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LOOK, chums—staggering news—PRIZE NEWS—for YOU! Fifteen spanking new Bikes, and Thousands and Thousands of other top-hole prizes all going FREE.

And here's how:

Each week in the GEM, I am going to print Armament Stamps—BOMBERS, GUNS, SEARCHLIGHTS, and so on—eight kinds altogether—and all you have to do is just CUT 'EM OUT AND COLLECT 'EM. You have 20 stamps to start with this week. If you also take the other best boy's papers like "Magnet" and "Modern Boy" you'll find more stamps in them to swell your total.

At the end of this month I shall ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you've collected. It may be Bombers, or Battleships, or perhaps Tanks and Destroyers together. Which—well, that's my secret!

So get busy, collect all the stamps you can so as to be right in front for the first prize-giving. I shall ask you which prize you want, too, the biggest collections of the stamps I call for will win. But don't send any yet; I'll tell you how and where when the time comes.

There you are . . .
and Nothing to Pay!
Isn't it great!

THE EDITOR.

*For Collecting
Armaments
Stamps*



**ANTI-AIRCRAFT
GUN**



HOWITZER



SEARCHLIGHT



BATTLESHIP



DESTROYER

Overseas Readers, Too! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you, as well, of course!

SEE PAGE 35 FOR RULES AND MORE STAMPS!

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WHEN A PACK OF DOGS RAN WILD AT ST. JIM'S! IT'S ONE OF MANY AMAZING INCIDENTS IN THIS GRAND YARN OF SPORT, MYSTERY, FUN AND ADVENTURE.



The collie made a friendly rush at Arthur Augustus, jumped up at him, and pawed half a dozen muddy patches down the junior's elegant jacket. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Down, you brute! Call this wotten dog off!"

CHAPTER 1.

An Important Meeting!

"**B**AI JOVE!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House of St. Jim's, gave vent to this exclamation in a startled voice as he came rushing up the stairs.

His monocle was flying in the air behind him, and he held an opened letter in his hand.

Kangaroo—otherwise Harry Noble—Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn of the Shell stared at him in astonishment.

It was not often Arthur Augustus was seen rushing up the stairs like that. As a general thing, the swell of St. Jim's moved with a stately dignity.

"Bai Jove!"

Kangaroo & Co. barred the way at the top of the stairs.

They were all staring at Arthur Augustus in greater surprise than ever.

"Kangawoo, deah boy—"

A grin broke out on Harry Noble's handsome, pleasant face. He tapped his forehead significantly.

"It's come at last, you chaps!"

"Rather!"

"I always said it was only a matter of time," remarked Harry Noble kindly. "I noticed a queer, feverish light in his eyes this morning. Come up to the bath-room, old chap, and let us hold your head under the cold-water tap."

"You uttah ass, Kangawoo!"

"Calm yourself, Gussy! Try to think of something soothing!"

"You silly duffahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Pway dwy up, and tell me where Jack Blake is, as it's a matted of great importance."

"I should rather think it was. Still, it isn't the first time you've gone off your rocker, Gussy," said Kangaroo pleasantly. "I suppose you think you are Herries' bulldog, or the Queen of Sheba, or someone like that."

"Wats!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You are a waggin' lot of duffahs! Skimmay—Skimmay, deah boy, have you seen Tom Mewwy, or Jack Blake, or Figgins of the New House?"

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By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Running a Dog Show is Tom Merry & Co.'s stunt to raise the wind for a down-on-his-luck hero. But while the Dog Show is a great success, the "hero" leaves a lot to be desired!

Herbert Skimpole stopped in his meditative walk along the upper passage, and blinked thoughtfully through his glasses.

"Yes, D'Arcy, of course I have seen Tom Merry and Jack Blake and Figgins. I may say I am constantly seeing them—in fact, I was in class with Tom Merry only this morning, and yesterday I met Figgins several times."

"Ass! I mean, have you seen them recently?"

"Comparatively recently, D'Arcy."

"I wegard you all as a set of fwabjous asses!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Skimmay I considah in the light of a wavin' lunatic! Kewwuish, deah boy, have you seen Tom Mewwy, or Jack Blake, or Figgins?"

"No, I haven't seen them," said Kerruish pleasantly; "but I know Manners has a snapshot he took of Tom Merry a couple of terms ago, if that would be any use to you."

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus rushed past the grinning juniors, and scudded along the passage at a great pace.

He rounded the corner at the end of the passage like a flash, and thudded full into another junior coming from the opposite direction.

The other junior promptly flung his arms round Arthur Augustus' neck, and they both bumped down to the passage floor.

"Owl Yawwoogh!"

"Gusey, you shrieking ass!"

It was Talbot who spoke.

Arthur Augustus had bowled the Shell junior over, and Talbot had knocked his head rather hard against the wall.

"Gweat Scott! I'm feahfully sowwy, deah boy—only I am in a gweat huvwuy!"

"Yes, it felt like it, you duffer!"

"I am lookin' for Tom Mewwy and Jack Blake and Figgins—"

"Well, you'll find them in Study No. 6," said Talbot, rubbing his damaged head. "The next time you come along a passage like an express train, old chap, you might sound a whistle or something!"

"Yaas, wathah—I mean, ass, Talbot!"

And Arthur Augustus raced on.

Meanwhile, in Study No. 6 a meeting was being held.

"Awful rot!" snapped Blake.

"Piffle!" said Lowther.

"It isn't British, anyway!" exclaimed Manners indignantly. "Tom Merry says the Wayland Rovers' secretary wrote an awfully decent letter and apologised for what happened in the last match. He couldn't jolly well do more than that!"

"Rather!"

"Jolly decent of him to apologise at all!" said Blake. "As a matter of fact, all the blame didn't belong to Wayland Rovers."

"What did the Rovers' secretary actually say, Tom Merry?" asked Kerr, in a thoughtful way. "Was it a genuine sort of apology?"

Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell, nodded.

"I didn't see the letter, of course," he explained, "but I was in Kildare's room when the letter came. Kildare read it out to Darrell, and, of course, I couldn't help hearing. It was only a short letter, but it was a jolly decent one."

"Good egg!"

"I don't see what more the Rovers could have done," Tom Merry went on. "The new secretary writes saying that his club regrets the dis-

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gracefully rough match which took place on our ground last season, that three of the worst offenders of the Wayland side were suspended, and a new captain elected, and that the Rovers are practically a new team. After a letter like that, St. Jim's first eleven ought to play the return match, I say."

"Think what the Wayland people will say if we don't play them!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Wayland Rovers drew on our ground, and everybody'll think St. Jim's is frightened of a hiding. Kildare ought to have thought of that."

"It isn't Kildare," said Tom Merry quietly. "He'd be ready enough to play them again, whether they had apologised or not. It's the masters who have kyboshed the whole thing."

"That's so!"

"And St. Jim's will be reckoned funky!" exclaimed Manners.

"Rotten!"

Perhaps it was not quite as bad as Manners of the Shell suggested, for very few school authorities would have allowed the team to play the return match after the disgraceful exhibition which had taken place when Wayland Rovers had visited the St. Jim's ground.

Wayland Rovers had come over confident of victory. They had started well, pressing in great form for nearly a quarter of an hour. Then Kildare had scored what could only be described as a lucky goal. It had been hard luck for Wayland Rovers, no one could deny that, but it could never have justified their subsequent tactics.

Wayland Rovers had played a rough game, causing the match to degenerate into an exhibition of brute force. Certainly, they had not fouled very much. There had been very little tripping indeed, but there had been a lot of unnecessarily heavy charging.

As a result of this Kildare and three more of the St. Jim's side had been crocked, and the match had ended in a draw.

Tom Merry remembered the game well; but the captain of the Shell also remembered something else.

There had been a little section of St. Jim's fellows who had stood on the touch-line and done as much as anyone else to cause the rough play.

"As a matter of fact, Tresham started barracking the Rovers' players before ever there was any rough play," said the captain of the Shell. "And Gilmore and St. Leger were almost as bad."

"Rather!"

"I jolly well believe they tried to spoil the match."

"Just the sort of thing they would do, anyway," said Monty Lowther of the Shell. "As likely as not Tresham had some bets on the match."

"I dare say Tresham had some motive in trying to upset the Wayland players," agreed Tom Merry. "But Tresham has left St. Jim's now, and everybody is jolly glad. Tresham doesn't matter; but it jolly well matters if St. Jim's refuse to play the return match. Something has got to be done about that, you fellows."

"My hat, yes!"

"That's why I've called this meeting," went on Tom Merry. "Of course, it's a first eleven affair; but first eleven affairs affect the whole school, and if the bigwigs of the Fifth and Sixth don't

trouble about St. Jim's reputation on the footer field, we've jolly well got to!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And so something has got to be done," said the captain of the Shell, in a heated voice. "I know Kildare has laid the Wayland Rovers' secretary's letter before the Head, and the Head has refused to alter his decision about scratching the return match. That's how the matter stands, and we've got to tackle it at once!"

"What about a deputation to the Head?"

"No good!"

"See Kildare, then?"

"Worse!"

Tom Merry looked moodily at the juniors as they made their suggestions, and shook his head.

Figgins, the long-limbed leader of the New House juniors, jumped to his feet.

"Nothing can be done to-day, anyway," he said, "so we'll just think it over. One of us New House fellows will have an idea by to-morrow morning."

"Some hopes!"

"Rats!"

"Dry up!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Yes, Figgy, we'll think it over, and think jolly hard, too. I dare say an idea will come to me before long. Hallo!"

A thump at the door interrupted Tom Merry.

"Come in!" he called.

"Pway unlock the door, deah boys. It is impos for me to come in till you do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't waste time, you duffahs, as we have only a vewy few minutes before the twain comes in!"

"It's only Gussy," laughed Monty Lowther, turning the key. "Come in, Gussy, only we don't want one of your special imitations of a cackling hen. You do it jolly well, but we are fed-up with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed, but only for a moment or two. There was a curious expression on the aristocratic face of Arthur Augustus as he came into the study.

Talbot followed quietly.

The swell of the Fourth sank into a chair and screwed his monocle into his eye. He stared blankly at the roomful of juniors.

CHAPTER 2.

Cousin Ethel's Request!

"WHAT'S happened, Gussy?"

Tom Merry asked the question, and stared hard at the letter Arthur Augustus held in his hand.

Arthur Augustus promptly handed the letter to the captain of the Shell.

"A wippin' lettah frowm Cousin Ethel; but it contains some wathah startlin' news."

"My aunt, I should say so," muttered Tom Merry, his eyes glued to Cousin Ethel's letter.

"I—I say, you chaps, Cousin Ethel is sending us an old soldier by the five o'clock train."

"Sending us a what?"

"An old soldier," repeated Tom Merry. "It seems than an old man got her dog out of the river for her, and afterwards she learned all about him. His name is John Palmer, and he has fought in ever so many wars, and is an awfully decent chap."

"And he's coming to St. Jim's?"

"Well, he's coming to Rylcombe by the five o'clock train," explained Tom Merry. "Cousin

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Ethel wants us all to meet him and find him a decent cottage to live in, and—and generally look after him."

"My aunt!"

The juniors looked at each other. All of them were only too ready to help anyone who had done Cousin Ethel a good service; but, as it chanced, funds all round were rather low.

"Have you come to the part where Cousin Ethel wemarks that Palmah has faults," said Arthur Augustus, "and is wathah difficult to deal with?"

"Yes; but she goes on to say that, under a rough exterior, the old man has a very fine character. You chaps, we shall have to raise enough tin to see the old fellow through for a bit, anyway," said Tom Merry.

"Just what I was goin' to wemark, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We must waise a subscription at once, and then wash off and meet the twain."

"Yes, that's it."

The juniors instinctively turned towards Arthur Augustus.

"Come on, Gussy!"

"You're the man with the tin!"

"I should be only too pleased, deah boys, to

THE GEM SPELLING BEE

Test Your Wits With These Ten Teasers!

Here is a list of ten words. Without looking at a dictionary can you spot the spelling mistakes.

CURRICULEM
CURTSY
UNPARALLELED
SEPERATE
SEIGE
DESCEND
INKLING
HARRASSED
FIREY
ADAMANT

Which are spelled wrong, and how? Turn to page 34 and you will see if your orthography is up to Sixth Form standard or merely so-so.

start the subsecription list, but I have just paid my tailah's bill!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"What did you want to pay a tailor's bill for, ass?"

"I didn't want to, Mannahs, only the tailah wanted me to!"

"Rotten!"

"I wogwet to say, deah boys, that I cannot subsecribe more than half-a-crown, and I shall have to request Digby to pay me the two shillings he owes me in ordah to do that!"

"Then I shan't be able to subscribe anything at all!" said Digby.

"My aunt!"

Pockets were hastily turned out, and a calculation made.

Roughly, the juniors could raise ten shillings, with a few promises which might or might not materialise.

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"What's to be done, you chaps?" asked Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I know!"

"Bai Jove, it is wathah a stunnah!" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "And time is flyin', deah boys. The only thin' I can suggest is that we wush off to meet the twain without first waisin' the subsevivion."

"Yes, come on!" said Blake. "There isn't too much time. Cash or no cash, we've got to meet the old chap."

And the juniors hurried from Study No. 6.

They were not long in reaching Rylcombe Station, but before they got there the smoke of the incoming train already showed up against the blue sky. It had halted at the platform by the time the juniors arrived.

"My hat! He hasn't come!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as he saw the deserted state of the platform.

"Bai Jove, pewwaps he is asleep in the twain, deah boys!"

Only one passenger had alighted from the train, and he was like nothing on earth so much as a tramp, who had seen better days even in the tramping line.

Tom Merry & Co. stared at the man in doubt and dismay.

The solitary passenger was staring back at them with an unpleasant grin on his fat, unshaven face. He was a dirty specimen of humanity, dressed in attire which was ragged in the extreme.

The unsavoury-looking individual came towards Tom Merry & Co. with an oily smile on his face. He removed his battered bowler hat, and the result was not an improvement. His long, uncombed hair was scarcely a crowning glory to his face.

"The young gen'lemen from St. Jim's?" he asked.

Tom Merry started.

"Ye-es; we are from St. Jim's."

"And you have come to meet me? My name is John Palmer."

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, and his monocle fell from his eye.

Tom Merry also gasped, but he tried to disguise the gasp as a cough. The rest of the juniors just stared at the man in astonishment.

John Palmer appeared perfectly unaware of the bad impression he had made.

"I thank you from the bottom of my 'eart for meetin' me," he said. "Miss Ethel said you would welcome me."

"Don't—don't mention it!" murmured Tom Merry.

"No, wathah not! Pway wegard it as a great pleasuah on our part, Mr. Palmah. Talbot and Mannahs, two of our fellows, are avwargin' a little tea for you in a wippin' tuckshop outside the station. I wathah fancy you must be in need of a cup of tea."

"A—cup of tea!" muttered Mr. Palmer. "The train journey has shaken me up a little, young gen'lemen, and perhaps somethin' a trifle more stimulin'—"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We will huwvy to the tuckshop and ordah coffee instead, as that is a vewy stimulin' and wefweshin' dwink."

John Palmer started. He stared at Arthur Augustus in doubt.

"Make it tea, young gents!" he said. "I wasn't thinkin' of coffee, but never mind. Make it tea."

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"Wight-ho, deah boy! Come on!"

It was only a few yards to the little cafe where Talbot and Mannahs had stopped to arrange about tea. And a ripping little tea they had arranged for, too, with some excellent slices of ham and some new rolls and a fruit cake.

Talbot was standing in the doorway watching for the approach of the visitor and the juniors. Taking into account the limited means at their disposal, Talbot could not help feeling rather pleased with the result.

The little party came in sight, and Talbot began to feel puzzled. He had expected to see the St. Jim's juniors crowding round the old soldier, talking cheerily; instead, Tom Merry & Co. were approaching in dead silence.

Tom Merry and Figgins were leading, and both of them were just as silent as the juniors behind them.

Talbot hurried to meet them. For a moment he could not see Cousin Ethel's protege clearly behind the little crowd of juniors.

"Has he turned up, you chaps?"

"Yaas—yaas; he's turned up," answered Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Palmah, this is Talbot of the School House!"

"Pleased to meet the young gen'elman, I'm sure! Ope we shall be friends!"

Talbot suddenly stepped forward. He faced Palmer with a startled, amazed expression in his eyes. For a moment or two, Tom Merry & Co. stared at their chum in surprise. Talbot had gone quite pale.

"Who—who are you?"

"John Palmer," answered Cousin Ethel's protege. "An old soldier of the King, and a very unlucky man!"

Talbot did not answer. He was still staring Palmer full in the face.

Tom Merry could not understand it.

No doubt Palmer was as big a disappointment to Talbot as he had been to the other juniors, but that scarcely seemed sufficient reason for Talbot's obvious amazement.

"What's up, Talbot?"

"Anythin' w'ong, deah boy?"

"N-no, nothing wrong!" muttered Talbot, his eyes still fixed on John Palmer. "It's all right!"

"Then—then pway let's go in to tea!"

"Yes; come in to tea," said Talbot, and he stood aside for John Palmer to pass.

The ex-soldier marched past with a grin on his fat face.

CHAPTER 3.

John Palmer!

IF there were surprise and uneasiness on Talbot's face as he followed the other juniors and John Palmer into the little cafe, there was still greater uneasiness in his heart.

There was a little doubt, too, at first, but that was dying rapidly, and the uneasiness was growing.

Talbot took a chair at the bottom of the table, facing John Palmer. The junior seemed unable to take his eyes off Cousin Ethel's protege.

Tom Merry and the other juniors had found their tongues at last. John Palmer might be a bitter disappointment. In their hearts they might consider him a fawning, altogether unpleasant individual. But he had done Cousin Ethel a good turn.

Tom Merry & Co. turned their thoughts upon that fact, and ignored the unsavouriness of the man their girl chum wished to befriend.

But Talbot was not thinking of Cousin Ethel's wish. Far more serious thoughts occupied his mind. He had watched Tom Merry handing out provisions to John Palmer, and the junior who had once been known as the Toff knew that he had not made a mistake.

With his eyes fixed on Palmer, Talbot thought of the old black days, now almost forgotten at St. Jim's except by a mean-spirited few. The wretched past came back in a flash to the junior.

Talbot saw himself a member of the gang of cracksmen again. In fancy he could see the Professor and Hookey Walker, and all the rest of the gang. And amongst them one face stood out clearly in Talbot's memory—the fat face of John Palmer!

Talbot was sure—quite sure! John Palmer had been known as Slade in those days, and he had only been a member of the gang for a short time. Palmer's methods had been too crude for the gang of "artistic" scoundrels, and they had dropped him.

Before that had happened, though, Palmer had been mixed up in more than one daring robbery planned by Hookey Walker and his associates. Talbot remembered the incidents quite well.

And now John Palmer, or Slade—or whatever his name was—had come to St. Jim's in the guise of an ex-soldier. He had come there to be befriended by Tom Merry & Co. for having done Cousin Ethel a good turn.

Even now Tom Merry & Co. were playing up nobly in doing their best by the ex-cracksmen.

"Pway twy some more of this ham, Mr. Palmah—"

"Or have a little cake for a change?"

"Yaas, do have some cake! It is weally wippin', and you must be feahfully hungwy aftah your long journey."

"And who says more tea?"

The juniors were doing their best for the man. They all seemed to have forgotten their disappointment at his appearance, and certainly Palmer seemed grateful to them. Again and again Talbot heard Palmer thanking Tom Merry & Co. Perhaps Palmer was trying to reform, and the help Tom Merry & Co. were only too ready to proffer him might prove the real turning-point in the ex-cracksmen's life. If he was sure of that he would never breathe a word of the man's past.

But Talbot also thought of the other possibility. Suppose Palmer was still the dishonest ruffian he had been. If that were so, and Talbot kept silent, Tom Merry & Co. would all be imposed upon sooner or later.

Tom Merry turned with a cheery laugh.

"What are you thinking about, Talbot?" he asked. "Anything up, old chap?"

Talbot started out of his reverie.

"That's all right, Tom—"

"Of course it's all right, ass, if you are referring to the cake!" laughed the captain of the Shell. "You ask Fatty Wynn. He's wolfed about half of it!"

"Oh, really, Tom Merry—"



Talbot stepped forward to meet John Palmer, and then stopped, a startled expression on his face. Tom Merry & Co. stared at their chum in surprise. They little guessed that in Palmer Talbot recognised one of the gang of the junior's cracksmen days!

"Yes, really, Fatty! I say, you fellows, what about asking Mrs. Court whether she knows anyone who has a cottage where Palmer can get a room?"

"Good egg, Tommy!"

"Here is Mrs. Court with some more tea, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway leave this mattah to a fellow of tact and judgment."

Talbot sat on in silence listening.

He heard Arthur Augustus raise the question about a room for Palmer in some neighbouring cottage, and he heard the tuckshop-keeper's answer.

The old lady seemed quite interested in the affair.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy, I do happen to know of a cottage," Mrs. Court replied. "My sister—Mrs. Hall—who is a widow, would be only too glad to let one of her rooms, and she'd find board as well if you liked."

"Yaas, wathah, as that would save Mr. Palmah dinin' out each day—which would be more expensive."

"Mrs. Court, what would your sister expect for her room?" asked Tom Merry.

"She usually charges twelve shillings a week for the room and breakfast, Master Merry."

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as vewy weasonable indeed."

"Yes, that would do rippingly!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Mr. Palmer, I know the cottage, and it's a really nice place. Shall we call it settled?"

John Palmer looked across the table at the handsome, cheery face of the captain of the Shell and he appeared very grateful.

"It'll only be for a short time, young gen'le-

men," he said. "It is not my way to sponge on people. I mean to look for work at once."

Talbot heard that with some relief. If Palmer really meant to look for work in the neighbourhood, it certainly added weight to the idea that he had reformed.

Talbot rose to his feet with the rest of the juniors as Tom Merry paid for the tea. The three or four shillings it cost made a hole in the ten shillings which had been collected among the juniors, and the captain of the Shell exchanged dismayed glances with Jack Blake and Figgins.

"Perhaps Mrs. Court's sister will let us pay for half a week in advance, and the rest at the end of the week?"

"Yes, that's it!"

"And we'll jolly well raise the cash somehow at St. Jim's!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "It'll be all right, Tommy. Kim on, you chaps!"

And the juniors left, the cafe and proceeded to the cottage of Mrs. Court's sister. In spite of the unprepossessing appearance of Mr. Palmer, the good lady agreed to take him in; and, that being settled satisfactorily, the juniors returned to St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4.

Lumley Speaks His Mind!

"If you School House duffers would only leave it to us—"

"Rats, Figgins!"

"Yaas, wats, Figgy!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "We are all agreed that money to provide for Mr. Palmah must be waised, and my ideah is that the mattah should be left entirely in my hands—"

"Bow-wow!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell and Figgins & Co. of the New House were guests in Study No. 6, ostensibly for the purpose of arranging some scheme for raising the necessary funds for John Palmer. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the millionaire's son, had also been invited because of his business abilities.

But as yet Lumley-Lumley had said nothing at all. He was watching the excited juniors, with a smile on his keen face.

"It isn't likely New House bounders could think of a scheme to raise cash!" said Jack Blake hotly. "I know you are well-meaning, Figgins, and—"

"Look here, Blake—"

"Yes, I'm looking!" said Jack Blake, with increased warmth. "I can see a set of awful asses, too!"

Lumley-Lumley laughed loudly and jumped to his feet.

"Let's get the thing on a business footing, you fellows," he said. "I guess you said John Palmer wanted work?"

"Yaas, that is twuc. The deah old chap is vewy keen—"

"Well, I think I can get him some work on Harris' farm."

"Bai Jove! That is wippin'!"

"But could you get it at once, old man?" asked Tom Merry.

"I might be able to."

"Good egg!"

"Yaas, that is a wippin' ideah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, we shall probably need funds, as Mr. Palmah's wardrobe is in need of



Somewhere in the desert an airmah had disappeared. Somewhere in the desert, too, was a fortune in gold. Jagers and his pal, the Winkle, flew full-throttle into the mystery—and it was nearly the last flight they ever made! This great yarn is just one of EIGHT in today's

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instant renewal. I ppropose that the New House boundahs do their best to raise funds, and we School House fellows do the same. Then we can add the two sums wealised into a gwand total."

"Good idea, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah! I dare say we shall waise quite twenty pounds between us, deah boys."

"Anyway, we'll do the best we can!" laughed Tom Merry. "What do you say, Lumley-Lumley?"

"I'm all in favour of finding the chap work," answered the millionaire's son quietly. "Mr. Harris spoke to me about being shorthanded only this afternoon, and I'll ring him up on the telephone. If there's anything doing we'll get things fixed up!"

"And, in the meantime, we'll do what we can to raise funds," put in Figgins. "No brainy ideas ever came from the School House, so we'll clear back to our own show. We'll let you have a decent sum of money in a day or two, Merry!" And Figgins & Co. sauntered away.

A minute or two later Lumley-Lumley was using the phone in the prefects' room. When he came out there was a satisfied grin on his face.

Tom Merry & Co. were waiting in the passage, and Lumley-Lumley greeted them with a cheery laugh.

"It's all right, you chap! Mr. Harris will take Palmer on at once—to-morrow, in fact—and he'll pay him fifteen bob a week, and provide most of his grub!"

"Good!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Of course, there'll be plenty of work to do," added Lumley-Lumley, with a curious grin. "But you say Palmer won't mind work, so that's all right. What about going down on our bikes to the cottage and telling him now, Merry?"

"Yes, that's the idea. I'll slip along and see Kildare about an exeat!"

Tom Merry scudded away, but he was back before long. He had an exeat for four in his hand.

"Kildare won't let more than four of us go," he explained. "I suggest Gussy, Blake, Lumley-Lumley and myself going."

And this being agreed upon, the four juniors hurried to the bicycle shed for their machines, and a few minutes later they were pedalling along the high road at a fine pace.

Lumley-Lumley stopped for a few moments at Farmer Harris' cottage to clinch matters, then they scorched on to Mrs. Hall.

Mrs. Hall, a kindly-looking motherly old lady, met them in the doorway. There was rather a severe expression on her face as the juniors raised their caps.

"If you've come to see Mr. Palmer, you'll find him upstairs," she said briefly. "He's gone to bed, Master Merry."

"Gone to bed, bai Jove!"

"Come on, you chaps!" muttered Tom Merry. Lumley-Lumley grinned.

The juniors tripped upstairs into the small but spotlessly clean room. The only unclean object to be seen was John Palmer, and he was in bed, smoking a cigarette and holding a glass of steaming liquid in front of his face.

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and let his monocle drop from his eye.

"I trust you are not ill, Mr. Palmah?"

"A little run down, I think," groaned Palmer. "I always take a sip of hot rum and water when I feel run down—just a sip—"

"What do you do with the rest of the half-pint?" asked Lumley-Lumley thoughtfully.

"Weally, Lumley-Lumley, deah boy—"

"Oh, don't mind me, Gussy! Get on with the washing! Tell Palmer we've found him work."

John Palmer started. Cousin Ethel's protegee seemed strangely alarmed.

"Work?" he repeated. "I—I can't express my thanks in words! When do I start?"

"To-morrow," said Tom Merry.

"To-morrow! What—what kind of work is it, young gen'lemen?"

"Farm work—weally most intwestin'—"

"And you'll get fifteen bob a week for it," put in Lumley-Lumley. "Of course, the hours are rather long—from six in the morning until six at night."

"From six in the morning!"

John Palmer sat up in bed and took another sip of rum and water and gasped aloud. He faced the juniors in dismay.

"Again, I can't find words to thank you, young gen'lemen!" he exclaimed. "But when I said



"George, if you were anything of a father you would help Billy to find his marble!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Israelstam, 35, Blenheim Road, Bradford.

just now that I felt a bit run down I was 'idin' the truth. As a matter of fact, I feel downright ill, and ache all over!"

"Bai Jove! That wathah looks like influenzah, Mr. Palmah," said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "Do you feel wathah depwessed, as well?"

"Orrible!"

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy, I am afwaid he has the flu."

Tom Merry did not answer. He was staring hard at John Palmer.

"Funny you should discover you had the flu just when we told you we'd got work for you, Palmer!" said Tom Merry.

"It's very unfortunate, sir!"

"It is a gweat pity, but it is poss that you will be bettah in the mornin'."

"Yes, very likely I shall," agreed Palmer.

"If it is humanly possible, I shall start work at— at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

"It won't be humanly possible," murmured Lumley-Lumley.

"I trust you will be bettah in the mornin', Mr. Palmah," said Arthur Augustus. "Although I feel that it is only fair to remark that I cannot help wegardin' your sudden attack as wathah suspish, in the cires. If you weally do ache all ovah, I hope you will soon be all wight."

And the juniors departed. There was a broad grin on Lumley-Lumley's face as Tom Merry & Co. came from the cottage.

"What do you make of him, Lumley-Lumley?" asked Tom.

"I guess your precious John Palmer may have jumped into a river and saved Cousin Ethel's dog," answered the millionaire's son, "and he may have fought for his country; but at the present moment he's an old fraud."

"Gweat Scott! I had the same idea for a moment—"

"Well, I've had it for longer than a moment," laughed Lumley-Lumley. "I wouldn't cross the road to give the old sponger twopence!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked at each other blankly. Even if John Palmer was a fraud, as far as his pretended desire for work was concerned, Tom Merry & Co. still had their problem to face.

Cousin Ethel had spoken of John Palmer having faults, but in spite of them she had asked the St. Jim's juniors to stand by the ex-soldier. Perhaps being a fraud and a lazy sponger were the faults discovered by their girl chum. In any case, it was still up to Tom Merry & Co. to fulfil Cousin Ethel's wish.

"If he is a lazy rascal we'll soon scotch that," said Tom Merry grimly. "We'll see him through for a bit, but he's jolly well got to work!"

"And perhaps, after all, dear boys, he has got influenjah—"

"Rats!" laughed Lumley-Lumley. "Let's get back to St. Jim's."

CHAPTER 5.

Just Like Gussy!

ALL four juniors were a little breathless after their cycle run from Rylcombe, and a little depressed by the result of their visit to John Palmer.

As they entered the School House the swell of St. Jim's halted in the hall.

"Bai Jove! I must wush off to Study No. 5, dear boys, and get that lettah to post to Cousin Ethel!"

And Arthur Augustus darted away. He hurried along the passage leading to the staircase, and then he suddenly stopped.

The telephone bell was ringing loudly in the prefects' room.

"Bai Jove! I shall be latah than evah postin' that lettah!" gasped Arthur Augustus, entering the empty room. He lifted the receiver, and spoke into the transmitter: "Hallo!"

"Hallo!" came back a faint voice over the wire. "Is that St. Jim's? This is the secretary of Wavens Rovers speaking."

"Bai Jove! I had bettah fetch Kildare—"

Arthur Augustus stopped speaking as the other voice went on again.

A sympathetic expression appeared on D'Arcy's face as he listened.

"Bai Jove, dear boy, I can only wegard your offah as genewous in the extweme! Yaas, wathah! I agree with you!"

Arthur Augustus' voice died away again, and he listened for another minute. When the swell of St. Jim's spoke again, there was an excited note in his tones.

"To-morrow aftahnoon, bai Jove! Yaas, it could be awwanged. In the cires, I am weady to give you my word in the mattah—"

"Kick off at three o'clock," came the voice over the wire.

"Yaas, wathah! Kick off at thwee o'clock

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to-morrow aftahnoon. Pway considah the mattah settled, dear boy!"

And, hanging up the receiver, Arthur Augustus hurried out of the prefects' room, and up the stairs to Study No. 6. Blake, Herries, and Digby were in the room.

"Blake, a vewy important thing has happened. You wemenbah that wippin' lettah the secwetawey of Wayland Wovahs w'ote to Kildare?"

"Of course I remember it!"

"Well, the secwetawey has just wung up St. Jim's," said Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "As there was no one about, I answered the phone. The Wovahs want to play us on their gwound to-morrow aftahnoon, bai Jove!"

"They will have to want, then."

"But the club has offahed a thwee-guinea gwawantee, the money to be given to any chawity St. Jim's like to suggest."

"My hat, that's decent of them!"

"Wippin'! The Wovahs insist on givin' the money to make up for the wotten game they put up on our gwound. And it appeahs that the Wovahs are pwactically a new side now."

"But it's no go," said Herries. "The Head has said St. Jim's first eleven are not to play the Rovers again, and so we shan't!"

"For once in a way I cannot agree with our respected Head."

"Ass!"

"The Wovahs have apologised, and they are offewin' thwee guineas to chawity as a sort of penaltah the club is imposin' on itself, and I cannot help wegardin' their action as wippin' in the extweme. In the cires, I had to agree, Blake."

"Eh? What did you agree about with the Rovers' sec?"

"I gave my word, Blake, that I would take ovah the best possible team to play the Wovahs to-morrow aftahnoon, which is a half-holiday," said the swell of St. Jim's. "The kick-off is at thwee o'clock."

"My—my hat!"

Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby gasped aloud, and stared at Arthur Augustus as if that elegant junior had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

Arthur Augustus sat down to his preparation, and his chums, who seemed speechless at his cool nerve in fixing the match, followed his example. But the moment prep was over, urgent messages were sent to Tom Merry & Co., and Figgins, and his chums of the New House.

The Terrible Three were the first to arrive, but Figgins, Fatty Wynn, and Kerr were not many seconds behind. They all crowded into the study, and Jack Blake closed the door.

In a few words Blake explained.

"Mind you," said the chief of Study No. 6, "I agree with Gussy that St. Jim's ought to play the Rovers. Gussy is right about that; but in fixing the match himself, he's asking for trouble."

"Weally, Blake, I uttably fail to see—"

"You burbling lunatic!" choked Jack Blake. "Think of the row afterwards if we play them. I suppose you mean that it is the junior eleven who are to play? You aren't going to have the frightful nerve to ask Kildare and the first eleven chaps to turn out?"

"Gweat Scott, no!"

"Well, think of the awful row that'll follow," Arthur Augustus waved his hand loftily.

"I have thought of ewewythin', dear boy," he

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Boys often seem able to get the best out of wireless sets, states a writer. However, they rarely seem able to get it all back again.

"Bus Catches Fire in Wayland." Passengers soon alight, I presume?

Whilst we are about it, what is the last record in aeroplanes? "Jump!"

I hear the zigzagging of his car led to a retired crook being arrested. He simply couldn't go straight for long.

"Imported Door Bolts," runs a headline. Shiver my timbers! How fast, I wonder?

Then there's the story about the oyster. It's best swallowed whole!

"Our Coals Are Best," advertises a company in Wayland. "Your hearth's desire," might fit even better!

Pay your taxes with a smile, suggests a writer. But most tax collectors insist on cash.

A financier says that Britain can never go bankrupt. It's us, however, not Britain, that we're worrying about in Study No. 10.

"Australia Descends Upon England," runs a cricket headline. Not blotting the Old Country out completely, I hope!

Story. "You're looking very chirpy," said Blake to Digby. "Rather! I've been to the dentist's," replied Dig. "Gosh! That's no reason to look happy!" exclaimed Blake. "Yes, it is," grinned Digby. "He was out!"

"Actor Insures Against Wearing Glasses." A short-sighted policy.

"Hallo, Fatty!" said Figgins, finding Fatty Wynn in the village tuckshop. "What are you doing here?" "I've just had a dozen of those pies," answered Wynn, sighing happily at the recollection, "and if they hadn't been so dear I'd have made my tea off them!"

Here's health, chaps!

explained. "You can always twust me to think of ewev'thin', and there weally is nothin' at all to feah. It isn't St. Jim's junior eleven who are playin' Wayland Wovahs to-mowwow—it's D'Arcy's eleven, bai Jove!"

"My—my hat!"
"But the match will be reported in the local rag, and the St. Jim's colours will be recognised."

"I propose we play in white shirts, deah boy."

"But—but the newspaper report—"

"The Wovahs' secwetawy doesn't think there will be weportahs on the gwound, Tom Mewwy," answered Arthur Augustus. "He waised the point, and said there would be vewy few spec-tators, because there is a show of some sort on at Wayland to-mowwow. It will be quite all wight, deah boys. We can cycle ovah as though we are goin' for a bicycle spin, and nothin' will be ovah heard of the affair. I twust you all wealise that I wegwet this secwecy, but I had no othah wesource. Wayland Wovahs want to play us to vindicate their honah, and it is up to us to give them a chance of doin' it."

"But—"

Arthur Augustus waved his hand again.
"You see, I have given my word of honah to take ovah the best available team," answered the swell of St. Jim's. "In the circe, there is nothin' for us to do but to wegard the mattah as closed, and pwocceed to pick the team. I will admit that I was a twifle hasty, perhaps, but it is too late to twouble about that now. Pway pass me some papah, and we will select the team!"

"You shrieking ass!"
"Wats!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Fatty Wynn, I twust you are all wight for goal?"

Fatty Wynn glanced doubtfully from Figgins to Tom Merry. All the juniors looked a little excited, and perhaps a trifle uneasy.

"Tom Mewwy, you will turn out, of course?"
The captain of the Shell did not answer for a moment. His sympathy was all with Wayland Rovers.

But the possible consequences attending the proposed match made Tom Merry hesitate. Arthur Augustus waited, pencil in hand.

The captain of the Shell suddenly made up his mind.

"Yes, I'll play—"

"Rather!"

"So will I."

"You are a howling ass, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "You've probably landed all of us in an awful mess; but, as you've promised to take over a team to play the Rovers, we shall have to back you up."

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"Thanks awfully, deah boy! I knew you would see the mattah in the wight light. Personally, I considah we shall have a wippin' game."

The team was made up, and the members of it could only hope that the playing of the match would not reach the ears of the Head.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy's Eleven!

"BAI Jove, what did I say, deah boys?"
"Blessed if I know, Gussy!" growled Monty Lowther. "You sáy such a lot! Thank goodness there are only a handful of spec-tators, anyway!"

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"That was what I was wewefwin' to, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus, as he slipped from his bicycle. "There can't be more than twenty spectators on the groud, so we can wegard ourselves as absolutely safe!"

"Humph!"

Tom Merry and ten other juniors propped their machines against the pavilion wall on the compact, pleasant Wayland Rovers' ground.

Tom led the way into the visitors' dressing-room of the Rovers' pavilion in a hopeful frame of mind.

"It may be all right, after all," he said.

"Yaas, wathah! I considah we have nothin' to feah now. Bai Jove, there is the Wovahs' captain waitin' to toss up!"

Arthur Augustus went to greet the opposing skipper and toss for choice of ends. He was soon back again.

A cheery grin was on the face of the swell of St. Jim's.

"We have won the toss, deah boys, and we play against the wind in the first half."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"The wind may drop, duffer!"

"On the contwawy, I wathah fancy it is goin' to fweshen up," replied Arthur Augustus. "You can twust me to have chosen the wight goal to defend."

Arthur Augustus led his side on to the field in great spirits.

Wayland Rovers were fielding a very strong eleven, but St. Jim's also had a strong team out. It could scarcely have been strengthened, except by first eleven players.

Wayland kicked off, getting away at once with a sweeping attack.

Tom Merry watched anxiously. If Wayland Rovers really meant to atone for their disgraceful exhibition of rough play on the St. Jim's ground, they had their chance now.

The Rovers broke through the St. Jim's half-back line, but there was not a suspicion of roughness. As a matter of fact, Tom Merry heard one of the home players shout an apology to Kangaroo for blundering into him by accident.

Tom Merry's eyes brightened as he heard that shout.

"It's the straight goods, Lowther!"

"Rather!"

"They mean to play the game!"

"And we've got to play it, too, to win!" answered Lowther, as the Rovers' winger centred the ball with a beautifully judged kick.

"Good old Figgins!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Figgins, at left-back, had brought one of his long legs into action and the danger was averted. The leader of the New House juniors had booted the leather away with a hefty kick.

The ball flew to Arthur Augustus on the wing, and the swell of St. Jim's did not waste time. He dashed away at a splendid pace.

The Rovers' left-half tried to stop him, but Arthur Augustus beat him for speed.

The swell of St. Jim's raced on until he nearly reached the home left-back. Then he whipped the ball across the centre.

Tom Merry gained possession, feinted past a rather flustered centre-half, and flashed the leather across to Talbot.

Talbot took the pass in his stride, and then hit the ball with his right boot.

Thud!

The ball left Talbot's foot like a shot from a

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gun. It whizzed straight for the top left-hand corner of the net.

"Oh, hard luck, Talbot!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Well saved, sir!"

The Rovers' goalkeeper had flung himself across the goalmouth and saved Talbot's terrific shot in great style.

It was very hard luck for Talbot, but it would have been equally hard luck for the goalkeeper if he had failed after such a fine attempt to save.

Talbot grinned broadly.

"My hat, this is something like a game!"

"Ripping!"

There was some clever play on the St. Jim's left wing, then another shot, this time from Jack Blake.

Again the home custodian saved and added to his laurels by clearing the ball with a huge punt.

Almost instantly Figgins and Kerr, the St. Jim's full-backs, were in the middle of a hot attack. The two New House juniors were perhaps the soundest pair of backs the St. Jim's junior side had ever fielded, and they played their very best game that afternoon.

Figgins' tackling roused the handful of spectators into shouts of applause.

Again and again the Rovers' forwards tried to force their way through, but they were splendidly held, and when long shots were attempted there was always Fatty Wynn to bar the way to the net.

But it was the same at the other end of the ground.

Tom Merry, Talbot, and Monty Lowther played the inside game with beautiful understanding, and cut their way through the home half-back line cleverly; but they could not score. Time after time shots were rained in upon the home custodian, but they were all kept out.

Jack Blake, receiving the ball from Talbot, streaked along the touchline at a great pace. He swerved past the half-back and, just as the back came out to tackle him, he slipped the ball right to Tom Merry's foot.

The captain of the Shell appeared to be about to shoot, then he swerved away to the left, thus deceiving the other back, and was through.

The Shell junior covered the twenty yards which separated him from the goal-area at a splendid point of speed. There were excited shouts; and, as a last resource, the Wayland goalkeeper rushed out.

It was really his only chance.

Cleverly the custodian tried to narrow down the angle of the coming shot and he waved his arms.

But Tom Merry did not lose his head, and suddenly he let drive with his right foot.

Thud!

The ball fairly whizzed into the net, and there was a spontaneous roar.

St. Jim's had scored first!

And they had done so on the stroke of half-time, for the referee whistled for the goal and for the breather with the same blast.

CHAPTER 7.

A Great Match!

IF the first half of that unofficial match between St. Jim's junior team and Wayland Rovers had been exciting and clever to watch, it was completely eclipsed by the second.

Tom Merry & Co. took the field after the interval, fully expecting a hard fight.

The Rovers started with a series of brilliant,

almost irresistible attacks. But the St. Jim's defence stood up to them, and Fatty Wynn was equal to all the shots that were sent in.

"On the ball, Figgins!"

"Oh, well cleared!"

One of the Rovers' attacks had been stopped by the leader of the New House juniors, and the leather was sent flying down the ground to Tom Merry.

The captain of the Shell trapped neatly, and flashed a perfect pass to Talbot.

Talbot dashed ahead, eluded a clever tackle, and transferred to Jack Blake; and the visiting forward line went sweeping down the field with a beautifully combined run.

there was a thud. The ball had struck the cross-bar, and glanced over for a goal-kick.

"Hard luck, Gussy!"

"By Jove, yes!" exclaimed one of the Wayland players. "You chaps jolly well deserved to score then!"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Tom Merry, laughing cheerily. "You are having as much of the game as we are. And a jolly fine game it is, too!"

There could be no doubt about the match being a very fine one. Whatever the result was at the end, the losers would deserve equally as much credit for the display as the winners.

Ever since the start, there had not been a single foul, not even an accidental one.



Thud! The ball left Talbot's foot like a shot from a gun, and whizzed straight for the top left-hand corner of the net. It looked a goal all the way, but the Rovers' goalkeeper flung himself across the goal-mouth and brought off a miraculous save.

Jack Blake raced on with the leather. Lowther, Talbot, and Tom Merry, the St. Jim's three inside players, were all well marked. It was no good passing to any of them.

And one of the backs was closing in upon Jack Blake. But just as he was tackled, Blake suddenly screwed round, and flashed the ball right across the ground to Arthur Augustus at outside-right.

Arthur Augustus steadied the ball and then raced ahead.

He swerved round the left-back and cut in for goal.

Someone rushed at him, but Arthur Augustus was just in time to shoot.

The ball flashed through the air. For a breathless moment it looked certain to find the net; then

After Arthur Augustus' hard luck, the exchanges ruled even for nearly half an hour. There were narrow escapes for both goals, but, somehow, the defence always managed to prevail in the end.

And as time wore on, the excitement and enthusiasm grew.

When the game had only ten minutes to go, St. Jim's still held their one goal lead, but there was no sign of the Rovers accepting defeat. They were playing harder than ever.

Harry Noble was working tremendously hard at centre-half for St. Jim's. Again and again he succeeded in getting the ball away to Tom Merry or Talbot or Lowther.

When there could only have been a few minutes to go, Tom Merry made a desperate effort to put

the result of the match beyond doubt. The captain of the Shell received the ball from Harry Noble, and whipped the leather across to Talbot.

Talbot kept possession of the ball for a second or two, then passed back to Tom Merry, and the next moment the Shell junior was making a fast run down the field.

He raced on, swerving and tricking his way past the home defenders. The handful of spectators cheered in excitement.

The captain of the Shell reached the backs, and as they closed in on him, he got his foot under the ball and lifted it over the heads of the two defenders. And the next instant the Shell junior had raced between them, and appeared to have the goal at his mercy.

"Shoot!"

"Shoot, Merry!"

Tom Merry shot with all the power he could. And it was a perfectly placed shot as well as a fast one. The ball flew away towards the bottom corner of the net.

The Wayland Rovers' goalkeeper flung himself across the goalmouth again, and in some miraculous manner, got his hands to the ball.

The goalie had saved his charge, but he was still prone on the ground, with the ball lying motionless a yard or two out of his reach.

Talbot dashed up, and Jack Blake came streaking in from the wing. But one of the home backs flung himself at the ball.

There was a thud, followed by a cheer.

The Wayland player had cleared.

The back had got his foot to the ball first, and the leather travelled up to the half-way line.

Already the referee had glanced at his watch twice in less than half a minute, so there could only be a few more seconds left for the game.

The Wayland centre-forward received the ball, and raced down the field, beating Harry Noble for speed.

Figgins rushed in to tackle, but the Wayland forward flashed the ball round one side of him and raced round the other.

Figgins was beaten!

Kerr dashed across, but he could never be in time to prevent the shot. Still, the Scots junior tried desperately, and if there had been another second, he might have succeeded.

But there was not. The Wayland centre-forward swung his right foot back and shot.

Fatty Wynn was ready, and he flung himself headlong across his charge. But Fatty never had a chance of saving that goal. The ball crashed into the net even as the Falstaff of St. Jim's fell full length.

"Oh, well shot, sir!"

It had been a magnificent shot, and it would have been the rankest bad luck if it had not gained its reward.

The referee sounded his whistle, and pointed towards the pavilion.

The great match Tom Merry & Co. had risked so much to play had ended in a splendid draw. It was the only fair result on the run of the play, and the St. Jim's juniors were as pleased as the Wayland players were.

"A jolly fine game, anyway!"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as the crowd of players trooped off the ground. "I should like to say I wegard it as one of the finest games I have evah played in!"

The Wayland captain flushed. He was a new captain, chosen by the Rovers' club after the other

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match with St. Jim's, and he had set his heart on making the match a fine, sporting affair. He held out his hand to Arthur Augustus.

"I want to thank you for playing us again," he said quietly. "Of course, I realised that St. Jim's had a perfect right to refuse any further match with us, and it was very generous of you to bring over such a very fine side. Here are the three guineas we promised. Please present it to any charity you like."

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

"No doubt there is some charity or some deserving person at Rylcombe who will be glad of the cash?"

"Gweat Scott, yaas! As a mattah of fact, there is an old soldiah we are twyin' to do somethin' for, but we're wathah out of funds. It was my ideah to use the money to help John Palmah."

"My hat, yes!" muttered Tom Merry.

"That sounds a ripping idea!" agreed the Rovers' captain heartily.

"Yaas, deah boy; he's a deservin' case," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't dig me in the wibs, Lowthah!"

"Ass!" exclaimed Lowther. "Look over there!"

Arthur Augustus wheeled round, and his monocle fell from his eye.

For there stood Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House.

CHAPTER 8.

All Serene!

"BAI Jove! He has gone, deah boys!"
Tom Merry looked blankly towards the exit.

Mr. Railton's stalwart form could be seen distinctly as he passed with the rest of the little crowd through the gateway leading to the main road.

The Housemaster was wheeling a bicycle, and the dismay grew on Tom Merry's face.

"My-hat! He's going back to report us!"

The St. Jim's juniors looked at each other in alarm.

"Faith, and we're in for it now!" said Reilly, the junior from Belfast. "I should think Gussy will be after getting whacked!"

"Pway don't be widio, Weilly!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus quickly. "And pway don't waste time! We must wace after Mr. Wailton and explain mattahs."

"A fat lot of good that will do, ass!"

"Yaas, wathah! I considah it will do all the good in the world, Tom Mewwy! We must wace aftah him at once!"

The juniors had come over in their football things, and they had only to slip on their overcoats.

Arthur Augustus mounted his machine, and started off at a fine pace, and Tom Merry and the other juniors followed him. None of them possessed the confidence Arthur Augustus had that it would be all right when matters had been explained to Mr. Railton, but there really was nothing else to be done.

The juniors crammed on the pace as fast as they could. As they came round a bend in the road they saw Mr. Railton ahead, jumping from his machine, having nearly run over a little fox-terrier.

The Housemaster stopped to speak to a white-haired old stonebreaker by the roadside, to whom the dog apparently belonged.

THE MAN WHO SAVED SIX NATIONS!

There's a striking tribute in the stamp-album, says our expert, to the debt northern South America owes to Simon Bolivar, the Liberator!



Venezuela honours Simon Bolivar on her ten cents issue of 1880. Most of her stamps bear his portrait.

LOOK through all the Venezuelan stamps you possess, and you'll find that most of them bear the likeness of a handsome, soldierly-looking man, dressed in the uniform of the time of the Duke of Wellington—Simon Bolivar.

To this day, in any state in the north part of South America, Bolivar's name is a household word. For, just over a century ago, he threw off the decadent Spanish control in South America and paved the way for the independence of no less than six states—present-day Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Panama.

Just think of it! Rescuing six whole nations, with a handful of ill-equipped soldiers to help him.

present-day dictators do, Bolivar refused all other titles except that of Liberator, and it was in that capacity that the Peruvians called in his help. Between 1824 and 1825 he crushed the Spaniards, and a year later, the southern provinces of Peru formed themselves into the wholly independent state of Bolivia—named after Bolivar himself.

DIED A PAUPER!

Back north again, Venezuela herself separated from her parent Colombia, and still further independence might have been established had not Bolivar died prematurely. (Colombia recorded this event on a commemorative stamp of 1930.)

Though quite a wealthy man, when he died Bolivar was a pauper, having given all his wealth to the cause which was so dear to him. Through him freedom came to the whole of northern South America, and under his sane leadership that part of the American continent held together as a single unit.

Throughout his lifetime, Bolivar was engaged in over two hundred important battles, and some of these have been the reason for the issue of special postage stamps. The Battle of Ayacucho, which took place on December 9th, 1824, for instance, was celebrated postally a hundred years later by both Venezuela and Peru, for it was this battle which finally smashed Spanish power in America. Actually, Bolivar himself took no active part in it, but his friend, Sucre—who also appears on a few Venezuelan stamps—was the victor in this engagement.

Just before this battle, Bolivar made one of the greatest forced marches in history, leading a rabble army across the Andes by tracks which even a mule could not manage.



Peru pays tribute to the Liberator. This stamp was issued in 1924 to mark the centenary of the Battle of Ayacucho, 1824.

TRAGEDY—AND A VOW!

Caracas, Venezuela, was Bolivar's birthplace, and, being the son of very well-to-do parents, he received a European education. Tragedy came early to him after reaching manhood. Within ten months of marrying, his wife died of yellow fever in Venezuela.

Back to Europe he went, and this time met his old friend and tutor, Simon Rodriguez, to whom he vowed to release his beloved country from the Spanish yoke.

In the early 1800's it looked as though he would succeed, but lack of support from his own patriots and general intrigue made it possible for the Spaniards to regain all

he had taken from them.

Bolivar fled to Haiti, whose negro president helped him with money and men to start out on the revolutionary road once again. This time he was more successful, and by 1822 he had overthrown the Spanish hold on Colombia for good.

Never wanting power in the way so many

Arthur Augustus spurted desperately, and arrived on the scene in a breathless state.

Mr. Railton was in the act of departing, after ascertaining that the dog was all right.

"Please, sir, may we speak to you for a minute?"

Mr. Railton turned, and nodded pleasantly.

"Ah, D'Arcy! I hope you enjoyed your game?"

"Yaas, wathah sir!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "As a mattah of fact, we want to ask you a vewy gweat favour, sir."

"A favour?"

"Ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "What we want is to explain, sir—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What is it you want to explain, Merry?" asked Mr. Railton. "Anything about the very excellent match D'Arcy's eleven played with Wayland Rovers?"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, sir!"

"But the Wayland secretary explained everything to me on the ground," added the Housemaster gravely. "The secretary showed me copies of the letters he had written to Kildare, and he told me about your telephone message, D'Arcy. I really fail to see how any explanation of yours can alter the facts."

"Bai Jove, no, sir!"

"Then why trouble to explain?"

"I—I— There are some extenuatin' cires, sir!" floundered Arthur Augustus. "Wayland Wovahs had lost their reputation as a sportin' wids, and they appealed to us—"

"And the game was quite unofficial, sir," said Tom Merry. "It wasn't a St. Jim's side which played the Rovers. It was D'Arcy's eleven."

"I shall probably mention the matter to Dr. Holmes at dinner to-night," said Mr. Railton, with a quiet smile. "But I do not think you need fear

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the result. I shall certainly say how much I enjoyed the match. And I think it is highly probable that St. Jim's first eleven will renew their fixture with Wayland Rovers next season."

"Bai Jove!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Tom Merry enthusiastically. "Thanks awfully, sir!"

Mr. Railton nodded and smiled, and cycled on. The juniors stood looking after him in silence. Figgins, who in his heart often envied the school House their Housmaster, was the first to speak.

"Railton is a brick, you fellows!"

"Rather!" replied Lowther.

The cheery voice of the old stonebreaker broke in.

Tom Merry & Co. turned, and saw the white-haired old man fondling a little fox-terrier.

"He's the right sort, that master of yours, young gentlemen!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus glanced at the other juniors, and Tom Merry nodded. Arthur Augustus fumbled in his pocket. There had, of course, been some silver included in the guarantee money handed over to him.

"Will you accept this?" Gussy asked, holding out half-a-crown to the man. "It is not a large sum, but pewwaps it may be usef'ul."

The old stonebreaker looked at the coin and smiled, but he shook his head.

"I thank you, sir," he said, "but I'd really rather not. I get my living all right at this job; and Peter, this little chap here, helps when dog shows come along."

"Bai Jove——"

"I hope you aren't offended, sir?" said the old man.

"No; wathah not. I can quite undahstand——"

"I am glad of that, sir," answered the old fellow simply. "I've never yet had to accept charity, and I don't want to until I'm forced, and I trust that won't happen for a long time."

"Bai Jove, I twust not!"

"And your dog helps you to make a living?" said Herries, with great interest. "He's a fine little chap! I've got a fine bulldog myself, so I know something about dogs."

"Yes; Peter's a fine little chap, and I was offered five pounds for him not so long ago. I wouldn't take fifty, sir!"

"I wouldn't take five hundred for Towser!" said Herries.

"Gweat Scott! Wouldn't you, weally, Hewwies?" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Towsah has no respect for a fellow's twousahs!"

"Rats!" snapped Herries. "So Peter wins prizes at dog shows?"

"He's managed to gain four firsts and three seconds so far. You don't happen to know when there is likely to be a dog show in these parts, sir?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Herries.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake glanced at him with puzzled looks.

"What's the mattah, deah boy?"

"N-nothing!" said Herries. "I've got an idea. But let's get back to St. Jim's, you chaps!"

"Yes, let's get on," returned Tom Merry. "If we are going to see John Palmer there isn't any time to waste. It's quite likely Palmer was able to start work, after all."

"Bai Jove, I was forgettin' about that!"

The juniors jumped on to their machines, and

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called out a cheery "Good-bye!" to the old stonebreaker. But they were in such a hurry that none of them noticed the old man's face. For the old stonebreaker was staring at them in puzzled amazement.

CHAPTER 9.

Herries' Great Idea!

"THERE'S no need for you chaps to go to see John Palmer!" said Lumley-Lumley coolly, when the juniors reached St. Jim's.

Tom Merry looked at Lumley-Lumley with a quick glance.

"Why not?" he asked.

"I've just been with him!" said the millionaire's son.

"Bai Jove! Then he was able to start work?"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"I guess not, Gussy! The old fraud is still in bed, and drinking hot rum-and-water. He was singing to himself when I reached the cottage, but when he saw me he had a fit of coughing. I jolly nearly emptied the water-jug over the old swindler!"

"Gweat Scott! You might have made his illness worse!"

"Bow-wow!"

"But if he has influenzah and a tempewature——"

"Ah, if!" scoffed Lumley-Lumley. "I tell you John Palmer is an old fraud! He doesn't mean to do any work while you chaps are prepared to support him."

"We've no proof, Lumley-Lumley."

"I don't want any——"

"Is that quite fair?"

"It's no bizney of mine, anyway. You do as you think best," answered Lumley-Lumley. "If Palmer sneaks your ticker, Gussy, don't forget that I warned you!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Lumley-Lumley, why did you say that?"

Talbot asked the question in a low, tense voice. He looked pale and anxious.

Lumley-Lumley glanced at him in surprise.

"Why did you speak about——about Palmer stealing Gussy's watch?" repeated Talbot. "Have you any reason for suspecting Palmer?"

"No, I haven't any special reason, Talbot," Lumley-Lumley said slowly. "I didn't mean it dead seriously, of course. It's my belief Palmer is shamming illness, and so I called him a fraud. I haven't the vaguest idea whether he is honest or not."

"I see."

Talbot had not told anyone that he had known John Palmer in the bad old days. He would never tell Palmer's secret unless Palmer forced him to by some dishonest action, and that had not happened yet.

Talbot's uneasiness wore off a little as he walked away across the quadrangle. But there was still a puzzled, uncertain expression in his eyes.

"Hallo, Talbot!"

Talbot started as Herries hailed him.

"I say, do you know where Blake is?"

"Gone to Study No. 6, I expect," answered Talbot. "I left them all just now."

"Well, come to Study No. 6 at once, will you?"

"Why, what's happened?" asked Talbot.

"Nothing has happened. But look here, you are in with us about raising some cash to help John Palmer, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm with you."

"Then I've got the scheme of a life-time," said Herries, lowering his voice. "It's absolutely a

great wheeze, Talbot. What about having a dog show?"

Herries made his suggestion in a quick, enthusiastic voice, and Talbot stared rather blankly at him. Herries went on quickly.

"That's my idea—a dog show!" he rattled on. "I know we could get one of those barns on Harris' farm, and we could get any amount of entrants from Rylcombe at a shilling a head."

"My aunt!"

"Of course, there would have to be prizes, and that would mean shelling out a little; but we should get all the cash back three or four times over."

"I—I suppose we should if enough dogs were entered."

"There'd be heaps of Rylcombe people only too glad to enter their dogs!" went on Herries breathlessly. "The idea came to me suddenly when we were talking to that stonebreaker. Talbot, it's the idea of a life-time!"

"I—I suppose it could be worked—"

"It couldn't fail! Say we only got a hundred dogs entered; that would mean five pounds—"

"My hat! Are there a hundred dogs in Rylcombe?"

"Well, if we don't get quite a hundred it won't matter. We shall have to ask that dog fancier from Rylcombe to judge the animals. I'd be willing enough to do that and save the expense, only I mean to enter Towser, and, of course, he will get first prize! The other chaps might say things if I gave my own dog a 'first'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The show could come off on Saturday," said Herries. "There's no footer on, and we've two whole days. Think what a sell it will be for the New House bounders!"

"Yes, there is that in it, of course."

"I've got all the details worked out. Let's go along to Study No. 6 at once and form a committee. We shall want a jolly strong committee, and I'm willing to act as chairman. Tom Merry and Jack Blake will be no end keen on the wheeze, I can tell you. Come on!"

Talbot laughed, and followed Herries into the House.

They arrived at Study No. 6 just as Jack Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three of the Shell were sitting down to tea.

Herries burst into the study with a rush.

CHAPTER 10.

Gussy Pays a Visit!

"I WEGARD the whole ideah as wotten in the extweme!"

Herries jumped to his feet wrathfully. He had laid his dog scheme before the other juniors, and his suggestion had been received in dead silence.

Arthur Augustus had been the first to break the pause.

"I not only wegard the ideah as wotten in the extweme," exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, "but I considah that it could only have come fwom a fathead—"

"Ass!" roared Herries.

"No one in his sane senses would willingly gathah togethah a large numbah of fewocious dogs," went on Arthur Augustus warmly. "It is well known that dogs in large numbers scwap like anythin', and they have no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs."

"You burbling duffer, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to be described as a burblin' duffah,

Hewwies; and I wefuse to considah your uttiahly wotten ideah about a dog show!"

"Who is asking you to consider it, ass?"

"Then the mattah dwops through—"

"Turn that ass out of the study!" shouted Herries.

"I uttiahly wefuse—"

"Then dry up!" cried Herries, in a warlike voice. "Well, that's my idea for raising money for John Palmer and scoring one against the New House—that we hold a first-class dog show on Saturday!"

"I should think it would work out all right if we could get enough dogs to enter," said Tom.

"We can easily do that—"

"Wats!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "The ideah is wotten in the extweme!"

"I put it to the meeting!" said Herries. "Does the School House of St. Jim's hold a ripping dog show or not?"

"Yes, rather!" yelled Digby.

"It's agreed, then?"

"Ye-es," said Tom Merry doubtfully. "Mind, I don't say the idea is such a bad one for a



"Ow! You're biting!"
"Well, do you expect me to swallow you whole!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Farrell, 12, Maryville Park, Belfast.

Fourth Form fellow; but we've got to be careful not to give away too much cash in prizes, you know."

"We can wait until we know how many dogs are to be entered before we decide about the prizes," returned Herries. "I thought of that. Now, what we want is a strong committee, so I propose that all the fellows in this room, Gussy, of course, standing out—"

"I uttiahly wefuse to stand out, you cwass ass!"

"You don't like the scheme, idiot!"

"I wegard it as wotten in the extweme!" retorted Arthur Augustus. "But I simply wefuse to stand out of the committee. You wequiah a fellow of tact and judgment on a committee, and I am quite weady to act as chairman—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Yes, really!" snapped Herries. "You can be on the committee if you like, but the moment you open your mouth to cackle you get shot out. Tom Merry, do you think one or two of us could get an exeat to go down to Rylcombe? We must see that dog fancier chap Tate as soon as possible, and get as many addresses of dog-owners as we can."

"Yaas, wathah! And we can dwop in and see John Palmah on our way."

Arthur Augustus jumped to his feet. He looked at Herries, with a cheery glance.

"Pewwaps, aftah all, your ideah is not so

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utterly rotten! In fact, there may be somethin' in it," conceded Gussy generously. "I will go and get leave for as many as possible from Kildare, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus was back again in a few minutes. He had succeeded in getting an coat for four.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Herries, and Arthur Augustus were to go to Rylcombe. Tea was hurried through, and within a quarter of an hour the four were on their way to Rylcombe.

Tom Merry glanced in dismay at the church clock as the four juniors cycled into the village.

"My hat, there isn't any too much time, after all!"

"No, we shall have to get a move on, and no mistake," replied Herries. "I vote we postpone seeing John Palmer until to-morrow."

"No; we can't do that, deah boy. Mr. Palmah is ill."

"But there isn't time to see Palmer as well as Tate, the dog fancier."

"Bai Jove, I wegard that as wathah awkward. The only thin' is to divide our forces, deah boys," suggested Arthur Augustus. "Some of us must see Mr. Palmah, as a person gets vewy depressed when a person has influenzah."

"Well, go and see him, Gussy, and we'll meet you here by the church in twenty minutes," said Herries. "How about that?"

"Wight-ho! I shan't be late, deah boy," said the swell of St. Jim's, jumping on his machine again. "Pway use tact and judgment in awwangin' mattahs with Tate. It is a pity I cannot come with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the three juniors cycled on, leaving Arthur Augustus to turn off down a side-street to Palmer's lodgings.

Arthur Augustus jumped from his machine as he reached the clean, neat little cottage, and raised his cap. Mrs. Hall was just coming through the doorway.

"Is Mr. Palmah still in bed?"

"Yes; he's still in bed."

"Then he has not weccovahd ffrom his attack?" said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "I'm afraid that he has influenzah, aftah all."

"Perhaps he has, and perhaps he hasn't, sir. He wasn't well enough to go to work this morning, but he was well enough to go out for some rum a little later on!"

And Mrs. Hall walked past Arthur Augustus, with an angry expression on her face.

The swell of St. Jim's looked puzzled as he mounted the stairs. He pushed open Palmer's bed-room door, and sneezed.

The bed-room was full of rank tobacco-smoke and the fumes of hot rum-and-water.

Arthur Augustus fairly choked as he walked in.

Cousin Ethel's protege was sitting up in bed, carefully wrapped up in blankets, but apparently anything but depressed. He was smoking a cigarette, and he had a newspaper propped up in front of him, and a glass of steaming hot rum-and-water by the bedside.

Whatever might be said against John Palmer, he seemed to be standing up to his attack of the flu very cheerily. His fat, unpleasant face broke into a smile as Arthur Augustus approached.

"This is very kind of you, young gen'leman! It's thoughtfulness like this as makes a man see what good there is in the world."

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As Figgins & Co. opened the door of the barn, they saw hammers and saws by the light of candles. Tom Merry "Colt"

"Pway don't mention it!"

"How can I help mentioning it, sir?" said John Palmer unctuously. "You can 'ardly guess how upset I was this morning when I found I couldn't go to work—"

"That's all wight, Mr. Palmah!" struck in Arthur Augustus cheerily. "Farmah Hawwis has agreed to keep the job open for you."

Palmer started, and the pleasant smile died out of his anything but pleasant face.

"Oh, has he? That's very kind of him, I'm sure!"

"I twust you are feelin' bettah," said Arthur Augustus.

"I—I think there may be a little bit of improvement."

"I'm vewy glad to heah that. I twust you will be quite all wight in a day or two. I must wush away now. Is there anythin' you want, Mr. Palmah?"

"Only to get well enough to go to work, sir," answered Mr. Palmer, in his oiliest tones. "Accepting charity 'urts an old soldier more than you can guess, sir."

"Bai Jove, then pway don't think of it. You did a wippin' good turn for my Cousin Ethel, and I wegard it as simply a mattah of duty to wepay you. I twust you will think no more about chawity, Mr. Palmah."

And, with a cheery nod, Arthur Augustus left.

He breathed deeply and with intense relief when he found himself outside, for the atmosphere of Palmer's room had nearly choked him.



The School House juniors working at a furious pace with mallets round. "New House bounders!" he exclaimed, "hem!"

[CHAPTER 11.]

Figgins & Co. on the Watch!

"JOLLY funny, anyway!"

Figgins muttered the words in a puzzled voice, and strained his eyes to pierce the darkness.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn were also straining their eyes.

But there was not very much that Figgins & Co. could see. It was just possible to make out the larger of Farmer Harris' two barns, and a small number of juniors passing in and out of it.

Figgins & Co. could not understand it.

"This is about the tenth time Tom Merry has been down to the barn, you fellows," Figgins whispered. "The School House fellows are up to something!"

"Like Gussy's check to say all New House chaps seen near Harris' farm would be ragged!" said Fatty Wynn.

Figgins chuckled. For if Arthur Augustus had not issued the unofficial warning, Figgins & Co. would never have thought of going near Harris' farm. The warning naturally sent them there at once.

Figgins looked very puzzled indeed.

"Blessed if I can make it out!"

"Let's get a bit closer."

"Don't make a row, then!"

The three juniors clambered through the hedge, but still they could see nothing that solved the

mystery. Tom Merry & Co. were busy inside the barn now, hammering and sawing at a furious pace.

Kerr crept cautiously a few yards nearer. The hammering still went on, and Figgins gritted his teeth.

"Make a rush for it, and swing the door open. Shall we?"

"They'll spot us, Figgy!"

"Can't be helped. I'm going to see what's happening inside that barn!"

"Right-ho!"

Figgins & Co. waited for a moment or two, and then rushed. They reached the barn, and Figgins forced open the door.

Tom Merry & Co., and Jack Blake and his chums were working at a furious pace with hammers and saws by the light of several candles.

Tom Merry wheeled round.

"New House bounders! Collar them!"

The School House juniors came rushing from the barn, and Figgins & Co. made a dash for the open gate.

Several more School House fellows had suddenly appeared in the farm gateway. They promptly lined up, barring the way against Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn.

"Stop the bounders, Kangaroo!"

Harry Noble, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn did their best. But Fatty Wynn was leading the way now, sprinting desperately. Fatty Wynn dashed into the middle of the opposition, and the New House junior's weight was too much for Harry Noble. Kangaroo went down with a bump.

The Falstaff of the New House promptly charged at Bernard Glyn, and again weight carried the day.

Bernard Glyn thudded into Clifton Dane, and the Canadian sprawled headlong.

"Oh, my aunt!"

"Gerroff!"

Tom Merry & Co. came dashing up, but Fatty Wynn, Figgins, and Kerr were racing on, leaving Kangaroo & Co. sprawling on the ground.

"Take to the woods!" panted Kerr. "We shall just do it!"

"As hard as you can, then!"

Figgins, the champion junior sprinter of St. Jim's, could have got away by himself without much difficulty, but he kept his pace down to the best his chums could do.

Figgins & Co. reached the woods in safety, and slipped the pursuers amongst the trees.

Kerr was the first to stop, excitement sparkling in his keen eyes.

"What do you think of it, Figgy?"

"Blessed if I know what to think!" growled the leader of the New House. "Those School House duffers seem to be making about fifty rabbit hutches."

"But didn't you see that cardboard sign Maunners was painting?" chuckled Kerr. "The School House bounders are going to hold a dog show!"

"My hat!"

"That's what the sign said, anyway," grinned Kerr. "'This way to the St. Jim's Dog Show.' Tom Merry & Co. are going to hold a blessed dog show, and you can be pretty sure it's in aid of the John Palmer Fund."

"My aunt!"

Figgins and Fatty Wynn stared at Kerr blankly. If the School House were going to hold a dog show, they would score over the New House.

"We've got to do something, you chaps!" said Figgins desperately. "We've got to hold a rival show next to their blessed dog show!"

"Another dog show, Figgy?"

"No; that's no good! We shouldn't have time to get any dogs. My hat, though, what about a cat show?"

"But where would the cats come from?"

"We should have to have a cat hunt to-night, and catch as many as possible."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make our show a real rag!" exclaimed Figgins. "We'll get that other barn on Harris' farm. Harris is an awfully decent sort, and he'll let us have it for nothing. And we'll shove up a whacking big notice: 'New House Comic Cat Show!'"

"Good wheeze, Figgy!" said Fatty Wynn heartily.

"It's better than nothing, anyway," returned Figgins. "Ten to one a lot of Rylcombe people will turn up for the School House show, and we must try to collar some of them. We'll charge the same entrance fee as Tom Merry charges; and if some of the people visit both shows, it'll be so much the better for the John Palmer Fund."

"That's so."

"Then let's get on with the washing," said Figgins practically. "Kerr, you slip along and arrange with Harris about the barn. Better do that on the telephone. Fatty Wynn and I will start the cat hunt at once, though I'm blessed if I know the best way to catch cats!"

"Collar 'em low, I expect," chuckled Kerr. "I'll meet you chaps in the quadrangle in ten minutes' time."

CHAPTER 12.

The Dog Show!

"OPEN the door, you silly old fogies!"

Arthur Augustus brushed the dust from his trouser knees, and jumped to his feet.

"That you, Wally?"

"Yes, of course it's me!" retorted Arthur Augustus' younger brother, Wally D'Arcy of the Third. "Open the door, ass!"

"The show doesn't start until thwec, and it isn't nearly that yet."

"Blow the show! Open the giddy door!"

And D'Arcy minor thumped and kicked away indignantly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Let him in, Blake! What do you want, Wally?"

D'Arcy minor slipped into the large barn and hastily closed the door behind him. He chuckled loudly. He had Pongo, his famous mongrel, under his arm.

For once in his life, Pongo was a picture of cleanliness and tidiness, but there was a depressed expression in his bright, canine eyes. Half an hour ago he had had his third bath that day, and he felt a little bit off in consequence.

Wally looked round the building and chuckled again. Tom Merry & Co. had been putting the finishing touches to the place.

Already there must have been fifteen or twenty dogs enclosed in little cages, and some of them looked as if they would have some considerable difficulty in getting even "highly commended."

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Wally D'Arcy placed Pongo in a cage and grinned at Tom Merry.

"My hat! You old fogies ought to see the crowd waiting in the road!"

"Bai Jove! Is there a crowd, deah boy?"

"A giddy army, Gus! Better open the show at once!"

"We can't until Tate comes to start judging the tykes."

Arthur Augustus opened the barn door and peered out. There certainly was quite a large crowd waiting for the show to open. It was to open punctually at three o'clock, when Tate, the Rylcombe dog-fancier, would start the judging.

Herries looked round the decorated barn gleefully. The School House dog show certainly promised to be a huge success.

"Won't it be a sell for Figgins & Co.!"

"Gweat Scott! I must wash away for a wash and brush-up, you fellows!"

"I'm coming, too, Gussy!" said Tom Merry.

"Wight-ho!"

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus hurried back to St. Jim's to get a wash and brush-up. The swell of St. Jim's, of course, had to change his suit, and he went up to the dormitory.

Tom Merry was on his way to a bath-room for a wash when he met Kildare.

"Hallo, Kildare!" grinned the Shell junior. The captain of St. Jim's looked at Tom Merry suspiciously.

"What are you School House kids up to on Harris' farm?" Kildare demanded. "It's not a rag, is it?"

"No, that's all right, Kildare!"

Kildare laughed.

"All right, is it? Oh, I say, you remember that trouble with Wayland Rovers?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"Well, it has all been settled now. It seems that Mr. Railton saw the Rovers play a friendly game last Wednesday, and he was greatly impressed by the sporting match they put up. Mr. Railton spoke to the Head about it, and the long and the short of it is that St. Jim's first eleven will renew the fixture with the Rovers next season."

"My hat! Is that a fact?"

"Yes; it's all settled!"

"Good!" exclaimed Tom Merry, and he went on to the bath-room for a much-needed wash.

He was in the midst of his ablutions when Arthur Augustus came rushing into the bath-room and dropped limply into the nearest chair.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy!" he gasped.

"What's happened?"

"The guawantee money fwom Wayland Wovers has gone!" said Arthur Augustus faintly. "It has uttally disappeared fwom my coat pocket!"

"You howling ass!"

"I wufuse to be chawactewised as an ass! It seems uttally imposs that the money can have gone, but it has! The Wovah's captain gave me two pounds in cuwwency notes, and the west in silvah. I put the notes in my leathah wallet and the west of the money loose in my twousahs pocket—"

"And it—it has gone?"

"No; only the wallet with the notes in it!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Gussy, you careless ass; you must have lost the cash coming home from the footer match!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in dismay.

(Continued on page 22.)



In Town To-day

Introducing George Figgins to the Microphone. By a B.B.C. TALENT SCOUT.

INTERVIEWER: Welcome to the microphone, Figgins! You are, I believe, the first member of the New House to face a live mike?

FIGGINS: And not before it was due, considering how very much alive the New House is, Mr. Interviewer. Not that I'm like Grundy, the human loud-speaker, never happy unless he's in the limelight.

INTERVIEWER: But you feel the New House has been kept too long waiting in the wings?

FIGGINS: Exactly. I feel the world at large does not realise how high the New House soars over the rest of St. Jim's.

INTERVIEWER: The New House is not so big as the School House, is it?

FIGGINS: No; but as its name implies, it is new—and progressive. Think of things like modern motor-cars, aeroplanes, wireless, television—all new, and essentially progressive.

INTERVIEWER: In that case, the New House ought surely to take the lead in the activities at St. Jim's?

FIGGINS: It does. Take footer. We have the best goalkeeper at St. Jim's, or any other school—Fatty Wynn—so we lead in the goal averages. Kerr is, in my opinion, the finest full-back in junior football to-day. I'm his partner at back, so we lead in defence—and I say that without wishing to blow my own trumpet. If I did wish to, I could point out that I am just as much at home leading the forward line as at back—and this season I hold the lead in scoring from the penalty spot. That leads us to cricket.

INTERVIEWER: Go on, Figgins, this is your innings.

FIGGINS: New House boasts Fatty Wynn, the best junior bowler for a generation. Googlies, yorkers, leg breaks, off breaks, Fatty can dish them all up red-hot. Perhaps I can let you into a little secret, Mr. Interviewer. This summer we are going to make it so hot for Tom Merry and the School House frumps on the cricket field that they'll be obliged to admit that they've burned their fingers badly in trying to cool the New House live wires, after all!

INTERVIEWER: What is your maxim for success, Figgins?

FIGGINS: Make it hot for the enemy, but for yourself, keep cool. I'll give you an example. At the end of last season, we of the New House fixed up a cricket match with Grimes & Co., the village boys of Rylcombe. We played on the village ground, which was hummocky, and slowed us down for a while. The onlookers began barracking, we had lost a valuable man through a mishap, and finally, Redfern and I were left at the wickets to get 50 runs in half an hour, with the late afternoon sun—the August variety—registering eighty degrees in the shade!

INTERVIEWER: Quite a hot spot to be in. Did you succeed?

FIGGINS: Reddy and I faced the bowling with the perspiration trickling down our foreheads and obscuring our vision. But though the pitch was almost smoking, and the bowlers were sending down some real sizzlers, we were both as cool as ice. Reddy flared out and flashed 20 off one over—two sixes, and two fours. Reddy is hot stuff, but he has a cool, clear brain.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel yourself?

FIGGINS: Quite calm. I hooked one ball into the pavilion for six, and there were some heated remarks from the chap it fell on. I drove the next ball for six again, and though the attack showed no signs of cooling off, we warmed to our work so thoroughly that Reddy and I had the required fifty on the board, with a good ten minutes to spare.

INTERVIEWER: Thirsty work, I should say.

FIGGINS: Agreed, Mr. Interviewer; but you must remember, New House is ever seeking its place in the sun, and the fire is never too fierce for us!

INTERVIEWER: Is there anybody you would care to send a message to at St. Jim's, Figgins?

FIGGINS: No. Unless D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel is listening. She is on a visit to the Head's wife, you know. Cousin Ethel is the sort of girl who would inspire a victory, even when all seemed lost.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, Figgins—on behalf of Cousin Ethel and the New House. By the way, I forgot to ask you about Mr. Ratcliff, your Housemaster?

FIGGINS: Jolly good thing you didn't, Mr. Interviewer. You see, 'Ratty' is really the only thing connected with the New House that isn't quite one hundred per cent. In fact, he's not so hot. 'Nuff said! Cheerio, Mr. Interviewer!

"No; I had the wallet all wight when we cycled to Wylcombe on Wednesday evenin'."

"Then you must have dropped it on the way."

"It seems most unlikely, as I have always considered a coat pocket a vewy safe place to keep cash in."

"Brrrrr!"

"Talbot, deah boy, have you seen that bwown leathah wallet of mine about?"

Talbot had just come into the bath-room for a wash, and he started as Arthur Augustus asked the question.

"Have you lost your wallet, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, with two pounds in it!"

"Perhaps you've left it in Study No. 6, after all," said Tom Merry. "There's time to have a hunt round. Jolly awkward if you've lost the cash, ass!"

Tom Merry led the way downstairs. It really would be very awkward if the money were lost. The promised cash prizes for the dog show would have to be made out of the admission and entrance fees, and it was unlikely that there would be a large profit.

Not a sign of the wallet could be found in Study No. 6 or in Arthur Augustus' trunk, and to look anywhere else seemed pretty useless.

Tom Merry glared at the swell of the Fourth Form.

"Of all the burbling asses, Gussy——"

"Weally, deah boy!" replied Gussy loftily. "It is vewy unfortunate that the wotten money is lost, but it is quite poss that it may turn up. My name is in the wallet, and it is pwobable the findah will bwing it back to me."

"Brrrrr!"

"And as it is pwactically thwee o'clock we shall have to wush back to the barn," added Arthur Augustus. "You are quite sure I didn't give the money to you to mind, Tom Mewwy?"

"Rats!"

Further words failed Tom Merry, and he led the way back to Harris' farm in silence.

Talbot was also silent, but he listened intently to Arthur Augustus as the elegant junior went over the few known details of his loss again.

"I say, you fellows, Tate hasn't turned up yet!"

Herries greeted Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus with dismay. It was already past three o'clock and there was no sign of Tate, the dog-fancier.

"My hat! We shall have to open the show without him, Herries!"

"Ye-es."

"And perhaps Tate will turn up before we've got the other dogs in their cages," added the captain of the Shell. "He promised faithfully to be punctual. My aunt, we'd better open the door!"

The would-be spectators were growing impatient at the barn door, and Herries did not dare to wait any longer. He opened the door, and he and Digby began to take the money.

Tom Merry & Co. decided to charge sixpence admission, and the money was handed over cheerfully. About twenty people passed into the barn in no time, a good many of them carrying barking dogs.

"Gussy, get on with the washing!" shouted Herries. "Collar that collie before it goes for the pom!"

"Wats!"

Someone's collie had broken loose, and was

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approaching a tiny pom, with a slow, menacing stride.

Herries fairly yelled.

"Collar the dog, Gussy, you ass!"

"I uttably wufuse to touch the bwute! Gweat Scott!"

The collie made a friendly rush at Arthur Augustus, jumped up at him, and pawed half a dozen muddy patches down the Fourth Former's elegant jacket.

"Bai Jove! Down, you bwute! Call this wotten dog off, somebody!"

The collie was dragged away and carefully fastened up in a cage.

Herries and Digby were still taking money at the door, but all the time they were watching anxiously along the main road. Still there was no sign of Tate.

Talbot had gone off on a bicycle to search for the dog-fancier, but the Shell junior had not come back yet. Herries was getting alarmed.

"The dogs are all in their cages now, sir!" called out one of the exhibitors. "Better get to the judging part."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Who is to do the judging, sir?"

Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle in his eye and looked round vaguely for support.

"As a mattah of fact——"

"Shurrup!" hissed Tom Merry, catching Arthur Augustus by the arm. "Herries, something's got to be done. Tate isn't coming, that's certain, and no one would ever agree to your judging the dogs."

"My aunt!"

Herries looked desperate. If the judging didn't soon start there would be some ugly questions asked about the cash prizes.

Herries choked.

"Gussy, your pater has no end of sporting dogs and——"

"Yaas, wathah, and jolly fewocious bwutes, too!"

"Well, you must know something about dogs!" whispered Herries. "Start the judging, and perhaps Tate will turn up, after all. We can't stand here like stuffed dummies! Start at Cage No. 1."

"Wight-ho, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You can twust me, Hewwies. And I wathah fancy I know a good deal about dogs."

Arthur Augustus walked to Cage No. 1 and stopped in front of a particularly ferocious-looking bull-terrier.

"Bai Jove!"

"Are you judging, sir?" demanded the owner of the bull-terrier.

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

"Then that dawg's a sight for sore eyes! Just you open his mouth an' look at his teeth——"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Open his mouth, and if you've ever seen a stronger jaw, or a finer set of teeth, I'd like to know where! Just open his mouth, sir!"

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, backing abruptly. "I wegwet to say that I must wufuse to open his mouth—I mean, it is weally not necessary! I can see fwom here that—that he is a vewy fine animal!"

"But you 'aven't 'arf looked at 'im!"

"Pway don't intewwupt me! I award the wotten dog a first pwize!"

"Ass!" hissed Tom Merry. "Tate may come in in a minute, and there's no need for you to award prizes. Make a tour of inspection first!"

"Thank you kindly, sir!" said the gratified bull-terrier owner. "I knew I was safe for a 'first,' of course; but I can see that there isn't much you don't know about dogs."

"No, wathah not—I mean, bai Jove, I seem to recognise this fewocious-looking bwute!"

"It's Herries' Towser, ass!"

"Bai Jove, yaas! I uttably wefuse to award Towseh any prize at all! Gwreat Scott, what is this, deah boy?"

"A Great Dane!" said the owner indignantly. "And there isn't another in the country like it!"

"Bai Jove, I can't say I am weally sowwy! Hold him back! Hold the bwute back, some-one!"

"Ass, he's chained up!"

"Bai Jove! Pway don't put yourself in a fluttah, sir, as—as— Tom Mewwy, I shall have to award another wotten first!"

"And another one here, Gus!"

"Wats, Wally!"

"Pongo's going to have a first, and don't you forget it!" shouted D'Arcy minor. "He's had three baths to-day, and if you don't give him a first—"

"Wats, you young wuffian!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I uttably wefuse to award another first—"

"Hurrah! Here comes Tate, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Hawwah! Mr. Tate, please conunence judgin' these wotten dogs at once!"



Levison and Mellish turned to flee as the released dogs, growling and snapping, rushed wildly out of the barn. But it was too late. Mellish was sent sprawling by the Great Dane, and Levison went staggering. "Ow—yow! Help!" gasped the cads of the School House.

"You are weally sure of that, Tom Mewwy?" asked Arthur Augustus doubtfully. "He made a spowing just then. I considah him a vewy fine dog!"

Arthur Augustus attempted to move away, but that was not good enough for the Great Dane owner. He seized Arthur Augustus by the arm. "I know he's a fine dog!" said the man darkly. "I knew that before I came here. What's he get, that's what I want to know?"

"Highly commended, ass!" whispered Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I have gwreat pleasuah in highly commendin' your dog, sir—vewy highly commendin' him indeed!"

"What?" shouted the dog-owner. "I get a V.H.C., when that mongrel of a bull-terrier takes a 'first'? Not for me, young gent! Cæsar has a 'first,' too, or I'll know the reason why!"

Loud-voiced disapproval broke out at once. Most of the entrants seemed to prefer Arthur Augustus as a judge.

"I wefuse to go on with the judgin'," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I withdwaw in favah of Mr. Tate! I have quite made up my mind nevah to judge at a wotten dog show again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tate, the keen-eyed little dog-fancier from Rylcombe, joined in the laugh as he glanced round the exhibitors. He faced the crowd in a cheery way.

"I mistook the farm, gentlemen, and that's why I'm late," he said. "Two dogs appear to have been judged; but that was only in fun. It doesn't count."

"What?" shouted the bull-terrier owner.

"Oh, don't it?" yelled the Great Dane's master.

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Tate merely laughed again.

"Don't lose your tempers, gentlemen," he said quietly. "The best dogs are going to have the prizes. By the way, Master Talbot wants to see you, Master Merry and Master D'Arcy, outside at once."

"Wight-ho, Mr. Tate!"

Tate's arrival on the scene had turned the show from a farce into what promised to be a very successful little undertaking.

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus left the barn gleefully.

CHAPTER 13.

Talbot's Discovery!

"**W**HAT'S the row, Talbot?" asked Tom Merry, as they met Talbot outside the barn.

"I'll tell you in a minute. Gussy, do you recognise this wallet?"

"Bai Jove, yaas! It's the one I had the two pounds in. Where did you find it, deah boy? Why, it's half-burnt!"

"Yes; it's half-burnt, all right. You are sure it was the wallet you had the lost cash in?"

"Absolutely sure, Talbot. As a matter of fact, it is the only wallet I have."

"Talbot, where did you find it?"

"I'll tell you that later on, Tom," answered Talbot quietly. "I'll keep the wallet for a bit, if you don't mind, Gussy, and there's an outside chance I may get some of the lost money back. Tom Merry, if you trouble any more about raising funds for John Palmer, you're an ass!"

"My hat, Talbot!"

"Palmer's a drunken rotter!" said Talbot hotly. "Mrs. Hall has had to turn him out of her cottage because he went out this morning and came back in a disgustingly drunken state! The man's an absolute outsider!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You ought to hear what Mrs. Hall says about him, anyway! But I must slip back to Rylcombe at once."

"Talbot, one minute——"

"I'll explain everything later, Merry," said Talbot. "I can't waste time now, or there won't be a chance of getting any of the lost money back. I—I'll turn up at St. Jim's just as soon as I can, you fellows!"

And Talbot mounted his bicycle and rode off.

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus stood staring after him blankly. Talbot often puzzled his chums, but he had puzzled them more than ever that afternoon.

Tom Merry stood looking thoughtful outside the barn, watching the approach of two other St. Jim's juniors. The two were Mellish and Levison.

"D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel has turned up at St. Jim's, you chaps," said Mellish.

"Bai Jove! Has she weally?"

"Yes. She arrived as we came away," said Levison. "I thought you'd like to know at once, so Mellish and I came straight down. May we just have a look in at your dog show, Merry? We only want to stay a minute or two, so it isn't worth while paying."

"Oh, go in, and stay a week if you want to!"

"Thanks awfully!" exclaimed Levison.

Aud Levison and Mellish went in, delighted. Tom Merry was still looking moodily up the road.

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"I say, Cousin Ethel will be awfully disappointed, Gussy!"

"Yaas; it's wotten in the extweme!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "Cousin Ethel believed in John Palmah, and it is always wotten if you believe in people, and then discovah that they are wank outsiders. In the circe, I wathah wish Cousin Ethel hadn't come to St. Jim's, bai Jove!" And Tom Merry agreed.

Inside the barn, Herries' dog show had gone off swimmingly and without a hitch. Tate had done the judging conscientiously, and everybody was satisfied. The old stonebreaker's terrier had won the first award, but the man was not there to receive his prize.

Tate grinned pleasantly as he made a short concluding speech after presenting the other prizes.

"Many of you gentlemen who had hopes of winning prizes and have failed to do so are, I trust, satisfied that it is because there were better dogs than yours in the show," the little man said. "Master Herries wishes me to thank you all for supporting so enthusiastically the dog show. It has been a great success. Gentlemen, the show is now closed."

The dog-owners applauded the little speech. There was a broad grin on Herries' face as the little crowd filed out of the barn.

"What do you think of my idea now, Gussy?" he chuckled. "Less than half the money we've taken by the show has covered the prizes, and with that three guineas Wayland Rovers gave you as a guarantee——"

"Bai Jove, haven't you heard, deah boy?"

"Heard what?"

"Why about those thwree guineas, Hewwies!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegwet to say I lost two pounds of them, bai Jove!"

"You shrieking ass!"

"Weally——"

"You careless duffer!" yelled Herries. "Let's bump the burbling ass!"

But Tom Merry held up his hand.

"Blow the two pounds!" he said. "Blow the John Palmer Fund! Palmer is a rotter, and—we've got to tell Cousin Ethel so!"

"Cousin Ethel?"

"Yaas, Digby. She has turned up at St. Jim's, and it's time we went to greet her, deah boys."

"Yes; let's get back to St. Jim's," said Tom Merry.

The juniors returned to the school, and met Cousin Ethel in the quad. The girl, looking prettier and daintier than when Tom Merry & Co. had last seen her, held out her hand with a laughing welcome as the juniors came up.

"I had to come to St. Jim's, Arthur!" she exclaimed, as she shook hands with Arthur Augustus. "You never even answered my letter about poor old John Palmer!"

"Gweat Scott, I did, deah gal!"

"Well, I never got the letter, Arthur."

Arthur Augustus gasped aloud.

"Bai Jove, I wote the lettah, but I believe I forgot to post it!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "I was goin' to Study No. 6 to get the lettah when the Wayland Wovers wang up on the telephone. The—the lettah is in Study No. 6 now."

"Then perhaps that's why I didn't receive it," laughed Cousin Ethel. "But it doesn't

matter, Arthur. I know you have all done your best to help John Palmer."

"Ye-es, we have done our best," said Tom Merry, in a quiet voice. "But—but I think you've been deceived as to his true character."

"You said in your lettah that he had his faults, deah gal, and bai Jove, he has!"

Cousin Ethel nodded.

"Yes, John Palmer has, at least, one fault—his great pride," the girl said quietly. "If you had seen the plucky way he jumped into the river to save my dog, you would have called him splendid."

"Bai Jove, here's Talbot, deah boys!"

Tom Merry gasped with relief. Perhaps the arrival of Talbot would save them from a difficult position.

The Shell junior hurried up to Arthur Augustus.

"There are twenty-five shillings of your lost two pounds, Gussy," Talbot said. "The rest of the money has been spent in—in drink, I think."

"In drink!"

"Who has spent it?" flashed Tom Merry.

"John Palmer," answered Talbot quietly.

"The wallet I found half-burnt in Palmer's room at Mrs. Hall's cottage, and I followed the clue up. I found John Palmer at the Green Man, and made him return all the money he hadn't spent. Palmer said he found the wallet; but I expect he robbed you in some way, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you think he did?"

"I—I can't say, deah boy, but it is not imposs, as I visited him that night we went to see Tate about the dog show, and he may have stolen the wallet then."

"That's when he did it, right enough."

"Who are you talking about?" asked Cousin Ethel, in amazement. "You don't mean to say that you think John Palmer has—has robbed Arthur?"

"I am afraid so, Cousin Ethel."

"And—and, anyway, he's an awful scamp," added Tom Merry. "We know for a fact that Mrs. Hall had to turn him out of her cottage for behaving like a beast."

"I simply cannot believe it."

"I am afraid it's twuse, deah gal."

"Oh, you have all made a great mistake!" exclaimed Cousin Ethel indignantly. "You have, really."

Talbot shook his head.

"I am afraid we haven't, Cousin Ethel. I knew John Palmer years ago."

"You knew John Palmah, deah boy?"

"Yes; I knew John Palmer in the old days," he said quietly. "Palmer—he was known as Slade—was a member of the Hookey Walker gang for a short time."

"Talbot, I cannot believe it!"

"It's true enough, Cousin Ethel," answered Talbot, in a low voice. "I recognised Palmer directly I saw him at the cafe when we all had tea; but I said nothing, because I thought perhaps he had reformed. I couldn't stand in the way of his having a last chance. But he hasn't reformed. He was a pickpocket in the old days. I know he robbed you of your wallet, Gussy. But I only succeeded in getting the money back when I told Palmer I knew him, and would hand him over to the police if he didn't clear out of Rylcombe at once. I—I bought his ticket for him, and saw him off by the five o'clock train."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry and the other juniors said nothing. And when Cousin Ethel walked away, even Figgins did not attempt to follow her.

Tom Merry & Co.'s girl chum was feeling all the bitterness of disappointment which comes when someone who has been believed in is found wanting.

CHAPTER 14.

A Shock for Herr Schneider!

MEANWHILE, Levison and Mellish, having got through their free view of the dog show, had been attracted by strange sounds coming from the smaller barn.

"Mum-my hat! It's cats, Levison!"

"No giddy doubt about that," said Levison.

They opened the door of the smaller barn. Through the gloom inside glittered greenly the eyes of many cats.

"The 'New House Comic Cat Show,'" read Mellish, from a big strip of cardboard already stuck up inside. "It's a New House rag. I remember now that Figgins asked me this afternoon what time the dog show started."

"What did you say? Six o'clock?"

"Yes. I didn't know that Herries was going to open the rotten affair in the afternoon."



"Don't be silly—your beard can't be tougher than my linoleum!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to M. Koster, 21, Nairne Grove, Sunray Avenue, Herne Hill, London, S.E.24.

"And Figgy didn't twig it, either," said Levison, grinning. "Those New House rotters won't half be wild! They were going to run this wheeze in competition, you bet!"

"Don't see much in it," replied Mellish, yawning. "Come on! It's no bisney of ours, anyway."

"Oh, isn't it?" grinned Levison. "There's a grand chance for a rag. Why shouldn't we let both lots of giddy animals loose?"

"I—I say, old chap, that's a bit risky," faltered Mellish.

"Don't be funky," said Levison. "They'll never find out that we did it."

"But we can't let the dogs loose!" protested Mellish. "Suppose they got lost?"

"Dogs don't get lost, you utter idiot! Trust a dog to find its way home! What fun would there be in it unless we let the giddy dogs go as well?"

Mellish did not quite see where the fun came in, anyway. There was less of the cad in him than in Levison. But Mellish was as clay in the potter's hand when he ran up against anyone with a stronger will than his.

"I'll let the cats go, then," he said, choosing what he thought the less dangerous task.

Levison shrugged his shoulders, but agreed. He went to the other barn, now deserted, and began quickly to unfasten the cages.

Towser's low growl rather alarmed Levison, but

the other animals made no hostile demonstration. They all seemed relieved to get free.

Peter, the stonebreaker's terrier, was the last to be liberated. Levison noted the fact that his cage bore a ticket announcing that he had won a first prize. He gave the little dog a push with his foot and darted out.

Mellish was waiting for him.

"We—we'd better bunk, Levison."

"Yes, come on! Ow-yow! Yaroooooooh! Help!"

"Yaroooh! Oh, great Scott!" yelled Mellish.

The dogs were making for them in a serried mass, snapping and growling for all they were worth. It was as though they had all gone mad together!

The two juniors turned to flee; but it was too late.

Mellish, quite unintentionally, barred the way of the Great Dane. The Great Dane seemed to be in a terrific hurry, and Mellish went sprawling under him.

"Ow—yow! Help!"

The Great Dane also collided with Levison, and it was not the dog that went down.

Over the two, grovelling on the ground, raced a dozen dogs of assorted breeds. Pongo snapped at Mellish, whom he did not like, and Towser left the imprints of dirty paws on the countenance of Levison.

"They're after the cats!" panted Mellish. "Ow—yow!"

"Hang the cats!" roared Levison.

The scratch pack was giving tongue after Figgy's startled horde of cats. Pursued and pursuers were lost to sight in the gloom, and the two culprits staggered up.

"There will be no end of a row, Levison!"

"Shurrup, ass! There's someone about!"

"It's only the old stonebreaker trying to catch his rotten tyke!" said Mellish sourly. "Let's get before he spots us!"

And the two black sheep of the School House "got."

Herr Schneider, the German master, was alone in the Fourth Form Room, when something happened!

The window stood wide open, for the evening was quite warm. Through the open window, making a most hideous row, came Thomas, the School House cat.

"Mein gootness! Ach himmel!" roared Herr Schneider, as Thomas alighted upon his back and dug in his sharp claws.

There was a rush of feet in the corridor, and a dozen juniors, headed by Tom Merry and Talbot, burst into the room.

They were just in time to see a strange sight. Thomas appeared to have been made the special quarry of the pack, for through the window came the Great Dane in advance, and Towser second, followed by at least a dozen dogs.

"Mein gootness! Vat—"

"All right, sir!" sang out Tom Merry. "We'll see—"

"But it is not all right, Merry! It is— Ach, vat you do, you prute?"

The cat was clawing at the good herr's fat neck, seeking to get higher.

"Towser, you rascal!" yelled Herries.

"Grab them, you fellows!" shouted Talbot, gripping the Great Dane by the collar and hanging on with all his strength.

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Herries seized Towser, and held on to him grimly.

The Great Dane struggled desperately with Talbot. Peter, the terrier, made wild leaps in his endeavours to get at poor Thomas. The collie had mixed himself up most uncomfortably with Herr Schneider's legs. Thomas, with arched back, fur all on end, and glittering eyes, hissed like a mad cat.

Into the pandemonium walked Cousin Ethel, with the stonebreaker behind her. The old man had followed the released dogs to the school, anxious to recover his terrier, and he had told the juniors what had happened.

"Oh, the poor cat!" cried the girl.

But at that moment the cat gave a tremendous spring, landed on the floor close to the grate, eluded by the fraction of an inch the snapping jaws of a setter, and disappeared up the chimney!

Herr Schneider collapsed, with a groan, into his chair.

Peter, the terrier, ran to his master, wagging his brief tail and looking as innocent as he knew how!

"What is all this, Herr Schneider?" asked Cousin Ethel.

"I cannot explain mit meinsel at all, Miss Cleveland. I do not vat you call understand!" panted the worthy Teuton. "But tere is run ting tat I know, and tat is tat I am scratched all ofer meinsel. Ach himmel!"

Herr Schneider fled in confusion.

Talbot quietly led out the Great Dane, now grown less frantic; and the other dogs, all except Peter, followed, escorted by several of the juniors. Herries brought up the rear, vainly endeavouring to maintain that his Towser was much too high-minded a dog to think of chasing cats.

"Some japer must have let the dogs loose!" Tom Merry explained to Cousin Ethel, when all the dogs had been taken away. "It was a pretty mean trick. Then, I suppose, they happened on poor old Thomas, and—"

"I guess that our cat show was let loose, too!" blurted out Figgins.

Tom Merry looked at him in amazement.

But at that moment Talbot re-entered the room, and Cousin Ethel turned upon him with a frown.

"Talbot, I thought you said John Palmer left Rylcombe this afternoon?"

"Yes. I saw him off by the five o'clock train," answered Talbot quietly.

"And you say, too, that he must have stolen Arthur's money!" went on the girl, reddening.

"Talbot, I cannot understand you!"

The old stonebreaker moved a step or two forward, and looked as if he meant to speak, but at a sign from the girl he kept silent.

"I do not understand you, Miss Cleveland; but I am sure of my facts," replied Talbot.

"But you are wrong—quite wrong!" flashed Cousin Ethel. "For this is John Palmer!"

She laid her hand on the stonebreaker's arm.

"But—but—" Talbot was lost for words.

"There's some mystery here," said Tom Merry. "You know, Cousin Ethel, that there isn't a more reliable chap than old Talbot. If he says—"

"It doesn't matter what he says," said the girl crossly. "This is John Palmer, the man who saved my dog."

The juniors, grown to a small crowd now, stared in blank amazement.

The old stonebreaker stooped to pat the head of Peter, who was getting fidgety, and then looked up smilingly.

"I think I can guess what has happened, young



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gentlemen," he said. "When I pulled this young lady's dog out of the river, and said I was going to Rylcombe, she told me some of you would meet me. I—well, charity is not in my line—no offence, but I can't bear it—and so I didn't come along that day!"

"Gweat Scott! Then——"

"Oh, dry up, Gussy! Who on earth is the other John Palmer, then?" asked Figgins. "He seems to have put it over us pretty completely!"

"How did he come to impersonate you?" inquired Talbot.

"Well, I'm afraid you may think me to blame for that," answered the genuine John Palmer. "I told a man that was working alongside me all about the young lady's kindness. He must have caught at the notion of imposing on it. I feel a bit guilty, but——"

"Not likely!" chipped in Jack Blake. "It wasn't your fault—not a bit of it!"

"Certainly it wasn't!" said Tom Merry. "Gussy, we owe John Palmer ten shillings for the prize Peter won!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! I have only a pound on me, but if Mr. Palmah——"

"I'll be glad of the ten shillings, sir, as Peter

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PEN PALS COUPON

7-5-38

has won that for me, but no more," said the old man. "I don't want to be ungrateful, but I'm not a sponger!"

"Wight-ho!" replied Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, though, that farm job—wouldn't that about fill the bill for our friend here, deah boys?"

"Oh, ripping notion, Gustavus!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily.

"Will it suit you, Palmer?" asked Talbot.

"That it will, sir! Nothing better!"

So it was arranged, Tom Merry and Talbot getting leave after prep to take John Palmer and introduce him to Mr. Harris.

"We'll talk to that bounder Figgy about his cat show to-morrow!" said Tom on the way back.

"Oh, I think we might let it drop!" answered Talbot. "After all, whatever they meant to do, it turned out a frost; and anyway, we can't row while Cousin Ethel is here. Must have harmony while her visit lasts, you know!"

And Tom Merry agreed.

(Next Wednesday: "SKIMPOLE THE SPORTSMAN!" Enjoy a good laugh at Skimming's expense! He takes to backing horses—and finds himself an "also ran"! Don't miss this lively long yarn.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,577.

A JOKE GIVES BUNTER HIS BIG CHANCE IN THE REMOVE CRICKET TRIAL—HE'S THE JOKE!—



Down came the ball and Billy Bunter made a wild swing at it. The bat struck the wicket, but the short-sighted junior was not aware of that. He thought he had hit the ball, and started to run!

Bunter Stands Treat!

"NOTICE to the Remove!

"A meeting of interest to all members of the Remove Cricket Club will be held in the Form-room at seven precisely."

That laconic notice, signed by Harry Wharton, captain of the Remove, was pinned on the board among a dozen other papers.

It attracted a great deal of attention when the juniors came out of the class-rooms after school that day at Greyfriars. There were plenty of other notices on the board, but to the Lower Fourth, at least, there was only one that had any interest, and that was Wharton's.

The reign of football was over, and fine weather turned all thoughts to cricket. There were matters of great importance—to the Remove—to be settled before the juniors began the summer game in earnest; hence the meeting called by Harry Wharton.

And to judge by the looks and remarks of the juniors who read the notice and commented upon it, the meeting was likely to be an exciting one in some respects.

Bulstrode stopped, with his hands in his pockets, read the notice, and grunted.

"Like Wharton, isn't it? He puts up a notice worded as if he were a blessed dictator issuing commands."

"Yes, rather," said Stott. "But perhaps pride will have a fall this evening."

Bulstrode looked at him quickly. Any suggestion of a "fall" for Wharton was welcome to the bully of the Remove.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,577.

First Man In!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I don't see why he should be cricket captain just because he's Form captain. Some of the fellows think there ought to be an election."

Bulstrode wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"He would be bound to get in."

"Oh, I don't know! The Form makes too much fuss of the chap altogether, in my opinion, and he isn't even civil to some of us."

"Some of you don't deserve it," said the voice of Bob Cherry, as he came along. "Some of you are miserable worms, you know, Stott."

Stott and Bulstrode walked away without replying, and Bob Cherry grinned and continued on his way to Study No. 1—the historic apartment in which dwelt the Famous Four—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, to say nothing of Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter was very much in evidence when Bob Cherry came in.

There was a strong smell of herrings, and Bob sniffed appreciatively. Billy Bunter was standing in his shirt-sleeves before the fire, which was blazing brightly. He had a frying-pan on the fire, and was cooking away contentedly, with a glowing face. He blinked round through his big spectacles as Bob Cherry came in.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Oh, is that you, Cherry? I say, what do you think of these herrings?"

"They smell ripping," said Bob, "and I'm hungry. Where did they come from?"

"I'm standing treat this evening," said Billy Bunter. "You fellows have treated me sometimes, and, of course, I must keep my end up. I'm standing this feed."

"On tick?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully—he knew Bunter.

"Certainly not, Cherry! I bought those herrings of Mrs. Mumble, and paid for them, spot cash. She's an unreasonable woman, and won't let me have tick. It's no use explaining to her that I shall shortly be receiving three pounds a week regularly from the Patriotic Homework Association. Women don't understand financial matters."

"No, I suppose they don't—your financial matters, at least," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! But what I was going

KING CRICKET COMES TO GREYFRIARS—AND BRINGS AN AMAZING CHALLENGE FOR HARRY WHARTON & CO.!

to say is, I've stood the herrings—there are nine of them—so that will be one each for you chaps and—

"And what about the rest?"

"I've been feeling rather low lately, and you know I've a delicate constitution, which requires to be kept up with constant nourishment," said Billy Bunter reproachfully.

"Well, never mind that," said Bob Cherry.

"How long will those herrings be?"

"Only another five minutes. But as I've stood the herrings, you might add a little to the feed. Suppose you buzz off and get some jam or marmalade at Mrs. Mimble's? We're out of both."

"Oh, all right! I suppose I might as well make a contribution."

And Bob Cherry left the study. Bunter turned to his cooking again. Cooking was a labour of love with the fat junior, and he enjoyed it almost as much as eating. He was still busy when Nugent came in.

Nugent sniffed, as Bob Cherry had done.

"Good!" he said, "Where did the Yarmouth warriors come from, Bunter?"

"I'm standing them."

"Had a postal order?" asked Nugent. "Or has somebody died and left you a fortune?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I'm standing them, and, now you speak of it, you might as well put in something towards the feed. I was going to get a cake, if the tin ran to it, but it didn't. Suppose you get the cake?"

"Well, after your noble example, I suppose I must stand something," said Nugent, laughing; and he left the study.

Billy Bunter grinned into the frying-pan. The herrings were forming the nucleus of a promising feed. Billy Bunter turned the sizzling herrings, and, as they were finished, piled them in a dish on the hob. The study was full of the scent, but it was an appetizing scent to hungry juniors.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, came in and slammed his books on the table. He did not seem to enjoy the herring scent so much as the others had done. The Hindu was more severe in his diet than the English juniors.

"Lovely, isn't it, Inky?" said Bunter, blinking round at him.

"The smellfulness is terrific!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, I forgot—you don't eat herrings! I'm afraid I've got nothing for you, Inky, but bread and cheese."

"My honourable self is not extremely famished."

"Still, if you like to get some bananas, I'll roast 'em for you," said Bunter. "I'm standing a feed this evening, but the funds won't run to much. I don't see why you shouldn't make a contribution. Suppose you buzz off to Mrs. Mimble's and get some bananas, and muscatels and almonds. They'll do you all right, and will suit me to finish with."

"The worthy suggestion of my esteemed chum is excellent."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed in the footsteps of Cherry and Nugent. The three of them came back together a little later, having met in the tuckshop. They laid their purchases

on the table. Bunter had finished cooking the herrings, and he put the frying-pan aside.

"Hand over the bananas. This begins to look a little more like a feed," he remarked, regarding the purchases on the table.

Harry Wharton came into the study. He sniffed appreciatively.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I see you've got herrings with it, Bunter. Anything else?"

"Eh? I—I don't—"

"I suppose the herrings haven't taken up the whole two bob?" said Harry, looking at him.

Bunter turned red as three pairs of accusing eyes were fixed upon him.

"Did you give the young sweep the tin to stand these herrings, Harry?" asked Nugent.

"Yes, of course—to get something for tea, anyway."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Why, he told me he was standing a feed, and chiselled me into making a contribution!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"And my worthy self, also," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You—you fat impostor!"

"I say, you fellows, Wharton isn't quite correct. I regarded that two bob as a loan," said Billy Bunter feebly. "I'm going to return it out of a postal order I'm expecting to-morrow morning."

"Nine herrings didn't run to two bob," said Bob Cherry. "Where's the rest of the tin, you—"

"I had to have a snack—"

"How much were the herrings?"

"I paid a shilling for them."

"And a bob for a snack, when I gave you the tin to get tea with!" said Harry Wharton indignantly.

"Of course, I regarded that as a loan. I'm going to settle up several little accounts when my postal order comes to-morrow."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, get off the postal order, for goodness' sake! Let's have tea. We've got to get to the meeting early. As for that young burglar—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"We'll keep him waiting five minutes for his tea as a punishment!"

Bunter's jaw dropped.

Wharton's idea was adopted at once. Bunter was gently but firmly pushed back from the table, and the juniors served themselves and started.

Billy Bunter expostulated and pleaded, but the chums of the Remove were adamant.

For five long minutes—which seemed like five years—Billy Bunter watched the juniors eating heartily, and making alarming inroads into the dish of herrings.

Bob Cherry, with his watch on the table, timed him.

"Time!" he exclaimed suddenly.

Bunter made one bound for the table. There were two herrings left, but they were on Bunter's plate in a twinkling. He started at a speed which showed that he meant to make up for lost time.

"And let that be a lesson to you!" said Harry Wharton severely.

Billy Bunter did not reply; he was too busy.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,577.

An Excited Meeting!

THE Form-room was lighted up, and a crowd was gathering in it. Wharton's notice had called together nearly all the Remove. Most of the Form belonged to the cricket club, and mostly as playing members. They turned up in force for the meeting which was to decide the arrangements of the club for the ensuing season.

Bulstrode and his friends had come to oppose. They didn't care very much what the Form captain suggested; they only meant to oppose it, anyway. An opposition conducted on these lines was certain to find plenty to do.

There was a buzz when Harry Wharton came in with his friends. The Remove captain's entrance meant that the meeting was about to come to business, and attention was turned upon him from all sides.

Bob Cherry had appointed himself informal chairman, and, in lieu of a bell to clang for order, he had armed himself with an old motor-horn, which could not fail to be heard in every corner of Greyfriars.

"Well, we're ready for business," said Nugent.

Toot, toot!

"What's that ghastly row for?"

"That's the signal for order."

"There'll be some disorder if you keep up that awful row!"

Toot, toot!

"Gentlemen," said Harry Wharton, "this meeting is called—"

"We know that already, Wharton! Get to the cricket!"

Toot toot!

"I cannot get to the cricket unless there is silence," said Harry Wharton, with unusual mildness. "Gentlemen, this meeting is called—"

"Hear, hear!"

"To discuss the cricket prospects for the coming season, and to arrange for the appointment of the usual officers."

"Hear, hear!"

"Before proceeding," said Bulstrode, standing on a chair and looking round, "I should like to point out that there's no reason why the football captain should continue his authority in the cricket season, and to move that an election be held forthwith for cricket captain."

Wharton flushed a little.

"There's no objection to that," he said. "I leave that matter in the hands of Mr. Chairman, as I shall be a candidate."

"Oh, rot!" said Hazeldene. "Wharton is cricket captain, of course!"

"Rats! I say, Bulstrode!" said Stott.

"Well, a show of hands will settle it."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ring off, Bunter! Hands up!"

"Look here, I'm going to speak! I'm a candidate!"

"What?"

Bunter blinked defiantly at the amazed Removites.

"I'm a candidate!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Chairman, I insist upon a show of hands for me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I don't bat as well as Wharton, perhaps, but you should see me bowl!"

"Yes, I'd like to see you—through a pair of field-glasses!" said Nugent. "I shouldn't like to be within reach of the ball!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

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"Who proposes Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry in a businesslike tone.

There was no reply. Nobody seemed anxious to propose the Owl of the Remove for cricket captain. Bunter blinked round him indignantly.

"I propose myself!" he exclaimed. "I insist that that's in order!"

"Oh, very well!" said the chairman, grinning. "Bunter proposes himself. Any seconder?"

Another chilling silence.

"I second myself!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very well!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter seconds himself! Hands up for Bunter!"

A fat hand went up, and then another. Both belonged to Billy Bunter. But no other hand went up.

"How's that?" grinned Nugent.

"Out!"

"I say, you fellows, you don't know what you're missing, you know! As cricket captain, I should raise the subscription, and stand a ripping feed at every match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ring off, Bunter! You're dead in this act! Gentlemen, I propose my friend Wharton for captain!" said Nugent.

"I have the esteemed honour of backing up my estimable chum secondly!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Hands up for Wharton!" shouted Bob Cherry.

A forest of hands went up. Bulstrode looked round, with a scowling brow. He had had a faint hope that he might succeed in wresting the captaincy from Wharton, but that hope was speedily extinguished. The majority for Wharton was even greater than he had looked for.

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Now hands up for Bulstrode!"

Five or six hands went up.

"Do you demand a count, Bulstrode?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"No!" growled Bulstrode.

"Any more candidates?"

There were no more. Harry Wharton was almost unanimously re-elected captain, and Bulstrode stood with a black look on his face.

Nugent as secretary had no opposition, and Bob Cherry was elected treasurer. These details being settled, the amount of the subscription was fixed, and Bob Cherry made a candid statement to the effect that he meant to have them in early, or know the reason why.

In spite of Bulstrode, business was being got through speedily; but there were other matters to come, of which the Form as yet knew nothing. But it was generally understood that Harry Wharton had something to say, and the fellows were anxious to get through business in order to hear it.

"Gentlemen," said the chairman, "our respected captain—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Will now address the meeting on an important subject."

"Go ahead!"

"On the ball, Wharton!"

Toot, toot!

"Gentlemen of the Remove Cricket Club," said Wharton, "as you're aware, in the matter of sports, the Remove not so long ago were humble followers of the Upper Fourth. We had a few places in their team, and they graciously condescended to let us play in matches sometimes.

We've changed all that. The Remove now has an athletic club of its own, and we've beaten the Upper Fourth in a Form football match."

"Hurrah!"

"But liberty, which is a jolly good thing in itself, comes expensive at times."

The Remove looked graver.

"As we're quite independent of the Upper Fourth now, and are allowed a separate ground," went on Wharton calmly, "we must expect to pay for it. We want new kit of all sorts, and it costs money. An extra subscription all round would do it, but that wouldn't be popular, if it could be avoided—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Wharton's going to make the club a present of all that's needed. Bravo, Wharton!"

"Bravo!" roared the Form.

Harry turned red and darted an angry look at his enemy.

"I'm not going to do anything of the sort. I haven't the tin, for one thing, and for another, I don't believe in the idea of a club taking additional assistance from a single member who happens to have money. It destroys independence. I'd rather play cricket with a split bat and home-made stumps than have presents made to the club by a single member."

"Hear, hear!"

"My idea is to have a concert by the Operatic and Dramatic Society, the proceeds to go to the cricket fund."

"Good!"

"All artistes will give their services free, and there'll be a charge for admission, which will go to the fund. Of course, all the Remove will turn up, and I hope we shall be able to get other fellows to come."

"Hear, hear!"

"I hope that will find the sum wanted; and if it doesn't, we shall have to fall back on an extra levy. That's all."

"I beg to oppose the whole proposition!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "When I was captain of the Remove it was my honour and pleasure to aid the sports club in a small way financially."

"That is what I object to," said Wharton quietly.

"The other fellows don't object," sneered Bulstrode. "I'm no longer captain, but I'm willing to assist the club in a humble way."

"Bravo, Bulstrode!"

"So, if Wharton has no objection, that will settle the difficulty, and save the fellows from having to listen to the singing of the Operatic and Dramatic Society."

There was a roar of laughter, and the general looks showed that the Remove regarded Bulstrode's offer as a generous one, and were willing to accept it. But Wharton's mind was fixed.

"I do object," he said quietly. "I consider that the club oughtn't to place itself under an obligation to a single member."

"Suppose you let the club decide for itself," said Bulstrode insolently. "You're not dictator of Greyfriars, you know."

"The club won't accept your offer while I'm captain."

"Oh, look here, Wharton—"

"Wharton's right."

"Rot!"

"Look here—"

"What I say is—"

Toot, toot!

There was a hubbub of voices and the vigorous tooting of the chairman's motor-horn was unheeded. Every fellow had an opinion to express, and expressed it in most cases at the top of his voice.

The door of the Form-room was suddenly flung open, and Wingate of the Sixth rushed in, followed by two-thirds of the members of the Sixth Form Debating Society.

The din from the Form-room had disturbed the great men in the midst of their deliberations upon the important subject of whether athletics are carried too far in Public schools. They had stopped only to pick up canes, and then rushed to the Remove-room.

No time was wasted in words. The cricket club meeting broke up hurriedly. They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

There was a wild scrambling and yelling, and the cricket club bolted out of the room, hotly pursued by the debating society.

And the juniors, some of them rubbing smitten places tenderly, scattered in all directions, and for that evening at least the discussion was over.

Bunter the Cricketer!

THE rising-bell was clanging, and the Remove were tumbling out of bed in the bright sunshine of the May morning. Billy Bunter, always the last to rise, sat up in bed, rubbed his eyes, and yawned.

"I say, you fellows, I believe that beast Gosling starts on that bell earlier every morning," he growled. "It can't be time to get up yet."

HARRY WHARTON DECLARES WAR!

by FRANK RICHARDS

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove is on the warpath, for he's up against his Form-master and an old enemy, Gerald Loder. The bully of the Sixth has made things hot for Wharton with the master of the Remove and the junior is out for revenge! You simply must read this great yarn of a bitter feud at Greyfriars.

No. 334 of

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,577.

"Gimme my clothes, Cherry, will you? I like to warm my things a bit in bed before getting up. You see, I—Ow, ow!"

Bunter slipped out of bed with remarkable celerity as Bob Cherry squeezed a cold sponge over his neck.

"Ow! You—you beast, Cherry! Oo-ooch! It's c-c-cold this morning! I don't think I shall bath."

Billy Bunter made that remark regularly every morning, and he lived up to it. He was last down from the dormitory, as usual. He found a group of Removites at the foot of the staircase, who all turned round to look at him.

"Here he is!" said Skinner.

"I say, Bunter, have you heard?"

"Heard what?" said Bunter, blinking at the juniors through his big glasses. "Is there a letter for me? I'm expecting a postal order this morning."

"No, there isn't a letter—"

"It might be a registered one. The remittance will probably come in notes."

"Ha, ha! There isn't even a registered one," said Russell. "But your name's up in the cricket list."

Billy Bunter swelled visibly.

"I thought Wharton would see the proper thing and do it at last," he said, with stately dignity.

He hurried away to the notice-board. Among the other papers there was certainly one in Harry Wharton's handwriting, giving the list of Removites who were wanted to turn up at first practice after morning school. The name of W. G. Bunter had been inserted in the list by another hand, but Bunter was too short-sighted to note the difference in the handwriting.

He beamed round contentedly on the grinning juniors.

"You'll see something after lessons," he said.

"The seefulness will be terrific."

And Bunter went in contentedly to breakfast. To Wun Lung, the Chinese, who sat beside him at the breakfast-table, Bunter confided his intentions of showing the Removites what cricket was really like. Bunter, according to his own account, united in his person the hitting powers of Bradman and the ease and grace of Hammond. Wun Lung appeared to be duly impressed, and Bunter did not notice the curious glimmer in the almond eyes of the Chinese.

Bunter never enjoyed lessons, but this morning he was particularly anxious to get through. His inattention was so great that the Form-master's wrath descended upon him more than once, and before the morning was over Bunter was richer by a hundred lines. But as more frequently than not he contrived to get someone else in his study to do his lines, that did not weigh very much on his mind.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch at last, as the Owl came out of a daydream to answer a question at random. "Bunter, you are giving no attention to the lesson!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"What are you thinking about?"

"Well, sir, the fact is I'm wanted to play in the Form eleven," said Bunter importantly. "I was really thinking about cricket, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him sternly.

"You are going to play in the Form eleven, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

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"Is the Remove getting up a cricket eleven to play the Second Form?"

There was a ripple of laughter in the class. Mr. Quelch, like most masters, permitted himself a little joke occasionally, at which the Form dutifully laughed.

Bunter turned red with indignation.

"Certainly not, sir! I'm down for first practice, to try for my cap for the Form eleven, and I'm bound to get it."

Mr. Quelch, seeing that the fat junior was in earnest, looked puzzled. Harry Wharton was looking perplexed, too. He had not seen the insertion in his notice on the board, and the others had taken care not to point it out to him.

"Well, well," said Mr. Quelch. "you must not think of cricket in class. Pay attention to your work, or you might be detained after school, Bunter."

"Yes, sir."

The Form was dismissed at last, and Billy Bunter followed the other Removites down to the cricket pavilion.

All Greyfriars was making preparations for the coming season. The weather was bright and dry, giving promise of an enjoyable cricket season to come.

The first Remove practice was, of course, very informal. There were over twenty candidates for the coveted eleven places, and Wharton had to pick and choose. The task of a cricket captain was not a light one. But the Remove knew that they could depend upon him to use his judgment without fear or favour.

Wun Lung, the Chinese, was among the juniors who wanted a trial. His appearance among them caused general grins, but Wharton had conceded a trial. But when Billy Bunter came out of the pavilion with pads and gloves on, and a bat under his arm, Harry Wharton stared at him blankly.

"Bunter! What on earth are you doing in that rig?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"Well, I like that, Wharton!"

"Do you? Well, I don't like fooling!" said Wharton crisply. "Get those things off and clear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter! We've got a lot to do."

"Oh, really, Wharton, you know jolly well that I'm in the first practice. You put my name in the list!"

Wharton stared at him.

"I did? Nonsense!"

"I appeal to the other fellows. Isn't my name in the list on the board?"

"It's there right enough," grinned Russell.

"The rightfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Sorry, Bunter, but I fancy some ass has shoved your name in for a joke; I never put it there. Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter blinked round him wrathfully.

"I say, you fellows, what a rotten joke! Who was it? You—you grinning Chinese beast, I know what you were chuckling at now!"

Wun Lung seemed to be doubled up with mirth. The Removites roared with laughter.

Bunter gripped the bat and made a rush at Wun Lung. He might as well have charged a will-o'-the-wisp. Wun Lung dodged instantly, and the end of the bat clumped on the chest of

Micky-Desmond, and bowled him over as if he had been shot.

The Irish junior gave a yell and sat looking dazed, and the Removites roared again. Wun Lung was hugging himself with mirth.

Billy Bunter blinked at Desmond in dismay.

"I—I'm sorry!" he gasped. "I—I—"

"Bejabers, and I'll make ye sorrier intirely!" roared Desmond as he jumped to his feet. "Bedad, an' I'll give you—"

"I—I—I'm very sorry—"

"Hold on, Micky!" exclaimed Harry. "It was an accident."

"Faith, an' it was a mighty painful one, thin!" said Desmond, rubbing his chest. "I shall have a bruise there."

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to bat, as I've put my pads on, you know. I don't see why I shouldn't have my trial for the eleven as well as the rest."

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Well, I shall jolly well draw out my subscription from the club, then—"

"You haven't paid it yet," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm only waiting for my postal order to come—"

"I mean, I shan't pay it, which comes to the same thing. Why shouldn't I have a trial, especially as I've taken the trouble to get ready?"

Wharton laughed. He was good-natured, and, after all, it would not take many minutes to get rid of Billy Bunter. So he nodded assent, and Bunter, to his joy and satisfaction, was sent in first. He had no doubt that he would be able to show the Remove some batting that would open their eyes to his real qualities as a cricketer.

The Trial Match!

HARRY WHARTON had selected twenty-two for the trial, leaving himself out. Bob

Cherry captained one eleven and Nugent the other. Bob Cherry's side batted first, and Harry made him a present of Billy Bunter.

Bob opened the innings with the Owl of the Remove. The fat junior swaggered to the wicket with a very important air and took up his position. He was taking first "knock," and Nugent put Hazeldene on to bowl against him.

Hazeldene was a moderately good bowler. He would not have had much effect upon Harry Wharton, but Billy Bunter was an easy prey.

The fieldsmen looked on, grinning, and the waiting batsmen in the pavilion watched the proceedings with great interest.

Billy Bunter blinked about him.

"Play!" called Wharton, who was umpiring, to wake up Bunter.

The ball came down. There was a fiendish yell from Billy Bunter. His bat clumped on the turf and the fat junior hopped on one leg, clapping the other with both hands and executing a savage dance that would have excited the envy of a dervish.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that?" yelled Hazeldene.

"Out!" said Wharton.

"Ow, ow, wow!"

"Get off the earth, Bunter!"

Bunter left off nursing his leg at last and lowered it gingerly to the ground. It had received a shock, but it was not hurt so much, after all. The fat junior blinked at Wharton with almost speechless indignation.

"Did you say out, Wharton?"

"Yes, of course. You were leg before wicket."

"Well, of all the cheek! I wasn't ready."

"You heard me call play!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I suppose I might be allowed a minute to get ready. If you're going to be so particular I'll be more careful next time."

"There's not going to be any next time."

"I say, that was only a trial ball, anyway."

Wharton burst into a laugh, and signed to Hazeldene to bowl again.

"I'll give you another chance, Bunter."

"Right-ho! I'll show you something like batting this time!"

Hazeldene grinned as he gripped the ball again. Billy Bunter took up his position, and was careful this time not to place his legs in front of the wicket.

Down came the ball, and Bunter swept at it.



The door of the Form-room was suddenly flung open and Wingate and a number of Sixth Formers rushed in with canes. No time was wasted in words. They set about the noisy members of the Remove Cricket Club, and there was a wild yelling and scrambling.

His bat struck something—it was the wicket. But the short-sighted junior was not aware of that. He knew he had hit something, and he ran. The ball hit his scattered wicket also, but that was nothing to Bunter.

A roar of laughter rose on all sides. Mingled with it came a sound of clapping hands and a feminine:

"Bravo!"

The Greyfriars juniors looked round in surprise. Half a dozen girls were standing by the ropes looking on, and evidently in great admiration of Bunter's batting.

They were recognised at once. Hazeldene's sister Marjorie was there with her friends Clara and Alice and the flaxen-haired German girl, Wilhelmina, and two others.

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They belonged to Cliff House, the new girls' school that had been opened the previous week near Greyfriars. The best relations were established at present between Greyfriars and Cliff House.

The Remove had all been invited to a fancy-dress dance at Cliff House, and had there made the acquaintance of Miss Penelope Primrose's pupils, and they had become very good friends.

Billy Bunter heard the handclapping. He saw the Cliff House girls as he ran, and their applause elated him. The other juniors simply shrieked.

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Marjorie & Co. thought they knew something about cricket, and, to show their knowledge, they were clapping Billy Bunter, who had knocked his wicket down, and was out, but, like Charley's Aunt, was still running.

Bob Cherry put his hands to his sides and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why don't you run, Cherry, you ass?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You're out!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Two or three fieldsmen took Billy Bunter by the shoulders, and gently but firmly marched him off the field. The fat junior went off disconsolately. He could not quite understand yet what had happened to his wicket, and he was rather inclined to think that there was some japing about it.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took Bunter's place at the wicket. The nabob was a good batsman, and Hazeldene's bowling made no impression upon him. At the change of ends Nugent bowled to Cherry.

Wun Lung was in Nugent's team, and he had been put to field in the slips. No one supposed for a moment that he would be of any use, and to that fact Bob Cherry attributed what happened.

He had cut away a ball, and was running, when there was a roar from the crowd:

"Caught!"

"Oh, well held!"

The diminutive figure of the Chinese had fairly leaped into the air, and the leather smacked into the palm of his hand.

Bob Cherry stopped short and stared at the Celestial in astonishment. Wun Lung grinned genially. The ball went up from his hands again, and came down straight into his palms.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "How's that?"

"Out!"

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Who'd have thought it?"

There was a fresh sound of handclapping from the girls.

Answers to Spelling Bee.

The words spelled wrong and now corrected were:

CURRICULUM
UNPARALLELED
SEPARATE
SIEGE
HARASSED
FIERY

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"Bravo!" exclaimed Marjorie. "Well bowled!" And the juniors shrieked. The batsman had been caught out, and to hear the bowler thus cheered was distinctly diverting. It had been a difficult catch, and most of the fellows set it down to a fluke on Wun Lung's part.

But Wharton thought differently. He recalled the little Chinese's skill in every variety of gymnastics, and the almost uncanny facility he showed in every kind of juggling. It occurred to Wharton that Wun Lung would be a useful man in the field. He was determined to watch the Chinese carefully. The Remove eleven would have enough good batsmen and bowlers, too, and a strong fieldsmen would be a great acquisition.

And Wun Lung showed that it was no fluke.

The next batsman was soon out in the same way, caught by Wun Lung in the slips.

The Removites, surprised as they were by the unexpected development on the part of the little Celestial, cheered him heartily. And the Cliff House girls cordially joined in the cheering, though the object of it on their part was the last batsman who had been sent back to the pavilion. But a little mistake of that kind did not matter.

Third man out closed the play for an interval, as it was nearly time for dinner. The trial match was to be resumed afterwards.

Harry Wharton guessed that the Cliff House girls had had some object in coming over besides that of watching the play, and he was right. As the cricketers came off the field Hazeldene's sister exchanged a glance with her friends, and all the girls assumed expressions of gravity and importance. It was evident that something unusual was coming.

A Cricket Challenge!

"So glad to see you over here!" said Harry. "It's awfully jolly for the schools to be so close together, isn't it? You're interested in cricket?"

Marjorie smiled loftily.

"Of course. We play cricket."

Harry Wharton & Co. almost gasped. Remembering the points in the game which had earned the applause of Marjorie & Co., he could not help wondering what kind of cricket they played at Cliff House.

"My goodness!" said Clara. "Why, of course we play cricket! Marjorie is a fine batsman!"

"I'm sure of that," said Wharton diplomatically.

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "I—I should like to see you chaps—I mean, you girls—play cricket!"

Nugent went off into a sudden shriek, and Bob Cherry glared at him. Nugent tried to turn his laugh into a cough, and nearly choked in the process.

"That's just what we want," said Marjorie triumphantly.

"Oh, we'll come! It will be awfully interesting."

"Ah, you don't understand yet! You don't know what we've come over for," said Marjorie.

And all the girls smiled.

"To pay us a visit, I suppose," said Hazeldene. Marjorie shook her head.

"Yes, of course; but something else, as well. You'll never guess, so I may as well tell you. We've brought over a challenge."

"A—what?"

"A challenge. Who is your cricket captain—I

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don't mean at the school, but of the Remove? Of course," said Marjorie, "we couldn't play a senior team. The Sixth Form would beat us easily."

"Ha, ha, ha—I mean, certainly! Wharton's cricket captain."

"And Nugent's secretary."

"Then you're the persons I want to see," said Marjorie. "I'm cricket captain of Cliff House, and Clara is secretary of the Cliff House Club."

"My—my hat!"

"All these girls are playing members," said Marjorie, with a wave of the hand. "We're in ripping form this season, and we mean to make things—things—"

"Hum!" said Clara.

"Yes, that's it. There is no other girl's school near Cliff House, so we can't fix up any matches with girls—and besides," went on Marjorie confidently, "girls don't play cricket very well, and we don't want to waste our time with a lot of—of—"

"Duds," put in Clara.

"Yes, duds," went on Marjorie. "We would much rather play a boys' team and have a real match, worth fighting for."

"Tat is so," said Miss Wilhelmina. "Te

cricket match is good, and to cold collation after the match is more good."

"So we've come to challenge you," said Marjorie. "Of course, it's only fair to warn you that we've made a close study of the game—Hullo, are you ill, Nugent?"

"N-no," gasped Nugent. "Only—only a sudden spasm. It's all right."

"We've made a close study of the game," resumed Marjorie, looking a little suspiciously at Nugent, "and we're in grand form. If you'd rather decline the challenge till you've got into better form, we don't mind."

"Not at all," said Clara.

"In fact," said Alice brightly, "we want you to be in your very best form, so as to make the match worth playing."

"Exactly!" said Marjorie. "Now, do you accept, or would you rather put it off till you're in better form?"

Harry Wharton looked helplessly at Nugent. He would not have wounded the feelings of the girl cricketers for anything. But—but to play a match—in sight of all grinning Greyfriars—

"Let me see," he remarked thoughtfully at last.

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"I shall have to consult the secretary about a vacant date."

"My goodness!" said Clara. "I forgot that! Of course, all our dates are open, as we haven't fixed up any match yet."

"Yes, we could meet you any half-holiday," assented Marjorie. "I do hope all your dates aren't full already, like those at Redclyffe."

"Redclyffe?" said Nugent inquiringly.

"Yes. I wrote a challenge to Redclyffe School, and their secretary replied in a most polite note, and told us how sorry they were that all their dates were full," said Marjorie.

Nugent seemed to be in danger of another spasm. Bob Cherry made a curious sound in his throat, as if he were on the point of choking.

Wharton turned a little red. He would gladly enough have replied that all the Remove dates were full, but that would not have been quite correct. He could not help suspecting that the Redclyffe secretary had stretched a point.

Marjorie looked at him, but his face was quite grave.

"Well, what do you say?" she asked, looking at Wharton again. "Do you accept the challenge?"

"I don't know about the state of the ground for a serious match."

"Oh, we should like you to play on our ground," said Marjorie sweetly. "We have a beautiful ground, where we practise ourselves. We haven't played a match on it yet with anybody."

There was only one answer Harry Wharton could make without transgressing the unwritten laws of courtesy.

"We'll come, and thanks."

"Very good!" said Marjorie delightedly. "Mind, we're going to beat you, so you know what to expect."

"We'll give you a hard fight."

"Yes, that's just what we want you to do, so

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"Let me see," said Wharton reflectively. "We have Saturday afternoon this week. The season hasn't really begun yet, and that's open. But we—"

"That will suit us beautifully."

"Of course," said Marjorie, "if you think you're hot up to our form, and you don't want to discourage your men by beginning the season with a defeat, don't mind saying so. We shan't mind."

"It isn't exactly that—"

"I hope," said Marjorie, with a trace of lofty scorn in her voice, "I hope that you have no objection to playing a girls' team."

"Certainly not! Girls ought to play cricket as much as boys, if they feel inclined to," said Wharton emphatically.

"Yes, rather," said Nugent, "especially when they make a close study of the game and get into grand form."

that if we beat you it will show that girls can beat boys at their own game in a serious match," explained Marjorie. "Now we must be off, or Miss Penelope will miss us at dinner. Good-bye!"

And Marjorie & Co. departed, leaving the Removites looking at one another rather blankly.

"Well, we're in for it now, and no mistake," murmured Bob Cherry. "I shall be glad enough to pay another visit to Cliff House, but—"

"But to play a cricket match—"

"It will be funny."

"Well, I'm jolly glad it won't be here, for all Greyfriars to look on and cackle," said Harry Wharton ruefully. "We must make the best of it."

And that was evidently the only thing to do. The challenge had been accepted, and the match was to be played.

(And what a match it is—the most amazing ever played! Look out for next week's thrilling and amusing chapters.)



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Printed in England and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription rates: Home and Abroad, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, May 7th, 1938.