

"TREASURE ISLE!"—POWERFUL STORY OF THE ST. FRANK'S CHUMS—INSIDE.



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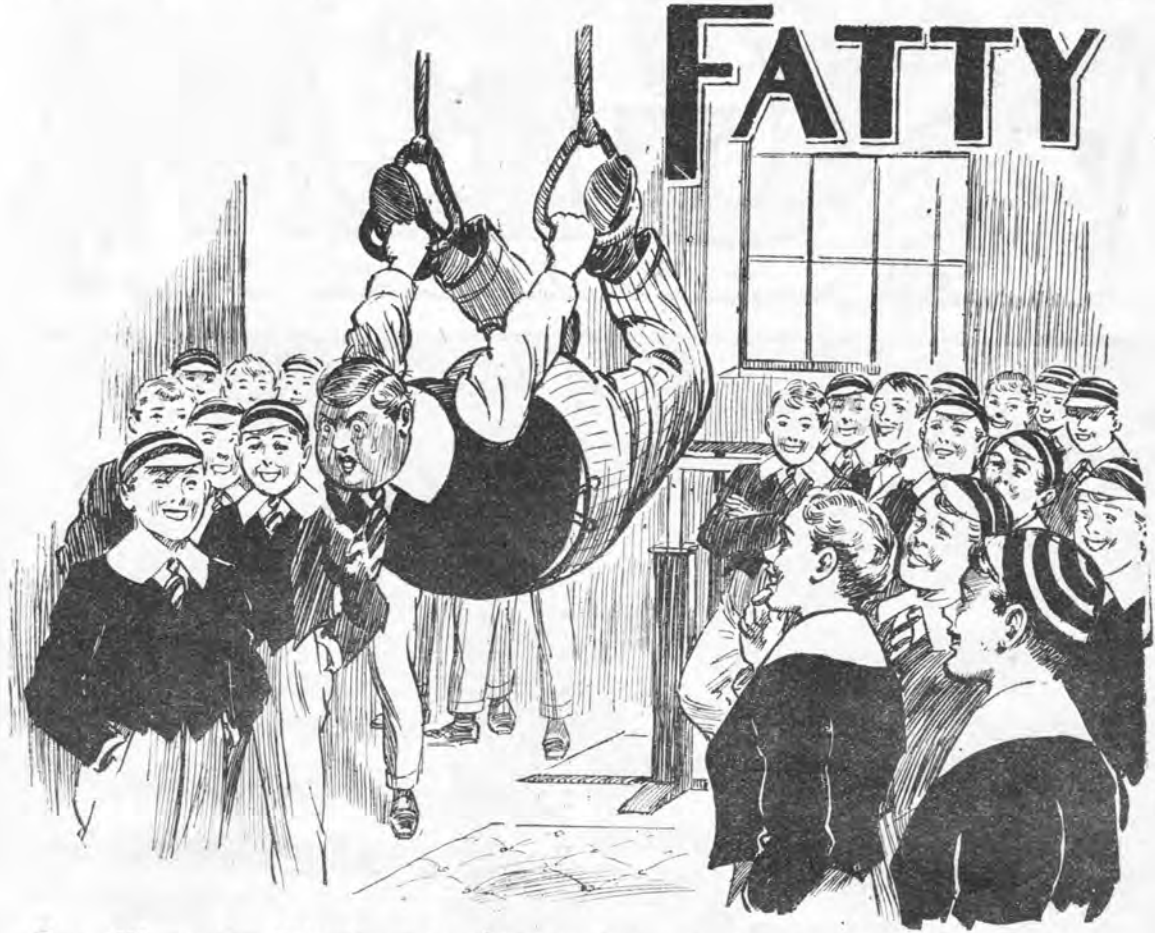
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending February 10th, 1934.



FATTY IN A FIX!

A Thrilling Incident from "FATTY WYNN'S THIN TIME!" A Great Story of the Chums of St. Jim's—Within.



Fatty Wynn, the Falstaff of St. Jim's, is fed-up—but not with food! Fatty's on a starvation diet and doing exercises to reduce his weight—and all because a wild bull chooses to "visit" St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 1. The Wild Bull!

"WUN!"
"Eh?"
"Wun!"
"What?"

"Wun like anythin'!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, waving his hands in great excitement.

Fatty Wynn did not run. He was sitting on the stile in Ryleombe Lane, within sight of the old grey tower of St. Jim's. He had a handkerchief spread on his knees, and on the handkerchief rested a large pork pie.

Fatty Wynn was eating the pie.

Naturally enough, he didn't want to be interrupted. And as he had already eaten four similar pies, and was well on with the fifth, he didn't feel inclined to run. Fatty Wynn had a weakness for pork pies.

He had a weakness, as a matter of fact, for anything eatable. Figgins and Kerr, his chums in the New House, had often expressed the sincere hope that they would never be wrecked on a desert island with Fatty Wynn, or abandoned in an open boat at sea with the fat Fourth Former. Under such circumstances, they declared their conviction that there would be no restraining Fatty Wynn from cannibalism.

Whereat Fatty Wynn would snort, and go his way—his way generally leading him to the tuckshop, when he had any money. He seldom had any; Mrs. Taggles, at the tuckshop, usually received it almost as soon as Wynn did.

Fatty Wynn was sitting on the stile in the sunny afternoon, thoroughly enjoying those pork pies.

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When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came dashing up the lane, with his eyeglass flying at the end of its cord, and holding his silk hat on with one hand, and shouting to Fatty Wynn to run, the Fourth Former simply looked at him.

D'Arcy waved his hand excitedly. D'Arcy generally cultivated that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. But he could get excited; he was excited now.

"Wun!" he roared.

"Eh?"

"Wun!"

Fatty Wynn took another mouthful.

Arthur Augustus rushed up to him and grasped him by one leg to drag him off the stile.

Fatty Wynn gave a yell and clutched at the stile to save himself, and what was left of his pork pie dropped into the grass underneath.

"Eh? You ass! Look at that!" roared Fatty.

"Wun, you duffah!"

"What's the matter?"

"The bull!"

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

"He's got out of Farmer Giles' field!" panted D'Arcy breathlessly. "Wun, you ass! He's comin' up the lane like steam! Wun like anythin'!"

Fatty Wynn ran then.

Arthur Augustus was already on the run again, sprinting towards the open gates of St. Jim's. Fatty Wynn dashed after him. He realised his peril, and did not even stop to pick up the fallen pork pie.

There was a deep bellow down the lane. It was the voice of the bull. Some careless farmhand had left the gate open, or else the bull had got through the hedge. At

—ARE THE STAR TURNS IN THIS THRILLING AND AMUSING YARN!

WYNN'S THIN TIME!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

all events, he was in the lane now, with flaming eyes and tossing head and lashing tail.

Several farmhands were chasing him, and it was likely to go badly with anybody who got into the bull's path just then. Once or twice he turned on his pursuers, and they retreated hurriedly from the lowered head and dangerous-looking horns. Then the bull careered on again, with the shouting pursuers closing up behind him again.

"Wun!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking back.

"Come on, Wynn, deah boy!"

"I—I—I'm coming!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Buck up!"

"I—I—I can run as well as any School House bouncer!" jerked out Wynn.

"Oh, wun!"

D'Arcy's slim legs carried him on at a splendid speed. D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant ways, was one of the best forwards in the junior team at St. Jim's.

Fatty Wynn was a wonderful goalkeeper, and he had a good turn of speed when he was in form. But four pork pies, eaten at express speed, was not likely to put any fellow in form for a fast race.

The fat Fourth Former laboured and panted. His face was crimson, his breath came in painful jerks, his eyes streamed and ran with water.

Fatty Wynn felt as if he had an iron band round his chest, and as if his lungs were bursting. His pace slackened.

Arthur Augustus turned his head again.

Fatty Wynn was several yards behind, and losing ground all the time. The bull had caught sight of the two juniors now, and was charging towards them with lowered head.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

The juniors were close to the gate of St. Jim's now. But would they reach the gate before the bull reached them? D'Arcy could have done it with ease. But Fatty Wynn?

"Buck up, Wynn!"

"Ow!"

"Wun, deah boy!"

"Groooogh!"

"Wun like anythin'!"

"Gr-r-r-r!"

Fatty Wynn slackened still more.

"I—I can't run!" he gasped. "I—I'm done! Keep on!"

And, with the bellow of the savage bull close behind him, Fatty Wynn dropped into a walking pace, utterly spent.

Arthur Augustus halted. He would not desert a chum in danger, though how he was to be of any use to Fatty Wynn was not clear.

There was a shout from the gateway of St. Jim's.

"Buck up, you fellows! Buck up!"

Tom Merry of the Shell ran out. He had caught sight of the chase, and, catching up the nearest weapon, he had rushed out to the aid of the juniors. He had a spade in his hand. Taggles, the school porter, was spending that

afternoon in tending the little garden belonging to the lodge, and his spade and garden-hose were there, and Tom Merry had caught up the spade.

Headless of the yell the angry porter sent after him, Tom dashed into the road with it.

"Tom Mewwy!"

"Get in, Gussy!"

"But—"

"Get in! Go on, Fatty!"

Tom Merry ran towards the bull. The savage animal was almost upon Fatty Wynn. The heavy iron spade swung up into the air, and Tom Merry struck with all his strength at the lowered, charging head.

There was a terrific roar from the bull. The blow had fallen heavily on the side of the head, and it caused the bull to swerve in his rush, and he went raging past the juniors, staggering blindly from the blow. He charged blindly into the hedge beside the road.

"Come on!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry dropped the spade, and, seizing Fatty Wynn by the arm, he rushed him in at the gateway. D'Arcy dashed after them. Taggles, the porter, stood up in his garden, and shouted to the juniors.

"Master Merry! You young rip! Where's that spade?"

"Look out, Taggles!"

Taggles was grasping the nozzle of his hose.

"You bring that spade back, Master Merry, or I'll turn the 'ose on yer!" he roared.

"Taggles—"

"I tell yer—"

"Get into your lodge, man!" roared Tom Merry. "The bull—"

There was a bellow from the gateway. The bull, mad with rage, was charging in after the juniors. There was no time to get the gates closed. Taggles, the porter, gave one wild stare at the bull, and then, dropping the hose, he bolted into the lodge and slammed the door.

The juniors dashed after him. In the open quad they were at the mercy of the bull, and they would have been overtaken and gored long before they could reach either the School House or the New House for shelter.

"Taggles!" shouted Tom Merry. "Let us in!"

But there was no reply from Taggles. He had bolted the door in frantic terror, and sank exhausted into a chair, too terrified to move again.

"Taggles—"

"Bai Jove! Look out!"

The three juniors looked wildly towards the bull. The furious animal was charging towards them, and there seemed no escape.

The pursuers were at the gates of St. Jim's by this time, and, looking in, they uttered a yell of warning. But warning was little use. The juniors saw their danger clearly enough, but they could not escape it.

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"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY"

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Fatty Wynn reeled back against the lodge, utterly spent. Tom Merry's eyes fell upon the garden-hose that Taggles had dropped in his terror, and a gleam of hope lighted his eyes. He sprang towards the hose and seized it. He raised it, and as the bull charged down upon him he faced the furious animal steadily and pressed the nozzle.

Whiz! Swish!

A stream of water shot fairly into the eyes of the charging bull and splashed blindingly over his head. The animal roared and snorted.

Whiz, whiz! Swish! came the water in a spattering stream, Tom Merry holding the nozzle with a hand that never trembled.

CHAPTER 2.

The Hero of the Hour!

WHIZ! Spatter!

The stream of water crashed into the eyes of the bull, and, with a choked bellow, it halted and whirled away from the whiz of the water.

Tom Merry did not move. He might have been a figure carved in bronze as he stood there holding the hose. Only his wrist turned slightly to direct the nozzle upon the bull as the animal swerved and swung away from the stream of water.

D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn stood gasping breathlessly. Fatty had not another run left in him if the bull had been charging directly at him, and D'Arcy, too, was out of breath.

Bellow, bellow!

Whiz!

It was touch-and-go! If the bull could have seen in the blinding water and had come on, Tom Merry would have been trampled over and gored in a second more. But the animal—startled, confused, bewildered by the sudden dash of water in his eyes—swerved away, staggering, and careered off into the quadrangle.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

There was a rush of all the fellows in the quad for refuge. The savage brute careered up and down the quadrangle, bellowing furiously, with water dripping from his head and neck.

Tom Merry gasped.

"That was a close thing, kids!"

"Bai Jove!"

"We're not out of the w-w-wood yet!" stuttered Fatty Wynn. "Let's get inside!"

"Taggles! Open the door, Taggles!"

"Taggles, you cowardly wascal!"

"Taggles! Taggy! Tag!"

But there was no reply from Taggles; he was still gasping in his chair inside the lodge, and he would not have opened the door for love or money.

Tom Merry dropped the hose and ran to the lodge window. At any moment the bull might come careering back, and the hosepipe might not stop him a second time. The window was open, and Reilly, who had hastily taken refuge in the lodge, stood at it.

"This way, chaps!" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus and Fatty Wynn lost no time in reaching the lodge window.

"You first, Gussy—"

"Pway excuse me, Tom Mewwy, a D'Arcy's place is the last in the wetweat," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "Pway get in first, deah boy."

"Ass! I want you and Reilly to help me in with Wynn!"

"Oh, vewy well! But—"

"But what? Quick!"

"I wofuse to be called an ass!"

"Fathead!" roared Tom Merry. "Get in!"

Bellow, bellow!

"Buck up, for goodness' sake!"

Tramp, tramp!

D'Arcy plunged in head first at the window, helped by Reilly.

"Buck up, Fatty!" shouted Tom Merry. "The brute's coming back! Buck up!"

Fatty Wynn gasped.

"Ow! Gimme a bunk up! Oh!"

Tom Merry "bunked" the fat Fourth Former up. Fatty Wynn went rolling wildly in at the window. D'Arcy and Reilly helped him from within. But the junior was too plump for the aperture; he stuck half-way through the window.

"Bai Jove! Make an effort, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ow!"

"Squeeze in, Wynn!"

"I can't!"

"Great Scott! You must! Quick! Drag him in!"

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"I'm doin' my best, deah boy!" panted the swell of St. Jim's.

"Yow! Ow!"

"You must come in, Wynn, old man! Bai Jove!"

"Go it, Fatty!"

"Yaroooooh!"

A loud snap was heard; Fatty Wynn's buttons were bursting off. Tom Merry looked round anxiously. The bull was charging furiously up and down the quad, bellowing loudly, with foam on his mouth. His eyes were blazing with fury. He did not seem to notice the juniors at the lodge window for the moment. But when he did—

"For goodness' sake, get in, Wynn!"

"I can't!"

"You must!"

Tom Merry shoved frantically. He could see—out of the corner of his eye, as it were—the bull's head turning towards him.

Bellow, bellow!

The brute was coming!

"Wynn!" yelled Tom Merry. "Quick! He's coming!"

He gave Fatty a final heave and then ran on, as the bull was almost on him.

Fatty Wynn gave a howl of terror, and with a terrific effort squeezed himself through and fell upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Reilly; the three juniors rolled on the floor together, the swell of St. Jim's underneath.

Tom Merry circled back, jumped at the window-sill, and flung himself in at the window. He was hardly in, when there was a terrific shock outside, and the lowered head of the bull struck the wall beneath the sill.

Tom Merry fell upon the other fellows. He was up in a moment, and he looked out of the window, with a face grown suddenly white, as he saw the wild, furious head and tossing horns. He had had the escape of his life.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ow!"

Bellow, bellow, bellow!

The juniors were safe. The bull was glaring in at the window, and his steaming breath reached Tom Merry's cheek, but he could not get in.

"Ow!" gasped D'Arcy. "I'm cwushed! I am bein' flattened like a wotten pancake, you know! Dwag that fat boundah off, deah boys!"

Bellow, bellow!

Then the bull rushed away. Two stout men in blue smocks were rushing at it, one with a noosed rope in his hand. The animal went charging out of the gateway, scattering the crowds before him, and the men rushed in pursuit.

"Taggles!" shouted Tom Merry. "Quick! Get the gates closed before the beast comes back!"

"Hey?"

"Quick—the gate!"

"I don't stir houter this 'ere 'ouse!" said Taggles.

"You duffer! I tell you—"

"I don't stir—"

"Give me your keys!"

Tom Merry snatched the keys and dashed from the lodge. In a minute or less he had slammed the gates shut and locked them.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Bellow, bellow, bellow!

Back along the road, in clouds of dust, rushed the frantic bull, with a dozen men in pursuit. Past the closed gates of St. Jim's he careered. He could not get in again. The juniors were safe at last.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Reilly came out of the lodge. Fatty Wynn followed them more slowly. The fat Fourth Former was panting.

A crowd of fellows came rushing up now that the gates were closed. There were juniors and seniors and masters in the crowd. Figgins and Kerr of the New House slapped Tom Merry vigorously on the back.

"Splendid!" roared Figgins.

"Here, let's get at him!" shouted Monty Lowther. "Good old Tommy!"

And he slapped, and Manners slapped, and Jack Blake and Herries and Kangaroo slapped, till Tom Merry yelled.

"Stop it, you asses! Do you take me for a giddy pancake? Stop it!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Good old Tom Merry!"

"Crumbs!" yelled little Joe Frayne. "Ain't he a corker?"

"Here's the Head!"

Dr. Holmes came up in rustling gown. His face was full of emotion. He held out his hand to Tom Merry and shook hands with the Shell fellow.

"Tom Merry," he exclaimed, "I don't know how to thank you for your courage! You have saved two of your school-fellows from serious injury, perhaps from death, by your



As the ferocious bull charged at the two juniors, Tom Merry pressed the nozzle of the hose. Whiz! Swish! A stream of water shot fairly into the eyes of the bull, and with a bellow the animal halted, unable to escape that blinding jet of water.

courage and presence of mind. I saw it all! Tom Merry, the whole school is proud of you. Boys of St. Jim's, I call for three cheers for Tom Merry!"

And the boys of St. Jim's gave them with a will.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip-hip-hurrah!"

And then Tom Merry was captured by his enthusiastic chums and carried off shoulder high to the School House. But it was not merely a School House demonstration. The New House fellows joined in it with equal heartiness. House rivalry was forgotten for the time; Tom Merry was hero of all St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking After Fatty!

FIGGINS of the New House marched Fatty Wynn off when the demonstration was over. Figgins took the fat Fourth Former by one arm and Kerr by the other. The three chums of the New House were inseparable, and Figgins and Kerr had really been thinking more about Fatty Wynn than about Tom Merry, the hero of the hour.

Fatty Wynn might be over-attached to the pleasures of the table. He might have an inordinate craving for pork pies. He might have an uncontrolled desire to consume jam tarts to the exact extent of his pocket-money. He might be unable to resist the temptation of buns and cake and ice-cream. But he was the best-hearted fellow, the kindest and truest chum, and the mightiest goalkeeper the Lower School had ever turned out. And he was Wynn—their chum Wynn! That was everything.

As a rule, Figgins and Kerr, in spite of their sincere friendship, did not sympathise very much with Fatty Wynn's healthy appetite. They had sometimes laid violent hands upon him to prevent him from gorging himself upon jam tarts just before a footer match. They had hinted in plain English that he would do well to moderate his transports a little when he invaded the tuckshop.

But that was forgotten now. Fatty Wynn had been

through a perilous adventure. Fatty Wynn was blown and spent. Fatty Wynn was gasping and exhausted. It was the place of his faithful chums to stand by him, to comfort him, and to feed him back into his usual state of placidity. And that was what his faithful chums proceeded to do.

They helped the gasping and exhausted Fatty into the New House. They assisted him gently upstairs to Figgins' study. There they dropped him gently into the armchair. Fatty Wynn subsided into it with an expressive grunt.

"Feel done in?" asked Figgins sympathetically.

"Oh!"

"Fagged?"

"Ow!"

"Poor old Fatty!" said Kerr. "What he wants is a pick-me-up! I'll see what there is in the cupboard."

Fatty Wynn brightened up a little.

"I'll have tea," he said faintly.

"Tea?" said Figgins. "Good!"

And Figgins jammed the tea kettle into the fire and stirred the fire round it so industriously that the room was filled with floating blacks.

"And something to eat," said Fatty Wynn.

"Ham?" asked Kerr. "And eggs?"

Fatty's Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Ripping!" he moaned.

"Buck up, old son; we'll have 'em ready in a jiffy!"

"Oh, good!"

"It's all right, we'll soon have 'em ready, old son! Just you sit there and rest and get your wind back!"

"Groooh!"

Fatty Wynn sat and got his wind back. His thumping heart was soon going at its old pace. The natural ruddy colour returned to his cheeks.

Meanwhile, a delicious smell of cooking rose in the study and permeated every corner of it. Fatty Wynn sniffed contentedly.

"That's something like!" he murmured.

"Better?" asked Figgins.

"I'm getting better."

"Good! Shan't be long now!"

Figgins was poaching the eggs in a frying-pan. Kerr, after exchanging a look with his chum, rushed out of the study.

Figgins dished up the eggs with the ham. He made the tea and poured out a steaming cup for Fatty Wynn.

By that time Kerr came back. He deposited a large paper parcel upon the table, and Fatty Wynn looked at it curiously.

Kerr opened it, and the fat Fourth Former's eyes glistened with delight as a cascade of pastry rolled out. Jam tarts and marmalade tarts, cream puffs and doughnuts, and a whole plum cake. Fatty Wynn began to wish that he was chased by a wild bull every half-holiday in the term.

"Come up to the table, Fatty," said Figgins, beaming. "No, don't move; I'll wheel your chair up!"

"Really, Figgy, old man!"

"It's all right; you mustn't exert yourself, my son!"

And Figgins wheeled Fatty Wynn up to the table.

Appetising dishes were set before him. The two chums watched him begin to eat with a great deal of interest.

"It's all right," said Figgins, "the poor old chap hasn't lost his appetite."

"He hasn't!" agreed Kerr.

It was pretty clear that Fatty Wynn hadn't. The two chums knew nothing of the pork pies in the lane. Had they known they would have still more admired the way Fatty Wynn wired into the poached eggs and bacon.

It was hardly tea-time yet, and Figgins and Kerr were quite willing to wait. Fatty Wynn's wants were to be looked after first. Fatty Wynn was looking after them himself pretty well, but Figgins and Kerr never relaxed their chummy attentions.

"Feeling better, old man?" asked Figgins, as the last of the eggs disappeared.

Fatty Wynn nodded.



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"Heaps!" he exclaimed.

"Good! What do you fancy next?"

"Jam tarts!"

"Here you are! Go ahead!"

Fatty Wynn went ahead. The study door opened, and Pratt of the Fourth looked in. Pratt was grinning.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Feeding the brute, eh?"

Figgins and Kerr glared at him. Fatty Wynn did not even look up. He was too busy with the jam tarts.

"You ass!" said Figgins.

"You chump!" said Kerr.

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Pratt. "I only looked in to see Fatty!"

"He's getting better."

"We're bringing him round."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass?" demanded Figgins wrathfully.

"Why, the School House chaps are saying—"

"Blow the School House chaps!"

"Yes; but they're saying—"

"Blow what they're saying!"

"They're saying that there wouldn't have been any danger, only Fatty Wynn was too fat to run away from the bull! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out!" roared Figgins.

"Yes; but they're saying in the School House—"

Pratt got no further. Figgins and Kerr rushed at him together, and he was collared before he could escape.

"Bump him!" shouted Figgins.

"Yow!" yelled Pratt. "Yow! I was only telling you that the School House fellows were saying—Ow! Yow!"

Down went Pratt with a mighty bump, and then he was rolled into the passage.

"Ow! Yarcooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door slammed on Pratt. Figgins and Kerr turned back apologetically to Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth Former was as busy as ever.

"Don't mind him, Fatty!" said Figgins.

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn.

"Don't mind that ass Pratt!"

"Pratt!"

"Yes. He said—"

"Did he?"

Figgins and Kerr burst into a laugh. Fatty Wynn had been too busy with the tarts to notice even the intrusion of the humorous Pratt.

"The School House bounders can go and eat coke!" said Figgins. "What do you think, Fatty?"

"They're splendid," said Fatty Wynn.

Figgins stared at him.

"What! The School House bounders are splendid, are they?"

"Eh? I was talking about the jam tarts!"

"Oh, I see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll try the cream puffs now."

"Good! Here you are!"

Fatty Wynn went on feeding. Figgins and Kerr were feeling very satisfied. Fatty Wynn, after his hairbreadth escape, was becoming his old self again, and settling down into his old ways. They were more than glad to see it.

The door opened again. Figgins and Kerr looked round angrily, expecting to see the obnoxious Pratt again. But it was French of the Shell this time. French of the Shell looked curiously at Fatty Wynn. Wynn did not look up. He was bolting cream puffs as if for life!

"I see Fatty's not much the worse," grinned French.

"He's getting better," said Figgins.

"I say, the chaps are saying over in the School House—"

began French.

"Oh, dry up!"

"But they're saying—"

"Never mind what they're saying; don't worry!"

"They're saying that if Fatty doesn't bring his fat down, and learn to run, they'll—"

"Outside!" roared Figgins, greatly incensed.

A cream puff, deftly aimed by Kerr, shot through the air. French did not see it coming for a moment.

"They're saying— Yarcooh! Yoop! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins pushed French out of the study. French staggered into the passage, scooping white cream out of his eye and saying things.

Fatty Wynn pushed his plate away with a grunt of contentment.

"Oh, ripping!" he said.

"Cake, Fatty, old man?"

"Well, just one slice."

"And some pineapple?"

"Well, yes; only one."

"And doughnuts—you were always fond of doughnuts," said Kerr, with tender solicitude.

But Fatty Wynn declined the doughnuts.

"I—I can't!" he said regretfully. "You're awfully good, you fellows. But I—I can't eat any more. I'm done!"

"Lend a hand, Kerr," said Figgins.

The armchair was wheeled back to the fire. Figgins lifted up Fatty Wynn's feet and put them on the fender. Fatty Wynn gave a sigh, and closed his eyes in a state of beatific contentment.

CHAPTER 4.

A Public Danger!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY lifted his teacup, as he sat at the table in Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage in the School House.

He did not drink the tea, but gazed at the cup with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

Blake, Herries, and Digby watched him. They had a way of watching Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sometimes, as if they found something very entertaining in his movements. As a matter of fact, the swell of St. Jim's was frequently very entertaining, though quite unintentionally.

"Good!" exclaimed Jack Blake suddenly.

Arthur Augustus started, and a little of the tea jerked over his cup. He stared at Blake reprovingly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Good!" repeated Blake.

"What do you mean, Blake?"

"Am I going to marry an heiress?" asked Blake.

"Eh?"

"Will she have brown eyes or blue?"

"What?"

"And am I to beware of a dark gentleman?"

"I fail to understand—"

"You're telling fortunes in the tealeaves, aren't you?" asked Blake.

Herries and Digby roared. D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye with his disengaged hand, and regarded Blake with immeasurable scorn.

"No, Blake; I am not tellin' fortunes in tealeaves," he said.

"Oh, my mistake!" said Blake blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what are you doing, then?" asked Blake. "Of course, that was what it looked like. Is there anything wrong with the tea?"

"I have not tasted it."

"You are afraid there's something wrong with it, I suppose?"

"I have not thought about the mattah at all."

"Then, if you were not telling fortunes, and you didn't think there was anything wrong with the tea, what were you staring into it for?"

"Was I?"

"Yes, you ass, you were."

"I was thinkin'—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Blake incredulously.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy set down his teacup in his saucer and regarded Blake fixedly.

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake. I considah—"

"Another cup of tea?"

"No; I think—"

"More toast?"

"Thank you, no. I wegard—"

"Have some jam?"

"Certainly not. I was goin' to say—"

"Well, I think I'm about finished, too," said Blake, yawning and rising. "It was a jolly good tea, and I was hungry. I wonder how Fatty Wynn's getting on? He had a narrow escape of bursting in Taggles' window."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was about Fatty Wynn that I was goin' to speak, dear boy."

"Oh, go ahead. Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"Pway listen to me, dear boy. I was goin' to speak about Fatty Wynn, and I wegard it as a wathah important mattah. Fatty Wynn was nearly wun down in the lane by a mad bull, because he couldn't wun fast enough."

"A School House chap got him out of it," said Blake, with a certain amount of satisfaction. "Those bounders over the way won't be able to say that the School House isn't Cock House at St. Jim's now."

"Yaas, wathah! But I was goin' to remark that Fatty Wynn had a second nawrow escape owin' to his bein' too fat to get through the lodge window."

"Poor old Fatty!"

"Lucky Tom Merry thought of the hose," said Digby.

"Of course, I should have done the same if I had been there."

"Perhaps," said Blake.

"Look here, Blake, you ass—"

"If I'd known what was going on," said Herries, "I'd have turned my bulldog loose. Towser would have made short work of the bull."

"Bolted him at a mouthful, I suppose?" suggested Blake. To which remark Herries replied only with a snort.

"I have been thinkin' about Fatty Wynn," said D'Arcy. "I don't know whethah a very important aspect of the mattah has struck you fellows."

"What is that?"

"That owin' to Fatty bein' so fat, and my stoppin' to look aftah him, I might have been goahed by the bull as well as Fatty."

"Would that have been important?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"I insist upon speakin'. I might have been sewiously injured, to say nothin' of the damage done to my clothes. As it was, my hat was twodden on by some careless wuffian and practically wuined."

"Of course, if Wynn had foreseen that, he would have stayed out in the road and been gored peacefully," suggested Digby.

"I wegard your wemarks as fwivolous, Dig. I was about

COOL!



Policeman (to boy on a fence having a free view of a football match): "Hi, what's happening here?"
Boy: "It's all right, guv'nor, there ain't no score yet!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Nepson, 72, Geoffrey Street, Ribbleson, Preston.

to say that I have reflected upon the mattah, and I have come to the conclusion that Fatty Wynn's fatness is a public dangah."

"Go hon!"

"To himself," said D'Arcy, "and to everybody else. Tom Mewwy will not always be on the spot with a garden hose when Fatty Wynn is chased by a mad bull. I think it is unlikely that Tom Mewwy will always be on hand in that way."

"But Fatty may never be chased by another mad bull."

"Well, it might be a mad dog, then, and I don't suppose a steam of watah would stop a mad dog, anyway. The fact is, dear boys, I wegard Fatty Wynn as a public dangah while he remains in his pwesent state of extwaw-ordinawy plumpness."

"Agreed," said Blake. "Proposed, seconded, and passed unanimously, that Fatty Wynn is a public danger. Now, has anybody seen my Virgil?"

"Pway give me your swiest attention, dear boys. My ideah is that somethin' ought to be done in the mattah."

"Blessed if I see what. Could we have him labelled 'Dangerous to Mad Bulls'?"

"Pway don't be an ass."

"I suppose you're not suggesting boiling him down into tallow, or anything of that sort?" Blake demanded. "His people would be practically certain to raise objections."

"You uttah ass—"

"Of course, he could be thinned down," suggested Digby.

"I was reading in a recipe about making toffee the other day, that if you wanted to thin it down you should add butter while it was hot in the pan. Now, my belief is that you could never thin Fatty Wynn down by adding butter."

"You feahful ass—"

"Besides, you'd never induce him to remain hot in the pan," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "It's asking too much of any fellow."

D'Arcy gazed almost speechlessly at the humorous juniors who persisted in misunderstanding him.

"You—you utter asses—"

"Well, if you've got any other method to suggest, I'm willing to help in carrying it out," said Blake. "Perhaps you're thinking of rolling him under the Head's lawnmower? That would only make him flatter; there would be just as much stuff in him, only it would be double width."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Or you can make people thinner by making 'em drink vinegar," said Digby. "Of course, you couldn't make Fatty

Wynn drink vinegar. But you might persuade him to. You could tell him it was buttermilk."

"Good egg!"

"You uttah asses! I wefuse to discuss the mattah with you any more," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wrathfully. "I shall pwocceed to Tom Mewwy's study and acquaint the Shell fellow with my bwiliant ideah."

"Pwocceed away," said Blake cheerfully. "Anybody seen my Virgil?"

"You ass!"

"Well, I want my Virgil; it's time to do my prep."

"You feahful chump—"

"Anybody seen my Virgil?"

D'Arcy opened the door of the study. He paused with his grasp on the handle, to send back a withering look at the chums of the Fourth. Blake was looking round for his book.

"I wegard you as a set of silly asses!" said D'Arcy.

"Good!"

"And blithewin' chumps!"

"Hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus went out of the study and closed the door with unnecessary force.

Slam!

Then he paused. He thought he heard his name called from the study.

"D'Arcy! I say, Gus!"

Arthur Augustus turned back to the door again, the frown clearing from his aristocratic brow. He opened the door and looked in.

"Did you call me, Blake, deah boy?"

"Yes, rather."

"What is it? Have you—"

"Have you seen my Virgil?" asked Blake blandly.

Slam!

The door closed behind D'Arcy even more forcefully than before, and the swell of St. Jim's walked down the passage with his noble nose held very high in the air. He left his three chums chuckling in Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 5.

No Backers!

TOM MERRY stretched out his feet to the fire. It was a bitterly cold evening, and the fire was piled up high in the Terrible Three's study in the Shell passage. There was a pleasant smell of hot buttered toast in the study, mingled with the fragrance of tea—Dame Taggles' best, and two shillings a pound.

The chums of the Shell had finished tea, but there was still toast on the table, and still tea in the pot. Funds were high in Tom Merry's study, and the three chums were living on the fat of the land. Outside the night was setting in, and a wild wind wailed among the elms in the quadrangle. But in the study the fire leaped and roared.

"This is comfy, and no mistake," said Tom Merry.

"I'll say it is," said Monty Lowther. "Hallo, who's there?"

There was a tap on the door.

"Come in, fathead!" called out Manners.

The door opened, and an eyeglass gleamed in from the dusky passage. The face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, glimmered behind it.

"Come in," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "Got over your fright?"

D'Arcy was just entering the study when Tom Merry asked that question. He paused, jammed his monocle more tightly into his eye, and regarded Tom Merry fixedly.

"What were you pleased to wemark, Tom Mewwy?" he asked.

"Got over your fright?" said Tom Merry pleasantly.

"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you do not think a D'Arcy capable of fallin' into a fwight?" said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh, I don't know. You fell into a river once, and I've seen you fall into a rain barrel," said Tom Merry. "Why not into a fright?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Manners and Lowther.

"If this is the way you weceive a visitah, Tom Mewwy—"

"I don't see how I can receive a chap more politely than by asking him how he feels!" said Tom Merry. "But if you say you weren't in a fright, of course, I take the word of a D'Arcy."

"I certainly was not in a fwight."

"Then it is all right. Appearances were deceptive. We'll agree that you only looked a fright," Tom Merry conceded.

"You uttah ass!"

"If this is the way you address your host, Gussy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Come in, old son, and sit down," said Tom Merry, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,355.

laughing. "Now, what is it? Do you want our opinion on a new waistcoat?"

"Nothin' of the sort, deah boy."

"A new hat?"

"Certainly not."

"If you've come to tea, you've come to the right place at the right time. There's heaps of toast and heaps of tea, heaps of ham and jam. You can take them both together, or einander nach, as old Schneider says. Or to put it in the words of the poet," said Tom Merry, with a wave of his hand to the tea-table, "'Still a ruby kindles in the vine, and many a garden by the water blows.'"

"I've had my tea, deah boys."

"Have another."

"Imposs. I am not Fatty Wynn. Look here, you know, I have come to speak to you about Fatty Wynn," said D'Arcy. "I have bwoached a most bwiliant ideah to the fellows in my study, and they have tweated it in a spiwit of uttah wibaldwy."

The Terrible Three exchanged a wink.

"Rotten of them," said Lowther.

"Beastly," agreed Manners.

"Unmanly," said Tom Merry.

"Awful cads, those Fourth Formers," said Monty Lowther, with a shake of his head. "They're worse than the Third Form fags."

"Heaps worse," said Manners. "Horrid little rotters, and Gussy's study are the worst of the lot, too."

"Yes, that's so," said Tom Merry sympathetically. "I've often wondered what Gussy's great-grandmother would say if she knew the company he kept."

"Horrid!"

"Simply beastly!"

"Unspeakable!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed at the chums of the Shell one after another. Their sympathy pleased him at the beginning, but as they went on with their frank opinions about Blake, Herries, and Digby, the swell of St. Jim's rose to his feet.

"If you boundahs intend to speak in this stwain about my fwends, I shall wetiah fwom the study," he said frigidly.

The Terrible Three burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right, Gussy. We were only pulling your leg. They are the best chaps in the School House, bar ourselves, and you're quite in the wrong when you have any trouble with them."

"Nothin' of the sort—"

"Oh dear! You can't satisfy some chaps at all," said Manners. "Suppose you tell us what you came to see us about, Gussy."

"Vewy well. I wegard Fatty Wynn bein' so awfully plump as a public dangah. It is a dangah to himself and to othahs. For the geneawal good, I think Fatty Wynn ought to be persuaded somehow to weduce his fat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows wegard it as a laughin' mattah—"

The Terrible Three evidently did. They laughed, and laughed, till the study and half the passage rang with it.

Arthur Augustus sat frigidly the while, his monocle jammed into his eye, regarding them with a fixed stare of great scorn.

"When you fellows have done—" he began at last.

Tom Merry wiped away his tears.

"Oh, Gussy! How are you going to reduce his fat?"

"I pwesume that a selected diet would be the best plan. Suppose he were put on a vegetawian wegime?" said D'Arcy.

"Say a little powwidge in the mornin', no lunch, and a vewy light tea, for a few weeks."

The Terrible Three shrieked again.

"I fancy I can see Fatty taking it on!" sobbed Lowther.

"I was thinkin' that we ought to put it to Figgins & Co., as sensible chaps, and then Fatty Wynn would have to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows care to come and back me up, I will go ovah to the New House at once and intahview Figgins & Co. on the subject."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cannot be sewious—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

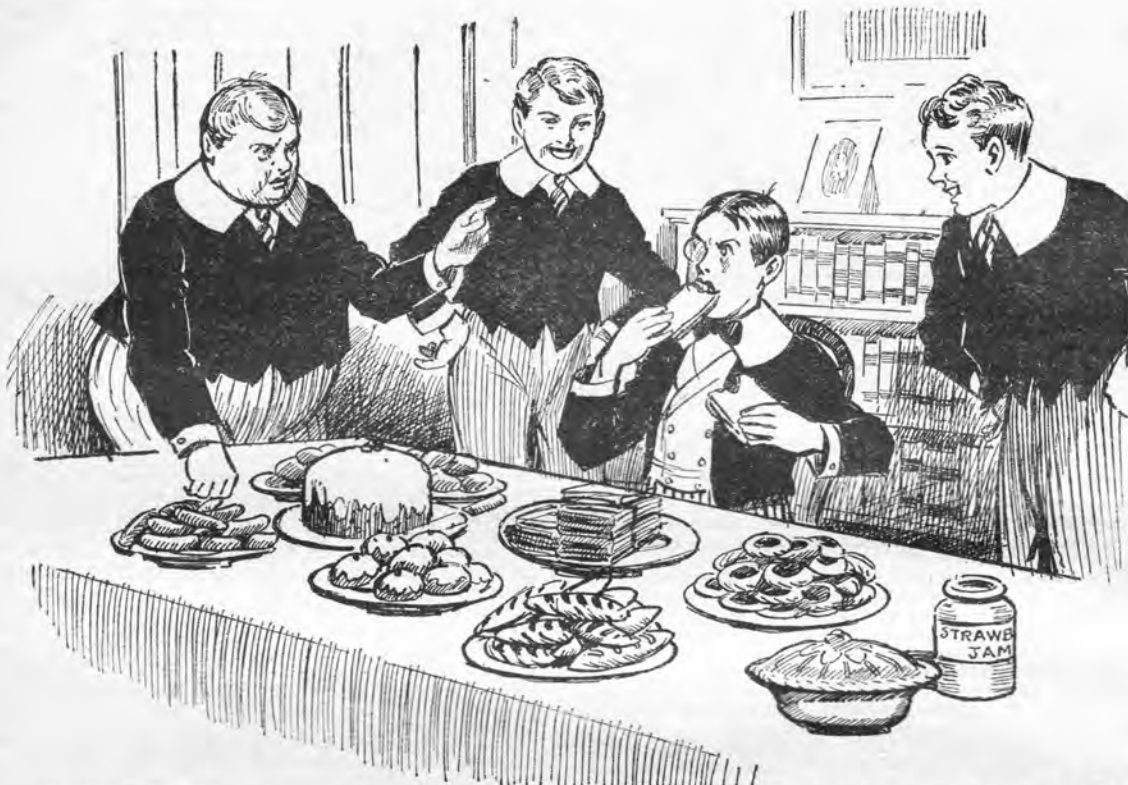
"You uttah asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Terrible Three.

Arthur Augustus rose from his seat and crossed to the door. He opened the door. Kangaroo looked in from the passage at the same moment; he had been about to open the door himself and look in, to ascertain the cause of the sounds of loud merriment. He stared into the study, with a grin. D'Arcy, who had looked back towards the chums of the Shell, did not observe him.



"Go ahead!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'll teach you to suggest that I ought to adopt a system of diet! Pile in! You've got to eat the lot!" Gussy gazed hopelessly at the stacks of food. "Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. Then he commenced on the sandwiches. It was beneath his dignity to ask for quarter!

"You uttah cwass asses!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You are as diswepsectful and cwass as the uttah duffahs in my own study. I wefuse to wemain and be tweated with this uttah want of pwopah wespsect!"

And Arthur Augustus strode from the study, right into Kangaroo, knocking the Australian junior fairly across the passage with the sudden impact.

"Ow!" roared Harry Noble.

"Bai Jove!"

"Yaroooh!"

"I—I beg your pardon, Noble, deah boy. I did not see you. Bai Jove!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"Ass!"

Kangaroo lurched forward, and caught hold of Arthur Augustus.

"Hold me up!" he gasped.

"Bai Jove! Are you injuahed, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"This is tewwible! Help!"

"Oh!" moaned Kangaroo.

"I'm awfully sowwy! Are you much hurt?"

"Oh! Carry me into the study!" moaned the Cornstalk faintly.

Arthur Augustus grasped the bulky form of the Colonial. Kangaroo was no light-weight for the slim swell of St. Jim's to carry in. The Terrible Three did not offer to lend a hand. Perhaps they had caught a wink from the Cornstalk.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

He staggered into the study under the weight of the sturdy Cornstalk. He slid Noble into a chair, and gasped.

"Ow! Oh!"

Kangaroo sat up, apparently quite recovered. The breathless swell of St. Jim's regarded him in wonder.

"Are you all wight?" he panted.

"Quite, thanks," drawled Kangaroo.

"Weren't you hurt?"

"Not at all."

"You—you uttah ass! Then you were wottin'!"

"Exactly," said Kangaroo blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"You feahful asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus strode into the passage, and slammed the door with a slam that was heard as far as Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form quarters. Blake chuckled.

"That's Gussy again!" he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fourth Formers chuckled and went on with their prep.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, still panting for breath, passed the study and descended the stairs. D'Arcy's face was pink with indignation. He felt that he was not being properly backed up. But he was as far as ever from abandoning his splendid idea.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Suggests Dieting.

FIGGINS stirred the fire.

Fatty Wynn opened his eyes, blinked at the fire, and closed them again. Kerr looked at Figgins.

"Time for prep, you know," he remarked.

"But, Fatty—"

"I wonder if we could excuse him to Mr. Lathom tomorrow?"

"I wonder?"

"The poor old chap isn't in a fit state for prep," said Figgins. "He seems to be quite fagged out."

Tap!

Figgins' eyes gleamed.

"If that's French or Pratt come back, I'll jolly well jam his head!" he muttered; and he threw open the door.

An elegant figure presented itself to view. It was that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a monocle jammed in his right eye, and a silk hat in his hand. He gave Figgins a graceful bow.

"Good-evenin', deah boy!" he said.

"Hallo!" said Figgins, in a subdued voice. He held up a warning finger. "Quiet!"

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed.

"What's the mattah, Figgy?"

"Fatty Wynn!"

"What's the mattah with him?"

"We're looking after him. He's had a rough time, you know. He musn't be disturbed. Don't make a sound. Tread on tiptoe!"

Arthur Augustus came into the study on tiptoe. Figgins closed the door noiselessly. Kerr held up his hand to D'Arcy as an additional warning to be quiet.

The swell of St. Jim's turned his monocle upon Fatty

Wynn. The Falstaff of the New House did not open his eyes. He may not have been asleep, but he was too far gone after that tremendous meal to support the burden of a conversation.

"Bai Jove!"

"Hush!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Quieter, Gussy!"

"Weally, is there anythin' wong with him? He looks all wight."

"He needs looking after."

"But, weally!"

"Hush!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Kerr and Figgins, and then at Fatty Wynn again; then he finally fixed his gaze upon Figgins.

"I have come oval to speak to you about somethin' wathah important, deah boys," he said, subduing his tones in deference to the most frantic signals of Figgins and Kerr. "You are awah that Wynn was in gweat dangah this aftahnoon, owin' to his bein' too fat to wun?"

"What!"

"He was a second time in dangah, because he was too fat to get through the window of Taggles' lodge."

"Eh?"

"If this goes on, he will gwow too fat to play goal for the juniah team, and that would be a weal catastwophe. I have a wproposal to make to you fellows."

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"I think that, for the genewal good, Fatty Wynn ought to be somehow induced to weduce his fat!" said D'Arcy firmly.

Figgins and Kerr gazed speechlessly at the swell of St. Jim's. That a School House fellow should have the nerve to come and say this to them in their own study, in their own House, almost took their breath away.

One of Fatty Wynn's eyes half-opened, and closed again.

Fatty Wynn was sleeping with at least one ear open.

"Well, my word!" murmured Kerr at last.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, apparently considering, from the silence of the New House juniors, that he had made an impression. "Yaas, wathah, deah boys! For Fatty Wynn's own sake, and for all our sakes, I considah that he ought to make the attempt to weduce his fat. The Gwammah School elaps sometimes ask us if we're fattenin' him up for Chwistmas, or if he is to be exhibited at a fweak show, you know, and I wegard that as vevy personal and unpleasant. The best thing to do is for Fatty Wynn to weduce his fat, and I know a wippin' way to do it."

Fatty Wynn's eyes were both open now.

"Oh, you do, do you?" gasped Figgins, finding his voice at last.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I—I—"

"You see, the best way to deal with this pwoblem is by a system of dietin'," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy explained.

"I have thought the mattah out. Fatty Wynn should adopt a system of diet, and stick to it."

"Oh!"

"I should wecommend a half-slice of bwead-and-butter for bwckkah, with a small cup of weakish tea—"

Fatty Wynn sat bolt upright in his chair, his eyes wide open now, and fixed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a look that might have made the hero of a six-shilling novel quake. But D'Arcy did not observe him for a moment.

"I should stop the cup of cocoa and the woll at eleven o'clock entirely," went on D'Arcy. "And for dinnah I should suggest some powwidge, and pewwaps a small slice of bwown bwead without buttah."

"What!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Ah, I see you're awake, deah boy! I am speakin' for your good, you know. For tea I suggest a single woll, without anythin' but plain watah to dwink with it."

"Ow!"

"And no suppah at all," said D'Arcy firmly.

Fatty Wynn stared at D'Arcy made his brilliant suggestions. If D'Arcy had been suggesting scalping him, and then boiling him in oil, Fatty Wynn would not have glared at him with a deadlier glare.

"There!" said Arthur Augustus, with a wave of the hand. "There you are, deah boys! What do you think of that for a pwogwamme?"

"I—I dont think!" gasped Figgins.

"You chump!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn—"

"You ass!"

"My deah Wynn—"

"You dangerous lunatic!" shrieked Fatty. "You—you've thrown me into a perspiration! You—you're dangerous!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Collar him!" shrieked Wynn.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made a backward step towards the door. It dawned upon him at that moment that it had been a little imprudent of him to venture with his splendid scheme into the rival House.

He had not counted upon Figgins & Co. cutting up rusty; but they certainly were cutting up rusty, especially Fatty Wynn.

Figgins and Kerr rushed at the elegant junior as he retreated.

"Weally, you know— Hands off! You wuffians! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus was pinioned in a moment. Figgins and Kerr grasped an arm each. The swell of St. Jim's gasped with indignation.

"Welease me, you wuff asses! I shall lose my tempah, and stwike you with violence if you do not welease me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold him!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wrenched his right hand loose and hit out. Figgins caught it on the end of the nose, and he sat down on the study floor with a sudden bump. Kerr closed with the swell of the School House, and bore him back against the wall. D'Arcy's silk hat rolled on the floor as he struggled with Kerr.

"Keep him!" panted Figgins, springing up.

The Scots junior chuckled.

"I've got him!"

"You—you wottahs—"

Figgins laid his powerful grasp upon the swell of the Fourth, and Arthur Augustus was pinioned again, more securely this time.

"Pway don't be such wuff beasts!" he exclaimed. "You are wumplin' my jacket, and you have wumped my waistcoat howwibly!"

"We've got him!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Bring him here!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Here he is!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was marched before the fat Fourth Former in the armchair like a prisoner being marched up to his executioner.

CHAPTER 7.

Forced to Feed!

FATTY WYNN sat upright in the armchair, with an extremely wrathful frown upon his fat face. It was not often that Fatty Wynn allowed his plump serenity to be disturbed. But if anything could disturb it to its very foundation, it was the suggestion that he should live upon a famine diet.

Fatty Wynn felt that that was the unpardonable wrong—the almost unforgivable sin.

He glared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Chump!" he said. "Fathead!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Ass! Frabjous duffer! Cuckoo!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Burbler!"

"Will you kindly welease me, Figgins, so that I can give Wynn a feahful thwashin'?" demanded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly.

Figgins grinned.

"No fear!" he replied.

"The chump!" said Fatty Wynn. "The chortling fat-head! The galumphing dummy! Feed on porridge and oats—eh? Cold water and dry bread for tea! Ugh! And a little brown bread—eh? Grooh!"

Fatty Wynn shuddered.

"Undah the cires, deah boy—"

"Name the punishment," said Figgins. "Shall we bump him?"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Not bad enough," said Fatty Wynn, with a shake of the head. "What he really wants is something lingering, with boiling oil in it."

"Shall we mop his napper in the ashes?"

"Weally, Kerr—"

"That's not enough—not nearly enough!"

"We could anoint him with red ink," suggested Figgins. "If you like, we'll mop red ink and gum over his head, and chalk his face, and put cinders in his clothes."

"You uttah wuffian!"

Fatty Wynn shook his head again. The punishment proposed did not seem adequate to him. Hanging, drawing, and quartering would have been nearer the mark.

Fatty Wynn glanced round as if in search of ideas. His glance ran over the well-stocked tea-table, and his fat face lighted up into a cheerful grin. He had evidently hit upon an acceptable idea.

"Sit him down!" he exclaimed.

Figgins and Kerr sat D'Arcy down—so suddenly that he gasped for breath, and his monocle jerked out of his eye.

"Yow! You uttah wuff beasts!"

"Now feed him!" said the fat Fourth Former.

"Feed him!" ejaculated Figgins.

"That's it! Make him eat all the grub that is on the table!" said Fatty Wynn, with a grin. "Every atom of it! Every morsel!"

Figgins and Kerr burst into a roar. There were sufficient provisions on the table to keep D'Arcy for a long time. The swell of St. Jim's gazed at the pile of tarts, cream puffs, doughnuts, cakes, and other things that Fatty Wynn had not been able to consume, and turned quite pale.

"I twust you are jokin'!" he remarked feebly.

"Not at all."

"I will not—"

"Yes, you will!"

"I wefuse to touch a morsel!" said Arthur Augustus, with all the dignity of the D'Arcys.

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"You'll get something else if you don't," he said. "If you don't clear that table, you'll have your head bunged in the ashes in the grate! Then we'll do up your top-knot with red ink and gum and liquid glue, and fill your clothes with cinders, and pour treacle down your back."

"Ugh!"

"So we will!" said Figgins. "We swear—"

"We swear!" said Kerr, in the best manner of the Amateur Junior Dramatic Society. "We swear! I swear, thou swarest, he swears! Je jure, nous jurons—"

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy!"

"Mind, we mean bisney," said Figgins. "We're looking after Wynn. He's our chum, and he's been through a rough time. What he says, goes!"

"I pwotest!"

"No good. Now, will you eat the lot, or take the alternative? Take your choice!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Figgins & Co. He could see that they were in deadly earnest. And there was no doubt that they could carry out their threats if they liked. He was alone in the study with them, and Figgins had only to call out to have a crowd of fellows in, who would be joyful at the prospect of ragging the swell of St. Jim's.

"You—you don't mean it, deah boys!" moaned D'Arcy.

"We do—we does!"

"But I cannot eat so much!"

"Oh, you never know what you can do till you try," said Kerr encouragingly. "Fatty has just eaten more than that lot."

"Yaas; but I am not a gweedy beast like Wynn!"

"What!" roared Figgins and Kerr together.

"I—I mean that I have not so healthy an appetite as Wynn!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"It's bound to improve with practice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Jam his head into the ashes!" said Figgins.

"Here goes!" said Kerr cheerfully.

Arthur Augustus was whirled towards the fire-grate.

He uttered a yell of alarm.

"Pway stop, you wottahs! I'll—I'll do as you say!"

"Honour bright?"

"Ya-as!"

Figgins and Kerr released him. Arthur Augustus turned towards the table. He had given his word now, and he had to keep it. But if he had failed, the chums of the New House were ready to seize him again, and inflict the alternative punishment.

"Go ahead!" said Fatty Wynn. "A little porridge, hey—and some dry brown bread with plain water! I'll teach you to give me the cold shivers! Pile in!"

"Bai Jove!"

It was beneath the dignity of a true D'Arcy to ask for quarter. Arthur Augustus sat at the table, looked helplessly at the piles of food, and started.

The sandwiches went. Then a pork pie. Arthur Augustus had already had his tea in Study No. 6 in the School House. But fortunately it had been a very light one. He was fervently glad of that. He devoured a large cake, and then his efforts slackened. If he had had nothing to eat for two days, he would have been satisfied by this time. But there were heaps to follow. He commenced operations on the jam tarts. Figgins & Co. watched him with grinning faces.

Fatty Wynn, usually the most good-natured of fellows, was merciless. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had wounded him in his tenderest spot.

D'Arcy had pronounced him an over-indulgent eater—had hinted that he ate more than was good for him! That was unpardonable. Fatty Wynn was quite touchy on that point. He often explained to scoffing juniors that he was

(Continued on next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4, (Comp.). Fine footballs are awarded every week for the two best jokes received and a half-a-crown is paid for every other joke that appears in this column.

SOME SWELL!

Sailor (on board ship in rough sea): "Bit of a swell to-day, sir."

Passenger: "It's very nice of you to say so, but you ought to see me on Sundays!"

A football has been awarded to A. Murray, Lowood, Victoria Road, Lenzie, near Glasgow.

THE YOUNG IDEA.

Boss (to tardy office boy): "What's your excuse for being late this time?"

Office Boy: "Stop me if you've heard this one!"

A football has been awarded to John Leaf, Glade Farm, Escrick, York.

FAMILY HISTORY.

Son: "Do you remember when you told me that you had been expelled from school?"

Father: "Oh, yes, that's history now."

Son: "Well, isn't it funny how history repeats itself?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Wells, 6, Sheldon Road, Bexley Heath, Kent.

THE 'TEC.

Waiter: "How did you know that we had a new dish-washer, sir?"

Diner: "The finger-prints on the plates are different!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Bennett, 1, Westwood Grove, Wallasey, Cheshire.

ENOUGH SAID!

Teacher: "What is the difference in meaning between the words 'sufficient' and 'enough'?"

Boy: "Sufficient is when ma thinks it's time for me to stop eating pudding—enough is when I think it is!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Chamberlain, 60, Wickham Road, Highams Park, London, E.4.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS.

Doctor: "Did you take your two-mile walk every day last week?"

Patient: "Yes; but I was very giddy after it."

Doctor: "Giddy? Why?"

Patient: "Well, I'm a lighthouse-keeper!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Carson, 40, Garthland Drive, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

CORRECT.

Mr. Selby: "What happened in 1564?"

Joe Frayne: "Shakespeare was born."

Mr. Selby: "And in 1570?"

Joe: "Shakespeare was six years old!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Hamilton, Balmblae, Falkland, Fife, Scotland.

A CAUTIOUS CUSTOMER.

Old Lady: "Are you a qualified chemist?"

Chemist: "Yes, madam."

Old Lady: "Did you pass all your examinations?"

Chemist: "I did, madam."

Old Lady: "Have you ever poisoned anyone by accident?"

Chemist: "Certainly not, madam!"

Old Lady: "Very well; then I'll have a small pot of vaseline!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Goldstein, Fransch Hoek, Cape Province, South Africa.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

not greedy, but that he liked a lot. And D'Arcy, as Wynn afterwards pathetically explained, made him feel quite ill by his description of the diet he suggested for reducing his weight.

D'Arcy's want of tact, in fact, had quite spoiled the beatific feeling that Wynn had been left with after that splendid feed. And the tactless swell of St. Jim's had to pay the penalty.

The jam tarts disappeared slowly, but they were all gone at last. Figgins, with a cheerful grin, pushed a large plate of cream puffs towards D'Arcy.

"They're nice!" he remarked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Pile in!"

Arthur Augustus piled in reluctantly. Slowly the cream puffs vanished from sight.

They really were nice, but Arthur Augustus was not in a fit state to appreciate their nice qualities just then. He was beginning to feel dreadfully full and bloated, and his face was assuming a bright and shiny look. His cheeks were pale, and there was a fishy expression in his eyes.

"Oh!" he murmured, as the cream puffs were finished.

"Oh!"

"Nice?" asked Figgins.

"Ow!"

"I hope you're enjoying this feed, D'Arcy!"

"Ugh!"

"Try the doughnuts!"

"Weally, Figgins!"

"Doughnuts forward!" grinned Kerr.

The doughnuts were eaten at a snail's pace. Arthur Augustus was feeling extremely uncomfortable. A slight feeling as if he were on a Channel steamer was coming over him.

"Now the marmalade tarts!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Gweat Scott!"

The marmalade tarts followed the jam tarts. D'Arcy's complexion by this time was assuming an art shade in green.

He lay back in his chair and panted.

There were biscuits and cakes on the table still, and several apples and some preserved fruits. But Fatty Wynn was magnanimous.

"We'll let him off the rest," he said generously.

"Besides, I can manage some more presently. Have you had enough, D'Arcy?"

"Ow! Yaas, wathah!"

"Will you come here again suggesting starving a fellow to death because he's got his bones covered with flesh, instead of being a silly tailor's dummy?"

"No, no!"

"Then buzz off! We shan't charge you anything for that feed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! Gweat Scott! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet. He made an attempt to walk to the door with his usual dignity. But it was a dismal failure.

His head dropped forward, and he fairly staggered. Figgins handed him his silk hat with all the politeness of a waiter expecting a tip.

"Got any more suggestions to make, Gussy? You can still have the red ink and the gum, you know."

Arthur Augustus did not reply. He tottered out of the study, and out of the New House, and crossed the quadrangle like a fellow in a dream—a fearful dream! A nightmare, in fact.

CHAPTER 8.

Poor Old Gussy!

JACK BLAKE pitched his books into the corner of Study No. 6, rose to his feet, and yawned.

"That's done!" he remarked. "If I ever run a

Public school, I shall abolish prep, and most lessons. If the fellows play footer in the day-time, and read the 'Magnet' in the evening, I should think they would do pretty well."

"I wonder where Gussy is?" Digby remarked.

Blake grinned.

"I don't know! Starting his splendid wheezes on somebody, I suppose! I heard him chucked out of Tom Merry's study once, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Herries, holding up his hand.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage. Footsteps, naturally, were not uncommon in the Fourth Form passage in the School House. But there was something very unusual about these particular footsteps.

They were slow and heavy, slow like the regular tapping of a wooden leg, heavy as if the person walking was dragging himself step by step.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "That's somebody ill!" He threw the study door open. The chums of the Fourth Form looked out into the passage.

"D'Arcy!"

The Fourth Formers uttered the name together. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who was dragging himself along the passage.

His face was pale, and there were clotted beads of perspiration on his brow. His movements were slow and lethargic. He seemed to be struggling with some inward disturbance. At all events, he was evidently not quite himself, and if the chums of the Fourth had not known him so well, they might have suspected that he had partaken of some liquid refreshment of a stronger nature than coffee.

Blake ran down the passage.

"Gussy! What's the matter?"

"Ow!"

"What's happened?"

"Grooh!"

"Poor old chap! He looks sick! Bear a hand, you chaps!"

The three juniors bore a hand together. Much as they might chip Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and make fun of his wonderful wheezes, they were very fond of the elegant junior, and at a sign of something wrong, they were affectionate chums again in a moment.

They piloted Arthur Augustus into the study and placed him in a chair. They stood round, looking at him in surprise mixed with alarm.

Arthur Augustus gazed at them with a lack-lustre eye.

He had allowed his silk hat to fall upon the floor. He had not even tried to put his monocle into his eye. He sat with his mouth partly open, a thing that the chums had never seen before in D'Arcy. There was evidently something very wrong with the swell of St. Jim's.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "What is it, Gussy? What's the matter, old man?"

"Ugh!"

"He's been eating," said Digby. "There's jam on him, and cream and crumbs!"

"My hat! He's been gorging like Fatty Wynn!"

"What has happened, Gussy? Have you been over to the New House?"

"Yow! Yaas!"

"Seen Figgins & Co.?"

"Gwoogh! Yaas!"

"Did they go for you?"

"Yaas, wathah! Ow!"

"What did they do?" said Blake anxiously. "The cheek—to rag a School House chap! We shall have to take this up. What did they do, Gussy?"

"Ow! They—they—Yow! Ow!"

"Great Scott! What was it?"

"They made me—made me—Ow!"

"Yes?"

"They made me—Ow! They—"

"What did they make you do?"

"Eat!"

"Eat?" exclaimed Blake, Herries, and Digby together.

Arthur Augustus groaned.

"Yaas! Yaas, wathah! They made me eat a feashful lot—just because I wpososed placin' Fatty Wynn on a diet to reduce his fat. Ow!"

"They—they made you eat!" gasped Blake.

"Ow! Ugh! Yaas! Cake and doughnuts and jam tarts and marmalade tarts and cream puffs!" groaned D'Arcy.

"Ow!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

The chums of the Fourth roared. They could not help it. Of all the raggings that the swell of the School House might have been subjected to in the New House, this one was the one that would have been the least expected by his chums.

D'Arcy gazed at them feebly as they roared. He did not feel even energy enough to remonstrate.

"Ow! Ugh! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and the Terrible Three looked in. Tom Merry & Co. had finished prep, and were going out. They gazed in with interest.

"What's the joke?" demanded Tom Merry. "We could hear your cackle at the end of the passage! What's the shriek?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is it, you fatheads?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Explain."

Blake gasped it out. Then the chums of the Shell joined in the roar. Six juniors roared and roared as if they were going by steam, while the swell of St. Jim's sat in the armchair and gasped.

(Continued on page 14.)

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM—



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters to:
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, CHUMS! Next Wednesday's grand number sees the start of the tip-top new feature many readers have been clamouring for. I refer, of course, to "Tom Merry's Weekly" (New Edition), and let me say right away that this up-to-date version of the paper run by the chums of St. Jim's is "the goods"! It contains many novel features that will appeal to all readers—bright and breezy features which will bring you into closer touch with the St. Jim's characters and the minor events of the school. Such features as "St. Jim's News Reel," "Look Through Our Telescope," "Monty Lowther Calling," and "Caliban's Puzzle Corner" will thoroughly amuse and interest you. In addition, there is a splendid feature—"Tom Merry's Flying Squad"—that will have a special interest for readers, because you can all join the "Flying Squad." Full details about it, together with a printed badge which can be cut out and worn by members, will appear next week. Make sure you don't miss the first number of "Tom Merry's Weekly."

"THE FAG'S SECRET!"

You all remember Joe Frayne, the little waif from the underworld whom Tom Merry befriended and brought to St. Jim's? Well, he is the character who plays the leading part in next week's powerful story. Joe is accused of a particularly mean action by certain of his school-fellows, and the evidence is so much against him that, unless he can prove that he was elsewhere when the deed was done, he will lose all the respect that his friends have for him. But when Joe is given the opportunity to clear his name, he refuses to say where he was! What is the mystery connected with the little waif? Read all about it in next Wednesday's magnificent long yarn. You will vote it the best school story of the week, bar none!

"TREASURE ISLE!"

In the next nerve-tingling chapters of E. S. Brooks' great new serial, there are some startling and exciting developments. It's tough luck on the St. Frank's fellows that, having escaped from their cannibal captors, they should run right into their enemy, Doc Haynes. But the impetuous Edward Oswald Handforth doesn't intend to become the prisoner again of this modern pirate, and he and his chums make a daring getaway. You will read what happens in the next thrilling instalment of this popular serial.

AN OUTSIDE IN OMELETS!

John Mackay, of Hull, has written to ask me if I can tell him what is the largest omelet that has ever been made. Now, I ask you, what a poser! Well, as it happens, I've discovered the facts of an outside omelet—and if it's not the biggest omelet ever made I'll eat my hat! The omelet was made at Chahalis, U.S.A., in 1931, and it consisted of 7,200 eggs and was cooked in a pan weighing half a ton and measuring eight feet across. The pan was greased by means of tying bits of bacon to the feet of girls and letting them slide around the pan! I am afraid I can't tell you how many people it took to eat it or what it tasted like!

THE FASTEST MAN ON EARTH!

Fred Astell, of Huddersfield, wants to know who has travelled faster than any man on earth. Officially, this honour belongs to Warrant-Officer Agello, who, flying a Macchi-Fiat machine, put up the world's air-speed record of 423 miles an hour. There are, however, some people who claim that Flight-Lieutenant Staniland, the famous British test pilot, has exceeded this speed in a terminal velocity dive; that is, a vertical dive with engine full on. Staniland is famous for these dives, and once won a big contract with a foreign country by his daring.

Various countries had sent machines to perform before this foreign Government, but after all the tests had been carried out, it was still undecided as to which country should get the contract. Staniland suggested a terminal velocity dive, but none of the others were prepared to undertake it, as it can only be done by a perfectly-built machine, owing to the terrific strain on all parts. Staniland did one—and won the contract!

PEARLS.

William Henderson, of Wembley Park, wants to know how pearls are made. Real pearls are made by oysters, which, when they find a small particle of sand or some such object sticking into them, discharge a liquid over the object to make it smooth. The liquid hardens and so the pearl is formed.

There are, however, natural pearls and artificially produced real pearls. The production of the latter is the main industry of some Chinese villages, and is a very fine art. The oysters are kept in special beds, and at a certain time they are raised to the surface and operated on. They are gently opened and small objects, bits of wood and the like, are pushed inside. It is round these that the pearls are formed, and after a time has elapsed the oysters are again raised and the pearls removed.

There is another method, used by the Japanese, which actually consists of a surgical operation, and produces much better pearls. In this method the oysters are kept in mesh cages and are very carefully looked after so that they will stand the operation. It is almost impossible to tell a natural pearl from one of these, except by cutting the pearl in two, when an expert can tell from the formation.

Artificial pearls are, of course, made in many ways. The really expensive ones are made by placing the tiny scales of a certain fish inside little glass spheres, and holding them there with a special preparation.

FREE GIFTS FOR ALL!

Have you seen This Week's MODERN BOY—our Companion Paper? It contains a jolly fine FREE GIFT for every reader—a Working Model AERO-CAR. The metal propeller, engine-front and elastic motor for working it were given FREE with Last Week's MODERN BOY. If you missed THAT, get your Newsagent to get you a back copy of that issue!

Next Week's MODERN BOY, dated February 17th, on Sale on the 10th, will contain ANOTHER SPLENDID FREE GIFT—A Remarkable Scientific Novelty which tells you the Time, Helps you to Find Compass Points, and Shows you How to Read a Map! That sounds jolly interesting, doesn't it? And it IS. Make sure you get YOURS!

THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice to The GEM LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

J. H. Friend, 22, Woodstock Road, Golders Green, London, N.W.11, wants a correspondent in Spain interested in stamps.
B. Caplan, 42, Ashbourne Grove, Golders Green, London, N.W.11, wants a pen pal anywhere in the Empire; interested in sports and stamps; age 13-14.

Eric Kent, Penryn, Windermere Crescent, Harton, South Shields, Co. Durham, wants correspondents in South Africa and Canada; interested in stamps, cycling, and boxing; ages 13-15.

James W. Phillip, 30, Pitfour Street, Dundee, Angus, Scotland, wants correspondents in Australia and England, interested in cricket and football; ages 16-20.

James Barnes, Florence Gibson Ward, R.L.C. Hospital, Heswall, Cheshire, wants to correspond with stamp-collectors in New Zealand and Australia; ages 12-13.

Eric Astbury, Florence Gibson Ward, R.L.C. Hospital, Heswall, Cheshire, wants correspondents in Scotland and Australia; football and cricket; ages 16-17.

James Winny, Station Road, Craven Arms, Shropshire, wants a correspondent interested in aviation, and model aeroplanes—especially F.R.O.G.S.

R. J. Tipping, 7, Eden Terrace, Londonderry, Ireland, wants to exchange stamps with or hear from readers in Iraq and Australia. Other hobbies: Chess, gramophone, and wire-less.

V. C. Tipping, 7, Eden Terrace, Londonderry, Ireland, wants correspondents keen on old numbers of the "Nelson Lee."
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356

FATTY WYNN'S THIN TIME!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "I always said that Gussy would be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Weally— Ugh! Ow!"

"But we can't take this lying down!" exclaimed Blake, struck by an afterthought. "The New House will be shrieking over this to-morrow—the whole school will yell over it! We shall be the grin of the whole place!"

"Yes, rather! But— Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make the New House sit up for it!" said Monty Lowther. "But—how?"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall insist upon makin' the boundahs sit up—like anythin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," exclaimed Manners, "we'll take up the question of Fatty Wynn's fatness—just as Gussy suggested—and make a ripping rag of it! We'll worry the New House chaps into grey hairs about it. What?"

"Good egg!"

"Ripping!"

"Splendid wheeze!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the School House juniors put their heads together over it, and with many chuckles they elaborated a scheme for the discomfiture of the New House juniors. Figgins & Co. had scored so far. But— It was, as Monty Lowther remarked, a big "but"!

CHAPTER 9. Going for Fatty!

CLANG! The rising-bell rang through the frosty morning air. Figgins & Co. turned out in the Fourth Form dormitory in the New House. Figgins was always first out of bed in that dormitory, and his chums were always second. They had to be, as a matter of fact, for Figgins would have yanked them out headlong if they had not turned out at his call.

Fatty Wynn blinked doubtfully at Figgins over the top of the bed clothes on this particular morning when Figgy called him. Fatty Wynn was wondering whether the great and affectionate care his chums had shown towards him the previous evening had outlasted the night. Fatty was greatly inclined to take a little extra nap.

"I—I don't know that I feel quite fit to turn out this morning, Figgy," he ventured.

"Yes, you do," said Figgins decidedly.

"Ahem!"

"Up you get!"

Fatty Wynn sighed and turned out. It was clear that the period of lavish affection and care was over. Fatty could not flourish for ever on the strength of his narrow escape from the bull.

The three juniors were first down. They went out into the quadrangle in the frosty morning air to get an appetite for brekker, as Figgins remarked. Fatty Wynn did not really need it. He had an appetite already.

There were juniors to be seen outside the School House, punting a footer about, early as it was. Figgins recognised Blake

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.



"Hallo, old boy—what do you want?" Mick o' the Mounted was out on patrol, and had just made camp when an Alsatian dog trotted up to him. As Mick patted the dog's head he saw a roll of paper tied to the collar.



"Gee, this looks interesting," muttered Mick as he unfasted the piece of paper, and then whistled his surprise. For on it was written a message. "Help!" he read. "Am prisoner in hut at Fork Rivers—McKee."



The Alsatian hurled itself at Mick's assailant, who, after a desperate struggle, managed to mount his horse and gallop away. Again the dog sprang, but Gaston drove it off with savage blows.



Mick regained consciousness to find the dog licking his face. "Good old boy," he said, scrambling to his feet. "Guess there is something in that message for help, and now we're going to get busy!"



Swiftly the intelligent creature overhauled the canoe. Gaston sought to fight it off with his paddle, but next moment the frail craft overturned as the Alsatian tried to clamber into the canoe.



Mick, swimming to the scene, saw Gaston and the helpless McKee flung into the water. While the Mountie tackled Gaston and knocked him senseless, the faithful dog was dragging his master to the shore and safety.

THE MOUNTED!

RE-S JRY OF THE WILD WEST!



At that moment the Alsatian snarled fiercely as a horseman galloped up. "I'm Pierre Gaston an' I'm looking for this dog—" he began, and broke off as he saw the note in Mick's hand. "That's only a joke," he added.

But Mick was not convinced—and his suspicions were confirmed when Gaston attacked him. A terrific blow to the jaw sent the Mountie reeling backwards, and in falling his head struck a tree-stump with stunning force.



Led by the dog, Mick rode down to Fork Rivers, and he was nearing the stream when he saw Gaston carry a helpless man from a hut and dump him into a waiting canoe. "That must be McKee," said the Mountie.

By the time he reached the bank, however, the canoe was in midstream. Mick hesitated to use his rifle in case he hit McKee; but before he could do anything the dog plunged into the river with an excited bark.



Gaston held me a prisoner because he wanted to learn where I had made a rich gold strike," McKee explained to Mick, later. "I hit on the idea of tying that message to Rolf, hoping someone would see it."

Mick rode away with his prisoner, Rolf running alongside for a short distance and barking a farewell. Once again Mick had done his duty—in a way which was to earn him swift promotion in the Mounted Police.

and D'Arcy and Tom Merry, and he chuckled.

"Let's go and ask Gussy how he is?" he suggested.

The three New House juniors ran across the quad. There was a shout at once from the juniors of the School House.

"New House cads!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Figgins genially. "How do you feel this morning, Gussy? Did you have enough for supper last night?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye and stared loftily at the New House trio.

"I wegard that as an impertinent question, Figgins," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Blake and Lowther and Herries and some more of the juniors came over towards Figgins & Co. They looked solemn as owls.

"Taken any measures yet?" asked Tom Merry.

Figgins & Co. looked puzzled.

"Measures?" repeated Figgins. "What do you mean?"

"Have you done anything yet?"

"Anything? What? How? What are you driving at?"

"About it, I mean."

"About what?"

"That."

And the School House juniors, raising their hands simultaneously, pointed to Fatty Wynn's waistcoat. Figgins and Kerr looked at Wynn, and Wynn squinted down at his waistcoat. They did not understand for the moment.

"What on earth are you getting at?" demanded Fatty Wynn indignantly.

"What's the matter with my waistcoat?"

"Nothing."

"Then what do you mean?"

"Have you done anything to reduce it?"

"Reduce what? The waistcoat?"

"No—the circumference."

"What?" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"The circumference," said the juniors all together. "It has been decided that the circumference of Fatty is a public danger."

Figgins & Co. glared. Arthur Augustus emitted a soft chuckle. But the other fellows remained as serious as if they were occupied upon a question of life or death.

"You silly chump—" began Figgins.

"Public danger," said Tom Merry solemnly. "The circumference of Fatty Wynn, tending as it does at its present rate of increase to exceed the circumference of the earth, may lead to some displacement in the orbit of the globe, and then—"

"You silly ass!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Have you taken any measures?" asked Monty Lowther. "I don't mean any measures round Wynn's waist—I know there's no measure long enough to go round—but—"

"Measures for reducing the bulk of the largest circumference—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins, half grinning. "Don't be an ass!"

"It has been decided in the School House—"

"Oh, blow the School House!"

"The School House, as Cock House of St. Jim's, naturally decide such matters," said Tom Merry loftily. "It has been decided in the School House that Fatty Wynn's circumference is a public danger. Measures must be taken to reduce it. I understand that a suggestion with regard to diet has been rudely received."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So other measures must be tried."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "Fatty Wynn caused deadly peril to D'Arcy's silk hat yesterday, all through being unable to run. Something must be done."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Oh, don't be a chump!" growled Fatty Wynn, who had grown very red in the face.

Tom Merry waved his hand.

"Something must be done," he repeated. "The question is, are you New House chaps going to take the matter in hand, or do you leave it to the School House?"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins.

And the three New House juniors stalked away with their noses in the air. There was a yell of the School House fellows after them:

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn turned crimson. He half wheeled, as if with the intention of charging the crowd of School House fellows single-handed. But Figgins and Kerr dragged him away.

"Silly asses!" growled Fatty Wynn wrathfully.

He expected sympathy from his chums. But he did not get it. Perhaps they had expended all their sympathy the previous day, or perhaps they felt that there was some justice in the School House position.

"Well, you see, you are jolly plump!" said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"Well, why shouldn't a fellow be plump?" he demanded.

"Fellows may be too plump!"

"At any rate, nobody ever asks me whether I've got pipe-stems on in mistake for legs!" said Fatty Wynn hotly.

Figgins coloured. Figgins' figure certainly erred slightly on the side of slimness, and when he was in footer clothes his calves did not show to advantage. Rude boys in Rylcombe had drawn attention to that fact. But Figgins had not expected it from Fatty Wynn. He felt inclined to say: "Thou, too, Brutus!"

"Oh, cheese that, Fatty!" said Kerr.

"Well, then, let me alone!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'm sure I'm not a greedy chap. I know I like enough to eat; but nobody could say I'm overfond of eating. I like a lot, that's all. Some chaps are so healthy, and have such a splendid physique, that they simply can't help putting on flesh."

Figgins grinned.

"Look here, Fatty, if you keep on you'll get too fat for footer!" he said.

"I'm not too fat!"

"Too plump, then!"

"I'm not so very plump, either!"

"Suppose you made a beginning this morning and had only one rasher?" Kerr suggested.

Fatty Wynn gave him an indignant glare.

"Just like you to suggest that on a cold morning when I'm specially hungry!" he exclaimed. "I was thinking of having some pork pies extra."

"Oh, my hat!"

And Figgins and Kerr gave it up.

Fatty Wynn ate his breakfast that morning with an indignant expression upon his face. Chipping from the School House fellows about his girth was all very well, he thought, but it was too much for his own chums to take up the same song. Fatty Wynn felt that he was being hardly used.

Perhaps his indignation made him cease counting, or made him careless, but he certainly put away a larger breakfast than usual that morning. A big meal always made Fatty Wynn happy and cheerful, and the clouds had quite cleared off his face when he took his place in the Fourth Form Room for lessons.

Mr. Latham, the master of the Fourth, was not yet there, and Fatty Wynn was greeted with a howl from the School House fellows in the Fourth.

"What price blubber?"

"Yaas, wathah, Wynn, deah boy! What pwice blubbah?"

Fatty Wynn snorted and took his place. There was a large sheet of paper gummed down to his desk, and on the sheet of paper was inscribed in large Roman letters:

"WHAT PRICE BLUBBER?"

"You silly asses!" roared Fatty Wynn, glaring round on the grinning class. "I should like to know what chump put that there! I should like to see the silly ass!"

The door opened, and Mr. Latham walked in. Fatty Wynn ceased suddenly. The Form-master stopped and blinked at Fatty Wynn over his spectacles.

"Is it possible, Wynn, that you were alluding to your Form-master with those disrespectful expressions?" he exclaimed.

"Oh! Oh, no, no, sir!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Ah! Oh, very well! But you will take twenty lines for using such expressions in the Form-room, Wynn!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

"Ye-es, sir!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Sorry, Wynn," said Reilly, leaning towards the fat Fourth Former. "But, faith, I'd like to ask ye a question, if I may?"

"Yes; what is it?" said Fatty Wynn unsuspiciously.

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn breathed hard through his nose. He did not reply to that question.

CHAPTER 10.

No Luck!

FIGGINS & CO. did not enjoy lessons that morning. They never did enjoy lessons very much, as a matter of fact, but on this special morning they were especially worried. All the School House juniors seemed to have made a special set against Fatty Wynn's state of plumpness. It was in vain that Figgins & Co. said to themselves that if Fatty Wynn was plump it was a matter that solely concerned Fatty Wynn. The School House fellows evidently meant to make a public business of it. And, worse than that, some of the New House juniors joined. French and Pratt were heard to whisper, while Mr. Latham's back was turned, an inquiry concerning the market price of blubber.

Figgins thought a good deal about it. It was like Blake's cheek, of course. And he would hammer French and Pratt after lessons.

All the same, the fact remained that Fatty Wynn's plumpness had suddenly assumed the proportions of a most important matter—big enough to have House rows about. It was annoying and ridiculous. Figgins wished that Wynn wouldn't grow so jolly fat. Kerr wished that Wynn would be a little more careful in his diet. Even Fatty Wynn himself began to wish in a vague sort of way that he was a little less strikingly like Henry the Eighth in figure.

But when the thought of a spare diet crossed his mind Fatty Wynn shuddered.

After lessons, when the Fourth Form poured out of their room, they found the Shell fellows all ready in the passage. The Terrible Three came marching up arm-in-arm, with solemn faces.

"I want to ask you chaps a question," Tom Merry remarked.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Anything about the footer?"

"Footer? Oh, no!"

"What is it, then?"

"It's rather a personal matter; I suppose you don't mind my asking—"

"Oh, go ahead!"

"What price blubber?" asked Tom Merry sweetly.

"Eh?"

"What price blubber?" demanded the Terrible Three with one voice.

Figgins & Co. glared.

"You champion chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say," exclaimed Kangaroo, coming up, "I've heard that rolling a chap downstairs and bumping him is a cure for plumpness! I don't mind lending a hand—"

Fatty Wynn walked away rather hurriedly, and Figgins and Kerr followed him. There was a cloud on Figgins' brow.

A yell followed them over the quadrangle.

"What price blubber?"

Figgins snorted.

"Hang it all!" he exclaimed. "This jolly well won't do, you know! I'm getting jolly well fed-up with this!"

"Let's go for 'em!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Hallo!" exclaimed French of the New House. "I say, Wynn, you haven't answered my question yet! What price blubber?"

"You ass!"

"I— Oh! Ow!"

Figgins & Co. pushed French over and walked over him, leaving him looking considerably rumpled and dusty as they passed on. French sat up and yelled:

"Yah, Fatty! What price blubber? What price tallow? Yah!"

Figgins & Co. went into their House with very red faces. Pratt was in the doorway, with several fellows of the Third and Fourth. They all grinned at Figgins & Co.

"Blubber going cheap?" asked Pratt.

"Tallow a drug in the market?" queried Jameson of the Third.

Figgins & Co. made a rush and scattered the kind inquirers to right and left. But as they scattered they sent back a yell:

"What price tallow?"

"Yah!"

Figgins & Co. went up to their study. As they entered

Figgins gave a snort of rage. Chalked across the looking-glass was the following notice:

"Two gallons of vinegar consumed daily will reduce flesh in the most obstinate case. Try it."

"The silly chumps!" growled Fatty Wynn. "A fellow can't have a decent amount of flesh on his bones without starting a cackle like a blessed farmyard!"

Figgins & Kerr stared at him. Their stare was searching.

"Look here, Fatty," exclaimed Figgins, "it won't do!"

"Eh?"

"It won't do!"

"What won't do?"

"You'll have to reduce your weight somehow!"

"Rats!"

"If you get too jolly fat to play in the footer team it will be rotten for us to have a New House chap dropped."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"And you are getting fatter; you can't deny it!"

"Bosh!"

"Better make a new rule," said Kerr. "Only eat enough for two people in the future, and it will make a wonderful difference."

"Stuff!"

"That's just what you're not going to do!"

"What?"

"Stuff!"

"Just so," agreed Figgins. "You're too fond of stuffing, Fatty. I'm sure we—Kerr and I—have mentioned it to you often enough in a friendly way!"

"I'm sure we have!" said Kerr.

"Too jolly often, if you want to know my opinion!"

snorted Fatty Wynn.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Figgins.

"Do! I'm going to the tuckshop!"

"What for?"

"A pick-me-up, of course!"

"We have dinner in half an hour!"

"I can't wait half an hour in this blessed cold weather; I'm hungry! I always get very hungry in this February weather!"

"And every other kind of weather, I think!" growled Figgins.

"Look here, you've got to muzzle your appetite, Fatty!"

"Rats!"

"You can wait till dinner—"

"Look here, Figgins!"

"And then have a light meal—"

"Oh!"

"It will do you good, Fatty! We're really thinking of you, you know! It's entirely for your sake, and—and ours!" said Figgins.

Kerr took a duster and wiped the chalked letters off the looking-glass. Fatty Wynn opened the door of the cupboard.

Figgins gently closed it again, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. The fat Fourth Former looked at him with feelings too deep for words.

"Figgins," he jerked out at last, "is that what you call chummy?"

"Real chummy!" said Figgins. "You can't eat so much, Fatty! It won't do! Last night was the final bust-up! You must be more careful!"

"B-but, I can't be kept short of food!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn in alarm, almost wildly. "I—I shall be ill, you know!"

"I rather think you'll be ill otherwise!"

"Oh, let's go out into the quad!" said Fatty Wynn abruptly, and he rolled out of the study. Figgins and Kerr followed him into the quad, watching him. They expected his footsteps to lead him in the direction of Dame Taggles' little tuckshop in the corner of the quad behind the elms.

But Fatty Wynn walked towards the gates. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation:

"What's that?"

"What's what?" asked Kerr.

"That—in the road!"

Figgins and Kerr, in surprise, stepped towards the gates, looking. Figgins swung round the next moment suspiciously.

His suspicion was well-founded. Fatty Wynn was scud-ding off towards the tuckshop. Figgins gave a shout:

"After him, Kerr!"

"What-ho!" grinned Kerr.

They dashed in pursuit. Fatty Wynn ran at top speed. He gained a start by his stratagem, but he was not equal to the two slim juniors in point of speed. They gained upon him rapidly.

Fatty Wynn contrived to reach the tuckshop and dash into it. Figgins and Kerr pelted in after him.

The fat Fourth Former grabbed a tart from the counter and took a single bite. Figgins' large hand grabbed at it, and the tart was squashed over Fatty Wynn's mouth. He gave a choking gurgle.

"Drop it!" roared Figgins.

Fatty Wynn dropped the remains of the tart and dabbed his jammy mouth furiously with his handkerchief.

"You rotters!" he roared. "What do you mean? Do you think I'm going to be starved to death and waste away to a shadow to please you? Get out! Lemme alone! Look here. I'm jolly well not going to chum up with you chaps any more! I'll change into another study! Yah!"

Figgins and Kerr took no notice. They took Fatty Wynn! Taking him by the arms, they marched him out of the shop.

"Let me go, you chumps!" roared Wynn.

"For your own good, Fatty!"

"Mind your own bisney!"

"It is our bisney to look after a chum!"

"I—I—I—" Fatty Wynn turned an imploring glance upon his merciless chums who were so grimly determined to be chummy.

"I—I say, Figgy, old man, I'm so hungry! I—I'm simply dying for a morsel—just one tart!"

"Can't be done!"

"Half a tart?"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Come on!"

Fatty Wynn was marched off. Nor did Figgins and Kerr lose sight of him till they went in to dinner in the New House.

CHAPTER 11.

Fatty Wynn's Wheeze!

TOM MERRY ceased punting about the old footer and picked it up as the bell rang for dinner. He came towards the School House with a glowing face.

Manners, and Lowther were glowing, too. They crossed the quad at a run, and very nearly ran into three Fourth Formers who were walking towards the New House arm-in-arm. The Terrible Three were very hungry. But they paused for a moment to look at Figgins & Co., so unusual was the aspect of the three inseparables of the New House.

For Fatty Wynn, usually so placid and cheerful, was



A fight with a Shark!

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looking dark and despondent, and Figgins and Kerr wore expressions of merciless resolve. There was evidently something unusual the matter.

"Anything wrong?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" said Figgins shortly.

"Price of blubber gone down, or anything of that sort?" asked Monty Lother.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Fall in tallow, perhaps?" Manners suggested.

Figgins snorted.

"We're looking after Wynn," he said. "Fatty's got his ears up because we're keeping him off the tarts. That's all. Don't be funny. Go back to your monkey-house—they're beginning to feed the animals."

And Figgins & Co. stalked on. The Terrible Three ran on towards the School House, laughing. Blake met them at the door with an inquiring look.

"Figgins and Kerr have undertaken to keep Fatty Wynn off his feed!" Tom Merry explained, and Jack Blake joined in the roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! They'll have all their work cut out then."

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!"

"I fancy it will be uphill work!" grinned Tom Merry. "Fatty Wynn will manage to diddle them somehow—what do you think?"

"Yes, rather—or he'll perish! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the School House chumps chuckled and went in to dinner.

They were very interested in the experiment Figgins and Kerr were making. That Figgins and Kerr should have been bantered into taking up the matter was a triumph for the School House fellows, and could be considered as wiping out the stain of the jape on D'Arcy the previous evening.

The forcible feeding of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a joke all over the school now. But the joke about Fatty Wynn's plumpness was putting the D'Arcy joke into the shade, and the popular question now was—"What price blubber?"—much to D'Arcy's satisfaction. He did not care to be reminded of his awful experiences in Figgins' study.

Tom Merry & Co. were laughing as they went into dinner, but Fatty Wynn was far from feeling any inclination to merriment when he entered the New House with Figgins and Kerr.

Fatty Wynn was feeling famished. That would not have been so bad, if he had been sure of being "given his head," so to speak, at the dinner-table. But Figgins and Kerr had wary eyes on him.

Fatty Wynn was to be kept short of provisions, and Figgins had plainly warned him that he wasn't to have more than one helping.

And the prospect made the fat Fourth Former groan inwardly.

The dining-room of the New House had a very pleasant scent when the juniors came in. They were having stew in the New House that day, and Fatty Wynn liked stew. He sat down to the table, sniffing.

Baker, a Sixth Form prefect, was the head of the Fourth Form table in the New House dining-room, the Form-master dining with the rest of the Form in the School House. Baker gave the juniors liberal helpings, but Figgins, passing up Fatty Wynn's plate, specially asked Baker to go easy.

"Fatty Wynn's on diet, Baker," he explained. "Will you go easy with the grub for him?"

Baker nodded.

"Certainly," he replied.

"Oh, I say—" began Fatty Wynn.

"It's about time you dieted, I think, Wynn," the prefect observed. "You'll soon be too fat for footer, if you keep on!"

"No dumplings for Wynn," said Figgins.

"Oh, Figgyl!"

"Just a light helping."

"All right!"

"And he won't want any more."

"Good!"

Fatty Wynn looked at the plate when it came down to him with an expression in his eyes that might have moved the Sphinx.

"What do you call that—a dinner?" he asked.

"Nuff for you, Fatty!"

"No good at all—rotten!"

"You're on diet, remember."

"I ain't!" roared Fatty Wynn excitedly.

"Quiet down the table there!" said Baker.

"B-but—"

"Don't make a row, please!"

Fatty Wynn began to eat, with gleaming eyes. He ate as slowly as he could, to make the dinner last as long as possible.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

The dinner would certainly have been enough for any other fellow at St. Jim's. But it seemed like a mockery to Fatty Wynn.

The plate was cleared long before the other fellows had finished. Fatty Wynn whispered fiercely in Figgins' ears:

"Look here, Figgyl, I'm going to have another helping!"

"You're not!"

"I suppose I can do as I like!"

"Your mistake—you can't!"

"I tell you—"

"Cheese it!"

"Look here, I'm jolly well going to have a double dose of pudding, then!"

Figgins shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind!"

"I tell you I will—I must—I—"

"Rats! You're not going to have any pudding at all!"

"What?" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"You're jolly well not going to have any pudding at all!" said Figgins serenely. "Now we've taken the matter in hand, we're going to see it through!"

"You—you ass—"

"You can talk as much as you like, Fatty, but you've finished eating till tea-time!" said Figgins firmly.

Fatty Wynn suppressed a groan. Till tea-time! Why, that was hours off yet. Figgins might as well have said till Christmas.

The dinner was over, and the New House juniors trooped out. Fatty Wynn felt an unaccustomed sense of lightness.

"Feeling fit?" asked Kerr.

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"I believe I'm going to be ill!" he said.

"Oh, you'll be all right—you'll lose about a hundred-weight a day till you're quite normal," said Kerr encouragingly.

"Oh, don't be funny!"

Fatty Wynn rolled disconsolately out into the quad. Figgins and Kerr let him go, but they were keeping an eye on him. Figgins lounged round the tuckshop, and as he had the key of the study cupboard in his pocket, both Wynn's sources of supply were cut off.

The fat Fourth Former drove his hands deep into his pockets, and walked away moodily, thinking it out. From the distance floated a shouted inquiry:

"What price blubber?"

Fatty Wynn snorted.

After all, he was rather plump—rather unusually plump. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if he could bring his weight down a little. But going short of food—that was not to be thought of! Anything but that!

Fatty Wynn started and looked up from his reverie near the doorway of the School House. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was passing him. Very slim and elegant the swell of the School House looked.

Fatty Wynn gazed at D'Arcy and clasped his hands. Never before had he envied D'Arcy—or, indeed, anybody else. But he envied the swell of the School House now—he envied him his slender figure. How did D'Arcy do it? D'Arcy was a little fastidious in his eating, perhaps, but he had a good appetite. Fatty Wynn knew that! How did he keep his figure so beautifully slim?

"Gussy, old man—"

Arthur Augustus paused and turned his head. He jammed his monocle more tightly into his eye, and gave Fatty Wynn a stare of great fridity.

"Weally, Wynn, I must remark that I wegard you as a wotten boundah! I was tweated with the gwosset dis-wespect in your study last evenin'!"

Fatty Wynn, in spite of himself, grinned at the recollection.

"I fail to see anythin' whatevah to gwin at!" said the swell of the School House.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Look here, Gussy, how do you do it?"

"How do I do what, deah boy?"

"Keep so slim!"

Arthur Augustus gazed down at his aristocratic figure with considerable satisfaction. Then he turned his eye-glass upon Wynn again.

"In the first place, Wynn, deah boy, I don't ovahent myself. In the second place, I take plenty of exercise."

Fatty Wynn started.

"Exercise!" he exclaimed. "By George! I'll take up gymnastics, and that will work the oracle! Figgins must have sense enough to see it. No need to cut down the meal. I'm going in for gym every day."

"Jolly good ideah, deah boy! If you would like me to give you some instwuction—"

But Fatty Wynn was hurrying off to find Figgins. He was full of his new wheeze.

CHAPTER 12.
Indian Clubs!

FIGGINS chuckled as Fatty Wynn came puffing towards him, and placed his lanky form in the doorway of the school tuckshop.

He put up his arms, with a hand on each doorpost, and grinned at Fatty Wynn.

"No, you don't!" he remarked.

"I say, Figgy—"

"Not this time!"

"I'm not going into the tuckshop!" panted Fatty Wynn.

"I—"

"I jolly well know you're not," agreed Figgins. "Nothing till tea-time, old man."

"Look here, I've got a new wheeze," said Fatty Wynn eagerly. "I—I know you are quite right, you know—you and Kerr—I know I had better bring down my weight a little—"

"A lot, you mean."

"Well, a lot, then," said Fatty Wynn. "But look here,

"Now, don't be an unreasonable ass, Figgy! I—"

"We'll see how the exercises go, at any rate," said Figgins. "What are you going in for—trapeze, bars, and Indian clubs?"

"I—I suppose so," said Fatty Wynn dubiously. "I—I'll take your advice about it, Figgy. What shall I go in for?"

"Well, I've got a set of Indian clubs in the study," said Figgins. "If you care to try them I'll show you the drill."

"Good! I suppose I can have a bit of a feed first?"

"I suppose you can't."

"Now, don't be a rotter, Figgy; I'm fearfully hungry!"

said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I haven't had any dinner to speak of."

"Well, after the drill, then," said Figgins. "Perhaps we might give in to the extent of one tart, Kerr. What do you think?"

"Well, just one," agreed Kerr.

"I jolly well wish you'd be reasonable!" said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "What's the good of one tart to a fellow like me?"

"One or nixes, Fatty!"

As Figgins flung open the door of the box-room, there was a sudden exclamation. Fatty Wynn started to his feet, so surprised that the bottle of ginger-pop fell from his hand and crashed to the floor. "You—you boulder!" roared Figgins. "This is how you diet, is it?"



there's no need for a chap to starve himself to get his weight down. There are other ways."

"What other ways?" asked Kerr suspiciously, coming up.

"Exercise!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Oh!" said Figgins.

"Gymnastics."

"Well, that's right!"

"But you don't care for the gym, Fatty," Figgins remarked.

"I'd rather take gymnastics than starve," said Fatty Wynn. "I'm really afraid of injuring my constitution, you know, if I don't have enough to eat. Look here, I'll take up gymnastics and go into training thoroughly, if you fellows will back me up."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Figgins heartily.

"Good wheeze!" said Kerr.

"Of course," said Fatty Wynn confidentially, "when I'm taking up physical exercises to reduce my weight there won't be any need to cut down my diet."

Figgins' reply was non-committal.

"We'll see," he remarked.

"I suppose one is better than nothing, but—"

"Come and do the Indian clubs, then!"

Figgins led the way to the New House. Figgins was looking distinctly pleased.

The chief of the New House was great on gymnastics. There were few things to be done in the gym that Figgins could not do. Even Tom Merry and Blake could not get ahead of Figgins when it came to gymnastics.

Often enough Figgins had urged upon Fatty Wynn the necessity of taking up gymnastics. Fatty Wynn preferred the tuckshop.

To have Fatty taking up gymnastics of his own accord like this was very gratifying to Figgins. Figgins was prepared to take a great deal of trouble to help Fatty Wynn on. Fatty was not, as a matter of fact, taking the thing up exactly of his own accord; but that was a point there was no need to consider.

Fatty Wynn was not looking very happy as he walked off with Figgins and Kerr towards the New House.

He had a foreboding that Indian club drill would make

him hungry—hungrier than he was—and what would one tart be? He was almost hungry enough to eat the Indian clubs, as it was!

"Here you are!" said Figgins, taking a pair of clubs and swinging them lightly through the air. "Now watch me!" Fatty Wynn watched him.

Figgins handled the clubs very well. It looked easy enough, the way Figgins did it. Fatty Wynn felt that he would be able to handle them all right. He had tried it before in a desultory sort of way.

"Oh, that's simple enough!" he remarked.

"Is it?" said Figgins, with a snort.

"Yes, I think it's quite easy!"

"Well, it's jolly well not so easy as it looks! Watch me!"

"Oh, all right!"

Figgins went through exercise after exercise. Perhaps Figgins shared to some extent the little weakness common to athletic persons—when they are showing you how to do a thing they seem to forget that you are supposed to be learning something, and turn it into a solo performance.

Fatty Wynn watched, and, getting tired of watching in a perpendicular position, he sat down. Then Figgins yelled:

COMPLIMENTARY.



Artist: "I say, could you get me a drop of water?"

Yokel (eyeing painting): "You won't get that there paint off with water—turpentine's what you want!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Rixon, 117, Wulstan Street, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.12.

"Now, then, that's not the way to exercise—you can't reduce your weight by sitting down! Up you get!"

Fatty Wynn rose, with a grunt.

"Suppose you hand him the clubs," suggested Kerr.

"Well, I was showing him."

"Afternoon classes soon."

"Oh, all right!" said Figgins. "I suppose you ought to be able to handle the things now, Fatty! You can try, at any rate!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

"Here you are, take the clubs!"

Fatty Wynn took the clubs. He allowed the ends of them to drop to the floor, and there was a fearful yell from Figgins:

"Ow! Ow! Yaroop!"

Figgins suddenly began to dance on one leg, clasping the boot of the other foot in both hands. There was quite a wild expression on his face.

"Oh!" he roared. "Yow! Ow!"

"Did that drop on your toe?" asked Fatty Wynn innocently.

"Yow! Yes! Ow!"

"I'm sorry—Ha, ha, ha! I—"

"You—you ass! Yow! Oh!"

"I don't want to hurry you," said Fatty Wynn, "but it will be afternoon school soon. Shall I begin?"

Figgins ceased his impromptu dance.

"Yes, you clumsy ass!" he growled. "And take care of those clubs! Mind you don't brain yourself or anybody else!"

"Oh, I think it's easy enough!"

"Well, wire in, then, if it's so jolly easy!" snorted Figgins.

Fatty Wynn swung up the clubs. There was a fiendish yell from Kerr, and he staggered back on one leg, clasping his knee.

"Ow! Wow! Whoop!"

"Oh, my hat! Did that hit your knee, Kerr? I thought I heard a crack! Did it hit you?"

"Yow! Do you think I'm doing this for fun?" bellowed Kerr.

"Well, you see—"

"For goodness' sake be careful!" exclaimed Figgins. "Now, then, we'll get behind you and watch! Go ahead, Fatty! It's simple, you know!"

"Oh, it's simple enough!" said Fatty Wynn.

He swung the clubs up.

They soared in the air.

"That right?" asked Fatty Wynn, without looking behind him.

"Yes, that's all right!" said Figgins. "You're a bit

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clumsy at first, but you'll improve, you know! Keep 'em in a regular rhythm! Put your beef into it!"

Fatty Wynn obeyed. He put his beef into it—and he had plenty of beef! The clubs sang through the air. With the impetus of a powerful swing, Fatty Wynn stepped backwards to keep his balance.

He was swinging the clubs backwards at armslength as he did so. It was unfortunate. There was a wild roar from Figgins and Kerr.

The clubs smote them fairly.

They were knocked flying, and Fatty Wynn swung round with a gasp as he heard two heavy bumps on the floor.

"M-my hat!" he gasped.

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

"You chump!"

"You fathead!"

"Yow!"

"I'm sorry—" began Fatty Wynn.

"Put those clubs down!" roared Figgins, staggering to his feet. "Put 'em down! If you ever touch Indian clubs in my presence again I'll—I'll brain you with one of them! Put 'em down, you chump!"

"Oh, all right!" said Fatty Wynn resignedly.

"Yaroorh! Oh! Ow! I didn't say on my toe, you fathead!" yelled Figgins.

"Look here, Figgins, if you're going to grumble all the time—"

Figgins snorted, and caught up one of the clubs and rushed at Fatty Wynn. The fat Fourth Former dodged out of the room and ran. He did not even stop to inquire about the jam tart he was to have had.

CHAPTER 13.

Fatty Wynn, Gymnast I

TOM MERRY was grinning as he came in for afternoon classes. Monty Lowther and Manners met him near the Form-room door.

"Wherefore that grin?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Have you seen Gussy's new spotted necktie—or what's the matter?"

"I've seen Fatty Wynn."

"Ha, ha, ha! Is he still dieting?"

"No, not if he can help it, I expect," said Tom Merry, laughing. "He's taken up gymnastics, and I hear he's nearly murdered Figgins and Kerr with Indian clubs. He's going to try the trapeze in the gym after school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't hold him," said Manners, with a chuckle; "it'll break under the strain—like Gussy's voice when he's trying to get a top note!"

Manners added that simile because he saw the swell of St. Jim's coming along the passage.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped and turned his eyeglass upon Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—" he began.

"Hallo, Gussy! Is that you?" said Manners. "When are you going to give us another of your ripping tenor solos?"

"You were speakin' of my voice in a most grossly disrespectful mannah."

"Oh, that's only my fun, you know! You know I really regard your voice as ripping," said Manners. "Isn't it ripping, Lowther?"

"Yes, rather!" said Monty Lowther. "It would rip anything, except the armour-plate on a battleship!"

"That's it," said Manners.

"You nitah asses!"

"I jolly well wish you'd give us another solo some time, Gussy," said Manners. "I've often wanted to get a snapshot of you with your mouth open getting a top note. It would fetch a fabulous sum on a comic postcard—Not going, are you?"

But Arthur Augustus was gone.

The Terrible Three chuckled and went into their Form-room. They thought the lessons very long that afternoon. They were looking forward to seeing Fatty Wynn distinguish himself in the gym after school.

Fatty Wynn on the trapeze was a thing likely to prove interesting and entertaining. As Monty Lowther remarked, an elephant walking the tightrope would be simply not in it with Fatty Wynn.

Lessons were over at last, and the chums of the Shell turned their footsteps towards the gym as soon as they were free of the Form-room. They found that many other fellows were doing the same.

The fame of Fatty Wynn's training had gone abroad, as it were, and others besides Tom Merry & Co. were keen to see his performance on the trapeze.

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn joined Tom Merry, and the Shell fellows joined the crowd who were

pouring into the gym. Half the Lower School—of both Houses—seemed to have resolved to turn up on the occasion of Fatty Wynn's performance.

"You see, this won't be a twice-nightly bisney," Monty Lowther remarked. "I'll take a bet of a football boot to a tin of blacking that it will be positively for one occasion only—first and last appearance of Fatty Wynn, the great star artiste!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Here they come!"

Figgins & Co. entered the gym. The chums of Study No. 6 followed them in, each with an anticipatory grin on his face.

Fatty Wynn was not looking enthusiastic. He seemed surprised at seeing so many fellows present, and murmured something to Figgins. Figgins promptly shook his head.

"Can't be did!" he replied. "You can't put these things off, Fatty. Why, the School House bouncers would say you were funkling the trapeze!"

"I should feel better after tea, and—"

"After tea we're taking you for a sprint."

"Look here, Figgins, I'm jolly well not going to overdo it, you know! There's no sense in overdoing a thing all at once!"

"You must stick to it," said Kerr, with a shake of the head. "No sense in doing things by halves. Stick to it, Wynn, and you'll be as slim as Gussy soon."

"Yaas, stick to it, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I wemembah you twiced once before to weduce your fat; but it was some wotten concoction you took for the purpose, instead of wholesome exercise. Stick to it, my deah boy, and in the course of time you may become a weally gwaceful athlete like—like—ahem!—me."

Fatty Wynn glared at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Do you think I'm likely to grow to resemble you at all if I take up athletics?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I'm jolly well going to give up the idea, Figgy! I—"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see nothin' whatevah in Wynn's wude wemarks to cackle at," said the swell of St. Jim's with a great deal of dignity. "I wegard this cacklin' as bein' in extremely bad taste. I am surprised to see my own friends cackle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

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

"Now, get to bisney!" said Figgins, with a brisk air.

"Here you are, Fatty, here's the giddy trapeze."

"Oh, all right! I—"

"Up you go!"

"I'm feeling horribly peckish. You see, it's this February weather!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I always get very hungry about this time of the year. And—"

"Up with you!"

"Has anybody got any milk chocolate?" asked Fatty Wynn, casting a pathetic glance round. "I think just a chunk of chocolate would buck me up."

"Rats!" said Figgins. "Up with you, you slacker!"

Fatty Wynn sighed and mounted. The juniors stood back. As Monty Lowther cautiously observed, it would be no joke to have a weight like Fatty Wynn's falling on them.

"Hold on!" shouted Figgins. "Hold fast! Keep a good grip, and let yourself go."

"Ye-es, but—"

"Now swing!"

"Oh! All right! Oh!"

Fatty Wynn grasped the rings and swung. The juniors gave a cheer of encouragement.

"Hurrah! Go it, Fatty!"

"Grooh!"

"Turn over!"

"Turn over and drop!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Take care of the earth—you might bust it!"

"Mind how you drop!" roared Kangaroo. "I don't want a hole bored through into my back garden in Australia!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn puffed and blew. He swung over and inserted his feet in the rings, but he did not venture to let go with his hands. The juniors cheered. Fatty Wynn's face was assuming the hue of a well-boiled beetroot.

"Go it, Fatty!"

"Why don't you drop?"

"Stand under him, Figgy, in case he falls!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My word! This would make Blondin look sick!" remarked Clifton Dane. "What are you swinging about like that for, Fatty?"

"I c-can't help it!" stuttered Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to I-laugh at! Ow!"

"Look out, Fatty!"

"He's falling!"

"Drop, old man—drop on your feet!"

Bump!

Fatty Wynn sat on the mat and gasped.

CHAPTER 14.

Bread-and-Butter!

"HA, ha, ha!" roared the crowd round.

The expression on Fatty Wynn's face was too comic for words. The juniors simply shrieked.

"Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

Figgins and Kerr rushed to raise their chum up. Fatty Wynn staggered to his feet in the grasp of his two faithful chums.

"Feel hurt, Fatty?" asked Kerr.

"Yow!"

"Bit shaken up, I suppose," said Figgins sympathetically.

"Grooh!"

"Never mind, try again."

"Eh?"

"Try again," said Figgins encouragingly.

"You ass!" said Fatty Wynn in measured tones. "You chump. You frabjous chump! If you ever catch me on that thing again, you can use my napper for a football!"

"Now, don't give in, old chap. Try—"

"Rats!"

Fatty Wynn stalked to the door. He was followed by a roar of laughter. Figgins and Kerr went with their chum, vainly expostulating. Fatty Wynn was done with that particular branch of gymnastics.

Tom Merry wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Oh, this is too good!" he murmured. "Fatty Wynn, the gymnast, beats Gussy, the tenor."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors dispersed, still laughing. They would have been glad to see Fatty Wynn going on with his performance, but Fatty Wynn was as disgusted with the trapeze as Figgins was with the Indian clubs.

The fat Fourth Former grunted as he made his way to the New House. He cast a glance in the direction of the tuckshop, but the expression upon the faces of Figgins and Kerr warned him off.

The chums of the New House entered their study. Figgins jammed the kettle on the fire. Fatty Wynn looked at him uncertainly.

"I suppose we're going to have something decent for tea," he remarked.

"Must be moderate, Fatty!"

"Look here, shall I go and do some shopping?"

"No, that you jolly well won't!"

"We've got enough stuff in the study for tea," Figgins remarked. "There's enough bacon and eggs for me, and you can have some bread-and-butter, Fatty."

"Good wheeze!" said Kerr. "That's a good arrangement!"

Fatty Wynn gave his chums a freezing look. Figgins' proposition almost took the fat Fourth Former's breath away.

"You—you crass ass!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "You galumphing burler! Do you think I shall sit here and chew bread-and-butter while you chaps are eating bacon and eggs?"

"You're on a diet, you know."

"No, I'm not; I—I'm on gymnastics."

Figgins shook his head.

"Gymnastics are all very well," he remarked, "but we must be careful of the diet, too, old man. You'll notice a splendid improvement in your health soon. You are only feeling what they call the 'habit hunger' in the crank books. You'll get over that in time, and you'll get accustomed to eating enough for two instead of enough for twenty. It's only a matter of time."

"I'm jolly well going to have the same as you chaps," said Fatty Wynn savagely.

Figgins hesitated.

(Continued on the next page.)

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"It can't be did, Fatty! You've got to keep on spare diet. But there's no need for Kerr and me to starve ourselves, is there, Kerr?"

"No need at all," said Kerr, at once. "Don't be an unreasonable chap, Fatty."

"I tell you I'm going to have the same things that you chaps have," said the Fatstaff of the New House doggedly. "If starvation diet is so jolly good, you can have a whack at it yourselves."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," explained Figgins heroically. "I'll set you a jolly good example, Fatty. You can't have the same stuff that I do—"

"I jolly well will. I—"

"But I'll have the same stuff that you do," said Figgins. "There you are! I'll only have bread-and-butter for tea to keep you company."

Figgins' self-sacrifice was not nearly so much appreciated by Fatty Wynn as it should really have been. The fat Fourth Former only grunted.

"I'll do the same," said Kerr generously. "Now, what do you say to that, Fatty?"

"You are a pair of blithering asses!"

"Eh?"

"Pair of silly chumps," said Fatty Wynn. "Yah! Rats! Much better let us all three have a jolly good feed."

"We're doing this for your good, Fatty!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Bread-and-butter and weak tea," said Figgins firmly. "Spread the festive board, my sons."

The festive board was spread. It did not look very festive to Fatty Wynn. But in his present famished state even bread-and-butter was welcome. He started operations on the bread-and-butter with great gusto, but at the third slice Figgins stopped him.

"Nuff!" he said.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Nuff!"

"Nuff! It's not enough! It's not half enough!" yelled Fatty Wynn. "You ass! I'm jolly well going to have something to eat!"

"You're finished!" said Figgins, with great firmness.

Fatty Wynn gasped with rage and walked out of the study.

CHAPTER 15.

Joe to the Rescue!

FATTY WYNN was desperate the next day. He was fed-up—in one sense, if not in another.

"I'm jolly well not going to stand it!" he muttered. "It's all rot to say I'm fat! Just plump, that's all! It's all rot, and I'm not going to stand it!"

Fatty Wynn looked round the quad with a cautious eye, and then bolted in the direction of the tuckshop. As he neared it he stopped, with a snort; Figgins was sitting in the doorway reading the "Magnet."

He looked up at Fatty Wynn with a grin.

"Hallo, Fatty!"

"Hallo!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

He strolled away, leaving Figgins still grinning. He went into the New House, and up to the study. He knew that Figgins had the key of the study cupboard in his pocket, but Fatty was getting desperate. He intended to burst open

the cupboard door with the poker. But as he put his head into the room he stopped.

Kerr was sitting at the table. He gave the fat Fourth Former a sweet smile, and Fatty Wynn retired without speaking.

Fatty Wynn walked into the quad with his hands deep in his pockets and a deep frown corrugating his usually placid brow. But as he met Joe Frayne of the Third, an idea suddenly occurred to him.

"Look here, kid," said Fatty Wynn in a low voice. "Would you like to do me a favour?"

Joe nodded.

"Crumbs! I'll do anything for you, Master Wynn!" he said.

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed.

"It's a delicate matter," he said. "A chap in my own House can't help me. It will have to be a School House chap—like you. Look here!"

He took a half-crown from his pocket.

"Go to the tuckshop and get some pork pies and jam tarts to that extent. Savvy?"

"What-ho!" said Joe. "I often fetches things for Master Merry."

"Well, take them into the School House," said Fatty Wynn. "You don't have a study, of course—you're in the Third! Take them into the box-room and then come for me."

"What for, Master Wynn?" said Joe, not understanding.

"You see, I want you to take me into the School House as—as a visitor," Fatty Wynn explained hurriedly. "If I go in alone, the fellows will jump on me."

Joe grinned. He had heard the story of the dieting of Fatty Wynn, of course. He fully comprehended the little game planned by the fat Fourth Former.

"I catch on, Master Wynn."

"Then buck up!"

"I'm on!"

And little Joe darted away.

In ten minutes he rejoined Fatty Wynn under the elm.

The fat Fourth Former met him with an eager look. Frayne came up breathless and grinning.

"It's o.k. right!" he exclaimed.

"You've got the stuff?"

"Yes, Master Wynn."

"Where is it?"

"Box Room No. 4."

"Good! You shall have some of it!" said Fatty Wynn.

And they went to the box-room.

Between them they soon cleared up the pork pies and tarts. Fatty Wynn rose from the box he had been sitting on with a great sigh of relief.

"My word!" he murmured. "I feel better now. Look here, kid, here's a couple of bob. Get some more things in here for me, and I'll come in after school to-day. You shall have your whack! See?"

Joe grinned.

"All right, Master Wynn."

And Fatty Wynn walked out of the School House undoubtedly heavier, but feeling as if he were walking on air.

Fatty Wynn looked quite contented in the Form-room that afternoon. He seemed to be looking forward expectantly to the close of lessons, that was all. He couldn't have been looking forward very eagerly to tea in Figgins' study, because that was to consist only of bread-and-butter in allowed quantities.

School over, Fatty Wynn strolled out into the quadrangle. The Third had just come out, and were yelling and whooping to express their delight at their freedom after classes.

"Hallo, Fatty! Where are you going?" asked Kerr.

"Oh, just to speak to young Frayne!"

"You seem to have struck up a friendship with that kid," said Figgins, staring. "Pratt was telling me you visited him in the School House this morning."

"Well, he's a decent little chap!" said Fatty Wynn.

And he walked away.

Joe met him with a grin and a wink.

"It's all right, sir," he remarked in a whisper. "I've got the things in the same room, sir. Are you a-coming in now?"

"Good!" said Fatty Wynn.

Half an hour later Figgins and Kerr were preparing tea in their study in the New House, and wondering why Fatty Wynn did not come.

"The system's answering splendidly!" Figgins remarked. "Fatty seems to be losing that craving for food, especially pastries. We shall have his weight down in next to no time."

"Looks like it," agreed Kerr thoughtfully.

"Ah, here he is!"

Fatty came in. He glanced at the tea-table, with nothing

(Continued on page 23.)

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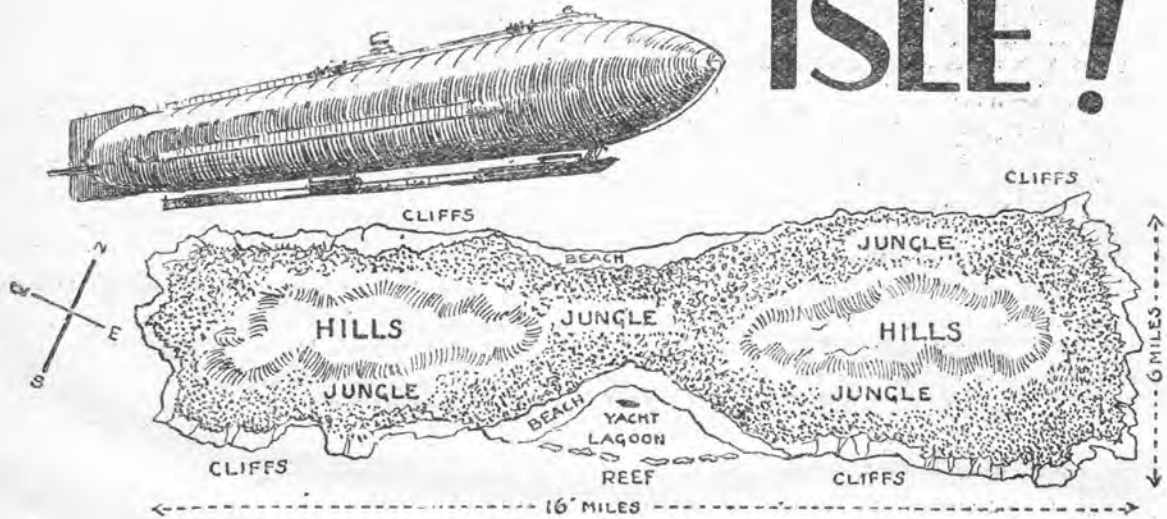
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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

The *Sky Wanderer*, the airship school of the St. Frank's chums, lands on Tao-Tao Island, in the Pacific, in response to a message of help from Mr. Beverton, an explorer treasure-seeking on the island. It transpires that Doc Haynes and most of the crew of the explorer's yacht have mutinied to seek the treasure. The St. Frank's boys are playing cricket when cannibals charge from the jungle and carry off twelve of them! Then Doc Haynes, whom the cannibals fear, appears and tells Nelson Lee that he is holding the juniors as hostage to ensure his own safety.

The Upper Hand!

IT was difficult to believe that Doc Haynes was as rascally as Mr. Mitchell Beverton had described. His manner was genial, and his face wore a friendly grin. But his actions were eloquent of his arrogant ruthlessness.

"Before we go into any kind of pow-wow, mister," he said, looking straight at Nelson Lee, "there's a little matter that needs my personal attention. I'm taking no chances, see?"

He suddenly raised his right hand, and at the same time shouted a native word. Instantly, the Tao-Tao savages ran forward, spreading out as they did so, until they encircled the entire party on the white sands. As though by magic, the blacks had produced small bows and tiny, slender arrows.

"Just in case of trouble, gents," said Doc Haynes blandly. "Treat these niggers right, and they'll eat out of your hand. See them arrows? Mebbe I don't need to tell you that the points have been dipped in poison? One scratch means certain death! If any of you feel inclined to use your guns, or show fight in any way, well, it'll be just too bad." He turned to one of his men. "You'd best come with me, Red."

"Just as you say, Doc," agreed the man cheerfully. Without another glance at Lee or the others, Haynes strode towards the airship ladder, accompanied by the man Red.

"Hang it, are you going to allow this?" demanded Dorrie, looking at Lee. "This infernal blighter seems to be doing just as he likes!"

"Unfortunately, the infernal blighter has the upper hand—and he knows it," replied Lee grimly. "You know as much about savages as I do, Dorrie—probably more. Look at these brutes. If we make a move, we're done for, and we haven't only ourselves to consider."

Dorrie realised the truth of it. If they were rash enough to resist, the St. Frank's boys would be massacred. There was nothing to be done. Doc Haynes, as Lee had said, held the whip-hand.

When the modern pirate reached the foot of the airship's ladder, however, he found Mr. Vickers, the second navigating officer, at the head of the stairs on the entrance

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

deck, and Mr. Vickers held a rifle in his hand, and the barrel was pointing steadily at the two men below.

"Better not try to get up here," said the young officer curtly.

"Think you'll stop me, son?" grinned Doc Haynes, as he commenced mounting.

"Stop, I tell you!" shouted Vickers. "I mean what I say. You're not coming aboard this airship!"

"Shoot, boy—and see what happens," jeered Haynes. "I'm not denying that you're liable to admit daylight into my vitals, but if you pull the trigger of that rifle, I shan't be the only one to die. You'll forfeit the lives of your pals, for my blacks will get busy with their poisoned arrows."

Vickers caught his breath in, and, mechanically, he lowered his gun.

"Thought that would drive sense into your numbskull," said Haynes calmly, as he continued to mount.

He reached the top, and his first action was to seize the young officer's rifle and fling it contemptuously to the sands below.

"Get going, son!" he said coolly.

His heavy gun was out, and its muzzle was jammed into Mr. Vickers' back.

"You confounded scoundrel!" began Vickers.

"Save your breath," interrupted Haynes. "Take me to your control-room. I'm in a hurry, and I'm nervous. My trigger-finger ain't none too steady."

He added pressure, and Mr. Vickers, helpless, was obliged to obey. There was something in Doc Haynes' smiling voice which told of a grim purpose. This scoundrel, who did everything so smilingly, was nevertheless highly dangerous.

One or two of the airship's crew were within sight, but Red had them covered with his own gun. Nothing more was said as they moved into the central lounge, and then took the electrically lit corridor which led to the control-room.

As the vessel was at anchor the control-room was empty. Mr. Vickers entered, with Haynes just behind.

"Guard the door, Red," said Haynes briefly.

"O.K., Doc!" replied Red.

The big man in white drill closed the door with a kick of his foot. Vickers had now turned, and was glaring furiously at his companion.

"Well, what do you want here?" he demanded. "If you think I'm going to get this ship into the air—"

"Hold your tongue, son," interrupted Doc Haynes. "The ground's good enough for me. I'm taking no chances—and I want to have a look at your wireless set. See? You're not sending any messages out for help."

Vickers started.

"Why, you infernal rogue—" he began.
 "Leave the compliments until later!" snapped Haynes, his manner changing like lightning. "Where's that wireless—"

He suddenly broke off when he saw a small door leading out of the control-room, and on the door was the painted word "Wireless." He strode forward, flung the door open, and saw beyond a small compartment which was crammed with dials, valves, and all the complicated apparatus connected with radio transmission and reception.

"Very pretty," commented Doc Haynes, his grin returning. "Seems a shame to mess it up."

Without compunction he drew trigger, and the resultant report was deafening in that confined space. With it came a shattering of glass.

"You hound!" shouted Vickers furiously.

Haynes took no notice. Again and again he fired, and the bullets not only shattered the expensive and elaborate valves, but every delicate instrument was ruined. Finely adjusted electric motors, transmitters, and other items of mechanism were put out of action. Haynes did not stop until he had twice reloaded his gun—and had fired every shot. He left the wireless-room a shattered, hopeless mess of wreckage. The air within the control-room was thick with cordite fumes.

"If you think you can get away with this, my friend, you've made a big mistake," said Vickers hotly. "You've done thousands of pounds worth of damage—"

"No good just destroying the valves," said Haynes coolly. "Like as not you've got spare valves. But you ain't got spare motors, and other things, have you? You'll send no radio messages with this pile of junk!"

He laughed uproariously, and, swaggering more insolently than ever, he went out into the corridor.

"O.K., Red!" he said. "All set now. We can get to the ground."

He treated Vickers with utter contempt, and the latter, opening one of the windows, leaned far out. Below on the white sands, in the fading evening light, Nelson Lee, the other men and the boys were still surrounded by the menacing circle of Tao-Tao savages.

"Sorry, Sir Robert," shouted Vickers hoarsely.

"What's been happening up there, Vickers?" demanded the airship commander. "What were those shots? Is anybody hurt?"

"No, sir—that scoundrel has destroyed the radio set."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Sir Robert. "So that's why he went aboard. Lee! What are we going to do about this?"

"At the moment, we can do nothing," replied Nelson Lee quietly. "I guessed Haynes' intention from the first. He knew that we were able to send out wireless messages for help, and he took drastic measures to deal with the danger."

The great detective was calm, he appeared to accept the situation philosophically. But, within him, he was burning with rage. To resist this insolent crook was impossible—at the moment. Haynes was in earnest, and Lee knew it. Haynes would not hesitate to give the word which would mean the loss of many lives, including the lives of St. Frank's boys. It was impossible for Nelson Lee to take any chance.

"Now, gents, we can talk more comfortable-like," said Haynes pleasantly, as he strode up with a swagger. "Who's in charge of this outfit, anyway?"

"You bloodthirsty villain!" panted Mr. Mitchell Beverton, white with rage. "Not content with turning on me, you must now commit this outrage against innocent strangers. You'll suffer for it, Haynes! You needn't think that you can maintain this dictatorial attitude for long."

"Gents, I'm real sorry I had to destroy your wireless," said Doc Haynes, bowing with derisive dignity. "I'm real sorry I had to grab them schoolboys, too. But I'm in a funny position, and I can't take no chances. It wasn't my fault you came here; but it would be my fault if you got away—see? And you ain't going until I give the word."

"Your insolence is intolerable," said Sir Hobart harshly. "This gentleman is Mr. Nelson Lee, and he is not only the headmaster of the St. Frank's Flying School, but he

is one of the world's greatest detectives, and you made a big mistake when you—"

He was interrupted by a burst of loud laughter from Doc Haynes.

"Excuse the mirth, gents," he said, grinning. "But I'm blamed if I can see what difference it makes if this Lee bird is a detective or a fishmonger! Detectives ain't no good on the island of Tao-Tao. So it's a flying school, is it? I thought there was something queer about your outfit. Well, it suits me."

At a signal from Haynes the blacks had withdrawn, and the immediate tension was over. Haynes had restored his gun to its holster, and he was standing with his legs set well apart, and his hands on his hips. The rays of the setting sun were shining fully upon his mocking, smiling face.

"Before long," said Dorrie deliberately, "we're goin' to wipe that satisfied grin off your ugly countenance, my friend!"

"Forget it, mister!" retorted Doc Haynes, his grin widening. "I'm a friendly cuss! I don't want no quarrels with you gents. You're strangers to me, and there's no more peaceful man in the South Seas than me. Mebbe Beverton has given you the low-down on what's happened—eh?"

"We know that you have seized Mr. Beverton's yacht, and that you marooned him on this side of the island—"

began Sir Hobart.

"Good enough then!" broke in Haynes. "That's the position, gents. When I saw you flying overhead, I don't mind admitting I was windy. Thought my game was all up; but as soon as you brought the gasbag down I was hopeful again. You're stuck here until I give you permission to go. Do you get that? I destroyed your wireless, but I don't aim to destroy anything else. No reason why I should. You'll take a nice, quiet holiday on this sunny, tropical island, and you'll go when I give you the word."

"I take it," said Lee, "that you are going to use the captive schoolboys as hostages?"

"Mister, you're a quick thinker," said Haynes, in the same mocking tone. "Them boys stays with me, and things will go mighty hard with them if you don't do as I tell you. If this airship so much as leaves her moorings, them kids will never be seen again! The Tao-Tao blacks are tame enough when I handle 'em, but if I give 'em the word to use them boys as sacrifices— Well, it'll be a nasty business. I ain't ready to leave this island yet, but when I am, I'll give you the word."

"Meanwhile, you expect us to take orders from you?" demanded Dorrie angrily.

"No, sir. You don't take orders from nobody as long as you behave yourselves," said Doc Haynes calmly. "You give me no trouble, and I'll give you no trouble. That's fifty-fifty, ain't it? I'm too busy to be bothered with you strangers, and I'm advising you to keep out of this business altogether. All you got to do is to take a spell of rest. I guess you've got plenty of food aboard? Well, it's easy, ain't it? Remember, I'm boss of this island. What I say goes."

"You'll be sorry for this, Haynes," said Mr. Beverton, hoarse with anger.

"You'd best tell your new friends that they're only safe because of me," continued Haynes. "The blacks on this island don't like white men, and they'll only leave you alone as long as I tell 'em to. Better keep friendly with me, gents; it'll pay you."

He laughed again, and made a signal to his men. "That's all, boys," he said boisterously. "We'll be getting back to our own side of the island. Get moving!"

With never a backward glance, Doc Haynes strode up the beach and vanished into the thick jungle.

"By gad!" panted Dorrie, clenching his fists. "What are you goin' to do about this, Lee? You're not goin' to let that hound—"

"Easy, Dorrie—easy!" interrupted Nelson Lee. "It's no good getting excited. Haynes proved his astuteness by smashing our wireless before we could use it. We were taken completely by surprise, and I must say, Mr. Beverton, that I hold you largely to blame for that catastrophe."

"Really, Mr. Lee, I don't see—" began the explorer.

"You did it unintentionally, and, therefore, we need say no more about it," continued Lee. "You were so overjoyed by our arrival that you neglected to tell me of the savages who are constantly watching this beach. Had I known that I would not have allowed the boys to play cricket on the sands, and so expose themselves to danger. But it's no good talking about that now. The damage is done."

"We've got to rescue them," said Dorrie fiercely.

"Yes, sir—yes!" went up an eager chorus from the boys.

"If we attempt to penetrate the jungle, we shall endanger—"

**St.
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J. Dodd. Sir J. Potts. T. Long.

(Three more portraits next week.)

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Dancing wildly and maintaining a terrific screeching, the fantastic figure of the witch-doctor advanced in a series of great hops towards the St. Frank's boys. "My goodness! He's coming in here!" exclaimed Church. "This is beginning to look nasty!"

their lives," replied Lee, frowning. "I will give Haynes the credit of being sincere. So long as we remain passive, I think he will leave us alone. I think, also, that the captured boys will be safe. In a word, we're helpless."

Lord Dorrimore made no comment, but he thought a lot. He knew Nelson Lee better than any man, and the thought of the great detective being helpless was so absurd that Dorrie refused to give it a moment's serious consideration.

Into the Jungle!

"HEELA! Heela!" It was a native word, uttered in a guttural voice, and it obviously meant "come" or "hurry." The language used by the Tao-Tao natives was totally different from the language used by islanders of other South Sea Islands.

Fifty of the natives were forcing their way through the jungle, and in their midst marched the bunch of St. Frank's juniors who had been captured. Curiously enough there were exactly twelve: Handforth, Church and McClure; Nipper, Tregellis-West, and Watson; Travers, Archie, Boots, Christine, Talmadge, and Yorke. Once under the dense foliage they had been set on their feet. Surrounded by savages they had had no opportunity of fighting; they had no option but to march.

Under the trees there was a perpetual twilight, greenish, mysterious; and the atmosphere was humid. Very soon they had found themselves traversing a recognised trail—a path which led windingly through the jungle—a path which had been used, no doubt, for centuries. Sometimes it dipped into swamps, through which they were obliged to wade. More than once they saw snakes and lizards were everywhere in evidence. And insects—tens of thousands of humming, droning, crawling, creeping insects. In the swamps, too, crocodiles lurked.

The boys knew that they were being taken into the heart of the jungle. And Nipper, at least, who had seen the island from above, knew that there was a belt of vegetation which ran right across the island's middle. It seemed evident that the blacks were taking their prisoners across to the southern shore—to Doo Haynes' camp.

The blacks themselves were vastly different from the brown, kindly inhabitants of the better-known South Sea Islands. They were repulsive in appearance—even more repulsive than the Solomon Islanders—and their low fore-

heads and jutting jaws proved them to be of a primitive, almost bestial type.

"Looks as if we're for it, my sons," said Nipper grimly. "These black beggars are savage. I've seen the cannibals of Papua, and they are not pleasant to look upon. But the Papuans are gentlemen in comparison to these beauties."

"They haven't killed us yet, anyway," said Tommy Watson, in his blunt, direct manner.

"Of course they haven't killed up, and don't mean to," said Handforth. "If they had wanted to polish us off, they could have done so long ago. By George, what an adventure!" He seemed to relish the situation. "Bagged by cannibals! Taken prisoners into the festering jungle! What a yarn to tell the other chaps after we're rescued!"

"If we're rescued," said Church soberly. "There's no 'if' about it, you chump!" retorted Handforth scornfully. "You haven't forgotten Mr. Lee, I suppose? Think he's going to leave us to our fate? Why, they've got rifles and machine-guns and everything else aboard the Sky Wanderer! I'll bet there's a rescue-party on our trail already, and there'll be fireworks before long."

His optimism was irrepressible, and, because of it, he was almost enjoying the situation. The others were not so sure. Nipper, indeed, was inwardly alarmed, for he had shrewdly sized up the possibilities. He knew that they had been seized by order of the white man who was virtual "king" of this tiny island domain. And Nipper saw, too, that he and his fellow prisoners were to be used as hostages. For that reason Nipper had no confidence in the hope that a rescue party would come.

"If we're to escape from this mess, my sons, we'll have to rely upon ourselves," he said. "I don't want to croak, but it's no good having a lot of false hopes."

"Hallo! We seem to be getting somewhere," came a comment from Travers, who was just ahead.

Not many of the boys had any idea how far they had travelled; but Nipper, who had kept his eyes and ears well open, reckoned that they had journeyed no farther than three miles, perhaps less. The constant twisting and turning of the jungle path was somewhat confusing.

Now, however, they came out into the first real clearing they had encountered; the trees fell away, and the rays of the setting sun slanted upon the conical roofs of a number of native huts, constructed mainly of swamp reeds and dried grasses. The place was swarming with yelling blacks,

but no women or children could be seen. These, no doubt, had been sent away. Only the men remained.

The schoolboy prisoners were bunched together in a crowd near the centre of the village; blacks swarmed about them, and there was a good deal of jabbering and excited gesticulating. Finally, one of the Tao-Tao men, more grotesquely painted than his fellows, forced a way through and glowered upon the captives.

"Heela!" he exclaimed, pointing. "Assi-assi!"

"What's he calling us asses for?" asked Handforth indignantly.

"He means—follow," said Nipper.

It was, indeed, clear that the head man was telling the boys to follow him. Even as they moved across towards one of the bigger grass huts, the short tropical twilight faded, and darkness shut down. Overhead, the stars, which had been feeble until now, sprang out into dazzling, sparkling prominence.

The boys found themselves groping in the darkness of the native hut—which was filled with a variety of unpleasant smells. The air was unbearably hot, too, and when one of the boys brushed against the grass wall, he felt a spider, or some such insect, fall upon his face, and then drop with a "plop" to his shoulder.

"Good gad!" came a complaint from Archie Glenhorne. "How frightfully frightful! I mean to say, do we really have to stay in this foul and noisome den?"

"Better make the best of it," said Nipper gruffly. "No good trying to get away yet—the door's guarded."

By the light of a fire outside, Nipper could see that savages were squatting a short distance away, facing the single doorway of the hut. There was no other exit, not even a window. And the walls, although made of grasses, were of considerable thickness. Any attempt to force a way out at the rear would be quickly detected; for the grasses were so dry that they rustled at a touch. Moreover, it was likely enough that other blacks were watching outside.

"I can barely believe what's happened yet," muttered Bob Christine. "Think of it, you chaps! Only two or three hours ago we were in the class-room at afternoon lessons! Then we saw the island, and that signal for help. We came down peacefully enough—"

"And played cricket on the sands," continued Handforth. "These rotten blacks took us so much by surprise that we never had a chance of defending ourselves. What does it all mean?"

"Boy, that's an easy one," said a pleasant voice.

A big shadow filled the doorway, and a moment later Doc Haynes himself forced his way through the opening. He clicked the switch of a powerful electric lamp, and the white beam flashed round at the white-clad schoolboys. The light also showed numerous insects scuttling across the hard earthen floor.

"Not the kind of accommodation you've been accustomed to, I'm afraid," said Haynes pleasantly. "But you'll have to make it do."

Handforth strode aggressively up to the man.

"What's the idea of this?" he demanded. "Who the dickens do you think you are, to take the law into your own hands like this?"

"I like your spirit, boy, but I don't like your tone," said Haynes, grinning, and patting Handforth on the shoulder. "I take the law into my own hands because on this island I am the law. Savvy? I've had a straight talk with the men of your party, and we understand one another. As long as they behave themselves and take no action, you kids will be safe. So you needn't expect any rescue party. You'll stay here as long as I choose to keep you here. No need to be afraid of the blacks. They look ugly, but they'll do you no harm. They'll give you food and drink, and they'll see that you don't get away. Better not try to escape, or the blacks might forget my orders."

"How long are you going to keep us here, then?" demanded Boots.

"A month, maybe," replied Haynes, with his broad smile. "You'll soon get used to it—"

"Absolutely not!" burst out Archie. "Odds foulness and horrors! I absolutely refuse to remain in this beastly but for a month."

"No need for you to remain in the hut, kids," replied Haynes cheerfully. "In the morning you'll have the run of the village, but if you attempt to break away into the jungle—well, you'll be sent back."

Calmly, easily, he told them the exact position, and as they listened, their hopes dwindled. Even Handforth felt dismayed. For he realised how apparently impossible it was for Nelson Lee to come to their rescue.

"It's a mighty unpleasant business, kids, and I'm real sorry for you," said Haynes, in conclusion. "Remember, I didn't bring this on you; I didn't want your blamed airship to land. But, seeing as it did land, I'll have to take

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,356.

action in my own interests. Just a bad break for you, that's all. But it'll be a whole heap more pleasant for you if you take it on the chin, and try no tricks."

With a nod he switched off his light and went out of the hut. For some time he talked with the head man of the village, and then, amid a considerable commotion, he and his party went off once again into the jungle.

His departure was a signal for an outbreak of wild celebrations. More fires were lit, and many of the blacks, grotesquely ornamented, danced a wild, abandoned dance.

"Looks as though they're getting ready to eat us," muttered Tommy Watson, as he stared out of the doorway. "I say, do you think that rotter was bluffing? Has he left us to our fate?"

"I don't think so," said Nipper. "The blacks won't hurt us; they're too afraid of Haynes. They're just letting off some steam, that's all. Primitive people of this sort use any excuse for a wild dance like this. By Jove! Look at this chap! He must be the witch-doctor of the tribe, or something! Did you ever see anything like it?"

There had been a stir amongst the dancers, and now they ceased their mad capers so abruptly that the boys experienced a sensation of impending disaster. It was almost as though a signal had been given, and the painted blacks, their chests heaving from their exertions, had faced about, and were staring fixedly at the prison hut.

A screeching voice sounded on the uncanny stillness, and then a new figure entered the firelit ring—a figure so fantastic, so grotesque, that the juniors caught their breath in.

The figure was dancing wildly, capering like some weird animal rather than a man. He advanced in a series of great hops, and he was concealed in an astonishing assortment of coloured grasses. They hung from his waist, from his legs, from his shoulders, and from the top of his head. There were grasses of all colours—green, blue, yellow, red, orange. As he twirled about, spinning like a top, the grasses rose upwards, and stood out straight, like a ballet girl's dress. The witch-doctor was then revealed, his black limbs shining in the firelight, his face, uglier than most, contorted hideously.

Wild and wilder grew his dance, and all the time he maintained a terrific screeching which drowned even the roaring and crackling of the many fires.

"Great Scott!" muttered Vivian Travers, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

As suddenly as the witch-doctor had commenced his demoniac dance, just as suddenly he ceased. He became stationary, as though turned to stone; then, after a brief pause, he moved forward towards the boys' hut.

"My goodness! He's coming in here!" whispered Church. "This is beginning to look nasty."

"These blighters are cannibals," said Yorke of the Fourth. "That brute Haynes was lying to us! We're not safe. The blacks are going to murder us, and everything we've seen out there has been a preliminary to the big scene!"

"No, no!" said Nipper quickly. "If they meant mischief like that, the witch-doctor wouldn't be coming here alone. Listen, chaps! I've got an idea."

And in Nipper's eyes there was a light of excitement.

The Bid for Liberty!

THE hush was maintained outside; the Tao-Tao blacks, numbering scores, crouched just as they had finished their dance before the advent of the witch-doctor.

All eyes were turned upon the prison-hut. The witch-doctor himself was still advancing, creeping slowly, and there was not the slightest doubt that it was the black rascal's intention to strike terror into the hearts of the prisoners.

At last he reached the entry; and then, with a sudden dash, he was inside.

At least, so it appeared to the blacks who were watching—and they lived in far too much awe of the witch-doctor to make any move. What had actually happened was very different. The witch-doctor had had no intention of entering the hut—but he entered it, all the same. For suddenly strong hands reached out, grabbed at the grasses, and he was yanked headlong through the opening.

"Now! On him!" panted Nipper. "Sit on his head, Handy!"

"Ass! I'm sitting on it already!" gasped Handforth.

Other juniors were sprawling all over the witch-doctor's prostrate form. The man had been taken completely by surprise, and he had not even had an opportunity of opening his mouth.

Crash!

In the flickering firelight, which percolated through the doorway, Nipper took aim; he had found a fairly large bone in the hut, not unlike a hambone in size and shape, and it proved to be an excellent weapon of offence. That

one blow was enough; the witch-doctor ceased his struggles. He had been knocked senseless.

"This'll mean trouble if we don't escape," said Nipper grimly; "but we've got to take a chance."

The others were wildly excited. They had eagerly consented to risk all in a desperate bid for liberty. By acting now, they stood a good chance; the longer they delayed, the less likelihood of escape. For at the present moment the Tao-Tao savages believed that the boys were stricken with terror.

With rapid fingers, Nipper and Travers and one or two of the others turned the unconscious man over; the cords which bound the grasses to him were freed. It was only the work of a moment for Nipper to wriggle out of his shirt, and to abandon his white flannel trousers. With deft fingers he tied the long grasses round his legs and body and head—just as they had been tied round the witch-doctor's—and they completely hid his white skin.

"Now, you chaps, be ready!" he said, with bated breath. "Better sit on this beggar—in case he comes to!"

Outside, the blacks were still silent—still motionless. Many of them, perhaps, were wondering; but they heard no alarming sounds from the hut. They did hear now the screeching, maniacal laugh of their witch-doctor. At least, so they supposed. Nipper's impersonation was remarkably good. He imitated that screeching cry almost perfectly.

There emerged from the hut—the same figure. It looked exactly the same, at all events. It came slowly, then trotted rapidly forward, and halted. Nipper dared not dance up and down, or caper about—lest the grasses should be disturbed and expose his white limbs in the firelight. As long as he remained cautious, there was nothing to give a clue to the substitution.

Screeching wildly, Nipper backed away from the prison-hut. Then abruptly he flung out an arm—but took care that it was concealed in the grasses.

"Heela! Heela!" he screamed.

The other blacks, knowing that word, sprang into action. Yet they did not quite know what to do; they were taken by surprise. Their witch-doctor was departing from the usual procedure. But none of the savages suspected the truth; none of them approached the grass-covered figure. Again Nipper pointed, and this time he stamped up and down, as though working himself into a great rage.

"Heela!" he screeched.

From the hut the boys emerged, and they acted as though they were utterly terror-stricken. They seemed hypnotised, like timid animals. And they went towards the supposed witch-doctor, who beckoned them on.

Already Nipper had seen the opening in the clearing.

"Assi—assi—assi!" he yelled wildly.

There was much jabbering amongst the blacks now. Some of them attempted to follow; but Nipper, with a wild scream, waved them back. He knew no other words, and he was fervently praying that the two he did know would suffice. It was only because of Nipper's shrewdness and keen observation that he was enabled to attempt this trick.

As he motioned the other blacks back, they halted. Nipper breathed with relief. It was evident that the Tao-Tao blacks lived in absolute awe of their witch-doctor; they dared not disobey.

"Assi!" yelled Nipper, beckoning to the boys.

He took the path into the jungle, but he stood aside, so that the others went first. Then, laughing crazily, with ever-rising screeches, he waved them on—only following after the last of the eleven had vanished into the darkness. Then he went after them still shouting, still capering.

The utter audacity of the trick had brought about success. Right under the eyes of hundreds of cannibals, the twelve St. Frank's boys had escaped!

"By George! We've done it!" gasped Handforth. "We've dished the blighters!"

"Not yet!" said Nipper. "They might come after us. Run! If they do come after us, I'll try to keep them off."

They ran desperately—but with growing hope. They knew that the trail, in the main, was easy to follow. It was a trail which had been made by countless feet over countless years. On either side the jungle was impenetrable; there were no side paths. And the trail led direct to the beach.

The darkness was intense, and the jungle was full of strange noises and sinister movements. Blindly the boys ran on, keeping to the trail with difficulty.

But, so far, everything had gone well. Nipper, in the rear, had not dared to shed the coloured grasses. As he ran, he kept staring behind, and listening. But there was no sound of pursuit. Sooner or later, however, there was certain to be a chase.

It was the start which mattered. Once clear, the boys would have the advantage—and their object was to get to the beach to rejoin the main party. If they could only do that, there were many sturdy helpers there—Nelson Lee,

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Dorrie, the staunch members of the airship's crew. They were men armed with guns, with automatic pistols. If it came to a fight on the beach, there could be only one result. The white men would triumph.

"Faster—faster!" shouted Nipper suddenly. "They're after us, you chaps—I can hear them!"

He could, in all truth. In the rear, as yet at some distance, there came a strange and terrible chorus. It was like the cries of a pack of wolves. It could mean only one thing—the natives were in full pursuit.

"Come on!" panted Handforth, as he ran. "It can't be much farther now! By George, we'll do it yet, you chaps!"

Behind them the pursuit was getting nearer; they heard, or fancied they heard, the thud, thud, thud! of the savages' feet. The night air was filled with the wild, screeching voices of the pursuing blacks.

By this time Nipper had forged ahead, and he had torn most of his grasses free. They were useless to him now.

"Look!" gasped Handforth suddenly. "Lights, you chaps! Lights! We're there!"

"Hurrah!"

They ran on with almost bursting lungs.

"Guv'nor—guy'nor!" shouted Nipper. "We're coming! We've escaped!"

Even as he shouted he burst free of the jungle, straight on to the silvery sands of the beach. Behind him came the others, yelling with triumph. In a body, they raced out upon the sands, free of the jungle—out into the open air, with the stars overhead. Lights were gleaming less than twenty yards distant—but at the sight of them Nipper came to a sudden halt, and it seemed that a cold hand was clutching at his heart.

For there was something wrong! He had expected to see the large bulk of the Sky Wanderer at her moorings on the beach. Instead, he saw a squat bungalow, with warmly lighted windows; he saw other huts, also lighted, and a great fire which blazed on the beach, and round which many rough men were standing.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" gurgled Nipper, aghast. "We took the wrong path!"

For in a flash he had realised the truth. Instead of taking the trail which led back to the northern beach, they had taken the trail to the southern beach—to the headquarters of Doc Haynes and his gang!

(The boys of St. Frank's have stepped out of the frying pan into the fire! What's going to happen now? More gripping chapters of this great serial next week.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No 1356.

FATTY WYNN'S THIN TIME!

(Continued from page 22.)

but bread-and-butter on it, with a disparaging curl of the lip.

"Hungry?" asked Figgins.

"Not so very!"

"Well, pile in! There are three slices for you!"

"Oh, all right!"

Fatty Wynn ate all of his three slices. But he did not ask for more. Kerr was looking a little dissatisfied as he finished his bread-and-butter. It was only friendly for the two chums to restrict themselves to the same diet that Wynn had. It would have been too bad to tantalise him with the scent of frying bacon. But Kerr was beginning to think that dieting could be carried too far. Something of the same sort was in Figgins' mind, though he would not have said so for worlds.

Fatty Wynn rose as soon as he had finished his frugal meal.

Figgins ran his hands through his pockets.

"Lend me half-a-crown, Fatty!" he exclaimed. "I'm stony! And we must get in some things before the tuckshop closes!"

Fatty Wynn turned red.

"I—I'm stony, too!" he exclaimed.

"Why, you had a postal order yesterday, and I'll swear you haven't spent it!" Figgins exclaimed. "You jolly well haven't had a chance!"

Fatty Wynn's colour deepened.

"I—I'm sorry! I've got none left!" he stammered. "I'm expecting some in the morning. I—I've written to my people to ask for some extra."

He quitted the study before his chums could reply. Figgins stepped to the window and looked out. Fatty Wynn was crossing over towards the School House, and, under the elms, Figgins saw him join Joe Frayne.

Figgins turned back into the study with a clouded brow. "I don't quite catch on to this!" he said. "What has Fatty been doing with his money, Kerr, old chap? He's just joined that young ragamuffin! Can he have been giving his money to that kid?"

Kerr looked puzzled.

"I dare say the kid's hard up," he remarked. "But I understand that Tom Merry's uncle keeps him in pocket-money. He may be getting some off Fatty, though."

"We'll jolly well see!" exclaimed Figgins abruptly.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going after Fatty Wynn!"

"Good egg! I'm with you!"

The chums of the New House hurried downstairs and crossed the quad to the School House. Mellish met them in the passage. Mellish gave them an evil grin. There were few things that passed in the School House—or anywhere else in St. Jim's—without Mellish getting to know. Fatty Wynn had not counted upon the cad of the Fourth and his spying proclivities.

"Looking for Wynn?" asked Mellish, with a snigger.

"Yes," said Figgins. "Do you know where he is?"

"Yes," grinned Mellish. "He's dieting!"

"Dieting?" exclaimed Figgins and Kerr together.

"He, he he! Yes! Box Room No. 4, third landing," said Mellish.

The New House chums ran upstairs. They reached the third landing very quickly and looked round for the box-room. The No. 4 painted on a door guided them, and they ran towards it.

There was a sound from within the room. It was the clink of a bottle on the edge of a glass, and the gurgle of ginger-beer.

"Then a voice they knew.

"That's good!"

"Prime, ain't it?" said another voice. "It's all right, that's what it is, Master Wynn!"

Figgins breathed hard through his nose. He turned the handle and flung open the door of the box room.

There was a sudden exclamation.

Fatty Wynn started to his feet, a bottle of ginger-pop falling from his hand with a crash in his surprise.

Figgins simply glared. On a box were spread arrays of pies and cakes and tarts and dried fruits! It was a regular feed, and both Fatty Wynn and Joe Frayne were evidently enjoying it to the full.

"Oh!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn blankly, at the unexpected sight of his chum.

"You—you bounder!" roared Figgins. "This is how you diet, is it?"

"You—you see—"

"And you're stony-broke, eh?"

"So I was!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'd given all my tin to Joe to get these things with."

Figgins and Kerr stared at him speechlessly.

"You—you fraud!" gasped Figgins at last. "Collar him, Kerr!"

"Here, I say— Ow—yow!"

Fatty Wynn was collared. They bumped him and bumped him again. Then they bumped him a third time, and gasped for breath.

"Groooh!" panted Fatty Wynn. "You silly asses! Look here, I've had enough of your rotten wheeze! I'm not going to diet! I won't! You can keep me out of the tuckshop if you like, and starve me in the study, but you can't prevent me from coming into the School House to feed!"

"My hat!" said Figgins.

Kerr burst into a laugh.

"He's got us there, Figgy!"

"The fat bounder, he has!"

Fatty Wynn staggered to his feet.

"Now, be sensible chaps," he urged. "You've had a rotten, stinky tea, and I was thinking of you all the time I was eating here, honour bright! Sit down and wire in! I'm not going to be starved, so there's no need for you to be starved, either! Sit down and feed, and let bygones be bygones."

Figgins and Kerr looked at one another. There was great wisdom in what Fatty said. And their meagre tea in the New House had left them feeling very empty. And the array of pork pies and cold beef and ham, and jam tarts and cake spread on the box was very attractive! Figgins and Kerr realised that they were very hungry.

"But—but what about the diet?" said Figgins feebly.

"Oh, that's all off, anyway!"

"Shall we, Kerr?"

"May as well," said Kerr, with a grin. "We've bumped him, anyway."

"Good!"

And Figgins and Kerr sat down to the meal. And by the time the four juniors had finished there was hardly a crumb left to tell the tale. And with that record feed ended Fatty Wynn's thin time!

THE END.

(Look out for another grand yarn of the chums of St. Jim's next week. "THE FAG'S SECRET!"—starring young Joe Frayne—will compel your interest from first line to last. Order your GEM early.)



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