to his side, and looked at Tom Merry sulkily.

"I'm not going to fight this chap if you others are going to pile on me afterwards."

"You said!" said Tom Merry hotly.

Manners stepped up to Jolliffe angrily.

"You are either going to fight me, or else you'll be dished in that pond!"

"And suppose I win?"

"Well, you'll win, that's all."

"What about these others?"

"We shan't interfere, you jolly well know that!" snarled Tom Merry. "Give him the hiding of his life, Manners."

Manners nodded. He could box quite well, as could most of the chaps at St. Jim's, and he did not notice the extra weight and age of the town lad.

Jack Blake did notice it, and looked troubled.

Jolliffe was a strongly built youngster.

"Can Manners stand up to him, Merry?" Jack Blake whispered.

"You'll see. Manners is indignant, and he takes a lot of beating when he's like that. But of not easily reason, and still less easily cooled down again. There, my son!"

Jack Blake nodded.

ANSWERS

THE "NEW LIBRARY"—No. 280.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

Jolliffe had rushed in, a terrific rush, with his arms clanking through the air like windmill sails. Manners promptly stopped aside, and let drive heavily with his left.

He caught Jolliffe on the side of the head with a blow which made the toady wonder what had happened.

Jolliffe could fight, though, even if he were not very much good at boxing. He was strong, and seemed capable of taking a good deal of "punishment." He broke away in a scrambling fashion after Manners' side step, then, flinching rather neatly, all but grazed Manners with a body-blow.

Manners staggered back, and Jolliffe came on. A few seconds before, Manners might have followed his blow on the bigger lad's head with another that would perhaps have put an end to the fight, but Manners had not quite cared to do that.

Jolliffe had no such scruples.

He followed the body-blow with a heavy right-hander, which made Jack Blake hiss his breath. Manners guarded cleverly, and drove Jolliffe back.

"Bei Jove! Gweel Scott! What is happening, Lewtiah!"

Manners is showing Jolliffe a new move in chess, Gussy. Jolliffe smashed up Bernard Glyn's acceptance.

"Bei Jove, then I twist Manners will give him a frightful Gwasch!"

"He will."

"Yess, wethak."

At that point in the fight, though, Jolliffe was more than holding his own. He was putting all his eggs in one basket, as it were, rushing in again and again. The pace was bewilderingly fast.

If Manners had also tried to force matters he would have lost, but the third junior knew too much about boxing for that. He sparred cleverly.

Jolliffe was beginning to tire at last. He had not done a great deal of damage with his rushes, and there could be no question that he was tiring.

Manners waited his opportunity.

But!

Jolliffe had rushed in again. He was met by a steady, straight left.

He seemed to recoil like a ball, although Manners had done little more than leave his fist for the toady to run against. Jolliffe scowled furiously. He rushed in again, flinging all his weight at Manners, but again there was a straight left waiting for him.

But!

Manners' knuckles thudded against Jolliffe's chest.

"Go—oo!" growled Jolliffe, inside.

But he was still game. He whirled his fists round viciously, and Manners at once gave up defensive work.

Crash! Thud!

The third junior met about his work of finishing off the fight in great style. He had no intention of leaving Jolliffe more than could be helped, but he meant to thrash the fellow who had spelt Bernard Glyn's acceptance. And Manners did thrash him.

Jolliffe hit viciously, but he was being driven back all the time now. He lost his temper, and for the first time one of the contestants was grunted.

Manners sent his opponent down with a heavy chest blow, and stood over him.

"Had enough?" he asked.

Jolliffe did not answer. He pretended to be a great deal more hurt than he really was, but his pretence stood him in little stead.

Tom Merry had very little sympathy to offer.

"Serve you jolly well right, Jolliffe," said Tom Merry.

"Yess, wethak, Mewwy, deah boy, I considah Manners had no oltah wesevoh but to administrah a frightful thrashing!"

"Well, he's done it, and," grunted Jack Blake.

"Bei Jove, yass! Lewtiah, I wesevohak you ogtah and Manners couldn't box. I suppose you have considerably shaken your opinion now?"

Lewtiah did not answer. Lewtiah was one of the black sheep of the School House Fourth Form, and in his heart he would have been better pleased if Manners, instead of Jolliffe, had received the thrashing.

Lewtiah was too wise to mention this fact, though. It would have been more than reckless to have done so in such company.

The juniors crowded round Manners enthusiastically, while Jolliffe slouched back towards the Green Man Inn. Lewtiah looked at the excited juniors with a sneer on his face.

"Lot of silly idlers!" he muttered. "Come on into Rylcombe, Rylcombe!"

"Dose line, I am affraid I cannot accept your invitation as I have to appear at a photographic exhibition in a very short time, in other circumstances—"

"Oh, rats!"

"I trust you realize that the previous engagement—"

"More rats!" snapped Lewtiah, and walked on moodily by himself, his hands in his pockets.

As a matter of fact, Lewtiah was rather lonely that afternoon. Mollish, one of his few chums in the school, was in the detention room struggling with the hidden beauties of Virgil, an impost. Mr. Rylcock had given him. Certainly, Manners had outdone an invitation to the photographic exhibition, but Lewtiah had torn it up.

It wasn't likely Lewtiah would go to anything got up by one of Tom Merry's friends.

All the same, he felt very lonely as he walked down Rylcombe Lane. As he neared the Green Man an unpleasant, sullen scowl settled on his face.

Because he had made himself so unpleasant at St. Jim's that no one took the trouble to chum in with him, Lewtiah felt he was being badly treated. Lewtiah seldom could be induced to see things as they really were, that the fault was in himself and not in Jack Blake and Tom Merry and all the other juniors of the School House.

CHAPTER 6.

Waiting for the Doors to Open.

JACK BLAKE stopped as he reached the upper passage, and stared. An apparently nerve-racking queue of juniors stretched along each of the passage walls, terminating in a small crowd in front of an unmade study.

On the other side of the wall arose there were two more queues, and they were being added to by newcomers every moment. Practically all the juniors of the School House seemed to be in the passage.

"Come on, Blake, deah boy; I have kept a place for you! Dose, take your elbow out of my wife!"

"Walk on your own feet, Herries, not mine!"

"Hurry up, Manners!"

Jack Blake chuckled and scudded down the passage between the queues. Arthur Augustus welcomed him with a gasp. The result of St. Jim's was pressed up against the door of the unmade study by the combined weight of the little crowd.

He looked very hot and uncomfortable.

"Here you are, Blakey, deah boy; you take my place, and I will waitish to the oltah end of the queue, as I am very cwevohed deah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My educated wait, what a crowd!"

"We'll Manners be pleased!" chuckled Lewtiah. "Talk about a West End theatre when there's something big on! Bang at the door again, Dose!"

Gilbert Dose obeyed.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Hurry up, Manners!"

"Rightish, you chaps!" came Manners' excited answer. "I can't quite make up my mind whether to hang the 'Sunset from Rylcombe Bridge' on the east or west wall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bang it out of the window, old chap!"

"Or up the chimney," added Lewtiah. "Anyway, open the door!"

"Yess, Manners, deah boy, pray open the door, as I am seriously thinkin' of waitish' from the oltah cwevoh."

Manners's voice came back reassuringly:

"She'n't be half a minish now."

"Hoory!"

The news ran down the queue like lightning. The door was to be opened in half a minute. The queues commenced to close up.

Keegerson, who had turned round to speak to Jack Blake, found that he could not turn back again. The crush was becoming tremendous.

Arthur Augustus was audibly gasping.

"Gweel Scott! Our clothes will be stiah w'ecks!"

"And careless, too!" gasped Digby. "Steady, you duffers!"

The small crowd of fellows in front of the door were being compressed into a smaller and still smaller space by the encroaching queues. Arthur Augustus became desperate.

"Pray be wesevohable, you stiah ams! We can't all get into the room. Only about a douse will be able to stiah at a time. Clifton Dose, the dockeeb's running into my wife!"

"Harr! lack, Gussy!"

"Good gwasch! Stand back a bit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Manners, you wrotah, open the deah!"

The sound of hurrying footsteps across the floor of the exhibition-room caused a gasp of relief. The door was to be opened at last.

Manners was already turning the key.

"It's only three minutes past four, you chaps," Manners called out cheerily. "I wouldn't have kept you waiting only

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 265.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

that ringing "Sunset from Rykossbe Bridge"—Yah! You! Gooch!"

Manners opened the door. The exhibition had duly commenced, and the fellows were at liberty to enter the rooms. They did enter it; Arthur Augustus being the first.

The instant the pressure given by the door was removed, the pressure of the juniors behind caused Arthur Augustus to shoot forward into the room as if expelled from a catapult. He dived full in Manners' chest.

Manners went down with a thud, and Arthur Augustus rolled on the top of him. Then Clifton Dane entered the exhibition-room. He came in backwards, at a great pace, until he reached the other two juniors on the floor, then he sat on them.

"An! ha, ha!"

The whole affair happened in wonderfully short time. A second or two ago the crowd of juniors had been desperately anxious to move without being able to; now they could move, and were desperately anxious to stop. But there was no withstanding the awful pressure of the four distinct queues behind them.

The juniors simply peered into the room. The struggling heap of juniors which had been forced to pile itself on the top of Manners and Arthur Augustus grew to a great height, legs were waving about in all directions, doing nothing more useful than tripping up the few who succeeded in avoiding the human pile itself.

"You aerial ones!"

"Take your knees out of my neck!"

"Take your elbows out of my eye!"

"Yow! Gooch!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Monty Lowther struggled clear of the heap and seized the door. They gave it a violent push. Tom Merry jammed his foot against it as another rush from outside made it impossible to close it further.

More juniors came into the room. Lumsley-Lumsley arrived with an unintentional rush just as Reilly succeeded in gaining his feet after a fourth attempt.

"Gooch, you spalpeen!"

Reilly, the junior from Belfast, had just time to fling his arm round Lumsley-Lumsley's neck, then down he went again. And Lumsley-Lumsley went with him, right into the centre of the struggling crowd on the floor.

Tom Merry, Lowther, and Jack Blake gave the door another hearty push.

"Come on, Reilly!" panted Tom Merry. "Get your weight into the door, kid!"

"Shush, an' it's Lumsley-Lumsley who has got his weight into me!"

Reilly and Lumsley-Lumsley struggled free. They rushed to aid Tom Merry and Jack Blake and Lowther. The five of them put every ounce of their strength into the work of getting the door shut again.

"We must shut it!" panted Tom Merry. "The room will be wrecked if we don't."

"Altogether, boys; get an elegant swing on it!"

The door groaned and creaked. The pressure outside was scarcely diminishing at all. Wally D'Arcy, Arthur Augustus' minor, had just arrived with a contingent of Third-Formers, and the legs were making their weight felt.

If once the door were allowed to swing open again, there would be no stopping the rush. And that could mean only one thing. Manners' exhibition would be wrecked.

Tom Merry & Co. worked with a will, and the next moment the door clattered to with a thud.

Tom Merry turned the key.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he gasped.

Jack Blake was passing, and Monty Lowther was staring at the struggling heap of juniors.

"My hat! Where's Manners?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners, the exhibitor, could not even be seen.

CHAPTER 7. The Exhibition.

"G EREUP!"

"Digby, you shrieking an'!"

"Herries, you howling duffer!"

Tom Merry stared at the struggling heap in dismay. There must have been twenty or more juniors on the floor. Their arms and legs seemed to be tied into all manner of hopeless-looking knots.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Monty Lowther helped to yank some of the topmost juniors to their feet.

"Don't be stony, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you think you're doing, Kerraids?"

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 263.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

"Blessed if I know!" growled the Mann junior. "Being lost for nothing, I think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

More juniors were jammed to their feet. Digby and Herries were reduced to a gasping state. They seemed to have a very vague idea as to what had happened.

"You howling majesties!" shouted Manners excitedly. "If you think this is the proper way to come to the first exhibition ever held at St. Jim's—"

"No; without noise!"

"Then what did you want to rush into me like an express train for, an'?"

"I didn't want to, dash boy!" growled Arthur Augustus. "It was the very last thin' in the world I wanted to do. The wretches behind pushed me into the wotton wotton."

"Must have been an an' to let 'em, then!" said Manners sulkily. "No harm has been done to the pictures, though. But these might have been."

"Show your pictures!"

"Look here, Herries—"

"And here, you!" said Herries. "I'm here!"

Tom Merry laughed cheerily. "Well, we've come to your exhibition, Manners," he exclaimed. "We promised we would, and we have done it. May as well clear now."

"But you haven't seen the photographs, you an'!"

"An'?"

Tom Merry looked round the walls. They had been very tastefully draped with a dull paper of a neutral tint, and then gathered with a mass of various-sized photograph frames. Every photograph was numbered, and a sheet of foolscap pinned on the door gave the correct title.

The subjects were divided into four classes, an entire wall being reserved for each class.

The wall by the door was devoted to imprommentis subjects, and according to Manners, supported the gems of the collection. Tom Merry looked at the gems with puzzled eyes.

Manners reached for a pointer.

"Perhaps some of you won't agree," he exclaimed, "but this picture is really the dancier on!"

"The what, dash boy?"

"The dancier on," repeated Manners enthusiastically. "The best work in photographic art. An expert who saw it during the holidays said he was ripping!"

"But Jove! I wish I could be as wight, Manners."

"You like it? Good! What do you think of it, Blake?"

"Topping!"

"What is it?" asked Lowther. "A fire-engine going backwards?"

"An! It's 'A sunset from Rykossbe Bridge.'"

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle in his eye, and stared steadily at the famous sunset. He stepped nearer and stared harder.

"But Jove, I should never have thought it, dash boy!" he said.

"You differ! It's an impression, of course!"

"Oh, well, perhaps that accounts for it, as I cannot regard it as being in the least like a sunset, Manners!"

"My aunt, this one is ripping!"

Manners turned with a gratified smile.

"Which, Herries? Number Sixty-seven?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm glad you like it."

"It's the best thing in the room!" said Herries heartily. "Look here, I'll give you my postcard for it. I haven't got a decent photograph of Towser."

"Towser?"

"Rather! You've got the dear old building to the life!"

"Clicking duffer!" sniggered Manners. "As if I'd take a photograph of some rotten building! That's an impression of a shepherd asleep on a mossbank. I had to get Skinslope to art the part."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy mistaking Skinslope for a building, Herries!"

Herries stuck to his guns.

"I don't care what it's supposed to be," he said decidedly: "my offer's still open. I'll buy it as a photograph of Towser, because if you stand here, it's just like the old dog."

"Silly an'!"

Manners turned his back on Herries, to attend to Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, who were carrying on an excited argument.

"Of course it's Rykossbe Church," said Dane.

"Any duffer can see it's the New House!"

"Ran!"

"Manners, Dane's not enough to think—"

"Manners, Kangaroo is idiot enough to think—"

Manners hurried up. Arthur Augustus was trying to throw oil on the troubled waters.

"Fwy dash's got werry with one another, dash boy, as

you are both wrong. I wish fancy the picture is a portrait of a wheel-barrow upside down. Bal Jore!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kiss that or a wall-hitch with a steple!"

"You cackling asses!" shouted Manners. Any one can see it's the view from the top of Rykomba Lane, looking towards the pond. That's a tree, not a steple, Gussy, you jehewerock!"

"Bal Jore, so it is, dear boy! Now you mention it I can distinctly recognise a tree!"

"Ah!" shrieked Manners. "You're looking at the wrong picture. That one's an impression of St. Jim's in a snow-storm."

"Great Scott! No one would ever have thought it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Billy bluffs!" growled Manners. "You know about as much about art as Harries' rotten building!"

Manners realised that his wall of impressions was not creating the slightest of interest as desired, so he directed attention to the other walls. He was far more successful at once.

The still life scenes, consisting chiefly of flowers and trees, was not greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm, but the other two walls were applauded loudly.

Manners' cheerfulness returned at once.

A portrait of Cousin Ethel coming out of the church porch was voted great. Manners certainly had been very fortunate in getting a picture of the girl whom the St. Jim's juniors when she was in her poorest and most natural attitude.

It is doubtful whether the professional at Rykomba could have taken that portrait of Cousin Ethel.

And there were heaps of others equally successful.

A snapshot of Kibbles scoring a goal in the Matchborough match was a masterpiece, while, in a different way, the series of views Manners had called "Up the River" were perfect little pictures.

As the juniors went round the walls, even Harries, whose interests were chiefly centered on buildings, realised that Manners had got together a really fine collection of photographs. Excepting the wall of impressionistic effects—efforts upon impressionistic work usually is divided—there was scarcely a photograph that could be called a failure.

"Jolly good, kid!" said Jack Blake heartily. "Didn't know a Shell sea could turn out such decent stuff."

"Jolly decent frames, too!" added Harries.

"Rather!"

The praise was unstinted. Manners accepted the congratulations modestly.

"It's awfully decent of you chaps to say so. I'm glad you like them. I'm going to ask you to clear now, so that some of the other kids can come in."

"Right-ho!"

"Bal Jore, though, we must open the door cautiously!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We must prepare against another terrible wall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry laughed, but he looked puzzled. The huge crowd outside the door was strangely quiet. In fact, it had been so quiet that the juniors within the room had forgotten all about it.

Arthur Augustus seized the door-knob.

"Pway bow against the door, dear boys, and only let in one or two at a time."

"Yes, that's it."

"Get ready, then. Directly I give the word— Bal Jore!"

"Is that the word?" grinned Monty Leather.

Arthur Augustus did not say. He had opened the door a few inches more. Nothing happened, so he opened it a few inches more. Then he peered cautiously round the door.

"My only toph!"

"What's the matter?"

"What's up?"

"Bal Jore, I hardly know, Mamma," said the swell of St. Jim's; "but the crowd has melted away. There isn't a single jurch in the crowdfield, bal Jore!"

"No one in the corridor!"

"No, waitah not, dear boy. They have all melted." Tom Merry and Jack Blake grinned. Manners looked extremely surprised.

"Something must have happened, of course. Perhaps Knox or another perfect cleared the passage or— Hullo!"

Manners started.

The House bell was sounding through the School House loudly. There could be no mistaking the deep-voiced note.

"My only Aunt Jore!"

"Something's up!"

"Yess, waitah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We are here summoned to the dinin'-room just as juniors used to

be in the olden days before they were allowed to have tea in their study."

"But those aren't olden days!"

"No, waitah not!"

"No good cackling, anyway," said Tom Merry briefly. "Look up the room, Manners; then we'll slip downstairs and see what the row is. Figgins must have gone off his nutcase."

"Rather!"

"Awful rot, ringing the House bell on a half-holiday?"

"Heard!"

The juniors trooped down the stairs, puzzled and disgusted. It was very seldom indeed that Dr. Holmes allowed a half-holiday to be interrupted, any more than he permitted class days to be broken into.

The School House bell would certainly not have been allowed to ring except for some very important matter. Tom Merry & Co. knew that well enough.

CHAPTER 8.

Mollish is Bumped.

"THAT'S the bell all right."

"No doubt about that."

Fatty Wynn and Kerr, of the New House, chuckled silently.

They had been waiting about in the School House quadrangle, near an open class-room window, for a long time—ever since Manners' photographic exhibition had opened with such a row. Fatty Wynn and Kerr's period of waiting was over now.

"Couldn't possibly be any other bell, could it?"

"No, rather not," grinned Kerr. "Figgins let out that he had orders to ring it at half-past four. I expect there has been a row or something."

"Never mind the row. Let's get along to Figgins."

"Right-ho!"

The two New House juniors ascended at a great pace for their own quarters. There was no need to enter the New House, though. Figgins was leaning out of his study window.

"Well gone, kids!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good!" said Figgins grins. "That means that every School House sea who hasn't gone for a walk will be in the dining-room. You two had better hang about in the quadrangle in case anyone turns up, though."

"Yes; that's it!"

"I thought I caught sight of Mollish just now."

"How Mollish!"

"We'll keep him directly we see him," said Fatty Wynn; "then I'll tell on him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A slight gap came from behind the quadrangle wall, but none of the three New House juniors heard it. Mollish, the end of the School House Fourth, crouched down at the foot of the wall in a mixture of fear and curiosity.

He knew some japs against his own House was being planned, but Mollish was not in the least troubled on that score. He did not care how many japs were recorded against the School House, or what form they took. But Mollish had a great fear of being bumped or hurt in any other way.

Figgins disappeared from the window, and a moment or two later came running out into the quadrangle. Mollish's curiosity overcame his natural caution for a moment or two.

He stood upright and peered over the wall.

"Wonder what the bests are up to?" he muttered.

There was no saying. Apparently Fatty Wynn and Kerr had gone into the New House at the same time Figgins had come out. At any rate, Figgins was crossing the quadrangle alone.

"Making for the fry under the window of Manners' exhibition-room," decided Mollish. "My hat! I wonder if Figgins means to raid Manners' photographs!"

The possibility seemed to please Mollish. Excitedly why it should do so, it would be difficult to say, but his face certainly brightened up.

It brightened still more a moment or two later. Figgins was rapidly climbing the fry. There could be no question that he was making for the exhibition-room.

The window was open, too. Mollish had noticed that when crossing the quadrangle himself.

"What a spore!" chuckled the end of the Fourth. "I hope Figgins smashes up all the photographs, then gets smashed up himself by Tom Merry & Co. I-I wonder if I could arrange to give the alarm at the right moment, after the damage is done!"

The question was a fascinating one to Melish. It appealed to him immensely.

Besides, Tom Merry would think it was a genuine show. It rather paid to keep in with the Terrible Three of the Shell, whatever Lewison might say to the contrary.

Melish hesitated a moment or two. He rather wished Lewison was there, though, for Lewison, with all his far greater insight, was infinitely the stronger-charactered of the two black sheep of the School House Fourth.

"Of course, it would be risky," thought Melish. "Tom Merry would want to know how I heard about the raid, and—Yah! Oh! Lewison go!"

A strong, young hand gripped the end of the Fourth from behind. A pair of steel, tremendously strong arms wound themselves round his waist.

"Be Figgie was right, after all," said a voice.

Melish went white with fear. Fatty Wynne and Kerr had him in their grip, and their faces were glowering with indignant wrath.

"At your usual game of eavesdropping!" said Kerr contemptuously.

Melish at once contrived to whine. He was not made of the stern stuff wrongdoers are supposed to be made of. The slightest hint of danger to himself reduced Melish to a state of collapse.

"No, really I didn't mean to listen, Kerr. I just happened to be passing, and—"

"And so you crawled down behind this wall to listen to what Figgies had to say?"

"No, Wynne, I didn't, really! I stooped down because—"

"Eats!" snapped Fatty Wynne.

"We don't want to listen to a whole string of whoopers, Melish," said Kerr snappishly. "The thing is—what are we to do with you until Figgie comes back? You'd be quite capable of telling a perfect lie was in the wrong House."

Melish began to whine again.

"I promise I won't, you chaps," he said eagerly. "I won't tell anyone. As a matter of fact, I'm glad you're ragging Manners, because he's a beast!"

"Eh?"

"I hope Figgies smashes all his beastly photographs to atoms! So, really!"

Kerr looked at the end of the School House Fourth, and the Scots junior's lip curled scornfully as he looked.

Eavesdropping was not tolerated at St. Jim's, of course, but if a House raid or a jape were expected, a jester might scout about to find out things. That was all honorable enough. If Melish had listened to Figgies' remarks for the sake of his own House, Kerr and Fatty Wynne would not have thought of ragging him.

They would have detained him, certainly, but only long enough for Figgies to carry out his plans. Once they were carried out, Melish would have been at liberty to depart unharmed.

But Melish had not listened for the sake of his House. In fact, he had deliberately said he wanted Manners' photographs to be smashed up. Kerr's face set grimly.

"Bump the young rotter!" he said.

The next instant Melish descended on the quadrangle with a sounding thump. He was raised again and bumped again.

"Ow! Yarnool! Lewison, please!"

"Say, I'm a rotter to want my own House japed!"

"Yah! I am a rotter—"

"Go on!"

"Yes! Stop! I am a rotter to want my own House japed!"

"Good!" said Kerr, laughing contemptuously. "So you jolly well are."

The two New House juniors gave Melish a push, and he collapsed in a puddle. Kerr pointed to the pathway.

"You can't cross the quad, yet," he said briefly. "If you want to get to the School House you'll have to get there by the long way. We aren't going to have Figgie given away to the prefects by a cad like you."

Melish slunk off just as Figgies climbed through the window of Manners' exhibition-room again. Fatty Wynne and Kerr ran to meet him. The chief of the New House juniors was climbing down the ivy at a great pace.

Melish strode on, glancing vindictively at the three, and he did not even stop when Skimpole all but collided with him a second or two later.

THE GALE LIBRARY.—No. 290.

THE "BOYS' FRIEND" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

CHAPTER 9.

A Ripping Idea.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arny gave vent to the exclamation in a startled voice. Jack Blake and Tom Merry stared at him. The swell of the Fourth Form had stopped at the door leading to the dining-room.

"Bai Jove, I wonder I hadn't thought of it before!"

Tom Merry and Jack Blake stared still harder.

"Of your rocker, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry politely.

"No, waiyah not. I trust I am not in the habit of going off my rocker—I mean, don't be a silly ass. Jack Blake, dear boy, it's quite all right."

"Eh?"

"No need to worry about the bell winder! Is such an extraordinary manner, as I know the reason."

"What?"

"The reason, dear boy. Bai Jove, you will be very surprised in a minute or two as an extremely wipple! idea is going to be suggested."

"What's that?"

Arthur Augustus chuckled pleasantly. He seemed to be an unusually complacent frame of mind.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake caught him by the arms. The chief of Study No. 6 looked very grim.

"There's been a row, of course, that's why the bell's ringing."

"No, dear boy. I waiyah fancy there has been nothing like a row. I think, if you waiyah, Tom Merry, our respected headmaster stopped you this afternoon."

"Rather. Jamed for ages, all about the hobbies the Shell follows go in for."

"Then you can depend upon it that is why the bell is bel's wung, dear boy."

"Eh?"

"Ah! Why should the bell be rung just because the Head talked about the hobbies of the Shell?"

"You're talking through your hat, Gussy."

"Woiyah, Kangaroo—"

"Of course you are!" said Jack Blake snappishly. "The masters aren't in the room yet. There's just time, young man."

"Right-ho, young Blake!"

Arthur Augustus looked from one to the other without understanding.

"Just time, dear boys! Time for what?"

"To give you a jolly good bumping."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of St. Jim's gasped.

"Woiyah, Jack Blake—Tom Merry, you howled wuffan!"

The two juniors, with Kangaroo's help, were lowering Arthur Augustus into a convulsant attitude for bumping. Arthur Augustus was gasping.

"I shall at last, like my teacher, you wottah! Welcome me, or I shall lose my temper!"

"Case?"

"Look out, you chaps!"

Arthur Augustus was presently released. Dr. Holmes was coming along the passage. He nodded pleasantly to the four.

"I expect you boys look upon this business as an unmerited encroachment on leisure hours," smiled the doctor.

"However, please consider the meeting which is about to be held as quite unofficial."

"Meeting, sir?"

"Yes, Merry. I think the word 'meeting' best describes what is just about to take place."

The Head walked on into the room. Arthur Augustus chuckled loudly.

"I knew I was right, the moment I waiyah. However, you will learn the secret in a few minutes, dear boys."

"Secret?"

"Yan, waiyah?"

"What secret?"

"The one you're going to learn in a very few minutes, Kangaroo!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "I would explain now, only I give my word of honour not to breathe a word. As you are all gentlemen of the first rank, you will realize that a word of honour—"

"We realize you're an ass!"

"A hecking ass, in fact!"

"Not to say, a silly duffer!" finished Jack Blake. And he marched into the room.

The other juniors followed. With the exception of Arthur Augustus, they looked very puzzled.

Certainly the Head's manner had not suggested that there had been a row of any sort. Dr. Holmes had seemed quite friendly—in fact, he had seemed more friendly than usual.



Vernon-Smith and Holmover major looked out of the window above. "You don't understand!" cried the Headmaster. "It has been done!" "Hush! the door is!" panted Johnny Bell. And once more the straws chattered under the weight of the door. (For this exciting incident, as the reader may see, is the tale of Harry Wharton & Co. entitled "HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S RESCUE," by Frank Richards, which is contained in the current issue of our popular comic paper "The Magnet" Library. Seven Shillings, prior to press.)

Tom Merry and Jack Blais looked at Arthur Augustus in a puzzled manner. Their elegant chum had puzzled them a good deal that afternoon.

The juniors were still looking at Arthur Augustus when Dr. Holmes turned away from Mr. Radley, who had just come into the room.

"Boys," began the headmaster, "I will not detain you with an unnecessary speech. I will explain in the fewest words possible the suggestion I wish to make."

Dr. Holmes described a sheet of foolscap.

Every junior in the room had his eyes fixed on the Head. Those who had aims which had yet to find the light of day looked uneasy.

Leaving out down near Arthur Augustus. He looked very uneasy indeed.

The Head was facing the juniors again.

"The suggestion I wish to make is this," went on Dr. Holmes, "that every junior in the school takes part in a competition I am about to announce. Boys, I intend to offer

a prize consisting of a complete set of fishing tackle for the best model aeroplane made in St. Jim's by a St. Jim's junior or juniors."

"Henry!"

Bernard Glynn's voice rang out in an unstoppable cheer.

"Yes, at any rate, seems pleased with the idea, Glynn."

"It'll be splendid, sir."

The juniors agreed in great excitement. Dr. Holmes held up his hand.

"The rules for the competition will be posted on the school noticeboard at once," he said; "but I want you to understand this, that the competition is open to every junior in St. Jim's, and that the aeroplane may be of any type, recognized or unrecognized, only it must be the entire work of the junior or juniors responsible for it."

"Yes, rather, sir."

"How will the test to prove which is the best be made, sir?"

"In the simplest manner possible, Harry," answered the

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 200.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
Order in Advance.

Head. "There will be a race for the medals in the quadrangle on the football field. The medal which then the graver disease in a straight line will win, provided it has not touched the ground, or been touched by any one during the fight. If two medals for the same distance, the one which Mr. Railton considers the most will win."

"Hoosy!"

"But Jove, what a wippin' ideal, sir!"

"The only other point I need mention is this," went on the Head. "If the winner already has his back to the goal, or if he would rather have something else as a prize, he is at liberty to choose any object I approve of to the value of five pounds."

"Five pounds!"

Tom Merry gasped. Skimpole and Korralah opened their eyes.

"Five pounds! The large sum of money suggested all sorts of possibilities. Skimpole blinked through his large glasses hopefully.

"Dear me, if I am fortunate enough to win, I shall ask for a complete set of Professor Balmynrumpet's works."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy having Balmynrumpet's balmy works when you could get a ripping camera—"

"Eats, Manners!"

"My ass, you could buy a building for a fiver!" exclaimed Hercules. "Not like Toward, of course."

"But Jove, I shouldn't think any one would want a building like Toward, however, dear boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors talked in great excitement. Certainly the Head's prize would be worth winning. The doctor put up his hand again.

"Please spread the news amongst the juniors who are not here, boys," he said. "After tea I shall make the same announcement in the New House. You may go."

The juniors fled from the dining-room. Everybody was talking at once, and no one was waiting for an answer. Manners joined Jack Blake by the arm.

"You chaps are coming to my study, Blake. Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn are coming. It's the tea in connection with the photographic exhibition."

"Right-o!"

"Thanks awfully, dear boy."

A small crowd of juniors trooped towards the study shared by Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. A cherry fire was burning in the grate, and Duncie Taggles' backshop had been ransacked for cushions.

"I'll have to be a short tea, you chaps," Manners said. "I shall have to clear in half an hour to show the masters round the exhibition-room."

"Right-o!"

"But Jove, I wonder who will win the wippin' prize the doctor has offered!"

"Some one in the Fourth, of course."

"The Shell, you mean."

"Eats!"

And the juniors commenced an excited discussion. Already the Head's prize was causing great excitement throughout the whole of St. Jim's.

Later on it was to cause still greater excitement throughout the whole of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 10.

The Spoilt Photographs.

"My hat!"

Tom Merry put down his cup, and looked at Manners. Manners had jumped to his feet.

"My hat! I must clear, you chaps. It won't do to keep the masters waiting."

Arthur Augustus shuddered at the thought.

"No, wait! not, dear boy. I agree that it wouldn't do to keep the masters waiting, but Jove!"

"Besides, they mightn't wait," said Lowther, laughing.

"What was wrong with you, kid?"

"Yess, wait! Let's go with Mamma, and offish our support, dear boys."

Tom Merry and Jack Blake nodded without a great deal of enthusiasm. They had seen Manners' photographs, and had duly admired them. They were not exactly anxious to see them again.

Bill, Manners was a chum. He would have to be supported.

"And we needn't look at the rotten things again," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "We can shut our eyes."

"Right-o!"

"Get on with the washing, Manners!"

Manners led the way from the study in suppressed excitement. It really was an honour that the Head should have asked for an invitation to the exhibition.

THE GUY LIBRARY.—No. 260.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,

Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"

Every Friday.

Arthur Augustus agreed on that point heartily.

"A very great honour indeed, dear boy. However, I think you had better show our respected masters the ordinary views first, Mamma, as your impressionistic ones are utterly rotten!"

"But let you know about photography, eat!"

"Dry up!"

"The masters are waiting, Manners!"

Manners started forward. Dr. Holmes, Mr. Railton, and Mr. Lathem were already in the passage by the exhibition-room. Mr. Linton and Mr. Selby were hurrying up to join them.

Manners whipped the key of the room from his pocket. He was flushed and excited.

"Get on with it, kid," he whispered. "Open the giddy door!"

Dr. Holmes stopped forward.

"This is the room, is it not, Manners?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes, sir, I am afraid the photographs are not really very good, but—"

"Suppose you leave us to decide for ourselves whether they are good or not?" said the Head. "It will be more satisfactory, don't you think?"

"Yes, sir," replied Manners, hastily thrusting the key into the lock.

"Get ready to light the candles, chaps," he whispered.

"They are on little shelves sticking out of the walls—doors of them."

"Right-o, dear boy!"

Manners pushed open the door, and stood aside for the masters to enter. They filed in gravely.

The room was in by no means complete darkness, but Manners went to work hastily to light the candles. The candles had been placed in good positions, and the soft light would show up the finer points of the photographs well.

Manners felt that he was on the verge of a great success. The lights flared up. Manners turned round to the Head.

The Head was staring blankly in front of him.

"Good gracious, Mamma, I—I—"

The Head stopped speaking. He hastily recovered his glasses, polished them, and replaced them on his nose again. He seemed more startled than ever.

"Really, Mamma, what ever have you done? Good gracious!"

"Eats my seal!" gasped Mr. Railton from behind.

Manners started forward in horror. The photograph the Head was looking at was No. 18—a scene in Rykman's! At least, it had been a scene in Rykman's.

It now consisted chiefly of a dab of red paint.

Manners simply glared at it.

There could be no doubt upon the point at all. Someone had deliberately raised the photograph by dabbing a fair-sized and well-laid paint-brush right in the centre of the photograph. The print was hopelessly ruined by the red paint.

"Mamma, is this some absurd trick of yours?"

Mr. Selby's voice rang out harshly. The master of the Third Form was by no means the best-tempered of men.

Manners turned.

"I—I—I—"

The photograph before which Mr. Selby was standing had been treated in exactly the same way as No. 18. There was a vivid dab of red paint in the very centre of it, extending on each side almost to the frame.

The photograph was the first of the really excellent little series of five-views. The whole set had been ruined in exactly the same way.

There was a dab of red paint in the centre of each of them.

"Great Scott!"

Arthur Augustus, Tom Merry, and Jack Blake stared round the room. The Head was staring round in equal amazement. There was not a single picture on any of the four walls that he could see which had not been completely ruined by a dab of red paint. Manners coloured deeply.

Dr. Holmes coughed. He looked very angry.

"Mamma, is this some trick which has been played upon you?"

"I—I—I—"

"Or is it some trick you are daring to play upon us?" demanded Mr. Selby snappishly.

"I—I—I—"

Manners stammered helplessly. He was still a deep beetroot colour.

Arthur Augustus caught his arm sympathetically.

"I know what you must be feeling, dear boy," whispered the Head of the School House, "and I sympathize. It is a very serious matter in the extreme to have ruined the masters, and then find that some wretch has ruined your photo-

gasped. "I should be ready to sink through the beastly bog, but Jove!"

The frown on Dr. Holmes's face grew graver. The Head had no doubt at all as to what had happened. An ill-considered trick had been played upon Manners. The labour of weeks, perhaps, had been rendered useless by some cad in a few minutes!

A jester who bore Manners a grudge must have gone round the room with a paint-brush, deliberately spoiling each of the photographs. The thing had been well planned.

The Head looked at Manners doubtfully. Manners's face depicted the essence of dismay and anger. The Head, almost for the first time in his life, did not quite know how to act. He glanced appealingly towards Mr. Rafton.

The Housemaster appeared to be in a similar dilemma. "Of course, it is a disgraceful outrage, sir," he said, "an outrage to the doctor. The culprit ought to be made an example of! This is more than a practical joke. It is wilful spoiling of property."

"You have seen some of the photographs, Rafton?"

"I have, sir, and I have seen Manners at work for weeks, printing and touching up his work for this exhibition. It is a disgraceful outrage! Many of the pictures were excellent."

The Head nodded. He was very grave looking. "Manners, have you any idea who has done this?"

"I—I—"

The Head hesitated for an instant. As a rule, the headmaster of St. Jim's did not interfere in matters which concerned the boys. Dr. Holmes had a great belief in not meddling more than he could possibly help. It was a sound principle, but it had its limitations.

There are some things which a master must take up. Dr. Holmes was not at all sure that this was not one of them. However the affair was looked at, it was more than a joke.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake glanced anxiously towards Manners. It was an important moment.

Manners pulled himself together with an effort. "I—I am awfully sorry, sir," he said. "I—I had no idea the photographs had been spoilt. I—I am sorry you've had the trouble to come here, sir."

"That is of no importance at all, Manners."

"It is very good of you to say so, sir."

"Nonsense! I am greatly annoyed that your photographs should have been so disgracefully spoilt. The matter shall be thrashed out."

Manners started. Arthur Augustus gasped aloud. He glanced quickly at the frowning Head master.

"Please, sir, I wish fancy Manners would take it as a great favour if you would leave the matter in our hands. I know it most awfully awful cheek to make a suggestion to a master, sir, especially to you, sir, but Manners would take it as a great favour if no official notice were taken of the wretched reprehensible outrage."

Tom Merry started. "Good for you, Jessy!" he whispered.

"Yes, wraith!" I mean, wraith!"

The Head looked indignantly at Manners. The amateur photographer bit his lip.

"I hope you will do as I say, also, sir—that you won't move in the matter."

"Your request does you credit, Manners, but I do not know whether I ought to accede to it."

The Head hesitated again. He and Mr. Rafton seemed to be in the same difficulty. They whispered together for a moment or two.

The Head turned to Manners again at last. "Although I am not at all certain I am acting for the best," he said, "I will do as you ask. My only stipulation is that when you have discovered the culprit, he is to be taken to Kildare for a sound thrashing. I will speak to Kildare, and a report of the thrashing will be given to me. You understand, Manners, that this is a distinct stipulation!"

"Yes, sir. Thank you awfully, sir!"

"And, Manners, I am very sorry indeed your exhibition has been spoilt," went on the Head kindly. "I have been looking forward to a view of your pictures."

And Dr. Holmes and the other masters filed from the room.

CHAPTER II.

Suspicious.

"THE howling cat!"

The exclamation burst from Jack Blake the moment the masters were out of the room. Tom Merry nodded.

"The mean rotter!"

"Yes, wraith!" A mean wraith seems the outburst up every week. It was just a mean, rotten trick! The cat hadn't anything to gain by wraithing Manners's photographs, but Jove!

"The mean rotter!"

"Yes, wraith!" A mean wraith seems the outburst up every week. It was just a mean, rotten trick! The cat hadn't anything to gain by wraithing Manners's photographs, but Jove!

"No, that's so."

Manners set his teeth grimly. He was a little pale, and there was an angry light in his eyes. He felt very much as Howie had once felt when Lovison tried to poison Forster.

Manners's fingers were clenched on his palms. "When I find who did it I'll smash the cat!"

"Yaa, wraith!" The wraith deserves a thrashing, wraith!"

"But who is the rotter?" exclaimed Tom Merry blankly.

The other juniors looked round the room. It was Lovison's own fault that his name came first to the juniors' minds. Lovison had once been found trying to poison Horrie's bull-dog, and Lovison had been caught red-handed in a great many other sordid tricks. It was scarcely to be wondered at that Tom Merry & Co. and the Study No. 6 juniors thought of Lovison before anyone else, in the search for the cad who had spoilt Manners's photographs.

Manners was the only one who did not think of Lovison. He was too upset at the damage done to think about anyone.

"The cat must have come in here during tea!" he said angrily.

"But the door was locked, dash boy!"

"Yes! but this window was open," replied Manners.

Tom Merry looked across at the window. As Manners had said, the window was open.

It was an easy climb up from the quadrangle, too, because of the thick-growing ivy. There could be little doubt that the cat who had done the damage had entered the room by means of the window.

Arthur Augustus started violently. "But Jove, I don't think it can have been Lovison, dash boy, as I believe he and Moffish are having tea with Lonsley-Lansky."

"We'll prove that, anyway," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Yaa, wraith!"

"If it wasn't Lovison, who could it have been?" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Lovison is about the only cad in the School House who would do a thing like this."

"Yes, that's so."

Tom Merry looked round the room again. Like the other juniors, he had thought that every photograph on the walls had been ruined by the solitary dab of red paint which had been placed in the centre of each print.

He started forward now with an exclamation of amazement.

There was one photograph which had been left untouched. It was an insignificant little print in the snapshot group, and showed a tall, long-limbed junior in the act of jumping a ditch.

Tom Merry stared at it blankly.

It was the only photograph in the room which had not been touched.

"Figgins!"

Tom Merry breathed the name through his teeth. The junior jumping the ditch was rather a good snapshot of Figgins, the leader of the Nyer House juniors.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle in his eye.

"Sweet Scott!"

"It's good jumping to conclusion," said Jack Blake, laughing hard through his nose. "It's just a coincidence that Figgins's photograph hasn't been touched. Old Figg wouldn't do a thing like this."

"No; wraith not! I consider it utterly impudent that Figg would dream of wraithing another fellow's property, but Jove!"

"Of course he wouldn't!"

Horrie and Loveth did not answer. The fact that such a photograph had been spoilt by a solitary dab of red paint looked like a joke.

Lovison, or any other cad who had a grudge against Manners, would probably have spoilt the photographs with a penknife, or in some similar way. The red paint certainly looked like a premeditated joke.

But Figgins! The leader of the New House juniors had always proved himself one of the most decent fellows in St. Jim's. As Arthur Augustus said, it seemed impossible that Figgins would have descended to such a trick as spoiling property. That was altogether outside the scope of friendly rivalry which existed between the two Houses.

Study uncracking and House raids were constantly taking place, but the rival juniors respected each other's belongings. It was one of the unwritten rules of the game.

"I wish we hadn't spoiled Figgins's study, you chaps."

Tom Merry looked at Lovison sulkily.

"What's that got to do with it, Monty?" he said.

"Nothing, I suppose, but—"

"Figgins hasn't a hand in this, kid," interrupted Tom Merry.

"No?"

Manners's face darkened. He was one of the best fellows in the school to jump to incorrect conclusions, but it was

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 399.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

strange, that Figgins's photograph was the only one left untouched.

Manners had not taken part in the steady raid against the New House, so he had not thought of it before. He thought of it now. There was a very grim expression on Manners' face.

"If Figgins did this, he's a howling cad!"
"But Figgins didn't do it, you say!"
"No; without me, Manners. It is the very last thing Figgins would think of doing."

Manners said nothing. He was moving towards the door. The other juniors followed him, Tom Merry carefully feeling the door behind them.

"We will go to Lumsley-Lumsley's room," the hero of the Shell said briefly.

"Wright-ho!"
"Come on, chaps!"
Lumsley-Lumsley shared a room with Mellich and Levinson. All three of them were at tea when Tom Merry pushed open the door.

Lumsley-Lumsley looked up sharply.
"Come in, you chaps! Afraid there isn't much tea left, but we can manage some toast."

"Not that's all right, old chap!"
"We've had tea, thanks!"

Tom Merry and Jack Blake were looking very hard at Levinson. The black sheep of the Fourth returned their looks coolly.

Mellich appeared to be puzzled.
"Anything the matter, Tom Merry?"
Tom Merry did not answer Mellich. He was still looking at Levinson. Levinson was still returning his look coolly.

"Been here long, Levinson?"
The black sheep of the Fourth appeared surprised.

"What's that got to do with you, anyway?"
"A lot," flashed Tom Merry. "and still more to do with you!" Lumsley-Lumsley, has Levinson been here long?"

"Hell as fire, I suppose, old chap!"
"But Jerry, does that mean that Levinson came direct from the dining-room here, Lumsley-Lumsley?"

"Yes; he came direct here with me, directly the meeting the Head called together was over."

"Like your blessed clock asking Lumsley-Lumsley questions about me?" said Levinson indignantly. "Whenever anything happens, you three always try to find me with it. If that's your idea of fair play, it isn't mine!"
Tom Merry felt his lip curl. There was a certain streak of truth in what Levinson said, only it was Levinson's own fault. If a judge is known to be unscrupulous, he cannot blame others for suspecting him of most of the unscrupulous things that happen."

Tom Merry tried hard to be fair.
"Some cad went to the room where Manners is holding his exhibition," he explained briefly, "and ruined the photographs."

"And you at once jump to the conclusion I did it!" flashed Levinson. "Do you call that being fair?"

"Really, Levinson—"
"We aren't going to jump to any conclusion," went on Tom Merry. "but we are going to find out who did spoil the photographs!"

"Then you won't find out by asking Lumsley-Lumsley questions about me," sneered Levinson. "I suppose you remember seeing me at the meeting in the dining-room, D'Arcy, as I was sitting near you?"

"Yes, without!"
"And Lumsley-Lumsley has told you I came straight home with him?"

"That's a fact."
"And I haven't left the room since," added Levinson, with another sneer.

"You're making an ass of yourself this time, Tom Merry, and you're proving what I've often said—that a fellow can't look to Tom Merry for fair play!"

"Woo-atah wot!"
"Is it fair play to accuse a chap of something without any proof, that?"

"We aren't accusing you of anything, Levinson. We mean to find out who was the cad who spoiled the photographs. We are just asking questions."

"And you've got your answers to them. I didn't touch Manners' rotten photographs, and I haven't been near the room. Now accuse Mellich!"
THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 260.

Mellich looked startled. He did not appreciate his chair's accusation.

"How can Tom Merry accuse me? I didn't touch Manners' photographs. It's jolly unfair—"

"Silly ass!"
"It's all very well for you to call me a silly ass, D'Arcy, but I'm not going to have it said—"

"Rats!"
"No one is going to accuse anyone of anything," said Manners slowly.

"Only I'd like you two to know that I'm going to find out who did spoil the photographs. Then I'm going to smash the cad!"
Mellich shuddered.

He had heard how Manners had threatened Jiffie that afternoon for jumping on Bernard Glyn's aeroplane. Levinson laughed scornfully.

"Yes, I would if I were you, Manners."

"I'm going to. I'm going to smash the cad!"
That is, if he doesn't smash you!" sneered Levinson.

"Suppose you clear out of the study now, and leave us to go on with our tea. I know Tom Merry is disappointed because he can't prove I spoiled the rotten photographs!"
Archie Assington turned on his heel.

"Come on, Merry, dear boy. Try and listen to the wretch!"

And the juniors trooped from the study. Mellich jumped to his feet with a startled exclamation as the door closed to with a bang. The cad of the Fourth was strangely excited.

CHAPTER 12.

Shingle Receives a Surprise.

"MY hat!"
Levinson and Lumsley-Lumsley looked at the cad of the Fourth in surprise. Mellich was very excited.

"What's up, Mellich?"
"What's the matter, am?"

Mellich cautiously opened the door and glanced along the passage. He closed the door again and chuckled loudly.

"I thought Tom Merry or Jack Blake might be listening."

"Rats!"
"Oh, do know you think Tom Merry wouldn't listen, Lumsley?" said Mellich.

"But you don't know Tom Merry as well as Levinson and I do. He just'll do his best to be."

"Didn't know that he pretended to be anything," retorted Lumsley-Lumsley. "He wouldn't listen at closed doors, though."

"Rotten Tom Merry! What's the matter, Mellich?"
"I—I know who ruined Manners' photographs, Levinson."

"What?"
"Yes, I do. What'll you say when I tell you Figgins did it!"

Lumsley-Lumsley laughed loudly.

"Rats! Figgins wouldn't do a rotten thing like that!"

"Oh, wouldn't he?"
"No, he wouldn't! And you jolly well know it!"

Mellich chuckled again.

"Figgins was in the exhibition-room, anyway. I saw him climb in through the window myself—I did really, Levinson!"

Levinson was on his feet.

"When? What time?"
"I can't give the time exactly, but it must have been while the Head was holding the meeting about the rotten prize for the best aeroplane!"

Levinson said nothing. "I was in the guard-room, so didn't hear the bell. I should think the meeting must have been beginning."

"And you saw Figgins climb in through the window of the exhibition-room?"

"Yes, Lumsley. Fatty Wynn and that beast, Kerr, had hold of me. The cad said I had been listening!"

Lumsley-Lumsley looked at the cad of the Fourth suspiciously. Mellich was not famous for telling the truth unless he wished to.

"Did anyone else see Figgins?"
"Fatty Wynn and Kerr, of course."

"Anyone else?"
Mellich thought for a moment or two. He brightened up suddenly.

"My hat! I believe Shingle saw Figgins go into the room! I'm certain he did!"

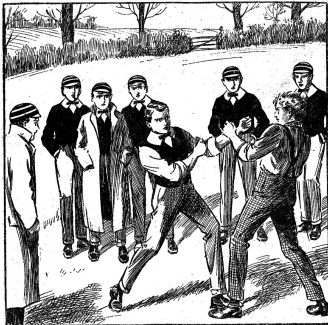
NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!

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

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order your copy in octavo. Price 1s.



"I'm going to give you a jolly good hiding!" panted out Manners, landing determinedly at the young fellow. "That was Edward Glyn's model acceptance you kicked to him?" (See Chapter 2.)

"Skimpole!"

Lewison chuckled heartily. He seemed delighted with Mellich's story.

Lansley-Lansley looked uneasy.

"I—I think there must be a mistake somewhere, Mellich."

"Mistake! How can there be a mistake!"

"I mean, Figgins wouldn't spoil Manners' photographs."

Mellich shrugged his shoulders.

"What not?" he exclaimed. "I happen to know Tom Merry and Jack Blake and the others wrecked Figgins' study earlier this afternoon, and naturally Figgins & Co. would want to get even with them. I think it's just the sort of thing Figgins would do, because it was a jolly good joke."

"But!"

"Everybody has a right to his own opinion," said Lewison, "and I agree with Mellich. It has nothing to do with me, though, and if I were you, Mellich, I wouldn't say anything to Tom Merry."

Mellich looked amazed. He had expected Lewison to jump at the chance of creating a falling-out between the rival Houses.

Mellich had got into the habit of telling his cue from Lewison, though.

"All right. I don't care," he said. "I don't want to say anything."

"I think Tom Merry ought to be told," said Lansley-Lansley.

"Told him, then. If Mellich or I did, we should only be suspected of telling lies."

"I—I'll think it over."

Lewison shrugged his shoulders.

"Please yourself," he said carelessly, and he scuttled from the room.

Once outside in the passage, Lewison lost his carelessness. He broke into a run, hurrying towards the Shell studios. By a stroke of luck he met Skimpole in the corridor.

Skimpole was reading one of his favorite works in words of six syllables, and stopped Lewison before the Fourth-Former had time to stop him.

The boyish man of the Shell seized Lewison by the top button of his coat. It was an aggravating trick Skimpole had, but for once Lewison did not object.

Skimpole blinked thoughtfully through his enormous glasses.

"Larion, as one of the capitalist class, you will agree that capital and labour would each be useless unless combined." Skimpole began. "That capital is helpless without labour; that labour would be futile without capital. Very well, then—"

"Hats!"

"Dear me! Why do you say hats?"

Larion laughed.

"Is Figgins of the capitalist class, Skimpole?"

"Yes, I suppose so; although he was unable to lend me two shillings yesterday. He said he wanted to buy some red flannel."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"What did you say, Larion?"

"Nothing. Have you heard about Manners' photographs?"

Skimpole thought for a moment or two.

"Yes. They have been spoilt by someone," he answered innocently. "The general opinion is that you must have done it, as there is no one else in the School House who would be likely to do such a thing. I offered to investigate the matter for Manners."

"And he wouldn't listen to you? I think he was an ass, Skimpole!"

"I thought he was very unwise myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Larion laughed, then paused. The next move in the game Larion had set himself to play would have to be carefully made.

The black sheep of the Fourth coughed thoughtfully.

"Fanny thing Figgins should have bought some red paint yesterday and the photographs should be ruined by red paint to-day," he suggested. "Of course, it may only have been a coincidence; but—"

"Oh, I think it a coincidence, as Figgins said he wanted the paint for a rabbit-hutch he was making for Cousin Ethel."

"Then depend on it it was a coincidence," said Larion carelessly. "Mellich certainly did say something about having seen Figgins climb into the exhibition-rooms."

Skimpole started.

"Dear me!"

"I expect Mellich made a mistake, that's all."

"Dear me! But I, also, saw someone—"

"Oh, I don't suppose there is anything in it," said Larion, scarcely able to prevent laughing outright. "Don't you worry about a Skimpole."

Larion hurried away. Lumsley-Lumsley had just come along the corridor, and Larion did not want the millionaire's eye to see him talking to Skimpole.

Besides, Larion had achieved his object. Skimpole was one of the best-ordered juniors in the Shell Form, but he had a firm belief in his own investigating powers. Even so Larion hurried away, the brainy man of the Shell started to run for Tom Merry's study.

Skimpole could be depended upon to tell Tom Merry about Figgins climbing through the exhibition-room window and the red paint the New House junior had bought the previous day. As Larion looked at things in his own distorted way, nothing could have gone better.

The black sheep of the Fourth walked on, chuckling to himself. He thought he could see how things would pan out.

CHAPTER 13.

The Beginning of the Trouble.

"SCHOOL HOUSE, AS!"

"Collar him, Roddy!"

Lumsley-Lumsley put up his hands, with a laugh. "Pax, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "I've only come to see Figgins. Pax!"

Roddy, Lawrence and Owen looked suspiciously at the School House junior. School House juniors had been in the New House ever before that day, and a wrecked study had been the result.

Roddy and Co.'s suspicion was not without foundation.

"If you've really come to see Figgins—"

"Of course I have, old chap!" laughed Lumsley-Lumsley.

"Important him. Is he in his room?"

Roddy nodded.

"Yes. The three of them are in the study."

"Thanks, actually, kid!"

Lumsley-Lumsley walked on. He had not the earliest of tasks before him, but he was sidled round by a not purpose just because it was difficult.

"There was a very thoughtful expression on his face as he knocked on the door of Figgins' room. He pushed open the door slowly.

"Busy, you chaps?"

"Frightfully."

Figgins laughed pleasantly. He was lying back in an easy-chair with his long legs stretched out in front of the study fire.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

chair with his long legs stretched out in front of the study fire.

Kerr was writing an impet, kindly presented to him at morning school, and Fatty Wynn was having a quiet snack consisting of a few bath-buns, a couple of pork-pies, and the remains of a cake.

As Figgins had said, they were frightfully busy in their different ways.

"Wasn't keep you a minute, kids?"

"Get on with it, then."

Lumsley-Lumsley hesitated for a moment again. The thing he had come to say certainly was not easy to say now that the roomest had arrived.

"It's like this—"

"What is?"

"I mean, have you heard that Manners' photographs have been raised, Figgins?"

The long-limbed leader of the New House juniors gave vent to a subdued cheer.

"Hoosy! Hear that, Kerr? Manners' photographs have come to grief, so we sha'n't have to go to the rotten exhibition to-morrow."

"Manners is very upset about it."

"Hark! hark!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Fatty Wynn. "Fanny being upset just because a few photographs have come to grief! If he'd lost some grub, now—"

"Someone climbed in through the exhibition-room window and dabbed red paint on all the prints," went on Lumsley-Lumsley, in even tones. "Figgins, you were seen climbing into the room, and I want to warn you that Tom Merry will probably come here—"

"You want to warn me?"

Figgins sprang to his feet. His face flashed with anger.

"There had been a time when Lumsley-Lumsley had been very different from this junior he now was. He had changed wonderfully since the old days, but it was not to be expected that Figgins & Co. realized quite as well as the School House juniors how great this change was.

Fatty Wynn stopped in the middle of the act of conveying a substantial portion of pork-pie to his mouth.

"Of all the rotten cheek—"

"I don't mean it as cheek, you chaps. I only want to—"

"Do you mean that you've had the cheek to come here and suggest that Figgins spoilt Manners' rotten photographs out of revenge?"

"No, Kerr—"

"That's what you are suggesting, Lumsley."

The School House junior bit his lip. It was far more difficult to explain than he had thought it would be.

"I don't want you chaps to flare up when Tom Merry comes here to ask questions," Lumsley-Lumsley exclaimed.

"Of course, Manners means to throw the matter out—"

"If Tom Merry or anyone else comes here with a rotten suggestion like yours, we shall know how to answer him!" cried Figgins.

"Yes, of course, but—"

"And the sooner you clear the better."

"Oh, I'll go at once, if you like, Kerr," answered Lumsley-Lumsley. "I don't think you are acting very reasonably."

"How acting reasonably?"

"Very well, I'll go."

Lumsley-Lumsley stopped speaking. He was a trifle heated himself, and there was some excuse for him.

He had come into the New House with the best of motives. He had been very anxious to explain to Figgins & Co. that some awkward questions were likely to be asked. Lumsley-Lumsley had only wanted to warn the New House juniors not to flare up, to prevent any ill-feeling spoiling the friendly rivalry which existed between the two Houses of St. Jim's.

Of course, it was natural that Figgins & Co. should flare up. But it was also natural that Lumsley-Lumsley should feel a little hot at being misjudged.

"I'm sorry you don't understand, Figgins—"

"Understand be blowed—"

"We understand that you think Figgins raised the photographs, anyway."

"Don't."

Figgins was flushed and angry-looking. None of the juniors heard a tap at the door.

They all turned with a start as the door was pushed open.

"But boys, you here, Lumsley-Lumsley, dear boy—"

Arthur Augustus came into the room. He was followed by Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther. Behind the Terrible Three was Jack Blake, Hervey, and Digby.

Skimpole brought up the rear, blinking thoughtfully through his enormous glasses.

Figgins & Co. faced the School House juniors angrily.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle in his eye.
"This is wathah a delicate match, deah boy, and I trust you will leave the affair in the hands of a fellow of tact and judgment."

"There's no need for all that signmarco—"
"Woolly, Figgys!"
"You may as well say straight out what you have come for," said Figgins harshly. "Lansley-Lansley has already as good as said you School House chaps think I spoilt Manners' photographs."

"Lansley-Lansley had no right to say that."
"I didn't say it, Blake."
"You as good as said it," said Figgins, in great heat.
"No, Figgins, you misinterpreted me."
Arthur Augustus put up his hand appealingly.
"Whatever you do, deah boy, pwey don't get watty with one another. The match is a very delicate one—"

"But?"
"There's nothing delicate about it—"
"Dear me, Figgins, I am inclined to agree with them," said Skimpole thoughtfully. "Manners' photographs were raised by red paint. You are known to possess a considerable quantity of red paint. It can also be proved that you entered the exhibition-room this afternoon by means of the window. I think the evidence clearly proves that—"

"Dry up, you ass!"
"Dear me, Merry—" "You shrieking daffodil!" cried Tom Merry anxiously.
"Look, here Figgins, none of us think you had a hand in the rotten business, of course—"

"Dear me! I certainly think Figgins did it!" said Skimpole, in surprise. "I do not consider he has a legal loophole for escape—"

"You coddling masher!" shouted Tom Merry, really angrily. "Don't take any notice of what the ass says, you ass!"
"If you don't think I did it, why are you here?"
"Because we want to throw the wathah out, deah boy—"
"How can you throw it out by coming here!"
"Well, we think Skimpole made a mistake," hastened to explain Tom Merry. "I don't think you were in the room at all—"

"But I was in the room—"
"But Jove! Then you can explain—"
"I can't explain anything, and I'm not going to try!" cried Figgins. "If you chaps are asses enough to think I did it, go on thinking it. I don't care."

"But it's all rot!"
"Exactly, Blake, but that isn't my fault."
"But if you'll discuss the matter coolly, perhaps—"
Figgins shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the good of discussing it?" he demanded. "Either you think I did it, or you don't. Your coming here proves which way you think. You can go and cough!"

"And the sooner the better!" cried Finky Wynn.
"At once, in fact!" added Kerr.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake looked at one another in dismay. Lansley-Lansley appeared very worried. Arthur Augustus let his monocle fall from his eye.

"Don't be an ass, Figgys, deah boy—"
"It's you who are asses!" cried the New House Junior.

"I'm not going to say another word on the subject. There goes the bell for prep."

And pushing their way past the School House juniors, Figgins & Co. strode from the room. Tom Merry & Co. stood looking at each other in dismay.

"But Jove, what a rotten business, deah boys!"
"Rotter!"
"Rotter!" agreed Tom Merry helplessly. "We shall have to send back to the School House for prep, chaps. Old Figgys will not look soon."

"Let's hope so, anyway."

Jack Blake did not feel very hopeful, though. If he had been in Figgins' place, he knew he would have stared up just as the New House juniors had. Almost any decent fellow would stare up in the same circumstances.

In some way Jack Blake saw that they had made a big mistake in coming to Figgins & Co.

Lansley-Lansley saw that a mistake had been made still more clearly. He did not join in the excited conversation as the School House juniors ran back across the quad. Lansley-Lansley felt that it had been he who had made the mistake.

And Lansley-Lansley was beginning to think something else as well.

Was it Figgins who had destroyed the photographs after all? Try as he would, Lansley-Lansley could not keep the suspicion out of his mind.

Before long a good many other School House juniors were to share the same suspicion with the millionaire's son.

CHAPTER 14.

An Awkward Situation.

"NEW HOUSE CADS!"

"New House rotters!"
Figgins & Co. walked across the quadrangle at a swinging stride. Hedderf & Co. were just behind. None of the six took the slightest notice of the crowd of School House juniors standing in the gymnasium doorway.

"Who spoilt Manners' photographs?"
"New House bradders!"
The crowd went up on all sides. Figgins & Co. walked steadily on.

Preparation was over for the evening, and a large number of juniors from both Houses had walked across the quadrangle to the gymnasium.

Figgins & Co. had left the freely-appointed building without going through their usual evening coupe of gymnastics. It was not pleasant to stay in the gymnasium and listen to the gibes of the School House juniors.

Certainly those responsible for the gibes were fellows of the Mellich stamp, but these were also others who took part in them. The suspicion that Figgins had destroyed Manners' photographs was rapidly taking root in the older House at St. Jim's.

"New House cads—"
"Boomers!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Arthur Augustus came up at a run. Tom Merry was very angry-looking.

"You asses!" he cried.
"Rats! We all know you and Figgins are chums, Tom Merry," said Mellish; "but you ought to stand up for your own chum Manners."

"Either—"
"Everybody knows Figgins spoils the photographs!"

Tom Merry dropped his hand on Mellish's shoulder. The cad of the Fourth looked scared.

"You young daffodil!" cried Tom Merry through his teeth. "We don't know anything of the sort. You've no right to say Figgins did it without proof."

"What about the red paint?"
"And what about Figgins being in the room?"

"Of course he did it, Merry," said Mellish. "It was a joke, and if I were Manners—"

Tom Merry sang Mellish from him. The hero of the Shell was very angry. He ran after Figgins & Co. Jack Blake and Arthur Augustus followed.

"Figgys, deah boy!"
Figgins strode on. He did not even turn his head.

"Figgys, you faithful ass!"
No answer.

Figgins & Co. went striding on.
"Figgins, don't be an ass!"

"Figgys, you faithful daffodil!"
Still no answer.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Arthur Augustus stopped. There was no way of making Figgins & Co. speak if they had made up their minds not to. And it was obvious enough Figgins & Co. had made up their minds not to speak.

They were deliberately cutting the School House juniors.

"Of all the young asses!"
"Of all the faithful daffodils!"

Jack Blake shrugged his shoulders.
"Oh, I don't know," he said quietly. "I dare say I should feel pretty ratty myself if I were Figgins."

"But Jove! Yaaa, wathah!"
"All the same, they're asses not to talk it over," said Tom Merry, in dismay. "Skimpole's cockle upset them, I suppose."

"Suppose so—"
"Yaaa! Skimpole certainly showed every little tact and judgment, but Jove! He wathah wathah mashes!"

"But Figgins knows Skimpole is a well-meaning ass."
Jack Blake shrugged his shoulders again.

"Jawing won't do any good!" he continued. "We've just got to corner Figgins & Co. somewhere, and make them listen to reason. Mellish and the other rotters who glib them want hearing!"

"Yaaa, wathah!"
"Ring off, chaps!" whispered Tom Merry. "Here comes Kildare."

Kildare, the bravest captain of St. Jim's, hurried up with a cheery grin. He had heard nothing of the dispute between the two Houses.

"Was that Figgins who went in just now, Merry?"
"Yes, Kildare. If you want him, I expect he's in his study by this time."

"Good!" said the senior pleasantly. "The first eleven match is scratched for to-morrow, so the football ground will be at liberty. I want you to get together the best School

THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 200.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

NEXT

WEDNESDAY.

House junior eleven you can, Merry, to play the best junior eleven Figgins can get from the New House."

"We are to play the New House?"

"Yes! with myself and one or two more seniors looking on," explained Kildare. "I'm rather anxious to see how you juniors are coming on, because sooner or later some of you will have to be drafted into the first team. I want you to get up to your very best game."

Then Merry spoke.

As a rule, a suggestion from Kildare that the School House should play the New House was greeted with enthusiasm. It was different now. Tom Merry did not feel at all anxious to play Figgins & Co. with the ill-feeling, which had so suddenly cropped up between the two Houses, in the air.

Kildare did not notice the junior captain's hesitation.

"Pick your own team, as usual," he said; "only mind they are the best juniors you can get. I want you to look upon the game as a trial match."

"But Jock!"

"What did you say, D'Arcy?"

"I merely remarked—"

"You see, Kildare—"

"It's like that, old chap?"

Kildare stared at the juniors. The three were obviously ill-at-ease. The heavy captain of St. Jim's could not understand it.

"What's the matter, Merry? You aren't afraid to meet the New House? I mean, you can get together a good team, can't you?"

"Yess, wathah; a wippie, oss!"

"Then it's settled you play the New House to-morrow afternoon?"

"Y-yes."

"Good!" replied Kildare briefly. "I'll go and tell Figgins you are anxious to play him. Mind, I expect a good hard game."

"But Jock!"

"All right, Kildare."

The senior glanced curiously at Tom Merry; then, turning on his heel, walked on. He hurried into the New House and knocked at Figgins & Co.'s door. Kildare always

knocked at a junior's door, although there were some other professors who would never have thought of doing so.

"Come in!"

Kildare pushed open the door. Figgins & Co. looked at him inquiringly.

The captain of St. Jim's spoke in his usual brief way.

"I have just been talking to Merry," he said, "and now I want to talk to you about the same thing. Can you get a good representative team together to play the School House juniors to-morrow afternoon, Figgins?"

"To play the School House?"

"That's what I said. There is no reason why you shouldn't play them, is there? I know you will all be busy making preparations for the Head's prize, but the Head wouldn't like that to interfere with the football."

"N-no; there isn't any reason why we shouldn't play them."

"Then I may consider it settled?"

"Does Tom Merry want to play?" asked Figgins doubtfully.

"Of course!"

Figgins looked at Kerr, and Kerr looked at Fatty Wynn. Kildare waited impatiently.

"Can I consider it settled, Figgins?"

"Y-yes; if Tom Merry wants to play."

"Good!" answered the senior. "Kick-off at two-thirty. I'll ask Kerr or one of the seniors to ref."

And the captain left the study, completely oblivious of the fact that he had left three startled and dismayed juniors behind in the New House study.

CHAPTER 15.

The Stopped Match.

"**H**ERE they come!"

"Here comes the New House cad, you chaps!"

The cry rang out in anything but the usual halting tones. The School House juniors lining one side of the football ground looked hostile and warlike.

The New House juniors on the opposite side of the pitch were equally indignant.

All that morning the ill-feeling which had sprung up



The BULLY of the BARRACKS

By Andrew Gray

A story that will hold you spellbound! Thrilling incidents follow dramatic scenes with startling rapidity. "The Bully of the Barracks" is the most stirring

Tale of Military Life

ever written and easily surpasses any story Andrew Gray has yet produced. It shows this popular author at his very best. Opening chapters this week in

The DREADNOUGHT

THE NEW LIBRARY.—No. 200.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

NEW YEAR — NEW BOOKS

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

NEW NUMBERS JUST OUT—

No. 216.

PETES PICTURE PALACE!

A Story—NEW, LONG, Complete Novel, dealing with the Amazing Adventures of JACK, SA., and PETE. By S. CLARENCE BOND.

No. 217.

THE NEW BROOM!

A Rousing, Long, Complete Tale of Kerton School. By MAX & ELLA SCOTT.

No. 218.

TWO LANCASHIRE LADS!

A Magnificent Complete Tale of Cleveland. By DAVID GOODFELL.

NOW ON SALE EVERYWHERE.

Covers Beautifully Printed in Colours.

PLEASE ASK ALWAYS FOR

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

so ardently between the two Houses had become more intense. At the morning break, between first and second school, there had been an encounter between the rivals in the quadrangle. Figgins & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. had not been there, but there had been something resembling a free fight amongst those who had been present.

Neither side had won, and so the ill-feeling had increased rather than abated.

And now Tom Merry and the rest of the School House junior eleven were on the football field, shooting it at goal. Tom Merry tapped the ball to Clifton Duns as Figgins led his side on the field. The hero of the Shell went to meet the leader of the New House juniors.

"Look here, Figgs!"

"Well, I'm looking!" retorted Figgins, through his teeth.

"Make it pass, old chap. Just because a lot of asses in our House pretend to think you—"

"Destroyed Manners' photograph," finished Figgins grimly. "You may as well say it straight out. If you think I did it, you can't want to speak to me; if you don't think it, it's a jolly chuck on your part, Merry, to come and ask me questions."

"But—"

"Oh, there's nothing to be gained by jawing about it," said Figgins. "Suppose you toss up."

Tom Merry bit his lip. He span a coin in the air.

"Heads!" said Figgins. "We'll defend that goal."

"Right-o!"

The two, who had always been the best of friends, parted. Knox, a perfect who was by no means popular at St. Jim's, scented his whistle. The juniors lined up.

Knox glanced along the line.

He started the game with another shrill whistle. The New House Merry came quickly to Jack Blake, and the Fourth-Former whipped the ball out to the wing. Arthur Augustus trapped it in his stride.

The wall of St. Jim's got going at a fine pace.

"Get woody, dear boys! Owl! Gwaw!"

Rodfern seemed to rush in from nowhere. He met Arthur Augustus shoulder to shoulder.

It was a perfectly fair charge, but Arthur Augustus did not expect it. The monacle shot from his eyes, and his legs shot up in the air.

He came down with a sounding thump into a puddle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old New House!"

"Back up, Figgs!"

Rodfern sent the ball into the middle of the field, and it fell between Tom Merry and Figgins. The two rivals struggled desperately for possession.

Tom Merry charged the New House junior over, and an instant later Kerr unconsciously howled Tom Merry over. Kidnare, standing on the touch-line, frowned.

The captain of St. Jim's was by no means anxious to see a match in which there was heavy charging. He was on the look-out for possible first-class players for the future, and a game in which there is much charging seldom produces the finer points of football.

A scramble in mid-field ended with Kerr measuring his length in the mud, and the School House partisans roared their loudest hosannas.

"Well played, Harries!"

"On the ball, School House!"

Knox grinned. He had been rather bored when Kidnare had asked him to referee the match, but he brightened up now. Knox did not care very much about football, but he liked to see the juniors howling each other over. And there was little doubt that that was what the rival teams meant to do that afternoon.

No one was really at fault. The great amount of feeling in the air had to find an outlet somewhere, and the football-match provided the means.

The charging was fair enough, but some of it was unnecessary. The rival juniors were bending into one another with a will.

Kidnare's frown deepened.

"What do the young asses think they're doing, Darrel?"

"Blow if I know! My hat!"

Tom Merry broke through the defence cleverly. He had the ball well in front of goal, when Figgins dashed up. The New House junior bowled Tom Merry over, and, before he could clear the ball, was bowled over himself by Manners.

The rival partisans cheered wildly.

"Good, Manners!"

"That squares the photograph business, old chap."

Figgins went a deep red. Manners looked uncomfortable, and half turned to speak to Figgins. The New House captain went striding up the field.

There was some more scrambling work in mid-field, then

Figgins was brought down by Harries. The brawny Study No. 6 junior had headed full into Figgins's chest.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that you like it done, Figgins?"

"Back up, New House!"

Kidnare glanced at his watch. The match had been in progress nearly a quarter of an hour, and, apart from Tom Merry's single run, there had not been a scrap of football worth watching.

The captain of St. Jim's turned to Darrel again.

"What in the world is the matter with the young idiots?"

"Blow if I know!" answered the second prefect of the School House, equally puzzled. "Someone said there was a row going on between the two Houses over some photographs which had been spoilt."

"There's certainly something the matter."

"Basher! Look at that!"

A School House junior and a New House player had come to blows. They were charging each other in the good old-fashioned way, and neither of them seemed to notice the fact that Jack Blake was dribbling up the field with the ball. Knox merely laughed.

The whole thing appeared as a joke to him.

Lumley-Lumley, standing on the touch-line, looked very worried. He still felt that all this ill-will was, in a way, due to him.

Jervoid Lumley knew that ever regretted his mistaken visit to Figgins & Co. the previous day. He glanced angrily at Levinson as the black sheep of the Fourth burst into a roar of laughter.

"This is what I call a jolly good match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, you chaps!" shouted Levinson. "That's the style! Bowl that an D'Arny into another puddle, Rodfern! Ha, ha, ha!"

Levinson's laughter rang across the ground in a tantalizing outburst. He was still laughing when Mellish came running up, looking surprised.

"I say, Levinson—"

"Oh, mate, Mellish! This is a jolly fine match! My word! Figgins was bowled over that time, and no mistake."

"But Levinson—"

Levinson turned irritably.

"Dry up, Mellish, you ass!"

"But—But there's someone at the school gates who wants to see you," said Mellish, glancing curiously at Levinson. "A chap named Jodiffe."

Levinson started violently.

"Ha!"

Jodiffe, the nephew of the landlord of the Green Man. You know, that chap Manners fought with yesterday for smashing Bernard Glynn's aeroplane.

"Dry up, you idiot!" snapped Levinson; and he looked round uneasily.

There was no one standing near except Lumley-Lumley. The milkmaid's son appeared to be intent upon the game.

Levinson lowered a sigh of relief.

"Don't talk so loudly, you ass! Is Jodiffe still waiting?"

"I suppose so."

"All right!"

And Levinson strolled away towards the gates. He walked with a great show of carelessness. Jervoid Lumley was watching him closely.

Lumley-Lumley had known what it meant to struggle for existence in the Bowers, New York, where life is impossible unless the wits are constantly awake and the slightest opportunity made use of. Lumley-Lumley's wife was still of the moment.

He made up his mind quickly.

Levinson was not half-way towards the gates before Lumley-Lumley was walking after him. The junior whose childhood's days had been spent in the streets of New York, had his hands in his pockets, and was walking every bit as casually as Levinson, but there was a very keen expression in his clear, far-seeing eyes.

As he turned his back on the football-match, a sudden shout went up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Didn't you see him coming, Umey?"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Arthur Augustus and Rodfern had hit in another collision. With a gasp, the wall of St. Jim's thudded down in the same puddle, just inside the touch-line. Rodfern thrashed down on top of him.

"You wretch an!"

"You hopeless rotter!"

Kidnare suddenly swung round, and walked quickly towards the corner of the field. The juniors stopped playing, and stared at him.

There was an angry flash on Kidnare's face.

THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 200,

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

Order in Advance.

"Stop the game, Knox," he said briefly. "If you fellows call this sort of thing football, I don't. Stop the game at once, please!"

The juniors stared at one another blankly. For the first time in the history of the struggles on the football field between the two Houses, a match had been stopped. The juniors could scarcely believe their own ears.

CHAPTER 16.

Lumley-Lumley Makes Amends.

"WHAT not, Kildare?" Knox spoke hotly. He felt that Kildare had stopped over his head in stopping a match which Knox was refereeing. The captain of St. Jim's straightened his shoulders.

"You don't think I'm going to let a display like this go on, you, Knox?"

"Where's the harm? A few knocks won't hurt the kids; harden their muscles, if they've got any."

"The gym's the proper place for that sort of thing; not the football field."

"No, without you, but Jove!"

"Do you consider you are trying to play football, Merry?"

"No, Kildare," said the Shell junior quietly. "We're just a bunch of ourselves, I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry, Kildare."

Tom Merry and Figgins spoke both together without looking at one another. Kildare nodded.

"I don't say anyone is to blame. There seems to be a lot of feeling in the air, and so the match had better stop."

"Yes, Kildare."

"But Jove, I should wish think it ought to stop!" gasped Arthur Argus.

"I am in a foolish state!"

The rival juniors separated without a word. Tom Merry led the way to the School House, and changed his things in silence. Then he, Manners, and Leather hurried to Study No. 4.

Jack Blake, Horrie, Digby, and Arthur Argus were already changed. They had not started tea yet, although the table was ready laid.

Jack Blake quietly pushed a chair towards Tom Merry.

"Sit down, kid!"

"Right-o?"

"We thought you might come in to tea."

There was a short pause, which Jack Blake broke in the end.

The Yorkshire junior looked up steadily.

"It's too rotten for words!"

"Really?"

"And it's got to stop," went on Jack Blake. "Mind, Kildare was right in what he said just now when he stopped the match. The New House kids weren't any more to blame than we were."

"That's so."

"Taa, watah! Although I must say I consider Western was wrong in knocking me twice into an absolutely rotten park!"

"Oh, we were all rough—"

"And we were all angry," said Jack Blake. "The thing is put a stop to it. I'm going to see Figgins, and I'm going to talk to him whether he likes it or not. None of us here think he touched Manners' photographs, and we aren't going to have matches stopped, and he made to look angry because of what a fellow like Melish pretends to think."

"Watah not?"

"Figgins won't listen to you, though, Blake."

"He's got to listen. Oh, come in!"

The door was pushed open, and D'Arcy raised his head into the room. Arthur Argus looked at his younger brother with disapproval.

"As usual, Wally D'Arcy was lazy and untidy—a striking contrast to his major."

"My aunt, you old fogey haven't half been kicking over the traces!" Wally said, with a shrill. "Fairly going the pace in your old age?"

"Wally, Wally."

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" said D'Arcy minor cheerfully. "I'm not here to blame any of you. Lumley-Lumley wants to see you all."

"Lumley-Lumley, has Jove?"

"Didn't know he had a 'by Jove' after his name, but he wants to see you, all serene. He's at the school gates."

"At the school gates?"

"Right first then, Gus!" checked Wally, and the door shut to with a bang.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake jumped to their feet. Digby and Horrie had already reached the door.

The seven juniors trooped down the passage at a rare pace. They walked across the quadrangle at a run.

The Gym Library.—No. 320.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR."

Every Friday.

"Lumley-Lumley, has Jove! I wonder what he wants, dear boys!"

"There he is, any way."

"Who is with him?"

"Bliss if I can see!"

The juniors raced up. Lumley-Lumley was standing just outside the gate. He had a big, rather-looking pug-nose with his Manners gave vent to a starting exclamation.

"Joliffe!"

"Taa, watah! Joliffe, the watah you administered a football thrashing to yesterday, has Jove!"

Lumley-Lumley had held of Joliffe's arm. There was a very grim grin on the St. Jim's junior's face.

"Yes, this is Joliffe all right!" Jerrold Lumley exclaimed. "He came to see Levison during the football match."

"Come to see Levison?"

"Yes; and I followed Levison to the quadrangle gates," went on Lumley-Lumley quietly. "I didn't know where Joliffe was waiting, but as I climbed the wall over the gates, so that Levison shouldn't see me, I heard enough to make me follow Joliffe closely, he and Levison parted."

"You didn't hear anything," muttered Joliffe.

"I heard you ask Levison for the five shillings he'd promised you for having done something," retorted Lumley-Lumley. "And I heard you ask a ought to be seven-and-sixpence, because you'd lost a penknife, either in the quadrangle or in the exhibition room."

"In the exhibition-room, Great Scott!"

Lumley-Lumley added.

"I can tell you I was startled, too. I followed Joliffe, and I've brought him back. He's as good as admitted it was he who destroyed Manners' photographs."

"What?"

Manners started forward. His fingers were clenched on his palms. Joliffe recoiled with a cry of alarm.

Joliffe still showed unmistakable signs of his previous fight with Manners. Manners glowered at him.

"If what Lumley-Lumley says is true, I'm going to smash you, Joliffe!"

"It isn't true!"

"Oh, yes, it is!" retorted Lumley-Lumley. "You may as well make a clean breast of it, Joliffe."

Manners was still approaching the town youngster. Joliffe looked amazed and unrepentant. His previous fight seemed to have completely cowed him.

"If I tell, will you promise that Manners doesn't pile on me?"

"I'm not going to promise anything," cried Manners. "I shall pile on you if you don't tell, though."

"It wasn't my idea."

"Was it Levison's?"

Joliffe hesitated. Then he nodded.

"Yes, it was Levison's," he said vindictively. "After I'd fought with Manners, Levison met me just outside the Green Man. He proposed me five shillings if I would climb through a certain window while you were all having tea and dab red paint on every photograph I found in the room except one."

"The watah watah?"

"Where did you get the red paint from?"

"Levison got that for me—took it from Figgins's study when Figgins wasn't there."

"My hat!"

Joliffe began to whine. He was really frightened now.

"It was Levison's idea, not mine. I should never have thought of touching Manners' photographs, although I wanted to get even with him for the fight."

"Great Scott!"

"I didn't know there were any photographs until Levison told me about them," whined Joliffe.

"And Levison got you the paint?" said Tom Merry curiously.

"Yes; and told me to spoil every photograph with one dab each—except No. 12, which was a photograph of Figgins jumping a ditch."

"Yes, weren't to touch Figgins's photograph?"

"No, Jove!"

"The St. Jim's juniors looked at one another quietly. The whole plot seemed clear as daylight now."

Levison had tempted Joliffe with the bribe of five shillings to do a childish trick he dared not perform himself. Levison had said that every photograph but the snapshot of Figgins was to be ruined. Levison could have had only one motive for that.

He had meant to throw suspicion on Figgins. And he had caused a good many to suspect the New House junior. Levison, through the extremeness of Joliffe, had been the cause of all the ill-feeling between the two Houses at St. Jim's; and Levison who was really responsible for the stopped football match.

"The attack and!"

Arthur Augustus stared at Josie in open disgust. Manx was still had his fingers clenched on his palms. He was standing over Josie menacingly. Josie retreated in fresh fear.

"You promised you wouldn't pile on me if I told you everything."

"I didn't promise anything of the kind!" said Manx harshly. "But I'm not going to give you the thrashing you deserve because I gave you one yesterday."

"But Jose, he certainly deserves a fearful thrashing!" Manx said, "dear boy!"

"Rather!"

"Though perhaps Manx is right, as Josie wasn't the wretched!" said Arthur Augustus. "I propose that some of us watch Jose while the others go and bring Levison."

"Yes, that's it!"

"Good for you, Gussy!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come on, Manx and Levison! We'll get Levison."

"Watch Jose, dear boy!"

The Terrible Three of the Shell started off at a run. They met Levison in the quadrangle, and he seemed to be looking about on the ground for something.

Tom Merry hurried up.

"Haven't you found it yet, Levison?"

Levison started violently. He looked scared for an instant.

CHAPTER 17. The Truth at Last.

"H AVEN'T you found it yet, Levison?"

Tom Merry repeated his question grimly. Levison pulled himself together.

"If you're trying to be funny, Merry—"

"But I'm not!"

"No, rather not!" added Levison. "Have you been looking long for it, Levison? Why don't you have a hunt round in the photographic exhibition-room?"

Levison started again. His uneasiness returned with a rush.

"I don't know what you axes are talking about!"

"We are talking about Josie's knife," explained Tom Merry pleasantly. "Josie is rather anxious about it; but you seem to have been looking pretty hard. Suppose you come and explain to Josie that his knife can't be found."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you mean?"

"Come and see Josie, and we'll explain."

Levison drew back. Like Josie, he was really frightened now.

"Merry, if you dare to touch me—"

"Cuff his arms, chaps!"

"Right—ho!"

"And if he struggles, carry the end!"

Levison struggled, but not for long. He was completely helpless in the hands of the Terrible Three. He was dragged across the street at a good pace.

"Merry, leave go my arm! Manx, I'll—"

"But Jose, here they come, dear boy!"

The Terrible Three and Levison had reached the School gates. Arthur Augustus gave a welcome shout.

Levison's face blanched as he caught sight of Josie.

"If that snook has been telling anything, it's all a pack of lies!"

"That's what we are going to find out."

"There's nothing to find out, Merry!" cried Levison. "I didn't touch the photographs!"

"How do you know we are talking about the photographs at all?"

Levison bit his lip. He realised in a flash that he had given himself away.

"I—I—"

Tom Merry's lip curled scornfully. Levison was nearly as contemptible as Molich, in a different way, when it came to facing the music.

"So it was you who destroyed the photographs, after all, you said!"

"No, it wasn't, Merry!" cried Levison. "I never touched them! I can prove that. If Josie says I did it, it's a lie! Josie spelt them himself!"

"At your instigation?"

"No, it wasn't!"

"Then how did Josie know anything about the photographs?" demanded Tom Merry.

Levison bit his lip again. He realised that he was in a hopelessly tight corner.

Arthur Augustus jerked his monocle in his eye.

"I regret to say that I cannot believe a word you are uttering, Levison," the veil of the School House exclaimed.

"If you tell the same rotten story to Kildare, you will find yourself in great trouble."

"Kildare!"

"Yes, wretch! When Manx discovered his photographs had been seized, he was so furious enough to ask the Head to leave the match in his hands. The Head agreed, but made the stipulation that the culprit should be taken to Kildare for a thrashing. I propose Levison is taken to Kildare at once, dear boys!"

Levison went very white.

"Don't do that, Merry!"

"We can't help ourselves."

"But if I explain everything—"

"Well, Levison, you must realise that we cannot break our word to the Head," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "The only advice I can give a faithful wretch like you is that you tell Kildare the truth!"

Levison did not answer. There really was nothing to say. Josie had slipped away during the discussion, and Tom Merry was leading the way into the quadrangle. Levison had to follow.

He looked his brain desperately for some plausible story, but Kildare was not the type of man to be easily deceived.

He listened quietly to Tom Merry's story, then demanded Levison's defence. No sinner in the school would have believed Levison's rambling excuses, but Kildare was intensely fair in all things.

He faced Levison quietly.

"The Head has spoken to me about this photograph affair," he said, "and I have full liberty to deal with the matter if I think fit. However, as you deny having had part in this outrage, Levison, I do not care to thrust you on the evidence."

Levison brightened up. There was an expression of triumph on his face as he glanced at Tom Merry.

"There's no evidence at all," he said boldly.

"What, of course, is a matter of opinion," retorted Kildare. "It is entirely circumstantial evidence unless I send for Josie and take his word against yours, a thing I do not care to do. As you deny Josie's story, Levison, I must refuse to deal with the matter. Manx, will you ask the Head if he would mind coming here as a great favour?"

"The Head?"

"Yes, Levison, the Head!" replied Kildare. "Unless you confess, I refuse to deal with the matter. The Head will think, as I do, and, as I do, we shall, you know what that will mean—a public flogging at the least, I suppose."

"But—"

"Hurry up, Manx!"

"Stop!"

Levison breathed the word desperately. He had gone very white again.

"Well?"

"I—I confess, Kildare!" the end of the Fourth stammered.

"You confess that it was you who told Josie to ruin the photographs?"

"I—yes—"

"Why did you do it?"

"Because—because Tom Merry & Co. are always against me," cried Levison excitedly. "They hate me—"

"Nonsense!" snapped Kildare. "You are talking absolute nonsense. You other fellows clear out of the room!"

Tom Merry, Manx and Levison stepped into the passage. Jack Blake, Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus followed on their heels. Kildare had reached a case down from the top of his bookcase.

Before Tom Merry & Co. reached the end of the corridor, the scene of crime was again, and the work of a case welded by the bravery of the captain of St. Jinx's was coming from Kildare's study; but Tom Merry & Co. did not stop to listen.

In a way they were glad that Levison's punishment had been taken out of their hands, and, besides, they had more important matters to attend to than Levison.

Without a word, Tom Merry led the way across the quadrangle again. The other juniors knew what was going to happen without a word being said on the matter.

Tom Merry walked straight into the New House, and thumped on the door of Figgins & Co.'s room. Figgins & Co. jumped to their feet as the School House juniors came into the study.

"I don't know who have been the biggest set of axes, Figgins," he said pleasantly. "You New House duffers or we School House seniors?"

Figgins did not answer. He still looked very heated, but he also looked uncomfortable. The stepped football match had been worrying Figgins & Co. just as much as it had worried the School House juniors.

"I don't see how you can blame us—"

"But Jose, I was just gone to wretch that I don't see how you can blame us, Figgins, dear boy," exclaimed Arthur.

The Gem Librarian—No. 200.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order at Advance.

NEXT

WEDNESDAY.

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

"Angustus. 'You must admit you got very wailay oosh nothin', bai Jove!'"

"Over nothing—"
"Yes, nothing, Figgins," said Tom Merry cheerily. "You ought to have known that none of us ever really thought you New House kids touched the photograph. It's not the sort of joke we expect you chaps to go in for."

"I should think not—"
"In fact, there's only one or two wraiths in the school who would wain property," added Arthur Angustus, "and Levinson is one of them. Levinson is havin' a faithful time in Kiddare's study, bai Jove!"

"Did Levinson do it, then?"

"Yes, wraith, and he is havin' a frightful thrashin' as a reward—"

"So you see what awful chumps you kids have been," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Well, he—"
"Oh, we've been awful asses, too, for letting you get ratty."

Arthur Angustus nodded.

"Yes, wraith! I consider we have been wraith wain all wraith, dash boys!"

Figgins shifted uneasily from one foot to the other. Tom Merry looked at him quietly. Then the Shell junior held out his hand.

"Pax!"

"Yes, pax, of course," answered Figgins heartily. "I—I'm sorry, you chaps—"

"Oh, we are all sorry," laughed Jack Blake.

"Yes, wraith, and I fancy Levinson is sorry too, too, bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And suppose you chaps come to Study No. 6 for tea?"

explained Jack Blake. "Will you, Figgins?"

"Rather!"

"Thanks awfully!"

"Come on, then," laughed Jack Blake. "We'll bar all conversation about photographs and talk of the ripping price the Head has offered for the best aeroplane!"

"Rather!"

And Figgins & Co. hurried out of their study with the School House juniors.

The old friendly rivalry was as keen as ever, and would become still keener when the day lay the aeroplanes race came along; but the unpleasant, bitter spirit Levinson had caused to creep up, died down from the minute Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. had agreed to make it pax.

Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn were conscious of a sensation of great relief as they walked across the quad, with the other juniors. It was splendid to feel that there was to be no more bitterness between the rival Houses of the old school.

CHAPTER 18.

The Head's Prize.

BAI Jove, it's done, dash boys!" Jack Blake, Horrie, and Digby, heaved a sigh of relief. The model aeroplane the Study No. 6 juniors had been making, was finished at last.

In another hour the aeroplane race was to start, so Jack Blake & Co. had not had much time to spare. But the last wire had been tightened now, and the last alterations made to the model. The Study No. 6 juniors were ready for the fray.

And in a good many other studies in St. Jim's, juniors had been equally hard at work during the last few days. The stopped football match was almost forgotten, and Levinson's dash trick on Manners completely forgotten, except by Manners.

Kenn Manners could think of nothing else except the aeroplane the Terrible Three of the Shell had made. There was quiet confidence on the faces of Tom Merry & Co.

The juniors were beginning to hurry into the quadrangle. A crowd of aeroplanes were being gingerly carried by hopeful owners.

One question obsessed every junior—will it fly? The question would be answered very shortly, for Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton were already in the quadrangle.

Kiddare had drawn a thick chalk line at the further end of the quad. The Head pointed towards the line.

"No one must have his feet this side of the line when releasing an aeroplane!" he said loudly. "The rest of the rules you are acquainted with. The winning aeroplane will be the one which flies the furthest in a straight line. No allowance will be made for curved flights. When an aeroplane comes to the ground the spot will be marked in chalk. I trust you all understand?"

"Yes, wraith, sir!"

"Very good! Ah, here is Mr. Ratoff!"

"And Piggy, bai Jove!" added Arthur Angustus, in a

lowered voice. "Bai Jove! Piggy & Co. seem to have a wraithin' aeroplane!"

"Trust Figgins!"

Jack Blake looked critically at Figgins & Co.'s model. The New House juniors had certainly turned out a workman-like little machine.

"And it flies, too," checked Figgins. "A bird isn't in it, Tom Merry grinned.

"We should have made one that could fly, only Manners would insist on having a patent clockwork motor instead of elastic."

"Bats, Tom Merry?"

"No you would, Manners."

"Just you wait and see!" said Manners warmly.

Mr. Railton hurried up to the chalk-line. The juniors were standing in a row. The Housemaster glanced at the "new faces."

"Let's hope the best model wins, boys," he said heartily.

"I see you are in the No. 1 position, Glyn."

"Yes, sir."

"Get ready, then?"

Bernard Glyn, Harry Noble, and Clifton Dene grinned. The other juniors watched anxiously.

When it came to inventing things Bernard Glyn was a junior to be feared.

"I wraith fear Glyn will win hands down, dash boys!"

"Ring off!"

Mr. Railton glanced at Clifton & Co.

"Are you ready, Glyn?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then go!"

Bernard Glyn moved a miniature lever on his complicated-looking model, and raised the aeroplane above his head. There was a whirling sound as the propeller whirled round. The other juniors held their breath.

"Hoory!"

Bernard Glyn had released his model.

The aeroplane sped away like an arrow for about ten yards, then something went wrong. The model shaded down to the ground with a clatter.

"My hat!"

Bernard Glyn looked in dismay at the wreck. Then he laughed like the sportsman he was.

"We're out of it, chaps. Fire ahead, Skimpy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors burst into a roar of laughter. Even Mr. Railton smiled.

Skimpy, the brainy man of the Shell, had an aeroplane built on entirely original lines. He was busy winding up the elastic motor.

"Dear me, I feel certain I shall win the prize. In one of his works on a future world, Professor Specious says—"

"Never mind Professor Specious, Skimpy," said Mr. Railton. "We are waiting for you."

"Dear me, certainly, sir! If you watch carefully—"

Dear me!"

Skimpy released his model, and Mellich dashed just in time. Skimpy's model appeared to ignore the rule about curved flights not being allowed for. The aeroplane did nothing at all for a moment or two except circle round his inventor's head at a terrific pace.

"Great Scott!"

"Look out, Piggy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpy's model seemed to fire suddenly of its fusile circular flight. It wheeled round abruptly, then flew away at an incredible pace towards the Head's study window.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Crash!

Skimpy's aeroplane crashed straight through the Head's study window, and glass flew in all directions.

Dr. Holmes stared in dismay, then broke into a hearty roar of laughter. Skimpy looked round with a startled expression on his face.

"Dear me, where has it gone? I utterly failed to follow its flight, but possibly it has left the quadrangle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a moment or two Mr. Railton was too overcome to start the next flight. Skimpy was still looking round for his aeroplane.

Figgins & Co. stepped up to the chalk-line, and the laughter ceased. The three New House juniors were getting their model ready.

"Go!"

Mr. Railton rapped out the word, and a ringing cheer went up from the juniors of both Houses. Figgins's aeroplane was flying in a dead straight line about twelve feet from the ground.

It came down almost at the other end of the quadrangle, and another roving choir went up.
"Good old Figgis!"

"Yaaa, wathah! Wippin', deah boy!"
"Jelly good fight, away!" exclaimed Tom Merry.
"That's what you besting, chaps. If only Manners hadn't been so anxious to insist on a patent clockwork motor—"

"Hais!"
"Go it, Reddy!"
Reddy and Co. were the next competitors, but the second aeroplane from the New House was not a success. It made a fine start but in an upward direction. It eventually came down on Lovison's head.

"Oh! Oh! Groo!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hard luck, Lovison!"
The end of the Fourth rowled. He had no share in an aeroplane, and was in a bad temper.

"Blake!"
Mr. Railton spoke quietly. He seemed to expect a good deal from the Study No. 6 juniors.

Jack Blake and Herries carefully wound up the motor of their machine, and another cheer went up.

"Good for you, Blake!"
"School House wins!"
"Oh, rotten luck!"

The Study No. 6 model came down to the ground scarcely a yard behind Figgis's chalk mark. Jack Blake grinned ruefully.

The New House were still in front.
Figgis & Co. were grinning in hope also.

Wally D'Arcy—Arthur Augustus minor—created a huge sensation with his model, and Carly Gibson and Jamison shrieked with delight.

The Third Form aeroplane beat Jack Blake's flight by six inches. There was great excitement as the chalk mark was made.

"Good old Wally!"
"Yaaa, wathah! I should reach here thought it!"
"Oh, you old fogies can't think!" said Wally cheerfully.
"It's up to you, Tom Merry, to beat Figgis."
"If only Manners hadn't been an ass!"
"Wait and see!"

There was one more fight before Tom Merry & Co. came to the front, and a very fine fight it proved to be. Lamley-Lensley's machine came to within a yard of D'Arcy minor's, and there was a roaring cheer for the millionaire's son.

Figgis & Co. joined in heartily. The three New House juniors were in great spirits.

Tom Merry & Co. were the only competitors left now, and the chances were all in favour of the New House carrying off the splendid prize the Head had offered.

Tom Merry held his aeroplane in the air, and Manners carefully wound up the clever, extraordinarily light clockwork motor which did duty as engine.

Lotherton watched anxiously.
A five-pound prize was worth winning.

"Back up, Tom Merry!"
"Mind you beat Figgis & Co.!"

"Hoovey!"

The Terrible Three of the Shell had sent their aeroplane on its journey. It dashed ahead in a beautifully straight line. The juniors cheered after it.

"School House wins!"
"No, it's coming down, deah boys!"

"Rais!"
There was a moment's uncertainty, then a terrific cheer went up. Tom Merry's model had beaten Figgis & Co.'s aeroplane by a dozen yards.

Figgis rushed up, and held out his hand.
"Good luck, you chaps!"

Tom Merry laughed heartily.
"It's Manners' prize, anyway!" he exclaimed. "The clockwork motor was his idea."

"Rais!" shouted Manners. "The Shell wins!"
"Yaaa, wathah, and a jolly good win, too, deah boys!"

The excitement was indescribable for a moment or two. Then the Head came up, and shook hands with Tom Merry, and Manners and Lotherton.

"Make up your minds what price to the value of five pounds you would like, boys," he said, "and let me know some time to-morrow."

That was all the Head said, but he thought a good deal more. Of all the juniors in the school he would rather Manners and his chums had won.

The prize would prove a compensation for Manners' worth photographs. The headmaster of St. Jim's saw a great deal below the surface of things, and he had guessed what Manners must have felt when the photographs had been found destroyed.

And Dr. Holmes was not the only one at St. Jim's who was glad that it had been Manners' idea which had won the Head's prize for the Terrible Three of the Shell.

THE END.

A splendid, long, complete story dealing with the adventures of the great detective of St. Jim's, entitled, "Tom Merry & Co. Mystery," by Martin Clifford, well up to the level of the best of our own papers, "The Penny Picture." Order this great, complete story paper from your newspaper dealer. Price One Penny.

STORYETTES.

BY ORDER.

With a graceful step, and much rustling of gauzy drapery, Mrs. Briggs sailed downstairs to the sitting-room, but on tanning the handle of that apartment she found that the door was locked and the key missing.

She therefore hailed Bridget, the parlour-maid.
"Bridget," she cried, "I can't get into the sitting-room!"
"Shure," answered Bridget, "an' it's meel know that, for I've the key in my pocket, an' ye won't have it!"

Mrs. Briggs felt back a step, and gasped with astonishment.

"Open the door immediately!" she panted.
"Will ye go in if I do?"

"Certainly I will!" was the reply.

"Then," answered Bridget, with decision, "ye don't get the key!"

"Open the door immediately!" pulled the outraged lady once more. But Bridget stopped her with an upraised hand.

"Shure, it's be your own order," she explained. "Ye said yesterday, 'Don't let me come downstairs an' see any dust on the sitting-room furniture.' So I says to meself, 'Then she sha'n't, an' I put the key in my pocket. No,' she concluded, with quiet determination, 'ye're not goin' inside!"

"Dad!"
"Yes, my son!"
"What kind of wood do they use most in tanning?"
"Well, when I went to school, my boy, they used birch."

HISTORY REWRITTEN.

The class were writing furiously, for it was the occasion of the essay examination at the end of the term, and each juvenile wished to carry back a prize to his parents.

Toomey Jones was feeling elated. His class had been allowed to choose their own subjects, and he had selected one with which he was fully acquainted.

This is what he wrote:

"King Henry VIII. was the greatest widower that ever lived. He was born at Aztec Deserve in the year 1226. He had six wives, not to mention children. The last was beheaded, and afterwards executed. The second was executed. She never smiled again. She said that the word 'Calais' would be found engraven on her heart after death. Henry VIII. was succeeded on the throne by his great-grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, sometimes known as the Lady of the Lake."

Great, however, was Toomey's disappointment when he learned that the executed prince had not fallen to his lot.

PREPARATION.

"Two-pen'orth of glass, please," said the tchin to the cell-house keeper.

"Certainly. What sort of glass do you require?"

"I dunno exactly, but it'll have to be jolly strong," replied the boy.

"We keep all sorts—'Hobbit,' 'The Building,' 'Gripless,' and half a dozen other kinds, sonny. Which will you have?"

"It don't matter a bit if it's strong, sir; as long as it'll hold coconuts to tight on the sticks as that they won't come down, no matter how strong folks throw the balls at 'em. Father ain't goin' to run as risks. It's gettin' ready for the fair."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 260.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
Order in Advance.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY.

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

OUR SPLENDID SERIAL.

BIRDS OF PREY



A Thrilling Story Dealing with the Adventures of Nelson Lee, Detective.

By MAXWELL SCOTT.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR.

Nelson Lee, the world-famous detective, is devoting all his energies to the task of breaking the power of a gigantic criminal organization, known as the Order of the Ring. The infamous secret society is under the leadership of a man who is known to all the members as "The Chief," but who also passes under the name of Mr. Stephen Meredith. His principal lieutenants are known as "The Squire," "The Doctor," and "Lady Ursula"—a beautiful young girl with the heart of a tiger.

With the intention of forcing him to join the Order, the Chief kidnaps Jack Langley, a young engineer, and Miss Aylmer, his fiancée. Jack proves obstinate, and as the two young people remain the captives of the Order, their only hope of release comes from Nelson Lee, who is hot on the track of the Chief and his associates.

By a stroke of good luck Nelson Lee manages once more to get on the track of the infamous leaders, and arrests the Chief and the Doctor. During the trial which takes place at

Sheffield, the detective is taken seriously ill, and it is not until he leaves the hospital, a few weeks later, that he learns that the prisoners are to be taken the next morning to Leeds, to attend the Assizes. Feeling certain that an attempt will be made to rescue them, he makes his way to the station. The Squire and Lady Ursula, with the aid of a number of the lower members of the Ring, release the two prisoners, and escape in a large car; and Nelson Lee, owing to his weak state of health is unable to stop them. Owing to the police station some time later, he is told that the car has been found, but not the occupants. The chief inspector advises him to throw up the case.

"Never, never!" cries Nelson Lee, his voice vibrating with passionate intensity. "I have vowed to drag this infamous society into the light of day, and I will do it, or perish in the attempt!"

(Now go on with the Story.)

Found at Last.

"There's nothing seriously wrong with you. You're just ran down, that's all. You don't need any medicine. All you want is a holiday. Go into the country. Take plenty of open-air exercise. Do no work of any kind whatever, and in ten days' time you'll be as good as well."

Such was the verdict of the eminent Sheffield physician whom Nelson Lee went to consult after parting from the inspectors. It was a verdict with which the detective heartily agreed, and he lost no time in putting it into execution. For reasons which will presently appear, he decided to go to Tolly; and early next day he took up his quarters, at a lodge under an assumed name, at a quiet farmhouse not far from the lease where the motor-car had been found.

If he had searched the whole length and breadth of the kingdom he could hardly have found a more suitable spot in which to spend a quiet holiday. In every way it was just the very place for an invalid in search of health—pleasantly situated, surrounded by lovely scenery, and sufficiently far from the noise and smoke of the busy town. Yet it had other and more important attractions in the eyes of Nelson Lee. It was for other and weightier reasons that he decided to take up his residence there.

A quarter of a mile to the south of the house was the lease where the Squire had left the motor-car. Two miles to the north was the railway-cutting in which the Squire had stopped the London express. Two miles and a half to the east was the ruined mill, where the Squire and the Doctor

had attempted to rescue the Chief after Nelson Lee had captured him.

What did all this point to? Did it not point to the fact that the Squire's house—the house to which Jack Langley had been taken, the house in which the underground mint was situated—was somewhere in that neighborhood, too? The detective thought it did, and it was for that reason that he quartered himself at the little farmhouse.

"The doctor has forbidden me to work," he murmured to himself, on the morning of his arrival. "Very good—I won't work! But the doctor has also ordered me to take plenty of outdoor exercise. Good again—I'll obey him to the letter! Every day I'll go for a long country ramble, first in one direction, and then in another. Before I leave I'll do this district thoroughly. I'll tramp every road and lane and footpath. I'll have a look at every house and cottage and hed. I'll explore every park and wood. That won't be work—it will simply be open-air exercise, and if I should happen to come across a house which answers to Jack Langley's description of the Squire's house—why, then, I'll forget what the doctor said about doing no work!"

He had brought with him from Sheffield a large scale map of the district he intended to explore. With the aid of a pencil and a ruler, he worked this out into ten small square—one square for each day of his holiday. Every morning, immediately after breakfast, he started out for his daily dose of "open-air exercise," when he returned, generally in the evening, he had "done a square," as he himself expressed it.

This went on for a week and a day, and although the

detective's daily tramps had browned his cheeks, and hardened his muscles, and infused new life into his veins, they had yielded no result with respect to the Squire's house. On the ninth day, however, his perseverance met with its reward. He found the house!

It happened in this way. He left the farm about half-past eight, and struck out in a westerly direction, for the purpose of exploring the last but one of his "squares." At the end of half an hour's walk he came to the cutting where the Squire had stopped the express. He crossed the line and the field beyond, and emerged into the road. He turned to the right, and presently came to a rustic stile, which gave admittance to a large and well-wooded park.

There was a noticeboard beside this stile, warning all and sundry that trespassers would be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. In defiance of this warning, the detective calmly climbed over the stile and entered the park. For upwards of twenty minutes he wandered through its leafy glades and daisy-dotted areas, looking in vain for any sign of a house. At last the trees began to grow denser and wider apart, and by and by he came to a low stone wall. He approached it, and peered over it, then his heart gave a mighty bound, and a quiver of rapturous triumph thrilled through his frame.

For three, before his eyes, bathed in golden sunlight, stood the house for which he had long sought.

Trembling with excitement, he scrambled over the wall, and concealed himself behind the trunk of a lofty, long-leaved oak. He called to himself the brief and hurried description which Jack Longley had given him in the cabin of the *Florida*. He compared it with the stately house in front of him. Without a doubt he had found the object of his quest.

Yonder was the terrace on which Jack had landed after smashing his way through the window. Yonder were the two broad flights of steps, above and below the carriage drive, down which the young engineer had leaped.

Here, stretching to his very feet, was the undulating lawn across which Jack had raced, with the Chief and Squire in hot pursuit. And here, too, just behind him, was the low stone wall over which Jack had vaulted into the park.

"This is the house, without a doubt," he murmured to himself. "This is the home of the Squire, and the site of the underground mine. At last I have tracked the scoundrel to his lair. At last I have—"

A faint rustling of the branches over his head brought his warnings to an abrupt termination. He raised his eyes to discover its cause, and even as he did so, a wriggling, snake-like length of rope, with a running noose at the end, came spinning downwards through the air, and settled round his shoulders.

As afterwards appeared, the Squire had been strolling through the park, and had picked up a coil of rope which one of the woodmen had left behind him after felling a tree. On his way back to the house, he had suddenly caught sight of Nelson Lee, and, fearing to cross the lawn lest the detective should see him, he had snarled up the very tree under which Nelson Lee had afterwards taken his stand. If he had had a revolver with him, he could have shot the detective with the greatest ease. Having no revolver, he had fastened a noose on the end of the rope, and had dropped it over the detective's head with the object of strangling him.

Quick as thought, the detective flung up his hands and made a grab at the noose. At the same instant, however, the Squire gave the rope an upward jerk, and before Nelson Lee could grasp the rope, it slipped over his shoulders and around his neck, and he was jerked off his feet, and swung into the air.

It need scarcely be said that the Squire was not strong enough to keep the detective dangling in the air for any length of time. As a matter of fact, the detective's feet were set off the ground for more than a second; but the very fact that the whole weight of his body had been thrown on to the rope even for a single second tightened the rope so such an extent, and gave him such a terrible shock, that when the Squire let go the rope, the detective dropped half fainting to the ground.

Observing this, and eager to finish his murderous work on Nelson Lee came round, the Squire whipped out a pocket-knife, and began to swear down the tree. By the time he reached the ground, however, the detective had collected his scattered wits, and had partially loosened the noose which was strangling him. Before he could scramble to his feet, however, the Squire rushed towards him knife in hand, and aimed a lightning blow at his heart.

With matchless presence of mind, the detective, who was lying on his back, kicked up his leg, and planted his foot in the Squire's corporation. With something between a grunt and a groan, the Squire staggered back, and in the twinkling of an eye the detective leaped to his feet and whipped out his revolver.

"Hands up, or I fire!" he cried. But almost before the

words had ceased his eye, the Squire flung the pocket-knife straight into his face.

The point of the blade grazed the detective's forehead, and filled his eye with blood. Fearing a second attack, he sprang aside and dashed the blood from his eye. Then he gazed around him in stupefied bewilderment. The Squire had disappeared!

Nelson Lee's bewilderment was not of long duration. A crackling of the undergrowth on the other side of the low stone wall told him what had happened. After haring his knife into the detective's face, the Squire had vaulted over the wall, and had taken to his heels across the park.

Needless to say, the detective lost no time in giving chase. But four long wings to the Squire's feet, and although he could not shake his pursuer off, neither could the latter overtake him. In and out amongst the trees they raced, up the green-sided sides of little hills, and down the rocky slopes of miniature ravines, neither of them gaining ground to the other in a single pace. Once the detective tried the effect of a running start, but missed his mark by the merest fraction of an inch. And once the Squire stumbled and fell, but regained his feet, and dashed away ere Nelson Lee could reach him.

At last, however, the Squire began to show signs of flagging, and the detective began to overhaul him hand over hand. Seeing this, the Squire changed his tactics. Hitherto he had contented himself with dodging in and out amongst the trees in a vain attempt to throw his pursuer off the scent. Now, however, he struck a bee-line for the north-west corner of the park, where stood the ruins of an ancient abbey—Riversdale Abbey—which gave its name to the neighbouring village of Abberdale.

All that now remained of this once famous abbey, which had served the double purpose of an abbey and a monastery, was a crumbling, ivy-clad tower, and a long, irregular wall, pierced by half a dozen Gothic windows. The tower was little more than a roofless shell. In the centre of the floor was a large round hole, something like the mouth of a well, which led into a dismal underground pit, of unknown depth, which tradition said—baldly, no doubt—had formerly been used as a place of imprisonment, and also of torture, for heretics. Originally the opening into this pit had been covered by a circular iron plate; but this had either been removed, or had rusted into decay.

It was towards this ruined tower that the Squire now directed his flight. He reached it breathless and exhausted, left thirty yards ahead of Nelson Lee, and as soon as he gained the shelter of its crumbling walls he flung himself down flat on his face behind a massive block of fallen masonry.

A moment later the detective dashed up. Fearing a trap, he halted outside the ruined doorway of the tower, and cautiously peered into the interior. Seeing no trace of the Squire, he ventured to step inside.

"Where the dickens has he gone?" he muttered to himself. "Surely he hasn't gone down that hole!"

He stole up to the mouth of the pit, and peered down into its gloomy depths; then he thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a box of matches. He struck a light, and was shading it with his hands, when a sudden sound behind him caused him to spin round with a gasp of alarm.

But the action came too late. Like a panther leaping on its prey, the Squire sprang forward and gave him a violent push. The next instant, with a wild, despairing cry, the detective staggered backwards and vanished into the pit.

A Double Surprise.

For over two hundred years the rain and snow had been free to enter the roofless tower of Riversdale's ruined abbey. In consequence of this the underground pit had become converted into a kind of subterranean reservoir, and through much of the water had naturally drained away through the chinks between the stones of the walls and floor, there still remained some six or eight feet of stagnant, evil-smelling liquid crusted on the surface with a thick, green film of slimy vegetation.

Under these circumstances it will readily be understood that the effects of the Squire's action when he hurled Nelson Lee into the pit were far less serious than they would have been if there had been nothing for the detective to fall upon but the hard stone floor. As a matter of fact, beyond a thorough soaking and a coating of slime, the detective was little, if any, the worse for his unexpected plunge.

For a moment or two he contented himself with "breasting the water." For he saw the Squire's evil face peering down through the mouth of the pit, and he wished the scoundrel to think that he had been killed. Of course, if the Squire could have seen him, such deception would have been too good for him.

THE GREAT LIBRARY—No. 221.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

impossible. But the mouth of the pit was fully forty feet above the surface of the water, while the interior was as dark as the interior of a coal mine, so that anybody looking down into it from above looked only into a yawning void of inky blackness. Such, at any rate, was the Squire's experience, and, after listening for several minutes without hearing any sound, he dragged away, happy in the thought that he had seen the last of his most dreaded foe.

After he had gone the detective commenced to swim round the walls of the pit, in the hope of finding some means of escape. For a time his hopes seemed doomed to disappointment, for the walls of the pit rose sheer and perpendicular, like the sides of a house, and were coated with a treacherous, jelly-like slime that made them as slippery as eels. Nowhere could he find anything to cling to, or anything on which to gain a foothold, and he had almost resigned himself to the prospect of a lingering death, when all at once the hand with which he was exploring—a was too dark to see anything—slipped round a corner, and plucked him easily up.

His first impression was that he had thrust his hand into the mouth of a drain, but a very slight examination showed him that what he had mistaken for the opening of a drain was really a low, arched doorway, the bottom of which was exactly on a level with the surface of the water.

With hope renewed, he placed his elbows on the lower edge of this opening and hauled himself through. Having scraped away some of the slime which clung to his hands and feet, he exposed his watertight matches and struck a light. He then discovered that the opening through which he had crawled was the entrance to an underground passage, which had been tunnelled through the earth long centuries ago, and lined with rough-hewn blocks of stone. Where it led to he could not even guess; but as soon as he had wrung some of the water out of his clothes he started out on a tour of exploration.

The passage was so low that in places he had to stoop, in order to avoid striking the roof with his head. The air was foul, and at times well-nigh unbearable. The walls were adorned with strange, fantastic-looking fungi, sometimes of gaseous green, and ever and anon the fiery eyes of scurried rats would gleam at him through the darkness, to vanish at his near approach.

For nearly half a mile he trudged along this eerie tunnel, sometimes striking a match, but for the most part stumbling on in the dark. Then an unexpected obstacle appeared. The roots of some enormous trees growing overhead had forced their way through the roof, dislodging several of the stones, and letting in a considerable quantity of soil—so much, so, indeed, that the passage was completely blocked, and further progress was impossible.

Nothing daunted, the detective promptly set to work to excavate a way through the soil mass. Luckily for him, the earth was only loosely packed, but even so, with his hands as his only implements, the task was one from which the stoutest-hearted might have shrunk. By dint of heroic exertions, however, the detective at last accomplished it; but by the time he reached the other side, and was free to resume his advance, it was nine o'clock. In other words, the task had occupied no less than eleven hours—from ten o'clock in the morning to nine o'clock at night.

After a brief interval of rest, the detective once more trudged ahead, and presently came to a narrow flight of steps, which apparently marked the end of the passage. These steps were so low and so close set that he had to run up two solid-looking walls, and at the top was a narrow wooden door, which had neither handle, latch, nor keyhole.

As the detective gazed at this door, and then at the walls on each side of the steps, a dim suspicion of the truth stole into his mind. The walls were evidently the inner walls of some large house—a hollow wall, in fact, with the steps running up inside it. The door at the top was, apparently, a wooden panel, which doubtless formed part of the paneling of one of the upper rooms of the house. But whose was the house? And what, or who, was in the room on the other side of the panel?

He crossed the panel by the light of his last remaining match. There might have been some secret mechanism for opening it, but he certainly could not see any. Then the match flickered out and left him in the dark.

He placed his ear to the panel and listened. He could hear nothing. He examined every inch of it with his hands. He could feel nothing. He applied his shoulder to it, and gave it a gentle push. It appeared to yield. He planted one foot against the opposite wall, and exerted all his strength.

For a moment nothing happened. Then a sharp, metallic click, a woman's wailing cry, a rattle through the air, and Nelson Lee fell, headlong into a brilliantly-lighted room.

He was on his feet in an instant. The only occupant of the

room was a young and beautiful girl. His eyes, so long accustomed to the darkness, were dazzled by the light, and he could not at first distinguish her face. He sprang towards her, and gripped her by the wrist.

"Not a sound, as you value your life!" he hissed. "I'm not going to hurt you unless—"

The scales fell from his eyes, and he checked himself with a low, hoarse cry of bewildered superstition. He dropped her wrist, and staggered back a pace or two. He rubbed his eyes and scratched himself, to make sure that he was awake. But the truth would not be denied.

The girl before him was Ethel Arlino. If the detective was surprised, poor Ethel was even more so. She had been sitting in her room, lost in dreamy reverie, when all at once she had been startled by a sudden crash behind her. She had sprung to her feet with a frightened cry, and before her startled eyes had risen up a weird-looking figure, whose clothes were wet and plastered with mud, whose hair was matted together with greenish slime, and whose hands and face were almost as black as those of a chimney-sweep.

This horrid apparition had seized her by the wrist, had begun to utter menacing words, and had then roared with a roar of insensibility. No wonder the poor girl began to think that her brain had given way.

The detective was the first to break the silence.

"Surely I am not mistaken!" he gasped. "You are Miss Arlino, are you not?"

"I am," she faltered, in a trembling voice. "But who—who are you?"

"I am Nelson Lee," he replied.

She started forward with a captious cry, and seized his gray hands, woman-like, her first thought was not for herself, but for the man she loved.

"Tell me quickly, is Jack safe?" she asked, regarding him with a pleading, anxious glance.

"That's the very question I was going to ask of you," he said. "I thought—everybody thought—that both you and Mr. Langley had been drowned in the wreck of the Dolphin. How did you escape?"

"We escaped in one of the boats," she said. "The Chief, the Doctor, myself, and Jack, and five of the crew. We landed on the beach of Peabody Cove, just under my uncle's house. For the rest of that night, and for the whole of the following day, we hid in one of the caves at the foot of the cliff. At night my uncle came and conducted us to the haunted wing of Peabody Grange, where we remained for the next two days. At the end of that time we all went aboard a private yacht, which took us to Southampton. Before we landed, Jack and I were dragged, and when I recovered my senses I was here. And I've been here ever since. But how did you come here?"

The detective told her, briefly and rapidly, of his pursuit of the Squire, and of his adventures in the underground passages.

"Then you didn't know that I was here?" she said, when he had finished.

"Of course I didn't," he said. "I thought that you were dead."

A look of disappointment crossed her face.

"I was hoping that you had come to take me away," she said.

"So I will," he replied.

"Through that underground passage?" she asked, with a shiver of fear.

The detective shook his head.

"There is no way of escape in that direction," he said.

"Then I'm afraid there's no way of escape at all," she said. "The door of this room is locked and bolted on the outside, and the window, as you will see if you draw aside these curtains, is guarded by strong iron bars. Besides, even if you managed to open the door you couldn't escape, for every servant in the house, both male and female, is a member of the Order of the Ring."

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"We'll find some way of escape, never fear," he said, in cheery, confident tones. "In the meantime, I shall be glad if you will enlighten me on one or two points. In the first place, am I right in supposing that this is the Squire's house?"

"Yes. This is the house to which the Squire lured Jack seven months ago."

"Do you know his name?"

"Abbeyvale Hall."

"And the Squire's name?"

"Joseph Broomer, at least, that's what he told me was his name; but he was more or less drunk when he gave me the information, so I don't know whether he was speaking the truth."

"He drinks, then?"

"Oh, yes. About every night, when he comes to pay me his usual visit, he's more or less interested."

"His usual visit? Does he come to see you every night?"

"Always at the same time—ten o'clock."

The detective pulled out his watch. It was three minutes to ten. He glanced across the room, and closed the panel through which he had entered. He rearranged the curtain in front of the window, and moved a chair. He examined his revolver, shook the water out of the barrel, and carefully replaced it in his pocket.

"It will serve to frighten him, at any rate," he muttered to himself.

He pushed a chair into the middle of the room, and beckoned Ethel to be seated.

"We're two minutes yet," he said, in a low voice. "Do you know whether Lady Ursula is here?"

"Yes; she is. She was in my room this afternoon."

"Are the Chief and the Doctor here?"

"No. The Squire told me, nine or ten days ago, that he had rescued them from the police, and had sent them to a place of safety in the South."

"Is Jack Langley here?"

"No."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No."

"Have you any idea why they're keeping you a prisoner?"

"Yes. As soon as Jack is well enough to be moved—"

"Is he ill?"

"He has been. Lady Ursula told me that he tried to jump out of the window, and is imprisoned, and was seriously injured by the fall—"

"Booked after him. As soon as he is able to be moved they're going to bring him, and then they're going to lecture me in his presence, in the hope of compelling him to join their ranks."

She had scarcely finished speaking ere heavy, staggering footsteps were heard in the corridor outside.

"The Squire!" gasped Ethel, turning pale. "Quick! Hide!"

"All right. There's no hurry," said Nelson Lee calmly.

"He is evidently those shafts in the wind, and it will take him a moment or two to find the keyhole. When he comes in, greet him in the way you usually do, and do not betray, either by word or look, that anything unusual has happened."

Just as he was about to leave, he turned back and said to her:

"The rattle of a key in the keyhole warned him that it was time to be moving. With stealthy, catlike footsteps he glided across to the window and concealed himself behind the curtain. The next instant the door swung slowly open, and the Squire staggered in."

"The detective was right," the Squire was undoubtedly "those shafts in the wind," yet he was sober enough to remove the key from the outside of the door, to thrust it into the keyhole on the inside, and to close and lock the door. He then lurched into the middle of the room, dragging a heavy chair after him, and seated himself in front of Ethel.

"And how is my pretty prisoner to-night?" he asked.

"No better for seeing you!" said Ethel earnestly, picking up a book and pretending to read.

The Squire leaned forward and drank the book a vicious blow that knocked it out of her hand and sent it spinning across the room.

"Well, he's a bit of a brute, isn't he?" said Nelson Lee, by Jove! But, I say, dear, don't you know it's a very rude to read when you're visitors? You should at least pay me the compliment of listening to what I have to say."

"Well, I'm listening," said Ethel, folding her hands and trying to look resigned. "What have you to say to me?"

"I'm a friend of yours to-day," said the Squire—"at least, I believe he's a friend of yours. His name is Nelson Lee."

"It's a pity Mr. Lee didn't see you?" said Ethel.

"But he did," said the Squire, with a chuckle. "That's where the joke comes in. He not only saw me, but he showed me all round the park. He nearly had me once or twice, but I managed to get rid of him at last."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Nelson Lee.

"I thought you would be. But will he arrive still when you hear how I did it. Shall I tell you?"

Ethel shrugged her dainty shoulders, but made no reply.

"I lured him into the ruined abbey," said the Squire.

"Underneath the door of the tower there's a horrible, lath-like pit, goodness knows how deep. I hid behind a heap of stones, and when he walked to the edge of the pit I leaped upon him from behind, and shoved him in. I waited a minute or two, to make sure that he was dead, and then I came away. What do you think of that, my dear?"

"Another thrilling instalment of this exciting new serial in next Wednesday's issue of 'THE GEM.'"

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns will be from those readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Correspondents sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondence is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be conducted through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

L. B. Stinson, 180, Indian Road, Toronto, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader in England, age about 16.

E. F. Kener, of Collins Street, Geraldine, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader in England.

G. Kace, P. O. Box 2550, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with an English girl, age about 16.

G. H. Gassen, 41, Wellington Street, S. Woodstock, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age about 16-17.

C. Noel, 343, Edward Street, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader living in England, about 16 years of age.

W. B. Kelly, 304, Boon Street, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a reader interested in stamp-collecting.

J. Kyrrk, 128, Fritchard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader of "The Gem" living in England.

W. M. Hardinge, 43, St. Maude's, Valletta, Malta, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader aged 16, living in England.

D. Shennan, 12, Rue Rello, Alexandria, Egypt, age 15, wishes to correspond with a girl Gentile in England.

R. M. Fillmore, Amherst, Nova Scotia, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers of either sex in England.

L. C. Wells, 1, Marvel Street, Woodbridge, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers. Also, will Miss Daisy Saunders, formerly of Belvedere Road, S.E., let the above have her present address.

Stevenson, Ashcroft, 12, Nelson Street, Ballarat East, Victoria, Australia, would like to correspond with a girl or boy Gentile in the British Isles.

Miss D. Benton, 12, Blanche Street, St. Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in England.

R. Plummer, Murrison Road, Rushworth, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England.

R. Numburg, 113, Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with boy and girl readers of "The Gem," age 14.

H. C. J. Bankrook, 42, Church Street North, Fittroy, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a Scotch or Welsh girl reader, age about 15.

W. Braden, 36, Park Avenue, Ashfield, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader, age about 12 or 14, living in the British Isles.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday.

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Our next grand, long, complete tale of the chaos of St. Jim's deals with another outbreak of hostilities between Moonlight, head prefect of the New House at St. Jim's, and Kildare, the captain of the school.

Moonlight is attacked in the dark and severely handled, and his suspicion falls upon Kildare, with whom he is upon the verge of terms at the time. Strange to say, circumstances combine to give colour to his suspicions, and the stalwart captain of St. Jim's finds himself under a cloud.

After a terrible "mill" with his enemy Kildare resigns the captaincy, and Moonlight makes a bid for the vacant position.

As the critical moment, however, the real suspense comes forward, and the situation is saved.

"FIGGINS & CO.'S FEUD!"

Is a story that brims with interesting incidents, and no Gemite can afford to miss it.

A South Australian "Gem" and "Magnet" League.

Books of the most legal and enthusiastic Gemites hail from the Overseas Departments of the Empire, and a letter recently received from one of my South Australian Gemite allies with what charges the idea of forming a "Gem" and "Magnet" League has been taken up among keen readers of the popular little companion paper "down under."

The letter runs as follows:

"Wayville, South Australia.

"Dear Editor.—I am very glad to be able to write to you again. I have started a "Gem" and "Magnet" League in South Australia, and I am getting on fine. I am the secretary, and W. G. G. is my under-secretary. These are two extracts from letters I have received since forming the League:

"Montrose, Dumfriesshire Street, Easter.

"South Australia.

"I should be very pleased to join the "Gem" and "Magnet" League. I think you will soon get a good number of members. I will do my best to get you some members from down this way.—Yours truly, (Signed) B. S. R."

"The other one comes from G. G., Leicester Street, Parkside, South Australia, and runs as follows:

"I will be only too pleased to become a member of your League. I will also try and keep the rules. If you will send me a dozen membership cards and rules I will undertake to get them soon filled.—Yours in unity, (Signed) G. G."

"I am enclosing you a copy of a membership card and rules. This is my method:

"I send a letter with a coupon, a membership card and rules. New members sign the coupon and return to me, and they keep the membership card.

"Will you, as a special favour, send me a prescription of how to make a copyright? I read it in "The Gem" a short while ago, but as I always pass on my books I have forgotten it.

"Would you mind publishing in 'The Gem' as follows: All South Australian readers wishing to join a "Gem" and "Magnet" League, please write to E. Prescott (Secretary), Goodwood Road, Wayville, South Australia. I have no other means of getting in touch with them. I have not seen 'The Feary Popular' yet, but I sincerely hope it will be a success.—I remain, yours truly, E. PRESCOTT."

By the time my South Australian Gemite sees his letter in print he will have received the instructions for making a copyright which he asks for, and which I have had pleasure in posting off to him at once.

The membership card and list of rules which Master Prescott encloses with his letter are, say, neat and well drawn up, the rules themselves being few and simple. They enjoin all members to read the "Gem" and "Magnet" Libraries, to pass on their copies to non-members when they have finished with them, and to work to obtain new members for the League. The only addition to these which I suggest to my energetic South Australian Gemite, who has my best thanks for his welcome letter, is that—*even here, as in other parts*—the "Feary Popular," included with the other two small story-papers of the League. I feel sure that my South Australian readers have only to make his acquaintance to adopt it at once.

How Tommy Atkins Talks.

Tommy Atkins is a bit of a linguist in his way, and the language which he speaks is one hard to understand, more only by those who fraternize with him. If, for example, you—an ordinary civilian—were to walk into barracks, begin a conversation, and there were told to stop "cheering the regt." you would have any idea what not to do? Of course you wouldn't, and yet your barly warrior friend would surely be giving you to understand that he was tired of your arguments.

Should he call you a "square pater," you may be quite sure that he has no small opinion of you as a body-kicker, whilst, if he also adds that you are "bitty," you may take this as a distinct recommendation to your personal appearance. That charming little curl which adorns Tommy's brow he calls a "guff."

If suddenly you hear him talking about his "leag-faced chum," don't be frightened; he is probably only addressing a cavalryman's horse.

Replies in Brief.

J. W. Melbourne (Durham).—Thank you for suggestion. I was pleased to hear you have started a league, and wish you the best of success with it. I am inserting your notice in this page. I am sorry I am unable to supply you with badges, but you might possibly be able to obtain them from the following firm: The British Photo Battery Co., Colindale Avenue, Walthamstow.

Will readers wishing to join a "Magnet" and "Gem" League write to J. W. Melbourne, 4, Edgars Road, Gillespie Moor, Durham?

J. Cunningham (Kilford).—The Correspondence Exchange is covered entirely for the advertisements of Colonialists. You can, however, open correspondence with one of these by writing to one of the addresses given each week in the Exchange Column.

W. A. Stepp (Hassles).—Mr. Sidney Dore regrets he is unable to supply you with the stories you asked him for.

J. Smith.—Thanks for your quotation. Addresses have been published from time to time of various presidents of "Gem" Leagues in different parts of England.

E. Cunningham (Doncaster).—Homes, Upcott Gill, of Drury Lane, London, W.C., published a book such as you require, entitled "Practical Ventiloquism," at 1s. 2d., post free.

C. Stone (Barnes).—No, it is not at all necessary for you to be a member of a "Gem" League before you can answer any of the advertisements in "The Gem" Library Exchange Column.

T. W. Holford (Shrewsbury).—I am sorry your letters have not been answered before. I am afraid it is hardly feasible for me to have a story written as the lines you suggest.

THE EDITOR.