

COMING SHORTLY! GRAND FREE GIFTS FOR READERS!

The GEM ^{2d}



**THE LAUGH'S
ON LEVISON!**

2
WHEN A PLACE IN THE ST. JIM'S JUNIOR FOOTBALL TEAM FOR THE MATCH
VERSUS GREYFRIARS IS SOLD BY AUCTION!

SKIMPOLE'S



The bidding for a place in the St. Jim's team to play against Greyfriars mounted up briskly. "Fifteen pounds," said Kourmi Rao calmly. "Twenty!" responded Lumley-Lumley. "Guineas!" said the Jam. "Go it, Lumley!" exclaimed the juniors. "I guess I know when I've had enough!" said Lumley-Lumley.

CHAPTER 1.

A Good Suggestion Acted Upon!

BREAKING up the happy home?" Figgins of the Fourth asked the question.

Figgins & Co., the chums of the New House at St. Jim's, had just come over to the School House on important business.

They had arrived at the door of Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage, and there they paused. The study door stood wide open. Inside the study Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were busy—very busy.

The Terrible Three were in their shirtsleeves. They looked somewhat warm and dusty. They were, apparently, breaking up the happy home, as Figgins expressed it.

The study table stood on its side in THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 1,546.

the passage. Near it stood the study bookcase. It was not very easy to get along the passage between them. Several chairs and boxes were also piled in the passage.

The few articles that remained in the study were being stacked away into corners. Even the fender was up-ended in the corner.

Figgins & Co. gazed into the study in astonishment.

"Moving job?" asked Kerr.

"Selling off at a sacrifice?" grinned Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry waved a dusty hand at the three fellows from the New House.

"You New House bounders buzz off!" he said. "Can't you see we're busy?"

"Yes; you look busy," agreed Figgins, "and rather dusty. If it's a sale I'll go twopence for the bookcase." "It isn't a sale, fathead!"

"Then what the dickens is it?" demanded the puzzled Figgins. "It can't

be that you're simply tidying up. You School House chaps never clean up unless your Housemaster comes down on you!"

"Buzz off!"

"But we've come over to see you," objected Figgins.

"Well, take a good look, and clear!"

"About the Greyfriars match," said Figgins.

"Never mind the Greyfriars match now."

"But I do mind," said Figgins warmly. "It's jolly important. It's about playing a chap of my House in the eleven, you know. I'm backing up his claims."

"The eleven for the Greyfriars match is made up already, my infant," said Tom Merry. "No; we won't take up the carpet, Manners. Too much jolly trouble to get it down again. We'll make the fags wipe their feet before

A SPARKLING LONG YARN OF FUN AND FOOTER, DESCRIBING TOM MERRY & CO.'S AMAZING AND AMUSING EFFORTS TO "RAISE THE WIND" FOR SKIMPOLE.

SCRAP! /



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

they come in. There'll be plenty of room, anyway."

"I say—" recommenced Figgins.

"Hallo! Are you still there?"

"Yes," roared Figgins, "I'm still here. About that New House chap I was speaking of—"

"Never mind the New House chap you were speaking of. No time now to bother about New House chaps, or any microbes of that sort. Nearly time to get washed, you chaps. They'll be along soon."

"Is it a meeting?" demanded Kerr.

"Yes, it's a meeting. Good-bye!"

"If it's a footer club meeting—" began Figgins.

"It isn't. Good-bye!"

"Now, look here, Tom Merry—"

"My dear chap," said Tom Merry, with exemplary patience, "we're busy. We're going to hold a meeting—a very important meeting—and we're making room for it. We've got to get ready for the meeting. The chaps will be

along soon. Now, run away, like a good little boy!"

Instead of running away like a good little boy, Figgins of the Fourth clenched a pair of large fists and stepped into the study.

"Who are you calling a 'good little boy'?" he demanded truculently.

"Well, like a bad little boy, then," said Tom Merry. "Anything for a quiet life."

"Yes, buzz off!" said Monty Lowther. "This is a very important meeting, for

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*Finding forty pounds in a week to meet Skimpole's debt gets the chums of St. Jim's guessing. But if funds are lacking, fun and excitement isn't!*

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a very important person, for a very important purpose! No dogs or New House kids admitted!"

"Something up against the New House, I suppose?" said Figgins suspiciously.

"My dear kid, I'd forgotten there was such a place as the New House," said Tom Merry calmly.

"School House fathead!"

"New House ass!"

"About the eleven for Greyfriars—that's got to be settled."

"It is settled."

"It isn't settled!" roared Figgins. "You said yourself that Koumi Rao was going to have a chance in the footer. I'm backing up his claims. And he's a New House chap. You can leave Lowther out to make room for him."

"Why, you cheeky ass—" exclaimed Lowther indignantly.

"Or Gussy," said Figgins. "Gussy's not much good, anyway."

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"Bai Jove!" said a voice in the doorway, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth came in. "I wegard that remark as simply idiotic, Figgins, as well as extremely personal. Tom Mewwy, what are these New House boundahs doin' here? I undahstood that the meetin' was exclusively School House."

"So it is," said Tom Merry. "This rubbish has blown in as the door was open."

"Why, you chump—" said Figgins. "Pway wun away, Figgy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This meetin' is a strictly pwivate concern. We are not acquaintin' the whole school with the mattah. It is, in fact, a secwet. In the cires we have decided to keep Skimpole's troubles to ourselves, and help him out—"

"Shut up, Gussy!" roared Tom Merry.

"Weally, deah boy, I am not goin' to tell Figgins anythin'. I quite approve of makin' a House mattah of it, as Skimpole is a School House chap. We don't want to make it the talk of St. Jim's. Those New House wottahs would simply cackle ovah it. I shall wufuse to tell Figgins one word."

"So Skimpole's in trouble, is he?" said Figgins, in wonder.

"Yaas—I mean, I shall wufuse to answah that question, Figgy. I wegard it as a leadin' question. Sowwy you should be left out, but it's quite a pwivate mattah, and, besides, we could not expect the New House to subscribe to the fund."

"So there's going to be a fund?" said the astonished Figgins.

"I decline to inform you whethah there is goin' to be a fund or not. As I have already remarked, it is a secwet. Besides, we can waise forty pounds without you New House boundahs chippin' in, I hope."

"Forty pounds!" roared Figgins.

"What on earth do you want to raise forty pounds for?" howled Kerr, in astonishment.

"If it's for a feed, it would be a regular whacker, and no mistake!" said Fatty Wynn, his eyes glistening.

"I wufuse to give you any information, Figgins. You need not glare at me, Tom Mewwy. I am not goin' to tell Figgins anythin'. I pwesume I can be trusted with a secwet."

Figgins & Co. grinned. Arthur Augustus' method of keeping a secret left them very little to discover.

"What on earth has Skimpole been doing?" asked Figgins. "I suppose you haven't got to bail him out, or anything like that?"

"Wats! It was only a mistake of Skimmy's. He weally thought the money was his, and he used it; so when—"

"Will you dry up?" howled Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Hallo!" said Jack Blake, as he came in with Herries and Digby of the Fourth. "Time for the meeting. You Shell bounders look pretty dusty. Do you generally hold meetings in your shirtsleeves?"

Several more juniors came along the passage—Noble, Glyn and Dane, and Talbot and Gore of the Shell, and Reilly, Lumley-Lumley, Levison and Hammond of the Fourth. They crowded in, and still more footsteps were heard coming. Evidently it was to be a numerous meeting, and the Terrible Three had done wisely in shifting the study furniture into the passage.

"New House bounders here!" exclaimed Glyn. "Wasn't this going to

be a School House meeting, and on the Q. T.?"

Tom Merry grunted.

"They may as well stay now—Gussy's told them all about it," he said.

"Why, Gussy, you ass—"

"Bai Jove, I wepudiate the insinuation!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "Tom Mewwy, how dare you make such a statement! I have repeatedly stated that I wufused to tell Figgins anythin'!"

"Kick the bounders out!" suggested Blake.

"Rats! We don't want to stay to your silly old meeting!" said Figgins scornfully. "Keep it and boil it! Still, if that ass Skimpole is in trouble, we'd be willing to lend a hand at getting him out of it, if required."

"That is the wight spiwit, Figgins," said Arthur Augustus. "You seemed to have nosed it out somehow, aftah all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I pwesume that some silly ass has been chattewin'—"

"Exactly," grinned Figgins. "That's just how it was—a silly ass has been chattering."

"Gentlemen," said Arthur Augustus, looking round, his eyeglass gleaming in his eye, "you are all aware that this meetin' and the object of this meetin'—"

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Wednesday's Number!

was to be kept strictly pwivate. Figgins states that a silly ass has been chattewin', and so he has got on to it. I suggest that Figgins be called upon to name the person he is aliudin' to, and that the person be forthwith bumped for bein' such a chattewin' ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any weason for laughin'. Gentlemen, I put the suggestion to the meetin', and call for a vote."

"Hear, hear!"

"Passed unanimously!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very well, Figgins, deah boy, I call upon you to name the silly ass whose widiculous chattewin' has enlightened you concernin' this meetin'!"

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

Arthur Augustus gazed round him in astonishment. He did not see any reason for the general outburst of merriment.

"Pway be sewious, deah boys," he remonstrated. "Figgins, will you give that name or will you not give that name?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Unless you uttah that name at once, Figgins, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I have no resource but to give the name," said Figgins seriously. "Gentlemen, the silly ass whose ridiculous chattering has enlightened me concerning this meeting is named Arthur Augustus Adolphus Fathend D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Bump him!"

"Weally, Figgins—weally, deah boys—hands off! I wufuse to be bumped, and I considah—you uttah wottahs! Leggo at once, you feahful beasts! Yowwwwwww!"

Bump, bump, bump!

CHAPTER 2.

Skimpole's Scrape!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat on the study floor and gasped for breath.

It was a full minute before he recovered sufficiently to pick himself up. Then he jumped up and pushed back his cuffs.

"You uttah wottahs—"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "Justice having been done, according to D'Arcy's own suggestion, the meeting will now proceed!"

"Collar him!"

Arthur Augustus was rushing upon Tom Merry, but he was promptly collared by Blake, Herries, and Digby. "Take him back to Study No. 6 and lock him in!" said Tom Merry.

"I wufuse to be locked in. I wufuse to allow this meetin' to pwocceed without me. I considah—"

"Chuck him out!"

"I wufuse to be chucked out! I—"

"Will you keep order, then?" demanded Tom Merry. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy, kicking up a row at a public meeting. Where are your manners?"

"Why, you uttah wottah—"

"Order!"

"I wufuse to ordah—I mean—Blake, leave off dwaggin' at my eahs, you wottah! In the cires I will thwash those wottahs aftah the meetin'."

And Arthur Augustus subsided, and was allowed to remain.

He snorted with indignation as he proceeded to dust his beautiful bags, which had suffered somewhat from contact with the study floor.

"What about those New House boundahs?" asked Manners.

"Oh, let 'em stay! They know all about it, thanks to Gussy."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Talbot suggested lettin' the New House into it," said Tom Merry. "Your suggestion is adopted, Talbot, nem. con."

Talbot of the Shell smiled.

"Well, it seemed to me really a matter for the whole school," he said. "But, of course, I only made a suggestion."

"I always said Talbot was the only chap in the School House with any brains to speak of," remarked Figgins. "Still, if you fellows want us to clear, we'll clear. We don't want to nose into anything."

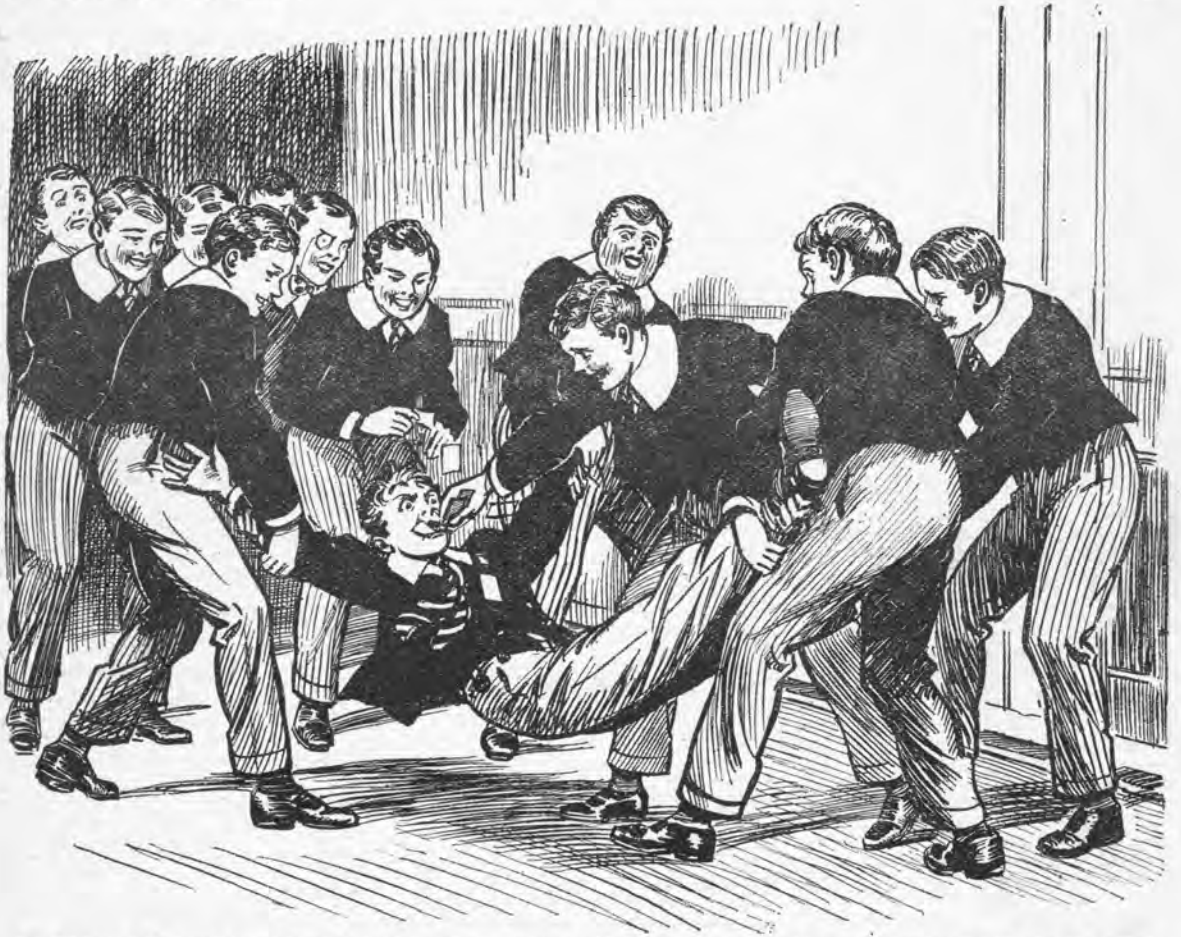
"Better stay," said Talbot.

"Yes, stay," said Tom Merry. "It's barely possible you may be able to make some suggestion. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I think we're all here," said Tom Merry, looking round.

Kerruish and Mulvaney minor had come in, and Croke, Skimpole, Julian, and two or three others. Skimpole, the genius of the Shell, was blinking in a dreamy way through his big spectacles. The meeting was all about



In the grasp of many hands Figgins was helpless. "Groooh!" he gurgled as Hammond proceeded to stuff the tickets into his mouth. "Swear to keep clear of the cooking and we'll come to the feed," said Lowther. "Gurrrrrr!" was all the New House leader could say.

Skimpole, but he did not seem very much concerned.

If Herbert Skimpole was in trouble, evidently the person who was least worried about it was Herbert Skimpole himself.

Although nearly every article of furniture had been cleared out into the passage, preparatory to the meeting, there was not too much room. There was "standing room only," and the standing was pretty close.

Some of the fellows did not know what the meeting was about, and had been brought along only by curiosity.

"Shut the door," said Tom Merry, who had donned his jacket again. "Gentlemen, the meeting has now—er—met—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Skimpole! Bring that ass Skimpole forward!"

"My dear Merry, I am here," said Skimpole, blinking at the captain of the Shell. "I understand that you wish me to speak."

"Yes, ass! Get on that stool and explain to the meeting."

"Go it, Skimmy!"

"With pleasure, my dear friends!" said Skimpole, getting on the stool and beaming over the crowded assembly through his big glasses. "Gentlemen, as you are aware, I am the sole representative in this school of Deterministic opinions—"

"Ring off, you ass! That isn't the subject."

"It is with much pleasure that I see this meeting gathered together to listen

to a speech on the subject of Determinism," pursued Skimpole.

"Cheese it!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Levison of the Fourth indignantly. "Do you mean to say that you've brought us here to listen to that?"

"No, no! Skimmy is offside. Skimmy, you ass, explain to the meeting about the cheques, and the mistake, and the rest of it."

"My dear Merry, it would be a waste of time alluding to such trivial matters, while the burning question of Determinism remains—"

"But that's what the meeting's about!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Then let it pass," said Skimpole.

"Let us turn to more serious subjects. Gentlemen, in presenting the case of Determinism to you, I will take a simple illustration. Suppose there were two men on an island—"

"Scrag him!"

"Bump him!"

Several hands were laid upon Skimpole, and the stool was kicked from under his feet. Apparently the meeting wasn't prepared to listen to a speech on the subject of Determinism, burning as that question was.

Skimpole came to the floor with a bump, and several boots kindly helped him out of the way.

"I'd better explain," said Tom Merry. "No good trying to get that ass to talk sense."

"Pewwaps you had bettah leave it to me, Tom Mewwy," suggested

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I will put it to the meetin'—"

"Order!"

"Oh, I don't care!" said Tom. "Let Gussy jaw; he will jaw, anyway, I suppose."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, that is not a vewy wespectful way of puttin' it. Howevah, I feel that I am the most appropwiate person to address the meetin', as a fellow of tact and judgment, and of few words!"

"The fewer the better," said Crooke of the Shell.

"Pway don't intewwupt, Cwooke, and please do leave off jinglin' your money in your twousahs pocket—it wowwies me. We all know that you are fwightfully wick, Cwooke, but you need not keep on jinglin' your money!"

"Is this meeting about Skimpole, or about Crooke?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I wish you would not intewwupt. Lowthah. Your wemarks put me out. Gentlemen, I will now pwocceed to explain. Our wespected fwied Skimpole—of course, that is only a figuah of speech, as it is impos to wespect a fellow who holds such astonishin' ideahs, and actually pwoposed that membahs of the House of Lords should be tweated as twamps unless they get to work—"

"For goodness' sake cut the cackile, Gussy!"

"Our wespected fwied Skimpole has got himself into a fwightful difficulty. He is in debt to the tune of fortyay

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pounds. I will explain to you how this happened in a few words."

"A few thousand, more likely!" groaned Blake.

"Our respected friend Skimpole is, as you all know, a silly idiot!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Among his othah widdleous ideahs, he thinks he is an inventah. He has invented a widdleous airship, and he was ass enough to send the plans to a papah called the 'Flying Times.' They sent him a couple of cheques, for instalments in payment, and he was silly idiot to believe that they were buyin' his silly airship. Bein', among other varieties of idiocy, a Determinist, he spent all the money as soon as he could get the cheques cashed, the only sensible thing he did bein' to stand some wathah nobby feeds."

"Hear, hear!"

"Then it came out, as Skimmy might have known, if he hadn't been a howlin' duffah, that the cheques were sent to him in mistake. They were weally intended for a man named H. Skimpoll, who appears to have complained about not weceivin' his money, and so it came out the cheques had been sent to the wong Skimpole. But by that time the howlin' ass had spent all the money. Mr. Skimpoll came here to weclaim it, and Skimmy had only a halfpenny left. Natuwallly, Mr. Skimpoll was not satisfied with that."

"Naturally," grinned Blake.

"He demanded the weturn of the money, but Skimmy was stony. In order to keep him frowm goin' to the headmastah about it, we undahtook to find the money. It is a mattah of forty pounds. If weported to the Head, Skimmy will get into a wow, and the bill will be sent to his patah. I understand that his patah will give him a feahful thwashin', and will stop his allowance entirely for a yeah or more, accordin' to the time it takes to pay the forty pounds. We gardin' Skimmy as a born idiot, we came to the conclusion that it was up to us to see him through."

"Hear, hear!"

"Skimmy owes Mr. Skimpoll forty pounds. It has got to be paid. We have undahtaken to pprovide the money, by hook or by cwook, as we wegard it as a debt of honah. We are goin' to save Skimmy frowm gettin' into a feahful wow. That is how the mattah stands. This meetin' is called to considah ways and means of waisin' the money. It is a large sum."

"My only hat!" said Figgins. "Where in thunder are you going to raise forty pounds? It's a giddy fortune!"

"A collection will be taken, to start with. Then we have got to put our heads together, and make suggestions. Evewy fellow with ideahs on the subject of waisin' the wind will be welcome to make suggestions. In any case, the forty pounds has got to be waised by next week. Aftah the meetin', gentlemen will wetiah and weffect upon the mattah, and send in their suggestions. Gentlemen, we will now pceed to the collection."

"Lemne get to the door, please," said Crooke. "I've got my prep to do."

"Same here," remarked Levison.

"Pway do not wetiah until the collection is taken, deah boys. Especially you, Cwooke, as you are wollin' in money. I considah that you might stand a couple of pounds."

"Catch me!" said Crooke disdainfully.

"How much will you stand, then?"

"The Gem Library.—No. 1,546.

"My dear chap, I can't even stand you!" said Crooke.

And he walked out of the study, whistling.

"Bai Jove! I wegard Cwooke as a wank wottah. Tom Mewwy, have you somethin' for collectin' the cash in—somethin' large?"

"There's the coal-scuttle," said Monty Lowther. "If that isn't large enough we might borrow a sack from Taggles."

"Try the inkpot," suggested Levison.

"Weally, Levison, the inkpot would not hold wewy much money."

"I dare say it will hold the collection, though," grinned Levison.

And Levison departed from the study, and there was a general exodus after him.

"Bai Jove! Where are you fellows goin'? The collection hasn't been taken yet," shouted Arthur Augustus.

Half the meeting had dissolved already. The other half remained, generously going through their pockets.

"Have you finished, D'Arcy?" asked Skimpole.

"Yaas, deah boy."

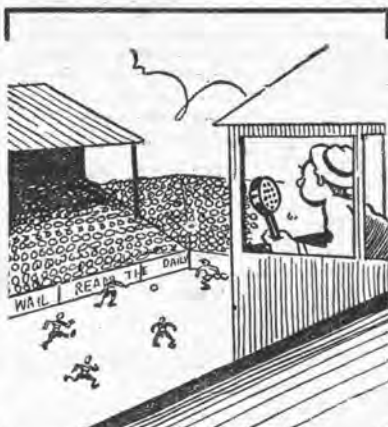
"Then I will now address the meetin' on the subject of Determinism—"

Skimpole got no further. Tom Merry took him gently but firmly by the ear, led him into the passage, and kicked him.

Skimpole disappeared from the scene.

Monty Lowther produced an ancient teapot, minus spout and handle, and took it round the meeting.

Arthur Augustus started the collection with a pound. But all the juniors were not so well provided with cash as the swell of St. Jim's. Very few of



Wireless Commentator: "I can see grim determination gleaming in the eyes of all the Rovers!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Myers, 29, Brook Street, Tottenham, London, N.

them were, in fact. There was quite a generbus contribution; everybody wanted to help that ass Skimpole out of his scrape. But the coins that rattled into the old teapot were mostly of copper.

Each fellow departed after making his contribution. The meeting dissolved quickly. At length only the Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6 remained in the room. Then Lowther turned out the teapot upon the table, and the money was counted up.

"One pound nine-and-six!" said Tom Merry.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Blake. "That's a quid from Gussy, and nine-and-six from the rest of the meeting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It is not weally a laugh-in' mattah," said Arthur Augustus. "We have pledged cur honah to see Skimmy through. Somethin' has got to be done."

"Something has!" agreed Tom Merry.

"We have pwomised Mr. Henwy Skimpoll his forty pounds. It has got to be waised somehow."

"The only thing I can think of," said Monty Lowther reflectively, "is to suggest to Mr. Skimpoll that we pay him on the instalment plan."

"Pway don't be funny, Lowthah. I wegard this as bein' a wathah wotten outlook for the forty pounds."

And the Co. agreed it was.

CHAPTER 3.

Up To Figgins & Co.

"IT'S up to us!" remarked Figgins. Figgins & Co. were at tea in their study in the New House.

The great Figgins had been thinking. The outcome of his unaccustomed mental exercise was stated in his remark.

"It's up to us!" repeated Figgins. "Those School House duffers will never be able to raise the money. It's really a debt of honour, as Tom Merry calls it, and it ought to be paid—and that idiot Skimpole will get into a frightful row if it isn't paid. But those School House chaps haven't the brains for a thing like this. It's up to us to help them out, if only to prove once more that the New House is cock House of St. Jim's."

"Ye-es," said Fatty Wynn. "Pass the cake, Figgy!"

"Forty pounds is a lot of money," said Kerr. "Bet you they won't make much of it by taking collections. Collections aren't much good."

Figgins shook his head.

"Utterly rotten!" he agreed. "Just like those School House chaps. People don't give away something for nothing. It will have to be a fund, and fellows will have to get something for their money. What about a concert, and high prices for admission?"

"Nobody would come."

"H'm! What about a performance by the Dramatic Club?"

"Fellows would have to be paid to come to see it."

"Oh, rot!" said Figgins uneasily. "It isn't so bad as all that. We could raise a pound or two in that way. But forty quid is such a big sum. What do you think, Fatty? Got any suggestions to make?"

"Yes; I think we'd better have the other cake now," said Fatty Wynn. "What's the good of keeping it till to-morrow. Something may turn up before to-morrow."

"Listen to him!" said Figgins, in disgust. "I didn't mean a suggestion about filling your unearthly inside, you porpoise! About Skimpole's fund."

"Oh, that!" said Fatty Wynn. "Yes, I dare say I could think of a wheeze. What about a feed?"

"A what?" roared Figgins.

"A whacking feed."

"You thumping ass! How can we help the fund by having a feed?"

"I mean a subscription feed," explained Fatty Wynn. "Lots of tuck—"

STARTING A STAMP COLLECTION

Whether or not you are a beginner in philately, you will find many useful hints in this interesting article.

HAVEN'T you ever been intrigued by some new foreign stamp—wanted to know what it means, where it comes from?

Of course you have! Well, be proud of this interest, let it grow. In short, become a stamp collector. You'll never regret it.

Now, before we come to the more practical side of the hobby, let's just consider for a moment exactly what being a stamp collector is. In the first place, it is showing an interest in postage stamps. At one time collectors used to hoard all and sundry pieces of printed, stamp-like matter, hospital



WEAPONS.—The daggers in this stamp's borders are the Malay's deadly kris.

tended to do duty in genuine postage ways only. Even so, there's more than fifty thousand different varieties available, so there's still plenty of scope left.

STUDY YOUR STAMPS.

A queer idea many people have about stamp collecting is that everything depends on the number of specimens you own. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for if this were so, it would mean that only the person with the very large purse could think about the hobby. Admittedly, it is the hobby of kings and kings of finance, and admittedly, too, it is nice to increase one's collection; but it is knowing your stamps that's the important thing, and here the humblest schoolboy is on an equal footing with the richest collector.

Examine stamps which come your way until you could say blindfold where such and such a detail appears, what it means, why it's there. Tiresome swotting, this? Not a bit of it! It's just commonsense, which gives a rich reward of pleasure. A model ship-builder never stops studying ships and all connected with them—and enjoys doing so. The same is true of the stamp collector. And, as stamps touch on nearly every subject under the sun, your interest in them will polish up your geography, your history, and your knowledge of everyday affairs.

STAMPS TO BUY.

Of course, unless you have generous friends ready to keep you supplied with stamps, the money side of collecting is an item, but don't let a limited amount of pocket-money bar you from trying collecting, and, above all, don't let "how-much-shall-I-make-on-this-stamp?" become the be-all and end-all of the hobby.

If you're just starting a collection your local stamp dealer (if you have one) will gladly supply you, or you could buy through the post from any reputable dealer, say, one advertising in your favourite paper. And what to buy?

If you're an absolute beginner, go in for packets of "all different." Buy the largest assortment you reasonably can. After that, buy "continent" collections, and when you've progressed a bit and got more experience, go in for collections of certain countries which interest you.

Individual



HISTORY.—Jugo-Slavia treads herself of the Austro-Hungarian yoke.

stamps and sets should be left, generally, until you've a fair-sized collection and you've outgrown the all-different packet stage. By then you'll know something about what and what not to buy.

In the early stages, don't let forgeries worry you overmuch. Most of the stamps you'll be handling will be cheap (from a monetary, although certainly not an interest, point of view) and not worth a forger risking his neck counterfeiting them. And even if you do come across forgeries, hang on to them as genuinely interesting items of what to avoid later on.

GUM GIVES THE GAME AWAY.

The "doubtfuls" you're most likely to encounter are reprints. These are



EXPLORATION.—Brave Captain Cook on a stamp of one of the islands he discovered.

As these reprints savour much more of the genuine article (they're at least printed from the original printing-plates) than does a forgery, and as they're often replicas of very valuable stamps, they're well worth hanging on to.

So far, no mention has been made of your stamp-album. This is very important—at the right time. But don't be in too much of a hurry to get one. Next week we'll talk about albums and all the fun you can have getting stamps ready for them.

In this preliminary article the vital thing is to see that you adopt the right attitude towards the hobby, so let's repeat the advice already given. Examine your stamps as often as you can. Get on nodding terms, and one day you'll be on speaking terms, but this won't be until you've studied them, and studied them again.

every fellow to eat as much as he likes of the very best—and all the profits to go to the fund. Tickets two shillings, you know."

"But we should have to buy the tuck."

"Buy it cheap in big quantities, and do the cooking ourselves," said Fatty Wynn. "Look at a twopenny jam tart!"

Figgins looked round.

"I can't see any jam tarts here," he said.

"I mean look at it—think of it! A twopenny jam tart costs twopenny. Well, I can make jam tarts—you know I'm a jolly good cook. I could make, say, five hundred—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"At a cost of about a halfpenny each. Think of the profit. We could give the fellows two bobs' worth of tuck at a cost of about a tanner each. And we could do that."

Figgins rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Might be something in that," he confessed. "It wouldn't raise all that's wanted, but it might raise a good whack towards it. Anyway, it would give the New House a start, and show those School House duffers the way. Hallo, come in!"

There was a tap at the study door. The door opened, and a dusky youth, with dark, velvety eyes and gleaming white teeth, came in.

It was Koumi Rao, the Jam of Bundelpore, the Indian junior, who honoured Figgins of the Fourth with his distinguished friendship.

"Trot in, Jammy," said Figgins hospitably. "You're late! But there are some muffins left. Fatty hasn't had time to scoff them all."

Koumi Rao dropped into a chair at the study table.

"You have seen the footer captain?" he asked.

Figgins looked a little glum.

"Yes, I've seen Tom Merry, Jammy,

but he was holding a fatheaded meeting in his study, so I wasn't able to jaw him," he said. "I'm afraid there isn't much chance of shoving you into the eleven to play Greyfriars."

"Why not?" demanded the Jam, his black eyes gleaming. "Am I not a good player? Why should I not play?"

"You see, Tom Merry is junior captain, and his giddy word is law," explained Figgins. "And I really don't feel sure that you could go into the team on your form. You are very good, but we've got mighty footballers in the Lower School at St. Jim's, Jammy. Somebody else would have to be left out, and Tom Merry would have to give a good reason for shifting him. However, I'll have another try. You see, it's one of our biggest matches, if not the biggest. Tommy will play you fast enough against Abbotsford or Rookwood."

"But I wish to play against Greyfriars."

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Figgins & Co. grinned. Experience in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's had somewhat tamed the high and lofty pride of the Prince of Bundelpore, who had first come to the school with an idea of being monarch of all he surveyed. But the Jam was still sometimes high and mighty.

It was difficult for him to understand that the wishes of the Prince of Bundelpore did not count any higher than the wishes of any other fag in the Fourth.

"We'll see what can be done," said Figgins. "Anyway, I'm putting you into the New House junior team for the next House match."

"But it is against Greyfriars that I wish to play. I know one of the Greyfriars boys, the Nabob of Bhanipur, and I should like to play because he's coming with the Greyfriars team."

"Well, I'll give Tom Merry another jaw," said Figgins. "Anything for a quiet life. We'll let you look on, anyway."

The Jam frowned. "Perhaps if I make Merry a present he will put me into the eleven," he suggested.

"Eh?" "I will give him a diamond ring." "Ha, ha, ha!" "Why do you laugh at me?" asked the Jam, as the chums of the New House burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Figgins. "Jammy, you old duffer, won't you ever understand that you're in England, and not in India? If you offered Tom Merry a present to put you in the team he would punch your nose."

"In India we give presents when we desire a favour to be done," said the Jam. "It is our custom."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "In England, too, I have heard that such things are done," said the Jam sarcastically. "In your business houses, when you wish to get a contract you give a present, is it not so?"

"Well, I dare say such things have happened," admitted Figgins, "but it isn't considered playing the game; only rotters do it."

"You call me a rotter?" demanded the Jam.

"Bow-wow! If you fly into a rage at everything I say, Jammy, I shall rub your princely nose in the carpet," said Figgins. "For mercy's sake, don't let's have any sulks now. Your friend Figgins is worried."

Koumi Rao's face cleared at once. "If the friend of my heart is in trouble, Koumi Rao is ready to die for him," he said softly.

"Hum! Are you insured?" grinned Figgins.

"Insured? No. Why?" "Then it's no good dying for me. If you were insured for forty pounds, it would be a different matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "My friend turns my words into a jest," said the Jam. "If it is money that is desired, behold!"

The Jam jerked out a wallet and opened it, and displayed a wedge of banknotes inside. The Jam had plenty of money.

Figgins shook his head.

"I'm not going to rob you, Jammy. I'll let you contribute a quid to the fund, if you like, same as Gussy has. But you can take it over to Tom Merry yourself."

"And then he will put me into the eleven!"

"No!" roared Figgins.

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"Suppose I give him five pounds?" "Oh, my hat!" groaned Figgins. "Go and offer Tom Merry five quid to put you in the eleven, if you want to leave his study by the window. Blessed if you won't turn your uncle's hair grey, Jammy. I won't let you contribute to the fund now, you're such an ass! Put that blessed money away."

"But what is the fund?" asked the Jam.

Figgins explained. "Bah!" said the Jam. "This fool—Skimpole—what does he matter? Why should he trouble you? He is not your friend."

"Not exactly a pal," said Figgins. "But he's a silly ass and he's in a scrape, and we're all trying to help him out of it, you know."

"But why?" "Oh, my hat! Because a chap does do these things, you know," said Figgins lucidly. "I'll tell you what, you can take a ticket for Fatty Wynn's feed. We'll arrange that, you chaps, and fix it for Saturday. We may as well draw up the notice now. You can cut up some cardboard into tickets, Jammy, and write 'Two bob' on each of them, and number them."

"While the stars shine, and the rivers roll, I shall always be at the service of my friend," said the Jam, in his grandiloquent style. "Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "That's rather flowery, but I suppose it means that you're willing to be useful. There's the card, and there's the scissors. Now we'll get on with the notice."

And while Koumi Rao was busy in the manufacture of the tickets, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn put their heads together over a striking notice, which was to be posted up simultaneously in both Houses.

When it was finished Figgins made a second copy, and left the study. He posted up the first notice, written by Kerr, in the New House. His copy he carried over to the School House.

In the School House he pinned it on the notice-board, and as he scudded away he had the satisfaction of seeing a gathering to read it.

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CHAPTER 4.

Levison Makes a Suggestion!

"BAI Jove! That New House boundah stickin' up a notice on our board!"

"Yank it down!" "Like his cheek!" "Let's look at it first," said Talbot of the Shell.

"Hallo! Figgys is getting to work already. This is for the fund!"

A big crowd of juniors read the notice eagerly. It was in Figgys's big, sprawling handwriting.

"NOTICE!"

ON SATURDAY next a feed will be held in the Common-room in the New House.

The best of everything will be provided.

Every fellow will be welcome to eat as much as he likes, of the very best! No limit!

Admission Two Shillings!

Tickets may be had from David Wynn, Esq., New House. Only cash accepted. Fellows who are hard up and would like to go in on the nod are respectfully and courteously requested to go and eat coke.

All profits go to the Skimpole Scrape Fund.

(Signed) GEORGE FIGGINS.

"Fancy that New House ass getting to work already!" exclaimed Blake.

"It's rather like his cheek! This comes of letting New House bounders into it."

"All the better," said Tom Merry. "We'll all take tickets, and I suppose there will be a profit, and every little helps. It's jolly decent of old Figgins to play up like this to get a School House chap out of a scrape."

"Yaas, wathah! It's wathah cheeky, but I approve."

"That's the last word," remarked Lowther. "Blake, you hear what Gussy says; he approves! Now lie down!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's a good idea," decided Tom Merry. "I only hope they won't let Figgins do any of the cooking, that's all. I remember the time he made a fig-pudding—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, yaas!" said Arthur Augustus, with a shudder. "Before I hand out my two shillings I shall insist upon an assurance that Figgins does not have a hand in the cookin'."

There was another notice on the board, in Tom Merry's hand. It ran: "Suggestions are invited for the Skimpole Scrape Fund. Apply to Tom Merry, No. 30 in the Shell passage."

Tom Merry had already received a good many suggestions.

Arthur Augustus had suggested that he should give a "wecital," promising any number of tenor solos, fellows to be charged, say, five shillings admission. To which Tom Merry had replied that the fellows would want to charge Arthur Augustus five shillings each all round to come and listen to his tenor solos, and that wouldn't help the fund—rather the reverse.

Having read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, so to speak, George Figgins' announcement, the Terrible Three went to their study to do their preparation.

They were thus occupied when Levison of the Fourth tapped at the door and came in.

The chums of the Shell gave him somewhat grim looks.

The cad of the Fourth was not popular in that study. Of all the School

House fellows, Talbot of the Shell was the only decent chap who seemed to be able to see any good in Levison. Levison's pals, Crooke and Mellish, were even blacker sheep than himself.

"Well?" said Tom Merry concisely. "I've looked in to make a suggestion, if you care to hear it," said Levison.

"Go ahead!"

"Good egg!" said Lowther heartily. "Hand it over, Levison; there's the teapot. I remember now you had a quid out of Skimpole when he got the money. Your idea is to hand it back, of course."

Levison grinned.

"Not exactly," he replied. "That quid has gone the way of a good many other quids. Skimmy can't start in business as a Determinist without its costing him something. That's not the idea. But I can suggest a way for a good bit of cash to be raised."

"We'll be obliged if you can," said Tom Merry. "We've promised to pay the debt next week, and it's got to be done, but I'm blessed if I see at present where the money is to come from."

"You're meeting the Greyfriars team next week," said Levison.

Tom Merry stared.

"Yes; but what has that to do with the fund?"

"I'm coming to that. I suppose you've made up the team that's going to play Greyfriars on Wednesday?"

"Yes."

"You three in it, of course?" said Levison, with a sneering smile.

"Not us three," said Tom Merry quietly. "Manners is out. If you're curious about the team, you can read the list when it's up."

"No room for a rank outsider like me?"

"Hardly."

"Of a chap like Crooke?"

"Crooke! Crooke can't play footer, and he doesn't like the game, either."

"He would give a good bit to be able to say that he'd played in the junior eleven, all the same, against Greyfriars."

"Well, he won't have a chance of saying it as long as I'm captain. If he cares to give up smoking and rotting about, and to take up regular exercise and practice, he'll have as much chance as anybody else, of course!"

"He won't do that; but he'd like to play once, for the sake of swank."

"The St. Jim's second eleven, my son, was not instituted as a swanking-ground for bounders like Crooke."

"Well, here's my suggestion. Crooke isn't the only chap. There's that nigger in the New House, rolling in money, the same as Crooke. There's myself, too; I'd like to get into the eleven for once. And there are others. Suppose you held an auction—"

"An auction?"

"Yes; and offered, say, four of the places in the team to the highest bidders."

"Wha-a-at!"

"You'd get some thumping good bids, and, even if you got four shaky players, you'd have a good chance of beating Greyfriars, all the same, with seven good men in the team. Anyway, you'd raise a big lump for the fund."

Tom Merry stared at him. He could scarcely believe that Levison was serious.

"Put up the places in the junior eleven to auction!" he repeated. "Is that meant for a joke, Levison?"

"Not at all; it's a suggestion."

"You must be off your rocker, I think."



"Darn it! I told you to keep an eye on that cat!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Baker, 3, College Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

"Don't you think it would raise a good bit for the fund?" said Levison. "You could get the consent of the club and the committee."

"It might," said Tom Merry. "But I certainly shouldn't think of doing anything of the sort."

"Swanking duffers like Crooke would jump at the chance," said Levison.

"And what sort of a game would they put up against Greyfriars?" demanded Tom Merry.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, the Skimpole Fund comes before a footer match, I suppose?" he remarked.

"Then your supposer is out of gear," said Tom Merry dryly. "If you're not pulling my leg, I think you must be dotty."

"Then you won't act on the suggestion?"

"No!"

"Of all the caddish rot I ever heard of—" began Lowther.

Levison flushed.

"I might have expected that kind of thanks," he said. "My idea was to do you a good turn, and Skimpole one. Not that I care two straws about you, or Skimpole, either; but—" he paused.

"But what?" said Tom Merry curiously.

"Well, I don't mind telling you. Skimmy is Talbot's studymate, and Talbot is awfully keen about getting him out of this scrape. And I'd do anything I could to do Talbot a good turn. He's the only one in your set who has ever treated me decently. As for you, personally, you can go and eat coke!"

"Thanks!" said Tom Merry. "I suppose you mean well, Levison; but—but—well, it's not a suggestion we can use, that's all. But we're much obliged, and—we thank you for making it."

"Keep your thanks!"

Levison swung out of the study, and slammed the door after him. The Terrible Three looked at one another oddly, and Lowther burst into a laugh. "Queer beggar!" he said. "It's odd how he sticks to Talbot. Talbot's the only decent fellow who can stand Levison, and whom Levison can stand. But the idea of selling places in the junior eleven—it's rather thick! Even when that chap is trying to do a fellow a good turn, he's bound to come out with something caddish."

"It would raise the wind," grinned Manners. "That swanking ass Crooke

would ladle out quids to be able to brag of having played in the junior eleven in the biggest match of the season."

"He won't have the chance," said Tom Merry dryly.

And the Terrible Three went on with their preparation without the slightest idea of making use of Levison's valuable suggestion.

CHAPTER 5.

Figgins Swears!

"WALK up, gentlemen!" "Tickets two shillings!" "Walk up! Walk up!"

It was after morning lessons the next day. Figgins & Co. had taken up their stand in the Form-room passage. Each of them had a sheaf of tickets.

Tickets for the Fund Feed were now on sale. Figgins & Co. evidently expected to do a roaring business, judging by the number of tickets they were provided with.

"Back up, you fellows!" sang out Figgins. "Only two bob a time, and the best feed that's ever been seen within the ancient and historic walls of St. Jim's. Admission by ticket, two bob a time. Here you are, Gussy!"

"Thank you, dear boy! I will take two, one for my minah."

"Four bob, please!"

"One moment, Figgay. I twust that the cookin' will be all wight?"

"First class!" said Figgins. "I'm having a hand in it myself."

"Bai Jove! Then I insist upon the immediate return of my money, Figgins! You can take back your wotten tickets!"

"Why, you ass—" said Figgins indignantly.

"I uttably wefuse to come to the feed if you have anythin' whatever to do with the cookin', Figgins!"

"Same here!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "We're willing to do anything for the good of the cause, excepting to die for it. We're too young to die!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" roared Figgins.

"The cooking will be top-hole—simply topping! I'm making a big fig-pudding myself."

"Oh my hat!"

"That does it!"

"Gimme my two bob back! Here's your ticket!"

Figgins glared at the juniors. All the fellows who had bought tickets were hurling them at Figgins, accompanied by the immediate demands for the return of their money.

The news that Figgins was making a fig-pudding for the Fund Feed seemed to spread general alarm. Nobody had forgotten a celebrated fig-pudding that Figgins had once made for a feed, into which, in the innocence of his heart, he had introduced an enormous quantity of syrup of figs.

"Unless Kerr and Wynn pwomise, bonah bwight, to westvain Figgins, by force, fwom havin' a hand in the cookin', I wefuse to come to the feed."

"We're not insured, you know, Figgins."

"Money back, you dangerous lunatic!"

"No fig-pudding for me!"

Figgins glared, and Kerr and Wynn chuckled.

"It's all right," said Kerr. "We undertake to chuck into the dustbin anything that Figgins cooks."

"Look here, Kerr—" roared Figgins.

"Shush!"

"You know I'm a jolly good cook. I've undertaken to provide a topping feed, so I'm bound to see to the cooking."

"You can see to the eating, too," grinned Monty Lowther. "I'm not going to be cut off in the bloom of my blooming youth."

"Life is sweet," said Manners. "You really can't expect us to face your fig-puddings, Figgy. There's a limit."

"You frabjous ass!"

"I call upon Figgins to swear he won't have anything to do with the cooking," said Tom Merry, "otherwise the feed will be off, and the fund will suffer. Now, Figgy, for the good of the fund."

"You howling ass!"

"For the good of the cause, Figgy!" grinned Kerr.

"Look here, Kerr, you Scotch duffer—"

"Figgins ought to be scotched when he starts cooking," said Monty Lowther. "If Figgins isn't scotched, the feed will be scotched. I call on Kerr to scotch him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! I uttably wufese to be poisoned with Figgy's fig-puddings. I would not condemn even a dog to eat Figgins' fig-pudding."

"Hear, hear!"

"Now then, Figgy—"

"You frabjous chumps!" roared the justly-incensed Figgy.

"Are you going to swear?"

"No, you howling asses!"

"Then, for the good of the cause, I propose to bump Figgins on his neck till he swears to steer clear of the cooking!" said Blake.

"Hear, hear!"

"Buck up!" yelled Figgins, as the School House juniors swooped down on him.

But for once his bosom chums did not back him up. They joined in the swoop.

The enraged Figgins was swept off his feet in the grasp of many hands, including those of Kerr and Wynn. His own familiar friends had turned against him—when it came to eating fig-puddings made by Figgins!

"Why, you rotters! Yaroooh! Stop it! You'll have the prefects here! Chuck it! Rescue! Yawp!"

"Make him eat his tickets!" yelled Hammond of the Fourth. "They're better than his puddings."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooogh!" gurgled Figgins, as Hammond proceeded to stuff the tickets into his mouth.

"Are you going to swear?"

"Grrrrrrrrrr!"

"No good swearing in Russian," said Lowther. "We want it in plain English. Swear to steer clear of the cooking, and we'll all come to the feed."

"Groooogh!"

"Easy with those tickets, Hammond!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grrrrrrrrrr!"

"Bump, bump, bump!"

"Now then, Figgy—"

"Yow-ow! Ooooh!" spluttered the unfortunate Figgins, ejecting a stream of two-shilling tickets from his mouth. "You thilly athes! Grooooh! You fatheaded duffers! Ooooh! Leggo! I'll thrash you! Ow!"

"Swear!"

"I won't!"

"Bump, bump, bump!"

"Oh crums! Oh crikes! I—I mean, I will, if you like! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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Figgins sat up, looking considerably dishevelled and crimson with wrath. He spat out a few more tickets. Hammond had been very liberal.

"You silly chumps! You—you—"

"Swear to steer clear of the cooking, and leave it all to Fatty, and don't give him any advice," said Tom Merry.

"Ow! Yes! All right!"

"Honour bright!"

"Yes!" yelled Figgins. "Lemme gerrup, you idiots! Here comes Kildare!"

Figgins scrambled up as Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, came down the passage with an ashplant in his hand. Kildare was frowning.

"What's all this thundering row?" he demanded wrathfully.

"It's all right, Kildare," said Monty Lowther meekly. "It's only Figgins swearing!"

"What!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgins swearing!" exclaimed Kildare, aghast. "Figgins, you young scoundrel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop that cackling!" shouted Kildare. "This isn't a laughing matter. Figgins, I'm not surprised that you have been ragged if you have been making a young blackguard of yourself! It serves you jolly well right!"

"I!" yelled Figgins furiously. "I haven't—I didn't—I wasn't—"

"Lowther, you said—"

"I stated the facts," said Lowther, still very meekly. "All the fellows will tell you that Figgins was swearing. I will repeat what he said—"

"Don't do anything of the sort!" said Kildare sharply. "I hardly know what to make of this, Figgins."

"Bai Jove! I will wepeat what Figgins said."

"I shall cane you if you do, D'Arcy. How dare you?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Let me explain, Kildare!" gasped Tom Merry, wiping away his tears.

"Figgins was swearing—"

"You corroborate what Lowther says, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes. Figgins was swearing—"

"Come with me to your Form-master, Figgins!" snapped Kildare. "You come, too, Merry and Lowther!"

"Figgins was swearing not to do any cooking for the feed!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare jumped.

"Figgins was what—what?"

"We're having a feed," explained Kerr. "Figgy wanted to cook, and we've made him swear that he won't. So he swore. We bumped him till he did."

Kildare understood at last. The juniors were shrieking with laughter, but the prefect did not laugh. It was miles below the dignity of the head prefect of the School House to have his leg pulled by a humorous junior.

Kildare turned to Monty Lowther with a grim look.

"So it was one of your little jokes, Lowther?"

"Ahem! I—I made an exact statement of the facts, Kildare," murmured Lowther. "I stated that Figgins was swearing. You didn't give me time to finish."

"I understand that you are a humorous kid," said Kildare. "You do a humorous column in your fag paper, I believe. I think you had better keep your humour for the columns of that paper. Humour is sometimes out of place. Hold out your hand!"

"Ahem! I say, Kildare, you know, I—"

"Hold out your hand at once!"

Monty Lowther sighed, and held out his hand. The ashplant came down with a heavy swish, and Lowther gave a yell.

"Do you still feel humorous?" asked Kildare.

"Ow!" groaned Lowther. "No; not at all! Not a bit! Quite the reverse!"

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, all you noisy young rascals clear off!" said Kildare.

And he put the ashplant under his arm and walked away.

Monty Lowther tucked his hand under his arm and groaned dismally. The humour of the humorist was considerably damped.

But the other fellows howled. Even Figgins was grinning now.

"Blessed if I see where the cackle comes in!" growled Lowther. "I'm hurt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind. Figgins has sworn," said Tom Merry. "Kerr and Wynn are expected to see that Figgins keeps that swear."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You thumping asses!" growled Figgins. "You don't know what you're losing. My fig-pudding would have been a corker. I shan't make it now. Now, anybody want a ticket? Two bob a time, and number unlimited—"

Figgins & Co. proceeded to do a brisk sale in tickets, now that the juniors were relieved of Figgy's cooking. Before dinner-time fifty tickets had been sold, and Fatty Wynn, who was appointed caterer, had the sum of five pounds to expend in the purchase of tuck—a task that brought beatific smiles to the face of the fat Fourth Former.

The New House "wheeze" was already going strong, and Tom Merry & Co. had to confess that, so far, the School House were "not in it" with their old rivals.

CHAPTER 6.

A Good Pull-Up For Carmen!

"EWEKAH!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that extraordinary ejaculation.

It was in Study No. 6 the next evening. Blake, Herries, and Digby, at the tea-table, were discussing the problem. The School House fellows were still at a standstill.

Blake had remarked very truly that it was up to Study No. 6 to show the way; those Shell bounders couldn't be expected to think of anything.

But Study No. 6 were stumped. They seemed to have no ideas left, any more than the Terrible Three.

It was near the week-end, and the following week Skimpole's debt to Mr. Henry Skimpoll had to be paid. And all there was towards it was one pound nine-and-six of the collection, and whatever should be raised by the Fund Feed in the New House.

The Fund Feed scheme was going strong.

Figgins & Co. were selling tickets on all sides. There was no further doubt that there would be a handsome profit.

And Tom Merry & Co., although they backed up Figgins heartily, felt a little sore. For it was a School House scheme to get a School House fellow out of a scrape, and it was really up to them. It was too bad altogether for the New House fellows to be running the whole show.

"Euwekah!" repeated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the chums of Study No. 6 allowed his first ejaculation to pass unheeded. Arthur Augustus' eyes were gleaming.

"Blessed if I see anything to be done!" said Digby. "Concerts are off. I suppose we couldn't charge gate-money for the Greyfriars match on Wednesday?"

"Well, we could charge it, but nobody would pay any," said Blake.

"Euwekah!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

Blake looked round at his noble chum. "Have you got a pain, Gussy?" he demanded.

"No, certainly not, you deffah!"

"Not a twist in your bronchial tube and things?"

"No."

"Then what are you squeaking like a little pig for?"

"You uttah ass, I was not squeakin'! I remarked 'Euwekah!'"

"Well, isn't that squeaking?" demanded Blake. "What on earth are you doing it for if you haven't got a pain?"

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake! Euwekah is a Gweek word, and it means 'I have found it,' or something of that sort."

"Oh, the blessed ass means 'Eureka!'" said Digby.

"Yaas, I mean 'Euwekah!'" said Arthur Augustus. "It flashed into my bwin. I've got it, as old Archimedes remarked when he started that sayin'. Euwekah, deah boys! It's all wight!"

"What's all right?" demanded Blake, Herries, and Digby together.

"I've got the idea we want."

"Oh rats!"

"It will be all wight—we can waise the tin. I wondah it did not occur to me before. Howevah, it is not too late!"

"Well, what's the idea?" said Blake, not at all hopefully.

Study No. 6 did not attach a high value to the idea that flashed into Arthur Augustus' noble brain.

"What's the mattah with 'Carmen'?" demanded Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

"Eh?"

"'Carmen' will get us out of this fix!"

"'Carmen'?" said Blake. "What carmen? And why should carmen help us? Do you mean making a collection among the carmen in Wayland? Why should they shell out for Skimpole?"

"Weally, Blake, I believe you are delibewately misundahstandin' me! I am alludin' to the celebawated opewah, 'Carmen.'"

"Oh, the opera!" said Blake. "What about it, ass? What the thumping thunder have you got in your potty brain-box now?"

"Pway don't make wude wemarks, deah boy! I am thinkin' of an opewatic performance. 'Carmen' is a vewy populah opewah. When it is performed, you know, they always get a cwowd. Well, why shouldn't we give a performance, and charge half-a-crown a head for admission? Two hundred and fifty half-crowns would amount to ovah thirty pounds, and that would be a tewwific whack towards the fund. In fact, with what Figgy is gettin', it would make up the forty pounds."

"But where are you going to get two hundred and fifty half-crowns from?" shrieked Blake.

"Pwactically, ewevybody would come to a weally wippin' opewatic performance," said Arthur Augustus. "People only need encouwagin', you know, to appreciate good music. We could get Talbot on the piano to pwovide the orchestwah—Talbot is a vewy clevah pianist. I know we are not well off for singahs; but I have a wippin' ideah about that. I should take the tenah part, of course, and I would also take the bawitone—I should be Don Jose and the Toweador, too! See?"

"Yes, that would save a lot of trouble in the scenes where they appear together," remarked Digby.

"We could cut out those scenes, deah boy. In fact, we should have to cut the whole thing considerably. There is not much time for wehearsals. I weally think, indeed, that we could awwange the opewah on somethin' of wecital lines—I will give the pwincipal awias as a sewies of solos."

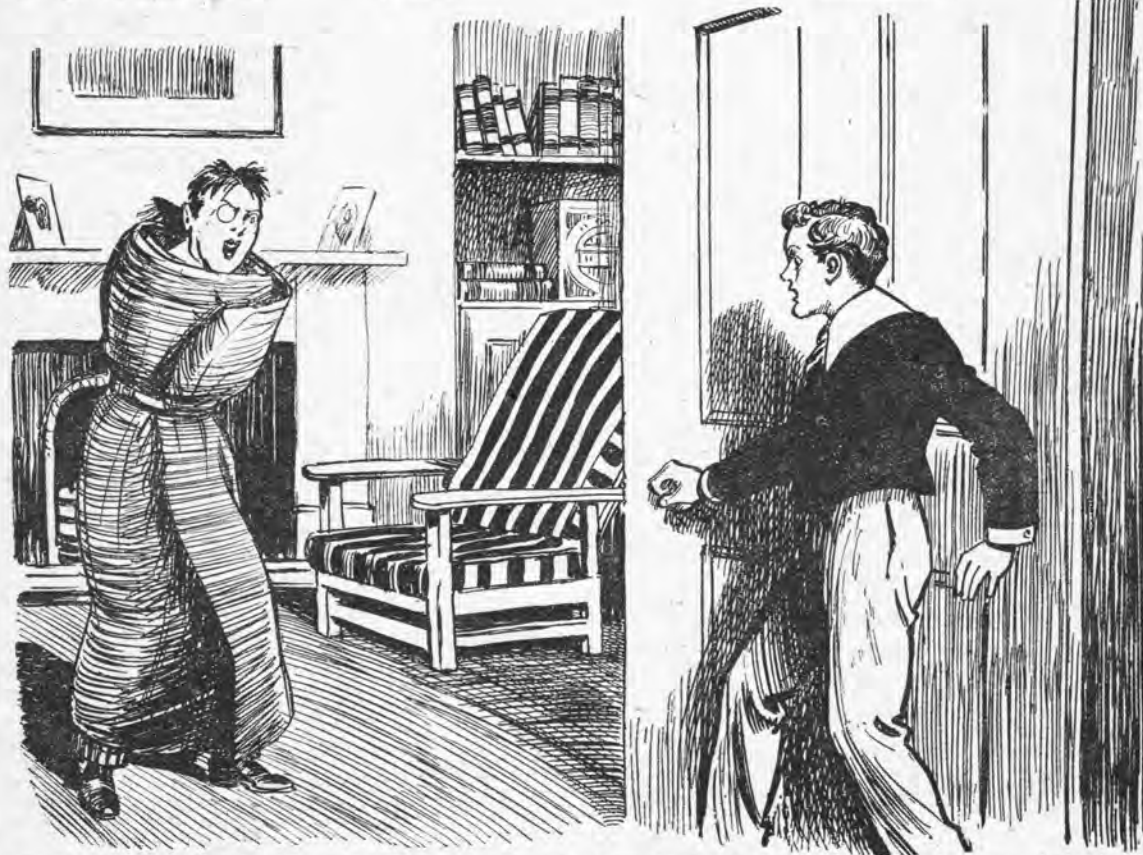
"My hat!"

"And you fellows could appeah—as a kind of Gweek chorus."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And Talbot can fill in on the piano. You see, I have wathah studied that opewah, ard, though I am weally a tenah, I could do the 'Toweador Song' wippingly. I will get Talbot to play it a bit highah, you know—he's an awfully clevah chap! I have not the slightest doubt that the whole school will simpy wush in to see a weally good opewatic performance. It will be a great draw!"

"Great Scott!"



"Great pip! What's the little game, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry in astonishment. "Pway release me, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I was singin' the 'Toweador Song,' and those wuff wottahs, Blake, Hewwies, and Dig, wolloed me up in the wug and stwapped it wound me!"

"If two hundred and fifty fellows come, and pay half-a-crown each, that will waise ovah thirty pounds, and will pwactically see us through. Now, what do you think of the idea, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

Blake, Digby, and Herries gazed at their aristocratic chum, almost overcome. The idea of giving a performance of an opera with Arthur Augustus taking both tenor and baritone parts, music supplied by a piano, and the other fellows appearing as a kind of Greek chorus, wanted a little getting used to.

Arthur Augustus was evidently very much taken with the idea. A succession of brilliant solos by Arthur Augustus ought to bring down the house—that was what the amateur tenor of Study No. 6 looked at it.

"Well, my sainted aunt!" said Blake at last. "You really think the whole school would come, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You don't think you'd be massacred on the spot?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"There's one way it might be worked," said Blake musingly.

"I am willin' to listen to suggestions, deah boy!"

"Well, the fellows wouldn't pay to come in. But we might get them to come in for nothing. Then we could charge 'em five shillings each to get out when you started singing. They'd pay. Now, two hundred and fifty times five shillings amounts to over sixty pounds."

"You uttah asses! Will you be sewious on a sewious subject? I have selected 'Carmen' as the opewah to be performed, because I am well up in the music, you know, and the pwincipal part of the bisney will fall on me. Just listen while I show you how I wendah the 'Toweador Song.'"

"Mercy!"

But Arthur Augustus had no mercy. He started:

"Vot're toast, je peux vous le rendre,

signor, signor, car avec les soldats!"

"Shut up!" roared Blake.

"Wats! I'm showin' you how it will go! Howevah, I will get on to the chowus."

"Ring off!"

"Toweador, eng ga-a-ar-dey!

Toweador, toweador!

Et sonjei bong et songe ong kongbatong.

Kurn ile nwaw te wegarde,

Aker lammoor tattong—"

Arthur Augustus got no further with his great rendering of the "Toweador Song" from "Carmen." Blake, Herries, and Digby rose to their feet with one accord, seized the amateur baritone, and whirled him off his feet and bumped him on the study carpet. The voice of Arthur Augustus suddenly changed from baritone to tenor on its top note:

"Yowwwwl!"

Arthur Augustus struggled spasmodically.

Blake rolled the hearthrug round him, and Arthur Augustus disappeared save for his head and his feet. A strap was promptly put round the rug and buckled behind Arthur Augustus tightly.

Then Blake, Herries, and Digby strolled out of the study smiling.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet with some difficulty. The hearthrug somewhat impeded his movements.

"Oh, great Scott! You uttah

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wottahs!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You fwightful beasts! Yoop! My clobbah will be uttally wuined! Come and unfasten me, you wottahs!"

A chuckle died away down the passage. Arthur Augustus tried to free his arms, but it was useless. The strap had been buckled too tightly.

"Oh, by Jove! The feahful beasts!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "Aitah this I shall uttally wufuse to give an opewatic performance. Oh deah!"

Tom Merry looked in at the doorway. He almost fell down at the sight of Arthur Augustus wriggling in the rolled-up hearthrug.

"Great pip! What's the little game, Gussy?" asked the captain of the Shell in astonishment.

"Pway wesease me, deah boy! I was singin' the 'Toweador Song'."

"But that isn't the correct costume for a Toweador, is it?"

"Weally, you ass, it is not supposed to be anythin' of the sort. Those wuff wottahs wolloed me up in the wug and swapped it woud me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to cackle at! Pway unfasten this wotten stwap, and I will go and give them a feahful thwashin' all woud!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry kindly released him, and the rug fell to the floor. A good half of the dust on it had been transferred to Arthur Augustus' elegant clobber, and the swell of St. Jim's gazed down at his dusty bags in dismay.

"Oh, the uttah wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed from the study in search of Blake, Herries, and Digby, with the ferocious intention of giving them a fearful thrashing all round.

And nothing more was heard of the scheme of giving an operatic performance of "Carmen" in aid of the Skimpole Fund; neither was the warbling tenor of Arthur Augustus rendering the "Toweador Song" heard again in Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 7.

His Highness Makes An Offer!

"WELL done, Jammy!"

Tom Merry was looking on at the footer practice a little later. Koumi Rao was also present.

"The Jam's coming on," said Figgins. "I really think he might go into the team for next Wednesday, you know."

Tom Merry grinned.

"I should have to leave somebody out to make room for him."

"Well, you're captain, aren't you?" said Figgins. "You can make up the team the way you think fit. If you take my recommendation, you've a right to leave out a man to put the Jam in. He's a ripping forward."

"You really recommend me to do that, Figg?"

"Well, yes, I think so. Koumi Rao is coming on splendidly."

"But the man I leave out would grumble."

"Let him."

"He would be ratty, very likely."

"Well, that needn't bother you. Besides, he should take it as a sport. He would have no right to grumble."

"You really think so?" said Tom Merry reflectively.

"Certainly!"

"Well, I'll think of it," said Tom.

"After all, you can look on."

Figgins jumped.

"I—I can look on!"

"Yes, if I give your place to Koumi Rao," said Tom innocently.

"My place!" roared Figgins.

"Certainly, you're the chap I should leave out to make room for Koumi Rao."

Figgins' face was a study for a moment.

"You say you wouldn't grumble—you would take it like a sport; and as captain, of course, I've a right to act on your recommendation if I see fit."

"I—I—I wasn't thinking about myself," stuttered Figgins, at last. "Of course, you would leave out one of the School House chaps. That's what I meant."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you ass! You're pulling my leg, are you?" growled Figgins, in relief.

"Perhaps, on the whole, you'd better leave the team as it is."

"Perhaps I had," grinned Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Here you are, you wottahs!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy arrived on the field and bore down on Blake, Herries, and Digby. "Now, you uttah beasts!"

The three juniors promptly raised their fists, and Arthur Augustus received three separate lunges.

"All hands repel boarders!" chuckled Blake.

"Ow! You wottahs! I am goin' to thwash you—"

"You're going to make it pax," said Blake cheerfully. "You asked us what we thought of your solo, and we showed you what we thought of it. You've got nothing to complain of, that I can see. Now, then!"

"Oh cwums!"

Arthur Augustus was cornered against the wall of the pavilion with three pairs of fists lunging at him.

"Is it pax?" asked Digby.

"Wats! No! I—yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah wottahs! In the cires I will make it pax. I wegard you with uttah despision—I mean, contempt."

"Hear, hear!"

Koumi Rao joined Tom Merry. Tom gave him a cheery nod. The Jam of Bundelpore drew the junior captain aside.

"You see that I play quite well?" he said.

"You're not so bad," agreed Tom Merry. "Figgins might do worse than put you in the House team for the next House match."

"I wish to play against Greyfriars."

"Can't be did!"

"It is my wish."

Tom Merry chuckled. The Jam of Bundelpore made that statement in a tone that was final. Evidently he considered that that ought to settle it.

"You will play me?"

"No."

The Jam's brows contracted. He fumbled in his pockets, and took out a small leather case. Tom Merry watched him curiously, wondering what he was at.

"Stay!" said the Jam. "Look at this!"

There was a flash and a glitter as he opened the case. A diamond ring reposed inside.

"What a beauty!" said Tom, in admiration.

"It is yours," said the Jam.

"Eh?"

"Take it!"

"My dear chap, I can't take it. What do you mean?" said Tom, in wonder.

"I give it to you, and you will give me a place in the eleven to play against

Greyfriars on Wednesday," said Koumi Rao.

Tom Merry crimsoned. For a moment his hands clenched and his eyes gleamed; but he unclenched his hands again at once.

"Put that diamond away, Koumi Rao," he said gently, "and don't be a silly ass! If any other fellow had said that I should have hit out. I suppose you don't know any better. But don't talk to me like that again!"

Tom Merry turned on his heel.

The Jam looked after him with thunderous brow, and dropped the case into his pocket again. The diamond was worth a thousand rupees at least. But once more it was borne in upon the Jam's mind that English customs were not those of the native State of Bundelpore.

The Jam strode gloomily away from the field, with his dusky hands deep in his pockets. Figgins joined him on his way to the New House.

"Wherefore that ruffled brow O friend of my giddy heart?" grinned Figgins, who sometimes adopted the Jam's superb phraseology in a humorous mood.

"I have been refused a place in the team. Merry has refused me. I told him that it was my wish."

"Go hon!"

"I offered him my diamond."

"Then you're lucky to get off without a thick ear," said Figgins cheerfully. "I warned you. It can't be did, Jammy. You see, another man would have to be left out."

"Why not?"

"Ahem!" Figgins reflected deeply.

"I—I—I think Tom Merry would put you in, Jammy, if a man offered to stand out to make room for you. I—I might do it, if you're so awfully set on playing."

"You?" said the Jam, opening his eyes wide.

"I—I—I might, if you buck up and get into awfully good form. You see, we've got to beat Greyfriars. And, really, you are in topping form, Jammy. I don't think it would be much risk."

The Jam shook his dusky head.

"I would not take your place, my friend. I will content myself; and, for your sake, I will not chastise the insolence of Merry."

Figgins chuckled. He found the Jam of Bundelpore very entertaining. The chastisement of Merry would have been a very painful process for the Jam.

After the footer practice Figgins & Co. were very busy with the preparations for the grand fund feed of the morrow.

There were still a few tickets to be sold, and Figgins hawked them round persistently. He sold one to Monteith, the head prefect, though it was not likely that the prefect would come to the feed.

He tried to get Sefton to take one—and the bully of the Sixth gave him fifty lines. But it was all in a day's work, and Figgins bore it philosophically.

Fatty Wynn was on the best of terms with the New House cook, and he had the run of the kitchen.

His cooking was really a work of art. Into that business the fat Fourth Former put all his thoughts and all his energy. And the cakes that came from the plump hands of Fatty Wynn were really marvellous, the pies were wonders, and the puddings were miracles.

That night a hundred and fifty tickets had been sold, nearly all the juniors of both Houses taking them. And of the fifteen pounds thus realised, Fatty Wynn calculated that it would not be necessary

to expend more than eight on the tuck, buying in quantities the "raw materials," and doing the cooking himself, with the assistance of the cook.

A tip for the cook would be needed, too; but Figgins & Co. joyfully declared that there would be at least six or seven pounds for the fund.

"And the School House won't beat that," said Figgins. "I'll bet you they'll never raise the forty quid at all. Old Skimpoll, the giddy author, will have to be satisfied with an instalment on account, and it will all be raised by the New House. And, after that, even those cheeky beggars won't be able to say that the New House isn't Cook House."

In the School House at the same time there was much cudgelling of brains.

After the rude reception of his idea of an operative performance, Arthur Augustus had given it up. And after his mighty brain had ceased to labour on the subject, it was not surprising that ideas were scanty.

Tom Merry, in desperation, consulted Skimpole himself. Skimpole, as the party most concerned in the matter, might have been expected to take a keen interest in it. But he didn't.

He was very busy studying Professor Loosetop's latest volume on Deterministic questions, and he had no time for trifles.

That Skimpy would get into a frightful row if the money was not paid was quite certain; but it didn't seem to worry him.

"I suppose you don't want to know how we're getting on with the fund, Skimpy?" said Tom Merry, a little crossly.

Skimpy came out of his big volume and blinked at him through his glasses.

"What fund?" he asked.

Tom stared at him.

"Your fund, you ass! The fund to pay your debt to old Skimpoll."

"Dear me! I had forgotten."

"Forgotten?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Yes. I have been thinking out some more serious matters. However, I hope you are getting on all right."

"Well, we're not!"

"Dear me! I am very sorry! You must feel disappointed," said

Skimpole amiably. "However, do not be downhearted. Perhaps it will all come right. Let me read what Professor Loosetop says—"

"Oh, you blithering ass!" said Tom.

"My dear Merry, Professor Loosetop's lugubrations are intensely interesting. Listen to this: 'The first principles of Determinism may be stated thus—suppose there are two men on an island—' Yaroooooh!"

Tom Merry seized a great volume of Professor Loosetop and smote Skimpy on the head with it, and left the study. Skimpole sat on the carpet, blinking, in a state of great astonishment.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Skimpole. "What was Tom Merry so excited about, my dear Gore?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gore.

(Continued on the next page.)



BANG—boom—whizz! Up they go! All the colours of the rainbow splatter the sky. What a thrill! Yes, you'll have a real, rip-snorting "Fifth" if you hurry up and join BROCK'S Club. And it's so easy. Simply go to a shop displaying BROCK'S FIREWORK CLUB Notice in the window and ask for a Club Card. Give the shopman a penny or whatever you can spare, and he'll enter it on the card. When you have saved a lot of pennies, no doubt Dad and Uncle Bill will add a bob or two. Then what a thrill you'll have choosing a grand selection of BROCK'S latest wonderful firework surprises.

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"I really did not mean to displease him in any way," said Skimpole, rubbing his head. "It appears to me that he is bothering very much about a trifling matter; but I do not expect anything different from his somewhat limited intelligence. Really, Gore, I do not see anything to laugh at."

And Skimpole plunged once more into the intensely interesting lugubrations of Professor Loosetop, and forgot about the whole matter.

Skimpole had no objection to Tom Merry & Co. raising the fund—none whatever; but he did not wish to be bothered with it. Matters of far greater importance occupied his powerful brain.

CHAPTER 8.

Something Like a Feed!

"WATHAH a cwam, bai Jove!" It certainly was rather a cram.

The Common-room in the New House was a large apartment, but its accommodation was taxed by the number of fellows who came to the fund feed.

Chairs and forms and tables had been borrowed on all sides, and arranged in order, and the good things laid out in enticing array.

After footer practice was over the ticket-holders came in in swarms, provided with excellent appetites.

The Co. had to act as waiters. Waiters were required, and the guests could not be expected to act as waiters, so there was nothing for it but to enlist the founders of the fund.

The Terrible Three and Study No. 6, and Figgins & Co., therefore, all set to work.

Monty Lowther had urged Arthur Augustus to appear in evening clothes for the occasion, to give the affair tone, and he was dashing away to change into his evening "clobber" when Blake fortunately discovered him, and yanked him back.

The ten waiters waited in their shirt-sleeves. The work was incessant, and it was warm.

Every fellow was entitled to eat all he wanted—as much as he could hold, in fact—for his two-shilling ticket, and most of the guests had come fully prepared to distinguish themselves as trenchermen.

The supply of tuck was simply enormous; but Figgins declared that Fatty Wynn would have to be muzzled till after the feast. It would never do for the supplies to run short.

Fatty was kept too busy fetching and carrying to be able to sit down and enjoy himself; but he indulged in a succession of "snacks" that probably equalled the feast of any other fellow present.

It was Arthur Augustus upon whom the heaviest work fell. Somehow, the juniors seemed to take a special pleasure in making the Honourable Arthur Augustus fetch and carry. D'Arcy wired in most industriously—he felt that it was up to him. And he was given no rest.

"Waiter!" roared Levison of the Fourth. "Here! Where's that dashed waiter! The one with the eyeglass! Waiter!"

"Yaas, Levison!"

"Don't call me Levison, waiter. Call me sir."

"Bai Jove!"

"Bring me some more jam tarts, and hurry up! Blessed if I ever saw such a rotten waiter!"

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"Waiter!" howled Crooke. "I've asked you twice for some cake. That waiter ought to be sacked."

"Sure, and I want some ginger-pop, Gussy!" shouted Reilly of the Fourth. "You're neglecting your duties, waiter. Ginger-pop, do you hear?"

"Yaas. Bai Jove! Yaas."

"Ginger-pop for me," said Levison. "Uncork it, waiter. What the dickens is the good of a waiter if he can't uncork the ginger-beer? There's a penny for you."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Put it in your pocket," said Levison.

"It's for you."

"You uttah wottah! How dare you give me a penny!" roared Arthur Augustus, crimson with indignation.

"I always tip waiters," said Levison.

"Nothing mean about me. Put that penny in your pocket, and open my ginger-beer."

"I wegard you as a wank wottah!"

"Blessed cheeky waiter, this fellow," said Levison.

"Are you going to open that ginger-beer, waiter—yooop!"

The waiter opened the ginger-beer somewhat clumsily. A stream of ginger-beer caught the humorous Levison under the chin, and he jumped up, spluttering.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Crooke.

Then he yelled still more loudly as the bottle turned on him.

"Ow! You fathead! Stop it! Yooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I'm awfully sowwy! These accidents will happen, you know," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "You look wathah wet, Levison."

"Ow! You silly chump! You did that on purpose!" shrieked Levison furiously. "Pll—Pll—Pll—"

"Weally, Levison—oh, you wottah!" yelled Arthur Augustus, as Levison caught up a fat and juicy jam tart, of Fatty Wynn's special make, and squashed it upon his aristocratic features. "Oooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus made a jump at Levison and clasped him round the neck, and they struggled wildly. The table rocked as the combatants bumped into it, and glasses of ginger-beer went streaming over the knees of their owners. There was a roar of wrath on all sides, and infuriated feasters jumped up raving.

"Kick 'em out!"

"Turn that waiter out!"

"Serag him!"

"Order!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Take that, you wottah! Take that, you howlid beast—"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Figgins seized Arthur Augustus, and Blake and Kerr fastened upon Levison, and they were dragged apart by main force.

Levison's nose was streaming red, and Arthur Augustus was looking wild and ruffled.

"Weleaso me, you wottahs! I am goin' to thrash him! He has jammed me all ovah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kick 'em both out!"

There were two heavy falls in the passage outside the Common-room—first Levison, then Arthur Augustus. After which the door was closed upon them.

Sounds of conflict were heard from the passage, and then flying feet, and a few minutes later Arthur Augustus re-entered, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief.

Levison did not come back. He was busily engaged just then in bathing his damaged features in the School House.

After that exciting interlude the feast proceeded jovially.

The mountains of good things were



There was a glitter as Koumi Rao opened the case. A diar "It is yours," said the Jam. "I give it to you, and you

diminishing rapidly in size, and the well-spread tables gradually assumed a bare appearance.

The guests, as they were satisfied, and found that they could not possibly hold any more, gradually cleared off.

Some of them sagely put supplies in their pockets, to be finished later. The last half-dozen or two grumbled as they went out, and declared that they weren't satisfied.

When they were all gone, the waiters gazed at the bare tables and at one another.

"We don't come on in this scene," grunted Monty Lowther. "Blessed if I expected a clearance like that!"

"What price us?" mumbled Fatty Wynn. "Not a beastly bun left! Not a blessed tart left! That cad Mellish was

filling his pockets all the time. So was young Pigott and Crooke. That wasn't playing the game!"

"Nevah mind, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "It has been a great success, even if there is nothin' left for the foundahs of the feast."

Financially, the feed had certainly been a success. There were six pounds ten shillings to be handed over to the Skimpole Scrape Fund, which, added to the one pound nine-and-six already in the old teapot, made up a grand total of seven pounds nineteen-and-six.

Arthur Augustus cheerfully remarked that now they only wanted thirty-two pounds and sixpence.

But where that thirty-two pounds and sixpence was to come from was a great mystery.



proposed inside. "What a beauty!" said Tom Merry. "He's got a place in the eleven to play against Greyfriars!"

CHAPTER 9.

The Only Way!

"NOTHING doing!"

That was the verdict when the Skimpole Fund committee met in Tom Merry's study on Monday, after lessons.

Figgins & Co. attended the meeting, along with the School House fellows, though it was admitted that Figgins & Co. had done their "little" bit, and that it was up to the School House to make the next move.

"Hasn't anybody made any suggestions?" asked Figgins. "You had a notice up on the board asking for suggestions, you know."

"Gussy proposed to give a song recital."

"Oh rats!"

"And an operatic performance of 'Carmen'!" grinned Blake.

"Bow-wow!"

"And Lowther's proposed that Mr. Skimpoll shall be asked if he will accept the forty pounds on the instalment plan."

"Anything with any sense in it?" asked Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Well, Levison made a suggestion," said Tom Merry. "It would be all right as far as money goes, but it won't work."

"I haven't heard of that," said Blake.

"What's that? Levison is an awfully deep chap, and he might think of something."

"Yaas, I weally do not approve of Levison, but he is a vewy deep boundah, deah boys. Let's hear Levison's suggestion."

Tom Merry laughed.

"He suggests selling some of the places in the junior eleven!"

"What!"

"He says swanking asses like Crooke would bag them if they could, and pay for them; highest bidder at an auction, you know."

"My hat!"

"What a wotten, caddish idea!"

"As a matter of fact, it would raise the tin," said Figgins, with a nod. "Koumi Rao would bid away like old boots; he's awfully keen to get into the eleven. So would that swanking ass Crooke and several more fellows. Levison's one of them himself, if he's got any money. But, of course, we couldn't entertain the idea for a moment. It would be a bit too much of a come-down to be auctioneering the places in the eleven."

"Better not to pay the chap Skimpoll at all," said Kerr.

Tom Merry ran his fingers through his curly hair.

"But we've got to pay him," he said.

"If you can, you mean."

"Whether we can or not," said Tom; "it's a promise."

"Yaas, we have given our word," said Arthur Augustus. "I have pledged the word of a D'Arcy, deah boy!"

"Which is more valuable than the word of a Merry!" remarked the captain of the Shell. "But the word of a Merry has to be kept, too."

"I did not mean to imply that, Tom Mewwy. I merely—"

"Merely thought out of your neck, as usual," said Blake. "There's the word of a Blake to be kept, too. We're all up to our necks in it, in fact, except Skimmy. Skimmy isn't bothering."

"Pity the silly ass wasn't sent to a home for idiots long ago!" growled Manners. "It looks to me as if we've promised something we can't perform."

"We've got to perform it, though the skies fall," said Tom Merry. "I'd rather adopt Levison's suggestion than fail to keep the promise."

"Yaas, honah comes even before footah, deah boys!"

"How is the fund getting on since the feed?" asked Figgins thoughtfully.

"Well, it's climbing up. Gussy has screwed a quid out of his pater, and young Wally has contributed a tanner. I've got ten bob from Miss Fawcett, and Lowther's got five from an old uncle he has lying about somewhere. Kangaroo and Lumley-Lumley have stood half-a-crown each. Two pounds and sixpence make up a total of ten quid. That leaves thirty quid still wanted."

"It's such a blessed whacking sum!" said Figgins. "Can't that idiot Skimpole raise something towards it?"

Tom Merry grinned.

"He offered me a threepenny-bit towards it. Only it turned out to be a threepenny-bit he'd changed for Mellish, and was no good."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then what the deuce is to be done?" asked Blake. "We simply can't break our word to old Skimpoll; and, besides, Skimmy would be landed if we did."

"It weally is a vewy awkward posish. Unless somethin' turns up we shall have to adopt that awful caddish suggestion of Levison's."

"We should have to get the consent of the whole club for that," said Tom Merry uneasily.

"Well, we're the leading members of the club; we'd manage that," said Figgins. "Not much time to spare, as the match is the day after to-morrow. I don't like the idea, but if you decide on it, I'll back you up."

The committee of ways and means looked at each other in grim silence.

Nobody liked the idea of putting up places in the junior eleven to auction, yet all of them knew that that unheard-of step would certainly result in an influx of cash into the coffers of the fund.

"It wouldn't be as if the money was for ourselves," said Manners, at last. "That would be caddish. But to raise the wind for a fund to pay a debt of honour concerning the whole school—that's a different matter."

"Yaas, in the cires pewwaps I could approve of it."

"Might offer one place," said Figgins, after another long silence. "You see, we've got to beat Greyfriars. If some duffer like Crooke got into the team he would be only a passenger, and two or three like that would give the match away."

"Somebody would have to stand out to make room for the new man," said Tom Merry. "It's not a matter for the footer captain to decide. In the cires I couldn't ask a member of the team to stand out to let some swanking rich cad like Crooke buy himself in. Some chap will have to volunteer to slide out."

"Bai Jove!"

"It is the duty of a D'Arcy to lead the way," remarked Monty Lowther solemnly. "I call on Gussy to lead the way, as his ancestors did at the Battle of Bunker's Hill."

"You uttah ass! My ancestahs were not at the Battle of Bunkah's Hill."

"Well, the Battle of Actium, was it?"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Well, never mind the battle; yout ancestors led the way, and it's up to you to live up to the noble tradition of the D'Arcy family."

"I vegard you as an ass, Lowthah—"

"Perhaps Blake will make an offer," suggested Kerr.

"Perhaps Blake won't!" replied the chief of Study No. 6, with great promptness.

"What about Kangaroo?"

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"Can't spare him from the team," said Tom Merry decidedly. "We've got to beat Greyfriars. Wharton's team is a pretty tough one. We want Kangaroo."

"Pewwaps you would care to stand out, Tom Mewwy."

"Why, you ass!" said Tom indignantly. "Who's going to captain the team if I stand out?"

"I should be quite weady and willin'."

"This isn't the time for joking."

"I'm not jokin'."

"Leave it to me," said Figgins heroically. "It's up to the New House to help you kids out of a fix. I'll slide."

"Bai Jove, that is weally wippin' of you, Figgy!"

But Tom Merry shook his head. "Can't spare you, Figgy. We want you as much as Kangaroo."

Figgins drew a breath of relief. It had cost him an effort to make that generous offer. But he could not help feeling glad that it had not been accepted.

"What about Lowther?"

"Don't you worry about Lowther," said the owner of that name pleasantly.

"Lowther is sticking to the team."

"Herries, old chap—"

"Bow-wow!" said Herries.

"You see, it won't work," said Tom.

"Nobody can be expected to stand out, and this isn't a case where a skipper can put his foot down. It's N.G."

"But what on earth are we going to do for the quids?" said Manners dismally. "Mr. Skimpoll will be here on Thursday for his money."

"Goodness knows."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the dismal faces of the committee, experienced a little inward struggle, and made up his mind.

"Gentlemen, I vegard it as bein' up to me to get you youngsters out of the swape, I will stand out."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"I am afraid it will mean givin' away the match to Gweyfwialhs, but honah comes first. It shall nevah be said that the word of St. Jim's was not as good as its bond, bai Jove!"

Tom Merry slapped the swell of St. Jim's on the shoulder.

"Good old Gussy! The offer is accepted, and Gussy shall be the auctioneer and sell the giddy prize. Let's get a meeting in the Common-room, and mind that everybody comes to it."

"I'll whip in the New House," said Figgins briskly. "You see that all your slackers turn up. Gussy is a giddy jewel! He's saved the situation, and perhaps the Greyfriars match, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass, Figgins!"

The committee broke up at once, to get to the business of the meeting, and to prepare for that exceedingly curious auction sale.

CHAPTER 10.

A Startling Announcement!

CROOKE of the Shell stared. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

But his eyes did not deceive him on this occasion.

On the notice-board was a newly written notice in the handwriting of Tom Merry, captain of the junior eleven. It was such a notice as had never appeared before on the notice-board at St. Jim's.

No wonder Crooke rubbed his eyes, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,546.

and rubbed them again. For the paper ran:

"NOTICE TO FOOTER ASPIRANTS.

"D'Arcy of the Fourth will hold an auction in the Common-room at seven o'clock precisely, for the sale of his place in the St. Jim's Junior Eleven, cash being urgently required to assist a deserving fund. The sale will be held with the full consent of the captain, committee, and members generally of the St. Jim's Junior Footer Club. The place goes to the highest bidder for cash. (Signed) TOM MERRY."

"Well, my only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Crooke, jingling his money in his trousers-pocket.

Crooke was always jingling money in his trousers-pocket. Crooke was the son of a millionaire stockbroker, and he had an allowance that was much too large to do him any good.

A fellow with a far from high character and too much money was bound to get into mischief, and Crooke got into plenty of mischief. A good deal of his spare cash went on "geezes"—in strict secrecy, of course—and some more of it went on "smokes."



"Shocking weather, Bert. Let's go back again!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Stonier, 38, Smart Street, Longsight, Manchester.

But, though Crooke was too lazy and self-indulgent to keep himself fit or to bother about practice, he was ambitious to shine as a footballer. He would have given a good deal to be able to swank as a member of the eleven.

Especially so on the occasion of the Greyfriars match. That was one of the biggest matches played at St. Jim's.

Many of the juniors' people came to see the game, and St. Jim's was always gay on that occasion with the bright dresses and hats of innumerable sisters and cousins and aunts.

Crooke's face glowed with satisfaction as he read that notice a second time. To let his people see him playing for the school in the biggest match of the season was worth something. He jingled his over-plentiful cash in his trousers-pocket more loudly than ever.

Other fellows gathered round the notice on the board. Levison read it with a sneering smile.

"So you've adopted my suggestion, after all?" he remarked, when he met Tom Merry.

Tom nodded.

"Yes; much obliged."

"It doesn't seem quite so caddish now—what?"

The captain of the Shell coloured a little. It certainly was rather hard to characterise Levison's suggestion as caddish, and act upon it all the same.

"Don't trouble to apologise," grinned Levison. "I thought you'd come to it in the long run. I see you've offered only one place?"

"Yes! D'Arcy offered his place."

"You won't get enough tin unless you offer others. I suggested four. That would give me a chance."

"We've got to beat Greyfriars if we can," said Tom Merry. "Still, you're welcome to bid at D'Arcy's auction if you like."

"I shouldn't have a chance against a fellow like Crooke or that New House nigger," said Levison. "Never mind, I'll wait."

Towards seven o'clock the Junior Common-room in the School House was crowded.

The news of that extraordinary auction had been spread far and wide in the Lower School, and juniors of both Houses rolled up in swarms.

Wally, the younger brother of Arthur Augustus, came in with a swarm of fags of the Third. The Third Formers could be seen consulting in eager whispers in a corner, and Wally was apparently making a collection of cash. D'Arcy minor was anxious to shine in the ranks of the junior eleven.

It was not probable, however, that the financial resources of the Third Form would be equal to the strain.

The Common-room was soon crowded. Figgins & Co had shepherded in almost every junior belonging to their House. Tom Merry & Co. had seen to it that all the School House juniors were there. The bidding was expected to be lively.

There were many fellows who considered that their claims to play in the St. Jim's junior team were simply undeniable, and who doubted Tom Merry's judgment and even his sanity when they were left out. Here was a chance for them to wedge into the team, and show St. Jim's and Greyfriars, and the world generally, what they could do at a big match.

Tom Merry was feeling decidedly uneasy inwardly.

He wanted very much to win the Greyfriars match. It was the first time in his career as a footer captain that he had even thought of admitting anybody into the junior team excepting on his form as a player.

Even the claims of close friendship yielded to his severe sense of duty as captain of the eleven. His own chum, Manners, had been left out to make room for Redfern of the New House, because Redfern was a better man in the team. Indeed, Tom Merry would have stood out himself if he had seen a better man to take his place.

If some clumsy and swanking "foozler" like Crooke should bag the place in the team under these new and extraordinary conditions it might have serious results for St. Jim's on the field of play.

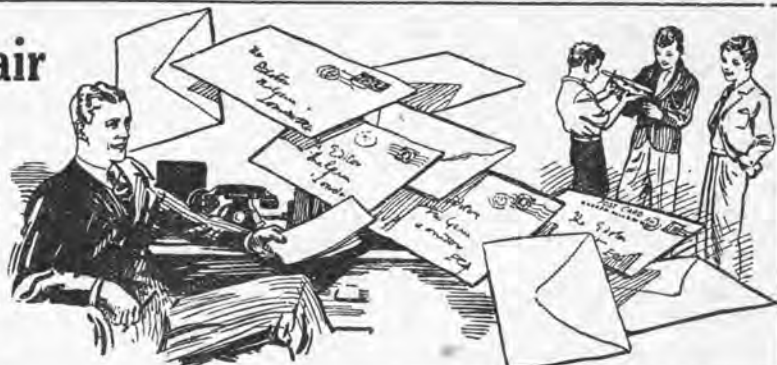
The Greyfriars team was a hard nut to crack at any time. Tom Merry had played against them before, and he remembered the fine form of Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Field, and the rest.

Still, even with one "passenger" in the team, he felt that St. Jim's ought to be able to hold their own with such mighty men as Figgins and Kangaroo and Talbot, and such a top-notch goalie as Fatty Wynn.

(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! Seen the announcement on page four? Free Gifts are on the way! I have been eager to get the good news off my chest for the last two weeks, but I didn't want to let the cat out of the bag till I had got everything fixed up. Now we are all set for the big event. In a fortnight's time you will have the first of the gifts in your hands, and I know that all Gemites will be delighted with them. The week after there will be more Free Gifts for readers.

But what are they to be? I can hear you all asking. That you will discover next Wednesday. The charm of presenting free gifts is the element of surprise, and there's no doubt readers will be pleasantly surprised next week! So look out for the good news.

In addition, a grand offer in connection with our free gifts is being made to all Gem readers. Many of you will jump at this offer, for it is the biggest bargain you will ever have the opportunity of snapping up.

Naturally, for the coming numbers, special programmes have been arranged. Firstly, there's a powerful series of St. Jim's stories which readers will welcome with open arms. Then there's a humorous Greyfriars yarn, and, besides another interesting stamp article and illustrated jokes, there will be two special new features which readers have been asking for. Believe me, the Gem has never been more attractive than it will be during the coming weeks. I have done my best for readers, and I hope readers will do their best for me by telling all their friends the good news.

Now we will take a look at next Wednesday's programme. A lively and exciting St. Jim's yarn tops the bill. It's called:

"THE NEW HOUSE RIOT!"

The title suggests that sensational things happen at St. Jim's. They do—and how! The excitement starts when the sour-tempered Mr. Ratcliff confiscates Fatty Wynn's tuck. The genial Welsh junior is not taking that lying down, and he sets about recovering his lost grub. This leads unfortunately to more serious trouble with "Ratty," and the outcome is that all the juniors in the New House are placed on short commons and study teas are barred! The juniors, highly indignant, protest against the unjust punishment, but their protest goes no ice with "Ratty." More desperate methods are then adopted, and the New House master is made to sit up and take notice when rebellion breaks out! The scenes which follow are too wildly exciting for Mr. Ratcliff's peace of mind!

Readers will enjoy this great story from first word to last. Don't miss it.

"THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS!"

Frank Richards' contribution to next

week's number is a thrilling complete story of sea and school adventure which all readers will revel in. During a terrific gale at night, a schooner runs aground on the dreaded rocks of the Shoulder, a headland near Greyfriars. Her appeals for help are heard at the school, and Harry Wharton & Co. break bounds to go to the seashore in the hope of being of some assistance. They little guess how helpful one of their number is to be to the distressed ship!

"MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR STAMPS."

Continuing our ripping new series, next week's article will contain many more useful hints for philatelists, such as how to clean soiled stamps and prepare them for your album, and how to mount them properly, and other useful tips.

Four more illustrated jokes, and all the news from yours truly about our free gifts, complete the next number. Don't forget to order your Gem early, chums.

REPLIES TO READERS.

R. Morris (Wolverhampton).—You don't tell me when you sent in your previous "Pen Pal" notice. There is still a waiting list, but I am reducing it as quickly as possible. No doubt your notice will appear soon. Two of Cutts' set have been sacked from St. Jim's—Prye and Tresham. No Greyfriars and St. Jim's juniors are related. There are thirty juniors in the Shell at St. Jim's and about forty in the Remove at Greyfriars.

A. L. (Nottingham).—Yes, certainly I will obtain for you the autographs of Martin Clifford and Frank Richards. Pleased to know you enjoy the stories.

R. Lowry (Thornaby-on-Tees).—Thanks for your list of the 1937 stories you liked best. None of your jokes was a winner. Send in some more.

"GEM Reader" (Hall Green).—St. Jim's and St. Frank's are in Sussex; Greyfriars is in Kent and Rookwood in Hampshire. Locking-up time at St. Jim's is seven o'clock. The school is a mile from Rylcombe and five miles from Wayland. Frank Richards is too busy on the extra-long Greyfriars stories to write any Grimsdale yarns.

"Regular Reader" (Leeds).—If you have good proof of cruelty to an animal, write to the local branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They will probably take up the case.

W. Snape (Blackpool).—So your father sometimes collars your Gem? Well, he knows what's good! The New House football eleven is: Figgins, Kerr, Wynn,

Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Pratt, Kouni Rao, Thompson, French, Digges. The School House team is: Merry, Blake, D'Arcy, Lowther, Manners, Herries, Digby, Noble, Talbot, Hammond, Dane.

M. Jones (Middlesbrough).—Thanks for your interesting letter and the list of St. Jim's characters you like best. I am sorry I cannot find out the answer to your first query. Mauleverer is not a German name. St. Jim's and Greyfriars are fictitious schools. Your joke failed to score. Have another shot.

Miss D. Price (Margate).—Pleased to hear from you again. Barbara Redfern of Cliff House is no relation to Redfern of St. Jim's. I don't know of a Gem club in your district. If I hear of one I will let you know.

W. Goff (Sydenham).—The story you refer to was very popular with readers.

D. Pope (Bickley).—Vernon Smith and Redfern don't join Greyfriars for some considerable time yet. I cannot send you the autographs you want as the characters are fictitious.

E. Spearing (Bournemouth).—Many thanks for your good opinion of the Gem. Some readers prefer complete yarns, while others like series. The old paper gives a fair mixture of each. Lowther ranks eleventh, on points, in the boxing list: Herries is fourteenth, and Digby sixteenth.

"Constant Reader" (Birmingham).—A feature similar to the one you suggest will soon be starting. Your joke was rather a "chestnut."

P. Barbrooke (Cambridge).—Pleased to hear that you are such a keen supporter of the companion papers, and that you like the early schooldays of Harry Wharton & Co. A "Toff" series will be appearing soon. Try again to win half-a-crown.

"A Reader" (Liverpool).—On the average, the height and weight of Greyfriars and St. Jim's juniors are much about the same. Bolsover is the Remove bully in the "Magnet" yarns. But before he came to the school Bulstrode was the bully. Peter Todd is 15 years 10 months.

B. Hudson (Wellington, New Zealand).—Talbot is 16 years 1 month; Blake, 15 years 4 months; D'Arcy and Figgins, 15 years 3 months.

J. Hooper (Hobart, Tasmania).—Thanks for your suggestion. I will bear it in mind. Glad to know you like the Gem so much.

L. Mann (Colchester).—I have no news yet for readers about the Greyfriars film. Martin Clifford and Frank Richards write under their real names. Choice of the six most popular St. Jim's characters is a matter of opinion. But judging from what readers say, the six most popular characters are among the following: Tom Merry, Talbot, Lumley-Lumley, Figgins, Lowther, Kerr, Blake, D'Arcy, Kildare, Levison, Wynn, Kangaroo, and Grundy.

PEN PALS COUPON
2-10-37

THE EDITOR.
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,546.

If the place went to an average player, there was nothing much to fear; but if Crooke "bagged" it, then he had grounds for uneasiness.

However, the risk had to be run. It was the last chance of raising the wind for the Skimpole Fund, and, as Arthur Augustus had sapiently remarked, honour came before even footer.

That Crooke meant to bid, and bid high, was evident. The cad of the Shell was there, with his friends, jingling his money as usual.

The door was closed at last, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was to act as auctioneer, mounted up on a stool behind the table, which had been drawn into a corner. He tapped upon the table with a ruler, which served him as an auctioneer's hammer.

Rap, rap!
"Gentleman," sang out Tom Merry, "the sale is about to begin! Order, please!"

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye, and surveyed the numerous and eager meeting.

"Gentlemen—"
"Go it, Gussy!"

"Gentlemen, you are aware of the nature of this sale. We are waisin' a fund to get a silly idiot out of a fearful scwape—"

"Hear, hear!"

"In othah circs we should scorn to accept filthy lucre for a place in the footah team; but circs althah cases. Honah comes first. We have promised to pay that fathead Skimpole's debt, and we are bound to keep our word. This sale is the last wosource. The New House have wallied nobly, and helped us to waise the sum of ten pounds, at which the fund now stands. But anothah thirty is needed."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gentlemen, in the circs, I have offahed to withdaw from the team and put up my place for sale, with the genewal consent of the club. I twust that biddin' will be vewy high. This is a gweat opportunity for a chap who thinks that he can play a good game for St. Jim's."

"Bravo!"

"The sale will now pwocceed."

"Hold on!" said Crooke. "No catches, you know!"

Arthur Augustus surveyed the cad of the Shell with lofty disdain.

"I fail to undahstand that wemark, Cwooke."

"Then I'll make it clear," said Crooke coolly. "What I mean is, if a fellow pays down hard cash for a place in the eleven for the Greyfriars match, he's going to play in that match. The captain will not be at liberty to drop him if he is not satisfied with his style of play."

"In the case of a playah bein' dwooped as you suggest, Cwooke, the purchase pwice will be handed back. We are not swindlahs!"

"All serene!" said Crooke. "Nothing like having it clear. Pile in!"

"Fire away, Gussy!"

"Go it, auctioneer!"

Rap, rap!

"Gentlemen, I now offah for sale the one and only lot in this auction—a place in the juniah eleven of St. Jim's. What offahs?"

There was a general movement forward of fellows who intended to bid. Koumi Rao, who had come in with Figgins & Co., joined the bidders with a gleam in his dark eyes. It was the Jam's chance at last.

CHAPTER 11.

High Bidding!

"WHAT offahs, gentlemen?"
"Go it, ye cripples!"
"Twopence!" sang out Wally of the Third, amid general merriment.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass severely upon his minor.

"Wally, you young wascal, this is not the time for your wotten fag jokes. Pway keep ordah. Wun away!"

"Oh, come off!" said D'Arcy minor impudently. "I suppose I can bid as much as anybody else. I offer twopence."

"Threepence!" squeaked Joe Frayne.

"Fourpence!" yelled Curly Gibson.

"Five bob!" said Lumley-Lumley.

The son and heir of Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, the railway magnate, was as well supplied with cash as Crooke of the Shell, and he was a much better footballer. He had the good wishes of Tom Merry & Co., as he started to bid.

"Ten bob!" said Crooke.

"Fifteen bob!" rapped out Lumley-Lumley.

"Gentlemen, fifteen shillings I am offahed—"

"Bobs!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Shillings, deah boy."

"Bobs—"

"Shillings—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A quid!" said Crooke.

And the moneyed man of the Shell flourished a pound currency note in the air.

"Gentlemen, I am offahed a pound, and—"

"A quid!"

"A pound—"

"Twenty-five bob!" said Levison of the Fourth.

In the corner, Wally was holding a hurried and desperat consultation. The bidding was already going up beyond the financial resources of the Third Form. But D'Arcy minor was not to be beaten if he could help it.

"You'll all have to whack out all you've got," he whispered. "You can sell your bikes and your white rabbits—any old thing. This is the chance for the Third, you know. If we bag the place, we'll toss up afterwards who's to have it. See? That's fair. If it goes under two quid, we can manage it."

And the inky brigade assented.

"Thirty shillings!" sang out Wally.

"Thirty-five!" said Crooke.

"I guess I'll make it two quid!" said Lumley-Lumley.

The sale was getting exciting. All round the bidders, the juniors were cheering them on with encouraging yells.

Koumi Rao had not yet spoken. Perhaps he did not deem it worthy of the dignity of the Prince of Bundelpore to speak while the bidding was still in common or garden shillings.

Crooke gave Lumley-Lumley an unpleasant look, and took out his wallet and opened it, showing a wedge of currency notes.

"You may as well chuck it!" he said.

"I'm going to have that place."

"I guess I'll see you out," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I reckon I shall make you quit, sonny."

And Lumley-Lumley also produced a well-filled wallet.

The faces of the committee of ways and means were brightening up. Levison's suggestion was working out well, so far as the financial aspect of the matter was concerned.

Levison himself had ceased to bid. The bidding was beyond his resources now. The contest was among the

moneyed men — Lumley-Lumley and Crooke, and Koumi Rao, who had not yet spoken. Wally's bidding was taken seriously only by himself.

Rap, rap!
"Gentlemen, I am offahed two pounds for this valuable lot, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Guineas!" shrieked Wally.

"Weally, Wally you cheeky young wascal, I am quite sure that you have no such sum as two guineas, or anything like it."

"Cheese it, and take the bid," said Wally. "Don't yo! bother about my resources, Gussy. I offer two guineas."

"I wepeat—"

"And I repeat, two guineas! Knock it down to me!" shouted Wally.

"Hold on! Two-ten!" exclaimed Crooke.

"Two-fifteen!"

"Three quid!"

"Three-ten!"

"Three-fifteen!"

"Four!"

Arthur Augustus' eye beamed through his eyeglass. The bidding was mounting up.

Wally, in utter disgust, retired from the scene as a bidder. The Third Form could not "stand the racket" any longer. Wally contented himself with uttering an occasional cat-call and making personal remarks to the bidders who had outbidden him.

"Four pounds I am offahed, gentlemen! This wippin' lot is goin' for four pounds. Did I catcl your eye, Koumi Wao?"

"Four-ten!" said Crooke at once.

"Five!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Look here, you rotter, you can shut up!" exclaimed Crooke, losing his temper. "I believe you're only running me up to help this rotten silly fund!"

"Order!"

Cwooke, that is a vewy impwopah wemark. If you wepeat that wemark, you will be wequird to wetiah from the auction. Pway wemembah your mannahs. Lumley-Lumley has offahed five pounds—"

"Five-ten!" snarled Crooke.

Crooke's blood was up now, and he meant to have that "lot," if it reduced him to a state of stoniness. Crooke was making a mental calculation. If he posed before his people on that day as a champion footballer in the school eleven, he was sure of being able to extract generous tips from his pater and his uncles. Crooke was a calculating youth.

"Six!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Six-ten!"

"Seven!"

There was a buzz of excitement. Seven pounds were offered; and seven pounds was a sum which few of the fellows present ever possessed at any other time. They were not all the sons of millionaires.

Crooke paused.

He had plenty of money, and he could afford to go higher for an object on which he had set his heart. But he did not like parting with the money.

Rap, rap!

"Gentlemen I am offahed seven pounds! Goin'-goin'—"

"Seven-ten!" said Crooke reluctantly.

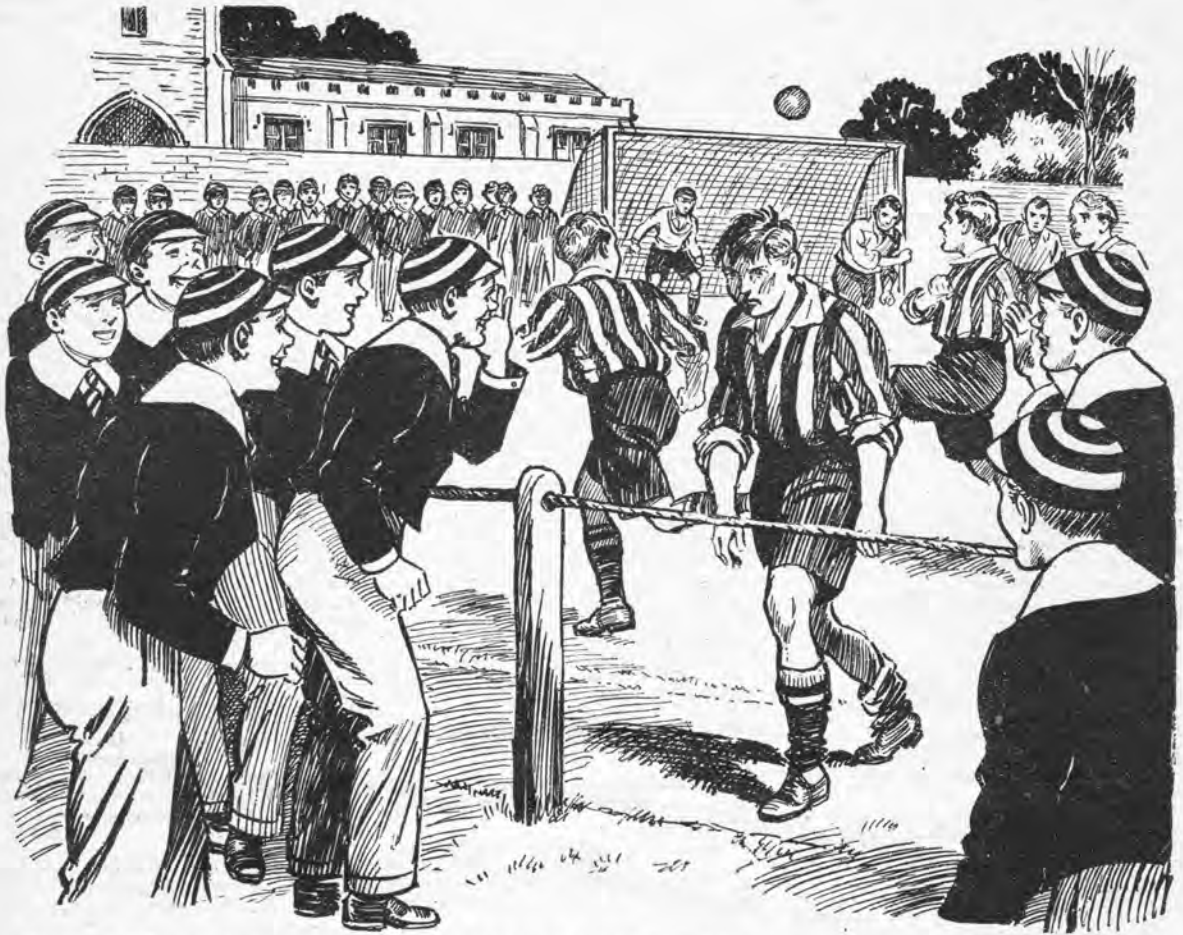
"Eight!" said Lumley-Lumley, without turning a hair.

"Bai Jove! I am offahed eight—"

"Go it, Crooke!" shouted a score of voices. "Don't be beaten! Bag it for the Shell, old man. Pile in!"

Crooke jammed his wallet back into his pocket with a scowl.

"The rotter's only running me up!" he growled. "I've not got a fortune



There was still a quarter of an hour of the match to go, but not for untold wealth and untold swank would Crooke have gone through that remaining fifteen minutes. He was fed up! He limped off the field, the crowd receiving him with mocking laughter.

to spend. Let him have it, and pay eight pounds for it. I don't care!"

This was not exactly a truthful statement, for Crooke did care—very much indeed.

But Lumley-Lumley was not simply running up the bidding. He was ready to pay, and he began to count out currency notes.

"Gentlemen, the lot's going for eight pounds, which is the highest offah. Goin'—goin'—"

Rap, rap!

"Ten pounds!"

It was the voice of Koumi Rao, the Jam of Bundelpore, at last. And Figgins & Co. gave a cheer.

"Hurrah! Go it, Jammy!"

Lumley-Lumley looked at the Jam and sniffed. He was on his mettle, too. But the bidding was getting very high now, even for the heir of Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, railway magnate.

"Gentlemen, I am waitin' for your offahs! I am offahed ten pounds! The valuable lot is goin' for ten pounds to his Highness the Jam of Bundelpore, and—"

"Eleven, I guess!"

"Fifteen!" said the Jam calmly.

This was a tremendous jump, and there was a cheer. Lumley-Lumley blinked at the Jam and hesitated. But the fellow who had once been called the Outsider of St. Jim's was famous for his nerve.

"Twenty!" he said

"Guineas!" said the Jam.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Lumley!"

Lumley-Lumley drove his hands into his pockets.

"Gentlemen, I'm no hog, and I guess I know when I've had enough. This is where I take a back seat."

But Arthur Augustus did not "knock down" the lot to the latest bidder; he looked inquiringly at his chums. Tom Merry & Co. hesitated, too. They wanted to raise the wind for the Skimpole Fund, but—

"Then the place is mine," said the Jam coolly. "You will knock down the lot to me as I have made the highest bid, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, but—but, weally—"

"The fact is," said Tom Merry hesitatingly, "we—we never anticipated whacking bids like this, and—and we don't think we can take so much money, even for the fund."

"Bah! It is my will!" said the Jam in his lordly manner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Koumi Rao gave the laughing juniors a glare. The Jam's lordly manners and customs never failed to have an entertaining effect upon his schoolfellows.

"I insist!" exclaimed the Jam, with a flash in his dark eyes. "You have offered the place for sale, and I have made the highest bid. A Jam of Bundelpore is not to be denied. While the stars shine—"

"And the rivers roll," grinned

Figgins, "a Jam of Bundelpore claims the right to play the giddy ox."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Koumi Rao opened a pocket-book and took out a bunch of banknotes. He extracted four fivers and a pound note and threw them on the table. It was evident that he had much more left.

"There is the money!" he exclaimed.

"Well, the silly ass seems to have plenty," said Blake. "If he insists, I don't see how we can back out."

"Go it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, making up his mind and taking up the banknotes.

Rap, rap!

"Gentlemen, the bid of twenty guineas is accepted, and the lot—I mean the place—is knocked down to his Highness Koumi Wao, the Marnalade—I mean the Jam of Bundelpore. Koumi Wao is a membah of the St. Jim's eleven for the Gweyfwiahs match."

"Hurrah!" shouted Figgins.

The Co. thumped their congratulations upon Koumi Rao's back and marched him off in triumph. The Jam walked off with a lordly stride and his dusky nose in the air.

He had his ambition at last; he was to play in the Greyfriars match. As for the money, he did not give it a thought. His Highness was one of those fortunate individuals who never had to consider the value of money.

"Gentlemen," said the amateur
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auctioneer, "the sale is now ovah. Before the meetin' breaks up, how-ehah, a collection will be taken for the fund—"

There was a general rush for the door.

Before even the cracked teapot could be produced the Common-room was clear, and the committee of ways and means were left to themselves.

"Bai Jove! What have all the fellows washed off like that for?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus in surprise. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Total, thirty-one pounds for the fund," said Tom Merry, who was treasurer of the Skimpole Scrape Fund. "It's topping! Ripping, in fact! But where, in the name of dickens, is the other nine quid coming from?"

"Echo answers where!" said Monty Lowther.

The committee of ways and means gave it up

CHAPTER 12. The Last Chance!

LEVISON'S suggestion had "panned out" well.

The Skimpole Scrape Fund had received a "leg up" such as its founders could not have anticipated. They congratulated themselves on their good fortune. They were well on the way to getting Herbert Skimpole out of his fix.

But there still remained a deficit of nine pounds. How it was to be made up was a deep mystery.

The next day the committee of ways and means thought it over, and discussed it in all its bearings. They had had phenomenal good luck, so far. But the deficit remained.

On Wednesday the Greyfriars match was to be played, and on Thursday, Mr. Henry Skimpoll, to whom the genius of the Shell owed forty pounds, was coming for his money. It had been promised to him. The chums of St. Jim's could not fail in their promise. A debt of honour was a debt of honour.

But what was to be done?

To put another place in the eleven up to auction seemed the only resource. Crooke might have gone up to nine pounds for it.

But there was a difficulty in the way. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy seemed to be the only member of the team whose spirit of self-sacrifice was equal to such a strain.

True, Figgins had offered, and Talbot had followed his example. But neither Figgins nor Talbot could be spared from the team if the match was to be won.

Some of the fellows observed that it was "up" to Monty Lowther. But Monty Lowther did not seem to see it.

Wednesday came, and with it came a letter from D'Arcy's elder brother, Lord Conway. Arthur Augustus had written to him for a contribution.

The viscount sent a letter and a cheque. The letter told Arthur Augustus that he was a cheeky young ass. The cheque, which was much more to the point, was for five pounds.

When Arthur Augustus displayed that letter and cheque, there was a general buzz of satisfaction from the committee of ways and means. Only Arthur Augustus did not look satisfied.

"Hurrah!" chortled Blake. "Old Conway is a brick! That leaves us with only four quid to raise."

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"Topping!" chorused the committee of ways and means.

"Railton will cash that cheque for you, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "He knows your brother, so he'll hand out the dibs at once."

"I am afraid it will be impos- sible to cash this cheque, Tom Mewwy."

"Eh? Why not? You mean to say that your brother can't meet his own cheques?" demanded Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I wegard that remark as asinine. But I feah it is up to me to send this cheque back to my majah."

"What for, fathead?"

"You see what he says in the lettah? He chawactewises me as a cheeky ass. I uttally wefuse to be wegard as a cheeky young ass. I shall return this cheque to Conway with a wathah stiff lettah."

Blake jerked the cheque out of Arthur Augustus' hand.

"You can please yourself about the stiff letter, my son, but this cheque's going to the fund," he remarked.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here's a fountain-pen. Endorse it at once!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I wegard this as a mattah of personal dig. I shall point out to Conway—"

"Then there's only one thing to be done," remarked Monty Lowther, in a thoughtful sort of way.

"What is that, Lowthah?"

"Hold your head under the tap until you endorse the cheque."

"Hear, hear!"

"I should uttally wefuse to have my head held undah the tap, Lowthah. I wegard the suggestion as wicidulous. In the cirs, I cannot accept this cheque, accompanied as it is by opprobious remarks."

Tom Merry closed one eye at the committee of ways and means.

"Gussy," he said, with great solemnity, "I am surprised at you! Considering that Lord Conway has been so generous, I must say I am surprised at you."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that! Pewwaps, in the cirs, I could ovahlook Conway's wude remarks. Pewwaps it would be wathah wuff to write to him a cwushin' lettah when he has wesponded so nobly to my

wequest," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Pewwaps, upon the whole, I had bettah take this lyin' down. I will ovahlook the mattah."

"That's right," said Blake affectionately. "I knew we could depend upon you to act like a born idiot—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Now get this cheque to Railton, and get the tin for it, and shut up, and write Lord Conway a nice letter."

"Hear, hear!"

So the cheque was cashed, and the sum of five pounds added to the still wanting fund. But the final four seemed to present as great difficulties as ever.

Crooke came up to the Terrible Three early after dinner.

"Fund all right?" asked Crooke.

"Four quid still wanted," said Monty Lowther. "As you're rollin' in money, you can make a contribution if you like."

Crooke shrugged his shoulders.

"Catch me! I don't see any sense in getting that dummy Skimpole out of a scrape. He doesn't seem to worry about it himself. But I'll make you an offer. I'm a better footballer than you are, Lowther."

"Go-hon!"

"And I'll hand out four quid on the spot for your place."

"Nothing doing," said Lowther, though he hesitated a moment. "I'd rather let Lumley-Lumley have it."

"Too late!" grinned Crooke. "Lumley's gone out for the afternoon, and it's your last chance. You can take it or leave it."

Monty Lowther looked at his chums. Manners and Tom Merry said nothing. But Monty thought that he could read their thoughts.

"Dash it all!" said Lowther uneasily. "It would be enough to make us lose the match, if that slacker plays, Tom."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom.

"Look here, I'll do as you say!" exclaimed Lowther. "I don't see any other way of raising the other four quid."

"Not unless Crooke contributes it to the fund. It would be only decent to help old Skimmy out of a scrape, Crooke."

"Is that meant for a joke?" asked Crooke pleasantly. "I've got something better to do with my money than help silly duffers out of scrapes. But my people are coming down to St. Jim's to-day, and I'd like them to see me in the eleven. Are you going to take my offer?"

Monty Lowther made up his mind.

"Take it!" he said.

Lowther's face was a little grim.

Tom Merry's face was grim, too, as he walked away with Crooke. He did not want the slacker and black sheep of the Shell in the junior eleven. But it was the only way.

"Where's Lowther?" asked Jack Blake, as Tom Merry joined the team in the quad ten minutes later.

"Isn't he playing?" asked Figgins.

"Crooke's playing."

"My hat!"

"And the fund's complete," said Tom Merry grimly. "We've saved Skimmy, and we may lose the Greyfriars match. Still, our promise came first."

"We must play like thunder," said Figgins. "You can depend on the Jam. Honestly, I think he's jolly nearly as good as Gussy. As for Crooke—well, it will be carrying a passenger, that's all. But we'll all play up—like billy-he!"

Tom Merry nodded.

The match was going to be a tougher one than usual, but it was the only thing to be done, and all the St. Jim's

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players resolved, in Figgy's expressive words, to play up like "Billy-ho!"

CHAPTER 13.

A Fight to a Finish!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. of Greyfriars descended from the motor-coach which had brought them from Rylcombe Station.

They were a fine-looking set of juniors, and the St. Jim's fellows knew from old that they were "hot stuff" on the football field.

Tom Merry & Co. greeted them warmly.

A dusky junior who came with the Greyfriars team, and who rejoiced in the impressive name of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur, was greeted in a weird language by Koumi Rao with great warmth. To the sound follows the words they uttered seemed, as Figgins remarked, like cracking nuts, but the two Indians smiled and talked, and talked and smiled, at a great rate, evidently very pleased and contented.

Crooke came down with the team, smiling.

About the fate of the match Crooke was not much concerned, so long as he had his money's worth, as he expressed it.

His father and his uncles had arrived—three fat and prosperous-looking City gentlemen, who wore rings and diamond pins, and big gold watch-chains, and shining silk toppers, and seemed to bring a whiff of the unhealthy atmosphere of Threadneedle Street with them to the playing-fields of St. Jim's.

And Crooke meant to have his four pounds' worth, and allow his elderly relatives to see him pose as a footballer, and to extract tips from them for footballing expenses on the strength of his performance in the match.

Crooke tapped Tom Merry on the shoulder.

"Where am I going to play?" he asked.

Tom shrugged his shoulders slightly. It did not matter much where Crooke played, so long as he kept out of the way; he was only a passenger at the best.

"Lowther's place, I suppose?" asked Crooke.

Lowther was a forward in the team. Tom shook his head.

"No; I'll put you in at half."

"I'd rather play forward."

"That's for me to settle. I'm going to put you where you'll do most good—or least harm, at any rate."

Crooke scowled, but he had no more to say. Harry Wharton of Greyfriars won the toss, and took advantage of the slight breeze.

From the kick-off the game was hard and fast.

The St. Jim's front line was composed of Figgins, Koumi Rao, Tom Merry, Talbot, and Blake. It was a splendid forward line, and capable of great things.

Koumi Rao was playing up in a way that delighted his chums, and astonished the School House fellows.

Tom Merry had hoped for the best, but he had not expected to see the dusky Jam shine so much as a footballer. It was a very agreeable surprise for him. The Jam was as fast as any fellow on the field, as cool as a cucumber, and clever with the ball.

Even the great Arthur Augustus himself would not have done better in his place. And Arthur Augustus, looking on, cheered the Jam generously.

In the half-back line Crooke was a passenger. Before the game had been going a quarter of an hour the black



"There the bandit stood, he levelled his revolver, but did I turn a hair?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Hebden, "Chez Nous," Clutton Street, Soothill, Batley, Yorks.

sheep of the Shell was in difficulties for breath. Countless cigarettes had spoiled his wind, and it was not long before he had hardly a run left in him.

It was a weak spot in the defence, and the Greyfriars players were not slow to take advantage of it.

They pressed hard on that flank, giving Crooke a good deal of running about. They came right through at last, and the ball was flashed into the net, in spite of Fatty Wynn's great effort to save.

It was first blood to Greyfriars.

Fatty Wynn tossed out the leather, and the players made their way back to the centre of the field. Tom Merry touched Crooke on the arm.

"Pull yourself together, Crooke!" he muttered.

"(Groogh!)" said Crooke, scowling.

"El—what's the matter with you?"

"(Groogh!)"

That was all Crooke could say. He wanted his second wind before he could say any more.

The teams lined up again. This time it was the St. Jim's attack that got home after a hard and long struggle. The ball went in from Tom Merry's foot almost on the sound of the half-time whistle.

"One all," said Blake, as they rested in the interval. "Not so bad, considering that we've got Crooke on our shoulders."

Crooke snorted.

"And what do you think of the Jam?" asked Figgins proudly. "Isn't he first-class, best quality jam, better than any marmalade going?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Topping!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"I'm jolly glad you got into the team, Koumi Rao! You're a giddy jewel!" The Jam's dusky face flushed with pleasure.

"We'll beat 'em!" said Talbot.

"We'll beat 'em if Crooke will only fall down and stay there!" said Figgins.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Crooke.

The whistle went for the second half, and the footballers lined up keenly. Crooke limped wearily to his place.

"You can go off, if you like," said Tom Merry, taking pity upon the unfortunate slacker of the Shell. "We can finish without you, Crooke."

Crooke scowled savagely.

"I'm not going off," he growled. "I've paid for a place in the team, and I'm going to play it out."

"Just as you like, of course."

But before long Crooke more than half-repent that he had not jumped at Tom Merry's offer.

There was a combined attack of the Greyfriars forwards, and the Saints halves failed to stem the tide.

Crooke was left on his back as the attack swept on to goal. He remained there.

A long and hard struggle before the goal followed, and three times the ball went in, only to be fisted out by the Welsh junior between the posts. Fatty Wynn was not to be beaten again.

The game swung back to midfield, and then the St. Jim's forwards got away, and combining cleverly took the ball right into the Greyfriars penalty area. But the opposing defence put up a stout resistance, and at last cleared their lines.

The play swept back again into the St. Jim's half. Crooke, leg-weary and without a run in him, found himself in the midst of the struggle. Harry Wharton's shoulder bumped him out of the way, and he went sprawling. The game swept on, and Crooke lay and blinked at the sky.

"Bai Jove! Make him caw! off!"

shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Kick that silly slackah off the field!"

"Get off, Crooke!" roared the crowd.

"Pick yourself up, man! You're not hurt!"

"Get out of sight, Crooke!"

Crooke picked himself up, crimson with exertion and rage. His people, who were to be so impressed by his presence in the school eleven, were hearing those derisive shouts. It was really rough on Crooke; he felt he wasn't getting his four pounds' worth, after all!

There was still a quarter of an hour to go; but not for untold wealth and untold swank would Crooke have gone through that remaining fifteen minutes. He was fed up! He limped off the field, the crowd receiving him with mocking laughter, and disappeared.

Crooke was not seen again for some time. He was in the dormitory, stretched on his bed, with an ache in every limb, winded to the wide, wishing sincerely that he had never spent four pounds on a place in the St. Jim's junior eleven.

Tom Merry & Co. were playing a man short. But a man short was really an advantage, considering that the "man" was a hopeless duffer and slacker, and had been a trouble and a nuisance in the ranks.

The score was still level; and the time was getting close.

Greyfriars were attacking hard, determined to win. But every fellow on the St. Jim's side was equally determined to do or die. They had raised the Skimpole Fund, and they were resolved not to lose the great match as the price of it.

There was three minutes to go, when Tom Merry led a desperate attack on the Greyfriars goal. Talbot received a pass from Tom, and he dribbled past two defenders. But Johnny Bull of Greyfriars bumped him over. As Talbot fell, however, he passed the leather to Koumi Rao on the other wing.

Koumi Rao saw his chance, dashed in with the ball and then let drive. Out it came from Bulstrode in goal, only to meet Tom Merry's head, and fly in again like a flash. It beat the goalkeeper, and lodged in the net, and there was a terrific roar from St. Jim's.

"Goal, goal, goal!"

(Continued on page 28.)

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HARRY WHARTON FINDS HIMSELF IN THE SHADOW OF EXPULSION IN TRYING TO PREVENT THAT FATE OVERTAKING ERNEST LEVISON!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Ernest Levison, angered and embittered by the ridicule of the Greyfriars Remove because of silly suspicions he entertained against Wun Lung, quarrels with Harry Wharton when the latter stops him bullying a jay.

Wharton has done much to bring out the good in Levison, and has succeeded for a time. But in Levison's present reckless and sour mood, all the bad traits in his character come to the surface.

He offers to go to the Red Cow, a public-house in Friardale, for Carberry, the black sheep of the Sixth, who is holding a little drinking and smoking party that evening. Wharton warns Levison that he is risking a flogging in going to the place, but Levison ignores his advice out of sheer cussedness.

On his return from the village, Levison is severely punished by Mr. Quelch for impertinence, and for not doing lines imposed on him for bullying. The punishment makes the junior even more bitter.

Later in the evening Bob Cherry plays a jape on Carberry & Co., with the result that their little party is a frost. Carberry knows Bob is the japer, and he swears to punish the junior in the Remove dormitory after lights out.

(Now read on.)

Bob Cherry's Scheme!

ERNEST LEVISON of the Remove didn't show himself in the Common-room at Greyfriars that evening, and his absence led to many jocular remarks. Bulstrode suggested that he was off following up a trail in search of another mare's nest—a suggestion that was received with loud laughter.

Ogilvy was of opinion that he was hanging round the letter-rack looking for a chance to read somebody's postcards. All sorts of suggestions were made, and when the Remove went up to bed, there were some inquiries as to the progress of his supposed new case.

Levison made no reply to the humorous queries of his Form-fellows. He never could bear ridicule, and the knowledge that he had fairly earned it did not make it any the more palatable.

The Remove went to bed and Carberry came to see lights out. The prefect's eyes were gleaming as he glanced at Bob Cherry.

"Anything wrong, Carberry?" asked Bob, with elaborate innocence.

"Oh, no, Cherry!" said Carberry. "Quite the reverse."

And he turned out the lights and quitted the room without saying good-night.

A couple of minutes later Bob Cherry skipped out of bed and lighted a candle.

"Who's game for a lark?" he asked.

Larks in the junior dormitories were common enough after lights out, and at Bob Cherry's words half the Remove sat up in bed. Bulstrode growled. He made it a point to growl at any suggestion made by another fellow.

"Oh, shut up!" he said. "Let's go to sleep."

"You can go to sleep if you like," said Bob Cherry. "We're going to have a lark. What price a pillow fight?"

"Good!" said a dozen voices.

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EXPULLED!

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

"Oh rats!" said Bulstrode, sitting up in bed. "We've had enough pillow fights. Can't you think of something new?"

Bob Cherry looked reflective.

"Well, anything for a quiet life," he remarked. "Suppose we have a race up the dorm, jumping over the beds—or, better still, from bed to bed?"

"You'll bust a bed, you ass!"

"Rats! I suppose it doesn't matter if we bust a bed or two. They're not our beds."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed two or three of the juniors. "Come on, then! A bed race."

"Well, if you bust my bed, I jolly well warn you that I shall sleep in yours," said Bulstrode threateningly.

The juniors were soon ready. Bob Cherry led off. He sprang upon the end bed and leapt on to the next, and one after another the juniors followed suit.

Billy Bunter sat up in his bed in alarm.

"I say, you fellows, I'd rather you went round my bed!" he exclaimed. "I don't want to get up, you know, and I can't have you jumping on me."

Only Levison can save Harry Wharton from the "sack"! But will he speak out for the fellow with whom he is on fighting terms?

"Get out of bed, Bunter!"

"You beasts, I won't! I—ow!"

Bob Cherry landed on the bed within an inch of Bunter and the shock nearly threw the fat junior out. Bulstrode came next and he purposely trod on Bunter and the Owl gave a squeak of pain. He squirmed promptly out of bed and gained a safer place.

The race went on the length of the dormitory. The distance between the beds was considerable, and a good leap was required to carry a junior from one to another. There were suppressed shouts of laughter when a junior fell short and rolled over on the floor.

The beds, too, groaned and creaked when the juniors landed on them. Bob Cherry, whenever he landed on Bulstrode's bed, seemed to come down with special force, and that bed had more to stand than any of the others.

The inevitable happened at last.

There was a terrific crash as Bob Cherry came down on Bulstrode's bed for the sixth time, and a yell from Bob.

The bed went right through, and Bob collapsed with it. Two or three other juniors, unable to stop themselves, rolled over him on the wrecked bed.

"Oh!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ow! Gerroff my neck!"

"Oh, murther!" howled Micky Desmond. "It's broke up I am intirely!"

"Ooooh! The brokefulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Singh.

"Me blokee to piecee!" moaned Wun Lung, as he rolled off the bed to the floor and gasped for breath. "Me velly much blokee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the rest of the Remove.

Wharton and Linley dragged Bob from the wrecked bed. It was a wreck and no mistake!

Bulstrode came up with a threatening brow.

"I'm going to have your bed, Cherry," he said aggressively.

"That's only fair," said Hazeldene.

"I don't care whether it's fair or not. I'm going to have Cherry's bed to-night," said the bully of the Remove.

"But what am I going to do?" asked Bob Cherry, with unusual meekness, and a lurking glimmer of fun in his eyes that Bulstrode did not see.

"Sleep on the floor, for all I care!" retorted Bulstrode. "All I know is, I'm going to have your bed!"

"You'd better not!"

"Who's going to stop me?"

"Well, I dare say I could stop you if I tried," said Bob Cherry. "But you can have the bed if you like."

"I'm jolly well going to, whether you like it or not!"

Bulstrode's manner was very hard for anybody to bear, and Harry Wharton's eyes were beginning to gleam, and Nugent clenched his fists. But Bob Cherry took it all with amazing urbanity.

"Very well," he said. "Don't forget that I warned you you'd better not have that bed. But if you insist, Bulstrode, there's an end of the matter."

Bulstrode grunted and went to Bob's bed to turn in. The noise had been too great to continue, and the Remove went quickly to bed, anxious lest some alert prefect should have heard the crash and should come along to investigate.

Bob Cherry cocked his eye thoughtfully at the broken bed. It certainly did not look very inviting. But there was no help for it. He blew out the candle and got into the broken bed. Uncomfortable as it was, Bob was soon fast asleep.

Rough on Bulstrode!

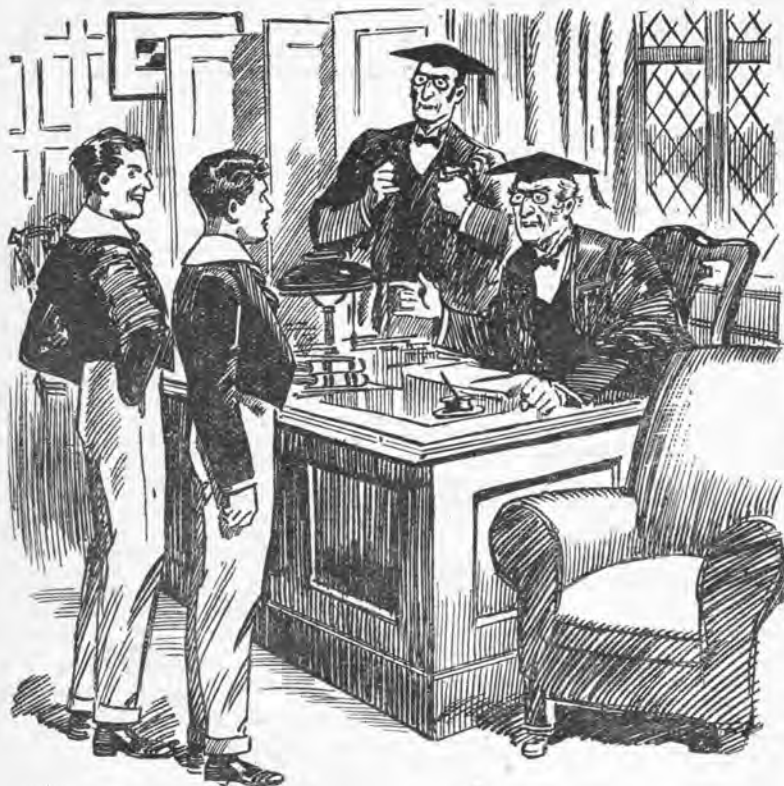
There was a sudden roar in the Remove dormitory. It was half-past ten and every junior in the long lofty room was sleeping soundly, when all of a sudden a fearful yell awoke the echoes. It was followed by another and another, and the sound of a cane thrashing on bed-clothes and the form under them.

"Oh, oh, oh! Help!"

It was Bulstrode who was yelling.

The Remove, startled out of their slumber, sat up in blank amazement, calling to one another to learn what the matter was.

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"Wharton, is there nothing else you can say?" asked the Head. "Can you give no explanation?" "No, sir," replied Harry. "Then I must do my duty," went on Dr. Locke. "You will both be expelled from Greyfriars!" Wharton started convulsively and Levison smiled grimly.

"Oh, oh, oh!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"There, you young sweep, that will teach you not to play tricks in my study!"

It was the voice of Carberry the prefect.

"Oh!" yelled Bulstrode, in anguish and amazement. "Oh! Ow!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Harry Wharton, springing out of bed.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"There, you young sweep, that will teach you!" came the panting voice of Carberry again.

A light gleamed out in the dormitory. Nugent had lighted a candle and so had Micky Desmond. The light showed the Sixth Form bully standing over Bulstrode's bed with a cane in his hand, panting from his exertions.

Bulstrode was writhing in the bed-clothes, his face red and his eyes nearly starting out of his head. He was as amazed as hurt—and he was very considerably hurt.

"What does this mean, Carberry?" asked Harry Wharton fiercely. "What do you mean by coming in here at this time of the night, and—"

The prefect scowled savagely at him. "I came in here to give that rascal Cherry a lesson. Why—why—it isn't Cherry! This is his bed!"

"Of course it isn't Cherry!" howled Bulstrode. "It's me!"

"Bulstrode! What are you doing in Cherry's bed? Where is Cherry?"

"Here I am," said Bob coolly. He

had slipped out of bed and picked up a jug of water from the washstand. "Come on, old chap, if you want a wash!"

Carberry, red with rage, started towards him. But Bob held the jug ready, and Carberry halted. He didn't want a drenching with cold water on a chilly night.

"You—you young rascal! You did this on purpose. You knew I was coming, then!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Bulstrode insisted on having my bed," he remarked. "I didn't want to fight him over it, and I thought you might be coming. Are you hurt, Bulstrode?"

"Oh, oh, oh!" moaned the Remove bully.

"Well, I warned you not to have my bed."

"Oh, oh, oh! Ow!"

"It's like your cheek to come here and bully, Carberry!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his eyes flashing. "If it had been Bob Cherry in the bed, we'd have given you a hiding before you got out, prefect or no prefect. Now get out!"

Carberry glared at the junior. He did not like to take orders from the Lower Fourth boy, but the aspect of the Remove was threatening.

"Out you go!" said Bob Cherry. "No dogs or Sixth Formers admitted here. I give you two seconds before I chuck this water at you!"

"You young scoundrel—"

"One!"

"I'll tan your hide!"

"Two!"

"I'll—Ow—ow—ooooch!"

Bob Cherry had kept his word. The water from the jug swished over Carberry and drenched his head and shoulders. The prefect gave a spluttering gasp and staggered back. Then, with a face like a demon, he flung himself forward at Bob Cherry.

But Harry Wharton sprang on him and dragged him back, and then Nugent, Desmond, and Mark Linley joined in, and the prefect went over on the floor.

The bump he gave rang through the House. He struggled up furiously, but the Removes clung to him, and more and more of the juniors piled on him, till Carberry had a dozen assailants to contend with, and sank to the floor under their weight.

Then Bulstrode, seeing an opportunity of getting a little of his own back, jumped out of bed, and wrenched the cane from Carberry's hand, and commenced to lash the legs of the bully—the only parts of him that could be seen from under the sprawling heap of juniors.

The yells of Carberry rang far and wide. A light gleamed in the door, and the stern face of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked in.

He had been going up to bed when he heard the terrific din from the Remove dormitory, and he had at once hurried to see what was the matter.

"Boys!" he exclaimed.

At the Form-master's voice the scuffle immediately ceased. The Removes bolted back to bed like a lot of rabbits to their burrows, and in a marvellously short space of time Carberry was left alone, sprawling on the floor.

"Carberry! Is that Carberry?" asked Mr. Quelch, in amazement.

"Ye-e-es, sir!" gasped Carberry, getting up.

"What does this riot mean?"

"Those young villains—"

"Those young what? How dare you use such an expression, Carberry?"

"I—I mean those young rascals attacked me!" gasped Carberry. "They set on to me, as you saw, sir."

"What are you doing in the dormitory at this hour of the night?" asked the Form-master coldly.

"I came to cane Cherry for—for an act of impertinence, and—"

"At this hour? I hardly understand this, Carberry. You were certainly wrong to do anything of the kind, and I am not surprised that the boys set upon one who startled them at such a time of night. This is not the way to make the office of a prefect respected, Carberry. If I hear anything of the kind happening again I shall consider whether to speak to Dr. Locke on the subject. Leave the dormitory at once!"

"But, sir—"

"Do you hear me, Carberry?"

And Carberry, gritting his teeth, left the dormitory, aching in every limb and wild with rage. Mr. Quelch gave one expressive glance along the row of beds, and then went out and shut the door.

From the Remove came a long, though suppressed chuckle. They had triumphed over the bully of the Sixth.

"What a brick Quelch is!" said Nugent. "He knew that Carberry came here to bully, and so he was down on him. Good old Quelch!"

And the dormitory unanimously agreed.

Mark Linley's Advice.

"A LLO there! 'Scuse me!" Harry Wharton looked round. He was taking a walk in the Close just before dinner, two or three days later. A red-faced man was looking in between the bars of the gate, and his hand was beckoning to him.

Wharton frowned a little as he looked at the person who called. He knew that he was a bar-tender from the Red Cow in Friardale. The young man wore a check overcoat, and he had a bowler tilted on one side of his head. His nose was rather red, and his eyes were fishy. He grinned with oily amiability.

"'Scuse me!" he said. "Your name don't 'appen to be Levison, I suppose?" "No, it doesn't!" said Harry shortly. "You know Levison?" "Yes."

"Will you tell him that Ted wants to see 'im, or give him this note?"

Harry looked straight into the fishy eyes of the young man from the Red Cow.

"No, I won't!" he said. "Take yourself off!"

"Eh?" "Clear off!"

The young man blinked uncertainly at Harry and ejaculated: "Blinking cheeky kid!" Then he turned to go down the road.

"Hold on, Ted!"

Levison's voice rang out, and the junior came sudding up to the gate. He gave Harry a look of quick suspicion and dislike, and held out his hand between the bars.

"Is that a note for me, Ted?"

"Yes," said the young man from the Red Cow. "Mr. Jolliffe, he—"

"Shut up! It's all right!"

"Right-ho!" said the young man, and he went down the road.

Levison put the letter in his pocket and looked at Harry's face with a sneer.

"You couldn't tell me he wanted to see me!" he said savagely.

"No," said Harry directly. "I wouldn't have a hand in anything of the sort. You've no right to have such an acquaintance, and you know it."

"Mind your own business!"

"It's any decent fellow's business to keep out of helping on an acquaintance like that!" said Harry scornfully. "You could see that that fellow was half-intoxicated. Suppose a prefect had been near, and had heard him asking for you?"

"Yes, he was a careless fool. I suppose Jolliffe gave him the note to get it to me, but didn't mean the dummy to come to the gate like that," muttered Levison, half to himself.

"If a master had heard him, he would have taken the note and read it."

"Shouldn't wonder. I shall speak to Jolliffe about it. I suppose you're not going to blab?" said Levison, with a sneer.

"I don't know whether I ought not to," said Harry. "It seems that you know this rotten cad Jolliffe well."

Levison shrugged his shoulders. His visit to the Red Cow on Carberry's business had been the first real step in his acquaintance with Jolliffe. Since then the acquaintance had ripened. The first visit had not been the last.

Only a few days had elapsed, but Levison had gone a pretty good distance on the downward path—driven by his own obstinacy and recklessness, and the desire to flaunt his independence in the

face of one whom he believed desired to control his actions.

He pretended to be indifferent to Harry's opinion, but, as a matter of fact, it was the desire to taunt the captain of the Remove which actuated him as much as anything else.

"Levison, if you reflected a little—"

"Don't preach to me!"

"I'm not preaching!" exclaimed Harry, reddening angrily. "I'm talking plain sense. If you reflected a bit you would see that this is rotten, caddish foolery, and that it can't last. I know you've been to the Red Cow several

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times lately. I haven't watched you in any way, but I know it. Every fellow in the Remove knows it, and these things can't be hidden for long. It will come to the ears of a prefect or master before long."

"Perhaps you will tell them."

"I shan't tell them—you know that. But if a fellow persists in making a fool of himself he ought to be stopped."

"Suppose you attend to your own affairs and leave me to manage mine!" suggested Levison, with a sneer.

"I don't like to see a chap going to the dogs. I suppose that note means that you're going down to the Red Cow to-night. I've more than half a mind to stop you."

"You couldn't."

"I could, but I can't make up my mind to do it. I don't like the idea of telling, even for a good object."

"Oh, don't talk to me! I've had more than enough of you and your airs of superiority!" growled Levison. "Let me alone to go my own way; that's all I want."

And he walked angrily away.

Harry Wharton thrust his hands into his pockets and strode towards the house. He was in a mood of indecision. Whatever he might say to Levison, it was impossible for him to betray the reckless junior to a master. Yet to stand by while he went from bad to worse—how could he do that?

He knew the kind of company the boy met at the Red Cow. Even in a few days the difference in Levison had become noticeable.

The boy had had few friends, though his bitter tongue had made fellows fear to be his enemies. But many of the Remove were now openly avoiding him. The Form-master's eye was on him, too.

On one occasion a packet of cigarettes had dropped out of Levison's pocket in the class-room, in the full sight of Mr. Quelch, and had considerably opened the master's eyes. He had observed Levison's slackness with lessons, as Wharton had observed his slackness out of doors.

This open revelation of his bad habits explained matters. The junior was severely caned, but that was the worst possible remedy to a boy of Levison's temperament. He had the peculiar faculty of always seeing the wrong side of a question, and obstinately sticking to his opinion against all reason.

Harry Wharton was the only one who remained at all intimate with him, and he did that in spite of Levison's continual insults, for the purpose of yet averting the junior's ruin if he could.

Harry, with hot temper, was the last fellow one would have expected to exercise such patience. But Harry had learned a lesson at Greyfriars, and he had not forgotten how a chum had stood by him not so long ago and helped him to win a battle with himself.

But his influence over Levison seemed to have fallen off entirely. The boy seemed to take a delight in outraging his opinions and shocking his feelings.

Harry met Mark Linley a few minutes after he had left Levison. The Lancashire lad stopped to speak to him.

"I say, Wharton—but never mind if you're busy," he broke off, seeing the cloud on Harry's face. "It can wait."

"It's all right," he said. "I'm not doing anything now. What is it?"

"It's a passage in Xenophon," said Mark ruefully. "I—I almost wish the Persians had scoffed up the ten thousand, sometimes. I don't like to bother you, but you seem to do these things easily."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Let's go and have a look at it," he said.

And the two juniors walked away to Mark Linley's study, which the Lancashire lad shared with Russell, Lacy, and Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. Russell and Lacy were out, but Wun Lung was curled up in the arm-chair before the fire. He blinked sleepily at the two juniors.

Linley's books were on the table, but he hesitated before he settled down to them.

"You were bothered about something when I met you in the quad," he said. "You've often looked bothered lately—excuse my remarking on it. If there is anything I could do—"

"It's nothing," said Wharton. "Thank you all the same. Yet—" He paused a moment. "You're a sensible chap, Linley, and you must have seen more of life than we fellows at school, and I shouldn't wonder if you could advise me."

Wun Lung glided noiselessly from the room. There was a great deal of delicacy about the little Chinese. The juniors hardly noticed him go.

"It's not about myself," said Wharton, a little abruptly. "But you must have noticed that chap Levison."

Mark nodded.

"He hasn't treated you very well, I know, Linley—he was one of the set who sided with Bulstrode to rag you; but he wasn't as bad as Bulstrode. He isn't a bad sort, only he's always doing ill-natured things. Yet he has often owned up and taken a licking when he has got another chap into trouble. He's got his good side, though he doesn't keep it uppermost. He's taken the chipping he's had lately very much to heart, and he's quarrelled with me because I stopped him bullying a fag who had checked him. I had to stop him, but—now he looks on me as his enemy." Harry laughed a little constrainedly.

"It was through Carberry that he came to be mixed up with the Red Cow people," he went on; "but he seems to

be going very strong there on his own. He's got a fancy into his head that we're all down on him, and, as a matter of fact, since he took to pub-haunting, most of the decent chaps give him a wide berth. What would you do in any place, Linley?"

The Lancashire lad looked very thoughtful.

"That's a difficult question to answer," he said. "It would be easy enough to say 'let him alone,' but you want to help him. I haven't much doubt that he plays cards for money at the Red Cow, and bets on horses, and that kind of thing. He happens to have plenty of money, and it's worth Jolliffe's while to fleece him. You could stop him by telling a prefect, but you can't do that. I suppose you've argued with him?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And what does he say?"

"He tells me to mind my own business," said Harry. "I dare say you wonder why I trouble about him after that. But—but I can't let him go, somehow. It isn't as if he was all bad. He has his good points, as I've said!"

Linley wrinkled his brows in thought.

"I can only say, stick to it," he said at last. "You're doing right in trying to save him, that's certain, and so stick to it."

"I thought you would say so, Linley, and I'll do it."

"You think he's going to the Red Cow again?"

"I feel pretty sure he's going to-night."

"Suppose you went and fetched him away, and gave the rascals a piece of your mind?" suggested Linley. "Tell them that if a Greyfriars fellow comes to the place again, you'll let the police know all about it. Jolliffe would be pretty scared at the idea of a showing up. I think I'll come with you and back you up, if you like."

Wharton's face brightened up.

"There's something in that!" he exclaimed. "No, I won't let you come,

in case anything should go wrong. You can't afford to run risks, Linley. I'll go, if Levison does."

And, having made up his mind, Harry Wharton opened the Xenophon, and the two juniors were soon busy retreating over again with the heroic Ten Thousand.

Caught!

HARRY WHARTON started and awoke.

It was very dark in the Remove dormitory, and the boy's open eyes stared into the gloom unseeing. What had awakened him?

Harry's sleep had been light. He had been thinking of Levison and his rascally friends at the Red Cow when he went to sleep, wondering that the reckless junior had not left the school during the evening. He woke now with the thought of him in his mind. He had heard some sound; he did not know what it was, but it seemed to echo in his brain like the sound of a door quietly closed.

In a couple of seconds Harry had stepped out of bed, and groped his way towards Levison's. He knew before he touched it that it was empty; but he passed his hand lightly over it to make sure. His suspicions were correct. Levison was gone.

Harry stood silent, shivering a little in the cold night. This was worse than he anticipated. Stolen hours at the public-house during the evening were bad enough, but for the junior to leave his bed at a late hour of the night, and break bounds while the school was sleeping—Harry could hardly realise that Levison had really done it, though the evidence of the empty bed was before him.

He was tempted to leave the fellow to his fate. After all, why should he persist in a thankless task?

But that was only for a moment.

He groped back to his bed and

dressed himself, taking care to awaken no one else in the dormitory. He remembered Mark Linley's advice, and he determined to follow Levison. If he could not prevail on the foolish fellow to come back, he could at least make it impossible for Jolliffe to allow him to enter the Red Cow again. And a desire to tell Jolliffe what he thought of him was very strong in Harry's mind.

He quietly left the dormitory. Juniors had broken bounds by night before, from motives of boyish recklessness. But "pub-haunting" was a new thing in the Remove. Harry knew which window Levison would have used to get out of the house, and, as he expected, he found it unfastened.

A minute more, and he was in the Close, scudding towards the wall.

There was a place where the wall was easy to cross, and Harry was soon climbing over it. How far was Levison ahead? The junior, as he dropped into the road, broke into a run, in the hope of overtaking Levison before he reached the public-house.

He ran hard, and the ground flew under his feet. But Levison had a good start, and had lost no time. He did not come in sight, and Harry had seen nothing of him when he arrived at last at the Red Cow.

Eleven struck from the village church.

Harry Wharton hesitated. What was he to do now? To enter the place—to face the hostile looks and ribald laughter of the crew who nightly gathered there—he shrank from the thought.

Under Mr. Jolliffe's rule, the place was the resort of all the blackguards in the neighbourhood, and especially of "sporting" characters from the not distant racecourse. To face such a crew was not a pleasant task, but the thought that Levison was there amongst them was enough.

The Red Cow was closed for the night, and Wharton went down the lane at the side of the building into the garden,



"I'll tan your hide!" roared Carberry. "I'll—ow—ow—ooooch!" Bob Cherry jerked the jug, and the water swished over Carberry, drenching his head and shoulders. The prefect gave a spluttering gasp and staggered back.

upon which opened the windows of the parlour where Mr. Jolliffe and his special friends gathered. Harry knew that, for he had heard all about the story of a fellow at Greyfriars who had been expelled for going there.

On most evenings the Jolliffe set were gathered in that room, and Harry found the little window streaming with light, as he expected. A door opened upon the garden. The sound of voices came to the boy's ears as he looked in.

"It won't do you any harm, Master Levison."

It was the coarse voice of Jolliffe. He was speaking to Levison, who had removed his cap and coat, and stood at the table, about to sit down, where three or four others were seated. There were cards on the table, and little heaps of money, and the landlord was offering a glass to Levison.

The junior shook his head.

"No, thank you, Mr. Jolliffe."

"It will warm you up," persisted Mr. Jolliffe. "And you can't refuse to have a drink with your old friends."

"I won't, I tell you!"

"Oh, very well, if you're afraid!"

"Who says I'm afraid?" broke out Levison fiercely. "Do you think I care what they say at school, even if they knew? Not that I care whether they know or not! Give it to me!"

He took the glass and put it to his lips. The men at the table gave him approving grins.

"That's right, kid!"

"Be a man, and let the old fogies go hang!"

Levison's face was flushed and angry. He began to drink, but before he had taken more than a mouthful, Harry Wharton sprang into the room. He

dashed the glass from Levison's hand with a blow of his fist, and it smashed on the table, the liquor splashing over the cards and the men sitting there.

They sprang to their feet with surprised oaths, and Mr. Jolliffe grasped Harry by the shoulder.

"You young rascal! What do you mean?"

Levison, for the moment, was dumb.

"Hands off!" cried Harry fiercely.

"Hands off, I say! You blackguard, to give that stuff to a schoolboy!"

"You—you young hound!"

"Hold your tongue!" cried Harry imperiously. "You're a dirty scoundrel, and your friends here are the same, and I tell you so to your faces. Yes, you can scowl as much as you like,"

he went on, facing Mr. Jolliffe's friends, who were drawing nearer to him, with savage looks. "You had better not lay a finger on me!"

"Kick the cheeky monkey out!" growled Jolliffe.

"Do," said Harry, "and I'll go straight to the police station and tell them what I've seen here!"

Jolliffe changed colour.

But before he could speak, Levison broke in. He had been too surprised by Harry's sudden appearance to speak before, but now he broke in furiously.

"You have followed me, Wharton? Spring, as usual!"

"I haven't spied!"

"You have followed me. Put up your hands!" exclaimed Levison, advancing fiercely on the captain of the Remove.

"I've had enough of this! Put up your hands, I say!"

Wharton dropped his hands to his sides.

"I won't fight with you," he said; "at

least, not here. I came here with a purpose, not to spy on you, but to speak my mind to that scoundrel Jolliffe."

"That what?" asked Jolliffe furiously.

"What else do you call yourself? You're a low, gambling thief!"

exclaimed Harry, who was too angry to measure his words. "That's what you are! And I tell you plainly that if any Greyfriars fellow comes here again, you'll be shown up. You're breaking the law, and you know it!"

"If this is the kind of thing you're going to bring on us, Master Levison, the less you come here the better,"

sneered Jolliffe, without replying to Harry.

Levison was cool again now. He looked at Jolliffe with a sneering smile.

"It's not my fault," he said. "The fellow persists in taking an interest in my welfare against my will. As for coming here, I assure you I don't want to. There are plenty of other blackguards in Friardale for me to associate with when I want such excellent company. I assure you that I'm not fastidious about my blackguards."

Mr. Jolliffe turned purple.

"Get out of my house!" he yelled.

"Certainly!" said Levison. "I'm going to make this interfering cad smart for this; but, all the same, what he says is quite true. You're a set of low, gambling thieves!"

And Levison, having made himself as unpleasant as possible, walked out of the room, followed by Harry Wharton.

In the little lane beside the public-house he stopped and turned on Harry, with a face almost convulsed with rage. His flippant coolness was quite gone.

"This isn't the first time you've meddled with me," he said thickly.

"Now put up your hands!"

Wharton thrust his hands deeper into his pockets.

"If you're of the same mind to-morrow, I'll fight you," he said quietly. "I won't fight you to-night!"

"Coward!"

Harry reddened, but the taunt did not move him. He stood calm and quiet, and Levison dropped his hands.

"Very well," he said savagely, "to-morrow, then."

And he strode sullenly out into the street. Wharton followed.

The two boys emerged into the glimmer of the light from the house, and a quiet voice, with tones that seemed to cut like a knife, fell upon their ears.

"Levison! Wharton! Stop!"

It was Mr. Quelch! The two juniors were fairly caught!

"You will return with me to Greyfriars at once!" said the Remove master severely. "Your disgraceful conduct will be dealt with to-morrow by the Head!"

And Wharton and Levison followed Mr. Quelch to the school.

Expelled!

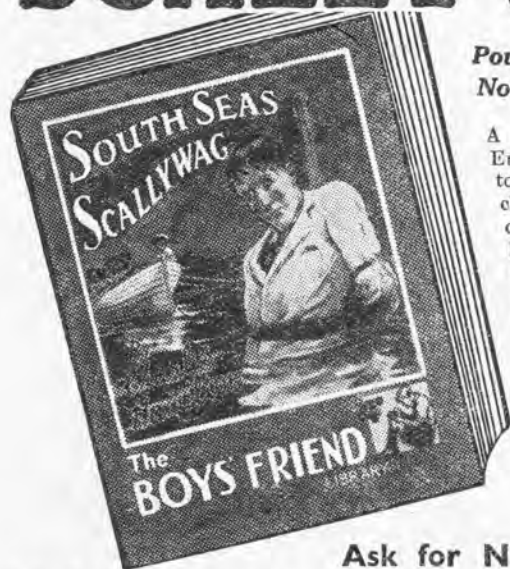
HARRY WHARTON had little more sleep that night. He lay in bed, troubled and restless, thinking. No sound came from Levison's bed, but Harry was pretty certain that Levison was awake also.

What would happen on the morrow? He could not tell.

Mr. Quelch had discovered the two boys in the act of leaving the public-house. He had naturally drawn the conclusion that they had gone together.

What else could he assume?

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Wharton could have explained; but he felt that it was impossible to say that he had gone there for the purpose of saving Levison from his folly. There would be so much of the "good boy" about it, so strong a savour of the self-righteous prig-hero of a good story-book. He had acted rightly, he knew that; but to explain it to another was a very different matter.

Besides, would Levison have borne him out? Levison was in a bitter humour, and he had already shown that a lie came easily to his lips. If he had denied the truth of Harry's explanation, that explanation would certainly have been discredited. Harry would have appeared in the unenviable light of having wished to clear himself by further blackening the name of his associate in wrongdoing.

Mr. Quelch had asked them if they had any explanation to give. Harry Wharton had kept silent, and Levison, with a curious smile, had answered, "None!" He evidently intended to let Wharton share in his punishment.

What would come of it?

Mr. Quelch had told the two boys to go back to bed, and to come into the Head's room the following morning after breakfast. The matter was to be dealt with by the Head himself.

Unless Harry was cleared, he could hardly fail to be expelled. As for Levison, his fate was certain. And how could Harry be cleared when he could not open his lips?

Sleep was impossible. The unhappy junior was up long before the rising-bell in the morning, and tramped round the Close, trying to compose his mind and think what to do.

He thought of his uncle, the kind-hearted but unbending old colonel. What would he think if his nephew was expelled? Even if he believed the explanation the boy would give, what a blow it would be to him.

Harry's face was gloomy when he came into breakfast. His chums noted it, but his look did not invite inquiry. They could not help him, and Harry resolved to keep the matter to himself until the worst was known.

It would not be long now.

Mr. Quelch's face was like iron as he sat at the breakfast-table. He did not look at either Wharton or Levison.

Levison cast more than one glance across at Harry, but Harry kept his eyes on his plate. But without looking at Levison, he knew that a cynical smile was playing upon the sneering mouth.

It was almost as if he enjoyed the situation.

A fellow like Levison was not likely to feel expulsion as keenly as another. Yet it could not fail to be a blow to him. He could not hope to escape, caught in the very act of flagrant wrongdoing as he had been. Was the prospect of involving Harry in his ruin a consolation to him?

Breakfast over, the Remove left the

Hall, and Harry, slipping away before his friends could speak to him, made his way to the Head's room. Levison followed him, and the juniors looked at one another outside the Head's door.

"A bust-up at last," said Levison, with a sour smile.

"Yes," said Harry quietly, "and as bad for me as for you."

"I warned you to let me alone, you know."

Harry made no reply, but tapped at the door, and the deep bass voice of the Head bade him enter. Mr. Quelch was already there. The Remove master had reported the matter to the Head the previous night, and so Dr. Locke was fully informed. There was a shade of care on the Head's face.

He fixed his eyes on the juniors as they entered.

Harry Wharton's manner was calm and respectful, but there was a flippancy about Levison's bearing which brought a frown to the Head's face. The outcast of the Remove knew that nothing could save him, and evidently he did not mean to propitiate where it could do him no service.

"My boys," said the Head quietly, "I have received a very serious report from Mr. Quelch. I am pained and surprised, especially in your case, Wharton. Have you anything to say?"

Harry Wharton was silent.

"Nothing, sir!" said Levison.

"Mr. Quelch, having received a hint that Greyfriars boys had been seen about the Red Cow at night, went there to investigate," said the Head. "He discovered you two in the act of quitting the place. That it was your first visit, I cannot believe. The discovery confirms reports that first drew your Form-master's attention to the place."

The juniors were silent.

"Once before, not long ago, Wharton," went on the Head, directing a glance towards the captain of the Remove, "you were accused of something of the same sort by a prefect. You succeeded in making me believe that you were innocent."

"I was innocent, sir!"

"In the light of your present conduct, Wharton, I cannot help fearing that you deceived me on that occasion."

"I'm sorry you should think so, sir. I have never deceived you. I should think Mr. Quelch could answer for my character."

"I would have done so gladly up till last night," said Mr. Quelch sadly.

"You cannot expect me to do so now, Wharton."

The junior did not speak.

"Mr. Quelch found you leaving the Red Cow, the worst place of its kind in the village, Wharton?" said the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"You had been to that place?"

"Yes, sir."

"At a late hour of the night? Leaving your dormitory and breaking bounds for the purpose?"

"One moment, sir. I went there without any intention of acting in a way you would not approve. I—I had a good motive for going."

"That is very hard to credit, Wharton. What good motive could you possibly have had for entering into association with a set of low, drinking wretches at a place of that description?"

"I—I cannot explain, sir; but—"

"You cannot explain, and you expect me to take your bare word in the face of the strongest evidence!" said the Head sternly.

There was a grim silence in the study for a few moments. Mr. Quelch turned away his head. The Form-master, cold as he sometimes was, had taken a deep interest and pride in the head boy of his Form. He had learned to like and trust Wharton. He would have taken his word without question the day before. But now— It was a blow to Mr. Quelch—harder than he could have expected. His faith in Wharton had been strong, and Wharton had been deceiving him.

The Head waited some moments for the accused junior to speak, but he did not. Dr. Locke turned to Levison.

"Levison, have you any explanation to make?"

"No, sir."

"You broke bounds last night to go to the Red Cow?"

"Yes, sir."

"For what purpose?"

"To play cards with the gang of rotters there, and smoke and drink, sir," said Levison, with perfect coolness.

The Head almost gasped, and Mr. Quelch's face grew very stern.

"Levison! What?"

"You asked me, sir."

"Boy, this astounding impudence will not serve you!"

"I suppose you wanted me to tell you the truth, sir?" said Levison, with affected humility. "I will tell you lies, if you like, sir. I will say that I went to the Red Cow with a good motive and the best intentions in the world."

Wharton flushed crimson.

Levison was parodying his words, with the cynical humour that was his strongest characteristic. A mocking grin met Harry's glance of indignation, and the boy felt his heart sink. There was no hope of Levison's speaking out, then!

"That is enough, Levison!" said the Head sternly. "It would be impossible for me to allow you to remain at Greyfriars, but I expected some slight signs of repentance and proper feeling. I can only regret that two culprits caught in the act of wrongdoing should take refuge, the one in brazen impudence, the other in what I am afraid, I can only regard as prevarication. Wharton, is there nothing else you can say? Can you give me no explanation at all?"

"No, sir."

"Then I must do my duty. You will both be expelled from Greyfriars."

PEN PALS

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1546.

Wharton started convulsively. Levison smiled grimly. He had known what was coming, and he was prepared for it.

"Very well, sir," said Harry, in a low voice.

The Head's glance searched his face, but it was quiet and cold. There was no sign of conscious guilt there. But the evidence was too strong. The Head turned to Mr. Quelch.

"The school will be assembled after prayers, Mr. Quelch," he said. "There is no need to delay this most unpleasant duty. I—"

"Why don't you speak, you fool?" said Levison, looking at Wharton. "Do you think I should be cad enough to lie about you now?"

Wharton did not look at him, but a wild hope sprang up in his heart. Dr. Locke turned quickly to Levison.

"What is that, boy?" Levison gave a scolding laugh. "I meant to speak all the time," he said drawlingly. "I was letting it go on to see whether Wharton would hold out. Wharton is innocent."

"What do you mean?" "I mean what I say. He did not come to the Red Cow with me last night. He followed me there to fetch me away."

"What?" "He has been good enough to constitute himself my father-confessor for a long time past," said Levison sneeringly. "I did not appreciate his kindness. He came to the Red Cow to repeat his lectures, and had a row there with Jolliffe and his friends. He made Jolliffe turn me out by threatening to show him up if he allowed me to come there again. That's all!"

Mr. Quelch drew a breath of relief. The Head's glance searched Levison's face, and then he looked at Wharton.

"Is this true, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry quietly.

"And why did you not explain?"

"Because—because I could not. You must see, sir, that I could not!"

"Besides, you wouldn't have believed him, sir," said Levison coolly. "Not if I had refused to hear him out, anyway."

"I have come very near to doing a terrible injustice," said the Head. "Levison, I hardly understand how you can find a pleasure in torturing in this way a boy who, on your own showing, has tried to be your best friend. Of the disrespect shown to me I will not speak. But I am glad you have told the truth."

Seen This Week's "Magnet," Chums? If not, try it to-day.

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now, at all events; and I thank you for that. I cannot allow you to remain at Greyfriars; but at least I will spare you the degradation of a public expulsion. You will leave the school this morning. You shall leave quietly, and without any fuss, while the other boys are in their class-rooms. You may go!"

Levison left the room without a word. The Head looked at Harry Wharton. "I can only say I am sorry, Wharton," he said. "And Mr. Quelch shares my feelings. You have acted with courage, though I think you have

strained a sense of honour too far in refusing to acquaint me with the true facts. You may go now, my boy!"

Harry Wharton left the study with a lighter heart than when he had entered it. But he was still thinking of Levison, and he went up to the dormitory, where the expelled junior was packing his box. Levison was a little white, but his countenance had not deserted him. He looked up with a curious grin as Wharton came in.

"Thank you, Levison," said Harry. "You have saved me—as I tried to save you and failed."

"It cost me nothing to speak out," yawned Levison. "I was booked for the sack, anyway. You've nothing to thank me for. No humbug, you know."

"You spoke out because you are a decent chap, and good-hearted at the bottom," said Harry, taking no notice of Levison's words. "I shall always remember that. And I'm sorry you're going."

"I'm not. I made a bad start here, and I shall be glad to get gone," Levison paused a moment, and then held out his hand to Wharton in a frank way. "Give us your fist, old chap. You're a good sort, and I know I'm an ungrateful cad. It's my nature, I suppose. You did your best for me, but it was pulling against the tide. I've gone under here; but—but when I make a fresh start I shall remember this, and I hope to do better next time."

And the grip of his hand sealed the promise.

Greyfriars knew Ernest Levison no more, but Harry Wharton did not forget him, and he did not forget Harry nor the lesson learned from him.

(Look out next week for another thrilling yarn of the chums of the Remove. Don't miss reading "THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS!")

SKIMPOLE'S SCRAPE!

(Continued from page 21.)

Goal it was!

The whistle blew.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

"Good old Jam!"

"Yaas, wathah! Huwvah, huwvah!"

St. Jim's had won, after one of the toughest matches that had ever been played on that historic ground.

There were high jinks at St. Jim's that evening.

With a satisfaction that almost equalled their satisfaction at winning the match, the juniors dispatched the forty pounds to Mr. Skimpoll.

Skimpy had been rescued from his scrape, the debt of honour had been paid, and Greyfriars had been beaten as well.

No wonder the heroes of St. Jim's rejoiced. Skimpoll was dragged from his study to join in the celebrations.

Reluctantly he left the delightful volume of Professor Loosetop, and listened in an absent-minded way while it was explained to him that it was all right, and that the debt had been paid, and it was all serene.

"Understand, fathead?" asked Blake, thumping him on the back.

Skimpoll blinked at him.

"Yes, my dear Blake. It appears that you have paid some money—I think you said—to somebody—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Your debt, fathead!" roared Tom Merry.

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