

THRILLING COVER-TO-COVER YARN OF TOM MERRY & CO. IN ITALY!—INSIDE.

The GEM ^{+2d!}



*The
Treasure of
Santa Maria!*

The TREASURE of SANTA MARIA!



The gondola headed for the little island in the distance, upon which the St. Jim's juniors hoped to find the buried treasure!

CHAPTER 1.

Brand New!

TOM MERRY of the Shell smiled a cheerful smile as he came out of the Form-room at St. Jim's.

Manners and Lowther looked very cheerful, too.

The Terrible Three, in fact, were in exuberant spirits.

It was the last day of the term at St. Jim's, and last lesson was over. Form work had become a thing of the past—holidays filled all thoughts—and the chums of the Shell had special plans for that vacation.

Hence their joyous smiles.

"Good-bye, Julius Caesar!" trilled Monty Lowther, as he executed a skilful "punt" with his "Gallic War," sending the valuable volume spinning along the Form-room passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

An elegant junior had just come out of the Fourth Form Room, and the spinning volume caught him just under his ear as he emerged into the passage. Arthur Augustus jumped clear of the floor in his astonishment as he felt that sudden smite, and the Shell fellows roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"Well, you boundahs—"

"Sorry, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "Quite an accident! If I'd known you were coming I wouldn't have punted the 'Gallic War' at you!"

"Vewy well, if that is the case, Lowthah—"

"Certainly it is the case," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "If I'd known you were coming I'd have punted the Latin grammar instead—it's heavier!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wogard you as an ass, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus, rubbing his ear. "If I were not pweessed for time just now, I should give you a feahful thwashin'! But I am expectin' my twunk to awwive, and I must go and see atah it."

And as he had no time to give the humorist of the Shell the fearful thrashing he undoubtedly deserved, D'Arcy picked up the volume and punted it back to its owner.

Monty Lowther promptly dodged, and the book flew over his shoulder.

But every bullet, they say, has a billet, and that volume of Julius Caesar found one, for Skimpole of the Shell was coming out of the Form-room, and it caught him under the chin.

Skimpole staggered back in surprise, and sat down in the Form-room, gasping.

"Dear me! What is that?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Try again, Gussy!" roared Monty Lowther.

And the Terrible Three walked out into the quadrangle, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to explain to Skimpole. D'Arcy rushed up to Skimpole with a very contrite expression upon his aristocratic face, and gave him a hand to rise.

"I'm feahfully sowwy, Skimmy!" he exclaimed. "I intended that book for Lowthah, you know, and the howwid boundah dodged it."

"Ow!" gasped Skimpole. "Never mind, my dear D'Arcy. I was looking for you, D'Arcy; I have something rather important to say to you. I hear that you are going to Italy for the vacation."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Good! I was going to suggest that I should come with you," said Skimpole, beaming at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy through his big glasses. "You would find me a very useful companion, and I should have an opportunity of studying—Where are you going, my dear D'Arcy?"

But his dear D'Arcy was gone.

Arthur Augustus hurried out into the quad. The Terrible Three grinned at him cheerfully, and Arthur Augustus gave them a withering glance through

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

his eyeglass. But they did not seem somehow to be withered at all. They grinned all the more, and D'Arcy, with his aristocratic nose very high in the air, walked down to the gates.

It was the time when the local carrier usually arrived, and Arthur Augustus was expecting something by the carrier. The carrier had been and gone, and Taggles, the school porter, was standing outside his lodge, regarding with surprise the article that the carrier had delivered. It was a huge trunk—a trunk of the most gigantic dimensions—built of solid leather, studded with nails, and with metal corners.

The weight of that trunk, when empty, would have taxed a strong man's strength. When it was full it would probably have defied the efforts of a steam crane. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face lighted up at the sight of it.

"Bui Jove, it's awwived!"

Taggles, the porter, turned his eyes upon D'Arcy. Taggles did not look pleased. It was the duty of Taggles to carry that trunk in, and he evidently did not relish the task.

"This 'ere is for you, Master D'Arcy," he said severely.

"Yaas, wathah, Taggy, deah boy! Take it in, please."

"Take it in?" said Taggles.

"Yaas."

"Which it weighs somethin'," said Taggles. "Wot might you 'ave in that there trunk, Master D'Arcy?"

"Nothin' at all, so far, Taggles. It's a bwand-new twunk I've ordahed for my twip to Italy," Arthur Augustus explained. "I shall have to take a lot of things with me, and I am goin' to pack them in that twunk."

Taggles stared.

"If it's hemply now, I don't see as you're goin' to move it at all when it's full," he said. "I'd better get Toby to lend a 'and with it."

"Great Christopher Columbus!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as the Terrible Three came up and surveyed the trunk. "Does that belong to you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What's the big idea?" asked Monty Lowther. "Are you laying in an ark in case of another flood?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy sniffed.

"I suppose I cannot twave! without a twunk, Lowthah?"

"Don't see why not," said Lowther. "I suppose you're not an elephant."

"Pway don't be funny, deah boy. I have ordahed that bwand-new twunk specially for our twip in the holidays."

"What!" roared the Terrible Three in one voice.

"I twust I speak plainly, deah boys. I shall wequial a lot of things in Italy, and I heah that it is not a good place for shoppin'. I suppose you wemembah the time when I wan out of silk hats on a twip abwoad? Once bitten, twice shy, you know. I am goin' to make sure

this time of havin' all the things I want."

"You're thinking of taking that trunk with you—with us?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, iny hat!"

"Hold me, somebody!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Gussy will be the death of me yet; I know he will."

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah. Pway take that twunk into the School House, Taggy. I have to begin packin' to-day."

Taggles regarded the trunk with misgivings. Finally he called Toby, the page, to his aid, and between them they lifted the huge trunk, and staggered away with it towards the School House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed them, keeping an eye on the trunk. He did not want the brand-new trunk bumped or damaged.

The Terrible Three followed, too, grinning joyfully. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was to be their companion on a trip that vacation, strange countries for to see, as the old ballad says. But the idea of starting forth with that gigantic trunk tickled the chums of the Shell very much.

Blake of the Fourth met the procession at the door of the School House. Jack Blake was another of the party for Italy. Blake gazed blankly at the

Hidden on a deserted island in the Grand Lagoon of Venice was the vast treasure of Santa Maria! And to the island came Tom Merry & Co. from far-off St. Jim's, to seek that secret fortune and save it from unscrupulous hands!

trunk, and then turned an inquiring glance upon the Shell fellows.

"What is it?" he inquired.

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

"It's Gussy's new trunk. He's going to take that trunk to Italy."

"My only chapeau!" ejaculated Blake. "Of all the frabjous chumps I—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Do you think we're going to let you load us up with a trunk like that?" roared Blake. "You—you fathead! You duffer! How much money have you wasted on that trunk?"

"I have not wasted any money. My patah is goin' to pay for it," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "It was weally a bargain—only twenty pounds. And it will do splendidly for our little twip. I may be able to let you fellows put some things in it. I will see when I'm doin' the packin'."

"You're jolly well not going to take that trunk, you ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass, Blake, and I shall certainly insist upon takin' that twunk. I have bought it specially for the twip."

"Oh, my hat!"

Toby and Taggles negotiated the doorway with success, and staggered into the House with the trunk. Quite a crowd of fellows had gathered round now to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's latest acquisition, and there was a general chuckle. Sarcastic voices inquired if D'Arcy had bought it to live in.

D'Arcy disdained to reply to such frivolous questions. He superintended the carrying of the trunk up the first staircase. Taggles bumped it heavily on the stairs, and leaned on it, and panted.

"Pway get on, Taggles, deah boy!"

"Which it's 'eavy!" grunted the school porter.

"Oh, put your beef into it, deah boy!"

Bump, bump!

The trunk was taken up one step at a time, bumping heavily upon each. The crowd of juniors yelled with laughter. Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, came out of his study to see what that terrific bumping was about. He gazed at the trunk in amazement.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated. "What—what is that for?"

"It's my new twunk, sir," said D'Arcy.

"Dear me!" said the astonished Housemaster. "What ever have you sent for that trunk for, D'Arcy? What possible use can you have for a trunk that size?"

"It's to take with me to Italy for the vac, sir."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Railton. And he smiled and went back to his study.

Arthur Augustus cast a puzzled look after him.

"I weally do not see anythin' funny in gettin' a new twunk to take to Italy," he said. "I wegard it as quite necessary. Pway get on, Taggles, and pway don't make such a feahful wowl!"

"It's 'eavy!" grunted Taggles.

"Yaas, it's solid leathah, you know. It will stand a lot of bumpin' about by weckless railway portahs."

"More likely to bump the reckless railway about, if they handle it!" grinned Monty Lowther. "But I don't believe you'll find any railway porter reckless enough to try and move that trunk."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump, bump, bump!

The trunk reached the landing at last. With a final effort, Taggles and Toby landed it there. Then it shrieked along the passage on its castors.

"Take it into my study, deah boys," said D'Arcy.

Herries and Digby were in Study No. 6. They came to the doorway in amazement as the great trunk rolled up.

"What on earth—" began Herries.

"What the dickens—" said Digby.

"Pway get out of the way, deah boys—the twunk's got to come in."

"You're not bringing that trunk in here!" roared Herries. "Why, you ass, there won't be room to move!"

"It must come in, Hewwies, deah boy. I've got to pack it!"

"You—you ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. Pway stand aside. Now, shove it, deah

**Turn to Page Seven and See the Important Announcement About the
WONDERFUL SCHOOL STORY
Starting Next Week!**

boys, and woll it in!" said D'Arcy encouragingly.

Taggles and Toby shoved manfully at the trunk. One corner of it rolled into the doorway, and Herries and Digby jumped back. Then the trunk stuck fast. It was too big to enter the study doorway. Junior studies in the School House of St. Jim's were not planned for trunks that size.

"Which it won't go in!" gasped Taggles, resting from his labours and mopping his brow. "It won't go in, Master D'Arcy."

"Oh!"

D'Arcy turned a perplexed frown upon the trunk. Certainly it wouldn't go into the study. The juniors shrieked.

"Pway don't cackle, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus testily. "There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at, so far as I can see."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm afraid it will have to be taken up to the dormitory aftah all," said D'Arcy. "Take it up, Taggles."

Taggles fixed a stony glare upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Taggles had expended all his available energy on getting the trunk thus far. To negotiate two more flights of stairs with it was far beyond Taggles' intentions.

"Into the dormitory!" he repeated.

"Yaas. It can't be left in the passage, you know."

"Can't it?" said Taggles. "Look here, Master D'Arcy, I've only got one neck, and I ain't goin' to break it under that there trunk! You 'ear me?"

"Pway do not be impertinent, Taggles!"

Taggles snorted.

"Impertinent or not, I've 'ad enough of that there trunk!" he said. "I'm done!"

And Taggles, breathing like a grampus, strode away.

The juniors roared.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked after Taggles in dismay.

"Taggles, my deah chap, you can't leave this twunk here, you know. It blocks up the beasty passage. Pway come and take it upstairs, and I'll give you five shillings!"

"No; for five pounds!" grunted Taggles.

And he staggered down the stairs, still breathing like very old bellows badly in need of repair.

"Toby, deah boy—"

But Toby, the page, had discreetly vanished. He did not want to be disobliging, but he, too, had had enough of that terrific trunk.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "You can leave it there, Gussy. As soon as a master falls over it, or a prefect barks his shins on it, you'll be told what to do with it!"

"H, ha, ha!"

"Pway help me, deah boys! I shall have to cawwy it up to the dormitory myself," said D'Arcy.

"Oh crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of the slim and elegant Arthur Augustus carrying that trunk up the stairs made the juniors scream.

"Will you lend me a hand, Tom Mawwy—"

"It isn't a hand you want, Gussy—it's a crane or a derrick!" gasped Tom Merry. "I'm not equal to the job—really!"

"Pway help me, Blake—"

"I've only got one neck, like Taggles, old man!"

"Kangawoo, deah boy—"

"Not this evening!" grinned the

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

Cornstalk junior. "Ask me something easier, Gussy."

"Bai Jovel! What am I goin' to do, then?"

"Sit on it, and see that nobody comes and slips off with it when you're not looking," suggested Monty Lowther humorously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jovel!"

The juniors streamed away, chuckling; and Arthur Augustus was left regarding his trunk with dismay. Evidently nobody was willing to lend him a hand. The swell of St. Jim's made up his mind at last.

"I shall have to tackle it myself, I suppose," he murmured.

And he did.

He exerted his strength upon the trunk and moved it nearly an inch. Then he gave it up. Herries and Digby regarded him from inside the study.

"Bai Jovel! I can't do it, you know."

"Go hon!" said Digby.

"I shall have to leave it there till I get somebody to move it—"

"Leave it there!" roared Herries indignantly. "How are we going to get in and out of the study, with that blessed thing in the doorway, you frabjous ass!"

D'Arcy reflected for a moment.

"I weally do not know," he replied firmly.

And he walked away, leaving Herries in a state of feeling too deep for words.

CHAPTER 2.

Monty Lowther's Little Joke!

TOM MERRY & CO. chuckled as they went into their study.

They had had vacations with D'Arcy of the Fourth before, and the question of luggage had always been a thorny one. Arthur Augustus had never really succeeded in taking all the luggage that he considered really necessary.

This time he did not mean to run any risk in the matter; and certainly, if he took that huge trunk with him, he would be amply provided. But his comrades had their own ideas about that trunk.

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I think sometimes that he's too funny to live. Imagine starting on a holiday with a trunk that size! When it's full up, I suppose it will weigh about half a ton!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy is an obstinate beggar, though!" grinned Manners. "He will stick to that trunk, if we let him."

"We jolly well shan't let him!" said Tom Merry.

"It's all right," said Lowther. "The trunk's in the passage at present. Gussy's going to find somebody to carry it upstairs—he won't find anybody in a hurry. I'm going to suggest to him to pack it up in the passage. Only, when he's gone, I've got a little favour to do him."

Lowther opened his tool-box and took out several long screws and a screw-driver, and a big gimlet. Tom Merry and Manners watched him in surprise.

"What on earth is that for?" asked Manners.

"Follow your uncle and you will see," said Lowther serenely.

Lowther quitted the study, and Tom Merry and Manners followed him curiously. The gigantic trunk was in the

Fourth Form passage. Herries and Digby had contrived to shove it out of the doorway, so that they could leave the study. But it more than half-filled the width of the passage, as it stood opposite the study door. The key was in the lock, and Lowther opened the lid and removed the tray. The vast interior of the trunk was exposed to view.

"You fellows keep an eye open for Gussy," said Lowther. "Whistle if you see him coming."

And Monty Lowther jammed the gimlet into the floor of the trunk and calmly commenced to bore.

Tom Merry and Manners shrieked. They understood now the scheme of the humorist of the Shell.

Manners went to the head of the stairs to keep an eye open for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and Monty Lowther calmly bored four holes in the bottom of the trunk and in the floor beneath.

Then he began to drive in screws.

It was not an easy task, for the floor was hard, and the screws long and thick. But Monty Lowther laboured away nobly and manfully at his task.

Screw after screw was driven in up to the head, and when they were quite in, the heads of the screws were almost invisible in the lining of the trunk.

There was a whistle from Manners at the head of the stairs.

Lowther jammed in the tray, shut down the lid, and locked it, and sat on the trunk looking quite innocent as Arthur Augustus came along the passage.

D'Arcy glanced at the chums of the Shell. The screwdriver and gimlet had disappeared into Lowther's pockets, and there was nothing to awaken the suspicion of the swell of St. Jim's.

"This is wathah wotten, deah boys," Arthur Augustus remarked. "I've asked a lot of fellows to come and help me, but they declined."

"Go hon!"

"Half a dozen fellows ought to be able to cawwy that twunk all togethah," said Arthur Augustus. "As it is, I shall have to leave it in the passage till I get somebody."

"Why not pack it in the passage?" suggested Lowther sweetly. "Save all the trouble of getting it upstairs and down again."

"A prefect might waise objection to havin' it left there," said D'Arcy doubtfully.

"Then let him shift it."

D'Arcy grinned.

"Yaas, that's a good ideah. Aftah all, we're goin' to-morrow mornin', and it won't be for long. I'll take your advice, deah boy, and pack it in the passage."

"Good egg!" said Lowther genially.

And he got off the trunk. Within five minutes Arthur Augustus was at work packing. He came down from the dormitory with an armful of shirts, and put them in the box. Suits of clothes, and all sorts and conditions of other garments followed. Arthur Augustus had a most extensive wardrobe, and he was adding to it. He seemed to have made up his mind to take the greater part of it to Italy with him.

The Terrible Three returned, chuckling, to their study. When that box was full it would be very heavy, and quite immovable, for reasons apart from its weight.

"It will be quite interesting when Gussy brings in his strong men to move that box to-morrow morning!" yawned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I fancy those screws will settle



"Ow—leggo—let me go—ow!" roared Levison, as Figgins and Kerr grabbed him and whirled him off his feet. Bump! Next moment the cad of the Fourth was tossed into the carriage, and he sprawled there among the feet of the astonished passengers.

the question of taking the trunk to Italy with us."

And Tom Merry and Manners grinned, and agreed that it would.

The Terrible Three prepared tea in the study with unusual elaboration. It was the last tea in the study until next term, and it was a very special one, too. The party for Italy were all to have tea together, and they were expecting a visitor.

Tom Merry & Co. considered themselves quite able to look after themselves on a trip to Italy, or to the North Pole, for that matter. But that opinion was not shared by their elders. Italy was at war, and, though there was no danger in that country, their people had only given permission because D'Arcy's former tutor, Mr. Mopps, was to go in charge of the party. Under the guidance of Artemus Mopps, M.A., the juniors would be all right, and D'Arcy had assured his chums that Mr. Mopps would not be very much trouble.

Blake, Herries, and Digby came in to tea. Herries and Digby were already booked for the vacation, and could not accompany the party abroad. But Jack Blake was coming, the total party numbering five—Blake and D'Arcy, and the Terrible Three. Certainly it would have been quite easy to make it up to fifty. Heaps of fellows would have joined in the excursion, especially if the question of finances could have been satisfactorily arranged.

Tom Merry & Co. had had many kind offers, all of which they had declined with thanks.

"Mopps here yet?" asked Blake, as he came into the study with his chums.

"Not yet," said Tom Merry. "May be here any minute, though. You fellows remember we've got to be very civil to Mopps. We've got to get him interested in the giddy treasure trove we're going to look for."

"I'm afraid he won't take much stock in that," said Blake.

"We shall have to talk him round. He's got to agree to take us to Venice, or there will be trouble," said Tom Merry flatly.

The study door opened again, and Figgins & Co. of the New House came in, with cheery smiles. House rows were off on the last day of the term, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were on the best of terms with the chums of the School House.

"Here we are!" announced Figgins. "Your visitor come yet?"

"He's coming," said Tom Merry. "You won't forget what I told you about being very nice to him?"

Figgins chuckled. "I'll treat him like a favourite uncle!" he declared.

"Here's Cussy! Finished your packing, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was breathing rather hard as he came in. The exertion of going up and downstairs, to and from the dormitory, was telling on him.

"No, deah boys, I haven't finished yet," he said. "I'm goin' to have a wash, and get it finished afore tea. I've awwanged about movin' the twunk.

To-morrow mornin' Taggles and the Head's gardener and chauffeur are comin' to get it down."

Lowther chuckled.

"Bet you they won't be able to move it!" he said.

"Wats!"

"Jolly lucky of you chaps to be going to Italy for the vac," said Figgins. "If we weren't booked, we'd come and look after you."

"Where are you going?" asked Tom Merry.

"Going up North with Kerr," said Figgins. "Land of cakes, you know."

"I'm going to try the haggis when I'm at Kerr's place," said Fatty Wynn confidentially. "I've never tasted a haggis. Kerr says they're ripping."

"What's this yarn about a giddy document and a treasure buried somewhere in Italy, or somewhere?" demanded Figgins. "I've heard about it. Levison and Mellish have been spreading the yarn. Nothing in it, of course?"

"That's where you make a mistake," grinned Tom Merry. "We've got a giddy document, written in Italian—"

"Then how the dooce do you know what it means?"

"Brooke of the Fourth translated it for us. You'll hear about it when we tell Mopps, and I'll show you the giddy clue to the treasure."

"I'd like to see that treasure," said Kerr sceptically.

"So should we. That's what we're going to Italy for."

"I remember you chaps searching for

hidden treasure once before!" said Figgins blandly.

The New House fellows chuckled. Figgins was referring to a great jape of the New House fellows on Tom Merry & Co. But the School House fellows only laughed.

"This one is the genuine article," said Tom Merry.

The door opened again, and Levison of the Fourth looked in. The juniors gave him a grim look. They had not forgotten Levison's attempt to get hold of the document which Tom Merry hoped would guide him to the buried treasure in the far-off land of Italy. But Levison had a very genial expression now.

"Hallo, you fellows!" he said. "I see you're keeping it up!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry shortly.

"We've been having some rows lately," said Levison, his good humour undiminished by Tom Merry's abrupt manner. "But as it's the last day of the term, I'd like to say good-bye. I'm going to-night, you know—not waiting till to-morrow."

Tom Merry relented. After all, they were going to part for a long time, and at that moment he could feel genial even towards Levison.

"Well, good-bye!" he said, holding out his hand.

Levison shook hands with him. "By the way, about that document of yours," he said. "I should like to see it, just out of curiosity, you know."

"I do not regard curiosity as a thin!" that should be gwatified," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Oh, rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Levison—" began Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Order!" said Blake. "No ragging on the last day of the term! But you can't see that giddy document—can he, Tommy?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Sorry, Levison!" he said politely. "But I'm not going to show anybody the document—any but my own friends, I mean."

"These chaps are going to see it, I suppose?" said Levison, with a gesture towards the New House juniors.

"That's different."

"You mean you don't trust me?" said Levison, with a sneer.

"Well, if you want me to be quite frank, that's so!" said Tom Merry bluntly. "Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn will say nothing about it after they've seen it, and they won't try to collar it—and you would."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"Then you won't show it to me?"

"No. You couldn't read it if I did."

"I mean the translation."

"Can't be done!"

"Well, I think you're a rotter," said Levison in a tone of deliberate insult, "and for two pins I'd give you a licking now, Tom Merry, to last you over the holidays!"

Tom Merry stared at Levison. It was a sudden change of manner, certainly. Some of the juniors chuckled at the idea of Levison licking Tom Merry, the champion athlete of the junior Forms.

"You'd better get out, Levison," said Tom quietly.

"I think you're a cad!"

"Very well; now go!"

"And a funk, too!" said Levison tauntingly.

Tom Merry jumped up.

"Look here, I don't want to lay hands on you, the last day of the term!" he exclaimed. "But if you don't get out of this study, Levison, I shall chuck you out on your neck!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"You couldn't!"

"What?"

"You heard what I said!"

Tom Merry flushed with anger.

"If you've come here to look for trouble, Levison, you'll jolly soon find some!" he said. "Will you clear out?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then I shall chuck you out!"

"Rats!"

That was a little too much for the captain of the Shell. He had been very patient with Levison, but he had come to the end of his patience now. He made a rush at the cad of the Fourth and grasped him.

Levison returned grasp for grasp, and struggled fiercely.

They whirled round in the crowded study, the other fellows stumbling out of their way, and then they went whirling through the doorway into the passage.

Tom Merry wrenched loose Levison's grasp and hurled him down the passage.

Bump!

Ow!

Tom Merry stood with blazing eyes fixed upon the cad of the Fourth as he sprawled in the passage.

"Do you want any more?" he demanded.

"Ow! No!"

And Levison picked himself up and staggered away, grunting.

CHAPTER 3.

A Startling Discovery!

TOM MERRY came back into the study with a flushed face.

"Sorry this has happened just now, you chaps!" he said. "But I couldn't stand any more from that rotter!"

"You stood more than I'd have stood," said Blake. "What on earth did Levison come here to kick up a row for, I wonder? He must have come intending it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lucky Mopps wasn't coming in just at that moment!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

All the juniors lent a hand at getting tea ready for the arrival of Mr. Mopps, and Levison and his peculiar conduct were soon forgotten.

Darkness had fallen upon St. Jim's, and the lights from the windows gleamed out into the old quadrangle.

A fire blazed merrily in the study grate, and the light gleamed upon a white cloth and shining crockery and piles of good things to eat. It was a very cosy and comfortable scene, and the juniors were prepared to enjoy themselves in the last study brew of the term.

Suddenly from the passage there came the sound of a wild yell and a bump.

"Great Scott!"

"What's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "It's Gussy's trunk! Somebody's fallen over it!"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. rushed out of the study.

The lights were not yet on in the passage, and it was very shadowy there. From the dusk came a series of gasps and groans.

"D-dear me! M-my word!"

The juniors rushed down the passage.

A little, thin man, in a frock coat, was sitting on the floor close to D'Arcy's famous trunk, gasping. He was rubbing his shins as he sat.

"Oh—oh dear! Groogh! Oh!"

"Bai Jove! It's Moppay!"

The juniors ran to pick Mr. Mopps up.

The tutor staggered to his feet with their aid. He was still gasping very painfully.

"Oh dear!" he stuttered. "I—I walked into something! How exceedingly careless to leave a large box in the passage!"

"Bai Jove!"

"This way, sir," said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Come into my study. So sorry you took a tumble!"

"D-d-dear me!"

Mr. Mopps allowed himself to be led on. Tom Merry turned on the light, so there should be no further mishap. The juniors were full of sympathy as they conducted Mr. Mopps into the study. The little gentleman was very much disturbed. Arthur Augustus had described his old tutor to the St. Jim's fellows as a tame little man with a stutter, and the description fitted Mr. Mopps exactly. He had a pale, scholarly face, with an absent-minded expression, and pale blue eyes that blinked and winked behind strong glasses.

"D-dear me! G-g-goodness gracious!" stuttered Mr. Mopps. "The person who left that large box in the passage must have been a dud-dud-dud—"

"Dummy, sir!" suggested Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"A dud-dud-dreadfully careless person!" finished Mr. Mopps.

"Quite right, sir," said Manners. "He's the biggest ass in the School House, sir!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"An awful duffer, sir!" said Blake solemnly. "Chap who's really not to be trusted out by himself."

"Blake, you ass—"

"I hope you're not much hurt, sir?" said Tom Merry, with great solicitude.

"We've got a ripping tea ready, sir!"

Mr. Mopps smiled a beaming smile.

"The anguish has abated," he said. "Never mind. It is all r-r-right. I shall be very pip-pip-pleased to join you, my boys!"

"Thank you, Mr. Mopps!"

"It will be an honour, sir!"

"A vewy gweat honah, Moppay, old boy!"

Mr. Mopps purred with pleasure. He had felt some slight doubts about undertaking the charge of a merry party of juniors. He had, in fact, come to St. Jim's to sample Tom Merry & Co. before he took them away.

Tom Merry & Co. were quite aware of that, hence their skillful "buttering up" of Mr. Mopps. If Mr. Mopps was not pleased with them, he might decline the charge, and in that case the excursion to Italy for the vacation might fall through, which would be too great a calamity.

"Pway sit down, Mr. Mopps!"

"It's rather a crowd, sir, but so many fellows are anxious to make your acquaintance, sir," said Monty Lowther. "Of course, everybody's heard of you at St. Jim's."

The fellows stared at Lowther. They did not remember ever hearing of Mr. Mopps, excepting casually as the tutor who had prepared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy for his entrance into the famous school.

"Indeed!" purred Mr. Mopps.

"Indeed, sir. We know all about your prize poem at Oxford, sir," said Monty Lowther, who had indeed extracted that item of information from D'Arcy.

"D-d-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps.

"We want you to recite it to us after tea, sir," said Manners.

"That's why we're all here, sir," said

The Story You Have Been Waiting For!

Telling of the Early Adventures of
Harry Wharton at Greyfriars
STARTS NEXT WEEK!

THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!

You'll Revel in
Reading About
Harry Wharton,
the Obstinate,
Hot-headed
New Boy of
Greyfriars!



Spread the Good
News Around
Among Your
Friends. They'll
Want to Read
This Grand
Story, Too!

To follow the fine series of Rookwood stories which concluded in our last issue, I have pleasure in announcing a new feature which I know will have a very special interest for all "Gemites"—"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!" This grand story, written, of course, by the inimitable Frank Richards, will relate the very earliest adventures of Harry Wharton, from the time when he first entered the great Public school, Greyfriars, as a new boy—and what an unusual type of new boy he was!

Every lover of Tom Merry & Co. will be familiar with the famous characters created by Martin Clifford's companion-author, Frank Richards, and featured every week in our great companion paper, "The Magnet."

I felt that I could not give my loyal chums of the GEM and "The Magnet" alike a greater treat than this magnificent yarn, which will answer the questions which pour in upon me every week from hundreds of companion-paper readers. What were Harry Wharton, Billy Bunter, Frank Nugent, and Bob Cherry like in those early days? How was the famous Co., now known as Harry Wharton & Co., first formed?

These, and many other similar questions, will be answered by Frank Richards himself in "THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"—which will, I promise you, be a real treat for all who read it, and will knit closer the ties which unite the readers and the Editor of the famous companion papers in a common bond of loyalty and good fellowship.

THE EDITOR.

Figgins, entering cheerfully into the game of pulling Mr. Mopps' respected leg. "We're very keen about it, sir!"

Mr. Mopps beamed. "You are very kik-kik-kik—"

"Eh?"

"Kind," said Mr. Mopps.

"Oh, not at all, sir! It will improve our minds," said Lowther. "Will you have tea now, sir?"

"I shall have the pip—"

"What?"

"I shall have the pip—the pip—"

"I hope nothing will happen here to give you the pip, sir?" said Lowther.

"I shall have the pip—pip—pleasure of reciting my pip-pip-poem after tea, certainly, if you desire it," said Mr. Mopps, sitting down. "I am sure you are very kik-kik-kind, and we shall get on very well together on our little excursion. Yes, thank you, I will take inuffles—yes, and tea. Weak tea, please. I like my t-t-tea quite we-we-weak."

And the feed commenced with great good-humour on all sides, Mr. Mopps having quite got over his misadventure with the trunk.

Mr. Mopps felt that he had seldom or never met such nice, quiet, pleasant, and appreciative young persons as Tom Merry & Co. Their interest in his Oxford prize poem touched him to the heart. It showed such an appreciation and respect for his learning, and it was very pleasant, too, to know that his fame had reached the great Public school.

"While on our journey," said Mr. Mopps, beaming over his glasses, "I shall have the pip-pip—"

"Oh, sir!"

"I shall have the pip-pleasure of giving you some instruction in the Italian tongue," said Mr. Mopps. "I am an Italian scholar myself. You are doubtless aware that my prime object in going to Italy is to collect material for my book on early Italian poets. The study of the early Italian poets is most interesting, my young friends."

"Are the Italian poets earlier than the English poets, sir?" asked Monty Lowther innocently. "I suppose in a sunny country like Italy they get up earlier?"

Tom Merry kicked Monty Lowther's foot under the table.

"D-d-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps, in surprise. "Is there a dog in the room?"

"N-no, sir."

"Something knocked against my leg," said Mr. Mopps, peering through his glasses.

Tom Merry turned crimson. It was evidently not Monty Lowther that he had kicked.

"May I fill your cup again, sir?" said Manners hurriedly.

"Pip-pip-please do, my dear boy!" said Mr. Mopps. "Pray remember that I drink my t-t-tea very we-we-weak!"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Talking about Italian," said Tom Merry, seizing the opportunity, "I have a paper to show you, sir, that will interest you. It is in Italian."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Mopps.

"I got it in a rather curious way, sir," said Tom Merry. "It's about a buried treasure in Italy."

"G-g-g-good gracious!" said Mr. Mopps. "That is very interesting!"

"It was an Italian chap gave it to me," said Tom Merry. "Chap named Maro Luigi. He said he had a secret about a lot of money being buried near Venice. There was an American chap after him—an awful bounder named Hiram Finn—and Luigi was dodging him. This Yankee chap wanted to kidnap him and make him show him where the money was hidden."

"What an extraordinary story!" said Mr. Mopps, in astonishment. "Are you sure that you have not been the victim of a jig?"

"A what?"

"A jig-jig-joke," said Mr. Mopps.

"Oh, yes, sir; it's all fair and square! I want you to read the paper and tell us what you think of it. I know you can read Italian like anything, sir."

"Quite so—quite so!" said Mr. Mopps.

"Luigi gave me the paper, sir, because he thought Hiram Finn would collar him, and he said if he didn't reclaim the paper the secret was mine," said Tom Merry. "He hasn't reclaimed it, though—"

"Have you been able to read this extraordinary paper?" asked Mr. Mopps.

"I got a chap to translate it, sir. I've burnt the translation now, in case anybody should get hold of it. I know it by heart," Tom Merry explained. "I've got the original paper in my pocket. I carry it tied up in the corner of my handkerchief for safety. There's a fellow at this school who knows about it, and has been trying to pinch it."

"To what?" asked Mr. Mopps.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"Ahem! I mean, to collar it," explained Tom Merry.

"I see. I am afraid it will turn out to be a jig-jig-joke," said Mr. Mopps, with a shake of the head. "But I shall certainly be very glad to see the paper, my young friend."

"Here it is, sir!"

Tom Merry put his hand into his pocket for the handkerchief in which the document was tied. Then a startled look came over his face.

"My hat!"

The juniors looked at him anxiously.

"Bai Jove, you haven't lost it, Tom Mewwy!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

Tom Merry felt in all his pockets.

"I told you it would be safah with me, deah boy."

"Oh rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"It's gone," said Tom Merry, in dismay. "I—I must have dropped it in the study here. But——"

"Sure you had it about you?" asked Kerr.

"Yes; I had it in my pocket. I looked to make sure only half an hour before Mr. Mopps came," said Tom Merry, in wonder. "I say, I suppose this isn't a joke of one of you chaps?"

"No fear!"

"Then what on earth has become of it? I couldn't have dropped a handkerchief from an inside pocket; besides, where is it, if I did?"

"Bai Jove!"

Monty Lowther gave a sudden yell.

"Levison!"

"What?"

"Levison!" yelled Lowther excitedly. "That's what he came for. You know what a giddy conjurer he is. He's always performing sleight-of-hand tricks. That's why he got up a row with you. He boned the paper when you chucked him out."

"Great Scott!"

"The rotter!"

"I'll jolly soon have it back!" exclaimed Tom Merry, starting for the door.

"Too late!" yelled Blake. "He's gone. Levison was leaving this evening, and he's gone and taken the paper with him."

"Oh!"

For a moment dismay fell upon the juniors. Levison was gone, and he had taken the paper upon which Maro Luigi had written down the clue to the buried treasure.

There was no doubt about it.

Tom Merry looked at his watch.

"What train was Levison catching?" he asked breathlessly. "Anybody know?"

"Must have been the seven-thirty."

"Then it's not gone yet. Might get to the station in time."

"After him!" yelled Blake.

With a rush the juniors were gone from the study. In the excitement of the moment they had completely forgotten the astonished Mr. Mopps.

In a moment Mr. Mopps was alone in the study.

Tom Merry & Co. were dashing halter-skelter down the stairs.

The astounded tutor gazed after them, and gazed round the empty study. His impression of Tom Merry & Co. as nice, quiet, orderly good boys had received a rude shock. Mr. Mopps gazed at the open doorway for some minutes in silence. Then he said:

"Goo-goo-goodness gracious!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

CHAPTER 4.

Too Late!

LEVISON was gone!

It did not take Tom Merry & Co. many minutes to discover from Taggles that Levison had gone to Rylcombe for the seven-thirty train.

It was twenty minutes past seven now. Levison had made sure of being in good time for the train, and doubtless, with the paper once in his possession, he had been anxious to get out of the school as soon as possible.

"The awful rotter!" said Figgins. "Why, this is actual stealing, you know."

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"I'm going to have that paper back!" he exclaimed. "Come on, you fellows, and sprint as you've never sprinted before."

And the School House chums streamed out of the gates.

Figgins called to Kerr and Wynn, who were following, and the New House juniors stopped.

"Aren't you going, Figgy?" asked Kerr, in surprise.

Figgins shook his head.

"But, dash it all, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn warmly, "it's up to us to lend Tom Merry a hand when that rotten cad's boned his giddy document."

"My dear chaps," said Figgins serenely, "you stay with your uncle! This is where the New House scores over the School House."

"Figgins, this isn't a matter for a House row——"

Figgins chuckled.

"Don't be an ass," he said politely, "or, at any rate, don't be more asinine than you can help!"

"But, I say——"

"We're going to get that paper back for Tom Merry, fathead," said Figgins.

"That is how we are going to score."

"Oh!" said the Co. together.

"They can't get to the station in ten minutes," said Figgins. "Even if the train's late in starting, they can't catch Levison."

"There's no reason why we should stay behind, that I can see," said Kerr.

"There's a chance."

"It's a mighty poor chance, and not good enough for us," said Figgins.

"Tom Merry's too excited to think about it. But all passengers from Rylcombe have to change at Wayland, as that's the end of the local line."

"But what——"

"They won't catch him at Rylcombe, but there's a chance of catching him at Wayland when he changes trains," said Figgins.

"But Wayland's four times as far off as Rylcombe."

"Yes, ass; but the train is a slow one—a slow local train—and we're going to get to Wayland by the time the train gets there," said Figgins calmly.

"But we can't!" said Fatty Wynn. "We could never run the distance in the time. Why, we should have to break all the running records twice over."

Figgins gave him a pitying look.

"We're not going to run it," he said. "Have you never heard of such things as bikes?"

"Oh, I see!"

"Time you did!" grunted Figgins. "Now, then, sharp's the word. Come and get the bikes out, and scorch like thunder!"

"Good egg!" said the Co. heartily.

And they had their bicycles out in a marvellously short time, and mounted

in the road, and scorched off for Wayland at top speed.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry & Co. were racing down the lane to Rylcombe.

There was a chance of catching the train—a bare chance. Trains at the little local station seldom started exactly to time. Tom Merry was a good runner; he had won prizes on the cinder-path. He forged ahead of his comrades, though they were all running well.

Tom Merry's face was dark with angry determination as he ran.

Levison had made one underhand attempt to get hold of the Italian document, and to learn the secret of Maro Luigi.

He had failed, and seemed to have given up the scheme. Tom Merry understood now that the cad of the Fourth had only been biding his time. The spy of the School House had discovered that Tom Merry carried the paper about with him, tied up in a handkerchief. And he had left his attempt till the last day of the term, so that he could get clear away with the paper when he had taken it.

He had come to Tom Merry's study that evening on purpose, and he had succeeded. But for Tom Merry's wishing to show the document to Mr. Mopps, he might not have discovered the loss for hours—perhaps not that night at all; and then Levison would have been safe away with the paper.

But now there was a chance of recapturing it—a bare chance!

Tom Merry ran as he had never run in his life before.

One by one the panting juniors dropped behind.

Blake was the last to keep company with Tom Merry; and even he dropped behind by the time they entered the old High Street of Rylcombe.

Without a pause, Tom Merry dashed on to the railway station.

The half-hour chimed out from the church as he came in sight of the station in the distance.

Seven-thirty!

Tom Merry put on a desperate spurt.

He almost reeled into the station vestibule.

He could hear a train puffing in the station; it was a minute past time, and it had not started yet.

Tom Merry pushed the astonished porter aside at the barrier, and dashed up the steps to the platform.

The train was there; the guard had just slammed the last door, and given the signal to start.

"Stand back there!" he shouted, as Tom Merry rushed for the train.

Tom Merry's eyes swept the carriage windows.

He caught a glimpse of a startled face at the window farther down the train, and dashed desperately for that carriage. The train was moving.

"Old back, there!"

Tom Merry dashed on. Levison's face at the train window turned white. Trumble, the porter, caught Tom Merry by the shoulders and dragged him back.

"Let me go!" shouted Tom.

"Master Merry——"

"Let me go!"

Tom Merry wrenched himself away from the grasp of the porter.

But it was too late.

The train was already pulling out of the station. Levison's carriage was past the end of the platform.

Tom Merry caught one glimpse of the face of the end of the Fourth—wreathed now with a triumphant, sneering grin. Then it vanished; the train was gone.

Tom Merry wheeled back, panting.

"You might 'ave been 'urt, Master Merry," said old Trumble reproachfully. "You shouldn't be so reckless."

Tom Merry did not reply. He felt a sickening sense of defeat. Levison was gone—and the document was gone with him. The juniors came panting on the platform one by one.

"Gone!" exclaimed Lowther. "Yes."

"Did you see him, deah boy?"

"Yes—he was in the train. I was a minute too late!"

"Wotten!"

"The awful cad!" said Blake, between his teeth. "He's got the paper! But we'll get it back, Tom—it's ours, and he can't keep it. He'll be made to give it up!"

Tom Merry smiled bitterly. "Can't! The only chance was to catch him with it on him. Now he'll be able to hide it, and deny that he knows anything about it. We can't prove that he took it."

"Bai Jove! That's so, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "It's wotten!"

"But what use can he make of it?"

said Lowther, after a pause.

Tom Merry smiled bitterly. "The same use that we were going to. He'll get it translated; and I know he and Mellish had some scheme for getting out to Italy in the vac, and searching for the treasure. Levison's father has business connections out there, and he could work it. The cad! If he does, it will be a race between us."

"The awful wottah! It's stealin'!"

"Oh, Levison doesn't mind that!"

And with grim faces the juniors started back to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

A Short-lived Triumph!

"MY score this time!"

Levison muttered the words with a grin of triumph.

The cad of the Fourth was alone in the carriage.

A sharp fear had gripped him as he saw Tom Merry racing down the platform. But his fear was gone now. He had tried before, in vain, to obtain possession of the document. Now he had succeeded. He had beaten Tom Merry & Co. at the finish, and there was much satisfaction in that knowledge to the cad of the Fourth.

"Beaten them hollow," he murmured, as the train rushed on through the gloom. "The paper's mine, and I'll get the pater to take me out to Italy this time, and while I'm there, I'll handle the stuff. What-ho! Those duffers won't get there before me—I'll bet on that!"

Levison fumbled in his pocket. He took out Tom Merry's handkerchief and untied the corner where the precious paper was secured.

He had not ventured to look at it yet. He knew that it was there; he had felt the paper in his fingers. But he had waited till he was safe in the train before looking at it. He took out the folded paper, and tossed the handkerchief from the window of the rushing train. He did not want to keep about him any evidence of the theft.

Levison felt quite secure. If Tom Merry accused him, and made any effort to reclaim the paper, Levison was safe. He simply had to deny knowing anything at all about any paper belonging to Tom Merry. And once he was safe home, he could con-

ceal the paper. No search would unearth it.

Levison unfolded the paper with fingers that trembled with excitement.

He spread it out to read, and he read it without, however, understanding a word of it. Levison's gifts did not extend to the knowledge of the Italian tongue. There it was, the hurried scrawl in the unknown language—hurriedly scrawled by Mario Luigi on that wild night when Tom Merry had saved him from the clutches of Hiram Finn and his gang—written as a clue to the treasure for the benefit of his schoolboy rescuer, in case Luigi should not succeed in escaping his enemies.

And now it was Levison's! The cad of the Fourth read and re-read the paper, trying to extract some meaning from the strange words:

"La cassa di danaro e sepolta fra le rovine della capella di Santa Maria dell'isola, presso Burano, nella Grande Laguna de Venezia. La pietra a segnata d'una croce rossa."

"MARIO LUIGI."

What did it mean?

It was a clue to the hidden money, and Levison could make out, at least, that it alluded to the Grand Lagoon of Venice.

That was all he could understand.

But it would be easy enough to get the document translated. And then—

Levison's eyes glittered with triumph.

"I'll copy it out, and have each sentence translated separately by a different man," he muttered. "It will cost a bit more, but it will make the secret quite safe. It won't do to let anybody get on to this."

And he chuckled.

He put the paper carefully into his pocket-book, and stowed it away in an inside pocket. The train seemed to crawl. Levison was anxious to get home, and, above all, to get farther away from St. Jim's.

Wayland at last! The train ran into the junction, and Levison looked out of the window. He had to change trains here; then he would be in the express, speeding away with his prize at fifty miles an hour.

He opened the carriage door and stepped out, and hurried down the platform towards the adjoining platform where the express was due.

He would have only one minute to wait.

And then—

"Hallo, Levison!"

The cad of the Fourth started, and turned a sickly colour. Three juniors, dusty and breathless, came down the platform and joined him. Levison tried to calm himself as he recognised Figgins & Co.

Were they after him? Did they know? How had they got to Wayland? The cad of the Fourth ground his teeth as he tried to smile.

"Hallo!" he said. "You going tonight, too?"

"Oh, no!" said Figgins airily. "Just come to see you off, you know. So jolly glad to see the last of you!"

"Here comes the express," said Keer pleasantly.

"Sorry I can't stop to talk to you," muttered Levison. "I've only got one minute before the train goes!"

Figgins nodded.

"Then you've got just one minute to hand Tom Merry's paper over to me," he said.

Levison started.

(Continued on the next page.)



Make the Jester smile and Win a MATCH FOOTBALL!

Send your Joke to The GEM Jester, 1, Tallis House, John Carpenter Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

LETTING THE LION HAVE IT!

Big-Game Hunter (angrily): "Why did you throw your rifle away when the lion charged?"

Companion: "Well, you told me to let him have it!"

A football has been awarded to J. McClan, 3, Coronation Road, Ipswich.

AN ADMIRAL IN THE MAKING!

"My big brother," said John, "is going to be an admiral."

"Oh!" said the visitor. "He's a cadet at present, I suppose?"

"Well," said John, after a pause, "he hasn't got that far yet, but he's going to have an anchor tattooed on his arm!"

A football has been awarded to N. Yates, 41, Lancaster Place, Leicester.

NOT SO GOOD!

Father: "How did you get on at the examination, Willie?"

Willie: "All right, dad. I only had one sum wrong."

"Very good, my boy! So you got all the others right?"

"No; I only did one."

A football has been awarded to P. Brown, 16, Wentworth Park, Finchley, London, N.3.

THE RUSTIC'S RETORT!

Motorist: "Which is the way to London?"

Rustic: "Dunno."

"Where does this lane lead?"

"Dunno."

"Which is the way to the main road?"

"Dunno."

"You seem to be a fool!"

"Well, I ain't lost!"

A football has been awarded to K. Foreman, Swiss Cottage, Winsor, nr. Southampton.

HELPFUL ADVICE!

It was on a local train. The ancient engine wheezed laboriously over equally ancient rails, and jolted to a stop at no place in particular. Time passed tediously. Some of the passengers looked wearily out of the windows, while others drew their hats over their eyes and tried to sleep. When half an hour had elapsed the guard came along.

"Li, guard!" exclaimed one passenger. "What's the trouble?"

"We're taking in water," was the explanation.

"Well," retorted the other, "why on earth don't you use another teaspoon?"

A special prize has been awarded to Miss D. Meche, 88, Gold Street, Johannesburg, South Africa.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"I don't understand you," he faltered.

"Something gone wrong with your understanding?" asked Figgins sympathetically. "What I mean is—we've cycled over here in a dooce of a hurry to get the paper you've stolen from Tom Merry."

"The—the paper!"

"Yes, the—the paper!" mimicked Figgins. "Do you want to catch this express?"

"Ye-es!"

"Then you'd better hand the paper over, for you're not going to get into the train till I've got it!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Levison desperately. "I don't know anything about any paper. I've only got one minute before the train goes!"

"So accustomed to pinching other fellows' props that he forgets any particular theft," grinned Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going in this train," said Levison as the express halted by the platform.

Figgins & Co. barred him off the train.

"Not till I've got the paper," said Figgins calmly.

"Let me pass!"

"Some other evening."

"Will you let me pass?" yelled Levison.

"When you've handed me the paper I—"

"I'll call for help. I'll—"

"You'll need a lot of help to get out of our paws with that paper," Figgins said, with undiminished good-humour. "Call away."

Levison made a rush. In a moment the three heroes of the New House had seized him and dragged him back.

"No, you don't!" said Figgins genially.

"Let me go!" shrieked Levison.

"No fear! Now look here, Levison, if you get a crowd round we shall call a policeman and accuse you of stealing that paper. You'll be taken to the police station and searched. Tom Merry and others can identify the paper. Is that what you want?"

Levison gasped with fear and rage. There was no doubt about it. He had the paper still upon him. If he could have reached his home with it the matter would have been different. But Figgins & Co. had been too quick for him.

"Look here," muttered Levison hoarsely. "I—I'll go halves with you—"

"Very generous for a thief, I must say!" said Figgins. "But we're not looking out for shares in a robbery, thanks!"

"I tell you—"

"The express goes in one minute," said Figgins. "If you want to lose it you've only got to keep on like this."

Levison panted.

There was no help for it. Losing the express would not help him. He was in the hands of the enemy—and he dared not face the trial of the police station. He dragged out his pocket-book and took out the paper with trembling fingers.

"There it is, hang you!"

Figgins took the paper. He looked at it carefully. It was written in Italian, and he was satisfied. Levison could not have prepared a "spoof" paper in anticipation—and he could not have written one in Italian. Figgins knew that this was the right paper.

"Thanks!" he said easily. "You

ought to be thankful that I've saved you from becoming a thief, Levison."

"Hang you!"

"There's gratitude for you!" said Figgins. "Chaps, let's put Levison safely into his train. We came here to see him off, you know."

"Ow! Leggo! Let me go—wow!"

Bump!

Figgins and Kerr grabbed Levison, whirled him off his feet, and tossed him into a carriage. He fell there among the feet of astonished passengers—astonished and angry. Figgins & Co. left Levison to explain. They hurried out of the station.

"Got it!" said Figgins, with great satisfaction. "This is where the New House scores, my sons!"

"Hurrah!" said the Co. heartily.

And Figgins & Co. mounted their bicycles and rode off in great spirits.

CHAPTER 6.

Good Old Figgins!

TOM MERRY & Co. were feeling decidedly glum. They had returned to St. Jim's tired, and troubled in mind, after their unsuccessful chase to the station.

Levison was gone, and Maro Luigi's document was gone with him; and it was a great blow to the juniors, who had intended to be the sole seekers of the hidden treasure of the Venetian lagoon.

True, Tom Merry knew by heart the English translation of the paper, and he could easily make a copy of it, so far as that went. But there would be a rival in the search—a cunning rival, whose cunning had already beaten him once. The happy holiday in Italy, varied by the adventure of a treasure hunt, would be changed into a hasty scramble to get at the buried chest before Levison could get at it. And if Mr. Mopps declined to be hurried at top speed—as was very probable—it was quite likely that Levison would get there first.

As for making a claim against Levison for the paper, that would be useless. If he got clear away with it, it could never be proved that he had taken it; and, in any case, even if he had to give it up, he would have time to make a copy of it, which he could get translated at his leisure.

Quite ignorant of the rapid ride of Figgins & Co. to Wayland Junction, Tom Merry & Co. came back to their study with glum faces, thinking with angry exasperation of the way the end of the Fourth had "done them."

Mr. Mopps had finished his tea alone. Until they came back into the study the juniors did not remember the existence of Mr. Artemus Mopps, so much were they occupied with the missing document. But at the sight of him they realised that they had not been exactly what would be called polite in thus deserting their guest without a word.

Mr. Mopps blinked at them over his glasses with his mild blue eyes.

"G-g-good gracious!" he said. "How dusty you look, my did-did-dear boys! What ever was the cause of that sudden and inexplicable commotion?"

"Bai Jove! I'm afraid we owe you an apology, sir," said Arthur Augustus, in his graceful way. "I trust you will excuse us for washin' off like that."

"Very sorry, sir!" said Blake.

"The fact is, I have lost that paper I was going to show you," said Tom Merry. "A chap collared it, and he's gone home. And he got off before we could nail him."

"N-n-nail him!" repeated Mr. Mopps. "Collar him, sir."

"Ah, you went after him, to ki-ki-kik—"

"Oh, no; we shouldn't have kicked him, sir! But we should have given him a jolly good hiding," said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I should have regarded it as a duty to administah a feahful thwashin'."

"To kik-kik-collar him," said Mr. Mopps.

"Oh, yes, sir! We went to collar him," said Monty Lowther, "but he got away."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Mopps. "And the paper is gone—that most interesting paper."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"N-n-never mind!" said Mr. Mopps comfortingly. "I am sure that it was only a jig-jig-joke, my dear boys!"

The juniors did not argue the point with Mr. Mopps. They could not show him Maro Luigi's paper now, and there was an end of it. They sat down glumly to their tea. Mr. Mopps had finished his, and he had a paper and a pencil on the corner of the table. The juniors observed that he had been scribbling in Latin, and they remembered the Oxford prize poem.

The prize man, like many prize men, knew his prize poem by heart, and he had taken advantage of the absence of the juniors to write down the hexameters which had gained him that enviable distinction in his college days. The juniors groaned inwardly; but they had already been wanting in politeness once, and they felt that they were bound to listen to the poem with a good grace. After all, Mr. Mopps was, as Monty Lowther murmured, a good little ass, and it would do no harm to stroke his ears.

"By the way, where are those New House bounders?" asked Tom Merry. "They didn't come to Rylcombe with us."

"Bai Jove, no! They came down as far as the gates," said D'Arcy.

"Gone back to their House, I suppose."

"Queer that Fatty Wynn didn't come back to finish his tea."

"Ha, ha, ha! Very queer!"

"Yaas, that was vewy queer indeed," said Arthur Augustus. "Only somethin' vewy important would keep Fatty Wynn from finishin' his tea."

"Right there, Gussy!" said a cheerful voice.

And Figgins & Co., looking very red and dusty, came into the study.

"Hallo! Where have you bounders been?" asked Blake.

"On a little run!" explained Figgins. "I suppose you didn't catch Levison at Rylcombe Station, did you?"

"No; the rotter was in the train, and it was starting as we got there," said Tom Merry.

"And the paper—"

"He's got it with him."

"Pity somebody didn't think of cutting across to Wayland on a bike and intercepting him when he changed trains," remarked Figgins airily.

Tom Merry grunted.

"I thought of that as we were coming back," he said. "It was too late."

"Yes, you School House chaps are generally a little late in the day, aren't you?" said Figgins agreeably.

"Oh, rats!"

"Yaas, wathah, Figgy; wats, and many of 'em! This is not a time for House waggins," said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Bless your little heart! I'm not ragging," said Figgins. "Only pointing out that you School House chaps are generally a day behind the fair, and that when there's anything to be done

quick the New House has to take it in hand."

And the Co. chuckled.

Tom Merry gave Figgins a quick look. Something in Figgy's tone raised his hopes. It would not be like Figgins to chip him in a moment of misfortune, unless he had good news.

"Figgins," he exclaimed breathlessly, "have you—"

"You've lost a giddy document?" said Figgins.

"Yes!"

"Written in Italian?"

"Yes, yes!"

"I suppose you could identify it if you saw it?" went on Figgins in the same airy way.

"Of course I could. Have you—"

"Was it anything like this?"

Figgins laid a scribbled sheet of paper on the table. Tom Merry caught it up; his eyes danced as he read the familiar though incomprehensible words:

"La cassa di danaro e sopolta fra le rovine della capella di Santa Maria dell'isola, presso Burano, nella Grande Laguna di Venezia. La pietra e segnata d'una croce rossa."

"MARO LUIGI."

"Figgins! My hat! How did you get it?" shouted Tom Merry.

Figgins grinned.

"Oh, we know how to do these things in the New House, you know—"

"Oh, come off!" said Blake. "How did you get it, ass?"

"Yaas, wathah! How did you get it, Figgy, deah boy? I wegard it as vewy wemarkable that you should get it when

I did not succeed in doin' so," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in considerable surprise.

"Buzzed over to Wayland on our bikes and caught Levison as he changed trains, and brought back the giddy document, and here it is—and here we are—hungry!"

"Very hungry!" said Fatty Wynn.

"File in, my infants!" said Tom Merry. "Figgy, old man, you're a brick; and you can call the New House the Cock House of St. Jim's if you like—till next term."

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Figgy as havin' played up vewy well."

And Figgins & Co., very pleased themselves at the pleasure they had given, sat down to tea in great spirits.

Tom Merry turned towards Mr. Mopps with the document, but Mr. Mopps, too, had a document in his hand—the Latin prize poem.

"Let's get that oyal first, deah boy," murmured D'Arcy in Tom Merry's ear. "Wespect for age, you know."

Tom Merry grinned. Mr. Mopps was nearly forty, and probably he would not have been very pleased at being respected for his age. But the juniors were all anxious to get the prize poem over, so they pressed Mr. Mopps to read it out.

Mr. Mopps was somewhat coy at first. He had written out the poem from memory with the deliberate and ruthless intention of reading it out; but he had to be pressed very considerably before he cleared his throat and began.

The juniors listened with dutiful attention and appreciation to Mr. Mopps' rolling hexameters. When he had finished they expressed their

wonder and admiration in terms that went straight to Mr. Mopps' heart.

While Mr. Mopps purred his contentment the juniors felt a slight uneasiness as to whether he might have any more poems about him.

But he hadn't; and he came good-naturedly down from the heights of Olympus to read Tom Merry's document.

Mr. Mopps adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses over his pale blue eyes and read the document written by Maro Luigi with great interest.

"Did-did-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps, when he had perused it carefully. "This is written as if quite sincerely, and in g-g-good earnest! The num-mum-man writes as if he really believes in the existence of the treasure!"

"I am sure he did, sir," said Tom Merry; "and I can't help believing in it myself. If you'd seen that man Hiram Finn, who was after him, you would think so. He was an awfully keen and sharp beast, and he wouldn't be hunting a mare's nest, I think."

"Wathah not!"

Mr. Mopps read over the paper again, and scribbled a translation of it, with an ease which the juniors admired much more than they had admired the Latin hexameters.

"The chest of money is buried among the ruins of the Chapel of Santa Maria on the island near Burano, in the Grand Lagoon of Venice. The stone is marked with a red cross."

"It is certainly very explicit," said Mr. Mopps. "It will be quite easy to take a gondola from Venice to this island near Burano, and visit the ruins



The gardener, the chauffeur, and Toby and Taggles laid hold of D'Arcy's trunk and exerted all their strength to lift it. But that trunk would not budge! "My heye!" gasped Taggles. "It's 'savy!" Little did they know it had been screwed to the floor!

of the Chapel of Santa Maria. And the chest is buried under a stone marked with a red cross; it should be easy to find it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Mopps beamed upon the juniors over his gold-rimmed glasses.

"I suppose you are very eager to undertake this search, my boys?"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"What-ho!"

"Then we will make Venice the starting-point of our little excursion," said the good-natured Mr. Mopps, "and we will see if this chest of money exists."

"Bravo!"

"Oh, ripping!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry clapped the fat Fourth Former on the shoulder.

"Good for you, Fatty! It's jolly good of you to wish us success—"

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn. "What are you talking about?"

"Didn't you say it was ripping?"

"Yes, and so it is—so tender—"

"Eh?"

"Simply melts in the mouth—"

"What—"

"Simply ripping!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Spilling!"

"What are you jawing about, you ass?"

"Eh? I was speaking of this cold chicken," said Fatty, in wonder. "What did you think I was talking about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn looked puzzled. All his attention had been given to the cold chicken, and he had not heard a word about the treasure of the Venetian lagoon. But he did not ask for any explanation. There was another cold chicken, and Fatty Wynn started on that. A bird in hand, it is said, is worth two in the bush; and to Fatty Wynn, a cold chicken on the table before him was worth any number of buried treasures on islands in the Grand Lagoon of Venice.

CHAPTER 7.

ON!

TOM MERRY & CO. turned out the following morning in great spirits.

Mr. Mopps had stayed the night at St. Jim's; he had brought his bags down with him, and a start was to be made direct from the old school for Newhaven, where the party were to cross for Dieppe, and start their journey.

Tom Merry & Co. had their packing done very early. They had travelled before, and, with the exception of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, they knew what to take, and what was more important—what to leave behind. Arthur Augustus was obstinately bent on taking the big brand-new trunk. He had packed it full to overflowing, and he confided joyously to Blake that there would be not the slightest danger of running out of ties or silk hats. Inside the great trunk he had placed an extra hat-box, in addition to the big leather hat-box which held two toppers and a straw and a Panama and a Homburg and a set of caps. Blake only smiled; Lowther had confided to him his little joke about the screws, and he was content.

A big car had arrived in the morning to take the five juniors and Mr. Mopps and their baggage to the station. It was a splendid spring morning, and

all St. Jim's was in high spirits. They were fond of the old school, but holidays were always welcome. When the car drew up outside the School House, and Taggles and Toby carried down the bags to place in it, Arthur Augustus turned his attention to his big trunk.

Taggles was remarkably polite that morning—he did not err, as a rule, on the side of over-politeness, but when the school broke up, Taggles' manners were always charming. Shillings and half-crowns, and even ten-shilling notes, came Taggles' way on days like that.

Taggles was specially polite to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was rolling in money as usual on such an occasion. His pater had been very generous, D'Arcy having explained that he would want a lot of money in an expensive country like Italy. Taggles had pressed into service the Head's gardener, the chauffeur, and Toby, the page. The four of them gathered round D'Arcy's trunk, and the fellows who knew that it was screwed to the floor gathered round it, too, to watch events.

"Pway be vewy careful with it, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "There are some vewy valuable things in it, you know!"

"Orlright, Master D'Arcy!" said Taggles. "We'll handle it as if it was the happle of our heye, sir!"

"How do you handle the apple of your eye, Taggles?" asked Monty Lowther, with an innocent desire for information.

Taggles only grunted. He had already had a half-crown from Lowther, so he did not feel called upon to appreciate the Shell fellow's humour.

"Now, then, lay 'old!" said Taggles.

The gardener, the chauffeur, and Toby and Taggles laid hold. They laid hold and exerted themselves. The trunk did not move.

"My heye!" said Taggles. "It's 'cavy!"

"Yaas, it's wathah heavy," agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But the four of you ought to be able to manage it, weally!"

"Oh, we'll get it down, sir!" said the chauffeur.

"Lay 'old agin!" said Taggles.

And they laid hold again.

But the trunk remained stationary. It is probable that if Hercules had made a thirteenth labour of moving that trunk, he would not have succeeded so well as he did with his famous twelve tasks.

Taggles, Toby, the Head's chauffeur, and the gardener exerted themselves manfully.

But it was in vain.

The trunk remained as firmly fixed as if it were clamped to the floor—or screwed.

There was a giggle from the crowd of fellows looking on.

"Put your beef into it!" said Kangaroo of the Shell. "You're not half trying, Taggy!"

"All together!" said Reilly. "Faith, don't let it bate you, you know!"

"Go it, Taggles!"

"Shove!"

Taggles went it—and shoved! But the trunk declined to move. The unhappy porter relaxed his efforts at last, and mopped his streaming brow.

"You must have put too many things in it, Master D'Arcy," he gasped. "I s'pose you ain't loaded it up with brick-bats, by any chance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It simply contains articles of attire," said Arthur Augustus. "It is

wathah heavy, I know, but weally it ought not to give all that twouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the row here?" asked Kildare of the Sixth, coming along the passage.

"Gussy's trunk," said Monty Lowther blandly. "Gussy has put in so many fancy ties and socks that they can't move it."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's toppers," said Lumley-Lumley. "I guess it's the toppers that have done it. How many have you put in, Gussy?"

"Weally, Lumley—"

"I'll give you a hand," said the captain of St. Jim's good-naturedly.

"Thank you kindly, sir!" said Taggles. "But I think it will want a lot of 'ands to move that trunk. And 'ow the railway porters is goin' to carry it, sir, is a mystery to me!"

"Lay hold all together!" said Kildare, laughing.

And Kildare lent his aid.

The captain of St. Jim's was a powerful fellow, and certainly the trunk, heavy as it was, ought to have moved with five strong pairs of hands upon it. But it wouldn't. Kildare, breathing hard, rose from his labours with a look of astonishment upon his face.

Mr. Mopps came up the passage, taking out his watch.

"We are all ready, D'Arcy," he said mildly. "The car is ready to start. I am afraid we cannot delay longer without losing the train, and in that case we should miss the boat at Newhaven."

"Yaas, sir; it's all wight—my twunk's comin'!"

Mr. Mopps gazed at the trunk.

"You are not thinking of bub-bub-bringing that t-t-trunk with you, D'Arcy?" he asked, in horrified astonishment.

"Yaas, Mr. Mopps!"

"B-b-but it is quite impossible, D'Arcy! You could not possibly travel with a trunk that size," said Mr. Mopps, in distress. "You must gig-gig-gig—"

"Eh?"

"You must gig-gig-give up the idea, D'Arcy. Pray come now; the car is waiting."

"But all my things are in that twunk, sir," explained D'Arcy. "I have nothin' else but one bag, sir."

"But, really, D'Arcy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"You'll have to make the bag do, Gussy. Come on!"

"I cannot come without my twunk, deah boy."

"Try again!" grinned Manners.

Taggles & Co. tried again. Kildare helped, and two or three more fellows lent a hand, but the trunk did not move.

"There's some joke in this," said Kildare suspiciously. "The trunk must be fastened to the floor in some way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, Gussy!" shouted Tom Merry from the stairs. "The car's going to start!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

Blake, Lowther, and Manners dashed downstairs and took their places in the car. Tom Merry called to Arthur Augustus again, and followed them. Mr. Mopps looked at his watch in great distress.

"D'Arcy, we shall lose the train!"

"But my twunk, sir—"

"You must come without it."

"It's fastened to the floor," said Kildare.

"My heye!" said Taggles.

"Bai Jove! It's a twick—a wotten twick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I wefuse to go without my twunk!"
 "D'Arcy, we must hurry!"
 "Come on, Mr. Mopps!" shouted Tom Merry, reappearing on the stairs. "We've only just got time for the train!"

"Did-did-dear me!"
 "Bai Jove! I shall have to unpack the twunk, and get it loose, and pack it again!"

"But there is no time!" gasped Mr. Mopps. "Really—"

"But, weally, Mr. Mopps—"
 Tom Merry slipped his arm through Mr. Mopps', and led him away to the stairs.

"Good-bye, Gussy!" he called out. "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's all right. You can stay here with the trunk. We'll send you some picture-postcards from Italy!" called back Tom Merry, as he disappeared down the stairs with the bewildered Mr. Mopps.

"Bai Jove!"
 Arthur Augustus looked at the trunk. The crowd in the passage roared with laughter.

D'Arcy ran down the stairs into the quadrangle. The car, with Tom Merry & Co. on board, was starting for the gates. D'Arcy dashed after it.

"Stop, you boundahs! Stop, you wottahs! You can't leave me behind!"

"Can't lose the train!" yelled Blake.

"But my twunk—"

"Pray get into the car, D'Arcy!" gasped Mr. Mopps. "We really must not lose the train."

"But my twunk—"

"We'll send you some picture postcards, Gussy, and a telegram if we find the giddy treasure!" yelled Lowther.

"Lowthab, I wegard you as a beast! I suspect you of havin' fastened my twunk to the floor. I considah you a wank outsidah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye, Gussy!"

The car ran slowly on.

Arthur Augustus caught up with it and jumped on the running-board, to continue the argument. His eyeglass dangled at the end of its cord, and his silk hat tilted to one side with quite a rakish look. His aristocratic face was wildly excited, and never had he lacked so conspicuously the repose which should stamp the caste of Vero de Vere.

"Jump in, Gussy!"

"There's still time!"

"But my twunk—my luggage—"

"Jump in!"

"If I come without my twunk, I shall insist upon stoppin' a few days in Pawis to do some shoppin'!"

"No law against that," said Blake.

"You can insist upon anything you like. No harm in a chap insisting till he's black in the face."

"You attah wottah!"

"Jump in!"

The car was at the gateway now. Arthur Augustus opened the door and jumped in. Then the car halted in the gateway. Taggles and Toby and the Head's gardener and chauffeur followed it to the gates. In the hurry of the moment Arthur Augustus had forgotten the tips; but they had remembered.

"Taggles & Co. want to speak to you, Gussy," said Lowther blandly.

"Bai Jove! I pway excuse me for havin' forgotten you, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, fumbling in his pocket for a pound note. "I have been the victim of a wotten twink! Taggles, pway take care of my twunk while I am gone."

"Cert'ly, sir!" said Taggles, as his honest horny hand closed with much

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
 Calling!



Hallo, everybody!
 Why was your nose put in the middle of your face? Because it's the scenter.

Well, what most becomes a man? A boy, of course.

Now try this: Why is a pair of skates like a banana skin? Surely you're not going to "fall" for that!

It was young Gibson who, asked by Mr. Selby to define the word "suffix," said it was a county in the south of England!

Then there was the fisherman who thought he was pretty hot, but all he caught was a cold.

Monocles are coming back into favour, says Gussy. In the public eye again?

Mr. Linton reminds us that money is a controlling force. With us it's usually a "spent" force!

"Youth Must Be Served," reads a headline. If not, it simply helps itself!

I hear that while Fatty Wyon was making a cake, Figgins accidentally dropped some glue into the mixture. If caused no end of a "stir"!

Remember, you needn't go abroad next winter. You can get plenty of it here.

A Wayland man who is a hundred

and three says: "Just keep smiling." Ho who laughs lasts!

I know a business man who lives on the fat of the land. He's invented a successful slimming course!

'Nother chap will trace your next-of-kin. The heir restorer.

Brief one: "D'you like moving pictures, Bill?" asked his mate. "Not 'arf!" "Then just help me move half a dozen from the attic, will you?"

A serial film, when completed, was found to be a foot too short. The villain had got away by inches!

Query: "How can I collect stamps?" asks a reader. Travel by Tube in the rush hour, old chap.

Mr. Selby was holding forth in the Third Form Room. "And when we go out on a cold winter's morning, what do we see on every naid?" he asked. "Gloves!" answered Wally D'Arcy.

They were giving auditions for a charity concert, and Gussy had to go along. "They didn't offah me an engagement, but they agweed my voice was heavenly," said Gussy, on his return. "Are you sure?" asked Blake.

"Well, deah boy, they said it was unearthly!" admitted Gussy.

News: Rhyl bargees are on strike. They won't touch work with a barge pole.

As the science master said, operating an electrical device: "You boys will notice that this machine is worked by a crank." That "started" them laughing!

Very last: A lady traveller at a Wild West station ordered a cup of tea, but hadn't time to drink it before the train restarted. A cowboy said: "Please take mine, lady—it's already sauced and blowed!" Western courtesy! After you, chaps!

satisfaction upon the pound note. "Like the happle of my heye, sir. 'Ope you'll 'ave a good time, sir!"

And the car drove on.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy set his silk topper straight, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and turned a withering glance upon his grinning comrades.

"You fighwifful wottahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as beasts—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I feel vevy doubtful whethah I can continue to considah you as fwends—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to speak to you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you wottahs, it seems quite imposs to make you feel pwopahly ashamed of yourselves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was evidently quite impossible, and Arthur Augustus gave it up.

CHAPTER 3.

In the Chops of the Channel!

"NEW HAVEN!" said Tom Merry.

The party from St. Jun's poured out from the train in great spirits.

The boat for Dieppe was waiting for the train. Porters carried the bags away in a procession, and the juniors and Mr. Mopps followed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had recovered his good humour by this time. The prospect of shopping in Paris consoled him—though his comrades

their own ideas about that. To travel to Italy with a single bag, containing only about twice as many things as any other fellow would have taken, appeared a sheer impossibility to Arthur Augustus. The only resource was a stay of a few days in Paris to replenish the supply. D'Arcy consoled himself with that thought, and he even admitted that the brand-new trunk which had been so unfortunately left behind would have been rather awkward to get on the boat.

Arthur Augustus kindly declared that he would buy a smaller one in Paris. Whereat Tom Merry & Co. smiled. They meant to keep a very sharp eye on Arthur Augustus, and to take excellent care that no trunks were added to the party en route to Venice.

"Aftah all," remarked D'Arcy, as they walked down to the boat, "it is quite possible to get what you want in Pawis. You fellows shall come with me to do some shoppin' in the Wuo de la Paix."

"I don't think!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthab—"

The party walked on the steamer. It was a fine, sunny day, and there was the prospect of a good crossing. Which was a great satisfaction to Mr. Mopps, who was not a good sailor.

"I hope you lads will not be ill in the bow-bow-bow—"

"We're going to be aft, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "You're more likely to be ill in the bow, sir."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"In the bow-wow-boat," concluded Mr. Mopps.

"Oh, that's all wight, sir; we're good sailahs. We've been on the watah before," said D'Arcy. "I twust you will be all wight."

"Ye-es," said Mr. Mopps, as the steamer moved out. "It looks like a kik-kik-kik-calm sea. I think I shall remain on deck."

"I don't think it will be wuff, sir," said D'Arcy encouragingly.

The sea was not what a sailor would call rough by any means. But before they were a mile from land it appeared to Mr. Mopps that the boat was rolling in the most horrible manner. He sat in his deck-chair with his complexion gradually changing to a scholarly pallor, and then to an art shade in green.

"Did-did-dear me!" murmured Mr. Mopps. "I t-t-trust I am not going to be ill!"

"Bwace yourself, sir."

"There are lots of remedies for sea-sickness, sir," said Monty Lowther kindly. "Have you ever tried chewing a little bit of fat pork?"

"Groogh!"

"Shut up, Monty, you ass!" said Tom Merry.

"Groo-oogh!" said Mr. Mopps faintly. "I—I think upon the whole it would have been a jew-jew-jew—"

"I don't quite compwehend, sir. Who would have been a Jew?"

"It would have been a jew-jew-jew—"

"Bai Jovo!"

"A jew-jew-judicious thing to cross by Calais, as the sea route is so much shorter," murmured Mr. Mopps. "I really think so—now!"

"Too late, Mr. Mopps," said D'Arcy. "But it's not a vewy long cwossin'—only about three hours—"

"Oh, did-did-dear!"

Mr. Mopps was silent for a long time—silent and unhappy. The steamer churned on into the chops of the Channel. Mr. Mopps grew more and more unhappy. He would have given Tom Merry's treasure, and all the other treasures in the world, with the "early Italian poets" thrown in, to have his feet on dry land again at that moment.

He wondered—as many unhappy Channel passengers wonder at the moment of anguish—how any man who was safe on land could be lunatic enough to trust himself upon water! But Mr. Mopps was soon in no state of wonder about anything. His complexion grew greener and greener, and all his efforts were directed towards mastering the extraordinary sensations he felt inside.

Passengers strolled up and down the deck, chatting cheerfully. Mr. Mopps looked upon them with a lack-lustre eye. Probably not one of them could have rendered a translation of the "early Italian poets"; but Mr. Mopps would have given all his scholastic attainments at that moment to be rid of the dreadful feelings that were rising within him.

The juniors were very sympathetic. Even Monty Lowther did not make any more funny remarks about fat pork. Mr. Mopps' silent anguish would have touched the heart of a tax-collector. An attendant came along the deck with a large basin, which he planted conspicuously before Mr. Mopps. Mr. Mopps groaned and shook his head.

"I—I don't want that!" he murmured.

"Never mind. You will, sir," said the man consolingly.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"Groogh!"

And Mr. Mopps did.

A fat Frenchman, with a fat cigar, halted near Mr. Mopps, smoking contentedly as he looked away towards La Belle France. A whiff of his cigar smote Mr. Mopps like a discharge of artillery. Mr. Mopps groaned. He reached out a feeble hand and pushed the Frenchman, who stared down at him in astonishment. Then he understood and sympathised.

"Peauvre garçon!" he said.

And he took himself and his cigar farther away.

The steamer plunged on.

"Oh, did-did-dear!" murmured Mr. Mopps. "How did-did-dreadfully the ship is rolling! I suppose it would be no use speaking to the captain to ask him if he can do something to stut-stut-stop the ship rolling?"

"I'm afraid not, sir," said Tom Merry bravely.

"We shall be in soon, sir," said Manners. "We're nearly in the middle of the Channel now."

"Nearly!" groaned Mr. Mopps.

"Quite!" said Tom Merry. "We shall be able to see Dieppe soon, sir. Buck up!"

"Groogh!"

Another half-hour—about twenty centuries long to Mr. Mopps! Then he gently touched D'Arcy on the arm, and D'Arcy leaned down to hear his faint, expiring murmur.

"I am dud-dud-dreadfully ill!" murmured Mr. Mopps. "I fuf-fuf-feel that I'm going to die. I am sus-sus-sorry that your holiday will be spoiled by such a fatality, D'Arcy. I—I wish to be buried in England."

"My deah chap—"

"You will have my body taken back to England for interment, won't you?" groaned Mr. Mopps. "Promise me that."

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy. "Honah bwight, sir!"

"Th-th-thank you!"

And Mr. Mopps closed his eyes.

"Poor old chap!" murmured Tom Merry. "Worst case I've ever seen. Do you remember Fatty Wynn after a big feed on a steamer one vacation, you chaps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Mopps was insensible to his surroundings now. Years of anguish rolled by—at least, so it seemed to Mr. Mopps. But Mr. Mopps, somewhat to his astonishment, did not die. A shake of the shoulder brought him back suddenly from the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He opened his eyes languidly.

"Dieppe, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"Groogh!"

"We're getting into harbour, sir."

"Groogh!"

"On land in a few minutes now, Mr. Mopps."

"Groogh!"

The steamer was still at last. Then the juniors raised Mr. Mopps to his feet. The tutor gazed round him with lack-lustre eyes. But as he felt no



"Understands English, is ut!" roared the fat gentleman, ye saucy little spalpeen, it's meself that'll give ye a clump D'Arcy.

further motion beneath his feet, he revived.

"We—we are really there at last?" he murmured.

"Really, Mr. Mopps!"

"Thank g-g-goodness!"

They piloted Mr. Mopps ashore, accompanied by an army of "facteurs" with their bags.

With the firm land under his feet, Mr. Mopps recovered wonderfully. He even smiled a little as he took his seat in the train for Paris.

"It was a dud-dud-dreadful crossing!" he murmured. "But I think I stood it pretty well—pretty well—eh?"

"Wemarkably well, sir."

"After all," said Mr. Mopps, "the sea is the natural element of the Briton. By braving the terrors of the waves, my boys, we have made England what she is!"

"We have, sir," said Tom Merry solemnly.

"Other nations," said Mr. Mopps, "lack our hardy strength for that reason. We have always been the rulers of the sea, because we have defied and scoffed at its terrors. As Britons, we are at home upon the blue water. We do not fear when the stormy winds do blow—eh?"

"Not a bit, sir!"

The train started, with that delightful swing-boat movement peculiar to the French trains. Mr. Mopps turned pale again.

"Did-did-dea, me!" he said. "I—I wish the train would not rock so! It makes me feel as if I were on that dud-dud-dreadful boat again!"

"Never mind, sir!" said Monty



with an accent that was certainly not Italian. "Sure, on yere head for yere cheek!" "Bai Jove!" gasped

Lowther. "It's a comfort to feel that we belong to a race of hardy Britons, who have always ruled the giddy waves, sir."

But Mr. Mopps did not reply. He was wrestling once more with the inward demon, and he did not seem himself again till Paris was reached.

CHAPTER 9.

In Italy!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY made his plans overnight for a gigantic shopping expedition, which was to despoil the Rue de la Paix and the Avenue de la Opera of their most valuable possessions. Tom Merry & Co. also made their plans. The latter were carried out, and Arthur Augustus found himself the next morning in the express for the south, with the shopping undone.

The kind offer of the juniors to leave him behind to shop, and to send him picture postcards from Italy, was refused with indignation by the swell of St. Jim's. Chiefly, as he assured them, because he was quite sure that they would get into trouble in Italy if he were not there to look after them.

Mr. Mopps had, fortunately, got over his trainsickness and his seasickness, and was quite cheerful again.

The express dashed away to the Sunny South. Mr. Mopps had chosen the Simplon route. The juniors, from the train windows, watched the massive Alps rise into view. They stopped a night at Lausanne, and the next day took the train for Italy.

The wonderful beauty of the Lake of Geneva burst upon them as the train ran on by the shores of the inland sea.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This is a wippen' place! We shall weally have to have a vacation in Switzerland some time, you chaps!"

"Makes you feel quite poetic," said Lowther. "What are those lings of Byron—"

"Yaas," said D'Arcy; "I know:

"Woll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, woll!"

"Not that, fathead! This isn't an ocean, it's a lake!" said Lowther. "Something about scalps."

"I am sure Bywon nevah w'ote any poem about scalps, deah boy!"

"Yes, he did. I've got it!" exclaimed Lowther.

"Before me are the Alps, Lifting sublime their snowy scalps!"

"Is that poetry?" asked D'Arcy doubtfully.

"Of course it is, ass! Scalps rhymes with Alps, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It must be jolly easy to make up poetry if whymes are all that are wanted," said Arthur Augustus. "F'winstance:

"Before me is a fweak, Liftin' sublime his awful cheek!"

"Why, you silly ass!" said Lowther warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then there's the 'Prisoner of Chillon,'" said Manners, who knew his Byron, having a youthful taste for that great poet. "We shall see the Castle of Chillon from the train. They call it Shee-yong here. You remember:

"My hair is grey, but not with years, Nor grew it white in a single night—"

"Sure that's right?" asked Blake thoughtfully.

"Of course I am!" said Manners warmly.

"Well, I think it goes differently," said Blake obstinately.

"My hair is white, but not with fright, Nor grew it grey in a single day—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bywon w'ote some stuff about Venice, too, in 'Childs Hawold,'" said D'Arcy. "We shall be able to vewify his statements about Venice when we get there. Chap who's been there told me that Bywon had got it all w'ong. You remember the lines:

"I stood in Venice on the Bwidge of Sighs—"

"What size?" asked Lowther. "Weally, Lowthah—"

"I'll bet they haven't got a bridge there the size of the Forth Bridge, whether it's a bridge of size or not!" said Lowther.

"It is not that kind of size, you ass. You must have heard of the Bridge of Sighs. They call it the Ponte dei Sospiri in Italian. Vowly poetical.

"I stood in Venice on the Bwidge of Sighs, A palaco and a pwison on each hand—"

"Must have been an awfully strong chap!" said Lowther.

"Why, you ass?"

"To hold a palace and a prison on each hand," explained Lowther. "Blessed if I see how he managed it! They must have weighed a lot."

"You awful ass! It means a palace and a pwison on each side—"

"Then why doesn't it say so?" demanded Lowther.

"Because side wouldn't rhyme—"

"Then he ought to have done it in blank verse," said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "Even poets ought to say what they mean, when they know. Hallo, what does this chap want?"

An attendant had put his head into the carriage from the corridor.

"Leave him to me, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "I'll pitch it to him in Fwench. What do you want, deah boy—vous desirvez quelque-chose?"

"Le dejeuner est servi."

"Yaas, it's a jolly fine day," said Arthur Augustus. "Vewy nice and polite of you to come and say so."

Mr. Mopps rose.

"Come on, my boys," he said.

"Where, sir?"

"To the dining-car, D'Arcy," said Mr. Mopps. "Lunch is ready."

"Bai Jove! Is it?"

"Yes, the man has just said so."

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus.

And the juniors chuckled.

Some time after lunch the train plunged into the Simplon Tunnel. Windows were closed with great care to keep out the foul fumes of the tunnel. The train rushed on in the darkness. For twenty or twenty-five minutes the express thundered on under the great mass of the Alps, the atmosphere growing hotter and hotter. The juniors gasped with relief when the train ran out at last into the sunlight again.

"We shall have to descend at Domodossola," said Mr. Mopps. "The examination of luggago for Italy takes place there."

"Bai Jove! Are we weally in Italy now, sir?"

"Yes," said Mr. Mopps, with a smile.

The juniors gazed from the train windows in wonder and awe. Italy, the land of dreams, was before them at last. Italy, the spoiled child of the Sulany South! The prize for which so many successive conquerors had contended—descending in wave after wave from the Alps as the centuries rolled by.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, in almost a hushed voice. "It's weally Italy, you know—place where Julius Caesar lived! He was a weal man, you know—though it doesn't seem like it when you read his stuff at school!"

"Domodossola!" said Mr. Mopps.

And the party descended for the examination of luggago. There was not much trouble—in graceful politeness the Italian Customs officers are not to be excelled.

Then the train rolled on towards Milan.

The juniors gazed from the windows. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

They were a little disappointed—as most travellers are who enter Italy for the first time by the Simplon Tunnel. But D'Arcy remarked that it would probably improve later on.

"Bai Jove! It's warmah here," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I say, I've got an Italian gwammah in my pocket. I'm goin' to give you chaps some tips about—"

"Better keep 'em for the hotel waiters," said Monty Lowther. "I've heard that the Italians are awfully keen after tips."

"Some tips about the language, you ass!" said D'Arcy, taking out his valuable volume. "Now we're in Italy we ought to talk Italian as much as possible."

"I know some words already," said Lowther modestly.

"Pway tell me what you know, deah boy."

Lowther reflected.

"Ice-cream—" he began.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Saffronnillo!" went on Lowther cheerfully. "Soho! Greek Streeto! Mussolino!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah! Now, take the verb essere, to be," said D'Arcy. "Essere, to be—Io sono, I am—tu sei, thou art—"

"Hold on!" said Lowther. "Let's get it in! Io sono, I am—"

"Yaas!"

"Tu sei—thou beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally considah that you might keep your funny bisney for the 'Weekly' at St. Jim's, Lowthah, you duffah. Avete il cappello nero del mio padre?" demanded D'Arcy.

"What!"

"Have you the black hat of my father?"

"Certainly not. I've got my own cap!"

"You uttah ass—it's an exercise!" shrieked D'Arcy. "No, signore, non ho il cappello nero del vostro padre—ho suo cappello bianco."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I mean not your fathah's black hat; I have his white hat."

"But you haven't got my father's white hat!" objected Lowther.

"I wegard you as a clump, Lowthah! When I say I have your father's white hat, I don't mean that I have it—I mean—"

"You mean you have his black hat?"

"No, you ass! I mean—it's a lesson!"

"The more it lessens, the better I shall like it!" yawned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now you have to wepeat it in Italian," said D'Arcy. "Have you my fathah's black hat?"

"But I don't know the Italian word for cat."

"Cat! I was not sayin' anythin' about a cat!"

"Didn't you ask me if I have your father's black cat?" asked Lowther innocently.

"You—you—you— I wefuse to give you any instructions in the Italian language, you uttah ass," said Arthur Augustus, closing his volume with a snap.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Monty Lowther remained in a state of cheerful ignorance upon that subject.

"Milan!" said Mr. Mopps, at last. And the juniors descended in Milan—the stazione di Milano, as D'Arcy explained.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

CHAPTER 10.

A Day in Milan!

AFTER tea at the hotel, the St. Jim's juniors enjoyed a ramble through Milan, under the gentle guidance of Mr. Mopps.

Mr. Mopps did not know the city, but he had a huge guide-book under his arm, to which he constantly referred. In that great industrial city, the juniors saw busy scenes that were not much in keeping with their ideas of the soft and sunny life of the sleepy South.

Bustling crowds, gigantic buildings—roaring traffic and clanging trams—and over all, the spires of the wonderful cathedral. And noise—noise—noise! But except for the sight of marching troops, there was little evidence that Italy was at war.

When Mr. Mopps stopped to consult his guide-book amid the bustling crowds, he was pushed off the kerb, and jostled and shoved—and once or twice the juniors had to rescue him from falling under a rushing tram, or under speeding cars which Italian drivers urge to reckless speed.

But it was a very pleasant evening to the juniors. They had had holidays in France, but it was a new experience to be farther afield, and to hear the Italian tongue spoken round them.

Many other languages, too, may be heard in the busy streets of Milan—German, French, English, and Russian. It is a cosmopolitan city.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as they waited at a corner for an interminable stream of traffic to pass. "If this is the dolce fah niente they speak of, I should think a chap would wequiah a west cure affah it!"

"The dolchey far what?" asked Lowther.

"The dolce fah niente, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "The sweet-to-do-nothin', you know—doesn't look much like it here. Isn't it wippin' to heah them talkin' Italian?"

"What language would you expect them to talk here, then?" asked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"From this corner," said Mr. Mopps, "you obtain a magnificent view of the famous Gothic cathedral. The cathedral was founded by—"

Tom Merry dragged him out of reach of a tram.

"Dud-dud-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps.

"Thank you very much, Merry. How very fast the trams go! And what a dud-dud-dreadful noise they make!"

"It's weemarkably intwestin' to observe a fowgen crowd," said Arthur Augustus. "You see all sorts of types here, you know. Now look at the fat Italian chap there—you'd never know he was an Italian if you met him in London."

The juniors looked at the gentleman in question. He certainly did not look much like an Italian, being a fat, ponderous gentleman in sports coat and grey flannel trousers, with a fat, ruddy face.

"Most Italians are wathah good lookin'," continued D'Arcy wisely. "You very seldom see a weally ugly one like that chap—"

A most terrific change came over the fat gentleman's face.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Blake hurriedly. "He understands English."

"Understands English, is ut?" roared the fat gentleman, with an accent that was certainly not Italian. "Sure, ye saucy little spalpeen, it's meself that'll give ye a clump on yere silly head for yere cheek entirely."

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "I—I—"

"Ye miserable leetle omadhaun—"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Sure, and did ye lave yere manners at home, ye—"

"Oh, I'm sure I weally beg your pardon, my deah sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I took you for an Italian—"

"And, faith, I took ye for a silly monkey, by the same token," said the fat gentleman. "And sure, I wasn't the one that made a mistake."

Tom Merry, choking with laughter, dragged Arthur Augustus away.

The swell of St. Jim's was crimson.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake. "You put your foot in it that time, Guasy. Make sure your Mussolini isn't an Irishman next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It's howwid!" moaned D'Arcy. "The gentleman will think me a wude cad—"

"Go hon!"

"I had better go back and apologise to him."

"Keep off the grass!" grinned Monty Lowther. "It won't be safe to go near him. Of all the silly clumps that ever clumped—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"We will now see the cathedral," said Mr. Mopps, as Manners dragged him from almost under another tram. "Dud-dud-dear me! What a number of trams there are!"

The party entered the great cathedral which, as D'Arcy explained, was called *Il Duomo* in Italian, and ascended the endless stairs to the top, where they had a wonderful view of Milan in the sunset, and the great plains of Lombardy in the distance.

"Dud-dud-dear me! What a great number of steps!" gasped Mr. Mopps.

"But it is very, very interesting. After our excursion to Venice, I shall spend some time in Milan, making my investigations into the subject of the early Italian poets. Milan is a most interesting city. In almost every street you find some ass—ass—ass—"

"We've got one with us," remarked Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Some ass—association of great historical interest," said Mr. Mopps. "The cathedral, for instance, was founded in the year—"

"What does this chap want?" asked D'Arcy.

They were leaving the cathedral now, and one of the cathedral guides who had followed in their footsteps was taking off his hat, and bowing like clock-work.

"Not very hard to guess," murmured Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"What do you want, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy; and then put it in Italian. "Che volete, cawo wagazzo?"

The Duomo guide stared, as well he might. "Caro ragazzo certainly means dear boy in Italian, but it is not a usual form of address there. As the man was old enough to be D'Arcy's grandfather, it struck him as peculiar to be called a boy.

"I generosi signori danno qualche cosa," said the guide.

D'Arcy looked puzzled for a moment.

"Hold on, cawo wagazzo!" he said. "Wait a minute till I look in my gwammah, and I'll talk to you like anythin'. Danno is a pluwal verb, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at, deah boys. I could talk to

(Continued on page 18.)



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! Seen the announcement on page seven? Great news, isn't it? I'm sure all GEM readers, most of whom, I know, read our popular companion paper, "The Magnet," will welcome the appearance in our pages of Harry Wharton & Co., the cheery chums of Greyfriars. These schoolboy characters, first created by Frank Richards twenty-eight years ago, are as firm favourites with all school-story readers as Tom Merry & Co., and to have the adventures of both featured in the GEM is a big scoop for the old paper.

The epic story, which will begin next week, is entitled:

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

It is written, of course, by Frank Richards, and deals with the early adventures of Harry Wharton at Greyfriars—how, as an untamed, spoilt, obstinate boy who has been allowed to run wild by an over-indulgent aunt, he is sent to Greyfriars against his will by his uncle; how he first meets Nugent en route, and, after fighting with him in the train, saves his life; and how his headstrong reckless behaviour lands him into serious trouble with his Form fellows. This amazing story of Wharton's coming to Greyfriars, and his adventures there, will greatly appeal to all GEM readers, and the early glimpses of Nugent, Billy Bunter, Bulstrode, and many other well-known characters will be an added source of interest and enjoyment.

Every boy in England—and most of the girls—will be eager to read this wonderful yarn, which is of really unique interest. So take good care, chums, that your GEM is reserved for you next week—there'll be a big rush for it!

"TOM MERRY'S BIG FIGHT!"

On such an important occasion as the appearance of the Greyfriars characters in the GEM, an extra-good yarn of Tom Merry & Co. is indicated. This we have in next week's thrilling story of fun, adventure, and boxing.

Tom Merry, on his way to the Wayland Empire to join his chums, is set on by footpads; but, fortunately for Tom, Tiny Tim, a boxer appearing in a turn at the music hall, wades in and promptly gives the k.o. to the schoolboy's attackers. A friendship is formed between Tom and his rescuer, which, later, is to have a happy outcome for both. For Tom is afforded the opportunity of repaying his debt of gratitude to the boxer by deputising for him in a boxing bout on the stage!

"Tom Merry's Big Fight!" will be read with enthusiasm by all "Gem-ites," and with "Just My Fun!" and the Jester's selection of readers' football winning jokes, which are all illustrated, completes a programme second to none.

THE GUN SILENCER.

"What is the principle on which gun silencers work?" asks Jack Baines, of Coventry. "Does a weapon fitted with one make any sound when fired?" The answer to your second question is "No," Jack. Authors of crime stories very often describe the sound of a silenced gun as "plop" or "phut," but actually it is incorrect, for if the silencer is in working order, the only sound to be heard is the click of the trigger.

The silencer works on a similar principle to the exhaust of a motor-bike, but is much more effective in silencing the explosion, of course. It is a tube about six inches long, and fits on the barrel of the gun. Inside it are several pierced discs, like the baffle plates in a motor-bike silencer. When the shot is fired the expanding gases caused by the explosion of the shell are turned back into the barrel by these discs, while the bullet goes out.

Now, before another shot can be fired, those gases must be released, and this is done by removing the spent shell from the gun. If the silencer is used on an automatic, it is almost impossible to fire more than one shot.

In the States, I believe, there are silencers which function satisfactorily on machine-guns, and permit of incessant firing. But, of course, they are obviously too large to be fitted to an ordinary automatic.

THE FASTEST GAME IN THE WORLD!

The success a little while ago of the British ice-hockey team in the Olympic Games, when our side won the world championship, has prompted a reader to write for some facts about the game.

Ice hockey is played by six aside, Fred Payne, of Brixton, each team comprising a goalkeeper, two backs, and three forwards. In addition, each side has three substitutes to take the place of injured players. A match lasts forty-five minutes, which is split up into three fifteen-minute periods, with an interval of ten minutes between each. The play is so tremendously fast that naturally injuries are frequent, and even the ref. sometimes

gets into the wars. That is why there are substitutes ready to take the places of those injured; but no team may have more than six men in play at a time. The ball is called a puck, and is a flat circular disc of vulcanised rubber.

It is perhaps not generally known, but ice hockey originated in Canada as long ago as 1750, and it was some British soldiers, fighting under General Wolfe, who started it. Having nothing to do, they began a game of football, but on an ice-bound surface it was difficult enough to keep the feet, without trying to play football. So they gave it up and tried playing the game with sticks instead of kicking the ball. This was no more successful—until some Indians, who were watching the soldiers' efforts, offered them their skates. And that's how ice hockey began.

AMAZING HIKE!

Averaging nearly nineteen miles a day, an engineer in America has been hiking along railway tracks for twenty-six years! It began with a wager when the engineer was twenty-five. He bet one of America's railroad kings that he could walk over the whole of his railway system in thirty years. So far, he has covered 178,000 miles in twenty-six years, and to win the wager of £20,000 he has to hike 12,000 miles in four years. If he keeps up his present average he will be through with his hike in less than two years. During his marathon walk he has had to renew his shoes eight hundred times!

Another amazing hike was that accomplished by Cookie, a cat living in Chicago. Eight months ago she was sent away by her mistress to a relative in Wilber, Nebraska. But Cookie pined for the old home, apparently, for recently she turned up there again, dirty, tired, and hungry—but happy! Somehow or other, she had found her way back from Nebraska, a distance of 600 miles!

PEN PALS

B. Hills, 40a, Beatty Avenue, Toronto, Canada; age 14-17; films, sports.

Brian Locke, 71, Cromwell Road, South Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.

Leslie Robey, 102, Cromwell Road, Kensington, London, S.W.7; United Services Hotel; age 16-18.

Wm. Brock, 26, High Street, Potters Bar, Middlesex; age 12-16; overseas; boxing, swimming, war curios.

Miss Kathleen Cooper, 16, Cleveland Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton; girl correspondents; age 13-15; horses, music, painting, GEM characters.

Miss Elsie Lowes, 30, Albert Road, Aston, Birmingham; girl correspondents; overseas; films, sports.

Miss Dorothy Galloway, 98, Granton Road, Edinburgh 5; girl correspondents; overseas; age 11 upwards; sports, animals.

Desmond Sale, 31, Viewfield Road, Southfields, London, S.W.18; age 11-12; stamps; Central America.

Miss Joan Morriah, 122, Victoria Road, Farnborough, Hants; girl correspondents; age 15-17; overseas; farming.

Miss Mary Waters, 6, Tudor Street, Devonport, Auckland, New Zealand; girl correspondents; sports, reading.

TAILPIECE.

Waiter: "Your coffee, sir—a special new brand from South America!"
Diner: "Oh, so that's where you've been!"

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS COUPON

18-4-36

these Italian chaps like anythin', if they'd give me time to look out the verbs in the gymmah."

"I generosi signori—"

"Danno!" said D'Arcy, hurriedly turning the pages of his grammar. "I can't find it. I'm sowwy. Non capisco, deah boy. I don't understand, cawo wagazzo."

"Generosi signori! Signorini generosissimi!"

"Signorini genewosissimi," said D'Arcy. "That means most genewous young gentlemen. I wondah what he is payin' us compliments for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mc guide!" the Italian got out. "Yaas, I am aware of that, deah boy—cawo wagazzo."

"Not forget guide."

"Certainly not, deah boy! I'll wemembah you with pleasuah. Come on, deah boys! I'm gettin' weady for suppah."

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

"I fail to see any cause for laughin'—"

Mr. Mopps slid a five-line piece into the guide's hand, and that gentleman ceased his wild attempts to speak English, and bowed and bowed and smiled.

"Now we will return to the hotel," said Mr. Mopps, leading the way in the wrong direction. "Keep near me, lads, in case you should get lost."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"I do not think we are very far from the hotel," said Mr. Mopps.

"It's a good distance going that way, sir," said Lowther.

"Indeed! Do you know how far it is, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir. About twenty-four thousand miles."

"Wh-wha!" ejaculated Mr. Mopps.

"The hotel's just behind us, sir," explained Lowther blandly.

"If you keep on in that direction, sir, we shall have to go right round the world to get to it, and it will be necessary to cross Africa and the South Pole—"

"Dud-dud-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps.

"I believe I was taking the wrong turning. I will look in the guide-book—"

Tom Merry rescued him from a tram.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Mopps, when he was landed, gasping on the pavement, like a newly caught fish. "How very many trams there are! Yes, indeed, that is the way to the hotel. Pray keep close to me, in case you should lose the way!"

And Mr. Mopps led his flock triumphantly home.

The juniors slept soundly enough that night, with the clangour of Milan going on to a late hour round them.

In the morning they breakfasted cheerfully, and left for the station. The baggage was sent by the hotel porters, and they walked cheerfully to the station to see more of the city.

Mr. Mopps was rescued from three trams and five or six cars en route, and he reached the station in a breathless condition.

After getting into two wrong trains, and getting out again, he was dragged almost by force into the right train and settled down for the journey to Venice.

"Ah, now we are really off!" he said, with satisfaction. "Thank g-g-goodness there are no trams in Venice. My dear boys, you will enjoy sight-seeing in that wonderful city—but you must always be careful to keep close to me in case you should lose your way or fall into any mishap. I have promised D'Arcy's

respected father to take the best possible care of you."

And Mr. Mopps wondered what the juniors saw to smile at in that remark.

CHAPTER 11.

Venice at Last!

TOM MERRY & CO. grew more and more excited as the train rushed on to its journey's end.

Venice—the Queen of the Adriatic—was before them; Venice, the wonderful land—and in a few hours they were to tread its streets and wander by the banks of its canals.

The train was speeding on over the level plains of Lombardy.

Glimpses to the north of white-capped mountains in the far distance, and round them the level green, the far-famed plains of Lombardy, where in the old days Goth and Hun had met in strife for the fragments of the Roman Empire.

The very names of the towns, as they passed them, were like music to the ear—Milano, Desenzana, Verona.

And now the Great Lagoon was in sight.

Across the wide, shallow lagoon to Venice the train ran upon a bridge supported by piles driven deep in the mud.

Round them gleamed the waters of the lagoon.

Venice at last!

Venice, the city of dreams—the city where the streets are waterways, where the foot of a horse never treads, and where the gracefully gliding gondolas take the place of the cabs of other cities.

The juniors descended from the train in the huge station at the head of the Grand Canal.

Facchino—for the porter in England, who becomes a facteur in France, further develops into a facchino in Italy—carried the bags out of the station.

Then the juniors gazed about them with wide eyes.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

"It's remarkable to see a station without any cabs. Where are we goin' to get a taxi, Mr. Mopps?"

Mr. Mopps smiled genially.

"There are no taxis here, D'Arcy," he replied.

"Really, sir!" said Lowther. "Why, I've heard that the taxes are very high in Italy, sir!"

"Pway don't be funny, Lowthah! How are we goin' to get to our hotel, Mr. Mopps, if there are no cabs?"

"We shall take a gondola."

"Bai Jove, that's wippin'! Just like bein' at an exhibish, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, indeed, D'Arcy was not the only traveller whose first impression of Venice was that it was like being at an exhibition.

Gondolas crowded the landing-stages, looking out for victims with all the keenness of the average cabby.

Big felt hats came off on all sides before the party as Mr. Mopps considered the matter before selecting his gondola.

A fat gentleman in a gold-laced cap came up to Mr. Mopps and raised his gold-laced cap, and bowed impressively.

COCOCUB NEWS.

Children who insist on having the cocoon with the "toy in every tin," and who belong to the Cococubs, now have a monthly magazine of their own, "The Cococub News," which records the adventure of the Cococub animals and many other interesting things. The first issue includes instructions for making a toy theatre in which the animals are the actors. This is sent free from Bournville to all Cococubs.

He looked like an ambassador at least, the juniors thought, till they read the words "Hotel d'Inghilterra" on his cap. He was one of the hotel porters of the Continental hotels whose magnificence puts that of mere dukes and princes far into the shade.

"Dud-dud-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps. "I wonder what the man wants? I wonder if he can speak English?"

"I'll try him in Italian, sir!" said D'Arcy. "Buono giorno, amico!"

"Good-afternoon!" replied the resplendent individual in perfect English.

"If you are for the Hotel d'Inghilterra I have a gondola ready."

"Oh!"

"Yes, that is our hotel," said Mr. Mopps. "Hotel d'Inghilterra. Thank you very much! Please see the baggage into the gondola."

"Yes, sir."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "The chap's an hotel portah! I had an idea that he must be the Lord Mayor of Venice, at least!"

The bags were transferred to a gondola, which drew up beside the landing-stage. The juniors descended the steps into the boat. It was a novel and exciting experience for them. It was a large gondola with two rowers, and there was ample room for any amount of luggage. In the little cupboard cabin in the centre of the craft there was not much room for five; but the juniors preferred to remain outside it, to watch their novel surroundings.

Mr. Mopps sat in the cabin as a shelter from the sun, and the juniors stood up among the bags, gazing round them with wide eyes.

The gondoliers pushed on. And the gondola glided down the Grand Canal.

"Venice at last!" said Tom Merry.

"We're really here. What a ripping place!"

"Niffs, doesn't it?" said Lowther.

"You must expect a canal to smell a little, deah boy. In fact, when you come to think of it, the smell is wathah pleasant."

Arthur Augustus was evidently determined to be satisfied.

The gondoliers emitted weird cries as they rowed the boat on. They did not row in the way the juniors were accustomed to rowing. They stood upright at either end of the boat, on a raised platform level with the gunwale, each armed with a single oar of immense length. Their movements were slow and leisurely, a change after the hurry and bustle of Milan. Milan is the new Italy; Venice is still the old Italy, and there is a marked difference.

The Grand Canal, in the form of a letter "S," winds through the whole length of the city from the railway station to the Grand Lagoon.

Houses built flush with the water's edge, piles dripping with moisture, doors opening on the canal instead of upon the street—all was strange and new to the eyes of the St. Jim's juniors.

"Bai Jove, there's a bwidge!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I wondah if that is the Bwidge of Sighs? They called it the Bwidge of Sighs, deah boys, because condemned pisonahs were taken across it to pison. Gondolier!"

The rower in the bow looked round.

"Is that the Bwidge of Sighs?"

"Signore!"

"Bai Jove! I forgot you didn't undahstand English. E questo il ponte dei Sospiri?" asked Arthur Augustus, in his best Italian.

The gondolier grinned.

"No, signore. E il Rialto."

"Bai Jove, it's the Wialto!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in great excitement. "You wemembah the Wialto, in the

"Merchant of Venice," deah boys? "What news on the Rialto?"

The Rialto!

Once the centre of the commerce of Venice, when Venice was the greatest trading sea-city in the world.

Now a sight chiefly for tourists, and deeply interesting and quaint, with its shops and its motley crowds of all nations.

"The Rialto, by Jove!" said Tom Merry. "Might almost expect to see old Shylock trotting along there, looking for Antonio and his pound of flesh."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The gondola glided under the Rialto, and rocked on its way to the sea. The gondolier, according to Venetian custom, called out the names of historic buildings and palaces as he passed them, but as he called out in Italian—the provincial Italian of Venice—the juniors were not much the wiser.

But Mr. Mopps, who had studied his guide-book to advantage, and could speak fluent Italian, asked questions, and pointed out places of interest to the boys. The house where Lord Byron had lived attracted their glances; the house where Wagner had died, too.

Then Santa Maria della Salute, rising grandly at the end of the canal where it joins the lagoon, the great church which was a-building when King Charles the First's head was still safe upon his shoulders. Then the broad lagoon and the sea-front, the vast quay of the Riva dei Schiavoni, backed by the Doge's Palace—magnificent relic of the days when Venice was the Queen of the Adriatic, and was ruled by her powerful Doges and the mysterious and terrible Council of Ten—and the Square of Saint Mark—la piazza de San Marco—and the wonderful cathedral.

Venice, in all its glory, burst now upon the eyes of the juniors.

They gazed about them breathlessly.

Along the Riva were moored innumerable gondolas, and on the Riva itself their owners basked in the sun as they waited for customers—as their ancestors had done in the days of the Foscari and old Dandolo, the conqueror of Constantinople.

Out in the lagoon ships lay at anchor—trading vessels and coasting craft, and a great warship.

Fronting the canal and the lagoon, great palaces turned now into hotels. The gondolas turned in towards the embankment. The Hotel d'Inghilterra—English hotel—was before them, a vast building, once the palace of a Venetian nobleman.

"Oh, bai Jove, it's wonderful!" said D'Arcy. "We'll have a wamble ovah this place to-morrow, deah boys, and blow the giddy tweasuh!"

"Yes, rather!"

They landed on the great granite quay. The smiling and genial gondoliers extracted from Mopps twice their legal due, and asked, with gentle smiles, for "sigarro."

Mr. Mopps shook his head.

He explained in Italian that he did not smoke, and had no cigars about him. Whereat the gondoliers smiled still more broadly, and asked for "pane." Mr. Mopps was still more puzzled; he had no bread about him, either. Then one of them jerked out the French word "pourboire," and he understood, and handed out the tips. In Italy there were many names for tips, and a traveller, unaccustomed to the ways of the gentle Italian, is a little puzzled at first at being asked for cigars, or bread, or macaroni.

Across the great quay was the imposing facade of the palatial hotel.

The party entered a wide vestibule,

and a magnificent individual bowed before them.

He might have been a Royal Chamberlain in a Royal palace, but, as a matter of fact, he was the hotel concierge.

Half an hour later, the juniors were sitting down to a big dinner in a vast dining-room, with windows overlooking the canal and the lagoon.

Arthur Augustus insisted upon having macaroni for one of the courses, assuring his comrades that when in Wome it was a good ideah to do as Womans do.

CHAPTER 12.

Old Foes!

TOM MERRY was the first to wake in the morning.

The juniors had slept soundly after their journey, and it was a late hour in the morning when Tom Merry sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes.

He had missed the accustomed sound of the rising-bell at St. Jim's.

The large windows in the bed-room looked out upon the Riva and the great lagoon, with the Lido and the blue Adriatic far beyond.

Pigeons fluttered on the window-sills, and the voices of the gondoliers could be heard without.

Tom Merry pulled aside the mosquito-net and jumped out of bed.

There was another bed in the room, with Arthur Augustus asleep in it. Tom Merry squeezed a wet sponge on his aristocratic features, and the swell of St. Jim's woke up quite suddenly.

"Bai Jove, it's wainin'!" he exclaimed.

"Time to get up, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus sat up in bed and dabbed his face.

"You uttah ass, Tom Mewwy! I thought I was out in the wain for a moment. Bai Jove! What time is it?"

"Nearly eleven."

"Gweat Scott!" D'Arcy tumbled out of bed. "This won't do, you know. I can't have you kids gettin' into lazy habits now we're on a holiday. Early to bed and early to waise, you know. Wing for hot watah, deah boy!"

Blake, Lowther, and Manners were in

the adjoining room, and they were quickly roused out.

The juniors looked from the windows at the blue lagoon and the gliding gondolas and the craft anchored out on the calm water.

Some of the vessels were so close in that they could make out the features of the dark-faced men lounging on the decks. A handsome schooner was almost directly opposite the hotel, and a couple of swarthy Italians were smoking cigars on the deck as they lazily watched the lazy scenn around them.

Tom Merry's eyes turned upon the schooner, and he gave a little start.

"Have you got your glasses with you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hand them over."

Arthur Augustus handed over an eyeglass.

"Fathead—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I mean your field-glasses, you ass!"

"Oh, I see! I undahstood that you alluded to my eyeglass. Of course, I have broughed a supply of eyeglasses with me, in case they should get bwoken. I wemembah once I was twavellin' with one eyeglass, and it got bwoken, and I was several hours without one. I vegarded that as—"

"Will you hand me your field-glasses, you clump?" roared Tom Merry.

"They are packed up in my bag, deah boy. And I wufuse to be called a clump—"

"Get them out—quick!"

"Certainly, deah boy," said D'Arcy, bending over his bag and rummaging among the neatly packed contents.

"But what's the huwwy?"

"I think I recognise one of those chaps on that schooner," said Tom excitedly.

"Bai Jove! I didn't know you had fwends in Venice."

"Ass! It's not a friend—it's an enemy. You remember those two Italian chaps who were with Hiram Finn in England, who were helping him to chase poor old Maro Luigi? I believe one of them is on that schooner yonder—or both."

"Gweat Scott!"

The White Knight Rides Again



Through all the hustle and bustle of England's twentieth century civilisation ride a strange, phantom figure—a knight dressed from head to foot in gleaming armour! He is the White Knight, one of the famous knights of King Arthur's Round Table, and mounted on a white charger, he rides with couched lance to fulfil the vows he made 1400 years ago!

Read the amazing exploits of this phantom knight, and be thrilled by the breath-taking adventures of Mick Denham and Don Farrar, two English schoolboys who set out to solve the mystery of the White Knight's spectral appearances in a grand new story appearing exclusively in the super story paper—

THE PILOT

On Sale Friday, April 17th, at all Newsagents.

2d

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 1,470.

The juniors rushed to the window, while D'Arcy rummaged for the glasses. The two Italians on the schooner were in full view, but one of them had his face turned away. The other Tom Merry was almost certain was Beppo, Hiram Finn's follower, and if one was Beppo, the other was no doubt Pietro, and Hiram Finn himself was probably on the vessel. The thought of meeting their old enemies on the very scene of the treasure hunt gave the juniors a thrill.

"Buck up with those glasses!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quick!"

"Bai Jove, they're not here!" said D'Arcy in dismay. "I wemembah now I packed them in the new twunk. They've been left behind."

"Well, you ass!"

"It is Lowthah's fault for sewewin' down my twunk," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm sowwy. I'll lend you my eyeglass if you like."

"Oh, rats!"

The man on the schooner lounged below, and Tom Merry turned away from the window, disappointed. He had only seen the man once, on a dark night in Rycombe Wood, and then it was only a glimpse. But he was almost sure that he recognised him.

"I remember now hearing Hiram Finn speak about a schooner," said Tom Merry. "His game was to kidnap Maro Luigi, and make him guide him to the place where the chest of money is buried. Luigi may be a prisoner on that schooner at this minute."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Manners, staring at the schooner from the window. "I haven't seen any of the rotters, so I can't say. But, look! There's a chap going on board who looks like a Yank!"

Tom Merry ran to the window again. A boat had pulled out from the quay, and in the stern sat a man of powerful frame, with high cheekbones and little grey eyes set close together, and a sharp nose like a knife-blade. Tom Merry gave a shout.

"It's Hiram Finn!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Tom Merry bounded to the door. "Hold on!" roared Blake. "You can't go downstairs in your pyjamas."

"My hat, no!" said Tom Merry, halting.

"And you couldn't do anything if you did," said Lowther. "Hiram Finn hasn't done anything you could tackle him for. They wouldn't allow you to go on board the schooner to look for Maro Luigi. You haven't any evidence you could lay before the authorities for a search to be made."

"And it's really not at all likely that he's there, you know," said Manners.

"I suppose not," admitted Tom Merry. "I suppose that's a trading schooner—it looks like it—and Finn may be simply here on his usual business. But it's queer seeing him here when we're here, too, looking for the treasure. It looks as if that's what he's come here for, don't you think?"

"In that case, Luigi must have told him."

"He might have made him tell."

"Yaas, wathah. The man is an awful beast, you know," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "In any case, the sooner we get to the treasure the better. I think we ought to go to-day."

"We'll tackle Moppy on the subject," said Tom Merry. "It isn't very far out to the island of Burano, and the paper says that the isle of the treasure is close to Burano. We can get there in a gondola in an hour, I dare say. But

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

so long as that schooner's at anchor there, Finn can't be looking for the giddy treasure; so it's pretty plain that he doesn't know where it is, so far."

"Might have roped it in already," suggested Blake.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Not likely! He wouldn't stay in Venice if he had it. The Italian Government would have a claim to part of it if they knew. And he would clear off as quick as he could if he had laid hands on it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Most likely he's nosed out that it's somewhere near Venice, and he's here just on spec," Blake suggested.

"Well, I suppose that's most likely."

Tom Merry looked at the schooner again. There was no sign of activity on board. The crew had evidently no intention of putting to sea. An Italian was sitting on the hatch, rolling and smoking cigarettes as if he had no other business in life.

Was it possible that a prisoner was being kept there—concealed on the schooner? It was really not probable. But even if it had been probable, Tom Merry was helpless. The port authorities would hardly have taken notice of such a surmise to the expense of searching the schooner, if he had demanded it. And the formalities to be gone through in a foreign country for such a purpose would have taken any length of time, and Finn would certainly have taken the alarm, and sailed—if he indeed had Maro Luigi a captive on board the schooner.

The juniors dressed, and Tom Merry tapped at the door of Mr. Mopps.

"Half-past eleven, sir!" he called out.

"Please do not wait for me, Merry!" called back Mr. Mopps, in a faint voice. "I am very fat-fat-fat—"

"My hat! You've changed since yesterday, then!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Very fat-fat-fatigued with the journey," said Mr. Mopps. "I shall not rise yet. Unfortunately, I still feel the effects of the tut-tut-tut—"

"The what, sir?"

"The tut-tut-train!" said Mr. Mopps.

"And I am rather sick. Go down to breakfast, my boy, and don't wait!"

"I suppose we can go out and look at the town, sir, after brekker?"

"Yes, Merry. But do not go in a gondola. You may meet with some accident if I am not there to take care of you."

Tom Merry smiled.

"Right-ho, sir!"

And the juniors went down to breakfast.

From the windows of the salle-a-manger they could still see the graceful masts of the schooner anchored out in the lagoon.

Tom Merry turned the attention of the waiter to it.

"Is that an Italian vessel?" he asked. The waiter looked out of the window.

"It is an American," he said. Like most hotel waiters in Italy, he spoke English.

"You have seen it before?"

"Yes; it comes here to trade," said the waiter. "I have seen it many times."

"That settles it," said Blake, when the waiter was gone. "Finn is here, just in the way of business. He's missed Luigi and his treasure, and gone back to work."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But what has become of Luigi, then, I wonder?"

"Goodness knows!"

The juniors had almost finished their

breakfast, when there was a terrific report, which seemed to shake the whole hotel.

Boom!

Pigeons flew down in crowds with a rush of wings. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was just raising a cup of tea to his lips, and his arm jumped, and the tea was deposited upon his beautiful trousers.

"Bai Jove! Oh!"

"What on earth—"

"It was a giddy cannon!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove! My waistcoat!"

"Buck up, Gussy!" exclaimed Blake excitedly. "It's an Abyssinian battleship, and they're bombarding Venice! Run for it!"

The swell of St. Jim's jumped up.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Down into the cellar—quick! It's the only safe place in a bombardment!" shouted Monty Lowther.

"I refuse to go into the cellar! A D'Arcy never runs away from danger!"

"Quick—quick! Suppose a shell struck you in the chest—it would utterly ruin your waistcoat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They are not fiwin' any more," said Arthur Augustus suspiciously. "I do not believe it is a bombardment at all. I believe you are wotting, you wottah! Waitah, what was that feahful wow about?"

"The midday gun, sir!" said the waiter, grinning.

"Bai Jove! Do they always make that feahful wow at midday?"

"Si, signore."

Arthur Augustus sat down to his breakfast again. He mopped his waistcoat with his handkerchief, and turned his eyeglass severely upon Blake.

"Never mind, Gussy!" grinned Tom Merry. "You have proved that a D'Arcy never runs away from danger when they fire the midday gun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

And D'Arcy finished his breakfast with an air of extreme dignity. Breakfast finished, the juniors sallied forth to see the town. As they left the hotel the schooner was still lying quietly at anchor in the lagoon, and the Italian seaman was still sitting on the hatch, rolling and smoking cigarettes.

CHAPTER 13.

A Day in Venice!

BLAZING sunshine poured down upon the wide quay, and upon the narrow streets and sluggish canals of the sea-city.

The juniors strolled along the Riva dei Schiavoni, past the colonnade of the Doge's Palace, and into the great Square of St. Mark.

"Gondola, signori?"

"Buon gondola."

"You go for a little sail?"

"Me very cheap."

But the juniors resisted the allurements of the gondoliers, in Italian and English, and walked into the great Piazza di San Marco.

The great square, the heart of Venice, the scene of many a stirring episode in the old days, lay blistering in the blaze of sun.

Pigeons innumerable fluttered round the old buildings, and collected in crowds in the square, feeding from the hands of passers-by.

Gondoliers basked in the sun on the

water-steps; beggars lay reclining by the pillars of the Doge's Palace and the old Cathedral of St. Mark.

Under the famous Clock Tower, the juniors turned into the Merceria, the great business street of Venice—so narrow that passers continually jostled one another in moving, and one had incessantly to wait for room to pass.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I undahstand now why they don't have any cabs or things here. It would be wathah a joke to see a taxi comin' down this stweet at a good speed!"

They walked on, crossing endless little

"You come in, gentlemen," he said. "It will cost you anything." He evidently meant "nothing," but his English was not perfect.

Then by chilly by-streets to the Grand Canal and the Rialto.

It was with a thrill that the juniors found themselves walking over the actual Rialto, with the name of which they had been familiar ever since they were old enough to know Shakespeare.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, whose courtesy was inexhaustible, purchased something at almost every shop. When he had got to the end of his Italian money the dealers showed perfect

dealah chap told me so. I wegard it as vewy cheap at ten fwanca."

"Made in Birmingham, most likely."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"More likely in Milan," said Tom Merry, grinning. "Milan is a great manufacturing city. They manufacture ancient coins, and Roman antiquities, and things."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"May as well get lunch out," said Blake. "I don't suppose Moppy is down yet. This place will do."

"English Spoken," said a notice in the window.

But the waiter who came to attend to



As Tom Merry dashed for the ladder, he hit out and knocked the Italian flying. Beppo crashed to the floor, but Hiram Finn was out of the cabin in a twinkling, and springing in pursuit of the junior.

bridges over sluggish canals, treading shadowy alleys that were cold and chilly wherever the sun did not reach.

Then they emerged into the great square again, into the blaze of the sun. It was like getting out of a cellar into an oven, as Monty Lowther remarked.

Businesslike dealers in curiosities kindly invited them to step into their shops and view the contents, which were to be purchased at a great bargain for ten times their value. Almost every other shop seemed to be stocked with grotesque jewellery, and with souvenirs of Venice, for happy visitors to take away.

A persistent dealer in lace—one of the staple products of Venice—followed the juniors quite a little distance in his earnest endeavours to show them his goods.

readiness to change English money; and when that was all gone he had no difficulty whatever in changing banknotes.

By the time they had "done" the Rialto, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was loaded up with a multiplicity of small parcels, the contents of which he did not remember.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "I think some of you fellows might cawwy some of these things. What am I to do with them?"

"Chuck them into the canal," suggested Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I have parted with about five pounds for these things, and—"

"And they're probably worth a quid!" grinned Lowther.

"Wats! I have a daggah here that belonged to Doge Dandolo himself—the

their wants was evidently not the person referred to. He spoke in Italian, with a strong accent of the province, quite beyond D'Arcy's powers of comprehension.

"You speak English?" asked Tom Merry.

The waiter smiled and shook his head.

"Fwench?" asked D'Arcy.

Another smile, and another shake of the head.

"Parlate Italiano solamenta?" asked D'Arcy.

"Si, signore."

"Tell him we want lunch," said Blake. "Put it in Italian—luncho, or grubo, or some Italian word like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They sat down at a table and pointed to the menu, and the man understood.

The GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

They were served with dejeuner. D'Arcy vainly trying to read the illegible names of the dishes on the menu. The waiter cheerfully told them in Italian what they were eating, and they were none the wiser. Like many Italian waiters, he was keen to learn English, and asked in turn the names of the things in English. He would tap the article he had brought with a fork, and inquire: "So chiama in Inglese?"

"Blessed if I know what to tell him we call this," said Lowther, surveying very suspiciously the peculiar-looking dish, which seemed to be a stew of some sort, and had a weird smell. "What is it in Italian, I wonder?"

"What is this called, waitah?"

The good man tried to explain, without making himself clear. Finally, he tapped his head.

D'Arcy stared at him in astonishment.

"E quello?" he demanded.

"Sì, signore."

"I weally don't undahstand it. They can't be cannibals here," said Arthur Augustus, in perplexity.

"He means it's made of the head of some animal, ass!" said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I'm going to touch it!"

"Let's have macawoni instead, deah boys. The macawoni here is vewy good, and when in Wome, do as the Womans do, you know."

"But we're not in Rome, we're in Venice," objected Lowther.

"I was usin' a signah of speech, deah boy," explained D'Arcy.

"Go hon!"

"So chiama in Inglese?" asked the waiter, pointing to the suspicious dish, and anxious for information.

"He wants to know the name of it in English," said Blake. "Blessed if I know!"

"Muck!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mook?" repeated the waiter.

"Muck!" corrected Lowther.

"Mack?" said the waiter, trying to get the pronunciation.

"No, muck!"

"Ecco! Muck!" said the waiter, getting it right at last.

"Yes; that's it—muck," said Lowther solemnly.

"Zank you, signore!" said the waiter, breaking out into unexpected English. "Muck! So chiama in Inglese, muck! Grazie!"

And the waiter departed quite cheerfully, having thus added to his knowledge of the English language.

The juniors chuckled, but Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass very severely upon the humorist of St. Jim's.

"I wogard it as wathah wotten to take the poor chap in in that way, Lowthah," he said.

"Well, he wanted to know," said Lowther. "I gave him the right word, didn't I?"

"Yaas, but—"

"Hallo! He's serving somebody else with the same stuff," said Tom Merry.

The juniors glanced across at the next table. A stout Englishman, clad in the grey flannels and sports jacket of the tourist, had come in for lunch, and the waiter was handing him that mysterious dish which had made the St. Jim's fellows so suspicious.

The big tourist glanced at it suspiciously, as the juniors had done. "What do you call this?" he demanded.

"In Inglese, muck," said the waiter cheerfully.

The tourist's face was a study. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

"What?" he gasped.

"Muck, signore."

"Wh-what?"

"Muck!" shrieked the waiter emphatically.

The tourist regarded the waiter for some moments with a deadly glare, and then rose and stalked out of the restaurant without having any lunch.

The unfortunate waiter gazed after him in astonishment. He did not see any reason why the traveller should be so disgusted at having the name of the dish explained to him in his own language.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lowther.

"I'll bet that's the first time the waiter's ever told the truth about that stuff."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he's lost a customah," said Arthur Augustus. "It was very funny, but I considah that it is up to Lowthah to tip him a pound."

"Catch me," said Monty Lowther.

"I haven't any quids to chuck away. I'll make it two francs."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Or, as Gussy is in charge of the party and responsible for our behaviour, he shall tip the waiter a quid," said Lowther. "That's a jolly good idea!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"It's up to you, Gussy," said Tom Merry solemnly. "You're responsible for your flock. No good having an elderly gentleman seeing us about if he isn't responsible for what we do! Pay up and look cheerful!"

And Arthur Augustus paid up and looked cheerful.

You'll find fun and excitement galore in—



—this week's first-rate school yarn of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.
the world-famous
Chums of Greyfriars.
By Frank Richards.

CHAPTER 14.

The Bridge of Sighs!

"I WANT to see the Bwidge of Sighs," Arthur Augustus remarked as they left the restaurant, and walked along the Grand Canal. "I particularly want to see the Bwidge of Sighs. I was weading up Bywon in the twain yestahday, and I want to see whethah his desowption is cowwect. Chap who had been to Venice told me that Bywon had got it all w'ong."

"Well, we ought to see the Bridge of Sighs," said Tom Merry. "Where is it?"

"Ask somebody, deah boy."

Monty Lowther stopped the nearest passer-by with a tap on the arm.

"Bridge of Sighs, please!" he said.

The Italian gazed at him in wonder.

"Bridge of Sighs," repeated Lowther.

"Any size will do, so long as it's a bridge of size!"

"You uttah ass! The man will think you are potty!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Let me pitch it to him in Italiano."

And he raised his hat with much grace, and asked in his best Italian:

"Prego dov'è il Ponte dei Sospiri?"

Then the Italian gentleman smiled and comprehended. He gave the juniors, in the politest way in the world, full instructions for finding the Bridge of Sighs; but, as they did not understand a word of it, the benefit of the instructions was not great.

Then he raised his hat with true Italian politeness, and D'Arcy raised his hat in return, and they parted amicably.

"Well, where is the Bridge of Sighs?" asked Blake.

"I weally do not know, Blake."

"Didn't that chap tell you?"

"Yaas, I fancy so; but I didn't quite compwehend. But it's all wright. You leave it to me," said D'Arcy confidently. "Chap who had been to Venice told me—"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Chap who had been to Venice told me," pursued D'Arcy calmly, "that whenever you want to find a place, you ask some chap to guide you, and give him a swanc. Lots of sweet awabs in Venice earn their livin' that way, you know, by guidin' stwanganahs about. Luckily, I can speak to them in Italian."

"What's the good of that if you can't understand what they answer?" queried Lowther.

Arthur Augustus did not reply to that question. He jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked round for a street arab. Street arabs are not difficult to find in Venice.

"Here's a little wagamuffin who will do," said Arthur Augustus, his eyes falling upon a youth whose sole garments appeared to be a pair of ancient and perforated trousers and a fragment of shirt. "Come here, little boy! Venite, waggazo!"

The ragazzo detached himself from the building he was leaning against, and came up with a broad grin upon his handsome, swartly face.

"Signore?"

"Ponte dei Sospiri," said Arthur Augustus. "Capite?"

"Sì, signore!"

"Voglio vedere!" said Arthur Augustus, rather doubtfully.

"Sì, signore!"

"Andiamo."

"Sì, signore!"

And the little ragamuffin trotted off in advance of the party, evidently

having understood that the Ingleso wanted to see the Bridge of Sighs.

Arthur Augustus turned a triumphant glance upon his comrades.

"I wathah think that's worked the owale," he remarked.

"We'll see," said Lowther.

They followed the little ragamuffin. He led them by the Grand Canal, then through by-streets into the Piazza of St. Mark. They crossed the great square once more, and came out upon the Riva degli Schiavoni.

"My hat! He's leading us back to our hotel!" exclaimed Blake.

"Pawwaps the Bwidge of Sighs is near our hotel, deah boys!"

The ragamuffin halted at a little bridge, by which the quay was continued over a canal that entered the lagoon at this point. The canal ran between the great wall of the Doge's Palace and the next building, separating them.

The boy grinned and pointed along the canal between the two great buildings. Raised high above the water, from one building to the other, was a little bridge, covered by a roof, and with little windows in the walls. There were no possible means of reaching it from where the juniors stood.

"Is that the Bwidge of Sighs?" said Blake.

D'Arcy questioned the boy:

"E il Ponte dei Sospiti?" he asked.

"Si, signore!"

"But how on earth are we to get to it?" demanded Monty Lowther. "I suppose you don't happen to have an aeroplane in your trousers pocket, do you, Gussy?"

"Weally, Lowthah!"

The little ragamuffin held out a grimy hand.

"Macaroni," he remarked.

"Bai Jove! He wants me to give him some macawoni!" said D'Arcy. "How can he possibly think that I cawwy macawoni about with me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "That's the Italian name for a tip. They ask you for a drink in England, and for something to eat in Italy, but it means the same thing."

"Oh, I see! But I want him to guide us to the Bwidge of Sighs."

"You told him you wanted to see it," grinned Monty Lowther. "Well, you can see it from here. Getting on it is another matter. That wasn't in the contract."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm afraid he's a young fathead," said D'Arcy severely.

"Ha, ha, ha! It isn't the kid who's the fathead."

"Voglio entrare in Ponte dei Sospiti, awo wagazzo," said Arthur Augustus.

"Si, signore!"

The little ragamuffin turned round and led them back the way they had come.

"My hat! We shall see Venice at this rate!" said Manners. "I wonder whether he's going to lead us back to the Rialto?"

Fortunately, the little ragamuffin did not take them so far; he stopped outside the Doge's Palace and pointed to the entrance.

"Oh, I compwehend!" said D'Arcy. "You have to entah the Bwidge of Sighs fwom inside the Doge's Palace, deah boys. The kid is weally intelligent, aftah all. Give him a five-fwano piece, somebody; I've wun out of money."

Tom Merry bestowed a piece of five lire upon the ragamuffin, who almost fell down in his astonishment at receiving so magnificent a tip.

"Grazie, grazie tanto, signore!"

And he bolted with the five-lire piece at top speed.

"You have to pay for admission here," said Tom Merry. "It's one of the show places of Venice. It isn't much; half-a-frano, I think."

The juniors paid and entered.

A guide presented himself at once, with a graceful bow.

"Ponte dei Sospiti," said Arthur Augustus.

"Si, signore!"

But the juniors learned that these things were done by rule. It was the regular custom for visitors to see the dungeons first—and to the dungeons they were taken. Then they mounted to the Ponte dei Sospiti.

It was a narrow bridge, high over the waters of the canal, covered in, and with little windows looking out upon the canal and the great walls that bordered it. Looking towards the sea, the juniors could see a strip of the lagoon and a narrow patch of the Riva degli

cheerfully that all the prisoners they mentioned had passed over the Bridge of Sighs, to be executed in the adjoining prison.

"Guy Fawkes, I suppose?" said Lowther.

The guide nodded.

"Si, signore."

Lowther jumped.

"Guy Fawkes passed over this giddy bridge?" he demanded.

"Si, signore."

"Oh, my hat! And I suppose William the Conqueror passed over it, too?"

"Si, signore."

"And George Washington?"

"Si, signore."

"And Jack Hobbs?"

"Si, signore."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, waking the gloomy recesses of the Bridge of Sighs to sounds of merriment, much to the astonishment of the guide.

"You can get a jolly lot of information by questioning the giddy guides!" grinned Monty Lowther, as he emerged from the Doge's Palace. "If I'd asked him if Figgins of the New House passed over that bridge to execution he'd have said 'Si, signore!'"

And the juniors went in to tea.

Tom Merry looked out over the lagoon, and saw that the schooner was still at anchor there.

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

ON NO ACCOUNT MISS THIS GREAT STORY NEXT WEEK!

Schiavoni and a portion of some building in the distance.

Arthur Augustus looked very puzzled.

"You wemembah what Bywon says?" he remarked.

"Oh, blow Byron!" said Blake.

"Let's get back to tea!"

"Bywon says—"

"Rata!"

"Nothin' of the sort! He says:

"I stood in Venice on the Bwidge of Sighs,

A palace and a pwison on each hand. I watched fwom out of the deep her structures wise—"

"Cheese it!" howled the juniors.

"We didn't come here to hear you recite Byron!"

"I was callin' your attention to the fact that Bywon had got it all w'ong, just as I was told by the chap who'd been to Venice," said D'Arcy. "He says that he watched fwom out of the deep her structures wise, while he was standin' on the Bwidge of Sighs. Now, you fellows can see for yourselves how much you can see of Venice fwom the Bwidge of Sighs. Just a little stwip of the lagoon and the quay. You can't see Venice at all; Venice is wound the cornah. I wegard Bywon as not havin' played the game."

And Arthur Augustus shook his head very seriously over that delinquency of the great poet.

"Well, 'structures rise' rhymes with 'Bridge of Sighs,'" said Monty Lowther. "I suppose that's why they do these things; it's a poet's licence, you know. Poets have a licence, same as dogs!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Let's ask the chap about the famous prisoners who've crossed this bridge and sighed," said Manners. "He speaks English."

The guide was only too ready to give information. Like many guides in that delightful country, he allowed politeness to outweigh accuracy, and he agreed

CHAPTER 15.

No Gun for Gussy!

M R. MOPPS was in the tea-room when the juniors came in. He was regaling himself with dry toast and weak tea, and a volume of "early Italian poets," and looked quite cheerful.

"Dud-dud-dear me!" said Mr. Mopps. "I was beginning to fear that you had been lost, my boys. I hope you have had a pleasant ramble, and gained some information about this delightful city."

"We have, sir," said Monty Lowther. "Especially about the famous prisoners who crossed the Bridge of Sighs."

"Very good!" said Mr. Mopps. "I suppose you would like something more than toast for tea, my lads?"

"Ye-es, please!"

"So I have ordered a high tea to be served immediately you came in," said Mr. Mopps, with a beaming smile. "It is my aim to make you kik-kik-kik—"

"To make us what, sir?"

"Kik-kik-comfortable," said Mr. Mopps. "Here comes the tea. Now, my boys, I have some plans for the excursion to-morrow."

"Oh, good, sir!"

"You have heard of the famous library of Venice—"

The juniors' faces fell. They had not heard of it, as a matter of fact; and they had been thinking of an excursion in the quest of the treasure island.

"The—the library, sir?"

"Yes. It is a very famous library, and I have obtained permission to make my researches there," said Mr. Mopps genially. "You boys shall come with me, and you shall look at the books and pictures while I am making my researches."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove!"

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to keep that for a rainy day, sir?" ventured Blake. "We have been taught to save up for a rainy day, and I wouldn't

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

mind saving up the library for a week or two—"

"Or a thousand years or so!" murmured Lowther.

"We want you to take us in a gondola, Mr. Mopps," said Tom Merry diffidently. "You know we've got to pay a visit to that island near Burano."

"Dud-dud-dear me, I had quite forgotten!" said Mr. Mopps, coming with a start out of the "early Italian poets." "You had a paper or something—some joke about a treasure, or something, I think—"

"Forgotten it!" murmured Blake. "Oh!"

Tom Merry had wisely decided to say nothing to Mr. Mopps about having seen Hiram Finn. The tutor would probably have taken alarm at once, and he would not have been likely to countenance a visit to the island of Santa Maria if he knew that it was possible that the dangerous ruffian would be encountered there. As for the danger, the juniors did not even think of it; but Mr. Mopps, being responsible for the party, would certainly have taken a different view.

Mr. Mopps looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Now I come to think of it," he said, "you boys would doubtless rather pay a visit to that island, wherever it is, than study the volumes and pictures in the library?"

"Just a little bit, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Very well," said Mr. Mopps. "We will take a gondola to the island to-morrow. I have no doubt that it will be very interesting to explore the ruined chapel, though—ha, ha, ha!—I doubt whether you shall find a treasure there."

"You needn't waste time on the island, sir," Blake suggested thoughtfully. "You could go into the library, while we're out in the gondola—kill two birds with one stone that way, Mr. Mopps."

"I fear you would not be safe without me, my boys."

"Oh, gondolas are safe enough, and the lagoon's as smooth as a looking-glass, sir. Besides, we should have the gondolier with us."

"Yes, that is true," admitted Mr. Mopps. "If I select an old and experienced gondolier, I have no doubt that he could look after you."

"And it would save your time, and you could get on with the 'early Italian poets,'" said Tom Merry thoughtfully.

Mr. Mopps was evidently very much tempted. He did not like the water, and the trip in the gondola would have been far from enjoyable to him. And he would have been thinking about the "early Italian poets" all the time, and wishing himself in the dusty recesses of the library among the musty volumes.

"I really think it is a good idea," he said, at last. "I am anxious to get to work. You boys will be quite safe with an old and experienced gondolier. Of course, you must not get into any tub-tub-tub—"

"Oh, no, sir! We'll select the gondola very carefully."

"Into any tub-tub-tub—"

"Some of them are old tubs, but some of them are really ripping craft," said Blake. "We'll pick out a good one."

"Into any tub-tub-trouble!" gasped Mr. Mopps.

"Oh, sir!" said the juniors, all at once, as if getting into trouble of any sort was the very last thing they had ever thought of in their lives.

"Very well," said Mr. Mopps. "I will arrange with the hotel proprietor to

have a gondola here in the morning, with an old and experienced gondolier, and you shall go."

"Good egg!"

After tea, Mr. Mopps being buried in "early Italian poets," Tom Merry & Co. discussed their plans for the morrow.

"We shall want a crowbar and a pickaxe, and a couple of spades," said Tom Merry. "We shall have to smuggle them into the gondola without anybody seeing them. We don't want them to guess what we're after. And I believe making excavations is not allowed; but we shall have to allow them ourselves."

"Hear, hear!"

"I suppose it's weally poss that that wascal Finn may see us and get on the twack?" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "We might meet him there?"

"Quite possible."

"Then we ought to be weady. We shall have to go out and buy the spades and the pickaxes and the crowbar. I think I had better buy a wevolvah."

"A which?"

"A wevolvah," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "We may be in dangah—"

"We're pretty certain to be in danger if you carry a revolver!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it's a danger we're not going to run into, either," said Tom Merry. "Revolvers are barred, Gussy. You can buy a toy pistol if you like, or a catapult—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You ought to have thought of this before you left England, Gussy," said Monty Lowther severely. "Then you could have brought one of those swords your aunt's sister used to slash about in the Middle Ages—as you've told us—"

"You uthah ass! I said my ancestahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally think I had better get a wevolvah—"

"Think again!"

"I shall insist upon gettin' a wevolvah!" said D'Arcy firmly.

And when the juniors sallied forth and went into the Merceria to make their purchases Arthur Augustus looked out for a gunsmith's shop. And when the spades and the pickaxe and the crowbar had been purchased, and wrapped up so carefully that they could not be recognised, the juniors laid violent hands upon Arthur Augustus and marched him back to the hotel—without the revolver.

CHAPTER 16.

A Wild Night's Adventure I

TOM MERRY sat up in bed.

Midnight had tolled out.

Venice was sleeping.

Even the great square of St. Mark was deserted, and the Riva degli Schiavoni echoed only occasionally to the footsteps of a belated passer.

Tom Merry stepped quietly from his bed and moved to the window. He looked out. Stars twinkled in the deep blue of the Italian sky, and were reflected in the waters of the lagoon. Dimly the shapes of the anchored vessels were made out, looming in the gloom. Along the quay were rows of moored gondolas, deserted for the night. The schooner of Hiram Finn was still at anchor.

Tom Merry dressed himself quietly. He had made his own plans for that night, but he had not told his chums. They would not have wanted him to go alone, and he knew that a crowd might have made his intended expedition impossible. He glanced at Arthur

Augustus, sleeping peacefully in bed. Then he quitted the bed-room quietly.

The hotel was very silent as he went downstairs.

Only the porter was in the hall, and he looked rather curiously at the junior. Tom Merry gave him a nod, and went out with a careless air, as if simply for a stroll on the Riva degli Schiavoni.

But as soon as he was outside the hotel his pace quickened.

He crossed the Riva to the water's edge, and paused on the steps down to the lagoon and gazed out towards the anchored schooner.

Tom Merry intended to pay Hiram Finn's vessel a visit under cover of the darkness and to discover, if he could, whether Maro Luigi was a prisoner there.

Two lights burned dimly on the schooner, fore and aft, as she rocked gently on the almost motionless water of the lagoon.

Tom Merry stepped into one of the outermost gondolas, intending to borrow it for the crossing to the schooner. There was a movement in the gondola, and he started as a dark form rose into view.

"Signore!"

It was the owner of the craft, who had evidently been sleeping in the gondola. Tom Merry was a little taken aback. He was willing, of course, to pay for the use of the gondola, but the presence of the owner was awkward, as his visit was to be paid secretly to the schooner. But he had to make the best of it.

"You go for a little sail, sotto le stelle!" said the gondolier, always ready to do business, late as the hour was.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Buono, signore!"

"You will take me?"

"Si, signore."

"You speak English?"

The gondolier showed his gleaming teeth in a grin.

"Little small English," he said.

"I want to go out to that schooner," said Tom Merry, pointing to the dim shape of the vessel on the lagoon.

The Italian understood the gesture, if not the words.

"Si, signore," he said, the inevitable reply.

"But I do not want them to see me," said Tom Merry, speaking very slowly so that the Italian should understand. "It is a secret."

The gondolier looked puzzled, as well he might. But he could not suspect the handsome, well-dressed young English signore of wishing to visit the trading schooner secretly for any dishonourable purpose; and, after all, it was not his business.

"I'll give you twenty francs," said Tom Merry—"venti lire."

The gondolier's eyes sparkled.

"Buono!"

"You take me?"

"Si, signore."

"Go quietly. Don't wake them. Piano," said Tom Merry, remembering in time the Italian word for softly.

The gondolier grinned.

"Si, signore."

And he loosened his craft. The gondola glided silently out into the still waters of the lagoon. The long, heavy oar made hardly a sound as it swept through the water. The gondola glided out towards the schooner.

Tom Merry kept his eyes fixed anxiously upon the vessel. The gondola drew closer and closer, and ranged alongside. If there was a watch being kept on deck Tom Merry would be disappointed; but he had seen no sign of a watchman.



Even as Hiram Finn spun round, clutching his revolver, Tom Merry's cudgel descended upon his head, and the Yankee fell like a log. At the same moment Beppo leaped at the juniors with a knife in his hand. But a stick smote the knife and sent it flying. "Done 'em!" roared Blake. "Hurrah for St. Jim's!"

There were people on board, but they were below. Tom Merry scanned the deck, and then, whispering to the gondolier to wait for him, he leaped lightly on board.

His heart beat fast as he felt the deck under his feet.

He was on board Hiram Finn's vessel. If the adventurer discovered him—especially if he had some guilty secret to hide—what would be the result? Tom Merry remembered the hard, desperate face of the man, and he realized that he was going into deadly danger. But he did not hesitate.

He crept silently to the companion-hatch. It was open, and a light glimmered in the little cuddy at the foot of the ladder—a smoky lamp swinging there.

There was no sign of anyone in the cuddy, and Tom Merry crept silently down the steps. He started as he reached the foot. A man was loling upon a seat by the table, leaning heavily on the table with his eyes closed. A bottle was before him, showing the cause of his heavy slumber.

Tom Merry knew the hard, dark face. It was that of Beppo, one of the Italians he had seen in the wood at Rylcombe with Hiram Finn.

There was a light in the adjoining cabin, and a murmur of a voice. Tom Merry crept to the half open door. This placed the sleeping man between him and the ladder, and if Beppo

should awaken his retreat was cut off. But there was no help for it. He had known that he was going into danger, and now that he had found the danger he did not hesitate.

He peered into the cabin through the slit between the door and the jamb. He had a view of half the interior. He could see a bunk, with a man's form partly visible in it—a man fully dressed. The man lay in an uncomfortable attitude, and Tom Merry could see that cords were tightly tied about his wrists. Doubtless his feet were equally well secured. But the junior could not see. A heavy cloth was bound over the mouth, concealing the chin, but the upper part of the face was visible.

Tom Merry breathed hard.

He knew the face. He was looking upon Maro Luigi, the man who had given him the clue to the hidden gold on the Venetian island.

His suspicions had been well founded. Maro Luigi had told him that if he did not reclaim the paper, it would be because he had fallen into the hands of Hiram Finn and his gang. And he had evidently fallen into Hiram Finn's hands. He was a prisoner on board the schooner, and kept evidently with the greatest care.

His big black eyes were burning, and his swarthy face was pale and wan.

The unfortunate Italian was helpless, at the mercy of the adventurer. He had given Tom Merry the clue to

the treasure in fear of this—partly, doubtless, in gratitude to the boy for having rescued him once—partly in order that the buried gold might never fall into Hiram Finn's hands. Better that anybody should have it than that the unscrupulous adventurer should be the gainer—that was how Luigi had looked at it.

The voice Tom Merry could hear speaking was that of Hiram Finn; but he could not see the American without opening the door farther. He heard the low, sharp, metallic voice of Finn, and realised the threat contained in those hard tones.

"Not asleep, Luigi? No, I guess not. You kinda wouldn't sleep tied up like that. It's your own fault, Maro."

The Italian's eyes burned.

"You're going to tell me where those dollars are buried, I reckon. Somewhere near Venice—eh? I guess I'm on to that much. And I guess I'm going to know the rest. You're going to tell me, Maro Luigi."

The Italian shook his head.

"We're in Venice now," went on Hiram Finn calmly. "We've been here two days, and I guess I'm running out of my stock of patience. You haven't told me the secret, but you've told others—eh? Guess whom I saw in Venice to-day? A schoolboy, Maro. Mighty like a young whippersnapper I caught a glimpse of in a wood at a

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,470.

time when you got away from me. I guess I can put two and two together. You told him something, and he's here—after you, or after the treasure, Maro."

A sudden gleam came into the bound man's eyes. Hope, perhaps, had revived in him. The American adventurer doubtless saw it, too.

Tom Merry heard the unseen man give a scoffing laugh.

"You won't be found here. The boat didn't see me, and he doesn't know I'm here; doesn't know the schooner from Adam. You're in my hands, I guess; but I've not got any more time to waste over you. Are you going to talk?"

Another shake of the head.

"It's your last night, Maro," said the adventurer, the tone of menace growing deeper in his voice. "I guess I've been easy with you. Beppo and Pietro would have made you talk before this—eh? But I guess it's the end of the tether now. You're going to talk, or I'm going to make you. We leave Venice to-morrow morning. I'm finished here. We sail before dawn, and we're going down the Adriatic—round to Naples, I guess. I've got business to do, and I can't afford to waste time. I guess I've wasted enough getting you back from England when you slipped me on an English ship. Maro Luigi, my friend, you are going to talk at dawn, if not before!"

Maro Luigi shook his head again.

"I guess I shall make you, then! I guess an iron bolt, heated red-hot, and slipped down your back will make you willing to give up all the treasures in the wide world if you'd got 'em in your trousers pocket."

The man in the bunk made no sign.

"Nod your head if you'll talk. I guess I'm not going to let you open your mouth. We're too near the quay for that."

Maro Luigi did not move.

"Obstinate dog!" said Hiram Finn, with deep anger in his voice. "I guess I mean business about that iron bolt. You'll learn in the morning, when we up anchor and get away from Venice. There's a right breeze for us, and we're going—savvy? I guess—"

The American broke off.

There was a sound in the cuddy as Beppo yawned and awoke. And there was a shout as the seaman's startled eyes rested upon Tom Merry.

"Il ragazzo!" he shouted. "Un ragazzo Inglese!"

"What!"

Hiram Finn was at the door of the cabin with a bound.

Tom Merry made a desperate spring for the ladder.

The Italian was in the way; but he was heavy from sleep, and his brain was still reeling from his drinking.

Tom Merry hit out and knocked the man flying.

Beppo crashed on the floor.

"Signore! Un spia—un ragazzo—"

He yelled as he went down. Tom Merry sprang for the ladder. But the Yankee, big and heavy as he was, was out of the cabin in the twinkling of an eye, and springing in pursuit.

His grasp just missed Tom Merry's ankle as the junior dashed up the ladder. With his heart thumping, the junior reached the deck and rushed for the side.

Hiram Finn leaped after him.

Tom Merry made a flying leap for the gondola floating in the darkness by the side of the schooner. And as he leaped Hiram Finn smote him, and Tom missed

the gondola, and plunged heavily into the water.

Splash!

From the rail the Yankee adventurer looked down with anxious eyes. He saw the gondola a moment later, and a dripping form dragging itself in.

CHAPTER 17.

A Council of War!

TOM MERRY dragged himself into the gondola with the aid of the boatman.

His brain was reeling, and he sank down exhausted, the water dripping from the drenched clothes and forming a pool round him.

"Signore! Signorino!" spluttered the gondolier.

Tom Merry panted, and struggled to his feet.

"Shore! Quick!" he exclaimed. "Quick—subito! Riva degli Schiavoni!"

"Sì, signore!"

The gondolier swung out the long oar, and the gondola glided back to the quay.

As it bumped on the steps Tom Merry jumped out.

The water ran down him as he stood. He looked out into the lagoon towards the schooner. A moving shadow in the starlight caught his eyes. The schooner was in motion, the mainsail had filled

Don't Forget to Give Your Pals the Tip About Our Grand Greyfriars Story.

out before the breeze that blew off the shore, and the vessel was gliding away towards the Lido and the wide Adriatic beyond.

Tom Merry clenched his hands.

His first idea had been to call help—to rouse the police, the port watchman—anybody—to get help to rescue Maro Luigi.

But it was too late.

What was he to do?

To leave Maro Luigi in the hands of the unscrupulous adventurer? Yet if he told his story, would the police believe it? Would not they think it was some wild, boyish fancy—a dream, or an invention? And the schooner was gone. To search her it would be necessary to send a vessel in pursuit. Tom Merry knew that it was hopeless. The voice of the gondolier interrupted his hurried reflections. He took out twenty lire and placed them in the man's dusky hand, and, without waiting for the profuse thanks, he hurried back to the hotel.

The hall-porter looked at him in amazement.

"The signorino has fallen into the water!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, and he hurried up to his room without further explanation. He turned on the electric light, and hurriedly stripped off his wet clothes and towelled himself down.

Arthur Augustus awoke, and sat up in bed, and blinked at him.

"Bai Jove! Where have you been, Tom Merry? What have you been up to, you boundah?"

"Call the other fellows, Gussy. We want a council of war."

"Vow well, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus, amazed as he was,

could see that it was a serious matter. He tumbled out of bed, and called Blake and Manners and Lowther from the adjoining room.

The three juniors came in in amazement. They saw Tom Merry towelling himself down, and simply stared.

"What on earth have you been doing?" demanded Lowther.

"Tumbling into the lagoon," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Great Scott! You might have been drowned!" ejaculated Blake.

"I came jolly near it."

"How on earth did you come to tumble in?"

"Hiram Finn's fist helped me."

"Hiram Finn!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

"Yes," Tom Merry hurriedly explained. "I got aboard the schooner. I wanted to see whether Maro Luigi was there."

"You cheeky ass to go without us!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Don't chip now, you chaps; it's too serious. I got on board from a gondola, and went down below, and there was Maro Luigi tied up in a bunk like a giddy turkey for Christmas. Hiram Finn and the two Italians were there, on the schooner. Finn was in the cabin with poor old Luigi. He'd seen us in Venice to-day, and smelt danger. He was threatening to put Luigi to the torture to make him give away the secret."

"The rotter!"

"They found me there and nearly had me," Tom Merry shivered. "If Finn had got hold of me, I don't think I should have got off the schooner alive. I expected him to fire after me in the water, but he didn't. He knocked me into the lagoon as I jumped for the gondola. The gondolier pulled me in."

"My hat!"

"What's going to be done now, you chaps?"

"Call the police, and collar the schooner!"

"She's gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

"Yes. They must have cut the cable. She was whisking away down the lagoon before I got to the quay."

"Then it's all up!" said Blake, with a whistle.

"All the same," said Tom, "I don't think Finn will go far away. I heard him talking. He knows the treasure is somewhere near Venice, that's why he's here. Luigi hasn't told him yet, but if they torture him he will—he's bound to. Look here! Finn knows he has no time to lose now, and he will put pressure on Luigi, and we shall find him at the island of Santa Maria—unless we get there first."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I suppose so," said Lowther thoughtfully. "We'd better get off first thing in the morning, without waiting for Moppy to come down. Then he can't ask any questions."

"That's so," said Blake.

"You all agree to that?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

CHAPTER 18.

Victory!

DAWN flushed up in pink and rose over the wide lagoon, and lighted the towers and roofs of the Queen of the Adriatic.

In the first rays of the sun the five juniors quietly left the hotel.

They had a bundle of rolls with them for breakfast in the gondola. It was all they needed. They left Mr. Moppy

sound asleep in his room, little dreaming of the wild adventure his charges were entering into. The juniors wished fervently that they had old Kildare of St. Jim's with them, or even their old rivals, Figgins & Co. But Mr. Mopps would have been quite useless. They had to depend on themselves.

The spades, the pickaxe, and the crowbar were placed in the gondola Tom Merry engaged, and the juniors had each taken a stout stick. The gondolier—the same man who had rowed Tom Merry out to the schooner the previous night—asked no questions. The young English signors desired a "promenade" on the lagoon to see the sun rise over Venice—not an uncommon excursion. That was all the gondolier thought.

"Burano," said Tom Merry to the Italian; and the gondolier shoved out the long bar. And the little craft swept away over the still shadowy waters of the lagoon.

Tom Merry & Co. looked about them as the gondola glided on. There was no sign of the schooner. But they had not expected to see her. The gondola moved on over the lagoon, and Venice became a blur of white buildings behind in the rising sun.

The gondolier pointed to an island ahead.

"Burano?" asked Tom Merry.

"Si, signore!"

"You know the island of Santa Maria, near Burano?"

"Andiamo al isola di Santa Maria, presso Burano," said Arthur Augustus.

And the gondolier nodded. He evidently understood, and knew the islet.

The gondola approached the little island. There were vestiges of buildings upon it. It had evidently been inhabited at some earlier date, but it had now fallen into ruin and solitude.

The gondola plunged her bows into deep mud, and the gondolier made her fast.

"Andiamo in isola," said D'Arcy, in as good Italian as he could muster. "Voi attendete qui."

"Si, signore!"

The juniors plunged ashore through the mud.

They did not need to ask where were the ruins of the old chapel of Santa Maria. Across the island they could see fragments of a building—the only one that had been of any size. They tramped across the little island, a rising crest of land hiding them from the gondola.

The gondolier was not likely to be curious. He was too accustomed to the manners and customs of tourists who seek all kinds of things, in all kinds of places, that totally lack interest to the native. The gondolier sat down to roll cigarettes and smoke until the juniors returned, in the comfortable consciousness that he was to be paid by the hour.

The juniors tramped into the ruins.

The sun was higher in the heavens now, and the rays were bright and warm. They fell into the ruins of the old chapel—masses of masonry overgrown with weeds, close by a choked-up canal full of foul odours.

The juniors' hearts were beating fast. Tom Merry paused in the shattered gateway of the chapel, and looked seaward, and uttered an exclamation.

"Look!"

In the far distance a sail appeared, and the juniors could make out the graceful form of a schooner beating up to the isle against the wind.

"The schooner!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"So Hiram Finn is coming!"

"He'll be too late!" said Tom Merry.

"But we've got no time to lose. Buck up!"

"Look for a cross marked in red on a stone!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

They searched through the ruins of the old "capella."

Blake gave a sudden shout:

"This way!"

In an obscure corner, shadowed by a fragment of the shattered wall, Blake had come upon one of the flagstones of the floor, upon which appeared the graven form of a cross in dull red. Excepting for the "croce rossa," the flagstone was exactly like all the others that formed the ancient floor of the chapel.

The juniors gathered round the spot with shining eyes.

"Quick's the word!" said Tom Merry.

He unwrapped the tools and set to work.

He jammed the end of the crowbar into the interstice between the marked flagstone and the next, and dragged upon it with all his strength.

The flat, thick stone slowly rose.

Tom Merry tilted it back. Underneath was the soft earth, with no sign that beneath it a treasure lay concealed.

"A spade!" said Tom Merry.

Blake handed him a spade. The pick was not needed. Tom Merry shovelled out the soft, muddy earth with feverish haste. There was a sudden shock of the spade.

"It's here!"

The spade had struck something harder than earth. Tom Merry hastily shovelled the earth away, and the top of a wooden chest was revealed. Then all the juniors bent themselves to it, and the chest was dragged out upon the flagstones.

It was a sea-chest about three feet long, made of oak, and it was very heavy. The lid was locked down, but a blow of the pick shattered the lock. Tom Merry raised the lid.

"My hat!"

The story was true—Maro Luigi had not deceived them, and he had not been deceived himself by the tale of the dying seaman in Leghorn.

The chest was crammed to the very brim with money—gold pieces of twenty francs and twenty lire. English sovereigns, German twenty-mark pieces, and coins of other kinds with strange inscriptions, Greek and Russian, that the juniors could not even read.

Gold—the treasure at last!

Blake knelt by the chest, and ran the coins in golden cascades through his fingers breathlessly.

"My only hat!" he said. "It's true! Real gold! The giddy treasure!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Only I'm afraid it doesn't belong to us, you chaps," said Tom Merry.

"Oh!" said all the juniors together. And their faces fell a little.

In the excitement of the discovery they had forgotten that little fact.

"I suppose you're right," said Blake, after a pause. "After all, the secret was Maro Luigi's—he gave you the secret, but it would be a bit thick to hold him to it if he can get away from Hiram Finn."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked out to sea. The schooner was close in shore now. It would not be long before the rival treasure-seekers were on the scene. Tom Merry spoke a few hurried words. The juniors closed the chest again, and hid it from sight with chunks of



Rain, hail or snow, however uncertain the weather you can bet your boots on one thing! There's a grand SCHOOLBOYS' OWN yarn waiting for you at your newsagent's, to while away a dreary afternoon. Try this one!

Do you like school stories, chum? Good! Then you'll just revel in this tip-top tale dealing with the unusual adventures of BOB MERRICK & CO., the cheery chums of the Classical Fourth at Toppingham School. It's brimful of fun and exciting situations. Make sure of this splendid treat!

**CHUMS
OF
TOPPINGHAM!**

.....No. 266 of the.....

SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

On Sale at all Newsagents and Bookstalls - 4d

masonry and loose bricks. The chest was hidden—safe from the eyes of Hiram Finn, even if he had learned the secret of the stone marked with a "croce rossa."

Then the marked flagstone was replaced, and the signs of the excavations cleared away. All looked as it had been before the juniors came to the ruined chapel.

Keeping close in cover among the masses of masonry, the St. Jim's juniors watched the schooner with eager eyes. The vessel glided close up to the shore, and the sails dropped. Three men could be seen moving on her deck, and the juniors watched them bring a fourth man up from below, evidently bound, and placed him in a boat. The boat was lowered; Hiram Finn and Beppo took the oars and pulled for the shore. Pietro remained alone on board the schooner.

Tom Merry set his teeth.

"They're coming," he said; "and they're bringing Luigi with them, as I expected. Lie low!"

The boat plunged bows into the mud, and disappeared from the eyes of the juniors hidden in the ruins. There was a sound of heavy footsteps crunching on the old stones, and two men came into the ruined chapel, leading between them a third—whose arms were bound behind his back. It was Maro Luigi. His face was pale and anguished. Hiram Finn looked round with a grin of triumph. The juniors lay very low in their cover, grasping their cudgels, and waiting for the word from Tom Merry.

"I kinda guess we scoop the deck here, Maro," said Hiram Finn, with a chuckle. "You didn't need that hot iron, but it's still time, if you're obstinate. I guess you're going to point out where the chest is buried now."

"A thousand curses!" muttered Luigi, between his teeth.

Finn laughed.

"I reckon you can do your swearing afterwards. Beppo, give him an inch of your knife—and another inch if he doesn't chatter!"

"Maldetto! E sotto la pietra segnata d'una croce rossa!" groaned Luigi.

"Thunder—and I guess I'm almost standing on it!" said Hiram Finn, staring down at the marked flagstone. "We'll soon see if he's told the truth. Heave that stone up, Beppo!"

The seaman bent over the stone. Tom Merry gave his companions a quick

whisper. There was a sudden rush of feet in the old ruins.

Hiram Finn swung round with an oath.

But even as he spun round, clatching his revolver, Tom Merry's cudgel descended upon his head with stunning force; and the Yankee adventurer gave one faint groan and fell like a log.

Beppo leaped up with a snarl like a cat, knife in hand, but a stick smote his knife, and sent it whirling. Another crashed upon his head, and another across his arm, and he yelled with anguish and fell.

"Done 'em!" roared Blake. "Hurrah for St. Jim's!"

Maro Luigi gazed at the juniors like a man in a dream.

Tom Merry opened his pocket-knife, and cut the Italian's bonds.

"It's all right, old son!" he exclaimed. "Allo right-ho, in Italian!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're a free man now, and we've found the giddy treasure for you—"

"Tutto va bene, e il tesoro è trovato!" chirruped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And Maro Luigi gasped in astonishment and joy.

"And it's all yours," said Tom Merry. "We're not going to touch it; and we'll lend you our gondola to get it away—"

"Oh, signore!"

"Tie those chaps up," said Tom Merry. "There's enough rope here—they used plenty of rope on poor old Luigi. The other rotter on the schooner will come to look for them sooner or later, and he can look after them!"

And Hiram Finn and Beppo were bound hand and foot. Then the treasure-chest was dragged out, and Maro Luigi, still dazed with joy and gratitude, feasted his eyes upon the contents—the heaps and piles of gold coins. Then he began to talk in rapid gestures. The juniors did not follow the words, but they understood what they meant, and they shook their heads.

"No; we're not going to take it, or any of it," said Tom Merry decidedly. "It's yours, Luigi—all yours. That's settled!"

"Oh, signore! Quel generosità!"

The chest was fastened up, and Maro Luigi and Tom Merry carried it across the little island to the gondola. The gondolier stared at the sight of the stranger, and Luigi talked to him in fluent Italian.

The juniors would have been sur-

prised if they had known that he was airily explaining to the gondolier that he had been on the island the day before, searching for mineral specimens for the young English strangers, and that he had a box full of stones of no use to anybody but a tourist!

The gondola glided away from the island. As they swept away into the lagoon, the juniors caught a glimpse of the schooner, and of Pietro staring anxiously shoreward, evidently wondering what had become of his comrades. Doubtless he discovered, in the long run, but Tom Merry & Co. did not wait to see. They lost no time in getting back to Venice, and it was still morning when the gondola touched the granite steps of the Riva degli Schiavoni, and the gondolier was dismissed with a tip that made him open his eyes.

Mr. Mopps had missed the juniors, and he was waiting anxiously for them when they came in. His breath was taken away when he heard of the adventure they had been through.

Maro Luigi deposited his treasure in Tom Merry's room, whence he removed it in bags lent him by the juniors, taking it away to some place of safety best known to himself. The juniors asked no questions; it was no business of theirs.

The Italian was deeply earnest in his endeavours to persuade the English boys to take one half of the treasure, but they would not. At last, to gratify the grateful seaman, they agreed to take a hundred pounds.

Mr. Mopps kept a very careful eye upon his charges after that. But the dangerous adventures were past, and when the holiday was over they came back to St. Jim's with wondrous tales to tell their schoolfellows there.

Indeed, on the first day of the new term, what was left of the hundred pounds—it was not much—was spent in a royal feed in Tom Merry's study, to which came Figgins & Co. and a crowd of other fellows; to discuss the good things provided by the returned travellers, and to listen with intense interest to the story of the treasure of Santa Maria.

(Next Wednesday: "TOM MERRY'S BIG FIGHT!" Watch out for this great yarn of fun, adventure and boxing. Order your GEM early.)



SPUR PROOF TENTS

Made from specially Proofed Canvas, complete with 3-Piece Jointed Poles, Guy Lines, Pegs and Runners. Packed in waterproof hoddah with handle. Size 6ft. x 4ft. 3 x 3ft. 6, with 6in. walls. Carriage Paid.

GEORGE GROSE & LUDGATE CIRCUS

NEW BRIDGE ST LONDON E.C.4

FREE! Over 60 different, including SET BELGIUM SOLDIER, 4 BOY KING, Set Airpost (Flight), Congo (Stanley), IRAN, HUNGARY (Boscon), GUATEMALA. Postage 2d.; request approvals.—ROBINSON BROS. (A), MORETON, WIRRAL.

BLUSHING. TIMIDITY, SHYNESS completely cured by reliable, pleasant Treatment. No drugs or difficult exercises. Full particulars free.—F. R. TATSON (A), Briarwood, Dibbets Lane, Latham, Lancs.

509 STAMPS FREE! ANDORRA, FINLAND, JAPAN, etc. 2d. Postage. Request approvals (abroad 6d. P.O.).—A. EASTICK, 22, Bankside Rd., Bournemouth.

When Answering Advertisements, Please Mention This Paper.

Printed in Great Britain and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Mail. Post. Subscription rates: Island and Abroad; 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, April 16th, 1936.

BIRDS' EGGS

If you collect Birds' Eggs, write for free price list to

C. H. GOWLAND, Naturalist,
"TADORNA," BARNSTON, WIRRAL.

STAMPS 300 DIFFERENT, incl. Airmail, "Beastly Uncommon," Sets, Pictorials, Colonials. Price 6d. (Abroad 1/-).—W. A. WHITE, ENGINE LANE, LYE, WORCS.

BLUSHING, Shyness, "Nerves," Self-Consciousness, Worry Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course 5/- Details—L.A. STEBBING (A), 24, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

ABYSSINIA—ITALY PKT. FREE! 55 diff., incl. 1st Ethiopia, Mussolini on Horseback, Set 3 Japan, Siam, mint Guiana, Colonials, Yalta, etc., Send To-day—Don't Delay. 2d. post.—Lisburn & Townsend (U.J.S.), Liverpool.

STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did! Particulars Free.—FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.