

"THE SPY-FLYERS!" MAGNIFICENT NEW YARN OF WAR FLYING THRILLS **STARTS INSIDE!**

**CONTINUOUS
VARIETY!
YOUR FAVOURITE
STARS -
TOM MERRY & Co
INSIDE!**

The GEM

2^d



MEET BERNARD GLYN, SON OF A MILLIONAIRE, WHO COMES TO—

The SCHOOLBOY



Bernard Glyn, inventor, fairly makes things hum with all his strange devices when he comes to St. Jim's! Especially when Herr Schneider gets caught in Glyn's special chair for unwanted visitors!

CHAPTER 1.

D'Arcy Receives a Shock!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's came along the Shell passage in the School House, and tapped at the door of Bernard Glyn's study.

There was no answer from within, and after waiting a few seconds the swell of St. Jim's tapped again and opened the door.

"Glyn, deah boy."

Still no reply.

"Bai Jove! I suppose the boundah's out!"

Arthur Augustus put up his eyeglass and took a survey of the study. Bernard Glyn was certainly not there, but the state of the room looked as if he had only just left it. There were open books on the table—books that looked dreadfully scientific to D'Arcy, with diagrams and "figs" on every page. There was a sheet of paper bristling with algebraic calculations, with a pencil lying across it.

Bernard Glyn was the son of a famous Liverpool engineer, who had settled down near St. Jim's. He had scientific tastes and unlimited pocket-money. Consequently, his study was crammed with things of great interest to boys whose hobbies took a scientific turn.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not in the least addicted to anything of the sort, but like the rest of the School House

juniors, he was interested by the strange things in Bernard Glyn's study.

"I suppose the young ass will soon be back," D'Arcy murmured to himself. "It is wathah wantin' in respect to be away when I give him a look-in, though, of course, he did not know I was comin'. Still, it is wathah wantin' in respect. I wondah what this funny thing is for?"

It was a curious-looking object. From two holes in a square black box two insulated wires ran, and on the end of each was a handle. D'Arcy looked it over, and round about, through his eyeglass, without being able to make anything of it. He was still engaged thus when an impatient voice came along the passage:

"Are you coming, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Well, why don't you come?"

"The chap isn't here, Blake."

Jack Blake grunted and came along the passage and looked into the study.

"Oh, rats!" he said. "Of course, he's out just when I want him. My hat! What does all this mean, I wonder?" He looked down at the algebra. "A multiplied by B and divided by C and subtracted from D, rearing on E and bucking against F—"

"Weally, Blake, you are weadin' all that wong. You—"

"Go hon!" said Jack Blake. "What's this? Model locomotives. That's rather interesting. Let's—"

"I was just lookin' at this thing," said D'Arcy. "I wondah what it's for!"

—ST. JIM'S IN THIS RIPPING YARN OF TOM MERRY & CO.!—

INVENTOR!

By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**

Jack Blake looked at it, too, and grinned.

"Do you know what it is, Blake, deah boy?"

"Yes, rather! You take those handles—one in each hand, you see—and, if the thing's in working order, you get—"

"What do I get, deah boy?"

"You get a slight electric thrill, which is awfully good for the nerves and the digestion."

"Bai Jove! That's wippin'!" said D'Arcy, greatly interested. "I believe the chap made this himself, you know. He's awfully clever! I couldn't do it, you know."

Blake sniffed.

"I don't suppose you could, Gussy. You might as well try the machine while we're waiting for Glyn—it will please him. These young inventors like to have their things tested. See if it's in working order."

"Certainly, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus grasped the two handles with a firm grasp.

The next moment there was a yell in the study that could have been heard at the other end of the School House.

"Ow! Wow!"

Blake roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wow! Help! Wescue!"

Arthur Augustus would have liked to let go those handles. But he couldn't. He clung to them and danced, while the electric current ran through him like a million pins and needles.

"Ow! Help! Wescue!" shrieked the swell of St. Jim's.

"Blake, you wottah—Ow! I shall no longah—ow!—weward you as a—wow, wow!—fwend! Help!"

"Let go!" gasped Blake. "Oh, my hat! Why don't you let go?"

"I—I—c-c-cant! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wescue!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry, dashing along the passage from his study and bursting into the room. "What's the—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It will do you good, Gussy!"

"Wescue! Shut it off! Stop the beastlay cuwwent! Wescue! Murdah!"

Blake, almost choking with laughter, ran to the rescue. Tom Merry held his sides and roared. D'Arcy, dancing like a hen on hot bricks, was a comical sight. He was released at last.

"Ha, ha, ha! Catch hold again, Gussy!"

"I—I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's, sinking into a chair. "Ow! I am uttably exhausted by that howwid expewience. Blake, I weward you as a wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weward pwactical jokes of this sort as bein' in the worst form poss. You are a beast, and you are anothah beast, Tom Mewwy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no occasion for this wibald laughtah. I shall have to sewiously considah wethah to weward you as fwends," said D'Arcy, finding himself with his cambrie handkerchief. "I feel quite exhausted, and I have been thwown into a fluttah. I weward Glyn as a beast to have such howwid thutings in his studay!"

"Thanks!" said a pleasant voice, and Bernard Glyn came in, with a huge volume under his arm, which he had just brought from the school library. He grinned as he looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That machine wasn't put there for every idiot in the Fourth Form to handle!"

D'Arcy rose to his feet.

"Am I to undahstand that you have addressed me as an idiot?" he said.

"My dear chap—"

"Pway be explicit, Glyn. This is a sewious mattah that wequahs to be settled. If you chawactewise me as an idiot I shall have no option but to immediately wetiah fwom your studay."

"Well, that's what I am waiting for you to do," said Glyn. "I'm busy. I went to fetch this book from the library, and I didn't expect to find a lot of mischievous kids in my study when I came back."

The juniors looked at one another. Tom Merry was head of the Shell, and Jack Blake was leader of the Fourth Form—at least, so far as the School House portion of the Form was concerned. To hear themselves described as mischievous kids was not exactly gratifying. The Liverpool lad sat down and opened the big volume Jack Blake looked at him, and then at Tom Merry again.

"There are some kids," said Blake, in measured tones, "who have to be licked for their own good. I rather think that this chap Glyn is one of them."

"I was thinking the same," Tom Merry remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! I weward it as a good ideah to wag the wottah. It will be only fair as a punishment for havin' that wotten electric machine in the woom!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bernard Glyn. "I'm busy!"

Jack Blake jerked his chair away, and he reposed on the carpet. He jumped up in wrath.

"Why, you ass—"

Blake wagged a warning finger at him.

"Now, that's only a hint," he said. "New kids at the school have to be respectful to their elders—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why, I'm older than you—"

"I am not speaking of age, but of seniority in the school!" said Blake loftily. "In that sense I am older than Tom Merry, and, therefore, chief of the juniors—"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Did you say rats to me, Tom Merry?"

"Yes, I did."

"If you're looking for a thick ear—"

"Go and look for it somewhere else, please," said Glyn, setting up his chair again. "I can't have kids rowing in my study."

"Bai Jove!"

"Look here," said Blake wrathfully, "I came along here to speak to you on an important matter, otherwise I'd wipe the study up with you. I've got a jape on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "What's the joke?"

"Nothing to do with the Shell," said Blake. "This is a Fourth Form wheeze. I've come to Glyn for help because he's a scientific beast and knows everything about electricity and rot of that sort."

Glyn looked up quickly.

Like most youthful experimenters, he was always glad to get fellows to take an interest in his experiments, and to call upon his scientific knowledge for aid was to pay him the highest possible compliment.

Jack Blake did not mean it for a compliment, but the boy from Liverpool was pleased, all the same.

"Hallo! What is it?" he asked. "I'll help you, if I can, of course."

"That's wathah wippin' of you, Glyn, and I will not, undah the cires, wetiah fwom your studay."

"Thank you for nothing," said Glyn. "What's the wheeze, Blake? What do you want?"

"I want some yards of insulated wire, an electric bell, and some professional knowledge of the subject," said Blake. "Mind you, Tom Merry, you can stand there taking it all in if you like, but this is a Fourth Form wheeze."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I expect you kids will make a muck of it," he said. "Better let me help."

"You can help, if you like, but mind, I'm the boss of this show," said Blake. "That's got to be understood. I suppose you know that the Shell and the Fourth are being taken in one lesson this afternoon for German."

"Yes, rather! Half an hour of old Schneider and German irregular verbs," said Tom Merry dismally, "and one of the finest afternoons in spring—it's rotten! I was thinking of getting up a petition to the Head to cut the German lesson and let the school out half an hour earlier."

"Bai Jove! That would be a good ideah. I don't mind bein' chairman of the deputation on the subject, deah boys. Oh, I suppose you are wottin', you wottah! Weally, Tom Mewwy, I—"

"You see, kids—"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake."

"Yes, that's all right, Gussy, I don't mind. You see, kids, we get quite enough German, and if the lessons were cut a little shorter on these nice afternoons, we shouldn't lose much, and what we lost in German we should gain in outdoor exercise. Then there's Herr Schneider—he says it's a fearful trouble for him to drive German into us; so it would really be doing a good deed, and treating our dear teacher with kindness, to cut the lessons short."

"Admitted," said Tom Merry, looking puzzled. "But I'm blessed if I know how you're going to cut a German lesson short with a few yards of wire and an electric bell."

"That's because you haven't the brain," said Blake. "I suppose you know that there's a bell rings for end of afternoon lessons?"

"Yes, I think I've noticed it," said Tom Merry sarcastically.

"And it's an electric bell in the Shell class-room?"

"Yes, what on earth about it? Since they put up the electric bell I suppose I've had time to know the buzz by heart."

"You haven't had time to think of a jolly good wheeze on the subject, though," said Blake, with a superior smile. "Now the buzz goes at half-past four exactly to-day. Suppose it went at twenty past instead?"

"Then we should be out ten minutes earlier, unless Schneider happened to look at his watch."

"I know his watch is always wrong, so that doesn't matter. Besides, he dismisses the class as soon as the bell goes, and he wouldn't think of doubting it."

"But how are you going to make the bell ring early?" asked Tom Merry, mystified. "It's fastened up over the door in the class-room, and you can't even get at it."

"I don't want to get at it."

"Explain to him, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "We can't expect Tom Mewwy to undahstand these things."

"I suppose not," grunted Blake. "Well, this is the wheeze. There's the bookcase near the door, and if we stick a bell in that, the buzz will sound just as if it comes from the regular bell up there, won't it? We can run a wire from the bookcase to the forms, and in my desk I can have a little dry battery connected to it. Then I shall only have to touch the ends of the wires to ring the bell. See?"

"By Jove!"

Tom Merry gave an expressive whistle.

It was a simple plan, and there was no reason why it should not answer. The lesson would seem a very short one to the German master, doubtless; but then, he would not have any suspicions when he heard the bell ring as usual. And he wasn't likely to notice that the buzz came from the top of the bookcase instead of from over the door. The difference in direction would amount to nil.

Jack Blake turned to Glyn.

"This is where you come in," he said. "Get out the props and come along."

The engineer's son grinned.

"Right you are! I'm on!"

With a little dry battery in his pocket, and a coil of double-insulated wire under his jacket, and a tiny electric bell, the engineer's son followed Jack Blake to the Shell class-room, accompanied by Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 2.

An Amazing Discovery!

THE amateur electricians assumed an air of great carelessness and indifference, in order to throw off the track anybody who might happen to observe them going to the Shell class-room.

That, of course, was quite sufficient to give the game away to anyone who did observe them.

Monty Lowther and Manners, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell, were in the passage, and they at once joined the party.

"What's on?" asked Lowther.

"On?" said Blake vaguely.

"Yes, on! What's the little game?"

"Little game?"

"What are you going to do?"

"Do?"

"My hat!" said Manners. "He's a giddy parrot! Have you noticed this in Blake before, Gussy? Have you had a doctor to him?"

"Bai Jove, I—"

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"Look here," said Blake wrathfully, "I don't see why you should suppose there was anything on. I—"

"You were looking so jolly mysterious—"

"I was looking careless."

"Well, it gave a chap the impression of mystery, then. What's the joke?"

"You can come along and see, if you like. Keep it dark!"

"Right you are."

They went along: Reilly of the Fourth and Skimpole of the Shell joined them en route.

Skimpole was a genius himself and a great inventor. He had invented airships which did not rise in the air, improved locomotives which he could not move himself, a new rapid system of shorthand which he could not write himself, and he had made other and equally valuable discoveries. He was interested at once when he saw a dry battery poking out of Bernard Glyn's pocket.

"Shut the door!" growled Blake, as soon as they were in the Shell class-room. "We don't want the whole giddy school here."

"Wathah not. Pewwaps if you all wetiah ffrom the spot exceptin' myself and Glyn, we could manage the mattah bettah. I could give Glyn diwections—"

"Oh, ring off, kid!"

"I wefuse to ring off! I could diweect Glyn—"

"What do you know about electricity?"

"Nothin' at all, deah boy. A pwactical knowledge is not wequiahed for a managhah. I can leave details to my subordinates. I could diweect Glyn—"

"You'll get directed with my boot if you don't shut up," said Blake. "Now, how are we going to shove that bell on top of the bookcase?"

"We shall wequiah a laddah."

"There isn't a ladder here."

"We could bowwow Taggles' long laddah—"

"Ass! How are we going to get it here?"

"Cawwy it."

"Duffer! Ass! Carry a ladder twelve foot long into the School House, past the doors of the Masters' Studies!" shrieked Blake. "Oh, brain him, somebody!"

"I wefuse to be bwained. I—"

Jack Blake did not listen. He cocked his eye up at the bookcase. It stood against the wall near the door, and it was a very high one. The steps near it only enabled one to reach the upper shelves, and not the top. On the top was a bust of Socrates, who had stared down on generations of St. Jim's juniors from that coign of vantage.

The duster of the housemaid seldom reached the spot, and Socrates was decidedly dusty.

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "I'll stand on the steps, and you can stand on my shoulders, Blake, only don't shove me over."

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps, though, I had bettah—"

"Shut up! Hold the steps, Monty. You connect up the wire with the bell, Glyn, and hand it up to me."

"That's soon done," said Glyn.

The juniors pulled the steps into position, and Tom Merry mounted them, and held on to the bookcase.

Blake followed him up the steps.

The juniors were safe from interruption for a good half-hour so there was plenty of time for the work. But it was not easy to do.

Blake grasped Tom Merry, and climbed upon his shoulders.

The hero of the Shell grunted.

"Now then, stupid; don't dig your silly knees into my ribs. I shall be over in a minute. My hat! Are you climbing up, or trying to break my backbone?"

"Oh, shut up, do!"

"That's all very well. They're my bones you're dislocating," said Tom Merry indignantly. "Thank goodness you're up at last! Safe?"

"As safe as I can expect with an utter dummy underneath me!"

"Hold on to the bookcase."

"You leave me alone, and look after yourself."

"Rats!"

"Yah!"

Meanwhile, Bernard Glyn was busy with the bell. The wire was a double one, enclosed in the insulator. He opened his penknife, and scraped the wire bright at the end, separated the ends, and attached them, and handed the bell up to Blake.

In reaching down for it, the leader of the Fourth nearly overturned the junior under him, and Tom Merry gasped and clutched the bookcase.

"Look out!" gasped Blake.

He clutched at the bookcase himself for safety, and, of course, knocked against the bust of Socrates. The bust reeled and rolled sideways, and Blake gave a yell of warning.

"Look out!"
 Crash!
 Smash!
 Socrates met the floor with an impact that scattered his features far and wide. The bust was broken with a vengeance.
 "My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Socrates' bust!"
 "Phew!"
 "You've done it now, Blake!"
 "You ass, it was you!"
 "Well, I like that—"
 "Oh, rats! Let's get this beastly bell fixed. I suppose it will be all right if I just lay it on top of the bookcase, Glyn?"
 "Yes, that's all right."
 "Buck up!" said Manners. "That row must have been heard."

round the room, and saw no one, and not a sound fell upon his ears.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom aloud. "This is most remarkable. The bust has fallen from its place without human agency. Most remarkable. For many years it has stood in that one spot without losing its balance. Now, suddenly, without warning, it topples over. It is most remarkable. Doubtless some secret atmospheric agency, of which science is not yet cognisant, has undermined its stability, leading to this sudden fall. The marvels of science are more wonderful than the fables of the heroic ages. The ordinary brain would jump to the conclusion that some mischievous junior had been here, and caused this mishap. But to the mind of a scientific man—"

Mr. Lathom's voice died away, and he wrinkled his brow in deep thought, and walked slowly out of the classroom.



"Ow! Wow! Help! Wescue!" Arthur Augustus would have liked to let go of the handles. But he couldn't—he clung to them and danced while the electric current ran through him like a million pins and needles. "Ow! Help! Wescue!" shouted the swell of St. Jim's.

"Faith, and there's somebody coming!" gasped Reilly. Footsteps sounded in the passage. The crash of the smashing bust had been heard.

"Quick!" said Glyn. "Shove this wire on top of the bookcase out of sight, and we'll get into cover. If we're caught here—"

"Right-ho!"

The wire was thrown on the bell, and the juniors jumped down from the steps. To jam them back into their place, and cut across the room to the wall-cupboard was the work of seconds.

Blake dragged Skimpole in, and the rest followed, and the door was nearly closed.

As it stood ajar, the juniors could see across the room to the door on the passage.

The class-room door opened, and Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, looked in.

Mr. Lathom was a short-sighted little gentleman, very benevolent and very scientific. He peered into the room, and caught sight of the broken bust, and came over and peered up at the bookcase.

The juniors were quiet as mice. The Form master looked

Jack Blake chuckled softly.

"The marvels of science are wonderful," he murmured.

"An ordinary brain—Ha, ha, ha!—would think that some mischievous junior had been here," said Monty Lowther. "My hat! Great are the marvels of science. Doubtless some secret atmospheric agency—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, this cupboard is awfully stuffy!" said D'Arcy. "Pway let us get out!"

They got out.

Reilly went to the class-room door to act as scout in case of the return of Mr. Lathom, while the others resumed the interrupted work.

Blake brought the wire down at the back of the bookcase close to the dark wood, where it would only be visible on a close examination. Then it was run along the floor close to the wall to the back of the forms, and finally brought up round the leg of a desk.

Blake surveyed it with satisfaction.

"It's ripping!" he said. "Nobody would see that without searching for it. After Schneider's gone, we can take

it away again. What have you got at the end for me to press, Glyn?"

"Look here."

Glyn placed the dry battery in Blake's desk, and connected up the wires with it.

The bell immediately began to ring.

"Here, hold on!"

"It's all right."

Glyn snipped through one of the wires, and the ringing ceased.

"Now, look here. To make the bell ring, you've only got to touch these two wire ends together where I've snipped it, and that establishes the circuit. See?"

"Yes, that's all right."

And the juniors, greatly satisfied with the preparations, left the class-room. The class-room did not remain unoccupied for long.

A minute after the door had closed it reopened, and Gore, the cad of the Shell, looked in. He beckoned to Mellish of the Fourth, who followed him in, and the two "rotters" of St. Jim's looked about the room.

"What on earth have they been up to?" said Gore, very much puzzled. "You could tell by their looks that it was some jape."

"Looks like it," agreed Mellish.

"Then, what is it?"

Mellish looked round the room and shook his head.

"Here's the bust on the floor," he remarked. "But that wasn't what they were looking so jolly satisfied about. There's lines for somebody for that. There's some jape going on, but I'm blessed if I can see the joke."

The two juniors walked round the room, looking among the desks. Eventually they discovered the wires under Blake's desk.

Gore connected the two loose ends, and the bell on the bookcase rang.

"That works all right," said Mellish. "Better chuck it, though, or you'll have somebody here to see why it's ringing."

Gore nodded. At a point near the wall he cut one of the wires, and the connection being broken, the ringing ceased. At the new breakage he connected up his new wire, and ran it along to his own desk. A second piece of wire he connected to one of the loose ends in Blake's desk, bringing it also along to his own desk.

Mellish watched him with interest. It was now in Gore's power, while sitting at his desk, to make the bell ring whenever he liked.

"My hat! I didn't think of that," chuckled Mellish.

"It's all right," grinned Gore. "You see, Blake won't be in this room till the German lesson, so nobody will know the wire has been tampered with. We can have a lark with the Form master in the afternoon, and if there's a search they'll find the battery in Blake's desk, and he'll get the roving."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I rather think it will be funny," said Gore. And they left the class-room, feeling very satisfied with themselves.

CHAPTER 3.

Mr. Linton Is Amazed!

MR. LINTON did not look very amiable when he came into his class-room that afternoon. He was a just master, but sometimes sharp-tempered, and never very cheerful-looking. He glanced over the class, and his glance showed the Shell that they had better be on their best behaviour that afternoon.

Monty Lowther, who had worked up one or two intentional blunders to raise a laugh in the Roman history lesson, decided to leave them over for a more suitable time. Buck Finn, the American junior, slid a chunk of chewing-gum back into his pocket, instead of distending his cheek with it, as was his habit. Gore grinned with anticipation. Mr. Linton was just in the mood to be exasperated easily by any recurring annoyance. Things could not have shaped better to suit the plans of the cad of the Shell.

The first lesson had not been in progress ten minutes when there was an interruption. The Shell were taking a more or less enjoyable plunge into deponent verbs, when the sound of an electric bell buzzed through the room.

It was only a slight buzz. Gore had just touched the two loose ends of the wire in his desk.

Mr. Linton started and looked round. A shade of annoyance crossed his face.

The electric bell always buzzed at half-past four, when afternoon lessons, except upon special occasions, ended at St. Jim's. The Form master concluded that it had been touched by accident; there was no reason why it should ring yet. He simply glanced at it, and lessons went on.

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His glance sought out Gore. Gore was one of the dullest fellows in the Form; not from want of ability, but from sheer laziness and slackness. Mr. Linton was a master with a strong sense of duty, which came rather hard on the dullards. He was about to give Gore his special attention for five minutes, and Gore knew it. It was time for the bell to ring again.

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

The Form master swung round, looking very annoyed.

"Dear me, there is the bell again!"

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged looks of consternation.

They knew very well that it was the unsuspected bell on top of the bookcase that was ringing, and not the one over the door. But what was making it ring? The desk Blake was to occupy when he came in for the German lesson was empty. What on earth was causing Glyn's bell to ring of its own accord?

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

Mr. Linton strode to the door and passed out. He evidently wanted to know who was ringing the bell. A murmur of voices broke out immediately the master's back was turned.

"What on earth is the matter with it?" said Tom Merry in an undertone. "There's nobody at Blake's desk, so the wires can't get connected."

"Blessed if I can understand it!" said Lowther.

"I say, Glyn, was there anything uncommon about that bell—any of your beastly inventions stuck on it?"

"No; of course not! It was just an ordinary bell," said Glyn, who was looking mystified. "I can't understand what's making it ring."

"There's something wrong somewhere."

"Looks like it."

The re-entrance of Mr. Linton stopped the talk. The Form master was looking very puzzled and angry. The class-room bell was worked from a switchboard in the Lower Hall, and anybody who chose to play a trick was at liberty, of course, to ring it, though the boy who should venture upon such a trick was likely to fare very badly if discovered.

Mr. Linton could only conclude that someone had pressed the button in a spirit of mischief in passing, and he would have given a great deal to know whom that someone was.

"Silence!" he said crossly. "We will resume. Gore—"

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

The Form master fairly jumped.

"Merry, go and see if anyone is ringing the bell."

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry was only out of the class-room a few moments. He came back to report that he had seen no one.

"Someone is playing an absurd trick," said Mr. Linton, his eyes glinting. "If I discover the person—Ahem! I cannot imagine who it is, but he will be severely punished. You may take your seat, Merry."

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry sat down.

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

Mr. Linton stared and glared. The impudence of the practical joker seemed to him almost inconceivable. He picked up his cane from his desk and went out of the room, and, with quiet steps, down the passage.

"Aha!" he murmured.

Binks, the page of the School House, was coming along. He must have passed close by the button, and there was a grin on Binks' face. He did not see the Form master, and as he came along he gesticulated and muttered aloud:

"Har, har, har! They little know!"

"I think I know," murmured Mr. Linton.

Binks was given to reading lurid, cheap American fiction, and he felt, under the many buttons of his uniform, the bounding heart of a new Deadwood Dick or Arizona Bill. He preferred dreaming of bloodthirsty adventures to cleaning knives, and that often led to trouble with the House dame. Binks hadn't touched the bell, and wasn't thinking of anything of the sort; but Mr. Linton couldn't possibly guess that Binks' mighty spirit was wandering over the mountains of the Far West.

As the page came closer Mr. Linton reached out and grasped him by the shoulder.

Binks came out of dreamland with a jump.

"Oh, I—I'm coming! I mean—"

"I hardly thought you would have the impertinence to play such a trick," said Mr. Linton. "As you have done so, however—"

"Ow!" gasped Binks, as the cane lashed round his plump form. "Ow! 'E's mad! Wot 'ave I done? Ow! Oh!"

"There!" said Mr. Linton. "Let that be a lesson to you, you foolish boy!"

"I—I—ow—ow—"

"Go!"

"But I—I—"

"Go!" thundered the Form master.

And Binks went, very much hurt and astounded.

Mr. Linton, feeling somewhat relieved, returned to the class-room.

During his absence Bernard Glyn had dodged over to the unoccupied desk, and looked into it to see what was the matter with the wires. He found them connected up, as Gore had left them, and so knew at once, of course, that the trick was being played by a new wire from the desk. He disconnected them with a jerk, and returned to his own place as Mr. Linton came in.

"It's all right," he whispered to Tom Merry. "Somebody has connected them and was working the wheeze with a new wire."

"Silence!" said Mr. Linton. "We will resume. Now, Gore!"

Gore's jaw fell. The wire being disconnected at Blake's

wire there. But his own was soon put right, so he did not trouble his head about it.

Herr Schneider, on the subject of German irregular words, was what the juniors called a terror. The subject was a very interesting one to him, but he had not the gift of making it interesting to others. When the lesson had lasted a quarter of an hour, Blake thought it was time for the bell to ring. It was only a quarter of an hour to Herr Schneider, but it seemed like whole hours to his pupils.

Buzz-z-z-z!

Herr Schneider looked up in surprise.

"Mein Gott! Tat lesson is ferry short mit itself pefore!" he murmured. "I tink tat te pell ring early, ain't it?"

Buzz-z-z-z!

"Ach, it is te pell right enoff!" The German master looked at his big watch. "Ach, mein vatch it is a quarter of an hour slow! Poys, ze class is dismiss!"

Glad enough the boys rose from their desks.

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "It's worked like a charm!"

"Bai Jove, it's weally wippin'!"

Herr Schneider still seemed a little puzzled. He looked at his watch again and held it up to his ear, and then crossed to the class-room window, which gave a view of the big clock in the tower.

Jack Blake groaned.



"Look out!" Crash! Smash! Socrates met the floor with an impact that scattered his features far and wide. The bust was broken with a vengeance. "My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Socrates' bust!"

desk, he could no longer ring the bell, and further interruptions of the same kind were impossible. The interruptions and the annoyance had sharpened Mr. Linton's temper, and Gore received the full benefit of it.

During the next ten minutes Gore wished about fifty times that he had let the electric wires alone.

CHAPTER 4.

Quite a Success!

FOUR sounded from the clock tower of St. Jim's, and Mr. Linton handed over his class to Herr Schneider, the German master.

The Fourth Form came in, and Blake, in ignorance of the late happenings, sat down at the desk where he had concealed the battery. It was a beautiful spring afternoon, and the sunshine and soft breeze seemed to call the juniors out of doors. To grind over German in the dull class-room was a heavy task, and to escape ten minutes earlier was a very attractive prospect.

Blake looked at the battery in his desk to make sure that it was all right. He was puzzled to find the end of Gore's

"My hat! It's all up now!"

But he was not quite up. Herr Schneider could see the face of the clock in the tower, but he could not make out the time. He was too short-sighted for the distance.

"Ach, I see it not!"

Blake breathed again.

"Gore," said Herr Schneider, calling to the nearest boy, "gome and dell me vat is te time py tat glock."

Gore stepped to the window.

He was as anxious as the rest to escape from the class-room, and a lie came very cheaply to Gore.

"Half-past four, sir—just turned," he said cheerfully.

A look of disgust crossed Tom Merry's face.

"Cad!" he muttered.

"Ach, then it is tat I am a quarter of an hour slow!" said Herr Schneider. "Tank you, Gore. Poys, you may go!"

And Herr Schneider put on his watch a quarter of an hour. As a matter of fact, the watch had been quite correct.

The juniors trooped out of the room. Tom Merry's face was dark. In the passage he turned upon Gore, who was chuckling.

"Did him beautifully!" said Gore.

"Yes, you cad!" said Tom Merry. "You told him a deliberate lie!"

Gore sneered.

"Of course, you wouldn't have!"

"You know I wouldn't," said Tom Merry savagely. "It was a good jape, and you've spoiled it by telling a beastly lie. I've a jolly good mind to go and tell Schneider now that you lied to him."

"Sneak!"

Tom Merry clenched his fists.

"You're not worth licking," he said between his teeth, and he turned away.

Gore, who had looked uneasy for the moment, breathed again.

"Lie or not, you're jolly glad to take advantage of it," he said. "If I had told him the real time you'd have been in the class-room now."

"Oh, don't talk to me!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as a wank wottah, Gore!"

"Rotter with the word," said Blake. "He's a slimy toad. Pah! I can't breathe when I'm near him! Come along!"

Gore scowled savagely as he was left alone. But the chums were glad enough to get out into the sunny quadrangle. As luck would have it, they met Mr. Linton just outside the door.

The Form master stared at them. He looked up at the clock tower, and then at the juniors again.

"What are you doing out of the class-room at this time?" he demanded.

"Been let out, sir," said Tom Merry meekly.

"But it is not yet time."

There was no reply to that.

"Is Herr Schneider ill?"

"I didn't notice it, sir," said Figgins of the New House.

"H'm! I shall see to this."

Mr. Linton went in the House. He looked in at the class-room, but the German master was gone. He went along to Herr Schneider's study, and found the stout German master reposing in an armchair, lighting his favourite German pipe, with a German newspaper, in the eye-shattering type of the Fatherland, on his knees. Herr Schneider looked up with a genial smile.

"You have dismissed the class early, Herr Schneider."

"I tinks not, Herr Linton. My watch I find him to be a quarter of an hour slow, ain't it, perfore."

"What time do you think it is now?" asked Mr. Linton.

"Nearly twenty minutes to five after."

"It is exactly twenty-three minutes past four," said the master of the Shell, looking at his own watch.

The German master jumped.

"Ach! But to class-room pell rang! I tinks it fery early, but to clock in to tower—"

"The clock in the tower agrees with my watch"

"Mein Himmel! Den tat poy lied to me—tat Gore, when he look out of to vindow!"

"You say the class-room bell rang. I cannot understand it. Binks would hardly venture to repeat his trick. There is something in this I do not understand. I recall now that the new boy in my Form is much given to electrical experiments. Come with me Herr Schneider, and I think we shall discover something in the Shell class-room."

"Ach! I tinks tat if it is a trick I punishes to poy."

They went into the Shell Room. Mr. Linton had been thinking the matter over, and it had occurred to him that he might have been too hasty with Binks. He had had occasion already to notice Bernard Glyn's electrical proclivities. With the new suspicion to go upon, the master searched the desks, and the battery was soon discovered. Blake had intended to return later and remove it, but he had not had an opportunity yet.

Mr. Linton frowned as he saw it.

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider. "Vat does tat mean?"

"It is a dry battery," said Mr. Linton. "You see, the wire goes up behind the bookcase. It undoubtedly connects with a bell there. That accounts for the fall of the bust to-day, I presume. There is the address of a Liverpool maker on this battery. But without that it would be pretty clear that it belonged to Glyn. Glyn has tricked you into dismissing the class a quarter of an hour before the correct time, Herr Schneider."

"Ach! I tinks I speak to him apout it, ain't it."

"I leave you to deal with him," said the master of the Shell.

Herr Schneider went back to his study and selected a nice thick cane, and then proceeded to look for Bernard Glyn.

A crowd of boys were in the quad, but the German master was too short-sighted to see if Glyn was among them. He went to Bernard Glyn's study to look for him there first. The studious lad spent a great deal of his leisure time

indoors. But, as it happened, the study was unoccupied. Glyn had not yet come in.

The armchair standing close by the table looked very comfortable and inviting, and the German master looked at it. He still had his newspaper under his arm, and he decided at once to sit there and wait for Glyn. When the Liverpool lad came in he would find Nemesis, a stout and angry Nemesis, waiting for him in his study.

With a sigh of contentment the plump German sank into the armchair, and the next moment he gave a gasp of horror and affright as the arms closed upon him and held fast to his fat ribs.

He was a prisoner!

CHAPTER 5.

Herr Schneider in the Chair!

HERR SCHNEIDER remained quite stiff for some moments, too astonished to attempt to move.

It seemed to him at first that he must be dreaming.

The armchair had looked so comfortable and inviting, and he had sunk into it with such a luxurious sense of repose.

"Mein Gott!" murmured the German master.

He moved his head from side to side helplessly, and tried at last to rise; but that was beyond his powers. The padded arms of the chair gripped to his ribs with a steady pressure. His feet kicked into the air spasmodically.

"Himmel! I vas vun prisoner!" murmured Herr Schneider. "Vat is it tat is te matter mit to chair, after? I tink tat te ting is bevitched, ain't it? I tink tat I not able to move pefore. Ach! Vat is it tat I shall do?"

That was a question. After school in the beautiful spring weather the House was empty. Herr Schneider had noticed how deserted the studies and passages were as he came along to Glyn's quarters.

There was no help to be had. Unless Glyn returned to the study, the German master was likely to remain a prisoner in the armchair for a long time.

Herr Schneider had intended to remain there waiting for Glyn; but not in these circumstances. He could not comfortably read his paper with the padded arms gripping his ribs, and besides, the position was ridiculous as well as uncomfortable. But how to escape?

"Help!" shouted Herr Schneider. "Help, ain't it?"

But only the echo of his voice answered. The stout German had a deep, rumbling voice, but very little wind, and with the strong grip compressing his ribs, his wind was shorter than ever. His voice did not sound half-way down the passage.

He realised that calling for help was no use; he had to help himself. He tried to rise, and lift the chair with him. It was a light weight, considering its size, and the German succeeded in getting upon his feet, with the armchair clinging on behind him.

But the effort was too great. He went down with a clatter upon the castors of the chair, and sat for some minutes gasping for breath.

"Mein Gott! But I vill bunish tat poy! Ach! I haf nefer, nefer peen in a bosition tat was more uncomfortable pefore."

His next resource was to work the chair along the castors towards the door, with his heels on the carpet, somewhat in the manner of an early velocipede. The chair ran easily on the little wheels—too easily, in fact, for it dashed against the door with a run, and crashed there with a shock that made the stout German gasp again.

"Ach, Himmel!"

He screwed the chair round and opened the door. It required some skilful navigation to steer the chair out into the passage, but the German master was desperate. He succeeded in getting through the door, and then went velocipeding down the linoleum of the passage.

The bumping of the curious vehicle first on one wall and then on the other, and the shrieking of the castors on the linoleum, as well as the gasping and grunting of the stout German, soon attracted attention.

Two or three fellows came running up, and they simply gasped at the sight of the stout German steering the armchair down the passage.

"My only hat!" gasped Clifford Dane. "It's Schneider, and he's off his rocker!"

"I guess he's balmy," said Buck Finn. "Fancy a fellow of his age playing a kid's game like this! I used to do that when I was nine."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Help!"

"He wants us to help him," said Gore, coming up.

Gore recognised the armchair, and knew that Herr Schneider was in the same plight that Skimpole had been in, but Gore scented a joke.

"He wants us to help him along."

"Must be mad," said Dane.
 "Well, let's help him, anyway."
 And Gore gave the armchair a shove that sent it along the passage at a spanking rate, with the German master waving his arms and legs frantically.
 "Ach! Tat you stop! Stop, ain't it!"
 "You asked me to help you, sir!"
 "Ach! Stop!"
 "Certainly. But you asked——"
 "I mean help me to get out of tat chair!" roared Herr Schneider. "Mein Gott! I am vun brisoner!"
 "My hat!"
 "Tat you release me, ain't it,"
 "Blessed if I know how to, sir," said Gore, examining the chair, with no intention of releasing Herr Schneider, even

"He'll be here soon, sir," said Gore comfortingly. "Shall we wheel you downstairs, sir?"
 "Ach, no! Te poy is mad, ain't it! Do you want to preak all my pones mit yourself?"
 "Oh, no, sir! I don't suppose it would break many."
 "Ach! Leave tat chair alone, ain't it. Stand pack, Gore. Dane, I tinks tat you tries to find out how to open tat peastly chair, ain't it, pefore."
 "I will try, sir, certainly," said Dane.
 And he tried; but in vain. And then Buck Finn tried, and failed. The spring was not easily to be found.
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along the passage, and stopped in amazement at the sight of the German master. He jammed his monocle into his eye, and took a survey of Herr Schneider.



"Ach! Peast! Engleesh prute!" Herr Schneider went flying out on to the pavement. Mr. Cook stood in the doorway ready to dispute his return, while Emily threw his hat, coat and umbrella at the astounded German master.

if he could. "There's a spring somewhere, I suppose. This is one of young Glyn's inventions. Of course, I thought at first that you were having a game, sir, pushing yourself about in an armchair."

"Ach! I tink tat you speak vun untruth, Gore. You vas untruthful poy. I tinks I cane Glyn for tis. Vere is tat poy?"

"What boy, sir?"

"Tat Glyn. He know how to unfasten tat peastly chair, ain't it."

"Very likely, sir. I say, Mellish, old chap, go and find Glyn. I saw him in the gym."

And Gore winked at Mellish, as a hint not to find the St. Jim's inventor. And Mellish winked back and ran off—not to find him.

Herr Schneider gasped.

"Tat tat, poy, be quick!" he murmured. "I am short of vind, and I am exhaust. I tink tat I punish tat Glyn, ain't it pefore."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ach! Tat you helps me, D'Arcy."

"Weally, Herr Schneider——"

"Dere is vun spring somewhere!" shouted Herr Schneider.

"Tat you finds him. Tat you looks for him after."

"Yaas, wathah, sir! This is a most wemarkable sight!"

"Look for te spring, ain't it!"

"Certainly, sir. This is a surpwisin' spectacle——"

"Look for te spring!"

"Yaas, wathah! I am extmely sowwy to see that a master or this coll has been tweated with diswespect, sir."

"Vill you look for te spring?"

"Bai Jove, with pleasuah, sir!" D'Arcy looked for it. He squeezed his hand in between the arm of the chair and the German's plump ribs, and gave the master an unintentional pinch that made him shriek. "Bai Jove——"

"Ach! Ow!"

"Is anythin' the mattah, sir?"

"Ach! You pinch me!"
 "It was quite accidental, sir; there isn't much woom between you and the chair, sir."
 "Ach! You pinch me again! Ow! Stop! Idiot!"
 D'Arcy drew back indignantly.
 "Did you address me as an idiot, sir?"
 "Ja, ja! Ass! Dummkopf!"
 "I wufuse to be chawactewised as an ass! I was twyin' to be obligin'—"
 "You pinch me!"
 "That was an accident, and I have wemarked that I am sowwy."
 "Ach! I feel to pain all to same, fool of a poy!"
 "Weally, my deah sir—"
 "Tat you go and find Glyn!" roared Herr Schneider.
 "Certainly, sir. Undah the cires—"
 "Go at vunce!"
 And D'Arcy went.
 Herr Schneider wasn't in a mood to be reasoned with. Fortunately, the swell of St. Jim's found Bernard Glyn outside the School House. He was chatting with Tom Merry & Co.
 "Hallo, what's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry, as D'Arcy ran up, with less of repose than usual in his manner.
 "Anything wrong?"
 "Glyn is wanted."
 "Who wants me?" said the Liverpool lad, looking round.
 "Any silly ass been trying the electric machine in my study again?"
 "Herr Schneidah wants him," said D'Arcy. "Herr Schneidah's been sittin' in that beastlay armchair, and he can't get out."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yaas, wathah, it is vewy funnay; but Schneidah is in a fearful tempah."

FOR HIS BROTHER'S SAKE!



Chas. Hamilton

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Glyn and the Terrible Three rushed off at once to see the German master.

They found him in the upper corridor, still in the embrace of the armchair, and as red as a turkey-cock. The crowd round him had grown, and the passage was almost crammed with juniors, chuckling and grinning.

"Ach! Dere is dat Glyn! Glyn!"

"Yes, sir!" said Glyn, hurrying to the spot. "It's all right, sir! I don't mind, though you might have taken the trouble to ask my permission."

"Ach! Vat is te poy talkin' about?"

"You are quite welcome to the chair to have a game with, sir," said Glyn, with a "cheek" that took Tom Merry's breath away. "It's all right. But—"

"Ach! Release me at vunce!"

"Are you finished, sir?"

"Feenished! Ach! Does te poy tink I got into dis chair of purpose?"

"Well, sir, you see—"

"I come to your study to bunish you!" roared the German master. "I sit in te chair to wait. I get fasten. Ach! I bunishes you severely!"

"Why, what have I done, sir?"

"You put bell in class-room to ring, and make me dismiss classes."

"Phew!" said Tom Merry. "So it's out, kids."

Bernard Glyn looked serious.

"That—that was only a joke, sir," he said.

"I bunishes you for tat shoke!"

"If you would overlook it this once, sir—"

"I not overlook him. Release me dis moment."

Glyn fumbled about the chair. But the spring did not work. Perhaps there was something wrong with it.

"Vhy you not release me?" roared Herr Schneider.

"The spring isn't working, sir," said Glyn blandly; a statement that was perfectly true, for it could not work unless it was pressed, and he was not pressing it.

"Ach! Cannot you vork it?"

"Shall I try, sir?"

"Ach! Ja, ja, stupid poy!"

"If you would let me off this time, for that affair in the class-room—"

"Release me at vunce!"

"The spring isn't working yet, sir."

Herr Schneider gasped. The colossal nerve of the Liverpool lad astounded him. He was able to guess by this time that unless he agreed to overlook the electric bell escapade, the spring of the armchair wouldn't be working. It was a case of making terms, though from Glyn's bland smiles nobody would have guessed that he was dictating terms to a master.

"Glyn, you—you—you— I tink I overlook tat affair of te pell. After all, it vas only vat you call bractical shoke."

"Yes, sir; that's all."

"I lets you off, I tink," said Herr Schneider, with an effort.

"Thank you, sir! That is very kind of you!"

"Now find tat spring and release me."

Glyn succeeded in finding the spring in a remarkably short time.

The German master rose, puffing and gasping, from the armchair. He gave Glyn a most expressive look, and went puffing downstairs.

The juniors in the passage shrieked. Tom Merry clapped Bernard Glyn on the shoulder.

"Well, of all the cheek!" he said. "I think you take the bun!"

CHAPTER 6.

Herr Schneider Does Not Play the Game!

BERNARD GLYN was a very quiet fellow, and he had not hitherto come into much prominence in the School House at St. Jim's, but the affair of the armchair brought him very much into notice.

The School House juniors laughed over it till their sides ached, and Herr Schneider did not forget it. Herr Schneider had an interview with Mr. Linton that was not quite pleasant. The master of the Shell was surprised to learn that Glyn had not been punished for the escapade in the class-room, and he sniffed when he heard the story of the armchair. Herr Schneider resented that sniff very much, but his resentment was directed towards the Liverpool lad.

The next day was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and Bernard Glyn had arranged to take a party of the juniors to his father's place near St. Jim's. There was no German lesson in the morning, so Herr Schneider had to nurse his resentment till later. After morning classes were dismissed, Bernard Glyn was chatting in the passage to the Terrible Three about the afternoon excursion, when the portly figure of the German master came along.

Herr Schneider was dressed for going out with a soft

hat on his head, and an ulster on his arm. He stopped at the sight of the boys, and beckoned to Glyn.

"Yes, sir," said Glyn, going towards him. The German master blinked at him through his spectacles.

"Ach, Glyn, you had a fery short German lesson yesterday?"

"Yes, sir. It was short, wasn't it?"

"I tink you knew the cause of tat, mein poy."

"I—I thought that was all settled, sir," said Glyn, in dismay.

"Ja, ja! Tat was settled. I looked over tat matter, Glyn."

"You are very kind, sir."

"But although I overlooked to trick, I cannot allow mein pupils to fall behind in dere lessons," said Herr Schneider sententiously. "I tink dat perhaps you have lost something of your Sherman by leaving off too early, ain't it?"

"I—I tink not, sir."

"Ach! You vill see! Gif me te-te-te pluperfect subjective of Werden—quick!"

Glyn hesitated a second, and was lost.

"Ach! You knows him not! Den you vill go into te class-room and write out te whole conjugation of te verb Werden from beginning to end," said Herr Schneider. "I gannot have mein pupils falling behind."

"Ich ware geworden," said Glyn.

"Tat is too late! You vill write him out!"

"But, sir—"

"Tat is enuff," said Herr Schneider, with a majestic wave of the hand. "Write him out ten times, mein poy, and remember him."

And Herr Schneider walked on, leaving the Liverpool boy with feelings too deep for words.

"Rotter!" said Monty Lowther. "Fancy raking up a matter again after it was settled!"

Glyn's brow was dark for a moment.

"He's a rotter!" he said. "The German stuff is only an excuse. I know the conjugation of Werden well enough, and he knows I do. It's a backhanded way of getting even with me for the armchair business."

"Never mind; we'll wake him up for it sometime," said Tom Merry. "Buzz off, and get the stuff written out!"

Glyn looked concerned.

"I shall be keeping you fellows."

"That's all right. You're standing us a jolly excursion this afternoon, so we can afford to wait."

"Well, I'll buck up as fast as I can."

And Glyn ran off.

The chums watched the New House juniors playing football, and cheerfully chipped Figgins & Co. until Glyn was ready to come out. Then they left the gates of St. Jim's in a cheery party.

CHAPTER 7.

Glyn Gets His Own Back!

"ICES!"

It was a warm afternoon, and that notice in the window of a pastrycook's in the village caught Tom Merry's eye, as the juniors walked down the ancient High Street of Rylcombe.

"Who says ices?" he said.

"Ices!" replied seven voices, with singular unanimity. And Skimpole blinked, and a moment later added: "Ices!"

"Good! Then come in!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wathah fancy an ice this aftahnoon, dear boy!"

"Just the thing!" said Lowther. "You can order a dozen for me to begin with, and then I'll let you know about the rest!"

"Bai Jove! Look there!"

In an apartment opening off the shop were tables arranged for teas, and on the hooks on the wall, close by one of the tables, hung a well-known ulster.

"Schneider!"

It was Herr Schneider's ulster, and his soft hat hung over it. But the German himself was not to be seen.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"This place sells ripping sausages," he remarked. "I know Schneider often comes here for a feed. He's just going to begin."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Bernard Glyn's eyes glistened.

"My hat! Hold on a tick and I'll give him one for the impot he gave me this afternoon! I scent a wheeze!"

"What's the idea, deah boy?"

"You'll see in a tick!"

Glyn crossed quickly to the table laid for the German. The inventor of St. Jim's generally had a collection of all sorts of fittings in his pockets, and on occasion he would turn out the most unlikely things. Electricity was his hobby,

(Continued on next page.)



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QUITE!

Teacher: "What three words do pupils use most?"

Tommy: "I don't know."

Teacher: "Correct!"

NOREEN RUSSELL, Gwynne Lodge, High Street, Wanstead, E.11.

A LONG JOURNEY.

Eat Man (who has just been knocked down by motorist): "Why couldn't you go round?"

Motorist: "I wasn't sure that I had enough petrol!"

H. SMITH, 551, Netheravon Road, Darrington, Nr. Salisbury, Wilts.

CAUGHT!

Sambo: "I can play anythin' on this oboe!"

Amos: "Oh, no you can't!"

Sambo: "I sure can."

Amos: "No you can't. You can't play de piano on it!"
NORMAN GROVE, 10, Danby Street, Peckham, S.E.15.

TRUTHFUL!

Explorer (who has lost his friend, to cannibal chief): "I can't find my friend anywhere. Have you seen him?"

Chief: "Not since dinner!"

LESLIE ROSSITER, Oledander, London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent.

GIVING THE SHOW AWAY!

Manager (to Irishman applying for a job): "Have you ever worked down a mine before?"

Pat: "Yessir!"

Manager: "What kind of lamps did you use?"

Pat: "Begorra, we didn't use no lamps! We worked in the daytime!"

E. ASHTON, Ghyllbank, Ravenhead, St. Helens, Lancs.

SHE KNEW.

Sailor (pointing out to sea): "Yes, lady, that's a man-o'-war."

Old Lady: "And what is the little ship over there?"

Sailor: "That's a tug, lady!"

Old Lady: "Oh, yes, I know, a tug-of-war! I've heard of them."

JOHN CONEYS, 31, Ventnor Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

AT LAST!

Car Park Attendant: "A shilling for the car, sir."

Car Owner: "Thank goodness, I've sold it at last!"

R. A. FISHER, 117, Welham Road, Streatham, S.W.

NO USE TO HER.

Tommy: "Mother, there's a man at the door with a wooden leg."

Mother: "Tell him we don't want it, dear!"

F. W. MAYMAN, 9, Millers Road, Preston, Brighton.

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and he was never found without some of the fittings about him. Serious as he was over his hobby, he had a weakness for practical jokes of a harmless kind, and one of his favourite wheezes was making bells ring in unexpected places.

The chums watched him with interest.

He drew a small electric bell from his pocket and bent by the table. The room was quite empty, there was only one waitress in the place, and Blake, with instant judgment, had commenced giving her orders that kept her near the shop window, and out of sight of what was going on in the inner apartment.

Glyn hooked the bell under the end of the table, jabbing a fastener into a crack of the wood, so that it hung there securely. There was a coil of double insulated wire connected with the bell. To uncoil it and run it along the base of the wall was quick work to him. There was oilcloth on the floor somewhat rucked up at the edges, and the wire was almost out of sight when it was laid close.

The other end of the wire was brought up to a table at a short distance, and it was a moment's work to connect it up to a pocket dry battery.

Glyn laid the little battery on the chair beside him and placed his cap over it. One wire he left disconnected; when it was connected the bell under the German's table would ring.

The chums of St. Jim's watched him in silent admiration.

On the table, for the purpose of summoning the waitress, was a bell which, when pressed by the diner, would give a buzz somewhat similar to that of an electric bell.

Glyn's wheeze dawned on the juniors of St. Jim's at once, and they prepared to enjoy the result.

The waitress, without a suspicion, brought ices to the table round which the juniors clustered. A few minutes later the German reappeared. He had been chatting with the proprietor of the place, giving him a description of how sausages were cooked in the Fatherland. He glanced towards the boys, and they all raised their caps respectfully. The German master sat down at the table and tucked a serviette round his chest up to his ears. Then he looked impatient, and pressed the bell.

Buzz!

The waitress came along a minute later with an appetising dish of sausages.

Herr Schneider beamed.

"Ach! Tat is goot!" he said.

He helped himself from the dish and commenced operations upon the sausages. He touched the bell again, and the waitress reappeared.

"Tat you prings me te lager," said Herr Schneider.

The lager beer was brought. Once more the German rang, this time for bread, and the waitress looked a little impatient as she brought it.

Then Herr Schneider seemed contented. He ate the sausages and the bread with great gusto, and took draughts of the lager beer to wash them down. A smile of beatific happiness overspread his fat face. He was far from his dear Fatherland, but this was like home.

Buzz!

The waitress, who was in the shop, uttered a slight impatient exclamation, and came round to the German's table.

"Yes, sir?"

Herr Schneider looked up.

"Ach! Vat is it?"

"You rang, sir?"

"I did not, mees. I vant nothing!"

"Very good, sir!"

And the waitress, supposing that the bell had been touched by mistake, retired to the shop again.

Buzz!

Again the girl came to Herr Schneider's table.

"Yes, sir?"

"Ach! Vat you vant?"

"You rang, sir?"

"I did not ring! Go off mit you!"

"Indeed, you did ring!" said the waitress, tossing her head. "These young gentlemen must have heard the bell!"

"I certainly heard a bell ring, miss!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Herr Schneider frowned at the juniors. The waitress returned again, and the German, looking considerably ruffled, resumed eating the sausages.

Tom Merry & Co. chuckled softly and moved off to a further distance, leaving Glyn alone at the table. They did not want Herr Schneider to suspect them.

"Pway bwing me some tea, deah boy—I mean gal," said Arthur Augustus, raising his silk hat to the waitress as if she had been a princess.

"Certainly, sir!"

Buzzzzz!

The girl was bringing the tea when the bell rang again. She did not take any notice of it till she had taken the juniors their tea, and then she went up to the German master.

"What is it this time, sir?"

"Ach! Vat?"

"You rang, sir?"

"I did not ring!" roared Herr Schneider. "Now tat you are here you may pring me some more lager beer—but I did not ring."

The waitress retired behind the shop, and the juniors heard a whispered consultation with the proprietor. The girl's evident impression was that Herr Schneider was intoxicated.

Mr. Cook, the proprietor, came into the shop, looking indignant. He wasn't going to have his waitress, who also happened to be his daughter, bothered by a gentleman who had been drinking so very early in the day.

Buzzzz!

Mr. Cook came up to the German master's side.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"No, I did not ring, ain't it?"

"I heard the bell, sir!"

"You heard some odder bell! I heard a bell meinself! But I did not ring!"

"Very good, sir!"

Mr. Cook retired, looking wrathful. He was certain that Herr Schneider had rung the bell, and he was naturally angry.

"Fancy a man of his age playing silly tricks like this!" he murmured to his daughter. "He looks very excited, too! He must have been drinking. If he should make a disturbance here it would ruin the place. If he rings again I shall put it to him straight."

Buzzzz!

Mr. Cook rushed up to the table.

"You rang, sir?"

The German master rose in his wrath.

"I did not ring!" he roared. "If you say tat I ring when I ring not I trow you out of te place, ain't it?"

"I shan't be the one to be thrown out," said the proprietor

Potts, the Office Boy!



determinedly. "You're not going to kick up a row here, if I know it! Out you go!"

"Vat!"
"Get out of my establishment!" exclaimed Mr. Cook, growing very red in the face. "I've had enough of you and your babyish tricks. Go home and lie down."
"Go home," murmured the German master, "und lie down! Himmel!"

"I wonder you're not ashamed to carry on so, before young persons, too!"

"Before young persons! Ach!"

"Go home," snapped the proprietor, "and lie down!"

"Ach! I haf not feenish mein sausage."

"Will you go quietly?"

"I vill not go at all. I punches your head, ain't it, if you cheek me any more. I haf nefer been so boddered in mein life. Go away!"

"Are you going to leave my shop?"

"Vill you go away? Odervise I strikes you!"

The German master looked so dangerous that Mr. Cook recoiled a little.

"Well, I give you a chance," he exclaimed. "But if that bell rings again, out you go, on your neck—so I warn you!"

And he stumped away.

Herr Schneider sat down, puffing with rage, and started on his savoury sausage again.

Buzz!

Mr. Cook fairly snorted with wrath. It was the bell again.

He rushed to Herr Schneider's table, and grasped the German by the shoulder, and yanked him off the chair. The German had just placed a forkful of sausage in his capacious mouth, and was fully enjoying the flavour. The sudden jerk of the chair sent half of it cramming down his throat, and he began to cough and splutter wildly.

"Gro—groo—geroooh!"

"Out you go!" roared Mr. Cook. "Call a policeman, Emily. Out you go!"

"Ach! I not goes—"

"Off with you!"

"Ach! Peast! Engleesh prute!"

They waltzed down the shop to the door, and Herr Schneider went flying out upon the pavement. Mr. Cook stood in the doorway ready to dispute his return. Emily fetched the German's coat and hat and umbrella, and they were pelted at the astounded German master.

Herr Schneider sat on the pavement, with the serviette round his neck, the most astounded man in the United Kingdom at that moment.

"Now off with you, or I'll give you in charge for being drunk and disorderly," said Mr. Cook, waving his hand at Herr Schneider.

The Herr staggered to his feet.

He was too amazed and dazed to think or act or do anything but blindly stare at the enraged Mr. Cook for some moments. Then he murmured unintelligible words in German, and gathered up hat, coat, and umbrella, and went slowly down the street with the greasy serviette still hanging round his neck.

Tom Merry & Co. hugged themselves with mirth in the teashop.

While Mr. Cook was ejecting the German master, Bernard Glyn collected up his electric bell and the wire and slipped them out of sight, along with the dry battery, in his pocket.

Tom Merry slapped him on the back.

"Ripping, old chap!"

"It's amazing what you can do with a bit of wire, a battery, and a bell," said Jack Blake. "I should never have thought of a wheeze like that."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Glyn grinned.

"It will teach the bounder to play the game," he remarked. "He deserved it every bit for raking up a thing that was settled, and going for me again and cutting short our afternoon."

"Yaas, wathah! It was wathah wuff on him, but—"

"That's all right," said Digby. "He asked for it. But we've given the people here a lot of trouble over that jape, and I think it's about the proper caper for Gussy to stand the waitress a good tip."

"Weally, Dig—"

"I hope you're not growing mean in your old age, Gussy," said Blake with severity. "I think Dig's suggestion a jolly good one."

"Certainly," said Herries. "I was just going to suggest it myself."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"If Gussy refuses to do the right thing—"

"I wufuse to wufuse—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle at a chap in that widiculous way, deah boys. Of course, I shall stand the waitress a weally decent tip. Do you think ten shillings will be enough, Blake?"

"Ass! Half-a-crown will be heaps."

"I wufuse to be called an ass—"

"You can give me the other seven-and-sixpence," said Skimpole. "I will use it for the purpose of spreading the light of Determinism—"

"Wats!" said D'Arcy. "There's the half-crown. Now I wathah think we had bettah be off, or Glyn's governah will give us up."

"Come on, then."

Quite satisfied with their reprisal upon the German master, the juniors settled their account at the shop and left. It was a short walk from Rylcombe to the residence of Glyn senior, through a pleasant lane.

"Hallo, what's that?" exclaimed Manners suddenly.

"What's which, my son?"

"Look!"

There was a low hedge along the lane, and on the other side of it could be seen a St. Jim's cap, evidently worn by someone sitting on the grassy bank in the field.

There was nothing strange in a St. Jim's fellow being there; any fellow might be spending the half-holiday in the fields with a book. But a thin haze of smoke was rising close by the cap.

The owner of the cap was smoking.

Tom Merry's brows contracted a little, and he stepped upon a knoll beside the lane and looked over the hedge. Another cap caught his sight, and another spiral of smoke.

"Gore!" he muttered. "And Mellish!"

The cads of the Lower School were there—in a secure corner, as they imagined—and smoking cigarettes.

There was nothing of the "goody-goody" type about Tom Merry; he had his faults, and was often enough in trouble for them. But there were some rules he never broke, and would have disdained to break. The rule against smoking at St. Jim's was very strict, and every sensible fellow knowing that it was made for his good, observed it. There might be something enticing in the secret cigarette, but it had to be paid for in shortness of wind on the playing fields; and

NO "BONES" ABOUT IT!



besides, to a boy like Tom Merry, with a keen sense of humour, the absurdity of a boy aping the habits of a man was always apparent.

"These are jolly good smokes," said Mellish, puffing away with a very good pretence of enjoyment.

"Ripping!" said Gore. "Glad you like them."

"Oh, rather! What's the brand?"

"I— Why, what— Ow!"

A hand had reached over the hedge and gripped Gore by the back of his collar.

He started up with a yell.

He could not see whom his assailant was, but he was in a grip of iron, which dragged him backwards into the prickly hedge. The cigarette went down his sleeve, and he shrieked as he felt the burning tip against his elbow.

"Ow! Leggo! Help! I'm burning!"

"My hat!" gasped Mellish, springing up. "It's Tom Merry!"

"Tom Merry! Leggo! I'm burning!"

"Rot!" said Tom Merry. "What are you talking about? How can you be burning?"

"Ow! The fag—fallen in my sleeve! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry, as he released the cad of the Shell. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Beasts! Oh!"

Gore tore off his jacket as if it had become red-hot. He turned a face flaming with rage upon Tom Merry.

"You—you beast! You rotter!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Tom Merry disdainfully. "You shouldn't play these dirty, low-down tricks."

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus, peering over the hedge, eyeglass in eye. "I wegard Goah as a low wottah!"

"Mind your own business!" howled Gore. "What's it got to do with you rotters, I'd like to know?"

"I'm head of the Shell, and it's expected of me to stop these rotten tricks," said Tom Merry serenely.

"Well, you won't stop me."

"Your mistake. I shall!"

"Yaas, wathah! I quite approve of Tom Mewwy's attitude in this mattah. If you knew what a widiculous ass you look with a fag in your mouth, Goah, I am sure you would not go in for smokin'."

"Oh, you shut up!"

"I wufuse to shut up. I insist upon pointin' out that a kid of your age looks a most widiculous object with a cigarette in his mouth. If it were at all smart and nobbay to smoke you may be sure that I should do it. But I am quite awah that it is uttally widiculous at our age, as well as unhealthy. Therefore—"

"My hat! Doesn't he go on like a gramophone?" said Monty Lowther admiringly.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Go it, Gussy—it serves Goah right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you put it in that light I shall not make any furthah remarks to Goah on the subject."

Gore had taken a case from his pocket, and selected another cigarette.

Tom Merry eyed him steadily.

"You are not going to smoke that," he said.

Gore gave him a look of defiance.

"I am."

"After what I have said?"

"You can say what you like—so long as I do what I like. You're not my giddy father-confessor, Tom Merry."

"I wegard it as Tom Mewwy's duty, as head boy in the Shell, to give Goah a feahful thwashin'!"

"And I jolly well shall," said Tom Merry. "You know the prefects leave this business to me, as head of the Form, Gore?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Hand over those smokes!"

"Want them myself!" sneered Gore; and Mellish cackled.

But he left off cackling as Tom Merry jumped over the hedge.

"Hand them over!"

Gore, with a muttered word that was not good to hear, hurled the cigarette-case at Tom Merry's feet.

"Take them, then!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry quietly.

He knocked the cigarettes out of the case and stamped them under his feet.

Without a word, he jumped the hedge into the lane again.

"I wegard that as a perfectly cowwect attitude, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Then I feel quite satisfied," he said. "Come on."

They went on. Gore looked down at his trampled cigarettes with a very evil look on his face. He picked up the empty case and shoved it into his pocket.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,309.

"The rotters!" said Mellish.

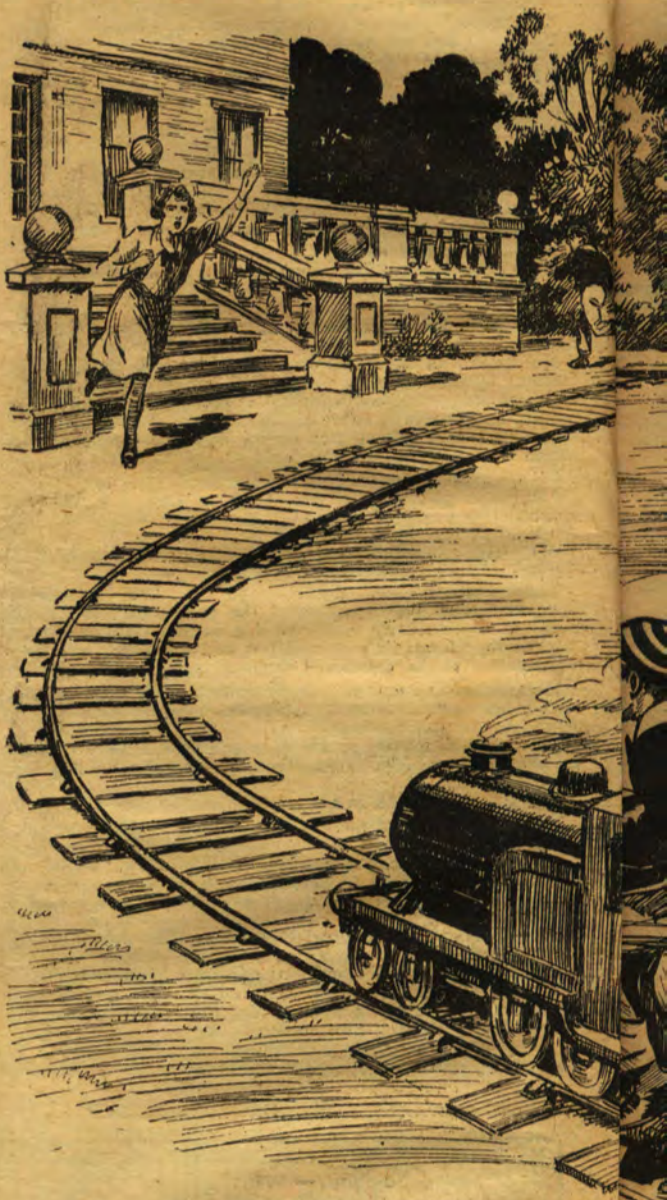
"I'll make them squirm for it yet," said Gore, savagely. "Tom Merry is getting altogether too high-handed. The beast! There goes a tanner's worth of smokes! I wonder where those rotters are going, by the way?"

"Oh, they're going to Glyn's place. It's down the lane, from here."

Gore's eyes glinted.

"Good! Let's follow them. Our smoke's done, anyway."

"May as well," said Mellish.



The girl was running towards the model railway with a deadly aim at the brake, while Tom Merry's eyes swept along the line.

And the two baffled smokers, with very evil expressions upon their faces, plunged through the hedge into the lane and followed in the direction taken by Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 8.

The Young Inventor's Workshop!

"BAI Jove! You are vevy well fixed heah, deah boy!"

That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's opinion, shared by his chums, as he looked round Bernard Glyn's quarters.

Glyn was the son of a millionaire, and, naturally, he had many possessions that the St. Jim's fellows admired immensely, and with a good-natured envy. He had three rooms to himself at Glyn House, and one of them—a very large apartment—was fitted up as a workshop, with every appliance that a young mechanic's heart could desire.

Glyn showed his possession cheerfully, without a trace of "bumptiousness" in his manner, though the fittings of that room alone must have run into hundreds of pounds.



Stop! Bernard, put the brakes on!" Glyn's hand sought the brake. "There's something on the line!"

Skimpole looked about him with keen admiration, blinking into first one corner, and then another, and leaving nothing unturned. Skimpole never had any money, but he was not at all envious; only, he could not help reflecting what he might have done, with his great intellectual powers, had he been equipped for experiments as Bernard Glyn was.

By this time his airship might have been soaring above the clouds—at least, so Skimpole thought. As a matter of fact, the airship was very much in the air at present. Skimpole belonged to the numerous class of inventors who conceive a hazy idea upon a subject, and, without thinking out the details, regard themselves as having made great discoveries.

Even given opportunities, he lacked the mental concentration necessary for bringing his theories to the test of practice.

But Skimmy would have been the last to see that obvious fact.

"Some fellows have all the luck," he said. "However, I should be willing, as I suggested before, to go into partnership with you over my airship, Glyn—a million pounds each out of the profits, and the rest to be devoted to the propagation of Determinism."

Glyn laughed.

"But what's the idea of the airship?" he asked. "How are you going to raise it from the ground?"

"I have not thought out that detail yet," said Skimpole. "But I shall, of course, raise it by—by some simple method of elevation."

"How are you going to get it along?"

"I have not definitely decided; but I shall effect that by some simple method of propulsion."

"Is it to be heavier than the air, or lighter?"

"I am leaving that point open, for the present."

"What will it be made of?"

"That is a detail to be settled later."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Then, what on earth does the invention consist of?"

"Really, Merry—"

"I suppose you're leaving the whole thing to be settled definitely later?" grinned Jack Blake.

"Certainly not, Blake! The main idea is settled, and that is the chief thing—the main idea of the navigable airship."

"And what is the main idea?"

"The—the main idea?"

"Yaas, wathah—what is it, deah boy?"

"I don't know that I could go into details," said Skimpole. "You would probably not comprehend. I have not thought out the details yet, either."

"But the main idea?" persisted Glyn.

"Well, of course, the main idea is—is a conglomeration of combined details," said Skimpole. "Without going into details I could hardly make you understand, and I have not yet thought out the details."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anything comical in that remark, Merry."

"Never mind. I do."

"What I am afraid of is that my idea may be used by others," said Skimpole, looking anxious. "My invention would be worth millions of pounds, but—"

"But you're not particular about a million or two," said Blake.

"I do not mean that. I should be willing to leave the profits to Glyn, for the sake of using the airship for the propagation of Determinism. Imagine Deterministic literature raining down from the skies."

"Bai Jove!"

"I foresee the time, very near at hand now, when airships will take the place of motor-buses," said Skimpole. "You step on an airship, pay your twopence, and are carried anywhere you like. The saving on the roads alone, in the cost of the upkeep, will be enormous. A further development of the idea will be aerial taxi-cabs. You see, there's a great deal in it, and as my invention is a certain success, I am really surprised that Glyn doesn't snap at the chance."

"It's because I'm not businesslike," said Bernard Glyn solemnly. "I don't know a good thing when I see it. But you can experiment here, if you like, and as much as you like, so long as you don't break anything."

"Thank you very much, Glyn. I shall take advantage of your kind offer. What is this bar across the window for?"

The juniors looked at it. From Glyn's workshop a pair of french windows opened upon a quiet lawn behind the house. The windows opened outwards upon stone steps down to the lawn. Across the doorway, inside, was a bar which seemed to lie loosely in its sockets.

Glyn looked round and laughed.

"That's a burglar-stopper," he said.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the bar. "I weally fail to see how that would stop a burglar. The doors open outwards, so the bar wouldn't pwevent a burglah openin' them."

"It would prevent his coming in."

"Blessed if I can see how!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Why, the bar is lying loose in the sockets, and anybody could lift it out."

"Try it."

But Tom Merry drew back his outstretched hand.

"Hallo! What little game is there on?" he asked, looking at Glyn, who was laughing.

"Weally, Glyn—"

"Indeed, that bar cannot possibly stop a burglar," said

Skimpole, blinking at it very intently through his spectacles. "You see, it lies quite loosely in the metal sockets, which are not even made to fasten. I could lift it out of its place easily enough with a movement of the hand."

"Good!" said Glyn. "Lift it out, and I'll accept your offer of going into partnership over the giddy airship."

"Dear me! Then I will certainly do it."

And the genius of St. Jim's grasped the bar firmly.

The next moment he gave a shriek.

"Ow! Wow! Wowwow!"

He tried to let go the bar, but he couldn't; neither could he lift it from its place. He could do nothing but jump up and down spasmodically. The perspiration streamed down his brow, and his spectacles slid down his nose. He danced and yelled, and the juniors burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow-wow-wow!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that, you know."

The burglar-stopper was a safer one than bolts or bars could have made. The light bar across the french windows was a conductor, and it was connected with a powerful battery at some distance. The current was powerful enough to overcome a strong man and keep him a prisoner hanging to the bar until the police could come.

Glyn grinned and shut off the current.

Skimpole staggered away gasping.

"Think it's safe enough now?" grinned Glyn. "I fixed that up myself, though I haven't caught anything bigger than a tom-cat on it so far. I could turn a current on if I liked powerful enough to kill an elephant if he touched the bar."

The juniors backed away rather hastily.

"Bai Jove! I wegard you as a vathah dangewous animal, you know," went on Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't turn on the cuwwent while I am heah."

"Not much! You would be just the chap to sit on the bar if I did."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Dear me!" gasped Skimpole. "I am very much shaken, but I think, upon the whole, that electricity is good for the nervous system, and I already feel better. I think, however, that I will sit down for a few minutes."

"Mind your eye," grinned Monty Lowther. "You know what sort of chairs you find in Glyn's quarters."

But the warning came too late.

Skimpole had sunk into a particularly comfortable-looking easy-chair near the french windows of the workshop. It was a wide, deep chair, and looked big enough for the proportions of a Falstaff to repose at ease in the yielding depths of it.

But Skimpole did not repose at ease.

He gave a wild gasp, and the next moment all that could be seen of him was his boots and his hands.

The seat of the chair was a little too yielding—it had sunk away out of sight, and Skimpole had been engulfed. As a matter of fact, it was not a chair at all, but a deep chest in the shape of one, and the lid formed a collapsible seat—and Skimmy was in the chest now, blinking up in amazement at the toes of his boots.

"Dear me!"

The juniors stared at the boots protruding from the bottomless chair.

"Bai Jove! Where's Skimmay?"

"Please help me out!" came a muffled voice. "I am feeling most uncomfortable. I—I am folded up in the middle like—a pocket-knife. Please help me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I feel most uncomfortable."

"You look it!" grinned Tom Merry, gazing down upon the unfortunate Skimmy, whose knees were almost under his chin, and who could not have struggled out of his uncomfortable position to save his life. "My hat! I don't see how we're to get you out, either, without amputating some of you."

"Really Merry—"

"Do you prefer to lose your legs or your head if amputation is necessary?"

"I—I—I—"

"It's all right," grinned Bernard Glyn, and he touched a spring at the back of the chair. The front of it immediately fell away, and Skimpole was shot forward, sliding out on the floor, and the chair closed up into its original position. "You're all right, Skimmy. That's another of my trespasser-catchers. There have been several curious people caught in that chair, who came nosing about my workshop while I've been at school."

"While you've been at school!" exclaimed Digby. "Then how on earth long did they stay there?"

"Until they were found," said Glyn coolly. "You see, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,309.

there's an electric button connected with the seat here, and when the chair-bottom falls through it rings a bell in the servants' hall—when it's in order. I disconnected it just now, or else we should have somebody coming along to see what the matter was. We had a capture in this chair last week—a village kid who was doing some work here, and thought he'd like to look round my quarters. He got in, and he happened to sit in that chair—and he was the most scared kid you ever heard of by the time he was helped out."

"Bai Jove! I should think so."

"I rather think I'll think twice when you ask me to take a seat," said Herries, staring rather grimly at that very peculiar armchair.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Glyn, laughing. "No tricks on a guest, you know. Skimmy took the bar of his own accord, and he sat on the chair without giving me time to warn him."

"Any more pleasant little surprises like that knocking about?" asked Manners, looking curiously about the workshop.

"Yes, heaps," said Glyn. "But I've got something to show you in the garden that'll interest you more."

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

"My model railway."

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "Why wasn't I born the son of a giddy millionaire? How does the railway work? Will it carry you?"

"Yes, rather! Two or three of us if you like. But I'll show you."

Glyn stretched out his hand to the bar across the door.

"Bai Jove! Look out, deah boy!"

Glyn laughed and lifted out the bar. It did not hurt him. He had shut off the current without any of the juniors noticing where or how.

"This way," he said.

He pushed the french windows open, and they followed him down the wide, mossy stone steps into the trim garden. And what they saw there brought an exclamation of great admiration from everyone.

CHAPTER 9.

On the Model Railway!

IT was a sight that would have pleased any lad with a turn for mechanics, and it delighted Tom Merry & Co. Expensive as Glyn's possessions were, they had hardly looked for anything on the scale of this.

It was a "model" railway, but of a size that far exceeded anything the juniors from St. Jim's had anticipated.

The track was laid in a circular form on the lawn, and it was of a substantial make and size, the lines well laid on solid sleepers. There were signals along the lines, and a miniature station complete. But the juniors' admiration increased as they saw the locomotive.

Glyn's face glowed with pleasure as his companions gathered round the engine, which was evidently the pride of his heart.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, jamming his monocle into his eye and surveying the locomotive. "I wegard this as wippin'!"

"It is ripping, rather!" said Blake, in great admiration. "You couldn't make one like that under an hour, could you, Gussy?"

"I think not, Blake— Oh, you are wottin', you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And will it weally wun along the line?" said D'Arcy, as if that was really too much to expect of even such a ripping locomotive.

"Or does it walk?" murmured Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Yes, rather," said Glyn, laughing. "It isn't just to look at, you know. It will carry any two of us sitting on the tender."

"Bai Jove!"

"Wait till I get the steam up, and then—"

"Bai Jove! It goes by steam?"

"Of course it does, ass! How the dickens does a steam-engine go?" demanded Glyn. "Did you think I push it along from behind?"

"Weally, deah boy, I didn't think about it at all. Upon reflection, I suppose a steam-engine should go by steam?"

"He's worked that out in his head," said Monty Lowther admiringly, "and without the aid of a net."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Let's have a ride," said Herries. "Nothing like seeing it work."

"Right you are!"

(Continued on page 19.)

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NOTES AND NEWS FROM—



Address all letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

WELL, chums, what do you think of

"THE SPY-FLYERS!"

Isn't it a great yarn? Believe me, the stirring opening chapters of this thriller is only a taste of what is to come! There'll be another grand instalment in next week's GEM, so keep a look out for it! Then there will be another gripping St. Jim's yarn by the ever popular Martin Clifford, entitled:

"THE TAMING OF THE TYRANT!"

I will just give you a hint as to what to expect: Mr. Ratcliff, the sour-tempered master of the New House, has fallen in love with Bernard Glyn's sister Edith! You'll get the laugh of a life-time when you read this tip-top yarn next Wednesday! In addition there will be more jokes sent in by readers, to each of whom I award a prize of half-a-crown, and another antic by the inimitable Potts, as well as a page from my notebook. Take my advice, order your copy of the GEM now!

SWALLOW THIS ONE!

The train was travelling from Hull to Hornsea, when suddenly the brakes went on hard and the train came to a full stop. The communication cord had been pulled! The guard hurried along to the compartment in which the cord-pulling had taken place, and found a party of schoolboys—the guard was suspicious, naturally.

"Please," said one of the boys, "this fellow here was eating a very large sweet and it stuck in his throat, so I pulled the communication cord, and he got such a shock when I did that he swallowed the sweet; so now it's all right!" What could the guard do? He couldn't prove that the boy hadn't swallowed a sweet, even if he was suspicious that it was only a "try-on." So he accepted the explanation and left it at that!

CATCHING THE THIEF!

Judging by the way scientists and inventors are setting to work on ideas for foiling the bandits, these gentlemen will soon be having a pretty thin time. Here are one or two of the latest inventions in this line.

A German inventor has made a small steel trap which can be carried in the pocket, and when the unsuspecting pick-pocket slips his hand in, he gets a bit of a shock—and he also gets caught!

Then there is a new and simple burglar alarm. A small metal ball has three legs

projecting from it. This ball is set up against a window or door in such a way that the legs are pushed in. When the window or door is opened, the ball rolls over and the legs are released. This causes a bell concealed in the metal ball to ring loudly—and the opener of the door hops it quickly!

Then, again, there is a new coat for the ladies, which is designed to protect them from bag-snatchers. The coat has a pocket fitted in the left sleeve, in such a position that it is almost impossible for a thief to get at it without alarming the wearer. The pocket is fastened with a "zip" fastener. Life looks like being hard for bandits—and a jolly good job, too!

POLICE!

Wireless listeners who were listening in to the B.B.C. got something of a shock the other afternoon. The orchestra was playing when suddenly a voice cried something that sounded like "Police! Police!" just as the music stopped short. All over the country amazed listeners were wondering what on earth had happened at Broadcasting House, and it was not until the following day that they were able to discover what had really happened. It was like this. There had been a temporary breakdown at the B.B.C., and while they were effecting repairs, the engineers accidentally switched over to Darenty National programme on Regional for a moment. At that time the Children's Bible Story from Cardiff was being told, and at the "switch-over" the words "The priests! The priests!" were being spoken by the announcer, but listeners misheard the words. A very simple explanation, but the listeners certainly got a shock!

EQUAL TO THE PYRAMIDS?

On a mountain at South Dakota a sculptor is at work on the largest figures in the world. They are to represent Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt, and are being carved out of the mountainside. The roughing-out of the figures is done by very skillfully planned charges of dynamite, and the final work carried out by an air-drill, operated from a pumping-station at the foot of the mountain. When he is at work the sculptor is attached to the face of the mountain by a rope, for his is probably the most dangerous job a sculptor has ever undertaken.

America is very proud of this effort, for the figures, which will be visible for miles, are expected to last for all time. Americans regard them as something to compare with the Pyramids of old.

THIS WEEK'S QUEER STORY!

He was an officer in the Indian Army, and when he came home he bought a second-hand car for thirty pounds. It did sterling service for him during his leave, but the trouble started when the time came for him to return to India. He could not sell his car! No one would offer him anything for it—he couldn't even give it away! At last, in sheer desperation, he came to the conclusion that there was only one thing to be done about it. He piled all his kit into the back of the car and started on his last drive in it. When he reached the docks he left the car, went aboard, and sailed for India. Needless to say, the police became interested in the car, and finally they took out a summons against the officer for leaving his car unattended. In his absence he was fined five pounds, and in the circumstances the magistrate ordered that the car should be sold, the fine paid out of the proceeds of the sale, and a cheque for the balance sent to the officer. In due course the officer concerned received a cheque for—£45!

HIS QUEEN!

Orr Sprate is an Alabama negro and if you ask him who his queen is he will tell you that she is the Queen of Clubs! It was this way: Orr was arrested on a burglary charge when a detective found that he had in his possession two packs of cards corresponding to two which had been stolen from a club. When the club had been burgled the burglar had left in a hurry and had left the Queen of Clubs from one of the packs behind him. Orr had a Queen of Clubs in each of his packs, so he was acquitted!

ANSWERS.

John Sanders, of Hampstead, writes to ask me what animal eats most for its size. Well, John, I suppose a cobra does pretty well, though he doesn't do it often, but I can tell you that a shrew-mouse eats three times its own weight of insects every twenty-four hours. I reckon that'll take a bit of beating! Tom Black, of East Grinstead, wants to know what elephants smell with. I understand, Tom, that an elephant smells through its trunk and not through its nose.

"NIPPER'S TRIUMPH!"

This is the title of the thrilling story which appears in this week's issue of our companion paper, the "Nelson Lee." Accused of a brutal attack on a new boy, Nipper is shunned by his chums at St. Frank's—he is an outcast of his Form. But it takes a lot to get Nipper down, and he determines to fight his way back again to his former popularity. In this ripping yarn, Edwy Searles Brooks tells how Nipper achieves his object. Take my advice and get yourself a copy of this grand paper right now!

HOW

In France they give a prize every year for the best manuscript submitted by a child under thirteen years of age. Not long ago it was awarded to a little girl of eleven, who sent in a story about animals. Some time after the prize had been presented it was discovered that the little girl had copied a story by Diderot, a famous French author of the eighteenth century!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE SCHOOLBOY INVENTOR!

(Continued from page 16.)

Jack Blake looked doubtfully at Herries.
"What about Herries' feet?" he said. "Will the engine stand the weight?"

"You let my feet alone!" Herries said wrathfully. "What about your own swelled head? Blessed if a real railway-engine could stand that sometimes!"

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

"Pway don't argue, deah boys! Where do you light the fire in that wippin' engine, Glyn? If you will lend me an old pair of gloves, I should be vewy pleased to light the fire for you."

"There isn't any fire, ass—it's heated by paraffin."

"Is it weally? Bai Jove!"

Glyn soon had the locomotive in working trim. The steam rose and puffed away in a very realistic manner. The juniors looked on in delight.

They did not suspect that two pairs of eyes were watching them from the top of the garden wall.

Gore and Mellish were looking over into the garden behind Glyn's house, much interested and puzzled by what they saw.

"It's a giddy railway-engine," said Gore. "My hat! They're going to ride on it, too! That chap must have pocketfuls of money!"

"Looks like it! I suppose there's no chance of us getting a ride on it, if we asked?" said Mellish.

Gore chuckled.
"I expect we should get the order of the boot if we were seen here."

"I suppose so. Hang them!"

"I'd like to chuck the beastly engine off the line when they're going round!" said Gore savagely. "It would be a screaming joke."

"So it would—but you couldn't manage it."

"I'm going to see, anyway."

"What are you going to do?" asked Mellish, as the cad of the Shell swung his leg over the wall.

There were trees between the wall and the group of juniors, who were, besides, far too keenly interested in the model locomotive to have eyes for anything else.

"I'm going in—come on!"

"I'm not coming."

"Yes, you are," said Gore, seizing Mellish by the shoulder and dragging him across the wall. "I'm not going alone. Don't be a coward!"

"I—I'd rather not risk it. Let go!"

"Bosh! You're coming!"

Mellish had no choice but to drop down on the flower border inside the wall. He went ankle deep into the soft soil, and sat down violently. Gore dropped lightly down beside him. Mellish rose to his feet with a scowl.

"There'll be trouble about this!" he grunted. "We're trespassers here!"

"Stuff! They won't treat St. Jim's boys as trespassers," said Gore. "If we meet any servants about we can pretend we belong to the visitors, and our caps will bear us out."

"Tom Merry's boot will bear you out, if he catches you."

"Oh, shut up; he won't catch us! I'm going to put a spoke in their wheel!" growled Gore. "Come on, and keep under cover; they can't see us if we keep in the trees! And hold your jaw!"

They crept nearer to the group of juniors, but took care not to show themselves. The model engine was giving forth puff after puff with a businesslike sound, and Glyn had taken his seat astride the tender.

"Come on, one of you!" he said.

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Upon reflection, I am afraid my clothes might get wumped. You go, Tom Mewwy!"

"Right you are, kid!"

"Jump on, then!"

Tom Merry straddled the tender behind the youthful engine-driver.

Puff, puff! The whistle screamed, and the locomotive glided along the line.

"Bai Jove! She's off!"

The group of juniors watched with the keenest interest. Gathering speed as she went, the engine rolled on, carrying the two juniors behind on the tender.

"Bravo!" shouted Blake.

"Hip-pip!"

Right on went engine and tender with their burden, making the circuit of the rails, and then round again at an accelerated speed.

CHAPTER 10.

A Narrow Escape!

GORE and Mellish watched from the trees, at a point near the model railway farthest removed from the engine-house.

Tom Merry's chums were standing near the engine-house, looking on with keen interest, and ignorant of the fact that the two cads of St. Jim's were in the garden at all. Their glances followed the engine as it rolled, and as the track was a very long one, when they were watching one point their backs were almost turned to the opposite point.

Gore noted it, and an evil gleam came into his eyes as he watched.

He looked quickly about him under the trees. Mellish followed his glance uneasily. He knew that some evil thought was in the mind of the Shell bully.

"What are you looking for?" he muttered.

"Something to stick on the line."

Mellish almost jumped.

"You duffer! They'd see you!"

"No, they won't! When the engine's over that side of the railway, they're looking at it, and can't see in this direction."

"No, but—"

"It wouldn't take a second to pop out of the trees and stick a log or something on the line."

"But—but—but—"

"But—but—but!" sneered Gore. "What are you but—but butting about, you worm?"

Mellish had turned quite pale.

"You fool!" he muttered. "That's past a joke. Suppose it throws the engine off the line—"

"That's what I want."

"It—it might injure them."

"I don't care if it does!" said Gore. "That's what I'm going to do. Who would know? We could cut off in a jiffy."

"I—I don't want to injure them. I won't have a hand in it. You're a mad fool. You can do it by yourself!"

Cut This Out and Keep It By You!

My train oil, and another there." At itly on the nose.

(Continued on the next page.)

FREE 32-Page

IN FULL COL

"Can I?" said Gore, with glinting eyes. He had wrenched a jagged piece of wood off a rustic chair that was standing under the trees. "This will do ripplingly. You can nip out and stick this on the line, Mellish!"

"I—I won't!"

"You will. You're smaller than I am, and lighter, and can run faster. It won't take a second, when their backs are turned. Then, if the engine goes round a third time they'll be done in."

"I won't have a hand in it!"

"You will, or—" Gore clenched his fists and towered threatening over the smaller boy. "Are you looking for a hiding, you worm?"

"If you touch me, I'll call Tom Merry," said Mellish desperately.

Gore gritted his teeth, but he held his hand. He controlled his savage temper with an effort.

"All right, you worm—I can do it. Keep your head shut."

"You'd better not—I tell you—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Mellish relapsed into uneasy silence. He was ready enough to play any spiteful trick upon Tom Merry & Co., but he felt that such a dangerous trick as Gore was contemplating might end seriously—and a serious result meant trouble. Gore was too reckless by nature to think or care for that; but Mellish thought and cared a great deal. But it was useless to attempt to dissuade the bully of the Shell.

Gore was watching his opportunity.

The engine had passed the place where they crouched a second time, and was speeding on towards the engine-house.

It reached the farthest part of the circular railway, and the group of juniors, following it with their eyes, had their backs turned towards the spot where Gore was waiting and watching.

That was his chance.

He whipped out of the trees and laid the jagged fragment

of wood on the line, and whipped back again into cover, almost in the twinkling of an eye.

It happened so quickly that Mellish, in spite of his nervous uneasiness, could not help admiring the way his companion had effected his purpose. The jagged fragment lay on the line, and Gore was crouching in cover again.

"Come on," muttered Mellish, "let's get clear while there's time."

"Shut up!" Gore did not stir. "I'm going to see the smash. Then there'll be plenty of time to cut. Wait till they're round a third time."

Puff, puff!

The engine, at a greater speed than ever, was dashing gaily on with the two juniors sitting astride of the tender. Lengthy as the model track was, it required less than a minute for the locomotive to reach the obstacle on the line and dash into it.

But at that moment there came a shrill cry from the direction of the house.

"Stop!"

The juniors standing by the engine-house looked up in surprise. A girl was running towards the model railway, with a deadly white face.

"Stop! Bernard, put the brakes on!"

The St. Jim's junior caught his sister's terrified glance and heard her cry without knowing in the least what was the matter.

"Put the brakes on!" cried the girl.

Glyn's hand sought the brake. He knew that something must have happened to so excite his usually quiet and calm sister, though he could not realise what it was.

But Tom Merry's eye had swept along the track.

"Brake, quick!" he gasped. "There's something on the line!"

The brake jammed on.

The engine slowed down, and as it slowed Glyn caught sight of a jagged lump of wood on the line, and changed colour.

"Great Scott! How did that get there?"

The engine stopped—only three feet from the obstacle.

Gore gritted his teeth, and Mellish was trembling.

"She must have seen you, Gore," he muttered. "For goodness' sake, let's cut!"

"Come addition there will be more

Tom Merry by readers, to each of whom

The juniors prize of half-a-crown, and

now, and by the inimitable Potts,

on the line, and a page from my notebook.

"Who order your copy of the

Glyn looked

"We've

exclaimed

Edith Glyn

"Yes, yes went on hard and the

way to see

the whistle—and I saw a boy run out of the trees and put a

piece of wood on the line. I—I thought you might be

killed."

"Bai Jove! It must have given you a fearful fright.

Miss Glyn," said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "I

think the wotten wascal ought to have a fearful thwashin'."

Glyn's brows contracted darkly.

"I don't know about being killed," he said. "We

shouldn't have fallen far. But we should have been hurt. I'm

jolly certain about that—and the engine might have been

busted up! Who on earth—some village kids—"

Miss Glyn shook her head.

"It was a schoolboy—he had a cap like yours."

Tom Merry started.

"Gore! Which way did he go?"

"He ran into the trees again."

In a moment the St. Jim's juniors were dashing into the

trees in search of the perpetrator of what might have been

a dangerous outrage—all except Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Even in that moment of excitement D'Arcy's natural courtesy towards the fair sex did not desert him. Miss Glyn was very much shaken, and the swell of St. Jim's offered her his arm back to the house with all the grace of a Grandison.

Miss Glyn smiled and accepted it. Meanwhile, Tom Merry & Co. were looking vengefully for the delinquent.

CHAPTER 11.

Caught!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked, but they looked in vain.

They hunted through the trees and shrubberies and up and down the garden, but they did not find Gore. But the cad of St. Jim's was not far off.

Mellish had made a blind dash towards the wall over which they had climbed to enter, but Gore dragged him savagely back.

"Not that way, dummy!"

"But—they—"

"Shut up! They'll see us if we climb on the wall now."

"Oh dear, so they will!" Mellish stopped, trembling.

"You—you brute, I warned you not to do that! You might have injured them for life! You—you fool! You've got us into a nice mess."

"Shut up, you snivelling worm!" muttered Gore fiercely.

"We've got to get out of this somehow."

"We can't! They'll see us—and they'll be after us in a minute, anyhow. They're bound to find us."

"Shut up—while I think. Here, dodge into these rhododendrons."

"I tell you—"

Gore's fierce grasp dragged Mellish into the shrubbery, and he was silenced. But there was rebellion in his looks.

"I'm not going to be run down by them. I'll go out and own up," he muttered. "After all, it was you put the log on the rail, and the girl must have seen you."

"Hold your tongue!"

The shouts of the St. Jim's juniors could be heard now as they searched among the trees.

Gore bit his lip desperately, still keeping his grasp upon Mellish. He knew that Edith Glyn must have seen him, and that he could not fail to be recognised and identified by her if he were captured. The thought of a report to the Head of St. Jim's made him quake.

But it was impossible to gain the wall, and hiding in the shrubberies would not save him for many minutes.

What was to be done?

As the voices of the juniors came nearer, Gore dragged his companion farther towards the house, where the french windows of Bernard Glyn's own room stood invitingly open. The shrubberies extended close up to the stone steps, and it struck Gore that he had found a possible refuge.

He muttered in Mellish's ear.

"Quick! Cut in here!"

"I—I won't! In the house! You're mad!"

"It's the only chance!"

"We may get cornered there—"

"We shall get cornered here if we stay."

"It's—it's all your fault," whimpered Mellish.

"Oh, shut up, and come in!"

His grasp was like iron on Mellish's arm. They ran together for the steps, and sprang into the room. The juniors, still in the shrubberies, did not see them, and when they came out into the open Gore and Mellish were safe indoors.

Tom Merry & Co. gathered on the lawn and looked about them. It did not occur to them that the intruder might have had the nerve to take refuge inside the house. Glyn was of opinion that the rascal, whoever he was, had dodged away to one of the gates or hidden himself in a tree.

"I wish I had my bulldog here," said Herries, with a rather challenging glance at his chums. "Towser'd track him down in next to no time."

"Yes—I don't think!" Blake remarked.

"You know how Towser tracks people down, Blake. Why—"

"Yaas, wathah! He can twack down a kippah, at all events, as we know from expewience," remarked Arthur Augustus.

"Look here, you ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"If you say that Towser can't—"

"Oh, blow Towser!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Whatever Towser can and cannot do, Towser is in his kennel at St. Jim's now, so we can leave him out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The beast appears to have got away, whoever he was, and that's the great point," said Blake. "There's precious little doubts in my mind that it was Gore."

"You hear that?" whispered Mellish, as the two cads of

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VICTOR BANCROFT, Matlock, ENGLAND.

St. Jim's crouched behind the curtains in the room and listened to the talk on the lawn.

"Hold your row! They'll hear you!" whispered Gore savagely.

"We shall find out; and if it was, we'll warm him," said Tom Merry. "Luckily, there's no damage done."

"That's all right," said Glyn. "Don't bother further. Would any of you care to have a run on the railway now? We're going to have tea on the lawn here in time for the walk back to school with dad and Edith. If you'd care to have a run on the railway——"

"Yes, rather!"

"Ripping, my son!"

"Good! Then we'll get going."

The engine was at a standstill. But Bernard Glyn soon had it going again, and it puffed away in fine style. The juniors of St. Jim's were all keen to ride on the tender, and they went round and round the circular railway in great spirits. Then Glyn coupled on a truck behind, and tried the engine with three juniors. D'Arcy sat in the truck, and was carried round in great comfort, sitting with his silk hat in his hand, in an attitude of great elegance.

It was great fun, and the juniors enjoyed themselves immensely. But the time did not pass so quickly to the two young rascals watching from the open windows of the workshop.

While the juniors were on the lawn it was impossible for Gore and Mellish to escape by the way they had entered, and for a time they were nonplussed. Mellish was beginning to complain again, but Gore's savage scowl cut him short. Gore was not in a mood to be trifled with.

"We've got to get out somehow," he muttered desperately.

"We can't! They'd see us in a jiffy if we cut."

"The brutes can't remain there for ever."

"Didn't you hear Glyn say they were going to have tea on the lawn after they'd done riding on the tender?"

"He may have meant in front of the house."

"He said the lawn here."

"Oh, hang him, and hang you! What's to be done?"

"Go out and own up."

"Hold your tongue! If the girl hadn't seen me, I'd say I came in for a lark. But now—— Oh, shut up! I wonder if we could get out through the house?" said Gore, looking towards the inside door of the workshop.

Mellish shrank back.

"We should be bound to run into some of the servants, or somebody belonging to the house."

"Yes, I suppose so. Well, we've got to remain here."

"They may be in any minute now. They've all had a run on the model railway."

"Then we'd better get out of sight."

Gore looked savagely round the room, Mellish following his glance in silence. A fresh sound on the lawn attracted their attention, and they looked out of the window again. Servants were setting a tea-table on the turf between the model railway and the window. It was evident that Glyn had selected this spot for the alfresco tea-party. There was no chance of escape now.

"Fairly caught!" muttered Gore. "I never was in such a fix. It's all your fault, you young cad!"

"My fault!" said Mellish, staring. "How do you make that out? I was against coming in to the grounds from the start."

"Oh, shut up!"

Mellish uttered an exclamation.

"Look out! They're coming!"

"Get down here—quick!"

Gore dragged Mellish behind the huge armchair in which Skimpole had had such a startling experience. The juniors of St. Jim's came crowding in at the open french windows, without a suspicion of the two palpitating young rascals who were crouching within a few feet of them.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "We've had a jolly fine afternoon here, Glyn. I wegard you as havin' done us down extremely well. I do not deny that I am gettin' peckish and weady for tea."

"I'm jolly hungry, as a matter of fact," Jack Blake remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! I have enjoyed my wide immensely, and have only soiled my hands a little on the twuck."

"What did you soil your face on, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove! I twast my face is not dirtay, Tom Mewwy?"

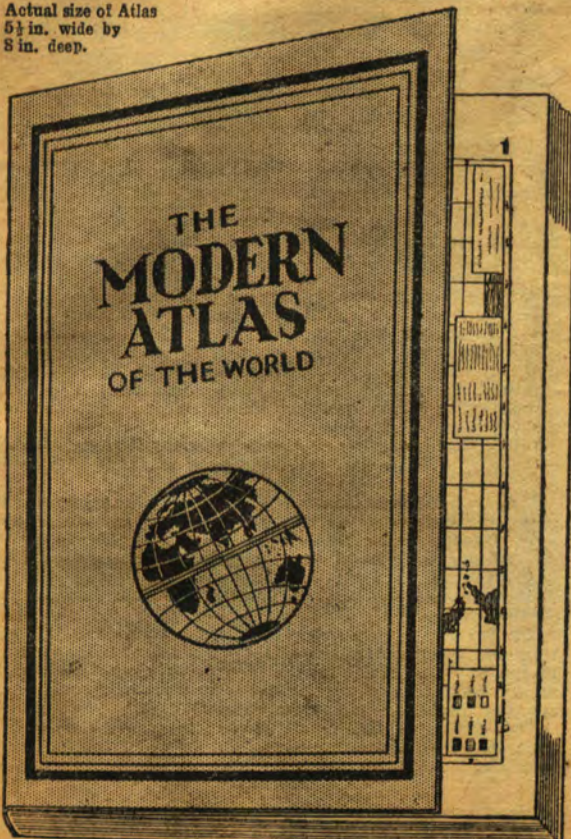
"Oh, perhaps it's your complexion."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"You've got a spot there," said Tom Merry, tapping D'Arcy on the cheek with his forefinger, which was stained with dirty train oil, "and another there." And he tapped him gently on the nose.

(Continued on the next page.)

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Don't miss this amazingly good offer, boys—start collecting those eight Coupons right away. There's one on page 19.

THE EDITOR.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,509.

"Weally— Why, you wottah, you have just sent them theah! I wegard that as a vewy wotten joke, Tom Mewwy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah. I—"

"Come up to my room and get a wash," said Glyn, laughing. "Tea will be ready in ten minutes."

"Wight-ho, deah boy! I should not like Miss Glyn to see me with a dirtay face. I should wegard it as a doocid awkward posish."

The juniors followed Glyn from the room, and the door closed behind them.

Mellish and Gore emerged from their hiding-place. They were dusty and breathless, gasping from having been crouched up in a small space.

"My hat!" gasped Gore. "It's hot! I— Ow!"

He had sunk into that comfortable looking chair to rest for a minute. In a flash his feet were in the air and he was looking up blankly past the toes of his boots at Mellish, who looked at him in alarm. Mellish was astounded to see his companion disappear so suddenly through the bottom of the chair. The next moment he grinned.

"Give me a hand out, you ape!" said Gore in a muffled voice.

Mellish took his hand. But Gore was doubled up in the shape of a V, and he could not be dragged out. His knees were almost touching his chin, and without the front of the chair being let out he could not escape.

"My hat!" said Mellish, with a whistle. "You're in for it now!" He looked out of the window. "Hallo! The coast's clear! The servants have gone!"

Gore groaned.

"Help me out!"

"I can't. Can't you wriggle out?"

"Dummy! Of course I can't! You must help me."

Mellish gave another look through the windows. The lawn was quite clear. The servants had laid the tables and retired. The coast was clear. But for how long? A minute, perhaps—or less.

"I'm going, Gore."

"Stop!" yelled Gore. "Don't you dare to leave me here! I shall be caught, and—"

"No good both of us being caught. I hate a selfish chap," said Mellish virtuously. "I warned you not to come here, you know. I don't want to say 'I told you so'; but

that's how it stands. I must hook it before they come back, now there's a chance."

And Mellish, unheeding the enraged glance of his whilom chum, slipped out of the french windows and cut across the lawn to the wall. In a moment he was clambering over it. He dropped into the lane and scudded off as fast as his legs could carry him.

Gore remained fastened up in the collapsible chair in a far from enviable frame of mind. He waited in tense anxiety for the return of the chums of St. Jim's. He tried to wriggle out of his captivity, but in vain. He was horribly cramped, and he felt pins and needles stealing over him.

The sound of the click of crockery from the lawn warned him that the coast was no longer clear. There was a tramp of feet at the door of the workshop, and the juniors, looking very bright and rosy from their recent wash, came streaming in, to go out to tea.

There was a shout of amazement at the sight of Gore.

"Bai Jove! It's Goah!"

"Caught!" yelled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He must have been hiding here all the time," grinned Glyn. "Lucky he took a fancy to resting in that chair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, I wegard this as wathah funnay! Goah, you are in a most wudicrous posish, deah boy."

"Let me out of this!" growled Gore. "My legs are twisted up; I believe I've sustained a serious injury."

"Rats!" said Glyn. "I dare say you are a bit cramped, but you're not hurt. I made that contrivance myself; it's one of my inventions. Jolly good one, too. I'll teach you to put a log of wood on my permanent way and risk busting my model engine!"

"I—I didn't!"

"Tea is ready!" said a gentle voice at the window, as Miss Edith looked in from the garden.

"Good!" said Glyn. "I say, Edie, is this the rotter you saw put the wood on the line?"

Miss Glyn smiled as she looked at Gore. She could only see the soles of his boots and his savage face.

"Yes, that is the boy, Bernard."

"I thought so. What have you got to say for yourself, Gore?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"We're going to eat muffins and tarts and cake," said Glyn, laughing. "As for you, you can stay there till we go back to St. Jim's."

"Ow! Let me out! I'm cramped!"

"I should have been worse than cramped if you had knocked my engine off the lines."

"Ow! Lemme go!"

"Shall we let him go, kids?" said Glyn, appearing to relent.

"Yaas, wathah! His suffewin's don't mattah vewy much, as the wottah deserves some punishment, but you must not forget that his clothes will be uttally spoiled, wumped up like that," said Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, let him go," said Edith Glyn, with a glance of contempt at the hapless bully of the Shell. "He deserved to be severely punished, but this may be a lesson to him. Let him go!"

Bernard Glyn touched the spring, and Gore was shot out upon the floor. He rolled over against Tom Merry, who promptly shoved him off, and then against D'Arcy, who pushed him away with his foot as if he were not fit to be touched with the hand. Then he picked himself up—cramped, humiliated, savage, dusty—and, after a look of hatred round at the grinning juniors, went sulkily through the window and disappeared.

"Good widdance!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Miss Glyn, may I have the great pleasuah of takin' you in to tea?"

D'Arcy had the pleasure. The little old gentleman, in whom the juniors would hardly have recognised one of the most famous and successful of Liverpool engineers, so unassuming and jovial was he, joined them at tea. He had quite forgiven Arthur Augustus the damage to his flower-beds, and he laughed heartily over the story of the capture of Gore.

The tea was a very merry meal, and when at last it was time for the juniors to go, they parted with a pressing invitation from Mr. Glyn and Edith to repeat their visit soon, which they gladly promised to do; and, needless to say, that promise was kept at an early date.

Tom Merry & Co. had seldom had a more enjoyable afternoon than the one spent at the home of the St. Jim's inventor.

THE END.

(Next week Martin Clifford contributes a side-splitting yarn of St. Jim's entitled: "THE TAMING OF THE TYRANT!" Make sure of it! Order your copy now.)

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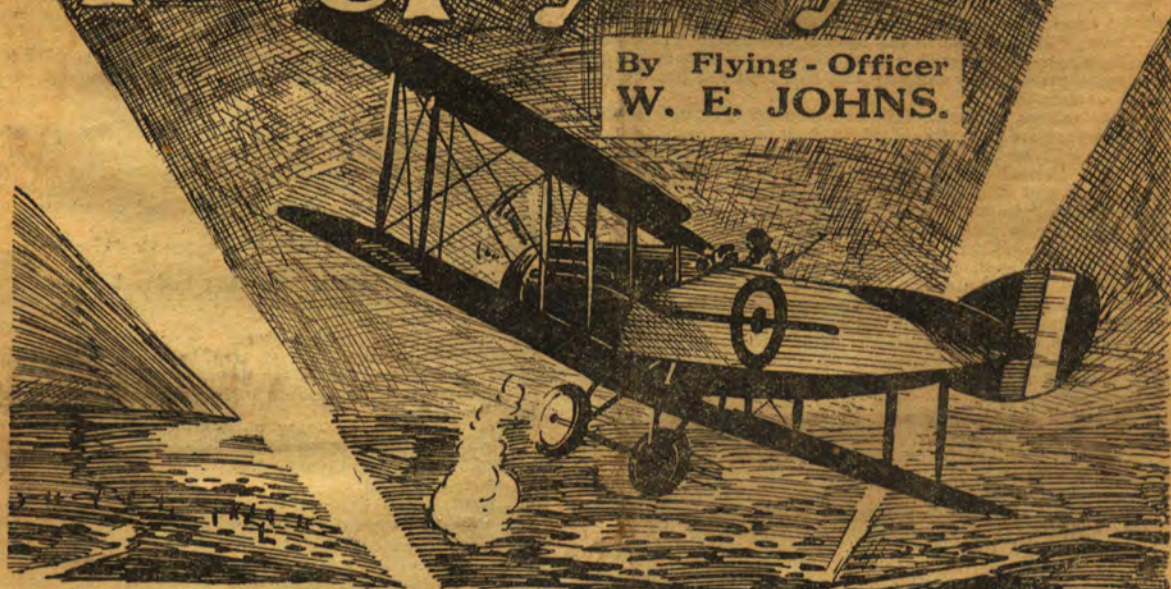
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CHAPTER 1. The Dog-fight!

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT! Rat-tat-tat! Captain Rex Lovell, R.F.C., flung his joystick over and kicked the rudder-bar in a wild half-roll out of the devastating blast of lead that had scored the top of

the fuselage of his Bristol Fighter not a foot from his head.

He looked around anxiously at his observer, Tony Fraser, and breathed a swift gasp of relief. Tony was braced back against the side of the rear cockpit, eyes glinting along the barrels of his twin Lewis guns, upon which he had just clamped a new drum of ammunition with the deft speed of long experience. Rex saw two tongues of orange flame leap from the muzzles, and then turned again to the work on hand, thankful that Tony had not been hit.

A red-and-green Fokker tore across his sights. Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat! He thumbed his triggers viciously, and plunged down in a wire-screaming dive in hot pursuit. He saw the pilot slump forward in his seat, and he zoomed up again with the exhilarating feeling of exultation that follows a victory. Flack-flack-flack! Again he heard the horrid sound of lead ripping through spruce and fabric near him. Spang-g-g! Something smashed against the roof of a centre section strut near his face, and he banked steeply. Tony's guns were chattering incessantly behind him as the gunner pumped lead into the whirling, black-crossed machines.

"Phew!" gasped the pilot. "This is getting a bit hot!"

All around him guns were stammering little staccato bursts. He snatched a swift glance behind, and saw a silver-bellied Albatross plunging earthward in a cloud of black smoke, streaked with tongues of orange flame. Tony's shrill yell of victory was borne faintly to his ears above the noise of the engine.

"I wish he wouldn't yell like that!" muttered Rex irritably. "He gets as crazy as a Red Indian when he's fighting!" He swerved violently to avoid colliding with another Bristol and an Albatross which, locked together, were spinning wildly downwards in a last ghastly embrace. He

caught sight of a large "B" painted on the nose of the Bristol. "Poor Jimmy's out of it!" was his unspoken thought, and he whirled in a blaze of fury at a Hun that was charging at him head-on.

"All right, come and get it!" he snarled. "Turn, you devil, or I'll ram you!"

His tracer was making a glittering line straight into the engine of the enemy plane, but the enemy pilot was shooting, too, as the quivering thud of bullets ripping through the Bristol testified.

At the last instant, only when collision seemed inevitable, the Fokker zoomed, and Rex flinched instinctively as its undercarriage wheels flashed past a matter of inches from the leading edge of his top plane.

"This isn't funny!" gritted Rex, as he gasped out a mouthful of acrid cordite gas. "Where are the others?"

He looked around him anxiously, and noted that, as usual, the dog-fight had lost height rapidly. The combat had started at 12,000 ft., and they were now within 3,000 ft. of the ground, immediately over No Man's Land; the wind, blowing from the east, a rare event, was blowing the fight farther over his own side of the lines. Below him two planes were smoking on the ground. The two machines that had collided had piled up in a ghastly heap of debris on a communication trench. An Albatross, standing on its nose in the German front line trench, was being frantically shelled by the British artillery.

Suddenly his eye fell on something that made him stiffen in his seat, whirl, thrust the stick forward, and plunge downwards. It was the Hannoverana that had been the cause of the trouble.

The two-seater had been used as a trap, a lure to bring down his Flight from a high patrol to the waiting guns of a Boche circus. The Hannoverana pilot, his work finished, was streaking for home, but he had left it until too late. Rex was above him, and used his height to advantage. He took the black-crossed machine in his sights and sent a stream of glittering tracer into its double tail.

The enemy pilot looked up and saw death staring at him in the spouting muzzles of Rex's twin Lewis guns. He veered crazily in a fruitless effort to throw the gunner off his mark, but Rex, fighting mad, was under his tail now, in his "blind spot," and nothing could shake him off.

"You're my meat!" muttered Rex grimly, as he closed in

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to deliver the final burst of fire that would send the other plunging earthward on the long drop to oblivion.

But the Boche knew that the end had come. His gunner was struggling to keep his feet in the swaying machine, in order to get in an effective burst at the Bristol, but in vain. The German pilot, having no desire to pile his machine up in the wreckage below, took the only course possible to save his life. He cut off his engine and flung up his arm in a despairing gesture of surrender.

Rex smiled sourly.

"Pack up, would you? All right, I suppose I've got to let you get away with it!"

He jabbed viciously towards the British lines with his gloved hand. The German made a signal of understanding and turned his machine in the desired direction. The other machines had disappeared with the amazing suddenness that is a peculiarity of air combat, and Rex followed his victim down unmolested.

A few salvos ofarchie followed them as they sailed into the comparative security of their own lines, the German machine still under the guns of the Bristol. Five minutes later the Bristol pilot's aerodrome at Maranique loomed up ahead, and Rex signalled to the other to land, afterwards turning to grin broadly at Tony who was following the proceedings with intense interest.

The Boche needed no second invitation. He planed down quickly and landed, Rex close behind. Almost before the Bristol had stopped its run Rex and Tony were out sprinting for the German machine. They were just in time, for its crew were feverishly working to release the device fitted to nearly all German war planes, which enabled a pilot who was compelled to land in enemy territory to set fire to his machine and thus prevent it falling into the hands of the other side.

Rex seized the German pilot by the collar and flung him clear of the machine.

"No, you don't!" he snarled grimly, in the German language.

The enemy pilot stared at him.

"You speak German?" he asked quickly.

Rex nodded.

"All right. Never mind the machine; we'll take care of that. Come on!"

They turned towards the little crowd of officers and mechanics who were racing towards them, and in a babble of excited voices they entered the officers' mess.

During the War it was customary for captured airmen to spend the evening as the guests of their captors, and headquarters had a good reason for not opposing this curious and irregular procedure. In many cases the airmen, suffering from reaction of the combat, and thawed by the comradeship around them, often let slip scraps of information which were of vital importance to the authorities.

More information was probably gained in this way than from any other source, in spite of the fact that airmen were constantly warned to remain dumb if they were captured.

On the evening in question the officers of 297 Squadron entertained another guest beside the two prisoners. This was Major Trevor, who had come over from Intelligence headquarters, presumably because he wished to study and hear what the two prisoners had to say before they really awoke to their position.

During the evening Rex and Tony acted as interpreters, and when the two captured airmen had finally departed for less pleasant quarters, the major, who had been in earnest conversation with Major Lukers, the C.O., called them over to him.

A tall, handsome, middle-aged man, with eyes of steely grey, he looked every inch a soldier, and Rex approached him with respect.

"I saw your dog-fight from an observation post near the front line," began Major Trevor, smiling, shaking hands with each of them in turn. "A good show—a rattling good show. Major Lukers tells me that you are going to make names for yourselves."

"Oh, I don't know about that!" replied Rex modestly, acting as spokesman for both. "It's all in the day's work, you know."

"By the way, how is it that you two speak German so well?" asked the major, in surprise.

"We were at Heidelberg together, sir," replied Rex.

"Heidelberg!"

"Yes, sir, we were at school together before that. My governor is a director of the National Chemical Company, and wanted me to join the firm when I left school. A lot of the chemical business is done with Germany, as you know, so I was sent to Heidelberg University to learn the language and study chemistry. I wanted Tony in the business with me, so we both went. We were there for nearly three years, and, as a matter of fact, we were only just home when war broke out. We joined the R.F.C. together. The Medical Board wouldn't pass Tony as pilot, but let him go through

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as an observer, and at the Pool we wangled it to get up here in the same squadron. To-day is the first opportunity we have had for airing our German since we left Germany," he concluded.

"Well, you seem to have remembered it all right," smiled the major, and then he became serious. "Come and sit down over here quietly for a moment. I want to speak to you privately. I have the C.O.'s permission."

Major Lukers nodded, and strolled away to join the other officers round the fire.

"Have you boys ever heard of 'Secret Missions'?" began Major Trevor, when they had settled themselves comfortably in a corner.

"You mean spy-dropping, and so on?" answered Rex quickly.

"Sh! That's not a nice way of putting it," replied the major, frowning, "but that is what it really amounts to, I suppose."

Rex nodded.

"I've heard something about these things that go on—queer rumous float about the tarmac, you know."

"Well, there are other jobs besides spy-dropping, as you call it," went on the major. "There is a job waiting to be done now, a job demanding a good deal of nerve and ability."

The major studied the end of his cigarette reflectively.

"You mean—"

"Exactly. After seeing your show to-day I thought you might like to take it on. A successful issue would no doubt result in a decoration."

Rex made a deprecating gesture.

"I'm not concerned with that, sir," he said simply. "Tell us about the job and let us get down to it."

The major edged his chair a little closer and dropped his voice to a whisper.

"Have you done any night flying?" he asked. "Good!" he went on, as Rex nodded in the affirmative. "You know the Lille—Le Cateau railway line?"

Again Rex nodded.

"Perfectly," he said.

"Very well," continued the major. "A mile from the village of Maricourt along the line, there is a tunnel. That tunnel is of vital importance to the enemy. They are using that line to bring up reserves and supplies, or they will be when the big spring show starts. If anything happened to that tunnel the line would be effectively blocked."

"Why not bomb the line?" suggested Tony.

"Useless," replied the major shortly. "We have already done that. Direct hits are difficult to obtain, and even when the line has been damaged it has been repaired again within twelve hours. No, it needs more drastic measures to put it completely out of action. That tunnel has got to be utterly destroyed so that it will take them months to clear it."

"I see," said Rex slowly. "And how do you propose to do that?"

"By placing a charge of high explosive inside the tunnel and blowing it up," replied the major softly.

"That doesn't sound easy to me," answered Rex soberly.

"It isn't," agreed the major. "But H.Q. have said it's got to be done, so done it must be. The only possible way is for a machine with a determined crew to land at night behind the German lines. They will have to get through the sentries, place the charge in position, fire it, and then escape—if they can."

"If they can?" echoed Rex.

"Precisely. Provided the tunnel is destroyed, the rest is of secondary importance."

"Sounds cheerful, I must say," said Rex grimly. "You don't mind what happens to the people as long as the tunnel goes west?"

The major nodded.

"I am afraid that is the way we have to work," he replied. "Naturally, we are always delighted to see our operatives return, but the success of their mission is of greater importance."

"Quite," agreed Rex. "I see that. Well, when do we go?"

"Then you'll have a shot at it?"

"I'm game. What about you, Tony?" queried Rex.

Tony looked pained.

"If it's good enough for you, it's good enough for me," he replied briefly.

"Good. Then come and see me in the morning, and we'll settle the details," said the major, rising. "Not a word to anyone. It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to say that absolute blind secrecy is essential. One word, and the enemy will know about it. Their operatives are as active as ours. Good-night!"

The major left the room abruptly.

"Well, what do you think about it, Tony?" asked Rex, as the major departed.

"It sounds a pretty deadly business to me," grinned Tony, "but we'll have a stab at it. Come on, let's get to bed."

The Tunnel!

THE following afternoon found them arranging the final details of the plan with Major Trevor in his office at Wing Headquarters, which were situated at Neuville, not far from their own aerodrome. Plans and aerial photographs littered the table.

"Well, I think that's about all," observed Rex, picking up his cap. "To-night it is. We shall leave at eight o'clock. I'll bring the Bristol over in daylight and land her outside"—he indicated the recently abandoned aerodrome through the window. "It's handy having a landing ground so close to you, sir."

"It is," agreed the major. "This room used to be 231 Squadron Office, you know."

"Yes, I remember it well," replied Rex. "I've landed here many times. Well, come on, Tony, let's go and get the machine; and you'll have the fireworks ready for us when we return, sir?"

"I've got a couple of Royal Engineers making up the charge now, in the end hangar."

"Good enough, sir," replied Rex. "Come on, Tony, let's go."

Rex sat silent for some time, deep in thought, as they sped homewards in the headquarters Crossley tourer. "I don't quite see why he is so keen for us to land at that field he had marked out," he mused. "I know it's a bit bigger than the one we had decided upon, but it's farther away, and I'm sure I could get down in the other one fairly comfortably. I'll see how the wind is. In any case, the surface of the field is an absolute gamble."

"Well, it's only a matter of opinion, after all," commented Tony. "I suppose we can land where we like when all is said and done."

"Yes, we'll see what it looks like when we get there." Arrived back at the aerodrome they had their tea under the banter of other officers, who were curious to know what was in the wind, but to their inquiries Rex only replied with an enigmatical smile.

"Come on, Tony," he said at last, "let's be getting away." And a few minutes later they were roaring through the still evening air on their short hop to the headquarters aerodrome. Leaving the engine ticking over, they made their way to the end hangar, where two Royal Engineers were mounting guard over a neat but bulky package. Rex whistled softly as he felt its weight.

"My sacred aunt!" he muttered. "This weighs a bit. How much?" he added, turning to the engineers.

"Fifty pounds, sir," replied one of the men, whose sleeve bore a lance-corporal's stripe.

"Holy mackerel, I'd no idea it would be so big. Somebody has got to carry this best part of a mile. It's an awkward shape to get into your cockpit, isn't it, Tony?" asked Rex.

The observer nodded. "I should think it would have been better in two parcels," he agreed. "Moreover, we could then have split the weight and carried half each."

"Could you make it up into two parcels?" Rex asked the engineers.

"Of course, sir," replied the corporal. "Major Trevor has been down here helping us to get ready, but I expect it will be all right. Two packages means re-wiring and detonating; take about half an hour, sir."

"All right, go ahead, I'll give you a hand," answered Rex. "This is the wire, eh?"

"Yes, sir. About a quarter of a mile of it. This end is fixed in the charge, and then you unroll it as far as it will go. To explode the charge, all you have to do is to connect these two terminals."

The half-hour soon passed, and the two packages were carefully stowed away. The airmen took their places in their cockpits. Little tongues of flame licked out of the exhaust-pipes as Rex opened the throttle slightly and prepared to taxi into position for the take-off.

Tony leaned over, tapped his pilot sharply on the shoulder, and pointed. A figure was hurrying towards them in the darkness.

"Is that you, sir?" called Rex, throttling back.

"Yes!" It was Major Trevor's voice. "Got everything you want?"

"Yes, sir."

"Off you go then. Remember the moon rises at nine o'clock; it's now eight-thirty. Good-bye, and good luck!"

He shook them both warmly by the hand, and backed away from the swirling slipstream as Rex turned into the wind.

The night was shattered by a mighty volume of sound as he opened the throttle wide, and the next moment they were off the ground, climbing swiftly for height into the starry sky. A finger of gleaming silver stabbed the darkness not far away, another, and then another. Dash-dash-dot-dash flashed the nearest searchlight, using the Morse code. It was the signal letter of the night. An orange flame leapt

into the sky ahead of them—the warning archie burst of the anti-aircraft batteries which were working in conjunction with the searchlights. The searchlight had asked for the password. Tony took a Very pistol from his pocket, which he had already loaded with a selected cartridge. He leaned over the side of his cockpit and fired high between wings and tail. There was a sharp report as the pistol flashed, and a ball of green fire, changing slowly to red, sank slowly earthwards. It was the "colour of the night," and his reply to the gunners below. O.K.! O.K.! flashed the searchlights, and then flickered out in their swift, curious manner.

Ten thousand feet glowed on the luminous dial of Rex's altimeter, but still he climbed. Twelve, fourteen, fifteen thousand showed in turn, and then they headed for the lines. For ten minutes, still climbing, the pilot groped his way through inquisitive searchlight-beams, and then, when his altimeter registered eighteen thousand feet, he throttled back and eased the stick until they were planing gently almost at stalling speed.

Far below them a thousand flickering fireflies showed the course of the trench system which stretched from the North Sea to Switzerland, where a million men were engaged in the biggest life and death struggle the world had ever known. Far away to the north, a cluster of dull, glowing archie bursts and a group of searchlight-beams showed where night bombers were at work. Almost silently they slid through the night, Rex peering ahead and downwards to pick up his landmarks. If possible, he wished to land without opening up his engine again, for this would inevitably betray their whereabouts to the watchers below. For this reason they had climbed to the tremendous altitude which should enable them to glide far into the enemy country without using the engine.

Of the desperately dangerous nature of their task they had no delusions. A bad landing would mean that at the best they would remain in captivity until the end of the War. It might possibly explode the terrific charge of high explosive which Tony was carrying in his cockpit. Yet the landing was only the beginning of their difficulties. Rex thought no further. "Let us have one thing at a time," he muttered to himself as he peered intently into the night.

Below them the earth was wrapped in profound darkness, the roads showing dimly as pale ribbons snaking across the war-stricken landscape; the woods lay like dull black stains. They were soon down to ten thousand feet as they lost height steadily on the long glide. Once a probing searchlight-beam swept past them, paused in uncertainty as the light reflected on wings and struts, but passed on as Rex slipped away swiftly, sacrificing valuable height in the side-slip. The pilot, still peering downwards, altered his course a trifle, and turning to Tony, pointed with outstretched finger. The words "the railway" floated back on the slipstream. Lower and lower they dropped, until Rex was swinging in wide circles over a large field that lay below. He was tempted to switch the engine off altogether, but dare not take the risk in case he overshot or undershot the landing ground. The last thousand feet of height disappeared quickly, and a row of trees loomed up ahead. With the wind moaning and sighing through struts and wires, they slid gently over them and into the field. The wheels bumped gently once—twice; the propeller stopped as Rex switched off, and they ran slowly to a standstill on the dewy turf. For a moment neither of them moved, but sat listening intently, peering with straining eyes into the darkness around them.

"I think it's all right," said Rex softly at last.

"This is the field you wanted to land in, isn't it?" asked Tony as he climbed stiffly from his seat.

"It is," replied Rex tersely. "It's plenty big enough. There was no point in going on to the other. Come on! Get under her tail, and we'll pull her into the shadow of those trees. She'll be facing what little wind there is if we have to get off in a hurry."

Slowly and laboriously they dragged the Bristol into the black shade of a group of trees on the edge of the field. Tony carefully lifted the packages from the plane, and laid them gently on the soft earth.

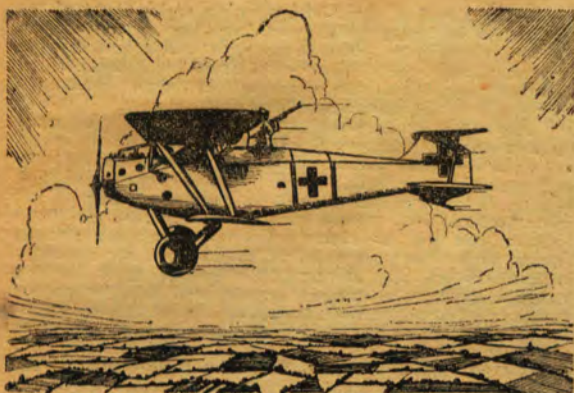
"Well, here we are," said Rex quietly. "Seems funny to be in Boche territory, doesn't it?"

"Funny!" whispered Tony. "I don't call it funny."

He did not say that his heart was thumping so loudly that he wondered why Rex had not noticed it.

"I know what it feels like to be a burglar now," whispered Rex, as they each picked up a package and crept quietly along the side of the hedge. "Come on; this way! I've studied photographs of this area until I know the place by heart. It wouldn't do to strike matches to look at a map."

For a quarter of an hour they made steady progress, halting to peer cautiously round corners, and to listen to the sounds that came faintly through the still night air. They could still hear the distant thunder of the guns along the line, and once the shrill cry of a night hawk near at hand made both their hearts miss a beat. They crept



A sketch by the author showing the formidable Hannoverana, the type of two-seater machine captured by Rex and Tony.

through a gap in the hedge and came out on a road. The steady tramp of marching men came to their ears, and they wormed their way back into the undergrowth and lay silent, hardly daring to breathe until the steel-helmeted figures had passed by. They crossed the road and entered a stubble field.

"This is it," breathed Rex. "The southern entrance of the tunnel is in the far corner of this field. Keep your eyes skinned for sentries."

Once more they crept along slowly, and with infinite pains, stopping every few steps to listen. Their goal was less than fifty yards away now, and the strain became almost unbearable. At every step they expected to hear the sharp challenge of a sentry, and see the flash of his rifle as he fired. Rex stopped and wiped the perspiration from his face, thankful that they had left their heavy flying coats on the machine. He stopped suddenly.

"Sh-h-h!" he breathed; and together they sank silently to the ground.

Someone was coming their way. The footsteps were approaching along the very hedge by which they were lying, and with one accord they both squirmed into the thick brambles that bordered it.

"Is that you, Fritz!" called a voice in the darkness from somewhere near at hand.

"Ja, ja!" replied another voice, so close that the two hidden airmen instinctively flinched.

A figure detached itself from the hedge not ten yards in front of them, and Rex saw that, but for the approach of the man behind them they must, in another few steps, have walked straight into him.

"Come on!" called the first voice roughly. "You're five minutes late!"

"No; I am on time!" argued the other.

Tony bit his lip as the heel of the man's heavy boot came down on his hand, but he made no sound.

"There is bread, sausage, and coffee at the box. Don't eat it all," went on the voice. "I'm not looking forward to four hours in this miserable hole of a place. Who is likely to come here, I should like to know?" he grumbled on. "The oberleutnant must have a bee in his bonnet."

"Better not let him hear you say so," said the other nervously.

For a minute or two the silence was broken only by the sound of a rifle being loaded.

"Oh, well, the War can't last for ever," said the first voice.

There was a gruff "Good-night!" and the sound of footsteps receding through the stubble into the darkness.

For another five minutes that seemed like eternity the two boys lay still as death, then Rex moved his hand very slowly until it found Tony's face. By twisting his body slightly he could just place his mouth near his companion's ear.

"I can't stick this much longer; I'm getting cramp," he breathed.

"Where is he?" came back faintly from Tony.

"About ten yards down the hedge."

"What's he doing?"

"Nothing. He may stand there for hours. Don't move."

Then for Rex began an ordeal which was to haunt him for many a day. Many times in the future was he to wake up dripping with perspiration from stalking a silent sentry, whose head he could just see against the moonlight on a railway embankment.

The work on hand must be done silently, he knew. One sound and they were lost. With the muzzle of his revolver gripped in his right hand, he wormed his way, inch by

inch, towards the unsuspecting man. When he was almost within striking distance the German strolled casually a few yards farther on, and he had to begin all over again. At last he lay almost at the man's heels, and then luck turned in his favour. The sentry yawned mightily, unfastened the collar of his tunic, stuck the bayonet of his rifle in the ground, took off his helmet, and placed it on the butt. As he did so Rex rose up like a shadow behind him, and brought the butt end of the revolver crashing down on his unprotected head. The sentry dropped like a log. Rex turned swiftly as he fell, and, snatching up his package with a whispered "Come on!" disappeared like a wraith in the direction of the embankment.

"What's the time, Karl?" called a voice loudly from the other side of the embankment.

"Nine-fifteen," replied Rex instantly, imitating the fallen man's gruff voice tolerably well.

"Donner blitz! How slowly the time goes!" growled the voice in the darkness.

Again the boys lay still while the man opposite strolled up and down humming softly to himself. Tony laid a trembling hand on Rex's arm.

"Let's get it over!" he gasped weakly. "I can't stand much more of it."

Rex cupped his hands, and put his mouth near Tony's ear.

"Give me your bundle," he whispered. "Don't move; but if he speaks, answer. If you hear a row start, sprint for the machine. I'll get back to it, somehow. Cheerio!"

"Cheerio!" breathed Tony; and the next second he was alone.

Somewhere in the distance a train whistled shrilly, and he wondered if Rex had heard it. The rumble of an approaching train soon became dimly audible, and he listened in an agony of apprehension.

"Here she comes!" called the voice opposite. "More ammunition for the boys!"

"Ja, ja!" grunted Tony.

"What's the matter with you to-night, Karl? You sound as bad tempered as a bear," came the voice again.

"So would you be with a cold like mine," replied Tony, through his nose; and added colour to his statement by sneezing violently in his handkerchief.

The train was less than a mile away now, roaring through the night. A black figure arose at Tony's side, and caught him by the arm. It was Rex.

"Come on!" he gasped. "Now's our time! The noise of the train will cover any row we make. I've planted the explosive right in the middle of the tunnel!"

They hurried down the hedge, unrolling the wire as they went. They were a bare hundred yards from the embankment when a rifle blazed into the darkness. Rex knew instantly what had happened. The man he had stunned had recovered consciousness and fired his rifle for help. There was a shout of alarm followed by several others just as the train plunged into the far end of the tunnel. "This will have to do," grunted Rex, dropping on to his hands and knees. For a second or two he fumbled with the terminals and then held them together.

Instantly it seemed as if the end of the world had come. A blinding sheet of flame leapt upwards. A reverberating roar rose to the heavens and a blast of air swept Tony off his feet. The earth rocked about him as he struggled to rise. "Come on!" cried Rex. "Run for it!" And together they sprinted down the hedge. The gap which opened into the road loomed ahead, and as they sprinted across it they had a fleeting glimpse of running figures farther down. Panting and gasping for breath they halted as they reached the machine; a great noise of shouting, punctuated with minor explosions, came from the direction of the tunnel.

"It sounds as if they are getting excited," grinned Rex as he put his hand on the radiator of the engine. "Thank goodness she's still warm. Swing the prop. Switches off."

"Suck in."

"Suck in."

There was a swishing noise as Tony frantically dragged the heavy propeller round to suck the gas into the cylinders of the engine. "Contact!" he yelled, casting concealment to the winds.

"Contact!" echoed Rex, and there was a shattering roar as the engine burst into palpitating activity. Tony dashed around the wing tip, made a flying leap for his cockpit as the machine began to move forward, and fell headlong inside.

There was a yell of alarm, and the flash of a rifle-shot stabbed the darkness in the direction of the road. Rex bared his teeth in a mirthless smile and shoved the throttle wide open. The Bristol sped across the turf like an arrow; for a moment he held her down, and then pulled up in a swift zoom. At a thousand feet he flattened out and breathed freely for the first time since they had landed on German soil. Tony touched him on the arm

and pointed downwards. "We brought it off!" he yelled above the roar of the engine. "Look!"

Rex looked down and caught his breath. Below them was a great crater from which blue and orange tongues of flame were leaping. "We caught the ammunition train—it blew up," he bawled, as he turned his nose towards the line.

Tony nodded dumbly. A searchlight appeared like magic in front of them and Rex banked steeply to avoid it. Another and another finger of white light pierced the darkness until the air around them was alive with the gleaming, probing beams. Archie shells glowed redly and filled the air with flame and hurtling steel. Rex dodged and twisted like a wounded snipe as he tore towards the lines. "Phew!" he gasped, as he put his nose down for the final rush. "I shan't be sorry when I'm out of this."

The desolate waste of No Man's Land lay below them now, and he levelled out as the barrage of hate died away behind. The British searchlights sprang up to meet them, but Tony's Very pistol and the "colour of the night" satisfied them, and they disappeared as swiftly as they had arisen.

Ten minutes later they slid quietly to earth on their own aerodrome at Maranique. "Well," exclaimed Rex as he switched off and the noise of the engine died away, "I'm not opposed to a little excitement once in a while, but if this is a sample of a 'secret mission,' I'm all out for ordinary dog fights and a quiet life."

"Get out," jeered Tony, "you know you've thoroughly enjoyed it. Come on, let's ring up the major."

They walked quickly towards the mess where several officers were standing in the open doorway, no doubt wondering at the late arrivals. "It's all right, chaps," replied Rex in answer to several questions. "We've only been doing a bit of night flying practice—haven't we, Tony?"

"That's all." As they reached the mess door a touring car pulled up and a figure alighted. It was Major Trevor.

"So you got back all right?" he asked rather breathlessly. "Quite O.K., sir, thanks," laughed Rex. "It wasn't easy—as you said; but"—he leaned forward—"we've blown the tunnel sky high," he whispered.

The major looked at him hard for a moment, then seized his hand and gripped it warmly. "Good boy," he said. "I'll see H.Q. know who did the trick."

The Major's Proposition!

REX and Tony sat sunning themselves on the tarmac, feeling in fine form after a successful two and a half hours patrol, for Tony, from the rear cockpit, had shot down a Fokker that was out looking for easy meat, but caught a tartar instead.

An orderly-room clerk came hurrying along from the squadron office.

"Captain Lovell, sir!" he called. "Yes, what is it?" replied Rex with interest. "Major Trevor would like to see you, sir. He's in the squadron office with the C.O., and will you bring Mr. Fraser with you, sir."

Rex nodded. "I wonder what's in the wind now," he said in a quiet aside to Tony as they made their way towards the office. Major Trevor looked up with a smile as they entered the room.

"Morning, Lovell—morning, Fraser," he called cheerfully. "I've just been having a word with your C.O. about you, and I'd like to have another chat with you. I have told the C.O. what is in my mind, so it is quite all right, if somewhat irregular. I think, if you don't mind, we'll go across to headquarters, because we may be some time."

Major Lukers nodded. "Certainly," he said, and then, turning to Rex and Tony: "What Major Trevor has to say to you is with my entire approval, although, naturally, I should like to make it clear that I should be extremely sorry to lose two of my best officers. Nevertheless, you must do as you think best. You will understand what I mean when you have had a talk with Major Trevor."

The two boys entered the major's car, and were soon speeding down the road towards Neuville. Not a word was spoken during the journey, and Rex, seething with curiosity, was glad when they reached their destination.

"Now, I am going to be as brief as possible," began the major when they had settled themselves down in his office. "I have a proposition to make. I was very much impressed by the way you carried out that raid the other night; it showed resourcefulness and ability. General Fellowes, who, as you no doubt know, is in command here,

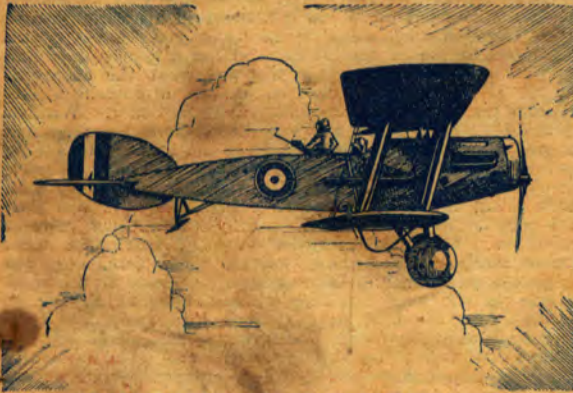
is delighted about it, and I may say at once that the scheme I am about to put up to you is made with his full approval. This is the headquarters of the Intelligence staff on this particular sector of the Front, and our business is to find out by every means at our disposal what the enemy is doing. More than that, we endeavour to prevent enemy agents from finding out what we are doing. Without mining matters, I can tell you that espionage—or spying, to use a more simple word—does not end there. It includes counter-espionage, which means spying on the enemy's spies, and that is the most deadly, dangerous work in the world. Operatives, as we prefer to call them, know that if they are caught they will be shot, quickly and without hope of reprieve. They are disowned even by their own side. Consequently, as they have everything to lose, they are desperate men. And in their ranks are some of the cleverest brains in the war, working without hope of honour or reward. In the first part of our duties we have been successful, but in the latter—well, not so successful. Briefly, information is leaking through to the enemy in a manner which clearly points to a highly organised system within our lines.

"You must understand this. It is not easy for an operative to obtain information. But that is, perhaps, the simplest part of his task. It is far more difficult for him to pass that information back to his own side when he has obtained it. The enemy are not only obtaining valuable information, but that information is back in Germany within twelve hours—we have proved that beyond all doubt. There are many methods employed to convey information—carrier pigeons, and so on."

The major paused for a moment to let his words sink in. "For instance," he went on slowly, lighting a cigarette, "the other night we put a net across the stream that runs near your aerodrome. As you know, it flows from France into Germany. We caught some funny fish—such as bottles, carefully corked, with letters inside. Most of it was amateurish work, however, and did not help us much. The time has come when we must identify and isolate the group of expert agents who are working over this side. After a good deal of consideration, we have come to the conclusion that the enemy must be employing aircraft on a fairly extensive scale. Well, we think, and you will probably agree, that there is only one thing to stop aeroplanes,



The sentry yawned mightily, unfastened the collar of his tunic, stuck the bayonet of his rifle in the ground, took off his helmet and placed it on the butt. As he did so, Rex, revolver in hand, rose up like a shadow behind him.



The author's sketch of a Bristol Fighter, the type of machine flown by Rex and Tony.

and that is— aeroplanes. The reason why I have brought you here to-day is to ask you if you would be prepared to work exclusively for headquarters, to try to locate these machines."

"What exactly would you want us to do, sir?" asked Rex slowly.

The major shrugged his shoulders. "Frankly, I do not know. You would have to take whatever steps you considered likely to produce results. I think I ought to warn you that tasks may arise which may be distasteful to you; but against that you must bear in mind that you would be doing work of the greatest possible importance, work demanding an even higher degree of skill and courage than that demanded by ordinary routine at a Service Squadron. For the present you would simply have to watch, using your eyes and putting two and two together if you saw an aircraft behaving in a suspicious manner. Call yourselves flying detectives, if you like," he smiled.

"Apart from the other night, may I ask if there is any reason why you selected us for this work, sir?" asked Rex.

"You may," replied the major, at once. "It is because of your knowledge of the German language."

"How is that going to help us?" queried Rex, raising his eyebrows.

The major pulled his chair a little closer.

"I am just coming to that," he said slowly, dropping his voice to a mere whisper. "You remember the Hannoverana you shot down, the other day?"

Rex nodded.

"Perfectly," he said.

"Well, it is still here, and it is in good order," answered the major, with a curious expression on his face. "An occasion might arise when that machine could be used to advantage. You see, in an emergency you could both pass as Germans."

"Not in these uniforms," smiled Rex.

The major looked him squarely in the eyes.

"The exigencies of war demanded that when the crew of

the Hannoverana left their machine here they left their uniforms as well," he whispered significantly.

"Are you suggesting that we wear German uniforms, sir?" said Rex curtly.

"No, no, not necessarily—not as a regular thing, of course," replied the major quickly. "I said 'in an emergency.' One never knows what is going to turn up at this game. I know the idea is unpleasant, but somebody has to do it, and officers much senior to you, both of the fighting and Diplomatic services, have much worse things than that to do in the service of their country. Still, if you prefer it, we will forget all about the German machine. But you must remember that it is up to every one of us to do our very best in our country's service, whatever sacrifice it might involve."

"If we were captured dressed like that we should be shot as spies!" broke in Tony, aghast.

"Without the slightest doubt," answered the major coolly. "But there are dozens of men taking that very risk to-day. Nearly every night operatives are taken over the line on special missions—locating dumps, and so on. If one of those machines was captured, either as a result of a forced landing, or for any other reason, both of the occupants would be shot. An officer's uniform would not save him if he was carrying a professed spy. You may even have to undertake that sort of work. Now, what do you say? Will you join us or not? It absolutely rests with you. I do not wish to force you in any way. Oh, and if you do join us, you will both remain on the strength of your present squadron."

Rex looked at Tony.

"Well," he said, "what do you say?"

Tony shrugged his shoulders.

"If we can do more good by working as the major suggests than we can by ordinary routine work, I think it is up to us to do it. Major Trevor seems to think we can. I'm not very keen on this business of flying under false colours, though."

"Good!" said the major, rising. "Let us settle the details. I think you had better use this aerodrome as much as possible, in case I need you, although in the ordinary way you will refuel and get your machine looked after by your own mechanics, as before. I will arrange for you to have 'carte blanche,' and see that you are not detailed for any duties by your own squadron. For the present I can only suggest that you fly where you like and keep your eyes open for aircraft behaving in a suspicious manner. Keep a sharp watch for possible landing grounds, particularly this side of the line. Report to me if you want anything or if you discover anything requiring assistance. Good-bye, and good luck!"

The major turned towards the pile of correspondence, and the boys departed with very mixed feelings.

"I don't know quite what to think about this business," began Rex, with a worried frown, after they had closed the door behind them. "It is either going to be pretty dull, or else—"

"I've got an idea that it's going to be 'or else,'" interrupted Tony. He little knew how true his words were to prove.

(Look out for thrills in next week's great instalment of this gripping yarn! When Rex and Tony get on the trail, things begin to hum!)

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