

HALF-A-CROWN FOR A GOOD JOKE—WIN ONE FOR YOURSELF! (SEE PAGE 11.)

CONTINUOUS
VARIETY!
YOUR FAVOURITE
STARS—
TOM MERRY & Co
INSIDE!

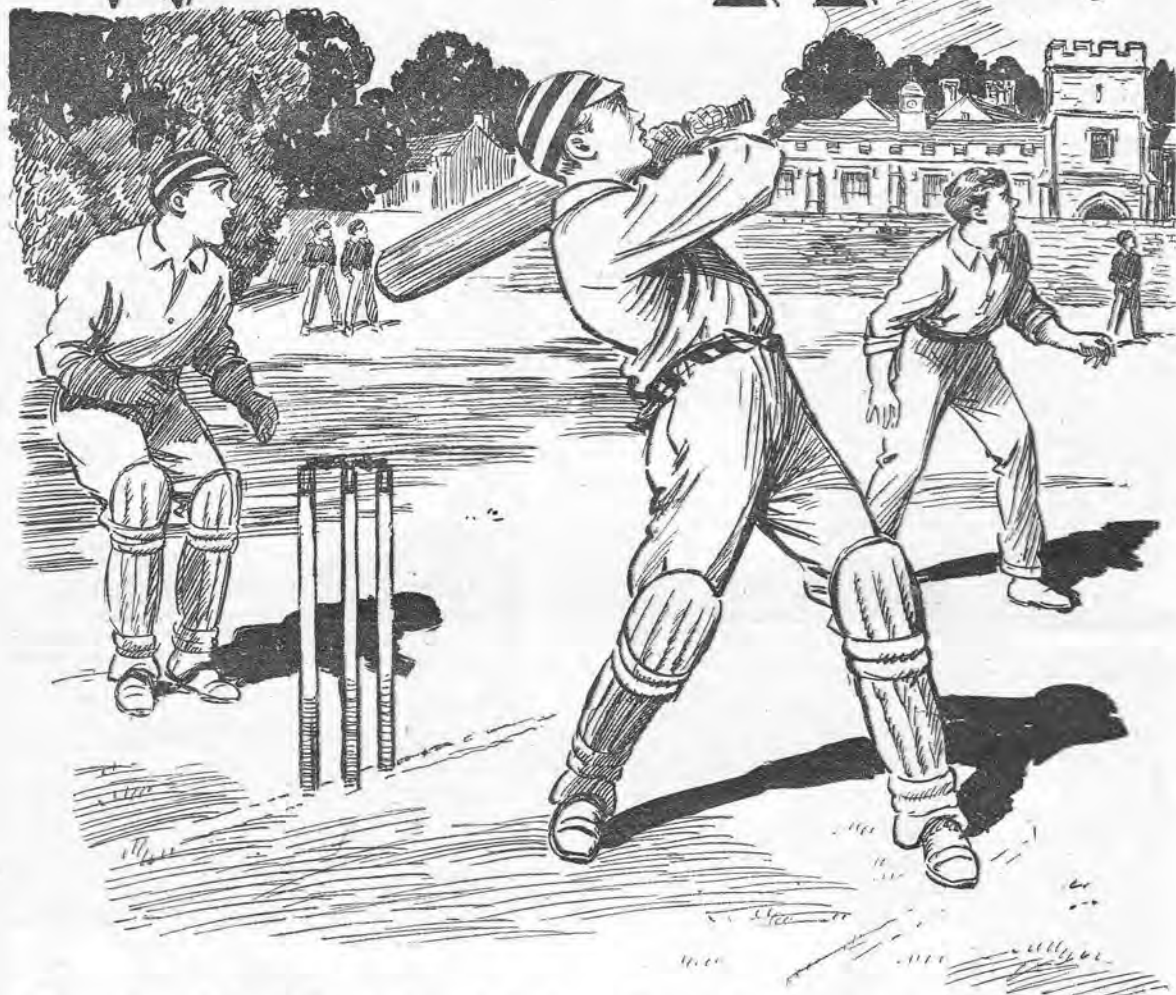
The GEM

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NERVE! PEP! PERSONALITY! THAT'S HARRY NOBLE—NEW BOY!

"WELL HIT."



Down whizzed the ball, up whizzed the bat! That ball went clean out of the ground—and clean through the Head's window! Amazing! But not so amazing as what followed! Read this ripping yarn of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 1. Many Guests!

"COO-EY!"
"Coo-ey!"
It was a curious sound to be ringing along the passage in the School House at St. Jim's. It smacked of the Australian bush, and seemed oddly out of place in those ancient walls.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, started as he heard it, and looked round him in astonishment, and then he smiled. He remembered that an Australian junior had lately entered the School House—a Colonial youth of a very decided character, who had brought many of his native manners and customs along with him to St. Jim's. The "coo-ey" was evidently a signal from Harry Noble to some of his comrades in the Shell Form, and the Housemaster smiled indulgently, and went on his way.

And as he did so, three juniors came bolting along the

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passage and stopped just in time to save themselves from crashing into the Housemaster.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry. "Sorry, sir!"

"We didn't see you, sir!" said Monty Lowther.

"Rather in a hurry, sir," stammered Manners.

"Coo-ey!" came again from the end of the Shell passage.

"Dear me," said Mr. Railton, "the passages are not places to hold foot races, Merry. Really—"

"It isn't a foot race, sir!" said Tom Merry. "Kangaroo—I mean Harry Noble—has just signalled, and—"

"Well, well, you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And the chums of the Shell hurried on.

"Nice pair of asses you are!" said Tom Merry severely.

"If I hadn't stopped you, you'd have cannoned into Railton, and there would have been a fall in Housemasters."

"Why, it was you who started running!" exclaimed Manners indignantly.

"Oh, don't argue; come on!"

WATCH THE SPARKS FLY WHEN HE GETS GOING AT ST. JIM'S!

WALLABY!

By

Martin Clifford.

"Coo-ey!"

"There he goes again! It means that it's all ready. If we stay here while Manners argues——"

"I wasn't arguing!"

"Then don't! Buck up!"

Manners stifled his wrath, and then bucked up! If it wasn't a foot-race, it looked very much like it, as the Terrible Three went along the Shell passage. Gore came out of his study as they passed his door, and they ran right over him, and left him gasping on the linoleum. Skimpole turned a corner, and met the three in full career, and was left in a sitting posture, blinking helplessly round him through his big spectacles. Then the three arrived, breathless, at the door of the end study, where an athletic youth, with handsome features and very keen, alert eyes, was standing.

It was Harry Noble, the new junior from Australia, better known in the Shell as "Kangaroo," or "Wallaby," or by several other names which the unfettered fancy of the juniors had applied to him.

"You're the first!" he said, with a cheerful nod. "Come in and look at the study. What do you think of it?"

The Terrible Three entered the room and looked round them.

"Ripping!" said Tom Merry admiringly.

It was a large room for a junior study; and, as a matter of fact, it had not been a study until to-day. But the influx of new boys during the term had made it necessary for more room to be found.

As Jack Blake of the Fourth said, with injured emphasis, you couldn't go on cramming new juniors for ever into the old studies. In the long run the county council would have been down on them, so Blake averred, for overcrowding.

Harry Noble had been in Blake's study for the last few days. Now, that study—No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage—was already occupied by Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, and the Australian junior—though admittedly a very fine chap—was not desirable as an addition to an already crowded room.

The chums of the Fourth, however, had treated him well, waiting patiently until new accommodation should be found.

The odd room at the end of the Shell passage had now been turned into a study.

"My word," said Manners, "you're going it!"

Noble beamed upon his guests with cheery hospitality. He was rather pleased with the way he had got it all up.

"Hallo, here are the Fourth Form kids!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

More guests were arriving.

The "coo-ey"—the signal that the feast was ready—had been heard in Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage, and the dwellers in that famous apartment were prepared for the occasion.

In honour of the study-warming, Blake, Herries, and Digby, put on clean collars. But the fourth of the party—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—had not been content with that.

D'Arcy perhaps considered that he had his reputation to keep up as the best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's, or perhaps he simply desired to do Noble honour, as a representative of a great British dominion.

Or perhaps—which may be nearer the truth—he was glad of a chance of sporting evening attire.

At all events, there he was in evening clothes, which fitted him like a glove, with a diamond gleaming in his expansive shirtfront, and a natty white tie, and a collar that looked as if it meant to cut his ears off!

D'Arcy's eyeglass glimmered into the study followed by D'Arcy.

"Welcome!" said Harry Noble.

"Bai Jove, deah boy, we're awfully pleased to come, you know!" said Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass upon his host. "It's simply wippin' of you to stand a—a function like this, you know."

"Don't mind Gussy," said Jack Blake. "He insisted on

coming like this. It was no good my warning him that you didn't keep a zoo here."

"Weally, Blake——"

"But he's quite harmless," said Digby. "Tame as a rabbit, in fact. He will feed out of your hand."

"Weally, Dig——"

"Sit down, old chap," said Monty Lowther, pushing D'Arcy into a chair, taking a grip of his high collar to do so. "Don't stand on ceremony."

"Oh! Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"My collar, you ass! You've wumpled my collar!"

"So I have," said Lowther. "Sorry! Never mind!"

"But I do mind!" said Arthur Augustus, rising from the chair like a jack-in-the-box as soon as Lowther released him. "I mind vewy much, and I am perfectly aware that it was no accident, but that you were playin' a wotten trick. Gentlemen, I am extremely sowwy to cause a wow in another fellow's quartahs, but, undah the cires, it will be necessary for me to give Lowthah a feahful thwashin'."

"Order, order!"

"I wefuse to ordah—I mean, I must insist upon givin' Lowthah a feahful thwashin'. I twost you will excuse me, Kangawoo, while I thwash Lowthah."

"Certainly!" grinned the Australian. "Don't mind me. Take him out into the passage, though, or you may smash the crockery."

"Yaas, wathah! Come out into the passage, Lowthah, so that I can thwash you without wisk to Noble's cwockewy."

"My dear ass——"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. Pway come on!"—And Arthur Augustus seized Monty Lowther by the shoulders, to swing him into the passage.

"Hold on, you ass!"

"I wefuse to hold on! Unless you immediately apologise, I shall thwash you!"

Lowther was laughing too much to take proper care of himself. The effort of the Fourth Form swell sent him staggering to the door. Three juniors were just coming in, late arrivals to the feast—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the New House. Right into them went Lowther, dragging D'Arcy with him, and with startled yells, Figgins & Co. fell over them. Five sprawling forms were mixed up on the linoleum, and which was which it was impossible for the moment to distinguish.

CHAPTER 2.

The Study Warming!

"H A, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

All the juniors, with the exception of those on the floor, joined in the shout of laughter. Arthur Augustus, squirming out of the heap and staggering to his feet, presented a strange sight.

Alas for the nobby evening clothes! The handsome shirt-front was rumpled and grimed, the natty tail-coat split up the back, and the high collar looked a limp and dirty rag.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard this wibald laughtah as bein' in wotten bad form!" gasped D'Arcy. "Undah the cires, Noble, I beg you to excuse me for half an hour while I wun and change my clothes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't wait for me, deah boys!"

"What-ho, we won't!" grinned Blake.

"I'll wun like anythin'. I shan't be long!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy disappeared down the passage.

Figgins & Co. and Monty Lowther glared at one another. They were all looking dusty and rumpled, but they did not think of going to change their clothes. A jerk here, a pull there, and a little dusting, set them to rights.

"I suppose this is a jape?" grunted Figgins wrathfully.

"It was that ass Gussy—"

"Where is he? I want to squash him!"

"Gone!" grinned Noble. "Sit down!"

Fatty Wynn wiped the dust out of his eyes, and looked at the spread—and all the ill-humour vanished from his face. A smile of beatific contentment overspread his plump features.

"I say, Kangaroo, this is ripping!" he said.

"Then let it rip!" smiled the Australian.

"Any more guests coming?"

"Yes; three more of the Shell—Skimpole, Dane, and Glyn!"

"Good-sized party!" grinned Tom Merry. "Lucky it's a big room. Well, there's room so far."

There was room, but not without squeezing. Blake, Herries, and Digby crowded at one side of the table, Tom Merry, Lowther, and Manners facing them. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn took the foot. It was a close fit. Kangaroo was at the head of the table, and there was a chair on either side of him for two more guests. Then there would still be two more. The Australian had pulled down the window to its fullest extent, and the fire was burning low; but the study was warm.

Little cared the juniors for that. They had healthy, boyish appetites, rendered keener by plenty of open-air exercises, and they had purposely missed their tea so as to do full justice to the Cornstalk's spread.

The feed was just beginning when a dark-complexioned junior with keen, magnetic eyes entered the study. It was Clifton Dane, the Canadian.

"Sorry I'm late," he said cheerfully. "Linton insisted on seeing some lines. You know what these Form masters are."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes; a regular bore."

"Glyn's just coming. He called out to me that he was finishing an experiment—something in the electrical line," said Dane, as he sat down in one of the chairs next to Noble. "It's all right; I've got room!"

"Close fit for the others when they come," chuckled Noble. "Now then, have I filled all the cups?"

"Yes, rather; and most of the saucers."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's want of space. Lucky you didn't get any over your bags," said Noble.

"Pass the poached eggs, please," said Fatty. "They're on your way, Merry. You might pass the ham, Figgins. Sausages this way, Blake."

"Hungry?" asked Blake sympathetically.

"Yes, rather! Figgins made me miss my tea; though I told him it was a risky thing to do. You never know what effect a thing like that may have on your constitution. It might mean some permanent injury. And I always get so jolly hungry in April, too. It's something in the weather, I think."

"Hallo, here's Glyn!"

Bernard Glyn came in. There was a smudge of some chemical across the nose and cheek of the Liverpool lad, but he did not seem to be aware of it. He grinned affably at the assembled company.

"Quite a pleasure to meet all you chaps!" he said. "Sorry I'm late, too. I heard the 'coo-ey,' but the experiment would have gone bust if I had left it then. I'm rigging up a new invention—and I think it will be a success—and then somebody will see some fun. Hallo, isn't Gussy coming?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said a voice at the door.

Arthur Augustus looked round the study for a seat. There was a seat, the last available one near the table. Noble rose to his feet.

"Sure you'll be all right?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's your teacup."

"Thank you, deah boy. Pass me the sausages, Lowthah."

"Certainly!"

Arthur Augustus had changed his clothes. His wardrobe

was extensive, and his dressclothes appeared to be unlimited. At all events, he was in evening attire again, and looked as nobby as ever.

Lowther passed the sausages, holding the dish towards the swell of St. Jim's for the latter to help himself.

D'Arcy gave a sudden exclamation and jumped up, knocking the dish backwards over Lowther's knees.

Lowther yelled. Half a dozen greasy sausages and a flood of hot gravy soused over his trousers, and the fluid soaked through in a moment. The dish went on to the floor and smashed into several pieces.

"Ow!" roared Lowther. "Oh! Ooooooh!"

"You uttah ass!"

"What did you do that for, Gussy?" gasped Tom Merry.

"The uttah duffah was just goin' to spill the gway on my twucks," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I jumped up just in time to stop him. Of course, I nevah expected him to play the giddy ox like this."

"I wasn't!" roared Lowther. "I was only handing you the sosses, you dummy!"

"I wufuse to be called a dummy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was handing the silly ass the—"

"If you declare that you had no intention of spillin' the gway on my twousahs, Lowthah, I am bound to believe you, as one gentleman to another," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "But you are such a wottah that I natavally expected you were wottin' when I saw the dish tiltin' towards me."

"Ow, oh! I'm burnt! You utter idiot!"

"Undah the cires, I will ovallook those extwemely offensive epithets—"

"Oh!"

"Never mind, Monty," said Tom Merry consolingly. "It's the price you pay for being such a giddy joker, you know. Gussy wouldn't have suspected anybody else of intending to spill gravy over his twucks."

"Yaas, wathah! Tom Mewwy has stated the case vewy pwecisely. I think an apology is due from Lowthah to our esteemed friend and entahtainah, Noble, for bewakin' his dish and wastin' his gway."

"Oh, you frabjous ass!" gasped Lowther.

"I decline to be addressed as a frabjous ass—"

"Never mind, Monty; trousers are cheap," said Manners.

"Sit down and finish your tea."

"Groooh! I'm all grease!"

"I should wecommend Lowthah to go and change his twousahs—"

"I'll change your features for you one of these times!" granted Lowther, as he sat down. "I'll change after tea. I'll my cup up again, please!"

CHAPTER 3.

A Little Sing-Song!

THE festive-board was showing a bareness now—naturally after the great onslaughts made upon it by a crowd of hungry juniors—but there was still something left, and Fatty Wynn was still at work upon it.

"Suppose we have a sing-song to finish up with?" suggested the Cornstalk. "We haven't got to get to prep yet."

"Bai Jove, that's a wippin' ideah! I don't mind givin' you a tenor solo."

"Oh!" shrieked Lowther.

"Bai Jove, Lowthah, old chap, what's the mattah? Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Then what were you shwiekin' for?"

"I was shrieking in anticipation."

"You uttah ass—"

"Let's have the tenor solo, and we'll all join in the chorus," said Figgins. "If it's too bad, we'll sing the chorus while Gussy's singing the verse, and then it will be all right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should attably wufuse to sing a solo undah those cires!"

"Well, it won't be a solo if we all join in," said Tom Merry. "Begin!"

"Pway wait till I get my note!"

D'Arcy produced a tuning-fork from his pocket, and struck it on the mantelpiece. Then he "ah-ed" up and down the scale till he was satisfied that he had his note, and then he started the tenor solo.

It was the hero's song from the first act of "Lohengrin," and as F sharp was the highest note, it was not so much out of D'Arcy's range as most of his tenor solos. For D'Arcy was persuaded that he had a top B flat, and nothing would convince him to the contrary, not even the unearthly

shriek he gave when he was trying to produce the top B flat.

"I didn't know he was going to sing in Esperanto," grumbled Lowther.

D'Arcy left off in the middle of his tenor solo to jam his eyeglass into his eye, and fix a glance of withering contempt upon Lowther.

"You uttah ass! I'm not singin' in Espewanto!"

"What is it, then—Sanskrit?"

"It's German, you feahful duffah!"

"Did you make it up yourself?"

"You—unspeakable ass! It's a song fwom Wagnah—from 'Lohengrin.'"

and Knox came rushing in, with canes in their hands, and looking furious.

"Turn them out!" roared Kildare.

"Bai Jove—"

"Here, I say—"

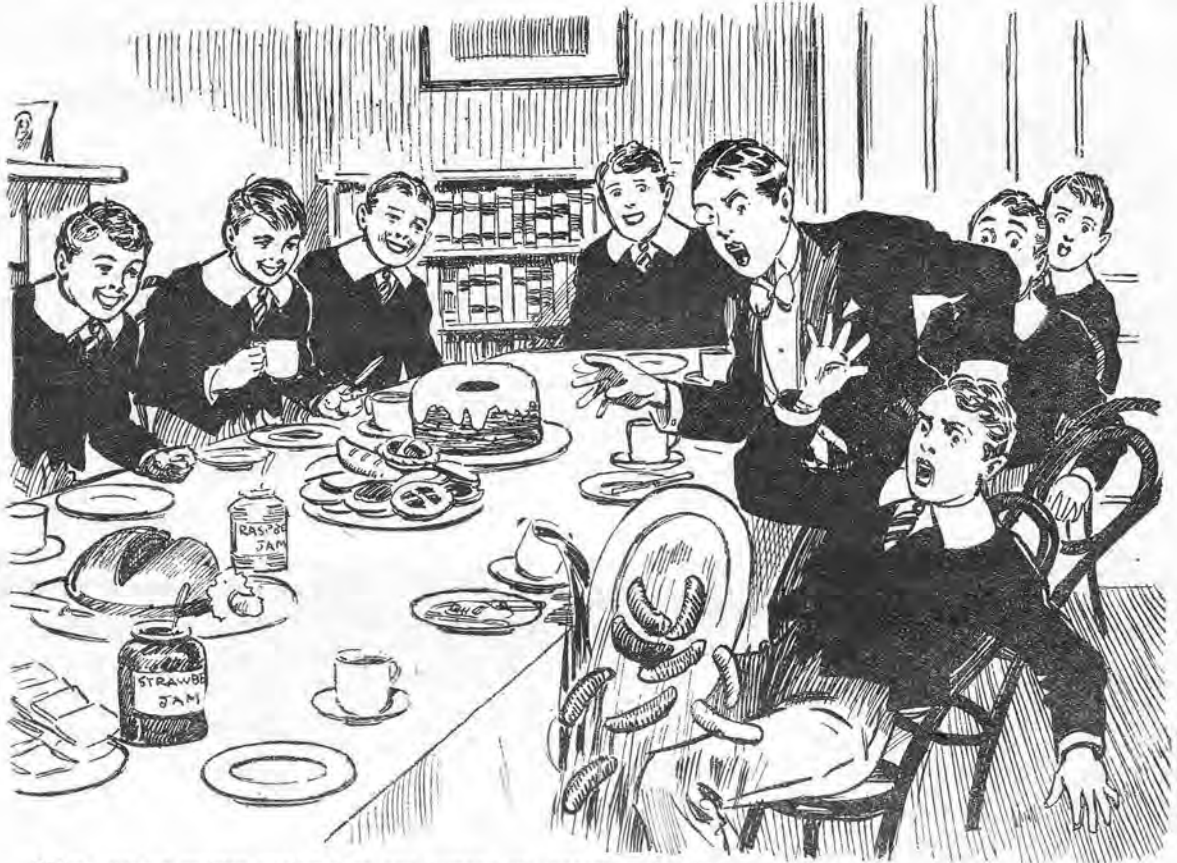
"Hold on!"

"Ow! Wow! Hooroo!"

"Yow! Groooh!"

"Oh, oh! Ow! Hold on!"

There was a wild scattering of the juniors. They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once. In the wild scramble for the door to escape the lashing canes, the juniors jammed and struggled and rolled over.



D'Arcy gave a sudden exclamation and jumped up, knocking the dish over Lowther's knees. "Yaroo!" yelled Lowther. Nearly a dozen greasy sausages and a flood of hot gravy soured over his trousers. "Ow!" roared the unfortunate junior. "Oh! Oooooooooooooooooooh!"

"I mean the German, or perhaps you invented the pronunciation," said Lowther thoughtfully. "Go on, though; I can stand it."

Augustus burst into melody again, and the German song tumbled out thick and fast. But tenor solos were not popular, and it was generally considered that D'Arcy had had his innings. Tom Merry burst into a coon song, and the others took up the chorus, and the end study rang with sound. In the midst of that formidable roar, both D'Arcy's operatic air and Figgins' Territorial song were drowned and inaudible.

"Wheezy Hannah, Wheezy Hannah—down where the water-melons grow!" roared the juniors.

And those who did not know any more of the song roared that line over and over again to the same tune, with surprising effects.

As few were singing the same words, and most of them had different tunes, the chorus was a little mixed, and not wholly harmonious. D'Arcy grew as red as a turkey-cock in his endeavours to bring his solo out above the roar, and Figgins, giving up the Territorial song in despair, commenced to tattoo on the floor with his heels, to add to the din.

The noise was far too great for them to hear footsteps in the passage. They had no hint of danger until the door was suddenly thrown open, and three or four infuriated prefects burst into the room.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, and Darrell and Rushden

Herries found himself with his head and shoulders in the cupboard amid smashed crockery. Tom Merry and Blake rolled amid the wreckage of the overturned table. Manners and Dane were sprawling in the grate on overturned dishes. And still the canes did not spare.

The noise the juniors had been making had rung through the whole School House, and the Housemaster had given Kildare a hint that he expected the juniors to be kept more orderly. And Kildare was not inclined to run any risk just then of spoiling the child by sparing the rod.

The desperate juniors swarmed out of the study at last. D'Arcy was the last to escape, very flushed and outraged in his dignity. He turned in the doorway to address some remarks to the panting prefects.

"Kildare, I regard this conduct as outrageous! I consider—"

Kildare rushed towards him, and he never knew what it was that D'Arcy considered, for the swell of St. Jim's went down the passage as if he were on the cinder-path.

The study was cleared, but it was a wreck.

Kildare looked round him rather ruefully, and then he burst into a laugh.

"I hear that this was a study-warming," he remarked. "The youngsters have got warmed, too, as it turns out. I hope they will be quiet for a little while now."

"I think they will," laughed Darrell.

And they certainly were.

CHAPTER 4.

Arthur Augustus Finds a Friend!

"WHEW!"

"My hat!"

"Ow!"

"Bai Jove!"

These four exclamations were all made together as the chums of Study No. 6 burst into their apartment, breathless, after their flight from the prefects.

"Great Scott!" gasped Blake breathlessly. "That was a warm time! I wonder where the others have got to?"

"I saw Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther bolting into their study. Dane went in with them," said Herries. "They're all right."

As a matter of fact the chums of the Shell were all right. For at that moment Tom Merry sat in the armchair in his study, laughing breathlessly. The chums of Study No. 10 had had just as hot a run for it as the Fourth-Formers, and Manners had taken the precaution of jamming the table against the door after entering.

The Terrible Three and Clifton Dane were in the room, all a little breathless, and all a little hurt, but quite good-humoured about it. They knew very well that the noise they had been making must have disturbed the whole House, and that they deserved a great deal more punishment than they had received.

"Kildare had his rag out that time, and no mistake!" said Tom Merry, panting. "What a businesslike stroke he has when he's in earnest."

"Yes, rather!" said Manners, feeling his leg tenderly. "He's given me some marks. Darrell laid it on pretty well, too."

"And Knox is a spiteful beast," said Lowther. "He caught me behind the head, a thing Kildare or Darrell would never do."

It was generally agreed that Knox was a beast. Against the other prefects the juniors never thought of bearing the slightest ill-will. As a matter of fact, it had been some excitement and fun, though painful at the time.

"Well, they're not after us, that's one comfort," said Tom Merry. "The Fourth Form kids got away all right, too. I don't know where Kangaroo is."

"I saw him streaking for the upper stairs."

"Good! He can run, too! They're not likely to follow us here, and—Hallo!"

"Tap!"

"Who's there?" called out Manners cautiously, determined to be unable to move the table from the door if it should prove to be a prefect.

"It's all right. It's I, dear boys!"

"Gussy, by Jove!"

Manners pulled away the table, and the Fourth-Former entered. He was looking considerably dusty and disordered, as was natural after what he had been through. The front of his evening shirt was crumpled and sticking out of his waistcoat in jags, but D'Arcy was too excited to notice it.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Take a seat, old man. Did you catch it?"

"I dare say you noticed, dear boys," said D'Arcy, looking round the study, "that Kildare stuck me."

The Shell fellows stared at him.

"I think he was striking out pretty freely all round," remarked Clifton Dane.

"Yaas, wathah! He stuck me! It is impos for a D'Arcy to be stuck without demandin' satisfaction, and I am going to send Kildare a lottah!"

D'Arcy made this announcement with due solemnity; but it was not received solemnly. Tom Merry & Co. stared at him, and then they went off with a shout of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy turned his monacle from one to another.

"Weally, dear boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If my remarks are weceived in this study with nothin' but wilbald mewmiment, I shall have no wesource but to wetiah."

And he retired, and a yell of unextinguishable laughter followed him down the passage. Curiously enough, his own study-mates had treated his remarks upon the same subject in exactly the same way—hence his visit to Tom Merry & Co. With a very red and indignant face, D'Arcy paused in the passage to reflect. Whom should he visit next—who was likely to regard this important matter with fitting seriousness?

His younger brother, Wally—D'Arcy minor of the Third; or Figgins & Co. in the New House; or—yes, there was Glyn. D'Arcy had visited Glyn of the Shell at his house, near St. Jim's, and was very friendly with the young inventor. He walked along to Bernard Glyn's study, tapped, and entered.

"Glyn, dear boy—" he began.

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Glyn was seated at the table, busy with a paper covered with mysterious-looking figures. He looked up rather irritably. On the table before him lay a large, nickel-mounted walking-stick.

"Eh? Excuse me; I'm busy," he said. "Buzz off!"

"My dear fellow, it's important, I've been insulted—"

"Yes. All right. I don't mind."

"You are not listenin' to me!" said D'Arcy indignantly.

"Pway give me your attention."

"Br-r-r-r-r!" said Glyn, with his eyes bent upon his problem.

D'Arcy's eyes glimmered behind his eyeglass. He picked up the walking-stick on the table, intending to give Glyn a slight poke with it to draw his attention.

The next moment a wild yell rang through the study.

"Oh!"

D'Arcy, with the walking-stick in his hand, danced on the floor of the study like a dancing dervish, letting out a series of ear-splitting yells.

He did not seem to be able to let go the walking-stick, for he kept it in his hand while he jumped spasmodically and yelled.

"Oh! Ow! Ooooh! Oh! Leggo! Lemme off!"

Glyn chuckled quietly. From the end of the walking-stick a thin wire ran under the table to a powerful battery there. As a matter of fact, the walking-stick was the Liverpool lad's latest wheeze. It was simply a conductor for a powerful current of electricity, and Arthur Augustus was getting the benefit of it. The wire ran through the centre of the stick to the metal cap, which D'Arcy was grasping with fingers that could not let go.

"My hat!" said Gore, looking in at the door. "What's the row? Hallo! Here's D'Arcy doing a walking-stick dance turn. Come and look!"

"Faith, and it's ripping!" cried Reilly, looking in.

"Kape it up, Gussy! Bravo!"

"Take it away!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Take what away?"

"The stick!"

"Faith, and I'll soon do that!"

The boy from Belfast grasped the stick—and gave a yell. Then he commenced to dance, as D'Arcy was doing, and a crowd of juniors gathered at the door and watched them, with cheers.

D'Arcy had hold of the head of the stick, and Reilly held the metal band at the other end, and each were unable to let go.

"Begorra, and it's kilt I am!" roared Reilly. "Faith, it's electricity entoiroy! Shut it off, ye gossoon!"

"Bai Jove! Ow! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Gore. "Go it!"

"Shut off the current, ye spalpeen!" yelled Reilly.

Glyn grinned, and shut it off. The walking-stick dropped from the shaking hands, and hung by the wire. Reilly and D'Arcy hugged their tingling hands, and grunted.

"Faith, and it's a good moind to punch your head I have!" growled Reilly.

Glyn laughed.

"I didn't ask you to take hold of the stick," he replied.

"You're interrupting my work. Buzz off!"

"Weally, Glyn—"

"Oh, get outside, kid! I'll talk to you presently."

"Undah the cires, I shall wetiah, but pway undahstand that I wegard you as a beast!"

"Right-ho! I don't mind!"

D'Arcy bestowed a withering glare upon the St. Jim's inventor; but it only took effect upon the top of his head, for Glyn was leaning over his paper again. The swell of St. Jim's retired from the study with his nose well in the air. In the passage he almost ran into Harry Noble.

"Bai Jove, I'm glad to see you, dear boy!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I'm lookin' for a fiend."

"Good!" said the Cornstalk. "I'm the very man!"

"Pway come into the quadwangle, where we can talk without intewwuption," said D'Arcy, with a glance at the crowd of juniors in the passage.

"Certainly!" said Noble, looking a little puzzled, but very obliging. "Is it anything very important?"

"Yaas, wathah! Awfully important!"

And Noble followed Arthur Augustus into the dusky quad-angle, where—mysteriously under the dark shadow of an elm—D'Arcy poured out his wrongs, and the satisfaction he required. And, to his relief—and somewhat to his surprise—the Cornstalk chum did not laugh. He listened to the recital with a face as solemn as D'Arcy could possibly have desired.

"I suppose I can twust the mattah into your hands, dear boy?" said Arthur Augustus, very flattered and pleased by the deep interest the Cornstalk evidently took in the matter. Noble slapped him on the shoulder.

"You can. Say no more about it!"

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Leave it to me."

And the Cornstalk placed his hand solemnly on his lips and hurried away.

D'Arcy, not knowing exactly whether to be pleased or not, went slowly to the School House.

CHAPTER 5.

Smythers Declines to Stay!

"NOBLE!"

Mr. Railton called the name as the Cornstalk chum entered the School House, and Noble turned towards the Housemaster, who was standing at the door of his study.

short in such a drastic way. "Let me see. Dane and Glyn were placed in their present quarters really only temporarily, and there is room for them in the end study. You will have Dane and Glyn with you, Noble, and—yes—Smythers."

"Ye-es, sir. I was thinking perhaps I should have a study to myself for a bit."

"Impossible!"

"But if the other fellows don't care to come, sir," said the Cornstalk meekly.

"I should say there is very little doubt upon that point."

"But if they don't."



"Yow! Groooh! Hold on! Ow!" There was a wild scattering of juniors. They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once. In the scramble for the door, to escape the lashing canes of the prefects, the juniors jammed and struggled and rolled over on the floor.

"Yes, sir?"

"The new Shell study is now prepared for occupation," said Mr. Railton.

The Cornstalk grinned slightly, as he remembered the study-warning.

"Yes, sir, I've seen it."

"You will take up your quarters there, Noble, and—let me see—you will have three study-mates." Noble's face fell, but he did not speak. It was useless to begin an argument with a Housemaster. Mr. Railton would have cut it

"As far as that goes, they are at liberty to remain in their present quarters if they wish to do so," said Mr. Railton, looking a little puzzled. "I have no desire to disturb them against their wish. But I warn you that there is very little chance of that."

"Very well, sir."

Noble walked on to his new study with a thoughtful expression upon his face, and a glimmer of fun in his eyes. He wanted that study to himself. And when he wanted a thing,

and set his mind upon having it, the young Australian, as a rule, succeeded in getting it.

"Hallo! This looks ripping!" he muttered, as he entered the study.

It was in a state of disorder, just as the prefects had left it, and everything was at sixes-and-sevens. The young Colonial set to work getting it to rights.

Tom Merry looked in while he was busily engaged, and offered to lend a hand, but Noble declined with a shake of the head.

"It's all right," he said. "I can manage."

And Tom Merry nodded and passed on. Noble had the study tidy at last, and the broken crockery stacked in a box, to be taken away by the maids next morning. The work finished, the Colonial's next proceeding was somewhat curious.

He took an acetylene lamp from the cupboard, and turned on the water, so that the gas began to generate in the carbide container. But he did not light it. He stood the lamp out of sight under the armchair and left it there.

The lamp was well loaded with common carbide of calcium—and not the "scentless" variety. Needless to say, in a few minutes a most horrid smell began to permeate the study. Noble closed the window, and the smell became strong, penetrating, and painful. It was like unto drains in the worst possible state of repair, only more so. And Noble sniffed, and sniffed—and grinned.

In spite of the poisonous smell, he sat down quietly at the table and commenced his preparation. He had been at work about a quarter of an hour, when a junior came in with a bundle of books under one arm and a fishing-rod and a cricket-bat under the other.

It was Smythers, of the Shell. Smythers was a rather wealthy boy—indeed, there were fellows in the Form who declared that it was since the family's accession to wealth that the family name had become a "y" instead of an "i." Smythers had plenty of pocket-money, and would have been a desirable study-mate to many fellows. But the Cornstalk was not one of them. He preferred to be king of the castle, so to speak.

"Hallo!" said Smythers, setting down his books on the table with a bump.

The Cornstalk looked up and nodded.

"Hallo!" he said. "What do you want?"

"I'm going to share this study."

"Good!" said Noble carelessly. "Bring along your props. I've furnished the study myself, but there's room for some props. I suppose you will be standing a bookcase or something?"

Smythers nodded.

"Taggles is going to bring along my things to-morrow," he said. "But, I say"—he looked round the study and sniffed expressively—"is there anything wrong with the drains in this part of the house?"

"Drains? I don't know. I'm not a sanitary inspector."

"Don't you notice a curious smell in the study?"

Noble sniffed.

"Well, now you speak of it, there's a bit of a whiff," he remarked. "I don't suppose it's due to the drains."

"Then where does it come from?"

Noble looked round the study.

"Blessed if I can see what causes it!" he said—which was strictly true, for the carbide lamp was hidden under the armchair.

Smythers threw the window up.

"I suppose you don't mind the window open?" he said. "I'm a fresh-air fellow, you know, and this whiff is simply poisonous!"

"My dear fellow, have both the door and window open, if you like," said Noble generously. "I like fresh air. I was raised in the bush. When I was staying with my uncle at Cronjinalong, I used to sleep in the open air."

"I'd rather sleep in the open air than in a scent like this!" growled Smythers.

He took out a scented handkerchief, and waved it in the air before him. Smythers was a little of a dandy, and rather a rival of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in that respect, but in the opinion of the swell of St. Jim's, Smythers overdid it. D'Arcy never used scent, while Smythers, as a rule, simply reeked of it.

Noble sniffed again.

"Phew! Are you trying to drive out one whiff with another?" he asked.

"I can't stand this!" exclaimed Smythers angrily. "How a chap can sit here and work in such a niff I can't imagine! There must be something wrong with the drains!"

"Oh, don't worry; it may clear off."

"It doesn't seem like it."

Noble shrugged his shoulders, and went on with his work. Smythers extracted a small phial from his waistcoat pocket

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and poured a generous allowance of scent upon his handkerchief, and fluttered it in the air.

The Cornstalk grunted, but did not look up. Smythers fanned himself with the handkerchief and growled.

"It's rotten! I can't stand it! I'm not going to stick in a rotten study that smells worse than a stable."

"Oh, dry up, old chap! I'm trying to work!"

"How can you work in such a reek?"

"It wasn't so bad before you added that scent to it."

"What! This is a most expensive scent!"

"Good old violet de Parme!" chuckled Noble. "Shilling a gallon!"

Smythers measured him with his eye. Had a Fourth-Former said that to the dandy of the Shell, Smythers would have been all over him in a second. But there was something about the resolute face and square chin and broad shoulders of the Australian that made Smythers pause.

"I look on you as a cad!" he said, after a minute's silence.

"No extra charge," said Noble cheerily.

"You are a rank outsider!"

"Not quite so rank as a chap who uses that scent."

"You—you—" Smythers paused. "I'm not going to stay in this study to be poisoned! Mr. Railton said I could stop in my old quarters if I liked."

"Please yourself, Smythers."

"My name's Smythers!" roared the dandy of the Shell.

"Sorry! Not half so good a name as Smythers, you know."

"Look here, you rotter—"

"Better language, please!" said Noble, getting up. "I'm not used to these fancy names. Are you looking for a thick ear?"

"I don't want a row with you," said Smythers, backing away. "I don't know what you're made of to stand this smell. I'd rather pig it in a Form-room, with the Third, than stay in this study."

"I'd rather you did, too, as a matter of fact, though it would be a bit rough on the Third," said the Cornstalk genially.

Smythers took up his books. The smell in the study was really horrible by this time, and as Smythers never suspected the real cause, it was not surprising that he could not stand it.

"Well, I'm going!" he snapped.

"Good-bye!"

Smythers only grunted in reply, and then left the study. He tramped along the passage with a very injured expression, depositing his belongings in his old quarters, and then sought Mr. Railton.

"If you please, sir, I'd rather stay in my old study," he said. "The end study isn't—hem—isn't comfortable, sir."

"As you like, Smythers," said the Housemaster.

And that was settled. Meanwhile, the Cornstalk had shut the door very carefully after the departing Shell fellow, and then—safe from observation—he executed a cakewalk of triumph round the table.

But his triumph did not last long, for neither Glyn nor Dane were so easily taken in. They soon discovered the lamp under the chair, and Noble was forced to agree to them sharing his study.

CHAPTER 6.

The Head's Offer!

IT was noticeable the next morning, at lessons in the Fourth Form Room, that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wore a thoughtful shade upon his aristocratic brow. Jack Blake observed it, and wondered what it portended.

It certainly did not mean that D'Arcy was giving extra thought to his lessons, for Mr. Lathom, the little master of the Fourth, patient as he was, had his patience severely taxed by the swell of St. Jim's that morning.

When the Form master wanted to know one of the chief productions of France, and was told "duels," he, naturally, stared a little. Jack Blake stared, too, for the reply showed what Arthur Augustus' mind was running on.

D'Arcy was so absent-minded that morning that Mr. Lathom gave him up in despair. He contented himself with inflicting lines with a liberal hand, and D'Arcy was the richer by three hundred in all by the time the Fourth Form filed out.

In the passage Blake gave him a sounding slap on the shoulder.

"What the deuce—"

"Look here, you young ass—"

"I decline to be called an ass!" Arthur Augustus removed Blake's hand from his shoulder, and stepped back away from him with an air of great dignity. "Pway do not be such a wuff beast, Blake! At pwsent, too, I have mattails to think of, and shall be obliged if you will not bothah me!"

"You—you ass!"

"As you declined to help me to demand satisfaction from Kildare, I have been compelled to look for a friend elsewhere. I am in doubt whether I can keep up your acquaintance at all, undah the cirs."

And Arthur Augustus walked away, with a dignified stride, leaving Blake overwhelmed with astonishment.

"My hat!" said Jack Blake, with a long whistle. "Found a friend elsewhere, has he? What boulder is pulling his aristocratic leg, I wonder? Hallo, Tom Merry! Are you Gussy's friend?"

The Terrible Three were coming along arm-in-arm from

"There's more news, too," said Manners. "I heard Kildare talking it over with Darrell. Of course, we're out of it."

"What's the news?"

"Haven't you heard—about the cricket?"

"No," said Blake, interested at once.

"When Railton was playing the other day he knocked a ball clear from the cricket ground through the window of the Head's study. It was a mighty swipe, and no mistake. But you were there—you saw it?"

"Yes, rather! It was a drive that Hammond or Sutcliffe might be proud of!" said Blake enthusiastically. "If I



Pongo, with half a dozen sausages in his jaws, made a break through the open door and dashed into the quadrangle, hotly pursued by the infuriated Fatty Wynn. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Darrell, all the gravity of a lordly Sixth-Former deserting him. "Ha, ha, ha!"

the Shell Form Room. They stopped at Blake's question. Tom Merry remembered D'Arcy's modest request of the previous evening, and roared.

"No," he said. "Gussy came to our study to find a friend, I think, but he found him not. He went away on his dig."

"Some ass is pulling his leg," said Blake, frowning. "I suppose I shall have to look into it."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Gussy's on the warpath, and no mistake!" he said. "Kildare ought to be warned to make his will! By the way, those chaps in the end study have chummed up, instead of knocking one another out, as I expected; and I hear they are going to become top study in the School House!"

Jack Blake looked warlike at once.

"Then there will be trouble!" he said. "No. 6 is top study in the School House! We've had enough rot of that sort from you Shellfish! If Kangaroo starts it he will get—get boomeranged!"

were the Head I wouldn't have that window mended; I'd have left it as it were, with an inscription on it in gold letters!"

"H'm! A little draughty in winter, I should think!" grinned Manners. "Anyway, the Head was struck—"

"Not by the cricket ball?"

"No, fathead, but the batting! Of course, if Railton had been trying to do it he probably couldn't have done it; it was an accident. But there seems to have been a lot of talk on the subject, and some of the chaps in the Sixth thought they could do the trick if they tried."

"That's just like the Sixth; they always think they can do anything another fellow can do!" commented Blake.

"Exactly. But the end of it is, the Head has very sportingly offered a prize of a new cricket bat—a jolly good one, too, I hear—to any chap who can send a ball through his window—from the cricket ground, of course!"

Blake's eyes sparkled.

"By George, I'm going to have a try!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"What are you cackling at, innage?"

"Ha, ha, ha! If it's cheek in the Sixth to try to equal Railton's stroke, what is it in the Fourth?"

"Oh rats! I'm going to have a try. I suppose the whole school will be batting at the Head's window for the next few days, instead of trying to make runs," said Blake.

"I've got a drive that I rather fancy, you know."

"Yes, you fancy it's a good one, don't you? Queer, the fancies people have sometimes," Monty Lowther remarked.

Blake bestowed a glare on the facetious Lowther, and went to his study for his cricket bat. The Terrible Three followed his example. It was a splendid day, and there was time for cricket practice before dinner. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther sallied out with their bats under their arms, and found a general concourse of fellows heading for the ground.

The Head's offer had been received with enthusiasm. There was not the slightest chance of most of the fellows getting a ball anywhere near the Head's window, which was at a tremendous distance from the ground for a drive; still, it had been done by a Housemaster, and all the young cricketers meant to have a shot at it, at all events.

There was a chance for fellows like Kildare and Darrell and Monteith. But it was rather comical to see Wally & Co. of the Third Form going down to the ground with a businesslike air.

It might have been expected that Arthur Augustus would be "on" that offer of the Head's immediately he heard of it. But other and weightier matters occupied Gussy's mighty brain. He "wathah fancied" himself as a cricketer—at bowling, batting, and fielding—but just now the tempting prize of a new cricket bat passed him unheeded.



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He sought out Noble as the Australian came down to the ground with his new chums—Glyn and Clifton Dane. Kangaroo had the bat under his arm that he had brought with him from Melbourne. He had forgotten D'Arcy for the moment, but he grinned as he caught sight of the Fourth-Former's anxious face.

"I want to speak to you, Noble," said D'Arcy, with a glance towards Dane and Bernard Glyn.

The two juniors grinned, and walked on, leaving the Cornstalk alone with D'Arcy.

"Go ahead!" said Kangaroo tersely.

"Have you seen Kildare yet?"

"Yes, certainly!"

This was true enough. Noble had seen him half a dozen times since his talk with D'Arcy in the shadow of the elms.

"Then it's all wight?"

"Certainly." The Cornstalk lowered his voice to a mysterious whisper. "Leave it to me. Come to my study at eight o'clock this evening, and all will be well."

"Vewy well!"

And D'Arcy went back to the School House.

CHAPTER 7.

A New Member of the Staff!

TOM MERRY tapped Harry Noble on the shoulder when the Shell came out after lessons that afternoon.

Noble looked round quickly, expecting to see D'Arcy, and grinned as he saw that it was Tom Merry who had tapped him. There was an important expression upon the face of the hero of the Shell.

"Where are you off to?" he asked.

"I was thinking of knocking up some cricket before tea."

"No time for that, kid. I want you."

The Cornstalk looked a little aggressive.

"My dear duffer," he remarked, "as head of the Shell—"

"As what?" bawled Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther instantly.

"As head of the Shell—chief of the new firm of Cornstalk & Co.—it's for me to give the giddy orders. You three will follow me to the cricket ground and put in some practice."

"Well, of all the cheeky young bounders!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Look here, I suppose you've heard of 'Tom Merry's Weekly'?"

"Yes; a sort of rag you kids publish, isn't it?"

"It's a ripping school newspaper," said Tom Merry warmly. "I edit it, and do the leading articles and so on. Lowther does the humorous stuff, and Manners looks after the hobby column. There's one editor and nine sub-editors."

"Enough, I should think."

"Well, as a matter of fact, they're only honorary sub-editors," explained Tom Merry. "They wouldn't contribute unless they had a title of some sort, and titles are cheap. Now, I want you to contribute something to this week's number about Australia."

The Cornstalk looked interested.

"Well, that's not a bad idea," he remarked. "You'd like me to edit the paper for this week, I suppose?"

"Something wrong with your supposer, then," said Tom Merry pleasantly. "I don't want anything of the sort. I just want some articles on Australia. It will be a bit of a change for the mag, and will give some useful information, I think. You can tell my readers—"

"Whose readers?" asked Manners and Lowther.

"Our readers," said Tom Merry. "You can tell our readers about hunting the sundowner, and gathering in the harvest of wallabies in the autumn, and so on—"

Kangaroo chuckled.

"I won't tell them that," he said. "I can give 'em something a little more accurate. I'll do you some articles with pleasure. I've got a relation who runs the local paper at Burra Burra, and I know all about it."

"My word," said Manners, "what giddy names! Burra Burra and Wurra Wurra and Croajingalong! You don't mean to say they're real names!"

The Australian laughed.

"Yes, they are, my son. But about these articles, I'll do 'em with pleasure; but, of course, I shall have to join the regular staff. No outside contributor business for me! Am I to be a sub-editor?"

"Oh, rats! We've too big an allowance of sub-editors already."

"Then it's off!"

"Hold on; you can be a sub if you like."

"Good! Of course, as a Cornstalk, I take a higher rank than the other sub-editors," said Noble, with a grin.

"Rats!"

"You see, I can give you a lot of points about running the paper, and—"

"Make it sub-editor-in-chief," suggested Lowther sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that's all right," said Noble. "Sub-editor-in-chief will suit me. And I'll come and sub-edit your paper as soon as you like."

"Right you are! Come on!"

"Where's the giddy editorial office?"

"In my study."

"And where do you do the printing?"

"We don't do it; the Rylcombe printer does it. We used to do the copying business, you know—a dozen impressions taken off gelantine—but it was a lot of trouble, and real printing is ever so much better," said Tom Merry confidentially, as they went up to the editorial office. "And the local printer chap does it at a reasonable figure. But you've seen the 'Weekly,' and you know how ripping it is."

"Yes, I've seen it."

They entered Tom Merry's study. There were stumps and a bat on the table, with a heap of lesson books and an inkpot, and a rabbit hutch. Tom Merry proceeded to clear the table by shoving the things over the edge.

Lowther gave a yell as the cricket bat bumped on his toe.

"Ow! You clumsy ass—"

"I wish you wouldn't keep on getting in the way when I'm clearing the table, Lowther!" said Tom Merry, in a tone of remonstrance.

"Fathead!"

"We shall want the inkpot. The books can go on the hearthrug. Here's plenty of blank paper. Hallo, Gussy, have you come to help with the editorial work?"

D'Arcy's eyeglass was glimmering in at the door.

"No, Tom Mewwy, I have not. I have othah mattahs to think of now."

"Oh! Have you heard from Cousin Ethel?"

"Cousin Ethel?"

"Yes, ass! Don't you remember you said she was coming to see Mrs. Holmes to-day?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, but I had weally quite forgotten!"

Tom Merry stared at him in astonishment. When Arthur Augustus forgot Cousin Ethel, it showed that there was decidedly something on his mind.

"What's the matter with you, image?" demanded Tom Merry.

"There's nothin' the mattah with me, and I decline to be addressed as an image," said Arthur Augustus. "I want to speak to Kangawoo."

"Sorry!" said Noble. "I'm Tom Merry's sub-editor, and I'm awfully busy just now."

"Yaas, but—"

"It's all right. Come to my study at eight o'clock, as I told you, and I'll see you, and everything in the garden will be lovely."

"Oh, vewy well!"

D'Arcy did not care to speak out before the Terrible Three, and Noble evidently didn't intend to give him a private interview. The elegant Fourth-Former went down the passage. Manners and Lowther were looking out of the window into the green and sunny quad.

"There's Figgins batting," said Lowther; "Fatty Wynn's howling to him. He's trying to put the ball into the Head's window."

"He won't do it; the prize is safe enough."

"I'm going to have a go," said Lowther. "I've done my little bit for the 'Weekly.' You'll find it in the drawer."

"Same here!" said Manners. "You can instruct the new sub in his duties, Tom. That's your duty as chief editor."

And Manners and Lowther took up their cricket bats and left the study.

"Well, we shall be quiet now, at all events," said Tom Merry, taking a sheaf of blank foolscap from a drawer. "Here you are. There's lots of ink and paper, and you only require brains for the rest to become a great author. If no silly ass comes and interrupts us—"

"Ah, you are here, Merry!"

Tom Merry groaned.

"Hallo, Skimmy! I was just hoping that no silly ass would come and interrupt us."

"Really, Merry—"

"Would you mind going and talking Determinism to Gore, or young Wally?" said Tom Merry. "We're busy."

"I have been talking on that great subject to Gore, Merry, and he has replied to me with utter rudeness. I have not

(Continued on the next page.)



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Recruiting Sergeant (to new recruit): "What's yer name, and what branch of the Service d'you want to be in?"

Perkins (who stammers): "Pup-p-p-pup-pup—"

Sergeant (writing): "Cannot speak English. Wants to join Machine Gun Corps!"

ERNEST DAWES, 11, Nowell Road, Barnes, S.W.13.

NO WONDER!

Teacher: "A fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer."

Student: "That explains why I failed in my exams!"

J. MACEY, Children's Home, Catel, Guernsey, C.I.

A LONG HEAD!

Small Boy (entering butcher's shop): "Please I want a sheep's head; and mother says will you cut it off as near the tail as possible!"

W. HOLLOWAY, Manor Farm, Stanford Dingley, Reading.

A FISHY STORY!

Old Salt: "Yes, guv'nor, once I was shipwrecked, and lived for a week on a tin of salmon."

Visitor: "By jove! Really? Not much room to move about!"

G. R. BODICOAT, The Laurels, Abbots Road, Humberstone, Leicester.

THE WILY ONE!

Mother: "Samuel, your manners are disgusting! When we were out to tea to-day, I distinctly saw you wipe your chair before you sat down, and little Tommy was watching you."

Samuel: "Exactly; I'm too old a bird to be caught by a drawing-pin!"

HARRY ALLMAN, 11, Lowther Street, Newmarket, Suffolk.

THE VERY THING!

Mac. (to old friend with whom he is having a drink): "Tell me, Sandy, have you any great ambition? Is there anything in this world you'd rather have than another?"

Sandy: "Nothing, Mac! Another would suit me fine!"

D. JONES, 237, Powercourt Road, Portsmouth, Hants.

HE WAS FLY!

Diner: "Waiter, there's a fly in my soup!"

Waiter: "Surely not, sir! I think that must be one of these vitamin Bees we hear such a lot about these days!"

P. HOLLAND, 33, Brunswick Avenue, New Southgate, N.11.

AND HOW!

Boss: "What's your name?"

New Office-boy: "Kaye, sir!"

Boss: "Hay?"

N.O.B.: "No, Kaye!"

Boss: "Oh, Kaye!"

N.O.B.: "Sez you!"

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"WELL HIT, WALLABY!"

(Continued from page 11.)

yet done my part towards the 'Weekly,' and I thought I would do it now."

"You can come in and do it if you promise not to talk."

"It may be necessary for me to converse to some extent, but I shall confine my remarks to observations upon the subject immediately under consideration," said Skimpole, taking a seat at the table.

"If you would confine them to words of not more than three syllables, it would be a great comfort," grunted Tom Merry.

"Yes, I certainly ought to have remembered that the intellects here are hardly on a par with mine," said Skimpole. "I know I have an extraordinary brain."

Harry Noble looked at Skimpole's extensive, bumpy forehead, and nodded assent to the remark.

"I should say so, judging by appearances," he observed.

"Ah, you are referring to my splendid grip of great problems, and my—"

"Never mind your splendid grip," interrupted Tom Merry; "let's get to work. I only hope you're the last duffer to interrupt."

The three juniors sat down round the table. Harry Noble turned over a copy of the previous week's magazine.

"Is this the sort of stuff you want?" he asked. "'The Black Chief. A Romance of the Red Braves'—G. Figgins. Br-r-r-r! 'Sir Fatted and his Fayre Lady,' a Serial in Rhyme, by J. Blake. Hum!"

"Nuff of that!" said Tom Merry. "Those serials have been dragging their weary length through the magazine since the start, like—like wounded snakes. Don't give us any piffle of that sort. Something lively about Colonial life, and about the first impressions of an Australian in England. People in this country are awfully interested in the Empire beyond the seas, you know, and any first-hand information will be welcome."

"Good! I think I can work it."

And the three juniors settled down to work.

Noble started on "A Cornstalk's Impressions at an English School," and, to judge by the grin on his face, some of the impressions were comical. Skimpole was deep in an article on Determinism, though he probably did not understand it in the least—but that, we believe, is no unusual case with Determinists. Tom Merry was writing an article on cricket, in which he explained the Head's offer of a new cricket bat, and invited all the youthful cricketers of both Houses at St. Jim's to "roll up in their thousands," and knock the Head's window-panes to smithereens.

The three were very busy, and for a time nothing was heard in the study but steady breathing and the scratch-scratch of the pens.

The silence was broken by a tap at the door, which was ajar.

Tom Merry grunted.

"Come in, fathead!" he called out, without looking up from his work. "Come in, fathead, and shut the door!"

A low laugh fell upon his ears, and the next moment Tom Merry was on his feet, with a crimson face.

CHAPTER 8.

A Rebellious Sub-Editor!

Cousin Ethel stood in the doorway, a smile upon her lips, and a dimple in her cheeks. Her blue eyes were glimmering with fun.

Tom Merry was dumb for the moment. His face was as red as a poppy, and for a moment he wished that the floor would open and swallow him up.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Cousin Ethel laughed again.

"Do you always greet visitors like that?" she asked sweetly.

"Oh! Ahem!—"

"Perhaps you did not know—"

"Of course, I didn't know it was you!" cried Tom Merry.

"I'm a fearful ass, I know. I'm sorry."

"Never mind, Tom."

"I'm awfully sorry, Ethel. I had no idea—"

"Of course you hadn't," said Ethel, laughing. "Never mind, Tom. But I see you are very busy now."

"Not a bit of it! This is only the 'Weekly,' you know," said Tom airily. "As a matter of fact, what I want at the present moment is a rest. The other fellows can get on with the paper."

Skimpole blinked at him.

"I should be very pleased to fill up your space as well as my own, Merry," he said. "My article is rather running over the page."

"Go it, Skimmy!"

"I don't see how I can get on without my chief editor," said Noble thoughtfully. "Still, I should like to take a rest, too."

He was looking at Cousin Ethel, and his expression showed how charmed he was with the fresh, frank face of the young English girl. Tom Merry remembered that they had not met, and he introduced Noble. It was pretty clear, from the Cornstalk's manner, that he didn't mean to be left in the study.

Tom Merry took down his cap.

"There's a Sixth Form match on," he remarked. "You'd like to have a look at the cricket, Ethel?"

"Very much; but I expected to see my cousin here. Glyn told me that the editorial staff of the 'Weekly' were at work, and I was certain that Arthur would be here."

Tom Merry laughed.

"D'Arcy's too busy, he says, to do any editing just now. We shall find him in the quad."

"Very good!"

And Tom Merry, with a warning glance at Noble, put his cap on, and conducted Cousin Ethel away.

Noble looked after them, and grinned, and then looked at Skimpole.

"I say, Skimpole—"

"My name is Skimpole," said the genius of the Shell mildly.

"Ah, Skimpole, then! It's all one. Do you think you could fill up my space this week as well as Merry's?"

Skimpole beamed.

"Yes, certainly! As a matter of fact, I could easily fill the whole magazine with my arguments on the subject of Determinism."

"That would be all right if the readers were all insured," remarked Noble. "Fill up my space, will you? Leave me about half a column—I shall want that."

"With pleasure!"

And Noble put on his straw hat, and left the study.

Potts, the Office Boy!



Nothing loth, Skimpole covered page after page with his sprawling writing. Noble strolled down to the quadrangle, and found Tom Merry and Cousin Ethel on the cricket ground. Tom glared at him.

"What price your article?" he demanded.
"Oh, that's all right!" said Noble easily. "Skimpy's doing it for me—same as yours."

"Stuff! Only a chief editor is entitled to work in that way. You just cut off and do your article."

"Oh, come off! You can treat common or garden sub-editors like that, but I am sub-editor-in-chief," said the Australian. "A sub-editor-in-chief does as he likes."

Crash!
The sound of a cricket ball smashing through a window interrupted the argument, which was growing excited.

Cousin Ethel uttered a little exclamation.
"Dear me! That is a window broken—"

Figgins had batted, and he was looking anxiously towards the House. He did not seem sorry for the accident, but rather pleased, much to the surprise of Cousin Ethel.

"What window's that?" sang out Figgins.
"Ha, ha, ha! It's the Third Form Room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Never mind; better luck next time."

Figgins grunted.
"I'll have a ball through the Head's window sooner or later, if I have to bust every giddy pane of glass at St. Jim's," he said.

Cousin Ethel looked at Tom Merry in wonder.
"Are they trying to break the windows?" she asked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Not exactly. Mr. Railton sent a cricket ball through the Head's window the other day—it was a marvellous drive—and in the excitement of the moment the Head offered a prize of a new cricket bat to any boy who could do it. The Head's an old cricketer himself, you know, and awfully enthusiastic about the game. I shouldn't wonder if he's sorry for the offer in the long run, though."

Cousin Ethel laughed.
"Yes. I should imagine so."

Three or four untidy heads and inky faces had appeared at the Third Form Room window, and several voices were bawling to the cricketers. Loudest of all was the voice of Wally, the younger brother of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Do you call that cricket?" bawled Wally. "You slab-sided duffers! You unspeakable asses! You—you—you goats!"

"Shut up, you Third Form fag!"
"You Fourth Form dummies!" roared Wally. "You've nearly frightened Pongo out of his seven senses! Do you call that cricket?"

"Oh, go and eat dog-biscuits!"

Wally's wrathful face disappeared from the broken window. He had been teaching Pongo to jump over a desk, and the cricket ball had suddenly interrupted the course of instruction. Pongo had promptly bolted from the classroom, and when Pongo bolted it was no easy matter to find Pongo again. No wonder D'Arcy minor was disturbed.

But little cared Figgins. He raised his cricket cap to Cousin Ethel as he caught sight of the graceful form of the girl between Tom Merry and Harry Noble, and went on batting. He intended to win the Head's prize, if possible, and at any cost of windows to the ancient foundation of St. Jim's.

"Give me a good one, Fatty."

"Right-ho!" said Fatty Wynn, who was bowling and

doing his best to help the batsman. "We'll manage it somehow."

Down came the ball again, and smack went Figgins' bat. The ball flew, and flew, and again there was a crash of glass.

"Hurrah!"
It was Linton's window this time.

"Bravo, Figgys!"
"I'll win that prize," grunted Figgins, "if I have to smash every blessed pane of glass in the blessed House!"

"Cave! Here comes Linton!"

The master of the Shell with an angry frown upon his face was seen to emerge from the House, and make his way towards the cricket ground.

CHAPTER 9.

Figgys' Rival!

FIGGINS ceased to bat, and he looked a little dismayed. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was a trifle touchy in some matters, and this was the second time his window had been broken that day.

His face expressed wrath as he came with long strides towards the cricket ground.

"Figgins!"
"Ye-es, sir?"

"You have broken my window!"
"I'm sorry, sir!"

"Possibly; and no doubt Noble was sorry for breaking it to-day."

"Yes, sir; awfully sorry," said the Cornstalk.

"Ahem! But that does not make any difference to the fact. The window has been broken twice, and my nerves have been very much upset. I feel as if I were in a state of siege in my study!" exclaimed Mr. Linton heatedly.

"You see, sir—"

"You seem to be deliberately trying to knock the balls towards the facade of the School House, instead of trying to avoid it."

"You see—"

"I shall report this to your Housemaster, Figgins."

"You see, sir—"

"Enough!"
"May I say a word, sir?" said Tom Merry, coming forward. "Figgins was trying to hit the ball through the Head's window, sir—to win the prize, sir."

"Oh!"

"Somebody will win the new cricket bat in the long run, sir, and then it will be all right," ventured Jack Blake.

"Ahem! And by that time, I suppose there will not be a whole window left in the front of the House!" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

"Sorry, sir!"

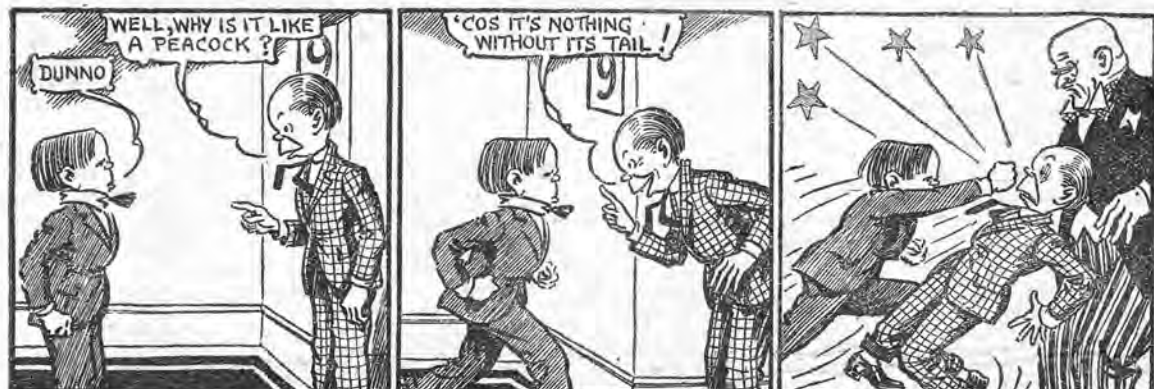
"Well, as Dr. Holmes has seen fit to make this offer, I suppose you cannot be blamed for taking advantage of it," said the master of the Shell; "but I warn you all that if my window is broken again, the boy who breaks it will be severely caned."

And the Form master walked away in high dudgeon.

"That's the worst of the chap," said Manners. "He's no sport. He's all right in the Form-room, but he's not a sport."

"Well, I suppose nobody likes being biffed on the napper with a cricket ball," Jack Blake remarked. "And the next one might get a wicket on his head, you know."

A TALL TALE!



"Well, there's a certain amount of risk in being alive at all," said Lowther. "I don't see why Form masters can't run risks as well as anybody else. But I suppose we shall have to give his window a wide berth in future. It means that there mustn't be any more wild hitting."

"Wild hitting!" exclaimed Figgins indignantly. "Who's been doing any wild hitting?"

"Well, I was only judging by appearances, Figgy."

"Lot you know about batting!"

"My dear chap, Linton's window is more than twenty yards from the Head's window, and if you were aiming at the Head's window—"

"Look at the distance!" hooted Figgins. "I'll wager you couldn't get as near!"

"That's not the question. What I say is—"

"Rot—rank rot!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"And look here, Monty Lowther—"

"Hold your row, you asses!" growled Tom Merry.

"There's Cousin Ethel looking at you!"

Figgins ceased at once, turning very red. He was extremely anxious to keep the good opinion of Cousin Ethel.

"I'll try again!" he grunted. "Here, Fatty—Fatty! What's become of Fatty?"

"He's gone!"

"The young boulder! I want him to bowl! Where's he gone?"

"I heard him say he was hungry," grinned Kerr.

"Hungry! I'll—I'll make him hungry!" said Figgins wrathfully. "I can play his bowling better than any other. Here, you can take the bat, Merry, if you like."

"Well, I'll have a shot!"

Tom Merry took the bat, and Jack Blake bowled to him. Figgins, with a slight blush in his cheeks, walked over to Cousin Ethel, who was chatting with the Australian. Brief as their acquaintance had been, Harry Noble had contrived to improve upon it, and he was on very good terms with Ethel Cleveland already.

There was an easy way about Noble, a complete self-reliance, and at the same time an evidently profound respect for the gentle sex which was very taking, and Figgins could see at a glance that Ethel liked the Cornstalk.

Figgins was not a selfish fellow, and he never expected to keep Cousin Ethel to himself. He was big and sturdy and honest and good-natured, and brave as a lion, but his dearest chum would not have called him handsome.

Mellish, the cad of the Fourth, had once referred to Cousin Ethel and Figgins as "Beauty and the Beast," and Figgins had been cut too deeply by the remark even to resent it. Like many big, kind-natured fellows, Figgins had a diffidence and a lack of confidence in his own personal qualities.

Noble was chatting away cheerily, and Cousin Ethel was chatting, too, and Figgins would have liked to chat also; but somehow he couldn't.

Noble seemed to be saying all there was to say, and there was nothing left for Figgins, and he stood silent.

"By Jove! That was a good stroke!" exclaimed the Cornstalk, as the ball flew from Tom Merry's bat.

It disappeared into the branches of an elm-tree at a great distance, and dropped to the ground amid a shower of leaves.

"Good!" said Figgins. "There was the distance if the aim had been as good. I shouldn't wonder if Merry pulled off the prize."

"I knew a chap in Croajingalong—" began Noble.

Cousin Ethel smiled, and listened to the story. Figgins listened to it, too, but he did not smile.

"I haven't seen any batting over here like that I was used to on the other side," Noble remarked, when the story was told. "I'm going to see a big match at Lord's during the summer, though. I wonder if you would care to go, Miss Cleveland?"

Cousin Ethel smiled very brightly.

"Yes, of course!"

"Miss Cleveland will be going to Lord's with some of us from St. Jim's," said Figgins, in a tone he vainly endeavoured to render genial.

"Good! Then I shall join the party," said Noble cheerfully.

"That will be very nice."

Figgins relapsed into silence.

A little later, as the batting was ending, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hove in sight. The thoughtful shade was still upon the noble brow of Arthur Augustus, but it lifted at the sight of his fair cousin.

"Bai Jove, Ethel!" he exclaimed, raising his silk topper in that graceful way which was only possible to the swell of St. Jim's. "I did not know you had awvived."

"I went to the editorial office to look for you, Arthur, but you were not there."

"I have had some wathah weighty mattahs to think out THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,513.

lately," said D'Arcy. "But it is tea-time, deah boy—I mean, deah gall! You will have tea in Study No. 6, of course?"

"Oh, not at all!" exclaimed Noble. "I'm sure Miss Cleveland will be kind enough to have tea in the new study. You see, Miss Cleveland, there's a new study been opened at the end of the Shell passage, and it's ripping and airy and spacious, you know. We had a study-warming yesterday, but if we had known you were coming, we should have put it off till to-day, of course. I really think you ought to come to the end study to tea this time, and your cousin will bring you. Gussy is my most particular friend at the present moment."



From the cricket ground came a cheering, shouting crowd. floated Harry Noble. The Head gazed in astonishment through Tom Merry. "He hit the ball through your window."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Figgins bit his lip. He would so gladly have asked Ethel to tea in his study in the New House, but he had taken it for granted that she would have tea with D'Arcy in Study No. 6, and now it was too late. There was a far from amiable expression in Figgins' eyes as he glanced at the Australian.

As D'Arcy backed up the Cornstalk, Cousin Ethel had no alternative but to accept. So, with a sweet smile, she accepted.

"Shall we say half-past six?" asked Noble eagerly. "And I'll buzz off and get the place ready."

"Yes, certainly!"

"Good! You bring your cousin, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah! Shall I bring Blake and Hewwies and Dig, too?"

It was impossible to say no, and as the Kangaroo had to say "Yes," he did so with a good grace.

"Yes, rather; bring the whole family!" he said. "I'll buzz off now!"

And he raised his straw hat to Cousin Ethel, and hurried away to prepare for the great occasion.



midst, borne high on the shoulders of Clifton Dane and Tom Merry, in window. "Boys!" he gasped. "Kangaroo did it, sir!" said "Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head.

CHAPTER 10.

A Third Form Jape!

"**B**AI JOVE, there goes the time!"

Half-past six rang out from the clock tower. Four juniors issued from Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. A girl was coming along from the direction of the House dame's quarters. Cousin Ethel was in time.

The juniors greeted her with cheerful grins,

"It's ripping of you to come to St. Jim's, and it's led Noble to stand a ripping tea!" Digby remarked. "You're always sure of something good in Noble's study!"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"I hope so, I am sure," she said demurely.

"Weally, Dig, I wegard you as an ass. Do you think Ethel cares as much for ham-sandwiches and jam-tarts as you do?"

And Arthur Augustus marched ahead with his charming cousin. Blake, Herries, and Digby followed, the last named looking rather red, and murmuring something about punching heads.

Cousin Ethel appeared delighted with the end study, and she had a word of praise for the papering, the painting, and the furnishing.

The New Firm were in the best of tempers, greatly pleased with their guest, even more than with the excellent spread the Australian had provided. The Cornstalk did not do things by halves. He had spent a small fortune—for a junior—upon the study-warming the day before; but the feed in honour of Cousin Ethel, though less expensive, was quite as good, if not better.

The chums of Study No. 6 grinned amiably when they saw the table. The little party settled down to a very cheerful tea, and had begun it in the highest of spirits, when a fresh visitor appeared at the door. It was D'Arcy minor of the Third, with his dog at his heels.

"Hallo!" said Wally cheerily. "I thought you would miss me if I didn't come, so I managed to work it in!"

Noble made a sign towards the passage.

"Outside!" he said.

"Oh, no, I couldn't leave Pongo outside!" said Wally, affecting to misunderstand. "He's quite quiet and harmless, and very fond of Colonials. Are you getting up to give me your seat, Gus?"

"No, I certainly am not doin' anythin' of the sort, Wally! I am gettin' up to hurl you forth!"

"Who's first, second, and third?" asked Wally innocently. "Are you going to begin with Blake and Herries and Dig, if you hurl me fourth?"

"I did not say fourth, I said forth, you young wapsallion! Ethel, I beg to tendah my most sincere apologies for this intewwupcion of the harmony of the meetin'!"

Cousin Ethel smiled.

"But I am sure Wally has come to see me," she said. "If our host does not object, why not let him remain?"

"Object!" said Wally. "Whv, Kangaroo particularly wanted me to come, didn't you, Wallaby? I came at the special wish of our friend Dingo."

Noble grinned.

"Stay, by all means," he said. "Find a chair somewhere. It's all right, Gussy; let him live!"

Wally found a seat beside Cousin Ethel, calmly pushing himself in between Ethel and his elder brother. Arthur Augustus sat down again, simmering with suppressed wrath.

Pongo took his place under the table, and kept D'Arcy in a state of endless nervous apprehension by an occasional growl or two. Not that Gussy was afraid for himself. He was as brave as a lion. He was thinking of his trousers—for which Pongo had shown a liking more than once before.

However, it was a very pleasant meal. If there was a shade of thoughtfulness on the brow of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, it passed unnoticed in the general chatter and clatter.

The New Firm did the honours of the feed as well as could be desired. Bernard Glyn, when tea was over, showed Cousin Ethel some of his inventions, and offered to give her an electric shock—an offer that was declined with thanks. Clifton Dane, who had some powers as a hypnotist, was willing to mesmerise her—another offer that was promptly declined.

D'Arcy, with a somewhat defiant glance round the study, suggested a little music, and followed up the suggestion with a generous offer to sing the Prize Song from "Die Meistersinger." Fortunately the clock struck while he was speaking, and then Cousin Ethel uttered a little exclamation:

"Dear, dear! Is that really a quarter to eight?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I shall have to hurry away!"

"Weally, Ethel—"

"Mrs. Holmes was expecting me ten minutes ago at least!"

"Bai Jove, that's wathah wotten, you know!"

"Yes, isn't it? Good-bye! Thank you, so much!" said Ethel, with a sweet smile to Noble. "It has been so very, very pleasant!"

"I hope you will come again, Miss Cleveland," said

Noble, as he opened the door for his guest. "It was jolly good of you to come!"

"Yes, indeed! I hope so!"

Arthur Augustus went out with his cousin, to see her to the Head's house. Noble waited till they had passed the turn of the passage, and then closed the door.

"Jolly ripping girl!" he said. "Now, you young rascal," he went on, addressing Wally. "I think it's about time you had a licking for your cheek!"

"Oh rats!" said Wally. "You've made it pax."

The Cornstalk laughed.

"I suppose I had better let you off."

"Yes—you might get hurt otherwise," remarked Wally, rising. "Pongo, Pongo, Pongo! Come here! You've finished with that bone."

"I say, I'll give Pongo an electric shock, if you like," said Bernard Glyn. "It does animals good, you know."

Wally glared at the cheerful electrician.

"Let me catch you giving him electric shocks, that's all!" he said. "I'll jolly soon give you a shock of another sort!"

And he marched out of the end study with Pongo.

As he came downstairs two juniors of the Third Form pounced upon him.

"You young bounder!" exclaimed Jameson. "Where have you been? We've been looking for you everywhere."

"Oh, I've been to tea in a Shell study!" said Wally, with an air of assumed carelessness.

Jameson and Gibson stared at him. They were never asked to tea in a Shell study—and very seldom in a Fourth Form one.

"Come off!" said Gibson tersely.

"Fact!" said Wally. "I've been having tea with Kangaroo—not a bad chap, either."

"Oh!" said Jameson, comprehendingly. "I understand. I knew your Cousin Ethel was having tea in the end study. You shoved yourself in."

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Jimmy?" asked Wally pleasantly. "You're going just the right way to get one."

"Look here, while you've been guzzling in a Shell study

we've been looking for you!" said Carly Gibson aggressively. "It's a jape we've thought of, but we wanted you to help."

"That's right, my sons," said Wally serenely. "Don't you ever try any japes without your Uncle Wally. They're bound to come a buster."

"Stow the gas!" said Jameson. "Look here—it's a feed."

"I've fed."

"But we haven't!" exclaimed Jameson indignantly. "You guzzling young sweep, we're jolly hungry, and funds are out! It's a rag against the Fourth, too!"

"Now you're talking! Get on!"

"It's Fatty Wynn," said Jameson, lowering his voice to a mysterious whisper, as the three fags walked out of the School House. "We saw him in the tuckshop. He's laid in a feed and gone off to enjoy it all by himself. Figgins is having tea in the School House, you see, and Kerr has filled up the study over there with fellows practising part-singing. Fatty Wynn is on his own; we saw him getting the things in Dame Taggles' shop—sausages, and cream-buns and jam-tarts."

"First-rate prog," said Gibson, smacking his lips. "We asked him for some—"

"And he told us we were cheeky fags," said Jameson darkly. "We didn't slay him, because—because—"

"Because he would have given you a hiding if you had started," observed Wally.

"Oh, don't be a beast, young D'Arcy. We thought we'd scoff his grub instead. He's taken it into one of the rooms at the back of the gym, so as to be quiet and uninterrupted!" grinned Jameson. "We watched him through the window. Come on, and we'll show you."

Wally chuckled, and followed his two comrades. In a couple of minutes they were looking into one of the windows at the back of the ground floor of the gymnasium. It was a small room, where some of the paraphernalia used in the gym was stored, and there, sitting on a chest, was the Falstaff of the New House. There was a seraphic

(Continued on the next page.)

Reinforcements for the half-backs



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smile upon the plump face of Fatty Wynn, and a gleam of greedy anticipation in his eye.

He had opened his parcel of good things from the tuckshop, and they were spread around him—sausages and ham-rolls and tarts and cake. The fat Fourth-Former was evidently "flush" just then, for he was doing himself remarkably well.

"Looks ripping, don't it?" murmured Gibson.

"Makes me feel quite peckish again," said Wally.

"We could raid it as easy as falling off a form. A rush in at the door, and we could bounce him over, and before he could get up—"

Wally shook his head.

"No; we won't collar his grub."

"Look here," began Jameson hotly, "if you're not hungry, we are!"

"I don't care whether you're hungry or not! We've got some grub in the Form-room, anyhow. I tell you you shan't touch his grub!" said Wally obstinately.

"I can see you've got some other jape in your head, you young ass! What is it?"

"I was thinking of the tortures of Tantalus."

"Eh? Who's Tantalus?" asked Jameson, whose attainments in classic lore were not great. "Is it a dog?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No. Tantalus was one of those ancient Greek bouncers who offended the gods, and was stuck in Tartarus, with a lot of ripping tommy just out of his reach, you know—like a carrot tied just ahead of a donkey's nose. I was thinking we could fix up Fatty like that. Here, come on!"

"But—"

"Don't jaw! Follow your uncle!"

And Wally led the way.

CHAPTER 11.

The Tortures of Tantalus!

FATTY WYNN had just taken his first mouthful when the door opened, and three Third-Formers presented themselves to his view.

Fatty laid down his knife and fork, and bestowed a glare upon the intruders.

"Get out!" he said.

"Rats!" said Wally. "Collar him!"

"Why, you cheeky young rascals!" exclaimed Wynn, in amazement at the nerve of the Third Form hero. "I'll— I'll pulverise you!"

"Oh!"

Outrageous as it was for fags to lay hands upon a Fourth-Former, Wally & Co. made no bones about it, so to speak. They rushed at Fatty Wynn, who rose to defend himself. He hit out, and Jameson rolled in one direction and Gibson in another. But Wally fastened desperately upon the fat Fourth-Former, and shouted to his comrades to back him up, while Pongo barked furiously.

Jameson and Gibson quickly returned to the fray. Fatty Wynn struggled desperately, but three to one was too long odds. He went down with a heavy bump, and the fags sprawled over him.

"You—you young rotters!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "I'll—I'll punch you to little bits! You—you cheeky imps!"

"Got him!" said Wally, crowing triumphantly.

"Yes, rather! Hurrah!"

"Hip-hip—"

Wally sat astride of Fatty Wynn's chest, and kept him pinned down. The fat Fourth-Former could only struggle and heave spasmodically. There was no dislodging the scamp of the Third Form from his perch, while Jameson hastily knotted a handkerchief round the ankles of the fat Fourth-Former.

"Now get one of those ropes, Jimmy," said Wally, with the air of a general giving orders. "Keep still, Wynn! That's the worst of Welshmen, they never know when they're beaten!"

"We—never—are—beaten!" gasped Fatty Wynn breathlessly.

"Well, you're jolly well near to it at the present moment! Gibby, my son, drag out those weights from the corner—the heaviest ones."

"Oh, rats, Wally! You're not going to start weight-lifting now!"

"I'll start eye-blackening, if you don't do as I tell you!"

"Yes, but—"

"Yank out those weights, ass! I'm going to tie Fatty to them!"

"Oh, I see!" said Gibson, chuckling.

And he dragged out the heavy weights one by one from their receptacles.

It did not take the scamps of the Third long to sling the weights upon lengths of cord and fasten the cord to one rope. The rope was then passed through a staple in the wall and tied to Fatty's wrists, behind his back.

Then the fat Fourth-Former was allowed to rise.

He rose—breathless and rumpled and gasping, as red as a poppy. He wrenched at his arms to free them, but that was a little beyond his powers. He could not get them loose, neither could he shift the mass of heavy weights that dragged upon them.

Wally, with a grin, arranged the feed just out of Wynn's reach, and then the chuckling fags quitted the room and closed the door.

"The—the young beasts!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "I'll—I'll pulverise them! I'll smash them like potatoes when I get hold of them! The rotters! Ow!"

He dragged at the cords. The weights clattered a little, but did not budge. There was a tap at the window and a yell of laughter. Three faces were looking in there, in evident enjoyment of Fatty Wynn's predicament.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wally suddenly. "Look there! I forgot Pongo!"

Jameson and Gibson chuckled hysterically. Through the window they could see Pongo, who had been left in the room. Wally had forgotten him, and Pongo had been quite willing to be left in the presence of the sausages.

Pongo was making for the sausages now, and it was quite touching to see the expression that came over the fat face of Wynn.

He made frantic gestures at the dog as well as he could with his hands dragged behind him, and clattered his feet on the floor.

Pongo retreated, growling.

"Oh lor!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Get back, you beast! Shush! Scat! Gr-r-r-r! Be off! Yah! Bunk! Gr-r-r-r! Booh!"

Pongo growled and kept back. But he soon observed with canine sagacity that Fatty Wynn could only stand still and clatter his boots and shout, and could not advance towards the provisions.

Pongo crept forward again, eyeing Fatty cautiously, and this time the shouts and clattering of Fatty did not frighten him back.

He growled and showed his teeth, and crept on.

"Booh!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Yah! Scat!"

But Pongo declined to scat.

He fastened his teeth in the sausages and began to eat them.

The perspiration rolled down Fatty Wynn's face.

"Oh!" he groaned. "My sausages! My ham! My ham! My sausages! You beasts! My sausages and ham! My ham and sausages. Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the fags outside the window.

"Help! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fire!" shrieked Fatty Wynn. "Murder! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pongo growled and ate. Fatty Wynn stamped and yelled. The tortures of Tantalus were a joke to this. Tantalus never saw a dog eating the good things he could not reach. But Fatty Wynn did.

"Help!" yelled Fatty. "Fire! Fire!"

There was a clattering of feet in the gym, and the door of the little room was thrown open and Tom Merry rushed in.

"What is it. Where's the fire? Why—what—?"

"Kick that dog! Kick him! Jump on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's eating my sausages! My ham! My grub! Jump on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's all this row about?" said Darrell of the Sixth, looking in. "Who's that shouting fire?"

"There's no fire!" snapped Wynn. "That was to make somebody come! Look at that beast! Let me loose! Haven't you a pocket-knife?"

Tom Merry, with tears of laughter running down his cheeks, opened his pocket-knife and cut Fatty Wynn loose. Wynn made a straight rush for the dog.

Pongo dashed off with half a dozen sausages in his jaws. Fatty Wynn rushed in pursuit, and Pongo made a break through the open door and dashed into the quadrangle, still with the infuriated junior in pursuit.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Darrell, all the gravity of a lordly Sixth-Former deserting him at the ridiculous sight.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry almost staggered from the gym.

Pongo was making a good run of it, with the fat junior in hot pursuit, and the dog was shedding sausages, so to speak, as he ran. He had only one left by the time he whisked round a corner of the School House, and Fatty Wynn, breathless and enraged, halted and gave up the chase.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Figgins, coming

(Continued on page 19.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,515.

A PAGE FROM—



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

HALLO, chums! Here's hoping you'll enjoy your Easter holidays! At any rate, I'm sure you'll enjoy this number of the GEM! When I tell you that next Wednesday's GEM will be every bit as good as this one, you will know that you really have something to which you can look forward!

"CHUMS ON THE ROAD!"

Martin Clifford has written one of his best stories about Tom Merry & Co., and he tells of their adventures when they set out on a cycle ride to Coventry. Then there will be further thrills in

"THE SPY-FLYERS!"

W. E. Johns' brilliant story of Secret Service work in the air.

More half-crowns will be awarded for jokes sent in by readers, and Potts, our irrepressible office-boy, will again be on parade. To wind up with, there will be another page from my notebook. Take my advice; order your copy now, and make sure that you are not disappointed!

A VALUABLE DOG!

Peter is a ten-months-old fox-terrier puppy. His mistress has always been fond of him, quite apart from his value in mere money; but just recently the value of Peter has gone up. The other day, Peter spotted a chance of having a bit of fun; the table-cloth was hanging over the end of the table, so he got hold of it and pulled it off! Now, there was a watch on the table, and a gold one at that, and when Peter pulled the cloth—off the watch came, too; and when the watch came, Peter swallowed it! His mistress, discovering what had happened, rushed the dog to a veterinary surgeon, fearing that her pet might suffer ill effects. But Peter was quite all right! He still had the watch when last heard of—and he claims to be the only dog in the world who has a gold watch!

AMERICA'S LEAD!

The United States of America have given a lead to this country which we hope this country will follow. One of the very first things that the new President's administration did when it took office, was to make an order that a good supply of fresh pen nibs must be available in every American post office! You all know what people say about our post office nibs, in this country!

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!

Mr. T. S. Fisher, a Cambridge graduate, has just recently given a very good example of the old saying about killing two birds with one stone. His home is in

Capetown, and he wanted to return there; also he had been offered a job there, when he had flying experience. So Mr. Fisher, being a bright fellow, decided that the best thing to do was to fly to the Cape. By doing this, he would get home at one-third of the cost of going by train and boat, and in addition he would obtain very valuable flying experience for his new job. A friend, Mr. S. M. Pearce, accompanied Mr. Fisher, and the two of them piloted the machine—a Gipsy Moth—in turns. No attempt was made to break any records on the journey.

ANOTHER SMALL FLEET!

The other day, I told you about the world's smallest navy which was for sale. Here is the story of the world's smallest merchant fleet. It consists of the s.s. *Wien*, a four-thousand-ton ship, which is the only sea-going vessel of Austria. The captain, Anton Scarpa, is the Head of the Austrian Marine. The *Wien* was built in England and was originally named the *Trevilly*. Vienna is her port of registration, but if her owners wanted her to be able to reach that port, they would have to treble the depth of the Danube for nearly a thousand miles! By the way, among other things, the *Wien* carries a cargo of onions!

ODDS AND ENDS.

Primo Carnera, the famous Italian boxer, was involved in a car smash the other day. It is said that the car is going on quite well!

A torpedo was fired during practice off Portland Harbour, but it didn't go where it was meant to go. Instead of keeping a straight course it rushed round in a curve, rising out of the sea, and sending a sheet of spray twenty feet into the air. Finally, it leapt out of the sea on to the sands of Weymouth Bay!

An island, half an acre in extent, with trees twenty feet high growing on it, has been sighted, floating about in the Pacific, 1,300 miles from San Diego, California!

Louis Wagnal, a Los Angeles carpenter, has just completed a five-year job of producing the world's largest Bible. It is hand-printed, has 1,048 pages, and weighs half a ton.

The steamship *Dampen* sprang a leak at sea, and was rushed to Newport, Virginia. In the dry dock there it was discovered that a large cod had become wedged in the leak, and had stopped the flow of water!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Fortune-teller (at fair): "Tell your fortune, sir?"
Visitor: "How much?"
Fortune-teller: "Half-a-crown."
Visitor: "You're quite right!"

A DOG'S DAY!

A court-martial was in progress at Aldershot. It was very dull and serious, and Roger thought that he would liven things up a bit—at any rate, as far as his presence in the court would brighten things! When the door of the court opened to let a witness out, Roger slipped by the N.C.O. on the door, and entered the court. The N.C.O. nearly collapsed with amazement, but he couldn't leave his position at the door, so he just stood and watched, and said things under his breath. The first thing Roger did was to lick the hand of a woman who was about to give evidence—Roger, by the way, is a black retriever—and then he sat down. Nobody quite knew what to do—everybody looked at some one else, as if he thought that everyone but himself ought to do something about it. During the pause, Roger got up, walked over to the President, and—having been patted by him—sat down at his feet. After that the court proceeded with its business!

HEY, PRESTO!

He was a juggler, but one day he did a very fine vanishing trick! He was doing one of his best numbers, which consisted of standing on a four-foot wooden globe, and juggling with five tennis balls. All went well, and the item came to a close without a mistake. To a roar of applause the juggler jumped from his globe to the stage, presumably with the intention of making a bow to the audience. But when he reached the stage, he did not stop—he went straight on, and disappeared from sight, leaving the audience gasping with amazement! But it wasn't just one of his tricks—the fact was that he had landed on the stage trapdoor, which gave way, and the unfortunate juggler fell about eight feet before he stopped!

SOME GOING!

Arthur Bale, of Manchester, writes to tell me that he has succeeded in writing 1,016 words on a postcard, thus beating the effort of Fred Blowers, who, as mentioned on this page some time ago, wrote 2,000 words. That's certainly good going, Arthur. Well done!

AN EASTER TIP!

It is sometimes a bit of a problem to know what to do at Easter, especially if the Clerk of the Weather is not very kind. Let me give you one good tip that will ensure you of a good time. Nip round to your newsagent and have a look at our companion papers, *The "Ranger," "Magnet,"* and *"Nelson Lee."* You will find that there are stories for all tastes; adventure, detective, school, and humour. My advice to you is "Try one and see!"

GLASS—WITH CARE!

George Cook, of Hampstead, writes to ask why the windows in uncompleted buildings have a dab of white wash in the centre of each pane. I understand, George, that this is merely to show the labourers that glass has been put in, and to prevent them trying to pass ladders through the windows without opening them!

YOUR EDITOR.

"WELL HIT, WALLABY!"

(Continued from page 17.)

out of the School House and staring at his breathless chum.

"Matter enough!" snapped Fatty Wynn. "That horrid beast of young D'Arcy's has wolfed my sausages!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to laugh at!"

Figgins apparently thought it was, for he continued laughing. Fatty Wynn snorted, and hurried back to the gym to secure the remainder of his feast. But a disappointment awaited the fat Fourth-Former.

There had been a crowd of fags on the scene, and the last crumb had vanished before Fatty Wynn returned to the spot. A good many of the fags, with smears of jam on their mouths, assumed expressions of almost preternatural innocence as Fatty Wynn came in.

The Falstaff of the New House looked round him, snorted, and retired. He spent a considerable time that evening looking for Pongo; but Pongo, like a wise dog, understudied Brer Rabbit and "lay low."

CHAPTER 12.

A Deed in the Dark!

THE tea-party in the end study was over, the cheery voices were silent, and the lights were out.

Arthur Augustus, coming along the Shell passage, was struck by the silence and darkness of the quarters of the New Firm. There was a shade upon the noble brow of Arthur Augustus, and an uneasy glimmer in his eye behind his monocle. He tapped at the door of the end study and opened it. All was blackness within.

"Bai Jove! It's struck eight, and the boundah isn't here!"

Arthur Augustus was keeping his appointment. In the interval since it had been made a change had come over D'Arcy's sentiments on the subject, but he turned up dutifully at the appointed time to explain to the Cornstalk.

The darkness and silence of the study surprised him. It looked as if Noble had forgotten all about the appointment.

"Are you heah, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy, peering into the gloom.

"Enter!"

It was Noble's voice, speaking in a deep, solemn tone. D'Arcy started. He did not know why Noble should adopt that tone, or why he should say "enter" instead of "come in." It was frequently done on the stage and in novels, but not in the Lower Forms at St. Jim's. D'Arcy felt vaguely uneasy as he stepped into the shadowy room.

"I'm heah, deah boy; I've entahed! Why haven't you got a light?"

"It is better that such a deed were done in darkness!"

"Bai—bai Jove! What are you talkin' about?" asked D'Arcy in alarm.

He could not see Noble, and that deep voice from the darkness was somewhat uncanny and a little alarming.

"Do you forget what this appointment is for?"

"N-n-no; but—"

"You have been struck!"

"Yaas, wathah; but—"

"Not hit, or smitten, or cuffed, but struck. A gentleman who is struck—by anything but lightning—has only one resource, as you can read in any sixpenny novel. He must have blood!"

"Pway don't be howwid!"

"You demand satisfaction—"

"Yaas, but—"

"There are no 'buts' in a case like this. You demand satisfaction—satisfaction you shall have. You have asked me to act as your friend."

"Yaas, but—"

"I shall stand by you. I shall see that the affair is carried out according to all the rules of the duello," whispered Kangaroo. "The body can be disposed of."

"The—the what?"

"The body. Of course, there will be a body."

"You—you uttah ass—"

"What? Do you mean to say that you recede—that you submit to be struck?"

"N-n-no; but—"

"Think of your aunt's sisters—I mean, your ancestors. Think of them in the roll of history, looking down on you from the ancient pictures on the walls at Eastwood. Think

of their heroic deeds in the past; how they wallowed in other people's blood in the field of battle—"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Think of how they girded on their armour for the fray and led their followers—who didn't wear any armour—to die for their country," whispered the Cornstalk. "Thinking of that—you cannot recede. You must have blood."

"Yaas, wathah; but—"

"No more! I will see you through!"

"But—but—"

"You can rely on me. Come; all is arranged."

"All is awwanged!" exclaimed D'Arcy, starting. "But—but—"

"Come!"

The swell of St. Jim's broke into a cold perspiration. He had never expected Noble to take it like this. In the heat of the moment he declared that he would have satisfaction, but he had been thinking over it ever since.

"Where—where am I to come?" he stammered.

"To the ruined tower!" hissed the voice in the darkness, and strew the hungry churchyard with his bones!"

"I absolutely wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!" stammered D'Arcy. "I uttably decline to stwew any hungwy churchyard with anyone's beastlay bones! I—"

"Aha! You falter!"

"I don't faltah, but—"

"You tremble!"

"I do not twemble, but—"

"You are afraid!"

"Nothin' of the sort! But—"

"Come!"

"Where, you ass?"

"To the box-room, then," whispered Kangaroo. "There you shall imbrue your hands—"

"I wefuse to imbwue my hands—"

"I will keep you up to the mark. Come!"

With a strong grip on his arm, the Cornstalk drew the dismayed swell of St. Jim's from the study. The end study adjoined the box-room, the door of which was open. D'Arcy stumbled in in the darkness, and barked his shins against a box, and uttered an exclamation:

"Bai Jove, I'm hurt!"

"Never mind!"

"But I do mind, you ass! My beastlay shin—"

"Never mind your beastly shin. Take this!"

D'Arcy shivered all over as he felt the butt of a pistol thrust into his hand. He grasped it mechanically.

"Don't fire till I give the word!" whispered the Cornstalk.

"I uttably wefuse to—"

"Silence!"

A pale blue flame glimmered in the darkness. It made the forms of the juniors dimly visible. It was an eerie, phosphorescent light, and had D'Arcy been a little calmer he might have guessed that Bernard Glyn, the St. Jim's inventor, had a hand in it. As it was, he blinked at it in horror.

"What—what is that?"

"Listen! He comes!"

"Who comes?"

"He!" whispered Noble. "Hark! The doomed wretch's footsteps echo through the night!"

"Oh wats! I—"

"Hark!"

Footsteps approached the box-room door. They came closer, more audible, and D'Arcy felt, with a thrill of horror, that it was Kildare coming to the meeting. A dim form, wrapped in a black cloak, stepped silently into the room. A slouch hat hid the features.

"Here he is!"

"By Jove!"

"Are you ready?"

"Ready for what?"

"The fight to death!"

"Look heah, Kangawoo, I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! I didn't mean you to take it so sewiously. I think you are a howwid wotah!"

"Aha! You finch!"

"Nothin' of the sort! But—"

"But your honour must be avenged! Give me the pistol, and I will do the deed!" said Kangaroo, in a terrible whisper.

"But—but, you ass—"

D'Arcy was too disturbed and excited to notice that what he was holding in his hand was simply the ornamenta. head of a massive walking-stick shaped something like a pistol-butt. Had it been light and had he been cooler, he would have known that it was the electric walking-stick he had handled before in Glyn's study.

"Give me the pistol!"

"I wefuse!"

"But blood must flow!"

"You howwid ass! I—"

"Then fire when I give the word!" The cloaked figure raised a hand, and something glimmered dimly in the pale, ghostly light—and how was D'Arcy to know that it was only a silver pencil-case? "Look—your foe is ready!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"One!"

"Weally, Kangaroo—"

"Two!"

"I wepeat that—"

"Three!"

"I tell you—"

"Fire!"

There was a crash; it sounded more like a hammer crashing on a fire-grate than the report of a pistol. It rang with deafening noise through the silence of the box-room, and at the same moment D'Arcy felt a shock through his arm, which instantly ran through his whole body.

He jumped.

"Ow! I'm wounded! Bai Jove! I'm shot, you know! Ow, ow!"

"Where is it?"

"Ow! I don't know!"

"Drop the pistol!"

"I—I—I can't!"

"Fly!" exclaimed Noble dramatically. "Kildare! Fly—fly for your life!"

"Oh, hang it!" said the cloaked figure. "I'm not a giddy aeroplane! Turn on the light!"

The gas was suddenly lighted, and D'Arcy blinked in the light, and looked round him.

CHAPTER 13.

Coals of Fire!

D'ARCY blinked—and well he might!

For there was no sign of Kildare in the box-room, no sign of blood, and no sign of a pistol. He was holding the head of a walking-stick in his hand, and in the light he knew that walking-stick, and understood the shock that had run through him. The current had been turned off as the gas was lighted.

The cloaked figure had thrown aside the cloak and stood revealed as Clifton Dane. Bernard Glyn, with a hammer in his hand, was standing near the firegrate beside an electric battery. Kangaroo was doubled up with laughter, and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn were shrieking.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Noble. "Fly—fly for your giddy life! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Glyn. "He must have satisfaction!"

"There must be blood!" said Dane, grinning. "Are you satisfied, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Am I to undahstand," said the swell of St. Jim's majestically, "that this a twick?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have been widiculin' me, Noble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Oh, carry me home to die!" gurgled the Colonial. "I know this chap will be the death of me—I know he will!"

The frown of wrath gathered on D'Arcy's brow. He was greatly relieved to find that he was not wounded, and that he had not wounded anybody. But to discover that the whole affair was a jape of the New Firm was too ridiculous.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass from one to another of the members of Cornstalk & Co., seeking to crush them with his scorn, but without any apparent effect, for they only shrieked the more.

"Bai Jove! You uttah wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, undah these cires, Noble, I have no wesource but to administah a feahful thwashin' Pway put up your hands! I— Ow-wow-wow!"

Glyn had suddenly switched the current on again from the battery. It ran through D'Arcy's limbs and made him jump. He began a sort of war-dance with the electric stick in his hand.

"Ow, wow! Leggo! Leave off! Wow!"

"Are you going to make it pax?" grinned the Cornstalk, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,313.

who had no desire for the jape to end in a bout of serious fisticuffs.

"Certainly not!—Ow!"

"Then you can go on dancing!"

"Oh! Ow! Leggo!"

Kangaroo began to beat time with his hands, as if D'Arcy was executing an impromptu step-dance.

"Go it! That's right! Keep it up!"

"Wats! Ow! Gr-r-r! Stop it! On—on second thoughts, deah boys, I will make it pax."

Glyn grinned, and shut off the current.

Arthur Augustus dropped the stick, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and turned a withering look upon the practical jokers.

"I have made it pax," he said, "and so I cannot give the thrice of you a feahful thwashin', as you wicly mewit. Howevah, I wegard you as feahful wottahs, and in future I shall be obliged if you will not address me. I dwop your acquaintance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus walked out of the box-room, leaving the New Firm giggling hysterically.

Feeling very much disturbed and exasperated, D'Arcy walked along towards his own quarters. He met Kildare in the passage.

The captain of St. Jim's stopped.

"Anything wrong, D'Arcy?"

D'Arcy looked at the big athletic Sixth-Former a little shamefacedly. The recollection of the ridiculous scene he had gone through made his cheeks burn.

"No, Kildare, I'm all wight."

"You are looking queer. Did I touch you up a little too warmly yesterday?" asked Kildare, with his good-natured laugh.

The swell of St. Jim's went scarlet.

"Weally, Kildare—"

The captain of St. Jim's laughed again, and passed on. D'Arcy went slowly and thoughtfully on his way.

"Upon the whole, I suppose I have been wathah an ass," he murmured. "Pewwaps it serves me wight. Kildare's an awfully decent chap."

He entered Study No. 6. Blake, Herries, and Digby were doing their preparation there, but they left off as D'Arcy came in, and grinned at him.

"All right?" asked Blake.

"All wight? Certainly. What do you mean?"

"What have you done with the body?"

"The—the—the what?"

"The body. I suppose there was a body?" said Blake.

"Did you shoot Kildare dead, or did he shoot you dead?"

"Pway don't be an ass!"

"Well, this is a bit of a swindle," said Digby. "Fancy a scion of the house of D'Arcy going in for satisfaction, and finishing up without a body."

"Rotten!" said Herries emphatically. "I was thinking that I could lend Towser to the authorities to track down Gussy, so as to get him arrested for—"

"And then we shouldn't be bothered by his hat-boxes in the study. But now—"

"It's a swindle!"

Arthur Augustus glowered at his chums.

"So that wottah Kangaroo told you that he intended to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall not stay here with a set of cacklin' asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust you will cease this wibald laughtah, or I shall have no alternative but to take my books into Tom Mewwy's study and do my pwep there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as beasts!" said Arthur Augustus, and he gathered up his books and left the study, slamming the door behind him. He left his chums laughing hysterically. With a heightened colour D'Arcy went along to Tom Merry's study, and found the Terrible Three sitting round their table at prep. They looked up gravely.

"Pway may I do my pwep here, deah boys?" asked D'Arcy. "Those wottahs in Study No. 6 are kickin' up too much wow!"

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "Come right in. Shove your books down here. I suppose there's no blood on them?"

"Eh?"

"I shouldn't like any of the gore to come off on the table-cloth," explained Tom Merry. "It's been washed lately."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"What have you done with the body?" asked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

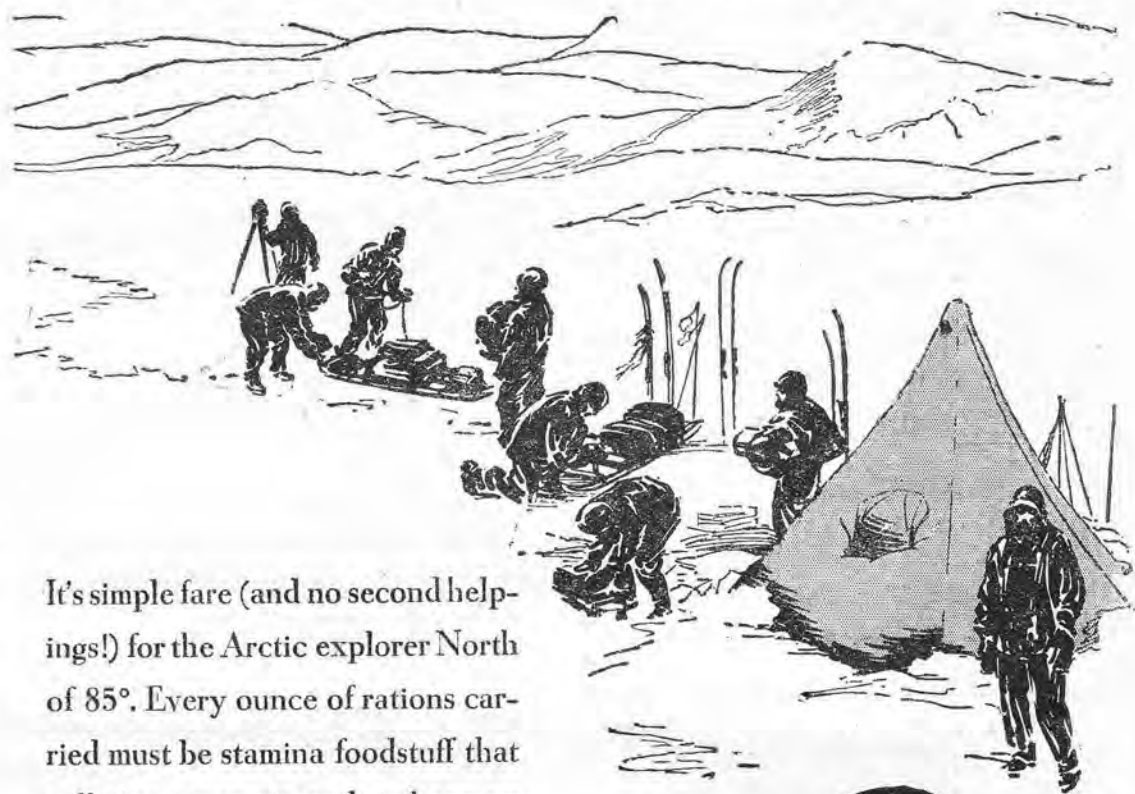
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Manners, unable to contain his mirth any longer.

Lowther and Tom Merry looked at him severely.

"Really, Manners," said the latter. "I'm surprised at

(Continued on page 22.)

North of 85°—



It's simple fare (and no second helpings!) for the Arctic explorer North of 85°. Every ounce of rations carried must be stamina foodstuff that will give a man strength to keep on — and on — and on. *Chocolate always finds a place on the sledge.*

For your own explorations and ramblings you can't beat chocolate. Better get Bournville if you want a chocolate that tastes extra good. For dealing with that "empty feeling," Bournville is really fine. And 2d. now buys such a jolly big chunk!



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you! An affair of honour is no laughing matter; and, besides, we shall have all the trouble of a new election for captain now—that Kildare has gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah wottahs! I suppose Kangaroo told you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus marched out of the study with his books under his arm, and slammed that door. Through the closed door followed a merry yell.

D'Arcy paused in the passage, hardly knowing where to go. He finally decided upon the Third Form Room, where the Third did their prep in the presence of a master. He could get a quiet corner there to work. But as he entered the Form-room he discovered that prep was over—Mr. Selby was gone—and the Third were indemnifying themselves for an hour's restraint by various kinds of horseplay. Wally was balancing a pointer on his chin when D'Arcy entered. He gave a yell at the sight of his major, and the pointer dropped on Jameson's toe, and then Jameson yelled, too.

"Here he comes!" yelled Wally.

"Ow! My toe!"

"Blow your toe! 'See the Conquering Hero Comes!'" chanted Wally. "I say, Gussy, what have you done with the body?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" screamed the Third. "What have you done with the body?"

D'Arcy halted, petrified.

He knew that Kangaroo would not have taken the fags into his confidence over that jape; but undoubtedly Wally & Co. knew all about it. Doubtless, some fag had heard the New Firm talking it over, or telling Study No. 6 about it. How ever it came about, they knew it.

"The body!" roared Curly Gibson. "Where's the giddy corpus?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young wapsallion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have a gweat mind to give you all a feahful thwashin'!"

"Don't shoot us!" pleaded Curly Gibson tearfully.

"Don't sh-sh-shoot us with a walking-stick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of St. Jim's walked out of the Third Form Room, leaving the fags shrieking. Feeling as if he had nowhere to rest his head, he walked away with his books. Suddenly a hand was clapped on his shoulder, and he looked up and saw Kildare.

"Still looking down in the mouth?" said the captain of St. Jim's.

"N-n-not pwecisely, Kildare, but——"

"What's up?" said the Sixth-Former tersely.

"Nothin', only—only I'm lookin' for somewhere to do my pwep. I'm—I'm not on good terms with the wottahs in Study No. 6."

Kildare laughed. He had been a junior himself, and he knew the uncertainty of life—in junior studies.

"Come into my room," he said. "I've got a fire there, and my fag is making some buttered toast. There's enough for two, and you can do your prep on my table."

D'Arcy muttered something unintelligible as he followed the captain of St. Jim's into his study. It was coals of fire, with a vengeance. The study was very cheerful and cosy, and the buttered toast was ripping, and D'Arcy did his prep on a corner of the captain's table in perfect ease and comfort.

And his comfort was not diminished by the ayed and admiring expression of several fags who looked into the study, and beheld him on such intimate terms with the head of the Sixth.

When D'Arcy left the captain's study at last, he was feeling in a good humour with everybody, and Kildare could have struck, hit, smitten, or cuffed him to his heart's content, without the slightest danger of Arthur Augustus demanding satisfaction.

CHAPTER 14.

Trouble in the Editorial Office!

WHEN Arthur Augustus encountered the New Firm the next day, his manner was cold, not to say chilling. But Noble slapped him on the back cheerily.

"It's all right, old chap!" he said.

D'Arcy drew back.

"It's not all wight," he said. "I wegard you as a beast!"

"It was a jolly good jape," pleaded Kangaroo. "It would make a ripping article for the 'Weekly.'"

Arthur Augustus changed colour.

"You would not be such a feahful wottah as to pwint anythin' of the sort in the 'Weekly'?" he exclaimed.

"Why not? I'm the new sub-editor-in-chief, you know, and a sub-editor-in-chief is expected to shove in a thing a bit out of the common," grinned Kangaroo. "The story of the duel in the box-room would——"

"I wefuse to give you permish. Upon the whole, Kangaroo, I will ovahlook that mattah," said D'Arcy hastily. "I will continue to wegard you as a fiend. You will not mention that nonsense in the papah, I twust?"

"I'll bury it deep from human eyes," said Kangaroo solemnly. "Wild dingoes or wallabies should not tear the dread secret from my bosom."

"Oh, pway don't wot!"

So friendship was restored between the swell of the School House and the New Firm. But with the chums of Study No. 6 it was a different matter. D'Arcy still looked upon them with an eye of coldness, and a chilling silence reigned in the study when he was there.

With the Terrible Three Gussy had no choice but to make it up, because it was the last day for sending in copy for the "Weekly," and Tom Merry's study was the editorial office.

When D'Arcy looked in after morning school, he coughed a little awkwardly. Tom Merry and Harry Noble were already busy there. They were filling up columns at a great rate, making up for lost time. The visit of Cousin Ethel to St. Jim's had taken up a great deal of time, which would otherwise have been devoted to the "Weekly," and editor-in-chief and sub-editor-in-chief had to slog a little now.

"Ahen!" said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry looked up genially, having apparently forgotten all about the episode of the previous evening.

"Hallo, Gus! Come in, and get to work!"

"Certainly, deah boy!"

And D'Arcy took his place at the table, and pulled out a fountain-pen and a sheaf of paper. He started work, and then started gnawing the handle of the pen, and looked at the ceiling.

Kangaroo looked at him.

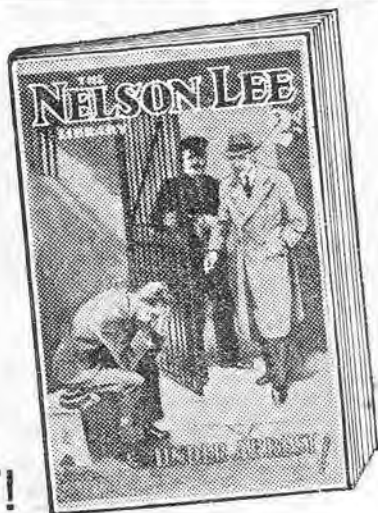
"Got a pain anywhere?" he asked.

"Certainly not! I was thinking. Can you tell me a whyme for glowious?"

"Writing poetry?" asked Kangaroo. "I don't know if I can let it go into this week's number. We've got a lot of poetry on hand now."

"Weally, Kangaroo, I wasn't thinkin' of askin' you. As a sub-edital of this papah——"

"Common or garden sub-editor, old fellow? I'm sub-editor-in-chief."



UNDER ARREST!

St. Frank's Sixth-Former arrested for murder! Sensational—dramatic—thrilling, this magnificent yarn of the popular chums of St. Frank's, which tells of the fight of Nelson Lee, the schoolmaster-detective, to save the honour of a senior schoolboy, will hold your interest as no story has ever done before. Ask your newsagent to-day for

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"Wats! I shall certainly wite as much poetry as I like."

"Ahem! I am afraid I shall have to sling this insubordinate contributor out of the office, chief."

"Order!" said the chief, without looking up. "Can't you kids scribble without interrupting your lord and master? Scat!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, get on with the washing!" grinned Kangaroo. "I'll put it in if it isn't too rotten. What's it about?"

"This is the line. 'Her eyes so blue are bwright and glowious.' That's wathah a tellin' line, isn't it?"

"Ripping! What's the next?"

"I don't know yet. I want a whyme."

"Heh! How would 'Her voice is sweet, and not uproarious' do?"

"Wats!"

"Or, 'She talks a lot, but is not jawious.'"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Lemme see! I—"

"Shut up!" bawled Tom Merry. "I'm doing the leader! How can I do the leader if you keep on like a pair of magpies?"

"Don't ask me conundrums."

"I wofuse to be called a pair of magpies—I mean—"

"Hallo!" said Blake's cheery voice, as he came in with Herries and Digby. "Hard at work, I see. Room for three little ones?"

"You needn't bother," said Tom Merry, without turning his head. "Skimpole has done enough for you three, and I shan't want any of your stuff this week."

Jack Blake looked warlike at once.

"What you really want is a thick ear, I suppose," he remarked. "None of your old buck, Thomas. Nice sort of a 'Weekly' it would be without any stuff of mine in it, I suppose. I'm thinking of winding up my poetic serial."

"Bout time, too!"

"Well, it's very popular, anyway," said Blake aggressively, "which is more than can be said for your rotten leading articles. What do we want with leading articles in a magazine, anyway? They're all right for a daily paper. A daily paper appeals to a very different class of intellect. With our intelligent circle of readers, we ought to give them better stuff."

"I was just thinking the same," remarked Kangaroo. "As a matter of fact, I was thinking of making a clean sweep of the usual piffle this week."

They glared at him.

"Well, of all the cheeky wasters," said Blake, in measured tones, "I think you take the giddy biscuit! What's it got to do with you, anyway, you—you, Kangaroo?"

"I'm sub-editor-in-chief."

"Sub-duffer-in-rats!" said Blake. "You ring off! I don't see how we're to find any room for you at all, as I'm doing an extra column on the subject of duels this week."

Arthur Augustus jumped up.

"Tom Mewwy, I pwotest against the pwesence of these boundahs in the editowial office!" he exclaimed. "I call upon them to wetiah!"

"Hallo! Here's Gus!" exclaimed Blake, as if he had not seen him before. "Here's the giddy duellist! Here's the chap who imbrues his hands in gore at the shortest notice, and disposes of the bodies."

"I wegard you as a wottah!"

"Dear me! He wants satisfaction!"

"Pway wetiah fwom the editowial office!"

"Rats! We've come here to work!"

"If you do not wetiah, I shall be undah the painful necessity of throwin' you out!"

"Now, don't be ferocious, Gus. There are only three of us, and I know you won't leave a rag of us when you've once started. You should remember how terrible you are, and keep the brake on."

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his pocket, pushed back his cuffs, and advanced upon his erstwhile chums. They grinned and stood ready.

"Are you going, Blake?"

"Lemme see. Are we going, Dig?"

"Lemme see! Are we going, Herries?"

"I don't think!" chuckled Herries.

"Then I have no wesoruce but to use violence," said D'Arcy; and he proceeded to use it.

He seized Blake, and waltzed him out of the study with surprising ease. Then he would have re-entered to waltz Herries and Dig out, but Blake would not let go. He went on waltzing—right down the passage, and Arthur Augustus struggled in vain.

"Leggo, you wottah! Ow! Let go!"

"It's all right. You're throwing me out, you know!"

"Hold on! Let go!"

"Can't do both!"

"Welease me! I— Ow!"

But Blake waltzed on, and there was no help for it. Past the end study they went, and into the box-room, and there, with a final whirl, Blake let go. Arthur Augustus spun round, and sat down dizzily on a box, and Blake went out and shut the door behind him.

As D'Arcy sprang to his feet there was a click in the lock.

"Bai Jove! The wottah has locked me in!"

Arthur Augustus rushed at the door, and dragged at the handle. It did not yield. He thumped on the upper panel.

"Blake, you wottah, unlock the door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laugh was followed by the sound of receding footsteps. Arthur Augustus thumped on the door again, and shouted. There was no reply.

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy walked to and fro like a lion in a cage. It was too bad. He had started to throw Blake out of the editorial office, and he had got himself locked up in a box-room. And what was he to do?

His contribution to the "Weekly" remained unfinished. His poem was half-done, and the rhyme for "glorious" was still undiscovered.

Arthur Augustus sat down on a trunk with his hands in his pockets, looking very disconsolate. He would willingly have made it pax with Study No. 6 just then, but his voice would not reach from the box-room to Tom Merry's study. He could picture the staff working away busily in the editorial office.

Half an hour passed, and D'Arcy was still a prisoner. He walked about the room, and sniffed and murmured vows of vengeance. At last footsteps were heard in the passage. He ran to the door, and thumped on it.

"Hallo!" said a voice from the passage—the voice of Reilly.

"Pway let me out, Weilly, deah boy!"

"Faith, and phwy can't yet let yerself out, entoirely?" asked Reilly, opening the door of the box-room and looking in in amazement.

D'Arcy almost staggered.

"Bai Jove! Wasn't the door locked?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Faith, there's no key in it entoirely!"

D'Arcy looked at the outside of the lock. There certainly was no key in it. He guessed now that Blake had made the "click" with the latch, and that he had been holding the door when it was pulled from inside.

Words failed to express the feelings of the swell of St. Jim's at that moment. He looked at the keyless lock, and looked at Reilly, who was roaring with laughter. At any moment during his imprisonment he might have opened the door, and walked out by simply turning the handle.

"The—the wottah!" gasped D'Arcy. "It was a twick!"

He rushed along to Tom Merry's study—really in want of satisfaction this time. But the editorial work was done, and the editorial office was empty. The bell called the juniors to dinner, and D'Arcy was greeted with a cheerful nod and a smile from Blake as he entered the dining-hall, to which he replied with a stare that would have brought a blush to the cheek of a gargoyle.

CHAPTER 15.

Bravo, Kangaroo!

"HALLO!" said Tom Merry, as the Terrible Three strolled out on to the cricket ground after dinner. "There's Kangaroo at the wicket. Phew! There goes Selby's window!"

Crash!

Noble was batting, in another attempt to win the Head's prize. His ball went nearer to the Head's window than any other previous one had gone; but it did not go quite near enough. It smashed through the window of the master of the Third.

Mr. Selby's irritable face was seen at the window the next moment. He glared out in search of the offender; but when he saw that the ball came from the cricket field, he drew back again with a grunt.

The Head's offer was growing very unpopular with the masters at St. Jim's; but it was very probable that the glaziers of Rylcombe looked on it with great favour.

"Better luck next time!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Go it, Kangaroo!"

But the Cornstalk came off the pitch.

"I'm going to have another try after school," he said determinedly. "I hear there's talk of a time limit, so we've no time to waste."

"Yaas, wathah! I weally think I shall have to wire in, deah boys."

"Oh, do!" said Kangaroo, laughing. "I shan't grudge you the prize if you get it, Gussy." He turned to Tom

Merry. "By the way, are all the papers in for the 'Weekly'?"

"Yes; the lot's finished now."

"Then I'll buzz off down to Rylcombe to the printer's on my bike. I suppose that's part of the duties of a sub-editor-in-chief?"

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry, who was not sorry to get out of the journey himself. "You can manage that all right."

And before afternoon school Kangaroo peddled away with a bundle of manuscript under his arm, and a cheerful grin on his face.

The rumour of a time-limit to the Head's offer turned out to be correct. There was a notice on the board the same day, informing St. Jim's generally that the offer of a new cricket bat to whoever could send a ball from the ground through the window of the headmaster's study held good only till the end of the week.

If it was not won by Saturday the offer would be rescinded, and the sum of money equal to the cost of the prize would be contributed to the school funds instead.

Tom Merry had other matters to think of on Saturday, however. After morning school the copies of the "Weekly" were to be delivered as usual by the printer's cart at St. Jim's, and the arrival of the "Weekly" was always an affair of great interest to the juniors. For, although it was "Tom Merry's Weekly," it did not appear regularly every week, other interests sometimes supervening, and it had sometimes dropped for a fortnight or three weeks at a time.

Blake, in a sarcastic moment, had even suggested that the title should be changed to "Tom Merry's Annual"—a suggestion, however, that was frowned upon by the editorial staff.

And so when, after dinner, Kangaroo & Co. went down to the wickets, Tom Merry and his chums walked down to the gates to meet the printer's cart, and receive the big bundle of "Weeklies."

As was more usual than not the copy had been sent in at the last possible moment, and Kangaroo had taken it upon himself to inform the printer that he needn't trouble to send any proofs—to save time. As it was not unknown for the proofs to knock about for a whole week before being corrected and sent back, Tom Merry had forgiven this assumption of authority on the part of the new sub-editor.

"Hallo! Here's the cart!"

The Terrible Three received a big, heavy bundle, and carried it back between them to the School House. There was a shout from the cricket field. Kangaroo was batting to the bowling of Clifton Dane, and he had knocked a ball through the branches of the big elm near the Head's window, bringing down a shower of leaves.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom. "He's getting near it! Let's go and have a look at him."

And the juniors hurried out on to the cricket field.

Careless of the cricket, the chums of the Shell hurried up to the study with their bundle, and it was unfastened on Tom Merry's table.

Fifty copies of the "Weekly" lay there, fresh printed, and the cover with the title looked just the same as usual.

Tom Merry opened the first page and gave a snort.

"Taken the first page for himself! I distinctly told him that my leading article was to go on the first page!"

The first page was headed: "A Cornstalk's Impressions of England." The "impressions" were brief enough, consisting of only one line: "Pretty little place, but requires a microscope to get a good look at it!"

The rest of the page was blank, except for the footnote: "To be continued, when I have borrowed a microscope."

The Terrible Three looked at one another rather grimly. "That's meant to be funny!" said Lowther. "Turn over!"

Tom Merry turned over.

Then the Terrible Three gave a simultaneous roar.

The next page was blank.

Save for the heading "Tom Merry's Weekly" along the top of the page, there was nothing to soil the purity of the paper.

Dazed, the three turned the pages over hurriedly, anxiously.

The same blankness met their view on every page!

It was not till they came to the final page that anything printed met their eyes, and then it was the following brief notice:

"NOTICE TO OUR READERS!"

"The new sub-editor-in-chief has decided to leave out all the piffle this week!"

That was all.

They laid the magazine on the table and looked at one another.

Then Tom Merry picked up a stump, Lowther an Indian club, and Manners a dogwhip. With these weapons they turned to the door, Tom Merry carrying a copy of the "Weekly" in his left hand. They passed the chums of Study No. 6 in the passage. Tom Merry held up the copy of the "Weekly" without a word. The Fourth-Formers read it and gasped.

"Wait a minute for us," said Blake, in a strange voice.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The four went into their study, and came out with cricket stumps in their hands. In serious array, they marched downstairs, and met Figgins & Co. on the steps of the School House. The New House juniors were coming to get their copies of the "Weekly."

"Got the 'Weekly'?" asked Figgins.

"Look!"

Figgins look and gasped.

"The—the cheeky boulder! Wait a tick for me!"

Figgins darted into the hall and returned with three walking-sticks. At such a moment there was no time to consult the owners. The New House Co., armed for the fray, marched down to the cricket ground.

The humorous sub-editor saw them coming, and he knew what it meant; but with superb nerve he went on batting. The avengers marched straight on to the pitch.

"Stop that!" shouted Tom Merry. "We're going to slay you!"

The last ball was coming down, and Kangaroo slogged it. The next moment he lifted up his bat to use it as a weapon of self-defence, but at that moment there was a wild roar.

Crash!

"The window!"

"Hurrah!"

"Kangaroo takes the cake!"

Noble looked round in astonishment. In the middle of a pane of the Head's window appeared a jagged hole.

Dr. Holmes was in his study at that moment, speaking to Mr. Selby on the subject of broken windows. Mr. Selby was in an annoyed frame of mind, and showed it. The Head was pacifying him.

"I have limited the extent of the offer to this week, Mr. Selby," the Head was saying. "If the prize is not won today, I—Dear me!"

The cricket ball crashed through the window.

Mr. Selby jumped as if he had been shot. Dr. Holmes jumped, too.

"Dear me!" said the bewildered Head. "I—I really—"

He rushed to the window.

From the cricket ground an excited crowd was rushing, shouting and cheering. In their midst, borne high upon the shoulders of Clifton Dane and Tom Merry, floated the Australasian junior.

For that splendid hit from the wicket had turned away the wrath of the editor and sub-editors of the "Weekly." In the enthusiasm of the moment they forgave the little joke of the Cornstalk.

"Boys!" gasped the Head. "What—"

"Hurrah!"

"Kangaroo's won it!"

"What? Was that ball—"

"Knocked from the cricket field, sir!" shouted Tom Merry. "Honest Injun, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Yaas, wathah! I was goin' to give Kangaroo a fearful thwackin'; but undah the cires I shall ovahlook his disrespectful conduct! I wegard him as a gweat man!"

"Hurrah for Kangaroo!"

"Bravo!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head again. "I—I must say that—that considerable damage has been done in my study—a very regrettable amount of damage—but I am glad the prize has been won. I shall certainly present the prize bat to Noble, and I congratulate him with all my heart!"

And the juniors cheered again, cheering the Head this time; and then they carried Noble round the quad in a triumphal procession. New House and School House, Fourth Form and Third Form and Shell, rejoiced alike. Arthur Augustus beamed upon his study-mates with whom he had been on terms of such estrangement, forgetting everything else in this hour of triumph. For the prize had been won by a junior—where the seniors had tried and failed—and it was time when all minor differences could be sunk.

Kangaroo had won the prize, and he had won it at a lucky moment, too; for, but for that fortunate occurrence, there would certainly have been a very warm time that afternoon for Tom Merry's sub-editor-in-chief.

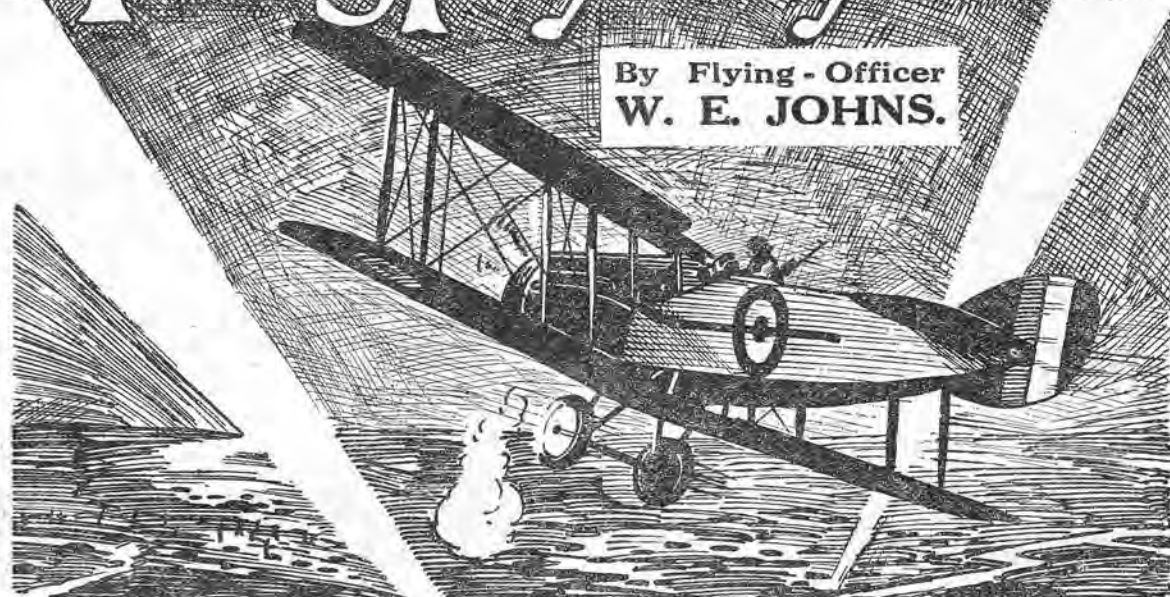
THE END.

(Tom Merry and Co. are off to Coventry in next week's ripping open-air yarn, "CHUMS ON THE ROAD!" Order your copy now and make sure of it.)

THRILLS WITH SECRET SERVICE AIRMEN.

The Spyfliers

By Flying-Officer
W. E. JOHNS.



WHAT HAS HAPPENED—

REX LOVELL and TONY FOSTER are chosen for Secret Service work by MAJOR TREVOR. They become suspicious of CAPTAIN FAIREAX, of the British R.F.C., believing him to be a spy. Later they go to Lille, behind the German lines, to deliver a message at a house. The house is raided while they are there and they escape disguised as German soldiers. But even as they are running across the garden their pursuers break through a door in the wall!

(Now Read On.)

Escape!

REX caught a fleeting glimpse of armed men in the doorway, and throwing the gun to his shoulder, blazed both barrels straight at them. Without waiting to see the result, he flung the now useless gun away and dashed off at a stumbling run in the opposite direction.

"Where are you, Tony?" he gasped.

"I'm with you," said a voice near at hand, and together they ran blindly on into the darkness, which seemed to press on them from all sides. A hedge loomed up before them, and without waiting to see what was over the other side, they plunged through it, regardless of thorns and brambles. The next instant they were tumbling head over heels down a steep slope, grabbing wildly at the sliding earth for something to check their fall. They landed in a heap at the bottom, gasping, with the wind knocked out of them. The darkness was as the darkness of the Pit.

"Are you hurt, Tony?" cried Rex, struggling painfully to his feet. He caught his toe against a projection and pitched headlong again. Gropping on the ground, his hand came in contact with a cold iron rail.

"Great heavens!" he said hoarsely. "We're on the railway line." A dull, rumbling roar, rapidly approaching, filled the air, and the headlights of a locomotive flashed into sight round a bend not one hundred yards away.

They flung themselves down on the bank of the cutting into which they had fallen as the train swept by; through the windows they could see that it was packed with German troops, no doubt being rushed towards the trenches.

"This is a bit of luck," exclaimed Rex as the tail light of the train swept round the next corner out of sight. "I know where I am now. Come on, this way!"

They walked for some time in silence, often stopping to grope their way in uncertainty; they could no longer hear the sound of the hue and cry behind them, and assumed that the pursuers had gone off in another direction. Once the moon showed dimly for a few minutes, and Rex pointed to it with a muttered exclamation of alarm.

"What's the matter?" asked Tony anxiously.

"I don't like the look of it," replied Rex. "Look at that mist. If that fog comes down before we get to the machine, there'll be no finding it, and if we did find it we couldn't get off the ground. We had better push on as fast as we can go."

They hurried their pace until Rex, who was leading, turned, and laid a restraining hand on Tony's arm.

"Here's the bridge," he said quietly, "just in front of us. This is where the railway goes under the bridge we crossed as we went into the town. We were lucky to strike this line, and no mistake; keep your eyes skinned in case anybody is about."

Their fears proved groundless, and reaching the road, they broke into a steady jog-trot. "This stuff is getting worse," panted Rex once between breaths as they ran. "We've no time to lose. If it gets any worse we're sunk. This way—this is where we turn off."

At the stile which they had crossed on their outward journey Rex stopped for a few moments to listen, but only the dripping of the moisture off the trees around them broke the silence. They started off again at a quick run down the side of the hedge by which they had left the Bristol, but fifty yards away from it, however, they slackened their speed and approached warily.

"It's all right, she's here, and I can't see anybody about," whispered Rex. "Oh, good lor', that's done it!"

His exclamation of disgust was echoed by Tony, and not without cause. The threatening fog had come down on them like a blanket, effectively blotting out everything in an impenetrable shroud of opaque moisture. Even at a distance of a yard they were unable to see each other.

"Catch hold of my coat and don't let go," said Rex desperately. "If we ever get parted in this stuff we'll never find each other again."

Only those who have been caught in the open in a fog at night know the feeling of utter blind helplessness which it produces. All sense of space and direction disappears.

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leaving one with the impression that every step will involve collision with an invisible obstruction.

Fortunately, Rex had the hedge beside him to give him his direction, and with his right hand brushing the bushes and his left hand held out before him, he groped his way, inch by inch, towards the machine. His hand encountered something solid, and he felt it gingerly. Presently he made it out to be the leading edge of a lower wing.

"Here it is," he said shortly; but even then they were unable to see the machine. "This fog is something I didn't bargain for!" he added savagely.

"What can we do?" asked Tony in a low voice.

"Nothing—absolutely nothing—except wait!" replied Rex, feeling his way to an undercarriage wheel and squatting on it. "An aeroplane can do a lot of things with a man, and a man can do a lot of things with an aeroplane, but there is one thing he can't do with it, and that is, get it off the ground in a fog like this."

"There is a straight run ahead of the machine, we know that much," returned Tony helpfully.

"So there may be; don't you try to teach me my job," answered Rex. "Even if there is, how the devil do you think I can hold a machine straight when I can't see a yard in front of me? Even suppose I did get off, what then? How thick is this stuff? We don't know. It might be only a hundred feet, but on the other hand, it might be five thousand, and the pilot hasn't been born yet who could keep a machine on even keel in this soup for more than three minutes. Even if I did get through it I could never get down again—that is assuming that this blanket stretches over France, as I expect it does. Our chances of getting down without hitting anything would be about ten million to one. No. We stay where we are; but there are no two ways about that."

An hour passed slowly, and still the weather remained unchanged. Another hour ticked by in silence, except for the dreary drip, drip, drip of water trickling off the wings.

"How long have we been here?" asked Tony at last, and the sound of his voice made Rex jump.

"About seven years, I think," answered Rex gloomily. "But it seems like ten."

"Only seven years—it seemed like eternity to me!" moaned Tony in a hollow voice.

Ten minutes dragged by on leaden wings, and Tony, who had seated himself on the other wheel, rested his chin on his hand despondently. "I can't stand much more of this," he said finally, in a strained voice. "I shall go crazy if something doesn't happen soon; I've never been so cold in my life. For goodness' sake talk about something or I shall scream!"

"Something is happening," replied Rex soberly; "it is just beginning to get light, but the fog hasn't lifted."

In another quarter of an hour they could see each other faintly through a clammy belt of moisture. Rex looked at his watch.

"It's nearly half-past six," he muttered, half to himself. "If we don't get a breeze within the next half-hour to blow this stuff away it might hang about for hours, and sooner or later somebody's bound to come along here."

Another hour passed slowly, and at the end of it Rex arose and shook himself.

"Get aboard!" he said tersely. "I've finished waiting!"

"What are the chances?" asked Tony quietly.

"Not very bright," admitted the pilot. "Visibility is about ten yards, but we've one thing in our favour, and that is the knowledge of a clear run ahead. I might get off, and, by holding her down and zooming, go right through it." He indicated the fog with his thumb. "If it's very thick"—he shrugged his shoulders—"well, it'll be just too bad, that's all!"

"If we do get off, I'm going to fly south-west and keep on flying till we come to the end of it. If there is no break I shall just fly until the petrol gives out, and that will mean pancaking, to say the best of it. If I do, don't jump. Strap yourself in, cock your knees up to your chin, cover your face, and hope for the best."

"One thing is certain, we daren't stay here any longer. Go ahead, laddie! Swing her!" he finished laconically, with a nod towards the prop. He climbed into his seat. "Switches off!" he sang out.

Tony turned the prop round once or twice, and balanced it on the point of contact.

"Contact!" he called.

Rex slipped his switch on. Tony put his weight behind the swing, and the engine burst into its steady purr, ticking over with the regularity of a sewing-machine as Rex throttled back to wait for it to warm up.

"I shall have to let her get thoroughly warm," he said, as Tony climbed into his seat. "I daren't risk choking her."

For ten minutes they waited, while Rex watched the thermometer climb slowly to the safety-line. He was about

to signal to Tony that he was going to take off, when something made him look up.

Down the side of the hedge, not thirty feet away, rode a troop of Uhlans, with an officer at their head. There was a shout from the leader as he saw that he was perceived, but Tony's gasp of horror was drowned in the mighty bellow of the 275 h.p. Rolls-Royce Eagle engine as Rex jammed open the throttle and started off across the field, gaining speed at every second.

The crack of carbines came faintly to his ears, but it was not bullets that he feared, for he knew the Uhlans were shooting blindly into the fog; it was what lay before him that made him wince.

The next sixty seconds seemed like a long-drawn-out nightmare. Tail up, they roared across the sodden turf into a solid bank of opaque white vapour. Would she never lift? Ah, the wheels were only just touching now; a final bump and she was off.

Rex held the stick forward as long as he dared, and then, as something grey loomed up in front of him he pulled the stick slowly back into his stomach. The seconds ticked slowly by as they zoomed into the enshrouding vapour. Rex, tight-lipped, began to ease the stick forward as the needle of the air speed indicator started to waver and then droop. But it was getting lighter now. The mist was lighter and whiter, and then, with a suddenness that was startling, they burst out into blazing sunshine.

Rex blinked like an owl in the light after the sombre darkness below. The glare was dazzling, but he looked round at his observer with a triumphant swing of his thumb.

As he turned south-west by his compass he looked anxiously around the sky, searching every quarter slowly and methodically, but he could see no other machines; they were alone in the sky.

Below them a plain of snowy whiteness stretched, it seemed, to infinity; above them a sky of purest cobalt blue merged slowly into turquoise as it curved over and kissed the mist at the distant horizon.

Not a speck broke the perfect harmony of blue-and-white as they skimmed along above the cloud tops in a silent world of their own. It was hard to believe that less than two thousand feet below, not a mile away, half a million men were entrenched in a gloomy land of mud and murk, grappling at each other's throats in the greatest struggle the world had ever known.

For nearly half an hour they flew thus, Rex watching his compass, Tony maintaining a vigilant watch around. Suddenly the engine spluttered, but picked up again as the pilot switched over from the main tank to the gravity tank.

"I've about twenty minutes' petrol left, but we must be over our own side of the lines by now!" he shouted over his shoulder, in answer to Tony's look of inquiry.

Another fifteen minutes passed; Rex throttled back and dropped slowly into the mist, eyes strained downwards. His altimeter began to swing back. At five hundred feet they were still enveloped in the grey opaque vapour. At two hundred feet they emerged from below the cloud bank into fairly clear atmosphere. The mist was slowly rising, and woods and fields lay below.

Rex made no attempt to find out where they were, but concentrated on getting down immediately into the largest field available. He chose an old stubble-field, and landed in the middle of it without any great difficulty.

He stood up in his cockpit and looked around; some Tommies were staring at them over a hedge not far away.

"Well, we are at least over our own side again, thank goodness!" he said, as he sat down again, with a tired sigh. "How long is it since we took off? It seems weeks to me. Well, we had better find out where we are and get some petrol. Keep your coat buttoned up—if anybody catches sight of these uniforms we are wearing we might stop a bullet yet, and that would be a tragedy after getting out of the hole we were in last night!"

It was past noon when they finally reached home, and they lost no time in getting to their quarters and stripping off the hated uniforms, which they stowed away out of sight. A meal and a bath, and they flung themselves down in Rex's room to rest. No sooner had they done so than Jimmy Brown, the recording officer, entered.

"I've just heard you were home," he said. "I had just about given you up. Major Trevor has been on the phone once or twice, and on the last occasion he told me he was afraid you had 'gone west,' and that you had better be reported 'missing.'"

"I think we had better go and see him," replied Rex, rising. "Come on, Tony; we can sleep afterwards."

They found Major Trevor in his office, and he gazed at them for some moments speechlessly when they entered the room.

"I can't tell you how glad and relieved I am to see you back," he said. "It is a weight off my mind. I had quite given you up for lost. Frankly, I never expected to see you



"Stick 'em up, Fairfax!" said Rex crisply, in English. "Make a sound and it will be your last!" The S.E.5 pilot stared as if fascinated at the muzzle of Rex's gun. "Bah!" he sneered. "One shout and I could have a dozen men here!"

again, and have been reproaching myself ever since you went for letting you go. Well, how did you get on?"

Briefly Rex recounted their adventures, the major watching him all the while with wide-eyed amazement as the story unfolded.

"You have been lucky; very lucky indeed," he said soberly at the end. "It is a pity that you couldn't get the return message, but that could not be helped. You certainly did all in your power, and you did remarkably well to bring yourselves back. You must both be very tired. Get off to bed now, and go on with your other work as soon as you feel fit again."

On the Trail!

A WEEK passed quickly, with Rex and Tony pursuing their quest with redoubled energy. Major Trevor's convictions regarding Captain Fairfax had left them seriously disturbed in mind, particularly in view of the fact that they suspected him of being concerned with the betrayal of the rendezvous in Lille; but, after the way in which the major had pooh-poohed the idea of Fairfax being concerned with espionage when they had broached the subject on the occasion of the guest night, Rex had not mentioned his suspicions when recounting the story of their latest adventure.

Had he been quite certain that the man whom he had seen under the lamp was Fairfax, he felt that he might have been justified in reopening the matter, and while in his heart he felt sure that he had not been mistaken, the one brief glimpse he had had in the darkened street was hardly sufficient proof to warrant it.

Yet the failure of their mission and the appearance of the man bearing so striking a resemblance to Fairfax at the crucial moment could hardly be coincidence, he reasoned, particularly as no thought of Fairfax was in his mind when he had looked out of the window of the ill-fated house in Lille and seen the man under the lamp-post.

Against that was the major's defence of the man, backed by his undeniably fine record. As Rex put it to Tony, it was impossible to imagine an officer with Fairfax's record to be in the pay of the enemy, yet it was almost equally impossible to think that they could both have made such an amazing mistake, or that there could be two men so much alike.

Meanwhile, Fairfax had, apparently, returned to headquarters after the guest-night, and they had not seen the S.E.5 since. Rex, becoming desperate, had resolved upon taking another extremely hazardous chance.

"I have got a feeling in my bones," he had told Tony the previous evening, "that the centre of this thing is at the Boche aerodrome, at Varne. Where we saw Fairfax—if it

was Fairfax. The only thing I have got to bear that out is the fact that either Fairfax, or someone very much like him, was there. If it wasn't Fairfax—well, we're on a wild-goose chase, and we are risking our necks for nothing; but, Trevor or no Trevor, I can't get it out of my head that Varne is the place to watch. It's just a hunch, but I am playing it up till we find something or face a firing-party. I am going to land again to-morrow at Varne."

And so it came about that the following morning found them in the Hannoverana again, clad in the German pilots' uniforms, planning down on to the German aerodrome.

Rex had thought his plans out very carefully, and acted accordingly. Landing some distance from the tarmac, he climbed swiftly from the cockpit, and bent over a tyre, as if examining it. What he actually did was to take a pen-knife from his pocket and thrust it, with a vicious jab, straight into the inner tube. There was a faint hiss of escaping air, and, for the benefit of possible watchers, he made a gesture of annoyance.

Climbing back into his seat, he taxied slowly to where several officers and a group of mechanics were standing in front of a hangar. He waved a greeting to Von Henkel, the officer who had given him the beer on the previous occasion, and again dismounted, beckoning to the mechanics as he did so.

"Can you fit me a new wheel, or mend that puncture?" he asked the N.C.O. in charge, in fluent German.

"Jowohl, lieutenant!" replied the unter-offizier, saluting.

And Rex paid no further attention to him, but strolled across to the mildly interested officers who were now making their way towards the mess. He greeted Von Henkel warmly.

"You are the very man I have come to see," he said. "Did I leave my cigarette-case here the other day? I couldn't find it anywhere when I got back, so I have slipped over to see if it is here; punctured my confounded wheel landing, too!" he added ruefully.

"No, I haven't seen a strange case about," replied the German; "but come in and have a beer while I ask the mess waiters if they have seen one."

Enquiries naturally proving fruitless, they returned to the front of the mess, and stood talking until the departure of a big formation left them almost alone.

"Well, Koepler, let's stroll along and see how they are getting on with that wheel," said Rex loudly to Tony, for the benefit of anyone within earshot, and together they meandered unconcernedly towards the sheds.

The tyre was still in process of being repaired, and they walked up and down, apparently aimlessly, in bored impatience. Actually, they were subjecting everything

within sight to a searching scrutiny. The door of every hangar except one stood wide open, and it was only the work of a few minutes to ascertain that they housed nothing resembling an SE5.

"I'm going to see what's in that end shed," said Rex quietly at the end of one of their perambulations. "Let's go round the back; no one is paying the slightest attention to us."

Casually, with their hands thrust deep in their pockets and pausing every few steps to talk, they slowly made their way to the rear of the hangars, and then strolled along until they were behind the one with closed doors. As they expected, there were one or two small windows quite low down at the back.

"Go straight on, Tony; I'll look," said Rex softly. Tony heard a quick intake of breath, but did not turn, and the next instant Rex had rejoined him, linked his arm through his own, and was continuing the walk as if nothing had happened. "Let's sit down," he said loudly, pointing to an empty oil-drum.

"Well, what was it?" whispered Tony, under his breath. Rex looked around keenly before replying. "There is a Bristol Fighter and a DH4 in there, both looking as if they are being used," said Rex quietly.

The sound of an aero engine over their heads made them look up, and, in spite of himself, Tony clutched Rex by the arm. An SE5 was just swinging in to land.

"Sit quite still," said Rex evenly; "this is where we learn something. If it's Fairfax and he spots us we are in for trouble; but I hope he won't see us. If it isn't him, it doesn't matter; but I shall be very interested indeed to see the face of the man who is flying that machine."

Out of the corner of his eye Rex watched the SE land and taxi tail-up towards the shed beside which they were sitting. A mechanic, who seemed to know exactly what to do, swung back the door, and the machine taxied straight in without stopping. The door swung to behind it, and the mechanic returned to the group working on the Hannoverian.

"This is where we click," said Rex, rising to his feet. "I must see who is inside that hangar."

Three paces brought them to the window and they peeped in; the SE5 was there, but the cockpit was empty and the pilot nowhere in sight.

"Stand still," said Rex, and, bending low, hurried to the next window and peeped up over the sill.

He was back in a second, his face a trifle pale.

"It's Fairfax," he said briefly. "We had better stand here until he goes down to the mess, and then we'll push off immediately the wheel is finished. Hallo, they've finished it now; they are going away!"

"Let us get off while we have the chance!" muttered Tony.

"Wait," replied Rex grimly. "Listen, Tony! I saw Fairfax take a bundle of papers—they looked like plans or maps—from his pocket. He is in a cubicle, changing, and I saw him put the papers on a table beside him. They might be something of vital importance to our people, and I am going in to get them!"

"Good heavens, Rex! Are you mad?" gasped Tony.

"We've got to do it!" retorted Rex doggedly. "A bold stroke is our best chance!"

They walked openly to the front of the hangar, opened the door, and entered. Rex, with his hand in the pocket

of his flying-coat, walked straight to a small door in the side of the hangar, turned the handle, and pushed. It was locked on the inside.

"Who is there?" called a voice from within. "It is I, Hauptmann von Rasberg!" replied Rex harshly.

There was the sound of a key being turned, and the door was flung open.

"Stick 'em up, Fairfax!" said Rex crisply in English. "Make a sound, and it will be your last!"

The SE5 pilot stared as if fascinated at the muzzle of Rex's Smith & Wesson revolver. Tony closed the door.

"Bah!" sneered Fairfax. "One shout, and I could have a dozen men here!"

"You're right," agreed Rex grimly; "but you wouldn't see 'em. Try it, and I'll blow you in half, and I mean that, you dirty spy! I don't know why I don't shoot you, anyhow. These are what I came for," he said, reaching out and picking up the packet of papers tied with red tape which were lying on the table; he dropped them with a quick movement into the pocket of his flying coat. "If you're wise you'll stand still!" he snarled, as Fairfax made an involuntary movement. "Stay where you are. If I have to shoot, remember it will be you that stops the first bullet."

He took the key out of the keyhole on the inside of the door, went out, and then locked the door swiftly on the outside. It was the work of a moment. With Tony at his heels, he hurried towards the hangar door, but before they could reach it, Fairfax was kicking and hammering on the door of his cubicle. As they walked across the tarmac several mechanics passed them hurrying towards the hangar.

"They think he is showing for them," said Rex quietly, as the muffled sound of Fairfax's voice reached their ears. "Swing the prop, and look lively—no, stand back, here's a mechanic coming to do it. Get into your seat."

For ten seconds that seemed like eternity to Tony, the mechanic slowly pulled round the big propeller. He paused when it was balanced on contact.

"Contact!" called Rex.

The mechanic swung the prop, but the only sound that came from the engine was a faint hiss as the cylinders failed to fire. A low groan of despair broke from Tony's lips.

"Try her again!" cried Rex coolly, and the mechanic once more stepped forward and swung the propeller. The engine started with a roar. Out of the corner of his eye Rex saw the hangar door flung open, and Fairfax race towards them; but he pushed the throttle open, and, narrowly missing the mechanic, raced across the aerodrome. There had been no time to turn round facing the wind, and he knew he was taking off down-wind. The trees on the far side of the aerodrome seemed to rush towards him, and he bit his lip. Could he clear them? The machine lifted at last, and as Rex pulled the stick back he saw the tree-tops sway beneath them as the undercarriage almost brushed them. He glanced over his shoulder. Tony's face was buried in his hands. "Close!" he bawled.

Tony leaped over and put his mouth against Rex's ear. "You'll kill us both doing that one of these days!" he yelled.

Rex nodded.

(Rex and Tony have got away this time, but they've got a tougher job on next week, so look out for super thrills!)



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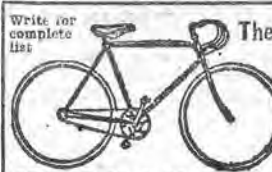
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