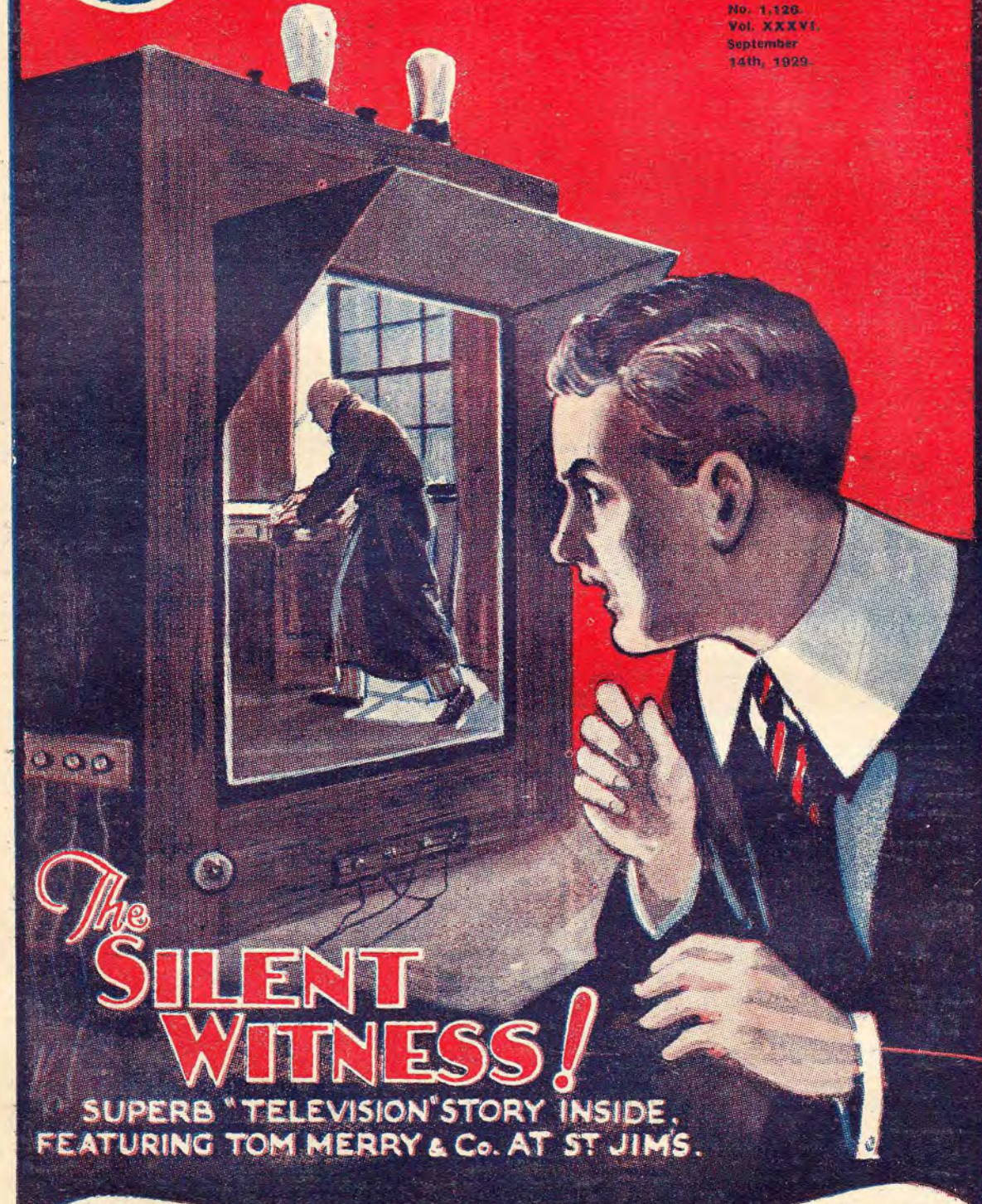


BRILLIANT NEW SCHOOL STORY BY DAVID GOODWIN STARTS TO-DAY!

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The **SILENT WITNESS!**

SUPERB "TELEVISION" STORY INSIDE,
FEATURING TOM MERRY & Co. AT ST JIM'S.

HERE'S A NOVEL COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY—

The SILENT WITNESS!

MARTIN
CLIFFORD

Of all the innumerable inventions and scientific experiments that are the absorbing hobby of Bernard Glyn, the inventor of St. Jim's, none have met with the amazing success of his latest "craze"—television. But even more startling is the part Glyn's television-set plays in solving one of the most baffling of mysteries!

CHAPTER 1.

Glyn on the War-path!

"G LYN!"

"Where's Glyn?"

"Where the dickens is that frabjous chump?"

Bernard Glyn, of the Shell at St. Jim's, was in great demand.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of St. Jim's, had searched the Shell quarters in vain. Jack Blake & Co., from Study No. 6 in the Fourth passage, had scoured their part of the House without success. Harry Noble, better known as Kangaroo, and Clifton Dane, who were Glyn's study-mates in No. 11, had gone downstairs and looked in the Form-room, the Hall, and the Common-room, only to draw a blank.

Bernard Glyn was nowhere to be seen.

"The prize idiot!" said Tom Merry, as the searchers all met again in the Shell passage.

"The burbling jabberwock!"

"Just like the fathead to arrange to take us all home to tea and then disappear!"

It was annoying. There was general agreement on that point. Invitations to tea at Glyn House did not come along every day of the week, and when they did come along they were not to be sneezed at, so to speak. Mr. and Mrs. Glyn were a deservedly popular host and hostess, and their guests were pretty sure of an enjoyable time. Tom Merry and his colleagues had been looking forward to this particular visit, and now, at the eleventh hour, Bernard Glyn had vanished.

"He can't have forgotten, can he?" asked Manners.

"Well, hardly. It was only half-an-hour ago when he reminded us of it," said Jack Blake, with a shake of his head.

"But you know what an absent-minded fathead he is when he starts thinking about his potty inventions. And I've heard he's developed a bee in his bonnet about television, lately."

"That's just what makes it unlikely that he's forgotten the appointment, though," put in Tom Merry. "The very reason we're going to Glyn House, I believe, is to inspect the television broadcasting apparatus he's had fixed up."

"So that's that!" remarked Clifton Dane. "But where is he?"

"Give it up!"

"Seems to me we've looked everywhere now," said Jack Blake. "Except, of course, the gym, which is hopeless, and the— Oh, my hat! Why, of course!"

"What's up now?"

"The labs!" grinned Blake. "Nobody thought to look in the blessed laboratories—the most likely spot of all!"

"Great pip! Of course!"

"Why ever didn't we think of them before?" asked Tom Merry. "Ten to one in doughnuts the silly ass has drifted into one of the labs and forgotten the time. Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry led the way, and the rest of the juniors crowded after him down the stairs. Nobody had previously thought of looking into the laboratories, but now that Blake had suggested it, the fellows could see that they had missed the one place above all others where Glyn was likely to be found.

Two at a time Tom Merry & Co. raced down the stairs, and sprinted along deserted passages, until they reached the two adjoining rooms devoted to the practical side of physics and chemistry respectively.

Tom Merry threw open the door of the chemistry lab and looked inside. Then he snorted.

"Oh, the chump!"

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"Is he there?" asked Blake.

"Of course he's there—large as life and twice as natural! And up to his eyes in it as though he's here for the rest of the afternoon!"

"My hat!"

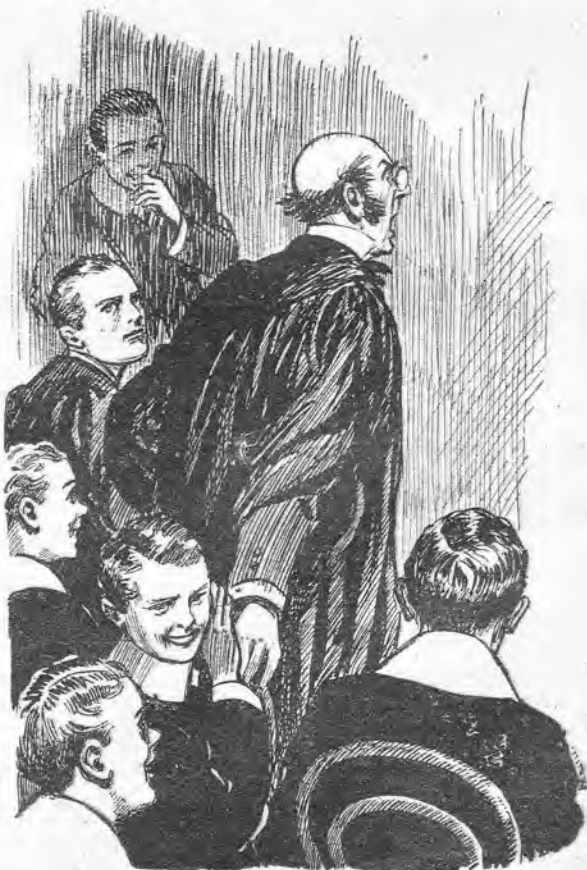
"What a host!" grinned Kangaroo. "Glyn, you ass!"

If Bernard Glyn heard, he heeded not. But the juniors judged that he hadn't ever heard. The inventor of the Shell was, as Tom Merry had said, "up to his eyes in it." He was leaning over a bench, apparently engaged in strewing the contents of a cupboard all round him. Test-tubes, crucibles, bunsen burners, glass bottles of all shapes and sizes, and a variety of other laboratory "junk" were to the right of him, to the left of him, and in front of him.

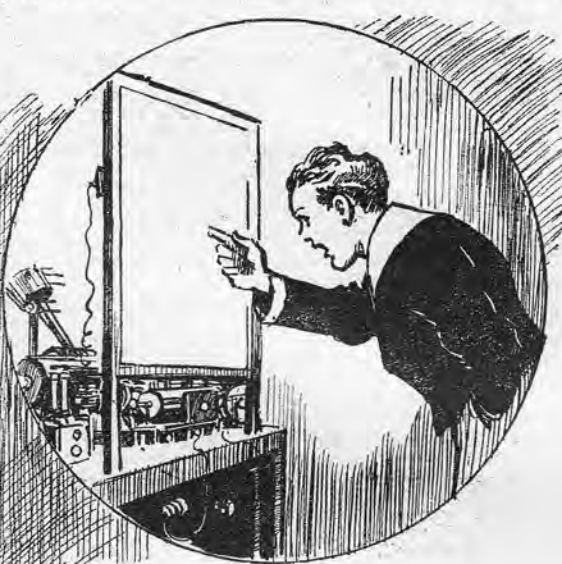
Bernard Glyn was usually quite at home under such conditions. But evidently something had happened on this occasion to take the joy out of his scientific life. A worried frown was on the schoolboy inventor's brow, and as he moved about the juniors heard him muttering to himself.

"Hallo, hallo! Looks as if something's upset the apple-cart!" remarked Monty Lowther. "Or is this how inventors usually look at home?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., & BERNARD GLYN OF ST. JIM'S!



"Something's gone wrong with the works, obviously," said Clifton Dane. "He hasn't even noticed we're here, yet."
 "Give him a yell, then, all together," suggested Digby.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Ready? One, two, three—"
 "GLYN!"

The lungs of Tom Merry & Co. were quite up to giving a yell that would have awakened the Seven Sleepers. On this occasion, they certainly succeeded in waking up Bernard Glyn.

Glyn jumped.

"What the dickens—"

"Brought him round at last!" exclaimed Lowther triumphantly. "And now what's it all about, Glyn?"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway explain what your ideah is, deah boy."

Glyn frowned.

"I don't know what you fellows want to worry me for. I'm busy."

"So it seems!" remarked Tom Merry, with a glance at the well-laden bench. "And now that we've come, perhaps you'll have the goodness to explain what the thump you mean by being busy!"

"Eh?"

"I suppose you haven't forgotten that you've arranged to take us all over to your place to tea this afternoon?" asked Jack Blake sarcastically.

"Yes."

"What?" hooted half-a-dozen indignant voices simultaneously.

"I mean no. I haven't forgotten. You chaps go on without me, and I'll follow later."

"That's not quite good enough, old bean," said Tom Merry. "You arranged it all, and you're jolly well going to take us! Isn't he, chaps?"

"What-ho!"

"Sorry! But I can't just now," said Bernard Glyn, turning to the bench again. "Now buzz off, there's good chaps. Anyway, don't bother me!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked at Bernard Glyn with rather grim looks. To the inventor of the Shell, engrossed as he apparently was with some worrying problem connected with his scientific pursuits, tea at Glyn House was probably a minor consideration. But Tom Merry & Co. looked at the matter rather differently, and they felt by no means inclined to set off on their own at their host's bidding—more especially since the invitation had come from Glyn himself.

"Look here, Glyn—" began Tom Merry patiently.

"Don't worry me, old chap. I've got enough worry already, without being worried by you," said Bernard Glyn. "But you invited us over to your place to tea—"

"I know I did. You'll find the mater will be expecting you all, if you trot along. Tell her I'm sorry I'm delayed. I've lost something."

"Lost something?" roared Tom Merry.

"That's what I said."

"You—you mean to say you're not coming just because you've lost something?"

"Just so. It's important, you see. I've lost two selenium cells, and without them my television apparatus is useless. So I've simply got to find them."

"Well, you crass ass?"

"Letting down his invited guests because he's lost a couple of thingummybob cells!" exclaimed Jack Blake in disgust. "Well, of all the prize idiots—"

"Of all the footling freaks—"

"Of all the howling fatheads—"

"I've said I'm sorry; that ends it," said Bernard Glyn firmly. "What puzzles me is, where could they have gone?"

"Where what could have gone?"

"My selenium cells."

"Blow your blessed selenium cells!"

"Yaas, wathah! Bothah the wotten things, whatevah they are!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "My candid opinion, deah boy, is this—"

"I left them in this cupboard," said Bernard Glyn, without waiting to hear the candid opinion of the swell of the Fourth. "They're useless to anybody except chaps interested in television. And as there's nobody else at St. Jim's experimenting in television except me—"

"But, my dear chap, all this is beside the point, so far as we're concerned," said Tom Merry, gently but firmly. "What does matter is that it's getting on for three o'clock and—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Bernard Glyn suddenly.

"What's up now?"

"Skimpole!" yelled Bernard Glyn, banging the bench with his fist as though he had made a remarkable discovery.

"Well, what's Skimpole to do with it?"

"Everything, of course! It's obvious now," said the inventor of the Shell excitedly. "Why the thump didn't it occur to me before?"

"Potty!" remarked Herries. "I always did think this scientific rot would turn Glyn's brain in the end."

"It's as plain as a pikestaff!" declared Bernard Glyn. "You see, Skimpole has been helping me with my receiving set—"

"But what has that to do with tea?" demanded Kangaroo.

"Bother tea! Skimpole's the man who's pinched my selenium cells. I can see it now. He's working on some potty idea—"

"What! Another of your kind at large?" asked Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some potty idea of building a receiving set for television pictures from other planets—Mars, and so on—"

"Oh, great pip!"

"And he's had his eye on those cells ever since I got them," said Bernard Glyn. "My hat! If he really has walked off with them, I'll slaughter the silly cuckoo!"

"Slaughter him a dozen times over, if you want to," said Tom Merry. "But you'll have to wait till we come back, old bean."

"Wait till rats!" was Glyn's reply. "I'm off now!"

"Look here—"

"Collar him!" yelled Jack Blake, as Bernard Glyn made a sudden move.

A dozen hands reached out to grab the schoolboy inventor. But instead of grabbing Bernard Glyn they succeeded in grabbing nothing more solid than thin air. At that moment Glyn had but one idea in his head, to get down to Skimpole's study, and find out if that apartment contained anything resembling selenium cells—whatever selenium cells might be. That idea of Glyn's was apparently powerful enough to overcome such physical obstacles as nine objecting juniors. At any rate, the inventor of the Shell succeeded in eluding them somehow. After which he made a dash for the door.

Tom Merry gave a yell.

"After him, chaps!"

"Gwab the sillay ass, deah boys!"

Slam!

Glyn had reached the passage and slammed the door behind him.

The delay caused by that little ruse, slight as it was, was sufficient to give Bernard Glyn a good start. When the juniors got out into the passage, it was to find that their quarry had already disappeared round the corner.

"Skimpole's study!" said Tom Merry, and nine wrathful juniors started to spring upstairs to the Shell passage again, breathing fire and slaughter against scientists in general and Bernard Glyn in particular.

They didn't succeed in catching him up. But as they reached the head of the stairs leading to the Shell passage, a sudden sound from the direction of Skimpole's study told them that Bernard Glyn was only just ahead of them.

Crash!

"My hat! Sounds like an earthquake!" gasped Tom Merry. "This way, you men!"

And he led the way to Study No. 9 with a rush.

CHAPTER 2.

Skimpole Comes to Earth!

HERBERT SKIMPOLE was the genius of the Shell. Most of the members of that celebrated Form were content to spend their spare time on the playing-fields or in the gym. Herbert Skimpole spent his spare time indulging in scientific speculation and philosophy. Skimmy applied his great brain in turn to various abstruse sciences with long names ending in "ism" and "ology," the meaning of which was a complete mystery to the rest of the Lower School at St. Jim's. In fact, it had been whispered that it was rather doubtful whether Skimpole himself was any wiser. Whether he was or not, it couldn't be denied that he spent a great deal of time imbibing knowledge of a peculiar kind from massive tomes, the mere sight of which was calculated to give other juniors a headache.

Occasionally, Skimpole descended from the higher realms of philosophical theory, and indulged in laboratory experiments of doubtful value.

On those occasions, the genius of the Shell usually found himself, strangely enough, abandoning his own experiments half-way through and helping Bernard Glyn, who was in the laboratory more frequently than any other junior at St. Jim's.

Bernard Glyn was sorely in need of an assistant, and Skimpole was an obliging individual. Hence, Skimpole's infrequent trips to the St. Jim's lab nearly always ended up in this manner.

When Glyn and Skimpole began simultaneously to interest themselves in television the inevitable soon happened. Skimpole's experiments, which were designed with the rather ambitious object of communicating by means of television with Mars, were as far from achieving their object as ever. And Bernard Glyn's, which were less ambitious and rather more practical, achieved such success that, with the obliging Skimpole's assistance, he had already con-

structed a receiving set and all the apparatus necessary for broadcasting from his father's house near the school.

In helping his more practical rival, however, Skimpole had not altogether lost sight of his own vast plans, and during the construction of Glyn's apparatus he had secured, in the way of presents from Glyn, all sorts of bits and pieces which he hoped were going to help him to get in touch one day with the inhabitants of the planet Mars—assuming, of course, that there were inhabitants of Mars, and that they possessed television broadcasting apparatus.

Bernard Glyn's selenium cells, in particular, had attracted the acquisitive instincts of the genius of the Shell. Selenium cells, it seemed, were the sine qua non of television. Television without selenium cells was like currant-pudding without the currants. Herbert Skimpole had yearned after selenium cells with a great yearning. But there Bernard Glyn had put his foot down, and Skimmy had had to go cell-less, so to speak.

At least, he had gone cell-less for a time. And then a day came when Skimpole was tempted. Absent-mindedly forgetting that he had been invited over to Glyn House to inspect the Shell inventor's broadcasting arrangements, Skimpole turned his thoughts to distant planets, and decided to make a real start on fixing up a receiving set in his study.

Accordingly, he repaired to the laboratory, and collected up all the bits and pieces he had acquired in the course of Glyn's experimental work.

In the cupboard in the lab, he spotted Bernard Glyn's much-prized selenium cells. Temptation assailed him. After a moment's hesitation, he picked them up and took them off with him.

Quietening his pangs of conscience with the thought that his action was in the best interests of scientific investigation, Skimpole returned to his study and started work.

Talbot and Gore, his study-mates in Study No. 9, simply stared when they came in some time later. Accumulators and batteries and pieces of metal were strewn all over the study, nuts and screws and bolts littered the table, and small baths and basins full of evil-looking mixtures were everywhere.

In the middle of the room Herbert Skimpole, in his shirt-sleeves, was working like a Trojan.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Talbot.

"What the thump are you doing?" demanded Gore.

Skimpole looked up and nodded.

"Good-afternoon, you fellows. It is to be doubted whether your limited intelligences are capable of comprehending the precise nature of the work I am at present engaged upon, so I fear that a technical explanation would be wasted on you—"

"Then give us a non-technical one," said Talbot, with an amused smile.

"I am most happy to do so, my dear fellow. Briefly, I am constructing an apparatus with the aid of which I have every hope of receiving visual images from the planet Mars."

"From whatter?" yelled Gore.

"No, my dear Gore—not from whatter. In fact, I must confess my inability to recollect the existence of such a planet," said Skimpole, with a thoughtful frown. "My set is designed to receive visual images from the planet Mars."

"Great pip!" murmured Gore, almost overwhelmed by that information.

"Doubtless you are already aware that scientists have for generations been speculating as to the nature of the inhabitants of that singular planet. It is my intention to settle the matter beyond dispute."

"And you intend to settle it with this collection of odds and ends here?" asked Talbot with interest.

"Precisely."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I really fail to observe the occasion for this risibility, my good friends. I assure you the plans I have drawn up leave no room for doubt as to the success of the undertaking."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Talbot and Gore, who, unlike Skimpole, apparently observed occasion for quite a lot of risibility.

"Really, your mirth amazes me! Possibly you fellows are not interested in the study of Martian characteristics?" asked Skimpole, blinking solemnly through his spectacles at his hilarious study-mates.

"Can't say I'm frightfully keen!" grinned Gore. "Matter of fact, I don't even know what Martian thingummybobs are!"

"Extraordinary! The lack of education evident in modern youth becomes more lamentable as time goes on!" declared the genius of the Shell sadly. "Consider, my dear fellows, the great vista of boundless possibilities opened up in the almost certain event of my experiment proving successful. If I succeed in getting visual images from Mars on my receiving-set—"

"If!" smiled Talbot.



Talbot and Gore simply stared when they entered their study. Accumulators and batteries were strewn all over the study, and baths and basins full of evil-looking mixtures were everywhere. In the middle of the room, Herbert Skimpole, in his shirt-sleeves, was working like a Trojan. "Well, my hat!" exclaimed Talbot. (See Chapter 2.)

"Then it is merely a matter of time before we shall be exchanging notes with the possibly highly-educated and highly-accomplished inhabitants of that planet."

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Think of the possibilities when that stage is reached," urged Skimpole seriously. "In a few years it may easily be possible to visit Mars as safely as we visit London to-day."

"But who wants to visit Mars?" howled Gore. "I'm jolly well staying on this earth. Catch me going on a visit to another planet!"

Skimpole looked profoundly shocked.

"You actually feel no desire to explore another planet, my dear fellow?" he asked, in amazement.

"Not the slightest!" snorted Gore. "Blow Mars! Who wants to go up in the air to another blessed planet? Do you, Talbot?"

Talbot smiled and shook his head.

"Amazing!" exclaimed Skimpole. He rose to his feet, holding Bernard Glyn's selenium cells, and stepped gingerly over a bath of oily-looking liquid to a place by the door that was comparatively clear. "One is led to believe that the whole thing is beyond your limited comprehension, my good fellows. Presumably, my dear Gore, you find it difficult to understand that with the aid of these selenium cells I shall be able shortly to sit in a chair in this study and watch events which are actually taking place on the planet Mars?"

"Oh, my hat! Well, it is just a little difficult!" gasped Gore.

"And you, Talbot—possibly it is hard for you to imagine

me establishing contact with some enlightened inhabitant of that distant planet with the limited means at my disposal?"

"Quite hard, old bean!" nodded Talbot.

Skimpole nodded sadly.

"Precisely as I thought!" he said. "Nevertheless, the fact remains that those results will undoubtedly be achieved from this study. First, my dear fellows, I shall receive visual images on my receiving-set; after that I shall go on to broadcasting myself so as to acquaint the Martians with the fact that I can see them. The next step will be to establish regular communication between myself and the enlightened spirits with whom I shall be in touch. And then, my friends—Yaroooooop!"

Crash!

Something had happened to put an end to Skimpole's oratorical flight.

That "something" was Bernard Glyn, flinging open the study door without the slightest regard for possible obstacles on the other side. As the first obstacle happened to be the back of Skimpole's head the results were naturally painful to Skimpole.

But the pain caused to Skimpole was nothing compared with the mental pain that was caused immediately afterwards to Bernard Glyn.

For the crash which brought Skimpole from distant planets down to mother earth again, and brought Tom Merry & Co. racing along the passage from the stairs, was the sound of two selenium cells dropping into a bath of oily liquid at Skimpole's feet.

"Whooooooh!" roared Skimpole, forgetful of Mars and television, scientific speculation and philosophy as he danced round the study clasp his damaged cranium.

A red-faced and excited Bernard Glyn barged into the study.

"My cells—my selenium cells—where are they?" he roared.

"Groooogh! Ow-ow! Groooogh!" was Skimpole's unenlightening answer.

"I know jolly well you've bagged 'em, so don't try to bluff me!" hooted Glyn. "Where are they?"

"Groooogh!"

Tom Merry & Co. arrived on the scene, breathless, at that moment, and grinned at the picture presented by the woeful Skimpole and the enraged inventor of the Shell.

"Hallo, hallo! Mean to say that crash was only Skimmy's topknot?" asked Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Really, my good fellows, I can see nothing calculated to cause such ill-timed risibility!" gasped Skimpole, caressing his bony cranium with great tenderness. "If I might say so, my dear fellows—"

"Where have you put 'em?" demanded Bernard Glyn, in a ferocious voice.

"Ow! If you are referring to the selenium cells which I borrowed without the trivial preliminary of asking your permission—"

"Knew you had 'em!" growled Bernard Glyn, a little relieved. "Well, now you've owned up, where are they?"

"In this bath, my dear Glyn!"

Bernard Glyn glanced at the bath. His jaw dropped as he saw the horrid mixture it contained.

"You—you've put my selenium cells in that muck?" he asked faintly.

"Apart from the fact that the bath contains a chemical mixture, and not muck, your statement is correct. You see, Glyn, the velocity of your movement in entering this apartment was so great as to cause me to precipitate the articles directly into the vessel in question."

For a moment Glyn's face was a study. Then a kind of explosion was drowned by the roar of laughter that went up from the fellows crowded in the doorway.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 3.

Tea or Telev'son?

"YOU—you—" gasped Bernard Glyn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you howling, footling idiot!"

"Really, my dear Glyn—"

"You burbling, meddling, blundering ass—"

"My dear fellow, I must really protest—"

"What the thump am I to do now?" roared Bernard Glyn. "Answer me that, you benighted, fat-headed frump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from Tom Merry & Co., who seemed to look on the circumstance of Bernard Glyn's being responsible for the damage to his precious apparatus as rather funny.

Herbert Skimpole looked genuinely distressed.

"Really, my dear fellow, if I have unwittingly been the means of injuring these articles in any way, I assure you I am full of regret. Possibly, however, the matter is not so serious, after all. I am not quite sure what elements are compounded into the mixture, but there may be nothing injurious about them."

"Likely, isn't it?" hooted the incensed inventor. "By the smell of the muck you've been mixing up half the chemical lab into that bath. 'Oh, my hat, look at 'em!'"

Bernard Glyn gingerly inserted his fingers into Skimpole's mysterious chemical mixture and brought out his selenium cells, dripping wet.

"Mind our rug, you ass!" warned Gore.

"Blow your blessed rug! Look at these cells!" groaned Glyn, brandishing those important articles for all to see. "I wanted 'em specially this afternoon, and now that footling dummy—"

"Our rug!" yelled Gore suddenly. "I knew you'd do it, you crass ass!"

A huge blob of fearful-looking liquid had oozed off one of the cells and dropped on to the carpet. Bernard Glyn carried on regardless.

"It's a thousand pounds to a bath-bun they're ruined!" he said mournfully. "And all because a silly— Yooooop! Wharrer you doing, you idiot?"

George Gore did not trouble to answer that question in words. A verbal answer, as a matter of fact, was rather unnecessary, since Bernard Glyn could see for himself without much reflection that Gore was endeavouring to knock his head against the wall of the study.

"I'll give you come and ruin our study rug!" roared Gore.

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"Yarooooogh! Why, you silly ass—"

Bernard Glyn hurriedly transferred the dripping selenium cells to the comparative safety of a chair and defended his head. A moment later a wild and whirling battle was in progress in Study No. 9.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Thud, thud, thud!

"Go it, ye cripples!" sang out Monty Lowther. "If this is what comes of being a scientist, I'm sticking to the classics!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tramp! Thud! Tramp!

"Oh, my hat! We shall have a prefect up here if this lasts!" gasped Tom Merry. "Drag the silly chumps apart!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors streamed into the study and surrounded the combatants.

"Ease up, Glyn!" yelled Jack Blake.

"Can it, Gore!" added Herries.

But Glyn and Gore refused to ease up or to can it of their own accord, and only the none-too-gentle compulsion of three or four juniors on either side eventually ended the argument.

"Going to stop it now?" asked Tom Merry severely.

"No, I'm jolly well not! Look at our rug!" hooted Gore excitedly.

"And look at my napper where he's bumped it!" roared Glyn. "Lemme go, you rotters! I want to punch his nose!"

"Then, there's only one way out, I suppose," sighed Tom Merry. "Bump 'em both till they promise to behave themselves, you men!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That's wathah a good ideah!"

And Arthur Augustus was right. After one or two bumps Glyn and Gore felt decidedly less enthusiastic about finishing their little dispute. After three or four, they felt no desire whatever to carry on.

Under Tom Merry's direction they were each given one more bump for luck, and then allowed to stand up. And after that, by mutual consent, the subject of the rug in Study No. 9 was dropped.

"And now what about tea?" asked Tom Merry, in businesslike tones.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Bernard Glyn snorted.

"Blow tea! What about my television set?"

"Blow your television set!" retorted Tom Merry warmly.

"You've asked us out to tea at Glyn House this afternoon—"

"Well, there's nothing to stop you going, as I've already told you," said Bernard Glyn crossly. "You fellows go on!"

"We're going on, old bean! And you're coming with us!"

"What-ho!" said Jack Blake emphatically.

"But I can't, I tell you! I've got to put these cells right—if they can be put right, after all that this silly chump has done to them!" grunted the inventor of the Shell, with a frown at Skimpole. "It'll be quite all right, as far as you're concerned. Mater's expecting you, and you can tell her I'll be along later on."

"We can tell her nothing of the kind!" said Tom Merry. Turning to the rest of Bernard Glyn's guests, he said:

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! Our host is suggesting that we go on alone. If the suggestion came from any other host we should regard it as rank bad form, not to say downright cheek—"

"Heah, heah!" remarked D'Arcy, nodding his cordial approval.

"But, seeing that it only comes from a potty inventor, who, after all, can hardly be looked on as altogether human—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We must simply put it down to eccentricity," said the skipper of the Shell firmly. "However, that doesn't necessarily mean that we shall accept the suggestion."

"No fear!"

"Bai Jove! I should wathah think not!"

"My idea is that if a chap belonging to the St. Jim's School House is suffering from the delusion that a lot of tinpot television junk is of more importance than his duty as a host, it's time that delusion of his was corrected!" said Tom Merry eloquently.

"Look here!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"No time for debating the subject, old bean!"

"But don't you see?"

"No, we don't! Now, you chaps, to get down to brass tacks, my suggestion is that we teach this benighted scientist how he should really behave when he invites a party of gentlemen to his house!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm ready!" growled Herries, beginning to roll up his sleeves.

"We must gently but firmly show him that the proper

caper is to forget his potty inventions and conduct us in a becoming manner to his jolly old ancestral hall—"

"Weally, deah boy, Glyn House is suahly hardly an ancestral hall—"

"That was poetic licence. All orators are allowed a certain amount of that," explained Tom. "Now, you chaps, are you all ready to give our host a lesson in etiquette?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Kim on, then! Ready, Glyn?"

Bernard Glyn snatched up his selenium cells, which had almost dried by this time, and backed hurriedly towards the door.

"No, I'm not!" he snorted. "Look here, Tom Merry, don't play the giddy ox! I'll come on later, when I've seen to these—"

"But that's not in accordance with the best traditions of etiquette," grinned Tom Merry. "As our host, you see, you can't possibly do it! Coming along?"

"Look here, you silly ass—"

"Collar him!" rapped out the captain of the Shell.

"I tell you— Yoooooop!"

Half a dozen pairs of hands grasped Bernard Glyn and whirled him off his feet.

"Pity these inventors are so dense!" remarked Tom Merry. "Better frogsmarch him downstairs, I suppose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll break these cells if you're not careful!" shrieked Bernard Glyn. "Look here— Whooooo!"

"Are you one of the guests, Skimmy?" asked Jack Blake, turning to Skimpole, who was blinking on at the scene with grave interest.

Skimpole started.

"Dear me! Now that you remind me of it, my dear Blake, Glyn did, in point of fact, invite me to his paternal relative's residence for the purpose of assisting him in completing his work on the— Ow-ow! For what reason are you grasping me by the collar, my good fellow?"

"Kim on!" was Jack Blake's brief answer to that question; and Skimpole, having no option, obeyed.

Progress after that was swift. Glyn and Skimpole were rushed along the Shell passage, rushed down the stairs, rushed through the hall, and rushed out of the House to the bike shed. There they were momentarily released, while the juniors got out their bikes.

Skimpole, having realised during the journey that he was expected to ride over to Glyn House with the rest, proceeded to get out his ancient boneshaker. Bernard Glyn, still breathing television, in addition to considerable wrath, took a few dizzy steps back towards the House again, only to find his retreat cut off by Herries and Blake, the latter wheeling Glyn's jigger in addition to his own.

"No sneaking off now, Glyn!" said Blake sternly. "That's not the behaviour we expect from our host, you know. Here's your bike!"

"Whoooooop!" roared the hapless inventor, as the handlebars caught him forcefully in that region popularly known as the breadbasket.

"Sorry!"

"Grooooooh! You clumsy ass! Look here, if you imagine I'm coming along at present—"

"We don't imagine it—we know it!" grinned Blake. "Help him on his bike, chaps! Show him how a host should behave!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whether Bernard Glyn was acquiring any knowledge of etiquette and correct behaviour in hosts from the juniors' efforts was rather doubtful. But he was rapidly learning, at any rate, that it was impossible to stay on at St. Jim's to attend to selenium cells when nine determined juniors had made up their minds that he was going to Glyn House.

Assisted by Blake and Herries and Lowther, the inventor of the Shell landed in the saddle with a bump. After that, in spite of his efforts to remain stationary, he found himself being guided erratically by cyclists fore and aft, and on the starboard and the bow, so to speak.

"Full steam ahead!" said Tom Merry.

"What-ho!"

"Whoooooop! Look here, you'll break my neck in a minute!" yelled Bernard Glyn, in alarm.

"Coming quietly, then?"

"No, blow you! Whooooo!" A wild swerve almost precipitated Bernard Glyn into the rhododendron bushes at the side of the gravel path, and he suddenly changed his mind.

"All right, then, you fatheads! I give you best—I'll come!" "Good egg!" said Tom Merry, with satisfaction. "Success crowns our efforts, chaps. After our rapid course of instruction Glyn appreciates his duties as a host to the full."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now we'll push ahead, and try to make up for lost time," remarked Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the St. Jim's party, complete with their host, accelerated through the gates and pedalled down the road

at top speed. And Bernard Glyn, reconciling himself to the position, soon forgot his scientific troubles and became his usual cheery self again. For the time being, even with him, tea had become more important than television.

CHAPTER 4.

The Mystery of Glyn House!

IT was a merry party that sat down to tea in Glyn House that afternoon. Tom Merry & Co. felt quite ready for high tea after their ride from St. Jim's, and Mrs. Glyn knew how to cater for healthy schoolboy appetites.

Mr. Glyn did not put in an appearance during the meal, and although the juniors had noticed his secretary, Mr. Chatteris, passing through the hall when they first entered the house, they had assumed that he was away from home on business.

It was not until tea was over that any comment was made on the absence of Glyn's father. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy then raised the matter with the polite inquiry:

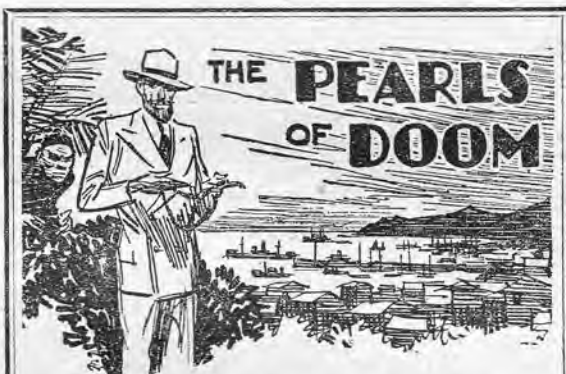
"Mr. Glyn is in the best of health, I trust, Mrs. Glyn?"

A slight shadow crossed the pleasant face of Bernard Glyn's mother.

"He is not ill, D'Arcy, though I'm afraid he is not as well as I could wish. Perhaps Bernard has mentioned it already?"

"Hem! 'Fraid I haven't, mater," confessed Bernard Glyn. "I should have done, but—but— Well, we were rather occupied with other things before we came away, weren't we, chaps?"

(Continued on next page.)



In the hush of the tropical evening a white trader lies dead. Dead in his lonely bungalow, and by an unknown hand. A string of priceless pearls is missing, and Sexton Blake, luckily on the spot, at once finds himself involved in an amazing drama of intrigue and peril. Working against him is the notorious international crook, George Marsden Plummer and his adventuress companion, Vali Mata-Vali. Thrilling events set in a South Sea Island, far away from English justice, make a narrative of unflagging interest.

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"Yaas, wathah—frightfully important mattahs, connected with science and television or somethin'," said Arthur Augustus, loyally if somewhat vaguely. "I sincerely trust that Mr. Glyn's health is not a mattah for serious concern, Mrs. Glyn."

"Nothing much—business worries and so on," explained Bernard Glyn. "It's something to do with investments, isn't it, mater?"

"I believe so, though I'm afraid I understand very little about it. The doctor has advised a rest-cure abroad, where he can forget business matters for a time," explained Mrs. Glyn. "But you didn't come here to bother yourselves with our domestic worries, boys!"

"Bai Jove! Nevalthelless, I assuah you we are all extremewly sowwy to heah the bad news, aren't we, deah boys?"

There was unanimous agreement. All the juniors had met Mr. Glyn previously, and all liked him immensely. They found it a little difficult to imagine how investments could affect the health of a gentleman of his wealth. Understanding of that kind naturally did not belong to their youthful experience; but they all felt sorry to hear that he was not well.

During the uncomfortable pause that followed the subject of their conversation, Mr. Glyn himself entered the room.

The juniors could see at a first glance that Mr. Glyn was unwell. A second glance told them, further, that he was considerably agitated.

They rose to their feet respectfully, but Bernard Glyn's father seemed hardly to notice them.

"Something's up!" muttered Bernard Glyn. Aloud he said:

"How are you feeling, pater?"

"Another five hundred pounds' worth of bonds missing!" announced Mr. Glyn, without heeding his son's inquiry.

Mrs. Glyn rose and gently offered her husband a chair.

"Please calm yourself, dear," she said, in her quiet voice.

Mr. Glyn sat down and passed a trembling hand over his brow.

"Missing—vanished!" he exclaimed. "I am sorry if I seem rude, boys, but I have had a shock!"

"Bai Jove! We are feahfully sowwy to heah that, sir!"

"This is the third time in less than a fortnight that valuable bundles of bearer bonds have disappeared from my safe," said Mr. Glyn. "I have only just been to the safe and made this latest discovery. This brings my total loss up to nearly two thousand pounds!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Are you sure they had been put there?" asked Mrs. Glyn gently.

"Positive, my dear! There is no possible doubt about it," was Mr. Glyn's decisive answer. "Only last evening, Chatteris and myself went through them. Now they are gone!"

"But—but isn't there any sign of the safe having been tampered with or forced?" asked Bernard Glyn.

"That is the mysterious part about it, Bernard. The safe is absolutely intact."

"Gweat Scott! It wathah looks as if someone has a duplicate key, then," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mr. Glyn shook his head.

"Impossible. It is a combination lock of the very latest pattern. The safe opens only to a rigid formula which is known to nobody but myself."

"And—and, of course, Mr. Chatteris," added Bernard Glyn slowly.

"And Mr. Chatteris," agreed Mr. Glyn, speaking as though he made the admission reluctantly. "I have always placed complete confidence in him, as you are aware, and I simply cannot for one moment entertain the idea that he is responsible."

Bernard Glyn rubbed his chin reflectively.

"But—but what can be the explanation, then? If, as you say, the safe wasn't forced in any way—"

"On each occasion there was no sign whatever of its having been tampered with."

"Well, then, pater, if that's so, and if it's impossible for any outsider to get to know how to open it, it must lie between you and Mr. Chatteris."

"Yes, yes; I understand exactly what the circumstances point to, Bernard," replied Bernard Glyn's father impatiently. "I insist, nevertheless, that I cannot entertain the idea that Chatteris has played me false."

"You're sure they were not taken out of the safe and put elsewhere?"

"Quite sure. I have the most vivid recollection of placing them in a cashbox at the back of the safe."

"Then either Chatteris has taken them, or you're bewitched," declared Bernard Glyn. "There's no other alternative that I see. What do you fellows say?"

Bernard Glyn's friends would rather not have expressed an opinion, but being asked for one pointblank, they had to admit that they could offer no further suggestions.

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"Of course, it's a jolly serious matter," remarked Tom Merry. "Whoever has done it is liable to a pretty heavy sentence if he's detected, and it doesn't do even to think about anybody in particular being guilty until there's positive proof."

"Just so. Mr. Chatteris must be feeling pretty uncomfortable about it, pater; I should think," suggested Bernard Glyn.

"I'm afraid he is. The whole thing is most unfortunate and distressing," said Mr. Glyn, shaking his head seriously. "The police-inspector has been over from Wayland, and has made it very obvious whom he suspects."

Mrs. Glyn made a significant gesture at the moment, and Mr. Glyn looked round and nodded as Mr. Chatteris himself entered the room.

"You have telephoned the police?" asked Mr. Glyn.

"Yes, sir. Inspector Skeat is motoring over as soon as possible. In the meantime, he asks that we do not touch the safe, in order that he may examine it as it stands when he arrives."

The juniors looked curiously at Mr. Glyn's private secretary. He was a dark, youngish man, with a rather expressionless face. That was perhaps to be expected from a man holding the post of a confidential secretary. Such expression as his face might have held was effectively obscured by a large pair of horn-rimmed glasses; so that, altogether, the juniors had little in his appearance on which they could base a judgment of his innocence or guilt.

Certainly, he betrayed by an obvious nervousness of manner that he was by no means easy in mind. But that, after all, was nothing to go on. Whether he was guilty or not, the extraordinary disappearances from his employer's safe placed him in a position where he could hardly have been expected to feel altogether at ease.

"You have finished all the correspondence, Chatteris?" asked Mr. Glyn, as the secretary hesitated, apparently waiting for instructions.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I shan't want you again to-day, except when the inspector turns up. I shall take a stroll in the grounds now, and try to puzzle out this extraordinary business. Send for me as soon as the inspector arrives."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Chatteris withdrew; and, after a brief interval, Glyn's father also quitted the room, leaving Mrs. Glyn and the juniors to discuss the mystery of the disappearing bonds from every possible angle. Most of the juniors felt a little uncomfortable in so doing, for Tom Merry and his chums were not fellows to pry into other people's business. Such an extraordinary affair, however, could not be easily dismissed from their minds, and as Bernard Glyn and his mother continued to discuss it, the juniors naturally joined in.

But discuss it as they might, they could see no solution other than that Mr. Chatteris was responsible. Chatteris was the only person besides Mr. Glyn with keys and a knowledge of the safe's workings. Unless Mr. Glyn had taken leave of senses and was robbing himself, nobody but Chatteris could possibly have made away with the bonds.

"But why should he do it?" asked Bernard Glyn. "He's been the pater's right-hand man for years and years, and he's well paid for his work, too. Why should he want to rob us suddenly?"

"Well, there are all sorts of possible reasons," said Herries, with a shrug. "He might have been investing, and got himself into an awful hole. No telling what the reason would be."

"But it seems so idiotic to start wholesale robbery at a place where he's bound to be the first one the police suspect," objected Jack Blake.

"A chap will do anything when he's desperate enough, old bean," said Kangaroo sagely. "Still, it's not really for us to say anything about it. I vote we dry up, and go and inspect Glyn's television gadgets."

"Good egg!"

The juniors were only too pleased to have found an alternative subject to talk about, and television, which had been scorned and rejected at St. Jim's, was hailed with enthusiasm at Glyn House.

Bernard Glyn led the way, and his guests followed him upstairs to his study, where the much-talked-of television broadcasting apparatus was awaiting their inspection.

CHAPTER 5.

A Message from Mars!

"HERE you are!" Bernard Glyn stood in the doorway of his study and pointed into the room with a gesture of pride.

The St. Jim's juniors looked in curiously. What they saw was rather disappointing to them. Television conjured up

ideas of something very impressive in the way of apparatus, and most of them had expected to find the schoolboy inventor's study transformed completely in preparation for his new craze.

Glyn's study, however, was very much the same untidy apartment that it always had been. His desk stood in the corner, books on all sorts of scientific subjects were scattered over the floor, and "junk" in plenty adorned the shelves and corners.

"And is that it?" asked Blake, pointing to a strange edifice of batteries and accumulators and valves, clustered round a strange-looking wheel pierced with slots of graduated size and strange design.

Bernard Glyn's eyes were bright as he nodded.

"That's it. What do you think of it?"

"Oh, my hat! Well, I've got a vague idea," grinned Blake.

"Just about as much idea as if you'd said it in double Dutch, old chap!" said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

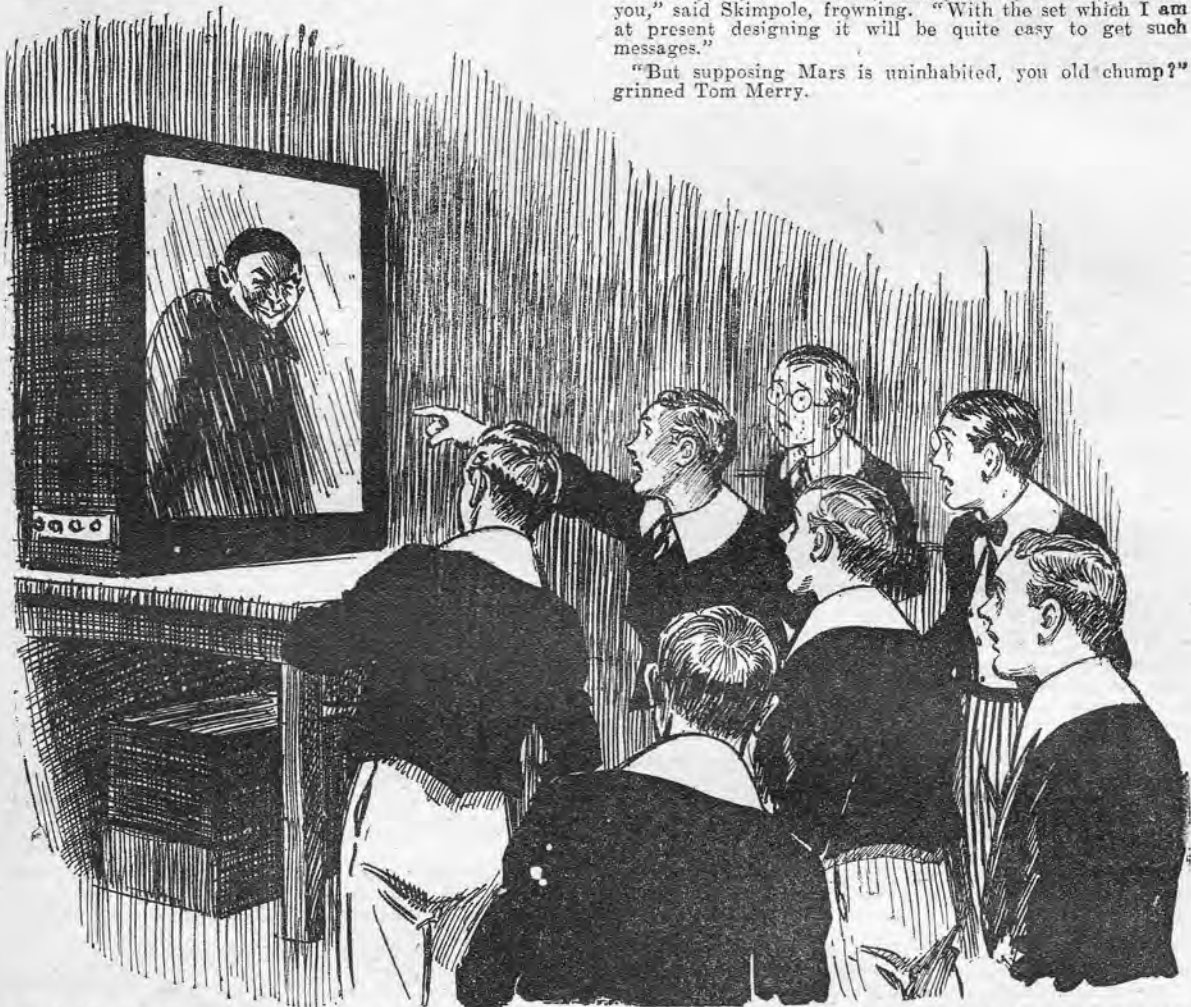
"Oh, rats! It seems easy enough to me, anyway," said the inventor of the Shell. "Now, Skimmy, I want you to get the idea of the thing, so that you may be able to control it from this end to-morrow, while I'm watching in at the school."

"I shall be most delighted to assist you in any way, my dear Glyn. By the way, it has just occurred to me—do you think it possible to receive visual messages from the planet Mars on your receiving apparatus?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, my dear fellows, I am perfectly serious, I assure you," said Skimpole, frowning. "With the set which I am at present designing it will be quite easy to get such messages."

"But supposing Mars is uninhabited, you old chump?" grinned Tom Merry.



"Look!" Kangaroo gave a sudden yell and pointed to where the screen of Glyn's television set had been. In that dusky part of the room a frightful apparition had appeared, wearing a long, dark cloak and a black skull-cap. "My hat!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "A Martian!" said Kangaroo, in a thrilling voice. (See Chapter 5.)

"Well, to be quite frank, not much."

"Eh?"

"I thought you'd have crowds of machinery and lots of arc lamps and things," said Jack Blake. "Mean to say this is all you need for television?"

"Ass! Fat lot of good it is talking to any of you chaps about scientific subjects!" remarked Bernard Glyn. "However, I'll see if I can make you understand how it works. First of all, the actor has to stand in front of the screen you see here. The light from the scene that is being broadcast, coming through the slots of this gadget here, alights on and affects the selenium cell I've got here—at least, I hope it will, though, after being chucked into that bath of muck in your study, Skimmy, I feel a bit doubtful about this one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyway, the selenium cell is connected with this battery, you see, and the different intensities of light affect the strength of the electrical current. The pulsations of the current are amplified up here, and then transmitted by way of an aerial. Savvy?"

"I must, with all respect, decline to admit such a remotely improbable hypothesis. Professor Balmyscrumpet states quite clearly in Chapter 358 of his work on planetary systems—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Dry up, Skimmy!"

"Give it a rest, old bean!"

Monty Lowther, who had been listening with a slight glimmer in his eyes, interposed.

"Fair play, you chaps!" he said. "After all, there's something in what Skimmy says. I've often thought about the possibility of getting into touch with Mars by television myself."

"Why, you silly ass—" began Manners. Then he stopped short, as Lowther closed one eye—the eye farthest from Skimpole.

"I don't see why they shouldn't be sending out television broadcasts from Mars at this very moment," went on Lowther, with great seriousness. "Just imagine! While

we are standing here all unaware of it, Mars may be extending the glad hand, and all that sort of thing!"

Skimpole fairly beamed.

"My dear Lowther, I am indeed pleased to hear you talk in this manner," he said "I must confess, Lowther, that hitherto I have not given you credit for sufficient intelligence to understand the possibilities of inter-planetary communication—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" began Lowther, rather warmly.

"But I admit that I have apparently not been doing you justice," said the genius of the Shell gravely. "You agree with me, then, that enlightened Martians may be endeavouring to approach us through the medium of television?"

"Absolutely," said Monty Lowther. By agreeing with Skimpole so far as that, the humorist of the Shell was, after all, admitting but very little. Certainly, it was quite possible that Mars was inhabited, and that its inhabitants were trying to communicate with the Earth by means of television. It was an exceedingly remote possibility; but it was a possibility, for all that.

"How delightful to meet a youth with vision and intelligence!" murmured Skimpole. "Your intelligence positively amazes me, my dear Lowther."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Lowther. Swallowing his rather mixed feelings over Skimpy's references to his intelligence, he went on: "Of course, I don't suppose they'll be working on exactly the same kind of idea as we are."

"Dear me, no! Naturally not!" agreed Skimpole unsuspectingly.

"For instance, they may have things reversed," argued Lowther. "Their broadcasting apparatus may be the same as our receiving apparatus, and vice versa. Don't you think it's quite possible, for example, that their messages might come through on this screen of Glyn's?"

Skimpole's massive brow corrugated with thought.

"I confess that the idea has never previously occurred to me, Lowther, but now you mention it, I can quite see the possibility."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry involuntarily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, my dear fellows—"

"Ignore 'em, old chap!" advised Lowther. "Naturally, we scientists cannot expect to be understood by laymen, can we?"

Skimpole had to admit the force of that argument. And there, for the moment, the matter rested, and the possibility of "receiving" Mars in Glyn's study remained unexplored while Glyn proceeded with his explanations of the science of television.

Lowther, however, did not intend to let that possibility remain unexplored for long, and while the rest of the fellows were plying their host with questions, Lowther was having a whispered confab with Kangaroo—a confab that was punctuated with numerous subdued chuckles on the part of the Australian junior.

When Glyn had satisfied all his interrogators, and the group around him had broken up, Monty Lowther had vanished. Another trifling circumstance which nobody noticed in the shadowy room, now darkening as the dusk deepened, was that Glyn's television screen had disappeared, leaving only a square space in the centre of the black box-like arrangement in which it was set.

"Moooooooooooooh!"

That was the first indication that Bernard Glyn and his guests received of anything untoward in the room.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Moooooooooooooh!"

"Dear me! What an extraordinary sound!" exclaimed Skimpole.

"Anything wrong with this room—haunted or anything?" asked Digby, looking round rather uneasily.

"Yah-boo! Moooooooooh!"

The juniors looked quite startled. The mysterious sound had a weird, ghost-like quality. Possibly in the broad light of day the effect would not have been the same, but in the gathering twilight it sounded quite unearthly.

"I say, you chaps, do you—do you think it might be—"

Kangaroo broke off, as if he didn't quite like to finish.

"Might be what, ass?" asked Tom Merry.

"Well, it sounds rather silly, but do you think it might be Mars?"

As he spoke, the Australian junior gave the Shell leader a dig in the ribs. That dig in the ribs brought enlightenment to Tom Merry.

"My hat!" he gasped, and then, as he looked round and observed that Lowther was nowhere to be seen, he grinned.

"What do you think, Skimpy?" asked Kangaroo.

"I—I— Well, really, I hardly know what to say," confessed Skimpole. "Certainly, the sounds that have just proceeded from that cabinet resemble no language with which I personally am acquainted, but—"

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"Aaaaaaaaah! Yaaaaaaa!"

"Dear me!"

"Moooooooooooooh!"

"Really, you fellows, this is most peculiar!" declared Skimpole. "I wonder, Noble, if there is something in your suggestion? Can it be—is it possible—that we are listening to the voice of an advanced and enlightened scientist from the planet Mars?"

"Must be!" said Kangaroo decisively. "Of course, you'd hardly expect the Martians to speak English, would you?"

"Well, hardly!" grinned Jack Blake, who, like the rest of the juniors, had seen daylight by this time. "But if his voice is coming through, why can't we see his chivvy?"

"Look!" yelled Kangaroo suddenly, pointing to Glyn's screen—or, rather, the place where the screen should have been.

The juniors looked. In the vacant space, which might, in the dim light, have been the screen itself, had appeared an apparition—a frightful apparition which bore only the faintest resemblance to a human being. It wore a long, dark cloak, and a black skull-cap; its mouth appeared to stretch across its face, and its eyebrows were black and of sinister aspect. Altogether, the televisual visitor was by no means a vision of delight.

"My hat!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"A Martian!" said Kangaroo, in a thrilling voice. "Can't get away from it now! That's a Martian all right! What else could it be?"

"Well, it certainly looks like nothing on Earth!" remarked Clifton Dane.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hush!" Skimpole held up his hand for silence. "This enlightened inhabitant of our sister planet, projecting his picture across the heavens to this room, is about to speak, if I judge correctly. Listen!"

"Aaaaaah! Yah-boo! Mooooooooh!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Feeding-time at the Zoo!" said Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole frowned.

"My dear fellows, I implore you to cease this ribaldry. Cannot you realise that you are witnessing the most epoch-making discovery that has ever been made?"

"Yaaaaa! Woof-woof!" came from the Martian.

"Amazing! Staggering!" said Skimpole, peering through his spectacles at the vision with an air of engrossed interest. "The sound is coming through perfectly, my dear Noble. Apparently the Martians speak a language containing an abundance of vowel sounds, mixed with occasional gutturals, such as are occasionally emitted by members of the canine species."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Please, please restrain yourselves, my friends, while I take observations!" implored Skimpole. "Listen! He is about to speak again!"

"Oooooooooh! Maaaaah! Gurrrrrrr!"

"Really, this is most interesting!" murmured the excited genius of the Shell. "I must communicate the fullest possible description of this to Professor Balmcyrumpet. I am sure he will be deeply interested."

"Mooooooooooooh!"

"To think, my friends," said Skimpole, with an eloquent gesture, "that this strange-looking creature is actually addressing us across the ether from another planet, millions of miles away—"

"My screen!" yelled Bernard Glyn suddenly.

"What?"

"My screen! The silly ass has left it on the floor just where someone's going to tread on it! Stand clear, Kangy! Oh, my hat!"

Bernard Glyn made a sudden dive to rescue the discarded screen from Kangaroo's feet.

That dive brought him into violent and unexpected collision with the cabinet. The effect on the Martian vision was fatal. With a wild roar the mysterious apparition materialised into a very real human being pitched into the middle of the room, and Skimpole's fond dream was dissipated at one stroke.

Crash!

"Yarooooooooh!" roared Monty Lowther, apparently continuing to speak in the Martian tongue.

"Whooooooooop!" yelled Jack Blake, as the humorist of the Shell collided with him broadside on.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the fortunate on-lookers who had escaped being collided with and trodden on.

Herbert Skimpole, who was not very quick on the uptake, stared at the very real vision for quite a long time before he understood.

"D-d-d-dear me! The—the Martian creature has actually materialised out of his own vision!" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"I—I—really, this almost passes the bounds of credulity!" gasped Skimpole. "I—"

"Mooooooh!" came from Lowther, as that humorous junior, looking rather dishevelled, scrambled to his feet.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The—the creature's cloak is falling away from him!" exclaimed Skimpole. "I declare that there seems something familiar—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me! Can it be— Are my eyes deceiving me, or is it really Lowther?"

Monty Lowther threw aside his "cloak," which was nothing more than a plush table-cloth, and untied the skull-cap he had improvised out of a duster, revealing himself in his true colours, but for the addition of a small quantity of ink which had been used in enlarging his mouth and eyebrows.

"Here I am, Skimmy! Straight from the planet Mars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good gracious me! Then—then we have not been watching Mars, after all!" gasped Skimpole. "It was a—practical jest on your part."

"Now I wonder how you guessed that?" asked Monty, gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole shook his head.

"I do not approve of perpetrating hoaxes of this kind, Lowther. I am afraid I do not see the humorous side of it at all!"

And Skimpole dried up at that and went about during

(Continued on next page.)



MALLORY AND IRVINE.

Unconquered!

MOUNT EVEREST, highest peak of the Himalaya Mountains in Northern India, still awaits its conqueror. So far as is known, no human being has yet penetrated to its snow-covered summit, towering 29,000 feet above sea-level, although many brave men have set out with that objective, and perished in the attempt.

Of these men, Mallory and Irvine ascended higher than anyone else, and lost their lives in the hour of their achievement. They are the daredevils who never came back, and the story of their amazing courage and fortitude, as witnessed by other members of the memorable Mount Everest Expedition, is redolent of those racial traditions of which every British boy may well be proud.

Mallory and Irvine made their epic endeavour to reach the peak of Everest in June, 1924. Previous attempts on the summit of this mighty mountain had been made in 1921, 1922, and in April of 1924. In the latter case, brave explorers reached the colossal height of 28,000 feet, and were compelled to turn back, after surmounting insuperable difficulties and dangers, and almost losing their lives, times out of number, among the great glaciers and jagged, snow-covered crags.

Difficult to Breathe:

ON the morning of June 6th, 1924, Mallory and Irvine set out, with four native porters, from the foot of Everest, to a base camp situated high upon the mountain-side. This they gained successfully, and sent word back to tell of their safe arrival.

Then they pushed on towards their

lofty goal. As they progressed higher and higher, it became more difficult to breathe, and they had need to resort to their oxygen apparatus to supply them with air. Great gales and blizzards howled continuously about them as they staggered blindly on, slipping, sliding, clawing at the icy surface, but always climbing.

Colder and colder became the rare atmosphere, until fingers and hands grew numb, could not be felt, until their faces went blue with the icy temperature and the difficulty of breathing.

Sleep was impossible at such a height. These brave men must go on, and on, until they dropped exhausted, and perished; until they were buried by a snowslide; until they fell to their deaths down a mighty chasm, slid to their doom down a great glacier, or attained the summit and returned in safety to their fellows below.

Two Tiny Specks!

THE following day, another climber, by name of Odell, left for the self-same base camp, high up on the mountain-side, laden with provisions and other necessities in case of need.

When he arrived a great blizzard was raging, which practically blotted out the summit of the mountain from his view. Then, as he gazed upwards the snowflakes, whirling ceaselessly around him, cleared a little, and he glimpsed a tiny, moving speck on the great, white slope which led to the peak of Everest.

Could he believe his eyes? Was it possible that Mallory and Irvine were on the brink of conquering the highest mountain in the world, were about to tread where no human being had ever trod before? Dazedly he passed a hand across his eyes, and looked again.

Mount Everest, the loftiest peak of the Himalaya Mountains, towering above all, still awaits its conqueror. But the epic endeavour of two daredevils, Mallory and Irvine, who sacrificed their lives in reaching a point never before trodden by man, will live long in the memory of every British boy!

FAMOUS DAREDEVILS!

Then he saw a second little speck moving beside the first, and they were seven hundred feet from the summit, as near as he could judge. With all haste he pushed up the mountain-side for a further 300 feet, shouting and waving his arms in the hope that the two brave climbers would see or hear him.

Then the blizzard swept down again in terrible fury, and Odell was obliged to take cover. An hour later he again looked up towards the peak, but the two specks had disappeared. In vain he gazed, until at last he reluctantly retraced his footsteps to the base camp, and having left the provisions and cleared it up in readiness for his friends' return—if they ever returned—made his way back to the foot of the mountain to rejoin the remainder of the expedition and report what he had seen.

To Their Doom!

THAT night was a terrible one of anxiety and suspense. Hour after hour passed, and still no flares were lighted at the base camp, showing that the brave climbers had returned. There came no sign, no signal, and all below were in the depths of black despair.

Then Odell again mounted to the base camp. But it was deserted, and nothing had been touched. Evidently no one had been there in his absence. For many hours he searched the white slopes for the two men, but no trace of them could he find.

Realising at last that his quest was hopeless, Odell returned to the base camp, and, taking two black sleeping-bags, laid them out on the glittering snow in the form of a cross. Thus did those watching below know that Mallory and Irvine had gone to their doom; two more brave men sacrificed on the altar of Everest.

Whether they attained the summit, whether they conquered Everest before they perished, is not known, will never be known. But their names will be remembered with pride and sorrow even when the great mountain peak is no longer a mystery to man. Here were two great daredevils who risked all and lost the game. Snow-covered, their bodies lie in Everest's mighty bosom, but their spirit lives, a thing of wonder and inspiration.

the rest of the juniors' stay at Glyn House with a frown of extreme disapproval on his serious face.

And by a kind of natural law of compensation the rest of the juniors were chuckling almost continuously for hours after—thanks to Lowther's amazing message from Mars!

CHAPTER 6.

Glyn's Triumph.

AFTER chasses on the following day Bernard Glyn put his apparatus to the test for the first time.

Everything had been left in apple-pie order in his study at Glyn House; Skimpole had been instructed in the simple operations of switching on and switching off until he knew them off by heart, and Monty Lowther, who, as the most loquacious junior in the School House, had been chosen to give the broadcast, had been shown just how he was to stand and what kind of actions he was to perform.

Bernard Glyn had no doubts as to the success of the sound broadcast, for he had achieved satisfactory results in that direction on many previous occasions. It was the television broadcast that was the problem. Glyn knew that television was only in its infancy, and that nobody had yet succeeded in transmitting really good, recognisable pictures through the ether. It was that circumstance that attracted the schoolboy inventor, and excited his ambition. Glyn wanted to see television raised out of the purely experimental stage, and he wanted to be the man to do it.

"You both know what you're to do?" he asked, as Lowther and Skimpole parted from him outside the bike shed.

"I'm O.K., old bean?" nodded Lowther. "What about you, Skimmy? You won't try to broadcast to Mars and give me an electric shock, will you?"

"Really, Lowther, I hardly see how my endeavouring to project your vision to Mars could produce such a result," said Skimpole, who accepted all things with equal good faith. "By altering the wavelength, my good fellow—"

"Can it, Skimmy?" growled Glyn. "Blow Mars! All you've got to do is to switch on at six o'clock to the minute, and switch off at six-thirty. Any more Martian stunts, and you're booked for something extra thick in the way of thick ears. Savvy?"

"Really, my dear Glyn—"

"No time for jawing about it. Do you understand what you're to do, or don't you?"

"Naturally I understand, my good fellow; but—"

"Right-ho, then! Buzz!"

And Bernard Glyn, with a nod, left his broadcasting staff and strode back to the School House.

Quite a crowd had gathered in Study No. 11 when he got back there. Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, his study-mates, had cleared away the tea-things and transferred the study table to the end of the room to leave more space for visitors; and Tom Merry and Manners from No. 10, and Jack Blake & Co. of the Fourth, and several other School House juniors, were seated or standing around awaiting for the "show" to begin.

There was a chorus of greeting as Bernard Glyn entered the study.

"Trot right in, old bean!"

"We're all ready and waiting, you know!"

"Make way for a real live televisionist!" grinned Jack Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bernard Glyn smiled good-humouredly.

"I'm going to fix it up on the table. Leave me an inch or two to move about in, you men!"

"Pleasure, old chap! By the way, are you making any charge for this entertainment?" asked Manners humorously.

"Oh, rats! I don't know whether there'll be any entertainment yet," said Glyn. "The probabilities are that Skimmy ruined those selenium cells when he chucked them into that bath of muck yesterday. And, anyway, I don't expect to see anything very wonderful yet. You must remember I'm only experimenting at present."

"Want any help?" asked Tom Merry, as Glyn set to work on the strange-looking conglomeration of electrical apparatus that was standing in the corner of the study.

"No fear! The first silly ass that starts messing about with this stuff goes out on his neck. This is work for an expert," explained the schoolboy inventor.

And he proceeded to fix up his receiving apparatus without assistance, while the unscientific-minded visitors whiled away the time in the discussion of a subject which, to tell the truth, interested them far more than television—namely, football.

"All serene now!" said Bernard Glyn at last. "What's the time, somebody?"

"Five minutes to six, deah boy!" answered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, consulting his gold hunter.

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"Good egg! Another five minutes, and they'll switch on at Glyn House. And then we shall see Lowther."

"Or not see him, as the case may be," suggested Jack Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if we don't, you can put it down to Skimmy's messing up those cells. But we'll soon know now, anyway. Clear the decks a bit, you chaps, and put the chairs round in a half-circle, so that you can all see."

"To hear is to obey!" smiled Tom Merry. "Stand back, Gussy!"

And the swell of the Fourth stood back, and others, more energetically inclined, helped to shift all available chairs to better positions.

"Six o'clock, deah boy!" called out Arthur Augustus, after another glance at his magnificent "ticker."

"Right-ho, old bean!"

Bernard Glyn leaned across the table, and connected up his set to make the circuit complete. Kangaroo, at a signal from his study-mate, switched on the sound-receiving set, and the expectant listeners heard Monty Lowther's unmistakable voice from the loud-speaker.

"Hallo, everybody! Glyn House Broadcasting Station calling!"

"Good old Monty!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Experimental transmission of sound and television will now take place!" announced Lowther's voice. "I hope you can all hear me and see me quite plainly."

"Don't know so much about the seeing part of it," remarked Digby. "How's it going, Glyn?"

"In half a sec! Sit tight!"

"Although I can't see you, I can easily imagine you fellows sitting round in Glyn's study," came Lowther's voice from the loud-speaker. "Most of you have got faces that once seen, are never forgotten!"

"Why, the silly ass—" exclaimed Blake wrathfully.

"Now that I'm away from you I feel that I can speak quite freely," went on Lowther. "For a long time I've been longing to tell Blake that his face resembles a squashed pancake as much as anything—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Needless to say, Jack Blake did not join in the yell of laughter that went up.

The leader of the Fourth somehow failed to see the humorous side of the broadcaster's uncomplimentary reference to his face.

"Then, there's a lot I've been wanting to say to Herries," rattled on Lowther's mechanised voice, with the utmost cheerfulness. "For instance, I've often thought like telling him the truth about his cornet-playing. The truth about it is that in less civilised times Herries would have been hung, drawn, and quartered for kicking up the awful row he makes with that instrument of torture."

"Why, the crass idiot—" roared Herries, starting to his feet in wrathful excitement.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Looks as if Monty's taking the opportunity of giving out a few home truths in safety!" grinned Manners.

Blake and Herries glared.

"Look here, if you're going to agree with him in what he said about my face—" began Blake.

"If you're going to support that silly ass in saying my cornet kicks up an awful row—" roared Herries.

"Hallo! What's this?" asked Tom Merry, interrupting what looked like turning into a rather heated argument.

"Stop rowing and look at the screen, you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gweat pip!"

All rows were forgotten as the juniors turned their attention to the screen. Bernard Glyn's television set had at last "got going," and the dull glass screen had suddenly become animated. A dim figure was moving up and down, and as the juniors watched that figure became outlined more and more clearly, until they could easily recognise Monty Lowther of the Shell.

There was a buzz as Bernard Glyn, by manipulating a knob very cautiously round a dial, brought up the picture more and more sharply into relief, until his study at Glyn House was revealed as clearly as if it had actually been there at St. Jim's; and as the schoolboy inventor stepped back, satisfied at last, the spectators' feelings found expression in a cheer.

"Good old Glyn!"

"Congrats, old bean!"

Glyn himself was almost overcome with amazement and delight as he saw how clearly the picture had come through. He had succeeded beyond his most optimistic dreams. In his excitement he hardly considered how and why he had succeeded so well, though he was aware that he had not consciously effected sufficient improvement on current methods to explain this spectacular achievement. The only feeling he experienced was one of supreme triumph.

"I—I say, you chaps, this is wonderful—miraculous!" he

gasped. "Nothing like this has ever been done before! Look at it!"

The juniors were looking. Lowther's voice was still coming through, but for the moment they were hardly heeding what he was saying. All their attention was taken up with the screen, where Lowther's figure, in miniature, was reflected with amazing faithfulness.

"Well, this beats the band!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Ever see anything like it?" breathed Kangaroo. "Glyn, old man, you've scored the success of your life here!"

"Bai Jove! This is the most remarkable thing I have evah seen!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weally considah one of the mastahs ought to see it!"

"Good idea! Fetch old Railton along and see what he thinks of it!" said Bernard Glyn enthusiastically. "Won't he rub his eyes? Won't everybody rub their eyes when this comes on the market? Oh, my hat! This is better than I ever hoped for!"

"I'll twof off and bwing Wailton," said Arthur Augustus obligingly.

And the swell of the Fourth, almost bubbling over with excitement, hurried out of the room to fetch the Housemaster, leaving the others still watching the screen with engrossed attention.

CHAPTER 7.

Monty Lowther's Audience.

MR. RAILTON was engaged with Mr. Ratcliff of the New House when D'Arcy arrived.

Mr. Ratcliff was not a very welcome visitor. Usually a visit from him meant a complaint against some junior or juniors belonging to the School House. This visit was no exception.

Something had just happened to annoy the dyspeptic New House master.

That, of course, was nothing unusual. Something or other always was happening to annoy Mr. Ratcliff.

On this occasion the culprit was Monty Lowther of the Shell. Coming through the gates, Mr. Ratcliff had passed that cheery junior cycling out of the school premises in company with Skimpole. The unlucky contact between a puddle and the wheel of Lowther's bike had resulted in a spot of mud alighting on Mr. Ratcliff's trousers.

Discovering the spot after progressing a dozen yards or so, Mr. Ratcliff, in his wrath, had decided to acquaint Mr. Railton with the circumstances of that dreadful affront to his dignity, and to demand the head of the offending Lowther on a charger—metaphorically speaking, of course. Hence his presence in Mr. Railton's room when D'Arcy arrived.

Arthur Augustus soon put a stop to his tale of woe. In his excitement over Glyn's amazing success, the swell of the Fourth had temporarily lost that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. He even forgot to knock on the door—an omission which drew a glare from Mr. Ratcliff, but which Mr. Railton, who was rather relieved at the interruption, freely forgave.

"Sowwy to intewwupt, Mr. Wailton!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "But you weally must come along!"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"You simply must, sir. It's weally amazin'—almost inwedible, in fact. I could hardly believe my own eyes when I saw it!"

Mr. Railton raised his eyebrows slightly.

"What ever is the matter, my boy? Has there been an accident?"

"Oh, cwikey! Not at all, sir. Nothin' of the kind, I assuah you. It's Glyn's television-set."

"What?"

"Television, you know, sir. Seein' things that are twansmitted by wireless through the ethewal waves or somethin'," explained the swell of the Fourth. "At pwesent, Lowthah is performin' f'wom Glyn's home, and we are watchin' in Glyn's studey. You weally must come, sir. As our Housemastah, you will natuwallly be intewested."

"Do I understand that Glyn has actually constructed a receiving-apparatus in his study, and that he has arranged for broadcasting from Glyn House?" asked Mr. Railton, in surprise.

"Pwecisely, sir!"

"And the results are successful?"

"More than successful, sir. Glyn says that nothin' like it has evah been achieved before."

"Dear me! This sounds very interesting," remarked Mr. Railton. "Glyn is something in the way of an inventor, I believe. Shall we go along and investigate, Mr. Ratcliff?"

Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"I am not in the habit of interesting myself in childish toys, Mr. Railton!" he snapped. "Were I approached in this manner by a boy belonging to my House, I should consider that I was being subjected to impertinence."

"Weally, Mr. Watcliff—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!" broke in Mr. Railton. "I really do not think that D'Arcy has any intention of being disrespectful, Mr. Ratcliff—"

"Quite wight, sir. I can assuah you—"

"That is enough, my boy. In any case, Mr. Ratcliff, if Glyn has constructed a receiving-set for television, I feel sure from my knowledge of the lad that it will be by no means a childish toy. Let us go and see for ourselves."

"If that is your opinion, Mr. Railton—" began Mr. Ratcliff harshly.

"It most certainly is."

"Then, in that case, I will accompany you to Glyn's study, and postpone our discussion of Lowther's insolent behaviour until afterwards."

And Mr. Ratcliff very unwillingly rose from his chair. Judging by the expression on his sour face, Glyn's television process was not in the least bit likely to interest him.

Strangely enough, however, forces were already at work to make the demonstration very interesting to Mr. Ratcliff—very interesting, indeed, in fact, though the reverse of pleasant.

D'Arcy led the way to the Shell passage with impatient footsteps. The two Housemasters followed at a more dignified pace.

As they drew near Glyn's study, sounds of merriment fell on their ears, coming from that direction. Something of a very humorous nature was evidently going on in Study No. 11, and Mr. Ratcliff's thin lips tightened as he heard. Mr. Ratcliff did not approve of a sense of humour in boys. He did not approve of anything concerned with boys, as a matter of fact.

The news of Glyn's triumph seemed to have spread. Study No. 11 was crammed to its fullest capacity when the two masters arrived, and a kind of overflow meeting outside was endeavouring to wedge through the doorway.

"Cave!"

The warning word went round like a flash as somebody spotted the newcomers. The crowd round the doorway melted away rather quickly, and D'Arcy was able to insinuate his slim person into the room.

"Pway cleah a way for distinguished visitahs, deah boys. Mr. Wailton and Mr. Watcliff are just comin' in," he announced.

"Oh, my hat!"

For some reason, D'Arcy's announcement appeared to cause sudden consternation in the crowded study. The laughter died away, and an audible gasp went up. If a bomb had been dropped in the room it could hardly have caused a more startling change in the behaviour of the occupants.

"Railton and Ratcliff, did you say? For goodness' sake keep 'em out!" urged Blake. "Oh crumbs! Too late!"

Arthur Augustus stared at his leader, wondering whether he had suddenly taken leave of his senses. Why Blake should be so anxious to keep out the distinguished visitors was a mystery to him for the time being.

But only for the time being. In less than half a minute the swell of the Fourth understood only too well. By that time, however, Messrs. Railton and Ratcliff had established themselves in chairs, and were interested spectators. And simultaneously with D'Arcy's discovery, they found out why their arrival had been the signal for the sudden cessation of the mirth in Study No. 11.

Monty Lowther was the cause of it all.

The humorist of the Shell had been well coached by Bernard Glyn in the technical side of his broadcasting performance. Unfortunately, Glyn had left the artistic side of it to Lowther himself.

Lowther had made the most of his opportunity, and the results, up to the Housemaster's entry, had been very entertaining to the spectators.

Lowther excelled in mimicry, and roars of laughter had greeted his impersonations of Kildare and Knox of the Sixth, Cutts of the Fifth, and Herries and D'Arcy of the Fourth.

Then he went on to the masters, starting with the Head, and afterwards switching on to Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell; and the laughter had been louder than ever.

And then D'Arcy's distinguished visitors came into Study No. 11, and the onlookers' roars of laughter died a sudden death.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" It was Monty's voice all right, and Mr. Railton, and even Mr. Ratcliff, leaned forward with interest as they recognised his features on the screen. "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! With your kind permission—or without it, if it comes to that—I will now give my celebrated impersonation of the most popular gentleman at St. Jim's—I don't think! Allow me to present Mr. Ratcliff!"

"Oh, ye gods!" murmured Tom Merry.

The leader of the School House juniors looked at Mr. Ratcliff, and almost groaned aloud at the expression of almost petrified rage on that gentleman's face.

Mr. Railton had half started to his feet at the visionary Lowther's announcement, probably guessing what was coming. The good-natured Housemaster of the School House began to regret bringing his unpopular colleague now.

Bernard Glyn made a move to switch off. But Mr. Ratcliff interrupted.

"Stop!" he commanded harshly. "I insist on witnessing this—this performance, Glyn!"

Glyn had no option but to obey. He fell back again. And Lowther's "celebrated impersonation" of Mr. Ratcliff began—with Mr. Ratcliff himself among the spectators!

CHAPTER 8.

Not Nice for Ratty.

THE televisionary Monty Lowther screwed up his face into an expression of acute misery, then added a touch of ferocity by showing the whites of his eyes. The effect was ludicrous and undoubtedly a libel on Mr. Ratcliff; yet, at the same time, there was something very akin to the original about it.

"Hem! Hem! Hem!"

It was Mr. Ratcliff's preliminary cough to the life. One or two subdued chuckles were heard in the room.

Mr. Ratcliff did not chuckle. The New House master was sitting bolt upright in his chair, his eyes glued to the screen, and an expression on his face that made Lowther's impersonation seem not very much exaggerated after all.

"Disgusting! How dare you engage in a brutal and degrading game of football when you should be doing your preparation. Disgusting, I say! Revolting, in fact! Who but brutal and degraded hooligans could play such a loathsome game?" rasped Lowther.

"Oh, crikey!" muttered Bernard Glyn, his hair almost standing up on end as he listened. "Why can't the silly ass stop?"

But Lowther didn't stop. Performing, as he was, in Bernard Glyn's study at Glyn House, he naturally saw no reason for stopping, so he went on.

The humorist of the Shell was in fine form. He rendered Mr. Ratcliff's vinegary accents with a faithfulness that was almost startling. Even Mr. Ratcliff could recognise the resemblance between his own voice and that coming out of the loud-speaker.

Lowther's "lines" were, perhaps, a little more libellous than his expression. Even Mr. Ratcliff, prejudiced as he was against all youthful pastimes, had never gone so far as to describe football as "brutal" and "loathsome" and "degrading." Yet, exaggerated as that all seemed, it still sounded like Mr. Ratcliff.

"Wretched and perverted young scoundrels!" thundered Lowther from the screen. "Struggling and kicking for the possession of a muddy ball, like a pack of savage animals! Pah!"

Lowther paused for breath, and extended an admonishing forefinger at some imaginary juniors.

"Only too well do I see the end of such perversion and iniquity!" he rasped. "Expulsion from the school, followed by a few years of aimless wandering; a rapid descent down the social scale, and then you will all find yourselves members of the criminal classes!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Really this was almost too much. The uncomfortable spectators longed desperately for some accident to happen to put the set out of action and bring Monty Lowther's funny turn to a sudden end. But Bernard Glyn's apparatus was apparently immune from accidents.

Mr. Railton was the most uncomfortable person in the room. It was on his suggestion that Mr. Ratcliff had come to the "show." Now that they were there, Mr. Railton would have done anything to have got his colleague away from it. It seemed, however, that Mr. Ratcliff didn't intend to budge.

Possibly the New House master guessed how Mr. Railton felt about this disrespectful mimicry on the part of a School House junior. Possibly it was that knowledge that had made him decide to stick it out. Such a motive would have been typical of Mr. Ratcliff.

Whatever his motive, Mr. Ratcliff stayed on.

Fellows who gave him sly glances to observe how he was taking it observed that his expression during Lowther's peroration had become more and more tigerish.

What followed made his expression almost fiendish. By a strange chance, Lowther decided to give an impression of Mr. Ratcliff lodging a complaint with Mr. Railton.

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That impression was true to life. The New House master almost winced as he heard and saw it.

"Mr. Railton! I desire to acquaint you with the circumstances of a savage and unprovoked attack made upon Figgins of my House by certain juniors belonging to your House. Hem!"

Tom Merry & Co. could hardly restrain a grin. Many a time and oft had they heard that phrase, or something like it, uttered in Mr. Ratcliff's harsh accents after a harmless House "rag."

Merry and certain of his friends, my dear sir, chose a moment when Figgins was walking across the playing fields to set upon him in the most ruffianly manner, as a result of which he is suffering several injuries!"



"Bai Jove! Watty to a T!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy involuntarily.

"What did you say, D'Arcy?" asked the real Mr. Ratcliff acidly, transferring his eyes for an instant from the screen to the swell of the Fourth.

"Oh ewikey! I weally was not awah that I had spoken, Mr. Watcliff!"

Mr. Ratcliff snorted, and did not pursue the matter, greatly to the relief of Arthur Augustus.

"Figgins, from motives which I do not pretend to understand, apparently wishes to shield the young ruffians who attacked him," continued Lowther, in Mr. Ratcliff's sour tones. "Nevertheless, Mr. Railton, I insist on their being punished in an exemplary manner. Hem! Hum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a spontaneous roar of laughter from the onlookers. Up to that point they had nobly repressed their feelings. But there was something irresistibly funny in the concluding cough that made further repression impossible.

"Stop!" It was Mr. Ratcliff. The New House master had started to his feet, white with rage. "How dare you laugh in my face at this disgraceful thing! Stop, I say!"

"Mr. Ratcliff—" began Mr. Railton, laying a restraining hand on the arm of his excited colleague.

"I refuse to discuss the matter, sir!" Ratty was almost green. "It has been my repeated complaint that I cannot get foot in this House without being subjected to insults and indignities—"

"Mr. Ratcliff!" exclaimed Mr. Railton sharply.

The New House master saw that he was in danger of overstepping the mark. He decided not to proceed with his views on the behaviour of the School House.

"Very well, sir. I will say no more!" he barked. "Perhaps it would be better for me to leave without witnessing the remainder of this vile performance."

"I consider it advisable," said Mr. Railton, with a cold nod. "Kindly switch off your apparatus, Glyn."

With a quickness born of desperation, Chatteris rushed to the open window, and vaulted on to the sill. Immediately he swung himself out into space and disappeared. "Heavens! He'll be killed!" cried Monty Lowther aghast. (See Chapter 9.)



Glyn was glad to get the order, and he hastened to obey. Monty Lowther's voice came to a sudden stop, and the moving picture of the humorist of the Shell vanished. And the rest of the Shell humorist's turn wasted itself on the ether, unrecieved.

"I will go, then," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I trust, Mr. Railton, that the notorious leniency with which you deal with the juniors in your charge will not prevent your meting out adequate punishment to the disrespectful and slanderous young miscreant who has dared to portray me on this screen!"

With that Parthian shot, Ratty rustled out of the study.

Mr. Railton stared after him with a frown for a few seconds; then he turned to the juniors.

"I trust that this—this performance was purely spontaneous on Lowther's part, boys? It was not deliberately pre-arranged?" he asked.

"Well, no, sir," answered Tom Merry. "Of course, if there's a row, we share the blame with Monty—I mean Lowther."

"I am afraid that in the circumstances a 'row' is unavoidable, Merry," said Mr. Railton. "And, since Lowther,

after all, is solely responsible for the trouble, I do not see that your standing behind him will make any difference. Kindly send Lowther to me as soon as he comes in."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Railton quitted the study.

And on consideration Bernard Glyn decided that it would be better to keep the set switched off. So up to the time arranged for the conclusion of the broadcast Monty Lowther was unwittingly wasting his sweetness on the desert air.

CHAPTER 9.

Circumstantial Evidence!

"WELL, that's that! Enjoy the jolly old histrionic performance, Skimmy!"

Monty Lowther stepped back from the screen before which he had been broadcasting for half an hour and gave Skimpole a hearty thump on the back as he spoke.

"Ooooooh! Pray refrain from such extreme boisterousness, my dear Lowther!" gasped the genius of the Shell, rubbing his back rather ruefully. "As to your question, I'm afraid I do not approve of frivolous mimicry. How much better it would have been had you recited a few chapters from Professor Balmycrumpet's remarkable work on the evolution of planetary systems!"

"Oh crikey! Why didn't you mention it before?" grinned the Shell humorist. "Ready to buzz off now?"

"I am quite prepared to take my departure at any moment convenient to yourself, my dear fellow," replied Skimpole, with his usual long-windedness.

"Good! Then we'll—Hullo!"

Lowther broke off, rather surprised, as the door of Glyn's study opened. Bernard Glyn's study was the sanctum sanctorum of Glyn House, and in the usual way not even servants were allowed to explore its mysteries.

But somebody was breaking the tradition now—somebody with dark, well-brushed hair and horn-rimmed spectacles.

Lowther recognised the newcomer. It was Mr. Chatteris, private secretary to Bernard Glyn's father.

Chatteris gave the two St. Jim's juniors a nervous look, then entered the room and closed the door after him.

"Can you young gentlemen spare me a few minutes?"

Lowther glanced at the secretary rather curiously, wondering what business he could have with them.

"All serene, Mr. Chatteris. Go ahead," he said.

"I have taken the liberty of approaching you in this particular spot so that we shall not be interrupted," said Mr. Chatteris, in a low voice. "I was hopeful of having a word with Bernard yesterday, but no opportunity presented itself. Possibly you will be able to speak to Bernard on my behalf."

"We'll do that all right, won't we, Skimmy?"

"Most decidedly, my dear Lowther. It is the duty of any human being to assist any other human being to the best of his ability. As Professor Balmycrumpet remarks in his remarkable book on 'The Psychology of Altruism'—"

"Hold on! Remember we've got to get back in time for calling-over," grinned Lowther. "Pile in, Mr. Chatteris."

"You may already be aware that on several occasions recently valuable bundles of bonds have disappeared from Mr. Glyn's safe during the night."

Lowther nodded.

"We have heard something about it," he admitted.

"The whole thing is an amazing mystery," said Mr. Chatteris. "On each occasion the safe has been found to be perfectly intact; yet these valuables have disappeared. Only two people possess the means of opening the safe—Mr. Glyn and myself. It is perhaps understandable, in the circumstances, that suspicion should have fallen on me."

Lowther and Skimpole nodded rather uncomfortably.

"Nevertheless, I am innocent," said the secretary earnestly. "I swear to you that I have touched nothing out of the safe. That is the first thing I want Bernard to know."

"Well, we'll tell him that," promised Lowther.

"But that isn't all. Knowing myself to be innocent, I have, naturally, racked my brains to solve the question of how the bonds could have got out of the safe. I have found what I believe to be the only solution. Unfortunately, I dare not mention my belief to Mrs. Glyn, and, above all, to Mr. Glyn. But I want Bernard to know, so that, if he believes me, he can, in his privileged relationship, speak to his mother and get something done."

"Blessed if I quite follow you," said Lowther, looking rather puzzled.

"I will explain. Briefly, I believe that Mr. Glyn is suffering from a very severe nervous breakdown that has slightly affected his brain."

"What?"

"Please do not look so startled. I am not implying that Mr. Glyn is a lunatic, of course. What I mean is that he

has developed one or two mental idiosyncrasies as a result of his breakdown in health. That is quite common in cases of nervous breakdown."

"But what's that got to do with the matter?" asked Lowther.

"A great deal. To come to the point, I believe that Mr. Glyn has been taking the bonds from the safe himself!"

"Oh!"

It was out now!

"To me it is the only possible solution of the mystery. I know that I have not taken a scrap of paper from the safe. And as Mr. Glyn is the only other person who possesses the means of opening the safe, he must be the one responsible. My theory is that, late at night in locking up the safe, he has been abstracting these bundles of bonds and hiding them somewhere about the house."

"But—but surely, in that case, they would be found?"

Mr. Chatteris shrugged.

"This is a big house, and there are a thousand-and-one hiding-places. They might easily remain hidden for years."

"But what would be his object, my dear sir?" asked Skimpole, blinking solemnly through his big spectacles.

"I am not suggesting that he has an object. What I do suggest is that these acts are the results of some mental aberration, and that he afterwards has no recollection of them," explained the secretary. "Mr. Glyn has been very worried of late over his exceedingly complicated business affairs. As a result of a Stock Exchange slump, his investments have depreciated to the tune of many thousands of pounds, and Mr. Glyn has been hard put to it to fulfil all his financial obligations. His difficulties are of quite a temporary nature, of course; but they have, I know, worried him considerably."

"Well, my hat!" Monty Lowther scratched his head, almost in bewilderment. "I suppose you realise that this sounds pretty steep?"

Chatteris nodded.

"Only too well do I realise it. That is why I haven't mentioned it to anyone in this house. But Bernard is a lad with enough imagination to understand the possibility of my having guessed the truth, and it is my hope that he will support me."

"Well, we can only promise to tell him what you've told us," said Lowther. "Frankly, so far as I'm concerned, it sounds just a bit too much up in the air."

"Be that as it may, will you speak to Bernard?" asked Mr. Chatteris.

Lowther nodded.

"Rely on me."

"Thank you—thank you, indeed!" said the secretary, obviously greatly relieved. "Perhaps it will be as well if I leave you now. I do not wish it to be known that I have spoken to you."

He shook hands with the two juniors and turned to go.

As he did so, there came the sudden heavy tramping of feet from the passage outside.

Chatteris paused, irresolute.

A moment later the door was flung open. Wide-eyed with astonishment, Lowther and Skimpole watched Inspector Skeat, the police-inspector from Wayland, stalk into the room, followed by a burly constable.

"What the merry dickens—" gasped Lowther.

"Arthur Chatteris!" Inspector Skeat's voice was hard. "I hold a warrant for your arrest for the theft of bonds to the value of one thousand pounds. I warn you that anything you may say may be used in evidence against you!"

Chatteris staggered back, his face deadly white.

"You can't—you can't do it!" he cried wildly. "Where's your evidence?"

The inspector laughed grimly.

"In the suitcase in your own room, in the shape of a cool thousand in bearer bonds!" he answered curtly. "Evidently you underrated the intelligence of the local police, Mr. Chatteris!"

White to the lips, Chatteris fell back another pace, and eyed the inspector like a terrified animal at bay. Inspector Skeat made a sign to the constable in the doorway, and the burly man in blue stepped forward.

The next instant something had happened that drew a cry of horror from the lips of Lowther and Skimpole.

With a quickness born of desperation, Chatteris had rushed to the open window. With a halt of a mere fraction of a second at the window-box, he had vaulted on to the sill. Immediately he swung himself out into space and disappeared.

"Heavens! He'll be killed!" cried Lowther, aghast. "It's a thirty-feet drop to the ground!"

All four rushed to the window and looked out. What they saw made Lowther and Skimpole gasp with relief, and Inspector Skeat mutter something under his breath.

Chatteris had not dropped to the ground, but had succeeded in getting a hold on the strong ivy that covered the

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wall of the house, and was now lowering himself step by step.

"Making a bolt for it!" snorted the inspector. "This way, Roberts!"

With that, Inspector Skeat fairly flew out of the room, with the constable at his heels.

Lowther and Skimpole continued to gaze out of the window, anxious to see what happened.

But there wasn't much doubt about the result of the chase. Long before the two representatives of the law had rounded the corner of the house, Chatteris had vanished into the shadows of the wooded grounds. And ten minutes later, when the two St. Jim's juniors were cycling down the drive on their way back to the school, they saw the baffled officers returning to Glyn House empty handed.

Guilty or innocent, Mr. Glyn's secretary had made good his escape!

CHAPTER 10.

Monty Misses the Point!

"SKIMMY did it!"

Bernard Glyn made that remark in Study No. 11 some few minutes after Mr. Railton's departure.

"Did what?" asked Tom Merry.

"Made my television set a success!" was Bernard Glyn's surprising answer. "I've been thinking it out. Skimmy did it. There's no doubt about it."

"Mean to say the way he switched on at Glyn House?" asked Jack Blake incredulously.

Bernard Glyn grinned.

"Don't be an ass, Blake! No; I'm talking about those selenium cells. You see, everything rests with them. You may remember I was a little worried about them yesterday?"

"May remember 'em!" echoed Tom Merry. "Can we ever forget?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats! Anyway, there's no doubt in my mind about Skimmy's being responsible for the broadcast being so successful."

"Was it successful, then? Better wait till Lowther comes back, and ask him!" suggested Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lowther's a fathead!" grunted Bernard Glyn. "But I'm talking about the technical side of the affair. Somehow or other, I've got the most perfect reception of television this evening that's ever been known. Now, how did it happen?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"No, it's not, you howling idiot! How did we get such wonderful results here to-night? I did nothing. And as nearly everything rests with the selenium cells, we've got to look to them for the answer. The answer is—that Skimmy improved them to a pitch of perfection that's never been known before."

The juniors looked considerably surprised.

"Mean to say that chump Skimpole actually beat you at your own game?" demanded Jack Blake. "Why, he knows as much about television as I know about Hebrew!"

Bernard Glyn grinned.

"I'm not saying he did it intentionally. Matter of fact, he didn't intend to do anything to them."

"Then, what the thump are you talking about?" howled Blake.

"I'll tell you. Remember when I tore into Skimmy's study and knocked the selenium cells out of his hands? Well, that was what did it!"

"Knocking them out of his hands improved 'em?" asked Tom Merry, with a stare.

"Not exactly! But knocking them into a bath of goodness-knows-what did!"

"Oh!"

"There must have been something in that mixture of Skimmy's that just did the trick," explained Glyn. "What it is I don't know, but it's evidently just the thing that inventors have been looking for for years."

"Oh, my hat! So it's all an accident?" asked Kangaroo.

"Just so! No credit whatever is due to me!" said Bernard Glyn modestly. "All the praise is due to Skimpole—if one gets praise for discovering things by accident!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I can find out what did it, you can bet your life I will," said Glyn. "But I'm not disguising the fact that Skimmy's the chap that did it—Hullo, here they come!"

Lowther and Skimpole walked into the study.

"Hullo, hallo! Everybody here!" remarked Lowther cheerily. "Well, just to relieve my burning anxiety, how did it come through?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther looked rather pleased.

"As well as that? Glad you enjoyed it, you fellows. I quite enjoyed doing it myself. See me all right?"

"Plain as a pikestaff!" grinned Kangaroo. "Plainer, in fact, but, of course, as it was you, that was only to be expected!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That reminds me, Lowther, next time you try to be funny about my face I'll give you a thick ear!" said Jack Blake. "Still, taking everything into consideration, I'll overlook it this time!"

"Same here!" said Herries, magnanimously. "I'll say no more about the piffing rot you talked about my cornet playing—taking everything into consideration!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther, seeing no sinister import in that phrase, joined in the laugh himself. Inwardly, he felt a little surprised that Blake and Herries, who were not exactly easy-going fellows, should have taken his slanderous utterances so cheerfully. Lowther had fully expected them to make a concerted rush at him on his return, and this cheery good-humour was very gratifying.

"By the way, how did you like my impression of old Ratty?" asked Lowther. "Pretty good—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thought you'd like it!" grinned Lowther. "Pity somebody or other couldn't have invited him here to see it. It would have done the old bounder's eyesight good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther began to look a little puzzled. It occurred to him that his remarks were creating rather more laughter than their purport altogether justified. It is said that an acknowledged wit has only to say, "Pass the salt!" to set the table in a roar. Lowther's wit, however, had never met with such enthusiastic acknowledgment at St. Jim's and he couldn't quite imagine the juniors' hilarity to be caused in that manner.

"Look here, what's the joke?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know it's funny—the idea of Ratty looking on at my little show; but I'm dashed if I see anything so screamingly funny as this in it!"

"Of course, you don't; but we do!" chuckled Clifton Dane.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All gone potty, or what's the matter?" asked Lowther, beginning to feel quite exasperated.

"Ha, ha, ha! Not quite!" said Blake, wiping the tears of merriment from his eyes. "You see—ha, ha, ha!—you see, old chap, what you said by way of a joke just now actually happened!"

"What?" yelled Lowther.

"Fact! Raiton came along to see the show, and brought Ratty along with him. And Ratty saw and heard it all. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the rest of the juniors.

Lowther's jaw dropped.

"You—you actually mean that? Ratty heard me taking him off?"

"Just that!"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!"

The humorist of the Shell, looking humorous no longer, dropped into a chair, and stared at the grinning juniors almost in horror.

"Sorry we had to laugh, Monty," said Tom Merry. "It's rotten for you, but—but, well, it does seem rather funny, too."

"Oh, my hat! I wish I thought so!" groaned Lowther. "What the thump's going to happen about it?"

"You've got to report to Raiton as soon as you come in."

"Oh dear!"

"Cheer up, old bean! If you'd only seen Ratty's face while he was looking on, you'd have thought it was worth it!" chuckled Bernard Glyn.

"Oh, rather!"

"Worth it to you, perhaps; you haven't got to stand the racket!" moaned Monty. "But—but Ratty heard the lot! Oh dear!"

"Bettah not keep Wailton waitin', deah boy!" advised Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wathah fancy Watty made him a bit fed-up over this bizney, and you may find him in the tautums if you keep him too long."

"Oh, crikey! I'll push off, then!"

"Keep smiling, Monty!" said Tom Merry. "It'll soon be over, and, after all, it's the best rag we've had for a long time. You'll earn tons of kudos over this!"

"Thanks, but I'd rather do without the kudos, at the price!" retorted Lowther. "Ta-ta, you fellows!"

"Half-a-mo! We'll come with you as far as Raiton's study, to help you keep your pecker up!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the whole crowd accompanied their hapless comrade to the door of the Housemaster's study, though whether they succeeded in helping Lowther to keep his pecker up was rather doubtful.

Five minutes later Lowther emerged, with instructions to

report to Mr. Raiton, render a full apology, and leave the matter of punishment in Mr. Raiton's hands.

It was rough luck on the humorist of the Shell, but everybody realised that Mr. Raiton could hardly do less.

Monty got it over as quickly as possible by proceeding straight from Mr. Raiton's study to the New House.

Needless to relate, his interview with the irascible New House master was decidedly unpleasant and extremely painful. Mr. Raiton "took it out" of Lowther with a vengeance, and from the time he left the New House up to the time he went to bed, Monty emitted Joleful "Ows!" and "Wows!" with great frequency.

In the meantime, the story of that humorous broadcast had spread into every corner of the school, and stately seniors and inky fags alike yelled over it.

But Lowther didn't laugh. Doubtless when the pain had worn off a bit he, too, would enjoy the recollection of the affair. But for the time being the humour had departed from the humorist of the Shell. For once in a way Monty Lowther seemed to have missed the point of the joke completely!

CHAPTER 11.

Declined without Thanks!

LOWTHER'S misfortunes did not, of course, prevent him from informing Bernard Glyn of the happenings at Glyn House.

Glyn listened to the story with a troubled brow. He was startled and distressed when Lowther told him of Chatteris' strange theory to account for the disappearance of the bonds.

"It can't be—simply can't!" he muttered, as Lowther finished. "I know the pater's been pretty run-down lately; but—well, if this were true, it would mean that he's practically off his rocker!"

"I thought it pretty steep myself," nodded Lowther. "But steep as it is, there's something rather genuine about that secretary chap—or else he's very deep; one of the two, anyway."

"I know. He always struck me as a very decent sort, and he has been the pater's right-hand man for years," said Glyn. "I can hardly believe he really has gone wrong. And yet what am I to believe? That my own father is mad?"

Lowther shrugged.

"Looks as if that's the only alternative. It's rotten!"

"It's awful. I'll never believe it of dad. Chatteris is guilty. Must be."

"Well, it's no business of mine, Glyn, anyway. I'll buzz off!" said Lowther; and he quitted Study No. 11, leaving the inventor of the Shell to his own reflections.

These reflections were not pleasant. Glyn could not—would not—entertain the thought that there could be any truth in the secretary's suggested solution to the mystery. Yet that implied that Chatteris himself was the thief; and somehow he hated the thought of that, too. Chatteris had been a trusted member of the household at Glyn House for years, and Bernard Glyn had grown to like the quiet, businesslike, mild-mannered secretary.

After cogitating for a few minutes Glyn rose and, quitting the study, went downstairs to the Prefects' Room.

Having obtained the necessary permission from Kildare, he got through on the telephone to Glyn House.

Mrs. Glyn answered from the other end. Even over the phone, Glyn thought he could detect a troubled note in her voice.

"That you, mater? Bernard speaking. Monty—Lowther, you know—has told me the news. Anything fresh since?"

(Continued on next page.)



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"They have not caught him, Bernard," came the answer. "Did dad agree to the warrant being issued for Chatteris' arrest?" asked Glyn curiously.

"He had to, my dear boy. What else could he do, after the police had found a thousand pounds' worth of the bonds among the man's belongings?"

"There's—there's no possibility of its all being a ghastly mistake?" Glyn asked slowly. "He always seemed such a decent chap—"

"I know, Bernard. We can't believe it ourselves. It's a great blow to us. But what can we do?"

"How is dad?"

Mrs. Glyn sighed.

"I wish I could say he was better; but—"

"You—you don't think his worries have made him absent-minded, or—or—"

Bernard Glyn tailed off, hardly knowing how to put it. Mrs. Glyn, however, seemed to sense his meaning.

"You are still thinking of the bonds? I had almost hoped that it was something of the kind, for the sake of Chatteris. But we can't think that, after what the police have found, can we?"

"I suppose not. It seems conclusive enough," admitted Bernard Glyn reluctantly. "And, of course, Chatteris has bolted, which is not the action of an innocent man. And yet—"

"I know how you feel, Bernard. I, too, have the same kind of feeling, even now."

"Well, I suppose we can't do any good by harping on it," said Glyn. "You'll let me know if they catch Chatteris, or—or if there's anything else to tell?"

"I'll let you know at once. You are going now, Bernard?"

"Must. Good-bye, mater!"

"Good-bye, my dear boy!"

Bernard Glyn rang off, and went upstairs to his study again.

A visitor was awaiting him in Study No. 11 in the form of Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the Fourth. Trimble had ensconced himself in the study armchair, and waved a fat paw in greeting, without troubling to rise, as Glyn came in.

"Hallo, Glyn, old chap! I say, I've come—"

"I can see that. Now go!" said Glyn curtly.

"Oh, really Glyn! I've come to help you—"

"But I don't want any help!"

"Don't be ratty, old chap! Look here, I happened to learn about the trouble at Glyn House—"

"You would! Trust you to find out about anything that's no concern of yours!"

"Oh, really, Glyn! I found it out quite by chance! I happened to be tying up my shoelace outside Tom Merry's study—"

"Scat!"

"But I've come to help you," pointed out Baggy Trimble patiently. "Look here, Glyn, let's get down to brass tacks. There's a mystery at Glyn House. You want to find out who pinched your pater's bonds. Well, I'm the man to find it out for you."

"You?"

"Little me!" said Baggy Trimble, with a podgy smirk. "It's no good leaving a thing of this kind to the police, Glyn. These local bobbies are hopeless. They'll get you nowhere. What you want is a chap with brains and imagination, and—and intuition and detective ability generally. I'm just the man for the job."

"M-my hat!"

"Don't think I'm cracking myself up," went on Trimble, with a deprecating gesture. "There's no swank about me, I hope!"

"Oh crikey! Isn't there?" gasped Bernard Glyn.

"Not at all. On the other hand, there's no false modesty," said Trimble. "Now, without boasting, I reckon I've got everything that goes to make a good detective. Sexton Holmes and Sherlock Blake and the rest of 'em have got nothing on me, I can tell you. I haven't the slightest doubt that I'd get to the bottom of this business of the missing bonds in no time."

"Great pip!" said Bernard Glyn, almost dazedly.

"Don't think I'm offering my services with the idea of making money out of you," said Trimble. "I'm not. Of course, when I recover the stuff for you and bring the guilty party to justice, you'll see me righted. That's taken for granted. In the meantime, of course, I shall naturally expect you to provide me with adequate refreshments while I'm working it out. A chap can't put his best work into a job while he's hungry, can he?"

"Can't he?" asked Bernard Glyn.

"Of course not. It's not to be expected," said Trimble.

"Well, what about it, Glyn old chap? Shall I go ahead?"

"Certainly!"

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"Good! A jolly sensible decision! Here, wharrer you doing, you silly ass? Yarooooop!"

"Helping you to go ahead!" answered Bernard Glyn grimly, as he grasped the Falstaff of the Fourth by the scruff of his neck and whirled him out of the armchair. "It was your suggestion, you know. I'm simply helping you to carry it out. Ready to go ahead?"

"Nunno! That wasn't what I meant—"

"It was what you said, anyway! Out you go!"

"Ow-wow! Whooooop!"

Crash!

Baggy Trimble went ahead without the option, so to speak. Propelled by Bernard Glyn's strong arm, he staggered through the doorway and crashed against the wall on the opposite side of the Shell passage, roaring.

"I'll give you three seconds to get to the end of the passage!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Ow! Beast! Look here—"

"One—"

"I didn't mean—"

"Two—"

"If you touch me—"

"Three!"

"Yoooooop! All right, you rotter! I'm going!"

Baggy Trimble went ahead like a champion on the cinder track.

And Bernard Glyn wasn't troubled again by the Falstaff of the Fourth that evening. The career of Trimble the detective had come to a sudden end.

CHAPTER 12.

In the Dead of Night!

BOOM! The last stroke of midnight sounded from the old clock tower of St. Jim's.

Bernard Glyn opened his eyes and looked round the shadowy dormitory, silent at that hour, save for the regular breathing of the sleeping juniors.

Sleep had not come to the inventor of the Shell yet. He had spent the long hours since lights-out tossing and turning in bed, trying to doze off, and only succeeding in becoming more awake as time went on.

Bernard Glyn was worried. Try as he might, he could not turn his thoughts away from the subject of Chatteris and the bonds. The thought of his father's secretary roaming the countryside, a fugitive from justice, continually tormented him.

Chatteris was guilty. Bernard Glyn had made up his mind on that point—or thought he had.

And yet—

Somehow Glyn could not altogether dismiss that suggestion of the secretary's. It was dreadful for him to think of his own father as mentally unbalanced. Yet it was possible. He had been run-down for some time—almost on the verge of a nervous breakdown. It was just possible.

As the hour advanced the schoolboy inventor grew more and more restless—further and further removed from sleep.

It was just after midnight, in mentally reviewing the events of the preceding day, that he suddenly thought of his experiment in television and started.

"My hat!" muttered Bernard Glyn.

In the excitement following the return of Lowther and Skimpole to the school he had forgotten to ask Skimpole whether he had disconnected the broadcasting apparatus. Now he remembered it.

"Just like Skimmy if he did forget it!" murmured Glyn to himself. "I wonder!"

After a pause he got out of bed and tiptoed across to Skimpole's bed.

"You awake, Skimmy?"

No answer. Skimmy was not awake. Bernard Glyn touched the shoulder of the sleeping junior and shook him gently.

Skimpole stirred uneasily and began to mutter in his sleep—a little habit from which the genius of the Shell occasionally suffered.

Bernard Glyn smiled faintly in the darkness as he caught one or two phrases.

"My dear Talbot, Professor Balmcrumpet's book explains determinism with delightful simplicity. Quite a short book. Not more than three or four hundred chapters in it, I assure you—"

"Wake up, Skimmy!" whispered Bernard Glyn.

"I assure you I am thoroughly awake, my dear fellow. As the professor truly observes— What—what? Who is it?"

Skimpole sat up in bed and peered at the shadowy form beside him in some alarm.

"Awake now?" whispered Glyn. "Don't be alarmed, Skimmy. It's I—Glyn."

"Dear me! You gave me quite a shock, Glyn. Are there burglars about? Is the school on fire?" asked Skimpole.



Within five minutes of leaving the dormitory, Bernard Glyn was climbing over the school wall, his "jigger" balanced at a perilous angle on his back. A daring drop to the ground on the other side, and Glyn was safely in the road. (See Chapter 13.)

"Neither. Sorry to wake you up, Skimmy, but something's just occurred to me about the broadcast."

"The broadcast, my good fellow?"

"The television, you know."

"Oh! Ah! Yes! What is the matter, my dear Glyn?"

"What I want to know is whether you switched off all right after Lowther had finished at Glyn House."

Skimpole rubbed his eyes and scratched his tousled head to assist him in thinking.

"I—I— Really it is quite difficult to remember," he answered at last. "I seem to have a distinct recollection of doing so, and yet I cannot be certain."

"Ass! Try to think!" urged Glyn.

"I am doing so. Unfortunately, the sudden entry of your respected father's secretary soon after Lowther had concluded left my mind a little confused on the point," said Skimmy slowly. "Possibly by applying scientific methods, I may be able to remember in time. Professor Balmcrumpet says—"

"Blow Professor Balmcrumpet!"

"Really, Glyn, I can hardly accept that remark as having anything to do with the subject. Professor Balmcrumpet says that with the fulfilment of certain conditions we can remember any detail of our lives with perfect clarity."

"Look here, Skimmy, can you remember whether you switched off my television apparatus at Glyn House, or can't you?" demanded Bernard Glyn impatiently.

"I am afraid, my dear Glyn, that at the moment—"

"You can't! Right-ho, then! In that case I'll just buzz downstairs and switch on to see if anything's coming through."

"My dear Glyn—"

But Glyn didn't wait for more perorations. Instead, he returned quickly to his bed, donned a dressing-gown and slippers, and tiptoed silently to the door.

Fortunately, his little interlude with Skimpole had not awakened anybody else in the Shell dormitory, so he was able to get away without being troubled by any inquiries. Skimpole sat up staring after the retreating figure of the inventor of the Shell and wondering in his solemn way whether it was up to him to accompany Glyn downstairs or

not, and before Skimpole could settle that question satisfactorily he had fallen asleep again.

Bernard Glyn crept downstairs, with no light to guide him through the deserted passages, save where beams of bright moonlight shone through an occasional window.

Reaching the Shell passage, he made for Study No. 11 and entered.

There was no need to light up; for Glyn knew the positions of the various switches and controls of his television set exactly. Gropping his way through the darkness of the room, he came to the table where the screen and loud-speaker had been left.

The loud-speaker being the nearer of the two, Glyn switched that on first and listened.

He hardly anticipated hearing anything; for even if Skimpole had omitted to "close down," the chances against there being anybody in his study at Glyn House at that hour were infinitesimal.

His surprise was great, therefore, when he detected, in addition to the faint atmospherics, a metallic sound, as of a door being unlocked.

That sound was followed by the sound of a movement of some kind, and then the closing of a door.

Bernard Glyn felt a chill run down his spine. There was something uncanny in those sounds, coming, as they were, through the ether in the dead of night. Glyn was a cool, practical, hard-headed fellow, with no faith in the existence of ghosts and their kind, but for a moment or two even he could not repress a feeling of superstitious fear.

Then, with an effort, he shook off the feeling. Reaching over the table he connected up the circuit of the television set, and glanced at the screen.

One look was enough to tell him that Skimpole had failed to observe his instructions. The study at Glyn House was still coming through. Dim and shadowy as it was now, Glyn could easily recognise it. The moonlight was streaming through the window, and revealed his desk, a heap of books, and a chair quite clearly.

Suddenly Glyn jumped.

A ghostlike figure had suddenly appeared on the screen
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from the darkness round the door, and was gliding, rather than walking, into the eerie light of the moon.

Trembling with excitement and horror, the inventor of the Shell leaned over to the screen to get a closer view.

Then a cry broke from his trembling lips.

"Father!"

CHAPTER 13.

Told by Television!

FOR a moment Bernard Glyn's discovery almost numbed him. What could it mean? For what purpose had his father entered the study at this hour?

Bernard Glyn's study at Glyn House was his own private personal demesne, protected from intrusion by inviolable custom. Why should his father have broken that custom, and at such an hour?

Glyn watched and marvelled.

The figure on the screen stood still and silent near the desk. Glyn had time to observe that his father was wearing a light-coloured dressing-gown. It was that garment which had given him a ghostlike appearance. Evidently he had got up from bed to visit Glyn's study. But why?

Try as he might, Bernard Glyn could not answer that question.

The contents of Glyn's study were, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, extensive and peculiar. It was quite conceivable that they were interesting enough to attract the interest of a busy man like Mr. Glyn. But it was impossible to imagine that they were interesting enough to bring him out of his bed in the middle of the night. That theory would not bear examination.

For a long time Glyn simply wondered, at a loss to understand the strange business.

Something more than the mere rustle caused by Mr. Glyn's movements came through from the loud-speaker suddenly.

Again Glyn felt a chill run down his spine. It was his father's voice; he could tell that. Yet there was something different about it—a certain strangeness in the inflection of the voice that made it seem unnatural.

The fact that he should be speaking to himself, too, made it all the more peculiar, and his words accentuated the strangeness of it.

"Two thousand!" was what Mr. Glyn said. "Two thousand! That's something to offset the loss in Anglo-Persian Nickels. With ten thousand in United Tins, we can afford to wait till Aguan Rubbers boil over. If only we can hang on—"

His voice tailed off into unintelligible mutterings.

He moved slowly across towards Bernard Glyn's desk. It was then, for the first time, that a strange circumstance was brought to the watching junior's notice.

Mr. Glyn's eyes were closed!

For a moment Bernard Glyn was staggered, hardly grasping the significance of it. Then he understood what it meant.

His father was sleep-walking—was walking and talking in a state of complete unconsciousness!

Bernard Glyn drew a sharp breath. Such superstitious fears as he had felt on first switching on the loud-speaker had gone now. But in their place had come a fear that was more real and urgent—a fear for the safety of his father. Glyn watched the movements of the dim figure on the screen with a deep anxiety, knowing that one false step might mean a fall and serious injury.

Suddenly Glyn watched the moving figure with a new interest. Mr. Glyn had halted in front of his son's desk. He now pulled open a drawer at the side of the desk and abstracted a sheaf of papers from it.

With a rapidly-beating heart, Bernard Glyn concentrated his gaze on those papers.

At first he could see little of them, as his father shuffled them from one hand to the other. Then Mr. Glyn altered his position slightly, and for an instant the watching junior saw something that made his face set.

The clear moonlight streaming through his study window at Glyn House had revealed the fact that they were no ordinary sheets of paper that Mr. Glyn held in his hands. Glyn didn't know a great deal about business matters, but he could recognise scrip when he saw it.

Mr. Glyn had been holding in his hands a bundle of bonds!

Bernard Glyn stood upright again, breathing hard.

The significance of his discovery did not dawn on him for a few seconds. Then he saw it all.

Mr. Glyn had abstracted the bonds from his son's desk during a fit of somnambulism. Necessarily, they must have been there previously. Necessarily, also, Mr. Glyn must have known that they were there, if not in his waking moments, at any rate, in the peculiar plane of consciousness in which he existed while sleep-walking.

Glyn pondered over it, and saw what all that implied.

It implied that Mr. Glyn himself had put them in the desk on a previous occasion. Since he had no recollection of it during the day, the previous occasion must have been an occasion like this when he had been sleep-walking.

It was quite conceivable that the peculiar activities in which the sleep-walker engaged during his somnambulist fits were remembered only when those fits were repeated. Examples of that kind of thing were fairly common, as Bernard Glyn knew.

Glyn thought he began to see daylight. His mind dwelt again on the few phrases his father had uttered just before he went to the desk. "Anglo-Persian Nickels," he had mentioned, and "United Tins," and "Aguan Rubbers"—all names of well-known speculative shares.

It was Stock Exchange speculation that had led to Mr. Glyn's somnambulism. That somnambulism was simply a form of the nervous breakdown which he was suffering as a result of unfortunate dealings in stocks and shares. In his sleep-walking fits he had unlocked his own safe, taken therefrom hundreds of pounds' worth of bonds, and hidden them away in various places, under some nightmare impression that by so doing he was covering himself against his speculative losses.

"Good heavens!" muttered Bernard Glyn aloud. "Then—then—"

He hardly dared give utterance to the thought. But he knew it for the truth, all the same.

Chatteris was innocent! The bonds which had been found among his belongings had been placed there at a time when Mr. Glyn was suffering from somnambulism!

And Mr. Glyn had actually agreed to the issue of a warrant for the arrest of his secretary, when all the time he had unknowingly been the culprit himself!

The revelation almost overwhelmed Bernard Glyn. But he no longer had any doubts about the facts.

"And to think that poor old Chatteris is hiding from the police, a blessed hunted criminal!" muttered Bernard Glyn.

He glanced at the screen again, attracted by a sudden noise from the loud-speaker.

What he saw drew a low cry of alarm from him.

The sleep-walker had been making for the door again, when evidently the girdle of his dressing-gown had caught in the desk. And just as Glyn looked round his father came crashing to the floor.

His heart in his mouth, Bernard Glyn watched and listened.

There was no sound—no movement.

Mr. Glyn lay as one dead!

It was intolerable, maddening, to have to see the whole thing happen, yet be unable to help. For several seconds Bernard Glyn stood there motionless, spellbound with fear. Every moment he hoped to see the recumbent figure rise, but the moments passed and there was still no movement.

Action came to the horrified Glyn at last. With a sudden swift movement he switched off both the television receiver and the loud-speaker. The vision vanished from the screen; the faint rustling of the loud-speaker died away.

Bernard Glyn quitted the study and returned to the Shell dormitory.

His mind worked quickly now. He debated the question what was best to do. His first thought was to telephone to Glyn House. On consideration he decided not to do that. The telephone exchange for St. Jim's was at Rylcombe post office, and the postmaster had to be awakened before he could get through. That would probably mean half an hour's delay at least. Glyn naturally had had very little experience of using the telephone in the middle of the night, but he was aware that in country districts there were difficulties.

By the time he had reached the dormitory he had made up his mind what to do. He would dress, borrow the celebrated duplicate key to the bike shed, owned by Aubrey Racke, get out of the House by one of the box-room windows, fetch his bike, and ride over to Glyn House.

It meant breaking bounds, but that couldn't be helped. There was no time to ask Mr. Railton's permission, or, in fact, to indulge in formalities of any kind.

Glyn dressed quickly and woke up Aubrey Racke.

Naturally, that gay and elegant junior was surprised and rather sarcastic. But Glyn did not trouble to explain his actions. Having ascertained that the key was in Racke's trousers pocket he unceremoniously annexed it and departed, leaving Racke staring after him almost dazedly.

Within five minutes Bernard Glyn was climbing over the school wall his "jigger" balanced at a perilous angle on his back.

A daring drop to the ground on the other side, involving slight damage to a mudguard which he ignored, and Glyn was safely in the road.

Then he mounted and sped away down the silent, moonlit lane, on his midnight mission.

CHAPTER 14.

Glyn to the Rescue!

BERNARD!

Glyn applied his brakes sharply as the name was called out on the still night air.

He was on the last lap. His way was taking him through a part of the lane, where woods lay on one side of him and common ground on the other. The cry came from the wooded side, and there was a familiar note in the voice which Bernard Glyn seemed to recognise.

He dismounted and peered into the deep shadows.

"Who's there?"

There was a rustling of bushes and undergrowth. A dim form emerged from the darkness.

"It is I—Chatteris!"

"Good heavens!"

Bernard Glyn almost winced at the sight of Chatteris. At that moment Chatteris looked exactly what he was—a fugitive from the law. In a few hours the smart, well-groomed secretary had become transformed into a grimy, unkempt man of the woods.

"You know, of course, what has happened?" asked Chatteris.

Bernard Glyn nodded.

"I feel like a hunted animal. The police have been



Our Oracle says that if the office-boy had twice as much sense as he's got at present, he'd be half-witted! (The office-boy is still thinking this over!—Ed.)

Q. Who won the Battle of Cannæ?

A. Reginald Whitting, of St. Annes, thinks that questions such as this ought to be barred by law from exam papers. In the first place, he had never heard of such a battle and has never wanted to. Then, to make matters worse, he put down as the answer on his paper that the cannibals had won it, because he thought that was what his chum at the next desk had whispered to him. Anyway, he failed in his exam, and thinks that possibly his history paper had some considerable part in "ploughing" him. Probably it had, Reggie, if most of your answers were on a level with the one about the battle. This was won by Hannibal. Trying to catch whispered remarks in the exam room is always a dangerous practice, my son!



This is what a Neptune's Cup looks like.

Q. What is the Neptune's Cup?

A. A giant type of sponge, Freddy C. Its scientific name is *Potérion patera*, and it sometimes attains a height of no less than four or five feet. Its chief home is the Indian Ocean, and its name is derived from its close resemblance to a huge goblet.

Q. Where has an amazing block of marble been quarried?

A. In Italy. It was no less than 60 ft. long, 6 ft. square, and the weight of it

was 380 tons. The fellow who had that fall on his too would have had something to shout about! The idea is to set it up as a monument to the great statesman, Mussolini.

Q. What are elvers?

A. Young eels, C. M. V.

Q. Why don't policemen wear chin-straps in sunny weather?

A. At first I thought that my reader, Charlie Cochrane, was trying for a "bite." By inquiry, however, I discovered first that policemen do not wear their chin-straps in sunny weather, and then I summoned the Big Four of Scotland Yard to a consultation on this auspicious and



The effect of wearing a chin-strap is shown in this picture of a "policeman off duty."

everywhere—combing out the woods, patrolling the roads. It has been a nightmare for me."

"I know."

"But I feel better, Bernard, seeing you," said Chatteris. "It seems providential, this meeting. What I want you to know is that I am innocent of the charge they have laid against me. You understand? I am innocent—I swear it!"

"I understand," said Glyn. "I believe you, too!"

"You believe me?" said the secretary, almost incredulously. "You mean that?"

"I do. But there is no time for talk. Something serious has happened, and I am on my way home now. You must come with me."

"What? And face certain arrest?"

"There will be no arrest—I promise you that. I can clear your name myself. Please take my word for it, and follow as quickly as you can. I must push on now."

With that Bernard Glyn mounted his bike again and pedalled off in the direction of Glyn House, leaving Mr. Glyn's secretary staring after him in doubt and astonishment, with which was mingled the dawning hope that Bernard Glyn's words had brought to him.

The junior dismounted outside Glyn House and let himself in by a side gate, the key of which he possessed. He

(Continued on the next page.)

important point. My own belief that the sack of the chin-strap was due to their desire for free movement in case anyone asked them to partake of a cooling glass of milk proved to be erroneous. The fact is that a policeman's face, like any other, is apt to become sunburnt, and if he wears a strap he could be too easily recognised by the mark of it when off duty by crooks, gas-meter men, and others best avoided.

Q. What is a golden wedding?

A. The fiftieth anniversary of the wedding day, Johnny Vandenburgh. You say in your letter that your father, who is hard-up at present, has been invited to one, and has been worried because he believes it is customary for the guests to take gifts to the celebration. That is quite true, and the present must be of gold. This is easily got over, however. What about his taking a goldfish?



Twelve pennies make a shilling, but the one shown above is worth £250.

Q. How much is a King Henry III. penny worth?

A. The one illustrated, Walter Mare, of Hackney, is worth no less than £250. This particular coin is of gold, and in the picture you will see what it looks like on either side.

Q. Who were the Medici?

A. A famous family which had their origin in Tuscany (pronounced Med-ee-chee). Firstly, they became very wealthy through trading, and later rendered great services by their wealth to the princes of Italy and other countries. So powerful did they grow that by the thirteenth century they were the virtual masters of Florence, the capital of Tuscany, and a hundred years later Cosimo Medici was the sole dictator of this fine city. Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was his grandson, became one of the greatest figures in all Italian history; and otherwise the family gave to Italy two Popes and to France two queens. The Medici family became extinct in the eighteenth century.

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then cycled down the path leading to the main entrance of the house, dismounted for the last time, and rushed up the stone steps leading to the front door.

By the simple expedient of pressing the electric bellpush and keeping it pressed Glyn succeeded in bringing someone to the door within a few minutes.

There was much drawing of bolts, turning of locks and releasing of safety-chains from within, then the great door at last swung open and Chambers, an ancient retainer of the Glyn family, looked out.

"Who's there?" demanded Chambers gruffly; then, catching sight of Glyn: "Bless my soul, Master Bernard! Is it you? This is a strange time o' night to be visiting the house. Come in, sir!"

"There has been no alarm in the house, Chambers?" asked Glyn, as he stepped into the hall.

"Alarm? You mean burglars or the like?"

"No, no. You have not been awakened previously by my father?"

"Your father? No, sir! Mr. Glyn retired to bed some hours ago," replied the old servant, obviously surprised by the question. "Why, what's the matter, Master Bernard?"

"Follow me," was Bernard Glyn's answer, as he started up the main staircase, two stairs at a time. Chambers, in a state of wonderment, followed.

Bernard Glyn's mother, wearing a dressing-gown, met them on the first landing and stared in amazement at the unexpected sight of her son.

"You, Bernard? What ever brings you here at this hour?"

In a few rapid sentences Bernard Glyn explained what had happened—how, by the strangest coincidences, he had been able, from his study at St. Jim's, to watch his father sleep-walking at Glyn House.

Mrs. Glyn's face went white when she learned of the accident which had brought Bernard Glyn out on his midnight journey.

"Then—then he is lying up there still—injured, possibly—"

She did not complete the sentence, but Glyn understood, and trembled a little.

"It may not be serious," he said at last. "I'll go up first, mater."

And he led the way to his study.

Happily, Glyn's hopeful words proved correct.

As he entered the study and switched on the light, there was a movement from the spot where he knew his father to have fallen, and the sound of a faint sigh.

Glyn fell on his knees beside his father and gently raised his head.

"Father!"

Mr. Glyn half-opened his eyes.

"Bernard!" He made a feeble attempt to rise, and Bernard Glyn helped him up and put forward a chair for him. "What has happened? How came I to be here?"

Mrs. Glyn, almost sobbing with relief to find her husband conscious and apparently uninjured, took her son's place at Mr. Glyn's side.

"Dear, you must not worry," she whispered. "You fainted—that is all. Chambers, help me to support your master back to his bed-room."

With his wife on one side and Chambers on the other Mr. Glyn was able to walk slowly back to his bed-room. Arriving there, he was helped into an armchair. A little brandy brought some colour surging back into his pale cheeks, and very soon he was looking himself once more.

Naturally, he was anxious to know exactly what had happened, and although Mrs. Glyn would have preferred to leave explanations over to the following day, his insistency eventually overcame her reluctance and she allowed Bernard Glyn to tell him everything.

Mr. Glyn listened to the story with a stern, troubled face. Not once did he interrupt the recital.

At the finish he buried his head in his hands, almost overwhelmed by his son's revelations. Mrs. Glyn rested her arm over his shoulder comfortingly.

"Dear, you must keep calm. Sleep-walking is just an effect of your condition of health. It is temporary, and will go for good when you take a rest-cure and become stronger again."

Mr. Glyn nodded dully.

"I know. I am not worried a lot about that, serious as
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it has proved to be. What does worry me is the thought of the wrong I have done poor Chatteris.

Bernard Glyn heard the distant buzz of an electric bell downstairs, and smiled.

"Cheer up, pater!" he exclaimed. "Chatteris himself is at the front door now!"

CHAPTER 15.

All Serene!

"CHATTERIS!"

Mr. Glyn almost whispered the name as his old secretary walked into the bed-room two minutes later.

Chatteris looked at the huddled figure in the armchair in wonderment.

"What has happened, sir? Have you been taken ill since I saw you?"

"Chatteris, I'm afraid I've done you a wrong that I can never atone for," said Mr. Glyn in a low voice. "I consented—reluctantly, let me say—to their issuing a warrant for your arrest. Now I find that I was wrong."

"Thank Heaven!" murmured Chatteris fervently.

"Nothing that I can say can express the humiliation I feel," went on Mr. Glyn. "It is too much to ask from you that you forgive me—"

"That isn't true, Mr. Glyn!" broke in the secretary quietly. "What has come about to convince you of my innocence, I do not know. But whatever it is, the evidence on which the police acted—the finding of some of the missing bonds among my belongings—looked conclusive. I was unable to explain them, and I cannot blame you for taking what seemed the only possible view."

Mr. Glyn shook his head.

"All the same, Chatteris, it was wrong of me. I should have known you better than to accept any kind of circumstantial evidence. But before I say more, you must know what has happened. Bernard, will you explain matters to Mr. Chatteris as you explained them to me?"

Bernard Glyn did so.

Great was the secretary's astonishment when he learned that the secret of the missing bonds had been fathomed through the medium of Glyn's television-set. Almost incredulously he listened to the story of the strange way Fate had chosen to clear his name.

When Glyn had finished he drew a deep breath.

"Then—then you—"

He broke off.

"I am the one who took the bonds from the safe," finished Mr. Glyn, with bowed head. "It seems almost nightmarish to me, but it is the truth, and I can't deny it. Naturally, Chatteris, I knew nothing about it afterwards. You will at least give me credit for that, I hope."

"Of course, of course! Pray don't distress yourself about the matter in any way, Mr. Glyn," begged Chatteris, who hardly knew how to express his delight at the amazingly swift change in his fortunes. "Let us all agree not to refer to the matter again, so that the painful episode may be more quickly forgotten."

Mr. Glyn smiled a little grimly.

"I'm afraid I shall not forget it very easily, Chatteris," he said. "This has been a lesson to me. Henceforth, health will be my first consideration. Stock Exchange speculation is finished with, so far as I am concerned. I have sacrificed health in the interest of money-making, and in so doing I have been unjust to myself, and have come within an ace of ruining your whole life."

"And now what about seeing what value in bonds is tucked away in the desk in my study?" suggested Bernard Glyn, who had been listening to his father's emotional statement rather uncomfortably.

It was a good suggestion. Obviously, the scrip could not be allowed to remain there any longer, now that the hiding-place had been discovered. Glyn and Chatteris went along to investigate.

The bonds which Glyn had seen so clearly on the screen at St. Jim's were still in the desk where Mr. Glyn had replaced them after his somnambulistic inspection.

Chatteris went through them rapidly, and in less than a minute had found that they represented a value of something in the neighbourhood of one thousand pounds sterling, which meant that, with the thousand the police had discovered in Chatteris' bag, the total loss had been recovered.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"GUSSY'S NOBLE SACRIFICE!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Grand Long Complete Tale of St. Jim's,

"THE WORST FORM AT CODRINGTON!"

By DAVID GOODWIN.

Another sparkling instalment of this school serial,

"FAMOUS DAREDEVILS!"

A vivid article telling of the adventures of Henry Hudson, the famous explorer, and a further batch of questions answered by our wise old Oracle.

ORDER YOUR "GEM" EARLY.

"Thank goodness it has turned out all right in the end, anyway," said Bernard Glyn, with a sigh of relief. "Goodness knows what the pater would have felt like if you had been caught and sent to prison!"

Chatteris shuddered.

"Don't speak of it. Fate, in the shape of your invention, has willed otherwise, anyway, and it is all over now."

Mr. Glyn was in bed when they got back to his bed-room again. Needless to say, he heard their news with deep thankfulness. Shocked though he had been by the events of the night, he felt a great satisfaction in the knowledge that the mystery was now entirely cleared up. That knowledge brought peace to his troubled mind, and very soon after Mr. Glyn was sleeping soundly. And they felt somehow assured that there was going to be no more sleep-walking that night.

Glyn then got ready to go. Mrs. Glyn was in favour of his sleeping at Glyn House the night, and explaining the extraordinary circumstances to Dr. Holmes in the morning. That course, however, would have involved a lot of fuss, which the junior wanted to avoid. So he had his way and returned to St. Jim's, carrying with him the two precious selenium cells.

"Seen Skimmy?"

Bernard Glyn burst into study No. 10 in the Shell passage after lessons on the following day, and asked that question.

The Terrible Three stared at the schoolboy inventor.

On the morning following his midnight adventure Glyn had told them all that happened, and it was with mingled amazement and relief that they learned of the solving of the mystery of Glyn House.

"Seen that burbling bandersnaith Skimpole?" Glyn repeated wrathfully.

"What's the trouble, Glyn?" asked Tom Merry.

"It's my selenium cells," grunted Glyn.

The Terrible Three grinned.

"Seem to remember something about them before!" remarked Manners.

Bernard Glyn snorted.

"That footling, fatheaded chump Skimpole has pinched them again!" he said, in a suppressed voice. "Just think of it! Cells that have produced the best results ever known, and a blundering idiot like Skimpole has the nerve to pinch 'em! Wait till I get him. I'll—"

What Glyn intended to do to Skimpole was never said, for the study door opened and Herbert Skimpole himself entered the room.

The genius of the Shell appeared to be worried. His hair was dishevelled, his clothes untidy, his massive brow was wrinkled as though the cares of the whole world rested on his youthful, if somewhat rounded shoulders.

"Can you, perchance, inform me, Merry, whether Glyn is in the immediate vicinity— Oh, there you are, Glyn!" he exclaimed, blinking solemnly through his big spectacles. "You're just the fellow I want to meet!"

"And you're just the fellow I want to meet!" roared Bernard Glyn. "What about my selenium cells?"

"Dear me! By a strange coincidence, it is on the subject of the selenium cells that I want to speak to you."

"Then you did take them! Where are they?" roared Glyn.

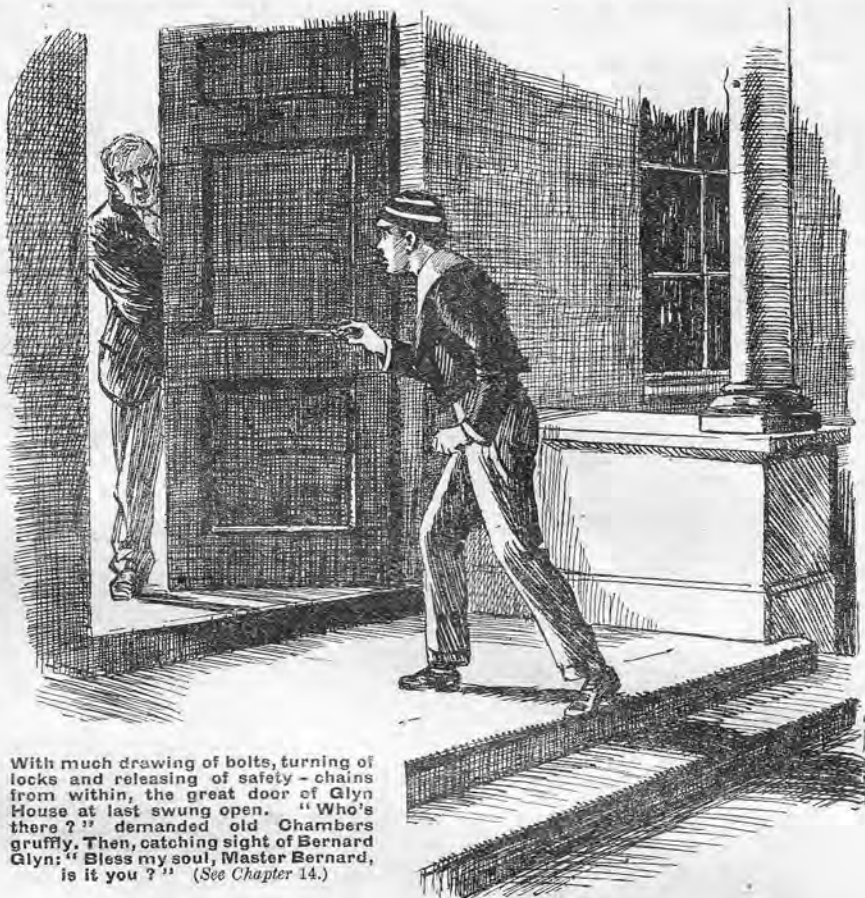
"Nowhere!"

"Eh?"

"Nowhere, my dear fellow!"

"How the thump can they be nowhere, you howling idiot?" hooted Bernard Glyn.

"Quite easily, my dear fellow—since they no longer exist!"



With much drawing of bolts, turning of locks and releasing of safety-chains from within, the great door of Glyn House at last swung open. "Who's there?" demanded old Chambers gruffly. Then, catching sight of Bernard Glyn: "Bless my soul, Master Bernard, is it you?" (See Chapter 14.)

Bernard Glyn blinked.

"N-no longer exist?" he stuttered, a sudden fear taking possession of him.

Skimpole nodded.

"You see, I have been burning up a rather imposing collection of rubbish which accumulated in my study during the experiments I have been undertaking. Absent-mindedly, I consigned the selenium cells in question with a pile of rubbish to the fire, and before I realised what had happened, they had been charred to ashes."

Bernard Glyn stood there motionless for fully half a minute, rooted to the floor with horror. Then, with a cry of mingled anguish and rage, he flung himself at the genius whose "act of inadvertence" had destroyed the articles which Glyn, just then, valued more highly than all the wealth of the Indies.

Skimpole let out a yell.

"Whoooooop! Pray desist, my dear fellow! Have I not told you it was a mistake— Ow-wow! Yarooooooop!"

"Oh, my hat! Leave a little bit of him!" gasped Tom Merry, overcoming his mirth with an effort.

"Don't strew the hungry study with his bones!" begged Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three took a hand in the game and dragged Bernard Glyn away from the hapless Skimmy. That youthful genius, his powers of eloquence for once forsaking him, made an immediate rush for the door, and very little was seen of him for the rest of the day.

As for Glyn, he was disconsolate, not only that day, but for several days after. Without the improved selenium cells his wonderful super-sensitive television-set was a thing of the past.

Like Rachel of old, Glyn now mourned for that which was lost, and would not be comforted. And it was quite a long time before his usual cheery spirits asserted themselves again.

THE END.

(There'll be another lively long complete story of the chums of St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled: "GUSSY'S NOBLE SACRIFICE!" Don't miss this, chums—it's a winner!)

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OPENING CHAPTERS OF A BRILLIANT NEW SCHOOL SERIAL!

The Worst Form at Codrington!

By
David
Goodwin



Form masters come and Form masters go, but still the Remove at Codrington College remains untamed. And in this lively opening instalment of a new serial you are introduced to the shining lights of the Remove, Taffy Wynne & Co., who treat all and sundry at Codrington in a like manner—a manner as startling as it is unruly!

CHAPTER 1.

The New Boy!

"WANTED.—An assistant master, of high scholastic attainments and an iron will, to undertake the control of an exceptionally unruly and backward Form at a large public school. High remuneration. State qualifications and degrees.—Box 771B."

A WIDE and wicked grin spread slowly over the freckled features of Talbot Delaval Wynne—better known as "Taffy"—aged sixteen, as he perused the above advertisement in the columns of a paper, while standing on the platform of Stanstead Station.

"Derry, my buck," he called to a friend some distance away, "come and cast your cold grey eye over this!"

Richard Dereker—in well-cut lounge suit, and with a straw hat perched on his head at a rakish angle—strolled up and took the paper. Dereker read the paragraph and gave a short whistle.

"What d'you think of it?" he asked.

"Think of it? It's us—we—our little selves! There isn't a doubt about it. The 'large public school' is Codrington; and 'the unruly and backward Form,' my dear infant, is the Remove—of which you and I are now the pride and adornment."

"Rot!" said Dereker. "It must be a hoax. The school hasn't come down to advertisin'. The governors wouldn't stand it."

"The Head, my dear boy, generally does as he likes, and he's an eccentric bird. If Box 771B isn't the Head I'll eat THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,126.

him! The last remainin' grey locks have vanished off his now polished pate in tryin' to find a Form master who can handle the Remove. You know the berth's vacant again."

"Of course!" assented Dereker, with a grin. "Little Morton chucked it at the end of last term, and has gone for a year's holiday to try to repair his shattered nerves. I often wondered the poor little wretch didn't die at his desk."

The Remove at Codrington prided itself, most improperly, in being unique in unruliness. Of course, at all great schools that Form—sometimes called the Lower Fourth—is the worst to handle, from the point of view of the Form master.

It is in that class that the wildest spirits are found; those who love not labour, or who, though not objecting to it, are too full of the zest of life to work for a step higher. Besides these, the Remove becomes a sort of eddy where all the "slackers" accumulate, sometimes remaining in it for years. Yet, for all its wildness, there is occasionally more real good grit in that Form than in most of those above or below it.

The Codrington Remove was not a mere mild, ordinary one. The last Form master but one, who had a great reputation beforehand for taming refractory boys, resigned after his first term, and had been heard to describe it as a crew of demons fresh from the pit. And Messrs. Wynne & Dereker, who did not look at all demon-like, but still were shining lights of the Remove, and accepted by many as its leaders, looked through the paragraph again and agreed that it was genuine. The headmaster was advertising at last for somebody who could tame the Form.

The grin on Dereker's face grew wider,

"Good egg!" he said. "I'm open to take a small bet that we make it hot for the gentleman with the iron will. We'll start the term well. Hallo! Here's De Quincey. Quince, you're a literary and artistic sort of bird—have a squint at this!"

A lean, dark-complexioned boy, very carefully dressed, and with a thoughtful scowl on his features, took the paper. De Quincey—for that was his name—also belonged to the Remove, but was very different from most of its members. He esteemed himself to be a poet, and had a very bitter tongue and a picturesque mode of speech. His great ambition was to found and edit a school magazine.

"My good ass," he said pityingly to Dereker, "I saw this ten days ago! Why, the paper's a fortnight old! They've got the man they want by this time, no doubt, and he'll be trampling on your necks to-morrow morning."

"You suppose it's genuine, then?" asked Dereker.

"Of course! There's no mistakin' such rotten grammar as the Head writes. How can a man be 'of an iron will'? He can have an iron will, or acquire an iron will. But how can he be of—"

"Oh, dry up!" said Wynne. "I want to know about this chap who thinks he's going to break us in."

"Let him!" said De Quincey.

He turned scornfully away towards a group of well-dressed Codrington seniors of the Shell and Fifth Forms who had arrived, and were waiting for the train which picked up the Codrington boys at the various stations on the opening day of the term. They knew their own importance far too well to consort with such rabble as the Remove; but they put up with De Quincey because the whole school did so, and everybody was a little afraid of his tongue.

"Isn't it a wonder nobody ever kicks De Quincey?" said Dereker. "If any of us others said the things he does there'd be murder done. Hallo! Who on earth let that out of the cage?"

He stared at a small and rather pale boy who just then appeared on the platform. The newcomer had a very simple face, and his limbs were so thin that they seemed like mere sticks inside his carefully brushed clothes; moreover, he looked as helpless as a strayed puppy. His luggage—a trunk and a big, unevenly shaped parcel—was brought in on a barrow by a coarse and red-nosed outside porter.

"Thank you very much!" he said gratefully to the porter in a nervous voice. "I'm—I'm very much obliged to you, sir!"

"Have you gotcher ticket?" said the porter, eyeing him dubiously.

"Er—er—yes, to be sure! It was bought for me. My aunt put it in my pocket herself," said the pale youth, feeling in a waistcoat pocket.

He then took off his hat and thanked the porter again.

Taffy, who was staring in wonderment, nudged his chum in the ribs.

"Dyer want me to get yer anything from the bookstall?" said the porter, still more suspiciously; for there were no signs of a tip.

As a rule, the Codrington fellows tipped well, and the newcomer's boxes were labelled to the school.

"No, thank you. I'm very much obliged to you!" bleated the new boy, looking more lost than ever. "If I had any money I should have asked you to get me 'Little Folks,' if you would be so kind. But I haven't any money; my aunt sewed up my trousers pockets. She—"

"No money!" gasped the porter, glaring. "Then where's my tip—eh? Oo's to pay me?"

"Dear me! I—I thought my aunt had paid for everything," said the boy, turning pale. "She said—"

"Have I brought these 'ere boxes all the way up the road for nothin'?" snarled the outside porter.

And, turning up his barrow, he shot the new boy's luggage on the platform with a bang.

"I—I—I'm very sorry!" stammered the boy, who seemed to be on the point of tears.

"I've a good mind to prosecute yer! Now, look 'ere, if you don't—"

Dereker was laughing till the straw hat wobbled on his head,

and the new boy looked as if he were going to faint before the red-nosed porter's wrath; but at this point Taffy Wynne strode forward and interposed.

"Shut up, Robins!" he said peremptorily to the porter, and then turned to the new boy. "Are you going to Codrington?"

"Y-yes, sir," bleated the slim youth. "But this gentleman says I owe him money. If I could send for my aunt—"

"Robins, you red-nosed fraud, what do you mean by ragging him like that?" said Wynne sharply to the porter. "Put his boxes with mine—do you hear?—and look after the lot!"

"Yessir!" said the porter briskly.

"And if I hear of you havin' the cheek to bully any chap bound for the school, I'll see you never get another tip from a Codrington man while the place stands. We're expecting the Remove along by the down train, and if you don't want to be ducked in the engine trough—"

"All right, Muster Wynne, I'll see to the luggage," said the porter smartly, taking the boxes to the labelling-room.

The new boy, looking timidly at Taffy, nearly melted into tears of gratitude—or, at least, seemed as if he were going to.

"How very kind of you, sir! How shall I thank you? I—I—"

"All right, kid. It's a wet summer, and you needn't weep on my bosom," said Taffy; while Dereker, screwing a key-ring into his eye, contemplated the new boy through it as if he were some strange animal.

"I really do not know what I should have done if the gentleman had insisted on being paid," said the boy, with a sigh. "It is dreadful to think of being in his debt. I—I thought of offering him my white mice as payment; only it would have broken our hearts to be parted. I know they could not live without me."

"White mice?" said Taffy, with a dazed look.

"Yes, in a cage among my luggage. Such sweet things! One is fawn and white, and the other is skewbald. They are orphans," continued the new boy, his hands clasped and his eyes filling with tears. "Their mother died when



they were young, and I brought them up by hand. If you had seen the dear mites sucking a rag dipped in warm milk, it would have touched your heart!"

Dereker leaned against a newly-painted pillar, and, gasping for breath, mopped his forehead. De Quincey, who had silently reached the spot and overheard the speech about the mice, peered at the new boy and then at the labels on his luggage.

"Is this worm really going to Codrington?" said De Quincey, in tones of wonder. "What in the world are we coming to? Where did you wriggle from, creature?" he said, addressing the gaping new boy. "Did the rain bring you to the surface? Speak, you creeping thing!"

"Shut up, Quince!" said Taffy abruptly. "I'm in charge of it. Git!"

"I congratulate you both on having at last found a creature of your own mental level," said De Quincey blandly to Wynne and Dereker. "I will leave you to fraternise. An revoir, worm! I hope it may be adieu!"

The new boy was too bewildered to make any reply. He looked such a forlorn little figure that Taffy, who sometimes did the most extraordinary things—as his friends put it—on a sudden impulse, took it into his head to make friends with him, and possibly stand between the new boy and trouble. There would be plenty of trouble in store for such a boy at Codrington.

CHAPTER 2.

The Remove Arrives.

"WHAT'S your name, kid?" asked Taffy. "Jellicoe," replied the new boy timidly. "Cecil Jellicoe, sir."

"Who are your people?" "Please, I haven't any people. I live with my aunt—Mrs. Caterham. I've always been an orphan," said the youth, with simple pathos. "That's what makes me so fond of mice."

"Where does Mrs. Caterham live?" "At Houghton Park, please, sir."

"Don't say 'sir,' you little ass. Is that straight about the mice? You've got 'em with you?"

"Yes; in a double cage, with a little wheel for exercise," replied Jellicoe.

"It's bad business," said Taffy gloomily. "Don't know how the school'll take it. Shockin' bad form, keepin' white mice at Codrington. If it was a badger, now, or a hyena, well and good. It'd be something to make you remembered; you'd stand out from the common herd. But white mice! Even the Preparatory kids wouldn't own to it!"

"He can't keep them," said Dereker decisively. "Lodgey'll drown them."

Lodgey was the school sergeant. Jellicoe looked so agast that even the tough Taffy felt for him and hid a smile.

"We'll see what can be done. Maybe I'll give you a leg-up, kid. Mind you, it's no small beer having me for a pal. It's not often I talk to a new kid, except with the toe of my boot, and you seem a worse terror than most of 'em, too. Hold on a shake while I get my ticket," said Taffy, stalking off.

Dereker caught him up at the booking office and began to protest.

"Look here, Taffy, this can't go on. You're only rottin', I hope."

"Rotting! What d'you mean?" said Taffy abruptly. "Why, you can't really intend to be seen with that pasty-faced little terror! He's dotty, or not far off of it. Hang it, think of our position! You're not goin' to back him up at the school? The chaps'll never stand it. They would turn you both out."

Taffy turned to him fiercely. "Will they, by gum! That's quite enough. I'll look after the kid, Derry, and stand between him and evil—like the prig-hero did in that ghastly book the matron gave us last term. Just let any of the rabble get up an' dictate to me, an' there'll be war!"

Dereker shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll preach sickly sermons in the dormitory about protectin' the weak, and walk about with my arm round the little beast's neck, if anyone objects!" said Taffy. "You know me."

"Well, you're a pig-headed chap—I've often told you so," said Dereker blandly. "A fellow's only got to suggest that you'll get hurt if you do a thing and off you go and do it. I don't mind. We're one flesh, Birne and you and I, so I don't mind givin' you a hand. There may be some fun in it, though I don't see where."

"Of course. You're a good chap, Derry. I've a sort

of notion the kid might turn out decently somehow. Suppose we made a cheap imitation of a second-rate rag out of him, just to see? It's possible he's got hidden merits."

"There are deuced few signs of them," said Dereker. "We shan't see much of the insect, that's one comfort, for he'll hardly be placed higher than the Third Form."

"Sometimes these puny little beggars are swots. He's older than he looks. Maybe he knows where he's placed. There's a dodge now for new kids to get their papers when they're taken to see the Head before the term opens."

They rejoined the limp Jellicoe, who was waiting forlornly on the platform, nobody deigning to take any notice of him.

"I say, young Jelly-what's-your-name," observed Taffy, "do you happen to know what Form you're in?"

"Oh, yes," said Jellicoe, with a blush; "I was taken to see the headmaster a week ago, and had a paper to do. He wrote afterwards to my aunt to say I should be put in a class called the—er—the—er—I think it was called the Movement, or something—"

"The Remove?" said Taffy, with a gasp.

"Yes, that's it—the Remove," replied Jellicoe.

The two chums stared at him blankly.

"Then I should say, my little lad, that your days on this earth are numbered," muttered Dereker.

"Is it a nice class?" asked Jellicoe meekly. "Are the boys industrious and well behaved? My aunt is very anxious for me to—"

The shriek of a locomotive whistle interrupted him, and a train came rolling into Stanstead Station. Taffy took the new boy solemnly by the shoulder and pointed towards it.

"You've hit it exactly," he said gravely. "Couldn't have described them better—and it's the only decent Form in Codrington. Look, there it is! You can see it from here—and hear it."

"And smell it," added De Quincey, who was close behind.

The new boy stood staring at the train, with eyes that opened wider and wider. Most of it was quiet enough, but from the middle carriage came an appalling uproar, and from one window a straw hat was being twirled violently on the end of a long walking-stick, while the hat's owner fought frantically for its possession. The hat was sent flying on to the roof of the platform-shelter.

From the next window puffed great clouds of dust, and through a thick fog in the compartment five or six youths could be seen belabouring each other with linen-bags amid a terrific shindy. The third window was blocked up with a great ball of newspapers, and from the fourth—which Jellicoe stood gaping at as it drew level with him, came flying a railway cushion straight upon his open mouth, and sent him sprawling backwards.

In a moment Taffy darted to the door, flung it open, and seized upon an enraged boy of his own age and size.

"You young beast, Kempe, you meant that for me!" cried Taffy, jerking him out on to the platform and shaking him violently. "I'll teach you your place, my beauty! Didn't you learn it last term? Take that, and that!"

A couple of deft kicks, implanted as Taffy spun the culprit round, disposed of Kempe; and at the same moment another boy, with bright chestnut hair, and one side of his collar flying loose as a sign of recent strife, came darting out of the carriage.

"Hallo, Taffy! Hallo, Derry!" he cried, shaking hands with the chums heartily. "How can Codrington go to the dogs while we three exist to keep it alive—eh, what? Those other rotters—Hallo! Who's the invalid?"

Birne—for such was the newcomer's name, looked with interest at Jellicoe, who Taffy was helping to his feet. Dereker rather expected to see the new boy blubbering, but he was not. Jellicoe picked himself up in silence, feeling his features with both hands to make sure they were there.

"I—er—I am afraid this is a very rough class," he said, in an annoyed voice. "Where are my white mice? My aunt—"

"She's past helpin' you now," said Taffy. "I alone stand between you and death, Jelly. Come on and bag seats, you chaps. Hi," he cried, hustling the new boy into the compartment with a rush, "make way for your betters, you cripples! What, only two seats empty? Minors and Stanford, out you get!"

With surprising speed Taffy and Dereker pitched out of the carriage a couple of loudly-protesting youths, who at once made a fierce attempt to force their way in again. A spirited battle was soon raging round the door, Jellicoe shrinking into a seat in consternation. The two evicted persons were soon beaten off and were seized upon by an angry stationmaster, who hustled them into another carriage, threatening all sorts of penalties.

"The Remove. The dear old giddy Remove!" cried Taffy, dealing Birne a sounding slap on the leg as the door was



Verulam was ejected out on to the platform—an amazing sight. He looked as if he had been in the hands of a quick-change artiste. A shout of laughter went up from all the Remove carriages as the dazed senior staggered across the platform. (See Chapter 2.)

slammed. "Where's the Form that can live with it? Only it doesn't do for the rank and file of it to forget that they've got to sing small when my little lot gets on its hind legs. Why, O'Flanagan, old bird, how are you? Hallo! What's that clothes-horse want?"

The hubbub in the four compartments occupied by the Remove was scandalising everybody, and making the stationmaster painfully eager to send the train along. In the midst of it an angry-looking Fifth Form boy of Codrington, nearly six feet high and dressed with exquisite neatness, came striding to the carriage. His name was Verulam, one of the most dignified of the seniors.

"Stop this noise, you young cads!" he cried hotly. "Do you hear? We won't have a lot of little blackguards disgracing the school like this! It's worse than a louts' bean-feast, and if you young ruffians don't stop—"

"Lo, he has spoken treason! In with him!" howled Dereker. And in a moment the carriage door flew open and three lusty Remove boys hurled themselves upon Verulam. He was hauled bodily into the compartment again, and the door shut.

If the noise had been noticeable before it was twice as bad now. The big senior fought and struggled in a perfect frenzy of rage and his long legs curled about both seats.

Jellicoe shrank into a corner, wondering what sort of company he had fallen into. It was surprising the ease and speed with which the four Remove boys mastered the big Fifth-Former, who then disappeared under a bunch of them.

What they were doing Jellicoe could not see. But a minute later, just as the train was starting, Verulam was ejected out on to the platform—an amazing sight.

He looked as if he had been in the hands of a quick-change artiste. His trousers had been hauled off and put on again inside out, his coat was tied round his neck by the sleeves, his necktie knotted round one ankle, and his collar fastened to the other. His face was flushed and well smeared with dust. How all this had been done in less than two minutes the scared Jellicoe could not imagine; but there it was.

A shout of laughter went up from all the Remove carriages as the dazed senior staggered across the platform. He was only just in time to reach the brake-van,

and was hauled into it by the grinning but indignant guard.

"If that hasn't taught you to leave us alone, nothing will!" cried Taffy, poking his head out of the window. "Hallo, Robins! Is that luggage in?"

"Yessir!" exclaimed the porter. "All labelled and put in!"

"Here you are, then!" said Taffy, thrusting a shilling into the porter's palm as the train ran past; and with his other hand he plucked Robins' cap and threw it at his head. "Take that for a reminder not to bully Codrington men, whether they tip you or not!"

Taffy sank back into his seat with a smile of bland satisfaction, and surveyed the company.

"Well, our syndicate's complete," said Taffy, with satisfaction. "Shove up, all you other kids, and don't crowd your betters! Well, Jellicoe, what d'you think of it?"

The new boy, whose eyes were as big as saucers, was too alarmed to reply. He seemed to shrivel up in his seat. The others noticed him for the first time.

"Eh? Who blew that in here?" exclaimed Johnson II, a red-headed boy, with a freckled nose. "D'you hear, kid? Who are you?"

"Throw it on the line!" said Mallock, another of the Removites; and he reached across as if he really meant to do it, to Jellicoe's great alarm. Taffy struck Mallock's arm up with a force that made his elbow tingle.

"I'll throw you out on the line if you don't let him alone!" said Taffy. "You hear me? Hands off!"

"Is he your young brother, Wynne?" said Johnson.

"No, he isn't!" returned Taffy angrily. "Shut your head!"

"Taff's got some bee in his bonnet about that little object in the corner," said Dereker, aside to Birne. "Goin' to dry-nurse him, just to cause trouble, I think. However, I said I'd back him, so—"

"I'll tell you about that presently," broke in Taffy to his chums. And to divert the attention of the others from Jellicoe he pulled out the newspaper. "I say, you chaps, have you seen this?"

He read out the advertisement, and it caused great amusement. They were all very keen to know who the new Form master might be, however.

"I'll take two to one we give him brain-över before the month's out!" said Johnson gleefully.

"He'll probably be some ass who thinks he can trust to a bit of extra skill with the cane," said Dereker. "As if the giddy Remove hadn't got its skin tanned hard as india-rubber ages ago! Or else some chump who thinks himself sarcastic."

"Let him come! I like to see their giddy hair turnin' grey week by week," said Taffy appreciatively. "Where's Quince?"

"Gone into another carriage—with Sanderson. I think," said Birne. "P'raps Quince spotted him for an old bird on sight."

"Which? Who's Sanderson?"

"A new chap," chuckled Birne. "Been placed in the Remove. He's got tons of money. Got scared of us on the journey. I think, and when we stopped at Fairley Junction he stood us all grub and pop."

"By Jove, you should have seen him buyin' up the whole refreshment-room!" said Johnson enthusiastically. "Told us to order all we liked—real pies, rolls, tarts, bathbuns without end. Must have cost thirty bob! And I saw him change a ten-pound note to pay for it! Governor's a gold-mine magnate, and allows him skits of money!"

"Ah, we've got some pretty rum fish in the school this term. I should think!" said Mallock. "Especially considering that dirty little tadpole in the corner. If he—Hallo, here's the giddy station!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Mysterious Stranger!

"ALL change!" bawled Johnson, flinging open the carriage door. "Alight here for the royal and ancient college of Codrington, noted for the noble bearing of its Sixth Form, and the ladylike behaviour of all the little boys who shape their future careers at its world-famed—Look here, young Mallock, if you want a black eye just do that again!"

The occupants of the carriage came pouring out like an avalanche, and Johnson was swept off his feet. The senior boys of higher Forms hurried out of the station as quickly as they could. It was always a thorn in their flesh to see how royally the notorious Form behaved, and they did not want to be mixed up with "Remove ruffians." But some latitude is allowed at Codrington on assembly-day.

"My luggage," panted Jellicoe anxiously. "I must see it is not roughly handled. The mice are in their cage in the big parcel, and—"

"All right, kid. I'll get a porter to see it isn't knocked about," said Taffy. "Hi, porter! This way, Jimmy. See my luggage on the cart, will you, and another lot labelled 'Jellicoe.' Take extra care of it. Come on, Derry, or we shall have to scarp for places on the clarrabane!"

They made their way through the station, and on reaching the road beyond found there were no vehicles waiting, except the luggage carts. It was a six-mile drive to the school, and the senior boys were always picked up by the four-in-hand coach, the Barleyford Rocket, which kept itself free for the journey on Codrington opening-days, while brakes were sent for the juniors.

"What's this, John Williams?" said Taffy, seizing upon a porter. "Where are our wagolettes?"

"Not arrived yet, sir. Big horse fair at Barleyford

to-day, an' all vehicles hired at whopping big prices. They'll be some time agettin' away."

"Who's responsible for it?" cried Marston, the head of the Fifth, angrily. "Where's our coach? They've no business to take any other job to-day!"

"Fraid you'll have to wait, sir. Be the best part of an hour afore the Rocket can get 'ere. Took a party down this mornin'."

The wrath and surprise were great. Codrington School was not used to being treated in this off-hand way. The elder boys were vowing vengeance on the Barleyford Rocket's proprietor, and the station became blocked.

"Here, let's get out of it!" said Dereker. "Let 'em fight it to a finish! I'm not in such a hurry to get back to that giddy old emporium of knowledge myself."

The juniors and Jellicoe made for the river bank, and were soon deep in talk over school politics and the possibilities of the new Remove master. None of them took any notice of Jellicoe, and they had covered a good deal of ground before they troubled about him. They halted by the embankment bordering the river and threw themselves on the warm turf.

"What's the game about this new kid, Taffy?" said Birne. "Let's get it over! Have you captured him for a fag?"

"Not a bad idea," said Dereker, lying on his back and chewing a piece of grass. "Remove isn't allowed to have fags. Make the Senior Forms savage."

"It isn't exactly that, though we might make him useful," Taffy replied; "but Derry said the other ratters would jump on him, because he's well, what you see he is—and jump on anybody who backed him up, too. Well, I want to see the biggest wheel jump on me; so I'm going to cherish him, just to raise the wind. If you chaps don't like it, you needn't."

"Oh, I'm on if you are!" said Birne lazily. "We'll pull together, of course. I'll wipe his mouth after meals, and kiss him for his mother, if you like."

"I don't want to foist him on you," said Taffy. "Only—I say, what the dickens is that chap dodgin' about for yonder?"

"Lie still; it's all right," said Dereker, for the afternoon sun was making him sleepy.

Taffy, however, had his suspicions aroused. He was always on the look-out for any species of "snape," played upon himself and his chums, and the attempts his enemies made were many.

Taffy crept up the slope and peered through the grass on top. He decided, however, that it was a false alarm; for the person he had seen was no Codringtonian, but a man of between thirty and forty, neatly dressed, with a clean-shaven, rather plump face, and an eyeglass swinging in front of his waistcoat.

The man's movements were so queer that Taffy continued to watch him. There was an anxious look on the stranger's face, and he glanced furtively back from time to time, and appeared to be keeping under cover of the bushes along the river, and sidling from one to the other.

Presently he gave this up, and stepped out hurriedly, coming nearly opposite Taffy. One more glance back he gave, and then suddenly dived under a bush and remained there, crouching and motionless.

Taffy's astonishment at this queer behaviour was turned into quite another feeling when he saw a policeman appear along the path!

(What's the reason of the stranger's queer behaviour? Read the next instalment of this fall-of-the-seriet.)



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