

GRAND CHRISTMAS NUMBER! TWO GREAT YULETIDE
YARNS INSIDE!



The Spectre of
ST. JIM'S!

The SPECTRE of



It is an old legend at St. Jim's that the White Monk haunts the school on the first fall of snow. But it's a legend that the light-hearted chums of St. Jim's have never given a thought to—until the spectral monk makes a dramatic appearance in the quadrangle!

CHAPTER 1.

A Mystery of the Night!

SNOW—thicker and thicker! The white flakes were falling incessantly. Walls and roofs at St. Jim's were gleaming white, and the old quad was wrapped as in a winding sheet. Through the dusk of the winter evening the leafless elms stood up gaunt and spectre-like, the white branches stretching out against the dim sky.

From the windows of the School House ruddy lights gleamed out into the quadrangle. Bright and cosy the interior of the School House looked by contrast with the cold and wind and the falling flakes without.

At the door of the School House several juniors were standing, straining their eyes into the gloom of the quad.

There were footprints in the snow on the School House steps, footprints on the drive—rapidly becoming obliterated by the fast-falling flakes.

"How long is he going to be, I wonder?"

Jack Blake asked the question impatiently. He drew back his head from the open door as a gust of wind blew snowflakes into his face.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form rubbed the mist from his eyeglass, and adjusted it in his eye. He

peered out into the quad, but even with the aid of his famous monocle he could see nothing but snow and leafless branches. Across the quad glimmered the light from the school tuckshop, but it was invisible to the juniors standing at the door of the School House.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "He's taking his time, you know. I weally don't think I shall wait here for Gore any longah."

"No; it's rather cold," remarked Tom Merry of the Shell.

"My hat!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, shivering. "Where on earth can Gore have got to? It's not five minutes across to the tuckshop—"

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps he is stoppin' for some we-freshment—"

"We'll bump him if he does!" growled Tom Merry. "He knows jolly well that we're waiting for the grub to have tea."

"Yaas, wathah! It weally would be most inconsiderate of Gore. Pewwaps we had bettah go and look for him," D'Arcy suggested. "He may have lost himself in the dark—"

"Hark!" exclaimed Tom Merry, holding up his hand. The juniors stood silent.

From the deep gloom of the quadrangle came a sudden

—Great Story of the Ghost that Got Tom Merry & Co. Guessing!

St. Jim's!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

piercing shriek. Loud, sharp, clear, it rang through the air, and echoed from the darkness with a chilling sound.

The juniors looked at one another.

Their ears were strained to hear, but not a sound came from the snowy quadrangle—not a sound save the soft moan of the winter wind.

"Good heavens!" Blake muttered, breaking the icy silence at last. "Wh-what was that?"

"It couldn't have been Gore!" muttered Tom Merry.

Darkness and silence in the old quad, and it seemed to the startled juniors that that terrible cry must have been a wild fancy of their own, so still was the quad now.

George Gore of the Shell had volunteered to cross the snow-driven quad to the tuckshop, to make the purchases for a study feed. He had been a long time gone, but there was no reason to suppose that anything untoward had happened in the old quad of St. Jim's.

Yet what did that terrible cry mean?

"It—it must be a rotten jape!" Monty Lowther muttered. "It's a jape of the New House fellows, perhaps. They may have collared Gore and the provisions—"

Tom Merry drew a breath of relief.

"Of course!" he exclaimed.

"That's it," said Blake with conviction.

"Yaas, wathah!"

It was as if a hard tension had been suddenly relaxed. The rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's—the School House and the New House—was always very keen, and at the approach of the Christmas holidays, the rival juniors were anxious to prove beyond doubt which was the Cock House at St. Jim's before they broke up for Christmas and departed on their various ways to the four corners of the kingdom. And this was a jape of Figgins & Co., they felt sure of that.

"But that yell?" said Manners.

"It was howwid!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shudder. "I suppose it was one of the New House boundahs, but—"

"I'm going to see!" exclaimed Tom Merry abruptly. "If the New House chaps are out for a raid in this weather, we can get out, too!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on!"

Tom Merry ran out of the School House. Blake and Manners dashed after Tom Merry. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hesitated a moment, in doubt whether to go upstairs for a rain-coat, and then dashed after them. He objected very much to getting snow upon his elegant Etons, but he did not mean to be left out if there was a fight.

Tom Merry dashed on into the quad.

The gloom was thick, save where it was lighted by the ridges and drifts of snow. He ran towards the old elms that hid the tuckshop from sight. Suddenly he stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked Blake.

"Heaven knows! Stop!"

The juniors halted, struck by the horror in Tom Merry's voice. Tom Merry had halted by something that lay in the snow—something that he knew was a human form!

He dropped upon his knees in the snow beside the inanimate figure. The other juniors gathered round with horrified faces.

"Good heavens!" muttered Manners.

"What—who is it?"

"It must be Gore!"

"A match!" muttered Tom Merry. "Quick!"

Blake, with a hand that trembled, struck a match. The wind caught it and blew it out.

"Under my cap!" muttered Lowther.

Blake struck a second match in the shelter of Lowther's cap. The light flickered upon the face that Tom Merry had dragged out of the snow.

It was a white, set face, with closed eyes, a face the juniors knew. The white, lifeless face was that of George Gore of the Shell.

For an instant the juniors gazed upon it, and then the match flickered out.

CHAPTER 2.

An Unknown Danger!

It was Gore who had uttered that terrible cry—the juniors knew that now. But why—why? What had struck him down? What terrible and unseen danger lurked among the shadows of the beloved old quadrangle?

"Bai Jove! It's howwible!" muttered Arthur Augustus.

"Let's get him in."

"Yes—quick!"

Blake struck another match. In its momentary glimmer Tom Merry and Manners took Gore up from the snow. Monty Lowther lent assistance, and among them the Shell fellow was carried towards the House.

There was a crowd of fellows in the open doorway now. That shriek had been heard in a good many of the studies, and some of the fellows in the Hall had seen Tom Merry & Co. rush out. Something was "up," and a crowd was gathering to see what it was.

There was a general exclamation as the juniors came in sight, bearing the Shell fellow in their midst, leaving a deep track in the snow behind them.

"What's happened?"

"Faith, and what's the matter with Gore entirely?"

"I guess he's fainted."

"Make room!" said Tom Merry abruptly.

Gore was carried into the Hall. He was laid upon the bench there, and Monty Lowther ran to Mr. Railton's study door, and in his haste and agitation opened it without even knocking.

Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, gave him a stern look.

"Lowther! What does this mean?"

"Oh, come, sir—quick!"

"What is the matter?"

"Gore, sir—I don't know—fainted, I think!"

With one bound the School Housemaster was out of his study, pushing Lowther aside.

He ran towards the spot where Gore lay on the bench, his head supported by Tom Merry. The boys made room instantly for the Housemaster.

Mr. Railton stooped beside Gore, and quickly examined him.

"He has fainted," he said. "Carry him up to his

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bed at once; he must be put to bed, and the doctor sent for. Kildare—Darrell—take him up to the Shell dormitory, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

The two stalwart Sixth Formers lifted the insensible Shell fellow in their arms, and bore him upstairs. Mr. Railton tapped Tom Merry on the shoulder.

"Go and help undress Gore, and get him to bed—while I telephone."

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry ran upstairs after the seniors. Mr. Railton had a telephone in his study, and he hastened to it at once. In two minutes he was calling the local medical man to the aid of the unfortunate Shell fellow. Dr. Hall replied that he would come at once. Mr. Railton left the telephone, and hurried up to the Shell dormitory. Tom Merry had already undressed Gore and got him into bed. Gore showed no sign of returning to consciousness. He was blue with cold, and Mr. Railton directed hot-water bottles to be placed at his feet, and blankets to be piled on him. The Housemaster's face was dark with anxiety.

Gore was not one of his favourites by any means; but Mr. Railton had a keen interest in all the boys in his House, and to all of them he was like an elder brother.

"How did this happen, Merry?" he asked, when all had been done for Gore that could be done.

"I don't know, sir," said Tom Merry. "Gore volunteered to go to the tuckshop and fetch the things for a study feed. Of course, nobody wanted to go across the quad in the snow. We were waiting for him to come back, when we heard a shriek—"

"I heard it," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I did not understand what it was. Well?"

"We didn't know anything had happened to Gore, sir, but we went out to look for him," said Tom Merry. "We found him lying in the snow, sir, like that!"

"He had gone out alone?"

"Yes, sir. There was not much to carry; only a bag of grub—I mean, things from the tuckshop, sir," said Tom Merry, colouring.

Mr. Railton nodded.

"Did you find the bag with him?"

"I never thought of looking for it, sir."

"Is it possible, do you think, Merry, that this is some more of the absurd rivalry between the Houses—that the New House juniors have somehow frightened Gore in this way?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Figgins & Co. wouldn't do a thing like that, sir."

"Gore must have been frightened. He shrieked, and then fainted."

"I suppose he was scared in some way, sir."

"You have no idea how?"

"No idea at all, sir."

"Gore is not usually troubled with nerves, is he?"

"Oh, no, sir! He's very strong."

"It is curious."

Mr. Railton turned to the bed again.

Tom Merry looked at Gore.

The Shell fellow's cheeks showed a trace of colour now, and his eyes were open, but there was no understanding in them.

His lips were moving, and low, broken words came forth. Mr. Railton stooped to hear.

"Oh, save me—save me!"

Then the pale lips were silent again.

Tom Merry quitted the dormitory.

The other fellows were waiting for him downstairs to hear what he had to tell.

"Gore is still unconscious," said Tom Merry. "It looks to me as if he's going to be ill. I can't understand it at all."

"Rai Jove, that's serious!"

"He was frightened somehow," said Blake. "Could it be a New House dodge?"

"I hardly think so."

"Let's go and see Figgins, and ask him," Monty Lowther suggested.

"Good egg!"

And Tom Merry & Co., putting on their coats and caps and scarves, left the School House, and tramped through the snow across the wide quadrangle to the New House of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

The Spectre of St. Jim's!

HERE was a cheerful fire burning in Figgins' study in the New House at St. Jim's. The table was laid for tea, and there were good things on the table.

Fatty Wynn had just unpacked a basket, and he was cleaning out the frying-pan with an old newspaper.

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Figgins and Kerr had put their work away to lend a hand in preparing tea.

"The sausages are good," said Fatty Wynn, "and the bacon is prime! As for the jam-tarts, they've been fresh made to-day."

"Oh, good!"

"We're entitled to a little extra feed," Fatty Wynn remarked, as he smeared butter over the interior of the frying-pan. "Christmas comes but once a year, you know."

"It hasn't come yet, Fatty."

"Well, it's coming. We shall be breaking up for the Christmas holidays before we know where we are," said Fatty Wynn. "Christmas is a great institution. Just the word makes you think of turkeys and puddings—"

"And indigestion," suggested Kerr.

"Rats! I never have indigestion! Indigestion comes of eating too little, in my opinion!" said Fatty Wynn, with a sniff.

"Ha, ha, ha! You're not likely to suffer from it, then!" laughed Figgins.

"I've a healthy appetite," said Fatty Wynn modestly. "I'm not one of those chaps who pretend they can't eat. No fairy appetite rot about me. I'm not greedy, but I like a lot. And the way to make yourself fit is to lay a solid foundation."

"My word, those sausages smell prime, though!" said Figgins.

"Oh, ripping!" said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn beamed over the frying-pan. The fat Fourth Former was never so happy as when he was engaged in culinary or gastronomic duties. The sausages were served up rich and brown, and the bacon was done to a turn. The three chums of the New House settled down to their tea with very cheerful faces. Figgins had made the tea and he poured it out. The moan of the wind in the old trees outside mingled with the clatter of knives and forks in the study.

"The wind's getting up," Figgins remarked. "Doesn't it howl! Like the ghostly monk of St. Jim's in the legend."

Kerr grinned.

"Yes, it's time for the giddy White Monk to be on the prowl now," he remarked. "He goes his round at this time of the year, so they say."

"I don't suppose we shall see him, though," said Figgins.

"Pass the sausages!"

"Here you are, Figgy!"

"It would be rather a dodge to get up a sham White Monk, and give the School House bounders a turn!" said Kerr, with a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tap!

There was a tap at the door, and it opened the next moment. Half a dozen juniors, in a considerably snowy state, came into the study. They were Tom Merry & Co. from the School House; and the conduct of Figgins & Co. was peculiar as soon as they saw them. Kerr took up the teapot, evidently for use as a defensive weapon, if necessary. Figgins picked up a cushion. Fatty Wynn made a strategic movement towards the grate, to get the poker within easy reach. The School House juniors and the juniors of the New House were generally upon fighting terms, and Figgins & Co. suspected a raid.

But Tom Merry & Co. had come with peaceable intentions.

"It's pax!" said Tom Merry.

Figgins laughed.

"Oh, all serene!" he said. "Pax with pleasure! Sit down, my sons, and warm yourselves. You look cold."

"Bai Jove, it is cold!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, polishing his eyeglass, which had become misty as he entered the warm study. "I object to this wotten snow!"

"Have it stopped immediately, then," said Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"You fellows come to tea?" said Figgins. "I'm sorry there's not much left. But you're welcome to what there is."

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn, with an inward heroic effort of self-denial. "Have the last soss between you!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Thanks, we won't rob you!" he said. "We haven't come to feed. We've come to ask you some questions."

"Fire away!"

"Have any of you chaps been playing ghost in the quadrangle?"

Figgins started.

"No!"

"Honour bright?"

"Yes, honest injun! Why?"

Tom Merry explained.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Figgins, when he had finished.

"And hasn't Gore come to himself yet?"

"No!"

"It's jolly odd!" said Kerr. "Gore isn't a coward like

Mellish, for instance. He wouldn't be frightened without a reason, I should think. He must have seen something."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'd like to know what he saw. As a matter of fact," said Figgins frankly, "it has just occurred to me that the first fall of snow is the time when the White Monk is supposed to walk, and I was saying to Kerr that we might work off a ghost wheeze on you chaps. But we haven't done it."

"Somebody else in the House may have done it," Blake remarked.

"It's possible, but—"

"But you don't think so?"

"Well, I don't," said Figgins. "Where did Gore see the ghost, or whatever it was?"

"Well, we found him in the snow in a dead faint under the elms," said Tom Merry. "You can see the place from this window."

He pulled the curtain aside.

Figgins and Kerr looked out of the misty window. Fatty Wynn went steadily on with the last sausage. The ghost of St. Jim's did not interest him so much as that beautifully browned sausage.

Tom Merry pushed up the sash of the window. Through the falling snow a few stars were twinkling dimly, and the juniors could make out the distant rows of elms.

Figgins strained his eyes in the gloom.

"That's where we found Gore," said Blake.

"My hat!" muttered Figgins.

"What's the matter?"

"Look! Can't you see something?"

Figgins clutched Tom Merry's arm with one hand, and pointed with the other. Tom Merry strained his eyes.

Was it a vision, conjured up by the gloom, the gleaming snow, and his excited state, or did he see a strange, ghostly figure, in monkish garb of the olden time, but white as the driven snow, glide for a moment from the shadow of the old elms?

"Great Scott!" muttered Tom Merry.

The form, if form it was, disappeared in a moment.

Figgins let the curtain fall back in its place.

In the lighted study the juniors gazed at one another with frightened looks.

"The ghost of St. Jim's!" muttered Figgins.

Tom Merry nodded.

That, then, was what Gore had seen—that was what had caused that terrible shriek, which seemed still to ring in Tom Merry's ears. No wonder the Shell fellow had fainted!

What did it mean?

For one moment it seemed to Tom Merry that, perhaps, the old legend was true—that the ancient walls of St. Jim's were haunted by the spectre of the murdered monk.

"Bai Jove!" Gussy broke the silence in the study.

"Did you see it, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And you, Blake?"

"Yes," said Blake, in a low voice.

There was another silence. Fatty Wynn had finished the sausage, and he left the last rasher of bacon. Even his appetite was a little affected. The study seemed cold, and its cheeriness was gone. Figgins closed the window sharply, and stirred the fire.

"I can't understand it," he said; "but I do not believe in ghosts."

"Of course, it's all rot!" said Manners; but his voice was less steady than usual.

"But what was it?" asked Figgins.

"I suppose it wasn't a mere fancy?" said Tom Merry dubiously.

Figgins shook his head.

"I saw it," he said.

"Then it was somebody playing a trick."

"I—I suppose so."

"But who?"

"Some silly young ass," said Figgins, forgetting for the moment that the same thought had passed through his own mind. "He ought to be jolly well licked for it, too!"

"I didn't see it clearly, but it was too big for a junior," said Tom Merry.

"Surely it can't be that a senior—a Fifth or Sixth fellow—would be idiot enough to play such a trick."

Figgins was silent.



As Arthur Augustus rushed round the corner of the Head's house in pursuit of Tom Merry & Co., Mr. Selby's guest stepped from the porch. Next moment D'Aroy crashed right into him, and Dr. Wynde was sent flying by the impact!

"It might be somebody from outside," said Blake slowly.

"How could he get in?"

"Well, it's jolly odd."

"Bai Jove! It's a howwid mystewy! I—I don't weally feel much inclined to cross the quad again to-night, you chaps," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Well, we've got to do that," said Blake. "But—but I think we'll avoid that—that special spot. We can go round."

"We ought to report this to Mr. Railton," said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll come across with you, if you like," said Kerr.

Tom Merry shook his head. None of the School House juniors felt inclined to cross the quad again in the dark. But they would never submit to such a slur as being accompanied by New House fellows because they were nervous. That would be too much of a descent for the dignity of the School House.

"We'd better be off," said Tom Merry. "Good-night, you chaps!"

"Good-night!"

The chums of the School House tramped downstairs. At the doorway of the New House they halted. But they made up their minds to it, and after a moment's pause they tramped out doggedly into the shadowy, snowy quadrangle.

They might be excused for avoiding the spot where the strange figure had been seen. They were no cowards, but they felt a natural reluctance to face that terrible apparition, whatever it was. Ghost stories in the daylight might seem ridiculous, but in the darkness and silence of the quadrangle their aspect was different.

The juniors were near the School House, walking with continual backward glances, when Tom Merry paused suddenly and listened.

"What was that?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hush!"

"It's only the wind," said Blake uneasily. "Let's get on."

Doubtless, it was only the wind moaning about the old roofs, but it seemed like a wild and demoniac howl to the throbbing ears of the juniors.

They increased their pace; the walk became a trot; finally a run. They ran on hard through the snow, and came up, breathless, to the doorway of the School House.

A group of juniors were there, looking out into the falling snow. They stared as Tom Merry & Co. came charging up the slippery steps.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kangaroo of the Shell. "Have you seen the ghost?"

"N-no," said Tom Merry, turning rather red. "We—we were in a bit of a hurry, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally D'Arcy—D'Arcy minor of the Third. "They were in a bit of a hurry, that's all. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wally—"

There was a roar of laughter among the juniors. Tom Merry was crimson, and so were his comrades. On second thoughts they wished they had crossed the quadrangle with a slow and stately stride. But it was too late now.

"Where is Mr. Railton?" Tom Merry asked.

"In the dorm with Gore."

Tom Merry went up to the Shell dormitory. The doctor had not yet arrived, and Mr. Railton was seated by Gore's bedside. There was more colour in Gore's face now, and his lips moved at intervals; it was evident that he was coming to himself.

Mr. Railton looked at the hero of the Shell inquiringly.

"We've just been across to the New House, sir," said Tom Merry. "I—I went to ask Figgins if any chap there had been playing ghost. He says no."

"I'm glad to hear that," said the Housemaster quietly. "Such a trick would be very foolish and very dangerous."

"We—we saw something in the quad, sir," faltered Tom Merry.

Mr. Railton gave him a sharp look.

"What did you see, Merry?"

"From Figgy's window, sir, just for a moment. It—Whatever it was, sir, it looked like the engravings of the White Monk in the school library, sir. A—a figure dressed like a monk, but all white—"

"Are you sure you saw this, Merry—or was it a trick of the imagination?"

"Figgins saw it as well, sir, and Blake and D'Arcy. I thought I ought to mention it to you, sir, under the circumstances."

The School House master nodded.

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"Quite right, Merry. If you saw this, as you suppose, it is undoubtedly some foolish fellow playing ghost, having heard the legend of the White Monk. But, hush!"

Gore's eyes had opened wildly.

He fixed a terrified stare upon Mr. Railton and shuddered. His lips moved, and muttering words came forth.

"Save me—save me! Oh, the ghost!"

"Gore, my poor boy, you are quite safe here!" said Mr. Railton soothingly.

"The—the ghost!" muttered Gore, shuddering violently.

"What did you see in the quadrangle, Gore?"

"The ghost—the White Monk!"

And Gore's eyes closed again.

CHAPTER 4.

Doubting Thomases!

TOM MERRY & CO. were in the Common-room in the School House when Gore came down late in the evening.

Gore was still looking very pale, and there was a harassed expression upon his face. Evidently he had not yet fully recovered from the shock he had sustained in the quadrangle. But he was able to explain what had happened, and the juniors gathered round him eagerly to hear what it was.

Gore shuddered a little as he explained.

"It was the White Monk," he said, in a low voice.

There was a general exclamation of incredulity.

"If it wasn't it was somebody dressed up and playing ghost," said Gore. "It was a monk, all in dead white, with a cowl over the face—and it came suddenly out of the shadows, without a sound, and almost touched me!"

He broke off, shuddering.

"Bai Jove, it must have thrown you into a fluttah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus sympathetically.

"I—I think I fainted."

"You jolly well did!" said Jack Blake. "You had gone off when we found you."

"No wonder," said Tom Merry. "You can chuckle if you like, Levison, but I expect you would have done the same!"

Levison, the cad of the Fourth, sneered.

"It was some shadow or other, of course," he said. "Gore was frightened by a shadow."

"Rot!"

"Do you think it was the ghost, then?" sneered Levison.

"No, I don't think that," said Tom Merry slowly. "But it must have been somebody playing ghost."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Levison, we saw it ourselves from the window of Figgy's study!" said Blake hotly.

"Imagination, my boy!" said Levison loftily. "When fellows are in a state of nerves, they see all sorts of things."

"You cheeky cad—"

"Don't argue with him, Blake, deah boy!" said D'Arcy.

"I am quite sure that if Levison saw it he would wun like anything—"

"Like you fellows did!" grinned Levison. "It was great to see you come pelting in at top speed! Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and regarded the cad of the Fourth Form with a withering glance.

"I may be afraid of ghosts, but I am not afraid of you!" he exclaimed. "And if I have any more disrespectful remarks, I shall give you a fearful thwashin'!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders and walked away with Mellish.

But the laugh was certainly up against Tom Merry & Co. Their little run across the quadrangle was not likely to be forgotten in a hurry.

Gore was not much inclined to talk about what had happened. The horror of it was still strong upon him.

The Terrible Three discussed the matter, but without coming to any satisfactory conclusion. That somebody was playing ghost seemed the most feasible theory; but who he was, and why he should do it, remained mysterious.

"But one thing's jolly certain!" said Jack Blake, gritting his teeth. "He's got to be bowled out!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What about a ghost hunt?" suggested Digby of the Fourth.

"The prefects have searched the quad already with most of the masters," said Manners. "Mr. Railton ordered them. They haven't found anything. We shan't find more than they did."

"But it must be somebody in St. Jim's—and he can be found!" said Monty Lowther. "The question is—how to get hold of the rotter."

It was a question which seemed likely to remain unanswered. The matter was enveloped in complete mystery.

There were not wanting many fellows who ascribed the

whole matter to Gore's nerves in the first place, and to the lively imagination of Tom Merry & Co. in the second.

Gore was still too much upset by his experience to take notice of or resent the jokes on the subject; but they exasperated Tom Merry & Co. sorely.

Tom Merry went to bed that night in a somewhat cross mood—not usual with him—and his temper was not improved by the chatter in the dormitory after lights out. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, put the lights out, and immediately he had left the dormitory there was a sudden yell from Crooke.

"Ow!"

"Shut up, you ass!" growled Bernard Glyn.

"The ghost!"

"Where?"

"In Tom Merry's mind's eye, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I feel so frightened!" murmured Crooke. "I wish the St. Jim's ghost was like the chap in the song, who couldn't come home in the dark. A really decent ghost would always go about in the daytime, not upset a fellow's beauty sleep like this!"

"Oh, dry up, do!" growled Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, dry up; he wants to listen for the ghostly footsteps!" chuckled Kangaroo.

And the whole dormitory roared.

It was a long time before the badinage ceased, and by that time the Terrible Three were furious, and longing to find who had played ghost in the quadrangle, that they might take summary vengeance upon him.

CHAPTER 5.

A Strange Guest!

MR. SELBY crossed the quad the following morning with gingerly steps.

Taggles, the porter, was engaged in sweeping the drive, but it was a long task, and Taggles was industrious. Mr. Selby did not like walking in the snow, and he was afraid of slipping over. He paused to speak to Taggles, in his usual manner.

"You should have had the path clear by this time, Taggles," he said harshly. "It has not snowed since early this morning."

"Ho!" said Taggles. "I'm sorry, sir! If I 'ad three pairs of arms, sir, I'd be only too pleased to do three men's work, sir. 'Avin' honly one pair, sir, I can't do it, sir, beggin' your pardon!"

"Don't be impertinent, Taggles!"

"Ho!" said Taggles.

He leaned upon his broom, and Mr. Selby walked on, frowning. Taggles spat upon his hands and resumed his sweeping at a more snail-like rate of speed than before. Taggles cast a look after the Form-master which showed that he shared the feelings of the Third Form at St. Jim's towards Mr. Selby.

The master of the Third tramped on gingerly through the snow and reached his destination, a wing of the Head's house, with a door opening upon the quadrangle, under a big, leafless elm. St. Jim's—the older part of it—was a mass of irregular buildings. The Head's house was a portion of the old School House, and attached to the Head's house were several other buildings, all parts of the ancient abbey that formed the major part of St. Jim's.

Mr. Selby entered a deep stone porch, shadowy even in the broad daylight, and knocked at an arched door and opened it. He stepped in, into a flagged passage, with two rooms opening off it, one on either side.

He coughed as he entered the passage.

A voice came from one of the rooms.

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Wynde."

"Come in, Selby."

Mr. Selby entered the room.

It was a comfortably furnished room with a bright fire burning in the grate. On a sofa near the fire a man, clad in a loose, flowered dressing-gown, was seated, half reclining. A book was open upon the table before him—a book of great age, to judge by the yellowness of the leaves and the peculiar form of some of the letters.

The man looked up and motioned the master towards a chair. Mr. Selby sat down and regarded him with a far from complacent expression.

The man upon the sofa returned Mr. Selby's steady look with one equally steady. He was not a common-looking man. His cadaverous face, his sunken eyes, and hollow cheeks, his utter want of colour, told of the sick man, yet he seemed to be well in body. His eyes, deeply sunken, were very bright. He had a quick, peculiar way of moving his

(Continued on the next page.)



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lips without speaking. His hands, which were long and white and thin, seemed never at rest.

"How are you to-day, Wynde?" said Mr. Selby.

The other smiled.

"The same," he said.

"You do not feel better or worse?"

"No."

"St. Jim's is very cold now," Mr. Selby remarked, "for one so weak as you are in health, Wynde. It is not a judicious place to select as a residence."

A peculiar ironic smile came over the pale face.

"Do you wish me to go, Selby?"

"No, no!" exclaimed the Form-master hastily. "I—I was thinking of you. I—I, of course, shall be the better pleased the longer you stay."

"Then you will be very pleased, as I am going to stay a long time," said the other cheerfully. "You are very kind."

Mr. Selby bit his lip.

"What are you reading?" he asked.

Mr. Wynde pushed his book towards him.

"A very interesting old book," he said. "A history of St. James' College, Sussex, with its legends. Printed in 1740. Quite an old book."

"Stuffy nonsense!" said Mr. Selby peevishly, pushing the book away from him. "What interest can you find in it?"

Wynde laughed.

"I am interested in such subjects—but our tastes never were similar," he said.

"Never mind the old book," said Mr. Selby. "I want to speak to you about yourself, doctor."

Wynde nodded.

"You have kept me very much in the dark," pursued Mr. Selby. "When I first obtained my appointment here I was in need of money, and you advanced me a hundred pounds. Without that, as you know very well, I might not have been able to take up my position as master at this college."

"Exactly."

"I hope I am grateful," said Mr. Selby, without, however, looking very grateful. "Any service I can render you in return I am willing to render."

"Thank you!"

"I have not been able to repay the money and am not yet in a position to do so; and I admit that if you pressed me for it it would make matters very awkward for me here," said the Form-master, flushing. "For those reasons—and out of friendship, of course—I acceded to the extraordinary request you made me a few days ago."

"Pure friendship, I am sure," said the other, with the same peculiar ironic expression upon his face.

Mr. Selby made an impatient movement.

"But I am entitled to know what it all means," the Form-master exclaimed, his voice rising a little. "I detest mysteries, and I dislike being kept in the dark. When I knew you before, you were a prosperous surgeon, wealthy and well known, and the last man in the world, I should imagine, to indulge in a freak of this kind. Now you suddenly come up to me and ask for shelter without explaining why you have left your practice and your home and your relations—without explaining anything."

"Quite so."

"Mr. Holmes kindly placed these rooms at my disposal when I represented to him that I wished to have a sick relation stay here for a time," said the Form-master, flushing again. "He has asked me no questions. He has passed no remarks upon your protracted retirement. It is understood that you are an invalid; but he has not referred to the fact that you never see a medical man. But he must wonder."

"Possibly."

"It is placing me in a most invidious position," said the Form-master, "and the longer it lasts the more invidious my position becomes. You have forbidden me to write to any of your connections asking for information—you have, to put it plainly, threatened to claim the money that is due to you, and which it is not convenient for me to pay, if I fail to observe your wishes. I have observed them in every way; but I say again, I have a right to an explanation. Why are you thus in hiding?"

The other was silent.

"You have left everything and buried yourself in the country, and you do not even venture outside the gates of this school. Why?"

No reply.

"Is it possible, Wynde, that you have broken the law in some way and that you are wicked and unscrupulous enough to place me in the position of sheltering a criminal from justice?" Mr. Selby asked in a trembling voice.

Wynde burst into a strange laugh.

"No," he said. "I have broken no law."

"Then why—"

"I have already stated my reasons—my health threatens

to break down under hard study and overwork, and I require a change and complete rest. I have hung over my experiments till my brain was dizzy and my senses swimming. Here I find repose."

"And is that all?"

"That is all."

"Then why should I not communicate with your friends?"

"Because I do not wish to be disturbed, or to receive troublesome letters."

"But your relations—"

"I desire to be left alone."

There was silence in the room for some minutes. Mr. Selby bit his lips, and Dr. Wynde turned the crackling, rustling pages of the old book. The Form-master rose to his feet at last.

"I suppose I must believe what you have told me," he said at last. "But I do not understand it—and I hate mysteries. I hope that you will explain to me; but I see that you are not in the humour to do so now. That is all."

Wynde did not reply. He watched the Form-master with a strange look as the latter quitted the room, and then stared at the fire with a strained, restless gleam in his eyes.

Mr. Selby, with a frowning brow, strode away towards the School House. He was in an irritable temper; and he indemnified himself for the annoyance his curious guest had caused him by boxing the ears of two juniors as soon as he entered the School House. Then he went into his study, leaving fury raging in the bosoms of Jameson and Curly Gibson.

CHAPTER 6.

Dr. Wynde is Wild!

JACK BLAKE looked out of the School House door after morning lessons, and sniffed the fresh, keen air.

A wonderful change had come over the aspect of St. Jim's. The snow had melted, the mantle of white was gone, and the ground was weeping with dampness. But a bright sun had come out, promising favourable weather for the afternoon.

"The ground will be in a rotten state this afternoon," Herries remarked. "Just our luck to have the ground unfit on a half-holiday!"

Blake nodded.

"We'll put in some practice, all the same," he said. "I believe it's going to snow again, as a matter of fact; this is only an interval. We can practise, whatever state the ground's in, I think—better than nothing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite so, my sons," said Tom Merry, joining them, cheerfully. "Seen or heard anything more of the White Monk?"

Jack Blake shook his head.

"No," he said. "I'm beginning to think it was fancy, after all."

As Blake was speaking, Monty Lowthier gently tipped D'Arcy's topper over his eyes and ran down the School House steps.

Tom Merry and Manners followed him, laughing. D'Arcy rescued his silk hat, and set it straight, and jammed his monocle into his eye furiously.

"Bai Jove! The wottahs! I—I—I—"

He ran down the steps, slipped on them, and finished his journey down in a sitting position. He jumped up in the quad and dashed in pursuit of the Terrible Three, leaving the juniors at the School House door yelling with laughter.

"Stop, you wottahs!" bawled D'Arcy, holding his eyeglass with one hand and his silk hat with the other, as he rushed in pursuit of the chums of the Shell. "I insist upon your stopping immediately! I am goin' to thrash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three, apparently in a state of the greatest terror, ran on. They dodged round the Head's house, and under the big leafless elm in front of the door of the little dwelling occupied by Mr. Selby's strange guest.

Arthur Augustus rushed round the corner of the house in pursuit. As it happened, the strange guest of Mr. Selby stepped from the deep porch at the same moment, and D'Arcy ran right into him.

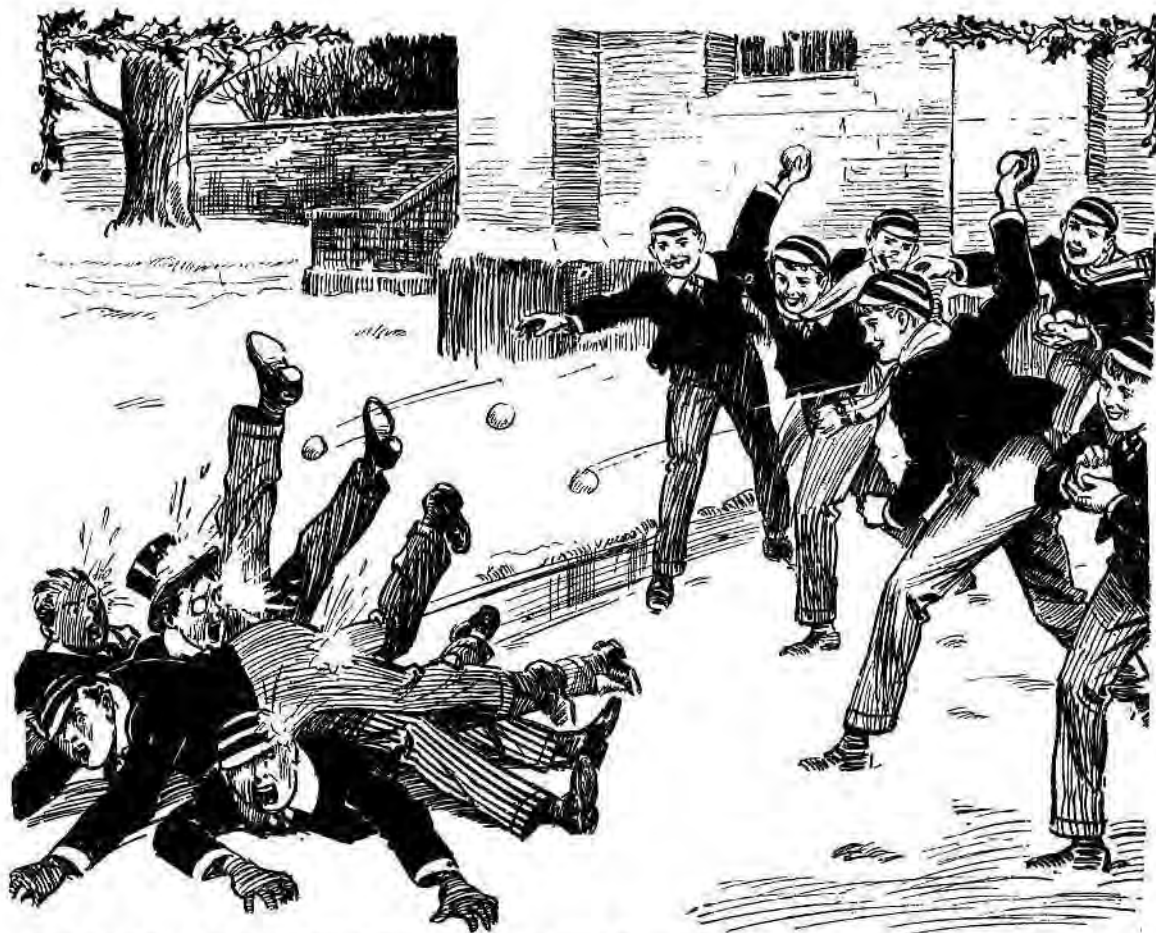
There was a sharp exclamation from Dr. Wynde, and he went whirling, and fell upon the ground before the porch. D'Arcy stopped at once, just saving himself by a grasp on the tree-trunk.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

His eyeglass flew in one direction, and his silk hat in another. For the moment he could only stand and stare breathlessly at the fallen stranger.

Wynde struggled to his feet.

Even at that moment no colour came into his pale cheeks



With Blake & Co. mixed up in a heap on the slide, Wally & Co. were not slow to seize their opportunity. Hastily making snowballs, they pelted the Fourth Formers. From such short range the tags couldn't miss, and they took full revenge on Blake & Co. for collaring their slide.

—he was white and sickly in look; but his deeply sunken eyes gleamed with a strange and savage light. He advanced towards the swell of St. Jim's with his eyes gleaming and his hands clenching, the fingers working convulsively.

D'Arcy, alarmed by his look, shrank back against the tree. He had expected the man to be angry, but there was an expression in Wynde's eyes, strange and unfathomable, that startled and alarmed him.

"I—I am vewy sowwy, my deah sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It was quite an accident, I assuah you!"

The man's grasp was upon him the next moment. He was dragged away from the tree and swung to and fro in a powerful grasp. It was surprising that the thin, frail, white-faced doctor could exert so much strength.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "Help! Wescue, deah boys!"

The Terrible Three had stopped, and were looking back. At the sight of Arthur Augustus vainly struggling in the grasp of the strangely incensed man, they ran back towards the spot. Tom Merry grasped the man by the arm, and Lowther and Manners drew the breathless swell of St. Jim's from his hold.

"How dare you drag a fellow about like that!" Tom Merry exclaimed. "His running into you was an accident."

The doctor stared at him without replying. His fingers worked convulsively, and there was a strange red gleam in the depths of his sunken eyes. It seemed to Tom Merry, as he watched him, that the man was making terrible efforts at self-control. Why he should be so fearfully excited was a mystery to the juniors.

The strange scene suddenly ended. The man turned and strode into the porch of the house, and the juniors heard the door slam, and a key turn in the lock.

They gazed at each other in amazement. Arthur Augustus smoothed out the many creases and wrinkles which the man's grasp had made in his Eton jacket.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry at last.

Manners whistled softly.

"He must be rocky in the crumplet!" he said, in a low voice. "I never saw a sane man look like that! Is it possible?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Looks as if he's not quite right," he said. "I suppose he's a bit loose in the rocker, and that's why Selby is taking care of him. Queer, isn't it?"

"I wonder if the Head knows?"

"Bai Jove, it's wotten, you know! I feel sowwy enough for the poor chap, if he is weak in the wockah, but he has wumped my clothes feahfully, and—"

"Well, you bumped him over," grinned Lowther. "Why do you do these silly things, Gussy?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

The Terrible Three walked away. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, forgetting his intended vengeance, returned to the School House to get his hat brushed and to change his jacket. As he ruefully confided to Blake, that jacket would want pressing before he could wear it again. When the Terrible Three came in to dinner, Arthur Augustus gave them a particularly severe look, at which the chums of the Shell smiled sweetly.

CHAPTER 7.

Waiting on Fatty Wynn!

COM MERRY & CO. came in after the footer practice as the early winter dusk gathered over the old quad of St. Jim's.

They were very cheerful, and very hungry. Toby, the School House page, met them at the door with a letter in his hand.

"For me, of course?" said Blake.

Toby grinned.

"Master D'Arcy, sir," he said.

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"Hand it ovah, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus took the letter. "This lettah is fwom my govannah, and I twust there is a fivah in it. The govannah has been gettin' wathah close lately, but I should wathah think that he would come out stwong at Chwistmas-time."

"Open it," said Monty Lowther. "Buck up!"

"Weally, what is the hawwy—"

"If there's a fiver in that letter, we're coming to tea with you!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, vewy well, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "Undah those cires, I will open the lettah at once."

He slit open the envelope, and as he withdrew the letter, a crisp, rustling fiver came into view.

"Bai Jove! The patah is playin' up all wight, you see!"

"Good!" said Lowther. "I'll give you a couple of uncles and an aunt for your pater, Gussy, if you ever feel inclined to swop."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Buzz off to the tuckshop," advised Blake. "I'm as hungry as a hunter, and I want my tea. Buck up, Gussy! Run!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I don't mind helping you with the shopping, you chaps!" said a modest voice.

"Hallo! Here's a New House bounder on the respectable side of the quad!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly.

Fatty Wynn grinned propitiously.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"That's all very well—"

"Yes, of course it is!" assented Fatty Wynn, with an amiable smile. "I believe in stopping all these blessed House rows at a time like this—"

"When Gussy has a fiver?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn indignantly. "I mean at a time like Christmas, of course, you fatheads. House rows are all very well at other times—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"It's all wight, Fatty, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "Come with me ovah to the tuckshop, and we'll change the fivah, and you shall get tea in the study."

"Good!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'll whistle to Figgins and Kerr."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Figgins and Kerr having been apprised of the intended feed, and having graciously accepted the invitation, Fatty Wynn walked across to the tuckshop with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The dusk was falling in the old quad thickly, and with the approach of night the snow was coming back. Thin, feathery flakes fell round the juniors as they crossed to the tuckshop, and floated on the keen, wintry wind.

"Bai Jove, we're goin' to have some more snow!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Upon the whole, I think I had bettah get an umbwella, deah boy."

"Oh, rats!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn—"

"You can buzz in!" said Fatty. "I'll change the fiver for you, and do all the shopping, if you like. You can depend upon me to get a really ripping feed."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hand over the fiver, then."

Arthur Augustus politely handed it over. There was no doubt about the correctness of Fatty Wynn's statement. When he had unlimited supplies of cash, he could certainly be depended upon to lay in a really ripping feed. But whether he could be depended to leave much change out of the fiver was another matter.

Courtesy, however, was D'Arcy's strong point, and he relinquished his fiver into Fatty Wynn's hands, and hurried back to the shelter of the School House.

Fatty Wynn ran into the tuckshop. As he had a great deal of shopping to do, and as he was pretty certain to have a few little "snacks," he was likely to be there for some time.

Arthur Augustus reached the School House as the snow began to fall more thickly. Levison, Crooke, and Mellish met him in the doorway. His friends had gone upstairs, and D'Arcy had no desire to stop and talk to the cads of the School House. But Levison stopped him, with a polite grin.

"I hear you're getting big remittances," he remarked.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the cad of the Fourth.

"I have had a wemittance," he replied. "It was not a big one—only a fivah."

"My hat! You are standing a feed, of course?"

"Yaas!"

"Going to ask all your friends, I suppose?"

"Yaas!" said D'Arcy grimly.

"Good! We'll come!"

"You won't do anythin' of the sort, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I do not wegard you fellows as fwends."

"Oh, come now, Gussy—"

"I'm sure nobody could regard D'Arcy with more admiration than I do," said Mellish.

"Wats!"

"We'll come and help you do the shopping," Levison suggested.

"Fatty Wynn is doin' the shoppin' already, and I do not want your assistance," said the swell of the School House, "and, as a mattah of fact, I should take it as a favah if you would not address me."

And Arthur Augustus walked on, and marched up to Study No. 6 in the School House.

Crooke and Mellish scowled angrily, but Levison was grinning, and there was a peculiar gleam in his eyes.

"Blessed if I can see anything to grin at!" growled Crooke.

"Didn't you hear what he said about Fatty Wynn doing the shopping?" demanded Levison. "What price our laying for him—under the elms—and collaring it as he comes by?"

"My hat! Splendid!"

"Wynn is a beastly hard hitter in a row," said Mellish uneasily.

"We're three to one. But we can get some more chaps—we'll let them think it's a House raid—and the stuff is Fatty Wynn's own!"

"Good egg!"

Levison lost no time in carrying out his idea. It was easy enough to get recruits for a House raid—especially when a convoy of provisions was to be captured. Reilly and Hancock of the Fourth, and several other fellows, joined the trio at once, and quite a little party tramped out in the darkness and the falling snow to lie in wait for Fatty Wynn under the elms.



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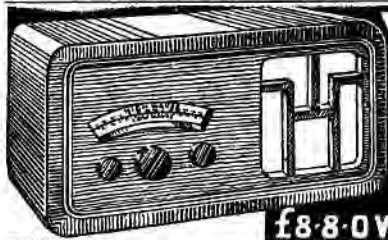
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CHAPTER 8.

The White Monk Again!

"T'S cold!"

"Groogh!"

"He can't be long now!"

"Confound the fat bounder! Why doesn't he buck up with the goods?"

Levison and his band of raiders were hidden in the deep shadows of the old elms in the quad. Early as the evening was, it was pitch-dark in the quad, save where the lights from the distant windows gleamed out upon the falling snow. The wind was blowing very keenly, and the juniors, waiting under the gaunt trees shivered as it whistled round their ears and legs.

In the distance gleamed the little diamond-paned window of the tuckshop. There was Fatty Wynn sorting out and selecting supplies, and doubtless taking a good many snacks in the process. Probably he was not in a hurry, but the raiders under the leafless trees were growing keenly impatient.

"Are you sure he's coming this way!" growled Hancock.

"Yes," muttered Mellish.

"Faith, and why should he? This isn't the way to the New House!" said Reilly.

"Look here! I know he is, and that's enough!"

"Faith, and I—"

"Hush!" said Levison. "I think I heard something!"

"It wasn't Wynn!" growled Kerruish. "His steps are loud enough to be heard, with all his blessed avoirdupois over them."

"Yes, rather!"

"It's the wind."

"I—I—I saw something move just then!" murmured Jones minor.

"Rats!" said Levison uneasily.

"I—I— Oh, look!"

Mellish grasped Levison's arm so hard in his agitation that the cad of the Fourth uttered an exclamation of pain.

"You ass—"

"Look!" shrieked Mellish.

A simultaneous cry of horror burst from the juniors.

From the darkness came that strange figure which Tom Merry & Co. had seen two nights before from the windows of Figgins' study.

It was the White Monk!

The ghastly form loomed up in the darkness, advancing towards the juniors, its arms outstretched; and with one accord they turned and ran for their lives.

Helter-skelter through the falling snow they dashed towards the School House.

The figure stopped.

But what became of it the terrified juniors did not pause to see. They dashed into the School House at top speed, panting with terror, out of breath, flecked all over with flakes of snow.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mellish, sinking upon an oaken seat in the Hall. "Good heavens! Then it's real!"

"Oh!"

"Great Scott!"

"Faith, and it's a spectre entirely!" muttered Reilly, between his chattering teeth.

Crooke set his pale lips.

"It's a rotten trick!" he muttered.

"Ye-es," muttered Kerruish. "Somebody's playing ghost."

"Of course!" said Crooke.

"Then go out again and see who it is," said Reilly.

But that Crooke evidently had no intention of doing.

"What's the matter with you kids?" asked Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, coming out of his study.

"The ghost!"

"The White Monk!"

Kildare smiled.

"That story again!" he exclaimed. "Who has seen it?"

"All of us!" said Kerruish.

Without replying, Kildare strode out into the quadrangle and towards the distant gloomy elms.

The juniors gathered in the doorway to watch him. The sturdy figure of the captain of St. Jim's disappeared into the darkness and the whirling flakes.

"Jolly plucky!" muttered Jones minor.

"Well, it's only a trick, of course," said Crooke.

"Why don't you follow him, then?"

Crooke was silent. Trick or not, he had no inclination to investigate the ghostly apparition.

The juniors waited anxiously for Kildare to return. He was not alone when he came back. Fatty Wynn, carrying an extremely large and well-laden basket, was with him.

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

NOT GUSSY'S STYLE.

Blake: "I say, Gussy, Fatty Wynn wants some advice on dressing."

Gussy: "Bai Jove! I'm quite willin' to help him."

Blake: "But it wouldn't interest you."

Gussy: "Why not, deah boy?"

Blake: "He wants to dress a lobster!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Cuthbert, 62, Sherwood Gardens, New Barking, Essex.

SAYS THE OLD SALT!

The fussy old lady had been asking the old sea salt all sorts of awkward questions about his sea life.

"And supposing," she said, "a hole was made in the ship by a submerged rock and water flooded in—what would you do?"

"Well," replied the exasperated old salt, "we'd make another hole and let it out!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Ashby, c/o Somerset House, Ascot, Berks.

THE LION'S SHARE.

Teacher: "If I gave you sixteen nuts, Jones, to share with your little brother, how many would he get?"

Jones: "Six, sir."

Teacher: "Nonsense; you can't count!"

Jones: "Yes, I can, sir; but my little brother can't!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Stoyel, Blackwood, South Australia.

A NASTY "EGGSPERIENCE"!

Friend: "How did you get on at the show last night?"

Actor: "Rotten! The manager kept egging me on and the audience kept 'egging' me off!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Richards, 53, Nine Elms Lane, Park Village, Wolverhampton.

PUTTING IT PLAIN!

Office-boy: "Please, sir, I think somebody wants you on the telephone."

Boss: "Now what is the use of saying you think I'm wanted? Am I wanted or not?"

Office-boy: "Well, sir, somebody rang up and said, 'Is that you, you old idiot?'"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Blandford, 16, Shropshire Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire.

A HELPING HAND!

Farmer Giles: "When do ye start a-ploughing?"

Farmer Brown: "Oi don't need to. Oi've hoired the field to some o' these here amateur golfers!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Duncan, 51, Goldrum Street, Dunfermline, Fife.

CUSHY!

Bates: "And was all your money obtained through hard work?"

Gates: "Most certainly! My father worked jolly hard for it!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Lovett, 36, Rowsley Avenue, Handon, London, N.W.4.

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Kildare had met him in the quadrangle, but he had met no one and nothing else.

"Not seen the ghost, Kildare darling?" asked Reilly.

Kildare shook his head.

"No, Reilly. You must have been thinking of the ghost story, and were frightened by a shadow," he replied.

"It was real enough, Kildare!"

"Stuff!"

"What were you chaps doing out there at all?" asked Fatty Wynn suspiciously.

"Yes, what were you doing?" asked Kildare. "It was very queer for you to be out in the snow there at all. Were you playing some trick yourselves?"

Reilly coughed.

"Sure, we were looking for Fatty Wynn!" he said. "We—we were going to help him carry the grub in, you know—save him a lot of—ahem!—trouble about eating it."

Kildare laughed.

"Well, it serves you right to get a scare, then," he replied. And he went back into his study.

CHAPTER 9.

Fun in the Snow!

"FREEZING, by Jove!"

Jack Blake uttered that remark as he looked out of the window of the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House next morning.

"It's jolly cold!" said Herries. "Must get up, I suppose. Blow that bell! I believe Taggles gets up earlier and earlier every morning to ring it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got to take Towser for a run before brekker," said Herries. "Buck up, you fellows, and come round the quad with me."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, turn out, you slacker!" said Herries, jumping out of bed.

"I wefuse to be called a slackah," said Arthur Augustus, sitting up in bed. "I shall be vewy pleased to have a wun wound the quad with you, Hewwies, but I bar Towshah. That wotten bulldog of yours has no wespect for a fellow's twousahs!"

"Go out in a blanket, then," suggested Digby.

"Weally, Digbay—"

"Faith, and I'm going for a slide, anyway!" said Reilly, jumping out of bed. "This is the first time it's frozen, and it will be thawing again soon."

The juniors dressed and went down in the cold, clear winter morning. The quadrangle was a sheet of white, and freezing hard.

The Shell were already down. The Third Form, too, had turned out early. Wally & Co. were making a slide under the windows of their Form-rooms, and were engaged upon it with loud shouts, the fags falling over as often as not as they slid to and fro.

"That's not a bad idea," said Jack Blake, stopping and looking on at the Third Form slide. "What do you fellows say?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm going to get Towser," said Herries. "I think it would be splendid exercise for Towser to buzz along a slide with me."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

But Herries did not stay to listen. He was marching off to fetch his unpopular favourite.

Wally & Co. glared round at the juniors as they came up to the slide. The slide had been started in the first place by some diminutive fags of the Second Form. Wally & Co. had descended upon them and driven them off and triumphantly taken possession of the slide. And it occurred to Wally that perhaps his elders entertained some idea of the same sort as they came up with grinning faces.

"What do you want here?" asked Wally, not very

amiably. "If you want a slide, make one for yourselves."

"Yes, rather!" said Jameson, with emphasis. "You're jolly well not coming on our slide, I can tell you."

Blake grinned.

"Cheek of these fags, to want a slide to themselves," he remarked. "Come on, you chaps! This slide just about suits my weight. Follow your uncle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get off!" yelled Wally.

But the Fourth Formers did not get off. They came on. A roar of indignation rose from the Third.

"Get off our slide!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We won't wear the thing out, you know," said Herries, coming back with Towser. "Quiet, Towsey!"

"Ah, good idea, Herries!" said Blake. "You can leave Towser at the beginning of the slide to keep these young beggars off!"

"Catch me! He's coming on the slide with me."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, yes, I know all about your trousers, Gussy!" grinned Herries, running towards the slide. "Look out! You're in the way."

Arthur Augustus turned an indignant gaze upon Herries, who, with Towser in advance, was bearing down on the slide. The swell of the School House just managed to avoid Towser, but he collided with Herries just as that junior reached the beginning of the slide, and they crashed to the ground. In a moment Blake and Digby, following behind, were mixed up with D'Arcy and Herries in the snow.

Wally & Co. were not slow to seize their opportunity. Hastily making snowballs, they pelted the Fourth Formers unmercifully. Arthur Augustus seemed to have a snowball in his eye in place of his monocle for quite five minutes. But the strength of the Fourth told in the end, and Wally and his friends had to give way.

When Blake, Herries, and Digby really set about them they had very little chance, and they were forced to vacate the slide. But not without a round of jeers and boogings and hooting and catcalls that rang far and wide.

Arthur Augustus eyed Herries severely.

"I don't mind bein' fwinded, despite your wuffianly conduct, deah boy," he said; "but I bar that wotten animal—"

"All right, Gussy!" said Herries. "Bar away. He'll go home all right, if you tell him nicely—I don't think!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Jack Blake & Co. were on the slide again in a moment, leaving Arthur Augustus a picture of outraged propriety. But the swell of the School House was as keen on winter sports as any of his chums, and he was soon enjoying himself.

Tom Merry & Co. joined in, and later Wally and his chums returned, and soon the Shell, Fourth, and Third were sliding away merrily, until the clang of the bell told the juniors that it was time for breakfast.

CHAPTER 10.

Mr. Selby Has a Shock.

MR. SELBY looked decidedly cross at the breakfast-table, and the Third Formers who had the honour and pleasure of breakfasting at his table were on their very best behaviour.

Mr. Selby's temper never was very good, and since his peculiar guest had been staying with him, it had been noticeably worse.

When breakfast was over—a relief to the Third Formers—Mr. Selby quitted the dining-hall of the School House and put on his hat and coat. He crossed the cold, windy quad in the direction of the quarters of his mysterious guest, picking his way through the snow, with a moody brow.

He entered the little porch, and went into the house, and found Dr. Wynde in the same room as before. The man was looking strangely pale and harassed, and he was buried in so profound a reverie that he did not hear the master of the Third enter the room.

Mr. Selby coughed loudly.

Still the doctor did not move. Mr. Selby came towards him and touched him on the shoulder. Then, with a sudden convulsive movement, Gerald Wynde sprang to his feet, his eyes blazing so strangely that the Form-master started back in surprise and alarm.

(Continued on page 14.)

So heavy has been the demand for the new Children's Bournville Cocoa, in every tin of which one of the Cococubs is presented free, that grocers have had to be rationed. Messrs. Cadbury Bros., Ltd., inform us, however, that every effort is being made to catch up with the demand; the toy makers are working day and night, and it is anticipated that full supplies will be available shortly. Ask Mother to arrange with the Grocer to reserve a tin of Children's Bournville Cocoa for her, should his stock run short. Two million Cococubs have been ordered, and they are being popped into the tins of cocoa as fast as they are delivered.

Get Together With Your Editor For A Chat.



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

HALLO, Chums! It is my great pleasure to place in your hands the twenty-eighth grand Christmas number of the GEM, and I know full well that you will enjoy its contents from cover to cover. It is a pleasant thought to me that for over twenty-eight years the GEM has provided first-class entertainment to some millions of readers. Actually the old paper is one of the oldest boys' publications in the world, which is sure proof of its lasting popularity. Only the best school stories, wholesome, healthy and true-to-life, are good enough for the GEM, and its proud record of being in the forefront of boys' papers for over a quarter of a century is a clear indication that its policy is the right one.

"THE OUTSIDER'S ENEMY!"

Next week there is on the programme another of those great St. Jim's stories of real human interest in which Martin Clifford always excels. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley comes into the limelight again. Ever since the Outsider reformed, Levison has endeavoured to entice him back to his old erring ways, but without avail. The resolute Outsider stands by his word, come what may. So it is that Levison has become Lumley's most bitter

enemy, and it needs only a little trouble with the Outsider to set the end of the Fourth seeking revenge. This is what

happens in next week's grand yarn, and under the treacherous guise of wanting to reform and be Lumley's friend, the

PEN PALS COUPON 15-12-34

Mr. Martin Clifford
and Mr. Edwy Searles
Brooks and the GEM
artists and staff ex-
tend to all readers
Best Wishes for a
Happy Christmas.

GRAND GIFT BOOKS.

Before I conclude let me offer two suggestions for Christmas presents. In the next few days parents and relatives will probably be trying to discover what you want. You cannot beat a good book. It is a lasting gift containing hours of happy entertainment. And two books that I strongly recommend are the ever-popular "Holiday Annual," price 6s., and the "Popular Book of Boys' Stories," price 2s. 6d. So drop a few discreet hints at home between now and Christmas—and I wish you all the best of luck.

TAILPIECE.

Mother: "Bobby, did you have a good time at the Christmas party?"

Bobby: "Yes, mother."

Mother: "Then why did you come away before it was over?"

Bobby: "Because I couldn't eat any more."

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, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

H. Cohen, 32, Eleanor Cross Roads, Waltham Cross, Herts, wants to hear from readers who will help in the formation of a pen pals club; stamps, boxing, football, and photography.

Emile Mahfood, 2, Heathfield Avenue, Upper Elleston Road, Kingston, Jamaica, wants pen pals in the British Empire; age 12-15; stamps.

J. H. Martin, Thornleigh, Romsley Hill, Halesowen, Wores, wants a pen pal at home or overseas; age 15-16; stamp collecting, cycling, sports, Pitman's shorthand.

Jack Anderson, 189, Ross Avenue, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada, wants to hear from stamp collectors in Sierra Leone, Gibraltar, Egypt, India, British Guiana, and West Indies.

Jack Sharp, Orona Street, Te Puke, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand, wants a pen pal in England or America; age 15-16; model aeroplanes.

Miss Joan Making, Lower Quinton, Stratford-on-Avon, wants girl correspondents.

Lucien Giquel, 62, Lower Main Road, Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa, wants correspondents in England, France, Australia, and Canada; age 13-15; swimming and news.

Vivian Hill, P.O. Box 19, Scottsburgh, Natal, South Africa, wants stamp correspondents in New Zealand, China, Austria, and Rumania.

Samuel Griffiths, 2, Wright Street, Woodstock, Cape Town,

South Africa, wants correspondents interested in sport; age 13-15; England, Australia, West Indies.

Bryan Dempster, Scottsburgh, Natal, South Africa, wants to exchange stamps; age 9-11; Borneo, Egypt, Belgian Congo.

John Wilson, 7, Franklin Street, Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa, wants correspondents in England and the Dominions; stamps, boxing.

Glen G. Smith, 82, Curtain Street, North Carlton, N.4, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wants a correspondent; swimming, shooting, boating.

Paddy Gilham, 97, Church Lane, Mill End, Rickmansworth, Herts, wants pen pals; cigarette cards, sports; age 13-15.

W. A. Hignett, 13, The Mount, Wallasey, Cheshire, wants to hear from stamp collectors in France, Italy, and Germany; also those interested in chess and model motor-boats; age 10-13.

Frank Hills, 12, Woodside Park Road, North Finchley, London, N.12, wants pen pals in the British Empire; age 14-17; sports, swimming, ships, films, camping.

Lionel R. Howe, 73, Station Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, wants pen pals in the British Empire; stamps; age 13-15.

M. McGuire, 71, Mason Street, Newport, W. 15, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wants pen pals in England, India, America; age 14-16; stamps and match labels.

Hugh Clifford Popen, 29, Malay Street, Moulmein, Burma, wants pen pals; Great Britain and New Zealand especially; swimming and snaps.

Cecil McFeeters, Moss Road, Shantallow, Londonderry, Ireland, wants correspondents anywhere; age 17-19; snaps.

Miss Margaret Kong, 123, Robinson Road, Hong Kong, China, wants girl correspondents; British Empire; age 17-18.

James Taylor, 116, East Claremont Street, Edinburgh, wants a correspondent in France; age 15-17; speed and sport.

The Spectre of St. Jim's!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Hands off!" said Wynde, in a low, thick voice. "It's a lie—it's a lie! There's nothing of the kind the matter with me. Merely a little fatigue, from overwork, that is all! Lies, I tell you—lies!"

The man gave a start. He seemed to be making a tremendous effort to collect himself, as if he knew that his faculties had been wandering.

"Oh! Is that you, Selby?"

"Yes, it is I!" said the Form-master irritably. "What do you mean? What are you talking about, Wynde?"

"I—I—I—"

"Why did you look at me like that when I came in?" demanded Mr. Selby abruptly.

"You—you startled me."

The man sank down into his seat again before the fire and turned his gloomy gaze upon the glowing embers. Mr. Selby watched him uneasily.

"What do you want?" said Gerald Wynde abruptly. "Why do you disturb me?"

"I've had a letter from a friend of yours."

Wynde turned a fierce look upon the Form-master.

"You have written, then—you have broken your promise with me—"

Mr. Selby made a gesture.

"I have not written. I have received a letter. It is merely a letter asking me if I know anything of you. Your friend and partner, Dr. Murray, has remembered that I knew you in former days, and it has occurred to him that I may know something of your present movements."

"Well?" said Wynde, avoiding the Form-master's gaze.

"He tells me that you have disappeared from your home—"

"You knew that."

"That you abandoned your practice and your experiments, without a moment's warning—"

"Well?"

"That your friends are all anxious and alarmed about your disappearance."

"Well?" said Wynde, for the third time.

"And he asks me if I have heard anything of you."

"You must tell him nothing," said Wynde harshly.

"Why not, Wynde?"

"Because I do not choose."

"What have you done?" said the Form-master, in a low, anxious voice. "Wynde, you cannot any longer disguise from me—I cannot disguise from myself—that you are in hiding. What have you done?"

"I have done nothing."

"I—I know that you have made many risky experiments," said the Form-master. "I know that you have been a cruel and un pitying vivisectionist, but I always understood that you would have sense enough to keep within the law. Is it possible, Wynde, that you have been mad enough to transgress it?"

"Mad?"

"Foolish enough, then," said Mr. Selby. "You have told me of experiments that have made me shudder with horror, and I am not a tender-hearted man. I am generally considered hard. Have you done anything—anything so horrible that you have had to fly from the law?"

Wynde looked at him strangely.

"No."

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No. 44. Vol. 1. (New Series.)

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! Here's wishing you all the merriest Christmas you've ever had!

Of course, you know Scotsmen don't celebrate Christmas till the New Year? Till the "present time" is "past," as it were. Sorry, Scots! Scotsmen make great pioneers, though. They like the "free" open spaces! "I think I heard your family spook last night," observed the visitor to Gussy's ancestral home. "A series of long moans, ending in a ghastly shriek." "Bai Jove, that wasn't our spook," said Gussy; "that was the waits!" Did you hear about the criminal who congratulated himself on having to serve a sentence at Christmas, because the days were shorter? That reminds me—can anybody give me a long sentence in three words, quickly. "Six months' hard!" If you're ever in "digs," I hope your landlady will be like the one who would never buy anything in round tins, because she liked to give her lodgers good square meals. Some acrobats I hear live largely on fruit. Evidently the stuff to give the troupes! "Why does a ship heel over?" inquires Skimpole. Because of the passenger "list." Ugh! Did you know Glyn has set up as a weather prophet? Crooke said he's "snow use," but Glyn doesn't often bear "false witness!" Excuse me—Gore on the phone. "What would I feel like if a tree fell on me?" asks Gore. An "unconscious humorist," undoubtedly! Shall I tell your fortune? You will shortly take a trip on the ocean, as the fortune teller said to the sailor. "Why are you always whistling?" demanded Grumpy, as Broadribs passed. "My dear chap, don't you know happiness always 'whistles past' the pessimist?" grinned Broadribs. "Ods bodikins!" cried good King Wenceslas, seeing his court fools shearing sheep in the courtyard. "My wits have gone wool-gathering!" "There is nothing so enlivening as to hurl a snowball!" declared Figgins. Unless it is to get one in the back of the neck! Gore says, in a snowfight between School House and New House, one thousand and forty-eight snowballs were thrown. Gore knows—he stopped one thousand of them! Said P.-c. Crump: "Here, this won't do. It's a last year's gun licence!" "That's all right," returned the sportsman. "I'm shooting the birds I missed last year!" That reminds me, when Wally D'Arcy complained that the temperature in the Form-room was below zero, Mr. Selby soon "made it hot" for him. Obliging! Remember, it's no use having "gooseflesh" in the early morning, or you will never last till "turkey-time." I don't "mince" my words, because I'd hate your "dessert" to overtake you. Here's hoping everything will be "bon-bon" and go with a "bang"! All right—don't "sleigh" me, boys!

Tom Merry

SAINTS vs THRILLING CHRISTMAS

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Ecoutez, mes enfants! Vive les Français! Vive les Anglais! Whoopee! As the result of an invitation from Lord Eastwood, la belle France has sent a football team, picked from some of her best public schools, to play against St. Jim's, at Eastwood House. Guss—my major, you know—is doing the honours in true British style, and the only unkind thing we hope to do to our visitors is to let them!

Here they come, a very fit lot of fellows believe me! Tom Merry and André Bayard, the French skipper, toss for choice of end. Bayard wins and chooses the light wind in his favour. Merry beckons his men. Saints! red shirts toe the line; French boys in white with a golden fleur-de-lis, face them. Phew! Ball's moving—Merry feints as though to "wing" the leather, then tips it to Lowther at his side. Merry and Lowther push through like a spear head, a tricky bout of short passing—beautiful work! Lowther decides a full back and taps the ball to Merry, giving him a great opening. Swish! Swift as a true, Merry drives the ball into the net—St. Jim's are one up in the first minute!

A reverse so early in the game is enough to put the French boys completely off their stroke. Mais, non! Like hounds unleashed they return to the attack. André Bayard, playing at outside-right, puts in a dazzling run which draws murmurs of approbation from the onlookers. Bayard veers in. Wally him, Wynn! It's a comet of a shot, and beats Fatty Wynn all the way. Scores level. Now what? The French boys are going for it. They sweep down on the St. Jim's citadel like a tidal wave! Bayard gets away again!

ST. FRANK'S TAME TIGERS

(By Clarence Fellowe, the Rhyming Reporter)

A challenge sent from Tigersyde commanded that St. Frank's should hide their heads in shame before a foe invincible with ball at toe! In open meeting, Nipper cried, "We'll never rest till Tigersyde have bit the dust and knuckled down—we'll have them learn of our renown!" Forthwith the game was played—oh joy! To see St. Frank's with skill deploy, filling the "Tigers" net with goals, as if the "tigers" had been "moles." By half-time, half a dozen up, St. Frank's were grinning—what a cup for boasting Tigersyde to drink! In it 'twas plain the pride would sink! At twelve to nil the foe was o'er—yes, Tigersyde were feeling sore!

Gerald Crooke dislikes Christmas crackers. For him they are not "hon-bon"!

George Figgins wants to organise a boxing tournament for Boxing Day. His champion, Fatty Wynn, however, is more interested in a sort of "box" which contains "tuck"!

ry's Weekly



Week Ending December 15th, 1934.

us FRANCE

ARE" AT EASTWOOD HOUSE

centring with beautiful precision at the feet of Franchot, the centre-forward. Franchot feints, wriggles past Kerr, and slams home a smasher that Fatty Wynn can only deflect into the net! Goal—France leads deservedly, 2-1.

Shades of Agincourt! What are our fellows doing? Fill up the wall with our English dead, as Henry V would have it! Packing the goal seems the only way to keep these avid Gauls from running up a cricket score! Oh, well saved, Fatty! He punched that one round the post. Next, please! Heck, that nearly beat our wizard of a Welshman! Franchot and his captain, Bayard, are a pair of untiring raiders. See, Bayard veers in again, to put France still further ahead! Half-time, France leading 3-1.

Here they come again. They're off! Merry sends Gussy away. Gussy spurts, centring to Merry. Merry leaps, just misses the ball—yes, but Lowther's there, to nod it home, beating Coquelin, in goal, easily. Something superb in the way Saints are coolly increasing pressure, playing scientific football, unruffled by a deficit. The French boys show short bursts of their previous form, but at back Figgins and Kerr are like twin Gibraltars now! Merry's at work again, instigating a sweeping attack. The ball comes to Blake, and the stolid Yorkshireman steers the leather straight home, with no mistake. Three goals all—but time's short.

France comes again, gallant as ever—Bayard goes very close, skimming the crossbar. Kangaroo relieves pressure. Blake and D'Arcy make ground, giving to Merry—and Tom Merry, unmarked, views the empty goalnet a fraction of a second before popping in the pill! Saints lead 4-3, and big-hearted Bayard's last effort goes just wide. Pheep! That's the final whistle. Just a moment, here's Bayard himself to say a word to you. André Bayard speaking:

"Merci, mes amis, merci, beaucoup. Your cheers give us fresh heart. We wish you the best of luck—till next time! Au revoir! And a merry Christmas!"

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?

Tom Merry: Definitely no!

Monty Lowther: A ghost is supposed to be made of nothing—and it's hard to believe in nothing!

Jack Blake: I'm plain Yorkshire—and Yorkshiremen prefer something they can get a grip on!

George Herries: I've asked my bulldog Towser, and he just grunts. I agree with him!

George Figgins: Personally, I never bother about ghosts till ghosts bother me!

George Kerr: As a Scot, I don't believe in "giving way" to any sort of fear!

Fatty Wynn: Ghosts are unsubstantial things, and anybody who can't put away a good square meal has my sympathy!

ST. JIM'S SPOTLIGHT

SKATING ON THIN ICE

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy performed some breath-taking evolutions on the lake at Eastwood House. Ignoring Blake's warning that the ice would not stand his weight, Gussy sped light as a bird over the shining surface. He startled his chums, who were watching, with a series of dazzling turns, and followed them up by describing a "figure eight" worthy of a professional. Forgetting caution, Blake hastily donned his skates and joined Gussy on the ice. Herries and Digby wisely remaining on the bank. For a few happy moments Gussy and Blake disported themselves on the thin ice—then, as they converged in the centre, there sounded an ominous cra-ack! Splash! Before they had time to think, Blake and Gussy were in up to their necks! Both being good swimmers, they kept their heads above water until Herries and Digby fetched a ladder and crawled out to their rescue. Wrapped in warm blankets before a roaring fire, Blake blamed Gussy for venturing on the ice—whereupon Gussy blamed Blake for adding his weight when it easily stood one! But as Digby remarked, whoever was to blame, it was "cold" comfort!

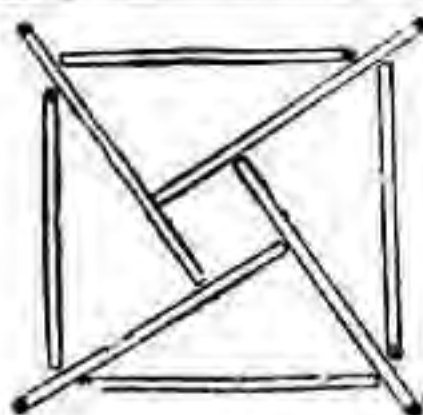
SINGING AT FULL BLAST

The Terrible Three and the four chums of Study No. 6 formed the mainstay of the party of waits which toured Eastwood village. Several local bigwigs, both male and female, had volunteered to sing carols in the cause of charity, but their intentions were stronger than their vocal chords. Amplified by the addition of seven lusty St. Jim's juniors, however, the Christmas waits did themselves more than justice! Gussy in particular fairly revelled in the opportunity of letting go his famous "tenor" voice. Blake and the rest, being unable to stop their cars, did their best to shout him down—with a truly deafening result! The collection swelled rapidly as the party moved from house to house, and at the finish they had a nice little sum. The St. Jim's juniors were heartily thanked—though as Tom Merry remarked, he will never be certain whether the donors gave so readily for charity, or merely to get rid of the amateur carollers!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

An Xmas party trick. Stand a glass full of water on a table, cover it with a handkerchief, and say you will drink it without your removing the handkerchief. How's it done? Pretend to drink the water through the cloth, tell someone to remove the handkerchief to prove the glass is empty, then drink the water!

Solution of
Last Week's
Puzzle



"Then why are you in hiding, for that is what it amounts to?"

"Suppose I have enemies?" said Wynde slowly, but with a strange, wild tone in his voice. "If I have enemies who threaten my liberty, what then?"

"But—but how can your liberty be threatened if you have committed no crime?" the Form-master exclaimed.

"It is possible."

"But how?"

"Are only criminals confined, then, in this country?"

"Only criminals—and lunatics," said Mr. Selby.

Wynde did not reply.

Mr. Selby gave a start and fixed a glance of horror upon his guest. He made a movement towards the door, and Wynde burst into a harsh laugh.

"You have guessed, then?"

"Wynde! Good heavens! I—I—"

Wynde made a gesture.

"You need not be alarmed. I am not mad," he said. "But it was simply the result of over-study, of too keen and protracted experiments—a touch of brain fever. But they would have placed me under restraint. Temporary restraint, they called it!" he added fiercely. "But I was not mad. It was lies! I am as sane as any other man; and if I hear in the night sometimes the shriek of animals that have died in my experiments that is simply the effects of over-strained nerves."

"Wynde!"

"I tell you I am sane. You will say that this has come as a judgment upon me for my cruelty to dumb and defenceless animals. Bah! I tell you I laugh at such stories. I am sane. But—but if they seized me, if they thrust me into a cell, who knows what might happen? Selby, you will not abandon me?"

"Good heavens!"

"Promise me, not a word to Murray—not a word to any of them."

"I—I promise!" gasped the Form-master.

"I shall be well soon. Well—quite well, too!" muttered Gerald Wynde, passing his hand over his brow. "You believe me, do you not?"

"Yes, yes."

"It is nothing. It is temporary—it is passing now. But—but sometimes in the night I—I have strange fancies. There is the White Monk. I have seen him."

"What?"

"It is fancy, is it not? I dreamed last night," muttered the man, "I dreamed that I was a spectre, haunting the shades of the woods. The trees were peopled with the eyes of the animals I have watched dying. Oh, their eyes—their eyes!" He broke off with a shudder. "Bah! Why do you put these morbid fancies into my mind? Leave me in peace!"

Mr. Selby rose to his feet. He backed out of the room, keeping his face towards the strange man, and closed the door quickly when he was in the passage.

As he strode out into the snowy quad once more Mr. Selby's face was as white as the snow that lay thickly all round him, and his eyes were fixed and set with horror.

CHAPTER 11.

Baffling Behaviour!

"**B**A! Jove, Wally! What's the mattah, kid?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy asked the question in tones of concern. He had come upon his minor in the passage, after school, standing by himself in the shadow, and squeezing his hands upon his arms.

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Wally's face was quite pale with pain, and his eyes were gleaming as though it required an effort on the fag's part to hold back the tears.

"Oh, it's Selby!" muttered Wally.

"Licked, deah boy?"

"Yes."

"What for?" asked Arthur Augustus.

As a rule, although Wally had a very generous allowance of impots and canings, he did his best to deserve them.

"Nothing."

"H'm!"

Wally snorted.

"You can sniff as much as you like, Cussy. I tell you it was for nothing, and I'll make the brute smart for it yet," he said.

"Weally, Wally—"

"He said I talked in class, and I didn't," said Wally. "He ought to have taken my word. Any decent man would."

"Yaas, wathah! It was decidedly bad form of him not to take your word, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

Wally gritted his teeth.

"I'll make him sit up!" he said.

"Weally, Wally. I cannot extend my approval to any scheme for makin' your Form-master sit up, as you wathah coarsely express it," said D'Arcy.

"Lucky I can get on without your approval, then, isn't it?" Wally remarked.

"Weally, Wally—"

Wally walked away without waiting for his stately major to finish. D'Arcy shook his head seriously. He was sorry for Wally, and very much annoyed with Mr. Selby, but he could not see that anything was to be done.

But Wally could. Whether it was his sick relation who

was troubling him or not, Mr. Selby had no right to visit his worries upon his boys in the Form by canings.

Wally was determined to make his Form-master "sit up," and he walked quickly in the direction of Mr. Selby's study.

He tapped at the door. He had an excuse ready if the study was occupied; but it was vacant. There was no reply, and Wally entered quickly and closed the door behind him.

He glanced round the study. The fire was laid ready for Mr. Selby, but it was not yet lighted. It was Wally's kind and amiable intention to stuff the grate with jumping crackers, to afford a little surprise for Mr. Selby when he came in and put a match to the fire.

But the scamp of the Third had no time to carry out his nefarious plan. Suddenly there was a touch on the handle of the study door.

Wally made one jump behind a bookcase that stood across the corner of the room. The next moment the door opened.

From where he stood Wally could see the reflection of the newcomer in the glass over the mantelpiece. He expected the reflection to be that of Mr. Selby. But it was not. He started a little as he recognised the white, strained, strange face of Mr. Selby's mysterious guest, Gerald Wynde.

So far as D'Arcy minor knew, Dr. Wynde had never entered the School House up till now. Yet now he came into the Fourth Form master's study with as much assurance as if the place belonged to him.

Wally was bitterly exasperated. He guessed that the sick man had come there to see Mr. Selby, and it was very probable that he would remain in the room until the Form-master arrived. In that case, Wally's imprisonment was likely to be a long one. As for revealing himself, that was not to be thought of for a moment.

He heard the newcomer close the study door, and then there was silence. What was the man doing?

Wally knew that he would have heard him if he had sat down. Yet could he be standing up, motionless, silent? A peculiar, creepy feeling came over Wally as he crouched behind the bookcase with bated breath. The silence in the study was so dead that he felt as if he must be alone in the room, and yet he knew that the stranger was there. What was he doing in that dead silence? What could he be doing?

Curiosity, and a strange eerie feeling of alarm, induced Wally to take the risk of peeping out from behind the bookcase. He caught a glimpse of the back of the man's head—the man had his back towards Wally. The fag ventured to look out more boldly, and then he almost cried out aloud in his amazement.

The stranger was standing in front of the looking-glass on the mantelpiece, regarding his reflection in it. Wally could see the reflection as well as the man, and he saw that the man was making strange grimaces at his face in the looking-glass.

He rolled his eyes, and twisted his lips, and wrinkled his forehead, in a series of hideous and meaningless grimaces, which indicated an unbalanced state of mind as clearly as anything could do.

Wally was rooted to the floor. He forgot that if he could see the man's reflection in the glass the man must also be able to see his reflection, if he cast his eyes in the right direction.

The fag stared blankly. Was the man mad? What was he making those horrible grimaces for, in the silence of the study? Wally felt his very flesh creep.

Suddenly Wynde gave a start.

Wally shivered. He knew that the man had caught his reflection, peeping from behind the bookcase, in the depths of the mirror.

The man swung round with a hoarse exclamation, and Wally gave a faint cry and sprang out from his place of concealment, ready to make a desperate run for the door. But in that single moment Gerald Wynde collected his wandering mind with a powerful effort, and assumed a perfectly natural manner.

"Dear me!" he said in an easy voice. "You startled me! Did you come here to see my friend, Mr. Selby?"

"I—I—" stammered Wally.

Dr. Wynde laughed.

"Ah! Some junior trick, I suppose?" he said.

"I—I—"

"Don't be afraid! I will not betray you to Mr. Selby," said Gerald Wynde. "You need have no fear, my boy."

"Th-thank you, sir!" muttered Wally.

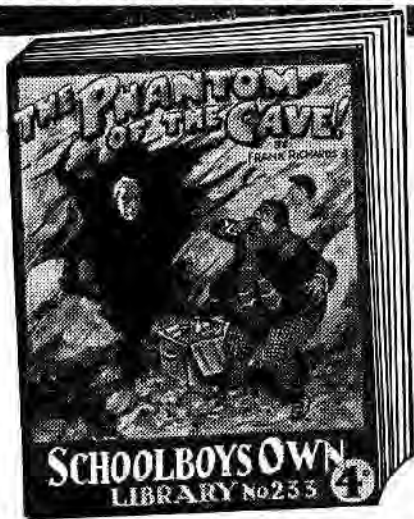
The door opened, and Mr. Selby came in. He gave a slight start at the sight of Wynde and the fag of the Third. He had expected to find his study empty.

"Wynde—you here!"

"Evidently," said Dr. Wynde.

"And D'Arcy minor—"

"I was whiling away the time talking to this extremely



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interesting youth," said Gerald Wynde, with a smile. "I have been quite entertained while I have been waiting for you, my excellent friend."

Mr. Selby frowned.

"You may go, D'Arcy minor!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir!"

Wally left the study gladly enough. But he was in a state of amazement, mingled with alarm. What kind of a man was this Dr. Wynde? What did those strange and horrible grimaces in the glass mean? To Wally it seemed as if the man must be mad. What did it all mean?

CHAPTER 12.

The Unwelcome Guest!

MR. SELBY fixed his eyes on his strange visitor when the door had closed behind D'Arcy minor.

The puckering of the Third Form master's brow, the glitter in his deep-set eyes showed how angry he was, and how hard he found it to keep his anger in control. But his voice was quiet enough as he spoke.

"What did you come here for, Wynde?"

Wynde watched him with a strange, cunning look.

"To see you, and to speak to you," he said.

"I could have come over to you."

"I preferred to come here. I suspected that perhaps you would not come."

Mr. Selby shifted uneasily.

"Why?" he muttered.

"I suspected that after what you discovered to-day, that you might write to Dr. Murray, or to my relations."

The Form-master was silent.

He stood near the door, and showed no disposition to come nearer. Wynde saw it, and burst into an angry, mocking laugh.

"You are afraid of me!" he exclaimed.

The colour wavered in Mr. Selby's face.

"N-nothing of the sort!" he stammered. "I—I—What an absurd idea!"

"You think I am mad."

"My dear Wynde—"

"But I am not," said Wynde, speaking very rapidly and thickly. "I assure you on that point. Hallucinations I may have had; I may hear noises; see strange things sometimes— He paused, and cast a peculiar glance about the study. "But I am sane—as sane as you are!"

The perspiration was thick upon Mr. Selby's brow. He was not a man of courage, or of steady nerves.

"Yes, yes—of course," he muttered.

"Strange fancies—fancies, mind you—do not make a man mad," said the doctor. "Do you dare to say that they do?"

"No, no!"

"Do you see that dog—"

Mr. Selby started violently.

"What dog?" he asked.

"The one that is sitting there beside the bookcase with the hile in its neck," said the other. "You see it, do you not?"

"There is no dog there," muttered Mr. Selby.

The other made an irritable gesture.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I should think it is plain enough!"

I have seen that brute every night—every night since—no matter! If I had my time again I should not make the experiments I have made. But it is too late to think of that. I wish that I did not see that dog wherever I go."

"My heavens!" muttered the Form-master.

"There! It is gone!" said Wynde thickly, and with a relieved look. "You see that it is gone now. Would you call that an hallucination?"

"It was an hallucination!" panted the Form-master. "For goodness' sake pull yourself together, Wynde, and do not let these strange fancies take possession of your mind! That way madness lies."

Wynde nodded.

"I know it!" he said. "I tried to keep myself in hand. What I require is rest—complete rest. When I am in health again I shall see that horrible dog no more. I know that! Yet one has the strangest fancies. I was reading in the book of that old monk—the White Monk of St. Jim's—"

"Do not speak of that."

I had the strangest fancy. It seemed to me that he rose into my view out of the musty old pages of that book, and that his soul passed into my body and animated me," said Wynde, in a low, strained voice. "Strange, was it not?"

"For goodness' sake, do not say such a thing!"

"You fear that someone might hear?"

"If they heard, you would be supposed mad, and—and taken away," said Mr. Selby. "You would be supposed—"

"But you will let me remain here in safety?"

"Yes, yes!"

"In this house—in your room?"

Mr. Selby started.

"Is not your own room—your own quarters—comfortable enough?" he muttered huskily.

"They might take me from there without you knowing," said Dr. Wynde, in a low, cunning voice. "Do you understand? And you might betray me. Who knows? I prefer to remain here. I can share your bed-room to-night."

Mr. Selby shuddered.

"The room next to mine is vacant," he said. "I will obtain that for you. I will have your things sent into it."

"Thank you, Selby! You are a true friend to me!"

Mr. Selby left the study and closed the door after him. In the passage he paused to wipe his damp brow with his handkerchief.

"Oh, Heaven!" he muttered. "What am I to do—what shall I do? I—I have had to break my word to him—to write to Dr. Murray that the man is here! He is mad! But—but Murray cannot be here till to-morrow. I shall endure mental torture for twelve hours yet! Yet I should have guessed this at the first! Who but a madman would have acted as he has done? I was blind to what was obvious!"

He started out of his bitter reverie. Two fags came dashing along the passage. They were Jameson and Curly Gibson. They stopped at the sight of Mr. Selby; but it was too late.

(Continued on the next page.)

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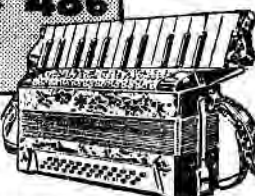
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"Jameson! Gibson!"

"Ye-es, sir?"

"Come here!"

The two culprits reluctantly approached. In his present state of mind, torn with anxiety and fear, Mr. Selby hardly knew what he was about. He glared at the fags.

"How dare you race about the passage in that manner!" he exclaimed.

"If you please, sir——"

"Take a hundred lines each!" said the Form-master harshly. "Were you going to my study?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Mind that you do not!" said Mr. Selby. "Tell the others that they are not to go to my study this evening under any pretext whatever. Do you understand?"

"Ye-es, sir," said Jameson and Gibson together, in wonder.

"Now go!"

They went gladly enough.

In the Form-room passage they found Wally, in talk with his major. Jameson tapped the scamp of the Third on the shoulder.

"Seen old Selby?" he asked.

"Yes. What about it?"

"He seems to be going dotty, that's all," said Jameson. "He says that nobody is to go to his study this evening on any excuse whatever. What's the little game?"

"He's got his precious friend there," said Wally.

"Oh, the sick man?"

"Yes. And I reckon his sickness is in the brain not in the body," said Wally. "I watched him making horrible faces at himself in the glass."

"Great Scott!"

"He's as mad as a hatter," said Wally. "And Selby is afraid the fellows will see him. Nice state of things, eh, bringing lunatics into the House? Blessed if I should go to sleep to-night if that chap were staying in the School House!"

"It's wemarkable!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "Vewy wemarkable! Mr. Selby seems not at all himself since the man came."

"He seems to be simply potty!" said Jameson crossly.

"The man's his relation—it runs in the family!" said Wally, with a grin.

D'Arcy gave him his minor a severe look.

"Weally, Wally, it is your duty to tweek Mr. Selby with great respect and considewation, undah the peculiar circes of the case," he said.

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Wally——"

"Come on, kids! Gussy will go on talking all night!" said Wally cheerfully.

"You cheeky young wascal——"

The Form-room door banged and cut short Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's remarks.

In the Third Form Room the fags listened, with exclamations of wonder, to what Wally & Co. had to tell them. And the heroes of the Third made up their minds at once upon two points—that Mr. Selby's friend was "off his rocker" and that Mr. Selby himself was not in a much better state. Which would not have been very gratifying to Mr. Selby if he had heard it.

CHAPTER 13.

The Ghost Walks!

"BED-TIME, you kids!" said Kildare, as he looked into the Junior Common-room that night.

"Weally, Kildare——"

"The captain of St. Jim's pointed to the clock.

"Half-past nine!" he said.

"I am not objectin' to the time, but to the expression 'kids,'" explained Arthur Augustus. "I weally considah that——"

"Buzz off!"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Kildare——"

"Exactly! Go to bed!"

And the St. Jim's captain walked away, laughing.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon his companions, who were grinning.

"I can see nothin' whatever to gwin at, deah boys!" he said.

"Go on!" Monty Lowther rose and yawned. "I wonder if the ghost will be walking to-night?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom Merry. "I suggest Gussy wraps himself up in a blanket and keeps watch in the passage all night."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

The juniors trooped out of the Common-room. They passed Mr. Selby in the passage. The master of the Third

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did not look at them; he was going towards his study with a dark, troubled frown upon his brows and his eyes on the floor. The chums of the School House looked at him in wonder.

"Look at the effect your young brother has on a Form-master, Gussy," Tom Merry remarked.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"He does look bothered, and no mistake!" said Blake.

"I wonder what the row is? It's since that sick friend of his has been staying here that he's looked so rotten, and Wally says he's been a perfect cannibal in the Form-room all the time. I've seen the man, and I don't see what there is in him to worry old Selby so much."

"Selbay may be vewy anxious about his fwien's health, deah boy."

"Yes, he looks the kind of man to worry about whether other people are well or not—Selby does!" Blake agreed sarcastically.

"The chap may be sticking here without being wanted," Levinson remarked.

"I guess that's the case," observed Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth. "I guess Mr. Selby would get rid of him if he could; to judge by his looks."

"Then why doesn't he?"

"Owes him money, perhaps," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Bai Jove!"

"The man seems harmless enough," said Manners. "I've seen him several times in the school library and museum, and he seems amused by looking over the old manuscripts and the relics of the abbey of St. Jim's. That's a good taste in a man."

"Yes; you'll be a dusty old boulder like that when you grow up," said Lowther, with a yawn. "Chap who starts photographing at your age is bound to come to that. I think——"

"No, you don't!" growled Manners. "You can't! Good-night, you Fourth Form kids!"

"Weally, Mannabs——"

And the Shell fellows went on to their own quarters. They turned in, some of them discussing the spectre of St. Jim's and the probability or otherwise of his reappearance. Gore did not take part in the discussion. Although Gore had come to the conclusion, like the rest, that the ghost he had seen was a practical joker in ghostly guise, the subject always made him silent and nervous after dark.

Kildare came into the dormitory and glanced along the row of beds.

"Now, then—all in?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

The light went out, and Kildare quitted the Shell dormitory. In the darkness the juniors did not feel so inclined to talk ghosts. They talked football instead, and Christmas holidays, till one by one they dropped off to sleep.

Outside the wind was moaning through the leafless branches of the elms, and the flakes of snow were silently, steadily falling.

There was a glimmer of moonlight over the old clock tower, gleaming upon the white mantle of snow that stretched over the quad and the roofs of St. Jim's.

Perhaps it was the wind that awakened Tom Merry.

He started from his slumber and lay in his bed, listening, wondering what had broken his sleep.

The low moan of the wind, the creaking of the branches, came from the quadrangle, and sometimes a faint, thudding sound as a mass of snow rolled from a slanting roof down into the quad below.

There was a gleam of moonlight upon the panes of the dormitory windows, but the long, lofty room was in deep darkness.

Tom Merry closed his eyes again.

He started, and his eyes came open again at once. Whether it was that sound that had awakened him before, he did not know; but decidedly there was no doubt about it now. He knew that creak of the loose board in the dormitory passage.

It was a footstep.

Tom Merry sat up in bed.

The White Monk—the spectre of St. Jim's—rushed into his mind at once.

He shivered for a moment.

What was the hour? In answer to the unspoken thought there came a chiming from the clock tower.

The four quarters, and then the hour Twelve!

Midnight!

All St. Jim's was sleeping then.

Who was it that passed the door of the Shell dormitory when the rest of the school was wrapped in slumber?

Creak!

Tom Merry caught his breath.

There was a faint sound at the door and he knew that it was opening. The boy sat still in bed with growing terror. What did it mean? Who was coming into the dormitory? Good heavens! What was going to happen?

His straining eyes were fixed upon the black aperture which was the doorway. The door was open now. The draught of cold air told him that.

Dimly, faintly, terrible in the gloom, a white figure loomed up.

Tom Merry uttered a cry.

Faint as the cry was, it sounded through the dormitory, and awakened several of the other juniors.

There was a creak as the door closed.

The figure was gone.

Tom Merry sprang out of bed.

"Wake, you fellows! Wake up!"

"What is it?"

"I've come to call you chaps," said Tom Merry, in a low, determined tone. "The ghost is walking, and I think it ought to be followed and shown up, whatever it is. I had a frightful scare. It looked into the dorm."

"Bai Jove!"

"What did you do?" asked Jack Blake, who was already out of bed.

"Nothing."

Blake chuckled softly.

"It vanished when I gave a cry," said Tom Merry. "Then I came along here, with Manners and Lowther."

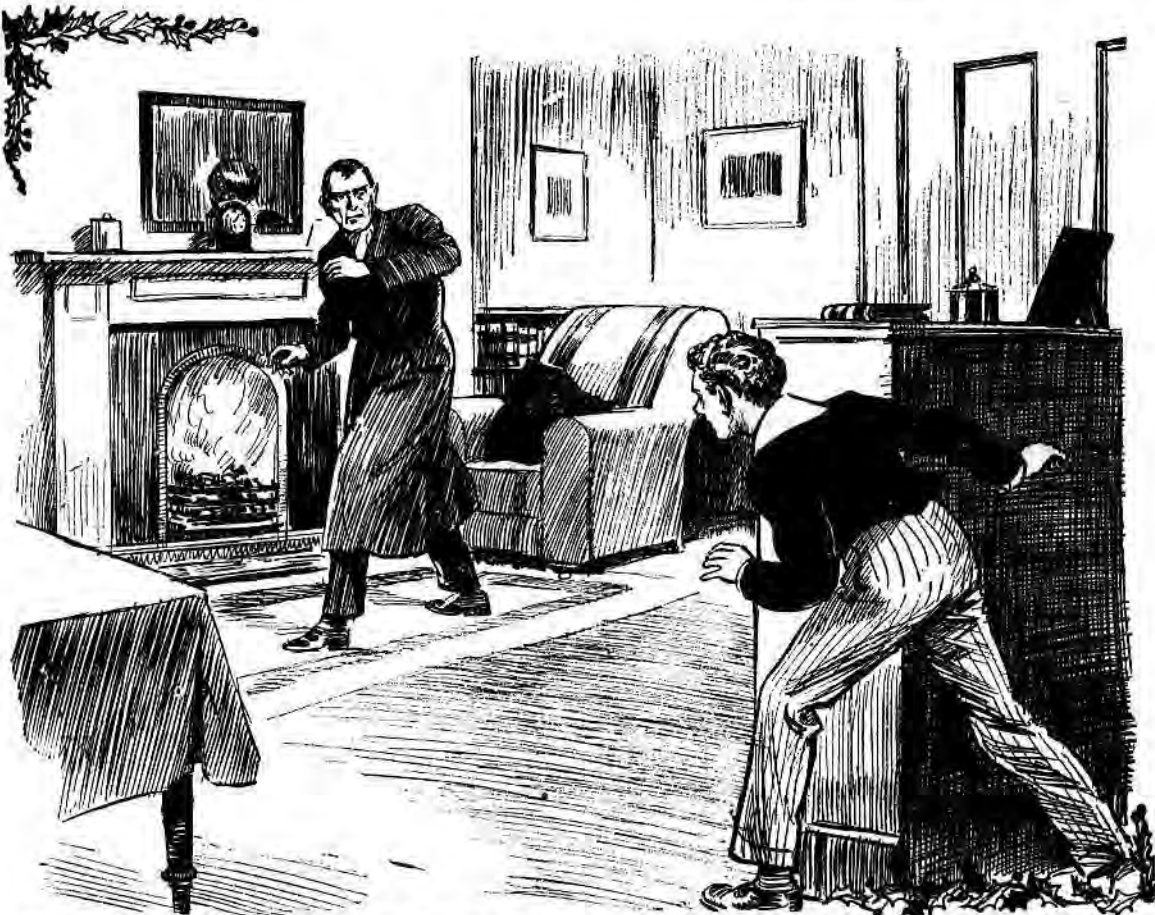
"My hat, I shouldn't have cared to go out into the passage, I think!" said Hancock, with a shudder.

"We thought we'd call you chaps to help us."

"Right-ho!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's have a light," said Herries.



Wally felt his flesh creep as he saw Dr. Wynde making horrible grimaces to himself in the glass. But suddenly the man gave a start and swung round with a hoarse exclamation. Wally sprang out from behind the bookcase. Dr. Wynde had spotted his reflection in the glass!

"What's the matter?"

"I've seen it!"

"Seen what?"

"The White Monk! Wake up!"

CHAPTER 14.

The Ghost Hunters!

"**B**AI Jove, you know!"

Arthur Augustus murmured the words in surprise as he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, without being fully awake.

"Pway don't shake me, deah boy. It is not wisin'-bell yet, and I refuse to be disturbed! Pway go away!"

"Gussy"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy opened his eyes wide.

"Bai Jove, is that you, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes."

"What is the mattah?"

"The ghost is walking."

"Gweat Scott!"

"No, no!" said Tom Merry hastily. "Somebody is playing ghost, and if we're going to catch him we shall have to be careful. If he knows he's being looked for, he's only got to whip off his disguise, and he's safe. We've got to catch him in the act."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Hark!"

The juniors stood quite still, listening tensely.

There was a creak from the passage. Tom Merry had left the door open when he came in with Manners and Lowther, and the sound was clearly heard by all who were awake in the dormitory.

Creak!

Someone was passing in the passage!

Every eye in the Fourth Form dormitory was fixed upon the open doorway—a blacker space than the wall in the darkness.

Did they see for a moment something that was white and

glimmering pass the doorway, with a faint rustle as of ghostly robes?

They could not be sure.

If so, it was gone in a second.

"I—I think I saw something!" muttered Manners.

"And I," said Monty Lowther, in a shaking voice—"I can't be sure, but—but I—I think I did!"

Blake set his teeth to keep them from chattering.

"Let's go after it!" he muttered.

"Ya-a-as, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, in a hesitating voice.

"I guess I'm coming!" said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Come on, then," Tom Merry said firmly. "It must be a trick—it simply must be! It can't be anything else. Come on!"

"Ya-as, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. moved silently and cautiously towards the doorway. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther; Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy; and Reilly and Lumley-Lumley made up the party. The other fellows preferred to remain in bed. But there were enough of them to tackle the ghost if it proved to be of human flesh and blood.

Tom Merry reached the doorway, and paused as he looked out into the passage.

Darkness met his gaze.

Up and down the passage he looked, but there was nothing to be seen—nothing to be heard!

At the farther end of the passage a glimmer of moonlight through the window dispersed the gloom to some extent, and the darkness was broken.

Tom Merry gave a sudden start as his eyes turned again in that direction.

There was a glimmer of white in the gloom.

With starting eyeballs the hero of the Shell looked. There was a deep breath from the juniors round him—they could see what he saw!

From the darkness a figure emerged into dim view—the figure of a monk of olden time, with the cowl covering his face.

In full, clear view the strange and terrible form passed before the vision of the juniors. Then it vanished into the darkness.

CHAPTER 15.

Run to Earth!

FOR a full minute there was a dead silence among the juniors.

All of them were pale, stricken with a strange horror by what they had seen.

The spectre had appeared soundlessly, and had disappeared again. What was it? Whence did it come? Where had it gone?

Tom Merry was the first to recover himself.

He made a movement to leave the dormitory; but Monty Lowther caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, Tom!" he muttered.

"The thing's gone down the passage," said Tom Merry. "We can follow it."

"Bai Jove!"

"Just a minute," muttered Lowther. "I—I feel a bit shaken up. Hang it all, Tom, I don't know that I want to get at close quarters with that horrible thing! Suppose—"

"Suppose what?"

"Well, suppose—"

"Don't be an ass, Monty," said Tom Merry, in low and steady tones. "A real ghost wouldn't make the floor creak in the passage."

"I—I suppose not. But—"

"I'm weedy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy firmly. "I'm quite weedy, deah boy. I am quite sure that it is only a wotten jape."

"You ready, you chaps?"

"Ye-es."

"Come on, then!"

Tom Merry led the way from the Fourth Form dormitory, and ran along the passage. He reached the corner where the ghost had disappeared.

It was not in sight.

Darkness surrounded him, and nothing more. The juniors gathered round him again. All was dark and silent; the spectre monk had vanished, as if for ever.

"Bai Jove! It's gone, you know!" muttered D'Arcy.

"Come on!"

"Going to follow it?" muttered Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes."

The juniors tramped determinedly down the passage. Through that passage, and several others, they sought the ghostly figure.

But no trace of it was seen.

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Angry and disappointed, and with a peculiar creepy feeling of nervousness, they returned to the dormitory passage.

"It's vanished," muttered Manners.

"Gone downstairs, perhaps," said Blake.

Tom Merry set his lips.

"If it's finished for to-night, we can't find it," he said angrily. "But—oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Run!"

It was the White Monk!

From the darkness the white, ghostly figure had suddenly emerged, close to the juniors, and was advancing swiftly upon them, its arms outstretched.

In the sudden alarm they forgot that they were hunting for the ghost, and were anxious to encounter it.

With startled cries they bolted back into the dormitory.

They rushed in, and amazed cries from the other fellows greeted them in answer to their own startled and terrified ejaculations.

But the phantom did not follow them into the dormitory; it vanished.

"Great Scott!" gasped D'Arcy. "I—I think I've had enough of ghost-hunting, deah boy. I—I have been thwown quite into a fluttah."

"What's the matter?" shouted Jones minor.

"The ghost!"

"The White Monk!"

"Ya-as, wathah! Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry burst into a laugh, half-amused and half-exasperated. The sudden ending of the ghost-hunt had been ridiculous enough.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I do not see anything to cackle at!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in indignant surprise.

"Well, I do," growled Tom Merry. "We went out to hunt the ghost, and as soon as we saw it we ran like a lot of frightened rabbits."

"I wufuse to be called a fwightened wabbit!"

"Well, come on!" said Tom Merry. "We're jolly well going to stop the ghost walking!"

"I'm ready!" growled Blake.

"Come on, then!"

Tom Merry & Co. moved towards the doorway once more. They were in an angry and resolute mood now, and not likely to run again. But the ghost was not to be seen in the passage. They scanned the passages up and down, but there was no glimmer of white in the darkness. Blake muttered a sudden, suppressed exclamation.

"Look!"

"Where?"

"On the stairs!"

In the dense darkness of the big staircase there was a glimmer of white. The juniors crept towards it noiselessly. The white figure flitted down the stairs.

It made no noise, and it was so phantom-like in looks and movements that a weird and eerie feeling came over the ghost-hunters.

But they followed it bravely.

The phantom paused on the landing.

The juniors passed on.

They drew nearer and nearer. And then the strange figure appeared to become aware of their presence.

It flitted on in the gloom, when they were almost within reaching distance of the ghostly, rustling, white robes.

Tom Merry set his teeth, and ran towards it as it reached the foot of the staircase on the lower passage.

His hand brushed against the floating, monkish robes, but they glided through his fingers, and the phantom fled on.

Click! A door closed suddenly in the darkness ahead.

A moment more, and the juniors were outside the door that hid the White Monk of St. Jim's from their sight. They did not open it. Breathless, panting, they paused there in the darkness.

"Whose room is it?" muttered Blake.

"I don't know."

"Either Mr. Selby's or the next one to it," muttered Monty Lowther.

Lumley-Lumley had his torch with him, and he pressed the switch. A gleam of brilliant light shone out. He turned it upon the doorway and the wall above, and they could see the number of the room. Tom Merry pointed to it.

"It's not Mr. Selby's room," he said, "it's the next—the vacant bed-room, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

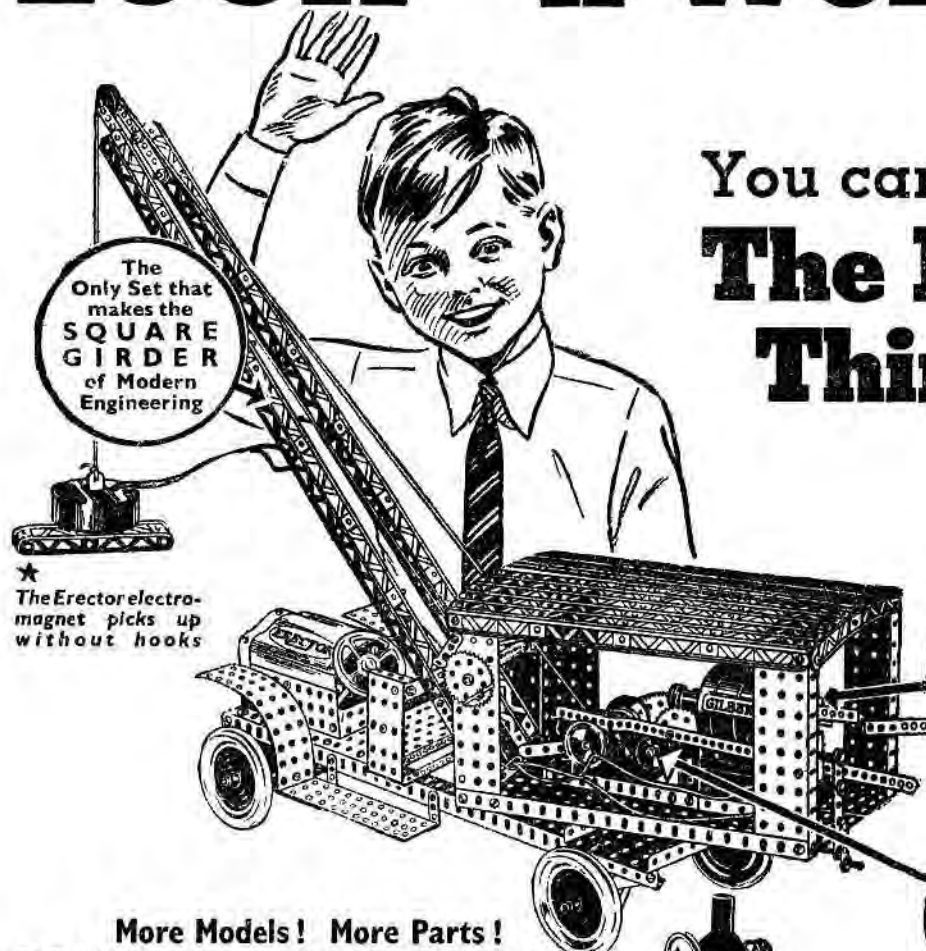
"What's the matter, Gussy?"

"The bed-room is occupied now. Tom Mewwy. I weembah seein' the maids gettin' it weady this evenin'—"

(Continued on page 22.)

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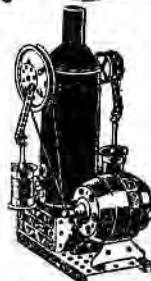
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"Oh!"

"Mr. Selby's friend has moved into it."

"I—I didn't know that," muttered Tom Merry. "I—"

Lumley-Lumley uttered a startled ejaculation.

"Let me look at your hand, Tom Merry."

"My hand?"

"Yes. Did you touch the ghost?"

"I just touched him; that was all."

"And he was solid—"

"His clothes were, at any rate."

All the juniors looked at Tom Merry's hand as the electric light gleamed on it. The fingers were white with chalk.

"Chalk!" muttered Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That's what makes the ghost white," said Tom Merry, with a slight smile. "He has taken the monk's robes out of the school museum and chalked them all over the outside. It's an easy way of making up as a ghost."

"Yaas, wathah!"

It was quite certain now. That the phantom of St. Jim's was a practical joker the juniors were now assured, and all fear of the supernatural had vanished from their minds. Yet they hesitated to enter the bed-room.

"We must go in," said Tom Merry at last. "If Dr. Wynde wakes up, we can explain. The rotter, whoever he is, has dodged into this room to escape us, and he may frighten Dr. Wynde to fits if he wakes up and sees him. He is not in good health, you know."

"Yaas, wathah! As a mattah of fact, Dr. Wynde is a little off his weekah already, and a shock like that might send him wight off!"

"Yes. We'll go in—"

"What is that? Who is there?"

It was a sudden, sharp voice from behind the juniors.

"Bai Jove! That's Selby!"

CHAPTER 16.

The Ghost is Laid!

MR. SELBY, half-dressed, suddenly came out of his room, and his face was pale in the light of the torch.

The Third Form master had not slept that night. The burden of Dr. Wynde's secret upon his mind was more than sufficient to banish slumber. The whispering voices in the passage close to his door had reached his ears, and he came out with an angry and frowning brow. He stared at the group of Fourth Formers and Shell fellows in amazement.

"What are you boys doing out of bed?" he demanded sternly.

"The ghost, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"We have seen it, sir," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Really, Merry—"

"It is someone playing ghost, sir—he has the old monk's robes, and has chalked them white," said Blake eagerly. "Some of the chalk came off on Tom Merry's hand when he touched him."

"Oh, indeed! And do you know where the trickster is now?"

"He went into this room, sir."

Mr. Selby started.

"In that room—the room next to mine?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"But—but my friend, Dr. Wynde—I—I mean, my relation is in that room, and—"

"The ghost went in there, sir."

A strangely startled and scared look came over Mr. Selby's face. It seemed as if a dark and terrible suspicion had entered his mind.

In the silence a sudden sound came from the room outside which the juniors were grouped.

"Take it away—take it away!"

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation.

The words could convey only one meaning to his mind—that the occupant of the room had awakened, and had seen the ghostly figure, and was crying out in terror at the sight.

Quick as thought, Tom Merry threw the bed-room door open. Mr. Selby shouted to him.

"Stop—stop! I forbid you to enter!"

But it was too late.

Tom Merry had dashed into the room.

Blake, the first to follow, felt for the switch inside the door as he entered, and turned it on.

There was a sudden flood of light in the room.

It disclosed a strange and startling scene.

The bed was unoccupied. Its appearance showed that it had not been slept in. There was but one occupant in the room.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,400.

It was the White Monk!

The gaunt figure, in trailing, monkish gown, with the cowl hiding the face with the exception of two gleaming eyes, stood before the juniors, so close that they could have touched it. But in the glaring light it did not look ghostly.

The robes, the cowl, the figure, were all evidently solid, and in the light the juniors could see that the white was caused by chalk thickly daubed over the outside of the cowl and the gown.

"Here he is!" gasped Blake.

"But—but—" Tom Merry staggered in surprise. "Where is Dr. Wynde—he is not here! There is no one in the bed."

Mr. Selby, in the doorway, heard the words, and groaned. They confirmed his suspicion. But it was too late to conceal the truth from the juniors.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at the strange figure.

It was not a phantom. But there was something weird, something terrible, in the figure in monkish garb, and in the wild, unnatural gleam of the eyes that shone under the ghostly cowl.

Tom Merry stepped desperately forward and dragged back the cowl from the man's face. There was a cry of astonishment.

"Great Scott!"

"Wynde!"

Mr. Selby groaned.

"Gerald Wynde! I guessed it! And he is mad!"

"Mad!" muttered the juniors, in hushed tones of horror.

They retreated instinctively to the doorway, their eyes upon the face of the insane doctor. Gerald Wynde was staring fixedly at the empty corner of the room.

"Take it away! Mercy!"

"What is it?" muttered Tom Merry, and his voice was shaking in spite of himself. "What is it you fear?"

"The dog!"

"There is no dog there!"

"You lie! Can you not see his eyes—his eyes—oh, Heaven! Take him away!" The man swung suddenly round towards the juniors, his gleaming eyes turning upon them wildly. "What do you want here? I am not mad—I am not mad! I am sane—quite sane! It is all lies!"

"Go!" muttered Mr. Selby, in a trembling voice. "Go—at once! I will look after him!"

The juniors moved quietly away.

Mr. Selby entered the room and closed the door after him. With silent footsteps, Tom Merry & Co. returned to their dormitory.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy murmured, as they reached the dormitory passage. "I undahstand it all now. That's why that chap was keeping so close—and why Selby was so wowwied about him—because he was weally off his weekah!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"He's as mad as a hatter," he said. "I think it's been getting worse for him—he certainly wasn't like that before. It's horrible, but I'm glad we've laid the ghost. The lunatic might have done some harm if he had not been stopped."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good-night, you kids!"

And the Shell fellows went to their own dormitory. But there was little sleep for them that night.

The Spectre of St. Jim's was laid!

With hushed breath the juniors told the story the next day, and the strange, eerie tale thrilled all St. Jim's. There had been a ghost—not a phantom visitor from another world, but a victim of a diseased and deluded imagination, who was evidently not responsible for his insane actions.

The sick man, studying the old manuscripts of St. Jim's in his dull hours of leisure and idleness, had come upon the story of the White Monk, with strange old pictures illustrative of the story, and it had taken a hold upon his diseased imagination. With the peculiar tendency to cunning trickery that is characteristic of diseased minds, he had made up the ghostly garb. Yet while he was playing ghost at the school, he was haunted himself by phantoms still more terrible—phantoms that were conjured up only by his own wild fancy, but real and fearful to him.

In the morning came Dr. Murray, and the strange guest of St. Jim's departed in his care, and though many of the fellows felt sorry for him, they—and Mr. Selby—were glad enough when he had quitted the school.

The ghost-hunters duly celebrated the laying of the ghost, and over the festive board they drank merry toasts in ginger-beer, and especially a merry Christmas to themselves and to everybody else, including the Spectre of St. Jim's.

(Look out next week for another grand yarn of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled: "THE OUTSIDER'S ENEMY!"—starring Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.)

A Thrill-a-line Story Of Eerie Adventure In A Haunted House!



BY EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Edward Oswald Handforth, at the invitation of his uncle, takes a party of St. Frank's juniors and Moor View School girls to Handforth Towers, in Norfolk, for the Christmas holidays. After a tiring journey the party arrive, and, to their astonishment, Handforth Towers is a bleak, deserted, and creepy old mansion! They are welcomed by Rodd, the wizened old butler, and his witch-like wife, for they learn that Handforth's uncle is away. After a hearty supper the girls go to bed, but the boys remain chatting in the dim old dining-room. As the midnight hour strikes a weird wail is suddenly heard, scaring the juniors. Handforth rushes out into the hall to find Rodd, and something grips his ankle, but when he looks down nothing is there! Then the old butler appears, saying: "It's the Lady of the Tower!" and promptly disappears. Once more the unearthly wail comes!

The Ghostly Cry!

WITH his heart fairly pumping within him, Handforth ran back into the dining-room and slammed the door. His face was pale, and he bent down and felt his left ankle.

"By George!" he panted. "This—this place is haunted!" "The Lady of the Tower!" murmured Church, going nearer to the fire. "That—that's what Mrs. Rodd meant. The place is haunted!"

"I didn't know it was haunted!" exclaimed Handforth. "Did you, Willy?"

"I don't know it is haunted," replied Willy steadily. "There may be something to account for that rummy sound. Don't forget it's windy to-night, and in an old house like this any peculiar piece of architecture might create an echo, or a whistling sound. If you'll take my advice, you chaps, you'll think about something cheerful, and not about ghosts!"

"Something grabbed my ankle out in the hall!" said Handforth. "I was standing there, in the dark, just when that picture fell!"

"Rats! It was your imagination——"

"I ought to know best, Nipper!" said Edward Oswald. "Something gripped my ankle, I tell you. And that candle went out—without anybody blowing it!"

"The imagination can do an awful lot, if you let it get away with you," said Willy.

"Willy's right," said Nipper, nodding. "We had better forget about it and go to bed."

But the guests revealed a peculiar reluctance to go to bed. Perhaps they could not forget that that strange wail

had come from somewhere upstairs. Besides, it was dark and gloomy up there.

"Let's stay round the fire for a bit," suggested Reggie Pitt, with a cheery note in his voice. "Let's tell a few yarns——"

"Ghost stories!" said De Valerie, with a grin.

"Stop that, you idiot!" growled Nipper, with a glare.

"I was only joking," smiled De Valerie.

"Well, you shouldn't joke like that," replied Nipper.

"We want to take our thoughts away from the subject of haunted houses as much as we can. Everything has helped to create the atmosphere of ghostliness. The wind outside, the wretched lighting of this place—no offence, Handy, old man—and the peculiar nature of Mr. and Mrs. Rodd. But there's really nothing wrong, so let's have a good old jaw about football."

"Or about our plans for Boxing Day," said Reggie Pitt. "Isn't there going to be a ball, or something? Handy told me there was a big fancy dress ball on the programme for Boxing Night——"

"Fancy dress ball!" interrupted Handforth bitterly. "Some hopes!"

"But you said——"

"I said all sorts of things," admitted Handforth, with a mournful look. "But everything seems to be going wrong. I thought there would be heaps of people here, and that Uncle Gregory would welcome us, and that we should have the wireless on, and all sorts of other things. Why, I even thought that my uncle had engaged a special orchestra for the ball. I don't mind telling you fellows that it's a swindle!"

"Hardly that, Handy——"

"An absolute swindle!" insisted Handforth. "Why, I wouldn't have invited you down if I'd known! I want to spend a merry Christmas—not a ghostly one! I'll bet you're all scared of going up to bed——"

"Oh, are we?" said a dozen voices.

"Of course, you'll deny it!" growled Edward Oswald. "But, all the same, you don't think much of the prospects. I don't mind admitting that I'd rather be here in front of the fire."

"We'd better not talk about——"

Nipper broke off as he felt a draught behind him, and as the candles gave a flicker. He looked round sharply, and the others turned their heads.

"The door's opened!" breathed Church, with a catch in his voice.

Slowly the great door was swinging open.

"If you're ready, young gentlemen," said a voice, "the bed-rooms are waiting!"

Rodd appeared, and there were many breaths of relief. "Can't you come in noisily, instead of creeping about like a cat?" asked Handforth, with a certain amount of irritation. "You're enough to give anybody the jumps, Rodd! We're not ready for bed yet," he added firmly.

"It's twelve-thirty, Master Edward," said Rodd steadily. Handforth looked at the others and then frowned.

"You can go to bed, Rodd," he said airily. "Don't wait up for us. Leave the candles in the hall, and—"

"Begging your pardon, Master Edward, but I must ask you to go to bed," said Rodd.

"Oh, look here—"

"The master insisted, young sir, that I should see you all abed before I put the lights out and went to my own room," declared Rodd. "I'm an old man, Master Edward, and I think I know best. If you will ask your young friends to come at once I shall be obliged."

Even Handforth's obstinacy could hardly withstand this—especially as his companions got up and prepared to leave the dining-room. Old Rodd's request was tantamount to a command.

So, whether they wanted to go to bed or not, they were going. And they all felt that this was another adventure. So far, they had only seen the hall and the dining-room. The upper part of the house was a sealed book to them.

"Come on, all of you," said Handforth. "By George!" he added, with an assumed yawn. "Half-past twelve! High time we were in bed, anyhow."

Out in the hall the table was full of candlesticks, with candles burning in each.

"We are going into the east wing, young sirs," said Rodd, as he invited them to take their candles. "Five bed-rooms have been prepared with beds in each. So if you will decide upon your own arrangements, we will go up at once."

"That's good!" said Handforth. "You chaps with me?"

"Rather!" agreed Church and McClure.

The others soon came to their decisions, and a move was made upstairs. There were no lights, except those which they carried, and when they reached the landing, they could see corridors stretching away into the blackness. The wind was now howling more loudly than ever.

"A wild night, young sirs," said the old butler, as he paused on the landing. "To your left, please. That is the east wing. The sleeping chambers are all adjoining."

"Just a minute, Rodd," said Handforth grimly. "I want to know what your wife meant when she referred to the Lady of the Tower—"

"Hush, Master Edward!" quavered Rodd. "'Tis dangerous to speak of the Lady of the Tower. The very mention of her name may cause— Ah, I know it! May we be saved on this night!"

He clutched at the heavy balustrade, and stared into one of the other corridors with frightened eyes. And before anybody could speak, that same unearthly cry arose—sounding a little louder now, but just as mysterious and ghostly as before. Indeed, it was even more terrifying because of its presence in the upper portion of the house.

"It's—it's down this corridor!" gasped Handforth, staring.

"The north wing!" muttered Rodd. "It's from the north tower—"

"Look here, Rodd!" interrupted Handforth tensely. "Is this house haunted?"

"Don't ask me, young sir—don't ask me!"

"But I am asking you!"

"Then Master Edward, I cannot reply," replied the old butler, trying to steady his voice. "I shall be pleased if you will respect my wishes."

"Well, there's one thing we can ask," put in Willy. "Where are the girls? We might as well know, in case of emergencies," he added, turning to the others. "They've got two bed-rooms, I suppose, Rodd?"

"Yes, Master Willy."

"Then where are they?"

The butler turned and pointed.

"In the north wing, young sir," he replied unsteadily.

The juniors looked where Rodd was pointing. The north wing! This was a shock for them. Irene & Co. were sleeping in that wing, where the ghostly wail originated!

Eerie Happenings!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH started.

"By George, that was a good question of yours, Willy!" he said, with a look of anxiety in his eyes.

"So the girls are in the north wing, are they? Why did you put them there, Rodd?"

"The missus took them, young sir," replied the butler, "and it was the master who gave orders. The north wing

is small, and there are only two chambers there—the doors being on the same side of the corridor, with a blank wall at the end. Have no fear, Master Edward. The young ladies are sleeping peacefully, I do not doubt."

"But—but that sound—"

Rodd shook his head, and looked rather sad.

"They did not hear," he replied softly. "The young ladies have not been disturbed. But we, perhaps—'Tis unwise, though, to speak on this subject. I bid you all good-night, young sirs."

He walked into the east wing, and there was nothing more to be said. Doors opened out on both sides, and the butler's words proved to be true. There were five bed-rooms ready, and three fellows went into each.

Handforth & Co. closed their door, and for a moment or two there was silence.

"My goodness!" said Handforth, holding his candle aloft.

There was every reason for his surprise. The apartment contained a big, old-world bed—a four-poster with great hanging curtains, which only added to its gloominess. It was obviously supposed to accommodate the three of them.

The room was draughty and cold. The carpet was almost ragged, and the rest of the furniture in the room was meagre and poor.

"Well, the bed looks all right," said Church, trying to be cheerful. "Better than one each. We shall be able to keep one another warm. But, I say, doesn't this room give you the shivers," he added involuntarily.

"It gives me the pip!" retorted Handforth, with a growl. "It's—it's amazing! My Uncle Gregory has got pots of money, and this room simply yells of poverty!"

"Perhaps he's not so rich as you think," said McClure. "Lots of these landed gentry are having a bad time of it. That's what my father says, anyhow. Although he's considered pretty well off, he has a hard job to make ends meet."

"We're not talking about your father—we're talking about my uncle," said Handforth coldly. "And he's rich—thundering rich! Wait a minute—I'm going to have a look at the other chaps—I want to see what their bed-rooms are like."

He went to the door and opened it.

"Hold on!" gasped Church. "Don't take the candle!"

"Afraid of the dark?"

"No—but it's not very cheerful without a candle, is it?" said Church gruffly. "Stick it on that little table, and leave the door open. Mac and I will be undressing."

"Oh, all right!" said Edward Oswald.

He went out, and had a look into the other bed-rooms. It was a shock for him to find that they were no better than his own. Indeed, two of them were much worse. They were draughty and damp, and the beds were wretched affairs. But the juniors made no complaints. They were Handy's guests, and they couldn't very well grumble.

"I'll have a talk to you fellows in the morning!" said Handforth, when they, in turn, asked him why he had come. "Good-night!"

He went back towards his own room, feeling grimly angry. This was a swindle, indeed! Instead of the Removites being awed and impressed by this wonderful Handforth mansion, they were probably regretting their acceptance of the invitation. It was an awful shock for poor old Handy.

Just before he reached his room he pulled up with a jerk. The door was still open, as Church had promised, and a thin gleam of light came out into the wide corridor. And Handforth suddenly felt his hair tingle. For his ankle was gripped again—gripped just as it had been seized down in the hall! It seemed to him that his flesh was creeping.

"Oh, my goodness!" he breathed.

He pulled himself together, and stared down at his feet. The light from the open doorway enabled him to see his boots, and the upturned ends of his trousers. But there was nothing else—absolutely nothing!

"Great Scott!" he said aloud.

Was it imagination? The grip was still there—he could feel it distinctly. He moved his leg, and gasped. For the grip had tightened, holding him there, so that he could not go forward. The sensation was indescribable.

"Church!" he shouted hoarsely. "Quick!"

Church, in great alarm, came rushing out with the candle. At the same second Handforth staggered back, that uncanny hold having been relaxed.

"The light!" he croaked.

"What's the matter?" shouted Church, his voice cracking.

Handforth seized the candle, and held it down towards the floor. Then an expression of dazed amazement came



To Handforth's startled gaze the figure in the corner of the room seemed to be a ghost moving towards him. "By George!" he shouted as he made a blind desperate rush. "I'm not scared!" Next moment he was grappling with the figure, but he didn't realise that it was his own chum McClure!

into his face, mingled with something that was very akin to fear.

The floor was bare, the walls and the wainscoting were clean and smooth. There was nothing of an unusual nature. For a wild moment Handforth thought that he had caught his foot against a projection—a protruding board, or something. But that couldn't be, for he had felt the grip on the very skin of his ankle.

He swung the light round again, and put it on the floor. An idea had come to him.

Quickly he pulled up his trouser leg and pushed his sock down.

"Oh corks!" he whispered.

There was a mark on his ankle—clear, irrefutable proof that *something* had actually seized him! His imagination could not be responsible for this.

"Did something bite you?" asked McClure, puzzled by this investigation.

Handforth didn't reply. He picked up the candle again, and hustled his chums into the bed-room. He had an overwhelming desire to look over his shoulder, into the depths of the dark corridor, but he conquered it.

He was relieved when he closed the bed-room door and set the candle down. But Church and McClure could see by his very face that he was scared.

"What—what happened, Handy?" breathed Church.

"I don't know," replied Edward Oswald. "I wish I did. But as I was coming along the passage something grabbed hold of my ankle. Just like it did in the hall!"

They looked at him incredulously.

"You fancied it, old man—" began Church.

"Look!" hissed Handforth. "Is that fancy?" He held up his ankle, and that mark was still visible, although it was now disappearing.

"But—but this is too rummy for words!" said Church. "There's a mark here, right enough—and it proves that something must have grabbed— Oh, but it's impossible, Handy! What *could* take hold of your ankle?"

Handforth commenced undressing.

"All I hope is that you don't have anything like it," he said. "By George! That would be awful! You're my guests, and so are the other chaps. I don't want any of you to think that this place is really haunted."

Before Church and McClure could reply, they heard the sound of a crash, and then footsteps rushing in the corridor. There were voices, too! Handforth rushed to the door and opened it.

"What's that?" he asked, looking out.

"There's something wrong in our bed-room, Handy!" panted Jack Grey, as he ran up. "A vase fell off the mantelpiece without being touched! It splintered to bits, and—"

"Rot!" said Handforth. "You must have knocked it—"

"We were in bed!" shouted Reggie Pitt, as he arrived. "De Valerie was just crossing from the window when that beastly vase crashed into the fireplace. We weren't anywhere near it. It's an absolute mystery."

"The wind must have blown it when Val opened the window—"

"He didn't open the window!" broke in Grey. "There wasn't any draught at all—and, besides, the vase is a huge thing, weighing pounds. A hurricane couldn't have dislodged it. And the mantelpiece is as wide as a table."

"I'm getting out of this place!" said De Valerie shakily. "I'm going to get dressed again, and I'll walk in the lanes all night! I'd rather do that than sleep in a haunted room!"

"What's the trouble here?" asked Willy, as he came up. "Don't be an ass, De Valerie! You can't go out—it's snowing harder than ever! Pull yourself together, my son!" he added severely.

De Valerie pulled himself together—promptly. The sight of that Third Former, cool and calm, was probably the reason for this quick recovery. A Remove fellow could never allow a fog to give him a lesson in courage.

"I—I was only fooling, of course," said Val awkwardly. "All the same, I don't think I shall get much sleep. I can't understand what happened. The vase was standing there—"

"If it comes to that, you're not the only one," interrupted Willy. "Do you know what happened in my room just now?"

"What?" they asked in one voice.

"Chubby took his shoes off, and put them under the bed, and before he could look round they whizzed headlong into a corner."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Handforth, aghast.

"As I told Chubby, I wasn't going to have his shoes under my bed!" said Willy indignantly.

"But—but the shoes?" asked Church. "You say they whizzed into the corner, without anybody throwing them?"

"Of course not!" said Willy. "I chucked them there!"

And he went off, grinning. The Removites seriously thought about falling upon him, and administering a

thrashing on the spot. But perhaps it wouldn't be a wise move. So they went back to their bed-rooms, and Handforth was far more worried than ever. What was to be the next adventure on this startling night?

The Figure in the Moonlight!

READY?" asked Handforth, in a low voice.
 "Yes—if you really mean it," said Church.
 They were in bed. Handforth was on the point of putting out the candle, which stood on a little table beside him.

"Of course I mean it," said Handforth. "We can't have this candle burning all night—not that it would, anyhow. There's only about enough to last an hour. And then where should we be in a sudden emergency? I'll have it next to my hand."
 He snuffed it out, and the bed-room was plunged into darkness.

The mattress was the most uncomfortable one that Handforth had ever encountered. It was all lumps and mountains. It didn't matter which way the juniors tried to repose, they encountered snags. One might have supposed that the mattress contained lumps of wood instead of hair. Even the pillows were lumpy.

"And my uncle's practically a millionaire!" murmured Handforth. "To-morrow, my sons, there's going to be the most unholly row that ever happened in Norfolk! If I had known this, I wouldn't have accepted the invitation for worlds—or let these other fellows in for it, either. What a game! Uncle Gregory is going to hear something from me—and it won't be just 'Good-morning!'"

"But he may not be here," said Church, as he writhed on to his other side, only to find that the rocks and crags were worse.

"He's bound to be here before the day's out, anyhow," replied Handforth. "It's Christmas Eve to-morrow, and old Rodd said that uncle promised to be back before Christmas. When I meet him—"

"Listen!" murmured McClure, sitting up.

"Eh? Listen to what?"

"I heard something just now—over against that other wall," replied Mac tensely.

They all sat there, silent. The blind was drawn, and the moonlight was streaming into the bed-room through the mullioned windows. The clouds, evidently, were breaking a little, for the moonlight kept appearing by fits and starts. At the moment a patch of it was upon the faded carpet.

Tap-tap-tap!

Vaguely, but nevertheless audibly, the sound of rapping came to the ears of the three juniors. They weren't sure where it was proceeding from. But it seemed to originate over in one of the far corners—against the outer wall. They sat there, holding their breath.

The moonlight went out, as an extra heavy cloud scurried across the face of the moon, and the bed-room was plunged into darkness.

Handforth slowly and cautiously slipped out of bed. He was feeling apprehensive, but he was not going to show the white feather.

He meant to discover the meaning of that rapping!

His bare feet touched the cold floor, and then, with extra caution, he crept round the four-poster and made towards that corner. His bare foot touched something on the floor, and for the moment he got a start. But it was only a shoe, and he went on again.

Rap, rap, rap!

Handforth gritted his teeth, and resolved to make a sudden rush into the corner. If anything was there, he would grapple with it. But at that moment the moon came out again, and a gasp sounded from the bed.

"Look!" came Church's startled voice.

Handforth spun round; his heart nearly stopped.

In a corner was a white figure—an indistinct object. To Edward Oswald's startled gaze it seemed to be suspended six inches from the floor. And then it moved towards him!

"By George!" he shouted. "I'm not scared!"

He made a rush—a blind, desperate bound. And the next second he was grappling—not with a ghost, but with something which gasped and gurgled. He was on top, too, and he hammered fiercely.

"I've got you!" he gasped. "I don't know who the dickens you are, but you're going to be slaughtered for playing these silly games! I'll teach you to play the ghost, you miserable beggar! Strike a match, Mac! Bring the candle, Churchy!"

"Hold on!" shouted Church, in alarm. "That's not a ghost, Handy—"

"I know that!" snapped Handforth. "Ghosts don't yell like this!"

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Biff! Crash!

"You—you clump!" roared Church. "You're half killing Mac!"

"Mac!" yelled Handforth, ceasing his attack.

"It's poor old Mac you've got on the floor!" said Church, jumping out of bed. "He got out a few seconds after you did, and went towards that corner. I expect you mistook him for a ghost—"

"My hat!" gurgled Handforth.

He got up, and stared down at the groaning McClure. The latter sat up, nursing his left eye and rubbing his jaw.

"Oh, corks!" he groaned. "I'm half dead. You—you dangerous lunatic! You howling madman! In another minute you might have murdered me!"

"Why the dickens didn't you say who you were?" asked Handforth indignantly.

"A fat lot of chance I had!" snapped McClure, struggling to his feet, swaying dizzily. "I was just going to investigate that rattling—"

"That was my game, too," interrupted Handforth. "We both had the same idea, and you must have been close behind me. But why did you give a gasp, Churchy? You said 'Look!' and when I looked round I saw Mac and thought he was something else!"

"Well, I saw you—and thought you were something else!" said Church. "It was the moon, I suppose—suddenly coming out like that."

"Sorry, Mac, old man," said Handforth soothingly. "But I did see something, and it looked awful, and it seemed to me that it was suspended in midair. I can't make it out. And as for you, you fathead, you've got your socks on; I didn't hear you until I felt you!"

"I can't sleep with cold feet," complained McClure. "Not that I shall sleep at all now, anyhow! Crikey! What a lovely black eye I shall have in the morning! For goodness' sake, Handy, don't do any more ghost-hunting to-night!"

They were about to get back into bed, not having found a satisfactory explanation of the latest mystery, when something else happened. It seemed that something fresh was taking place in this house of mystery every five or ten minutes.

The uncanny rapping had not been explained yet, but the chums of Study D, being level-headed fellows, fully realised that that phenomenon might easily have a very simple explanation. A loose piece of ivy, perhaps, broken down by the wind, and swaying against the outer wall. An explanation of that sort would easily account for the sound.

But the juniors were not even allowed to make any conjectures on the subject; for, before they could hold any further discussion, or even remember what they had got out of bed for, a fresh sound came from outside, on the landing.

There was a kind of gasping scream—nothing ghostly about it, but alarming enough, nevertheless. And it was followed by a shout—a desperate, frantic appeal.

"Help!" came the cry. "Help!"

The Spectral Presence!

NIPPER jumped out of bed in a single spring.

"Come on!" he exclaimed. "There's something wrong!"

"Begad!" gasped Montie. "Somebody is appealin' for help! It seems to me, dear old boys, that there'll be no rest for anybody to-night!"

"I couldn't sleep, anyhow!" shouted Watson.

They rushed to the door, and got outside just as Handforth & Co. were tearing out of their own bed-room. Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey and one or two others added to the crowd.

"Who yelled just now?" asked Pitt quickly.

"Goodness knows!" replied Handforth. "We all seem to be here—"

"Listen!" interrupted Church.

And as they all fell silent, the cry came again:

"Help!"

But this time it was more subdued. It was much weaker, as though the one in distress was at his last gasp. And that appeal came from the great landing at the end of the corridor. Handforth was looking startled in the light of the candles that the other juniors were holding.

"My minor!" he said breathlessly.

"By Jove!" said Nipper. "I believe it is!"

"One of his tricks—" began Watson.

"No!" snapped Handforth. "He wouldn't play a trick like that—and his voice was too weak, too. Quick! Come on; we've got to see what's wrong with him."

He ran to the end of the corridor, and the others accompanied him. But they were in such a hurry that the candles were extinguished by the very force of their rush. They were all plunged into darkness, but this did not deter

them. Handforth was the first to reach the landing, and he suddenly pulled himself up, and the others ran into him from behind.

"Look!" said Handforth, his voice shaking.

And this time it was no junior in pyjamas, no second McClure! Something was at the far side of the landing. And at the very first glance Handforth felt his heart leap wildly. This thing was indeed a spectral presence!

It was not shapeless, but very visibly apparent. The figure was that of a woman—a kind of mixture between a mediæval lady, with a long cone-shaped hat, and a sort of witch. The figure was crouching, as though bending over something on the floor.

"The Lady of the Tower!" breathed Handforth tensely.

"By Jove, yes!"

"The ghost!"

The juniors, in spite of their alarm and their creepy sensations, found it possible to stand their ground. But perhaps this was because they were held there—so magnetised that they couldn't move.

For they knew—they had absolute proof—that this figure was no dressed-up trickster. It was not luminous, as a faked ghost might have been, but just whitely visible, the outline being distinct, in spite of the general sense of unreality which the presence created.

For the juniors could see right through it!

They were at such an angle that one of the landing windows was in line with them. That ghostly presence stood between them and the window, and they could see the criss-cross window-bars right through her.

A moan sounded, low and pitiful.

"Help!" came a husky whisper. "Oh, help!"

The spectre of Handforth Towers moved. It seemed to glide away from the spot, and the juniors watched it with startled eyes. The figure straightened herself, and then one of her hands was raised, pointing straight at them. A laugh came, a faint, shrill kind of cackle. And in the same second the spectre resolved itself into a wreath of thinness whirled round in the air, and vanished before the juniors' very eyes.

The spell seemed to be broken.

"Oh!" breathed Tommy Watson. "What—what was it?"

And then, from out of that north wing, came the sound of the throbbing cry—the Lady of the Tower going back to her haunt! The whole thing was uncanny in the extreme. Something moved just at that spot where the presence had been. And Handforth rushed over.

He dropped to his knees and shouted.

"Quick!" he yelled. "It's Willy! Lights! Willy, old son!"

Somebody managed to strike a match, and the candles were illuminated. They crowded round, shaking and trembling. Willy Handforth was in his major's arms. The fag was prostrate, with his head on Edward Oswald's lap. And in the candlelight his face was deathly pale, and his eyes were closed.

"The poor kid's fainted!" muttered Handforth frantically. "That—that ghastly thing had got hold of him! Get some water—"

"Look!" said Church. "He's coming to!"

Willy slowly opened his eyes, but the colour did not return to his cheeks. The pallor of his face was eloquent of his recent experience. And as he opened his eyes his expression became fixed and horrified.

"Don't touch me!" he gasped. "Go away—"

"It's all right, Willy," murmured Handforth. "It's me!"

"Oh, Ted!" breathed Willy, his tense expression relaxing. "Oh, thank goodness! Has—has she gone? I—I don't seem to remember—"

"Stand aside, you fellows. I'm going to carry him to his bed-room," said Handforth grimly. "He's had a terrible shock."

This was pretty evident, for Willy although a Third Former, was one of the pluckiest fellows at St. Frank's. And his steadiness in the dining-room had been an indication of his nerve. But now he looked very scared.

In his own bed-room Willy was gently laid on the bed, and the sheets and blankets were pulled over him. Water was forced between his chattering teeth. But Handforth was still worried. His minor's face was almost death-like in its pallor.

"It's—it's all right," said the fag shakily. "Don't—don't

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crowd round me like this, you fellows. I shall be O.K. in a few minutes."

"Leave him alone for a bit," murmured Nipper.

They gently pulled Handforth away, allowing Willy to recover himself, without being flurried by their presence or by questions. They stood in a scared-looking group by the mantelpiece, where several candles were burning.

"That—that spectre!" said Handforth, with an anxious glance towards the bed. "I think it got hold of Willy, or something. I want to find out the truth—"

"Leave him alone for a minute," urged Nipper.

"I suppose you're right," admitted Handforth. "But what was it? The figure of a woman, and she was bending over poor old Willy! And we could see right through her! Did you notice it, you chaps?"

"Yes, of course!" said Pitt, sorely puzzled.

"I am trying to see how trickery could be responsible," muttered Nipper. "And yet it seemed so supernatural."

"Trickery!" interrupted De Valerie, his voice harsh with the tension of the adventure. "It couldn't have been trickery. Hang it, I'm not superstitious, but I've seen a ghost to-night—a genuine spirit! That—that thing was transparent—and it vanished into thin air, too!"

"I'm beaten," confessed Nipper, scratching his head. "Did you notice the way it went into a kind of smoke wreath, and then vanished altogether? Right in front of our eyes, on that bare landing!"

"I'm going to question Willy!" said Handforth grimly. He refused to wait any longer, and they took the candles and went back to the bed. Willy was lying with closed eyes, but he opened them as the juniors gathered round. And they were pleased—and relieved—to see that he had recovered his normal, healthy colour. This was a great joy to his major.

"Thank goodness that awful pallor has gone from your face, Willy!" he said breathlessly. "How do you feel, old man?"

Willy looked rather sheepish.

"I'm all right," he said. "I was an ass to yell like that and give you all a scare. But—but that thing—"

"Yes, what about it?"

"I—I can't remember properly," replied Willy, a puzzled look coming into his face. "At least, I don't believe I can tell you anything. There was something hovering—something—"

He passed his hand over his eyes and shook his head. "No, I—I don't seem to know—"

"But why were you there, Willy?" asked Nipper.

"There?" said Willy slowly. "Where?"

"On the landing."

"Was I on the landing?" said the fag in surprise. "I

can't quite— Oh, yes!" he added, with a sudden start. "By jingo, I've got it now! Of course!"

"Well?" they chorused eagerly.

Willy was looking more sure of himself.

"Of course, I've got it," he repeated. "I was worrying about Ena and the other girls. That's right. I just wanted to see if they were safe, you know, and I thought it a good idea to make sure."

"I'm worried about them, too," muttered Handforth, frowning. "I've been thinking about the girls. How is it that we've been making all this noise, and they haven't come out to see what's wrong? And why haven't they had any adventures? I've got an idea that there's something wrong."

"Don't interrupt Handy," said Nipper. "Go on, Willy!"

"Well, I was just going into the north wing, you know," said Willy. "You see, I could easily tap on the girls' doors, and ask if they were all serene-o. If they sang out that everything was O.K., I could have gone to bed in comfort. I wasn't thinking about ghosts—you know how much I care for ghosts, anyhow."

"Well?"

"Well, then it happened," said Willy impressively. "I just got into that north wing when that—that horrid-looking female figure appeared. My stars! It seemed to develop right in front of my giddy eyes. I backed out on to the landing, and— Yes, I believe I tripped, or something. I know I sang out for help. That thing was right over me—but I can't quite say— No, I don't think I can get hold of it all. Do you know what happened after that, Ted?"

"Nothing happened," said Handforth. "At least, the spectre simply vanished, and we went forward and found you unconscious. By George, I don't wonder at it! It was enough to scare anybody. And you say the thing was right on the top of you, hovering near by?"

"I—I felt it!" muttered Willy. "It—it seemed all filmy—"

He broke off and shivered.

"But what about the girls?" he went on, starting up. "I tell you, Ted, I've got a feeling that there's something wrong in the girls' rooms! I can't tell you why, but I'm certain. Why haven't they come out? We ought to find out something for certain."

"We're going to," replied Handforth, with sudden determination.

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