

"THE SCHOOLBOY SPORTSMEN!"

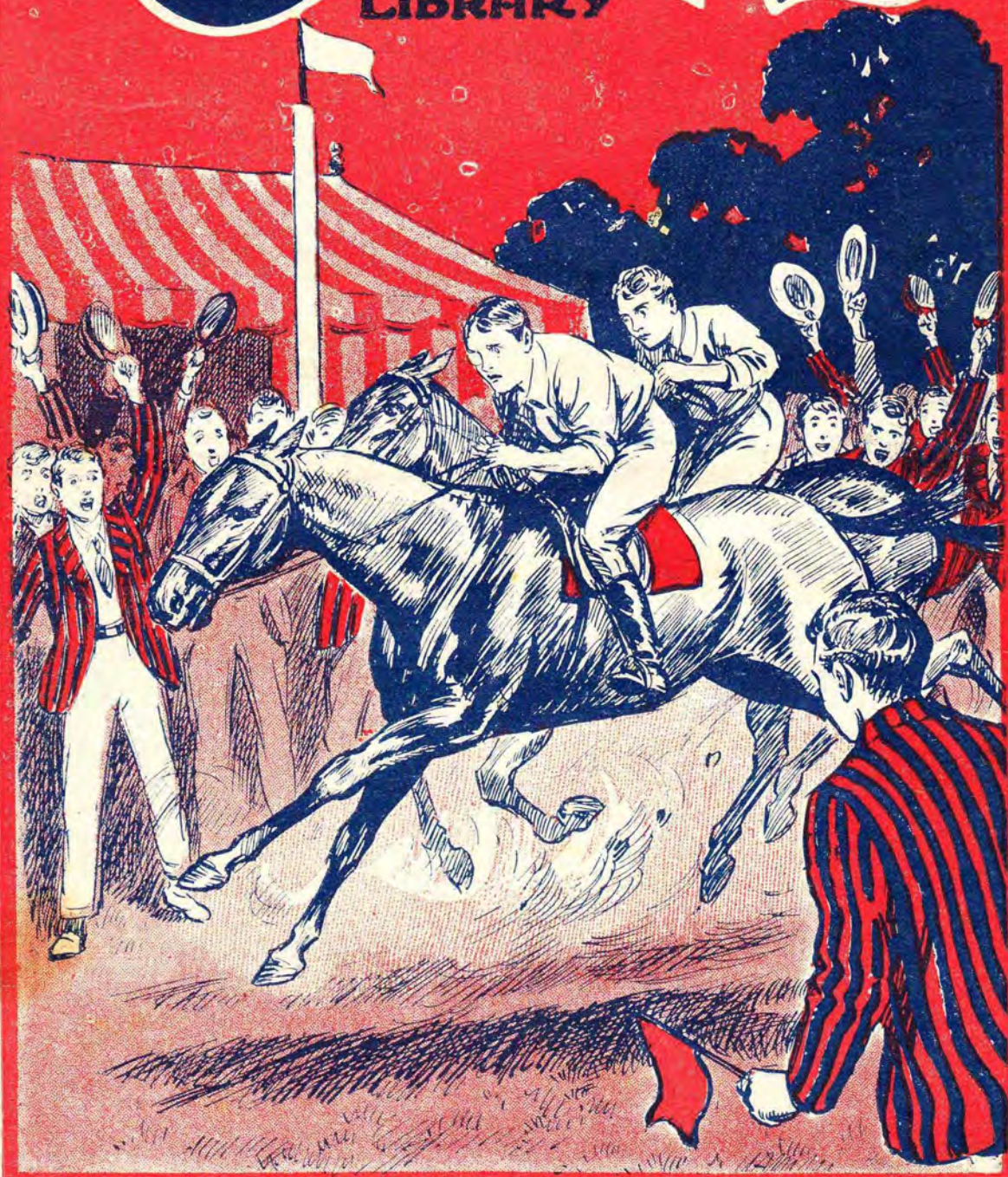
A Special Extra-long Story
of Tom Merry & Co. and
the Australians at St. Jim's.

No. 984. Vol. XXX.—August 7th, 1926.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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GUSSY WINS! Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pulls off the great race for St. Jim's by a short head! (See the extra-long school story inside.)

OUT FOR BLOOD! In a series of great contests Tom Merry & Co. keep their end up against the Aussies and the Greyfriars fellows alike. There are no flies on the heroes of St. Jim's!



THE SCHOOLBOY SPORTSMEN!

A Magnificent New Extra-Long Complete School Story of the World-Famous Chums of St. Jim's.

By
Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1. Stale!

"**H**OW'S that?"

"Out!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the glass of fashion and mould of form at St. Jim's, bent an astonished glance on the spread-eagled stumps that had formed his wicket, and repeated himself, somewhat after the manner of a parrot.

"Bai Jove! Weally—feahfully sowwy, an' all that, Kangawoo, old man!"

"Don't mench!" murmured Kangaroo, from the other end of the pitch. "We were just getting along nicely, too. Just like you to go and muck it up, Gussy. Still, it's the fortune of war, I suppose!"

"It are—it is!" grinned Gordon Gay, from the slip. "Going, Gussy—or are you going to sorrow over that wicket all day?"

There was a chuckle from the fieldsmen, and Wootton minor replaced the stumps for the next batsman.

"Weally, Gordon Gay!" said Arthur Augustus, a flush suffusing his aristocratic features. "That was really a most remarkable fluke, you know! Howevah, of course, I am goin'!"

And, still shaking his head as if in grave doubt whether he had really been bowled at all, the swell of St. Jim's walked gracefully back to the pavilion. He received a mixed reception as he mounted the steps. Tom Merry slapped his shoulder and grinned.

"Well played, Gussy!" he said cheerily. "You made twenty!"

"Hear, hear! And might have made forty if he hadn't tried that swanky late cut of his!" grunted Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Easy all, Gussy!" grinned Monty Lowther, laying a soothing hand on him. "Gently does it, as the beetle said to the man with the hob-nailed boot! We all know you didn't get out on purpose, you ass—so—oh, my hat!"

"There goes Levison!" said Blake miserably.

True enough, Levison had just driven a ball from Jack Wootton straight back into the bowler's hands, and was now wending his way back with a "duck" to his credit.

"My giddy aunt!" groaned Tom Merry. "We shall capture a record licking at this rate! I never saw such a stale lot of dodderers—we can't get going at all!"

Certainly, the St. Jim's team appeared in considerable

danger of losing their fixture with Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School, for which a whole holiday had been granted in honour of the gallant victory over the touring team of Australian boy cricketers, who were now staying at St. Jim's. The match was being played at Rylcombe, and the visitors had come early and succeeded in getting the Grammarians out for 160—an excellent score. The St. Jim's first innings had yielded 70, chiefly owing to a determined stand between Talbot and Kangaroo, and now, having suffered the ignominy of following on, they had lost seven wickets for the unimposing total of 65. With an innings defeat staring them in the face, the batsmen were scraping desperately in the hope that some miracle would occur to give them a sporting chance. Gussy and Kangaroo had enjoyed a productive partnership, but Noble could not find another batsman to stay with him, and the end loomed imminent.

Kerr came in, and gave Kangaroo a chance. The score leaped to seventy, and then eighty. But the Scottish junior was out to a fine catch by Gordon Gay, and Fatty Wynn, last man in, went to the wicket.

St. Jim needed ten to make Gordon Gay & Co. bat again, and Fatty grimly determined that it would not be his fault if the ten were not scored. He blocked each delivery with great care, and then Noble had the bowling again. He drove the ball into the long field, and the batsmen ran twice. A "four," followed by another, brought the scores level, and Tom Merry & Co. raised a cheer. Then, as if to mark the limit of the powers of the St. Jim's batsmen, Noble mis-timed the next ball badly and had the mortification of seeing it safely held by Frank Monk.

"And you fellows really beat the Australians!" grinned Gordon Gay, as he led his men off the field. "However did you manage it, Merry?"

The St. Jim's skipper grinned ruefully, and shook his head in a bewildered manner.

"Goodness knows what's come over us to-day!" he answered. "We seem to have gone utterly stale—that's the only possible explanation. And now you want—"

"One run to win!" grinned Gay. "Though you may be able to bowl the whole team out for nothing, of course!"

Tom Merry grinned faintly, and tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn. The New House junior went on to bowl without very much hope of taking all ten wickets for nothing, but he intended to capture one if he could manage it.

Gordon Gay took the first over, with Frank Monk at the other end, and though they hit the first few balls, they made no attempt to run. Fatty Wynn grinned to himself,

and changed his tactics. His next ball took the Grammarian leader completely unawares and there was a crash. Gordon Gay's wicket was a heap of debris.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gay, and hastened back to the pavilion with a rather heightened colour.

Jack Wootton followed, but could make nothing of Talbot at the other end, and was astounded to have his middle stump knocked flying by Fatty Wynn's very first delivery. Wootton left, looking even more self-conscious than Gay had done. Carboy came in and met Fatty's ball. He took it on the edge of his bat, whence it shot like a flash into the wicket—and there was a roar of cheering from the St. Jim's team and their supporters, while Fatty Wynn beamed happily.

"Three for nothing!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "By Jove—we'll lick 'em yet!"

"I'm afraid that's rather out of the question," said Tom Merry, looking quite cheerful after that startling bowling performance. "Still, that takes some of the sting out of it. Look—Monk's got the run!"

Frank Monk had driven the ball away, and amid ironical cheering, the batsmen secured the run needed to win the game.

"Now if Fatty Wynn had bowled like that all through the game!" grinned Gordon Gay, as the cricketers streamed off the field.

"I only wish he had!" responded Tom Merry. "But it wasn't Fatty's fault we lost. With anything like decent batting we'd have pulled through as usual!"

"Shows what Grammar School bowling can do!" said Gay seriously. "You must admit we deserved to win that time, Merry. What do you think, Richardson?"

The Australians had a match with Abbotsford that day, but tiny Tim Richardson had been kept out of the team owing to a slightly sprained finger, and had come over to Rylcombe with one or two of the tourists' reserves. The game at Abbotsford was not deemed worthy of much interest—being merely another walk-over on the Australians' already lengthy list.

Richardson grinned at Gay's question. "I hardly like to pass opinion!" he remarked with a chuckle. "St. Jim's certainly left it a bit late to put on a spurt. Hard luck, Merry—and well played, Gay!"

"You fellows coming over to our Rodeo?" asked Monty Lowther. "I expect Tommy's told you about it—quite a big stunt—Lord Eastwood is arranging the prizes and everything!"

"Oh, yes! You mentioned it before the match, Merry!" exclaimed Gay. "There are to be races for 'blood' horses, cart horses, and donkeys, aren't there? And Gussy told us he's having his favourite mount, 'Silverpoint,' too!"

"That's it!" said Tom Merry, nodding. The Australians can all ride—and Richardson here, and Hill and Steele can manage a bucking broncho if they want to—they used to live on a ranch, they tell me!"

"Come off!" grinned "Tim" Richardson. "We're not exactly Tom Mixes, but we can handle a gee, I'll admit!"

"We'll come over like a shot—if you fellows don't mind us bagging all the prizes!" said Gordon Gay, and there was a chuckle from the Grammarians.

"You're jolly welcome—though we've got an eye on the prizes ourselves!" said Tom Merry. "We're having Farmer Sturt's field over beyond the playing-fields—it's big enough to mark out a decent circular course—and it looks like being an exciting stunt!"

"We'll come, then," said Gordon Gay at once. "I can ride a bit—and I can hire a gee-gee from somewhere. What about the cart horses, though—are you asking the Wayland Corporation to loan you a few?"

"It'll be on Saturday afternoon, so we're hoping to borrow a few—and Farmer Sturt's lending some as well!" said Tom Merry. "Then as to donkeys—you'll have to get them from wherever you can. Anyway, I'll let you have a full programme to-morrow, Gay!"

"You will? Good!" said the Grammarian. "You fellows haven't time for a snack in the study before you go, I suppose?"

"Sorry, old man," said Tom Merry. "We've got to get in by calling-over—we shall have to scorch, as it is. Lucky we've got our bikes. So long, you chaps!"

"Au revoir, Merry!"

"See you again, Richardson!"

And with a whirl of wheels the St. Jim's team and the Australian reserves streamed off along the lane towards home, eagerly discussing the arrangements for the coming Rodeo. It had been Lord Eastwood's idea, and had been

taken up with approval by the Head, who agreed that his boys should be able to ride and take an interest in horses—not the kind of interest taken by Rucke & Co., but a healthy and active one.

There were to be all kinds of races, including a "straight" race for "blood" horses, in which the field was not likely to be large, though the entrants were keen enough. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had entered on his horse, Silverpoint, and Gordon Gay had promised to ride, Charlie Hill, Tim Richardson, and Dicky Steele had each arranged to hire a mount from the Wayland stables, or ride one of the half-dozen which Lord Eastwood was sending down for the benefit of those who had no mount. Tom Merry had decided to compete, and Kit Wildrake, of the Fourth, was keen to head the field. These were likely to make an exciting race of it, though it was probable that there would be more entrants before the day.

The race for cart-horses—with carts—had originated from Gussy's mighty brain, and promised to be an event productive of a great deal of fun, and already a crowd of entries had been received for this race. Fellows who could not ride, or who did not feel inclined to risk sitting in a saddle, were all the more keen to shine in this case and drive one of the huge dust-carts belonging to the Wayland Corporation, round Farmer Sturt's meadow after the manner of the Roman chariots of old. Having no whips, the juniors would have to rely on their vocal chords to urge their giant steeds to the tape. So many entries had been received that the Head had decided to draw the names by lot, and allow as many chariots as could be secured.

The mere mention of the donkey races had been sufficient to send a crowd of fellows combing the countryside in the hope of discovering a donkey in some field or other, and hiring it, however high a figure was demanded. Farmer Sturt had agreed to lend five of these patient animals, and several farmers in the district had been petitioned with success, so that the field in this event was likely to be a big one.

The juniors were riding hard now along the leafy lane, for there was only a few minutes before locking-up—and Taggles could be relied upon, whatever his shortcomings, not to be late in performing that duty. He had even been known to perform it a minute or two before the scheduled hour, so the cricketers were taking no risks, and going all out to reach the school in time.

They whizzed towards the cross-roads with bells pealing, and then suddenly Tom Merry, in the lead, jammed on his brakes. Richardson, Manners, and Lowther, riding at his side, did the same, for a sound had met their ears which filled them with alarm. Most of the juniors in the rear perceived that the leaders had stopped, and followed suit, but the last two or three crashed into the main body with a shout, and went down in a heap in the roadway.

"What the thump—"

"What are we stopping for?"

"Get on in front, there!"

"Yaroor! Yah! Keep your rotten bike off my napper, you idiot!"

Crash, crash!

But another sound rose above the crash of falling bikes.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

The juniors in the van stared expectantly as a clatter of hoofs burst upon them, and a huge cart-horse, its mane flying in the wind, and its hoofs beating a thunderous tattoo on the road, dashed out of the side turning and crossed their path.

But it was not the horse, startling as it was to behold a cart-horse in such a headlong gallop, that riveted their attention. It was the figure of a St. Jim's junior, clinging tightly to the horse's mane, that caused them to emit a simultaneous gasp.

"Grundy!" ejaculated Tom Merry, finding his voice suddenly. "He's got hold of a mount from somewhere! Come on, you chaps—to the rescue! The idiot will kill himself—and the horse, too, if he's left alone!"

Setting the example, Tom Merry swung his leg over the saddle and pedalled hard in the wake of Grundy and his charger, who were churning up clouds of dust behind them.

"Put it on!" panted the Shell captain, and Richardson and his chums obeyed.

The bikes fairly flew over the ground, and they began to gain on the horse. They flashed on, past green hedge and under shady tree, and still Grundy thundered on with his fiery steed—which showed no signs of slowing down. The



rest of the cyclists were close behind the leaders now, and it was well for them that there was no other traffic in the lane. Tom Merry gave a grunt as horse and rider vanished round a bend, and he increased his speed.

Like a flash the four leaders whizzed round the corner, eager to behold their quarry, and then jammed on their brakes frantically and leaped off their bikes.

Grundy had halted his steed—or the steed had halted of its own free will, which was the more likely contingency—by a clear pool at the side of the lane. The horse, standing across the roadway, was drinking contentedly, while Grundy, perspiring and breathless, but red with triumph, sat its back as proudly as any knight of old.

"Look out—he's stopped!"

"Get off, Grundy, you ass—quick, before it starts again!"

"My dear chap," began Grundy patronisingly.

There was a sudden whir, and a shout from Monty Lowther.

"Look out, you fellows—danger ahead!"

The rest of the pursuers swept round the corner in a bunch, and then, perceiving Grundy and his mount blocking the way, jammed on their brakes desperately. Those in the rear, being unable to stop, crashed helplessly into those in front, and the whole cavalcade went over in a yelling, struggling heap, in which arms and legs and bicycles were inextricably mingled.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "I hope nobody's hurt!"

There was a chorus of grunts and groans as the cyclists struggled to their feet one by one, and they glared at Grundy.

"Anybody hurt—seriously, I mean?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

"Yow! I've got a purple eye where that idiot Gussy shoved his boot!" growled Blake ferociously, dabbing with his handkerchief at an injured optic.

"And I've scraped very nearly all the skin off my shin!" granted Herries vengefully. "If I find out who ran into me—"

"Peace, my infants!" said Monty Lowther soothingly. "If you're all there, why worry about a few scratches? I've stood worse than that, and never breathed a word—yaroop!"

Lowther's remarks terminated suddenly as Blake reached out and gave him a gentle tap on the nose, just sufficient to bowl him over in the dust.

"Try that, then, you grinning idiot!" said Blake grimly. "And see how you like it! If you'd had a kick in the eye—"

"You—you—howling blatherskite!" hooted Monty Lowther, scrambling to his feet. "I'll—I'll—lenime get at him, Tom Merry!"

"Shut up, Monty!" said Tom, grinning in spite of himself. "Blake's feeling a bit short-tempered—and no wonder. It's this fatheaded ass that's the cause of all the trouble!"

He glanced grimly at Grundy, still seated in lofty disdain on his charger, which had not moved or even stopped drinking at the crash of the falling cycles.

"Grundy, you footling fathead!" roared Kangaroo. "Where on earth did you get that gee-gee from? And what do you mean by letting it run away with you? You—"

"My dear chap," said Grundy, with a kind smile, "I'm just training for the Rodeo. I couldn't get a real horse till the day of the race, but I tipped a farm-hand near Wayland to lend me this one for an hour. It's a jolly good horse, too, I can tell you!"

"Bump the idiot!" said Blake. "Let's take it out of the blithering fathead! If it hadn't been for him—"

"Scrag him!" said Lowther vengefully, and there was a rush for Grundy and his horse.

George Alfred gave a gasp of alarm, but he need not have worried. His charger, apparently having drunk his fill, swung round silently, and before the juniors could grasp Grundy's legs, the horse was galloping away down the lane, with Grundy hanging to its mane for dear life, leaving the cricketers standing.

Tom Merry stared dazedly after the cart horse till it disappeared in a cloud of dust in the distance.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he ejaculated at last. "I knew Grundy was several sorts of an ass—but this fairly takes the biscuit!"

"Ow!" grunted Blake dismally. "I can feel my eye swelling already. All through Gussy—and that ass Grundy! Wait till I get hold of him!"

"Let's hope he gets home safely!" said Tom Merry, with a grin. "He's likely to do himself some damage if he falls off! Anyway, we can't worry about the ass—he must look after himself! And we shall have to travel like the wind to get in in time for calling over! Put in on, you chaps!"

The cricketers knew that it would be useless to explain

to Taggles that they had had a smash-up, and they set out again for St. Jim's at their best speed. They arrived, fortunately, just as Taggles came walking down to the gates, swinging his keys, and crowded in with half a minute to spare—much to the old porter's secret annoyance, as they guessed.

But the gates would be locked when Grundy turned up, for he was still roaming the lanes and by-roads on his gallant charger—unless his horsemanship had failed him, and he had fallen off. In that event, he was wending his way wearily homeward on foot—which, the juniors reflected with satisfaction, was more than likely!

CHAPTER 2.

A Cure for the Blues!

"HALLO! Here they come!"

"Good old Tom Merry!"

"How many did you win by, you fellows?"

"Don't they look a cheerful lot?" grinned

Racke.

"Shut up, you cad!" grunted Kerruish, producing comb and paper. "Now then, you chaps—let 'em have it!"

And at a sign from the Manx junior, the crowd in the School House doorway commenced to sing or play—with possibly more energy than harmony—"See the Conquering Heroes Come."

That cheery greeting ought to have had a heartening effect on the St. Jim's cricketers, but it didn't. They blushed to a rich shade as they ascended the steps. Tom Merry held up his hand, and the songsters ceased their efforts suddenly.

"Take it quietly, you chaps!" said Tom. "We've done nothing to make a fuss about!"

"Told you so!" chortled Racke.

Kerruish gave the cad of the Shell a shove, and he rolled down the steps with a series of bumps and yells. But the faces of the juniors who had gathered to welcome home the team had fallen. It was evident to the most optimistic that all had not gone as it should have done at Rylcombe:

"Well, what happened?" asked Gore bluntly. "Let's hear the worst—licked by an innings?"

"No, you rotter!" growled Blake. "That's just the kind of thing you would think—though it's no use concealing the fact that we didn't win!"

"That's pretty obvious!" grinned Cardew. "You fellows haven't quite that victorious glint in your eyes. Spill the news, somebody!"

"Licked by seven wickets!" answered Tom Merry manfully. "It couldn't be helped—we had an off day. Let us pass—we're about fed up, I can tell you!"

"Hard luck, old man!"

"Yah! What price ducks eggs?" squeaked Trimble.

The cricketers glared, and shoved their way none too gently through the crowd of juniors. There were sundry gasps and exclamations as a cricket-bat clumped in a fellow's ribs, or a cricket-bag bumped into a waistcoat. But the majority felt sympathetic, for it was rare indeed that Tom Merry & Co. came home with such a tale of woe to tell.

Clive walked up to the dorm with Tom Merry and Lowther, and extracted information from them as they changed.

"Hard cheese, Merry!" he remarked. "What went wrong—the batting?"

"You've hit it!" said Tom Merry grimly. "We all batted like a set of bunny rabbits—and if Fatty Wynn hadn't done the hat trick in the second innings before they scored a run, we should have been beaten by an innings. We were all stale—that's about all there was to it."

"How did the Australians get on at Abbotsford?" interrupted Monty Lowther suddenly. The team had been so absorbed in its own troubles that nobody had thought to inquire.

"Won by six wickets," responded Clive, smiling. "Hill telephoned to Railton immediately after the match. They're not back yet, of course. You fellows are still the only team that's beaten them!"

"Lucky for us we didn't play 'em to-day," grinned Tom Merry. "I never saw such a rotten show—I don't believe I could have hit a four to save my life! You chaps ready to brave the storm of public opinion?"

Lowther and Manners nodded, and the Terrible Three left the dormitory, Sidney Clive still conversing with the rest of the team.

"The 'Aussies' won again!" mused Lowther. "Looks to me as if there's going to be a crowd at Greyfriars on Wednesday when Hill and his merry men meet Wharton & Co. What kind of chance do you think the Friars have got, Tommy?"

"A jolly good one!" said Tom Merry frankly. "We've



The St. Jim's cyclists stared aghast as a huge cart-horse, its mane flying in the wind, and its hoofs beating a thunderous tattoo on the road, dashed out of the side turning and crossed their path. It was not the horse that riveted their attention. It was the figure of a St. Jim's junior clinging tightly to the horse's mane. "Grundy!" ejaculated Tom Merry, finding his voice suddenly. (See Chapter 1.)

never licked them without a terrific struggle—and occasionally—

"Very occasionally," agreed Lowther, grinning.

"They've licked us!" finished Tom Merry.

"It's about evens, I think!" remarked Manners calmly—Manners being secretary of the junior cricket club. "We rarely win on their ground, and, of course, when they come here—"

"Hill's team will have to go all out!" said Tom Merry, throwing open the door of Study No. 10. "Though on their best form it will take something to stop them!"

"And then we've got to play Greyfriars for the Maxwell Cup and Shield," said Manners. "What if we're in the form we were to-day?"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" ejaculated Lowther. "I'd forgotten that. If we don't improve a bit by then—"

"The Friars will have a walk over!" said Manners.

"We've got to lick the fellows into shape or bust in the attempt!" said Tom Merry, stretching comfortably in the depths of the armchair. "Though at the moment, I can't think of anything."

"We want rejuvenating—some of that monkey gland business!" said Lowther. "But the question before the meeting is—how?"

"How?" echoed Manners.

"Practice—" began Tom Merry thoughtfully.

"It looks to me as if we've had enough practice," put in Manners. "The team has slaved at the nets morning, noon, and night during the last week or two, Tom. I think that's the cause—the whole team has gone stale!"

"That's about the size of it!" agreed Lowther. "But if we chuck practice, we sha'n't stand an earthly—we've only got a week and half before the match—and it would never do to let Gussy's pater present the Cup and Shield to Wharton and his pals—on our own ground, too!"

"That's not to be thought of!" said Tom Merry decidedly.

"I think the best plan would be to call a meeting of the committee and ask for suggestions—Come in!"

A knock had interrupted the Shell captain's remarks, and the door opened at his invitation to admit Bernard Glyn, the mechanical genius of the Shell.

Glyn gave the occupants of the study a quizzical glance.

"You fellows busy?" he asked.

"Not at all," said Tom Merry politely. "Take a pew, old man. Perhaps you've got a suggestion to make—we were discussing the whys and wherefores of the junior cricket team having gone stale—our noble and illustrious selves included!"

"That's just what I came to see you about," said Glyn, nodding. "Kangy came in about half an hour ago, and he's been telling me about the licking you chaps received at the hands of the Grammarians. I came here—"

"With a supply of monkey glands?" asked Monty Lowther hopefully.

"Not exactly that," grinned Glyn. "But I've got a means of rejuvenation—my own invention—which is just as good, if not better. I didn't offer it to Kangy, because—because—"

"Because a prophet is always without honour in his own country!" grinned Tom Merry.

Glyn grinned and sat down on the only vacant chair of which the study boasted.

"Something of the kind," he admitted. "I thought if you, as junior captain, took up my 'Reviver,' it would recommend it to the fellows."

"Your Reviver?" queried Lowther.

"My own manufacture?" said Glyn modestly. "It's a little idea that occurred to me—I was wondering if it might come in useful at any time. Now you chaps say you're stale, I'm offering you a chance to rejuvenate yourselves in the style of the monkey gland experts!"

"Setting up as a surgeon now, Glyn?" asked Monty Lowther, humorously.

Glyn calmly took a small and tightly-corked bottle from his pocket.

"Ugh!" grunted Manners, distastefully. "Medicine!"

"Don't get alarmed," said Glyn. "This stuff is perfectly harmless—Glyn's Reviver, I'm calling it. You just drain the bottle at a draught—it's perfectly tasteless, I can guarantee—and you'll feel as bucked as if you'd had a legacy left you!"

"I'd like to know what's in it first!" said Tom Merry suspiciously. "I'm not swallowing a lot of chemical muck, I can tell you. If it's quite harmless, you can tell us what it's made of?"

The schoolboy inventor's eyes glimmered, but he shook his head.

"I'm sorry—but I naturally want to keep the secret," he explained. "All I can say is that a draught of this Reviver whenever you're feeling blue is enough to buck up the sleepest fellow in the school. No ill effects—no risk. If anybody feels bad after it, I'll—I'll swallow a gallon of the stuff! Look—I'll drink this lot now—just to show you that it's all right!"

While the Terrible Three watched him with mingled interest and doubt, Glyn carefully shook the bottle, and uncorking it, drained it apparently with great relish.

"Harmless—as—as water!" he added, with a grin.

"It—it certainly looks all right!" said Lowther, doubtfully. "But I don't like the idea of taking a quack medicine."

"But it isn't a quack medicine," urged Glyn. "It's a fresher—just like a glass of lemonade at Dame Taggles'—nothing more. If you fellows will only try it—you'll be surprised at the results; and as you know, something's got to be done before the Greyfriars match, if St. Jim's is going to have that Cup and Shield. Still, please yourselves—though you're asses to refuse. I've got another bottle here. Anybody like to try it?"

Monty Lowther, perhaps the most imaginative of the three, stretched out his hand.

"I don't mind," he remarked. "It certainly doesn't look as if it could hurt anybody—and you've drunk some yourself. Here goes, anyway! To our success against Greyfriars!"

And, holding up the bottle as if for a toast, Lowther took a long draught of Glyn's Reviver. He set down the bottle, and his chums eyed him expectantly.

"H'm! Not bad!" he announced thoughtfully.

"What's it like?" asked Manners.

"Hasn't got much taste," said Lowther cautiously. "It's as much like water as anything. Bit colder, though, and it certainly gives you a 'bucked' feeling. It's jolly good, Glyn!"

"I knew it was," said Glyn, with satisfaction. "I've got half a dozen bottles of it here. The stuff costs very little to make, but I'm selling it at a penny per bottle, proceeds to be shovelled in the cottage hospital box in Hall."

"Good man!" said Tom Merry heartily. "By Jove! I think I'll try some, and see how it strikes me. Here you are, Glyn!"

Tom Merry tossed over a penny, and shook his bottle vigorously. The inventor watched him drink it with a lurking grin on his face.

"Nice?" he asked at last.

"Ripping!" ejaculated the Shell captain, his eyes sparkling. "This is the stuff to administer, and no mistake! It's cold, as Monty said, but I feel as if I could knock a bus down now!"

"Good!" said Glyn. "How about you, Manners?"

"Oh, I'll risk it!" said Manners. "If it kills Tom and Monty, I shouldn't like to be the only one left alive. You'll have to stand the cost of the funeral, Glyn, that's all!"

"Rely on me for a bunch of flowers, anyway," responded Glyn, taking a penny in exchange for a further bottle of the Reviver.

Manners drank it down with a gasp of satisfaction.

"It's great!" he ejaculated. "Why, you'll sell dozens of bottles, Glyn; you'll never have enough to go round!"

"If everybody returns the bottle as soon as they've finished with it, I can refill it and sell again," said Glyn. "I'll get the house dame to wash 'em. I've collected a good stock to start with. All I ask is that any fellow who likes the Reviver shall just recommend it to the next fellow, and all the cash will go to the cottage hospital!"

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Merry. "It's jolly decent of you to stand the racket like this, Glyn! It will cost you a bit, I expect. All the fellows will be keen to try that stuff."

"Let 'em!" replied Glyn recklessly. "It doesn't cost so much as you might—ahem!—think. I'll run along now. Let me have those bottles if you've finished with them. Thanks! Ta-ta, you fellows!"

And, with a cheery nod, Glyn left the study with the

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empty bottles under his arm. The Terrible Three stared after him with a rather remarkable expression on their faces.

"Well?" said Tom Merry.

"That chap fairly takes the cake!" said Manners.

"He's hit on a good wheeze this time, though," grinned Lowther. "That Reviver has put new life into me. I feel like a giant now!"

"Got enough energy even for prep?" asked Manners, grinning.

"Tons!" said Lowther cheerily, getting out his books and seizing his pen. "I'm going to invest in some more of that stuff, I think. It really does buck you up!"

"That's true enough," agreed Manners. "I feel about twice as energetic as usual myself. How about you, Tom?"

"Same here!" said Tom Merry, grinning. "I was just thinking that it's just as well we're all so full of beans, because we've left it pretty late for prep, and Latham will expect us to be up to the mark in the Form-room, whatever our cricket's like!"

The word soon went round that Tom Merry & Co. had sampled Glyn's Reviver, and had pronounced it good; and during the next day or two there was a tremendous rush on the stuff. Fellows were ready to pay their pennies and tuppences for a compound that had such a beneficial effect upon them, for the general verdict agreed with Tom Merry's—namely, that the Reviver "bucked you up" no end. Moreover, the fact that all the money paid for the Reviver was to be sent to the local hospital made fellows still more ready to part with their cash. Glyn did a roaring trade, and the praises of his famous Reviver were heard on every hand.

CHAPTER 3.

The St. Jim's Rodeo!

"COMPETITORS for the donkey-race, line up!"

Kildare, a megaphone at his mouth, and his face red with shouting, roared that injunction to the crowd of juniors who swarmed on Farmer Sturt's meadow on that sunny Saturday afternoon.

The St. Jim's Rodeo—Lord Eastwood's brain-wave—was in full swing, the whole school and a good sprinkling of seniors having turned out to watch the events. Nothing like it had ever occurred at the old school before.

Overnight, Lord Eastwood had sent down, under the charge of grooms, half a dozen of his own horses, including Arthur Augustus' favourite, Silverpoint, and the mounts were free to any of the juniors who cared to take part in either of the two "straight" races of the afternoon, the three-quarter mile and the mile and a half. Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School, had secured a horse from Wayland, while Kit Wildrake, of the Boot Leg Ranch, had also hired one. The rest of the competitors were content to ride Lord Eastwood's fine horses, and trust to skill and enthusiasm to bring them home.

The race for carthorses and chariots—in which the juniors were to drive the Wayland Corporation dust-carts in the style of Roman gladiators of old—had attracted a large number of entries. And the fact that only nine carts were available—and those only because Lord Eastwood was acquainted personally with the Mayor of Wayland—had necessitated a draw. Among the lucky entrants was George Alfred Grundy, who openly stated his intention of "romping" home, a possibility loudly scouted by his rivals, who were all equally certain of success.

Now the donkey race, one of the preliminary events, was toward, and there was a rush for where the donkeys, loaned by local farmers after much persuasion, were tethered, contentedly cropping the grass.

The course was quite a short, circular one, starting from the judge's enclosure, where sat the Head, with several of the masters, and finishing at the same point. But trouble arose in that the competitors had to start level; and, as some of them were finding great difficulty in controlling their mounts, this took some time.

"Back, there, Trimble!" roared Kildare, as Baggy, clinging to a donkey almost as rotund as himself, rode forward out of the line. "Look lively, you fat boulder!"

"I—I e-can't!" wailed Trimble, clinging might and main to the donkey's ears. "This—this rotten beast won't do as I tell him! He k-keeps on going forward, and I can't stop him!"

"Help Trimble to get his mount in line!" shouted Kildare, hardly able to speak for laughing.

Tom Merry and Kangaroo sprang forward and seized Baggy's donkey.

"Hang on, Baggy—you're all right!" grinned Tom Merry, shoving the donkey back until it stood in the required position. "If you fall off, you'll bounce. There's nothing for you to worry about, old fat bean! And don't forget—you're riding to win!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rest of the donkey riders roared at the fat junior's

plight, and all glanced eagerly at Kildare, who held a coloured handkerchief in his hand with which to signal them off.

"Are you ready—go!" shouted Kildare, and dropped the handkerchief.

There was a terrific cheer from the excited onlookers as the majority of the donkeys were seen to leave the post at a rapid trot. But there was a louder laugh as Baggy Trimble's mount was left behind, its legs planted four-square to all the winds that blew, so to speak—utterly determined that, come what might, it would not shift.

"Kimmup, you beast!" exhorted Trimble angrily. "Get on, then! Nice old donk! Get a move on, you little rotter! Come on, Neddy! Good old Ned! Blow you!"

To all of which the donkey remained oblivious, merely eyeing the crowd and the disappearing forms of the other donkeys with a glance indicative of sublime indifference.

Almost tottering with laughter, Tom Merry and his chums dashed to the rescue, and the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 got behind Trimble's donkey and shoved.

"Phew! The little beast won't shift!" gasped Blake, as they bent their shoulders to the work. "It's like shoving against a blessed brick wall. Yarooogh! Yowp!"

Blake had not intended to finish his remarks in that highly original manner. But force of circumstances proved too much for him. Apparently the donkey found the combined weight of the seven juniors, not to mention the crushing burden of Baggy Trimble on top of him, too much for flesh to endure. Accordingly, he took the path of least resistance, and started.

Unfortunately for Baggy's helpers, he started quite suddenly and without warning, trotting away with Baggy rolling wildly in his seat and hanging desperately to his long ears. Blake,

from its rider. As it neared home, it spurted gallantly. Mulvaney was left standing. Baggy was home first amid thunderous applause followed by a hearty roar of laughter. The laughter grew louder, and developed into a howl as the fat junior, unable to stop his mount, dashed on and commenced a second round of the course.

"Yow! Stoppit, you fellows!" howled Trimble wildly. "I c-can't c-control the beast! Help! Help!"

Chuckling merrily, several juniors ran alongside the donkey, and, slowing him down into a walk, eventually stopped him.

With a gasp of relief, Baggy rolled off and pumped in breath like a grampus.

"Yah! You rotten little beast!" he growled, surveying his donkey malignantly. "You jolly nearly shook every bone in my body out of joint! But—but—I won, didn't I, Merry?"

"Yes; you were five or six lengths in front!" grinned the Shell captain.

"Oh, good!" Baggy smirked. "I shall get a prize, then. That's more than you fellows will do, I'll bet! Yah! You can take the donk over there and tether him, Merry!"

And with that cool remark, Trimble rolled away to the judge's stand ere any of the seven could lay a vengeful hand upon him.

"Well—well, I'm blowed!" breathed Lowther, staring fixedly after the fat figure.

"Did you ever in all your life?" asked Digby. "Of all the conceited, fat, objectionable duffers—"

"He ought to be hanged, drawn, quartered, and boiled in oil!" grunted Blake, in high dudgeon.

"Try it the other way round, old bean!" suggested Lowther, grinning.

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The Express Bowler of Australia?—

flying nothing to shove against, went down with a crash, and Lowther went on top of him. Tom Merry rolled in a heap and found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Herries struggling under him, and Manners and Digby piled on them all like snow on top of a mountain.

"Yah! Yow-wow! Keep your great hoof out of my ear, Herries!"

"Yaroooh! What silly, blithering idiot caught me on the nose? I'll—I'll smash him—"

"Oh, deah! My clothes are fwightfully wumpled, deah boys! I sha'n't be able to wear this waistcoat again—all through that blessed little donkey!"

Seven juniors rose painfully to their feet, glaring after the "little donkey," which had very wisely stood not upon the order of its going, but had gone at once.

And as they looked, they saw that Trimble had made up for his late start with a vengeance, and was now well in the forefront of the race, his mount stepping it out with the best of them. There was a cheer as Roylance, who had been leading the field, fell back to allow Mulvaney, on a tubby little donkey, whose feet fairly twinkled over the grass, to go ahead. But there was an even louder shout as Baggy Trimble, his face red as a tomato, and still hanging grimly to his mount's ears, drew level and challenged Mulvaney for first place.

"Go it, Pat!"

"Put it on, Baggy!"

"Good old Ireland!"

"Up, Trimble! It's not far now!"

Neck and neck the two donkeys raced, leaving the rest of the field far behind as they neared the tape. Mulvaney was urging on his mount like a born jockey, but Trimble had all he could manage to sit tight and keep going. But Trimble's mount did not apparently need any encouragement

"Oh, rats! What's the next race?"

"Chawiot wacin'!" announced Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Woman style, you know. The Wayland dust carts as chawlots, an' weal cart horses to draw them. I heah they've given the carts a special spwng clean for our benefit—wathah dustay othahwise!"

"Wish I'd got one!" grinned Blake. "Still, I'm in the later races, so I can't grumble. Good luck, Gussy! You're in this!"

"Yaas, wathah—an' I'm goin' to win it!" said Gussy. "I was vewy lucky to draw a cart. You fellows comin' to see me start?"

Kildare was already shepherding the entrants for the chariot-race into line, and now he announced the length of the course.

"Twice round!" he shouted, in a stentorian voice. "The white flags mark the turning-points!"

The fortunate entrants for this race soon found their chariots, and the giant cart horses drew them into line.

"Ahem!" The Head coughed and turned to Mr. Railton. "This—is this is really—"

"It seems a little remarkable!" smiled the Housemaster. "I am not sure whether this was Lord Eastwood's idea or D'Arcy's—though I rather suspect the latter!"

"It is certainly a little unusual," observed the Head dryly.

"Very!" assented Mr. Railton. "I believe this completes the 'freak' racing, however. And in the serious racing, our Australian visitors will join, of course."

"Quite so," responded Dr. Holmes. "They appear to be ready to start this—ahem!—chariot race!"

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The "chariots" were by this time awaiting the signal, the drivers grasping the reins, eager to be off. Gussy and Grundy were together in the line. Monty Lowther had drawn an equipage, and Kangaroo another. Then Dicky Steele and Maurice Lockwood of the Australians were driving, with Figgins and Fatty Wynn of the New House. Last, but far from least in his own opinion, came Baggy Trimble, his chest puffed out importantly, apparently looking on the race as something in the nature of a walk over. Baggy had quite recovered from his fright in the donkey race, and felt more than equal to pulling off this in addition.

"All ready?" called Kildare. "Right, then—go!" With a terrific jolting and rumbling, the huge dust-carts lumbered forward, and the race started. Not being supplied with whips, the juniors had to rely on vociferous urging to get their horses along. Most of the Wayland steeds were content to proceed at a steady jog-trot, and in spite of furious shouts from their drivers, they refused to accelerate.

Dicky Steele took the lead at once, but was challenged strongly by Kangaroo and Fatty Wynn. Baggy Trimble found himself lost in the ruck, and jerked the reins desperately, but to no avail. Grundy, roaring at the top of his bull-like voice, thundered along right in the wake of the leaders, threatening fire and murder to his hapless steed in the event of his not getting to the fore in a few moments.

They swung round the first turn in a little group, Dicky Steele still leading, but with Fatty Wynn in close attendance. Grundy had challenged Kangaroo and was fast drawing into third place.

Round the second corner and into the straight swept the two chariots driven by Dicky Steele and Fatty Wynn, with Grundy galloping on their trail like a comet. Kangaroo's horse had slowed down to a walk, and Figgins and Lowther, dashing past, closed up the gap.

The chariots swept round again, and the second lap was begun, Fatty Wynn falling behind a little, but still a close rival to the Australian. There was a cheer as, at the next turn, Dicky Steele dropped back a little and Fatty Wynn and Grundy swung round on each side of him and took the lead.

The next corner, however, saw Dicky Steele dash in between them and regain his position, and so the three leaders, with Figgins and Lowther falling farther and farther behind, thundered down on the tape. When but fifty yards remained, Fatty Wynn and Grundy made a great effort, and yelling at the top of their voices, passed Dicky Steele and swept towards the finish, neck and neck.

Then, just as a tie seemed inevitable, Fatty Wynn's steed charged still further ahead and breasted the tape not a moment too soon, Grundy rumbling home second with Dicky Steele a close third. Figgins and Lowther came in together for fourth place, and there was a yell as Trimble, his face crimson with exertion, drove his horse over the line and dashed straight into the judge's enclosure, missing the Head's chair by a hair's-breadth.

"What—bless my soul!" stuttered Dr. Holmes, jumping to his feet quicker than he had done for years. "Seize the horse, boys; Trimble has lost control!"

The juniors obeyed with alacrity, and Trimble's steed was led away in safe hands, while Baggy, wet with perspiration, climbed down from his seat and threw himself full length in the long grass to rest.

"Oh! Oh, dear!" he gasped dismally, taking huge gulps of air. "I'm warm!"

"Feel like another dash for the half-mile on a racehorse, old fat tulip?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ow! Shut up! I couldn't move a yard!" gasped Trimble unhappily.

"So-long, then, old chap! Kildare's shouting for the half-milers. I'm off!"

And Lowther dashed away, leaving Trimble to gasp and gasp to his heart's content in the grass.

CHAPTER 4.

An Official Event!

"THEY'RE off!"

Kildare's flag went up, and like a flash the horses entered for the three-quarter mile race left the post. A roar of cheering followed the schoolboy jockeys along the course as they strove might and main to secure the lead.

Tim Richardson and Dicky Steele jostled each other for first place, while Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raced along a few yards behind. The rearguard, several of whom had made a bad start, were struggling nobly to come up and challenge the leaders.

"Gad! Arthur is riding a splendid race!" ejaculated Lord Eastwood, who had arrived unexpectedly by car just previous to the start of the race. "I think he will overhaul those Australian boys, do you not, Dr. Holmes?"

"I must confess I am not an authority on horsemanship," responded the Head, with a smile. "But I sincerely hope a St. Jim's boy secures the honour. See, Merry is taking the lead now!"

The Head was right. Tom, riding grimly, had drawn level with the two Australians and was forging ahead at a terrific rate.

"Arthur calls Merry's horse The Comet," said Lord Eastwood, his aristocratic face twitching with excitement. "And I think he is somewhere near the truth! Ah, here they come!"

The horses swept round the course past the judge's stand, completing the first lap in splendid style, and then, as they swung into the straight again, a change was to be seen. Arthur Augustus, coaxing his favourite Silverpoint with rare skill, had spurred up to second place, and all in a flash, it seemed, Tom Merry dropped behind and Tim Richardson went to the head of the field.

"Tally-ho!"

"Put it on, Gussy!"

"Good old Australia!"

"Tim! Tim! Up, Tim!"

The Australians roared encouragement to their representative, and the St. Jim's juniors responded with vociferous cheers for Gussy. The swell of St. Jim's was challenging fearlessly now, and at the last turn there was barely a neck between Silverpoint and the Australian's horse.

"Go it, Gus! Good old Gussy!" roared Herries, throwing Digby's cap high in the air in his excitement. And Digby, hardly noticing the loss of his headgear, joined wholeheartedly in the shouting that urged the Fourth-Former onwards.

The post loomed close, and Gussy spurred desperately, but Tim Richardson also held something in reserve, and with fine judgment he rode his mount home half a head in front of Silverpoint.

As he flashed past, the post the rest of the visitors set up a terrific cheer, giving voice to a number of Australian war-cries which caused the St. Jim's fellows to stop their ears till the noise had subsided. But all were eager to congratulate Richardson on his fine race, and Gussy, as soon as he had put his horse in the charge of a groom, dashed up breathlessly and pumped the Australian's hand vigorously.

"Jolly well widden, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You deserved to win, Richardson! It takes a good horse an' widah to beat Silverpoint!"

"It was touch and go!" grinned Richardson, bearing his honours without blushing. "Another few yards and that gee of yours would have overhauled mine and walked home! I should think he's a terror on a long distance?"

"Not a bit of it, Richardson!" said Arthur Augustus gallantly. "You licked me fair and square, an' it was the finest wace I've ever had, bai Jove!"

The Australians were in high glee over the result, all the more as Dicky Steele had ridden in a comfortable third—thus giving the visitors two out of the first three places.

"And now for the knightly chargers!" grinned Monty Lowther, as Kildare and Monteith roared instructions through their megaphones. "Who's going to ride a cart horse for half a mile?"

"I guess it'll take a real horseman to get one of those home!" grinned Kit Wildrake, the Canadian junior. "You in this, Tom Merry?"

"Not this time, thanks!" said Tom Merry. "But the Aussies reckon they are going to collar it, so we rely on you, Wildrake, old man!"

"I can't promise you anything, Merry—but I'll do my best!" said Wildrake.

"Line up, there!" shouted Monteith threateningly, and the juniors hastened to secure their mounts.

The Australians were represented in this race by Dicky Steele, Charlie Hill, and Andrews, while St. Jim's had Wildrake, D'Arcy, Grundy, Kangaroo, Redfern, and Lawrence.

There was a general holding of breath while Kildare glanced along the line and gave the word—then, with a thunder of hoofs the field swept away, and the cheering recommenced. Although the race was somewhat of a novelty, it was regarded as a great test for the riders, and the St. Jim's competitors were very keen to win it. Moreover, the three Australians had the reputation of being splendid horsemen, and would be likely to give nothing away. The

ANSWERS

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majority of the St. Jim's jockeys were casual riders who trusted mainly to luck to bring them home—and this was speedily evident.

Hill, Steele and Andrews went away in company, with Gussy and Wildrake almost level, and then, with a big gap separating him from the van, came Grundy. Behind Grundy the rest struggled valiantly with refractory mounts, without succeeding in getting much more than a trot out of them.

A cheer went up as the first turn showed Gussy in the lead, with Wildrake just behind him and the three Australians thundering along on their heels. By the time the first lap was completed, Grundy had galloped his mount clean off the course, and was careering across the meadow with very little hope of ever reducing the horse to order again, while the little band of riders in the rear were merely finishing for the sake of appearances.

But the race in the van was as keen as ever. First

While congratulations were still pouring on the successful competitors, Kildare's megaphone came into action again, calling for entrants for the last and biggest event of the afternoon—the mile and a half straight race for "blood" horses. The entries for this event were numerous, and each and every entrant was set on winning it at all costs. The Australians had three hopes—Hill, Steele, and Richardson. The rest of the tourists, though they could all ride, could not expect to vie with these three, who were acknowledged adepts in the saddle. Rylcombe Grammar School was represented by Gordon Gay and Jack Wootton, who had only just arrived, having been to Wayland to fetch their mounts. There was a stable at Wayland where horses could be hired, and though the "blood" might be a little doubtful, the Grammarians were confident that they would romp home. St. Jim's had a small, but select, band of jockeys—Tom Merry, Wildrake, and the one and only Gussy. With such a distinguished "field," it was small

CAMEOS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

No. 6.—THE MIDNIGHT FEAST.



*The solemn stroke of midnight sounds,
And all is dark and quiet;
The master makes his final rounds,
And hears no row nor riot.
To bed he wends his weary way,
Thinking that all are sleeping;
Upon St. Jim's the moonbeams play,
And stars are shyly peeping.*

*The final stroke of midnight dies,
And in our sleeping quarters
Tom Merry softly says, "Arise!"
To all his keen supporters.
Candles are lighted up and down
The large and lofty room;
Their flickering rays remove the
frown
Of midnight's semi-gloom.*

*Pickets are posted at the door,
In case some prowling master
Should creep in softly to explore,
And thereby bring disaster.
A hamper, crammed with tempting
tuck,
Is then dragged into sight;
We gaze at it, and bless our luck,
And chortle with delight!*

*Pyjama-clad, we gather round,
And vote the banquet topping!
Then you may hear the merry soma
Of gingerbeer corks popping.
Seated cross-legged upon the floor,
We tuck the tarts away;
Merry and Manners, Glyn and Gore,
And all, are bright and gay!*

*A cheerier crowd you never saw,
Nor yet a finer spread;
It's risky, true, to break the law,
But not a boy's in bed!
They've tumbled out, with one accord,
To help consume the dainties;
They gather round the festive board—
No heart dismayed or faint is!*

*No warning whisper greets our ear
Of "Cave! Here's a master!"
The hamper's contents disappear,
The fun grows fast and faster.
By one o'clock the banquet's ceased
And off to bed we scamper;
The only relic of the feast
Is just an empty hamper!*



Steele dashed to the fore, to be beaten back by Wildrake. Then Hill came up with a rush and held a good lead for a few seconds. But Gussy, riding magnificently, drew level and passed him, and then, amid a wild shout, Wildrake came up, passed Gussy and thundered by the post a splendid winner, Gussy flashing in a second ahead of Charlie Hill and Steele.

The juniors tumbled from their horses with flushed faces, and were surrounded by cheering juniors. Wildrake was punched and pummelled by his congratulatory chums till he hardly knew whether he was standing on his head or on his heels, and Gussy had his hand shaken again and again by excited juniors.

"Hard luck, Hill!" grinned Wildrake, as he met the Australian captain in the crush. "You made that gee of yours shift a little, I guess!"

"It was your race—and D'Arcy's—all the way!" grinned Hill ruefully. "I could see how you were nursing your horse right up to the post—and then you left us standing, you boulder! Still, I'm jolly glad!"

wonder that greatest excitement prevailed as the entrants rode up to the tape.

Kildare ran his eye over them keenly, and raised his flag.

"You know what to do, kids!" he said briefly. "You ride out to the farthest flags—taking the whole field in one lap, and after going twice round, finish here, as before. Are you ready?"

Receiving no reply, Kildare gave the signal, and the horses leapt off the mark as one. For the first few seconds, the juniors hardly had breath to cheer as they watched the field gradually stringing out, and then a sudden roar went up as Tom Merry was seen to be in the lead.

"Good old Tommy!"

"Hold it, man!"

"Go it, St. Jim's!"

There was a chorus of counter shouts from the Australians, but Steele and Richardson, only a few yards behind the Shell captain, made no attempt to overtake him. The

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horses galloped to the full extent of the big field, and approached the straight run to complete the first lap with the positions still unchanged. Tom Merry, his eyes fixed steadily ahead of him, maintained the lead with seeming ease, with Steele and Richardson just behind, holding a yard on Wildrake and Gussy, and Charlie Hill just behind them.

Amid a thunder of shouting, the horses swept past the judge's enclosure—and then a change was manifest. Tim Richardson, riding apparently without any effort at all, overhauled Tom Merry and secured first place—and then, before the St. Jim's juniors realised that they had lost the lead—Wildrake came loping up on a big grey and went just ahead of Richardson, where he remained.

The struggle was intense now, and the race held everybody's attention. At the next turn, Wildrake's mount faltered in its stride, and Richardson drew level. But in a few seconds Wildrake had made good the loss, and held a lead of two or three yards.

Round the next corner—and then the long straight gallop for home. As they turned, Richardson spurred hard, and in a flash had passed Wildrake's grey and was dashing down on the tape with his mount going all out. There was a gasp from the St. Jim's juniors, and a howl of delight from the Aussies.

"Well done, Tim!"

"Keep it, Tim boy!"

"It's yours, Tim!"

But they had no need to urge on the diminutive youth who bestrode his horse with such unconcerned ease, and swept down on his goal with the race well in hand.

"My hat! That fellow can ride!" gasped Blake. "He's got it this time, for sure. Why—what—who—Gussy!"

And before the startled eyes of the crowd, Arthur Augustus was seen dashing to the fore, with Silverpoint going gracefully and swiftly as a deer, till he sped level with Richardson's mount. Then, with Gussy smiling happily and coaxing on his horse in an ecstasy of pride, the post loomed near, and though his head was in a whirl, the swell of St. Jim's knew that Silverpoint had proved his mettle and won the race for St. Jim's!

"Oh, hai Jove! Weally—good old Silverpoint! Good old horse!"

And almost delirious with excitement, Gussy slipped out of the saddle and fondled the horse's muzzle affectionately, while his chums, cheering wildly, crowded round him and, despite his loud protests, hoisted him shoulder-high. Catching sight of Richardson, Gussy grinned and waved cheerily, and the Australian waved back.

"Hard cheese, Richardson!" shouted Gussy, with a flushed face.

"Bully for you, old man!" grinned Richardson, in return.

"Hip, hip, hurrah! Good old Gussy!"

The juniors were so excited that they hardly knew what they were saying, and, shouting gleefully, they bore Arthur Augustus on their shoulders to the judge's stand, where the prizes were to be presented by the Head.

"I'll never use any of his fancy waistcoats to clean the frying-pan again!" grinned Blake, slapping Gussy on the back in a manner that drew forth a howl from the blushing hero.

"Bai Jove, Blake, you wottah—you vewy neahly busted my backbone then, you fwabjous ass!"

"All right, old man!" said Blake soothingly. "Take it easy—you've won the race—what more do you want?"

"Yaas, watahah!" said Gussy, beaming again at the thought of that last dash and the triumph of his favourite, Silverpoint.

Breathless and laughing still, the juniors allowed Arthur Augustus to descend to terra firma again, and then they formed a huge half-circle, while the Head stood up and coughed preparatory to making a speech.

"I have great pleasure in presenting the prizes, very kindly given by Lord Eastwood, to the victors in this afternoon's sport. I have enjoyed most of all the fine display of sportsmanship between victor and vanquished—and I am particularly pleased to see that our Australian visitors did not take part without gaining some of the awards—"

Here the Head broke off with a smile, while three cheers were given for Tim Richardson.

"However," continued the Head, "it naturally gives me satisfaction to be able to present the prize for the principal event to a St. Jim's boy—and I congratulate him on the excellent race he rode to secure it!"

Gussy blushed modestly, and Blake squeezed his arm enthusiastically.

"Hip, hip—" began Blake.

"Hurrah!" shouted the juniors, in no uncertain voice.

"And now," ended Dr. Holmes, "I think Lord Eastwood has a few words to say to you, my boys!"

The Earl of Eastwood rose and bowed.

"I haven't much to bother you with," he began with a

smile, "but I should like to congratulate you all on your splendid sportsmanship, and say how pleased I am to see such healthy rivalry between you boys and the representatives of a great colonial country. As you can imagine, it gives me additional pleasure to have seen my son win the final race on his favourite horse, to which Dr. Holmes has so kindly referred. There is one thing more. The Head has asked me to tell you that the day of the Greyfriars versus Australia match—when our visitors will leave us—will be a whole holiday—"

At this point the earl's remarks were drowned in a burst of cheering.

"And that is all!" said Lord Eastwood, sitting down. "I now call upon Dr. Holmes to present the prizes."

The Head took the fountain-pen which Kildare handed him, and coughed.

"Let me see—ahem! First prize for the donkey race. Baggy Trimble, step forward!"

Amid a storm of ironic cheering, Baggy Trimble strutted forward to receive his prize, wearing a smirk that brought a glance of displeasure to the Head's face.

"I hope you will put this pen to good use, Trimble!" remarked Dr. Holmes, and Baggy retired, grinning. It was not likely that he would find much use for a fountain-pen, unless he suddenly developed a keenness for school work, but it was the limelight attaching to the prize that pleased the fatuous Fourth-Former.

"The chariot race!" announced the Head, with a smile. "David Wynn, please."

David Llewellyn Wynn, grinning, rolled forward and received a cricket bat with a polite bow.

"The three-quarter-mile race," continued the Head.

But there was an interruption. The crowd of juniors suddenly became aware of a sound, something between a bellow and a snort, proceeding from behind a hedge quite near to the judge's stand. The bellow sounded again, and without further warning the hedge was forced aside and a young bull stood revealed, pawing the ground and glaring undecidedly at the crowd of fellows.

"Bulls!" gasped Baggy Trimble, scuttling wildly in the direction of the field gate. "Oh, help! Save me, somebody! I shall be tossed!"

The juniors stared in amazement and alarm as the bull, a dangerous animal although not yet grown to full size, suddenly lowered its head and charged.

"Get back!" roared Kildare. "Back, you juniors! If he gets among you—"

Kildare did not finish, but darted forward between the bull and the crowd of masters and juniors who were rushing pell-mell towards the gate.

"Get clear, all of you!" shouted the captain of the school. "Come on, Monteith—we've got to head this beast off somehow!"

"By gad!" gasped Monteith nervously. "Here he comes! I'm—I'm going to cut and run for it!"

Kildare gave the prefect a glance, and then whirled round as a rush of footsteps came from behind him. The bull was almost upon them now, and in a moment or two would either have veered away or run amok among the St. Jim's fellows. But two juniors had dashed out to meet it, and while the rest of the school watched with astonished gaze, Kit Wildrake and Charlie Hill fell upon the bull, one on each side, in the manner of hardened cowboys, and, securing a cross-hold, bore him down with a bump in the grass. Then, while the animal bellowed and kicked, Wildrake coolly roped its forelegs with the aid of his famous lariat, which he had fortunately strung to his belt, and Hill, using the other end of the rope, secured its hind legs. With a few final turns of his lariat, Wildrake had the bull helpless and neatly trussed up in the grass.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Kildare. "That was quick work, you kids!"

"My hat, yes!" gasped Monteith, almost shivering with relief.

"We'd better tell old Mr. Sturt that there's a young bull of his all tied up and waiting for him!" grinned Wildrake, as the juniors approached.

"Quite safe now, Trimble!" grinned Charlie Hill, turning to the fat junior, who was fairly quaking in his shoes. "It couldn't hurt a fly!"

"By gad! You young fellows have got strong nerves to be able to handle the animal like that!" said Lord Eastwood admiringly. "You've trussed it up like a couple of cow-punchers! I have never seen anything like it!"

The two juniors chuckled, and the Head came forward with a pleased smile.

"I think we might present a special prize for this—this unofficial event!" he remarked. "You agree with me, Lord Eastwood?"

"By gad, yes!" said his lordship. "They deserve a medal each, not a prize!"

And when Hill and Kit Wildrake had been slapped on



Crouching unseen by the Shell Junior, Baggy Trimble watched Bernard Glyn hold one of the bottles under the tap and fill it with plain water. Then the fat junior's eyes gleamed as he realised what a glorious opportunity he now had of making Glyn squirm. The "secret" of the "Reviver" was a secret no longer. (See Chapter 6.)

the back till they fairly ached, the rest of the prizes were presented, and Lord Eastwood made a short speech announcing that a special prize would be awarded to Hill and Wildrake to commemorate the unexpected final to the Rodeo. And it is safe to say that nobody was better pleased with the afternoon's sport than the youthful cow-punchers!

CHAPTER 5.

Australia v. Greyfriars!*

"ALL aboard the lugger!"

Thus Monty Lowther, seated in the big charabanc which was to take the Australian cricketers to Greyfriars.

The day was warm and sunny, and there was every indication that by noon it would be very hot indeed. It was the Aussies' farewell to St. Jim's, for after their fixture with the doughty warriors of the Kentish school, they were to make Greyfriars their headquarters for a week or two while playing such schools as Highcliffe and Redclyffe.

Tom Merry and his chums—the whole of the cricket team, in fact, were taking advantage of the holiday they had been granted to journey over and watch the match—an event which they were looking forward to with great pleasure.

The charabanc had arrived early, but it was soon full. The last of the bags and portmanteaux on board, the Australians set up a lusty cheer as the car rolled away down the drive, leaving a crowd of fellows cheering and wishing them pleasant travelling and good fortune.

"Good-bye, St. Jim's!" shouted Charlie Hill, waving his cap as the crowd at the gates receded. "Three cheers for St. Jim's, you chaps! Hip-hip—"

"Hurrah!"

The Australians gave the cheers with a will, and were cheered back from the gates till a bend in the lane cut off the view.

"I'm jolly sorry to leave St. Jim's!" said Charlie Hill, sitting down again. "You fellows have given us a ripping time, you know—though you did lick us at cricket, which wasn't exactly what we expected! What are the Greyfriars fellows like?"

*This match took place prior to Harry Wharton & Co.'s start on their adventurous tour to India.—EDITOR.

"Top hole!" responded Tom Merry. "You'll like 'em as soon as you clap eyes on 'em—especially Bob Cherry and that inky chap who says that 'the pleasurefulness is terrific!'"

"What the thump—" began Hill, puzzled.

"He's an Indian," explained Tom Merry, with a grin. "The giddy Nabob of Baniphar, or some such place. Anyway, he's a rattling good chap, and a deadly bowler into the bargain! If there was another bowler like Fatty Wynn in the world—though, of course, there isn't—"

"Hear, hear!" interrupted Figgins.

"I should say it was this chap. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, is his full cognomen," said Tom.

"I shall be interested to meet him!" grinned Hill. "And you say they've got a good team—good as yours?"

"Facts speak for themselves," said Tom Merry. "You'll have to pull up your socks if you're going to lick 'em!"

"By Jove, we will, too!" grinned Charlie Hill. "We can't afford to be beaten twice. We had hopes of an unbeaten tour, but you chaps put the kybosh on that!"

"Ha, ha! Yes!" grinned the Shell captain.

The charabanc rumbled on through leafy lanes and by rolling meadows, giving the Australians a glimpse of rural England at its best. The sun was mounting high in the blue when they rolled from Sussex into Kent.

"Nearly there!" said Tom Merry at last; and Hill nodded.

In a few more minutes the charabanc rumbled through the little village of Friardale and along the lane towards Greyfriars.

"Here we are!" ejaculated Tom Merry, suddenly spotting a group of fellows at the gates. "Pull up here, driver!"

The big car drew up to Gosling's lodge, and was greeted by a ringing cheer from the Friars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry, helping to get the bags down. "Here's old Tommy come to see us again! Not to mention the Australians, who we're going to show what's what and who's who! How goes it, Tom Merry?"

"Fine, thanks, old chap!" grinned Tom, descending from his seat.

Hill came down behind him and gripped the hand which Harry Wharton, the captain of Greyfriars, extended to him.

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"Pleased to meet you, Wharton!" he said, with his cheery grin.

"Same here!" responded the Remove skipper heartily. "Let's give you a hand with your traps and things. You're staying with us a few days, I hear, to play Highcliff and one or two other schools."

"You've hit it!" agreed Hill. "And we've made up our minds to start our visit with a win—if you chaps will let us!"

"Don't you believe it!" grinned Wharton. "We've got a good side, and we shall be all out to lower your colours!"

"The lickfulness of the esteemed and ridiculous Australians will be terrific!" purred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with his quiet smile.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Hill involuntarily, beholding Inky for the first time. "I mean, hear, hear, old man! But you haven't done it yet, you know!"

"This way for Little Side!" roared Bob Cherry, shouldering a cricket-bag and leading a crowd of the Australians towards the cricket-ground.

"Here we are, you chaps! There's the pavy. Change at your leisure!"

"Thanks!" grinned Richardson, eyeing the greensward with satisfaction. "We shall give you some leather-hunting on this, Cherry!"

With a cheery nod, Richardson and the rest of the Aussies repaired to the pavilion, and were soon prepared for the fray, while Harry Wharton and his chums chatted cheerily with Tom Merry & Co.

"Jolly glad to hear that you fellows managed to lick them!" said Wharton cordially. "We're hoping to do the same—but they're a hot crowd, aren't they?"

"They are!" agreed Tom Merry. "They is!"

"All ready, skipper!" announced Charlie Hill, joining the group. "Where's the coin?"

"Call to this!" said Wharton, spinning a shilling.

"Heads for luck!" called Hill.

"Heads it is!" agreed Wharton. "What will you fellows do—field, of course?"

"Not quite so green as that!" grinned Hill. "I think we'll take first knock!"

"Right-ho!" said Wharton. "Come on, you chaps—we're fielding."

The Australians were introduced before the game to Dr. Locke, the kindly old Head of Greyfriars, and he shook hands very cordially with them all ere the first pair strode out to bat.

"Get ready to bowl your hardest, Inky!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Lockwood and Andrews approached the wickets, looking very fit and capable of great deeds that sunny summer's morn.

Wingate and Gwynne, the umpires, took their stand, and Inky gripped the ball in his dusky palm. The ball came down, and Lockwood cut it away for a single. Squiff fielded the ball, and Inky sent down his second. Andrews played forward to it, and gave a gasp as he saw the trap a second too late, and glanced round just in time to behold the collapse of his wicket!

"Good old Inky!" chirruped Bob Cherry delightedly. "Keep it going, my dusky pippin!"

The Greyfriars cricketers waited eagerly while Michael

McLean came out to replace Andrews. The Scottish junior took guard carefully and refused to fall a victim to the nabob's wiles, and the runs came but slowly and in singles. The score-board showed only six when a subtle delivery from Hurree Singh caught Lockwood napping and gently removed the bats.

"How's that?"

And Lockwood trailed thoughtfully back to the pavilion with four to his credit. Charlie Hill, the crack batsman on the visitors' side, succeeded, but the rate of scoring was still slow, though no more wickets fell.

Then for a brief spell Hill appeared

to "collar" the bowling, and in a few balls made sterling use of his height to bang the leather to the boundary, increasing the total by leaps and bounds. The Australian captain had made seventeen before his middle stump was knocked flying by one of Inky's best.

"Tim" Richardson partnered McLean through a stormy period, and then he succumbed to a particularly innocent-looking ball from Sampson Quincy Illey Field, the Australian member of the Friars' eleven.

Hurree Singh then took three wickets in rapid succession—just missing his "hat trick"—and sending Lewis, Lane, and then McLean back hot foot to the pavilion, before a determined stand by Torrance and Laurence Drew, the stonewaller, retrieved the Australians' fortunes a little. At 39, however, Torrance gave a high catch which Wharton held securely, and Dicky Steele took his place.

The innings was kept alive, but with 47 on the board, Georgie Horton, last man in, mis-timed one of Hurree Singh's "specials," and paid the penalty.

The Australians trooped off the field, feeling anything but satisfied with such a meagre total. Still, they reflected philosophically, there was always the second innings.

Wharton and Cherry opened the innings for Greyfriars, and, encouraged no doubt by their opponents' failure, began to lay about them right heartily. Wharton was not dismissed till he had made a sparkling 21, and Bob Cherry was caught out only after a useful 13. Linley and Bull partnered well, but then the Australian bowling met with more success, Dicky Steele securing Johnny Bull's wicket, and following that up with Peter Todd's and Bulstrode's. But Vernon-Smith came to stay, and Mark Linley, who was still batting strongly, partnered him gaily till 70 rattled up. The Lancashire lad gave a catch to Charlie Hill at last, but not before he had played a valuable innings. Vernon-Smith remained till the end, which came at 81—a very satisfactory total, considering the Australians' first effort—and the teams adjourned for lunch.

Lockwood and Andrews opened their side's second innings with the intention of retrieving their previous bad start or perishing in the attempt. The elegant Lockwood cut and drove with glorious precision, and Andrews banged away everything possible in his usual hard-hitting style. Twenty and then thirty appeared on the board with the opening pair still unparted. Forty rattled up soon afterwards, and Wharton tossed the ball to Inky with something approaching a groan.

"Go it, old scout—do your best!" he gasped.

Inky nodded, and put all he knew into the next ball. And to the joy of the Greyfriars team, it broke through Lockwood's guard and scattered the stumps on the sward—breaking the partnership at last!

But the Friars realised grimly that they were by no means out of the wood yet, with only one wicket down for forty! Michael McLean followed in, but this time his stay was short, and Inky chuckled quietly as he lifted the Scottish Australian's off stump clear of the ground with a guileful break. Even Charlie Hill did not last long, for Hurree Singh had struck his best form suddenly, and his bowling was irresistible. Hill slogged hard at the fourth ball, and then turned in surprise to stare at the desolation behind him.

"Three down for forty-one!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "This is better!"

But another of those lightning changes for which cricket is rightly famed came over the game almost immediately. "Tim" Richardson and Andrews stuck their backs against the wall, and by resolute cricket brought the total to 80 before Inky could dispose of the latter—and even then, Richardson continued to amass runs with his deft strokes and clever footwork.

John Lewis and Laurence Drew both rendered the diminutive batsman yeoman service, and there was a spontaneous burst of applause as he scored his fiftieth run with a boundary to leg.

The total had run up to 133 before Hurree Singh disposed of the last man—Richardson carrying his bat for a brilliant 53. Opinion was about equally divided between the chances of the respective teams during the short interval, for although the Friars had a stiff task in front of them to get the 100 runs required to win, they would only have to improve very little on their first display to accomplish it.

"I think we shall do it, Harry!" said Bob Cherry confidently, as the Australians took the field.

"Don't count your chickens before they're hatched, Bob!" grinned Wharton. "Still, we've got a good chance if we keep our heads!"

The first pair opened confidently enough, but disaster overtook Bob Cherry in the first over. The ball glanced off the edge of his bat and into the wicket before he had scored, and the usually cheery Removee walked mournfully back to the pavilion.

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Mark Linley came in, but Dicky Steele and Michael McLean were bowling their best, and runs were hard to get. Four wickets had fallen, and only thirty runs on the board, when Vernon-Smith came out to join Harry Wharton.

"It's now or never, Smithy!" called the Remove skipper. "Show 'em what we can do!"

Smithy nodded, and from the moment of his arrival the score leaped forward apace, with both batsmen hitting anything and everything with an impartiality that was heart-breaking to the bowlers. At seventy, Charlie came on to bowl, and succeeded in catching Vernon-Smith off a hot return, the Bouncer having made 23 in splendid style.

Johnny Bull followed, and, although the score increased, the wickets fell, with Wharton remaining undefeated at the crease. There was a murmur round the ground as the last man walked to the wicket—Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, a very reliable man at a pinch.

The Friars needed but ten runs to win, and Wharton was grimly determined that they should get them. Tom Brown had the bowling, but he stonewalled steadily to the end of the over, and then Wharton faced Charlie Hill.

The first ball from the Australian captain was much too good to hit, and Wharton wisely let it pass. But the next one offered a chance, and the Remove skipper leaped out and drove it to the boundary for 4. The next was a beauty, and Wharton blocked it thankfully. The fourth, too, was too dangerous to risk, and he suppressed his impatience and awaited the fifth. It pitched a little short, and in a flash Wharton had banged it away, and 4 runs were added to the score. One to tie, 2 to win!

Wharton faced the Australian's bowling steadily as the last ball of the over came down, and, resisting the temptation to essay a boundary off so good a delivery, he cut it away and called:

"Come, Brownie—two!"

Like hares the batsmen dashed along the pitch, turned, and sprang back again. As Wharton's bat clumped home safely inside the crease, the ball came in, just too late, and a roar of cheering went up from the crowd on Little Side.

"Hurrah! Well hit, Wharton!"

"Good old Greyfriars!"

"You've licked 'em! Well played!"

"Hard luck, Australia!"

Amid the pandemonium which ensued Harry Wharton hardly knew what happened to him. His back was slapped and congratulations were roared in his ears, for he had batted undefeated throughout the innings, and contributed a faultless 64 to the victory. Charlie Hill was amongst the first to congratulate the Remove captain, and Tom Merry was hardly a second behind him.

"Good man, Wharton!" shouted Monty Lowther boisterously. "And hard cheese, Hill, old chap!"

"Fortune of war again, old scout!" grinned Hill, though he made a wry grimace first. "You fellows seem to have broken our run of luck. Still, it was a great game, and the game's the thing!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"What's up, Fatty?"

Even Bunter, the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, and noted cadger and borrower, was heeded in that happy moment.

"I think you all ought to have a spread in the Rag—to celebrate, you know!" rattled on Bunter, his little eyes gleaming behind his big glasses. "I'd stand treat, only—I've been disappointed over a postal-order. Tell you what, you fellows club together for the feed, and I'll come. I can't say fairer than that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled merrily at Bunter's time-honoured little joke, and the fat Owl joined the crowd which surged towards the school tuckshop. The idea of a spread found general favour, and contributions were quickly forthcoming, though Bunter had to be restrained from commencing on the good things before they had a chance to progress as far as the Rag.

But he came, nevertheless, and as it was an auspicious occasion—a time for the quaffing of toasts in foaming ginger-pop, as Bob Cherry put it—he was allowed to stay. And, needless to say, Billy Bunter consumed the lion's share of the viands, not being troubled by any feelings of politeness towards the visitors.

But everybody was happy, and there were many speeches of congratulation for the victors, and condolence with the vanquished, though the Aussies did not need much cheering up in that congenial atmosphere. And it was a source of pleasurable anticipation for the rivals of St. Jim's and Greyfriars to remember that they would be engaged in the contest for the Maxwell Cup and Shield in less than a week.

It was late when the St. Jim's fellows piled into a charabanc and rolled away in the dusk towards Sussex and St. Jim's, with high recollections of the match between the Aussies and the Friars, and still higher anticipations for their own encounter with those dour warriors. Who would

win the great match on Saturday? There was no doubt concerning that question among the juniors of St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 6.

What Baggy Saw!

"SOLD out!" said Glyn tersely, and Baggy Trimble blinked.

The fat junior had looked into Glyn's study after dinner, not in order to purchase a bottle of Glyn's now famous Reviver, but to watch other fellows doing so, and endeavour to borrow the wherewithal to sample the Reviver himself.

He had expected to find a crowd surging round the doorway, and Glyn with his shirt-sleeves rolled up, busy handing out bottles as fast as he could take the cash; but it was not so. Instead, he discovered Glyn seated behind his improvised "counter," busy in another way, totting up the day's takings, with no sign of customers whatever. Whereupon Baggy had asked, rather unnecessarily, why trade was not in full swing, and Glyn had responded with the two words quoted.

Glyn was very satisfied with the success of his latest "wheeze," and intended to send off the first donation to the cottage hospital at once, hence the fact that he had no time to waste on the podgy Fourth-Former in the doorway.

"I say, Glyn, old fellow—" recommenced Baggy hopefully.

Glyn looked up this time, and pointed to the passage.

"Cut!" he said briefly, and resumed totting as if Trimble had ceased to exist.

"Oh, really, you know!" ejaculated Baggy. "I—I was wondering if you could lend me—that is, I've been disappointed about a cheque, and, having lent Kangaroo my last pound—"

Baggy had succeeded in attracting Glyn's attention at last. The schoolboy inventor gave him a grim look.

"Look here, you fat crab," he growled, "I've nothing to lend, and you needn't spin that ancient yarn about a cheque to me! As for Kangy owing you a quid, that's rot, and you know it. Clear off before I give you my boot!"

"Oh, really!" protested Trimble indignantly. "I was only going to make a suggestion, Glyn, that's all. If you haven't the decency to listen to a fellow for a couple of seconds—"

"Well, get it off your chest!" urged Glyn impatiently. "You can see I'm busy. If you've got anything important to say, for goodness' sake say it and go! That's a tip!"

Baggy glared, but decided to continue.

"Look—look at all that money!" he said breathlessly, indicating the "takings." "I thought—you and I might help ourselves to a bit—commission and—so on—and nobody would ever know!" The fat Fourth-Former broke off, with a cunning gleam in his little eyes.

As for Glyn, he stared unbelievably at Trimble for a few seconds, almost unable to credit the evidence of his ears.

"Say that again—I may not have heard you right!" he murmured at last.

"Who's to know if we take half of it—and share up!" demanded Trimble excitedly, glancing suspiciously over his fat shoulder as if fearful of eavesdroppers. "It would be enough to get a good feed with, at least—lots better than sending it to a mouldy old hospital."

Glyn arose to his feet with a deliberation that would have warned any fellow less fatuous than Baggy. But even he began to feel alarmed as Glyn reached for a cricket stump from the corner of the study.

"I—I say, you—you know—" he protested feebly, retreating into the doorway again.

Glyn eyed him silently, and then advanced.

"It's no good talking to you, Trimble!" he remarked calmly. "The only thing you understand is a stump—laid on hard! It's a wonder to me how you ever manage to keep on the right side of a prison wall—sheer luck, that's about all there is to it! Come here, you fat scoundrel—I'll give you my answer!"

"Yow-wow! I'm not—I didn't mean—" gasped Baggy wildly, as Glyn made a sudden dart and gripped his collar.

"I know you don't know what you mean!" grinned Glyn, swinging his stump suggestively. "Nor does anybody else. I imagine. But perhaps this will help you to remember!"

He whirled up the stump and bent Baggy over his knee with a twist of his arm. Baggy gave a desperate howl, and bumped over on the study carpet, where he lay groaning.

"Stoppit, Glyn, old chap!" he gasped fearfully. "I—I'll tell you what I really came for—I wouldn't touch your rotten money with a barge pole! I—I came for that quid I lent Kangy this morning—you must have mistaken me, somehow!"

There was a step in the passage, and Harry Noble, the Cornstalk of the Shell, entered the study.

"Hallo! What did I hear about me owing somebody a

quid?" asked Kangaroo. "Somebody was yelling at the top of their voice a minute ago!"

Glyn grinned at the expression of consternation which had appeared on Baggy's face.

"Ananias was a fool to that fat rogue!" he remarked, letting the stump fall. "Get up, you podgy porpoise—we'll both help you out of the study, and see who can shift you farthest!"

"Good wheeze!" said Kangaroo, drawing back his foot in readiness.

"Cut off, Baggy!" snapped Glyn, as the fat junior scrambled up. "You've got to get it over, you fat porpoise!"

"Oh—oh, I say!" ejaculated Trimble, edging cautiously towards the door. "You beasts—I think—Yah! Yaroop! Wow-wow-wow!"

What Baggy thought was never known. Arrived in the doorway, he had made a sudden dash for it, but, quick as he was, Kangaroo and Glyn were quicker, and two boots smote the Fourth-Former in a hearty farewell. He fairly flew out of the study and landed, roaring, on his hands and knees. He paused only to scramble up and glare vengefully at the grinning juniors, and give a parting yell as he scuttled down the passage.

"Yah! Beasts!"

Kangaroo grinned and kicked the door shut. Glyn shoved the money he had counted into a bag, and began to pack his stock of bottles into a portmanteau.

"Just over a pound, Kangy!" he remarked cheerfully. "And I can sell tons more of the stuff yet!"

"It's jolly good," admitted Noble. "You haven't any left at all, have you? It seems to ginger a fellow up—like lemonade, only better!"

"And yet it doesn't taste!" said Glyn, smiling slightly.

"Quenches your thirst, though," said Noble. "I haven't the foggiest notion of how you make it, Glyn—but it's a discovery!"

Glyn suppressed a chuckle and picked up the portmanteau. "So long," he said cheerily. "I'm going to replenish the supplies. The Reviver will be on sale by tea-time!"

And with a nod, Glyn left the study and made his way to the school chemistry lab. Glyn was something of a favourite with the science master, being one of the few juniors who felt inclined to experiment for his own instruction after proper hours—and experience had shown that he could be left alone without blowing himself up. The schoolboy inventor was fond of "mucking about" in the lab, but was not likely to court disaster. He found the lab deserted now, as he had expected.

The bell for classes would ring in a few minutes, but Glyn intended to replenish his whole stock before then. It was unfortunate that, as he entered, Glyn did not notice a fat form which bobbed down with lightning rapidity behind one of the benches. And Baggy Trimble, crouching unseen, gave a soft chuckle.

With really remarkable perspicuity, Baggy had perceived in the study that Glyn would shortly have to secure fresh supplies of his famous Reviver, and he had hung about the passages in the faint hope of "spotting" him on his way to the lab. The moment he had caught sight of the portmanteau, Baggy had put two and two together and scuttled off to the lab, where, from the safe vantage of a high bench, he hoped to watch the manufacture of the Reviver unseen. Once in possession of the secret, Baggy had no doubt that he could extort a consideration from Glyn in order to keep his fat mouth shut. He would show Glyn what was what and who was who. He—Baggy Trimble—had been hoofed out of Study No. 11 on his neck. Well, let Glyn wait, that was all!

The Fourth-Former gave a gasp as Glyn approached his hiding-place, and then a smile broke on his fat features. For Glyn had stopped only a few yards distant, and was working at a bench which was plainly visible to Baggy from his hiding-place. Fortune was indeed favouring the fat spy in his nefarious designs.

He grinned as Glyn deposited the portmanteau on the floor, and drew therefrom a bottle. Baggy's eyes gleamed and then goggled as Glyn held the bottle under the tap, filling it with plain water, and then, affixing a neat little label, returned it whence it had come. Baggy's eyes started farther and farther from his head as he watched the whole stock of the Reviver replenished—swiftly as could be desired and at no cost whatever—from an ordinary tap in the school laboratory. The fat junior almost hugged himself as he got over his astonishment and realised what a glorious opportunity he now had of making Glyn squirm! The secret of the Reviver was a "secret" no longer—and Baggy was not the kind of fellow to keep a secret to himself unless he had some very powerful reason for suppressing it!

Trembling with excitement, Baggy saw Glyn refasten the portmanteau, and with a brief glance round, leave the lab and hasten away towards the House.

"The—rotten swindler!" gasped Trimble, rising with

sundry grunts from his cramped position behind the bench. "Getting money under false pretences—that's what he's been doing! I really ought to tell Railton or the Head—and I've a jolly good mind to! And the fellows have actually been thinking they felt better after drinking Glyn's Reviver! He, he, he!"

Baggy spluttered and gave voice to his unmusical cackle as he thought of the "faith that moveth mountains," and which had assuredly succeeded in bringing the junior cricketers back into form!

"When—when I tell 'em, the fellows will slaughter the silly ass!" grinned Baggy joyfully. "That'll get me even with him, at any rate—even if he won't pay to have his rotten secret kept! Not—not that I'd accept a bribe—of course I wouldn't! Still, if he's reasonable—ten bob, say—"

Musing in that pleasant vein, Trimble rolled into the School House and approached the Shell passage, simply bursting with eagerness to see Glyn and tax him regarding the secret which was a secret no longer. He knocked



There was a terrific cheer from the excited onlookers as the madder laugh as Baggy Trimble's mount was left behind, uttering, "you beast!" exhorted Trimble angrily. "Nice old c-

importantly on the door of Study No. 11, and rolled in confidently as Glyn's voice responded.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Glyn, in surprise. "Want to be hoofed along the passage again, old fat tulip?"

"Not so much of your beastly familiarity, Glyn!" said Baggy tartly. "I haven't forgotten the—the indignity to which you subjected me a few minutes ago; but I want to speak to you—on an important matter!"

"I've nothing to lend!" said Glyn promptly. "And you're not going to sample the cake we've got for tea! I suppose you haven't suddenly developed another interest in life besides grub?"

Baggy glowered, but allowed that remark to pass with a sniff.

"Look here!" he grunted. "I know what I know—and your Reviver isn't all you make out, Glyn!"

The Shell fellow stared, and eyed Baggy very closely. "Suppose you come right out into the open?" he suggested quietly. "I shall be able to understand you better if you talk plain English!"

"Well, I may know the secret of the Reviver, and I

may not!" said Baggy, coming as far into the open as his innate caution would allow him.

"Oh, so you've found out the guilty secret, have you, old fat pippin?" asked Glyn thoughtfully. "Might I ask who told you?"

"Nobody!" said Trimble promptly. "That is, I watched you making that lot in the lab just now. It's water—just water out of the lab tap, so there! You know that as well as I do!"

"H'm!" said Glyn musingly. "Here's our Baggy with a secret that he's simply aching to blab all round the school—only supposing he's got hold of the right end of the stick, of course! Tell you what, Trimble," he continued, as if struck by a sudden brain-wave. "If you think a ten-bob note would help you to forget anything you may have found out—"

"Yes? I—I could forget everything for that, easily!" said Trimble, eagerly extending a greasy palm.

"Or perhaps a quid?" pursued Glyn thoughtfully.



of the donkeys were seen to leave the post. Then there was a mined that, come what might, it would not shift. "Kimmup, Get a move on, you little rotter!" (See Chapter 3.)

"Better say a quid. If that would make you forget everything concerning the Reviver—would it, Trimble?"

"Oh, quite!" grinned Baggy, chuckling inwardly at the ease with which Glyn was knuckling under to his demands. And after the first payment there would be a second, and then a third—Baggy could be trusted to see to that!

"Good!" said Glyn briskly, jumping up. "Then if you can forget it as easily as all that, old fat man, you can't know very much about it to start with, can you? And anything you have chanced to discover, you'll say nothing about—you understand, Trimble? See this stump? Right! You can count on the biggest lambasting you ever had in your fat career if you so much as breathe a whisper concerning the Reviver! How does that strike you, you fat blackmailer?"

Baggy's jaw had dropped at Glyn's sudden change of front, and he babbled incoherently as he eyed the stump.

"Oh, you rotter!" he ejaculated. "I—I'll tell—I mean, I won't! I won't breathe a word! Honest Injun! I'll—I'll keep as mum as an oyster! You can trust me, Glyn—you can really!"

"Get out!" advised Glyn grimly. "And bear in mind what I promised you if you let so much as a word drop in your rotten tattle! Think of a record licking every time you want to blab! I want to keep the jape up a bit longer yet—till the Greyfriars match is over, anyway. Now you can clear!"

And Baggy, with an alarmed glance at the junior he had intended to blackmail, cleared.

CHAPTER 7.

Racke's Revenge!

"I SAY, Racke!"

Aubrey Racke of the Shell did not look pleased at the sound of Baggy Trimble's voice, nor at the sight of his fat features as they were inserted into his study. He and Crooke were talking "gee-gees," and they had no use for the impecunious Trimble. Racke glared as Baggy entered the study, and gripped a lexicon.

"I'll give you two seconds, Trimble," he said evenly. "If you're not gone then, I'll—"

"Hold on a minute, old chap!" gasped Baggy excitedly. "I've got some news! You'd be glad to know what I know!" he added mysteriously.

"What's the fat fool got hold of now?" asked Racke, in wonder.

"Some rot, of course!" grunted Crooke. "Heave that lexicon at him! I'm fed-up with the little beast!"

"Might be somethin' in it, though," observed Racke. "Now you're here, Trimble, you can choke it up. If it's anything interestin', you're safe. If not, you go out on your fat neck!"

"I've found out the secret of Glyn's Reviver!" blurted out Baggy desperately.

"Oh!" said Racke, yawning. "Can't see how that rot interests me. What is it—water?"

"That's it!" said Baggy eagerly. "It's just water! He fills the bottles from a tap in the lab—I watched him doing it this afternoon before classes!"

Racke stared as Trimble gave him that startling information. He had never for a moment thought that his case-jest was anywhere near the truth, and yet here was Baggy Trimble—a notorious liar, of course—affirming that Glyn had been pulling the legs of the whole junior school with—water!

"What?" he ejaculated. "You mean to say that Glyn has been sellin' water? Why, I had some myself—it was a first-class pick-me-up! By gad, though, now I come to think of it, it was a bit like very cold water!"

Crooke grinned, and Baggy chortled.

"It's true enough, Aubrey!" repeated the latter. "I hid behind a bench while Glyn filled every bottle he'd got, and stuck his label on each one as he filled it—just like a real chemist!"

And the fat junior went off in a cackle of merriment at the recollection.

"Well, did you ever?" gasped Racke, grinning. "I can hardly swallow it, but, supposin' it's true, what's it got to do with me in particular, Trimble?"

"It'll be the joke of the term!" chortled Crooke. "I always thought there was somethin' fishy about it from the start!"

"If you fellows had anything like my brains," said Baggy sarcastically, "you'd have seen what I'm driving at from the beginning!"

"Oh, cut that out!" grunted Racke. "And leave out the swank!"

"Oh, really, Racke! Still, I don't mind telling you the idea that occurred to me," said Baggy patronisingly. He caught the danger-gleam in Aubrey Racke's eye suddenly, and his tone changed abruptly. "Look here, Racke, I'm the only chap who knows the secret, and Glyn's threatened to lick me if I split!" he said earnestly.

"We'd better tell him that you have, then!" grinned Crooke.

"This is my wheeze," pursued Baggy cunningly. "The fellows are potty over that stuff; they believe it does them good. And Glyn wants them to go on believing it till after the Greyfriars match!"

"I see. Kind of auto-suggestion stunt," said Racke, nodding. "Carry on, old fat tulip!"

"Listen! Supposing somebody put something in the bottles—something to make fellows off colour—say, the day before the match—that's to-morrow?" said Trimble hopefully.

"What exactly do you mean?" asked Crooke.

"The fat idiot doesn't know himself!" grunted Racke.

"They'd all drink it—and half the team would be off colour, perhaps!" gasped Trimble. "The match would be a walk-over for Greyfriars!"

"You rotten traitor!" growled Crooke.

Crooke was not a very sensitive youth, but Baggy's cheery blackguardism irritated him. Which was perhaps a little cool of Gerald Crooke, in the light of his recent conduct over the St. Jim's v. Australia match.

"I think I see the wheeze," observed Aubrey Racke coolly. "You mean we could lay bets on Greyfriars—an' anybody will back St. Jim's now they've trounced the 'Aussies. By gad! What a chance to rook Lodgey! I got clear of him over that last match, but I know he's simply achin' to get me into his clutches again! If I asked him to bet against Greyfriars winnin'—he can have the chance of a draw, too—he'd take it like a shot; an' I believe we could wangle it, as Trimble suggests, so that the St. Jim's team can't play up to form. The match will be touch an' go, in any case. By gad!"

"That's the wheeze, Aubrey, old man!" said Baggy eagerly. "I suppose you can lend me a fiver or so? I'd like to have a little bit on, only—I've been disappointed over a remittance—"

"Oh, shut up!" grunted Racke. "I'll give you a quid if I can work it; but there's a thumpin' lot of risk, an' I don't intend to fall foul of Tom Merry an' his pals so soon after that other stunt. The question is—how could I get at the Reviver? An' I should have to doctor a good many bottles so as to make sure of the cricketers gettin' some of it."

"Get some stuff from a chemist," suggested Crooke. "You want somethin' fairly harmless—just to make 'em sick, that's all!"

"The very idea!" ejaculated Aubrey Racke excitedly. "Thanks, Crookey, old man! You jogged my memory. I've got a packet of somethin'—a white powder—got it from a chemist chap I used to know; he said it was perfectly harmless, but a few grains would make a fellow as sick as a dog—"

"Silly ass to give it to you, then!" observed Crooke coolly.

"Don't be an idiot!" said Racke politely. "Anyway, I've got the packet in my desk somewhere, I believe. Let's look!"

The cad of the Shell threw the cigarette he had been smoking into the fender, and opened the lid of his desk. After a few seconds' search he gave an exclamation of satisfaction and held up a fair-sized packet.

"There's enough here to adulterate the whole of Glyn's stock," he said delightedly, giving the packet to Crooke for inspection. "What luck! Baggy, my fat pippin, do you happen to know if Glyn is in his study now?"

"Yes, he is!" said Baggy vengefully. "He told me to clear, so I came here to show him how I'm going to keep his rotten secrets! You won't have a chance to get into his study to-night, Racke. And—and I only suggested the scheme, mind! You're carrying it out all off your own bat, of course!"

"Oh, of course!" said Racke sarcastically. "I don't expect a fat funk like you to stand by me—and I don't want you to! Question is—when can I get a chance at the confounded Reviver?"

"After lights-out to-night?" suggested Crooke practically. "You could sneak down an' do the job at your leisure; it wouldn't take half an hour to doctor the whole lot. The fellows will drink it to-morrow, an' then you've got them feelin' seedy for the match. By gad! I wonder what Lodgey would lay against Greyfriars? I'd like a fiver on them, Aubrey!"

"That's the best dodge," said Racke thoughtfully. "I should run no risk of bein' interrupted after lights-out. That's settled, then. Much obliged to you, Trimble, an' all that! Here's a quid—comin' over! Catch!"

Baggy caught the note—with his nose. It fluttered to the carpet, whence it was speedily retrieved. A pound was not much—especially as Racke and Crooke appeared to be laying plans for much higher stakes; but, Baggy reflected philosophically, it was better than a mere threat from Glyn—and Racke and Crooke had yet to realise the golden dreams which they were dreaming.

"There's time to run down to the Green Man before dorm, Crookey!" said Racke cheerfully. "Are you game to fix up a bet now? Nothin' like strikin' while the iron's hot, is there?"

"Right-ho!" agreed Crooke. "I must say it was very kind of Trimble to let us into a good thing like this. Much obliged, Baggy! Shut the door after you!"

At which pointed hint Baggy sniffed and rolled out of the study, a pound richer; and, if the secret was well kept, safe from Glyn's wrath into the bargain. Both of which circumstances were a source of satisfaction to Bagley Trimble.

Meanwhile, Racke and Crooke were cycling down the lane towards the disreputable public-house known as the Green Man, at which Joseph Lodgey, the bookmaker, had his head-

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quarters. Lodgey was always ready to "have a little bit on" with his rascally acquaintances from St. Jim's, though on his last transaction with Racke, when he had bet "double or quits" on Australia against St. Jim's, he had suffered a severe jolt to his equilibrium. Instead of winning the sum of forty pounds from Aubrey Racke, he had been obliged to cancel Racke's I O U for twenty pounds in regard to debts contracted previously—and it had gone hard against the grain to do it. But Lodgey lived in hope—and he knew his customers too well to think that they would be able to keep away from him for long.

The frowsy bookmaker was smoking an evil-smelling cigar in the billiards-room of the Green Man when Jolliffe, the landlord, entered with the information that there were "two gennlemen to see you, Joe."

Lodgey grinned and winked.

"Show 'em in!" he grinned. "Let's 'ope it's that there young Master Racke wot took twenty pun off me last week."

He grinned still more and nodded affably as Racke and Crooke were ushered into the billiards-room, neither of them appearing to notice the overpowering odour of stale smoke and alcoholic beverage.

"Take a seat, young gents—take a seat!" urged Lodgey, waving his visitors into chairs. "Why, to be sure, it's a pleasure to be seein' of you agen! Maybe you was wantin' a little business done, Master Racke, sir?"

Racke put on a doubtful expression. It would never do to let the bookie see that he had any especial reason for wanting to back Greyfriars. Racke endeavoured to convey the impression that, as he had done so well recently, he felt like having a little gamble—in which the chances appeared to be in Mr. Lodgey's favour. If Mr. Lodgey had only known it, he was dealing with wits as sharp, or sharper, than his own when he transacted business with Aubrey Racke.

"To tell the truth, Lodgey," said Racke, with an air of complete frankness, "I want to have a little flutter on the match for the Maxwell Cup and Shield. St. Jim's are playin' Greyfriars, you know. As I won a bit last time—"

"You did, sir!" agreed Lodgey reminiscently.

"I was wondering if you'd care to do business again? I should want to back St. Jim's, of course!"

Lodgey shook his head sorrowfully, and Racke winked unseen at Crooke.

"You see, it's like this 'ere, young gent," said Lodgey slowly. "I'll hadnit I was mistook about that there Australian match, but, seein' as 'ow St. Jim's won, it's long odds agen Greyfriars—d'you see?—an' on the St. Jim's ground, too!"

"I suppose so," assented Racke thoughtfully.

"So I must refuse your bet this time, Master Racke!" said Lodgey very decidedly. "I 'ope as 'ow you won't think I'm no sport; but I'd lay five to one agen Greyfriars winnin'—that's flat! I wouldn't take a bet on St. Jim's at odds on."

"What d'you think of that, Crookey?" asked Racke musingly. "Five to one is rippin' odds, you know—an' I hear Greyfriars are a good team. They might bring it off. Dash it all! I'm well heeled just now, Lodgey. I'll take you for a fiver, Greyfriars to win—five to one against! How's that?"

"Count me in, too!" said Crooke, hardly able to conceal his excitement.

Joe Lodgey's bleary eyes opened wide as the two young rascals laid those bets. He would stand to win ten pounds, of course, if Crooke laid a fiver also, and so far as he could see there was no doubt about his winning. But supposing for a moment that he lost? He certainly did not intend to pay out fifty pounds, nor anything like it. Racke and Crooke would lose, of course. But Lodgey was thinking hard as the juniors watched him, wondering at his lack of enthusiasm. The bookie grinned at last.

"You'd make a poor man o' me, young gents!" he grinned, pulling out a little notebook and entering up the bets, after which he handed the juniors receipts. "Still, Joe Lodgey is the man for a bit o' sport—an' I allus pay up if I lose!"

He made that statement in order to promote confidence in his clients; though he had already decided that in the very unexpected event of Greyfriars winning, he would make a dash for it rather than pay up. The rascally bookmaker was well aware that Racke and Crooke would be unable to take any steps if he discreetly disappeared for a while. And that course was only the emergency exit, so to speak. So he nodded cheerfully and puffed with beaming good-humour at his fat cigar, emitting clouds of smoke which set Racke and Crooke coughing violently, though Lodgey did not appear to notice it.

"That's that, then, young gennlemen!" he said, tucking away his notebook. "Nothin' like a bit o' sport, is there? An' when you've won, jest come along here an' you'll find Joe Lodgey with the cash all ready to pay out. So long, Master Racke—and Master Crooke, sir!"

And, concealing their jubilation only by a valiant effort,

the two young rascals were ushered out into the lane through the back entrance of the Green Man and returned to St. Jim's just in time for locking-up.

"By gad!" gasped Crooke. "He swallowed it whole! We're goin' to win twenty-five quid apiece, Aubrey, my lad!"

"I'd like to have put a tenner on—if I'd thought he would have taken it!" grinned Racke. "But there was no sense in overdoin' the thing. If he once got the wind up, he might call the bets off!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Crooke. "And now all we've got to do is put that stuff into the Reviver."

"Trust me!" chuckled Racke, as they entered their study. "We can go over anythin' that wants discussin' after prep."

For the rest of the evening the two schemers waited restlessly for dorm, Racke in particular being keen to get his task over and make the plot secure. He was among the first between the sheets in the Shell dormitory, but he did not sleep. He lay awake while the last drowsy whispers died away, and the juniors' breathing was deep and regular. Roused from a doze by the boom of the clock in the old tower, he slipped silently out of bed and dressed partially in the darkness.

"That you, Racke?" came Crooke's whisper; and Aubrey Racke started violently.

"You comin', Crookey?" he asked faintly.

"If you like!" agreed Crooke. The success of the scheme appeared to Crooke to demand his presence, if only to satisfy himself that everything had gone according to plan.

The juniors were soon dressed, and then, with rubber-soled shoes on their feet, they quietly left the dormitory and crept along the passage. After listening for a few seconds at the head of the stairs, they descended into the Shell passage. All was dark and eerie about them, and several times one of them gave a start as a shadow appeared to move in some alcove.

"Come on!" hissed Racke. "This is Glyn's study!"

The cad of the Shell cautiously pushed open the door of Study No. 11 and entered. Crooke switched on an electric-torch which he had thoughtfully brought along, and Racke drew the blind to hide any stray gleam; for it was possible that one or two of the masters were still in their studies.

Quietly and methodically Racke uncorked the bottles of Glyn Reviver and sprinkled a few grains from his packet into each of them. The powder dissolved immediately, leaving no trace to betray its presence. While Crooke directed the torch on Glyn's "stock," Racke adulterated all the larger sizes and then turned his attention to the smaller ones. He was unable to doctor all of these, owing to the powder running short; but by the time he had finished, quite three-parts of the stock of the Reviver was adulterated and could be relied upon to cause violent sickness as soon as it was imbibed.

Chuckling softly, Racke screwed up the packet and followed Crooke from the study. A few minutes later they were safe in the Shell dormitory, their midnight expedition having turned out an unqualified success.

"To-morrow!" whispered Racke; and Crooke chortled silently as he slipped between the sheets again.

On the morrow—if the rascally scheme worked as they expected—half the junior cricketers, at least, would drink the doctored Reviver and fall victims to the plot. Which was a very pleasant reflection to the two juniors who had wagered against their own school in a cricket match on the following day.

CHAPTER 8.

A Mysterious Malady!

CRASH!

Tom Merry stared rather dully at the little heap of stumps and bails which had once been his wicket. He leaned on his bat and dragged out his handkerchief to mop his brow, while Fatty Wynn grinned at him from the bowling crease.

"Keep your eyes peeled, Tom Merry! That was an easy one, you know!"

Tom grinned and nodded without speaking. Somehow, he had never felt less inclined for batting—and this on the afternoon of the day before the match for the Maxwell Cup and Shield! He could not understand it—he had felt right as rain till practice began—then slowly he had begun to feel seedy.

Fatty Wynn took his little run and sent down the next ball. Tom Merry was dimly aware of its approach, but he made no attempt to play it. And the wicket crashed over for the second time.

"Bai Jove, Tom Mewwy! You didn't twy to hit that one! Are you feelin' off colour, deah boy?"

"What's up, Tom?"

"Pull yourself together, old man!"

There was a chorus from the rest of the cricketers as Tom, his usual healthy cheeks quite pale, leaned heavily on his bat and gasped.

"I—I feel—" he began.

Monty Lowther and Manners trotted up to him, but he waved them back.

"I—I feel as if I'm going to be sick!" he mumbled.

"Great Scott!"

"What have you been eating?"

"You'd better go off, Merry!"

"I think I'll sit down for a few minutes—perhaps it'll go off then," mumbled Tom, walking rather unsteadily to the nearest seat and subsiding thankfully upon it.

Manners and Lowther sat down beside him, looking quite concerned.

"This is rotten, old man!" said Manners.

"Does it feel very bad?" asked Lowther sympathetically.

"Awful!" groaned Tom Merry. "It's tummy-ache and sickness all mixed up together! I sha'n't be fit for cricket to-morrow at this rate!"

"Bear up, old fellow!" urged Lowther. "You'll be feeling better in a few minutes, I expect. I—" Suddenly as Kangaroo came reeling off the pitch, his face chalky white, and his breath coming in gasps.

"My hat, you fellows—make room for a chap!" he groaned, sinking down and holding his head between his hands.

"What the merry thump—why, it's a regular epidemic!" ejaculated Lowther, staring at the rest of the cricketers, several of whom appeared disinclined for further practice, while one or two were sitting on the grass and looking very ill indeed. A groan at his elbow caused Lowther to spin round just in time to see Manners collapse on the other side of the seat, and horrible sounds advised Monty as to what was happening.

"What on earth's the matter with these chaps?" asked Blake, coming off the field. "Here's Talbot and Levison down and out—and these two chaps—they can't all have been gorging, like Trimble. It's a giddy mystery!"

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "I am suah there is some weason for it—do you think they can have been poisoned, Blake?"

"Ass!" said Blake witheringly. "Though goodness knows what they have done with themselves!" he added frankly.

Groan! from Tom Merry.

Groan! from Manners.

A feeble groan from Kangaroo.

"Bai Jove! I'm feahfully sowwy for you, deah boys!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, surveying the smitten cricketers through his monocle. "I'm glad I haven't been dwinkin' anythin' since tea—exceptin' Glyn's 'Wevivor'—oh, deah!"

"What—you, too?" howled Blake.

Gussy made no reply, but fondled the region covered by his fancy waistcoat—when he wore it—and groaned feebly.

"It—it came on all of a sudden, deah boy," he gasped painfully.

Blake and Herries supported their chum, but Gussy broke loose and fairly sprinted behind the pavilion, when in a few moments came a repetition of the horrible sounds which had proceeded from Manners.

"It must be something they've drunk!" said Figgins. "I wonder—"

"What?" asked Lowther eagerly.

"Any of you fellows ever felt queer taking Glyn's Reviver?" asked Figgins.

There was a general shaking of heads—excepting where the juniors were incapable of doing anything but groan.

"H'm! Can't be that, then!" said Figgy judicially.

"Unless he's made a fresh lot lately, and mixed up the ingredients wrong!"

"By Jove! That must be it! I know he made a fresh supply yesterday!" ejaculated Lowther excitedly. "And Gussy just said he'd had nothing since tea but Glyn's Reviver. Oh, the awful idiot! He might have killed anybody, mucking the stuff up like that. Come on, you fellows!"

"Where away?" asked Figgins.

"Glyn!" said Lowther grimly. "We'll drag him down here and show him his handiwork, and then force him to tell us what he puts in his Reviver! Come on!"

"I'm with you!" said Figgins at once, and the two juniors dashed off pell-mell towards the House, leaving Digby with the groaning cricketers, one or two of whom were slowly beginning to feel better. Arthur Augustus returned from behind the pavilion, looking very pale and shaken, but breathing more freely than before.

"Hallo, Dig!" he gasped. "Wheah have the west of the fellows gone, deah boy?"

"After Glyn!" grinned Digby. "He's going to be made to answer for his sins!"

"Bai Jove! I never thought of that—of course, it must have been the Wevivor!" said Gussy. "Now I come to

think of it, theah was a diffevent taste about it, though I natuwallly didn't think it mattered! The widiculous fathead might have made us all sewiously ill!"

"Lucky for the New House bounders they hadn't had any of the new lot of stuff yet!" said Digby. "They're all right. Hallo! Feeling better, Tom Merry?"

The Shell captain looked up and smiled faintly.

"I feel a bit—" he began, and then a paroxysm crossed his face. He leaped frantically for the pavilion and disappeared behind it as Gussy had done a few minutes before.

"Bai Jove! That pwoves it was the Wevivah, Dig!" said Arthur Augustus. "It takes us all in the same way!"

Kangaroo and Manners had recovered, and joined the group awaiting the return of Figgins and Lowther with Bernard Glyn of the Shell. Tom Merry returned to the fold, so to speak, looking as if he had been through it severely, and then there was a shout.

"Here they come!"

Bernard Glyn was to be perceived, with Figgins and Lowther each taking an arm, approaching Little Side very much under protest.

"You silly idiots!" he exclaimed, as his captors halted him before the rest of the team. "There's nothing wrong with the Reviver! If you've been ill it's your own silly faults!"

But a glance at Tom Merry's face, and those of the other sufferers, made Glyn stare.

"My hat! It's hardly likely you'd all be taken ill like that without some cause!" he admitted. "But I can guarantee the Reviver is as harmless as—as water!"

"We'll believe that when you can prove it, Glyn!" said Tom Merry grimly. "But it looks very much like some kind of a fool joke to me—and I'm going to make the author of it sorry for himself! Why, half the team has been ill, and we might easily have been put out of the running for the match to-morrow!"

Glyn started, and a remarkable suspicion came into his mind.

"I don't blame you for looking at it like that, Merry!" he said quietly. "But I give you my word that, as I made it originally, the Reviver wouldn't have harmed a fly. I'll drink a bottle to prove it if you like!"

"I'll get one!" said Manners at once, and darted off to do so.

Meanwhile, the juniors eyed Glyn doubtfully. Certainly, the schoolboy inventor was not the fellow to play foolish practical jokes on the eve of an important match, but the fact remained that some person or persons unknown were guilty, and Tom Merry was grimly determined to discover and punish the offenders.

Manners returned in a few moments with a bottle of the famous Reviver, and Glyn uncorked it and took a sip. Then he spat violently.

"It's been doctored!" he said quietly. "If you fellows will search my study, I dare say you'll find a few bottles that haven't been touched—in fact, there's one in my desk that should be pure enough. I'm asking you to take my word, Tom Merry!"

Tom looked Glyn straight between the eyes, and nodded.

"Your word's good enough for me, Glyn!" he said coolly. "I'm sorry I ever doubted it. I might have known you wouldn't play a rotten trick like that on anybody."

"Thanks!" said Glyn. "Then I may as well let you all into the secret—there's nothing to be gained by keeping it dark any longer. The Reviver was water—just pure water from the lab tap!"

If Glyn had exploded a bombshell among the juniors, he could not have silenced them more effectively. They stared at him in amazement, till at last Lowther spoke.

"Now I come to think of it—it did taste like water!"

Glyn grinned. He could not help it.

"I know it was a jape," he said, "but it worked. And you fellows can't deny that you've got back into form. That's what I invented it for, so you've had your money's worth. And the Cottage Hospital will get the benefit of the cash!"

"Well, of all the japers!" breathed Tom Merry.

"Of all the leg-pullers!" said Figgins deeply.

"Talk about auto-suggestion!" grinned Blake. "Why—we've auto-suggested ourselves back into form—I wouldn't have believed it possible if I didn't know it's actually happened!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors broke into a hearty laugh at the thought of how they had hoodwinked themselves—and as Glyn had said, all to a good purpose.

They crowded up the stairs to Study No. 11, where Glyn began to remove each stopper in turn, testing the contents of each bottle and putting all those which had been tampered with on one side.

"Those are all right!" he said at last, indicating a number of smaller bottles for which Racke had not had sufficient

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powder. "If any of you fellows would like to sample those, you'll find they're pure water, right enough!"

"We know that now!" said Tom Merry grimly. "The trouble is, who on earth could have got at your stock in your absence, Glyn? It must be some rotter with a grudge against the cricket eleven, too!"

"I'll joke them, if I get hold of 'em!" growled Kangaroo.

"Hear, hear!"

The cricketers were still endeavouring to decide on a course of action when a fat face and a pair of cunning little eyes looked in at the doorway.

"Hallo! You're here then, Glyn!" said Baggy Trimble, rolling into the study with cool self-assurance. "I'd like to speak to you a moment in private, old fellow!"

Baggy winked meaningly at Glyn, and the schoolboy inventor glared back. The wink was visible to everybody in the study, though the fatuous Baggy was happily unaware of that circumstance.

"I've no secrets from my friends!" said Glyn coolly. "What was it you wanted to speak to me about, Trimble?"

"No secrets! I like that!" ejaculated Trimble indignantly. Then perceiving that he was letting his fat tongue run away with him, he changed his tone. "Look here, Glyn—you know what it is—let's go into the passage!"

Glyn grinned. Now that he had told Tom Merry & Co. the secret of the Reviver, there was no need to placate Trimble. But Baggy did not know that.

"I'm staying here!" remarked Glyn calmly. "Say anything you've got to say and clear, Trimble!"

Baggy stared, and then an unpleasant expression appeared on his face.

"I suppose you don't mind these fellows hearing what I've got to talk about, then?" he asked angrily.

"We'll go!" said Tom Merry, a little puzzled, but moving towards the door.

"Don't!" said Glyn. "Sit down, please! I want you all to hear Trimble's yarn. Go ahead, Baggy!"

Baggy stared from Glyn to Tom Merry, feeling that something was amiss, but being unable to perceive that his precious secret was now common property.

"Well then, I'll speak out!" he ejaculated angrily. "This rotter has been japing you fellows—the Reviver is just water—I saw him filling the bottles!"

"We've heard that!" said Lowther coolly.

"Eh?" Baggy's jaw dropped. "Who told you? Glyn promised to—lick me if I breathed a word—but—but—aren't you going to rag him for japing you?"

"Far more likely to rag you, you fat frog!" said Blake grimly. "You came here to scrow hush money out of Glyn—that's your style, you fat rotter! But for once you're a bit too late with your news—so scat, while you've got the chance!"

"Yes, push off, old bladder of lard!" urged Lowther.

"You—you—rotters!" hooted Baggy. "As for you, Glyn—I'm jolly glad now I didn't keep mum—and I hope you chaps are too squiffy to play Greyfriars! Yah!"

And with that Parthian shot, Baggy turned to leave the study. But he did not get far. Blake made a jump for the door, but Glyn was there first.

"Not so fast, old fat cherub!" he remarked. "That last bit wants explaining, you know. Who did you blab to, after all? If we can get hold of somebody that knew—"

"I weally think we've happened on a clue, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus excitedly, and quite in the manner of Sherlock Holmes.

"Go hon!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! Twimble may have had a hand in this business, too! I suggest bumpin' Twimble until he chokes up the twuth—it's about the only method of twatment which the wotthah understands, deah boys!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bump him!"

Baggy gave a wild yell as he was seized from all angles and whirled aloft in the grasp of many hands.

"Lemme down!" he roared desperately. "I'll—I'll tell you all I know—only lemme down! I don't want to be bumped! Lemme get down, you rotters!"

The juniors lowered Baggy doubtfully, and he sat on the carpet and pumped for breath.

"I—I say—" he hedged feebly.

"Choke it up, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "It's got to come, you know!"

"Who did you tell about the Reviver?" asked Tom Merry.

"I—I told Racke!" gasped Baggy fearfully.

"Go on!" urged Lowther. "And Racke decided to adulterate the stuff—is that it?"

"Yes!" said Baggy, gasping still. He could see now that his only chance lay in making a clean breast of the whole thing. "Racke's betting against St. Jim's with Lodgey of the Green Man—he thought you fellows wouldn't

be fit for to-morrow—" His voice trailed off before the grim looks that were bent upon him.

"Racke!" said Tom Merry, between his teeth.

"Trying to make us lose the match—like he did last time!" gasped Kangaroo.

"Making us ill!" hissed Manners. "Why—I'll—I'll smash him—I'll—I'll—"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry in his grimmest tones.

And the cricketers, breathing hard, swarmed out of the study, leaving Baggy Trimble gasping on the carpet and feeling devoutly thankful that he was not in the shoes of the schemer of the Shell!

CHAPTER 9.

Nemesis!

"WACKE, you wotter!"

Aubrey Racke of the Shell did not appear alarmed as he heard his name pronounced in accents of concentrated wrath. On the contrary,

he seemed rather amused by the angry faces which were framed in the open doorway of Study No. 7.

"You fellows?" he asked, raising his eyebrows. If his astonishment was assumed, it was well done. "It isn't often that I'm honoured by your illustrious presence, Merry—let alone the cream of the lower school into the bargain. Come in an' sit down, all of you!"

Considering that, even in Racke's palatial study, there was not enough chairs to seat the whole of the St. Jim's junior cricket eleven, that request might have been taken humorously. But the juniors were not in a humorous mood, and nobody grinned at Racke's little joke—not even Lowther.

In their opinion, a jest was a jest—and the adulteration of Glyn's Reviver, even if meant as a jest, came perilously near the limit. But when the motive was nothing less than to "muck up" the chances of St. Jim's winning the Maxwell Cup and Shield, the matter assumed a much more serious and unforgivable aspect. Hence the frowning glances that were turned upon Aubrey Racke and Gerald Crooke—glances which Racke did not appear to notice at all.

As he received no reply, the cad of the Shell shrugged his shoulders.

"If you won't, you won't, of course!" he remarked nonchalantly. "But might I suggest that my time is of value? And if you could get to the point—"

"We'll get to the point fast enough!" grunted Blake, who had been responsible for the greeting which had announced the visit. "Buck up and tell him what he's suspected of, Tom Merry—and then we'll make him sorry for his sins!"

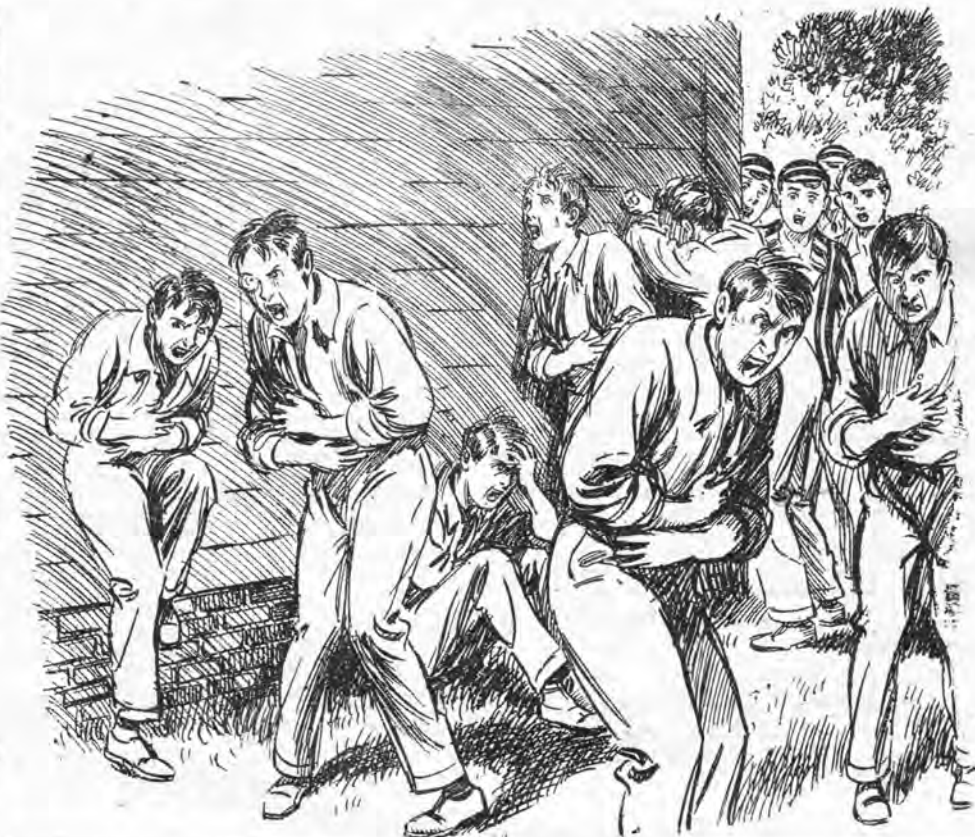
Tom Merry looked straight at Racke as he spoke.

"We suspect you of having put something in Glyn's stock of Reviver—with the intention of making us unfit for the match to-morrow, Racke! We want a plain answer. Do you know anything about it?"

Racke yawned rudely, and grinned coolly at the Shell captain's dark face.

"Dear me!" he smiled. "I really believe you're lookin' a little bit off colour, Tom Merry! An' I suppose that as soon as anythin' goes wrong with your serene highness I'm to blame. Is that it, old bean?"

There was no mistaking the venom behind Racke's smiling utterance, and Tom Merry coloured angrily.



The St. Jim's cricketers were a pitiful sight to behold. "Gwoooch!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy painfully "It—it came on all of a sudden!" There were groans on all sides. Bernard Glyn's doctored "Reviver" was doing its work! (See Chapter 8.)

"Look here, Racke!" he ejaculated, calming himself with an effort. "This is a serious matter, and I'm sorry if we're suspecting you unjustly. But we've heard something from Trimble—"

"What a reliable witness!" murmured Racke. "Sure he isn't guilty himself, and is just pullin' your simple legs by puttin' it on somebody else? Or hasn't that occurred to your powerful intellects?"

"You're guilty yourself, you rotter!" roared Blake. "Look here! Are we going to stay here all night while Racke spins us a series of yarns—when we know he did it all the time?"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry quietly, and there was a doubt in his face. "I certainly hadn't thought of Trimble being the culprit, though I don't think he would have had the nerve to do it! And it would require a pretty strong motive to make a fellow run such a risk, too!"

"Glad you think I've got enough nerve, anyway!" observed Racke imperturbably.

"Rag the rotter!" breathed Manners. "He's only pulling our legs, Tom!"

"Fair play's a jewel!" said Tom Merry. "And Racke's entitled to it, I suppose, as much as anyone else. Still, it looks too fishy! But—but I suppose Trimble's as much under suspicion in a way, especially as he confessed to watching Glyn making the fresh lot of Reviver!"

"More so, I should think!" said Racke coolly. "That fat clam will put it on to the first name that comes into his head when he's found out!"

"Shut up!" grunted Kangaroo. "It comes to this, Tom Merry. Either Trimble or Racke did the job; they were the only two fellows who knew Glyn's secret."

"Fellow might still try to jape you fellows without knowin' any secrets!" suggested Racke.

The juniors glared at the smiling Aubrey, conscious of the fact that they had been rather hasty in condemning him out of hand on evidence no more trustworthy than Trimble's. But they all felt sure that Racke was the culprit. If that was indeed the case, how was it to be proved?

"I shouldn't like to remind you chaps that I've got my prep to do!" said Racke seriously. "But, of course, there's Linton in the mornin'—"

There was a languid step in the passage, and Cardew lounged in the doorway, watching them all with his slightly supercilious smile.

"Dear men," drawled Cardew, "you fellows taken to callin' on dear old Aubrey in your old age? After all your warnin's and sermons on rectitude, Thomas, old chap! Might a fellow join in the little game, whatever it's goin' to be? I'm dyin' for a hand at banker. Can you fellows play banker?"

Some of the cricketers grinned. But they did not intend to leave the matter unsifted. The culprit—whichever he was—who had plotted to make them lose the match—had to be found, and justice visited summarily upon him.

"Wherefore the worried brows?" queried Cardew, glancing from one to another of the juniors. "Have I butted into a council of war, by any chance? It looks as if another of Aubrey's misdeeds has come to light and a council of the junior school met to deal with him. Let me watch, an' I'll play banker with what's left of him afterwards!"

"Cut that rot out, Cardew!" grunted Blake. "This has got to be gone through. Some—some frightful rotter shoved some stuff in Glyn's Reviver since yesterday afternoon and half of us have been sick over it. Trimble says it's Racke's plan to put us off form, so that he can win a bet with Lodgey on the Greyfriars match!"

Cardew appeared surprised.

"Then why not ask him frankly an' in a straightforward manner if he knows anythin' about it?" he asked. "He'll tell you he didn't if he did; but that should be sufficient affirmative from a liar of Aubrey's capacity. You're slow, Blake!"

"We've asked him!" growled Blake. "He denied all knowledge of the affair, and suggests that Trimble is the culprit all the time!"

Cardew's eyes glimmered as he surveyed the dark face of Aubrey Racke and the frowning brows of the junior cricketers.

"Any of you fellows thought of gettin' out a bike an' whizzin' down to the Green Man to ask Lodgey?" he said, grinning at the expression which appeared on Racke's face.

"We wouldn't be seen dead at the Green Man!" said Blake. "The matter has got to be decided without that!"

"You've got a job on, then," said Cardew amiably. "Aubrey will lie till he's blue in the face, an' you can't do anythin' but take his word!"

Racke breathed freely again as the faces of the juniors showed plainly that they did not intend to follow Cardew's cheery suggestion. The locality of the Green Man was strictly out of bounds to St. Jim's juniors, and though that would not have deterred them had they wanted to go there, none of them wished to enter the disreputable headquarters of Joseph Lodgey.

"It's Racke or Trimble; that much is pretty plain," said Tom Merry at last. "And whoever it was must have had a pretty powerful motive. Get Trimble, somebody!"

"What a bwainy ideal! Leave it to me, deah boy!" chirruped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Let's question Trimble in front of Wacke. You know what a liab Trimble is. He's suah to give eithah himself or Wacke away before he's said two words!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Cut along, then, Gussy!"

And while the rest of the juniors waited in grim silence, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy disappeared in quest of Baggy Trimble. Fortunately, the fat junior was in his study, lounging in the armchair and watching his study-mates at prep—following his usual cheery custom of "chancing it" with Mr. Lathom in the Form-room on the morrow.

"Twimble, deah boy, you're wanted!" announced Gussy, looking into Study No. 2 and approaching Baggy cheerily.

"Eh?" ejaculated Trimble, with a rather apprehensive glance at the swell of St. Jim's. "I didn't do it. I'm perfectly innocent—"

"That remains to be seen!" said Arthur Augustus, fastening an aristocratic finger and thumb on one of Baggy's fat ears. The ear was drawn in the direction of the door, and the rest of Baggy's person had no option but to follow the ear.

"Yow-wow! Yah!" roared Trimble violently. "You rotten bully, D'Arcy! Lemme go!"

"What's he done?" asked Mellish curiously, but making no move to go to his study mate's aid. Feats of valour were not in Mellish's line, and Kit Wildrake had not looked up from a particularly obstreperous Latin verb.

"That's what we're goin' to find out, Mellish!" replied Gussy grimly, marching Baggy willy-nilly into the passage. It was but a few steps to Racke's study in the Shell passage, and Trimble was walked briskly to what seemed to him very like his doom.

"Heah we are, Baggy!" said Gussy brightly. "Now you

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can tell us what you told Wacke, an' we'll see which of you is the feahful boundah who made us—ahem!—ill!"

Baggy took one wild glance round the study, and quailed in terror before the glances which were directed at him.

"Yaroogh! I never! It wasn't me! Don't you fellows dare touch me!" he burst out. "It—it was Racke all the time—you can take my word, I suppose! I'm innocent as—as an unborn babe!"

"Ease up a minute, and answer a few straight questions, my fat tulip!" said Monty Lowther calmly. "We're trying to discover whether it was you or Racke—"

"It was Racke!" roared Trimble, without waiting to hear the rest of Lowther's indictment. "If—if you fellows say I mucked up Glyn's rotten Reviver, I'll go to Railton and have it out—so there!"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, giving Trimble a peculiar look.

If the Podgy Fourth-Former was willing to drag the Housemaster into it, suspicion devolved again on Racke with something approaching certainty.

"I mean that!" said Baggy desperately. "It was Racke, I tell you! I knew he had some rotten scheme on, but—but not enough to be able to warn you fellows! If he tries to put it on to me, you can fetch Railton now!"

"Hold on a minute, Merry!" interrupted Racke, moistening his lips. "I'm—I'm afraid Trimble has made a mistake. This—this is all a misunderstanding, an' you've only got that fat rotter's word, at the best! I tell you—"

"Let somebody go down to the Green Man and ask Lodgey!" roared Trimble, his wits sharpened by impending danger. "I'm willing to stand by what Lodgey says—Racke's got a bet with him—I know that!"

"All right!" said Racke coolly, a cunning grin appearing for a moment on his face. "Let somebody go an' ask Lodgey if I've got any bets with him, an' if I have, you can do what you like in the matter. When it's proved that I haven't, I shall expect an apology from all you fellows!"

"Don't worry! You'll get it all right—if you're innocent!" said Tom Merry. "But—who wants to go to the Green Man?"

There was no rush to secure that enjoyable mission. On the contrary, although it would put the matter beyond doubt, there appeared to be a general desire to escape being deputed for the task. It was Cardew who made the next suggestion.

"I'll volunteer for service, dear men!" he drawled, giving Aubrey Racke an amused glance. "An' perhaps I shall do more good than you fellows. You see, Lodgey knows me—in a business way, so to speak—an' he'd tell me the truth without tryin' to conceal anythin'. If one of you highly moral youths asked him, he'd probably swear that he'd never even met our Aubrey—an' that would be rather disappointin', wouldn't it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Something in that!" said Kangaroo thoughtfully. "Of course, Lodgey would only spin some rotten yarn to one of us, but to Cardew—"

"Bein' a well-heeled customer who hasn't been on the razzle lately," grinned Cardew, "he'd let me into it like a shot—an' what a surprise for dear old Aubrey!"

Racke's face had undergone a variety of changes during the last few seconds. He had felt quite secure at the thought of one of the junior cricketers interviewing Lodgey—he knew he could rely on the rascally bookie to screen a "customer" with any number of lies. But Cardew—Racke was well aware that Cardew could pull Lodgey's leg to just what extent he pleased, and then the whole miserable pretence would come toppling down about his ears like a house of cards.

"I'll break bounds in such a noble cause as this," said Cardew, with a grin at Racke, "an' run down to the Green Man now, if one of you fellows will help me get my jigger over the wall."

"I will!" said Blake at once.

"Any of us will, Cardew," said Tom Merry. There appeared to be no lack of support for Cardew in his quest for evidence.

"You fellows—" began Racke, his face white.

"Well?" asked Tom Merry, his eyes gleaming.

"I—I own up!" panted Racke. "I—I only did it for a joke—nothin' more, I swear. There was no bet with Lodgey—"

"That remains to be seen!" said Cardew coolly. "I'm ready, Blake, if you're goin' to help me with that bike!"

"Let's go, then," said Blake.

"Hold on!" gasped Racke. "I'll—I'll admit it all! You rotter, Cardew! I have got a bet on the match. I—I—"

His voice trailed off as his string of excuses failed him. "So you admit having doctored the Reviver in order to make us lose to-morrow, you—your unspeakable cad!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yes!" muttered Racke miserably.

"What's to be done with him?" asked the Shell captain, drawing a deep breath. "Everything's too good for a rotter like that! He ought to be boiled in oil!"

"If the Head knew about the bets, and the attempt to put us out of the match, he'd flog and expel the sneaking cad!" said Kangaroo grimly.

"Oh! Don't—don't report it, for heaven's sake!" gasped Racke fearfully, his disdainful manner completely forgotten now. "I—I—Do anything you like, but keep it dark, for goodness' sake!"

"Oh, we'll keep it dark!" growled Tom Merry, "though you certainly don't deserve it! Any suggestions, you fellows?"

"Yes," said Glyn, producing several bottles of his Reviver from his pockets. "I brought these along in case they were wanted—they've all been doctored by Racke—every one of 'em!"

"Make him drink 'em all!" grinned Blake. "Good old Glyn! That's a regular brain-wave, old scout!"

"That's the caper!" chortled Kangaroo. "When he's got through that lot he'll be feeling like nothing on earth, I'll guarantee!"

"Good man, Glyn!" said Tom Merry joyfully. "Here you are, Racke, take your choice! You can drink this stuff, or we'll think twice about keeping the affair secret! You're getting off jolly cheaply, anyway!"

"Ow! Keep off!" gasped Racke, as he was seized and a bottle of the adulterated Reviver forced to his lips. "I—I—Yarrough!"

His remarks ceased as the Reviver swamped down his throat, and he was obliged to swallow it. That bottle drained, another was forced in its place, and then another. The cad of the Shell was helpless in the hands of the grinning juniors.

"There! I think that's enough to teach him the evil of his ways!" said Lowther, with satisfaction, as Racke collapsed on the hearthrug, with a dismal groan, after having imbibed the sixth bottle.

"Feelin' qualmy already, Racke?" asked Cardew, with a grin.

Racke groaned again and crawled to the fender.

"Ow! Get out, hang you! Get out!" he gasped, and ended with a sudden gurgle.

Grinning, the juniors crowded out of the study and left the schemer of the Shell to recover from his punishment as speedily as he could, feeling that they had done their utmost to persuade Aubrey Racke that honesty was, after all, the best policy.

And their best was very good indeed—as far as physical effects went, at any rate. Racke spent a night of agony, and turned out of bed in the morning looking as pale as a ghost. The cricketers had completely recovered from their own doses, and that, in their opinion, was all that mattered.

And in the sunny that day—where he was obliged to retire after breakfast—Racke had ample time to regret his cleverness in adulterating Glyn's Reviver!

CHAPTER 10.

The Maxwell Cup and Shield!

"GOOD old Greyfriars!"

"Go it, Wharton!"

"Show 'em some cricket, Bob!"

"Hurrah!"

That terrific chorus of cheers, greeting Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry as they emerged, padded and gloved, from the pavilion, showed that the visiting team had brought over plenty of supporters.

The weather, after promising rain, had cleared up wonderfully, and, in spite of a shower in the early morning,

the wicket was in perfect condition for Greyfriars to open their innings. The excitement was intense, and a dense throng surrounded the ropes and filled every available deck-chair. The Head, with a sprinkling of masters, relations, and friends of the juniors, graced the gathering in front of the pavilion.

Gussy's Cousin Ethel, seated with Doris Levison, waved happily to the St. Jim's cricketers as they took the field with the Greyfriars batsmen.

Added interest had arisen from the fact that Sir John Maxwell, the governor who had presented the cup and shield which was to go to the victors, had discovered that this was the hundredth encounter between the junior elevens of Greyfriars and St. Jim's, each having won forty-one matches, the odd eighteen having been drawn. This announcement rendered both sides all the keener to record a victory, and take the lead in the long list of famous fights.

Tom Merry had lost the toss, but that had not dismayed the cheery Shell captain in the least. There was always some consolation in knowing just how many runs would be required. With the whole day to play, it was hoped that there would be plenty of time to finish.

A roar of cheering and a ripple of hand-clapping greeted the first hit—a flashing boundary from Harry Wharton's blade. Fatty Wynn caught the ball as it came in, with a rather serious expression on his plump features. He addressed himself to the bowling with all his skill—and Fatty Wynn's skill with the ball was a byword at St. Jim's.

It was not long before the fat junior had a success to record, a fast ball whipping in from the off and clipping Harry Wharton's bails into the wicket-keeper's hands.

"Well bowled, Wynn!"

"Good old Fatty!"

"Stick it, Falstaff!"

While the New House bowler grinned and spun the ball from hand to hand the Greyfriars skipper walked back, with 5 to his credit, and sent in Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire.

The batsmen settled down, and the runs came apace. Fatty Wynn gave place to Talbot, and Levison relieved Kangaroo at the other end, but Bob Cherry and Mark Linley refused to be parted. At 39, however, Levison held a flying ball from Bob Cherry's bat, and the cheery Bob retired after a spirited 15.

Batsmen came in, and the wickets fell—chiefly owing to the bowling of Fatty Wynn and Talbot—but the score mounted with unpleasant rapidity.

Vernon-Smith had a joyous "knock," and was only dismissed by a wonderful catch in the slips by Figgins—the Bounder of Greyfriars having made 25. The 50 was long past, and 75 appeared on the board, with Johnny Bull and Squiff at the wickets, and they added a useful 20 before Squiff was caught off Talbot's bowling.

The last man gave little trouble, and his wicket fell to Fatty Wynn, with the total at 99.

The cricketers streamed off the field, the visitors very satisfied, and Tom Merry & Co. looking and feeling far from cheery.

"Not so bad, Merry!" grinned Harry Wharton. "You fellows will have some luck if you get as many against Inky's bowling!"

"Rats!" retorted Tom Merry, with a return of his sunny smile. "You'll wake up when we get to the wickets, I can assure you!"

The teams partook of a light lunch in the shade, and then returned to the field under a sun which could only be described as sweltering. It shone from a sky of deep azure and with the intensity of molten fire—or so it seemed to the cricketers.

"Phew!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he followed his skipper

Here you are, chums!
This superb stand-up
cut-out photo of
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on to the field. "We shall jolly well roast out here! Get 'em out quick, Inky, or you'll find your fieldsmen have all turned into grease-spots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The bowlfulness will be terrific!" parried Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his remarkable English. The blazing summer sun had no terrors for Inky, whom it reminded pleasantly of his own dusky clime, and he gripped the ball, with a gleam in his dark eyes, as Tom Merry and Talbot came to the wickets.

"Play!"

Tom Merry swung his bat and gave a gasp. He heard a crash and turned to behold a sadly-wrecked wicket. With a crimson face the St. Jim's skipper left the crease and hastened to hide his blushes in the pavilion.

"Hard luck, old chap!" murmured Bob Cherry, as he passed.

Tom Merry grinned faintly. He merely granted in response to the rest of the St. Jim's batsmen, awaiting their turn at the wickets.

"What was wrong with that one, Tom Merry?"

"Why didn't you hit it?"

"Oh, give a chap a rest!" granted Tom, reddening still further. "I just missed it—by Jove! There goes Blake!"

Blake had indeed "gone"—his middle stump having been lifted clean out of the ground by a delivery from Hurree Singh.

Jack Blake's face, as he came back to his comrades, was the colour of a particularly ripe tomato. His chums mercifully forebore to remark on the second "duck" of the innings, for matters were speedily becoming serious.

Talbot and Kangaroo were batting, and they could usually be relied upon to hit anything and everything that came their way, and to punish the loose balls without mercy. But this afternoon they floundered uncertainly before the bowling of Hurree Singh and Squiff, the Australian junior, and it was not long before Kangaroo was neatly caught behind the wicket.

"Man in, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, in a voice in which there were a variety of emotions, alarm and astonishment being chief among them. "And, for goodness' sake, don't collect another duck's egg—Kangy's only just dodged it."

Arthur Augustus nodded comprehendingly, and sallied forth, with the fixed intention of "collaring" the Greyfriars bowling and flogging it to all parts of the field. He resolved to hold his special late cut in reserve, and to run no risks whatever until he had his aristocratic eve in and felt well set. He took centre with great solemnity, and faced Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with an owl-like expression on his face.

The first ball certainly looked easy enough. The swell of St. Jim's was tempted to hit out at it, but refrained. Caution was to be his watchword at first. Instead of sending it to the ropes with a glorious drive, Arthur Augustus reached out and patted the ball respectfully back along the pitch. At least, that is what he intended to do. What actually occurred was that the ball glanced off the edge of his bat and whizzed straight in the direction of Bulstrode, who was taken quite by surprise by that unexpected "chance."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Gussy, as Bulstrode, moving a second too late, missed the catch and the ball rolled harmlessly in the grass. "Bai Jove, you know, that was a close shave!"

And in the pavilion, Tom Merry breathed again as Gussy stopped the next ball and hit a single off the next. But the swell of St. Jim's did not enjoy a lengthy innings. He went out a little too far to an inviting ball from Hurree Singh, and turned round to find that he had been swiftly and efficiently stumped. With a glance of surprise at the wicket-keeper, Gussy tucked his bat under his arm, with three runs opposite his name on the score sheet.

To the relief of the St. Jim's batsmen, Talbot, after a shaky opening, settled down to play a steady innings, but it was only too obvious that he was far from happy and quite unable to "make hay" of the bowling in his usual manner.

Figgins, with Cousin Ethel's adoring eye to give him courage, made a valiant attempt to brighten the innings, and contributed a fiery fourteen before he was caught brilliantly on the boundary by Harry Wharton. Levison succeeded him, but was clean bowled first ball, and returned with a heightened colour and the third "duck" of the innings. The remaining batsmen appeared to be struggling against an overwhelming fate, and Fatty Wynn, the last man, was cleverly bowled with the feeble total of 34 registered.

The faces of the home team were glum as Harry Wharton approached them. A paltry 34 after the Friars had made 99! It hardly bore thinking about!

"Ahem! You fellows following on?" asked Wharton, suppressing a smile.

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Tom Merry summoned a feeble grin.

"I suppose so!" he responded. "My hat! We're going to pull up our socks this time, though!"

The Greyfriars skipper nodded and strolled tactfully back to his chums. Tom Merry beckoned to Talbot, and they began to refasten their pads.

"And this time," said Tom Merry grimly, "we sha'n't be back again quite so quickly, unless they're putting magic behind their bowling!"

"It seems like magic, when that Inky chap's bowling!" granted Blake. "He's hot stuff, and no mistake!"

"So is the Australian!" grinned Talbot. "But we've taken their measure now, and they won't find us quite so easy to get rid of! Come on, Tom!"

And, while the crowd round the ropes greeted them with loyal handclapping and cheerful shouts, the two batsmen strode hastily to the wickets and faced the Friars' bowling once again.

To the infinite relief of the rest of the team, Tom Merry and Talbot survived the first over, and the second. After the third, neither seemed to be troubled much by the bowling, and at last the runs began to mount up.

At 25 a brilliant catch dismissed Talbot, and Blake went in. Then ensued a partnership. Tom Merry and Jack Blake remained together for over after over, and the wiles of the visiting bowlers were exerted in vain. The total stood at the imposing figure of 70 for two when Tom Merry left, a victim to a break from Hurree Singh.

The Shell captain sent in Noble, and the Australian junior proceeded to get amongst the runs almost at once. Blake was hitting with great freedom, and 90 had appeared on the board when he left with a well compiled 32.

Arthur Augustus went in, and to the profound surprise of his comrades, did not return immediately. He stayed to add seventeen before Harry Wharton, coming on as a change bowler, captured his off stump. Tom Merry's face was bright now, for with the total at 115, St. Jim's had a sporting chance of winning after all.

Nor was this the end of the innings. Figgins and Redfern both had useful "knocks," and Fatty Wynn got going for the last wicket and hit a couple of "fours" with all the strength of his podgy shoulders behind them, before going down to Squiff.

The innings closed for 149, leaving Tom Merry in a very satisfied frame of mind. After the disastrous collapse of the first innings, he had visualised something like an innings defeat, but now, with the Friars set 85 to win, good bowling and fielding might easily turn the match into a brilliant victory.

An early adjournment was made for tea under the old elms, and then the last—and deciding—innings was commenced amid terrific excitement. Wharton and Cherry opened, and though they took no risks, they let no chance go by without availing themselves of it to the full. Ten appeared on the telegraph board without the loss of a wicket. Fifteen followed, and the St. Jim's faces became a little anxious. The Greyfriars pair were set now, and began to take liberties with the bowling. It was in attempting a little too much with a ball from Fatty Wynn that Bob Cherry played the ball on to his own wicket, and retired with thirteen, the total standing at 23.

Linley followed, and speedily made his presence felt. While the faces of the St. Jim's supporters grew longer and longer, Wharton and Linley hit freely, and 40 rattled merrily on the board with their partnership still in full swing. In spite of desperate bowling changes, the 50 went up amid cheering, and then Mark Linley gave a difficult catch in the long field. Monty Lowther made a flying leap at the ball, caught it, and rolled in the grass, but his arm was held high above the ground, with the red sphere clasped tightly in his palm.

"Out!"

After that remarkable catch, a change seemed to come over the fortunes of the Friars. The batsmen came in bravely enough, but Fatty Wynn and Talbot, ably backed up by Kangaroo, sent them back again with very few runs to their account, and as the visitors' hopes began to droop, those of St. Jim's mounted higher and higher.

The total was 63 for seven when Vernon-Smith came to the wicket. The Bounder wore his usual cynical grin, and he nodded cheerfully to Wharton, who had survived so far by brilliant batmanship.

"Show 'em what we can do!" grinned Smithy.

And Wharton nodded back.

From that point another and equally startling change came over the spirit of the game. Seventy-seventy-five—and a single gave Vernon-Smith the bowling. The Bounder drove a four, and the umpire called "over." Greyfriars wanted only five to win as Fatty Wynn took the ball for a fresh over. He bowled, and Wharton drove the ball away hard. The batsmen ran twice in almost complete silence. Two to tie, three to win!

Fatty Wynn, summoning all his cunning, sent down his

most deadly ball. It flashed past the bat, and in the unconscious silence the crash of Wharton's wicket was as sweetest music to St. Jim's ears.

There was a yell from Figgins.

"Oh, well bowled, Fatty! Well done, old man!"

But St. Jim's were far from being out of the wood yet. The Friars wanted only three runs to win, with Bulstrode and Tom Brown to bat. Bulstrode came in now, obviously nervous, but determined to do his best. He made a heroic attempt to stop Fatty Wynn's next ball—and the rending crash of falling stumps sounded again.

Three to win! Last man in!

Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, came out to join Vernon-Smith, looking very calm and confident. He had often stone-walled his side to victory while his partner secured the necessary runs, and he had no doubt as to his ability to do so again.

Three to win! Tom Brown carefully placed the ball past point, and the batsmen ran once.

Vernon-Smith had the bowling, and his expression was set and grim. He watched Fatty Wynn's delivery right up the pitch, and drove it away. And as the batsmen crossed, a gasp from the St. Jim's crowd signalled the fact that the scores were level.

Level! And Fatty Wynn, cool and calm, bowled the last ball of the over. Down it came—a little red sphere seemed to be drawn to Tom Brown's bat—then a sudden swerve—and a crash as the New Zealand junior's wicket was scattered behind him!

Greyfriars were all out—the teams had tied!

The roar that went up could have been heard easily at Rylcombe. Fellows swarmed on to the pitch, hoisting Fatty Wynn on their shoulders, and Greyfriars supporters surrounded Vernon-Smith and clapped him on the back till he ached under his congratulations.

"A tie, after all!" grinned Tom Merry, gripping Harry Wharton's hand in the crush.

"Yes, by Jove! I thought we had it then!" gasped Wharton. "But you fellows didn't deserve to lose—you played up like Trojans—and Fatty Wynn is a regular corker, and no error!"

"He is! He are!" grinned Tom. "We wanted to lick you, of course, but after a game like that neither side really deserved to go under!"

The Head, rising to his feet, called for silence.

"I will now present the Maxwell Cup and Shield!" he announced with a smile. "Boys, make way for the rival captains! Wharton—Merry, step forward, please!"

The two skippers, grinning, walked along the avenue which was made for them, and halted respectfully before the Head. Dr. Holmes shook hands warmly with both of them.

"I must congratulate you both heartily on a great display of sportsmanship!" he said. "We have all extracted the utmost enjoyment from the game, and the result is any-

thing but a disappointment. After such an exciting finish, I am glad to see that honours are evenly distributed. But the trophies will have to be held alternately for six months—when they are to be fought for again, under the terms of Sir John's presentation. Have either of you boys a suggestion—ahem!"

"Let Greyfriars have it, sir!" offered Tom Merry. "As they are the visiting side."

"We'll toss for it!" suggested Harry Wharton, producing a shilling. "If you think that would be satisfactory, Dr. Holmes?"

"It is certainly a fair solution to the difficulty!" assented the Head.

Wharton spun the coin, and Tom Merry called

"Heads!"

"Wrong, old chap! Tails!"

And Wharton showed the tail of the shilling uppermost.

"Greyfriars will hold the Cup and Shield for the first six months, then!" announced the Head. "At the expiration of that period, they will be returned to St. Jim's."

"And when they come back," murmured Tom Merry to his chums, "they won't go away again—we'll see to that!"

"Rats!" grinned Harry Wharton, under his breath. "We shall only be lending you them for six months. Wait and see!"

And there was a terrific roar of clapping as the Head concluded his speech and sat down. The game was followed immediately by a bumper spread in the junior common-room, where the chief event of interest—outside the appealing of hungry inner men and the proposing of innumerable toasts in ginger pop—was the contest between Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wynn to see who could shift most from the festive board. But Baggy, who had been slacking in a deck chair all the afternoon, fell away badly towards the finish, and Fatty Wynn romped home an easy winner.

After further speeches and a general exchange of compliments, Harry Wharton & Co. piled into their charabano and rolled away towards Greyfriars, with the Maxwell Cup and Shield proudly exhibited at the helm by Bob Cherry.

But, as Monty Lowther remarked after the cheering had subsided, and the Greyfriars cricketers had disappeared round a bend in the lane, the trophies were only lent. And when they were returned at the end of six months, the St. Jim's team were determined that they should not pass out of their possession again. Which remained for the future to unfold.

Aubrey Racke, who had spent a quiet day in the sunny, suffering from some mysterious complaint which defied the house dame, did not join in the general rejoicing which took place that evening. Racke would possibly have felt a little better if the Cup and Shield had gone with the Greyfriars fellows—for a whole year! His little scheme had come to nothing.

But Racke was not considered in the scheme of things that night. At a supper in Study No. 10, Tom Merry made a speech, and several other fellows followed suit.

After all the sensations of the past few weeks, the visit of the Australians, and the great game with Greyfriars, everybody was well satisfied—all excepting Racke, whose schemes had failed utterly to bear any fruit but retribution!

It had been a great day for the Schoolboy Sportsmen.

THE END.

(Look out for a tip-top story next week, dealing with the holiday adventures of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled: "THE MOTOR-BOAT BOYS!" By Martin Clifford. All "Gemites" will vote this top-notch, full-of-rim yarn one of the finest they have ever read.)

Maxwell Cup and Shield Scores.

GREYFRIARS.

First Innings.		Second Innings.	
H. Wharton b Wynn	5	b Wynn	33
R. Cherry c Levinson b Talbot	15	b Wynn	13
M. Linley lnc b Wynn	18	c Lowther b Wynn	14
P. Todd c Merry b Noble	6	b Wynn	4
F. Nugent c and b Wynn	4	c and b Talbot	2
H. Vernon-Smith c Figgins b Wynn	25	not out	11
S. O. I. Field c Kerr b Talbot	12	b Talbot	3
J. Bull st Redfern b Noble	11	b Wynn	2
H. J. R. Singh b Talbot	2	b Wynn	1
G. Bulstrode b Wynn	1	b Wynn	0
T. Brown not out	0	b Wynn	1
Extras	0	Extras	0

Total 99

Total 84

Bowling: Wynn 5 for 33, Talbot 3 for 39, Noble 2 for 27.

Wynn 8 for 41 Talbot 2 for 43.

ST. JIM'S.

First Innings.		Second Innings.	
T. Merry b Hurree Singh	0	b Hurree Singh	34
R. Talbot c Bull b H. Singh	9	c Nugent b Field	13
J. Blake b H. Singh	0	b Wynn b H. Singh	32
H. Noble c Brown b Field	2	b H. Singh	11
A. A. D'Arcy st Brown b H. Singh	3	b Wharton	17
G. Figgins c Wharton b Field	14	c Cherry b Field	12
E. Levinson b Field	0	c and b H. Singh	5
R. H. Redfern c Linley b H. Singh	2	b H. Singh	9
M. Lowther b H. Singh	1	not out	5
G. F. Kerr not out	1	c Linley b H. Singh	1
D. L. Wynn b H. Singh	1	b Field	8
Extras	1	Extras	2

Total 34

Total 149

Bowling: Hurree Singh 7 for 10, Field 3 for 23.

Hurree Singh 6 for 67, Field 3 for 51, Wharton 1 for 29.



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J. B. HOBBS.

IN this week's "Magnet" look out for a grand photograph of Hobbs, the hero of cricket. A splendid stand-up, cut-out portrait of the Idol of All England, the man who can cut in and wrest triumph out of a seemingly lost cause, will be welcomed by everybody. The magnificent series of photos now being given away by the "Magnet" and "Popular" have had, as was only natural, a bumper success. By the way, the "Popular" presents this week J. M. Gregory, the famous Australian fast bowler. Get these two splendid photos—Hobbs of Surrey, and Gregory from the far South. They will look well on the table in your den, reminders of what grit and set purpose can do for a man.

"EVERY BOY'S HOBBY ANNUAL!"

A special introductory word is demanded for the "Hobby Annual." Directly it is realised what this magnificent book really means to all fellows with a hobby, the trumpets will be sounding! "Every Boy's Hobby Annual" is a superb book for everybody who has a hobby. Its articles are written by experts, and lavishly illustrated with clear drawings, photos, and diagrams. Everything is there from wireless to carpentry, and from Nature study to laboratory enterprise. There are three pocket detachable charts dealing with radio work, fretwork, and woodwork. Bear in mind that the long informative articles on hobbies are right up-to-date. "Every Boy's Hobby Annual" breaks into fresh country. It is a book which will have an immense appeal to all readers of the companion papers. See you make sure of a good thing!



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All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

LUCKY LANCASHIRE!

JUST LIKE PAT!

Two Irishmen who were old friends met in the street one day. "Sure, I met a man last week, and bedad I'd have sworn it was yourself," said one. "And wasn't it?" asked the other. "Devil a bit!" replied the first. "But he was your very image barrin' he was a thrifle grey. I suppose you haven't a twin brother a few years older than yourself?"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Vincent Whelan, 5, Kylemore Avenue, Deane, Bolton, Lancs.

ONE FOR TOMMY!

Tommy: "Talking of riddles, uncle, do you know the difference between an apple and an elephant?" Uncle (benignly): "No, my lad, I don't." Tommy: "Well, you would be a smart chap to send to market to buy apples, wouldn't you?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Eva North, 14, Eastwood Avenue, Littleover, Derby.

A MATTER OF TIME!

Two recruits stationed at a fort overlooking the sea were examining one of the fort guns. One suggested that they should let it off, adding that nobody would be any the wiser. They loaded the gun, one of them holding a bucket over the muzzle to drown the sound. The gun was fired, and the shell and bucket, with the soldier in tow, went flying gaily out to sea. An officer immediately rushed up to the remaining soldier to inquire the cause of the commotion. "Where's Murphy?" he yelled. "Gone for a bucket of water, sir," coolly remarked the recruit. "How long will he be?" roared the officer. "Well," came the answer, "if he comes back as quick as he went, he's due any minute!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss L. Harvey, Apperley, 106, Constitution Road, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

AN OLD FRIEND AND A NEW ONE!

Book your orders right away for "The Holiday Annual," and "Every Boy's Hobby Annual." These two grand books will be published on September 1st. But don't imagine it will be safe to wait till the date named. Of a surety it will be nothing of the kind. "The Holiday Annual" has delighted thousands and thousands of readers for years past. You will find it full of the most exciting tales, and with delightful pictures in colours, also handsome photogravures, and heaps of wit and humour of the finest brand.

LOOK OUT FOR THE SHERBET MAN!

Would you like a free gift of a box of delicious sherbet? Of course you would! Then look out for the Special Representative of the GEM at the seaside this summer! At all the principal seaside resorts our Representative will be SPECIALLY LOOKING OUT for boys and girls who are carrying a copy of the GEM. To everyone seen displaying this paper, he will present free a delicious box of sherbet. So take your GEM with you when you go on the beach, and show it as prominently as you can. Our Sherbet Man will be on the look-out for you!

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE MOTOR-BOAT BOYS!"

By Martin Clifford.

For next Wednesday see the GEM for a ripping story of Tom Merry & Co. under the above title. Real top-line holiday fare this, with our old friends and prime favourites distinguishing themselves mightily ashore and afloat. This thrilling yarn is the first of a splendid new series in which the interest and excitement are keyed up to a high pitch.

"A PHANTOM THRONE!"

By Sidney Drew.

Look out for a breathless and extra-long instalment of this serial in the next number of the GEM. This is really big stuff, showing Val and his plucky British band putting it across the cunning satellites of the ex-Kaiser.

Your Editor.

EASILY EXPLAINED!

Diner: "Waiter, there's a button in this soup." Waiter (a retired compositor): "Very sorry, sir, Printer's error—should be mutton!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Clifford Argyle, 9, Victoria Street, Rusholme, Manchester.

A GREAT OVATION!

They were experts, but chiefly in the art of bragging. At that particular moment they were discussing their own wonderful feats as vocalists. "Why," said the American, "the first time I sang in public I was simply showered with flowers. Enough, in fact, to start a florist's." "That's nothing," said Pat. "The first time I sang was at an open-air concert, and the audience was so delighted, they presented me with a house." "A house?" scoffed the American. "You must be off your head!" "Faith, and it's true!" said Pat. "They presented me with a house, but, begorra, it was a brick at a time!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. J. Clark, 34, Brooke Road, Grays, Essex.

A RUDE AWAKENING!

A certain old gentleman took a great interest in his allotment. One day the following advertisement caught his eye: "All garden pests killed instantly by our method. Give us a trial. Post free, five shillings." The old man immediately forwarded the sum, and received a small package in return, which, when opened, disclosed a toy wooden mallet, with these instructions: "Hit them on the head with this. Repeat if necessary!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. W. Bennett, 134, Northwold Road, Clapton, E. 5.

QUITE CORRECT!

Mr. Corkerton, who had an irrepressible habit of boasting, was holding forth. "Yes," he said, "I was hanging on the buffers, and the train was going at seventy miles an hour. My arms grew tired, my hands slipped, and I remembered saying, as my head struck the rails—" "Hard lines!" remarked a quiet little man.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. F. Nash, 50, Brighton Road, Godalming, Surrey.

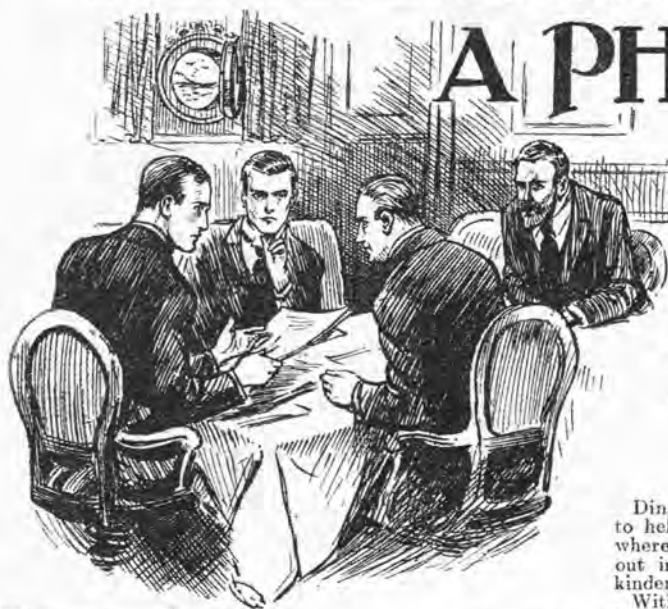
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THE MAN OF MYSTERY! When Ferrers Lord, the mysterious millionaire—whose power appears limitless—gets on the warpath even the ex-Kaiser and his intriguers have to sit up and take notice!



A PHANTOM THRONE

By Sidney Drew

An Amazing Story of Breathless Adventure and International Intrigue.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR!

FERRERS LORD, millionaire and world traveller, entertains the Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary aboard his yacht, the Lord of the Deep. In the privacy of Ferrers Lord's cabin these Ministers of H.M. Government discuss informally with the millionaire and Rupert Thurston the activities of the Royalist party in Germany. Lord declares that the plot to restore the Kaiser to the throne is likely to be put into operation at any moment, and adds that should Germany be plunged into civil war, the whole of Europe would be involved in consequences too horrible to contemplate. Ferrers Lord then suggests a way out of the trouble, and although it is fraught with much risk to those who throw in their lot with him, the millionaire answers for the loyalty of all aboard the Lord of the Deep, and offers to take that risk.

Under the command of Midshipman Val Hilton, Prince Ching Lung, David ap Rees, Benjamin Maddock, Barry O'Rooney, and a number of ordinary seamen proceed to an island named Klarspargen, where, in accordance with the orders of Ferrers Lord, they meet James Wigland, an interpreter and ex-spy, who leads them to a rectangular underground chamber—a one-time German submarine base—built below an old mill.

They are investigating its inner secrets when the mill is blown sky-high by Baron von Stolzenburg, who, it transpires, owns the island. The Baron is made prisoner and taken into the underground chamber.

Later, Val and his companions are discovered by a party of Royalists who have foregathered on the island to meet the ex-Kaiser, and in consequence are forced to beat a hurried retreat to their stronghold. The Baron pleads neutrality and Val releases him. The Germans, however, bring pressure to bear, and the Britishers are forced to vacate their refuge. Clad in invisible clothing—an invention of Ferrers Lord—they are making their getaway down a secret channel, when Ching Lung's quick eyes discern two prowlers on the bank whose strange actions portend danger!

(Now read on.)

The Armed Ghost!

"THERE'S a boat on the way to catch us, son," said Ching Lung. "Those Huns seem to have got our plans nicely taped, and they've found out about our dinghy and raft, thanks, of course, to Stolzenburg. To do the chap justice, I did hear him promise not to do anything with his hands against us, and he may not have thought he was breaking his contract with you by helping his side against ours with his mouth, for they have a funny sense of honour. To cut it short, they intend to start the fireworks when they catch sight of their boat, and expect us to beat it at once. As the blazing petrol will flow out and downstream, we must go up to dodge it, and their boat is, according to programme to sail up outside the fire area and then run in and nail us!"

"Brutes," said Val. "I wish the tide would run faster. Do you see the boat?"

"No, you watch for that while I watch the Hun on the bank. He's looking for the boat, too, and if it doesn't turn up for another five minutes we may manage to crawl out of the soup. We're only semi-invisible, you know, and O'Rooney is doing the right thing in sitting tight. A splash or a creak might be fatal."

Dinghy and raft seemed to have joined in a conspiracy to help the Huns for they persisted in hugging the bank where the tide was almost dead, and declined to float out into the brisker ebbing current. The clouds were kinder, for they veiled the moon.

With one eye on the shadowy figure of the watcher, Barry ventured to press the blade of one of the sculls against the bank and push, and then they began to move a little faster, the dinghy swinging broad-side on to the tide, for which Ching Lung was grateful as it saved his neck. Dave, who was lying on the raft between Maddock and Wigland, gave the bo'sun his whispered opinion of Huns and ex-Kaisers, and it wasn't a flattering one.

"Keep your breath to cool your porridge, Master Dave," growled the Bo'sun. "If a streak of luck don't hit us soon you may have months and months to tell your gaoler all that, if he'll listen, souze me. And if he does listen I hope he won't understand English, for your remarks will get his goat. Are we spotted?"

They saw a flash of light. The watcher had switched on a flash-lamp, but its ray was not turned downwards, but outwards towards the north-east. Then he turned round and the light vanished.

"Dig in, Barry, dig in and take your chance, man," said the prince in a quick whisper. "That's the signal to fire the petrol!"

"Oi daren't troy to turrrn, sor. Oi'd seil the whole bag of thricks in wance to the murdering blackguard if I did."

"Keep down and in," said Val. "There's a boat coming up and we may sneak past her. But watch him, watch him!"

Val could not see the boat, but Barry O'Rooney seized the opportunity, and the stern end of the camouflaged raft was seven or eight yards below where the watcher stood when he turned again.

"There she is, Ching," said Val. "She's only creeping up under a fore-sail. My stars! That was a close thing! We only just missed that!"

From the open sea-gate shone a broad stream of light which told them that the petrol was ablaze. The light was seen from the boat and at once she hoisted her mainsail and the breeze filled it. Other men had joined the watcher, for there was no need to guard the man-holes as the flaming petrol would guard that.

"Another chance, Barry," said Ching Lung. "They're busy now waiting for us to bolt, for they know we couldn't stick in there more than two or three minutes. When we don't come out they'll think we've committed suicide!"

"Or found a fire-proof hiding-place down there," said Val.

"Yes, they may think that, son, and I jolly well hope it, for they'll have to stop and make sure, and the show won't cool down for hours! The trouble is," he added, "that they're more likely to think we've managed to dodge out without being seen, though their sentry will swear himself black in the face we haven't."

"Great thunder and gridirons!" said Barry O'Rooney. "They've let a floating volcano loose on us! Phwat a loife!"

A thin rivulet of flame came trickling through the sea-gate, a rivulet of blazing spirit that grew broader as it advanced. It lighted up the sea, the sandy shore, the advancing boat, and the figures on the bank. The burning stream, for some mysterious reason, ran straight out in a broad band, curved in the current, and then advanced with

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increasing speed between the raft and the dinghy and the boat.

The growing light from this river of fire was not the only peril, although that prevented Barry from using the sculls. It advanced so rapidly that it was soon threatening to become a fiery barrier between them and the open water, a barrier that might drift inwards, for the wind was blowing towards the island.

The heat had driven the group of excited Germans farther up beyond the sea-gate. The breeze that passed over the zone of flame was so hot that Ching Lung and Val could feel the heat through their hoods and gloves. The shape that it had taken now was that of a serpent with many coils, and the head of the snake had pushed in front of them.

"We're done, Ching," said Val. "The rotten stuff is twisting in, and it's going to shut us in a loop!"

"I believe you, son, and there's plenty of it still running out of the hole," answered Ching Lung grimly. "That does it!"

As he spoke, the head of the fiery snake curved in shorewards till the flames were licking the edge of the sand.

"The rotten island seems like a magnet to it!" groaned Val. "It's absolutely pulling it at us."

"Bedad, there's only wan thing Oi can see for ut unless we want to grill, and that's to get ashore," said Barry O'Rooney. "Ut's the wind doing ut. Oi've been nearly dhrowned at say more than wance and nearly burned alive ashore, but, bedad, this looks loike a mixture of the two, and it's a monstrous sort of way to doie to be kilt by foire and wather at the same toime."

"Nothing else for it," muttered Val bitterly. "The rotten stuff is driving nearer, so we've got to do it. Will these things stand salt water, Ching?"

"I haven't an earthly, if you mean these togs, but I have several earthlies that any goods turned out by the chief and our big pal, Hal Honour, are well up to sample. And be smart about what you mean to do, son, for I'm getting too warm to enjoy it, and a big, red-hot curve is pushing our way."

Val leant over the stern.

"Do you hear, you fellows? I'm turning it up," he said. "It's either get ashore or burn. Don't make a ripple as you get overboard. Try to swim as quickly as water rats, and then crawl out gently and lie flat."

"I never tried to swim in a mackintosh like this, gloves, and a pair of stockings with rubber soles," said Dave, "but I'm jolly anxious to try. They say drowning is an easy death, but I know, frizzling isn't. When do we go?"

"At once, you ass! The next few puffs of wind and the blazing petrol will be washing round you!"

They were only a few yards from the bank, and, crawling over Wigland, Dave allowed himself to roll off the edge of the raft into the water. The cloak hampered his legs, but he found that he could easily swim such a short distance using his arms alone, and he was soon safely ashore.

The others followed one by one without any mishap.

"Another wash-out!" said Dave. "Out of the fire into the ash-pit. What stunning stuff this camouflage is! I can just spot the raft and the dinghy, but—Gosh! How do we go now, Val, commander of these poor, wet, lost sheep? Supposing the camouflage does the trick and the Huns don't get us, what then?"

"As I don't think they'll be anxious to lease the place from Von Stollenburg, they'll climb into their bus and clear out."

"Then that old guy Robinson Crusoe has got us walloped to a frazzle!" said Dave. "He had a nice fat wreck to go to on his desert island when he wanted some grub or a new suit. It was quite a decent island, too, with palm trees and things—not like this sandy hole. There's not a bite or a drink on the whole dust-heap, for it's all on the raft. The only johnnies likely to come here in six months are those smugglers, and we've scared them stiff, so how do we go, my lad?"

Val, who had dried the lenses of his field glasses as well as he could, was looking through them towards the bank above the sea-gate, and did not answer. It was Barry O'Rooney who did.

"There's an old rule that's always carried out by those unlucky gossונים who, like myself, are such fatheads as to follow the say for a living," he said. "Whether you're castaways in an open boat, on a raft, or flung ashore on a desert island, the rule holds good and never changes. We'll suppose, bedad, that the castaways are grown-up men; who, thin ut's aisy, for they play pitch and toss and ate the loser, and so they go on till the luckiest winner has aten

the whole bunch. When there are bhoys there, whoy thin it's aisy still, for ut saves the throuble of tossing. They kill and ate the youngest and tenderest first, and the oldest and toughest bhoys last. But niver moind, Masther Dave, af ut comes to carrying out the ould rule and we have to club you on the head for lunch, you'll be doying in a noble cause, good luck to you! The last man Oi helped to ate was a ship's cook named McGruncher, and whin Oi think of ut, ivery tooth in me head begins to ache loike fury!"

"And then you woke up, Barry," said Dave. "Can you make anything of it, Val?"

"Not much—the glasses are wet and smeary. The boat seems to have dropped anchor! Where is the raft and the dinghy?"

"You'll know in a minute, and so will the Huns, son," said Ching Lung. "We must wriggle out of this, sharp!"

There was no need to explain why, for something suddenly began to blaze that was not petrol. The cloth that covered either the raft or the dinghy had caught fire, and it would not be long before the Germans would arrive to know the meaning of it.

"Cut for it one at a time," said Val, "for that will be safer than moving off in a bunch. We'll meet at the mill. Cut off for a start, Dave, and you follow him, Wigland."

Whatever had caught fire did not burn furiously, but it burnt with a vivid green flame that was certain to attract almost immediate attention. Val sprinted for thirty yards or so, and then knelt in the sea-grass and watched the Germans come running along. In the big figure which outpaced the others, he recognised his late prisoner, Baron von Stollenburg. When they stopped in a group, pointing and gesticulating, they looked dead black against the green glare.

"Worse and worse," thought Val. "That bit of bad luck will give us away again. We were too close to the shore to drown, and they know we're not idiots enough to let ourselves be burnt! Oh, bother the light! It must be some chemical in the stuff that makes it flare briglit green like that. My hat! They're well on us!"

Two of the Germans, one of them with a flashlamp, were bending down with their backs to the sea, and Val knew that although the amazing invention of Ferrers Lord and his engineer was almost perfection for its intended purpose, it had its weaknesses. It might render a person or an object almost perfectly invisible in an uncertain light, but it could not hide footprints in the sand.

It was the tracks they had made in coming ashore that the Huns had discovered. On the bare sand they might be able to follow traces with a flashlamp, but it would be a slow process and an almost impossible one where the sea grass grew thickly.

Val left them to it. At night, with their camouflage, the Huns might just as well have chased some of the wisps of smoke that were drifting over from the burning dinghy, but in the morning it would be a very different thing. The mill was the only real bit of cover, and that would very soon be raided.

Val gave the aeroplane a very wide berth, and sat on their old friend, the mooring-post, for a breather and then made for the stump of the ruined mill. There were pockets in his coat so heavy and soggy with water that he stopped to turn them inside out. There was something hard in one of them, which turned out to be a pair of silver-plated handcuffs.

"Gee! The last person who wore this coat must have been on an arresting job," he thought. "I fancied that it felt a bit heavy for water."

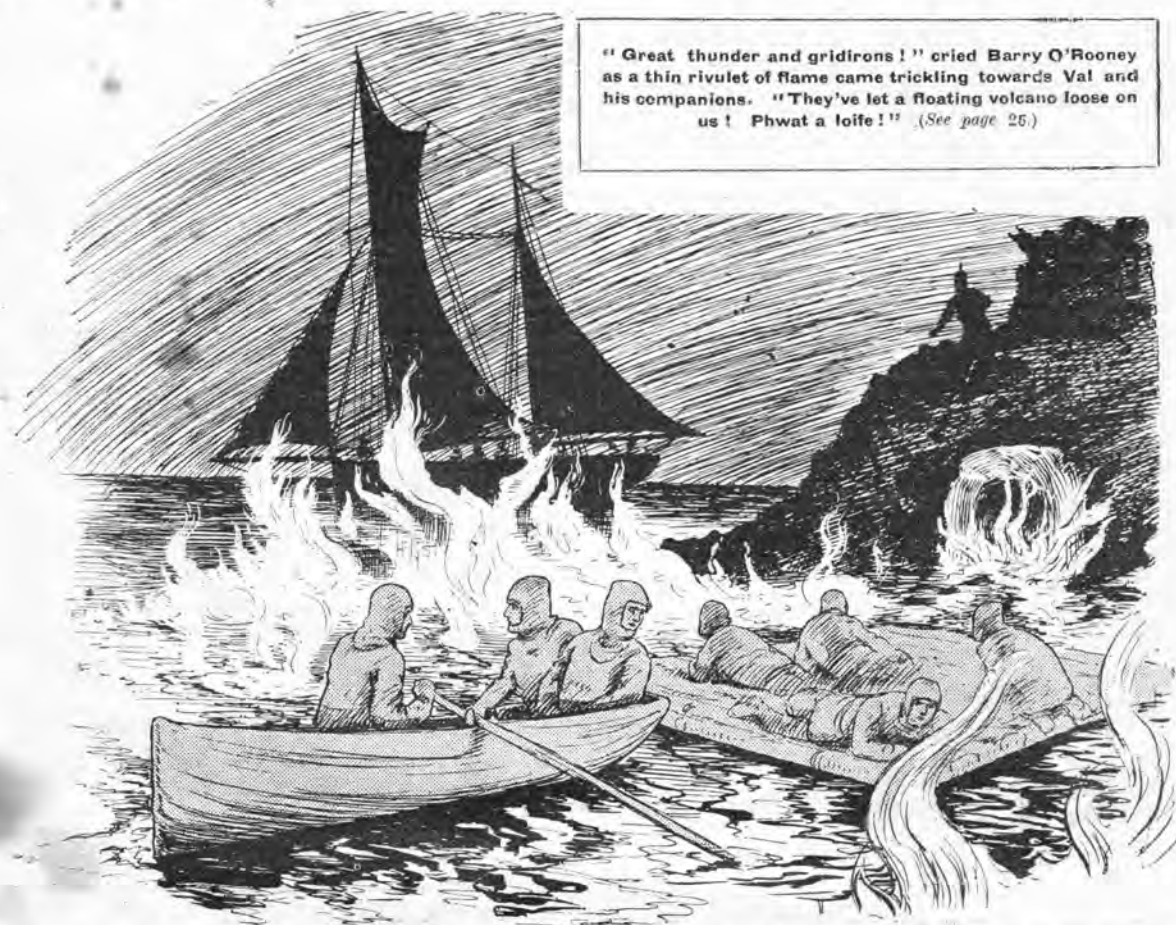
There was something weighty, too, in one of his inner pockets which he remembered was Ching Lung's automatic pistol. Val tingled to his very finger tips as he pulled out the weapon. A great idea had come to him, a simple, obvious idea, and it seemed so ridiculously easy to accomplish that he felt inclined to laugh.

Treading as lightly as possible and keeping his hands behind him, he walked towards the big aeroplane. The Huns had not left it quite unguarded and the flicker of a match to light a cigarette betrayed the guardian.

It was the pilot of the machine who had taken possession of the ex-Kaiser's chair and found a bottle with some champagne in it, and though the wine was rather flat by this time, it was quite palatable. The pilot took off his cap, rubbed his hand over a head of hair that stood up erect all over his head, and yawned.

"A fine time they took to roast out and capture a few English pig-dogs," he said to himself. "Will they never make an end of it? In half an hour I would have cooked

"Great thunder and gridirons!" cried Barry O'Rooney as a thin rivulet of flame came trickling towards Val and his companions. "They've let a floating volcano loose on us! Phwat a loife!" (See page 25.)



them like so much pork. And a long night's flight in front of me before I see my bed! Dunder! What was that!"

Very slowly the man put down the glass just as he was about to drink and very slowly he turned in the chair. Val did not think he had made any sound, but he knew that something had startled the German. Looking steadily in front of him with terrified staring eyes, the Hun pilot reached back to the table with his right hand and grasped the neck of the champagne bottle.

He could see something and yet he could see nothing tangible, only something grey and horrifying. The man was no coward, for although his limbs were shaking and a clammy perspiration was oozing from every pore in his body, he rose to his feet and peered at the uncanny shadow.

"The wine," he muttered, "and yet I have only drunk two glasses! But I am not used to wine. Fool, fool! There is nothing, nothing! The wine has jumped into your eyes! Maniac, what could there be but the wine in your eyes!"

He tossed the bottle into the sand, but evidently his own explanation did not satisfy him for he moved towards Val a few inches at a time, telling himself there was nothing but a crazy shadow, the result of a couple of glasses of stale champagne. Val was regretting the German language he had despised at school and refused to learn.

It was not worth regretting, for Val felt himself master of the situation, as well he might be, for he seemed to be holding all the aces in the pack. And then the pilot of the aeroplane saw something that was tangible and real. It was an automatic pistol, and it was levelled at his head though it was held by an invisible hand. It did not seem to be floating there, but to be attached to something faint and spectral.

The German made a hoarse rattling sound in his throat. A shining pair of handcuffs were beside the pistol. And then Val spoke in English.

"Out with your wrists, my lad," he said, "and no foolery or nonsense. I've got you set, do you understand? Silence!"

"Yes, Herr Ghost, I speak English," said the German, as the shining handcuffs closed over his shaking wrists. "Vonderful, vonderful, ach, der camouflage! Ach, der disguise! I dake you for a ghost and my fool of knees still together knock. I gif in!"

"Then trek it full pelt for what's left of the mill, and remember the ghost is behind you with a gun!"

The Captured 'Plane!

"CHI-IKE!"

At Midshipman Hilton's subdued call, other dim spectres emerged from the gloom and gathered round the prisoner.

"Gag this chap, Mr. Maddock," said Val. "He's the pilot of the bus and he may upset things if he squeals too soon. Hurry up, for his pals have discovered where we came ashore, and I think they must be getting a bit nervous. Take the key of those bracelets and put it in his pocket, otherwise they won't be able to free him till they get hold of a file. A word with you, prince."

"Both ears are at your disposal, commander," said Ching Lung.

Val lowered his voice.

"I'm going to steal their 'plane," he said. "We've made such a mess of things in general that we can't stay on Klarspargen. They can land big reinforcements from the boat, and even if we dug a trench and tried to keep them off, having neither food nor water would soon settle our hash. The rest depends on what petrol there is left, for they have been burning it pretty lavishly."

"Do it now, commander," said Ching Lung.

Once more Val used his binoculars.

"Finished, Mr. Maddock?"

"My last and only handkerchief has gone, sir," answered the bo'sun. "Our Hun friend is now wearing it as a respirator to keep the damp night air off his chest; souse me, so if I catch a sudden cold in my head myself it will be pretty nasty for me unless O'Rooney lends me his!"

"Bedad, if Oi do you'll be lucky, bhoys," said O'Rooney. "You'd better throy Jimmy Wigland."

"They're on the move," said Val. "Shift along and commandeer the bus. You pilot her, Mr. O'Rooney, and we'll see what petrol there is. Take her out West until we know how we stand for juice."

"An' no time to waste, either, old scouts," put in Dave. "Here comes another bunch of the pirates."

Seven or eight men had just landed from the boat, obeying

"A PHANTOM THRONE!"

(Continued from previous page.)

a signal flashed to them from further down the beach. The bo'sun gripped the prisoner, and after laying him flat on his back in the sand, he advised him to remain there quietly for another ten minutes.

As the shadows moved towards the aeroplane, they saw a fat stunted human figure. The man had just climbed out of the machine. It was Rudolf Zeimmeyer. He came waddling towards them, the faint moonlight glistening on his round spectacles. He was very short-sighted and failed to see any of the mysterious shadows. Then men from the boat were defiling across the sand. Val glanced that way and saw something he did not like—a gleam that seemed to come from the barrel of a rifle.

"Down and let him pass," he said.

Zeimmeyer waddled on so close to Maddock as he crouched in the sand, that by reaching out his left arm, the bo'sun could have seized one of his thick ankles. The German was slightly deaf, too, as well as short-sighted, for Dave's nose began to tinkle and he was unable to suppress a strangled sneeze, but Zeimmeyer did not hear it. The next moment the shadows were flitting forward again, and once again Val looked back.

"Time to quit," he said. "Up with you and away like a streak!"

The prisoner was on his feet and running across the sand tearing at the gag with his manacled hands. He got

rid of the bo'sun's handkerchief and uttered a resounding yell and then a success of hoarse shouts. The propeller of the aeroplane whirled and clattered and the machine moved across the sand, so nicely levelled for the benefit of the All-Highest, with quickening speed.

There were more yells—yells of amazement, consternation and fury, and then a rifle shot, and then the captured plane was in the air and winging seawards.

"This," remarked Master David ap Rees, with a grin, "is what I call a cheerful stunt! It's the first real smile I've had since I came here! I'm afraid they'll be quite angry with us, Ching. How many years do you get for pinching an aeroplane if they get you?"

"Couldn't tell you, old bean," said the prince. "If I ever helped to steal one before, I was sensible enough not to get caught. A nice bus, eh? If our commander finds plenty of juice and decides to make a 'bee-line' for Portsmouth aerodrome or any other British aerodrome, there'll be some fun when we arrive! By the build of her this plane belongs to the German Central Airways Company, and isn't government property. If she had belonged to the government, Zeimmeyer might have kept his mouth shut. Yes, I can see funny doings, my son, very queer doings!"

"Then for the love of Mike give Val a tip and tell him what to do!"

(Val and his chums have certainly put it across the Germans, but with a scarcity of food and petrol their position is still precarious! Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums.)

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