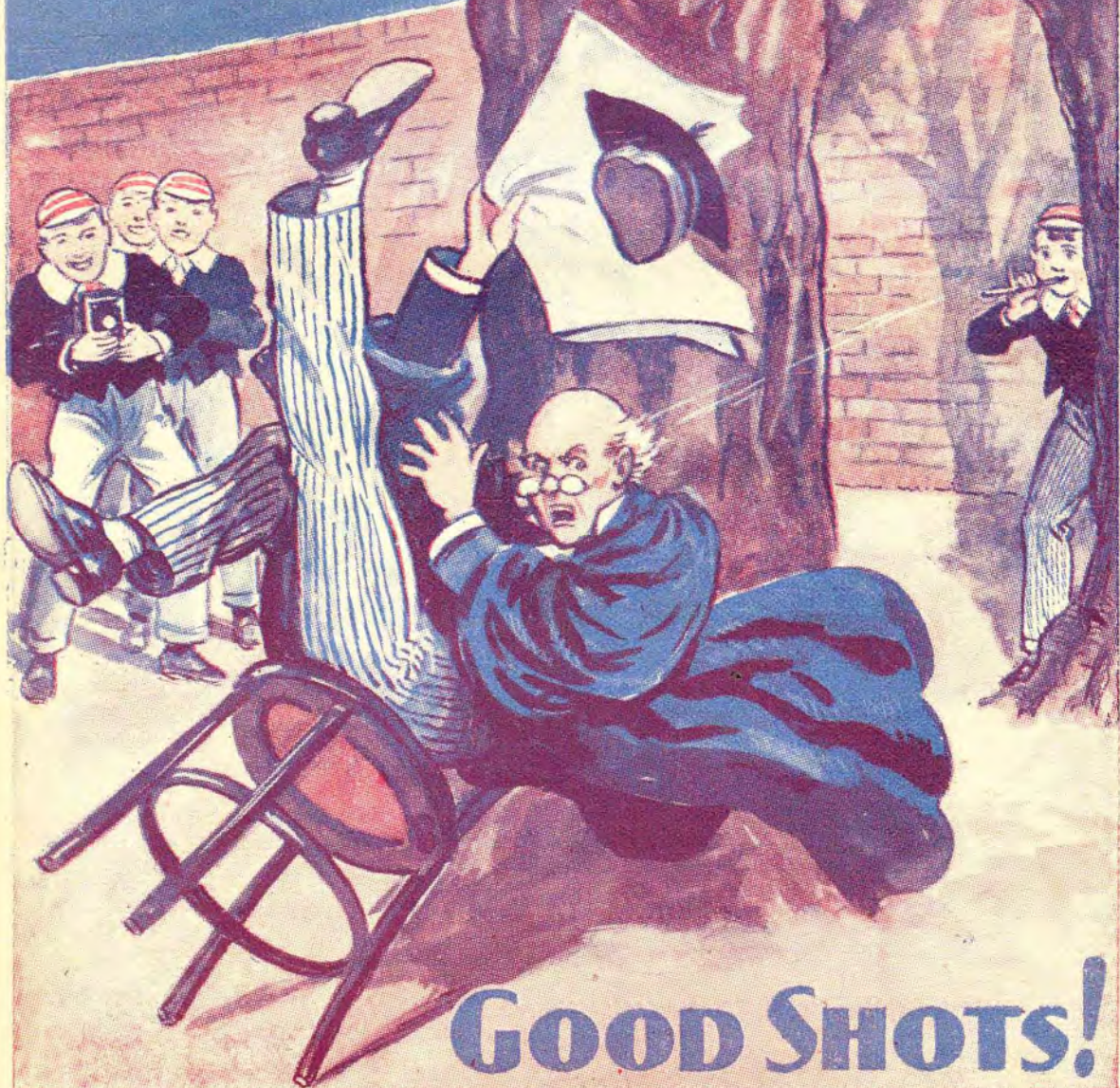


"THE SILENT WITNESS!" GREAT STORY OF TOM MERRY & CO. WITHIN.

The GEM 2d



GOOD SHOTS!

WHEN A CAMERA ESTABLISHED THE GUILT OF AN INNOCENT JUNIOR!

The SILENT



By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD**

Mr. Selby pricked up his ears as he heard Levison's whispered voice from the alcove. "I fancy the snap of Mr. Selby falling into the ditch is in Manners' camera, Mellish," said the cad of the Fourth. "But it's not my business to sneak."

CHAPTER 1.

Manners is Fed Up!

"**M**ANNERS, old chap!"
"Oh!" said Manners.
Manners was surprised.
So were Tom Merry and

Monty Lowther.
The Terrible Three were in their study. Tom Merry was coming over a footer list, Monty Lowther was doing lines, and Manners was cutting films. A goodly proportion of Manners' pocket-money went in films, and a good part of his spare time was spent in Mr. Lathom's dark-room.

Manners of the Shell was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. He was busily engaged when Gore of the Shell looked in and called him "old chap."

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Naturally, Manners said "Oh!"

He was not on chummy terms with Gore, not in the least; indeed, they often had "words"—quite emphatic words. And Gore was not very agreeable, as a rule. Now he looked in with a most agreeable smile on his face, and addressed Manners in quite affectionate terms.

"Busy, old fellow?" said Gore.

"Yes," said Manners.

"Sorry to interrupt."

"Well, you can leave off interrupting," remarked Manners. "That's soon mended. Good-bye!"

"Ahem! I say, old son—"

Manners laid down his scissors and looked at Gore.

"Now, look here, Gore, what's the little game?" he demanded.

"Little game?" repeated Gore.

"Yes. Last time you saw me you called me a silly ass, and I called you a howling fathead. I still consider you a howling fathead, but you've turned me into an old chap, an old fellow, and an old son! What do you mean?"

Tom Merry and Lowther grinned and looked curiously at Gore. They did not understand it any more than Manners did. Gore coloured a little.

"The—the fact is—" he stammered.

"Well?"

"Will you lend me your camera?"

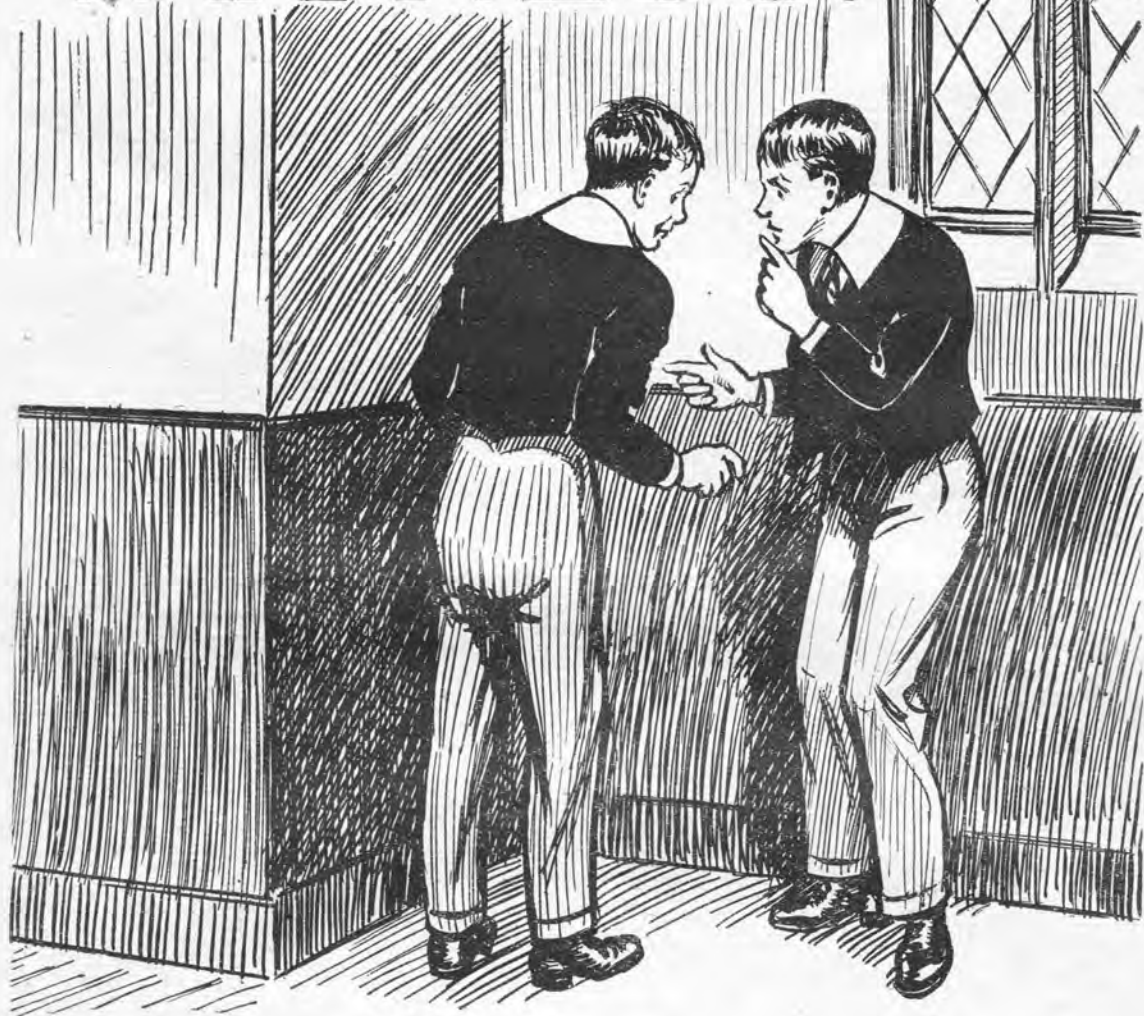
"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Manners. "I'm a silly ass when you don't want to borrow my camera, and an old chap when you do?"

"Well, you—you see—you don't mind my asking you?"

"Not at all," said Manners. "And I hope you don't mind my saying 'No'!"

A PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION STARTS LOTS OF FUN AND NO LITTLE TROUBLE AT ST. JIM'S! THERE'S NOT A DULL MOMENT IN THIS GRAND YARN.

WITNESS!



"I want it rather particularly," said Gore.

"So do I," said Manners.

"Look here, you rotter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther.

Manners picked up his scissors again, and pointed to the door with them.

"I never lend my camera, excepting to fellows who know how to handle it, and can take care of it," he explained. "It's a presentation camera, and I'm looking after it. You don't know how to use a camera."

"I'm going to learn," said Gore.

"On my camera?" said Manners witheringly. "Thanks! Ask next door!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Gore. And he retired from the study, closing the door after him with a bang.

Manners snorted.

"Awful cheek!" he said. "Going to learn to use a camera with my ten-guinea presentation camera. My hat!"

Tap!

"Come in!" said Tom Merry.

The door opened and Mellish of the Fourth looked in. The Terrible Three looked at him rather grimly. They did not like the sneak of the Fourth. But Mellish was looking very friendly—almost wriggling with agreeableness, in fact.

"I say, Manners, old fellow!"

"Hallo!"

"Will you lend me your camera?"

"No! Shut the door after you!" said Manners politely.

Was it Manners who snapped Mr. Selby falling into a muddy ditch? The Shell junior protests his innocence—but the film in his camera proves his guilt!

"I'll buy my own films, of course," said Mellish.

"You can buy your own camera, too," said Manners.

"Look here, if you've lent it to Gore—"

"I haven't!"

"Then why can't you lend it to me?" demanded Mellish. "I'm going to learn photography."

"Not with my camera!" grinned Manners. "Shut the door after you!"

Slam! Percy Mellish was gone, apparently in a bad temper. Manners grunted, and Monty Lowther chuckled. Tom Merry looked puzzled.

"There seems to be a rush on your camera," he remarked. "What the dickens are Gore and Mellish taking up that rot for?"

"Rot!" said Manners, with a glare. "If you had the brains to be a photographer—"

"Bow-wow!" said Tom. "I've had THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,544.

enough of it, with films stuck all over the study. Only yesterday I sat on a lot of them in the armchair—"

"Yes, you silly ass, and mucked them up!" growled Manners wrathfully. "That lot cost me two-and-six! You—Hallo! Who is that?"

There was another tap at the door, and Levison of the Fourth looked in. He was another fellow with whom the Terrible Three were not on the best of terms. They seemed to be getting a lot of visits that afternoon from fellows they hardly spoke to. They stared inquiringly at Levison.

"Manners here?" said Levison. "Ah, here you are, Manners!"

"Yes, here I am," said Manners.

"I've just looked in to speak to you," said Levison, with an agreeable smile. "How are you getting on with your photography?"

"Same as usual," said Manners, with a stare. "You're not interested in it, Levison. What are you getting at?"

"The fact is, I'm taking it up," said Levison. "I've done a lot of it in my time, but I don't happen to have a camera now. I was wondering whether you'd let me help you sometimes in the dark-room, and give me some tips?"

Manners thawed visibly. Tom Merry and Lowther grinned. Anybody who took an interest in photography, and asked Manners for information, was sure of getting on the right side of Manners.

His chums suspected that Levison was leading up to a request for the loan of the camera, and piling on a little "soft-sawder" to begin with.

"I've seen some of your pictures, you know," went on Levison, encouraged by Manners' relaxing countenance. "That photograph of yours of the St. Jim's eleven—it beats any professional work I've ever seen!"

"That was a specially good one!" agreed Manners, relaxing still further. "You ought to get a camera, Levison. You're keen on photography."

"The fact is, I'm too hard up," said Levison. "And—and if you wouldn't mind, Manners, I'd like you to lend me your camera for a bit."

Manners stiffened up again. He was an enthusiast on photography—some of the fellows said a crank—but he was no fool.

"Sorry. Can't be done!" he said shortly.

"I wouldn't hurt it, you know," said Levison. "You know I can take proper care of a camera, Manners, old chap."

"Not so much of your old chap!" said Manners sourly. "I don't keep a camera for general use. Besides, I want it myself. And I remember I lent it to you once, and you played a rotten trick with it!"

"Ahem! This time, you know—" "Nothing doing!" said Manners. "Good-bye!"

Levison scowled. He was standing in the doorway, scowling, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form came along.

Levison tramped away, looking extremely annoyed, and D'Arcy took his place in the doorway. The swell of St. Jim's turned his eyeglass benevolently upon the chums of the Shell.

"Mannahs, deah boy—"

"Hallo!"

"Would you mind lendin' me your camewah?"

"My only hat!"

"Look here, what's the little game?" demanded Tom Merry, mystified. "Is every silly ass in the School House

taking up photography all of a sudden, or is this a rag?"

"I wefuse to be called a silly ass, Tom Mewwy!"

"I suppose it's some scheme to pull my leg," said Manners, beginning to look wrathful. "Run away and play, Gussy! Go and buy a new silk hat!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Or a pair of fancy socks, or a new tie!" snorted Manners. "I'll lend you a dress tie to play with, if you like. That's more in your line than a camera."

"You uttah ass, Mannahs! At the pwesent moment I wequiah a camewah," said Arthur Augustus. "I have nevah twoubled about such wubbish before—"

"Such what?" snapped Manners.

"Wubbish! But in the cires I am goin' to take up photogwaphy, and if you will lend me your camewah to begin with—"

"Yes, I can see myself lending my camera to a silly idiot!" grunted Manners.

"If you chawactewise me as a silly idiot, Mannahs—"

"Well, a howling ass, then!" said Manners. "And I don't believe you want the camera at all. I believe this is a silly jape. Buzz off!"

"Aftah that wemark, Mannahs, I wefuse to pursue the subject any furthah," said Arthur Augustus, with great dignity.

"Thank goodness!" said Manners feelingly.

Bang!

The door closed after Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"It's your own fault, Manners, old scout," he said comfortingly. "They're ragging you because you're such a blessed crank about your camera, you know. I suppose it's a little game, and every blessed bounder in the House is coming here pretending he wants to borrow your camera."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was Tom Merry who laughed, not Manners.

Manners frowned and picked up a cushion.

"I don't see any joke in it," he said. "The next silly ass who comes in talking about cameras will get this cushion, I know that."

Tap!

Manners' eyes gleamed as the tap came at the door. He gripped the cushion ready. The door opened, and Digby of the Fourth looked in.

"I say, Manners—"

"Well?" said Manners in a deadly tone.

"Will you lend me your eam— Yaroooooooh!"

Whiz!

The cushion flew with unerring aim. It caught Robert Arthur Digby under the chin and completely bowled him over. Digby, with a roar of surprise and wrath, went spinning back into the passage, where he sat down.

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

"Right on the wicket!"

"How's that, umpire?" gasped Lowther.

"Groogh!" came from Digby.

"Yooooop! Wha-a-at—what the thunder are— Ow! Wow! Why, you silly ass— Yooooooop!"

Manners fielded the cushion and slammed the door of the study. Digby did not look in again. Apparently he did not want any more.

Manners sat down, with a heavy frown. Scarcely had he sat down when the door opened. Herries of the Fourth smiled agreeably into the study.

"Hallo, you there, Manners—" "I'm here," said Manners sulphurously.

"Will you lend me your camera? Why, what— Keep off! Oh, my hat! He's mad!" yelled Herries, as Manners rushed at him, brandishing the cushion.

Biff, biff, biff! Whack! Herries dodged out of the study and fled.

CHAPTER 2.

A Terrible Example!

"HA, ha, ha!" Tom Merry and Lowther yelled. They were almost doubled up with mirth.

Manners was glowing with wrath. "The silly asses!" he growled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you fatheads. I don't see any joke in this—not the slightest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the next silly ass who comes here ragging will get it in the neck!" roared Manners. "I'm fed-up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Manners, looking as if he were prepared to begin with the cushion on his studymates.

"Shush!" said Lowther soothingly. "We haven't asked you to lend us your camera, old son. But you'll be getting some more requests soon, I expect. The whole House seems to be in it."

"If I had studymates who had a tincture of brains, instead of a pair of cackling, silly asses, they'd help me to stop 'em!" hooted Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Peace, my child, peace!" said Tom Merry. "We'll stand by you. This may be very funny, but it's gone far enough. They must learn that they can't jape this study. The next joker who comes in looking for a camera is going to be made an example of. We'll let him trot in and collar him, and give him the ink. That will keep the rest off the grass."

"Well, that's a good idea," said Manners. "Get between him and the door when he comes in, if there's another of the silly asses. I don't see any joke in this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if you don't leave off cackling—"

yelled Manners.

"Shush! Here he comes!"

Tap!

The Terrible Three "shushed" as there came a knock at the door.

Manners, with a deadly gleam in his eyes, took down a bottle of ink from the shelf. What was in the inkpot was not sufficient for the purpose—at least, Manners thought it wasn't. He meant to be liberal with the ink.

The door opened and a bony forehead and a large pair of spectacles gleamed in. The visitor was Skimpole of the Shell, who shared the next study with Gore and Talbot. Skimpole blinked benevolently at the Terrible Three.

"My dear fellows," said Skimpole, "excuse my interrupting you—"

"Oh, certainly!" said Monty Lowther, pushing Skimpole a little farther into the study and closing the door.

Skimpole blinked at him.

"My dear Lowther—" he began in a solemn way.

"Go ahead!" said Lowther.

"I hardly understand you, Lowther. I came in to see Manners."

"I thought so," assented Lowther.

"Well, here's Manners, and he's quite

ready for you—expecting you, in fact. You're ready, aren't you, Manners?"

"I'm ready!" snorted Manners. Skimpole blinked round with a surprised look.

"Pile in!" said Tom Merry encouragingly. "We know what you want, Skimmy. You're taking up photography, and you want to borrow Manners' camera—what?"

"My dear Merry, I hardly see how you guessed it," said Skimpole. "However, that is my object in calling in. Manners, would you have any objection to lending me your camera? Oh—ah—yawp!"

Skimpole hadn't time to finish. Manners was upon him with the spring of a tiger, and Skimpole was upended in the twinkling of an eye. He came down on the study carpet with a heavy bump and a loud roar. Then Manners turned the ink-bottle over him.

Swish! Splosh! Splash! "Oh dear! Yaroop!" roared Skimpole. Oh crumbs! My dear Manners—groooh—yow-ow! Gug-gug-guggg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Skimpole floundered under the ink. His face and head were smothered with it. He could not see through his spectacles. He rolled on the carpet and dodged wildly, seeking to escape the stream. But there was no escaping it. Manners stuck to him like a leech.

Not till the last drop was gone from the bottle did Manners cease to pour. By that time the unfortunate Skimpole was in a parlous state.

"Now chuck him out!" hooted Manners.

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"No fear!" said Lowther. "He's rather too inky to touch. Let him crawl out." Monty Lowther opened the door. "There you are, Skimmy—or are you going to stay for some more? We've got a bottle of gum at your service."

"Groogh! Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Skimpole. "My dear fellows, this—this outrage—groogh! I—I—I am astounded—yoooooh!"

"I'll give him the gum!" shouted Manners, jumping towards the shelf. "He hasn't had enough."

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Skimpole fled through the doorway. The ink was enough for him, and he did not want any gum. Leaving a stream of ink behind him, he fled.

"Tell the other idiots that there's the same for them, if they come here after my camera!" roared Manners.

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

Skimpole disappeared. Howls of laughter followed him.

Manners closed the door with considerable satisfaction.

"I fancy that'll be the last," he remarked. "A joke's a joke, but one can have too much of a good thing. That'll be a warning to them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three sat down again—Manners to his films, Tom Merry to his footer list, and Lowther to his lines. The Shell fellows had no doubt that the

awful example they had made of Skimpole would put an end to the rag. And, indeed, several minutes passed without any interruption.

Then there came a tap, and the door was opened. And the handsome, good-humoured face of Talbot of the Shell looked in. Manners made a spring for the gum bottle.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Chuck it, Manners. I mean, don't chuck it! You haven't come to borrow a camera, Talbot?"

"No," said Talbot.

"Oh!" said Manners, setting down the gum. "Good luck for you! You're the first silly idiot who hasn't come here to borrow a camera this afternoon."

"I looked in to ask you what on earth's the matter," said Talbot. "What have you been doing to poor old Skimmy?"

"Inking him!" grinned Lowther.

"Bob's worth of ink wasted," said Manners. "But he's welcome to it. I've got the gum ready for the next."

"But what's the game?" asked Talbot in astonishment. "What has Skimmy done?"

"Asked me to lend him my camera."

"My hat! Do you always ink a chap if he asks you to lend him your camera?" ejaculated Talbot.

"It's a rag," explained Tom Merry.

"There's been a regular procession for an hour or so, all asking Manners to lend his camera—pulling his leg, you know. So we made an example of



Swish! Splosh! Splash! "Oh dear! Yaroop!" roared Skimpole, as Manners turned the ink-bottle over his head. "My dear Manners—grooh—gug-gug-gugggg!" Skimpole floundered under the ink and dodged about on the floor wildly. But there was no escaping the stream.

the last merry japer, to put a stop to it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Talbot. "You blessed duffers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh? What?"

"It wasn't a jape," gasped Talbot. "Skimmy thinks you've all gone mad. He's thinking of going to the House-master about it. He thinks you ought to be seen by a doctor."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

An inky face glimmered in at the doorway. It was Skimpole's.

He blinked nervously at the Terrible Three through inky spectacles.

"Are they calmer, Talbot, my dear fellow? Do not—do not run any risks, Talbot. It would be much better to ask Mr. Railton to send for a doctor. I think it is probably sunstroke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" began Tom Merry.

"It's all right," said Talbot. "Only a little mistake. They thought you were pulling their leg, Skimmy."

"I fail to see why they should have thought so, Talbot. I fear that their brains are unhinged," said Skimpole doubtfully. "I merely asked Manners to lend me his camera, and he attacked me like a wild animal. I have been reduced to a deplorable condition."

"You had better go and get a wash, Skimmy," chuckled Talbot.

"Look here!" roared Tom Merry. "What are you getting at? If it isn't a jape, what did all those asses come asking Manners for his camera for, one after another?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Talbot. "It's a camera competition. Some of the fellows have just seen it in the 'Weekly Snap,' and they're going in for it—a prize for the best photograph, you know—only there's a shortage of cameras."

"Oh!" said the Terrible Three together.

"Five pounds for the best photograph by an amateur under sixteen," grinned Talbot. "A lot of the fellows are going in for it. You will have to keep your camera chained up, Manners."

"Ahem! Sorry, Skimmy—"

"Awfully sorry, Skimmy, old man, but—"

"We—we take it back," said Monty Lowther. "And—and we shan't charge you anything for the ink."

"You—you are sure they are quite sane, Talbot?" asked Skimpole, evidently still in doubt on that point.

"Ha, ha, ha! Quite—or as much as usual, anyway."

"Why, you ass—" began Manners.

"Then I will proceed to the bathroom," said Skimpole, greatly relieved in his mind. "If I have been the victim of an unfortunate and deplorable misapprehension, I excuse you fellows; but I beg you to reflect before acting in so exceedingly hasty and reckless a manner upon another occasion."

And Skimpole drifted away, leaving a trail of ink behind him.

CHAPTER 3.

Snapped!

"FIVE quids!" said Jack Blake thoughtfully.

"Pounds, deah boy!"

"Five quids!" repeated Jack Blake, unheeding. "It's really worth going in for. We shall have to get a camera from somewhere."

"I wefuse to bowwow Mannahs' camewah!"

"Most likely he would refuse to lend it, too, so you'd be in agreement about that," remarked Blake. "We'd better club up and get a camera among us. I don't see why this study shouldn't rope in that five quid."

"Hear, hear!" said Herries and Digby.

Study No. 6 was in consultation. Blake was sitting on the table with an open copy of the "Weekly Snap" on his knees. There had been a rush on that copy that afternoon. It was the only one in the school.

Kerr of the New House, who dabbled in photography, had happened to bring

it in, and remark that the snapshot competition was worth going in for.

A good many fellows thought the same. A dozen chaps with cameras decided at once to bag that five pounds when they heard of it.

The copy of the "Weekly Snap" passed from hand to hand, till it was worn almost threadbare. And one result had been the rush for Manners' camera, which had had such a deplorable outcome for Skimpole.

The Terrible Three had been busy in their study, and had not seen or heard of the "Weekly Snap" competition.

Study No. 6 were in somewhat low water with regard to funds. Arthur Augustus had written home twice for a fiver, but it had not arrived.

Fivers seemed scarce these days; perhaps the noble Earl of Eastwood had found a better use for his spare cash. Arthur Augustus said sorrowfully that it was hard lines; and his studymates agreed that it was.

Blake, Herries, and Digby had run almost out of tin—a thing that sometimes happened in the best regulated studies. So they were inclined to jump at the prize of five pounds offered by the editor of the photographic journal.

Herries, Dig, and D'Arcy had been along to see Manners about his camera, and returned to Study No. 6 in a state of intense indignation, one after another. Still, Manners or no Manners, they were going to bag that five pounds if they could.

"Of course, Manners will go in for it when he knows," Blake remarked. "He's a really good photographer, and he might pull it off, so far as the mere finish goes. But they want something a bit out of the usual. Listen to this!"

Blake read out:

"The prize is offered for the most striking, original, and interesting photograph, these qualifications being as important as good execution."

"Yaas, wathah! We shall beat those Shell boundahs there," said Arthur Augustus. "Mannahs will have good execution, but his pictuah won't be stwikin' or intwestin'. His pictuaahs are weally a feahful bore, you know."

"A certain amount of imagination will be required," said Blake. "An original turn of mind, you know. That's where we shall score."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Frinstance, suppose we photographed Gussy trying on two of his fancy ties at a time—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What about a photograph of my bulldog?" said Herries thoughtfully. "You know what a beautiful picture Towser makes."

Blake shook his head.

"Might break the camera, putting Towser's chivvy into it," he said.

"You silly chump!" roared Herries. "If you're going to be funny—"

"The first bisney is to get the camera," said Digby. "We can't all use Manners' old camera. Besides, he'll want it himself when he gets on to this."

"Affah Mannahs' extweme wudeness, I should wefuse—"

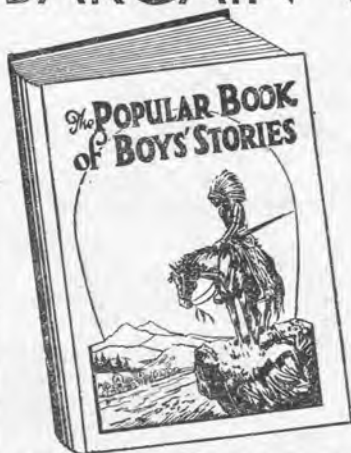
"Bow-wow! Now, where are we going to get a camera?" said Blake.

"We can't expect fellows to lend us theirs—they'll want 'em. Every chap who's got a camera will be going in for this five quids—"

"Pounds!"

"Quids!" roared Blake. "Cheese it! We shall have to buy a cheap camera. Manners' camera cost about ten guineas,

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but that was a presentation one. You can get a very good cheap camera. How much tin have you fellows got?"

There was a general turning-out of pockets.

Arthur Augustus produced two shillings; Herries, fourpence; Digby, a halfpenny; and Blake, twopence. Blake surveyed the collected wealth with a sniff.

"Two-and-sixpence-halfpenny," he said. "We can't get a camera for that—at least, I've never heard of one. When is your pater going to send you that fiver, Gussy?"

"I weally do not know, Blake. Instead of the fivah, he sent me a wecommendation to keep within my allowance," said D'Arcy dolefully. "I wegarded that as addin' insult to injuwty."

"What about your pater, Dig?"

"My pater's travelling abroad at the moment."

"What about yours, Herries, old man? Didn't you have a tame uncle once who used to shell out?"

"I've written three letters," said Herries. "I haven't had any answers yet."

Blake groaned.

"It never rains but it pours," he said. "My people have just stood me a new footer rig-out, and I must let that blow over before I ask for any more. Still, we've got to have a camera. We'll sell something."

"Good egg!" said Herries. "Sell your bike, old chap, and let's have a really first-class camera."

Blake gave him a freezing glare.

"I was thinking of your bulldog," he replied.

"My—my bulldog!" gasped Herries.

"Why, you silly duffer—"

"Well, your cornet, then."

"Don't be a funny idiot!" growled Herries. "Is this a serious matter or isn't it?"

"A lot of chaps would give something for Herries' cornet just to get it out of the passage," remarked Digby.

Herries snorted.

He was almost as likely to part with Towser as with his cornet. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass severely upon Herries.

"Hewwies, deah boy, it is up to you. You are called upon to make a sacrifice for the good of the study."

"Rats!"

"If my fivah had come I should place it at the service of the whole study, Hewwies."

"But it hasn't come!" snorted Herries. "Still, I've got an idea. There's Dig's colour-box; it cost a pound, and some fellow would give five bob for it—"

"Let me catch you selling my colour-box!" said Digby warmly.

"Weally, Dig, it is up to you—"

"Well, if Blake won't sell his bike—"

"Catch me selling my bike!"

"What about your new footer, then?"

"Fathead!"

"I do not wegard that as an answah, Blake. If you sell your footah you can get a new one out of the pwize."

"Bow-wow!"

"I wegard you all as failin' in your duty to the study, and I must we-mark that I am surprised at you," said Arthur Augustus with great severity.

"What about loyalty?"

"Oh, we're not at the end of our resources yet!" said Blake, with a chuckle. "There's your gold watch, Gussy."

"M-my gold watch!"



"Yes—and your silver cuff-links."

"Weally, Blake—"

"And your bike, if it comes to selling a bike."

"But I want my bike, deah boy. I can't wide a camewah, I suppose?"

"Well, can I?" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake, you should not waise your voice like that. It weally jars on my nerves, you know."

"And then your hats," said Blake warmly. "You give thirty bob each for silk hats, and I dare say an old-clothes man would take 'em at a bob a time."

"Weally, you ass—"

"And if we sold about twenty, that would raise a pound," said Blake argumentatively. "Well, you can get a good camera for a pound, or less."

"You uttah ass!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You know vewy well that I do not have twenty silk hats!"

"And then your fancy ties," pursued Blake. "You've spent a small fortune on them. Suppose we sell four dozen at sixpence each?"

"You are perfectly well aware that I haven't four dozen ties; I have only two dozen."

"Well, that's twelve bob, at sixpence a time."

"You—you fatheaded duffah! I nevah give less than five shillings for a tie."

"Then it stands to reason they'd sell at sixpence each."

"I wegard you as a silly idiot, Blake! If you cannot make any sensible suggestion you had better leave gettin' the camewah to me. I will contrive to waise the money somehow. I wemen-bah that young Hammond was offewin' to buy Dig's pocket-knife."

"Let me see you selling my pocket-knife!" said Digby. "Look here, I propose that we put it to the vote and choose the giddy victim, same as they do in an open boat at sea when they want to eat somebody. Hands up for selling off Gussy's hats and ties for what they'll fetch."

Three hands went up at once.

"Now hands up for not selling them," said Dig.

Arthur Augustus sniffed and put his elegant hand up, but his hand went aloft in solitary state.

"Passed unanimously," said Blake, slipping off the table. "Now, Gussy,

the majority's against you. Trot out the toppers!"

"Wats!"

"Gussy must agree," said Blake. "We can't sell his property till he agrees. Buck up and agree, Gussy."

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

"Mind, we're going to tap your head against the floor till you do," said Blake. "It's up to you."

"Wubbish!"

"Lay hold!" rapped out Blake.

"You uttah asses!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Blake, Herries, and Digby collared him. "Welease me!"

"Over he goes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yawwooh!" roared Arthur Augustus, as he was suddenly upended in the grasp of his chums. "Gweat Scott! Woop!"

The study swam round Arthur Augustus as he swung upside down in the grasp of three pairs of hands, with his carefully parted hair rubbing on the study carpet.

"Now, then," said Blake, "do you agree, Gussy?"

"No!" roared Gussy.

"We don't want to damage the carpet. Better agree."

"Welease me! Yowoooh! Gwoongh! You wottahs! Yooooop!"

Snap!

"Hullo! What the thunder—"

The juniors stared towards the open doorway. Julian of the Fourth was standing there with a camera in his hands. He was grinning over the camera, which had just snapped.

"Julian, you fathead—"

"Hold him!" exclaimed Julian eagerly. "I'll take another snap in case the first is a failure. You're in a beautiful light from the window."

"Why, what—"

"An original and striking picture, you know," said Julian, squinting in the view-finder. "Hold on! Keep like that a minute—don't move!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus rolled on the study carpet with a roar, and Blake, Herries, and Digby rushed at Julian.

Julian did not take that second photograph. He dodged away down the passage and fled.

Arthur Augustus sat up, gasping.

"Collah him!" he shrieked. "I wefuse to be photographed in that widiculous posish. Bweak the camewah! Bweak the silly ass himself! Afrah him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Striking, original, and interesting!" howled Digby. "Julian will collar that prize."

Arthur Augustus scrambled to his feet. He was crimson with wrath.

"The uttah wottah!" he shrieked. "I will not allow it! I wefuse—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed from the study in search of Julian of the Fourth. He left his chums howling with laughter.

Certainly, if Julian's snapshot were a success, the result would be original, interesting, and striking. But the bare idea of being placed on permanent record in that ridiculous attitude made Arthur Augustus simply boil with wrath.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake.

"Julian will get the prize. They won't find anything to beat that!"

Bang, bang, bang! rang along the passage.

Arthur Augustus had found Julian's door locked.

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For the next ten minutes Arthur Augustus' voice was heard talking to Julian through the keyhole.

Julian turned a deaf ear. He certainly did not mean to part with a striking, original, and interesting photograph merely on account of D'Arcy's objection to figuring in it.

Arthur Augustus gave it up at last, and came back into Study No. 6, and occupied the next ten minutes in telling his chums what he thought of them. And what exasperated him more than anything else was the fact that Blake & Co., instead of being properly repentant, persisted in cackling like hyenas.

CHAPTER 4.

Bad Manners!

"I'M on to this!" said Manners. Manners was delighted to hear of the photograph prize. It was a chance for the enthusiastic amateur photographer to make his hobby pay for itself, and Manners did not mean to lose that chance.

After ascertaining from Talbot the particulars of the competition, Manners took out his camera.

"Coming out for a walk?" he asked. "Strike the iron while it's hot, you know. We're short of funds, and that five quid would come in very handy just now. I'm the best photographer in the school—you know that. That five quid is as good as ours. Are you going to try with that little camera of yours, Talbot?"

"Yes," said Talbot, laughing. "I've taken some nice pictures with my little camera."

"I'll lend you mine, if you like," said Manners. "You could use it without mucking it up. I don't mind lending it to a chap who can handle it."

"Thanks!"

"Now, let's get out," said Manners. "I've got a film in, and I'm anxious to get to work."

"Oh, all serene!" said Tom, putting his footer list into his pocket.

And the Terrible Three and Talbot left the study and sauntered out into the quadrangle.

Manners looked about him with an eagle eye. He was very keen to get to work.

"Striking and original!" he remarked. "No good taking views for that. St. Jim's seen from the south wouldn't be any good in this competition. A snap of a fight would be striking—two or three fellows going for one another hammer and tongs, you know. What do you think?"

"Topping!" said Talbot.

"Well, go ahead, then," said Manners, halting in the quad, and pulling out his camera and adjusting the view-finder. "You three pitch into one another."

"What?"

"Don't mind a few hard knocks. I want the scene to be realistic," said Manners. "A black eye or two would add to the effect."

"Why, you silly ass—"

"You frabjous idiot!"

"Look here, I suppose you want our study to bag that five quid?" said Manners irritably. "I should think my own pals might back me up. If you like, I could shove in the black eyes afterwards, doctoring the film. 'You needn't go as far as that. Just slog one another pretty hard. Where are you off to?' roared Manners.

His chums were walking away. For

some reason or another they did not seem inclined to slog one another pretty hard to enable Manners to get a striking picture.

Manners hurried after them.

"If you call this chummy, I don't!" he said.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Talbot, as if struck by a bright idea. "What about a snap of a chap being bumped—ragged baldheaded, you know? We might manage that for you."

"Oh, good!" said Manners eagerly.

"Chap looking a regular wreck, with all his buttons off, and his hair in a mop, and covered with dust, and being bumped like a steam-hammer?" suggested Talbot.

"Ripping!"

"Good! Hand me the camera, and I'll take it for you."

"Eh?"

"While Tom and Lowther are bumping you," explained Talbot.

"Me?" gasped Manners.

"Certainly!"

"Why, you silly ass," roared Manners,

"I thought you meant—"

"Never mind what you thought I meant. That's what I meant. You chaps don't mind giving Manners a good bumping?"

"Not at all!" said Tom Merry.

"Rely on me!" said Lowther heartily.

"You silly chumps!" growled Manners. "I—I don't think that would make much of a picture, anyway."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! Let's go and look for something."

Manners walked on, frowning, and his chums followed him, chuckling.

Mr. Selby, the master of the Third Form, was seated under the elms, reading a newspaper.

Manners halted as he saw him.

"Got it!" he whispered.

"Selby?" said Tom Merry. "That's no good!"

"You remember the time Herries' bulldog got loose and chased old Selby? What a figure of fun he was!" whispered Manners excitedly.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

"Well, wouldn't that make a striking picture?"

"I dare say it would; but it won't happen again."

"Ass! Go and bring Towser here behind the tree."

"What!"

"And set him on Selby!" said Manners excitedly. "He doesn't like Selby, you know; the beast kicked him once. He would be sure to go for him. I could get one or two good snaps before Selby gets to the House with Towser after him; might even get one of Towser hanging on to his trousers! That would be ripping!"

"You—you frabjous lunatic!" gasped Tom Merry. "What you want is a strait-jacket! Catch me setting a bulldog on to a Form-master!"

"He wouldn't know how Towser got loose."

"Towser might bite him, you silly ass!"

"Well, he's a beast! He rags the fags no end!"

"And they'd have Towser shot."

"Well, Towser's a beast, too! Everybody's fed-up with him except Herries."

"Look here, you're getting dangerous!" said Monty Lowther. "I think we'd better take that camera away and lock it up somewhere."

"Better take Manners' and lock him up somewhere!" grinned Talbot.

"Hallo! By Jove—"

He broke off suddenly.

Mr. Selby was leaning back in his chair under the tree. His foot was resting upon one of the huge gnarled roots that cropped up out of the ground, and he had tilted back his chair at really a dangerous angle.

At a distance, taking cover very cautiously among the trees, was Wally of the Third—D'Arcy minor. The fag was visible to the Shell fellows, but not to Mr. Selby. He had a pea-shooter in his hands, and his intention was only too evident.

Mr. Selby was not popular in his Form. Wally was evidently "out" for vengeance for some caning or "lining" received that day.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "The young ass! If Selby sees him—"

Tom made frantic signs to Wally.

The fag had the pea-shooter to his mouth now, and was peering round cautiously from behind a tree towards his Form-master. He was in a line behind Mr. Selby, and naturally out of view, as the Form-master had no eyes in the back of his head.

Wally was an expert with the pea-shooter, and he was taking careful aim at one of Mr. Selby's ears.

He did not heed the Shell fellow's signal.

The juniors did not dare to call out to him, for fear of attracting Mr. Selby's attention to the fag. They did not want to get Wally the licking of his life.

But they knew that if Mr. Selby were suddenly stung by a pea in the ear, he would probably go over backwards, and then—

"The young ass!" murmured Talbot.

"I'll—"

But Talbot had no time to act. There was a faint whiz, and the pellet flew.

The chums of the Shell watched in horror.

Mr. Selby gave a sudden jump, and clapped his hand to his ear. The pea had struck him fairly behind the ear.

"Goodness gracious! What— Oh!"

Back went the tilted chair, and Mr. Selby made a wild effort to save himself. But he had no chance. The chair flew over backwards, and Mr. Selby flew over with it, and his shoulders bumped down on the turf and his legs sprawled over the chair.

A Form-master sprawling on his back, tangled in his gown, with his legs wildly thrashing the air, was an unprecedented sight in the quadrangle of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry, Lowther, and Talbot started forward instantly to his assistance. Manners shrieked out:

"Hold on! Gerrout of the way!"

Snap!

"You fathead!" gasped Lowther.

Manners hastily turned the film to the next exposure.

Snap!

The three Shell fellows rushed to Mr. Selby and grasped him. They dragged him to his feet, shaken and confused and gasping.

"Hope you're not hurt, sir?" said Talbot politely.

"Oh! Oh dear! I—I—I was suddenly stung!" gasped Mr. Selby. "A wasp, I suppose—a wasp very late in the season! Oh dear! I am severely hurt! Oh! Ah! Manners!"

Manners was retreating. He deemed it judicious to get off the scene with his snapshots. But Mr. Selby was not to be denied.

"Manners!" he roared.

Manners still turned a deaf ear.

"Manners," shrieked Mr. Selby, "come back at once! How dare you, Manners!"

Manners turned back reluctantly. He

could not pretend not to hear the master of the Third, whose voice could be heard as far as the School House.

"Yes, sir," said Manners. "Did you call, sir?"

"Come here!" shrieked Mr. Selby.

"Ahem! I—"

"You have dared to photograph me," shouted the Third Form master. "You have dared to photograph me, Manners, in an awkward and—and absurd position!"

"I—I—I—"

"You—you young rascal! Give me that camera at once!"

CHAPTER 5.

The Reward of Enterprise!

MANNERS blinked at the master of the Third in utter dismay.

If Mr. Selby had asked him for one of his ears he could hardly have been more dismayed.

"M-m-my camera, sir?" he stuttered.

"Yes!" thundered Mr. Selby.

"Wh-wh-what for, sir?"

"I am going to destroy that photograph, Manners, and report you to your Form-master for insolent presumption!" roared Mr. Selby.

"I—I say, sir—"

"Do you hear me, Manners?"

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"Hand it over, you ass!" whispered Tom Merry in alarm.

Mr. Selby was looking as if he were on the verge of apoplexy.

There was no help for it. Manners held out the camera, and then he drew it back again, just as the Form-master grabbed at it.

Grabbing was not a dignified action for a Form-master, but undoubtedly Mr. Selby did grab. He was wildly anxious to get that ridiculous photograph destroyed.

But Manners simply couldn't do it. All the blood of an amateur photographer was boiling in his veins. He jerked the camera back.

"Manners!" roared Mr. Selby.

"If—if you please, sir, I—I want to develop it!" said Manners. "The fact is, sir, I've got a new film in the camera. I've only taken two photos. If it's opened in the daylight the rest of the film will be wasted."

"That is your own fault, Manners. You have been guilty of unpardonable insolence. For the last time, hand me the camera."

Mr. Selby's tremendous voice had drawn a crowd round the spot. Study No. 6 had arrived, and Figgins & Co., of the New House, and a dozen other fellows. They were all looking serious.

Only one fellow was grinning—that was Wally of the Third.

D'Arcy minor was very elated with his success in bowling over Mr. Selby, without Mr. Selby suspecting his agency in the matter. The Third Form master was still under the impression that he had been stung by the last wasp of summer.

"Mannahs, you ass," murmured Arthur Augustus, "are you off your wockah?"

"Hand it over, you fathead!" hissed Blake.

Mr. Selby's face changed from crimson to purple. He made a motion towards Manners, as if he would take the camera by force.

"What is the trouble here, please?"

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, came on the scene with his long strides.

The juniors made way for him. Mr. Selby, stuttering with wrath, turned to the Housemaster.



"Manners has taken a photograph of me, Mr. Railton, and he refuses to obey my order to hand me the camera. I shall request the Head to flog him for his insolence."

"Manners photographed you without asking permission?" asked Mr. Railton.

"I was falling over my chair, sir, and Manners photographed me in a ridiculous attitude!" shrieked the Third Form master.

Mr. Railton's brow grew very stern.

"Manners, is it possible that you have been so wanting in the respect due to a Form-master?"

"I—I—I'm looking for an original and striking picture, sir, for a photo competition."

"Give Mr. Selby your camera at once!"

"The—the rest of the film will be spoiled if it's opened, sir," said the unhappy Manners. "May I take it to the dark-room, sir, to open it—"

"You will hand it to Mr. Selby at once! Your loss is your own fault. Indeed, I am strongly inclined to take your camera away and confiscate it."

"M-my hat!"

That dreadful possibility almost overcame Manners. Without another word he handed the camera to Mr. Selby. An order from his Housemaster was not to be trifled with.

As Mr. Selby was not Manners' Form-master, and had no authority over the Shell, Manners had felt himself justified in his previous hesitation, though, as a matter of fact, he wasn't justified.

Mr. Selby, who was generally in the wrong, was in the right for once. But the enthusiastic photographer did not see eye to eye with his victim, naturally.

Mr. Selby took the camera, with gleaming eyes. He opened it and reeled out the long film, which, of course, was immediately rendered useless by exposure to the light.

Manners' two snapshots were useless now, and so was the rest of the film. Films were a considerable item of expense to a junior who was keen on photography, and Manners looked on mournfully.

Mr. Selby flung the curling film on the ground and set his foot upon it.

"And now, Mr. Railton," he said, "I demand the severest punishment of that insolent boy."

"Manners shall certainly be punished," said Mr. Railton, a little

dryly. "You may leave the matter in my hands, sir."

He made a sign to Manners, to follow him, and walked away to the School House.

Manners took his empty camera and followed him dolefully. The waste of a film, and the licking in prospect, discouraged Manners.

He was five minutes in Mr. Railton's study. When he came out, and rejoined his friends in the quadrangle, he was rubbing his hands hard together, and he looked rather flushed.

"Licked, you ass?" asked Tom Merry.

"Bow-wow!"

"I must say it serves you wight, Mannahs!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a judicial air. "Your conduct was vewy diswespictful."

"Oh, cheese it! Wow-ow! Two on each hand!" mumbled Manners. "I can't see that Selby had anything to complain of. Railton says that if it happens again he's going to take away my camera and confiscate my photographs. Yow! Of course, it won't happen again. We shall never catch Selby rolling over the back of his chair again. No such luck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you are a giddy ass!" said Levison of the Fourth. "You couldn't expect Selby to stand it."

"Yow-ow! Fathead! Yaroooh!"

"Tell you what," said Levison. "Lend me your camera, and I'll take a snap of your face as it looks now. Manners. That will make a striking picture—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners did not oblige. He snorted and stamped away, still rubbing his hands. He felt that he was not receiving proper encouragement. He left most of the juniors chuckling.

"Selby couldn't be expected to stand it," remarked Julian of the Fourth. "But the picture wouldn't have beaten mine. I've got a much more striking one—Gussy standing on his head—"

"Julian, you uttah wottah!" Arthur Augustus bore down on Julian. "Have you had the frightful cheek to develop that photograph?"

"What-ho!"

"I insist upon your handin' me the negative at once!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "I refuse to have such a thin' on wecord!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Julian shook his head.

"Can't be did!" he replied. "I'm after that prize. But I'll do the fair thing. If the picture gets the prize, I'll go halves with you."

"I refuse to have that pictuah wemain in existence. I uttably refuse to be made to look ridiculous!"

"Well, I didn't do that, did I?" said Julian, in surprise. "Nature did that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus did not answer Julian's remarks. He rushed at him, with his noble fists thrashing the air.

Julian dodged behind Tom Merry, hotly pursued by Arthur Augustus.

"Here, look out!" roared Tom, as he received a drive meant for Julian. "Wharrer you at, you dangerous lunatic?"

"Sorry, deah boy. Lemme gewwat him—"

"Keep off!" yelled Talbot, as Arthur Augustus tried to get round him at the grinning Julian.

"Gewwout of the way! Sowwy I hit your nose, Talbot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Talbot seized the excited swell of St. Jim's, and bumped him down in the quad.

Julian chuckled and sauntered into the House.

Arthur Augustus sat up and gasped, and groped for his eyeglass.

"You uttah wottahs! Ow! Talbot, I wegard you as a wottah! Yow! Tom Mewwy, you are a beastly wuffian! Gwoogh!" Arthur Augustus scrambled up. "I've no time to thrash you now! Yow—ow! I'm goin' to sewag that villain! Gwoogh!"

A yell of laughter followed Arthur Augustus as he rushed away, dusty and ruffled, in search of Julian of the Fourth. Fortunately, he did not find him.

CHAPTER 6.

A Bargain in Old Clothes.

"**H** ALLO!" ejaculated Blake. "The very chap I want to see!"

"That chap!" said Herries and Digby simultaneously.

"You bet!"

The chums of Study No. 6 were standing in the gateway discussing ways and means. How that camera, upon which the study had decided, was to be purchased, was a deep problem which exercised the brains of the three juniors to an almost painful extent.

The mighty intellect of Arthur Augustus was not engaged upon the problem. He was still hunting for Julian in the hope of administering a fearful thrashing, and capturing the negative.

A gentleman was coming along the road from Rylcombe—a gentleman in a shabby coat, very ancient boots and trousers, with a sack over his shoulder. The gentleman's calling was dealing in old clothes, varied with speculations in rags and bones, not to mention bottles and jars.

Mr. Wopps was a familiar figure; but what business Jack Blake could possibly have with him was a mystery to his chums. But Blake waved his hand to Mr. Wopps, and signed to him to halt.

Mr. Wopps did so at once.

"Arternoon, genelman!" he said affably. "Hanythin' in my line?"

"That's it," said Blake.

Mr. Wopps sometimes did a little private business with Taggles, the porter, who disposed of disused garments and boots to him.

Certainly he had never done any business directly with St. Jim's fellows before. He was a little surprised, in fact; but he was ready for business. Probably he expected to make better bargains with the juniors than with the keen old porter.

"Hanythin' to oblige a young gent," said Mr. Wopps. "I give the best prices for old trouss."

"H'm! We can't do business here," said Blake, looking round.

"I should jolly well say you can't!" gasped Dig.

"Come to the side gate at the back, Mr. Wopps, will you?" said Blake.

"I'll get it open for you."

"Suttinly, sir!"

Mr. Wopps disappeared round the school wall. Blake hurried across the quadrangle, accompanied by his chums.

"Look here! What's the little game, you fathead?" demanded Herries.

"Raising the wind."

"But—but what with?"

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"Clobber."

"You're going to sell your clothes to old Wopps?" ejaculated Dig.

"Not my clothes—Gussy's."

The three juniors reached the gate at the back where the tradesmen entered. They found Mr. Wopps ready for them there.

Blake opened the gate, and the gentleman who dealt in old clothes came in.

"We've got some ripping things to sell, Mr. Wopps!" said Blake cheerfully. "I suppose you buy new clothes as well as old ones?"

"Suttinly, sir!"

"Well, nearly new, you know—worn once or twice. And silk hats."

"Silk 'ats is a drug in the market, sir," said Mr. Wopps. "Gents as wear toppers generally buy 'em noo. Which my opinion is, a good second-hand silk 'at is better than a cheap noo one; but it's the way they looks at it—they buys 'em noo. Still, I'm open to give the market price, and a little hoover."

"They're jolly good ones," said Blake. "The cheapest is twenty-five bob new."

"I'll see 'em, sir."

"Hem!" said Blake.

To bring the articles for sale there was hardly feasible. But to introduce Mr. Wopps into the School House was a little difficult. Mr. Wopps was a very honest gentleman, but not exactly the kind of caller the juniors were expected to have.

"He's got to come into the study," said Blake.

"Oh, my hat!" said Dig.

"My only aunt!" murmured Herries.

"Toby will help us," said Blake.

"I'll call Toby."

Toby, the School House page, was not far away. As a matter of fact, he had spotted Mr. Wopps and the juniors from the window of the boot-room, and he had come out to stare at them.

Blake caught sight of him and called to him.

"Toby, my tulip, I want you to get Mr. Wopps in the back way and sneak him into the study," he said.

"Into your study, Master Blake!" exclaimed Toby.

"It's all right, Toby—only a little business," said Blake reassuringly.

"We don't want all the House to know we're hard up, that's all. You sneak Wopps into the study, and we'll stand you a currant bun."

Toby grinned.

"I'll do my best, Master Blake."

Mr. Wopps followed Toby in at the back door. Herries and Digby glared at the great chief of Study No. 6.

"We shall get into a row, you silly ass!" said Herries.

"I suppose we can't spread out Gussy's clobber over the kitchen garden for Wopps to see, can we?" demanded Blake.

"Well, no; but—"

"Oh, bother your butts! Let's get to the study."

Blake led the way, and they hurried into the School House and up to Study No. 6.

As they entered the famous apartment, Herries and Digby grinned, and Blake frowned. For Arthur Augustus was there.

Arthur Augustus had declared in round terms that it was a fellow's duty to make sacrifices for the good of the study. He meant it, of course—probably thinking of Digby's pocket knife or Herries' cornet, or Blake's bicycle. His own elegant clobber was quite a different matter.

It was quite certain the business could not be done with Mr. Wopps in Gussy's presence.

"Got that negative?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"Not yet, deah boys! I have always had a wathah high opinion of Julian. I was not aware that he was a beastly pwactical jokah. I shall have to weconsidah my opinion of that chap."

"Better get after that negative, though," said Blake, listening for the footsteps of Toby and Mr. Wopps. "You see, if it comes out in the 'Weekly Snap' as a prize picture, it will be—er—horrid—simply horrid!"

"Yaas, wathah—though I did not expect you to wealise it, Blake!"

"I've been thinking about hardly anything else," said Blake seriously. "The worry of it is turning my hair grey."

"Weally, Blake—"

"You'd better get after Julian at once!"

"The uttah wottah is keepin' out of sight somewhere."

"Have you looked in the old tower? Manners often goes there to get his films printed, you know, and Julian might do the same."

"Bai Jove! The uttah wottah may be pwintin' a copy of that wotten photograph at this vewy minute!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

He simply bolted out of the study.

In a couple of seconds his footsteps died away down the passage towards the stairs. Gussy was gone!

"Is Julian in the tower?" asked Dig.

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake, with a yawn. "He may be. Anyway, a little run will do Gussy good. Hallo! Here's the Wopps-bird!"

The old clothes merchant came along the passage.

Toby, with a very cautious and mysterious manner, was piloting Mr. Wopps along the Fourth Form passage from the direction of the back stairs.

Juniors who met him stared at him and grinned, and Mr. Wopps grinned affably in response. He was a very affable gentleman.

"Ere you are!" said Toby.

"Thanks, Toby! Keep watch on the stairs, old scout, and if you see D'Arcy coming—"

"Yes, Master Blake—"

"Take him into a quiet corner and kill him. Come in, Mr. Wopps!"

Toby grinned and departed.

Mr. Wopps removed his hat as he came into the study. Then he produced a fearsome-looking instrument of which the juniors did not know the use.

"I—I say! What's that?" asked Dig.

"Them's the steelyards," explained Mr. Wopps. "They're for weighing the old clo'."

"Oh, my hat! We're not going to sell Gussy's clobber by weight," said Blake.

"P'rhaps you've got some old rags you'd like to dispose of?"

"N-no!"

"Or bones?" said Mr. Wopps.

"Too late!" said Dig. "We had the bones of a haddock last night, but they're gone."

"Or bottles or jars?" asked Mr. Wopps.

"N-no! Look at these!"

Blake jerked open a large box belonging to Arthur Augustus, and drew out an armful of shirts.

It was a standing grievance in Study No. 6 that Gussy kept that big box there, for the study was none too large without big boxes taking up space. Certainly, the box served as a seat when there was company.

By disposing of the shirts, the price

of a really good camera could be raised, and the box got rid of; thus, two birds would be slain with a single stone!

Gussy's very latest clothes were kept in another box in the dormitory. Even Blake would not have been unmerciful enough to "trade off" Gussy's latest creations. He did not want to break the noble heart of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mr. Wopps' face lighted up at the sight of the shirts. From his expression it could be judged that they were a good "line."

"Aren't they ripping Mr. Wopps?" said Blake.

"I'm afraid it will be rather a lorse to me givin' what I hofferred you," said Mr. Wopps, "but I sticks to that."

"Well, that's six bob for the lot," said Herries. "That's not bad. Then there's the hats, you know."

"They're yours, Mr. Wopps," said Blake. "Put 'em in your sack. Trot out the toppers, you fellows. Gussy always keeps three in the study. Better leave the others. I don't suppose he'll miss three."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tanner each," said Mr. Wopps.

"But they cost thirty bob each!" said Blake, rather dismayed.

neckties on the study table. There were a dozen of them, of all hues and shades.

"Very 'andsome," said Mr. Wopps. "Jest to oblige you young gents, I could give you two shillings for the lot."

"I suppose buying and selling's two different things," said Herries. "Gussy gave five shillings for some of them."

"Very different, sir," said Mr. Wopps calmly. "I may 'ave them neckties left on my 'ands for a long time. Heighteen-pence is wot I ought to give."

"Two bob does it," said Blake.

The neckties were swept into Mr. Wopps' capacious bag, and two shillings clinked on the table. Six shirts and



"Welease me! Yawwooh! Gwooooh! You wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus. Snap! "Hallo! What the thunder—" began Blake. The juniors stared towards the open doorway. Julian was standing there with a camera in his hands, and he had just taken a snap of D'Arcy in that ridiculous attitude.

He had heard that it was a merchant's business to praise his own wares.

"Very 'andsome," said Mr. Wopps—"very 'andsome indeed! I could go to a shilling each for them shirts."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Some dealers would honly offer you sixpence," said Mr. Wopps. "But I ain't that sort. You'll find me an honest dealer, young gentlemen. I says a shillin', and I means a shillin'."

"B-but they cost no end of money," said Blake. "Gussy runs up bills with his outfitter, and his pater pays, you know."

"Oh!" said Mr. Wopps. "They ain't your property, Master Blake?"

"Ahem! I'm seeing to this for Gussy. D'Arcy couldn't bear parting with them personally. Besides, he's gone to see a chap very particularly. I suppose you couldn't offer more, Mr. Wopps?"

"That was noo," said Mr. Wopps.

"But this one—this is new. Gussy's only worn it about twice."

Mr. Wopps shook his head.

"There ain't no demand for silk 'ats, Master Blake. But jest to oblige you young gents I could go to a tanner a time."

Blake shook his head in turn.

"No," he said; "that's too bad! We—we'll keep 'em and make Gussy a present of them."

"Hanythin' else?" asked Mr. Wopps. "I'd like to do some business while I'm 'ere. If your thinkin' of sellin' Eton jackets, f'rinstance."

"Gussy's got some in the dorm," said Dig, thoughtfully.

"No; we'll let him keep 'em," said Blake with a shake of the head. "What about neckties, Mr. Wopps?"

Blake spread out a tempting array of

twelve neckties had raised eight shillings. Blake could not help feeling that Mr. Wopps had got a bargain.

But Study No. 6 had cash enough for the camera now, and that was the main point. Blake had generously resolved that the camera should belong to Gussy personally.

"Very glad to do business with you another time, gents," said Mr. Wopps, putting his sack over his shoulder and picking up his hat. "P'raps there's some other young gents I could oblige while I'm 'ere?"

"Ahem! No. G-good-afternoon!" said Blake.

Mr. Wopps left the study. As he came into the passage there was an exclamation.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus had returned.

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CHAPTER 7.

A Rise in Prices.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY turned his eyeglass in surprise upon Mr. Wopps.

Mr. Wopps was about the very last visitor he would have expected to meet coming out of Study No. 6 in the School House.

"Afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Wopps genially. "P'raps you'd like to do a little business, sir?"

"G'eat Scott!"

"Best prices, sir, for rags and bones, bottles and jars—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hany old clothes, sir?"

"I am not in the habit of disposin' of my old clothes in that mannah, thank you," said Arthur Augustus. "You are vevy good, but there is nothin' doin'."

"Good-bye, Mr. Wopps," said Blake hurriedly. He was very anxious that Arthur Augustus should not discover what was in Mr. Wopps' bag. It would have led to something little short of an earthquake. "Hurry along!"

"Suttin'ly, sir!"

Mr. Wopps followed Toby. To get to the back stairs he had to pass through the Shell passage, and he paused to speak to the Terrible Three, who were chatting with Talbot in the study doorway.

The Shell fellows looked blankly at Mr. Wopps.

"Hanythin' in my line, gents?" said Mr. Wopps.

"Great Scott!" said Gore from within the study.

"Rags and bones—"

"Here's Skimpy," said Gore. "What will you give for him?"

"My dear Gore—" murmured Skimpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You kum mer longer me, Mr. Wopps," said Toby anxiously.

"I offer the best prices, gentlemen," said Mr. Wopps. "But if you're not sellin' hanythin', p'raps you'd care to look at a line in shirts and ties that I 'ave to offer."

"Oh, my hat!" said Tom Merry.

Mr. Wopps opened his bag and displayed a collection of shirts and ties.

"Nothing doing," said Monty Lowther. "You might call on the Head before you go, or the Housemaster."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop him!" came in a sudden yell along the passage. "Stop that wottah!"

Arthur Augustus had made a startling discovery. Perhaps the sight of Mr. Wopps, after Blake & Co.'s previous remarks concerning his wardrobe, had made him suspicious. At all events, he had looked into his box as soon as he entered the study. Then he glared at Blake, Herries, and Digby.

"Where are my shirts and ties?"

He did not wait for an answer to his question. It was only too clear where his things were. He rushed out of the study, and sped along the passage after the departing merchant.

"Stop him!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, as he spotted the merchant still leaving the Shell fellows. "Hold him!"

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Manners. "Looking for a bargain in second-hand clothes, Gussy?"

"The awful wottah! He's got my clobber!"

"What?"

"My clobber!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, coming up breathlessly.

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"Wopps, hand me my clobber at once!"

"Do you heah?"

Mr. Wopps smiled genially.

"Hanythin' I can show you in the way of shirts and ties, Master D'Arcy?" he asked. "I've got some 'ere that are just your size, I believe." Mr. Wopps opened his bag again. "Look at these 'ere—"

"They are mine!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"I jest bought 'em from a young gent," said Mr. Wopps calmly.

"Blake, you uttah wottah—"

"Cheese it, Gussy!" gasped Blake, arriving on the scene, panting. "You silly ass! You can't touch Mr. Wopps' property that he's bought and paid for!"

"You've been selling Gussy's clobber?" yelled Talbot.

"Certainly! We put it to the vote in the study, and it was decided to do it. We've got to get a camera. We can't take striking and original photographs with Gussy's shirts, I suppose, or with his neckties?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The vote was three to one for raising money on Gussy's clobber," continued Blake. "Mr. Wopps came along at the right moment—the right man in the right place! What Gussy's grumbling at is beyond me!"

"He's always grouching about something," remarked Herries, with a shake of the head.

"You—you feahful wottahs! M-my ties, m-my shirts! Mr. Wopps, I will return you the money you gave for those things. It was a—a misapprehension. How much was it, Blake?"

"Eight bob," said Blake.

The expression on D'Arcy's face made the juniors shriek. The idea of his valuable and extensive stock of shirts and ties going for eight shillings almost overcame the swell of St. Jim's. For some moments he could only gasp.

"You uttah ass!" he ejaculated at last. "I shall give you a feahful thwashin' for this, Blake. Howevah, hand ovah the eight shillings at once."

Blake shook his head.

"That's for the camera," he said.

"I wufuse—"

"Bow-wow! Do you think we've taken all this trouble for nothing?" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "We don't expect gratitude, but you might thank a fellow."

"Gratitude! You—you bwigand! Return the money to Mr. Wopps at once, you uttah wottah, and let me take my pwoperty."

"It isn't your property—it's Mr. Wopps' property. Come on, you chaps, it's time we got down to footer practice," said Blake. "Good-afternoon, Mr. Wopps! Toby will show you out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blake, you—you unspeakable wottah! Tom Mewvy, will you lend me eight shillings to weimburse Mr. Wopps?"

Tom Merry grinned, and went through his pockets. He produced a half-crown. Lowther added another, and Manners generously contributed three shillings.

"Thanks awfully, deah boys! I'll settle this on Saturday. Mr. Wopps, there is your money. P'way hand ovah my pwoperty."

"You want to purchase a shirt, sir?" asked Mr. Wopps genially. "Certainly, sir! Which one do you prefer? This one with the pale pink-and-blue stripes is very fashionable, sir, and the price is eight shillings."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Prices gone up!" gasped Monty Lowther. "Buying and selling seem to be two rather different matters."

"I tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have this shirt for seven-and-sixpence," said Mr. Wopps liberally. "My prices are always reasonable."

"Oh cwumbs! That shirt cost me a guinea!"

"Then you are getting it remarkably cheap for seven-and-six," Master D'Arcy, said Mr. Wopps. "But I am a reasonable man."

"But you only gave me a shilling for it!" ejaculated Blake.

"I have to make my little profit, sir," said Mr. Wopps cheerfully. "I dare say I shall have a dead loss on some of the articles. If you would care to see some ties in the latest fashionable shades, Master D'Arcy, I have a dozen here. Hany one of them you can 'ave for a 'arf-crown."

"You gave me two bob for the whole dozen!" shrieked Blake.

Mr. Wopps did not seem to hear him. It was only too clear that buying and selling were two different matters. Arthur Augustus looked dumb-founded. In the innocence of his heart, he had supposed that if the money were handed back to Mr. Wopps, the transaction would be undone. A half-crown extra to Mr. Wopps for his trouble would have seemed the right thing. But Mr. Wopps had made a bargain, and he was not disposed to part with it.

"'Ere's a 'andsome white shirt," said Mr. Wopps. "The price of that one is five shillings, and a bargain at that, sir."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"'Ere's a blue silk tie, sir, for three shillings."

"G'eat Scott!"

"And very reasonable, sir, considering the original price of the harticles," said Mr. Wopps emphatically.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake. "I—I say, Gussy, are you coming down to the footer? We've got to go and buy a camera, too."

"I'll tell you wot I'll do," said Mr. Wopps, in a burst of generosity. "I'll let the ole lot go for two-pun-ten."

"Two-pounds-ten!" murmured Tom Merry. "Who wouldn't be in the old clo' bisney?"

"I don't do trade like this hevery day, sir," remarked Mr. Wopps.

"I suppose not," grinned Tom.

"Gentlemen, it's up to us to make a whip round for Gussy, but I'm blessed if I think we can manage two-pounds-ten!"

There was a general fumbling in pockets and shaking of heads. Funds were low, but at any time two-pounds-ten shillings was a considerable sum.

"I'll tell you wot I'll do," said Mr. Wopps. "As the young gent is so keen to buy the harticles, I'll keep 'em in a separate lot for a few days, wrapped up nice and clean and tidy, and when you send me the dibs, I'll send 'em along. Jest you 'and me a pound down to clinch the bargain, and it's a go!"

Arthur Augustus did not speak. But the Terrible Three and Talbot and Gore made up the required pound among them, and handed it to Mr. Wopps. Then that gentleman went on his way, smiling, and Toby showed him out.

Arthur Augustus' face was a study. Blake tapped him on the arm in a friendly way.

"Coming down to the footer?"

"I'm not comin' down to the footah, Blake."

"You'd rather come at once and buy the camera?"

"I wufuse to come and buy a camewah."

Arthur Augustus walked away with his noble nose high in the air. Blake looked at the grinning Shell fellows.

"There's no pleasing some people," he remarked. "You'd hardly believe, from the way Gussy takes it, that we took all the trouble off his hands, and dealt with Mr. Wopps without worrying him at all—without even consulting him. It's a thankless world! Let's get down to footer, you chaps, and try to forget Gussy's ingratitude."

On the footer field, Blake & Co. contrived to forget Gussy's ingratitude. But Gussy could not forget his shirts and his ties.

When Blake, Herries, and Digby came into tea, Arthur Augustus' face was like unto a graven image; and when, later, they came in with a new camera they had purchased in Wayland for the sum of ten shillings, Arthur Augustus' face was still frozen.

"We've got it, Gussy," murmured Blake.

No reply.
"Don't you want to see your new camera, Gussy?"

Silence.
"We're going to get you a new shirt and three new ties out of the prize, if we bag it," said Dig.

Sniff!
"And you haven't thanked us yet for the trouble we took," said Blake.

Snort!
"Gussy, old chap, we want to consult with you—"

"I wufuse to consult with you, Blake. I wegard you as a wank wottah."

"Well, I don't see how we're going to have a chance at the prize if you don't help us," said Blake resignedly. "You know what we're like when you desert us, Gussy—like lost sheep."

Arthur Augustus' noble face began to relax. It was said of old that a soft answer turneth away wrath.

"You see," added Dig, "we want a fellow of tact and judgment to run the affair, or—or we shan't score, you know."

Arthur Augustus smiled.
"If Gussy would come out with us to-morrow with the camera and give us directions!" murmured Herries.

"Weally, deah boys, of course I don't mean to leave you in the lurch," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, you can rely on me."

And all was calm and bright.

CHAPTER 8.

Sauce for the Gander!

A MATEUR photography seemed to be the order of the day at St. Jim's now.

The number of camera fiends that had been brought to light by the "Weekly Snap" competition was surprising. Every fellow who had a camera was busy using it, and refusing to lend it to fellows who hadn't one.

At least a dozen new cameras were purchased among the juniors; and, out of lesson time, snapping was incessant. Fellows ranged the countryside far and wide in search of striking and original subjects.

Manners of the Shell looked upon the efforts of the other fellows with a tolerant eye. Manners was assured that if the prize came to St. Jim's at all, it would come to his study. He had the best camera—that was admitted; and he was the best photographer—which wasn't admitted.

Striking and original subjects were not easy to find. Study No. 6 were very busy with their new camera, and Blake succeeded in snapping Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, in the act of chasing his hat in the quadrangle.

Blake was in high hopes of that picture; but his hopes were dashed to the ground when the film was confiscated, and he received a hundred lines. Blake remarked bitterly that there was no encouragement for enterprise in the School House.

Then Kerr of the Fourth took a good snap of Mr. Ratcliff, his Housemaster, in the act of slipping down the steps of the New House. It would have made a very striking picture—there wasn't the slightest doubt of that—but Mr. Ratcliff unfortunately spotted Kerr in the act.

The result was painful to Kerr. His hands smarted for the rest of the day, and his camera reposed in Mr. Ratcliff's study, to be handed back to him at the end of the term.

The five-pound prize was not to come to Figgins & Co., and the remarks that were made in Figgins' study about Mr. Ratcliff would have made that gentleman's hair stand on end, if he had heard them.

During the following few days, Arthur Augustus had three fights with Julian of the Fourth on the subject of the offending snap Julian had taken in Study No. 6. But the negative was not captured.

Julian declared that he was willing to go halves with Gussy if it bagged the prize, and the fellows all agreed that he could not say fairer than that.

Arthur Augustus' attitude on the subject was considered unreasonable. But the swell of the School House declined to listen to reason; and it seemed probable that he would have a fight with Julian every day till the competition was over.

Study No. 6 was still short of funds; and with four juniors keeping very busy with the camera, films went rather quickly.

Blake's proposal to raise cash for films by disposing of further articles from Gussy's wardrobe to the obliging

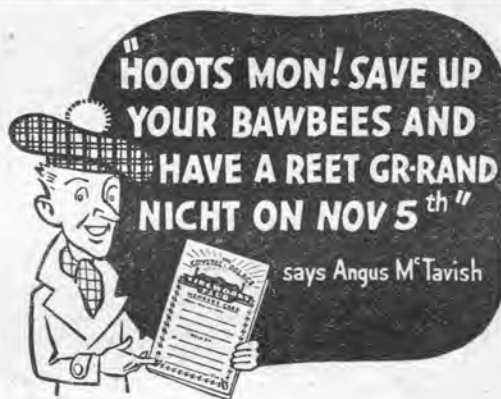
Mr. Wopps was the cause of a long and heated argument in the study.

Herries and Digby supported Blake's proposal heartily. Blake pointed out to his noble studymate that the majority were against him, and added that he had been saved a lot of trouble in changing his shirts and ties since the visit of Mr. Wopps.

"I wegard you as an uttah ass, Blake," said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, I don't see what's to be done," said Blake. "We're hard up, and that five quid would see us through for a bit. We've used up all the films, and most of them have been mucked up in the developing. It seems that a fellow has to learn how to develop before the things turn out satisfactorily."

(Continued on the next page.)



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Lucky Manners keeps his hypo and developer and things in the dark-room, or we should have been put to a lot of expense for those. But about films—

"We should have sold some more of Gussy's clobber," said Digby.

"You uttah ass, Dig—"

"Wopps offered us sixpence each for your toppers, Gussy—"

"Sixpence?" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"And I dare say he'd let you have 'em back at five bob each when good times come," said Blake. "He'd keep 'em separate, wrapped up nice and clean, you know, like your ties and shirts. We can't go without films for our camera when you've no end of toppers eating their heads off, you know."

"If you touch my toppahs—"

"Well, it's up to you," said Blake. "We require ten bob for new films. If you can think of a way of raising it, well and good. If you can't, we shall have to go for your wardrobe again. You ought to be glad to have a reserve like that for the study to fall back on in hard times. It's up to you."

Arthur Augustus was about to make a wrathful response, but a sudden thought seemed to flash into his mind. He smiled instead.

"Give me till this evenin', and I'll see what I can do," he said.

"Done!" said Herries, Digby, and Blake together, very heartily.

At tea-time the chums of Study No. 6 were due in Tom Merry's study. Blake, Herries, and Digby turned up, but Arthur Augustus was a little late.

"Gussy coming?" asked Tom.

"Oh, he's coming!" said Blake. "I dare say he's busy raising the wind. He seems to object to his toppers going."

A few minutes later Arthur Augustus came in. There was a cheery smile upon his face.

"Sowwy I'm late, deah boys!"

"Oh, don't mensh!" said Tom Merry. "What luck?"

"All sewene! Blake, deah boy, here's ten shillings. That will see us oval."

Blake stared at the ten shillings as he took it.

"Well done!" he ejaculated. "You've done it, Gussy. I'm glad; I will say that! We'll keep your toppers back for next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"But where did you get it?" asked Digby.

"Sellin' some things among the fellows," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

"Breaking up the happy home?" said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas."

"I hope you haven't parted with anything you really wanted, Gussy," said Blake, really concerned. "You know that—"

"Not at all, deah boy. I shan't miss the things. Thank you; two lumps of sugah, Mannahs."

Tea was very cheerful in the study. Manners was quite certain of bagging the photo prize—and, if bagged, it was going to be whacked out in the study. Blake was equally certain of bagging it now that he could get a supply of films; so all parties were cheerfully anticipative.

Blake & Co. returned to Study No. 6 after tea in a very cheery mood. Arthur Augustus seemed cheeriest of all. He was smiling incessantly, as if his

late sale of things he would not miss had bucked him up somehow.

"Hallo! Where's my new footer?" exclaimed Blake, as he came into the study. Blake's handsome new footer was conspicuous by its absence.

"Blessed if I know!" said Dig. "It was there when we went out."

"See it, anybody? Some silly ass has taken it for a joke, I suppose," grunted Blake. "I don't like duffers meddling with my new footer. What are you grinning at, Gussy, you fat-head?"

"Was I gwinin', deah boy?"

"Yes, you were, you ass! There's nothing funny in playing silly jokes with a fellow's football," growled Blake. "I wonder—"

"It's all wight, Blake!"

"Eh? Do you know where the footer is?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, where is it, then?"

"Ovah in the New House, deah boy, in Clampe's study."

"Do you mean to say that that New House bounder has raided my footer?" roared Blake in surprise and indignation.

"Not at all, Blake. I sold it to him."

Blake nearly fell down.

"S-s-sold it?" he stuttered.

"Yaas."

"You—you—you've sold my new footer to Clampe?"

Arthur Augustus nodded cheerfully.

"Yaas. He gave me five shillings for it."

"Five shillings? It cost fifteen-and-six!"

"Yaas, I dare say; but buyin' and sellin' are two vewy different mattahs, you know," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wealised that the othah day in dealin' with Mr. Wopps, so I let Clampe have it for five bob. Of course, five bob wasn't enough for the films we want, but Dig left his penknife in the study, fortunately—"

"My pocket-knife?" yelled Dig.

"Yaas, deah boy. Mellish gave me half-a-crown for it."

"Mellish gave you half-a-crown for my pocket-knife?" gasped Digby.

"Yaas. That made seven-and-six," said Arthur Augustus, apparently unconscious of the ferocious expressions on the faces of Blake and Digby. "But I had to make up the ten bob. Luckily, Kewwuish was willin' to buy a cornet for half-a-crown—"

Herries jumped.

"A cornet?" he roared.

"Yaas. I think Kewwuish got wathah a bargain with that cornet, as I've heard you say, Hewwies, that it cost pounds. But buyin' and sellin' are vewy different mattahs. I only hope Kewwuish won't start pwactisin' on that cornet, as he's in the next study. He might be willin' to let you have it back some time when you're in funds, Hewwies—pewwaps at a highah pwice. I suppose it's worth more than half-a-crown," added Arthur Augustus innocently.



Julian dodged behind Tom Merry as Arthur Augustus rushed. "Look out!" he roared. "Wharr"

"You—you—you've sold my cornet?" stuttered Herries.

"Yaas. We'll go out aftah lessons to-morrow mornin', Blake, and lay out ten shillings in films," said Arthur Augustus. "And don't wowwy about bein' short of tin on anothah accasion; you can always wely on me to waise money."

"What?"

"Next time we are hard up, deah boys, you leave it to me. I am sure I could get a pound for Blake's bike—"

"My b-bike?"

"Yaas; and a few shillings for Hewwies' bulldog."

"Wha-a-at!" shrieked Herries.

"And Dig's white wabbitts would fetch somethin'," said Arthur Augustus, opening the door of the study. "You leave it to me, deah boys, next time we're stony. There will be no occasion to sell off my toppahs at sixpence each, I assuah you."

And Arthur Augustus nodded and walked out and closed the door behind him. The three juniors heard him chuckle as he sauntered down the passage.

"The—the—the villain!" gasped Herries. "After him! Scrag him! Wallop him! Bump him! Lynch him! My cornet! My hat! I'll—I'll—"

"My pocket-knife!" yelled Digby. "Why, that pocket-knife cost a guinea."



at him, and Tom received a drive meant for Julian. "Here, you at, you dangerous lunatic?"

It was a birthday present. Why, I— I'll—

"My new footer!" groaned Blake.

"Oh dear!"

"We're going to scrag him!" roared Herries, making for the door.

Blake burst into a chuckle and pushed his excited chums back.

"Rats! Cheese it! He didn't scrag us for selling his shirts and ties."

"But my cornet!"

"My pocket-knife!"

"And my new footer!" said Blake.

"Gussy's dished us. And—and it serves us right!"

"What?"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander," said Blake.

"We've got to take it smiling. Upon the whole, I don't think we'll sell off any more of Gussy's wardrobe. Oh, my hat!"

When Arthur Augustus came into Study No. 6 to do his preparation he found three juniors with very peculiar expressions on their faces. Arthur Augustus had brought in a golf club under his arm, perhaps with a view to an argument. But the golf club was not needed.

"Wathah wippin' that we shall have those films to-morrow, deah boys, isn't it?" said Arthur Augustus cheerily.

And Blake, Herries, and Digby, manfully controlling their feelings, agreed that it was ripping. And

Arthur Augustus smiled serenely, and went on with his preparation.

He was no longer in a state of apprehension on the subject of the remainder of his wardrobe. It was painfully clear that if Gussy's toppers went, they would be followed by Blake's bike, Herries' bulldog, and Digby's white rabbits. Mr. Wopps had paid his last visit to Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 9.

Manners Comes Down Heavy!

"**W**HERE'S my camera?"

Manners asked that question, or rather howled it. Manners was looking round the study with a ferocious eye. His camera was not in its place on the shelf, and it was a half-holiday.

That afternoon the amateur photographer was going to be very busy, and during the morning he had declined to lend his camera to fifteen fellows, one after another.

It looked now as if someone had borrowed it without the preliminary of asking permission. After fifteen refusals, perhaps the sixteenth would be photographer had decided that asking wasn't much use.

Manners glared at Tom Merry and Lowther suspiciously. He more than suspected that his study-mates were getting fed-up with photography, and Lowther was quite humorous enough to hide his camera.

"Where is it?" demanded Manners.

"Give it up," said Tom Merry. "Perhaps you've left it in the dark-room."

"I never leave it in the dark-room."

"Perhaps you've lent it to somebody?" suggested Lowther.

Manners snorted.

"I heard Skimpole asking for it, and Gore and Mellich, and Blenkinsop, and Ray, and Kerruish, and Lumley-Lumley, and Reilly, and—"

"Don't go through the whole roll-call!" growled Manners. "Every blessed ass in the House wants my camera this afternoon! Have you hidden it, you duffer?"

"Never thought of it," said Lowther regretfully. "But that's a tip."

"Fathead! Somebody's borrowed it!" roared Manners. "Where's a cricket stump? What do you want to shove the stumps out of sight for, just because it's footer now? A stump is handy when a fellow borrows your camera."

"You can't take photos with a cricket stump, surely?" said Lowther, in astonishment.

"Ass! With a cricket stump I can look for the boulder who's borrowed my camera."

A cricket stump was disinterred from the cupboard, and Manners started to look for his camera. Tom Merry and Lowther accompanied him; they thought Manners might need holding when he found the borrower.

Manners headed for Levison's study. Levison was one of the would be borrowers, and Manners intended to see them all in turn till he found the camera, and then there would be a case of assault and battery.

Manners kicked open the door of Levison's study in the Fourth Form passage in a very unceremonious way. Levison was there, and he was sitting at the table examining a camera. It was a large camera, and Manners gave a whoop at the sight of it.

"So it was you!" he roared.

Levison started.

"Don't you knock at a door in your slum, Manners?"

"You rotter!"

"Here, I say! What—what—Yah!" roared Levison, as Manners rushed at him, and began with the cricket stump.

Whack, whack, whack!

Manners was in deadly earnest, and the cricket stump came across Levison's shoulders with terrific vim. The Fourth Former yelled, and dodged wildly round the table.

"Keep him off!" he shrieked. "Is he mad? My hat! Keep him off, or I'll brain him!" The Fourth Former caught up a chair, and whirled it in the air. "Now, you rotter—"

Tom Merry and Lowther seized their chum, and dragged him back. Manners was not finished yet.

"Lemme go!" yelled Manners. "I'll teach him to collar my camera! Playing some rotten trick on it, I expect. I'll—I'll—"

"You'd better hold him!" howled Levison. "If he comes near me I'll brain him, the silly idiot!"

"Peace, my infant!" said Lowther, dragging Manners back. "You can put that chair down, Levison. Why can't you leave other people's property alone?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, fathead!" said Levison. "Why, you rotter, leave my camera alone!" he yelled, as Manners picked up the camera.

"Your camera?" hooted Manners.

"Yes, idiot!"

Manners looked more closely at the camera, and then a very peculiar expression came over his face. He put it back on the table.

"Ahem!" he remarked.

"Isn't it yours?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"N-no."

"Why, you silly ass, do you mean to say you pitched into Levison when he hasn't taken your camera at all?"

"Well, it would be just like him to take it," said Manners. "He's always playing some rotten trick. That looks like mine; it's the same size; but it isn't mine, as it happens. I didn't know Levison had got a camera."

"You—you silly cuckoo!" said Levison furiously. "That's my camera; I've hired it. You blithering jabber-wock!"

"Well, I'm sorry I lathered you," said Manners. "I thought it was mine. Somebody's taken mine."

"Sorry, are you?" hooted Levison. "Will that make my back all right, you burbling idiot, after you've nearly broken a stump on it, you babbling lunatic?"

"Well, you shouldn't be such a tricky beast!" said Manners. "You've played tricks on my camera before."

"Hang your camera!"

"Somebody's taken it out of my study."

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"I hope it's lost, or stolen, or smashed," said Levison. "And if you don't get out of this study, you'll get smashed!"

"Well, it's your own fault for being such a tricky rotter," said Manners. "Come on, you chaps! I've got to find the beast yet!"

The Terrible Three left the study, leaving Levison rubbing his shoulders and looking daggers. It was really a very unfortunate mistake, and Levison might be excused for feeling angry.

"Skimpole, perhaps," said Manners, in the passage. "I'll go and see Skimpole next. Leggo that stump, fathead! What are you at?"

Tom Merry jerked the stump away. "You can look for your camera without that," he said. "You might brain poor old Skimmy on suspicion. You might have apologised to Levison, too!"

"Blow Levison! Didn't he play tricks on my camera last term?" said Manners. Manners had a long memory where his camera was concerned. "He's only got himself to thank! Br-r-r!"

Skimpole's door was kicked open next. Manners was not in a good temper. He had fears for the safety of his camera. It was a valuable camera, and it might have suffered in unskilled hands. And it had a roll of films in it ready for use, and if it were opened, the films would be spoiled.

"Hallo! Here it is!" growled Manners.

Skimpole was seated in the armchair, with a camera on his knees. He was blinking at it through his big spectacles, examining it.

Skimpole was a brainy youth, and he knew all about Determinism, but what he did not know about cameras would have filled all the volumes in a photographic library.

Tom and Lowther seized Manners at once. He glared at them wrathfully.

"Leggo, you asses!"

"Make sure first!" grinned Tom Merry. "Is that Manners' camera, Skimmy?"

Skimpole turned his glasses upon them.

"Yes, my dear Merry. I have borrowed it."

"You cheeky ass!" howled Manners.

"I desire to take some photographs this afternoon," said Skimpole. "As you declined to lend me the camera, Manners, I borrowed it without permission."

"You—you—you—wharrer you doing with it?" shrieked Manners, struggling in the grasp of his grinning chums.

"Examining it, my dear Manners. I am unacquainted with the use of a camera," said Skimpole. "I have, of course, to acquaint myself with the use of the instrument before I proceed to take photographs. I do not see where the film should go in this camera. Perhaps you will explain."

"You silly villain—"

"Dear me!"

"And you've taken the film out!" yelled Manners.

"Is that a film—that curly thing?" asked Skimpole, with an air of interest.

"Dear me! I can put it in again quite easy, my dear Manners. There is nothing whatever to get excited about."

"You—you—you—" Manners simply gasped. "You bilthering ass. Don't you know that a film is useless if it's exposed to the light?"

"I was not previously aware of that, Manners. Of course, I have a good deal to learn about photography."

"That's one-and-six you've chucked

away!" shrieked Manners. "My hat! I'll make you pay for it!"

"I'll pay for it with pleasure, Manners," said Skimpole, with dignity. "I have no desire to put you to loss. At the present moment, unfortunately, I have no money, but another time—"

"Lemine get at him!" yelled Manners.

The infuriated photographer wrenched himself away and simply leaped upon Skimmy. There was a wild yell from Skimmy as he went over on the rug, with Manners on him.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Yooooop! Help! Oh dear!"

Skimpole's learned head was being banged on the floor. He wriggled and yelled for help. Tom and Lowther rushed to drag Manners off. But Manners refused to be dragged. With the two juniors dragging at him, he continued to bump Skimpole's head, and Skimmy's voice rang the length of the passage.

Snap!

Julian of the Fourth grinned into the study over his camera.

"Got it!" he exclaimed breathlessly.



"Keep it up! A little more to the left, Lowther—you're in the light. More to the right, Merry. I want Skimpole in the centre."

Snap!

Bump, bump, bump!

"Yoooooop!"

Snap!

Manners was dragged off at last, and Skimpole sat up and rubbed his head. Julian closed his camera with great satisfaction.

"That's three snaps," he said. "The last one will be perfect, I think. My idea is that I shall bag the prize with this or else the D'Arcy one. Thanks awfully!"

Julian walked away greatly satisfied. He had secured a striking and original picture again. Skimpole sat on the rug and rubbed his head. His powerful brain had received quite a shock.

"M-Manners," he gasped, "I regard your action was ruffianly! Groogh! I shall refuse to use your camera now—wow!—in any circumstances whatever!"

"You'll get some more, if you do!" snorted Manners, and he carried off his camera in triumph, and proceeded to look for a new roll of film.

CHAPTER 10.

A Busy Afternoon!

THERE were many amateur photographers very busy that afternoon.

It was the last half-holiday before the end of the "Weekly Snap" competition, and the camera fiends were making hay while the sun shone, so to speak. The weather was fine and sunny, which was a stroke of good luck.

In all corners of the old school fellows were lurking with cameras; and in the in the woods, fellows could be seen with fields and the meadows, up the river, and cameras. Many of them had been hired at the shop in Wayland, some had been bought, and one or two had been obtained on the instalment plan.

Certainly, it seemed very probable that the five-pound prize would come to St. Jim's; among so many, it was very probable that the lucky one would be found.

Julian was sticking to "interiors" mostly. His pictures of Study No. 6 and of Skimpole's study had developed well, and they were undoubtedly striking and original.

He had also secured a snap of Manners slipping down the tsairs with a bucket of water, and another of Digby sliding down the banisters and landing upon Cutts of the Fifth. The expression upon Cutts' face, as it came out in the print, was decidedly striking.

Study No. 6 were also very busy. The last supply of films obtained by Arthur Augustus' novel method of raising the wind was being used up lavishly.

The four juniors spent the afternoon out of doors with the camera, and came in somewhat dusty and tired, but very satisfied. They had an enormous number of photographs taken, and among the lot, as Blake remarked, there was sure to be one that would take the biscuit.

Tom Merry, Lowther, and Talbot were chatting on the School House steps when they came in. Manners was not visible.

"What luck?" asked Tom.

"Ripping!" said Blake. "We've got four dozen!"

"My hat!"

"Gussy took a dozen of them, so they won't be any good—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"But I think the prize one will be among the lot. How is Manners getting on?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Blessed if I know. We got fed-up, and went down to the footer instead. Manners is still going it."

"Here he comes!" said Talbot.

Manners arrived, grinning.

"Missed a jolly good chance," he remarked. "Old Selby took a tumble in the ditch. Some ass had moved the plank—rotten joke, I suppose—and Selby went right in. I could have snapped him a treat."

"And didn't you?" asked Blake.

Manners shook his head.

"No fear! Railton has promised to confiscate my camera if I snap Selby again. I couldn't keep it dark very well, especially if it came out as a prize picture—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it was a pity to miss it," said Manners regretfully. "You should have seen him—he landed on his back in the water, with his legs in the air. You'll see him as he comes in—rather muddy, I think."

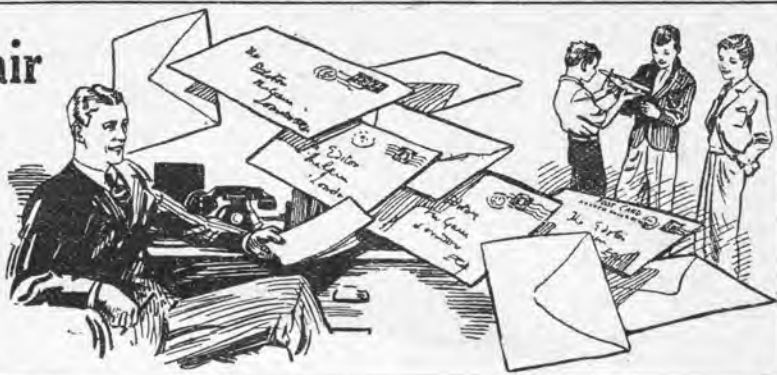
The juniors grinned gleefully. Mr. Selby was not popular. They watched for him to arrive.

The Third Form master came in a few minutes later, and the juniors tried

(Continued on page 18.)

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal.
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
Fleetway House, Farring-
don Street, London, E.C.4.



HALLO, Chums!—Here we are once again, and I'm very eager to tell you all about the ripping things I have been arranging during the past few days for GEM readers, but I must contain my eagerness for the present. It is a little early yet to let the cat out of the bag.

In next week's issue, however, I shall be announcing a splendid new stamp feature which is to start in two weeks' time. This will be the preliminary to other grand features and stories, and—Well, I'll leave you to guess the last.

Meanwhile, Martin Clifford has again hit the high spots with his next sparkling yarn of St. Jim's. It stars our old friend, Herbert Skimpole, and it is called:

"SKIMPOLE THE BENEVOLENT!"

Skimmy has invented a weird and wonderful airship, the plans of which he sends to a paper called the "Flying Times." He is supremely confident that the invention will be taken up, and that he will receive generous payment for it. Tom Merry & Co., however, treat the matter as a joke—but you can imagine their amazement when a cheque for twenty pounds arrives for Skimpole from the "Flying Times"! And, what's more, another cheque for a like amount follows a few days later! Who said the age of miracles was past?

But, amazing as Skimpole's success as an inventor is, it's not so amazing as the manner in which he disposes of his windfall. For Skimmy proceeds to carry out his crazy but benevolent principles—much to the amusement of St. Jim's, and to the satisfaction of all the tramps in the district!

Readers are booked for another load of laughs in this highly amusing yarn. Make sure you don't miss it.

"HEADING FOR TROUBLE!"

In this next great yarn of Harry Wharton & Co.'s early schooldays we find Ernest Levison, a character who is a curious mixture of bad and good, taking the downward path. Harry Wharton has done more than any other fellow to bring out the good in Levison, and for a time his efforts have been successful. But Levison, smarting under ridicule his suspicious nature has brought down on his head, breaks out again and the bad traits in his character come to the surface. Needless to say, Levison lands himself in trouble, and in his present reckless mood more serious trouble will surely come his way.

Frank Richards is at his very best in this powerful yarn, so take my tip and see that your next GEM is reserved for you.

GRAND FREE GIFTS!

By the way, chums, have you heard

about the wonderful FREE GIFTS which will be presented in next Saturday's "MODERN BOY"? Every number will contain a 52-PAGE POCKET STAMP ALBUM AND GUIDE and a BIG PACKET OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL STAMPS, and there are more to come! Every GEM reader, I know, will be eager to get these superb free gifts, so tell your newsagent right away to reserve for you a copy of the "Modern Boy." There is bound to be a rush for this popular paper, and you don't want to be disappointed. Don't forget, it's on sale Saturday, price 2d.

REPLIES TO READERS.

A. Geen (Bickley, Kent).—The junior football and cricket teams are selected from the following players: Merry, D'Arcy, Blake, Lowther, Figgins, Talbot, Kerr, Wynn, Redfern, Noble, Manners, Lawrence, Owen, Hammond, and one or two others. Some of the jokes you submitted have already been published in the GEM, while the others didn't lend themselves to illustrations. Try again, old chap.

J. Chipperfield (Hove).—Many thanks for your compliments and good wishes. I am glad to know that you think the GEM and "Magnet" are the best books out. "The Popular" ceased publication in 1931, and the "Boys' Friend" in 1927. The reduction in the number of pages in the "Holiday Annual" was due to a cut in the price. It is now only five shillings. I will bear in mind your suggestion. The GEM used to be a penny and the "Magnet" a halfpenny. I will send along the autographs you require.

R. Milne (London, W.C.2).—Once again your joke didn't hit the bullseye. Try the Jester with one that makes a funny picture.

C. Carter (Bromsgrove).—Send along your album and I will get Martin Clifford and Frank Richards to add their autographs to it. If you want to correspond with other readers, I will put a notice in "Pen Pals" for you. Let me know. Thanks for the list of characters you like best.

C. Rickard (Calgary, Canada).—Yes, your brother is quite right about the St. Jim's stories. Thanks for your suggestion. I am already preparing a similar feature. You will hear about it soon.

J. Jackson (S. Woodford, E.18).—Glad to hear you have become a GEM reader and that you like it immensely. The master of the Second Form at Greyfriars is Mr. Twigg.

E. Bull (Sunderland).—Pleased to hear from you again. Lumley-Lumley was featured in the "holiday" series. Joe Frayne will figure more prominently soon. I'm afraid I cannot help you to secure that old St. Jim's story you want. Thanks for your good wishes.

K. Jones (Ilford).—Yes, you may

certainly have those autographs. Post me your album. Sorry, your joke was too ancient.

F. Drake (Barnehurst).—Both the "Nelson Lee" and "Bullseye" have ceased publication. The stories dealing with Levison's reformation will be coming along in due course. If your friend in America has difficulty in getting the GEM, tell him to write to our Subscription Dept., at the above address. Send me your autograph album. Micky Mulvaney is still at St. Jim's.

Miss J. Milnes (Sheffield 6).—Many thanks for your interesting letter. I hope you will soon be fit enough to leave hospital. I am glad to hear that you and your father both enjoy the GEM. Yes, I will get the autographs you want. Best wishes.

M. Wakeford (Stockwell, S.W.9).—No, the Foreign Academy is no longer in existence in the present Greyfriars stories in the "Magnet."

G. Wilde (Tadmorden).—I cannot give you any information yet about those two St. Frank's stories. Clampe is 15 years 7 months; Piggott, 14 years; Langton, 17 years 4 months; Joe Frayne, 13 years 5 months; Cousin Ethel, 15 years; St. Leger, 16 years 10 months; Skinner, 15 years 6 months; Glyn, 15 years 6 months; Bull, 15 years 3 months; Wun Lung, 14 years 3 months; Hop Hi, 12 years 5 months. Your joke failed to make the Jester smile. Better luck next time! Thanks for your congratulations.

G. Frost (S. Ealing, W.5).—Yes, it's a proud record of which the GEM can boast—thirty years old and still going strong. Martin Clifford started writing school stories at an early age. I am pleased to hear that you are so keen on the St. Jim's characters. Sorry, but I cannot be of much assistance to you in obtaining those early numbers of the GEM and "Magnet." All I can suggest is that you put a notice in "Pen Pals." Drop me a line if you wish this done.

W. Thomas (Paddington, W.2).—The GEM artist is R. J. Macdonald and the "Magnet" artist, C. H. Chapman. It would take up too much space to give the list you want. Thompson is 16 years; Digges, 14 years 9 months; Cutts, 17 years; Gilmore, 16 years 9 months; Lefevre, 17 years.

N. Garrahan (Quebec, Canada).—Your "Pen Pal" notice will appear soon. Tom Merry did not figure in the first GEM stories. They were not about St. Jim's. My mail is very large, but I am always interested in what readers have to say.

A. Deacon (Harrow Weald).—The GEM has been running now since March, 1907. Glad to hear you greatly enjoy the stories.

Chin, chin, chums!

THE EDITOR.

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to suppress their smiles as he came squelching up to the House. He was simply caked with mud, and water squelched out of his boots at every step. His face, wherever it was not disguised by mud, showed crimson with rage.

"Had an accident, sir?" asked Blake, with respectful sympathy.

Mr. Selby paused on the steps and snorted.

"I have been the victim of an infamous trick!" he gasped. "Some unfeeling young rascal moved the plank bridge, and it fell as I crossed it. Someone must have seen me coming across the meadow, and done this intentionally."

"Not a St. Jim's fellow, surely, sir," said Tom Merry with great meekness.

"I am certain that it was. You were near the spot, Manners."

"I didn't touch the plank, sir," said Manners.

"There will be an inquiry," said Mr. Selby in a grinding voice, as he squelched into the House.

Tom Merry whistled.

"Trouble for somebody," said Talbot. "One of the Third Form fags, most likely; they don't like Selby."

"Quite sure it wasn't you, Mannahs, deah boy?"

"Quite sure," said Manners. "I wouldn't have risked it. Still, I can't say I'm sorry it happened. Selby made me give up a ripping photograph the other day, and got me into a row with Railton. He deserves it."

"He's got a suspicious eye on you," said Blake. "It's a bit unlucky you were there. Still, there must have been other fellows there, too."

"Oh, blow Selby!" said Manners. "Who says tea? I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"Tea!" said all the juniors together.

"There's a feed in Study No. 6," remarked Blake. "Gussy's fiver has come at last. He's going to get his clothes out of pawn—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake, you ass—"

"But there will be enough left for a feed."

"Yaas, wathah, and I should be vewy glad to see all you fellows there, afiah the feahful times we have had lately," said Arthur Augustus.

"Hear, hear!"

Manners took his camera to the study in the Shell passage, and then the Terrible Three adjourned to Study No. 6.

There had been hard times of late in that celebrated apartment, but Blake & Co. were making up for it now. The festive-board was laden with excellent things, and eight juniors sat down to a lavish tea in great spirits.

They were beginning, when Julian looked in.

"Come in, Julian," said Jack Blake hospitably. "Just in time for tea."

Dick Julian shook his head.

"Thanks, I've had my tea. I'm going to take you. A study feed will make a striking picture—"

"You have not yet handed me that wotten pictuah you took last week—" began D'Arcy.

"Oh, that's ancient history, Gussy! Smile!"

"What?"

"Smile!" said Julian, sighting his camera. "Head a bit more to the right, Talbot! Close your mouth a little more, Herries!"

"What!" snorted Herries.

"Smile, Gussy—"

"You uttah ass!" Arthur Augustus was frowning. "I have already given you three thwashings for not givin' up that wotten photogwaph—"

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"Smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I uttahly wufuse to smile, you silly ass! I—"

"Well, I'm not going to take you with a face like that," said Julian. "I can't risk my camera on it."

"Why, you silly duffah—"

Julian sniffed and went down the passage. Arthur Augustus frowned severely at the grinning tea-party.

"I can see nothin' whatevah to gwin at, you duffahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, Levison! What luck?" asked Talbot, as Levison of the Fourth passed the open door with his camera in his hand.

"Nothing to speak of," said Levison. "I say, have you seen Selby? What's happened to him?"

"Tumbled in a ditch," said Tom Merry. "Somebody moved the plank."

"What a chance for a snap!" said Levison. "Did anybody get one?"

"Too jolly risky," said Manners. "If any fellow's snapped him, the best thing he can do is to chuck it away."

Levison nodded, and passed on.

There was a peculiar expression upon Levison's face, but the juniors did not see it. Levison turned into the Shell passage, and glanced up and down. Then he quietly entered Tom Merry's study, where Manners' camera reposed on the shelf.

If the Terrible Three had been aware of that action, they would have been surprised. But the merry tea-party in Study No. 6 were thinking of anything but Levison and his caddish tricks.

Manners, in the keen interest of taking photographs during the afternoon, had forgotten the incident of the cricket stump.

Levison had not forgotten. Manners had wielded the stump, and Levison had been stumped—it was the difference between the active and the passive—so perhaps it was natural that Levison should have a longer memory.

[CHAPTER 11.]

Levison's Little Game!

MR. SELBY pricked up his ears. The Third Form master was coming down the passage from the Housemaster's study, looking very cross.

Mr. Railton had done his best to soothe him; the Housemaster did not think that a St. Jim's fellow had deliberately moved the plank bridge for the purpose of giving Mr. Selby a tumble.

Mr. Selby, however, was convinced of it, and he required the matter to be inquired into. Indeed, his suspicions went further, and he surmised that the young rascal who had caused his tumble had done so with the intention of photographing him in a ridiculous position.

Mr. Selby had not forgotten the incident of the previous week and Manners' unlucky snapshot, and he had heard all about the "Weekly Snap" prize.

Mr. Railton, however, had declined to share his suspicions, and the Form-master came away from the study, very muddy and very cross, feeling that he was not receiving proper consideration and support.

And as he approached the window alcove in the passage he heard a whispered voice—the voice of Levison.

"They can't prove anything, anyway. Nobody saw Manners take the snap."

Then Mr. Selby pricked up his ears. He had a suspicious eye on Manners already. He paused in the passage,

under the impression that the juniors in the window recess had not heard his footsteps and did not know that he was there.

"How do you know Manners snapped him?" asked the voice of Mellish.

"I fancy it's in his camera," said Levison. "Of course, I don't know—I wasn't on the spot—but I've got my own ideas about it. I fancy that if Mr. Selby looks into Manners' camera, he would find a snap of himself in the ditch. Of course, I'm not going to say anything. It isn't my business to sneak."

"Levison!"

The two juniors swung round from the window.

"Yes, sir," said Levison.

"Are you aware of the identity of the boy who played a trick upon me this afternoon?"

"No, sir."

"You have just stated to Mellish your belief that it was Manners."

"I—I—I was only just talking, sir!" stammered Levison. "Of—of course, I don't know anything about it. I wasn't there."

"You certainly appear to think that it was Manners," said Mr. Selby. "You probably have some reason for thinking so. If you know anything about the matter, Levison, it is your duty to tell me."

"I don't, sir," said Levison. "I only know that Manners has been taking photographs; but everybody knows that. I—I dare say he didn't do it, sir. If he snapped you, the film would still be in his camera, so he can easily prove that he didn't if—if—"

"If he did not!" said Mr. Selby grimly. "Thank you, Levison!"

The master of the Third strode on. He was convinced now that Manners had played the trick upon him for the purpose of getting a striking snapshot. Yet it could not be said that Levison had sneaked.

Certainly the contents of Manners' camera would prove the matter. If he had snapped Mr. Selby wriggling in the ditch, he had directly disobeyed his Housemaster's orders, and the presumption would be strong that he had arranged the mishap for the purpose.

Mr. Selby was much obliged to Levison for the hint concerning Manners' camera.

Mellish looked very oddly at his companion when the Form-master was gone.

"What's the little game?" he asked.

"Game?" repeated Levison vaguely.

"Yes. You got me here, and began talking about Manners as soon as you heard old Selby coming along. You did it on purpose for him to hear you!"

"What rot!" said Levison.

"I don't believe Manners did it," said Mellish. "He wouldn't be such an ass after what Railton said to him."

"Well, if he didn't, his film will prove it," said Levison carelessly. "If he did, he ought to be punished for—ahem!—disrespect to a master. Those rotters have sniffed at me often enough for breaking rules!"

"I don't believe Selby will find a picture of himself in Manners' camera."

"Well, if he doesn't, Manners is all right, isn't he?" yawned Levison.

And he sauntered away, whistling, leaving his chum looking very puzzled.

Meanwhile, Mr. Selby was looking for Manners. If such a photograph existed in Manners' camera, the Form-master did not mean to give him an opportunity of concealing it if he could help it.

He inquired for Manners, and soon learned where he was. The merry tea-party in Study No. 6 was startled by

a rap on the door, and Mr. Selby, with a frowning brow, stepped into the study. The juniors rose respectfully to their feet, and Manners made an involuntary grimace. He had little doubt that Mr. Selby was after him—on suspicion.

"Manners!" said the Third Form master harshly.

"Yes, sir?"

"Did you photograph me this afternoon, when I had fallen into the ditch. I am aware that you were upon the spot."

"I did not, sir," said Manners quietly.

"Did you place the plank in a dangerous position, to cause my fall, after seeing me approaching across the meadow?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, Manners. Where is your camera?"

"In my study, sir."

"Have you removed the photographs from it that you have taken to-day?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Very good! That camera must be placed in my hands at once—or, rather, you shall take it to the Housemaster in my presence. The contents must be examined."

Manners flushed.

The implied doubt of his word was plain enough, and he did not like it.

Tom Merry and Lowther looked very grim. But arguing with a Form-master was out of the question.

Only Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ventured upon a remark. As Blake observed afterwards, Gussy was always ready to exemplify the old proverb, that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

"It appeals to me, Mr. Selby, that you are implyin' a doubt of Mannahs' word, sir," he began, turning his eyeglass upon the Form-master. "That is not what Mannahs has a wight to expect, sir."

"You will kindly hold your tongue, D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove!"

"I think it very probable that you are all in a plot together," snapped Mr. Selby. "Manners, follow me at once!"

Manners hesitated a moment. Mr. Selby was not his Form-master. But he was a master, after all, and he had to be obeyed. Manners followed him from the study.

Monty Lowther brandished a fist in the air when they had gone.

"What surprises me," he remarked, "is that nobody ever dots Selby in the eye. He keeps on asking for it and never gets it. If I knew who had ducked him 'this afternoon I'd stand him a currant bun!"

"Yaas, wathah! His mannahs leave vewy much to be desiahed."

Tom Merry looked very uneasy.

"It's all right, Tom," said Talbot reassuringly. "Manners has told us that he hasn't snapped Selby. There's nothing in his camera to do him any harm."

"No, I suppose not," agreed Tom. "Manners told us plain enough, that's true. I suppose it's all right."

Mr. Selby came back along the passage with Manners, the latter carrying the still unopened camera. They went downstairs, and directly to Mr. Railton's study. The Housemaster had

a trace of impatience in his face as he regarded Mr. Selby inquiringly.

"I have reason to suspect that Manners has photographed me in the ditch," said Mr. Selby. "I request that the photographs he has taken may be examined."

"You have no objection, Manners, I suppose?" said Mr. Railton.

"None at all, sir. Of course, they will have to be developed. I was going to do it after tea—"

"They will not be trusted in your hands, Manners, in the circumstances," said Mr. Selby. "I will ask Mr. Lathom to develop the films, as he understands such matters."

"If Mr. Lathom will take the trouble, sir, I shall be glad," said Manners. "He can do it better than I can."

"Request Mr. Lathom to step here, Manners," said the Housemaster.

Manners fetched Mr. Lathom.

The master of the Fourth was a keen photographer, and willingly undertook to develop the film. He took away the camera at once to the dark-room.

"We shall soon have proof as to whether Manners has stated the facts or not," said Mr. Selby, with a grim look at the Shell fellow.

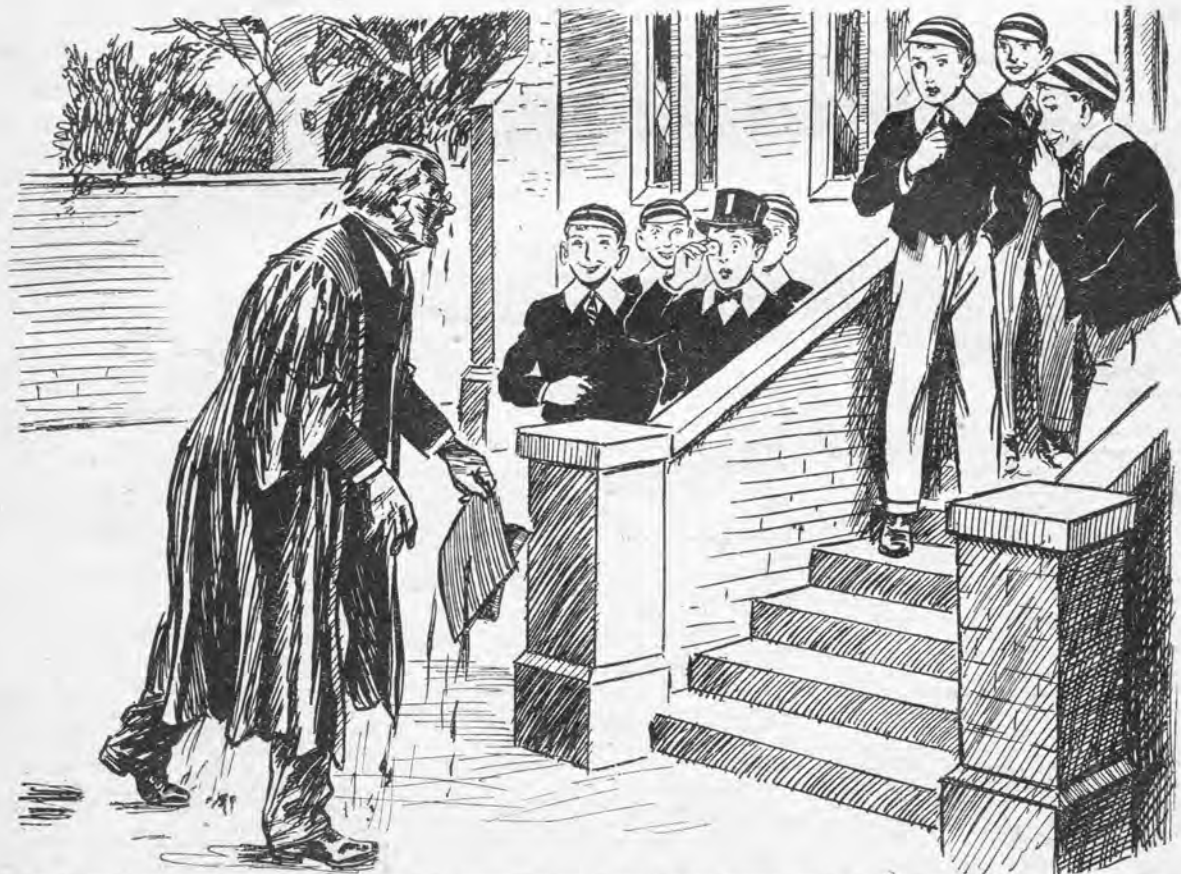
Mr. Railton frowned.

"I accept Manners' word," he said. "I have asked Mr. Lathom to develop the film in order to place the matter beyond all doubt, that is all. Manners, you may go; you will be sent for if wanted."

"Thank you, sir!" said Manners.

He returned to Study No. 6.

"Well?" said half a dozen voices.



Mr. Selby, caked with mud and soaking wet, squelched up to the School House, and the juniors tried hard to suppress their smiles. "Had an accident, sir?" asked Blake. "I have been the victim of an infamous trick!" gasped the Third Form master.

"It's all serene," said Manners. "Lathom's developing the film, and he won't find Selby in any of the pictures. Selby will have to sing small, the blessed hunk!"

"I trust he will have the good grace to beg your pardon, Mannahs," said Arthur Augustus.

"Catch him!" growled Manners.

Tea in Study No. 6 was finished, and the juniors were chatting football and photography when there was a tap at the door, and Toby looked in.

"Master Manners wanted in Mr. Railton's study," he said.

"Right-ho, Toby! You chaps can come along and see Selby climb down, if you like," said Manners, with a chuckle. "I'll leave the study door half-open for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tea-party followed Manners downstairs. He tapped at Mr. Railton's door and entered, leaving the door well ajar. In the passage his friends waited for him, prepared to see what passed, and to enjoy the climbing-down process on the part of the obnoxious Form-master.

But there was a surprise in store for Tom Merry & Co. As Manners entered the study Mr. Railton fixed a grim and frowning look upon him.

"Manners!"

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Manners, quite taken aback by Mr. Railton's look and tone.

"I am surprised and shocked, Manners, to discover that you have spoken falsely."

"Wha-a-at, sir?"

"I was quite assured of it from the beginning," said Mr. Selby acidly.

There was a murmur in the passage of amazement and wrath. Manners stared blankly at the Housemaster in utter dismay.

CHAPTER 12.

Found Guilty!

MR. RAILTON frowned grimly. It was evident that it was a shock to him to discover Manners in a falsehood, as he had said.

Mr. Selby did not seem at all surprised. Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was in the study with some negatives in his hand, and he looked very distressed.

"What have you to say, Manners?" asked the Housemaster.

"I—I don't quite understand!" stammered Manners. "I—I told you the exact truth, sir."

"The impudence of that boy is astounding!" ejaculated Mr. Selby. "He dares to deny what he has done, with the proof under his very eyes!"

"Manners," said Mr. Railton sternly, "you remember that I forbade you to repeat your former offence of photographing the masters—ahem!—on undesirable occasions. I warned you that you would be severely punished and your camera would be confiscated. You have, however, taken a photograph of Mr. Selby in the ditch, and the presumption is therefore very strong that you moved the plank to cause the accident, as you have denied your own action."

"B-but I haven't, sir!" blurted out Manners. "I told Mr. Selby I hadn't, sir."

"Do you venture to repeat that statement, Manners?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You deny that you took a photograph of Mr. Selby in the ditch?"

"Certainly, sir."

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"Manners, I fear that I have been greatly deceived in you," said Mr. Railton. "Look at those negatives, boy, and repeat your denial, if you have the audacity."

Manners glanced at the negatives in Mr. Lathom's hand.

"Were those negatives developed from the film in my camera, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, Manners," said the little Form-master, in a low voice. "I opened your camera, removed the film, and developed it. These are the six negatives."

"Then it is all right," said Manners. "There certainly isn't a photograph of Mr. Selby there."

"My dear Manners, look!" said Mr. Lathom mildly.

He held out the negatives. Manners looked at them, and almost fell on the floor of the study. There were three separate photographs of Mr. Selby struggling in a muddy and reedy ditch. In the negatives, of course, the light tones were dark, and the dark tones light, but the Third Form master was quite recognisable. The other three pictures were ordinary views.

Manners stared at the negatives dumbfounded.

He felt as if his brain were turning. He had taken none of those six photos!

How had they come to be in his camera? He was dumb.

"Well, Manners?" Mr. Railton's voice was as hard as iron now. "Have you anything to say?"

"I—I don't understand. I never took any of these photos—"

"Here is the boy's own handiwork," said Mr. Selby. "He photographed me three times, as you see, Mr. Railton, and denied having done so. I take it as proved that he played the trick with the plank that caused the accident. In any case, he has deliberately disobeyed your orders."

"I—I haven't!" stammered Manners. "I—I can't imagine how these photos got in my camera. I never took them."

"Can you prove that you never took any of these six photographs, Manners?" asked Mr. Railton.

"No, sir. I was out by myself this afternoon."

"It is obvious that if you admitted taking the three views, you would be condemning yourself as having taken also the three pictures of Mr. Selby," said Mr. Railton. "All six photos were developed from the film in your camera."

"I—I never took them, sir!" stammered Manners.

"Have you anything further to say?"

"Only that I don't understand how those photos came to be in my camera, sir."

"You remember my commands to you, Manners, and the penalty. This camera will be confiscated. I am sorry, as I am aware it was presented to you for an act of courage. You will be caned by the headmaster. I shall report the whole circumstances of the case to Dr. Holmes. Had you confessed your fault, I should have punished you myself; but your conscienceless prevarication makes the matter very much more serious. I have no doubt that Dr. Holmes will punish you in the presence of the whole school. For the present you may go."

"But, sir, I—I—I—"

"You may go, Manners."

The Shell fellow staggered, rather than walked, from the Housemaster's study. He looked utterly dazed. With the evidence against him, Mr. Railton

had no choice but to find him guilty, and he realised that. It seemed to Manners that his head was turning round.

His chums met him in the passage in a state of surprise and consternation. They were utterly dismayed by the turn the affair had taken.

Tom Merry caught his chum by the arm.

"Manners, old chap—"

"I—I think I must be going potty!" stammered Manners. "I didn't take any snaps of Selby, I swear I didn't. Yet there they were in my camera, with three other views which I never took. I felt inclined to snap Selby in the ditch, but I didn't—I swear I didn't!"

"But the snaps are there," said Blake.

"Yes, I know they are. But I never took any of the pictures which Mr. Lathom developed from the film in my camera. I can't make it out."

Mr. Lathom came down the passage, and he gave Manners a sad glance. He, like the Housemaster, was shocked and surprised.

Julian came down the stairs and stopped the master of the Fourth.

"Can I use the dark-room now, sir? I want to do some developing."

"Certainly, my boy," said Mr. Lathom.

"Thank you, sir!"

The Fourth Form master went to his study. Julian was looking extremely cheerful.

"I've got a ripping set of interiors, you fellows!" he remarked, not noticing for the moment the glum looks of the juniors. "Even if I don't bag the prize, I shall have a ripping set of pictures. I've got most of the studies, and a view of the Shell passage from the window end—Hallo! What's the matter with you, chaps?"

Julian looked concerned as Tom Merry explained.

"That's jolly odd," he said. "This is what comes of being an enthusiastic camera fiend, Manners. You simply snapped Selby by instinct, you see, without even noticing what you were doing."

"I swear I never took any of the pictures," said Manners dazedly. "Railton thinks I'm a liar; so does Selby. But I don't care what Selby thinks. Only—only it's rotten for old Railton to look on me as a lying cad, like Levison—"

Manners voice broke.

That was the unkindest cut of all. The coming punishment from the Head, even the loss of his beloved camera, did not hit him so hard as the loss of Mr. Railton's good opinion.

"Buck up!" said Tom Merry. "We're going to set it right somehow."

Julian went away with his camera to Mr. Lathom's dark-room.

Tom Merry & Co. stood in a miserable group, discussing the matter. Talbot of the Shell was looking grim and thoughtful. Manners leaned on the banisters, utterly dejected.

Mr. Railton came out of his study, evidently on his way to see the Head to make his report of the matter. His glance dwelt for a moment sternly on Manners. The acute distress in the junior's face caused his expression to change a little, and he paused.

"This has been a great shock to me, Manners," he said. "I had a very different opinion of you."

"I can't help it, sir," groaned Manners. "I swear I never photographed any of those six pictures taken from my camera."

Mr. Railton's brow darkened again.

"If you persist in that ridiculous denial, Manners—" "

"It is the truth, sir," said Tom Merry. "We all know that Manners wouldn't tell a lie."

"May I make a suggestion, sir?" said Talbot quietly. "Isn't it possible that there has been some trick?"

"Certainly not, Talbot! The camera was opened and the film developed by Mr. Latham."

"No mistake about that!" groaned Manners. "The photographs were there, right enough."

"But before Mr. Latham had the camera," said Talbot. "Mr. Railton, I am sure there has been some trick in the matter."

Mr. Railton looked rather curiously at Talbot. The Toff of the Shell had an old head on young shoulders.

"If you can make any suggestion, Talbot, to clear Manners of this very serious charge you are at liberty to do so," he said.

"Thank you, sir! Where did you leave your camera when you came in, Manners?"

"In the study."

"Then you came into Study No. 6 for tea?"

"Yes."

"Then anybody could have got at the camera if he wanted to?"

"I suppose so."

"If somebody else had a camera the same size he could have taken out your film and put in his own if he had liked—somebody else who had photographed Mr. Selby in the ditch, I mean?"

Manners started. Mr. Selby, who had come on the scene from the Housemaster's study, sniffed, but Mr. Railton looked very attentive.

"Who'd play such a dirty trick as that?" muttered Lowther.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy simply yelled. "Levison!"

"Yaas, watah! He played a wotten twick like that once before."

"I remember now!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "So he did! Why, it was as easy as anything to do, and Levison's just the chap to do it."

"But Levison hasn't a camera," said Blake.

"Bai Jove! I—I nevah thought of that!"

"But he has a camera!" shouted Lowther. "It's the same size as Manners'. We've seen it. He hired it somewhere. He had it in his study this afternoon when Manners went for him."

There was a buzz of excited voices at once. Mr. Railton's voice broke in:

"Fetch Levison here, please!"

Two or three fellows hurried away in search of Levison. A crowd had gathered in the passage, and there was a breathless hush while they waited for Levison.

CHAPTER 13.

The Answer's in the Negative!

LEVISON of the Fourth came up in a few minutes. He was looking surprised, but otherwise quite unconcerned.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, Levison," Mr. Railton scanned the cool, steady face of the cad of the Fourth. "Levison, I understand that you have a camera the same size as Manners'?"

"I think so, sir," said Levison, looking astonished.

"Some pictures have been found in Manners' camera, showing Mr. Selby at the time when he fell into the ditch.

A WORD OF WARNING!



"Look out for cannibals, Bill. I'm going for a stroll."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Fletcher, 127, Ravenscliffe Avenue, Eccleshill, Bradford.

Manners declares that he did not photograph Mr. Selby. It is suggested that someone else may have taken advantage of Manners' absence from his study to take out his film and put in another one.

"Yes, sir?" said Levison.

His tone was one of polite inquiry. Mr. Railton coughed.

"Did you photograph Mr. Selby this afternoon, Levison?"

"I, sir? No."

"Did you see him in the ditch?" "No, sir. I heard about it when I came in. I remember I asked these fellows as I passed them in the study what had happened?"

"Yaas, that's so," murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Did you go to Manners' study, Levison?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"You did not touch his camera?"

"His camera, sir? Why should I?"

"Never mind that! Answer my question."

"I did not, sir."

"You deny having been in Manners' study at all since you came in?"

"Certainly, sir!" A bitter look came over Levison's face, and he smiled sardonically. "I understand now, sir. Now Manners has been found out he would like to put it on me."

"That is what it appears like to me," said Mr. Selby in a grinding voice.

Manners crimsoned.

"I never said—" he began.

"It was I who made the suggestion, not Manners," said Talbot quietly. "I didn't think of you, Levison. I suggested that it might have been done by someone who used the same kind of films. I am certain that the trick was played by somebody."

"And you played just such a trick once before!" exclaimed Tom Merry hotly.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"There is no evidence against Levison," said Mr. Railton. "He could have played this trick, but so could anyone else who had a similar camera. The fact that Levison played such a trick last term is not evidence against him now. Can you account for your time, Levison, since you came in?"

"I've been having tea in my study, sir, with Mellish and Lumley-Lumley."

"I guess that's correct," remarked Lumley-Lumley. He had followed Levison on the scene. "Levison was in the study five minutes after he came into

the House, sir. I saw him come in from the window."

"That was time enough for him to play the trick," said Monty Lowther.

"Pretty quick work!" sneered Levison. "I stopped for a few minutes to speak to the fellows in Study No. 6, and then went into my own study."

Mr. Railton glanced over the crowd of excited juniors.

"Does anyone remember having been in the Shell passage at the time?" he asked.

There was a general shaking of heads.

"Levison would pick a time when there was nobody about, of course," said Blake.

"All in five minutes!" sneered Levison.

Julian of the Fourth, with stains of chemicals on his fingers, and a purple smudge on his nose, came up from the dark-room. He joined the crowd in the passage, curious to know what was on.

"Hold on a minute, sir!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy excitedly. "Pewwaps Julian saw somethin' of Levison while he was hangin' about the passages. He had the fateful cheek to snap me the othah day, and pewwaps—"

"Very well; I will question Julian. Julian, it is a question whether anyone was seen to enter Manners' study while Manners was in Study No. 6. If you can give evidence—"

"Only Levison, sir," said Julian.

"Levison!"

"You saw Levison entering Manners' study?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Not entering, sir—coming out," said Julian, in surprise. "I was taking the Shell passage from the window, and Levison came out of Tom Merry's study and went away very quickly."

"When was that, Julian?" asked the Housemaster, his face growing very grim.

"About an hour ago, sir. Manners was in Study No. 6. It was a few minutes after I had called in there."

Tom Merry's face lighted up.

"That settles it!" he exclaimed. "That was the time!"

"What have you to say, Levison?" asked Mr. Railton sternly. "You have just denied entering Manners' study at all!"

Levison breathed hard for a moment.

"If you choose to believe him, sir, I've got nothing to say," said Levison bitterly. "They're all in it together to put this on me. I repeat that I haven't been in Manners' study at all since I came in."

Julian burst into a chuckle which drew surprised glances from all sides.

Mr. Railton frowned.

"This is no laughing matter, Julian." Julian coloured.

"Excuse me, sir, but I can prove what I've said."

"Indeed! In what way?"

"I mentioned that I took a view of the Shell passage, sir. Levison's in the photograph, coming out of Tom Merry's study."

There was a chirrup of delight from the whole Co.

Levison's face was deadly pale, and his eyes had a hunted look. The toils were closing in on him.

"You are sure of what you say, Julian?" asked Mr. Railton.

"Oh, yes, sir! I've just developed the film, and it's drying now. Levison comes out quite clearly, sneaking out of the study."

"I shall examine the film," said Mr. (Continued on page 28.)

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MARK LINLEY PROVES HIS METTLE WHEN IT COMES TO A SHOW-DOWN BETWEEN THE REMOVE BULLY AND HIMSELF!

NOT WANTED AT GREYFRIARS!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

When Mark Linley, a Lancashire mill-boy, comes to Greyfriars he finds that he is not wanted in the Remove. Bulstrode & Co., the snobs of the Form, are up against him, and are determined to drive him out of the school.

Mark, however, makes friends with Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter, the latter succeeding in borrowing five shillings from the new boy on the strength of a coming postal order.

While at tea in Study No. 1, several of the Remove look in and insult Mark. Thinking that he will antagonise the Form against Harry Wharton & Co., the Lancashire boy leaves them after tea. He is passing the Common-room when there is a yell of derision at him. Mark turns away.

(Now read on.)

Linley's New Quarters.

"I'M glad Linley's got the decency not to shove himself in here with us," said Snoop of the Remove to a crowd of fellows in the Common-room at Greyfriars. "I half-expected him to come in."

"Shocking come-down for you, Snoop," said Temple of the Upper Fourth, with a sneer. "Your people are in the oil and colour line, I believe."

Snoop turned crimson.

"It's a lie!" he yelled.

"It's a what?" asked Temple, coming a step nearer.

"I—I mean it isn't so," stammered Snoop. "You're mistaken, Temple."

"Well, if it were so, there's nothing in it to be ashamed of that I can see," said Temple, who belonged to a good family and could afford to take a broad view of the matter. "I think you're a set of snobs to treat young Linley like that. He looks worth a dozen of you young cads. Besides, the Remove is the kind of Form for any waster to be shoved into."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

There was a Removeite yell, and before long a scuffle and punching of noses. Then came a prefect with a cane, and an exodus of juniors from the Common-room.

Mark Linley had walked away feeling very heavy-hearted. He had looked for difficulties at Greyfriars, but the angry and savage reception he was receiving was much more than he had bargained for. A fag met him in the passage and called to him.

"I say, young shuttle-and-loom, Mr. Quelch wants to see you!"

Mark took his way to the Form-master's study. Mr. Quelch nodded to him gravely and kindly.

"You will share Study No. 12 in the Remove passage with Russell, Lacy, and Wun Lung," he said. "You may take your books in there. Has your trunk been taken up to the Remove dormitory?"

"I don't know, sir. It was left at the porter's lodge."

"You had better see about it."

"Yes, sir."

Linley left the room. He decided to look at his new quarters first, and

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By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

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went up to Study No. 12. The door was shut and a glimmer of light came from underneath. Linley knocked at the door and entered.

Russell and Lacy were doing their preparation. Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, was curled up like a cat in the armchair. All three juniors looked up as Mark Linley entered.

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

"Mr. Quelch says I'm to share this study with you," said Mark awkwardly.

"Oh rats!" said Russell warmly. "Quelch doesn't know what he's about. The room is too small for three as it is, and it was annoying to have that Chinese monkey in here. It won't do, my son. Go back to Quelch and tell him to think it out and guess again."

Mark did not know much about Public schools, but he knew too much to take a message like that to a Form-master.

"I'm sorry I'm in the way," he said. "I suppose I must do as Mr. Quelch tells me."

"I suppose you must," granted Russell. "Are you the new chap

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The snobs of the Remove are out to drive Mark Linley from Greyfriars. But the Lancashire mill-boy shows that he can take it on the chin—and still come up for more!

~~~~~

Linley, the fellow who worked in a coal-mine?"

"I am Linley and I worked in a factory."

"Well, I don't see why you couldn't stay in the factory and not come here to take up a quarter of a crowded study. But I suppose we shall have to put up with it. Do you want to do your prep now?"

"My—my what?"

"Great Scott, don't you know what prep is? Your preparation; you have to prepare your morning's work overnight."

"Oh, I see! Yes, I suppose I must do it here, now—but I shall have to get my books out of my skip."

"Out of your what?" asked Russell and Lacy.

"My trunk, I mean."

"Well, if you mean a trunk, why don't you say a trunk?"

"It's not exactly a trunk; it's a—"

"Skip," grinned Lacy. "Well, suppose you skip off and find your skip and let us finish our prep?"

Mark turned to leave the study. The Chinese boy sat up in the armchair and blinked sleepily at the lad from Lancashire.

"Me tinkee you looker afel thunk," he said. "Bulstrode makee jokee, me tinkee. You bettel looker afel skippee."

Mark was a little puzzled to make out the curious words of the Chinese, but he nodded and left the study. He understood that some joke was intended on his property, and he was anxious. He left the house and hurried down to the porter's lodge. Gosling was standing in his doorway, and Mark asked after the famous skip.

"Which I've carried it hup," said Gosling. "And wot I says is this 'ere, it was thunderin' 'eavy, Master Linley."

Mark tendered the porter twopence, which was certainly quite sufficient in the way of a tip. Gosling took the twopence and inspected it carefully, and Mark walked away, leaving him still inspecting it.

He re-entered the house, and seeing Billy Bunter in the Hall, inquired his way to the Remove dormitory. Bunter directed him cheerfully enough, and added that he would be glad of another shilling off the postal order that was coming in the morning.

"I'm afraid I can't manage it, Bunter," said Mark, colouring. "I've got very little money, you know."

"Oh, if you don't want to lend me a bob, say so!" said Bunter. "You can have it back to-morrow morning with the other five shillings I borrowed, that's all."

"I can't do it now."

And Linley walked on, leaving Bunter snorting with disgust.

Mark ascended to the Remove dormitory and quickened his steps as he heard loud voices and shouts of laughter proceeding from the room. He opened the door and looked in, and his eyes blazed with anger at what he saw.

### Mark Loses His Temper.

**B**ULSTRODE & CO. were in the dormitory in a group around the famous skip. The skip was open and the ragers were dragging the contents of the basket-trunk out. Bulstrode was standing on a bed in the attitude of an auctioneer, with a mallet in his hand, which had probably been used in breaking open the new boy's trunk.

"Gentlemen, make your bids!" said Bulstrode. "I am offering you a pair of trousers of an unique cut. You see that the material is decidedly substantial, and indeed, is quite thick enough to make tents or sails with—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the cut is unique. I can safely say, gentlemen, that a pair of trousers of a similar cut cannot be found in Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let those things alone!" shouted Mark Linley, dashing into the dormitory, his eyes blazing with anger.

Bulstrode looked at him calmly and took no further notice of him.

"Gentlemen, I am waiting for a bid for these unique and extremely valuable trousers."

# YOU'LL ENJOY EVERY WORD OF THIS GREAT YARN TELLING HOW THE GREYFRIARS SCHOLARSHIP BOY TURNS HIS FORM-FELLOWS' SNEERS INTO CHEERS!



As Mark Linley was walking past the football pavilion, Bulstrode picked up a clod of turf and threw it with a deft aim. It caught the new boy a biff on the side of the head, knocking his cap off. The juniors laughed mockingly.

Mark Linley forced his way through the crowd of laughing Removites and faced Bulstrode.

"Will you let those things alone, you cad?" he shouted.

"Well, hardly," drawled Bulstrode.

"Then I'll make you!"

Bulstrode grinned.

"Hold him, you chaps!" he said. "He's getting dangerous. I'll give him a licking after this auction."

Skinner, Snoop, Barr, and Trevor caught hold of the Lancashire lad and held him fast, in spite of his struggles. Bulstrode grinned at his furious face, and held up the trousers to inspection again.

"Gentlemen, I'm waiting for a bid. These unique trousers are going cheap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll throw in this waistcoat with the same lot," said Bulstrode.

"Let me go!" shouted Mark Linley.

But they held him fast. Bulstrode dragged a couple of white shirts from the skip and flaunted them in the air.

"What offers for shirt, trousers, and waistcoat?" he said. "Don't be backward in coming forward, gentlemen. What offers?"

"Twopence the lot!" said Hazeldene.

"Any advance on twopence?"

"Threepence!" said Stott.

"Threepence I am bid. Any advance on threepence?"

No reply. Bulstrode raised the mallet.

"Going for threepence the lot—going—gone—gone!"

The mallet came down and smashed a little clock that had been taken out of the basket. There was a roar of laughter. Bulstrode tossed shirts, trousers and waistcoat over to Stott, who let them fall to the floor, where they were soon trodden underfoot.

Bulstrode dragged some underclothing from the skip and held it up

to view. Mark Linley made a desperate effort and broke loose from those who were holding him.

"Look out!" yelled Trevor.

But the warning came too late. Linley went at Bulstrode with a rush, and in a moment had him round the neck, and was punching wildly at his face. Bulstrode gave a roar of rage, and tumbled headlong off the bed, with Linley clinging to him.

"You noisy sweeps!" said the unpleasant voice of Carberry, the prefect, at the door. "What's all this row about?"

"It's the new fellow," said Snoop. "The factory rotter, Carberry. He's going for Bulstrode like a wild beast. Look at him!"

"Here, young shaver, stop that!" exclaimed Carberry. "Do you hear me? I'm a prefect, and if you don't obey me, I'll give you something to make you!"

Mark was deaf to him. He was punching Bulstrode furiously, while the Remove bully, bewildered and dazed by the sudden attack, was hardly able to defend himself. The prefect, with an angry scowl, stooped and dragged the new boy from Bulstrode by main force. Linley seemed inclined to attack him in turn, but he saw in time that he was a senior, and restrained himself. Carberry shook him savagely. "What do you mean by it?" he shouted. "Don't you know that you have to obey a prefect's orders, you factory ruffian?"

"I—I'm sorry!" gasped Mark. "I—I lost my temper."

"Beastly tiger-cat!" snarled Snoop. "Look at Bulstrode. His nose is bleeding!"

"I'll smash him for that!" howled Bulstrode.

"What's it all about?" demanded Carberry, still grasping Linley by the collar. "I've a good mind to give you a hiding apiece all round."

"It was that factory chap," said

Snoop. "He's got a temper like a demon. He wants a good hiding. He wouldn't take any notice of even you, Carberry."

"I'll teach him to take notice of a prefect," said Carberry. "You young cad, you oughtn't to come to a decent school! Why didn't you stick in the factory you belonged to?"

"Mind your own business!" said Linley.

Carberry stared at him in astonishment for a moment.

"You—you talk to me like that?" he gasped.

"I'll talk to anybody like that who insults me!" shouted Mark. "You're a bully and a cad, and these fellows are a set of cads and cowards, too. I'll take them all on, one at a time, and give them a hiding!"

"I'll give you a chance," said Bulstrode.

"Hold your tongue, Bulstrode! So I'm a cad, am I?" said Carberry, with a glint in his eyes. "I think you'll have to learn better manners, you factory sweep! Lay him over that bed, you kids!"

Half a dozen of the juniors hurried to obey. Hazeldene, Trevor, and Skinner held back; but there were enough of them to handle the struggling new boy. He was laid over the bed, face downwards, and the prefect took up a slipper that had been turned out of the box.

"This is the first lesson," he remarked. "If ever you want another, you'll get it—in the same place."

Mark Linley gave a gasp of pain as the slipper rose and fell. But then he set his teeth, and remained silent under the shower of blows that followed.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Hazeldene, as Carberry continued to swipe with the slipper. "That's enough!"

Carberry's reply was a cuff that sent Hazeldene reeling. Then the slipper

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rose and fell again with more savage force than before. There was a sudden shout from the doorway.

"Stop that!"

Wingate came quickly in. At sight of the captain's angry face, Carberry's hand fell to his side, and the juniors released the new boy. But Mark Linley did not move. He still lay face downwards across the bed, in pain, and unable to move for the moment.

Wingate's brow was like a thunder-cloud.

"What do you mean by treating a kid like that?" he demanded.

"He cheeked me," said Carberry defiantly. "I'm a prefect, and I'm not responsible to you for my actions, Wingate. He's had his lesson."

And Carberry hurled the slipper away and strode out of the dormitory. Bulstrode & Co. followed him quietly. They did not dare to face the captain of Greyfriars just then.

Wingate lifted Mark Linley from the bed. The boy, his face pale, looked dazedly into the kind face of the Greyfriars captain. Big and rugged as he was, Wingate had a soft heart.

"I'm sorry for this, Linley," he said. "I don't know what you've done, but you've been treated badly. What was it about?"

Linley steadied himself on the captain's arm.

"It's all right," he said thickly.

"It's not all right," said Wingate warmly. "I've a good mind to march you straight to the Head and tell him what Carberry was doing."

"No, no!" exclaimed Mark, in alarm. "I—I don't mind. I'd rather not cause trouble. I don't suppose Carberry meant to hurt me so much. I—I don't want to get him into a row."

The captain of Greyfriars was silent. He recognised the true grit that showed in the Lancashire lad's words, yet he was greatly inclined to expose Carberry's brutality to the Head, all the same. One thought restrained him—if Linley were placed in the position of having complained the Remove would regard it as sneaking, and he would never be able to make his peace with the Form.

"I—I suppose I was a fool to come here," said Mark. "They don't understand. They don't like a factory lad among them. I suppose it's natural. I dare say I shall get along all right in time, when they get used to the idea."

"Well, you're a plucky kid," said Wingate. "You're going the right way to work, anyway, and I think you'll pull ahead in time—with the best fellows in your Form, at any rate. Stick to it!"

"I mean to," said Mark quietly.

And Wingate left him, and Mark proceeded to repack the things that had been dragged from his skip.

### Disappointed Ragers!

AT bed-time that night there was a great deal of suppressed excitement in the Remove. Fellows glanced at Mark Linley and whispered to one another. The lad from Lancashire could not fail to see that a ragging was planned for after lights out, and be prepared to face it bravely.

Just before bed-time Harry Wharton was passing Mr. Quelch's door, when the Remove master beckoned him to enter. The captain of the Remove stepped into the Form-master's study.

"You have made the acquaintance of the new boy Linley?" asked Mr. Quelch.

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"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"I believe there is some sort of set made against him in the Remove, Wharton."

"Some of the fellows seem to have their backs up, sir."

"I need not say that I'm quite sure you have no hand in it, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "If I thought it possible I should not speak to you now as I am going to do. Wharton, I know something of Linley from the clergyman who helped him to get the scholarship by means of which he came here. He is a steady, decent lad, and any shortcomings he may have will soon, I think, be eradicated at Greyfriars. I should like you to lend him any little help you can, Wharton."

"Certainly, sir."

"As captain of the Remove it is your duty to put down bullying and ragging, and I am sure I can rely on you, Wharton."

"You can rely on me, sir."

Wharton joined the Remove, who were going up to bed. It was Carberry's duty to put the lights out, but this evening Mr. Quelch took the prefect's place. When the Removites were in bed Mr. Quelch paused a moment before extinguishing the lights.

A less keen-sighted master would have noticed that the Remove was in a state of suppressed excitement and only waiting for him to be gone before getting out of bed again.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "on several occasions lately there has been noise in this dormitory after lights out. I am determined to restore complete order to the Remove dormitory. I shall be very alert to-night, and any boy found to have left his bed after lights out will be given an imposition of five hundred lines and six strokes with the cane. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!" said the Remove.

The lights were put out, and the Form-master closed the door. There was a general indignant exclaiming at once:

"The beast!"

"The rotter!"

"The interfering brute!"

"It's on purpose to protect that factory cad!" exclaimed Bulstrode furiously. "Who's game to get up and put him through it, all the same?"

"I'm not, for one," said Hazeldene.

"I'm not going to get a licking and five hundred lines to please you, Bulstrode."

"We all know you're a coward. Vaseline. Trevor—Snoop"—Bulstrode sat up in bed—"will you get up if I do?"

"I won't," said Snoop. "Not much!"

"Don't be an ass, Bulstrode!" said Trevor. "You know jolly well that you daren't get up. The factory kid can wait, I'm going to sleep."

Bulstrode growled, but, as a matter of fact, he did not mean to venture out of bed after the Form-master's warning, and he soon followed Trevor's example and went to sleep.

Mark Linley was breathing more freely with relief. He had escaped a dormitory ragging, and for that he was thankful. He did not know much about the matter, but he knew that he had narrowly escaped a painful ordeal.

He fell asleep at last, and slept soundly enough till the rising-bell went in the morning. He was the first up in the Remove. He was accustomed to jumping out of bed much earlier at home in Lancashire.

Many of the Removites grumbled at the hour of rising, but it seemed late to the Lancashire lad.

Harry Wharton sat up in bed and glanced at the new boy.

"You're an early riser," he remarked, as he stepped out of bed.

Linley smiled.

"This isn't early for me," he said. "I usually rise much earlier. It seems awfully quiet here."

"The bell makes row enough, I think," said Bob Cherry, rubbing his eyes. "I believe Gosling makes it clang like that on purpose, because he's in a temper at getting out of bed."

The juniors rose one by one and dressed themselves. The morning was clear and cold, and Harry Wharton and his chums kicked a football about in the Close before breakfast. A number of Removites joined them, and quite a crowd were soon punting the footer around.

Mark Linley looked on, keen enough to join, but very doubtful about his reception if he did so.

"Get out of the way, you mill-hand!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Hold your tongue, Bulstrode!" said Wharton sharply. "Kick that ball over here, Linley. Why don't you join in the game?"

Mark kicked the ball with a power and accuracy which showed that he was not new to football. The crowd streamed away after it, and Mark joined in with them. Bulstrode stopped.

"If that factory cad comes in I'm out of it," he said.

"And I," said Snoop.

"Same here!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, get out of it, then!" said Harry Wharton angrily. "Come on, Linley!"

Linley shook his head.

"It's all right," he said. And he put his hands in his pockets and walked away.

Harry Wharton shouted after him.

"Linley, come back here!"

Mark started a little at the tone of authority in Wharton's voice, but he turned back and looked at the Remove captain.

"What is it?" he said.

"Come and help us punt this ball about. I'm football captain in the Remove, and you've got to do as I tell you as far as football is concerned. Come on!"

Linley laughed cheerily.

"Oh, if that's how it stands I'll come on fast enough!" he said.

And he came back promptly.

"Well, I'm out of it," said Bulstrode.

"And I," said Trevor.

"You can do as you like, Bulstrode," said Wharton disdainfully. "You're a waster, anyway, and out of place near a football. As for you, Trevor, if you stand out now, you'll stand out of the Remove footer team, too, so take your choice!"

Trevor hesitated, but he knew that Wharton had a will of iron, and meant what he said. He left Bulstrode's side. "Going to be bullied into taking up that outsider, are you?" sneered Bulstrode.

"Rats!" said Trevor.

The juniors were soon punting the ball again. Mark Linley joined in keenly. Harry Wharton noted his form with an appreciative eye. The mill-hand from Lancashire was fast and steady and keen, and not in the least afraid of hard knocks.

As the bell rang the punt-about ceased, and the juniors, warm and exhilarated, trooped off towards the House. Harry Wharton dropped into step beside Linley.

"You seem to take to footer," he said.

"I've played since I was a little nipper," said Linley.

"I suppose you will join the Form club? We're pretty strong on football here," said Wharton. "I'm captain of the Form team. Our side is up to good form now, but there's always room for a good player. If you shape well, there's no reason why you shouldn't get your cap for your Form."

Linley's eyes sparkled. "I should like to," he said. "I'd give anything—but the other fellows would be down on the idea at once."

Harry Wharton laughed. "The opinion of the other fellows doesn't weigh much with me in making up the Form team," he said. "If they had anything to say against your form as a player, I should listen, of course; but other things haven't anything to do with football. You had better join the Form club. Nearly all the Remove are in it, and you can't play for the Form without joining. The subscription is three bob. Frank Nugent, in my study, is secretary and treasurer."

"Good!" said Linley. "I'll be glad to join. I hope it won't make trouble for you."

Wharton laughed again. "I don't care if it does," he said. "I'm used to trouble and I don't mind it. I had a rough time when I first came to Greyfriars, and I pulled through. You'll do the same if you stick it."

"I shall stick it." "Right! That's the spirit." And the juniors went in to breakfast.

#### Resignations Accepted.

**B**ILLY BUNTER felt a tap on his shoulder as he came out into the Hall a little later, and he blinked round through his spectacles.

"I say, Levison—" "It is I," said Mark Linley. "I want to speak to you, Bunter. I lent you five shillings yesterday off your postal order."

"Did you?" said Billy Bunter. "You know I did." "Oh, all right! Don't get ratty about it. I suppose you don't think that I'm not going to pay you, do you?"

"No, of course not. But the post is in now, and I should be glad if you would hand over the tin. I've got to pay my football subscription."

"Well, the fact is, Linley, I've had a disappointment about that postal order. It hasn't come." Mark Linley uttered an exclamation. "Oh, it's all right! It's coming this evening, for certain. I suppose it will do if you have it to-night?"

"I want to pay my football subscription."

"Well, you can pay it out of your own money, and have this to-night," said Bunter.

Mark made an impatient gesture. "I cannot. I haven't enough money without that."

"Well, leave the football subscription till this evening. If you could let it stand over for a day or two, I could repay it without any inconvenience at all," said Billy Bunter confidentially. "The result of 'Answers' football competition is announced in the number that is out now, you know."

"What has that to do with it?" demanded Mark.

"A jolly lot. I'm in that competition. I've been sending in the answers, you see, and with my great ability at guessing the correct ones, there's no doubt at all that I shall get the first prize. The prize is a pound a week for six

months. I'll tell you what, Linley. Suppose you let me have another fifteen bob now, and you can have the first pound."

"I don't suppose you will ever get the prize—"

"Oh, really, Linley! With my ability—"

"Look here, I want that five bob," said Linley abruptly. "When can I have it?"

"You can have it to-day," said Bunter sulkily. "My postal order may come by any post now, and you can have your pound of flesh, you Shylock!" And Billy Bunter walked away indignantly.

Linley turned red. It was not pleasant to be called a Shylock for asking for his loan. He felt that he had made a mistake in lending money, but, after all, it would be all right when the postal order came.

A tap on his shoulder made him turn round, and he found Frank Nugent at his elbow, with a pencil and a little book in his hand.

"Wharton says you're joining the Remove footer club," said Nugent.

"Yes, that's right."

"Three bob, please."

Linley turned red again.

"I—I'm sorry," he said. "The fact is, I haven't the tin. I had it, only I've lent five bob to a chap—"

Nugent whistled.

"You—you don't mean to say you've been lending money to Bunter?" he asked, glancing after the fat junior.

"My hat!"

"Yes, I've lent him some tin off a postal order he's expecting—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Linley's been lending Bunter money off his postal order!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Mark looked at the two of them.

"I don't see where the funny part comes in," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Nugent wiped his eyes. "My only Aunt Matilda! Billy Bunter has been expecting that postal order ever since he was a nipper in the Third Form! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It hasn't come yet!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "Perhaps by the time Bunter is an old man it may arrive, but the chances are against it."

Mark Linley's face was a study.

"Do you mean to say that I've lost my five bob?" he asked.

"Well, if you see it again I shall be surprised, and I'll purchase it of you to put in a glass case in Study No. 1."

"But—but I can't afford to lose it."

"Yes, it's rough, isn't it?" said Bob Cherry. "You'd better give Bunter a hiding. That will give you some satisfaction. But as for your cash, I'm afraid that has vanished."

The chums of the Remove walked away, still chuckling.

But it was no laughing matter to Mark Linley. He was unable to pay his football subscription, and the consolation of giving Billy Bunter a licking did not appeal to him much.

He could not help feeling downcast as he went into the class-room with the rest of the Remove. Harry Wharton noticed it, and as the class came out after morning lessons he asked the new boy what was the matter. Linley told him frankly enough.

"I—I don't really mind," he said; "but could my subscription be allowed to stand over for a bit?"



Mark Linley's eyes blazed with anger as he came into the dormitory. Bulstrode was standing on a bed, with a mallet in one hand and a pair of Mark's trousers in the other. "Gentlemen, make your bids!" said the Remove bully. "I can safely say that a pair of trousers of similar cut cannot be found in Greyfriars!"

"Oh, yes, that's all right!" said Wharton. "But Bunter must be made to refund it. It's too bad!"

And Harry found an early opportunity of speaking to Billy Bunter. The fat junior would rather have avoided the interview, but Wharton was not to be avoided.

"Bunter," he said sharply, dropping his hand on the fat junior's shoulder in the Close, "I warned you not to cadge off young Linley."

Bunter blinked at him with great scorn.

"Oh really, Wharton! I hope you don't think I've been cadging off anybody."

"You've borrowed five shillings off the new kid."

"He's going to have that back out of my postal order."

"Look here, Bunter, don't tell any more fairy tales about a postal order, or you'll get bumped!"

"Well, as a matter of fact, there seems some delay about that postal order," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Perhaps, upon the whole, I'd better let him have it out of 'Answers' football prize."

"You young ass—"

"I don't think you ought to call me names, Wharton, because I like paying up my debts promptly. It may not be your way, but it's mine. I'm going to let young Linley have his five bob back out of the first week's pound in 'Answers' prize. The result of the competition is announced in the number on sale, and so he won't have to wait long."

"Listen to this, you've got to repay Linley that five bob."

"I'm going to—out of 'Answers' prize."

Wharton was greatly inclined to knock Bunter's head against a tree, but Billy's faith in his wonderful ability to win a prize was touching.

"I say, Wharton, wait a minute! Can you lend me a shilling?"

"No, I can't."

"Well, make it twopence, then. I want to get 'Answers,' so as to show you the announcement of William George Bunter as the winner of the pound a week for six months!"

Wharton laughed in spite of himself, and tossed two pennies to the fat junior, who scuttled off with them. Wharton was pretty certain that the Owl of the Remove had not come within miles of the right answers to the football pictures in the competition.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton."

It was Bulstrode, with a very disagreeable look on his face. Half a dozen fellows were with him, and they all looked "ratty." Wharton gave them an inquiring look.

"I hear that you have asked this factory chap to join the Remove football club," said Bulstrode savagely.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Then it's true?"

"Yes. He seems to be a decent footballer."

"Well, if he joins, I leave," said Bulstrode, "that's all. I don't intend to belong to a club with factory sweeps in it."

"Leave, then," said Harry Wharton laconically.

Bulstrode glared at him.

"Do you mean to say that you'd rather have him in the club?"

"Yes, rather. He's a decent footballer, and you're a slacker. He plays the game, and you are not above fouling on the field. He's worth fifty of you!"

Some of the Removites chuckled. Bulstrode was white with rage.

"I knew you would take this line," he said thickly. "I told the fellows all along that you would set yourself up against the Form, out of sheer cussedness."

"Nothing of the sort. I'm sorry to see you chaps making silly goats of yourselves, that's all. Linley is a decent sort."

"A mill-hand," said Trevor.

"Yes, a mill-hand, and a jolly decent chap. It's no good expecting me to back you up in any beastly snobbery, for I'm not that sort. I'm surprised at you, too, Trevor. You're a Lancashire chap yourself."

"Ye-e-es," drawled Trevor; "but I haven't worked in a mill."

"You mightn't have been the worse for doing so, though. It might have taught you to stick to your work instead of slacking, and to treat a decent fellow decently, instead of playing the snob."

Trevor turned red, but he made no reply; and, in fact, Harry's words seemed to have struck him with some force, for he drew a little away from Bulstrode. But the latter was furious.

"Well, we all resign from the club, that's all," he said. "And I rather think you'll have some more resignations soon, Wharton."

"Resign and be hanged!" said Harry Wharton, turning on his heel. And so the discussion ended.

#### Mark on his Mettle!

MARK LINLEY joined the chums of the Remove on the junior ground for football practice before dinner, and played Soccer for the first time. He was very much at home on the football field, and he did not seem likely to want any lessons.

Harry Wharton smacked him on the shoulder in a hearty way as they came off the field. There had been very few at practice besides the chums of Study No. 1. The Remove generally "kept off the grass."

Bulstrode & Co. openly declared their intention of sending the new boy to Coventry. The greater part of the Form were undecided about the matter.

"You'll do, Linley," said Wharton. "You only want a bit more practice at the game, and I think you'll be all right for the Form eleven."

Linley's eyes glistened.

"That would be ripping," he said. "The rippingfulness would be terrific!" purred the Nabob of Bham-pur. "But behold the woeeful countenance of our esteemed Bunterful chum."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "What's the matter, Bunt?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him lugubriously.

"I can't understand it," he said. "What can't you understand? Expound it, and we'll try to work it out for you," said Nugent encouragingly.

"It must be a mistake."

"What must?"

"I'm sorry to see such carelessness, but, of course, it's a printer's error."

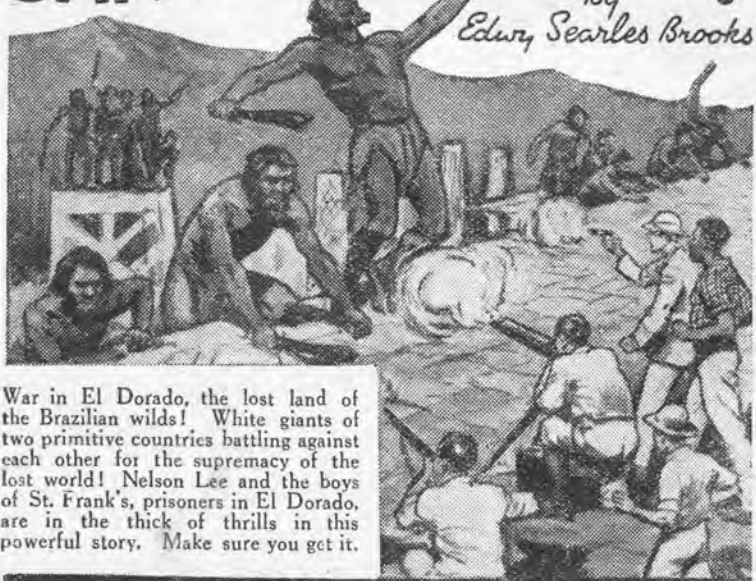
Bob Cherry took the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him forcibly.

"Explain yourself, you fat duffer!" he growled. "What are you talking about?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I wish you wouldn't shake me!" said Billy Bunter. "I was depending on that pound a week to clear up all my old accounts and

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start afresh. And I ought to settle up that five bob with the new chap. He's a poor beggar from a coal-mine, or something—"

"A what?" said Mark Linley.

"Oh, really, Linley, I didn't see you there!" blinked Bunter. "I mean, you're a ripping chap, and I like you so much that I feel I ought to settle up about that five bob. That's what I really meant to say. But there's a mistake in adjudging the prizes and I'm left out."

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

"It's no laughing matter, you fellows. It must be a printer's error, of course. The curious part is that in the list of answers there are a lot more printer's errors as well. Very few of the answers given tally with those I sent in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it's a case of carelessness. I dare say they're busy, and it will be set right in next week's number. The prize will wait till then, only I hope it won't be sent by mistake to the chap whose name has been shovelled in instead of mine as winner of the first prize."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Billy Bunter peevishly. "I suppose you don't think I've really lost the prize, do you?"

"Well, I do, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "Didn't I tell you all along that your answers to the football pictures must have made the judges weep? I don't believe you got a single one right!"

"With my wonderful ability at guessing the answers, I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then you don't think it's a printer's error?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Upon the whole, I don't see how so many printer's errors could occur in one number," admitted Bunter. "It must be a curious want of judgment that's the matter. But, now, what's going to be done?"

"I hope dinner's done," said Nugent. "I'm going in to dinner."

"Oh, don't be funny, you know! I'm stony, and I've entered into a good many engagements on the strength of that pound a week. How am I going to settle up all my old accounts?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Come on, you chaps!" said Wharton.

"I'm hungry! You'd better get up a subscription in the Remove, Bunter."

Billy Bunter grunted. The chums of the Remove walked away, laughing. But Harry's face became more serious presently. Mark Linley had gone in first.

"The young ass!" he said. "The answers he sent in to the football pictures were too idiotic for anything, and he wouldn't hear a word of advice on the subject. He thought he knew best. All the same, I don't like to see the young duffer in the dumps. Suppose we have a whip-round for him? He'll forget all about his disappointment if he has a good feed. And, besides"—Harry lowered his voice a little—"he has eadged five bob off the new chap, who can't spare it, and he could pay up then."

"But would he?" said Nugent dubiously.

"Yes; I'd see to it."

"The honourable idea is good," said Hurree Singh. "I shall be pleasantly gratified to contribute the august pound."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No, you won't," he said. "We don't want any more than ten or twelve bob at the outside, and he can spare five out of that for his debt. As you are rolling in filthy lucre, you can stand five, and we'll make up the rest."

"The agreeableness of my worthy self is terrific!"

And the whip-round was promptly made.

After dinner Wharton looked for Bunter, and ran him to earth in a quiet corner. The glistening of twelve shillings in the Removite's hand made Bunter's eyes sparkle.

"If you'd like to lend me a few bob, Wharton—"

"I wouldn't!" said Harry, in his direct way. "We've had a whip-round for you to stand you a feed and to help you pay your debts."

"Well, that's awfully decent of you, I must say, Wharton! How much is it? I suppose it's a sort of testimonial?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said Wharton. "There's twelve bob. We've subscribed it between us in Study No. 1."

"You might have extended it a little, so as to take in the whole Form, Wharton. I would rather have had a pound!"

"You ungrateful young duffer! Look

here, you're to pay Linley his five bob and keep the rest for yourself."

"Oh, bosh! Linley is going to have his five bob out of my postal order!"

"He's going to have it out of this!"

"I don't see why you should dictate to me what I'm going to do with my own money, Wharton!" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"But it's not your money till I give it to you. I can still return it to the subscribers, if I like."

"Oh, really, Wharton, of course, I should like to pay back Linley, and you can trust me to do so; that was what I really meant to say!"

"I intend to ask him so you had better pay up!" said Wharton significantly.

And he placed the twelve shillings in Bunter's palm and walked away.

Bunter looked at the coins and looked across at Mrs. Mimbles's shop. But, irresponsible as Bunter was, he had a glimmering of common sense, and he knew that it would not do to trifle with Wharton when he was in earnest. He heroically turned his back on the tuckshop and looked for Linley. He found him in the Close, and tapped him on the arm. Linley looked round.

"Here's your five bob," said Bunter; "and I hope you regret now having hinted that I was not likely to repay you!"

Mark slipped the money into his pocket.

"Thanks, Bunter!" he said.

And Billy Bunter went off to the tuckshop.

Mark Linley walked towards the football ground. A group of fellows were standing by the pavilion, and Bulstrode's voice was heard in strident tones.

"Here comes the factory sweep!"

"What's the price of cotton just now?" called out Snoot.

"Shut up!" said Trevor.

Snoot stared at the speaker.

"What's the matter with you, Trevor?"

"Nothing," said Trevor. "Only shut up, that's all."

Snoot shut up. He wasn't the kind of fellow to quarrel with anybody bigger than a Third Form fag. But Bulstrode was made of sterner stuff.

(Continued on the next page.)

## PEN PALS

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Bully as he was, he had plenty of obstinacy and pluck.

He picked up a clod of turf and threw it at Mark with a deft aim and knocked the new boy's cap off. The clod caught Mark a buff on the head, in addition, and he spun round with blazing eyes.

"Who threw that?" exclaimed the Lancashire lad.

The juniors laughed mockingly. Mark, leaving his cap where it had fallen, ran towards the group, his fists clenched hard. He had been very patient, but the time of patience was past now.

"What coward threw that?" he exclaimed.

"I did," said Bulstrode promptly. "Got anything to say about it?"

"Yes; put up your fists!"

Bulstrode stared. There was no fellow in the Remove who could stand up to him, excepting Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry. The Lancashire lad did not look anything like a match for the burly Bulstrode. But he evidently meant every word he said.

"Put up your fists! Do you hear?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" drawled Bulstrode. "I say, you chaps, let's bump him."

"Right-ho! Bump the cad!"

"No, you won't!" said Harry Wharton, coming up in time. "Linley has challenged you, Bulstrode, and you can fight him. There won't be any bumping just now."

"Mind your own business!"

"That's what I am doing. My business is to come down heavily on bully-

ing, and I'm doing it. Why don't you fight him?"

"I could knock him into the middle of next week!"

"Do it, then. We'll see fair play."

Linley took off his jacket and Bob Cherry held it. The Lancashire lad's eyes were burning, and his lips were hard set.

"Now come on!" he said.

"Oh, very well!" drawled Bulstrode.

"If you'd rather have a licking, I'll give you one."

And he came on.

And there was a surprise waiting for the bully of the Remove. He did not walk over the new boy with scarcely an effort, as he expected. He found a pair of hammer-like fists too hard to pass, and those fists came home on his features with blows that made him stagger.

Bulstrode sprang back, tore off his jacket, and then, breathing fury, rushed upon Linley again, realising at last that the fight was serious.

And now the bully of the Remove put all his beef into it. But he found he was up against an opponent quite his equal.

The Removites stood round, watching with keen interest. It was a fight such as had not taken place in the Remove since the historic encounter between Bulstrode and Wharton. In amazement they watched the form of the Lancashire lad.

Mark Linley received plenty of punishment from Bulstrode's heavy drives, which he could not always stop. But punishment had no effect on his spirit. His left eye was closed up, his

nose was swelling, and his mouth was cut, with a thin stream of red running from the corner. But he was game all through. And, hard as the punishment was, Bulstrode's was harder.

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "Lancashire wins!"

Bulstrode had gone down under a terrific right-hander, and he did not rise to time. He sat up, blinking and dazed. Snoop tapped him on the shoulder.

"You're not licked, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode snarled.

"Get away! Hang you! I'm done!"

Mark Linley turned away. He was a little unsteady himself; but Harry Wharton's hand supported him.

"Well done!" said Harry. "That's a lesson to Bulstrode, and I think it will be a lesson to the Remove. Come on. You want looking after now, old chap."

Bob Cherry helped Linley on with his jacket, and he walked away, leaning on Harry Wharton's arm still. Bulstrode glared after him sullenly, through half-closed eyes. But the looks of the other Removites were changed.

Pluck will always tell, and prowess in the fighting line always appealed to the Greyfriars Removites more than anything else. A fellow who could lick the bully of the Form was a fellow to be respected. And, strangely enough, but very pleasing to Mark Linley's ears, a cheer followed the boy who had not been wanted at Greyfriars.

(Another great yarn next week of the early schooldays of the Greyfriars chums. Make sure you don't miss "HEADING FOR TROUBLE!")

## THE SILENT WITNESS!

(Continued from page 21.)

Railton. "Come with me, Julian, and show me the film."

The Housemaster strode away, followed by Julian.

In five minutes Mr. Railton returned. His brow was like thunder.

The juniors hung on his words.

"Julian's film shows Merry's study with a boy leaving it," he said. "In the negative the boy in question looks decidedly like Levison. If you persist in your denial, Levison, the matter will be left till the print can be taken."

"It's still light enough, sir," said Julian. "It can be done to-day."

Levison bit his lip hard.

"That will settle the matter beyond all possible doubt. Have you anything to say, Levison?"

All eyes were upon the cad of the Fourth. His face was reddening and paling in turns. The toils had closed round him at last.

"I—I"—Levison spoke thickly—"I—I—The fact is, sir, I—I—I did it for a joke, sir. I meant to own up."

"You admit, Levison, that you substituted another film for the one in Manners' camera?"

Levison licked his dry lips. After the proof that he had been in Tom Merry's study, and after his denial of having been there, he knew that a lie would not serve him.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"You photographed Mr. Selby in the ditch, then, intending to play this trick on Manners? Doubtless you moved the plank to cause the accident, as you must have thought out this trick from the beginning," said Mr. Railton. "You will come with me to the Head, Levison."

Without a word Levison of the Fourth followed the Housemaster to the Head's study.

He left a joyous crowd behind him.

Manners was surrounded by a congratulating swarm of juniors, and Dick Julian came in for quite an ovation.

And while Tom Merry & Co. were rejoicing, there were sounds of anguish proceeding from the Head's study, where Levison was receiving the flogging of his life.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had announced that he would graciously

permit Julian to use that celebrated photograph of Study No. 6, in which Gussy was represented, up-ended by his affectionate chums. That was a reward of Julian's services in clearing Manners, and bringing Levison's guilt home to him.

But the swell of St. Jim's looked a little green when the result of the "Weekly Snap" competition was announced, and Julian's picture, having "bagged" the five-pound prize, was printed in the photographic journal. It was agreed that Julian deserved the prize; but Arthur Augustus shook his head very seriously over the picture.

After their tremendous expenditure on films, Study No. 6 were somewhat surprised and disappointed at not bagging the prize. But they congratulated Julian very heartily, and so did Manners, who secured the second prize.

As for Levison, all he had secured was a flogging, but it was agreed, too, that he richly deserved what he got.

(Next Wednesday: "SKIMPOLE THE BENEVOLENT!" You simply must read what happens when Skimpole comes into a small fortune. It's a scream! See that you order your GEM early.)

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