

SPLENDID STORIES & CASH PRIZES FOR READERS!

The **GEM** ¹/₂

No. 653. Vol. XVIII. **LIBRARY** Aug. 14th, 1920. 20 PAGES.

"BEATEN HOLLOW!" & "THE DETECTIVE'S DILEMMA!"
IN THIS ISSUE.



A STRANGE CRICKET MATCH! "LADYBIRDS V. ST. JIM'S JUNIORS"!
(An Astonishing Scene in this week's Grand School Story.)

WIN ONE OF OUR HALF-CROWNS!

SEE PARTICULARS BELOW!



NOTE.—Half-a-crown will be awarded to the sender of every paragraph published on this page.

A Collier's Life.

I work in a colliery in Wales, and get up at 5.45, to start work at seven. We go down the pit after lighting our lamps, and walk in about 300 yards, where the fireman stops us to see that our lamps are safely locked before we start work. Then we walk on about a mile, till we get to the "face." Here we strip to the waist, and hack out the coal with a pick. The miner's pick is called a mandrel. Then we pick up the coal, and put it in the trams by means of the curling-box. After the tram is bedded we start to race, that is putting the lumps on the side of the tram, and filling the middle up with smaller lumps. The haulier comes with his horse, and pulls the full tram out, while an empty one is run in. Several trams are linked together, and pulled off by a small engine. At the double parting a bigger engine takes twenty trams in tow.—Richard Davies, 59, High Street, Senghenydd, Glam., South Wales.

Rabbits and a Hen.

Dutch rabbits are excellent as pets. They are hardy and easy to keep. Their food should consist of grain, roots, meal, green foods, and hay. Don't buy cheap grain—only the best. There should be no wet green-food.

Now, as to the hen:

Said the famous Henry Ward Beecher To a hen, "You're a beautiful creature."

The hen answered, "I beg,

You'll accept of an egg."

And thus did the hen re-Ward Beecher.

—F. G. Warrington, 40, Castle Avenue, Higham's Park, Essex, E. 4.

A Puzzle.

Often talked of, never seen;
Ever coming, never been;
Daily looked for, never here;
Still approaching in the near.
Thousands for my presence wait,
But, alas, such is my fate,
Though expected to appear,
They will never see me here.

—To-morrow.

—R. A. Jenkins, 24, Risca Road, Newport, Mon.

The New Jack Horner.

"My Readers' Own Corner,"

Said little Jack Horner,

"Is much liked in town.

I'll tell you just why,

They all like to try,

To win, if they can, half-a-crown."

—Arthur Lee, 293, Whit Lane, Pendleton, Manchester.

How to Bind "Gems."

Put the books in their exact order, then gum a quarter of an inch strip on the back edge of the front cover of each number, starting with the copy at the bottom of the pile, and arranging so that the first number comes out on top. Then cut a piece of thick brown paper large enough to form a cover. Gum the part of the brown paper that will cover the back edges, and then stick it on to the books, and the result is quite satisfactory. For a title, cut separate letters from the heading of a daily paper, and gum them on the front of the cover.—Leslie Weeks, 34, Heavittree Road, Plumstead, Woolwich, S.E.13.

Curious.

A man was seen walking over London Bridge reading a paper, just as the clock struck twelve. What was his name? Answer: Saunders—because his father's name was Saunders.—Miss Ivy Sills, 18, Mortimer Road, East Ham, E. 6.

The Battle of Gosforthmuir.

There's some say that we won,
And some that they won,
And some say that none won at all, man;
But of one thing I'm sure,
That at Gosforthmuir,
A battle there was which I saw, man.
And we ran, and they ran,
And they ran, and we ran,
And we ran, and they ran, awa', man.
—Henry Bell, 18, Henry Street, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Old [Mother. Shipton.

About a week ago I visited Knaresborough, and saw old Mother Shipton's Cave and the Dropping Well. Mother Shipton was a wonderful person, and all her prophecies up to now have come true. One of them was:

Around the world thought shall fly,
In the twinkling of an eye.

That meant the telegraph. The Dropping Well turns all objects placed beneath it, and left for a period of time, into stone. I strongly advise all persons who can, to pay a visit to the place.
—P. Scatchard, 26, Garden Road, Brighouse, Yorks.

Our Oldest Roads.

The oldest visible roads are those by which pilgrims used to travel. Between Castleacre and Walsingham may still be seen the Palmers' Way, and in the West Country there is the ancient Prayer Way, which led to holy Glastonbury, once the most famous abbey in the land. But the best known of these routes is the Pilgrims' Way, from Winchester to Canterbury, the most popular of all the old pilgrimages, and the one dealt with by Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales." This path leads over Reigate Hill, and it may be traced by the yew trees which were planted alongside the way to provide the good yew bow for the fighting-men of the bygone. All through Surrey you find the old bridle paths, which were the only link in the past between the towns. These pathways are only a few feet wide. There is hardly room for two mounted men to pass. Goods were carried along these routes on pack-horses.—W. Thorley, 256, Ripon Street, Bradford, Yorks.

A Sense of Humour.

A Brighton newsagent has deliberately thrown away his best customer. "Is it possible," asked a client, "to get a copy of the GEM for a week back?" "Couldn't say for certain," replied the newsagent, "but wouldn't it be better to try a porous plaster? They tell me they never fail."—H. Smith, jun., 49, Winter Road, Norwich.

The Answer.

A prisoner was being tried for assaulting a police-constable. "Now," said the magistrate, "tell me at once, without any prevarication, did you, or did you not, strike the officer?" The accused looked thoughtful for a moment, then brightened up. "The answer is in the infirmary," he said.—John G. Kelly, 62, Errol Street, Liverpool, S.

Contributions are invited from readers of the "GEM" for publication on this page. Anything will do, so long as it is interesting, short, and concise—a good joke, a description of a holiday, a bright idea for increasing the popularity of the "Gem," a good anecdote. "Pars" should not be more than three hundred words long—the shorter the better. They can be sent in on a postcard. Address all contributions to The Editor, The "Gem" Library, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and mark them "Readers' Own Corner."

A HIGHLY AMUSING COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE.

BEATEN HOLLOW!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale,
dealing with the adventures of Tom
Merry & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER 1.

A Curious Challenge!

"**E**XTWAORDINARY!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that exclamation. He was seated on the empty coal-scuttle in the junior Common-room at St. Jim's—having first carefully placed a sheet of newspaper on the scuttle to protect his spotless trousers—and he was deeply engrossed in the local paper.

"Extwaordinawy!" repeated Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry & Co., who were standing in front of the mantelpiece, discussing (a) the weather, (b) the afternoon's cricket, and (c) the programme for the evening, surveyed the swell of St. Jim's in astonishment.

"What's wrong, Gussy?" inquired Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet.

"Extwaordinawy!" he repeated.

"That's the third time you've made that remark, you chump!" said Manners.

"What's extraordinary?"

"Gussy must be referring to his face, or his fancy-waistcoat, or his razzle-dazzle socks," said Monty Lowther.

"They're all extraordinary!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, this is not a subject for wibald mewwiment. It is a weally sevious mattah."

"What is, you burbling duffer?" shouted Tom Merry.

"This challenge."

"Eh?"

"On pewusin' this week's issue of the 'Wayland Gazette,' deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

"I find, in the advertisement column, a pawagwaph which I can only descwibe as extwaordinawy!"

"What's it all about?" demanded Manners.

Arthur Augustus handed the paper to the Terrible Three. And he indicated the paragraph which had arrested his attention.

When they came to read that paragraph, Tom Merry & Co. were inclined to agree with their noble chum that it was indeed extraordinary.

It ran as follows:

"**THE LADYBIRDS CRICKET CLUB** (composed of ladies only) hereby challenge any junior team of schoolboys (average age 15) to play a match with them on Wednesday afternoon next. The object of this challenge is to prove that girls are far superior to boys in the matter of cricket. Should the challenge not be accepted, the Ladybirds will conclude that there is no local team of schoolboys which has the courage to face them. Any replies to this advertisement should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Miss Ursula R. Dunn, Box X.Y.Z., 'Wayland Gazette' Office."

"Well, I'm dashed!" said Tom Merry.

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Manners.

"Well, I'm dashed and blowed and jiggered!" said Monty Lowther.

The Terrible Three were no less impressed than Arthur Augustus had been.

"Extwaordinawy, deah boys, isn't it?" said the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry nodded.

"There's no other word for it!" he said.

"Fancy a girls' team having the giddy nerve to challenge a team of school-boys!" said Manners.

"It fairly beats the band, takes the cake, and prances off with the whole blessed box of tricks!" said Monty Lowther.

A crowd of Shell fellows and Fourth-

Formers came into the Common-room at that moment.

"Seen this, you fellows?" said Tom Merry.

The others had not seen it. And when they did peruse that amazing paragraph they fairly gasped.

"What awful nerve!" said Jack Blake.

"Colossal cheek, I call it," said Harry Noble.

"As if a team in petticoats could possibly hold a candle to a boys' eleven—ourselves, frinstance!"

"It must be a jape," said Talbot.

"It's genuine enough," said Tom Merry.

"The question is, what are we going to do about it?"

"Ignore it, dear man," drawled Cardew.

"What! And let Miss Dunn and her merry maidens think that we're funky of meeting them?" exclaimed Manners.

"No jolly fear!"

"I considah, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, surveying the captain of the Shell through his monocle, "that it's up to us to accept that challenge."

"Hear, hear!"

"There's been a lot too much jaw lately about the supposed equality of the sexes," said Jack Blake.

"Of course, girls are very nice, in an ornamental sort of way. In fact, they're quite useful when it comes to knitting a fellow's socks and ties. But they can't play cricket for toffee—and they never could!"

"We could lick any girls' team, even if we played blindfolded, and used pokers instead of bats!" was Sidney Clive's comment.

"Yes, rather!"

"Those in favour of taking up this challenge, show their hands!" said Tom Merry.

Quite a forest of hands shot up.

Everybody seemed to be in favour of

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

meeting and defeating the presumptuous Ladybirds' eleven.

"All serene," said the captain of the Shell. "I'll write to Miss Dunn straight away!"

And he did so, the rest of the juniors giving him a hand with the composition of the letter.

The reply to the challenge was posted in time for the last collection. And for the remainder of the evening the St. Jim's juniors discussed the amazing affair.

On all sides it was agreed that, if the match came off, it could have only one result—the overwhelming defeat of the Ladybirds. And everybody hoped that the match would come off, in order that the audacious young ladies who had issued the challenge might be put in their places.

No reply came to Tom Merry's letter the next day, or the day after. And by Wednesday dinner-time it was generally considered that the girls had backed out—that they did not relish the prospect of facing the St. Jim's junior eleven on the cricket-field.

After dinner, however, there were developments.

The Terrible Three were strolling in the quad, in their flannels, when Kildare of the Sixth bore down upon them.

"Merry," he said, "you're wanted."

"Where, Kildare?"

"On the 'phone in the prefects' room. It's a lady," added the captain of St. Jim's, with a smile.

"Tommy," said Monty Lowther, wagging an admonishing forefinger at his chum, "I'm shocked—nay, disgusted! Fancy a youth of your tender years indulging in flirtations!"

"Don't be an ass!" growled Tom Merry. "It's Cousin Ethel, I expect, or possibly my Aunt Priscilla."

"May we come along and hear you whisper sweet nothings into the transmitter?" inquired Manners.

Tom Merry walked away without replying; and his two chums, exchanging significant winks, followed him to the prefects' room.

The receiver was off its hooks, just as Kildare had left it. Tom Merry put it to his ear and spoke into the transmitter.

"Hallo!"

A shrill, feminine voice sounded over the wires.

"Is that Tom Merry?"

"Yes."

"This is Miss Dunn, the organiser, secretary, and captain of the Ladybirds Cricket Club."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Did you get my letter, Miss Dunn?"

"I did."

"And you're prepared to play against our eleven?"

"Of course!"

"That's good!" said the captain of the Shell. "We were beginning to think you had backed out—"

"You had no right to thing anything of the sort!" came the tart reply.

"Ahem! Would you like to come to our ground at St. Jim's, Miss Dunn, or would you prefer us to come to yours?"

"We will come to St. Jim's. We shall arrive in half an hour, and we shall expect you to have the goal-posts ready."

"The—the goal-posts?" stammered Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"But—but goal-posts aren't used in cricket! We'll see that the stumps are up, if that's what you mean."

"Very well. Of course, you understand that the members of your team

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

will be expected to bat, bowl, and field left-handed!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Unless you consent to this arrangement, we shan't play!"

"Oh!"

Tom Merry hesitated for a moment. Every member of his eleven was a right-handed player, and to play with the left hand only would be a very severe handicap to the team.

Even so, the captain of the Shell felt that it would be quite safe to allow Miss Dunn that concession. These Ladybirds appeared to understand very little about cricket: and it would be quite possible for a left-handed team to beat them comfortably.

"All serene, Miss Dunn!" said Tom Merry at length. "We'll agree to bat, bowl, and field with the left hand only. But it's rather a pity that you didn't make that stipulation when you published your challenge in the paper."

"It's an understood thing," was the reply, "that when boys play against girls they use the left hand only."

"Well, we won't quarrel about it," said Tom Merry. "I've no doubt we can lick you by playing left-handed—Ahem! I mean—"

"I regard you as a very rude boy! And the Ladybirds will make a special point of administering a crushing defeat to you this afternoon!"

"That remains to be seen, Miss Dunn!" chuckled Tom Merry.

And he rang off.

Manners and Monty Lowther had heard sufficient of the conversation to know what it was all about.

"So the girls are coming?" said Manners.

"Yes; in half an hour."

"Good!"

Tom Merry rounded up the other members of the team, and there was great excitement in the junior section of St. Jim's.

"We shall be wathah handicapped, deah boys, by havin' to bat an' bowl an' field left-handed," said Arthur Augustus.

"But, all the same, theah can be only one result to the match."

"A win for St. Jim's by about two hundred runs," said Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. waited, with keen anticipation, for the Ladybirds to arrive.

CHAPTER 2.

A Shock for St. Jim's!

"HERE they come!" said Talbot. The St. Jim's juniors were at practice, on Little Side,

when a brake rumbled up, with eleven members of the fair sex on board.

Tom Merry & Co. promptly sprinted on to the scene, and assisted the young ladies to alight.

They were very remarkable young ladies. Not one of them could by any stretch of the imagination have been termed beautiful. Powder and paint were strongly in evidence on their faces; and their attire was rightly described by Arthur Augustus as "extwaordinawy." They wore knitted jumpers and gaudy skirts; and their hats were anything but Paris models. As for their shoes, they were on a par with those of the ploughman who homeward plodded his weary way.

A sturdily-built, ginger-haired girl, with bushy eyebrows, scanned the St. Jim's juniors.

"Which is Tom Merry?" she asked.

The captain of the Shell came forward with a smile.

"Oh, you're the guy, are you? I'm Miss Dunn."

"Pleased to meet you!" said Tom Merry, shaking hands.

"I'll introduce you to the rest of my team," said Miss Dunn. "Miss Jones, Miss Harris, Miss Smart, Miss Lightfoot—"

Tom Merry shook hands with each of the girls in turn; and he was astonished at the heartiness of their handgrips.

"Miss Boosey, Miss Bates, Miss Flipjack, Miss Larkins, Miss Freke, and Miss Filbert. There, that's the lot!" said Miss Dunn.

Tom Merry's hand was quite limp by the time he had greeted the members of the Ladybirds eleven.

"Are you weady to start, deah girls?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, rather!" said Miss Dunn, in brisk, high-pitched tones. "Hand me a bat!"

"It's the usual thing to toss for choice of innings," said Figgins.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the New House were in the St. Jim's team, and they were very glad indeed that they had been included. As Fatty Wynn remarked in an undertone to Kerr, he wouldn't have missed this pantomime for worlds.

Tom Merry spun a coin.

"Tails!" said Miss Dunn.

"It's a head," said the captain of the Shell.

"Then we'll bat first!"

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry, "but that's our privilege, you know!"

"Oh, very well!" said Miss Dunn, with a pout. "Come along, girls! And no slacking in the field, mind! We musn't allow these boys to score too many goals!"

"My only aunt!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Miss Dunn led her team on to the field, to the accompaniment of a slightly ironical cheer from the pavilion.

"Did you ever see such a rummy-looking collection?" said Jack Blake.

"No, never!" said Harry Noble.

Tom Merry and Talbot stepped on to the field to open the St. Jim's innings. They had not taken the trouble to don pads or batting-gloves. Evidently they imagined that the girls' bowling would be far from deadly.

Kildare and Darrel, of the Sixth, were the umpires, and they were grinning broadly.

Tom Merry took his stand—in a left-handed position, of course—and Miss Dunn bowled to him.

The captain of the Shell expected to see the ball come creeping along the turf at a snail's pace. On the contrary, it travelled with the velocity of a bullet!

Tom Merry scarcely saw it. It crashed on to his wicket, and there was a yell from the fair "fieldsmen."

"How's that?"

Kildare's hand went up, and Tom Merry, looking utterly dazed, started to walk back to the pavilion.

"Of course, you did that on purpose, Tommy?" said Jack Blake, as the captain of the Shell came up the pavilion steps.

"Eh?"

"You didn't attempt to hit that ball!"

"Oh, yes, I did."

"What!"

"But it was simply unplayable. It had me beaten all the way."

"My hat! Must have been a thundering fluke, then!" said Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the next man in.

The swell of St. Jim's looked rather grim as he stepped on to the playing-pitch. He had made up his mind that he would show the Ladybirds no mercy. He would make hay of their bowling, and when he had been at the wickets a couple of hours or so, hitting out like a Jessop,



A brake rumbled up to the gates, with eleven members of the fair sex on board. A sturdily-built, ginger-haired girl scanned the St. Jim's juniors. "Where is Tom Merry?" she asked. The captain of the Shell came with outstretched hand. (See Chapter 2.)

Miss Dunn would be heartily sorry that she had inserted that challenge in the local paper.

"Who is this coming forth now?" said Miss Dunn.

"Looks a regular toff, doesn't he?" murmured Miss Jones.

"Knock his wicket down, Ursula!" urged Miss Harris.

Miss Dunn took a businesslike grip on the ball.

"Play!" she croaked.

Arthur Augustus took guard.

"I'm quite weady, deah gal!" he said.

The ball came whizzing along the turf, and the batsman swiped at it. More by accident than design, he managed to hit it, and it went speeding away towards the boundary-line.

"Come along, Talbot!" said Arthur Augustus. "Wun, deah boy!"

But Talbot stood motionless.

"Look!" he gasped.

Miss Freke had been standing on the boundary-line, engaged in powdering her nose. When the ball came in her direction she did not turn and flee. She threw the powder-puff on to the ground, and calmly caught the ball. It landed fairly and squarely in her hands, and the on-lookers were far too astonished to applaud the catch. They could only gasp.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "It wathah looks as if I'm out, you know!"

"Yaas, deah boy, I'm afwaid it does!" mimicked Miss Dunn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Looking very bewildered, the swell of St. Jim's returned to the pavilion. And as he went, he kept muttering to himself:

"Extwaordin'w'y!" and "Most wemark-able, bai Jove!"

"Two wickets down, and not a run scored!" said Tom Merry. "Go ahead, Figgy! We musn't let the girls have things too much their own way!"

Figgins went in to bat with an expression of grim determination on his face. He fully intended to succeed where Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus had failed. But he was not accustomed to batting left-handed, and Miss Dunn's next ball made a terrible mess of his wicket. The balls were scattered to the winds, and two of the stumps shot clean out of the ground.

"M-m-my hat!" stammered Figgins.

"Another victim!" chortled Miss Jones. "This beats coconut-shies any day!"

With burning cheeks, Figgins walked back to the pavilion. His place at the wicket was taken by Harry Noble, and the Australian junior managed to open the scoring. He snicked a fast ball from Miss Dunn through the slips, and the batsmen crossed twice.

Further runs followed. But both Harry Noble and Talbot felt strangely ill at ease. The bowling was good—quite as good as any that was encountered in junior cricket. And, of course, the batsmen laboured under the handicap of playing left-handed.

With ten runs on the board, Talbot was clean bowled.

And then came a startling collapse.

The remaining batsmen could make no headway at all against the swift and deadly deliveries of the Ladybirds.

Duck's eggs were the order of the day,

and the St. Jim's eleven was finally dismissed for the puny total of fifteen.

"This is awful!" groaned Tom Merry.

"Simply appallin', deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"All out for fifteen!" gasped Jack Blake. "Did you ever?"

"There's one consolation," said Manners. "We shall get the girls out for even less than that."

"Don't forget that we've got to bowl and field left-handed," said Talbot.

The Ladybirds were smiling cheerfully. They seemed to have no qualms as to how the game would go. Indeed, Miss Dunn was heard to remark that she would get the necessary runs off her own bat.

"Come along, Flossie!" she said cheerfully. "Don't trouble to put any batting-gloves on, my dear. The bowling will have no terrors for us!"

The young lady addressed as "Flossie" was Miss Jones, and she promptly accompanied her leader to the wickets.

The crowd of spectators had swelled enormously.

Practically the whole of the Shell and the Fourth were looking on at the match, and the flags were there to a man. Even the high-and-mighty men of the Sixth, hearing what was going on, came out to see the fun.

Tom Merry and Talbot shared the bowling. Both were excellent bowlers in the ordinary way, but their left-handed deliveries were naturally feeble.

Whack!

Miss Dunn sent her first ball skimming away over the turf.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

"You needn't trouble to run, Flossie," she said. "It's a boundary!"

And so it was. Figgins, who was fielding near the railings, gathered up the ball, and returned it to Tom Merry.

"Buck up, Tommy, for goodness' sake!" he growled.

But Tom Merry's second ball had a worse fate than the first. Miss Dunn ran forward to meet it, and she sent it soaring away, to alight with a thud on the tiled roof of the pavilion.

The Ladybirds clapped their hands delightedly.

"Hurrah!"

"Well hit, Ursula!"

As for the St. Jim's spectators, they sat spellbound. This was the first time they had ever seen a girl—a mere girl—despatch a ball on to the pavilion roof. Cousin Ethel was rather an athletic young lady, and so was Marie Rivers, the school nurse; but neither could have made a hit of that description.

Tom Merry's next ball was dead on the wicket, and Miss Dunn contented herself with tapping it back to the bowler.

The following ball, however, pitched short, and the "batsman" punished it without mercy. She sent it clean out of the ground, and there was a chorus of applause from the Ladybirds who were looking on.

"Bravo, Ursula!"

"We've won the game!"

"Hip, hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

The girls had indeed won. There had been two hits for six, and one for four, and the St. Jim's total had been passed. Miss Dunn had won the match off her own bat in one over!

Tom Merry's face was a study.

"Carry me home to die, somebody!" he groaned.

"It seems utterly incredible that they have licked us!" said Arthur Augustus. "I would have been pweared to wagah my Sunday toppah that we twounded the Ladybirds!"

Miss Dunn was chuckling.

"I haven't finished yet," she said. "And Flossie hasn't even started! When she does start, you boys will have plenty of leather-chasing to do."

And so it proved.

Miss Jones played quite as vigorous a game as her partner, and the perspiring St. Jim's fieldsmen had a very sorry time of it.

The score mounted apace.

Fifty went up on the telegraph-board, and sixty and seventy followed at brief intervals.

The Ladybirds seemed to be carrying all before them.

Tom Merry tried fresh bowlers, but the only result was to increase the rate of scoring.

Finally, in desperation, the captain of the Shell turned to Miss Dunn.

"Look here," he said. "Now that you've beaten us, you ought to allow us to play right-handed in the usual way."

But Miss Dunn was adamant.

"The conditions governing the game must be observed," she said.

"Oh, crumbs!"

At the end of another hour's leather-hunting the St. Jim's fieldsmen were out of breath and out of temper. They realised that the Ladybirds were making them the laughing-stock of the school, and the position was decidedly humiliating.

The score now stood at 150, and Miss Dunn and Miss Jones were still going strong. Nothing could shift them.

Finally the captain of the Ladybirds threw down her bat.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 663.

"Going to chuck it, Miss Dunn?" asked Tom Merry hopefully.

"Only for a time," was the reply. "I could do with some refreshment, couldn't you, Flossie?"

"Yes, rather!" said Miss Jones.

Tea had been set out on the grass, in the shade of the elms, and the weary male cricketers and the unwary female ones strolled in that direction.

The Ladybirds attacked the cakes and pastries with healthy appetites. But the appetites of Tom Merry & Co. seemed to have failed them completely.

Even Fatty Wynn was too exhausted to do full justice to the good things.

"You boys don't appear to be eating anything," observed Miss Dunn.

"We—we're not feelin' vewy hungwy. deah gal!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"I should advise you to pile in and lay a solid foundation," said Miss Dunn. "You'll be fielding for hours and hours yet!"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

Bitterly did the juniors regret having accepted the Ladybirds' challenge to a cricket match.

But they could not back out now. Having gone so far, they had to see the thing through. And the prospect of a further spell of fielding beneath the blazing sun was anything but pleasant!

CHAPTER 3. Unmasked!

AFTER tea Miss Dunn and Miss Jones continued to make the fur fly.

The girls hit out recklessly, and the scorers found it difficult to keep pace with them.

In the field the St. Jim's juniors puffed and panted and perspired, and waited for the Ladybirds to declare the innings closed.

But they waited in vain.

Miss Dunn seemed to have no intention of declaring. She would probably have remained at the wickets until sunset, but for an extraordinary incident which resulted in the sudden stoppage of the game.

The captain of the Ladybirds was in the act of running between the wickets when she suddenly tripped and pitched forward on her face.

Kerr and Monty Lowther promptly rushed forward to assist Miss Dunn. And then a startled exclamation burst from the lips of the New House junior.

"Great jumping crackers! Look at that!"

The cricketers crowded round in astonishment.

Miss Dunn's skirt was out of position, and a pair of schoolboy's turned-up trousers was visible!

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

"It isn't a she at all, deah boys; it's a he!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"What?"

"It's a jape!" howled Manners.

Miss Dunn scrambled to her feet. And then, for the first time, it became apparent that she was wearing a wig, for beneath her flaming locks the black, crisp hair of a fellow was visible.

Morcover, one set of bushy eyebrows—false, of course—had become unstuck!

"Who—who are you?" gasped Tom Merry.

Miss Dunn promptly turned and fled. But she didn't get far. Jack Blake darted after her, and seized her by the hair.

There was a shriek from Miss Dunn, and the wig came away in Blake's hand.

And then, as Miss Dunn's real identity

was discovered, there was a chorus of wrathful and excited exclamations.

"It's Gay!"

"Gordon Gay!"

"This is a jape!"

"A jape by the Grammarians!"

Gordon Gay saw that the game was up.

"I surrender," he said in his natural voice. "But you fellows must admit that you've been fairly dished, diddled, and done!"

"Gay, you wottah—"

"Gay, you villain—"

"Gay, you spoofing bounder—"

"Look out!" shouted Figgins suddenly. "The rest of the bounders are bolting!"

The other Ladybirds, seeing that the hoax had been discovered, were streaking away at top speed. But they were handicapped by their skirts, and were soon recaptured by a furious mob of St. Jim's juniors. Then their wigs and their false eyebrows, and the girls' clothing which they wore over their Etons were wrenched away, and they stood revealed as Gordon Gay's chums from Rylcombe Grammar School.

Frank Monk was there, and Wootton major and minor, and Lane and Carboy. They struggled desperately in the grip of their captors, but they struggled in vain.

There was a tremendous commotion on the cricket-field.

Tom Merry & Co. were thunderstruck.

This was by no means the first jape that the Grammarians had played on their rivals of St. Jim's, but it was quite one of the most daring.

"So it was you who put that advertisement in the local paper?" said Tom Merry, turning to Gordon Gay.

The leader of the Grammarians nodded.

"I knew you fellows would jump at the challenge," he said.

"And it was you who spoke to me on the 'phone this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"We must have been blind not to have discovered the jape long ago!" growled Kerr. "Look at the boots they're wearing—hefty clodhoppers that no girls would ever wear! And look at their chivvies, simply plastered with powder and paint!"

"And their clothes, too!" said Harry Noble. "What girls would wear such atrocious things?"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Have you fellows enjoyed yourselves?" he inquired.

"No—but we're going to!" said Tom Merry grimly. "We'll make you feel sorry you ever thought of playing this stunt!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What shall we do with them, Tommy?" said Monty Lowther.

"I should like to flay them alive!" growled the captain of the Shell. "But I expect Kildare would put his foot down if we attempted to do that."

"Ha, ha! I expect he would!"

"I've got a wheeze," said Figgins.

"Let's hear it, Figgy!"

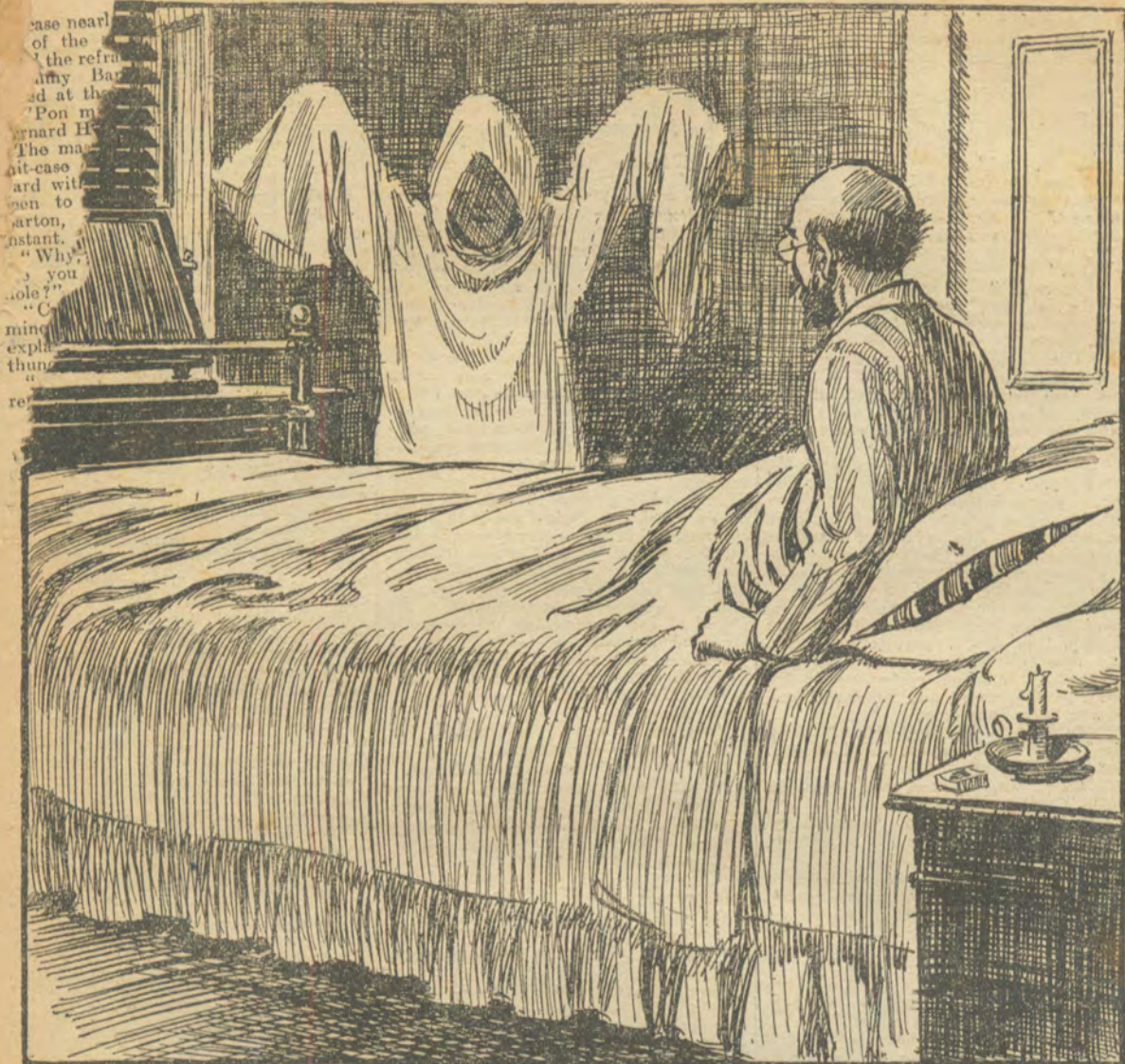
"Over in the New House, among our theatrical props, there are a dozen pierrot-costumes. We'll make these bounders put them on, and we'll send them back to the Grammar School looking like nothing on earth!"

"But what about the costumes?" said Blake. "You'd never get them back!"

"That doesn't matter. They're very torn and tattered, as it is."

"I'll pop over and fetch them," said Kerr.

Whilst Kerr was absent, Harry Noble sped away in search of some rope, and Manners and Lowther paid a visit to the wood-shed. When they returned to



The new master sat up, and blinked at the shrouded figure which hovered at the foot of the bed. "What on earth---?" he began. "Awise!" said the ghost, in a terrifying voice. "Awise, you feahful wottah! Your hours are numbahed!" (See Chapter 6.)

the cricket-ground, Manners carried a tin of red paint, and Lowther a tin of green ditto.

"Bai Jove! Why have you bwrought that paint, deah boys?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"To paint their chivvies, of course!" said Manners.

"They're painted already," said Talbot.

"True," said Monty Lowther. "But we're going to do the thing in style!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Gordon Gay & Co. surveyed the preparations that were being made, and they were alarmed and uneasy.

"You're surely not going to make us put those hideous things on?" said Frank Monk, pointing to the pierrot-costumes which Kerr had brought.

"Right on the wicket!" said Tom Merry.

"We jolly well won't—" began Gordon Gay.

"Then we'll tickle you up with cricket-stumps until you do!" said the captain of the Shell relentlessly.

There was no help for it. The St.

Jim's juniors were on top now, and resistance would be futile.

Gordon Gay & Co. donned the pierrot-costumes over their Etons. Their aspect was so ludicrous that they could hardly help laughing at one another. But they did not laugh at the prospect of tramping all the way to Rylcombe in that unorthodox attire.

The wrists of the victims were then tied to their sides by means of the rope, which was passed round their waists. And then they were lined up in single file, with Gordon Gay at the head, and linked together.

"Now for their chivvies!" said Monty Lowther.

Gordon Gay blinked in dismay at the tin of green paint which Lowther held under his nose.

"Don't you dare to daub any of that stuff on me!" he shouted.

But Monty Lowther went merrily ahead. He smacked on the paint with a liberal brush, and Gordon Gay's cheeks and forehead and chin became a startling green. The nose was left

alone, in order that Manpers might paint it a flaming red.

Each of the victims was dealt with in turn. And when the transformation was completed, the Grammarians stood gasping with fury in the midst of their grinning tormentors. They were beginning to regret, now, that they had been presumptuous enough to come over to St. Jim's in the capacity of the Ladybirds.

"Look here, Merry," said Wootton major, "it was only a jape—"

"So's this!" said Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How the dickens d'you think we're going to get back to Rylcombe?"

hooted Wootton minor.

"I'm no good at conundrums," said Tom Merry. "You'll have to get along as best you can. Gordon Gay's in front, and he'll set the pace."

The Grammarians looked round helplessly.

The brake in which they had come to St. Jim's had now disappeared. They had no alternative but to walk; and

they nursed a faint hope that some charitably-disposed person would meet them on the road, and liberate them from their bonds.

Monty Lowther strutted up and down like a pompous drill-sergeant.

"By the right, quick march!" he commanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay lurched forward, and his companions in misfortune, not being prepared for that sudden movement, toppled over, and went sprawling.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the St. Jim's juniors. It was their turn to laugh now, and their yells of merriment rang over the playing-fields.

The Grammarians tottered to their feet with some difficulty, and started forward again. They were anxious to get away from that hilarious crowd with all possible speed.

"Quick, Gay!" panted Frank Monk.

"It's not a bit of use my going too fast," growled Gordon Gay. "Every time I put a spurt on, you silly asses go sprawling, like a set of humpty-dumties!"

The procession staggered away in the direction of the school-gates.

Kildare of the Sixth made no movement to interfere. He considered that Gordon Gay & Co. were getting their just deserts.

Taggles, the school porter, nearly fell down as that weird and wonderful procession came into view.

"My heye!" he muttered. "Young rips! Which I've never 'card of sich goings hon!"

"Untie us, you—you goggling yokel!" hissed Gordon Gay.

But Taggles made no motion to extricate the Grammarians from their unfortunate plight.

A crowd of St. Jim's fellows followed Gordon Gay & Co. down to the gates, and they sped the parting guests by hurling derisive taunts—and lumps of mud—at them.

"Yah!"

"Get out!"

"This will teach you not to come here and jape us again, in a hurry!"

"I wathah fancy, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "that we've had the Bettah of the argument, aifah all!"

"Yes, rather!"

And Tom Merry & Co. forgot the fact that they were sore and stiff, and forgot that gruelling period of leather-chasing in the sweltering sun, as they crowded in the school gateway, and watched "Miss U. R. Dunn" and the rest of the Ladybirds stumbling and staggering along the dusty road.

CHAPTER 4.

Cousin Jimmy to the Rescue!

"O H, dear!"

"This is awful!"

"Wish we could find some body who'd untie us!"

Uttering dismal lamentations, Gordon Gay & Co. lurched along the road which led to Rylcombe.

They met quite a number of people on the road—mostly grinning yokels. But in spite of their frequent and insistent appeals to be released from their bonds, nobody raised a finger to help them.

The Grammarians had looked big enough freaks when they were disguised as members of the opposite sex. But that was nothing to their present freakish appearance. Their pierrot-costumes were torn and rent and

muddy; their cheeks were green; and their noses a dazzling red. Pierrot-caps were perched on their heads.

"We can't possibly turn up at the Grammar School in this state!" muttered Gordon Gay.

"No jolly fear!"

"But we simply must get back, or we shall miss calling-over," said Lane.

"And then there will be the very dickens to pay!" said Carboy.

Gordon Gay groaned. He felt his humiliation keenly. If he and his chums arrived at the Grammar School in that appalling condition, it would be a great blow to his prestige as a leader. He would be accused of blundering—of failing to carry his jape through to a successful end.

Yet what could he do, when no passer-by would sever the rope which bound the Grammarians together?

It took the party about an hour to reach Rylcombe. Progress was painfully slow, owing to frequent tumbles on the part of the members of the procession.

After what seemed an age, the gates of the Grammar School came in sight.

Lounging in the gateway was a tall, athletic young man of about twenty. He was a handsome young man, too, and was clad in white flannel trousers and a gorgeous cricket-blazer. He stared at the approaching procession in stupefied amazement.

Gordon Gay stopped short—so suddenly that he nearly caused the fellows behind him to pitch forward on top of each other.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated the leader of the Grammarians.

"What's up?" asked Frank Monk.

"That's my cousin Jimmy!"

"Great Scott!"

"Dashed if I knew you had a cousin Jimmy, Gay!" said Wootton major.

"What is he?"

"An undergrad at Cambridge. He said he was going to look me up one of these days. And he couldn't have come at a worse time!"

"He'll be able to set us loose, that's one blessing!" said Carboy.

Jimmy Barton, Gordon Gay's cousin from the 'Varsity, continued to stare at the extraordinary procession of painted pierrots.

"What the thump——" he began, in amazement.

"Cut us loose, Jimmy, for goodness' sake!" pleaded Gordon Gay.

"Why, great Scott, it's Gordon! What on earth's happened, kid?"

"I'll explain afterwards," said the Grammarian breathlessly. "Set us free first. We want to bunk inside and get these beastly things off before anybody spots us!"

Cousin Jimmy whipped out his pen-knife, and hurriedly severed the juniors' bonds. Once, their arms were free and they were detached from each other, they sped into the building, leaving their benefactor gaping after them in utter bewilderment.

It took Gordon Gay & Co. a long, long time to remove the paint from their faces. They had to rub and scrub until they almost peeled the skin off.

The hideous pierrot costumes and the hats were stowed away in Gordon Gay's study. And then the juniors, having made themselves presentable at last, went down into the quadrangle.

Cousin Jimmy was strolling to and fro, with his hands in his pockets, and a pipe in his mouth.

"That's tons better!" he remarked, as Gordon Gay & Co. came up. "You're recognisable now. How did you come to get in such an appalling state?"

"It was a jape," said Frank Monk.

And then the juniors exploded and had befallen them at St. Jim's.

Cousin Jimmy listened interest and many chuckles.

"That was a jolly cute yours, Gordon, to tog yourself girls' team," he said. "But Jim's fellows seem to have got it back at the finish."

Gordon Gay looked grim.

"They gave us a rough hand," said. "But we're not beaten yet. make those bounders smart before many days are over! By when did you get here, Jimmy?"

"Half an hour ago."

"And how long are you staying?"

"It all depends."

"On what?"

"On how much amusement I'm able to pick up in this part of the world."

"Had your tea?" inquired Frank Monk.

"No."

"Then we'll jolly soon get you some. This way!"

And cousin Jimmy was escorted into the building.

In Gordon Gay's study a cheerful repast was prepared, and the juniors, who had had one tea at St. Jim's, now started operations on another.

Cousin Jimmy ate with a hearty appetite, and his host regaled him with cream-buns and anecdotes. The latter chiefly concerned the long-standing feud between the Grammar School and St. Jim's.

"If only I could think of some dodge for scoring off Tom Merry & Co.!" said Gordon Gay, with a sigh. "I thought this cricket affair would be successful right up to the hilt, but it wasn't. We were bowled out at the finish!"

"It's high time we gave those St. Jim's bounders a real good shaking up!" said Frank Monk.

"Hear, hear!"

"If you want something to do to keep you amused, Jimmy," said Gordon Gay, "you can lend us a hand."

"With pleasure, dear boy!"

"Can you think of a really ripping stunt?"

"Not at the moment. But I dare say I shall get a brain wave later in the evening."

"Good!"

"After what you've told me about those kids at St. Jim's, I should like to see them taken down a peg or two," said cousin Jimmy. "And if I can have a hand in it, so much the better. I feel just in the mood for a rag."

When tea was over Gordon Gay's cousin announced his intention of going for a solitary stroll.

"I expect I shall get an inspiration while I'm out," he said. "What time do you kids go to bed?"

"Ten," said Wootton major.

"Well, I'll look in just before bed-time, and let you know if I've thought of anything."

"Ripping!"

Cousin Jimmy refilled and relighted his pipe, and set out for a stroll in the gathering dusk.

He walked slowly, with his head bent in deep reflection.

Although he had arrived practically at man's estate, Jimmy Barton was still a boy at heart. He revelled in japes of every description; and the more daring the jape, the more it appealed to him.

All sorts of schemes came into his mind as he walked along, but he dismissed them one by one as impracticable.

He was strolling past the little railway-station of Rylcombe, still cudgelling his brains for a satisfactory "wheeze," when a dapper little man, carrying a

case nearly as big as himself, stopped of the station. He was humming the refrain of a college song. Jimmy Barton stopped short, and looked at the dapper little man.

"Pon my soul," he ejaculated, "it's Bernard Huggins!" The man thus referred to dumped his suitcase on the ground, and came forward with outstretched hand. He had been to the same college as Jimmy Barton, whom he recognised on the instant.

"Why, Jimmy," he exclaimed, "what are you doing in this out-of-the-way hole?"

"Come down to see a young cousin of mine at Rylcombe Grammar School," explained Jimmy. "And what the thunder are you doing here, Bernard?"

"I'm going to St. Jim's," was the reply.

"St. Jim's!" "Yes. They're in rather a hole. Railton, one of their Housemasters, has been ordered away by the doc. Nerve trouble, you now. He's got to have complete change and rest. He didn't want to leave the Head in the lurch, so he promised him that he'd get somebody to deputise for him while he was away. He wrote to me, as an old pal, and asked if I'd care to take on the job—and here I am!"

"Are you keen on taking Railton's place?"

"Dashed if I am! I was on the point of popping down to Brighton for a holiday when Railton's letter came. But of course one can't back out in a case of this sort."

For a full moment Jimmy Barton was silent. Then he turned to Mr. Huggins with a peculiar twinkle in his eyes.

"You can buzz off to Brighton, old man," he said.

"Eh?"

"You can go right away."

"Don't be an ass, Jimmy! I've got to see this job through."

"But supposing I see it through for you?"

"You!"

"Yes. I'm not such a brilliant pillar of learning as you are, but a Housemaster doesn't need to do much teaching. He's simply responsible for maintaining order and discipline in his House. And I can manage that all right."

"But—but the Head's expecting me—"

"He doesn't know you, I suppose?"

"No."

"Then I can pass myself off as you, and he'll be none the wiser."

Mr. Huggins fairly gasped.

"You—you're not serious, Jimmy?"

"Perfectly serious, I assure you."

"But why should you want to go to St. Jim's as a temporary Housemaster?"

Jimmy Barton chuckled.

"I've promised my young cousin," he said, "that I'll invent some scheme for making the St. Jim's kids sit up. St. Jim's and the Grammar School are always at loggerheads, you know. And if I go up to the school in your place I shall be able to make things hum!"

"Oh!"

Mr. Huggins understood at last, and he smiled.

"Same old Jimmy!" he said. "Always keen on a jape!"

"Are you willing to swop places?" asked Jimmy.

Mr. Huggins hesitated.

"I don't altogether like the idea—" he began.

"Just for a day or two!" urged Jimmy. "Within a couple of days I shall have been able to achieve my object."

"And what then?"

"Why, I shall wire for you to come up

from Brighton and carry on with the good work. You'll be staying at the Queen's, I suppose?"

"Yes; but—"

"The whole arrangement's perfectly simple and simply perfect!" said Jimmy Barton. "I'll go along to St. Jim's and represent myself as Mr. Huggins—"

"But what's going to happen when I—the genuine Mr. Huggins—come along?"

"I shall have vamoosed the ranch by then. The Head will know there's been a jape, but he won't know the identity of the merry japer. And he'll never dream that you've been a party to it.

You can explain that the reason why you're two days late in arriving at the school is that you had to go down to Brighton on urgent business."

"It's a risky stunt, Jimmy—"

"Bosh! There may be a slight element of risk about it; but surely a couple of seasoned japers like ourselves will be able to work the oracle? Shake hands on the compact, Bernard!"

After some further hesitation, Mr. Huggins shook hands with Jimmy Barton.

"It's a go!" he said. "But, mind you, Jimmy, I won't pretend I'm frightfully keen on the business. I wouldn't do this for anybody but you."

Jimmy Barton consulted his watch.

"The last train for Brighton," he said, "leaves in ten minutes. I'll come and see you off."

A quarter of an hour later the Brighton train, with Mr. Bernard Huggins on board, was speeding away towards the south. And Jimmy Barton, after witnessing its departure, strolled back to the Grammar School, arriving just before bed-time.

"Well, Jimmy?" said Gordon Gay, as his cousin stepped into the study.

"Thought of anything bright and brainy?"

"Yes, rather! My plans are all cut and dried, dear boy!"

"Good! Get them off your chest!"

And then Jimmy Barton explained his intentions to the delighted Grammarians.

"I shall lead Tom Merry & Co. the dickens of a dance!" he declared.

"They'll wish they'd never clapped eyes on Mr. Huggins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians laughed loud and long at the prospect of their rivals being completely spoofed. And their only regret was that they would be unable to play a personal part in the jape.

"You'll need a disguise, won't you, Jimmy?" said Gordon Gay.

"It's not absolutely necessary; but perhaps I ought to wear a false beard and a pair of spectacles, to be on the safe side."

"We can let you have those out of our theatrical props," said Frank Monk.

"Good!"

The transformation scene took place in Gordon Gay's study. And shortly afterwards a severe-looking gentleman, with a bushy beard, and wearing a pair of large spectacles, set out in the direction of St. Jim's.

The fun was about to begin!

CHAPTER 5.

Not Nice for Gussy!

OF course, it was all Gussy's fault!" said Monty Lowther. "Oh, of course!" said Manners.

A crowd of Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers were gathered together in the junior Common-room that evening, discussing the startling events of the afternoon.

"Gussy landed us fairly in the soup!" said Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye, and glared at his chum.

"Weally, Blake! I quite fail to undahstand your meanin'!"

"It was you who saw that advertisement in the local paper, and brought it to our notice," Blake went on. "If you hadn't seen it the Ladybirds wouldn't have come, and we shouldn't have been spoofed! See?"

Arthur Augustus gave a snort.

"You have no wight to say that, Blake, you wottah! It was Tom Mewwy who accepted the challenge. All that I did was to point out the pawwagwaph in the papah. I considahed that it was my duty to do so!"

"Rats!"

"If you say 'Wats!' to me, Blake—"

"More rats!" said Jack Blake cheerfully.

"If ever anything goes wrong—if ever we come a giddy cropper—if ever there's a bad blunder made—you can bet your boots that Gussy's at the bottom of it!" said Monty Lowther.

The swell of St. Jim's fairly bristled with indignation. It was not his fault that Gordon Gay & Co. had succeeded in winning that extraordinary cricket-match. And he could not see that his schoolfellows were merely "chipping" him. He took their remarks dead seriously.

Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs and advanced upon Monty Lowther.

"Spare me!" pleaded the humorist of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is my intention, Lowthah," said the swell of St. Jim's, breathing hard, "to administrah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Help!"

"Put up your hands, you wottah!"

Monty Lowther backed away, shaking at the knees as if he was in a state of abject terror.

As for Arthur Augustus, he pranced to and fro like a cat on hot bricks. And the onlookers roared with laughter.

"Three to one on Gussy!" drawled Cardew.

"Pile in, Gussy!"

"Give him beans!"

Jack Blake and Herries and Digby were about to seize their warlike chum and swing him back, when the door of the Common-room suddenly opened, and a tall stranger came in.

The juniors—with the exception of Arthur Augustus, who was still waiting for Monty Lowther to put up his hands—stared curiously at the newcomer. He was a tall man, dressed in flannel trousers and a gaudy cricket-blazer. These sporting garments were strangely at variance with the stranger's bushy beard and large spectacles. He did not look an athlete, yet he wore the clothes of one.

Who the tall man was, nobody had the foggiest notion.

It was common knowledge that Mr. Railton, the House-master, had gone away for a rest and change. But it had not occurred to the juniors that a deputy had been engaged.

"I am waitin', Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus grimly.

"Afraid the performance will have to be cancelled, old top!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I can never fight my best in the presence of strangers!"

"Stwangahs!" echoed Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

And then, turning suddenly, he caught sight of the tall man who was standing on the threshold.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

"Bai Jove!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "Who are you, my man?"

The stranger frowned.

"I am not accustomed to being spoken to in that disrespectful manner!" he said. "I am Mr. Huggins, and I am here to carry out Mr. Railton's duties in his absence!"

There was a murmur of astonishment, mingled with uneasiness, from Tom Merry & Co. They didn't altogether like the look of the temporary Housemaster. His bushy beard was forbidding in the extreme; the eyes which surveyed them through the spectacles were keen and penetrating.

Arthur Augustus, however, did not look in the least abashed. He regarded Mr. Huggins with a critical eye.

"I don't altogether approve of that blazh you're wearin', sir—" he began.

"What!"

"The colour scheme is faulty! Thah should be a little more purple an' a little less pink!"

"Boy!"

"An' your twousahs, sir, are vewy baggy! Baggy bags are an abomination! You should put them in the pwess ewvey evening!"

"How—how dare you?" gasped Mr. Huggins.

And Jack Blake trod heavily on Arthur Augustus' foot, to check his flow of criticism.

"Yawwooooh! Blake, you clumsy ass—"

Mr. Huggins frowned.

"Your impertinence, D'Arcy, is staggering!"

"I didn't mean to be impertinent, sir—"

"Whether you meant to be or not, you certainly were! And as I do not allow little boys to be impertinent to me, I am about to punish you!"

So saying, the new Housemaster seized Arthur Augustus by the collar and swung him across his knee.

Having placed the delinquent in a convenient position for castigation, Mr. Huggins commenced to spank him.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yawwooooooh!"

The victim's yells rang wildly through the Common-room. And Tom Merry & Co. could not refrain from grinning, as they watched the Housemaster's hand rise and fall.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yow - ow - ow! Wesease me!" screamed Arthur Augustus. "I weseuse to be twented in this mannah!"

The humiliation of being spanked in the presence of his schoolfellows was almost more than the swell of St. Jim's could bear. His dignity was outraged; his pride was wounded. It was not long before that he had suffered a similar humiliation at the hands of the bogus porter who had replaced Taggles for a time.

Mr. Huggins did not desist until he was almost breathless.

"There!" he panted, releasing the unfortunate Gussy. "Let that be a lesson to you never to criticise my personal appearance again!"

"Ow-ow-ow!"

The new master's gaze scanned the throng of fellows in the junior Common-room.

"I can clearly see that I have an unruly House to deal with!" he said. "It appears that Mr. Railton has been too lenient—too easy-going! I shall alter all that!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The man's a beastly tyrant!" muttered Jack Blake.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

"Worse than old Ratty, of the New House!" growled Digby.

"Silence!" rapped out Mr. Huggins.

"Who is the senior boy here?"

"I am, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"Very well! I shall hold you responsible, Merry, for any scenes of disorder which may occur in the junior section of the School House whilst I am here!"

Mr. Huggins paused, and glanced at his watch.

"It is bed-time!" he observed. "You will go to your dormitories at once!"

The juniors obeyed.

As for Mr. Huggins, he made his way to Mr. Railton's study, chuckling softly to himself as he went.

Jimmy Barton, alias Mr. Huggins, was enjoying himself immensely.

His most difficult ordeal—that of interviewing the Head—was over. Doctor Holmes had asked no awkward questions, nor had he suspected that anything was wrong.

And now that he had exposed himself successfully to the gaze of Tom Merry & Co., and not one of them had guessed that he was an impostor, Gordon Gay's cousin felt perfectly safe. He dropped into the armchair in the Housemaster's study, and, puffing at his pipe, he began to draw up his plan of campaign for the morrow.

CHAPTER 6.

The Ghost Walks!

"NICE sort of beast, isn't he?"

It was Monty Lowther who made the remark in the Shell dormitory.

The "beast" to whom Monty Lowther referred was, of course, the temporary Housemaster, whose unexpected arrival at St. Jim's was the one topic of conversation.

Even the affair of the cricket match with the Ladybirds was forgotten in the light of this new development.

"What did old Railton want to go away for?" growled Manners.

"His nerves were groggy," said George Alfred Grundy. "I heard the doctor saying the other day that if Railton didn't clear out and take a holiday he'd be having a breakdown."

"But why should the Head want to put a bearded tyrant like this merchant Huggins in Railton's place?" demanded Wilkins.



Tarzan of the Apes!

THE wonderful story of a man who lived from early childhood in the woods with none but fierce and savage apes as his companions and protectors. The tale on which the famous film was founded: Begin it TO-DAY in the

BOYS' CINEMA 2

"Echo answers 'Why?'" said "We could do without a Housemaster a bit!"

"Hear, hear," said Harry. "These temporary masters are gen. terrors. They know they're not go to stay long, and while they are they make themselves as officious as they can be."

And Monty Lowther began to chat

"I do not love thee, Mr. Huggins, Thou art, in sooth, a silly juggins, A beastly tyrant, and a muggins; So I do not love thee, Mr. Huggins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody, as a matter of fact, loved Mr. Huggins. And the fellow who had least cause to love him was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

Gussy had been spanked in public by the new master; and that humiliation would rankle for many a day.

Tom Merry & Co. felt sorry for Arthur Augustus. They had laughed while he was being spanked. There had been something irresistibly comical in the sight. But they considered that Mr. Huggins had no right to administer punishment in that humiliating form. Had he boxed Gussy's ears, or caned him in the usual way, it would have been different. But a public spanking was a thing from which Gussy's dignity would not easily recover.

The fellows in the Shell dormitory were still discussing the matter after Kildare of the Sixth had extinguished the lights.

And presently the door opened, admitting a ghostlike figure, clad from top to toe in a flowing sheet.

The slanting rays of the moonlight fell upon that quaint and spectral form, and Tom Merry & Co. sat up in bed and gasped.

"Who the—"

"What the—"

"Must be a jape!" muttered Manners. "It's a Fourth Form bouncer or a fellow from the New House most likely," said Talbot.

The ghostlike figure glided to the middle of the dormitory, and then it halted between the rows of beds.

A hollow groan echoed through the dormitory; but it was not a very realistic groan.

The ghost evidently expected that Tom Merry & Co. would be scared out of their wits. But that expectation was not realised.

"Chuck playing the giddy goat, or, rather, the giddy ghost!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Who are you?"

And at least a dozen voices repeated the question.

"Who are you?"

"Ha, ha!" There was a croaking laugh from the spectre. "Tom Mewwy, I am the ghost of thy murthered gwand-fathah!"

"My only aunt!"

There was a gasp of astonishment from the juniors.

"Gussy, you ass—"

"Gussy, you chump—"

"Gussy, you burbling imbecile—"

There was an exclamation of dismay from the "ghost."

"Bai Jove! How did you know it was me, deah boys?"

"Ass!" snorted Tom Merry. "You gave yourself away as soon as you opened your mouth!"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"What's the little game, Gussy?" inquired Talbot.

"I'm goin' to give the new mastah a fright," explained Arthur Augustus.

"My hat!"

"An' I thought I'd look in heah first to see if I should mustah as a ghost."



"I want each of you to balance a club on your nose!" snapped Mr. Huggins. Very reluctantly the juniors did what was required. Their antics, as they endeavoured to poise the Indian clubs on their noses, sent the spectators into fits of laughter. (See Chapter 7.)

I think you will agree, deah boys, that I can play the part vewy well!"

"Ass!"

"Dolt!"

"Chump!"

"Oh, weally, you know——"

"If you start trying to spoof the new master," said Harry Noble, "you'll be bowled out right away!"

"But—but Blake an' the othahs said I made a toppin' ghost——"

"They were pulling your leg, you duffer!"

"Get back to bed, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "It's not a bit of use your going ahead with this stunt!"

"Are you suggestin', Tom Mewwy, that I'm no good for the part?"

"You're no good for any part, except a comedian's!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was disappointed and wrathful. He had hit upon the idea of getting himself up as a ghost, and scaring the new master in revenge for the spanking which Mr. Huggins had administered to him in the Common-room. And he had hoped, first of all, to deceive Tom Merry & Co. by gliding into the Shell Dormitory and uttering ghostly phrases.

The Shell, however, were not to be deceived. They had not been able to recognise the swell of St. Jim's, but the moment Arthur Augustus had spoken he had betrayed himself. Gussy's voice was familiar to all, and it would be familiar to Mr. Huggins.

"I've made up my mind to have wevenge on the new mastah," said Gussy. "An' I'm goin' ahead!"

"Then you're a burbling chump!" growled Tom Merry. "You'll get it in the neck, and serve you jolly well right!"

Arthur Augustus could be very obstinate when he chose. And he chose to be obstinate now. Wild horses would not have dragged him from his purpose. He intended to make Mr. Huggins sit up, and the expostulations of the Shell fellows made no difference.

Without another word the "ghost" quitted the Shell dormitory, and made his way to the bed-room which Mr. Railton had occupied, but which would now be occupied by Mr. Railton's deputy.

Arthur Augustus softly turned the handle of the door and peeped into the apartment.

The room was empty.

Mr. Huggins was still below in his study, smoking.

"Bai Jove! Afwaid I'm wathah too early!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

And he went back to the Fourth Form dormitory, intending to revisit the House-master's bed-room an hour later.

"That you, Gussy?" said Jack Blake, as the swell of St. Jim's came in.

"Yaas, deah boy!"

"Did you work the oracle?"

"Huggins hasn't gone to bed yet. I pwopose to visit him latah."

"Look here, old chap," said Herries. "Take the advice of your uncles, and don't go."

"Eh?"

"Take that comic sheet off and get to bed!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"You'll never succeed in scaring Huggins," said Digby. "He's far more likely to scare you!"

"Yes, rather!"

"But—but you fellahs said just now that I made a toppin' ghost!" protested Arthur Augustus.

"We were rotting, you chump!" growled Jack Blake. "You're about the most unghostlike ghost I've ever struck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus realised that his own chums in the Fourth were of the same opinion as Tom Merry & Co., namely, that his jape against the new master would not succeed.

Gussy meant to prove otherwise. He hadn't the slightest intention of retracting from his purpose.

The swell of St. Jim's lay down on his bed until the first stroke of eleven sounded from the old clock-tower. Then he rose to his feet.

"You fellahs awake?" he inquired.

There was no response. Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby were in the arms of Morpheus.

Arthur Augustus went quietly from the dormitory, and ascended the staircase. Then he stole along the passage, and halted outside the door of Mr. Huggins' bed-room.

No sound came from within.

"Suahly the wottah is in bed by this time!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Very cautiously he opened the door and peered into the room.

Yes, the Housemaster was in bed and asleep. He was lying on his side, with his head resting on his arm.

Fortunately for the impostor, he had not removed his false beard before retiring for the night. Had he done so, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would most certainly have tumbled to the fact that there was something wrong—that the Housemaster was sailing under false colours.

Arthur Augustus glanced down at the sleeping figure for a moment. Then he advanced towards the foot of the bed.

For an instant the junior's courage began to waver. But he pulled himself together, and resolved to go through with the part.

"Now for it!" he muttered.

And he gave a piercing scream—a scream which would have awakened the celebrated Seven Sleepers.

It certainly awakened Mr. Huggins.

The new master sat up and blinked in astonishment at the shrouded figure which hovered at the foot of his bed.

"What on earth—" he began.

"Awise!" said Arthur Augustus, in a terrifying voice.

"Eh?"

"Awise, you feahful wottah! Your hours are numbahd!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Mr. Huggins.

"Twemble!" hissed Arthur Augustus.

The new master did not tremble. He was amazed—he was thunderstruck—but he was not frightened.

Arthur Augustus mistook the expression on Mr. Huggins' face to be one of fear. He, therefore, warmed to his work.

"I am a spectah—a gwuesome, gwisy spectah!" he exclaimed.

"You're a silly young ass!" was the gruff reply.

Arthur Augustus nearly fell down.

"W-w-what!" he gasped.

"You must be insane, D'Arcy, to come into a master's bed-room at this hour, and in such ridiculous attire!"

"Oh, cwumbs!" Arthur Augustus fervently wished that the floor would open and swallow him up. "How—how did you know it was me, sir?"

"By your voice, of course!"

"But—but I disguised it—"

"The disguise wasn't apparent!" said Mr. Huggins drily.

And he stepped out of bed in his pyjamas.

Arthur Augustus backed away in considerable trepidation. He didn't quite know what to make of Mr. Huggins. The latter had called him a silly young ass—certainly a remarkable expression for a Housemaster to use!

Moreover, in spite of his beard and spectacles, Mr. Huggins seemed to possess the youth and agility and manner of Kildare of the Sixth.

Click!

The Housemaster switched on the electric light.

Arthur Augustus, wrenching away the sheet that enveloped him, stood blinking at Mr. Huggins in consternation and dismay.

For the first time, the swell of St. Jim's realised the enormity of his offence. He had broken into a master's bed-room at eleven o'clock at night; and

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

he had attempted to scare Mr. Huggins by rigging himself out as a ghost.

If the Housemaster were to report him to the Head, consequences of a serious nature might follow.

But it soon became apparent that Mr. Huggins intended to take the law into his own hands.

"I've already had occasion to chastise you once this evening, D'Arcy," he said. "You have now made it necessary for me to administer a further chastisement. Get over that bed!"

Arthur Augustus reluctantly obeyed. Now that the sheet had been removed from his person, the only protection he had consisted of a suit of very thin pyjamas. Poor protection this—against the slipper which Mr. Huggins grasped in his hand.

"Oh, cwumbs! Buck up an' get it ovah, sir!" pleaded the swell of St. Jim's. He had not felt so apprehensive since his last visit to the dentist.

Whack, whack, whack!

Mr. Huggins did great execution with the slipper. It rose and fell with almost monotonous regularity, and the victim was obliged to bite his lower lip hard in order to keep from yelling.

It was an ordeal for Gussy—not so humiliating as the spanking in the Common-room, but more painful.

When at last it was over, the Housemaster pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said briefly. "And let there be no repetition of this conduct!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy limped slowly and painfully away to his own quarters.

And, needless to state, the ghost did not walk again that night!

CHAPTER 7.

Mr. Huggins Makes Merry!

"TUMBLE out, you kids!"

It was Kildare of the Sixth who spoke.

The hour was quite early; the rising-bell was not yet due to ring; and there was a great deal of yawning and grumbling in the Shell dormitory when the captain of St. Jim's looked in.

"What's up, Kildare?"

"Why should we turn out?"

"Rising-bell hasn't gone yet!"

"My orders are that the whole of the Shell and the Fourth are to wash and dress, and form up in the quadrangle without delay," said Kildare.

"My hat!"

"Who gave you those orders, Kildare?" asked Tom Merry.

"Mr. Huggins!"

"It's like his cheek!"

"What's he want us for?"

Kildare grinned.

"He's going to put you through a course of physical jerks," he said.

"Eh?"

"He says the School House wants waking up."

"What right has he got to say that?" exclaimed Harry Noble wrathfully.

"He hasn't been here five minutes!"

"And if the House wants waking up why doesn't he start with the Sixth?" said Monty Lowther. "Why should the Shell and the Fourth be singled out as victims?"

"Afraid I can't answer that conundrum," said Kildare. "I should advise you to turn out, and not keep Mr. Huggins waiting."

And the captain of St. Jim's withdrew. Tom Merry & Co. turned out, looking and feeling decidedly savage.

The impression that they had formed overnight concerning the new master—that he was a tyrant and a beast—seemed to be borne out now.

A Housemaster—even a temporary Housemaster—had a good deal of power; but it was questionable whether he had the right to do this sort of thing.

Even Mr. Ratcliff, the sour, ill-tempered disciplinarian of the New House, would have drawn the line at ordering his charges to get up before rising-bell.

"This is the absolute limit!" said Talbot.

"The limit and the last straw rolled into one!" growled Tom Merry. "This fellow Huggins is a Tartar, and no mistake!"

"I could just do with another forty winks, too!" said Grundy.

The Shell fellows dressed, grumbling whilst they did so. And on their way down to the quadrangle they were joined by Jack Blake & Co., of the Fourth.

"What do you think of this stunt, you fellows?" asked Jack Blake.

"Words fail us!" said Monty Lowther.

"This boulder Huggins will cause a rebellion before he's been here much longer," said Harry Noble. "He seems to be an awful outsider!"

"On the contrary, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "he's wathah a good sort!"

"What!"

"When I went to his woom last night, in ordah to give him a fwight, he was cute enough to discover my identity—"

"Didn't require much cuteness!" grunted Jack Blake.

"Pway be silent, Blake! As I was sayin', he discovered my identity, an' I thought he'd report me to the Head, at least. But he simply gave me a lammie with a slippah, an' let it go at that."

"That was certainly rather decent of him," remarked Tom Merry thoughtfully. "But I'm dashed if I call this decent, dragging us out of bed in the middle of the night!"

"Is Huggins really going to give us physical jerks?" said Digby.

"So Kildare says."

The juniors streamed out into the quadrangle.

Mr. Huggins was strolling to and fro, with a pipe in his mouth. He was wearing grey flannel trousers and a sweater.

The Housemaster smiled and stroked his beard as the juniors arrived on the scene.

"Good-morning, my boys!" he said.

There were one or two half-hearted replies to the salutation. The majority of the fellows remained silent.

"Although I have not been here long," said Mr. Huggins, "I am aware that there is a certain amount of slackness in the School House. It is my intention to cure that slackness—not by administering lectures or impositions, but by putting you through a course of physical culture exercises."

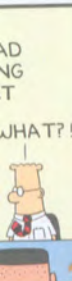
"I don't think such a step is necessary, sir," said Tom Merry boldly.

"I am not asking for your views on the subject, Harry. I am satisfied that there is slackness in the school generally, and in this House in particular. I shall not be here long—"

"Thank goodness!" murmured somebody.

"But whilst I am here I mean to make good use of my time. I hope to raise you all to such a state of physical excellence that you will be almost up to the standard of the Grammar School in the village."

Tom Merry & Co. were fairly stag-



They had always considered themselves to be streets ahead of the marriars. But Mr. Huggins did not appear to think so.

"I will now set to work," he said. "You will go to the gymnasium, and obtain a couple of Indian clubs. You will then form up out there."

The expressions on the faces of Tom Merry & Co. were sullen and mutinous. They didn't approve of the new master, and they approved still less of his methods.

But it would be worse than useless to rebel against Mr. Huggins' authority. If trouble arose, the Housemaster would have the rest of the masters at his back, to say nothing of the Head.

And so, with much grumbling and grumbling, the juniors obeyed orders. Five minutes later they lined up in the quad, armed with Indian clubs.

Then the exercises began.

They were very strenuous exercises. Mr. Huggins ordered his pupils to swing the right club, and then the left, and then both together.

There were casualties, of course. Levison of the Fourth dropped one of his clubs on to Baggy Trimble's pet corn; and a moment later Monty Lowther caught Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a terrible crack on the head.

"Yavoooooh!"

"Sorry, Gussey!" murmured the humorist of the Shell.

"Yow! You've bawined me, you wot!"

"Impossible!" said Monty Lowther, solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's quite enough noise!" said Mr. Huggins sternly. "Keep those clubs in motion, there! I'm not going to allow any slacking!"

Panting and perspiring from their exertions, the juniors continued to swing the clubs. And an enormous crowd of sight-seers streamed out into the quad.

Sixth-Formers, Fifth-Formers, and fags looked on with many chuckles at the strange exhibition.

"This new man must be potty!" exclaimed Kildare.

Darrel nodded.

"I don't think the Head would approve of this sort of thing," he said.

"I'm jolly sure he wouldn't!"

Mr. Huggins waited until quite a big audience had assembled. Then he allowed the club-swingers a brief respite.

"Wonder what he's going to do next?" muttered Tom Merry.

"Goodness knows!" granted Jack Blake. "I can't stick this much longer! All the fellows are cackling at us!"

"Now, my boys," said Mr. Huggins, "I want each of you to balance a club on his nose."

The juniors fairly gasped.

At first, they thought that Mr. Huggins must be joking. But the Housemaster's face was as solemn as an owl's.

"Do you hear me?" he rapped out. "But—but there's no sense in balancing clubs on our noses, sir!" faltered Tom Merry.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Huggins, "it is a feat requiring great skill!"

"But we shall look awful asses, sir—" protested Harry Noble.

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Huggins. "Obey me at once!"

Very reluctantly the juniors did what was required of them. At least, they attempted to do so. And their antics, as they endeavored to poise the Indian clubs on their noses, sent the spectators into fits of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"What a giddy scream!"

"It's a sight for gods and men and little fishes!"

The crowd rocked with laughter, and Mr. Huggins made a curious gurgling sound in his throat. He, too, was on the verge of exploding.

"Come along, my boys!" he said encouragingly. "Your efforts, so far, do not appear to be meeting with much success!"

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

"Yarooooop!"

These exclamations of anguish were caused by the clubs which descended upon the feet and shins of the unwilling jugglers.

Taggles, the porter, came shuffling across the quad to ring the rising-bell. But he never rang it. He was astonished to find that nearly everybody was up, and that an unprecedented scene was in progress.

"My heye!" muttered Taggles, stopping short. "Which I ain't never 'eard of sich goings on! That feller 'Uggins must be off 'is dot!"

Taggles' view was shared by the majority of the fellows. It certainly seemed as if the temporary Housemaster had taken leave of his senses.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Tom Merry. "We're the laughing-stock of the school!"

"We shall never be able to live this down—never!" said Jack Blake.

Mr. Huggins happened to glance towards the Cloisters, and he saw that the Head was approaching from that direction.

The Housemaster turned hurriedly to his pupils.

"Dismiss!" he said suddenly.

The juniors dismissed readily enough. They could not have remained there much longer, performing such weird antics in the presence of the hysterical throng. They gathered up their clubs, and beat a hasty retreat to the gymnasium.

His pupils having melted away like mists before the morning sun, Mr. Huggins did likewise. He had very good reasons for not wishing to interview the headmaster of St. Jim's just then!

CHAPTER 8.

A Staggering Shock!

AFTER breakfast, Mr. Huggins cycled to Rylcombe post-office, where he despatched a telegram as follows:—

"Huggins, Queen's Hotel, Brighton.—Please come at once and take up your duties.—JIMMY."

Gordon Gay's cousin realised that the amazing jape had gone far enough. It would not be safe for him to remain much longer at St. Jim's. Everybody was talking about him and his queer methods, and the masters would soon become suspicious, and begin to ask awkward questions.

Besides, the jape had succeeded so admirably that Jimmy Barton didn't want to spoil it by staying at St. Jim's and running the risk of being bowled out.

Having sent the telegram to the genuine Mr. Huggins, he repaired to a quiet meadow, and removed the false beard and the spectacles. Then he made his way to the Grammar School.

Gordon Gay & Co. were strolling in the quadrangle, waiting for the bell to summon them to morning lessons. As soon as they caught sight of Jimmy Barton they sprinted up to him.

"Hallo, Jimmy!" said Gordon Gay, with a note of anxiety in his tone. "You're soon back. Hope those St. Jim's bouncers haven't bowled you out?"

Jimmy chuckled.

"No jolly fear!"

"You've worked the oracle?" asked Frank Monk eagerly.

"Yes. But I've had to chuck it rather sooner than I expected. You see, I've made things hum to such an extent that it wouldn't be safe to stay any longer at St. Jim's."

"Tell us all about it, Jimmy!" said Gordon Gay.

"There isn't much to tell. The first thing I did on arriving at the school was to administer a spanking to a youth named D'Arcy."

The Grammarians chortled with delight.

"And I repeated the dose later on, with a slipper!" continued Jimmy Barton. "Then this morning I had all the juniors out before rising-bell, and gave them a course of physical culture."

"My hat!"

"It was the funniest thing in the world to see them trying to balance Indian clubs on their noses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians simply yelled. And Gordon Gay promptly embraced his cousin, and waltzed him round and round in the quad.

"Jimmy, old top," he gurgled, in an ecstasy, "you're worth your weight in strawberries!"

"Of course," said Jimmy, wrenching himself away. "I might have carried out heaps more stunts if I'd stayed. But, all things considered, I think I'm wise to



15 DAYS FREE TRIAL

Packed FREE. Carriage PAID. Direct from Works. **LOWEST CASH PRICES. EASY PAYMENT TERMS.** Immediate delivery. Big Bargains in Shop Sold and Second-hand Cycles. Tyres and Accessories at popular Prices. Satisfaction guaranteed or Money Refunded Old Cycles Exchanged. Write for Monster Size Free List and Special Offer of Sample Bicycle.

MEAD CYCLE COMPANY, Incorpd. Dept. B 607, BIRMINGHAM.

PHOTO POSTCARDS OF YOURSELF, 1/3 doz. 12 by 16 ENLARGEMENTS, 8d. ALSO CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL. CATALOGUE AND SAMPLES FREE.—HACKETTS, JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS BE SURE TO MENTION THIS PAPER.

STRENGTHEN YOUR NERVES. Nervousness deprives you of employment, pleasures, and many advantages in life. If you wish to prosper and enjoy life, strengthen your Nerves, and regain confidence in yourself by using the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. Used by Vice-Admiral to Seaman, Colonel to Private, D.S.O.'s, M.O.'s, M.M.'s, and D.C.M.'s. Merely send a penny stamp for particulars.—GODFREY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 327, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.

MAGIC TRICKS, Illusions, etc.—Parcels 2/6, 5/6, and 10/6. Sample Trick, 1/— T. W. HARRISON, 239, Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

"CURLY HAIR!" "My bristles were made curly in a few days," writes R. Welch. "GURLIT" curls straightest hair. 1/5, 2/6. (2d. stamps accepted.)—SUMMERS (Dept. A. P.), 31, UPPER RUSSELL STREET, BRIGHTON.

PATTER for Amateur Comedians. For single turns, 9d. and 1/— For double turns (2 comedians), 9d., 1/—, and upwards. Three crosspatter acts, 1/3. Comic sketch (3 comedians), 1/3. List of comic duets etc., 1d.—JACK M. FINN, Author, Colchester.

chuck it now, before anybody smells a rat."

"Yes, rather!"

The bogus Housemaster did not return to St. Jim's, and his absence caused considerable comment and mystification.

After morning lessons, however, the Terrible Three had occasion to go to their study. And there, on the mantelpiece, they beheld a placard which fairly took their breath away.

Inscribed on the placard was the following message:

"TO TOM MERRY & CO.—YOU MUST ADMIT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN DISHED, DIDDLED, AND DONE, AND THAT THE GRAMMARIANS ARE TOP DOGS!"

"(Signed) GORDON GAY & CO.

"per pro. 'MR. HUGGINS.'"

The Terrible Three stared at that placard with eyes that fairly bulged from their heads.

Tom Merry was the first to find his voice.

"Spoofed!" he gasped.

"Dished,iddled, and done!" quoted Monty Lowther.

"That fellow Huggins was an impostor!" exclaimed Manners dazedly. "Whoever would have thought it?"

Jack Blake & Co. came along the passage at that moment. Tom Merry called to them.

"Look at this, you fellows!"

The Fourth-Formers gazed at the placard, and they were almost overcome.

"A Gwammah School jape, bai Jove!" muttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Did you evah?" said Jack Blake solemnly.

"But—but who was this fellow Huggins?" exclaimed Digby. "It couldn't have been Gordon Gay, surely?"

"Must have been some pal of Gay's, who agreed to play the part," said Tom Merry. "And we must admit that he played it jolly well. Why, he must have spoofed even the Head!"

When the news of the jape spread through the School House at St. Jim's there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And the only consolation that the juniors had was the prospect of turning the tables on the Grammarians at no distant date.

Later in the day, the genuine Mr. Huggins arrived at the school.

The Head was fairly flabbergasted. But he could not doubt Mr. Huggins' credentials.

"There is an impostor here," he exclaimed—"a man who led me to believe that he was you!"

"Really?" said Mr. Huggins, in feigned astonishment.

"I quite fail to fathom the man's motives in coming here and passing himself off as you," continued the Head. "I will send for him, and demand an explanation!"

But the bogus Housemaster was nowhere to be found. The Head was informed that he had gone out after breakfast, and had not returned.

Tom Merry & Co. had a very shrewd idea of the practical joker's whereabouts. But they said nothing. They were furious at having been japed, but they had no desire to make matters unpleasant for the japer. They resigned themselves as best they could to their humiliating position; and they were compelled to admit that, for once in a way, they had had been Beaten Hollow!

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Tom Merry & Co. next week, entitled, "A BATTLE OF HONOUR!" Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy NOW!)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA!

By "COOEE."

(Continued from last week.)

"NEVER mind," said Mr. Pantan, "the tiger will follow the kangaroo till he tires him, and then we'll get him. The kangaroo can go faster, but can't keep it up as the tiger does. Let's follow on at a good pace."

Just then there was more whining, and a couple of young tiger puppies rushed past in the track of their mother. "Don't shoot them," said Mr. Pantan, "they'll guide us where we want to go."

The puppies held on their way, and in a few minutes the mother was surprised in the act of drinking the blood from the jugular vein of the kangaroo. Mr. Pantan made sure of his aim, and Mr. Thornton emptied his barrels on the puppies, and so rid the district of pests which had been too long able to escape vengeance.

The boys were allowed to carry the adult tiger home, so that Jack might see it properly in daylight. He was up smart enough next morning to continue his studies in natural history, and Bob Pantan was lecturer. Bob explained that though the animal was sometimes called a tiger, and sometimes a wolf, it was neither the one nor the other, but a marsupial.

They measured it carefully, and found it was over four and a half feet from nose to the tip of tail. Its colour was yellowish-brown, and across its back and half-way down its hind legs were sixteen broad dark stripes, very much like those of a tiger. Bob described it as a cowardly animal, and given to prowling along the sea-beach in search of dead fish and blubber. When it killed a sheep it sucked the blood from the neck, ate the fat round the kidneys, then left the carcase, and never came back to it again. It has a scientific name, "Thylacinus Cynocephalus," which means a creature with a dog's head and a pouch.

Jack wondered what curious animal he would meet next in this country of surprises, and he had not long to wait, for a couple of days later Mr. Pantan asked him, with a twinkle in his eye, if he would make one of a party to go hunting the devil. Jack was puzzled at the question, but joined heartily in the laugh at his expense, and declared himself ready to join the expedition.

The road that night led up the fairly steep side of a hill, and as the Tasmanian devil carries on his business in the dark, they were soon in such a thick part of the bush that they could scarcely get any help from the moon.

After walking about an hour they came to some rocks on the face of the hill, where Mr. Pantan knew there were some clefts and burrows likely to be the haunt of the devil. When their patience was almost exhausted, and they were just about to turn home, they heard a low guttural sound, half-grunt, half-bark, and at once they were all straining their eyes in the direction whence it came. Suddenly Mr. Pantan up with his gun, took aim, and fired, and the whole party followed him as he rushed forward. A curious little pig-like animal, about two feet long, lay on the ground, and once more Bob and Jack had to sling the "game" on the stick and carry it home.

(More about "Cooee" experience next week.)

The Editor's Chat

Note:—Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Address: Editor, The "Gem," The Fleet House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The title of our next grand, long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's is

"A BATTLE OF HONOUR!"

By Martin Clifford.

This is a splendid tale of a thrilling adventure, a hairbreadth escape, and an amazing sequel, whereby Tom Merry finds himself fighting the battles of one who is almost a stranger to him. A story every Gemite will revel in.

"THE DUFFER'S DOWNFALL!"

By Michael Poole.

is the next story of the famous St. Katie's series. In it Duff, the new associate of Dexter & Co., comes up against the full force of Jolly Roger's character, and the Duffer succumbs!

The further adventures of **"A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA!"** gives in an exceptionally interesting fashion some more facts and anecdotes about life "Down under."

QUITE A MISTAKE.

It is odd to note the kind of thing some keen readers will take exception to. For instance, there was that amusing incident described in a recent yarn where somebody sits down on a tin of toffee. Will you believe it, but in connection with this more than dramatic episode a letter was written in far-away Australia, and in this note the writer said the occurrence was impossible. Nobody, he thinks, would sit on toffee without observing the detail. That shows all he knows about it. Why, folks can be so absent-minded that they will sit on a committee, leave alone toffee, and go to sleep! Oh, it has been done! I am quite content to pass the toffee experience as all right. The author knew what he was doing—trust him for that. There is not much an author does not know. If there is something of which he is ignorant he thinks he understands, so it all comes to the same thing in the end. But don't sit down on toffee yourselves. It is a mistake.

FOOTBALL.

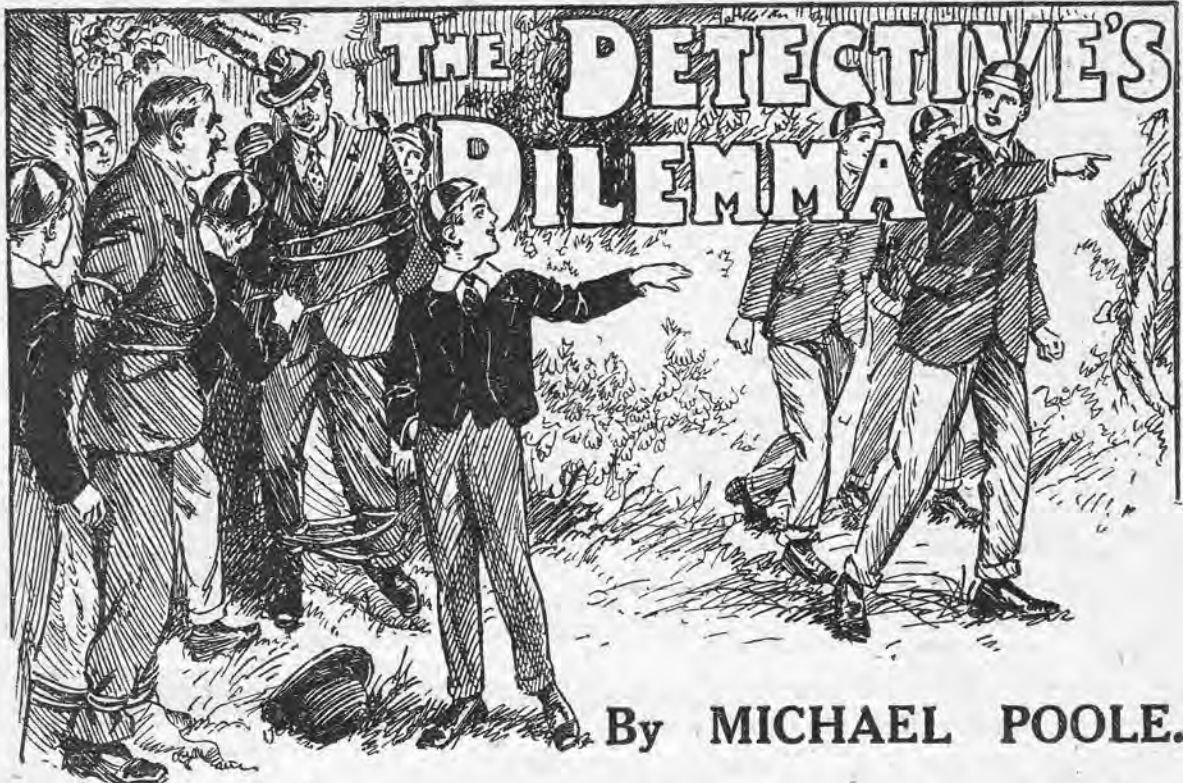
I am asked to publish the following requests: The Grosvenor United (2nd Eleven) F.C. require football matches, home and away, age 15. S. Miller, 22, Grosvenor Street, Camberwell, S.E. 5.—Sec. Starshot Rangers, 14, Medway Road, Roman Road, Old Ford, wants to hear of good players willing to join. A mile radius Victoria Park, age 16-17.—Glenroy F.C. Away, 5 miles, 16 years, medium. J. A. Goffin, 20, Cranborne Road, Barking.

THE BRITISH "MAGNET" AND "GEM" CLUB.

Mr. John Penn sends me particulars of the big strides his club is making. He encloses a copy of his up-to-date printed magazine, in which the result of a recent voting-competition shows, once again, the popularity of the Companion Papers. Many thanks. Those interested should write to Mr. Penn, at 125, Dartmouth Park Hill, Highgate, London, N. 19.

Your Editor

A Splendid Long Tale of Dickie Dexter & Co., the Chums of St. Katie's.



CHAPTER 1. Complications for Richard!

IT was a very wise man who once said that life was just one thing after another.

Take the case of Richard Dexter, of the Transitus, for instance. Anybody who knows the Kid also knows that he was the last fellow in the world to stir up trouble, or want to worry anybody, or start any sort of complications for himself or anybody else. It was always other people who made the trouble as far as Dickie Dexter was concerned.

One afternoon the Kid went out with Dobbie on a photographic excursion into the really wild parts of Dulchester. They didn't get any photographs, but Dobbie nearly had his camera stolen, and Dexter got a nasty knock on the head.

Apart from that, however, they made friends with a very pleasant man called the Dandy, who rescued them from a tight corner, patched them up, and saw them safely off the premises.

That's one thing. It began and finished one summer's afternoon, and had nothing at all to do with the fact that some time later the Kid quietly stole out of Katie's by the emergency stairs about an hour after lights out. He went with another friend this time, J. E. Duff, also of the Transitus, and they had a giddy ride in a motor-car, then came back to the school.

There was no earthly reason why they shouldn't have got back into their dormitories quite safely, and no one had been a penny the wiser. Unfortunately, a sort of remnant left over from the last mild adventure butted in here. Burglars were on the prowl, and the Kid and the Duffer got mixed up in the business.

It ended quite all right, however. The Kid discovered it was the Dandy who had been inspired by the Kid's tales about Katie's. Wherefore, Dexter took the bag from the Dandy and cried quits. The Dandy got safely away, and the

school got back everything it might have lost.

Everybody ought to have been satisfied at that. The local police-sergeant came, and he said he was satisfied. Mr. Bird was perfectly satisfied—and he wasn't the sort of man to be easily content.

Mr. Roger Blunt smiled and seemed quite satisfied. But he wasn't! He had observed the fact that Dickie Dexter, the brave boy who had chased the burglar and captured his bag, was fully and completely dressed, despite the fact that he must have been outside the school before anybody else, except Duff, who accompanied him.

Duff was also completely dressed, even to the fact that his boots were properly laced.

Not for a moment did Roger think the two had anything to do with the burglars. Oh, no! His theory, quickly formed, was that Dexter and Duff had been out of the school on some little stunt of their own, and, coming back at the time of the burglar-hunt, had very wisely taken a hand in the business.

That very same night Roger did a little private investigation on his own account. He examined the window through which the burglar had gained entrance and exit. More, he examined the whole length of the fire emergency stairs.

And he found that the door on the top corridor was open! Roger was just going to pass through into the corridor when it was silently pushed to, and he could hear the big bars on the other side quietly sliding into place.

Jolly Roger was locked out!

He dashed down the emergency stairs, back into the school, and like newly-greased lightning, he flashed up the stairs again to the corridor where Dormitories C, D, and E were situated.

Here he was just in time to see the Duffer quietly entering Dormitory D. For Duff had waited his chance to slip

up to the door which he had left unbolts three hours or more ago, and fasten it up again.

The Duffer didn't see Roger, and the master of the Transitus never said a word to his densest and most thick-headed pupil. All that Roger did that night was to go upstairs and examine the lock on the emergency exit door.

He found that the bars were carefully oiled where they slipped into their sockets. Roger discovered that none of the others were so treated.

"Ah, ah!" said Roger to himself. "Have we a little mystery here? I have heard that our Duffer has a mechanical turn of mind. Does he use his brains astutely, even to my deception? I will investigate the matter. Life is full of interest!"

But on the following morning, Roger did his best to wind up the attempted burglary incident, and the sergeant assured both the Head and Mr. Blunt that they could now leave the matter in his competent hands, and that they wouldn't be troubled further.

The sergeant made a mistake here, because, of course, he didn't know about life being just one thing after another. It was Detective Smithers who discovered that.

Mr. Smithers was really a Scotland Yard man, attached to the Dulchester Police for several months past in order to keep an eye on several gentlemen who resided in the city, and whose records were quite well-known to the highest authorities in police circles.

On the day when Dobbie and Dexter had been rescued by the Dandy, Mr. Smithers had seen both of them talking to one of his pet subjects. He had even crossed the street in order to warn the Dandy not to try any tricks on with schoolboys, and the Dandy had repulsed him scornfully.

Nevertheless, Mr. Smithers duly noted
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 553.

the fact that the Dandy was talking to two boys from St. Katherine's School, and he made a mental photograph of the two boys and tucked it away at the back of his brain.

Just as it happened, Mr. Smithers was away from Dulchester on the night of the attempted burglary at St. Katie's. He only heard of it two days later, when he returned to the city.

The sergeant told him about it casually. He said that no harm had been done, and there wasn't a clue or a trace of the burglars.

"Pah!" said Mr. Smithers. "The Dandy—probably Slim James was with him! I'll get 'em! They're booked this time!"

Then he sauntered forth and went to Katie's. His first call was at the Recorder's office, where he gained a full and complete account of the burglary as Mr. Deveen knew it. He also learned about the call of the insurance expert some few days ago.

"Slim James!" cried Mr. Smithers. "We'll have him! Anything like these photographs?"

He showed Mr. Deveen an assortment of photographs, but there wasn't one of them like the man who had called about the insurance. Mr. Smithers regretfully recalled that Slim James was supposed to be something of an expert in the matter of make-up.

Then Mr. Smithers examined certain photographs of school groups, and asked the names of two boys who appeared in a recent photograph of the Transitus Form.

"Dobbin, J. A., with spectacles; Dexter, R., small boy," memorised Mr. Smithers.

"It was young Dexter who nearly caught the burglar," explained Mr. Deveen. "He managed to get the bag all right, but the man succeeded in making his escape. A very brave and plucky youngster."

"Very!" said Mr. Smithers. "Very, very interesting. I wonder—I should like to have a few words with the headmaster of the school, if you can arrange it for me?"

A few minutes later the spick and span Mr. Smithers was shown into the headmaster's study.

And it was just then that the really complicated part of the business began for Richard Dexter. Quite a number of people were taking a deep interest in him, and between them, all unknown to the Kid, they were preparing one or two unpleasant half-hours for him!

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Smithers' Clever Plot!

"MR. SMITHERS is a detective from Scotland Yard," said the Beak in his loftiest manner.

"He wishes to ask you a number of questions, Dexter. I wish you to answer them to the best of your ability, and to give all the assistance you can. The same remark applies to you also, Dobbin!"

"Yes, sir," said Dexter and Dobbin.

They were in the Head's room, and in the chair at the side of the Head's desk sat Mr. Smithers, smiling pleasantly, and with oppressive confidence. Mr. Roger Blunt was standing very upright just to the left of the Head, and all three men were concentrating their gaze on the two youths from the Transitus.

"We have met before," began Mr. Smithers genially. "You two boys probably remember the afternoon?"

"Yes," said Dexter; while Dobbin nodded. "It was the afternoon we were with the Dandy, wasn't it?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 653.

Mr. Smithers turned to the Head and smiled. He had already explained his theory to the headmaster, and the latter hadn't much faith in it. The idea that boys from Katie's gave useful information to burglars, even unconsciously, did not please Mr. Bird!

Jolly Roger had already been questioned by the detective, but had been compelled to admit regretfully that he had seen very little of the burglars, as it was dark when he had tried to come to grips with them.

He judged that the man he had surprised in his own room was on the short side, while the man who nearly collided with him in the corridor was a tall, thin fellow. Beyond that he could add nothing.

It was now Dexter's and Dobbin's turn. There wasn't very much in it so far as Dobbin was concerned, because he felt quite sure that even Scotland Yard detective couldn't land him in for anything connected with burglars.

But Dexter was different. He knew a lot of things that Dobbin didn't. He knew, too, that if he were not very careful he would most certainly land the Duffer into a terrific row, because the Duffer had been with him outside the school when the burglar came through the window.

And Dexter also knew that he might land the Dandy into a row, too—a row that would lead straight to prison for the Dandy!

The Kid didn't want to land anybody into trouble. He wasn't that sort at all. The Duffer was a jolly good chap, and at all costs the Kid wasn't going to give the game away so far as he was concerned.

And the Dandy had been very decent to the Kid and Dobbin when they were in a tight corner, and so far as the burgling business was concerned, hadn't the Kid made that quite square when he brought back everything the Dandy had taken? It would be a mean, miserable sort of business if the Kid went and got the Dandy into trouble now!

But here was the detective from Scotland Yard plunging into a whole mass of awkward questions! And the Head was showing signs of restiveness too!

"Why should you be in that part of the town, Dexter?" demanded the Beak. "How did you two boys come to know this fellow, the Dandy, as they call him?"

"Perhaps you will explain that," added Mr. Smithers, and the smile grew broader. He was really getting on the track of the business now!

"Dobbin went down there to photograph phases of real life, because the judges in the photographic competition said that was what he ought to do," Dexter answered quite frankly. "Four men set on us, and cut Dobbin's camera from round his shoulders, and hit me on the head rather badly. Probably they'd have killed us both if the Dandy hadn't appeared and rescued us. He got a new strap for Dobbin—for Dobbin, sir, and he bandaged my head, and gave us tea and biscuits, and then he saw us into a safer place. He—he was really very good to us, sir!"

More questions! Dobbin was called upon, and he confirmed every detail of the Kid's story. Mr. Smithers began to get annoyed because this wasn't helping his theory at all.

"Now we come to the night of the burglary!" said Mr. Smithers suddenly. "You heard the alarm raised, and, with another boy, rushed out and chased the burglar. You saw him?"

"Yes, sir," said Dexter.

"Did you recognise him?" demanded the detective.

"I knew he was a burglar," answered the Kid, "because he had a bag, and,

anyway, he was running away—and he wouldn't do that if he wasn't a burglar, would he?"

"Did you recognise him as the Dandy?" Mr. Smithers asked.

The Kid stared at him, then he looked at the Head, and then at Jolly Roger. Over his face slowly spread a look of fear—nay, almost terror.

"I never thought—it was dark. How could I see him?" he bleated. "You mean—You're trying to catch us? You think Dobbin and I arranged the burglary? You're trying to make us say things we don't mean—"

He turned to the Head piteously.

"It isn't quite fair, sir," he urged. "You don't think Dobbin and I have anything to do with the burglary, sir? We didn't—we couldn't—I did my best and tried to catch him—"

"Yes, yes," said the Head, and turned to Mr. Smithers.

"Is it your suggestion that these boys were privy to some plan to burgle the school, Mr. Smithers?" he asked. "If it is—Allow me to put the question to them quite straightly."

"No, no!" protested Mr. Smithers. But the Head had turned to Dobbin and addressed him sharply.

"Dobbin, have you any knowledge whatever which leads you to connect this man, the Dandy, with the burglary here? Answer me yes or no, Dobbin?"

"No, sir!" said Dobbin.

"Thank you! Dexter"—the Head directed his gaze to that youth, and the Kid thought that the game was now up—"can you give Mr. Smithers any further information?"

It was a loophole for the Kid! He couldn't and he wouldn't! If the worst came to the worst, he would have a nervous breakdown, and assert that he was the burglar himself!

"No, sir!" he answered. "Dobbin and I had nothing to do with the burglary, sir, and I'm sure that the Dandy—He told us himself, sir; that he was advertisement agent for an insurance company, didn't he, Dobbin?"

"Yes, sir," said Dobbin emphatically.

"I don't think they can help you any further, Mr. Smithers," the Head said quietly. "Mr. Blunt did not see the men clearly; it is equally obvious that Dexter would have less opportunity of seeing the man who was running away. Are you quite satisfied with their story of how they met this man—the Dandy?"

"Oh, yes!" said Mr. Smithers. And in his own mind decided that he would ask no more questions in the Head's presence.

"You boys may go," said the Head kindly. "You may rest assured that neither in my mind nor in Mr. Smithers' mind is there the faintest suspicion that you were connected with this burglary in the slightest degree. Mr. Smithers has to ask these questions, of course. You may go!"

They went out. Watching young Dexter's face, even Mr. Smithers was impressed by the fact that the small boy was evidently highly-strung, and probably wouldn't be very much use, after all, as a witness. Nevertheless, the detective proposed to watch and wait.

But Jolly Roger was not deceived. He felt more amazed and perplexed than ever, and he wanted to get away and think about it all by himself.

So, being a clever man, he smiled when he went out to accompany Mr. Smithers downstairs. Mr. Smithers also smiled, because he was a clever man, too, and what he couldn't get one way he could usually get in another!

He still felt quite sure that the Dandy was behind the attempted burglary at the school, but there wasn't enough proof to bring the Dandy into it yet. If only

the boy Dexter could give a little positive evidence, Mr. Smithers was quite confident that the Dandy's freedom would be out short.

Mr. Smithers made a few more inquiries at the Recorder's office, and then went back to the police-station, where he concocted a very clever plot. It was a top-hole little scheme, and it would settle quite definitely just how much Richard Dexter knew about the Dandy.

Mr. Roger Blunt wasn't in quite such a hurry. He wanted the burglary business to settle down before he began to make unpleasant inquiries, but he confessed to himself that the whole affair had begun to take on a queer aspect.

As for the Kid, he was pretty miserable about the whole business, and, to make it worse, he couldn't tell any of his chums the real situation. Dobbie only knew part, and that was the part that didn't matter, while the Duffer didn't know anything about the Dandy.

Miserably he strolled out after dinner by himself, trying to think over the whole position once more. As he passed the Recorder's office the assistant clerk saw him, and called out.

"A queer sort of chap brought this note up for you this morning," he explained. "He wanted me to give it to you personally, he said, and it's very important!"

Dexter nodded, and took the note. The envelope was rather dirty, and addressed in poor writing: "Master Dexter, St. Kathrin's Schol."

Inside was a half-sheet of cheap paper, on which was written:

"Meet me or my pal by big oak in wood near your cricket-field at 5 o'clock this afternoon. Must see you. Important. "DANDY."

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" sighed the Kid. "If anybody sees me— This is the frozen limit! What does the silly idiot want to come round here for? And sending a note to the Wrecker's office! They are bound to talk about it!"

It really was enough to upset anybody, and the Kid walked across the playing-fields with the feeling that the Dandy had given the game away himself now, and that it served him jolly well right, only—

He was walking along the edge of the wood when he heard a faint whistle from quite near at hand. Then someone called softly:

"Say, youngster! Half a mo!"

Dexter went back a little way. Just inside the wood a figure rose cautiously before him and smiled cheerfully. It was the Dandy!

"S-sh! Thought I'd better have a word with you," the Dandy said. "Been waitin' here for quite a time, and expected to wait a lot longer—p'raps a day or two. But I don't take any risks! Not likely, with the cops keeping their little eyes on me! But I've dodged 'em all right!"

"But why did you send a note?" demanded the Kid, and took the dirty envelope from his pocket. "It's giving the game away!"

"Me send a note?" demanded the Dandy. "Not likely! I've never sent you no note!"

"Who sent that, then?" the Kid asked, and handed him the note he had just had from the Recorder's assistant.

"Gee-whizz!" The Dandy smiled. "Somebody's having a game with you, Mr. Dexter! How are things standing? You said we were quits. But old Smithers has been up, hasn't he? Hot stuff, Smithers! Been asking questions?"

Dexter told him what had happened this morning, and again the Dandy smiled.

"You're a real toff, you are!" he said

admiringly. "I'm clearing out of Dulchester for a time—getting a bit warm, and it doesn't suit me. Going to be good—turn over a new leaf and all that—if I can dodge old Smithers. He's written that note."

He handed back the dirty, ill-spelt note to the Kid and began to explain. He had drawn the Kid into a hiding-place among the bushes, where they could watch the playing-fields, and here they exchanged confidences.

Now, in the beginning there wasn't the faintest desire on Dickie Dexter's part to impede the course of justice. You might even say that he was never really on the side of the Dandy.

But he didn't want to be the one who sneaked on the Dandy. Further, he wasn't on Mr. Smithers' side, because it was pretty obvious that the detective was out to bring trouble on the Kid.

The Dandy's appearance this afternoon and his appeal to the Kid to keep his word, combined with the realisation that the note through the Wrecker's was a spoof affair got up by Mr. Smithers, settled the Kid's mind. He was out to defeat the detective!

"That's all right, Dandy!" the Kid said, when the burglar had finished his remarks. "I don't approve of that burglary stunt of yours, of course, but we cried quits on that, and you can bet your best boots that I sha'n't give the show away to Mr. Smithers! And he's going to catch me, is he? You leave him to me, Dandy!"

"You're a brick!" said the Dandy. "Goo'-bye!"

He disappeared, and the Kid wandered back to the playing-fields. As he had truly remarked, his brain was rotating and bright schemes were dancing in his mind.

Now and again he read and re-read the note signed "Dandy," and the more he stared at it the more he became convinced that this was a little game of Mr. Smithers. Just how the detective proposed to work the spoof he did not know; but, whatever he did, the Kid intended to be quite ready for him.

A good many fellows saw that note during the afternoon. To each and every one was explained the full story—or as full as was wise for them. Even Big Hallam saw the note.

The story was told in three non-stop reels. Part 1 told of the meeting of Dobbie, Dexter, and the Dandy. Part 2 everyone really knew. It was merely a record of the fact that the Kid had chased an unknown burglar and got his bag from him. Part 3 related the visit of the Scotland Yard man this morning, and how he tried to drag Dobbie and Dexter into the burglary.

"And now I've got this note," the Kid explained, "and that just shows that it probably is this fellow, the Dandy, who burgled the school. What we've got to do is to catch him! He ought to be caught, or else suspicion will cling to me, won't it, Hallam? This chap, Dandy, evidently thinks I recognised him, and I expect he's going to threaten me what he'll do if I tell. So you'll help us to capture him, won't you, Hallam?"

"We ought to tell the Head," suggested Hallam.

"Don't you think it would be better to catch him first and then tell the Head?" the Kid argued; and Hallam saw the point.

Besides, it would be a pretty decent lark, anyhow; and they might just as well have some fun on the job, and get the credit for it, too. Even Hallam saw that.

Altogether there were thirty to forty fellows in the Upper School who knew the plans for capturing the burglar.

And everybody agreed that it would be a ripping stunt, and quite one of the best things the Kid had ever done!

Long before five o'clock the copse which led down to the river was well guarded. From different points of observation thirty-eight or forty big fellows watched joyfully, as the diminutive form of Richard Dexter entered the wood at five minutes to five and proceeded to walk down the sloping path towards the big oak-tree!

CHAPTER 3.

A Little Hero!

ABOUT a quarter to five that afternoon Detective Smithers clambered up to the wood and sought a convenient hiding-place.

A few minutes before him a plain-clothes man, carefully instructed in the part he had to play, had gone before him, and stood behind the oak-tree.

At three minutes to five both of them knew that their little ruse was going to be entirely successful. Down the path came Richard Dexter—and alone!

The plain-clothes man stepped from behind the tree, and held up a warning finger.

"Sh! The Dandy daren't come!" he whispered dramatically. "But you're not giving us away, are you? You got the Dandy's note?"

"Oh, yes!" said the Kid. "Are you the Dandy's pal?"

"Yes!" The man nodded sharply. "He wants to know what's happened?"

"Just nothing!" said the Kid. "Nothing at all!"

"Good!" Again the man nodded sharply, and looked quickly over Dexter's shoulder. "You recognised the Dandy all right the other night?"

"What do you think?" the Kid laughed. "You were in the school yourself, weren't you?"

"Of course!" the man answered, and Dexter saw him raise his hand. "I can tell the Dandy that everything's safe?"

"Should I be here?" laughed the Kid, and then felt a hand on his shoulder.

Almost before he turned round to face the newcomer the Kid whistled sharply.

"Richard Dexter! I arrest you for being concerned with two other men in the burglary at the school!" It was Detective Smithers who had put his hand on Dickie's shoulders, and he was smiling sardonically. "I've got to warn you, of course; but I'll tell you right away that if you tell me the whole truth I dare say I'll be able to arrange—"

Long before he had got so far as that there was a sound of the crackling of bushes. Mr. Smithers looked up, to discover that boys—big, manly boys, wearing St. Katie's cap—were appearing, not in ones and twos, but in dozens!

"What—" began the detective; but three of the biggest had seized him. Others had pounced on his assistant, while others were bringing forth yards and yards of rope!

The detective tried to protest. But it wasn't any use. The woods echoed and re-echoed with the row Katie's lads kicked up.

Mr. Smithers tried to shout to Richard Dexter, who was acting as general officer commanding, because it was his stunt, and he felt like a giddy hero.

Big Hallam was another general on the job. When they had wound yards and yards of rope round their two captives they dragged them to a tree. Not the oak-tree, because that was rather too large; but just a nice healthy tree. And to this Mr. Smithers was duly tied.

His companion was tied up to the next

tree. By this time both the prisoners were purple in the face, and had lost their voices in trying to yell out that this was a mistake.

"I'll go and tell the Head now!" Big Hallam called out. "Some of you fellows can come with me, but at least half of you must stay here to guard the burglars!"

Mr. Smithers was still explaining and threatening, but they begged him to be calm. The police would be here soon, and they were the proper people to listen to their excuses.

Meantime Big Hallam and about half a dozen others had sped away. Jolly Roger, taking a stroll towards the playing-fields, saw the crowd streaming towards him, and wondered what had happened.

Big Hallam pulled up just before he reached Roger, and called out his news joyfully.

"We've got them, sir! Just come to see if you or the Head would be good enough to telephone the police. They can't get away!"

"Who?" demanded Roger. "Why? What has happened?"

"We've captured the two burglars who were here a night or two ago, sir," Hallam explained more calmly. "Dexter thinks there may be another; but we've made sure of these two, anyway!"

"You've captured the burglars?" repeated Roger, still more amazed. "How? Tell me exactly what has happened, Hallam!"

Hallam quietened down and steadied himself.

"Young Dexter, of the Transitus, had a note this afternoon, presumably from one of the burglars, asking him to meet the burglar in the copse at five o'clock," Hallam said carefully. "Evidently the burglar imagined that Dexter had recognised him the other night and knew him to be a man known as the Dandy. But you know that part of the story, I believe, sir?"

"Yes!" Roger nodded abruptly. "Go on, Hallam!"

"Dexter came to me at once, sir," the captain of the school went on, "and reported the full facts. I decided not to inform the Head until we had actually secured the burglar—in case there was any hitch, sir. We made our plans, and surrounded the wood, while Dexter went to keep the appointment. On a given signal from him, we plunged ahead and captured not merely one, sir, but both!"

The Head was quite as much amazed as Jolly Roger when he heard the story, but Hallam assured him that there could not possibly be a mistake. Dexter had actually got one of the burglars to admit that he was in the school that fateful night!

"You should have told me at once, Hallam," the Head said, in gentle admonition. But, of course, Hallam knew that if he had told the Beak, the burglars wouldn't have been recaptured, and they would have missed this gorgeous lark.

And the Head telephoned at once for the police, who agreed to come promptly. The Head decided that he would be ready to lead them personally to the spot, while it was arranged that Mr. Blunt should return with Hallam at once to see that a proper guard was kept over the prisoners.

On the way to the copse, Roger heard a good deal more of the plans which had been made. Somewhat weakly he

agreed with Hallam that young Dexter had acted very sensibly.

But imagine Roger's shock when he saw Mr. Smithers, the detective, tied up to a tree! As soon as the detective saw him, he gave a cry of delight.

"Tell these young fools to let me go at once, Mr. Blunt!" he begged. "A joke's a joke, but this—"

"But what does it mean?" Again Roger wanted explanations, and Dexter showed him the note signed by "Dandy."

"I shall have to keep that, sir," Dexter pointed out. "It will be a most important point in my evidence, of course."

"I sent that note!" Smithers cried out. "I will explain—"

"He admits it, sir," Dexter and a dozen others wanted Jolly Roger to note the fact.

"This isn't the Dandy I once met, sir," Dexter explained still further. "It's a frightfully complicated case, I should think, sir, because he's posing as a detective and as the Dandy, and all the time—"

"Will you let me go?" demanded the detective, and for once in a way Mr. Blunt could not decide. He really believed Smithers was a detective, but why on earth had he written this note?

Mr. Smithers wasn't in the mood to explain very carefully, and his companion in distress also wanted to give his point of view. Between them they complicated matters still further, and Mr. Blunt decided to compromise.

"The police will be here soon," he explained. "I'm afraid I must leave the decision to them. It's an extraordinary affair, and you must forgive me if I appear a little perplexed."

Fortunately, the police of Dulchester answered Mr. Bird's summons with remarkable promptitude. In a very short time the Head himself led a sergeant and three constables into the copse.

More shocks! The sergeant and the constables knew both Mr. Smithers and his assailant, Wellins, as well as they knew each other. They didn't exactly love them, but—Smithers was shouting out and demanding release.

The Head recognised Mr. Smithers, of course, and at first he thought that he was an impostor; then he thought that the boys had played a very foolish practical joke, until he grasped the real story. When he understood that Mr. Smithers really had sent the note to Dexter, and that Dexter had acted in a perfectly straight-forward manner in reporting it to the captain of the school, everything began to get involved again.

In the end the ropes which bound the two unfortunates to the trees were unfastened, and Mr. Smithers and Wellins stood amongst the crowd—free men once more!

Everybody was asking for fuller explanations. The Head acted wisely in getting the main characters into his study as quickly as possible, and here the whole story was gone through again.

Mr. Bird grasped every detail very quickly. So did most of the others.

"It really amounts to this, Mr. Smithers," said the Head in his best judicial voice. "Not content with my assurances and your own questioning of this morning, you arrange this trap in order to catch the boy Dexter, and, by frightening him, possibly get him to make some admission. The plan fails completely, and you are actually hoist with your own petard. I am afraid that I cannot apologise on behalf of the boys!"

The grim, tense look on Mr. Smithers'

face relaxed into a sort of gentle smile.

"I quite agree, Mr. Bird," he jerked out. "It's up to me to do the apologising. I'm sorry! But if you have any more burglaries here, I hope you'll catch the burglar before I hear about it. It might reform him to have the experience I've had."

So the Head and Mr. Smithers parted on quite good terms. Everybody began to see the humour of the thing, and Hallam chose the correct moment to ask a question which had been in his mind.

"You don't think I acted wrongly in using my own discretion, sir?" he asked the Head.

"Certainly not, Hallam!" the Beak answered firmly. "I think your conduct has removed the last faint suspicion from the minds of the officials, and they appear to me to be more than usually suspicious!"

Hallam clapped the Kid on the back when they came from the Beak's study. You might say that Hallam shared the honours with the Kid of having organised a most successful stunt. And everybody agreed that it just served the detectives right, and that the Kid had got his own back both for himself and Dobbin.

"But, I say, Blunt," said Mr. Steed to his colleague, "you rather gave me the impression at noon that young Dexter had something he wanted to hide? You said that he was an ingenious youth, and that there was more in his burglar-chase than met the eye? You don't think that now, do you?"

Jolly Roger put both hands to his head and carefully stroked his hair, as though to make sure that it was still there.

"My dear Steed," he said, in slow and sorrowful tones, "I have always prided myself that I am not easily deceived, but there are times when I doubt it. To-day is one. In confidence, I will admit to you that last night I was quite certain that Dexter was outside the school, fully-dressed, before the alarm was raised on the night of the burglary. In my own feeble way I associated him with Duff, the bottom boy of the Transitus, and I was anxious to investigate the case more fully."

"But—" began Mr. Steed.

"To-day the mystery thickened. Dobbin appeared to be in it, and I observed regretfully that our friend the detective was obviously intent upon outwitting Dexter. I fancied, moreover, that Dexter was perturbed and troubled and far from happy. Observe what happened to the detective. As a wise man, I shall go slowly. For the moment, at all events, I am content to regard Dexter as others regard him—as a little hero. Talk to me about Dexter in a week's time, Steed. I may be feeling stronger by then."

And, upstairs in Study No. 10, Richard Dexter was explaining again about the Dandy and Mr. Smithers—and others.

"I was just on the track of the real burglar," he was saying, "and then, of course, Scotland Yard comes and butts in and destroys all my clues. If the Beak had only forbidden everybody except me to touch the case, all would have been well. You can always trust your Uncle Richard to manage a job properly. But, my hat! Didn't old Smithers look mad when we had him trussed up like a giddy martyr!"

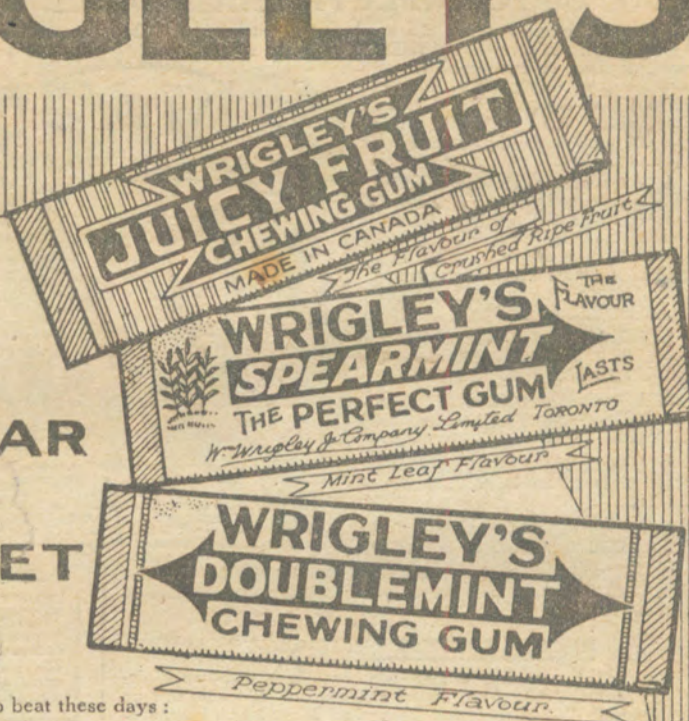
THE END.

(Another grand story of the chums of St. Katie's next week, entitled: "THE DUFFER'S DOWNFALL!" Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY!)

WRIGLEY'S

3
Flavours

**AN
EXTRA BAR
IN
EACH PACKET**



HERE'S a double Treat that's hard to beat these days :

WHILE everything else has "gone up" in price, WRIGLEY'S is still a 1d. a Bar for the longest-lasting sweetmeat in the world.

The addition of an extra 6th Bar is WRIGLEY'S way of serving the Boys on the pre-war price basis.

AND what a wonderful sweetmeat WRIGLEY'S really is. To-day it has a larger sale than any other standardised sweetmeat in the world. WHY?—Because it is by far the biggest value in the world. It

- Lasts Longest in Substance and Flavour ;
- Is the Finest Digestive ;
- Is good for the Teeth and Gums ;
- Cleans the Tongue and Sweetens the Breath ;
- Sustains the Strength and Spirits.

GET AND TRY A PACKET TO-DAY

and you will understand why WRIGLEY'S is

THE WORLD'S FIRST AND FOREMOST FAVOURITE SWEETMEAT

SOLD EVERYWHERE.

Make sure you get the real WRIGLEY'S



6 BARS 3d.
(1/2d. PER BAR.)

**Sealed tight
—kept right.**

**The
Flavour Lasts**

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HAIR.

Adopt the Popular and Beneficial "Harlene Hair-Drill."

1,000,000 COMPLETE "HAIR-DRILL" Outfits FREE TO READERS.

If you are worried about the condition of your hair, if it is weak, impoverished, falling out, or affected with scurf, dryness, or over-greyness, do as millions of others (both men and women) have done, and try "Harlene Hair-Drill," the delightful toilet exercise and unfailing remedy for all hair defects.

A short course of Hair-Drill will quickly convince you of the wonderful benefits to be derived from its daily practice, and the opportunity is freely offered to you in the unique Four-Fold Gift Outfit described below.

HERE IS THE 4-FOLD GIFT.

1. A Bottle of "Harlene" the true liquid food and tonic for the hair, which stimulates it to new growth.
2. A Packet of "Cremex" Shampoo Powder, which prepares the head for "Hair-Drill."
3. A Bottle of "Uzon" Brilliantine, which gives a final touch of beauty to the hair.
4. A copy of the new edition of the "Hair-Drill" Manual of instruction.

Write in the first place for one of the 1,000,000 "Harlene Hair-Drill" Outfits, and prove its efficacy for yourself free of personal expense.

MILLIONS PRACTISE "HAIR-DRILL."

Millions of men and women now practise "Harlene Hair-Drill" daily. They have tested and proved that this unique preparation, "Harlene," and its agreeable method of applica-

tion, "Hair-Drill," is the surest way to overcome all hair defects, and that it is also the easiest way to ensure the perfect growth of long, silky, beautiful hair in abundance, glossy and bright.

"HARLENE" FOR MEN ALSO.

Men, too, find that "Harlene" prevents Scalp Irritation, Dryness, and a tendency to Baldness. It is no exaggeration to say that millions of men and women in all walks of life practise the refreshing and beneficial "Hair-Drill" daily, and so preserve hair-health and beauty.

After a free trial you can always obtain further supplies of "Harlene" at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 9d. per bottle; "Cremex" Shampoo Powders at 1s. 1½d. per box of seven shampoos (single packets 2d. each); "Uzon" Brilliantine at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per bottle, from all Chemists and Stores, or will be sent direct, on receipt of 6d. extra for postage, from Edwards' Harlene, Ltd., 20, 22, 24, and 26, Lamb's Conduit, Street, W.C.1.

"HARLENE" GIFT COUPON.

Detach and post to EDWARDS' HARLENE, Ltd., 20, 22, 24, and 26, Lamb's Conduit St., London, W.C.1. Dear Sirs.—Please send me your Free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair-Growing Outfit as announced. I enclose 4d. in stamps for postage and packing to my address. GEM, 14-8-20.

NOTE TO READER.

Write your full name and address clearly on a plain piece of paper, pin this coupon to it, and post as directed above. (Mark envelope "Sample Dept.")



Reflect on the condition of your hair. When it is attacked by scurf, dryness, over-greyness, and begins to fall out and becomes brittle, thin and weak, it needs the beneficial treatment of Harlene Hair-Drill to give new health and strength to the impoverished hair roots. Send for a free trial outfit to-day.

NICKEL SILVER WATCHES

DELIVERED ON FIRST PAYMENT OF

2/- ONLY. YOU HAVE WATCH WHILST PAYING FOR IT.



Gent's full-size Railway timekeeping Keyless Lever Watch; Stout Nickel Silver or Oxidized Damp and Dust Proof Cases, plain dial, perfectly balanced superior Lever Movement, splendid timekeeper. Price for either pocket or wrist, 15/- each. Luminous dial (see time in dark), 2/- extra. Ladies' Chain or Wrist, 2/- extra.

We will send either of these watches on receipt of P.O. for 2/-. After receiving watch you send us a further 2/-, and promise to pay the remaining 11/- by weekly or monthly instalments. For cash with order enclose 14/- only. Five years warranty given with every watch.

To avoid disappointment, send 2/- and 6d. extra postage at once. No unpleasant inquiries. All orders executed in rotation.

The LEVER WATCH Co. (M Dept.),
42a, Stockwell Green, London, S.W. 9.

ELECTRIC LIGHT. Battery, lampholder, lamp, wire, switch, re-lector, and instructions, post free, 4/2. Cat. Model Engines, Motors, Railways, Dynamos, etc., 3d.—Small Power Co., 58, Queen's Road, Aston, Birmingham.

CUT THIS OUT

"The Gem." PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 113, Fleet St., London, E.C. 4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price; so you may need 13 coupons and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the GEM readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Self-Filling, or Safety Models, 2/- extra.

N

NERVOUSNESS

Cure It and be Popular and Successful.

You can't be popular if you are nervous. If you bluish and look confused when spoken to, Nobody wants Bashful, Nervous, Timid, Awkward people round them either in Society or in Business. It is the Confident that are liked, the Self-Possessed. They are popular everywhere, they are the Winners of all life's Prizes. Why not be like them and have a try for Success? You can be Cured of Nervousness and Blushing. In One Week by My System—cured permanently—you will gain Confidence, Ease of Manner—Personality. Be a Leader in Society and a Winner in Business. Seize this chance. Write to me at once, mentioning GEM, and I will send you full particulars Free, in plain sealed envelope. Address—Specialist, 12, All Saints Road, St. Anne's-on-Sea.

ARE YOU SHORT?

If so, let the Girvan System help you to increase your height. Mr. Briggs reports an increase of 5 inches; Driver E. F. 3 inches; Mr. Ratcliffe 4 inches; Miss Davies 3½ inches; Mr. Lindon 3 inches; Mr. Kettle 4 inches; Miss Ledell 4 inches. This System requires only ten minutes morning and evening, and greatly improves the health, physique, and carriage. No appliances or drugs. Send 3 penny stamps for further particulars and £100 Guarantee to Enquiry Dept., A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N. 4.



DUTTON'S 24 HOUR

DUTTON'S SHORTHAND has only 6 rules and 29 characters. Complete theory learned in 24 hours. Practice quickly gives high speeds. Send 2 stamps for illustrated booklet containing specimen lessons to DUTTON'S COLLEGE (Desk 303), SKEGNESS. London Branch: 92 and 93, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1. Manchester Branch: 5, 8, 9, Victoria Buildings, St. Mary's Gate.

SHORTHAND

Catalogue Raincoats, Trenchcoats, Boots, Shoes, Cutlery, Costumes, Rings, Watches, etc., on easy terms. 30/- worth, 5/- monthly; 60/- worth, 10/- monthly, etc. Write for Free Catalogue and Order Form. Foreign applications invited. **MASTERS, Ltd.,** 6, Hope Stores, RYE. (Estd. 1869.)

14-8-20