

BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS COMES TO ST. JIM'S! See this week's splendid long complete school yarn inside!

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

The GEM

2^d



BILLY BUNTER'S BOUNDARY!

THE LAUGH OF THE WEEK! BUNTER, THE FAT BOY OF GREYFRIARS,

BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S!



Can Bunter eat? Oh, boy, he fairly puts Fatty Wynn in the shade! Can he bowl like Fatty Wynn? His bowling is certainly dangerous—but only to the fieldsmen! Amazing things happen when Billy Bunter of Greyfriars comes to St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 1.

A Surprise for Gussy!

"**B**AI Jove, I don't know this handwitin', you know!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, made the remark. He had taken a letter down from the rack, looked at it, then screwed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked again.

But even the aid of the monocle did not make the hand-writing on the envelope familiar. He was sure he had not seen it before.

D'Arcy regarded it curiously, wondering. It did not seem to occur to him that he could discover more about the letter by opening it.

"Bai Jove, you chaps, I wondah whom this is fwom?" he said. "I don't know the chap, anyway—at all events, I don't know his fist, you know!"

"Hallo, Gussy! What are you mumbling about?" asked Jack Blake cheerfully, as he came along the passage.

"I was not mumblin', that I am aware of, Blake, deah

boy. I was wondewin' whom this lettah was fwom. I don't know the hand."

Blake glanced at the letter.

It was addressed to "Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's, Sussex," in a big, sprawling hand, and there were nearly as many blots, snears, and smudges on the envelope as there were letters of the alphabet.

"Why not open it and look inside?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove, that's a wippin' ideah, you know! Lend me your penknife."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy slit the envelope and took out the letter within. Blake waited, looking at him.

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, any news?" demanded his chum. "Is it a siver from your noble governor?"

"My governah would hardly wite in such wotten handwitin' as that, Blake!"

"Is it from your Aunt Adelina, then?"

"I wogard that question as fwivolous! It is fwom a fwied—I should say an acquaintance—and he's comin' here."

VISITS ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY! READ ALL ABOUT IT BELOW!

By Martin Clifford.

"Oh! Name?"

"He signs the lettah 'W. G. Buntah,'" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, glancing at it. "I pwesume the 'W' stands for William, for it must certainly be the person we have heard addressed by the wathah familiah abbowviation of Billy."

Jack Blake gave a start.

"Billy Bunter!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He's coming here?"

"Yaas, appawwently," D'Arcy rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "He says that there bein' a whole holiday at Gweyfwialhs he has taken advantage of the opportunity to accept my kind invitation. I don't wemembah givin' him any kind invitation, you know, but I suppose I must have."

Blake grunted.

The St. Jim's juniors had lately met the Greyfriars juniors on the cricket field, and they had been on excellent terms with the eleven that came from Greyfriars. But there was one member of the Greyfriars party whom they had not much taken to, and that was Billy Bunter. And it was Bunter who had kindly accepted D'Arcy's kind invitation—given or not given—and was coming to St. Jim's.

"Well, Gussy, I must say that you might be a little more careful in the selection of your friends!" said Blake, wagging a warning forefinger at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Weally, Blake, I always try to keep my circle of friends quite select, not to say swaggah!" said Arthur Augustus. "But when I came to St. Jim's I was put into Study No. 6, and I was weally bound to chum up with you and Hewwies and Dig!"

"What!" roared Blake. "I wasn't alluding to myself, you utter ass! I was thinking of this chap Bunter."

"Oh, I see! As a mattah of fact, deah boy, I did not chum with this chap Buntah at all. I wegard him as a harmless sort of young ass, you know, but I did not take to him vewy much. But a chap is bound to be polite to a visitah. I looked aftah him a bit."

"And invited him—"

"Yaas, I suppose I must have invited him, as he says he's accepted my kind invitation," said D'Arcy, puzzled. "I don't wemembah it in the least, but I suppose it's all wight. Pewwaps, though, somebody else invited him, and he's got it mixed up. Did you invite him, Blake?"

"No, ass!"

"I refuse to be called an ass! I—"

"When is he coming?"

D'Arcy glanced at the letter.

"To-day, deah boy. He says to-mowwow, but—"

"Well, duffer, if he says to-morrow, probably he means to-morrow."

"No, I think not, because he says to-mowwow, Wednesday, and to-day's Wednesday; and, besides, the lettah's dated yestahday."

"Ass!"

"I decline to be called an ass! I wegard you as wemarkably stupid this mornin', Blake. The young boundah says he's comin' by an early twain, and will be at Wylcombe Station at eleven-thirty, and he particularly wants somebody to meet him there."

"Young ass! It doesn't seem to have occurred to him that it isn't a whole holiday at St. Jim's as well as Greyfriars!" grunted Blake. "How is a chap to get off in the morning, I'd like to know?"

"Probably he has not thought of that, deah boy. Pewwaps I can obtain permish to cut last lesson and go to the station."

"Blessed if I like this! Why couldn't you invite Harry Wharton, or Bob Cherry, or that chap Nugent, or Linley?" grunted Blake. "They're all ripping chaps. Just like you to pick out this chap Bunter—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"He's exactly like Wynn, of the New House, only more so—much more so. What are you going to do with him?"

"Weally, I haven't had time to think yet. I—"

"We shall all have to bear a hand, I suppose—"

"Weally, Blake, I can look aftah my guest all wight," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Pewwaps he is not exactly the guest I would have chosen, and I can't think how it was I came to ask him, but—"

"Did you ask him?"

"Yaas, I must have—he says so," replied D'Arcy innocently. "Besides, Fatty Wynn paid a visit to Gweyfwialhs, and they tweeked him well, he says, and so we could hardly fail to play up when a Gweyfwialhs chap comes here. I twust you are not goin' to be inhospitable, Blake?"

"We were going to play cricket this afternoon," growled Blake. "If it had been Wharton, it would have been all right. Shove a bat in his hand and he's happy. But this worm Bunter doesn't play cricket. He only came here with the team to look on and jaw."

"Yaas, but—"

"Of course, a chap doesn't want to be inhospitable," said Blake, relenting a little, "and the Greyfriars chaps always treated us well."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But you might have selected—"

"Weally, Blake, it's too late to think of that now, and you must wemembah that the chap's our guest," said Arthur Augustus. "He will be the guest of Study No. 6, and it's up to us to give him a good time."

"Well, we'll do our best. You can take him out for a walk while we play cricket," said Blake. "Of course, we can't put that off—or we could make him play. Every decent chap ought to be fond of cricket. We can assume that he's a decent chap, and make him play."

"Yaas, but—"

"That's settled! Hallo, there's the breakfast-bell!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Come in; I'm hungry!"

And Jack Blake made for the dining-room, followed more slowly by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy was hospitality itself, but perhaps if he had had his choice he would have selected any guest but Billy Bunter. But courtesy to a guest came before anything else. It was up to Study No. 6 to give the visitor a good time, and Blake, in spite of his remarks on the subject, was certain to do as much as anybody else to keep up the reputation of the study.

CHAPTER 2.

The Terrible Three on the Track!

TOM MERRY of the Shell glanced across to the Fourth Form table in the School House dining-room.

His glance rested upon D'Arcy's thoughtful face and upon the equally thoughtful expression Jack Blake was wearing.

"Something's on," Tom Merry murmured to Monty Lowther, who was next to him at the Shell table. Lowther looked up from his egg.

"What is it?"

"Look at Gussy."

Lowther looked.

The swell of St. Jim's had just set down his teacup, and had taken the letter from his pocket, and was reperusing it.

After reading it through again, he restored it to his pocket, and resumed his breakfast with a still more thoughtful frown.

The chums of the Shell exchanged glances.

It was pretty clear that there was something "on," and the Shell fellows were naturally curious to know what it was, for the rivalry between Tom Merry and his chums on the one hand, and Study No. 6 on the other, never slackened, except when they were disputing with Figgins & Co. of the New House, or the fellows of the neighbouring Grammar School at Rylcombe. Whether Study No. 6 were planning a jape, or whether there was a chance of planning a jape against them, Tom Merry naturally wanted to know what was going on.

"I think I can guess what's up," Monty Lowther murmured, after a minute or two's reflection.

"Go it!"

"It's Cousin Ethel!"

"Cousin Ethel?"

"Yes," said Lowther confidently. "I know Gussy was saying something the other day about Ethel paying another visit here. That letter's from Ethel, and it means she is coming to-day."

"Shouldn't wonder!"

"Oh, it's a dead cert!" said Monty Lowther. "What do you think, Manners?"

"Shouldn't wonder!" said Manners.

"I tell you it's a dead cert!" said Lowther warmly. "I can tell it by the expression in Gussy's eye. You see if you don't hear something presently about his going to the

station. Of course, he wouldn't let on that Ethel's coming. He always tries to appropriate her—like his cheek!"

"Yes, rather. But—"

"A little less talk at that end of the table, please," said Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, with a severe glance in the direction of the Terrible Three.

And the discussion ceased.

But the chums of the Shell were eager to know whether Lowther's surmise was correct—for was not Ethel Cleveland their chum as much as anybody's, and weren't they entitled to forestall D'Arcy in meeting her at the station if they could possibly fix it?

Already a scheme was floating through Tom Merry's mind of locking the swell of St. Jim's up in the toolshed, and going to the station in his place—with apologies to Cousin Ethel for the unavoidable absence of Arthur Augustus.

That D'Arcy would be keeping the matter dark was only to be expected, and the Terrible Three were too cautious to ask any direct questions.

They watched and waited.

"Hallo!" muttered Manners. "Look there!"

The Shell fellows stopped suddenly. At a short distance, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had stopped Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, as he came out of his study. Every word the swell of St. Jim's uttered was audible to everybody near him; he was making no attempt to subdue his voice.

"Pway, sir—"

"Eh? Yes, did you wish to speak, D'Arcy?" said little Mr. Lathom, stopping, and blinking at the swell of the School House through his glasses.

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I wish to wequest a little favah, sir."

"Proceed."

"I should like to be excused last lesson this mornin', sir—"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

"I have a fwiend comin' to the school on a visit, sir, and I want to meet the twain, sir, if poss. It's vewy important."

"Ahem! I do not know—"

"The twain gets into Wylcombe Station at eleven-thirty, sir."

"Yes, but—"

"I weally wish you could give me permish, sir. I should take it as a vewy gweat favah indeed."

"Well, D'Arcy, this is very irregular, but I will not refuse you," said Mr. Lathom, in his benevolent way. "You may go."

"Thank you vewy much, sir. I am awfully obliged, sir." The swell of St. Jim's hurried away.

Tom Merry and his chums looked at one another.

"That settles it," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather. Cousin Ethel's coming this morning."

"And that young boulder's going to meet her without saying a word about it to any of us!" said Noble.

"That's his little game."

"But we're done," said Monty Lowther. "We can't get off morning lessons like that. Linton isn't quite so good as Lathom in that way."

"No. But we must manage it somehow!" said Tom Merry determinedly. "A couple of us would be enough."

"But what's the wheeze?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, as Gussy is keeping us out of the affair, it's only fair play that we should keep him out, isn't it?"

"Exactly!"

"If he meets with any accident, and can't go to the station, we can carry his apologies to Miss Cleveland."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And bring her to St. Jim's, and take the opportunity of fixing up something for the afternoon," grinned Tom Merry. "Gussy will be left on his lonesome, and serve the young boulder jolly well right! Fancy his having the check to keep Cousin Ethel to himself!"

"Awful nerve! It's a ripping idea, if we can get off!"

"We've got to get off!" said Tom Merry.

And the chums of the Shell set their wits to work to devise a plan for getting off in time to meet the eleven-thirty train at Rylcombe Station.

CHAPTER 3.

To Be or Not To Be?

"IF you please, sir—"

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stopped with a pleasant smile as Tom Merry spoke to him. The big, athletic Housemaster always had a cheerful smile for the juniors, and Gore and Mellish and some other discontented spirits hinted that he made favourites of Tom Merry's study. But, except that he had a natural liking for cheery and manly natures, and disliked anything in the shape of meanness and deceit, the Housemaster never showed favouritism.

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"Yes, Merry; what is it?"

"Could you get me let off this morning, sir, in time to go to Rylcombe to meet the eleven-thirty train, sir?" asked Tom Merry meekly. "I've a particular friend coming by the train, sir, and I should like to be at the station."

"You must ask your Form master, Merry."

"Yes, sir; but I—I thought you might speak a word for me."

Mr. Railton shook his head.

"It is absolutely a matter for Mr. Linton to decide, Merry. You must ask him."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Railton walked on, leaving Tom Merry looking glum. Tom knew perfectly well that Mr. Linton was the right gentleman to approach in the matter; but the master of the Shell was a little uncertain in temper, and Tom was leaving him as a last resource.

"Any luck?" asked Lowther, who had been looking on from a distance, and had hurried up to hear the verdict.

"No. Refers me to Linton."

"Rotten! Try Kildare!"

Tom Merry nodded, and looked out for Kildare. The captain of St. Jim's was chatting on the steps with Darrell, another Sixth-Former. Tom Merry approached him with the meekest, possible smile, and the most insinuating manner. Had his old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, seen him at that moment, she would have thought that her dear boy was really too good and virtuous to live in this wicked world at all. But Kildare of the Sixth knew that when Tom Merry looked most innocent he was probably planning some jape, and he was on his guard at once.

"Well, what tricks are you up to now?" he demanded.

Tom looked shocked.

"Tricks, Kildare?"

The big Sixth-Former laughed.

"You've never heard of such things, of course," he said.

"What do you want, anyway?"

"I thought you might speak a word for me—"

"You can generally speak enough for yourself."

"Yes; but this is to Linton," said Tom Merry. "A—a particular friend is coming to Rylcombe by the eleven-thirty, and I want to meet the train. If you were to speak a word for me to Mr. Linton—"

"Can't be done! It's not a matter for me to interfere in."

"But as a favour, Kildare—"

Kildare shook his head.

"It would do more harm than good. Mr. Linton would think that you ought to have come directly to him. That's what you'd better do."

"Yes; but you never know how to take him."

"Well, that's the best advice I can give you."

Tom Merry rejoined Lowther and Noble in the Hall. His expression told them that Kildare had "panned out" no better than Mr. Railton.

"No good," he said. "I suppose we shall have to tackle Linton direct. I suppose we couldn't get Clifton Dane to hypnotise him, could we, Kangaroo?"

Kangaroo chuckled.

"I don't think Dane would care to risk it with a Form master," he remarked. "And hypnotism only works with easy-going people who are easily led. And Mr. Linton is about as easily led as a—"

"As a tiger, or a bucking broncho," grinned Lowther. "Hypnotism's no good. You'll have to put it to him gently, Tom, with your sweetest smile."

"Ye-es; but smiles are no good on Linton. He doesn't understand 'em, and he'll talk some piffle about lessons being interrupted, and so on, as if lessons mattered on an occasion like this. Blessed if I don't wish we were in the Fourth! We'd soon talk over Lathom."

"I suppose it wouldn't do to cut?" suggested Lowther.

"Rats! That would be a row and a flogging, I expect. And when we came in with Cousin Ethel, it wouldn't be exactly pleasant to be yanked off before the beaks."

"H'm! I suppose not!"

"But we've got to work it somehow. We've got to think it out."

"Can I help you, Merry?"

The Shell fellows looked round at the sound of Skimpole's voice. Skimpole, the brainy man of the Shell, looked at them with a beaming smile blinking behind his big spectacles.

"I heard you remark that you must think something out," he said. "Perhaps I can assist you. With my superior knowledge, I could probably elucidate in one moment the difficulty that baffles you."

"Yes, very likely," assented Lowther. "We were trying to work out a problem. If you take three apples from two boys, how many thick ears would you have left?"

"Really, Lowther—"

"We want to get a run this morning, Skimmy," said Tom

Merry, laughing. "We've got to meet the eleven-thirty train at Rylcombe, and we want permission to get off."

Skimpole rubbed his forehead thoughtfully.

"Couldn't you ask Mr. Linton?"

"Yes, ass! We've thought of that simple way, but we're afraid he'll say no. You never know how to take him."

"Oh, I see! Perhaps you could manage to leave the Form-room undetected," said Skimpole thoughtfully. "Let me see. With the aid of science most difficulties can be solved."

And he rubbed his bony forehead harder. The chums of the Shell watched him, grinning. They hadn't much faith in Skimpole's great brain power, though Skimmy was the most scientific youth at St. Jim's. What he didn't

good terms with Tom Merry & Co., but there was little that was retiring in his disposition. He was never backward in asking anything that he wanted to know.

"What's up?" was his inquiry. "Anything going on?"

"Yes," said Monty Lowther; "I am."

And he went on, leaving Gore scowling.

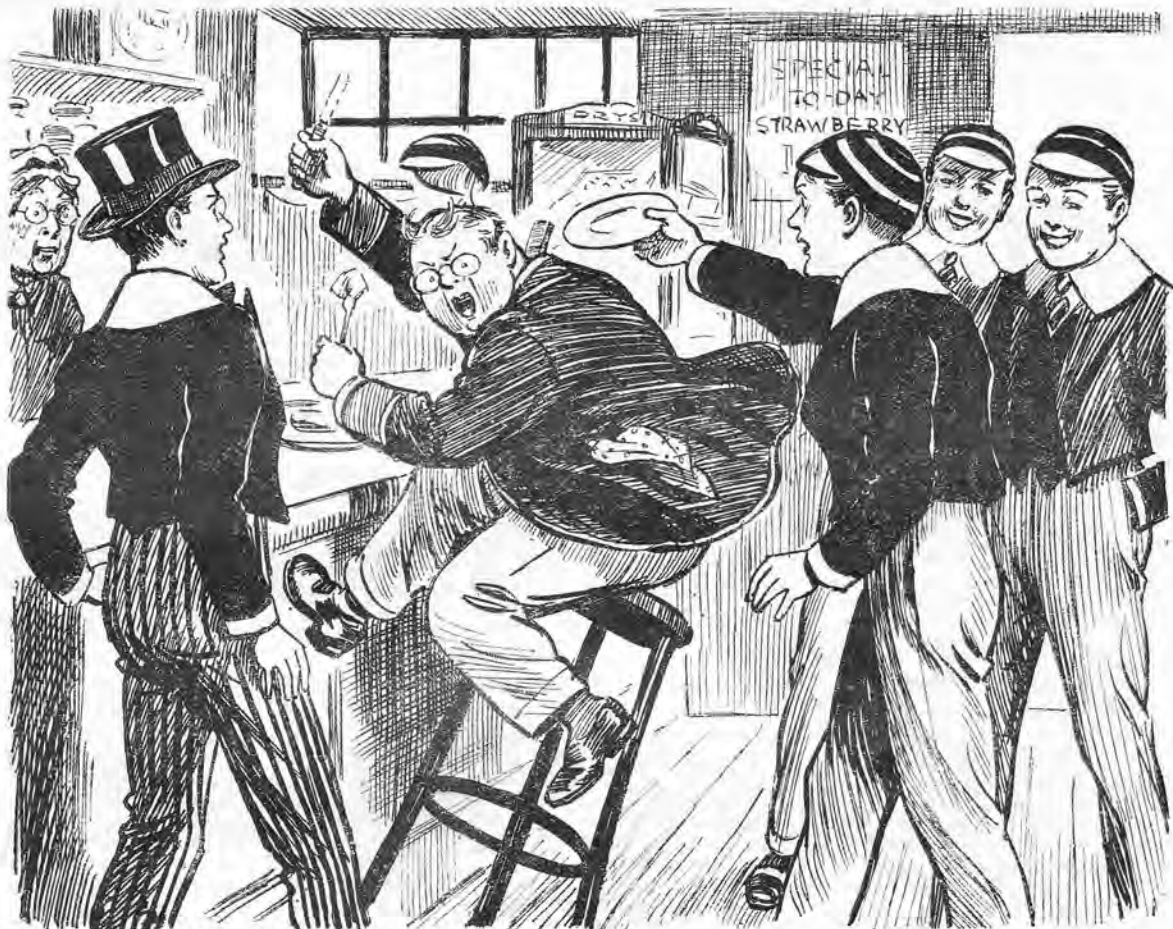
"Oh, it's nothing!" said Tom Merry, more politely.

"We want to get permission to take a little run at eleven-thirty, and we can't think how."

"Ask Linton," said Gore, with a sneer. "He'll let you go if you flatter him—same old game. You're his favourite."

Tom Merry looked steadily at the cad of the Shell.

"I suppose you can't help being a worm," he remarked. "I'm no more Mr. Linton's favourite than anybody else



Bunter was leaning over the counter busy with a knife and fork on a chunk of pineapple. Lowther passed the ice, carelessly holding the plate near Bunter's head. "Here you are, Bunter!" Bunter raised his head, knocked the plate and sent the ice sliding down his neck! "Ow! Ow, yow!" he yelled.

know about Determinism, and all sorts and conditions of other "isms," wasn't worth knowing.

"Aha! I have it!" exclaimed Skimpole.

"Go it, fathead!"

"Better go to Mr. Linton, and, instead of asking permission, claim it as a right. Explain to him that you are a free citizen of a partially free country, and that you insist upon your right to do as you like. As a reasonable man he cannot fail to see that that view is the correct one, and—"

"And as a silly ass I couldn't fail to get licked," said Tom Merry. "If you can't think of anything better than that, Skimmy, you may as well sell your thinker for firewood."

"Really, Merry—"

"Oh, take a little run, Skimmy!"

And Skimpole went his way. It was nearly time for morning chapel, which immediately preceded first lesson, and time was getting close. The chums of the Shell wrinkled their brows over the problem in vain, Gore and Mellish were looking at them wondering what was amiss, and Gore ventured to inquire.

Gore, the cad of the Shell, was not on anything like

in the Form. He treats me better than you because I work, and don't tell lies."

"Oh, you can put it like that!" said Gore, shrugging his shoulders. "We all know how you suck up to Linton, and that he never shows anything but favouritism."

"Yes, rather!" said Mellish.

"That's not true," said Tom Merry. "And you jolly well know it's not! Mr. Linton is perfectly just, and you know it as well as I do."

"Stuff! They've all got their favourites, and Linton's as bad as the rest. If you soft soap him the same as you do Railton, you'll get what you want. Ow!"

Smack!

Tom Merry's patience was exhausted, and his open hand smote Gore on the mouth, and cut his remarks short with startling suddenness.

"Ow! Yow!"

Gore hurled himself blindly forward at Tom Merry, but as he did so a voice, that made him suddenly stop and turn cold all over, called sharply to him.

"Gore!"

It was Mr. Linton's voice.

The master of the Shell had come out of his study, and the expression on his face showed Gore that he must have heard most of what was said.

Tom Merry turned red. He expected an imposition for "rowing" in the passage, but he did not regret the smack that had silenced Gore. But Mr. Linton's angry look was fixed upon the cad of the Shell.

"Gore, I heard what you said."

"I—I was only joking, sir. I—I'm sorry."

"You must not joke about your Form master," said Mr. Linton grimly. "You will come into my study after morning lessons, Gore."

"Ye-es, sir. I—"

"Enough! Go!"

And Gore slunk away. Tom Merry waited for the thunder to burst upon himself, but it did not. Mr. Linton's face cleared.

"Merry, I could not help hearing what you said, and I am glad to see that you have such a good opinion of me."

Tom Merry turned crimson.

"Oh, sir! I—"

"There is nothing to be ashamed of, Merry, in having stopped an ill-natured and slanderous tongue," said the master of the Shell. "I gather that you were wishing to ask some favour of me?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Well, you may ask."

Tom Merry hesitated. He had defended Mr. Linton without the faintest idea that the Form master was within hearing, and he had a horrid feeling of being detected in a virtuous action, and looking like a "good boy" in a story book.

"Come, Merry!" said Mr. Linton, with a smile. "What is it?"

"I—I—I was going to ask you, sir, if—if we could get off lessons this morning in time to meet the eleven-thirty at Rylcombe, sir!" stammered Tom Merry. "We—we've got a particular friend coming, sir!"

"Ahem! How many wish to go?"

"Four of us, sir," said Tom Merry, gaining courage—"Manners, and Lowther, and Kang—er—I mean, Noble, and myself, sir. I know it's a lot to ask."

"Well, you may go, Merry! You can leave at half-past ten."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

And the chums of the Shell went into chapel that morning feeling decidedly elated.

CHAPTER 4.

D'Arcy is Left Behind!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, in the Fourth Form Room, kept his eye on the clock during the lessons that morning.

The swell of the School House was not, as a matter of fact, particularly pleased by the promised visit from Billy Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, but courtesy and hospitality outweighed every other consideration. He was bound to meet the fat junior at the station, and to take every care of him. And in point of fact he was not displeased to have a run in the fresh morning air while his Form-fellows were at lessons.

Most of them would very willingly have accompanied him; indeed, Fatty Wynn, of the New House, considered that he had a right to do so. Under the very eyes of the quiet, short-sighted little Mr. Lathom any amount of whispering went on in the Form-room, and so most of the Fourth knew by this time that a fellow was coming from Greyfriars on a visit, and that D'Arcy had permission to go to the station to meet him.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—Figgins & Co.—were specially interested. For Fatty Wynn had only a short time before paid a visit to Greyfriars on Bunter's invitation, and had been royally treated there. True, he more than suspected that all the trouble and expense of the visitor's entertainment fell upon Bunter's friends, and not upon Bunter himself. Still, he had been "done" rippingly, and if Bunter was returning the visit Fatty felt that he ought to have a hand in it.

"The chap ought to have written to me, and not to you, Gussy," said Fatty Wynn. "I asked him to visit me when I was at Greyfriars."

"Bai Jove! Then he has pprobably make a mistake on the subject, for I do not wemembah askin' him at all, dear boy!"

"More likely he prefers to visit a chap who's rolling in tin," murmured Figgins, who knew something of William George Bunter. "We could only stand him a study feed and show him round, but Gussy can roll him in gold!"

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"Weally, Figgins—"

"It's Gussy's filthy lucre that's done it," said Kerr. "I remember Bunter passing remarks on his banknotes."

"Weally, Kerr—"

"I expect he means to give me a look-in as well," Fatty Wynn remarked. "Bunter has his faults, but he's a ripping chap in some respects. He can cook, and he can appreciate another chap's cooking, and he's got an appetite that makes mine look silly. I like a chap who can eat."

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have no objection to you fellows helpin' me to entahtain the young boundah," said D'Arcy. "Fortunately, I am in considerable funds to-day, havin' had a fivah frowm my gavernah yestahday, and a postal ordah frowm my Aunt Adelina at Leammington. In case I wun short—"

"Run short!" murmured Figgins. "Listen to the giddy billionaire!"

"In case I wun short of tin, I can bowwow some of Tom Mewwy, who has just had a weally handsome wemittance frowm his old gaverness, Miss Pwiscaillah Fawcett. It is a most fortunate circ, because we must weally do our best for a stwaagah within the gates, you know."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "I am sure there is someone talking!"

He had just awakened to the fact.

Fatty Wynn rose in his place.

"If you please, sir—"

"Yes, Wynn?"

"I should like to go to the station with D'Arcy, sir. The chap who is coming is a most particular friend of mine."

"I am afraid I cannot give any further permits, Wynn. You may sit down!"

Fatty Wynn sat down.

"Nevah mind," murmured D'Arcy. "You can help me to pwepare the gwub latah, you know. It's a half this aftahnoon."

Fatty Wynn granted.

"I must insist upon silence being kept in the class," said Mr. Lathom.

Half-past ten chimed out from the village clock, and Arthur Augustus rose. Followed by envious glances from his Form-fellows, the swell of St. Jim's quitted the classroom.

At that unaccustomed hour passages were deserted, and D'Arcy was naturally surprised as he passed the Shell room to see the door open and four youths come out. They were Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and Noble.

"Bai Jove!" he said. "Where are you goin', deah boys?"

"Hallo! Is that you, Gus?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Going out?"

"Yaas, and I'm in wathah a huwwy. The twain gets in in an hour, and it takes me half an hour to get to Wylcombe."

"Then what's the hurry?" asked Tom Merry.

"I've got to change my clothes, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus hurried upstairs.

The chums of the Shell exchanged glances, and chuckled. "That shows it's Cousin Ethel, if we didn't know it already," grinned Lowther. "He's going to put on his best bib and tucker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry. "We may as well follow his example. Must look decent when we meet Cousin Ethel. We'll have a trap to the school, too—luckily I'm in funds. Miss Fawcett sent me two pounds yesterday. It's come just in the nick of time."

As they passed the Fourth Form dormitory, on the way to their own, the chums of the Shell heard Arthur Augustus D'Arcy within. He was busy, and Tom Merry opened the door and looked in.

"Hallo, Gussy!" he said, feeling for the key in the lock as he spoke. "Don't forget to put the bear's-grease on your hair!"

Arthur Augustus looked round.

"I weward that wemark as uttably fwivolous, Tom Mewwy!"

"By Jove! Look at that grease on your trousers!"

The elegant Fourth-Former gave a jump.

"Gwease! Gwease on my twousahs!"

"Sorry! I meant crease," said Lowther.

D'Arcy gave him a withering look. His trousers had the most beautiful crease that was to be seen within the walls of St. Jim's.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

The chums of the Shell chuckled, and closed the door.

"Got the key?" muttered Lowther.

"No," growled Tom Merry. "It wasn't in the lock."

"Rotten!"

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows a little. It would have

been a simple expedient to lock Gussy up in the dormitory, but as the key wasn't in the lock that was out of the question. But his brow cleared in a moment.

"It's all right! He's certain to go down to Study No. 6 to finish," he said. "He's got a big glass rigged up there, you know, and he keeps his collars and ties there. I'll cut down and get the key now."

"Good egg!"

Tom Merry darted downstairs, and in less than a minute he was returning with the key of Study No. 6 triumphantly in his hand.

"That's all right," he said. "Now let's change."

And they went into the Shell dormitory.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus was proceeding cheerfully with his toilet. He was far from suspecting what was passing in the minds of the Shell fellows; and, in fact, he was too busy to even wonder what they were doing out of their Form-room at that hour in the morning.

He felt it to be necessary to dress for the occasion. That was for the sake of the reputation of St. Jim's in general and of Study No. 6 in particular.

Although he did not dress as he would have done had it been Cousin Ethel whom he was going to meet, the result when he had finished was decidedly striking.

As a matter of fact, dressing was a labour of love with D'Arcy, and he liked to take his time about it and make it really successful.

Twenty-five minutes of the half-hour he had allowed himself had elapsed when he left the dormitory and descended to his study to put the finishing touches to his toilet there.

There was a large glass in the study, put up at D'Arcy's own expense, which gave a full-length view of his elegant figure. D'Arcy surveyed his reflection in the glass with some satisfaction.

He adjusted his collar and tied his tie. And as he was thus engaged the door opened a few inches and Tom Merry looked in.

"Getting on all right, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy! But I weally wish you would not keep on intewwuptin' me in this fivulous mannah!"

"Sorry; I'll buzz off!"

And Tom Merry slammed the door; and in the echo of the slam D'Arcy did not hear the sound of the key turning in the outside of the lock.

He tied the necktie to his satisfaction, and then took a silk topper out of his hatbox and brushed it carefully—not to say lovingly.

He adjusted the silk hat at the exactly correct angle before the glass, and took a last survey of his tout ensemble through his eyeglass.

"Bai Jove! I think that's all wight!"

There was a clink at the study window, and a pebble fell in upon the floor. Arthur Augustus glanced out into the quadrangle.

Four youths stood there, looking up at his window. They were nicely dressed, and wore silk hats, which they proceeded to raise simultaneously to D'Arcy, as if moved by the same spring.

"Bai Jove! Did you throw that stone, Tom Mewwy?"

"Certainly. I wanted to attract your attention. We're just going."

"Weally, I am quite indiffewent as to whethah you are just goin' or not. I wegard this wenewed intewwuption as bein' in vewy bad form."

"We had to say good-bye," said Tom Merry reproachfully. "We couldn't go without saying good-bye to Gussy."

"Certainly not," said Kangaroo. "You see, we're just going down to the station."

"To meet a particular friend," said Lowther.

"Who's coming by the eleven-thirty?" said Manners.

And then the four said in chorus:

"Good-bye, Gussy! Sorry you can't come!" Then they marched off, chuckling.

Arthur Augustus gazed after them in astonishment.

"Bai Jove! Are they goin' to meet Billy Buntah? Weally, I do not quite compwehend this. I cannot help suspectin' that Tom Mewwy is wathah off his wockah."

And Arthur Augustus added the finishing touches. He threw on a light overcoat, jammed his monocle into his eye, and crossed to the door. He was surprised when it refused to open.

He pulled at the handle, and pulled again. But the door did not budge.

"Bai Jove! It's locked on the outside!"

D'Arcy dashed back to the window.

"Tom Mewwy, you ass, come and unlock my door! Come back! Bai Jove, they've gone!"

The chums of the Shell were just leaving the gates of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

A Slight Surprise!

"HA, HA, HA!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"This is where we smile!" said Tom Merry.

"I'd give a week's pocket-money to see Gussy's face when he tries to open the door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Those beautiful trousers, that lovely waistcoat, that ripping top—put all on for nothing!" said Lowther.

"It's enough to make a dog weep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He will stay there till after morning lessons," grinned Kangaroo. "Blake can let him out. He can't make anybody hear from the study—unless, perhaps, one of the maids."

It's a chance for him to get his contribution done for the "Weekly."

"Or get through his latest impot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Shell, greatly pleased with themselves, strode cheerily down the road towards the village.

They were sorry for Gussy, of course; but all was fait in war. They had "caught on" to the little game, and they were going to the station in D'Arcy's place; and they anticipated the merriment which the story would cause in the School House when it got round.

The laugh would be up against Study No. 6, especially if they could contrive to make an arrangement with the unsuspecting Ethel to take up the afternoon. It would make Blake & Co. look absolutely green, and the chums of the Shell chuckled gleefully over the prospect.

They lost no time in getting to Rylcombe. It was only twenty-five minutes after eleven when they entered the little station.

"Lots of time," said Tom Merry, looking carefully into the glass over an automatic machine, and flicking a speck of dust from his nose, and giving his necktie a tug to the centre. "That road's beastly dusty!"

"I'll give you a brush down, if you like," said Monty Lowther, taking up a rough broom the porter had left leaning against the automatic machine.

"Well, you might, old chap—Hold on, you ass! Keep that broom away! This is no time for your rotten jokes!"

"Well, you asked for it!"

"Ass! Cousin Ethel may be here any minute."

"Well, we're all ready," said Monty Lowther. "We all look very nice, I'm sure, except Manners—"

"What's the matter with me?" demanded Manners.

"Only your face, old chap; but you were born with it, and it's too late to alter it now. Look here, what yarn are we going to tell Cousin Ethel about Gussy not coming?"

"No yarn at all—the frozen truth."

"Ye-es; but what variety of truth, then?"

"Look here, Lowther, don't be funny; it grows painful after a time. It's like the constant drop of water wearing away the hardest stone. We're going to tell Miss Cleveland the solid facts; Gussy's detained at the school and can't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hence our presence here, and we'll arrange for a drive in the afternoon," said Tom Merry. "We'll make her promise, and then the other bounders won't have a chance. Figgins will be on the track the moment he knows she's coming. You know that duffer."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hallo! Here's the train. Now, turn on your sweetest smiles, and all of you raise your hats when I raise mine."

"Right you are!"

The train was rushing into the station.

Eagerly the chums of the Shell scanned it as it drew to a clattering halt.

Doors flew open, and faces appeared at the windows; and at the first glimpse of the charming features they knew so well, the juniors would have dashed to the carriage and torn the door open.

But the expected face did not appear.

There were only three passengers for Rylcombe in the train, only three individuals who alighted upon the platform.

One was a stout old farmer, and another was Pitcher, the son of the local butcher, and well known to the St. Jim's fellows. He put his thumb to his nose as he walked off the platform, but Tom Merry had no attention to waste on him.

The third passenger to alight was a fat little fellow in spectacles, who stood on the platform, looking up and down as if in expectation of seeing someone.

There was something familiar in his aspect to the juniors of St. Jim's! But they were not looking at him now.

Where was Cousin Ethel?

It was possible that the girl had not noticed that this was her station, that she was deeply interested in a book, or even fallen asleep. The juniors separated and rushed up and down the platform looking into the carriages.

There were only four carriages to the little local, and only one or two passengers in each. But Cousin Ethel was not among them.

"Stand clear there!"

The dismayed juniors stepped back from the train.

The last door slammed, and the train rolled out of the station, and vanished down the curving line.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

"My only hat!" said Tom, rubbing his chin. "What does it mean?"

"Miss Cleveland hasn't come by this train," said Kangaroo. "She may have lost the connection at Wayland, and may be waiting for the next."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"There's five minutes to change trains at Wayland; she couldn't lose it," he said. "She knows these trains by heart."

"She may have lost her train starting."

"Not likely; Cousin Ethel never loses trains."

"But—but—what—"

"There's some mistake; we've misunderstood Gussy."

"You mean you've misunderstood Gussy," said Lowther meaningly.

"Oh, draw it mild! It was you first suggested that it was Cousin Ethel he was coming to meet," said Tom Merry warmly.

"There's some mistake somewhere," said Kangaroo. "You've got it wrong. But if it wasn't Cousin Ethel Gussy was coming to meet, who was it? He was certainly coming to meet this train."

"Yes, there was no doubt on that point."

"Then who the dickens—"

"I say, you fellows—"

Kangaroo broke off.

It was the stout youth in spectacles who spoke.

The juniors of St. Jim's looked at him.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "I've seen you before somewhere."

The stranger blinked at him through his big glasses.

"Oh, really, I should say so!" he exclaimed. "You're Figgins, aren't you?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"No; I'm Tom Merry."

"Oh, yes, of course, I remember! I should know you anywhere. I guessed you fellows belonged to St. Jim's, so I thought I'd speak to you," said the short-sighted junior. "I was expecting D'Arcy to meet me here, but I suppose you've come instead."

"What!" roared Tom Merry.

"I was expecting D'Arcy—"

"D'Arcy!"

"Certainly. I'm Bunter—William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove—the Lower Fourth, you know, I'm coming to St. Jim's."

"The dickens you are!"

"Yes. It's a whole holiday at Greyfriars to-day, and I'm taking the opportunity of accepting D'Arcy's kind invitation."

"My only hat!"

"I particularly requested D'Arcy to meet me at the station, but I suppose he was unable to come."

"Yes," said Tom Merry grimly. "He was unable to come."

"And you've come instead?"

"Yes, exactly; we've come instead."

"Good!"

CHAPTER 6.

Bunter Takes a Snack!

BILLY BUNTER blinked with satisfaction.

The juniors of St. Jim's were by no means so satisfied. They remembered Bunter very well, as a fellow who had accompanied the Greyfriars junior team when it came to play a cricket match at St. Jim's. They knew very little of him; but if he had been the finest fellow in the wide world they would have been exasperated now.

They had been expecting to see Cousin Ethel, and to raid D'Arcy's charming cousin would have been a triumph over Study No. 6.

But they had no desire to raid Billy Bunter.

D'Arcy would have been quite welcome to his fat visitor. The four Shell fellows felt that they could have kicked each other, and themselves as well, hard.

The result of their ripping wheeze was that they had had a walk to the station, and had saved D'Arcy the trouble

of coming down and meeting this chap from Greyfriars. It was quite on the cards that they might be done into looking after him all the afternoon, too.

But it was impossible to let Bunter see their thoughts.

Courtesy to a stranger was as strong an instinct with the Terrible Three as with Arthur Augustus himself.

The chap had come from Greyfriars to visit a St. Jim's fellow, and they had prevented that fellow from meeting him at the station. Common politeness required that they should assume D'Arcy's responsibilities and take every care of William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove.

Tom Merry gave his chums a comical glance.

"We're in for it," he murmured.

"Oh, you ass!" murmured Manners. "You want a study

licking for this!"

"It's Lowther's fault!"

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther.

It had been Tom Merry's intention to hire a trap or car and take Cousin Ethel to St. Jim's in state, but he did not feel inclined to do so in honour of William George Bunter. Bunter could walk.

"I say, you fellows—"

"This way," said Tom Merry.

"I say, Merry, I'm hungry, you know. Is there anywhere in the village where a chap could get a snack?"

Bunter looked quite pathetic as he asked the question.

"Certainly," said Tom Merry. "This way."

And he led the way to Mother Murphy's tuckshop.

Though he had saddled himself with Gussy's guest, and a fellow he certainly did not take a fancy to, Tom Merry's hospitality was unbounded. If Bunter was hungry, Bunter was to be fed on the best that Rylcombe afforded, at any cost.

It was fortunate that Tom Merry was in funds—very fortunate indeed, as it turned out.

Billy Bunter gave a grin of satisfaction as they entered the little shop of Mother Murphy, where the juniors of St. Jim's were well-known and very welcome customers.

The fat junior looked round the shop, his eyes glistening at the sight of pies and puddings, tarts and cream-puffs galore.

If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had met him, the Falstaff of Greyfriars would have indulged in a tremendous feed in the village tuckshop, and probably that was one of his reasons for being so extremely desirous that the swell of St. Jim's should be at the station on his arrival.

He blinked now in an inquiring way at Tom Merry.

Tom looked pretty prosperous, Bunter decided; and, anyway, no doubt he could run up an account, even if he ran short of cash.

And so William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove resolved not to stint himself.

As for Tom Merry, he was all hospitality.

"Wire in!" he said tersely.

He pulled out one of the high cane chairs for Bunter.

Bunter sat down and put his hat on the counter, and wiped his glasses. He was evidently preparing for serious business. The juniors, who knew Fatty Wynn and what he could do in the gastronomic line, had always thought him unbeatable—till now. They were about to discover that Fatty Wynn was a mere tyro in comparison with this cheerful youth from Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter started on pies and puddings of a solid description. They vanished at a rate that would have made the celebrated Fatty Wynn himself open his eyes wide. Having taken the edge off his appetite with as much as the Terrible Three would have laid in for a good-sized study feed, Bunter turned his attention to lighter articles.

Mrs. Murphy's pastry was good—and Bunter said so—and proved his words by his deeds. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the quality of Mrs. Murphy's cooking was amply demonstrated.

The St. Jim's juniors watched him with growing interest. "Sorry you don't feel hungry," said Lowther. "You're not eating anything. Are you always like this?"

"Oh, no!" said Bunter innocently. "I get hungry sometimes. Wharton thinks I'm greedy; Wharton's head of our study, you know. I'm not really greedy, but I admit I like a lot."

"There's a lot of difference there."

"Of course. Yes, I'll have some ginger-bear."

"These table-jellies are ripping," said Manners. "Try—"

"Well, perhaps one."

Tom Merry tried to stop his chums by warning glances. He did not want to stint Bunter in any way, but he was growing seriously afraid that the fellow from Greyfriars would burst if this were continued.

"Have some nuts?" said Monty Lowther recklessly.

"I'll shove some in my pocket, to eat as we go along," said Bunter.

And he slid off the high stool.

"Here, I forgot the coconut-ice," said Lowther. "You must have a fragment of that—say a pound."

"I'll take it in my hand."

And Billy Bunter was contentedly munching coconut-ice as the party left the tuckshop at last.

Tom Merry settled the bill—a very considerable one—ungrudgingly; but he wondered how William George Bunter could walk after that snack. But the fat junior seemed invigorated by it, and he arrived in high spirits with Tom Merry & Co. at the gates of St. Jim's.

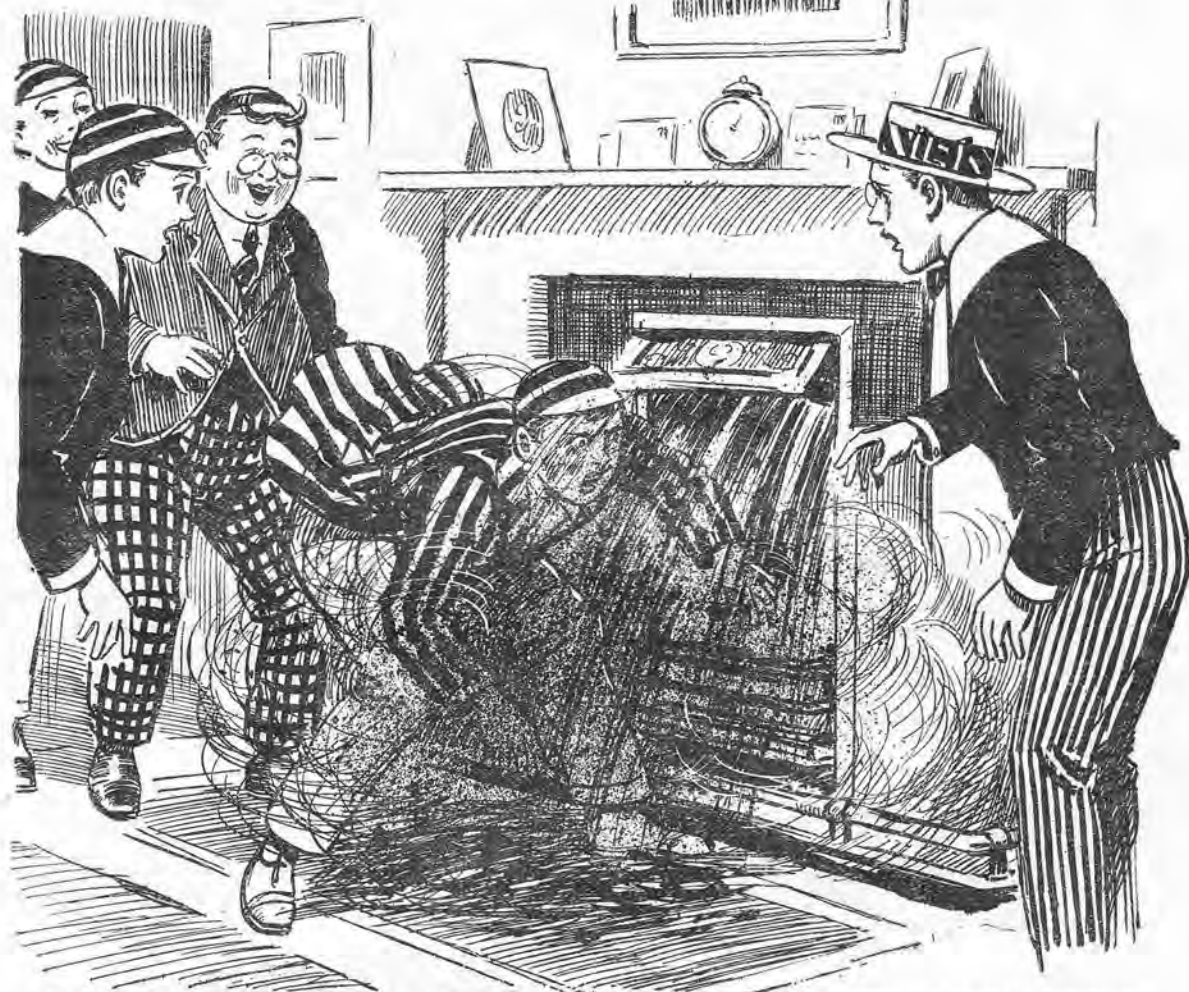
"Tom Merry?"

"Yaas. He locked me in."

"What on earth was he doing out of the Form-room then?" asked Digby, in surprise. "I don't quite catch on. I know a key that will fit the door, though."

He ran along the passages to Reilly's study and abstracted the key from the lock, and the door of Study No. 6 was speedily opened.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was seated gracefully in the arm-



Figgins put his head up the chimney. "Come down, you School House cad!" he yelled. The shout dislodged a quantity of soot, which descended on Figg's head in a black cloud. "Ow—groo—I'm choked! [Groo—ug-g-g-gh!]" spluttered Figgins, his face as black as a Hottentot's!

CHAPTER 7.

Tom Merry Does Not Score!

"HALLO! This giddy door's locked!"

Jack Blake shook the handle of the door of Study No. 6. Morning school was over, and Blake and Digby had come up to the study for their bats. Herries had gone to feed his bulldog. Blake rattled the door handle in amazement.

"What giddy ass has locked this? Gussy can't have—Hallo!"

"Is that you, Blake, deah boy?" came a voice from within the study.

"Gussy! That you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I thought you were gone to the station."

"I have been the victim of a wotten twick!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Unlock the door!"

"You uttah ass! Do you think I should be in here if the door were locked on the inside?" demanded D'Arcy indignantly through the keyhole.

"Never thought about it. The key's not on the outside."

"Then that wottah Mewwy has taken it away."

chair, reading the latest number of the "Magnet," and apparently not dissatisfied with his imprisonment.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake. "You don't seem much the worse for it!"

"Wathah not, deah boy. As a mattah or fact, I think Tom Mewwy must have been undah a wemarkable misapprehension. He has gone to Wylcombe instead of me, with Mannahs and Lowthah and Kangawoo. I think he must have heard something, you know, and jumped to the ewwoneous conclusion that I was meetin' Cousin Ethel at the station. That is the only possible way I can account for his swange conduct."

Blake and Digby roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, I wegard it as wathah funnay myself," said Arthur Augustus, with a grin. "As he has gone to the station instead of me, he will find out his mistake there, and as a decent chap will be honah bound to bring William George Buntah back with him. So long as the chap is wocceved and looked aftah, it's all wight. Tom Mewwy has saved me a walk to the station, and I have had a vewy pleasant wead instead while I was waitin' for somebody to

open the door. I wathah think that the gw'n will be up against Tom Mewwy this time!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I should like to see his chivvy when he meets Bunter!" chuckled Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, it would be a good wheeze to leave Bunter on Merry's hands for the afternoon," suggested Digby; "as he has taken him abroad, he might as well keep him, and we can get the cricket all the same."

"Not a bad idea."

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I am afraid it would not be poss for me to neglect my guest!" he exclaimed. "You see, the chap is my visitah."

"Well, he'll have to play cricket, then," said Blake, "or else we shall have to leave him to you on your lone-some."

"It is necessary for you to back me up, deah boys, in entahtainin' a visitah, for the honah of the studay."

"Then we'll put a bat in his hand," said Blake. "I suppose you'll have to give him some dinner. Where are you going to feed him?"

"I pwesume that he can dine in the hall with us?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Better speak a word first, in case there isn't any plate or any grub for him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And D'Arcy went downstairs to see about it, while Blake and Digby carried out their bats. But they did not go to cricket. Blake chuckled as he stepped out of the House, with a new thought in his mind.

"Let's get down to the gates and see Tom Merry come in," he said. "I want to see how happy they are with Bunter."

"Good!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, rejoining his



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chums. "It's all wight about the dinnah. It would be only decent to meet the chap at the gate."

And the Fourth-Formers strolled in that direction.

They waited in the gateway, chuckling over the little error Tom Merry & Co. had made, till the juniors from the village came in sight.

Billy Bunter, with a smear of jam on his mouth and a fragment of jelly on his fat cheek, was looking very contented, but a little tired. He did not like walking.

Tom Merry & Co. were a little tired, too, but not of walking.

Billy Bunter blinked at the juniors in the gateway. Even the short-sighted Removeite from Greyfriars recognised at once the resplendent attire of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove, deah boy! I'm glad to see you!" said D'Arcy, with outstretched hand. "I'm so sowwy I couldn't come to the station."

"That's all right, D'Arcy," said Billy Bunter affably. "Your friends explained that you were detained, and they've looked after me rippingly!"

"I'm awfully obliged to you, Tom Mewwy!"

"Not at all," said Tom.

"Yaas, wathah! It was so kind of you to go down to the village on purpose to meet my fwiend Buntah."

The Shell fellows exchanged sickly glances.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake, there is nothin' to laugh at!" said D'Arcy reprovingly. "It was simply wippin' of Tom Mewwy to take all this twouble; just as if it were Cousin Ethel who was comin' by the twain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" grunted Tom Merry. "No good rubbing it in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway come with me, Buntah, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, slipping his arm through Bunter's. "Dinnah will be weady shortly."

"I shall be ready for it," said Bunter. "I've had a snack in the village, but I'm a bit peckish to-day."

"Vewy good! Come on!"

And D'Arcy walked off with his guest.

The juniors in the gateway looked at one another; the Fourth-Formers grinning, the Shell fellows very pink about the cheeks.

"What a giddy jape!" chuckled Jack Blake. "You've missed it this time, Tom Merry, and no giddy mistake."

"It's a jolly swindle!" said Tom Merry. "How was I to guess that Gussy was going to meet that—that oyster at the station?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I wish Gussy joy of him!" grunted Lowther. "I'm going to book a front seat at dinner and watch him. It's worth it."

CHAPTER 8.

Lowther is Hospitable!

DINNER at St. Jim's was at half-past one. There was an interval to be filled up before the meal was due, and Arthur Augustus thought it could be filled up very nicely by showing his guest round St. Jim's.

Bunter had been to St. Jim's before, but he had not been shown over the place, and a walk round ought to have interested him. He received the suggestion politely, but not very enthusiastically.

"But pewwaps you are tired?" suggested D'Arcy. "You would wathah sit down?"

"Well, I am a little fagged," said Bunter. "I'm a good walker, but I'm out of form when I go off my feed. And I haven't been eating much lately. Still, I had a snack in the village. I suppose you have a tuckshop at the school? I think I remember it."

"Yaas, wathah! It's kept by Mrs. Taggles, the portah's wife," said D'Arcy. "She is an estimable old lady, and makes vewy fine pastry. Shall we have a stwoll wound the wuined towah?"

"H'm—yes! What else is there to see?"

"The chapel, with painted windows, datin' f'rom the weign of Henwy the Eighth, or somebody."

"Hem!"

"Then there's the school libwawy, with the old manu-scrip'ts; one of them that belonged to Chaucer himself."

"Don't know him," said Bunter. "Was he at this school?"

"Ahem! I wathah think not. Then there's the New House—that's the wival House, you know. You've met Figgins?"

"Ye-es."

"And there's the gym," said D'Arcy.

"Ah, I used to go in for physical culture a lot!" said

Bunter. "I was a demon at athletics at one time. That's what made me what I am."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the ample form of Bunter.

"Bai Jove! Is it, weally?"

"Yes. Nothing like it for bringing out the muscle. I gave it up, though. A lot of the fellows were getting jealous. Suppose we go and have a look at the tuckshop? I should like to see it. Our school shop is kept by an awfully unreasonable old woman; always makes a chap pay cash, or else refuses the order."

"Bai Jove!"

"They walked away to the school shop."

Dame Taggles gave Arthur Augustus a cheery smile. Although he was not a great eater, he was generally overflowing with cash, and was a good customer.

Billy Bunter looked round the shop.

His fat face beamed, and his little round eyes glistened joyously behind his spectacles.

"This is a ripping show!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What time did you say dinner was?"

"Half-past one, deah boy."

Bunter looked at his watch.

"Hem! 'Nother three-quarters of an hour. I'm feeling rather faint. I suppose I could have a snack here?"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway wire in!"

"Jolly good! I think I'll try the rabbit pies."

"Pway serve my fwient Buntah, Mrs. Taggles! I am responsible."

"Certainly, Master D'Arcy!"

Dame Taggles willingly served Bunter. Bunter was also quite prompt in serving himself. The good things disappeared so fast that Mrs. Taggles had to keep a rapid account with pencil and paper.

Bunter blinked at D'Arcy, who stood by the counter, politely waiting.

"Aren't you going to have a snack, D'Arcy?"

"Thanks, no, deah boy. I'm not hungwy!"

"These tarts are ripping!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther entered the shop as Bunter was busily engaged. They stared at him, and in their surprise forgot to make their purchases.

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry. "He's at it again!"

"Where is he putting it?"

"I say, old fellow," said Bunter, looking round, "these marmalade tarts are just the thing! Won't you have some?"

"Not just now, thanks!" said Tom Merry. "Don't want to spoil dinner."

"Dinner's another thirty-five minutes yet."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I can wait. But you're losing time. Wire in!"

"Try the ices," said Monty Lowther. "I can recommend these ices. Dame Taggles is famous for ices."

"Thanks; I will!"

"Let me help you," said Lowther. "Don't move off that stool. I don't suppose you'll find it very easy to move," he added, under his breath. "I'll get you the ice."

"Oh, really, you're very good!"

Dame Taggles passed over the ice, and Monty Lowther took it. It was a little oblong ice on a plate. Bunter was leaning over the counter, busy with knife and fork upon a chunk of pineapple. Lowther passed the ice, carelessly holding the plate near the back of his head.

"Here you are, Bunter!"

Bunter raised his head. It knocked against the plate, of course, and the ice slid off, and slid freezingly down between Bunter's collar and his neck.

Whether Monty Lowther had intended it or not, that was how it happened. Bunter gave a wild yell and a squirm.

"Ow, wow, yow!"

"Dear me!" said Lowther. "I'm awfully sorry!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry, looking round.

"Ow! The ice is down my back! Ow!"

"Bai Jove!"

Bunter was off the stool in a second. He folded himself up, trying to shake the ice out, but it was fairly down his back.

"Here, lay hold!" exclaimed Lowther. "If we grip him by the ankles, and hold him upside down and shake him, it's bound to drop out."

"Ow! Stop! Don't you do anything of the sort! Look here! If you make my glasses fall off, and they break, you'll have to pay for them—so there! Lemme alone!"

"But I want to help you—"

(Continued on next page.)



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NOT HER JOB.

Customer: "What does this mean? There's a fly in my teacup!"

Waitress: "I don't know. I'm a waitress, not a fortune-teller!"

JACK NICHOLSON, Evel Pavilion, Mountain San, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

SPROUTING!

Willie: "Daddy, are you still growing?"

Father: "No, son. Why?"

Willie: "Because your head's coming through your hair on top!"

TOM BURRELL, 21, Ranelagh Street, Ravenhill Avenue, Belfast, N. Ireland.

SOME CATCH!

Cowboy: "This is a lasso with which I catch cattle."

Greenhorn: "By Jove! What bait do you use?"

J. HARDINGHAM, Ardlui, Queen's Road, Seone, Perth.

ARITHMETIC!

New Office Boy: "I've added up these figures ten times, sir."

Boss: "Good boy!"

N. O. B.: "And here's the ten answers, sir!"

JERRY McHUGH, 9, Carlisle Street, Belfast.

HE FORGOT!

Absent-minded Professor (after being hauled out of river): "And the worst of it is, that I have just remembered that I can swim!"

W. SMITH, 79, Flaxman Street, St. Paneras, London, W.C.1.

THAT'S ME!

Butler (hearing noise): "Is that you, my lord?"

Voice from darkness: "Yus, that's right, guv'ner!"

ALFRED ROBINSON, 20, Saltwell Road, Middlesbrough, Yorks.

ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS!

Mother: "Billy, I sent you to the chemist to fetch two bottles, and you've only brought one."

Billy: "Yes, mother, one bottle was marked 'Not to be taken,' so I left it!"

GORDON TALBOT, 24, Montagu Street, Swindon, Wilts.

TOO BAD!

Aunt: "And how did Tommy do in his history examination?"

Mother: "Not at all well. But it wasn't his fault; they asked the poor boy about things that happened long before he was born!"

C. F. W. ROBERTS, 41, East London Street, Edinburgh.

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"Lowthah, I wegard you as a beast! You have played a wotten twick on my guest!"

"Rats! Accidents will happen."

"I wefuse to ccredit that that was an accident! I——"

"Let me help you, Bunter."

"O-ow!"

Billy Bunter was helping himself. He tore off his jacket, and then his waistcoat. He had to get that clammy ice out somehow. It was melting fast from contact with his skin, and little tricklets of it were running all over him. He tore off his collar and tie, and then started on his shirt.

"Bai Jove, deah boy!" gasped D'Arcy. "Wemembah there's a lady pwesent!"

"Ow! I've got to get that ice out! Ow! It's melting! I shall catch pneumonia from this. I can feel it coming on! Ow!"

And the shirt came whisking off over Bunter's head.

Dame Taggles discreetly retired to her little parlour.

"Fish it out, can't you?" roared Bunter. "What do you want to stand there like an ass for? Fish it out!"

"I will," said Lowther.

"Buck up, then!"

What was left of the ice was jammed between Bunter's undervest and his skin. Monty Lowther gave it a squeeze that finished the melting process suddenly.

Bunter gasped.

"Why, it's all gone!" said Lowther, in surprise.

"Ow-wow!"

"Never mind; have another."

"Oh, really, Lowther——"

"There are plenty more," said Lowther innocently. "I'll hand you another——"

"No, you won't!" roared Bunter, backing away from the obliging humorist of the Shell. "You keep off! Ow! I shall have to change my clothes. Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Come with me, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "I can lend you a change of undalgarments. Lowthah, I shall give you a feahful thwashin' pwesently!"

"Why, what's the matter?"

"I wegard this as a wotten twick!"

And Arthur Augustus helped Bunter on with his jacket, and marched out of the school shop.

The Terrible Three chuckled hysterically when he was gone.

"All the same, it was too thick," said Tom Merry. "You ought to remember he's a giddy visitor, Monty."

"He's not my visitor," said Lowther. "I wouldn't be found dead with him!"

"Honour the guest that is within thy doors," said Manners, shaking his finger at Lowther. "I'm ashamed of you!"

"Oh, rot!" said Lowther uneasily. "Never mind. We'll stand him another feed about half an hour after dinner, when he's hungry again, and make it up."

CHAPTER 9.

Bunter, the Ventriloquist!

THERE were many glances towards William George Bunter when he entered the dining-room of the School House with the Fourth-Formers.

His fame had spread, and the juniors were curious to see him. His fat figure, his fat face, his spectacles, and

his smirk of self-satisfaction were easily remembered; people who had seen him once generally knew him again.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was taking every care of his guest. He had arranged for Bunter to have a place beside him, and he looked after him well.

The diet at St. Jim's was liberal, which was fortunate, for Bunter's two snacks did not seem to have made much difference to his appetite. He had two helpings of everything, and was hardly finished when the fellows had to rise to leave the table. Still, he was looking very contented as he trotted out by the side of the slim, elegant swell of the School House.

"They feed you well here," he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What a ripping afternoon!" said Bunter, looking round the sunny quadrangle, where a crowd of fellows could be seen, most of them looking very cheery. "Nice and warm! Just the afternoon to lie in the stern of a boat on the cushions and drift downstream, and——"

"And wead poetry?"

"Oh, no! And eat jam tarts!"

"Hem!" said D'Arcy. "Exactly! I—— Weally, Gore, I wish you would not push against me so woffly!"

Gore, the cad of the Shell, stopped. He had nearly knocked D'Arcy over by shoving rudely against him. Arthur Augustus smoothed his ruffled jacket, and Gore stared at Bunter.

"My hat! Where did you pick that up?"

"Weally, Gore——"

"Is it a new kid?"

"Buntah is my guest," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I will thank you to treat him with pwopah respect, Gore, and give him none of your wotten caddishness!"

Gore chuckled.

"What I want to know is, what's he doing outside the Zoo?" said Gore, who was never troubled with considerations of courtesy.

Smack!

Arthur Augustus was not quarrelsome—quite the reverse—but he could not allow his guest to be treated with discourtesy.

His open hand smote Gore across the mouth with a crack like a whip, and the surprised Shell fellow staggered back.

He sprang forward the next moment with clenched fists.

Arthur Augustus squared up to meet him, but at the same moment a strong grip was laid on Gore's collar from behind, and he was jerked back.

He squirmed round savagely, but his rage changed to terror when he saw that he was in the grip of Kildare of the Sixth.

The captain of St. Jim's gave him a stern look.

"This is not the place for fighting, Gore."

"He hit me first!" snarled Gore. "I——"

"I heard it all!" said Kildare cuttingly. "You were acting like a cad, as you usually are. You will do a hundred lines, and bring them to me before tea. That will keep you out of mischief for part of the afternoon, at all events. Get away!"

And Gore slunk away.

"Thank you vewy much, Kildare," said Arthur Augustus graciously. "It would have been a feahful fag to thwash that wottah on a warm ahtahnoon."

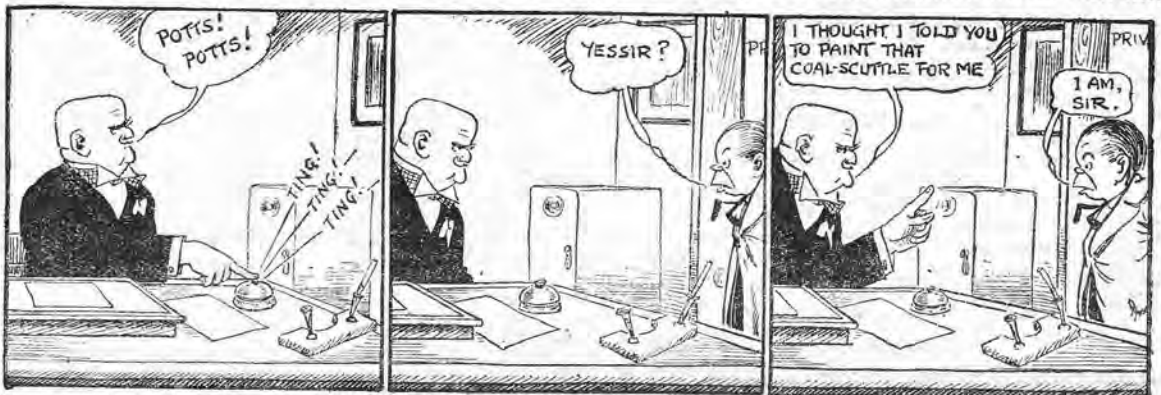
Kildare smiled, and walked away.

Billy Bunter blinked after him.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Kildare, our captain—one of the vewy best!" said

Potts, the Office Boy!



D'Arcy. "I always back up Kildare! He's a wippin' sort!"

"H'm! I think I could imitate his voice a treat," murmured Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

D'Arcy stared at him.

"Why, pway?"

Bunter grinned.

"There's a lot of fun in it. I'm a ventriloquist, you know. My abilities in that line are simply marvellous," he said modestly. "There's a lot of fun in it, if you keep it dark, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you remember when I was here before?" grinned Bunter. "Blake thought you were asking him for tarts, or something, and he jammed a lot of tarts in your chivvy at last."

"I wemembah! It was howwidly wide of Blake, and I wasn't weally askin' for things at all, you know."

"But I was doing it for you," chuckled Bunter.

"Eh?"

"You see, it was my ventriloquism. My abilities are mar—"

"Bai Jove!"

"I catch the trick of a voice awfully quickly," said Bunter. "Any voice a bit out of the common is easy to catch, and anybody who knows the voice thinks it's that chap speaking when he hears the imitation. See? That's half the game."

"I see. Bai Jove, this is awfully intewestin'!" said D'Arcy. "It was wathah a wotten twick you played upon me, but it was vewy clevah."

"Yes, I'm considered a rather clever chap," said Bunter. "I'm a jolly good amateur photographer, you know, and a hypnotist, too."

"Bai Jove! There's a chap here named Dane who can hypnotise, you know, and—"

"Er—I—I've rather given up hypnotism lately," said Bunter hastily. "I'm sticking to ventriloquism. I find that's my—what do you call it—it's a French word, you know, something like meat-axe?"

"Metier?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "Ventriloquism is where I come out strong. I've often thought of giving an entertainment, and charging for admission, but the fellows at Greyfriars won't back me up. Skinner says the audience ought to be paid for coming to hear me, you know, and that's rot."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Shall I give you a specimen? I've played all sorts of japes at Greyfriars. I made Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent start fighting once, because they thought they had insulted one another, you know."

"Bai Jove! What a wotten twick! I—I mean, how awfully clevah!" said D'Arcy, remembering that the amateur ventriloquist was his guest. "Pway don't do anythin' of that sort now, though!"

"Here's that chap again—what's his name? Blood, or something—"

"Gore," said D'Arcy.

"That's it! He's looking annoyed about something—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I expect it's the hundwed lines!"

"Serve him jolly well right he's got 'em! I'll make him jump!"

Gore scowled savagely at the juniors as he came by. He was in a towering rage at having to stay in during the half-holiday and do the lines, and he would probably have "gone for" both Gussy and Gussy's guest on the spot had he not been restrained by fear of Kildare.

"You rotters!" he snarled. "I suppose you think you've done something jolly clever in getting me detained—"

"Weally, Gore!"

"I'll make you sit up for it! I—"

"Gore!"

The name was rapped out sharply, and it was Kildare's voice to the life. The cad of the Shell fairly jumped.

"Yes, Kildare! I—I—I—"

He stared round blankly. Kildare was not there.

Gore looked round about, and up and down, with a dazed look on his face. He blinked at D'Arcy and Bunter, and rubbed his chin.

"There's something wrong with my nerves," he muttered.

"I—I'd swear I heard Kildare's voice."

And Gore went away, looking very puzzled and uneasy.

Arthur Augustus burst into a chuckle.

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right, eh?" grinned Billy Bunter.

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "It's a weally wippin' gift! Suppose you come oval to the New House with me and play some twicks on Figgins & Co?!"

"Certainly," went on Bunter.

And they went.

CHAPTER 10.

Up the Chimney!

"WHERE'S Wynn?"

Figgins asked the question of Kerr.

Kerr shook his head.

"I don't know. He went up to the study some time ago for his bat."

Figgins growled.

"I suppose he's found something in the cupboard. Let's go and have him out!"

And Figgins and Kerr, who were in their cricketing flannels ready to go out, went upstairs instead and looked into their study.

Fatty Wynn was there.

But, for once in a way, he was not eating. Perhaps it was because there was nothing in the cupboard. The cupboard door was open, as if he had looked in there. Figgins' study had run out of provisions.

Fatty Wynn was standing before the open window, his hands in his pockets, looking out into the sunny quad. He wasn't looking at the cricket field or at the pigeons. There was a thoughtful expression upon his face, and his eyes rested upon the School House.

He was so preoccupied that he did not hear Figgins and Kerr come in, and did not know they were present till he received a sounding slap on the shoulder, which made him stagger forward.

"Phew! What! Hallo! You ass!"

"We've come to look for you," growled Figgins. "I suppose you know that we're playing cricket this afternoon, Fatty, or have you forgotten?"

"Bless me, I'd forgotten all about it!"

"You—you—you'd forgotten all about it!" said Figgins, hardly able to believe his ears. "You'd forgotten all about the cricket?"

"Yes, it's only a scratch match, isn't it?" said Fatty Wynn. "It isn't as if it were a House match, you know. I was thinking of something else."

"Grub, I suppose," said Figgins unpleasantly.

INSTRUCTIONS—OBEYED!



"Oh, come, Figgins!" said Fatty Wynn warnily. "Any stranger hearing you talk would think I was a greedy chap."

"He wouldn't need to hear me talk to find that out—he would only have to look at you!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"I'm looking. We're going to play cricket—so are you! Come on! If this isn't a House match there will be one on shortly, and you're going to be in form or I'll know the reason why. Come on!"

"Wait a minute! I was thinking. Look here, I suppose we want to do the decent thing, don't we?"

"I suppose. What are you getting at?"

"Why, Gussy has a visitor over in the School House—a chap that treated me very well when I visited Greyfriars. I really think I ought to do something to help Gussy entertain him, you know."

"To help bolt the feed in Study No. 6, you mean?"

"I don't mean anything of the sort. Of course, if they asked me to a feed, I couldn't refuse—it wouldn't be civil. But what I'm thinking about is being decently civil to a chap who treated me well. It's up to us to look after him."

"You come along to the cricket, my fat youth. Gussy can look after his guest all right without your assistance, and he can find fellows enough in the School House to negotiate the feed. Come on!"

"But think a minute, Figgins! Hallo, here they are!"

Gussy and Gussy's guest looked into the study. The swell of St. Jim's surveyed the chums of the New House through his eyeglass, and Billy Bunter blinked genially at them through his big spectacles.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Is Blake gone down to the ground? We're just getting along there ourselves!"

"Bai Jove! I've forgotten the cricket!"

"My-bat! It seems to be catching this afternoon!" said Figgins, in disgust. "The Fourth Form at St. Jim's was always supposed to be a playing Form. You chaps had better take to playing marbles!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Come on, Wynn! Are you coming?"

"I was thinking—"

"You've done enough thinking this afternoon," said Figgins, seizing his plump chum by the back of the neck and running him to the door. "Sorry to biff you, Gussy! You should move quicker!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Come on, Wynn! This way to the grand stand!"

"Ow! Leggo! Yah!"

Fatty Wynn was rushed out of the study. Kerr followed, laughing. Arthur Augustus had been shoved violently against the door, and he leaned there, gasping.

"Here, Figgins, stop that!"

Figgins gave a jump.

It was Tom Merry's voice, apparently, and it proceeded from the study he had just quitted.

The idea of receiving orders from a School House fellow, in his own quarters, made the blood of all the Figginses boil in the veins of the New House junior.

"What's that?" he roared, stopping in his headlong career and releasing the gasping and breathless Fatty.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Figgins stared—as well he might. He had not seen Tom Merry in the study. But Tom Merry was there, or else his ghost—or else Figgins was dreaming. Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was deceived.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "I'd swear that I saw him goin' down to the cricket as we came ovah!"

Billy Bunter dug him in the ribs.

"Don't you catch on?" he whispered.

"Bai Jove! Is it—"

"Keep it dark!"

"Bai Jove! Pway don't dig me in the wibs, though, Buntah! I am afraid you will wumple my waistcoat."

Figgins had rushed into the study.

He was staring blankly round it now, looking for Tom Merry, without finding him. Round and round went Figgins, as if on a pivot, looking in all directions—in vain!

He looked under the table, into the cupboard, and even in the coal locker.

The result was the same.

There was no sign of Tom Merry.

"M-m-my only Panama hat!" gasped Figgins. "Where is the rotter? Where are you hiding yourself, you School House monkey?"

There was no reply.

Figgins came out of the study again, a puzzled and almost alarmed expression upon his face. It seemed to him that his ears were playing him tricks.

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Kerr looked equally surprised. Fatty Wynn was too breathless to think of anything but getting his wind again. "Blessed if I didn't think it was Tom Merry in the study," said Figgins. "I heard his voice as plain as anything. Hark!"

"New House ass!"

"There it is again!" roared Figgins; and he rushed into the study, followed by Kerr.

They glared round in search of the School House junior.

"He's—he's not here!" gasped Kerr.

"There's nowhere he could hide!" panted Figgins.

"Unless he's up the chimney—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He is in the chimney!" roared Figgins, for it was in that direction that the mocking laugh seemed to come, and he rushed to the grate.



The struggling seniors passed close to the table under which they resist. He put out his hands and caught a

But there he had to pause.

The opening of the chimney was wide enough to admit a human form, certainly, but it was almost unimaginable that anybody could have thrust himself up through the narrow space into the soot and dust.

"He—he can't be there! But—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark! He is there!" exclaimed Kerr.

Figgins put his head under the chimney, turned his face upward, and blinked there. It was too dark for him to see anything.

"Come down, you School House cad!" he roared.

"Gr-r-r-r!"

That chimney wanted sweeping. The shout upward dis-

lodged a considerable quantity of soot, and it descended upon Figgins.

He withdrew a face as black as a Hottentot's from the chimney, gasping and spluttering frantically.

"Ow! Groo! I'm ch-ch-choked! Groo—ug-g-g-gh!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "Look at his clothes! This is weally too wuff!"

Figgins' nice white flannels were in a parlous state; but he wasn't thinking of that just then. He was choked and blinded by the shower of soot. He knuckled it out of his eyes and spat it out of his mouth.

"Ow! Groo! The beast! We'll smash him when he comes down! He must have kicked all that soot down on me on purpose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, you cackling ass! You cackling, too, D'Arcy?"



John was hiding, and the temptation was too strong for him to dash off them, sending them reeling to the floor!

"I'll teach you to cackle! What are you doing in this House at all? Get out!"

"Weally, Figgins! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Out you go!" roared the exasperated Figgins. "Here, New House kids! Rally up!"

D'Arcy caught Bunter by the arm.

"Bettah cut, deah boy!"

They dashed downstairs, barely in time to escape a rush of New House juniors, who came crowding to the spot in reply to Figgins' alarm.

The newcomers stared blankly at Figgins as he looked out of the study.

"My word!" gasped Pratt. "What's the matter? You

can't make up as a nigger minstrel now, Figgins. We've got to play cricket."

"I'm not making up as a nigger minstrel, you ass!" roared Figgins. "Tom Merry's up my chimney, and he's shoved down soot on my chivvy!"

"What?"

"Tom Merry!"

"Up the chimney!"

"He jolly well isn't!" said French, pointing to the window. "There he is on the cricket ground, talking to Noble."

Figgins looked out of the window, and was almost stupefied by what he saw. There was Tom Merry, in spotless flannels, talking to the Cornstalk chum.

"You're off your rocker," said Giles comfortingly.

"Tom Merry hasn't been here."

"He has, I tell you!"

"He doesn't look as if he'd been up a chimney!" chuckled French.

"N-n-no, but—"

"But you do," said Pratt, grinning. "You'd better get a wash before you come out, Figgins, and buck up about it!"

Figgins went out of the study with a dazed expression. Unless, as one of the juniors had expressed it, he was "off his rocker," he did not know how to account for the strange occurrence. He was still looking mentally disturbed when he joined the juniors on the cricket field.

CHAPTER 11.

On the Cricket Field!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY chuckled gleefully as he walked away from the New House with his friend from Greyfriars.

There was no doubt that William George Bunter was a ventriloquist, and an exceptionally good one, and D'Arcy began to feel more respect for the fat junior. He had not liked him much, and he had not admired him; still, the chap could do something, there was no doubt about that.

And so Gussy's opinion of him began to rise. A chap who can "do things" as well as talk is always entitled to a certain amount of respect.

The spectacle of Figgins with the soot on his astounded face was almost too much for Arthur Augustus. He was greatly inclined to roar with laughter. And even the knowledge that that would be "deucid bad form" hardly restrained him.

However, he had satisfied himself with a series of irrepressible chuckles and cachinnations. He was still cachinnating when Blake bore down upon him and gave him a slap on the shoulder, which made him break off suddenly, like an alarm clock that is suddenly stopped.

"Oh!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "Weally, Blake, I wish you would not be so wuff! You have thrown me into quite a fluttah!"

"What are you cackling about?" said Blake; and, without waiting for an answer to his question, he went on: "Why aren't you in flannels? Have you forgotten the cricket? I suppose your friend plays cricket?"

"Oh, yes, rather!" said Bunter, in his usual style. "I'm considered rather a terror at cricket at Greyfriars!"

"Bai Jove, are you weally?" said D'Arcy, in surprise. "Why didn't they put you into the team that played us last time?"

Bunter shook his head.

"There's a lot of jealousy in these matters," he said. "Of course I wouldn't say anything against the cricket captain at our show. Wharton's all right. But he's unconsciously led away, you know, by wanting to make the best show on the field. If I showed the chaps what I could really do they'd want me to be the cricket captain. That's how the matter stands."

"I see," said Jack Blake; and he murmured to himself: "I don't think!"

"When I do play," went on Bunter, "I rather make the fur fly. Batting, bowling, and fielding all come the same to me. I've been told that I look a great deal like Bradman. If I'd only got my cricketing things with me I'd show you something!"

"That's all right!" said Blake grimly. "I can lend you a bat."

"Oh, I—I don't know that you'd have a bat to suit me, and—"

"We've got dozens, all sizes, and you can take your choice."

"I haven't any pads—"

"We can lend you some."

"My gloves—"

"Fatty Wynn's will fit you to a hair!"

Billy Bunter was fairly caught. Blake spoke in a low tone to Tom Merry.

"We shall be awfully pleased if you'll play, Bunter," said Tom Merry, coming over to the fat junior. Blake had simply told him that Gussy's guest would like to play, and Tom Merry, though he was not much impressed by Bunter's appearance, was willing to do the polite thing. "We can lend you an outfit."

"I—I haven't any flannels here, though—"

"That's all right," said Blake. "Fatty Wynn's will fit you. Wynn, old man, will you lend Bunter some flannels?"

"With pleasure," said Fatty Wynn, coming over and shaking hands with Bunter. "I'm awfully pleased to see you here, Bunter. I haven't forgotten how well you treated me at Greyfriars. Only too happy to do anything for you! I'll have the flannels here in a jiffy, and you can change in the pav." And the fat Fourth-Former cut off towards the New House.

"This way," said Blake, taking the Greyfriars Removite into the pavilion. "Choose a bat among this lot, will you? Some of these pads will fit you."

"Bai Jove," said D'Arcy, catching Blake by the arm as he came out, "this is weally too wotten, you know!"

"Eh? What's the matter?"

"Makin' that young ass play ewicket, I mean. You can see that he doesn't want—"

"You're dreaming, Gussy! He said he'd like to!"

"Yaas, but he can't play, and—"

"He says he can play."

"Yaas, wathah! But you know vewy well—"

"My dear chap, I couldn't possibly doubt the word of a friend of yours," said Blake blandly. "Didn't you say plainly to a chap once that you'd never speak to a fellow who doubted the word of a friend of yours?"

"Yaas, wathah, but—"

"We must do the polite thing by Bunter. He says he would like to play, and that he can play, and he's entitled to be believed until he's proved to be a buster," said Blake. "That's all right."

And he jerked himself away, leaving Arthur Augustus feeling very dubious. Tom Merry and Figgins were tossing for innings. It was not a regular match—just a scratch affair that had been arranged that morning to fill up the afternoon because a fixture had fallen through. Half of the regular junior House eleven were out on the river, or in the woods, and the ranks had been filled up with the other fellows—hence it was possible for Tom Merry to put Bunter into his side without anybody stepping out. Tom Merry won the toss, and elected to bat.

"Shove Bunter in to open the innings," said Blake. "I hear that he's a terror at cricket where he comes from."

Tom Merry looked dubious.

"Blessed if he looks it, then!"

"Oh, you can't judge by appearances! Shove him in."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!"

"I wufuse to wing off! Tom Mewwy—"

"Shut up, ass!"

"Wats! Tom Mewwy, I do not think that Buntah is weally—"

"I can't allow you to run a guest down in that way," said Blake. "It's all right, Merry—this is only Gussy's suspiciousness!"

"Blake, you uttah wottah—"

"You know, he's always suspecting things—"

"I wufuse to allow that wotten statement to pass, Blake! It is the extreme of vulgawity to be suspicious! I wufuse—"

"Then let Bunter alone! Shove him in, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Not much! Lowther, you go in first, with Noble!"

"Right-ho!" said Monty Lowther.

And the School House innings opened with Lowther and the Cornstalk.

Fatty Wynn had come puffing up to the pavilion, and thrown a bundle of clothes to Bunter.

"Here you are, old chap!" he called out.

"Thanks awfully," mumbled Bunter. "I say—"

But Fatty Wynn was gone.

He was wanted to bowl the first over, and Figgins was bawling at him. Fatty Wynn was the champion junior bowler of St. Jim's, and he always had plenty to do in the House matches, and Figgins gave him plenty of practice at all times.

"I'm coming, Figgy!"

"Come on, then, ass! Take the ball!"

Fatty Wynn took it—on his chest. He gave a gasp.

"Yow!"

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"Oh, stop yowing and begin bowling!" said Figgins crossly. "You stopped in the House to gorge. I know!"

"Only just a jam-tart, Figgy—"

"Br-r-r-r! Go on and bowl!"

And Fatty Wynn went on and bowled. The jam-tart and the run down to the ground had not robbed him of his skill, for the first ball of the over sent Monty Lowther's bails flying.

"My hat!" said Lowther.

"Here, Bunter!" called out Blake. "Buck up—you're wanted!"

"I'm n-n-not ready yet!"

"I'll come and help you."

Manners went on in Lowther's place, and kept his end up for a time. Several others came over, and when Noble had the bowling he knocked up runs in a style his comrades had learned to expect of him. There was no doubt that the Australian junior was a born cricketer.

"Good old Wallaby!"

Kangaroo grinned. The variety of names the St. Jim's juniors found for him was amazing, but he answered to them all.

Manners' wicket fell at last, and at the same moment Billy Bunter came out of the pavilion in flannels and pads and batting-gloves, and with a bat belonging to Reilly under his arm.

"I'm ready," he announced.

"Right-ho!" said Blake. "Here's your place. I suppose Bunter's going in next, Merry?"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Oh, yes! In you go, Bunter! Look out for Fatty Wynn—he's a demon!"

"Certainly. I'm not in my best form to-day—long railway journey, you know," said Bunter, blinking at the junior cricket captain.

"Oh, of course!" said Tom Merry politely. "We shan't expect too much!"

And Bunter went to the wicket.

CHAPTER 12.

Billy Bunter Plays Cricket!

BILLY BUNTER took up his position at the wicket, and planted his bat firmly on the crease and blinked towards the bowler.

Fatty Wynn had tossed the ball to Kerr, who, not being prepared for it, caught it with his chin, and gave a roar.

"What the dickens are you up to, Wynn?" roared Figgins.

"Kerr's going to bowl this over."

"Eh? Why?"

"I'm not going to bowl Bunter first ball," said Fatty obstinately. "The young ass can't bat for toffee! Look how he's holding the bat—as if it were a scythe, or a policeman's truncheon! He can't bat! Kerr can knock his wicket over."

Figgins grinned.

He had observed that Bunter, whether he could play cricket or not—and the "not" was the more probable—was blessed with plenty of self-love, and very likely would not be pleased by having his wicket knocked to pieces first ball. And Fatty Wynn didn't want to get on the wrong side of Bunter. He was thinking of the loaves and fishes.

"Go it, Kerr!" he said.

Kerr rubbed his chin, and picked up the ball. He went on to bowl, and met the expectant blink of Billy Bunter.

Bunter was quite ready for the ball, and when it came down he made a mighty swipe. His bat swept the air in a circle, without hitting anything, and the impetus of it made him swing right round, and clout the wicket-keeper on the side of the head.

"Ow!" yelled Pratt, who was the unfortunate stumper.

The ball knocked his wicket to pieces, of course.

"How's that?" yelled Figgins.

"Out!"

Bunter blinked round.

"Oh, really, you fellows! My foot slipped!"

And he clambered to his feet, and took up his position at the wicket again. The St. Jim's juniors looked at him.

"You're out," remarked Tom Merry.

"Eh?"

"You're out."

"Oh, really, Merry—"

"Look at your wicket!" shrieked Blake.

"Well, that was a trial ball, wasn't it?"

"Oh—er—ahem! Was that a trial ball, Figgins?" gasped Tom Merry.

Figgins chuckled. He was willing to be polite to a visitor, and as it was pretty certain that Bunter wouldn't make any runs, there was no harm in letting him go on batting a little longer.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Figgins. "Give him another, Kerr."

"Right you are!" grinned Kerr.

The ball was sent back by the wicket-keeper, and Kerr bowled again. This time Billy Bunter was more fortunate. The swipe of the bat actually did smite the ball—and smote it directly into the hands of Figgins at point.

Figgins caught the ball with perfect ease and held it up, but the short-sighted junior from Greyfriars did not see that. He knew he had hit the ball, and he started running. Right down the pitch he tore, Noble staring at him in astonishment from the other end and taking care not to stir.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd.

"Go it!" shrieked Blake in huge delight. "Make the fur fly, Bunter! Put the pace on! Go it!"

The crowd simply shrieked.

But Bunter did not see what they were shrieking at. The howls of encouragement he took quite seriously, and he charged down the pitch at a spanking rate, and ran right into Noble at his wicket.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Figgins, still holding the ball in his hand. "Is the chap off his giddy rocker?"

"I—I say, Noble, why don't you run?" gasped Bunter. "Do you want to run me out, you ass?"

Kangaroo was simply doubled up with laughter.

"Oh, my Aunt Maria!" he gasped. "Carry me home to die! Bunter, you'll be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Run, you ass," shrieked Bunter, "before the ball comes in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

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

"I say, you fellows!"

"Can't you see Figg's got the ball?" yelled Noble. "You're caught out!"

"Oh, really, Noble—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that?" shrieked Figgins, tossing up the ball and catching it again with a smack in the palm of his hand.

"Out!" gasped the umpire.

"Well, I should have thought that an Australian would have known how to play cricket," said Bunter. "Fancy running me out like that."

"I haven't run you out, you duffer—you're caught out!"

"It's no good trying to get out of it—"

"Eh?"

"I'm accustomed to cricket of a bit higher quality than this," said Bunter. "You should hear what we say at Greyfriars to a chap who runs you out."

"You silly ass—I—I mean, excuse me," said Noble, remembering rather late that Bunter was a visitor. "You see—"

"I say, you fellows, if you really think I ought to go out—I'll go. But if you call this cricket—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Some of the juniors had thrown themselves on the grass, and were kicking up their heels in hysterical laughter. Tom Merry clung to the pavilion, and Figgins clung to Patty Wynn, bubbling helplessly.

Billy Bunter blinked round with considerable indignation. "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he remarked peevishly. "I think I'd better get out of this, D'Arcy."

"Oh, no, dear boy!" said D'Arcy, controlling his merriment. "It's all right. It's a—a misunderstanding, Figgins, dear boy. My friend Bunter isn't weally out, is he?"

"Eh! Not out?"

"Give him another chance, dear boy."

"Oh, certainly!" said Figgins, tossing the ball over to Kerr. "It's a jolly good entertainment, anyway. People pay money to see things less funny than this. Get back to your wicket, Bunter."

And the fat junior trotted down the pitch.

He took up his position again, blinking rather indignantly towards Kerr, who sent down a smart ball. There was a yell from Bunter. Instead of batting, he suddenly dropped the willow, and hopped on one leg, clasping the other with his hands.

(Continued on page 19.)

A treat for "after school"

"THERE's something to look forward to after history is over," thinks Jones minor. Wrigley's . . . the monster pennyworth that is even more than a sweet. It is the purest pennyworth made—four pellets of delicious chewing gum that buck you up—make your mouth fresh and cool. Wrigley's makes you feel fresh and alert . . . the delightful flavour lasts . . . and lasts.

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HALLO, Chums! I've got a regular peach of a story for you all next week, and the central figure in it is Herbert Skimpole, the "crank." Skimpole thinks that his will power is such that he can make people do most astonishing things. But—and there is a but—Skimpole learns rather late in the day that

"SKIMPOLE'S WILL POWER WON'T!"

That's the quaint title of next week's full of laughs story by famous Martin Clifford. Don't miss it or you will be missing the treat of the week. For thrills you can look forward to the continuation of W. E. Johns' great yarn,

"THE SPY-FLYERS!"

which moves with terrific action and is full of surprises. By way of a laugh I recommend you to turn to those pages which contain, firstly, another comic strip, starring Potts, the Office Boy, and, secondly, the column of jokes sent in by GEM readers. To the senders of these jokes, by the way, I have pleasure in awarding half-a-crown apiece.

THE WEEK AFTER NEXT!

In a fortnight's time I have a big surprise for you, so keep your peepers open for a full announcement regarding it in next week's chat. See you all next Wednesday, then.

FED UP!

They were "nice little boys" but they were breaking the law. In short, they were kicking a football about in the streets. Up popped a man in blue and talked to them severely. After the "lecture" the policeman took the culprits along to a police box and locked them in, in order to teach them a lesson. He threatened to cart them off to a real police station if they offended the majesty of the law in the same way again. About half an hour elapsed and then the policeman returned to the police box to release his youthful prisoners. He found them squatting on the floor munching vigorously. When told they could go the boys departed at the double and soon made themselves scarce, whereupon the policeman, feeling a bit peckish, looked on the shelf for his packet of sandwiches. Did he find his sandwiches? No, sir! They had gone—and so had the young rascals who had eaten them!

WRONG NUMBER?

The scene was a police station and the sergeant picked up the telephone instrument as the bell shrilled. "I say," said

an agitated voice, "I've backed a horse—" The sergeant snorted and cut in with: "You've got the wrong number. This is a police station, not a bookmaker's establishment." With that he rang off. Judge of his astonishment when the bell rang again and the same voice came through and the same words: "I've backed a horse and—" "You've got the wrong number!" exclaimed the fed-up police sergeant, and was about to ring off again when the anxious voice blurted out at express speed: "I say, I've backed a horse and cart into a window!"

THREE OF A KIND!

There was great excitement in Singapore Harbour recently when a ten-foot shark was caught and hauled in. There was greater excitement still when they slit the shark open, for inside the carcass were three large bottles which had once contained whisky. Do sharks drink this fiery liquor?

FREE GIFTS!

Do you know that our grand companion papers, "Magnet," "Modern Boy," and "Ranger," are each presenting a wonderful series of photogravure plates to all readers? In the case of "Magnet," these wonder photo plates depict Marvels of Modern Engineering, whilst "Modern Boy" are thrilling all their readers with a series of plates illustrating Great Adventures. "The Ranger"—the famous six-story adventure weekly—is presenting a fine set of photo plates dealing with World Records We Are Proud Of. Each series contains twelve photo plates, and all of them are well worth collecting. If you are interested, get a copy of the current issue of one, or all, of these grand boys' papers.

A BATTLE ROYAL!

Supposing you had the chance of witnessing a fight to the death between a giant shark and a swordfish, which "demon of the deep" would you fancy to win? Most people I have asked plump for the shark. Yet passengers on board a liner, which was crossing the Indian Ocean recently, saw such a battle and saw the swordfish win! The fight lasted for as long as thirty-five minutes. Then the swordfish got in a master blow, ripping the shark from head to tail.

THE FLOATING DROME!

Some time ago the world rocked to the news of the fierce burning of the famous French liner, Atlantique. Some of you will remember that it was eventually towed to France practically a total

loss. But it appears that the hull is not very much the worse for the fire, which consumed the rest of this floating palace. Now it is suggested that the hull of the burned out Atlantique should be towed to a spot half-way across the Atlantic Ocean and moored as a floating island for aeroplanes flying between France and the United States. Converting the hull into a floating drome, say the experts, is not a matter of great difficulty, and heavy weights will keep the vessel moored in the same spot even in the biggest storm. Not a bad idea, what?

"DOCTORING" BIG BEN!

If you are in London during the next five months make a point of seeing Big Ben, the famous clock by Westminster Bridge. Big Ben will be in the hands of the "doctors." Every inch of the three hundred and twenty-five feet tower will be carefully examined by workmen for signs of cracking or wear and tear, and the examination will mean the erection of fifteen miles or so of tubular steel scaffolding. Yes, sir, Big Ben's face will be washed and the general overhaul—the first thorough one for thirty years—is reckoned to cost £75,000. Expensive, we know, but the job will give employment to a hundred workmen or more.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Can a horse with a broken back jump fences, walk eighteen miles back to its stables and live for eight days afterwards? On the face of it you would doubtless say "No" very emphatically. Yet an Irish horse which fell at a fence in a three miles steeplechase at Mallow, not long ago, was remounted, finished the course—which meant jumping four hefty fences—walked the eighteen miles home, and lived for eight days before the veterinary surgeons were called in to account for its sudden collapse. Their examination proved that the unfortunate horse had broken its back during the race at Mallow.

HEARD THIS ONE?

Customer: "Are these binoculars any good?"
Shopkeeper: "They certainly are, sir! You see that church over there? Well, those binoculars bring it so close that you can hear the organ play!"

HERE'S AN ARGUMENT!

"A" writes to me from Sunderland saying that he has had an argument with his pal "B." And this is what it's all about. "A" declared that a mile is 1,760 yards. "B" begged to differ. He said a mile was 2,240 yards. But the funny part about it is that both are right. You see, there are only 1,760 yards in an English mile, but there are as many as 2,240 yards in an Irish mile. So it looks as though "B" is an Irishman—with the Irishman's usual sense of humour!

OUR TEA BILL?

"How much tea is consumed in England in the course of a year?" asks Fred Bennet of Worthing. Fred thought he would catch me napping with that, I'll wager. But I've been reading the papers, too. And the answer to his question as supplied by the authorities is 465,000,000 pounds—or 220,000,000 cups of tea every day. Sounds incredible, doesn't it? No wonder we have been called a nation of tea drinkers!

YOUR EDITOR.

BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S!

(Continued from page 17.)

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "What's the matter now?"
 "Ow! I'm hurt!"
 "How's that?" yelled Kerr.
 "Out—leg before!"
 "Ow! Wow! Wow!"
 "You can't be hurt, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "The ball struck your pads, you know."
 "Ow! I'm hurt!"
 "Weally, Buntah—"
 "Ow! Wow! I'm hurt! Yow!"
 "But you can't be, deah boy—"
 "Ha, ha, ha! He looks as if he felt hurt!" shrieked Tom Merry. "I'm afraid you're out this time, Bunter—leg before wicket, you know!"
 "Oh, really, Merry—upon the whole, I think I'd better go out," said Bunter, still clasping his leg. "I suppose you call this cricket! You ought to see us play cricket at Greyfriars!"
 "Well, I should like to see you and bring a camera, if it's anything like the cricket you play here!"

Billy Bunter hopped off without replying. He was glad enough to be out. In spite of D'Arcy's assurances that he wasn't hurt, he certainly felt as if he were hurt.

Arthur Augustus followed him into the pavilion and helped him off with his pads. The swell of St. Jim's was very sympathetic.

"It's wotten!" he said. "Navah mind—pewwaps you would like to come for a stwoll instead of playin' ewicket."

"I'm feeling a bit peckish," remarked Bunter. "Cricket always makes me hungry. We might go and get a snack and be back in time to bowl in the next innings."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, wondering what Bunter's bowling would be like. "That's a weally wippin' ideah!"

And they adjourned to Dame Taggles' tuckshop.

CHAPTER 13.

Bunter Bowls!

"Gussy! Where's that ass Gussy?"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You're wanted!" shouted Herries, putting his head in at the tuckshop. "You're the last man in, and they're waiting for you."

"Bai Jove!"

Billy Bunter looked round from his seventh ice.

"It's all right," he said. "Don't mind me. I'll be along in a minute!"

"You'll excuse me, deah boy—"

"Yes, rather! I'll have another ice, please, Mrs. Taggles. These are ripping ices."

And Billy Bunter continued to eat ices while Arthur Augustus hurried off with Herries to the cricket-field. He was greeted with a howl from the impatient cricketers.

"Where have you been?" roared Tom Merry. "What sort of a cricketer do you call yourself, eh?"

"I have been lookin' aftah my guest, Tom Mewwy—"

"Blow your guest!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I mean—"

"Take your bat out, ass!"

"I decline to be called an ass! I—"

"Last man in!"

"Vewy well, I will go in, Tom Mewwy; but pway undahstand that—"

Arthur Augustus, with an indignant sniff, went to the wicket. He did not stay there long. Fatty Wynn was in fine form, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's bails went down in the first over.

"Bai Jove! Is that out?" asked D'Arcy, turning his eye-glass upon the wrecked wicket.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

"Good gwacious! Sowwy, Tom Mewwy! I was just gettin' into wippin' form, and if the innings had lasted longah I think I should have made a good show."

"Yes," grinned Lowther. "You're like the chap who could always score a century if they'd only let him make a hundred runs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"All down," said Tom Merry. "All down for sixty-five. Measly score! If you did that in a real House match, my gous, I'd sack the lot of you, and get a new eleven out of the Third Form."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Well, we've got such jolly good backing," said Blake. "Here's D'Arcy, dealer in ducks' eggs, and Bunter, who's never out."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, coming up. "Innings over? I say, they're ripping ices over there, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Are you going to bowl for us, Bunter?" asked Jack Blake. "After the way you batted, we're looking forward to your bowling."

"Buntah does not feel inclined to bowl—"

"Oh, yes, that's all right!" said Bunter. "I'll bowl. I'm a bit off my form at batting, but my bowling is really my strong point. If you like to put me on to bowl first over, I'll show you some things."

"You'll show us a conceited little fat rotter!" murmured Digby.

"Eh? Did you speak?"

"Nice afternoon for cricket," said Dig blandly. "After the match we're going to feed in Study No. 6."

"Jolly good! I've had a snack, and I feel up to doing something really decent at bowling," said Billy Bunter.

"Wynn bowls well. You always notice a stout chap can bowl well. I'm a demon at it myself."

"Oh, give him the first over, Merry!" gasped Blake.

Tom Merry grinned at the idea.

"May as well," he assented. "I expect one over will be enough."

And when the New House cricketers opened their innings, Billy Bunter was put on to bowl from the pavilion end against the great Figgins.

There was a droll expression upon Figgins' face as he took his stance at the wicket. After Bunter's batting, he could guess what his bowling would be like. He didn't expect to see much of the ball.

But Billy Bunter made great preparations. He retreated a considerable distance behind the bowler's wicket, and took a loping run. Then he turned himself into a sort of stout catherine-wheel, and the ball flew from his hand.

Nobody—Bunter least of all—knew where it had gone till there was a roar from Monty Lowther, who was fielding at mid-on.

"Ow! Wow! Grooooh!"

Lowther was seen to clap his hand to the side of his head.

"What's the matter?" roared Figgins.

"Matter! Ow! That young demon's trying to brain me! Yow! Wow!"

"You don't mean to say—Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's juniors roared.

Tom Merry clasped Blake and almost sobbed on his breast. Figgins wept over his bat. They had seen all sorts and conditions of bowling, but they had never seen a bowler mistake mid-on's head for the wicket before.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't let him bowl again!" yelled Lowther. "If he does, I'm going to field deep—jolly deep."

"Oh, I say, you fellows, my hand slipped, you know! Chuck that ball back."

Monty Lowther, rubbing his head with one hand, picked up the ball with the other. He threw it back as requested, but not as desired.

"Oh!" roared Bunter, as the ball caught him on the chest.

He sat down on the grass.

"Butter-fingers!" growled Manners. "Why didn't you catch?"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

Blake jerked the fat junior to his feet again and thrust the ball into his hand. He was weeping with merriment.

"There you are, kid! Bowl!"

"Right-ho! Blessed if I know what they're all cackling about! Accidents will happen."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes; especially when you're bowling," said Tom Merry, retreating to his place in the field again.

Bunter gripped the ball and took a run. The fieldsmen fielded deep—very deep indeed. Indeed, some of them seemed to be hurrying right off the field. Bunter, as a bowler, might not be dangerous in the ordinary sense of the word, but he was dangerous to the field.

"Go it, porpoise!" sang out a dozen voices.

Whiz went the ball.

There was a roar from Figgins.

The ball had gone nearer the wicket this time—just near enough to crash on Figgins' shoulder. Figgins jumped clear of the ground and dropped his bat. He clasped his shoulder and yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd.

"Shoulder before wicket! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take that lunatic off. Tom Merry!" yelled Figgins. "What the dickens do you mean by playing a dangerous maniac?"

"Oh, really, Figgins—"

"He's nearly busted my shoulder! I shall have an ache there for a dog's age. Take him off, or I'll brain him with the bat!"

"I think I'll change the bowling now!" gasped Tom Merry. "You can take a rest, Bunter. We'll play a man short for a bit."

"Oh, really, Merry! I'm a bit off my form at bowling, but my fielding at Greyfriars is a proverb. I'll field if you like."

"Right-ho! Give Noble the ball!"

"Where shall I field, then?"

"Oh, anywhere you like! Ahem! Go into the long field."

And Bunter trotted away to long-on. He blinked round actively, watching for the ball. Figgins sent it his way presently, but the fat junior did not see it coming. He could have stopped it easily with his foot if he had seen it, but he didn't; but he stopped it, all the same. The ball gave him a crack on the ankle, and he yelled.

"Ow! Wh-wh-what was that?"

"Field that ball!" roared Tom Merry.

The batsmen were running.

"Send that ball in!"

"Ow—yow—wow!"

Noble came tearing up for the ball. He recovered it and sent it in, with a shot at the wicket straight as a die. There was no need for the wicket-keeper's aid. Crash went the middle stump of Figgins' wicket, and a second later his bat bumped on the crease. But the umpire shook his head.

"Out!"

Figgins carried out his bat. There was a roar from the School House.

"Well fielded!"

"Good old Cornstalk!"

Billy Bunter hopped away towards the pavilion.

"I say, Merry, if you don't mind, I'll go off for a bit," he said. "I'm feeling a bit done-up."

"Right you are!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Go and have a rest."

And Billy Bunter went into the pavilion and changed his things. He had had enough cricket that afternoon.

CHAPTER 14.

So Near and Yet So Far!

BUNTER came out of the pavilion a little later.

The juniors were still busy on the cricket field. The New House innings was not half through yet, and the School House juniors were all in the field. Figgins had insisted upon Tom Merry playing another fellow in Bunter's place, so the side was up to its full number.

Arthur Augustus was fielding, and so he had no chance of looking after his guest just then. The joes Billy Bunter had consumed in the tuckshop were very nice, but they had not made much difference to his appetite. It was close upon tea-time, and the junior from Greyfriars was hungry.

"Blessed if I can see what they see in that game to stick at it like that!" he muttered. "I'd rather have a feed, any time. I say, you fellows!"

He spoke to Digby and Herries. Digby and Herries were not playing, but they were looking on with keen interest.

"I say, you fellows—"

Dig looked round. He would have told any St. Jim's fellow to go and eat coke, or something equally polite. But he felt that more courtesy was required for Gussy's guest from Greyfriars.

"Hallo!" he said. "Ripping game, isn't it?"

"Ye-e-es, I was thinking it would be a good idea to have the feed ready for when the match is over," said Bunter. "I'm a jolly good cook, you know. I want to help. Could I lend a hand?"

"Certainly!" said Dig, resigning himself to his fate.

"Come along to Study No. 6. Come on, Herries, old man."

"Right-ho!" said Herries.

Some preparations for a really imposing feed had been made in Study No. 6. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not the fellow to spare expense in entertaining a visitor. Billy Bunter's round eyes twinkled as Dig opened the cupboard and disclosed the pile of excellent things there.

"I say, you fellows, this is spiffing!"

"It's decent, isn't it?" said Dig. "Light the fire, Herries, old man, and I'll fill the kettle."

"Right-ho!"

Billy Bunter brought the things out of the cupboard.

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They made a respectable pile on the table, and Bunter read over the labels on bottles, jars, and glasses with intense satisfaction.

"I say, you chaps, we might have a snack now to begin with, in case they're a long time finishing the match," he remarked. "I'll fry a dozen sausages or so—eh?"

"Good idea!" said Digby, who was rather hungry himself, now he came to think of it. "How's that fire going, Herries?"

"It's coming up," said Herries, rising from the grate with a face like a peony. "It's going all right. Here's the frying-pan, Bunter."

"Good! This is like home, and no mistake."

Billy Bunter joyfully seized the frying-pan. He greased it out with the hand of experience, and cut the sausages apart. The fire was burning bright now, and it gave the study a very cosy look.

"Hallo!" said Herries suddenly.

The door was pushed open, and Knox, the prefect, looked in. He was scowling, but his face lighted up as he saw the array of eatables on the study table. He gave a whistle.

"Phew! What a spread! You gorging young wasters, you'll make yourselves ill! I can't allow this!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Digby hotly. "I suppose we can have a feed in our own study if we like?"

"None of your cheek, Digby! There's a lot too much gorging goes on in this study," said Knox. "I'm going to keep an eye on you. You'll make yourselves ill. I'm going to confiscate this grub!"

"What!" ejaculated Digby.

"What!" roared Herries.

"Wh-wh-what!" stammered Billy Bunter.

The prefect grinned as he gathered up the good things.

"You can have it back a little at a time, as it's good for you!" he exclaimed. "I can't see youngsters ruining their digestions in this way."

Then he turned to the door, carrying away the feed, while the juniors stood petrified.

Herries rushed forward.

"Knox, you cad! You're not going to collar our grub!"

The senior reached out and gave Herries a smack on the head that sent him reeling into the armchair. Then he coolly left the study.

Herries sat up, rubbing his ear.

"The cad! The rotter!"

"The cowardly beast!" howled Digby. "We're not going to stand it! Fancy confiscating a fellow's grub—for nothing!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"The beast! We'll have it back somehow!"

"He says we can have it a little at a time."

Digby sniffed scornfully.

"That's only his jaw. He doesn't mean to let us have any. He's going to scoff it. I believe he followed us up to the study on purpose, because he thought there was a feed going on."

"Can't you complain to somebody?" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Mr. Railton, or the Head?"

"No good complaining about a prefect. Besides, he's within his rights. We've had grub confiscated before," said Dig ruefully. "Only this cad is simply doing it to get a feed on the cheap—that's the difference."

"We—we won't stand it!" said Herries wildly.

"Let's tell the fellows."

Herries and Digby rushed out of the study, and out of the School House. Billy Bunter followed them slowly out of the study. There was a cloud upon the fat junior's face. The feed had been so close, and now it was gone from his grasp like a beautiful dream.

It was too bad for anything. No doubt the feed would be replaced somehow later, but meanwhile—meanwhile, Bunter was hungry.

"The cad!" he muttered. "He's no right to take the grub! I'm getting into a low state already for want of nourishment. Hallo, Wynn!"

Fatty Wynn was coming upstairs. There was an expectant look upon his plump face.

"I'm out," he said. "Noble bowled me first ball, and I thought I'd give you a look in. It's only a single innings match, you know. What about the feed? Dig and Herries have just passed me, but they didn't answer when I called to them."

Billy Bunter's face was lugubrious.

"Knox, the prefect, has collared it."

"What!" howled Fatty Wynn.

Bunter explained. Fatty Wynn's face grew longer and longer as he listened. Dismay and wrath were mingled in his plump countenance.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "I say, as I came up I

saw Knox going into Crewe's study! Crewe's his chum, you know."

Bunter brightened up wonderfully.

"Good! I suppose he's gone to ask Crewe to the feed. We might get back the grub while he's gone. Come on! Do you know his study?"

"Yes, rather! This way!"

They ran off quickly, Fatty Wynn leading the way. They passed Crewe's study, and heard Knox's voice within, and knew that the coast was still clear.

Fatty Wynn grinned gleefully.

"It's all right," he whispered. "Knox is in there. We can get the things and go back a different way without passing this study. Buzz on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Crewe.

"Hallo! Blessed if I knew I left the cupboard open!" said Knox suspiciously. "H'm! The things are all right! Look at that little lot!"

"Ripping!" said Crewe.

"They've been disturbed, though," said Knox, puzzled. "Somebody's been in the study! Look here!"

"Hallo! What's that?"

"What's what?"

"I heard somebody breathing, or gasping, I think."

Knox snapped his teeth.

"Ah, we've caught 'em in the act, then!" he said venomously. "They're in the study, whoever they are. Come out, you young whelp! I can see you!"



Bunter turned himself into a sort of catherine-wheel, and the ball flew from his hand. Nobody—Bunter least of all—knew where it had gone until there was a roar from Monty Lowther, who was fielding at mid-on. "Ow! Wow! Groooh!" yelled Lowther, as the ball smote him on the head!

They reached Knox's study, and ran in without ceremony. The raided provisions were not to be seen, but Fatty Wynn ran across to the cupboard and dragged the door open. There lay the cloth they had been wrapped in, and there were the things themselves—an imposing pile.

"Here they are—quick!"

"Hold on!" gasped Bunter. "They're coming!"

Footsteps were coming quickly along the passage towards the half-open door. There was no time to get clear with the plunder—or without it, for that matter. Billy Bunter made a plunge for the screen that stood in a corner of the room, and hid behind it, palpitating. Fatty Wynn, knowing what he had to expect if Knox and Crewe caught him there, squirmed under the table. There was a long cover on the table, reaching nearly to the floor, and the Falstaff of the New House was almost hidden from sight.

A second or two later the two seniors entered the study.

"It's a ripping spread!" said Knox.

There was no reply. The two hidden juniors were palpitating, but they knew very well that Knox could not see them, and they did not mean to show themselves until they were forced to.

"Lock the door, Crewe," said Knox, selecting a cane. "I'll have him out and give him a tanning. These juniors have been too cheeky lately."

"What-ho!" said Crewe; and he crossed to the door and locked it.

"Now come, you—you whelp!" roared Knox.

There was no reply.

But just as Knox was starting to look for the hidden raider, or raiders, there was the sound of a sharp and angry voice at the door.

"Let me come in, Knox!"

Knox gave a jump.

It was the voice of Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's.

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CHAPTER 15.

Knox Hears Voices!

KNOX gritted his teeth savagely. He hurriedly put away the cane, and unlocked the door.

He disliked the captain of St. Jim's intensely, but he did not dare to refuse him entrance to the study.

He threw the door open savagely.

"There you are!" he growled. "What do you want?"

Then he jumped.

There was no one there.

Knox stared at the open doorway, and then stepped out into the passage. He looked up the passage, and he looked down the passage.

Kildare was not in sight.

Knox re-entered the study and looked at Crewe, who was equally astonished.

"Isn't he there?" asked Crewe.

"No. Blessed if I can understand it!"

"I suppose he just called out in passing," said Crewe, in wonder. "That's not like Kildare. I should never have thought he'd play such a trick."

"Well, he's gone," said Knox, slamming the door. "Now we'll look for that young beggar. I'll give him the tanning of his life!"

"Open this door!"

Knox almost staggered. It was Kildare's voice again in the passage.

He tore open the door.

The passage was empty.

"M-my hat!" gasped Knox, in perfect bewilderment.

"It's somebody playing a trick."

"Yes, but how—how?"

"Blessed if I know! Kildare wouldn't do it. It's somebody imitating his voice," said Crewe. "He's dodged into the study opposite, I should say."

"That's Darrell's study," said Knox, closing the door.

"I—My hat!"

"Open this door!"

Knox still had his hand upon the door. He tore it open instantly; but the passage was empty. There was only one possible conclusion to come to—the joker, whether Kildare or somebody else, had dodged into the study directly opposite the prefect's.

"Come on, Crewe!" said Knox savagely.



The St. Frank's Barring Out!

OPEN rebellion at St. Frank's! Such is the sensational state of affairs that the heavy-handed Housemaster of the Ancient House has brought about by his tyrannous treatment of the Remove Form. Nipper and his fellow rebels barricade themselves in and hurl defiance—and soot and water—at the tyrant. Read what happens in the all-thrilling story in to-day's super number of

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He strode across to Darrell's door, and thrust it open. He knew that Darrell was there, having seen him come in from the cricket practice a quarter of an hour before.

Darrell was seated at his table reading a letter. He looked up in surprise when the two seniors burst rudely into the room.

"What the dickens do you want?" he demanded. "Haven't you ever heard of knocking at a door before you enter?"

"Is Kildare here?" demanded Knox.

"Kildare—no! I believe he's still at the cricket."

"He was at my door a minute ago—or somebody was imitating his voice," said Knox. "Whoever it was must have dodged into this study."

"What do you mean? Nobody has dodged into the study," said Darrell testily. "Shut the door after you."

"Do you mean to say that nobody has entered this room just now?"

"Of course not! Shut the door!"

Knox and Crewe retired in complete bewilderment, and closed the door.

They knew that Darrell would not tell an untruth, and they were entirely puzzled.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Knox, as he went into his own study. "They say that the School House is haunted, and I'm blessed if I'm not beginning to believe it! Now to settle that young rotter—"

"Knox!"

It was Mr. Railton's voice.

"Yes, sir?" said Knox, turning round in the passage.

Then he went quite pale.

"He's not here!"

"The place is haunted!" gasped Crewe.

"It's a trick of some kind!" said Knox, grinding his teeth. "Shut the door, and take no notice of it! Now then, you stand at the door, while I hunt round the study!"

Crewe went to the door, and as he did so his voice—or a voice very like it, made an unexpected remark:

"Don't be a beastly bully, Knox!"

Knox swung round on him in a fury.

"What's that?" he exclaimed. "Mind what you're saying, Crewe!"

"Eh? I? What do you mean?"

"I don't want any jaw from you!"

"Oh, you're a silly dummy!"

Now, Crewe knew that he never said that, but the voice was so like his own that he stood gasping, with his mouth open in sheer astonishment. But Knox had no doubts. He was already exasperated, and to be insulted like this without cause by his own chum was too much.

He rushed round at Crewe, and gave him a right-hander on the nose which sent the unprepared senior staggering against the wall.

"Take that!" roared Knox. "And now you can get out!"

"Oh! Ow! Grooh! You mad idiot!" gasped Crewe. "I tell you, I never—"

"Get out of my study, you cad!"

"I'll jolly well give you something for yourself before I go, then!" exclaimed Crewe, quite losing his temper. "Take that, you cad!"

Knox took it on the chin—and he hit out in return savagely. The two seniors, losing utterly the control of their tempers, were fighting like tigers the next minute.

Fatty Wynn, under the table, listened with great surprise and very great satisfaction. He had been expecting to be dragged out every moment. Billy Bunter chuckled softly behind the screen in the corner. His ventriloquism had sometimes stood him in good stead, but never so much as at the present moment.

Knox and Crewe, after exchanging savage blows, grappled with one another, and went reeling and staggering about the apartment.

They passed close by the table, and the temptation was too strong for Fatty Wynn to resist. He put out his hands, caught an ankle of each of them, and sent them reeling to the floor.

They went down with a crash that shook the study, and jolted things off the mantelpiece. Knox was uppermost, and he was pommelling his whilom chum.

Fatty Wynn nipped out from under the table.

"Quick, Bunter!" he shouted.

Billy Bunter nipped out from behind the screen, and darted to the door. Together they rushed into the passage. The two seniors saw them go, and a sudden suspicion flashed through Knox's mind.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Pax!"

He jumped up, and Crewe staggered to his feet. He mopped a bleeding nose, and looked inclined to renew the combat.

"You rotter!" he snarled. "I've had enough of you! You won't see me inside your study again in a hurry!"

"Hold on, Crewe, old boy! I—I think I was hasty! Did you call me—"

"Of course, I didn't!"
 "You heard the voice?"
 "Yes; but—"
 "It was one of those brats, then!" exclaimed Knox.
 "The same chap who was imitating Kildare's voice, of course! Let's collar them!" By George, I'll make an example of the young whelps!"
 And they dashed from the study. Fatty Wynn and Billy Bunter had a good start, but the seniors were faster afoot. They gained swiftly on the juniors. The fugitives had intended to make a break for the cricket field, where there would be safety in numbers. But there was no time, and they scuttled swiftly up the second staircase, and darted into Study No. 6, and just had time to lock the door before Knox was hammering upon it.

"Open this door!" roared Knox.
 "Yes, that's likely—I don't think!" said Fatty Wynn.
 And he sat down to rest in the armchair, and Bunter sat on the table, while Knox and Crewe kicked furiously at the door.

CHAPTER 16. Recaptured!

"PLAY up!"
 "I say, Tom Merry—" "Don't say anything, old chap, I'm playing cricket!"
 "But, I say—" "Go and eat coke!"
 "Never mind!" "The feed's gone!"
 "Good!"
 Dig and Herries gave it up. It was evident that it wasn't of much use talking to Tom Merry about the raided feed while he was on the cricket field.

But the scratch match was very near its close. Kerr had just scored the sixty-fifth run for the New House, and the scores had tied, when Noble went on to bowl. The New House had three more wickets to fall, and they were naturally expecting a victory with wickets to spare, but the Australian's bowling soon banished that expectation. The juniors shouted with glee over the "hat trick" in the next over, and the New House were all down for sixty-five, and the scratch match was a draw.
 Tom Merry gave Kangaroo a mighty thump on the back. "Well done!" he exclaimed. "You have saved our bacon!"
 "You needn't bust my backbone, if I have!" said Noble.
 "Still, I'm glad! I was lucky!"

"Rats! It was good bowling! Now, what's that about the feed, Dig?" asked Tom Merry, as they crowded into the pavilion.

"Knox has raided it!"
 "What? Knox? Our feed?"
 There were general exclamations of indignation. Figgins & Co. had been invited to the feed, and they were as indignant as the School House juniors.
 "Bai Jove! I wegard that as vewy bad form of Knox, you know!"

"We'll jolly soon have it back!" exclaimed Jack Blake.
 "If there's any left of it!"
 "How long ago was it, Dig?"
 "About twenty minutes."
 "Well, it can't be all gone in that time," said Tom Merry.
 "Come on! Let's go in a body and see Knox about it!"

"Right-ho!"
 "And bring the bats and the stumps, in case there's an argument!" said Kangaroo.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

And the indignant cricketers made their way into the School House in imposing array. Prefect or no prefect, Knox wasn't going to raid a big feed in so barefaced a way, without an argument on the subject.

They marched up to Knox's study, and found the door wide open, and the study unoccupied. Tom Merry looked into it.

"Nobody here!" he remarked.
 "There's a row going on upstairs," said Kangaroo.
 "Hallo, Dane!" he added, as Clifton Dane of the Shell came down. "What's that row up there?"
 Clifton Dane laughed.

"Knox and Crewe hammering at Study No. 6," he said. "I saw Fatty Wynn and Bunter cut in there. The Sixth Form rotters are after them."
 "Oh, they've been trying to get the grub back, then!" said Blake. "We'll jolly soon see if they've got it!"

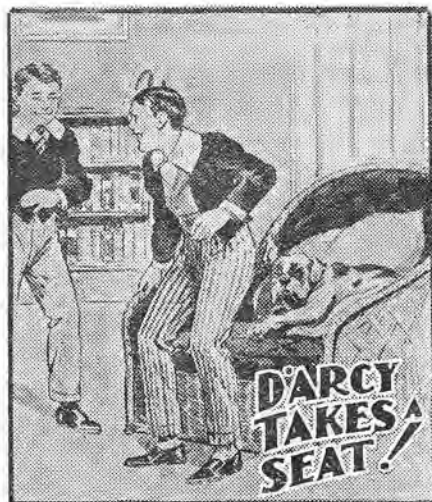
The juniors did not stand on ceremony. They swarmed into the Sixth Form study, and Blake tore the cupboard door open. The juniors knew their property at a glance.
 "Here it is!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Wrap it up!" said Tom Merry. "Bring every blessed morsel. Then we'll go up and argue it out with Knox and Crewe!"

And the raided provisions were wrapped up in the cloth, and Blake and Figgins carried the precious burden between them, as they left the study.

They ascended the stairs towards the Fourth Form passage,
 (Continued on page 28.)

"SKIMPOLE'S WILL POWER WON'T!"



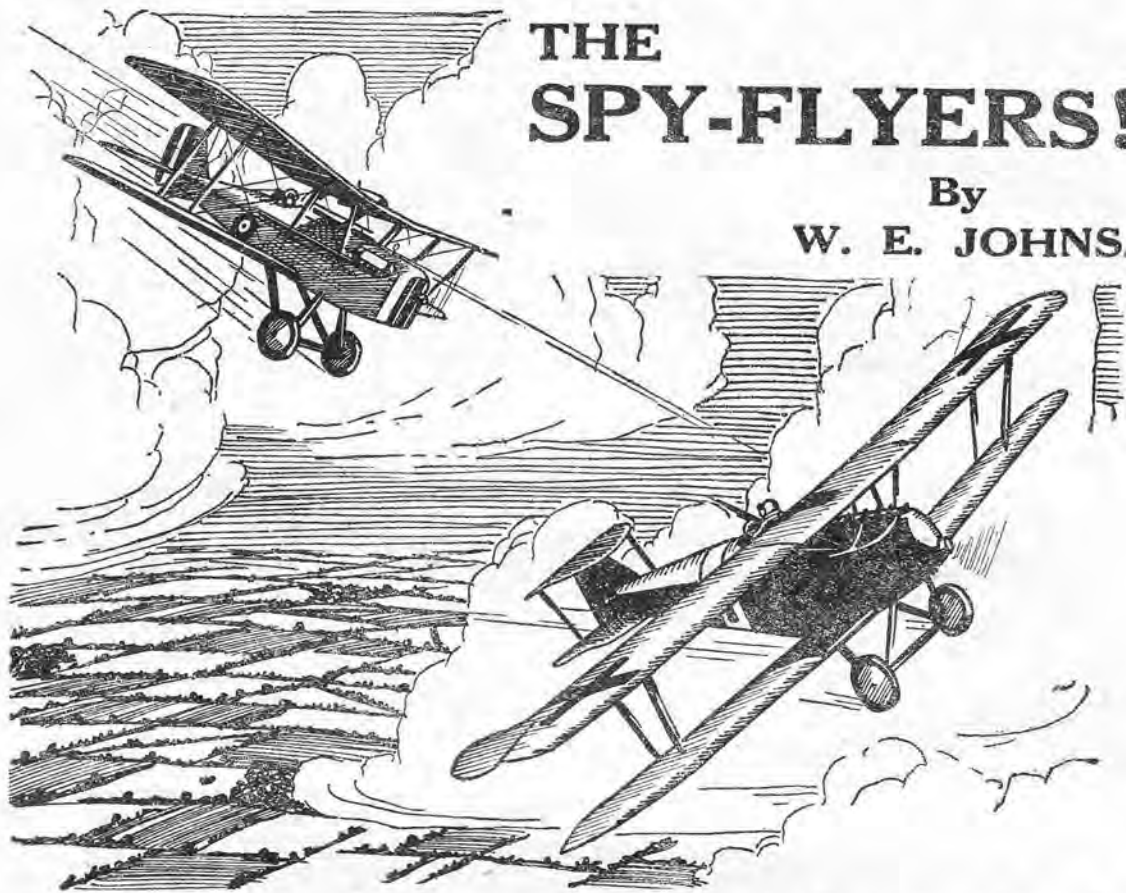
NEXT WEEK'S RIPPING YARN!

Skimpole's at it again! This time he thinks he can cure anyone of anything—by will power! He tries to cure Towser of a mysterious illness, but judging by our cover picture shown here it will be D'Arcy who will want curing soon!

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THE SPY-FLYERS!

By
W. E. JOHNS.



REX LOVELL and TONY FOSTER are chosen by **MAJOR TREVOR** for Secret Service work in the air. They discover that **CAPTAIN FAIRFAX** of the British Intelligence Staff is a famous German spy! Dressed in German uniforms, and flying a German plane, Rex and Tony are shot down by a British machine, but they manage to reach a German aerodrome. Rex is chosen by **HAUPTMANN VON RASBERG** to fly a passenger over to the British lines at night. Rex lands his passenger at a disused chateau and discovers that it is the meeting place of German agents; presiding at the meeting is **Von Rasberg** himself!
(Now read on.)

Amazing Revelations!

SO you were my passenger, eh? I might have guessed it, thought Rex grimly, and then listened intently, every nerve tingling, as Von Rasberg spoke.

"I wish he wouldn't keep us waiting like this," he was saying in German. "I for one shall be pleased when I get back to where I belong. Hark! He is coming now."

Rex nearly fell backwards as Von Rasberg sprang up and took a quick step towards the very window through which he was watching. He just had time to fling himself back on the ground among the weeds and broken masonry under the window, when the window was opened a few inches, and the German peered out into the darkness.

"Yes," he said again, "I hear him coming now."

The faint sound of a motor-cycle rapidly approaching was borne to Rex's ears. He lay as still as death, hardly daring to breathe, as it drew up on the overgrown drive a few yards away from him. There was a clank of metal as the stand was lowered, and then a sound of footsteps which seemed to be coming straight towards him.

"Come along!" said Von Rasberg irritably. "Every second we spend here is fraught with danger."

"I was detained," replied a voice, which in some vaguely distant way seemed curiously familiar. For perhaps a second Rex actually lay, face downwards, between the two men, and he flinched instinctively, half expecting to feel the crashing blow that would accompany discovery. He breathed again as the footsteps receded, and the sound of the window being closed above him reached his ears.

He heard a door slam somewhere not far away, and he

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rose again as silently as a shadow, and placed his eye to the slit. The three men were facing the door expectantly. It opened, and Rex eagerly looked at the face of the newcomer.

For how long Rex remained rooted to the spot, staring in dumb stupefaction, he could never afterwards say. His brain literally reeled from a shock which seemed to paralyse his limbs. His lips went bone dry, and the skin of his face seemed to tighten like elastic. Of all the people in France, the last he expected to see at that sinister rendezvous was the man at whom he was now staring in horror-stricken amazement. It was Major Trevor.

For a full minute the earth seemed to rock beneath his feet, and then, as he recovered himself by a supreme effort of will, a thousand thoughts rushed through his brain at once, and he struggled to master them into intelligible order.

With this stunning revelation everything was changed, and he tried to see the new position in his correct perspective. Good heavens! First Fairfax, and now Trevor, of all people, he thought. No wonder information was leaking! Leaking! It must have been literally pouring out! Major Trevor was taking a bulky package out of the breast-pocket of his trench-coat, and Rex watched him as if fascinated.

"They are now complete," announced the major, speaking in German. "These maps show how the dispositions of the troops on this sector will appear on the first day of the big offensive. I've had a job to complete them, but there they are, and I'm glad it's done. I hope things will be a bit easier after this."

At his next words Rex grew rigid with horror and rage.

"What have you done with those brats, Lovell and Fraser?" sneered Major Trevor, with a sardonic smile.

"Done with them? Nothing—yet," replied Von Rasberg. "We thought they had got away this afternoon, but their engine let them down, and they had to come back."

"Well, Von Hartzmann can do what he likes with them now. I've finished with them," announced the major.

"You foul, treacherous hound!" thought Rex, wriggling with suppressed fury.

"I think," went on the major, "that this scheme of mine was one of the neatest I've ever put across. When I blundered over the affair of the tunnel—"

"Yes. How did that happen?" asked Von Rasberg, with interest.

The major made a deprecating gesture.

"I sent those two half-baked young fools on the job. I had to do something, or the general would have wondered why. I was told to send somebody to do it, and he would have done it if I hadn't. The long and short of it was, I sent those two as you know, but I took every reasonable precaution to make sure they failed. I told them to land on field 117, which I knew was wired, and then gave them a charge with faulty detonators which I fixed myself. What must they do, but first of all reset the charge, and then land on a field of their own choice. When I heard they had succeeded, I nearly threw a fit. It was a case of fools for luck, if you like. Von Hartzmann, of course, was livid about it, so in order to appease him I sent them over to our place at Lille with a letter saying who they were, and that they had better be put out of the way. The fools there let them slip through their fingers. Then they got on the trail of Fairfax. They think they are watching him now; but, of course, Fairfax is watching them."

"I think I started a good scheme when I got them flying over in that Hannoverana. They little knew I was making carrier-pigeons of them. I had a slot put inside the fuselage and Von Henkel, or Hartzmann, just collected my messages while they were drinking beer in the mess. Simple, wasn't it? There they were, working hard to find out who was carrying the information which they themselves were carrying. I flatter myself that they'd hardly be likely to suspect themselves."

The major laughed at the grim humour of the situation. "You clever devil!" gasped Rex, aghast. "You clever, cunning dog!" The knowledge that he and Tony had been used as enemy agents appalled him, and he listened breathlessly to the story of betrayal.

"They were rather clever to spot Fairfax," went on the major. And again Rex struggled to get the situation correctly balanced in his mind. That Fairfax was a German spy was no news to him, and he now understood the major's attitude when he had broached the subject to him. The knowledge that the Germans had known about them all along filled him with a sense of bitter disappointment. No wonder things had been easy, and all the time they thought they were being clever! Rex squirmed with a burning resentment at the thought of how the Germans must have laughed at them. What fools they had made of themselves! He bit his lip until it bled in the fury of his bitter hatred against the man who had made dupes of them.

"One of them flew me over here to-night," announced Von Rasberg.

"What?" Major Trevor spun round as if he had been shot. "Do you mean he brought you here?"

"Yes."

"Why in the name of Heaven—"

"Wait a minute; don't worry. The chief is no fool. Von Henkel went sick this afternoon, and it was the colonel's idea. It was more than that, it was inspiration. Who could be better than Lovell, or Wistmann, as he calls himself? In the first place, he knows the country better than any of our pilots, and if we ran into trouble—if the guns got us, or we crashed—we should lose one man instead of two."

"But suppose he bolts while he is here?"

"What, and leave Fraser in Germany to be shot as a spy? Not likely! Do you suppose we had not thought of that?"

The major nodded.

"Yes, I see that," he said. "It was a clever scheme, but I don't like the idea of him being so close."

"Fear not, my friend!" exclaimed Von Rasberg impatiently. "Max is outside, keeping an eye on him, anyway. He won't let him leave the machine."

"All right; but the sooner they are both under the ground the better I shall be pleased. Let us have no more of this foolery; they know too much already. Well, there are the plans. I must go now."

"And so must I," said Von Rasberg, rising and placing the plans in his pocket.

Rex waited for no more. He dropped on all fours and crawled quickly away from the chateau until he was round the corner of the outbuildings, when he broke into a run towards the machine. For a moment he was tempted to rush off to Wing Headquarters and have the traitorous

major arrested forthwith, but that would mean leaving Tony to his fate. Moreover, the plans of the British advance would then inevitably fall into German hands, and that had to be prevented at all costs. He next thought of striking Von Rasberg down as he rejoined the machine, but that might sound the alarm to the other spies, and he had no intention of allowing the major to escape if he could possibly prevent it. No, he would have to think of something else.

A few moments later, when Von Rasberg joined him, he was sitting, apparently dozing, in his seat. The Hauptmann looked around suspiciously.

"Has no one been here?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Rex. "Max—he didn't tell me his other name—has been talking to me ever since you went. He's just gone over there," he added, pointing in the opposite direction to the hedge under which the German was lying bound and gagged.

"I see," said Von Rasberg. "Well, let us be getting away."

They swung the machine round to give it the longest possible run, for there was no wind, and the big black-crossed machine roared up into the night.

An inquiring searchlight beam flicked up out of the darkness below, but Rex slipped down on his wing away from it. Another and another took up the chase, and archie began to stab the darkness with its orange and red flashes. Rex paid little attention to it, for he was engrossed in his thoughts. To get the plans and destroy them must be his first action; but how? That was the question. Obviously he could not get them in the air, and it would be too late when he landed at Vame; he would therefore have to make an intermediate landing, he decided. He remembered the field on which he and Tony had landed on their first expedition and he nosed the machine round almost imperceptibly on a course that would bring them to it.

With his left hand he groped for the ignition control, and very slowly began to draw it back. The engine changed its note at once, and a long tongue of flame licked out of the exhaust. Von Rasberg leaned over.

"What's wrong?" he bawled in Rex's ear.

The pilot shook his head and pretended to juggle with the throttle, but he retarded the spark still more until the vibrant roar of the engine became an intermittent splutter. Suddenly such a burst of flame leapt from the exhaust as the unexploded gas rushed through the red-hot pipe, that he himself was startled.

"Go down!" yelled Von Rasberg, now thoroughly alarmed; and Rex, throttling back, began a long glide towards the earth, leaning over the side of his cockpit as if searching for a suitable field. He turned, and beckoning to Von Rasberg, pointed as if satisfied at the field upon which he had determined to land some minutes ago, and then glided into a rather bumpy landing.

"It's that darn magneto," he growled, after he had switched off the engine. "The brushes of these new magnetos have a nasty habit of sticking, but I'll soon put it right. Have you got a torch?" he asked Von Rasberg.

"Yes."

"Well, perhaps you wouldn't mind coming and showing me a light?"

Cursing luridly, Von Rasberg climbed out of his cockpit and walked round the wing to where Rex was unbolting the engine cowl with his spanner.

"Hallo, I didn't feel that lump of archie hit us," said Rex, pointing to the fuselage at the junction of an under-carriage strut. "Just hold it a minute, will you?"

"Hold what?" asked Von Rasberg, bending down to look at the strut.

"This," said Rex, and brought the heavy spanner down with a thud on the back of the German's head.

Von Rasberg pitched forward on to his face, and for the second time within an hour an unconscious man lay at Rex's feet. He felt no compunction about the blow; Von Rasberg would, he knew, have watched him shot without a quiver of an eyelid. The situation was one where desperate measures were needed, and he was prepared to enforce them.

He dropped to his knees beside the inert form, unbuttoned the leather flying-coat, and took the plans from the German's pocket. What to do with them now he had them he did not know. To take them with him on his next desperate mission would be the act of a madman, he reflected. The packet was a bulky one, and the paper tough and tightly packed; it would take some time to tear it up, and, in any case, tearing was an unsatisfactory method of disposing of papers of such importance. It might even take some time to burn them. Suddenly he had an idea, and he swung himself up on the lower plane and quickly unscrewed the draining tap of his gravity tank. A stream of petrol gushed out, and he held the papers in it until they were thoroughly soaked.

What about Von Rasberg? How could he dispose of him? That was a problem he could not solve. Alive, he was a danger, there was no doubt of that, but he shrank from killing an unconscious man, although he was in no doubt as to what the German would do had the situation been reversed. He had no means of tying him up, for his belt and muffler had already been used for a similar purpose. Well, he would have to leave him and take his chance, that was all.

Rex climbed back in his cockpit and taxied to the far end of the field into position for taking off. He scrambled out again, threw the petrol-soaked papers into the hedge, and then flung a lighted match on to them. The papers instantly burst into flames with a blaze of light that startled him; quickly he regained his cockpit, and with one hand on the throttle ready for instant action, watched the small but furious conflagration. Satisfied at last that they were consumed beyond hope of recovery, he opened the throttle and soared up into the still night air. Glancing over the side as he swung round in the direction of Varpe, he could still see the glowing mass where the plans of the British advance were being charred to cinders in the terrific heat of the blazing petrol.

"Well, now for it!" he muttered grimly, as, a few minutes later he planed down on to the German aerodrome.

A Desperate Venture I

A LITTLE group of mechanics moved towards him in the darkness as he taxied in, and after telling them to stand by the machine in case he needed it again, he strode down the tarmac in the direction of the officers' quarters, where he changed back in his German uniform before entering the mess.

In the corridor which led to the mess he paused in his stride and caught his breath sharply. Outside the mess door, standing "at ease," was a sergeant and two soldiers; the light gleamed on their fixed bayonets. Rex only paused for an instant, and then, with a casual acknowledgment of their salute, he passed between them and opened the door.

Through a haze of tobacco smoke he saw some twelve or fourteen officers seated round the long table where they had evidently just finished dinner, for several wine bottles were prominent. At the end of the table nearest to him sat Colonel von Hartzmann; at the opposite end was Fairfax. Among the others Rex recognized Tony, Von Henkel—who had evidently recovered from his influenza—and several other officers of the squadron.

All eyes were on him as he walked across the room, rang the bell for the mess waiter, ordered some food, and seated himself at a vacant place at the table next to Tony.

His first act must be, if possible, to warn Tony of the true state of affairs. He waited until the conversation was resumed, and then he turned, and, looking Tony in the eyes, said in a normal voice: "Well, old boy, what have you been doing to kill time?" And then, dropping his voice to a mere whisper, he added: "They know who we are, keep your head; machine is on tarmac."

The mess waiter entered and placed a plate of food before him, and although in his present condition the sight of food nearly sickened him, he proceeded to eat it, passing casual remarks about the weather and anything that occurred to him. It did not take him long to perceive that the attitude of the officers present had changed since last he saw them. The atmosphere of the room was charged with a tense expectancy that could be felt; he remembered the guard mounted outside the door, and knew the reason. Their time had come. One advantage only he held; he knew that they knew Tony and himself in their true colours, but what they did not know was that he, Rex, was fully aware of it. He was ready for the colonel's question when it came, for his eyes had wandered frequently to the door.

"Where is your passenger?" asked Von Hartzmann.

"He was not ready to come," replied Rex casually, without looking up, and helping himself to more sausage. "He came back in a towering rage to where I was waiting by the machine, and said things had not worked out according to plan, and he might have to wait four or five hours. He said he thought the delay might make you anxious, so I had better come back here, report the position to you, and then go back and fetch him at about two a.m."

He hoped that his story would be believed, and that he would be able to find some means or other of getting Tony into the back seat of his machine before the truth was discovered. He reached for another slice of the coarse German bread with a sang froid he did not feel, for in the hush that had followed his words, he could feel the colonel's steely eyes boring into his brain.

"I see," said Von Hartzmann, with ominous calm, and again a ghastly silence fell upon the room.

"What's up with you all?" asked Rex, looking around with a grin. "Are you expecting a raid, or have you all

caught Von Henkel's influenza? How are you, by the way?" he smiled, looking up into Von Henkel's scowling face.

The German made no reply.

"Pretty bad, I see," went on Rex, answering his own question.

A telephone-bell rang shrilly in the distance, and a moment later an orderly entered.

"Colonel von Hartzmann wanted on the telephone, please," he called loudly.

Now Fate has ordained that in moments of great anxiety certain people are gifted with a perception so acute that it almost amounts to second sight, and as the telephone-bell rang Rex was as certain of the cause as if he could see the caller at the other end of the line. He knew that Von Rasberg had either been found, or had recovered from the blow, and made his way to assistance, and was now ringing Colonel von Hartzmann, his chief.

It did not surprise him, therefore, that when the colonel returned to the room his face was white and set in a mask of grim Teutonic hate. His lips were pressed into a thin straight line, and his eyes flashed with a rage that he was evidently finding difficult to control; the eyes were turned on Rex, and the pilot felt a shiver run down his spine as his own eyes met the baleful gleam in the others.

The colonel stopped for a moment beside his own chair, picked up his wine-glass and took a sip, slowly and reflectively, as if deciding on a course of action, and then walked round the table until he stood at Rex's elbow.

"What have you done with those papers?" he asked slowly and deliberately.

Every word fell like a drop of ice-cold water on Rex's heart.

"Papers—what papers?" he asked, looking up. "You know what papers I mean—spy!" snarled the colonel, and dashed the contents of his glass into Rex's face.

There was a deadly silence in which Rex picked up a table napkin and mopped the liquid from his eyes.

"Don't move, anybody!"

The words, low but vibrant, cut the silence like a whip-lash. Nobody moved, and Rex, taking in the group with a quick sweep of his eyes, saw that Fairfax was leaning slightly forward; above the edge of the table in front of him were two little, round, black holes—the wicked-looking muzzles of a pair of automatics.

"Von Hartzmann," went on Fairfax crisply, every word distinct, "I warn you that if any man in this room moves as much as a muscle, I will shoot you dead! I must also warn every other gentleman present that, although a call for assistance might result in tragic consequences for certain members of this party, the result will be equally tragic for the man who makes the sound! I need hardly tell you that, in the circumstances, I shall not hesitate to shoot!"

Rex, fighting to get a grip on his reeling senses, felt Tony's hand clutch his arm like a vice.

"Lovell, Fraser, listen! Do exactly what I tell you," went on Fairfax. "Go to the door and dismiss the guard. Tell them the colonel is not ready; they are to return in half an hour. Fetch your machine and taxi down here until you are exactly opposite this door. Go!"

Mechanically the two boys rose to their feet. The colonel's hand started to move, but it stopped abruptly as Fairfax's fingers tightened perceptibly on the triggers of his guns.

Like a man in a dream, Rex walked to the door, with Tony at his heels. He opened it and stepped out. The sergeant sprang to attention.

"You may dismiss!" said Rex curtly. "You will not be required for half an hour. Return then."

The sergeant saluted; there was a sharp word of command, and the file marched noisily down the corridor and out into the night.

Rex, mentally thanking Providence for the blind obedience to commissioned rank which is ingrained in every German soldier, hurried towards the sheds. The Rumpel was still standing where he had left it.

They sprang into their seats, a mechanic ran to the propeller, and an instant later the engine started its powerful song. The pilot waved away the chocks and taxied quickly towards the mess; as he reached it he thrust the throttle forward and back quickly, filling the air with a sudden volume of sound as the noise of the engine rose to a quick crescendo and died away again.

Inside the room Fairfax was standing with his back to the door, a queer smile on his face, and his gun still covering the group at the table. With a quick movement, he thrust one of the guns into his pocket, took the key out of the keyhole, opened the door, and stepped backwards through it.

Von Hartzmann sprang forward with a curse; a streak of flame leapt from the gun in Fairfax's hand; the German spun round, and then crashed forward on to his face.



"What have you done with those papers?" asked Colonel von Hartzmann slowly and deliberately. Every word fell like a drop of ice-cold water on Rex's heart. "Papers—what papers?" he asked, looking up. "You know what papers I mean—spy!" snarled the colonel, and dashed the contents of his glass into Rex's face.

As Fairfax closed and locked the door behind him pandemonium broke loose in the room, but without waiting to see any more he ran like a deer towards the waiting machine.

"Off you go!" he snapped, and flung himself at full length on the lower plane, near the fuselage, hands gripping the leading edge.

Rex shoved the throttle open, and the Rumpier roared away, tail up, across the turf. The tension on the joystick increased as the machine gathered flying speed, and Rex eased it back, with wild exultation in his heart. They were off!

He held the machine on her course until the altimeter needle showed a thousand feet, and then he banked round gently in the direction of the lines. Leaning out, he could see Fairfax's dark figure where it crouched close against the fuselage; it was hardly a comfortable position, but within half an hour they would be safely over the British lines.

A searchlight beam stabbed the darkness ahead, and whoof! whoof! whoof! flashed the archie bursts. Rex was expecting it; he knew that every battery between Varne and the lines would be warned of their escape, and would be on the look-out for them. Whoof—bang! Whoof—bang! crashed the shells, the distant bursts glowing dull crimson and the near ones a vivid scarlet orange.

Rex used every wile he knew to throw the gunners off their mark, cutting off his engine from time to time, and side-slipping away when the bursts came too close.

Wrang-g-g-g! Something struck the machine with a crash that made it quiver from prop boss to tail skid. The engine spluttered, and a glance at a dial on his instrument-board showed Rex the cause of the trouble. The pressure in his main petrol-tank had dropped to zero: a piece of shrapnel had evidently punctured the tank.

He switched over to his gravity-tank, and the engine picked up again, but Rex's heart had turned to lead, for he knew that there could not be more than ten minutes' petrol left in that tank—and that was not sufficient to take him to the lines.

He bitterly regretted using the precious fluid in order to burn the plans he had taken from Von Rasberg, but he did not reproach himself, for the circumstances could not have been foreseen.

He knew that a landing was inevitable, and he tried to think where, by some means or other, they might be able to get enough petrol to continue their journey. He did not wish to take any chances by landing in an unknown

field which, too late, might prove to hold obstructions and cause them to crash.

The nearest really good landing ground that he could remember lay a few miles to the north. He had studied the map carefully and knew the country around, and he could not recall seeing any camps or buildings near the field he had in mind.

Accordingly, he switched off his engine and began a long glide towards it. Archie was still hammering away, but the gunners soon lost him without the sound of the engine to guide them.

The fact that they were wearing German uniforms was now likely to be a valuable asset, reflected Rex, and they should experience no great difficulty in getting petrol—even if it meant stopping a car on the road. His spirits were, therefore, by no means cast down as he glided gently over the hedge that bordered the field.

What happened next occurred too quickly for him to think, much less to act. Without warning, the darkness was turned into broad daylight as a floodlight blazed out from a corner of the field.

He heard the sound of many voices shouting, and he thrust the throttle open again, but it was too late, his wheels were already on the ground.

Something seemed to catch the machine, and it stopped dead, flinging him forward violently against the instrument-board. Automatically he switched off the spark. There was a deafening crash of breaking wood and tearing fabric as the Rumpier pitched up on to its nose and then somersaulted.

His next conscious recollection was struggling to get out of the wreck, calling frantically to the others. He knew what had happened; he had struck a pilot trap, a field that had been wired in every direction to rip up hostile machines who were seeking to land on special missions.

Figures were running towards them from every direction. "Are you all right, Tony?" called Rex, as he struggled to his feet and stood swaying in a blaze of light. "Where's Fairfax?"

"Here I am," replied Fairfax, crawling out from under a wing. "I knew about this field and tried to warn you, but I couldn't get to you."

(Rex and Tony have fallen into the hands of the Germans again. Look out for thrills in next week's splendid instalment!)

BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S!

(Continued from page 23.)

and the hammering on the door of Study No. 6 grew louder as they advanced upon the scene.

Knox and Crewe were growing perfectly furious.

They hammered and thumped, but the two juniors in the study did not even reply to them, maintaining a silence that exasperated the two seniors beyond all bounds.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What's the row about?"

"That's our study door you're banging at," remarked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Pway wetiah, deah boys, and don't make such a dweadful wow!"

The seniors glared at them.

"You young whelps—"

"Oh, better language!" said Tom Merry. "Don't you know that it's the duty of a prefect to set a good example to juniors by well-chosen language and restrained manners? You could learn it from any goody-goody storybook!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knox's mark is the 'Sporting Leader'!" grinned Blake.

The prefect and his comrade glared at the juniors. They would gladly have licked them all on the spot; but nearly a dozen juniors, armed with bats and stumps, were not to be easily licked.

Jack Blake tapped at the door.

"Open the door, you kids! It's all right—we're here!"

Fatty Wynn opened the door.

Knox and Crewe rushed into the study, but the crowd of juniors rushed in, too, and the two bullies paused.

"Now look here!" said Tom Merry decisively. "None of your rot! If you lay a finger on anybody in this study you'll get hurt!"

"You cheeky whelp!"

"We've got the grub you boned from us," went on Tom Merry calmly. "We're going to keep it. You're going out of this study! I don't care whether you're a prefect! You're a cad! Now, if you want trouble, we're ready!"

"Ready—ay, ready!" grinned Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Knox and Crewe looked at one another. It was useless to exert their authority as members of the Sixth. The cricket stumps looked dangerous, and, as a matter of fact, the juniors were anxious to begin. Without a word, but with a black scowl on his face, Knox stalked out of the study, and Crewe followed him.

"Good riddance!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard it as a vewy good widdance!"

"I'm jolly glad they've gone," said Billy Bunter, drawing a deep breath. "Hallo! You've got the grub! My word, this is ripping!"

"And we're ready for tea," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, we're quite weady!"

"Let's leave those two fnstuffs to cook, while we go and change," said Blake. "Keep the door locked while we're gone!"

"Right-ho!"

The proposal just suited Fatty Wynn and Billy Bunter. They were left to themselves in Study No. 6, and they

lost no time in setting to work. Billy Bunter's fat face was beaming. He had had a pretty good time during his visit to St. Jim's, but this was the most enjoyable part of it.

To have a good fire, nice bright cooking utensils, and unlimited tuck—that was Billy Bunter's idea of happiness.

And he had it now.

There was soon a delicious smell of cooking in the study.

Although in some points Fatty Wynn and Billy Bunter were not like one another, there was one point upon which they were in cordial agreement—a love of cooking, and of consuming the articles cooked.

"This is ripping!" said Billy Bunter, for about the tenth time, as he looked up from a frizzling frying-pan. "I shall pay you another visit here, Wynn."

"Do, old chap!" said Fatty Wynn cordially. "Visit me in the New House next time, and I'll look after you all right!"

The juniors were soon all in the study. It was a close fit for so many; but the youngsters were accustomed to close quarters.

The feed was a great success, and when it was all over Bunter, who had eaten enough for six fellows, found some difficulty in rising from the table. But there was a smile of beatific contentment upon his somewhat shiny visage.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Won't you have a little more, deah boy?"

"No, thanks—I'm quite satisfied! I say, you fellows, I must say that this has been a ripping feed. I must say I appreciate it. You've done me down in the most ripping way. It's—well, it's superb!"

"I am vewy glad we have succeeded in entahtainin' you," said D'Arcy, in his stately way. "It has been a great pleasurah to all of us!"

"Yes, rather!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I wouldn't have missed it for worlds."

Bunter looked at the study clock.

"I suppose I must be moving," he said regretfully. "Blessed if I want to move. But the trains have to be caught, blow 'em!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry, Blake, and D'Arcy accompanied Bunter to the station, and on arriving there Tom Merry arranged for a lunch basket to be put on the train. Then the juniors chatted on the platform until the local came puffing in.

It stopped, and Arthur Augustus opened a carriage door for Bunter.

The fat junior clambered in. They shook hands all round at the carriage door.

"I say, you fellows, you've given me a ripping time," said Bunter, as the guard waved his flag. "I shall come and see you again soon. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

The train moved off.

The juniors waved their hats to Bunter, who waved a fat hand in return.

The fat hand was the last they saw of William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove.

The train disappeared, and the juniors of St. Jim's slowly left the station and made their way back to the school.

THE END.

(Next week's story is a wow! Whatever you do, don't miss "SKIMPOLE'S WILL POWER WON'T!" See special announcement on page 23.)

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