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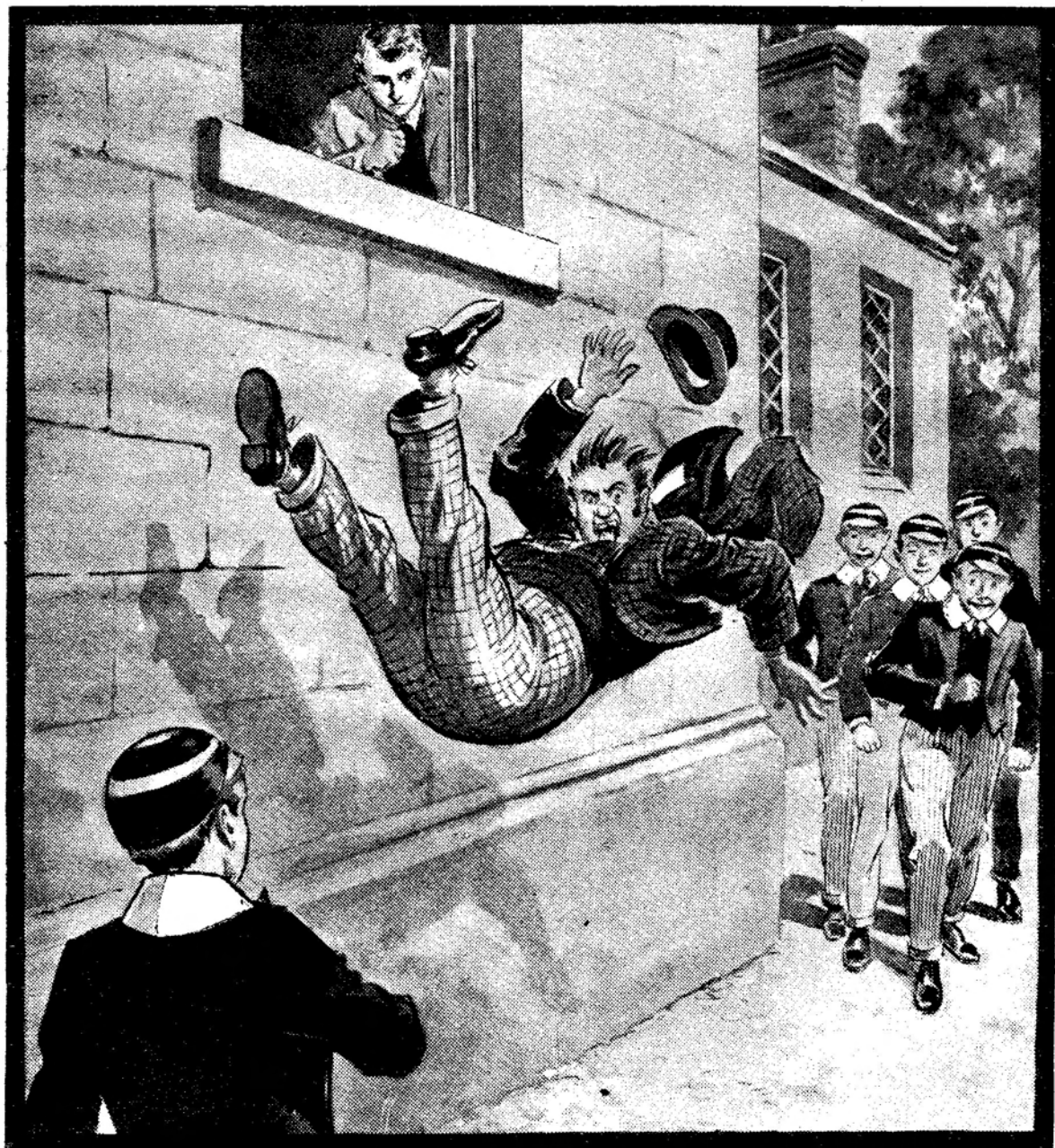
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LACY'S LOSS!

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



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LACY'S LOSS.

A Magnificent
New, Long, Complete Story of
Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

George Alfred Puts His Foot Down.

TOM MERRY!" Grundy of the Shell rapped out the name sharply. Grundy, to judge by his tone, was in the imperative mood.

Tom Merry did not turn his head. The captain of the Shell had stopped at the door of Study No. 9 in the Fourth, and was speaking to Levison, Clive, and Cardew, to whom that study belonged.

He did not seem to hear Grundy's stentorian tones.

"Saturday afternoon!" Tom Merry went on, looking into the study. "You three fellows are coming, I suppose? It's about time we mopped up the Grammar School, and taught them who is who—"

"And what is what?" said Levison. "And which is which?" grinned Clive. "Tom Merry!"

Grundy roared the name this time. Still the captain of the Shell seemed deaf.

"We're going in force," he continued. "We shall catch Gordon Gay & Co. napping—at least, we hope so, and—Hullo!"

Grundy's heavy hand dropped on Tom Merry's shoulder and swung him round. The captain of the Shell looked at Grundy at last.

"Look here, Merry—" "Hullo! Did you speak?" asked Tom amicably.

"I've spoken three times!" "You always did talk too much!" agreed Tom. "Don't speak a fourth time, there's a good chap! Run away and play!"

"Look here—" "Take your paw off my shoulder, please!"

"I've got something to say to you!" "Go and say it to D'Arcy," suggested Tom Merry. "He's in Study No. 6."

"Look here—" "Or Julian; he's at home!" said Tom. "I dare say he will be delighted—perhaps. Now, about Saturday, you fellows!"

"Will you listen to me?" demanded Grundy wrathfully. "Mind, I can manage the bizney myself! I'm simply calling you in as junior captain. If you choose to take the matter in hand I'll let you!"

"Would you mind explaining what you are burling about?" asked Tom politely. "It's that fellow from Rylcombe Grammar School—Lacy—"

"Lacy of the Grammar School?" exclaimed Cardew, looking out of the study. "What about dear old Algy Lacy?"

"He's here!" growled Grundy. "He's come over to St. Jim's?"

"Yes." "Well, there's no law against that," said Tom Merry. "Why shouldn't he, if he wants to?"

"He's in Racke's study." "Well, let him stay there!"

"That's just what I'm not going to do!" said Grundy grimly. "He's been over here before, and I know what he

comes for. He's the fellow who used to be at Wodehouse with you, Cardew. And I understand that you were in a smoky, rotten gang at Wodehouse."

"You understand that?" asked Cardew.

"Yes, I do." "Good! I didn't know you could understand anything."

There was a chortle from Study No. 9, and George Alfred Grundy snorted.

"I don't want any of your cheek, Cardew! I dare say you are no better than he is. I can tell you plainly that we don't want any rotten Wodehouse tricks at St. Jim's. I suppose this cad Lacy doesn't find any smoky rotters at the Grammar School, so he's chummed up with Racke and Crooke here. I'm not going to have it. He's in Racke's study now playing banker."

Tom Merry frowned. "Awful!" yawned Cardew. "I'm shocked!"

Cardew did not look very shocked, however.

"Well, I'm not only shocked, but I'm not going to stand it!" said Grundy. "So as captain of the Shell, Tom Merry, I call on you to chip in!"

"Not my bizney," said Tom shortly. "It's not going to be allowed!" said Grundy positively.

"My dear chap, if Racke and Crooke are looking for the sack, it isn't my bizney to stop them," said Tom. "It's like Lacy's cheek to play his game here. But Racke's study is Racke's study, not mine!"

"And you call yourself junior captain!" snorted Grundy. "Well, that's not good enough for me!"

"Rats!" "If you don't stop it, I will!"

Tom Merry laughed. "Go ahead!" he said. "I've no objection. A licking won't do them any harm. And if you get one it won't do you any harm. In fact, it may do you good. Buzz along and ask for it!"

"If you fellows had any sense there'd be a new election for junior captain," said Grundy. "I would put up for election if asked properly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I don't see anything to snigger at!" roared Grundy.

"No? Can one of you fellows lend Grundy a looking-glass?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

George Alfred Grundy gave another snort, and strode away. He headed for Racke's study in the Shell passage.

"By gad, this will be worth watching!" said Ralph Cardew. "Come along, you fellows, and let's see Grundy on the merry war-path!"

"Good!" said Levison, laughing. The three Fourth-Formers left the study, and Tom Merry joined them as they followed Grundy. The latter halted at Racke's study, and thumped on the door.

The door was locked, as it generally was when Aubrey Racke was giving a smoking-party there.

"You there, Racke?" shouted Grundy.

"Hullo! What's wanted?" came the acid voice of the cad of the Shell from within the study.

"Open the door!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Lacy's there—Lacy of the Grammar School!"

"What about it, ass?"

"You're playing cards."

"Not at all! We're discussing botany."

"Bub - bub - botany?" stammered Grundy in astonishment.

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors in the passage.

They knew how much interest Racke & Co. were likely to take in botanical pursuits.

"Oh, you're pulling my leg, are you?" shouted Grundy. "I'll give you botany! Open the door!"

"Bow-wow!"

Thump, thump! Kick! Bang!

"Bai Jove, what's that feahful wow?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth came along the passage. "Gwunday, you will have a pwefect up heah if you kick up that feahful wow!"

Thump, thump! Kick!

"Weally, Gwunday—"

Thump, thump!

"What on earth's the rumpus?" exclaimed Jack Blake, who had followed D'Arcy along the passage from Study No. 6, with Herries and Digby. "If you don't want to be frog-marched, Grundy, you'd better chuck it!"

"Rats!"

Thump! Bang!

The din brought a crowd of juniors into the passage. Manners and Lowther came out, and Julian and Kerruish, and Talbot and Gore and Skimpole. All the fellows stared at Grundy as he thumped and banged on Racke's door.

The door suddenly opened.

The noise would certainly have brought a prefect on the scene if it had been continued long, and that would have been awkward for the blackguard of the School House.

Racke looked savagely out of the study.

"Now, you fool, what do you want?"

Oh!"

Grundy shoved Racke roughly aside, and strode into the study. Crooke of the Shell jumped up from the table, and Algrnon Lacy of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School rose in a more leisurely manner. The elegantly-dressed, somewhat supercilious-looking Grammarian eyed Grundy coolly.

Grundy strode directly towards him.

"There's the door!" he said.

"What?"

"Get out!"

CHAPTER 2.

Grundy Comes Down Heavily.

GET out!" Grundy rapped out the words in tones that admitted of no argument. He pointed to the doorway, crowded with grinning juniors, as he spoke.

Lacy did not move.

Racke and Crooke looked on savagely. They had been having quite an entertaining time with the wealthy and reckless Grammar School fellow. There was a scent of cigarette-smoke in the study, and cards lay on the table. Lacy's lips curled in a sneer.

"What's the game?" he asked. "Who is this fool, Racke?"

"Get out of my study, Grundy!" said Racke, in tones of concentrated rage.

"Perhaps you'll put me out!" suggested Grundy.

Racke clenched his hands hard.

He would gladly have taken Grundy at his word if there had been any prospect of success. But the weedy slacker of the Shell was of no use in a scrap with the burly Grundy. It was doubtful if all three of the merry blades could have shifted the burly Shell fellow.

"Weally, Gwundy," broke in Arthur Augustus warmly, "you have no right to be wude to the Gwammah School chap. Pway westwain your Hunnishness, deah boy!"

"You dry up!"

"Bai Jove!"

"That cad's going out on his neck if he won't go out on his feet!" said Grundy truculently.

"Are these St. Jim's manners?" drawled Lacy, with an insolent smile.

"I know you fellows are at loggerheads with Gay and his crowd. But I supposed a chap could pay a friendly visit—"

"No objection to a friendly visit," said Tom Merry drily. "You're welcome here, as far as that goes."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't see what Grundy's chipping in for," said Manners. "There's a time for ragging Grammar cads, Grundy, and a time for not doing it. Suppose you clear out, and let Lacy alone?"

"Suppose we run him out on his neck?" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I wergard that as a good suggestion."

Grundy snorted.

"I'm not ragging him because he's a Grammar cad," he said. "He's come here to gamble with Racke."

"Oh!"

"I heard Racke say, 'You're banker, Lacy, as I passed the study,'" said Grundy. "Look at those cards! Niff the smoke? Well, that isn't good enough for St. Jim's, and I'm not going to allow it!"

"Bai Jove! That altahs the case! I wathah agreee with Gwunday!"

"No business of Grundy's that I can see," remarked Herries.

"Well, I'm making it my business," said Grundy. "Lacy can play his shady games in his own school! He's going out!"

Lacy shrugged his shoulders, with a sneer.

The slim, elegant Grammarian, with his well-cut clothes, his handsome tie, with a diamond pin gleaming in it, formed a striking contrast to the burly Grundy, who was careless and a little slovenly in his dress. But although Algernon Lacy had the advantage in looks, it was easy to see who would have the advantage in a scrap.

Grundy could have handled three or four of Lacy's type.

"Are you going?" demanded Grundy.

"Suppose I don't?"

"Then I shall put you out on your neck!"

Lacy glanced at Crooke and Racke. The two black sheep of the Shell looked furious, but evidently disinclined to enter into fistical contest with the overbearing Grundy. There was no help from that quarter.

Lacy's cheeks burned. The humiliation of being ordered out like this stung him, though he was not specially sensitive.

Grundy raised his hand commandingly.



Grundy's Little Way.
(See Chapter 2.)

"Get out!"

"Mind your own bizner!" said Lacy, between his teeth. "I'll go when I choose!"

Grundy wasted no more time in words.

He strode straight at the Grammarian, and grasped him by the collar.

Lacy, red with rage, struck at him, his fist landed squarely in Grundy's rugged face: The burly Grundy did not even heed the blow. With a swing of his sinewy arm he brought Lacy round towards the door.

Lacy turned upon him like a cat, clinging to him, and fighting furiously.

For a few moments Grundy and Lacy were locked together, struggling, and then the slim Grammarian came hurtling bodily towards the doorway.

"Bai Jove! Look out!"

The juniors in the passage crowded back.

Lacy sprawled through the doorway, landing on his hands and knees.

Grundy panted.

"There, you rotter! Now travel alone!"

"You meddling cad!" shouted Racke.

Racke, in his fury, made a stride towards George Alfred Grundy. The latter swung round on him, and Racke retreated promptly enough. Gerald Crooke kept his distance. He was not a fighting-man.

Lacy staggered up.

His collar had burst open, his tie was loose, and his hair in disorder. Several buttons had burst off his well-fitting waistcoat.

He stood gasping for breath, white with passion.

The St. Jim's juniors watched him curiously.

He was no match for the burly Grundy, but they expected him to begin again. No fellow there would have stood being handled in that way, whether he was a match for his adversary or not.

But Lacy did not re-enter the study.

"Give me my hat, Racke," he said, in a low, choking voice.

Racke tossed out the Grammarian's straw hat, and Lacy caught it. Without a word, or a look at the juniors round him, he strode away towards the stairs.

A minute more and he was out of the School House, and striding across the quad towards the gates.

His visit to Racke had come to a sudden termination. That little game of banker was destined never to be finished.

Grundy set his tie straight, and smiled.

"Now get out, you meddling hound!" hissed Racke.

"Mind, this will happen again if that fellow comes here to gamble!" said Grundy. "I'm not going to allow it. 'Tain't good enough for St. Jim's."

"Will you go?"

"Clear off, confound you!" snarled Crooke.

"I'm going," said Grundy calmly. "But before I go I'm going to knock your heads together as a warning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Pewwaps that is wathah a good idea!"

"Go it, Grundy!" chirruped Wilkins and Gunn, the study-mates of the great George Alfred.

"Keep off, you dangerous maniac!" roared Racke, dodging wildly round the table.

Grundy was after him like a shot.

He caught Racke by the collar, and dragged him towards Crooke. Crooke rushed for the door; but the juniors there grinned and closed up, and presented an impenetrable barrier. Racke was yelling, as he was dragged along in Grundy's powerful grip, his heels trailing on the study carpet. Grundy's other hand closed on Crooke.

"Leggo! Oh, my hat!"

"Yah! Help!"

Crack!

Two heads came together with a loud concussion, and Racke and Crooke yelled in chorus:

"Yah!"

"Yarook!"

Bump, bump! Grundy rolled the two black sheep of the Shell on the floor, and left them gasping.

"If you want any more," said Grundy, glaring at them, "you've only got to come and ask me for it!"

And the great Grundy strode out of the study with the look of a fellow who felt that he had done his duty.

The crowd of juniors dispersed, grinning.

Grundy's methods were certainly high-handed, and Racke & Co.'s affairs were no business of his; but nobody had any sympathy to waste on the blades of the School House.

Racke savagely kicked the door shut. Crooke sank into the armchair, gasping and rubbing his head.

"The bullyin' beast!" he groaned.

Racke ground his teeth.

"I'll make him sorry for it, somehow!" he muttered.

"Going to lick him?" sneered Crooke. Racke snarled. He threw himself into a chair, but started up again as a glitter on the carpet at his feet caught his eye. He stooped, and picked up a diamond tie-pin.

"That's Lacy's," said Crooke.

It was a handsome gold pin, and the diamond set in it was worth ten pounds at least. Algernon Lacy was an expensive youth.

"Knocked out in the scrap, I suppose—might have been trodden on," said Racke. "Lacy will be wild when he misses this."

"He will be pretty wild at our letting him be chucked out of our study," said Crooke. "He won't come here again."

"Then he can wait for his pin till he does!" snapped Racke, and he stuck the tie-pin into his pocket-book. "I'm not going over there with it. Hang Lacy, and hang Grundy! Hang everybody!"

And with that comprehensive malediction Aubrey Racke proceeded to rub his head, and for some time to come there was a sound of mumbling and groaning in Study No. 7 in the Shell.

CHAPTER 3.

Lacy's Loss.

GORDON GAY, junior captain of the Grammar School, came into his study with a ruddy, cheerful face, and pitched his bat into a corner. Wootton major and minor followed him in. The three Grammarians were fresh from cricket practice, and hungry as hunters. Tadpole, their study-mate, blinked at them. Tadpole, who was artistic, had the table covered with his paraphernalia, and was daubing away industriously at what he alleged to be a picture.

"Tea ready?" demanded Gay.

"Tea?" said Tadpole absently. "Is it tea-time?"

"Past tea-time, fathead!"

"I quite forgot. How do you like the picture, Gay?"

Gordon Gay grinned, and looked at the picture.

"Splendid!" he said enthusiastically. "I didn't know you'd taken up war scenes, Taddy. That officer on the charger is ripping!"

"My dear Gay, it is a windmill!"

"My mistake! The trenches are jolly well done, too!"

"They are not trenches, Gay," said Tadpole mildly. "It is a sylvan scene, and they are streamlets."

"And the explosion in the corner?"

"That is a fir-wood."

"Oh, my hat! Shove it under the table now, Taddy, and let's have tea."

"If you would not mind missing tea

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this evening, Gay, I could finish my picture," suggested Tadpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay picked up the picture, unfinished, and shipped it under the table. Wootton major deposited the colour-box in the coal-locker. And, as Tadpole raised objections, Wootton minor deposited him in the armchair, head-foremost. Then the merry Grammarians prepared tea.

Tea was still proceeding when there came a sharp knock at the door.

"Come in!" called out Gay cheerily.

Lacy of the Fourth entered.

"Hallo! Been scrapping?" asked Jack Wootton.

The chums of the Fourth grinned. Lacy was generally very elegant, to the very last button; but he looked rather untidy now.

"I've been over to St. Jim's," said Lacy.

"Looking for trouble, and finding it—what?"

Lacy's lip curled.

"I never enter into your silly rags, and you know it!" he snapped. "I went there to visit friends of mine."

"I savvy," said Gordon Gay drily. "You've picked out the shadiest rotters at St. Jim's to make friends with. You had them playing cards in your study here last week."

"I suppose that's my own bizney?"

"I suppose so," assented Gay. "If there's too much of it, I may take you by the neck and rub your nose in the cinders!"

"There's been a row at St. Jim's," said Lacy, unheeding the Australian junior's remark. "A fellow named Grundy burst into the study and scrapped with me."

"I fancy you didn't put up much of a scrap against Grundy," chuckled Harry Wootton. "Rather above your weight."

"He made out that he came in to stop card-playing in Racke's study," said Lacy. "He went for me, and pitched me out. Afterwards I found out what his game was. I suppose you fellows have noticed my diamond pin?"

Gay laughed.

"Couldn't help it," he said. "As you take it for a walk every day, a chap couldn't fail to notice it. Anything happened to the merry diamond?"

"Grundy's stolen it!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He picked it out of my tie while we were scrapping," said Lacy coolly, but with a nasty gleam in his eyes. "That was why he went for me, of course. I've no quarrel with the fellow—never even spoken to him. I felt him clawing over my tie while we were scrapping, but I didn't think of the diamond just then. I missed it the minute I was outside the gates, though."

"Why didn't you go back for it?" asked Gay sharply.

"I didn't care to face that crowd again. They were all ready to pile on me."

"That's rot! You'd get fair play at St. Jim's."

"You may call it fair play for a great lout like Grundy to set on me," sneered Lacy; "I don't! He's six inches taller than I am, and twice as heavy. I'd had enough of him."

"Something in that," agreed Wootton major. "Grundy is a heavy-handed beast, and a good bit of a bully."

Gordon Gay looked worried.

The rivalry between St. Jim's and the Grammar School seldom slept, and rows and rags were very frequent. But everything was above-board, so far as the rival juniors were concerned. Lacy was not the kind of fellow to enter into a contest which was sometimes a little

rough and ready, but always with good feeling on both sides.

"Look here, Lacy," said Gay abruptly, "I dare say you've lost your pin. But a tie-pin might get lost in a scrap. It's all rot to say that Grundy's stolen it."

"You don't believe me?"

"No, I don't! It looks to me as though you're trying to get back on Grundy for licking you by saying this."

Lacy shrugged his slim shoulders.

"I thought I'd come to you about it first," he said. "If you'd rather I asked Dr. Monk to take the matter up, I'll do it. Grundy's got to give me my pin back. It's worth ten pounds."

"You ought not to wear a ten-quid tie-pin!" growled Gay. "Only a swanking ass would do such a thing in the Fourth Form!"

"If that's all you've got to say, I'll go to the Head!"

"You won't go to the Head!" said Gay quietly. "We're not going to have a scandal over this. The St. Jim's fellows won't believe a word of it, and they'll look on it as hitting below the belt."

"Hang the St. Jim's fellows! I don't care how they look on it."

"But we do. If your pin's lost, it can be found. I dare say you dropped it scrapping with Grundy."

"I tell you I remember him feeling over my tie while I was struggling with him."

"And I dare say you imagine all that," retorted Gay. "You'd like to believe him a thief because he's licked you. You'd like to make the accusation, because you're up against all the fellows there. You're jolly well not going to do it!"

"No fear!" said Wootton major.

Lacy's eyes glittered. To do him justice, he believed in his accusation. He was full of spite and malice towards George Alfred Grundy, and he was glad to believe anything against the fellow who had provoked his hatred.

"I'm goin' to have my pin back," he said sullenly. "I want you fellows to come over to St. Jim's with me to see fair play. I'm not goin' to be ragged again. I'm goin' to have that pin before Grundy sticks it somewhere where it can't be found. If it doesn't turn up, I shall go to the police-station about it."

Gay's face flamed with anger.

"Do! And I'll smash you the next minute!" he said. "You're not going to be allowed to put us all on bad terms with St. Jim's, Lacy. We'll look into the matter, certainly. The pin's lost, of course; and I dare say it's been picked up by this time, and it's ready for you to claim it. Come along in, Monkey," added Gay, as Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy passed the doorway.

The three Fourth-Formers entered the study.

"Anything on?" asked Monk.

Gordon Gay explained.

"All rot!" said Frank Monk immediately. "The pin was dropped in the scuffle, of course. Lacy's only got to call for it."

"He's afraid of being ragged if he goes over there!" growled Wootton major.

"Well, he can write for it to be sent."

"I'm not goin' to write," said Lacy sullenly. "If it isn't back at once, Grundy may stick it away somewhere. I'm goin' to have it back at once."

"It's not stolen, you ass!"

"Well, I say it is stolen! Grundy noticed it in my tie, and picked a row with me on purpose to pinch it!"

"Oh, rats!" said Gay. "That's all piffle! Look here, if you fellows have had tea, let's buzz off to St. Jim's, and see them about it before locking-up. I dare say the rotten thing's only waiting to be claimed."

"I'm ready to go with you," said Lacy. "I'm not going alone, I know that. They can't rag a crowd of us."

"Come and run out the bikes," said Carboy. "There's lots of time before dark."

The Grammarians left the study, Gordon Gay & Co. in a troubled mood, and Lacy with a malicious gleam in his eyes. The matter was utterly repugnant to Gay and his chums—they knew how such an accusation would be received at St. Jim's. And Gay, at least, had a lurking suspicion that Lacy would not have been sorry to embitter the relations between the rival juniors.

The seven juniors pedalled away briskly for St. Jim's, six of them, at least, hoping that the pin would be found waiting to be claimed by the owner. Lacy did not share that hope. He valued his ten-pound tie-pin, but not so highly as he would have valued a crushing revenge upon the burly fellow who had pitched him neck and crop out of Aubrey Racke's study.

CHAPTER 4.

The Accusation.

"HALLO! 'Ware Grammar cads!" The Terrible Three of the Shell were chatting in the old gateway of St. Jim's when the cyclists came to a halt outside. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther lined up at once.

"Looking for thick ears?" asked Tom Merry. "This way!"

"Thick ears while you wait!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Roll up, St. Jim's!"

Blake & Co. came speeding up from one direction, Figgins & Co. of the New House from another. If the Grammarians had come raiding they had awakened a hornets' nest.

"Bai Jove! Go for them, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, waving his eyeglass. "Wag the wotahs!"

"Charge!" yelled Figgins.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Gordon Gay.

"Pax!"

"Wats!"

"Pax be blowed!" said Figgins warmly. "You've come here for a set of thick ears, and you've come to the right place!"

"Pax!" repeated Gay, holding up his hand. "Look here, it's a serious matter. No larks."

Tom Merry & Co. gracefully yielded the point. More and more St. Jim's juniors, of both Houses, were arriving on the spot at the news of "Grammar cads." But Tom Merry waved them back. George Alfred Grundy came up with Wilkins and Gunn, and Grundy was not to be waved back.

"Give 'em socks!" he shouted. "Mind your own business, Merry! Go for 'em!"

Tom Merry gave the warlike Grundy a shove, and he sat down in the gateway. "Now, what's the rumpus, Gay?" asked Tom. "You can trot in. It's pax."

"It's not pax!" gasped Grundy.

"Sit on him, somebody!"

"Yarrah! Oh! Gerroff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn sat on Grundy. Even the burly George Alfred had no chance with Fatty Wynn's avoirdupois planted upon him. He collapsed.

"Come in, Gay!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The Grammarians came in.

"It's about Lacy," said Gay.

Tom smiled.

"Lacy was really looking for trouble when he was here," he explained. "Grundy mopped him up. It was like his cheek, but Lacy really asked for it. Surely you haven't come over about that?"

Lacy broke in.

"We've come over for my diamond pin," he said. "Grundy's got to hand it over!"

Tom Merry stared at him.

"Your diamond pin?" he repeated.

"Grundy stole it from my tie!"

"Why, you lying cad!" exclaimed Tom fiercely.

"Bai Jove! That is a feahful whoppah, Lacy!"

Grundy struggled under Fatty Wynn.

"Lemme gerrup!" he roared. "I'll smash him! Lemme gerrup, you fat idiot!"

"You can get up and smash him if you like, old scout," said Fatty Wynn.

"Give him one for me, too."

Grundy leaped up as the fat Fourth-Former removed his weight. He made a rush directly at Lacy, who paled a little, and drew behind Gordon Gay.

Gay stood as firm as a rock.

"Hands off!" he said coolly.

Tom Merry & Co. dragged Grundy back in time. The Shell fellow struggled furiously in their grasp.

"Let me go!" he roared. "I'm going to smash him! Didn't you hear him say I'd stolen his silly pin?"

"So you did!" said Lacy bitterly. "That's why you tackled me in Racke's study! You stole my pin, and you've got it now!"

"Keep quiet, Grundy!" snapped Tom Merry. "You can smash Lacy afterwards. He's lying, and we all know he's lying!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Racke and Crooke had joined the crowd, and they exchanged a quick glance as they heard Lacy's words.

Crooke nudged his comrade.

"Let's get back to the house!" muttered Racke.

"But—"

"Come on—don't jaw!"

Crooke followed his friend in wonder. In the crowd at the gates there were no eyes for them.

"Look here, what's the game?" asked Crooke, as they reached the School House. "Why don't you give Lacy his pin?"

"That can wait!" said Racke, with a sneer. "Is there any hurry?"

"He's accusing Grundy—"

"Quite so."

"But—I don't see—"

"Grundy may be sorry for kicking up that row in our study before this affair is through," said Racke. "It may be a lesson to him to keep his oar out. Let him get out of it the best he can!"

"But—but the pin—" stammered Crooke.

"I'll shove that somewhere safe," said Racke coolly. "It won't hurt Lacy to wait a few days for it. He thinks Grundy's stolen it—he would! Let him make the most of it. This may mean no end of trouble for Grundy!"

Crooke chuckled, and the two cads of the Shell hurried upstairs.

Meanwhile there was growing excitement among the crowd at the gates.

Lacy's accusation had come like a bombshell to the St. Jim's juniors.

Dark looks were cast at Gordon Gay & Co. Not unnaturally, the Saints concluded that Gay and the rest were backing up Lacy's wild accusation.

There was a murmur of wrath on all sides.

"The miserable worm's lying," said Kangaroo of the Shell, "and every chap who backs up his yarn is a liar, too!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, every Grammar cad of you!" said Jack Blake savagely.

"Kick the wotahs out, deah boys!"

"Rush them!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Gay. "We don't—"

"Outside!"

"Wush the wottahs!"

"We don't back up Lacy!" shouted Gay. "Can't you let a fellow speak?"

We think Lacy's mistaken—"

"Lying is the word!" said Wilkins.

"We've simply come over to ask you fellows about it. Lacy's lost his pin, and he wants it. I dare say it's been picked up—"

Taggles, the porter, came out of his lodge. The crowd had drawn him forth. It was a very unusual scene at the school gates.

"Better come in!" said Tom Merry sharply. "We shall have a master here next! Come into the House. If the pin was lost here, it's still in Racke's study, and it can be found. I wouldn't take Lacy's word that it was lost here, though."

Lacy sneered.

He was opening his lips to make a bitter remark, when Carboy caught him by the shoulder.

"You shut up!" said Carboy. "You've said enough!"

"Come up to Racke's study," said Tom shortly. "We can jolly soon see whether the confounded thing's there!"

The whole crowd marched for the School House. There were very grim faces round the Grammarians as they headed across the quad. Not a fellow there believed the accusation for one moment. Nobody cared specially about Grundy; but it was the honour of St. Jim's that was at stake. They were not likely to believe that there was a thief in the school on the word of a Grammarian—especially a fellow like Algernon Lacy, whom they knew to be a rotter.

Gordon Gay & Co. were grim and exasperated, too. Lacy had placed them in the position of accusers against their will.

The juniors crowded up to the Shell passage, Wilkins and Gunn keeping hold of Grundy to restrain him from assault and battery on the spot.

Tom Merry threw open Racke's door.

The study was empty.

"Nobody here!" growled Tom.

"Where are those fellows?"

"They were at the gate a few minutes ago," said Cardew of the Fourth. "Anybody seen Crooke and Racke."

"Here they are!" called Clive from the passage.

Racke and his study-mate came along. They looked surprised at the sight of the crowd round their study door.

"Hallo, Lacy!" said Racke cordially.

"I'll 'Hallo, Lacy!' him in a minute," rumbled Grundy. "Let go my arm, Wilkins, you silly idiot! Let go, Gunn, you dummy!"

"Come in here, Racke!" rapped out Tom Merry.

"You're making jolly free with my study!" sneered Racke.

"Lacy says he lost a diamond pin when he was here!"

"I don't!" cut in Lacy. "I say that Grundy stole it from my tie while he was assaulting me!"

"Let me get at him!" bellowed Grundy.

But Wilkins and Grundy held their infuriated chum securely. It was not a time for fistcuffs.

"My hat!" ejaculated Racke. "So that was why Grundy came bursting into my study, was it? I wondered why he did it!"

"So did I!" chimed in Crooke, with a grin. "He was after Lacy's diamond pin, was he? My hat!"

"Why, you—you—you—" spluttered Grundy.

"If the pin was left here it must have

been dropped," said Tom. "Have you seen anything of it, Racke?"

"Nothing."

"You, Crooke?"

Crooke shook his head.

"Then it must be about the room somewhere," said Tom—"that is, if it was lost here at all."

"It wasn't lost; it was stolen!" said Lacy.

"Hold your tongue!" broke out the captain of the Shell angrily.

Lacy shrugged his shoulders and sneered.

"Look round the study," said Tom Merry. "You Grammar chaps can do it, as you've come here after Lacy's silly jewellery. Go ahead!"

And the St. Jim's juniors gathered in the passage outside, while Gordon Gay & Co. searched the study for the lost pin. They scanned every inch of the carpet, they turned up the edges and looked underneath; they examined the fender and the grate; they moved every article of furniture. A swarm of faces in the doorway watched them in grim silence.

The search ended at last. It had been thorough enough, and it was useless to continue it further. And the result was—nil!

CHAPTER 5.

Missing!

ALGERNON LACY had watched the search with a sneering smile upon his face, which made a good many of the St. Jim's fellows yearn to punch his head. The fact that the pin could not be found in the study convinced Lacy—if he needed convincing—that his suspicion was well founded. If the pin has been dropped in the scrap, where was it? It could not have vanished into thin air. Malice had prompted the accusation in the first place, but Lacy's last shadow of doubt had vanished now.

Gordon Gay & Co. looked troubled and dismayed.

Where was the diamond pin?

After all, Grundy's attack upon Lacy had been made upon a flimsy enough excuse. He had been interfering and meddling with fellows with whom he had no concern. Had his object really been to purloin the diamond? It was possible, at least. The Grammarians could not scout the suggestion now, as they had at first. The diamond was evidently missing.

"Well," said Gay at last, "it's not here. That's plain enough!"

"Plain enough!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Might have been dropped in the passage or on the stairs when Lacy cleared off," suggested Levison. "Might have been loose in his tie."

Lacy sneered. But some of the fellows started along the passage in search. They came back unsuccessful.

"It seems to be gone," said Gay.

"No doubt about that," said Cardew.

"It's gone!"

"I want it!" said Lacy significantly. "I've watched this little comedy through, and now I'll be obliged if Grundy will hand over my pin!"

"You uthah wottah!" exclaimed D'Arcy wrathfully. "How dare you insinuate that Gwunday has stolen your wotten pin!"

"I'm not insinuat'ing it; I'm statin' it!" said Lacy coolly. "You can keep your distance, Grundy. If you lay a finger on me I shall call in your headmaster! I'm not going to be assaulted as well as robbed!"

"I'll smash him!" gasped Grundy. "If you don't let me go, Wilkins—"

"What on earth is to be done?" said

Gordon Gay in distress. "Where on earth can the pin have got to?"

"It's here somewhere," said Monk.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"How do you know it's here?" he demanded. "Lacy says it was here, but I wouldn't take that gambling blackguard's word against a Hun!"

"Wathah not! Lacy will have to prove that it was heah."

"I can prove that easily enough," said Lacy icily. "I dare say Racke and Crooke noticed that I was wearing it when I came in this afternoon."

"That's so," said Crooke. "I noticed it."

And Racke nodded.

"And you may have taken it away with you and pretended to miss it to get even with Grundy for licking you," said Levison.

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Gordon Gay angrily. "Lacy wouldn't do that."

"It's more likely than that a St. Jim's chap pinched it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't see any reason to believe that the pin's lost at all," said Tom Merry decisively. "Lacy says so, but I don't trust him. I'd take your word, Gay, like a shot, but I don't take Lacy's."

Gordon Gay looked doubtfully at Lacy.

He wondered whether it was possible that the elegant Grammarian had hidden the pin with the scheme of bringing a false accusation against the fellow who had "handled him."

But he shook his head.

Lacy was a slacker, with inclinations to vice; but he was not a rascal—not to that extent, at all events. And he was very far from possessing the nerve required for playing such a game. It required nerve as well as wickedness to concoct such a scheme; and Lacy possessed neither to the required extent. It was impossible, and Gay felt that it was impossible.

"The pin was lost here," he said. "I'm sure of that!"

"Then where is it?" demanded Tom Merry sharply.

Gay was silent.

"It can't be found," said Tom. "If it was lost here, that means that a fellow has picked it up and kept it, or that Grundy stole it. Do you think we're going to believe either on the word of a rank outsider like Lacy?"

"Wathah not!"

"Lacy can go to the Head if he likes," said Tom. "I don't care a rap! But I know what Dr. Holmes will say to such a lying tale."

"I shall certainly go to the Head if my pin isn't handed back to me," said Lacy coolly.

"You won't!" growled Gordon Gay.

"Look here—"

"The pin was lost here," said Gordon Gay. "Perhaps it's been trodden on or kicked out of the way somewhere. It may turn up. Give it a chance, anyway. Lacy might have dropped it going home, too!"

"I missed it the moment I was out of the gates," said Lacy. "Then I remembered that Grundy had handled my tie."

"Well, there's nothing more to be done!" said Tom Merry. "We stand by Grundy!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My opinion is that Lacy's mistaken or lying. And now, the sooner he gets out the better!"

"He's not going before I've licked him!" roared Grundy.

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom irritably.

"It's your silly rot that started the whole trouble! Shut up, for goodness' sake!"

Grundy did not heed. He wrenched himself away from Wilkins and Gunn,

and made a rush at Lacy. The Terrible Three seized him at once, and pitched him into a corner of the study. They were fed up with Grundy.

Gordon Gay & Co. left the School House with Algernon Lacy, and walked back to their bicycles. Some hooting followed them.

They looked gloomy enough as they rode back to the Grammar School. The whole incident was troublesome and worrying.

"I suppose you fellows admit now that the pin was stolen?" said Lacy, breaking the silence at last.

"It looks like it!" growled Gay. "You've got yourself to thank for being a swanking, blackguardly fool!"

"Hear, hear!" said Wootton major.

Lacy's eyes gleamed.

"Well, I'm going to have that pin back," he said. "It's worth ten quid. If they don't give it up I shall go to Dr. Monk, or else the police-station!"

"You'll get your neck wrung if you do!" growled Gordon Gay. "You've forgotten, too, that if Grundy is hauled up before the Head it will come out what you were doing in Racke's study. What do you think Dr. Monk will think of banker and smoking as an afternoon's amusement?"

Lacy was silent. He had forgotten that.

"I'm not goin' to lose a ten-quid pin," he said at length sullenly.

"Better than getting the sack from the school, I should say. Anyway, you're not going to make a regular scandal of it. You shouldn't have been in Racke's study at all, in the first place, and you shouldn't wear a ten-quid diamond. It's your own fault. Shut up!"

"Look here—"

"Shut up!" roared Gordon Gay, in great exasperation.

And Algernon Lacy decided to shut up.

CHAPTER 6.

Trimble's Idea.

THERE was a great deal of talk that evening at St. Jim's on the subject of the Grammarians' visit.

And there was deep indignation.

The Lower School talked the matter over without limit. New House juniors were as indignant as School House.

Lacy was alluded to with all sorts of expressive names, and the general belief was that he had invented the whole story to get even with Grundy for kicking him out.

That was Grundy's firm opinion, and the other fellows, for once, agreed with George Alfred.

Everybody knew that Grundy was an ass—in fact, several sorts of an ass. But it was absurd to suppose that he was a thief. Moreover, he could have no motive for dishonesty, for he was far wealthier than Lacy, and if he had coveted a diamond pin he could have had one by asking his affectionate Uncle Grundy. The burly Shell fellow did not care for such gewgaws, however. Nor could it be supposed that he would venture to wear a stolen pin. If he had taken it, he had taken it for its money value, and that was absurd. Grundy showed two fivers in the Common-room that evening as proof positive that he wasn't hard up. The accusation was a reckless one, even if not made out of sheer malice. And though Grundy was not exactly popular, everybody was prepared to take up the cudgels on his behalf against Lacy of the Grammar School.

The Terrible Three and Study No. 6 and Figgins & Co. of the New House, though really good friends, were not always in accord—in fact, very seldom so. But they agreed on this point—that Lacy had put his pin away somewhere and invented that yarn about Grundy. That

seemed to them the only possible explanation, and it was in keeping with what they knew of Algernon Lacy's malicious and revengeful nature.

And they felt very sore with the Grammarians for not taking the same view. As Blake remarked, Gay knew that Lacy was a howling cad, anyway. But Gay had made it plain that he did not agree with them.

Either the pin had been lost out of sight, or else somebody at St. Jim's had bagged it; that, it was easy to see, was the view of the Grammarians.

And, for once, something like bitterness crept into the feelings of the rival juniors.

Racke and Crooke—who could have enlightened the fellows—kept their own counsel. They disliked Gay and his friends as much as they disliked Tom Merry & Co., or the overbearing Grundy himself, and they were amiably pleased to see them all at loggerheads.

Nobody expected that the pin would turn up at St. Jim's, though it was noticed that Baggy Trimble of the Fourth had fallen into the way of peering into corners and under seats inquisitively. Trimble of the Fourth was still in hopes of finding the lost diamond—whether with the intention of returning it to its owner or not was doubtful. Trimble had remarkably elastic ideas on the subject of innum and tuum.

Moreover, Trimble had been doing some thinking with his somewhat obtuse brain. He bore down on Grundy in the Common-room that evening, and interrupted his remarks—which were addressed to Wilkins and Gunn, and were on the topic of Lacy, and altering the shape of Lacy's features.

"I say, Grundy—" began Trimble.
"Buzz off, you fat beetle!" rapped out Grundy.

"About that pin—" Grundy lifted his boot, and Trimble retreated. He blinked round, and, seeing Study No. 6 enter the Common-room, he started for D'Arcy.

"I say, Gussy, old chap—" "Pwaw do not address me as Gussy, Trimble!" said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner.

"Look here, you know, about that pin of—"

"Have you found it?" demanded Blake.

"Eh? Of course I haven't!" "Perhaps Trimble pinched it?" said Herries, in his slow, thoughtful way.

"Why, you rotter—" spluttered Trimble.

"Well, you might, you know," said Herries calmly. "You pinch a chap's sugar out of his study."

"That's different—I mean, I don't do anything of the sort! But about that pin, Gussy—"

"Weally, Trimble—"

"I think a reward ought to be offered," explained Trimble. "Suppose five pounds reward was offered, fellows would hunt for it high and low, you know, and if it's here it would be found."

"It's not here!" growled Digby.

"Well, Lacy might have dropped it here somewhere," urged Trimble. "It's a stain on the school, you know, an accusation like Lacy has made, till it's cleared up. I think Grundy ought to offer five pounds reward. Then I'd undertake to find the pin, if it's anywhere in the school. See?"

"Wats!"

"But I'm not going to talk to Grundy—I disdain to take any notice of him, in fact. You've got plenty of money, D'Arcy—"

"Eh?"

"Suppose you offer five pounds reward—"

"Bai Jove!"

"For the honour of the school, you know," urged Trimble, blinking at him.

"You uttah ass!"

"Now, don't be mean, you know—" "Blake, deah boy, will you hold my eyeglass while I give Twimble a feahful thwashin'?"

"Certainly!"

Trimble did not wait. He scuttled off, and bore down on the window-seat, where Levison, Clive, and Cardew sat in a row chatting. They did not give the Paul Pry of St. Jim's very welcoming looks. But Baggy Trimble was not sensitive.

"I say, Cardew, old fellow—" "You want a thick ear?" asked Cardew.

"Eh? No!"

"Then don't call me 'old fellow.'"

"Look here, you know, it's up to you, Cardew. I suppose you'd like Lacy to get his pin back, as he used to be your pal at Wodehouse?"

"Bother Lacy! Cut off!"

"I'm thinking of the good name of the school, Cardew. That pin ought to be found. A reward ought to be offered—say, five pounds."

"My hat!"

"You've got pots of money," said Trimble. "I know you've got a fiver in your pocket this blessed minute. I saw you take it out of a letter this morning. Suppose you offer it as a reward for the finding of the pin? Then I'd undertake to find it. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at."

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Clive.

"Why should Cardew offer a reward for finding another fellow's property?"

"Honour of the school," said Trimble loftily. "So long as it's lost, the Grammar cads will say it's stolen. Perhaps it was, you know. Grundy may have stolen it. Or you may have, Clive."

"What?" roared the South African junior.

"Or you, Levison—"

Levison jumped up.

"I—I say, no offence, you know!" exclaimed Trimble hastily. "I was only speaking generally. Anybody may have stolen it. But if it's been lost, it can be found, you know, and that will clear it up. See? I think you ought to offer a reward, Cardew, as you've got pots of money."

"Think again!" grinned Cardew.

"If you don't—"

"Well, I sha'n't, you fat ass!"

"Then it will look as if you know where it is!" said Trimble sternly.

"Wha-a-at?"

"You were there when Grundy was scrapping with Lacy. You might have put your foot on it, and—"

Trimble got no further.

Cardew seized him by the collar, and spun him round and sent him whirling across the Common-room.

He crashed into Gore of the Shell, who promptly pitched him off, and he staggered over to Clifton Dane, who gave him another shove, and then he sat down and roared.

"Yow-yow-yow!"

And Trimble did not approach the chums of Study No. 9 again that evening. His excellent suggestions did not seem to meet with proper appreciation somehow.

CHAPTER 7.

Something Like a Wheeze!

"B Y gad!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew uttered that ejaculation suddenly the next day.

Lessons were over, and the three chums of the Fourth were sauntering in the quadrangle, Cardew looking unusually thoughtful.

Clive and Levison regarded him inquiringly.

"What's biting you now?" inquired Levison.

"I've got an idea," Cardew's eyes glistened. "Look here, that beastly pin of Lacy's hasn't been found."

"Bother Lacy and his pin!" growled Clive.

"Agreed! Bother 'em as much as you like, but it hasn't been found, and the Grammar cads have a handle against us on account of it. Suppose we adopt that idiot's suggestion of offering a reward?"

"Is that your idea?" demanded Clive.

"That's it."

"Well, it's rotten!"

"I haven't told you all of it yet."

Lacy's lost his merry diamond—"

"I don't believe he's lost it," said Levison. "It looks to me like a fairy tale, to get even with Grundy. All the fellows think so."

"I don't think so," remarked Cardew.

"Then you're an ass!"

"Thanks! I knew Lacy in the old days, when I was at Wodehouse, so I know him better than you fellows do. I know him inside-out. He's a conceited fool, and as full of malice as a rat when he's offended; but he isn't rotter enough, and he hasn't nerve enough, to make up a yarn like that about a fellow. I am certain that Lacy has lost his pin, and that he believes Grundy took it. I grant that he founds his belief chiefly on the circumstance that Grundy thumped him. That's like him."

"If he lost his pin he didn't lose it here," said Clive.

"Exactly."

"Well, ass, if it's not lost here, it can't be found here!"

"Quite so. My idea is that Lacy lost his pin somewhere else, and when he missed it he jumped to the conclusion that Grundy had stolen it simply because he hates Grundy. Now, where did he lose it? We've searched high and low without finding it here."

"At his own school, I suppose."

Cardew nodded.

"I think that's most likely," he agreed. "Anyway, whether he lost it at the Grammar School or not, it's going to be looked for there. I'm going to adopt Trimble's suggestion."

"Five pounds reward!" exclaimed Levison.

"Yes."

"It's not worth that to you, I suppose?"

"Yes, for the sake of the merry wheeze!" grinned Cardew. "If the pin turns up it's worth that sum to clear this school of suspicion. If it doesn't, it's a jape on the Grammarians—see?"

"I don't see where the jape comes in."

"Sit down here, and I'll explain."

The three juniors sat on one of the old oak benches under the elms, and Cardew took out a pocket-book and pencil. He scribbled on a page of the pocket-book for a few minutes, his chums watching him in surprise.

He looked up at last, grinning.

"When a thing's lost, the natural thing is to advertise for it," he said. "I'm going to advertise in the 'Rylcombe Times.'"

"For Lacy's pin!" exclaimed Clive, in astonishment.

"Why not? I can afford five quid for a really good jape. What does the dashed money matter?" said Cardew, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I suppose it doesn't matter much to you, as you're rolling in it. But I don't see the jape."

"Look at that advertisement, and you'll see it."

Levison and Clive, in amazement, looked at the written sheet Cardew held out for their inspection. It ran:

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 545.

"£5 REWARD!"

"LOST, A DIAMOND PIN,

at Rylcombe Grammar School, either in the buildings or the grounds. Anyone finding same will be paid the above reward on application to X, Office of the 'Rylcombe Times.' Search may be made in and about Rylcombe Grammar School at any time. No restrictions."

"My hat!" ejaculated Clive.

"You're going to put that in the local paper?" shouted Levison.

Cardew grinned.

"Why not?"

"It will start a hundred hard-up bouncers searching for the tie-pin, I should say."

"I hope so."

"They'll swarm all over the Grammar School—"

"Exactly!"

"But—but—but—"

"That's the jape," explained Cardew. "As soon as this ad comes out, every bouncer in the neighbourhood who's in need of five quid will start looking for the tie-pin. Don't you think so?"

"It's jolly certain."

"And that will mean a high old time for the Grammar School, won't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what will Dr. Monk say?" exclaimed Clive.

"Not having the honour of the old gentleman's acquaintance, I can't guess. Something emphatic, I dare say."

"I—I say, it's rather too thick!" murmured Clive. "No restrictions! Why, there might be a gang of reward-hunters invading the school in lesson-time!"

"Very likely."

"But what about the reward?" said Levison. "Lacy won't pay it."

"I don't want him to. I'm going to pay it if the pin's found. I can afford five quid for a merry jape, and to make the Grammarians sit up. Besides, there's a stigma on this school till the pin's found. It's worth something to clear the matter up."

"That's so!" agreed Levison. "But suppose—"

Cardew rose.

"There's time to catch the 'Times' office before they close," he remarked. "Coming for a spin?"

"Oh, all serene!"

The three juniors wheeled out their machines, and pedalled away to Rylcombe. The advertisement was duly handed in at the office of the local paper, and Mr. Tipper assured Cardew that it would appear in the next issue.

Cardew left the office in a satisfied mood, and Levison and Clive followed him, looking rather dubious. It was a jape on the Grammar School of an extraordinary kind, and they could not help wondering how it would turn out.

The trio passed Gordon Gay and Frank Monk in the lane as they rode back to St. Jim's, and they jumped down.

"Found that pin yet?" asked Cardew. Gay shook his head.

"No; how could we find it? It's somewhere at your school."

"My idea is that Lacy lost it somewhere about the Grammar School!" explained Cardew.

"He says he lost it at St. Jim's," said Gay, knitting his brows. "Look here, there's no doubt it's at St. Jim's somewhere. Several fellows saw Lacy wearing it when he went out yesterday."

"Blessed if it doesn't look—" began Monk, but he paused.

"Not at all," said Cardew. "There's no thieves at St. Jim's, however many there may be at the Grammar School!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 545.

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Oh, bump them over!" said Cardew. There was a sudden rush of the three, and the two Grammarians went rolling in the dust. Cardew & Co. jumped on their machines again, and pedalled away, laughing, and Gordon Gay and Monk, dusty and furious, shook their fists after them.

CHAPTER 8.

A Little Excitement.

"WHAT the merry dickens—"

Gordon Gay made that remark as he came out early on Saturday morning, with Wootton major and minor, before breakfast.

The three Cornstalks were first down of the Grammar School Fourth, and they



GET ONE OF THESE CARDS.

IT is mostly on the impulse of the moment that we fritter away our money. If we stopped to think we should remember that we are asked to save, so that our money may make things easier for the brave boys "out there."

If you carry a War Savings Card in your pocket, it will be a very useful reminder.

You won't mind going without your little pleasures when you remember for whom it is that you are saving.

If you haven't one of these War Savings Cards, get one to-day from any post-office.

Each card is divided up into thirty-one spaces. Whenever you have 6d. to spare, you just buy a stamp at the post-office and fix it on one of the spaces. As soon as all the spaces are filled up you can take the card to a post-office and exchange it for a 15s. 6d. War Savings Certificate.

In five years' time that certificate will be worth £1.

This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

came out cheerily into the sunny quadrangle. And then they stopped, staring with astonishment.

At that early hour the quad was generally deserted.

It was not deserted now.

A man was moving slowly along under the trees, bent half double, scanning the ground as he moved, evidently in search of something.

Cardew's advertisement, which had appeared in the local paper on Friday, was already bearing fruit. But the Grammarians, who, naturally, did not read the advertisements in the local paper, were astounded.

"What on earth's that johnnie doing here?" exclaimed Wootton major.

"Lost something!" said Harry Wootton.

"How could he have lost anything here?"

"The gates aren't open yet," said

Gordon Gay, in wonder. "He must have dropped in over the wall. Let's interview him."

The three juniors bore down on the stranger.

"Hallo, Mister Man!" greeted Gay.

The man looked up.

"Morning, sir!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Looking for it, sir!"

"My hat! What are you looking for?"

"A pin, sir."

Gay blinked at him in blank astonishment.

"You've got in over the wall to look for a pin!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"Are you off your rocker?" demanded Gay.

"Ain't got no time to waste," said the stranger curtly. "I'm arter that pin!"

And he pursued his way, bending low, and scanning every inch of the gravel path. The three Grammarians looked at one another.

"Must be potty!" said Wootton minor.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Poor chap escaped from an asylum, I suppose," he said. "Better get him out quietly if we can. Here, you chap! If you want a pin, I've got one you can have."

The man looked round quickly.

"You've found it!" he exclaimed, in disappointment.

"Not exactly found it—I've got one," said Gay, taking a pin from the lapel of his jacket. "Here you are!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" growled the stranger. "That ain't a diamond pin!"

Gay gave a start.

"Oh, you're looking for a diamond pin!" he exclaimed.

"Course I am!"

"And why on earth do you expect to find a diamond pin here?" exclaimed Gay.

"Cause it was lost 'ere."

"Is it your pin?"

"Course it ain't!"

"Then what are you looking for it for?"

"Five pun reward, of course."

"Well, my hat!"

The man hurried on his way, scanning the path. He was a very early comer, and did not mean to lose time. There was a sound of thumping at the locked gates, and the three juniors turned in that direction. Old Corporal Cutts, the porter, looked out of his lodge, but did not come out.

Outside the gates two seedy-looking personages were thumping on the bars, and ringing at the bell.

"Hallo! What do you want?" demanded Gordon Gay.

"We want to come in!" growled one of the visitors.

"Who are you?"

"Name of Wiggins."

"What do you want?"

"We've come 'ere to look for that there pin!" explained Mr. Wiggins. "Hanybody started yet, sir? We've come early."

"Great pip!"

"Can't you open this 'ere gate?" demanded Mr. Wiggins warmly. "Wot's the good of advertising fi'-pun reward for finding that blinking pin, and keeping a gent coo'in' his 'eels houtside? Let us in, I says. Me and my pal 'ave come early."

"You clear off!" said Corporal Cutts, coming out of his lodge at last. "I ain't letting your sort in 'ere!"

"We've come to look for that there diamond pin!" shouted Mr. Wiggins. "No restrictions, it says in the paper. We can look where we like. Open this 'ere gate!"

"My hat!" murmured Gay. "That

idiot Lacy must have been advertising for his pin. But what have they come here for? The pin's at St. Jim's!"

Mr. Wiggins shook the bars of the gate violently.

"Are you going to let us in?" he exclaimed wrathfully. "Think we've tramped 'arf a mile for nothin'?"

"No, I ain't!" said the corporal. "You clear off!"

"Gimme me a bunk up, Bill Hankey!" said Mr. Wiggins. "I'll show 'im whether we're going to clear hoff, arter tramping 'arf a mile!"

"Right you are!"

"I say, you can't come in here, you know!" exclaimed Jack Wootton.

"Can't we?" said Mr. Wiggins derisively.

Mr. Hankey, having given him the required bunk, Mr. Wiggins scrambled over the wall. Corporal Cutts stared at him blankly. This open and extraordinary trespass in broad daylight staggered him. Mr. Wiggins gave a hand to his comrade, who was astride the wall the next minute. Both of them dropped inside.

"Well, my hat!" said Gordon Gay. And the three Grammarians walked back to the House, leaving the porter engaged in a fiery altercation with the two intruders.

Most of the Grammar School fellows were down by this time, and Gay ran up to Algernon Lacy.

"You howling ass!" he exclaimed.

"What's the row?" demanded Lacy.

"Do you see those johnnies?" roared Gay. "They've come to hunt for your silly pin. What have you been advertising it for, you dummy?"

"Eh? I haven't!"

"You haven't?" stuttered Gay.

"Of course I haven't, you ass!"

"Well, my word!" Gordon Gay dashed across to the first corner, who was still rooting along the gravel path, watched by a crowd of surprised juniors. Gay caught him by the shoulder.

"Leggo!" growled the stranger.

"Don't waste time! I'm arter that pin!"

"How did you know a pin was lost?" demanded Gay.

"The advert, of course."

"Have you got a copy of it?"

"Yes; 'ere you are! Don't waste my time!"

The man tossed a folded copy of the "Rylcombe Times" to the junior, and went on hunting. Gay scanned the paper, and soon found the advertisement. He rushed up to Lacy, jamming it on his nose to draw his attention to it.

"Look here, you fathead—"

"Ow!"

"Did you put that advertisement in?" shouted Gay.

Lacy blinked at it.

"No, I didn't!"

"Fathead!" shouted Frank Monk.

"Do you mean to say that somebody else is offering five pounds reward for finding your silly pin?"

"Blessed if I understand it!" said Lacy, in astonishment. "I suppose it's my pin that's mentioned there. But I've had nothing to do with it."

"Then who put in that advertisement?"

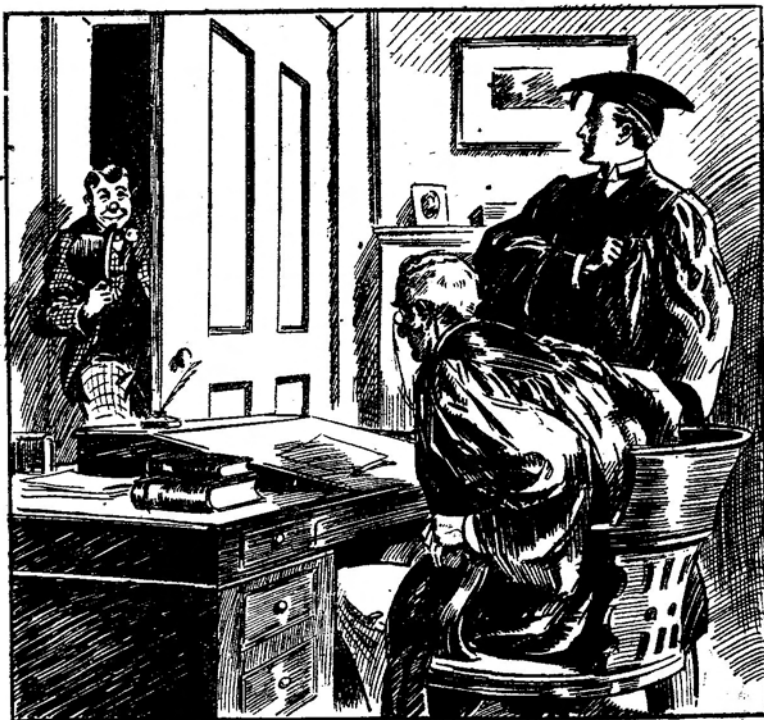
"Blessed if I know!"

"Hallo! Here's another of them!" exclaimed Carboy.

A man dropped in over the school wall, and came towards the house. He was a seedy and beery-looking individual, and had a black patch over one eye. Mr. Adams, the master of the Fourth, had just come out, and he stopped dead at the sight of the one-eyed man.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.

The one-eyed gentleman came up to him, and touched his rag of a cap.



Mr. Wiggins Looks In.

(See Chapter 10.)

"Morning, sir!" "G-g-good-morning!" gasped the Form-master.

"Any objection to my going over the 'ouse, sir?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"There's three blokes started already," said the one-eyed man. "I suppose they're arter it, ain't they?"

"I—I fail to comprehend—"

"I'll begin in the 'ouse, if you don't mind."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Adams, in a gasping voice. "How dare you trespass in the school grounds! Go away at once!"

"Wot?"

"Strangers are not allowed within the school precincts. Kindly go!"

The stranger stared at him with his one available eye.

"I come to look for that there pin!" he explained.

"What?"

"I s'pose it ain't been found already?"

"I do not understand you. You must immediately leave this school," said the Form-master. "Gay, kindly call Corporal Cutts to show this man out."

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed the one-eyed gentleman angrily. "I ain't bein' showed out, not if I knows it—not till I've 'ad a 'unt for that there pin! I'm arter the reward!"

"The man must be insane!" murmured the amazed Form-master. "Gay, call the corporal at once."

"The corporal seems busy, sir," said Gay.

"Bless my soul!"

Corporal Cutts was assuredly busy. His altercation with Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Hankey had ended in a row, and the two reward-seekers were just then rolling the corporal along the round. Leaving him in a breathless and gasping state, Messrs. Wiggins and Hankey came towards the house, victorious.

"Mornin', sir!" said Mr. Wiggins cheerfully. "Hany objection to a bloke goin' over the 'ouse?"

"I must be dreaming!" murmured Mr. Adams.

"Sorry I 'ad to 'andle your porter, sir. He didn't seem to understand that we 'ad business 'ere," said Mr. Wiggins.

"You—you have no business here!" exclaimed Mr. Adams. "I insist upon your leaving at once. Otherwise I shall telephone for the police!"

"What about the reward?" demanded Mr. Wiggins indignantly.

"Think I've tramped 'arf a mile for nothing on an empty stummick? I don't think! I'm arter that f'pun. Come on, Bill Hankey, and never mind the ole gent!"

The one-eyed man had already slipped into the house. Messrs Wiggins and Hankey followed him, and Mr. Adams stared after them blankly. The master of the Fourth really did not know how to deal with the extraordinary situation.

CHAPTER 9.

Gordon Gay Rises to the Occasion.

GORDON GAY & CO. went in to breakfast in a somewhat excited frame of mind. How that extraordinary advertisement had got into the local paper they could not guess. Lacy denied that he had had anything to do with it.

But it was evident that the advertisement had not been inserted in vain. There were plenty of people in Rylcombe and Wayland to whom five pounds was a fabulous sum of money, especially in hard war-times. And it was pretty clear that the news of the offered reward had spread far and wide. Men who were out of work, and men who never intended to be in work, if they could help it, were joining in the hunt for the pin and the reward; and Gordon Gay opined that later in the day there would be an increase in their numbers. Already there were eager seekers up and down the grounds and the playing-fields, and five or six had penetrated into the house. As the Grammarians sat down to breakfast

the one-eyed man came into the dining-hall, looking round him like a dog after a rabbit.

"Skuse me, gents!" was all he said. Then he began searching the hall, peering under the chairs and tables with great persistence.

Mr. Adams had informed Dr. Monk of the extraordinary state of affairs, and the Head of the Grammar School came on the scene at last. Dr. Monk swept into the dining-room with a rustle and a frown.

"What are you doing here?" he thundered, as the one-eyed man blinked at him.

"Looking for the blinking pin, sir!" "Are you insane?" exclaimed the Head. "How dare you come here! Leave these premises at once!"

"Oh, come off, old gent! Wot do you want to advertise for, if you don't want a bloke to come 'ere and find the blinking pin?"

Mr. Adams speechlessly held out the "Rylcombe Times" to the Head. He had obtained it, by way of explanation, from one of the reward-seekers.

The doctor glanced at the advertisement with thunderous brows.

"Who inserted this ridiculous advertisement?" he gasped.

"That does not appear to be known," said Mr. Adams. "I have questioned the boys, but no one seems to know anything about it."

"Has a diamond pin been lost?" "I have not heard of it."

Lacy of the Fourth stood up, with a very red face.

"My diamond pin is lost, sir," he stammered.

"Indeed!" Dr. Monk fixed his eyes on the junior sternly. "Did you put this advertisement in the paper, Lacy?"

"Certainly not, sir! I know nothing about it," said Lacy. "My pin was not lost here, either, but at St. Jim's."

"It is extraordinary, Lacy, that some other person should be advertising a reward for the recovery of your property!"

"I suppose it's a practical joke, sir."

"Ah!" The Head crumpled the paper in his hand. "That is doubtless the explanation." He turned to the one-eyed gentleman again. "My man, this advertisement is an absurd joke. No pin has been lost here. Please take your departure at once!"

"All werry well," said the one-eyed gentleman. "But I ain't going without a blessed good look for that pin, not unless you 'and over the five pun!"

"I shall certainly not hand you five pounds!" said the doctor angrily. "I request you to leave at once."

"I don't think!"

"Otherwise you will be ejected!" rapped out Dr. Monk.

The one-eyed gentleman looked warlike at once.

"You begin!" he exclaimed. "I come 'ere on business. I ain't interfering with nobody. You let a man get about his blooming business!"

And he turned his back on the doctor, and recommenced his search of the dining-room.

Messrs Wiggins and Hankey entered the dining-hall just then.

"Hallo! Any luck, cully?" boomed Mr. Wiggins.

"Not so far," said the one-eyed gentleman. "I ain't going till that blinking pin's found, though!"

"Same 'ere."

"Leave this building at once, all of you!" thundered the Head.

"Can't be done, sir."

"Mr. Adams, kindly call the corporal here."

Corporal Cutts came in, somewhat dusty. The Head pointed to the three busy searchers.

"Remove those men, corporal!"

Corporal Cutts grunted.

"Which I'd like to know 'ow to set about it, sir, seein' as I ain't a blinkin' giant, and can't 'andle three men at a time," he said.

"H'm! Ahem! Mr. Adams—"

"Ahem!" mumbled Mr. Adams.

The Form-master was not in the least disposed to tackle the reward-seekers. He was not of the warrior breed.

Delamere of the Sixth broke in.

"Can we help, sir?"

"Bless my soul! Perhaps that would be best. The prefects may deal with the matter," said the Head.

There was really nothing else to be done. The captain of the Grammar School and half a dozen stalwart Sixth-Formers advanced upon the reward-hunters.

"Now, then, out you go!" said Delamere sharply.

"P'raps you'll put me out!" sneered the one-eyed gentleman.

"Yes, rather!"

"Ere, 'ands off! My heye!"

There was a terrific struggle for a few minutes. But the odds were great, and the three reward-hunters were carried bodily out of the hall and strewn in the quadrangle in a breathless condition. The juniors were all on their feet, greatly excited.

There was loud cheering as the Sixth-Form fellows hustled and dragged the furious trio to the gates and deposited them in the road. The gates were promptly shut on them.

Then the Sixth-Formers made a round of the grounds, clearing out hunter after hunter, amid loud expostulations and vociferations.

The juniors entered into the clearance with great zest. For a good half-hour excitement reigned at the Grammar School. A good many of the eager reward-hunters, naturally indignant, showed fight. But they were all disposed of at last. Some of them departed breathing fury; others gathered in an angry crowd outside the school gates, hooting and jeering.

Lessons began later than usual that morning at the Grammar School. Mr. Adams was looking very red and flustered when he came in to take the Fourth.

Second lesson was under way when the Form-room door was opened, and a shock head put in. The Form-master spun round.

"Morning, sir!" said the owner of the shock head. "Any objection to a cove beginnin' 'ere?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm arter that pin, sir. No offence."

"Go away!" shrieked the Form-master, waving his hands wildly. "Go away at once! I will call the police!"

"My heye! 'Ave I dropped into a lunyatic asylum by mistake?" ejaculated the new-comer.

"Go away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys! Fellow, go away! Go away at once!"

"Wot about that there reward, then?"

"Go away!"

"Oh, come off! I ain't going!"

"Shall we shift 'im, sir?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Yes! Please remove him! Bless my soul!"

The Fourth Form made a rush. But the shock-headed gentleman did not wait for it; he slammed the door and disappeared.

"After him!" roared Carboy.

"Stop! Come back!" shouted Mr. Adams.

But the juniors were suddenly deaf. They trooped out into the passage, whooping. The startled reward-seeker, probably believing that he had fallen into a juvenile lunatic asylum, fled for his life. He just got over the wall in time, with the mob of juniors roaring below.

It was a good half-hour before Mr. Adams succeeded in rounding up his flock into the Form-room again. Then he locked the door, and lessons proceeded. But during lessons there were several knocks at the door; and when the fellows came out after dismissal, they found a dozen or more men and youths in the quadrangle, rooting right and left for Algernon Lacy's diamond-pin.

"Well, if this doesn't take the merry biscuit!" ejaculated Gordon Gay.

"They're going to make a week-end of it, I suppose. We shall have a whole army to-morrow."

"There's the Head!" murmured Jack Wootton.

Dr. Monk was looking out of his study window with a thunderous brow. A few minutes later a crowd of the Sixth emerged, and the reward-hunters were rounded up once more and marched out of the gates, amid loud objurgations.

Gordon Gay rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Lacy didn't put that advert in," he remarked.

"Who the merry dickens did, then?" demanded Wootton major.

Gay smiled.

"I fancy it came from St. Jim's. It's a jape, my son—I didn't think of it at first; but, of course, it's a St. Jim's jape. That's why it's worded as it is, to bring a swarm of duffers rooting all over the Grammar School. Hallo, here's another!"

Delamere's study window opened, and struggling figures appeared. The angry captain of the school dropped a reward-hunter out, with a bump, into the quad.

The juniors promptly chased him out of gates. Outside, a couple of dozen men and lads, in very bad tempers, were hooting and shouting.

"It's a merry practical joke," said Gordon Gay, with a twinkle in his eyes. "But it's a shame these fellows should have all their trouble for nothing. They ought to be given a tip where to look for that pin."

"But how—"

"Wait a minute!"

Gordon Gay ran into the house. He reappeared in a few minutes with a big sheet of cardboard, upon which was daubed an inscription in large letters. The juniors grinned as they looked at it. Gordon Gay hung it on the bars of the gate, facing the crowd outside.

And the angry reward-hunters read:

"NOTICE!"

"£5 REWARD!"

"Owing to a mistake in the advertisement, the name of this school was given instead of that of St. James's School. The diamond pin was lost there."

"BY ORDER."

"Oh!" said Mr. Wiggins blankly. "That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut. Blessed if I didn't think that they were all dotty 'ere! Lost at St. James's School, was it? Come on, Bill!"

"I'm arter you!" said Mr. Hankey.

And they started, and the whole crowd of reward-hunters followed them. And after that the enterprising searchers who arrived at the Grammar School read the notice on the gates, and immediately stepped out for St. Jim's.

A sweet and blessed peace reigned at the Grammar School that afternoon; and Gordon Gay & Co. wondered what was happening at St. Jim's, and chortled as they wondered.

CHAPTER 10.

The Tables Turned.

"I WATHAH think of wunnin' ovah to the Gwammah School this aftahnoon, deah boye."

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Jolly good idea!" agreed Blake. "I dare say they've had some results from the merry advertisement by this time."

And there was a chuckle. Cardew of the Fourth had secured a copy of the "Rylcombe Times" containing the advertisement; and it had passed from hand to hand among the St. Jim's juniors that morning, with chortling.

Levison joined the group who were discussing the matter in the quad after dinner. Levison was grinning.

"I've just seen Grimes!" he announced. Grimes was the grocer's boy from Rylcombe.

"Yaas, deah boy! What about Gwimes?"

"He's been taking groceries to the Grammar School this mornin'," grinned Levison. "He says there's a regular swarm there, and no end of a row. The seniors have been chucking them out on their necks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Bai Jove! That is wathah hard cheese!"

"A rather good jape on the Grammar School!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We might as well bike over and see how they're getting on."

"Yaas, wathah!" "Rotten spoof, I call it," said Racke of the Shell. "If a chap claims the reward, and doesn't get it, there may be a row."

"If the reward's claimed it will be paid," drawled Cardew.

"You'll spring a fiver for it?" sneered Racke.

"Certainly!"

"Cardew would be bound to pay the reward, Wacke, aftah undahakin' to do so!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "You are a suspicious beast, Wacke!"

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Hallo! What's wrong at the gates?" exclaimed Wilkins.

There was a sound of loud altercation at the school gates, and the juniors moved in that direction. Old Taggles, the porter, was arguing with three seedy-looking men, who had arrived in somewhat breathless condition. They were Messrs. Wiggins and Hankey and the one-eyed gentleman; they were also the advance guard, so to speak, of the five-hunters.

"Ain't coming in, ain't we?" exclaimed Mr. Wiggins indignantly. "Well, I like that! Ain't we walked 'ere on puppos, you hold himage?"

"We ave!" said Mr. Hankey emphatically. "Get outer the way, old bony face!"

"You can't come in here!" exclaimed Taggles, between astonishment and indignation. "Now, then, don't you shove—Yah! Oh!"

The three visitors shoved without ceremony, and Taggles sat down with a bump.

"Hallo, what's that game?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What are you pitching our porter about for?"

"No offence, young gents," said Mr. Wiggins. "We're 'ere to 'unt for that there diamond pin."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ain't got any time to waste," said Mr. Wiggins. "There's a 'ole crowd coming along. Fi-pun is fi-pun, in war-time, sir. Come on, Bill!"

"I'm arter you!"

"But—but—but—" stammered Tom Merry.

But the reward-seekers did not stay to be butted, so to speak. They were keen

to get to work before the main body arrived.

They hurried on to the School House, entered without ceremony, and commenced operations there.

The juniors stared at one another.

"What on earth—" said Grundy.

"Bai Jove! There's somethin' w'ong somewhah!" said Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head. "What are they comin' heah for?"

Cardew whistled.

"Blessed if I savvy!" he said. "It says the Grammar School plain enough in the advertisement. Besides, Grimes says he saw them there. Hallo, here are some more of them!"

Five or six men and lads came in at the gates, looking round them.

"What do you chaps want here?" shouted Grundy.

"All right, sir—we're going to look for that lost pin," said one of the new arrivals.

"It wasn't lost here—it was lost at the Grammar School, at Rylcombe!" exclaimed Cardew. "Haven't you seen the advertisement?"

THE BUTTERFLY.

Perhaps you don't know Cheerful Charlie. If that is so, let us say that you ought not to lose any time in making the acquaintance of this sprightly young fellow. He is a fine soldier, a manly lad; but he is also a ventriloquist, and he bubbles over with fun from morning till night.

The pranks he gets up to by making use of his remarkable gift appear every week exclusively in



There are many other features in this bright little journal which will make you laugh and lighten your load of care in these anxious times. You all know the eminent comedian, T. E. Dunville. A page of pictures, showing him in some side-splitting adventure, appears also in the "Butterfly," and "Butterfly Bill" has made his mark as one of the funniest of front-page characters in any comic paper. Then there are many other screamingly funny pictures; and the reading-matter, too, is excellent.

Altogether, if you are in want of a paper which is packed with the best of features in fun and reading-matter, you should place an order with your newsgent to save for you a copy of the "Butterfly," published every Tuesday, price 1d.

"That's all right, sir; that was a mistake of the printer's. This here is the place. There's a notice on the gate of the Grammar School," explained the youth.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"A notice on the gates of the Grammar School!" repeated Tom Merry. "My only hat! They've switched them off on to us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Racke. "What a jape! This is where you get left, Mr. Crafty Cardew!"

"By gad!" said Cardew.

"Here they come!" chortled Monty Lowther. "The cry is 'Still they come!'—Shakespeare. Ha, ha, ha!"

A dozen fellows came in at the gates. They were a crowd of bargemen who worked on the Ryll, and generally congregated in leisure moments at the Green Man. Evidently the five pounds reward had been discussed at that establishment, and the bargemen had decided that it was worth trying for. They looked a very rough and burly crowd, and not easily to be got rid of.

Tom Merry & Co. could only watch them in dismay.

What on earth was to happen now they could not guess. The Grammarians had evidently succeeded in switching the reward-hunters off the Grammar School and on to St. Jim's, and it was impossible to switch them back. Cardew's face was a study. He had not considered this possible outcome of his extraordinary wheeze.

"My hat! You've done it now!" murmured Clive.

"Let's chuck 'em out!" exclaimed Grundy, always warlike, and ready for drastic measures.

"Not so jolly easy!" grinned Wilkins. "I'm not fighting any bargees. I know that!"

"Rot! I'll order 'em off!" said Grundy.

George Alfred Grundy strode up to the latest arrivals and planted himself in their way. They stared at him.

"It's a mistake your coming here," said Grundy. "There's no diamond pin lost at this school. You'd better get out!"

"Wot do you know about it?" demanded one of the party. "Was it you lost the pin?"

"No. But—"

"Then 'ow do you know?"

"Well, I do know; and you'd better clear off at once!" said Grundy. "Now, then, off you go!"

The bargeman stared at Grundy for a moment, and then lifted him by the collar with a powerful hand and pitched him out of the way.

Grundy rolled in the quad, gasping for breath.

"Yow-ow! Oh, my hat!"

The bargemen went on towards the house. Wilkins helped up his chum.

"Better leave 'em alone, old chap!" he murmured. "They're rather too hefty for you."

"Groogh-hooh!" was Grundy's reply.

But he left them alone after that.

"There's Railton!" murmured Blake.

The School House master had come to the doorway, in astonishment at the sight of the noisy crowd.

"What do you want here?" he exclaimed.

"No offence, sir!" said the leader of the bargees civilly. "We got the arter-noon free, and we thought we'd come and look for that there diamond pin. There seems to be a lot on the job already."

"Praps you would give a bloke a 'int where to look for it?"

"I—I don't understand! What pin are you alluding to?"

"Advised in the paper, sir, and five pounds reward for finding it; no restrictions, neither," said the bargee. "We'll come in, with your leave, sir! Come on, mates!"

"But—but you must not come in here!" exclaimed the astounded master.

"There must be some mistake!"

"No blinking mistake, sir! And we ain't got any time to waste, neither. This way, mates!"

Mr. Railton essayed to bar the way, but he was pushed aside, and the rough crowd swarmed into the house.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the House-master dazedly.

He hurried away to consult the Head in this extraordinary emergency. Meanwhile, the reward-seekers spread about the house. The advertisement had stated that the diamond pin was lost in the grounds or the buildings, and that there would be no restrictions to the search.

Naturally, the reward-seekers did not place any restrictions on their movements, as the advertiser had given them such extensive leave.

They spread up and down the passages, penetrated into the Form-rooms, and looked into the studies.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 545.

And more and more were arriving. Every loafer in the neighbourhood seemed to have heard of the five-pound reward, and to have decided to have a shot at it.

The St. Jim's fellows looked on blankly.

How that extraordinary invasion was to be dealt with was a mystery.

Crooke suggested telephoning for the police. But P.-c. Crump, of Rylcombe, would have found it difficult to deal with such a crowd. They were peaceable enough if they were not interfered with; but there were a good many who would have cut up very rusty if ordered out, especially the gang of river-men, some of whom had been sampling the beer at the Green Man, not wisely but too well.

Mr. Railton was still explaining the amazing situation to the Head in his study, when the door was opened and the cheerful Mr. Wiggins looked in. He nodded amiably to the horrified Head, who looked at this invader of his peaceful sanctum as Priam of old might have looked upon the messenger of evil tidings who drew his curtains at the dead of night.

"What—what—what—" stuttered the Head.

"No offence, sir!" said Mr. Wiggins. "Do you mind a bloke lookin' in this 'ere room?"

"Bless my soul!"

"Come on, Bill!"

"I'm arter you!" said Mr. Hankey. The Head sat petrified as Messrs. Wiggins and Hankey came in. But Mr. Railton strode in the way.

"Leave this room at once!" he rapped out.

"Look 'ere, we're arter that there di'mond pin!"

"It is not here. This is the head-master's room. Leave at once!"

Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Hankey looked surly, but they obeyed. The Housemaster closed the door after them.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Holmes. "What—what can have brought those—those dreadful persons here?"

"I cannot understand it, sir!"

"They must be induced to leave somehow!"

"I will do my best, sir."

"Pray, do! Otherwise, I must telephone to the police-station."

Mr. Railton left the study, and strode down the passage. There were a dozen searchers in sight, some of them seeking in the corners of the passages, under seats, and in window-recesses, some comparing notes. They were making themselves quite at home—taking full advantage of the permission accorded in the advertisement.

"You must leave here at once!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "I cannot understand what has brought you here!"

"Ere you are, guv'nor!" said Mr. Wiggins, holding out the "Rylcombe Times." "That's wot done the trick!"

Mr. Railton blinked at the advertisement.

"But this says the Grammar School!"

"That's a mistake in the printin'; they told us so there. This 'ere is the place. Come on, Bill! Let's try upstairs."

"I'm arter you!"

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Railton. "I repeat that there is some mistake, and you must leave these premises at once!"

"We ain't come 'ere for nothin', guv'nor!"

"You have no right here!"

"Wot does that there advertisement say, then?" demanded Mr. Wiggins. "No blinkin' restrictions—wot?"

"Wot!" said a dozen voices. "We ain't going!"

"No fear!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 545.

"Unless you go at once the police will be called in!" thundered Mr. Railton.

"Call 'em in and be blowed!" retorted Mr. Wiggins independently.

And he marched upstairs with Mr. Hankey, a dozen more following.

"Shall I call up some of the Sixth and shift them out, sir?" asked Kildare.

Mr. Railton shook his head. He did not want to see a battle-royal in the school. The crowd of bargemen would certainly have been difficult for the whole Sixth Form of St. Jim's to handle.

He returned to the Head's study, and Dr. Holmes took up the telephone-receiver.

CHAPTER 11.

Found at Last!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked on blankly. They could not interfere, and they could only wonder how it would end. Eager searchers were going along the upper passages, and peering into the studies, with noise and clamour without limit. Some of the fellows who objected were turned out of their own rooms without ceremony. The crowd of bargemen apparently regarded the whole matter as a lark, and were enjoying it.

"Well, if the pin's here, it will turn up, anyway!" Cardew remarked philosophically. "There won't be a blessed corner left unturned."

"TIT FOR TAT!"

By OWEN CONQUEST,

IS THE TITLE OF THE

Long Complete Tale of

JIMMY SILVER & CO.

IN THIS WEEK'S

BOYS' FRIEND.

PRICE 1d.

"There's a gang of them in the box-rooms now," said Monty Lowther. "They're turning the old boxes inside-out. Blessed if I know what they expect to find there! Lacy's pin can't be there, I should say."

"They don't know it's Lacy's pin," chuckled Blake. "They only know a pin's lost, and it must be in an out-of-the-way place, or it would have been found. Let 'em rip!"

"Bai Jove! We shall have to let them wip, deah boys. There isn't any pwevin't them!"

"Not without a giddy battle," said Levison, laughing.

"Did you say they're in the box-rooms?" exclaimed Racke of the Shell, with a startled look.

Lowther nodded.

"Yes. They won't do any damage there—only empty boxes there. What's the matter, Racke?"

Racke did not answer. He was running up the stairs. The juniors stared after him.

Racke did not heed their stares. He dashed away at top speed to the lower box-room.

There were five or six searchers in that room, among them the indefatigable Messrs. Wiggins & Hankey. They all looked round as Racke came in breathlessly.

"You can get out of here!" exclaimed Racke. "You don't expect to find a lost tie-pin here, do you?"

"Well, it's somewhere," said Mr. Wiggins. "Might 'ave been dropped 'ere, fur all we know."

"I tell you it's not here!" exclaimed Racke angrily. "You can get out of this room at once!"

Mr. Wiggins looked at him sharply. "P'raps you're arter the reward, too?" he remarked. "Looks as if the young gent thinks it might be 'ere, Bill."

"It do!" agreed Mr. Hankey.

"By gad, it does!" said a cool voice at the door. Racke spun round, and scowled savagely at Cardew of the Fourth, who regarded him with a mocking grin.

"Go ahead," continued Cardew. "Don't waste time. The Head's 'phoned for the bobbies. I dare say the pin's here."

"How could it be here, you fool?" shouted Racke.

Cardew laughed.

"Might have been shoved here out of the way!" he said deliberately. "Might have been picked up in your study, Racke, after Lacy was gone the other day, and shoved out of sight on purpose to make trouble for Grundy—what?" He laughed again, as the colour changed in Racke's sallow face. "Have I got on the middle stump this time, dear boy?"

"You—you fool!"

Cardew called down the stairs.

"This way, you fellows, if you want to be in at the death! I rather fancy we're on the track of the merry diamond!"

"Shut up!" hissed Racke.

Cardew laughed again as a crowd of juniors came up the stairs.

"You don't mean to say it's here!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Racke is specially anxious for this room not to be searched," grinned Cardew.

"Bai Jove! What does it mattah to Wacke, Cardew?"

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation as he looked at the alarmed, furious face of the cad of the Shell. The same suspicion that had entered Cardew's mind shot into Tom's at that moment, and he wondered that it had not occurred to him before.

"Racke, you cad," he exclaimed, "did you find the pin in your study after Lacy was gone?"

"I—I—"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that. It is extremely pwob," said Arthur Augustus. "It would be just like Wacke to hide it, and cause twouble with the Gwammah chaps!"

"I-I didn't! I—I—" Racke stammered.

"You did!" said Tom Merry contemptuously. "I wonder we never thought of it! If the pin was dropped in your study you were sure to see it there. And you put it out of sight to make trouble with Gay and his friends—"

"You can't prove it!"

"If the pin's found in this room, that's proof," drawled Cardew. "I suggest joinin' the merry pin-hunters."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Racke gritted his teeth. He glanced at Mr. Wiggins, who was nosing along the wainscot. Tom Merry followed his glance.

"You know where it is, Racke," he said quietly. "The sooner you own up the better!"

Racke shrugged his shoulders, recovering his coolness to some extent.

"It was only a joke on Grundy," he said. "I kept it in my pocket to return to Lacy, till the silly ass came over here with his accusation against Grundy. Then I thought I'd see it through. Grundy wanted a lesson for bursting into a chap's study and meddling with him."

"Where is the pin?"

Racke lounged to a corner of the box-room, turned up the edge of the linoleum, and picked up the hidden tie-pin.

"There it is!" he said coolly.

"My hey!" exclaimed Mr. Wiggins. Cardew laughed.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE ST. JIM'S GALLERY.

No. 15.—Mr. Horace Ratcliff, M.A.

MR. RATCLIFF is one of the two St. Jim's Housemasters. Mr. Railton is the other. Both are Housemasters, but there the resemblance between them ceases.

The master of the School House has already been dealt with. About Victor Railton it was possible to say many pleasant things, and it was quite needless to say anything unpleasant. He is quite an ideal master.

His coadjutor is the very reverse. Mr. Ratcliff does not like boys, or understand them. It is difficult to suggest any job for which he would be eminently fitted, but quite certain that which he chose is not the right one for him. Perhaps something in which he could do his work, whatever it might be, all alone, without any but passing and brief contact with his fellow-creatures, might fill the bill. Mr. Ratcliff might not like it, but it would be so very much better for everybody else.

To know some people really well is to love them. You recognise they have faults. You might even give a list of their faults. But the faults are not them. They are the merest surface flaws. With others, to know them really well is inevitably to dislike them. Doubtless they possess other qualities besides the unpleasant ones which breed dislike. But it is always of the unpleasant ones that we think in connection with them.

Mr. Ratcliff is this sort of person. "Nobody loves him." If any New House fellow says he likes him, he is saying the thing which is not. He may do that to serve his own ends, but he is extremely unlikely to get any real change out of it. As for the School House, their dislike and contempt is even more pronounced than those of the New House, for there is, in their case, no House feeling to make them even pretend respect.

"Ratty" is sour and spiteful and stingy. One of the barrings-out with which he has had to cope was due to his meanness. He had been saving his pocket by giving the New House bad grub. Dick Redfern was the ringleader that time; but in the great barring-out Figgins & Co. led the way. That revolt grew to such serious proportions that Ratty had to go away from St. Jim's for a time, to give things a chance to settle down. It was then that Mr. Wodger, Miss Glyn's sweetheart, took charge.

That must have been no end galling to Ratty, for he had himself been very much in love with Edith Glyn—almost the only instance recorded of any tender human feeling in him. It was hopeless from the first, naturally. Strange marriages occur every day; but if Bernard Glyn's pretty and charming elder sister had consented to endow Mr. Horace Ratcliff with her hand and heart—to say nothing of the inheritance that will be hers, as the daughter of a millionaire, one day—it would have been more than strange; one might have held it miraculous.

It was hopeless; but it softened him for the time being. He took the Shell for a while in Mr. Linton's absence, and his manner astonished everyone. He was civil, kindly, forgiving. He spoke to everyone mildly. When Lowther let off a jumping-cracker in the Form-room, all that he said was: "Very well, Lowther! As you have owned up to it, and say you are sorry, I will let the matter drop." Imagine that from Ratty! Then there was the matter of Glyn's clockwork rat. It should not have been taken into the Form-room, and it certainly should not have been allowed to bite the master. But all the rat's victim said was: "You must be more careful, Glyn."

As the brother of the peerless Edith, Bernard Glyn naturally had a big pull with Ratty. But he did not know that he had it, for he was quite unaware of the Fifth Form master's passion. Ratty's efforts to be specially kind to him left him gasping; and when he was asked over to Ratty's sanctum in the New House to tea he began to wonder whether the world was coming to a sudden end.

Ratty really was softened. He tried to be

nice to Mr. Railton, whom he had been treating as an enemy for quite a long time past. He quoted poetry to him. How Railton must have stared and wondered when the sour Ratty spoke:

"In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love!"

It must have made him wonder whether the acid New House master—who, by the way, though his fancy may have turned to thoughts of love, is by no means a young man—had gone potty.

He surprised Taggles, too. A box of flowers, destined for Miss Glyn, came from the florist's. Taggles took it up. Mr. Ratcliff, opening his heart and purse-strings, gave Taggles sixpence! The porter had to bite it before he could be quite sure that it was a good coin.

But Miss Glyn got the wrong box. The one she received should have gone to Figgins &



Co. It contained rabbit-pie, and such things. So she was amazed, too, though possibly not so much amazed as when she first realised that Mr. Ratcliff had fallen in love with her.

Arthur Augustus butted in on one of the very few occasions when a chance to be alone with Edith Glyn came to Ratty. They had met at a cottage, the young lady there on some mission of benevolence; Mr. Ratcliff—well, let us say, being benevolent to himself. Gussy came in for milk, and stayed because he felt exhausted. It is safe to say that he was less exhausted than was the master's patience. But Gussy behaved in complete innocence. Any other St. Jim's junior would either have hurried away or have stayed with the object of annoying Ratty. Gussy is quite above suspicion of any design to annoy.

It was largely through Ratty that George Figgins and Dick Redfern were set at feud, and when they discovered that they joined forces, and vowed vengeance. Redfern worked it. He took away Ratty's clothes

when he was bathing, and left feminine garb to replace them. Ratty had to get away in the loathed disguise. There was no alternative to that. He did not make a charming lady, I am very sure. But Dick Redfern had not wanted him to look charming.

Kerr played an even more audacious trick upon the sour Housemaster. He made up as Mr. Ratcliff's—entirely imaginary—deserted and neglected wife. And he played the part with infinite ability. He claimed Ratty with lifelike sobs, and chased him over the New House in lifelike rage.

Jack Blake is among the fellows whom Mr. Ratcliff most dislikes, and the fact that Blake does not belong to his House is not much of a stopper upon his spite. It was Blake whom he forbade to go to the circus. Blake went in disguise, and the spying master got roughly handled by some of the circus people for hanging around and making himself unpleasant. There was another occasion when Blake and his chums were accused by the New House master of having gained a sight of an examination-paper. They had done nothing of the kind—that sort of thing is not in their line. A prefect had mislaid the paper. Ratty showed signs of grace that time. He felt that he really had made himself unnecessarily objectionable, and by way of reparation he gave a cup for a cross-country race.

But he has no real interest in athletics. He dislikes and despises games of all kinds. The New House fellows get no such encouragement to uphold the honour of their House as the School House fellows get from Mr. Railton.

Quite lately we have seen Blake in collision with Ratty—on the day when the Shell and Fourth had their wrestling events in the sports competition. Blake was one of the Fourth's great champions, Cardew was the other; but that did not hinder Mr. Ratcliff from locking him up in a room at the top of the New House for a very slight—almost imaginary—offence.

Mr. Ratcliff does not like Tom Merry, either, and he loathes "Tom Merry's Weekly." It is only a short time since there was trouble, engineered by Racke, on that score; and something very like amateur burglary was practised upon the master.

Figgins—with Kerr and Wynn thrown in, so to speak—is another of the objects of Ratty's special dislike. Figg felt it especially when his poor old dog, Spot, was sentenced to execution by the master in one of the recurrent silly fancies about dogs eating the nation's sorely-needed grub. Levison & Co. helped Figg out of that trouble, and found a home for Spot.

There is not much gratitude in Mr. Horace Ratcliff. Darrel, the good-natured prefect, intervened between him and a certain bellicose individual who had come along with the full intention of thrashing him. But even after that Ratty was quite prepared to help in getting Darrel expelled for having taken part in a "prize-fight," where he had for opponent the same bellicose individual. Mr. Railton, though he has no liking for his colleague, has done him more than one good turn; but Ratty did all he knew how to make matters unpleasant for Railton when he imagined he had chanced upon a disgraceful secret involving that gentleman. There was nothing at all disgraceful about it in reality—only a brother of Mr. Railton's who was down on his luck and needed help to get to Canada.

Naturally, Mr. Selby, the Third Form master, is no friend of Mr. Ratcliff's. They ought to have much in common, for it would be hard to say which of them is the more thoroughly unpleasant. But they are too much alike, and each too self-willed, for them not to clash. As for Messrs. Linton and Latham, they avoid Mr. Ratcliff as far as possible, and therein they do wisely. The Head has no such confidence in the middle-aged New House master as he has in the comparatively young master of the School.

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House. He tolerates Mr. Ratcliff, but it is not likely that he will weep tears of bitter regret when that gentleman finds it time to retire from the scene of his labours.

There are many other things concerning Mr. Ratcliff that might be dwelt upon, but space is running short. Do you remember how he dogged Kerr and two more in the belief that they meant to break the bounds imposed temporarily by the Head, and how the three led him on ever so far, and then sat down to have a slight snack just inside—only just inside—that boundary line? Do you remember—it was but a short time ago—that legacy of the patent safe, and the

damaging disclosures as to Ratty's past made by the messenger to whom his dead uncle had entrusted, by his will, the delivery of it? It is not at all likely that all of the stories Simon told were true, but they amused St. Jim's no end. Then there was the story of the St. Jim's ruins, and how Ratty professed a knowledge of matters archaeological, which was certainly not genuine, and how at last the ruins were discovered to be those of a pig-sty, buried when the playing-fields were levelled. Then, again, in earlier stories of the school afloat, the tyranny he practised when left in command.

One always pictures Ratty with a cane in

his hand, as he appears in the portrait which adorns this article. He loves using that cane. He loves inflicting impositions. He loves lecturing some unhappy junior until that junior hardly knows whether he is standing on his head or his heels. He is a tyrant in grain, a very Hun in the matter of spying. A man of "high moral character," no doubt, where the sin to which he is not inclined are concerned, but hardly a man of high principles.

"And of such are"—"No, no! I fear I have lighted upon the wrong quotation. I should not put that on Ratty's tombstone, anyway."

THE TWINS FROM TASMANIA.

FOR NEW READERS.

The twins are Philip Derwent, of Highcliffe, and his sister Philippa, of Cliff House. They have a cockatoo, named Cocky, which has been until recently with Flip (Philip) at Highcliffe, but is now at Cliff House. Flip has made an enemy of Gadsby, who is plotting against him with Vavasour. His best chums, Merton and Tunstall, are away from the school for a time, owing to a serious accident to one of Merton's eyes in a fight with Ponsonby. In their absence Flip gets too friendly with Pon and the rest of the nuts, and, without any real taste for it at the outset, takes to gambling. He goes with the nuts to a gambling den at Courtfield, quarrels with Pon, and is knocked senseless just as the warning "Police!" is heard. Flip comes to himself in a cellar, bound hand and foot. He is let out, however. He makes up his mind that the only thing for him to do is to run away, as returning to Highcliffe means certain expulsion. Then he meets Peter Hazeldene, who has run away from Greyfriars. Goggs of Frankingham comes to Highcliffe. Flip and Hazel go to London, and after many exciting adventures make for Wayland. They tramp for some time, and eventually lose their way. Suddenly Hazel disappears from view, and Flip, moving forward, pulls himself up in the nick of time on the edge of a steep downfall.

To the Rescue.

"HAZEL!" Again Flip called through the darkness. But no answer came back.

Hazeldene had slipped down some precipitous slope, it was plain.

Slowly and cautiously Flip went forward. To hurry would not help his comrade.

Feeling his way foot by foot, Flip came upon the edge. Had he rushed forward he would inevitably have gone over it.

Now he threw himself flat, with head and shoulders over the dark void, and called again:

"Hazel! Speak, if you can, old chap!"

Then he waited for an answer. He fancied he could hear something like a low groan this time.

What was to be done? Somewhere down below there was Hazel, certainly hurt, perhaps badly hurt; it might even be dying. And, for all Flip knew, there was no help within miles. He had no clear notion where they were. To anyone who knew the downs the manner of the accident might have suggested the place of it, for there are not many such precipitous slopes in the whale-backed hills of Sussex. Plenty of places down which one may roll; not so many with anything like a sheer fall.

The only thing to do, whatever the risk, seemed to be to get down to Hazel. Somehow, that must be done. Flip was but a few seconds in making up his mind to it.

He twisted round, and let his feet dangle over the ledge. They found a hold, and he let himself down a yard or so. Then, sliding and clutching and scrambling with his boot-toes, he went down some twenty yards with considerably greater speed than he had bargained for.

He pulled up by clutching a gorse-bush. The prickles told him what it was, but he held on.

"Hazel!" he called again.

"I'm here!" said Hazel's voice.

It sounded very weak, and it seemed to come from some distance below, and away to the right.

Flip shifted his course as well as he could in that direction. It was chance work at best, for there was no light to help him, and he had no notion how deep the descent might be. But he took the risk cheerfully and pluckily, as it was his way to take risks. Many a fellow vainer of his courage would not have taken it at all; but Flip Derwent had never hesitated about that. There was the thing to do, and Flip did it.

Now, again, some thirty yards lower down, after a succession of slips and scrambles, he pulled himself up, and this time found something solid under his feet.

It was a ledge—quite a narrow one, as he found by thrusting out one foot, but yet wide enough to give him a feeling of security.

"Hazel!"

He called yet once again, and the answer came:

"I'm—here! Sprained—something—and—all—shaken up!"

"Speak again, old chap! I don't quite get where you are!"

"And I—don't know—where you are—a bit—so I—can't tell you!"

The words came in broken, jerky fashion, and Hazel's voice was weak. But it did not sound hopeless or afraid. Even in a strait such as this Peter Hazeldene had lots of faith in Flip Derwent.

Slowly and cautiously still, Flip made his way along the narrow ledge. It grew narrower still, and he was forced to crawl on hands and knees.

But he held on, calling from time to time to Hazel, and each time getting an answer that seemed to come from a little nearer.

At last he stopped. He was forced to stop, for the ledge gave out, as he could tell by stretching out a hand. Now Hazel seemed almost directly below him. But he was still not quite near.

"I'm coming down to you, old fellow," said Flip.

"Better not—risk it!" panted Hazel. "Most likely—break—your neck!"

But he hardly spoke as if he wanted Flip to forbear the attempt. And, even if he had, Flip would have gone, nevertheless.

It was taking chances again, for there could be no certainty but that he would go past Hazel in the descent. And if he did it was likely enough that he might not be able to climb up again.

The situation was one calculated to strain the strongest nerves. Perhaps Flip came through it as he did partly because he had never considered the question whether he had nerves to be strained. Anyway, his luck held.

He came down three or four yards slowly and carefully, then lost his footing and hand-hold, and slithered down for another three or four, to bring up standing—reeling, rather—on another narrow ledge, close by a huddled heap that he could see but dimly in the pale starshine, but that he knew must be Hazel.

But he could get no word from his comrade. Hazel had fainted dead away. The danger to Flip had given him the finishing touch. Pain and shock had caused him to swoon away for a few minutes earlier; but he had come to again, and had been able to answer Flip's calls. But for that he would probably not have been found, and in that case would certainly not have lived through the night.

For it was freezing hard. And Flip, kneeling by his comrade's side, and laying a hand on his cold face, feared for a moment that he was indeed dead. But he found that Hazel's heart still beat, and that reassured him.

The next thing he did was to take off his own overcoat and wrap it around Hazel. It was almost the only thing he could do. They

had no food, no drink; and the sharp touch of the frost was likely enough to work grievous harm upon anyone so shaken and injured as was Hazel.

At all costs he must be kept warm. And, as things were, at all costs could only mean at Flip's cost. Flip himself, warm from his scramble down, did not feel just then the want of the coat. But he knew well enough that it could not be long before he felt it. That did not matter. He was better fitted to bear than Hazel. Through all their wanderings he had borne the heavier share of their joint burden; and that night was to mark the crowning act of his self-sacrificing courage.

A Trying Night.

FLIP was no perfect character. He was more than a trifle vain; more than a trifle heedless at ordinary times; too easily led by anyone whom he liked. But pluck and resolution and loyalty beyond the common were in him, with all his faults; and few fellows would have done, even for the best of chums, what he did for Hazel, who was hardly his chum in any true sense, and who, in the past, had been his enemy.

It was utterly useless to think of trying to do anything for Hazel's hurts, whatever they might be, in the darkness. It was as useless to think of attempting to find help. Flip knew that he could not hope to climb the steep, cliff-like face he had descended. And even if he could have reached the top again, what would have been the use of it?

Above was only the crest of the great, rolling down, void of any house or any shelter, as far as he knew.

How far down he might have to go before he reached the ground below he could not even guess. But if he could reach it, to what end? Not a light gleamed down there. They seemed as completely cut off from help as if on a desert island or a raft in some lonely sea.

It was more like the raft than the island, though. On an island there would at least have been more room to move about. The ledge on which Hazel lay was narrow. Flip, kneeling beside him, stretched out one foot a few inches, and found that there was nothing under it.

He dared not try to move Hazel, and he could not find that the ledge was wider elsewhere. So he did the only thing he could think of to make his comrade in misfortune safe. He lay down beside him on the outer side, so that at least Hazel might not roll off without first rolling him off. Then he snuggled close up to Hazel, and waited with a fast-beating heart for his comrade to speak again. Until then there was no chance of his sleeping. Probably there was not much chance afterwards, for he was getting chilled to the bone.

The minutes seemed like hours. But Hazel was alive; his heart still beat. And Flip clung to hope.

At last Hazel spoke. The words came suddenly. He had not even moved his head.

"Are you there—Flip?"

"Yes, old chap: of course I am!" answered Flip from between chattering teeth.

"It's nearly—morning—isn't it?"

"Jolly near it!" answered Flip, with cheerful irony. He lied, but he lied with a good motive. It was not the kind of lie that ought to count against anyone.

"I can—sleep—I think. I'm quite—warm. But my—left knee—hurts—no end. And my—ankle, too!"

"Go to sleep if you can, Hazel; that's the best dodge," Flip answered.

"If you'll—put your—arms round me!"

Flip did so at once, and was glad enough to do it for his own sake. Some of Hazel's warmth transferred itself to him. He did not even try to pull the greatcoat over himself. Hazel needed all that, but, lying thus close, he began to feel less utterly chilled.

Nearly morning! There were many hours to be got through somehow between now and morning; and well Flip knew it.

But the lie comforted Hazel, and therefore was justified. Within a few minutes he was fast asleep.

A drowsy feeling stole over Flip, in spite of the cold. He murmured something like a prayer, and sank into a troubled slumber.

It did not last long. Within two hours he was awake, shivering and numb.

Very gently he disengaged his arms from Hazel's body. His comrade slept on.

Flip stood upright. He moved along the ledge a yard or two, and flapped his arms in an effort to get back some bodily heat.

But for all he could do it was cold—terribly cold. There was no prospect of further sleep for him, he knew. He must endure as best he could the long night that could only end with dawn. It was the harder to endure because of the cramped space in which he must stay.

Hour after hour crept upon its leaden way. There were times when Flip dozed, standing; or, if he did not doze, his brain was so numbed that he lost consciousness of his whereabouts and condition. But there were other times when he was only too acutely conscious of everything, and then it seemed as though the morning would never come—as though darkness had settled upon the land for ever.

But at long last dawn came. In the eastern sky were streaks of light that broadened gradually and spread to the other quarters of the horizon. Dimly the shapes of distant hills appeared. But a ground-mist lay below, and even yet Flip could not see the bottom of the broad valley which was underneath.

Hazel awoke, groaning with pain.

Flip knelt by his side again.

"Is it very bad, old fellow?" he asked; and, for all its hoarseness, his voice was very gentle.

"Rotten!" moaned Hazel, moving restlessly in pain.

Then he noted Flip's face, and for once his selfishness fled.

"Flip! My hat, you do look awful!" he said, in real alarm. "You must be jolly nearly dead with cold! Where's your overcoat?"

Flip did not answer that. But Hazel saw now.

The tears ran fast down his face as he saw. He was weak and in pain; but through all the night he had been kept warm by his comrade's self-denial, while Flip himself had endured the biting frost. Now Flip was almost at the end of his bodily tether. But the spirit in him was stronger than the body, and when that is so the body, upheld by the spirit, can endure things him incredible.

"Don't worry, Hazel. It's all right now, and I'll soon have you out of this!" croaked Flip. His voice was terribly hoarse, and his throat ached horribly.

But the tears continued to run down Hazel's strained face. Full understanding had come to him at last of what it meant to have such a comrade as this. It may be that he was minded to give Flip more than his due. There were fellows who would have done the same.

Harry Wharton would have done it; again and again he had stood by Hazel in sore straits. But Hazel had never felt towards him as he felt towards Flip now. He had never felt so grateful to anyone before. The feeling of gratitude had in it a force that seemed almost to hurt him physically.

Flip turned his head. It hurt him, too, to see Hazel like that. He looked down into the valley, and saw that the mist had cleared off. This ledge was a full hundred feet above the bottom; it was more than two hundred from the place whence Hazel had fallen and Flip

had clambered. Hazel had not fallen sheer, of course. For the most part his progress had been a rolling one, slackened in speed by the clutches he had made at the bushes growing upon the slope.

It was not quite a precipice, though here and there its face was as perpendicular as the wall of a house. But its descent would have tested the nerve and activity of most people in broad daylight. And Flip, risking everything for his comrade, had made his way down it in the dark. Hazel would have been a dull clod indeed if there had been no gratitude in his heart for that!

The sun had risen now, and its beams were gathering strength. There was not much warmth in them; the temperature was still several degrees below freezing-point. But Flip felt less cold than he had. He could stamp about now without fear of going over the edge of the narrow ledge; could do a few exercises that helped to make his blood run again. He was too utterly tired out for much of that sort of thing. If he once got warm he would go to sleep, he felt sure. And sleep was not for him yet.

"You won't mind being left here for a bit, Hazel, will you?" he croaked.

The tears started to run down Hazel's face again.

"Oh, don't leave me, Flip!" he pleaded.

"I must, old chap! We've no grub, you know—no anything. I'll see if I can do anything to make you easier first. But I'm bound to go, you know."

"Oh, don't, don't!" said Hazel, in weak passion. "I shall die if I'm left here alone! I know I shall!"

"You'll die, anyway, when your time comes; but not before!" Flip croaked, grimly cheerful. "It will come jolly soon if you don't get out of this, I reckon. I shan't be long. The very first place I get to will be good enough for me. They're bound to help when they're told how things are."

"Don't go yet, Flip! My knee's so bad! Have a look at it first!"

"Oh, I'm going to do that!" replied Flip.

"Mustn't mind if I hurt you a bit."

"I don't mind anything as long as you don't leave me alone, old man!"

Flip and Marjorie.

"COMIN' along, Goggs?" asked Tunstall, after classes next morning.

"I have an imposition to write, I regret to say, otherwise I should be charmed, I assure you."

Tunstall grinned. He had not yet had time to get used to Goggs, though he had already begun to like him considerably.

"Do you always talk in that dashed way, an' do your impots at once, like a good little Goggs?" Tunstall asked.

"That is the usual style of my conversation, I believe. I trust that you do not object to it?"

"Oh, not at all, by Jupiter! As long as it doesn't make you feel silly it's all right, old top. It would me, I know."

"I do not often feel silly. I only look silly," replied Goggs sadly.

Tunstall clapped him hard on the back.

"Cheer-ho, old top!" he said. "You don't look half as silly as you are—I mean, you ain't half as silly as you look. No, that isn't it, either. I'm getting mixed up. What I mean is, if you look silly, it's because it suits you to. I should like to see you with those dashed goggles off, by Jupiter!"

Goggs removed them at once. Tunstall had not expected that he would. He had anticipated some excuse.

Still less had he expected the bright blue eyes that looked humorously at him when the disfiguring glasses were removed. There was no sign of weakness about those eyes, and they redeemed quite wonderfully the effect of the snub nose and distinctly plain features.

"You don't need 'em a snap, Goggs!" said Tunstall.

"In any ocular sense—no. Though there was a time when I did. But they have other uses. When I arrived here I was also suffering from deafness—perhaps suffering is hardly the right word, however, as the defect was imaginary. That has ceased to serve any turn, since Ponsonby and his friends have learned that I am hostile. At least, it has ceased to serve any turn except the annoyance of the respected Mr. Mobbs."

"Anythin' that does that is dashed useful!" said Tunstall.

"I will not say that you pain me, Tunstall, for that would not be true. I will freely confess that my feelings towards Mr. Mobbs fall somewhat short of love and reverence."

"I should dashed well think so! Are you

goin' to be ass enough to stick in here scrawlin' away at that impot for the little worm?"

"I never scrawl, Tunstall." Goggs exhibited his script, which could hardly have been neater had he been at work upon an examination-paper with marks depending upon the handwriting. "But I do not see any necessity for considering Mr. Mobbs' feelings to the extent of hurrying over this task, especially as you desire me to go out with you."

"Come along, then, you dashed old wordslinger! You can put your goggles on again if you like. I'm not ashamed to be seen with them—not now I've seen behind them."

The two went downstairs and out together. On the way they met Mr. Mobbs, who favoured them with a comprehensive scowl of sour displeasure, but said nothing—which, as Tunstall remarked, was quite the best thing he could say.

"Where are we going, Tunstall?" asked Goggs, when they were well outside the gates.

"By Jupiter, you're a knock-out! Didn't it occur to you to ask that before now?"

"I have no anxiety on the subject—merely a slight natural curiosity."

"We're goin' to Cliff House. Any objection?"

"None whatever, Tunstall, I assure you. Quite the contrary, indeed!"

Tunstall grinned.

"If you'd been told before you might have kept me waitin' while you adorned yourself, old man," he said.

"I think not. I trust that I am always neat. A person of my unprepossessing personal appearance could not afford to indulge himself in the sartorial glories of such as Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour. You yourself, Tunstall, are something in the nut line—if the remark does not offend you."

"I am, whether it does or not, I suppose. It doesn't, as it happens. I like to look decent, but I'm not a dashed pop, like Vav. Vav's about the giddy outside edge in that way. He can give even Pon points."

Goggs did not answer that. He subsided into a thoughtful silence, which lasted until Tunstall exclaimed:

"There they are—all four of them! I suppose you know them all, Goggs?"

"Yes, I know them all. But Miss Trevlyn and Miss Howell I know but slightly."

"Jolly nice girls, both of them! If that sort of thing were in my line I should be quite gone on Phyllis. Though I'm not so sure that Flip's sister isn't the best and prettiest of the crowd, after all."

"I consider that she is," said Goggs gravely. "I entertain a high regard for Miss Hazel—dear; but I think Miss Derwent unapproachable."

"Rough on you, Goggs! Can't say I've ever found her so. She's like a particularly nice an' friendly fellow—no end like her brother."

The girls were still out of earshot, though drawing nearer.

"You misapprehend me, Tunstall—whether wilfully or otherwise—"

"That's all right, old top! I twig all serene."

"What I mean," said Goggs gravely, "is that in my eyes Miss Derwent is—"

"Perfect! Oh, yaas, Goggs, I've seen chaps taken that way before. They don't all carry it as well as you do. There was Pon, now. He was gone on Flip. That was what made the rotter suck up to young Flip. Pon was in the way of makin' himself a bit of a nuisance—"

Tunstall stopped short. Goggs' jaw had stiffened ominously, and his hands had clenched. He did not look so meek and mild now.

He said nothing; but Tunstall was very certain that if ever Pon gave Philippa Derwent any trouble he would have to reckon with Goggs. Tunstall rather hoped it might be so. He would have liked to see Goggs really handling Cecil Ponsonby.

Now the girls drew near, and hats came off, and there were greetings—very hearty greetings for Tunstall, who was a favourite with all four; and as hearty, if less demonstrative, from Marjorie and Flip to Johnny Goggs. At present Phyllis and Miss Clara, not knowing so much about Goggs, were inclined to regard him as rather soft and silly.

Presently the six broke up into two detachments. Tunstall went ahead with Phyllis and Clara; Goggs found himself walking between Flip and Marjorie in the rear.

From the trio in front came gay peals of rippling laughter, punctuated by the "Ha, ha, ha!" of Tunstall, in deeper notes. But in the rear the conversation took a more serious turn.

"Oh, have you heard anything?" asked Marjorie eagerly.

"About the two runaways, you mean, of course?" said Goggs. "Yes, I have heard something, though I do not know that it is of extreme importance. They were certainly in London two evenings ago, for Mr. Mobbs saw them there."

"Did he go up to hunt for them?" inquired Flap.

"I do not think so. I fancy that he was there on his private affairs. They came into a restaurant in which he was taking tea, and your brother, Miss Derwent—"

"My friends call me Flap, you know."

"It is an honour that you should remind me of that fact, and I appreciate highly the implication involved, Miss Der-Flap, I mean."

"You mustn't let Clara hear you talking like that, you know."

"Why not?"

"She would giggle, and that might hurt your feelings."

Goggs appeared to give grave consideration to this idea.

"No," he said, at length: "I do not think that Miss Trevlyn's derision would really hurt my feelings. Let me resume my narrative, however. It appears that your brother hailed an Australian officer, who was taking tea, as an old friend—"

"Now, I wonder who that could have been!" broke in Flap. "I can't think, unless—it couldn't have been Walter Leith, surely! But go on. I ought not to interrupt you like this."

"I do not know who it was, of course. I have only heard that your brother and Miss Hazeldene—"

"Marjorie's," corrected "Miss Hazeldene" gently.

"Thank you!" said Goggs. "Your brother and Marjorie's made a summary exit—"

"Did a bunk, Flap would say," murmured Flap.

"Ah, yes! The expression is more forcible, certainly. I had not the advantage of your brother's early rearing."

"Flap ran pretty wild," said Flap.

"And I am so very, very tame!" sighed Goggs.

"You're not! You only pretend to be—that's all."

"Mr. Mobbs saw them no more. That is all I know of them. I have found out more about the circumstances connected with Flap's departure, but as yet there is nothing I can use to clear him."

"I don't see how he can be cleared," said Flap, with a touch of despondence.

"Of having behaved foolishly—no. But of what seemed the more wanton part of the offence—yes. Not immediately, perhaps; but, with luck favouring, in a few days possibly."

"Marjorie's so worried about Hazel," Flap said. "I tell her that he must be all right, for I know that Flap is; and I'm sure Flap wouldn't let any harm come to him."

"He might not be able to help it," said

Marjorie sadly. "And I'm afraid Hazel might be an awful burden to Flap at best. I know what Hazel is when he's in trouble."

"But how can you tell Flap is all right, Miss-er-Flap?" inquired Goggs.

"Oh, I always know if anything is really seriously wrong with Flap; I feel it in my bones—no, not exactly that, either; but I feel it, and I'm quite certain, and I'm never wrong."

"That is interesting," Goggs said. "Mental telepathy, I suppose. A most fascinating subject. You have not had this feeling of late—since your brother went?"

"Yes, I have. Once—that was all. It came and passed quite suddenly. It must have been some momentary danger."

They rounded a corner as Flap spoke, and just ahead, coming towards them, saw two figures.

One was that of a tall, lithe Australian officer. The other was short and very fat, with big spectacles, and a round head surmounted by a greyish cap.

Tunstall and the two girls with him had passed these two.

"That's Bunter," said Marjorie. "He's a horrid fellow, though I don't think he knows how horrid he is."

"Why, it's Walter Leith!" cried Flap. And she sprang forward to greet the upstanding young Australian.

(To be continued.)

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LACY'S LOSS.

(Continued from page 12.)

"Gentlemen, the missing article's found. This cheery merchant is going to get the reward. You had better travel."

And Messrs. Wiggins & Co., in great disgust, travelled.

So near, and yet so far! It was hard lines for Wiggins & Co.!

"An' now Racke's goin' to have his reward," remarked Cardew. "It won't be five quids for Racke, though. I suggest a dozen bumps, hard!"

"Yaas, wathah."

Racke made a rush for the door, but he was promptly collared. He was swept off his feet in the grasp of the juniors.

"Leggo!" he roared.

"You scheming rotter!" said Tom Merry sternly. "You wanted to make out that Grundy had stolen the pin!"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Racke. "It was only a joke. I was going to give it back to Lacy next time I saw him! Do you think I was going to keep it, you silly idiot? Leggo!"

"No, I don't think you'd have kept it," said Tom. "But you wanted to make as much trouble as possible between us and the Grammar School crowd, and you've done that, too. And now you're going to get your reward! Down with him!"

Bump!

"Yarrah!"

Bump, bump!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Racke.

But the juniors did not cease till the full dozen bumps had been administered, and then Racke was allowed to crawl away.

Justice had been done—indeed, Aubrey Racke, as he limped, groaning, to his study, felt that it had been overdone.

The news that the missing diamond pin had been found had the effect of clearing off the reward-seekers, and when P. C. Crump arrived at St. Jim's he found that his services were not required. The circumstances—or some of them—were explained to Mr. Raiton.

The Housemaster learned that Lacy had lost the pin at St. Jim's, and that Racke had found it. But he was not told that Racke had hidden it in the first place, or the cad of the Shell would certainly have been flogged for his peculiar sense of humour.

Tom Merry & Co. cycled over to the Grammar School in the afternoon with the pin and an explanation. Grundy went with them; and Lacy, having heard the explanation, decided to apologise to Grundy for his unfounded suspicions.

Probably Grundy's truculent look had something to do with that. Grundy was looking dissatisfied when the St. Jim's juniors left.

"I'd rather have licked him!" he growled. "Never mind, I'll lick Racke!"

And Racke was not given the option of an apology. Grundy bestowed a terrific licking upon the misguided humorist; and while he was about it he licked Crooke as well.

And the next time Algernon Lacy came over to visit his smoky friends Grundy had an eye open, and he fell upon the black sheep of the Grammar School and smote him hip and thigh. After that, Grundy was satisfied, and he let the matter drop.

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"THE SCHOOLBOY HUN!" by Martin Clifford.)

Your Editor

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"THE SCHOOLBOY HUN!"

By Martin Clifford.

The schoolboy Hun is really not a very bad specimen of a Hun; in fact, he is not a Hun at all. But he has a German name and a very German uncle, who brings him to St. Jim's; and these two circumstances are quite sufficient to arouse prejudice against him among the more unthinking fellows at St. Jim's. Grundy is especially biased and bitter, whereas Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, not so much by way of thinking it out as through the possession of a soft and generous heart, takes another view. I think you will all like Paul Laurence, though he is labelled "Hun," and will all be interested not only in this, but in the stories about him which will follow it.

LIST OF TOM MERRY STORIES IN THE "GEM"—(continued).

- 331.—Algy of St. Jim's.
- 332.—Playing a Part.
- 333.—Ordered Off.
- 334.—The Toif. (The first story of Talbot.)
- 335.—Hero and Rascal.
- 336.—The Hidden Hand.
- 337.—The Parting of the Ways.

- 338.—Monty Lowther's Mistake.
- 339.—The Outsider's Choice.
- 340.—Gussy's House-Party.
- 341.—Held by the Enemy.
- 342.—The St. Jim's Caravanners.
- 343.—The Housemaster's Bodyguard.
- 344.—Levison's Last Chance.
- 345.—The Fighting Prefect.
- 346.—The Secret Committee.
- 347.—Tom Merry's Find.
- 348.—Scouts to the Fore.
- 349.—The St. Jim's Airmen.
- 350.—Tom Merry & Co. on Guard.
- 351.—The King's Pardon.
- 352.—Working His Way.
- 353.—Saving Talbot!
- 354.—Tom Merry's War Fund.
- 355.—Captured by Cipher.
- 356.—Keeping it Dark.
- 357.—The St. Jim's Refugee.
- 358.—Talbot's Triumph.
- 359.—Talbot's Christmas.
- 360.—The Foe of St. Jim's.