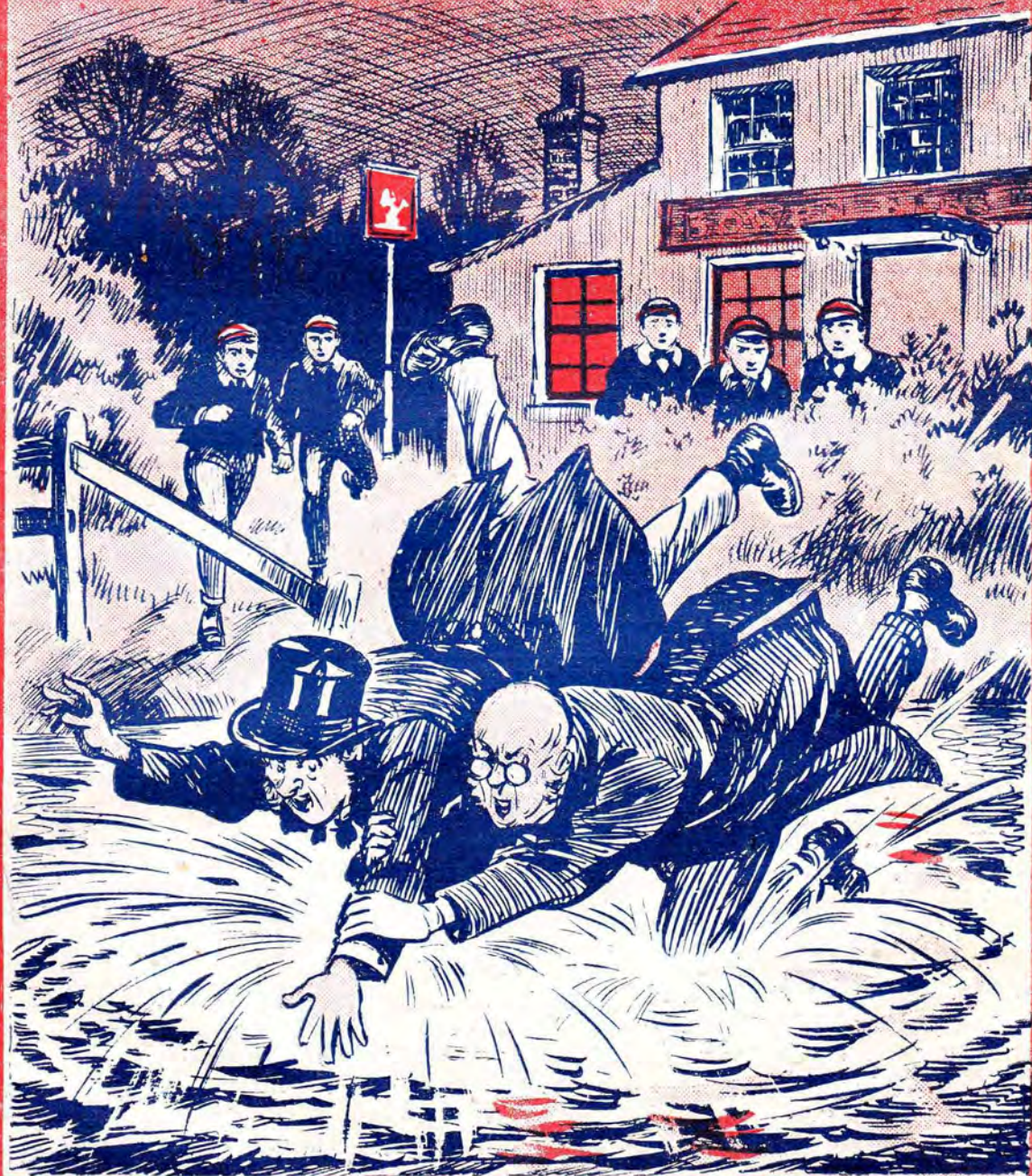


VALUE FOR MONEY! 15 YEARS' POPULARITY PROVES IT!

The GEM 2^D

No. 793.
Vol. XXIII.
April 21st, 1923.

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SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



MESSRS. RATCLIFF AND SELBY GET A BAD FRIGHT!

(An Amusing Incident from "Glyn's Scaresophone," the Grand, Long Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's in this issue.)



Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
"THE MAGNET" Every Monday
"THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday
"CHUCKLES" Every Thursday
"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

My dear chums,—A quick glance round at next week's programme of the GEM will repay anybody. First and foremost next Wednesday sees the Grand Cup tie number of the famous paper.

"ST. JIM'S AT THE CUP FINAL!"

That's the magnificent story Martin Clifford contributes to the coming issue. It is a triumph. Make a note of the fact that the new GEM is a Footer Number with heaps of special footer attractions. I cannot emphasise too much the success attending the efforts of Mr. Clifford to go one better than all previous football yarns. He has scored all along the line. There is an enormous lot in this story. I should not dream of giving away a particularly clever and original plot. But what I can refer to is the splendid spirit of the great winter game with which this tale is infused from first to last. At the outset you will all be as puzzled as were Tom Merry & Co. over the identity of a certain team. What's more, you will read with the keenest interest of the diplomacy and sportsmanship exhibited by both sides. It is a rattling yarn, with a bright, fresh atmosphere, and it rips along and makes the best goal the author has won yet.

AND DON'T FORGET GRUNDY!

George Alfred Grundy has a conspicuous part to play. He has a magnificent reputation for putting his foot in it, but if there is trouble it isn't all his doing. Anyway, he does face the music. He meant awfully well, too, and if letters will get into the wrong hands—well, there you are, you know! The coming story presents a troop of the old favourites, and they are all sure of a rousing welcome, including Herries.

THE "ST. JIM'S NEWS!"

Any kind of discussion about the coming supplement will be gladly welcomed. We are very near the wind-up of the footer season, but St. Jim's has managed to work up a glorious culmination to that season. It does one good to see how the cheery Third-Formers of St. Jim's meet the fags of good old Greyfriars in friendly rivalry. When the St. Jim's juniors get going, things happen. An amazing variety of happenings get recorded in the new supplement of the official paper of St. Jim's. I am often

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told the supplement is too small, but that is really nothing, for we hear the same thing said of every good thing like the "St. Jim's News." What is more to the point is the fact that the new supplement is the smartest yet. The "St. Jim's News" goes on climbing the giddy heights of popularity, and next Wednesday's issue will make another sparkling record.

"A TRIAL RACE!"

A Tu Sin yarn is ever welcome. The plucky young Chinese with whom Captain Malcolm Arnold has familiarised us, is modest and thorough, two qualities which make for success. But what's going to happen in this new yarn of a race run under sensational conditions? I can safely leave you to discover the upshot. The result is not a bit what might be expected. It all comes to this—Tu Sin is faced with a tremendous difficulty. He seems fated to come a cropper, anyhow, for the situation in which he finds himself placed is fraught with no end of peril. But Tu Sin can ride; he seems to be part of his mount, to blend his splendid spirit with that of the noble beast under him. It is a neck or nothing yarn, this, with a good deal of treachery in it, while the climax is a fair bolt from the blue.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

But we can leave Tu Sin in the saddle and go on to look at other attractions. Don't forget that postcards serve admirably for all Tuck Hamper entries. N.B.—This topping feature is holding its own, and a bit more, just like the Football Competition. There never was such an all-round footer edition of the GEM as that of next week, but it will not do to neglect Duncan Storm's serial, nor the welcome fact that the new serial is just about ready—waiting in the wings, so to speak—to enter the lists. The title of the successor to the Wolves is

"THE SPIDER OF THE NORTH!" by David Goodwin.

Keep your eye on the GEM for further particulars and the opening chapters of this thrilling story. It is all about mill land, and the "spider" in question is a clever, scheming rogue, nothing in common with the other spider of the north who cheered up Bruce, the victor of Bannockburn.

PLENTY OF CRITICISM.

Shoals of letters reach me every week about the stories in the GEM. Most of them are right down helpful communications. That does not mean they are packed full of compliments like sardines in a box. It is not so much a compliment that is wanted as useful criticism. I believe a lot of people consider that criticism is just another term for finding fault. Nothing of the sort. The real criticism is remote from picking holes, it is of the suggestive, friendly type.

Your Editor.

The "Magnet" Limerick Competition!

NO ENTRANCE FEE REQUIRED.

FIRST PRIZE

£1-1-0

and

Consolation Prizes of 2/6 for all efforts published.

In order to win one of the above prizes all you have to do is to supply the last line of the verse given below, taking care to see that your effort bears some apt relation to the theme.

RULES GOVERNING THE "MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

- 1.—The First Prize will be awarded to the sender of what, in the opinion of the Editor and a competent staff of adjudicators, is the best Last Line received.
- 2.—Consolation prizes of 2/6 will be awarded from week to week to those competitors whose efforts show merit.
- 3.—The coupon below entitling you to enter for this competition must be either pasted on to a postcard, in which case your last line must be written IN INK directly beneath it, or enclosed separately in an envelope with your Last Line effort attached.
- 4.—Competitor's name and full postal address must accompany every effort sent in.
- 5.—Entries must reach us not later than April 26th, 1923, and MUST NOT be enclosed with entrance forms for any other competition. They must be addressed "MAGNET Limerick No. 2," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.
- 6.—Your Editor undertakes that every effort sent in will receive careful consideration, but he will not hold himself responsible for coupons lost or mislaid, or delayed in the post. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery.
- 7.—This competition is open to all Readers of the Companion Papers, but the result each week will appear only in the "Magnet."
- 8.—It is a distinct condition of entry that your Editor's decision must be accepted as binding in all matters. Acceptance of these rules is an express condition of entry.

"MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION.—No.2.

Said Bunter, "There's nothing for tea,
And I'm hungry as hungry can be."

But when he asked Brown
To advance half-a-crown

THIS EXAMPLE WILL
HELP YOU:

Brownney turned a deaf ear to his plea!

G.

CUT HERE.

GLYN'S SCAREOPHONE!



The Schoolboy Inventor's Latest "Stunt" Causes a Good Deal of Fun—and Endless Trouble at St. Jim's. A Remarkable School Story.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Trying it on the Pig!

"BERNARD'S very latest!" announced Kangaroo, with a wave of his hand.

The three occupants of Study No. 11 in the Shell—Bernard Glyn, the schoolboy inventor, Harry Noble, from Australia, and Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior—were all at home; and the Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Harry Manners, and Monty Lowther—had looked in upon them by express invitation.

"It doesn't look much," remarked Manners, regarding it.

"It really isn't much," answered the inventor modestly.

"Oh, rats! I call it a jolly good wheeze!" said Kangaroo.

"Glyn calls it the scareophone," Dane said.

"Sounds interesting," observed Tom Merry.

Manners was right in saying that the invention did not look much—that is, if one judged by size. It occupied only a small space. It seemed little more than a box with a wire attachment.

"Let's have a sample of its capabilities," suggested Manners.

"Good word, capabilities," Lowther said. "In the right connection, that is. I doubt, however, whether it is properly to be applied to a machine. You see—"

"A silly ass!" chipped in Manners. "I see him a lot too often. He's trying to live with. But as I've stood him so long, I dare say—"

"Oh! Murder! Help!"

The Terrible Three jumped as one man.

"What was that?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Only the scareophone!" answered Glyn, with a cheery grin.

"But it called out—"

"Yes. That's one of its 'capabilities.' Here's another—not quite such a noisy one."

The wire attached to the scareophone was twisted about the study table, but not carelessly twisted. Glyn held in his right hand a small india-rubber bulb which was at its end. He glanced at this, pressed it in a certain spot, and watched the faces of the visitors to see what they thought of the result.

Those faces were puzzled. For there seemed to be no result. There was nothing at all to be compared to that startling cry, anyway.

But there was a sound. They cocked their ears to listen. It was a slight sound; but had not Glyn said that he would try a more quiet one?

It was a slight scraping noise. At first barely audible, it grew as it went on till it was quite loud.

"What do you make of it?" asked Glyn.

"Rats gnawing at the wainscot," replied Lowther.

"There was only one rat at first," said Tom Merry. "But—"

"Now there are a dozen at least, and they're gnawing hard," Manners finished for him.

Glyn nodded, looking pleased.

"Imagine yourself alone in your study late at night," said Dane.

"What's the use? We should jolly soon get a prefect or a master on our backs if we were caught out at that!" objected Manners.

"Rats! I mean—of course it's rats; but just use your imagination a little, old top! Imagine that you don't like rats—a good many people bar them no end!"

"No need to imagine that. I bar them no end myself," said Lowther.

"Well, when you heard that noise you'd think at first it was one rat playing his games. Then it gets worse and worse, till presently there's a little army of them going it strong. That's about the time when—"

"You'd use your imagination to see a master or a Sixth-Former coming, and do a bunk for the dormitory," Manners agreed.

"The rats aren't anything much, really," said Glyn. "That's only a kind of overture, as you might say. There's the cat, an' then the dog, an' after that the yells of murder. One thing sort of leading up to another—see?"

"Ripping!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I can't think how it's done, though, old file!"

"And I'm not going to tell you exactly. But I may say that it's on the dictaphone principle. That box holds records, and the bulb here connects with what sets them going. You see these four marks? I press here for rats—here for cats—then here for dogs—and at last here for the cries for help. I wanted to get it so that I could vary the order, but I haven't been able to think out a way yet."

"That's no odds," remarked Lowther. "Seems to me you've got a kind of pocket drama as it is."

"Think so?" returned Glyn, evidently gratified. "I thought myself it was not so dusty. Of course it's only a trifle, but I fancy it's rather an ingenious trifle."

Kangaroo slapped him on the back.

"You're a genius, old man!" he said warmly.

"Oh, rather!" chimed in Dane.

"And so say all of us!" spoke Tom Merry.

"Let's try it on somebody," suggested Manners.

"Sort of trying it on the dog, eh?" Tom Merry said.

"Better be the pig, hadn't it?" said Lowther.

They stared at him. "Trying it on the dog" is a well-known phrase; Monty Lowther's variant of it was new to them all.

"Trimble!" he explained concisely.

"That's right," agreed Dane. "It would be an insult to the canine race to talk of Baggy as a dog."

"He would do very well to try it on," Glyn said. "He's an awful funk, and stupid, too, for all his cunning."

"But there's Mellish," Manners warned them. "Mellish is sharp enough. Now, I thought of trying it on Gussy."

"Gussy's no funk. Besides, there's Blake and Dig. Herries may not be so cute; you might take him and Gussy in. But Digby and Blake aren't the right sort to be had easily."

"You're right, Tom!" said Harry Noble. "Shall we make it No. 2 of the Fourth studies, Bernard, and chance Mellish? It'll please Wildrake, too."

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"We haven't heard the dog and cat yet," said Lowther. "Better not turn them loose here. They make an awful row, and it was a bit of a risk letting you hear the 'Help! Murder!' one," Glyn answered. "I agree to trying it on the pig, although we do have to risk the weasel."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's not so bad. Mellish is a bit like a weasel!" said Manners.

Glyn carefully coiled the wire and picked it up with the box. They made their way to the Fourth Form passage.

The study occupied by Bagley Trimble, Percy Mellish, and Wildrake was well situated for the experiment, for it was easy to take the wire round the corner a few feet away, so that anyone looking out of the study door would not see the operator. Indeed, if the box and wire were unnoticed—and they were not conspicuous objects, for the box had been painted the same colour as the linoleum in the studies, and the wire was dull in hue—the operator might be seen and still remain unsuspected.

Manners tapped at the door of No. 2, ready with an excuse in case Trimble or Mellish was present.

No reply came. He opened the door and looked round it. Baggy was there. But it was plain at a glance why he had not answered.

For Baggy was in the arms of Morpheus.

He lay back in the shabby armchair. His mouth was open. His fat, unlovely face was flushed. His podgy hands were folded over his extensive waistcoat.

On the table were two or three crumby plates and a number of paper bags. Baggy had been doing himself well. It was quite in his line to leave his study-mate out of it, though it was hardly in Mellish's line to be so unobservant as to fail in realising that Baggy had a feed on hand.

Manners turned.

"Give me that thing, Glyn," he said. "Under the chair here near the door will do, won't it? Baggybus is asleep and snoring."

"It's no news that he's snoring, anyway," said Lowther. "I heard him at it before you opened the door, but I didn't know whether one of the fags had a trombone out in the quad."

"That will do all serene, Manners," replied the school-boy inventor. "Look sharp! There's no one about now; but Mellish or a crowd of other fellows might turn up any minute."

Manners put down the box, and laid the wire along the floor. Then all six retreated round the corner, and stood there as if engaged on an animated discussion on footer or some other topic of interest.

Glyn pressed the bulb. Even with the study door shut they could hear the rats scraping and gnawing.

But Baggy heard not. Baggy snored on. His snoring mingled unmusically with the record. Then it ceased to mingle. It had drowned the noise of the rats—which had not in the first instance been produced by rats at all, in point of fact—and next moment the end of the record was reached.

Glyn pressed the bulb again, in the next section, and now the cats came into the drama.

The cats were no end lifelike. They spat and swore and miaowed.

But Baggy snored on.

Even the barking of the dog failed to rouse him.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Manners, in deep disgust.

The dog ceased to bark. Once again the Terrible Three heard the cry: "Oh! Murder! Help!"

And that did it! With a howl Baggy awoke. He rushed for the door, tore it open, and tumbled over himself into the passage.

"What's the matter, Baggy?" asked Tom-Merry kindly. "Ow! Yow! I—I—that study's haunted—or—or else somebody's murdering somebody else—"

"It would be that way, to be murdered!" broke in Lowther. "For if somebody was killing the same somebody it would be sui—"

"Rats! Didn't you fellows hear? The most awful cries! I—I must have dozed off. They woke me up. I say, hadn't some of you better go and see whether anything has happened? Don't all go, though. I can't be left alone—I refuse to be left alone!"

Baggy was sitting on the floor, the image of fat fear.

"It did sound like rats, didn't it, Tommy?" Lowther said.

CHAPTER 2.

Mellish's Little Game!

AT this moment Percy Mellish appeared upon the scene, just as Glyn, dodging past Baggy, snatched up the box from beneath the chair and thrust it under his jacket.

It made rather a conspicuous lump there. But Mellish pretended not to see.

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"Hallo! You fellows bullying Baggy again?" he inquired, with an ingratiating snigger.

"No. Baggy's had a day-nightmare, and been scared out of his senses," answered Kangaroo.

"If any," added the humorist of the Shell.

Mellish had caught a glimpse of the disorder of the table.

"I don't care much what you've done to him, anyway," he said, with a spiteful look at the fat fellow. "He's been gorging and guzzling again, and hasn't offered me a blessed scrap!"

"I wasn't dreaming," said Baggy dully. "At least, I didn't dream those awful shrieks—I know I didn't, for I heard them after I woke up. Besides, I wasn't really asleep—only a little dozy. I say, Mellish, has anybody been murdered?"

"Not here, and not lately. But I know someone who jolly well deserves to be, Baggy! You chaps going? Aren't you game to investigate what Baggy heard?"

"Hardly worth while, is it?" returned Dane. "No one takes any notice of Baggy."

And the six trooped off. The experiment had been a success, though it had seemed at one time that Baggy's somnolence had spoiled it. They did not trouble themselves with the idea that the consequences of the fright might have been serious to the fat Fourth-Former.

"I'm not going back into that study, so you needn't ask me to, Mellish!" said Baggy, quivering like a jelly.

"I'm not going to ask you to. I don't care a hang whether you do or not. I shouldn't care if you never came back, you selfish pig!" retorted Mellish. "And I'm sure Wildrake would be glad to see the back of you."

He walked in and examined the paper bags. But they were even as he had expected—all empty. He had hoped against all probability that one tart, one bun, one sausage roll, might just possibly be left.

But it would not have been like Baggy to leave one.

"I—I don't feel at all well, Mellish," bleated Baggy.

"Something's given me quite a turn inside."

"Serve you jolly well right!" grunted the hard-hearted Percy.

He screwed one of the paper bags into a ball and hurled it at the fat fellow.

Baggy had not seen him throw, and when the missile smote him on the cheek he gave a jump and a yell of panic.

"I don't wonder your nerves have gone all to pieces," said Mellish morosely. "Anybody's might, that behaved like you do. You're the biggest pig I ever knew, Trimble!"

Baggy had stolen cautiously into the study now. Mellish might be bad-tempered and abusive, but he was at least company.

"I—I did hear something, old fellow," said Baggy propitiatingly.

"Dare say you did. Heard yourself snore, and thought it was an earthquake, didn't you?"

"I heard somebody screech out 'Murder! Help!'" replied Baggy impressively.

"Oh, rot! Are you going to clear that table? I suppose I'm entitled to have my tea, such as it is, though you have been blowing in your giddy remittance without offering me a mouthful?"

Baggy sullenly cleared the table, then departed.

Mellish, eating bread and butter with no more interesting accompaniment than a spoonful or two of marmalade, smiled cunningly.

The sneak of the Fourth was no fool. He knew more than a little about Glyn's inventive proclivities. He knew something about gramophones, dictaphones, and other instruments of the kind; and he had seen the bulge under Glyn's jacket after Glyn had stooped and picked up something from the floor of Study No. 2.

He had not given away the fact that he had twigged. That was to the good. If the thing was missed Glyn would hardly suspect him.

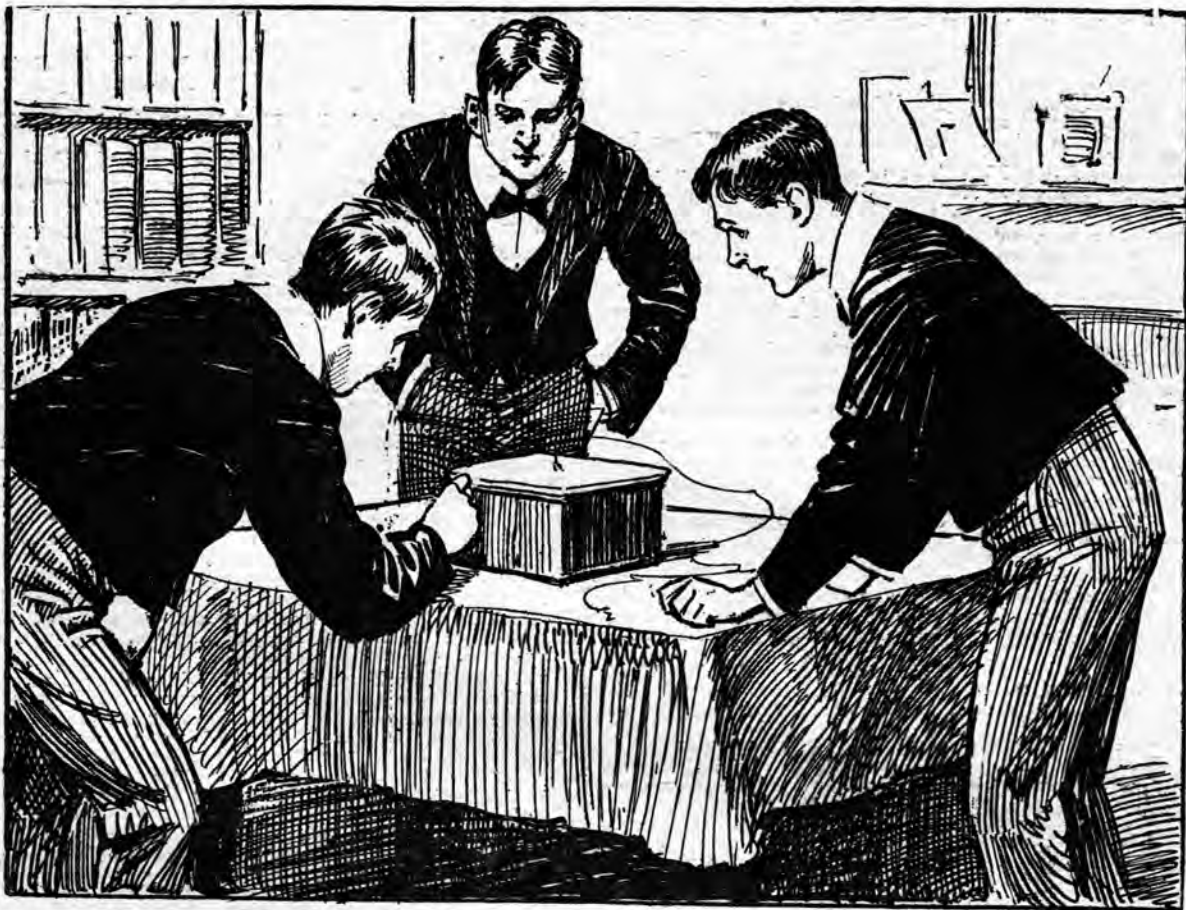
And it was going to be missed, if Percy Mellish could contrive to get hold of it!

There were possibilities about a contraption which would cry "Murder! Help!" in such an extremely life-like manner. Mellish's mean mind ran rather to the chance of making a profit than to the prospect of fun. Fun appealed less to Mellish than to most fellows in his Form.

Baggy did not return, and, having finished his meagre tea, Mellish slunk along to the Shell passage.

He listened intently at the door of Study No. 11. By this time most of the juniors had had tea. Some of them had gone off to the Common-room, some to look up chums, while others were staying in their own studies till prep was over.

Noble & Co. did not seem to be among these last. Mellish could hear no voice from inside their door, no sound which suggested that Glyn was at work on one of his inventions. He sniffed, for Glyn's inventions sometimes took a smelly turn. But there was no odour.



"Bring out that invention of Glyn's, Mellish," said Racke, "and let's have a look at it." "Lock the door first," said Mellish. "I don't want anybody bursting in here." Racke complied, and Mellish brought forth the scareophone and placed it upon the study table. Racke and Crooke looked at it with astonishment. (See this page.)

He did not tap at the door. It would not be easy for him to concoct an errand to those three in which they would believe. He turned the handle, pushed open the door inch by inch, and thrust his head in.

There was nobody there.

With hands that trembled he searched among Glyn's litter for the box. He found it at length on a bookshelf, partly hidden by a big lexicon.

Then for a moment he hesitated. He had not made up his mind to what use in particular he intended to put the thing; and he wondered whether "borrowing" it was worth the risk. Noble & Co. were of the downright type who called by stronger names what Mellish and Trimble and their sort styled "borrowing."

To that moment's hesitation Mellish owed the consequences which followed upon his nefarious enterprise.

If he had snatched up the scareophone at once, and had stood not upon the order of his going, he would not have heard the voices of Bernard Glyn and Harry Noble as they came with Dane from the study of the Terrible Three, and if he had not heard those voices he would not have bolted like a frightened rabbit into Study No. 7, where Aubrey Racke and George Gerald Crooke hung out.

His one thought was that he must not let himself be seen with that lump under his jacket. Noble & Co. would think nothing of seeing him enter Study No. 7; he was often there.

Crooke looked up with a scowl as Mellish shut the door behind him rather hastily.

"I didn't hear you knock!" he growled.

"I forgot to knock," replied Mellish.

"Don't take any notice of him," said Racke, who seemed in a pleasanter mood than his study-mate. "He's like a bear with a sore head to-day, by gad! Banks is worryin' him. What's that you've got hidden away under your jacket, Mellish?"

"Shush! If you talk so loud chaps outside may hear you. It's Glyn's latest. I borrowed it from his study to show you."

"Then you can take it back, you ass!" snapped Crooke. "I should think we've been in rows enough lately without

givin' Glyn an excuse to raise Cain. He don't like havin' his jiggers touched."

"He's not to know Mellish has got it, I suppose?" Racke said. "Anyway, I'm goin' to have a look at it. Bring it out, old top!"

"Lock the door first," said Mellish. "I don't want anybody bursting in here."

Racke complied. Then Mellish put the scareophone on the table.

"It doesn't look anythin' much," remarked Crooke disparagingly.

"What is it?" inquired Racke.

"Sort of a dictaphone. They tried it on Baggy, and he believes our study's haunted. It yells out 'Murder! Help!' like one o'clock. At least, that's what I understand. I haven't heard it yet."

"It's not goin' to yell out 'Murder! Help!' here, not if I know it!" said Crooke. "Why, that would bring those bounders in directly!"

"Oh, I don't know, Gerry. I don't suppose it's as loud as all that, an' the walls are pretty thick, y'know," Racke said. "How does it work?"

"There's a wire and a bulb arrangement," Mellish answered.

"We've eyes in our heads," said Crooke. "We can see that."

Racke was straightening out the wire. Now he pressed the bulb.

The last record used was No. 4—the culminating one. The next to be used—since Glyn had not yet hit upon a plan to vary their order—was No. 1—the rat one.

To the three at first the gnawing sound seemed the merest accident. Not even Racke connected it with his pressure of the bulb, and the other two were not aware that he had pressed.

But when the gnawing increased until it sounded like a dozen rats at work they looked at one another.

"It wasn't that thing, was it?" asked Crooke, gazing at the box.

"Dashed if I know!" replied Racke. "But it certainly began when I squeezed the bulb."

"Squeeze it again, an' see if the answer's a lemon," Croke said facetiously.

But he was getting quite interested.

Racke pressed again, and the cats spoke.

"It is the thing!" said Mellish excitedly. "I can hear it coming from the box."

"See here, I'm not game to try any more of it in this study," Racke said. "The next might be a dashed sight too noisy. We'll take it down to a corner of the quad. It's dusk now, an' there isn't likely to be anyone about."

He put the invention, wire and all, under his jacket. Then the three slunk downstairs and out.

It was not a very agreeable evening. There was no rain, but the sky was badly overcast, and a biting cold wind blew.

The quad was deserted. They went to its farthest corner, and Racke, who had quite taken charge, reducing Mellish to a subordinate position, again pressed the bulb.

At first there was no result. But a second squeeze made the dog bark.

The dog came to an end of its barking. Racke pressed again, and all three fairly jumped as a seemingly agonised cry of "Oh! Murder! Help!" broke the silence of the gloomy quad.

"Mum-my hat! I don't wonder Baggy was scared!" exclaimed Mellish.

"You're scared yourself," said Croke contemptuously.

"So were you! So was Racke!"

"I wasn't! But it was a bit startlin'," admitted Racke. "There are points about this jigger, Mellish. Tell you what—I'll keep it for a bit. You can smuggle it back into Glyn's study when I've done with it."

"That's all very well. What do I get out of it? That's what I want to know!" grumbled Mellish. "I'm not saying that I'll take it back, either! That might be too risky!"

"You're a rotten sponger!" snarled Croke.

But Racke was flush, and because of that, in good humour.

"I'll give you five bob now, an' you shall have another half-dollar if you have to take the thing back," he said. "Very likely you won't have to. It may be safer to smash it up when we've done with it."

"Oh, but I say, I don't know about that! Glyn would make no end of a row, and—"

"Glyn won't know. Do you take the five bob, or don't you?"

Mellish took it, and Racke took the scareophone.

"I—I wash my hands of it if there's trouble," said Mellish uneasily.

"It won't hurt them," answered Racke. "You might try to get your pal Trimble to wash his, too. But I suppose that's too much to hope for. I say, we won't all go in together. You sneak off first, Mellish."

CHAPTER 3.

Ghostly Rumours!

MELLISH sneaked off, still uneasy, but comforted by the reflection that he was five shillings to the good, anyway. It had been pretty smart of him, he thought, to wangle five bob out of that dodge to scare Trimble.

Racke and Croke waited a minute or two before they followed him.

As they were going in they heard the voice of Taggles, the school porter, behind them.

Croke was ahead, Racke walking closely in rear so that his chum's body might help to hide the box. It was Racke's face which Taggles saw in the light of the lamp above the door. Taggles must just have been on his lighting rounds; that lamp had not been lit when they came out.

"Master Racke! Hi say, what 'ave you been a-doin' of out there?" demanded Taggles.

"Catch hold of this thing, Croke!" whispered Racke.

He thrust the scareophone into the unwilling hands of Croke, and turned to confront Taggles haughtily.

"What's that to you?" he asked.

Croke went on. If Taggles had not recognised him it was not worth while to stay there to be spotted. Croke had a presentiment of trouble, and felt as though the box pressed against his diaphragm was burning him.

"Which what I says is this 'ere!" boomed Taggles' voice behind him. "Tain't no great matter to me if any of you boys does in any other of you. I can't say—no, I cannot say, not honest—that I place any vally on any boy amongst you all. But that's one thing, an' 'earin' cries of murder in the quad is a different thing, total different. For if there was to be such a thing as a dead 'un found in the quad, who's the fust person what would 'ave questings asked of him? Why, Taggles!"

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He made an impressive pause.

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't be an old ass, Taggles!" he said. "Probably you only fancied you heard things. But even if you did hear anythin'—"

"Which I did, an' that I'll take my dyin' oath of!" struck in Taggles obstinately.

"Well, it's a dashed long way from a yell of 'Murder' to a dead body. Go an' find your dashed corpse before you come cacklin' to me about it!"

Taggles looked at him in a puzzled way.

"It were a ghastly sound," he said. "If anythink's 'appened, Master Racke, don't you think I'm a-goin' to shield you. So there ain't no use you a-puttin' of your 'and in your pocket, thinking as 'ow—"

"I wasn't goin' to do anythin' of the sort, you old sponger, I assure you. Cut off an' look for your corpse. Tell you what, though; I'll give you a reward of ten bob for every dead 'un you find to-night."

Racke went in, and Taggles went off, to examine the quad. That cry in the night had put the wind up Taggles, and he did not feel at all easy as he searched.

"It may be something to do with them there two Levisons, who are supposed to be at Greyfriars. You remember young Levison was accused of putting a banger in Mr. Selby's fireplace, and he swore black was blue he hadn't anything to do with it, and eventually bunked from this 'ere school and went to Greyfriars. It might be them there rips a celebratin' their return by 'aving a joke on me. I dunno."

He searched for some considerable time, but, of course, he found nothing. There was no trace of the Levisons, and he dismissed the idea of a jape. In short, Taggles was scared stiff.

"If them there himps of sin 'adn't been there I should 'ave thought for sure it was ghostesses," he muttered, furiously scratching his head. "I dunno as it weren't, after all. Hi might be able to 'ear them when them young warmints could not, 'count of me not bein' so steeped in iniquity as the likes of them."

But on second thoughts he dismissed that notion, too, perhaps because he was still suspicious of Racke and Croke.

Racke caught up Croke before the Shell passage was reached, and just at the moment when he came alongside, Croke happened to press the bulb.

"Oh, by gad, there are the rats again!" he exclaimed, grinning.

"What did you do that for, you silly idiot?" snapped Racke.

"I didn't do it really. It was an accident. I just gave the jigger a sort of squeeze, an' that noise came."

"Get inside the study, do!" said Racke, in some alarm.

"If anyone heard! An' what's the dashed use of talkin' about it's bein' a dashed accident when what you did was the very thing that has to be done to set it goin'?"

They were inside No. 7, and the door was closed behind them by the time Racke had finished speaking.

Croke put the scareophone down on the table.

"I never thought it would work properly with the wire all muddled up like that," he said. "I say, though, Racke, it's some invention—I'll admit that. Glyn must be a frightfully clear beast to be able to make such a thing. If we took it to pieces, do you reckon we could see how it's done?"

"We're not goin' to take it to pieces—anyway, not yet," replied Racke. "I don't suppose it took much thinkin' out, really. It's only a matter of makin' the records an' then fixin' them up, so that pressin' the bulb sets them goin', same way as you start a gramophone or a dictaphone."

"That's all!" returned Croke, with a touch of sarcasm. "If you could make the records an' the dashed machinery an' wangle it so that merely pressin' the bulb started it, you could construct one for yourself, couldn't you, Aubrey?"

"I don't need to," said Racke. "I've got this—an' dirt-cheap, too! Mellish sold it to me for five bob—see? I don't know where he got it. How should I?"

"Oh, I'm game to stick to that yarn!" Croke said. "Serve Mellish right if Glyn does jump on him! You can't trust Mellish a yard! But what are we goin' to do with the thing, Aubrey? I'm gettin' interested in it. But I don't quite see what we can do except scare a few funks an' fatheads."

"Well, that's worth doin' when the funks an' fatheads are chaps you don't cotton to, Gerry. Gussy an' Grundy are fatheads, if they're not funks, an' we might put the wind up them a bit. An' there are funks about."

But both, in thinking over the question, came to the conclusion that most of the St. Jim's juniors who could be labelled as funks were not among their enemies—were, in fact, among their friends—if fellows of the type of Racke and Croke can fairly be said to have friends.

"We might use it on old Taggles to-night," suggested Racke. "The old ass had the cheek to ask me what the cry of 'Murder!' meant! Seemed to think I'd done someone in."



"Oh! Help!" The cry reached Taggles' ears, and his blood chilled with fright. His hair—what little there was of it—stood on end. He felt goose-flesh creeping all over his body, and he clutched the arms of his chair frantically. "It's ghostesses!" he muttered. "It must be!" Racke and Crooke, outside the lodge window, made not a sound as they worked Glyn's strange contrivance. (See this page.)

I told him to go an' look for the corpse, an' I'd give him ten bob if he found it. He won't find it, naturally, an' he'll very likely fancy it was a ghost he heard. I owe Taggles one or two, an' I shouldn't a bit mind scariu' him out of his skin."

"I owe him a bit as well. I'm on," answered Crooke. "Let's steal out after prep, an' set the dashed thing goin' near the lodge. It's a dark night, an' he'll never spot us."

"Right-ho!" agreed Racke.

They carried out their plan. They had no right in the quad between prep and supper, but that fact only made them more secure from the risk of being spotted.

This time Racke put the little machine into a bag, and hid the bag under his raincoat. It would not do to be seen with a bag, which would suggest an expedition out of gates; but the scareophone was easier to conceal thus, and if danger loomed up it would be practicable to drop the bag in a dark corner, and retrieve it later.

Taggles was alone in his lodge when they reached it. Dame Taggles had gone to Rylcombe to see a friend. Usually Taggles did not at all object to the absence of his better half in the evenings, for the dame had not full sympathy for the need which Taggles felt of frequent libations of gin.

But Taggles really wished that she had not gone out to-night. That cry of "Murder!" seemed still to be echoing in his ears. The wind whistled eerily round the lodge, and made his fire smoke.

He was very uneasy.

He was raising a glass to his lips when he heard that cry again:

"Oh! Murder! Help!"

The "Oh!" was no mere ejaculation. It was a wail of agony. The second word came short and sharp, but the "Help!" dragged out as though it came from someone whose throat was clutched by a cruel hand.

Glyn had taken a lot of trouble with that record.

Taggles dropped his glass. It crashed on the floor, and the odour of gin diffused itself more strongly through the little room, fighting with the choking smell of the smoke.

The porter could not rise from his seat. But if he had been

able to, he would not have got up; and not for a hundred pounds would he have gone to the door.

Racke had worked off the cat and dog records on the way across the quad, judging rightly that the fourth record was the right one to scare Taggles. Now he had to go through the other three again before he could get at "Murder!"

Taggles did not hear the rats. The cat and dog noises came to his ears and comforted him vaguely. They were natural, anyway. Even a cat or a dog close at hand would have seemed like company to Taggles just then.

But all his comfort fled when again that terrible cry made itself heard above the gusty wind.

His hair—what little there was of it—stood on end. He felt goose-flesh creeping all over his body. He clutched the arms of his chair frantically.

"It's ghostesses!" he muttered. "Stands to reason it must be ghostesses, 'cause no one what was alive could go on bein' murdered, could they? If it comes agin hi shall go clean off my 'ead, hi knows hi shall! Ho, bust it! What did the missus want to go out for—this night of all nights?"

"Look out, Crooke, you idiot! He'll see you!" hissed Racke.

The blind was not quite down, and Crooke was peering in beneath it.

Taggles did see. But he did not see Crooke. That is, he did not know he saw Crooke. He described the face at the window afterwards as "the most 'orrible, gashly face as any one ever seed, not like nothink 'uman!"

He yelled in his abject fear. Racke and Crooke bolted. For a minute or two they lingered in the darkest corner of the quad, for it seemed to them that Taggles' yell must be heard in either the School House or the New House, and they had no desire to run into someone rushing out to the rescue.

But no one came. The two stole in, quite elate. They felt that they had paid off their little scores against Taggles in most successful fashion.

Luck was with them. They met no one in the passages.

"Go down to the Common-room, Gerry, an' see who's

there," said Racke, eager for more victims. "If nearly all the fellows are, we may be able to catch someone alone in his study, an' give him a dashed good fright."

Crooke went. He returned with the information that the common-room was packed, as it often was during the time between prep and supper. But he had not seen Arthur Augustus D'Arcy there, and though Wilkins and Gunn were of the company, their illustrious leader, George Alfred Grundy, was alone in their joint study, with the door slightly ajar.

"Starin' into the fire," said Crooke. "If it was anyone else, I should say he was thinkin' hard. But we know dashed well Grundy can't think."

"See anythin' of Glyn an' those other two?" inquired Racke.

"Yes. They were in front of the fire, with some of the other swankers—Tom Merry an' that crowd—jawing about the strange actions of young Levison."

"Come on, then! We'll try it on Grundy."

And they did try it on Grundy—with complete success, from their point of view. For Grundy, in spite of the fact that he really had more than an average amount of pluck, was badly scared; and Gussy, who heard the terrible cry from round the corner, was even worse scared, being more nervous than Grundy, though not less really courageous.

Racke and Crooke had the pleasure of witnessing a lively altercation between Grundy and the swell of the Fourth. Grundy, catching at any natural explanation of the cry, accused Arthur Augustus of trying to frighten him, and Gussy, badly shaken, could not understand at first, and then understood and was indignant. He was so genuinely indignant that Grundy really could not doubt his word, and so genuinely scared that Grundy's own fright came back.

They compared notes in shaking voices, while Racke and Crooke, in a darkened study, with the door an inch or two open, listened to every word, and had to put their handkerchiefs to their mouths to prevent themselves from chortling audibly.

In the Fourth-Form dormitory that night Gussy told the story of his fright, and was mercilessly chaffed. In the Shell dormitory the great George Alfred Grundy kept silence, for he did not relish chaff, and the incredulity of Wilkins and Gunn had warned him what he might expect from the rest.

But Gussy had told the other fellows that Grundy, too, had heard the terrible cry; and next morning the news somehow got round that Taggles had heard it, and had very nearly had a fit. Then Baggy Trimble had also heard, as Mellish could testify, Baggy said.

Mellish refused to testify, however, averring that he had heard nothing except the burbling of Baggy.

Ghostly rumours were started, flourished, and grew fast. It must have been a ghost, for how else might Baggy have heard it just after tea, and Taggles somewhere about eight o'clock—but there was a confused story that Taggles had heard it twice—and Grundy and Gussy a little later?

The sturdy common sense of the majority at St. Jim's rejected the notion of a ghost prowling round and yelling murder. But there was a minority which went in fear, and even among the majority were some who did not feel quite easy, because it was obvious that if it wasn't a ghost it was something; and even if it was only a trick, it wasn't at all the sort of trick that a fellow would care to have played on him when he was alone, as Grundy and Gussy had been.

CHAPTER 4.

To Solve the Mystery!

NINE fellows in the School House knew the secret, or part of it—Glyn, Noble, and Dane; Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther; Racke, Crooke, and Mellish.

But of those nine the first six had no suspicion whatever that Racke and Crooke were concerned, and Mellish, who knew that they must have been, asked them no questions, but avoided them. Mellish had washed his hands of the affair. He had only stolen the machine, and if Racke and Crooke were caught out and gave him away, he meant to deny having done that. It would have been just as easy for them to steal it as for him, and he wished now that he had let them.

Clifton Dane put his head in at the door of No. 10, where Tom Merry was busy making out his list for a footer team against the New House, Manners with the development of some photographs, and Lowther with a fountain-pen, a sheet of foolscap, and the great thoughts that were surging into his brain.

"You fellows got time to come along?" asked Dane. "We want to have a pow-wow with you on rather important bizness."

"We'll come," answered Tom readily.

"Speak for yourself, Tommy. I'm busy," growled Manners.

"Same here," said Lowther.

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"Then I'll come alone," said Tom. "After all, they don't matter—do they, Dane?"

But that gibe was naturally enough to bring Manners from his photographic work and Lowther from his humorous masterpiece.

The three went along to No. 11, and found Glyn and Kangaroo looking rather serious.

"Well, what's the row?" asked Tom.

"You've tumbled to what it is that's causing all these yarns of ghosts and things, I suppose?" returned Glyn.

"Wasn't sure. Thought it might be your scareophone; but—"

"I was sure," Manners interrupted Tom. "Pretty obvious, I should say."

"But I think you've been carrying the game a bit too far, Glyn. It was all very well to try it on Baggy; but—"

"You silly idiot!" roared Harry Noble. "Do you reckon that Bernard or any of us three would have done all that with it?"

"If you say you didn't I'm bound to believe you," answered Lowther, rather huffily. "But if you didn't, who did?"

"That's just what we want to find out," said Glyn. "Some rotter has boned the jigger!"

"Now I begin to understand," Tom Merry said. "I didn't before. Of course a lark's a lark, but this is beginning to get a bit too thick."

"Any idea who's the guilty party?" inquired Manners.

"That's what we want you three to help us to find out," said Glyn.

"Why us three?" asked Lowther. "Leave Tommy and Manners out of it. The job suits me. Hand it over to me and don't interfere, and I think—"

"What's the matter with you, Lowther, is that you don't think!" snorted Kangaroo. "You haven't tumbled to the idea yet that this isn't just exactly a joke for Glyn. If the thing goes on someone's going to be jolly well frightened into a fit before long."

"Well, that won't be Glyn's fault," said Tom.

"It can very easily be made to look as though it was, though," Glyn said mildly. "If the scareophone's found, suspicion is bound to fall on me at once."

"That's right—unless it's found in someone else's possession," agreed Manners.

"And the rotter or rotters who have it are going to take jolly good care they're not caught with it," added Tom Merry. "They might even shove it back on Glyn and contrive to get him caught with it when things get too hot for them."

"But these fellows, and we, too, can prove that—" began Lowther.

"That he tried it on Baggy. That's about all we can prove. We know he's telling the truth when he says that he hasn't used it since—"

"I didn't say just that, Merry; but it's a fact. You've got a notion how I feel about it. I don't funk a row, but I haven't any relish for being wrongfully convicted of doing things that I should reckon dead off."

"What we're after is to find the thing and administer to the bounders who boned it," said Noble grimly.

"Let's go into the whole business as far as we can," suggested Tom. "First of all, Glyn, does anyone but us six know anything about it from you?"

The schoolboy inventor shook his head.

"Well, we can set Baggy aside. He hasn't brains enough to guess."

"Mellish came up while Baggy was grovelling in the passage," said Manners.

"But he didn't see or hear anything," Noble said. "The explanation was that the fat rotter had had a day-nightmare."

"You can't be sure how much Mellish sees or hears. He's a sly young rotter," said Clifton Dane.

"Well, then, we won't put Mellish aside yet. Of course there are other ways in which somebody might have tumbled to the thing. Mellish isn't the only chap here mean enough to go routing about in other fellows' studies."

"That's true, Tommy," Kangaroo said. "And we can't very well bring a charge of theft against anyone we catch. We want to get the jigger back on the quiet. Besides, the thief would say that he only borrowed it, and we couldn't prove that he did more."

"Taggles seems to have heard the 'Murder!' yell next after Baggy," said Manners. "According to his yarn, he heard it first in the quad some time between tea and prep. It ought to help if we could find out whether any fellows from this House were in the quad then."

"Let's go and interview Taggles at once," said Lowther. "I'll talk to the old sinner."

"Don't let's be in such a silly hurry!" retorted Harry Noble. "We haven't dealt with half the evidence yet. Later on in the evening Taggles heard it again—Grundy heard it, and Gussy heard it. Grundy and Gussy at the

same time—there's no doubt about that. Taggles may have been before or after them. That doesn't seem to matter a heap, though in these cases you never know what may matter."

"At that time nearly all the Shell and Fourth were in the Common-room," said Glyn. "We were all there. Wilkins and Gunn were there, though Grundy wasn't; Blake and Herries and Digby; Julian, Hammond, Reilly, Kerruish—oh, and Mellish! I'm quite sure I saw him there. That seems to put him out of court."

Mellish would have felt a deep sense of relief could he have heard that.

"The question isn't so much who was there as who wasn't," remarked Tom.

"Which is a whole heap more difficult to remember or to prove," said Clifton Dane.

"Racke and Crooke weren't, I'm sure," Manners said.

"But they hardly ever are," said Glyn.

That was true. Yet the mention of those two names set all thinking.

"It's the sort of trick Racke and Crooke might play," said Lowther.

"Lots of fellows might play tricks with the thing without ever guessing that there would be any serious result," said Noble. "But there aren't so many who would walk into another fellow's study and bone his property. Now you can't say those two wouldn't do that. We've known them to do heaps of worse things."

"It might have been some of the fags," Manners said.

"You mean you don't think it was those two?"

"I don't mean that, Tommy. Only that it's so dead easy to suspect them that we may miss clues by taking too much for granted. Besides, we haven't really anything to hang the theory upon that it was Racke and Crooke."

"What's needed in the detective line is brains, my boy—brains, not a hat-stand," said Lowther. "When you hang up your hat you get rid for the time being of the best part of your head. I don't. I'm going to adopt that theory. I shan't hang it up; I shall keep it revolving here—in this dome of thought, old top."

He touched his forehead.

"Well, there's plenty of room for it there, anyway," answered Manners. "What do you think, Noble? Are we to look out for suspicious actions on the part of Racke and Crooke, or shall we make inquiries among the fags, or—"

"We'd better look out for suspicious actions on the part of anyone," broke in Dane. "After all, it may not be a rotter at all. A fellow might borrow the thing for a joke, meaning to tell Glyn afterwards."

"I think he would have confessed before now if it had been that way," Glyn said. "And I shouldn't think it much of a joke at best."

"Let's go and see Taggles," said Lowther.

CHAPTER 5.

Tea in Tom Merry's Study!

"I won't dashed well do to use the thing again to-night," said Racke. "I wish it would. I should like to have another go at that snob D'Arcy. He'll be waitin' an' listenin' for it, you bet! Wouldn't wonder if it sent him into fits next time."

"I've got a notion where to use it an' do a bit of good," returned Crooke.

"I tell you we can't. It's too dashed risky."

"But it's not inside the school at all. Besides, the dashed contraption ain't your property, is it? I reckon I've as much right to it as you have."

"I like that! Who paid Mellish five bob for it—you or I, Crooke?"

"Oh, have it your own way," replied Crooke sulkily. "I suppose you've heard that the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief?"

"A minute ago you were makin' out it was as much yours as mine, so—"

"Dash it all, don't let's argue! I have to take my share of the risk, don't I? Well, then—"

"If it's outside the school I don't mind. Not Taggles again, though. He's been talkin', an' someone might be on the watch."

"Hang Taggles! I've a better wheeze than that. What about Banks?"

"Is that sweep at the Green Man again?"

"Don't you know he is? Didn't I have a dunnin' letter from the pirate to-day?"

"So you did. I'd forgotten."

Racke yawned, as if to show that he must not be expected to take any lively interest in the misfortunes of his pal.

"I don't believe you'd forgotten, either. You might lend me enough to stop the beggar's mouth for a time, Aubrey."

"We've had all that over before, dear boy. It can't be done, an' that's all about it."

"You're flush."

"I shouldn't have been if I'd been ass enough to back the same gees as you did, old gun!"

Crooke scowled.

"That was just luck. But I know it's no use expectin' you to be a real pal."

"I don't mind goin' with you to give Banks and Jolliffe a scare, an' that's more than you'd get anyone else to do," replied Racke. "I don't see what you fancy you're goin' to get out of it, though."

"This is my notion. I've raised a fiver. Banks says he won't take less than ten, an' that's only half my debt. Well, I have a notion that after he's been properly scared he may be so upset that he'll be glad to take what he can get—see?"

"Can't say it's a dashed brilliant idea. But I'm willin' to do my bit towards it. Better night than it was last night, anyway, an' I feel like a run out. St. Jim's is a dashed dull place, Gerry!"

It is probable that Racke would not have felt as keen on a nocturnal expedition, or Crooke upon his scheme for dealing with Banks, and it is more than probable that the former would have revised his notions as to the dullness of St. Jim's, had they known that the visit to Taggles had put the six quite definitely on their trail.

Taggles was not too easy to pump. He regarded all boys as "himps." He did not want to do any of these fellows a service. But he did want to talk about his terrible experiences, and he was encouraged to talk.

In the course of his ramblings the fact that he had seen Racke passing in from the quad just after the first "Murder!" cry came out. And after that they only went on listening to him long enough to make him forget that he had mentioned that fact. He had spoken also of the "gashly face" at the window.

"Come and have tea with us, you fellows," said Tom Merry, as they left the porter's lodge. "I've had a hamper to-day from Huckleberry Heath. You know what that means?"

"Do we not?" exclaimed Clifton Dane.

"We're coming—rather!" said Harry Noble.

"I think I can come, but I've a little job to do first," Glyn said.

"You haven't—you shan't—and you don't, not if I know it!" said Kangaroo, thumping his chum's back. "He's started in on another invention, you fellows, and you know what that means. If we let him get at it we shan't see him at tea, not even with the prospect of Miss Fawcett's cakes and other good things to draw him."

"All right; I'll leave it alone till later," Glyn said.

"Anyone else coming, Tom?"

"Blake, Gussy, Dig, and Herries—that's all. Which means that we mustn't get chin-wagging about the scare-ophone, of course. But we've had enough of that for a bit from Taggles."

"And we're on the right track, so we needn't worry," Manners said.

There was no talk about the scareophone, in the sense that Tom Merry meant, at the well-spread board in No. 10.

But there was any amount of talk which was really about it, though four of the ten were not aware of that.

Gussy was off his feed. Sausage rolls, pork pie, cake, raspberry tarts, all failed to arouse any enthusiasm in him. He sampled them all, but did not come again to anything. The rest did so to everything.

But if Arthur Augustus did not do a tenth share of the eating he did far more than a tenth share of the talking, and all his conversation turned upon that terrible cry and the mystery surrounding it. More than once Tom Merry and Clifton Dane felt tempted to tell him the truth. He looked quite haggard, and his nerves were badly shaken.

But it had been agreed that Blake & Co. were not to be let into the secret. Glyn did not want any more fellows to know; and, after all, it was chiefly Glyn's affair.

"Oh, do shut up about that screech, Gussy!" growled Herries at length. "We're sick to death of it. What's a screech more or less, anyway? And I don't believe you ever heard this—you only imagined it."

"Let him gas," said Blake pleasantly. "I've got better use for my jaws. Tommy, will you tell Miss Fawcett that this pork pie was the very best I ever tasted?"

"Why does Gussy remind you of Samson?" asked Lowther.

"He doesn't," replied Manners. "Gussy's biceps aren't up to much."

"But his jawbone—"

"Weally, Lowthah, I should have thought that you were awah that the weapon Samson used was the jawbone of an ass!" protested Arthur Augustus.

"That's just the point," said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gussy rose, indignant.

"I cannot vewy well administah to you a feahful thwashin', Lowthah—"

"That's true, anyway, whatever you may say next," put in the irrepressible one.

"As you are in youah own studay an' more or less my host. But I am not sittin' heah to be insulted!"

"No; I notice you've got up on your hind legs, old top."

"I am goin'," announced the swell of the Fourth, with dignity.

But Tom Merry caught him by the arm.

"Don't get on your ear, old chap," he said. "Our tame idiot doesn't mean any harm."

Gussy was pacified, and tea proceeded.

The meal was almost at an end when Baggy Trimble looked in.

"Never mind about knocking at the door, Trimble," said Tom Merry.

"Eh? Oh, that's all right; I never do when it's a pal, you know."

"When what's a pal?" asked Lowther. "There may be some sort of reason in a chap with a head made of wood adopting a door for a pal, but don't make it our door, Baggybus."

Trimble paid no heed to that speech. He gazed at the fragments upon the table. In spite of the best efforts of nine of the ten around it those fragments still represented what would have been a substantial meal to almost any other junior, and quite an acceptable snack to Trimble.

He licked his lips, and his eyes gleamed.

"You might have asked me to tea, Tom Merry!" he said reproachfully.

"I might have asked Taggles or Ratty," replied Tom, "but I simply didn't think of it. No offence to them, or to you, Baggy."

"Oh, I'm not offended, and I'm not proud—at least, I am proud; a Trimble of Trimble Hall naturally has his dignity to consider, but—"

"I'm not going to ask you to strain yours," said Tom, grinning.

"I—I—I've got something to tell you fellows. But if you're not going to be pals—"

"We're not!" said Manners decidedly.

"All right, then. But you'd like to know it, all the same. You would, Glyn, and so would Gussy."

"D'Arcy majah, if you please, Twimble!"

"Why Glyn and Gussy in particular, you fat image?" inquired Kangaroo.

"That's tellings. But Glyn's lost something that I expect he'd like to find, and I might help him, but I don't know that I'm going to."

"But where does Gussy come in?" asked Jack Blake.

"I never thought Gussy—"

"D'Arcy majah, Twimble, unless you desiah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Yah, you're a funk! Everybody says so except old Grundy, and that's only because he was in a funk himself."

Now six of the ten began to have a glimmering notion of what the fat Fourth-Former was driving at.

In some way or other he had found out what it was that had frightened D'Arcy and Grundy and Taggles. It was even possible that he knew where the scarephone was at that moment. If he did it would not require a big bribe to induce him to tell, and it would be decidedly useful to know.

There was nothing but meagre circumstantial evidence against Racke and Crooke—certainly not enough to justify Glyn's going to them and demanding that they should give up the instrument.

Tom Merry and the schoolboy inventor looked at one another. Kangaroo rose and got nearer the door, no doubt to make sure that Baggy should not flee in haste if he scented the possibility that pressure might be put upon him. The Australian junior was always practical.

But just at this moment the voice of Mellish was heard from the passage:

"Trimble! Baggy! Where are you? You're wanted!"

Kangaroo was a second too late. Baggy slipped out, evading his clutch.

The door was shut to, but all heard the voice of Mellish again:

"You fat idiot! Didn't I tell you—"

The rest was lost. Mellish had remembered prudence and had lowered his tone.

"What on earth is it all about?" asked Digby.

"That's more than I can tell you, Dig," replied Tom.

"Glyn knows something," said Herries.

"Several things. And I'm hoping to know more in time," rejoined Glyn.

"If it was any othah fellow but Twimble I should considah myself in honah bound to wesent what was said," spoke Arthur Augustus. "I twust that no one heah looks upon me as a funk. It is an oppowbvious term which—"

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"Oh, come along, Gustavus, and don't get worrying about trifles," interrupted Blake. "No one here thinks you a funk; we know better. But, if you ask me, Baggy knows something about that giddy trick someone played on you and Grundy, and I reckon its up to us to get Baggy in a corner and make the fat hound do a bit of 'fessing."

And Blake looked shrewdly first at Glyn and then at Tom Merry.

But they did not rise to the bait. Quite enough were in the secret already, and though the quartet from Study No. 6 were to be trusted all the way, it was not worth while to let them, or anyone else, into it.

CHAPTER 6.

Trimble the Traitor!

BAGGY had been playing his old game—listening at keyholes.

He knew now what it was that had sent him roaring with fright out of No. 2. He knew that, through Mellish, Racke and Crooke had come into possession of Glyn's new invention, and he had even a notion of the use to which they proposed to put it that night.

Mellish had not found it so easy to wash his hands of the whole affair. Having spent the five shillings received from Racke, he had thirsted after more easy money. He could not see that the extraction of another half-crown or two would take him into deeper water, and he had gone along to the Shell passage to interview those two at a time when most of the fellows were in the playing-fields.

Baggy had followed, had listened, had heard, had understood some, if not all, of what he heard, and had left the keyhole determined to make his market of it in some way or another.

But Baggy was a leaky vessel. He had dropped hints which alarmed Mellish. Thus it was that he had been called out of No. 10 at a moment when he might have begun to make revelations.

"Racke and Crooke won't half give it to you in the neck if you play that game, you fat blabber!" said Mellish viciously.

"I didn't say anything about Racke and Crooke. I don't know anything about them. What should I know about them? I went to Tom Merry's study because I thought he might have been decent for once and asked me to tea. I suppose there's no harm in that, is there?"

"Why did you go smelling round to know where Glyn was, then?"

"I did nothing of the sort. Who says I did?"

"Wilkins. He told you that those three had gone to tea in No. 10."

"Oh, now I remember! Wilkins did say something about that, but I didn't take much notice. Look here, Mellish, what do you want with me?"

"You come along with me and I'll tell you."

Baggy went, anxious to disarm the suspicions of his study-mate. He felt that he had been trapped when he found Racke and Crooke in No. 2.

Mellish had brought them along to instil fear into the heart of Baggy. They proceeded to attempt that operation.

"Look here, Trimble, what have you dashed well been doin', you fat rotter?" began Racke.

"Nothing," replied Baggy, rolling his eyes and looking as innocent as nature would let him.

"You have, you tgly oyster!" snarled Crooke. "You've been spyin'!"

"Spying on who?" returned Baggy.

"On us! You be careful, or you'll get—"

"I haven't been spying on you, Racke. I don't know what you're talking about. Yow! Yaroooooh! Lemme alone, Crooke!"

Crooke had seized him by the collar and was shaking him savagely.

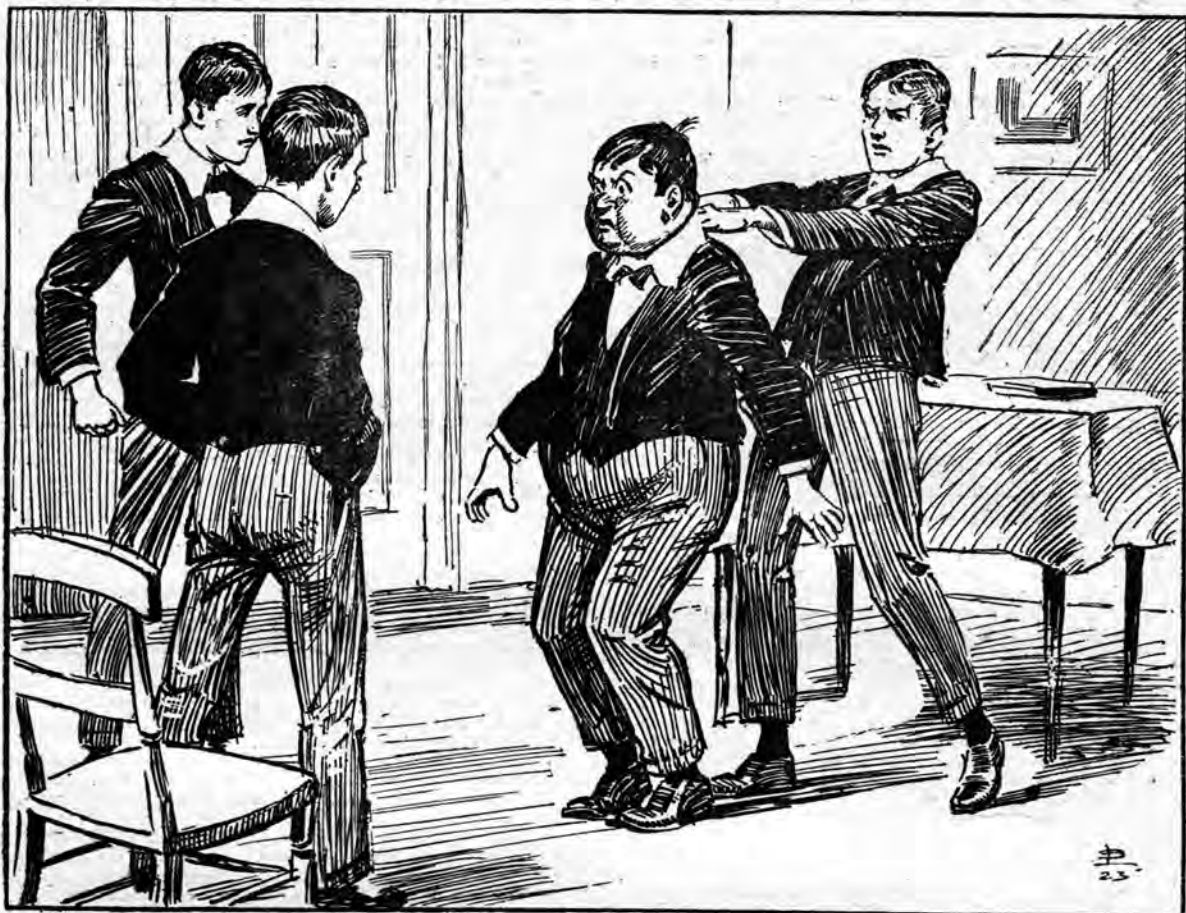
"Let him be, Gerry," said Racke. "You take my tip, Trimble! If you know anythin', or think you know anythin' about us, you dashed well keep it dark. We know a thing or two about you, remember!"

"I'm going to keep it dark—that is, I don't know anything. What is there to know, anyway? Mellish must have been stuffing you up with some of his lies, Racke."

"What did you tell me about knowing how Gussy and old Grundy had been scared out of their seventeen senses, eh?" demanded Mellish.

"Oh, that! Why, I only said it might have been Racke and Crooke. I thought it might be because pretty nearly all the other chaps were in the Common-room at the time. I don't blame them if it was them; I'm not so fond of those two as all that comes to. I dare say I may have said that there would be trouble if the other fellows knew about it. So there would. But I didn't mean that I was going to tell them. Racke's a pal of mine—ain't you, Aubrey?"

"You fat slug!" hissed Racke.



Croke rushed upon Trimble and gripped him at the back of his fat neck. "You've been spying, you ugly oyster!" he snarled. "I haven't!" wailed Baggy. "I don't even know what you've been talking about. Yow! Yaroooh! Lemme alone!" "Let him alone, Gerry," said Racke. "We know more about him than he knows of us!" (See page 10.)

The epithet did not sound truly pally. But Baggy was not plucky enough to resent it openly.

"Well, you needn't be afraid of anything that I'm likely to tell anybody," he said ingratiatingly. "A Trimble never goes back on a pal, you know. I say, Racke, I suppose you haven't five bob you can lend me?"

"Your supposer seems to be in dashed good workin' order, Baggy," replied Racke, grinning nastily.

"Croke—" "If you ask me I'll give you another shakin', you bloated fraud!" snarled Croke.

"I wasn't goin' to ask you anything whatever. I would scorn to be under an obligation to a fellow of your sort. Beastly mean, I call you! I say, though, Racke, even a bob would be better than nothing. I'm positively famishing, and I haven't a blessed sou!"

"Nothin' doin'!" snorted Racke. And Croke, on his way out, lifted his boot and applied it with considerable force to the podgy Fourth-Former.

"Yow!" yelled Baggy. "All right! After that don't you be surprised at anything that may happen!"

The kick was a tactical error on the part of Croke, and Racke told him so without mincing words as they and Mellish went out together.

"Oh, I don't fancy he really knows anythin'," said Croke. "Do you, Mellish?"

"I'm not sure. He doesn't know everything—that's as much as I'd care to say. It wouldn't be a bad plan if you two were to keep an eye on him, though."

"Us two? How are we to keep an eye on him, idiot?" retorted Croke.

"How can we, when he's in your study an' we're on a different passage?" added Racke. "It's you that should watch him."

"It's not really any bizney of mine," Mellish said.

"Oh, isn't it, then! When you've had another five bob out of me not two hours ago! If there's a row you're in it right up to your dashed neck, Mellish, an' don't you forget it!"

They had reached the study on the Shell passage now, and the door was shut behind them. Mellish, with his craftiest look on his face, said:

"Look here, Racke, for another five bob I'll smuggle that thing back, and then we shall all be safe. I'm not going to do it for nothing, it's too jolly risky."

"You can do it to-morrow, not to-night," answered Croke.

That means you're up to something with it to-night. Right-ho! Baggy is just as likely as not to go along and tell Glyn or Tom Merry all he knows or suspects. But for half a dollar I'll undertake to watch him so that he don't get a chance. How's that for a bargain?"

"You're like the daughter of the horse-leech, Mellish," returned Racke. "Your turn, Croke, old top. Better shell out. I have my doubts about that fat rotter, an' it ought to be worth it to you. For my own part, I shouldn't care a dashed lot about gettin' rid of the thing to-night."

With a very ill grace Croke shelled out. He did not like it, and he did not pretend to like it, and he was so abusive to Mellish that the sneak of the Fourth felt no keenness about earning the money he had taken.

If his watch upon Baggy had been more thorough Tom Merry might not have received the anonymous note which he found thrust under the door of No. 10 when he and his chums returned to that celebrated apartment after a visit to the Common-room. And if Croke had not dealt Baggy that savage kick the anonymous note might never have been written.

Tom picked it up. It was a scrap of paper torn from a leaf of an exercise book, bearing these words:

"It woodent be a bad noshun to watch out for Racke and Croke to-night. They are up to sumthing. You mite tell Glyn and Noble and Dane."

"From a true frend."

"My aunt, I should say so!" said Manners, sniffing contemptuously as he read it over Tom's shoulder.

"What should you say? Not surely that Baggibus is your aunt?" gibed Lowther.

"Baggy? Yes, I suppose this would be Baggy," Tom said. "The spelling's bad enough, and so is the writing; and it's smeared and it's dirty. But I fancy there's something in it."

"We'd already arranged to keep our eyes peeled for any suspicious move by those two, so we've nothing to thank that fat sneak for," growled Manners.

"I wasn't exactly proposing a vote-of thanks to him," answered Tom mildly. "But I'm going along to speak to Glyn and Dane and Noble. It's up to us to see this thing through with them, I consider."

To that Manners and Lowther agreed without argument, and a consultation of a few minutes with the schoolboy inventor and his two chums resulted in a working arrangement for that night which would not have pleased Racke and Crooke at all had they guessed at it.

But had they guessed at it they would have given up their project. Racke would not so much have minded doing that, but Crooke had persuaded himself that Banks, the bookie, might be so terrified that he would desert the Green Man for one of his other haunts, and for the time being cease to trouble George Gerald Crooke.

CHAPTER 7.

On the Trail of Two!

RACKE and Crooke were among the first fellows up to bed that night. Tom Merry & Co. and Harry Noble & Co. were among the last. These six did not all come up together, for that might have looked as though there was something in the wind. But after Wingate had attended to lights out and said good-night each of them got silently out of bed again.

Each of them slipped on underclothing, shirt, and trousers, then they all got back. They were not in the habit of wearing their day clothes in bed, and though it was a cold night, they certainly would not have done so for the purpose of keeping warm; but the cold made it no hardship to lie thus snugly, and to be ready directly the one among them who was to watch gave them the signal would help to prevent any danger of their missing the two whom they hoped to catch out.

Glyn took the first watch. He was to wake Tom Merry at eleven if there had been no occasion to awaken anyone before that. After twelve it would be safe to assume that nothing was likely to happen.

Bernard Glyn was anxious. He had admitted as much; but he had not let even Noble and Dane know quite how anxious he was.

He wanted that box back. He was worried that his invention should have been used in the way it appeared to have been.

It was meant to scare people, of course. But somehow he had never imagined its scaring them quite in the way or to the extent that it had done. The "Oh! Murder! Help!" record had been a source of pride to him, so lifelike it had seemed, even though he knew that the cry came out of the box.

But he realised now that its lifelikeness made it positively dangerous. Taggles had been very badly frightened, and Gussy and Grundy, who were as essentially plucky as any two fellows at St. Jim's, were scarcely less frightened than the porter.

For conscience's sake, then, and also because he knew that there would be trouble for him if those in authority came to know of the scarephone, Glyn wanted that box back, and wanted it back as soon as might be.

There was no fear that he would doze on his watch.

The dormitory was quite dark, and he sat up in bed, a thick dressing-gown wrapped round his shoulders. He heard ten strike. It seemed like an hour before the quarter chimed, and like another before the half-hour followed.

Someone was stirring!

He could see nothing, but he heard a whisper:

"Are you awake, Aubrey?"

Racke answered aloud. He had not been actually asleep, but he was too near being so to equal the caution of Crooke.

"Yes, of course I am," he answered, and the words came clearly to Glyn.

"Shush!" hissed Crooke. "You'll have someone hear you."

"Hadh't we better chuck the dashed silly notion?" yawned Racke, not "shushing" to an extent sufficient to keep his question from reaching Glyn's ears.

"Oh, dash it all, you promised to come!"

Promises never weighed very heavily with Aubrey Racke. But more fully awake now, he felt himself inclining to the carrying out of this one.

To steal out late at night was no new thing for Racke and Crooke. They had done it so often with comparative impunity that the peril of it was less to their minds than it might have been expected to be, seeing that neither was

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of the heroic breed. They dared to take chances because they counted chances heavily in their favour.

"Right-ho! I suppose a fellow must keep a promise," said Racke now.

And he got out of bed and began to dress in the dark.

Crooke was dressing also. Glyn waited. Directly they were outside the door he would rouse Tom Merry. Then he would follow those two, and leave Tom to rouse the other four and follow him with them.

The black sheep of the Shell had had plenty of practice at dressing in the dark. They were swift and silent, so swift and so silent that Glyn almost missed their exit from the dormitory.

Almost—not quite! He heard the door open, and on the instant he was out of bed.

Tom Merry, sleeping lightly, was aroused the moment Glyn's hand touched his shoulder, and, with only a hurried whisper to Tom, Glyn passed out on the track of those two.

They made straight for the box-room through the window of which they were accustomed to clamber on to the leads when on these nocturnal expeditions. The scarephone had been left there, inside a bag, which itself was hidden in a box.

Had Glyn known that all that followed might have been avoided. He had grown so concerned about the instrument that he would not have risked letting the black sheep go out with it in order to see what use they meant to put it to.

But he only reached the door of the box-room at the moment when they began to clamber out of the window.

He stood in the darkness till they had gone. Then he followed, dropping from the leads before they were half-way across the quad to the old tree which had helped the passage of so many St. Jim's fellows, senior and junior, over the wall.

It was easy to guess that they were going to the village, since they were evidently not on their way to frighten Taggles again. But guessing was not good enough for Glyn. He wanted to be quite sure.

He mounted the wall behind them. Out in the road the darkness was less dense, and he was able to catch a glimpse of their shadowy figures as they took the way to Rylcombe.

Then he waited for his chums.

He had not long to wait. In two minutes all five were under the wall on which he sat. In another two minutes all six were over it.

But the brief delay meant that Racke and Crooke had gained quite a considerable lead.

"You're sure they've got the thing, Bernard?" asked Kangaroo, in low tones.

"I'm not sure, but I think they have. Anyway, I'm going to act on the theory that they have."

"The rotters may only be going to the Green Man. That sweep Banks is about again—I've seen him. When he's there Racke and Crooke often go."

That was Manners. But his tone gave no hint of any disinclination to follow.

"It's a bit late for going there, isn't it?" asked Dane.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom Merry. "I fancy that most of what those idiots call sport goes on at the Green Man long after most people are in bed. They're not afraid of an old donkey like Crump spotting them."

"Let's run a bit," suggested Kangaroo. "If we let them get too far ahead we may lose them altogether."

All were wearing rubber-soled shoes, and the padding of their feet on the grass by the wayside in Rylcombe Lane made no noise likely to reach the ears of those ahead.

All were silent now. Not a word was spoken till through the gloom came a warning "Hist! Halt!" from Tom Merry.

They stopped at once, and none too soon.

Clearly to the ears of all six came the grumbling tones of Mr. Selby, the Third Form master.

"I tell you, Ratcliff, that I am persuaded the two figures we saw—"

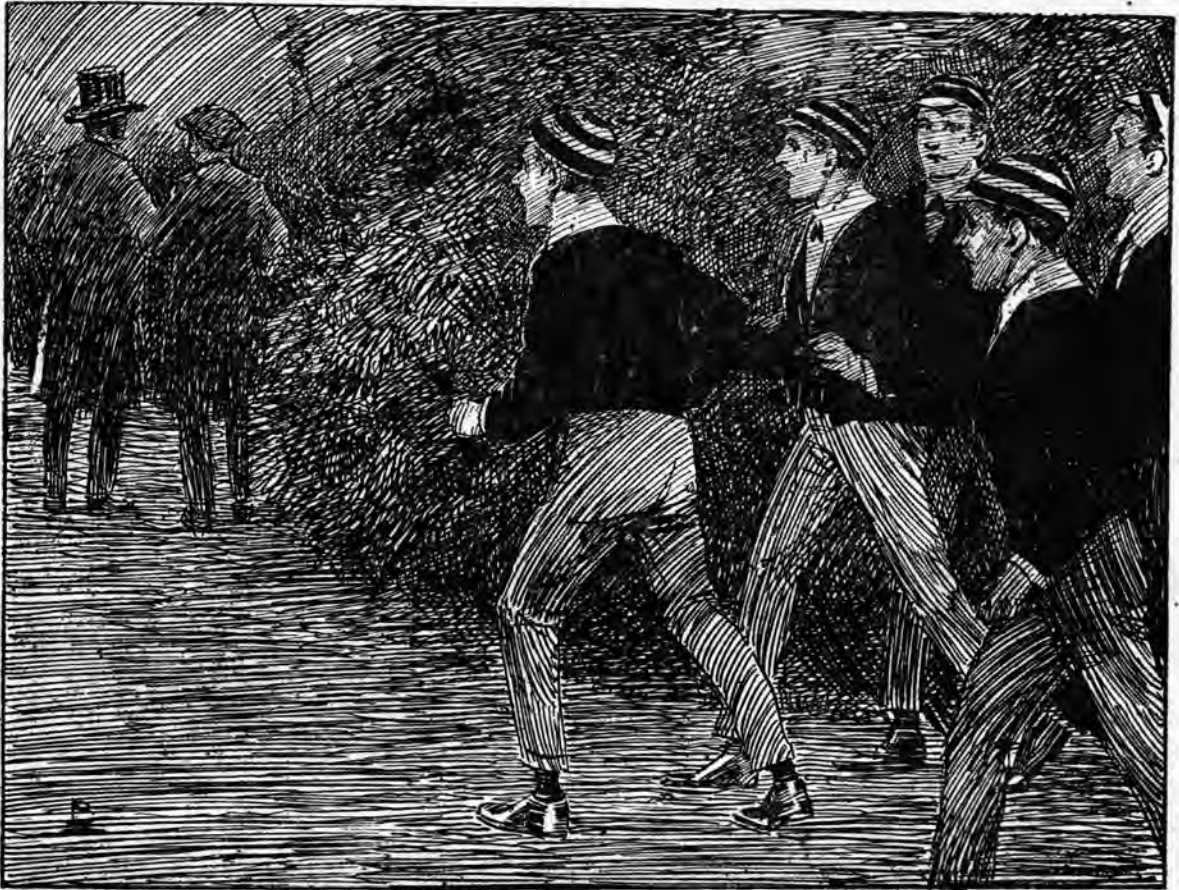
"Excuse me, Selby, but I prefer correctness. I did not see them. It was you who did so, or thought that you did," broke in the sour voice of the master of the New House.

"Ratty and Selby!" whispered Lowther. "My only Aunt Sempronia, here's a pretty go!"

It was not often the two most unpopular masters at St. Jim's sought each other's company. Each regarded the other as an unpleasant person, and neither was wrong. It was an accident that they were returning from Rylcombe vicarage together that night. They had not been aware when accepting a dinner invitation from the vicar that they would meet one another at the hospitable board.

But they were ready to hunt together if they saw but half a chance of catching out any St. Jim's boy in nefarious proceedings. They had at least one common feeling—a general dislike for all boys.

"I assure you, Ratcliff, that it is quite impossible I should have been mistaken," said Mr. Selby earnestly and, for him, quite civilly. "But that your head chanced to be



The six juniors were noiselessly walking through the lane when Tom Merry suddenly called a halt. The others stopped at once—not a moment too soon, for from ahead came the soft voices of Mr. Ratcliff and Mr. Selby. "My only Aunt Sempronia!" whispered Lowther. "Here's a pretty go! How can we warn Racke and Crooke now?" (See page 12.)

turned the other way I am confident that you, with your quick sight and keen powers of observation, could not have failed to see also."

The compliment mollified Mr. Ratcliff, as well it might, for Mr. Selby was not one given to pay compliments. Possibly the master of the Third counted on that fact.

"If you really think—" began Mr. Ratcliff.

"I do not think, my dear sir, I am sure."

"Then what do you propose that we should do?"

"Go back at once and endeavour to catch those young miscreants!"

Tom Merry could have groaned, and Bernard Glyn felt worse than did Tom.

Racke and Crooke were rank outsiders, and if they were caught out and expulsion followed they would get no more than their deserts. Not a fellow among the six but had said at one time or another that he would be glad to see those rotters sacked.

But when it came to the pinch the aspect of affairs seemed somehow different.

Glyn had an unreasonable feeling that if they were caught it would be partly his fault. It was unreasonable, for he had not tempted the black sheep with his scare-phone. They had come by the thing wrongfully.

Tom and one or two of the others—certainly Kangaroo—realised that if Racke and Crooke were bowled out with Glyn's invention in their possession it would be unhealthy for Glyn. No one would believe for a moment that anyone at St. Jim's but Glyn could have constructed such a thing, and if taxed with it he could not deny it.

They all stood back in the gloom and waited till the two masters were headed towards the village again.

"Now what are we going to do?" asked Manners.

"There's only one thing to be done—get ahead of those two if we can and warn Racke and Crooke," replied Tom.

In the darkness someone squeezed his arm, and he guessed that it was Glyn.

"They don't deserve that we should take the risk and trouble, but I suppose you're right, Tommy," Lowther said.

"We can't get past them until they're out of the lane,"

observed Kangaroo. "When we can I vote we try the Green Man first. That's the likeliest place for those two rotters to have gone, and Ratty and Selby may not be on to it as we are."

"You bet they will be, though," groaned Lowther, "unless they know of any worse place than Joliffe's at Rylcombe. We don't. If they do it's all to the good that they should have such nasty minds, for they'll make for it as sure as eggs are hen-fruit!"

CHAPTER 8.

A Scare for Several!

RACKE and Crooke had no notion that Nemesis was on their track in the shape of Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby, than whom Nemesis, however grim his aspect, could not have looked grimmer.

Those two black sheep knew even better than Tom Merry did—much better, for Tom was only drawing inferences from what he had heard—that when Joliffe, the crafty landlord of the Green Man, and his partner in craft, Mr. Banks, the bookie, had a pigeon or two to pluck they never minded sitting up late.

That was hardly how Racke and Crooke would have put it, of course. They did not regard themselves as pigeons for the plucking. They thought themselves as astute as Joliffe or Banks. The only thing they had against those personages was their nasty habit of wanting to be paid the money they had won.

It was this unpleasant trait which caused George Gerald Crooke to regard Mr. Banks as an enemy just now.

Crooke was very hopeful of curing Banks—temporarily, at least. He had scraped together the sum of five pounds, and fancied that after Banks had been properly terrified he might be induced to accept that as an instalment and allow the balance to stand over indefinitely.

His dear pal Racke had less faith than he. But Racke did not happen to owe Banks anything at that moment, so that he had no objection to facing the bookmaker; and he

(Continued on page 16.)

ANTHONY SHARPE is the cutest detective known!



THE MYSTERIOUS 'X'!

BY EDMUND BURTON.

Another of the Amazing Exploits of
ANTHONY SHARPE—Investigator.

CHAPTER I.

The Warning!

ONLY six letters this mornin', sir." Tim O'Carroll entered the sunny room where he and Anthony Sharpe were about to begin breakfast, and laid the little sheaf down beside his master's plate. Sharpe poured out the coffee, and then started on a leisurely examination of his morning's mail.

Tim attacked the eggs-on-toast with the zest of one whose appetite is always an unflinching ally, and silently watched the investigator as the latter scanned five of the letters without comment. But as he opened the sixth and last Sharpe's brows drew together, whilst his lips pursed themselves up in a soundless whistle.

"What is it, sir?" asked O'Carroll quickly. "A new case?"

The detective glanced up, his face grave. "No," he rapped back; "it concerns the present one."

"The one we've nearly finished?" Tim queried. "What does it say? I hope there's goin' to be no hitch—"

"There may well be!" Sharpe cut in grimly, as he passed a single sheet of paper across the table. "You can read that, if you like, though you'll scarcely understand its meaning until I explain."

O'Carroll fixed his eyes on the few lines of neat writing the note contained, and a puzzled look overspread his shrewd face.

"To Anthony Sharpe," he read. "Take warning! If you persist in pursuing the affair you are at present engaged on, you will have only yourself to blame for the consequences. We have already crossed swords twice: the third time will be the last. 'X'."

"What's it all mean, sir?" Tim asked, in a low voice. "Who, or what, is 'X'?"

"It is the sign-mark of one of the most astute and versatile criminals who ever pestered Society," Sharpe replied. "His real name no one knows, but he was a nasty thorn in the side of the authorities some little time ago. On two occasions he and I were pitted against each other, when, I must admit, 'X' got the better of me. I roped in some of his gang, but the leader apparently dissolved into thin air. And now, just as we have everything ready to strike at this coterie of bank thieves, the mysterious 'X' politely tells me to stay my hand!"

"You mean that these robberies at the suburban bank branches were arranged by him?" Tim said.

"So it would appear on the strength of this," Sharpe tapped the threatening letter with his forefinger. "I certainly considered the various coups remarkably clever, and not unlike 'X's' handiwork, but I frankly confess that, until now, I did not exactly connect him with them. He has been lying low for over twelve months, and I was almost beginning to forget his existence."

By means of several weeks of tireless endeavour, Sharpe and Tim O'Carroll, aided by their trusty ally, Detective-Inspector Winton, of Scotland Yard, had at length succeeded in solving a mystery which was disturbing all London. Many outlying

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branches of various banks had been rifled in a most cunning manner which left few clues of any value behind; but, finally, the trio's perseverance was rewarded. They had followed up what scanty material they had to go on, eventually succeeding in tracking the supposed gang to a big detached house standing a few miles beyond the limits of the metropolis. Indeed, Winton was this very morning at headquarters, where he was arranging to make his swoop that night.

"Well, sir," Tim asked presently. "What's to be done?"

"About this? Why, I shall go ahead, of course," Sharpe answered without hesitation; "but you, youngster, had best keep out of it. I happen to know that this mysterious 'X' never threatens idly, and when he takes the trouble to pen a warning like that he's quite sincere. Therefore, Timothy, my boy, you must stay at home—"

"Stay at home! Stay here, when you're goin' with Winton an' his crowd!" O'Carroll sprang up indignantly; then calmed himself with an effort. "'Tain't playin' the game, chief! You've never asked me to drop out

before, an'—an' I've been with you in this case from the start."

Sharpe's eyes softened, though he still looked very anxious.

"You're a good lad, Tim," he said, "but I know what I'm talking about. I am familiar with the methods of 'X'; you are not, and—"

"Then, bedad, I'm goin' to learn 'em!" the youngster said rebelliously, the Irish blood in his composition rising to boiling point at what he considered to be a gross injustice, for he could not see why, danger or no danger, he should be left out at the end of the chase. "You hear, sir? I'm going—" Then he paused, looking a little ashamed of his outburst. "Sorry, guv'nor! Sure, I was forgettin' who's boss of this firm. But—but I want to be in at the finish—badly!"

Sharpe laughed. "All right, Tim," he conceded, after a little further thought, "you may come. After all, the house will be surrounded, and, with Winton's fellows within call, I doubt if even the astute 'X' can do much damage. That satisfactory?"

O'Carroll nodded his thanks, and resumed



The sandbag whizzed through the air and met the base of Anthony Sharpe's skull with a dull thud, sending him tumbling over like a sack.

his breakfast with the air of one who had overruled a stern opposition. Just then the telephone-bell rang, and for some minutes Sharpe was deep in conversation with Winton of the C.I.D., making their final plans for the coup which they expected to bring off within the next few hours.

CHAPTER 2.

The Mysterious 'X'—Trapped—Twelve Minutes to Live!

THE house to which the bank thieves had been traced was an old, rambling building standing in its own grounds on the left-hand side of the road; and at about nine o'clock that night fully a dozen plain-clothes men were concealed in the thick shrubberies round about, where Winton was conversing in whispers with Anthony Sharpe. The raiding party had arrived one at a time, so as to arouse no suspicion from any casual passer-by, and it was decided that Sharpe should make an entry alone, in order to ascertain how the land lay, the C.I.D. men to remain in hiding pending the investigator's signal to advance.

Since Sharpe had received that mysterious warning, and learnt that the elusive "X" was at the bottom of these clever bank thefts, he was doubly anxious that the ring-leader should not slip him this time, as he had done twice already. Therefore, he proposed a preliminary reconnoitring expedition in the hope that he might make sure of "X's" presence with the gang before the others swooped down on the house.

Presently the investigator moved cautiously through the trees, making a circuit of the building before deciding on a promising-looking window on the ground-floor. This he noiselessly opened, and crawled through into what appeared to be a large pantry beyond. Here he paused, listening intently, but no sound broke the stillness, and he tiptoed forward until he reached a long passage where a turned-down gas jet glimmered at the far end. Then he heard something—the faint murmur of voices proceeding, it seemed, from a closed door just beneath this feeble illumination.

The danger was great, as Sharpe knew well, but the prize was greater. Some of the gang were certainly there—possibly the leader—and on that latter point he was most desirous of satisfying himself. He stole along like a cat, his eyes fixed upon a tiny gleam that showed the position of the key-hole; then bent down to peer through, but suddenly spun round with a stifled gasp as a slight sound from the rear startled him.

Unfortunately, Sharpe was just a fraction of a second too late. A murky figure lurched towards him from the shadows of the staircase, and, even as he noticed it, something whizzed through the air, meeting the base of his skull with a dull thud, and tumbling him over like an empty sack. A sandbag, deftly wielded, is an ideal weapon, for the blow has rarely to be repeated.

When Anthony Sharpe came to himself he was sitting, bound hand and foot, in a big wooden chair placed in the centre of a long, low-ceilinged apartment. He glanced dully round, his head still singing from the effects of that blow, and let his eyes rove over the seven or eight occupants the room contained. The majority of them were well-dressed enough, with one or two individuals of the "bruiser" type as make-weight. But it was mainly on a tall man, in perfectly cut clothes, that the investigator's attention was fixed—a man whose thin lips wreathed themselves into a superior smile as he noticed that his captive had recovered consciousness.

The fellow was not unhandsome, in a dark, sinister way, and his figure, though spare, was wiry and well built. His long, tapering fingers drummed idly upon the table at which he sat; but presently he leaned forward, looking at Sharpe with an almost pitying expression in his face.

"Well, my dear chap," he said, in tones that sounded like mild reproach, "you are certainly a very, very foolish person. Did you not receive my note this morning?"

"I did," the detective answered instantly, desperately striving to pull himself together and ignore that infernal "singing" in his head—"I did; that's why I'm here—Mr.

He other shrugged his shapely shoulders.



"In twelve minutes, Mr. Sharpe," said the mysterious "X," "you will be blown skywards. Lean forward a little, and look beneath your chair!" The detective did so, and his heart beat wildly!

"Well, well," he smiled; "it's useless trying to do a good turn for some people. I am sorry, however, that you have decided to give up your most successful career! What a pity!"

The man's tone was so quiet and conversational that a chance listener would never have suspected that anything deadly lay behind it. It almost sounded as though he were merely chiding Sharpe for deciding to relinquish his profession.

"Your information, I fear, is incorrect," the investigator replied steadily. "I was never fonder of my profession, and—perhaps you may not be aware of it—this house is at the present moment under close observation by friends of mine, who have orders to break in should I not have rejoined them very shortly." He glanced at a clock on the mantelpiece. "In twelve minutes, to be quite exact."

The tall man laughed lightly.

"Then in twelve minutes, Mr. Sharpe," he said, "you will have rejoined your departed friends in the Great Beyond! Lean forward a little, and look beneath your chair!"

The detective wriggled, craning his neck until he could just see the floor between his feet; then his heart seemed to stop momentarily, only to race wildly next instant.

For there lay a long metal cylinder to which a couple of wires were attached, and these travelled away across the carpet until they disappeared beneath a door on the right.

"The ends of those wires, my prying friend, are fixed to the hall-door above," explained the mysterious "X," "and, as you know from experience, the average policeman will, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, make his entry by the front door. I think my meaning is pretty clear—eh?"

Indeed, it was only too clear! The forcing of the door would fire the explosive beneath the chair, and Sharpe would be blown to atoms by the hands of his own colleagues!

The plan was a devilish one—well worthy of the cunning master-criminal who had devised it. But then, "X" had always been of an original turn of mind, and something of this nature was only to be expected from him.

"You have eight minutes to think it over," the fellow smiled, glancing at the timepiece as he rose. "By then we shall be well away, and you—Why you, Mr. Sharpe, will also be well away—skywards!"

One of the band turned out the light, after which Sharpe heard a slight grating noise, followed by a shuffling of feet; then silence, save for the faint ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece.



CHAPTER 3.

Moments of Agony—Gone to Earth—Drawn Blank!

EVERY one of those regular ticks, soft though they were, seemed like the thud of a hammer on Sharpe's brain. He could move neither hand nor foot, so securely had he been trussed up, and with each passing second he knew that the sands of his life were steadily running out. The mysterious "X" never threatened idly, and the elaborateness of his present preparations were sufficient proof that he had been at considerable pains to carry out that threat. There must have been some stray streak of sportsmanship in the criminal's strange composition, since he had gone to the trouble of sending that warning beforehand; though anyone who was acquainted with Anthony Sharpe might have known that it would not have turned him from his duty.

The moments slipped away, a cold sweat breaking out on the detective's forehead as he finally realised that but a very few seconds of life must now be left to him. He could not see the clock, but its regular tick-tick came clearly to his ears, seeming, to his fevered imagination, like the solemn tolling of a funeral bell.

Sharpe was only human. He was not one of those dare-devil detectives of lurid fiction who know no fear under any circumstances, and he realised only too well the small hope there was of emerging from his present desperate position alive. However, it would come quickly; his end would probably be painless, for he would have no time to suffer, and there would be others left to carry on his work when he had gone—

Crash!
From some other part of the house came a sudden rending of woodwork, and Anthony Sharpe's bound body shuddered violently. Then his head sagged forward on his chest.

It was Tim O'Carroll who was moistening his master's lips with brandy when the investigator came to a little while later. His bonds had been loosed, and he was sitting back in the chair, with Winton and the others crowding round him.

"What has happened?" he asked, striving to collect his scattered senses. "Why—"

He broke off, stooping and staring dully at the cylinder on the floor; then passed his hand across his forehead in utter stupefaction.

"Yes, 'tis still there, sir," Tim grinned. "You see, we didn't enter by the front door at all, as that gent hoped we would, so his little 'Brock's Benefit' became a damp squib!"

Sharpe turned quickly.

(Continued on page 27.)

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"GLYN'S SCAREOPHONE!"

(Continued from page 13.)

cherished a delusion, not much less absurd than Crooke's, for he thought that if Messrs. Banks and Joliffe could be induced to play a little game after the wind had been put up them by the scareophone there was a good chance that Aubrey Racke might come out a winner to a substantial extent at the end of that little game.

Even when he was flush the dear Racke had no aversion to dishonest profits. He was the true son of his father.

Naturally, Racke and Crooke were well aware of the habits of Joliffe and Banks. As such times as the bookie put up at the Green Man the room in use after closing hours was one which overlooked the garden. There, if they had no profitable little game in hand, the two cronies would sit drinking and smoking till at least midnight. They were not early birds, the worms they favoured being late rather than early worms.

Through the garden Racke and Crooke crept. Crooke had the scareophone; he had carried the bag containing it all the way, and was not minded to give up the contraption now that the time for its use had arrived.

But for the argument which his obstinacy in this respect caused they might have eluded Messrs. Selby and Ratcliff, who knew less about the Green Man than those two.

"Hand it over!" said Racke.

"Dashed if I'm goin' to!" replied Crooke.

"By gad, that's pretty thick! Here have I come all this way an' taken all this dashed risk to oblige you, an' now you think you're goin' to work the thing!"

"It was my idea, wasn't it, confound you!"

The two masters could not catch the words, but they heard voices that seemed to come from the garden of the Green Man, and those voices seemed to them like boys'.

By this time the three parties were very close together, though, owing to the darkness, only the biggest party of the three had any notion of that. Racke and Crooke had no suspicion that anyone was on their trail, and the two masters did not dream that half a dozen juniors had had the temerity to follow them with the purpose of thwarting their intended capture.

"There's the rats' record!" whispered Glyn to Tom Merry.

Racke and Crooke had accommodated their differences in some way, and the fun had begun. But only Racke and Crooke thought of it as fun, and they would not have done so had they known a small fraction of the truth.

It was quite an accident—for no one could have accused Messrs. Banks and Joliffe of being devotees of fresh air—that the bow window of the lighted room had one of its sashes slightly open. But for that accident the two fat rascals who sat with their grog and their big cigars by the fire would have heard nothing. As it was—

"There's rats somewhere behind the wainscoting," Joliffe remarked Banks.

"I dessay," replied Joliffe. "They don't worry me. Sure to be a few in a place such as this. No odds as long as they ain't pink 'uns. You don't like that kind, do you, Banks?"

"What is that extremely queer sound, Selby?" asked Mr. Ratcliff.

"It sounds—it really sounds like rats gnawing somewhere," answered the master of the Third.

"Oh, hang it all, something's got to be done, or these two rotters will be caught out for a dead cert, and then you'll get into hot water for making the thing, Glyn, and we shall all be in the cart for breaking bounds at night!" said Tom Merry.

"There's the cats!" said Glyn tragically. "I fancy it's too late to do anything now, Tom."

But Tom Merry was not the fellow to give up while a hope remained.

"Come with me, Manners," he said. "We'll get those two silly asses out of that if we can. Lowther, you and Dane look after Selby; Kanga and Glyn must attend to Ratty. If they show signs of coming in chase do something—do any blessed thing—to draw them off! Bolt and let them blunder after you—trip them up, but for any sake don't get caught! It's a hundred to one against our all getting clear, I suppose, but we've got to try it; we can't give up now!"

And, followed by Manners, he disappeared into the

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gloom, circling the masters in the hope of getting into the garden through the hedge. He knew where Racke and Crooke must be, for he saw the light from the window of the room in which the publican and his guest sat.

The four left behind felt a sudden simultaneous sinking of heart. Tom had chosen for himself the more perilous enterprise, for there was a far bigger chance that he and Manners would be caught inside the garden than that those outside, who had plenty of room to dodge possible pursuers, should be grabbed. But with his going it seemed for a moment that leadership had gone, that there was no one so ready as he to point out the course best to take.

It was only for a moment. There was no faint heart among them, and Kangaroo was only less resolute and less ready than Tom Merry himself.

"Cats howlin'," Bank had remarked to Joliffe, inside.

"Let 'em howl!" Joliffe had replied.

"Dear me! There appears to be an extraordinary number of cats in this neighbourhood, Selby," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Perhaps they are after your rats, Selby—he, he, he!"

"I tell you that I most distinctly heard rats gnawing," Ratcliff, answered Mr. Selby ill-temperedly. "Now, with your name—ha, ha, ha!"

Neither was frightened yet. That was to come.

Now the dog record was on. Tom Merry and Manners had found a weak place in the garden hedge and were struggling through, though Manners muttered that he reckoned it was a heap more risk than those two rotten idiots were worth.

"Whose dog's that?" asked Banks. "You ain't got a tyke, Joliffe, I know!"

"Don't like the nasty animals," returned Joliffe, still untroubled. "One bit me once. He died soon after, I'm glad to say!"

"I don't wonder," said Banks, looking hard at his friend. "What did he die of, though? Did it poison him?"

Joliffe took his cigar out of his mouth to answer that insult in the way it deserved.

But the retort was never made. For now Racke—or Crooke—had pressed the bulb for the fourth record, and upon the still night air there came that agonised series of cries:

"Oh! Murder! Help!"

Those cries had sounded eerily enough in the passages at St. Jim's, yet more eerily in the dark quad; but they were more effective than ever out here at a time not far from midnight.

In spite of all his anxiety Bernard could not help a thrill of pride. This particular one of his inventions might be a mistake from some points of view—as some of his other inventions had been—but it was certainly not a failure!

Banks and Joliffe started to their feet. They stood staring at each other, their red faces beginning to take on a yellow hue.

Joliffe dropped his cigar, and let it stay where it had dropped, burning a hole in the hearthrug. Banks said in a trembling voice:

"There's somebody bein' done in, Joliffe!"

"Well, it's a mercy it ain't us," quavered Joliffe. "I hope the murderer won't come here. There it is again, Banks!"

By some strange freak—for it was certainly not due to the cleverness of Racke or Crooke, whichever may have been handling the bulb—the fourth record was repeated at once.

"Oh! Murder! Help!"

"Don't grab at me in that frantic manner, Ratcliff!"

"It's you who are grabbing, Selby! Oh dear! I—I really, Selby, this is terrible—this is horrible beyond words! Murder is being done, and—"

"Who knows that we may not be the next victims?" burred Mr. Selby. "I do not propose to stay here to be killed, Ratcliff! I—leave go of me—leave go, I say!"

But, while he urged his companion in this desperate adventure to quit his hold, he still clung despairingly to that companion.

"You silly asses! Ratty and Selby are on your track!" hissed Tom Merry to Racke and Crooke. "We were after you, but we got on to them, and came to warn you! Cut for all you're worth!"

"Rot! You can't string us like that!" retorted Racke.

To his mean mind, as to that of Crooke, it seemed impossible in the first flush of surprise that Tom should be telling the truth.

Would they have risked anything to warn Tom Merry & Co.?

Not jolly well likely!

"Idiot! They're coming this way! I heard the garden gate open!" said Tom hotly.

The catch of the gate had clicked. Nothing is much more difficult than to locate sounds without the help of some other sense than hearing. Messrs. Selby and Ratcliff had no definite notion whence those sounds had come. But

they—or one of them—had seen the gleam of light from the window, and had been moved to make for it as for some human harbour of refuge.

CHAPTER 9. Paying the Piper!

IT must not be allowed! For the sake of Tom Merry and Manners—by comparison with them Racke and Crooke did not matter even a little bit—it must not be allowed!

Harry Noble acted promptly. He did a thing that he would not have done except in the wildest excitement.

He lifted foot against the sacred persons of two masters. And he kicked hard.

It must have been quite a long time since anything like that had happened to either gentleman. But it was not so long that both did not realise what it was that had happened, and they swung round together, half their fear driven from them by this astounding assault.

Luckily for Kangaroo, only half of it. The other half of it might have fled but for the fact that at that moment the fourth record came into play again.

"Oh! Murder! Help!"

Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby forgot that they had been kicked. In dire fear lest they should be murdered they turned and fled, still frantically clutching one another.

They headed across the green in front of the inn. They were making straight for the pond, but in their fright they never thought of that.

The four Tom Merry had left behind had had no need to do anything beyond what Harry Noble had done. The two masters had no need to be lured on a wild goose chase. Their own fears sped them.

Splash!

"Owl! I'm drowning!"

"Yow! Leave go of me, Ratcliff!"

"My hat! They're in the pond!" cried Kangaroo.

And he and the other three rushed through the darkness to the aid of the masters, just as Tom Merry and Manners, Racke and Crooke came out of the garden gate together.

"Will you believe now, you silly chump!" roared Manners. "Oh, it doesn't matter a scrap how much row we make now, Tommy! It's all up, and these two rotters have landed us fairly in the cart!"

"Let's bunk!" quavered Racke. "They'll get out all serene. They can't drown in that pond. Let's bunk. If you keep your mouths shut about us we won't let on about you, I swear!"

"Where's that thing of Glyn's?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Which of you has got it?"

"You have, Crooke!"

"I haven't, then; I dropped it!"

"Oh, you cowardly rotter!" snapped Tom.

His first thought was for Glyn. If that contraption was found in the garden of the Green Man, it might give the whole game away.

He ran back to retrieve it.

But now Mr. Banks and the publican, less frightened than the two masters—though their fright had been anything but small—had plucked up courage enough to open the window. As Tom came up, Banks leaned out, and smote with the poker at him, while he stooped to pick up the scarephone.

Tom's hands were on the thing, and they clung to it. But he was half-dazed by the savage blow, and it was almost blindly that he made for the gate.

There he ran right into someone's arms. He could not see who it was, and he struggled, still blindly. But those arms were strong; and now a familiar voice spoke to him, and through his dazedness he knew it.

For it was the voice of Mr. Railton, his Housemaster.

"Who are you?" it demanded sharply.

"It's me, sir—Merry!"

"And what are you doing here, Merry? What's that you have? And what's all that hubbub across the green? Good gracious, surely that is Mr. Ratcliff's voice I hear!"

"Yes, sir. I'm afraid he's in the pond, sir—and Mr. Selby, too!"

"No, it's all right, Tom; we've got them out!" shouted Kangaroo.

Racke and Crooke would have bolted then but for Manners.

"No, I'm hanged if you're going to sneak out of it!" Manners hissed, hanging on like grim death to them both. "You brought us all into this rotten mess, and if we've got to pay the piper—and we jolly well have—you're going to stand your share of the bill!"

"You'll put it all on us, of course!" gurgled Crooke.

"We sha'n't! We sha'n't tell any more than we have to. But it's bound to come out now. Oh, you rotters!"

Now there gathered a group of eleven—Racke and Crooke, and the six who had trailed them, Mr. Railton flashing an electric-torch, and Messrs. Selby and Ratcliff, dripping with muddy water, lavishly adorned with duckweed, a pitiable spectacle.

"You two had better get home with all haste, or you will be laid up with chills," said Mr. Railton to his colleagues. "To-morrow will be time enough for you to investigate this affair, if indeed you think it necessary after the very thorough investigation into it that I intend to make this night."

With their fear still upon them, soaked and chilled, teeth chattering, and clothing clinging to their bodies, the two were in no case to argue. Not even their bad tempers could give them spirit to withstand Mr. Ratcliff just then.

They went in silence. And Kangaroo wondered whether to-morrow would bring for him what he might be said, in another sense, to have given them—the order of the boot!

"Now, Merry, what's that thing, and what does all this mean?" asked Mr. Railton.

Tom rubbed his head, still almost too dazed to answer. It was Glyn who replied.

"It belongs to me, sir," he said. "It's one of my inventions. But I'm sorry now that I ever invented it."

"No doubt you are, Glyn. Remorse generally follows upon being caught out. What is this invention?"

"I call it the scarephone, sir. This is how it works."

He took it from Tom Merry's unresisting hands. The rest held their breaths. Racke and Crooke hated Glyn. Why was he so frank about it all? But the rest knew that this was by far the best way in dealing with Mr. Railton.

The master of the School House was neither nervous nor timid; but he started when the fourth record sounded.

"And you brought that wretched thing out to terrify people in the village, Glyn?" he said.

"Yes, sir," answered Bernard Glyn, after a barely perceptible pause.

It was not true; but it was at least a generous lie, though Racke and Crooke were too mean of soul to appreciate its generosity. The others, with no desire to share the punishment these two had deserved, were as one man in their determination to stand by Glyn.

"I will deal with you to-morrow," Mr. Railton said curtly. "Home now!"

Dr. Holmes chanced to be away for a day or two, and both Mr. Selby and Mr. Ratcliff were in bed next day, so that it was Mr. Railton who dealt alone with the culprits. There was nothing weak in his dealing, but they got off with punishments short of the drastic ones that Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby would have enforced. Their hands were smarting when they came out of the Housemaster's study, and they had impositions to do, and they were gated for a week, and Glyn's scarephone was destroyed; but they were not expelled. Not even Kangaroo was expelled. Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby never took action in the matter of the kicking, though Noble could not believe that they had forgotten it.

Mellish's complicity came out through that leaky vessel, Baggy Trimble, and Mellish shared the rough justice which the six meted out to Racke and Crooke.

"An' that silly ass Lowther said we ought to be grateful to them!" groaned Aubrey Racke, when their ordeal was over.

"We're dashed well not!" returned Crooke viciously.

Of course they were not! Lowther did not really expect them to be. When were Racke and Crooke ever grateful?

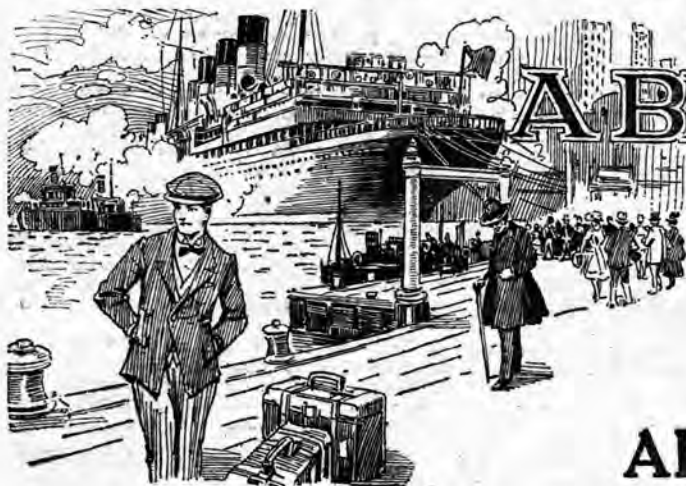
THE END.

ANOTHER RIPPING SCHOOL STORY NEXT WEEK—

"ST. JIM'S AT THE CUP-FINAL!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

BE SURE YOU READ NEXT WEEK'S ALL FOOTER NUMBER OF THE "GEM!"



A BRITISHER'S TEST!

The Story of a British Boy's Adventures Alone in America.

By

ALAN MITCHELL.

CHAPTER 1.

The Letter—New York!

DONALD CLIFF leaned back in the corner of the railway carriage, and looked out at the familiar country as it sped past.

He had just left Cranhurst, the school that had been his home for the last five years, and was going out into the unknown world to make good.

"My uncle says I'm to make good, and I'm jolly well going to!" muttered Don, and placing his hand in an inner pocket, he drew forth a letter.

It bore an American stamp, and had been received by Don the day before. Opening it for at least the tenth time, he read:

"Dear Donald,—I note that you are leaving school in a day or two. I enclose your fare to America. Come out here and make good. I will meet the boat—the Berengaria—and will keep an eye on you, and see that you do well.

"Grit and determination are qualities necessary for success out here.—Your affectionate uncle,

"WOODVILLE P. CRAIG."

"It's jolly decent of the old boy, considering I've never seen him—at least, not since I was a tiny baby," thought Don, as he put the letter away. "Still, I—"

Don's father had married an American woman—much against the wish of her family—during a visit to America. Both his parents had died with tragic suddenness, and Don, but ill-provided for, had been left alone in the world. His uncle, who had written the letter, had, however, on the death of Don's mother and father, sent instructions to England that the boy should be sent to a public school.

Now, after five years, he had left Cranhurst, and was on his way to America.

"The uncle seems to be hot stuff on the 'make-good' business. He's taken jolly good care to underline it. Still, he'll tell me what to do when I get there—when he meets the Berengaria at New York," mused Don. "He seems to be keen on grit and determination. Well, I—"

He squared his chin. Had his uncle known Don better, he would have had no need to wonder whether he would show grit and determination. For the last three years he had represented his school at the Public Schools' Boxing Championships at Aldershot, and had come out with flying colours on all three occasions, fighting with a doggedness and resolution to win

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under the heaviest punishment. He had given weight away, but his grit and determination had always pulled him through.

He'd jolly soon show them over there whether he had the "two qualities necessary to success," as his uncle had put it.

On reaching London he put up at a small hotel near the British Museum, and spent the remainder of the day buying one or two odds and ends to supplement his equipment for the voyage and what lay beyond in the land of the Almighty Dollar.

The Berengaria was not sailing for three days, which gave Don plenty of time to get his things packed and labelled and dispatched to the port of embarkation.

It was something of a shock to him, however, when he had paid his passage and his meagre hotel bill, to find that he had but a pound and a few odd shillings left over.

"I don't know if it's meanness, or if he doesn't know the price of the beastly fare," he muttered to himself, as he left the shipping-office—looking with a wry face at the change in his hand. "Still, when I see him things may be different."

At last came Liverpool and the Berengaria. The immense size of the ship took the boy's breath away. As he walked along the seemingly endless decks, past the rows and rows of cabins, he thought of how his school chum, Bob Warren, would have liked to have been with him. He felt utterly lost in the huge floating city.

"It's only four and a half days, thank goodness, so it won't be so bad," he thought to himself.

With much shouting and waving of handkerchiefs of every size and colour the huge liner at last swung out into the waters of the Mersey, and started on her race across the Atlantic to the city of New York.

The journey across was uneventful, but at last the Statue of Liberty hove into sight over the skyline, while behind it rows and rows of many-windowed buildings towered into the sky.

Gradually the city became clearer, and the great ship swung gracefully into the big harbour. Two tugs came up on either side, and connecting hawsers to the Berengaria, towed her alongside the quay.

"By Jove, an uncle will want a bit of finding in that crowd!" thought Don, as he looked over the side of the ship at the seething mass of people on the quayside.

A sigh of relief came from him a little

later, when the first and second class passengers began to pour from the ship on to the quay. There was at once a visible thinning of the crowd.

At last the time came for the third-class passengers to land, and, picking up his two large handbags, Donald walked down the gangway and into the Customs' office, where, after his baggage had been carefully examined and passed, he emerged on to the quayside.

Placing his bags on the pavement, he looked anxiously round. There were still a number of people about, but no one came forward with outstretched hand to meet him.

"Expect the uncle's a bit late. Perhaps he doesn't know the ship's in yet," muttered Don, scanning the faces of the people who were evidently waiting for the third-class passengers.

As he stood there, a somewhat anxious look on his face, he noticed a broad-shouldered, elderly man, with a wide-brimmed hat, and somewhat shabbily dressed, walk across and gaze at the words "D. Cliff" on his luggage. As Don turned round, the man shuffled away with a muttered, "Say, no offence, boy!"

Don pulled the letter from his uncle out of his pocket, and scanned it once more carefully. It bore the New York postmark, and—a thing he had not noticed before—had the name of an hotel on the top of the notepaper.

"Hotel Superior, 23rd Street," he read. "Well, if he doesn't pop up soon, I'll cut along and see if he's at this hotel. Bound to be, I should say!"

The minutes dragged like hours. The crowd, one by one, dispersed.

He looked at his watch.

"Well, I'll be dashed!" he exclaimed. "I've been waiting here nearly two hours, and not a sign of anyone to meet me. I'm going along to the hotel to see what the idea is. Perhaps the old boy's ill, and can't come along."

Putting the action to the word, he picked up his two bags and left the quay, followed, at some distance, by the shabby man with the wide-brimmed hat, who had looked him up and down when on the quayside.

Boarding a street car, Don soon found himself in Twenty-third Street. A few minutes' walk brought him to the Hotel Superior, where he inquired for Mr. Woodville P. Craig.

The sleek-looking man in the office, without a word, went carefully through the registers, running over the names carefully with his forefinger.

"Say, boy, it's you for a blank!" he said, at last, raising a thin hard face, and

fixing two piercing eyes on Don's face.

"What's the big idea, anyway?"

Don's face flushed with embarrassment, although his heart was heavy with disappointment.

"That—that's the big idea!" he stammered, and placed the letter from his uncle on the counter. "It's—it's got this hotel's name on the paper and the envelope."

The clerk examined the notepaper and the name of "Craig," then a smile spread over his face.

"Some guy's been havin' you on the end of a bitta rope," he said, in a not unkindly voice.

"But he's my uncle!" said Don, in an anxious voice.

"Well, he's been an' gone, and done you in the eye," said the clerk. "He's one of the free guys that drop in here and use our notepaper without being asked to. We've caught one or two before now."

Don's face dropped. With only a few shillings in his pocket, he was alone in the great city of New York.

"M-m-may I leave my two bags here for a little while?" he asked a little sadly. "I'm going out to see if I can find out anything about my uncle!"

The man assented with a cheery nod, and Don went out into the busy streets.

As he came out of the hotel entrance he did not notice the slouching figure with the wide-brimmed hat which dodged

into a shop entrance on the far side of the road and watched him as he went up the street.

A directory of New York showed Don that there were several thousand Craigs, but not one Woodville P. Craig.

"Well, what a rotten do!" he muttered to himself when he was once again in the street. "Still," he added, bracing himself up, "now I am here I'm going to do something. I must get work of some kind, but, first of all, I must get somewhere to stay!"

A somewhat brusque policeman at the corner of the street informed him that the cheapest lodging quarter was the Bowery. Don thanked him and made his way back to the Hotel Superior, where he asked for his bags.

"Had any luck, kiddie?" asked the clerk, thrusting aside the proffered payment for keeping the bags. "Keep that in your pocket, bo'; you'll need it before you've been in li'l old Noo York vurry much longer." And he busied himself once more with his books behind the counter.

A street-car conveyed Don to the Bowery. It also conveyed a shabbily dressed man, who wore a wide-brimmed hat pulled well down over his eyes.

It was late in the afternoon when Don at last came across a small lodging-house in one of the narrow streets that run from the Bowery down to the river.

"Only a dollar a week, as you're so

good lookin'," said the fat, smug landlady. "Food—extra!"

"That'll do!" answered Don.

He was shown up into a small cubicle containing one hard, wooden chair, and a low, flat, hard bed. The clothes on the bed were scanty, but showed a cleanliness somewhat unusual in this quarter of the great city.

"Place for washin' at the end o' the corridor, kid!" remarked the woman, holding out a hand that was not quite in keeping with the clean sheet on the bed. "Say, an' I'll take the furst dollar in advance. Meals you can pay for separate—when you have 'em!"

Don handed her five shillings in English money.

"Just over?" inquired the woman.

Don nodded, but thought it better not to tell the woman anything about the missing uncle or anything else connected with his presence in New York.

As soon as he was left alone he counted over the money he had remaining. By stinting himself to the utmost, he saw that the money would last him barely a week for food.

He sighed. Then his chin jutted out, and a look of battle came into his eyes.

"That letter told me that America was the place to make good, and, by Jove, I'm going to test it!" he said through his clenched teeth. "I'm going to test it!"

Eagerly he scanned the paper the next morning, and cut out employment



"Walk up! Walk up! Walk up!" shouted the red-faced man with the gaudy waistcoat, waving a hand in the direction of the ring. "Who's the next gennelman to try his luck with the Kid for twenty-five dollars?" "I'll have a go at him!" cried Donald Cliff, rising.

advertisements where he thought he might stand a chance of getting a job.

With the advertisements placed in order in his pocket he left the lodging-house. It was still very early, and the streets had not yet taken on their busy aspect.

A glass of hot milk and a cake sufficed him for breakfast, and he made his way with all possible speed to the place mentioned in the first advertisement.

Twenty or thirty men were already in the queue when he turned the corner of the street leading to the office he was seeking. He joined on the end. As he waited more men tailed on behind and leaned against the wall to wait, among them a shabby man with a wide-brimmed hat.

After about half an hour the queue began to move. Evidently the business of selection had commenced. Slowly the line of men moved forward. Eagerly Don watched the door of the office gradually drawing nearer. Perhaps his tall, athletic person and fair knowledge of business taught him at school would be assets that would give him a chance of securing the position.

"Say, boys, the rest of you can fade. We're suited!"

The words came like a bombshell to Don, as the clerk, in his shirt-sleeves, and carrying a fountain-pen, addressed the remainder of the queue.

With a heavy heart Don turned away. He still had other advertisements to answer. Sorting out the next, he made off as fast as he could go.

The same thing happened at the next place, and the next.

It was getting dark when Don at last completed the list he had taken with him. Luck had not been with him, for at each place they were either suited, he was too late, or not quite the sort of fellow they were looking for.

Slowly he retraced his steps towards the Bowery. At a small shop he stopped and had a meat-pie and another glass of milk—his only meal since the morning.

Leaving the shop he turned the corner into the Bowery. Suddenly a murmuring sound came to his ears.

He looked up instinctively. Over a brilliantly illuminated doorway hung a big sign.

"BOXING! WALK IN AND TRY!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Gruelling Fight!

"SAY, gentlemen all, I give twenty-five dollars to any-one, eleven stone or un-der, who'll stand up a-against the Kansas Kid for two rounds!"

These words came through the doorway to Don's ears as he stood on the pavement looking at the boxing sign. The price of admission was a dime. Should he go in and have a look at the boxer who was throwing out this challenge to anyone? Might he not stand a very good chance? He was nearly eleven stone, and had won the Public Schools' Welter-weight Championship at Aldershot the year before. He carefully sorted out a dime from his little store of money, which he had now converted into American coinage, and making for the pay-box, handed it over and entered the hall.

The room in which he found himself was fairly big and well illuminated. At the far end was a raised ring, and in front of this a small platform. Odd groups of men stood about in various parts of the room, looking at the man who was shouting from the little platform.

"I'll give—give, mind you, gentlemen—twenty-five dollars to anyone who can stand up against this boy for two rounds!" The red-faced individual, with the gaudy waistcoat, waved a beringed hand in the direction of the ring. "There 'e 'is, gentlemen, as gentle as a lamb. 'E wouldn't hurt nobody. Now, then, who's going to try their luck?"

The man indicated in the ring was a typical square-jawed bruiser, with little, close-set, bloodshot eyes, and flat, spreading nose. Don noticed that one of his ears seemed to have disappeared, leaving only a small hole. This, he knew, was known among the boxing fraternity as a "tin ear," and was the sure sign of the bruiser.

The Kansas Kid, for such the man in the ring was called, was stripped ready for action, and his ferret eyes searched the room in quest of a possible opponent.

Don sat on a low bench just inside the door, where he could command a clear view of the stage.

A man with a wide-brimmed hat, who had just paid for admission and followed him in, took a seat near the door, and also watched the stage, although he cast occasional glances in the direction of the pale-faced, eager-looking boy whose eyes were glued on the stage.

As Don watched, a big, hulking fellow

walked forward from a little group near the far wall and took up the challenge, and immediately began to strip to the waist. In a few seconds the man was ready and jumped into the ring beside the Kansas Kid.

"Only two three-minute rounds!" said the red-faced man, in a kindly voice. "Then I just hand you over twenty-five nice, glitterin' bits o' silver, and you can run away and dash into the nearest departmental store and sort your wife out a nice, use-ful pre-sent!" A smile spread over his face. "Say, are you all ready? Will one o' you gentlemen keep time? Thank you, sir," as a man near the stage assented, and took out his watch. "Now, first round. Time!"

After the two men had shaken hands, the Kansas Kid dropped at once into a low, crouching attitude, and in this position he slowly encircled his opponent. Suddenly, like a cat, the Kid sprang in and delivered a terrific right swing at the other man's head. It was more by good luck than judgment that the man jerked his head back in time. The blow missed his chin by the merest fraction of an inch. Still this escape was only momentary, for the very next second a fierce upper-cut—coming from a most unexpected angle—crashed on the man's chin, and, with a groan, he crumpled up on the floor and lay still.

"Bad luck! Bad luck!" shouted the man with the red face, as the man on the floor sat up slowly and gingerly rubbed his chin. "Never mind, sir, you put up a very good show, and I believe, with a bitta luck, you'd give the Kid all he wanted. Like to try again, sir?"

The man, shaking his head vigorously, made a hasty movement in the direction of his clothing, and, dressing quickly, was soon among his friends at the far end of the room.

"Now then! Now then! Who's going to have another go at the Kid before I close down for the evening? I'll only make it twenty to-morrow—so now's your chance! Walk up! Walk up! Walk up!"

Don rose to his feet, a look of determination in his clear blue eyes.

"I'll have a go at him!" he said, in a clear, penetrating voice.

"Come along then, sonny!" cried the red-faced man. "You look a likely lad!"

The man in the wide-brimmed hat rose to his feet, and leaned forward with outstretched hand, as if to prevent the boy taking up the challenge; but the next second, shaking his head, he sank back into his seat and watched the boy with eager eyes as he made his way towards the ring.

All eyes in the room were on the young lad as he mounted the few steps and commenced to strip.

A new interest came into the eyes of the Kansas Kid, as he looked at the muscles on Don's arms and chest. The smiled faded a little from the red-faced man's countenance.

The same man stepped forward to take the time as before, and Don stepped into the ring.

"Time!" called the man with the watch.

The Kid dropped into the same position he had assumed with the first man. Don had carefully noted the two positions for which the Kid worked—the one where he could bring in the right swing, and the other which was the preliminary to the terrific upper-cut—and he made up his mind not to give the man the opportunity of getting into either position.

For a few seconds the Kid circled round Don, watching for the slightest chance of an opening. None, however, was to be seen. Don's guard was perfect.

A loud cough came from the man with

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As the enraged man leapt in with both hands extended for Don's throat, the youngster brought up a smashing upper-cut, which caught him full under the point of the jaw, sending him backwards with a thud to the floor.

the red face. This seemed to be a signal of some sort, for a worried look came into the Kid's eyes, and he commenced to prance around Don. Then, like a flash, he rushed in, and before the youngster could guard himself, shot a smashing blow at his head. The blow, however, did no material harm, although it sent Don spinning to the ground.

He was on his feet again at once, but the next second was felled again from a hard, straight left between the eyes.

"One—two—three—four—five—"

Don sprang to his feet, and at the same time cleverly side-stepped, only just in time to avoid a crashing right swing. Following up his advantage, the Kid dashed again at Don, but the blow was parried.

"Time!" shouted the man with the watch.

"Well done, kiddie!" came a chorus of voices from the crowd of onlookers.

Don's head was ringing, and there was a trickle of blood coming from the corner of his mouth.

"That's half-way, anyhow!" he muttered to himself, as he sat panting in the corner.

A grim look came into his eyes as he watched the red-faced man giving the Kansas Kid some advice over by the platform.

"Time!"

The Kid was on Don like a whirlwind as soon as he left his corner, and blows rained down on the youngster's head and

shoulders. Most of them he avoided with his nimbleness of foot. Occasionally he got home a straight right or left to the Kid's face, but it seemed to have but little effect on the rugged features.

The Kid's eyes were gleaming. It was evident that he meant to put the boy out as soon as he possibly could. Time and time again he brought round his smashing right, and each time it was parried.

Still, the Kid's strength and experience were beginning to tell. Don was growing visibly weaker, but his spirit was dauntless. He fought like a tired tiger.

Suddenly the Kid shot in a terrific blow to the body, and Don, throwing up his hands, fell headlong to the floor.

"Good, boy!" said the red-faced man, looking proudly at the Kansas Kid.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—"

The voice of the timekeeper droned away. As eight left his lips, Don rolled over, opened his eyes, and staggered to his feet.

A look of surprise came into the red-faced man's face as the Kid leapt in to finish the fight, and, incidentally, save his employer twenty-five dollars.

Don met the rush with a straight left to the face, which steadied the Kid, and drew blood from the flattened nose.

The Kid's eyes flamed, and he came in again, hitting hard with right and left, and gradually working for the position that would enable him to administer the finishing blow. Suddenly he saw his chance. His arm went back like a flash, but he was too late.

"Time!" shouted the timekeeper.

Don had won the twenty-five dollars!

The place resounded with the shouting of the Americans down in the room; but it all sounded faint and far away to Don, who was sitting in a somewhat dazed condition in the corner of the ring.

"Say, but you're a plucked 'un!" It was the voice of the red-faced man.

"Here you are, sonny, an' I'm mighty pleased you've won it!"

Don thought the look on the man's face belied his words as he looked up. The man was holding out a little roll of five-dollar bills to him.

"Thank you!" said Don, clutching the notes with eager fingers.

"Now, 'ow would you like a job in this here booth? I'll see as you make a good thing out of it. All you want is a little practice. The Kansas Kid 'ere can put you through your paces, an' give you an idea of 'ow the business is worked." The red-faced man jugged his face forward as he spoke, and looked inquiringly at Don.

Slowly Don shook his head.

"Thank you very much for the offer, but I think there are bigger things for me to do in New York than to spend my life in a boxing-booth, thank you all the same."

The man shrugged his shoulders, and, going to the platform again, once more asked for a challenger to take on the Kansas Kid.

Dragging on his clothes, for he was

dead tired, Don stumbled out of the boxing-hall and into the street. Hungry and thirsty, he turned the corner and entered the shop where he had had his last meal.

As he stood at the counter, eating his meat pie and drinking his milk, one or two Americans entered. They were talking about the contest at the booth. One of them wore a wide-brimmed hat and was shabbily dressed.

"Say, you sure showed some grit, sonny!" exclaimed the latter in a low voice as he ordered a pie of some sort at the counter.

"Thank you!" said Don simply, and went on with his eating. A few minutes later the man left the shop.

Finishing up his milk, Don made his way back to his lodgings in a little happier frame of mind than he had left them that morning. He now had enough money to last him another three weeks, which would give him a chance of looking round for employment.

CHAPTER 3.

A Situation—Uncle!

THE following morning he was up with the first rays of the sun, and was again eagerly scanning the paper for some sign of a position that might suit him.

"It's no good wandering all over the place trying for jobs for which I am undoubtedly not suited. I'll just cut out those I think I do stand a chance of getting!" he thought to himself as he ran his eyes down the long columns.

All that day he again trudged the streets, calling at various offices advertised, but in vain.

It was when he was returning to the Bowery that he noticed a placard in an employment bureau:

"Steel hands wanted at Pittsburg."

He paused in front of the window.

"Not quite the sort of employment I should hanker for," he muttered to himself. "Although I expect there is as much chance of making good in that trade as any other. I'm off to Pittsburg, if it costs all I've got. I'm fed up with staggering round the outskirts of New York."

The next day he packed one of his bags and, leaving the other in charge of the fat landlady, whom, he had found out, was quite a good sort, made his way to the station.

The fare was ten dollars, which came as something of a shock to Don. But he was determined to get there, and he paid up, although with a grimace.

He looked out of the window when he had been travelling some four hours. Away ahead he could see the cloud of heavy smoke which indicated the huge American steel and coal centre. The skyline was broken by hundreds and hundreds of tall chimneys and the head-gear of collieries. Occasionally flashes from the numerous furnaces turned the lower side of the huge hanging cloud of smoke into a fiery blood red.

"There seems to be something doing there!" he exclaimed half aloud.

As he watched from the carriage door a head, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, was thrust out from a carriage a little farther down, and a pair of piercing eyes watched every passing emotion of the young Englishman as he looked forward with hopeful eyes at the evidences of industry ahead.

Twenty minutes later the train rolled into Pittsburg station, and Don, his head pushed forward, eagerly edged through the crowd into the busy street. There seemed to be hundreds of men coming off

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the train, most of them carrying bags and parcels of various sizes and shapes. Each face, like Don's, held an eager, anxious look.

"All after work?" thought Don as he trudged along through the crowded streets. "I'll have to be up and out on the job pretty early in the morning to stand a dog's chance, especially as I haven't got the slightest bit of experience."

The hum and roar of machines and furnaces filled the air. Now and then a shrill whistle blew, and a huge glow would fill the sky as the bell of a furnace dropped to allow the monster to be fed with coal, coke, and iron ore. Don gazed up with eyes of wonder as he went along. It was the first time he had ever seen a furnace that jutted eighty to ninety feet into the air. It was the first time, too, he had ever been in the busy heart of an iron and steel-making district, and he was filled with the wonder of the thing—filled with a desire to understand what it all meant.

It was with the greatest difficulty, lodgings being scarce, that he at last managed to secure a small room in the lower part of the city. It was clean, wholesome, and cheap.

The landlady informed him that the place had been besieged for the last few days by men from all over the country, and that it would be extremely unlikely that he would be able to get a job unless he was very skilled.

"But I'm not," said Don a little dejectedly. "Never seen a steel works in my life!"

"Waal, don't tell 'em that!" advised the woman.

All the landlady could say, however, had no effect on Don's spirits. He was determined to get a job of some sort, and he didn't much care what it was, so long as it held out prospects. Consequently he went to bed with a light heart and slept soundly, dreaming of furnaces that rose for miles into the air like giant candles, of blood-red skies, and cascades of molten metal.

In the morning he was up with the dawn, and, gulping down a scanty breakfast, made his way out into the streets, striding in the direction of the works. Already men were out and about, a fact which made Don hurry all the more.

At the first two places he was politely but firmly told that they were full up, but at the third he was shown into the office of the blast-furnace manager, a hard-faced, bullet-headed individual, who eyed Don narrowly as he entered.

"Waal?" asked the manager.

"I've come to ask you for a job. I've come over from England to make good," said Don bravely.

"Know anythin' about the steel business?"

"Not a single thing!"

"And you've got the cheek to stroll into these here works an' look around for a crib?"

"I have. I'm fairly strong, and I'm not afraid of work," answered Don, although his hopes of getting a position were fading.

"Waal, you sure gotta bit o' cheek!" said the manager.

"I'm sorry; but I want a job, and I don't believe in telling lies to get one," answered Don.

"An' I like you for it. You're on!" He pressed a button as he spoke. A man, evidently a clerk, entered. "Say"—he turned to the newcomer—"enter this feller on the pay roll. Pig-iron loader. Fifteen dollars a week. That'll do." He turned again to Don, who could hardly believe his ears. "What's yer name, sonny?"

"Donald Cliff, sir!"

"Right, Cliff; start in the mornin'. Six, sharp!" exclaimed the manager in a quick business-like tone. He held out his hand to the astonished boy. "You'll do waal, my boy; I can see it in yer face."

A few minutes later Don was in the street, his head buzzing with excitement. At last he was settled in a job; all that remained now was to make good. Trusting his hands deep in his trousers-pockets, he strode back to his lodgings, a happy smile on his handsome face.

A pair of piercing eyes, gazing out from under a wide-brimmed hat, watched him go.

The next morning he was at the works well before six and reported to one of the foremen. He was taken down to the pig-iron shed and shown the rows and rows of broken bars of iron lying in the sand surrounding the base of one of the large furnaces.

"Tapped an' broken yesterday," said the foreman. At the same time he pointed to a row of wagons that stood on a sunken railway line at the bottom of the iron beds. "Them's gotta be loaded." With that he walked away.

As soon as he had gone, Don stooped and laid hands on one of the bars of iron, weighing nearly a hundredweight, and strove to lift it. He found it a great strain, and the carrying of it to the wagon more so, but he managed it.

He was returning for another when another man entered the shed.

He was wearing a leather apron and carried a small pick in his hand.

Without even a glance in the direction of Don, he dug the pick under a bar of iron, and, with a quick jerk, brought it into an upright position. Then, tapping the sides to loosen the hard sand that adhered, he balanced the bar across his thighs on the leather apron and walked quite quickly towards the wagon and threw it on.

"That's the idea is it?" muttered Don to himself. "We'll have to see about this." He left the shed quickly and sought out the foreman, whom he asked for one of the small picks. The man smiled, and taking him along to the stores, handed him a new one.

"You're responsible for that now, sonny," he said in a kindly voice, "so don't go an' get it pinched."

This pick and a leather apron, which the foreman had also given Don, made things easy, and he found the balancing of the iron in the way the other man did it come quite natural. As soon as he got into the knack of it, he found that he could pick up and carry to the truck two bars to the other man's one.

"Say," remarked one of the foremen to another as he passed through the shed, "but that noo kid is sure knuckling down some!"

"Got Sam there licked for speed," said the other as they passed on.

Don had been working for nearly an hour, when the man called Sam threw his hand pick down with an air of disgust, and, spitting on his hands, came across to him, a menacing look in his eyes.

"Say, you," he remarked as he approached, "what's the big hurry—gotta catch a train?"

Don looked up with a surprised look at the stranger.

"I don't understand what you're talking about," he remarked gently and, stooping, prepared to pick up another piece of iron.

"Waal, I ain't agoin' to work my mits off to try an' keep pace w' you. You're snifin' more iron than I like—an' it's goin' to stop right now." He commenced to roll up his shirt-sleeves as he spoke.

"I came here to work, not to lounge!" remarked Don coolly, "and what I'm

going to get paid for I do!" There was a ring of determination in his voice.

The man lunged forward and grabbed Don roughly by the arm.

"I ain't in the habit o' arguin' about these sorta things—I acts!"

Before he could get another word out Don dropped the pick he had been holding in his right hand and, swinging round, brought his fist flash on the other man's nose. A second later the two were struggling on the ground. Several times the man tried to get a grip on Don's throat, but each time the boy managed to wriggle away. Suddenly Don sprang to his feet, closely followed by the other man, and a fierce fight ensued.

The man's methods were unorthodox, and Don had all the best of the fighting. The fellow was thoroughly enraged, and Don realised that there would be trouble for him if the man got his hands on him.

All of a sudden, just as Don's foot

caught on a piece of loose iron, the man leapt in with both hands extended for his throat. Just in time, however, Don saw the movement, and as the man came forward he brought up a smashing uppercut. The blow caught his adversary full on the point of the jaw, and sent him with a thud to the floor.

"I'll teach you to try and make me a slacker like yourself!" cried Don, as he stood over the dazed figure on the ground.

"Put it there, Don-ald; you're a good kid!"

At the mention of his name Don swung round, and found himself confronting a somewhat shabby individual who was wearing a wide-brimmed hat. The man was looking at Don with eyes full of kindness. His hand was outstretched.

"I—I—I don't quite understand!" stammered Don, looking a little confused.

"Waal, Donald, I've been watching you ever since you came off the Beren-

garia. I watched the dogged look on your face when you set out determined to get work of some sort. I watched you win that twenty-five dollars in the boxing-booth. I watched you here, and saw the way you meant to work, an' I watched the way you thrashed that dog on the ground who tried to stop you workin'. I've done all this with an end—to see if you had the grit and determination I mentioned to you in my letter!"

Don staggered back.

"You—you—you—" he began.

"I am Woodville P. Craig, millionaire, of Chicago, an' you're coming right slap bang into my office as my secretary!"

THE END.

(Look out for another splendid Tu Sin story next week, entitled: "A TRIAL RACE!" by Capt. Malcolm Arnold. You will enjoy reading this thrilling story of the Turf!)

WHAT COULD BE EASIER THAN THIS, BOYS!

READ THE HISTORY OF THE WEST HAM FOOTBALL CLUB AND WIN A BIG MONEY PRIZE!

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What You Have to Do!

Here is a splendid Footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find the history of West Ham Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "West Ham" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, APRIL 26th, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This Competition is run in conjunction with the "Magnet," "Popular," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "West Ham" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name

Address

G

THE "HUDDERSFIELD TOWN" FOOTBALL COMPETITION RESULT!

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution came nearest to correct, with one error:

THOMAS COMBE,
70, Hawthornvale,
Leith,

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following eight competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

Charles H. Morton, 7, Eyre Street, Pallion, Sunderland; Frances Morton, 7, Eyre Street, Pallion, Sunderland; Jane Hamilton, 20, Duke Street, Motherwell; Joan Frisken, 21, Church Street, Lochgelly; Mrs. Pattinson, 17, Clementina, Carlisle; Harold Lee, 23, Almscow Street, Bolton, Lancs; Miss V. Shaw, 61, Pontypridd Road, Porth, Glam; Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol.

Forty-eight competitors, with three errors each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be seen on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Huddersfield Town might be called the kiddies of the First Division. A few years ago they were in great financial difficulties, but they played such brilliant football that the gates increased amazingly. Huddersfield won the English Cup last year, and will fight hard to keep it.

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A THRILL IN EVERY LINE OF THIS POWERFUL SERIAL, BOYS!



The Wolves of St Beowulf's!

A Story of Thrills and
Breathless Situations
on Land and Sea.

BY

DUNCAN STORM.

Wobby & Co. are the pluckiest
and liveliest boys you ever
met, and their adventures are
amazing.

Introduction.

Jack Wabbgong, James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinese named Lung, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, together with Viscount Waffington, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in bringing about the capture of a gang of international burglars.

John Lincoln, one of the governors, takes an interest in the lads, and arranges to take them on a world tour.

The great day comes, and aboard the Pole Star the happy party set off on their great adventure.

After an exciting sea trip, the Pole Star drops anchor at San Carlo, where the boys make things so lively they have to dash back to the ship to avoid arrest. Immediately they get back they are told they are to rout out a number of pirates—a prospect they hail with joy. The journey is continued until the coast of Morocco is reached. Here the party land, and, armed to the teeth, they advance upon the stronghold of Suini Baba, the pirate chief.

They are captured, however, by a party of mounted Moors, and marched to the residence of El Took, the nigger governor of Suini Baba. Things would have gone badly for the boys, but for the sudden appearance of Nobby, whose strange antics help them in effecting their escape. They prepare a further attack, this time with the aid of some of Suini Baba's own riders, to whom the party had shown great hospitality. The rush meets with no resistance. Suini Baba, knowing his fate, leaps to his doom. The victorious party then explore the tower, unearthing the ill-gotten gains of the pirate chief. Then, dynamiting the dungeons and lighting the fuses, they make off with the plunder.

(Now read on.)

Homeward Bound!

SULIEMAN rode ahead of the party, keeping a sharp lookout through the gloom for any straggling follower of Suini Baba who might be disposed to take a pot-shot at them.

His rifle was held across his saddlebow as his keen eyes searched the rocks.

But not a living creature showed. Suini Baba's sentries were off, over the hills and far away. First the apparition of the ghost horsemen in the Valley of Stones, and then the explosion of dynamite, had set them clambering over the dark mountains like goats, with a tale that the Hundred Horsemen, accompanied by Ebbles himself, had descended THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 793.

upon the hill fortress and had snatched Suini Baba to his doom.

Presently they saw figures in the gloom ahead of them.

"Look out, boys!" said Wobby. "Here's people!"

But Sulisaman made a sign that they had caught up the tail-end of their own caravan, which was silently moving down the valley.

Presently there was a dull, thundering roar, which echoed through the mountains.

"That's the powder gone up!" said Mr. Hobbs, listening intently.

A second and a sharper thump seemed to vibrate through the rock beneath them, and a grumble like thunder ran through the dark crags above.

"That's the drawin'-room gone up on the dynamite," said Mr. Hobbs. "And I'm thinking that, when all the tugs of these parts go swarming up to ole Sweeny's place to see what they can pick up, they won't find much but the drains and the coal cellar left. There was enough stuff in that dungeon to blow up a town 'all."

Soon they were out of the Valley of Stones, and the column pressed on through the night.

Mr. Travers was frankly anxious.

"Let's be getting!" he said. "We've got half the pick of Bond Street on those four camels, and the sooner we see the sea the better I'll like it."

Then he turned to the boys.

"You'll be able to buy yourselves motor-cars, young gentlemen, if we get that bunch safely home."

"Why?" asked Jim Ready in astonishment.

"Why!" said Mr. Travers. "Your share of the rewards on them won't come out at much less than a thousand pounds apiece. Half the stuff is reward stuff, and there's a whole lot of Russian stuff there that will never be claimed. The Bolsheviks have wiped up the owners long ago."

"Does Hobbo stand in as well?" asked Stickjaw.

"Of course," said Mr. Hobbs, greatly elated. "What's the good of being in with the police if you don't stand in for your share of the boodle? I'm going to buy myself a little cottage, I am, somewhere down by the seaside," added Mr. Hobbs, "and I'm going to sit in my armchair and look at the sea. An' on winter nights when the sou'-westers are blowing, the slates are flying, and the sea is roaring on the marine parade, I'm going to turn over in bed at my usual time for going on watch, and I'm going to pull the bedclothes round my ears and say, 'Thank goodness, I've finished with the sea!'"

But the thought of this felicity made Mr. Hobbs exceedingly anxious.

He rode by the treasure camels as they stalked on under their heavy loads. He rode in advance of the column, looking out for any possible enemy, and he rode far in the rear of the column to pick up the first signs of any chase.

He was an anxious and a careworn man when at last they came to the coast in the dusk.

A flare was burnt, and Mr. Hobbs danced as it was answered from the sea, where the Kipper King was anxiously on the look-out for them.

Even then Mr. Hobbs was not happy. There was a nasty loup of sea running on that lonely beach, and not till they were all safe aboard with their treasures did he even care to light his pipe.

But he cheered up as the engines of the Kipper King started and she headed out to sea to meet her consort, the yacht.

"No more shore excursions for me for a long time," said Mr. Hobbs solemnly. "And now I begin to know why millionaires wear that worried look. And there's a light, Master Wobby—ship's light! It's the Pole Star looking for us. I'll be happier still when we've landed this stuff safe at Gibraltar. There's policemen at Gib, and where there's money you always want policemen."

And Mr. Hobbs was not really happy till that vast treasure had been safely landed at Gib, and the Pole Star, with her consort, were steaming through the Mediterranean, making for the Suez Canal.

ANSWERS
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Mr Hobbs Speaks Out!

IT was a very pleasant and uneventful voyage for the Pole Star and the attendant trawler, Kipper King, as they passed through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea.

These two ships moved mysteriously on the waters. They were never seen together. Yet they met on the deep sea in calm weather and exchanged crews, and the Kipper King borrowed provisions and coal.

At the Suez Canal the Kipper King changed her name. She passed through the Canal as the Golden Gain, trawler, bound from Hull to Fremantle, Australia.

She was seen again at Aden in the same guise. It was not till she had passed through the Straits of Babel Mandeb that she once more became the Kipper King, and closed with the yacht Pole Star to get the news and a supply of ice.

The boys passed through the Red Sea on the yacht, and very glad they were that they were not shut up in the red-hot little hulk of the Kipper King.

Dempsey, the bear, must have been very glad, too, that he was on the larger, cooler vessel, with her shady awnings and electric fans.

It was in the Red Sea, with a following wind the thermometer at 115 degrees, that Ingakook, the Eskimo, took the knock.

He pulled off his leather underclothing, and sighed and panted.

"Me too hot!" he sighed. "Me melt!"

Dempsey was in about the same condition. Though he was shaven close like a poodle-dog, the bear suffered tremendously from the heat. Curled up, he lay in the shade of the awning alongside the unhappy Ingakook, Ingakook's head resting on his stomach, till science came to their assistance.

"Those two will die if we don't do something!" said Wobby, regarding these two mascots. "And if we lose 'em we shall lose our luck! We will go and see Mr. Wiles about it."

Mr. Wiles soon got to work.

He ordered up two huge blocks of ice and two electric fans, which the electricians connected up. The fans were set running over the ice, and Ingakook woke up under their cool breeze.

"Dat mo' better!" he said, as his eyes opened, and his flat yellow face brightened.

"That makes you feel more at home, Cooky, don't it?" asked Wobby, who, with his hands in his pockets, looked on at the experiment with great interest. "Makes you feel more as if you were up in good old Baffin's Bay, with the breeze blowing straight up the Pole!"

Ingakook nodded, and smiled faintly. Dempsey curled himself up against the ice, buried his snout in his paws, gave a puff of a sigh of content, and had the first comfortable nap since they had passed over the place where Pharaoh was drowned.

"Miracle o' modern science, Waff, my boy!" said Wobby. "Icebergs in the Red Sea!"

It was a bit better when they had passed into the Indian Ocean, and steamed southwards for the Ivory River. Both the Eskimo and the bear began to get used to the heats.

Mr. Hobbs chained Dempsey up, and

gave him very little to eat. And he put Ingakook through a course of Swedish exercises.

"I've never taken the fat off an Eskimo afore," he said. "But it stands to reason that he don't want all that tallow on him till he goes back to the North Pole. Besides, we shall be wanting him before long."

"What for?" asked Waff.

Mr. Hobbs grinned as he lit his pipe.

"Why, Master Waff," he said, "don't you notice that the governor is busy in his cabin most of the time? And aren't you young gents getting worn down with exercises at the quick-fires?"

"Yes," replied Waff ruefully. "I don't see what it's all for. First you put us through exercises on the yacht. Then you ship us over to the Kipper King, and put us through exercises there. Soon we sha'n't be anything more than grease spots ourselves!"

"Of course you don't see what it's all for," said Mr. Hobbs. "But what d'ye think I'm giving you your gunnery course for? D'you think it's to knock over cokenuts at a Sunday-school treat?"

"Are we going to fight?" asked Waff eagerly.

"You'll get all the fighting you want before another ten days are out," said Mr. Hobbs. "Yes, you'll get a chance of calling yourselves the Wolves of St. Beowulf's! You'll 'ave something to bite, and something that will bite back, if I'm not mistaken!"

"Tell us about it, Hobbs!" pleaded Stickjaw.

"Well, it's like this," replied Mr. Hobbs. "The governor has got estates up the Ivory River—rubber, cocoa, ivory, and free niggers. And he's laid out as pretty a little scheme of a garden subbub, away from the noise and the hubbub, with the rhubub in the tub-bub, as you'd ever wish to see. Nice village, 'orspital, village 'all, cinema, baths, laundries—everything done up to the nines regard-

less of expense to make the niggers happy. And he left it all in charge of a fair-talking Portuguese called Juan Pereira. Have you got that part of the story, boys?"

"Yes!" said the boys eagerly.

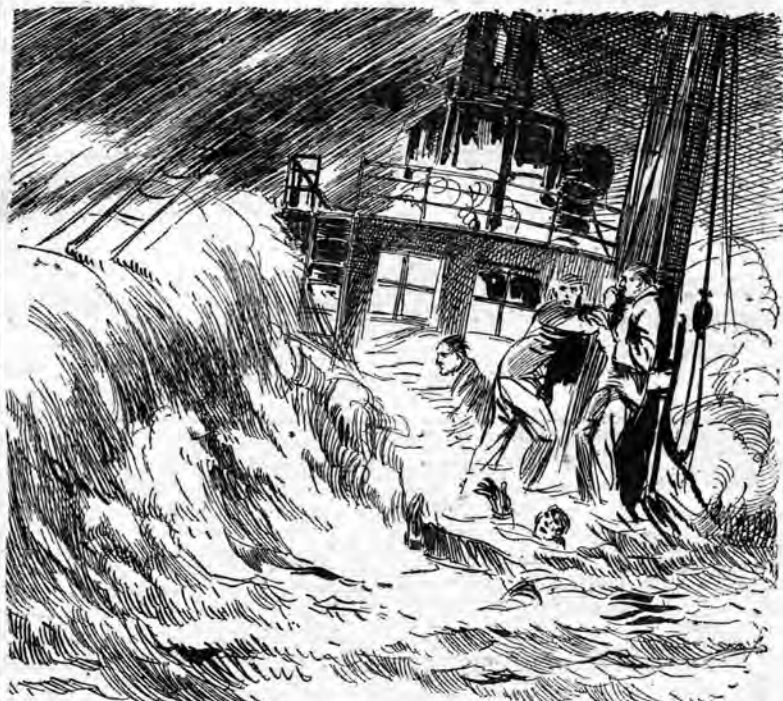
"Well," said Mr. Hobbs, puffing at his pipe, "this chap Pereira carried on all right for a bit. Then he began to get slack. And when the governor sent a young man to look after him, that young man died suddenly of fever. 'It was the sort of fever that you get from a dose of rat poison in your gruel!'"

"How did they know the chap was poisoned?" asked Wobby.

"Murder will out!" replied Mr. Hobbs. "The man died after feeding and drinking with Juan Pereira. His native boy came in the early morning, and he says, 'My boss is dead.' And Pereira, he says to the boy, 'That's a pity. He was a very nice young feller. We will wrap him in his blankets, and you can take him across the river in your canoe to the burial ground, and I will bring the burial party across to the cemetery after breakfast.'"

Mr. Hobbs took a puff at his pipe.

"I knew that young chap," he said. "He was one of the governor's secretaries—a St. Beowulf's boy, the same as you. His boy took the canoe, and Pereira's men put the body into it to be buried. They would not cross the river with it themselves, being superstitious of travelling with a dead white man. And the boy was nervous, the river was running strong, and, being only a nigger and no navigator, he ran the canoe into a tree snag that was swinging round on the current, and the canoe was upset and the body pitched into the river. The nigger was swimming and hollering for help, when there was a rush in the river, and a great old crocodile that used to watch that crossing took the body and went away with it to the hole under the bank where he lived. And Pereira, when he came to



"Hold tight!" roared Mr. Hobbs, spinning the steering gear in his hands. "Hold tight for your lives!" There was a crash and a roar, and the hull of the Kipper King disappeared beneath a boll of dirty foam.

fish out the boy, with his big canoe, only laughed. He said it would save the trouble of burying an officious Nosey Parker of an Englishman!"

"What a blackguard!" exclaimed Stickjaw.

"Blackguard is too soft a name for him, Master Stickjaw," said Mr. Hobbs. "But murder will out. That boy was fond of his English master, and he swore to himself that he would have that croc which had taken the body. He lay for the croc with his rifle, and he watched the bank at night till the beast came up."

"Did he shoot it?" asked Wobby.

"There was no need to shoot it," said Mr. Hobbs. "The brute was dead, poisoned by the body it had eaten—the body of a poisoned man. And when he found this out that nigger did not stop to say 'Ta-ta!' He knew that if Pereira suspected him he would die very quick. He lit out over the wild-beast tracks, and got away with the tale. But he had to travel a thousand miles round to dodge Pereira. And when he got away the Great War had broken out. Then Pereira got in with the Germans. He thought that England was going to lose, and that the governor would never come back to ask him for an account of his stewardship. He made slaves of the niggers, and let the town go to rack and ruin. He combed the country for niggers and for ivory, and set himself up as a little king; and the governor took no notice, because he was busy with other things. He's given Mr. Pereira all the rope that he wants to hang himself twice over, and now we are going in to see about it. King Pereira's got a fort. He has surrounded himself with a crush of all the rag-tag and bobtail of East Africa, and he has spies everywhere watching on the governor. That is why we are going to take in the Kipper King and drop on him when he least expects us. Now, young gents, I'll take you through the Q.F. exercises again. Then we will have a turn with the bayonet, just to put the right polish on you when the time comes to square the account with this monkey-face Portuguese!"

After this the boys needed no urging to the martial exercises through which Mr. Hobbs was putting them with merciless severity. They jumped to it.

And there came an afternoon when Mr. Hobbs nodded his approval as they knocked the flag out of the target buoy at two thousand yards!

"You'll do," he said with approval. "In a day or two we'll be having a game of roll, bowl, or pitch with this banana-faced dago, and, if you keep it up to that standard, you'll hit the cokernut every time!"

The Plan of Campaign.

IT was two days later when the Kipper King closed with the Pole Star at dusk, on a glass-smooth sea about a hundred miles from the coast of Africa.

Arms, ammunition, and stores were quickly transferred, and the boys lined up on deck with the raiding party, almost trembling lest they should be held back.

Wobby hid away Nobby the kangaroo in a quiet corner, hoping to smuggle him into the landing party.

Jim Ready unblushingly attached a chain to the bear, and Dempsey, rearing up, stood in line with the landing party, toeing the deck seam by which they dressed their rank, with the best of them.

John Lincoln nodded when he saw the boys. There was no chance of him keeping them aboard the Pole Star. This was the education for which he had brought them from school, a lesson in the quick handling of events which turns boys swiftly into men.

"What about that bear?" demanded Mr. Hobbs, who was following the inspecting officers.

"Shut up, Hobbo!" said Wobby in a whisper. "They haven't said anything. What do you want to make a song about him for?"

Mr. Hobbs held his peace after that, only grumbling that they'd have to look after their own menagerie.

Then the party was swiftly transferred to the Kipper King, and the two ships parted, the Kipper King to enter the Ivory River, to smoke out Pereira from his stronghold, whilst the Pole Star would enter the main channel in support.

The Kipper King seemed in no hurry to make her landfall. When the two ships parted she waddled along through

the calm, sticky sea at half-speed, heading south.

The boys got their suppers on deck, for the heat and the cockroaches below were almost unsupportable.

"I don't mind half a dozen cockroaches in my soup," said Wobby, "but I draw the line when they crowd it like a kid's swimming-bath. Ease up, Hobbo, and tell us where we are going to."

Mr. Hobbs made room for him as they squatted on deck, making their supper-table on the planks round a hurricane lamp.

"Why, young gents," he said, "the Ivory River's got more than one mouth. And you bet our friend Pereira's got his watch on the mouth of the main channel of the river. He's a reg'lar little king now, and he's got his navy. He'll have an oil launch cruising off the Ivory Channel, and when they sight the Pole Star, they won't take long in letting him know that the governor's about. That means he'll be watching the main channel of the river."

"But he won't be watching for us if we slip into one of the other mouths," said Waff.

"Got it in a nutshell, Master Waff," said Mr. Hobbs. "We work like a ferret put into a rabbit hole. We go in at the Sloogee channel, fifty miles north of the main channel. That runs a hundred miles inland before it joins the main river, and King Pereira's town is below the junction. He'll be looking down river for us, thinking that the Pole Star will be the ship that's after him. She's too deep to use any other channel. He won't be looking for the Kipper King coming down river on him, and that's where he's going to get caught in the machinery."

"But won't he be watching the Sloogee Channel?" asked Wobby.

Mr. Hobbs shook his head.

"There's forty miles of mud and mangroves all round the entrance to it, and the worst sand-bar on the East Coast," he said. "In fact, there's only one man alive who could take a ship of this size in at the Sloogee back door without spilling her."

"Who's that?" asked Stickjaw.

"Me!" said Mr. Hobbs briefly.

(Next Wednesday's instalment of this wonderful story is a particularly thrilling one. Don't miss it!)

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"The Mysterious 'X'!"

(Continued from page 15.)

"What are you saying, boy? What can you possibly know of this?"

"I know all about it, sir," said O'Carroll. "Sure, I didn't like to let you out o' me sight, so I followed, an'— Well, when you went in by the little window, I kept on until I spotted a chink o' light through a shutter. I saw they had you roped up, good an' fine, an' heard what that blackguard said, 'cause there was a smashed pane just under me nose; so I hurried back to Mister Winton, an' we came in by another door at the rear—"

"Good heavens!" Sharpe suddenly interrupted. "Then I can thank you for my life, lad! Only for your forethought—"

"Sure, you can't do without me, sir!" Tim chuckled. "You ought to know that by now."

"But what about that gang, Winton?" Sharpe said, turning quickly. "Have you searched the place? They can't have got very far!"

"They're not here, anyway!" grunted the C.I.D. man disgustedly. "We've scoured the house all over, but there's not a mouse in it— Well, what's the matter now?"

For Sharpe, swiftly recollecting the slight grating sound he had heard just after the light had been turned out, had started from his chair, and was shining his electric torch all over the floor at one side of the room. Presently he pointed to a large trapdoor in the corner.

"Here's their exit," he said, stooping and tugging at the wooden square, which swung up without much trouble, and revealed a ladder leading into the darkness below. "Now, you fellows, follow me—though I fear they've got too long a start."

They climbed through the trap, arriving in a small cellar, and here they saw that a breach had been pierced in one wall, through which they passed in single file, finding themselves in a narrow tunnel cut below the ground level.

They followed this for a short distance, finally arriving at another ladder, leading upwards into a large outbuilding well removed from the house. The door stood open, and a distinct smell of petrol filled the place.

"Well, that's apparently the finish of to-night's work," Sharpe murmured, shrugging his shoulders resignedly. "One must always be prepared for failure in our profession, friend Winton."

"Failure!" snapped the man from Scotland Yard. "I'm not giving up as easily as all that! We can make inquiries—"

"About a car, or perhaps two cars, whose numbers, even were they by chance noticed, are surely faked!" Sharpe interposed. "No, old man! We must wait and see. I fancy, somehow, that we haven't heard the last of this mysterious 'X'."

"Is this another of your premonitions?" asked Winton sarcastically.

Anthony Sharpe nodded, still smiling.

"It is. I am more or less a believer in premonitions, and I trust this one will prove well founded, for I want 'X' badly," he replied.

And the famous investigator was destined to have his hope realised—sooner, perhaps, than he had anticipated!

THE END.

(Look out for the next splendid Anthony Sharpe detective story, entitled: "THE HAUNTED MINE!" A real thriller this is, boys.)



My Readers' Own Corner

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All Attempts in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper! Innocence Established!

A negro woman was on trial in a police-court, charged with assaulting another negress. The victim did not appear, being in the city hospital. "Luella Washington," said the police judge, "what have you to say for yourself?" "Judge," Luella replied, "Ah never struck that woman, Ah never touched her. Ah had reprimanded her for throwin' garbage out back, and she kept right on doin' it, an' this mornin' Ah reprimanded her again, judge. Ah come down from mah flat up above, an' was holdin' up mah right hand jes' like the Statue of Liberty, jes' like Ah'm holdin' up my right hand now, reprimanding that woman, an' as Ah come close to her, that woman jes' jumped head first ovah the railings. Ah neva! touched her." "What did you have in that hand you were holding up like the Statue of Liberty?" the judge asked. "A hatchet, judge!" came the quiet reply.—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to: E. J. Barnes, 5, Grange Street South, Grangetown, Sunderland.

A CRUEL FATE!

Two old Highlanders came to Edinburgh for the first time. Passing along a street they saw painted on a small board, "John James, Engraver. Ground Flat." "Oh, John," cried the old woman, "what a terrible death!" "Ah," replied her staid husband, "I'll bet ma life it's been one o' thae confounded steam-rollers!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Walter Wood, The Lodge, Benwell Old House, West Old Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A QUESTION OF QUALITY!

"Three hundred pounds for a dog!" exclaimed Mr. Binks, as he looked up from his newspaper. "Do you believe anyone ever paid such a price, Mary?" "I am sure I don't know, Jim," his wife said. "Does it say that so much was paid?" "Yes, there's an article on valuable dogs, and it mentions of one being sold for three hundred pounds. I don't believe it." "It may be true, Jim," she said quietly. "Some of these well-bred animals bring fancy prices, and there's no particular reason why the paper should tell an untruth about it." "I know that, Mary; but just think of it. Just try to grasp the magnitude of that sum in your weak, feminine mind. You don't seem to realise it. Three hundred pounds for a dog. Why, hang it, Mary, that's more than I'm worth!" "I know it, Jim," said the wife, "but some are worth more than others!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. G. Hopkins, 3, Alma Road, Cardiff.

HE KNEW TO HIS SORROW!

When Tommy came home from school he was almost in tears. "What's the matter?" asked his father. "Teacher caned me because I was the only boy in the class who could answer his question," said the boy. "I'll see him about that!" fumed the father. "What colossal cheek. What was the question?" "He asked who put the glue in his inkwell!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Herbert Cocking, 19, Jack Street, Ardwick, Manchester.

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